

**CREATING ETHNICITIES & IDENTITIES
IN THE ROMAN WORLD**

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**CREATING ETHNICITIES
& IDENTITIES IN THE
ROMAN WORLD**

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**INSTITUTE OF CLASSICAL STUDIES
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The cover image shows survivals of the temples at Yanuh in 2005.
For details, see Kevin Butcher's article in this volume, Figure 10 p. 205.
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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This volume arises from two inter-related sessions presented at the 7th Roman Archaeology Conference, held at UCL and Birkbeck College in March 2007. One of these focused exclusively on identity-formation in Italy in the period of Roman conquest and afterwards (*c.*300 BC – AD 100), while the other addressed the processes of creating and maintaining ethnic identities throughout the Roman world. In particular, each panel explored the role of Roman ethnic categorisations in influencing the ethnic identities of groups within the empire. Both panels also sought to facilitate a cross-disciplinary approach to this area of study, by addressing the problems posed by a range of archaeological, visual, epigraphic and literary evidence. For present purposes, the core of papers delivered at the conference has been augmented with additional contributions in order to extend the chronological and geographical coverage of the volume.

The editors would like to thank also the organisers of the 7th Roman Archaeology Conference for accepting our panel sessions, and also all the speakers who took part in the conference sessions on which this book is based, and who helped to make these panels a success. We would also like to thank our contributors for their patience during the preparation of this volume. We would also like to acknowledge the support of our respective institutions, the Institute of Archaeology, University College London, and Classics at the National University of Ireland, Galway.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- ADAJ* *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan*
- ADelt* *Ἀρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον*
- AE* *L'Année Épigraphique: Revue des publications épigraphiques relatives à l'antiquité Romaine. Paris, 1888-.*
- AION (Ling)* *Annali dell'Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli, Dipartimento di Studi del mondo classico e del Mediterraneo antico, Sezione linguistica*
- AJA* *American Journal of Archaeology*
- AJP* *American Journal of Philology*
- ANRW* H. Temporini (ed.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* (Berlin 1972-)
- AntCl* *L'Antiquité Classique*
- ArchCl* *Archeologia classica*
- ArchEph* *Ἀρχαιολογική Εφημερίς*
- AREpLond* *Archaeological Reports*
- ARP* *Accordia Research Papers*
- ASAtene* *Annuario della Scuola Archeologica Italiana d'Atene*
- ASNP* *Annali di Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, Serie III.. Classe di lettere e Filosofia*
- ASP* *Archivio Storico Pugliese*
- BAR* *British Archaeological Reports*
- BASOR* *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
- BASP* *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists*
- BCH* *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*
- BICS* *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*
- BMCR* *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*
- BSA* *Annual of the British School at Athens*
- ChrÉg* *Chronique d'Égypte*
- CIL* *Corpus Inscriptorum Latinorum. Consilio et auctoritate Academiae litterarum Regiae Borussicae. Berlin-Brandenburgische: Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1862-.*
- CIS* *Corpus inscriptionum semiticarum*

- CJ* *Classical Journal*
- CP* *Classical Philology*
- CQ* *Classical Quarterly*
- CRAI* *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres*
- Ergon* *Τό Έργον τής 'Αρχαιολογικής Έταιρείας*
- EtCret* *Études Crétoises*
- FGrH* F. Jacoby, *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (Berlin 1923–)
- FHN* *Fontes Historiae Nubiorum* (Bergen).
- GaR* *Greece and Rome*
- GRBS* *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*
- HSCP* *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*
- HTR* *Harvard Theological Review*
- I.Lamp* P. von Frisch (ed.), *Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien, VI : Die Inschriften von Lampsakos* (Bonn, 1978)
- IANice* G. Laguerre 1975. *Inscriptions antiques de Nice-Cimiez (Cemenelum, Ager Cemenelensis)* (Paris).
- IC* M. Guarducci, *Inscriptiones Creticae I-IV* (Rome 1935-50).
- IGLS* *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*
- IK* *Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien, 16: Ephesos* (Bonn) 1980.
- ILLRP* H. Degrassi, *Inscriptiones Latinae Liberae Rei Publicae* (Rome 1957–
- Insc. It.* *Inscriptiones Italiae*
- JanthArch* *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology*
- JAOS* *Journal of the American Oriental Society*
- JEA* *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*
- JJP* *Journal of Juristic Papyrology*
- JRA* *Journal of Roman Archaeology*
- JRAI* *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*
- JRS* *Journal of Roman Studies*
- KE* *Κρητική Εστία*
- KhrChr* *Κρητικά Χρονικά*
- MeditArch* *Mediterranean Archaeology. Australian and New Zealand Journal for the Archaeology of the Mediterranean World*
- MÉFRA* *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome*
- MHR* *Mediterranean Historical Review*

