

Sculptural genres in late antiquity : continuity or discontinuity?

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SCULPTURAL GENRES IN LATE ANTIQUITY – CONTINUITY OR DISCONTINUITY?

In 1994 I published »Tradition in Late Antique Sculpture. Conservation – Modernization – Production«¹. The book consists of two parts. In the first I discuss the phenomenon of reworking as a way of renovating older sculpture². The second part deals with 'The Sculptural Scenery of Late Antiquity'. I examine sculpture executed in the Classical tradition and conventionally dated to the High Empire, when it should, in my opinion, rather be dated to the Late Antique period.

The book is a preliminary study intended to provoke a debate. In an article in *Museum Helveticum* »Das Ende der antiken Idealstatue«, Dietrich Willers has taken up the challenge³ stating that my book: »in seiner prononcierten Art zu konstruktivem Widerspruch einlädt«. In the following I will try to amplify some of my views.

Traditionally it has been agreed that it was in the troubled years of the third century that production ceased of copies of that type of sculpture, which in German is normally labelled 'Idealplastik' and in English 'mythological sculpture'⁴. Portraits were still

produced, some over life size, as evidenced from the material itself and remarked upon by Ammianus Marcellinus (cf. below n. 27).

There is, however, general agreement that a small amount of pagan sculpture in the 'Zeitstil' was still produced. But owing to the studies of E. Gazda⁵ and L. Stirling⁶ it has been established that, executed in reduced size, the genre of classicizing mythological sculpture was a reality of the fourth and early fifth century. As pointed out by E. Gazda some credence must be given to the angry words of the Syrian bishop Theodoret, who in the mid-fifth century complains about pagan sculpture still being produced and displayed in public. He indignantly enumerates what shameless types were on show, »Dionysos that limbo-loosener and effeminate creature« being his main dislike. My aim is to suggest that sculptural genres of Late Antiquity probably included a much wider range of types and forms.

The period in question is one of transition as well as one particularly preoccupied with the past. The title of the eye-opening exhibition in the Metropolitan Museum in 1977, »The Age of Spirituality« with the subtitle »Late Antique and Early Christian Art – Third to Seventh Century« is right on target⁷. 'Age of Spirituality' is, however, only one view of the period.

¹ N. Hannestad, *Tradition in Late Antique Sculpture. Conservation – Modernization – Production*. Aarhus / Aarhus University Press (1994) 166.

² In particular I focus on the Ara Pacis as a case study. In a bizarre review (*JRA* 10, 1998, 447–453) A. Claridge states: »a determining factor that Hannestad overlooks completely is that re-cutting means removing stone« neglecting the fact that I have, in great detail (pp. 27–54), supported with good illustrations (figs. 5–32), demonstrated how much stone has been removed from the reliefs of the Ara Pacis. Furthermore, A. Claridge confuses the two processes of re-working: re-working (of a head) for the sake of conservation and re-working with the intention of making a different type of head (usually a new portrait). For a recent contribution to the discussion of toolmarks on the monument, see D. A. Conlin, *The Artists of the Ara Pacis* (1997) 47–52. 56 (Tetrarchic). cf. also 47–48. 56 (Hadrianic).

³ D. Willers, *MusHelv* 53, 1996, 170–186.

⁴ On terminology, see L. M. Stirling, *Mythological Statuary in Late Antiquity: a Case Study of Villa Decoration in*

Southwest Gaul (Ph. D. University of Michigan 1994) 7 arguing that a direct translation of the German term to 'ideal sculpture' can be confusing in an Anglophone context; cf. also Willers (supra n. 3) 182: »Skulptur <idealer> und mythologischer Thematik«; id., *Idealplastik*, in: H.-G. Nesselrath (ed.), *Einleitung in die griechische Philologie* (1997) 672–674.

⁵ E. Gazda, *A marble group of Ganymede and the eagle from the age of Augustine*, in: J. H. Humphrey (ed.), *Excavations at Carthage conducted by the Univ. of Michigan VI* (1981) 125–178.

⁶ L. M. Stirling, *Mythological Statuary* (supra n. 4); ead., *Divinities and Heroes in the Age of Ausonius. A Late-Antique Villa and Sculptural Collection at Saint-Georges-de-Montagne* (Gironde), RA 1996, 103–143.

⁷ K. Weitzmann (ed.) *The Age of Spirituality. Exhibition Metropolitan Museum 1977* (1979).

