



U N I V E R S I T Y O F O X F O R D
History Working Paper
Number XIII, October 2013

The End of the Statue Habit (AD 284-620)

Bryan Ward-Perkins

The End of the Statue Habit (AD 284-620)

Bryan Ward-Perkins

The habit of erecting honorific statues faded steadily through Late Antiquity. Now that the ‘Last Statues of Antiquity’ (LSA) database is freely available on line, empire-wide figures charting this decline are readily available.¹ A search in the database for statue bases datable to the tetrarchic and pre-Constantinian period (the 28 years between 284 and 312), produces 321 bases; already by the next 25 years (the reign of Constantine, 312-337) the number has shrunk to 167; while for the 30 years of the earlier Theodosian period (379-408) the figure is down to 133.² In the fifth century the rate of shrinkage accelerated, so that from the entire period after 450 only some 38 bases are known.³ By 550 the statue-habit was effectively dead outside Constantinople. The very last reliably documented honorific statue was set up in Constantinople sometime early in the reign of Heraclius (AD 610-41; LSA 478). In this article I will investigate this steady decline and eventual disappearance, and explore the possible reasons behind it.

When did new dedications cease?

To understand why the statue habit ended, it is first of all essential to outline the broad pattern of change that eventually led to the total disappearance of new honorific statuary, and the very first thing to note is that much of the decline pre-dated 284, the date chosen for the start of the ‘Last Statues’ project. For instance, even at Lepcis Magna, a city quite exceptionally rich in late-antique honorific statuary, the 75 dedications of the late third and the fourth century are considerably fewer than those of the second and early

¹ <http://laststatues.classics.ox.ac.uk/>. The project which produced this database, funded by the AHRC, was directed by R.R.R. Smith and the author; a number of scholars contributed to its creation, and are credited under each individual entry (the principal collaborators being Ulrich Gehn, Julia Lenaghan and Carlos Machado). Throughout the article that follows, the principal reference to each statue or inscription is to its LSA database entry – here the essential evidence relating to the piece is presented and discussed, and, whenever possible, photographs provided. It should be noted that LSA numbers were assigned as database entries were created and have no significance other than to serve as tags leading to the right entry.

² Because the information from the statue bases is the most readily compared – since many of them are datable, at least approximately, and since something approaching a representative sample survives – these are what I principally examine in this article when setting out broad trends within the statue habit.

³ The figure of 38 excludes bases that only record the relocation or repair of a statue.

third.⁴ With the sole exception of sites that assumed wholly new importance in Late Antiquity, such as Constantinople, it is a safe assumption that early imperial statuary consistently outweighed, generally by a substantial margin, that of the period after 284. Furthermore it is also well recognised that by the start of our period the pattern of who was receiving statuary had already substantially changed: in particular, statues to local notables which predominate in the record of the early empire, had already declined greatly in number (there are only 130 dedications to local figures in the LSA database, around 8% of the total).

In some parts of the empire, honorific statuary had never successfully established itself, and the practice was effectively dead even before Late Antiquity.⁵ There are, for instance, only four entries for Britain in the database, and only one of these straightforwardly relates to an honorific statue (a marble head, perhaps of Constantine, LSA 1226). The same is true of northern Gaul and the Rhineland provinces: just two bases are recorded, and both of these come from the wholly exceptional context of the imperial city of Trier (LSA 2610, 2611).⁶

But it was not only in highly marginal provinces, like Britain, that the statue habit had never really established itself, and where it disappeared remarkably early. From the whole of Egypt and the Near East, rich and heavily urbanised regions, only 50 statue inscriptions appear in the LSA database, and 34 of these date from before 337. Statues had never played a major role in the thriving towns of the Levant; this did not change in Late Antiquity, and by the later fourth century here only a very occasional statue was set up.

Other areas had once seen considerable numbers of dedications, but lost the statue habit early on, in some cases even before 284. Particularly striking is the case of southern Gaul, always a heavily romanised province, where we might expect the statue habit to have survived in some strength into Late Antiquity, but which has only produced six late-antique

⁴ Tantillo 2010, 184-99. Furthermore, since statues and statue bases were so often re-used (erasing the earlier inscriptions), there should be a bias in the surviving evidence in favour of the latest statues and their inscriptions: Stewart 2007, 27.

⁵ For what follows, on Gaul and Iberia, I depend on the work of Christian Witschel; for Egypt, the Levant and the Balkans, on that of Ulrich Gehn.

⁶ Trier has also produced considerable quantities of sculptural evidence (LSA 584, 1076, 2402, 2407), with more recorded from the nearby imperial villa at Welschbillig (LSA 1075, 2637-40).

statue bases, none securely datable beyond the early years of the fourth century.⁷ In the Iberian peninsula the statue habit survived into our period slightly better, with some 42 bases recorded, but all of these come from just 14 cities, and dedications to men other than emperors are extremely rare (only six of the total), and even dedications to emperors fall off markedly after the death of Constantine. The last reliably dated statue base from Iberia was set up in 379/87 (LSA 1989), but by this date the native statue habit was already dead: this monument was erected to a former governor by the grateful people of the province of Asia, where, unlike Iberia, the statue habit was still alive and well in the late fourth century. In the Balkans too the most marked decline had happened before our period and continued through the earlier fourth century: by 350 the statue habit in the region had effectively disappeared.

The broad regions where the statue habit survived best in Late Antiquity, and the only regions with a flourishing habit after about 350, were: Italy, particularly Italy south of Rome, from which we know of 249 statue inscriptions (with 88 recorded north of Rome); Rome itself, with by far the largest concentration of late-antique statue inscriptions, 373 in all; the provinces of central north Africa, from Tripolitania to Numidia, with 356 bases; and the Aegean provinces (Greece, the islands, and western Asia Minor), with 396. Constantinople was also rich in statuary, reaching much later in time than any other city, though the extensive evidence we have from it is largely literary (only 13 statue bases are known, several of them uninscribed) and primarily relates to imperial statuary (131 of the 193 entries in the database), so not readily comparable with material from other regions.⁸

Each of these regions has a different statue history; indeed within each broad region there are also striking differences between particular areas.⁹ Developments are particularly clear in Italy, including Rome, for two reasons. Firstly, because the evidence is so extensive, with over 700 statue inscriptions recorded, revealing patterns that can be traced simultaneously across several different urban centres. Secondly, because the Italian, and

⁷ We might expect southern Gaul to show a similar statue history to Italy north of Rome, but this latter broad region has 88 entries in the LSA database, many from the Po plain.

⁸ The primary research on Rome and Italy was done by Carlos Machado, that on Africa jointly by him and Gabriel de Bruyn, while the Aegean region was covered by Julia Lenaghan and Ulrich Gehn, with the latter also cataloguing the material from Constantinople.

⁹ Many not readily explicable: for instance, the fact that Sicily, a very 'senatorial' province, has only produced 17 late-antique statue inscriptions (a tenth of the 170 known from Campania).

particularly the Roman, evidence is unusually closely datable, since statue bases from the peninsula give full details of honorands' names and *cursus honorum* (Fig.1).



Fig.1 LSA 1266. Base for the statue of Caius Caelius Saturninus signo Dogmatius, erected in Rome, in 324/37 (now in the Vatican Museums). Dogmatius' career, starting as advocate of the *fiscus* and culminating in his becoming a senator and *comes* of the emperor, is set out in loving detail.