<i>NSc</i>	<i>Notizie degli scavi di antichità</i>
<i>OJA</i>	<i>Oxford Journal of Archaeology</i>
<i>PastPres</i>	<i>Past and Present</i>
<i>PBSR</i>	<i>Papers of the British School at Rome</i>
<i>PCPS</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society</i>
<i>PP</i>	<i>La parola del passato</i>
<i>QSAP</i>	<i>Quaderni della Soprintendenza di Archeologia nella Piemonte</i>
<i>RE</i>	<i>Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i>
<i>REA</i>	<i>Revue des études anciennes</i>
<i>RÉg</i>	<i>Revue d'égyptologie</i>
<i>RIG II.1</i>	<i>M. Lejeune 1985. Recueil des Inscriptions Gauloise, vol. II.1. Textes gallo-grecs (Paris).</i>
<i>RIG IV</i>	<i>J.-B. Colbert de Beaulieu and B. Fischer 1998. Recueil des Inscriptions Gauloises, vol. IV. Les légendes monétaires (Paris).</i>
<i>RMD I</i>	<i>M. M. Roxan, Roman military diplomas 1954-1977 (London)</i>
<i>RSL</i>	<i>Rivista di Studi Liguri.</i>
<i>ScAnt</i>	<i>Scienze dell'Antichità: Storia, archeologia, antropologia</i>
<i>SCO</i>	<i>Studi Classici e Orientali</i>
<i>SEG</i>	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i>
<i>SHAJ</i>	<i>Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan</i>
<i>SIG³</i>	<i>W. Dittenberger, Sylloge inscriptionum graecarum (Leipzig 1883–)</i>
<i>ST</i>	<i>H. Rix, Sabellische Texte: die Texte des Oskischen, Umbrischen und Südpikenischen (Heidelberg, 2002).</i>
<i>StEtr</i>	<i>Studi Etruschi</i>
<i>TAPA</i>	<i>Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philosophical Association</i>
<i>WorldArch</i>	<i>World Archaeology</i>
<i>TMArchives</i>	<i>Papyrus archives in Graeco-Roman Egypt (Leuven Homepage of Papyrus Archives), online at: http://www.trismegistos.org/arch/index/php</i>
<i>ZDPV</i>	<i>Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>
<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>

The standard abbreviations of papyri are listed in J. D. Sosin *et al.* (edd.), *Checklist of editions of Greek, Latin, Demotic, and Coptic papyri, ostraca and tablets*

[Last updated 11 September 2008], at:

<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/papyrus/texts/clist.html>

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN LEBANESE TEMPLES¹

KEVIN BUTCHER

In recent years the study of identity in the Roman Near East has become something of a hot topic, with wide ranging debates focusing on the question of whether the culture was essentially Hellenized or whether the Hellenized element disguised a more profound, native identity.² This seems to be part of a wider discourse about ‘Romanization’ versus native resistance and often entails detailed discussions about forms and styles in material culture and the origins of these. The introduction of new forms and styles has been seen as either an important cultural break with the past or as a comparatively unimportant decorative addition to an otherwise unbroken native cultural tradition. Although there have been some interesting and nuanced debates that seek to move beyond simple oppositions of Greek and native,³ some discussions of material culture continue to display a tendency to adhere to somewhat unreflective, opposed ideals when describing changes and continuities, equating form and style *with* identity (and identity with ‘culture’). Indeed, the Near East is a place where processes like ‘Romanization’ and ‘Hellenization’ – which have been deconstructed elsewhere – continue to enjoy robust health.⁴ In our eagerness to demonstrate that the Roman empire impacted either greatly or very little on communities in Syria we forget that traditions may be revived or invented, that appropriations of forms and symbols may change their meaning or old meanings persist despite a change of forms or symbols, and that our descriptions of them as ‘native’ or ‘Greek’ are pretty thin characterizations of objects and processes that may not concur with ancient experiences of them.⁵ It has also been observed that the recent scholarly interest in identity in the Roman world has not examined power relationships and the mechanics of

¹ Much of the research for this paper was conducted while I was a Getty Villa Visiting Scholar in Los Angeles in 2007. I would like to thank Erich Gruen for inviting me to take part, and Susan Downey for her thoughtful response to my original paper. I am also indebted to Charles Salas, Kara Cooney, Sandy Garcia, and Christina Meinking, and to all those who attended the Villa Program working group, especially my colleagues on the Villa Program, Molly Swetnam-Burland, and Cecilia d’Ercole. Some of the ideas expressed here were also presented to audiences at the Archaeological Institute of America annual general meeting in Chicago in January 2008, at the conference ‘Contextualising the sacred in the Hellenistic and Roman Near East’, Aarhus, September 2008, and at the Danish Ph.D. course ‘Architecture in Context’ in Damascus, October 2008, and I also wish to thank those audiences for their input.

² Millar 1993; Kennedy 1998; Ball 2000.

³ Kaizer 2002: 24-27.

⁴ See, for example, Richardson 2002.

⁵ Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Cohen 1989.

legitimation to the same degree.⁶ One wonders how much our reliance on descriptions of form and style (be they considered ‘Greek’, ‘Roman’, ‘traditional’, or ‘native’) has obscured our view of these power relationships, which may have been more localized in space and time than our somewhat timeless descriptive categories seem to allow. We are surely obliged to explain the evident changes that took place in the Near East during the period of its incorporation into the power structure we call the Roman empire, and the apparent continuities visible there, not by appeal to the agency of forms and styles but in terms of concrete social relations and actions.

