

from THE SURVIVAL OF ROMAN ANTIQUITIES IN THE MIDDLE AGES

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Chapter 10:

STATUES AND RELIEF

Introduction:

There is no doubt that much classical culture survived with the classical languages, to be studied during the mediaeval centuries. Christians could not ignore the pagan past (Wilson 1983, 8ff., 18ff.), and it might be argued that they did not understand antique statues, that they considered them examples of the vainglory of the pagan world (cf. Origen on idols in *Con. Celsum* 8.17), or simply that they found them less useful than aqueducts, baths, columns or capitals. Free-standing sculpture appears to have died a slow death through an increasing lack of interest in its nature or possible applications (an attitude common even before 400 AD) - so the explanation may have to do with the disinterest of the earlier mediaeval centuries in the techniques involved. But no one explanation for this decline is convincing: the Barbarians, lacking a taste for statuary, came well after the decline had started; and the Christians, theoretically averse to images, may have sustained the skill with orders (mostly for statuettes and bas-reliefs) rather than killing it. Roman prefects towards the end of the fifth century ordered damaged works (once dissociated from pagan cults) to be restored (Gregorovius 1972, 1.71f.), but manufacture was in decline: the latest recorded in Rome is that of Phocas in 608 (Stichel 1982, cat. 145). Whatever the cause, the result was a decline in technical proficiency, so that eventually the production of even a blocked out figure would have proved impossible (cf. Romanini 1976 for a discussion of mediaeval treatments of the classical repertoire). But how one accounts for the revival of classical techniques (such as the spectacular stucco-work at Cividale, Brescia, Rome and elsewhere: Peroni 1969) is another matter.

The saddest example of this lack of interest in a once-great art form is the dismembering of what must have been large statue groups on the base of the Mausoleum of Hadrian, and their use as missiles by the Byzantine defenders against Vitiges' Goths in 537 (Cecchelli 1951, 37, 51); the monument was decorated, according to Procopius (*De Bello Gothico* 1.22), with statues and equestrian groups of fine marble (including, as we now know, parts of a replica of Myron's *Discobolos*).

This preamble provides the essential background to any consideration of the survival of statues in the Middle Ages, for it separates their status from that of the greater bulk of antique sculpture, from theatre masks to sarcophagi, which were avidly re-used, and imitated in the Romanesque period (Hamann-Maclean 1949-50, *passim*). And while it is conceivable that some traditions in the production of coins, gems, manuscripts, sarcophagi and perhaps even mosaics were unbroken, this is emphatically not the case with statues, which might have appeared to most of the Middle Ages as part of an alien tradition, without echoes in contemporary culture.

## THE FATE OF STATUES IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Statues were certainly available to the earlier Middle Ages, and probably plentiful in later centuries, if the hypothesis of rediscovery following city expansion is accepted. They were certainly there for the taking on many of the islands of the Mediterranean - many of which featured in the pattern of trade

with the East: the riches of Rhodes were available (Van der Vin 1980, 655f.); and Buondelmonti writes of trying to re-erect the Naxian colossus on Delos, and of seeing on the ground 'a crowd of other statues executed with marvellous art, and yet others buried under little mounds' (ibid., 659f.). Furthermore, in Italy as elsewhere in the Empire, abandoned sites remained intact for hundreds of years with their monuments and statues, as we have seen. Aquileia and Luni were sparsely inhabited. Velleia may well have disappeared from history just as the Tetrarchs came to power in 284; but some statues were indeed toppled or plundered, as Vermeule (1977, 76) notes; and 'the Julio-Claudian statues were not disturbed by mediaeval builders or limeburners. Livia and her descendants lay peacefully on the floor in front of the long platform and tribunal of the basilica until 1761, when they were found as they had fallen forward in two rows and were carried off by Don Filippo di Borbone, Duke of Parma, to his museum.' Why Velleia was not extensively plundered is a mystery, for it is near to a Roman road, and indeed to Parma itself. Some, such as Atina, were sparsely re-inhabited: the *Chronicon Atinense* writes (RIS 7.905) of the 'road which is called "of the Monuments", because it is full of monuments along its length;' and as late as 1702 a local historian, B. Tauleri (1702, 25), glosses this as 'the road of the monuments, so called because along it were commonly buried in vessels of worked stone the Idolators; and here indeed we currently find those tombs, with the bones of those ancient bodies'.

But for populated centres, evidence is scarce. Even for Rome, track of the enormous population of statues (cf. Beutler 1982, 175f.) is usually lost after the sixth century. A few certainly went earlier, as when Constantine carried off a large number to furnish Constantinople, or Genseric to embellish his African palaces. Bishop Zachary of Mytilene, in his *Church History* (written c. 491) noted the existence in the City, apart from twenty-four churches and two basilicas, of '324 great and spacious streets, two great Capitols, 80 golden gods, 64 ivory gods. It contains 46,603 dwelling houses and 1,797 houses of the magnates.' The *Notitia* state that, in the time of Honorius, there were still standing two colossi, twenty-two equestrian statues, eighty images of gold and seventy-four of ivory (Gregorovius 1972, 1.72). - and the poet Claudian described the city as full of shining metals which blinded the sight (Rodocanachi 1914, 7). Cassiodorus, writing early in the sixth century, refers to the 'most plentiful population of statues, and indeed the most abundant herd of horses' of Rome (Var. 7.13): some of these, such as the elephants on the Via Sacra (ibid., 10.30) were certainly of bronze, and that many were well maintained seems clear from the mention of some statues still retaining the signature of their makers (ibid., 7.15). Others were stolen for their base metal - a contradiction of Cassiodorus' and his master's desire 'daily to increase the embellishment of the city' (ibid., 2.35; Della Valle 1959, 130). Thus the bronze bull was still standing in the Forum Pacis in Totila's day (died 552), for when a (doubly) misguided heifer tried to mount it this was taken as an augury (Llewellyn 1970, 76).