Rome had the greatest concentration of late-antique honorific statuary anywhere in the empire, with, at the beginning of our period, a tradition that still included dedications by groups such as guilds (which, outside Rome and Campania, are otherwise exceedingly rare). It also had the longest lasting statue habit of the West, reaching into the later fifth century. However, even in Rome the statue habit was moribund before 500; indeed, if we exclude statue inscriptions that record the repair or relocation of statuary (rather than new honorific dedications), it had pretty much disappeared by 450.¹⁰ There is evidence of statues of Theoderic, the Ostrogothic king of Italy (493-526), being set up in Rome, but it is striking, and surprising, that, despite the undoubted conservatism of men like Cassiodorus, there is no evidence that the aristocracy of Rome was being granted statue-honours in the early

¹⁰ The last well-preserved statue bases in Rome are the group of three set up in the Colosseum by the Consul and Prefect of the City, Basilius, in 484. They probably supported statues, but their wording is wholly atypical, so this is not certain. There is also literary testimony to *imagines* (probably statues) of the emperor Zeno (474-91), set up in different places across the city: LSA 2749. Further, Rome and Italy have produced a remarkable group of later-fifth/early-sixth-century heads, both male and female, several with diadems and so imperial (or royal): LSA 755-8, 760, 815 and 1079. The quality of finish on these heads is high and all were probably from busts, displayed indoors and without inscriptions (LSA 755 survives as a bust). Quite how these busts were used, and why there are so many of them in Italy, at a period when conventional imperial statuary had more-or-less disappeared, is a mystery.

sixth century.¹¹ The famous Column of Phocas (Fig.2; LSA 1313), a statue-monument dedicated by the exarch in 608, is highly deceptive – it has all the air of being part of a live statue-tradition, but in reality the tradition was long dead in Italy, even in Rome, and what we see here in the Forum is a practice imported from Constantinople, where it still (just) survived.¹²



Fig.2 LSA 1313. The honorific column in the Roman Forum, originally set up in the tetrarchic period, but rededicated in 608 to bear a gilded bronze statue of the emperor Phocas.

Southern Italy, in particular the senatorial province of Campania, was also rich in fourth-century dedications, but here the tradition died earlier than in Rome, at the beginning of the fifth century, almost certainly accelerated by the crisis of the years around 410, since there are a number of dedications reliably datable to the first decade of the fifth century, and almost nothing thereafter. The last reliably dated dedication is of 437 (LSA 324), and by this time it is an isolated example. In northern Italy, any consistent picture of new dedications ends even earlier, in the 370s. In striking contrast to contemporary Constantinople, even the new imperial residence of Ravenna has produced almost no evidence, besides that for an equestrian bronze statue dedicated to the Ostrogothic king, Theoderic (493-526; LSA 2751).¹³ Italy, particularly Rome, has however produced a number of inscriptions recording

¹¹ LSA 490 and 491 for statues of Theoderic in Rome.

¹² For Phocas' two columns in Constantinople: LSA 2774, 2775. Columnar monuments, after a tetrarchic group in the Forum, were not a feature of the statue landscape in Rome.

¹³ The archaeology of Ravenna, which is buried very deep, is admittedly little known.

the repair or relocation of older statuary, several of which can be dated securely to the later fifth century (Fig.3).

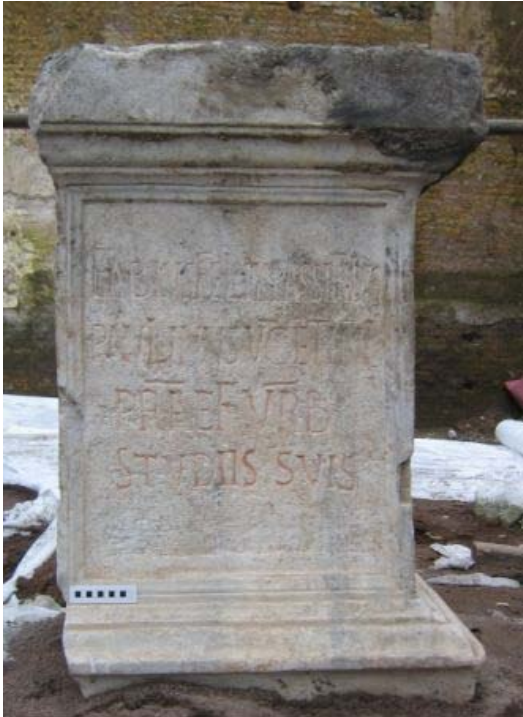


Fig.3 LSA 2664. A recently discovered base in Rome erected between 450 and 476 by the Prefect of the City, Fabius Felix Passifilus Paulinus, which records that Paulinus had done something, '*studiis suis*' (through his own special care), presumably a repair or relocation of the statue above. (Photo: courtesy of Silvia Orlandi)

This is important because it shows that Italians still liked to carve their inscriptions on statue bases (and had not, for instance, moved over to using paint), and that they appreciated statuary enough to manage carefully what they had inherited from the past.¹⁴ But this appreciation, and this epigraphic habit, no longer extended to the setting up of new honorific sculpture.

The evidence from Africa is less well dated than that from Italy, because fewer of the non-imperial figures commemorated here rose high in imperial service (and hence into historical prominence). However, the majority of the African evidence (204 of the 356 inscriptions in the database) relates to dedications to emperors, which for obvious reasons are almost always closely datable; so the overall patterns of change are clear. The picture in Africa is interesting, and somewhat puzzling. One immediate characteristic is a strong degree of local variation. Some of this is unsurprising – in particular the scarcity of evidence from the thinly urbanised provinces at the western end of the north African coast. But

¹⁴ Good examples are the series of bases set up in Rome by a Prefect of the City, Paulinus, sometime in the third quarter of the 5th century: LSA 1088, 1283, 1338, 1523, 1819, 2664. The repair of old statuary in Rome persisted into Ostrogothic times: in Cassiodorus, *Variarum* X.30 of 535/6, for instance, Theodahad orders the repair of bronze elephants on the Via Sacra.

other aspects are less easily explained: for instance, the comparative scarcity of statue inscriptions from Byzacena (with only 23 late-antique bases recorded), despite its dense network of cities and its proximity to the statue-rich Proconsularis; and an apparently complete lack of epigraphic evidence from Cyrenaica. By contrast, the late-antique statues of Lepcis Magna, the capital of Tripolitania, stand out for their abundance and diversity: Lepcis has produced 75 statue inscriptions from our period (considerably more than any other city of the empire outside Rome), to an unusually wide range of honorands.¹⁵ While, as we have seen, dedications to emperors predominate in late-antique Africa, in Lepcis, although these are present in healthy numbers (22), they are substantially outnumbered by the combined total of dedications to imperial officials (26) and to local figures (16).

The chronological pattern of the decline of new dedications in Africa, follows the empire-wide pattern of healthy numbers in the tetrarchic period, followed by progressive falls thereafter, but with an interesting twist: a resurgence in the number of imperial statues in Valentinianic times (363-79). Lepelley attributed this to a softening of policy towards the city councils by the Valentinianic emperors, after the harsh centralising regime of the Constantinian dynasty; and this argument makes a lot of sense, since the great majority of the imperial statuary in Africa (and elsewhere) was dedicated by the cities themselves.¹⁶ However, nowhere else in the empire is there a similar Valentinianic resurgence, which we would expect in response to what was presumably an empire-wide policy towards the cities, and, even stranger, this African surge in imperial statuary evaporates under the Theodosian emperors (from 379): the 31 imperial statues known from the period 363-79, drop to only nine for the period after 379. This cannot be attributed to a change of heart towards statuary on the part of the emperors themselves (perhaps letting it be known that they did not welcome statue dedications), since Theodosian emperors (and empresses) were awarded statues with some regularity in the east Mediterranean. As far as we can tell, the statue habit in Africa, despite its apparent buoyancy in the 360s and 370s, was effectively dead by about 400, long before the Vandal invasion of 429-39. There are only seven

¹⁵ The work on Lepcis for the LSA database was done by Francesca Bigi and Ignazio Tantillo. Ephesus has 45 inscriptions in our database, Aphrodisias 40, while in the West, Puteoli with 27 produces the largest number after Lepcis.

¹⁶ Lepelley 67-72, 101-6. There are many exceptions to this rule, but throughout the Roman world dedications to emperors in lesser cities were generally made by the cities themselves (often specified as a decision of the council), while those in provincial capitals were generally made by governors.

dedications known from the whole of north Africa that could be as late as the fifth century, and only one of these, a base from Lepcis datable to the period 408-23, has to be later than 400.¹⁷

The Aegean region, including Constantinople, is the most important region of all for late-antique honorific statuary: it is here that the great majority of well-preserved sculptural remains have been found, and here that the statue habit lasted longest. As we have seen, in the western Mediterranean new dedications had effectively ceased by around AD 410 (except in Rome); in the Aegean they continued through the fifth century and into the sixth. This is therefore the key region for appreciating and understanding the very last statuary of the Roman world. Unfortunately, however, there are a number of problems in charting the latest stages of the eastern statue habit with any degree of confidence and precision.