Veneer versus essence

The religious sanctuaries of Roman Syria are prominent reminders of past communities, and it is hardly surprising that they have been drawn into the debates about Near Eastern identities. It can be concluded from literature and iconography that Syrians were proud of their deities and cults, which were considered to be of great antiquity, with a number of the more prominent ones having taken root abroad as well.⁷ The Syrian sanctuaries and their public monumentality undoubtedly assisted in the constitution and reproduction of communal identity; they were, after all, important social spaces.⁸ These sanctuaries were ‘Hellenized’ in Roman times in that they were given monumental structures which in style and, to greater or lesser degree, in form, match our expectations about ‘Graeco-Roman’ styles and forms. There, however, it seems that scholarly agreement stops. For some, these observations about style and form would seem to confirm the cultural dominance of Greek values, even in the sphere of religion. The temples represent some kind of break with whatever religious identities had existed before. Generally, this equation of Greek form and style with Greek culture and identity has gone unchallenged: the culture of Rome, either directly or through native alignments with it, is the agent responsible for the temples. How, then, to rescue ‘native’ identities? The counter argument downplays the significance of overall appearance in favour of more detailed analyzes. Domination creates resistance, and so deviations from Graeco-Roman forms are examined in detail to see if their origins can be located in earlier traditions of the region. These deviant forms are then placed in opposition to the ‘Graeco-Roman’ ones (features characterized as ‘Persian’ or ‘Assyrian’, being equally deviant, are normally cited as evidence for the ‘native’ as well). Origins, or perceived origins, are believed to explain the meaning of these features in contemporary society.

Both sides of this argument have a point, but often seem to be indulging in a simplistic form of culture history. The outward ‘Graeco-Roman’ appearance becomes a signifier of Greekness, to be overcome by the metaphor of a veneer: a surface whose outward forms conceal the true identity, or essence, of a thing.⁹ For those who see in the sanctuaries of

⁶ Huskinson 2000: 18; Mattingly 2006: 6-7; Pitts 2007: 709.

⁷ Swain 1996; Elsner 1997.

⁸ Steinsapir 2005.

⁹ Explicit in Ball 2000, especially chapter 7, ‘Imperial veneer’. Ball’s study, apparently taking its cue from the final section of Millar’s work (1993), is very much occupied with constructs of ‘east’ and ‘west’, and part of its aim is to reclaim the ‘west’ for the ‘east’. See also Sartre 1991: 491 and 496. Outward ‘Classical’ appearances are often contrasted with inner ‘native’ forms: Gawlikowski 1989; Freyburger 1997; Stucky 2005: 189.

Roman Syria acculturation to 'Graeco-Roman' forms, there is a mysterious passivity and historical amnesia,¹⁰ and a failure among indigenous communities to assert an identity through form and style; for those who hold to the notion of a veneer, surface appearance becomes something of minor importance, and the underlying presence of traditional forms becomes (to borrow a neat phrase from Tonio Hölscher) 'significant *in spite of* its temporary domination by Greek styles'.¹¹ The terminology used seems to imply that these buildings exhibit some kind of cultural schizophrenia: a native shrine shrouded by a foreign and alien screen, a conflict between imperial import and authentic tradition. Thus, while many case studies demonstrate that the Syrian examples deviate from any concept of 'perfectly Greek temples',¹² 'native' identity is often defined *only* by its difference from forms and styles labeled 'Greek'. Yet there need not be any logical link between 'Graeco-Roman' style and 'Graeco-Roman' identity. Rather than being a Weberian ideal type designed to help us think more clearly about the social processes involved, we grant the epithet 'Greek' or 'Graeco-Roman' to a temple in Syria only because we see it as an individual element in some grander nexus of forms and styles that we have designated as 'Greek' or 'Graeco-Roman'; such labels tell us nothing specific about its formal and stylistic references and nothing about the agencies that resulted in the choices being made. Furthermore, where identities are concerned, surface appearances *cannot* be dismissed; but it seems unnecessary to argue that native or local identities have to be located exclusively in non-Graeco-Roman forms. We do not have to see every 'Graeco-Roman' style temple or altar located on an artificial raised platform as a 'Semitic High Place' in Classical drag, or to claim that any freestanding column is 'really' a *baetyl*, in order to champion the persistence of indigenous identities. The Graeco-Roman forms can also be viewed as an expression of native or local identities and the vigour of ancient tradition, rather than a hiatus in that tradition, or something supplanting the old identities.

In this chapter I will be concentrating on sanctuaries in the coastal regions of Syria, mainly in Lebanon, with some references to sites in the Bekaa and Antilebanon and further north (Figure 1). These zones are amongst those considered to have been most thoroughly 'Hellenized' and their sanctuaries and temples are typically described in the literature as 'classical'.¹³ As we will see, even in the coastal regions one does not have to search far to find evidence for pre-Roman cult buildings continuing in use, and while continuity of use is not absolute proof of continuity of cult (and therefore of the retention of some form of identity from earlier times), it is suggestive. Nevertheless the validity of the 'veneer' approach, which posits that it is necessary to locate the vigour of 'native' traditions in the survival of old buildings and traditional forms and that the Graeco-Roman element represents a break with tradition, needs challenging. That is what I will attempt here.

¹⁰ Kennedy 1999: 102 (who does not endorse the view).

¹¹ Hölscher 2004: 6.

¹² *E.g.*, Gawlikowski 1989; Will 1995; Freyberger 1997; Ball 2000; Butcher 2003; see also Millar 1993: 310.

¹³ Gawlikowski 1987; Millar 1993: 274; Kennedy 1999: 102.