Religion played a part in the destruction of statues, but the details of what the reforming Christians actually did to ancient monuments tend to be vague in the extreme (Mâle 1950, 33-4), or obvious topoi. Indeed, even within inhabited cities, it seems doubtful whether the enthusiastic tales of destruction told by Christian authors accord with what actually happened, for there are plenty of examples of pagan statues remaining in place, to be rediscovered by later excavation: others were erected to embellish cities and their mediaeval walls, as we have seen. Indeed, at the Baths of Caracalla as at Hadrian's Villa, some statues were simply left standing (Vermeule 1977, 58ff.; 70ff.). This was also the case at Arles where, in the theatre, an Augustus, two goddesses, and the famous Venus were found. The Venus was lying 'in front of the columns', and may therefore simply have fallen from its base (cf. Constans 1921, 288ff.). Exactly when this happened is difficult to say, but we do have the story in the *Life of S. Hilaire* (PL. 55.1235; Constans 1921, 295) of how an unfortunate fifth-century priest called Cyril, commissioned to build basilicas by his bishop, had his foot crushed by a tumbling block of marble in that same theatre; so perhaps the statues fell while he was despoiling the building.

## MUTILATION AND DESTRUCTION

Indifference to the beauty of some antique works of art was the first stage in encouraging their destruction, and Gregory of Tours provides a case study. He mentions twelve churches in Rome, but says nothing of the ancient monuments (Vieillard-Troikourov 1976, 391). In Gaul, he does mention spectacular

building works, such as the aqueduct at Vienne ( HF 2.33) and the enceinte at Dijon (ibid., 3.19), and even admires the mosaics in the Temple of Vasso Galate at Claremont (ibid., 1.32; Vieillard-Troikouff 1976, cats 96, 89); but even when he writes of places where we know there to have been important ancient ruins, these are usually ignored. Indeed, his only detectable enthusiasm for surviving pagan statues is when they are destroyed. He praises S. Martial for having effectively ended the cult of idols (Gloria Martyrum 27: and cf. Matthews 1975, 154ff.), and has nothing but scorn for statues of Mars and Mercury which were on a column at Brioude in the fourth century (Liber S. Iuliani martyris 5.6), for the idol Berecynthia at Autun, destroyed about 400 (GC 77), for the temple at Cologne, which had been razed by his great uncle, S. Gallus, along with its images (Liber Vitae Patrum 6.2), or for the statue of Diana at Ferté-sur-Chiers in the Ardennes, thrown down by S. Walfry (HF 8.15; Young 1975, 44). Such destruction was often systematic, and associated with the founding of a church, as in the case of S. Pierre 'au mont Blandin' in West Flanders (Knoegel 1936, no. 173), or S. Amandus' destruction of an idol and altar of Mercury, to build a church on the very same site (ibid., no. 472, early seventh century: cf. no. 508). It could therefore be very thorough: the Venus now in the museum of the Maison Carrée, Nîmes, was found in no less than 103 pieces (Mâle 1950, 43-4).

In many cases, pagan statues were mutilated (presumably to wipe out their power) and left in place. This happened at the sanctuary of Mont-Martre, near Avallon, the site of a Gallo-Roman temple: all the statues were broken, and some were partly effaced by hammering, but they were not buried or reduced to lime - indeed, they can still be seen in the museum at Avallon (Espérandieu 3.242). At Sarrebourg, the mithraeum was violently destroyed in the last decade of the fourth century, and its statues mutilated; the body of a man near the altar may have been the priest (Young 1975, 37). Similar destruction was wrought outside Europe: the colossal statue of Zeus at Cyrene - on the same scale as the work by Pheidias - was also destroyed deliberately, in part by fire; but not enough of it remains for us to be clear about what exactly was done, or when. Sarcophagi could suffer a similar fate, sometimes for religious reasons: thus at Medinet al Zahra, near Cordoba, the Moslems either destroyed Christian sarcophagi (some of which were employed in the structure) or hammered the heads.

## BURIAL

Other statues were simply hidden, certainly on purpose, and sometimes at least by pagans no doubt apprehensive about the safety of their images. As is clear from Espérandieu's monumental work, blocked or dry wells were a very popular depository for statues, many of them carefully defaced beforehand, presumably by Christians. But sometimes works were concealed with care, surely in the hope that pagan cults could be resurrected when the destructive vigour of the Christians had diminished. Frantz (1965, 200) has estimated that the cult-statues of Athena Parthenos and Asklepios were removed from the relevant Athenian temples sometime before 485, but what happened to them is unknown. At Avignon, in the fourteenth century, Urban V ordered a recently found statue of Hercules to be re-buried, perhaps because he feared it; and the Archbishop of Arles, finding the tomb of Maximian in 1047, had it and its rich contents thrown into the sea (Müntz 1887, 44f.). In 1654, the canons of Saint-Sauveur in Aix-en-Provence opened trenches in their choir to make tombs, and found fragments of columns and parts of an idol of the sun-god - the church may be built on a temple dedicated to Apollo (Clerc 1916, 373). And as late as the mid-eighteenth century, pagan statues from a supposed Temple of Diana were uncovered at Arles, but quickly reburied as 'idols of the devil', having first been exorcised by the bishop (Benoit 1951, 34).

Their rediscovery could provide a welcome surprise (cf. Gazda 1970, 246), as when Arechi II found a golden idol while building S. Pietro a Corte at Salerno in the 760s, and used its metal to gild the church (Chronicon Salernitanum 17.22; Delogu 1977, 50, and n. 133). Similarly, the well-known Minerva of Poitiers was discovered hidden underneath a floor of bricks (Espérandieu 2.295-8). Concealment was apparently the intention behind the dismantling of at least one pagan funerary monument on the site of a necropolis near the Beaucaire road - the Via Domitiana - 1.5 km from the Porte d'Auguste at Nîmes (Varène 1970): its seven first- or early second-century statues were placed in a heap within it, and then the whole structure buried. Very possibly, in view of the inscriptional evidence, the pit contained works from a whole set of monuments (Gallet de Santerre 1961). The finding of six bronze coins of the fourth

century suggests destruction after the Peace of the Church and, since fragments of a great first century altar no less than 3.88m in length were found on the same site (*ibid.*, 102ff.), this was probably the work of Christians. Another example is the great villa of Chiragan, near Martres Tolosanes, where a large number of very high quality statues and busts have been discovered, mostly in holes specially dug to hold material from the site, and of about three to four thousand cubic metres capacity in all; small sculptures were also found piled in the basin of the impluvium. Although the late nineteenth-century excavators believed the works to have been damaged deliberately, the only damage seems to be accidental, for although noses are broken off, there are no signs of hammering). The excavators do not estimate when the holes were dug, but the fact that plenty of walls remained standing on the site indicates that the area was not cleared for agriculture: perhaps it was wished to hide 'dangerous' statues, or simply to tidy the site for re-habitation.