A major difficulty is the almost complete disappearance, at an early date, of new dedications to emperors in any city outside Constantinople, meaning that imperial statuary can no longer be used as an index of what was happening more widely across the statue habit. In the earlier Theodosian period (the years between 379 and 408), dedications to emperors and members of their family were still common in the East (there are 31 known from cities other than Constantinople). But after 408 provincial imperial statuary dried up dramatically: the only fifth-century eastern provincial statues to emperors, that must be later than 408, are one at Erythai, in the province of Asia, to Honorius and Theodosius II (AD 408/23, LSA 285), three wholly anomalous bases from the military site of Novae in the Balkans, that perhaps supported imperial statues (of AD 430-2; LSA 1102, 1103 and 2445), and record of three statues set up to the empress Eudocia (one of 421/39 in her home town of Athens, LSA 139; two of AD 444 in Antioch, LSA 2742, 2743).¹⁸ As far as we know, the emperors Marcian, Leo I and Zeno, who between them ruled from 450 to 491, received not a single statue in the eastern Mediterranean outside the imperial capital.¹⁹ Under Anastasius I (491-518) and, later, under Justinian (527-65), there is a smattering of evidence,

¹⁷ LSA 1767 (of AD 383/408), 1832 (393/424), 2160-1 (both possibly of AD 402), 2451 (389/439), 2468 (395/408). Lepcis inscription of AD 408/23: 2177. There is one remarkable outlier: a statue inscription from Carthage (now lost) for Justin II (AD 565-78, LSA 2771). Outside Constantinople, there is no other evidence of statue dedications to Justin; indeed, along with the Column of Phocas in Rome, this is the only certain statue dedication outside Constantinople later than the reign of Justinian (527-65).

¹⁸ Additionally, LSA 197 from Aphrodisias, rededicated to an emperor Theodosius, could possibly be to Theodosius II (408-50), rather than Theodosius I (379-95).

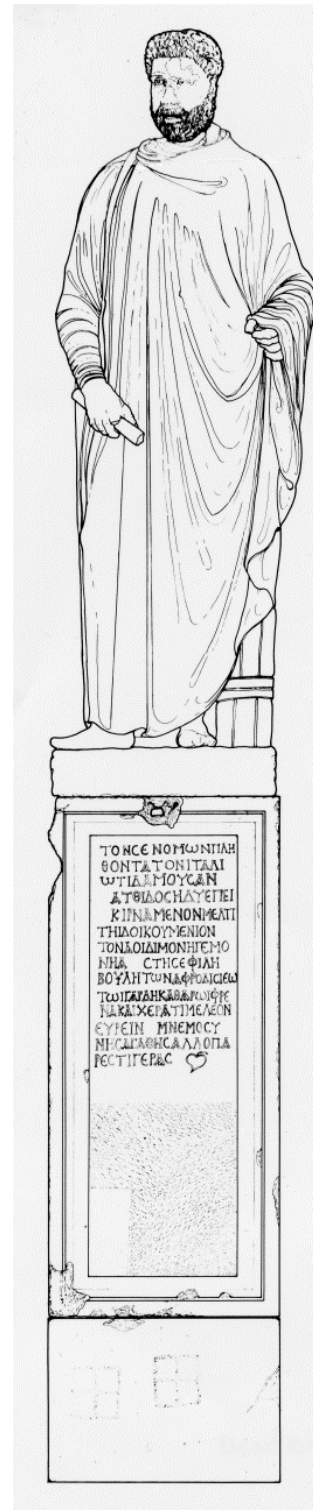
¹⁹ There is evidence of statues to Zeno in the West: LSA 2749 (Rome), and perhaps LSA 13 (Salona).

with two provincial statues recorded to the former and at least three to the latter; but after Justinian silence descends.²⁰

Because outside Constantinople we lack imperial statuary, to understand the pattern of change in the Aegean region we need to examine dedications to imperial officials and to local dignitaries. But in the East late-antique non-imperial honours are particularly difficult to date, because the Greek-speaking world had adopted a habit of celebrating its non-imperial honorands in elaborate verse, with much more interest in describing their virtues than in setting out their names in full or in giving detailed accounts of their careers.²¹ As a result, these men are often difficult to identify with confidence, and therefore difficult to date. For instance, at Aphrodisias a statue was set up to a governor who is simply named 'Oikumenios' in the dedicatory inscription (Fig.4; LSA 151).

We would like to know whether this man was Oecumenius Dositheus Asclepiodotus, who is known to have served as governor of the province of Creta in 382/3, because this would provide external evidence to date our dedication, and the statue (LSA 250) that was found alongside it. But, because the inscription gives only one of the honorand's names, and no further clues as to his identity, we cannot be certain that we are dealing with the same man.

Fig.4 LSA 150-1. The base and statue of the governor 'Oikumenios' at Aphrodisias, possibly Oecumenius Dositheus Asclepiodotus, who is documented in the years around 382/3. (From Smith 2002, fig. 1)



²⁰ To Anastasius: LSA 2754 (Alexandria in 501), and LSA 2757 (Dara in 505/18). There are two statue bases with dedications that are certainly to Justinian: LSA 365 (Antiochia ad Pisidiam) and 2636 (Cyrrhus in Euphratensis). Two more that are much less certain are: LSA 231 (Aphrodisias) and 945 (Samothrace). Additionally, we can be confident that the statue erected in the centre of Justiniana Prima was to him, the city's founder (LSA 1784).

²¹ Robert 1948, 107-10.

Because eastern honours were commemorated in polished verse, some of these were copied, and subsequently circulated in collections of Greek poetry.²² This fact is, of course, a boon for the modern scholar, since it has preserved record of a number of inscriptions which would otherwise have been completely lost, in particular those for an important group of statues set up in the Hippodrome of Constantinople to successful charioteers of the later fifth and earlier sixth century.²³ However this poetic record carries with it problems for anyone seeking to document the very last phase of ancient sculpture in the round: it is clear that honorific paintings, as well as honorific statues, existed in the sixth century (and possibly earlier), and the poems rarely specify, even when it is certain that they were attached to images, whether these images were two- or three-dimensional.²⁴ Several of the poems merely say that they relate to an '*eikōn*' (image), a word that can refer to any medium of representation (sculpture, painting, mosaic, or some other material). Only very rarely do poems contain enough clues for us to be certain that sculpture is referred to: an example is a poem regarding Proculus, *quaestor* of the palace in Constantinople, which fortunately for us contains the line, 'this bronze announces what reward my labours had', making it almost certain that it was attached to a bronze statue (LSA 488 of AD 522/7).²⁵

If we examine all the available evidence, difficult though it is, it is quite clear that statue honours continued, even outside Constantinople, through the fifth century, and possibly into the sixth. There is, first of all, a smattering of statue honours that can reliably be associated with known individuals of the second half of the fifth century: in 457 at Laodicea ad Lycum (in the province of Phrygia Pacatiana) a statue was set up to Flavius Constantius, consul and prefect of the East (LSA 525); between 424 and 471 (and probably towards the end of the period), one at Ulpia Augusta Traiana (Thracia) to Aspar, *magister utriusque militiae* (LSA 10); in 465/74 at Philippopolis (Thracia) to Basiliscus, consul and also *magister utriusque militiae* (LSA 367); and in 475/8 at Metropolis (Phrygia Salutaris) statues, to Epinicus, praetorian prefect of the East and a native of Metropolis, and to his wife (LSA

²² The phenomenon is discussed by Bauer 2007.

²³ Cameron 1973. LSA 349, 361, 489. 499-507, 511.

²⁴ Mango 1986 discusses this evidence for images in paint or mosaic. Examples of honorific epigrams that certainly refer to paintings are *Anthologia Graeca*, I.36, XVI.36 and 41 (all by Agathias, and therefore of the mid-to-later sixth century).

²⁵ Unless, highly implausibly, a bronze plaque is referred to.

667, 668). Two of these dedications, those to Aspar and to Basiliscus, are anomalous, because to military figures (who had not traditionally received statue honours), and because they come from a province (Thracia in the Balkans) where the statue habit had otherwise long disappeared; so they are probably less a continuity of the statue habit than a reinvention of it after a lapse of time. However, the statues at Laodicea and at Metropolis are wholly in line with earlier practice and almost certainly represent manifestations of a continuous practice.