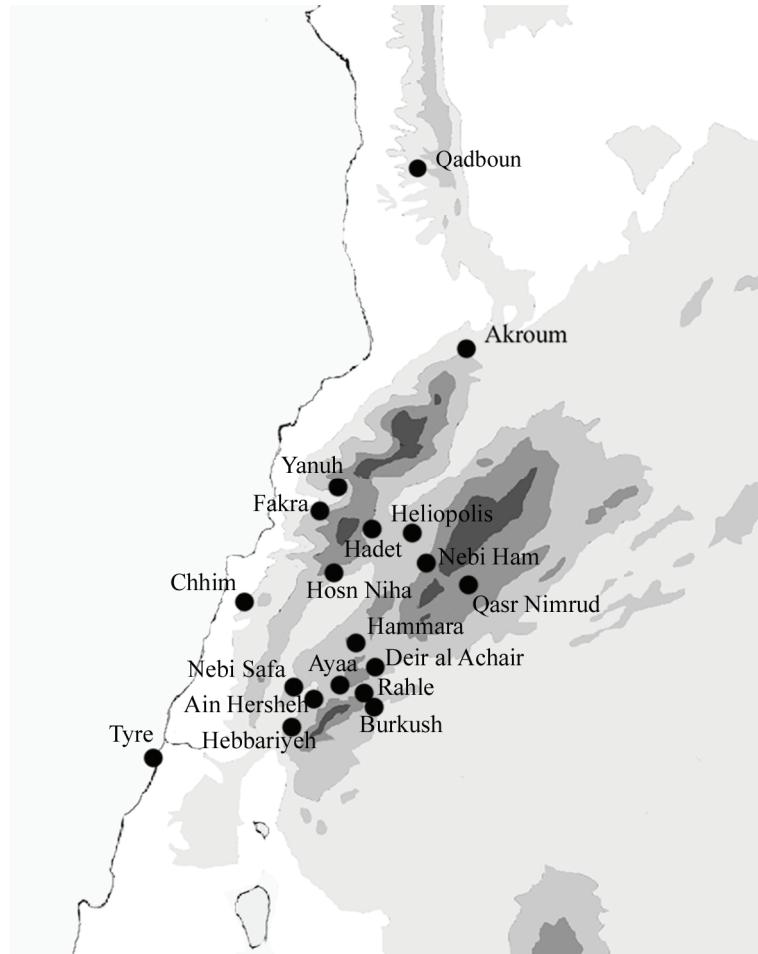


Figure 1. Map showing the sites mentioned in the text.

Tradition versus innovation

How do we evaluate the survival of old, pre-Roman buildings in sanctuaries or the construction of new, classical style buildings? The appearance of ‘Greek’ or ‘Graeco-Roman’ forms and styles for monumental religious architecture looks innovative, and it is easy for us to equate their emergence with a general change or transformation of culture and the dissolution of traditional identities. But we cannot be certain that that is how the builders saw them. Investment in sanctuaries using current styles and forms could be seen as respect for the antiquity (and therefore direct continuity) of a cult, not a cultural hiatus and historical amnesia. Where we see change or transition they might have seen a continuum, and where we see the introduction of universal or ‘international’ styles¹⁴ they might have seen quite specific local or regional references: the imitation of, or

¹⁴ Segal 1997: 1-4.

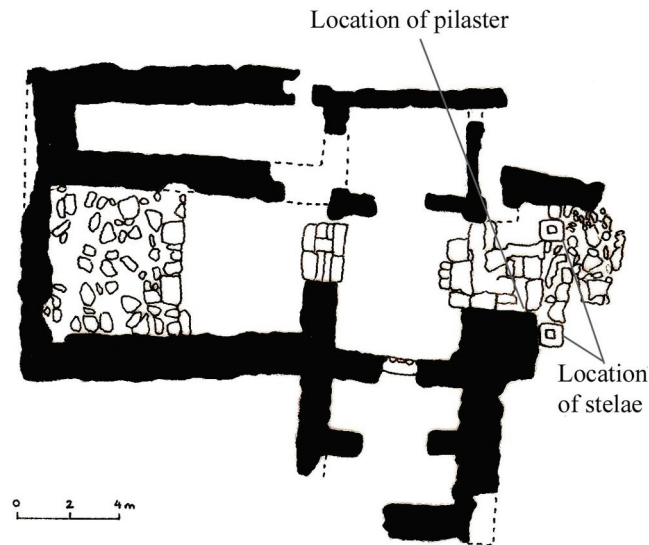


Figure 2. Plan of Qadboun. After Bounni 1997 (simplified). North at the top.

improvement on, another building in the region; *e.g.*, a sanctuary with which they felt themselves to be in competition. Expression in Greek style is not necessarily the same as becoming Greek instead of native (as if choosing one identity meant discarding the other), just as the survival of old buildings in sanctuaries is not necessarily evidence of the vigour of ancient traditions. Lack of change may imply that the cult was unable to attract sufficient respect from wealthy donors and that it was comparatively weak. Updating or revaluating sanctuaries with buildings in styles deemed venerable by the elites speaks of vigour and continuity.¹⁵ What follows are a few examples to support this line of argument.