## THE LIME KILNS

When population expanded, and building with it, the lime kiln was the ultimate destination of statues either disregarded or feared, just as it had been for 'useless' works in earlier centuries, as we have read in the late antique Codes ; hence lime kilns are a common feature of antique sites. White marble produced the best lime (Müntz 1884; Lanciani 1902-12, 1.22ff.; Rodocanachi 1914, 29ff.), and hence statues were particularly at risk (rather than architectural members, which were difficult to handle). Great destruction was involved because, in the burning process, one third of the original weight was lost: and the weights involved meant that most lime-kilns were established amid the ancient monuments. At Arles, for example, the baths installed outside the enceinte were partly demolished in the mid-fourth century, and the marble veneer then used by burners who squatted on the site - in an area which was, by 400, nothing but a field of ruins. Losses were increased by the upturn in building in the later Middle Ages when, as Esch remarks (1969, 31), the antique began to be measured by the cubic foot. It was now that so many antiquities were destroyed: as an account of mediaeval Brescia has it (Brescia 1979, 2.73), 'in the tenth and eleventh centuries the by now few remains of ancient splendour no longer struck any chords in the minds of the inhabitants who, in the extreme poverty of those times, considered statues, columns and marbles solely as raw material which could be liberally pillaged and transformed into lime.'

Luckily, however, the voracity of the lime-kilns was matched by their choosiness: granite, porphyry and basalt were useless for the process - one reason for the survival of antiquities in these materials. In Rome, some works may have survived because not all the lime needed there came from the city, for the obligation of inhabitants of Tuscia and Campania to provide lime for Rome is documented from late antique times onward (Gibson 1979, 32 and n. 6). This is confirmed by the survival in the Largo Argentina (an area noted for its lime kilns in the Middle Ages) of the colossal acrolith of the head of Juno, presumably from a cult statue from one of the temples: it was found lying on the site earlier this century - not buried, built into a wall, or otherwise damaged (Marchetti-Longhi 1932/3, 202 and fig. 38).

## THE FATE OF 'IDOLS'

The building stock was, as we have seen, a valuable commodity - temples included. But the fight against paganism coloured attitudes toward statues, which were often considered to be idols, and to have magical powers, whether they were cult-statues or not. Campaigns for the destruction of 'idols' took place all over the West and even in Byzantium (Mango 1963, 55f.); thus Gregory the Great, in a letter to Mellitus (*Eccl. Hist.* 1.xxx), asked that the temples themselves should not be destroyed, but only their idols, and that holy water should be used to purify such places. In dealing with the pagan past, prudence was important, but pagan feasts and ceremonies were translated into Christian ones wherever possible, just as 'sacred' trees and springs were transmogrified (Young 1975, 41 for S. Martin of Tours' actions). And the Virgin Mary effortlessly adopted some of the characteristics (and sometimes the form) of Athena herself (Lewis 1980, 81ff.; and cf. L-B England 5.203ff.).

Indeed, idolatry was a continuing problem, as pronouncements in the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries demonstrate (Young 1977, 6): we are reminded of this not only by the strictures against the excessive attention paid to Christian martyrs (Dyggve 1952, 157), but also by Gregory of Tours' account of the baptism of Clovis by Saint Remigius with the words 'Worship what you have burnt, burn what you have been wont to worship' (HF 2.31), or by the account of the toppling (with the aid of prayer) of a cult statue of Diana and its destruction with hammers (HF 8.15). Gregory I wrote in 598 AD of the 'gens Anglorum' with their cult of wood and stone (letter to Eulogius, MGH Epist. 2.30); and Gregory II's letters about Boniface's mission to Germany in the earlier eighth century make it clear that the practice was strong there, especially among 'pagani' who were, presumably, largely unaffected by Christian control (MGH Epist. 3, e.g. 266ff.). But still some cults (and statues?) remained: in the early seventh century, at Lagnes, no less than twelve temples with their idols were broken (Knoegel 1936, no.366); and Bishop Hugbert, operating in the Ardennes and Brabant at the same period, destroyed 'idola plurima et sculptilia' (ibid., no. 643). Such idols still included, if we are to believe Boniface (died 754: Epistle 21), examples in gold, silver and brass. In 942/4 we find a cleric complaining of the persistent survival of the cult of Diana (including 'dances and Bacchic orgies') at Sant' Angelo in Formis (De Franciscis 1956, 60); and a relief on Notre Dame, Paris (Wentzel 1953, 342 and pl. 48a) of a woman adoring an antique gem with a profile portrait is echoed in charges of heresy associated with the worship of idols as late as 1328 (e.g. MGH Legum Sectio 4, 6.1, 372ff.). However, given the frequency with which gems and cameos were set in crosses (the Lothair Cross, Aachen) or reliquaries (the David Reliquary, Basle), such charges should not surprise us (Keller 1970, 63ff.).

But what exactly was an 'idol'? Mediaeval illustrations suggest (e.g. Buchthal 1971, pl. 50) that it was a statue (often naked) in a temple, and standing on a column. However, as the Marforio was also called an 'idol' in the Mirabilia (Scaglia 1964, 147), it is clearly pointless to attempt a tight definition. Nudity per se must have caused the destruction of many works, for the naked body was consistently looked upon as sinful during the Middle Ages - hence the idea that a naked statue was a veritable heathen object (cf. Esch 1969, 33ff.; Alsop 1982, 556, note 9 for further references). Bathing for monks, for example, was severely restricted except when ill; and compare the temptation of S. Gall, when 'there appeared to him two demons in the form of nude women ... as if wishing to enter the bath, and displaying to him the baseness of their bodies' (MGH Script. rer. Merov. 4.263).