As well as these bases that can be associated with datable individuals, there are others that certainly date from the fifth century (or later), even though we cannot tie them to known and datable figures. For instance, a base at Aphrodisias to a governor of Caria, Flavius Palmatus (LSA 199), which is both important and well-known (because it is associated with a surviving statue, LSA 198; Fig. 5), is certainly fifth-century (because it describes Palmatus as holding a consular governorship, which Caria became at some point only after 395/413). Its appearance, primarily its remarkable hairstyle, then suggests that it is from the late fifth, or early sixth, century. There is indeed some evidence that could testify to provincial statuary at an even later date: for instance, a base at Ephesus to an imperial official named 'Theodorus' (LSA 726) might be to a Theodorus who was governor of Asia (of which Ephesus was the capital) in around the mid-sixth century (unfortunately the name became very common in the later fifth and sixth centuries, so this is not certain). There are even poems recording images of the later sixth century, which might possibly have been for statues: for instance an epigram relates to the setting up of an *eikōn* to the poet and historian Agathias in his home town of Myrina in the province of



Fig.5 LSA 198. Statue of Flavius Palmatus, governor of Caria, at Aphrodisias, probably of the very late 5th or earlier 6th century. (Photograph: New York University Excavations at Aphrodisias-Petruccioli).

Asia (LSA 663), which must date from the period after he had become famous in the mid-sixth century and before his death in around 582. This image may have been a painting, but the wording of the epigram would also suit a statue.²⁶ As we shall see, in Constantinople the statue habit is reliably documented for the imperial family into the very early seventh century, and for non-imperial figure at least into the reign of Justinian (527-65), so it is quite possible that some new honorific statuary was erected in the provinces of Asia Minor into the sixth century.

What we can say with absolute certainty is that the statue habit survived in the provincial cities of the Aegean considerably later than it did in the West, at the very least into the late fifth century (though probably in ever diminishing quantities), and possibly into the sixth. It is likely that there was considerable variation within the broad Aegean region, with much better survival of the statue habit in some regions than in others, though, given the slippery nature of our evidence, this is difficult to pin down. For instance, if we look only at the evidence of inscriptions, it seems that the statue habit disappeared much earlier in mainland Greece and the islands than it did in Asia Minor: there are statue inscriptions from Greece and Crete reliably datable to the first two decades of the fifth century, but thereafter the only statue dedication that can be dated with confidence is one in Athens set up by the emperor Theodosius II to his wife Eudocia in 421/39.²⁷ However, this picture from Greece, though fairly clear from the evidence of the statue bases, is muddled when one considers the evidence of surviving sculpture, because a substantial body of sculptural material is dated art-historically to the fifth century, and even into the sixth.²⁸ Is this 'late' material in fact much earlier than we think, or do we simply lack the datable inscriptions that went with this sculpture?

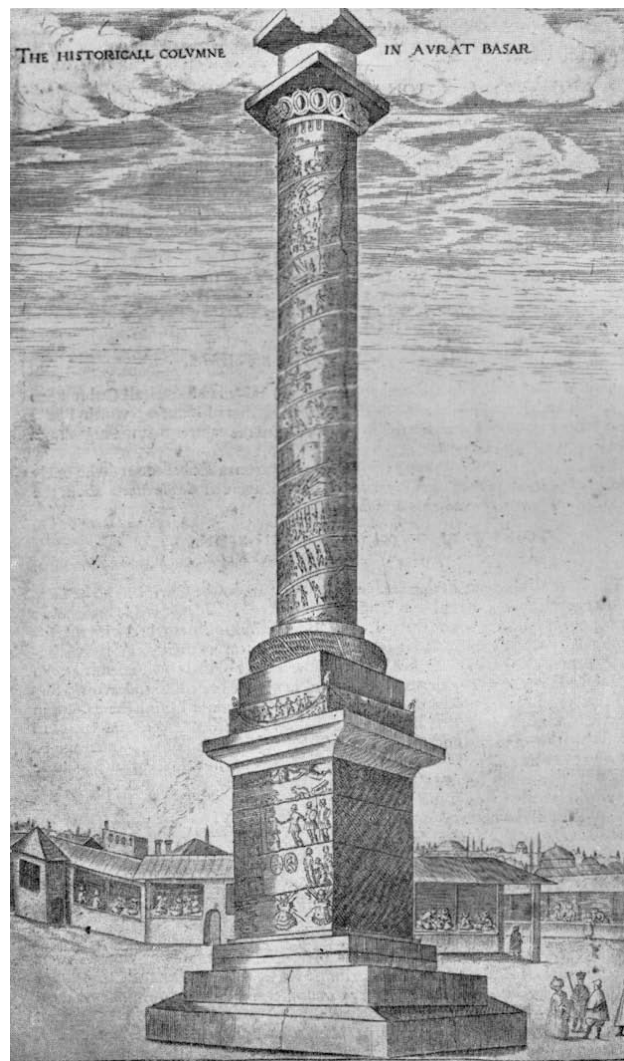
²⁶ In favour of it being a painting is the fact that the image of Agathias was accompanied by images of his father and brother: these are easier to envisage as a group-painting than as three separate statues.

²⁷ The datable 5th-century dedications of Greece and the islands are the following: a statue at Megara, and two at Athens to Herculius, praetorian prefect, of AD 407/12 (LSA 55, 137, 138); a statue at Gortyna on Crete to Leontius, praetorian prefect, of either 412/13 or of 435/41 (LSA 787); the statue to Eudocia at Athens of 421/39 (LSA 139).

²⁸ Examples of sculpture from Greece dated on stylistic grounds to the fifth century are: LSA 54, 68, 69, 75, 77, 80, 117, 119, 143, 2311. Amongst the Greek material is a group of statues of *chlamydati* from Corinth, with highly stylised drapery, which have often been dated to the sixth century on stylistic grounds: LSA 19, 22, 23, 24.

The picture from Constantinople is much clearer, at least for imperial statuary, though we rely for the most part on literary evidence.²⁹ Some of this evidence comes from the eighth-century *Parastaseis*, which are notoriously unreliable when telling stories about statues in the past and about the circumstances in which statues were erected, but seem to be essentially trustworthy when listing the mass of imperial statuary still visible around the city. Furthermore there is enough evidence in chronicles like the *Chronicon Paschale* and that of John Malalas, as well as in a smattering of recorded verse dedications, to support the basic picture offered by the *Parastaseis* of a city teeming with imperial statuary, added to throughout the fifth and sixth centuries. Some of these imperial projects were on a grandiose scale, quite unmatched in the West: for instance, the colossal statue that Theodosius I set up on a spiral column in the centre of his forum (in AD 386-94; LSA 2458), which was later replaced by a statue of Anastasius; Arcadius' column and statue of 401-21 (Fig.6; LSA 2459) and the gigantic equestrian statue that Justinian erected on a column in the Augusteion in 543 (Fig.10; LSA 2463). A characteristic of the city, from the time of Theodosius I (379-95) onwards, was the presence of striking numbers of statues to women of the imperial house, and, under Theodosius I and the emperors of the later sixth century, the setting up of whole dynastic groups, in the time of Justin II (565-74) apparently including statues of the emperor's daughters. The evidence for imperial statuary in Constantinople is

Fig.6 LSA 2459. The column of Arcadius in Constantinople, of the early 5th century, drawn before it was demolished in 1719; it was originally surmounted by a colossal bronze statue of the emperor.



²⁹ For the detail of what follows, I rely on the work of Ulrich Gehn.

continuous to the reign of Phocas (602-10). There is however no evidence that his successor, Heraclius (610-41), was ever honoured with a statue, though his nephew, and close political ally, Nicetas, was awarded a gilded equestrian statue, probably soon after Heraclius' seizure of power. This is the last reliably documented statue of the ancient world.

