Baptismal art and identity construction in the Western Mediterranean in the fifth and sixth centuries

Volume 1

Stefanie Lenk M.A., Wolfson College
DPhil History of Art

Acknowledgements

This thesis is one of the many outputs of a research project which has fundamentally changed how I think about the purpose of the discipline of history of art, my ideas about what academic work should look like and even my ideas about what I would like to do after finishing this DPhil (*not* something completely different!). *Empires of Faith*, a Leverhulme-funded project run between Oxford University and the British Museum from 2013 to 2018, set out to find new ways of incorporating material culture into the study of religion. I hope I am right that we have made a good start in this respect, and I know for certain that *EoF* has helped me grow in many unexpected ways. I am deeply indebted to my colleagues Philippa Adrych, Nadia Ali, Robert Bracey, Belinda Crerar, Katherine Cross, Dominic Dalglish, Jaś Elsner, Maria Lidova, Georgi Parpulov and Rachel Wood.

The writing of this thesis would not have been possible without funding from the Leverhulme Trust and the British Museum. Likewise, support received from the Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes earlier in my studies first made this step a viable one for me.

Many hands have helped with this thesis. My greatest thanks are due to my supervisors, Jaś Elsner and Gervase Rosser, who have accompanied me through all the stages with much care and vigour. Decisive encouragement and inspiration for the thesis came from Stefan Trinks, Dominic Dalglish, Ine Jacobs, Marco Meyer, Joachim Helfer, Jean-Michel Spieser, Giacomo Savani, Craig Clunas and the late Mark Whittow, who have all read substantial parts of it. I must also thank many others for their great generosity in giving me advice and offering support of every kind: Achim Arbeiter, Philippa Adrych, Fathi Béjaoui, Gunnar Brands, Jane Chick, Katherine Cross, Elizabeth Fentress, Clemens Kruse, Susanne Lange, Tomas Lehmann, Anastasia Moskvina, Veronika Tvrzníková, Bryan Ward-Perkins and Edward Zychowicz-Coghill.

Thanks to the assistance of the Leverhulme Trust, the British Museum, the Oxford Centre for Byzantine Research, the Santander Academic Travel Award and Wolfson College, I was able to travel to all of the sites of my case studies and attend a number of conferences which greatly impacted my work. I think back very fondly in particular to the conference 'Debating Religious Space and Place from Constantine to Cnut (AD 306-1035)', held at the University of Leicester in 2014, and to the Oxford study group which made it through Algeria thanks to Ahcicene and Kader in 2017. I have been made to feel warmly welcome in many places, but would especially like to mention the kindness of the Campo Arqueológico de Mértola.

This thesis would be unreadable without Jaecki Lindenau and my constant guardian in the jungle of English, Margaret Scarborough. I would not have seen the point of writing it in the first place if it weren't for my Hermsdorf family.

Short abstract

This thesis reconsiders the significance of baptismal art and architecture for our understanding of Christian identity construction in late antiquity. Early Christian art is often discussed as a visual language developed specifically to convey Christian messages. When researchers deal with pre-Christian imagery being repurposed for Christian use, they tend to focus on how such imagery functioned within an inherently Christian logic of interpretation. In this thesis, I explore art-historical and archaeological evidence in order to challenge the often encountered assumption that in Christian cult spaces, Christianness seamlessly replaced late Roman identity. The thesis argues that in an array of Christian communities in the fifth- and sixth-century Western Mediterranean – some located on its rural edges and others in one of its imperial centres, Ravenna – traditional Roman culture persisted as an integral constituent of Christian identity. In their baptisteries, Christian communities visually and spatially evoked their links to Roman, at times even pagan, traditions. The sacrament of baptism was the once-in-a-lifetime transition from the old life into the new Christian one, and the official celebration of admission into the circle of the faithful. It was also the first instance of a public profession of belief in Christian doctrines. The ceremony of baptism was enacted as a central event in the formation of Christian identity. In this light, the decisions of a number of Christian communities to surround neophytes during this rite of passage with imagery and architecture deriving from a cultural sphere which, according to extant textual sources, they were supposed to leave behind, demonstrates that these communities encouraged Christians to experience their Roman and Christian identities as congruent with each other.

Long abstract

Identity formation in multi-ethnic societies has become a major concern in the study of late antiquity, as it has in a wide array of other disciplines, including anthropology, psychology and religious studies. Historians and archaeologists of societies in the migration period of late antiquity have made significant contributions to the deconstruction of old monolithic models of identity and social belonging. As a result of such efforts, notions of the fluidity and permeability of ethnicities have become mainstream concepts in this field, serving to shift scholarly interests to *how* identities were constructed, as opposed to *whether* or not identity construction took place. Moreover, it is now widely acknowledged that the cruder concepts of identity promoted by earlier generations of scholars contributed to constructing and legitimizing contemporary understandings of fixed ethnicities and, deriving from this discourse, of modern nationhood. Conversely, meanwhile, the universalizing concept of religious identity that assigns Christian faith the most determinative social role in the life of a Christian at all times still tends to dominate accounts of late antique Christian societies. This concept is certainly omnipresent in studies of early Christian art. Furthermore, early Christian studies rarely differentiate between local, cultural or class distinctions with respect to how Christian-ness was actually enacted. In marked contrast to the study of European ethnicities, the writing of early Christian history still operates with concepts that leave notions of a monolithic late antique origin for modern Christianity untouched – with all the consequences such assumptions might entail for the construction of Christian identity today.

In this thesis, I propose the study of imagery and architecture of baptismal spaces rooted in pre-Christian Roman culture as a way forward for the examination of the processes of Christian identity-construction in the late antique Mediterranean. I have focused on how cultural identity, i.e. the affirmation of aspects of traditional Roman culture, intersected with the innovations of a Christian-focused identity. I argue that Christian communities celebrated Roman culture, which was an integral constituent of fifth-and sixth-century society, also as an integral part of their sense of Christianity, and did so in the baptistery, the key space of affirmation of Christian beliefs. Baptismal decorations encouraged Christians to experience their Roman and Christian identities as congruent with each other.

In recent decades, scholars have extensively questioned the binary opposition of pagan versus Christian. It has been stressed that Christians experienced their religion in less clear-cut ways

than the writings of Christian apologists suggest. It is assumed that a certain flexibility existed in Christian self-conceptions, with regard both to the sheer multitude of confessions and heresies, and to the preparedness or unwillingness to adhere to Christianity's novel and monopolistic claim to exclusivity. Terms like 'semi-Christians' or '*incerti*' have increasingly influenced the way religious realities of late antique Christians are conceptualized. Scholars also seek to deconstruct late antique notions of non-negotiable divides between pagans and Christians as discursive constructs used to establish a common identity among Christians. However, scholarship which focuses on *how* Christians reconciled the exclusivity of the Christian religion with ongoing Roman traditions, whether these were associated with paganism or not, is still in the minority.

Through analyses of several case studies of the art and architecture of Western Mediterranean baptisteries of the fifth-and sixth-centuries, I demonstrate that in the baptismal sphere, some Christian communities referred to Roman traditions in visual and material culture, ritual practice, social activities and pre-Christian religious space. Although contemporary Christian polemicists would have attacked many of these traditions as pagan, in the communities I discuss here, the association with Roman cultural practices was not formally proscribed. On the contrary, through their incorporation into baptismal space, they were elevated as unquestionably Christian practices. By taking a local focus, this thesis thus helps to nuance the prevailing monolithic model of late antique Christian identity.

The study of baptismal spaces is a particularly fruitful way forward for research on Christian identity-construction. Made for all who wished to be baptized, baptismal art and architecture was, according to the missionary logic of conversion, meant for everyone. Such imagery is situated dogmatically at the very heart of the church. Baptism effects the spiritual rebirth of the baptizand as a member of the body of Christ — the precondition for eternal life in heaven. In life too, the sacrament was a momentous turning-point. All but the baptized were excluded from Eucharistic prayers and communion. With baptism came the understanding of the true nature of Christ. The Christian mysteries, the nature of the Trinity and the meaning of the Eucharist were revealed in the rituals of preparation for, or in the retrospective explanation of, the baptismal rite. At the same time, the official profession of the Christian faith was another unprecedented requirement in the life of the Christian. In the fifth and sixth centuries, adult baptism, which required the clear awareness of the sacrament as a choice made by the individual, seems to have prevailed, or to at least have been a common practice alongside

infant baptism. The sacrament of baptism was the once-in-a-lifetime transition from the old life into the new Christian one, and the official celebration of admission into the circle of the 'faithful' among the Christians. The ceremony of baptism was enacted as a central event in the formation of Christian identity. In this light, the decision of some Christian communities to surround neophytes during this rite of passage with imagery and architecture evoking cultural spheres which, according to textual sources, they were supposed to leave behind, demonstrates that for these communities Christian identity was not incompatible with Roman identity.

This argument has been inspired by Éric Rebillard's recent historical work on North African Christianity in late antiquity. Rebillard applies concepts from the field of identity theory to the study of early Christian religion, emphasizing the internal plurality of individuals and the multiple social roles individuals fulfill at a given time. This model of thinking about religious affiliation allows for more refined interpretations of religious realities than the schematic categorizations 'Christian', 'pagan', 'semi-Christian' and so on. It incorporates 'Christian-ness' as one category among several others that together shape the totality of an individual's experience. Identity theory maintains that persons will activate multiple identities in situations where various groups to which they adhere (e.g. family and religion) overlap. Allowing for the possibility of an enactment of different social roles side by side presents a fundamental challenge to the analytical framework with which early Christian art and architecture have been studied in the past.

This thesis has taken further inspiration from recent efforts in the study of religion to establish the lived practice of religion as a valuable category of investigation alongside the study of religious beliefs. This ongoing project originally derives from the wish to free the study of religion from an exclusive fixation on belief as the defining quality of religion. Focusing on the actual experience of a religious person is not synonymous with disregarding the religious beliefs this person might hold; it merely shifts the emphasis of our observation to the individual, situational and flexible character of all religious experience. Drawing and expanding on these insights, instead of taking works of art as expressions of a preconceived shared understanding of religious values and doctrines, I apply here an alternative view that sees imagery, space and materiality as constitutive for both the creation and negotiation of a communal sense or group identity. This approach has recently come to prominence through the emerging field of 'material religion', which works from the premise that the formation of

religious identity is a discursive process within a group that needs reconfirmation through cultural practices, e.g. language or the use of material culture. Images, architectural settings, places, and situatedness within landscape all form part of a symbolic language that gives visibility to the characteristics and aims of a given community. These visual and spatial settings, created at some point in time, enter an interactive process of transformation, replacement and reuse: people reacting to their built environment form visions and realities of their social and religious environment, while contemporaneously their social and religious environment is itself to a large extent predefined and limited by the built situation in place. The study of material culture should hence be used as a vital instrument in the study of religious experience and identity construction. However, while research on objects, images, spaces, clothing and food has started to transform the study of religion, methodological approaches which can do justice to this 'mute' body of evidence are still in their infancy. With this thesis I also hope to contribute to the further development of this methodological groundwork.

The thesis is divided into four chapters, each of which illuminates a different aspect of affiliation with Roman culture in the baptismal space: the use of Roman stock imagery and the contemporaneous absence of explicitly Christian imagery (chapter 1); the occurrence of so-called 'pagan' iconographies (chapter 2); the integration of antique personifications within Christian narrative scenes (chapter 3); and finally the baptismal reuse of *cellae* of former pagan temples (chapter 4). Chapter 1 discusses previous research on the baptistery of Djémila in the Roman province of Numidia (Roman Cuicul in North-Eastern Algeria) as an example of the unjustified emphasis of scholars on Christian allegorical interpretations of Roman natural imagery when this is employed in Christian spaces. The chapter argues that a doctrinal Christian frame of reference for the interpretation of baptismal imagery is not necessarily the only viable option, and that careful examination of the religious and cultural affiliations of the Christian community in situ is necessary to uncover potential additional perspectives on the layers of meaning of baptismal art. Chapter 2 introduces three baptismal iconographies pertaining to Graeco-Roman myths and civic cultural practices in Southern Lusitania (today Algarve and Baixo Alentejo in Portugal) and Africa Proconsularis (today north-eastern Tunisia) which scholarship has problematized as 'pagan survivals' in baptismal art. In this chapter, I argue that at the time of decorating the baptisteries in the fifth and sixth centuries, Roman cultural practices were profoundly integrated in Christian lives; arguably both clerical and lay

patrons of the baptisteries did not see them in opposition to Christian identity. The degree to which the Romanness of Christian communities can be said to have been intentionally promoted through material culture varies in the three case studies. Chapter 3 reexamines the arguably best-studied baptismal work of art, the cupola mosaic of the Orthodox baptistery in Ravenna. I focus on the representation of the River Jordan at Jesus's baptism in the form of an antique river personification. My analysis of the literary record connected to this specific baptismal scene will bring me to the conclusion that in the understanding of the bishop of Ravenna Chrysologus, the mosaic represented a conversion of a representative of classical antiquity into Christianity. This would make Ravenna's dome mosaic an outstanding case of a conscious late antique visual commentary on the possibility of a positive relationship between antique culture and Christianity. Finally, chapter 4 draws on the example of three converted temple-churches in Africa Proconsularis and Byzacena (today Tunisia) and their baptismal reuse. This last chapter discusses how the examination of the spatial and social contexts in which *cella*-baptisteries existed can help with the interpretation of their significance to the Christian communities who used them. I further discuss the potential function of *cella*-baptisteries to integrate divergent ethnic groups under the umbrella of a shared Roman culture.

These baptismal spaces invited a flexible, locale-specific interpretation of Christian culture. The time frame of my investigation overlaps with the cultural and social changes that marked the disintegration of the late Western Roman Empire. The establishment of Barbarian kingdoms in the area of investigation – the Visigothic kingdom on the Iberian Peninsula, the Vandal kingdom in North Africa and the Ostrogothic kingdom in Italy – led to processes of diversification across the interconnected Mediterranean. Ethnically diverse societies – Romans, more or less Romanized indigenous populations, and migrating people – slowly transformed urban, and to some extent rural spaces. As recent studies have increasingly insisted, Roman culture continued to be an integrating factor for ruling elites of diverse ethnic backgrounds and affiliations throughout the fifth and sixth centuries. Among the selection of Christian communities discussed in this thesis, for several an at least mixed ethnic background can be made plausible. Yet we cannot ascertain with certainty if or how any of the Christian communities I discuss would have identified themselves in ethnic terms. But the visual and archaeological evidence suggests that, however these communities described themselves, aspects of the culture of the Roman world, as it was reflected in their own region, were

integral to the construction of their identity as Christians. The integrating force of Roman culture persisted in lay Christian circles and was a commonality, even beyond elite spheres, between Barbarian migrants and indigenous populations.

Abbreviations

CIL	*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*
C. Th.	*Codex Theodosianus*
Ambrose, De sacr.	Ambrose, *De sacramentis*
Augustine, Conf.	Augustine, *Confessiones*
Augustine, Contra ep. fund.	Augustine, *Contra epistulam Manichaei quam vocant fundamenti*
Augustine, De civ. Dei.	Augustine, *De civitate Dei*
Basil, Hom. In hex.	Basil, *Homiliae in hexameron*
Clement of Alexandria, Paed.	Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus*
Cyril of Jerusalem, Myst. Cat.	*Catecheses mystagogicae*
Gregory of Nyssa, Catechet. Mag.	Gregory of Nyssa, Oratio Catechetica Magna
Gregory of Tours, Glor. conf.	Gregory of Tours, *Liber in gloria confessorum*
Hesiod, Theog.	Hesiod, *Theogonia*
Ildefonsus, De cogn. bapt.	Ildefonsus, *De cognitione baptismi*
Isidore, De eccl. off.	Isidore, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*
Isidore, Etym.	Isidore, *Etymologiae*
John of Damascus, De fid. orthod.	John of Damascus, *De fide orthodoxa*
Justin Martyr, Apol.	Justin Martyr, *Apologia*
Lib. Pont.	*Liber Pontificalis*
Martin of Braga, De corr. rust.	Martin of Braga, *De correctione rusticorum*
Origen, Hom. Jos.	Origen, *Homiliae in Joshuam*
Piazenca Pilgrim, Itin.	Piazenca Pilgrim, *Itinerarium Antonini Placentini*
Quodvultdeus, Lib. prom. et praed. Dei	*Liber de promissionibus et praedictionibus Dei*
Reg. Eccl. Carthag. Excerpta	*Registri ecclesiae Carthaginensis excerpta*
Salvian, De Gubern. Dei	Salvian, *De Gubernatione Dei*
Tertullian, De spec.	Tertullian, *De spectaculis*
Theodoret, Jerem.	Theodoret, *Explanatio in Jeremiam*

Content

Introduction 3
Current scholarship on baptismal art and methodological challenges 5
Rethinking Christian identity: Multiple identities 14
The baptistery as a place of Christian identity construction 21
'Lived religion' and the study of material culture 26
Roman visual and material culture in the baptismal sphere 32
Chapter 1: The absence of Christian symbolism in the baptistery of Djémila, Numidia 41
Introduction: The absence of Christian symbolism 41
The Catholic church complex of Djémila and its baptistery 45
Dating the baptistery and the church complex of Djémila 55
The problem of the absence of Christian symbolism 61
The baptistery of Djémila: Analysis on the basis of the church fathers 65
The baptistery of Djémila: Accounting for the historical and material evidence as a corrective to the textual analysis 71
The religious transformation in fifth-century North Africa 72
Roman culture and religious practice in the episcopal complex of Djémila 76
Conclusion 84
Chapter 2: The Use of 'Pagan' Imagery in Baptisteries 86
Introduction: Complex cultural affiliations of images as an indicator of the contemporaneous enactment of Roman and Christian identities 86
1. Henchir el Koucha 91
The archaeological evidence 91
The cultural affiliations of the motif of the facing horses 97
Baptismal Liturgy, the Circus and Christian identity 104
2. Mértola 109
Mythological subject matter between belief and practice 109
The archaeological evidence 114
Dating and Locating the Mosaic Workshop of Mértola 120
Font II 123
The Mosaic Decoration of the Platform as Evidence for a Baptismal Use? 126
The Christian and Roman Bellerophon Scene 129
3. Milreu/Estói 134
The pre-Christian archaeological evidence 135
The Baptismal Space 139

Associating with Roman Material Heritage – Pragmatics or Intention? 145
Conclusion 151
Chapter 3: Problematic Personifications? – The conversion of Jordan in the Orthodox Baptistery of Ravenna 153
Introduction: 'What are pagan river gods doing in scenes of Jesus's baptism?' 153
The baptismal scene in the Neonian baptistery 157
The creation of a new iconography 161
Chrysologus's reinterpretation of the meaning of Jordan at the baptism of Christ 171
The baptism of Christ in the Orthodox baptistery as an integration of the ancient world into Christianity 178
Beyond marking place - Examples of other personifications of Jordan that represent antiquity 184
Conclusion 188
Chapter 4: North African temples à cour as hosts for fifth- and sixth-century baptisteries 189
Introduction 189
The motivations behind temple-church conversions in North Africa 194
Beyond the paradigm of 'pragmatism' in the study of temple-church conversions 204
Roman civic identity in Thuburbo Maius and Sufetula 211
1. Thuburbo Maius and its temple-church 214
2. Sufetula and its temple-church 224
Creating Christian-Roman civic identity: the *cella*-baptisteries 234
3. The *cella*-baptistery of Jebel Oust – Building on a Roman cult space 239
The temple complex in Roman times 241
Jebel Oust and the *cella*-baptistery in Christian times 244
Conclusion 250
Conclusion 253
Bibliography 257

Introduction

So-called 'Roman orthodoxy' (Nicene orthodoxy in the West and Chalcedonian orthodoxy in the East) was established in the late Roman world, at a time of great social and political transition, and flourished in the migration period of the fifth and sixth centuries. Scholars who use the compound of 'Roman' and 'orthodox' usually agree that orthodox Christians, i.e. Nicene and Chalcedonian Christians, saw themselves as partakers in the Roman world, in contrast to migrating peoples who still adhered to paganism or non-orthodox Christian faiths.[1] The compound's lifespan, however, is in terms of the historian, a limited one. At the threshold of the early Middle Ages, 'Barbarian' beliefs eroded, as the acculturation of migrants increased, and their progressive inclusion into what was formerly considered 'Roman orthodoxy' changed the character of the church into a global one no longer bound to Roman identity.[2]

This thesis interrogates material sources from the fifth and sixth centuries to come to a more nuanced understanding of what implications the association of Christianity and Romanness had for the conduct of late antique Christians'. I argue that Christian art and material culture shows us that in their lived religious practices, Christians treated Roman

[1] Y. Hen, "Compelling and intense: The Christian transformation of Romanness", in: *Transformations of Romanness. Early Medieval Regions and Identities,* Walter Pohl et al. (ed.) (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2018), 65-67; W. Pohl, "Introduction: Early medieval Romanness - a multiple identity", in: *Transformations of Romanness. Early Medieval Regions and Identities,* Walter Pohl et al. (ed.) (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2018), 23-24; W. Pohl, "Christian and Barbarian Identities in the Early Medieval West: Introduction", in: *Post-Roman Transitions: Christian and Barbarian Identities in the Early Medieval West,* Walter Pohl and Gerda Heydemann (ed.) (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 22; G. Greatrex, "Roman identity in the sixth century", in: *Ethnicity and culture in late antiquity,* Stephen Mitchell and Geoffrey Greatrex (ed.) (London, Swansea: Duckworth, Classical Press of Wales, 2000), 277. Regional perspectives are offered in J. Conant, *Staying Roman: conquest and identity in Africa and the Mediterranean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 191-192; S. Muhlberger, "Looking back from mid century: the Gallic chronicler of 452 and the crisis of Honorius' reign", in: *Fifth-century Gaul: A crisis of identity?,* John Drinkwater and Hugh Elton (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 36. For Byzantium cf. I. Stouraitis, "Byzantine Romanness: From geopolitical to ethnic conceptions", in: *Transformations of Romanness : early medieval regions and identities,* Walter Pohl et al. (ed.) (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018), 131-132.

[2] W. Pohl, Identities (2013), 22-24; G. Greatrex, Roman identity (2000), 278.

cultural techniques and Roman spaces, which high-ranking church representatives considered un-Christian or even pagan, as parts of Christian culture.[3] The thesis demonstrates that very diverse Christian groups, some located on the rural edges of the Western Mediterranean and others in one of its imperial centres, Ravenna, allowed Roman visual culture, and even pre-Christian cult spaces, to shape baptismal art and architecture. Whether these manifestations of Romanness had an impact on Christian beliefs, i.e. their orthodoxy, can be shown by analyzing material culture only with great difficulty. Roman-Christian material culture does provide evidence, however, that late antique Christians privileged keeping Roman traditions alive over contemporary scholarship considers correct Christian conduct. Roman cultural techniques, officially deemed un-Christian, appear in the material record, and suggest that individual communities' understandings of permissible and orthodox ways of performing Christianity were influenced by the cultural landscapes that surrounded them.

In response to the dominant approach in scholarship of dealing with questions of continuity and rupture with the classical past in late antique Christianity through texts, I will shift the focus to what the analysis of material and visual culture can contribute to the study of Christian religiosity in the late antique Mediterranean. Here I follow an approach to religion that privileges its quality as lived practice over its doctrinal ambitions.[4] While the 'lived religion' approach has been productive, especially in the field of Roman religion, the study of early Christian art has not yet taken sufficient advantage of this and other approaches that take the exploration of non-elitist, local

[3] Fundamental for the Christian invention of 'paganism' is M. Kahlos, *Debate and dialogue: Christian and pagan cultures c.360-430* (Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate, 2007), 18-26 and 93-112.
[4] See the seminal study M. McGuire, *Lived religion: faith and practice in everyday life* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

and individual perspectives as seriously as the incommensurably better studied testimonies of the church fathers.[5]

More precisely, I will focus my argument on fifth- and sixth-century Western Mediterranean baptismal spaces, thereby concentrating on a functional space decisive for the formation of Christian religious identity in late antiquity. Under the guidance of their ecclesiastical leaders, Christian communities created spaces and celebrated baptismal ceremonies in them, crafting a vision of Christianity in which Roman culture was an intrinsic component. Often, the material evidence does not allow us to distinguish between baptisteries used by local Roman or Romanized populations and those of German migrants. Where it does, however, it is clear that Roman cultural practices were welcomed in the religious lives of both.

Current scholarship on baptismal art and methodological challenges

In the recent past, the study of baptismal art has witnessed a significant turn. From the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, the ground in the field was laid by attempts to establish an overview of early baptismal art as a unitary totality and to define general iconographic trends.[6] The majority of research in the second half of the

[5] For the place of individuality as a conceptual framework in Roman history and archaeology see for instance J. Rüpke, *On Roman religion: lived religion and the individual in ancient Rome* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 2016); J. Rüpke and W. Spickermann, *Reflections on religious individuality: Greco-Roman and Judaeo-Christian texts and practices* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2012); R. Raja, *Urban development and regional identity in the Eastern Roman provinces, 50 BC-AD 250: Aphrodisias, Ephesos, Athens, Gerasa* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2012); É. Rebillard and J. Rüpke, *Group identity and religious individuality in late antiquity* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2015).

[6] J. Strzygowsky, *Ikonographie der Taufe Christi: Ein Beitrag zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der christlichen Kunst* (Munich: Theodor Riedel, 1885); A. d. Waal, "Taufe Christi auf vorkonstantinischen Gemälden der Katakomben", in: *Römische Quartalschrift 10* (1896); L. de Bruyne, "La décoration des baptistères paleochrétiens", in: *Actes du Ve Congrès International d'Archéologie Chrétienne,* Congresso internazionale di archeologia cristiana (ed.) (Vatican City: Pontificio Istituto di archeologia cristiana, 1957); H. Stern, "Le décor des pavements et des cuves dans les baptistères paléochrétiens", in: *Actes du Ve congrès international d'archéologie chrétienne,* 1957); A. Fausone, *Die Taufe in der frühchristlichen Sepulkralkunst* (Vatican City: Pontificio Istituto di archeologia cristiana, 1982).

twentieth century has consisted of national inventories of baptismal iconographies, which are often discussed in relation to baptismal liturgical practice.[7] These studies are concerned with local specificities which add nuance to the earlier generalist accounts. Lately, interest in early Christian baptismal rites and their origins has increased.[8] Baptismal art and material culture in the late antique West has figured prominently in this context.[9] The most recent extensive work is by Robin M. Jensen in her books *Living Water. Images, Symbols, and Settings of Early Christian Baptism* (2011) and *Baptismal imagery in early Christianity. Ritual, visual, and theological dimensions* (2012). Jensen is concerned with bringing together the study of baptismal figurative language in scripture, liturgy, and the writings of the church fathers with the study of baptismal art. In this respect, Jensen's work is representative of much current scholarship on baptismal art in

[7] For the Mediterranean West see D. Iturgaiz, "Baptisterios paleocristianos de Hispania", in: *Analecta Sacra Tarraconensia 41* (1968) and D. Iturgaiz, "Baptisterios paleocristianos de Hispania", in: *Analecta Sacra Tarraconensia 40* (1967); J. Lassus, "Les baptistères africains", in: *Corsi di Cultura sull'Arte ravennate e bizantina 17* (1970); F. M. Buhler, *Les baptistères en France. De l'époque paléochrétienne à la période romane: Inventaire déscriptif* (Mulhouse: Centre de Culture Chrétienne, 1975); D. Gandolfi, "L'edificio battesimale in Italia: Aspetti e problemi: atti dell'VIII Congresso Nazionale di Archeologia Cristiana, Genova, Sarzana, Albenga, Finale Ligure, Ventimiglia; 21-26 settembre 1998", in: *Atti dei convegni / Istituto Internazionale di Studi Liguri,* (ed.) (Bordighera: Ist. Internazionale di Studi Liguri, 2001)Atti dei convegni / Istituto Internazionale di Studi Liguri; F. Bisconti, "L'iconografia dei battisteri paleocristiani in Italia", in: *Congresso Internazionale di Archeologia Cristiana - Atti,* Pontificio Istituto di archeologia cristiana2001) as well as the comprehensive overviews A. Khatchatrian, *Origine et typologie des baptistères paléochrétiens* (Mulhouse: Centre de culture chrétienne, 1982); S. Ristow, *Frühchristliche Baptisterien* (Münster: Aschendorffesche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1998).

[8] M. E. Johnson, *The rites of Christian initiation: their evolution and interpretation* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999); B. D. Spinks, *Early and medieval rituals and theologies of baptism. From the New Testament to the Council of Trent* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006); E. Ferguson, *Baptism in the early church: History, theology, and liturgy in the first five centuries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009); D. Hellholm (ed.), *Ablution, initiation, and baptism: late antiquity, early Judaism, and early Christianity = Waschungen, Initiation und Taufe: Spätantike, frühes Judentum und frühes Christentum* (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2011).

[9] See for instance I. Foletti and S. Romano (ed.), *Fons Vitae: Baptême, Baptistères et Rites d'initiation (IIe-VIe siècle)* (Rome: Viella, 2009); H. Schneider, "Die Entwicklung der Taufbecken in der Spätantike", in: *Ablution, Initiation, and Baptism: Late Antiquity, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity,* David Hellholm (ed.) (New York, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011); D. Apostolos-Cappadona, "I understand the mystery, and I recognize the sacrament. On the iconology of ablution, baptism and initiation", in: *Ablution, initiation, and baptism. Late antiquity, early Judaism, and early Christianity,* David Hellholm et al. (ed.) (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2011); N. S. Dennis, "Living Water, Living Presence: Animating Sacred Space in the Early Christian Baptistery", in: *Holy Water in the Hierotopy and Iconography of the Christian World,* Alexei Lidov (ed.) (Moscow: Russian Academy of Arts, 2017).

particular, and early Christian art more generally. The aims of both books are concisely conveyed by Jensen's characterization of her 2012 study:

> […] an elaboration of how visual images both express and transmit certain theological and sacramental values or themes, it also attends to how the design and decoration of ritual space corresponds to the baptismal rite itself, both as it might have been enacted and as it was described or explained to those who experienced it.[10]

Jensen's approach, a model of thoroughly researched groundwork for the study of baptismal art, should be examined carefully, since the underlying concept of early Christianity that it promotes is as pertinent in early Christian studies as it is potentially questionable. Jensen takes the massive body of empirical data (literary and material) from different contexts in the East and the West as 'sacramental' evidence of an ideal, theologically conceptualized totality rather than as experiments and discursive statements within a fissile, complex and diverse range of Christianities.

For Jensen, baptismal imagery is an *expression* of 'theological and sacramental values or themes'.[11] Jensen's use of the word 'expression' could be mistaken as a suggestion that we can know precisely the messages visual art transmitted, and the mechanisms by which it did so, as well as the intentions of its creators as both artists and patrons. This seems to be the minimum requirement for a confident argument about what is expressed by an image.[12] For most late antique works of art, however, this information is of course not available and so most often remains a question of interpretation. Nor is it clear whether such a message existed in the first place. Throughout her books, Jensen

[10] R. M. Jensen, *Baptismal imagery in early Christianity: Ritual, visual, and theological dimensions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 1.
[11] Ibid.
[12] For the problem of expression J. Elsner, "Alois Riegl and Classical Archeology", in: *Alois Riegl, revisited: contributions to the opus and its reception,* Peter Noever et al. (ed.) (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010), esp. 56-66.

answers her initial question of *how* images express theological themes and values with the response *that* they are 'sacramental', i.e. they refer to the sacraments of either baptism or Eucharist.[13] This sacramental model of visual interpretation is analogous to a sacramental reading of the scripture. From this point of departure, however, art historical observation cannot detect the conflict and discord potentially inherent in works of art. Instead, the examined object inevitably becomes another piece of evidence affirming the predetermined theological ideas which, according to the sacramental model at least, the image was bound to in the first place.

As a consequence, neither *Living Water* nor *Baptismal Imagery in Early Christianity* offers a differentiated account of particular traditions of imagery or of ritual practices with a view to different local conditions and changes over time. *Living Water* structures its content according to groups of objects or materials like 'sarcophagi' or 'glass, ivory and mosaics'. In *Baptismal Imagery*, Jensen defines five core topics that recur in the textual and artistic interpretation of baptism, such as '*Baptism as Cleansing from Sin and Sickness*' or '*Baptism as Dying and Rising*'. She thus does not distinguish her material according to its place in the Eastern or Western ecclesiastic traditions or its distribution in time. Furthermore, while Jensen gives equal weight to Eastern and Western textual records of baptism, her material examples derive almost exclusively from the West. Jensen states clearly that she is not concerned with regional and chronological differences:

> Similarly, the study does not make a point of regional or chronological differences and allows that the significance of any of these effects would have varied according to place and time. The goal, rather, is to demonstrate the

[13] Jensen establishes the sacramental model in R. M. Jensen, *Understanding early Christian art* (London: Routledge, 2000), 84-88.

> complexity of this sacrament by considering its textual and nontextual illustrations, ritual processes, and ritual spaces.[14]

Jensen provides a concise justification for what is in effect a universal sacramental model in the introduction to her first book on baptismal imagery:

> The difficulty of finding documents that share the locale and date with available art objects makes assertions risky. Yet, when one considers as much extant evidence as possible, patterns emerge that can be identified across place and time, and certain general questions arise that benefit from examining and synthesizing different types of data.[15]

According to this view, general patterns of baptismal practice and iconography can be seen to evolve regardless of theological, political, geographic or linguistic distinctions and conflicts. This universalist and monolithic core assumption fundamentally shapes the results of Jensen's studies, and also has decisive implications for how the reader is meant to understand early Christianity's detachment from Roman religion and from Judaism.

In *Living Water*, Jensen sums up the development of baptismal iconography in the earliest phase of Christian imagery, focusing on catacomb painting and sarcophagi. Jensen assigns the term 'sacramental images' to the images shared by Christians and adherents of Roman religions (e.g. birds, garlands, shepherds, praying figures and banquet scenes), and claims that these were only popular for a century and a half at most before the mid-fourth century when they began to disappear.[16] For the group of early baptismal imagery, Jensen adds a series of 'abbreviated references' to biblical narrative scenes drawn from the Old Testament – scenes like Adam and Eve, Noah and

[14] R. M. Jensen, *Baptismal imagery* (2012), 4.
[15] R. M. Jensen, *Living Water: Images, Symbols, and Settings of Early Christian Baptism* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 3.
[16] Ibid., 6.

the ark, the travels of Jonah, Moses striking the rock, Daniel in the lion's den and the three youths in the fiery furnace.[17] By making these distinctions, Jensen contrasts a visual culture that privileges stock imagery popular in the ancient world in religious and profane contexts with another that is in keeping with scripture.

A second group consists of what Jensen calls 'later images'.[18] The examples of this second group derive from transportable artworks, notably ivories, and from mosaics that were used as monumental decoration in baptisteries. In a chapter on baptisteries, Jensen stresses that their iconographies are distinctively Christian:

> Certain decorative motifs are commonly incorporated, usually in polychrome mosaic. Particularly common motifs are fish, birds, lambs and shepherds, and deer coming to drink at a fountain. Other decorative schemes were often followed, however. Images of Christ's baptism, processing apostles or saints, wreaths, candles or lamps, and biblical scenes have survived in various places and from different eras.[19]

As we can see, in the later material record Jensen again finds symbols used generically throughout the Roman Empire and across religions, as well as in specifically Christian narratives. In the case of the 'later images', however, she does not tackle the pre-Christian origins of the majority of the motifs, but stresses instead the consistent appearance of biblical themes, apostles and saints over a long stretch of time.

But where and when was this kind of unambiguously Christian imagery produced? The house church at Dura Europos (fig. 178), dated to about 240 AD, is among Jensen's examples. Its murals depict a shepherd with sheep, Adam and Eve, the Samaritan woman, David and Goliath, Jesus healing the paralytic, Jesus walking on water, Jesus

[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid., 88.
[19] Ibid., 231.

stilling the storm, and three women carrying torches towards a rectangular structure with a peaked roof, which has been interpreted as either the coming of the women to the tomb or as the wise virgins approaching the tent of the bridegroom.[20] Jensen also includes the Orthodox (fig. 119) and Arian baptisteries (fig. 120) of Ravenna in her sample, which happen to embrace the entire iconographic programme she mentions. Considerable parts of this iconography can also be found in the cathedral baptistery of San Giovanni in Fonte in Naples. A no longer surviving statue of Christ and John the Baptist is recorded for the Constantinian construction of the episcopal baptistery of the Lateran in Rome.[21] There is also a mural of uncertain date (between the early fifth and eighth century according to different sources) from the baptismal font in the Catacomb of San Ponziano in Rome that depicts the baptism of Christ (fig. 177).[22] Finally, two portraits of the bishops Martin of Tours and Paulinus of Nola are reported in the baptistery of the site of Primulacium in southern France, now lost.[23]

Evidently, we can assume that the extant material and textual evidence is not representative of the original number of explicitly Christian baptismal themes. Lesser-known, because not clearly attributable, themes of similar content, like the holy figures in Mértola's baptistery II in south Portugal (fig. 89), do not appear in Jensen's account.[24] Yet, it is worth pointing out that the total evidence of Christian subject matters remains

[20] M. Peppard, "Illuminating the Dura-Europos Baptistery: Comparanda for the Female Figures", in: *Journal of Early Christian Studies 20* (2012). Among the extensive literature on the house church of Dura Europos cf. C. Hopkins, *Christian Church at Dura Europos* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934); C. H. Kraeling, *The Christian building* (New Heaven: Dura-Europus Publications, 1967); U. Mell, *Christliche Hauskirche und Neues Testament: die Ikonologie des Baptisteriums von Dura Europos und das Diatessaron Tatians* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010).
[21] Sylvester I, Lib. Pont. 34.13.
[22] F. Bisconti, Iconografia (2001), esp. 424-427.
[23] Paulinus of Nola, ep. 32.
[24] For the fresco decoration of Mértola II V. Lopes, *Mértola e o seu território na antiguidade tardia (séculos IV-VIII)* (Huelva: Universidad de Huelva, 2014), 259-260 figs. 300-308.

meagre as compared to the plenitude of examples of more generic baptismal art, found especially in North Africa and Italy, which I will return to at the end of the introduction. Jensen's examples are spread across Syria, central Italy and Southern France. Apart from Dura Europos and the Lateran baptistery, all of them date to the fifth century or later. Jensen does make a valid point that the findings of Dura Europos especially weaken any general claim about the lack of 'theological narrative' present in the beginning phases of early Christian baptismal art.[25] Indeed, the repertoire of the Syrian house church resembles the visual programmes of much later and more monumental Christian art as found in Ravenna and Naples. In the cases of Dura Europos, Ravenna and Naples, more than one of the iconographies mentioned by Jensen are grouped together. Obviously, Jensen's argument that the examples are to be found across time and space is correct. Yet, when her examples are taken in the context of all the extant imagery from late antique baptisteries, they form only a small minority group, surely insufficient in themselves to permit any broad historical conclusions. Most importantly, the examples reflect local traditions present in the northern Mediterranean and Syria at different times. They are certainly not sufficient proof for any conclusions about a general tendency in Christian art. Why does Jensen attempt to make this case?

A comparison with an argument made by Diane Apostolos-Cappadona might help us arrive at an answer:

> The transformation of western Christian art from "potentiate" icon, to paraphrase Kitzinger, to literal narrative changed in tandem with the western Christian perception of Baptism from an ablution leading to initiation toward a

[25] Always given that the house church at Dura Europos, built long before the time of known standard conventions for church building, was actually a baptismal space. This is a modern assumption made by the excavators based on the finding of a basin beneath the apse. Cf. C. Hopkins, *Christian Church* (1934), 249; C. H. Kraeling, *Christian building* (1967), 145-151.

> codified liturgical ceremony that cleansed "original sin" as the theology of confession and penance evolved in coordination with the sacramental practice.[26]

Like Jensen, Apostolos-Cappadona assumes that Christian iconography starting out from more general 'icons' or 'sacramental images', as Jensen calls them, evolves to 'literal narrative', or a 'theological narrative' as Jensen has it. Apostolos-Cappadona ties this shift to the development of the Christian rite of baptism and thus to the development of the church as a whole. What began as a ritual with ties to Jewish and pagan rites of purification and initiation became *baptism* with all the theological and liturgical implications attached to it by the Christian church. For Apostolos-Cappadona, the development of baptismal iconography is the direct visualization of this process. Jensen's account of baptismal imagery seems to implement the same line of thought. In Jensen's version, the material under discussion is crowned by images far-removed from their pagan models. In her interpretation, Jensen shines light on the way to orthodoxy, right up to the mosaic domes of Naples and Ravenna.

It would seem that where baptismal imagery is taken for granted as a visual translation of earlier scriptural models from the Bible or the church fathers, the only permissible interpretative frame is one that foregrounds the self-affirmation of a hermetic Christianity bent on orthodoxy. In adopting this tack, Jensen and Apostolos-Cappadona stand in a long tradition of scholarship that has operated on this preconception of late antique Christianity.[27] This thesis, in contrast, attempts to rectify the common assumption that fifth-and sixth- century baptismal art is always compatible with what modern scholarship would normally identify as orthodox Christian practice.

---

[26] D. Apostolos-Cappadona, Iconology of ablution (2011), 1725.

[27] Classical examples include A. Grabar, *Christian Iconography. A Study of its Origins* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 31-54; S. C. Murray, *Rebirth and afterlife : a study of the transmutation of some pagan imagery in early Christian funerary art* (Oxford: B.A.R., 1981), 37-63.

Rethinking Christian identity: Multiple identities

The brief introduction into scholarship on baptismal art shows how scholars have tended to privilege moments in late antique church history in which Christians set themselves apart from traditional Roman religion and from their Roman neighbours. It stands in sharp contrast to currents in Christian history writing that see the Christian church as an integral constituent of the Roman world and emphasize the influence numerous Roman traditions had on the church in post-imperial times.[28] The conflicted but persistent relationship of the church with the classical education system, on which the education of clerics and monks continued to depend throughout the fifth and sixth centuries, is one such example.[29] The impact that a thoroughly classical training could have had on a cleric's interaction with the Christian community, however, has been little discussed. Similarly, recent analyses of Christian transformations of Roman cities interpret Christian settlements in ancient urban cores as isolated *insulae*, as conquered realms within the Roman city which interacted only superficially with the city's urban life.[30] Christians' entanglement with Roman society and traditional Roman institutions is still overlooked on a regular basis.

Nonetheless, in the last decades, the traditional binary opposition of pagan and Christian has been extensively questioned.[31] Historians and archaeologists have stressed that

[28] See most recently on Christianity's relation to Romanness Y. Hen, Compelling and intense (2018).

[29] L. I. Larsen and S. Rubenson, *Monastic education in late antiquity : the transformation of classical paideia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); H. Inglebert, "Éducation et culture chez les chrétiens de l'antiquité tardive", in: *Que reste-t-il de l'éducation classique: Relire le Marrou, Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité,* Jean-Marie Pailler and Pascal Payen (ed.) (Toulouse: Presses universitaires du Mirail, 2004), esp. 335-6; see also most recently K. Pollmann, *The baptized muse: early Christian poetry as cultural authority* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[30] For a critique see H. W. Dey, *The afterlife of the Roman city. Architecture and ceremony in late antiquity and the early middle ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 10.

[31] Influential studies often operate with the opposition. See as an example R. MacMullen, "What Difference Did Christianity Make?", in: *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte 35* (1986).

Christians experienced their religion in less clear-cut ways than the writings of Christian apologists suggest.[32] Instead, most scholars assume that there was a certain flexibility in Christians' self-conceptions, in regard both to the sheer multitude of confessions and heresies (Nicene, Arian, Donatist, Syrian, Egyptian, Pelagian, Nestorian, Manichaean and others), and to the readiness or unwillingness to adhere to Christianity's claim to exclusivity.[33] The increasing use of terms like 'semi-Christians' or '*incerti*' reflect changes in the way scholars imagine the religious realities of late antique Christians.[34] But scholarship that focuses in detail on processes of *how* Christians reconciled ongoing pagan traditions and the exclusivity of the Christian religion is still a minority concern.[35] The popular view that a secular realm independent from the religious realm was introduced into Roman society in the fourth and fifth centuries, an argument most prominently advocated by Robert Markus in 1990, has only just begun to be criticized.[36] Critics of this theory stress that Christians were more integrated in environments still marked by Roman customs and institutions than Markus allows for.[37] They also seek to

[32] On the impact of Christian apologetics on researchers' understanding of Christian religiosity P. Brown, "Christianization and religious conflict", in: *The Cambridge Ancient History: Volume 13: The Late Empire, AD 337–425,* Averil Cameron and Peter Garnsey (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 633-636.

[33] Scholarship has, however, often limited this claim to the fourth and fifth centuries. J. J. O'Donnell, "The Demise of Paganism", in: *Traditio 35* (1979); G. W. Bowersock, *Hellenism in late antiquity: Thomas Spencer Jerome lectures* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 5-6; F. R. Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization c. 370–529* (Leiden: Brill, 1993-1994), 147-168; G. Fowden, "Polytheist Religion and Philosophy", in: *The Late Empire, A.D. 337–425,* Averil Cameron and Peter Garnsey (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); I. Sandwell, *Religious identity in late antiquity: Greeks, Jews, and Christians in Antioch* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 4; A. Busine, *Religious practices and Christianization of the late antique city (4th-7th cent.)* (Leiden, Boston, MA: Brill, 2015).

[34] An overview of the debate is given by M. Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue* (2007). For the term '*incerti*' see 31-38. See also É. Rebillard, *Christians and their many identities in late antiquity, North Africa, 200-450 CE* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), 95; A. Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 176-177.

[35] Important contributions are M. R. Salzman, *The making of a Christian aristocracy: social and religious change in the western Roman Empire* (Cambridge, MA, London: Harvard University Press, 2002); M. Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue* (2007); I. Sandwell, *Religious identity* (2007); É. Rebillard, *Christians* (2012); É. Rebillard and J. Rüpke, *Group identity* (2015).

[36] R. A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[37] See for instance É. Rebillard, *Christians* (2012), 90.

deconstruct late antique notions of non-negotiable divides between pagans and Christians as discursive constructs used to establish a common identity among Christians.[38]

In his recent contribution on Christian identities in North Africa from the third to the fifth century, historian Éric Rebillard, using sociological theory on identity formation, has challenged the view that the behaviour of North African Christians was predominantly determined by their Christianity.[39] Instead, he champions an approach that acknowledges the internal plurality of individuals and allows for the multiple social roles ('multiple identities' in Rebillard's terminology) that a person 'activates' at any given time.[40] He considers being a Christian only one of many social roles a person could play in her lifetime. Rebillard's approach is individualistic in so far as it questions the legitimacy of using 'internally homogeneous and externally bounded groups' as categories for scholarship the way the term 'Christians' was often used by the church fathers.[41]

Rebillard argues that North African Christians had plural identities based on 'category memberships [social identities] such as ethnicity, religion and occupation'.[42] He holds

[38] M. Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue* (2007); I. Sandwell, *Religious identity* (2007); S. Lander, *Ritual Sites and Religious Rivalries in Late Roman North Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016). For Christian identity construction see also C. Harrison et al., *Being Christian in late antiquity: a festschrift for Gillian Clark* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).
[39] É. Rebillard, *Christians* (2012), 3.
[40] Seminal for identity theory is F. Barth, *Ethnic groups and boundaries: the social organization of culture difference* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1969). For 'multiple identities' see for instance P. J. Burke, *Advances in identity theory and research* (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2003), 167-224; P. J. Burke and J. E. Stets, *Identity theory* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 130-154; I. H. Settles and N. T. Buchanan, "Multiple groups, multiple identites, and intersectionality", in: *The Oxford handbook of multicultural identity,* Verónica Benet-Martínez and Ying-yi Hong (ed.) (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); R. Josselson and M. Harway, *Navigating multiple identities : race, gender, culture, nationality, and roles* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); M. Voss Roberts, "Religious belonging and the multiple ", in: *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion 26* (2010).
[41] R. Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 164; É. Rebillard, *Christians* (2012), 2.
[42] É. Rebillard, *Christians* (2012), 4.

further, based on a model developed by the sociologist Don Handelman, that these category memberships were arranged in a lateral way, which means that a certain social identity of a person will prevail in one situation, while a different identity will prevail in another. This lateral arrangement is opposed to hierarchical category memberships in which a certain category, religion for instance, predominates and determines the individual's behaviour over the others.[43] A sermon of Augustine can be used as an illustration: 'There are plenty of bad Christians who pore over astrological almanacs, inquiring into and observing auspicious seasons and days.'[44] Augustine is speaking about people who actively combine different identities. In a lateral category membership, this behaviour can seem perfectly plausible, while in a hierarchical category membership, like the one Augustine advocates, this kind of astrological interest is illicit and must be stigmatized ('bad Christians').[45] Rebillard's plea for lateral category membership in late antique Christian identities thus introduces a model for thinking about religious affiliation that allows for more refined interpretations of religious identifications than the schematic categorizations 'Christian', 'pagan', 'semi-Christian' and so on. Rebillard draws our attention to the possibility that Christian identity was accompanied by other identities which could (but did not have to) take centre stage.

But what would lateral category memberships have meant in practice for late antique Christians of the fifth and sixth centuries? Scholars of identity formation agree that agents commonly adopt more than a single role in social situations.[46] For a late antique

[43] D. Handelman, "The Organization of Ethnicity", in: *Ethnic Groups 1* (1977), 191; É. Rebillard, *Christians* (2012), 4.
[44] Augustine, Sermon on Psalm 40.
[45] É. Rebillard, *Christians* (2012), 72.
[46] R. H. Turner, "The role and the person", in: *American Journal of Archaeology 84* (1978); S. Stryker and P. J. Burke, "The past, present, and future of an identity theory", in: *Social Psychology Quarterly 63* (2000); P. J. Burke, "Relationships among multiple identities", in: *Advances in identity theory and research,* Peter J. Burke (ed.) (New York, New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2003).

Christian this could for instance mean that she identified as a Christian community member, daughter, wife, patron of the arts, etc., and that in many situations more than one role was activated. She would have had to negotiate them as they mutually determined her actions. A caveat is in order here. Rebillard, in his attempt to question the status of Christianness as the most prevalent identity category, is primarily concerned with lay Christianity in North Africa at the turn of the fifth century. In the context of the present thesis, however, the actors examined, namely Christian communities building and using baptisteries, comprise both clerics and lay members, spread across different locations and moments in the fifth and sixth centuries. Over the course of roughly two centuries, lay and ordained Christians obviously differed in the degree to which their Christianness determined other aspects of their identities. In very general terms, we can expect that the advance of Christianization in these centuries, when Christian ideas and values were progressively coming to shape all areas of society, also increased the salience of Christianness for the construction of personal identities.[47] This thesis is not concerned with identifying situations where the identity category Christianness was not 'activated' or subordinate to others. To the contrary, it starts from the assumption that Christians would have been particularly aware of their Christian identity when visiting baptismal spaces. Does this mean that the entire theory of multiple identities is irrelevant to my argument here?

[47] To cite a minute fraction of the literature on Christianizations' societal implications: R. Lim, "Christian Triumph and Controversy", in: *Interpreting late antiquity : essays on the postclassical world,* G. W. Bowersock et al. (ed.) (Cambridge, Mass., London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001); R. A. Markus, *The end* (1990); J. Elsner, *Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 185-218; C. Rapp and H. A. Drake, *The city in the classical and post-classical world : changing contexts of power and identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); M. R. Salzman, "The Christianization of Sacred Time and Sacred Space", in: *The Transformations of Urbs Roma in Late Antiquity,* William V. Harris (ed.) (Portsmouth: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1999).

No. Operating with multiple identity categories can prevent the trivialization of Christians' relationships with other aspects of their lives. For instance, iconographies and monuments like the ones I will discuss here have often been seen as exemplary of processes of 'Christianization' of Roman culture. While such conclusions are not untrue, they fall short of describing in any detail what such processes actually meant for Christians' understandings of their own religiosity. Declaring that an object was 'Christianized' without specifying what this process entailed, suggests that the object was henceforth principally understood in Christian terms, whereas any other ways in which it might have mattered usually fall off the radar. Effectively, what this object says about the religious identity of its makers and recipients is decided before any serious consideration is given to the question. In the language of identity theory, we could say that scholarship takes for granted a hierarchical category membership in which Christians did not care for objects beyond their Christian value.

Identity theory provides alternative explanations for how Christians could have negotiated multiple identities. Identity theorists maintain that individuals constantly seek to establish congruence between different, more or less salient identities.[48] How challenging this task is depends on how mutually exclusive these identities are. The more common 'meanings' different identities share, the more sustainably they can be activated at the same time.[49] Where identities share many 'meanings', verifying one identity will help verify the other.[50] If, for instance, an individual maintains the role of

[48] T. Tsushima and P. J. Burke, "Levels, agency, and control in the parent identity", in: *Social Psychology Quarterly 62* (1999); S. Stryker, "Identity competition: Key to differential social movement involvement", in: *Identity: self and social movements,* Robert White (ed.) (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000);A. D. Cast and P. J. Burke, "A theory of self esteem", in: *Social Forces 80* (2002); P. J. Burke, Relationships (2003)

[49] P. J. Burke, Relationships (2003), 197.

[50] Ibid., 200.

engineer, and the same individual maintains the role of citizen of an isolated city, then planning the city's new bridge will help him verify both identities. If, however, two identities have oppositional meanings, they cannot be verified at the same time. The person will likely re-identify in order to re-establish the congruence of their multiple identities.[51]

For each of the case studies I will discuss the possibility that Christianness and Romanness were considered congruent enough to be acted out together, i.e. that they shared enough 'meanings' to verify one another. Those who lived with Roman traditions were Christians as a matter of course; contemporaneously, Christian baptisteries projected a vision of Christianity that was inclusive of Roman culture. Where a contemporaneous affiliation with pre-Christian Roman culture can be demonstrated, Christians sometimes lived forms of Christian religiosity that Christian authorities would likely have considered unorthodox. At the same time, these forms might well have been in line with the understanding of Christian orthodoxy of individual communities. As we will see in the following chapters, in Christian communities, the creation of things affiliated with Roman culture, alongside their maintenance, use, targeted reuse, and the simple fact that they were not destroyed, are all ways identification with Roman culture can transpire in material culture. However, it will also become evident that identifying a baptismal reference to a Roman tradition at a given point in time, is not sufficient evidence for subsequent recipients to also have adopted Roman culture in their understanding of Christianness. I will discuss this point in more detail at the end of the introduction.

[51] Ibid., 199-200.

Ultimately, the practice to identify contemporaneously with both Christianity and Romanness in baptismal spaces had potentially long-term consequences for entire communities' understandings of Christianity. As I will argue in the next section, baptism was experienced as constitutive of the construction of Christian identity and could affect future generations' ideas of what it meant to be Christian.

The baptistery as a place of Christian identity construction

In this thesis, I propose the study of the imagery and architecture of baptismal spaces rooted in pre-Christian Roman culture as a way forward for the examination of the processes of Christian identity construction in the late antique Mediterranean. Made for all who wished to be baptized, baptismal art and architecture was, according to the missionary logic of conversion, meant for everyone.[52] Such imagery is, as it were, situated dogmatically at the very heart of the church. That the sacrament initiating the profession of Christian truth which ultimately led to eternal salvation in Christ should have taken place in sight of imagery with the potential to undermine Christian doctrine would thus require further explanation. Certainly, classical imagery is occasionally found in a variety of communal Christian spaces and all these occurrences deserve attention. I hold, however, that the baptismal space has a special status which requires particularly careful examination. This special status derives from where the baptismal rite is situated semiotically in the life of a Christian.

Baptism effects the spiritual rebirth of the baptizand as a member of the body of Christ, and is the precondition for eternal life in heaven.[53] Thus, only the baptized could receive

[52] Seminal studies on conversion in the Roman Empire are M. Goodman, *Mission and conversion: proselytizing in the religious history of the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994); N. B. McLynn et al., *Conversion in late antiquity: Christianity, Islam, and beyond* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015).

[53] For the sacrament of baptism as effecting a change in the religious identity in Ambrose and Augustine R. Aasgaard, "Ambrose and Augustine. Two Bishops on Baptism and Christian Identity", in: *Ablution,*

Christian burial.[54] In life too, the sacrament was a momentous turning point. All but the baptized were excluded from Eucharistic prayers and communion.[55] With baptism came the understanding of the true nature of Christ. The Christian mysteries, the nature of the Trinity and the meaning of the Eucharist were revealed in the process of preparation for, or retrospective explanation of, the baptismal rite.[56] At the same time, the official profession of Christian faith was another unprecedented requirement in the life of the Christian. Textual evidence suggests that the late antique baptismal ceremony was preceded by a period of catechesis, in addition to many other ceremonies of spiritual cleansing, exhortation and inner contemplation. The creed was learned by heart as part of the catechetical lessons. Augustine, who is the main source for baptismal liturgy in the Latin speaking world in the fifth century, made catechumens profess the creed individually the day or night before the immersion.[57] The introduction of the credal recitation, it has been argued, had implications for the faith of the catechumens; through it, their faith was meant to change from a personal commitment to Christ into a belief in the body of doctrines necessary for the baptismal ceremony.[58] During the ceremony itself, at least where the Nicene rite was followed, the baptized were immersed in the name of the Trinity, which is often reported to have meant a triple immersion progressing from the name of the Father and the Son to the Holy Spirit. This

Initiation, and Baptism: Late Antiquity, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity, David Hellholm (ed.) (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2011).

[54] P. Brown, Christianization (1997), 657.

[55] For Augustine's times cf. J. P. Burns Jr. and R. M. Jensen, *Christianity in Roman Africa. The development of its practices and beliefs* (Grand Rapids, MI, Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2014), 203.

[56] An overview of the baptismal catechesis and ceremonies to the fifth century is provided in E. Ferguson, *Baptism* (2009).

[57] Ibid., 784. For an overview of Augustine's theology of baptism J. Patout Burns, "Augustine's theology of baptism", in: *Ablution, initiation, and baptism : late antiquity, early Judaism, and early Christianity,* David Hellholm (ed.) (Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 2011). On the Augustinian ceremony see also E. Ferguson, *Baptism* (2009), 785-786.

[58] P. F. Bradshaw, "The Profession of Faith in Early Christian Baptism", in: *Evangelical Quarterly 78* (2006); ibid., 107.

had to be affirmed each time by the baptized.[59] Augustine himself stressed the importance of the neophyte's profession of faith for the efficacy of the sacrament: 'What is the baptism of Christ? The bath of water in the word. Take away the water; there is no baptism. Take away the word; there is no baptism.'[60] Augustine describes the baptismal experience quite literally as an immersion in Christian doctrine.

The sacrament of baptism was arguably perceived as transformative and identity-changing. In the fifth and sixth centuries, adult baptism, which required the clear awareness of the sacrament as a choice made by the individual, seems to have prevailed, or to at least have been a common practice alongside child baptism.[61] The baptismal ceremony effected the transition from the catechumenate, the state of adhering to Christ, to the state of *fidelis*, the faithful. Technically both the catechumens and the faithful were Christians, but the role that Christianity played (or was supposed to play) in their lives changed considerably through baptism. The increasing significance of Christianity as a marker of identity is reflected in the distinction between the procedures necessary for becoming a catechumen and those required to become a *fidelis*. The most outspoken witness we have for the admittance to the catechumenate after the fourth century is Augustine.[62] In a letter of c. 403 AD, the deacon of the church of Carthage, Deogratias, asked Augustine to instruct him on how to best relate the good news to someone eager to become a Christian. Augustine's reply, *De catechizandis rudibus*,

[59] E. Ferguson, *Baptism* (2009), 638.
[60] Augustine, Expositio evangelii secundum Johannem, 15.4.
[61] W. Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014), 111-123; F. v. d. Meer et al., *Augustine the bishop: the life and work of a father of the church* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1961), 349-353. For parallel baptisms of adults and children until the seventh century see H. Schneider, Die Entwicklung der Taufbecken in der Spätantike (2011). Cf. Augustine's own catechumenal and baptismal experience: W. Harmless, *Augustine* (2014), 79-106.
[62] Other preserved treatises on the catechumenate from the fourth and fifth centuries do not describe how candidates were instructed: M. Dujarier, *A history of the catechumenate: the first six centuries* (New York: Sadlier, 1979), 91-93.

provides insight into the missionary practice starting from the first encounter between cleric and the Christian to be.[63] This first meeting did not take long. The cleric instructed the candidate about subjects such as the unity of the Old and New Testament, the ideals of love of God and love of one's neighbour, and the necessity of living in accordance with Christian morals.[64] The candidate was then asked if he or she believed in these things and wished to put them into practice. If the answer was positive, the person received the *signatio*, a sign of the cross on the forehead, and was henceforth a Christian.[65] There is debate over which other ceremonies might have accompanied this admittance to the catechumenate. The giving of salt seems to have played a role as a pre-baptismal practice in North Africa, the *exsufflatio* (a blowing for purposes of exorcism) and the laying of hands upon the candidate are also reported from other parts of the Mediterranean.[66] However, the recorded evidence from the fourth and fifth centuries does appear to agree on how relatively undemanding entry to the catechumenate was, particularly as compared to the more thorough and rigorous examination that third-century candidates had had to undergo. According to sources like *The Apostolic Tradition* of Hyppolitus, written c. 215 AD in Rome, catechumens spent three years in attendance before admission to baptism was granted.[67] Augustine, instead, did not specify any minimum period of preparation required for catechumens to become *fideles.*[68] While catechumens were invited to attend sermons like everyone else – Christians and non-Christians alike – we do not have any evidence that their

[63] W. Harmless, *Augustine* (2014), 131-133; M. Dujarier, *Catechumenate* (1979), 93-4.
[64] J. P. Burns Jr. and R. M. Jensen, *Christianity* (2014), 202.
[65] Ibid., 202-203.
[66] W. Harmless, *Augustine* (2014), 174 no. 157; M. Dujarier, *Catechumenate* (1979), 92; F. v. d. Meer et al., *Augustine* (1961), 354.
[67] M. Dujarier, *Catechumenate* (1979), 48 and 91-106.
[68] Ibid., 94; J. P. Burns Jr. and R. M. Jensen, *Christianity* (2014), 202.

spiritual journey was supervised before they enrolled in the baptismal preparation process held in Lent.[69] Regular catechetical lessons, examinations of candidates' preparedness, and fasting and abstinence from a variety of things are recorded for the Lenten preparation only.[70] A procedure designed to help with the process of inner transformation required by baptism is testified to in Augustine's time only after catechumens had signed up for baptism. As a consequence, it seems that popular opinion held that it was necessary to make a distinction between the seriousness of catechumens and of the faithful, as is reported by Augustine himself: 'Let him be, let him do as he likes; he is not baptized yet.'[71]

The sacrament of baptism was the once-in-a-lifetime transition from the old life into the new Christian one, and the official celebration of admission into the circle of the faithful. It was also the first instance of a public profession of belief in Christian doctrines. In the fifth and sixth centuries, the ceremony of baptism was enacted as a central event in the formation of Christian identity, perhaps even more so than in the previous centuries due to the fading importance of the catechumenate. The baptismal space is a place of Christian identity construction. As such, the decision of some church communities to surround neophytes during this rite of passage with imagery and architecture deriving from a cultural sphere they were supposed to leave behind must have surely been significant.

[69] J. P. Burns Jr. and R. M. Jensen, *Christianity* (2014), 203.
[70] Ibid., 204-205.
[71] Augustine, Conf. 1.11.18. See also É. Rebillard, *Christians* (2012), 65-66.

'Lived religion' and the study of material culture

In my proposition that scholars should take baptismal imagery and architecture that does not confirm congruity between textual and material evidence more seriously, I am inspired by efforts in the study of religion and in archaeology to establish the lived practice of religion as a valuable category of investigation alongside the study of religious beliefs.[72] This ongoing project originally derives from the wish to free the study of religion from an exclusive fixation on the concept of belief as the defining quality of religion, which ultimately derives from a Christian, and especially Protestant, bias towards religion.[73] Focusing on the actual experience of a religious person is not synonymous with disregarding the religious beliefs this person might hold; it merely shifts the emphasis of our observation to the individual, situational and flexible character of all religious experience. Religious belief itself can be understood in this sense as a religious practice.[74] That said, 'lived religion' does not project complete individuality onto religious experience, but accepts that 'people construct their religious worlds together', for instance through rituals.[75] In the same vein, ritual studies have questioned the common understanding of a ritual as a tool for the transmission of

[72] Within the field of lived religion, material culture is accepted as a crucial component: R. A. Orsi, *Between heaven and earth: the religious worlds people make and the scholars who study them* (Princeton, NJ, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005), 73-109; M. McGuire, *Lived religion* (2008), 97-118; M. A. Vásquez, *More than belief: a materialist theory of religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); D. Morgan, *Religion and material culture: the matter of belief* (London: Routledge, 2010); J. Droogan, *Religion, material culture and archaeology* (London, New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013); B. Meyer, "Picturing the Invisible. Visual Culture and the Study of Religion", in: *Method and theory in the study of religion 27* (2015).

[73] For the history of Christian faith T. Morgan, *Roman faith and Christian faith: pistis and fides in the early Roman Empire and early churches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). For the Christian bias towards belief D. S. Lopez Jr., "Belief", in: *Critical terms for religious studies,* Mark C. Taylor (ed.) (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1998); M. McGuire, *Lived religion* (2008), 14; J. Droogan, *Religion, material culture and archaeology* (2013), 21-28. For Protestant biases shaping the study of early Christianity J. Z. Smith, *Drudgery divine: on the comparison of early Christianities and the religions of late antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), esp. 1-53.

[74] D. Morgan, "Introduction. The matter of belief", in: *Religion and material culture: the matter of belief,* David Morgan (ed.) (London: Routledge, 2010), 4-5.

[75] M. McGuire, *Lived religion* (2008), 14.

beliefs, replacing it with models that emphasize the impact of the act of performance on the spiritual and emotional experiences of individuals and amongst groups.[76]

In the recent past, questions of perception, performativity and embodied experience have also entered the scholarly discourse on late antique baptismal art.[77] These approaches use predominantly liturgical texts as analytical frameworks for the study of baptismal experiences. Students of early Christianity thus find themselves in a dilemma: catechetical and mystagogical literatures seem to promise the most immediate and detailed glimpse into a remote ritual practice, yet they also provide us with the normative and universalist perspectives of the church fathers that we originally sought to pit against local and individual customs.

Instead of taking works of art as expressions of a preconceived shared understanding of religious values and doctrines, I apply here an alternative view that sees imagery and space as constitutive of both the creation and negotiation of a communal sense or group identity within (religious) groups.[78] The formation of religious identity is a discursive process within a group that needs reconfirmation through cultural practices, e.g. language or the use of material culture.[79] Images, architectural settings, places, and

[76] See for instance J. Z. Smith, *To take place: toward theory in ritual* (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1987); A. B. Seligman et al., "Ritual and the subjunctive", in: *Ritual and its consequences: an essay on the limits of sincerity,* Adam B. Seligman et al. (ed.) (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
[77] I. Foletti, "Saint Ambroise et le Baptistère des Orthodoxes de Ravenne. Autour du Lavement des pieds dans la liturgie baptismale", in: *Fons Vitae. Baptême, baptistères et rites d'initiation (IIe-VIe siècle),* Ivan Foletti and Serena Romano (ed.) (Rome: Viella, 2009); N. S. Dennis, Living Water, Living Presence: Animating Sacred Space in the Early Christian Baptistery (2017). See also S. Schweinfurth, "Creating Sacred Space as Cosmic Liturgy in Late Antiquity. Two Case Studies from Ravenna", in: *Mobile Eyes: peripatetisches Sehen in den Bildkulturen der Vormoderne,* David Ganz and Stefan Neuner (ed.) (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2013).
[78] S. Neuner et al., "Pikturale Horizonte der Gemeinschaftsproduktion", in: *Bilder und Gemeinschaften. Studien zur Konvergenz von Politik und Ästhetik in Kunst, Literatur und Theorie,* Beate Fricke et al. (ed.) (Paderborn: Fink, 2011).
[79] P. Bourdieu, "Identity and Representation: Elements for a Critical Reflection on the Idea of Region", in: *Language and Symbolic Power,* Pierre Bourdieu (ed.) (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), esp. 220-223.

situatedness within landscape all form part of a symbolic language that gives visibility to the characteristics and aims of a given community. These visual and spatial settings, created at some point in time, enter an interactive process of transformation, replacement and reuse: people reacting to their built environment form visions and realities of their social and religious environment, while contemporaneously their social and religious environment is predefined and limited by the built situation in place. Imagery and architecture are not just receptive of the community's definitions of them, they also form the community.

The study of Christian identity construction stands to benefit from a material focus.[80] However, while attention to objects, images, spaces, clothing or food has begun to transform discourse in the study of religion, methodological approaches which can do justice to this 'mute' body of evidence are still in their infancy.[81] In itself, the approach I have chosen to take in this thesis is not new, but the implications it could have in the study of Christian religiosity have not been examined. Within the limits which the material record sets, I try to examine how users moved through baptismal spaces and what they could have perceived. By approximation, I inquire about the intentions of the patrons of the baptisteries to arrange art and architecture in a specific way, and how

[80] The study of identities through the study of material culture and art has long been defined as a promising area of research: H. Fehr et al., "The Transformation of Romanness - Archaeological Perspectives 400-800 AD", in: (ed.) (Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, forthcoming); R. Raja and J. Rüpke, *A companion to the archaeology of religion in the ancient world* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 22-23; T. Insoll, "Christianity", in: *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Ritual and Religion,* Timothy Insoll (ed.) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), esp. 958; P. Graves-Brown et al., *Cultural identity and archaeology: the construction of European communities* (London: Routledge, 1996); R. Laurence and J. Berry, *Cultural identity in the Roman Empire* (London: Routledge, 1998); S. Cardarelli et al., *Art and identity: visual culture, politics and religion in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2012).

[81] D. Morgan, "Material analysis and the study of religion", in: *Materiality and the Study of Religion: The Stuff of the Sacred,* Tim Hutchings and Joanne McKenzie (ed.) (London: Taylor & Francis, 2016), 14-15.

this might have affected users' understanding of the rite.[82] In order to do so, I mainly interrogate the material record, while I draw on written evidence specifically where it relates directly to my object of study (see ch. 3). My main focus is on Roman, pre-Christian imagery; how such imagery was framed in its built context, interacted with decorative schemes at large, and was, at times, reused and repurposed.

The thesis therefore examines how access, circulation patterns and sight lines were predetermined through the architecture, how ecclesiastical and profane buildings flanking the baptisteries extended the ways baptismal space was used, and the association with, reuse and reframing of pre-existing structures. This approach takes the built environment seriously as constitutive of lived religious practice, and more precisely of baptizands' experience and understanding of the rite of baptism.[83] It will lead in the course of the thesis to several findings: 1) By performing the baptismal rite in a specifically modified environment, some Christian communities allowed elements of Roman traditional life to visually or physically shape the initiation to Christianity. The findings suggest that these communities treated Roman cultural techniques, some of them officially considered unorthodox, as Christian. 2) In some cases, it is plausible that communities consciously sought to associate themselves with pre-Christian Roman traditions in the baptistery. 3) The Roman practices Christians continued to perform in baptismal spaces concern a) the creation of traditional decorative patterns bare of specifically Christian symbolism, b) the reuse of Roman buildings and mosaics, c) the use

[82] See for a comparative approach for instance A. M. Yasin, "Beyond spolia. Architectural memory and adaptation in the churches of late antique North Africa", in: *North Africa under Byzantium and Early Islam,* Susan T. Stevens and Jonathan Conant (ed.) (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2016). For the acknowledgement of spatial arrangements as a category of interpretation in a potentially baptismal example cf. J. Chick, *The large Pavement at Qasr el-Lebia in Cyrenaica: Episodes, Narratives and Transformations* ((unpublished): University of East Anglia, 2014), 330-347.
[83] See also R. M. Jensen, "Archaeology of Christian initiation", in: *A companion to the archaeology of religion in the ancient world,* Rubina Raja and Jörg Rüpke (ed.) (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 259.

of imagery alluding to Roman institutions like public baths or the circus, and d) the association of Christianity with classical mythology, including personified natural forces in the guise of Roman divinities. 4) In exceptional cases, Christians also associated the baptistery with sites of pre-Christian cult practices, most clearly at the North African site of Jebel Oust.

At the outset, the limitations of research on the interplay between art, architecture and identity formation should also be stated clearly. Studying the conditions under which Roman material culture occurred in baptisteries informs us about the sensory frames provided for individual responses but cannot give us insight into users' reactions. The study of material culture thus forces us to talk about an unspecified collective of recipients, since individual responses to material culture are hardly discernible. Moreover, the archaeological evidence provides ample material for sharpening our understanding of religious practices, but it is difficult to isolate religious beliefs in practice.[84] Art and architecture do not express any intrinsic, stable meanings. Meaning arises from human interactions with architecture and imagery. As a result, meanings are produced: as such, they are context-dependent, multivalent and changeable.[85] For the study of art bound up with liturgical practice, Staale Sinding-Larsen's processual understanding of the production of meaning has been groundbreaking: an image in a

[84] É. Rebillard, "Material culture and religious identity in late antiquity", in: *A companion to the archaeology of religion in the ancient world,* Rubina Raja and Jörg Rüpke (ed.) (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), G. Woolf, "Ritual traditions of non-mediterranean Europe", in: *A companion to the archaeology of religion in the ancient world,* Rubina Raja and Jörg Rüpke (ed.) (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 474. For an overview of recent archaeological approaches to religion R. Raja and J. Rüpke, "Archaeology of religion, material religion, and the ancient world", in: *A companion to the archaeology of religion in the ancient world,* Rubina Raja and Jörg Rüpke (ed.) (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2015).

[85] L. Jones, *The hermeneutics of sacred architecture: experience, interpretation, comparison* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 29-34; J. Elsner, "Material Culture and Ritual: State of the Question", in: *Architecture of the sacred: space, ritual, and experience from classical Greece to Byzantium,* Bonna D. Wescoat and Robert G. Ousterhout (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

liturgical space will leave space for different interpretations in the course of a given liturgical action, moreover, its significance will change in different ceremonies over the ecclesiastical year. Since a whole array of meanings can be applied to one image, the image potentially embodies them all. Hence, the image will evoke the many different ways it can be read and the many different ritual actions connected with it, even when these actions are not executed. In consequence, the image embraces a complex range of meanings that can shape ritual processes and is itself shaped by them.[86] I address the multivalence of images in more detail in chapter 2, where I explore the usefulness of 'cultural connotations' for the interpretation of religious imagery. In chapter 4, I argue against the separation of form and meaning that tends to be upheld in analyses of reused iconographies and architecture.[87]

These obvious limitations should not discourage inquiry into religious practices by way of material culture. As I stated at the beginning of this section, how religiosity is expressed is highly significant for the religious experience of individuals, and this is certainly not less valid in those cases in the past where religious practices deviated from what might be considered normative today.[88] Nonetheless, we need to remain aware of what our evidence does and does not allow us to say about how religious identity was constructed in baptismal spaces. The study of material culture can provide insight into how religious identity was expressed through art or how it was performed in the

[86] S. Sinding-Larsen, *Iconography and ritual: A study of analytical perspectives* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget AS, 1984), 36.
[87] For the latter point cf. H. Focillon, *Vie des formes, suivie de Éloge de la main* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1964).
[88] R. Raja and L. Weiss, "The Role of Objects: Meanings, Situations and Interaction", in: *Religion in the Roman Empire 1* (2015), 141.

baptismal space, but it cannot tell us about individuals' conscious attribution of meanings to the ways in which they expressed themselves.

Roman visual and material culture in the baptismal sphere

Our period of investigation overlaps with the cultural and social changes that marked the disintegration of the late Western Roman Empire.[89] The establishment of Barbarian kingdoms in the Western Mediterranean, the Visigothic kingdom on the Iberian Peninsula, the Vandal kingdom in North Africa and the Ostrogothic kingdom in Italy, led to processes of diversification across the interconnected Mediterranean.[90] Ethnically diverse societies slowly transformed the Roman world, increasingly blurring the boundaries between indigenous and migrating populations. In consequence, the role that ethnicity played for the identity of migrating peoples in the fifth- and sixth-century Western Mediterranean has received much attention in the past.[91] What constituted Roman identity in the post-Roman Western empire, however, is a question that has only

[89] For the transformations of the late antique Roman West see W. Pohl, "The barbarian successor states", in: *The transformation of the Roman world, AD 400-900,* Leslie Webster and Michelle Brown (ed.) (London: British Museum Press 1997); B. Ward-Perkins, *The fall of Rome and the end of civilization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 80-102; J. M. H. Smith, *Europe after Rome: a new cultural history 500-1000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); G. Halsall, *Barbarian migrations and the Roman West, 376-568* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); P. J. Heather, *The fall of the Roman Empire: a new history of Rome and the Barbarians* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); C. Wickham, *The inheritance of Rome: a history of Europe from 400 to 1000* (London: Allen Lane, 2009).

[90] D. Abulafia, *The great sea: a human history of the Mediterranean* (London: Allen Lane, 2011), 226-238; P. Horden and N. Purcell, *The corrupting sea: a study of Mediterranean history* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000). A picture of disintegration of the Mediterranean region long before the Barbarian era is drawn in R. Hingley, *Globalizing Roman culture: unity, diversity and empire* (London: Routledge, 2005) 91-120, esp. 91-92.

[91] Cf. for instance P. Amory, *People and identity in Ostrogothic Italy, 489-554* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); W. Pohl and H. Reimitz (eds.), *Strategies of distinction : the construction of the ethnic communities, 300-800* (Leiden: Brill, 1998); S. J. Barnish and F. Marazzi (eds.), *The Ostrogoths. From the migration period to the sixth century* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007); W. Pohl, Identities (2013); E. Buchberger, *Shifting ethnic identities in Spain and Gaul, 500-700 : from Romans to Goths and Franks* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017); G. Sears, "A Catholic stronghold? Religious and ethnic identities at Tipasa", in: *De Africa Romaque: merging cultures across North Africa,* Niccolo Mugnai et al. (ed.) (London: The Society for Libyan Studies, 2016); J. Wood, *The politics of identity in Visigothic Spain : religion and power in the histories of Isidore of Seville* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

very recently begun to be asked with fervour.[92] Walter Pohl suggests differentiating between different modes of late antique Roman identification that can but do not have to determine Roman identity.[93] Pohl proposes categories as diverse as urban, political, legal and civic, military, territorial, imperial, cultural, religious, and ethnic Roman identities.[94] This view allows Romanness to mean many different things in different places and for different peoples.[95] It also helps increase our awareness of features of Romanness that might have been identifiable as Roman longer than others.

This thesis is concerned with an aspect of Romanness often considered particularly long-lived, with cultural Romanness, and more precisely, with the use of Roman art and material culture. While political and legal definitions tend to be discussed as increasingly irrelevant from the fifth century onwards, Roman literary and artistic culture are often seen as driving factors for identifying with Romanness in late antiquity.[96] A shared education, literature and language are the markers of Roman identity most commonly referred to by scholars today. More fleeting expressions of Romanness, like ways of behaving publicly and of structuring social life, such as public benefactions, dining, festivals or dress, have begun to be better understood in the context of the late antique period.[97]

---

[92] For the first results of the ERC project 'Social cohesion, identity and religion in Europe, 400-1200' that was held at the University of Vienna from 2011-2016 see W. Pohl et al., *Transformations of Romanness. Early medieval regions and identities* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018).
[93] W. Pohl, Introduction: Early medieval Romanness (2018), esp. 9-26.
[94] Ibid., 9-26.
[95] See also G. Greatrex, Roman identity (2000).
[96] G. Woolf, *Becoming Roman: the origins of provincial civilization in Gaul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 240-249; A. Merrills and R. Miles, *The Vandals* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 88-90.
[97] On cultural identity in the Roman world see M. Grahame, "Material culture and Roman identity: the spatial layout of Pompeian houses and the problem of ethnicity", in: *Cultural Identity in the Roman Empire,* Ray Laurence and Joanne Berry (ed.) (London: Routledge, 1998). For a North African example see for instance R. Miles, "The Anthologia Latina and the creation of a secular space in Vandal Carthage", in: *Antiquité Tardive 13* (2005).

Deciding who and what defined material culture as 'Roman' in post-imperial Rome, however, remains a challenge.[98] What do we consider first? The techniques of production, the ambition or civic, ethnic, or cultural background of the craftsman, of the commissioner, of the users?[99] For this thesis, I have chosen to take a conservative angle, calling material culture 'Roman' or describing it as following Roman tradition wherever technical and stylistic qualities or subject matter are directly linked to classical Roman art and architecture. My standpoint here is that the rootedness of Roman iconography and architecture in traditional Roman life was a fact that must have been evident to many, if perhaps not all, late antique Christians, living in a world undergoing gradual but constant transformation. As we shall see, many of the Roman traditions tackled in this thesis were either still actively practiced or fresh in the memory of fifth- and sixth-century Christians. It is likely that a network of cultural and social practices once intimately entangled and still performed by people who called themselves Romans or aspired to be Romans was not all of a sudden dissociated from the cultural complex of *Romanitas*. Instead, this dissociation must have been effected to differing degrees and at varying rates from place to place.

This makes it necessary to expect considerable shifts in users' ability to interpret 'Roman' material culture depending on locale and time. The moment of creation of a baptistery seems most indicative for an assessment of openness towards Roman culture. At later stages in the use of a baptistery it proves difficult, as the case studies

[98] A thorough study on this subject is forthcoming: H. Fehr et al., *The Transformation of Romanness* (forthcoming). See also J. Webster, "Creolizing the Roman Provinces", in: *American Journal of Archaeology 105* (2001); P. v. Rummel, "Unrömische Römer und römische Barbaren. Die Fluidität vermeintlich präziser Leitbegriffe der Forschung zum spätantiken Gallien", in: *Gallien in Spätantike und Frühmittelalter. Kulturgeschichte einer Region,* Steffen Diefenbach and Gernot Michael Müller (ed.) (Berlin, Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2013).

[99] W. Pohl, Identities (2013), 32.

will demonstrate, to differentiate between consciously undertaken maintenance and preservation of Roman material culture for practical reasons. Furthermore, we have to allow for the possibility that a partially 'Roman' significance of an image or building vanished over time, giving way to an exclusively Christian significance. Where we observe the attitudes of Christian communities to their baptisteries over time, most notably in chapters 2 and 4, we therefore need to distinguish carefully between moments of creation and later receptions, and examine the evidence for each. This involves taking into account whether a) the Roman roots of a feature were physically recognizable, and b) whether recipients could have been aware of the Roman origin of the feature.