## STATUES AND MAGIC

Statues and bas-reliefs were sometimes feared and destroyed because they were considered inimical to the Christian religion, but also because the old myth of Prometheus taught that a man was a statue into which life had been breathed; the process could be associated with magic just as, in Christian story, it was associated with divine intervention (Raggio 1958). Statues and bas-reliefs might therefore be dangerous: their limbs might move, and they could probably think - hence the plentiful legends with which they were surrounded during the Middle Ages (Müntz 1887, 162ff.; Graf 1915). The step from automata to magic in mediaeval imagination was a small one (e.g. Frankl 1960, 170f.): Robert de Clari, for example, in his account of Constantinople and the terrible sack, writes of the statues on the spina of the hippodrome, 'in years past these would by magic stir themselves to play games, but now they move no more' (Patrone 1972, 224); to this account of the past might be added the Mirabilia stories of the moving statues on the Capitol in Rome. It was believed that Gregory the Great 'caused all the heads and limbs of the statues of the demons to be broken, so that from the crushed roots of heresy, the palm of Christian truth might more fully manifest itself' (Buddensieg 1965, 47); this belief extended to all statues in Rome, until Platina protested (ibid., 51ff.). So presumably Gregory would not have approved of the legend of how the sarcophagus in which he was buried itself moved (Vendoyes 1925). The idea was still current in the High Renaissance, when the Sala di Costantino was decorated with frescoes whose theme was the triumph of the Church over paganism, including a scene of a pagan sculptor destroying his own works (ibid., 62ff. and pl.7a).

Magical properties were, therefore, a constant excuse for either the destruction or the re-use of pagan work (Esch 1969, 44f.). Magister Gregorius may have

begun the Gregory legend (Deér 1959, 42, n. 79), and there could be truth in it, for Gregory was the man who began a homily: 'My brothers, do not love what you see; it will not long endure'; he never learned Greek, in spite of a stay of six years in Byzantium, and 'his intellectual formation was not in the tradition of classical antiquity' (McNally 1978, 10ff.). The Temple at Philae, in use as a temple up to the sixth century (because of the guarantees of Diocletian, renewed in 451), was then turned into a church, and several teams of masons were used to damage systematically the pagan sculptures on the exterior. Sometimes only the 'moving' parts were scored out - evidently an attempt to prevent the idols exercising their malign functions (Nantin 1967 and figs 13-14). Inside, however, the reliefs were merely covered from view - hence their fine state of preservation. In c. 535-7 the Duke of the Thebaïad came to tear down the statue of the god inside; again, we do not know what happened to it but, if of good metal, it was probably melted down for the mint, like that at the Alexandrian Serapaeum in c. 400-12 (ibid., 6-7; and Gibbon 28).

We have accounts of just how dangerous or alarming pagan statues could be. S. Benedict transformed the Temple of Apollo on Monte Cassino into an oratory, and found nearby a bronze idol under a heavy stone (placed there already by Christians to keep it down?); taken to the kitchen to be melted down, it caused a fire and broke down a wall the monks were building, but its eventual fate is unknown (Louis 1975, 241ff.). Indeed, the site of nearby Casinum may have been rich in such works, for Poggio Bracciolini acquired a female torso from there in 1429 (Epist. 1.284). At Modena, in 711, the statue of Minerva exuded blood and then milk (Malmusi 1830, no. 57). The saints, however, always seem to win: thus the missing central figures from the then standing Temple of Neptune (or of the Dioscuri) in Naples were explained in the Middle Ages as being called down from their exalted position by S. Peter himself when he passed through the city (Bernabo Brea 1935, 67) - and must therefore have been visible on the ground below the pediment long enough for the legend to be born. The two statues of the Dioscuri which are preserved on the façade of the church now on that site are identified in inscriptions as those central figures, but are in fact too small to have filled the gap (ibid., 68f, pl. 3); but since they are draped male nudes, they were most suitable idols for a saint to bring low. The supposed maleficence of the colossal statue of Minerva in Constantinople caused its destruction at the hands of the Greeks themselves, after the first siege of 1204 (cf. Gibbon 60).

In the treatment of their own statues, Christians appear to have been consistent for, apart from a few miraculous moving images (often figures of the crucified Christ), Christian statues do not move. Bernard of Angers, writing in the late tenth century about the image of S. Gerald on the altar at Aurillac, asked 'What do you think, brother, of this idol? Would Jove or Mars have considered such a statue unworthy of him?' (cf. Hubert 1982, 257f.). He held a similar opinion of the image of Ste Foy, but later repented, for 'it is not a filthy idol' (Dahl 1978, 177); and when her image is insulted, the saint herself - and not her image - took steps to defend it (ibid., 178ff.). In other words, the distinction between revering such images and worshipping them appeared to be a clear one, at least to some; although the strong interest in statue reliquaries in France underlines the fragility of the divide (Hubert 1982). Sometimes, indeed, saints would work miracles against pagan statues: thus a life of S. Gall explains how he and Columban miraculously put down three gilded bronze statues into the sea. On another occasion, S. Gall ripped three statues off the wall to which they were fixed and threw them into a lake (MGH Script. rer. Merov. 4.260, 289).