Preoccupation with the cultural heritage or pride in the glorious past is another important trend of the time. Sometimes it turns into pure nostalgia. In art, paraphrasing and revival of old motifs and art forms are favoured, often mixed in strange new ways. The contorniates are deliberately programmatic in their choice of motifs, some showing famous pieces of sculpture like the Scylla group. Mosaics of the Late Antique period, particularly in the Levant, pass on Classical motifs to the very end of Antiquity, sometimes even beyond the time of the Arab conquest. In synagogues and in churches we find motifs that we would not expect in such places of worship. The Late Antique world is a world of images, basically pagan in concept but sometimes mixed with Christian ideas. G. W. Bowersock has blazed a trail on this topic in his »Hellenism in Late Antiquity«⁸. The great exhibition catalogues, like the above from the Metropolitan Museum, illustrate very well how strong the Classical tradition was in twodimensional art and in the luxury crafts of the Late Antique period⁹.

The famous ivory diptych from the late fourth century of the Nichomachi and the Symmachi keep up the tradition, and predictably so since we know both families to have been stern pagans; but it would be difficult to deduce anything about the belief of the patron who commissioned a superbly-carved ivory diptych, now in the Tesoro del Duomo in Monza, showing a poet and his muse, the work presumably dating from a hundred years later¹⁰.

Silver plates demonstrate a similar fascination with the classical past and even in the silver of Christian Byzantium the classical tradition is strongly felt in the depiction of living beings. It is also worth considering that when the Parabiago silver dish came to light in

the vicinity of Milan, in the early part of this century, it was considered a work of art from the High Empire owing to its series of pagan motifs rendered in a purely classical tradition. This dating stood unchallenged for many years. However, with increasing knowledge as to the luxury crafts of Late Antiquity and its art forms in general, established through several great finds of unquestionably Late Antique silver hoards – the Sevso treasury (owned by a Christian) being the most recent addition – the Parabiago plate eventually found its place in the fourth-century context.

Sometimes different genres are mixed or even brought into confrontation with each other as in the Theodosius Missorium in Madrid. Above, the coming era is manifested by the Christian emperors frontally enthroned in hierarchical order as indicated by size, but they are supported by the Graeco-Roman personification of the earth, Tellus, a key motif since the Augustan period.

In the same way Late Antique literature often paraphrases classical models. Thus the Greek author Nonnos of the fifth century wrote a *Dionysiaca*, a pastiche in the style of the Iliad and the Odyssey, and of the same length as those two poems combined. It is preserved (but not much read) and it gives a lengthy account of Dionysos' triumphant conquest of India. At the same time Nonnos is well-known as a Christian author who produced a paraphrase of St. John's Gospel. Apparently no contradiction existed in such a body of work. That fundamentalist Christians were active, there is no doubt: witness the aforementioned Syrian bishop, but his later colleague in Aphrodisias seems not to have been troubled by wall paintings in his residence depicting Victory and the three Graces. The idea of Christianity as such being hostile to the Classical tradition in art is simply not valid¹¹.

To establish a solid basis for further deductions concerning sculpture we should look at the circumstances of its discovery and to alternative criteria for dating – and of course still bear in mind accepted features of the Late Antique period regarding style and type. A good example would be the

⁸ G. W. Bowersock, *Hellenism in Late Antiquity* (1990).

⁹ In particular *Spätantike und frühes Christentum. Ausstellung im Liebighaus* (1983) and *Milano capitale dell'impero romano 286-402 d. c.* (1990); see also G. M. A. Hanfmann, *The continuity of Classical Art: Culture, Myth, and Faith*, in: K. Weitzmann (ed.), *Age of Spirituality* (1980) 75-99; a recent contribution on the subject is J. Elsner, *Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph* (1998) making several good points on Late Antique classicism 186-197. For an overview of sculpture of the Theodosian period, see B. Küllerich, *Late Fourth Century Classicism in the Plastic Arts* (1993).

¹⁰ Milano (supra n. 9) cat. 5b. 1d with colour plate p. 311. On this matter, see also K. J. Shelton, *Roman Aristocrats, Christian Commissions: The Carrand Diptych*, in: F. M. Clover – R. S. Humphreys (eds.), *Tradition and Innovation in Late Antiquity* (1989) 105-127.

¹¹ N. Hannestad, *How did rising Christianity cope with pagan sculpture?*, in: I. Wood – E. Chrysos (eds.), *East and West: Modes of communication. Proceedings of the first plenary conference at Merida* (1999) 173-205. On the frescos in Aphrodisias see S. Campbell in: *Aphrodisias Papers* 3 (1996) 190-192 dated to the sixth or possibly seventh century (adding that the motifs: »do not seem appropriate decoration for the residence of a bishop«).

