Papers of the British School at Rome **81** (2013), pp. 279–302 © British School at Rome
doi:10.1017/S0068246213000111

ARCHITECTURE AND ÉLITE IDENTITY IN LATE ANTIQUE ROME: APPROPRIATING THE PAST AT SANT'ANDREA CATABARBARA[1]

by Gregor Kalas

The conversion of a fourth-century secular basilica into the church of Sant'Andrea Catabarbara in Rome during the 470s invites a discussion of how architectural adaptation contributed to the identity of its restorer, Valila. More than a century after the praetorian prefect of Italy, Junius Bassus, founded the basilica in 331, a Goth named Valila, belonging to the senatorial aristocracy, bequeathed the structure to Pope Simplicius (468–83). References to Valila's last will in the church's dedicatory inscription were inserted directly above Junius Bassus's original donation inscription, inviting reflections upon the transmission of élite status from one individual to another. The particularities of Valila's legacy as a testator, as indicated in the references to his will in the Sant'Andrea Catabarbara inscription and confirmed by a charter he wrote to support a church near Tivoli, suggest that he sought to control his lasting memory through patronage. Valila's concern for a posthumous status provides a context for interpreting the interior of the Roman church. Juxtaposed to the church's fifth-century apse mosaic were opus sectile *panels depicting Junius Bassus, together with scenes of an Apollonian tripod and an illustration of the exposed body of Hylas raped by two nymphs originating from the earliest phase of the basilica. The article proposes that Valila nuanced his élite identity by preserving the fourth-century images and thereby hinted that preservation fostered both the accretion of physical layers and the accrual of multiple identities by a Gothic aristocrat in Rome.*

La conversione di una basilica secolare del IV secolo nella chiesa di Sant'Andrea Catabarbara a Roma negli anni intorno al 470 invita a una discussione su come gli adattamenti architettonici contribuirono all'identità del suo restauratore Valila. Più di un secolo dopo che il pretoriano prefetto d'Italia, Junius Bassus, fondò la basilica nel 331, un goto di nome Valila, appartenente all'aristocrazia senatoria, lasciò in eredità la struttura a Papa Simplicius (468–83). Riferimenti alle ultime volontà di Valila nell'iscrizione dedicatoria della chiesa furono inseriti direttamente sopra l'iscrizione originale della donazione di Junius Bassus, invitando ad una riflessione sulla

[1] The author thanks Dorothy Metzger Habel and Julian Hendrix for their insightful comments on drafts of this article. The text also profited from helpful suggestions provided by the anonymous reviewers for *Papers of the British School at Rome* and the members of the Late Antique Seminar at the University of Tennessee, including Thomas Heffernan, Michael Kulikowski, Jacob Latham and Tina Shepardson. Maura Lafferty generously shared her extensive knowledge of Latin terminology.
Abbreviations:
CIL T. Mommsen *et al.* (eds), *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (Berlin, 1863–present).
MGH *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*.
ICUR G.B. de Rossi and G. Gatti (eds), *Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae Septimo Saeculo Antiquiores*, 2 vols (Rome, 1857–1915).
ILCV E. Diehl (ed.), *Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres*, 3 vols (Berlin, 1961).
PLRE J.R. Martindale (ed.), *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, 3 vols (Cambridge, 1971–92).

trasmissione dello stato elitario da un individuo a un altro. La particolarità del lascito di Valila come testatore, come indicato nei riferimenti alla sua volontà nell'iscrizione di Sant'Andrea Catabarbara e confermata da una carta che egli scrisse per supportare una chiesa vicino Tivoli, suggerisce che egli cercava di controllare che la sua memoria fosse duratura attraverso l'esercizio del patronato. La concezione di Valila per uno status *postumo fornisce un contesto per l'interpretazione dell'interno della chiesa romana. Giustapposti al mosaico absidale della chiesa del V secolo erano pannelli in* opus sectile *rappresentanti Junius Bassus, insieme con scene di un tripode apollineo e un'illustrazione del corpo esposto di Hylas rapito da due ninfe originate dalla fase più antica della basilica. Nell'articolo si propone che Valila sfumò la sua identità elitaria, preservando le immagini di IV secolo in modo da insinuare che la conservazione favoriva sia la crescita degli strati fisici sia l'accumulo delle molteplici identità di un aristocratico goto a Roma.*

Late antique sponsors of architectural projects gained status from their benefactions. After the middle of the fourth century many patrons in Rome devoted their energies to conserving pre-existing buildings, in part due to a law of 364 CE curtailing the use of civic funds for the construction of new buildings.[2] At the same time, codes of civility encouraged restorers to honour the original founders of buildings as esteemed forebears. Through the display of inscriptions connecting the restorer's prestige to that of the original benefactor, the transformation of a pre-existing structure into a church during late antiquity commemorated cross-generational affiliations in keeping with the Roman textual practice of recording those who sponsored repairs.[3] In late antiquity, preserving and reusing buildings both guaranteed the survival of ancient architecture and constructed identities for those who maintained the late classical past.

