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CHRISTIANIZING STATUES UNAWARES?  
IMPERIAL IMAGERY AND NEW TESTAMENT PHRASING  
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While in a more dramatic decline in the West, the erection, re-dedication, re-configuration, and (re)-inscription of honorific statues in late antiquity was a practice that lingered into the sixth century AD in some regions of Asia Minor. This process is usually discussed in the context of a broader, and more fundamental, overhaul within the urban culture and art of the epoch, caused by profound shifts in the economics and logistics of statue production, as well as changing patterns within visual representation of imperial power and provincial benefactors.<sup>1</sup> In the context of a variety of modes of Christian engagement with statues in cityscapes, from aggressive iconoclasm to application of crosses, the impact of Christianity on honorific statues is still generally seen as almost exclusively negative.<sup>2</sup> The ‘statue habit’ refused to be Christianized, since a practice of erecting sculpted images of saints, apostles, or Christ never developed, and existing patterns of commemoration of civic memory of local elites and imperial officials failed to acquire a pronounced Christian character.<sup>3</sup>

The traditionally Hellenic character of honorific inscriptions on statue bases is one of the central aspects of the continuity of classicizing patterns of the statue habit. It is generally assumed in scholarship – inasmuch as the question is posed at all – that Greek honorific epigraphy belongs among those types of late antique writings that exhibit a vigorous continuity with Hellenic traditions of civic discourse of honour, quite distinct from the ever rising tide of Christianization within the later empire, with its associated patterns of thought, rituals, and literature.<sup>4</sup> A recent study of a series of inscribed honours to a local benefactor, Maximus, which accompanied his honorific statues in fifth-century Stratonikeia (Caria), has offered a negative illustration of this thesis. As B. Ward-Perkins has discussed, this attempt to Christianize the statue habit by supplanting the discourse and vocabulary of civic euergetism with that of Christian care for the poor, supported by New Testament phraseology, was a path not followed in other inscribed honorific monuments.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Literature on late antique statues is too vast to cite here in full; we will refer to key recent studies that provide up-to-date discussion and further bibliography. Two recent collections of papers on various aspects of late antique statuary are indispensable: Bauer, Witschel 2007 and Kristensen, Stirling 2016. Smith, Ward-Perkins 2017 offer an authoritative narrative. Re-use: Machado 2017, Jacobs, Stirling 2017; re-carving: Prusac 2011; re-inscribing: Shear 2007; engagement with Hellenic statuary (including mythological) by early Christian viewers: Mango 1963, Saradi-Mendelovici 1990, Deligiannakis 2008, Nasrallah 2010, Marsengill 2014, Peppard 2016. An informed general overview is Witschel 2015.

<sup>2</sup> For iconoclasm, see now the magisterial Kristensen 2013 alongside the earlier studies of Mango 1963, Jacobs 2010. For crosses, see Kristensen 2012 (with earlier bibliography).

<sup>3</sup> For honorific statues and their inscriptions as mirrors of civic ideals and local memory, see van Nijf 2015, van Nijf 2016.

<sup>4</sup> There has been less scholarship on late antique honorific inscriptions in Greek than in Latin (Niquet 2000, Eck 2010, Weisweiler 2012, Orlandi 2017); see, however, the seminal study in Robert 1948 and more recent works by Horster 1998 and Slootjes 2006: 129–40. Most studies have been concerned with specific instances of localities rather than more general trends – see the model study of Oecumenius’ epigram (*SGO* 1.242, no. 02/09/17) in Ševčenko 1968, the brilliant exposition in Mango 1986, the relevant parts of Roueché 2004 on the rich corpus from Aphrodisias, and the recent insights in Toth 2016: 29–34. For a review of late antique verse inscriptions in Greek (many of them honorific) that provides fascinating insights into the dynamics between traditional Hellenic and Christian diction, see Agosti 2008.

<sup>5</sup> Ward-Perkins 2015.

The study that follows focuses on what we shall argue is another example of honorific epigraphy in which Christian ideas and idiom are clearly present. Rather than trying to challenge the widely held academic understanding of the tenacity of Hellenic patterns in honorific inscriptions in late antiquity, however, we will seek to demonstrate that the literary and conceptual frameworks that underpin these epigraphic texts could defy the Christian vs Hellenic divide. As we will argue, ‘Christianization’ of inscribed statue bases could result from mutual coalescence of Christian and traditional (Hellenic and Roman) vocabulary of power – both literary and visual. We will also suggest that the increasing presence of Christian texts in educational curricula in late antiquity could be a significant factor of change of idiom used in learned poetry, even if this infiltration would be far from conspicuous at first sight.

We will therefore approach the inscribed honorific epigram on Andreas from two perspectives: literary and visual. On the former account, we will argue that New Testament idiom could form an indispensable element of the sort of literary diction that a late antique poet would draw upon when composing an honorific epigram. We will also suggest that a significantly better sense of the inscribed monument’s ideological implications (including its unmistakably Christian verbal underpinning) can be made when its visual context – the representations of imperial power on coins and in sculpture – is taken into account.