The baptistery as the site of classical Roman visual language is astonishing in yet another respect. Scholars widely agree that Roman art, literature and philosophy continued to be an integrating factor especially for elites, including Barbaric elites.[100] Artworks commissioned by elites are often deeply impregnated with pre-Christian Roman models, and frequently draw on classical imagery.[101] Where classical Graeco-Roman traditions reached broader masses, the notion is prominent that this happened in 'secular'

[100] For instance J. Pelikan, *Christianity and classical culture: the metamorphosis of natural theology in the Christian encounter with Hellenism* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1993); M. Humphries and D. M. Gwynn, "The Sacred and the Secular: The Presence or Absence of Christain Religious Thought in Secular Writing in the Late Antique West", in: *Religious diversity in late antiquity,* David M. Gwynn et al. (ed.) (Leiden, Boston, MA: Brill, 2010); A. Cameron, *Greek mythography in the Roman world* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) For 'Germanic' use of 'Roman' culture Y. Hen, *Roman Barbarians: the Royal Court and culture in the early medieval West* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). For the Vandal reign J. Conant, *Staying Roman* (2015); A. Merrills and R. Miles, *The Vandals* (2010), 88-108 and 204-227; an alternative view on the Vandals and the continuity of classical traditions is offered in R. Bockmann, *Capital continuous: a study of Vandal Carthage and Central North Africa from an archaeological perspective* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2013). For a nuanced assessment of continuity and change under Ostrogothic rule see S. J. Barnish and F. Marazzi (eds.), *Ostrogoths* (2007).

[101] Classical studies are K. Weitzmann, "The Survival of Mythological Representations in Early Christian and Byzantine Art and Their Impact on Christian Iconography", in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers 14* (1960), 43-68; G. M. A. Hanfmann, "The Continuity of Classical Art: Culture, Myth and Faith", in: *Age of Spirituality. A Symposium,* Kurt Weitzmann (ed.) (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1980), 75-98; A. Grabar, *Christian Iconography. A Study of its Origins* (1961), 31-54.

contexts.[102] The appreciation of classical traditions has been almost univocally located outside of the ecclesiastical sphere and in most cases in the private, domestic sphere. At moments of interaction of ecclesiastical institutions with lay Christianity, ecclesiastical dignitaries (with the occasional individual exception) are regularly represented not as preservers of pre-Christian culture, but either in opposition to or in forced coexistence with it. The documentary value of visual and material culture has rarely been made use of with respect to this question.

The case studies in this thesis concern Roman imagery and architecture that were targeted at lay Christians regardless of their social standing. It is plausible that the bishops in charge of administering the sacrament of baptism were involved in artistic decisions about the decoration of the baptisteries. This thesis thus presents evidence that ecclesiastical elites disseminated Roman culture to all strata of society. Moreover, for three of the baptisteries, it is plausible that Ostrogoths (at the Arian baptistery of Ravenna discussed alongside the Orthodox baptistery) and Vandals (at Thuburbo Maius and Jbel Oust) were among the recipients, or were at times even the patrons, of baptismal imagery and architecture strongly alluding to Roman art and religion. These

[102] Late antique classical art and its reception are commonly discussed in private, and often elite, contexts, see for instance J. Elsner, "Genders of viewing. Visualizing women in the casket of Projecta", in: *Roman eyes : visuality and subjectivity in art and text,* Jaś Elsner (ed.) (Princeton, NJ, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007); I. Uytterhoeven, "Know your classics! Manifestations of classical culture in late antique elite houses", in: *Faces of hellenism: studies in the history of the Eastern Mediterranean (4th century B.C.-5th century A.D.),* Peter van Nuffelen (ed.) (Leuven: Peeters, 2009), 332-335. The capacity of art and material culture to transgress private and public spheres is increasingly becoming a concern to scholars. See for instance T. K. Thomas, "Material meaning in late antiquity", in: *Designing identity: the power of textiles in late antiquity,* Thelma K. Thomas et al. (ed.) (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016). Instances of overlap of the ecclesiastical and classical realm in public space are, however, only exceptionally discussed, e.g. in I. Jacobs, "Holy goals and worldly means. Urban representation elements in church complexes", in: *Religious practices and Christianization of the late antique city (4th-7th cent.),* Aude Busine (ed.) (Leiden, Boston, MA: Brill, 2015). For the domestic art of Roman middle classes E. Mayer, *The ancient middle classes: urban life and aesthetics in the Roman Empire, 100 BCE-250 CE* (Cambridge, MA, London: Harvard University Press, 2012), 166-212. For divine subject matters in art in the public sphere in pre-Christian Rome J. R. Clarke, *Art in the lives of ordinary Romans: visual representation and non-elite viewers in Italy, 100 B.C.-A.D. 315* (Berkeley, CA, London: University of California Press, 2003), 73-94.

cases make apparent that the integrative force of Romanness had the potential to connect the clergy and lay Christians of different strata of society, including Barbarians, even when they had no claims to Roman origins themselves.

The case studies form only a small part of the entirety of preserved late antique baptismal art in the Mediterranean West, which is rich in modern Italy and Tunisia, but comparatively sparse in the Iberian Peninsula, Southern France, or Morocco (fig. 178). The research for this thesis brought to light a total of 56 Western Mediterranean baptismal decorations either still in situ or attested in writing that contains information about the location and iconography of the imagery.[103] Five of these I discuss in depth (Djémila, Milreu, Mértola 1, Henchir el Koucha and the Orthodox baptistery of Ravenna) and three more are consulted as comparative evidence (Montinho das Laranjeiras in Portugal, Mariana on Corsica and the Arian baptistery of Ravenna). The 56 examples can be divided into three categories: a), a total of 7 examples depicts Christian narrative scenes from the New Testament or holy figures; b) the largest group of 28 examples shows ornamental, floral or animal decoration which leave no doubt about the Christian

[103] For the baptisteries listed cf. S. Ristow, *Frühchristliche Baptisterien* (1998); F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, *Basiliques chrétiennes d'Afrique du Nord. II. Inventaire des monuments de la Tunisie* (Bordeaux: Ausonius, 2014)
Category a)
North Africa: St Cyprian in Carthage
Italy, France: Naples, Primulacium, Orthodox baptistery of Ravenna, Arian baptistery of Ravenna, Catacomb of San Ponziano in Rome
Iberian Peninsula: baptistery 2 in Mértola
Category b)
North Africa: Békalta, Bir Ftouha, Bou Achir, Bou Smir, Hadjara-Mengouba, Henchir el Koucha, Henchir Errich, Henchir Hakaima, Hammam Lif, Henchir Messaouda, Henchir Sokrine, Henchir Zembra, Kélibia, La Skhira, Oued Zit, Oumcetren, Sbeitla St Vitalis, Seynane, Sfax, Sidi Abich, basilica II in Sidi Jdidi, Sidi Mansour, Thuburbo Maius, West Church in Timgad, basilica 1 in Uppena (Henchir Chigarnia)
Italy, France: Albenga, Cividale del Friuli, Lateran baptistery in Rome
Category c)
North Africa: Bît-el-Assa, basilica 1 in Bulla Regia, basilica 3 in Carthage, Chott Menzel Yahia, basilica 1 in Dermech, Djémila, El-Erg, Hippo Regius, Ksar el Hadouch , basilica 3 in Makhtar, Oued Ramel, Bellator church in Sbeitla
Italy, France: Aix-en-Provence, Aquileia, Cimitile, Isola Comacina, Mariana on Corsica, Marseille
Iberian Peninsula: baptistery 1 in Mértola, Milreu, Montinho das Laranjeiras

nature of the scenes. They either allude to the psalms or are combined with Christian symbols or inscriptions. The last group c), which comprises 21 examples, shows ornamental, floral or animal scenes which cannot be univocally identified with Christianity. Group c) also comprises six of the eight examples discussed here (the baptisteries of Ravenna belong to a)). Numerically, my subset of eight is roughly equal to the entirety of preserved Christian narrative scenes in the Western Mediterranean. It forms a seventh of the entirety of preserved baptismal decorations that have come to my knowledge. The subset, moreover, is only a fraction of all the baptismal mosaics rooted in Roman visual culture, many of which form part of group c). As I argued at the beginning of the introduction, the generally orthodox character of baptismal imagery claimed by modern scholarship is hardly backed by the quantitative evidence of preserved baptismal decorations. The numbers suggest, to the contrary, that Christian adoptions of Roman culture shaped late antique baptismal art considerably. This means that the question of what fifth- and sixth-century Christians considered 'orthodox' Christian art should be fundamentally reassessed.

The thesis is divided into four chapters, each of which illuminates a different aspect of affiliation with Roman culture in the baptismal space: the use of Roman stock imagery and the contemporaneous absence of explicitly Christian imagery (chapter 1); the occurrence of so-called 'pagan' iconographies (chapter 2); the integration of antique personifications within Christian narrative scenes (chapter 3) and finally the baptismal reuse of the *cellae* of former pagan temples (chapter 4). Chapter 1 discusses the past research on the baptistery of Cuicul in the Roman province of Numidia (today Djémila in north-eastern Algeria) as an example of the unjustified emphasis of scholars on Christian allegorical interpretations of Roman natural imagery when this is employed in Christian

spaces. The chapter argues that a doctrinal Christian frame of reference for the interpretation of baptismal imagery is not necessarily the only viable option, and that the careful examination of the religious and cultural affiliations of the Christian community *in situ* is integral to uncovering potential additional perspectives on the layers of meaning of baptismal art. Chapter 2 introduces three baptismal iconographies pertaining to Graeco-Roman myths and civic cultural practices in Southern Lusitania (today Algarve and Baixo Alentejo in Portugal) and Africa Proconsularis (today north-eastern Tunisia) which scholarship has problematized as 'pagan survivals' in baptismal art. In this chapter, I argue that Christians treated Roman cultural techniques as Christian and at times consciously propagated their embeddedness in Roman traditions. I further introduce the 'cultural affiliation' of a religiously ambiguous image as an alternative interpretative means to discuss the 'meanings' of imagery in response to the predominantly Christianizing approach to such imagery. Chapter 3 re-examines the arguably best-studied baptismal work of art, the cupola mosaic of the Orthodox baptistery in Ravenna. I focus on the representation of the River Jordan at Jesus's baptism in the form of an antique river personification. My analysis of the literary record connected to this specific baptismal scene will bring me to the conclusion that in the understanding of the bishop of Ravenna Chrysologus, the mosaic represented a conversion of a representative of classical antiquity to Christianity. This would make Ravenna's dome mosaic an outstanding case of a conscious late antique visual commentary on Christianity's positive relation to Roman mythology. Finally, chapter 4 draws on the example of three converted temple-churches in Africa Proconsularis and Byzacena (today Tunisia) and their baptismal reuse. This last chapter, following on from chapter 1, discusses how the examination of the spatial and social contexts in which

cella-baptisteries existed can help with the interpretation of their significance to the Christian communities who used them. I further discuss the potential function of *cella*-baptisteries of integrating divergent ethnic groups under the umbrella of a shared Roman culture.

Chapter 1: The absence of Christian symbolism in the baptistery of Djémila, Numidia

Introduction: The absence of Christian symbolism

The majority of the decorations found in baptismal spaces in the late antique Roman West are composed of images of birds, fish and other animals, shells, flowers and trees, vases and water in addition to crosses. Narrative imagery is preserved rarely and usually only in the most elaborate baptismal settings. Geometrical patterns are often used in tandem with either of the two, and sometimes dominate the baptismal space.[104] Scholars widely agree that although the most prevalent sort of imagery belongs to a generic and not originally Christian canon of elements, it nevertheless denotes a Christian meaning. For images like the lamb, the fish, the peacock or the deer drinking from the fountain, the Christian symbolic value is uncontested. Motifs that are less iconic are equally given Christian meaning, as they are combined with distinctly Christian symbols and placed in a Christian space.[105] The most common interpretative approaches to baptismal art see sacramental or paradisiacal meanings expressed in such decorations.[106]

---

[104] For a recent overview of baptismal iconography see R. M. Jensen, *Living Water* (2011). A comprehensive archaeological overview including short iconographic descriptions is offered by S. Ristow, *Frühchristliche Baptisterien* (1998). For regional overviews cf. D. Iturgaiz, Baptisterios paleocristianos (1967); D. Iturgaiz, Baptisterios paleocristianos (1968); J. Lassus, Les baptistères (1970); I. Gui et al., *Basiliques chrétiennes d'Afrique du Nord. Inventaire des Monuments de l'Algérie* (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1992); F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, *Tunisie* (2014); F. M. Buhler, *Les baptistères* (1975); J. Guyon, *Les premiers baptistères des Gaules (IVe-VIIIe siècles)* (Rome: Unione Internazionale degli Istituti di Archeologia Storia e Storia dell'Arte in Roma, 2000); F. Bisconti, Iconografia (2001); D. Gandolfi, *L' edificio battesimale* (2001).

[105] Most prolific on the subject of how to interpret Christian images of nature is H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean. The Terrestrial World in Early Byzantine Art* (University Park, London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1987); H. Maguire, "Adam and the Animals: Allegory and the Litteral Sense in Early Christian Art", in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers 41* (1987); H. Maguire, *Nectar and illusion. Nature in Byzantine art and literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[106] On sacramental interpretations see in the introduction, 6-9. For paradisiacal imagery e.g. G. B. Ladner, *Handbuch der frühchristlichen Symbolik: Gott, Kosmos, Mensch* (Stuttgart: Belser, 1992), 138-143; R. M. Jensen, *Baptismal imagery* (2012), 177-213; N. S. Dennis, Living Water, Living Presence: Animating Sacred Space in the Early Christian Baptistery (2017); D. Morfino, "Le strutture battesimali nell'Africa Romana IV-

North Africa, in particular the territories of today's Tunisia and Algeria, provides us with the largest number of late antique baptismal fonts paved with mosaics in the Roman West.[107] Many of these display non-narrative figurative imagery. A pair of deer drinking from a fountain, for instance, is a particularly common baptismal decoration, both in North Africa and beyond (fig. 1).[108] The only contemporary source about its meaning for the baptismal rite derives, in fact, from North Africa.[109] According to Augustine, Psalm 42, 'As the hart longs for the springs of water, so does my soul long for you, O God', was chanted during the baptismal ceremony. In his commentary, he explains further that the thirst of the deer and their habit of killing and eating snakes represent humans' innate thirst for God and their capacity to destroy sins and vices, respectively. Baptismal

VI secolo d. C.", in: *Il primo christianesimo nell'Africa romana e in Sicilia,* Rosa Maria Bonacasa Carra (ed.) (Palermo: Carlo Saladino, 2011), 62.

[107] J. Lassus, Les baptistères (1970). The most useful overview is provided by F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, *Tunisie* (2014); I. Gui et al., *Algérie* (1992). Further on iconographical questions E. Palazzo, "Iconographie et Liturgie: la mosaïque du baptistère de Kélibia (Tunisie)", in: *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft 34* (1992); C. Courtois, "Sur un baptistère découvert dans la région de Kélibia (Cap Bon)", in: *Karthago 6* (1955); P.-A. Février, "L'abeille et la seiche (à propos du baptistère de Kélibia)", in: *Rivista di Archeologia Christiana 60* (1984); O. Perler, "Die Taufsymbolik der vier Jahreszeiten im Baptisterium bei Kélibia", in: *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum 1* (1964); N. Duval and N. B. Lazreg, *Le baptistère de Bekalta* (Paris: Musée du Petit Palais, 1995); J. Cintas and G. L. Feuille, "Eglise et baptistère de Thibiuca", in: *Karthago 3* (1952); N. Duval, "Les baptistères d'Acholla (Tunesie) et l'origine des baptistères polyobés en Afrique du Nord", in: *Etudes d'Archeologie Chrétienne Nord-Africaine IX. Ant. Africains 15* (1980).

[108] For North Africa see F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, *Tunisie* (2014), for Henchir Messaouda 238-239, Bou Smir 233, Oued Zarga 81-84, Henchir Errich 376. For the mosaic surrounding the baptistery of Bir Ftouha S. T. Stevens et al., "Bir Ftouha: A Pilgrimage Church Complex at Carthage", in: *Journal of Roman Studies Supplementary Series 59* (2005), 303-342, esp. 303-308. The motif is not limited to baptismal use in North Africa. See church decorations of Zaouit Soussa in F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, *Tunisie* (2014), 222-223, Henchir Bechouk 68-69, Henchir El Ouara 361-363, El Ounaïssia 363-365. On the iconography B. Domagalski, *Der Hirsch in spätantiker Literatur und Kunst: unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der frühchristlichen Zeugnisse* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1990); H.-C. Puech, "Le cerf et le serpent, note sur le symbolisme de la mosaique découverte au baptistère de l'Henchir Messaouda", in: *Cahiers archéologiques de l'antiquité et moyen age 4* (1949). Other pairs of deer appear in the baptisteries of Valence (France), Stobi and Ohrid (Macedonia), Salona (Croatia), Butrint (Albania) and Ras-Siagha on Mount Nebo (Jordan).

[109] Augustine, Psalm 42,1-3. See J. P. Burns Jr. and R. M. Jensen, *Christianity* (2014), 209. Only in the baptistery of Henchir Messaouda is one of the deer depicted killing a snake: H.-C. Puech, Puech 1949 – Le cerf et le serpent (1949); G. L. Feuille, "Une mosaïque chrétienne de l'Henchir Messaouda", in: *Cahiers archéologiques 4* (1949); F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, *Tunisie* (2014), 238-239.

decoration like this one, with a clearly identifiable biblical point of origin and liturgical or theological relevance, has long been given preference in the study of baptismal art.[110]

Not every baptismal decoration, however, responds to a Christian reading in a straightforward way. In the fifth and sixth centuries, images of the natural world apparently devoid of any immediate Christian significance were produced in the same contexts.[111] The decoration of the sixth-century baptistery of Butrint in Albania, for instance, seems to have been too unspecific in its Christian messages for even a contemporary audience (fig. 2).[112] The mosaic floor depicts a large variety of plants, fish, birds and wild and domestic animals isolated from each other in a series of roundels. Not long after the original mosaics were completed, two new motifs were inserted in the traffic-worn area approaching the font: the first shows two large peacocks pecking on vine stems growing from a kantharos and the second, two deer next to a cross.[113] In contrast to the rest of the depictions, these added motifs must have ensured that the mosaic floor appeared distinctly Christian and conveyed the Christian messages that the secondary patrons perhaps felt had been missing.

This chapter is dedicated to the question of how we should deal with figurative baptismal imagery whose Christian meaning is inexplicit. The baptistery of Djémila (fig. 3), ancient Cuicul, in what is today north-eastern Algeria will serve us as a test case. I will problematize the established art historical approach of stopping the interpretative process applied to the generic marine scene that adorns the baptistery's floor as soon as a Christianizing interpretation is reached. This one-dimensional view of Djémila's

[110] See no. 6 in the introduction.
[111] H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean* (1987), 5-15.
[112] Ibid., 7.
[113] J. Mitchell, *Pagëzimorja e Butrintit dhe mozaikët e saj = The Butrint baptistery and its mosaics* (London: Butrint Foundation, 2008), 33-37.

mosaic decoration, as indeed of many other comparable examples, helped contribute to the misguided ethics evident in the modern restoration of the baptistery. I will argue instead that the ambiguous character of Djémila's baptismal art should be taken seriously for what it can tell us about Djémila's early Christian community's regard for, and relation to, the pre-Christian culture surrounding it. I will first locate the baptistery firmly within the Christian complex of Djémila and take a stance on the debated issue of the dating of the baptistery, suggesting a construction date at the end of the fourth or beginning of the fifth century. I will then discuss the degree to which explicitly Christian symbolism was certainly absent from the baptistery and recap the dominant interpretation of the baptismal iconography based on the writings of the church fathers. Finally, I will account for the material evidence surrounding the baptistery to broaden our perspective on it. Our knowledge about Christian openness towards Roman non-Christian customs in early fifth-century North Africa, and in particular about such trends in Djémila, made palpable through material culture, should encourage us to leave the exclusively Christian framework for understanding such imagery behind. The Christian community of Djémila was thoroughly indebted to various aspects of pre-Christian Roman ritual life. The chapter argues that we need to account for the specific religious preconditions under which individual Christian communities perceived Christian art in our search for the meaning of such art. It seems that by choosing a generic Roman mosaic design, Djémila's church community demonstrated the ancestral relation of Christian life as it was practiced in Djémila with Roman culture. The initiated Christian would not have felt cut off from the institutions of public life and the elite culture that she was familiar with when leaving the font. Since the Christian community was

immersed in traditional Roman ways of life, there was no need for an artistic emphasis on binary difference or total transformation.

The Catholic church complex of Djémila and its baptistery

The baptistery of Djémila is one of the most elaborate and best-preserved baptisteries of North Africa. It has received almost no scholarly attention since its excavation in 1922, due to lack of archaeological investment in the site since Algerian independence and subsequent geopolitical biases. Djémila lies in the mountains of the Tell Atlas, in north-west ancient Numidia, at an altitude of c. 850 m, on the route between Sitifis (Sétif) and Cirta (Costantine).[114] The city was founded as a colony for veterans possibly under Nerva or Trajan and was inhabited until at least the sixth century.[115] Djémila was located at the border with the province Mauretania Sitifensis, which had been cut out of Mauretania Caesariensis during the reign of Diocletian (fig. 4). The city was under Vandal rule from c. 430 onwards, except for an interlude between 442 and c. 455 when it briefly fell back to the Roman Empire.[116]

The city experienced a vivid phase of construction and restoration of public and private buildings in the fourth and fifth centuries.[117] The period also witnessed the construction

[114] For Djemila's urban development cf. G. Sears, *Late Roman African urbanism: continuity and transformation in the city* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2007), 55-58; P.-A. Février, "Notes sur le développement urbain en Afrique du Nord. Les exemples comparés de Djemila et Sétif (1964)", in: *La Méditerrannée de Paul-Albert Février (reprint),* (ed.) (Rome: École francaise de Rome, 1996); M. Blanchard-Lemée, *Maisons à mosaïques du quartier central de Djemila, Cuicul* (Paris: Ophrys, 1975). See also J.-M. Blas de Roblès and C. Sintès, *Sites et monuments antiques de l'Algérie* (Aix-en-Provence: Édisud, 2003), 89-124.

[115] For Djémila in the Byzantine period P.-A. Février, "Remarques sur les mosaïques de basse époque à Djemila (Algérie)", in: *Bulletin de la Société nationale des antiquaires de France Année 1965* (1966), 87; P.-A. Février, Développement urbain (1996), 674-676.

[116] A. Chastagnol and N. Duval, "La survivance du culte impérial dans l'Afrique du Nord à l'époque vandale", in: *Mélanges d'histoire ancienne offerts à William Seston,* William Seston (ed.) (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1974), 91-94.

[117] G. Sears, *African urbanism* (2007), 56-58; P.-A. Février, Développement urbain (1996), 674; C. Sintès and Y. Rebahi, *Algérie antique (catalogue de l'exposition 26 avril au 17 août 2003, Musée de l'Arles et de la Provence antique)* (Arles: Éditions du Musée de l'Arles et de la Provence antiques, 2003), 299.

of a substantial Catholic church complex that supplanted earlier structures in the newly developed southern district of Djémila (fig. 5).[118] The carefully planned complex consists of two churches set parallel to each other and facing eastwards, a chapel, the baptistery as well as an entrance hall, an alley, courts and living quarters (figs. 5, 6). Aside from the smaller north church, known since 1840, the complex was excavated in 1921/22 by Albert Ballu and Paul Monceaux (fig. 7).[119] The documentation of the excavation has been repeatedly criticized for its inaccuracy and inconsistency.[120] A revised ground plan of the site made by Jürgen Christern in 1976 is to date the basis for the little research that has been done on the church complex (fig. 8). Ballu's ground plan indicates several earlier structures built on the terrain in the west, which have not yet been examined in detail, since the northern, southern and western surroundings of the complex have not been properly excavated.[121]

Visitors approached the baptistery from an alley flanked by porticoes and structured by an apsidal archway, passing dwellings for humans, animals and large latrines (fig. 9). They reached first the monumental portal of the larger, five-aisled south church. A small three-aisled chapel facing the south church is slightly out of line with the rest of the neatly structured complex. The baptistery to which a small bath is attached (fig. 10) is

[118] J. Christern, *Das frühchristliche Pilgerheiligtum von Tebessa* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1976), 137-144; I. Gui et al., *Algérie* (1992), 92-96. An article that reconstructs the liturgically prescribed movements through the church complex is in preparation by Anastasia Moskvina (University of East Anglia). See also N. Duval, "L'évêque et la cathédrale en Afrique du Nord", in: *Actes du XIe Congrès international d'archéologie chrétienne 11* (1989).

[119] A. Ballu, "Les ruines de Djemila (antique Cuicul)", in: *Revue Africaine 62* (1921); A. Ballu, *Rapport sur les travaux de fouilles et de consolidations effectués en 1922 aux monuments historiques de l'Algérie* (Algiers: Jules Carbonel, 1923); P. Monceaux, "Découverte d'un groupe d'édifices chrétiens à Djemila", in: *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Academie des inscriptions et Belles-Lettres 66* (1922); P. Monceaux, "Cuicul chrétien (Numidie)", in: *Miscellanea Giovanni Battista de Rossi. Atti della pontificia accademia romana di archeologia (serie III) 1* (1923).

[120] See e.g. P.-A. Février, Développement urbain (1996), 667, no. 56.

[121] See A. Ballu, *Rapport* (1923), 25; J. Christern, *Pilgerheiligtum* (1976), fig. 72.

located at its north-western end.[122] The circular central baptismal building, with a diameter of 12.15 m, consists of a baptismal chamber of an interior diameter of 5.16 m (fig. 11) and an ambulatory (fig. 12). The quadrangular baptismal font in the centre of the chamber has a side length of 97 cm and a depth of 75 cm.[123] It has two steps and is covered by a *ciborium* (fig. 13).[124] The chamber is likely to have been covered by a cupola. When it was restored, the cupola was rebuilt at a height lower than that of the original (fig. 3). The original building is preserved with a maximum height of 2 m.[125] The vaulted ambulatory is structured by semi-circular niches of a depth of c. 50 cm; the inner wall consists of 12 niches, the outer one of 24 (fig. 12).[126] The niches were carved 47 cm above ground, which seems to have been a comfortable height for seating. It has been suggested that the niches provided seating to waiting catechumens.[127] Two more niches of this kind were placed at the north and south of the baptismal chamber (fig. 11). According to Ballu's excavation report, light was provided by eight square *oculi* of 25 cm length placed in the vaulted ceiling of the ambulatory.[128]

---

[122] Literature on the baptistery beyond the excavation reports is sparse. Usually it is dealt with in the context of Algerian Christian art more generally: D. Morfino, Le strutture battesimali (2011); S. Ristow, *Frühchristliche Baptisterien* (1998), no. 75; I. Gui et al., *Algérie* (1992), 95; A. Khatchatrian, *Origine* (1982), 83; W. Gessel, "Monumentale Spuren des Christentums im Römischen Nordafrika", in: *Antike Welt 12* (1981), 55-56; J. Lassus, Les baptistères (1970); M. Leglay, "Note sur quelques baptistères d'Algérie", in: *Actes du Ve congrès international d'archéologie chrétienne,* Congresso internazionale di archeologia cristiana (ed.) (Vatican City: Pontificio Istituto di archeologia cristiana, 1957); Y. Allais, *Djémila* (Paris: Société d'édition Les belles lettres, 1938), 59-62.

[123] P. Monceaux, Cuicul chrétien (Numidie) (1923), 99.

[124] For the reconstruction of the *ciborium* W. Gessel, Monumentale Spuren des Christentums im Römischen Nordafrika (1981), 56; M. Leglay, Note sur quelques baptistères d'Algérie (1957), 402-403.

[125] J. Christern, *Pilgerheiligtum* (1976), 138 no 36. I have not been able to establish the exact date of the reconstruction of the roof. See W. Gessel, Monumentale Spuren des Christentums im Römischen Nordafrika (1981), 56 for an approximate date not too long before 1981.

[126] P. Monceaux, Découverte (1922), 404. The excavators discovered a previous building located on a lower level west of the chapel of a shape similar to the baptistery. Ibid., fig. 5. It features a circular wall with niches carved in the inside. The excavators speculatively identified it as a previous baptistery : A. Ballu, *Rapport* (1923), 28.

[127] Y. Allais, *Djémila* (1938), 59 ; A. Ballu, *Rapport* (1923), 19.

[128] A. Ballu, *Rapport* (1923), 20. Monceaux, however, mentions only one cement frame of an oculus found at the excavation site which he assumes must have been placed in the middle of the cupola. It measures 25 by 27 cm. See P. Monceaux, Découverte (1922), 404. Allais suggests that *occuli* were placed both in the

The central rotunda is inscribed within a slightly irregular quadrangular form consisting of two vestibules in the eastern half and a small bath (1) in the west (fig. 14, cf. numbers 1-4). The inner circular zone could be reached from the vestibules via two passages in the east. The passages flank a triconchal apse (2) at the eastern end of the baptistery which is in line with the apses of the double church (fig. 15). A straight vista passes from this accentuated apse through the *ciborium* to the entrance to the adjacent bath in the west (fig. 13). The entrance is likewise designed as an apsidal niche; a second entrance to the bath of similar shape is located in the southern vestibule (3), opposite the baptistery's entrance in the east. The small bath consists of a *frigidarium* in the central hall which is divided into three parts by columns, by latrines in the south, and a northern part which has been described by the excavators as a second small *frigidarium*, a *tepidarium*, *caldarium* and *laconicum* (fig. 10).[129]

Although there are four entrances to the complex, only one leads straight into the baptismal area. This is the south-eastern entrance which is placed directly in front of the main entrance of the north church, and leads into the southern vestibule (3) of the baptistery via a staircase. On the north-eastern side there is a further entrance that connects a series of rooms of uncertain purpose with the northern vestibule (4).[130] Two more entrances lead into the facilities of the bath (1) in the south and west. Scholars have suggested that a passageway originally connected the baptismal complex via the western entrance to the bath with the small chapel adjacent, because the chapel's

vaulted gallery and in the cupola and were glazed, as glass fragments were found on the site: Y. Allais, *Djémila* (1938), 60.

[129] A. Ballu, *Rapport* (1923), 22-23; Y. Thébert, *Thermes romains d'Afrique du Nord et leur context méditerranéen* (Rome: École française de Rome, 2003), 203 is more cautious in his attribution.

[130] Allais suggested that the apsidal space within the rooms was the *consignatorium*: Y. Allais, *Djémila* (1938), 61.

entrance in the northern side aisle faces the baptistery. As an attachment to the baptistery, the chapel, for instance, could have functioned as a *consignatorium*, where catechumens professed their faith before the baptismal rite.[131] Over time, however, because of a slope between chapel and baptistery, the structures around the chapel have disappeared up to the cave level, which makes it impossible to deduce the exact relation of the chapel and baptismal complex.[132]

The baptistery is in a comparatively good state of preservation and several decorative elements have been preserved from Byzantine times. The walls of the ambulatory and baptismal chamber seem to have been unadorned, covered only with plaster.[133] Nor have the excavators left any record about any fragments of a potential mosaic or painted decoration of the cupola. The niches of the ambulatory are made from a mix of brick and rubble; the latter is arranged in the form of a cross with short arms, visible only from the outside (fig. 3). The sculpted decoration inside the ambulatory is fairly limited. The vaults of the niches are decorated with shells carved in stucco (fig. 16).[134] A series of small pilasters runs between the niches (fig. 12). Within the baptismal room, the floor mosaics certainly make the greatest impression, with the font and the central rotunda entirely covered in mosaics. The intricate pattern of the ambulatory floor is composed of a star motif; between the stars there are crosses pattées filled with double-headed arrows and swastikas (fig. 17).

[131] J. Lassus, "Les edifices du culte autour de la basilique", in: *Atti del VI Congresso internazionale di archeologia cristiana,* Congresso internazionale di archeologia cristiana (ed.) (Vatican City: Pontificio Istituto di archeologia cristiana, 1965), 598 and J. Lassus, Les baptistères (1970), 250-251.
[132] P.-A. Février, Développement urbain (1996) no 53.
[133] P. Monceaux, Découverte (1922), 404.
[134] Ibid., 402-403.

In the baptismal chamber, there is a marine scene composed of a large diversity of sea animals and framed by a meander at the outer border (fig. 18). The scene has never been described in detail, nor has it been reproduced in the scholarly literature.[135] The white ground is marked with dark blue parallel lines that suggest moving water, but is also structured by four ornamental shrubs kept in baskets at the corners of the font, as well as by four jewelled kantharoi filled with water on its four sides (fig. 19).[136] The kantharoi are framed by pairs of stylized dolphins which swim towards them, whereas the majority of creatures are loosely placed and depicted naturalistically. In addition to diverse kinds of fish, one of them apparently flying, the mosaic comprises a starfish, a winged insect likely found near water, a sea shell and a crustacean which is perhaps a lobster. The ambition of the mosaicists seems to have been to represent the entirety of aquatic life with an emphasis on marine life in particular. The addition of the potted shrubs that evoke a cultivated and domestic sphere and the kantharoi taken from a more metaphorical set of imagery generally associated with plenty, however, makes it impossible to classify the floor mosaic of the baptismal chamber as purely marine, although this is the predominant theme.

The floor of the almost quadrangular baptismal font depicts a pattern of eight fish in red and blue on white ground. Of the fish, half swim on the sides while the remaining four face a small white swastika framed in a red roundel in the middle of the basin (fig. 20).

[135] The mosaic decoration has been mentioned in passing in ibid., 403; Y. Allais, *Djémila* (1938), 61; W. Gessel, Monumentale Spuren des Christentums im Römischen Nordafrika (1981), 56; L. Drewer, "Fisherman and fish pond: From the sea of sin to the living waters", in: *Art Bulletin 63* (1981), 545. Only the mosaic inscriptions have been explored in any depth: H.-G. Pflaum and X. Dupuis, *Inscriptions Latines de l'Algérie* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 2003), 868-869; P. Monceaux, Cuicul chrétien (Numidie) (1923), 106-107 and on marine scene 99; H. Grégoire, "Les baptistères de Cuicul et de Doura", in: *Byzantion 13* (1938).

[136] Similar designs of kantharoi and shrubs are known from domestic North African contexts. Compare for instance the pavement of *oecus* XIV at the House of Nicentius in Thuburbo Maius: A. Ben Abed-Ben Khader et al., *Thuburbo Majus. Les mosaïques de la région des grands thermes* (Tunis: Institut National d'Archéologie et d'Art, 1985b), plate XX, fig. 40a.

In contrast to the colourful scheme of the marine floor, the more stylized mosaic of the basin uses a moderate selection of white, red and dark blue. An inscription runs along three of the four sides of the border in white script on red ground. Its letters measure about 15 cm.[137] The preserved part reads: 'EMPUS ERITOMNESIN FONTE'. It has been plausibly completed to '*tempus erit omnes in fonte [renasci]*' – 'the time will come when all [will be reborn] in the fountain'.[138] The design of the inscription prescribes the reading direction. The text starts in the east (EMPUS) where the first half of the line is missing, continues on the southern side (ERITOMNESIN) and finishes on the northern side (FONTE), where the second half of the line is missing. Instead of script, the original western side shows a wave pattern. The baptized would have been able to read the inscription fully only when facing the triconched apsidiole (2) (fig. 14) in the east. The setting of the inscription therefore indicates that the neophyte must have entered the font from the west (fig. 13).

A drawing documenting the inscription, published shortly after the discovery of the baptistery in 1923, reveals, however, that less than half of the central image depicting fish had survived to the twentieth century (fig. 21).[139] The mosaic was heavily worked over in a later restoration whose date is not documented. The original components can be distinguished with the naked eye because they are darker in tone. Unfortunately, the 1923 drawing only records the text, not the entire design of the mosaic. An examination of both text and mosaic leads to the conclusion that the central swastika was added by

[137] P. Monceaux, Découverte (1922), 405.

[138] This reading goes back to Monceaux who suggested that the missing part should be completed as follows: '*[Gentes t]empus erit omnes in fonte [renasci]*'. The addition of '*gentes*' in the sense of 'heathen' is, however, only speculative and not as crucially necessary for the logic of the phrase as the addition of a verb ([*renasci*]) is. The addition is inspired by Matthew 28,19: '*Docete omnes gentes, baptizantes eos* […]'. Cf. Ibid., 406 no. 1; H.-G. Pflaum and X. Dupuis, *Inscriptions Latines* (2003), 869 no. 8281.

[139] The drawing is published in P. Monceaux, Cuicul chrétien (Numidie) (1923), 107, no. 21.

the twentieth-century restorers, probably in emulation of the swastikas integrated in the ornamental floor of the ambulatory (fig. 22). In the surviving fragment, three fish were directed towards the centre of the mosaic with another fish swimming in between them. For this reason, the schematic order of the design as it appears today is a plausible but unprovable addition of the restorer. The discovery of the later intervention confronts us with the possibility that there might have been no immediately discernible Christian symbol whatsoever on the mosaic floor. Given that the stucco of the interior walls was unpainted, we are faced with a striking scarcity, if not absence, of explicitly Christian imagery in the baptismal chamber.

Several other inscriptions have been preserved in the baptistery. Two mosaic fields with a circular inscription in their centre survive in the east and west of the font in the ambulatory (figs. 23, 24). Only a fragment of the eastern one, placed in front of the entrance to the bath, has survived. It is written in white on red ground and red on white ground within a double circle of a diameter of 37 cm (fig. 25). [140] The inscription of the outer circle reads today [ADDUETNLVMIN] and in the inside a single [N] can be distinguished besides fragments of other letters. In 1922, the excavators identified the words '*in lumin[e]*'.[141] The reading, '[ACCEDITE] AD D[E]V[M] ET I[~~N~~ L]LUMIN[AMINI]' – 'Come to God and be enlightened', which draws on Psalm 33,6, was subsequently suggested, but seems to be based on many assumptions.[142] The other inscription in front of the apsidiole is entirely illegible today (fig. 24). A third mosaic inscription lies almost hidden besides the south-western column of the ciborium (fig. 26). The enigmatic

[140] H.-G. Pflaum and X. Dupuis, *Inscriptions Latines* (2003), 868, no. 8278a.
[141] P. Monceaux, Découverte (1922), 403.
[142] The Clementine Vulgate has *'Accedite ad eum et illuminamini'*: H. Grégoire, Les baptistères de Cuicul et de Doura (1938), 590.

inscription in red on white ground, without vowels, reads: 'TP T SPT Q'.[143] In the case of this inscription, and possibly also that of the circular one near the bath, the underlying meaning had to be known by the viewer for it to be accurately deciphered. A more informative inscription is engraved in the plaster of the southern rotunda: '+ I(n) n(omin)e D(omi)ni, ame(n). Passassius lector in D(e)o bibat. 'In the name of the Lord, amen. May the lector Passasius live in God'.[144] Monceaux takes *Passassius* for a popular form of the quite common Christian name *Paschasius*. He considers the initial formula, the writing and the cross to be of the Byzantine period.[145]

Before discussing the mosaic floor in detail, let us finish our tour through the church complex (fig. 8). The entrance of the recessed three-aisled north church is directly opposite the baptistery's southern vestibule entrance (fig. 27). This makes it likely that the north church held some function within the baptismal rite. The apses of both the north and south church terminate at exactly the same height. Stairs in the two churches lead to a 90 m long subterranean passageway that provides access to a series of crypts (fig. 28).[146] Two apsidal crypts are located underneath the church apses; they contain the remains of pedestals which Christern has interpreted as bases for bishops' tombs (fig. 29).[147] The subterranean passageway connects the churches and apparently also once hosted the relics of the bishops' bodies.[148] A memorial function of this structure has been suggested in light of another monument in the south church, the so-called

[143] P. Monceaux, Découverte (1922), 404.
[144] The replacement of [b] for [v] is common in North African late antique Latin script.
[145] Now in the museum at Djémila. P. Monceaux, Découverte (1922) 405; H.-G. Pflaum and X. Dupuis, *Inscriptions Latines* (2003), 869 no 8283 suggests '*Pallasius*'.
[146] J. Christern, *Pilgerheiligtum* (1976), 140; N. Duval and P.-A. Février, "La basilique cimétériale de l'Est à Djémila. Une église à crypte méconnue", in: *Aevum inter utrumque: mélanges offerts à Gabriel Sanders,* Marc Van Uytfanghe and Roland Demeulenaere (ed.) (Steenbrugis: Abbatia S. Petri, 1991).
[147] Christern argues against the view that the bases were supporting altars. J. Christern, *Pilgerheiligtum* (1976), 140 and 142-143.
[148] Ibid., 140, 253-254.

Cresconius inscription (fig. 30), which documents that the complex served as a memorial site for deceased bishops. Christern has argued that the passageway was a processional way leading past the remains of Djémila's bishops, then venerated as martyrs, and thereby argued for Djémila's role as an important pilgrimage site.[149]

While Christern's argument is substantiated by the observation that the well-laid-out structure of the church complex would have suited the needs of pilgrims, it can only really be grounded in the Cresconius inscription. The inscription, placed in the choir of the south church, west of the fenced altar space, is a panegyric verse on the deeds of Cresconius, the deceased Catholic bishop of Djémila. The verse first praises the wonderful buildings ('*Hic ubi tam claris laudantur moenia tectis'*) at the site and tells us that Cresconius prevented his legitimate predecessors from being forgotten by relocating them ('*iustos […] priores*') to the place of worship. In the following phrases, many Christians are evoked who come to see the bishops' tombs, to pray, to chant hymns '*in unam congeriem*' and to receive salvation by the sacrament of the unction ('*sacramento dei medicinam sumere c[r]ismae*'). The last part of the inscription is the funerary inscription of Cresconius. It states explicitly that Cresconius was a Catholic.[150]

> Here where the city with its famous buildings is praised you find shining gables and holy altars. These are not the work of noblemen; but through the glory of such great achievement the name of its creator Cresconius resonates throughout the centuries. People are happy that with his honourable works he put his predecessors in their just positions; [these] who long quietness took out of sight are now shining brightly resting upon a beautiful altar. They are happy that their gathered crown shines, because an honourable protector has wisely fulfilled the

[149] Ibid., 253-254. Similarly A. Grabar, *Martyrium. Récherches sur le culte des reliques et l'art chrétien antique. Architecture* (Paris: Collège de France, 1946), 448-450.

[150] It is unlikely that the term 'Catholic' could also have referred to a Donatist bishop Cresconius. In 411, Donatist bishops rejected the label 'Donatist', but referred to themselves as Christians rather than as Catholics: B. Shaw, "African Christianity: Disputes, Definitions, and 'Donatists'", in: *Orthodoxy and heresy in religious movements. Discipline and Dissent,* Malcolm R. Greenshields and Thomas A. Robinson (ed.) (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), esp. 21-22. See also Augustine, Contra ep. fund. 4,5-5,6.

task with spirit. And from everywhere the Christians come together fulfilled by the wish to see themselves united in the praise of God and happy to step over the holy threshold. Everyone is happy to sing the holy songs and stretch out the hands in order to receive through the sacrament of God the medicine of Christ. Cresconius was born to serve the laws themselves and the altars and he reached the goal of his life with honours in the Catholic church. He was the protector of modesty, he devoted himself to charity and peace and through his teaching the people of Cuicul are flourishing. Friend of the poor people he was given to every charity and never denied this heavenly task. His soul vanishes while his body rests in peace; the crowd of people is expecting the coming resurrection in Christ so that he will become participant of the holiness in the chair of the heavenly kingdom. [151]

Dating the baptistery and the church complex of Djémila

The Cresconius inscription is central to the debate about the dating of the church complex. Both churches were once covered with mosaics which have been frequently used by scholars to suggest a dating for the whole complex. In both cases, the church mosaics show ornamental and animal decoration (figs. 31 a-c, 32) but with clear stylistic differences, which might indicate that they were executed at different times, but that could also indicate that they were produced by different workshops.[152] Moreover, our

[151] R. Cagnat, "Séance, Janvier 17", in: *Bulletin archéologique du comité des traveaux historiques et scientifiques* (1922) XXVI-XXXII; E. Albertini, "L'archéologie chrétienne en Algérie", in: *Atti del III Congresso internazionale di archeologia cristiana,* Pontificio Istituto di archeologia cristiana (ed.) (Rome: 1934), 413-415; J. Christern, *Pilgerheiligtum* (1976), 140-141; H.-G. Pflaum and X. Dupuis, *Inscriptions Latines* (2003), 873 no 8299: 'Hic ubi tam claris laudantur moenia tectis,/ culmina quod nitent sanctaque altaria cernis,/ non opus est procerum, sed tanti gloria facti/ Cresconi rectoris ovat cum seacula nomen,/ quibus honorificos eum ostendente labores/ iustos in pulcra sede gaudent locasse priores/ quos diuturna quies fallebat posse videri,/ nunc luce profulgent subnixi altare decoro,/ collectamque suam gaudent florere coronam,/ animo quod sollers implevit custos honestus./ undique se visendi studio Cristiana decurrit/ aetas in unam congeriem deo dicere laudes/ liminaque sancta pedibus contingere laeta;/ omnis sacra canens manus porrigere gaudet/ sacramento dei medicinam sumere c[r]ismae./ Cresconius legibus ipsis et altaribus natus, honoribusque in ecclesia catolica (f)unctus,/ castitatis custos, caritatis pacique dicatus,/ cuiuc doctrina floret innumera pleps Cuiculitana./ Pauperum amator elemosine deditus omni/ cui numquam defuere unde opus celeste fecisset/ huihus anima refrigerat corpus in pace quiescit/ resurrection expectans futuram in Cristo corona/ consors ut fiat sanctis in sede regni celestis.' I would like to thank Clemens Kruse for his help with the translation of this text.

[152] Where a difference in time of execution is suggested, the more qualified mosaic work of the north church is dated earlier. F.-G. d. Pachtère, *Inventaire des mosaïques de la Gaule et de l'Afrique* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1911), 70; P. Monceaux, Découverte (1922), 388-389 and 394-398; P.-A. Février, Remarques sur les mosaïques de basse époque à Djemila (Algérie) (1966), 87-89; J. Christern, *Pilgerheiligtum* (1976), 140-142.

general knowledge about the periodization of North African late antique mosaics is not sufficient for us to rely on stylistic difference when a fairly short period of time separates the two specimens, as seems to be the case in Djémila. Two bishops of Djémila of the name of Cresconius have been identified: the first Cresconius took part in the Council of Carthage of 411 that tried to reconcile Donatists and Catholics; the second Cresconius, or Crescens depending on the reading, attended the Council of Constantinople in 553.[153] The situation is complicated by the fact that the Cresconius inscription is in large part an almost exact copy and compilation of two inscriptions in the Alexander church at Tipasa.[154] In the nave of this cemeterial church the text was divided into two segments – one about the relocation of the predecessors, and the other an epitaph of bishop Alexander.[155] The Alexander inscription or indeed a shared model of the two inscriptions was adapted to the situation in Djémila, where details like the name of the bishop and the city were replaced.[156] The Alexander inscription has not been dated with certainty either, but seems to belong to the fourth century for paleographic reasons.[157] Evidently, both churches shared a practice of commemorating Catholic bishops to attract pilgrims.

The majority opinion on the dating of the Cresconius inscription is that it refers to the first bishop Cresconius attested to in 411.[158] If this is correct, then the inscription as a consequence would date roughly to the first quarter of the fifth century, but could also

[153] P.-A. Février, Remarques sur les mosaïques de basse époque à Djemila (Algérie) (1966), 89.
[154] E. Albertini, L'archéologie chrétienne (1934), XXVII-XXIX; J. Christern, *Pilgerheiligtum* (1976), 140-142; H.-G. Pflaum and X. Dupuis, *Inscriptions Latines* (2003), 873 no 8299. For the Alexander inscription CIL 8, 20903, 20905.
[155] CIL 8, 20903, 20905; J. Christern, *Pilgerheiligtum* (1976), 142.
[156] For a detailed comparison see H.-G. Pflaum and X. Dupuis, *Inscriptions Latines* (2003), 873-874; E. Albertini, L'archéologie chrétienne (1934), XXVII-XXIX.
[157] J. Christern, *Pilgerheiligtum* (1976), 142 no 48.
[158] Recently with a summary of the arguments G. Masaro, "Vario formata decore. Reminiscenze classiche e autori cristiani nelle dediche metriche delle basiliche tardo-antiche", in: *Memoria poetica e poesia della memoria. La versificazione epigrafica dall'antichità all'umanesimo,* Antonio Pistellato (ed.) (Venice: Ca'Foscari, 2014), 188-195, esp. 193-195.

date to as early as the end of the fourth century. Paul-Albert Février, however, pointed to the existence of the sixth-century bishop Cresconius, and thereby introduced the possibility that the inscription was produced in Byzantine times.[159] The debate has considerable implications for the dating of the entire church complex. Monceaux on the other hand dated the smaller north church to the fourth century and the south church with the Cresconius inscription to the first quarter of the fifth, on the premise that both churches were unlikely to have been built simultaneously.[160] The baptistery has not been individually dated but has always been seen in the context of the construction of the entire site.[161] In the 1960s and 1970s, it became the prevalent view that both churches were built at the same time, due to the consistent building technique seen in the foundations of both churches as well as in the subterranean passageway.[162] Djémila is hence the only double church in North Africa for which a uniform building phase has been made plausible.[163] It has been speculated that two churches were necessary to accommodate pilgrims or, alternatively, that the north church was reserved for catechumens.[164]

Given that the construction of the double church in a single phase is the most likely interpretation, the Cresconius inscription is relevant for the dating of the wider complex. The earlier suggested dating of the Cresconius inscription to the turn of the fifth century

[159] P.-A. Février, Remarques sur les mosaïques de basse époque à Djemila (Algérie) (1966), 89-92.
[160] The south church has been dated on the basis of the Cresconius inscription. The north church has been considered older because of the style of the mosaics and linguistic characteristics of the inscriptions: P. Monceaux, Découverte (1922), 391, 398; P. Monceaux, Cuicul chrétien (Numidie) (1923), 111.
[161] According to the dominant view, the baptistery belonged to the north church. See J. Christern, *Pilgerheiligtum* (1976), 144. In opposition to this E. Albertini, L'archéologie chrétienne (1934), 415.
[162] P.-A. Février, Développement urbain (1996), 667; P.-A. Février, Remarques sur les mosaïques de basse époque à Djemila (Algérie) (1966), 88-89; J. Christern, *Pilgerheiligtum* (1976), 143-144; A. Chastagnol and N. Duval, La survivance (1974), 88-94.
[163] Comparable compounds are in Sbeitla I-II, Bulla Regia and Sabratha III-IV: N. Duval, L'évêque (1989), 386.
[164] J. Christern, *Pilgerheiligtum* (1976), 144 with a bibliography on the justification for double churches.

seems to correlate best with the wider archaeological evidence. Christern has shown that the church complex of Djémila was part of a larger group of ecclesiastical and profane sites built by the same workshops, most of them near Tebessa in Numidia.[165] The double church of Djémila is the most distant of the sites attributed to the Tebessa group, but displays the characteristic features of the group in terms of its architecture and decoration. The south church displays the combination of columns and piers typical of this corpus (fig. 33), and latticework has also been found that conforms both in style and motif to the architectural sculpture of the Tebessa group (fig. 34).[166] The building period of the group is dated to the pre-Vandal era and stretches from the last years of the fourth century to the first decades of the fifth.[167] It must be pointed out, however, that the Cresconius inscription belongs to the evidence used to justify this dating.

Further in support of the earlier dating of the Cresconius inscription, a group of votive inscriptions inserted in the mosaic floor of the north church has been tentatively dated to the late fourth or first half of the fifth century, which would make the furnishing of the north church roughly contemporary with the inscription (fig. 32).[168] One of the seven donor inscriptions lists the *vir honestissimus* Pomponius Rusticus.[169] An epitaph found at Djémila documents a *clarissima femina* named Pomponia Rusticula with the life dates 436-452.[170] Given the rarity of this name, it has been suggested that she could have

[165] Ibid., 156 fig. 32.
[166] Ibid., 153-154.
[167] Ibid., 215-225.
[168] The inscriptions were made at the same time. A. Chastagnol and N. Duval, La survivance (1974). For the inscriptions P. Monceaux, Cuicul chrétien (Numidie) (1923), 103-104, a selection in CIL VIII, 8344-8348. See also A. M. Yasin, *Saints and church spaces in the late antique Mediterranean: Architecture, cult, and community* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 118-119.
[169] P.-A. Février, Remarques sur les mosaïques de basse époque à Djemila (Algérie) (1966), 88 ; CIL 8, 8347.
[170] For Pomponia Rusticula P.-A. Février, "Inscriptions chrétiennes de Djémila (Cuicul)", in: *Bulletin d'Archéologie Algérienne 1 (1962-1965)* (1967), 207-214; C. Courtois, *Les Vandales et l'Afrique* (Paris: Arts et métiers graphiques, 1955), 452 no 35.

been the daughter of Pomponius, which would place the birth date of her father from the later fourth to the early fifth century.[171]

Certain subtleties in the content and language of the Cresconius inscription specifically suggest that it was written at a time of conflict between Catholics and Donatists in Djémila.[172] In the description of the multitude of visitors to the bishop's tomb, for instance, the passage '*in unam congeriem deo dicere laudes*' occurs. According to Augustine, the formulation '*Deo laus*' was a notorious Donatist catchword.[173] Here, it was assimilated to suit the purposes of the Catholic bishop of Djémila, where it was ostentatiously placed with '*in unam congeriem*'. The phrase evokes the claim of the unique legitimacy of Djémila's church community: only a united, that is Catholic, congregation is capable of praising God.[174] Interestingly, this passage is one of only two lines of the inscription that do not appear in the Alexander inscription and that must hence be considered as adaptations to the specific situation at Djémila. A further indication of the anti-Donatist intention of the inscription seems to have been neglected so far. Bishop Cresconius reported at the Council of Carthage that the Donatist bishop

[171] P.-A. Février, Remarques sur les mosaïques de basse époque à Djemila (Algérie) (1966), 87-88; A. Chastagnol and N. Duval, La survivance (1974), 91.

[172] On the problematic differentiation between Catholic and Donatist churches on an archaeological basis see G. Sears, *African urbanism* (2007), 34-37; A. Leone, "Tracing the Donatist Presence in North Africa: An Archaeological Perspective", in: *The Donatist Schism. Controversy and Contexts,* Richard Miles (ed.) (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016). On the Donatist controversy W. H. C. Frend, *The Donatist Church: A Movement of Protest in Roman North Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952). Recent contributions include M. A. Tilley, *The Bible in Christian North Africa: The Donatist world* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997); B. Shaw, "Who were the Circumcellions?", in: *Vandals, Romans and Berbers: New perspectives on late antique North Africa,* Andy Merrills (ed.) (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004); R. Miles (ed.), *The Donatist Schism. Controvery and Context* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016).

[173] Augustine, ep. 108,5,14. On the validity of Augustine's assessment G. Sears, *African urbanism* (2007), 35. See also W. H. C. Frend, *The Donatist Church: A Movement of Protest in Roman North Africa* (1952), 307-308; G. Masaro, Vario formata decore. Reminiscenze classiche e autori cristiani nelle dediche metriche delle basiliche tardo-antiche (2014), 193.

[174] E. Albertini, L'archéologie chrétienne (1934), XXX-XXXI; H.-G. Pflaum and X. Dupuis, *Inscriptions Latines* (2003), 874.

of Djémila had died.[175] Given that at least one dead Donatist bishop is attested from Djémila, one wonders where his tomb was placed. The relocation of the bishops commemorated in the inscription certainly concerns only the *iusti priores*, the righteous Catholic successors of Crescentius, whereas the Donatist bishops must have suffered from this act of deliberate neglect as a *damnatio memoriae*.

Donatism continued to be of concern to Catholics and Arians in the fifth and sixth centuries.[176] The anti-Donatist message of the inscription therefore is no certain evidence for an early fifth-century dating, although that was undoubtedly the culmination point of the conflict and the more likely possibility. The most likely option is the erection of the Catholic church complex before the Vandal invasion in the early 430s, when the Vandals' anti-Nicene policy made a Catholic building project of this scale and importance improbable.[177] An alternative option would be a construction date between 442 and about 455, during which period the Vandal army temporarily lost control over Djémila.[178]

The Cresconius inscription certainly provides only indirect evidence for the dating of the baptistery. Assuming that the analysis is correct that the building of the double church and of the memorial for the Catholic bishops, initiated by Cresconius, was part of a large building project, the contemporaneous construction of an adjacent baptistery, perhaps in consideration of the launching of a pilgrimage, would seem a logical step. The

[175] S. Lancel (ed.), *Gesta conlationis Carthaginiensis, anno 411: Accedit Sancti Augustini breviculus conlationis cum Donatistis* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1974), 12,1.
[176] J. Conant, "Donatism in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries", in: *The Donatist Schism. Controversy and Contexts,* Richard Miles (ed.) (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016); M. Arbi Nsiri, "La survivance du Donatisme après la conférence de Carthage de 411", in: *L'Africa romana: Momenti di continuità e rottura,* P. Ruggeri (ed.) (Rome: Carocci, 2015); W. H. C. Frend, *The Donatist Church: A Movement of Protest in Roman North Africa* (1952), 305-306.
[177] It is, however, a matter of dispute to what extent the Vandals were able to enforce the anti-Nicene policy beyond Carthage. See R. Bockmann, *Capital continuous* (2013), 130-131.
[178] A. Chastagnol and N. Duval, La survivance (1974), 91-94.

balanced layout of the site, in which the entrances of baptistery and north church are exactly adjusted to each other, in addition to the apparently deliberate effort taken to brand the complex as a whole by using a unified colour scheme of inscriptions, point to the same conclusion.[179]

The problem of the absence of Christian symbolism

Now that we have established a working hypothesis for the dating of the baptistery, let us resume the analysis of the mosaic decoration of the baptismal chamber. The elaborateness and size of the baptistery of Djémila suggest that the baptismal rite played an integral role in the church complex, which must itself have been an important Christian site in the region given its dimensions relative to the comparatively small size of the city. It is all the more astonishing therefore that explicitly Christian symbols are very sparse if not entirely absent in the baptistery. The problem of this decorative choice is emphasized by the crucial role that baptism played in the formation of Christian identity, which I have outlined in the introduction.[180] While baptismal liturgies were aimed at making neophytes break with their old lives to immerse themselves fully in their new roles as *fideles*, the principal artistic theme shaping the rite in Djémila does not evoke rupture with the habitual, nor a completely new or transformative idea or atmosphere. On the contrary, aquatic scenery that depicted diverse species in a naturalistic manner had a particularly high recognition value. In Roman and late Roman North Africa, depictions of marine life, whether as its own subject matter or in combination with a wide range of topics, including fishing scenes, depictions of sea deities, sea monsters, Venus, Europa or Ulysses, very commonly embellished Roman

[179] The colour scheme of white letters on red ground on the Cresconius inscription is adapted to the red-and-white coloured inscriptions of the baptistery as well as of the roundels in the north church.
[180] See in the introduction the section 'The baptistery as a place of Christian identity construction'..

villas and fountains, pools and baths (fig. 35).[181] Djémila's preserved mosaics are a good example of this: the marine subject matter outnumbers all other figurative themes depicted in profane settings.[182] Depictions of sea life comparable and roughly contemporary to those of the baptistery were to be found in the *maison de l'âne* (fig. 36), the *maison d'Amphitrite* (figs. 37, 38) and the *maison d'Europe* (fig. 39).[183] While none of the figurative mosaics of the Great Bath of Djémila have been preserved, the sculpture of a fish, still in situ, frames the entrance to the bath's latrines (fig. 40). It is a reminder of the great applicability of this stock image in various domestic and public profane contexts. Those contexts belonged to the frame of experience within which the new Christian pictorial world was to be perceived.

The baptistery of Djémila is one of the earliest Christian structures in North Africa to have taken as its core figurative decoration marine scenery, which became a common subject in North African churches especially in the sixth century.[184] Besides large-scale floor mosaics depicting sea life, fish or other marine life was also a regular motif of the mosaic Christian epitaphs covering the floor-space of many churches (fig. 41), referring to an older Roman tradition that links death or the afterlife to the sea (fig. 42).[185]

---

[181] K. Dunbabin, *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa. Studies in Iconography and Patronage* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 125-130. See also N. Smati, *Les mosaïques figurées à thème marin en Afrique du Nord (Tunisie-Algérie-Maroc): étude descriptive et analytique (Tunisie, Algérie, Maroc)* (Paris IV (doctoral thesis): 2000).

[182] Cf. M. Blanchard-Lemée, *Maisons à mosaïques du quartier central de Djemila, Cuicul* (1975).

[183] Ibid., for 'The toilet of Venus' 61-84, for 'Amphitrite' 106-119, for 'Fish and wild animals' 121-124, for 'The abduction of Europe' 143-147.

[184] K. Dunbabin, *Roman North Africa* (1978), 189 and 193; T. Ghalia, *Hergla et les mosaïques de pavement des basiliques chrétiennes de Tunisie: plan, décor et liturgie* 1989), 44-48 with a selection of examples. F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, "Églises urbaines, églises rurales dans la Tunisie paléochrétienne: nouvelles récherches d'architecture et d'urbanisme", in: *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Academie des inscriptions et Belles-Lettres 145* (2001), 1491 for the interesting example at El-Ouara.

[185] K. Dunbabin, *Roman North Africa* (1978), 189-190.

A certain reluctance to depict explicitly Christian iconography, let alone Christian narrative, is a feature especially typical of the early mosaic church decorations of North Africa.[186] The mosaic decoration of the double-church of Djémila is a case in point (figs. 31 a-c, 32). The mosaics are rich in ornament and animal imagery, yet univocally Christian symbolism and newly developed Christian iconography are largely absent.[187] The double-church of Djémila shares this quality with some of the largest North African episcopal churches like Hippo Regius, Dermech in Carthage, Timgad or Tébessa.[188] The decoration of baptisteries and chapels is, for the most part, more experimental and varied than that of larger churches.[189] The baptistery of the west church at Timgad (fig. 43), which is also an early fifth-century baptismal structure from Numidia, offers a good comparison to the baptistery of Djémila.[190] While it is covered in mainly geometric and vegetal ornament, short-armed Greek crosses adorn the upper part of the six corners of the interior steps of the font (fig. 44) and christograms the lower (fig. 45). A chi-rho is depicted on one of the outer sides (fig. 43).

There is a good chance that in the centre of Djémila's baptismal font where the restorers inserted the swastika there was originally a cross. The way the preserved fish face the centre of the font in schematic order would suggest this (fig. 20). Later fonts of the Byzantine era, in Kélibia in Africa Proconsularis (fig. 46), Békalta in Byzacena (fig. 47) and several other locations, depict a large cross or, as in the case of Kélibia, a chi-rho on the

[186] Ibid., 188-195.
[187] A detailed description of the motifs is provided in P. Monceaux, Cuicul chrétien (Numidie) (1923), 95-96.
[188] K. Dunbabin, *Roman North Africa* (1978), 188.
[189] Ibid.
[190] I. Gui et al., *Algérie* (1992); M. Leglay, Note sur quelques baptistères d'Algérie (1957).

bottom of the font.[191] Yet, even if there had been a cross original to the font in Djémila, due to the font's mosaic design it could not have been much larger than today's swastika, which measures about 15 cm. The comparatively small sign would have been imperceptible from most places in the baptismal chamber because it would have been placed 75 cm below the floor level (fig. 13). In the manner of a belated revelation, the cross would have given Christian significance to all former visual impressions only at the moment of entering the font. Thus, it would not have had an impact on the visual experience of the baptizand until late in the ceremony, and would have potentially gone unnoticed by bystanders. This artistic strategy, of delaying explanation or making it retrospective, is not dissimilar to the sequencing of baptismal mystagogical catechesis which took place only after the baptismal ceremony, revealing retrospectively to the newly born faithful the deeper significance of their baptismal experience.[192]

The western circular inscription (fig. 23) still legible today is equally poor in Christian symbolism. The lavishly framed inscription and its eastern counterpart in front of the apsidiole (fig. 24) accentuate the east-west axis of the baptistery (fig. 14). This axis most likely defines the walking direction of the neophytes who arguably entered the font from the west, as we saw. The locations of the inscriptions also enhance the importance of the apsidiole in the east (2), potentially the place where the bishop administered the baptism, and of the bath, to be entered directly from the location of the inscription (fig. 14). Neophytes who entered the font from the West would have passed the inscription

[191] F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, *Tunisie* (2014) for Kélibia/Demna 165-169, for Bekalta 227-228. See further Hammam Lif 150-152, El Kenissia 229-230, Bou Smir 233, Sfax 237, Sbeitla II 386-391. At times, animals took the place of the cross: Sidi Mansour (lamb) 235-236, Oued R'mel (dove) 190-191.

[192] Well-known examples include C. Calcaterra (ed.), *La catechesi pasquale: di Ambrogio di Milano* (Milan: Archivio Ambrosiano, 1973); G. Maestri and V. Saxer, "Catechesi prebattesimali e mistagogiche", in: (ed.) (Milan: Paoline, 1994). For an overview V. Saxer, *Les rites de l'initiation chrétienne du IIe au VIe siècle* (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 1988).

if their way from the ambulatory had led them via the western entrance into the baptismal chamber. In addition, any attendants of the baptismal ceremony and those entering the baptistery from the bath would have seen it. The reading direction of the western inscription (figs. 23, 25) cannot be reconstructed with certainty from today's state of preservation. Only the letter [N] is clearly discernible in the inner circle, which could be read from either east or west. The outer circle's inscription must be read by turning around the entire inscription. Thus, the inscription was directed either at those entering the baptistery from the bath or those leaving the baptismal chamber on their way to ambulatory or bath. In any case, the emblematic inscription was legible only to those initiated into its meaning. Neither the inscription nor the surrounding frames of both the eastern and the western inscriptions (figs. 23, 24) display any explicitly Christian symbols.

The extreme flexibility in meaning of the decorative programme of Djémila's baptistery – evoking as it does an array of non-Christian imagery often found in profane settings – demands an explanation. Why was the baptismal congregation left to associate so freely when viewing the marine floor mosaic? Traditional approaches would deem such a question irrelevant, since they assume that a fairly cohesive Christianizing interpretation was prevalent in everyone's understanding of Christian art. In the following, I am going to challenge this view.

The baptistery of Djémila: Analysis on the basis of the church fathers

The indebtedness of Christian decorations depicting the natural world to Roman artistic traditions has long been acknowledged.[193] Late antique Christians were confronted on

[193] See for instance J. Elsner, *Imperial Rome* (1998); H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean* (1987); H. Maguire, *Nectar and illusion* (2012); K. Dunbabin, *Roman North Africa* (1978), 188-195; G. Cantino Wataghin, "I

many occasions with imagery within the Christian realm that resembled the imagery in use outside of the ecclesiastic space. The episcopal complex of Djémila is an example of this, where depictions taken from natural life are the most common. When it is time to explain the taste for adapting worldly topics seen in these mosaics, the vast majority of scholarly explanations are bound to consult the Christianizing interpretations given by the church fathers.[194] The underlying assumption is that these textual sources reveal how the mosaics were generally understood by Christians at the time. Exegesis on the symbolic significance of fish and of water is particularly abundant, as is the scholarly literature on the former.[195] The specific symbolic properties of aquatic scenes like the one in the baptistery of Djémila have been discussed in this manner by Lois Drewer.[196] Drewer points out that fish were taken as symbols for Christian souls, whereas the church fathers interpreted the qualities of water in two primary ways.[197] She observes that water was conceived of either as a representation of 'living water' that nourished the fish living in it or as a symbol for the worldliness from which the fish need to be freed.[198] According to Drewer, Christian marine imagery that was copied from non-Christian Roman models might be interpreted accordingly, that is, decorations which show only sea animals like the one in Djémila would be depictions of the living water,

primi Cristiani, tra imagines, historiae e pictura. Spunti di riflessione", in: *Antiquité Tardive 19* (2011); L. Drewer, Fisherman (1981).

[194] Only a few scholars have tried to find alternative explanations for stock imagery in Christian contexts. For North Africa see K. Dunbabin, *Roman North Africa* (1978), 194.

[195] A concise overview is offered by F. Bisconti, *Temi di Iconografia Paleocristiana* (Vatican City: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 2000), '*pesce*', 252-258.

[196] L. Drewer, Fisherman (1981). Similarly F. Bisconti, *Temi di Iconografia Paleocristiana* (2000), 252-258.

[197] L. Drewer, Fisherman (1981), 533-534.

[198] For the two different traditions see e.g. Tertullian, De Baptismo 1 (cited below)' in contrast to Clement of Alexandria, Paidagogos 3,11: '[…] Jesus, Saviour of the Human race, Shepherd, Husbandman, Helm, Bridle, Heavenly Wing of the allholy flock, Fisher of men who are saved, catching the chaste fishes with sweet life from the hateful wave of a sea of vice'; Jerome, Hom. 92: 'by the word of God are lifted out of the abysmal waters of this world like so many fish'; Ambrose, De sacr. 3,3: 'So even for you this world is a sea. It has diverse floods, heavy waters, severe storms. And do you be a fish, that the water of the world may not submerge you'.

whereas scenes of similar content but with the addition of fishermen (fig. 48), would depict the vicious sea of the world from which the fishermen – Christ or the apostles respectively – rescue Christian souls.[199] The subject matter of the living water can again be construed further as signifying God as the source of life, as baptismal waters or as the image of the Holy Spirit.[200] In the case of Djémila, Drewer believes that the mosaic floor of the baptismal chamber signifies baptismal water because of the space in which it was set.[201]

In Drewer's model the implicit producer of such Christian meanings was the bishop of Djémila or another clerical figure with access to the writings of the church fathers. He uses them to interpret, or potentially even to design, the mosaics of the baptistery. Drewer also does not seem to think that the view of the mosaics' signification first offered by the hypothetical bishop would have changed over time. The Christian meanings attributed to the pre-Christian subject matters appear to be distinct, stable and universal. It is a necessary precondition of approaches like Drewer's that other interpreters like the mosaicists who created the image or the visitors to the baptistery adopted the views of the imaginary bishop without attaching their own individual and nuanced opinions. Or if they did, their added perspectives are not worth mentioning, given that they cannot be reconstructed.

If we accept these preconditions as givens for a moment, it seems plausible that the mosaic floor of the baptismal chamber was understood to depict salvific living water or even baptismal water. Several of the writings of North African church fathers our

[199] L. Drewer, Fisherman (1981), 534.
[200] Ibid., 542.
[201] Ibid., 545.

imaginary bishop could have drawn from would support such a reading. Tertullian, for instance, used the image of Christian souls swimming in salvific water: 'We little fish, after the image of our Ichthys Jesus Christ, are born in the water, nor otherwise than swimming in the water are we safe.'[202] He is not alone; Cyprian also symbolizes water as salvific baptismal water.[203] However, even an unsystematic survey of North African positions on the qualities of water reveals the inflexibility of Drewer's scheme. Augustine, for instance, drops out of the scheme, because he also evokes the sinfulness of the water and states the desirability of living like a fish within it: 'But if you join the initial letters of these five Greek words, ᾽Ιησοῦς Χριστος Θεοῦ υἱὸς σωτήρ, which mean, "Jesus Christ the Son of God, the Saviour", they will make the word ἰχθύς, that is "fish", in which word Christ is mystically understood, because He was able to live, that is, to exist, without sin in the abyss of this mortality as in the depth of waters.'[204] The same idea appears in Ambrose, who puts emphasis on believers instead of on Christ: 'So even for you this world is a sea. It has diverse floods, heavy waters, severe storms. And do you be a fish, that the water of the world may not submerge you.'[205] We should be cautious of any scheme that allows for only one way of allegorizing subject matter not originally created for Christian interpretation, when Christian figurative speech itself was creative and diverse.

Yet, there are even deeper problems with this approach. While many scholars permit more flexibility in Christian interpretations of imagery drawn from nature and animal life, they tend to focus on paradisiacal and sacramental themes.[206] Henry Maguire's

[202] Tertullian, De Baptismo 1.
[203] Cyprian, ep. 63.8.1-9.1. See also J. P. Burns Jr. and R. M. Jensen, *Christianity* (2014), 184.
[204] Augustine, De civ. Dei 18,23.
[205] Ambrose, De sacr. 3,3.
[206] See for instance D. Morfino, Le strutture battesimali (2011).

book, *Earth and Ocean. The Terrestrial World in Early Byzantine Art*, has been an important contribution in its questioning of this limitation.[207] Besides his attempt to systematize the allegorical frameworks that early Byzantine natural art could have drawn on, Maguire also draws attention to a strong tradition in patristic literature that favoured the literal sense of depictions of nature.[208] *Earth and Ocean* in particular makes use of the sermons and commentaries on the *Hexameron* – the first six days of the world – in order to show how in the controversies amongst the church fathers all sorts of positions were taken, from exclusively literal readings to deeply allegorical stances on the meaning of God's creation. Included in a vast corpus of literal descriptions of the world that tend to avoid allegorical interpretation (except in the few places where it happened to suit the author's purposes) is the influential commentary on the *Hexameron* by Basil the Great.[209] The sermons, preached in 378, were soon imitated by Ambrose, and, following a Latin translation by Eusthatius, were also used by Augustine.[210] Where Basil considers the creation of the beasts and plants on the fifth day, he says:

> Those who cannot accept the scriptures in their common sense, say that water is not water, but some other substance; the words plants and fish they interpret as seems good to them; the creation of the reptiles and wild beasts they explain by twisting [the sense] according to their own suppositions, like interpreters of dreams who give whatever meaning they wish to the phantasies that have appeared during sleep. As for me, when I hear grass spoken of, I think of grass: and so also with plants, fish, wild animals, and domestic animals. I accept everything at face value.[211]

[207] H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean* (1987).
[208] Ibid., 5-40.
[209] Ibid., 31-32.
[210] Ibid., 31. For the sermon's influence see S. Giet, *Basile de Césarée, Homélies sur l'Hexaéméron* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1949), 70-71.
[211] Basil, Hom. In hex. 9,1. (Transl. follows H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean* (1987), 31-32.)

Basil emphasizes that creation conveys an idea of its Creator's greatness. Maguire argues that we should read some of the mosaic church floors of the fifth and sixth century in the same way.[212] The 'face value approach' exposes the structural weakness of many other interpretations that focus exclusively on the allegorical significance of Christian imagery, namely, that the allegorical reading of an image presumes that something other than what is depicted should be expressed. The problem with such a reading is that it is impossible to disprove it. Regardless of what we see, the meaning of the depiction depends entirely on the meaning that the allegory ascribes to it.[213] Exclusively allegorical readings therefore eradicate the impact that an image by itself could have had on its interpreter. When Maguire suggests taking natural imagery with Basil at face value, he tries to escape this problem.

Earth and Ocean, however, does not fully succeed in this. Maguire starts from the assumption that the text 'can reveal the thought processes that lie behind the work of art, *even if the text itself was not known either directly or indirectly to the artist*'.[214] Church writings are presented once more as 'keys' for unlocking the meanings of Christian art.[215] Instead of acknowledging that some artworks – like the mosaic floor of the baptistery of Djémila – lack hints that allow a key message to be revealed, and might never even have had a key message in the eyes of their users, we are encouraged to use the writings of the church fathers to give Christian art meaning.

The problem of starting a visual interpretation by consulting the church fathers is that it leaves no space for localized, time-dependent and individual meanings of Christian art.

[212] Ibid., 32-40.
[213] See on the problem W. Raeck, *Modernisierte Mythen. Zum Umgang der Spätantike mit klassischen Bildthemen* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1992), 9.
[214] H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean* (1987), 1 [Italics by the author].
[215] Ibid., 2.

When Maguire holds that the makers, and by analogy also viewers, of Christian art did not need to know the textual keys for them to be true, he risks crossing them from the list of those who are entitled to produce meaning. This systematically privileges the opinions of the ecclesiastical elite, which are declared to be normative for a lay understanding of art. Moreover, the approach entails a selection bias: artworks which allow for a textual interpretation are often preferred as study objects to the many neglected others.[216] The study of Christian art thus becomes ultimately an illustrated confirmation of the knowledge scholars have already generated from the established textual canon. The consequence is a self-perpetuating fixation on the authoritative voices of the church fathers.

The baptistery of Djémila: Accounting for the historical and material evidence as a corrective to the textual analysis

In the following, I will include further evidence in addition to ecclesiastical writing to reach a more nuanced understanding of the baptismal floor of Djémila. I will initially discuss the turn of the fifth century in North Africa as a time of great religious transformation which had manifold effects on Christian attitudes towards Roman culture and ritual. I will then ask what the material evidence at Djémila tells us more specifically about Djémila's Christian community in this regard. Taking the historical and material evidence into account, I argue, is fundamental if we wish to broaden our understanding of the multiplicity of perspectives that contemporary viewers could have had on Djémila's baptismal floor.

[216] See e.g. Ibid., 2.

The inscription of Djémila's font, 'the time will come when all [will be reborn] in the fountain', suggests that the Christian community was well aware that society had not yet been completely Christianized when the baptistery was constructed. Both the continued existence of and forms of Roman religion after its formal prohibition in 391 by the decree of Theodosius I are notoriously hard to determine.[217] Secret worship and domestic rituals are only rarely traceable, and, on top of this, relevant archaeological evidence remains often unstudied. Indirect evidence for paganism, however, is ready to hand, recorded in Christian expressions of concern about pagan practices, in North Africa most prominently by Augustine.[218] Dolbeau sermon 26, from the series of Augustinian sermons discovered in 1990, serves as an apt example.[219] Augustine mentions the secret continuation of initiatory rites into pagan cults in communities only recently Christianized, as well his concern about the presence of Christians at spectacles and magical and astrological sessions.[220] The *Tractatus contra paganos*, given on a first of January between 400 and 404, in particular, gives insight into Augustine's worries about the continuation of pagan worship. Exceptionally long and with the expressed intention of keeping listeners away from the Roman New Year celebration, the *Tractatus* provides Augustine's descriptions of Neoplatonic spiritual exercises and purifying rites

[217] C. Th. 16,10,10 issued on 24 February 391. For the problems of interpreting archaeological evidence of private religious practices in the period of late antiquity see C. Sfameni, *Residenze e culti in età tardoantica* (Rome: Scienze e Lettere, 2014). On domestic religion in the ancient world more generally J. P. Bodel and S. M. Olyan, *Household and family religion in antiquity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008). With a specific interest in Jewish domestic ritual R. Albertz et al., *Family and household religion: toward a synthesis of Old Testament studies, archaeology, epigraphy, and cultural studies* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2014).

[218] R. A. Markus, *The end* (1990), 117.

[219] For an annotated French translation E. Gilson, "Philosophie et incarnation selon saint Augustin: suivi de, Saint Augustin: Lettre XVIII, Sermon contre les païens, Dolbeau 26", in: *Saint Augustin, Philosophie et incarnation,* (ed.) (Geneva: Ad Solem, 1999)Saint Augustin, Philosophie et incarnation.

[220] Augustine, Dolbeau 26,28. See C. Lepelley, "L'aristocratie lettrée païenne: une menace aux yeux d'Augustin (à propos du sermon Dolbeau 26 – Mayence 62)", in: *Augustin prédicateur,* Goulven Madec (ed.) (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1998), 398.

of mystery cults as ongoing.[221] Augustine also affirmed that in early fifth-century North Africa the divide between the Christian lower classes and a pagan aristocracy had not been overcome. He imagines a pagan confronted with the prospect of converting to Christianity objecting: 'I will be what my concierge is, and not what Plato was, not what Pythagoras was.'[222] The strong affiliation of the Roman aristocracy with paganism was problematic for Augustine because its influence on the wider public was significant. Augustine reports in another place a phrase used in Hippo: 'if this noble became Christian, nobody stayed pagan'.[223]

Imperial and private anti-pagan measures worsened relationships between Christians and pagans and disrupted the public order. A wave of conflicts had begun when the Theodosian decree was enforced in North Africa from 399 onwards. Gaudentius and Jovius, two delegates sent by emperor Honorius in this year, destroyed temples and statues in Carthage, and were imitated by Christians in Carthage and elsewhere.[224] Christian iconoclasm was virulent throughout the first half of the fifth century at least.[225] For instance, the destruction of a statue of Venus in a public bath in Carthage was ordered by bishop Quodvultdeus in 434 because a young girl had been possessed by a bad spirit while contemplating the deity.[226] Christianization proceeded meanwhile, to the extent that a large share of North Africa's late antique ecclesiastical structures were

[221] Ibid., 401-406.
[222] Augustine, Dolbeau 26,59.
[223] C. Lepelley, L'aristocratie lettrée (1998), 408 no. 42, on Augustine, Psalm 54,13.
[224] D. Riggs, "The Continuity of Paganism between the Cities and Countryside of Late Roman Africa", in: *Urban centers and rural contexts in late antiquity* Thomas S. Burns and John William Eadie (ed.) (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2001), 294. The event is recorded in Augustine, De civ. Dei, 18,54. See further C. Lepelley, L'aristocratie lettrée (1998), 400 no. 17.
[225] An overview of Christian attitudes towards pagan statuary in North Africa is provided in A. Leone, *The end of the pagan city. Religion, Economy, and Urbanism in late antique North Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 121-187.
[226] C. Lepelley, "Le musée des statues divines. La volonté de sauvegarder le patrimoine artistique païen à l'époque théodosienne", in: *Cahiers Archéologiques – Fin de l'Antiquité et Moyen Âge 42* (1994), 5.

built over the course of the fifth century.[227] Christian building projects transformed the African landscape, although Christianity did not leave its mark on rural Proconsularis and Byzacena until the Byzantine period, while in other regions, like Numidia, Christian traces are more patchy.[228]

On the other hand, North Africa's Roman, and notably also pagan, heritage continued to mark the landscape, provoking different reactions and ways of dealing with it among Christians.[229] Five months after the destruction of temples in Carthage in 399, Honorius ordered that the temples be left intact once they had been emptied of illicit things.[230] Similar orders reached the provinces, both in Africa and elsewhere, throughout the fifth century. Archaeological evidence suggests that many of the surviving African temples were closed and fell into decay.[231] Yet, in 407/408, another law followed that advised the reuse of former temples.[232] A canon issued by the provincial church council of Africa Proconsularis in 401 in Carthage took a stance on these developments. Interestingly, the African clerics considered the artistic properties of a temple as a valid category in their

[227] Y. Thébert, "L'évolution urbaine dans les provinces orientales de l'Afrique Romaine Tardive", in: *OPUS 2* (1983), 115. On the Christianization of North Africa from an archaeological perspective N. Duval, L'évêque (1989). Most recently the useful catalogue of churches in Tunisia F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, *Tunisie* (2014).

[228] A comprehensive study of rural Byzantine churches in North Africa is missing to date. A start is made by the work of Fathi Béjaoui and François Baratte: F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, Églises urbaines, églises rurales (2001); F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, *Tunisie* (2014). A brief overview of fifth- and sixth-century church building in T. Ghalia, "L'architecture religieuse en Tunisie aux Ve et VIe siècles", in: *Antiquité Tardive 10* (2002). On Byzacena specifically N. Duval, "Études d'architecture chrétienne nord-africaine", in: *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome. Antiquité 84* (1972), 1127-1179. For rural North Africa more generally see recently P. v. Rummel, "The Transformation of Ancient Land- and Cityscapes in Early Medieval North Africa", in: *North Africa under Byzantium and Early Islam,* Susan T. Stevens and Jonathan Conant (ed.) (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2016).

[229] Cf. chapter 4.

[230] C. Th. 16, 10, 18 issued on 20 August 399.

[231] A. Leone, *Pagan city* (2013), 29; G. Sears, *African urbanism* (2007), 229.