One of the most remarkable claims for continuity from pre-Roman times concerns Qadboun, a site north of Lebanon, in the mountains near Masyaf. Given that to date only a preliminary notice has appeared,¹⁶ one should be wary of pressing this evidence too far, but the excavators report that, apart from a rectangular *naos*-like structure built of roughly-dressed masonry, the site also possessed a larger, more irregular sanctuary (Figure 2) whose plan, if not construction, they believe dates to the ninth century BC, and which has parallels in various Bronze and early Iron Age sanctuaries. It is built of roughly-cut stones of irregular sizes. At the entrance to this complex is a paved area flanked by sockets that appear to have held *stelae*, one of which, a basalt relief of the ninth century BC depicting a Baal, the excavators believe was standing in its place until its burial in late Roman times. Regardless of whether or not this was indeed the case the site also produced 'Graeco-Roman' material. Immediately behind the sockets, either side

¹⁵ These styles may have been deemed venerable because they were perceived to demonstrate an alignment with 'Greek' or 'Graeco-Roman' culture in general, but on the other hand they may have been adopted because they were the styles of other religious buildings in the vicinity.

¹⁶ Bounni 1997.

of the entrance, are the remains of stone pilasters in Doric style, attached to the walls of what are thought to be flanking towers of the earlier building. The sanctuary yielded fragments of relief decoration, some of which is typically 'Hellenized' in style, and one of which shows a priest making an offering in what seems to be a traditional pose of Syrian priests of the Roman period.¹⁷ What this seems to suggest is that an older sanctuary might have seen use in Hellenistic and Roman times with only minor changes, and that the past was very much visible, externally, and internally. Yet even if this was the case, one wonders whether its survival was due more to an inability to attract wealthy patrons in Roman times than local 'resistance' and the strength of old traditions.

A case for ritual, but not physical, continuity has been made for the sanctuary of Apollo at Tyre.¹⁸ The evidence suggests that it was wholly a creation of the Roman period, but the excavators see this sanctuary, which never received a 'Graeco-Roman' temple, as evidence for the continuation of an indigenous tradition and draw a contrast with the temples of Lebanon that we will be considering shortly.¹⁹ There is some evidence for some sort of use of the site in pre-Roman times, but it became an identifiable sanctuary with a *temenos* wall only in the first half of the first century AD. In spite of the evidence for several phases of investment, enlargement, and construction, the sanctuary was only in use for about a century and was then abandoned at some point in the second century (in the third century it had been incorporated into the necropolis and a platform for sarcophagi was built over it). While in this case one cannot doubt that interest, and investment, in this sanctuary was strong in the Roman period, whether the lack of a temple really should be taken to signify some 'native' desire for difference is difficult to demonstrate. One could argue that, had the sanctuary continued in use for longer, a temple *might* have been built within the precinct. And while there was no demonstrable continuity of worship on the site from pre-Roman to Roman times, and no profound past to respect or curate, elements of the earliest phase were incorporated into later phases, effectively *establishing* a strong tradition of architectural continuity that, for whatever reason (lack of investment? Links to the fortunes of a single patron or group of patrons?), was cut short. Indeed, the frequent reworking and incremental elaboration of the sanctuary during its short life may be instructive for a more general appreciation of processes of renewal and patronage in the sanctuaries of the region.

The rustic temples at Akroum in northern Lebanon, on a hilltop overlooking the plain of Homs, may represent a more advanced stage of elaboration, in which sanctuaries were given 'Graeco-Roman' temples.²⁰ These buildings have not been examined in detail and their construction histories and chronology are quite obscure. The best-preserved of the three temples there, dubbed Temple A (Fig. 3), has a colonnaded *pronaos* that was clearly added to the rectangular *naos* after the latter was built (Fig. 4). Though constructed of rectangular stones, they are irregular and only roughly worked; the same can be said for the entablature, columns, and moldings. Was this a stylistic choice? We might be tempted to think that it was so: a failure to absorb 'Graeco-Roman' values completely; or a partial

¹⁷ Krumeich 1998.

¹⁸ Bikai, Fulco, and Marchand 1996.

¹⁹ Bikai, Fulco, and Marchand 1996: 84-85.

²⁰ Taylor 1971: 140-43; Nordiguan 2005, 218-19



Figure 3. Temple A at Akroum, 1995.



Figure 4: Akroum, 1995. Detail of the inside of the pronaos of Temple A, where it butts against the construction of the *naos*.