The versified honorific inscription on the base of the statue of Andreas (IEph 4.1301, *SGO* 1.301, no. 03/02/07, both quoting earlier editions), a high-standing official in Asia Minor (quite probably proconsul of the province), has not attracted much scholarly attention.<sup>6</sup> The fact that the prosopography of the hono-  
rand (*PLRE* II 87, no. 6) and the dating of the inscription remain unclear (the inscription has been broadly dated to late fourth–early fifth century AD) has not been conducive to a better understanding and wider use of the monument either. Furthermore, the inscribed Greek text itself, as we shall argue, has not been correctly interpreted.

The text of the inscription on the base of the now lost statue of Andreas is as follows:

† χειρὸς κρατήσας / ὁ περίσεμνος Ἀνδρέας /  
ὅποια Μίνως ἢ Λυκοῦργος / ἢ Σόλων  
στήσας τ’ ἐς / ὀρθὸν τῆς Ἀσίας τὰ / πράγματα  
βραχεῖαν / ἀμοιβὴν τῶν πόνων / ἐδέξατο

The extremely venerable Andreas, having taken (Asia) by the hand, like Minos or Lycurgus or Solon, and having put upright the affairs of Asia, received a small award for his toils.<sup>7</sup>

Its author demonstrates sufficient command of the classicizing idiom that was typical for late antique honorific inscriptions in Greek. The well-composed iambics themselves indicate good literary skills and may suggest aspiration to tap into the emerging late antique trend to use iambics in adulatory poetry.<sup>8</sup> The text is composed in the purportedly classicizing ‘florid style’ typical of the majority of late antique inscribed honours of provincial governors and local elites which it shares with broader stylistic trends of Greek poetry of the epoch.<sup>9</sup>

One of the aspects of the epigram’s classicizing quality is how it stylizes Andreas the governor as a perfect judge. The hono-  
rand is portrayed through reference to legendary figures of Hellenic tradition who were remembered as idealized judges – Minos, Lycurgus, and Solon. Governors’ presumed ability to perform the judicial function while avoiding corruption was widely celebrated in late antique honorific inscriptions in Greek. This was an essential part of their imperial mandate as well as provincial expectations from them.<sup>10</sup> The inscription, however, goes beyond the conventional vocabulary like ‘right-judging’ (ἰθυδίκης)

<sup>6</sup> The inscription does not feature in the discussion in Slootjes 2006: 129–40. For a brief discussion and an English (flawed) translation, see LSA-714.

<sup>7</sup> Our translation follows the German one in *SGO* 1.301, no. 03/02/07.

<sup>8</sup> Agosti 2001.

<sup>9</sup> Seminal is Robert 1948; for the ‘florid style’, see also Salway 2015 (Latin evidence) and Slootjes 2006: 129–40. A recent synthesis on late antique poetry in Greek, with further bibliography, is Agosti 2019.

<sup>10</sup> See Slootjes 2006: 47–78 on governors as judges (with further bibliography).

or tropes of judicial ‘purity’ (ἀγνός; καθάρως) and ‘clean hands’ that are pervasive in Greek honorific epigraphy.<sup>11</sup> The author of the epigram extends this traditional emphasis and parades his knowledge of Hellenic tradition through the impressive name-dropping of legendary judges.

Other tropes on which the epigram builds, however, while coming from the broad pool of late antique honorific epigraphy, are less conventional than the ubiquitous praises of governors’ unblemished judicial record. One is the emphasis on Andreas’ ‘raising upright of the affairs of the province of Asia’ (στήσας τ’ ἐς ὀρθὸν τῆς Ἀσίας τὰ πράγματα). This florid circumlocution taps into traditional τόποι of giving praise to the governor as renovator (ἀνανεωτής) that are more typically used in reference to specific buildings.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, vocabulary of renovation that highlights the raising upright of fallen structures in provinces can be found in an inscription that commemorates the proconsul of Asia Lucius Caelius Montius, who arranged for much-needed repairs of the aqueduct in Tralles, Caria, ca AD 340–50.<sup>13</sup> As we will argue, however, in Andreas’ epigram the trope of governors’ efforts to raise back up provincial structures, although it has parallels in the extant epigraphic corpus, is enveloped in a remarkably Christian idiom.

Phrases that describe a figure of utmost authority raising less privileged subjects an upright, and that feature the specific wording of ‘taking by the hand’ (χειρὸς κρατήσας), are well attested in the text of the Greek New Testament. Christ is described as taking ailing people ‘by the hand’ and raising them to their feet while miraculously restoring their health in three episodes in Mark (alongside one in Luke):

Now Simon’s mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her. And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up (καὶ προσελθὼν ἤγειρεν αὐτὴν κρατήσας τῆς χειρὸς), and the fever left her, and she began to serve them.<sup>14</sup>

They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. And when he had entered, he said to them, ‘Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping. <...> Taking the child by the hand (κρατήσας τῆς χειρὸς τοῦ παιδίου) he said to her, ‘Talitha cumi’, which means, ‘Little girl, I say to you, rise’. And immediately the girl got up and began walking.<sup>15</sup>

And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, ‘You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again’. And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, ‘He is dead’. But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up (κρατήσας τῆς χειρὸς αὐτοῦ ἤγειρεν αὐτόν), and he arose.<sup>16</sup>

In a manner similar to these Scriptural episodes, in the inscribed epigram, Andreas brings salvation to the province of Asia by ‘taking her by the hand’ (χειρὸς κρατήσας) and ‘raising her back on her feet’ (στήσας τ’ ἐς ὀρθόν). It would follow that the individual whom Andreas takes by the hand is a female personification of the province of Asia. As the verbal parallelism with the New Testament episode is firm, as is the conceptual similarity of ‘saving’ both in the inscription and the New Testament episodes, we would argue that the author of the epigram in question did indeed have a Biblical background in mind when conjuring up his versified praise for Andreas.