[232] C. Th. 16,10,19,2 issued on 15 November 408; 407. For the dating see C. Pharr, *The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmondian Constitutions* (Clark, NJ: The Lawbook Exchange, 2001), 458, no. 96.

decision making for or against the persecution of the pagan heritage.[233] The bishops broadly advised the destruction of temples, but were ready to make exceptions for artistically outstanding buildings: temples in rural areas and on private property were defined as targets for destruction because they were bare of ornament. Implicitly, the bishops recognized the aesthetic value of pagan architecture as a reason for its preservation.

Chapter 4 is dedicated to the North African temples that were converted into churches with attached baptisteries; it asks what the motivations were for preserving these temples under the Christian banner. Returning to the baptistery of Djémila, the font's inscription '*tempus erit omnes in fonte [renasci]*' brings to mind yet another observation, so apparently trivial that it is rarely considered: the inscriptions of the earliest North African ecclesiastical buildings were written in Latin. As Peter Brown noted in response to William H.C. Frend's influential claim that North African Donatism as a local African church rejected Greco-Roman culture, the Donatist and Nicene churches shared a distinct preference for Latin.[234] Avoiding the vernacular languages of Punic and Berber marked a shift in the religious practice of North Africans. Increasingly, the church replaced the vernacular with Latin as the language of worship. According to Brown, by adopting Latin the church fostered the expansion of classical culture associated with Christianity at the expense of native cultures associated with paganism.

Thus, Roman culture continued to be a persistent trait of the Christianizing North African society of the fifth and sixth centuries, often transgressing the parameters of the

[233] Register of Carthage, canon 58: *'[…] templa eorum, quae in agris vel locis abditis constituta nullo ornamento sunt, iubeantur omnino destrui'*; C. Munier, *Concilia Africae: a. 345-a. 525* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1974), 196. See also C. Lepelley, Le musée (1994), 6.

[234] W. H. C. Frend, *The Donatist Church: A Movement of Protest in Roman North Africa* (1952). In response P. Brown, "Christianity and Local Culture in Late Roman Africa", in: *The Journal of Roman Studies 58* (1968).

spheres scholarship neatly identifies as religious and secular.[235] Circuses and perhaps also theatrical plays continued to be frequented long into the Vandal period.[236] The interest of the Vandal kingdom in maintaining Roman traditions like the construction of public baths and the sponsoring of Latin poetry has been taken more notice of in the past decade, however.[237] The collection of North African poetry in the *Anthologia Latina*, usually dated to the last days of the Vandal kingdom in 532-534, and the epic poem *Johannis,* written at the beginnings of the 550s under Byzantine rule by Flavius Cresconius Corippus, stand at the end of a long tradition of Latin North African poetry that incorporated mythological topics with ease.[238]

Roman culture and religious practice in the episcopal complex of Djémila

With this brief recapitulation of the ruptures with and continuities of Roman culture and ritual practice in fifth-century North Africa in mind, let us revisit the episcopal complex of Djémila. In two areas within the complex, there is evidence to suggest that Djémila's Christian community was strongly rooted in Roman traditions originally connected to Roman religious practice. Djémila's Christian population made sure that these traditions lived on within the frame of Christian religious practice and social life.

Let us first examine one of the seven donor inscriptions of the north church, dated to the late fourth or first half of the fifth century (fig. 32). The inscription reads 'TULIUS

[235] Most influential for the development of a secularist reading of societal developments in late Roman North Africa is R. A. Markus, *The end* (1990).
[236] A. Leone, *Pagan city* (2013), 100. See chapter 2, 85-93 on the significance of circus games for North African Christians.
[237] Recent publications dealing with Vandal attitudes towards the Roman past include J. Conant, *Staying Roman* (2015); R. Bockmann, *Capital continuous* (2013); R. Miles, The Anthologia Latina (2005); A. Merrills and R. Miles, *The Vandals* (2010).
[238] A. Cameron, "Byzantine Africa: The literary evidence", in: *Changing Cultures in Early Byzantium,* Averil Cameron (ed.) (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996); R. Miles, The Anthologia Latina (2005); C. Lepelley, "Sacred and Secular. The Use of Secularised Latin Pagan Culture by Christians", in: *Religious diversity in late antiquity,* David. M. Gwynn and Susanne Bangert (ed.) (Leiden, Boston, MA: Brill, 2010).

ADEODATUS SACERDOTALIS VOTUM COMP(levit)' – 'the *sacerdotalis* Tulius Adeodatus fulfilled his vow'.[239] The title *sacerdotalis* does not relate to a priestly office, but needs to be completed to read *sacerdotalis provinciae*, which designates a former *sacerdos provinciae*, the president of the *concilium* of the province who was elected yearly.[240] The council of the province held its meeting once a year during the celebrations in honour of Rome and Augustus. The council's duty was to represent the wishes of the province through decrees and ambassadors and to assess the work of governors and other administrators sent by the court. The presiding *sacerdos* resided during the year in the capital of the province and was charged in particular with preparing the sacrifices, *ludi* and festival ceremonies.[241] The inscription proves that the Christian community considered the office of the *sacerdos provinciae* to be meaningful and prestigious around or after 400 AD. The inscription is not unique in North Africa, allowing for the possibility that the institution of the council of the province was maintained in the fifth century. An amendment dated to 455, in the Vandal period, mentions *Maximinus sacerdotalis* of the united provinces of Numidia and Mauretania Sitifensis.[242] Another late document might be the undated epitaph of a certain *Astius Dinaminus sacerdotalis provinciae Africae* from Ammaedara in Byzacena.[243] Due to the unstable borders between the two provinces, it is subject to speculation whether Tulius Adeodatus presided over the united provinces of Numidia and Mauretania Sitifensis like Maximinus or was responsible for Numidia only.[244] What can be asserted with certainty is that one of the notables of the Catholic community of Djémila who was among the benefactors

[239] CIL 8, 8348.
[240] A. Chastagnol and N. Duval, La survivance (1974), 91.
[241] Ibid., 110-111.
[242] Ibid., 112-113.
[243] Ibid., 100-102.
[244] Ibid., 91-94.

of the north church also had a central function in a traditional Roman institution invested in organizing state festivals. The extent to which Christians understood this role to be a religious office is difficult to determine. In any case, in the second half of the fourth century, emperor Julian attempted to make the *sacerdos provinciae* head of all pagan priests in the province.[245] With respect to a similarly long-lived office, the *flamen perpetuus* (attested in North Africa until the sixth century), we know that in 311 the church council of Elvira (Spain) permitted Christians to take up the office, as long as they did not perform sacrifices or profit financially from it.[246] Though the *flamen perpetuus* traditionally carried out sacrifices and ceremonies in honour of the emperor and his deceased predecessors, scholars assume that the office was perceived in Christian times as a secular duty performed by the municipal elite, which comprised in particular the task of organizing games in honour of the emperor.[247]

The second point concerns a preparatory stage of the baptismal rite itself. As we have seen, the baptistery and the bath annex correspond closely with each other (fig. 14).[248] The entrance from the southern vestibule (3) provides a circuit via the bath (1) to the baptismal area and back to either of the vestibules (3, 4), but also allows for the separate use of bath and baptistery. It has been argued that it cannot be ultimately proven that the bath was still in use at the time the baptistery was built. [249] There are, however, good reasons to counter this objection.

[245] Ibid., 116.
[246] The latest inscription mentioning the title, on an epitaph of Astius Mustelus in Ammaedara is from 526: ibid., 110.
[247] Ibid., 109-110; C. Lepelley, "Le lieu des valeurs communes. La cité terrain neutre entre païens et chrétiens dans l'Afrique romaine tardive", in: *Idéologies et valeurs civiques dans le Monde Romain,* Hervé Inglebert (ed.) (Paris: Picard, 2002), 276-277. The purely secular significance of the office is questioned by M. Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue* (2007), 38.
[248] For the baptismal bath see Y. Thébert, *Thermes romains* (2003), 202-203.
[249] P.-A. Février, Développement urbain (1996), 664.

There is no archaeological evidence for an alternative use of the bath, and the two parts of the complex are so closely intertwined that it is hard to imagine any other reason for the baptistery's placement within the bath other than that they were conceived of as a whole.[250] Furthermore, the prominent vista that is created between the triconchal apse (2) and the entrance to the bath (1), passing over the baptismal font, would have been unnecessary and even misleading if the bath was not in use and held no meaning for the sacrament of baptism (fig. 13). The vista is symbolically charged since an important part of the baptismal ceremony was arguably held at the triconched apse in the east of the baptismal chamber. The apse (2) appears to be the most suitable place for ritual actions performed by the bishop after the baptized left the font coming from the west (fig. 15).[251] As there is no information on the baptismal liturgy performed at Djémila, I will use as a point of reference Augustine's baptismal liturgy from the church at Hippo, in terms of location and period of use close to that of Djémila.[252] In Hippo, two main rites preceded the first Eucharist that the newly baptized celebrated together with the community.[253] The first was the dressing of the baptizands. The second was the post-immersion anointing with oil consecrated by the bishop and the imposition of hands by the bishop. Only this last rite was thought to confer the Holy Spirit.[254] Besides the symbolism of the architectural composition of the baptistery, there is a further reason for arguing that the bath functioned together with the baptismal complex. Djémila is not the only baptistery with an annexed bath in the area of today's Algeria. The baptisteries of both Tipasa in Mauretania Caesariensis and of the Donatist church of Timgad in

[250] Y. Thébert, *Thermes romains* (2003), 203.
[251] Pre-immersion rights were possibly performed in a *consignatorium*. See no. 130 in this chapter.
[252] Augustine himself is aware of the variety in liturgical practice in North Africa. See for instance Augustine, ep. 55,19.
[253] J. P. Burns Jr. and R. M. Jensen, *Christianity* (2014), 201-202.
[254] Ibid., 202.

Numidia are also connected to baths. The small bath of Tipasa is adjacent to the baptistery (fig. 49); [255] in Timgad as in Djémila, baptistery and bath are so closely interconnected that the baptistery can be accessed via the bath (fig. 50).[256] Baths in church complexes with baptisteries have also been suggested for Hippo, Rusguniae, Bulla Regia and Sbeitla II.[257]

The phenomenon of North African baptismal bath annexes has not yet been studied in detail.[258] A systematic archaeological survey and interpretations of their usage are missing, but a function within the pre-baptismal preparations is likely in the cases of Djémila, Timgad and Tipasa.[259] The only extant source for pre-baptismal cleansing in North Africa is again Augustine, writing to Januarius (c. 400) on the practice of bathing on the Thursday before Easter:

> […] many or almost all persons in many places were in the habit of bathing on that day. […] If you ask how the custom of bathing arose, no more reasonable explanation occurs to me than that the bodies of those to be baptized had become foul during the observance of Lent, and they would be offensive if they came to the font without bathing on some previous day. This day was especially

[255] Y. Thébert, *Thermes romains* (2003), 226-227.
[256] Ibid., 252-253.
[257] N. Duval, L'évêque (1989), 389; J. Lassus, Les baptistères (1970), 251; J. Lassus, Les edifices (1965), 597-598; M. Leglay, Note sur quelques baptistères d'Algérie (1957), 706.
[258] An overview is offered in Y. Thébert, *Thermes romains* (2003). The most recent study on North African baptisteries mentions them only in passing: D. Morfino, Le strutture battesimali (2011), 32, 64. See also J.-M. Blas de Roblès and C. Sintès, *Sites et monuments antiques de l'Algérie* (2003), 116. Two significantly larger bath complexes were part of the Egyptian pilgrimage site of Abu Mina. See P. Grossmann, *Abu Mina: a guide to the ancient pilgrimage center* (Cairo: Fotiadis & Co. Press, 1986), 20-23; D. Frankfurter, *Pilgrimage and holy space in late antique Egypt* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 292-293. Given their size, it seems implausible that they were predominantly used on Maundy Thursday as Grossmann suggests. For the long history of the ecclesiastical and monastic use of baths see F. R. Stasolla, *Pro labandis curis: il balneum tra tarda antichità e Medioevo* (Rome: Fratelli Palombi editori, 2002); F. R. Stasolla, "Balnea ed edifici di culto: relazioni e trasformazioni tra tarda antichità e alto medioevo", in: *Ecclesia Urbis,* Alessandra Guidobaldi Guiglia and Federico Guidobaldi (ed.) (Vatican City: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 2002). For the conversion of baths into churches and Christian positions towards bathing culture in the West see J. A. Jiménez Sánchez and J. Sales Carbonell, "Termas e Iglesias durante la antigüedad tardía: Reutilización arquitectónica o conflicto religioso? Algunos ejemplos hispanos", in: *Sacralidad y Archeología,* José María Blásquez Martínez and Antonino González Blanco (ed.) (Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, 2004).
[259] J. Lassus, Les baptistères (1970), 251; J.-M. Blas de Roblès and C. Sintès, *Sites et monuments antiques de l'Algérie* (2003), 116.

> chosen for it, on which the Lord's Supper is annually commemorated, and, because it was permitted for those about to be baptized, many others wished to join with them in bathing and relaxing the fast.[260]

Augustine experienced bathing as a practice common among neophytes when they broke the fast on Maundy Thursday after the period of strict observance called for by Lent. During the Lenten period the neophytes in Hippo had fasted by eating only once a day, had abstained from eating meat, drinking wine, engaging in sexual relations and attending the theatre. Additionally, they did not visit the public baths in that time. The Lenten period was moreover structured by a series of purifications and catechetical lessons like exorcisms and the teaching of the creed and the Lord's Prayer.[261] The baptismal rite itself took place during the Easter vigil on Saturday night. It is noteworthy that Augustine describes this washing on Maundy Thursday as a pragmatic necessity without giving it any significance in the context of the spiritual purification of the body that had taken place in the weeks before the event. Given that it appears likely that the bath of Djémila had been, at least in part, built for the purpose that Augustine describes as a widespread habit, it would seem a somewhat wasted effort if the Christian community could have bathed just as well in a public bath.[262] The archaeological evidence suggests instead that the Christians of Djémila, Tipasa, Timgad and possibly others gave great importance to the existence of a bath as part of the religious

[260] Augustine, ep. 54,7,9-10 (transl. Augustine and W. Parsons, *Letters. Volume 1, (1-82)* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1951), 259).
[261] J. P. Burns Jr. and R. M. Jensen, *Christianity* (2014), 205-206.
[262] Though there is little evidence that shared bathing was not the norm in late Roman North Africa, a separate Christian bath would also have allowed for the separation of the sexes. For an archaeological assessment of North African bathing practice G. Sears, *African urbanism* (2007), 86. One of the two bath complexes at Abu Mina is a double bath, potentially built in this way for the same purpose of dividing the sexes: P. Grossmann, *Abu Mina: a guide to the ancient pilgrimage center* (1986), 20-23. See further with a focus on eastern sources G. Bady and L. Foschia, "Chrétiens, rabbins, païens dans le même bain? Les bains dans l'Orient romain (ive-viie s.) ou comment s'en accommoder", in: *25 siècles de bain collectif en Orient: Proche-Orient, Égypte et péninsule Arabique: balaneia = thermae = hammāmāt: actes du 3e colloque international Balnéorient,* Marie-Françoise Boussac et al. (ed.) (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 2014).

infrastructure. The fact that Augustine mentions large crowds attending the bath on an important day in the Christian calendar points in a similar direction. It is worth asking whether bathing might have been perceived by the neophytes as another ritual step towards the ultimate cleansing. Whatever meaning it held for individual Christian communities – pragmatic washing or ritual cleansing – it seems safe to say that a pre-baptismal purification makes particular sense for a population that was still strongly influenced by Roman religious practices, which acknowledged a need for purification before the performance of sacred actions. Preliminary purification by washing belonged to the standard practices of much of Roman religious worship – be it in civic temples or in healing or oracular sanctuaries, be it in mystery religions like Roman Mithras worship or in magical practices. [263] A pre-baptismal bathing custom, as it appears to have been celebrated in Djémila, should therefore be read as evidence for the community's indebtedness to traditional Roman ways of ritual practice and the wish to maintain elements of this tradition in their religious life as Christians. With regard to this point, I have shown that the late fourth- or early fifth-century baptistery of Djémila – part of an important Numidian episcopal complex, a Catholic memorial site, and presumably the centre of a pilgrimage – was most likely bare of univocally Christian decoration. The marine scene that dominates the baptismal decoration would have reminded contemporary viewers of mostly secular Roman public and private buildings, while also leaving open the possibility of Christianizing interpretations. The second part of my argument concerns the Roman traditions of non-Christian origin that conceivably shaped the art and architecture of Djémila's church complex, and evidently were of

[263] E. Ferguson, *Baptism* (2009), 25-37; D. Hellholm (ed.), *Ablution, initiation, and baptism* (2011), 41-154 with several chapters dealing with non-Christian rites and initiation rituals involving water. On the role of water in Roman Mithras worship in particular see P. Adrych et al., *Images of Mithra* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 76-78.

importance to its Christian community. I argue that for any meaningful interpretation of Djémila's baptismal decoration we need to take into consideration this integrating stance on Roman traditions.

In a further contribution to the interpretation of motifs taken from the natural world in church buildings, Maguire states that by '[b]orrowing much of the iconography of secular abundance and pleasure, the Christian authorities converted the good life dominated by the late Roman aristocrats into a good life that was controlled by the church'.[264] Maguire draws here on the wider material culture surrounding, and employed by, Christians as the source of interpretative aids for Christian art, in a similar vein to the approach I am suggesting here. He shows that despite harsh critiques of domestic luxury from the side of clerics, the furnishings of ecclesiastic buildings adapted precisely the models criticized.[265] Maguire argues that the takeover of domestic forms of art in the church space reveals the church's claim for the position formerly held by the aristocracy as the dominant institution of civic power. The church presented itself as heir of the socio-economic and political power held by the Roman aristocracy, and claimed its succession via artistic imitation.

When we overcome exclusively scripture-based approaches by acknowledging 1) the impact that the cultural affiliations of an iconography can have on its understanding in Christian contexts, and 2) the importance of the general attitude towards Roman culture for the viewer's perspective, the baptismal mosaic of Djémila exemplifies Maguire's point well, though it also transcends it.[266] Djémila's marine scenery (as indeed much of

[264] H. Maguire, "The Good Life", in: *Late Antiquity. A guide to the postclassical world,* Glen W. Bowersock et al. (ed.) (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 253.
[265] Maguire also cites some examples of domestic iconoclasm targeted at mythological scenery, for instance at El Haouria in modern day Tunisia. Ibid., 247-249, esp. 248.
[266] For 'cultural affiliation' see chapter 2, 87-93.

the natural imagery Maguire has in mind) was not restricted to aristocratic use, but had the character of stock imagery for multi-purpose use in a variety of both domestic and public contexts. Baths, where marine scenes also tended to be used, were especially central institutions in late Roman cities. While many other institutions of public life started to vanish from the third century onwards, baths replaced the forum in its function as the central location of public life and social and political events. The church council of 411, for instance, took place in the bath of Gargilius in Carthage, and the baths were the only group of public buildings Vandal rulers took much care to restore.[267]

It appears that in the case of Djémila the cultural point of reference of the baptismal decoration must be conceived of in much wider terms: The baptistery is decorated in a distinctively Roman way, blurring the borders between a pre-Christian and a Christian society that both lived with the same sort of imagery. Through the mosaic a visual connection between representative buildings of Roman life and the initiatory space for Christians was produced. It was left to the interpretation of the viewers and the guidance of the clerics to reconcile the mosaic's generic Roman character with its Christian meaning.

Conclusion

By looking at the case study of the baptismal decoration of Djémila, I have demonstrated the need to move beyond purely allegorical readings of baptismal imagery, and of early Christian art more generally, because they systematically privilege the views of ecclesiastical elites. Analysing the local conditions under which contemporary viewers

[267] On the Vandal appreciation of baths see R. Miles, The Anthologia Latina (2005), 110-111. For the continuous use and refurbishment of baths see Y. Thébert, *Thermes romains* (2003), 418-421; P. v. Rummel, The Transformation of Ancient Land- and Cityscapes (2016), 113; J. Conant, *Staying Roman* (2015), 53; G. Sears, *African urbanism* (2007), 86.

interpreted baptismal art, largely through material evidence, contributes to a nuanced understanding of contemporary perspectives. In the case of Djémila, it has become clear that the congregation was deeply embedded in Roman pre-Christian traditions which, to a traceable extent, it sought to preserve in the public Christian realm. I suggest that we can understand the marine and not specifically Christian decoration of Djémila also as a means intended to foster and express the link of Djémila's Christian community with the Roman culture it considered itself a part of. In the next chapter, I will develop this argument further by examining baptismal iconography that has in the past been described as 'pagan'.

Chapter 2: The Use of 'Pagan' Imagery in Baptisteries

Introduction: Complex cultural affiliations of images as an indicator of the contemporaneous enactment of Roman and Christian identities

In the last chapter, I have shown that baptismal imagery is often treated by modern scholars as a visual translation of earlier scriptural models taken from the Bible or the church fathers.[268] Where baptismal decoration is potentially in conflict with the textual model, this tends to be overlooked or discussed only to the degree that the imagery can be made to conform with the textual evidence. What happens, though, if we shift our attention to non-Christian iconography, i.e. iconography which clearly surpasses the Christian interpretative frame, because its origins lie openly outside of the Christian religion and do not conform to official demands on Christian conduct and theological opinion? The use of imagery not straightforwardly associable with Christian significance requires us to explore images' relevance and function beyond their correspondence to the Christian message. This chapter concentrates on a group of baptismal iconographies that have the potential to evoke associations that conflict with Christian faith. The three case studies are drawn from the late Roman and Byzantine mosaic tradition that connected workshops and craftsmen between North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula, fostering the transmission of artistic techniques and visual repertoires.[269] The chapter

[268] An earlier version of the Lusitanian section of this chapter has been published in S. Lenk, "Iberian Christians and the classical past – The baptistery of Milreu/Estói (Algarve) at the end of late antiquity", in: *Transformatio et Continuatio. Forms of Change and Constancy of Antiquity in the Iberian Peninsula 500-1500,* Horst Bredekamp and Stefan Trinks (ed.) (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2017).

[269] For the artistic exchange in various crafts between North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula, particularly in Lusitania and Baetica H. Schlunk and T. Hauschild, *Die Denkmäler der frühchristlichen und westgotischen Zeit* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1978), 35-73, esp. 38-39, 46-47, 54-55, 57-58, for the considerable influence of North African art on the Balearic Islands 77. See also N. Duval, *Les églises africaines à deux absides. Recherches archéologiques sur la liturgie chrétienne en Afrique du Nord. I: Les basiliques de Sbeitla à deux sanctuaires opposés* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1971), 381-395. For an overview on North Africa's trade relationship with Hispania C. Wickham, *Framing the early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean 400-800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 709-713. On Baetica and Lusitania in particular K. E. Carr, "A changing world – African red slip in Roman and Visigothic Baetica", in: *The Visigoths: studies in culture and society,* Alberto Ferreiro (ed.) (Leiden: Brill, 1999); J. C. Quaresma, "Les importations de céramique

starts with the sixth-century rural baptistery of Henchir el Koucha in Africa Proconsularis in the north of present-day Tunisia, whose decoration alludes to the traditions of the Roman circus. It then moves to the Roman province of Lusitania in what is today southern Portugal, where the assumed baptistery of Myrtillis, now Mértola, in the Alentejo, contains an image of the mythological hero Bellerophon. Finally, I discuss the baptistery of the *villa rustica* at Milreu/Estói in the Algarve, also in the province of Lusitania, which is attached to an earlier Roman building covered with a mosaic frieze showing a marine *thiasus* scene.

While the so-called water-temple of Milreu is the subject of long-standing debates, the other two case studies have only recently been excavated. In all three cases, scholars have contented themselves with thinking about ways in which contemporary users might have Christianized depictions which arguably do not fit their religious assumptions. In the introduction, I have already criticised the tendency to stop investigating the purpose of such depictions once a 'Christianized' meaning is established.[270] The exclusive focus on Christian meanings makes us lose sight of the more basic question of why such imagery was used in Christian spaces in the first place. This chapter explores possible motivations for the preference of imagery with Roman roots over imagery of an ostensible and uncontested Christian character in the baptisteries of Henchir el Koucha, Milreu and Mértola.

culinaire africaine à Chaos Salgados, Santiago de Cacém (Mirobriga?), en la villa de Toralla (Vigo, Galicia, Espana)", in: *Late Roman coarse wares, cooking wares and amphorae in the Mediterranean: archaeology and archaeometry: comparison between western and eastern Mediterranean,* Simonetta Menchelli et al. (ed.) (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2010).

[270] See in the introduction 18-20.

I would like to call the kind of imagery this chapter is concerned with images with complex cultural affiliations.[271] By cultural affiliation I mean all those aspects of an image or object that constitute its belonging to a given culture or cultures in the eyes of a beholder. Cultural affiliations are not inherent properties. Human attributions and ways of handling imagery and objects endow them with meaning, with cultural significance being one part of this.[272] Defining cultural affiliations does not presuppose culture to be a fixed entity; rather the concept is based on an understanding of culture as a continuously evolving process a group of people engages in to create a shared identity.[273] The interpretative level of cultural connotations has come to prominence in the context of art historical globalization studies.[274] How viewers associate objects or images with a culture, define them as foreign or familiar, as representative of something outside or within their own culture, or both, are questions highly relevant to the study of the material cultures of interconnected societies. However, the interpretative level of cultural connotations can also be fruitfully applied to the field of late antique Christian art, even beyond research on globalization and connectivity across geographical borders. The cultural affiliation of visual and material culture is not only of interest in

[271] For the concept of the 'cultural biography' of an image, discussed in the context of globalizing image use in antiquity, see M. J. Versluys, "Roman visual material culture as globalising koine", in: *Globalisation and the Roman world: world history, connectivity and material culture,* Martin Pitts and Miguel John Versluys (ed.) (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 154-155. On visual memory banks recently J. Elsner and M. Squire, "Sight and memory. The visual art of Roman mnemonics", in: *Sight and the Ancient Senses,* Michael Squire (ed.) (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016).

[272] For attribution of value and meaning to objects A. Appadurai, "Commodities and the politics of value", in: *The social life of things: commodities in cultural perspective,* Arjun Appadurai (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), esp. 3-5.

[273] D. Howes, "Cultural appropriation and resistance in the American Southwest. Decommodifying 'Indianness'", in: *Cross-Cultural Consumption: Global Markets, Local Realities,* David Howes (ed.) (London, New York: Routledge, 1996), 155-157 for culture as 'process' which also problematizes the status of material culture in such a definition. Cf. J. Tomlinson, *Cultural imperialism: a critical introduction* (London: Pinter, 1991), 4-5 on culture as 'a particular way of life'.

[274] On cultural connotations as an investigative category see V. Rujivacharakul, *Collecting China: the world, China, and a history of collecting* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2011), 15-19; M. J. Versluys, Roman visual material culture as globalising koine (2015), 141-143.

border zones or where iconographies and objects travel, but crucially also in times of cultural transition. The question of cultural continuity or rupture is of particular pertinence to the study of late antiquity and the fundamental social, political and religious changes of this period.

In the context of the late antique development of 'Christian culture', by which I understand the ways and means of communicating that people identifying as Christians use in communal religious contexts, many questions arise about the cultural affiliation of imagery.[275] Was an image deriving from a non-Christian context identified as Christian when placed in a Christian religious setting? If it was an ancient motif, did it continue to be related to the past? Was this past understood as Christian, as Roman, as pagan, as a mix of these things or as something else? Did an image lose its affiliation with the past when it was integrated into the Christian sphere? Questions like these often come up as by-products of iconographic analyses of pictorial programmes made for Christians, yet they are rarely systematically approached. What these questions have in common is that they try to determine the degree to which Christian communities had exclusive or inclusive attitudes towards visual culture that was not originally affiliated with Christianity; they ask for the cultural affiliations attributed to such visual culture in times of religious change.

[275] I do not explicitly understand Christian culture to be an elite culture, but to be present whenever people who identify as Christian interact. Elitist concepts of culture are still omnipresent in Roman and late antique studies, including Christian studies. See for instance R. Hingley, *Globalizing Roman cultur* (2005), 69-71; A. Cameron (ed.), *The Mediterranean world in late antiquity, AD 395-600* (London: Routledge, 1993), 131-141. For the geographical area discussed in this chapter A. M. Jorge, "Church and culture in Lusitania in the V-VIII centuries: A late Roman province at the crossroads", in: *The Visigoths: studies in culture and society,* Alberto Ferreiro (ed.) (Leiden: Brill, 1999). For popular Christian culture see J. P. Toner, *Popular culture in ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009), 185-197. A fresh perspective on the subject is offered in L. Grig, *Popular culture in the ancient world* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

In order to assess which cultural affiliations an image used in a Christian space would have held for fifth- and sixth-century Christians beyond its Christian affiliation, it is imperative to think about how acquainted they would have been with other contexts in which such imagery occurred and about the alternative meanings they could have plausibly ascribed to the imagery. Both questions will be discussed in respect to each case study.

Where it can be established that the image would likely have had complex cultural connotations for a considerable number of recipients, I will ask what role the image might have played in the lived religious practice of the community. Its impact on the self-image of the Christian community could have considerably differed depending on the image's location and visual impact in the communal and liturgical space. Where the positioning of such imagery was carefully planned and given a very prominent role in the baptismal space, it is more likely that its sponsors wanted it to promote a Christianity inclusive of the culture to which it alluded. It is important to point out before we begin that all attributions that I have used so far in my description of the cultural baggage of imagery – 'the Roman tradition', 'the pagan past', 'Roman cultural affiliation', 'Christian cultural affiliation' – are my own. I am not presupposing that contemporary recipients would have made clear distinctions between religious or imperial and non-imperial cultures, nor between the past and the present. Yet, I find such terminology indispensable in order to communicate what, from our retrospective viewpoint, Christian communities did when they used imagery of non-Christian origin. While I consider it possible that the use of traditional imagery in baptismal contexts was targeted and purposeful, it is likewise imaginable that those who created and cared for culturally ambivalent imagery simply did not feel a strong divide between the 'Roman'

and 'Christian' spheres. [276] The three case studies will give us the chance to discuss to what extent material remains can or cannot help decide this question in individual cases. What the presented evidence demonstrates in any case is that through baptismal art, members of the Christian communities discussed handed down a (in my terms) flexible and inclusive understanding of Christian identity to future generations of Christians.

1. Henchir el Koucha

The archaeological evidence

In 2013, a rural church (fig. 51) was excavated at the village of Henchir el Koucha, close to Oued Zarga, 75 km south-eastwards of Carthage in ancient Africa Proconsularis.[277] The pavement of this 25 m long, north-oriented church is largely covered in mosaics, which I will return to shortly.[278] Based on ceramic finds, the three-aisled church was built at the beginning of the fifth century at the latest, and was considerably transformed in one or two phases in the sixth century.[279] On its north-eastern side, it was flanked by an additional chamber of c. 8 m by 3.60 m.[280] According to the excavators, a baptismal font was inserted in this chamber in the sixth century (fig. 51). [281] The previous use of this part of the church (including the possibility of a baptismal function before the construction of the preserved font) has not been discussed by the excavators.

---

[276] Arguments for an interested association with Roman culture include J. Conant, *Staying Roman* (2015), esp. 371-377 in the context of political fragmentation in Vandal North Africa, Romano-African Christians and Vandal Christians alike could have used the identity category of Romanness to attain cultural stability. For Romanness as religious category 130-192. In contrast G. Bonner, "The Extinction of Paganism and the Church Historian", in: *Journal of Ecclesiastical History 35* (1984), 348: Christians may have wanted to make it easier for converts to accept Christian religion on the grounds of a shared cultural heritage.

[277] F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, *Tunisie* (2014), 81-84; F. Béjaoui, "Quelques nouvelles découvertes d' époque chrétienne en Tunisie", in: *Acta XVI congressus internationalis archaeologiae christianae (Romae 22-28.9.2013): Costantino e i Costantinidi: l'innovazione costantiniana, le sue radici e i suoi sviluppi,* Vincenzo Nicolai Fiocchi et al. (ed.) (Vatican City: Pontifico Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 2016), 1682-1685.

[278] F. Béjaoui, Quelques nouvelles découvertes d' époque chrétienne en Tunisie (2016), 1683.

[279] Ibid., 1682.

[280] F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, *Tunisie* (2014), 82.

[281] Ibid., 84.

As so often in Africa Proconsularis, the baptismal setting is astonishingly lavish for a rural construction.[282] A quadrilobed font of a depth of 66 cm (1), originally covered by a ciborium and furnished with a heated drainage system, took up the northern half of the baptismal chamber.[283] In connection with the installation of the font, the baptistery was covered entirely in a mosaic floor which has been for the most part preserved. Quadrilobed fonts like the one in Henchir el Koucha are the most common font type in North African baptisteries overall.[284] Traditionally they have been thought to date mostly from the Byzantine period, when it is assumed that a large wave of baptismal constructions spread across rural North Africa, although recent scholarship has noted that a small minority of a corpus of altogether 24 exemplars has been dated to as early as the fourth century.[285] The excavators themselves suggested that a Vandal dating of the font in the early sixth century was not less plausible than a Byzantine dating later in the same century.[286]

At some point, the passage (2) from the northern end of the church behind the apse to the chamber was blocked off with blocks of limestone (marked in red) (fig. 51).[287] The blocks covered a section of the baptistery's mosaic floor.[288] The mosaics hence preceded the blocking of the passage. The excavators do not give any reason to doubt that the mosaic decoration was fabricated around the same time as the font. Thus, the mosaic

[282] For an overview D. Morfino, *Le strutture battesimali* (2011). For the Christianization of rural North Africa K. Bowes, *Private worship, public values, and religious change in late antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 162-178.
[283] The basin has a depth of 66 cm and occupies 4 m x 3.80 m of the chamber which is approximately 4 m x 8 m large: F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, *Tunisie* (2014), 82.
[284] D. Morfino, Le strutture battesimali (2011), 49-52 fig. 23.
[285] Ibid., 52 no 142.
[286] The find of an epitaph dated to the reign of Thrasamund in 517 near the quadrilobed baptismal font of El-Erg (Byzacena) has recently provided a reason to rethink the common Byzantine dating of this type of font, also in relation to Henchir el Koucha. F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, *Tunisie* (2014), 84 and 341.
[287] Ibid., 82.
[288] Ibid., 82.

decoration was likely created in the sixth century, either when Africa Proconsularis was still under Vandal rule or after the Byzantine conquest of North Africa in 533 AD.

More refurbishments took place. In the south of the baptismal annex another entrance was carved (3), making the baptistery accessible directly from the outside.[289] Another substantial alteration to the church was the installation of a counter-apse in the south. North African counter-apses like this one are thought to date in the Byzantine period to the sixth century.[290] The ground plan (fig. 51) seems to suggest that this change (also marked in red) correlated with the total blocking of the passage between church and baptismal chamber.

A sixth-century visitor to the baptistery would have experienced a mosaic programme that was on the one hand innovative and unusual within the iconographic spectrum of North African baptismal decorations, and on the other marked by great coherence in comparison to the mosaic decoration of the basilica, which was transformed substantially by the insertion of more and more mosaic epitaphs.[291] Visitors entering the baptistery from the south (3) would have observed two large mosaic panels, framed by a wave pattern and a floral ornament on the borders (figs. 52 and 53). The southernmost panel depicts floral motifs and shield ornaments, interspersed with little crosses.[292] The currently available photography is of very poor quality, which makes a detailed description impossible. The larger central panel is orientated towards the font so that

[289] Ibid., 82.
[290] Ibid., 84. For the North African and Iberian model of the counter-apse N. Duval, *Les églises africaines à deux absides. Récherches archéologiques sur la liturgie chrétienne en Afrique du Nord. I: Les basiliques de Sbeitla à deux sanctuaires opposés* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1971); T. Ulbert, *Frühchristliche Basiliken mit Doppelapsiden auf der Iberischen Halbinsel: Studien zur Architektur- und Liturgiegeschichte* (Berlin: Mann, 1978).
[291] F. Béjaoui, Quelques nouvelles découvertes d' époque chrétienne en Tunisie (2016), 1683.
[292] Ibid., 1684.

visitors would have needed to move forward into the chamber to look at it. The only position from which it can be fully appreciated is from inside the font. The panel is unique in its design. It is divided in two halves, with the central half facing the font and the northern one surrounding it. In the central part (fig. 53), a source of water streams from the part closest to the font, nourishing a pair of deer. This baptismal motif is common throughout North Africa and was integrated in a larger scene set amidst two pine trees.[293] The bust of a young, beardless man with bare shoulders is depicted on the far left, cornered between the deer and a pine tree. A winged man, draped in a floating garment, flies at the top of the scene and carries a fork-like object, possibly a candlestick.[294] A red bird clutches the winged man's garment.[295] Both the male bust and the winged man are unique occurrences of depictions of humans or divine personalities in North African baptismal imagery. The unusual iconography makes it hard to accept the excavators' interpretation of the scene as the baptism of Christ in the presence of an angel and the Holy Ghost in the guise of a dove.[296] Neither the interpretation of the bust as Christ nor of the clutching bird as the Holy Ghost can be based on comparable late antique pictorial schemes.

Moving forward to the north, the panel continues. There is no visual demarcation, but it spreads around the font (figs. 52 and 53). The floral border is carried through on all sides except for the west where, judging from the available photography (figs. 52 and 53), the new wall separating the northern end of the church from the baptistery (2) covered it. The northern and western sides of the font are decorated with pairs of

[293] For the motif cf. chapter 1, no. 106.
[294] F. Béjaoui, Quelques nouvelles découvertes d' époque chrétienne en Tunisie (2016), 1684.
[295] F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, *Tunisie* (2014), 82.
[296] F. Béjaoui, Quelques nouvelles découvertes d' époque chrétienne en Tunisie (2016), 1684.

animals arranged in strict symmetry; the members of each pair turn to one another and are separated by a grape or floral motif between them. There is no equivalent on the eastern side which is entirely filled by the vegetal border. The pairs of animals, peacocks and another pair of birds picking grapes in the north, and a pair of horses in the west, follow a pattern of facing animals with origins in ancient Mesopotamia, and mirror the deer facing the fountain in the south.[297] The pair of horses (fig. 54), adorned with neckbands and each holding a front leg raised, face a plant that is no longer identifiable. This scene, uniquely in the mosaic floor, is not orientated towards the fountain, but faces outwards, in close proximity to the deer and at 90 degrees to them (fig. 53). The likely explanation is that when the mosaic was created, before the wall separated church and baptistery, visitors were still able to enter the baptismal chamber from the basilica in the west where the horse motif welcomed them (2).

Visitors would have noticed that the baptismal decoration was ostensibly consistent with the mosaic programme of the basilica. The excavators describe large panels covering the basilica in vegetal and ornamental decoration.[298] The central nave also hosts three animal scenes: the southernmost, near the counter-apse, is a pair of deer and a cock surrounded by pines, but an epitaph inserted later caused the erasure of half of the scene (fig. 55). Another pair of deer and a palm tree are depicted at the centre of the nave, while in the northernmost animal scene a peacock follows a horse (fig. 56), in between the two is a flowering plant.[299] The horse is presented in a similar posture to the horses in the baptistery and also wears a neckband. Finally, the supposedly latest

[297] H. Danthine, *Le palmier-dattier et les arbres sacrés dans l'iconographie de l'Asie occidentale ancienne* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1937).
[298] F. Béjaoui, Quelques nouvelles découvertes d' époque chrétienne en Tunisie (2016), 1682-1683.
[299] Ibid., 1683.

installation, the counter-apse, is adorned with a mosaic that covers a reliquary sunk into the ground which by 2016 was still undisturbed. On top of the reliquary, a *kantharos* filled with flowers and grapes is depicted. The mosaic of the counter-apse also shows a pair of peacocks facing a cross from which alpha and omega hang.[300] A pair of doe is represented in front of the counter-apse.[301]

The design of this latest mosaic shows that artists carried through with the facing animal motif as a central figurative element throughout all significant alterations to the building. The narrative culmination point was reached in front of the baptismal font where the human bust and the angel are set above the pair of drinking deer. The baptismal mosaic floor was left untouched whereas in the basilica the floor design is disturbed by a total of fifteen mosaic epitaphs, inserted fairly systematically in the northern and southern rooms behind the apses as well as in front of the apses (fig. 55).[302] The mosaic decoration of Henchir el Koucha thus raises a number of questions, but only one of them shall be our concern here: in contrast to depictions of pairs of peacocks and deer and to a lesser extent the depiction of the cock, horses do not have a tradition of representation in church spaces and baptisteries.[303] In their uses of this pattern, North African ecclesiastical spaces privileged animals with widely recognized Christian symbolic significance.[304] The deer drinking from a water source, for instance, are closely related to Psalm 42, 'As the hart longs for the springs of water, so does my soul long for you', while peacocks are a long-standing symbol of immortality, whereas

[300] F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, *Tunisie* (2014), 83.
[301] F. Béjaoui, Quelques nouvelles découvertes d' époque chrétienne en Tunisie (2016), 1683; F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, *Tunisie* (2014), 84.
[302] For the epitaphs F. Béjaoui, Quelques nouvelles découvertes d' époque chrétienne en Tunisie (2016), 1683.
[303] For mosaics depicting cocks in Tunisian church spaces in Tabarka, Haidra and Bulla Regia cf. Ibid. 1683, no. 22.
[304] A notable exception are the pairs of facing lions that are treated in this chapter, 121.

frequently used pairs of sheep often represent the Christian community.[305] What interest, then, could the Christian community in Henchir el Koucha have had in adding the pair of horses to the established baptismal iconography?

The cultural affiliations of the motif of the facing horses

Horses were only very rarely employed as Christian symbols.[306] Besides the two examples from Henchir el Koucha, a case in question is the horse scratching on a fifth- or sixth-century brick fragment from the monument of Milreu (Algarve) discussed later in this chapter (fig. 57). The fragment is one of a group of bricks found in the church in 1877.[307] The other bricks are ornamented as well, showing common Christian symbols like a pair of peacocks around a vase, a fish, a *kantharos* with leaf ornament, or two fragments of a four-leaf clover.[308] The exact use of these tiles is uncertain, but their ornaments share a symbolic quality which suggests that the scratched horse also possessed a meaning of that sort. However, it is in the private realm of Christian funerary imagery, both in North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula, that horses more commonly appear, although in limited numbers (fig. 58).[309] Imagery related to the Roman circus

[305] For paradisical and baptismal symbolism G. B. Ladner, *Frühchristliche Symbolik* (1992), 138-143.
[306] An exceptional case is the bucolic scene with three horses in the southern annex of the Arapaj basilica in Albania: H. Hidri et al., *Die frühchristliche Basilika in Arapaj/Durrës (Albanien)* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2011), 36-41.
[307] S. P. M. Estácio da Veiga, *Catalogo dos monumentos e objectos de arte antiga, descobertos e obtidos no reconhecimento das antiguidades do districto de Faro, feito desde março de 1877 até outubro de 1878, para o levantamento da Carta Archeologica do Algarve em virtude da portaria de 15 de janeiro de 1877 por S. P. M. Estacio da Veiga* (Lisbon: Archive of the Museu Nacional de Arqueologia Lisbon, 1878), 44.
[308] Ibid.. The bricks are preserved today in the collection of the Museu Nacional de Arqueologia in Lisbon. See no. 468 in this chapter.
[309] Examples in Tunisia are a funerary mosaic in a church in Hadjeb-el-Ayoun, where a horse is placed between a vase and a dove among flowers, as well as the tomb of Lollianus from Tabarka. The mosaic shows a horse tied to a cypress tree beneath the figure of the Good Shepherd and his sheep. Above them are pairs of doves and fish. K. Dunbabin, *Roman North Africa* (1978), 103. The four horses surrounding a cross that Dunbabin identifies in a panel near the altar in the church of El Mouassat have been convincingly identified as sheep due to their enlarged tails reminiscent of similar examples from Uppenna and Sidi Habich. See N. Duval, "Le dossier de l'église d'El Mouassat (au sud-ouest de Sfax, Tunisie)", in: *Antiquités Africaines 8* (1974), 167. The depiction of hooves with two main digits further indicate that they were intended to represent sheep.

sometimes replaced triumphal motifs on Christian sarcophagi in the form of flower garlands and laurel wreaths. The so-called agonistic crown with which winning charioteers were apparently honoured has been identified on a number of sarcophagi.[310] Horses seem to have been another element taken from the repertory of chariot racing for sepulchral purposes. In analogy to the other triumphal motifs used, the horse has been assumed to symbolize victory over death.[311]

The specific tripartite type of two horses facing each other was already in widespread use in private North African spaces when the church of Henchir el Koucha was decorated. Such adorned horses, raising their front legs and facing a plant, a cylinder or a *kantharos*, were commonly depicted in North African domestic mosaics between the late second and the sixth century (fig. 59).[312] Indeed, over twenty North African examples are known, more than half of them from Africa Proconsularis.[313] There is also some evidence for the proliferation of the motif in Italy and Spain.[314]

[310] N. Duval, "Les prix du cirque dans l'antiquité tardive", in: *Cirques et courses de char. Rome-Byzance* Christian Landes (ed.) (Lattes: Edition Imago, 1990), 137.

[311] Cf. K. Dunbabin, *Roman North Africa* (1978), 88-108, esp. 103 for the question of Christian reinterpretation of the horse motif. On elements of horse races as repertoire in Christian sepulchral imagery see N. Duval, Les prix du cirque dans l'antiquité tardive (1990), 137; N. Duval, "Recherches nouvelles sur les prix de concours représentés sur les mosaïques", in: *Bulletin archéologique du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques. Fasc. B, Afrique du Nord 22* (1992), 182; N. Duval, "Les prix de concours de l'Antiquité tardive: nouveautés, hypothèses et doutes ", in: *Bulletin de la Société nationale des antiquaires de France 2004-2005* (2011), 253-256.

[312] M. Yacoub, "La mosaïque de Lahmimine et le thème africain des cheveaux de cirque affrontés", in: *La Mosaique Gréco-Romaine IV: IVe Colloque International pour l'Etude de la Mosaique antique,* Jean-Pierre Darmon and Alain Rebourg (ed.) (Paris: Supplément au Bulletin de l'A.I.E.M.A., 1994), 252. See also M. Ennaifer, "Le thème des chevaux vainqueurs à travers la série des mosaïques africaines", in: *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome 95* (1983).

[313] Ibid., 843, no. 128.

[314] The motif appears on the hilt of a knife, today in the Museo de Spalato, see M. Yacoub, La mosaïque de Lahmimine et le thème africain des cheveaux de cirque affrontés (1994), 252, no. 19; on a second to third century terracotta tile from Osuna (Prov. Sevilla) H. Schlunk and T. Hauschild, *Die Denkmäler* (1978), 58, pl. 72a.

Initially, the motif of facing horses was most probably a way of representing successful race horses, often proudly depicted by their owners in private contexts.[315] The earliest dated example from the house of Sorothus in Hadrumetum (Sousse) from the late second or early third century, now partially destroyed, depicted eight pairs of named horses adorned with palms on their heads and colourful harnesses around their necks (fig. 60). The horses are marked with stable marks or the mark SORO/THI on their hindquarters and shoulders, and they surround palm trees, similar to other early examples of the motif.[316] In the later third and in the fourth century, the central object depicted between the two horses was frequently a *modius*, a cylinder filled with grain customarily given as a prize to winning race horses (fig. 61).[317] The *modius* and other prize symbols – details like bandaged legs, tails bound up with ribbons or blankets draped over the necks, in addition to the use of proper names for the horses – details which mark them as individuals – all suggest that the depicted animals were racehorses.[318] The frequency of this motif and of the related motif of the lone horse depicted in a similar manner, is material evidence for the popularity of chariot racing and horse breeding in North Africa, which was among the most prolific breeding regions of the Roman Empire.[319]

From the fifth century onwards, the motif of the facing horses begins to change. Horses are less often identifiable through proper names, and the *modius* starts to be replaced

[315] M. Ennaifer, Le thème des chevaux vainqueurs à travers la série des mosaïques africaines (1983), 825-837.
[316] K. Dunbabin, *Roman North Africa* (1978), 93-94.
[317] N. Duval, Recherches nouvelles sur les prix de concours représentés sur les mosaïques (1992), 199-201.
[318] On the nomenclature of circus horses K. Dunbabin, *Roman North Africa* (1978), 95 no 25.
[319] On horse farms in North Africa F. Bourdy, "Les cheveaux des courses de chars à Rome", in: *Le Cirque et les courses de chars Rome-Byzance: catalogue de l'exposition,* Véronique Fuentes et al. (ed.) (Lattes: Editions Imago, Musée archéologique Henri Prades, 1990), 147. For the motif of the singular horse M. Ennaifer, Le thème des chevaux vainqueurs à travers la série des mosaïques africaines (1983), 825-831.

by a *kantharos* (fig. 62).[320] Furthermore, the horse motif tends to be represented in proximity to other prophylactic or luck-bringing symbols and inscriptions.[321] Later examples from the fourth to sixth centuries are consequently discussed in the scholarship in symbolic terms rather than as naturalistic depictions. They are seen as luck-bringing signs of victory or as part of more mystical narratives built upon the cosmological meanings attributed to the circus in antiquity.[322]

The facing horses in the baptistery of Henchir el Koucha follow a similar logic to these roughly contemporary depictions. They are not identifiable through names and no depiction of a *modius* evokes a recently won race. However, the tripartite scheme, the position of the horses with one front leg raised, and the neckbands are continuations of the original scheme. Visitors to the baptistery would have noticed the formal analogy of the pair of horses with the pairs of established Christian symbols like the deer and peacock. They would have experienced the horse depictions as one part of a fairly limited selection of animals that decorated church and baptistery repeatedly and in varying combinations. The facing horses motif, though, has a particularly prominent position within the baptismal floor: when the mosaic was made, it was arguably selected to be the first depiction encountered upon entering the baptismal chamber from the

[320] M. Yacoub, La mosaïque de Lahmimine et le thème africain des cheveaux de cirque affrontés (1994), 252.

[321] M. Ennaifer, Le thème des chevaux vainqueurs à travers la série des mosaïques africaines (1983), 836-842 for the mosaics in the maison du Paon, in Moknine (fifth century) (fig. 62 in this thesis) with its inscription protecting against jealousy, and Lahmimine (sixth century) (fig. 64 in this thesis). An interesting variation is the fourth century mosaic of Ellés in which the horses are replaced by female centaurs and the *modius* by a figure of Venus. K. Dunbabin, *Roman North Africa* (1978) 261, plate LX, fig. 152.

[322] K. Dunbabin, *Roman North Africa* (1978), 103-104; M. Ennaifer, Le thème des chevaux vainqueurs à travers la série des mosaïques africaines (1983), 837. See also the different views on the mosaic of Lahmimine M. Yacoub, La mosaïque de Lahmimine et le thème africain des cheveaux de cirque affrontés (1994), 256; N. Duval, Recherches nouvelles sur les prix de concours représentés sur les mosaïques (1992), 204-205. For sixth century cosmological interpretations of the circus S. T. Stevens, "The circus poems in the Latin Anthology", in: *The Circus and a Byzantine cemetery at Carthage,* John H. Humphrey (ed.) (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988).

basilica. It lost this position over the course of the sixth century, but continued to be bound in a decorative scheme that emphasized the salvific nature of baptism.[323] The specific contribution of the horse motif to the overall scheme should be sought in the connotation the horse motif had held since its invention. The notion of victory implied by the motif in the context of the circus was likely now applied to a baptismal purpose. In a baptismal context, it plausibly alludes to the triumph that lies in the spiritual rebirth effected by the baptism. Thus, the pair of horses became part of the overall message of the baptismal decoration, an expression of joy in the achievement of eternal life as a Christian.

Yet, the Christian allegorization of the motif does not eliminate its rootedness in the tradition of circus imagery. So what did the Christians who commissioned the baptistery and the generations who used it over the course of the sixth century make of the image's multivalence? Were they aware of the racing significance of the horse motif? Two things must have been true for the horse motif to have been actively remembered as originating in circus imagery. First, viewers had to be familiar with the realities of the circus, or at least with the circus as a concept. Second, the horse motif would need to have been a fairly widespread and well-known motif regularly associated with circus races.

In regards to the first point, there can be no question that chariot racing was still actively remembered, and in some places still practiced, even in sixth-century Africa Proconsularis. A series of ten poems from the *Anthologia Latina*, of which all but one are ascribed to Luxorius, who wrote for the Vandal court during the reign of Hilderic and

[323] See in this chapter, 95.

Gelimir (523-533 AD), strongly suggests that circus games were held in Vandal Carthage at the time, only 75 kilometres away from Henchir el Koucha.[324] It has also been further argued that the circus in Thysdrus in Byzacena was still active in the sixth century.[325] While the *Anthologia Latina* was not compiled in North Africa, it contains a rich collection of North African poetry, a sizable portion of which was probably composed for the Vandal court.[326] Key *topoi* are Roman institutions like the circus and the amphitheatre as well as new Vandal building projects and the social practices connected to them, whereas Christian subjects are sparse.[327] The *Anthologia Latina* contains works of several poets who probably wrote under different rulers in late antique Carthage. Yet, they are united in their praise of traditional Roman elite cultural practices such as hunting, feasting, euergetism or indeed the holding and attending of circus races.[328] These were amenities enjoyed by members of the Vandal court as much as by the lay Romano-African elite, and their poetical appraisal might well have been a deliberate attempt by the Vandal rulers to emphasize the commonalities between these two groups.[329] The circus is of particular importance as a literary theme in the *Anthologia Latina*, emphasizing its prominence among the Roman traditions still of relevance to sixth-century North Africa. A mosaic depiction of a chariot race from Gafsa (fig. 63),

[324] S. T. Stevens, The circus poems in the Latin Anthology (1988), 177-178. Procopius, De Bello Vandalico, II, 6,6-8 gives testimony to the survival of the circus in this late period. On the late phase of the North African circus with a discussion of circus imagery cf. J. A. Jiménez Sánchez, *Los juegos paganos en la Roma cristiana* (Treviso, Rome: Fondazione Benetton studi ricerche, Viella, 2010), 335-338.
[325] A. Leone, *Pagan city* (2013), 101.
[326] For questions of dating and compiling the *Anthologia Latina* A. Cameron, Byzantine Africa (1996), 3, no. 8; R. Miles, The Anthologia Latina (2005), 306 no 3.
[327] On the circus see S. T. Stevens, The circus poems in the Latin Anthology (1988). For Christian subjects in the *Anthologia Latina* R. Miles, The Anthologia Latina (2005), 317-318.
[328] D. R. Shackleton Bailey, *Anthologia Latina. I, Carmina in codicibus scripta. Fasc. 1, Libri Salmasiani aliorumque carmina* (Stuttgart: in aedibus B.G. Teubneri, 1982).
[329] R. Miles, The Anthologia Latina (2005).

possibly from a bath in sixth-century southern Byzacena, confirms that the circus continued to fascinate late antique minds even far from Carthage.[330]

As to the second point, I have mentioned earlier that the horse motif was obviously popular, especially in Africa Proconsularis, from the second to the sixth century. The motif is clearly embedded in the racing context in all examples up to the late fifth century (fig. 62). Only in Henchir el Koucha and Lahmimine, in another mosaic from sixth-century Africa Proconsularis (fig. 64), is this context not explicitly evoked.[331] While it is certainly true that the motif regularly appears in private houses of persons who were arguably owners of race horses, this does not automatically exclude the less wealthy from knowing the motif. Facing horses, for example, decorated private baths attached to villas, like those in Sidi Abdallah and Moknine (fig. 62), thought in many instances to have been semi-public spaces.[332] Moreover, the motif could travel in the decorations of movable objects, varieties of which have been preserved on the hilt of a knife, today in Spalato, and on a terracotta tile from Osuna.[333] To conclude, from the moment of its creation at some point in the sixth century to the time when circus races fell into oblivion later in the same or perhaps the following century, there is a good chance that for at least some of the visitors to the baptistery of Henchir el Koucha, the associations inspired by the horse motif would have oscillated between (at least) two different poles: Christian salvation and the Roman circus.

---

[330] K. Dunbabin, *Roman North Africa* (1978), 92-93.

[331] M. Yacoub, La mosaïque de Lahmimine et le thème africain des cheveaux de cirque affrontés (1994); M. Ennaifer, Le thème des chevaux vainqueurs à travers la série des mosaïques africaines (1983), 840-842.

[332] For Sidi Abdallah and Moknine M. Ennaifer, Le thème des chevaux vainqueurs à travers la série des mosaïques africaines (1983) 835, 838. The semi-public function of many privately owned baths has often been acknowledged. Notable examples are the baths of the Villa del Casale in Piazza Armerina or of the villa of San Giovanni di Ruoti.

[333] See in this chapter, no. 314.

By alluding to both circus races and Christian salvation at the same time, the motif of the facing horses integrates a social dimension into Christian art which is traditionally considered to have been kept apart from the church space. The choice of this motif for the decoration of a baptismal space in particular has wider ramifications, because it puts into perspective the degree to which baptismal liturgy was the determining factor in the communication of Christian values to neophytes. In Henchir el Koucha, it seems, liturgy and baptismal decoration probably conveyed different ideas about how strictly traditional Roman life had to be banned from Christian life.

In 399 AD, imperial legislation prohibiting all sacrifices in relation to Roman festivals reached North Africa.[334] Spectacles such as chariot racing were still permissible, though this did not hinder Christian polemicists from condemning them as 'pagan'.[335] Church writings circulating in the Western Mediterranean urgently warned against the feelings the circus aroused and against its idolatrous implications. The circus was generally deemed an unchristian institution that needed to be overcome. The two core arguments against the circus made in Tertullian's *De Spectaculis*, which the Carthage-born author wrote at the turn of the third century, became the model for subsequent treatises, sermons and letters on the same issue.[336] The first argument is directed against the

[334] C. Th. 16,10,17, issued on 20 August 399. See also N. Belayche, "Des lieux pour le « profane » dans l'empire tardo-antique ? Les fêtes entre koinônia sociale et espaces de rivalités religieuses", in: *Antiquité Tardive 15* (2007), 42; C. Lepelley, *Les cités de l'Afrique Romaine au Bas-Empire* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1979), 381.

[335] On Christian critiques of the circus L. Lugaresi, "Regio Aliena. L'attegiamento della chiesa verso i luoghi di spettacolo nella città tardoantica", in: *Antiquité Tardive 15* (2007). For an overview of religious aspects of Roman spectacles in antiquity J. Zaleski, "Religion and Roman Spectacle", in: *A companion to sport and spectacle in Greek and Roman antiquity,* Paul Christesen and Donald G. Kyle (ed.) (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2014). See also K. M. Coleman, "Fatal Charades: Roman Executions Staged as Mythological Enactments", in: *Journal of Roman Studies 80* (1990). For the role of the circus in fourth- and fifth-century *ludi* see J. A. Jiménez Sánchez, *Los juegos paganos en la Roma cristiana* (2010), 137-152.

[336] J. A. Jiménez Sánchez, *Los juegos paganos en la Roma cristiana* (2010), 279 and 286.

circus in particular.[337] It concerns the *locura* or madness which the races induced in spectators. Augustine's worry that his friend Alypius's soul was being corrupted by watching the maddening races, or Salvian of Marseille's account of how the enthralled spectators' cries in the arena blended in with the cries of the murdered outside as the Vandals conquered Cirta, evoke the same fear of losing self-control.[338] The second warning encompasses all spectacles, accusing them of being idolatrous because they were dedicated to pagan deities. Participants of spectacles like the circus were automatically in denial of God. This is the principal argument in Tertullian's *De Spectaculis*, and it was also picked up by Salvian in the fifth century and Isidore of Seville in the seventh.[339] The longevity of Christian polemics against idolatrous spectacles brings us to the question: To what extent did the official abandonment of sacrifices on the occasion of festivals manage to alter the popular perception of games as pagan in nature?

Both the *locura* argument and the idolatry argument treat circus games as part of a body of cultural practices that were presented in their entirety as opposed to Christian beliefs and values. Beyond the allegation of idolatry, stereotypical accusations were made against all forms of Roman spectacles: the circus was maddening, the theatre immoral,

[337] Tertullian, De spec. 16,1.

[338] Augustine, Conf., VI, 7,11-12; Salvian, De Gubern. Dei, VI, 12, 69, 71. For further Christian literature on the subject J. A. Jiménez Sánchez, *Los juegos paganos en la Roma cristiana* (2010), 279.

[339] Salvian, De Gubern. Dei, VI, 2, 60; Isidore, Etym., XVIII, 27,1 and XVIII, 59. On Isidore and his warning of demons in the ruins of the circus L. A. García Moreno, "El Cristianismo y el final de los ludi en las Espanas", in: *Hispánia en la Antigüedad Tardía: ocio y espectáculos, Actas del 2 Encuentro Hispania en la Antigüedad Tardía, Alacalá de Henares, 15 a 17 de octubre de 1997,* Luis A. García Moreno and Sebastián Rascón Marqués (ed.) (Alcalá Henares: Universidad del Alcalá, 2001), 7-8; C. Mercado Hernández and E. Sánchez Medina, "Visión isidoriana de los espectáculos públicos", in: *Hispánia en la Antigüedad Tardía: ocio y espectáculos, Actas del 2 Encuentro Hispania en la Antigüedad Tardía, Alacalá de Henares, 15 a 17 de octubre de 1997,* Luis A. García Moreno and Sebastián Rascón Marqués (ed.) (Alcalá Henares: Universidad del Alcalá, 2001), 225-226.

the amphitheatre cruel.[340] Christian writers construed the circus as participating in and even fomenting a culture of dangerous pleasures and shallow entertainments. Conversely, by criticizing the circus, they attacked the cultural practice of Roman spectacles more broadly.

The circus seems to have signified the dangers of all Roman spectacles within the baptismal liturgy. Significantly, a formulation used in baptismal liturgies to make neophytes abjure the devil referred to Roman spectacles. In *De Spectaculis* Tertullian gives the first attested record of a version of this formulation: 'When we enter the water and profess the Christian faith in the terms prescribed by its law, we profess with our mouths that we have renounced the devil, his pomp and his angels.'[341] Formulations such as '*pompae diaboli*' appear several times in *De Spectaculis*. The meaning of *pom*pa in the baptismal context has been vividly discussed by Tertullian scholars, as *pompa* evokes an array of meanings ranging from 'procession' to 'retinue' to 'splendour' to 'ostentation'.[342] Some interpreters argue that Tertullian referred specifically to the '*pompa circi*', the procession attached to circus games.[343] Without entering into this debate, it should be noted that Tertullian himself adopts the formula 'the devil, his pomp and his angels' as an evocation of idolatry, which comprises all spectacles. Hence, he concludes, the newly baptized abjures all forms of spectacle by renouncing 'the devil,

[340] J. A. Jiménez Sánchez, *Los juegos paganos en la Roma cristiana* (2010), 270. Tertullian's *De Spectaculis* is a reaction against all spectacles.
[341] '*Cum aquam ingressi Christianam fidem in legis suae verba profitemur, renuntiasse nos diabolo et pompae et angelis eius ore nostro contestamur*.' Tertullian, De Spec. 4,2 (transl. Tertullian et al., *Apology; De Spectaculis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), 243).
[342] On the question of the correct translation of 'pompae diaboli' see J. H. Waszink, "Pompa diaboli", in: *Vigiliae Christianae 1* (1947) with an account of the different arguments.
[343] Ibid., 32-34 on the positions of Waszink and Köhne.

his pomp and his angels'.[344] Soon after, Tertullian clarifies that the primary significance of '*pompa*' is the procession taking place in the circus:

> But rather more pompous is the outfit of the games in the circus, to which the name pomp properly belongs. The pomp comes first and shows in itself to whom it belongs, with the long line of images, the succession of statues, the cars, chariots, carriages, the thrones, garlands, robes. What sacred rites, what sacrifices, come at the beginning, in the middle, at the end […].[345]

'*Pompae*' as Tertullian used the term in the baptismal abjuring rite did not necessarily evoke the idolatrous aspects of the circus or of spectacles exclusively. Yet, this valence was clearly an important dimension of the phrase's overall meaning. Tertullian's interpretation remained influential for the exegesis of the abjuring formula. Cyril of Jerusalem's *Mystagogic Catecheses*, written in Greek in c. 370 AD, explains the meaning of the phrase 'I renounce you, Satan, and all your works, and all his pomp, and all your worship', which was pronounced by those about to be baptized as they faced westwards, in the direction of Satan. He explicitly uses the spectacles as a synonym for '*pompa*': 'These are the devil's pomp: a passion for the theatre, horse-races, hunting and all other such vain pursuits. […] Avoid the races, a mad spectacle which unseats the soul. All these things are the devil's pomps […]'.[346] While the exact wording was not preserved in the Augustinian rite, the same ritual movements preceding baptism are

[344] Tertullian, De Spec. 4,5: 'What shall we call the chief and outstanding matter, in which the devil and his pomp and his angels are recognized, rather than idolatry? […] So, if it shall be established that the whole equipment of the public shows is idolatry pure and simple, we have an indubitable decision laid down in advance, that this profession of renunciation made in baptism touches the public shows too, since they, being idolatry, belong to the devil, his pomp and his angels.' (Transl. Tertullian et al., *Apology; De Spectaculis* (1931), 242). '*Quid erit summum atque praecipuum, in quo diabolus et pompae et angeli eius censeantur, quam idololatria?* […] *Igitur si ex idololatria universam spectaculorum paraturam constare constiterit, indubitate praeiudicatum erit etiam ad spectacula pertinere renuntiationis nostrae testimonium in lavacro, quae diabolo et pompae et angelis eius sint mancipata, scilicet per idololatrian.*'

[345] Tertullian, De Spec. 7,3-5 (transl. Ibid., 249) '*Sed circensium paulo pompatior suggestus, quibus proprie hoc nomen: pompa praecedens, quorum sit in semetipsa probans de simulacrorum serie, de imaginum agmine, de curribus, de tensis, de armamaxis, de sedibus, de coronis, de exuviis. Quanta praeterea sacra, quanta sacrificia praecedant, intercedant, succedant* […].'

[346] Cyril of Jerusalem, Myst. Cat. 1,4-8. (transl. E. Yarnold and Cyril, *Cyril of Jerusalem* (London: Routledge, 2000), 170-171).

attested. The candidate turned westwards and renounced Satan, then eastwards and swore allegiance to Christ.[347] The ritual of abjuring the devil was a standard practice in baptismal rites, so the chances are good that a similar formulation would have been used in the baptistery of Henchir el Koucha.

This usage would have placed neophytes in the unique position of having to abjure the attendance of non-Christian institutions, exemplified by the Roman circus, in the presence of Christian iconography rooted in the very same institution. The baptistery of Henchir el Koucha gives us an example of material practice, in this case the use of an image, subtly compromising official doctrine. The situation is however far from being paradoxical. It merely shows that the lived religious practice at sixth-century Henchir el Koucha was more open to Roman culture than late antique Christian writing would suggest.

The degree of planning necessary to produce a design of the narrative coherence that is particular to Henchir el Koucha's baptismal mosaic suggests that the facing horses motif was chosen in full awareness of its ambivalent quality. It is unlikely that the motif was selected coincidentally, as the design process was far from being a mere selection from a pool of common patterns. The baptismal decoration is innovative in its character, as most clearly exemplified by the unique addition of human-shaped figures to the more established animal scenes. The employment of the motif of horses at the prominent position in the (original) entrance area of the baptistery (2) likewise seems too extravagant to be coincidence. Such a choice would be most apt in a surrounding in

[347] J. P. Burns Jr. and R. M. Jensen, *Christianity* (2014), 208-209.

which Christians could affirm their attachment to Roman culture while equally identifying as Christians.

Those who integrated the facing horses motif in the baptismal mosaic at the time of its making, left no doubt that the horses' primary function was to symbolize the victory offered by baptismal salvation. Christian identity was demonstrably salient in Henchir el Koucha, yet the builders acknowledged that Roman culture had a place within it. While the Christian significance of the motif was not questioned, it also held an additional layer of meaning. Roman and Christian identities were perceived as congruent enough to celebrate both. The baptismal horse motif speaks to a religious environment in which Christians identified as Romans to such a degree that they were interested in adopting Roman themes in their religious practice. When the facing horses motif lost its prominent position at the baptistery entrance, it is plausible that active engagement with it diminished. Those who maintained and used the baptistery later on in the sixth century, however, may still have related favourably to this message. In fact, many later users may have until horse racing came to an end and ceased to be identified as a Roman institution.

2. Mértola

Mythological subject matter between belief and practice

Mythological imagery is usually problematized by scholars when integrated in a Christian setting because of the pantheistic world view inherent to Roman mythology. The classical heroes and hybrids who are the subject of this section and the one that follows derive from the same narrative universe as deities and feature in relation to the gods as their companions or adversaries. A common explanation for the continuous use of mythological imagery in Christian contexts is that it became secularized. It is often held

that by the fifth century mythological imagery fulfilled several social functions, notably the demonstration of *paideia*, the acquaintance with classical Hellenic culture which demonstrated cultivation and high social status, but that the expression of pagan beliefs was only rarely amongst these.[348] According to this view, mythological subject matter did not contain anything contemporary viewers could believe in. It is, however, also acknowledged that the attitude typical of the ecclesiastical elite with *paideia* was a complex and problematic one, since they feared not only the lasting presence of the ancient gods, but also that classical learning would perpetuate ethical conducts now deemed unchristian.[349]

If mythological imagery was in fact disentangled from religious beliefs in late antiquity, would not the main reason for avoiding the use of such imagery in Christian public spaces also be gone? It is apparent from the archaeological evidence that there was a strong divide in the fifth- and sixth-century Western Mediterranean between domestic

[348] Late Roman mythological knowledge is understood as an elite, secular phenomenon. See A. Cameron, *Greek mythography* (2004). For the demonstration of *paideia* as a class marker in various artistic contexts W. Raeck, *Modernisierte Mythen* (1992), 161; K. Dunbabin, "Expressiones de Cultura en un Mondo Cristiano: Escenas Mitológicas e Mosaicos del Mediterranéo Oriental durante los Siglos V y VI D.C.", in: *Civilización y barbarie: el mito como argumento en los mosaicos romanos,* Luz Neira (ed.) (Madrid: CVG, 2012); K. Dunbabin, "Mythology and Theatre in the Mosaics of the Graeco-Roman East", in: *Using Images in Late Antiquity,* Stine Birk et al. (ed.) (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2014), 237; I. Uytterhoeven, Know your classics! Manifestations of classical culture in late antique elite houses (2009), 332; L. M. Stirling, *The learned collector: mythological statuettes and classical taste in late antique Gaul* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 138-164. Interesting alternative avenues into the study of the Christian use of mythological topics offer S. Muth, "Eine Kultur zwischen Veränderung und Stagnation. Zum Umgang mit den Mythenbildern im spätantiken Haus", in: *Epochenwandel? Kunst und Kultur zwischen Antike und Mittelalter,* Franz Alto Bauer and Norbert Zimmermann (ed.) (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2001); S. Muth, *Erleben von Raum – Leben im Raum: zur Funktion mythologischer Mosaikbilder in der römisch-kaiserzeitlichen Wohnarchitektur* (Heidelberg: Verlag Archäologie und Geschichte, 1998); A. Ferrari, "La rilettura cristiana dei miti pagani", in: *Antiquité Tardive 19* (2011).

[349] A. Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium: the transformations of Greek identity and the reception of the classical tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 120-172. For the Christian parallelisation of Hellenic and pagan in the late antique East G. W. Bowersock, *Hellenism in late antiquity: Thomas Spencer Jerome lectures* (1990), 10-13. A less differentiated approach in which mythological subject matters in domestic mosaic decorations are taken as evidence for the paganism of their owners is taken in J. Lancha, "Mythologie classique et mosaïques tardives d'Hispanie (IVe S.)", in: *Antiquité Tardive 11* (2003), 197. See also J. Huskinson, "Some Pagan Mythological Figures and Their Significance in Early Christian Art", in: *Papers of the British School at Rome 42* (1974), 68-69.

and ecclesiastical visual culture in relation to mythological subjects. Villa owners continued to decorate private spaces, furnishings and equipment with mythological scenery despite in all probability being Christians. They adapted traditional mythological topics to their needs and interests, which indicates that these themes were very much alive in Christian society.[350] In church interiors and liturgical objects created in the fifth and sixth centuries in the same regions, by contrast, such imagery is, while not entirely absent, strikingly rare. Given that mythology was so prominent in lay Christian life, why did it not penetrate official religious Christian spaces more often?

It is worth pursuing this question, since it sharpens our understanding about what was at stake when such imagery was employed. Two explanations come to mind. First, we may assume that church officials had reservations about the feasibility of disentangling mythological imagery entirely from religious beliefs. In this scenario, if classical deities still mattered in the religious lives of individuals, it would have been wise for church officials not to take any risks regarding the orthodoxy of the imagery used in churches themselves. In the context of the Iberian Peninsula, where the next two case studies are

[350] Mythological imagery was ubiquitous in domestic contexts in late antiquity. See for instance K. Weitzmann, *The Survival of Mythological Representations in Early Christian and Byzantine Art and Their Impact on Christian Iconography* (1960); A. Grabar, *Christian Iconography. A Study of its Origins* (1961); J. Huskinson, Pagan Mythological Figures (1974); G. M. A. Hanfmann, *The Continuity of Classical Art: Culture, Myth and Faith (1980)*; J. Elsner, *Art and the Roman Viewer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 251-260; R. E. Leader-Newby, *Silver and society in late antiquity: functions and meanings of silver plate in the fourth to seventh centuries* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 123-171; J. A. North and S. R. F. Price (eds.), *The religious history of the Roman Empire: pagans, Jews, and Christians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 691-742; A. Marcone, "Persistenze classiche e innovazioni cristiane: iconografia ed epigrafia nelle Venezia", in: *Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire: The Breaking of a Dialogue (IVth-VIth Century A.D.),* Peter Brown and Rita Lizzi Testa (ed.) (Zurich, Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2011); A. Marcone, "Alla ricerca di un'identità. Tradizioni classiche nella prima iconografia Cristiana", in: *Using Images in Late Antiquity,* Stine Birk et al. (ed.) (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2014); K. Dunbabin, Expressiones de Cultura en un Mondo Cristiano: Escenas Mitológicas e Mosaicos del Mediterranéo Oriental durante los Siglos V y VI D.C. (2012); M. Guardia, *Los Mosaicos de la antigüedad tardía en Hispania: Estudios de iconografía* (Barcelona: PPU, 1992). Compare S. Muth, Veränderung und Stagnation (2001), 116, 97-98 for the notion of mythological imagery a a dying tradition in late antiquity.

located, this is not an entirely implausible assumption to make. Besides many mentions of cults connected to rivers, forests and stones in works such as *De correctione rusticorum* by Martin of Braga (c. 515-580), and works by Isidore of Seville (c. 556-636) and Braulio of Zaragoza (c. 590-651), sixth-century testimony of the veneration of gods like Jupiter, Minerva, Mars and Saturn intimate that worship of Roman deities also persisted.[351] The episcopal network of the Iberian Peninsula in the fifth century was among the most thinly spread in the Western Mediterranean.[352] Bishops had little influence on and only limited access to many Christian communities, which often made their own religious decisions autonomously. To complicate the picture, the political and religious transition of Lusitania from a Roman province to a post-imperial province under Visigothic dominion happened during our period of examination. The 460s brought the permanent presence of the Visigoths in Lusitania with the conquest of the province's capital Augusta Emerita (Mérida) in 469, but the political situation remained unstable, e.g. Lusitania's northern territories fell to the Sueve kingdom in the second half of the sixth century. Until the conversion of the Visigothic king Reccared I to the

[351] On worship of Roman gods T. Garcia González, "La iglesia desde la conversión de Recaredo hasta la invasion árabe", in: *Historia de la Iglesia en España,* Ricardo Garcia Villoslada (ed.) (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1979), 665-667. On the Christian literary tradition condemning pagan cults in Hispania J. Madoz y Moleres, "Una nueva recensión del 'De correctione rusticorum', de Martín de Braga (Ms. Sant Cugat, n. 22)", in: *Estudios eclesiásticos 19* (1945); S. A. Barney et al., "The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville", in: (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); L. Riesco Terrero, *Epistolario de San Braulio* (Seville: Editorial Católica Española, 1975), 109-115. Hispanic councils repeatedly debated the measures needed to end idolatrous practices; more or less explicitly pagan places of worship were mentioned in the councils of Braga II in 572 (canon I), Toledo III in 589 (canon 16), Narbonne in 589 (canon 14), Toledo XI in 681 (canon 1) and Toledo XVI in 693 (canon 2). See Vives, José et al., *Concilios visigóticos e hispano-romanos* (Barcelona, Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto Enrique Flórez, 1963); L. Caballero Zoreda and J. C. Sánchez Santos, "Reutilización de material romano en edificios de culto cristiano", in: *Antigüedad y cristianismo 7* (1990), 436-437.

[352] K. Bowes, ""Une coterie espagnole pieuse": Christian archaeology and Christian communities in fourth- and fifth-century Hispania", in: *Hispania in late antiquity: current perspectives,* Kim Bowes and Michael Kulikowski (ed.) (Leiden, Boston, MA: Brill, 2005), 257. For the vital role of the laity in the Iberian Arian church specifically R. W. Mathisen, "Barbarian 'Arian' clergy, church organization, and church practices", in: *Arianism: Roman heresy and barbarian creed,* Guido M. Berndt and Roland Steinacher (ed.) (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

Chalcedonian creed in 587, Visigoths who adhered to Arianism stressed their religious independence from the local Ibero-Roman population.[353] The Visigothic occupation of Southern Lusitania, where the two case studies are located, complicates determining the religious and ethnical identities the examined Christian communities held. Attitudes towards Roman mythology potentially differed depending on how Christians identified ethnically, if they did so at all.[354] For the Barbarian part of the Iberian population, associating one's Christianness with the Roman mythological tradition might have felt like an adoption, rather than a continuation, of Roman culture.[355] Where mythology no longer promoted a competing religious world-view, what was it that made church officials still reject the use of mythological scenes in Christian religious spaces? Mythology was a cultural institution similar to the theatre or the circus in that by 'practising' it vocally, visually or in writing, one enacted cultural techniques which Christian authorities considered dangerous. This was not only because they were idolatrous (the problem of assuming the presence of deities besides God), but increasingly because they presented a violation of how these authorities wanted Christians to *act* (e.g. the fear of *locura*).[356] An essential function of the communal

[353] For Visigothic religiosity R. d. Andrade Filho, "O reino visigodo: catolicismo e permanências pagãs", in: *História Revista 17* (2012); J. Wood, *The politics of identity in Visigothic Spain : religion and power in the histories of Isidore of Seville* (2012) 191-232; P. Mikat, *Doppelbesetzung oder Ehrentitulatur : zur Stellung des westgotisch-arianischen Episkopates nach der Konversion von 587/89* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1984).

[354] For Visigothic identity J. Wood, *The politics of identity in Visigothic Spain : religion and power in the histories of Isidore of Seville* (2012), 23-64; S. Coleman and P. Collins, *Religion, identity and change : perspectives on global transformations* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 223-246; P. J. Heather, *The Visigoths from the migration period to the seventh century : an ethnographic perspective* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1999).

[355] A comprehensive study of Visigothic attitudes towards Roman culture, and mythology specifically, is missing to date. Isidore of Seville's inclusion of mythological subjects in his history writing demonstrates a sense of Visigothic ownership of Roman and Greek culture and mythology. P. Merritt Bassett, "The Use of History in the Chronicon of Isidore of Seville", in: *History and Theory 15* (1976) 288-289. For Visigothic culture see A. Ferreiro, "The Visigoths: Studies in Culture and Society", in: (ed.) (Leiden, Boston, Cologne: Brill, 1999).

[356] See for instance A. Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium* (2007), 120-172.

church space, and of the baptistery in particular, was to foster and nourish correct Christian ethical conduct. The demonstration of *paideia* within the ecclesiastical sphere works against any exclusivist Christian code of conduct.

Nevertheless, mythological imagery was occasionally used in the West in ecclesiastical spaces, notably in Lusitanian baptisteries. Mythological subjects in baptisteries are a powerful testimony that some fifth- and sixth-century Christian communities upheld this longstanding tradition and exposed future generations of Christians to it. In this and the following case study, I will examine the extent to which the analysis of the spatial situations in which mythological themes were placed can provide insights into the significance they held for the lived practice of individual communities.

The archaeological evidence

The antique Myrtillis, today Mértola, in the Alentejo, was a centre of mining from pre-Roman times onwards and from the fifth to seventh century also a significant centre of commercial trade between Lusitania and the wider Mediterranean.[357] In 1877, the city of Mértola was examined by the archaeologist Estácio da Veiga for the first time; his observations are seminal for archaeological studies in Mértola and Lusitania more generally.[358] About a century later, an artificial platform in the north of Mértola was studied more extensively (fig. 65).[359] The structure is a Roman cryptoporticus that overlooks the river Guadiana and was supposedly built in the late third or early fourth century. It has a length of 32 m, and the subterranean portion measures 2.70 m in width

[357] C. Torres, "O Guadiana – Envolvimento histórico", in: *Odiana, CCR Algarve* (1998), 7-8; V. Lopes, "Mértola na antiguidade tardia. A topografia histórica", in: *Arqueologia em Portugal,* José Morais Arnaud and Andrea Martins (ed.) (Lisbon: Associação dos Arqueólogos Portugueses, 2017), 1379-1380.
[358] V. Lopes and S. Gómez-Martínez, "Trabalhos arqueológicos de Estácio da Veiga em Mértola", in: *Xelb. Actas do IV Encontro do Arqueologia do Algarve 7* (2006), 271.
[359] C. Torres, "Alcáçova de Mértola. História e arqueologia urbana", in: *Arqueologia 6* (1982).

and has a medium height of 5.80 m.[360] It is thought to have served in late antique times as the foundation of the forum of Mértola and also as a subterranean cistern.[361] The same form of double-use is known from the cryptoporticus at Almuñecar in the province of Granada.[362] In Mértola, a small civic basilica was also excavated at the end of the nineteenth century in the south of the forum.[363] It has been speculated that in late antiquity the platform (fig. 66) may have functioned as the site of a bishop's palace, although no records of a bishop in Myrtillis have been preserved.[364] The platform was overbuilt in the Almohad period with dwellings whose foundations have been preserved.[365] A number of further excavations in the 1980s and 1990s, in the north-western corner of the platform also brought to light a late antique ensemble of buildings.