young *togatus* from Aphrodisias, a 2.15 m high marble statue (Pl. 35, 3). It has been dated by the excavator and some recent publications to the early or middle second century¹², while I have suggested a dating to the early fifth century¹³. The statue is intended to reproduce elements of style and form of the earlier period and in fulfilling this intention the sculptor has been quite successful. The statue wears the Augustan type of toga, not the form with *contabulatio* that came into fashion in the later Severan period. However, this Augustan form continued to be reproduced later, in particular when the being represented is a personification, or a person, who stands for continuity. Thus the Genius Senatus and the emperor are clad in this type of toga in the reliefs of the Tetrarchic Decennalia Base on the Forum Romanum, while the senators on the same base wear the modern toga¹⁴. The eyes of the Aphrodisias *togatus*, who may be a personification, are without any carved indication of iris and pupil, as was the fashion until the very late Hadrianic period. This trait, however, is also encountered in a later period, such as in portraits of Constantine and, if the established identification of Julianus the Apostate is accepted, in his portraits, too¹⁵. The Aphrodisias *togatus* has one peculiar feature that only occurs in the period around 400–450: a bald pate surrounded by locks of hair almost like a tonsure. In some cases the hair at the dome of the head can be rendered in long thin, wavy strands. A piece of superb quality with a detailed rendering of locks of hair similarly framing the dome, is the head of a bearded man of the mid-fifth century from Aphrodisias, now in Brussels¹⁶. It seems hard to

accept a unique occurrence of this peculiar feature, more than 250 years before it appears anywhere else.

These two characteristic features, the tonsure-like coiffure and the lack of any plastic rendering of iris and pupil, similarly occur on the head of a philosopher, now in the Vatican, dated by the publisher to the late fourth century¹⁷. The locks of hair of the Vatican piece are much less elaborate than on the Aphrodisias *togatus* but the idea must have been the same: to create a partly ‘updated’ pastiche reflecting the ideals of the High Empire. As regards style, it should be noted that the drapery of the Aphrodisias statue is rendered in a very abstract and ornamental fashion. By its mannerism it relates to the above-mentioned diptych of a poet and his muse (supra n. 10). Furthermore, the figure has no volume but is plank-like with oddly-sloping shoulders¹⁸. That the actual sculptural quality is very high seems hardly relevant.

In Aphrodisias a sculptor’s workshop has been excavated, which had been destroyed in the fourth century by an earthquake. Among the finds are two replicas in different sizes of a Satyr carrying the infant Dionysos on his left shoulder. More unfinished fragments of this same group were found in the workshop, which apparently had specialized in this Hellenistic style group¹⁹.

The Satyr, who dances forward in a very affected manner with the infant Dionysos on his left shoulder establishes a link to the so-called Esquiline Group, now in Copenhagen, which includes another example of

¹² R. R. R. Smith – C. Ratté, *AJA* 101, 1997, 20–22 figs. 16–18 as evidenced in the publication the statue has now been remounted on a new base, thereby achieving a much more satisfactory appearance; most recently R. R. R. Smith, *JRS* 88, 1998, 69 f.

¹³ N. Hannestad, *Tradition* (supra n. 1) 160 figs. 103–105.

¹⁴ H. Kähler, *Das Fünfsäulendenkmal für die Tetrarchen auf dem Forum Romanum* (1964). The preserved porphyry statues crowning the columns likewise wear the Augustan toga.

¹⁵ H. P. L’Orange – M. Wegner, *Das spätantike Herrscherbild von Diokletian bis zu den Konstantin-Söhnen* (1984) 162 f. pls. 76 c–d. 77 (the statue on permanent exhibition in the Louvre). The generally accepted iconography of Julianus has been questioned by K. Fittschen, *Privatporträts hadrianischer Zeit*, in: *Roman Portraits. Artistic and Literary* (1997) 32–36; see however N. Hannestad, *Tradition* (supra n. 1) 153.

¹⁶ J. Inan – E. Alföldi-Rosenbaum, *Römische und frühbyzantinische Porträtplastik aus der Türkei* (1979) cat. 204, see

also cat. 206 (Aphrodisias) with references for the tonsure like coiffure.

¹⁷ M. Stadler et al., *Museo Chiaramonti III* (1995) Taf. 1007 (inv. XXIII 14), cf. also the preceding entry.

¹⁸ Similar sloping shoulders has a Hercules with obvious Late Antique eye rendering and exaggerated rendering of anatomical details like the Satyrs below. The piece is stated by the excavator to have been found in the sculptor’s workshop, K. T. Erim, *Aphrodisias. City of Venus Aphrodite* (1986) 66 (with illustration) but it is not mentioned in the publication of the workshop, see following note.