<sup>11</sup> For the language of incorruptibility in Greek honorific inscriptions, see Robert 1948: 38–41; Horster 1998: 40. For ‘clean hands’ as a metaphor of financial integrity, see e.g. Oecumenius’ inscribed praises for his ‘clean mind and hand’ (ALA 31 = SGO 1.242, no. 02/09/17, verse 5: καθαρῶι φρένα καὶ χέρα); for ἰθυδίκης, see Slootjes 2006: 131n10.

<sup>12</sup> For ἀνανεωτής / ἀνανέωσις and similar tropes in honorific epigraphy, see Horster 1998: 43; Slootjes 2006: 131n8.

<sup>13</sup> Καὶ τότε σῆς ἀρετῆς / πανεπίφρονος ἔξοχον ἔργον, / Μόντιε κυδήεις, ἀνθυπάτων / ὑπατε, ὃς δολιχοῖς ἀγῶσιν (sic) / κατ’ οὐδεος ὕδατος ὄλκον / κείμενον ὀρθώσας ἄστν / τόδ’ ἠγγάϊσας (SGO 1.204, no. 02/02/04; editio princeps is Pappacostantinou 1909: 296–300); see LSA-521 for discussion. For the honorand, see PLRE I 608, L. Caelius Montius; Robert 1948: 110–14; Castello 2011.

<sup>14</sup> Mk 1:30–31. New Testament translations are English Standard Version throughout, with slight modifications.

<sup>15</sup> Mk 5:38–42 (cf. Lk 8:50–55).

<sup>16</sup> Mk 9:25–7.

The popularity of the New Testament healing episodes in early Christian writings (including apocryphal) and scriptural commentaries helped to make the image of Christ reaching out with his hand to a figure of a distressed person kneeling or lying widely recognizable. Texts that elaborated on these narratives, or which developed similar episodes, were widely produced and would circulate in Greek-speaking Christian communities across the Mediterranean, including Asia Minor. The phrasing of ‘taking by the hand’ (with close synonymic substitutions) is also attested in other writings that would be known to Christian readers in late antiquity.<sup>17</sup> The wide dissemination of such texts among the increasingly Christian late antique readership casts in high relief the vocabulary choice that the author of the inscribed epigram made. In an absolute majority of the literary recasts of the scriptural formula of extending a helping hand and raising a person, there are substantial vocabulary changes from the Gospel narratives, whereas Andreas’ epigram remains verbatim New Testamentary.<sup>18</sup>

Postulating a New Testament allusion as the centre around which the interpretation of an honorific inscription hinges, and that also sets into play visual associations that we discuss below, is not as far-fetched as it might seem. While, as noted earlier, honorific epigrams do belong among those late antique genres that exhibit a vigorous continuity with the Hellenic traditions of civic discourse of honour, for those genres, however, there is nevertheless an increasing scholarly awareness of the ways in which authors were open to crossing the presumed borderline between traditions, as e.g. instances of ancient novels engaging with Christian ideas and concepts beyond the frames of parody indicate.<sup>19</sup> In the context of late antique learned poetry, to which a significant portion of honorific epigrams belongs, cross-pollination between Hellenic and Christian diction was a hallmark development, as examples of sixth-century poets (Agathias, Julian, Paul the Silentiary, Comes, Macedonius, Kollouthus, Theodore of Alexandria etc.) indicate.<sup>20</sup> For late antique adulatory poetry in Greek, which comes rather close to inscribed epigrams to governors in its general purport and style, the effortless assimilation of Biblical, and newer Christian, tropes and turns of the phrase

<sup>17</sup> Most centrally in the Septuagint (Gen 19:16; Ps 72:23; Is 42:6). Interestingly, it is also attested in Chariton’s *Chaereas and Callirhoe* 8.2 – see n. 19 below for the complex literary connections between Greek romances and Christian writings.