In this ensemble (fig. 67), a portico (1) covered in mosaics (fig. 68) leads to an adjacent room called the 'northern room' (2). This room is connected with a rectangular room of c. 250 m^2, directed along a north-south axis, in which a monumental font is centrally placed (3) (figs. 69, 70).[366] The font sits in a lowered basin surrounded by an elevated colonnade. The basin has a length of 11 m, but was reduced in the sixth or seventh century by 1.5 m due to the construction of 60 and 70 cm high elevations, possibly benches, in front of the northern and southern walls.[367] The structure of the font is

[360] Ibid., 618-619. For the question of dating in regards to the used building materials and techniques see V. Lopes, *Mértola na Antiguidade Tardia* (Mértola: Campo Arqueológico de Mértola, 2003), 82-86.
[361] C. Torres, Alcáçova de Mértola. História e arqueologia urbana (1982), 617.
[362] V. Lopes, *Mértola na Antiguidade Tardia* (2003), 86.
[363] Ibid., 69.
[364] Ibid., 69-71 and 82-86.
[365] V. Lopes and S. Gómez-Martínez, Trabalhos arqueológicos de Estácio da Veiga em Mértola (2006), 274-275, fig. 5.
[366] V. Lopes, *Mértola e o seu território* (2014), 185.
[367] V. Lopes, *Mértola na Antiguidade Tardia* (2003), 72-73, fig. 46. According to Lopes, the font's ground lies at a height of 64.50 m and the colonnade at 65.50 m. The basin is at a height of 64.94 m.

complex: an octagonal inner space with two deep steps spanning approximately 1 m is enclosed in a tier of apsidioles. Two flights of stairs confine the font west- and eastwards. They lead into the basin, but also create an even level between the font's rim and the colonnade. The excavator Virgilio Lopes dates the first phase of the building with the font to the fifth or early sixth century, on the basis of ceramic finds and a number of stylistic comparisons.[368] The stairs were added in the sixth or seventh century.[369] The excavations further revealed a subterranean water conduit as well as fragments of a fountain head, possibly a reuse, found in proximity to the font (fig. 71).[370]

The building was initially thought to be a bath with an octagonal basin, possibly in a palatial context, although this interpretation has rightfully been questioned because of the unusual construction in which one basin sits within the other, the lack of hypocausts and the lack of any other basins.[371] It has been suggested instead that the building was a baptistery.[372] Lopes adheres to this second identification and brings to bear the accessible structure of the font, several archaeological finds in the surroundings and also the mosaic decoration.[373] With regard to places and objects of Christian use, only a few hints are available. A small apse (4) is attached to the colonnade on the eastern side, apparently from the earliest phase of the building (fig. 72).[374] In its centre, a rectangular

[368] For the ceramic finds see V. Lopes, *Mértola e o seu território* (2014), 198-200. For typological comparisons with similar fonts in the Mediterranean see ibid., 204-207.
[369] For measurements V. Lopes, *Mértola na Antiguidade Tardia* (2003), 72.
[370] Ibid., 69 no 143. There aren't any imprints preserved that would indicate a canopy. V. Lopes, *Mértola e o seu território* (2014), 184-185.
[371] For the identification as a bath C. Torres, Alcáçova de Mértola. História e arqueologia urbana (1982), 5. For the hypothesis that the building was a palatial structure M. L. Real, "Materiais de construção utilizados na arquitectura cristã da alta Idade Média, em Portugal", in: *História da Construção. Os Materiais,* Arnaldo Sousa Melo and Maria do Carmo Franco Ribeiro (ed.) (Braga: CITCEM, 2012), 98.
[372] S. Macías, *Mértola Islâmica. Estudo histórico-arqueológico do bairro da Alcáçova: séculos XII-XIII* (Mértola: Campo arquéologico de Mértola, 1996), 54, no. 141; V. Lopes, *Mértola e o seu território* (2014), 196-197.
[373] V. Lopes, *Mértola e o seu território* (2014), 197.
[374] V. Lopes, *Mértola na Antiguidade Tardia* (2003), 73, fig. 46.

imprint has been preserved in the pavement which Lopes suggests could have been an altar.[375] The apse, the font and the basin were decorated as an ensemble, since all were encrusted with alternating white and grey marble plaques.[376] A few of these are preserved in situ, as on the outer wall of the font (fig. 70). Besides the possible sanctuary, two further fragments with a potentially Christian function were found in the vicinity of the font. First, a marble fragment showing a small part of a Greek cross inscribed in a circle was excavated in the possible baptismal complex; second, a fragment of a *mensa* that could have belonged to an altar was incorporated in one of the Almohad houses on the platform.[377] None of these finds make the inference of baptismal use of the complex irrefutable. On the other hand, other purposes for which the richly decorated complex would have been used are also difficult to identify.

The find of the fountain head makes an alternative use of the font as a fountain seem plausible, but fountains were themselves sometimes integrated in baptisteries. The Lateran baptistery most prominently, but also that of Stobi in Macedonia, are late antique examples of baptisteries that contained a fountain.[378] The octagonal form of the font, while only occurring in two other Iberian baptisteries, is typical for Western

[375] Ibid., 71. Altars are sometimes part of baptismal structures in the Western Mediterranean. They plausibly were used for the first communion after the baptismal ceremony. For this liturgical practice in Iberia C. Godoy Fernández, *Arqueología y liturgia. Iglesias hispánicas (siglos IV al VIII)* (Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona, Port de Tarragona, 1995), 53 and C. Godoy Fernández, "Baptistérios Hispánicos (Siglos IV-VIII). Arqueologia y Liturgia", in: *Actes du XIe Congrès international d'archéologie chrétienne,* Noël Duval and Philippe Pergola (ed.) (Rome: École française de Rome, 1989), 633. For the Iberian Peninsula, a well-known but contested example is Casa Herera, near the Lusitanian capital of Mérida. See V. Lopes, *Mértola e o seu território* (2014), 202-203.

[376] V. Lopes, *Mértola e o seu território* (2014), 181-182.

[377] Ibid., 197. For the mensa fragment ibid., 212, cat. 29. For the cross fragment C. Torres, *Museu de Mértola. Núcleo do Castelo* (Mértola: Campo arqeuologico de Mértola, 1991), 45; S. Macías, *Mértola Islâmica. Estudo histórico-arqueológico do bairro da Alcáçova: séculos XII-XIII* (1996), 54, no. 141.

[378] For a reconstruction of the Lateran baptistery F. Bisconti, Iconografia (2001), 408-412, fig. 1. For an archaeological perspective G. Pelliccioni, *Le nuove scoperte sulle origini del Battistero lateranense* (Rome: Tipografia poliglotta vaticana, 1973). On the fountain in the baptistery of Stobi W. B. J. Dinsmoor, "The Baptistery: Its Roofing and Related Problems", in: *Studies in the antiquities of Stobi,* James Wiseman (ed.) (Belgrade: Boston University, 1975).

Mediterranean baptisteries, especially in Italy, southern France, Tunisia and Algeria.[379] The specific form of the font, an octagon surrounded by apsidioles, is particularly frequent in northern Italy. The baptisteries of Albenga, Riva Ligure and Taggia in Liguria, of Aosta in Valle d'Aosta, as well as of Emona (Ljubiliana) in Slovenia are all morphologically similar. A further possibility is that the font originally had another function but was adapted for baptismal use. Lopes's dating of the two sets of stairs leading from the ground of the basin to the rim of the font to a second construction phase in the sixth or seventh century points in this direction.[380] By the addition of the stairs, the font ceased to be an independent structure within another basin, but became more accessible both from the colonnade and the basin.

The mosaic fragment of Bellerophon killing the chimaera (5) (fig. 73) has been preserved at the extreme end of the south-eastern corner of the colonnade. Bellerophon is about to spear the lion-headed chimaera with a goat's head on the back and a snake-headed tail, spitting fire out of all of its three snouts. The trunk of the chimaera is preserved as is a part of the attacking Bellerophon riding on the harnessed Pegasus. The mosaic surprises with its fine execution and its very good state of preservation. In the surviving fragment, the figures have round, widely opened eyes and supple, full-bodied shapes. The scene is depicted on a white ground using a limited palette of white, red, brown and

[379] On the symbolical significance of the octagon in a baptismal context R. M. Jensen, *Living Water* (2011) 244-247; C. Godoy Fernández, "A los pies del templo. Espacios litúrgicos en contraposición al altar: una revisión", in: *Sacralidad y Arqueología,* José María Blásquez Martínez and Antonino González Blanco (ed.) (Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, 2004), 483. See also O. Brandt, "The Lateran Baptistery and the diffusion of octagonal baptisteries from Rome to Constantinople", in: *Acta Congressus Internationalis XIV Archaeologiae Christianae Vindobonae 19-26 settembre 1999,* (ed.) (Vatican City: 2006). For the Iberian examples see this chapter 111-114, and the baptismal font of Barcelona S. Ristow, *Frühchristliche Baptisterien* (1998), no. 566.

[380] Lopes suggests a previous function as *frigidarium*, but concedes that no other basins have been found in the area: V. Lopes, *Mértola e o seu território* (2014), 766.

grey limestone. The tesserae have an average size of 0.5 cm.[381] Only two more small mosaic fragments (6) made of slightly larger limestone tesserae were preserved in the colonnade. They are on the eastern side in proximity to the Bellerophon fragment above the water conduit. On the border of the colonnade a pattern of roses in semicircles can still be seen (fig. 74). More centrally placed in the colonnade is the lower end of a flower on white ground facing northward (fig. 75), away from the Bellerophon scene.[382]

In his functional analysis of the complex surrounding font I, Lopes argues for understanding the portico, the northern room and the supposed baptistery as parts of the same baptismal complex (fig. 90).[383] In Lopes's reconstruction, the catechumens walked through the portico (1), used the northern room (2) as a waiting area or changing room, and then proceeded to the baptismal area. After the baptism, they received the first communion at the possible altar space in the eastern apse (4) and left the baptistery through the north-eastern exit.[384] Given our uncertainty about whether the apse really contained an altar, this can only be a hypothesis, although it does not conflict with the little available information on Iberian baptismal liturgies.[385] Within the greater ensemble, the Bellerophon mosaic (5) has a rather unassuming position in the south-eastern corner, away from the main flow of visitors. It can be imagined that the colonnade housed the families and friends who attended baptisms or that clerics and neophytes processed through the colonnaded corridors. Either way, those who passed

[381] V. Lopes, *Mértola na Antiguidade Tardia* (2003), 118.
[382] Ibid., 116.
[383] V. Lopes, *Mértola e o seu território* (2014), 201.
[384] Ibid., 201.
[385] For the first communion after baptism C. Godoy Fernández, *Arqueología y liturgia. Iglesias hispánicas (siglos IV al VIII)* (1995), 53. For controversies on Iberian baptismal liturgy V. Lopes, *Mértola e o seu território* (2014), 202. More generally C. Godoy Fernández, Baptistérios Hispánicos (Siglos IV-VIII). Arqueologia y Liturgia (1989).

through the space would have walked over floor mosaics like the Bellerophon scene, possibly attending to them or simply covering them with their steps.

Dating and Locating the Mosaic Workshop of Mértola

The mosaics of the portico (1) (figs. 68, 76, 77), preserved on an area of 125 m^2, have no parallel in Portuguese mosaic art.[386] The long corridor is divided into a series of panels separated by diverse ornamental zones which appear to be thematically connected. The dominant theme is the hunt. A variety of animals is depicted: lions, a stag, a deer, a leopard, a hare, ducks and other birds, notably an ostrich, as well as a mounted huntsman carrying a falcon. The figures are again spread on a white background and share their round, compact forms and large round eyes with the Bellerophon fragment. They were clearly executed by the same workshop. In the panels of the portico, however, the colour scheme is more varied and a large number of red branches and plants are spread in between the figures. The mosaics are of high quality, demonstrated for instance by the modelling of the stag (fig. 79). The outlines of its belly and neck are of the same white colour as the background, creating the illusion of the animal melting with its environment – a visual effect common in nature. The stag's body is nevertheless perceptibly distinct from its environment thanks to an oval-shaped layout of the tesserae of the upper body which contrasts with the more evenly arranged tesserae of the background.

[386] For Mértola's mosaics V. Lopes, *Mértola e o seu território* (2014), 363-421; V. Lopes, "Os mosaicos do baptistério de Mértola", in: *O mosaico romano nos centros e nas periferias,* Comissao Executiva do X° Col AIEMA (ed.) (Coimbra: Museu Monográfico de Conímbriga, 2011); V. Lopes, "Les mosaïques de Mértola et le baptistère. Bilan des fouilles recentes", in: *La mosaïque gréco-romaine. [Actes du IXème Colloque international pour l'étude de la mosaïque antique et médiévale organisé à Rome, 5-10 novembre 2001],* Hélène Morlier (ed.) (Rome: École française de Rome, 2005); V. Lopes, *Mértola na Antiguidade Tardia* (2003), 98-125.

Several motifs indicate a North African origin of the mosaicists from Africa Proconsularis or Byzacena, which is in line with the high quality of the mosaics' execution. [387] The sixth-century mosaic pavement of the nave of the rural basilica of Hergla in Africa Proconsularis, 40 km north of Sousse, is the only other extant example of a mosaic floor depicting a hunting scene to combine the facing lion motif and a huntsman carrying a falcon (fig. 80).[388] The pair of lions facing an (often umbrella-shaped) tree has several fifth- and sixth-century parallels in churches in Tunisia and on the Balearic Islands thought to have been decorated by North African mosaicists (fig. 81).[389] Animal hunt scenes, particularly popular in the Near East, were also frequent in late antique North Africa, including similar compositions of animals chased by horsemen on a white ground dotted with plants (figs. 82, 83).[390] Representations of ostriches, today extinct in North

[387] On the possibility of African mosaic workshops in Lusitania J. Lancha, "De nouvelles données sur les mosaïstes itinérants en Lusitanie", in: *V Mesa Redonda Internacional sobre Lusitania Romana: Las comunicaciones,* Jean-Gérard Gorges et al. (ed.) (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, 2004). For Mértola V. Lopes, *Mértola na Antiguidade Tardia* (2003), 103-117.

[388] For Hergla T. Ghalia, *Hergla* (1989); V. Lopes, *Mértola na Antiguidade Tardia* (2003), 113-114, also 104.

[389] Hergla panel G: T. Ghalia, *Hergla* (1989), 68, fig. 21, 58-66 with comparisons to the Basilica Es Fornas de Torello (Menorca) and the Basilica de Isla del Rey. Other North African examples are from the north church of Djémila (today in the museum of Djémila) and an apsidal mosaic from Carthage (today on display in the Musée du Bardo, Tunis). For Djémila : T. Redjel and S. Tewfik, *Guide Djémila* (unspecified place of publication: Araja Éditions, 2010), 23. For Carthage : M. Yacoub, La mosaïque de Lahmimine et le thème africain des cheveaux de cirque affrontés (1994), 117, inv. 3574, fig. 126 and M. Yacoub, *Le musée du Bardo* (Tunis: Éditions de l'agence nationale du patrimoine, 1996), 255-256, fig. 158 which suggests a sixth-century dating. A Near Eastern example of the lion motif is St Stephen's Church in Umm al-Rasas in Jordan: M. Piccirillo, *I mosaici di Giordania: [catalogue of an exhibition], Castello di Malpaga, Cavernago-Bergamo, marzo-giugno 1991* (Jerusalem: Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, 1991), 83-85, fig. 44. Facing lions are also commonly used in synagogues in the Near East, e.g. in Beth Alpha and Na'aran: G. W. Bowersock, *Mosaics as history: the Near East from late antiquity to Islam* (Cambridge, MA, London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), figs. 4.1, 4.4. For a comparative analysis of Balearic mosaic motifs and North African connections M. Orfila and F. Tuset, "Descripción, paralelos y análisis de los mosaicos de la iglesia de Son Fadrinet (Campos, Mallorca)", in: *Mayurqa 29* (2003); H. Schlunk and T. Hauschild, *Die Denkmäler* (1978), 57-58, 75-85; P. d. Palol, "En torno a la iconografía de los mosaicos cristianos de las islas Baleares", in: *Actas de la primera Reunión Nacional de Arqueología Paleocristiana: Vitoria, 29-31 octubre 1966,* Pedro de Palol (ed.) (Valladolid: Sancho el Sabio, 1967), esp. 140.

[390] The scene is discussed in M. Yacoub, *Le musée du Bardo* (1996), 257-258, fig. 188.

Africa, also have models in North Africa and the Near East and must have added to the exotic flavour of Mértola's hunting scene. [391]

In terms of dating and location, the floor mosaics around the font point in a similar direction. The motif of rose buds inserted into scales (6) (fig. 74) has direct parallels to the mosaic of the church at Hergla (fig. 84) as well as to profane examples in Jebel Oust and Thuburbo Maius, all located in Africa Proconsularis.[392] North Africa is also where representations of Bellerophon and the chimaera continued to be produced until comparatively late. While the Iberian examples, to which I will come later, originate in the second to fourth century, mythological scenes drawn from the myth of Bellerophon are preserved from sixth-century North Africa. A scene from Belalis Major in the region of Beja in Africa Proconsularis, today in the Musée Bardo in Tunis, shows Achilles riding the centaur Chiron and killing a stag with bow and arrow (fig. 85). The scene is accompanied by the chimaera spitting fire from all three snouts as in the scene in Mértola. It is attributed to the late fifth to early sixth century. [393] Another mosaic floor

[391] See for instance the ostriches in the north church of Djémila and the early representation in the mosaic of the *maison de l'âne* in a private *frigidarium* in Djémila in Numidia: F.-G. d. Pachtère, *Inventaire des mosaïques de la Gaule et de l'Afrique* (1911), 68-70. For a hunting scene including an ostrich from a baptismal context see the Diaconicon baptistery at Mount Nebo in Jordan. See e.g. J. Balty, "La place des mosaïques de Jordanie au sein de la production orientale", in: *Les églises de Jordanie et leurs mosaiques: actes de la journée d'études sur Les Eglises de Jordanie et leurs mosaiques organisée à la occasion de l'inauguration de l'exposition "Mosaiques Byzantine de Jordanie" au musée de la Civilisation gallo-romaine à Lyon en avril 1989,* Noël Duval and Jean-Charles Balty (ed.) (Beirut: Institut français d'archéologie du Proche-Orient, 2003), 165, fig. 10. Lopes identifies the large bird in Mértola's mosaic as a crane: V. Lopes, *Mértola na Antiguidade Tardia* (2003), 110. However, its pronounced legs ending in two toes permit only an identification of the bird as an ostrich, which is the only bird that has only two toes. An exceptional motif is that of a lioness breastfeeding a snake. See ibid., 105.

[392] For the apsidal mosaic in the 'salle du jeu' in Jebel Oust M. Fendri, "Évolution chronologique et stylistique d'un ensemble de mosaiques dans une station thermale à Djebel Oust (Tunisie)", in: *La mosaique gréco-romaine,* (ed.) (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la Recherche scientifique, 1965), 548, fig. 12. For the fragment of portico VIII in the peristyle of the maison de Nicentius in Thuburbo Maius A. Ben Abed-Ben Khader et al., *Thuburbo Majus. Les mosaïques de la région des grands thermes* (Tunis: 1985a), plate XVIII, fig. 38b.

[393] The mosaic is from the region of Béja, its exact context is unclear: M. Yacoub, *Le musée du Bardo* (1996), 145, fig. 114; M. Yacoub, *Splendeurs des Mosaïques de Tunisie* (Tunis: Agence nationale du patrimoine, 1995), 365, fig. 180.

from Henchir Errich near Sbeitla in Byzacena shows Bellerophon among a group of mythological heroes (fig. 86). The scene is dated to the Byzantine period for stylistic reasons.[394] All things considered, it is most likely that a North African workshop produced the mosaic decoration of Mértola at some point in the late fifth or sixth century.[395]

Font II

Before I can discuss the impact of the imagery on the potential baptismal space of Mértola, I need to examine a new excavation find in the vicinity of the platform, as it has implications for our reconstruction. A second monumental font in proximity to the platform was discovered recently in 2013 (fig. 87).[396] Excavations are still ongoing at the time of writing. Font II sits on a small hill that is separated from the platform by only a few metres (fig. 66). It also has been identified as a baptistery. The recent excavation certainly complicates the identification of the font on the platform, henceforth called font I, as a baptistery. Font II sits centrally in a building of a maximum of 23 m length, orientated along an east-west axis (fig. 88).[397] The exact outline of the building has not yet been established.[398] An argument brought forward by Lopes for a rectangular apse in the east leading to a crypt must remain speculation for the time being.[399] Three bases of columns were found in situ on the southern side of the building as well as several

[394] F. Béjaoui, "Deux mosaïques tardives de la région de Sbeïtla, l'antique Sufetula en Tunisie", in: *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Academie des inscriptions et Belles-Lettres 45* (2001), figs. 17, 21.
[395] For a sporadic African presence in Mértola J. Arce, "Spain and the African provinces in late antiquity", in: *Hispania in late antiquity: current perspectives,* Kimberly Diane Bowes and Michael Kulikowski (ed.) (Leiden, Boston, MA: Brill, 2005), 358.
[396] On font II see V. Lopes, *Mértola e o seu território* (2014), 250-312.
[397] For measurements ibid., 253.
[398] Ibid., 253-255.
[399] Ibid., 255.

column shafts.[400] A limestone and marble pavement is still in place around the font.[401] The font itself has an octagonal shape like font I, but it has three steps instead of two leading to an internal depth of 1.52 m.[402] The font's maximal size is 4.80 m including the apse. The drainage of the font sits at a height of 1.16 m, allowing a baptismal candidate to stand in water.[403] Luckily, a number of surviving painted fresco fragments give an idea of the interior decoration of the baptistery. Most notably, one fragment shows two faces, one crowned by a halo (fig. 89). Several more fragments of heads, limbs and drapery or ornamental forms prove that the baptistery was richly decorated and included a series of human bodies, at least one of them a holy figure. Because of the slight curvature of the frescoes it is suggested that the fragments were part of a cupola decoration.[404] When the findings of the font and the interior decoration are taken together, the building's use as a baptistery is in little doubt.

Lopes dates font II to the second half of the fifth century, based on a number of assumptions.[405] He assumes that font II predates font I, since it is suitably sized for adult baptism, which, Lopes argues, subsequently declined in favour of infant baptism. He dates the fresco paintings to the sixth to seventh century.[406] Owing to the rareness of datable comparanda on the Iberian Peninsula and the fragmentary state of the paintings, this suggestion must be regarded with caution. The suggested dating is problematic since the argument presupposes that font I was always used as a baptistery — a use which Lopes himself questions elsewhere.[407] Moreover, there is archaeological

[400] Ibid., 254.
[401] Ibid.
[402] Ibid., 291-295.
[403] Ibid., 259.
[404] Ibid., 259-260 figs. 300-308.
[405] Ibid., 273.
[406] Ibid., 301-308.
[407] See ibid., 766.

evidence to suggest that adult and infant baptism in fact coexisted in Lusitania and Baetica throughout the sixth century. It is true that the earliest Iberian council texts to characterize baptizands in general as infants date from the sixth century.[408] However, several Lusitanian and Baetican baptismal fonts are attested in the same century that were significantly deepened, apparently to allow for the rite of immersion of adults.[409] Others, built in the sixth or seventh century, were suitable for adult baptism from the beginning.[410] On the whole, a comprehensive change of rite from adult to infant baptism by the end of the fifth century seems unlikely given the decentralized structure of the Iberian church. On the basis of its octagonal form, the dating of font II cannot be narrowed further than the fifth or sixth century.[411] Most Western Mediterranean octagonal examples are from these centuries, as are the only two Hispanic examples: font I from Mértola and the baptismal font of Barcelona.[412]

[408] The case for parallel baptisms of adults and children being conducted until the seventh century is argued by H. Schneider, Die Entwicklung der Taufbecken in der Spätantike (2011); esp. 1703; J. Fernandez Alonso, *La cura pastoral en la España romanovisigoda* (Rome: Iglesia Nacional Española, 1955), 281; D. Iturgaiz, Baptisterios paleocristianos (1968), 215.

[409] For the deepening of the fonts of San Pedro de Alcántara, Torre de Palma and potentially Casa Herrera T. Ulbert, *Frühchristliche Basiliken mit Doppelapsiden* (1978), 175-176. On baptisteries in Hispania D. Iturgaiz, Baptisterios paleocristianos (1968); D. Iturgaiz, Baptisterios paleocristianos (1967); C. Godoy Fernández, Baptistérios Hispánicos (Siglos IV-VIII). Arqueologia y Liturgia (1989); H. Schneider, Die Entwicklung der Taufbecken in der Spätantike (2011). For rural baptisteries G. Ripoll and I. Velásquez, "Origen y desarrollo de las parrochiae en la Hispania de la Antigüedad tardía", in: *Atti delle giornata tematica dei Seminari di Archeologia cristiana (École française de Rome – 19 marzo 1998),* Philippe Pergola (ed.) (Rome: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia cristiana, 1999).

[410] Lopes lists as Iberian monumental baptisteries: Alconétar, Casa Herrera, El Gatillo de Arriba, Valdecebadar de Olivenza, S. Pedro de Mérida, La Cocosa, El Germo, S. Pedro de Alcântara, Torre de Palma: V. Lopes, *Mértola e o seu território* (2014), 282-283.

[411] For the spreading of octagonal baptisteries O. Brandt, The Lateran Baptistery and the diffusion of octagonal baptisteries from Rome to Constantinople (2006). See also S. Ristow, *Frühchristliche Baptisterien* (1998); A. Khatchatrian, *Les baptistères paléochrétiens: plans, notices et bibliographie* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1962); V. Lopes, *Mértola e o seu território* (2014), 277-279.

[412] The second or third construction phase of the font of Barcelona is octagonal, abolishing a previous cruciform phase. The octagonal phase is dated by Lopes to the fifth or the first half of the sixth century: V. Lopes, *Mértola na Antiguidade Tardia* (2003), 203. Ristow even assumes a sixth or seventh century date: S. Ristow, *Frühchristliche Baptisterien* (1998), no. 566.

This leaves us with the possibility that font I and II were used as baptisteries at the same time, if font I was indeed a baptismal font. A comparable situation is known from Ravenna where the Nicene and the Arian churches built independent baptisteries consecutively.[413] A similar set-up is not impossible on the Iberian Peninsula, where Arian and Nicene communities co-existed until at least the conversion of Reccared I to Catholicism in the late 580s.[414] Alternatively, both buildings might have coexisted but could have been used as baptisteries consecutively, or the complex on the platform could have had several purposes, one of them baptismal.

The Mosaic Decoration of the Platform as Evidence for a Baptismal Use?

As the recent appearance of font II complicates the identification of font I's function, let us return once more to the mosaics, to examine whether or not they would serve as evidence in favour of a baptismal use of the space. Is the iconography in accordance with an ecclesiastical use of the ensemble? The space is adorned with mosaics of three identifiable thematic groups: 'rose pattern', 'hunting scene', and 'Bellerophon killing the chimaera'. None of these mosaics relates to the little that is preserved of Iberian baptismal decorations. Yet, given that the mosaicists were probably of North African origin or worked with North African models, we should also take this tradition into consideration. The rose pattern is the most straightforwardly related to baptism. The

[413] See chapter 3.

[414] Lopes discusses this possibility briefly. For the question of heterodoxy at Mértola V. Lopes, *Mértola e o seu território* (2014), 771-772. The near absence of evidence from before the 580s for institutionalized Arian episcopacies attached to cities in Iberia makes it difficult to gauge how common Nicene and Arian churches operating in parallel really were. Only at the council of Toledo in 589 are both Nicene and Arian bishops from the same cities attested. See R. W. Mathisen, Barbarian 'Arian' clergy, church organization, and church practices (2014). The question of the possibility of parallel Arian and Catholic episcopacies in the same bishoprics after the conversion of Reccared I is discussed in P. Mikat, *Doppelbesetzung oder Ehrentitulatur: zur Stellung des westgotisch-arianischen Episkopates nach der Konversion von 587/89* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1984). For the Nicene and Arian church in Iberia K. Schäferdiek, *Die Kirche in den Reichen der Westgoten und Suewen bis zur Errichtung der westgotischen katholischen Staatskirche* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1967).

motif of roses was commonly used for baptismal as well as funerary decorations in North Africa.[415] The hunting scene has a single precedent in North African church decoration in the church at Hergla (while the detail of the facing lions was more widely disseminated in North African church contexts), whereas a large hunting scene from a baptismal context survives only further in the Roman East, in the Diaconicon baptistery at Mount Nebo in Jordan (fig. 91).[416] In the Western tradition, however, the theme of the human hunter is, apart from Mértola, entirely absent, and only one animal hunt is attested in a baptismal space. In the baptistery of Valence in south-eastern France, the octagonal font is adorned with a mosaic divided into two zones, one in direct contact with the font and an outer zone (figs. 92, 93). The inner zone is designed with placid animals like lambs and deer, but also carnivorous animals such as a wolf or a bear drinking from water, whereas in the outer zone a scene is preserved of a bird of prey catching a running hare while another bird picks the hare's eye (fig. 93).[417] Due to a complicated conservation history, the dating of the mosaic has long been disputed, but a recent re-examination makes a fabrication in the sixth or seventh century likely.[418] In the decoration of Valence, the paradisiac influence of the baptismal water is set into contrast with the cruel reality of those yet to be saved. The loss of most of the mosaic decoration of the presumed

[415] Mosaics displaying rose motifs decorate the baptismal fonts of basilica 1 at Dermech: S. Ristow, *Frühchristliche Baptisterien* (1998), no 723 of the Vitalis church at Sbeitla (ibid., 741), of Oued Zit (ibid., 736), of Henchir Sokrine (ibid., 717), of Bît-el-Assa (ibid., 697) and the apse of the baptistery of the Servus church at Sbeitla (ibid., 740).

[416] For Hergla T. Ghalia, *Hergla* (1989), plates 17, 19.

[417] For the mosaics J. Tardieu and I. Parron-Kontis, "Les mosaiques dites du "baptistère de Valence"", in: *De mémoires de palais. Archéologie et histoire du groupe cathédral de Valence,* Pascale Soleil (ed.) (Valence: Musée de Valence, 2006); M. Vignard, "Les mosaiques du Musée de Valence: Dossier", in: *Collections du Musée de Valence,* Charles Burgard and A.-C. Pahin (ed.) (Valence: Musée de Valence, 1982).

[418] J. Tardieu and I. Parron-Kontis, Baptistère de Valence (2006), 139-141. The dating was first problematized in A. Blanc, "Le baptistère de Valence (Drôme)", in: *Gallia 15* (1957), 114-115. An eleventh century fabrication was first suggested in P.-A. Février, "Les baptistères de Provence pendant le moyen âge", in: *Actes du Ve congrès international d'archéologie chrétienne 5* (1957).

baptismal space of Mértola prevents rash judgement about a similar configuration. The church mosaic of Hergla (fig. 80) that comes closest to the portico's pictorial programme abstains from making clear distinctions between good and bad. The hunting scene alternates with ornamental panels, marine scenes and other animal subjects within the three-aisled basilica. While Hergla illustrates that falconry and wild animals were considered appropriate themes for an ecclesiastical space in Africa Proconsularis, it does not offer any immanent narrative order, but suggests that a free play of associations was acceptable.[419] Thus, the apparent randomness of the subject matter, or in other words the withdrawal from visual strategies which were straightforwardly applicable to Christian allegory, could potentially have been a North African import as much as the inclusion of exotic motifs like ostriches and lions.[420] A loosely structured narrative frame would also have suited the incorporation of the Bellerophon scene, which is not securely attested for any late antique baptismal or church space. Where it was used in sixth-century North Africa, it has no clear provenance or the architectural context could not be determined.[421] When regarded with 'North African' eyes, the decorative concept of the Mértola platform might have looked unconventional but was not out of the question. Both the rose pattern and the lion motif link the mosaic with common church decoration. In consideration of the pictorial programme as a whole, the baptismal function of the complex can neither be ruled out nor confirmed, which in itself is a signum of some of North African ecclesiastical art.

[419] Ghalia comes to a very different conclusion, applying a sacramental model of interpretation to the decorative programme of Hergla: T. Ghalia, *Hergla* (1989), 58-66, 75-90, 198.
[420] An interesting parallel is offered by the 'North African' narrative strategies of Balearic church mosaics. For an example of the current state of research M. Orfila and F. Tuset, *Son Fadrinet* (2003).
[421] For the lack of provenance of the Béja mosaic M. Yacoub, *Le musée du Bardo* (1996), 145. For the archaeological finds at Henchir Errich F. Béjaoui, *Deux mosaïques tardives* (2001).

I will continue to explore the possibility that the complex was indeed a baptistery. The question that needs to occupy us now is why the scene of Bellerophon killing the chimaera, handed down through Homer and Hesiod, would have been chosen as a baptismal decoration in the sixth century.[422] To examine this question, it seems helpful to think again about the cultural affiliations the motif would have held for contemporary viewers. On the textual level, there is no evidence of fifth- and sixth-century Christian interpretations of the myth of Bellerophon in Iberia or elsewhere.[423] The few Christian references that are preserved do not offer any reason for a Christian reinterpretation of the hero, but rather see him critically.[424] We can only speculate whether most viewers would have been familiar with Christian allegorizations of Bellerophon's myth. Nevertheless, viewers had access to the myth of Bellerophon through textual and visual sources.[425] The acquaintance with the myth of Bellerophon in late antique Iberia is attested in a series of mosaics; in fact, the theme of Bellerophon fighting with the chimaera is nowhere so often documented as in Iberia.[426] All in all, Portugal (2) and Spain (6) can claim eight examples, followed by England (5) and France (3), whereas Byzantine

[422] Homer, Iliad, 6,152-204; Hesiod, Theog., 319-325. On Bellerophon in mythology S. Hiller, *Bellerophon. Ein griechischer Mythos in der römischen Kunst* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1970), 9-13.

[423] For late antique Christian and pagan commentators on Bellerophon H. Brandenburg, "Bellerophon christianus? Zur Deutung des Mosaiks von Hinton St. Mary und zum Problem der Mythendarstellungen in der kaiserzeitlichen dekorativen Kunst", in: *Römische Quartalschrift 63* (1968), 60-61.

[424] Justin Martyr, Apol. 1, 21; Gregory of Naziansus, Or. 43, 21.

[425] See for instance the short poems of the *Anthologia Latina* on Bellerophon (97) and on the Chimaera (98): A. Riese, *Anthologia Latina, sive, Poesis Latinae supplementum. Pars prior, Carmina in codicibus scripta* (Leipzig: in aedibus B.G. Teubneri, 1894), 124.

[426] A. Alarcão et al., *Conimbriga. Casa dos Repuxos* (Coimbra: Instituto Português de Museus/Museu Monográfico de Conímbriga, 1992), 42-44. For Bellerophon in Iberia J. M. Blázquez Martínez, "Mosaicos hispanos de tema homérico", in: *VI Coloquio Internacional sobre mosaico antiguo (Palencia - Mérida 1990, Guadalajara 1994),* César María Batalla (ed.) (Palencia: Asociación Española del Mosaico, 1994); J. M. Blázquez, *Mosaicos romanos de Córdoba, Jaén y Málaga* (Madrid: Instituto Español de Arqueología "Rodrigo Caro", 1981), 77.

examples are much rarer.[427] In Iberia, the preserved examples in Loma del Regadío (Teruel),[428] Ucero (Soria),[429] Torre de Bell-Lloch (Gerona),[430] Puerta Oscura (Malaga),[431] Sahelices el Chico (Salamanca),[432] Mérida,[433] Conimbriga[434] and Mértola point to a wide transmission on the peninsula. With the exception of Mértola and Mérida, all have been attributed with certainty to a domestic context, either in a rural villa or in a rich urban residence.[435] Furthermore, all examples except for Mértola have been dated to the second to fourth century. No Iberian depictions of Bellerophon on any other materials from the fifth or sixth century have come to my attention. The Bellerophon scene was apparently of a certain popularity with wealthy households in Hispania. These are the material hints available for a reconstruction of how someone in the baptistery of Mértola might have placed this image culturally. One association that we can relatively safely presume the image would have held for many viewers was that of traditional Roman elite culture.

Scholars have debated for a long time over the Christian significance of Bellerophon. The question has been under discussion since the discovery of the fourth-century floor

[427] A slightly outdated list is provided in J. M. Blázquez Martínez, Mosaicos hispanos de tema homérico (1994), 43. France: Autun, Reims, Nîmes; England: Lullingstone, Hinton St. Mary, Frampton as well as the more recent finds at Croughton (discovered in 1991) and Boxford (discovered in 2017). For Croughton S. R. Cosh and D. S. Neal, "Croughton. Mosaic 86.1", in: *Roman Mosaics of Britain 1* (2002); M. Dawson and D. S. Neal, "New Fragments and Further Excavation of the Bellerophon Mosaic from Croughton", in: *Britannia 41* (2010).

[428] S. Azuara Galve and C. Villagordo Ros, *La villa romana de La Loma del Regadío (Urrea de Gaén)* (Zaragoza: Prames, 2007).

[429] J. M. Blázquez and T. Ortego y Frías, *Mosaicos romanos de Soria* (Madrid: Instituto Español de Arqueología "Rodrigo Caro" del Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1983), 50-51, 93, fig. 3.

[430] A. Balil, "Mosaico de Bellerofonte y la Quimera, de Torre de Bell-Lloch (Gerona)", in: *Archivo Espanol de Arqueologia 33* (1960); J. M. Blázquez Martínez, Mosaicos hispanos de tema homérico (1994), 282.

[431] J. M. Blázquez, *Mosaicos romanos de Córdoba, Jaén y Málaga* (1981), 77-80.

[432] M. Chamoso, "Villa Romana de Sahelices el Chico (Salamanca). El Mosaico de Belerofonte y la Quimera", in: *Revista de Arqueologia 312* (2007).

[433] J. M. Álvarez Martínez, *Mosaicos romanos de Mérida: nuevos hallazgos* (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura. Dirección General de Bellas Artes y Archivos, 1990), 98-101.

[434] A. Alarcão et al., *Alarcão, Conimbriga* (1992), 41-44.

[435] A domestic context is also a likely option in Mérida. J. M. Álvarez Martínez, *Mosaicos romanos* (1990), 98-191.

mosaic of a villa in Hinton St Mary (Dorset) in 1963.[436] The mosaic became famous for the contemporaneous depiction of a bust of a man crowned with a chi-rho, usually interpreted as Christ, and the scene of Bellerophon killing the chimaera.[437] Two more mid-fourth-century mosaics in villas in Frampton (Dorset) and Lullingstone (Kent) also attest to the scene being used, or at least not demolished, by villa owners who chose Christian imagery as domestic decoration.[438] These are, apart from the mosaic of Mértola, the only known examples of the theme's connection to Christianity. The potential Christian significance of the image of Bellerophon killing the chimaera has received so much attention, however, that the depiction has recently been discussed as a possible marker of Christian identity, at least in the context of fourth-century England.[439] Several suggestions have been put forward about what constituted the Christian message of Bellerophon, but the only hypothesis that has found wide acceptance is that the image of Bellerophon killing the chimaera was used to represent the fight of good against evil.[440] The same interpretation has been proposed for Mértola.[441] This basic idea has been developed in different, more specific directions: the

[436] J. M. C. Toynbee, "A New Roman Mosaic Pavement Found in Dorset", in: *The Journal of Roman Studies 54* (1964).
[437] Pearce's argument against the traditional interpretation as Christ provides a useful overview of the debate: S. Pearce, "The Hinton St Mary Mosaic Pavement: Christ or Emperor?", in: *Britannia 39* (2008).
[438] For the use of the Bellerophon motif in Frampton and Lullingstone M. Henig, "From Romano-British Hero to Patron-Saint of England: the Transformations of Bellerophon and his Chimera", in: *Myth, allegory, emblem: the many lives of the Chimaera of Arezzo: proceedings of the international colloquium, Malibu, the J. Getty Museum (December 4-5, 2009),* Giuseppina Carlotta Cianferoni et al. (ed.) (Rome: Aracne, 2012), 138-141.
[439] S. R. Cosh and D. S. Neal, Croughton. Mosaic 86.1 (2002), 236. See also M. Henig, From Romano-British Hero to Patron-Saint of England: the Transformations of Bellerophon and his Chimera (2012). The idea of Bellerophon as a Christian symbol was, however, introduced much earlier. See M. Simon, "Bellérophon chrétien", in: *Mélanges d'archéologie, d'épigraphie et d'histoire offerts à Jérôme Carcopino,* Jacques Heurgon et al. (ed.) (Paris: Hachette, 1966); J. Huskinson, Pagan Mythological Figures (1974), 73-78. A skeptical view is offered in H. Brandenburg, Bellerophon christianus (1968).
[440] Huskinson dismisses the idea of Bellerophon as a pagan type of Christ: J. Huskinson, Pagan Mythological Figures (1974), 78. Hiller speculates about Bellerophon as image of imperial triumph, but also as 'slayer of evil': S. Hiller, *Bellerophon. Ein griechischer Mythos in der römischen Kunst* (1970), 82.
[441] V. Lopes, *Mértola na Antiguidade Tardia* (2003), 117-118. For a similar interpretation in the case of Milreu see further below in this chapter.

fight of Bellerophon and the Chimaera has been taken to represent the different poles of light and darkness[442], for instance, or life and death[443], or even Christianity (Bellerophon) and paganism (chimaera).[444] Uniting all these readings is an exclusive concern with the allegorical message of the Bellerophon scene in a Christian context. The question that has been asked is *what is this image about*? This is of course crucial for the understanding of an image's meaning. However, an interpretative analysis of meanings does not sufficiently explore the significance of an image, as I suggested in the introduction. All suggestions fail to explain *why* Christians in fourth-century England or sixth-century Portugal might have been interested in representing the fight of good against evil *in the form of* Bellerophon spearing the chimaera. It might certainly be the case that the written evidence which could explain the specific interest of Bellerophon's story for Christians has been lost or was never transmitted. Yet, another option should also be considered – Bellerophon might have been of interest to Christians because he was a particularly well-liked mythological hero.

This explanation, which privileges enjoyment in the affiliation with Roman culture over Christian interpretability, is based on the premise that Christians valued Roman culture in their religious practice. This seems to me exactly what the archaeological evidence at Mértola suggests. The supposed baptistery is a testimony to the continuity of the Roman artistic and building traditions that were put into the service of a Christian practice. Mértola exceeds Henchir el Koucha in this respect, because the North African baptistery

[442] S. Hiller, *Bellerophon. Ein griechischer Mythos in der römischen Kunst* (1970), 88.
[443] J. Huskinson, Pagan Mythological Figures (1974), 74.
[444] M. Simon, Bellérophon chrétien (1966), 901.

integrated Roman imagery into the Christian space rather than use a Roman-looking space for Christian purposes.

Observed in its surroundings, Mértola's Bellerophon does not stick out at all. In fact, the mosaic is exactly the sort of image we would expect to find in a wealthy domestic Roman structure. It is telling that researchers find it difficult to decide whether the building ensemble of Mértola fits better with a palatial or a baptismal structure. If the supposed baptistery was not a transformed domestic structure, it looks as if it was meant to recall one. In contrast to the example from Henchir el Koucha, the Bellerophon mosaic does not take up a prominent position within the decorative scheme, but is one motif of potentially many and placed in the building's corner. We do not have enough evidence to assume that the Bellerophon scene pertained to a mosaic ensemble like the one in Henchir el Koucha, whose Christian message was carefully planned. On the contrary, there is even the possibility that the building with its mosaic originally served another purpose and was reused as a baptistery. Alternatively, and much like the North African church of Hergla, the building's original purpose was baptismal but its decoration brought together a selection of themes popular in late antique domestic culture which carried no obvious Christian messages.

The admittedly patchy evidence speaks to a Christian community that understood Roman and Christian culture as one cultural continuum, perhaps without giving much thought to it. As far as we can tell, the builders and maintainers of the ensemble valued mythology without strongly emphasizing their mythological interests. It has often been argued that Christians did not *believe* in mythological events anymore, but used them

for other reasons.[445] I would add that the public display of *paideia* is as significant as a *practice* as it is in terms of belief. Making, handling, seeing and talking about mythological imagery in church spaces contributed to the self-image of Christian communities. No matter whether or how the community rationalized the use of mythology, that is, whether or how it gave mythology Christian (or indeed any other) meaning, by dealing with Roman traditional life as a religious community, it made it matter to Christian religion. Mythology was Christianized, not in the sense that Christians believed in it, but in the sense that it was part of Christian religious practice. For a church community to associate itself with mythology meant to acknowledge the great significance Roman culture still held for daily Christian life. The Bellerophon scene of Mértola is therefore another apt example of the way that Christian and Roman identities were experienced as congruent enough to be acted out together. As long as the Bellerophon scene was not covered or made inaccessible, it affected, if only marginally, the communal experience of baptism. As such, as long as the assumed baptistery was used, Christians would have been prompted to acknowledge the presence of Roman mythology in their religious lives.

3. Milreu/Estói

The last case study looks at the re-employment of a Roman mosaic of formerly non-Christian use for an uncontested baptismal setting in the Lusitanian village of Milreu/Estói. The mosaic's subject matter is the marine *thiasus*, the retinue of Poseidon.

[445] This view seems to stem from a persistent fixation on belief as defining for religion, central in particular to the study of Christianity, seen through an essentially Protestant lens. Faith is of course vital for early Christianity. Recently on this T. Morgan, *Roman faith and Christian faith: pistis and fides in the early Roman Empire and early churches* (2015). However, any study interested in early Christian public life and its bearings on the ancestral past needs to take into account the central role that practice played for ancient religion. See in the introduction 4 and the section ''Lived religion' and the study of material culture'.

If divine figures were included in the scenery, they are not detectable any longer; however, mythological creatures associated with the divine marine sphere were depicted in immediate proximity to the baptismal font. In the last section of this chapter, I attempt to reconstruct the pictorial programme of the baptismal chamber of Milreu, and discuss to what extent the material preconditions under which the Christian occupants erected the baptistery affected the way their Christian community associated it with the built Roman heritage. The pre-existing site predetermined a range of possibilities for the Christian community within which it had to interact with the building. I will argue that the specific form of reuse makes it likely that the Christian occupants had or developed a positive attitude to the monument's mythological mosaic scenery. They integrated the pre-Christian imagery in the baptismal space, taking pride in their association with it.

The pre-Christian archaeological evidence

The baptistery in question is attached to an antique building of unclear original function, which has been interpreted over time as a sanctuary, mausoleum or dining hall (fig. 94).[446] It was built opposite a Roman villa in the village of Milreu/Estói, about 8 km

[446] T. Hauschild, *Der Kultbau neben dem römischen Ruinenkomplex bei Estoi in der Provincia Lusitania (Ph.D. Thesis)* (Berlin: 1964). For an updated account of the archeological assessment of the religious complex A. Oepen, *Villa und christlicher Kult auf der Iberischen Halbinsel in Spätantike und Westgotenzeit* (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2012), 96-109. For a function of the building as a temple dedicated to a water deity or as a nymphaeum see T. Hauschild, "Die Mosaiken am Podium des Wasserheiligtums von Milreu, Estoi (Algarve)", in: *La Mosaïque Gréco-Romaine IV,* Jean-Pierre Darmon and Alain Rebourg (ed.) (Paris: Supplément au Bulletin de l'A.I.E.M.A., 1984); T. Hauschild, "O "ninfeu" de Milreu", in: *Religiões da Lusitânia. Loquuntur saxa.,* Museu Nacional de Arqueologia (ed.) (Lisbon: 2002); F. Teichner, "'De lo Romano a lo Árabe'. La Transición del sur de la provincia de Lusitania a Al-Gharb Al-Andalus. Nuevas investigaciones en los yacimientos de Milreu y Cerro de Vila", in: *Villas tardoantiguas en el Mediterráneo occidental,* A. Chavarría et al. (ed.) (Madrid: Editorial CSIC Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2006), 83. For a function as a mausoleum see D. Graen, ""Sepultus in villa" – Bestattet in der Villa: Drei Zentralbauten in Portugal zeugen vom Grabprunk der Spätantike", in: *Antike Welt 35* (2004); D. Graen, "Kaiserzeitliche Grabmonumente in der Lusitania zwischen Romanisierung und Afrikanisierung", in: *Romanisierung – Romanisation. Theoretische Modelle und praktische Fallbeispiele,* Günther Schörner (ed.) (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2005); D. Graen, "Os mosaicos do "santuário" de Milreu, Estói (Algarve), no contexto de uma nova interpretação", in: *O Arqueólogo Português IV* (2005); J. Griesbach, "Grabbauten und Villen auf der iberischen Halbinsel", in: *Grabbauten des 2. und 3. Jahrhunderts in den gallischen und*

north of Faro, the ancient municipium of Ossonoba in Lusitania.[447] The monument was reused as a church from the second half of the fifth or sixth century at the latest, which is when the baptistery was added to the complex. There is archaeological evidence that a later settlement existed within the building after the Arabic conquest of Lusitania until the early tenth century.[448]

The villa itself dates back to the first century AD and both villa and monument have been excavated twice: in 1877 by Estácio da Veiga (fig. 95) and from 1971 to 1998 by Theodor Hauschild (fig. 96).[449] The complex is located above the course of the Rio Seco close to one of the roads coming from Ossonoba.[450] The villa is divided into a residential area with a peristyle and a large bath, and a *pars rustica* where wine and olive oil were produced.[451] In the course of the fourth century a fundamental refurbishment took place.[452] The peristyle and a *frigidarium* were decorated with mosaic floors, several of

germanischen Provinzen. Akten des Internationalen Kolloquiums Köln, 22. bis 23 Februar 2007, Dietrich Boschung (ed.) (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2009). For a function as an aula see F. Teichner, "La pars urbana tardorromana de la villa de Milreu (Estói, Portugal): nuevas descubrimientos y antiguos documentos", in: *Las villae tardorromanas en el occidente del Imperio: arquitectura y función: IV Coloquio internacional de Arqueología en Gijón,* Carmen Fernández Ochoa et al. (ed.) (Gijón: Trea, 2008); F. Teichner, ""Nam primum tibi mater Hispania est, terris omnibus terra felicior". Spätantike Großvillen und Residenzen auf der Iberischen Halbinsel", in: *Bruckneudorf und Gamzigrad: Spätantike Paläste und Grossvillen im Donau-Balkan-Raum: Akten des Internationalen Kolloquiums in Bruckneudorf vom 15. bis 18. Oktober 2008,* Gerda von Bülow and Heinrich Zabehlicky (ed.) (Bonn: Habelt Verlag, 2011).

[447] An insightful analysis of the religious authority of Hispanic rural elites on their estates, outdoing urban-oriented bishops, is offered in K. Bowes, *Private worship, public values, and religious change in late antiquity* (2008), 179-187.

[448] F. Teichner, "Acerca da villa romana de Milreu/Estói. Continuidade de ocupação na época árabe", in: *Arqueologia Medieval* (1994); A. Sidarus and F. Teichner, "As Termas romanas no Gharb Al-Ândaluz. As inscrições árabes de Milreu (Estói)", in: *Arqueologia Medieval 5* (1996); F. Teichner, De lo Romano a lo Árabe (2006); T. Hauschild and F. Teichner, *Milreu. Ruins* (Lisbon: IPPAR – Departamento de Estudos, 2002), 57-58.

[449] A. Oepen, *Villa und christlicher Kult* (2012), 97-109; F. Teichner, *Entre tierra y mar. Zwischen Land und Meer. Architektur und Wirtschaftsweise ländlicher Siedlungsplätze im Süden der römischen Provinz Lusitanien (Portugal)* (Mérida: Museo Nacional de Arte Romano, 2008), 98-102 and F. Teichner, La pars urbana (2008), 732-733 on the archaeological interventions of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

[450] T. Hauschild and F. Teichner, *Milreu. Ruins* (2002), 14.

[451] Most recently on the complex of the villa F. Teichner, *Entre tierra y mar* (2008), 95-270.

[452] This is the case of many other Lusitanian villas at the time. Besides the general tendency of high social classes to move to the countryside, an earthquake potentially triggered the wave of renovations. See T. Hauschild and F. Teichner, *Milreu. Ruins* (2002), 12 and D. Graen, Sepultus in villa (2004), 68.

which depict sea animals, mainly fish. The mosaic, originally covering the full 18 m length of the peristyle, has been preserved to a 6 m length to this day (fig. 97). In addition, a construction of monumental scale was built at some point in the first half of the fourth century on the other side of the road, at a distance of 10 m from the villa (fig. 94).[453] The monument, built in *opus testaceum*, was more than 10 m high. It was raised on a podium surrounded by columns and could be walked around; a gallery and a walled court surrounded it. The building is oriented to the south and has an apse that was covered by a cupola. Fragments of *opus sectile* and a large number of coloured glass tesserae, many of them gilded, indicate a lost programme of rich decoration of the inner walls and the cross vault. A comparable mosaic vault has been preserved in Iberia in the cupola of Centcelles near Tarragona.[454] The podium supporting the monument is 1.20 m in height and was covered by a mosaic frieze 67 m long (fig. 98).[455] Milreu's mosaic decoration shares the maritime motif with the villa mosaics and is clearly meant to correspond with them. The mosaics on the northern façade are the best preserved and feature diverse types of fish, amongst them dolphins. Many smaller fragments on the other sides of the frieze depict bodies of fish and other not clearly identifiable water creatures.[456]

Several functions of the monument have been suggested. Traditionally, it has been regarded as a sanctuary, a nymphaeum or a temple dedicated to a water deity, but more

[453] The suggestions for a dating of the monument differ and have changed over time, however the first half of the fourth century is now generally agreed upon as the rough date of creation. Cf. T. Hauschild, Hauschild 1994 – Die Mosaiken am Podium (1984), 287 who opts for a dating from the end of the third or beginning of the fourth century, and more recently T. Hauschild, O "ninfeu" de Milreu (2002), 216 suggesting a dating in the middle of the fourth century. A dating in the first quarter of the fourth century is preferred by D. Graen, Sepultus in villa (2004), 69.

[454] For the cupola of Centcelles most recently A. Arbeiter and D. Korol, *Der Kuppelbau von Centcelles: Neue Forschungen zu einem enigmatischen Denkmal von Weltrang* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2016). See also J. Arce, *Centcelles: el monumento tardorromano: iconografía y arquitectura* (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2002); H. Schlunk, *Die Mosaikkuppel von Centcelles* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1988).

[455] T. Hauschild, "A arquitectura a os mosaicos do "edifício de culto" ou "aula" da villa romana de Milreu", in: *Revista de História da Arte 6* (2008), 21.

[456] For a detailed description and hypothetical reconstruction of the frieze see ibid., 21-24, fig. 8.

recently it has been argued that it was a mausoleum or a dining hall. In support of the traditional interpretation we may observe that its form is reminiscent of Gallo-Roman ambulatory temples, that its frieze displays marine iconography, that it contained a hexagonal basin recorded by Estácio da Veiga in the middle of the *cella*, lost today (fig. 95), and lastly, that what may be a ditch around the monument might have been used as a water basin.[457] If the building did originally serve as a place of pagan worship, it would be one of only two known Hispanic examples of the Christian use of a previous temple structure.[458] Recent scholarship has problematized the fact that no devotional objects or inscriptions have been found during the excavations. Since the conduits, which fed the basin at Milreu with water, destroyed parts of the mosaic decoration of the frieze and thus suggests that they were installed after the initial construction, the monument's pre-Christian function as a water sanctuary has been challenged.[459] At the same time, a series of typologically similar Iberian buildings at the villa of São Cucufate in the Alentejo, the villa of Quinta de Marim in the Algarve, the villa of Maternus at Carranque in Castilla y León, and the villa at Los Castillejos in the Extremadura have been brought into the discussion. Dennis Graen has argued that the monument of Milreu and its Iberian counterparts are typologically similar to a series of monumental mausolea in Rome.[460] He further compares the maritime iconography on the podium to marine

[457] The arguments were first summarized in T. Hauschild, *Der Kultbau* (1964). Unfortunately, almost no records have survived about the basin in the *cella* which might have been added as late as in the Islamic period. An obvious parallel is discussed in chapter 4.

[457] T. Hauschild and F. Teichner, *Milreu. Ruins* (2002), 57-58; F. Teichner, De lo Romano a lo Árabe (2006).

[458] In Tarragona a church reuse of a temple is attested from the eighth century onwards: J. Arce, "Fana, templa, delubra destrui praecipius: The end of the temples in Roman Spain", in: *The archaeology of late antique paganism,* Luke Lavan and Michael Mulryan (ed.) (Leiden, Boston, MA: Brill, 2011), 202. A doubtful case is Santa Eulalia de Bóveda near Lugo. There is much uncertainty as to the chronology of the building, claimed to have been a pagan sanctuary originally. R. Blanco-Rotea et al., "Evolución constructiva de Santa Eulalia de Bóveda (Lugo, Galicia)", in: *Arqueología de la Arquitectura 6* (2009).

[459] D. Graen, Sepultus in villa (2004), 70; D. Graen, Os mosaicos do santuário (2005), 378.

[460] D. Graen, Os mosaicos do santuário (2005); D. Graen, "The So-Called Temples of Milreu, Sao Cucufate and Quinta de Marim – A Suggestion of a New Interpretation of Their Function, Based on Actual

thiasus scenes on late antique sarcophagi (fig. 99).[461] According to Felix Teichner, the series of monuments should instead be interpreted as free-standing dining halls.[462] Marine life is indeed a recurrent theme in the mosaic decoration of Iberian *triclinia*, but marine *thiasus* scenes are largely absent from them.[463] In light of these arguments the structure's proposed temple function seems doubtful, yet neither the mausoleum thesis nor the aula thesis have been conclusively proven thus far. I will therefore call the pre-Christian building simply a monument and will not engage with the problems which a former temple function would entail.

The Baptismal Space

The subsequent phase of Christian use of the site is difficult to interpret archaeologically.[464] The existence of a baptismal font situated in the north-west of the monument between the platform and the outer wall of the court, not far from the entrance (figs. 100, 101), is the most striking argument for the transformation of the monument into a church. The font has been preserved: it is at least 92 cm deep, has an

---

Excavations and Iconographic Studies", in: *Xelb. Actas do II Encontro do Arqueologia do Algarve, Silves 17.-19.10.2003 5* (2005). See also J. Griesbach, Grabbauten und Villen auf der iberischen Halbinsel (2009).

[461] For the theme of the marine *thiasus* on Roman sarcophagi P. Zanker and B. C. Ewald, *Mit Mythen leben: die Bilderwelt der römischen Sarkophage* (Munich: Hirmer, 2004), 117-134.

[462] F. Teichner, *Entre tierra y mar* (2008), 516; F. Teichner, Spätantike Großvillen (2011), 296-298.

[463] Iberian *triclinia* decorated with fish and other sea animals are at the Casa del Anfiteatro in Mérida, Vega del Ciego in Asturias, Vega Baja de Toledo and Casa dos Esqueletos in Conímbriga. See M. Guardia, *Los Mosaicos* (1992), 309. For an exhaustive overview of marine mythological Roman mosaics in Portugal cf. C. Mourão, *AVTEM NON SVNT RERVM NATVRA. Figurações heteromórficas em mosaicos hispano-romanos* (Lisbon: Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2010); C. Mourão, "Mosaicos romanos com motivos aquáticos em Portugal", in: *O mosaico romano nos centros e nas periferias: originalidades, influências e identidades: actas do X Coloquio Internacional da Associação Internacional para o Estudo do Mosaico Antigo (AIEMA),* Museu Monográfico de Conímbriga (ed.) (Conímbriga: Instituto dos Museus e da Conservação, 2011); C. Mourão, "Motivos aquáticos em mosaicos antigos de Portugal – Decorativismo e Simbolismo", in: *Revista de História da Arte 6* (2008); C. Mourão, *Mirabilia Aquarum. Um estudo de corpus dos mosaicos romanos com motivos marinhos na Província da Lusitânia* (Lisbon: Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2001).

[464] On the Christian reuse T. Hauschild, "Milreu/Estoi (Algarve): Untersuchungen neben der Taufpiscina und Sondagen in der Villa – Kampagnen 1971 und 1979", in: *Madrider Mitteilungen 21* (1980); S. Ristow, *Frühchristliche Baptisterien* (1998), no. 888. Ristow lists the font only as potential baptismal font, likely because of its attachment to a presumed nymphaeum.

almost quadrangular floor and two sets of three narrow steps extending the font to a length of 1.63 m.[465] It corresponds to the description of the ideal shape of a baptismal font given by the seventh-century Spanish bishops Isidore of Seville and Ildefonsus of Toledo, according to which the font should have three steps down and three up, with the floor counted as the seventh step and signifying Christ.[466] The font of Milreu belongs to a common Iberian type of baptismal fonts of rectangular, oblong shape and approximately quadrangular floor with two sets of stairs, most frequently occurring in the second half of the fifth and the sixth century, with a particular concentration of this type in Lusitania.[467] Besides the font, several furnishings decorated with Christian imagery further indicate a Christian reuse and redecoration of the monument. This includes a marble plaque depicting two birds drinking from a *kantharos* (fig. 102) as well as the aforementioned bricks featuring a pair of peacocks (fig. 103), a fish, a *kantharos* (fig. 104), two four-leaf clovers (figs. 105 a and b) and a horse (fig. 57).[468] Astonishingly, the northern stairs of the font are placed on the intact grave of a youngish adult (fig. 106). Remarkably unharmed by the font's construction, the grave did not contain grave goods and cannot be dated with any certainty.[469] It has been suggested that the grave was part of an early Christian graveyard established after the monument had lost

[465] T. Hauschild, Milreu/Estoi (1980), 190.
[466] Isidore, De eccl. off. 2,25,4; Ildefonsus, De cogn. bapt., 110.
[467] T. Hauschild, Milreu/Estoi (1980), 200-201; T. Ulbert, *Frühchristliche Basiliken mit Doppelapsiden* (1978), 156.
[468] Estácio da Veiga calls the plaque the base of a pillar and records its find spot as the 'sala grande', likely the interior of the monument. In the same space he records many more marble fragments, among which are two Corinthian capitals: S. P. M. Estácio da Veiga, *Inventario do Museu Archeologico do Algarve fundado em 1880 na Academia Real de Bellas Artes de Lisboa por Sebastião Phillipes Martinus Estácio da Veiga* (Archive of the Museu Nacional de Arqueologia Lisbon: 1885). The tiles are catalogued in S. P. M. Estácio da Veiga, *Catalogo dos monumentos e objectos de arte antiga, descobertos e obtidos no reconhecimento das antiguidades do districto de Faro, feito desde março de 1877 até outubro de 1878, para o levantamento da Carta Archeologica do Algarve em virtude da portaria de 15 de janeiro de 1877 por S. P. M. Estacio da Veiga* (1878), 44. The plaque and the bricks are preserved today in the collection of the Museu Nacional de Arqueologia in Lisbon (15262, 2001.15.12, 997.17.1, 2006.372.14, 2006.372.12, 2001.15.14).
[469] Cf. T. Hauschild, Milreu/Estoi (1980), 201.

its original function. [470] Most of the graves are facing eastwards and are located within the walled court of the monument with the densest concentration in the northern entrance area.[471] In the north-east of the courtyard, an almost quadrangular construction with a niched apse in the east that contained three burials sticks out (fig. 101). It has been compared to similarly constructed Iberian mausolea and has been tentatively dated to the fifth century.[472] If the dating is correct, the mausoleum would mark the earliest attestable phase of the Christian occupation of the monument.

Whether the owners of the villa transformed the monument into a church or it changed ownership is unknown. Unfortunately undocumented finds of grave goods from the late nineteenth and twentieth century testify to a usage of the site up to the late sixth or early seventh century.[473] Excavators of this early period described the findings of ceramics and a buckle as "Visigothic".[474] The complexity of ethnic attributions to archaeological findings has been fully acknowledged only more recently, however, and the attribution as Visigothic is hardly justifiable.[475] Thus, it can only be taken as an indication of the historic period in which the goods originated, not as evidence for the ethnic affiliation of the deceased. Whether the Christian occupants of Milreu's monument were Hispano-Romans, Barbarians or both remains as unverifiable as the terms they would have used to described themselves.[476] Returning to the baptismal

[470] On the additional burial sites ibid., 204-207.
[471] F. Teichner, *Entre tierra y mar* (2008), 255, fig. 29a. One grave is situated in the apse of the monument.
[472] A. Oepen, *Villa und christlicher Kult* (2012) 107, no. 530.
[473] F. Teichner, *Entre tierra y mar* (2008), 256. See also T. Hauschild, Milreu/Estoi (1980), 196; *F. Teichner, Acerca da villa romana de Milreu/Estói. Continuidade de ocupação na época árabe* (1994), 94-95.
[474] M. Lyster Franco, *As ruínas romanas do Milreu: e os últimos trabalhos nelas realizados por intermédio da Dirrecção Geral dos Edifícios e Monumentos Nacionais* (Faro: 1942), no pagination.
[475] F. Teichner, *Entre tierra y mar* (2008) 256. For the identification of Vandal ethnic identity through grave goods see 222-223 in this thesis.
[476] For Barbarian occupation of Iberian villas more generally A. Chavarría Arnau, "Interpreting the Transformation of Late Roman Villas: The Case of Hispania", in: *Landscapes of change : rural evolutions in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages,* Neil Christie (ed.) (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 74-75. Most

font, the ground plan from 1880 made following the first excavation by Estácio da Veiga (fig. 95) clearly shows that the font had been integrated in a special room which was formed out of the wall of the antique podium in the east, the outer wall that confines the court in the west and two newly built walls in the south and north.[477] This structure must have been about 4 to 5 m in width. Today only a few parts of the outer walls are archaeologically provable to the north and west of the font, while substantial parts of the wall of the podium and the outer court wall still exist (fig. 107).[478] A breach through the wall of the podium might indicate an entrance (fig. 106); the other option is an entrance that opened up to the court.[479] The construction of a special baptismal room is not surprising. In fact, even in modest Iberian churches a separate space was usually provided for the baptismal rite.[480]

What is perhaps more surprising is that the Christians who built the baptistery used the wall of the podium for their construction, a choice which seems to have made the mosaic frieze of the monument part of the interior decoration of the baptismal chamber. Unfortunately, the mosaic frieze is almost entirely destroyed in the area included in the baptistery. However, photographs and drawings from the 1880s and 1890s give insight into the decoration of the frieze in the proximity of the baptistery (figs. 108, 109).[481] They show the fragment of a high-quality mosaic of a Triton with raised hands, holding a shell or a bowl in his right, and another fantastic sea creature composed of a torso of

---

recently on Visigothic and Roman identity J. Arce, "Goths and Romans in Visigothic Hispania", in: *Transformations of Romanness. Early medieval regions and identities,* Walter Pohl et al. (ed.) (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2018).

[477] T. Hauschild, Milreu/Estoi (1980), 201.

[478] Ibid., 192 and 201-202.

[479] Ibid., 202.

[480] H. Schlunk and T. Hauschild, *Die Denkmäler* (1978), 48.

[481] *D. Graen, Os mosaicos do santuário* (2005), 376. A similar photograph was published in 1882 in the journal *O Occidente* no. 138. http://hemerotecadigital.cm-lisboa.pt/OBRAS/Ocidente/Ocidente.htm (last retrieved 14 June 2018).

a lion and a curled, long fishtail, which faces the Triton with an open and snarling snout. At the time the photographs were taken, the upper parts of the podium had been already removed, resulting in the loss of the faces of both creatures. Today the frieze is completely destroyed. According to the caption in the photograph from the 1890s (fig. 108), the mythological scene was situated on a wall in the west of the monument, the same site as the baptistery's location: '*Concelho de Faro – Freguezia de Estoy. MILREU. Monstros mythologicos figurados em mosaico no muro de oeste de um edificio antigo*'. A few preserved fragments confirm that the mosaic decoration included, besides fish, elements of a marine *thiasus* and probably of a fishing scene. Still extant are a long curled tail with spikes on the eastern side of the monument, similar to the tails of the Triton and the sea lion (fig. 110), together with a little human foot on the front side of the frieze (fig. 111). A fragment of the forepart of a fishing boat is stored in the Museu Nacional de Arqueologia in Lisbon (fig. 112).[482]

In addition, in the immediate surroundings of the font, at the right hand of the breach through the podium, is a small mosaic fragment of yet another curled tail (fig. 113, 107). The shape of this fragment clearly matches the shape of the Triton's tail recorded in the photograph (fig. 108). The colour scheme of the mosaic fragment in situ – a tail of dark grey and yellow parts at the intersection point – is the same as that preserved in a drawing made of the sea lion and Triton during the excavation by Estacio da Veiga, which is today in the Museu Nacional de Arqueologia in Lisbon (fig. 114).[483] Graen therefore

[482] Graen identifies the boat as the *Vegeiia* or *Placida* type: ibid., 375, fig. 22. For a detailed catalogue of all archived fragments including an additional fragment of a hoof, possibly from another sea creature and possibly from Milreu, today in the Museu Santa Rocha of Figueira da Foz ibid., 373-377.

[483] The drawing, however, is not accurate because horse legs were added to the figure of the Triton. See ibid., 374, fig. 14. The colour version of the drawing has been consulted at the archive of the Museu Nacional de Arqueologia, Lisbon.

suggested that the small fragment next to the font is the last remains of the Triton on the photograph from 1890. The photograph also documents a stone structure located below the Triton (fig. 108). Graen identified it as part of the now lost outer walls of the baptistery.[484] However, closer inspection of the shape of the meander below the tail of the preserved fragment in situ and the mythological scene recorded in the photograph makes it evident that the two fragments cannot be part of the same ornament. The wave pattern significantly differs in steepness between the two. The wave pattern covering the podium is significantly steeper than the pattern in the photograph in all the parts that are still in place (figs. 108, 113). It is also questionable whether the meander on the photograph ever contained as many different colours as the fragments on the podium. Although the reduced colour scheme of the meander on the photograph might, arguably, be due to the quality of the shot or to an uncleaned surface, the photograph does represent other shades of grey in the stonework below the mosaic or in the sea lion with some sharpness and nuance.

Two possibilities for an alternative location come to mind if we accept that the caption from 1890 is correct in its identification of the mosaic's location on a wall in the west of the monument: either the pattern of the meander changed considerably in form and arguably in colour in the now lost part at the south-western corner of the podium (fig. 100), which seems unlikely as the meander has been preserved on most parts of the podium and is everywhere else consistent in its shape; or the Triton and sea lion pair was in fact part of a mosaic decoration on another wall west of the monument. The logical alternative is that the caption of the photograph has been misunderstood. The mythological scene was actually attached to the outer wall that encircled the court

[484] Ibid., 376.

around the monument, and not, as Graen proposed, to the podium (fig. 100).[485] Because the photograph shows the brick wall of the monument rising up behind the wall to which the mythological scene is attached, the scene must have faced westwards, out of the inner precinct of the monument (fig. 108). If we regard this second alternative as the more likely option, the decorative programme of the baptismal chamber of Milreu can be reconstructed as follows: a Triton facing a sea lion was located on the outer wall of the baptistery (fig. 108), while another sea creature was placed on the eastern interior wall of the baptistery (figs. 107, 113). There is no way to determine to what extent the mosaic decoration in the interior of the baptismal chamber remained untouched by the Christians. We do know, however, that the scene caught in the photographs in the proximity of the baptistery was preserved to a degree that left its subject matter fully recognizable.

Associating with Roman Material Heritage – Pragmatics or Intention?

The baptismal chamber of Milreu was set amidst Roman mosaics pertaining to mythological thinking. The fact that formerly very popular hybrid sea creatures are widely absent from the Christian spaces of fifth- and sixth-century Iberia suggests that the field of associations triggered by them was not self-evident in the Christian sphere and that they were possibly considered inappropriate. Nereids, Tritons and hybrid animals like hippocamps, centaurs or *cetea* traditionally form the cortège of Roman deities whose stories are related to the sea such as Neptune, Oceanus or Venus Marina. Both narratively and visually sea creatures are associated with the gods. [486] The absence

[485] Hauschild excluded the possibility of a mosaic decoration on the outer wall on the basis of an examination of the scarce remains of the northern part of the outer wall. See T. Hauschild, *Der Kultbau* (1964), 32.

[486] For myth related to the marine world circulating in Iberia J. M. Blázquez, *Arte y religión en el Mediterráneo antiguo* (Madrid: Cátedra, 2008), 11-19. A good account of the thematic spectrum and the

of mythological repertoire in Christian artworks of the Visigothic period cannot simply be explained by the Germanic descent of new generations of artists. Artistic traditions, in terms of workshop practices and customers' preferences, did not change overnight. Moreover, Visigothic artists engaged with the Roman material culture of the areas they settled in, but were selective in what they incorporated into their artistic language: the artistic renderings of marine sea life that so often accompanied the marine *thiasus*, for instance, also existed in Visigothic Lusitania (fig. 115).[487]

Given that *thiasus* scenes, like mythological topics in general, were omitted from newly built Iberian church spaces, we must ask ourselves whether the decoration in proximity to the baptistery of Milreu was caused by pragmatic motivations alone. Economic as much as aesthetic considerations might well have come into play when the magnificent fourth-century monument was reused as a church.[488] When it comes to the choice to locate the baptistery along the north-western walls within the complex, however, pure

geographical dissemination of marine mythological scenes in Iberian mosaics is provided in M. Durán, *Iconografía de los mosaicos romanos en la Hispania alto-imperial* (Barcelona: Universitat Rovira i Virgili, 1993), esp. 225-237 for a summary. See further for Spain and Portugal M. Guardia, *Los Mosaicos* (1992), 307-309; L. Neira Jiménez, "Algunas consideraciones sobre mosaicos romanos con nereidas y tritones en ambientes termales de Hispania", in: *Termalismo Antiguo; actas,* María Jesús Peréx Agorretea (ed.) (Madrid: Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, 1997); G. López Monteagudo, "La iconografia del dios Oceanos en los mosaicos hispano-romanos", in: *O mosaico romano nos centros e nas periferias: originalidades, influências e identidades: actas do X Coloquio Internacional da Associação Internacional para o Estudo do Mosaico Antigo (AIEMA),* Museu Monográfico de Conímbriga (ed.) (Conímbriga: Instituto dos Museus e da Conservação 2011); J. Lancha, Mythologie classique et mosaïques tardives (2003) ; C. Mourão, *AVTEM NON SVNT RERVM NATVRA. Figurações heteromórficas em mosaicos hispano-romanos* (2010); C. Mourão, Mosaicos romanos com motivos aquáticos em Portugal (2011); C. Mourão, Motivos aquáticos em mosaicos antigos de Portugal – Decorativismo e Simbolismo (2008); C. Mourão, *Mirabilia Aquarum. Um estudo de corpus dos mosaicos romanos com motivos marinhos na Província da Lusitânia* (2001). For a comparative discussion which takes into account the Eastern Mediterranean evidence L. Neira Jiménez, "The Sea Thiasos of Nereids and Tritons in the Roman Mosaics of Turkey", in: *11th International Colloquium on Ancient Mosaics, October 16th-20th, 2009, Bursa, Turkey: Mosaics of Turkey and parallel developments in the rest of the acient and medieval world,* Mustafa Şahin (ed.) (Istanbul: Uludağ Üniversitesi, Mozaik Araştırmaları Uygulama ve Araştırma Merkezi, 2011).

[487] M. Cruz Villalón, *Mérida Visigoda. La escultura arquitectónica y litúrgica* (Badajoz: Colección Roso de Luna, 1985), 102-103, cat. no. 209.

[488] For a discussion of the role of pragmatics for the reuse of religious pre-Christian structures see also chapter 4, 190-197.

pragmatism is harder to defend. On the one hand, the location chosen for it is idiosyncratic; on the other, it would have been possible to build an independent baptismal room if the Christian community had thought one necessary.

There is not a single comparable case on the Iberian mainland where a baptismal font was erected upon a grave (fig. 106).[489] Furthermore, the north-western location of the font in proximity to the main entrance in the west runs counter to the most common Lusitanian practice. While in Iberia as a whole, and in particular in the north-east, there was a trend to position the font in the west of the church, Lusitanian baptisteries were commonly situated north- or southwards in proximity to the apse.[490] Closest to the location of Milreu's font in the north-west next to the entrance is the placement of the font in the martyrial church of Marialba (Léon) in northern Spain.[491] However, in Marialba the font was placed in a complex annexed to the church (fig. 116

).[492] A similar solution would have been feasible also for Milreu, which would have made it possible to avoid using any of the mosaic decoration in the interior or exterior of the baptistery. While independent baptisteries were less customary in Iberia than in northern Italy, for instance, there were no defining rules for the baptismal settings of Lusitania and Baetica other than that they were typically set apart from the open church

[489] For the Iberian region, in the basilica of Son Peretó near Manacor (Mallorca) graves were found next to the baptismal font from a probably older necropolis. Cf. T. Hauschild, Milreu/Estoi (1980), 201, no. 36.
[490] Examples are (north) Casa Herrera, Torre de Palma, Alconétar, Valdecebadar (Olivenza), and (south) San Pedro de Mérida, El Gatillo. The locations of Lusitanian baptisteries addresses T. Ulbert, *Frühchristliche Basiliken mit Doppelapsiden* (1978), 140-156. See also T. Hauschild, Milreu/Estoi (1980), 202. For an overview of baptisteries' locations in Hispania see C. Godoy Fernández, A los pies del templo. Espacios litúrgicos en contraposición al altar: una revisión (2004), 481-485.
[491] T. Hauschild, "Milreu, Estoi (Algarve), Untersuchungen neben der Taufpiscina und Sondagen in der Villa, Kampagnen 1971 und 1979", in: *Madrider Mitteilungen 21* (1980), 202.
[492] A. Oepen, *Villa und christlicher Kult* (2012), 398-407, esp. 404.

space.[493] As in Milreu, many of these fonts were placed in a baptismal chamber attached to the basilica, yet independently functioning annexes like the one at Torre de Palma in the Alto Alentejo, or free-standing rotundas as in Algezares in Murcia, existed as well.[494] Given that the location of Milreu's baptistery did not follow regional custom and that alternative building concepts and space would have been available, a purely pragmatic attitude seems unlikely.

Since pragmatic reasons do not seem to explain fully the baptistery's integration of the mosaic friezes, let us return to their subject matter. The overall theme is the depiction of life in water. As I discussed in the previous chapter, the water subject is integral to baptismal symbolism. The Christian community of Milreu apparently welcomed the imagery as sufficiently close to the range of permissible baptismal iconographies. It appears not to have been alone in this decision to turn to the reuse of older imagery. A potential case is the Church of San Miguel in Barcelona (fig. 117). San Miguel is attested in 1046 AD, but it has been pointed out that the ground plan of the church does not conform to those typical of Romanesque churches, and hence it has been speculated that the church might be older.[495] San Miguel's floor mosaic likely dates to the second half of the second century AD and probably decorated the *frigidarium* of a Roman bath.[496] The fragmentary mosaic depicts two pairs of facing male Tritons accompanied

[493] C. Godoy Fernández, A los pies del templo. Espacios litúrgicos en contraposición al altar: una revisión (2004), 481-482 with further literature on North Italian baptisteries; H. Schlunk and T. Hauschild, *Die Denkmäler* (1978), 48.
[494] For Torre de Palma S. Ristow, *Frühchristliche Baptisterien* (1998), nos. 528-530, for Algezares no. 568.
[495] See the conflicting datings of X. Barral i Altet, *Les mosaïques romaines et médiévales de la Regio Laietana* (Barcelona: Universidad de Barcelona. Instituto de Arqueología y Prehistoria, 1978), 39: 'probablement en place depuis le Moyen Age (XIIe-XIIIe siècles)', and A. Balil, "El mosaico romano de la Iglesia de San Miguel", in: *Cuadernos de Arqueologia e Historia de la Ciudad 1* (1960): 'Debió existir ya en el s. X, con cementerio proprio, pues en 1046 pasó a depender de los canónigos de la cathedral de Barcelona. […] un studio de la planta permite observer que ésta no corresponde a una iglesia románica'.
[496] A. Balil, El mosaico romano de la Iglesia de San Miguel (1960), esp. 22-26.

by dolphins at both longitudinal sides.[497] The two figures of one of the pairs hold a fish between them. There is a sea-horse on one of the vertical sides, again accompanied by dolphins. This mosaic covered the nave of San Miguel before the destruction of the church.[498] More decisively late antique is another case of inclusion of Roman imagery in the Algarve. A mosaic from the villa of Montinho das Laranjeiras (fig. 118), depicting a fish belonging to the family of garfish as well as the fragments of a curled tail, arguably formed part of an 'open font with a mosaic pavement ornamented with fish' excavated by Estácio da Veiga in 1877 in the Roman villa.[499] The most likely function of the rectangular basin with two sets of steps (length 1 m x width 60 cm x depth 60 cm) is that of a baptismal font. Destroyed today, it was located in the north-western arm of a cruciform building of the late sixth or early seventh century which has been identified as a church.[500] That the mosaic would have been made at such a late date is questionable. The detailed naturalism of the garfish, notably in combination with what was most likely a sort of sea-monster with a curled tail, corresponds much better with

[497] It has been relocated to the Museu d'Arqueologia de Catalunya.

[498] For a ground plan of San Miguel X. Barral i Altet, *Les mosaïques romaines et médiévales de la Regio Laietana* (1978), plate XIII. Another second-century mosaic depicting 'a sea filled with algae and fish' in the south of the crossing of the cathedral of Léon was likely only integrated in the early tenth century which is the assumed building time of the cathedral. See M. Gómez-Moreno, *Catálogo Monumental de España. Provincia de León* (Madrid: Ministerio de Instruccíon Pública y Bellas Artes, 1925), 25-26; A. Garcia y Bellido, *Nueve Studios sobre la Legio VII Gemina y su Campamento en Léon* (Léon: Diputacion Provincal de Léon, 1968), 19-21, fig. 16; T. Mañanes, "El mosaico romano de las termas de la Catedral de León", in: *Estudios sobre Mosaicos Romanos,* Tomas Mañanes and Alberto Balil (ed.) (Valladolid: Universidad Valladolid, 1980), 25-28; J. A. Jiménez Sánchez and J. Sales Carbonell, Termas e Iglesias durante la antigüedad tardía: Reutilización arquitectónica o conflicto religioso? Algunos ejemplos hispanos (2004), 197.

[499] Museu Nacional de Arqueologia, Lisbon, inv. 18754. J. Maciel, *Antiguidade Tardia e Paleocristianismo em Portugal* (Lisbon: Justino Maciel, 1996), 91-92. A second mosaic fragment from Montinho das Laranjeiras shows a *kantharos* (Museu Nacional de Arqueologia, inv. 18697). For the excavation see M. L. E. d. V. Santos Affonso dos, *Arqueologia Romana do Algarve* (Lisbon: Associação dos Arqueólogos Portugueses, 1972), 373-377; J. Saavedra Machado, "Documentos de Estácio da Veiga para o estudo da arqueologia do Algarve. Catálogo de plantas, desenhas e mosaicos", in: *Actas das I Jornadas Arqueológicas,* (ed.) (Lisbon: Associação dos Arqueólogos Portugueses, 1970), 282-283.

[500] J. Maciel, *Antiguidade Tardia e Paleocristianismo em Portugal* (1996), 91-100; also A. Oepen, *Villa und christlicher Kult* (2012), 111-116; T. Hauschild, Milreu, Estoi (1980), 202-203.

the richness of species and detailed renditions of Hispanic marine mosaics from earlier centuries for which the fourth-century mosaics of Milreu can serve as an example.[501] In a plausible scenario, the church builders of Montinho das Laranjeiras incorporated a pre-existing Roman mosaic depicting marine life in the baptismal font.[502] If, however, the mosaic was made at the same time as the church building, the makers would have drawn on earlier Roman models without regard for making them suit their Christian purpose. Beyond the water subject, these three Hispanic examples are alike in that their imagery does not explicitly serve the transmission of Christian ideas. Tritons and garfish diverted from the overall allegorical message of water as the element leading to baptismal salvation. This did not stop Christians from incorporating them, however. The Roman imagery seems to have had worth for them, which made narrative misfits insignificant.