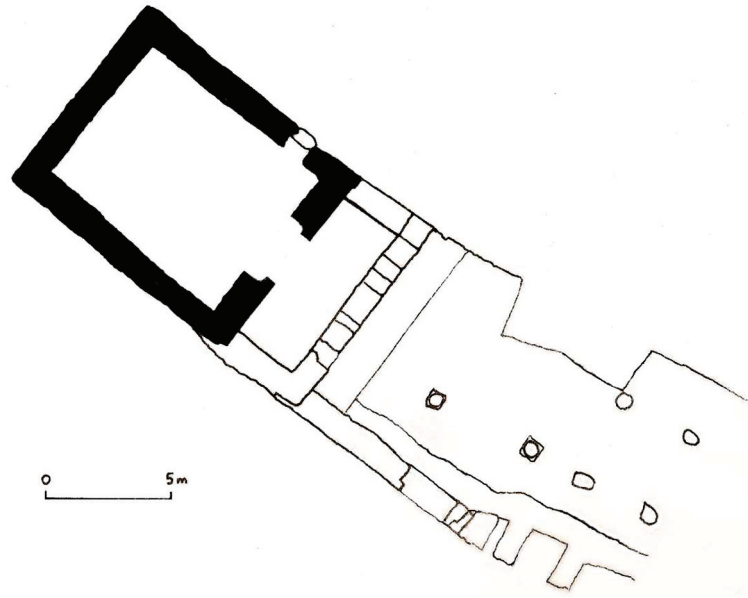


5. Akroum, 1995. Interior of the *naos* of Temple A, showing the arched entrance to the *adyton*.

attempt to resist them by incorporating the forms but not the styles. We might note the use of an archway within the *naos*, giving access to the *adyton* (Fig. 5), as a highly unusual feature of this building, and add that to the catalogue of potential ‘native’ forms (particularly if we can locate a pre-classical parallel, or one from outside the Roman empire). Such conclusions are possible, but there are other possibilities. Given that many other Lebanese temples are in an apparently unfinished state, with features partially blocked out or unworked, it seems equally likely that the intention was to dress the stonework properly, but in this case the resources were entirely lacking or the opportunity never arose. Indeed, Temple A would appear to anticipate our next site.

The sanctuary at Chhim, in the hills above Sidon, has recently been the subject of detailed excavations by a joint Lebanese-Polish team (Figures 6-8) and may give us some impression of what Temple A at Akroum might have looked like had more resources been available.²¹ The temple as it survives today would appear to be Antonine in date, but it evidently had a complex earlier history which ongoing excavations are gradually revealing. A rectangular *naos* with ‘Egyptian’ decoration (a winged sun disk over the entrance), probably dating to the first half of the second century AD, seems to predate its Corinthian *pronaos*. Initially this *naos* may have formed a free-standing building of roughly dressed stone, replacing an earlier religious structure that lay on a different alignment. A second-century AD *temenos* wall abuts the *cella* and forms a continuation of its south-west side. When the tetrastyle *pronaos* was added the presence of this *temenos* wall meant that the south-west column had to be engaged with it; a free-standing pillar

²¹ Waliszewski 2001; 2003.



6. Plan of Chhim. After Waliszewski 2003 (simplified). North at the top.



7. Chhim, 1994. The temple, with the *temenos* wall extending in front of it.



8. Chhim, 1994. The Corinthian *pronaos* and the façade of the *naos*, with the monumental entrance in the *temenos* wall in the left foreground. Remnants of the colonnaded way and a later basilica are scattered before the temple. Note that the outermost column of the *pronaos* is engaged to a pillar rather than being circular in section.

with an engaged column was erected to mirror it, presumably for reasons of symmetry, in the north-east corner (Figure 8). Presumably at roughly the same time the facade of the *naos* was neatly dressed, but the rest of the building was left only roughly dressed. A colonnaded way was created in the second century, extending from the temple towards a large tower-like structure of uncertain date immediately to the south-east. Though the dating has yet to be clarified, it seems that an earlier *naos* and (cult?) tower were given a face lift in the later second century with a monumental *temenos* wall and entrance, a porticoed processional way, a Corinthian *pronaos* and a neatly-dressed *naos* entrance employing Egyptian mouldings, a winged sun disk and reliefs (one a bust of Helios and the other a priest). The whole looks piecemeal, the product of fits, starts, and compromises rather than a unified programme. That the whole temple could not be neatly dressed in Greek (and Egyptian) style perhaps speaks of some limitations rather than ‘native’ resistance to ‘Graeco-Roman’ values: the resources to completely renovate Chhim’s sanctuary with ‘worthy’ styles were never available.

A site that might be seen as more successful in attracting wealthy patrons was Yanuh (Figures 9-10), high in the Lebanon range above Byblos, not far from the sanctuary at Afqa (the source of the Adonis river). Had it not been for recent careful excavation and survey of this sanctuary we might have supposed that nothing survived of any earlier, pre-monumental phase, but excavation revealed that a large rectangular platform (7.2 x 5.7 m) of the late second century BC, with a stepped approach on one of its long sides, remained in use after the main phase of monumentalisation in the first half of the second

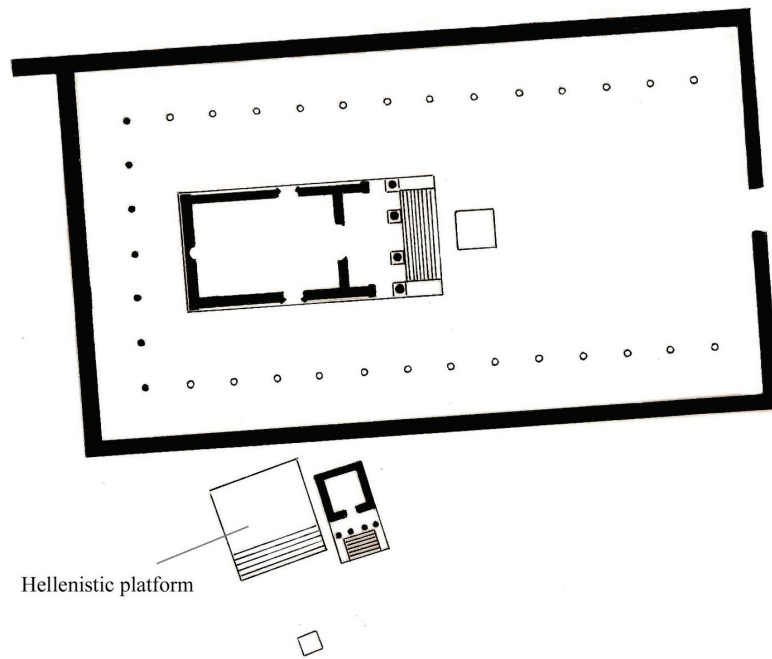


Figure 9. Plan of Yanuh. After Gatier and Nordiguian, 2005 (simplified). North at the top.