Stories of talking statues are a strong and frequently antique-oriented part of the folklore of the Middle Ages (e.g. Oldoni 1977/80, 2.585ff.). Superstition might therefore join with ignorance to promote admiration: even as late as the twelfth century, some antique statues were regarded as possessing magical properties, as various texts in the *Mirabilia* tradition make clear. A later example (the source of which describes the actions of statues of Provinces on the Capitol in Rome) is the early fourteenth-century derivation by Da Nono dealing with the history of Padua, which has a statue over the first city's east gate which points in the direction of any of the allies in need of help (Hyde 1965-6, 331f.). Stories of just how sumptuous such statues could be are common, as in that purveyed in the *Spicilegium Ravennatis Historiae* (RIS 1.2, 575), about Julius Caesar at Ravenna, where 'he had statues made, wishing to proclaim his importance. He ordered to be placed, over the Porta Aurea, ... a bronze statue of himself seated on a golden throne, ... his stomach full of golden coins, his head a precious stone, and holding a precious gem of inestimable value in his hand - all of which shone like the morning star; and before him were a thousand pounds of pure gold ...' This, the gate previously called 'Asiana', was dismantled only in the sixteenth century. Nor does the

chronicler hold Caesar to have been the only potent commissioner of buildings and art for, on the same page, he relates how Tiberius had a large column built near the church of S. Agnese, and not far from the same gate, 'and girded it around with magic art, so that it could not be destroyed without risk of fire.' There is therefore a world of difference between the re-use of antique marble blocks and the re-use of statues seen to be malevolent: at mediaeval sites such as Pisa, where both Roman and Arabic spolia (the latter from the Fatimid Mosque at Mahdiya) are in evidence, re-used antique statues are conspicuously absent.

## SCULPTURE ON MONUMENTS

As we might expect, the more solid and bulky the object, and the further from habitation, the longer it survived, so large monuments survived better than free-standing statues, which were more fragile. There is evidence that some monuments now lost or much damaged, and their associated sculpture, including bas-reliefs, were in good condition throughout the Middle Ages - especially tomb structures, cippi and altars, most of which were placed along roads. Material within cities (unless they were abandoned or severely under-inhabited) went more quickly, for obvious reasons; this was particularly the case with Rome, the source of the majority of Roman relief sculpture surviving from the Peninsula (Koeppel 1982).

Outside the walls of Rome, the long stretch of the Via Appia is the best surviving example of an antique road, with its series of tomb structures and sculptures. As in so many other areas, destruction of many of these is probably very recent, and we may perhaps be allowed to imagine the *Magistri Aedificorum Urbis* (probably established 1363, with certain statutes earlier) keeping up the roads around Rome up to the tenth milestone, as was their duty, and cutting back trees and bushes along the Via Appia (Schiaparelli 1902, 12, 18). Other documentary proof of the survival of cemeteries is plentiful, and an example from Lucca will suffice: there are references to tombs outside the north and south gates in 960 ('prope Tumbam'), 1006 ('a la Tomba'), and 1292 ('extra Moriconis de Tumba': Belli Barsali 1973, 470, and nn. 24-7). In addition, the church of S. Vincenzo bore the appellation 'ad Tumbam', and S. Jacopo that of 'de Tumba' or 'alla Tomba'; the former is a seventh-century name, and the latter perhaps predates the twelfth century (*ibid.*, 525, 541). The antiquity of this tomb is made the more likely if we assume that the Roman road which certainly passed through the relevant gate went as far as S. Jacopo (cf Bindoli 1931, 330f.).

Larger structures had an even longer life: the Trophy of the Alps, at La Turbie, the Mausoleum of Hadrian, and the Column of Trajan are good examples. The Trophy of the Alps latter was not finally destroyed until 1705, and Lassalle (1970, 116, n. 2) draws attention to a Life of Saint Honorat, written by Raimond Feraud at the end of the thirteenth century, which describes the saint's destruction at that site. But the account of the 'idol of Apollo' (the crowning statue of Augustus) makes it clear that the design of the work was known well after its conversion into a castle in the twelfth century. By analogy with the conversion of arches at Rome into forts, the new work at La Turbie incorporated many of its inscriptions, marble revetments and statuary (on its biography, cf. *CIL* 5.ii, 904ff.). Similarly, some of the statues which once graced the Mausoleum of Hadrian (now the Castel Sant' Angelo) survived to be discovered in the nineteenth century, even if they were in pieces; yet others must have been unearthed in the late Trecento, in the course of the extensive building work carried out in the castle by Boniface IX. Mediaeval regard for the structure was so high that an eighth-century account states that the Mausoleum's quadriga was gigantic (Cecchelli 1951, 49) and, in twelfth-century versions of the *Mirabilia*, we are told that statues on the monument were in bronze, although there is no evidence that this was the case (*ibid.*, 63f.).

The survival of Gallo-Roman funerary monuments and other antiquities into the later Middle Ages is apparent from elements in drawings by Villard de Honnecourt, the only mediaeval artist we know of who drew antiquities for artistic purposes: he clearly admired what he drew, and intended to study it. Most puzzling is his illustration of 'the tomb of a Saracen that I once saw' (Hahnloser 1972, 26ff., 349), because of the illogicality of the architectural

superstructure, and because nothing extant matches it: the common opinion that Villard imitated either a late Imperial diptych or a Carolingian manuscript may be correct, although Hahnloser's comparison with the Cerumnus stele from Rheims (ibid., fig. 36) has sufficient points of similarity to suggest he may have seen something like this. After all, his inscription is categorical: he 'saw' the tomb he drew. An attractive theory by Talobre (1973) suggests that Villard was drawing the mosaic behind the Aix tomb of Charlemagne, whom he thought of as a Roman (hence the use of 'Saracen' to describe such a foreigner). At least three of his drawings can be identified as pagan statues: one is seated, and two are standing (Hahnloser 1972, 130ff.; 159; 370). The standing one on his folio 43 has been compared with a bronze statuette of Alexander (ibid., fig. 139a), and the seated figure on the same sheet could perhaps be a Mercury, or a reclining hero; Mercury could also be the identity of the figure on folio 58 (cf. Hamann-Maclean 1949-50, fig. 72). And although Villard has not inscribed where he saw any of these works (let alone what size they were), it may be that their appearance on a sheet which also bears a leaf-head comparable to bosses at Rheims Cathedral could indicate that he saw them there. By analogy with the picture we have of Ghiberti's use of antiquities, may we imagine the works as statuettes, circulating among the masons at Rheims, perhaps having been discovered in the area? Could this help explain the classicism of some of the sculptures there, such as the famous Visitation group? Possibly so, for other works at Rheims also have stylistic connections with antiquities (Hamann-Maclean 1949-50, figs. 34f., 49-52, and 73f.).