What we can take away from the case of Milreu is that to ask whether the incorporation of Roman material culture was a pragmatic or intentional act is to miss the point. Milreu's Christian community, likely under the lead of the estate holders and providers of the building, had no other option than to deal with the architectural situation already in place; they did not have the luxury to determine an attitude towards mythology in the church space independently from the material constraints imposed by the monument. It was within the spectrum of their agency, however, to embrace more or less proactively what they were faced with. The patrons of the baptistery decided

[501] A. Oepen, *Villa und christlicher Kult* (2012), 114 argues for a dating to the first half of the fourth century. Justino Maciel seems to suggest a dating to the fifth or sixth century with reference to the North African tradition: J. Maciel, *Antiguidade Tardia e Paleocristianismo em Portugal* (1996), 97. For stylistic considerations on Lusitanian marine mosaics cf. J. Lancha, De nouvelles données sur les mosaïstes itinérants en Lusitanie (2004) in response to A. Balil, "Sobre los mosaicos Romanos de Galicia: identificación de un taller musivario", in: *La mosaïque gréco-romaine II: actes du IIe Colloque international pour l'étude de la mosaïque antique, Vienne, 30 août-4 septembre 1971* Henri Stern and Marcel Le Glay (ed.) (Paris: A.&J. Picard, 1975).

[502] A. Oepen, *Villa und christlicher Kult* (2012), 114.

against destroying the mosaic façade and against following local custom in their selection of the site. Instead, mythological sea creatures were consciously made part of the visual stimuli which accompanied the baptismal ceremony, inside and outside of the baptismal chamber. Milreu's Christians were demonstrably keen to integrate their pre-Christian heritage into the self-image of the community. This act of association with pre-existing Roman visual culture seems no less intentional than the planned use of Roman imagery in the newly built baptistery of Henchir el Koucha.

Conclusion

In the baptisteries of Henchir el Koucha, Mértola and Milreu, the line between Roman and Christian culture is blurred; the mosaic decorations affirm an inclusive vision of Christianness by acknowledging Roman culture as a part of Christian identity. In Henchir el Koucha, an iconography associable with the Roman circus had been integrated within an ostensibly Christian framework. The motif of the facing horses held several connotations concurrently, one of which had the potential to put into question the very Christian codes of behaviour confirmed by the baptismal rite. In Mértola, we encountered a building with characteristics of both baptismal and palatial structures. Fittingly, Roman domestic and Christian visual languages also coalesced here in a mythological scene. The Christians of Milreu inserted a baptismal space within a pre-Christian Roman one, and let the mosaic frieze and its rendition of water infused with pre-Christian myth stand for the salvific water of baptism. They presented themselves as carrying on Roman heritage by building on it.

Analysis of how pre-Christian imagery was set within the respective baptisteries and how it could have affected visitors as they occupied these spaces helps us realize that 1) allusions to Roman culture differed in pertinence, and 2) the degree to which patrons

intentionally created links between Roman and Christian culture probably varied. While the Roman decoration of Milreu's small baptismal chamber apparently dominated its aesthetics, the prevalence of the allusion to Roman culture in Henchir el Koucha's baptistery decreased over time, and in Mértola mythological imagery was, judging from limited evidence, not of central importance from the moment of creation. I have suggested that the more pertinent Roman imagery was in the baptismal space, the more likely it was the creators' intention to emphasize its relevance for Christianity. All three buildings, however, enabled ways of re-enacting Christian identity that left space for contemporaneously associating oneself with Roman culture. They allowed for what identity theory calls the simultaneous activation of different identities which were experienced as congruent enough to be acted out together.[503]

All of the mosaics mentioned would have been present in the religious life of Christians in post-Roman societies of the sixth century. The ethnic affiliation of the Christian communities cannot be determined for any of the examples. The extent to which these communities were affected by the arrival of the Vandals or Byzantines in Africa Proconsularis or by the Germanic conquerors in Lusitania is likewise unclear. In any case, fundamental shifts in the political landscape evidently did not hinder the three Christian communities from feeling connected to Roman culture. Indeed, it is interesting to ask whether the political transitions themselves might have motivated baptism into a Christianity with roots in Roman culture. The evidence from the Arian baptistery of Ravenna, briefly discussed in chapter 3, and the reused Roman temple of Jebel Oust in chapter 4 point in this direction.

[503] See in the introduction 18-20.

Chapter 3: Problematic Personifications? – The conversion of Jordan in the Orthodox Baptistery of Ravenna

Introduction: 'What are pagan river gods doing in scenes of Jesus's baptism?'

The dome mosaic of the Orthodox baptistery San Giovanni in Fonte, in Ravenna, also called the Neonian baptistery, is arguably the best studied of all examples of late antique baptismal art (fig. 119).[504] This is partly due to the significance of the cathedral baptistery, built under the direction of bishop Ursus at the time when Ravenna became capital of the Western Roman Empire in 402.[505] The outstanding quality and the comparatively good state of preservation of the dome, constructed and decorated somewhat later than the baptistery itself under bishop Neon (c. 451-473), make it an obvious starting point of art historical interest.[506] The fact that the dome mosaic of the second preserved baptistery within the walls of Ravenna, Santa Maria in Cosmedin (c. 500) (fig. 120), is an Arian copy of, or rather an answer to, the artistic solution found in the Orthodox baptistery, adds to the importance of the latter.[507] The narrative structure

[504] An overview of the cupola's iconography is offered in C. Jäggi, *Ravenna: Kunst und Kultur einer spätantiken Residenzstadt: die Bauten und Mosaiken des 5. und 6. Jahrhunderts* (Regensburg: Schnell + Steiner, 2016), 118-129; C. Rizzardi, "La Decorazione musiva del Battistero degli Ortodossi e degli Ariani a Ravenna: alcune considerazioni", in: *L'edificio battesimale in Italia,* Daniela Gandolfi (ed.) (Bordighera: Ist. Internazionale di Studi Liguri, 2001), 329-330. For detailed studies see C. O. Nordström, *Ravennastudien; ideengeschichtliche und ikonographische Untersuchungen über die Mosaiken von Ravenna* (Stockholm: Almquist and Wiksell, 1953), 33-34; S. K. Kostof, *The orthodox Baptistery of Ravenna* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965); F. W. Deichmann, *Ravenna: Hauptstadt des spätantiken Abendlandes* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1974), vol. 1 130-143, vol. 2.1 18-47; A. J. Wharton, "Ritual and Reconstructed Meaning: The Neonian Baptistery in Ravenna", in: *Art Bulletin 69* (1987); I. Foletti, Saint Ambroise et le Baptistère des Orthodoxes de Ravenne. Autour du Lavement des pieds dans la liturgie baptismale (2009).

[505] S. K. Kostof, *The orthodox Baptistery* (1965), 12.

[506] For Neon's patronage of the dome mosaic C. Jäggi, *Ravenna* (2016), 119-120.

[507] Recent comparisons are C. Rizzardi, La Decorazione musiva del Battistero (2001); B. Ward-Perkins, "Where is the archaeology and iconography of Germanic Arianism?", in: *Religious diversity in late antiquity,* David M. Gwynn and Susanne Bangert (ed.) (Leiden, Boston, MA: Brill, 2007); I. Weinryb, "A take of Two Baptisteries: Royal and Ecclesiastical Patronage in Ravenna", in: *Asaph: Studies in Art History 7* (2002). On the decoration of the Arian baptistery C. Rizzardi, "L'arte dei Goti a Ravenna: motivi ideologici, aspetti iconografici e formali nella decorazione musiva", in: *Seminario di studi sul tema: "Ravenna e l'Italia fra Goti e Longobardi (Ravenna, 14-22 aprile 1989),* Del Girasole, 1989); C. Jäggi, *Ravenna* (2016), 198-200.

of the iconographic programme of the dome (fig. 119) is complex, and its meaning, as a result, has been long debated; a particular source of disagreement among scholars is the connection between the scene depicting the baptism of Christ in the middle of the cupola (fig. 121) and the surrounding scenes. The central medallion is encircled by two concentric bands, depicting a procession of the twelve apostles carrying golden wreaths in the inner band and alternating empty thrones and the four gospels lying open on altars in the outer band.

This chapter is not primarily concerned with the overall programme of the baptistery, but rather with an isolated figure within the cupola, and with its appearance in the context of baptismal imagery more broadly: the personification of the River Jordan flanking Christ at his baptism (fig. 122). In 1993, Robin M. Jensen published an article on this figure entitled 'What are pagan river gods doing in scenes of Jesus' baptism?'.[508] Jensen problematized the fact that a personification – an anthropomorphic representation of a thing or a concept – stands in the long Greek and Roman tradition of attributing superhuman agency to a non-human entity by giving it anthropomorphic shape.[509] For example, representing a river in the classical manner as a bearded, aged

[508] R. M. Jensen, "What Are Pagan River Gods Doing in Scenes of Jesus' Baptism?", in: *Bible Review Washington 9* (1993).

[509] On antique personifications of natural phenomena A. Gerber, *Naturpersonification in Poesie und Kunst der Alten* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1883), esp. 269-284; E. Gombrich, "Personification", in: *Classical influences on European culture A.D. 500-1500,* Robert Ralph Bolgar (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), esp. 248-253. See also E. Stafford and J. Herrin, *Personification in the Greek world: from antiquity to Byzantium* (Aldershot, Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005); K. Weitzmann, The Survival of Mythological Representations in Early Christian and Byzantine Art and Their Impact on Christian Iconography (1960); B. Poulsen, "City Personifications in Late Antiquity", in: *Using Images in Late Antiquity,* Stine Birk et al. (ed.) (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2014); F. Piper, *Mythologie der christlichen Kunst von der ältesten Zeit bis in's sechzehnte Jahrhundert* (Weimar: Verlag des Landes-Industrie-Comptoirs, 1847-1851), vol. 1.2, 7-10. The (late) antique play between antropomorphic and topographical understanding of river personifications is discussed in regards to Homer and Philostratus in J. Elsner and M. Squire, "Homer and the Ekphrasists: Text and Picture in the Elder Philostratus' 'Scamander' (Imagines I.1)", in: *The archaeology of Greece and Rome: studies in honour of Anthony Snodgrass,* John L. Bintliff and N. K. Rutter (ed.) (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), esp. 74-75.

man bearing attributes such as an ampulla or reed, means to allude to a form of representation commonly used in antiquity as a means to emphasize the divine aspect of natural or man-made geographical entities.[510]

Jensen answered her own question by pointing to the fact that Jesus's baptism took place at the River Jordan, which had a sanctifying effect on the river, turning Jordan into a Christian symbol for baptism.[511] Jensen's question does not seem to be exhaustively answered in this way, however, because it leaves unconsidered why depicting the story of Jordan's sanctification was thought to be important in the first place, and why the representation of Jordan as a personification was chosen. In this chapter, I would like to suggest a new answer to an old question. Instead of looking at the cultural baggage of an iconography by concentrating on its former use in material terms as I did in the last chapters, I will this time consider liturgical and exegetical literature from or read in Ravenna to help answer this question. I have emphasized so far how important both the cultural backgrounds and viewing habits of baptistery users' were for their understanding of baptismal decorations. Of course, the lived experiences of users of baptisteries also depended to a significant degree on episcopal guidance. Rather than

[510] For river personifications S. Klementa, *Gelagerte Flussgötter des Späthellenismus und der römischen Kaiserzeit* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1993); E. Dinkler-von Schubert, "Fluss 2 (ikonographisch)", in: *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum,* Theodor Klauser (ed.) (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1972); C. Weiss, "Fluvii", in: *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae (LIMC),* Hans Christoph Ackermann and Jean-Robert Gisler (ed.) (Zurich: Artemis, 1981); M. Lehnerdt, "Flussgötter", in: *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie,* Wilhelm Heinrich Roscher (ed.) (Leipzig: Teubner, 1884); H. Leclercq, "Fleuves", in: *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie,* Fernand Cabrol and Henri Leclercq (ed.) (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1907-1953). For Jordan in particular E. Dinkler-von Schubert, Fluss 2 (ikonographisch) (1972); 84-96. O. Waser, "Vom Flussgott Jordan und anderen Personifikationen", in: *Festgabe Adolf Kaegi,* (ed.) (Frauenfeld: 1919); G. Ristow, "Zur Personifikation des Jordan in Taufdarstellungen der frühen christlichen Kunst", in: *Aus der byzantinischen Arbeit der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik,* Johannes Irmscher (ed.) (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1957); R. Vollkommer, "Iordanes", in: *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* Hans Christoph Ackermann and Jean-Robert Gisler (ed.) (Zurich: Artemis, 1981-) with a catalogue of depictions of the personified Jordan.

[511] R. M. Jensen, Pagan River Gods (1993), 36-39. Cf. also R. M. Jensen, *Living Water* (2011), 118-123. References to Jordan in Matthew 3,13; Mark 1,9 and, less explicitly, Luke 3,21-22.

pit these factors against each other, we should take into account all available evidence that might help us reconstruct visitors' experiences, with the caveat that clerical interpretation does not represent one to one that of users.

The personification of Jordan is embedded within a narrative biblical scene, in contrast to the baptismal imagery that has been discussed so far. When asking what the reasons for Jordan's appearance in the baptistery are, we need to be sensitive to Jordan's role within the wider narrative context. The iconographic type of the baptism of Christ attended by the personified Jordan is, as I will show, probably novel at the moment of its insertion into the dome of the Neonian baptistery. Fortunately, a few textual hints have been preserved which give us some insight into how bishop Neon's predecessor Peter Chrysologus (431/2-450) interpreted the then-popular story of Jordan's attendance at Christ's baptism. I am going to show that Chrysologus interpreted the depiction as a conversion scene in which Jordan is a self-determined agent who is accepting the greater truth of Christianity over lesser truths. By narrating the story in this way, Chrysologus actively perpetuated the antique tradition of personifying the natural elements. Here, I will analyse the dome mosaic and Jordan's role within it in light of one of Chrysologus's sermons, in part because the baptismal story as Chrysologus tells it seems to have directly inspired the artistic rendition of the baptism scene at Ravenna. Granted, Chrysologus predates the creation of the mosaic, but the sermons of the 'golden-worded' bishop certainly continued to circulate in Ravenna after his death. It is important for us to realize that a version of this sermon and the baptismal imagery likely worked hand in hand for some attenders of the baptistery, each amplifying and nuancing certain elements of the other. While Chrysologus's sermon might have

influenced the way viewers 'read' the image, the image, in turn, could also have had an impact on how his telling of the story was understood.

My assumption is that the pictorial personification of Jordan, in accordance with ancient custom, made clear the fluvial agent's rootedness in the pre-Christian world of mythology, since the River Jordan is clearly depicted in the guise of a Roman river god. My main argument is that the depiction, when interpreted with Chrysologus as Jordan's conversion to Christianity, turns the visual version into a story of the incorporation of a representative of the pre-Christian ancient world into the Christian past, presence and future. The Neonian baptistery's iconography, when seen in light of Chrysologus's interpretation of Jesus's baptism, indicates that the Nicene Christian community of the Western Roman capital was encouraged to value the ancient past, represented in a distinctly Roman manner, as something worthy of integration into Christianity.

The baptismal scene in the Neonian baptistery

Let us start with a description of the baptismal scene in its architectural and conservation contexts. Jordan appears at the moment of the completion of Christ's baptism (fig. 121). Christ's slender but athletic body is shown naked, covered to the waist by the light blue, translucent water of the River Jordan; John, taller than Christ, stands on a rocky ledge. He is dressed in an *exomis* made of animal skin and carries a *crux gemmata* in his left hand. He is about to pour water from a shallow bowl held in his right hand over Christ's head. A dove descends directly above Christ's head from the golden heaven. In the background, standing, also up to his waist in water, an athletic, bearded middle-aged man of darkish complexion with stringy long grey hair interspersed with blue, green and purple streaks looks up at Christ. Above his head there

is the only inscription of the medallion within the inner circle, which identifies the figure as IORDAN̄N̄.[512]

The conservation history of the dome mosaics is long and difficult. The iconography of the inner medallion can be traced back to the year 1690.[513] Several remarkable iconographic features that had often been held as idiosyncratic additions of the nineteenth-century conservation by Felice Kybel, appear already in a drawing of the dome mosaic by Giovanni Ciampini in his *Vetera Monimenta* from 1690 (fig. 123), the first historical volume dedicated to the late antique buildings of Ravenna.[514] Kybel's conservation efforts can be seen with the naked eye (fig. 121) and are also recorded in Corrado Ricci's drawing of the cupola mosaic (fig. 124). The upper central part of the medallion, distinguishable by the brighter colour of its golden background, has been totally redone. The area includes the upper part of the body of John the Baptist as well as the upper half of the cross and the paten, the neck and head of Christ and the dove.

[512] Scholarship has not satisfactorily explained the second N in the inscription. On the rarity of the inscription R. Garrucci, *Storia della arte cristiana nei primi otto secoli della chiesa* (Prato: G. Guasti, 1872-1881), vol. 4, 34, no. 1.

[513] The dome mosaics underwent drastic conservation work in 1791 as well as in the decade from 1854 to 1864, with the second efforts effectively effacing the first. The nineteenth-century Roman conservator Felice Kibel in particular has been criticized for his work, which had to be re-evaluated only two decades later. A brief historical overview of the phases of conservation is provided by M. Verhoeven, *The Early Christian Monuments of Ravenna: Transformations and Memory* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 252-256. Most recently, on the restorations C. Di Francesco et al., *Il Battistero Neoniano: uno sguardo attraverso il restauro* (Ravenna: Longo, 2011). See further G. Gerola, "La tecnica dei restauri ai mosaici di Ravenna", in: *Estratto dagli Atti e memorie della R. Deputazione di Storia Patria per la Romagna (Atti per la Romagna) VII* (1917); C. Ricci, *Tavole storiche dei mosaici di Ravenna: Battistero della Cattedrale* (Rome: 1930-1937); G. Bovini, "Principali restauri compiuti nel secolo scorso da Felice Kibel nei mosaici di S. Apollinare Nuovo di Ravenna", in: *Corso di Cultura sull'arte ravennate e bizantina 13* (1966); G. Bovini, *Edifici di culto di Ravenna d'età preteodoriciana* (Bologna: Pàtron, 1969); A. M. Iannucci, "Una ricognizione al Battistero Neoniano", in: *31. Corso di Cultura sull'Arte Ravennate e Bizantina,* Raffaella Farioli Campanati (ed.) (Ravenna: Del Girasole, 1984); A. M. Iannucci, "Nuove ricerche al Battistero Neoniano", in: *32. Corso di Cultura sull'Arte Ravennate e Bizantina. Seminario Internazionale di Studi su "Cipro e il Mediterraneo orientale",* Raffaella Farioli Campanati (ed.) (Ravenna: Del Girasole, 1985); A. M. Iannucci et al., "Il nuovo atlante dei mosaici del Battistero Neoniano: catalogazione fotografica e riflettografica", in: *44. Corso di Cultura sull'Arte Ravennate e Bizantina. Seminario internazionale di studi sul tema: Le grandi isole del Mediterraneo orientale tra tarda antichità e medioevo; Ravenna, 19-21 settembre 1998,* Raffaella Farioli Campanati (ed.) (Ravenna: Del Girasole, 2001).

[514] G. G. Ciampini, *Vatera Monimenta* (Rome: 1699), 235. Ciampini's drawing is discussed in C. Rizzardi, La Decorazione musiva del Battistero (2001), 918; F. W. Deichmann, *Ravenna: Hauptstadt* (1974), vol. 2,1 33.

A comparison with Ciampini's drawing, which is not entirely correct, shows that Kybel added the beard of Christ and Saint John's halo and neglected to include the water poured from the paten; Kybel also seems to have altered slightly the position of the cross and of the dove. In spite of this exclusion, both the paten (notable in that it is used instead of the standard late antique iconography of John's hand resting on Christ's head) and the elaborate cross (instead of the crosier) were recorded in 1690.[515] The figure of Jordan has apparently remained untouched by modern conservations.

The absence of records of most premodern conservations obscure the history of the medallion immensely. There is evidence that the lowest zone of the mosaic decoration, situated at eye level, was altered shortly after the Neonian construction, however, no late antique conservation work on the medallion can be verified.[516] While it is very likely that some restorations must have been executed in the first millennium after the baptistery's construction, the first recorded restoration was envisaged only in 1566 – the year Giulio della Rovere became bishop of Ravenna – when an archiepiscopal ordinance was issued 'to restore the mosaics of the *capelle* and whatever else is devastated'.[517] It is not clear exactly where mosaics were restored or replaced, since the ordinance concerns the '*capelle*', i.e. either the cupola or the baptistery itself.[518] A further document from 1591 indicates that little work was done on the mosaics in the

[515] For comparisons of the baptismal pouring of water with liturgical instruments C. Rizzardi, La Decorazione musiva del Battistero (2001), 919-922. For an analysis of the *crux gemmata* R. Wisskirchen, "Zum Medaillon im Kuppelmosaik des Orthodoxenbaptisteriums", in: *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum 36* (1993).

[516] Two monograms supposedly meant to indicate Peter II (494-518) and Maximian (546-556) located in the lower zone of the mosaic walls of the baptistery suggest late antique restorations, however, the entire zone was re-restored in Kybel's campaign, the accuracy of which is uncertain. See F. W. Deichmann, *Ravenna: Hauptstadt* (1974), vol.1 19; S. K. Kostof, *The orthodox Baptistery* (1965), 18-21.

[517] Further restorations initiated by Giulio della Rovere (1566-1578) that did not include the mosaics are recorded from 1573 onwards and must have been finished by 1591 at the latest. See for more detail S. K. Kostof, *The orthodox Baptistery* (1965), 21.

[518] Ibid., 144, appendix 2, doc. 1 and 21, no. 48.

decreed restoration.[519] No other restorations of the mosaics are recorded before 1690. Technical analysis does not provide any further evidence relevant to the question of the medallion's authenticity.[520] The authenticity of Jordan and of the state of the mosaics in 1690 more generally should therefore be taken as givens, at least for a working hypothesis.

Jordan is designated by his attributes – the reed he carries and the amphora at his side from which water flows. A green cloth embellished by shimmering reflections of light covers his right hand and the forearm that reaches out as if trying to touch Christ. He holds the cloth over his left forearm; the thumb and index finger that hold the reed are not covered. Because of this stance, the Jordan of the Neonian baptistery has been compared to the angels who hold towels for Christ which begin to appear in Eastern depictions of the scene in the sixth century (fig. 177).[521] In this image, however, the river god obviously uses the cloth himself without noticing that it dips into his waters. Since covering the hands was a gesture of reverence common in both court ceremonial and sacred imagery, Jordan is thus clearly depicted in adoration of Christ.[522] The imperfect state of the covering of the hands could be possibly explained by the fact that the river is depicted as not yet proficient in taking on an elaborate ceremonial posture, but

[519] See ibid., 21 no. 48 and 145, appendix 2, doc. 3: '[…] the church is without any damage. There are only a few remains left which are still in need of repair, in the same way as was necessary in places [of the church] which have already been repaired and remade.' (Transl. by the author) '…*Ecclesia ipsa stat decenter, tantum remanserunt nonulle reliquie, que adhuc indigent reparatione modo prout actum fuit in locis, et figuris jam resarcitis ac restauratis*'.

[520] On the difference in size of the late antique halo of Christ in comparison to the restored one see A. M. Iannucci et al., Iannucci, Santopuoli et al. 2001 – Il nuovo atlante dei mosaici (2001).

[521] See for instance O. Waser, Von Flussgott Jordan (1919), 194.

[522] F. W. Deichmann, *Ravenna: Hauptstadt* (1974), 37.

instead mimics John, whose hand holding the gemmed cross is likewise covered in a gesture of reverence, while the hand holding the bowl is not.[523]

The scene of Christ's baptism is situated directly above the baptismal font.[524] Although taken from the life of Christ, the scene is placed in the heavenly spheres, in the centre of the dome, in the space commonly designated for the depiction of celestial scenes. The distinguished position of the baptism contrasts remarkably with the simplicity of the composition. Set within an earthly landscape, its sanctity is marked by the descending Holy Ghost which appears in the guise of a dove. The golden background and the gemmed cross also remind the viewer of the heavenly nature of the depiction.[525] The location of the scene directly above the baptismal font foregrounds the simultaneous parallels and differences between Christ's baptism and the baptism of the neophyte below. The cupola medallion shows both the ideal prototype and the historical initiatory moment of the very sacrament that would have been experienced by the baptizand in the here and now.

The creation of a new iconography

As I have argued above, the personified River Jordan in the Ravenna mosaic has predecessors in the representations of river deities or personifications of rivers that were highly popular throughout the Roman Empire. In late antiquity, personifications of

[523] Deichmann suggests that the artist copied a common personification of Jordan with bare thumb and index holding the reed. Ibid., 37.

[524] The font in the baptistery today uses the ancient one in its foundations. It was internally circular in plan and the position of today's font indicates that the original one was centrally located and approximately 2.7 meters in diameter: S. K. Kostof, *The orthodox Baptistery* (1965), 36-37, figs. 20-21. Kostof's discussion is based on the report F. Lanciani, *Cenni intorno ai monumenti e alle cose piu' notabili di Ravenna* (Ravenna: Tip. Della Ditta G. Angeletti, 1871). The original font was replaced by today's octagonal font either in the twelfth century according to S. K. Kostof, *The orthodox Baptistery* (1965), 146, appendix 2, doc. 5, or in the second half of the sixteenth century according to F. W. Deichmann, *Ravenna: Hauptstadt* (1974), vol. 1,2, 19.

[525] R. Wisskirchen, Zum Medaillon im Kuppelmosaik (1993).

natural phenomena also continued to be frequently referred to in both poetry and exegesis.[526] From the fifth century onwards, however, church fathers in both East and West became more cautious about animating nature in their writings.[527] Theodoret (c. 393-457) and John of Damascus (675/676-749), for instance, explicitly denied that the natural phenomena personified in the scripture were gifted with reason or with souls.[528] A similarly cautious attitude towards the use of personification in Christian contexts can also be observed in the arts. Take for example the city gate sarcophagi of the late fourth century which repeatedly depict the reclining Jordan below the ascending chariot of Elijah.[529] In this respect, the sarcophagus of Sant' Ambrogio in Milan stands out (figs. 125, 126), since it depicts Adam and Eve instead of Jordan. The associative narration of the city gate sequence is rendered ineffective by this change, however: while Elijah parted the River Jordan before his ascension to heaven (2 Kings, 2,1-18), no obvious link can be drawn between Elijah and Adam and Eve. The substitution can only be understood as a deliberate attempt to avoid depicting a personified River Jordan.[530]

[526] For personifications in antique poetry J. J. Paxson, *The Poetics of Personification* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); esp. chapter 3 on Prudentius' *Psychomachia*. For an overview of Christian usage of antique personifications in writing J. C. Joosen and J. H. Waszink, "Allegorese", in: *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum,* Theodor Klauser (ed.) (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1950) and art L. Lüdicke-Kaute and O. Holl, "Personifikationen", in: *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie,* Engelbert Kirschbaum SJ (ed.) (Freiburg (Breisgau): Herder, 1971). See also A. Gerber, *Naturpersonification in Poesie und Kunst der Alten* (1883), 274-275; F. Piper, *Mythologie der christlichen Kunst* (1847-1851), 7-10.

[527] See for instance Augustine's hesitant use of personifications É. Rebillard, *Christians* (2012), 77 and F. Piper, *Mythologie der christlichen Kunst* (1847-1851), 11-13.

[528] Theodoret, Jerem. 2,12; John of Damascus, De fid. orthod. 2,6.

[529] H. U. v. Schoenebeck, *Der Mailänder Sarkophag und seine Nachfolge* (Vatican City: Pontificio istituto di archeologia cristiana, 1935); S. Schrenk and G. Rexin, "Erstaunen oder Flucht? Zur Darstellung des Jordan in den spätantiken Bildern der Taufe Jesu", in: *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum 50* (2007), 189, no. 52.

[530] The other scenes depicted on the front are Moses receiving the law and Noah and the ark, the latter yet another new variant in the iconographic programme of the city gate sarcophagi. E. Dinkler-von Schubert, Fluss 2 (ikonographisch) ,86; H. U. v. Schoenebeck, *Der Mailänder Sarkophag und seine Nachfolge* (1935), 44.

The writings of Theodoret or John of Damascus suggest that Christian sensibilities towards personifications originated in the concern that the idea of natural phenomena as supernatural agents would be unwillingly promulgated. This worry was possibly nourished by the ongoing worship of springs, rivers and other natural phenomena, which had arguably outlasted the Theodosian decrees (391/392) longer than other pagan cults.[531] Only six years before Neon became bishop of Ravenna in 458 and initiated the works on the dome mosaic, the council of Arles II (c. 452) had prohibited ceremonial acts performed at waters, trees and rocks.[532] A century later, the Council of Tours (567) and the Council of Auxerre (578) declared that worshippers of natural sites like springs were to be excommunicated.[533] Complaints by bishops in the sixth-century Roman West, such as Caesarius of Arles,[534] Martin of Braga,[535] and Gregory of Tours,[536] about vows and votive offerings of bread, candles or textiles at springs attest to some of the ephemeral forms that such worship took.[537]

[531] On the worship of rivers and springs in late antiquity E. W. Sauer, "Religious rituals at springs in the late antique and early medieval world", in: *The Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism',* Luke Lavan and Michael Mulryan (ed.) (Leiden, Boston, MA: Brill, 2011); J. B. Bauer, "Fluss I (Naturelement)", in: *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum,* Theodor Klauser (ed.) (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1972); H. Beck, "Brunnen III. Religiöses", in: *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde,* (ed.) (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1981); J. Toutain, "Les cultes des fleuves, sa forme primitive et ses principaux rites, chez les peuples de l'antiquité classique", in: *L'ethnographie 13-14* (1926). See the Roman inscriptions dedicated to Father Tiber in J. Le Gall, *Recherches sur le culte du Tibre* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1953), 61-62 or the Christian veneration of the Nile in Egypt M. Vinzent, "Das "heidnische" Ägypten im 5. Jahrhundert", in: *Heiden und Christen im 5. Jahrhundert,* J. van Oort and D. Wyrwa (ed.) (Leuven: Peters, 1998), 51. On the problematic tracing of officially banned forms and places of worship B. Caseau, "Late Antique Paganism: Adaptation under duress", in: *The Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism',* Luke Lavan and Michael Mulryan (ed.) (Leiden, Boston, MA: Brill, 2011).

[532] Concilium Arelatense 2,23, cf. H. Beck, Brunnen III. Religiöses (1981), 12.

[533] Ibid.

[534] Caesarius, serm. 13.5, 14.4, 53.1, 54.5, 229.2, 229.4.

[535] Martin of Braga, De corr. rust., 16.

[536] Gregory of Tours, Glor. conf., 2.

[537] The perishable nature of these offerings and the increasing scarcity of base metal coins, traditionally deposited in wells and springs in antiquity, complicate the archaeological assessment: E. W. Sauer, Religious rituals at springs in the late antique and early medieval world (2011).

Considering the less than clear status that personifications of nature had at the time of the decoration of the Orthodox baptistery, it is noteworthy that the iconography of the baptism of Christ attended by Jordan was selected, especially given that it was by no means an established image type. It seems to be the earliest surviving example of this iconography, in fact, and is one of only two mosaic depictions of the personified Jordan in any late antique Christian building.[538] One indication of the iconography's novelty is the label IORDA$\overline{\text{N}}\overline{\text{N}}$ in large, black letters, which is readable when one stands at the ground level of the baptistery. This is the only late antique occurrence in which the river personification is named and in all likelihood was meant to inform the viewer of the figure's identity.[539] The practice of labelling mythological figures was not new to late antique art and was arguably, amongst others, a means of preserving and communicating classical knowledge in a Christianizing world.[540] The labelling of Jordan in Ravenna seems to be an example of such a reminder. Besides the novelty of the subject matter, the iconography of the personified Jordan itself has neither precursors nor successors: it is unique. The reverential manner in which Jordan covers his hands

[538] For the mosaic decoration and the depiction of a personification of a river usually attributed as Jordan of the church of Hosios David (c. 500 AD) in Thessaloniki A. Grabar, "À propos d'une icone byzantine du xive siècle au musée de Sofia", in: *Cahiers Archéologique 10* (1959), 291-297; C. Ihm, *Die Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei vom vierten Jahrhundert bis zur Mitte des achten Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1960), 44-45 and 182-184; G. Matthiae, "La cultura figurativa di Salonicco nei secoli V e VI", in: *Rivista di Archeologia Christiana 83* (1962); J.-M. Spieser, "Further remarks on the mosaic of Hosios David", in: *Urban and Religious Spaces in Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium,* Jean-Michel Spieser (ed.) (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001). The identification as Jordan goes back to Severus of Antioch (d. 538): C. Ihm, *Die Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei* (1960), 46, no 4.

[539] Late antique parallels are the labelled personifications of the rivers of Paradise at the Martyr Theodore chapel in the cathedral of Madaba, at the St. Paul church at Umm al-Rasas, both in Jordan, and at the Jabaliyah baptistery in the Gaza stripe. Cf. M. Piccirillo, "The Byzantine mosaics of Jordan as an historical source – II (1980-1984)", in: *La Mosaique Gréco-Romaine IV: IVe Colloque International pour l'Etude de la Mosaique antique,* Jean-Pierre Darmon and Alain Rebourg (ed.) (Paris: Supplément au Bulletin de l'A.I.E.M.A., 1994); R. Talgam, *Mosaics of Faith: Floors of Pagans, Jews, Samaritans, Christians, and Muslims in the Holy Land* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014); J.-B. Humbert, "The Rivers of Paradise in the Byzantine church near Jabaliyah – Gaza", in: *The Madapa Map Centenary,* Michele Piccirillo and Eugenio Alliata (ed.) (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1999).

[540] W. Raeck, *Modernisierte Mythen* (1992), 160-166. See also A. Cameron, *The Last Pagans* (2011), 705.

with a cloth and appears to adore Christ stands in marked contrast both to earlier and later Christian depictions of the personified river (fig. 122). The Arian rendition (fig. 127), on the other hand, is much more orientated towards the antique tradition of representing river gods that is predominant in the usual Christian depictions of Jordan.

The only surviving monumental Roman depiction of Jordan is preserved in a relief on the Arch of Titus (c. 70 AD) in Rome (fig. 128). Here, Jordan, depicted as a middle-aged and athletic figure, lies on a *ferculum*, or bier, while holding a reed and leaning on an amphora. His attributes as well as his age and recumbent position follow the most frequent type of river personifications of the Roman imperial period.[541] Early Christianity included personifications of rivers in its iconographical canon from the third century onwards, but according to the material that survives, the personifications only appear in the more personal context of sarcophagi. The earliest depiction of a personified river on a Christian sarcophagus is the reclined, beardless figure of Neptune holding a trident located on the narrow left side of the tub-shaped sarcophagus of Santa Maria Antiqua (c. 270) (fig. 129).[542] The water that spills from his jug flows into the same sea into which Jonah is thrown from the boat seen on the front of the sarcophagus. At the right-hand side of the front, water reappears in the scene of the baptism of Jesus. Finally, at the right narrow side, two nude fishermen empty their nets. Although the respective scenes are separated by trees, they are held together visually by the theme of water; they seem,

[541] S. Klementa, *Gelagerte Flussgötter des Späthellenismus und der römischen Kaiserzeit* (1993), 109. Jordan's position on a *ferculum* makes clear that the personification is not chiefly designed to represent a river, but that it is a depiction of a personification of Jordan meant to be carried as an item of booty in a triumphal procession, symbolizing the victory over a country identified with the river. The carrying of depictions of river personifications in triumphal processions following the victorious return of the emperor was living praxis in Imperial Rome. See E. Dinkler-von Schubert, Fluss 2 (ikonographisch) (1972), 75.

[542] G. Bovini et al., *Repertorium der christlich-antiken Sarkophage* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1967-2003), vol. 1, 306-307 no. 747. See further R. M. Jensen, *Living Water* (2011), 46-51; E. Dinkler-von Schubert, Fluss 2 (ikonographisch) (1972), 84-85.

moreover, to place the story of Jonah in the context of an apostolic fishing for men, with a parallel intimated by the salvific force of the baptismal water that surrounds him. The earliest personifications of Jordan to appear in a Christian context date from the second half of the fourth century and are all connected to scenes of Elijah's ascension into the heavens (2 Kings, 2,1-18) on sarcophagi.[543]

First attested by the depiction in the Neonian baptistery, the next Christian image type to include the personified Jordan, i.e. the baptism of Christ, begins to appear in the fifth century. Eleven or twelve of these late antique baptismal scenes are known in total, most of them produced in the sixth century or later.[544] The subject was frequently depicted throughout the Middle Ages, particularly in the East, but also in the Frankish-Carolingian world.[545] Besides the Jordan of the Orthodox baptistery, only one other example might date to the fifth century, although this is contested. The ivory Werden casket (fig. 130), usually attributed to northern Italy, shows Jordan as an aged, corpulent man witnessing the baptism in a reclining position. He leans on his jug, two reeds placed between the crooks of his arms. A number of datings for the Werden casket have been suggested, which range from as early as the beginning of the fifth century to an estimate that it is a more recent production, which identifies it as a Carolingian copy of a late antique model.[546] The examples of the possibly original Werden casket, the Orthodox

[543] See in this chapter 162.
[544] An account of all of the scenes, including figures, is provided in S. Schrenk and G. Rexin, Erstaunen oder Flucht (2007).
[545] J. Strzygowsky, *Ikonographie der Taufe Christi* (1885); G. Ristow, *Die Taufe Christi* (Recklingshausen: Aurel Bongers Verlag, 1967), 151-156.
[546] The various positions are presented in S. Schrenk and G. Rexin, Erstaunen oder Flucht (2007), no. 49. Cf. P. Williamson, "VII.37", in: *799 – Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit: Karl der Große und Papst Leo III. in Paderborn; [eine gemeinsame Ausstellung der Stadt Paderborn, des Erzbistums Paderborn und des Landschaftsverbandes Westfalen-Lippe vom 23. Juli-1. November 1999],* Christoph Stiegemann and Matthias Wemhoff (ed.) (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1999); T. Weigel, "53", in: *Klosterwelt Werden 799-1803: das Jahrtausend der Mönche,* Jan Gerchow (ed.) (Cologne: Ruhrlandmuseum Essen, 1999), 357-359; W. F. Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1976), 83-84; R. Vollkommer, Iordanes (1981-), 659.

baptistery (c. 451-473) and the Arian baptistery (c. 500) in Ravenna are the earliest extant examples of this type as well as the most Western ones. The other representations are later and of diverse Eastern origins.

Until now, scholarship has treated the novel appearance in the second half of the fifth century of the personified Jordan in the baptismal scene and the particular rendering of his reverence for Christ mostly as a side issue.[547] In Jensen's contributions to the Jordan iconography, for instance, she focuses on Jordan as a geographical marker, yet she does not address the question of why the site of Christ's baptism was of such significance to worshippers in Ravenna.[548] Moreover, using the personification of Jordan as a geographical marker was not standard practice in fifth-century public Christian spaces, as we have seen. Annabel Jane Wharton's interpretation leaves unconsidered the reverential pose of Jordan. Wharton thinks the personifications of Jordan are used to emphasize the link between Christ's baptism and the Old Testament prefiguration of the Ark of the Covenant that led the Israelites through the Jordan (Joshua 3,14-17).[549] Friedrich Wilhelm Deichmann and Carl Nordström have argued for the river's inclusion on the basis of the popularity of miraculous stories of Christ's baptism in which Jordan features prominently.[550] Nordström was the first to identify a significant version of these stories in the works of Chrysologus, bishop of Ravenna and Neon's predecessor.[551] They are right to stress the importance of these texts and I will address the relations between these images and texts in detail shortly. Neither Deichmann nor Nordström, however,

[547] An exception is C. O. Nordström, *Ravennastudien* (1953), 33-34.
[548] Lately R. M. Jensen, *Living Water* (2011), 118.
[549] A. J. Wharton, Ritual and Reconstructed Meaning (1987), 94.
[550] F. W. Deichmann, *Ravenna: Hauptstadt* (1974), vol. 1, 135-136; C. O. Nordström, *Ravennastudien* (1953), 33-34.
[551] Ibid., 33.

examined why these stories were popular or why they were used in visual accounts of Christ's baptism. The most extensive explication of the overall meaning of the iconography has been given by Sabine Schrenk and Gerhard Rexin.[552] They focus on a group of six representations of Jordan which date from the sixth to eighth century, that show Jordan with his body facing away from the baptism, usually with his hands raised and head turned over his shoulders to look back at the scene. One prominent example of this iconography was commissioned for the ivory throne of Maximian (fig. 131), bishop of Ravenna from 546 to 556, which is of disputed but likely Eastern origin.[553] It is the last of the three examples of the iconography of Jordan at Christ's baptism in Ravenna. These personifications are usually described in the literature as 'fleeing' from the baptism, which sometimes implies a scholarly interpretation of the iconography as quintessentially pagan, and therefore hostile to Jesus's baptism.[554] In opposition to this view, Schrenk and Rexin demonstrate the rootedness of this imagery in antique artistic practices, and provide numerous examples of both Christian and antique images in which personifications of rivers figure as astonished witnesses whose astonishment signifies a wonderful event, usually an epiphany or a godly revelation (figs. 132, 133). They argue that river personifications in particular were endowed with the function of expressing wonder in the face of events since their placement usually corresponds to a standard formula used in antiquity to transmit the idea of an epiphany, which consists of movements similar to those found in the late antique examples of Christ's baptism. 'Fleeing' personifications of Jordan in the context of a Christian epiphany like the

[552] S. Schrenk and G. Rexin, Erstaunen oder Flucht (2007).
[553] W. F. Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters* (Mainz: Verlag des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, 1952), 68-69.
[554] For a review on the literature S. Schrenk and G. Rexin, Erstaunen oder Flucht (2007), 180-182. For the 'pagan Jordan' G. Ristow, Zur Personifikation des Jordan (1957).

baptism of Christ should therefore not be interpreted as averse to the baptism, but as wondering or marvelling at the miracle in the antique sense.[555] This particular analysis is of limited use for the interpretation of Jordan in the Orthodox baptistery because he clearly cannot be considered a 'fleeing' river personification, although Rexin and Schrenk seem to be correct in stressing the epiphanic character of the baptism scene. Despite his benevolent posture, it can certainly be argued that Jordan's presence functions in the scene as a marker of the epiphany of Christ. Their argument does not, however, help explain why bishop Neon and his artists chose to perpetuate the antique tradition of depicting river gods at epiphanies in the Orthodox baptistery. To take the steady use of this imagery for granted means to presuppose an unbroken continuity of visual concepts from antiquity to the post-Constantinian age – an assumption that needs to be scrutinized carefully.

When searching for a reason for the inclusion, or potentially invention, of Ravenna's new baptismal iconography, it seems appropriate to begin by looking at the usage of the place it was created for. We do not have any first-hand evidence of the baptismal practice of Ravenna other than the material evidence we observe in the Orthodox and Arian baptisteries.[556] It seems permissible, however, to draw limited conclusions from the baptismal liturgy of the cathedral baptistery of Milan, explicated by Ambrose, bishop of Milan from 374 to 397, in his series of Easter week lectures following the baptismal ritual.[557] The architectonic similarities of Ravenna's and Milan's niched, octagonal baptisteries, and their later status as centralized baptisteries of the Roman West where Latin rites were used, makes it likely that the bishops of the respective cities took note

[555] S. Schrenk and G. Rexin, Erstaunen oder Flucht (2007), 182-188.
[556] E. Ferguson, *Baptism* (2009), 756.
[557] A. J. Wharton, Ritual and Reconstructed Meaning (1987), 360.

of one another's liturgies, although this does not guarantee that their practices were identical.[558] The River Jordan occurs in one of the Old Testament stories Ambrose relates to explain the meaning of the baptismal ritual.[559] It is the story of the leprous Syrian Namaan (2 Kings 5,1-14), sent by Elisha to the Jordan to wash himself clean. At first Namaan doubts that the washing will have any healing effect: 'Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? (2 Kings 5,12)'. In spite of his doubt, he leaves the Jordan a healthy man. Ambrose concludes that it is not the element of water itself, but only consecrated water that can transmit God's grace.[560] The waters of the River Jordan therefore embody for Ambrose the baptismal water that is consecrated by a priest. The archetype of this divine consecration is the descent of the Holy Ghost at the baptism of Christ.[561] Ambrose's reference and interpretation of the Namaan story can be read as an explicit warning against popular beliefs in the salvific powers of ordinary unconsecrated water. The idea that the River Jordan was consecrated or sanctified at the baptism of Christ, whether by the influence of the Holy Ghost or by the physical contact with Christ himself, is well established in exegetical literature.[562] The sanctification had a purifying effect on the element of water which was hence suitably used as the baptismal medium.[563] Among the examples from Northern Italy that survive from around 400, at least one other exegete, bishop Maximus of Turin (390-408/423) follows the same line of thought. Maximus stresses that it was Jesus who

[558] On structural similarities ibid., 360-361.
[559] Ambrose, De sacr. 1,13-15.
[560] Ambrose, De sacr. 1,15.
[561] Ibid.
[562] See for instance Ephrem the Syrian, Hymnus de Epiphania 6,1 who ascribes the sanctification to the Holy Ghost. For Ignatius of Antioch, Ad Ephesios 18,2; Ambrose, De sacr. 1,18; Leo the Great, Serm. 1, it is rooted in the physical contact with the body of Christ.
[563] For instance, according to Ignatius of Antioch, Ad Ephesios 18,2 Jesus's baptism had purified the water of the Jordan. This made all the water the source of purification for ordinary humanity. Gregory of Nyssa, Catechet. Mag. 35,15 attests to the purifying effect of water. This privileges water as baptismal medium.

sanctified the waters of Jordan at his washing, '(f)or Christ's consecration is greater than that of the element'.[564] Ambrose and Maximus argue essentially that the element of water, and of the waters of the River Jordan more specifically, function as the medium or vessel selected for the godly sanctification. In a first instance, it might seem as if this idea is visualized by the mosaic of the Neonian baptistery, given that Jordan is shown in veneration of Christ. However, if water's passive role in the baptismal rite would have been a relevant message to convey in Ravenna, it remains to be asked why staging the river's personification prominently in the scene would have been considered an effective means of achieving this goal. By using an apparently recent iconography of a reverent Jordan, the emphasis was laid on the river as an embodied agent. Visually, the embodiment of water in an anthropomorphic form provides Jordan with the power to act and – in contrast to a non-figurative rendition of water as water – implies that the river has a choice, ultimately a will of its own. The representation of Jordan does not seem to admit only a passive function to the divine medium.

Chrysologus's reinterpretation of the meaning of Jordan at the baptism of Christ

One bishop of Ravenna actually did comment on the presence of Jordan at Christ's baptism, in the period between the construction of the Orthodox baptistery under bishop Ursus and its subsequent decoration under bishop Neon. Carl Nordström was the first to note a passage on the issue in sermon 160 by Peter Chrysologus, bishop of Ravenna from 431/2 to 450, Ursus's successor and Neon's predecessor.[565] Nordström saw that the sermon was closely related to the decoration of the cupola mosaic:[566]

[564] Maximus of Turin, serm. de S. Epiphania 100,3.
[565] For the latest state of research on the dates of Peter Chrysologus's episcopate C. Jäggi, *Ravenna* (2016), 117 no 260.
[566] C. O. Nordström, *Ravennastudien* (1953), 33.

> Why is it that the Jordan, who fled at the presence of the Ark of the Covenant [Joshua 3,16-17], did not run away when the whole Trinity is present? Why is it? It is because the one who shows homage and deference begins to be fearful [Ps. 114.3-6] no longer. Here the Trinity puts all its grace into operation and expresses all its love for the world; on that prior occasion it took hold of the elements in order to instruct its little servants to fear it.[567]

Chrysologus's words must be considered carefully, because they are the only evidence for an interpretation of Jordan's participation in the scene of Jesus's baptism at Ravenna. Sermon 160 is furthermore a sermon on Epiphany – one of the three feast days, besides Easter and Pentecost, on which the annual celebration of baptism traditionally took place in the West.[568] The baptism of Christ is interpreted as an epiphanic event because the threefold nature of God is revealed for the first time when the Holy Spirit, in the guise of a dove, descends from heaven and the voice of God the Father is heard from heaven: 'This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased'.[569] Under the episcopate of Chrysologus, the baptism of Christ featured as one of three events celebrated on Epiphany in Ravenna alongside the adoration of the magi and the miracle at Cana.[570] There is no evidence to indicate the precise day on which the baptismal liturgy was celebrated in Ravenna, but Epiphany is one of several plausible options and is likely to have been widely associated with baptism. Hence, it can be argued that Chrysologus's preaching was tied, at least indirectly, to the baptismal rite at Ravenna.

---

[567] Chrysologus, serm. 160 '*[…] quid est quod Jordanis qui fugit ad praesentiam legalis arcae, ad totius Trinitatis praesentiam non refugit. Quid est? Quia qui pietati obsequitur, incipit non esse timori. Hic Trinitas exercet gratiam totam, totam secum loquitur charitatem: ibi elementa corrupit, ut servulos instituat ad timorem […].*' (transl. follows P. Chrysologus, *St. Peter Chrysologus: selected sermons* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 280 with slight modifications by the author).
[568] E. Ferguson, *Baptism* (2009), 333 and 345. For Epiphany and Pentecost see also 115-117 and 166-170.
[569] Matthew 3,16-17. For the baptism of Christ interpreted as a theophany in Christian art F. W. Deichmann, *Ravenna: Hauptstadt* (1974), vol. 1, 210; vol. 2,1, 33-34.
[570] This can be concluded for instance from the sermons on the Epiphany 157 and 160. Cf. P. Chrysologus, *St. Peter Chrysologus: selected sermons* (2005), 270 nos. 20 and 281.

Chrysologus's commentary draws on Joshua 3,16-17, which describes the Hebrews' crossing of the River Jordan. Under the guidance of Joshua, who placed the Ark of the Covenant at the shore of the Jordan, the river split and allowed the Hebrews free passage. This passage stands in a long exegetical tradition of Old Testament prefigurations of the baptism of Christ. Two other crossings of large bodies of water, the crossing of the Red Sea (Exod. 14,15-15.22) and the division of the Jordan by Elisha (2 Kings 2,12-14), were also understood as prefigurations pointing to baptism. [571] Both crossing and baptism represent the overcoming of a boundary and an arrival, and both are connected to water.[572] This specific tradition is found already in the Bible itself, with Paul's interpretation of the crossing of the Red Sea as a baptism.[573] The earliest known parallel drawn between Joshua's crossing of the Jordan and the baptism of Christ is made by Origen.[574]

Significantly, in Joshua 3,16-17 the river is not described as a personified deity that is frightened or fleeing, but as a body of water responding to the plan of God:

> the waters coming down from above stood and rose up in a heap very far away, at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan, and those flowing down toward the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. And the people passed over opposite Jericho.

Chrysologus's interpretation of this event, however, clearly describes the river's flight in the presence of the Ark of the Covenant. Chrysologus alludes here to a second biblical source – several psalms frequently referenced since the fourth century in connection to

[571] R. M. Jensen, *Baptismal imagery* (2012), 20-23.
[572] Ibid., 184-186.
[573] Cor 1,10,1-2 'For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea'. Paul refers to Moses 2:13:21 and Moses 2:14. This and all the following biblical quotes in this chapter follow the English Standard Version.
[574] Origen, Hom. Jos. 4,1. Cf. R. M. Jensen, *Baptismal imagery* (2012), 184.

the baptism of Christ. These psalms praise the power of the Lord over the waters (Ps. 74), describe the tormented waters (Ps. 77) and the flight of Jordan (Ps. 114) at the arrival of the Lord.[575] The theme of flight occurs explicitly in Psalm 114.3-6:

> […] The sea looked and fled; Jordan turned back.
> The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like lambs.
> What ails you, O sea, that you flee? O Jordan, that you turn back?
> O mountains, that you skip like rams? O hills, like lambs?

Psalm 114 gave rise to a widespread exegetical tradition that interpreted Jordan as frightened and fleeing from God. Exegetes usually set this scene in the context of the baptism of Christ. The interpretation apparently derives from eastern sources and is mostly recorded in Syrian and Greek.[576] In his book *Christ au Jourdain*, Daniel Vigne differentiates between three major interpretive types of Jordan's response to Christ's baptism: 1) the abrupt cessation of the flow of the waters of Jordan at the moment of Christ's baptism, which is an exclusively Eastern tradition, 2) the most popular version, which describes the retreat of the waters in fear of Christ, which is for the most part an Eastern tradition, and 3) the return of the waters, often after they have been called back by Christ, which was also transmitted in the West.[577] The only source that predates the

[575] Ps. 74,15: 'You split open springs and brooks; you dried up ever-flowing streams.', Ps. 77,17: 'The clouds poured out water; the skies gave forth thunder; your arrows flashed on every side.'

[576] A comprehensive overview of this tradition is provided in A. Jacoby, *Ein bisher unbeachteter apokrypher Bericht über die Taufe Jesu nebst Beiträgen zur Geschichte der Didaskalie der zwölf Apostel und Erläuterungen zu den Darstellungen der Taufe Jesu* (Strasbourg: Trübner, 1902) and more recently D. Vigne, *Christ au Jourdain: le baptême de Jésus dans la tradition judéo-chrétienne* (Paris: Gabalda, 1992), 279-285; S. Schrenk and G. Rexin, Erstaunen oder Flucht (2007), 191-196. See also F. W. Deichmann, *Ravenna: Hauptstadt* (1974) vol. 1, 34-35; C. O. Nordström, *Ravennastudien* (1953), 60; R. Vollkommer, Iordanes (1981-), 658; G. Ristow, Zur Personifikation des Jordan (1957), 120.

[577] D. Vigne, *Christ au Jourdain* (1992), 279-285. Vigne claims that his type 1 does not occur with direct reference to Christ's baptism, which is disproven by the Chronicon Paschale 42,1/5 (c. 630): 'John baptized in the river Jordan on the eleventh *tybi* at the tenth hour, and the Jordan drew back [Ps. 113,3]. The Lord said to John: tell the Jordan to stand still, the Lord has come to us. And immediately the waters stood still.' (transl. by the author) Cf. also the report by the Piacenza Pilgrim of the Jordan standing still on the Feast of Epiphany during the baptism of the neophytes in the Jordan of the late sixth century: Piacenza Pilgrim, Itin. 11.

fourth century is the homily on the Theophany by Pseudo Hippolytus, which dates to approximately the third century, and is a particularly clear example of the second interpretative type identified by Vigne:

> The prophet who had seen this miracle a long time in advance, interrogated them: 'Why was it, sea, that you fled? Why, Jordan, did you turn back?' (Ps. 114,5) And the waters replied: 'We saw the creator of the world as a slave; and since we ignored the mystery of the divine frugality, we drew back out of horror.'[578]

Chrysologus's interpretation, on the other hand, does not fall into any of these categories entirely, but does allude to the pseudo-Hippolytean tradition and to the other interpretations of the second group, since it combines the elements of fear and flight. It is possible that Chrysologus knew of the Eastern tradition because it had already been transmitted to the Latin-speaking West. The earliest preserved Latin examples of interpretations of the Psalms on the Jordan are two passages in the work of the Italian or South Gallic poet Sedulius (d. c. 450). Sedulius's most famous work, the *Carmen paschale*, includes the following passage:

> The elements sensed the God, the sea fled and even
> Jordan turned his course in waves flowing backwards. (Ps. 114,3)
> Since also the prophet says when he sings: 'Why was it, sea, that you fled?
> Why, Jordan, did you turn back?' (Ps. 114,5)[579]

Sedulius's version is faithful to Psalm 114, although he also dramatizes the psalm in the way the Eastern writers of Vigne's second interpretative type do. The imperial court at Ravenna, a rich interface between East and West, was probably one of the best places

[578] Pseudo Hippolytus, Hom. Theoph. 2.
[579] Sedulius, Carmen paschale 2,162/5: '*Senserunt elementa Deum, mare fugit et ipse/ Iordanis refluas cursum convertit in undas./Namque propheta canens: quidnam est, mare,quod fugis, inquit,/ et tu, Iordanis, retro quia subtrahis amnem?*' For both passages see S. Schrenk and G. Rexin, Erstaunen oder Flucht (2007), 192.

to learn about both branches of the exegetical tradition, if not directly from further Latin sources, then from Greek ones.

Chrysologus does not situate Jordan's fear and flight at the moment of Christ's baptism, but earlier, when the Hebrews cross the Jordan in Joshua 3,16-17. It is evident that Chrysologus was acquainted with a version of Jordan's response to Christ of Vigne's second type, but must have adapted it to support the Old Testament typology of Christ's baptism, instead of using Psalm 114 in the traditional way, to refer to the baptism itself. Christ's baptism is for Chrysologus, contrary to these other interpretations, a joyful event for the river. In the first half of the fifth century, when Chrysologus was preaching sermon 160, there is to my knowledge only one other exegete, Jerome (c. 347-420), who shared his interpretation of a Jordan delighted to accompany Christ at his baptism. It is only from the late fifth or early sixth century onwards that a few more Eastern commentators begin to interpret the Psalms as an expression of joy and excitement on the part of the watery elements present at the baptism.[580] In Jerome's homily on the Epiphany the same connection between the passage through the Jordan and Christ's baptism is drawn, and it equally describes the embracing movement of the waters of Jordan towards Christ as an expression of joy in contrast to the river's earlier retreat:

> The Jordan River that dried up when Joshua led the Israelites into the Land of Promise, now longed to gather together all its waters into one place, if it could, to bathe the body of the Lord.[581]

Jerome's interpretation differs from that of Chrysologus in its more factual description of the drying up of the Jordan during the crossing, which comes close to the biblical

[580] See Jacob of Serough, On the appearance of the Lord and his baptism in the Jordan, and Sophronius of Jerusalem, Rituale Graecorum in ibid., 192-193 in the original and with a German translation.
[581] Jerome, Hom. 89; Transl. Jerome and M. L. Ewald, *The homilies of Saint Jerome* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1964) vol. 2, 230.

account of the river as being 'cut off' (Joshua 3,16). Chrysologus, however, mixes the exegetical tradition attested in Jerome with the Eastern one that ascribes fear to the waters. Chrysologus, in contrast to Jerome, gives the drying up of Jordan at the crossing a negative meaning, describing it as fearful behaviour. Chrysologus's original and unique exegesis has not yet been adequately recognized as a valuable interpretative tool for the baptismal scene in the Orthodox baptistery.

Let us examine Chrysologus's words again. The declared aim of the passage is to explain the presence of Jordan at the baptism of Jesus:

> Why is it that the Jordan, who fled at the presence of the Ark of the Covenant [Joshua 3,16-17], did not run away when the whole Trinity is present?[582]

Chrysologus sees fear as the root cause of both Jordan's presence at the baptism and his absence at the crossing; in his interpretation, Jordan is afraid at the crossing but unafraid at the baptism:

> It is because the one who shows homage and deference begins to be fearful no longer [Ps. 114.3-6]. Here the Trinity puts all its grace into operation and expresses all its love for the world; on that prior occasion it took hold of the elements in order to instruct its little servants to fear it.[583]

Interestingly, in both cases, taken from the Old and New Testaments, respectively, it is the Trinity that provokes the emotional response of Jordan. While in the presence of the Ark of the Covenant, the Trinity frightens the 'little servants' ('*servulos*'), at Christ's baptism the Trinity acts with grace and charity. Accordingly, in the Old Testament Jordan acts under compulsion ('*elementa corrupit*'), whereas at the baptism, the river, inspired by grace and charity, obeys piety ('*pietati obsequitur*'). The New Testament passage

[582] Chrysologus, serm. 160 *'[…] quid est quod Jordanis qui fugit ad praesentiam legalis arcae, ad totius Trinitatis praesentiam non refugit*'.
[583] Chrysologus, serm. 160 *'Quia qui pietati obsequitur, incipit non esse timori. Hic Trinitas exercet gratiam totam, totam secum loquitur charitatem: ibi elementa corrupit, ut servulos instituat ad timorem.'*

marks a fundamental shift from the Jewish relation to God, as Chrysologus sees it, in which obedient behaviour is motivated by fear, to the Christian relation to God, a voluntary piety that is the product of the Christian key virtues of grace and charity, inspired by the Trinity. [584] It seems justifiable to read '[…] because the one who shows homage and deference begins to be fearful no longer' as a direct commentary on the conversion of Jordan. In contrast, 'Jewish' fear is declared to be detrimental to the cultivation of piety. Jordan realizes this only at the epiphanic event of the baptism of Christ. In his Old Testament encounter with God, Jordan witnessed the Trinity mediated by the presence of the 'lawful Ark (of the Covenant)' ('*ad praesentiam legalis arcae*'). At this point in history, of course, the Trinitarian nature of God had not been revealed yet and so Jordan experienced it only in the form of the ark symbolizing the Old Law. At the baptism Jordan faces the whole Trinity for the first time, which, in its wholeness, is emblematic of the revelation of Christian as opposed to Jewish truth, and is thus compelling to the river, transforming it fundamentally.

The baptism of Christ in the Orthodox baptistery as an integration of the ancient world into Christianity

How should we interpret the mosaic medallion of the Orthodox baptistery in light of Chrysologus's sermon? I assume here that his story of the conversion of Jordan as a reaction to the river's epiphanic experience of the Trinity had repercussions for how viewers experienced the mosaic. But how might image and narrative have interrelated more precisely? To offer a tentative answer to this question, let us first compare

[584] Chrysologus stresses the voluntary nature of Jordan's decision once more in sermon 90.3: 'The son of Zechariah submerges his Lord in the baptism of repentance, washes him for the forgiveness of sins, because the Fountain wanted to be washed, the Advocate wanted to receive pardon, and the Judge himself wanted to undergo his own sentence'. (transl. E. Ferguson, *Baptism* (2009), 757). Note also Chrysologus's emphasis on the river as an agent ('judge', 'advocate') which possesses a will, instead of framing Jordan purely as a body of water.

contemporary conventions of representing river personifications in late antique church spaces with the mosaic of the Neonian baptistery. The iconography of the rivers of Paradise form the most apt group for comparison. What a brief survey of the Christian use of this iconographic type brings to light is that several river representations fit the traditional scheme of being personified as male nudes, since they are depicted in reclined positions and with a range of attributes that draw on established models.[585] This applies to four river personifications in the Justinian re-foundation of Cyrenaica (Qasr Lybia) in modern Libya (fig. 134). A large floor mosaic of 6 m x 10 m, dedicated in 539, in one of Cyrenaica's churches, shows river personifications in four out of fifty panels, today displayed in the museum of Qasr Lybia.[586] The four personifications are represented as resting male nudes of different ages and with different attributes (fig. 135). Although largely destroyed, the personifications of the rivers of Paradise in the medallions of the Martyr Theodore chapel in the cathedral of Madaba and the St Paul church in Umm al-Rasas (fig. 136) in Jordan were likely depicted in a similar way. It can be further noted that where the rivers of Paradise are shown in baptismal contexts, their lower bodies are usually missing. The floor mosaic of the small baptistery of Mariana in Corsica (fig. 137), arguably from the late fourth century, as well as that of the Macedonian baptistery in Ohrid of the fifth century (fig. 138) both display the personifications of Pishon, Gihon, Euphrates and Tigris as male heads which frame

[585] A late antique exception to the commonly figurative depictions of Jordan in Christian spaces is the representation of Jordan in the apse of SS. Cosmas and Damian in Rome. Felix IV, pope from 526 to 530, chose a mere inscription of Jordan's name for the decoration of the apse; the four rivers of Paradise are likewise indicated by name. See C. Ihm, *Die Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei* (1960), 137. For the relation between Jordan and the rivers of Paradise and the iconography of SS. Cosmas and Damian J.-M. Spieser, *Images du Christ* (Geneva: Droz, 2015), 275-278 and 281-283.

[586] I am grateful to Jane Chick for her kind permission to consult her unpublished PhD thesis on the mosaics of the East church at Qasr Lybia (University of East Anglia). For the time being cf. E. Alföldi-Rosenbaum and J. B. Ward-Perkins, *Justinianic mosaic pavements in Cyrenaican churches* (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1980), 37-40 and 121-133 on further personifications of natural phenomena in mainly Eastern churches.

diverse animal scenes. The busts of the rivers of Paradise in the mosaic floor of the Jabaliyah baptistery (fig. 139) in the Gaza Strip are represented in a similar way.[587] The personifications were reduced to their faces or busts, with the most offensive parts of the traditional iconography thereby avoided. An important exception to the general conformity of the representations of the rivers of Paradise is that of the Gehon of the Jabaliyah baptistery, which is depicted as female, and the Euphrates in the Martyr Theodore chapel, which is also female. This brief survey leaves us with the observation that where personifications of rivers occur in the Christian public space, they are often continuations of, rather than commentaries on, traditional ways of representing rivers. In all of these cases, the iconographies of the rivers themselves do not suggest any considerable effort of re-invention. The emphasis is not on reformulating such imagery in an explicitly Christian way; instead, there is a prevailing tendency to incorporate existing iconographic traditions. Where adaptations do occur, e.g. in the baptismal space, the personifications are represented in a 'cut-down' version of themselves, as busts or heads, recalling the antique tradition of representing figures such as Oceanus as a face or mask only.[588] While, however, there is evidently a Christian practice of following the Roman tradition of representing rivers as personifications, the baptismal

[587] On the iconography of the rivers of Paradise in the Levant R. Hachlili, *Ancient Mosaic Pavements. Themes, Issues, and Trends* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 182-183; R. Talgam, *Mosaics of Faith: Floors of Pagans, Jews, Samaritans, Christians, and Muslims in the Holy Land* (2014), 216. For Jabaliyah J.-B. Humbert, The Rivers of Paradise in the Byzantine church near Jabaliyah – Gaza (1999). For Ohrid V. Bitrakova-Grozdanova, *Monuments paléochrétiens de la région d'Ohrid: Starohristijanski spomenici vo Ohridsko* (Ohrid: Inst. pour la Protection des Monuments de la Culture et Musée National d'Ohrid, 1975). For Mariana G. Moracchini, "Le pavement en mosaïque de la basilique paléo-chrétienne et du baptistère de Mariana (Corse)", in: *Cahiers Archéologiques 13* (1962); G. Moracchini-Mazel, "Une basilique et un baptistère paléo-chrétiens découverts à Mariana (Corse)", in: *Comptes-rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres 106* (1962); G. Moracchini-Mazel et al., *Les Fouilles de Mariana (Corse)* Fédération d'associations et groupements pour les études corses, 1971).

[588] The reduction of a personification to a face has a long tradition in mosaic art. See V. Bitrakova-Grozdanova, *Monuments paléochrétiens de la région d'Ohrid* (1975). For comparisons on the Iberian Peninsula G. López Monteagudo, La iconografia del dios Oceanos (2011).

scene in the Orthodox baptistery of Ravenna sticks out markedly from this pattern. The Jordan of the Orthodox baptistery is the only extant river personification of its time that visibly reflects a positive affiliation with, or even a support of, the Christian faith; it must be read as a positive comment on Christianity, but likewise as a positive comment on the figure of Jordan. In contrast to comparable depictions, this image functions as an evaluating and approving comment on the personified river, rather than as a mere place-marker or symbol for a body of water.

The artists went a step further by nuancing the relationship and hierarchy between the participants of the baptism scene through careful renditions of their physical characteristics and postures. With his tanned body and scrubby strands of blue and green hair, Jordan carries himself in a manner distinct from the fairer and larger bodies of Jesus and John. Although athletic and fitted with the attributes worthy of a river god, Jordan, looking attentively up to Christ, seems fully content with his new role as doting servant, relinquishing any claims to veneration himself. The representation of Jordan stresses both his excellence and his inferiority; Jordan is characterized by his otherness, his marked difference from the superior bodies of Christ and his baptizer.

I would argue that the interplay between this carefully arranged image and Chrysologus's interpretation of Jordan as an obstinate and fearful natural force which has just been subdued and converted by virtue of an epiphany has implications for a possible and perhaps unexpected reading of this image. On the one hand, by ascribing to Jordan elevated experiences of the soul such as piety, Chrysologus was drawing on the antique tradition of personification. Jordan is marked in Chrysologus's words as one newly converted, who, when confronted physically with a Christian revelation, can no longer turn away from God. On the other hand, Jordan's visual representation in the

form of a classical river personification suggests to recipients that the river possesses a will, in line with antique tradition. The visual form Jordan takes in the dome mosaic marks him clearly as both a servile Christian and as belonging to the classical world of mythology and natural phenomena imbued with agency – a dual identification rarely depicted so explicitly in baptismal spaces. When we consider how the story of the miraculous baptism of Christ unfolds in Ravenna's Orthodox baptistery both narratively and visually, it seems plausible that viewers could have understood the personified Jordan in awe of Christ's baptism as a representation of the Christianization of the classical world. This fusion of Christian and pre-Christian iconography is both carefully crafted and original for its time; as indicated by the labelling of Jordan, the scene was too new to have been automatically understood. Indeed, the labelling suggests that it was thought that the figure of Jordan could have been taken for something else besides the river. By embodying Jordan in the shape of a Roman deity, the artists opened up several layers of interpretation: the personification not only represents the watery element purified by Christ (in accordance with Ambrose and Maximus), or the river in which Jesus was baptized converting to Christianity (in accordance with Chrysologus), but also allows for an understanding of Jordan as belonging to the pre-Christian world. As such, the central image of the Orthodox baptistery was carefully designed to depict the initiatory moment of Christian mission in a strong self-affirmatory gesture as a moment of Christianization of the ancient world in the guise of a Roman deity. The Roman pre-Christian world and Christianity visually overlap and become inseparably intertwined in the figure of Jordan – legendary Christian river *and* supernatural agent cast in the tradition of the river gods.

The messages of the central medallion were bound into the overall narrative of the dome's imagery. In a long-standing debate different elements of the cupola's decoration have been brought to the fore as potentially determinant for a key message. While many scholars believe that the apostles revere the act of Christ's baptism itself, others view Christ as the object of veneration more generally, whether as Christ triumphant or as Christ in his theophany, and still others see the four empty thrones in the area below the apostles as the actual focal point of the dome's narration.[589] Whatever the culmination point of the narrative may be, if any, the medallion obviously sits in the centre of a highly complex, multi-layered cluster of images and relates to each of them. When viewed in relation to other elements of the cupola, the medallion, in its function as an image of conversion and a call for baptism, creates several narratives about the salvation of men in the past, present and future. In the past, the baptism of Christ had a salvific effect on the River Jordan and, as I discussed earlier, thereby influences the capacity of all waters to purify in future generations. The iconography further points to the influence of Christ's baptism on the present by depicting the apostles one level beyond the medallion and thus evoking the lineage of representatives of Christ, whose actual descendants in the form of the clergy transmit the baptismal grace in the here and now, at the ground level of the baptistery.[590] Moreover, the presence of the four empty thrones on the level below the apostles reminds the viewer of the second coming of Christ, and thus of the necessity of baptism before the Last Judgement pending in the near future.

[589] For an overview of the debate C. Rizzardi, La Decorazione musiva del Battistero (2001), 923-934.

[590] Perhaps there is a case to be made that the mosaic of the cupola also had a pentecostal meaning, because of the prominent presence of both the dove and the apostles in a setting that emphasizes the Christian mission. I won't pursue this further here, because the first depiction of the Pentecost in the Syrian Rabula codex dates only from the sixth century.

Beyond marking place - Examples of other personifications of Jordan that represent antiquity

Whether my suggestion that contemporary viewers might have taken the personification of Jordan as standing for more than the river is plausible, depends not least on whether a similarly multi-layered interpretation of Jordan was also implied in other Christian works of art. This last section discusses two more examples, both from the sixth century. The pictorial and narrative tradition of the 'fleeing Jordan' seems the best place to start looking, because features of this classical motif, like the raised arm and the turning of the torso, are particularly prone to reinterpretations of the subject matter as indicating an attempt to escape.[591] The backside of a Palestinian ampoule, dated from the middle of the sixth to the beginning of the seventh century, today at the Franz Joseph Dölger-Institut in Bonn (figs. 140, 141), is the only example among the surviving pilgrims' ampoules of Palestine to depict a personification of Jordan.[592] The fragment shows the nativity in the upper part and the baptism of Christ below. In the lower left area, behind two angels who carry the clothes of Jesus, the personified Jordan, naked and covered to his waist in water, has turned away from the scene but looks back at it. Water spills from a jug to his left and he carries a reed. Jordan's facial features are clearly distorted: bulging eyes and an enormous chin hanging down stand out on an already disproportionately large head. A wreath made of reeds or perhaps strands of hair is depicted in a disordered manner below the two claws that crown his head. The way Jordan positions himself towards the scene was clearly to be understood as the flight of a demonized element. Significantly, we also find in the Bonn ampoule the only

[591] Contra S. Schrenk and G. Rexin, Erstaunen oder Flucht (2007), 182-188 who argue for an exclusive reading of the motif as an expression of wonder towards an epiphany in keeping with the classical tradition.

[592] J. Engemann, "Palästinische Pilgerampullen im F. J. Dölger Institut in Bonn", in: *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum 16* (1973).

known case in which two witnesses to the baptismal scene are integrated; they replace, as it were, the river personification that commonly fulfills this function of the baptism's witness.[593] To the right of the scene, behind John, stand two men without halos, one of them bearded and long-haired with a raised right arm who turns back to the second, shaven man with short hair.[594] Their presence seems to make Jordan superfluous, unless he fulfilled another role in the visual narrative of the ampoule than that of witness. Here, the distinctly ugly Jordan rather seems to personify disobedience and unwillingness in response to the event of Christ's baptism. In the case of the Dölger ampoule, Jordan's 'flight' expresses more than a standard pictorial formula of astonishment. The example of the ampoule indicates that the averted personification of Jordan was at least at times referred to as a symbol of paganism. This reading is supported by two examples taken from Vigne's second grouping of the Eastern textual tradition. The oldest version of this type we have already come across: Pseudo Hippolytus explains Jordan's flight explicitly as having been caused by his pagan status.[595] A passage by Pseudo John Chrysostomos from the seventh century also represents Jordan as reluctant to cooperate: 'Why do you want to be baptized? Jordan will not receive you, he recognized you, his creator; he turned back his floods (Ps. 114,3-5), he does not flow forwards, he rejects the regime […]'.[596]

The second example brings us back to Ravenna, to the so-called copy of the Orthodox baptismal scene in the cupola of the Arian baptistery (fig. 127) from c. 500 AD.[597] Jordan,

[593] For Jordan's role as witness to the baptismal scene S. Schrenk and G. Rexin, Erstaunen oder Flucht (2007).
[594] J. Engemann, Palästinische Pilgerampullen (1973), 16.
[595] See in this chapter 175.
[596] Pseudo John Chrysostomos, S. Theophania (transl. by the author from a German translation in S. Schrenk and G. Rexin, Erstaunen oder Flucht (2007), 194).
[597] The description as a 'copy' started to be formulated in the early twentieth century. See e.g. J. Kurth, *Die Mosaiken der christlichen Ära. I. Die Wandmosaiken von Ravenna* (Leipzig, Berlin: Deutsche

now seated to Christ's right side, as counterpart to the standing John the Baptist on Christ's left, gestures to Christ with his left hand. This depiction of Jordan is strongly tied to the classical tradition of depictions of river deities. Jordan's enlargement in size as compared to the prototype, his fair skin colour which matches the complexion of Christ and John, his more prominent position in the foreground next to the new-born Christ, and the respectful representation of an aged and venerable man with well-kempt beard and hair, all suggest a high appreciation of Jordan. The lack of a label illustrates the increased familiarity of the public with the iconography in Ravenna. His classical appearance might be easily explained as a recurrence of the antique model of river personifications devoid of any additional meaning, but Jordan features much too prominently in the medallion to be merely a contingent witness to the baptism. The explanation frequently given by scholars, that Jordan was granted his relative prominence in order to guarantee a harmonized composition, explains the phenomenon away as purely compositional at best.[598] Furthermore, the presence of highly connotative and similar, but not identical, iconography of the same subject less than half a mile away makes it increasingly implausible that convention alone predetermined the artistic choice. How, then, should we interpret the iconographical changes? Bryan Ward-Perkins, in his search for meaningful differences between Arian and Nicene iconography, considers the explanation that adherents of the two churches differed fundamentally in their regard of river deities an 'absurd' conclusion, because Christians, whether Arian or Nicene, were not meant to attribute importance to deities at all. [599] As I hope I have demonstrated above, we do not need to go so far as to see symbols of paganism in the

Bibelgesellschaft, 1901), 193-194; C. Diehl, *Ravenne. Les villes d'art célèbres* (Paris: 1928), 45-46. It has since been little reviewed.

[598] See for instance B. Ward-Perkins, Germanic Arianism (2007), 271 no 12.

[599] Ibid., 271

Ravennate depictions of Jordan. To make sense of both images, it is sufficient to assume that the baptismal scenes could be read as visualizations of Christianity's triumphant yet incorporating relation to the ancient past. As Ward-Perkins rightly observes, the renditions of Jordan in the two cupola mosaics are distinctly different from each other, which seems to be most easily explained by differences in their intended messages. Following the observation that the Arian depiction of Jordan is highly favourable while still emphasizing its rootedness in antique models, this seems to indicate a manifestly positive view of antiquity on the part of the builders of the Arian baptistery. Ittai Weinryb has suggested that the baptistery's promoter, the Ostrogothic king Theoderic, showed his often expressed admiration for classical Roman culture by enhancing the status of Jordan, whom he saw as a representative of antiquity.[600] The search for a distinctly Arian visual language has been concluded overwhelmingly in the negative in a number of Mediterranean examples.[601] It is therefore telling that in Ravenna, where a pronounced difference from an Orthodox model is graspable, the Arian rendition should surpass the Orthodox model in its praise of antiquity especially. In the following chapter, we will examine more closely a comparable situation in an arguably Arian Vandal baptistery. The Arian baptistery's mosaic is further distinct from the Orthodox rendition in that it no longer stresses Jordan's belief in Christianity. By 500 AD, it seems, the river was no longer thought to be in need of conversion. Jordan had become fully Christian.

[600] I. Weinryb, *A take of Two Baptisteries* (2002), 53.

[601] B. Ward-Perkins, Germanic Arianism (2007) ; R. Bockmann, "The non-archaeology of Arianism – What comparing cases in Carthage, Haidra and Ravenna can tell us about 'Arian' churches", in: *Arianism: Roman heresy and barbarian creed,* Guido M. Berndt and Roland Steinacher (ed.) (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014); D. Mîrşanu, "The Aesthetic 'Shadow'of Gothic Arianism: Archaeology, Architecture and Art in the Age of Heresies", in: *Memory, Humanity, and Meaning,* Mihail Neamţu and Bogdan Tătaru-Cazaban (ed.) (Bucharest: Zeta Books, 2009). For a traditional position R. Sörries, *Die Bilder der Orthodoxen im Kampf gegen den Arianismus* (Frankfurt (Main): Lang, 1983). On potential Arian nuances in the Arian baptistery in Ravenna e.g. C. Rizzardi, *La Decorazione musiva del Battistero* (2001), 929-930, R. Bockmann, The non-archaeology of Arianism (2014).

Conclusion

The emergence of a multitude of iconographies of Jordan in scenes of the baptism of Christ in the fifth and sixth centuries was not incidental. These new iconographies relate to an emerging exegetical literature in the Latin, Greek and Syrian textual traditions that problematized the role of Jordan at the baptism from the fourth century onwards. I have shown that baptismal imagery provided independent commentaries on the narrative of Jordan's attendance at Christ's baptism. Some of these visual commentaries, notably the mosaic of the cupola of the Orthodox baptistery of Ravenna, responded to the stories' latent theme of Jordan's status within the Christian realm. For the Orthodox baptistery, we can conclude that a plausible reading, underpinned by Ravenna's bishop Chrysologus's own interpretation of Jordan's role at Christ's baptism, stresses Jordan's affiliation with antiquity. At Ravenna, baptisms were conducted under a monumental dome whose decoration promoted the Roman pre-Christian heritage as part of Christianity.

Chapter 4: North African temples à cour as hosts for fifth- and sixth-century baptisteries

Introduction

While the first three chapters concentrated on the insertion of iconography of pre-Christian origin in newly built baptisteries, this last chapter brings into focus the question of reuse of Roman sacred space for baptismal purposes. The topic of baptismal incorporation of Roman material heritage has already been raised in the discussion of the baptistery at Milreu in the Algarve. The example of Milreu invited us to reflect on the relevance of the fourth-century mosaic decoration of the converted church for the newly created baptismal space, while the unknown, but arguably profane, initial purpose of the building featured only as a side consideration.[602] This chapter problematizes the frequent and frequently discussed phenomenon of the conversion of Roman temple structures into churches, and investigates the significance of such changes where a baptismal space is involved. [603] The chapter expands my argument of

[602] See chapter 2, 137-139.

[603] This can only be a selection of overviews on the subject of temple-church conversions in a rich field of research: F. W. Deichmann, "Frühchristliche Kirchen in antiken Heiligtümern", in: *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts 54* (1939); F. W. Deichmann, *Die Spolien der spätantiken Architektur* (Munich: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1975); B. Brenk, "Spätantike und frühes Christentum", in: (ed.) (Berlin: Propyläen, 1977); R. P. C. H. Hanson, "The transformation of pagan temples into churches in the early Christian centuries", in: *Journal of Semitic Studies 23* (1978); J. Vaes, "Christliche Wiederverwendung antiker Bauten: Ein Forschungsbericht", in: *Ancient Society 15-17* (1984-1986); M. Greenhalgh, *The Survival of Roman Antiquities in the Middle Ages* (London: Duckworth, 1989), esp. 93-97 and 155-157; H. Saradi-Mendelovici, "Christian Attitudes toward Pagan Monuments in Late Antiquity and their Legacy in Later Byzantine Centuries", in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers 44* (1990); J.-P. Caillet, "La transformation en église d'édifices publics et de temples à la fin de l'Antiquité", in: *La Fin de la cité antique et le début de la cité medievale,* Claude Lepelley (ed.) (Bari: Edipuglia Galliard, 1996); B. Ward-Perkins, "Reusing the Architectural Legacy of the Past, entre idéologie et pragmatisme", in: *The Idea and Ideal of Town between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages,* Gian Pietro Brogiolo and Bryan Ward-Perkins (ed.) (Leiden: Brill, 1999); B. Ward-Perkins, "Reconfiguring Sacred Space: from Pagan Shrines to Christian Churches", in: *Die spätantike Stadt und ihre Christianisierung,* Gunnar Brands and Hans-Georg Severin (ed.) (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2003); B. Caseau, "ολεμείν λίθοις. La désacralisation des espaces et des objets religieux païens durant l'Antiquité tardive", in: *Le sacré et son inscription dans l'espace à Byzance et en Occident. Études comparées,* Michel Kaplan (ed.) (Paris: Éditions de la Sorbonne, 2001); B. Caseau, "The fate of rural temples in late antiquity and the christianisation of the countryside", in: *Recent Research on the Late Antique Countryside,* William Bowden et al. (ed.) (Leiden: Brill, 2004); J. Hahn et al., *From Temple to Church: Destruction and Renewal of Local Cultic Topography in Late Antiquity* Brill, 2008); L. Lavan and M. Mulryan, *The Archaeology of Late Antique Paganism* (Leiden, Boston, MA: 2011). For regional studies

the previous chapters by tackling the baptismal reuse of spaces explicitly connoted as pagan. Did Christian communities reuse temples as churches in order to associate themselves with the Roman heritage? Did the conversion of temples' *cellae* into baptisteries have a particular symbolic value? And did Christians compromise their orthodoxy in any way by reusing *cellae* as baptisteries?

