

Hippolytus statue

The Workshop



02-03. September 2021
Convent van Chièvres | Groot Begijnhof 39 | Leuven

KU LEUVEN

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Introduction: Past, Present and Future of the Research on the Hippolytus-statue

Although the so called Hippolytus-statue is known for almost 500 years, the scholarly interest remained rather marginal. In this talk, I will sketch out an overview of the most important scholarly contributions and outline the *status quaestionis*. By doing so, I also will point out shortcomings of previous research and discuss chances and limitations of the ongoing project. Finally, I will conclude by presenting some *desiderata* for future enquiries.

András Handl is a FWO senior postdoctoral fellow at the Research Unit History of Church and Theology, Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, KU Leuven, Belgium. He studied theology, Christian archaeology and art as well as journalism in Budapest, Erlangen, Leipzig and Rome. He earned his Ph.D. at the University of Basel with a dissertation to bishop Calixtus I. of Rome (217?-222?) and his controversy with the Author of the *Refutatio omnium haeresium*. He is the initiator and PI of the Hippolytus-statue project. Not only that, but he is also interested in the relations between Christians and the City of Rome, history of papacy, migration of Christians, the cult of saints and martyrs, the reception history of biblical texts, and in material remains of (early) Christianity.



Doubtful Dates, or Revisiting the Inscriptions from the so-called Statue of St. Hippolytus

This paper revisits the coherence of the date implied by the dating *formulae* from the three inscriptions carved on the statue of Hippolytus (AD 222) with the actual features of their script and ornamentation. I will first examine the phrasing of the *formulae* against the background of expressions used to denote dates in corresponding passages of other third-century inscriptions and documentary papyri. Then I will give an overview of the internal coherence of the inscriptions from the statue, which will confirm or question the supposition that they are products of “the same hand”. The third part of the paper will examine the lettering of these inscriptions against other finds from its reported find-spot near the *Castra Praetoria*, in the *ager Veranus*, and against a wider background of securely dated third-century epigraphs of the city of Rome.

Paweł Nowakowski is Assistant Professor in ancient history at the University of Warsaw. He is broadly interested in all aspects of Greek, Latin, and Aramaic/Syriac epigraphy of the Roman and early Byzantine periods, especially, the linguistic transformations, and the religious change as documented by inscriptions. Since 2020 he has been the PI of the project Epigraphy and Identity in Early Byzantine Middle East, funded by the National Science Centre (NCN), Poland, which explores the choice of language for dedicatory inscriptions from churches and synagogues. Prior to that, worked at ERC-funded project The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity, where he was responsible for a large-scale survey of inscriptions documenting the rise and development of the cult of saints.



The Easter Calendar Inscriptions on the Hippolytus Statue Chair

The chair supporting the statue of Hippolytus is inscribed with two tables representing an Easter cycle of 112 years beginning in 222 CE. Its attribution to Hippolytus is moot, but it would appear to date from around the year 222. If so, this would be the earliest known attempt by Christians to design a fixed, pre-calculated and cyclical scheme for determining the date of Easter, and its origins are most likely local to Rome. In this paper, I shall attempt to situate this inscription in its local cultural context, with attention to Roman lunar calendar traditions and Christianity in early third-century Rome. I shall consider the possible relationship of this inscription to a literary text of controversial attribution to a ‘Hippolytus’, the *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium*, which condemns (in 8.18) those who observe Easter on the 14th day of the moon (and not on the following Sunday) – a somewhat Judaizing practice which this inscription is similarly designed, implicitly, to oppose. I shall discuss the broader significance of this cycle in relation to Christian intellectual history and the ‘parting of ways’ between Christianity and Judaism.

Sacha Stern is Professor of Jewish Studies and Head of Department at the Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies, University College London. An ancient historian by training, he has published several books on calendars and time reckoning in Antiquity and the Middle Ages, including *Calendar and Community: A History of the Jewish Calendar* (2001), *Time and Process in Ancient Judaism* (2003), *Calendars in Antiquity: Empires, States, and Societies* (2012), and most recently *Calendars in the Making: The Origins of Calendars from the Roman Empire to the Later Middle Ages* (2021). Since 2008 he has been Principal Investigator of five research projects at UCL on calendars in late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. He is the editor of the *Journal of Jewish Studies*.



EMANUELE CASTELLI

The List of Titles on the Statue of “Hippolytus”: A Comparative Study with Other Lists of the Same Genre

On the rounded back right corner of the chair of the so-called statue of “Hippolytus” (now at the entrance to the Vatican Library) a long list of titles of literary works is inscribed. The list dates back to just before the middle of the third century AD. Up to now this list has been studied from two different perspectives: 1. as a list of works belonging to a single Christian author, named Hippolytus, who lived between the second and third centuries in Rome; 2. as a list of Christian writings perhaps belonging to various authors: this possibility was considered after the discovery, made by the archaeologist M. Guarducci, of the original female identity of the statue now at the Vatican Library. In my talk, however, I intend to examine the list from a new perspective, that is, in relation to other lists of titles of literary works of ancient authors. The comparison will thus take into consideration many other lists handed down by inscriptions or in ancient and Byzantine manuscripts. Through this comparison I intend to bring out some specificities that characterize the list on the “statue of Hippolytus” and which should be considered by anyone trying to answer the question of the use of the statue in the third century AD.