<sup>18</sup> An early instance with a substantial impact on later accounts is of course *Acts* 3:7 (episode of the healing of a lame person that had a significant impact on the phrasing of the later miracle accounts: καὶ πιάσας αὐτὸν τῆς δεξιᾶς χειρὸς ἤγειρεν αὐτόν); in the apocryphal acts of the apostles similar phrasing is found in episodes of miracles – see e.g. *Ath* 154 (Ὁ νεώτερος οὗτος τὴν χεῖρά μοι ἐπιθεῖς ἤγειρέν με – the episode involving Mnesara), *A. Andr.* 5 (rendering divine knowledge to Lesbius: Καὶ παραχρῆμα πιάσας αὐτὸν τῆς δεξιᾶς χειρὸς ἀνέστησεν). Apocryphal gospels follow suit; see especially the *Ev. Nikod.* 24.1, which is a key text for the nascent tradition of the depiction of the harrowing of hell, in course of which Christ raises Adam with his hand: Οὕτω τοῦ Ἄιδου διαλεγόμενου τῷ Σατανᾷ, ἤπλωσεν ὁ βασιλεὺς τῆς δόξης τὴν δεξιὰν αὐτοῦ χεῖρα, καὶ ἐκράτησε καὶ ἤγειρε τὸν προπάτορα Ἀδάμ; see also *Ev. Barth* 2.17: ὁ δὲ ὑπέβαλεν τὴν χεῖρα αὐτ(οῦ) καὶ ἤγειρέν με. Early martyrdom accounts echo the New Testament phrasing, sometimes verbatim: *M. Perp.* 20 (κρατήσασα τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῆς ἤγειρεν αὐτήν – Perpetua helping Felicitas), as do hagiographic narratives, as e.g. Marc. Diac. v. *Porph.* 7.19–21 (Καὶ κατελθὼν ὁ ληστής ἐκ τοῦ σταυροῦ περιέλαβέν με καὶ κατεφίλησεν, καὶ προτεινας τὴν δεξιὰν ἀνέστησέν με λέγων Ἐλθὲ πρὸς τὸν σωτήρα). In the liturgical poetry, the language of the salvific God’s hand is also popular: Romanos the Melodist, *Hymn* 28 stanza 15 (Ἦγειρε πεισόντα υἱὸν δοῦς δεξιὰν ὁ οἰκτίρμων). A Septuagint instance of the phrasing of stretching out God’s helping hand in Dan 10:10 is also to be noted – a text that also enjoyed popularity among Biblical commentators, see e.g. Theodoret, *Interpretation of Daniel* (PG 81.1493, 43–9).

<sup>19</sup> For the connections between the novel and Christian writings, see Trypanis, Gelzer, Whitman 1975: 298–9; Ramelli 2001; for a briefer version of the argument of the latter monograph, see Konstan, Ramelli 2014. For early Christian narratives parodied in Apuleius’ *Golden Ass*, see Shanzer 1990, Schmidt 1997, Sick 2005; for liturgy parodied, see Tripp 1998, Schmidt 2003.

<sup>20</sup> For late antique learned poetry in Greek (including inscribed epigrams) as accommodating overlapping, and contrasting, modes of engagement with the Hellenic tradition and Christian devotion, see the ground-breaking studies by Agosti 2008, Agosti 2012 (a handy recapitulation of his own, as well as other scholars’, recent studies of the problem). On late antique Greek epigram, see the reliable review in Agosti 2019. On the broader issues of classicizing poetic diction as (dis)entangled with religion, see Cameron 2004, Cameron 2007. Specific poets: for Agathias, see Cameron 1966, McCail 1971, Kaldellis 1999 (making a case for Agathias’ ‘pagan’ commitments, as he also does in other publications on the antiquarian Greek writers in late antiquity – Kaldellis 2003, Kaldellis 2005), see now the bold reconsideration of Agathias and his *Cycle* in Smith 2019; Whitby 2006 offers an important general discussion of the style of late antique Greek poetry focused on Paul the Silentiary; Theodore of Alexandria – Fournet 2003; *Codex Visionum* – Hurst, Rudhardt 2003; Eudocia – Livrea 1998, Whitby 2007. For reconsideration of the academic narrative of ‘paganism’ of the classicizing poetry in late antiquity, see Shorrock 2011, Cameron 2011 (esp. Ch. 11).

has been well-acknowledged, as the case of Dioscorus of Aphrodito's petitions to officials clarifies.<sup>21</sup> Latin monumental epigraphy celebrating outstanding members of imperial elite, as has been recently argued, could equally draw on Christian vocabulary, if for polemical purposes.<sup>22</sup>

Dynamics of exchange between classicizing genres and recognizably Christian strands of writing were bi-directional in nature. Not only would purportedly 'Christian' texts be thoroughly clad in classicizing literary style and vocabulary, but also certain traditional genres and texts increasingly featured elements with ostensibly Christian pedigree.<sup>23</sup> This mutual transparency of the two traditions (if indeed the academic language of two distinct strands of literary enterprise and thinking is still relevant) strongly suggests that, for a late antique author, engaging with either tradition would amount to drawing on a joint pool of images and words that could be equally applicable in a variety of genres. Extreme cases such as the teasingly 'pagan' and ostensibly 'Christian' epic works by Nonnus of Panopolis are symptomatic of the transparent character of this alleged borderline, which could be crossed in both directions even within the oeuvre of a single poet, all the more so as his *Dionysiaca* show involvement with Christian writings and theology.<sup>24</sup> Thus, the 'modern style' of erudite late antique poetry deriving from Nonnus' epic works would be widely applied in a variety of genres, including inscriptional poetry, and irrespectively of genre distinctions that relied on the putative Hellenic ('pagan') vs Christian literary traditions.<sup>25</sup> Even before Nonnus, however, inscribed epigrams commissioned by high-standing officials may have featured elements of the literary idiom derivable from Christian writings.<sup>26</sup> What this shared panoply of elements of style and thinking ultimately suggests is a fundamental shift in how rhetorical and poetical skills would be acquired within a curriculum of παιδεία in which 'Christian' and 'pagan' were no longer two opposed poles but rather strands of the same cultural commodity.<sup>27</sup>

Let us now look more closely at the visual implications of the scene that is conjured up in a language resonant with Biblical idiom. It involves a standing male figure (Andreas) and a female figure, representing the province of Asia, positioned below, either lying down or kneeling. As we shall argue, this portrayal draws on a rich pool of imagery that encodes imperial power and clemency towards provinces. While most widely attested on coins, both broadly contemporary to the inscription and earlier, the image of an imperial figure stretching out a hand to a kneeling female personification of a region would, arguably, have been a received visual pattern in which to imagine imperial power that also surfaced in sculpture and literary compositions.