The larger phenomenon of temple-church conversions has been rarely discussed from this angle.[604] For the most part, scholars have sought to better understand how and when temples were converted into churches. Broad surveys on the subject understandably leave the question of *why* to be tackled by studies which analyse narrower sets of samples, usually taken from a region or city.[605] In this chapter I attempt to examine this proposition in some detail by comparing three examples that share similar locations and architectural compositions. From the subset of Western Mediterranean temple-church conversions that include baptismal spaces, I will concentrate on the evidence from North Africa in the Roman provinces of Africa Proconsularis and Byzacena. In those provinces, the integration of baptismal chambers

---

see for instance J.-M. Spieser, "La christianisation des sanctuaires païens en Grèce", in: *Neue Forschungen in griechischen Heiligtümern,* Ulf Jantzen (ed.) (Tübingen: Wasmuth, 1976); L. Foschia, "La réutilisation des sanctuaires païens par les Chrétiens en Grèce continentale (IV e VIIe s.)", in: *Revue des Études Greques 113* (2000); R. Bayliss, *Provincial Cilicia and the Archaeology of Temple Conversion* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2004). On North African temple conversions see N. Duval, "Église et temple en Afrique du Nord", in: *Bulletin archéologique du comité des traveaux historiques et scientifiques* (1971); F. Teichner, "Signa Venerandae Christianae Religionis: On the conversion of pagan sanctuaries in the diocesis of Africa and Aegyptus", in: *Libyan Studies 27* (1996); M. Milojevic, "Retrofit ecclesia: A non-conformity building type", in: *Conformity and non-conformity in Byzantium,* Lynfa Garland (ed.) (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1997); G. Sears, "The fate of the temples in North Africa", in: *The Archaeology of Late Antique Paganism,* L.; Mulryan Lavan, M. (ed.) (Leiden: 2011); S. Lander, *Ritual Sites and Religious Rivalries* (2016).

[604] Occasionally, the possibility that temples were reused because they were considered part of the Roman heritage has been considered. See M. Milojevic, *Retrofit ecclesia: A non-conformity building type* (1997); H. Saradi-Mendelovici, *Christian Attitudes* (1990); J. Vaes, *Christliche Wiederverwendung antiker Bauten (1984-1986)*. An eye-opening comparison for the early Islamic world is offered by M. Guidetti, *In the shadow of the church: the building of mosques in early medieval Syria* (Leiden, Boston, MA: Brill, 2017).

[605] See for instance I. Jacobs, "Temples and Civic Representation in the Theodosian Period", in: *Using Images in Late Antiquity,* Stine Birk et al. (ed.) (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2014); M. R. Salzman, Sacred Time and Sacred Space (1999).

in former temples occurs frequently enough – three times within an approximately 100 km radius – for us to ask legitimately whether these constructions responded to a shared need for a baptismal association with the Roman religious infrastructure. Of the twelve certain cases of temple-church conversions from Algeria to Libya, baptisteries are attested for certain only in the temple-churches of Thuburbo Maius, Sufetula and Jebel Oust. Interestingly, the baptismal reuses follow a similar pattern in that they are integrated within the *cellae* of these temples.[606] Despite this structural similarity, my analysis will bring me to different conclusions about the extent to which a symbolic reading of the baptisteries as situating Christians as participants in a shared Roman culture is justifiable. As I have discussed in the introduction, a Christian affiliation with Roman culture, while expected by scholars in private or elite contexts, is rarely conceived as a factor negotiated communally between lay Christians and clerics. The cultural trait that has perhaps lent itself most to interpretations in such terms is the Christian approach to re-interpreting time structured within a pagan religious framework. By adjusting the Roman calendar to Christian holidays and festivities, the church adopted pagan feast days, making them Christian in many cases, while it secularized others. These adjustments allowed for the continued celebration of festivities of pagan origin like the Lupercalia until the early Middle Ages.[607] In both cases, continuity with the pre-Christian civic tradition was ensured, requiring that lay participants acknowledge the celebrations' secular character, but without persecuting

[606] For a list of North African temple-church conversions see no. 615 in this chapter.

[607] For the continuous celebration of Roman festivities see for instance J. A. North and N. McLynn, "Postscript to the Lupercalia: From Caesar to Andromachus", in: *The Journal of Roman Studies 98* (2008); M. R. Salzman, Sacred Time and Sacred Space (1999); W. Weismann, *Kirche und Schauspiele: die Schauspiele im Urteil der lateinischen Kirchenväter unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Augustin* (Würzburg: Augustinus-Verlag, 1972); M. Meslin, *La fête des kalendes de janvier dans l'empire romain. Etude d'un rituel de Nouvel An* (Brussels: Latomus, 1970), 51-93.

the performance of rituals once they had become customs. The 'Christianization' of time, as Michele Salzman puts it, orchestrated by the church and affecting everyone, made it possible for originally Roman traditions to be performed within a Christian framework.

Salzman has shown that the Christianization of time is more readily discussed than the Christianization of space as a process that required the church to make concessions to the continuous public attachment to Roman traditions.[608] Current scholarship has questioned the validity of symbolic readings of Christian repurposing of pagan space and offers instead pragmatic considerations as the driving force behind the reuse.[609] Interpretations that emphasize pragmatic motives for temple-church conversions, have replaced, or at least nuanced, older views that interpreted similar cases in adversarial terms as fights over space between Christians and the adherents of Roman religions. Instead, there is an increasing awareness that the phenomenon of temple-church conversions make up only a fraction of the mass of converted antique buildings in late antiquity, meaning that a temple might have undergone multiple stages of repurposing or vacancy before its ultimate conversion into a church, and that many temples were not converted into churches but were simply left to fall into decay or used as quarries.

[608] M. R. Salzman, Sacred Time and Sacred Space (1999). The question of what the Christianization of urban space consists of is discussed in G. Brands, "Die spätantike Stadt und ihre Christianisierung", in: *Die spätantike Stadt und ihre Christianisierung: Symposion vom 14. bis 16. Februar 2000 in Halle/Saale,* Gunnar Brands and Hans-Georg Severin (ed.) (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2003), 9-25.

[609] See the edited volume L. Lavan and M. Mulryan, *The Archaeology of Late Antique Paganism* (2011) as well as R. Bayliss, *Provincial Cilicia* (2004); J. H. F. Dijkstra, "The fate of the temples in late antique Egypt", in: *The archaeology of late antique paganism,* Luke Lavan and Michael Mulryan (ed.) (Leiden, Boston, MA: Brill, 2011), 401; B. Caseau, The fate of rural temples (2004), 130; L. Foschia, La réutilisation des sanctuaires païens (2000), 432. For North Africa G. Sears, *African urbanism* (2007); A. Leone, *Pagan city* (2013); A. Leone, *Changing Townscapes in North Africa. From Late Antiquity to the Arab Conquest* (Bari: Edipuglia, 2007).

Yet the divide between how we think about the Christianization of time and of space still requires an explanation. While there seems to be little doubt that festivities of non-Christian origin were contested by Christian church officials or were appropriated by them for Christian purposes, the Christianization of space is less often discussed in conjunction with the continuity of traditional life.[610] Did late antique Christians consider vacant temple spaces to be less their Roman heritage than Roman festivals? Were temples void of such associations?

We can indeed raise some doubts that fifth- and sixth-century users would have identified the temples with Roman religion or with Rome itself. Depending on the deity formerly worshipped in the temple, a civic or regional instead of a Roman connotation might have predominated at the time.[611] Roman material heritage and its cultural affiliations are generally subject to individual interpretation. What scholars now perceive as Roman, it has been argued, may not necessarily have been conceptualized in this way by those embedded in the culture of their time. It is possible that contemporaries did not compare their culture with other parts of the empire or indeed with Rome itself, and thus did not experience it as dependent on Rome at all.[612] Such arguments, however, do not call into question that temples were understood as relics from the past, only the extent to which this past was consciously associated with Rome. I will continue to refer to Roman culture in this chapter, cognizant of the fact that the

[610] See for instance I. Jacobs, "Ecclesiastical dominance and urban setting. Colonnaded streets as back-drop for Christian display", in: *Antiquité Tardive 22* (2014); I. Jacobs, *Aesthetic Maintenance of Civic Space. The 'Classical' City from the fourth to the seventh c. AD* (Leuven-Paris-Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2013).

[611] D. Riggs, The Continuity of Paganism (2001), 286.

[612] J. B. Rives, *Religion and Authority in Roman Carthage from Augustus to Constantine* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); M. Grahame, Material culture (1998).

social, political and cultural characteristics commonly referred to as Roman today will not, while noted and remembered, have been named in such terms by everyone.

The motivations behind temple-church conversions in North Africa

It is not easy to determine whether or not specific temple-church conversions can be taken as indicators of cultural closeness or rapprochement of Christians to Roman antiquity, in large part because information on the processes of and motivations for temple-church conversions is rare. North Africa is no exception in this respect. Neither the frequency with which the temples were converted nor the periods of the attested conversions are clear.[613] In most cases it is impossible to assess how long a temple had been out of use before its conversion. To counter the lack of available material evidence, historical events and Roman legislation have been used to an unjustifiable degree as reference points for dating temple-church conversions, even − and not infrequently − against archaeological evidence.[614]

The temple-church conversions of Thuburbo Maius, Sufetula and Jebel Oust, distinguished by their *cella*-baptisteries, represent only a fraction of all North African conversions. Christian reuse has been suggested for many temples, though archaeological information in several instances has been insufficiently recorded to make any certain claims. At times, lack of stratigraphy has created doubts about the pre-existence of a temple, the existence of a church on the site of a temple, or the precise form of conversion. Sometimes, for instance, whether a church is built upon a destroyed temple or reuses the preserved structure remains unclear. Depending on how much credibility one ascribes to the diverse and often contradictory archaeological

[613] G. Sears, The fate (2011), 252.
[614] Ibid., 252.

interpretations, a pool of at least twelve out of about twenty plausible examples, from Algeria to Libya, comes into consideration.[615] Two principal phases of conversion are usually discussed in these cases, often as alternatives and generally inconclusively. The first phase is the turn of the fourth to the fifth century, because of the official prohibition of paganism under Theodosius I. The second is the sixth century, when church renewal and construction came to a peak under Byzantine rule.[616] The possibility that such conversions took place under the Vandal reign in the later fifth and early sixth centuries is, by contrast, almost never considered. The supposed lack of significant constructions during the Vandal era and the implied assumption that the Vandal persecution of the Catholic church must have led to a general standstill of any church activity appear to lie behind scholars' reluctance to investigate this possibility further.[617]

The motivations for the conversions in North Africa have been discussed at length. Interpretations which favour a symbolic dimension for the conversions tend to address

[615] The breadth of possible cases has never been catalogued comprehensively. Frequently discussed examples include, besides Thuburbo, Sufetula III and Jebel Oust, the new temple at Tipasa, church 1 at Timgad, the Capitolium at Constantine, the temple near the arch of Caracalla at Tebessa, the basilica of Rutilius at Mactar, the temple in the Forum Vetus at Lepcis Magna and the temple of Jupiter Dolichenus are published, with bibliographies, in A. Leone, *Pagan city* (2013), 65-74 and G. Sears, The fate (2011), 250-252. The Caelestis temple at Carthage and the Draco temple at Tipasa are attested through literary accounts only. For the Caelestis temple see in this chapter 198-200, for the Draco temple G. Sears, *African urbanism* (2007), 59 and G. Sears, *The fate* (2011), 251. This makes twelve certain examples in total. The Christian conversions of the two temple-churches at Cyrene have been contested in J. B. Ward-Perkins and R. G. Goodchild, *Christian monuments of Cyrenaica* (London: Society for Libyan Studies, 2003), 12. In addition, Leone suggests for further examination several poorly published examples: the temple of Apollo and Diana at Mactar, the temple of Hoter-Miskar, the temple of Henchir-Khima and the temple at Lambaesis. See A. Leone, *Pagan city* (2013), 70-74. The following should be added to the list: Uppenna: D. Raynal, *Archéologie et histoire de l'Eglise d'Afrique: Uppenna I, Les fouilles 1904-1907* (Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 2006), 378 ; Simitthus: F. Rakob, "Der Tempelberg und seine Heiligtümer", in: *Simitthus. Der Tempelberg und das römische Lager,* Friedrich Rakob (ed.) (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1994), 8, 37, figs. 15-16; the speculative cases of basilica I of Sufetula: N. Duval, *Les églises africaines* (1971), 9; N. Duval, *Les églises africaines à deux absides. Récherches archéologiques sur la liturgie chrétienne en Afrique du Nord. II: Inventaire des monuments. Interprétation* (Paris: Boccard, 1973), 163; of the Caelestis temple in Thuburbo Maius : A. Lézine, *Thuburbo Majus* (Tunis: Societé Tunisienne de diffusion, 1968), 23-24; of the temple of Saturn in Thuburbo Maius: ibid., 27-28; A. Leone, *Pagan city* (2013), 71.

[616] G. Sears, *The fate* (2011), 253.

[617] For a criticism of such practice see ibid., 251, 253.

the earlier phase, at the turn of the fifth century, and cast conversions as a Christian gesture of triumphal supersession. This suggestion mirrors the state of the debate on Mediterranean temple-church conversions more generally: it is often assumed that in the Byzantine period paganism was already of too little relevance to hinder Christian communities from repurposing temples for other uses.[618] Where a fifth- or sixth-century repurposing appears likely, pragmatic reasons tend to be seen at the core of the conversion. I will return below to this argument, and to possible counter-arguments.

In any case, readings of temple-church conversions as hostile takeovers appear plausible in light of the North African Christian policy against the continued use of temples, which was especially palpable around 400 AD. Judging from the preserved evidence, the battle on Roman religions was not fought legally in North Africa before 399 AD, when Honorius sent imperial agents to Carthage to enforce a new law which prohibited the destruction of temples unless they contained illicit objects.[619] Due to the 'the evil sloth of the judges, the connivance of the office staffs, and the contempt of the municipal senates', as an edict posted at Carthage in 407/408 AD complained, the now 'superstitious' Roman religions probably continued to live on unofficially, even though many temples were supposedly closed by that time.[620] A Nicene church council held in 401 AD in Carthage urged that a more radical solution should be found and advised the issue of an edict in

[618] J.-M. Spieser, *La christianisation des sanctuaires païens en Grèce* (1976), 320; B. Caseau, B. Caseau, La désacralisation des espaces (2001), 103; G. Sears, *African urbanism* (2007), 101.
[619] C. Th. 16,10,18 to Apollodorus, Proconsul of Africa, issued on 20 August 399. See also D. Riggs, The Continuity of Paganism (2001), 294.
[620] C. Th. 16,10,19,2 issued on 15 November 408; 407. For the dating see C. Pharr, The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmondian Constitutions (2001) 458, no. 96. Quotes after ibid., 296. For the survival of Roman religions in North Africa also D. Riggs, "Christianizing the Rural Communities of Late Roman Africa: A Process of Coercion or Persuasion?", in: *Violence in Late Antiquity. Perceptions and practices,* Harold A. Drake (ed.) (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003). On secret pagan worship in late antiquity see also B. Caseau, Late Antique Paganism: Adaptation under duress (2011), 127-131.

favour of the destruction of temples and cult statues.[621] Augustine, in his correspondence with landlords of rural estates, in several cases recommended that the landlords destroy pagan temples or shrines located on their properties.[622] Little textual or archaeological evidence exists, however, that testifies to temple destructions.[623] Only one letter exchange between Augustine and the grammar teacher Maximus from Madauros, from the early 390s, refers to a temple attack that provoked a riot in which several Christians lost their lives.[624] Assaults specifically targeted at cult statues were more common. Textual evidence attests to the destruction, mutilation and theft of idols across North Africa.[625]

Shira Lander has recently demonstrated that North African bishops used a rhetoric of supersession and triumph when talking about the conversion of church spaces. Significantly, the evidence seems most conclusive in polemical writings between adherents of Nicene, Donatist and Arian churches about changes of denomination as

[621] Concilium Carthaginensium 16 iunii, 401, in Concilia Africae, Reg. Eccl. Carthag. Excerpta, 58, 196: '*De reliquis idolorum vel templis ab imperatoribus abolendis'*, quoted after A. Leone, *Pagan city* (2013), 58 no 97. See also D. Riggs, The Continuity of Paganism (2001), 293.

[622] L. Dossey, *Peasant and empire in Christian North Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 187-189.

[623] S. Lander, *Ritual Sites and Religious Rivalries* (2016), 246. North Africa follows the general trend. See J. Hahn et al., *From Temple to Church* (2008), 274. Traces of a fire, probably dating to after the mid-fourth century are recorded for the temple of Zeus at Cyrene, where the cult statue of Zeus has been found smashed. G. Sears, The fate (2011), 248. Better dated North African temple destructions point to the Vandal (Mustis, Africa Proconsularis) and the Byzantine (Ghirza, Tripolitania) periods. For Mustis A. Leone, *Changing Townscapes* (2007), 135. For Ghirza Y. Modéran, *Les Maures et l'Afrique romaine (IVe-VIIe siècle)* (Rome: Ecole française de Rome, 2003), 633, 647-648.

[624] Maximus and Augustine, ep. 16 and Augustine, ep. 17. B. Shaw, *Sacred Violence. African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustin* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 235-243; S. Lander, *Ritual Sites and Religious Rivalries* (2016), 179.

[625] A. Leone, *Pagan city* (2013), 121-187; S. Lander, *Ritual Sites and Religious Rivalries* (2016), 247-248; K. Dunbabin, "A mosaic workshop in Carthage around 400 A.D.", in: *New light on ancient Carthage,* John Griffiths Pedley (ed.) (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1980), 78. For the preservation of endangered statuary in late antique 'museums' C. Lepelley, Le musée (1994) and no. 664 in this chapter. For the preservation of statuary beyond North Africa B. Caseau, La désacralisation des espaces (2001), 107-121 and C. Mango, "Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder", in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers 17* (1963). For the decline of North African statuary more generally R. R. R. Smith and B. Ward-Perkins, *The last statues of Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 56-86.

well as destructions of churches belonging to other creeds.[626] There is only one case in which a North African bishop described a conversion of a temple space as proof of God's victory over the infidels, but this case is contested. Quodvultdeus, bishop of Carthage in the 430s, records the consecration of the temple of Caelestis at Carthage as the new episcopal church, an event which he witnessed as a young man.[627] The Romano-African goddess Caelestis, the patron goddess of Punic Carthage called Tanit, continued to be of influence for the inhabitants of Carthage until the 440s at least.[628] When the Caelestis temple, Quodvultdeus tells us, 'had been closed for some time through neglect, with the thorny hedges which surrounded it obstructing access, the Christians wanted to appropriate it for the use of the true religion […]'. After they removed everything from the temple, bishop Aurelius, under the eyes of a crowd on the occasion of Easter 'placed his seat there in the place of Caelestis, and sat on it'.[629] Quodvultdeus relates further: '[…] a remarkable and incredible detail presented itself to our gaze: an inscription in very large bronze letters on the front of the temple, saying "Aurelius the priest dedicated this". Reading this the crowd marveled at the actions which with prophetic spirit God's foreknowledge had brought to this set conclusion'.[630]

This apparent conversion could have been only an ephemeral act meant to demonstrate Christian dominance over pagan sacred space: Quodvultdeus likewise reports that several years later, during the tribunate of Ursus around 420 AD, Ursus razed the

[626] S. Lander, *Ritual Sites and Religious Rivalries* (2016), 119-175.
[627] H. R. Hurst, *The sanctuary of Tanit at Carthage in the Roman period: a re-interpretation* (Portsmouth, RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1999), 91-95. See also R. P. C. H. Hanson, The transformation of pagan temples (1978), 262-263; S. Lander, *Ritual Sites and Religious Rivalries* (2016), 197; D. Riggs, Christianizing the Rural Communities of Late Roman Africa (2003), 301.
[628] Salvian, De Gubern. Dei, 8.2, cf. D. Riggs, The Continuity of Paganism (2001), 295.
[629] Quodvultdeus, Lib. prom. et praed. Dei, 3,38,44 (transl. H. R. Hurst, *The sanctuary of Tanit* (1999), 91-92).
[630] Ibid., 92.

Caelestis temple to the ground and installed a cemetery instead.[631] It has been argued that this would have been unlikely had the Caelestis temple been a functioning church by then, and that a temporary demonstration of God's ultimate triumph over paganism on the occasion of the Easter celebration is a more likely explanation of the earlier event than a permanent conversion of the space.[632] Given how contested the religious affiliation of the temple district appears to have been according to Quodvultdeus, however, many scenarios can be imagined in which the temple was converted only to be later deconsecrated again. In either case, whether the episode refers to a temporary imposition of bishop Aurelius or to a definite act of conversion, it still provides interesting insight into the modes of the appropriation of pagan space. No physical alteration of the former temple space is mentioned other than the emptying of the space, the installation of the bronze inscription and the positioning of the bishop's cathedra above the place where previously the statue of Caelestis had stood. While according to similar accounts, usually but not only from Byzantium, temples were ritually cleansed and exorcised before being taken into Christian use, Quodvultdeus's account does not reveal any fear of demonic powers residing in the temple. Reports on temple exorcisms from North Africa are markedly absent.[633] In sum, in the late fourth and early fifth centuries, Christians across North Africa, including a significant number of bishops, evidently had hostile attitudes towards temples and the cult statues they

[631] Ouodvultdeus, Lib. prom. et praed. Dei, 3,38,44 (Transl. Ibid. 91-92)

[632] R. P. C. H. Hanson, The transformation of pagan temples (1978), 263; see also S. Lander, *Ritual Sites and Religious Rivalries* (2016), 199.

[633] G. Sears, The fate (2011), 254. The fear of pollution was nevertheless an issue in fifth-century North Africa. A North African purifying washing is recorded by Optatus in relation to a Donatist cleansing of a Nicene church: S. Lander, *Ritual Sites and Religious Rivalries* (2016), 112. Further P. Brown, *Authority and the sacred: aspects of the Christianisation of the Roman world* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 17. For temple exorcisms more generally H. Saradi-Mendelovici, Christian Attitudes (1990), 54-56; F. W. Deichmann, Frühchristliche Kirchen in antiken Heiligtümern (1939), 106-109; M. R. Salzman, Sacred Time and Sacred Space (1999), 130-131; B. Caseau, La désacralisation des espaces (2001), 86.

held. This hostility led at times to attacks against statuary, whereas recorded attacks on temples themselves are very few. The Christian appropriation of the Caelestis temple at Carthage, notably targeted at the cult of the patron deity of the capital, fits in the context of Christian measures taken publicly against the pagan heritage at the beginning of the fifth century.

Nevertheless, recent scholarship has been concerned with the fact that the case of Caelestis may not be representative of the wider evidence of North African temple-church conversions. Anna Leone and Gareth Sears have both shown that urban development in late antique North Africa was marked by the increasing reuse of Roman structures for both private and public purposes from the fourth century onwards.[634] According to this view, temple conversions are just one dimension of this larger trend, initially caused by a need for more economical urban planning in the face of deteriorating state finances and material shortages, and motivated further by a civic desire to preserve the historic urban fabric while securing attractive sites within it. We can assume that these basic motivations also apply to church buildings within pre-existing urban structures, and may be furthermore considered sufficient as an explanation for temple-church conversions.[635] Both Leone and Sears, then, place the Christian reuse of temples within the context of urban change, rather than assuming a Christian polemic rhetoric of building directed against pagan cults to start with.

It needs to be added that temple-church conversions were not a particularly common phenomenon. Anna Leone has estimated that five percent of all known North African

[634] A. Leone, *Pagan city* (2013), 27-82; A. Leone, *Changing Townscapes* (2007), 208-213; G. Sears, The fate (2011); G. Sears, *African urbanism* (2007), 250-256.
[635] A. Leone, *Pagan city* (2013), 81-82; G. Sears, The fate (2011).

temples were converted into churches.[636] Temple abandonment occurred from the third century onwards, long before Christian hegemony in North Africa.[637] Many North African temples are assumed to have been left to fall into decay, whereas the dismantling of temples in order to recuperate building materials is only thought to have become a widespread practice during the Byzantine reconquest when materials were needed for fortifications.[638] Other temples were replaced by new constructions during the fourth century, to which the first reuses of temples also date.[639] Archaeological, epigraphic and textual sources suggest that the first reuses in North Africa served commercial or civic purposes, for instance as public meeting spaces.[640] Given that several laws from the late fourth and fifth centuries order that temple destructions and reuses be regulated by the state or by civic structures, the unofficial private use of temple spaces was likely perceived as a problem.[641]

What also becomes clear from Roman legislation is that governors were instructed to privilege the restoration of Roman structures over the construction of new buildings.[642] All in all, fifteen imperial edicts from 321 to 395 AD are concerned with securing the maintenance of the ancient urban fabric.[643] In 365 AD, Valentinian instructed Dracontius, vicar of Africa, to enforce the renovation of old buildings as a condition for the construction of new ones.[644] In 399 AD, another edict followed that interdicted

[636] A. Leone, *Pagan city* (2013), 65-66.
[637] G. Sears, The fate (2011), 237.
[638] A. Leone, *Pagan city* (2013), 29. Sears argues for an increased destruction in the Byzantine period G. Sears, The fate (2011), 229.
[639] A. Leone, *Pagan city* (2013), 61-66; G. Sears, The fate (2011), 239-243.
[640] A. Leone, *Pagan city* (2013), 62-65; G. Sears, The fate (2011), 242-243. A fourth-century reuse of a North African temple as official meeting space is most clearly stated in an inscription from Abthugni, published in C. Lepelley, *Les cités de l'Afrique Romaine au Bas-Empire* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1981), 265-267.
[641] G. Sears, The fate (2011), 239, 243-244.
[642] C. Lepelley, *l'Afrique Romaine* (1979), 59-65.
[643] Ibid., 63.
[644] C. Th. 15,1,15. This law is repeatedly enforced until 393 AD: ibid., 64, no 22.

temple destruction in the African provinces, unless they contained illicit objects, and commanded that their condition 'shall remain unimpaired'.[645] A law from 407/408 also specified that both city temples and rural temples should be vindicated for public use.[646] Theodosius II went a step further in 435 AD to ordain the prohibition of pagan cults once more and explicitly recommended the Christianization of the former temple spaces.[647] Overall, the legislative evidence draws a picture of North African cities under imperial pressure to preserve their architectural heritage, whether of former religious function or not, and to find new appropriate uses for it.

The aforementioned considerations are not exclusive to North Africa, and there is a strong trend in scholarship to see temple conversions dated to the later fifth or sixth centuries as rooted predominantly in pragmatic causes.[648] This branch of scholarship assumes that the temples' former religious purpose no longer had meaning for Christian reusers, and finds more generally the potential symbolical charge of such buildings subordinate to pragmatic considerations.[649] In other words, temples at the point of their conversion into churches are effectively understood to be secularized. This assumption also has repercussions for scholars' assessment of the wider symbolic value Christian users of the temple-churches ascribed to the Roman origin of the temples: the advocates of the 'secularism' thesis argue for the creation and existence of a non-religious realm in the late Roman Empire that served as a sphere for interaction across

[645] C. Th. 16,10,18 to Apollodorus, Proconsul of Africa, issued on 20 August 399.
[646] C. Th. 16,10,19.2 issued on 15 November 408; 407. For the dating see C. Pharr, The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmondian Constitutions (2001) 458, no. 96.
[647] C. Th. 15.10.25. For the dating of the law see R. P. C. H. Hanson, The transformation of pagan temples (1978), 262.
[648] See for instance ibid.; *J.-P. Caillet, La transformation en église* (1996); B. Caseau, *La désacralisation des espaces* (2001), 103-107.
[649] J.-M. Spieser, *La christianisation des sanctuaires païens en Grèce (1976)*, 320; B. Ward-Perkins, *Reconfiguring Sacred Space* (2003), 237; G. Sears, *African urbanism* (2007), 101; B. Caseau, La désacralisation des espaces (2001), 103

religious differences.[650] This view, however, presumes that religious differences caused irreconcilable divides in late antique societies. On that assumption, only by suppressing those religious differences did civic life become possible. This view leaves little space for the possibility that Christians were integrated in an environment still marked by Roman customs and institutions, not out of necessity, but of their own will. While to the secularist camp secularization appears appropriate and logical within the civic space as the means of making daily interaction possible, within the Christian realm it is seen as often counter-productive to the aims of the clergy. [651] In fact, secularization is considered out of place within the Christian realm, where it was not needed to make things work. The possibility that Roman culture and the Roman past could have been of inherent value to Christians as a religious group (rather than as particularly well-educated or superstitious individuals) has in consequence been little discussed.[652] The scholarly discourse on temple-church conversions follows the same logic by assuming that once a temple was secularized, it lost all symbolic value in the eyes of its Christian users, as if Christians, *per definitionem*, could not have differentiated between the different layers of cultural and religious significance that such a building held. To conclude, Roman legislation pushing for conservative urban planning occurred in the same period as the violations against pagan heritage in the African provinces. Situating the significance of temple-church conversions primarily in relation to Christian-pagan

[650] R. A. Markus, *The end* (1990), esp. 15, 119; C. Lepelley, *l'Afrique Romaine* (1979), 371-373 and C. Lepelley, *l'Afrique Romaine* (1981), 272-278. More recently B. Shaw, *Sacred Violence* (2011), 195-206; R. Miles, *The Anthologia Latina* (2005), 308; N. Belayche, *Des lieux pour le « profane » dans l'empire tardo-antique ? Les fêtes entre koinônia sociale et espaces de rivalités religieuses* (2007).

[651] For North Africa A. Merrills and R. Miles, *The Vandals* (2010), 89. Augustine is often taken as a measure for the anti-secularist tendencies in the North African church: P. Brown, *Authority and the sacred* (1995), 16-26; R. A. Markus, *The end* (1990), 117-123; R. A. Markus, *Christianity and the Secular* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 71-72.

[652] Alternatively, it has been outrightly dismissed. P. Brown, *Authority and the sacred* (1995), 24-26.

disputes thus cuts the reuse of temples off from the general trends of urban redevelopment. It also misrepresents the diversity of the patterns of transformation of Roman monumental structures, which involved periods of vacancies and profane reuses, potentially before religious repurposing happened. In turn, neglecting the religio-political implications of temple-church conversions does not do justice to their potential to offend a still existing pagan stratum of society, nor to their role in collective civic memory.

Beyond the paradigm of 'pragmatism' in the study of temple-church conversions

Datings of Christian temple reuses to the Byzantine period were first privileged in reaction to the often unfounded earlier fourth-century datings, placing the moment of conversion later and at a time of accelerated church building in the course of the Justinianic reconquest of North Africa.[653] As in the wider field of research, the more recent scholarship on North Africa tends to explain temple-church conversions in the Byzantine period by identifying pragmatic reasons for repurposing. The ready availability of the temple structures, their central locations within cities, the great difficulty of dismantling solidly built temples and the economic damage resulting from the temples' prolonged decay have all been brought forward.[654] This reorientation towards the pragmatic aspects of temple reuse more consciously accounts for the material circumstances of reuse than most earlier scholarship. Both material constraints and material opportunities were certainly key in the process of church planning, as in any other construction work, and their impact needs to be cautiously examined whenever a church building was integrated in an older structure, as it is very plausible that practical

[653] Overviews are given in G. Sears, *The fate* (2011), 249-253; A. Leone, *Pagan city* (2013), 68.
[654] A. Leone, *Changing Townscapes* (2007), 211; A. Leone, *Pagan city* (2013), 102. See also no. 649 in this chapter.

concerns played a role in the process. However, a strict concentration on practical concerns risks ignoring the simultaneous impact of Christian attitudes towards Roman heritage. Even where pragmatic reasons for a temple conversion were decisive, it is likely that Christians – exposed to the built environment of the Roman epoch by the sheer fact of living and acting within it – cared for the history and aesthetics of Roman buildings. Christian views on Roman culture can be expected to have shaped the ways in which temples were appropriated for Christian use. Symbolic dimensions to temple-churches and the acts of their conversions must therefore be factored in, even in those cases of reuse which have little to do with the triumphant gestures of spatial conquest evoked in early Christian writing.

Over the course of the last chapters I have established that in a range of Western Mediterranean baptisteries, visual representations evoking aspects of traditional Roman life were used to publicly demonstrate the affinity of Christian life with Roman culture. Rather than regarding such representations as reminiscent of pagan superstitions, I have argued, we should assume that Christians simultaneously appreciated the multivalence of associations and meanings attributable to them and their affiliation with Roman culture. This associative play involved both newly created imagery modelled after Roman examples and pre-existing Roman imagery integrated into the baptismal space. Is it possible that a similar mechanism was at work where the *cellae* of temples were transformed into baptisteries? In the former cases, images eliciting a wide array of associations, including some of a pagan nature, were selected to adorn a baptismal space. *Cella*-baptisteries, though, seem to be another matter altogether. In them, an entire space, presumably associated by Christians with pagan idol worship, gained a baptismal function. As a consequence, it has been deemed 'highly

unlikely' that North African temple-churches could have deliberately preserved 'the reminders of the pagan past out of purely antiquarian motives'.[655]

This statement shows that most treatments of the subject have operated on two basic assumptions which should both be put into question. The first ('reminders of the pagan past') is that Christians associated temples predominantly with paganism. The second ('out of purely antiquarian motives') is that the only mode in which Christians could have interacted with the classical heritage, besides attacking it for its previous use, would have been as connoisseurs demonstrating their cultural sophistication through familiarity with ancient art.

The first point needs careful nuancing. The material and written record certainly suggest that late antique Christians considered the temple, and the *cella* in particular, as polluted by paganism. Quodvultdeus's testimony shows that a member of the Christian clergy in c. 420 AD interpreted the dwelling place of the cult statue, i.e. the *cella*, as the pagan focal point within a temple. The well-attested North African violations of cult statues arguably took place in the same type of space.[656] According to the few extant sources, it seems that to eliminate the power of a pagan sanctuary, it was necessary for Christians to attack this part of a temple. Although we need to be wary of focusing excessively on the importance of the *cella* for Roman worshippers, this view should nevertheless be considered as a plausible interpretative framework for Christians of the period. While other parts of the temple might have been no less sacred for Roman worshippers, and are indeed likely to have suffered destruction as well, the silence of North African Christian sources about them makes it difficult to draw conclusions.

[655] G. Sears, *African urbanism* (2007), 19.
[656] See in this chapter 197.

Where *cellae* were reused as baptisteries – as spaces designed to house the initiation ceremony into Christianity that required abjuring all other belief – it is worth asking how consciously Christians, in practicing the baptismal rite, referred back to the former pagan significance of the space in which the ritual was held.

On the other hand, for late antique Christians the pagan past was by no means the only, and not even necessarily the dominant key for understanding the temples. Claude Lepelley has pointed out that already in 401 AD, when the church council of Carthage was consulted on the destruction of temples and idols, it argued for such destructions only in the cases of the remote temples the congregating bishops assumed were bare of ornament: 'Their temples shall be torn down entirely, which were constructed on the fields or remote places without any ornament.'[657] The obvious corollary is that the bishops did accept the preservation of pagan infrastructure on aesthetic grounds. In their decision, they followed one of the two arguments used by imperial law to justify the protection of temples in the fourth and fifth centuries: first, the artistic value of their architecture and sculpture made them worthy of protection, and second, their status as monuments 'of the ancient' or 'of the ancestral *patria*', i.e. their status as heritage.[658] Both the imperial legislation and the North African bishops dealt with the surviving temples, not only with respect to their function as former religious architecture, but also as works of art or heritage. These policies must have had particular implications for the preservation of elaborate city temples. The bishops' decision puts into perspective the

[657] Register of Carthage, canon 58: '[…] *templa eorum, quae in agris vel locis abditis constituta nullo ornamento sunt, iubeantur omnino destrui*', C. Munier, *Concilia Africae: a. 345-a. 525* (1974), 196. See also C. Lepelley, Le musée (1994), 6.

[658] C.Th. 15,1,37, issued January 1 398: '*nisi ornamentum genitalis patriae decreti huius auctoritate defenderint*'; Leges Novellae, Majorian, 4: '[…] *monumenta veterum* […]'. See C. Lepelley, *l'Afrique Romaine* (1979), 63-66; C. Lepelley, Le musée (1994), 6-9.

well-established opinion that temples converted into churches symbolized the *ecclesia triumphans*. The bishops' care for the ancient monuments suggests that at the roots of the Christian incorporation of the temples there could have been motivations other than the demonstration of Christian dominance.[659] Even though our evidence barely allows us to determine the sequence of events, it is crucial to be aware that the reasons and the *post factum* justifications for temple conversions might have differed from each other and from case to case.

As to the second point, the situation is no less complex in late antique North Africa. The idea that Christians would have been purely 'antiquarian' in their public approach towards temples seems implausible when we consider the critical state of Christian-pagan relations at the turn of the fifth century. Antiquarianism, a term used to explain Christian engagement with classical culture, while not strictly incorrect, is neither entirely adequate nor fully describes the motivations behind the public reuse of temples.[660] Strictly speaking, only objects stripped of all function other than the conscious contemplation of their historic and artistic value should be categorized as objects of antiquarian interest. Sculpture museums, assumed to have been created following the dismantling of temples, were indeed established in late antique North Africa and beyond.[661] Such a function has been suggested, for example, for an assemblage of statues of deities and temple inscriptions in the temenos, porticoes and

[659] G. Brands, Die spätantike Stadt und ihre Christianisierung (2003), 15-16.
[660] C. Lepelley, Le musée (1994); M. Milojevic, Retrofit ecclesia: A non-conformity building type (1997), 356. For a differentiated view on religious antiquarianism C. Machado, "Religion as antiquarianism: pagan dedications in late antique Rome", in: *Religious Dedications in the Greco-Roman World. Distribution, Typology, Use,* John P. Bodel and Mika Kajava (ed.) (Rome: Institutum Romanum Finladiae, 2009). For aspects of antiquarianism in late antique poetry and collecting J. Elsner and J. Hernández Lobato (eds.), *The poetics of late Latin literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017); L. M. Stirling, *The learned collector: mythological statuettes and classical taste in late antique Gaul* (2005).
[661] C. Lepelley, Le musée (1994), 10-12; A. Leone, *Pagan city* (2013), 169-176; G. Sears, The fate (2011), 244-245. See also B. Caseau, La désacralisation des espaces (2001), 110-112.

principal *cella* of the Apollo temple at Bulla Regia.[662] Another case in Caesarea Mauretaniae, today's Cherchell in Algeria, demonstrates particularly well how antiquarian interests were interwoven into the complex net of functions buildings and furnishings acquired through their repurposing. Along the walls of the Western bath at Caesarea, over fifty sculptures of different fabrications, predominately depicting divinities, were excavated in a series of niches. Rather than being purpose made for the baths, the sculptures appear to have had a second life there. It has been speculated that they were moved there from 'cleansed' temples. This suspicion is nourished by the fact that four pedestals inscribed '*translata de sordentibus locis*' ('transferred from sordid places') were also excavated at the bath.[663] If the bath was still in use at the time of the installation of deconsecrated cult statues, the case of Caesarea would be distinctly different from Bulla Regia's sculpture museum. In that case, the former cult objects would have been made part of a living tradition of decorating baths with classical sculpture.[664] Their integration would have modified significantly both the space and the sculpture itself: the bath of the west would have changed in outlook and character, while the statuary would have officially lost its devotional function. While both entities preserved some of their original functions (the bath remained a bath; the sculpture kept

[662] A. Merlin, *Le temple d'Apollon à Bulla Regia* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1908), 23; A. Beschaouch et al., *Les ruines de Bulla Regia* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1977); C. Lepelley, Le musée (1994), 12; A. Leone, *Pagan city* (2013), 182-183.

[663] S. Gsell, *Cherchel. Antique IOL-Caesarea* (Algiers: Service des antiquités, 1952), 110-116. For the inscriptions C. Lepelley, Le musée (1994), 10; C. Lepelley, "The survival and fall of the classical city in late Roman North Africa", in: *The City in late antiquity,* John Rich (ed.) (London: Routledge, 1992), 59.

[664] E. Brödner, *Die römischen Thermen und das antike Badewesen. Eine kulturhistorische Betrachtung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1983), 132-133. Sculpture translations to baths are attested also in other North African baths: A. Lézine, *Architecture Romaine d'Afrique* (Tunis: Presses Universitaires de France, 1953), 116. The most famous parallel in the East are the 81 antique statues gathered in the bath of Zeuxippos in Constantinople by the late fifth century. See A. Kaldellis, "Christodoros on the Statues of the Zeuxippos Baths: A New Reading of the Ekphrasis", in: *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies 47* (2007). For the reuse and display of classical and late antique sculpture in late antiquity T. M. Kristensen and L. M. Stirling, *The afterlife of Greek and Roman sculpture: late antique responses and practices* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016); M. Bergmann, *Chiragan, Aphrodisias, Konstantinopel: zur mythologischen Skulptur der Spätantike* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1999).

its artistic value), their recombination also created something new – a museum-bath with sculptures of decorative and artistic significance. Such public reuse should not be labelled as pure antiquarianism. Rather, it was an act of creative assemblage, motivated as much by practical as by antiquarian considerations, both conservation and reinvention.

Though legally motivated by the wish to preserve the Roman urban fabric, the Christian reuse of temples is non-antiquarian in a comparable way. As I have shown above, temple reuse is one of the many facets of the conservative building policy in North Africa which often favoured the repurposing of monumental heritage over its abandonment.[665] This means that temples and sculptures continued to serve public functions and thus became imbued with new layers of meaning. While now disentangled from their former religious use, reused temples still raised memories of, and as time went on, associations with, their former use and significance. Instead of seeing in them 'reminders of the pagan past' exclusively, we should keep in mind the suggestive power of their multivalence and complexity, which grew with each new function and designation. For the fifth and sixth centuries when most temple-church conversions appear to have happened, we must therefore be open to the possibility that temples had become representative of much more than paganism. Did the Christian patrons and users of the *cella*-baptisteries of Thuburbo Maius, Sufetula and Jebel Oust also value them as representative of Roman antiquity?

[665] A. Leone, *Changing Townscapes* (2007), 208-213; A. Leone, *Pagan city* (2013), 27-82; G. Sears, *African urbanism* (2007), 250-256. A case study on conservative urban planning in the fifth and sixth centuries is offered in T. W. Potter, *Towns in Late Antiquity: IOL Caesarea and its contexts* (Sheffield: Ian Sanders Memorial Committee, 1995).

To find tentative answers to this question, I propose to depart from the scholarly tradition of discussing the motivations for temple conversion at the time of the conversion per se (which is often futile since we cannot date them reliably). In the absence of any textual sources, the only information that can help us reconstruct in a very limited way how the *cella*-baptisteries would have been perceived by contemporaries is provided by the built frames within and outside the churches in which the baptisteries operated. We need to take into account the little that we know about the social, cultural and religious conditions of the sites of the *cella*-baptisteries if we want to argue plausibly for or against any symbolic charge they might have carried.[666] Of course, the environment of the *cella*-baptisteries was in constant flux over the course of the fifth and sixth centuries – a fact that deserves attention. The circumstances in which the baptismal practice unfolded in a former temple *cella* changed over time, both in relation to developments within the church and its community and to those outside, in the civic or rural sphere in which it was located. In the following, I will focus on two dimensions which I will argue were important for the construction and, to a less clear extent, perception of the *cella*-baptisteries: 1) the longevity of the classical Roman city, its institutions and the impact these had on the Roman civic identity of its inhabitants in Thuburbo Maius and Sufetula, and 2) the importance of a pre-Christian spring cult for the religious site of Jebel Oust from imperial times to the fifth century.

Roman civic identity in Thuburbo Maius and Sufetula

All three temple-churches I discuss in the following sections display the same curious feature: each contains a baptismal font inserted into the inner sanctuary of the temple. Noël Duval published an article on these converted temples in 1973 in which he offered

[666] Cf. B. Ward-Perkins, Reconfiguring Sacred Space (2003), 286.

a typology of the temples.[667] In comparison to the classical temple, located on a podium with a frontal staircase and a tetrastyle façade (like the temple converted into a church at Tipasa), the temple-churches of Thuburbo Maius, Sufetula and Jebel Oust all conform to the North African type of the *temple à cour* (fig. 142).[668] The layout of a *temple à cour* comprises a peristyle adorned with a porticoed façade, placed directly on ground level, which leads towards a *cella* of medium size in relation to the courtyard. In Thuburbo Maius (fig. 143) and Sufetula (fig. 144) the church was built inside the peristyle, while at Jebel Oust, to which I will return later, it was attached to one of the porticoes. The relatively small size and squareness of the *cellae* made them particularly suitable for their new baptismal purpose. Yet, neither Christian temple conversions, nor the baptismal facilities within them, were contingent upon the existence of a *cella* of the *temple à cour*-type. Among all the attested North African temple-churches, only one other church, the basilica of Rutilus at Mactar, reused a *temple à cour*; in this case none of its three *cellae* seem to have been included in the church building.[669] Many other African *temples à cour* do not show any evidence of Christian repurposing.[670] If we dig a little deeper, more commonalities between Sufetula, Jebel Oust and Thuburbo Maius surface which offer further interpretative lenses for examining the baptismal reuse of the *cellae*. Very importantly, Thuburbo Maius and Sufetula share, besides continuous habitation until at least the early Middle Ages, a consistent use of the classical city centre around the forum, whereas the site of Jebel Oust, to which I will return later, had seen

[667] N. Duval, Église et temple (1971).
[668] Ibid., 295, on Tipasa specifically 292-295.
[669] Duval suggests the series of annexes in the south-east as a potential location for a baptismal font: N. Duval, "Une hypothèse sur la basilique de Rutilius à Mactar et le temple qui l'a précédée", in: *Revue d'Études Augustiniennes et Patristiques 31* (1985), 37-45, esp. 44.
[670] For *temples à cour* in Christian and non-Christian contexts see ibid., 36-37; A. Lézine, *Architecture Romaine d'Afrique* (1953), 100; M. Leglay, *Saturne Africain. Histoire* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1966), 275-283.

a remarkable period of continuous religious use.[671] Sufetula and Thuburbo Maius are exemplary in North Africa for the longevity of their classical urban fabric. While both cities underwent processes of slow modification that would have made the sixth-century panorama almost unrecognizable to the fourth-century citizen, essential Roman amenities were maintained or even constructed in the face of political instability and change.[672] In contrast to other North African post-Roman cities where newly built Christian districts shifted away from the Roman urban cores, as at Djémila or Timgad, Sufetula's Christian infrastructure was integrated into the forum district.[673] The continuous use, refurbishing and preservation of the Roman urban fabric cultivated (as much as it was caused by) a positive image of the cultural achievements of the classical city.[674] As cities gradually lost what had been their relative autonomy as centres of tax collection and redistribution, the upkeep of institutions central to traditional civic life, most notably baths, was certainly an expression of the importance that Roman institutions continued to have for civic identity.[675] An inscription from Aïn-Djelloula, the ancient Cululis in Byzacena, powerfully illustrates how civic Roman values were associated with the upkeep and restoration of built heritage. Written by a Byzantine official between 539-54 AD after the defeat of a Moorish invasion, the inscription

[671] For Thuburbo Maius R. Bockmann, *Capital continuous* (2013), 150. For Sufetula C. Fenwick, "From Africa to Ifrīqiya: Settlement and society in early medieval North Africa (650-800)", in: *Al-Masaq: Journal of the Medieval Mediterranean 25* (2013); F. Béjaoui, "Nouvelles données archéologiques à Sbeïtla", in: *Africa 14* (1996).

[672] R. Bockmann, *Capital continuous* (2013), 156-161 and 229; A. Leone, *Changing Townscapes* (2007), 140-147; G. Sears, *African urbanism* (2007), 47-55.

[673] C. Fenwick, From Africa to Ifrīqiya (2013), 21-23.

[674] G. Sears, *African urbanism* (2007), 78-83; C. Lepelley, The survival and fall of the classical city (1992), esp. 70.

[675] P. v. Rummel, The Transformation of Ancient Land- and Cityscapes (2016), 110-111. On the limitations of reconstructing civic identity at the period of great urban transitions see C. Witschel, "Die spätantiken Städte Galliens: Transformationen von Stadtbildern als Ausdruck einer gewandelten Identität?", in: *Gallien in Spätantike und Frühmittelalter. Kulturgeschichte einer Region,* Steffen Diefenbach and Gernot Michael Müller (ed.) (Berlin, Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2013). For the maintenance and construction of baths in fourth- and fifth-century North Africa G. Sears, *African urbanism* (2007), 86-88.

declares that the town's restoration would re-establish 'census, stability, citizens, law, walls and lists of magistrates' ('*censuram, statum, ciues, ius, moenia, fastus*').[676]

Let us take a closer look at the two temple-churches of Thuburbo and Sufetula within their urban settings. What do we know about the self-conception of the cities' inhabitants in the post-Roman phase of the cities, and could this have affected the construction or perception of the *cella*-baptisteries?

1. Thuburbo Maius and its temple-church

In Thuburbo Maius, fifth-century Christians lived in a modest but thriving *colonia*. Parts of the city's centre underwent substantial renovation efforts, whereas other central and peripheral areas were repurposed by private occupants, so that Thuburbo continued to exist in its usual dimensions (fig. 145).[677] Located c. 65 km southeast of Carthage in Africa Proconsularis, in the fertile Oued Milian valley, the city had been a site of settlement from the fifth century BC. While most of the public buildings were, as so often in North Africa, constructed in the course of the second century, other, significantly older buildings also dotted the city.[678] Substantial fifth- and sixth-century modifications to the decoration of a number of large houses, as well as the fifth-century

[676] *Fastus* here assumedly implies that magistracies were revived. C. Lepelley, The survival and fall of the classical city (1992), 68. On the site see D. Pringle, *The defence of Byzantine Africa from Justinian to the Arab conquest: an account of the military history and archaeology of the African provinces in the sixth and seventh centuries* (Oxford: B.A.R, 1981), 196-197.

[677] For the urban development of Thuburbo Maius see R. Bockmann, *Capital continuous* (2013), 151-162; G. Sears, *African urbanism* (2007), 47-50; A. Leone, *Changing Townscapes* (2007), 140-147; A. Ben Abed, "L'Afrique au Ve siècle à l'époque vandale: Nouvelles données de l'archéologie", in: *Carthage: L'histoire, sa trace, son écho. Catalogue de l'exposition au Musée du Petit Palais,* (ed.) (Paris: Paris-Musées, 1995), 310-313; L. Maurin, "Thuburbo Majus et la paix vandale", in: *Les Cahiers de Tunisie XV* (1967); A. Merlin, "L'histoire municipale de Thuburbo Majus", in: *Cinquième Congrès international d'archéologie (Alger, 14-16 avril 1930),* Société Historique Algérienne (ed.) (Algiers: Société Historique Algérienne, 1933). African cities kept their old titles in late Roman times even though they had become meaningless in the course of the third century. See C. Lepelley, *The survival and fall of the classical city* (1992), 60.

[678] For the Punic *naos* of Thuburbo Maius A. Lézine, *Architecture punique: recueil de documents* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1959), 7-26.

construction of the *maison du cratère*, testify to the economic power of the local elite at a comparatively late date.[679] The city profited from euergetism on a large scale.[680] Thanks to the sponsoring of refurbishments and rebuilding, the summer and winter baths were in continuous use throughout the fifth and first half of the sixth centuries, whereas the *bains du labyrinth* were abandoned by the early fifth century. The *frigidarium* of the *bain des étoiles*, moreover, received an outstandingly luxurious ceiling decoration and marble incrustation in the late fifth or early sixth century.[681] Beyond these efforts of restoration, domestic and public spaces were also amply refunctioned. Parts of the *maison de Neptune* were parcelled up, and the existence of a large number of oil presses, dispersed in close vicinity to the forum, shows that the forum area was transformed into an industrial and potentially commercial centre at a late date.[682] Oil presses were found in the basement of the Capitol, in the small temple, and in the winter bath; the latter find suggests a relatively late date of reuse as the bath was maintained until the first half of the sixth century.[683]

To a remarkable extent, fifth-century Thuburbo Maius appears to have been attached to its religious heritage. Both the excavations of the winter and summer baths brought to light, besides epigraphy of diverse subject matters (some religious in nature, like a small altar dedicated to Caelestis), sizable quantities of marble sculptures as well as terracotta statues and masks, all showing sacred subject matters (summer bath: 15,

[679] A. Leone, *Changing Townscapes* (2007), 146; R. Bockmann, *Capital continuous* (2013), 159-161, on the *maison du cratère* esp. 161.
[680] C. Lepelley, *l'Afrique Romaine* (1981), 199-202.
[681] On the baths of Thuburbo see R. Bockmann, *Capital continuous* (2013), 156-159; A. Leone, *Changing Townscapes* (2007), 140-143.
[682] L. Maurin, *Thuburbo Majus et la paix vandale* (1967), 238-249; R. Bockmann, *Capital continuous* (2013), 143.
[683] L. Maurin, *Thuburbo Majus et la paix vandale* (1967), 238, no. 70.

winter bath: 7).[684] It seems reasonable to assume that the sculptures, like those in the Western bath of Cherchell, had been reassembled from the sanctuaries of the city to embellish the renovated baths.[685] At least one inscription supports the hypothesis that temple sculpture found its way to the baths while they were still operating: it derives apparently from a temple context and prohibits trespassing into a chapel reserved for Aesculapius, but was reused as a threshold in the summer bath.[686]

A little-known excavation has further demonstrated that Aesculapius continued to play an active role in the life of the city even in the fifth and arguably the sixth century. At the end of an extensive research project that excavated and catalogued Thuburbo's mosaics, a building that has been plausibly identified as an *asclepeion* was discovered immediately behind the apses of the *oecus* of the *maison du char de Venus* in the far west of the city (figs. 145, 146).[687] The curative space apparently continued to function until the early fifth century, but was refurbished in parts at an even later date in the sixth century. The newly discovered mosaic pavement of the building revealed a depiction of an agonistic crown bearing the label 'ASCLEPIA' (fig. 147): the name for the

[684] A. Merlin, "Séance de la commission de l'Afrique du Nord", in: *Bulletin archéologique du comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques* (1915), CXXX-CXL, on the altar of Caelestis see CXXXI ; A. Merlin, "Séance de la commission de l'Afrique du Nord", in: *Bulletin archéologique du comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques* (1916), CXL-CXLIII ; A. Merlin, "Séance de la commission de l'Afrique du Nord", in: *Bulletin archéologique du comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques* (1917), CXLIII-CXLIV. See also A. Lézine, *Thuburbo Majus* (1968), pl. XI.

[685] Cf. L. Maurin, Thuburbo Majus et la paix vandale (1967), 236.

[686] A. Merlin, Séance de la commission de l'Afrique du Nord (1916), CXL-CXLI.

[687] A. Ben Abed-Ben Khader, "Un nouvel édifice des Asclepia en Afrique à Thuburbo Majus", in: *La mosaique Gréco-Romaine* Mongi Ennaifer and Alain Rebourg (ed.) (Tunis: Institut National du Patrimoine, 1999); A. Ben Abed-Ben Khader and M. Bonifay, "La céramique de l'édifice des Asclepeia à Thuburbo Majus", in: *Antiquités Africaines 34* (1998); A. Ben Abed, L'Afrique au Ve siècle à l'époque vandale: Nouvelles données de l'archéologie (1995), 310-312. On the *maison du char de Venus* A. Ben Abed-Ben Khader, "Thuburbo Majus: les mosaïques dans la région ouest ", in: *Corpus des Mosaiques de Tunisie,* (ed.) (Tunis: Institut National d'Archéologie et d'Art, 1985)Corpus des Mosaiques de Tunisie, 61.

games celebrated in honour of the god Aesculapius.[688] The excavation further revealed four inscriptions dedicated to Aesculapius Augustus and dated to the second and third centuries in two of the rooms of the heavily subdivided building.[689] The find of numerous clay lamps, some of which are datable to the late fourth or early fifth century, suggests that the *asclepeion* was in active use around the time and possibly after the official prohibition of paganism in 391 AD.[690] Varied other ceramics of the later fifth and sixth centuries have also been excavated.[691] Further nourishing the possibility that the antique healing method could have had an afterlife of some sort in Christian times, the excavator has also pointed to one of the mosaic floor patterns of the *asclepeion* (fig. 148), which has an almost identical equivalent in the *bain des étoiles* (fig. 149).[692] This mosaic pavement belongs to the last phase of the refurbishments of the bath, dated to the first half of the sixth century, and is seemingly more or less contemporary with the *asclepeion* mosaic.[693] The continuous occupation of the space raises the question whether the building still retained some of its original function at so late a date.

The Christian population of Thuburbo evidently lived in a city that cared for many of its Roman institutions well into the fifth and sixth centuries. While the city centre was slowly transformed into an industrial and possibly commercial area, civic core institutions like the city's baths and to a notable extent the city's pre-Christian religious

[688] A. Ben Abed-Ben Khader, Un nouvel édifice des Asclepia (1999), 322. For a North African comparison N. Duval, Les prix de concours de l'Antiquité tardive: nouveautés, hypothèses et doutes (2011), 250-253. On agonistic crowns more generally N. Duval, Les prix du cirque dans l'antiquité tardive (1990).
[689] A. Ben Abed-Ben Khader, Un nouvel édifice des Asclepia (1999), 324-325.
[690] A. Ben Abed-Ben Khader and M. Bonifay, La céramique de l'édifice des Asclepeia à Thuburbo Majus (1998), 233.
[691] Ibid., 234.
[692] A. Ben Abed-Ben Khader, Un nouvel édifice des Asclepia (1999), 325-326.
[693] M. A. Alexander and M. Ennaifer, "Thuburbo Majus: les mosaïques dans la région est", in: *Corpus des mosaïques de Tunisie,* (ed.) (Tunis: Institut National d'Archéologie et d'Art, 1994)Corpus des mosaïques de Tunisie, 35, no. 372A, see also 19.

heritage were maintained with much effort and used in new ways. Given the relative wealth of fifth-century Thuburbo, it is all the more surprising that only one church – the temple-church – is known to date. The 411 AD council at Carthage provides us with evidence of both a Donatist bishop Rufinus and a Nicene bishop Cyprianus, while in 484 AD, only the Nicene bishop Benenatus attended the council.[694] The existence of both a Donatist and a Nicene community makes it likely that there were at least two churches in place at some point in the fifth century. The literature, indeed, often refers to a second temple-church at Thuburbo, but the sparsity of the excavation records on Thuburbo has left room for confusion in this matter. In fact, two separate incidents of temple conversions have been suggested, yet no good evidence has been provided for either. At the extreme north-east of the court of the so-called Caelestis temple, a rectangular apse with a basement underneath was once identified as the remains of a church building on top of the destroyed temple (fig. 145).[695] This identification was soon challenged as too hypothetical.[696] Furthermore, scholars have also explained the existence of an apse attached to the *cella* of the temple of Saturn in the south of the city (fig. 145) as the product of a Christian conversion, although any further evidence for such a conversion is missing.[697]

[694] A Christian community is attested in Thuburbo since 258 AD when Thuburbo's bishop participated in the council at Carthage. R. Bockmann, *Capital continuous* (2013), 150; A. Leone, *Changing Townscapes* (2007), 141, 143.
[695] A. Lézine, *Thuburbo Majus* (1968), 23-24. The supposed church is mentioned first in L. Poinssot, "Trois inscriptions de Thuburbo Majus", in: *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Academie des inscriptions et Belles-Lettres 5* (1915) and again by A. Merlin, Séance de la commission de l'Afrique du Nord (1916), CXLI without providing any further reasons for this identification. For a plan see A. Ben Abed-Ben Khader et al., *Thuburbo Majus. Les mosaïques de la région des grands thermes* (1985b), pl. 9 as well as 47 no. 1 for a literature review.
[696] A. Merlin, L'histoire municipale de Thuburbo Majus (1933), 223; A. Lézine, *Thuburbo Majus* (1968), 25.
[697] A. Lézine, *Thuburbo Majus* (1968), 27-28; A. Leone, *Pagan city* (2013), 71.

The one securely identified temple-church is situated about 200 m southeast of the forum (T6) (fig. 145), thus roughly in the centre of ancient Thuburbo, fronting an open space (fig. 142). The construction date of the *temple à cour* is as much a matter of speculation as its dedication.[698] An inscription regarding a restoration under the reign of Commodus found in the church – if not an example of *spolia* – would place the temple's construction before the second half of the second century.[699] A suggested dedication to the deity of agriculture Cereres tends to be dismissed, as it is based on finds of a few *spolia* possibly belonging to a Cereres sanctuary in the temple space and its vicinity, among other inscriptions mentioning Saturn, Diana and other gods, which could have been transported from elsewhere.[700] In the temple's vicinity to the north, remains of a monument of concave shape and a colonnade in the north-east, placed opposite the original main courtyard entrance of the temple, have been preserved, as well as what was possibly a sort of gate in the south-east (fig. 142).[701] The date of the temple's conversion into a church cannot be narrowed down further than to pre-Vandal or Vandal times, as will be discussed below.[702]

The modestly sized church is fitted in the temple court, reversing the temple's orientation by 180°, thus allowing for a north-eastern orientation (fig. 150).[703] The

[698] R. Bockmann, *Capital continuous* (2013), 151; N. Duval, Église et temple (1971), 280.
[699] A. Lézine, *Thuburbo Majus* (1968), 27-28. Further now lost inscriptions testifying a renovation are documented in A. Merlin, "Séance de la commission de l'Afrique du Nord", in: *Bulletin archéologique du comité des traveaux historiques et scientifiques* (1912), CCLXXVI.
[700] The most detailed argument for the Cereres dedication is offered by A. Lézine, *Architecture Romaine d'Afrique* (1953), 112-117; A. Lézine, *Thuburbo Majus* (1968), 27-28.
[701] R. Bockmann, *Capital continuous* (2013), 152; for a careful description of the antique temple and its surroundings see A. Merlin, Séance de la commission de l'Afrique du Nord (1912), CCLXXIV-CCLXXV.
[702] The temple-church conversion has been predominantly dated to the fourth or early fifth century. See G. Sears, The fate (2011), 206, 211; R. Bockmann, *Capital continuous* (2013), 156; N. Duval, Église et temple (1971), 290. Stylistic and epigraphic characteristics of the mosaic floor initially suggested a Byzantine construction date: A. Merlin, Séance de la commission de l'Afrique du Nord (1912), CCLXXXIV.
[703] For the most updated descriptions see R. Bockmann, *Capital continuous* (2013), 151-156; The church is in its largest dimensions 23,15 m x 14,45 m: F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, *Tunisie* (2014), 158-160, esp.158.

three-aisled church occupies about half of the temenos, leaving the southern portico in place and relocating columns of the western portico to demarcate the northern aisle (fig. 151). An apse was inserted into the former portico façade, whereas the central courtyard entrance of the temple was blocked off. An entrance to the temple in the south (1), however, continued to be used, now leading into the side aisle (fig. 150).[704] It might have been the new main entrance, but because the entrance in the west (2) remains unclear due to lack of excavation, this is difficult to determine. The remaining half of the temenos was equally accessible via a lateral entrance through the portico façade (fig. 143) and gave way to the preserved colonnade and the courtyard which together housed a total of ten graves.[705]

The *cella*, now transformed into a baptistery (3), received two new doors carved into its south wall (4), still demarcated by thresholds (fig. 152). The original entrance from the west (5) faced the separating wall between church and courtyard and was apparently blocked towards the side of the courtyard (figs. 143, 150). However, the western entrance (5) does not seem to have been blocked entirely as a column shaft located in the western entrance indicates an opening, accessible from the northern aisle (fig. 152).[706] Near this original entrance (5), a now lost mosaic depicted an arcade of nine arches supported by columns. The arcade framed nine medallions with crosses in their centres; the arches were interspersed with floral motifs.[707] Mosaic decorations with comparable representations of colonnades have been found in both domestic and

[704] F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, *Tunisie* (2014), 158.
[705] R. Bockmann, *Capital continuous* (2013), 153.
[706] N. Duval, Église et temple (1971), 286 assumes that this entrance was blocked entirely. R. Bockmann, *Capital continuous* (2013), 153 points to the column suggesting an open entrance solution.
[707] N. Duval, Église et temple (1971), 286; A. Merlin, Séance de la commission de l'Afrique du Nord (1912), CCLXXIX ; A. Ben Abed-Ben Khader et al., *Thuburbo Majus. Les mosaïques de la région des grands thermes* (1985b), 60.

religious North African architecture, for instance in the baptistery at Skhira (fig. 165), the counter-apse of Orléansville and in a villa at Nabeul.[708] Centrally placed in the nearly square *cella* of 6 m length on each side is the round baptismal font 1.20 m deep and 1.10 m in diameter. Four flights of stairs of four steps each gave access to the font, forming a cross (fig. 153).[709] It has been debated whether the apsidal niche of the *cella* belongs to the original temple structure, like in Jebel Oust, or to the Christian refurbishments.[710] The likely location of the temple's cult statue arguably became the seating area of the bishop during baptismal ceremonies.[711]

The double entrance in the south of the *cella* (4) leads to a flight of rooms added in the phase of Christian reuse that connects the baptistery with the narthex of the church (fig. 150). In this area, there were troughs (fig. 154), which seem to have served charitable purposes in North African churches; the room preceding the narthex hosted two tombs, positioned prominently within a set of six columns (figs. 150, 154).[712]

Taking everything into account, the temple-church's layout differed considerably from that of the temple. Christian users were re-orientated in terms of how they entered and walked through the new church. The 180° change in orientation, the division of the courtyard and the insertion of an apse must have altered the perspective onto the complex significantly.[713] Interior furnishings, like a synthronos in the apse and mosaic

[708] Ibid., 286.
[709] F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, *Tunisie* (2014), 159.
[710] A. Lézine, *Architecture Romaine d'Afrique* (1953), 118 attributes the niche to the Christian phase, challenged by N. Duval, Église et temple (1971), 289. For Jebel Oust A. Ben Abed et al., "Jebel Oust", in: *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome 117* (2005), 411.
[711] See for a comparable setting in Djémila N. Duval, Église et temple (1971), 289.
[712] For the through monuments see R. Bockmann, *Capital continuous* (2013), 153.
[713] The reversion of orientation is a common phenomenon of temple conversions. J. Vaes, Christliche Wiederverwendung antiker Bauten (1984-1986), 330.

flooring, further altered the former temple's appearance.[714] Other elements demonstrated continuity with the temple building. The remaining half of the courtyard (fig. 143) seems to have been barely altered, and while a part of the columns was relocated, much of the temple fabric – such as the blueish-white columns contrasting vividly with the brown-yellowish stone of the outer temple walls (fig. 152) – was preserved. In a similar way, the *cella*-baptistery was demonstrably altered. It retained its former dimensions, presumably including the (now repurposed) cult niche. However, it lost its formerly solitary position through the addition of the rooms joined to the south. The original access adorned with a column (5), moreover, was apparently not given up, yet was accompanied by a new bipartite entrance (4).

As far as we can tell, the temple-church was in constant use throughout the fifth and sixth centuries.[715] Without any clear indication of when it was converted, there is little point in speculating about the identity of the patrons. There is, however, some information about its fifth- or sixth-century users. Two burials, interpreted as burials of Vandal notables, should serve us as evidence of the presence of Vandals among the temple-church community. An epitaph belonging to a tomb located in a very privileged position in front of the choir (6), next to the columns of the seventh traverse (fig. 150), records the deceased's name as Arifridos, a name of clearly Germanic origin.[716] The rich grave goods of Arifridos, who was interred in his official garments, out of keeping with

[714] For the synthronos, dated to the Byzantine period, F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, *Tunisie* (2014), 160. For the dating of the mosaic fragments to the Vandal and Byzantine periods cf. A. Ben Abed-Ben Khader et al., *Thuburbo Majus. Les mosaïques de la région des grands thermes* (1985b), 55-60; A. Merlin, Séance de la commission de l'Afrique du Nord (1912), CCLXXVIII-CCLXXIX.

[715] F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, *Tunisie* (2014), 160 fixates the abandonment in the seventh century. For datings of the Christian furnishings see in this chapter no. 716.

[716] An overview of Arifridos's burial is offered in R. Bockmann, *Capital continuous* (2013), 154. See also A. Merrills and R. Miles, *The Vandals* (2010), 83-86. On Arfridos's name N. Francovich Onesti, *I Vandali: lingua e storia* (Rome: Carocci, 2002), 148.

the North African custom of the time, are the object of an ongoing debate about the extent to which cloths and metalwork traditionally ascribed to the Vandals offer any certainty about the ethnicity of the buried.[717] Against the traditional interpretation of Afridos's opulent costume, which includes shoe buckles, a gold-buckled and ornamented belt, and agate brooches probably used to fasten a cloak, as Vandal, most details have been recently identified as typical for late Roman government officials as markers of social status rather than ethnic identity.[718] As, however, the name Arifridos and the particular burial practice still suggest a Germanic background, the lavishly dressed deceased in this case likely belonged to the Vandal aristocracy. A second burial (7), of a woman, exhibits similar features in terms of dress and expensive jewelry, some of which is largely accepted to be of Germanic style.[719] The burial is located between the set of columns in the western room that connects the baptistery and narthex, in a direct sightline with the apse (fig. 150). The interment of a Vandal notable seems hence not to be an isolated case in the temple-church. The woman's tomb even shaped in a fundamental way a significant space in the church, which had no other evident purpose than to give public access and draw attention to the two tombs. The presence of the two tombs is not proof that the temple-church belonged to an Arian denomination, since the notables could have theoretically converted or their burials been placed in a Nicene

[717] For a scrutinizing reassessment see P. v. Rummel, "Les Vandals ont-ils porté en Afrique un vetement specifique?", in: *La Méditerranée et le monde mérovingien: témoins archéologiques,* Xavier Delestre (ed.) (Aix-en-Provence: Editions de l'Association Provence Archéologie, 2005).

[718] The traditional position is held by G. G. Koenig, "Wandalische Grabfunde des 5. und 6. Jhs.", in: *Madrider Mittelungen 22* (1981), esp. 323. See also J. Kleeman, "Quelques réflexions sur l'interpretation ethnique des sépultures habillées considerées comme Vandales", in: *Antiquité Tardive 10* (2002). This position was criticized in D. Quast, "Cloisonnierte Scheibenfiebeln aus Achnim-Panopolis (Ägypten)", in: *Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt 29* (1999), esp. 116. On the question of ethnic Germanic identity expressed through dress see P. v. Rummel, Les Vandals ont-ils porté en Afrique un vetement specifique? (2005).

[719] This jewelry is integrated in the wider debate on Vandal ethnicity in P. v. Rummel, Les Vandals ont-ils porté en Afrique un vetement specifique? (2005), 287.

church. Yet, there is a clear possibility that the church was Arian by the fifth century. This is a factor that must be taken into account in the discussion of the Christian significance of the *cella*-baptistery further below.

2. Sufetula and its temple-church

Sufetula, situated on the high plains south of the mountains of the Dorsal in ancient Byzacena, today central Tunisia, profited throughout late antiquity and the early Middle Ages from its fertile hinterlands as a producer of grain and olives. The ninth-century Egyptian historian Ibn ‘Abd al-Hakam recounts how the city, thanks to the wealth it generated through agriculture, was able to pay an enormous ransom to its Arab conquerors in 647 AD after the renegade Byzantine exarch Gregory’s reported defeat there.[720] The recording of the story suggests that it was plausible to Ibn ‘Abd al-Hakam, writing about two centuries after the event, that Sufetula had been a wealthy city until at least late Byzantine times. Excavation work undertaken at Sufetula in the 1990s demonstrated that Sufetula’s city centre continued to be inhabited and agriculture persisted until at least the ninth century.[721] Not unlike Thuburbo Maius, Sufetula’s centre evolved over the fifth and sixth centuries around the city’s forum, which probably hosted a Capitol (fig. 155).[722] Numerous church constructions in its vicinity demonstrate that in Christian Sufetula the religious centre was almost congruent with the forum district, although several churches hosting martyrs’ burials extended the Christian presence to the periphery (fig. 155).[723] The city’s former reputation as a ‘paradigmatic

[720] A. Gateau, *Ibn 'Abd al-Hakam. Conquête de l’Afrique du Nord et de l’Espagne* (Algiers: Éditions Carbonel, 1942), 46-49. See A. Mrabret, "L'état économique de l'Afrique byzantine d'après les récits des chroniqueurs arabes", in: *Africa 13* (1995), 124; C. Fenwick, From Africa to Ifrīqiya (2013), 19-20.
[721] F. Béjaoui, Nouvelles données (1996). See also C. Fenwick, From Africa to Ifrīqiya (2013); D. Pringle, *The defence of Byzantine Africa* (1981), 284-285.
[722] G. Sears, *African urbanism* (2007), 52.
[723] For churches in the periphery F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, *Tunisie* (2014), 398-404 and 407-408; F. Béjaoui, "Une nouvelle église de la région de Sufetula (Sbeïtla): Ksar El Guellal", in: *Africa 16* (1998); N. Duval,

example of urban fragmentation' has in the last decades been challenged, as the excavations in the 1990s showed that the urban core was more densely and consistently inhabited in the Vandal and Byzantine period (and beyond) than previous excavations had permitted scholars to understand.[724] Sufetula's archaeology reveals a late antique city that held its urban Roman core in high esteem, integrating it into the Christian city, or rather anchoring the Christian infrastructure in the Roman cityscape.[725]

This does not mean, however, that we should imagine post-Roman Sufetula's building policy as straightforwardly conservative and non-dynamic; the contrary is true. Preserving the urban fabric certainly involved adapting it to the exigencies and customs of post-Roman urban life which were so pronouncedly different from those of the Roman past. From the fourth century onwards, Sufetula underwent expansion and constant restructuring, until the Byzantine city presented a dramatically changed urban image; in this it bears much resemblance to the development at Vandal Thuburbo Maius.[726] The *municipium*, whose foundations were probably built in the Roman period and likely preceded the earliest dated inscription of 139 AD found on the forum gate dedicated to Antoninus Pius by some time, experienced a significant embellishment of the public sphere in the course of the fourth century.[727] A series of inscriptions attests to restorations and new constructions in the theatre, in one of the baths of the city and

"L'église V (des Saints-Gervais-Protais-et-Tryphon) à Sbeitla (Sufetula), Tunisie. [Recherches 1954-1963]", in: *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome. Antiquité 111* (1999).

[724] C. Fenwick, From Africa to Ifrīqiya (2013), 22.

[725] On the question of survival of the city's municipal institutions in the fourth century and beyond see G. Sears, *African urbanism* (2007), 53.

[726] A. Leone, *Changing Townscapes* (2007), 182-185; G. Sears, *African urbanism* (2007), 52-55; N. Duval, "Observations sur l'urbanisme tardive de Sufetula (Tunisie)", in: *Les Cahiers de Tunisie 12* (1964); N. Duval, "L'urbanisme de Sufetula = Sbeitla en Tunisie", in: *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung,* Wolfgang Haase and Hildegard Temporini (ed.) (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1982); C. Fenwick, From Africa to Ifrīqiya (2013), 21-23.

[727] R. Bockmann, *Capital continuous* (2013), 228-229.

on the southern porticus of the forum where a hall was inserted.[728] The installation of four fountains in the grid of the city as well as the construction of a second triumphal arch significantly altered the public space.[729] One of the newly built fountains (fig. 155) in the south-east of the forum disrupted the *decumanus maximus* to such an extent that it would have been only usable by pedestrians.[730]

Sufetula's transformation into an important Christian centre probably also began in the fourth century.[731] The city centre alone comprises six churches (basilicas I-V and VIII); a seventh cemeterial church (basilica VI) is located in the outskirts of Sufetula and another chapel at about 3 km away in the countryside (basilica VII).[732] It is telling that the three earliest churches (basilicas I, III and IV), all tentatively dated to the fourth century, are built upon pre-existing structures around the forum (fig. 156).[733] The construction of basilica VIII in the immediate southeast of the forum (fig. 156), which likewise reused an older structure including a colonnade, has not been dated with any certainty.[734] Basilica I, the nucleus of the Nicene episcopal complex, reused a porticoed building to the northwest of the forum which was not in line with Sufetula's rigid street grid. It has been speculated that the building predated the Roman city plan and may have been a temple.[735] Basilica III, the temple-church (fig. 144), located about 50 m east of the

[728] C. Lepelley, *l'Afrique Romaine* (1981), 309-11.
[729] R. Bockmann, *Capital continuous* (2013), 229.
[730] N. Duval, L'urbanisme (1982), 611. For an overview of public fountains in late antiquity I. Jacobs and J. Richard, ""We Surpass the Beautiful Waters of Other Cities by the Abundance of Ours": Reconciling Function and Decoration in Late Antique Fountains", in: *Journal of Late Antiquity 5* (2012).
[731] Sufetula's importance is principally attested archaeologically. In 570 AD, Sufetula hosted the provincial church council of Byzacena: P. Champetier, "Les conciles africaines durant la periode byzantine", in: *Revue Africaine 95* (1951), 108.
[732] F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, *Tunisie* (2014), 378-407. See also F. Béjaoui, Une nouvelle église de la région de Sufetula (Sbeïtla): Ksar El Guellal (1998).
[733] For basilica I: N. Duval, *Les églises africaines* (1971), 85. For basilica IV: N. Duval, *Les églises africaines* (1973), 175-177.
[734] For basilica VIII and its transformation into a workshop in the early Islamic period F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, *Tunisie* (2014), 405-407.
[735] N. Duval, *Les églises africaines* (1971), 9; N. Duval, *Les églises africaines* (1973), 163.

forum's Antonine gate (fig. 157), was inserted in a temple of unclear dedication, just off the *decumanus maximus*. Basilica IV equally reused an ancient building at the north-western corner of the forum which was distinguished by a large porticoed façade.[736] Hence, while the monument preceding basilica I was likely dismantled, since its stones served as building material for the church, the other three churches reused prominent architectural elements like the colonnades (basilica VIII) or porticoed façades (basilica IV) of their forerunners.[737] We will soon return to this point regarding the temple-church.

In the Vandal and in particular in the Byzantine period, Sufetula's Christian landscape expanded and earlier churches were refurbished or significantly redeveloped. Basilica I received a new mosaic floor in the late fifth century, and in the late fifth or early sixth century its baptistery was converted into a memorial burial chapel. The epitaph of bishop Jucundus after whom the chapel was named proves that the complex belonged to the Nicene church. The conversion presumably coincided with the construction of the larger five-aisled basilica II opposite basilica I, as the newly built church probably received a new baptismal room when the previous one fell out of use.[738] An epitaph for the presbyter Vitalis in the main nave of basilica II, dating his birth or his death to the twenty-eighth year of Vandal king Geiseric's reign (467 AD), provides the only secure date in the Nicene complex and has given rise to much debate about its chronological phasing.[739] What should be noticed here is that in either 467 AD or 505 AD (depending on whether the epitaph records the date of birth or death of Vitalis, who lived for 38

[736] F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, *Tunisie* (2014), 396-398.
[737] A recent summary on basilica I is given in ibid., 383.
[738] N. Duval, *Les églises africaines* (1971), 292.
[739] An overview of the involved argumentation is provided in R. Bockmann, *Capital continuous* (2013), 232-234.

years), the Vandal regime based in far-away Carthage was sufficiently established in Sufetula for the Nicene church community to use the dating system of the Arian king's reign.[740] Furthermore, Vitalis's epitaph provides evidence that the Nicene church complex steadily grew to a substantial size during the Vandal rulership.[741]

The modest basilica V and the cemeterial church VI, as well as the rural basilica VII, demonstrate considerable Byzantine architectural and artistic influences.[742] Basilicas V and VI were also places of martyrial cults: besides the Milanese martyrs Gervasius and Protasius, basilica V also commemorated the Capadocian saint Tryphon, a Byzantine import which marks the beginning of this saint's commemoration in the Latin-speaking West.[743] Basilica VI was instead a place of worship for the probably local saints Fortunatus and Sylvanus.[744] During the Byzantine period the cityscape saw many alterations beyond the churches. Extra-cemeterial burials were scattered over the inner city with the same frequency as olive presses and silos.[745] It is, however, the fortification of Sufetula which must have made the most dramatic impact on the city's layout. Sufetula was far from heavily fortified in comparison with other North African cities, with only a number of small forts in the south-west of the city (fig. 156), yet this loose defense system provoked the fortification of pre-existing buildings.[746] Central Roman

[740] On the significance of the Vandal dating system for Romano-Africans and on dating alternatives see J. Conant, *Staying Roman* (2015), 151-159.
[741] Duval, however, made a case for the epitaph having been relocated during Byzantine construction works on basilica II: N. Duval, *Les églises africaines* (1971), 224.
[742] N. Duval, L'église V (des Saints-Gervais-Protais-et-Tryphon) (1999); F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, *Tunisie* (2014), 398-404 and 407-408.
[743] Y. Duval, *Loca sanctorum Africae: le culte des martyrs en Afrique du IVe au VIIe siècle* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1982), 81-85; N. Duval, L'église V (des Saints-Gervais-Protais-et-Tryphon) (1999), 977-978.
[744] N. Duval and F. Baratte, *Les ruines de Sufetula (Sbeitla)* (Tunis: Societé Tunisienne de Diffusion, 1973), 104-109; N. Duval, L'urbanisme (1982), 618.
[745] For the burials: N. Duval, L'urbanisme (1982), 625. For olive oil manufacturing F. Béjaoui, *Sbeïtla, l'antique Sufetula* (Tunis: Les Éditions de l'ANEP, 1994), 11, 19.
[746] On the fortlets see N. Duval, L'urbanisme (1982), 622-624.

institutions like the forum, and likely the amphitheatre and a temple in the north-west of the city as well, were given a military function. Even many houses in the forum area show raised floor levels and thresholds.[747]

Basilica III, the temple-church, was certainly in use by the sixth century, but a conversion date as early as the fourth century has also been suggested (fig. 144).[748] Tentatively dated to the third century, but only on the basis of the sculpture found inside the temple, the *temple à cour* formed part of the original grid of the Roman city.[749] Directly accessible from the *decumanus maximus* (1) (fig. 158), it was located east of the forum and west of the theatre and the great baths. In contrast to the solution found at Thuburbo, at Sufetula the complete court of the peristyle, measuring 23,60 m x 18,40 m, was transformed into a large basilica of five aisles that faced north-west, altering the previous orientation by 90°.[750] The church shares this 'occidentation' with most of Sufetula's churches.[751] Because of the radical clearing during the excavations of the early twentieth century, the plan of the temple-church is unfortunately not very clear.[752] It is uncertain whether any more than the platform of the porticoed temple façade survived into Christian times. In any case, the church was entered via the former central doorway (1), whereas the side entrances on the plan are only hypothetical.[753] Above the entrance a lintel carried the inscription 'Hic domus + oratio[nis]'.[754] The stylobate demarcating

[747] Ibid., 624. For the fortified houses see F. Béjaoui, Nouvelles données (1996), 38-39.
[748] For the fourth century dating N. Duval, Église et temple (1971), 276. Leone suggests a construction date in the Byzantine period: A. Leone, *Pagan city* (2013), 70.
[749] Cf. N. Duval, Église et temple (1971), 276.
[750] Ibid., 269.
[751] Ibid., 272. Exceptions are basilica V, facing eastwards, and basilica VI, facing north-eastwards: F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, *Tunisie* (2014), for basilica V 400, fig. 391-147; for basilica VI 403, fig. 393-147.
[752] For the excavation history see N. Duval, Église et temple (1971), 268.
[753] Ibid., 269.
[754] An analysis of the inscription is given in A. Merlin, *Forum et églises de Sufetula* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1912), 28 no. 7.

the outline of the basilica is still in situ, without any trace of the columns' bases or the entrance to the church. The southern and eastern porticoes of the courtyard were used for interments, while the western portico was cut off and possibly hosted rooms alongside the main apse.[755]

The moment of conversion is again doubtful, though a late fourth-century conversion has been suggested on the basis of the liturgical arrangement around the altar space: in the main nave, a chancel (2) was placed centrally in the middle of the nave, and at a later stage it was enlarged and connected to the apse by a slim corridor (fig. 144). A similar sequence of arrangements was found at Sufetula in basilica I.[756] The chancel located centrally in the nave was ascribed to the earliest construction phase of basilica I, tentatively dated to the fourth century, and hence a similar dating was suggested for the construction of the temple-church.[757] However, the fourth-century dating of the construction of basilica I is hypothetical and its liturgical arrangement seems to have persisted until the late fifth or sixth century.[758] If basilica I inspired the liturgical arrangement in the temple-church, a later construction date is also plausible.[759]

At some point, the northern part of the temple-church was transformed into a baptismal complex comprising a vestibule (3), a large central baptismal hall – the former *cella* (4), an annexed chapel (5), a room which was either an atrium or crowned by a cupola (6) and a number of smaller rooms of undefined purpose (fig. 144). Comparable North African baptismal complexes belong to large cathedrals in Carthage-Dermech I, Hippo

[755] N. Duval, Église et temple (1971), 269, 272.
[756] Ibid., 276.
[757] See N. Duval, *Les églises africaines* (1973), 347, 163, see also fig. 183 for an overview of the development of the choirs at Sufetula. For the dating of stage 1 of basilica I see ibid., 163.
[758] Ibid.
[759] A. Leone, *Pagan city* (2013), 70.