Stylistic analysis of mediaeval work can also suggest prototypes. Thus two of the great northern British crosses, at Bewcastle and Ruthwell, both of which sites are close to Hadrian's Wall, are compared by Saxl (1943, 7ff. and fig. 1ff.) with Mediterranean models, with which they agree in, for example, details of dress (cf. Cramp n.d.); if to these we add his convincing comparison between the S. John of the Lindisfarne Gospels and Romano-British reliefs (ibid., pl. 7), then a fair conclusion is that the artists of the crosses and of the Gospels drew at least some inspiration from relief sculpture, perhaps funerary, connected with the garrisons manning the Wall; this interest in a monumental style derived ultimately from Roman art may have been supported by contemporary imports, demonstrating the widely based trade in art-objects and influences in this period. Cramp (n.d., 264f.) points out that the first interest in Roman work in Northern England dates from the later seventh century, and suggests close parallels between such work at Hexham, and Roman work nearby. Similar comparisons may be made between provincial Roman funerary works, and Romanesque art, as for example for the Virgin of Essen which, it is suggested, is modelled on such antiquities (Bloch 1969; and cf. Hamann-MacLean 1940-50, 195ff.). And the study of mediaeval portraiture has led Keller (1970) and Ladner (1984, 321-69) to draw many antique parallels.

## ADMIRATION FOR STATUES

'Idols' were feared for their magic, but did this prevent admiration of other antiquities? One point of view (Bracco 1965, 286) holds that it was impossible - even as late as Dante - for the mediaeval mind to understand the material expressions of Roman culture, because the language was irredeemably pagan, and therefore lacking in any Christian and spiritual values. But if this was always true, why did Hildebert of Lavardin lament the statues of the old gods which he saw being burnt for lime in Rome (Raby 1957, 1.324f.)? Certainly, confusion about alien religious practices was widespread: in the *Chanson de Roland*, for instance, the 'Sarrazins' (who are usually regarded as honourable even if not Christian) are said to worship images, including Apollo (lines 8, 417, 3493; cf. Scaglia 1964, 139 n. 7); and Charlemagne and his troops broke up idols when they sacked Saragossa (line 3664), just as the *Royal Frankish Annals for 772* chronicle his destruction of the Irminsul idol and the temple which contained it.

However, Charlemagne's artists seemed well able to differentiate the evil from the useful, as shown by the antiquarian program for Aachen. Not everyone was convinced: the statue of Theodoric brought from Ravenna in 801 - did Charlemagne know of the famous equestrian statue of Justinian? (Stichel 1982, cat. 132) - clearly displeased Walafrid Strabo, who was puzzled by its nudity ('I believe he is nude solely so that his dark skin might be admired'), but repulsed by its subject, the Arian emperor, and by 'the golden adornments' (MGH Poet. lat. aev. Carol. 2.370ff.). On the other hand, about 839 the work was described in admiring terms by Abbot Agnel of Blachernes (Colin 1947, 89ff.). It must surely have been the personal choice of the Emperor, for Agnel writes



of it as 'an extremely beautiful statue, the like of which, as he himself testified, he had not seen' (cf. Müntz 1887, 41; Beutler 1982, 76ff.).

Christian Beutler (1964) has studied survivals from the Carolingian period which indicate both an interest in full-scale sculpture and in the imitation of antique exemplars: he compares most convincingly the statue of Charlemagne in Müstair with the Julian the Apostate in the Louvre (for the head) and the porphyry Eastern Emperor in Ravenna. He shows that other works clearly echo fifth-century sarcophagi and statues as well as the ubiquitous consular diptychs (and now Beutler 1982). And the re-used antique wolf is well known (Beutler 1982, 76ff.).

Such imitation bespeaks ready availability. If we believe the Einsiedeln Itinerary, statues were still on show in Rome in Carolingian times: there was an equestrian statue of 'Constantine' in the Forum in the ninth century; this is almost certainly not the Marcus Aurelius, which was very probably at the Lateran by then, and is never recorded as being in the Forum. Indeed, at least one equestrian statue survived into the tenth century, when Gregorovius (1972, 2.208) notes that the Crescenzo family bore the name 'dal cavallo di marmo'. The picture he paints (*ibid.*, 278ff.) is of a city untouched by predatory hands since the time of Totila and therefore, in this century, with its antique monuments at least partly intact. He notes the name of 'hortus mirabilis' given to the Forum of Augustus, for example. Certainly, the legends which surrounded some of the antique statues indicated just how many remained to provoke the imagination (*ibid.*, 3.168ff.) - witness Gregorius' statement that in the Forum of Nerva 'there is a great crowd of broken statues' (Rushforth 1919, ch. 16).

Charlemagne and his court were exceptional in their use of antiquities (leaving aside any political messages these invoked), for other centres were much less sophisticated. Bishop Henry of Winchester's excuse, therefore, for removing statues from Rome to England in the twelfth century - namely to prevent their being worshipped by the Romans - is probably only partly humbug (L-B England no. 4760).

## RE-USE OF STATUES

In the later Middle Ages, some statues were re-used, for portraits or figure-types, perhaps because their qualities were appreciated. Re-use was miscellaneous: a late Roman military figure at Benevento was given a Longobard head (perhaps to represent a prince) and probably featured on a tomb, being removed to the cathedral campanile on its construction in 1280 (Rotili 1978, 5ff. and figs 4f.; Amelung 1897 for later examples; cf. Rebecchi 1984, figs. 295f.); the 'uomo di pietra' in Milan, a togate figure whose head was reworked into that of a tonsured priest, supposedly to represent Bishop Adelmanno Menelozzi (died 956: Zoli 1975); at Conques a fourth century parade mask used as the head of Ste. Foy (Keller 1970, 68ff.); or the papal authorisation of 1360 to seek for 'two or three statues of marble or travertine so as to make from them apostles for the niches of a church' (Rodocanachi 1914, 25).