¹⁹ See P. Rockwell, *Unfinished statuary associated with a sculptor’s studio*, in: *Aphrodisias Papers 2* (1991) 127–143. It is suggested that the two well preserved statues were brought in for repair despite the find of four unfinished fragments of this same type. For a different view (i. e. that these two statues were also late Antique products), see J. A. van Voorhis, *The sculptor’s workshop at Aphrodisias and the production of ideal sculpture in Late Antiquity*, *AJA* 102, 1998, 409.

this very type. The group makes a major ensemble of which five full-sized statues – a torso with a head of Hercules, the Satyr and the three gods Neptune, Jupiter, and Sol – are now on display in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek. The sculptures were reused as building material in the area of the Via delle Sette Sale on the Esquiline Hill – hence the name. More fragments exist, adding at least two more sculptures to the ensemble and indicating that the original number must have been nearly twice that of the present exhibit²⁰. By inscriptions on the bases the group can be attributed to a single workshop or group of artists. The Esquiline Group has a definite homogeneity in terms of size, material and type, but it also has the mark of the ‘School of Aphrodisias’ of its time: a variation in the sculptural expression from the exaggerated and mannerist rendering of anatomical details of the Satyr to the sloppiness of the Sol. The sculptors were, in fact, Aphrodisians working in Rome in the second quarter of the fourth century but their names are also known from inscriptions from their native city, Aphrodisias. Owing to the epigraphic studies of Charlotte Roueché²¹ the group may be redated from the conventional Hadrianic date to late Antiquity, and nothing regarding style or form contradicts this late dating. Even by the standards of the High Empire the ensemble is vast, and it tells us much about the potential still present in a late period. One more peculiar feature of Late Antique sculpture appears in this group i. e. a variation in the rendering of the eyes ranging from the sculpted shapes of the iris and pupil characteristic of the mid-second century, the period around 200 and the fourth century, and the Hercules which has no plastic rendering of iris and pupil like that of the young *togatus* mentioned above. A most striking discrepancy between eye rendering and general features appears in a full-scale head of Dionysos (or Apollo) in Chania, Crete (Pl. 35, 1)²². The softly-modelled head in bluish-grey, presumably Aphrodisian marble, with delicately carved hair locks could easily pass for a piece of sculpture from the

High Empire had not the strangely-marked eyelids, the circularly-drilled tear ducts and particularly the deep semi-circular rendering of iris/pupil related it to portraits of the third quarter of the fourth century²³.

One more full-scale sculpture, presumably also belonging to the Aphrodisian circle, is the marble group featuring the myth of Daidalos found on the slope of the Citadel Hill in Amman²⁴. The main figure, standing 1.9 m tall, is now on display in the Jordan Archaeological Museum, while the fragments of his raised arms carrying the body of Ikaros have been lost since the excavation. Fragments of the torso and part of the limbs of Ikaros have, likewise, disappeared. Stylistic traits point to a dating in the fourth century and the expressive mode relates to the figure of the Satyr carrying the infant Dionysos; more conclusive is, however, the construction of the statue, which is unique. It was made in separate parts, presumably in Aphrodisias, to be assembled in Amman. The figure of Daidalos consists of five different pieces: one comprises the head and torso down to the belt at the waist. The two arms, of which the shoulders are preserved have been inserted in sockets. To hide the joins they correspond to the lines marked by the straps (to fasten the artificial wings), the gown and the line of the belt. The lower part consists of two elements, the bottom part of the torso and the left leg. The right hip and leg, of which only the knee is preserved, carried the entire weight of the figure through an internal pole, probably made of metal, ending in the right hip.

The only explanation for this strange mode of construction is that transport of large-scale carved statuary or blocks of marble had become too difficult, something which is also evidenced in several other pieces of marble sculpture of Late Antiquity²⁵. Bringing marble the long distance over land to Amman must have been relatively expensive during the High Empire, but not a major problem. Several pieces from the first three centuries of the Empire have

²⁰ N. Hannestad, *Tradition* (supra n. 1) 110–113 with references. A new publication of the group by Mette Moltesen will appear in *Antike Plastik*.

²¹ C. Roueché, *PBSR* 50, 1982, 102–115 (with K. T. Erim) and ead., *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity* (1989) 27–29.

²² Chania Museum, inv. 3028, the exact provenance is unknown, see N. Hannestad, *The Classical Tradition in Late Roman Sculpture*, in: *Akten des XIII. Intern. Kongresses für Klassische Archäologie Berlin 1988* (1990) 515 f. pl. 79, 1–2.

²³ To be seen in a prince of the Valentinian house, cf. W. von Sydow, *Zur Kunstgeschichte des spätantiken Porträts im 4. Jh. n. Chr.* (1969) 73 ff. pl. 2 a–b; *Spätantike und frühes Christentum* (supra n. 9) cat. 52.

²⁴ T. Weber, *Gadara Decapolitana* (preprint of the *Habilitationsschrift* 1995) cat. D. 6; I am most grateful to Thomas Weber for having generously made available to me this preprint; N. Hannestad, *The Marble Group of Daidalos, Hellenism in Late Antique Amman*, in: *The 7th Intern. Conference on the History and Archaeology of Jordan (SHAJ VII)* (forthcoming).

²⁵ N. Hannestad, *Tradition* (supra n. 1) esp. 154 f.

been found, all conventionally carved, and even large-scale sculpture existed, too, as indicated by a hand and elbow of a colossus, estimated to have been nine metres high, found in the nearby Great Temple of the Citadel Hill²⁶.

