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Bare Ruined Choirs, Turkey's war on the cultural heritage of Cyprus

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BY [Katherine Eastland](#)

When churches fall completely out of use

What shall we turn them into?

—Philip Larkin, 'Church Going'

Nicosia

Soon after the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974, the roof of St. Andronikos church in Kythrea caved in and fell into its sanctuary. No one came by to clear the rubble, so there's a heap of ruins on the ground covered with tangled greenery. From where I stand, on top of that heap, I can see that the walls, once known for their frescoes, have been stripped white and are now marked with black and neon graffiti. In some places there remain a few painted figures, including ones of Saints Peter and Paul, but their faces are chiseled out and their bodies have been

pockmarked by bullets. Cars roll by every so often, but the one persistent sound is the hum of bees coming from a smashed clerestory window.

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