Religious Practices and Christianization of the Late Antique City (4th–7th cent.)

Edited by

Aude Busine

BRILL

Contents

Introduction: Religious Practices and Christianization of the Late Antique City

Aude Busine

In modern scholarship, Christianity and the classical city, which constitues the original founding element of Greco-Roman civilization,[1] are often deemed to be incompatible. The *communis opinio* may be summarized in Mogens Hansen's assertion that the *polis*, with its polytheistic cults and events, was a Pagan institution in which worthy Christians could take no part.[2] More generally, Voltaire's idea[3] of a causal relationship between two distinct historical phenomena, viz. the conversion to Christianity and the end of the Ancient World, prevails in a significant number of studies of Late Antiquity.[4] The confusion encourages one to reassess the relationships between those two key events. This volume, which results from the conference on "Religious Practices and Christianization of the Late Antique City" held at the Université libre de Bruxelles from January 19 to 21, 2012, seeks to study the phenomenon of the Christianization of the Roman Empire within the context of the transformations and eventual decline of the Greco-Roman city. The studies brought together here aim to describe with greater precision the possible links between religious, but also political, economic and social mutations engendered by Christianity and the evolution of the antique city. More particularly, an effort will be made to measure the impact on the city of the progressive abandonment of traditional cults to the advantage of new Christian religious practices. The papers in this volume will cast a new light on the intersection between the Christianization of the Roman Empire and the progressive disappearance of the municipal civilization characteristic of Greco-Roman Antiquity. It is hoped that this Introduction, though not intended to offer an exhaustive

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1 Cf. Inglebert (2005) 22–30; Loseby (2009).

2 Hansen (2008) 169. Cf. Liebeschuetz (2001) 247–248.

3 Voltaire (1769) chap. XL, 255: "Le christianisme ouvrait le ciel mais il perdait l'Empire". See after him Gibbon (1776 [1906]), according to which the Church had destroyed "the solid fabric of human greatness" (xxix).

4 For an analysis of the theme of decadence, cf. Mazzarino (1959); Schiavone (1996).

historiographical overview, will nevertheless lay the foundations on which the issues to be pursued further in the different papers of the volume can be based.

1   Christianization and the Evolution of the City

Whether viewed from the perspective of history or historiography, the Christianization of the Ancient World is as complex a phenomenon as it is significant. Its complexity is due, among others, to the fact that the term "Christianization" refers both to the process and to its result.[5] Studies of the Christianization of the Roman Empire have long been characterized by a triumphant discourse focusing on the conversion of individuals, especially on the theological, moral and psychological causes of these conversions.[6] The phenomenon has also been abundantly studied from the perspective of the progressive recognition of Christianity as the state religion. Historical markers as Constantine, Theodosius and Justinian have here been used as a model to explain how populations of the Empire were incited, often through political coercion, to move from one religion to another.[7] Recent studies, however, have tended to play down the impact of Constantine's conversion in the progress of Christianity and called into question the actual effects of anti-Pagan legislation.[8]

    The Christianization of the Ancient World in its relationship to the city deserves a particular attention, while it is especially there, in the cities, that Christianity was to develop. From the 4th century onwards, the creation of a Christian Empire entailed not only a change in the religious faith, beliefs and practices of the inhabitants, but also implied a total overhaul of traditional culture and society. The Christian attitude towards the earthly city, to be replaced by the Celestial City, was more ambivalent than prevailing attitudes in the 3rd century.[9] One might say that the universalist scope and eschatological dimension of the new religion made it an unlikely candidate for a civic religion.[10] However, Christian authorities, encouraged by the new imperial measures, soon understood that they could not realize their proselytizing and

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5   Cf. the terminological analysis in Inglebert (2010) 9.
6   Cf. the historiographical assessment established in Inglebert (2010).
7   Cf. MacMullen (1997) 1–52; and more recently Veyne (2007).
8   Cf. Baslez (2008). Regarding the vitality of traditional cults, cf. Gregory (1986); Whitby (1991); Chuvin (2004²) 135–152; Jones (2014).
9   Cf. Sandwell (2007) 132–136.
10   Cf. C. Sotinel's contribution to this volume.

moral mission if they did not invest in the cities' territory and appropriate their sphere of influence.