The Amman Daidalos was placed in an exedra presumably as a part of a villa setting. The Esquiline Group was certainly created for one of the wealthy mansions situated in this part of the green belt surrounding the old nucleus of the City and a much-favoured residential area of the Late Roman nobility. In Late Antiquity and even later in Constantinople we know of people collecting ancient sculpture, but great changes had remodelled society. The public space, the Agora, the Forum and various piazzas had lost their importance except for the setting-up of portrait statues; the focus was now on the emperor or the higher magistrates²⁷. The temples went out of use, often to become store houses of ancient sculpture. The predilection of the nobility for ostentation now found an outlet in church building or repairs to aqueducts or baths. Usually baths came to house sculpture from the public space, which had become outdated for its original setting.

The nobility, however, was still rich. The domus and the suburban villas of the cities remained magnificent, and the countryside of the fourth century, particularly during the stable period 320–380, witnessed a true villa 'boom'²⁸. The splendour of Late Antiquity thrived in the stately home: refined new structures or rebuilt mansions were embellished with niches as a new architectural concept, floors were laid with slabs of coloured marble or mosaics, often with mythological motifs. The great hoards of silver of Late Antiquity were on display in such stately homes. Intellectual life

was nourished in these surroundings and the reception areas became an important part of the mental and physical structure. In the words of Peter Brown: »the forum was made private«²⁹. Another striking feature of this upper-class ownership is the cultural homogeneity of its members³⁰; in addition they often owned land in various parts of the empire. Consequently the pattern of embellishment could be very similar in different parts of the empire and, as regards sculpture, the suppliers were often the same³¹. How long these stately homes lasted in their splendour is a matter of debate³². The period of decline can be difficult to date and there were certainly differences across the empire. As recently stressed by J. Arce numerous villas underwent great changes during the fifth-seventh centuries (supra n. 28). In such villas, parts of the buildings were transformed to accommodate small industries. Along the north-western frontier rustic new-comers moved in, occupying only a few rooms³³. During this process the buildings must have been cleared of sculpture and, for some reason, the works in question were not broken up but merely buried³⁴. The great clear-out

²⁶ T. Weber (supra n. 24) Cat. D. 12.

²⁷ On sculpture in the public space, see D. Willers, *MusHelv* 53, 1996, 171–173 with references. On the pattern in Late Antiquity, see F. A. Bauer, *Stadt, Platz und Denkmal in der Spätantike* (1996). It appears that bronze (sometimes gilded) became the favourite material for honorific statues as also evidenced by Ammianus Marcellinus (XIV, 6, 8).

²⁸ J. Arce, *Otium et negotium: the great estates, 4th–7th century*, in: L. Webster – M. Brown (eds.), *Transformation of the Roman World* (1997) 19–32; and S. Scott – N. Christie, *Elites and exhibitionism and the Late Roman Villa*, in: *Landscape of Change* (Scholar Press - forthcoming). I am most indebted to S. Scott and N. Christie for having made available to me their manuscript. On the transformation, see also J. Percival, *The fifth-century villa: new life or death postponed*, in: *Fifth-century Gaul: a crisis of identity?* (1992) 156–166.

²⁹ P. Brown, *Church and Leadership*, in: P. Veyne (ed.), *A History of Private life* (1987) 274; on the role of the stately home see *id.*, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity* (1992) esp. 20–25.

³⁰ Brown *op. cit.* esp. 35–41 and *passim*; see also P. Heather, *Literacy and Power in the Roman World*, in: A. Bowman – G. Wolf (eds.), *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World* (1994) 181–186; on Gaul, see R. W. Mathiesen, *Roman Aristocrats in Barbarian Gaul* (1993) chap. 10.

³¹ N. Hannestad, *Tradition* (supra n. 1) part II; *id.*, *Rising Christianity*, in: Wood – Chrysos (supra n. 11) 184–194.

³² Cf. S. P. Ellis, *The End of the Roman House*, *AJA* 92, 1988, 565–576.

³³ Scott – Christie (supra n. 28) part VII.

³⁴ The deliberate destruction of sculpture is a rare phenomenon except for the mutilation of faces or the sex of the figures, if naked (this goes for females too), see N. Hannestad, *Rising Christianity* (supra n. 11). Professor Petros G. Themelis has kindly drawn my attention to the destruction of sculpture by Christians in Messene (sarcophagi smashed into thousands of pieces), where, in addition, a statue of Hercules was crushed and the entrance of the room blocked. Similar events took place in the Asclepieion at the south slope of the Acropolis of Athens and elsewhere. For certain religious groups in opposition to Christianity it also made sense to hide their sacred sculpture, thus the Walbrook Mithraeum in the Late Constantinian period, see R. Mury in: J. Munby – M. Henig (eds.), *Roman Life and Art in Britain* (1977) 375–382.

appears to have taken place in the period around 500–525. In Athens, where an intensive period of building activity followed the Herulian invasion, a series of private houses on the Areopagos flourished until circa 530 when the ownership changed and the sculpture was dumped in the wells³⁵.