In late antiquity, personifications of Rome and, increasingly, Constantinople loomed large as part of the imperial visual propaganda through the medium of coins.<sup>28</sup> This was part of the wider developments

<sup>21</sup> Dijkstra 2003. On Dioscorus' profound Hellenism, see Fournet 1999.

<sup>22</sup> DiLuzio 2017 has made a case for the presence of, and polemical engagement with, contemporary Christian ideas and language of asceticism in the famous fourth-century verse epitaph of Vettius Agorius Praetextatus (*CIL* VI 1779).

<sup>23</sup> For two-way exchange – rather than a singularly directed Hellenic influence on Christian classicizing writing – seen from a wider historical perspective, see e.g. Kahlos 2007, and the papers in the recent collection Salzman, Sághy, Testa 2016. For productive exchange between Neoplatonism and early Christianity, including literary patterns of biographic writing, see Simmons 2015, Edwards 2000 (esp. Introduction).

<sup>24</sup> From the ever-growing scholarship on Nonnus, see e.g. Vian 1997, Shorrock 2011, Spanoudakis 2014.

<sup>25</sup> For the 'modern style' and the Nonnus' legacy, see Miguélez-Cavero 2008. See also G. Agosti's studies cited in n. 20 above.

<sup>26</sup> Avdokhin forthcoming.

<sup>27</sup> The presence of Scriptural texts in educational curricula is well-attested for late antique Egypt, as e.g. P. Oxy. 2. 209 (Rom 1.1–7), P. Vindob. 51 (Latin Ps. 20) – see Bucking 1997; Bucking 2007; Henner 1999; Luijendijk 2010; Strawbridge 2016; Carlig 2013; Carlig 2019. More generally, for late antique education as relying on Christian as well as Hellenic school-texts, see Criore 1996 (esp. 244–53). Gemeinhardt, Van Hoof, Van Nuffelen 2016 and Hauge, Pitts 2016 are two useful collections of recent studies offering reflections on the matters of interaction between religion and education in late antiquity from a variety of perspectives, with new insights that substantially differ from the once dominant vision of Marrou 1948.

<sup>28</sup> Toynbee 1947, Bühl 1995, Cameron 2015. For coins as a medium of imperial propaganda, see e.g. Wallace-Hadrill 1981, MacCormack 1981, Noreña 2011, Manders 2012 (with further bibliography).

in contemporary art, where personifications of regions and cities were on the rise.<sup>29</sup> More interesting than this, however, is the way in which numismatic images focus on the interaction between the imperial power (embodied in the figure of the emperor) and female figures – most centrally those of provinces – in a manner that is immediately relevant to the inscribed epigram on Andreas the governor. Broader similarities between, on the one hand, late antique literary portrayals of personifications of cities and regions (most commonly Rome and Constantinople) and, on the other, their numismatic depictions have long been recognized.<sup>30</sup> However, neither kneeling personifications of provinces and male figures of imperial power raising them to their feet with an extended hand nor literary parallels to this subcategory of numismatic imagery have been specifically discussed as a strand of late antique imperial visuality.

At least as far back as the Augustan times,<sup>31</sup> the restoration of state affairs back to their pristine norm was portrayed on coins via images of emperors raising kneeling or prostrated female figures that stood for abstract civic virtues, Rome, or *res publica* in general. The obverse of an Augustan coin type minted in Rome by Cossus Cornelius Lentulus in 12 BC depicts a togate Augustus who extends a hand to the *res publica* kneeling before him (*RIC* 1<sup>2</sup> 413).<sup>32</sup> This image built and expanded on the ideological emphases of legends of contemporary coins that celebrated Augustus as restorer of the *res publica* and pristine laws.<sup>33</sup>

A number of iconographically similar coin types (*RESTITVTOR REI PVBLICAE / LIBERTAS RESTITVTA / ROMA RESVRGENS / REPARATIO REI PVBLICAE* etc.) of subsequent emperors rely on this kind of imagery. Such are coins and medallions with the depictions of Galba giving his hand and raising *Libertas* (*RIC* 1<sup>2</sup> 479–80), Vespasian helping *Minerva* (*Roma* herself) rise (*RIC* 2 407–8), Maximus



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6

<sup>29</sup> Downey 1938, Ostrowski 1996, Leader-Newby 2004, Poulsen 2014.

<sup>30</sup> Toynbee 1947, Cameron 1970: 273–6, 363–6, Whitby 1985b: 513.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. however earlier instances of similar iconography, e.g. M. Aquilius' reverse type displaying a soldier raising up a female figure (the personification of Sicily) (*RRC* 401/1; 71 BC); L. Staius Murcus' denarius (*RRC* 510, *RIC* 1<sup>2</sup> 310; 42–41 BC) showing a male figure raising up a kneeling female figure (the personification of Roma? Toynbee 1934: 51 tentatively suggests Asia).

<sup>32</sup> Vermeule 1960.