This essay examines a patron who converted the fourth-century secular basilica of Junius Bassus into the church of Sant'Andrea Catabarbara. Exploring how the Christian patron's identity was grafted onto the pre-existing structure, the pages to follow investigate how a building transformed into a church was crucial to setting forth the multiple facets of the donor's status.[4] The discussion establishes that the benefactor negotiated élite identity by converting the late antique basilica into a

[2] The legal text issued in 364 CE restricted new construction in the city of Rome. *Codex Theodosianus* 15.1.11 (in P. Meyer and T. Mommsen (eds), *Theodosiani libri XVI* (Berlin, 1905), vol. 1, part 2, p. 803): 'Intra urbem Romam aeternam nullus iudicum novum opus informet, quotiens serenitatis nostrae abitria cessabunt. Ea tamen instaurandi quae iam deformibus ruinis intercidisse dicuntur, universalis licentiam damus'.

[3] For the Roman tradition of repairs connecting restorers to the original founders of architectural projects, see E. Thomas and C. Witschel, 'Constructing reconstruction: claim and reality of Roman rebuilding inscriptions from the Latin west', *Papers of the British School at Rome* 60 (1992), 135–78; A.M. Yasin, *Saints and Church Spaces in the Late Antique Mediterranean* (Cambridge, 2009), 101–29. For the Christian reuse of ancient buildings, see J. Vaes, 'Christliche Wiederverwendung antiker Bauten: ein Forschungsbericht', *Ancient Society* 17 (1984–6), 305–443.

[4] B. Ward-Perkins, *From Classical Antiquity to the Middle Ages: Urban Public Building in Northern and Central Italy, 300–850* AD (Oxford, 1984), 80–4. For codes regarding individual identity, see P. Amory, *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy, 489–554* (Cambridge, 1997), 83–4.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0068246213000111 Published online by Cambridge University Press

church as a late outgrowth of civic patronage in Rome. The sponsor in question, Valila, was a Romanized Goth who established Sant'Andrea Catabarbara and honoured Pope Simplicius (468–83) in the process.[5] Within the interior of Sant'Andrea Catabarbara, the juxtaposition between Christian mosaics and pre-existing pagan images produced a dissonant clash resulting from Valila's desire to conserve most of the structure's historic features. Conscious to preserve visible signs of the original patron, Valila kept an inscription inserted by the founder, Junius Bassus, and conserved the pagan inlaid marbles decorating the side walls.[6] Further, the interior decoration of Sant'Andrea Catabarbara included the surprising survival of a nude image of Hylas (Fig. 1), bringing classical discourses on gender and sexuality into a consideration of church architecture. Questions about the formation of individual identity through architectural sponsorship emerge. Specifically, did Valila's strategy of honouring an earlier founder contribute to the visual appearance of the early Christian church? In addition, did gender, status and perhaps ethnicity emerge as important issues to visitors who experienced the transformed basilica?

FOUNDATION AND RESTORATION

Valila's fifth-century church triggered very specific recollections of Rome's past, allowing memories of earlier aristocratic sponsorship to resonate in the converted building. Attending carefully to the building's history, Valila advertised that he inherited the prestige of the founder by retaining the original inscription located directly below the fifth-century apse mosaic, with its own dedication text describing the church conversion. The original, fourth-century epigraphic text states: 'Junius Bassus, consul of *clarissimus* ('most illustrious') rank, built [this] at his own expense and happily dedicated