It must be remembered that in the 4th century, *poleis* and *ciuitates* were still the basic units in the political, social and cultural organization of the Empire's inhabitants, notwithstanding the restrictions imposed on their autonomy by the successive reforms of Diocletian and Constantine.[11] From an institutional viewpoint, the community life was still ruled by the tripartite structure Assembly-Council-Magistrates. Admittedly, following its western counterpart, the *curia*, the *boulè* had become a wealth-based and hereditary structure, comprising permanent members born of the great notable families, whereas the Assembly of citizens' role was in most cases confined to formally approving, through acclamation, the decisions worked out by the Council and the Magistrates.[12] Yet, in the 4th century, the identity of an inhabitant of the Empire was still grounded in his urban citizenship and mode of life, and in his participation—albeit tacit—in the common decision-making. As in earlier centuries, each city was still proud of its origins and jealous of its prerogatives.[13] Each city's specific culture, the foundation of its organization and legitimacy, was kept well alive and made manifest through mythological scenes publicly displayed throughout the city or echoed in the discourses of the Third Sophistic's orators like Libanius. The administrative, political and economic structures required for the management of the public good were concentrated in the urban centre. Through the visibility and monumental nature of these structures, the city-center became the material symbol of the civic community. As a consequence, the habits the city came to reflect the ideal of urban life, to the extent where the city and town are often regarded as synonymous. It is this physical and cultural environment that the Christians sought to appropriate and make compatible with the practice of their religion.

In order to offer a full assessment of the range of mutations engendered by the progressive integration of Christianity, it should first be recalled that those who were labelled as "pagans" or "polytheists" by Christians do not represent an actual and well-defined group, but multiple and polymorphic communities who would never have defined themselves as such.[14] We should therefore underscore the permeability of the groups opposed in the apologetic

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11   Cf. B. Ward-Perkins, (1998 [2009[8]]).
12   Cf. Jones (1971); Roueché (1984); Liebeschuetz (2001) 124–136.
13   As it illustrated by the telling example of Orcistus, cf. Jacques (1992).
14   Cf. Jones (2012).

and dogmatic approaches.[15] Likewise, ancient Christian religions should not be reduced to a homogeneous and uniform system, studied in terms of Christianity as it is known today. It is necessary to distinguish a multiplicity of Christianities, varying with time and geographical location.[16]

Modern specialists in the Greek-speaking world, more strongly committed to the idea of decline, have tended to analyse the evolution of the late antique *polis* against the glory of the classical Greek city, notably its autonomy and its democratic ideas. The changing relationships between people and elites, such as Louis Robert observed in Greek cities as early as the 3rd century BCE,[17] would thus point to the influence of a Roman model on Greek civic life.[18] In this way the history of the *polis* in Late Antiquity—that only an empty shell would have remained—, boils down to an analysis of what disappeared, especially in institutional and social terms, or of what was to survive in the Byzantine world.[19] In contrast, scholarship on the municipal life of the western provinces has emphasized the originality and strength of the Late Antique city, possibly because in this region of the Empire the *polis* appeared later and disappeared earlier.[20]

In recent decades, historians have attributed the causes of the decline of the Late Antique city to factors like the loss of political autonomy, a decrease in economic activity, the destructions caused by wars or natural injuries, the desertion of the notables, the decline in euergetism, the fiscal burdens imposed on the cities, the centralization of the administration, and the takeover of local structures by ecclesiastical authorities.[21] More positive changes brought to the civic institutions by the shift in religions have already been studied: e.g., the commitment of bishops to the governments of their cities,[22] the evolution of administration,[23] the creation of new charity institutions,[24] and the insertion of Christianity into the fabric of cities.[25] Analyzing the different religious

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15   Cf. Beard, North, Price (1998) 364–388; Fredriksen (2003); Lavan (2011) li–lii; Rebillard (2012); Frankfurter (2005).
16   Cf. Markus (1990); Brown (1996); Gwynn, Bangert (2010). For the notion of local religion, see Frankfurter (2005).
17   Robert (1960) 325.
18   Cf. Heller (2009).
19   Cf. Harland (2006); van Nijf, Alston, Williamson (2013).
20   Cf. Lepelley (1979); Lepelley (1992); Harries (1992); Leone (2013).
21   Cf. Jones (1940); Liebeschuetz (1992); Liebeschuetz (2001).
22   Cf. Rapp (2005).
23   Cf. Dagron (1974); Delmaire (1989).
24   Cf. Daley (1999); Brown (2012).
25   Cf. the series directed by Pietri (1986–2007); Bauer (2008).

practices as the authors do in this volume will aim to complete the picture and to diagnose the evolving dynamics at work within the city.