The evidence from Constantinople for statues to people below the level of the emperor is much thinner, because our literary sources were little interested in recording honours below the imperial. However, while it is insufficient to quantify, there is enough evidence to show that the city, as we would expect, had a range of dedications to very diverse personages. Particularly striking is a group of statue honours, that are of a completely new type and exclusive to the eastern capital: 18 statues to successful charioteers which were erected on a distinctive, very large, and highly elaborate form of base in the Hippodrome between the late fifth century and the earlier sixth (Fig. 7; LSA 349, 361, 489, 499-507, 511). These reveal, not just continuity, but lively innovation within the

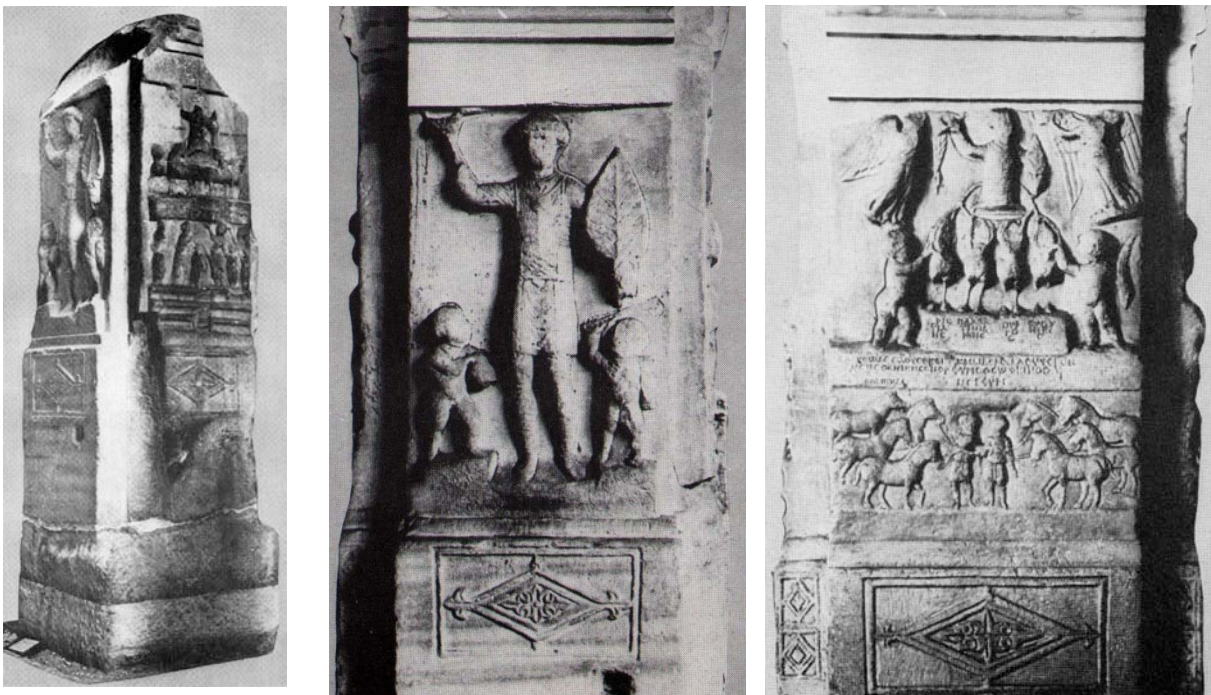


Fig.7 LSA 349. One of the two surviving statue bases, erected to the charioteer Porphyrius between 500 and 510 in the Hippodrome of Constantinople (and now in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum).

statue habit of the eastern capital, at a time when in the West, even in Rome, the practice of erecting statuary had effectively disappeared. Exactly when non-imperial statuary ended in Constantinople is impossible to say: we have good evidence for the charioteer statues continuing to around 540 (LSA 500); of a statue to a *quaestor* of the palace of 522/7 (LSA 488); to a prefect of the city of 536/42 (LSA 476); to the general Belisarius of 529/62 (LSA 2794); and of a probable statue to a consul and praetorian prefect of the mid-6th century (LSA 477). Non-imperial dedications perhaps ended around mid-century, rather earlier than statues to emperors, which, as we have seen, continued into the early seventh century.

Why the End of the Statue Habit?

The evidence of the 'Last Statues of Antiquity' database allows us to speculate intelligently about why new honorific statuary disappeared from the empire – a process which, as we have seen, was progressive, but very slow. A first point to make is one that is disappointing for a scholar who has spent several years studying statuary: statues played an important role in expressing and lubricating the political relationship between cities and their masters, but they were far from indispensable, even in an urban context. The cities of Egypt and the Levant, which flourished in Late Antiquity, did perfectly well with very little new honorific sculpture, as they had done through the previous centuries of imperial rule. The statue habit was not universal in the Roman empire, and its demise is emphatically not an index of the economic and demographic decline of the ancient city.

Nor did the end of statuary constitute an end to the importance of images in social and political life. Statues had always been just one part of the wide range of human imagery deployed in Antiquity, of which the one omnipresent aspect was the head of the emperor on the coinage. As statuary died out, some forms of imagery continued (such as that on the coins), and others gained ground, such as the painted images of saints ('icons'). Just as today, statues were essential for outdoor display because of their durability, but painted images were more convenient indoors, because they took up less space and could much more easily be moved around: panels with the heads of the ruling emperors appear behind Pilate in the trial scene of the 6th-century Rossano Gospels (Fig. 8), and a passage by Severian of Gabala, written in around 400, testifies to their ubiquity: 'Think how many



Fig.8 Christ appears before Pilate in the 6th-century Rossano Gospels; behind Pilate are painted tablets with the heads and shoulders of two emperors.

governors there are in the whole world. From the moment that the emperor is not in contact with them all, it is necessary that his image be posted in the tribunals, the markets and in meeting places and theatres, in all places in which the governor does business, in order that his acts have the necessary authority.’³⁰ Because statues have survived comparatively well in the archaeological record, there is a risk of exaggerating their importance.

The concentrations of late-antique statuary – in Rome, southern Italy, central north Africa, and the Aegean region – show that the statue habit was tied to a particular style of urban life: the ‘civic’, and, in Rome and Italy, the ‘senatorial’. Of the 1180 new dedications recorded in the LSA database for which we know the awarder, 609 (just over half the total), were made by provincial cities themselves (and are generally expressed as by their councils), and a further 78 were dedicated by the authorities of the city of Rome.³¹ The only other substantial categories of awarder in the LSA record are provincial governors, with 199 dedications, and high imperial office-holders, with 73.³² The practice of erecting honorific statuary was closely tied to traditional civic politics, and its decline is unquestionably largely

³⁰ Quoted from Lavan 2011, 462.

³¹ 31 by the Senate (and People), and the 47 by the Prefect of the City.

³² These figures are for statues known from their inscribed bases, and exclude the statuary that was not new, but only curated in Late Antiquity. It should be noted that some statues had awarders who can be categorised under more than one type, so the totals revealed by searching the LSA database under different categories of awarder add up to more than the total number of statue-inscriptions for which we know the awarder; but this has most impact with categories such as ‘patron’ or family member’..

explained by the well-known progressive diminution in the status, and the real power, of this ideal, surviving longest in the Aegean where this had been born.³³

An examination of the statue dedications to Julian (Augustus 360-3) confirms the link between traditional city politics and new statuary. Julian set out to revive the autonomy and status of cities, and was rewarded with at least 33 statues in the provincial cities of the empire. At least eleven, and possibly 13, of these were awarded in Asia Minor, where Julian ruled for only 18 months.³⁴ By contrast and despite his long reign, Constantius II (337-61), Julian's predecessor, had received only eight statues in the same region, and his successor, Valens (363-78), was to receive only five.³⁵ It is true that the majority of statues to emperors was probably erected shortly after their accession (as a mark of loyalty to the new regime), so the relative lengths of these three emperors' reigns is not as significant as we might initially expect; but it is none the less striking that an emperor who was keen to foster traditional civic politics received an exceptional number of statue honours. Three of the inscriptions also make reference to Julian's highly traditional religious and philosophical ideals: Miletus, in its dedication, described itself as 'the nurse of Didymeian Apollo', while Pergamum praised Julian as a 'master of Philosophy', and Iasos as one 'who is ruling by [the precepts of] Philosophy'. The statue habit, civic politics, and old-fashioned philosophical and religious ideas, were to some extent entwined – unfortunately for statuary, all of these ideals were in decline in Late Antiquity.

However, while the statue habit was heavily dependent on dedications by cities, and hence in a weak position, the cities had by the start of our period adjusted its use to suit the world of Late Antiquity – a world dominated by the emperors and by imperial officials. Of the 609 new dedications made by cities, 284 were to emperors and a further 198 to imperial officials (134 of these, provincial governors); only 25 were set up to local civic office holders. The statue habit had adapted, and was being used astutely. It was also being used by men inside the imperial system. As we have seen, the second- and third-largest categories of

³³ Liebeschuetz 1992; Liebeschuetz 2001.