[5] R. Krautheimer, *Corpus Basilicarum Christianarum Romae. The Early Christian Basilicas of Rome* (Vatican City, 1937), I, 62–3; R. Enking, *Sant'Andrea cata Barbara e S. Antonio sull'Esquilino* (*Le chiese di Roma illustrate* 83) (Rome, 1964), 8–10; M. Sapelli, 'La Basilica di Giunio Basso', in S. Ensoli and E. La Rocca (eds), *Aurea Roma: dalla città pagana alla città cristiana* (Rome, 2000), 137–9. An argument that the inscription of Sant'Andrea Catabarbara should not be read as indicating Valila, but rather the term *valide*, was advanced by M. Cecchelli, 'Valilae o valide? L'iscrizione di Sant'Andrea all'Esquilino', *Romanobarbarica* 11 (1991), 61–78. Margherita Cecchelli's argument was based upon a spurious transliteration of the inscription in an early modern manuscript. The term *valide* makes little sense in the context and the word is not used in Christian inscriptions according to D. Mazzoleni, 'Osservazioni su alcune epigrafi basilicali romane', in F. Guidobaldi and A. Guiglia Guidobaldi (eds), *Ecclesiae Urbis: atti del congresso internazionale di studi sulle chiese di Roma (IV–X secolo)* (Rome, 2000), I, 272. For Gothic identity, see P. Geary, *The Myth of Nations: the Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton, 2002), 108–11; A. Gillett, 'Was ethnicity politicized in the earliest medieval kingdoms?', in A. Gillett (ed.), *On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2002), 121.

[6] The inscription attesting to the foundation by Junius Bassus, *CIL* VI 1737, remained on view in the church of Sant'Andrea Catabarbara.

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Fig. 1. Inlaid marble panel of the rape of Hylas from the basilica of Junius Bassus in Rome (Museo Nazionale Romano, Palazzo Massimo alle Terme, Rome). *(Photo: © Vanni Archive, Art Resource, NY.)*

[it]'.[7] The inscription, produced in 331 CE, created the impression that Bassus had accomplished a grand civic donation, even though the structure originally stood on private land. The basilica stood within the estate of Junius Bassus, who, after a military career, only reached the highest senatorial rank of *vir clarissimus* ('most illustrious man') after Constantine expanded the aristocracy. Bassus became a member of the senatorial élite once Constantine appointed him as praetorian prefect of Italy, an extremely powerful position he held for

[7] *CIL* VI 1737: *IUNIUS BASSUS V(ir) C(larissimus) CONSUL ORDINARIUS PROPRIA IMPENSA A SOLO FECIT ET DEDICAVIT FELICITER*.

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fourteen years (318–31) followed by the consulship in 331.[8] There is no clear-cut evidence that Junius Bassus, the consul, was Christian.[9] Indeed, he is to be distinguished from his son with the same name — a convert who had served a term as the urban prefect of Rome and was buried in a famous Vatican sarcophagus in 359.[10]

Today only fragments of the interior ornament survive, and the hybrid nature of the church occupying a converted secular hall has been obscured due to the building's demolition. Originally situated on the Esquiline Hill in the vicinity of Santa Maria Maggiore and just off the present via Napoleone III, the basilica of Junius Bassus remained in use until its abandonment in the fifteenth century. The name Sant'Andrea Catabarbara developed centuries after Valila transformed the structure into a church, and refers to Barbara, the founder of an eighth-century monastery built next door.[11] In ruins by the seventeenth century, the building benefited from archaeological study in 1932 — just prior to the structure's total demolition.[12]

The basilica originally stood as an independent apsidal hall within the larger Bassus estate, but fulfilled the mostly public purpose of presenting the original founder as an élite office-holder to audiences who could enter without an invitation.[13] Situating his Esquiline residence in previously commercial space, Junius Bassus positioned his family's urban residence at a site with optimal visibility among other great late antique urban estates located on the Esquiline Hill.[14] Initially, the secular basilica displayed the aristocratic virtues that Junius

[8] For the identity of Junius Bassus, see C. Hülsen, 'Die Basilica des Iunius Bassus und die Kirche Sant'Andrea cata Barbara auf dem Esquilin', in A. Weixlgärter and L. Planiscig (eds), *Festschrift Julius von Schlosser* (Zürich, 1927), 53–67. For the praetorian prefecture of the elder Junius Bassus, see P. Porena, *Le origini della prefettura del pretorio tardoantica* (Rome, 2003), 456–66, 482–7, 546–9; P. Borena, 'Trasformazioni istituzionali e assetti sociali: i prefetti dal pretorio tra III e IV secolo', in R. Lizzi Testa (ed.), *Le trasformazioni delle* élites *in età tardoantica* (Rome, 2006), 325–56; D. Potter, *Constantine the Emperor* (Oxford, 2012), 244, 251–2.