2   Secularization and Christianization in the Cities

In applying the sociologists' notion of the "profane" to Late Antique society, the works of Robert Markus and Peter Brown have laid the foundations for an ever-growing discussion on the religious evolution of the city in the Late Antique Roman Empire.[26] They suggested that the end of the monopoly of traditional civic religion engendered the emergence of a secular realm, a sphere which could be shared by the totality of citizens regardless of their religious allegiance. According to Peter Brown, the notion of the secular is even characteristic of the Late Antique world, which witnessed the development of a public culture in which all citizens could take part.[27] As Claude Lepelley has shown for Late Roman Africa,[28] the city seems to have become by the third century a neutral space, freed of religious references, whose consensus on a common set of values allowed to englobe all of the civic community. Relegating the religious dimension into the sphere of the private should not to be confused with a form of religious tolerance, but must rather be seen as reflecting the concern of local elites to keep managing cities whose organisation would remain unchanged.[29]

Markus explains that, once religious competition no longer constituted a threat to the Church, the secular sphere progressively shrunk, making room for the sacred.[30] This desecularization was to give rise to a society based on religious unity, such as would develop in the Byzantine Empire and the Western Middle Age. According to Claire Sotinel, on the other hand, the secular sphere never totally disappeared from the Christian society's scene, except in crisis situations that were limited in time and space.[31] In her view, "the only city from which the secular would be altogether absent is the Celestial City".[32] The secular would, rather, have moved into spheres that were irrelevant to the Christian

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26   Cf. the overview offered by Rebillard, Sotinel (2010).
27   Brown (1980a); Brown (1995) 40–54.
28   Cf. Lepelley (2002).
29   On the role played by the elites in the late antique cities, see Kotula (1982).
30   Cf. Markus (1980); Markus (1990).
31   C. Sotinel (2010).
32   *Ibid.*, 349.

religion, i.e. spectacles, market-places, and where the bishop could wield no direct authority over the Christians' moral behavior.

Studies on the secularization of the city have drawn their data mainly from three domains. They have, first of all, observed the emergence of secular literary and artistic expressions, in which the mythological references were no longer regarded as manifestations of an idolatrous polytheistic religion, but as elements of a common cultural background.[33] The adoption of this secular culture allowed the elites, even the Christian ones, to keep relying on the social function of classical education.[34]

Secondly, historians and archaeologists have noted the visibility of the religious in the urban texture and the phenomenon of desacralization of traditional places of worship.[35] The re-employment of former temples for secular purposes reflects the ambiguity in Christian policies toward old religious buildings.[36] The Christian authorities, while denouncing the temples as associated with demons and their worship, made a point of maintaining an artistic and urban heritage, an object of pride for citizens throughout the Empire.[37]

The third subject, particularly productive for the study of secularization of Ancient civilization, resides in the spectacles, which were extremely popular throughout Late Antiquity despite the violent censure of a number of Christian preachers who denounced their idolatrous and immoral character.[38] From the 4th century onwards, the spectacles, whether financed by local elites or by emperors, were progressively dissociated from the rites that traditionally accompanied them. These events, which gathered the communities at regular intervals, were an opportunity to provide the established powers with *a posteriori* justification.[39] As symbols of the urban (as opposed to barbarian) civilization, these spectacles constituted, still in Late Antiquity, a powerful factor of civic unity, transcending religious divisions. According to Hervé Inglebert, it is thanks to this medium that some form of participation in citizenship was to survive until the 6th century.[40] The French historian explains that for reasons more fiscal than religious, Justinian confiscated the revenues to be devoted to

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33 Cf. Liebeschuetz (1995) 193–208; Lepelley (2010) 477–492.
34 Cf. Bowersock (1990) 1–13; Cameron (2011) 353–360; Elm (2012).
35 Cf. Caseau (2001); Hahn, Emmel, Gotter (2008).
36 Cf. Ward-Perkins (1999); Jacobs (2014).
37 Cf. Saradi-Mendelovici (1990) 47–61; Jacobs (2013).
38 Cf. Lim (1994); Dugast (2007); Belayche (2007).
39 Cicero (*Pro Sestio* 50–54) already saw in these spectacles one of the means, beside the assemblies, through which the people could make its voice heard. Cf. Buc (1997) 67–73.
40 Inglebert (2005) 103–109, 407–408.

the spectacles, and thus brought to an end the possibility of participation in the ritualized consensus uniting the emperor with all inhabitants of the Empire.