Emanuele Castelli is a classicist, book historian, and patristic scholar. He is researcher scholar for History of Christianity at the University of Messina. Prior to that, he worked at the Institut des Sources Chrétiennes, he collaborated in the ERC-funded project ParaBibText in Munich, and hold an Alexander von Humboldt Fellowship where he studied ancient book titles. He is the author of: *La nascita del titolo nella letteratura greca. Dall'epica arcaica alla prosa di età classica*, (De Gruyter 2020), *Un falso letterario sotto il nome di Flavio Giuseppe. Ricerca sulla tradizione del ΠΕΡΙ ΤΟΥ ΠΑΝΤΟΣ* e *sulla produzione letteraria cristiana a Roma nei primi decenni del III secolo* (Aschendorff 2011) and several articles on the Hippolytus-statue (VetChr 46 [2007]; Augustinianum 48 [2008]; ASE I [2010]).



How likely is a third-century statue of Hippolytus?

In this talk I will provide an overview of what is known about Christian attitudes to free-standing monumental sculpture, in order to sketch out the broad context within which we should view the Hippolytus statue. Christians were by no means opposed to all three-dimensional representation, and statues of secular dignitaries (including highly devout emperors) were erected in public places in some number well into the sixth century. Evidence of new or newly adapted statues of Christ and of Christian saints is, however, much scarcer: such evidence as does exist will be explored in this talk.

Bryan Ward-Perkins is Professor (emeritus) of Late Antique History at the University of Oxford, where he taught until September 2019 and was Chair of the Oxford Centre for Late Antiquity. He is the author of *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization* (Oxford 2005). In 2009-12, he directed (with R.R.R. Smith) the Last Statues of Antiquity project, which produced a database of all the evidence for newly-dedicated monumental sculpture of the late antique period, <http://laststatues.classics.ox.ac.uk/>, and a print discussion-volume: *The Last Statues of Antiquity*, edited with R.R.R. Smith (Oxford 2016). In 2014-18, he ran an ERC project on The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity, which has already produced a freely-available searchable database, <http://csla.history.ox.ac.uk/>, with a print volume reflecting on the results due to appear next year.



The Many Lives of Hippolytus' Statue

The monument presently known as the statue of Hippolytus is a rare example that can be shown to have been altered at least twice, a first time presumably in the third century AD, and the second time in the sixteenth century, when Ligorio carried out his severe restoration. In this talk I re-contextualise the changes made to the statue, comparing them with other antique and late antique examples that underwent physical alterations and/or re-interpretation. I will examine the potential for re-interpretation for this statue in the subsequent stages of its life, or its many lives, as well as the possible contexts in which it could have been displayed in Antiquity.

Ine Jacobs is the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Associate Professor of Byzantine Archaeology and Visual Culture at the University of Oxford. She received her doctorate from the University of Leuven. Her research interests include Roman and Byzantine architecture and urbanism, the experience and perception of the built environment and its decoration, long histories of display and reception of sites, statuary and artefacts, and material religion. She has worked on excavations in Belgium, Italy, the Republic of North Macedonia and Turkey. She was a member of the Sagalassos team between 2003 and 2014. In 2016, she became the field director of the Aphrodisias excavations.



GINETTE VAGENHEIM

Pirro Ligorio and the Restoration Techniques of Antique Statues in the 16th century: The Example of the "Hippolytus statue"

L'identification par Margherita Guarducci, de partie antique de la statue d'Hippolyte, comme celle d'une figure féminine assise sur une chaire, un rouleau dans sa main, a provoqué une profonde révision de l'histoire du christianisme à Rome entre le II e et le IIIe siècle, notamment sur l'identification d'Hippolyte, l'avènement de l'épiscopat monarchique ainsi que celle de la figure féminine originelle et sa signification doctrinale. Pour ma part, je reviendrai sur le rôle de Pirro Ligorio (1512c.-1583) dans la découverte, en 1551, de la statue mutilée, entre la Via Nomentana et la via Tiburtina et de sa restauration ne me fondant sur ses écrits et ses dessins conservés dans ses manuscrits des «Antichità romane»; il s'agira ensuite de la replacer dans le contexte plus général de sa pratique de restaurateur de statues antiques, dont son œuvre montre, dans ce cas également, qu'il possédait une connaissance profonde, et de souligner finalement l'attention particulière que Ligorio porta aux sources textuelles païennes et chrétiennes grâce notamment à l'aide des érudits du «cercle Farnèse».