Regius and Tipasa.[760] Column bases of different origins placed along the vestibule (3) in the former northern arcade of the temple suggest that a new porticoed corridor was constructed, apparently with a barrel vault, the columns of which were out of symmetry with the two columns framing the entrance to the *cella*-baptistery (figs. 144, 159).[761] Because of the irregular alignment of the baptistery's columns with the columns of the vestibule, and the absence of stairs to climb the *cella*, raised 60 cm above ground level in today's condition, it has been suggested that the original entrance to the *cella* might have been blocked off, yet there is no other evidence that would support this reconstruction.[762] The purpose of the newly built western room (6) adjacent to the *cella*-baptistery is unclear, but it was quite elaborate. The distance between the four columns, which carried a vault or arches, is 5 m, so that the arcades would have been as monumental as the one above the apse of the basilica.[763] The chapel (5) (fig. 160) on the eastern end of the baptismal complex could be entered via the vestibule (3) and gave access through a newly carved entry into the *cella*-baptistery. The design of the chapel's choir is very similar to that of basilica V, which probably received its liturgical furnishings in the Byzantine period.[764]

Four angles cut in stone, of which the tallest still reaches the substantial height of 10 m, form the outer limits of the square *cella* (4) (fig. 161), whose inner walls measure 8.80

[760] N. Duval, Église et temple (1971), 275-276.
[761] Ibid., 272.
[762] The point was raised in ibid. Duval's plan is here not entirely correct. A foundational wall in between the columns is missing altogether.
[763] Ibid., 275.
[764] F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, *Tunisie* (2014), 402. Giordani argues that the baptismal chapel of the temple-church probably housed relics, since there were relics found in the choir of basilica V. This does not seem convincing. B. Giordani, "La basilica III di Sufetula", in: *L'Africa romana: lo spazio marittimo del Mediterraneo occidentale: geografia storica ed economia (atti del XIV Convegno di studio, Sassari, 7-10 dicembre 2000),* M. Khanoussi et al. (ed.) (Rome: Carocci, 2002), 2061.

m each. The masonry between the angles is missing today.[765] Inside the *cella*-baptistery, a font was inserted into a separate walled construction (4.70 m x 4.50 m), with entries in the east and the west (fig. 162).[766] Two flights of stairs in the south and north-east lead from the font's hexagonal rim onto a platform which then leads two steps further down into the quatrefoil-shaped lower part of the font (fig. 163).[767] Complex pluriform forms like this one are typical for Byzantine North African fonts.[768] The font of the temple-church in its current form can be dated to the Byzantine period.[769] This dating corresponds to the late Byzantine dating of the mosaic epitaphs found in and around the church, as well as to the dating of the choir's layout in the baptismal chapel.[770] The temple-church was therefore certainly used well into the Byzantine period.

It has been speculated that the church might have been the Donatist cathedral of Sufetula, because the Nicene church complex always had a baptismal font.[771] The state of the Donatist movement in Sufetula throughout the fifth and sixth centuries is, however, more than unclear. There is only one extant mention of the Sufetulan Donatists from the council of Carthage in 411 AD when bishop Jucundus called his Donatist competitor Titianus an 'invention'.[772] This might or might not be a valid

[765] A. Merlin, *Forum et églises de Sufetula* (1912), 33; N. Duval, Église et temple (1971), 272.
[766] Duval proposed that this construction protected the font at a time when the *cella* roof had started to decay: N. Duval, Église et temple (1971), 272. This suggestion has been dismissed in R. Bockmann, *Capital continuous* (2013), 235, no. 1652. For a comparable setting of an inner baptismal zone, and an outer zone that probably served as waiting room, see the baptistery of Djémila discussed in chapter 1.
[767] Duval has demonstrated that in parts the hexagonal form was altered to a round form at a later stage. However, it remains unclear why the quatrefoil-formed bottom and the round main basin should be contemporary. See N. Duval, Église et temple (1971), 273.
[768] See D. Morfino, Le strutture battesimali (2011).
[769] N. Duval, Église et temple (1971), 273; F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, *Tunisie* (2014) come to the same conclusion.
[770] N. Duval, Église et temple (1971), 276. More recently on the epitaphs F. Béjaoui, Nouvelles données (1996), 40.
[771] N. Duval, Église et temple (1971), 276. This over-simplification of denominational attributions has been justly criticized. See G. Sears, *African urbanism* (2007), 34-37, 53; A. Leone, *Pagan city* (2013), 70, no. 144; R. Bockmann, *Capital continuous* (2013), 236.
[772] N. Duval, *Les églises africaines* (1971), 294.

assessment of the small size of the Donatist community at Sufetula, which, if it had been insignificant, would probably not have needed nor had the funds for a five-aisled basilica in the city centre.[773]

In comparison with the temple-church of Thuburbo Maius, the rebuilding of Sufetula's temple-church demonstrates an even greater ambition to change the design of the former temple entirely. While both temple-churches went through a change of orientation, of 180° (Thuburbo) and 90° (Sufetula) respectively, at Sufetula the temple was literally 'turned inside out' (fig. 164). During the Christian transformation, the former open-air court was fully covered by the church building and half of the colonnade, previously a source of shade and shelter from rain, was probably an open-air graveyard. While it is both true that one continued to enter the space from the *decumanus maximus* (1) and that the temple façade might have been preserved to offer visual continuity to passersby, once one had passed the entrance to the new church, the interior space must have felt profoundly different from the former temple district. The same is true for most of the baptismal complex at the rear of the church. Rather than reusing the northern colonnade, a new colonnade (3) was built to serve as an entrance hall to the baptismal spaces, possibly at a stage when the temple had already been spoliated. Equally, the insertion of side rooms to the left and right of the baptismal room, the carving of a new entrance into the eastern *cella* wall and the construction of an enclosure around the font meant a significant change to the ground plan. The only spatial continuity which the architects allowed for that we can be relatively certain

[773] It should be added that the denial of the existence of an opponent at home was somewhat topical at the Catholic-Donatist council of 411. See B. Shaw, African Christianity: Disputes, Definitions, and 'Donatists' (1992), 26.

about are the dimensions and considerable height of the *cella*-baptistery.[774] Moreover, the position of two columns at the former *cella* entry is a plausible indicator that the *cella*-baptistery continued to be accessible via its original entrance, kept in addition to the eastern entrance of the newly built chapel.

Creating Christian-Roman civic identity: the *cella*-baptisteries

As we have seen, the transformations of both temples into churches substantially changed their appearances. The creation of new accesses, re-orientation of interior spaces, roofing of formerly open-air sections, and, vice versa, uncovering of previously roofed parts, as well as new room layouts and new furnishings, ensured that Christian visitors would have had a fundamentally different experience entering these churches than they would have had entering the previous temples. Transformations of this quality, it stands to reason, required careful planning and were a considerable investment.

There are good chances that the Christian communities who commissioned the temple-church conversions were relatively free in their decision. There is no documentary basis to suggest that the construction of churches in North Africa depended on municipal expenses.[775] Roman legislation, which increasingly privileged the reuse of public buildings over new constructions, was hence not necessarily the determining factor in temple-church conversions. Given the abundance of preserved church constructions built from scratch, private Christian initiatives financing new churches without state sponsorship were unlikely to have been obliged to reuse public buildings. The fourth-century building boom, the rich Christian infrastructure of Sufetula and the reported

[774] With the reservation that the roofing solution of the Christian phase is unknown.
[775] Ibid., 373.

wealth of the city, as well as the substantial fifth-century renovations of public amenities in Thuburbo, demonstrate that both cities, whether at the municipal or private level, were wealthy enough to finance large-scale public building projects during the wave of conversions of Roman monuments.[776] This does not mean, however, that external constraints played no role in the choice to convert pre-existing buildings into churches. Large building plots in city centres were apparently hard to obtain without reusing old ones. Besides scarcity of space, scarcity of building materials may also have played a role. The lack of quarries in the vicinity of Thuburbo, for instance, resulted in the city's import of marble on a large scale.[777] Reworking pre-existing structures would have been a pragmatic, if not required, solution under such circumstances.

In our search for possible motivations for the construction of Thuburbo's and Sufetula's temple-churches, a strong similarity between the two building sites has become apparent. Urban life followed many patterns set down by the Roman layers of both cities. The city centre around the forum continued to play a vital role in both cities, public amenities and meeting spaces were maintained, and Thuburbo offers additional evidence that both its artistic and medicinal heritage continued to be cared for despite the pagan subtexts they carried. Indeed, for both cities it has been speculated that further temple-churches existed, with Sufetula's basilica I the most likely case.[778] Overall, there seems to have been considerable tolerance towards Roman heritage rooted in pagan beliefs. Moreover, Christian communities, especially in Sufetula, sought to organically integrate the new Christian infrastructure in the city centre by

[776] The simultaneousness of comparative urban wealth and reuse of public buildings is discussed in G. Sears, *African urbanism* (2007), specifically on Sufetula 49-55; C. Lepelley, *l'Afrique Romaine* (1979), 396.
[777] R. Bockmann, *Capital continuous* (2013), 150-152.
[778] For basilica I: N. Duval, *Les églises africaines* (1971), 85. See also notes 695-697 and 737 in this chapter.

transforming public buildings, thereby both altering and assuring the survival of the traditional urban core.

It is plausible that the commissioners of the two temple-churches shared the positive view of the city's Roman urban core, and the aim of preserving it and keeping it alive, with the rest of civic society. They privileged the chance to attain building plots in the Roman city over spaces free of pagan associations. At the same time, giving their churches distinctly new and Christian appearances that set them apart from the previous interiors. The ambitions of the commissioners of the temple-churches of Thuburbo Maius and Sufetula therefore seem to conform with the desire of Christian communities to associate themselves with the local Roman culture without compromising their identities as Christians.

This observation would be particularly valid with respect to the commissioners' decisions to transform the *cellae* into baptisteries and the architectural solutions they found, provided, that is, that the commissioners were still aware of the buildings' previous function and familiar with the former temple interior or with similar *temples à cour*. In contrast to the rest of the interior spaces of the temple-churches, the design of the baptismal spaces respected the pre-Christian layout of the temples. Original ground plans, entrances and the considerable height of Sufetula's *cella* were kept, for instance, and would have been recognizable to those in the know. In both cities, the visual impact of the baptismal halls was enhanced via the addition of distinguished architectural elements – in Sufetula, a large baptismal complex, and in Thuburbo, a burial chamber for a notable of the city. If Christians had known of the prior pagan purpose of the *cella*-baptisteries, how would they have approached baptisms within the former *cellae*? Judging from the few North African Christian sources relating to temple spaces, like the

example of Quodvultdeus's treatment of the Caelestis temple at Carthage, it seems plausible that Christian communities were encouraged to celebrate the Christian reuse as a rightful supersession.[779] Beyond baptism's general significance as a rupture with superstition, Christians could have given their baptism particular meaning, because it was held in the temple's *cella* – the space that, more than any other part of the temple, could have been understood as an emblem of the city's pagan past. The baptizands might have seen themselves in the position to redeem, through their purification in the *cella*-baptistery, a citizen of Thuburbo Maius or Sufetula, and thereby contribute to the salvation of the civic community.

It is important to note at this point that the grand architectural setting that would have dignified the symbolic victory over paganism was Roman. The *cella* space might *conceptually* have figured as the object that needed to be overcome, but *formally* it would have been the celebratory architectural frame within which the Christian triumph was enacted. The *Romanitas* of the *cella*-baptistery would have carried both negative and positive connotations at once. Paradoxically, the *cella* commented on itself – the church 'spoke' its Roman architectural language while condemning its past use. For Thuburbo's and Sufetula's Christians, *cella*-baptisteries could have thus played an important role in creating a Roman *and* Christian civic identity.

If, however, the commissioners who repurposed a building were no longer able to interpret its past function, then the *cella* would not have been recognized as such, and would not have had specific symbolic value within the temple-church. To the generation that witnessed the monument's conversion, at least, only the outside of Sufetula's

[779] For North African Christian writers on temple-church conversions see S. Lander, *Ritual Sites and Religious Rivalries* (2016), 176-214.

baptistery would have been recognizable as part of the original Roman structure. Measuring a minimum of 10 m, it was, according to Duval's reconstruction, by far the tallest part of basilica III (fig. 164) and, towered above most of the late antique city centre. To appreciate fully the visual impact that the *cella*-baptistery had on contemporaries, it is important to keep the urban transformations of the fifth and sixth centuries in mind. In an environment where the means for monumental architecture increasingly vanished, where ephemeral structures replaced solidly built ones, and where the city's Roman layout made room for another spatial logic which eventually became the guiding principle of medieval towns, the Roman structure likely stood out as a landmark.[780] The *cella*-baptistery might thus have been a testimony to the greatness of the Roman city of Sufetula as well as a proud sign of its Christianness, without carrying any pagan connotations anymore.

All in all, the temple-churches and their *cella*-baptisteries could have carried a host of symbolic meanings – from pagan structure to Roman civic heritage to Christian church. Yet, in consideration of the evolution of the cities and their civic identity over the course of the fifth and sixth centuries, the possibility that memories of the pre-Christian and Roman nature of the buildings vanished over time or, indeed, never came to the surface at all, must be accounted for. Succeeding Vandal and Byzantine occupations might have left marks on the cities' self-images, and on what Christian communities attached importance to. If, for instance, Thuburbo's temple-church indeed became Arian, potentially under Vandal leadership, this might have impacted the Christian

[780] The repurposing of pre-existing structures and growing privatization of public space altered the formerly clear-cut organization of the cities, mixing up residential, productive, defensive, cemeterial and religious zones. A. Leone, "Change or No Change? Revised Perceptions of Urban Transformation in Late Antiquity", in: *Theoretical Roman Archaeology Journal 98* (1999).

community's interest in the history and Romanness of its church. This does not mean that tradition necessarily ended with the arrival of foreign occupying forces. In the last section, I discuss the possibility that there was considerable Arian interest in connecting with local Roman heritage.

3. The *cella*-baptistery of Jebel Oust – Building on a Roman cult space

The burials in the temple-churches of Thuburbo and Sufetula show that their Christian communities were not exclusively Romano-African. The time of conversion for both churches is doubtful and might well date to after the fourth century. Active use can be seen in the fifth century by Vandals in Thuburbo, and in the sixth century in Sufetula when the city was under Byzantine rule. This could have had consequences for the baptismal practice celebrated in the temple-churches. It has been discussed in the past whether Donatists might have been in charge of basilica III in Sufetula, but in fact the religious landscape of both Sufetula and Thuburbo could have been even more varied: there could have been an Arian community in Thuburbo, and an orthodox or miaphysite denomination is plausible for Byzantine Sufetula. In this last section, I examine the symbolic resonance that a denominational affiliation could add to the understanding of a temple-church. I will return to my third example in Jebel Oust. The character of the Christian transformation of this site raises the question whether baptism in a former temple space was a way of associating the non-African ruling elites' religion with traditional religious space and beliefs.[781] So far, the Christian reoccupation of a *cella* has seemed perfectly compatible with orthodox Christian conduct. The example of Jebel Oust suggests that the interest in relating to Roman traditions could at times be so

[781] For negotiations of ethnic and religious identity in Vandal North Africa recently R. Whelan, *Being Christian in Vandal Africa: the politics of orthodoxy in the Post-Imperial West* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2018); G. Sears, A Catholic stronghold? Religious and ethnic identities at Tipasa (2016).

strong that the distinction between pagan and Christian cult practice was at risk of being blurred.

Jebel Oust is a rural site in Africa Proconsularis 38 km southwest of Carthage that has lost its antique place name (fig. 166). It is located on the road that connected the capital with Bulla Regia and is only about 25 km away from Thuburbo Maius.[782] At the foot of the Zaghouan mountains, a hot spring fed a large bath complex which from the beginning of its existence in the first century AD was connected to a *temple à cour* on top of the spring. Following a first excavation in the 1960s, a re-excavation campaign was run in the first decade of the twenty-first century by the École Française de Rome and the Tunisian Institut National du Patrimoine.[783] The modern excavators focused their attention on the changes the site underwent during the Roman phase of its occupation. The excavation also shed light on the settlement beyond bath and temple, unearthing a residential area in between the two, and providing new insights into a rich residential complex that was attached to the bath in the north-east.[784] Its function has not been determined with any certainty, and it has been interpreted varyingly as a private villa, as a residential area for visitors of the site, or as a hospital.[785] Later, the site

[782] The excavators speculate that Jebel Oust was affiliated with a Roman settlement. Possible territories include Uthina, Giufi, Sutunurca or Pagi Fortunalis et Mercurialis : A. Ben Abed and J. Scheid, "Nouvelles recherches archéologiques à Jebel Oust (Tunisie)", in: *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Academie des inscriptions et Belles-Lettres 149* (2005), 348, no. 24.

[783] The first excavator, Mohamed Fendri, published only the mosaics on the site, while the results of the excavation of the temple courtyard are unfortunately completely lost. M. Fendri, Évolution chronologique et stylistique d'un ensemble de mosaiques dans une station thermale à Djebel Oust (Tunisie) (1965). The re-excavation was conducted from 2000-2010 and was published annually in the *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome* as well as in A. Ben Abed and J. Scheid, "Sanctuaire des eaux, sanctuaire des sources, une categorie ambigue: l'exemple de Jebel Oust (Tunisie)", in: *Sanctuaires et sources,* John Scheid and Olivier de Cazanove (ed.) (Naples: Publications du Centre Jean Bérard, Collège de France, 2003); A. Ben Abed and J. Scheid, Nouvelles recherches archéologiques à Jebel Oust (Tunisie) (2005); A. Ben Abed-Ben Khader et al., "Le sanctuaire de source de Jebel Oust (Tunisie)", in: *Les Nouvelles de l'archéologie 124* (2011).

[784] A concise overview of the complex is offered in A. Ben Abed-Ben Khader et al., Le sanctuaire de source (2011).

[785] Ibid., 17.

was Christianized, leading to the construction of a modest church attached to the temple as well as a *cella*-baptistery that displays many similarities with the baptisteries at Sufetula and Thuburbo Maius.[786] While the excavations were not specifically targeted at the Christian phases of the occupation, they offer new information about the Christian transformation of the temple and beyond, and a more detailed stratigraphic analysis than anything available for Thuburbo or Sufetula.

The temple complex in Roman times

As far as we can tell, the hot spring was the centre of activity at the site throughout the history of the settlement of Jebel Oust. Still gushing today at c. 55°C, the chloric, sodic, impotable spring that colours its surroundings in a vivid red sits on a small hill (fig. 167).[787] From the early imperial period at least, the spring was likely the focal point of a cult. It appears that this cult was reimagined at least once (fig. 168) before the site was Christianized. The first temple, already a *temple à cour*, was constructed in the early imperial period with its *cella* placed directly above the spring. By the first half of the second century AD, however, the spring seems to have taken another course and access to it became more difficult. A much deeper well of c. 6 m depth was dug and access to the spring was regained.[788] At this point, a large building programme changed the appearance of the entire site, which acquired a curative function as a bath, while the temple complex was monumentalized (fig. 166). The new location of the spring was more westwards than before, and in consequence the second *cella* was also positioned more westwards to assure that the *cella* continued to sit above the source of the spring.

[786] For a resumé of the Christian complex of Jebel Oust before the excavation of the École Française de Rome started see N. Duval, Église et temple (1971), 190-192.
[787] A. Ben Abed et al., "Jebel Oust", in: *Mélanges de l'école francaise de Rome (Antiquité) 113* (2001), 532.
[788] A. Ben Abed and J. Scheid, Nouvelles recherches archéologiques à Jebel Oust (Tunisie) (2005), 327-329.

In the larger second *temple à cour* building, the inner courtyard had the dimensions of the previous temple. The well was not at all accessible from the *cella* in this phase and it is uncertain whether a peephole provided a view of its reddening waters. No coin finds or offerings have been found within the well.[789] Yet, it might have been audible, and we can imagine hot vapours emerging from the source, especially on cold mornings and evenings.[790] The porticoed façade of the second temple building looked over a newly built bathing complex down the hill.[791] The dedication of both temples is unclear. Statues of Aesculapius and Hygea have been found on the site (fig. 169). They are relatively small and of uneven size and are not sufficient evidence for the primary dedication of the temple. An inscription dedicated to Mercury Silvanus is also attested at the site.[792]

The considerably sized bath complex was built at a lower level in a direct line of sight with the temple, while a small bath was built half way up the hill (fig. 166). The spring water was channeled into several of their pools.[793] Via an elaborate hydraulic system the entire site now also had access to fresh water from the aqueduct of Carthage, situated at 2 km from Jebel Oust.[794] An adjacent residential building which incorporated a large garden might have given shelter to the site's visitors or served as a villa. The complicated ground plan of the complex makes a secure attribution difficult.[795] In any case, we can assume that Jebel Oust attracted visitors from the region or from further

[789] A. Ben Abed and J. Scheid, Sanctuaire des eaux (2003), 16.
[790] Ibid., 15-16.
[791] A. Ben Abed et al., Jebel Oust (2005), 410.
[792] The temple has been referred to as a temple of Aesculapius in past scholarship. A. Ben Abed and J. Scheid, Sanctuaire des eaux (2003), 11. For the Mercury Silvanus inscription see A. Ben Abed and J. Scheid, Nouvelles recherches archéologiques à Jebel Oust (Tunisie) (2005), 322, fig. 4.
[793] A. Ben Abed-Ben Khader et al., Le sanctuaire de source (2011), 4-6 (pagination of the online version).
[794] H. Broise et al., "Jebel Oust", in: *Mélanges de l'école francaise de Rome (Antiquité) 123* (2011), 328.
[795] A. Ben Abed and J. Scheid, Nouvelles recherches archéologiques à Jebel Oust (Tunisie) (2005), 347.

away, because there was no significant settlement attached to it which could have made use of such an extensive structure.

The relation between temple, bath and living complex is subject to debate. The excavators are cautious to attribute any more than a purifying function to the bath, as a space where worshippers would have bathed in preparation for the visit to the temple, since no sign of religious activity in the bath itself has been brought to light. [796] The continuously prominent location of the hot spring underneath the *cella* and the use of its waters in the central open air pool (5) and the circular caldarium (9) (fig. 170) of the large bath, are clear evidence in any case that a) the source was central to a cult and b) the bath complex formed a unity with the sacred space.[797] Although there is no evidence for any sacral quality of the spring water once it left the temple district, there remains the strong possibility that a curative effect was ascribed to the idolized source.[798] The existence of the statues of Aesculapius and Hygea certainly suggests that the complex of Jebel Oust was associated with the desire for good health and healing. Since Roman baths built for curative purposes catered for different exigencies and do not follow a general design, they do not offer a useful comparison. There is no comparabler villa in the region either.[799] In any case, bath and residence were still operating in the fifth century, when the site was transformed for Christian use. By the time Christians took over the site, Jebel Oust had already been redeveloped twice, once presumably from a

[796] A. Ben Abed and J. Scheid, Sanctuaire des eaux (2003), 2 and 16.
[797] A similarly close connection between baths and temple exists for instance in Bath in England where the baths were in use until the late fourth or early fifth century. An introduction to the bath is offered in B. W. Cunliffe, *Roman Bath* (London: Society of Antiquaries of London, 1969), 89-147.
[798] On the usage of thermal springs for issues of health in North Africa A. Wilson, *Water management and usage in Roman North Africa: a social and technological study (Ph.D. Thesis)* (Oxford: University of Oxford, 1997), 134. For a comparison with the Roman Near East Z. Kamash, *Archaeologies of water in the Roman Near East: 63 BC-AD 636* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2010), 148-176.
[799] W. H. Heinz, *Römische Thermen: Badewesen und Badeluxus im Römischen Reich* (Munich: Hirmer, 1983), 164-165.

locally venerated spring to a Roman temple, and a second time by significantly enlarging the temple and connecting a thermal complex to it.

Jebel Oust and the *cella*-baptistery in Christian times

The archaeological evidence clearly shows that the temple-church was not operating in isolation but continued to be part of a rural settlement until it was probably abandoned at some point after the seventh century. Mosaic floors in the residential area were still replaced in the fifth century and attest a continuous use of this space.[800] By that time the location of the entrance to the bath, also in continuous use, had changed. Only the residential area gave access to it via a narrow corridor (R22) (fig. 170).[801] The bath was maintained till about the mid-sixth century, though the usable space diminished over time. The eastern part of the complex with the *frigidarium* (14) was the last part of the bath to be used.[802] The pools which were fed by the hot spring of Jebel Oust (e.g. 1, 5, 9) were also reduced in number. The last basin to be fed by the spring was the small *caldarium* 7 in the late fifth or first half of the sixth century.[803] The settlements and workshops along the slope between temple-church and bath complex developed late and were in use until the seventh century.[804]

Most remarkably, fragments of a recently found monumental marble staircase connecting the cult complex and the bath have been dated by the excavators to the fifth century and to the late fifth century at latest (fig. 174). [805] They were in a direct axis with the central entrance of the temple façade. The late date makes it unlikely that they

[800] A. Ben Abed and J. Scheid, Sanctuaire des eaux (2003), 13.
[801] A. Ben Abed et al., Jebel Oust (2005), 419.
[802] Ibid.
[803] Ibid.
[804] A. Ben Abed-Ben Khader et al., Le sanctuaire de source (2011), 8 (pagination of the online version).
[805] A. Ben Abed-Ben Khader et al., "Jebel Oust", in: *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome 120* (2008), 260-262.

formed part of the cult complex when it was still pagan. The most likely option appears to be instead that they were part of the Christian redevelopment of the site, connecting the temple-church with the bath downhill and with the rest of the settlement.[806] Besides the bath and the residential complex, the area presumedly also hosted another church at the time. The excavators mention it several times in passing, although without marking it on the plan.[807]

When exactly the temple was converted into a church complex is unknown, nor is it clear when the temple in its original function was abandoned.[808] Fragments belonging to the temple furnishings were used, however, as filling material for Christian renovations, which testifies to a thorough clearing of the pagan remains after the conversion.[809] The phase corresponding to the Christian occupation of the temple has been hardly examined (fig. 171). While at both Thuburbo and Sufetula the new churches occupied the sites of the former temenos, at Jebel Oust, the deep ditch in the courtyard (fig. 167) that had provided access to the source made such an arrangement impossible. A church (1) of modest size (17 m x 11.50 m), unfortunately still barely excavated, was built along the northern side of the peristyle, facing northwards (fig. 171), and was surrounded by a graveyard.[810] Visitors would have continued to enter the ecclesiastical complex by passing through the peristyle (2) potentially still adorned by the original monumental

[806] Ibid., 262; A. Ben Abed-Ben Khader et al., Le sanctuaire de source (2011), 7 (pagination of the online version) comes to the same conclusion. The authors suggest additionally the possibility that the staircase might belong to a late phase of pagan development of the site in the late fourth century. No other temple refurbishments are recorded for this date.
[807] A. Ben Abed and J. Scheid, Sanctuaire des eaux (2003), 13; A. Ben Abed and J. Scheid, Nouvelles recherches archéologiques à Jebel Oust (Tunisie) (2005), 324. Also in F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, *Tunisie* (2014), 156.
[808] A. Ben Abed et al., "Jebel Oust", in: *Mélanges de l'école francaise de Rome (Antiquité) 118* (2006), 393 vaguely suggests a late fourth-century or early fifth-century abandonment of the pagan site.
[809] A. Ben Abed et al., "Jebel Oust", in: *Mélanges de l'école francaise de Rome (Antiquité) 114* (2002), 562.
[810] A tomb inside the church was discovered, but has not been excavated: A. Ben Abed et al., Jebel Oust (2006), 392; N. Duval, Église et temple (1971), 292.

façade.[811] Visitors could then either turn right to enter the church or head to the baptismal complex (fig. 171). In the interior, a quadrilobed font was inserted at the centre of the *cella* (3), a *synthronon* was integrated into its pre-Christian apse, and, like at Sufetula, two chambers were built that flanked the *cella*-baptistery.[812] The baptistery was accessed from the south-western corner of the portico. First, the southern chamber (4), designed like an atrium in a way comparable to the western room adjacent to the *cella*-baptistery of Sufetula, was passed through. The atrium gave way to the baptismal chamber, where the font was entered and exited in a south-north direction (figs. 172, 173).[813]

The excavators initially suggested a late fourth-century dating for the Christianization of the site and later a date from the early fifth century onwards.[814] The earlier estimate seems to relate less to the archaeological evidence at the site than to the date of the historical circumstances (notably the Theodosian interdiction of pagan practices) that are often assumed to have led to temple-church conversions.[815] Indeed, the dated Christian interventions at the temple site range from the fifth to the seventh century; most of the structural changes made to the ground plan are dated to the fifth century.[816] On the basis of the phasing of an outer wall between the church and the peristyle, the

[811] A. Ben Abed et al., Jebel Oust (2001), 535.
[812] For the baptismal chamber and the apse see A. Ben Abed et al., Jebel Oust (2002), 563; A. Ben Abed et al., Jebel Oust (2005), 411. For a detailed excavation report of the southern of the two annexes see ibid. 411-414.
[813] A. Ben Abed et al., "Jebel Oust", in: *Mélanges de l'école francaise de Rome (Antiquité) 116* (2004), 698.
[814] A. Ben Abed and J. Scheid, Nouvelles recherches archéologiques à Jebel Oust (Tunisie) (2005) suggests conflicting dates for the Christianization in the late fifth century on p. 324 and in the late fourth century on p. 329. In 2006, the excavators discard a fourth-century dating: A. Ben Abed et al., Jebel Oust (2006), 391. For the last suggestion from the early fifth century onwards A. Ben Abed-Ben Khader et al., Le sanctuaire de source (2011), 4 (pagination of the online version).
[815] See no. 215.
[816] For datings of the Christian interventions see A. Ben Abed et al., Jebel Oust (2004), 696-697; A. Ben Abed et al., Jebel Oust (2005), 414; A. Ben Abed et al., Jebel Oust (2006), 392; A. Ben Abed-Ben Khader et al., Jebel Oust (2008), 262.

excavators suggested a building date for the church in the second half of the fifth century at the earliest.[817] This would still be in accordance with the fifth-century dates of the southern antechamber in the baptismal complex and the monumental staircase, dated to the late fifth century at the latest. The quadrilobed form of the font with semi-circular steps cut into the lobes (fig. 173) is comparable to a number of other North African fonts like the ones at La Skhira (fig. 175), Henchir El Koucha (fig. 52) or Kélibia (fig. 46). These fonts are commonly dated to the Byzantine phase in the sixth century.[818] A font of comparable shape in El-Erg in Byzacena, however, has recently been dated to the Vandal period, and gives reason to question the confidence with which the most elaborately shaped North African fonts are generally considered to be Byzantine.[819] A continuous Christian use of the site from some point in the fifth until the seventh century seems to be confirmed by the findings of the recent excavation.

Taking everything into account, the patrons of the Christian site of Jebel Oust created a cult space that respected and highlighted its origins in a temple space significantly more than in either Thuburbo or Sufetula. Due to the marble staircase leading all the way up to the presumably still porticoed temple-church façade, the impression of monumentality is perhaps best maintained in Jebel Oust of all the temple-churches. Importantly, the church, tucked away behind the portico, played a lesser role visually in the ensemble than the baptismal complex, centrally placed at the end of the still recognizable temenos. The second-century layout of the temple was largely kept intact.

[817] A. Ben Abed et al., Jebel Oust (2006), 392.
[818] The assertion that these fonts were built in the sixth century is not always easily justifiable. A comparatively securely dated font is for instance La Skhira. It is dated on basis of one coin find, the shape of the font and the stylistic analysis of the surrounding mosaics: F. Baratte and F. Béjaoui, *Tunisie* (2014), 256. For Kélibia ibid. 165-169. For Henchir El Koucha see chapter 2, 91-108.
[819] Ibid. 84 and 341. See chapter 2, 92.

The hot spring was likely still in place when the complex was Christianized, attested by the refurbishments for the construction of basin 7, the last caldarium in the bath, in the late fifth or first half of the sixth century.[820] The *cella*-baptistery occupied not only the dwelling of the deity of the former sanctuary, but also the point of origin of a sacred spring which had been venerated for centuries. The Christian community ensured that they appreciated the element of water at the same place where this had happened for other religious reasons before. The rationale changed of course significantly – the baptismal water had a distinctly Christian purpose – but the Christian community of Jebel Oust did place emphasis on the continuity of the encounter with the natural force that had made Jebel Oust sacred for centuries. Spring worship is one of the oldest pagan practices, and also one which was consistently integrated into Christian cults throughout late antiquity and the Middle Ages.[821] The manifold water symbolism connected to baptismal water provides us with an additional explanation for the baptismal repurposing of the *cella* at Jebel Oust.[822] It is very likely that a Roman cult connected to a spring became the object of official Christian veneration in Jebel Oust. The spiritual rite of baptism, ineffective without water as its material transmitter, became a way for Christians to connect with the sacred spring on Christian terms. Those who affirmed their Christian identity at Jebel Oust through baptism were hence confronted with the task to make their Christianness compatible not only with what has been termed Roman culture, or practices which can, in theory, be performed on a secular basis, but also with

[820] A. Ben Abed et al., Jebel Oust (2005), 419.
[821] H. Beck, Brunnen III. Religiöses (1981); F. J. Dölger, "Die Münze im Taufbecken und die Münzen-Funde in Heilquellen der Antike", in: *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum 3* (1932); J. Vaes, Christliche Wiederverwendung antiker Bauten (1984-1986), 334. For a medieval comparison P. C. Claussen, "Der Marmorbrunnen von S. Bartolomeo all'Isola in Rom oder: Immer wenn der Tiber kam", in: *Georges-Bloch-Jahrbuch des Kunstgeschichtlichen Seminars der Universität Zürich,* Wolfgang Kersten and Wolfgang Kübler (ed.) (Zurich: Kunsthistorisches Institut der Universität Zürich, 1994).
[822] See chapter 1, 66-69..

a religious tradition rooted in paganism. Apparently, the site's pagan origins did not impinge on late antique users' ability to see their Christian and Roman identities verified. This, however, while perhaps possible at the local level, was certainly no longer in line with official Christian orthodoxy. The stratigraphic data collected at the excavation allows us to speculate on the Christian group responsible for the temple conversion. The start dating of the Christian transformation of Jebel Oust in the fifth century is remarkable because from 439 AD Africa Proconsularis was under Vandal rule. The *sortes Vandalorum*, a territory that was partitioned and distributed to Vandal notables instead of remaining under the authority of the Vandal kings, was most drastically affected by the Vandal anti-Nicene laws.[823] In the 450s, the ordination of new Nicene bishops was forbidden in Africa Proconsularis. Since only bishops can administer baptism, this legislation was an attempt to gradually eradicate Nicene baptism, and thereby the Nicene church community. In 483 AD, the Vandals decreed the closing of all the Nicene churches in this province. They also prohibited the Nicene Roman African population from practicing baptisms.[824] While how much impact Vandal legislation actually had on the Nicene church as a whole is a matter of debate, the Proconsularis as the heartland of the Vandal occupation is usually left out of the picture.[825] Jebel Oust is only 25 km away from the Vandal capital Carthage, where these laws definitely had weight.[826]

Given that a high-profile Nicene church foundation, let alone the construction of a baptistery, was unlikely in the fifth century when the temple of Jebel Oust was Christianized, we are left with the possibility that the temple-church was a Vandal Arian

[823] R. Bockmann, *Capital continuous* (2013), 130-131.
[824] Under Thrasamund this law was extended to the rest of the Vandal kingdom: J. Conant, *Staying Roman* (2015), 165. For baptism see A. Merrills and R. Miles, *The Vandals* (2010), 180.
[825] Ibid., 188
[826] A. Merrills and R. Miles, *The Vandals* (2010); ibid., 188.

foundation or was made Arian in the course of the fifth century – in line with other Arian conversions of old churches as well as new constructions.[827] This would make Jebel Oust an ancient cult site based on a sacred spring appropriated by the Arian church. Since the right to baptize was so contested under Vandal rule and was directly linked to the survival of a religious tradition, baptisteries must have become symbols for the rightful expression of the Christian faith and a manifestation of ecclesio-political dominance. As the Arian church was not indigenous to Western North Africa, the attachment of an Arian baptistery to the source of a traditional cult would have been easily interpretable as an attempt to connect the Arian church with a site of the region traditionally of religious significance. In this way, Arians could have demonstrated their willingness to integrate Arian Christianity into the pre-existing religious landscape and their power to do so.[828] If the baptistery was, however, added only during an Orthodox transformation of an Arian complex, a similar argument could be made for the Byzantine church reclaiming the Roman site from the Arians.

Conclusion

The plausibly Arian patronage of the *cella*-baptistery of Jebel Oust is a good illustration of the case in point: with more detailed information about the temple-church conversion, the act of appropriating a former temple becomes subject to the specific balance of religious power on-site. Most commonly, the agents who appropriated a temple for their own purposes remain unknown to us, but this does not diminish the political potential inherent in acts of reuse. The two predominant explanatory patterns for temple-church conversions – pragmatism and the public demonstration of the

[827] Ibid. 180, 188.
[828] The long-standing prevalent assumption that the Vandals had little interest in associating themselves with Roman culture has been forcefully corrected in the recent past. J. Conant, *Staying Roman* (2015).

Christian triumph over paganism – both seem insufficient for understanding the complex and changing nature of the sites of Jebel Oust, Thuburbo Maius and Sufetula. While these two stances likely played a significant role in the creation and maintenance of all three temple-churches, Jebel Oust demonstrates clearly that the Christian reuse of regional landmarks could have produced effects beyond these two facets.

I have argued that in all three cases an ethos of preserving the Roman heritage under the Christian banner was a guiding factor in transforming and maintaining the former temples as churches. A consideration of the built context that surrounded the temple-churches of Thuburbo Maius and Sufetula leads to the realization that in both cases the transformation was in line with the more general attitude of the citizens towards the Roman fabric of their cities. Seen in their urban contexts, the temple conversions of Sufetula and Thuburbo Maius should not strike us as anomalies, but on the contrary, as logical measures taken in cities which demonstrably valued the Roman heritage and relied on its structures. The construction of Thuburbo's and Sufetula's temple-churches contributed to the creation of a communal Christian civic identity that was indebted to and interwoven with the cities' Roman culture. I have further argued that the *cella*-baptisteries could have played a special role in helping Christian citizens ritually confirm their bond with the Roman culture of the city, and contemporaneously overcome the pagan aspect of their Roman heritage. This interpretation, however, requires that Christians were aware of the historicity and pagan significance of the *cella*-baptisteries. This is knowledge that we cannot universally assume for the fifth and sixth centuries. We should therefore avoid taking the initial reasons for conversion as its ultimate justification. The long life of these church spaces and the variety of their users means that interpretations of these spaces' significance must allow for ruptures and diverse

trajectories. Continuous use produced new possibilities for meaning to be attached to the sites, even the possibility of meanings that could overlap with or accentuate their former pagan function. The exact nature of most of these meanings is not accessible to us.

At the time of construction, however, the wish to affirm both Christian and Roman identities is palpable for all three temple-churches. This is especially the case for Jebel Oust, where the Christian reorganization of the pagan cult site respected the existing layout to a remarkable degree and even monumentalized it through the addition of a monumental staircase. The way the site explicitly connects the sacrament of baptism to an earlier pagan cult demonstrates how Christian attachment to Roman religious traditions could even put Christian orthodoxy at stake.

Conclusion

Identity formation in multi-ethnic societies has become a major concern in the study of late antiquity, as it has in a wide array of other disciplines, including anthropology, psychology and religious studies.[829] Historians and archaeologists of societies in the migration period of late antiquity have made significant contributions to the deconstruction of old monolithic models of identity and social belonging. As a result of such efforts, notions of the fluidity and permeability of ethnicities have become mainstream concepts in this field, serving to shift scholarly interests to *how* identities were constructed, as opposed to *whether* or not identity construction took place.[830] Moreover, scholars now widely acknowledge that the cruder concepts of identity promoted by earlier generations of scholars contributed to constructing and legitimizing contemporary understandings of fixed ethnicities and, deriving from this discourse, of modern nationhood.[831] Conversely, as I have shown in the introduction, the universalizing concept of religious identity that assigns Christian faith the most determinative social role in the life of a Christian at all times still tends to dominate history writing on late antique Christian societies. This concept is certainly omnipresent in studies on early Christian art. Furthermore, early Christian studies rarely differentiate between regional, cultural or class distinctions with respect to how Christian-ness was actually enacted. In marked contrast to the study of European ethnicities, for example,

[829] For overviews of the current state of research cf. R. Josselson and M. Harway, *Navigating multiple identites* (2012); V. Benet-Martínez and Y.-y. Hong, *The Oxford handbook of multicultural identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).
[830] P. Amory, *People and identity in Ostrogothic Italy, 489-554* (1997); W. Pohl and H. Reimitz (eds.), *Strategies of distinction : the construction of the ethnic communities, 300-800* (1998); S. J. Barnish and F. Marazzi (eds.), *Ostrogoths* (2007).
[831] S. Jones and P. Graves-Brown, "Introduction. Archaeology and cultural identity in Europe", in: *Cultural identity and archaeology : the construction of European communities,* Paul Graves-Brown et al. (ed.) (London: Routledge, 1996), 18.

early Christian history writing still operates with concepts that leave notions of a monolithic late antique origin for modern Christianity untouched – with all the consequences such assumptions might entail for the construction of Christian identity today.[832] Like scholars of ethnicity, on the other hand, scholars of modern and contemporary religion have embraced identity theory as indispensable for the study of religions: it is now commonplace in religious studies to account for the specific spiritual and social needs of individuals or groups by complementing the study of the institutional, doctrinal and liturgical core tenets of religious identities with examinations of popular non-normative practices, and individual responses to them.[833] In this thesis, I have tried to make this non-centrist approach to identity, seen from the evidence of archaeology as well as historical documents, fruitful also for the study of early Christianity and its artistic and material expressions.

In my discussion of Christian identity-construction in the fifth and sixth centuries, I have focused on how cultural identity, i.e. the affirmation of aspects of traditional Roman culture, intersected with the innovations of a Christian-focused identity. I have argued that Christian communities, which visually and spatially combined materials that evoked multiple traditions in their baptisteries, affirmed that Roman culture was an integral part of their sense of Christianity, and did so in the key space of affirmation of Christian beliefs. The range of case studies presented in this thesis demonstrates that Roman culture itself meant different things to different communities. For example, the incorporation of Roman architecture into the baptismal space might in certain contexts

[832] See J. Z. Smith, *Drudgery divine* (1990).
[833] An overview over this wide field of research is offered in S. Coleman and P. Collins, *Religion, identity and change* (2004); M. Voss Roberts, Religious belonging (2010), 49-51; M. McGuire, *Lived religion* (2008).

have had implications for how favourably a given community positioned itself in relation to ancestral Roman religion (as in Djebel Oust), whereas in other instances this kind of gesture was likely of lesser significance (as in Milreu/Estói). Complex relationships between multiple religious identities did occur, though they certainly arose under conditions very different from those that have fostered the eclectic contemporary religious identities we have grown accustomed to since the New Age.[834] In all the cases that I discuss, however, it is clear that members of the Christian communities had multiple identities which they combined publicly in a Christian space. They sought to express their Roman identity (or the aspiration to have a Roman identity) in different ways through their affiliation with Christianity.[835] It is therefore crucial that research on early Christianity acknowledges that Christian-ness has never stopped Christians from crafting complex bonds between various aspects of their worlds, both inherited and recent, then as now.

For the question of Christian identity-construction in late antiquity, it is significant that Christians used baptismal spaces in particular in their search to connect to the Roman present and past. Baptisteries were under the control of the clergy, and they were the engine of both conversion to and collective affirmation of the faith. Where Christian visual and material culture, on the one hand, and its Roman, pre-Christian equivalent, on the other, merged in a baptistery, it must be assumed that both the clergy (which includes the bishops in charge of the baptismal ceremony) and the lay Christian community supported this choice. The visual and archaeological evidence suggests that

[834] An attempt to negotiate this difference is made in M. McGuire, *Lived religion* (2008).
[835] For the intersection of multiple identities I. H. Settles and N. T. Buchanan, Multicultural identity (2014), 162-165; E. R. Cole, "Intersectionality and research in psychology", in: *American Psychologist 64* (2009); S. A. Shields, "Gender: An Intersectionality Perspective", in: *Sex Roles 59* (2008).

the positions of lay practitioners and their ordained leaders in relation to Roman culture and its significance in Christian life were much less far away from each other in these instances than contemporary textual evidence would suggest. Whether church officials consciously decided in favour of such artistic solutions is hard to assess, even in the few cases where textual evidence has been preserved, as the discussion of the Orthodox baptistery of Ravenna demonstrates. In any case, both lay and clerical patrons of such baptisteries would certainly have been aware of the far-reaching consequences of their artistic choices, at a point in time when the rite of initiation was of the utmost importance for Christian identity-construction.

Finally, it is important to stress that the angle on Christian identity-construction I have taken in this thesis is only one of many worth pursuing. I have argued here that we need to redefine our model of Christian identity in early Christian studies, and that archaeological and visual evidence can help us do so. To that end, we should account for the great social breadth of Christian religious practices, for the variations that occurred across provincial and urban locales, as well as for the horizontal structure of personhood, which can accommodate spiritual concerns, cultural affinities, local rooting, familial affection, gender roles, social standing and ethnic self-images, all on an equal footing.

Bibliography

AASGAARD, Reidar (2011), Ambrose and Augustine. Two Bishops on Baptism and Christian Identity. In: *Ablution, Initiation, and Baptism: Late Antiquity, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity*, ed. by David HELLHOLM, Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1253-1282.

ABULAFIA, David (2011), *The great sea: a human history of the Mediterranean*, London: Allen Lane.

ADRYCH, Philippa et al. (2017), *Images of Mithra*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

ALARCÃO, A. et al. (1992), *Conimbriga. Casa dos Repuxos*, Coimbra: Instituto Português de Museus/Museu Monográfico de Conímbriga.

ALBERTINI, Eugène (1934), L'archéologie chrétienne en Algérie. In: *Atti del III Congresso internazionale di archeologia cristiana*, ed. by Pontificio Istituto di archeologia CRISTIANA, Rome.

ALBERTZ, Rainer et al. (2014), *Family and household religion: toward a synthesis of Old Testament studies, archaeology, epigraphy, and cultural studies*, Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.

ALEXANDER, Margaret A., ENNAIFER, Mongi (eds.) (1994), *Thuburbo Majus: les mosaïques dans la région est* (Corpus des mosaïques de Tunisie, Tunis: Institut National d'Archéologie et d'Art.

ALFÖLDI-ROSENBAUM, Elisabeth, WARD-PERKINS, John Bryan (1980), *Justinianic mosaic pavements in Cyrenaican churches*, Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider.

ALLAIS, Yvonne (1938), *Djémila*, Paris: Société d'édition Les belles lettres.

ÁLVAREZ MARTÍNEZ, José María (1990), *Mosaicos romanos de Mérida: nuevos hallazgos*, Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura. Dirección General de Bellas Artes y Archivos.

AMORY, Patrick (1997), *People and identity in Ostrogothic Italy, 489-554*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

ANDRADE FILHO, Ruy de (2012), *O reino visigodo: catolicismo e permanências pagãs*, História Revista 17, 15-50.

APOSTOLOS-CAPPADONA, Diane (2011), I understand the mystery, and I recognize the sacrament. On the iconology of ablution, baptism and initiation. In: *Ablution, initiation, and baptism. Late antiquity, early Judaism, and early Christianity*, ed. by David HELLHOLM et al., Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1721-1741.

APPADURAI, Arjun (1986), Commodities and the politics of value. In: *The social life of things: commodities in cultural perspective*, ed. by Arjun APPADURAI, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 3-63.

ARBEITER, Achim, KOROL, Dieter (2016), *Der Kuppelbau von Centcelles: Neue Forschungen zu einem enigmatischen Denkmal von Weltrang*, Mainz: Philipp von Zabern.

ARBI NSIRI, Mohammed (2015), La survivance du Donatisme après la conférence de Carthage de 411. In: *L'Africa romana: Momenti di continuità e rottura*, ed. by P. RUGGERI, Rome: Carocci, 1195-1204.

ARCE, Javier (2002), *Centcelles: el monumento tardorromano: iconografía y arquitectura*, Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider.

ARCE, Javier (2005), Spain and the African provinces in late antiquity. In: *Hispania in late antiquity: current perspectives*, ed. by Kimberly Diane BOWES and Michael KULIKOWSKI, Leiden, Boston, MA: Brill, 341-361.

ARCE, Javier (2011), Fana, templa, delubra destrui praecipius: The end of the temples in Roman Spain. In: *The archaeology of late antique paganism*, ed. by Luke LAVAN and Michael MULRYAN, Leiden, Boston, MA: Brill, 195-208.

ARCE, Javier (2018), Goths and Romans in Visigothic Hispania. In: *Transformations of Romanness. Early medieval regions and identities*, ed. by Walter POHL et al., Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 371-378.

AUGUSTINE, PARSONS, Wilfrid (1951), *Letters. Volume 1, (1-82)*, Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press.

AZUARA GALVE, Sara, VILLAGORDO ROS, Carolina (2007), *La villa romana de La Loma del Regadío (Urrea de Gaén)*, Zaragoza: Prames.

BADY, Guillaume, FOSCHIA, Laurence (2014), Chrétiens, rabbins, païens dans le même bain? Les bains dans l'Orient romain (ive-viie s.) ou comment s'en accommoder. In: *25 siècles de bain collectif en Orient: Proche-Orient, Égypte et péninsule Arabique: balaneia = thermae = hammāmāt: actes du 3e colloque international Balnéorient*, ed. by Marie-Françoise BOUSSAC et al., Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 985-1000.

BALIL, Alberto (1960), *El mosaico romano de la Iglesia de San Miguel*, Cuadernos de Arqueologia e Historia de la Ciudad 1, 21-74.

BALIL, Alberto (1960), *Mosaico de Bellerofonte y la Quimera, de Torre de Bell-Lloch (Gerona)*, Archivo Espanol de Arqueologia 33, 98-112.

BALIL, Alberto (1975), Sobre los mosaicos Romanos de Galicia: identificación de un taller musivario. In: *La mosaïque gréco-romaine II: actes du IIe Colloque international pour l'étude de la mosaïque antique, Vienne, 30 août-4 septembre 1971* ed. by Henri STERN and Marcel LE GLAY, Paris: A.&J. Picard, 259-263.

BALLU, Albert (1921), *Les ruines de Djemila (antique Cuicul)*, Revue Africaine 62, 204-274.

BALLU, Albert (1923), *Rapport sur les travaux de fouilles et de consolidations effectués en 1922 aux monuments historiques de l'Algérie*, Algiers: Jules Carbonel.

BALTY, Janine (2003), La place des mosaïques de Jordanie au sein de la production orientale. In: *Les églises de Jordanie et leurs mosaiques: actes de la journée d'études sur Les Eglises de Jordanie et leurs mosaiques organisée à la occasion de l'inauguration de l'exposition "Mosaiques Byzantine de Jordanie" au musée de la Civilisation gallo-romaine à Lyon en avril 1989*, ed. by Noël DUVAL and Jean-Charles BALTY, Beirut: Institut français d'archéologie du Proche-Orient, 153-188.

BARATTE, Francois, BÉJAOUI, Fatih (2001), *Églises urbaines, églises rurales dans la Tunisie paléochrétienne: nouvelles récherches d'architecture et d'urbanisme*, Comptes rendus des séances de l'Academie des inscriptions et Belles-Lettres 145, 1447-1498.

BARATTE, Francois, BÉJAOUI, Fatih (2014), *Basiliques chrétiennes d'Afrique du Nord. II. Inventaire des monuments de la Tunisie*, Bordeaux: Ausonius.

BARNEY, Stephen A. et al. (eds.) (2006), *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

BARNISH, Sam J., MARAZZI (EDS.), Federico (2007), *The Ostrogoths. From the migration period to the sixth century*, Woodbridge: Boydell Press.

BARRAL I ALTET, Xavier (1978), *Les mosaïques romaines et médiévales de la Regio Laietana*, Barcelona: Universidad de Barcelona. Instituto de Arqueología y Prehistoria.

BARTH, Fredrik (1969), *Ethnic groups and boundaries: the social organization of culture difference*, Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

BAUER, Johannes Baptist (1972), Fluss I (Naturelement). In: *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, ed. by Theodor KLAUSER, Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 68-73.

BAYLISS, Richard (2004), *Provincial Cilicia and the Archaeology of Temple Conversion*, Oxford: Archaeopress.

BECK, Herbert (1981), Brunnen III. Religiöses. In: *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 11-16.

BÉJAOUI, Fathi (1994), *Sbeïtla, l'antique Sufetula*, Tunis: Les Éditions de l'ANEP.

BÉJAOUI, Fathi (1996), *Nouvelles données archéologiques à Sbeïtla*, Africa 14, 37-63.

BÉJAOUI, Fathi (1998), *Une nouvelle église de la région de Sufetula (Sbeïtla): Ksar El Guellal*, Africa 16, 1-14.

BÉJAOUI, Fathi (2001), *Deux mosaïques tardives de la région de Sbeïtla, l'antique Sufetula en Tunisie*, Comptes rendus des séances de l'Academie des inscriptions et Belles-Lettres 45, 489-515.

BÉJAOUI, Fathi (2016), Quelques nouvelles découvertes d' époque chrétienne en Tunisie. In: *Acta XVI congressus internationalis archaeologiae christianae (Romae 22-28.9.2013): Costantino e i Costantinidi: l'innovazione costantiniana, le sue radici e i suoi sviluppi*, ed. by Vincenzo Nicolai FIOCCHI et al., Vatican City: Pontifico Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 1679-1689.

BELAYCHE, Nicole (2007), *Des lieux pour le « profane » dans l'empire tardo-antique ? Les fêtes entre koinônia sociale et espaces de rivalités religieuses*, Antiquité Tardive 15, 36-46.

BEN ABED-BEN KHADER, Aicha (1999), Un nouvel édifice des Asclepia en Afrique à Thuburbo Majus. In: *La mosaique Gréco-Romaine* ed. by Mongi ENNAIFER and Alain REBOURG, Tunis: Institut National du Patrimoine, 321-326.

BEN ABED-BEN KHADER, Aïcha (ed.) (1985), *Thuburbo Majus: les mosaïques dans la région ouest* (Corpus des Mosaiques de Tunisie, Tunis: Institut National d'Archéologie et d'Art.

BEN ABED-BEN KHADER, Aïcha et al. (2008), *Jebel Oust*, Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome 120, 260-268.

BEN ABED-BEN KHADER, Aïcha, BONIFAY, Michel (1998), *La céramique de l'édifice des Asclepeia à Thuburbo Majus*, Antiquités Africaines 34, 231-249.

BEN ABED-BEN KHADER, Aïcha et al. (1985a), *Thuburbo Majus. Les mosaïques de la région des grands thermes*, Tunis.

BEN ABED-BEN KHADER, Aïcha et al. (1985b), *Thuburbo Majus. Les mosaïques de la région des grands thermes*, Tunis: Institut National d'Archéologie et d'Art.

BEN ABED-BEN KHADER, Aïcha et al. (2011), *Le sanctuaire de source de Jebel Oust (Tunisie)*, Les Nouvelles de l'archéologie 124, 10-14.

BEN ABED, Aïcha (1995), L'Afrique au Ve siècle à l'époque vandale: Nouvelles données de l'archéologie. In: *Carthage: L'histoire, sa trace, son écho. Catalogue de l'exposition au Musée du Petit Palais*, Paris: Paris-Musées, 308–315.

BEN ABED, Aïcha et al. (2006), *Jebel Oust*, Mélanges de l'école francaise de Rome (Antiquité) 118, 391-397.

BEN ABED, Aïcha et al. (2004), *Jebel Oust*, Mélanges de l'école francaise de Rome (Antiquité) 116, 691-713.

BEN ABED, Aicha et al. (2002), *Jebel Oust*, Mélanges de l'école francaise de Rome (Antiquité) 114, 561-566.

BEN ABED, Aïcha et al. (2001), *Jebel Oust*, Mélanges de l'école francaise de Rome (Antiquité) 113, 531-539.

BEN ABED, Aïcha, SCHEID, John (2003), Sanctuaire des eaux, sanctuaire des sources, une categorie ambigue: l'exemple de Jebel Oust (Tunisie). In: *Sanctuaires et sources*, ed. by John SCHEID and Olivier DE CAZANOVE, Naples: Publications du Centre Jean Bérard, Collège de France, 7-14.

BEN ABED, Aïcha, SCHEID, John (2005), *Nouvelles recherches archéologiques à Jebel Oust (Tunisie)*, Comptes rendus des séances de l'Academie des inscriptions et Belles-Lettres 149, 321-349.

BEN ABED, Aïcha et al. (2005), *Jebel Oust*, Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome 117, 418-427.

BENET-MARTÍNEZ, Verónica, HONG, Ying-yi (2014), *The Oxford handbook of multicultural identity*, New York: Oxford University Press.

BERGMANN, Marianne (1999), *Chiragan, Aphrodisias, Konstantinopel: zur mythologischen Skulptur der Spätantike*, Wiesbaden: Reichert.

BESCHAOUCH, Azedine et al. (1977), *Les ruines de Bulla Regia*, Rome: École française de Rome.

BISCONTI, Fabrizio (2000), *Temi di Iconografia Paleocristiana*, Vatican City: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana.

BISCONTI, Fabrizio (2001), L'iconografia dei battisteri paleocristiani in Italia. In: *Congresso Internazionale di Archeologia Cristiana - Atti*, ed. by Pontificio Istituto di archeologia CRISTIANA, 406-460.

BITRAKOVA-GROZDANOVA, Vera (1975), *Monuments paléochrétiens de la région d'Ohrid: Starohristijanski spomenici vo Ohridsko*, Ohrid: Inst. pour la Protection des Monuments de la Culture et Musée National d'Ohrid.

BLANC, André (1957), *Le baptistère de Valence (Drôme)*, Gallia 15, 87-116.

BLANCHARD-LEMÉE, Michèle (1975), *Maisons à mosaïques du quartier central de Djemila, Cuicul*, Paris: Ophrys.

BLANCO-ROTEA, Rebeca et al. (2009), *Evolución constructiva de Santa Eulalia de Bóveda (Lugo, Galicia)*, Arqueología de la Arquitectura 6, 149-198.

BLAS DE ROBLÈS, Jean-Marie, SINTÈS, Claude (2003), *Sites et monuments antiques de l'Algérie*, Aix-en-Provence: Édisud.

BLÁZQUEZ, José María (1981), *Mosaicos romanos de Córdoba, Jaén y Málaga*, Madrid: Instituto Español de Arqueología "Rodrigo Caro".

BLÁZQUEZ, José María (2008), *Arte y religión en el Mediterráneo antiguo*, Madrid: Cátedra.

BLÁZQUEZ, José María, ORTEGO Y FRÍAS, Teógenes (1983), *Mosaicos romanos de Soria*, Madrid: Instituto Español de Arqueología "Rodrigo Caro" del Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas.

BLÁZQUEZ MARTÍNEZ, José María (1994), Mosaicos hispanos de tema homérico. In: *VI Coloquio Internacional sobre mosaico antiguo (Palencia - Mérida 1990, Guadalajara 1994)*, ed. by César María BATALLA, Palencia: Asociación Española del Mosaico, 279-292

BOCKMANN, Ralf (2013), *Capital continuous: a study of Vandal Carthage and Central North Africa from an archaeological perspective*, Wiesbaden: Reichert.

BOCKMANN, Ralf (2014), The non-archaeology of Arianism – What comparing cases in Carthage, Haidra and Ravenna can tell us about 'Arian' churches. In: *Arianism: Roman heresy and barbarian creed*, ed. by Guido M. BERNDT and Roland STEINACHER, Farnham: Ashgate, 201-218.

BODEL, John P., OLYAN, Saul M. (2008), *Household and family religion in antiquity*, Oxford: Blackwell.

BONNER, Gerald (1984), *The Extinction of Paganism and the Church Historian*, Journal of Ecclesiastical History 35, 339-357.

BOURDIEU, Pierre (1991), Identity and Representation: Elements for a Critical Reflection on the Idea of Region. In: *Language and Symbolic Power*, ed. by Pierre BOURDIEU, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

BOURDY, Franck (1990), Les cheveaux des courses de chars à Rome. In: *Le Cirque et les courses de chars Rome-Byzance: catalogue de l'exposition*, ed. by Véronique FUENTES et al., Lattes: Editions Imago, Musée archéologique Henri Prades, 147-148.

BOVINI, Giuseppe (1966), *Principali restauri compiuti nel secolo scorso da Felice Kibel nei mosaici di S. Apollinare Nuovo di Ravenna*, Corso di Cultura sull'arte ravennate e bizantina 13, 83.

BOVINI, Giuseppe (1969), *Edifici di culto di Ravenna d'età preteodoriciana*, Bologna: Pàtron.

BOVINI, Giuseppe et al. (1967-2003), *Repertorium der christlich-antiken Sarkophage*, Wiesbaden: F. Steiner.

BOWERSOCK, Glenn Warren (1990), *Hellenism in late antiquity: Thomas Spencer Jerome lectures*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

BOWERSOCK, Glenn Warren (2006), *Mosaics as history: the Near East from late antiquity to Islam*, Cambridge, MA, London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

BOWES, Kim (2005), "Une coterie espagnole pieuse": Christian archaeology and Christian communities in fourth- and fifth-century Hispania. In: *Hispania in late antiquity: current perspectives*, ed. by Kim BOWES and Michael KULIKOWSKI, Leiden, Boston, MA: Brill.

BOWES, Kim (2008), *Private worship, public values, and religious change in late antiquity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

BRADSHAW, Paul F. (2006), *The Profession of Faith in Early Christian Baptism*, Evangelical Quarterly 78, 101-115.

BRANDENBURG, Hugo (1968), *Bellerophon christianus? Zur Deutung des Mosaiks von Hinton St. Mary und zum Problem der Mythendarstellungen in der kaiserzeitlichen dekorativen Kunst*, Römische Quartalschrift 63, 49-86.

BRANDS, Gunnar (2003), Die spätantike Stadt und ihre Christianisierung. In: *Die spätantike Stadt und ihre Christianisierung: Symposion vom 14. bis 16. Februar 2000 in Halle/Saale*, ed. by Gunnar BRANDS and Hans-Georg SEVERIN, Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1-26.

BRANDT, Olof (2006), The Lateran Baptistery and the diffusion of octagonal baptisteries from Rome to Constantinople. In: *Acta Congressus Internationalis XIV Archaeologiae Christianae Vindobonae 19-26 settembre 1999*, Vatican City, 221-227.

BRENK, Beat (ed.) (1977), *Spätantike und frühes Christentum*, Berlin: Propyläen.

BRÖDNER, Erika (1983), *Die römischen Thermen und das antike Badewesen. Eine kulturhistorische Betrachtung*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

BROISE, Henri et al. (2011), *Jebel Oust*, Mélanges de l'école francaise de Rome (Antiquité) 123, 328-336.

BROWN, Peter (1968), *Christianity and Local Culture in Late Roman Africa*, The Journal of Roman Studies 58, 85-95.

BROWN, Peter (1995), *Authority and the sacred: aspects of the Christianisation of the Roman world*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

BROWN, Peter (1997), Christianization and religious conflict. In: *The Cambridge Ancient History: Volume 13: The Late Empire, AD 337–425*, ed. by Averil CAMERON and Peter GARNSEY, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 632-664.

BRUBAKER, Rogers (2004), *Ethnicity without Groups* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

BUCHBERGER, Erica (2017), *Shifting ethnic identities in Spain and Gaul, 500-700 : from Romans to Goths and Franks*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

BUHLER, Frédéric M. (1975), *Les baptistères en France. De l'époque paléochrétienne à la période romane: Inventaire déscriptif*, Mulhouse: Centre de Culture Chrétienne.

BURKE, Peter J. (2003), *Advances in identity theory and research*, New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

BURKE, Peter J. (2003), Relationships among multiple identities. In: *Advances in identity theory and research*, ed. by Peter J. BURKE, New York, New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 195-216.

BURKE, Peter J., STETS, Jan E. (2009), *Identity theory*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

BURNS JR., J. Patout, JENSEN, Robin M. (2014), *Christianity in Roman Africa. The development of its practices and beliefs*, Grand Rapids, MI, Cambridge: Eerdmans.

BUSINE, Aude (2015), *Religious practices and Christianization of the late antique city (4th-7th cent.)*, Leiden, Boston, MA: Brill.

CABALLERO ZOREDA, Luis, SÁNCHEZ SANTOS, Juan Carlos (1990), *Reutilización de material romano en edificios de culto cristiano*, Antigüedad y cristianismo 7, 431-485.

CAGNAT, René (1922), *Séance, Janvier 17*, Bulletin archéologique du comité des traveaux historiques et scientifiques, XXVI-XXXII.

CAILLET, Jean-Pierre (1996), La transformation en église d'édifices publics et de temples à la fin de l'Antiquité. In: *La Fin de la cité antique et le début de la cité medievale*, ed. by Claude LEPELLEY, Bari: Edipuglia Galliard, 191-211.

CALCATERRA (ED.), Carlo (1973), *La catechesi pasquale: di Ambrogio di Milano*, Milan: Archivio Ambrosiano.

CAMERON (ED.), Averil (1993), *The Mediterranean world in late antiquity, AD 395-600*, London: Routledge.

CAMERON, Alan (2004), *Greek mythography in the Roman world*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

CAMERON, Alan (2011), *The Last Pagans of Rome*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

CAMERON, Averil (1996), Byzantine Africa: The literary evidence. In: *Changing Cultures in Early Byzantium*, ed. by Averil CAMERON, Aldershot: Variorum.

CANTINO WATAGHIN, Gisella (2011), *I primi Cristiani, tra imagines, historiae e pictura. Spunti di riflessione*, Antiquité Tardive 19, 13-34.

CARDARELLI, Sandra et al. (2012), *Art and identity: visual culture, politics and religion in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars.

CARR, Karen E. (1999), A changing world – African red slip in Roman and Visigothic Baetica. In: *The Visigoths: studies in culture and society*, ed. by Alberto FERREIRO, Leiden: Brill, 219-261.

CASEAU, Beatrice (2001), ολεμείν λίθοις. La désacralisation des espaces et des objets religieux païens durant l'Antiquité tardive. In: *Le sacré et son inscription dans l'espace à Byzance et en Occident. Études comparées*, ed. by Michel KAPLAN, Paris: Éditions de la Sorbonne.

CASEAU, Beatrice (2004), The fate of rural temples in late antiquity and the christianisation of the countryside. In: *Recent Research on the Late Antique Countryside*, ed. by William BOWDEN et al., Leiden: Brill, 103-144.

CASEAU, Beatrice (2011), Late Antique Paganism: Adaptation under duress. In: *The Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism'*, ed. by Luke LAVAN and Michael MULRYAN, Leiden, Boston, MA: Brill, 111-134.

CAST, Alicia D., BURKE, Peter J. (2002), *A theory of self esteem*, Social Forces 80, 1041-1068.

CHAMOSO, Martín (2007), *Villa Romana de Sahelices el Chico (Salamanca). El Mosaico de Belerofonte y la Quimera*, Revista de Arqueologia 312, 24-33.

CHAMPETIER, Pierre (1951), *Les conciles africaines durant la periode byzantine*, Revue Africaine 95, 103-120.

CHASTAGNOL, André, DUVAL, Noël (1974), La survivance du culte impérial dans l'Afrique du Nord à l'époque vandale. In: *Mélanges d'histoire ancienne offerts à William Seston*, ed. by William SESTON, Paris: E. de Boccard.

CHAVARRÍA ARNAU, Alexandra (2004), Interpreting the Transformation of Late Roman Villas: The Case of Hispania. In: *Landscapes of change : rural evolutions in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages*, ed. by Neil CHRISTIE, Aldershot: Ashgate, 67-102.

CHICK, Jane (2014), *The large Pavement at Qasr el-Lebia in Cyrenaica: Episodes, Narratives and Transformations*, (unpublished): University of East Anglia.

CHRISTERN, Jürgen (1976), *Das frühchristliche Pilgerheiligtum von Tebessa*, Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner.

CHRYSOLOGUS, Peter (2005), *St. Peter Chrysologus: selected sermons*, Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press.

CIAMPINI, Giovanni G. (1699), *Vatera Monimenta*, Rome.

CINTAS, Jean, FEUILLE, George Louis (1952), *Eglise et baptistère de Thibiuca*, Karthago 3, 195-205.

CLARKE, John R. (2003), *Art in the lives of ordinary Romans: visual representation and non-elite viewers in Italy, 100 B.C.-A.D. 315*, Berkeley, CA, London: University of California Press.

CLAUSSEN, Peter Cornelius (1994), Der Marmorbrunnen von S. Bartolomeo all'Isola in Rom oder: Immer wenn der Tiber kam. In: *Georges-Bloch-Jahrbuch des Kunstgeschichtlichen Seminars der Universität Zürich*, ed. by Wolfgang KERSTEN and Wolfgang KÜBLER, Zurich: Kunsthistorisches Institut der Universität Zürich, 70-91.

COLE, Elizabeth R. (2009), *Intersectionality and research in psychology*, American Psychologist 64, 170-180.

COLEMAN, Kathleen M. (1990), *Fatal Charades: Roman Executions Staged as Mythological Enactments*, Journal of Roman Studies 80, 44-73.

COLEMAN, Simon, COLLINS, Peter (2004), *Religion, identity and change : perspectives on global transformations*, Aldershot: Ashgate.

CONANT, Jonathan (2015), *Staying Roman: conquest and identity in Africa and the Mediterranean*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

CONANT, Jonathan (2016), Donatism in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries. In: *The Donatist Schism. Controversy and Contexts*, ed. by Richard MILES, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 345-386.

COSH, Stephen R., NEAL, David S. (2002), *Croughton. Mosaic 86.1*, Roman Mosaics of Britain 1, 234-236.
COURTOIS, Christian (1955), *Les Vandales et l'Afrique*, Paris: Arts et métiers graphiques.
COURTOIS, Christian (1955), *Sur un baptistère découvert dans la région de Kélibia (Cap Bon)*, Karthago 6, 98-123.
CRUZ VILLALÓN, María (1985), *Mérida Visigoda. La escultura arquitectónica y litúrgica*, Badajoz: Colección Roso de Luna.
CUNLIFFE, Barry W. (1969), *Roman Bath*, London: Society of Antiquaries of London.
DANTHINE, Hélène (1937), *Le palmier-dattier et les arbres sacrés dans l'iconographie de l'Asie occidentale ancienne*, Paris: P. Geuthner.
DAWSON, Mike, NEAL, David S. (2010), *New Fragments and Further Excavation of the Bellerophon Mosaic from Croughton*, Britannia 41, 313-339.
DE BRUYNE, Lucien (1957), La décoration des baptistères paleochrétiens. In: *Actes du Ve Congrès International d'Archéologie Chrétienne*, ed. by Congresso internazionale di archeologia CRISTIANA, Vatican City: Pontificio Istituto di archeologia cristiana, 340-369.
DEICHMANN, Friedrich Wilhelm (1939), *Frühchristliche Kirchen in antiken Heiligtümern*, Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts 54, 105-139.
DEICHMANN, Friedrich Wilhelm (1974), *Ravenna: Hauptstadt des spätantiken Abendlandes*, Stuttgart: Steiner.
DEICHMANN, Friedrich Wilhelm (1975), *Die Spolien der spätantiken Architektur*, Munich: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.
DENNIS, Nathan S. (2017), Living Water, Living Presence: Animating Sacred Space in the Early Christian Baptistery. In: *Holy Water in the Hierotopy and Iconography of the Christian World*, ed. by Alexei LIDOV, Moscow: Russian Academy of Arts, 89-117.
DEY, Hendrik W. (2015), *The afterlife of the Roman city. Architecture and ceremony in late antiquity and the early middle ages*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
DI FRANCESCO, Carla et al. (2011), *Il Battistero Neoniano: uno sguardo attraverso il restauro*, Ravenna: Longo.
DIEHL, Charles (1928), *Ravenne. Les villes d'art célèbres*, Paris.
DIJKSTRA, Jitse H.F. (2011), The fate of the temples in late antique Egypt. In: *The archaeology of late antique paganism*, ed. by Luke LAVAN and Michael MULRYAN, Leiden, Boston, MA: Brill, 389-436.
DINKLER-VON SCHUBERT, Erika (1972), Fluss 2 (ikonographisch). In: *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, ed. by Theodor KLAUSER, Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 73-100.
DINSMOOR, William B. Jr. (1975), The Baptistery: Its Roofing and Related Problems. In: *Studies in the antiquities of Stobi*, ed. by James WISEMAN, Belgrade: Boston University, 15-25.
DÖLGER, Franz J. (1932), *Die Münze im Taufbecken und die Münzen-Funde in Heilquellen der Antike*, Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum 3, 1-24.
DOMAGALSKI, Bernhard (1990), *Der Hirsch in spätantiker Literatur und Kunst: unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der frühchristlichen Zeugnisse*, Münster: Aschendorff.
DOSSEY, Leslie (2010), *Peasant and empire in Christian North Africa*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
DREWER, Lois (1981), *Fisherman and fish pond: From the sea of sin to the living waters*, Art Bulletin 63, 533-547.
DROOGAN, Julian (2013), *Religion, material culture and archaeology*, London, New York: Bloomsbury Academic.
DUJARIER, Michel (1979), *A history of the catechumenate: the first six centuries*, New York: Sadlier.
DUNBABIN, Katherine (1978), *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa. Studies in Iconography and Patronage*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
DUNBABIN, Katherine (1980), A mosaic workshop in Carthage around 400 A.D. In: *New light on ancient Carthage*, ed. by John GRIFFITHS PEDLEY, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 73-84.

DUNBABIN, Katherine (2012), Expressiones de Cultura en un Mondo Cristiano: Escenas Mitológicas e Mosaicos del Mediterranéo Oriental durante los Siglos V y VI D.C. In: *Civilización y barbarie: el mito como argumento en los mosaicos romanos*, ed. by Luz NEIRA, Madrid: CVG.

DUNBABIN, Katherine (2014), Mythology and Theatre in the Mosaics of the Graeco-Roman East. In: *Using Images in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Stine BIRK et al., Oxford: Oxbow Books, 227-252.

DURÁN, Mercedes (1993), *Iconografía de los mosaicos romanos en la Hispania alto-imperial*, Barcelona: Universitat Rovira i Virgili.

DUVAL, Noël (1964), *Observations sur l'urbanisme tardive de Sufetula (Tunisie)*, Les Cahiers de Tunisie 12, 87-106.

DUVAL, Noël (1971), *Église et temple en Afrique du Nord*, Bulletin archéologique du comité des traveaux historiques et scientifiques, 265-296.

DUVAL, Noël (1971), *Les églises africaines à deux absides. Recherches archéologiques sur la liturgie chrétienne en Afrique du Nord. I: Les basiliques de Sbeitla à deux sanctuaires opposés*, Paris: E. de Boccard.

DUVAL, Noël (1971), *Les églises africaines à deux absides. Récherches archéologiques sur la liturgie chrétienne en Afrique du Nord. I: Les basiliques de Sbeitla à deux sanctuaires opposés*, Paris: E. de Boccard.

DUVAL, Noël (1972), *Études d'architecture chrétienne nord-africaine*, Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome. Antiquité 84, 1071-1172.

DUVAL, Noël (1973), *Les églises africaines à deux absides. Récherches archéologiques sur la liturgie chrétienne en Afrique du Nord. II: Inventaire des monuments. Interprétation*, Paris: Boccard.

DUVAL, Noël (1974), *Le dossier de l'église d'El Mouassat (au sud-ouest de Sfax, Tunisie)*, Antiquités Africaines 8, 157-173.

DUVAL, Noël (1980), *Les baptistères d'Acholla (Tunesie) et l'origine des baptistères polyobés en Afrique du Nord*, Etudes d'Archeologie Chrétienne Nord-Africaine IX. Ant. Africains 15, 329-342.

DUVAL, Noël (1982), L'urbanisme de Sufetula = Sbeitla en Tunisie. In: *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung*, ed. by Wolfgang HAASE and Hildegard TEMPORINI, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 596-631.

DUVAL, Noël (1985), *Une hypothèse sur la basilique de Rutilius à Mactar et le temple qui l'a précédée*, Revue d'Études Augustiniennes et Patristiques 31, 20-45.

DUVAL, Noël (1989), *L'évêque et la cathédrale en Afrique du Nord*, Actes du XIe Congrès international d'archéologie chrétienne 11, 345-399.

DUVAL, Noël (1990), Les prix du cirque dans l'antiquité tardive. In: *Cirques et courses de char. Rome-Byzance* ed. by Christian LANDES, Lattes: Edition Imago, 135-146.

DUVAL, Noël (1992), *Recherches nouvelles sur les prix de concours représentés sur les mosaïques*, Bulletin archéologique du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques. Fasc. B, Afrique du Nord 22, 177-209.

DUVAL, Noël (1999), *L'église V (des Saints-Gervais-Protais-et-Tryphon) à Sbeitla (Sufetula), Tunisie. [Recherches 1954-1963]*, Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome. Antiquité 111, 927-989.

DUVAL, Noël (2011), *Les prix de concours de l'Antiquité tardive: nouveautés, hypothèses et doutes* Bulletin de la Société nationale des antiquaires de France 2004-2005, 250-257.

DUVAL, Noël , FÉVRIER, Paul-Albert (1991), La basilique cimétériale de l'Est à Djémila. Une église à crypte méconnue. In: *Aevum inter utrumque: mélanges offerts à Gabriel Sanders*, ed. by Marc VAN UYTFANGHE and Roland DEMEULENAERE, Steenbrugis: Abbatia S. Petri, 133-142.

DUVAL, Noël, BARATTE, Francois (1973), *Les ruines de Sufetula (Sbeitla)*, Tunis: Societé Tunisienne de Diffusion.

DUVAL, Noël, LAZREG, Nejib Ben (1995), Le baptistère de Bekalta. In: *Carthage. L'histoire, sa trace, son écho: catalogue de l'exposition à Paris*, Paris: Musée du Petit Palais.

DUVAL, Yvette (1982), *Loca sanctorum Africae: le culte des martyrs en Afrique du IVe au VIIe siècle*, Rome: École française de Rome.

ELSNER, Jaś (1995), *Art and the Roman Viewer*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

ELSNER, Jaś (1998), *Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

ELSNER, Jaś (2007), Genders of viewing. Visualizing women in the casket of Projecta. In: *Roman eyes : visuality and subjectivity in art and text*, ed. by Jaś ELSNER, Princeton, NJ, Oxford: Princeton University Press.

ELSNER, Jaś (2010), Alois Riegl and Classical Archeology. In: *Alois Riegl, revisited: contributions to the opus and its reception*, ed. by Peter NOEVER et al., Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 45-57.

ELSNER, Jaś (2012), Material Culture and Ritual: State of the Question. In: *Architecture of the sacred: space, ritual, and experience from classical Greece to Byzantium*, ed. by Bonna D. WESCOAT and Robert G. OUSTERHOUT, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

ELSNER, Jaś, HERNÁNDEZ LOBATO (EDS.), Jesús (2017), *The poetics of late Latin literature*, New York: Oxford University Press.

ELSNER, Jaś, SQUIRE, Michael (2016), Sight and memory. The visual art of Roman mnemonics. In: *Sight and the Ancient Senses*, ed. by Michael SQUIRE, Abingdon: Routledge, 1-35.

ELSNER, Jaś, SQUIRE, Michael (2018), Homer and the Ekphrasists: Text and Picture in the Elder Philostratus' 'Scamander' (Imagines I.1). In: *The archaeology of Greece and Rome: studies in honour of Anthony Snodgrass*, ed. by John L. BINTLIFF and N. K. RUTTER, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 57-99.

ENGEMANN, Josef (1973), *Palästinische Pilgerampullen im F. J. Dölger Institut in Bonn*, Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum 16, 5-27.

ENNAIFER, Mongi (1983), *Le thème des chevaux vainqueurs à travers la série des mosaïques africaines*, Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome 95, 817-858.