It is generally accepted that sculpture found in Delian or Pompeian houses or in first or second-century Roman villas is contemporary with the architecture. It is believed, however, that in Late Antique houses this correlation is meant to be different – though no good reason for this has been suggested. It is a problem that much sculpture has been found outside the buildings, buried in dumps with no evidence, such as coins or ceramics, from which dating could be established, and that sometimes it is only the sculpture which is found, not the houses from whence it came. The sculptural content of such a cache or of stray finds from inside the buildings could be of a different age. Some pieces were indeed old when buried, some may have been fine collectors' pieces repaired and cared for, but many pieces may have been made specifically for the new setting. Not surprisingly, there tends to be a different profile in sculptural settings according to where in the Empire the collection was assembled. It also makes a difference whether it was a modest establishment or a great estate that had to be embellished. As might be expected, the houses in Late Antique Ostia have a large proportion of reused sculpture and the same goes for the above-mentioned houses in Athens.

It is, however, different when it is a matter of sculpture found in the hilly, green belt around central Rome, which as mentioned above, was a favourite residential area of the Late Roman nobility. Much sculpture from these areas, such as the Esquiline Group, was found in connection with the late 19th century building boom following the Risorgimento: much of this was to end up in recent collections in Rome itself or abroad. Such collections contain markedly more sculpture of a late date than the old collections furnished with finds from the centre of Rome, Villa Adriana etc.³⁶.

Valdetorres de Jarama, east of Madrid, has witnessed the excavation of an extraordinary Late Antique complex in the shape of an octagon with niches, presumably part of a villa. The complex, including its

rich sculptural setting, has been greatly damaged, partly due to the thin layer of covering soil³⁷. From the evidence of the architecture and ceramic finds the complex can be dated to the Theodosian period but the sculpture is all considered to be antique pieces from the High Empire acquired by a Late Antique collector, perhaps in Rome³⁸. The sculpture, every piece of small size, falls into two distinct groups: a series in a dark greyish marble, stated to be of Aphrodisian origin, and another one in white marble, some pieces admittedly from a little later. Among the pieces in white marble, two in particular should be noted. One of these is a very fragmented group including an eagle, and as regards style and size, it is very close to the Ganymede group published by E. Gazda (supra n. 5). The other one is a headless statue of Asclepios of a similarly re-fined but un-plastic marble carving³⁹. A small-scale statue (or statuette) of Asclepios, often accompanied by one of Hygieia, is a find one would expect to make in a Late Antique house. Numerous examples of this god (and his daughter) have in fact been found under such circumstances, though usually to be dated to the High Empire. There is, however, something suspicious about postulating such a large production of this type of statuary still in perfect condition to be re-used two or three hundred years later. It would be more convincing to fit the Asclepios of Valdetorres into the context established by E. Gazda and L. Stirling, and thus it would be approximately contemporaneous with the ivory diptych of the early fifth century, now in Liverpool, depicting these same two deities⁴⁰.

Among the sculptures in dark marble is a headless giant, which must have been placed on a low, moulded base of white marble⁴¹. He is throwing

³⁷ C. Puerta – M. Á. Elvira – T. Artigas, *La colección de esculturas hallada en Valdetorres de Jarama*, ArchEspA 67, 1994, 179–200.

³⁸ The co-excavator Javier Arce considers the sculpture to be of the same date as the building; see also N. Hannestad, *Rising Christianity* (supra n. 11) 197 n. 75.

³⁹ C. Puerta et al., *Valdetorres* (supra n. 37) cat. 9; h: 59 cm (original c. 72 cm).

⁴⁰ K. Weitzmann (ed.) *Age of Spirituality* (1979) cat. 133. On Late Antique statues of Asclepios, see N. Hannestad, *Rising Christianity* (supra n. 11) 197 n. 75. Asclepios and Hygieia as a pair also appear in a cache of sculpture from a Late Antique sea-shore villa east of Alexandria (N. Hannestad, *Tradition*, supra n. 1, 123). For a fifth century statuette with a Hygieia (?) in Aphrodisias, see K. T. Erim in: *Aphrodisias Papers* 1 (1990) 29 fig. 30.

⁴¹ C. Puerta et al., *Valdetorres* (supra n. 37) cat. 1; h.: 61cm

³⁵ A. Frantz, *Late Antiquity: A. D. 267–700*, Agora XXIV (1988) 34–48. 87–90; P. Castrén (ed.), *Post-Herulian Athens* (1994) on the 'House of Proclos' (A. Karivieri) 89–139.