3   Religious Practices and the Christianization of the Cities

The issue of religious practices has received surprisingly little attention in the studies of secularization and Christianization of the city. Yet, the various forms of worship appear to be good indicators of the internal evolution of the society, for the traditional cults always played a decisive role in the functioning of the city as well as in the construction of civic identities.[41] The different devotional acts, whether sacrifices, prayers, processions, festivals or the consultation of oracles, provided the civic community with a sense of cohesion transcending legal distinctions, since they involved women and children as well. In this manner the public manifestations of religion were both a factor in and a result of the hierarchization of Antique society. The cults provided the civic community with an opportunity to gather in common practices and discourses that allowed them to position themselves in space and time, and with regard to the gods as well as to other human communities. In a system where "doing is believing", to use John Scheid's felicitous phrase,[42] the issue of personal adherence was not a relevant one for Greeks and Romans. The one thing that did count was respect for the contract that linked devotees to the divinities protecting their home and city as well as to those of Rome and the emperors. In contrast, adherence to Christianity demanded a personal choice and commitment, opening up new dimensions like faith, repentance and morality. It must also be remembered that the demand to worship only one God was altogether foreign to Greco-Roman religions.[43] In what Peter Berger, and John North after him, have called the "religious supermarket",[44] each human could participate in as many forms of worship as he chose, in addition to the civic cults. In contrast, becoming a Christian entailed (in theory) not only observance of new initiation and sacrificial rites like baptism and the Eucharist, but also unconditional renunciation of all those practices that were deemed idolatrous.

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41   Cf. Polignac (1995), which demonstrates the importance of worship practices in the phenomenon of the cities' emergence.

42   Scheid (2005).

43   Note the reticence of some scholars to use the term *monotheism* to refer to the religious aspirations outside Judaism and Christianity. See Barnes (2001); Chaniotis (2010) 112–114.

44   Berger (1969) 137; North (1992).

In his book *The End of Sacrifice*, Guy Stroumsa has highlighted the fundamental role played by that central act of traditional piety, the blood sacrifice.[45] This external public rite, in which all shared, he argues, yielded to an internal form of religion, based on confessional adherence and the silent reading of revealed texts. According to Stroumsa it is ancient Judaism that carried the seeds of this new "souci de soi" (as Michel Foucault called it), for Judaism inspired major Christian concepts like the resurrection of the flesh and divine incarnation. It is this revolution that might have triggered the displacement of the sacred towards the realm of the private. Stroumsa himself situates the shift from a civic religion towards a community-based one among the consequences of the end of sacrifice.[46]

The task remains, then, to bring together these ideas with studies of other traditional forms of devotion practised in the Late Antique city. Blood sacrifice seems to constitute a separate case inasmuch as it is the religious practice that the Christian authorities unanimously and most virulently condemned.[47] It must be remembered that it was precisely this categorical refusal to perform sacrifices to the Roman gods and emperor that distinguished Christians from other cults in the Empire. It seems necessary, therefore, to investigate the development of unity in civic worship via forms of religious behaviour less stigmatized by Christian ideology, and whose permanence and evolution can be better observed.

It is known that other practices, such as the offering of lamps, the consultation of oracular shrines, ritual acclamations to a unique deity or the veneration of angels, were followed both by people who defined themselves as Christians and people who did not.[48] Elsewhere, there may have been an *interpretatio christiana* of traditional religious practices: Nicole Belayche has suggested that the spring festival celebrated by the Christians in Gaza in May under the name "Day of the Roses" may have been a Christianized version of the traditional Roman *Rosalia* festival.[49] In a number of cases, it has been possible to explain the overlap between religious practices, whether in the form of coinciding festival dates or the replacement, in a place of worship, of an old deity by a Saint with similar virtues or attributes,[50] as an attempt by Christians to take over and adapt popular cults, without which the conversion of Gentiles would not have

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45   Stroumsa (2005).

46   *Ibid.*, 147–186.