Similar are those cases where parts of statues were completed with modern sections, as with the antique heads set into fourteenth-century bodies, once on the façade of Florence Cathedral and now in the Louvre (Rathe 1910, 108ff.; Jucker 1982). Sometimes antiquities were used for themselves, as it were: in Florence stood a famous statue of Mars, perhaps unearthed during that city's expansion: it was a landmark, and much prized by the inhabitants, until it was lost in the flood of 1333 (Pegna 1974, 100ff.). And in Piazza Erbe, Verona, an antique statue was provided with a new head and, in 1368, placed atop a fountain: popularly known as 'Madonna Verona', it may well have been near its present site since 379, the date of the inscription with which the work is often linked (Franzoni 1965, 111f.). Perhaps its presence is reflected in the *Laudes Veronensis* of c. 796, which contrast the pagan remains with the Christian period (Hyde 1965-6, 313f.): 'Behold, a city founded by evil men who knew not the law of our God, and worshipped old images of wood and stone.' The Romans frequently decorated fountains with statues, but perhaps the mediaeval vogue came from Constantinople, where both the Delphic serpent tripod and

the Colossus of Constantine were fountains by 1420 (Majeska 1984, 256).

## RELIEFS

Perhaps the vogue for the re-use of reliefs came from the Romans: some of the panels of the Arch of Constantine are in re-use, probably from earlier triumphal arches or gates which had been demolished; and it can be shown that, far from the various components being amalgamated in a meaningless if decorative manner, the iconographic program of the new arch is a tight and intelligent one. Again, the Antonine reliefs at the Villa Medici were re-cut in the third century into a more modern style; and perhaps the Cancelleria reliefs, found dismounted from their altar and their worked face protected (Magi 1945, figs. 42, 47), were also candidates. Study of mediaeval reliefs (as in the *Corpus della scultura altmedioevale in Italia*) shows a large inspiration from classical motifs, paralleled by the re-use of Roman pieces. How and why were such pieces re-used?

If antique statues could sometimes be too maleficent to be allowed to survive, or too easily transformed into lime, decorative reliefs usually fared better (e.g. Baum 1937), especially when they apparently had no overt pagan implications and were therefore potentially useful; and, in any case, they were usually difficult to break up. This led to the use of some, like inscriptions, face-down as paving slabs: the Spada reliefs, in fine Lunense marble (and conveniently sized at 1.75m x 1.10m), were used in Sant' Agnese fuori le Mura, whence they were lifted during re-building work in 1620. Six of the eight reliefs contain nude or lightly draped males and, although extensive repairs were certainly made to them after discovery, there is no indication that they had been mutilated in any way before being laid in the church. But most decorative motifs are either neutral (cf. Buis 1973-4), or susceptible to Christianisation. 'Neutral' ensembles were in the majority, one example being the propylea at Trieste which, incorporated into the façade of S. Giusto, included friezes with lotus flowers, arms, acanthus, and griffons (Mirabella Roberti 1975). Krautheimer has suggested (1971a, 231f.) that for Carolingian writers 'the choice did not lie simply between acceptance or refusal of pagan elements; it lay between either rejection or re-interpretation'; with the visual arts, perhaps, the choice was extended, because the work could be re-cut, as happened so often at Modena (Rebecchi 1984).

Indeed, there are plentiful examples of relief sculptures from Antiquity which are re-used on Christian and secular buildings, as well as of mediaeval panels apparently in re-use on later structures (Hubert 1982, 256; Schmitt 1980, 133ff., 138ff., for a list of some 290 occurrences from France and Spain) - so it is clear that re-use was a continuing rather than an isolated vogue. Antique reliefs were frequently displayed without reworking, and it is difficult to interpret the placing of some of them as other than an interest in their sculptural qualities. Thus a *suovetaurilia* relief was used as a lintel in the church at Beaujeu, and its placement may date from the construction of that church in 1076; at nearby Charlieu there is a relief which surely imitates it, of the second quarter of the twelfth century. Both have been interpreted as a defence of the Eucharist (Ternois 1965). The important point, however, is that this sacrificial scene survived whatever Christian assaults there might have been upon it, to emerge in a place of honour in a Christian church. Much the same happened to the bronze font at Beaujeu, now lost, which may well have been an antique krater (ibid., 252). A Christian reinterpretation must also be the reason for the display of antiquities in some Greek churches (Mango 1963, 63f.).

Re-integration and re-interpretation may often have been the aim, but it is usually difficult to gloss the extent of any mediaeval *interpretatio christiana*, because we lack contemporary commentaries; it was certainly common (Parra 1983, 468f.). What meaning, for example, has the antique gem once set in the crown of the Miraculous Virgin at Notre Dame du Puy (Bachelier 1956)? And were fragments of antiquities displayed in secular locations - such as the piece of sarcophagus with the Miracle of the Quail at the Mas de Cascaveu, Trinquetaille, immured in a barn (Benoit 1954, no. 86) - any more than good-luck charms? Those periods and places where we find actual antiquities used alongside similar copied motifs may convince us that the *interpretatio* is more thoroughgoing, as is the case in twelfth-century Rome, which saw a revival of paleochristian motifs (Toubert 1970) as well as of parallel pagan ones. Some

motifs, such as the vine, were very popular: a relief with vines was used on the papal throne in S. Lorenzo in Lucina, where the sections for the sides have been cut out in order to maintain some kind of symmetry (Gandolfo 1974-5, 214ff., figs 5,6); and the mosaic in S. Clemente has tendrils which sprout from the foot of the Cross (analogous to work on the Ara Pacis), and are explicitly connected with the idea of redemption in the inscription underneath.

Another popular motif was the dolphin. The Pisans took at least one frieze from Rome to Pisa - namely the dolphin frieze now on the Camposanto, which came from the Basilica of Neptune behind the Pantheon. This was re-cut on the verso about 1130, probably because of the explicit Christian meaning of the dolphin; the new work was in a style analogous to that of the panels in the Baptistery, and the blocks probably served as transennae for the Cathedral - with both the antique and the modern sides visible (Grisanti 1980). Nor were the Pisans alone in their interest in such scenes, as can be seen from the popularity of the so-called 'thrones' (of Diana, Neptune, Apollo and other gods), which were even located in churches (Ricci 1909), a reference of 1525 showing their use as plutei or transennae (ibid., 258f.). Moreover, the esteem in which these were held meant that they were collected and prized (especially by Venetians: Hyde 1978), and were sometimes considered to be the work of Praxiteles himself (Chastel 1953). Here it was presumably the winged putti (and the dolphin in the case of the Neptune version) which ensured that they were interpreted as Christian (cf. Esch 1969, 46ff.).