³⁶ Cf. N. Hannestad, *Tradition* (supra n. 1) 113–116.

stones at the gods, and this motif together with the style and, furthermore, the combination of material, again recalls Aphrodisias. Recently a fragment of an anguiped leg carved in the same type of stone and with a rendering of scales of similar shapes has actually been found in Aphrodisias itself⁴².

Such giants, a young and an old, are part of the sculptural setting of a Late Antique suburban villa in Constantinople, located on the shore of the Golden Horn in the area of modern Silahtaraga. They, too, are throwing stones at the Gods⁴³. The publishers argue that the collection of sculpture has a time span ranging from the reign of Trajan to the later third century⁴⁴. However, as pointed out in great detail by R. Fleischer in a review⁴⁵, the greater proportion of the sculpture should be markedly updated: presumably they were made for the setting. Among the better-preserved pieces is a small-scale statue of Sol ('Apollo'). As far as size, style, type and carving are concerned, this particular piece is similar to a Meleager from Milan, the Dionysos from the villa at Chiragan and to the seated young Christ in the Museo delle Terme in Rome, the last-named agreed to date from the mid-fourth century or a little later⁴⁶.

By far the most exuberant sculptural setting in a private context is the embellishment of the above-mentioned villa in Chiragan (Martres Tolosanes) south of Toulouse. Approximately 150 pieces of sculpture can be related with certainty to this villa⁴⁷. The dating of this vast and luxurious estate is debated. Much sculpture was collected for the villa, a few

copies and many portraits, but a very considerable part of the sculptural setting was created to harmonise with the architecture. This includes 37 pieces in the round, nearly all of which are small-scale mythological sculptures, such as the Dionysos.

Presumably made for the reception rooms, there are also twelve tondo busts and twelve corresponding reliefs depicting the Labours of Hercules, both series executed in the local marble of Saint-Béat. The tondos, with a diameter of between 74 cm and 90 cm, feature various gods and personifications. On display in the museum are the pair Asclepios and Hygieia. In terms of style, eye execution, etc. the Chiragan tondos bear a close resemblance to a series of tondo portraits made for a school of philosophy in Aphrodisias around 400⁴⁸. A reasonable hypothesis would be that the final sculptural setting was made for the villa at about the same time, which was the period of the Theodosian renaissance. The larger pieces were carved on the spot by Aphrodisian sculptors, while the small-scale statuary was produced in Aphrodisias and transported to the villa, some pieces semi-manufactured.

This applies to a torso with the upper part of the legs of an old fisherman carved in the dark marble (Pl. 35, 4)⁴⁹. Highly-polished areas against unfinished parts points by itself to Late Antiquity, as does the very solid trunk of which only a broken surface remains on the right buttock. Characteristic of the Aphrodisian school is the non-naturalistic rendering of anatomical details varying from sloppiness to exaggeration into mannerism in one and the same figure. Thus the characteristic tuberos rendering of the serratus anterior is similar to that of the Satyr carrying the infant Dionysos⁵⁰. The front of the Chiragan fisherman is delicately carved and polished while the back is only roughly shaped, the drapery of front and back not even being consistent, leaving the borderline between these two areas glaringly obvious. Furthermore, the figure still has a neck support. Presumably it should have been finished at its destination but this was never accomplished. It only underwent a rough shaping. This reveals a carving technique also evidenced in unfinished pieces from the above-mentioned sculptors' workshop in Aphrodisias. Sculpture intended to be in the round

(original c. 87 cm), on the bases 195 f.

⁴² R. R. R. Smith – C. Ratté, *AJA* 99, 1995, 54 fig. 30.

⁴³ On a re-interpretation of the motif, see N. Hannestad, *Tradition* (supra n. 1) 126 f. and id., *Rising Christianity* (supra n. 11) 199.

⁴⁴ N. De Chaisemartin – E. Örgen, *Les documents sculptés de Silahtaraga* (1984), on the very summary excavation providing only scanty evidence of the architecture, 7–9.

⁴⁵ R. Fleischer, *Gnomon* 60, 1988, 61–65.

⁴⁶ For this comparison, see B. Küllerich – H. Torp, *Mythological sculpture in the fourth century*, *IstMitt* 44, 1994, 307–316 and N. Hannestad, *Rising Christianity* (supra n. 11) 175–177.

⁴⁷ The basic publication is L. Joulin, *Les établissements gallo-romains de plaine de Martres-Tolosanes* (1901). On the sculpture most recently N. Hannestad, *Tradition* (supra n. 1) 127–141; id., *Rising Christianity* (supra n. 11) 187–191 with references. From being in nearly total obscurity, the sculpture has recently moved into focus, cf. J. Elsner (supra n. 9) 109 f. Publications by respectively M. Bergmann and J. C. Balty are announced.

⁴⁸ R. R. R. Smith, *Late Roman philosopher portraits from Aphrodisias*, *JRS* 80, 1990, 127–155.