Ginette Vagenheim is Professor of Latin Language and Literature and Humanities at the Université de Rouen-Normandie, Member of the Institut universitaire de France, Life Member of Clare Hall in Cambridge and Fellow of the Harvard University and The University of Columbia NYC. She currently acts as expert at the ERC for SH5 panel. After a Degree in Classical Philology at the Université Catholique de Louvain-la-Neuve, she obtained a Master in Medieval and Renaissance Philology [supervised by Giuseppe Billanovich] at the Università del Sacro Cuore di Milano; she then obtained a doctorate in Ancient Art History and Archaeology at the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa [supervised by Augusto Campana and Salvatore Settis]. She is author of more than 150 publications, especially on Pirro Ligorio and on the history of classical scholarship in the Renaissance, on the history of epigraphy in the Renaissance and on its historiography in the 19th century.



ROALD DIJKSTRA

Reconstructed Image or Historical Figure? Hippolytus' Reception in Fourth Century Poetry

Hippolytus was one of the martyrs whom Damasus (366-384) celebrated with a poem (epigram 35). This controversial bishop also embellished the sites at the Via Tiburtina and in Portus (67*). Moreover, he used the site of Hippolytus for reconciliation with the supporters of his rival Ursinus, as appears from another inscription commemorating the event (351). Damasus' self-promotion and political interest interfere with aspects of the historical figure of Hippolytus. Moreover, given the formulaic nature of Damasus' poetry, traditional phrases should be carefully distinguished from the elements that he might have taken from historical sources. Prudentius' *Peristephanon* II is partly based on Damasus, but also extensively describes (among other things) the cult site for Hippolytus and a painting of him there exposed. In this paper the rationale behind the choice of elements from the life of Hippolytus in the poems of Damasus and Prudentius is discussed as well as the value of their work for our knowledge about Hippolytus in earlier times.

Roald Dijkstra, Ph.D. (2014), Radboud University Nijmegen, is postdoctoral assistant at KU Leuven. He co-authored *Peter in Rome* about the early Roman reception of the apostle (Garant, 2019), *The Early Reception and Appropriation of the Apostle Peter (60-800 CE)* (Brill, 2020) and published *The Apostles in Early Christian Art and Poetry* (Brill, 2016).



The Hippolytan Corpus and the Hippolytan Statue

Most of everything associated with Hippolytus is of great dispute. What did he write? Where did he live? And even, how many Hippolytus' were there? Scholars have proposed several different answers to these questions, but all of them hang on the curious inscriptions etched on the sides of the third century Hippolytan statue. These inscriptions include two calendrical tables related to the celebration of Easter and the Passover, and a third inscription listing the titles of various compositions. In this paper, I examine these inscriptions in the light of evidence found within Greek, Latin, Armenian, and Syriac sources. With this data I draw mutually reinforcing connections between the statue and the writings attributed to Hippolytus. The most important of these directly link the statue with Hippolytus' *Canon*, *Commentary on Daniel*, and his *Defense of the Gospel of John and Revelation*, a work sometimes called *Chapters against Gaius*. From these observations, other secondary and tertiary connections can then be made throughout the Hippolytan Corpus. Towards the end of my paper, I also take care to answer criticisms of previous attempts to associate the statue with Hippolytus. I conclude that the Hippolytan Statue and the major works of the Hippolytan Corpus should indeed be associated with a man named Hippolytus, who flourished in early third century Rome.

Thomas C. Schmidt is Visiting Assistant Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at Fairfield University. His interests include the formation of the New Testament, early Christian eschatological thought, eastern Christianity, the Hippolytan Corpus, and the life of Jesus. He has published books with Cambridge, Fordham, and Gorgias presses.



Schedule

Thursday, 02. September 2021

9:00 – 9:40	ANDRÁS HANDL Introduction: Past, Present and Future of the Research on the Statue
9:40 – 10:30	PAWEŁ NOWAKOWSKI Doubtful Dates, or Revisiting the Inscriptions from the so-called Statue of St. Hippolytus
10:30 – 10:50	Coffee break
10:50 – 11:40	SACHA STERN The Easter Calendar Inscriptions on the Hippolytus Statue Chair
11:40 – 12:30	EMANUELE CASTELLI The List of Titles on the Statue of "Hippolytus": A Comparative Study with Other Lists of the Same Genre
12:30 – 13:00	Discussion
13:00 – 14:30	Lunch break
14:30 – 15:20	BRYAN WARD-PERKINS How likely is a third-century statue of Hippolytus?
15:20 – 16:10	THOMAS SCHMIDT The Hippolytan Corpus and the Hippolytan Statue
16:10 – 16:30	Discussion
16:30 – 17:00	Coffee break
17:00 – 18:30	Cultural program
19:30	Conference Dinner @ Cum Laude (Lipsius room)

Friday, 03. September 2021

9:00 – 9:50	GINETTE VAGENHEIM Pirro Ligorio and the Restoration Techniques of Antique Statues in the 16th century: The Example of the "Hippolytus statue"
9:50 – 10:40	ROALD DIJKSTRA Reconstructed Image or Historical Figure? Hippolytus' Reception in Fourth Century Poetry
10:40 – 11:00	Coffee break
11:00 – 11:50	INE JACOBS The Many Lives of Hippolytus' Statue
11:50 – 12:30	Discussion
12:30 – 13:00	Conclusions
13:00 – 14:30	Lunch