³⁴ LSA 197 (Aphrodisias); 2279 (Balboura); 713 and 748 (both Ephesus); 514 (Iasos); 290 (Ilium); 613 (Magnesia ad Maeandrum, probably to Julian); 550 (Miletus); 635 (Myra, probably to Julian); 517 (Pergamum); 2526 and 2527 (Sagalassus); 265 (Side).

³⁵ To Constantius II as Augustus, eight dedications in five cities: LSA 291 (Assos); 2079 and 2086 (both Ephesus); 632 and 634 (both Myra); 264 (Side); 2524 and 2525 (both Sagalassus). To Valens: LSA 223 (Aphrodisias); 2280 and 2281 (both Balboura); 638 (Hierapolis Castabala); 2524 (Myra).

awarder are provincial governors (199 dedications), and other, even higher, imperial office holders (73). These men used statuary in exactly the same way that the cities did: to express their loyalty to their own masters, and to please them. In the vast majority of cases, the master they chose was the emperor himself, who received 165 of the dedications by governors, and 65 of those by higher ranking officials. But an imperial office holder could also use statuary to flatter a man who stood higher in the official pecking-order: for instance, in 382/3 a governor of Creta erected in his capital, Gortyna, a remarkable group of bases honouring, not only the imperial college (LSA 472, 770, 771, 950), but also a clutch of high-ranking senatorial aristocrats (LSA 775-87). The precise motivation for this group-dedication is uncertain, but in making it the governor must have been hoping to further his own career.³⁶

In Rome, southern Italy, and (to a lesser extent) Africa, the statue habit was closely tied to the power and tastes of the region's highly traditional senatorial aristocracy. Ammianus Marcellinus, in a famous passage lambasting the senators of Rome (XIV.6.8), included a criticism of their love of statuary: 'Some of them, believing that through statues they will be remembered for ever, passionately seek these, as if they would gain a greater reward through a lifeless bronze image than through knowing that they had behaved with honesty and rectitude; and they have these statues covered in gold ...'. The LSA database fully supports this picture of the senatorial aristocracy's love of statuary. Southern Italy and Rome are the only regions of the empire where dedications to emperors are only close to a third of the total, rather than the half or more in other areas (including northern Italy). This is not because dedications to emperors are lacking, but because dedications to aristocrats are so abundant. Of the 152 new dedications known from Campania, the heartland of the senatorial aristocracy's estates, the large majority (some 102 bases) are to aristocrats, pushing the 34 statues to emperors (a healthy number) down to under 22% of the total. The role of statues in reflecting and expressing local dependence on the power of great aristocrats was peculiarly strong in Italy. Of the 172 statue inscriptions that make it explicit that they were set up to patrons (*patroni*), over two-thirds are from Italy (94 of them from southern Italy).³⁷ It is also from southern Italy that the inscriptions on statue bases reach

³⁶ These dedications were studied for us by Francesca Bigi and Ignazio Tantillo.

³⁷ There are 37 from North Africa. In the east Mediterranean, mentions of a patronage relationship on statue dedications are exceedingly rare.

the highest flights of rhetoric when talking about statue honours. For instance, an inscription of 379/82 from Beneventum to a governor of Campania, describes the statue that was being set up as an 'outstanding and special gift, glorious above all other honours' (LSA 1730).

All this evidence suggests that statues were still useful as a way of expressing loyalty, whether to emperors, imperial officials, or aristocratic patrons. Furthermore, as we have seen in the extensive evidence for re-use, they were not expensive. The decline in civic politics during Late Antiquity can explain the almost complete disappearance of dedications to local men and a radical decline in the overall statue habit; but it does not explain why a convenient form of flattery totally disappeared: setting up a statue to the reigning emperor, or a local patron, did not require large amounts of cash, nor a lively infrastructure of civic politics.

To understand why new statuary completely disappeared, we also need to look more widely, at a disparate series of lesser factors, which combined with the decline of civic politics to kill off the statue habit. One important one was the rise of Christianity. This unquestionably had an immediate negative impact on religious sculpture: since Christians had spent centuries resisting the worship of 'idols', they were unlikely to set up many new idols of their own. There is evidence for some large-scale Christian religious statuary, but it is very rare, and the best attested examples are from the reign of Constantine (in particular some silver statuary in the Lateran basilica and baptistery), when patrons were perhaps still experimenting with art-forms for the newly monumental buildings of their religion.³⁸ The only surviving large-scale Christian statuary that we have found, and therefore entered in the LSA database, are a possible Evangelist from Constantinople (LSA 2420), and three striking tondo-portraits, also from Constantinople and also probably of Evangelists or Apostles (LSA 2416, 2417, 2418).³⁹ These latter constitute a Christian appropriation of the tradition of representing intellectual heroes within tondos, best known from the series of philosophers found at Aphrodisias (LSA 203, 206-8, 210-12, 214, 236, 238, 602). But the extreme scarcity of this material is much more telling of the wider trend than are the very

³⁸ Lateran statuary: LSA 508, 509; de Blaauw 1996.

³⁹ There are of course plenty of bas-relief Christian sculptures on the front of sarcophagi, and a few small-scale sculptures in the round, such as the Good Shepherd statuette now in the Vatican Museum, and the remarkable Jonah images now in Cleveland.

few surviving pieces of Christian statuary. Particularly interesting in this regard is a base from Ephesus, with an inscription recording the removal of a statue of Ephesian Diana, and its replacement with a Cross (LSA 610): ‘Destroying the guileful statue of the demon Artemis, Demeas dedicated this mark of truth, the divine Cross, the driver away of old idols, immortal victory-bearing sign of Christ.’ When Demeas removed the pagan statue, probably towards the end of the fourth century, he did not replace it with a statue of Christ or one of the Apostles, but with a non-figurative symbol, the Cross. In three-dimensional art, Christianity was more comfortable with such symbols than it was with figurative images.⁴⁰

The death of religious statuary, though important in itself, does not however explain the slow disappearance of secular statues, which constitute by far the largest category of statuary in our database. At no point did churchmen condemn secular statues outright, and profoundly pious emperors, like Theodosius I and Justinian, were enthusiastic recipients of statue honours: Theodosius even encouraged the erection of statues to his dead father.⁴¹ However, it is also true that, while not condemning secular statuary, the new religion did not provide fertile ground for it to flourish. For instance, in Christian times there was unease about the degree to which imperial statuary, indeed any imperial image, could be venerated, whereas in the pagan past this had not been an issue.⁴² In 425, a law ‘On Imperial Images’, made it clear that these should not be excessively adored, since ‘worship in excess of human dignity is reserved for the supreme God (*supernum numen*)’, and one of the things that the emperor Phocas was criticised for on his fall in 610 was for having an image of himself carried into the Hippodrome accompanied by men in white robes and bearing lighted candles.⁴³ It is also striking that, while churchmen became comfortable with two-dimensional images of themselves, particular as the donors or dedicators of new

⁴⁰ When, in the early seventh century, Heraclius appropriated a column in Constantinople, built by his predecessor Phocas, he set on top of it not the statue of a saint (nor of himself) but a Cross (LSA 2745).

⁴¹ LSA 721 (Ephesus), 1695 (Canusium), 2725 (Antioch), 2730 (Rome), 2731 (Stobi): all but the first were equestrian. LSA 2667 (Rome) is a unique statue dedication to Theodosius’ dead mother, Thermantia. His (living) wife, Aelia Flacilla, was also commemorated: LSA 185 (Aphrodisias), 723 and 745 (both Ephesus), 2726 (Antioch), 2729 (Constantinople).

⁴² Well discussed in Setton 1941, 196-211.