Figure 10. Yanuh, 2005. In the left foreground, the remains of the small temple; behind, to the right, the *temenos* wall; to the rear, the large temple on its podium, with lateral side doors in the *naos*.

century AD.²² The excavators have drawn a tentative parallel with a religious structure of similar appearance found at Tell Dan in the Jordan Valley. An Aramaean inscription bearing a date corresponding to 110/109 BC, found reused in late Roman times, mentions a religious structure and may well relate to this building; the creation of a sanctuary at this date has been plausibly linked to the presence of the Ituraeans who are thought to have occupied the region at this time. This building would seem to have survived the main phase of monumentalization in the first half of the second century AD, when extensive remodelling of the site took place. A small prostyle temple with a tiny, single-roomed *cella*, 2.76m square, was constructed on the same alignment as the Hellenistic platform (facing south-east) and immediately adjacent to the east. To the north of both platform and temple, a rectangular *temenos* containing porticos and a much larger prostyle temple were built, with the whole ensemble facing east. This necessitated a careful levelling operation and resulted in a remarkably symmetrical sanctuary, albeit awkwardly placed with respect to the small temple and platform lying immediately to the south.²³ It seems that both the small temple and the large one in its monumental *temenos* were constructed at more or less the same time, though it is difficult to be certain whether they were part of a single religious complex. Where one might detect continuity in the persistence of the stepped platform and the orientation of the small temple, one might also see tensions in the way the larger temple and its *temenos* are separated from them. At any rate, it would seem that the older platform remained accessible and still in use (a large altar was positioned before it) in the second century AD, strongly hinting at its continued ritual significance. But the massive building program meant that this old feature became very much part of the ‘new’ ensemble, rather than the other way around.

What these sites seem to teach us is that each had its own unique historical trajectory, from which it could be hazardous to generalize. While some sanctuaries fell into disuse, probably at different times and for a variety of different reasons, others continued to attract worshippers and wealthy individuals who invested in these places, sometimes with such enthusiasm that they changed the overall appearance and experience of the sanctuary completely. But can we do more than simply downplay arguments about ‘Hellenization’ or ‘Romanization’ versus native survivals in favour of a close reading of individual construction histories? Rather than viewing the physical transformations as a break with indigenous tradition, to be succeeded by some ‘Hellenized’ form of worship characterized by ‘Greek’ temples or, alternately, trying to detect the valiant persistence of indigenous traditions and their concomitant identities (‘Syrian’, ‘Phoenician’) hiding behind ‘Graeco-Roman’ veneers, the individual building histories might be best read as evidence of varying modes of patronage and differing conceptions of the purpose of the architectural process; raising questions about whether in many cases the processes of patronage – of building, renovation, and renewal – were just as important, if not more so, than achieving a ‘finished’ sanctuary.

²² Gatier and Nordiguian 2005: 11.

²³ Gatier and Nordiguian 2005: 12-13, 22-27.

Form and style versus process

I have already mentioned the ‘unfinished’ state of many temples and presented a few examples. These unfinished elements extend beyond decorative programmes to basic dressing of the stones. Thus the unfinished state does not look like some kind of decorative scheme of its own, an idiosyncratic native style that can be drawn into the debate about identities. Often the work had been started but apparently abandoned, with guidelines having been cut and the dressing of blocks begun. The unfinished state therefore clearly contains the potential of a fully-realized temple. But was it simply a case of lack of resources that prevented them from being completed? If this should prove to be the case, then so many temples exhibit unfinished elements that this phenomenon demands some broader social or economic explanation, taking into account that while the resources and skills required for erecting the buildings were apparently available, those needed for dressing the stones were not always forthcoming. The problems may not have been simply financial: the skill and knowledge of how to work the stones may have been in limited supply in ways that the skills required to quarry the blocks and to erect the buildings were not. On the other hand, much of what we know about the modes of production of sanctuaries suggests that some of these modes could have been a factor contributing to their unfinished appearance.

The (admittedly meagre) epigraphic evidence from the region points to a variety of modes of financing and construction. Most of the builders were locals; there is no certain evidence for the involvement of the Roman state. In no instances do we have clear evidence for an individual or a group of donors paying for an entire, completed temple or sanctuary, although that is certainly conceivable in the case of more comprehensive renovations like that at Yanuh, and should not be ruled out as a mode. There is epigraphic evidence for communal building by a village (the temples at Nebi Ham and Hammara²⁴) or communal building using the financial resources belonging to a deity (*e.g.*, a tower built with the funds of the Great God at Fakra).²⁵ Many inscriptions refer to individual donations – not of a whole building, but of parts of it. Someone – perhaps the Iamlichos son of Baribaos named on a side door – paid at his own expense for at least a part of the peripteral temple at Qasr Nimrud, in the Antilebanon east of Nebi Ham.²⁶ At Ain Hersheh in the foothills of Mount Hermon an inscription lying in front of the temple commemorates the erection of a large altar in AD 114/5 to the ‘ancestral god’ by Alexander, son of Alexander, in fulfilment of a vow, with his wife and for his children.²⁷ A monumental religious structure at Hadet in the foothills of the Lebanon range, overlooking the Bekaa Valley²⁸ was erected to Apollo by a certain Marcus Sentius Valens

²⁴ Nebi Ham: Krencker and Zschietzschmann 1938: 170; Millar 1993: 283; *IGLS* 2986, with modifications in Nordiguian 2005: 96. On the difficulty of recognizing a classical temple among the architectural remains at Hammara, see Nordiguian 2005: 94-99.