[9] A. Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford, 2011), 178, explains that a mistaken identification of an anonymous Christian consul has led to the confusion about Bassus's religion. Alan Cameron therefore contests the arguments about Junius Bassus, consul, of T.D. Barnes, 'Statistics and the conversion of the Roman aristocracy', *Journal of Roman Studies* 85 (1995), 135–47.

[10] For the younger Junius Bassus and his sarcophagus, see E. Malbon, *The Iconography of the Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus* (Princeton, 1990).

[11] L. Duchesne (ed.), *Le Liber Pontificalis* (Paris, 1981 (reprint)), II, 28.

[12] G. Lugli, 'La basilica di Giunio Basso sull'Esquilino', *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana* 9 (1932), 221–35. The spot is now the site of the Seminario Pontificio di Studi Orientali.

[13] The basilica of Junius Bassus was constructed on private property but welcomed uninvited visitors, as is implied by the honourific nature of the founder's inscription; for the public accessibility of large Roman houses, see A. Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum* (Princeton, 1994), 17–37.

[14] L. Cracco Ruggini, 'Le domus tardoantiche di Roma come 'sensori' delle trasformazioni culturali e sociali', in W.V. Harris (ed.), *The Transformations of* Urbs Roma *in Late Antiquity* (*Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series* 33) (Portsmouth (RI), 1999), 53–68.

Bassus aspired to uphold: euergetism, office-holding, literary erudition, and financial support for civic entertainment.

The specific events occurring in Junius Bassus's basilica cannot be defined; yet the senator most probably held assemblies there. Early modern drawings and descriptions provide keys to understanding the now-destroyed basilica.[15] Giovanni Ciampini's seventeenth-century ground-plan and exterior drawing articulate the form of the secular basilica: a hall approximately 21 m in length with a single nave terminated in an apse, featuring three large arched windows on each side wall with three smaller windows above the entrance (Fig. 2).[16] A vestibule ending in curved walls on the short ends preceded the basilica's main hall. Due to its scale and its original context within a residential estate, the Bassus basilica displays affinities with a series of late antique apsidal halls located on aristocratic urban compounds.[17] Given that its architectural form resembled a civic audience-hall, the interior provided ample space for the consul, positioned in the apse, to address semi-public assemblies of just over 50 individuals.

Early modern drawings and surviving fragments of Junius Bassus's original interior decoration scheme indicate that lavish wall ornamentation celebrated the consul's benefactions by depicting the urban rituals he sponsored. In the sixteenth century, Antonio da Sangallo the Younger rendered a hypothetical arrangement of the original inlaid marbles on one of the walls; however, portions of his drawing recreate the interior scheme in an overly imaginative manner (Fig. 3).[18] Sangallo fancifully inserted the motifs in the upper and lower registers of the drawing, inventing features such as the circular format of images resembling Roman coins for the portraits in profile and borrowing other scenes from various sculptural reliefs from Rome. More reliably recorded are the panels drawn in the central portion of Sangallo's wall scheme, such as the imagery featuring Egyptianizing decorative motifs in the borders. This can be confirmed due to the survival of *opus sectile* panels from

[15] A drawing by Antonio da Sangallo the Younger, preserved in a Vatican Library manuscript, provides an approximation of the interior: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barb. Lat. 4424, fol. 31v. G.B. de Rossi, 'Della basilica di Giunio Basso consule sull'Esquilino', *Bollettino di Archeologia Cristiana* 2 (1871), 5–29, reported on the scanty remains in the late nineteenth century.

[16] G. Ciampini, *Vetera Monimenta* (Rome, 1609), vol. I, table I, figs 4 and 5; F. Guidobaldi, 'L'edilizia abitativa unifamiliare nella Roma tardoantica', in A. Giardina (ed.), *Società romana e impero tardoantico* II. *Roma. Politica economica, paesaggio urbano* (Rome/Bari, 1986), 184–237. The building measured 21 × 12.5 m including the apse.

[17] F. Guidobaldi, 'Distribuzione topografica, architettura e arredo delle *domus* tardoantiche', in Ensoli and La Rocca, *Aurea Roma* (above, n. 5), 133–6; S.P. Ellis, 'Power, architecture, and decor: how the late Roman aristocrat appeared to his guests', in E.K. Gazda (ed.), *Roman Art in the Private Sphere: New Perspectives on the Architecture and Decor of the Domus, Villa, and Insula* (Ann Arbor, 1991), 122–34; F. Guidobaldi, 'Domus: Iunius Bassus', in E.M. Steinby (ed.), *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* II *(D–G)* (Rome, 1995), 69–70.