47   See Nasrallah (2011). For a reassessment, see Ullucci (2012).

48   Cf. Aune (1983); Rothaus (2000) 41–63; Mitchell (1999); Belayche (2010); Cline (2011).

49   Belayche (2004) 17.

50   Cf. Perrin (1995); Pietri (1997).

been possible. However, as Peter Brown has pointed out for the cult of martyrs,[51] this model of borrowing, whose origins lie in the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*, can not be applied to every case. For instance, the coincidence of incubation, which had long taken place in Asclepius' sanctuaries but also developed around Christian martyrs' tombs, proves to be more complex than models of simple adoption suppose, both in terms of the chronology and the religious significance of incubation.[52]

And finally, some traditional public feasts like the Lupercalia survived without being Christianized but lost their overt religious character".[53] This festival was very popular in Late Antique Rome, albeit decried by uncompromising Christians, probably less because of their allegedly "pagan" origins than the risks they posed to the social order.

New initiatory and sacrificial rites like baptism and Eucharist were originally practised in the private context, on the margins of the public life and with little interaction with civic life. Nevertheless, the regular gathering of the faithful in growing churches did have an impact on life in the city. John Chrysostom goes so far as to claim that his church in Antioch, a locus of virtue and salvation, should be substituted for the *agora*, the nerve centre of the classical *polis*' economic, social and political life. To the preacher, the *agora* appeared as a place of debauchery and perdition much like theatres and hippodromes.[54] He deplores, however, that the Church, having become for some a new locus of social interaction, had also become the scene of activities foreign to its religious calling, as Christians went there to talk, conduct business, and even to meet women.[55] Whatever the bishop's judgment, we can observe here that regular meetings in churches did have an impact on civic habits in the urban sphere, since a number of functions essential to the city's life previously performed in a public space, were now shifting to a space reserved to the members of a religion they had chosen.

Moreover, the impact of Christianity in the cities must not be restricted to the consequences of performing rites within the enclosed space of the churches. Post-Constantine Christianity acquired increasing visibility in the city through Christianization of the institution of the adventus.[56] Just as in

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51   Brown (1980b).
52   Cf. Wiśniewski (2013); Graf (2013).
53   Cf. Lançon (2000) 95–96. On the de-paganization of public cults, see J. Hahn's contribution to this volume.
54   Cf. Lavan (2007).
55   Cf. the passages cited by Lavan (2007) 167 n. 55.
56   Cf. Markus (1990) 85–135; Sotinel (2000).

the evolution of pilgrimages to the Holy Land,[57] the development of the cult of martyrs and their relics gave rise to new forms of religious performance. At the occasion of the annual *panegyris* celebrating a saint, the clergy organized processions linking a church to a *martyrium* outside the city walls. During these events, which were accompanied by festivities, hymns, prayers and fasting, the visible presence and performance of a new hierarchy in society allowed the Christian bishops to manifest the new social order that they sought to impose.[58] Other processions organized for special occasions like the nomination of a new bishop, ecumenical festivals like Easter or the *translatio* of a Saint's relics provided additional opportunities to give the civic territory of both city and countryside a new cohesion in a Christian frame. It is known that the classical processions would stop at stations in front of symbolic places in the city like the *bouleuterion*, thus strengthening the links between the participants and the city's institutions.[59] And the establishment of new itineraries for the Christian processions had consequences for the city's customs and thus community life as a whole.[60]

An episode in the *Life of Porphyry* of Gaza (§ 20–21) shows that the successive processions of rival religious groups within the city confines could spark conflicts between the communities. And the example of the *translatio* of Babylas' body from Daphne to Antioch city center constitutes evidence that a procession could be instituted by some Christians in the context of a fierce competition with an existing cult, in this case, the Apollo oracle at Daphne: in the mid-4th century, the martyr's body had been brought and buried in a chapel near Apollo's temple. Emperor Julian attributed the silence of the oracle to the presence of the Saint's relics and then removed his *martyrium* from Daphne. According to Ammianus Marcellinus (22.13.3), the fire of the temple in 362 was caused by a priest having left a candle burning, suggesting that the temple was still in use at that time. All Christian sources considered the unexpected ruin of the temple as a sign of the victory of Christianity.[61]

These new festive occasions progressively took over the role of the traditional calendar which had until then always determined the rhythm of all

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57   Cf. Kötting (1950).