ESTÁCIO DA VEIGA, Sebastião Philippes Martins (1878), *Catalogo dos monumentos e objectos de arte antiga, descobertos e obtidos no reconhecimento das antiguidades do districto de Faro, feito desde março de 1877 até outubro de 1878, para o levantamento da Carta Archeologica do Algarve em virtude da portaria de 15 de janeiro de 1877 por S. P. M. Estacio da Veiga*, Lisbon: Archive of the Museu Nacional de Arqueologia Lisbon.

ESTÁCIO DA VEIGA, Sebastião Philippes Martins (1885), *Inventario do Museu Archeologico do Algarve fundado em 1880 na Academia Real de Bellas Artes de Lisboa por Sebastião Phillipes Martinus Estácio da Veiga*, Archive of the Museu Nacional de Arqueologia Lisbon.

FAUSONE, Alfonso (1982), *Die Taufe in der frühchristlichen Sepulkralkunst*, Vatican City: Pontificio Istituto di archeologia cristiana.

FEHR, Hubert et al. (eds.) (forthcoming), *The Transformation of Romanness - Archaeological Perspectives 400-800 AD*, Berlin, New York: De Gruyter.

FENDRI, Mohamed (1965), Évolution chronologique et stylistique d'un ensemble de mosaiques dans une station thermale à Djebel Oust (Tunisie). In: *La mosaique gréco-romaine*, Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la Recherche scientifique, 157-173.

FENWICK, Corisande (2013), *From Africa to Ifrīqiya: Settlement and society in early medieval North Africa (650-800)*, Al-Masaq: Journal of the Medieval Mediterranean 25, 9-33.

FERGUSON, Everett (2009), *Baptism in the early church: History, theology, and liturgy in the first five centuries*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

FERNANDEZ ALONSO, Justo (1955), *La cura pastoral en la España romanovisigoda*, Rome: Iglesia Nacional Española.

FERRARI, Anna (2011), *La rilettura cristiana dei miti pagani*, Antiquité Tardive 19, 209-222.

FERREIRO, Alberto (ed.) (1999), *The Visigoths: Studies in Culture and Society*, Leiden, Boston, Cologne: Brill.

FEUILLE, George Louis (1949), *Une mosaïque chrétienne de l'Henchir Messaouda*, Cahiers archéologiques 4, 9-16.
FÉVRIER, Paul-Albert (1957), *Les baptistères de Provence pendant le moyen âge*, Actes du Ve congrès international d'archéologie chrétienne 5, 423-432.
FÉVRIER, Paul-Albert (1966), *Remarques sur les mosaïques de basse époque à Djemila (Algérie)*, Bulletin de la Société nationale des antiquaires de France Année 1965, 85-92.
FÉVRIER, Paul-Albert (1967), *Inscriptions chrétiennes de Djémila (Cuicul)*, Bulletin d'Archéologie Algérienne 1 (1962-1965), 207-226.
FÉVRIER, Paul-Albert (1984), *L'abeille et la seiche (à propos du baptistère de Kélibia)*, Rivista di Archeologia Christiana 60, 277–292.
FÉVRIER, Paul-Albert (1996), Notes sur le développement urbain en Afrique du Nord. Les exemples comparés de Djemila et Sétif (1964). In: *La Méditerrannée de Paul-Albert Février (reprint)*, Rome: École francaise de Rome, 651-697.
FOCILLON, Henri (1964), *Vie des formes, suivie de Éloge de la main*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
FOLETTI, Ivan (2009), Saint Ambroise et le Baptistère des Orthodoxes de Ravenne. Autour du Lavement des pieds dans la liturgie baptismale. In: *Fons Vitae. Baptême, baptistères et rites d'initiation (IIe-VIe siècle)*, ed. by Ivan FOLETTI and Serena ROMANO, Rome: Viella, 121-155.
FOLETTI, Ivan, ROMANO (ED.), Serena (2009), *Fons Vitae: Baptême, Baptistères et Rites d'initiation (IIe-VIe siècle)*, Rome: Viella.
FOSCHIA, Laurence (2000), *La réutilisation des sanctuaires païens par les Chrétiens en Grèce continentale (IV e VIIe s.)*, Revue des Études Greques 113, 413-434.
FOWDEN, Garth (1998), Polytheist Religion and Philosophy. In: *The Late Empire, A.D. 337–425*, ed. by Averil CAMERON and Peter GARNSEY, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 538-560.
FRANCOVICH ONESTI, Nicoletta (2002), *I Vandali: lingua e storia*, Rome: Carocci.
FRANKFURTER, David (1998), *Pilgrimage and holy space in late antique Egypt*, Leiden: Brill.
FREND, William Hugh Clifford (1952), *The Donatist Church: A Movement of Protest in Roman North Africa*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
GANDOLFI, Daniela (ed.) (2001), *L'edificio battesimale in Italia: Aspetti e problemi: atti dell'VIII Congresso Nazionale di Archeologia Cristiana, Genova, Sarzana, Albenga, Finale Ligure, Ventimiglia; 21-26 settembre 1998* (Atti dei convegni / Istituto Internazionale di Studi Liguri, Bordighera: Ist. Internazionale di Studi Liguri.
GARCIA GONZÁLEZ, Teodoro (1979), La iglesia desde la conversión de Recaredo hasta la invasion árabe. In: *Historia de la Iglesia en España*, ed. by Ricardo GARCIA VILLOSLADA, Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 663-669.
GARCÍA MORENO, Luis A. (2001), El Cristianismo y el final de los ludi en las Espanas. In: *Hispánia en la Antigüedad Tardía: ocio y espectáculos, Actas del 2 Encuentro Hispania en la Antigüedad Tardía, Alacalá de Henares, 15 a 17 de octubre de 1997*, ed. by Luis A. GARCÍA MORENO and Sebastián RASCÓN MARQUÉS, Alcalá Henares: Universidad del Alcalá, 7-17.
GARCIA Y BELLIDO, Antonio (1968), *Nueve Studios sobre la Legio VII Gemina y su Campamento en Léon*, Léon: Diputacion Provincal de Léon.
GARRUCCI, Raffaele (1872-1881), *Storia della arte cristiana nei primi otto secoli della chiesa*, Prato: G. Guasti.
GATEAU, Albert (1942), *Ibn 'Abd al-Hakam. Conquête de l'Afrique du Nord et de l'Espagne*, Algiers: Éditions Carbonel.
GERBER, Adolf (1883), *Naturpersonification in Poesie und Kunst der Alten*, Leipzig: B. G. Teubner.
GEROLA, Giuseppe (1917), *La tecnica dei restauri ai mosaici di Ravenna*, Estratto dagli Atti e memorie della R. Deputazione di Storia Patria per la Romagna (Atti per la Romagna) VII, 101-194.
GESSEL, Wilhelm (1981), *Monumentale Spuren des Christentums im Römischen Nordafrika*, Antike Welt 12, 3-76.

GHALIA, Tahar (1989), *Hergla et les mosaïques de pavement des basiliques chrétiennes de Tunisie: plan, décor et liturgie*.

GHALIA, Tahar (2002), *L'architecture religieuse en Tunisie aux Ve et VIe siècles*, Antiquité Tardive 10, 213-222.

GIET, Stanislas (1949), *Basile de Césarée, Homélies sur l'Hexaéméron*, Paris: Éditions du Cerf.

GILSON, Etienne (ed.) (1999), *Philosophie et incarnation selon saint Augustin: suivi de, Saint Augustin: Lettre XVIII, Sermon contre les païens, Dolbeau 26* (Saint Augustin, Philosophie et incarnation, Geneva: Ad Solem.

GIORDANI, Barbara (2002), La basilica III di Sufetula. In: *L'Africa romana: lo spazio marittimo del Mediterraneo occidentale: geografia storica ed economia (atti del XIV Convegno di studio, Sassari, 7-10 dicembre 2000)*, ed. by M. KHANOUSSI et al., Rome: Carocci, 2059-2066.

GODOY FERNÁNDEZ, Cristina (1989), Baptistérios Hispánicos (Siglos IV-VIII). Arqueologia y Liturgia. In: *Actes du XIe Congrès international d'archéologie chrétienne*, ed. by Noël DUVAL and Philippe PERGOLA, Rome: École française de Rome, 607-635.

GODOY FERNÁNDEZ, Cristina (1995), *Arqueología y liturgia. Iglesias hispánicas (siglos IV al VIII)*, Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona, Port de Tarragona.

GODOY FERNÁNDEZ, Cristina (2004), A los pies del templo. Espacios litúrgicos en contraposición al altar: una revisión. In: *Sacralidad y Arqueología*, ed. by José María BLÁSQUEZ MARTÍNEZ and Antonino GONZÁLEZ BLANCO, Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, 473-498.

GOMBRICH, Ernst (1971), Personification. In: *Classical influences on European culture A.D. 500-1500*, ed. by Robert Ralph BOLGAR, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 247-258.

GÓMEZ-MORENO, Manuel (1925), *Catálogo Monumental de España. Provincia de León*, Madrid: Ministerio de Instruccíon Pública y Bellas Artes.

GOODMAN, Martin (1994), *Mission and conversion: proselytizing in the religious history of the Roman Empire*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

GRABAR, André (1946), *Martyrium. Récherches sur le culte des reliques et l'art chrétien antique. Architecture*, Paris: Collège de France.

GRABAR, André (1959), *À propos d'une icone byzantine du xive siècle au musée de Sofia*, Cahiers Archéologique 10, 289-304.

GRABAR, André (1961), *Christian Iconography. A Study of its Origins*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

GRAEN, Dennis (2004), *"Sepultus in villa" – Bestattet in der Villa: Drei Zentralbauten in Portugal zeugen vom Grabprunk der Spätantike*, Antike Welt 35, 65-74.

GRAEN, Dennis (2005), Kaiserzeitliche Grabmonumente in der Lusitania zwischen Romanisierung und Afrikanisierung. In: *Romanisierung – Romanisation. Theoretische Modelle und praktische Fallbeispiele*, ed. by Günther SCHÖRNER, Oxford: Archaeopress, 135-147.

GRAEN, Dennis (2005), *Os mosaicos do "santuário" de Milreu, Estói (Algarve), no contexto de uma nova interpretação*, O Arqueólogo Português IV, 367-415.

GRAEN, Dennis (2005), *The So-Called Temples of Milreu, Sao Cucufate and Quinta de Marim – A Suggestion of a New Interpretation of Their Function, Based on Actual Excavations and Iconographic Studies*, Xelb. Actas do II Encontro do Arqueologia do Algarve, Silves 17.-19.10.2003 5, 70-80.

GRAHAME, Mark (1998), Material culture and Roman identity: the spatial layout of Pompeian houses and the problem of ethnicity. In: *Cultural Identity in the Roman Empire*, ed. by Ray LAURENCE and Joanne BERRY, London: Routledge, 156-178.

GRAVES-BROWN, Paul et al. (1996), *Cultural identity and archaeology: the construction of European communities*, London: Routledge.

GREATREX, Geoffrey (2000), Roman identity in the sixth century. In: *Ethnicity and culture in late antiquity*, ed. by Stephen MITCHELL and Geoffrey GREATREX, London, Swansea: Duckworth, Classical Press of Wales, 267-292.

GREENHALGH, Michael (1989), *The Survival of Roman Antiquities in the Middle Ages*, London: Duckworth.
GRÉGOIRE, Henri (1938), *Les baptistères de Cuicul et de Doura*, Byzantion 13, 589-593.
GRIESBACH, Jochen (2009), Grabbauten und Villen auf der iberischen Halbinsel. In: *Grabbauten des 2. und 3. Jahrhunderts in den gallischen und germanischen Provinzen. Akten des Internationalen Kolloquiums Köln, 22. bis 23 Februar 2007*, ed. by Dietrich BOSCHUNG, Wiesbaden: Reichert, 269-311.
GRIG, Lucy (2017), *Popular culture in the ancient world*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
GROSSMANN, Peter (1986), *Abu Mina: a guide to the ancient pilgrimage center*, Cairo: Fotiadis & Co. Press.
GSELL, Stéphane (1952), *Cherchel. Antique IOL-Caesarea*, Algiers: Service des antiquités.
GUARDIA, Milagros (1992), *Los Mosaicos de la antigüedad tardía en Hispania: Estudios de iconografía*, Barcelona: PPU.
GUI, Isabelle et al. (1992), *Basiliques chrétiennes d'Afrique du Nord. Inventaire des Monuments de l'Algérie*, Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes.
GUIDETTI, Mattia (2017), *In the shadow of the church: the building of mosques in early medieval Syria*, Leiden, Boston, MA: Brill.
GUYON, Jean (2000), *Les premiers baptistères des Gaules (IVe-VIIIe siècles)*, Rome: Unione Internazionale degli Istituti di Archeologia Storia e Storia dell'Arte in Roma.
HACHLILI, Rachel (2009), *Ancient Mosaic Pavements. Themes, Issues, and Trends*, Leiden: Brill.
HAHN, Johannes et al. (2008), *From Temple to Church: Destruction and Renewal of Local Cultic Topography in Late Antiquity*: Brill.
HALSALL, Guy (2007), *Barbarian migrations and the Roman West, 376-568*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
HANDELMAN, Don (1977), *The Organization of Ethnicity*, Ethnic Groups 1, 187-200.
HANFMANN, George M.A. (1980), The Continuity of Classical Art: Culture, Myth and Faith. In: *Age of Spirituality. A Symposium*, ed. by Kurt WEITZMANN, New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 75-98.
HANSON, Richard Patrick Crosland Hanson (1978), *The transformation of pagan temples into churches in the early Christian centuries*, Journal of Semitic Studies 23, 257-267.
HARMLESS, William (2014), *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press.
HARRISON, Carol et al. (2014), *Being Christian in late antiquity: a festschrift for Gillian Clark*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
HAUSCHILD, Theodor (1964), *Der Kultbau neben dem römischen Ruinenkomplex bei Estoi in der Provincia Lusitania (Ph.D. Thesis)*, Berlin.
HAUSCHILD, Theodor (1980), *Milreu, Estoi (Algarve), Untersuchungen neben der Taufpiscina und Sondagen in der Villa, Kampagnen 1971 und 1979*, Madrider Mitteilungen 21.
HAUSCHILD, Theodor (1980), *Milreu/Estoi (Algarve): Untersuchungen neben der Taufpiscina und Sondagen in der Villa – Kampagnen 1971 und 1979*, Madrider Mitteilungen 21, 189-219.
HAUSCHILD, Theodor (1984), Die Mosaiken am Podium des Wasserheiligtums von Milreu, Estoi (Algarve). In: *La Mosaïque Gréco-Romaine IV*, ed. by Jean-Pierre DARMON and Alain REBOURG, Paris: Supplément au Bulletin de l'A.I.E.M.A., 285-291.
HAUSCHILD, Theodor (2002), O "ninfeu" de Milreu. In: *Religiões da Lusitânia. Loquuntur saxa.*, ed. by Museu Nacional de ARQUEOLOGIA, Lisbon, 241-244.
HAUSCHILD, Theodor (2008), *A arquitectura a os mosaicos do "edifício de culto" ou "aula" da villa romana de Milreu*, Revista de História da Arte 6, 17-31.
HAUSCHILD, Theodor, TEICHNER, Felix (2002), *Milreu. Ruins*, Lisbon: IPPAR – Departamento de Estudos.
HEATHER, P. J. (1999), *The Visigoths from the migration period to the seventh century : an ethnographic perspective*, Woodbridge: Boydell.
HEATHER, Peter J. (2007), *The fall of the Roman Empire: a new history of Rome and the Barbarians*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

HEINZ, Werner Helmut (1983), *Römische Thermen: Badewesen und Badeluxus im Römischen Reich*, Munich: Hirmer.

HELLHOLM (ED.), David (2011), *Ablution, initiation, and baptism: late antiquity, early Judaism, and early Christianity = Waschungen, Initiation und Taufe: Spätantike, frühes Judentum und frühes Christentum*, Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter.

HEN, Yitzhak (2007), *Roman Barbarians: the Royal Court and culture in the early medieval West*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

HEN, Yitzhak (2018), Compelling and intense: The Christian transformation of Romanness. In: *Transformations of Romanness. Early Medieval Regions and Identities*, ed. by Walter POHL et al., Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 41-57.

HENIG, Martin (2012), From Romano-British Hero to Patron-Saint of England: the Transformations of Bellerophon and his Chimera. In: *Myth, allegory, emblem: the many lives of the Chimaera of Arezzo: proceedings of the international colloquium, Malibu, the J. Getty Museum (December 4-5, 2009)*, ed. by Giuseppina Carlotta CIANFERONI et al., Rome: Aracne, 137-150.

HIDRI, Hava et al. (2011), *Die frühchristliche Basilika in Arapaj/Durrës (Albanien)*, Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

HILLER, Stefan (1970), *Bellerophon. Ein griechischer Mythos in der römischen Kunst*, Munich: Wilhelm Fink.

HINGLEY, Richard (2005), *Globalizing Roman culture: unity, diversity and empire*, London: Routledge.

HOPKINS, Clark (1934), *Christian Church at Dura Europos*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

HORDEN, Peregrine, PURCELL, Nicholas (2000), *The corrupting sea: a study of Mediterranean history*, Oxford: Blackwell.

HOWES, David (1996), Cultural appropriation and resistance in the American Southwest. Decommodifying 'Indianness'. In: *Cross-Cultural Consumption: Global Markets, Local Realities*, ed. by David HOWES, London, New York: Routledge, 138-160.

HUMBERT, Jean-Baptiste (1999), The Rivers of Paradise in the Byzantine church near Jabaliyah – Gaza. In: *The Madapa Map Centenary*, ed. by Michele PICCIRILLO and Eugenio ALLIATA, Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 216-218.

HUMPHRIES, Mark, GWYNN, David M. (2010), The Sacred and the Secular: The Presence or Absence of Christain Religious Thought in Secular Writing in the Late Antique West. In: *Religious diversity in late antiquity*, ed. by David M. GWYNN et al., Leiden, Boston, MA: Brill, 493-509

HURST, Henry R. (1999), *The sanctuary of Tanit at Carthage in the Roman period: a re-interpretation*, Portsmouth, RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology.

HUSKINSON, Janet (1974), *Some Pagan Mythological Figures and Their Significance in Early Christian Art*, Papers of the British School at Rome 42, 68-97.

IANNUCCI, Anna Maria (1984), Una ricognizione al Battistero Neoniano. In: *31. Corso di Cultura sull'Arte Ravennate e Bizantina*, ed. by Raffaella FARIOLI CAMPANATI, Ravenna: Del Girasole, 297-339.

IANNUCCI, Anna Maria (1985), Nuove ricerche al Battistero Neoniano. In: *32. Corso di Cultura sull'Arte Ravennate e Bizantina. Seminario Internazionale di Studi su "Cipro e il Mediterraneo orientale"*, ed. by Raffaella FARIOLI CAMPANATI, Ravenna: Del Girasole, 79-107.

IANNUCCI, Anna Maria et al. (2001), Il nuovo atlante dei mosaici del Battistero Neoniano: catalogazione fotografica e riflettografica. In: *44. Corso di Cultura sull'Arte Ravennate e Bizantina. Seminario internazionale di studi sul tema: Le grandi isole del Mediterraneo orientale tra tarda antichità e medioevo; Ravenna, 19-21 settembre 1998*, ed. by Raffaella FARIOLI CAMPANATI, Ravenna: Del Girasole, 333-359.

IHM, Christa (1960), *Die Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei vom vierten Jahrhundert bis zur Mitte des achten Jahrhunderts*, Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner.

INGLEBERT, Hervé (2004), Éducation et culture chez les chrétiens de l'antiquité tardive. In: *Que reste-t-il de l'éducation classique: Relire le Marrou, Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité*, ed. by Jean-Marie PAILLER and Pascal PAYEN, Toulouse: Presses universitaires du Mirail, 333-341.

INSOLL, Timothy (2011), Christianity. In: *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Ritual and Religion*, ed. by Timothy INSOLL, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 948-966.

ITURGAIZ, Domingo (1967), *Baptisterios paleocristianos de Hispania*, Analecta Sacra Tarraconensia 40, 209-295.

ITURGAIZ, Domingo (1968), *Baptisterios paleocristianos de Hispania*, Analecta Sacra Tarraconensia 41, 209-244.

JACOBS, Ine (2013), *Aesthetic Maintenance of Civic Space. The 'Classical' City from the fourth to the seventh c. AD* Leuven-Paris-Walpole, MA: Peeters.

JACOBS, Ine (2014), *Ecclesiastical dominance and urban setting. Colonnaded streets as back-drop for Christian display*, Antiquité Tardive 22, 263-286.

JACOBS, Ine (2014), Temples and Civic Representation in the Theodosian Period. In: *Using Images in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Stine BIRK et al., Oxford: Oxbow Books, 132-149.

JACOBS, Ine (2015), Holy goals and worldly means. Urban representation elements in church complexes. In: *Religious practices and Christianization of the late antique city (4th-7th cent.)*, ed. by Aude BUSINE, Leiden, Boston, MA: Brill, 71-114.

JACOBS, Ine, RICHARD, Julian (2012), *"We Surpass the Beautiful Waters of Other Cities by the Abundance of Ours": Reconciling Function and Decoration in Late Antique Fountains*, Journal of Late Antiquity 5, 3-71.

JACOBY, Adolf (1902), *Ein bisher unbeachteter apokrypher Bericht über die Taufe Jesu nebst Beiträgen zur Geschichte der Didaskalie der zwölf Apostel und Erläuterungen zu den Darstellungen der Taufe Jesu*, Strasbourg: Trübner.

JÄGGI, Carola (2016), *Ravenna: Kunst und Kultur einer spätantiken Residenzstadt: die Bauten und Mosaiken des 5. und 6. Jahrhunderts*, Regensburg: Schnell + Steiner.

JENSEN, Robin M. (2015), Archaeology of Christian initiation. In: *A companion to the archaeology of religion in the ancient world*, ed. by Rubina RAJA and Jörg RÜPKE, Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 254-267.

JENSEN, Robin Margaret (1993), *What Are Pagan River Gods Doing in Scenes of Jesus' Baptism?*, Bible Review Washington 9, 34-34.

JENSEN, Robin Margaret (2000), *Understanding early Christian art*, London: Routledge.

JENSEN, Robin Margaret (2011), *Living Water: Images, Symbols, and Settings of Early Christian Baptism*, Leiden: Brill.

JENSEN, Robin Margaret (2012), *Baptismal imagery in early Christianity: Ritual, visual, and theological dimensions*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

JEROME, EWALD, Marie Liguori (1964), *The homilies of Saint Jerome*, Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press.

JIMÉNEZ SÁNCHEZ, Juan Antonio (2010), *Los juegos paganos en la Roma cristiana*, Treviso, Rome: Fondazione Benetton studi ricerche, Viella.

JIMÉNEZ SÁNCHEZ, Juan Antonio, SALES CARBONELL, Jordina (2004), Termas e Iglesias durante la antigüedad tardía: Reutilización arquitectónica o conflicto religioso? Algunos ejemplos hispanos. In: *Sacralidad y Archeología*, ed. by José María BLÁSQUEZ MARTÍNEZ and Antonino GONZÁLEZ BLANCO, Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, 185-201.

JOHNSON, Maxwell E. (1999), *The rites of Christian initiation: their evolution and interpretation*, Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press.

JONES, Lindsay (2000), *The hermeneutics of sacred architecture: experience, interpretation, comparison*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

JONES, Siân, GRAVES-BROWN, Paul (1996), Introduction. Archaeology and cultural identity in Europe. In: *Cultural identity and archaeology : the construction of European communities*, ed. by Paul GRAVES-BROWN et al., London: Routledge, 1-24.

JOOSEN, Josephus C., WASZINK, Jan Hendrik (1950), Allegorese. In: *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, ed. by Theodor KLAUSER, Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 283-294.
JORGE, Ana Maria (1999), Church and culture in Lusitania in the V-VIII centuries: A late Roman province at the crossroads. In: *The Visigoths: studies in culture and society*, ed. by Alberto FERREIRO, Leiden: Brill, 99-122.
JOSSELSON, Ruthellen, HARWAY, Michele (2012), *Navigating multiple identities : race, gender, culture, nationality, and roles*, Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press.
KAHLOS, Maijastina (2007), *Debate and dialogue: Christian and pagan cultures c.360-430*, Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate.
KALDELLIS, Anthony (2007), *Christodoros on the Statues of the Zeuxippos Baths: A New Reading of the Ekphrasis*, Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies 47, 361-383.
KALDELLIS, Anthony (2007), *Hellenism in Byzantium: the transformations of Greek identity and the reception of the classical tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
KAMASH, Zena (2010), *Archaeologies of water in the Roman Near East: 63 BC-AD 636*, Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press.
KHATCHATRIAN, Armen (1962), *Les baptistères paléochrétiens: plans, notices et bibliographie*, Paris: Imprimerie nationale.
KHATCHATRIAN, Armen (1982), *Origine et typologie des baptistères paléochrétiens*, Mulhouse: Centre de culture chrétienne.
KLEEMAN, Jörg (2002), *Quelques réflexions sur l'interpretation ethnique des sépultures habillées considerées comme Vandales*, Antiquité Tardive 10, 123-129.
KLEMENTA, Sylvia (1993), *Gelagerte Flussgötter des Späthellenismus und der römischen Kaiserzeit*, Cologne: Böhlau Verlag.
KOENIG, Gerhard G. (1981), *Wandalische Grabfunde des 5. und 6. Jhs.*, Madrider Mittelungen 22, 299-360.
KOSTOF, Spiro K. (1965), *The orthodox Baptistery of Ravenna*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
KRAELING, Carl H. (1967), *The Christian building*, New Heaven: Dura-Europus Publications.
KRISTENSEN, Troels Myrup, STIRLING, Lea Margaret (2016), *The afterlife of Greek and Roman sculpture: late antique responses and practices*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
KURTH, Julius (1901), *Die Mosaiken der christlichen Ära. I. Die Wandmosaiken von Ravenna*, Leipzig, Berlin: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft.
LADNER, Gerhart B. (1992), *Handbuch der frühchristlichen Symbolik: Gott, Kosmos, Mensch*, Stuttgart: Belser.
LANCEL (ED.), Serge (1974), *Gesta conlationis Carthaginiensis, anno 411: Accedit Sancti Augustini breviculus conlationis cum Donatistis*, Turnhout: Brepols.
LANCHA, Jaine (2004), De nouvelles données sur les mosaïstes itinérants en Lusitanie. In: *V Mesa Redonda Internacional sobre Lusitania Romana: Las comunicaciones*, ed. by Jean-Gérard GORGES et al., Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, 409-426.
LANCHA, Janine (2003), *Mythologie classique et mosaïques tardives d'Hispanie (IVe S.)*, Antiquité Tardive 11, 197-214.
LANCIANI, Filippo (1871), *Cenni intorno ai monumenti e alle cose piu' notabili di Ravenna*, Ravenna: Tip. Della Ditta G. Angeletti.
LANDER, Shira (2016), *Ritual Sites and Religious Rivalries in Late Roman North Africa*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
LARSEN, Lillian I., RUBENSON, Samuel (2018), *Monastic education in late antiquity : the transformation of classical paideia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
LASSUS, Jean (1965), Les edifices du culte autour de la basilique. In: *Atti del VI Congresso internazionale di archeologia cristiana*, ed. by Congresso internazionale di archeologia CRISTIANA, Vatican City: Pontificio Istituto di archeologia cristiana, 581-610.
LASSUS, Jean (1970), *Les baptistères africains*, Corsi di Cultura sull'Arte ravennate e bizantina 17, 235-252.
LAURENCE, Ray, BERRY, Joanne (1998), *Cultural identity in the Roman Empire*, London: Routledge.

LAVAN, Luke, MULRYAN, Michael (2011), *The Archaeology of Late Antique Paganism*, Leiden, Boston, MA.
LE GALL, Joel (1953), *Recherches sur le culte du Tibre*, Paris: Presses universitaires de France.
LEADER-NEWBY, Ruth E. (2004), *Silver and society in late antiquity: functions and meanings of silver plate in the fourth to seventh centuries*, Aldershot: Ashgate.
LECLERCQ, Henri (1907-1953), Fleuves. In: *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, ed. by Fernand CABROL and Henri LECLERCQ, Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1760-1761.
LEGLAY, Marcel (1957), Note sur quelques baptistères d'Algérie. In: *Actes du Ve congrès international d'archéologie chrétienne*, ed. by Congresso internazionale di archeologia CRISTIANA, Vatican City: Pontificio Istituto di archeologia cristiana, 401-406.
LEGLAY, Marcel (1966), *Saturne Africain. Histoire*, Paris: E. de Boccard.
LEHNERDT, Max (1884), Flussgötter. In: *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, ed. by Wilhelm Heinrich ROSCHER, Leipzig: Teubner, 1487-1496.
LENK, Stefanie (2017), Iberian Christians and the classical past – The baptistery of Milreu/Estói (Algarve) at the end of late antiquity. In: *Transformatio et Continuatio. Forms of Change and Constancy of Antiquity in the Iberian Peninsula 500-1500*, ed. by Horst BREDEKAMP and Stefan TRINKS, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 63-91.
LEONE, Anna (1999), *Change or No Change? Revised Perceptions of Urban Transformation in Late Antiquity*, Theoretical Roman Archaeology Journal 98, 121-130.
LEONE, Anna (2007), *Changing Townscapes in North Africa. From Late Antiquity to the Arab Conquest*, Bari: Edipuglia.
LEONE, Anna (2013), *The end of the pagan city. Religion, Economy, and Urbanism in late antique North Africa*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
LEONE, Anna (2016), Tracing the Donatist Presence in North Africa: An Archaeological Perspective. In: *The Donatist Schism. Controversy and Contexts*, ed. by Richard MILES, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 317-344.
LEPELLEY, Claude (1979), *Les cités de l'Afrique Romaine au Bas-Empire*, Paris: Études Augustiniennes.
LEPELLEY, Claude (1981), *Les cités de l'Afrique Romaine au Bas-Empire*, Paris: Études Augustiniennes.
LEPELLEY, Claude (1992), The survival and fall of the classical city in late Roman North Africa. In: *The City in late antiquity*, ed. by John RICH, London: Routledge, 50-76.
LEPELLEY, Claude (1994), *Le musée des statues divines. La volonté de sauvegarder le patrimoine artistique païen à l'époque théodosienne*, Cahiers Archéologiques – Fin de l'Antiquité et Moyen Âge 42, 5-15.
LEPELLEY, Claude (1998), L'aristocratie lettrée païenne: une menace aux yeux d'Augustin (à propos du sermon Dolbeau 26 – Mayence 62). In: *Augustin prédicateur*, ed. by Goulven MADEC, Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 397-413.
LEPELLEY, Claude (2002), Le lieu des valeurs communes. La cité terrain neutre entre païens et chrétiens dans l'Afrique romaine tardive. In: *Idéologies et valeurs civiques dans le Monde Romain*, ed. by Hervé INGLEBERT, Paris: Picard, 271-285.
LEPELLEY, Claude (2010), Sacred and Secular. The Use of Secularised Latin Pagan Culture by Christians. In: *Religious diversity in late antiquity*, ed. by David. M. GWYNN and Susanne BANGERT, Leiden, Boston, MA: Brill.
LÉZINE, Alexandre (1953), *Architecture Romaine d'Afrique*, Tunis: Presses Universitaires de France.
LÉZINE, Alexandre (1959), *Architecture punique: recueil de documents*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
LÉZINE, Alexandre (1968), *Thuburbo Majus*, Tunis: Societé Tunisienne de diffusion.
LIM, Richard (2001), Christian Triumph and Controversy. In: *Interpreting late antiquity : essays on the postclassical world*, ed. by G. W. BOWERSOCK et al., Cambridge, Mass., London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 196-218.

LOPES, Virgilio (2003), *Mértola na Antiguidade Tardia*, Mértola: Campo Arqueológico de Mértola.
LOPES, Virgilio (2005), Les mosaïques de Mértola et le baptistère. Bilan des fouilles recentes. In: *La mosaïque gréco-romaine. [Actes du IXème Colloque international pour l'étude de la mosaïque antique et médiévale organisé à Rome, 5-10 novembre 2001]*, ed. by Hélène MORLIER, Rome: École française de Rome, 489-501.
LOPES, Virgilio (2011), Os mosaicos do baptistério de Mértola. In: *O mosaico romano nos centros e nas periferias*, ed. by Comissao Executiva do X° Col AIEMA, Coimbra: Museu Monográfico de Conímbriga, 915-925.
LOPES, Virgilio (2014), *Mértola e o seu território na antiguidade tardia (séculos IV-VIII)*, Huelva: Universidad de Huelva.
LOPES, Virgilio (2017), Mértola na antiguidade tardia. A topografia histórica. In: *Arqueologia em Portugal*, ed. by José Morais ARNAUD and Andrea MARTINS, Lisbon: Associação dos Arqueólogos Portugueses, 1379-1390.
LOPES, Virgilio, GÓMEZ-MARTÍNEZ, Susana (2006), *Trabalhos arqueológicos de Estácio da Veiga em Mértola*, Xelb. Actas do IV Encontro do Arqueologia do Algarve 7, 269-282.
LOPEZ JR., Donald S. (1998), Belief. In: *Critical terms for religious studies*, ed. by Mark C. TAYLOR, Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 21-35.
LÓPEZ MONTEAGUDO, Guadelupe (2011), La iconografia del dios Oceanos en los mosaicos hispano-romanos. In: *O mosaico romano nos centros e nas periferias: originalidades, influências e identidades: actas do X Coloquio Internacional da Associação Internacional para o Estudo do Mosaico Antigo (AIEMA)*, ed. by Museu Monográfico de CONÍMBRIGA, Conímbriga: Instituto dos Museus e da Conservação 287-302.
LÜDICKE-KAUTE, Lore, HOLL, Oskar (1971), Personifikationen. In: *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, ed. by Engelbert KIRSCHBAUM SJ, Freiburg (Breisgau): Herder, 397-407.
LUGARESI, Leonardo (2007), *Regio Aliena. L'attegiamento della chiesa verso i luoghi di spettacolo nella città tardoantica*, Antiquité Tardive 15, 21-34.
LYSTER FRANCO, Mário (1942), *As ruínas romanas do Milreu: e os últimos trabalhos nelas realizados por intermédio da Dirrecção Geral dos Edifícios e Monumentos Nacionais*, Faro.
MACHADO, Carlos (2009), Religion as antiquarianism: pagan dedications in late antique Rome. In: *Religious Dedications in the Greco-Roman World. Distribution, Typology, Use*, ed. by John P. BODEL and Mika KAJAVA, Rome: Institutum Romanum Finladiae, 331-354.
MACÍAS, Santiago (1996), *Mértola Islâmica. Estudo histórico-arqueológico do bairro da Alcáçova: séculos XII-XIII*, Mértola: Campo arquéologico de Mértola.
MACIEL, Justino (1996), *Antiguidade Tardia e Paleocristianismo em Portugal*, Lisbon: Justino Maciel.
MACMULLEN, Ramsay (1986), *What Difference Did Christianity Make?*, Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte 35, 322-343.
MADOZ Y MOLERES, José (1945), *Una nueva recensión del 'De correctione rusticorum', de Martín de Braga (Ms. Sant Cugat, n. 22)*, Estudios eclesiásticos 19, 335-353.
MAESTRI, Gabriella, SAXER, Victor (eds.) (1994), *Catechesi prebattesimali e mistagogiche*, Milan: Paoline.
MAGUIRE, Henry (1987), *Adam and the Animals: Allegory and the Litteral Sense in Early Christian Art*, Dumbarton Oaks Papers 41, 363-373.
MAGUIRE, Henry (1987), *Earth and Ocean. The Terrestrial World in Early Byzantine Art*, University Park, London: Pennsylvania State University Press.
MAGUIRE, Henry (1999), The Good Life. In: *Late Antiquity. A guide to the postclassical world*, ed. by Glen W. BOWERSOCK et al., Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 238-259.
MAGUIRE, Henry (2012), *Nectar and illusion. Nature in Byzantine art and literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

MAÑANES, Tomas (1980), El mosaico romano de las termas de la Catedral de León. In: *Estudios sobre Mosaicos Romanos*, ed. by Tomas MAÑANES and Alberto BALIL, Valladolid: Universidad Valladolid, 25-28.

MANGO, Cyril (1963), *Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder*, Dumbarton Oaks Papers 17, 53-75.

MARCONE, Arnaldo (2011), Persistenze classiche e innovazioni cristiane: iconografia ed epigrafia nelle Venezia. In: *Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire: The Breaking of a Dialogue (IVth-VIth Century A.D.)*, ed. by Peter BROWN and Rita Lizzi TESTA, Zurich, Berlin: LIT Verlag.

MARCONE, Arnaldo (2014), Alla ricerca di un'identità. Tradizioni classiche nella prima iconografia Cristiana. In: *Using Images in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Stine BIRK et al., Oxford: Oxbow Books, 253-267.

MARKUS, Robert A. (1990), *The End of Ancient Christianity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

MARKUS, Robert A. (2006), *Christianity and the Secular*, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

MASARO, Gabriele (2014), Vario formata decore. Reminiscenze classiche e autori cristiani nelle dediche metriche delle basiliche tardo-antiche. In: *Memoria poetica e poesia della memoria. La versificazione epigrafica dall'antichità all'umanesimo*, ed. by Antonio PISTELLATO, Venice: Ca'Foscari, 177-205.

MATHISEN, Ralph W. (2014), Barbarian 'Arian' clergy, church organization, and church practices. In: *Arianism: Roman heresy and barbarian creed*, ed. by Guido M. BERNDT and Roland STEINACHER, Farnham: Ashgate.

MATTHIAE, Guglielmo (1962), *La cultura figurativa di Salonicco nei secoli V e VI*, Rivista di Archeologia Christiana 83, 163-213.

MAURIN, Louis (1967), *Thuburbo Majus et la paix vandale*, Les Cahiers de Tunisie XV, 225-254.

MAYER, Emanuel (2012), *The ancient middle classes: urban life and aesthetics in the Roman Empire, 100 BCE-250 CE*, Cambridge, MA, London: Harvard University Press.

MCGUIRE, Meredith (2008), *Lived religion: faith and practice in everyday life*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

MCLYNN, Neil B. et al. (2015), *Conversion in late antiquity: Christianity, Islam, and beyond*, Farnham: Ashgate.

MEER, Frederik van der et al. (1961), *Augustine the bishop: the life and work of a father of the church*, London: Sheed and Ward.

MELL, Ulrich (2010), *Christliche Hauskirche und Neues Testament: die Ikonologie des Baptisteriums von Dura Europos und das Diatessaron Tatians*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

MERCADO HERNÁNDEZ, César, SÁNCHEZ MEDINA, Esther (2001), Visión isidoriana de los espectáculos públicos. In: *Hispánia en la Antigüedad Tardía: ocio y espectáculos, Actas del 2 Encuentro Hispania en la Antigüedad Tardía, Alacalá de Henares, 15 a 17 de octubre de 1997*, ed. by Luis A. GARCÍA MORENO and Sebastián RASCÓN MARQUÉS, Alcalá Henares: Universidad del Alcalá, 221-229.

MERLIN, Alfred (1908), *Le temple d'Apollon à Bulla Regia*, Paris: Ernest Leroux.

MERLIN, Alfred (1912), *Forum et églises de Sufetula*, Paris: Ernest Leroux.

MERLIN, Alfred (1912), *Séance de la commission de l'Afrique du Nord*, Bulletin archéologique du comité des traveaux historiques et scientifiques, CCLXXII-CCLXXX.

MERLIN, Alfred (1915), *Séance de la commission de l'Afrique du Nord*, Bulletin archéologique du comité des traveaux historiques et scientifiques.

MERLIN, Alfred (1916), *Séance de la commission de l'Afrique du Nord*, Bulletin archéologique du comité des traveaux historiques et scientifiques.

MERLIN, Alfred (1917), *Séance de la commission de l'Afrique du Nord*, Bulletin archéologique du comité des traveaux historiques et scientifiques.

MERLIN, Alfred (1933), L'histoire municipale de Thuburbo Majus. In: *Cinquième Congrès international d'archéologie (Alger, 14-16 avril 1930)*, ed. by Société Historique ALGÉRIENNE, Algiers: Société Historique Algérienne, 205-225.
MERRILLS, Andy, MILES, Richard (2010), *The Vandals*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
MERRITT BASSETT, Paul (1976), *The Use of History in the Chronicon of Isidore of Seville*, History and Theory 15, 278-292.
MESLIN, Michel (1970), *La fête des kalendes de janvier dans l'empire romain. Etude d'un rituel de Nouvel An*, Brussels: Latomus.
MEYER, Birgit (2015), *Picturing the Invisible. Visual Culture and the Study of Religion*, Method and theory in the study of religion 27, 333-360.
MIKAT, Paul (1984), *Doppelbesetzung oder Ehrentitulatur : zur Stellung des westgotisch-arianischen Episkopates nach der Konversion von 587/89*, Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.
MIKAT, Paul (1984), *Doppelbesetzung oder Ehrentitulatur: zur Stellung des westgotisch-arianischen Episkopates nach der Konversion von 587/89*, Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.
MILES (ED.), Richard (2016), *The Donatist Schism. Controvery and Context*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
MILES, Richard (2005), *The Anthologia Latina and the creation of a secular space in Vandal Carthage*, Antiquité Tardive 13, 305-320.
MILOJEVIC, Michael (1997), Retrofit ecclesia: A non-conformity building type. In: *Conformity and non-conformity in Byzantium*, ed. by Lynfa GARLAND, Amsterdam: Hakkert, 343-366.
MÎRŞANU, Dragoş (2009), The Aesthetic 'Shadow'of Gothic Arianism: Archaeology, Architecture and Art in the Age of Heresies. In: *Memory, Humanity, and Meaning*, ed. by Mihail NEAMŢU and Bogdan TĂTARU-CAZABAN, Bucharest: Zeta Books, 411-431.
MITCHELL, John (2008), *Pagëzimorja e Butrintit dhe mozaikët e saj = The Butrint baptistery and its mosaics*, London: Butrint Foundation.
MODÉRAN, Yves (2003), *Les Maures et l'Afrique romaine (IVe-VIIe siècle)*, Rome: Ecole française de Rome.
MONCEAUX, Paul (1922), *Découverte d'un groupe d'édifices chrétiens à Djemila*, Comptes rendus des séances de l'Academie des inscriptions et Belles-Lettres 66, 380-707.
MONCEAUX, Paul (1923), *Cuicul chrétien (Numidie)*, Miscellanea Giovanni Battista de Rossi. Atti della pontificia accademia romana di archeologia (serie III) 1, 89-112.
MORACCHINI-MAZEL, Geneviève (1962), *Une basilique et un baptistère paléo-chrétiens découverts à Mariana (Corse)*, Comptes-rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres 106, 99-102.
MORACCHINI-MAZEL, Geneviève et al. (1971), *Les Fouilles de Mariana (Corse)*: Fédération d'associations et groupements pour les études corses.
MORACCHINI, Geneviève (1962), *Le pavement en mosaïque de la basilique paléo-chrétienne et du baptistère de Mariana (Corse)*, Cahiers Archéologiques 13, 137-160.
MORFINO, Debora (2011), Le strutture battesimali nell'Africa Romana IV-VI secolo d. C. In: *Il primo christianesimo nell'Africa romana e in Sicilia*, ed. by Rosa Maria BONACASA CARRA, Palermo: Carlo Saladino, 9-93.
MORGAN, David (2010), Introduction. The matter of belief. In: *Religion and material culture: the matter of belief*, ed. by David MORGAN, London: Routledge, 1-17.
MORGAN, David (2010), *Religion and material culture: the matter of belief*, London: Routledge.
MORGAN, David (2016), Material analysis and the study of religion. In: *Materiality and the Study of Religion: The Stuff of the Sacred*, ed. by Tim HUTCHINGS and Joanne MCKENZIE, London: Taylor & Francis, 14-32.
MORGAN, Teresa (2015), *Roman faith and Christian faith: pistis and fides in the early Roman Empire and early churches*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

MOURÃO, Catia (2011), Mosaicos romanos com motivos aquáticos em Portugal. In: *O mosaico romano nos centros e nas periferias: originalidades, influências e identidades: actas do X Coloquio Internacional da Associação Internacional para o Estudo do Mosaico Antigo (AIEMA)*, ed. by Museu Monográfico de CONÍMBRIGA, Conímbriga: Instituto dos Museus e da Conservação, 343-351.

MOURÃO, Cátia (2001), *Mirabilia Aquarum. Um estudo de corpus dos mosaicos romanos com motivos marinhos na Província da Lusitânia*, Lisbon: Universidade Nova de Lisboa.

MOURÃO, Cátia (2008), *Motivos aquáticos em mosaicos antigos de Portugal – Decorativismo e Simbolismo*, Revista de História da Arte 6, 115-131.

MOURÃO, Cátia (2010), *AVTEM NON SVNT RERVM NATVRA. Figurações heteromórficas em mosaicos hispano-romanos*, Lisbon: Universidade Nova de Lisboa.

MRABRET, A. (1995), *L'état économique de l'Afrique byzantine d'après les récits des chroniqueurs arabes*, Africa 13, 123-133.

MUHLBERGER, Steve (1992), Looking back from mid century: the Gallic chronicler of 452 and the crisis of Honorius' reign. In: *Fifth-century Gaul: A crisis of identity?*, ed. by John DRINKWATER and Hugh ELTON, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 28-37.

MUNIER, Charles (1974), *Concilia Africae: a. 345-a. 525*, Turnhout: Brepols.

MURRAY, Sister Charles (1981), *Rebirth and afterlife : a study of the transmutation of some pagan imagery in early Christian funerary art* Oxford: B.A.R.

MUTH, Susanne (1998), *Erleben von Raum – Leben im Raum: zur Funktion mythologischer Mosaikbilder in der römisch-kaiserzeitlichen Wohnarchitektur*, Heidelberg: Verlag Archäologie und Geschichte.

MUTH, Susanne (2001), Eine Kultur zwischen Veränderung und Stagnation. Zum Umgang mit den Mythenbildern im spätantiken Haus. In: *Epochenwandel? Kunst und Kultur zwischen Antike und Mittelalter*, ed. by Franz Alto BAUER and Norbert ZIMMERMANN, Mainz: Philipp von Zabern.

NEIRA JIMÉNEZ, Luz (1997), Algunas consideraciones sobre mosaicos romanos con nereidas y tritones en ambientes termales de Hispania. In: *Termalismo Antiguo; actas*, ed. by María Jesús PERÉX AGORRETEA, Madrid: Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, 481-496.

NEIRA JIMÉNEZ, Luz (2011), The Sea Thiasos of Nereids and Tritons in the Roman Mosaics of Turkey. In: *11th International Colloquium on Ancient Mosaics, October 16th-20th, 2009, Bursa, Turkey: Mosaics of Turkey and parallel developments in the rest of the acient and medieval world*, ed. by Mustafa ŞAHIN, Istanbul: Uludağ Üniversitesi, Mozaik Araştırmaları Uygulama ve Araştırma Merkezi, 631-654.

NEUNER, Stefan et al. (2011), Pikturale Horizonte der Gemeinschaftsproduktion. In: *Bilder und Gemeinschaften. Studien zur Konvergenz von Politik und Ästhetik in Kunst, Literatur und Theorie*, ed. by Beate FRICKE et al., Paderborn: Fink, 10-39.

NORDSTRÖM, Carl O. (1953), *Ravennastudien; ideengeschichtliche und ikonographische Untersuchungen über die Mosaiken von Ravenna*, Stockholm: Almquist and Wiksell.

NORTH, John A., MCLYNN, Neil (2008), *Postscript to the Lupercalia: From Caesar to Andromachus*, The Journal of Roman Studies 98, 176-181.

NORTH, John A., PRICE (EDS.), Simon R. F. (2011), *The religious history of the Roman Empire: pagans, Jews, and Christians*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

O'DONNELL, James J. (1979), *The Demise of Paganism*, Traditio 35, 45-88.

OEPEN, Alexis (2012), *Villa und christlicher Kult auf der Iberischen Halbinsel in Spätantike und Westgotenzeit*, Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag.

ORFILA, Margarita, TUSET, Francisco (2003), *Descripción, paralelos y análisis de los mosaicos de la iglesia de Son Fadrinet (Campos, Mallorca)*, Mayurqa 29, 189-207.

ORSI, Robert A. (2005), *Between heaven and earth: the religious worlds people make and the scholars who study them*, Princeton, NJ, Oxford: Princeton University Press.

PACHTÈRE, Félix-Georges de (1911), *Inventaire des mosaïques de la Gaule et de l'Afrique*, Paris: Ernest Leroux.

PALAZZO, Eric (1992), *Iconographie et Liturgie: la mosaïque du baptistère de Kélibia (Tunisie)*, Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft 34, 102-120.
PALOL, Pedro de (1967), En torno a la iconografía de los mosaicos cristianos de las islas Baleares. In: *Actas de la primera Reunión Nacional de Arqueología Paleocristiana: Vitoria, 29-31 octubre 1966*, ed. by Pedro DE PALOL, Valladolid: Sancho el Sabio, 131-150.
PATOUT BURNS, James (2011), Augustine's theology of baptism. In: *Ablution, initiation, and baptism : late antiquity, early Judaism, and early Christianity*, ed. by David HELLHOLM, Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 1290-1303.
PAXSON, James J. (1994), *The Poetics of Personification*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
PEARCE, Susan (2008), *The Hinton St Mary Mosaic Pavement: Christ or Emperor?*, Britannia 39, 193-218.
PELIKAN, Jaroslav (1993), *Christianity and classical culture: the metamorphosis of natural theology in the Christian encounter with Hellenism*, New Haven, London: Yale University Press.
PELLICCIONI, Giovanni (1973), *Le nuove scoperte sulle origini del Battistero lateranense*, Rome: Tipografia poliglotta vaticana.
PEPPARD, Michael (2012), *Illuminating the Dura-Europos Baptistery: Comparanda for the Female Figures*, Journal of Early Christian Studies 20, 543-574.
PERLER, Othmar (1964), *Die Taufsymbolik der vier Jahreszeiten im Baptisterium bei Kélibia*, Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum 1, 282-290.
PFLAUM, Hans-Georg, DUPUIS, Xavier (2003), *Inscriptions Latines de l'Algérie*, Paris: E. de Boccard.
PHARR, Clyde (2001), *The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmondian Constitutions*, Clark, NJ: The Lawbook Exchange.
PICCIRILLO, Michele (1991), *I mosaici di Giordania: [catalogue of an exhibition], Castello di Malpaga, Cavernago-Bergamo, marzo-giugno 1991*, Jerusalem: Studium Biblicum Franciscanum.
PICCIRILLO, Michele (1994), The Byzantine mosaics of Jordan as an historical source – II (1980-1984). In: *La Mosaique Gréco-Romaine IV: IVe Colloque International pour l'Etude de la Mosaique antique*, ed. by Jean-Pierre DARMON and Alain REBOURG, Paris: Supplément au Bulletin de l'A.I.E.M.A., 219-225.
PIPER, Ferdinand (1847-1851), *Mythologie der christlichen Kunst von der ältesten Zeit bis in's sechzehnte Jahrhundert*, Weimar: Verlag des Landes-Industrie-Comptoirs.
POHL, Walter (1997), The barbarian successor states. In: *The transformation of the Roman world, AD 400-900*, ed. by Leslie WEBSTER and Michelle BROWN, London: British Museum Press 33-47.
POHL, Walter (2013), Christian and Barbarian Identities in the Early Medieval West: Introduction. In: *Post-Roman Transitions: Christian and Barbarian Identities in the Early Medieval West*, ed. by Walter POHL and Gerda HEYDEMANN, Turnhout: Brepols, 1-46.
POHL, Walter (2018), Introduction: Early medieval Romanness - a multiple identity. In: *Transformations of Romanness. Early Medieval Regions and Identities*, ed. by Walter POHL et al., Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 3-39.
POHL, Walter et al. (2018), *Transformations of Romanness. Early medieval regions and identities*, Berlin: De Gruyter.
POHL, Walter, REIMITZ (EDS.), Helmut (1998), *Strategies of distinction : the construction of the ethnic communities, 300-800*, Leiden: Brill.
POINSSOT, Louis (1915), *Trois inscriptions de Thuburbo Majus*, Comptes rendus des séances de l'Academie des inscriptions et Belles-Lettres 5, 325-332.
POLLMANN, Karla (2017), *The baptized muse: early Christian poetry as cultural authority*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
POTTER, Timothy W. (1995), *Towns in Late Antiquity: IOL Caesarea and its contexts*, Sheffield: Ian Sanders Memorial Committee.
POULSEN, Birte (2014), City Personifications in Late Antiquity. In: *Using Images in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Stine BIRK et al., Oxford: Oxbow Books, 209-226.

PRINGLE, Denys (1981), *The defence of Byzantine Africa from Justinian to the Arab conquest: an account of the military history and archaeology of the African provinces in the sixth and seventh centuries*, Oxford: B.A.R.

PUECH, Henri-Charles (1949), *Le cerf et le serpent, note sur le symbolisme de la mosaique découverte au baptistère de l'Henchir Messaouda*, Cahiers archéologiques de l'antiquité et moyen age 4, 17-60.

QUARESMA, José Carlos (2010), Les importations de céramique culinaire africaine à Chaos Salgados, Santiago de Cacém (Mirobriga?), en la villa de Toralla (Vigo, Galicia, Espana). In: *Late Roman coarse wares, cooking wares and amphorae in the Mediterranean: archaeology and archaeometry: comparison between western and eastern Mediterranean*, ed. by Simonetta MENCHELLI et al., Oxford: Archaeopress, 157-166.

QUAST, Dieter (1999), *Cloisonnierte Scheibenfiebeln aus Achnim-Panopolis (Ägypten)*, Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt 29, 111-124.

RAECK, Wulff (1992), *Modernisierte Mythen. Zum Umgang der Spätantike mit klassischen Bildthemen*, Stuttgart: Steiner.

RAJA, Rubina (2012), *Urban development and regional identity in the Eastern Roman provinces, 50 BC-AD 250: Aphrodisias, Ephesos, Athens, Gerasa*, Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press.

RAJA, Rubina, RÜPKE, Jörg (2015), Archaeology of religion, material religion, and the ancient world. In: *A companion to the archaeology of religion in the ancient world*, ed. by Rubina RAJA and Jörg RÜPKE, Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 1-26.

RAJA, Rubina, RÜPKE, Jörg (2015), *A companion to the archaeology of religion in the ancient world*, Chichester: Wiley Blackwell.

RAJA, Rubina, WEISS, Lara (2015), *The Role of Objects: Meanings, Situations and Interaction*, Religion in the Roman Empire 1, 137-147.

RAKOB, Friedrich (1994), Der Tempelberg und seine Heiligtümer. In: *Simitthus. Der Tempelberg und das römische Lager*, ed. by Friedrich RAKOB, Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1-50.

RAPP, Claudia, DRAKE, H. A. (2014), *The city in the classical and post-classical world : changing contexts of power and identity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

RAYNAL, Dominique (2006), *Archéologie et histoire de l'Eglise d'Afrique: Uppenna I, Les fouilles 1904-1907*, Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail.

REAL, Manuel Luís (2012), Materiais de construção utilizados na arquitectura cristã da alta Idade Média, em Portugal. In: *História da Construção. Os Materiais*, ed. by Arnaldo Sousa MELO and Maria do Carmo Franco RIBEIRO, Braga: CITCEM, 89-126.

REBILLARD, Éric (2012), *Christians and their many identities in late antiquity, North Africa, 200-450 CE*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

REBILLARD, Éric (2015), Material culture and religious identity in late antiquity. In: *A companion to the archaeology of religion in the ancient world*, ed. by Rubina RAJA and Jörg RÜPKE, Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 427-436.

REBILLARD, Éric, RÜPKE, Jörg (2015), *Group identity and religious individuality in late antiquity*, Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press.

REDJEL, Tahar, TEWFIK, S. (2010), *Guide Djémila*, unspecified place of publication: Araja Éditions.

RICCI, Corrado (1930-1937), *Tavole storiche dei mosaici di Ravenna: Battistero della Cattedrale*, Rome.

RIESCO TERRERO, Luis (1975), *Epistolario de San Braulio*, Seville: Editorial Católica Española.

RIESE, Alexander (1894), *Anthologia Latina, sive, Poesis Latinae supplementum. Pars prior, Carmina in codicibus scripta*, Leipzig: in aedibus B.G. Teubneri.

RIGGS, David (2001), The Continuity of Paganism between the Cities and Countryside of Late Roman Africa. In: *Urban centers and rural contexts in late antiquity* ed. by Thomas S. BURNS and John William EADIE, East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 285-300.

RIGGS, David (2003), Christianizing the Rural Communities of Late Roman Africa: A Process of Coercion or Persuasion? In: *Violence in Late Antiquity. Perceptions and practices*, ed. by Harold A. DRAKE, Aldershot: Ashgate.

RIPOLL, Gisela, VELÁSQUEZ, Isabel (1999), Origen y desarrollo de las parrochiae en la Hispania de la Antigüedad tardía. In: *Atti delle giornata tematica dei Seminari di Archeologia cristiana (École française de Rome – 19 marzo 1998)*, ed. by Philippe PERGOLA, Rome: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia cristiana, 101-165.

RISTOW, Günter (1957), Zur Personifikation des Jordan in Taufdarstellungen der frühen christlichen Kunst. In: *Aus der byzantinischen Arbeit der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, ed. by Johannes IRMSCHER, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 120-126.

RISTOW, Günther (1967), *Die Taufe Christi*, Recklingshausen: Aurel Bongers Verlag.

RISTOW, Sebastian (1998), *Frühchristliche Baptisterien*, Münster: Aschendorffesche Verlagsbuchhandlung.

RIVES, James B. (1995), *Religion and Authority in Roman Carthage from Augustus to Constantine*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

RIZZARDI, Clementina (1989), L'arte dei Goti a Ravenna: motivi ideologici, aspetti iconografici e formali nella decorazione musiva. In: *Seminario di studi sul tema: "Ravenna e l'Italia fra Goti e Longobardi (Ravenna, 14-22 aprile 1989)*: Del Girasole, 373-375.

RIZZARDI, Clementina (2001), La Decorazione musiva del Battistero degli Ortodossi e degli Ariani a Ravenna: alcune considerazioni. In: *L'edificio battesimale in Italia*, ed. by Daniela GANDOLFI, Bordighera: Ist. Internazionale di Studi Liguri, 915-930.

RUJIVACHARAKUL, Vimalin (2011), *Collecting China: the world, China, and a history of collecting*, Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press.

RUMMEL, Philipp von (2005), Les Vandals ont-ils porté en Afrique un vetement specifique? In: *La Méditerranée et le monde mérovingien: témoins archéologiques*, ed. by Xavier DELESTRE, Aix-en-Provence: Editions de l'Association Provence Archéologie, 337-343.

RUMMEL, Philipp von (2013), Unrömische Römer und römische Barbaren. Die Fluidität vermeintlich präziser Leitbegriffe der Forschung zum spätantiken Gallien. In: *Gallien in Spätantike und Frühmittelalter. Kulturgeschichte einer Region*, ed. by Steffen DIEFENBACH and Gernot Michael MÜLLER, Berlin, Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 277-296.

RUMMEL, Philipp von (2016), The Transformation of Ancient Land- and Cityscapes in Early Medieval North Africa. In: *North Africa under Byzantium and Early Islam*, ed. by Susan T. STEVENS and Jonathan CONANT, Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 105-117.

RÜPKE, Jörg (2016), *On Roman religion: lived religion and the individual in ancient Rome*, Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press.

RÜPKE, Jörg, SPICKERMANN, Wolfgang (2012), *Reflections on religious individuality: Greco-Roman and Judaeo-Christian texts and practices*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

SAAVEDRA MACHADO, João (1970), Documentos de Estácio da Veiga para o estudo da arqueologia do Algarve. Catálogo de plantas, desenhas e mosaicos. In: *Actas das I Jornadas Arqueológicas*, Lisbon: Associação dos Arqueólogos Portugueses, 335-385.

SALZMAN, Michele Renee (1999), The Christianization of Sacred Time and Sacred Space. In: *The Transformations of Urbs Roma in Late Antiquity*, ed. by William V. HARRIS, Portsmouth: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 123-134.

SALZMAN, Michele Renee (2002), *The making of a Christian aristocracy: social and religious change in the western Roman Empire*, Cambridge, MA, London: Harvard University Press.

SANDWELL, Isabella (2007), *Religious identity in late antiquity: Greeks, Jews, and Christians in Antioch*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

SANTOS AFFONSO DOS, Maria Luísa Estácio da Veiga (1972), *Arqueologia Romana do Algarve*, Lisbon: Associação dos Arqueólogos Portugueses.

SARADI-MENDELOVICI, Helen (1990), *Christian Attitudes toward Pagan Monuments in Late Antiquity and their Legacy in Later Byzantine Centuries*, Dumbarton Oaks Papers 44, 47-61.

SAUER, Eberhard W. (2011), Religious rituals at springs in the late antique and early medieval world. In: *The Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism'*, ed. by Luke LAVAN and Michael MULRYAN, Leiden, Boston, MA: Brill, 505-550.

SAXER, Victor (1988), *Les rites de l'initiation chrétienne du IIe au VIe siècle*, Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo.

SCHÄFERDIEK, Knut (1967), *Die Kirche in den Reichen der Westgoten und Suewen bis zur Errichtung der westgotischen katholischen Staatskirche*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

SCHLUNK, Helmut (1988), *Die Mosaikkuppel von Centcelles*, Mainz: Philipp von Zabern.

SCHLUNK, Helmut, HAUSCHILD, Theodor (1978), *Die Denkmäler der frühchristlichen und westgotischen Zeit*, Mainz: Philipp von Zabern.

SCHNEIDER, Hannah (2011), Die Entwicklung der Taufbecken in der Spätantike. In: *Ablution, Initiation, and Baptism: Late Antiquity, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity*, ed. by David HELLHOLM, New York, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1697-1719.

SCHOENEBECK, Hans Ulrich von (1935), *Der Mailänder Sarkophag und seine Nachfolge*, Vatican City: Pontificio istituto di archeologia cristiana.

SCHRENK, Sabine, REXIN, Gerhard (2007), *Erstaunen oder Flucht? Zur Darstellung des Jordan in den spätantiken Bildern der Taufe Jesu*, Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum 50, 180-198.

SCHWEINFURTH, Sophie (2013), Creating Sacred Space as Cosmic Liturgy in Late Antiquity. Two Case Studies from Ravenna. In: *Mobile Eyes: peripatetisches Sehen in den Bildkulturen der Vormoderne*, ed. by David GANZ and Stefan NEUNER, Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 61-89.

SEARS, Gareth (2007), *Late Roman African urbanism: continuity and transformation in the city*, Oxford: Archaeopress.

SEARS, Gareth (2011), The fate of the temples in North Africa. In: *The Archaeology of Late Antique Paganism*, ed. by L.; Mulryan LAVAN, M., Leiden, 229-259.

SEARS, Gareth (2016), A Catholic stronghold? Religious and ethnic identities at Tipasa. In: *De Africa Romaque: merging cultures across North Africa*, ed. by Niccolo MUGNAI et al., London: The Society for Libyan Studies, 131-141.

SELIGMAN, Adam B. et al. (2008), Ritual and the subjunctive. In: *Ritual and its consequences: an essay on the limits of sincerity*, ed. by Adam B. SELIGMAN et al., New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 17-42.

SETTLES, Isis H., BUCHANAN, Nicole T. (2014), Multiple groups, multiple identites, and intersectionality. In: *The Oxford handbook of multicultural identity*, ed. by Verónica BENET-MARTÍNEZ and Ying-yi HONG, New York: Oxford University Press, 160-180.

SFAMENI, Carla (2014), *Residenze e culti in età tardoantica*, Rome: Scienze e Lettere.

SHACKLETON BAILEY, David Roy (1982), *Anthologia Latina. I, Carmina in codicibus scripta. Fasc. 1, Libri Salmasiani aliorumque carmina*, Stuttgart: in aedibus B.G. Teubneri.

SHAW, Brent (1992), African Christianity: Disputes, Definitions, and 'Donatists'. In: *Orthodoxy and heresy in religious movements. Discipline and Dissent*, ed. by Malcolm R. GREENSHIELDS and Thomas A. ROBINSON, Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 5-34.

SHAW, Brent (2004), Who were the Circumcellions? In: *Vandals, Romans and Berbers: New perspectives on late antique North Africa*, ed. by Andy MERRILLS, Aldershot: Ashgate, 227-258.

SHAW, Brent (2011), *Sacred Violence. African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustin*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

SHIELDS, Stephanie A. (2008), *Gender: An Intersectionality Perspective*, Sex Roles 59, 301-311.

SIDARUS, Adel, TEICHNER, Felix (1996), *As Termas romanas no Gharb Al-Ândaluz. As inscrições árabes de Milreu (Estói)*, Arqueologia Medieval 5, 177-189.

SIMON, Marcel (1966), Bellérophon chrétien. In: *Mélanges d'archéologie, d'épigraphie et d'histoire offerts à Jérôme Carcopino*, ed. by Jacques HEURGON et al., Paris: Hachette, 889-904.

SINDING-LARSEN, Staale (1984), *Iconography and ritual: A study of analytical perspectives*, Oslo: Universitetsforlaget AS.

SINTÈS, Claude, REBAHI, Ymouna (2003), *Algérie antique (catalogue de l'exposition 26 avril au 17 août 2003, Musée de l'Arles et de la Provence antique)*, Arles: Éditions du Musée de l'Arles et de la Provence antiques.

SMATI, Naima (2000), *Les mosaïques figurées à thème marin en Afrique du Nord (Tunisie-Algérie-Maroc): étude descriptive et analytique (Tunisie, Algérie, Maroc)* Paris IV (doctoral thesis).

SMITH, Jonathan Z. (1987), *To take place: toward theory in ritual*, Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press.

SMITH, Jonathan Z. (1990), *Drudgery divine: on the comparison of early Christianities and the religions of late antiquity*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

SMITH, Julia M. H. (2005), *Europe after Rome: a new cultural history 500-1000*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

SMITH, R. R. R., WARD-PERKINS, Bryan (2016), *The last statues of Antiquity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

SÖRRIES, Reiner (1983), *Die Bilder der Orthodoxen im Kampf gegen den Arianismus*, Frankfurt (Main): Lang.

SPIESER, Jean-Michel (1976), La christianisation des sanctuaires païens en Grèce. In: *Neue Forschungen in griechischen Heiligtümern*, ed. by Ulf JANTZEN, Tübingen: Wasmuth, 309-320.

SPIESER, Jean-Michel (2001), Further remarks on the mosaic of Hosios David. In: *Urban and Religious Spaces in Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium*, ed. by Jean-Michel SPIESER, Aldershot: Ashgate, 1-12.

SPIESER, Jean-Michel (2015), *Images du Christ*, Geneva: Droz.

SPINKS, Bryan D. (2006), *Early and medieval rituals and theologies of baptism. From the New Testament to the Council of Trent*, Aldershot: Ashgate.

STAFFORD, Emma, HERRIN, Judith (2005), *Personification in the Greek world: from antiquity to Byzantium*, Aldershot, Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

STASOLLA, Francesca Romana (2002), Balnea ed edifici di culto: relazioni e trasformazioni tra tarda antichità e alto medioevo. In: *Ecclesia Urbis*, ed. by Alessandra GUIDOBALDI GUIGLIA and Federico GUIDOBALDI, Vatican City: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana.

STASOLLA, Francesca Romana (2002), *Pro labandis curis: il balneum tra tarda antichità e Medioevo*, Rome: Fratelli Palombi editori.

STERN, Henri (1957), Le décor des pavements et des cuves dans les baptistères paléochrétiens. In: *Actes du Ve congrès international d'archéologie chrétienne*, 381-390.

STEVENS, Susan T. (1988), The circus poems in the Latin Anthology. In: *The Circus and a Byzantine cemetery at Carthage*, ed. by John H. HUMPHREY, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 153-178.

STEVENS, Susan T. et al. (2005), *Bir Ftouha: A Pilgrimage Church Complex at Carthage*, Journal of Roman Studies Supplementary Series 59.

STIRLING, Lea Margaret (2005), *The learned collector: mythological statuettes and classical taste in late antique Gaul*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

STOURAITIS, Ioannis (2018), Byzantine Romanness: From geopolitical to ethnic conceptions. In: *Transformations of Romanness : early medieval regions and identities*, ed. by Walter POHL et al., Berlin: De Gruyter, 123-139.

STRYKER, Sheldon (2000), Identity competition: Key to differential social movement involvement. In: *Identity: self and social movements*, ed. by Robert WHITE, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 21-40.

STRYKER, Sheldon, BURKE, Peter J. (2000), *The past, present, and future of an identity theory*, Social Psychology Quarterly 63, 284-297.

STRZYGOWSKY, Josef (1885), *Ikonographie der Taufe Christi: Ein Beitrag zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der christlichen Kunst*, Munich: Theodor Riedel.

TALGAM, Rina (2014), *Mosaics of Faith: Floors of Pagans, Jews, Samaritans, Christians, and Muslims in the Holy Land*, University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.

TARDIEU, Joelle, PARRON-KONTIS, Isabelle (2006), Les mosaiques dites du "baptistère de Valence". In: *De mémoires de palais. Archéologie et histoire du groupe cathédral de Valence*, ed. by Pascale SOLEIL, Valence: Musée de Valence, 131-141.

TEICHNER, Felix (1994), *Acerca da villa romana de Milreu/Estói. Continuidade de ocupação na época árabe*, Arqueologia Medieval, 89-100.

TEICHNER, Felix (1996), *Signa Venerandae Christianae Religionis: On the conversion of pagan sanctuaries in the diocesis of Africa and Aegyptus*, Libyan Studies 27, 53-66.

TEICHNER, Felix (2006), 'De lo Romano a lo Árabe'. La Transición del sur de la provincia de Lusitania a Al-Gharb Al-Andalus. Nuevas investigaciones en los yacimientos de Milreu y Cerro de Vila. In: *Villas tardoantiguas en el Mediterráneo occidental*, ed. by A. CHAVARRÍA et al., Madrid: Editorial CSIC Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 207-220.

TEICHNER, Felix (2008), *Entre tierra y mar. Zwischen Land und Meer. Architektur und Wirtschaftsweise ländlicher Siedlungsplätze im Süden der römischen Provinz Lusitanien (Portugal)*, Mérida: Museo Nacional de Arte Romano.

TEICHNER, Felix (2008), La pars urbana tardorromana de la villa de Milreu (Estói, Portugal): nuevas descubrimientos y antiguos documentos. In: *Las villae tardorromanas en el occidente del Imperio: arquitectura y función: IV Coloquio internacional de Arqueología en Gijón*, ed. by Carmen FERNÁNDEZ OCHOA et al., Gijón: Trea, 732-740.

TEICHNER, Felix (2011), "Nam primum tibi mater Hispania est, terris omnibus terra felicior". Spätantike Großvillen und Residenzen auf der Iberischen Halbinsel. In: *Bruckneudorf und Gamzigrad: Spätantike Paläste und Grossvillen im Donau-Balkan-Raum: Akten des Internationalen Kolloquiums in Bruckneudorf vom 15. bis 18. Oktober 2008*, ed. by Gerda von BÜLOW and Heinrich ZABEHLICKY, Bonn: Habelt Verlag, 293-308.

TERTULLIAN et al. (1931), *Apology; De Spectaculis*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

THÉBERT, Yvon (1983), *L'évolution urbaine dans les provinces orientales de l'Afrique Romaine Tardive*, OPUS 2, 99-130.

THÉBERT, Yvon (2003), *Thermes romains d'Afrique du Nord et leur context méditerranéen*, Rome: École française de Rome.

THOMAS, Thelma K. (2016), Material meaning in late antiquity. In: *Designing identity: the power of textiles in late antiquity*, ed. by Thelma K. THOMAS et al., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 21-54.

TILLEY, Maureen A. (1997), *The Bible in Christian North Africa: The Donatist world*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

TOMLINSON, John (1991), *Cultural imperialism: a critical introduction*, London: Pinter.

TONER, Jerry P. (2009), *Popular culture in ancient Rome*, Cambridge: Polity.

TORRES, Cláudio (1982), *Alcáçova de Mértola. História e arqueologia urbana*, Arqueologia 6, 86-95.

TORRES, Cláudio (1991), *Museu de Mértola. Núcleo do Castelo*, Mértola: Campo arqeuologico de Mértola.

TORRES, Cláudio (1998), *O Guadiana – Envolvimento histórico*, Odiana, CCR Algarve, 8-12.

TOUTAIN, Jules (1926), *Les cultes des fleuves, sa forme primitive et ses principaux rites, chez les peuples de l'antiquité classique*, L'ethnographie 13-14, 1-7.

TOYNBEE, Jocelyn Mary Catherine (1964), *A New Roman Mosaic Pavement Found in Dorset*, The Journal of Roman Studies 54, 7-14.

TROMBLEY, Frank R. (1993-1994), *Hellenic Religion and Christianization c. 370–529* Leiden: Brill.

TSUSHIMA, Teresa, BURKE, Peter J. (1999), *Levels, agency, and control in the parent identity*, Social Psychology Quarterly 62, 173-189.
TURNER, Ralph H. (1978), *The role and the person*, American Journal of Archaeology 84, 1-23.
ULBERT, Thilo (1978), *Frühchristliche Basiliken mit Doppelapsiden auf der Iberischen Halbinsel: Studien zur Architektur- und Liturgiegeschichte*, Berlin: Mann.
UYTTERHOEVEN, Inge (2009), Know your classics! Manifestations of classical culture in late antique elite houses. In: *Faces of hellenism: studies in the history of the Eastern Mediterranean (4th century B.C.-5th century A.D.)*, ed. by Peter van NUFFELEN, Leuven: Peeters, 321-342.
VAES, Jan (1984-1986), *Christliche Wiederverwendung antiker Bauten: Ein Forschungsbericht*, Ancient Society 15-17, 305-443.
VÁSQUEZ, Manuel A. (2011), *More than belief: a materialist theory of religion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
VERHOEVEN, Mariette (2011), *The Early Christian Monuments of Ravenna: Transformations and Memory*, Turnhout: Brepols.
VERSLUYS, Miguel John (2015), Roman visual material culture as globalising koine. In: *Globalisation and the Roman world: world history, connectivity and material culture*, ed. by Martin PITTS and Miguel John VERSLUYS, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 141-174.
VIGNARD, M. (1982), Les mosaiques du Musée de Valence: Dossier. In: *Collections du Musée de Valence*, ed. by Charles BURGARD and A.-C. PAHIN, Valence: Musée de Valence.
VIGNE, Daniel (1992), *Christ au Jourdain: le baptême de Jésus dans la tradition judéo-chrétienne*, Paris: Gabalda.
VINZENT, Markus (1998), Das "heidnische" Ägypten im 5. Jahrhundert. In: *Heiden und Christen im 5. Jahrhundert*, ed. by J. VAN OORT and D. WYRWA, Leuven: Peters, 32-65.
VIVES, José et al. (1963), *Concilios visigóticos e hispano-romanos*, Barcelona, Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto Enrique Flórez.
VOLBACH, W.F. (1976), *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters*, Mainz: Philipp von Zabern.
VOLBACH, Wolfgang Fritz (1952), *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters*, Mainz: Verlag des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums.
VOLLKOMMER, Rainer (1981-), Iordanes. In: *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* ed. by Hans Christoph ACKERMANN and Jean-Robert GISLER, Zurich: Artemis, 658-661.
VOSS ROBERTS, Michelle (2010), *Religious belonging and the multiple* Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion 26, 43-62.
WAAL, Anton de (1896), *Taufe Christi auf vorkonstantinischen Gemälden der Katakomben*, Römische Quartalschrift 10, 335-349.
WARD-PERKINS, Bryan (1999), Reusing the Architectural Legacy of the Past, entre idéologie et pragmatisme. In: *The Idea and Ideal of Town between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Gian Pietro BROGIOLO and Bryan WARD-PERKINS, Leiden: Brill, 225-244.
WARD-PERKINS, Bryan (2003), Reconfiguring Sacred Space: from Pagan Shrines to Christian Churches. In: *Die spätantike Stadt und ihre Christianisierung*, ed. by Gunnar BRANDS and Hans-Georg SEVERIN, Wiesbaden: Reichert, 285-290.
WARD-PERKINS, Bryan (2005), *The fall of Rome and the end of civilization*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
WARD-PERKINS, Bryan (2007), Where is the archaeology and iconography of Germanic Arianism? In: *Religious diversity in late antiquity*, ed. by David M. GWYNN and Susanne BANGERT, Leiden, Boston, MA: Brill, 265-289.
WARD-PERKINS, John Bryan, GOODCHILD, Richard G. (2003), *Christian monuments of Cyrenaica*, London: Society for Libyan Studies.
WASER, Otto (1919), Vom Flussgott Jordan und anderen Personifikationen. In: *Festgabe Adolf Kaegi*, Frauenfeld, 191-217.

WASZINK, Jan Hendrik (1947), *Pompa diaboli*, Vigiliae Christianae 1, 13-41.
WEBSTER, Jane (2001), *Creolizing the Roman Provinces*, American Journal of Archaeology 105, 209-225.
WEIGEL, Thomas (1999), 53. In: *Klosterwelt Werden 799-1803: das Jahrtausend der Mönche*, ed. by Jan GERCHOW, Cologne: Ruhrlandmuseum Essen, 357-359.
WEINRYB, Ittai (2002), *A take of Two Baptisteries: Royal and Ecclesiastical Patronage in Ravenna*, Asaph: Studies in Art History 7, 41-58.
WEISMANN, Werner (1972), *Kirche und Schauspiele: die Schauspiele im Urteil der lateinischen Kirchenväter unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Augustin*, Würzburg: Augustinus-Verlag.
WEISS, Corinna (1981), Fluvii. In: *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae (LIMC)*, ed. by Hans Christoph ACKERMANN and Jean-Robert GISLER, Zurich: Artemis, 139-148.
WEITZMANN, Kurt (1960), *The Survival of Mythological Representations in Early Christian and Byzantine Art and Their Impact on Christian Iconography*, Dumbarton Oaks Papers 14, 43-68.
WHARTON, Annabel Jane (1987), *Ritual and Reconstructed Meaning: The Neonian Baptistery in Ravenna*, Art Bulletin 69, 358-375.
WHELAN, Robin (2018), *Being Christian in Vandal Africa: the politics of orthodoxy in the Post-Imperial West*, Oakland, CA: University of California Press.
WICKHAM, Chris (2005), *Framing the early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean 400-800*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
WICKHAM, Chris (2009), *The inheritance of Rome: a history of Europe from 400 to 1000*, London: Allen Lane.
WILLIAMSON, Paul (1999), VII.37. In: *799 – Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit: Karl der Große und Papst Leo III. in Paderborn; [eine gemeinsame Ausstellung der Stadt Paderborn, des Erzbistums Paderborn und des Landschaftsverbandes Westfalen-Lippe vom 23. Juli-1. November 1999]*, ed. by Christoph STIEGEMANN and Matthias WEMHOFF, Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 482-483.
WILSON, Andrew (1997), *Water management and usage in Roman North Africa: a social and technological study (Ph.D. Thesis)*, Oxford: University of Oxford.
WISSKIRCHEN, Rotraut (1993), *Zum Medaillon im Kuppelmosaik des Orthodoxenbaptisteriums*, Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum 36, 164-170.
WITSCHEL, Christian (2013), Die spätantiken Städte Galliens: Transformationen von Stadtbildern als Ausdruck einer gewandelten Identität? In: *Gallien in Spätantike und Frühmittelalter. Kulturgeschichte einer Region*, ed. by Steffen DIEFENBACH and Gernot Michael MÜLLER, Berlin, Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 154-200.
WOOD, Jamie (2012), *The politics of identity in Visigothic Spain : religion and power in the histories of Isidore of Seville*, Leiden: Brill.
WOOLF, Greg (1998), *Becoming Roman: the origins of provincial civilization in Gaul*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
WOOLF, Greg (2015), Ritual traditions of non-mediterranean Europe. In: *A companion to the archaeology of religion in the ancient world*, ed. by Rubina RAJA and Jörg RÜPKE, Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 465-477.
YACOUB, Mohamed (1994), La mosaïque de Lahmimine et le thème africain des cheveaux de cirque affrontés. In: *La Mosaique Gréco-Romaine IV: IVe Colloque International pour l'Etude de la Mosaique antique*, ed. by Jean-Pierre DARMON and Alain REBOURG, Paris: Supplément au Bulletin de l'A.I.E.M.A., 249-257.
YACOUB, Mohamed (1995), *Splendeurs des Mosaïques de Tunisie*, Tunis: Agence nationale du patrimoine.
YACOUB, Mohamed (1996), *Le musée du Bardo*, Tunis: Éditions de l'agence nationale du patrimoine.
YARNOLD, Edward, CYRIL (2000), *Cyril of Jerusalem*, London: Routledge.

YASIN, Ann Marie (2009), *Saints and church spaces in the late antique Mediterranean: Architecture, cult, and community*, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.
YASIN, Ann Marie (2016), Beyond spolia. Architectural memory and adaptation in the churches of late antique North Africa. In: *North Africa under Byzantium and Early Islam*, ed. by Susan T. STEVENS and Jonathan CONANT, Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 215-236.
ZALESKI, John (2014), Religion and Roman Spectacle. In: *A companion to sport and spectacle in Greek and Roman antiquity*, ed. by Paul CHRISTESEN and Donald G. KYLE, Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 590-602.
ZANKER, Paul, EWALD, Björn Christian (2004), *Mit Mythen leben: die Bilderwelt der römischen Sarkophage*, Munich: Hirmer.

Addendum: Additional Bibliography of Volume II

BEN ABED-BEN KHADER, Aïcha (ed.) (1980), *Thuburbo Majus: les mosaïques de la région du Forum* (Corpus des Mosaïques de Tunisie), Tunis: Institut National d'Archéologie et d'Art.
BEN ABED-BEN KHADER, Aïcha (ed.) (1994), *Thuburbo Majus: les mosaïques dans la région est* (Corpus des Mosaïques de Tunisie), Tunis: Institut National d'Archéologie et d'Art.
BEN ABED-BEN KHADER, Aïcha (ed.) (1999), *Les mosaïques du parc archéologique des Thermes d'Antonin* (Corpus des Mosaïques de Tunisie), Tunis: Institut National d'Archéologie et d'Art.
BEN ABED-BEN KHADER, Aïcha (ed.) (1999), *Un nouvel édifice des Asclepeia en Afrique découvert à Thuburbo Majus*. In: La Mosaïque Gréco-Romaine VII: VIIe Colloque International pour l'Etude de la Mosaïque antique, ed. by Mongi ENNAIFER and Alain REBOURG, Tunis: Institut national du patrimoine, 321-326.
FENDRI, Mohamed (1961), *Basiliques chrétiennes de la Skhira*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
FÉVRIER, Paul-Albert (1968), *Djémila*, Algers: Direction des Affaires culturelles, Sous-Direction des Arts, Musées, Monuments historiques, Antiquités.
LESCHI, Louis (1938), *Cuicul de Numidie*. Toute une cité de l'Afrique romaine, Alger: Fontana.
LESCHI, Louis (1940), *La basilique chrétienne en Algérie*. In: Atti del IV Congresso internazionale di Archeologie Cristiana, ed. by Pontificio Istituto de Archeologia Cristiana, Rome, 45-167.