<sup>33</sup> E.g. *RIC* 1<sup>2</sup> 356, 357: *S(enatus) C(onsulto) OB R(em) P(ublicam) CVM SALVT(e) IMP(eratoris) CAESAR(is) AVGV(S)ti CONS(ervatam)*; *RIC* 1<sup>2</sup> 358: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) S(enatus) P(opulus)Q(ue) R(omanus) V(ota) S(uscepta) PR(o) S(alute) IMP(eratoris) CAE(saris) QVOD PER EV(m) R(es) P(ublica) IN AMP(liore) ATQ(ue) TRAN(quilliore) S(tatu) E(st)* (minted in 16 BC); *aureus* of 28 BC (British Museum accession no. CM 1995, 4–1.1), reverse: *LEGES ET IVRA P R RESTITVIT* – see Rich, Williams 1999, Rich 2013.



(*RIC* 10 1602–3), or Priscus (*RIC* 10 1416) in similar postures. Valentinian II helps up another kneeling region on his gold solidus (*RIC* 9 43c; Fig. 1). Theodosius I raises a female representation of the *res publica* on his Antioch-issued aes (REPARATIO REIPVB, *RIC* 9 42; Fig. 2). Significantly, Valentinian III in AD 455 issued a solidus that depicted him as Augustus raising a female figure that stands for the *res publica* (*RIC* 10 2040–44; Fig. 3).<sup>34</sup> The continuity of the coin type with its associated image through the fifth century AD suggests that, in the time period in which the Andreas epigram was inscribed and read, comparable depictions of power dynamics would be familiar across the empire at least through the means of coin circulation.

These coin types, while involving a male figure of authority offering a helping hand to a female personification of public order, do not include portrayals of provinces. One numismatic pattern that is demonstrably a spin-off of this type, however, does specifically feature a kneeling province-figure and an emperor who helps her rise to her feet. Coins of this kind arguably originated in a military context and encode, visually and textually, the forced pacification of rebellious provinces (such as, famously, Judaea in the well-known Flavian coin type)<sup>35</sup> which formed part of an emperor-led restoration of state peace.

The seminal shift in emphasis – from military subjugation to serene, and beneficial, domination – seems to have taken place in the well-known series of Hadrian’s coins minted between AD 134 and AD 138. These coins represent, on their reverse, personifications of provinces, and depict the emperor’s various engagements with the provinces of the empire, from military to economic or religious. Seen together, these form a coherent programme of visual propaganda, emphasising Rome’s dominion and its allegedly peaceful incorporation of a range of regions into the imperial framework.<sup>36</sup> Imagery depicting the emperor raising up a kneeling province would have circulated widely, defying as it did both geographical distance and the demarcation between media of visual propaganda, as the instances of the Hadrianeum in Rome and the ἔθνη reliefs from Aphrodisias clearly indicate.<sup>37</sup>

Within the series, particularly relevant to this discussion are the coins of the RESTITVTOR type that depict the emperor stretching out a hand down to kneeling figures of provinces with apposite legends: RESTITVTORI HISPANIAE (*RIC* 2 326–7, 388, 952–4), RESTITVTORI ITALIAE (*RIC* 2 328), RESTITVTORI MACEDONIAE (*RIC* 2 329), RESTITVTORI PHRYGIAE (*RIC* 2 962), RESTITVTORI AFRICAE (*RIC* 2 322–3, 941), RESTITVTORI BITHYNIAE (*RIC* 2 948), RESTITVTORI GALLIAE (*RIC* 2 324) (Fig. 4).<sup>38</sup> On these coins, the emperor is depicted not as a victorious conqueror and a forceful restorer of the empire but rather as a serene benefactor.<sup>39</sup>

The visual rhetoric of the portrayal of pacified provinces on Hadrianic coins (as well as monumental art, including in Asia Minor) is, in chronological terms, rather far from the fourth–fifth century epigram on Andreas. Other numismatic images and their emphases are much closer. Kneeling provinces and emperors raising them benevolently are consistently present on later Roman imperial coins. Postumus (*RIC* 5.2 157–9) and Victorinus (*RIC* 5.2 8), in close succession (AD 267–8), are depicted as restorers of a kneeling Gaul. The well-known Carausius’ coin of AD 288 celebrates his advent to Britannia with a Virgilian echo in the legend and a depiction of the personification of the island welcoming him (*RIC* 5.2 554–5).<sup>40</sup> Aurelian raises a turreted Tyche representing the Orient (RESTITVT ORIENTIS, *RIC* 5.1 233, 304, 349–51, Cyzicus; Fig. 5), or the entire *orbis terrarum* (RESTITVTOR ORBIS, *RIC* 5.1 349, Cyzicus). Two gold medallions originating from the same hoard (Beaurains) depict Constantius Chlorus raising Britannia (after the

<sup>34</sup> See also Grierson, Mays 1992: 80, 270 (where the possibility is indicated that the gesture may have been reinterpreted as giving largesse), Pl. 858.

<sup>35</sup> Stevenson 2010.

<sup>36</sup> Toynbee 1934.

<sup>37</sup> Smith 1988, Hughes 2009.

<sup>38</sup> The same iconography was also employed on Hadrian’s RESTITVTORI ORBIS TERRARUM type (*RIC* 2 594); cf. Aurelian’s (*RIC* 5.1 349) and Gallienus’ (*RIC* 5.1 236) similar types.