58   Cf. Leemans (2003) 11–21.

59   On the importance of the itinerary and stations of the ancient processions, cf. Rogers (1991).

60   Cf. Baldovin (1987).

61   J. Chrys., *De S. Babyla c. Iulian.* 93; Theodor., *Hist. eccl.* 3. 11. 4–5. On this episode, see Carruthers (2002); Shepardson (2014) 58–90.

of the civic community.⁶² In this respect, one may consider that the cults worshipping local martyrs and Saints fulfilled a number of functions of the cults which had structured every city's life since Ancient times.⁶³

The visibility of the new places of worship also allowed Christian authorities to redesign the symbolic outlines of the city. John Chrysostom, for instance, affirmed that the true ramparts of the city of Antioch were constituted by the *martyria* situated on its outskirts.⁶⁴ By the same token, the Christian practice of inhumation *ad sanctos* in the very city centre reflected not only a novel conception of death but also a new conception of the urban space.⁶⁵ The Christian processions which moved throughout Constantinople, spreading prayers and incense, clearly aimed at turning traditional civic places like the agora, the hippodrome or the main streets of the city into places filled, as John Chrysostom described them, by the presence of the Holy Spirit, and therefore entirely devoted to the practice of the Christian religion.⁶⁶

4   Towards a Christian City?

All in all, it appears that the study of the evolution of the religious practices in the city requires qualification of the assumption of plain incompatibility between Christianity and the classical city. At least for the period from Constantine to Justinian, when the traditional civic cults no longer addressed the totality of citizens and the Christian cults did not do so yet, we must reconsider the issue of cult-based citizenship.

In order to provide some structure for this discussion we would propose a series of stages in the evolution of the cities inhabited by Christians. First, as a consequence of the advance of Christianity, there developed a kind of neutral, secularized city whose religious dimension was relegated to the private sphere and whose body of citizens were no longer defined in terms of civic cults. The secular space became the field of competition between different religious groups, as Christian services would be observed on the margins of the public sphere, and have no impact on city life.

Then, with the progressive disappearance of the traditional cults, cities saw the Church take over, adapt, and maintain a number of modes of civic

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62   Cf. Salzman (1999); Lançon (2000) 138–139.

63   Cf. Van Uytfanghe (1996).

64   J. Chrys., *In martyres Ægyptos, PG* 50, col. 694.

65   Cf. Brown (1980b) 1–22; Bernier (2008).

66   Cf. Andrade (2010).

functioning, developing a more overt Christianity with greater public visibility. Thus Christianity—notwithstanding its universalist claims—made its imprint on the particular local religious practices of a number of cities and consequently adopted certain identifying functions of the former urban cults through the cult of Saints. By these means the religion proved capable of providing each urban community with emblematic figures that distinguished them from other cities and to which the citizens could lay claim. New religious practices came to be developed according to each city's urban character and the personality of its local saints. In this Christianized city, the (mostly Christian) citizens publicly participated in Christian forms of worship but at the same time defined themselves in terms of their membership of the city, and not only by their religious allegiance. A composite civic and Christian culture developed, knitting the community together around common points of reference.[67] This process has hitherto been largely ignored by modern scholarship.

The 4th century seems to constitute a turning point, witnessing the emergence of Christian institutions liable to represent the totality of the urban community.[68] Perhaps one could here propose another turning point in Justinian's measures of compulsory conversion, inasmuch as these cancelled the possibility of having non-Christian citizens, for until that point Roman law had defined the body of citizens in non-confessional terms.[69] Justinian's era certainly saw the emergence of another type of Christian city, corresponding to the ideals of John Chrysostom: a society dominated by Bishops regulating both the charity and the access to the beyond. The culture advocated here by the local authorities was henceforth based on Biblical narrative, at the expense of the classical *paideia*, which disappeared at the same time as the traditional educational structures.

Whether for political, economic or religious reasons, the appearance of the Church in the civic domain modified the nature of the part it took in the consensus, giving rise to a new form of collective, non-civic participation where membership in a community came to be defined in terms of religious life, marked by masses and worship of the Saints. This situation precipitated the end of the civic urban ideal, since the city was henceforth reduced to an administrative and military entity.

In order to assess the extent to which the observance of the new Christian rituals and the progressive disappearance of traditional cults contributed to the evolution sketched here, it will be necessary to specify what is understood

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67   Cf. Busine (2014) 220–236.
68   Cf. Sotinel (2005).
69   Cf. Inglebert (2005) 108.

by city, civic identity and citizenship, as Hervé Inglebert proposes in the conclusion to this volume. Allowance must also be made for differences in evolution at different times and places, requiring attention to a multiplicity of sources and analytical approaches. Such is the ambition of this volume, in which historians and archaeologists as well as historians of religion seek to understand whether Ancient Christianity was able to ensure the survival of civic practices and identities and also how much urban realities impacted the evolution of early Christianity.

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