As with sarcophagi, recutting could be an attractive option, and reliefs often had complicated histories once they were in re-use - like the three slabs in Luna marble of the fifth century (and possibly made in Ravenna) now in the church at Limans (Basses Alpes: Barroul 1964). One of these, displaying a cross, was re-used as the tympanum of the fourteenth-century church now on the site: it may once have been a paving slab, for another relief serves to this day to cover a tomb in front of the choir. The third is in use as part of the font. Indeed, the very size of architectural blocks could also provide a temptation for the mediaeval sculptor unwilling or unable to quarry a fresh block, and it is not unusual to find partly reworked decorated blocks when mediaeval structures are dismantled. One example is the tripartite cluster of capitals by Rainaldo from the façade of Pisa Cathedral (now Pisa, Museo Nazionale di S. Matteo): the centre block is indeed twelfth century, but that to one side is a fragment of Roman architrave and, to the other, a fragment of column (nos 5177-8).

## SCULPTURE IN THE EAST

Outside Europe, the survivals of sculpture and architecture were greater in quantity, and sometimes spectacular, because pressure of population was generally less. However, survival could still be in doubt: at Athens, for example, decline began well before it did at Rome, for excavations on the Agora have revealed evidence not only of lime kilns, largely from the Byzantine period, but also of the melting down of bronze statues to provide material for metalworkers, probably in the slump after the invasion of the 267 (Thompson 1972, 210f.); and 'it would be invidious to attribute to the Byzantine limemakers the destruction of ancient marble sculptures; at the time of their activity, alas, little ancient marble was to be found in the area of the Agora' (ibid., 191) : presumably the Herulian invasions destroyed those which the Romans had not already exported.

In contrast, Constantinople was an object of envy and emulation in Western courts - and, according to received views, of importance in the preservation of the art of Graeco-Roman antiquity for the Renaissance. Some antique statues did survive into the later Middle Ages (Gibbon, 60, lists some of them), although just how many, and of what age and type, is disputed (cf. Gazda 1970, 247ff.). Nicetas' account (PG 139.1041ff.) of what was left at the time of the sack of 1204 is well known, and while both he and Robert de Clari wrote of marvellous automata (of which we find echoes in mediaeval romances: Polak 1982, 163f.), it is likely that at least some of the material described was of Hellenistic date, arguably including a Hercules of otherwise unknown type (Cutler 1968, 116f.; Mathiopulu-Tornaritu 1980). Part of the account by Robert de Clari describes the spina of the hippodrome: 'The length of that piazza there was a wall ten feet wide and a good fifteen feet high. On it were statues of men and women, horses and bulls, camels, bears and lions, and of many

other kinds of animals in bronze. These were so well made, and so realistically modelled, that there is no artist pagan or Christian who would know how to portray and sculpt statues more beautiful than these' (Patrone 1972, 224). Although the account is written in the past tense, it is known that at least some works survived until the sack as public trophies, so to speak, and therefore received public protection.

Since one of Nicetas' charges against the Latin barbarians was that they melted down statues to make coinage - he probably knew Procopius' account (3.5.4) of how the Vandals had done likewise to Roman bronzes (Cutler 1968, 116) - it is at least arguable that de Clari refers to some works destroyed in the sack.

However, opinions on what was visible then are divided: Cutler, stating that 'it is in the light of a Constantinople with public places filled with statues that the *De signis* must be read' (ibid., 115), clearly believes in a large population of statues; whereas, according to Mango (1963), the actual stock was never high, for few were imported after the time of Constantine (cf. the anonymous accounts in PG 122.1189ff., 157.651ff.). Later travellers mention little (e.g. Majeska 1984, 250ff. for the Hippodrome). Many works had perhaps been destroyed quite early, such as the bronzes in the Baths of Zeuxippus, which probably went when the Baths burned down in 532. Mango estimates that no more than a hundred existed in the mid-Byzantine period, and then states firmly (ibid., 71f.) that 'Byzantine art does not exhibit a single instance of such intimate contact with specific antique models as we find, though transposed in subject matter, in the portal of Rheims cathedral, or in the work of Nicola Pisano'. We must therefore think, with Kitzinger (1982, 668), of no more than a vague Hellenistic heritage in Byzantine art, and one which was not fed by the free availability of antiquities: 'In theory it is possible to assume that Byzantine painters and mosaicists were inspired by ancient statues and reliefs ... But the actual evidence is not encouraging and often suggests indirect rather than direct contacts.'

Outside inhabited centres, antiquities survived almost intact for centuries. One such was the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus which, according to Eustathius of Thessaloniki's twelfth-century commentary on the *Iliad*, was then intact (PW 24.374, s.v. Pytheos). Nicostratus (an author unknown except from references in a seventeenth-century text) must have visited Samothrace - or perhaps his source did - before the sixth-century earthquake left the sanctuary there in ruins: for he describes the Winged Victory, which is not even mentioned by any extant ancient author (Lewis 1959, 115ff. and n. 30).

## CONCLUSION

Given all the above considerations, we must conclude that statues and reliefs were, like sarcophagi, available during the Middle Ages to those who sought them out - although intolerance and fear took their toll. Certain works were even prized, as is shown by their veneration, decoration, or incorporation into some part of the life or buildings of the town or countryside (Adhémar 1939, 76ff. for plentiful examples); others probably played an important part in the various revivals of monumental sculpture in the Middle Ages, as can be shown for some Carolingian work, or from comparisons between antique work at Aquileia and figures from S.M. in Valle, Cividale (Beutler 1982, figs. 122f.). Nevertheless, in spite of the destruction and indignities outlined above, the important fact is the sheer quantity of statues deliberately preserved, or left alone through indifference, or indeed rediscovered along with sarcophagi and building materials during population expansion, which were therefore available to the artists of the later Middle Ages and hence to those of the Renaissance as well.

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