<sup>39</sup> Kreitzer 1996 (Ch. 6).

<sup>40</sup> de la Bédoyère 2005.

overthrow of Allectus in AD 296 (*RIC* 6 33) (Fig. 6).<sup>41</sup> The other is the much discussed gold multiple (the so-called Arras medallion) on which the almost menacingly advancing Constantius is greeted by a submissively kneeling Londinium who ostensibly expects mercy and benefaction.<sup>42</sup>

Alongside the above – illustrative much rather than exhaustive – lists of numismatic parallels to the portrayal of an emperor extending a helping hand to a kneeling female figure of a province, however, there is other evidence that suggests a consistent pattern of visualizing figures of imperial power along similar lines in late antiquity. A sculptural monument, which is arguably an inscribed honorific statue to an emperor with a remarkably similar iconography, is attested from at least the early fourth century AD. Most relevantly to this discussion, the statue finds itself entangled in Christian exegesis that infuses its imperial visuality with Christological reading directly grounded in a New Testament episode of salvation. The famous ‘statue of Christ’ which allegedly depicted Jesus extending a salvific hand to the kneeling woman with the issue of blood was a major pious landmark in Caesarea Philippi (Panaes). It is described and heavily interpreted in Eusebius’ *Church History*, a narrative which would later be taken up by subsequent Christian historiography.<sup>43</sup> It is most modern interpreters’ consensus that the monument must have been an imperial honorific statue set up rather probably during Hadrian’s reign, as the close similarities with the Hadrianic coin reverses discussed above suggest.<sup>44</sup> A draped and bearded male is depicted as extending a hand to a kneeling female figure, which, when seen alongside comparable Hadrianic coinage, was most probably a personification of the province of Judaea. It is central to our argument that, for fourth–fifth century Christian viewers, writers, and readers, the imperial monument, with its gestures and postures of power and submission, would easily be read as a sculpted image of Christ – a drastic act of re-interpretation of pre-Christian sculpture that has numerous parallels in the epoch.<sup>45</sup> It is also worth a note that the characteristic posture of Christ extending a helping hand down to a kneeling figure came to be elaborated as an element of the iconography of the harrowing of Hell in the later tradition – an episode developed in late antique apocryphal and homiletic writings that assimilated significant strands of the visuality of imperial *adventus*.<sup>46</sup>

Conceiving of imperial figures and provinces in terms of personified representations could also become part of elaborate verse compositions in late antiquity. In Paul the Silentiary’s *Description of the Ambo of the Church of St Sophia*, the emperor Justinian is portrayed as addressed, in an impassioned speech, by a thoroughly desperate Rome (i.e. Constantinople). The female personification of the new capital, after performing the due προσκύνησις, is reassured by the imperial gesture of an extended right hand that raises her up to her feet again.<sup>47</sup>

Crossover from the modes in which imperial power was represented, visually and verbally, to tropes of depiction of imperial officials that we postulate in this honorific monument has been noted in scholarship, although the topic has not received a systematic study so far. On a more abstract level, P. Zanker has famously proposed the speak of the ‘epoch face’ (*Zeitgesicht*) that would be introduced by the idealized depictions of the ruling emperor and eagerly followed in public and private portraits of local elites, including honorific statues of imperial officials – a model to which R. R. R. Smith has added substantial nuance.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Christol 1976, Juhász 2016.

<sup>42</sup> Bastien, Metzger 1977; Toynbee 1944: Pl. 8.5–6.

<sup>43</sup> Eus. *HE* 7.18, cf. his *Comm. in Lucam* (8:43ff)—*PG* 24.542c–544a. The account is adapted and expanded in Sozomen *HE* 5.21.

<sup>44</sup> For discussion and bibliography, see *DACL* 6.2, s.v. Hémmorroïsse, Col. 2203, No. 1, and more recently Wilson 2004: 90–97. A competing identification with Asclepius has also been suggested but is not shared by the majority of scholars – see e.g. Keel 1994.

<sup>45</sup> See n. 1 above for bibliography on Christian re-interpretation of earlier statues.

<sup>46</sup> Grabar 1936: 245f, Nordhagen 1982, Dufraigne 1994, Roddy 2001.

<sup>47</sup> Silent. *Descr.* 234–5: ὡς φαμένη χαρίεντα λιλαίετο χεῖλεα πῆξαι  
ποσσὶν ἀνακτορείοισιν. ὁ δ’ ἴλαον ἠθάδι Πώμηι  
δεξιτερὴν ὤρεξεν ὑποκλάζουσαν ἐγείρων.

<sup>48</sup> Zanker 1982; Smith 1998.