⁴³ *Codex Theodosianus* XV.4.1; *Chronicon Paschale*, under the year 610.

churches (as we see, for instance, in the mosaics of the basilica at Poreč and in San Vitale), there is no evidence that a bishop, or other churchman, was ever honoured with a statue.⁴⁴

There is also evidence that, in some minds at least, the dedication of statues should still be accompanied by pagan ritual, a feature that is unlikely to have enthused contemporary churchmen. A praetorian prefect of the East, the pagan Flavius Eutolmius Tatianus, between 388 and 392 erected a series of statues in Asia Minor and Egypt: in all the instances where the inscription is still complete enough to read it, he included in the dedicatory inscription the phrase ‘set this up with the customary devotion’, a clear reference to pagan ritual.⁴⁵ Such explicitly pagan ceremonial will not have survived the ban on the practices of the old religion enacted by Theodosius, but it was never, as far as we know, replaced by Christian ritual: when a statue of the empress Eudoxia was erected in Constantinople in 403, the dancers and applause ‘customary on the erection of statues of the emperors’ so disturbed the patriarch John Chrysostom, who was celebrating the liturgy in St Sophia, that he delivered a tirade against the empress, thus prompting his own exile.⁴⁶ The setting up of statues, while not explicitly in conflict with Christian values, was at best a secular event, and hence not always fully at home in the new world.

Nowhere is this clearer than in four statue inscriptions from Stratonicea in Asia Minor, all to a certain Maximus.⁴⁷ They represent a serious attempt to fuse the values of traditional munificence, which would be rewarded with the adulation of fellow citizens and often with a statue, with the ideals of Christianity, whose rewards are only in Heaven. One of these inscriptions tells of how ‘the Council (*boulē*) and the citizens without wealth (*akteanoi poliētai*) set [Maximus] up in glorious images of stone in front of the sacred houses of Christ God’, and concludes with the pious statement ‘How good it is not to care for wealth!’ (LSA 657). The location of this statue (in front of a church), the ‘citizens without wealth’ (probably a way of describing the *demos*), and the final phrase dismissing wealth, are all suitably Christian in tone; but Maximus, the despiser of wealth, was also expected to

⁴⁴ LSA 479 is a statue epigram, with a lemma suggesting it was dedicated to a patriarch of Alexandria – but the evidence for thinking the lemma to be in error is overwhelming. The earliest evidence of a living churchman represented in two dimensions in a Christian context is from 402: a painting of Paulinus of Nola, set up by his friend Sulpicius Severus: Bianco 1992-3; Lehman 1997.

⁴⁵ LSA 164, 166 and 167 (all Aphrodisias), 267 (Side), 876 (Antinoopolis).

⁴⁶ The base for this statue is LSA 27; the quotation is from Sozomen’s *Ecclesiastical History* VIII,20.

⁴⁷ LSA 657, 1200-2; I discuss these inscriptions in detail in Ward-Perkins forthcoming.

enjoy the worldly fame provided by ‘glorious images of stone’. The statue habit formed part of a set of values in which it was natural and right to revel in public esteem; indeed rewarding benefactors with statues was a central plank of this value system. Unfortunately for statuary, these simple ideals did not sit happily within the new Christian dispensation, in which good deeds were not meant to lead to earthly glory.⁴⁸

It is also possible, though hard to prove, that Christianity, with its distrust of three-dimensional imagery, nudged patrons away from being commemorated in statuary, towards being honoured in paintings or mosaics. As we have seen above, there is good evidence from recorded epigrams that two-dimensional images could serve precisely the same honorific purposes as statues in Late Antiquity – the epigrams attached to these images are so similar to those for statues that often they cannot be told apart.⁴⁹ However, because we depend on the chance survival of epigrams to document these two-dimensional images, it is impossible to know how common they were and whether they were a replacement for statuary or an adjunct to the statue habit, which had long existed. When the powerful eastern minister Eutropius fell from power in 399, a law was issued annulling all his acts and ordering the destruction of all his portraits: ‘All statues, all portraits (*simulacra*), whether of bronze, or marble, or of colours (*ex fucinis*), indeed of any material whatsoever ...’. Evidently, in 399, long before statuary disappeared in the East, painted images of men below the level of the emperor existed alongside statuary. At a rather later date, however, two-dimensional images may well have played a small role in squeezing out statuary. There is no evidence of Justinian being commemorated with a statue in Italy, despite his ‘liberation’ of the peninsula, but he and Theodora were honoured in two-dimensions in the famous mosaics set up in the chancel of San Vitale (Fig. 9). By the 530s in Italy, mosaic representations within a church may well have been seen as both more appropriate and more prestigious than traditional statuary in a secular context.

⁴⁸ LSA 1685 from Praeneste (Campania) is another interesting inscription, combining wholly traditional commemoration through a statue and annual feasts, with a Christian hope in the afterlife, describing the honoured man, who had died young, as ‘sought for in heaven that he might be freed from bodily prison.’

⁴⁹ The classic discussion of these is Mango 1986. Good examples of epigrams that might be for two- or for three-dimensional images are LSA 476, 477 and 481 (all from Constantinople), and 663 (from Myrina in Asia Minor).



Fig.9 The emperor Justinian, standing beside Maximian bishop of Ravenna and surrounded by guards and courtiers, as represented in the chancel of San Vitale, Ravenna. The emperor is presenting a large golden dish to the church.

However, while there may have been something of a move towards honorific images in paint or mosaic and away from statuary, this can only have been a very slow change: while in Ravenna it was perhaps thought most appropriate to honour Justinian in mosaic, a colossal equestrian statue to the same emperor was being set up in the heart of Constantinople (LSA 2463), and he was also honoured with a statue on a column in



Fig.10 LSA 2463. The colossal bronze statue of Justinian in Constantinople, drawn before its destruction in the fifteenth century.

the centre of his new foundation, Justiniana Prima (LSA 1784). There was certainly no wholesale rejection of statuary in Late Antiquity: a number of statue bases survive from Rome, Italy, and Africa with inscriptions that record the ‘curation’ of earlier statuary, some of them from a period after new statuary had disappeared. Few of these inscriptions are explicit as to what exactly was done to the statue involved (we assume that for the most part it was moved from a decrepit part of town to a better location, because this is sometimes stated), but in all cases the official concerned proudly recorded his intervention in an inscription (Fig.3). Statuary was still appreciated even after patrons had ceased to erect new statues in any quantity.⁵⁰

A further factor that probably played a part in the decline of the statue habit was ever greater imperial control over the erection of new honorific statues. At some point in the 340s, a law (which does not survive) was issued, decreeing that imperial permission was needed before any statue in bronze could be set up: statue bases from Berytus (modern Beirut) of 344, and from Cirta in Numidia of 340/50, both refer to imperial permission in relation to bronze statues (LSA 1190, 2327), while an inscription from Athens of 379/95 is explicit that a marble statue could be set up with permission from the city, while a statue of bronze required the consent of the emperor (LSA 2, 423). In 398 this law was extended, in the case of dedications to imperial officials, to all statues, even those in marble, though there is no good evidence to show that this directive was enforced.⁵¹ In 439 the emperors banned the erection of any imperial statue by private individuals, ostensibly lest the awarders gain a sense of ownership of the statue through their generosity.⁵² Finally, a law of 444 ordered that those honoured with statues should pay for them themselves, in order to ensure that public money was not spent on them.⁵³ These laws must have had a dampening effect on the statue habit, though we should note that they were primarily

⁵⁰ Our database includes 153 ‘repair and relocation’ inscriptions, visible by clicking on ‘View only inscriptions recording relocation or repairs of statues’ in an Advanced Search: 80 (somewhat over half the total) are from Rome; 34 from Italy; and a further 34 from Africa. Regrettably, although archaeological work at sites like Aphrodisias, Ephesus and Miletus has shown that similar curation of statues was commonplace in the eastern empire (see, for instance, Smith 2007), there it never became a common practice to commemorate this with an inscription. A search in the database for ‘curation’ inscriptions later than 450 produced 16 examples, for the most part from Rome, but including a case at Faventia in northern Italy (LSA 1613) and another at Catina in Sicily (LSA 2057). The care of statues in Italy is also a well-known feature of the *Variae* of Ostrogothic times.

⁵¹ *Codex Iustinianus* I.24.1.

⁵² *Codex Iustinianus* I.24.3.

⁵³ *Codex Iustinianus* I.24.4.

aimed at controlling the erection of statues to people below the level of the imperial family – statues to emperors erected by cities, which constitute a large part of our evidence, should not have been affected.