⁴⁹ N. Hannestad, *Tradition* (supra n. 1) 135. 155; id., *Rising Christianity* (supra n. 11) 199 f. with references.

⁵⁰ Cf. N. Hannestad, *Tradition* (supra n. 1) 118 f. n. 191 and supra n. 18; the Hercules has similar features.

was carved from front to back like a relief. To apply such a technique makes very good sense as regards facilitating transport since the piece in this semi-manufactured condition was less breakable – it could be tied to a plank. Apparently the dark, more limestone-like marble had a greater tendency to split than the white (or veined) marble, also quarried in Aphrodisias. Back in Aphrodisias itself more copies in white marble, with some variation in the draping of the loin cloth, have been excavated⁵¹.

The last collection of sculpture I shall include is the cache found in Late Antique Antioch. The sculpture must have adorned a suburban villa of the Theodosian period, still in use during the fifth century, but at some late date the sculptures ended up in a dump, a development typical of the last act in the story of so many late villas. The sculptures were admirably published in 1970 by D. M. Brinkerhoff⁵². Brinkerhoff relates the material to sculpture generally agreed to be Late Antique such as the above-mentioned mature man with a tonsure-like coiffure from Aphrodisias, now in Brussels (supra n. 16). However, he does not draw the full conclusions from his own observations; nor, perhaps, was the time ripe to do so.

Among the sculptures is a head of the Ares Borghese type (Pl. 35, 2). It is carved in bluish-grey, presumably Aphrodisian, marble and despite the fact that it is a copy, it has traits of style and form that places it in the middle, or even late, fifth century as an almost Byzantine piece of sculpture. The staring, mask-like face with the deep, circular rendering of the irises combined with a version of the bald pate, adapted to the helmet⁵³, testify to such a late dating, thus making it perhaps the latest genuine copy to have been produced. It would have been most interesting to know whether only the head or the entire body of the figure was also reproduced.

⁵¹ R. R. R. Smith in: *Aphrodisias Papers* 3 (1996) 57–61. It is worth noticing that the head belonging to the torso (now in Berlin) with the almost female like breasts, has a rendering of the eye that accords with a dating of the fourth century – which also applies to the rendering of the hair. The small version, also in Berlin (Staatl. Mus. Inv. 1742) is very similar to the Chiragan piece according to size and rendering of anatomical details.

⁵² D. M. Brinkerhoff, *A Collection of Sculpture in Classical and Early Christian Antioch* (1970), on the rather obscure conditions of find 3–5; N. Hannestad, *Tradition* (supra n. 1) 118–121.

⁵³ Hannestad, *Tradition* (supra n. 1) fig. 79 (profile/back of head).

How should one conclude regarding the question: »Das Ende der antiken Idealstatue?«. In part it is a matter of definition. The exquisite, full-scale copies of, say Myron's Diskobolos or the works of Polykleitos ceased to be produced in the Severan period as has been the *communis opinio*⁵⁴. Such pieces were still collected and repaired but the skill and interest necessary for the reproduction of organic and harmonious anatomy was gone. The production of large-scale, complicated groups of sculpture was discontinued. Coloured marble was henceforth used only to face floors and walls and there is very little evidence as to bronze sculpture. However, some copies were still carved to the very end of Antiquity and the same goes for a significant production of mythological statuary, mostly on minor scale. Some motifs became particularly favoured in accordance with the spirit of the time.

The Classical tradition in sculpture died hard and its final phase followed the fate of the stately home. With the end of this lifestyle, sculpture in the Classical tradition passed away, too.

Afterword

Since the delivery of the manuscript, the book by M. Bergmann, »Chiragan, Aphrodisias, Konstantinopel. Zur mythologischen Skulptur der Spätantike«⁵⁵ has been published. Taking her outset in the sculpture from the Villa of Chiragan (see above n. 47) the author gives an overview of mythological sculpture in the late period, agreeing on a vast production of marble sculpture mainly produced by the 'School of Aphrodisias'.

⁵⁴ D. Willers, *MusHelv* 53, 1969, 172–176 however, an unfinished Diskophoros in small size was found in the sculptor's workshop in Aphrodisias, see P. Rockwell in: *Aphrodisias Papers* 2 (1991) figs. 11–12.

⁵⁵ M. Bergmann, *Chiragan, Aphrodisias, Konstantinopel. Zur mythologischen Skulptur der Spätantike*, Palilia 7 (1999).

TAFELVERZEICHNIS

- Pl. 35, 1 Head of Dionysos, Chania Museum (h.: 0.27 m).
Pl. 35, 2 Head of Ares Borghese type. Antioch Museum
 (h.: 0.26 m).
Pl. 35, 3 Togatus. Aphrodisias Museum (h.: 2.15 m).
Pl. 35, 4 Torso of an old fisherman, from Chiragan.
 Toulouse, Musée Saint-Raymond (h.: 0.52 m).

All photographs by the author.