²⁵ Krencker and Zschietzschmann 1938: 53-54; Nordiguian 2005: 157.

²⁶ Krencker and Zschietzschmann 1938: 180; Millar 1993: 311.

²⁷ Nordiguian 2005: 114.

²⁸ *IGLS* 2921.

(probably the descendant of a colonist), in fulfilment of a vow. Sometimes we encounter a combination of these modes.²⁹

Whether paid for by elites or funded by common treasuries, most of the rural sanctuaries appear to have been the product of efforts by a variety of individuals or groups – not necessarily concerted or harmonious, or even with any clear final vision in mind. Here, perhaps, lies a key to understanding the ‘unfinished’ temple, not as a failed or abandoned project, but a living, ongoing one in which many patrons might be expected to contribute. Our expectations imagine that the completed buildings, like those seen in our reconstruction drawings, embody the ultimate intention of their builders, but that vision may have little in common with ancient experiences. We should recognize that every building is a compromise between what was originally envisaged and what is possible given the various contingencies and constraints. Like the ‘unfinished’ modern houses in certain Mediterranean countries where metal reinforcing rods sprout from their flat roofs in anticipation of additional stories that could, but perhaps never will be, built, the unfinished temples defer the final compromise. Their incompleteness becomes a hyperbolic statement rather than a style: an anticipation of a splendid future, the promise of magnificence without its full and actual realization.

In the context of elite social display the act of building for the deity could have been just as significant, if not more so, than experience of a finished product.³⁰ It may have been the case that construction sometimes began without any clear conception of what the finished building ought to look like, leading to new developments, and the insertion of new features, as work progressed. Where does this leave the search for a correlation between religious architecture and identities, rooted, as they tend to be, in arguments about form and style? It allows us to consider the appearance of the ‘Graeco-Roman’ temple not as a rupture with past tradition, but as an element of religious continuity, where augmentation and elaboration of a sanctuary are part of an ongoing process of identification with it by its patrons. Statements and claims were still being made through form and style, but we should consider more carefully the identities of those making them, consider whether the forms and styles might have been much more localized in their references than we usually concede. The influences of the temples at Heliopolis on the forms and styles of neighbouring rural temples in the central Bekaa Valley of Lebanon has long been recognized. Similarly, a group of temples clustered in the southern Bekaa share Ionic elements, in contrast to the Corinthian elements favoured by those sanctuaries apparently influenced by Heliopolis.³¹ If the various ‘Graeco-Roman’ styles and outward forms of the temples (rectangular, symmetrical *naoi* with pitched roofs, colonnaded *pronaoi*) prove to be the result of local influences, we might perhaps envisage the inner, ‘native’ forms as the product of such influences as well – meaning that those forms conventionally championed as evidence for unbroken continuity

²⁹ On the resources of a deity and a village at Hosn Niha: *IJLS* 2946.

³⁰ Taylor 2003: 4-5, 212-14.

³¹ A group of temples around Mount Hermon – Deir al-Achair, Nebi Safa, Rahle, Burkush, Ayaa, Ain Hershah, and Hebbariyeh – all employ Ionic pilasters and columns. Krencker and Zschietzschmann 1938: 205-64; Nordiguan 2005: 104-05, 107-23.

of native religious identities and the survival of tradition on a site³² may sometimes have been new features imposed by the builders, in imitation of specific features found in neighbouring temples. So while those inner forms *could* have been dictated by the requirements of traditional cult, it is surely also possible that cult activities could have been augmented by the introduction of new forms emulating neighbouring ones. The cults were not the mainstay of some timeless, unchanging Orient rooted in the distant past, but dynamic social forces embedded in local communities, with individual histories and contemporary concerns (among them, the attraction of worshippers and benefactors). But to recognize that 'native' forms could be imported intrusions is not to shear them of relevance for native identities. Traditions do not have to be old to communicate a sense of authenticity and connection with the past. In the same spirit, the external appearance of 'Graeco-Roman' temples could also convey a sense of tradition.

We need to move beyond our captivation with the authentic, defined by the perceived origins of forms and styles, when considering the relationship between religious architecture and identity in Roman Syria. This is not to insist that ancient origins be ignored; it is merely to point out that the contemporary needs to be taken seriously. To examine the relationship between religious architecture and identity is to attempt to recover a history of intimate social forces, to explore the relations between the sanctuaries and the communities and individuals who patronized them.³³ The architectural process ought to be taken as an important element in those relations, as much as any forms and styles that resulted. Perhaps, after exploring these expressions of social power, we will still be reduced to arguments about the 'Greek' versus 'native' identities of the cults and their patrons, but I suspect what we will uncover is something infinitely more subtle and complex.

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³² Typical 'native' features include a raised *adyton* with crypts beneath, and staircases either side of the entrance to the *naos* leading to the roof, but it is hard to find pre-Roman parallels for these features.

³³ Gatier 1997; Kaizer 2002: 157-61.

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