In late antique epigrams, similar language is often used to speak of emperors and elite honorands. To give a few examples, Dulcitus, governor of Caria, is deemed worthy of a golden statue to match his virtues in mid-fifth century Aphrodisias:

ἤθελεν (sc. Βαλεριανός), εἰ θέμις ἦν, / καὶ χρυσίην τάχα / μορφήν  
σῆς / ἀρετῆς τεύχειν ...<sup>49</sup>

Both the practice of golden or gilt statues and relevant vocabulary were primarily a feature of imperial monuments and inscriptions.<sup>50</sup> In certain cases, however, gilded statues could be afforded to exceptional high-ranking officials as e.g. Fl. Ulpus Erythrius, governor of Thebais (AD 385–7), Lucius Aur. Symmachus (consul, Rome and Constantinople, ca AD 377), Aurelian, consul and praetorian prefect (early fifth century AD).<sup>51</sup> Managerial style of both well and less known governors and consuls could be celebrated as ‘divine’ (ζάθεος) – an epithet falling only one step short of θεῖος as a properly imperial characteristic. Such are e.g. ‘divine judicial decisions’ (ζαθέησι δικασπολίαις) of the notorious Eutropius celebrated in Magnesia ad Maeandrum (ca AD 371–2),<sup>52</sup> or Alexander’s statue (fourth century AD) which is ‘evidence of his divine rule’ (τῆς ζαθέης ἀρχῆς τέκμαρ) in Aphrodisias.<sup>53</sup> This assimilation of epigraphic (as well as broader) self-representation of high-ranking officials to imperial honorific discourses may have had to do with the ever-increasing, in post-Constantinian times, dependence of senatorial elites on the emperor, as J. Weisweiler has argued.<sup>54</sup>

The inscribed base of Andreas’ statue, therefore, finds itself peculiarly positioned on the putative spectrum of traditional (Hellenic) vs Christianized means of verbal and visual expression in late fourth–early fifth century Ephesos, a city where epigraphic statements of religious affiliation could be bold and brisk, as Demeas’ inscription-accompanied cross famously suggests.<sup>55</sup> Andreas’ honorific statue and its inscription would certainly hark back to late antique traditions of civic commemoration through epigraphy, including in its reliance on specific tropes (e.g. of ‘raising up’ buildings in provinces, as the instance of the inscription honouring Lucius Caelius Montius in Tralles suggests).<sup>56</sup> As Andreas’ statue itself has been lost, nothing can be said about how traditional or elegant its style was, to say nothing of the high probability that it would have involved the re-use of an earlier image. The surviving text of the inscription, however, attests to an author and, presumably, viewers and readers that found themselves neatly caught in between the traditional Roman epigraphic habit and their idiom and Christian vocabulary and frames of thinking. Similar depictions of personified provinces that ultimately stemmed from Hadrianic patterns in sculpture and coinage probably suggest that the representations of the imperial presence in provinces as encoded in the images of a masculine figure of power extending a helping hand to a female personification of a region would have been wide-spread. The author of the epigram, we suggest, can hardly be suspected of seeking to make a deliberate point of casting the otherwise unknown Andreas as equal to the emperor, let alone Christ. Rather, a familiar mode of visualizing imperial power – as governor, Andreas represented it – found its way

<sup>49</sup> ALA 41 = SGO 1.238, no. 02/09/09 (LSA-225), ll. 1–2; cf. Slootjes 2006: 133–4.

<sup>50</sup> E.g. Theodosius II (or I – dating varies) (CIL III 735 = LSA-2497; Cedrenus 1.567; Patria 1.73); Anastasius (AG 16.70; LSA-497); Justin I and Sophia (AG 9.810; LSA-2770). For emperors’ role in granting the right to have bronze and gilded statues erected starting from the fourth century AD, see Robert 1974: 123–5; Lahusen 1978; Feissel 1984; Weisweiler 2012: 326. The craving for gilded honorific images among the ever-expanding senatorial order is castigated in Amm. 14.6.8.

<sup>51</sup> For Erythrius, see Bernand 1969: 489–91 no. 123 pl. 88 = LSA-877 (χρῦσειος Ἐρύθρη[ιος] ... ἐν χρυσῆν στ[ήλην]); for Lucius Aur. Symmachus’ gilt statue (*auro inlustrem statuam*) in Rome and Constantinople, see CIL VI 1698 = LSA-342; PLRE I 863–5, Symmachus; for Aurelian, see AG 16.73 (χρῦσεος ἔστηκεν Αὐρηλιανός); PLRE I 128–9, Aurelianus 3; Bagnall, Cameron, Schwartz, Worp 1987: 335; see also discussion and bibliography in LSA-469.

<sup>52</sup> SGO 1.197, no 02/01/06 (LSA-614).

<sup>53</sup> ALA 32 = SGO 1.231, no. 02/09/02 (LSA-153).

<sup>54</sup> Weisweiler 2012, Weisweiler 2015.

<sup>55</sup> Demeas famously set up a sign of cross on an base inscribed with a declaration of his Christian credentials put in Homeric language at the point where an image of Artemis had stood in the vicinity of Hadrian gates – IEph 4.1351 = SGO 1.334–5, no. 03/02/48 .

<sup>56</sup> See our discussion on pp. 56–57 above.

unobtrusively into the honorific text. Equally unobtrusive, however, was use of New Testament phrasing that put to words the image of an emperor raising the fallen province of Asia up to her feet. The resulting ‘Christianization’ of the statue, therefore, was probably both remarkably unintentional and revealing. It indicates the fundamental shifts in the modes of perception of earlier visual patterns of the representation of imperial power and the already dominant thinking in undeniably Christian terms and idiom. The irrevocable marrying of the two traditions is probably best understood when seen beyond a binary Christian vs Roman divide. It represents a new synthesis of a compound civic visual and literary language which had already been achieved when the monument was being erected, inscribed, and viewed within the cityscape of late antique Ephesos.

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