In one particular case, southern Italy, we can probably tie the final demise of new statuary to a specific historical event – the early fifth-century Gothic invasion that resulted in the sack of Rome in 410. There are twelve statue inscriptions from southern Italy that can be dated, with reasonable confidence to the decade 400-409, revealing a statue habit that was still very much alive at the beginning of the fifth century. But after 409 the only securely dated inscription for a new statue, from the entire region, is a dedication of 435 in Aricia to a praetorian prefect of Italy.⁵⁴ It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the disasters around 410 dented the self-confidence of the cities of southern Italy, to the point that they abandoned what appears to have been still a fairly lively tradition of erecting honorific statues.⁵⁵

At the very end of the statue habit, a lack of the technical competence needed to produce life-sized three-dimensional images (which is considerable) may even have played a small part in finally killing off new statuary. However, our evidence suggests that, where there was the will, the means to erect statues could generally be found: for instance, when the inhabitants of two cities in Thrace (one of them a very minor centre) decided to honour military men of the mid-to-late fifth century, long after the statue habit had disappeared from the region, somehow they were able to do this (LSA 10, 367). We should also note that late-antique awarders of statues were often happy to take substantial short-cuts in producing ‘new’ statues, by lightly adapting earlier material for their dedications. For instance, when the inhabitants of Side wanted to set up a group of statues to the emperors of one of the tetrarchies, they took heroic nudes of the Julio-Claudian period and simply recarved the heads (LSA 245, 246). The universality of this practice shows up clearly in our database, where late-antique heads abound, while late-antique bodies are rare.

It is also clear that patrons could be satisfied with a finished result that we would regard as technically sub-standard. In sculpture, the best examples of this are a group of

⁵⁴ 400-409: LSA 327, 330, 339, 1413, 1808, 1862, 1934, 1942, 1973, 2030, 2039, 2045. Post-409: LSA 324 (of 437 from Aricia).

⁵⁵ The evidence is set out and discussed in detail in Ward-Perkins and Machado forthcoming.

statues to late-antique imperial officials in Corinth, the capital of the province of Achaëa and therefore close to the centre of Greek cultural aspirations (LSA 19, 22-24, 80). These are highly schematic in their rendering of drapery, and do not remotely approach the sophistication and finish of contemporary work at Aphrodisias. In one case (LSA 22), a naked foot and part of the lower drapery of an earlier female image, that was adapted to celebrate the late-antique official, were left unchanged (perhaps to be masked by plaster). The same, to us technically shoddy, approach can be found in many of the statue bases of the fourth and fifth centuries (which were probably almost all adapted from older material). For instance, one of the most prestigious statue bases of the early fifth century in Rome, set up to the 'Fides' and 'Virtus' of the emperor's armies in the very centre of the Forum and facing the Senate House, is a re-used and damaged equestrian statue base set up on end, with metal repair-clamps (which were presumably hidden under plaster) and with its original base- and crown-mouldings unaltered, although asymmetrical in their new vertical setting (Fig.11; LSA 1363).



Fig.11 LSA 1363. The base for a statue to the *Fides* and *Virtus* of the emperor's armies, erected in the middle of Rome's Forum in 406. Note the cracks in the marble, the repair-clamps, and the difference between the mouldings on the right and left of the base (the fillet of stone on the right has a profile with a convex curve, since it was originally the top edge of a base for an equestrian statue).

In sum, the decline of civic politics, with which honorific statuary was closely connected, was the most important cause of the decline of the statue habit; but it was not the only cause. Other developments played a role: above all the rise of Christianity with its distrust of three-dimensional imagery and its rejection (at least in theory) of worldly glory; but also increasing imperial regulation, and perhaps even the loss of skills; while in one region, southern Italy, the barbarians played a walk-on part in the story. This is not to say, however, that our project has definitively 'solved' the problem of why the statue habit died in precisely the ways it did. For instance, we remain puzzled as to why new dedications ended in Africa so soon after they had had a revival in Valentinianic times, and why the cities of Asia Minor more-or-less stopped setting up statues to the emperor in the fifth century, while continuing to make dedications to lesser persons (and while imperial statuary flourished in nearby Constantinople). Indeed there is also no definitive answer as to why Heraclius finally broke with the tradition of accepting grandiose honorific monuments in Constantinople, and thereby delivered the *coup de grâce* to the centuries-old statue habit.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bauer 2007 = Bauer, F.A., 'Virtuelle Statuensammlungen', in Bauer and Witschel 2007, 79-109.

Bauer and Witschel 2007 = Bauer, F.A. and Witschel, C., *Die Statuen in der Spätantike*, Reichert Verlag, Wiesbaden 2007.

Bianco 1992-3 = Bianco, M.G., 'Ritratti e versi per le basiliche di Sulpicio Severo e di Paulino Nolano (Paul. Nol. Epp. 30-32)', *Romanobarbarica* 12, 1992-3, 303-5.

de Blaauw 1996 = de Blaauw, S., 'Das Fastigium der Lateranbasilika: Schöpferische Innovation, Unikat oder Paradigma?', in B. Brenk (ed.), *Innovation in der Spätantike*, Wiesbaden 1996, 53-64.

Cameron 1973 = Cameron, Alan, *Porphyrius the Charioteer*, Oxford 1973.

Lavan 2011 = Lavan, L., 'Political talismans? Residual 'pagan' statues in late antique public space', in L. Lavan and M. Mulryan (eds.), *The Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism'*, (= *Late Antique Archaeology* 7), Leiden and Boston 2011, 439-77.

Lehman 1997 = Lehman, T., 'Martinus und Paulinus in Primulacium (Gallien), Zu den frühesten Mönchsbildnissen (um 400) in einem Kirchenkomplex', in Keller, H. and Neiske, F. (eds.), *Vom Kloster zum Klosterverbad: der Werkzeug der Schriftlichkeit*, München 1997, 56-67.

Lepelley 1979-81 = Lepelley, C., *Les Cités de l'Afrique romaine au Bas-Empire*, 2 vols, Paris 1979-81.

Liebeschuetz 1992 = Liebeschuetz, W., 'The end of the ancient city', in Rich, J. (ed.), *The City in Late Antiquity*, London and New York 1992, 1-49.

Liebeschuetz 2001 = Liebeschuetz, W., *The Decline and Fall of the Roman City*, Oxford 2001.

Mango 1986 = Mango, C., 'Epigrammes honorifiques, statues et portraits à Byzance', in *Aphierōma ston Niko Svorōno I*, Rethymno 1986, 23-35. Reprinted in C. Mango, *Studies on Constantinople*, Aldershot 1993, Essay IX.

von Premerstein 1912 = von Premerstein, A., 'Griechisch-Römisches aus Arkadien', *Jahresheft des österreichischen archäologischen Institutes in Wien*, XV, 1912, 197-218.

Robert 1948 = Robert, L. 'Epigrammes relatives à des gouverneurs', *Hellenica* 4, 1948, 35-114.

Setton 1941 = Setton, K.M., *Christian Attitudes towards the Emperor in the Fourth Century*, New York 1941.

Smith 2002 = Smith, R.R.R. 'The statue monument of Oecumenius. A new portrait of a late antique governor from Aphrodisias', *The Journal of Roman Studies* 92 (2002), 134-56.

Smith 2007 = Smith, R.R.R., 'Statue life in the Hadrianic Baths at Aphrodisias, AD 100-600: Local context and historical meaning', in Bauer and Witchel 2007, 203-35.

Stewart 2007 = Stewart, P., 'Continuity and tradition in late antique perceptions of portrait statuary', in Bauer and Witschel 2007, 27-42.

Tantillo 2010 = Tantillo, I., 'I costumi epigrafici. Scritture, monumenti, pratiche', in Tantillo, I., and Bigi, F. (eds.), *Leptis Magna: una città e le sue iscrizioni in epoca tardoromana* Cassino 2010, 173-203.

Ward-Perkins forthcoming = Ward-Perkins, B., 'Four bases from Stratonikeia: a (failed) attempt to christianise the statue habit', in A. Busine (ed.), *Practices and Christianisation in the Late Antique City (4th-7th cent.)*, Leiden and Boston forthcoming.

Ward-Perkins and Machado forthcoming = Ward-Perkins, B. and Machado, C., '410 and the end of new statuary in Italy', in J. Lipps, C. Machado and P. von Rummel (eds.), *The Sack of Rome in 410 AD: The Event, its Context and its Impact. Proceedings of the Conference held at the German Archaeological Institute at Rome, 4-6 November 2010* (= Palilia, vol. 28), Wiesbaden.