[18] G. Becatti, *Scavi di Ostia* VI. *Edificio con* opus sectile *fuori porta Marina* (Rome, 1969), 187–215.

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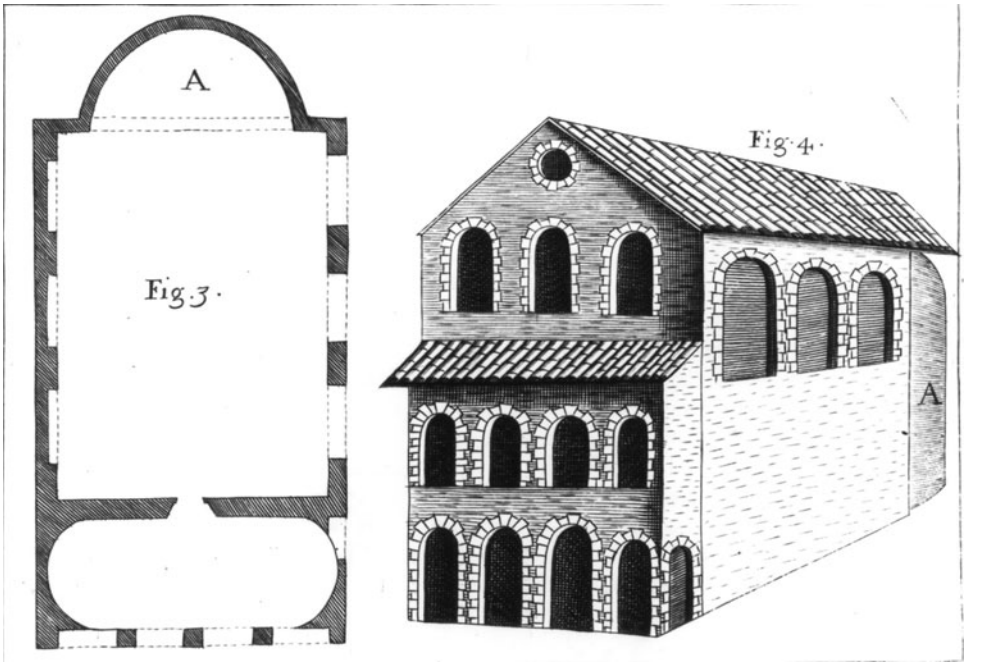

Fig. 2. Giovanni Ciampini, Plan and view of Sant'Andrea Catabarbara. From *Vetera Monimenta,* tav. I. *(Photo: Special Collections and University Archives, Jean and Alexander Heard Library, Vanderbilt University.)*

the Junius Bassus basilica, made of inlaid marbles with mother of pearl, now displayed in Rome's Capitoline Museums and the Palazzo Massimo alle Terme (Figs 4 and 5).

The original marble panels from the Esquiline basilica honoured the founder and his intellectual interests. One surviving *opus sectile* panel depicts Junius Bassus — the figure is shown wearing consular robes — as a charioteer accompanied by the four horse riders from the circus games celebrating his consulship (Fig. 4).[19] The four horsemen wear the differently coloured outfits of the competing circus factions and they hold elongated, basket-like implements used to play a late antique game called *sphaeromachia*.[20] Early modern drawings of the chariot scene reveal that it once had a semicircular format,

[19] K.M.D. Dunbabin, 'The victorious charioteer on mosaics and related monuments', *American Journal of Archaeology* 86 (1982), 82–6.

[20] A. Nesbitt, 'On wall decorations in sectile work as used by the Romans with special reference to the palace of the Bassi at Rome', *Archaeologia* 45 (1880), 287; R. Paris, 'I panelli in opus sectile dalla basilica di Giunio Basso: osservazioni sul pannello con biga e fazioni del circo', *Bollettino di Archeologia* 7 (1991), 91–7. One argument that the inlaid marble decoration of the basilica of Junius Bassus should be dated to the late fifth century has not gained acceptance, M. Cagiano de Azevedo, 'La datazione delle tarsie della basilica di Giunio Basso', *Rendiconti. Atti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia* n.s. 40 (1967–8), 151–70.

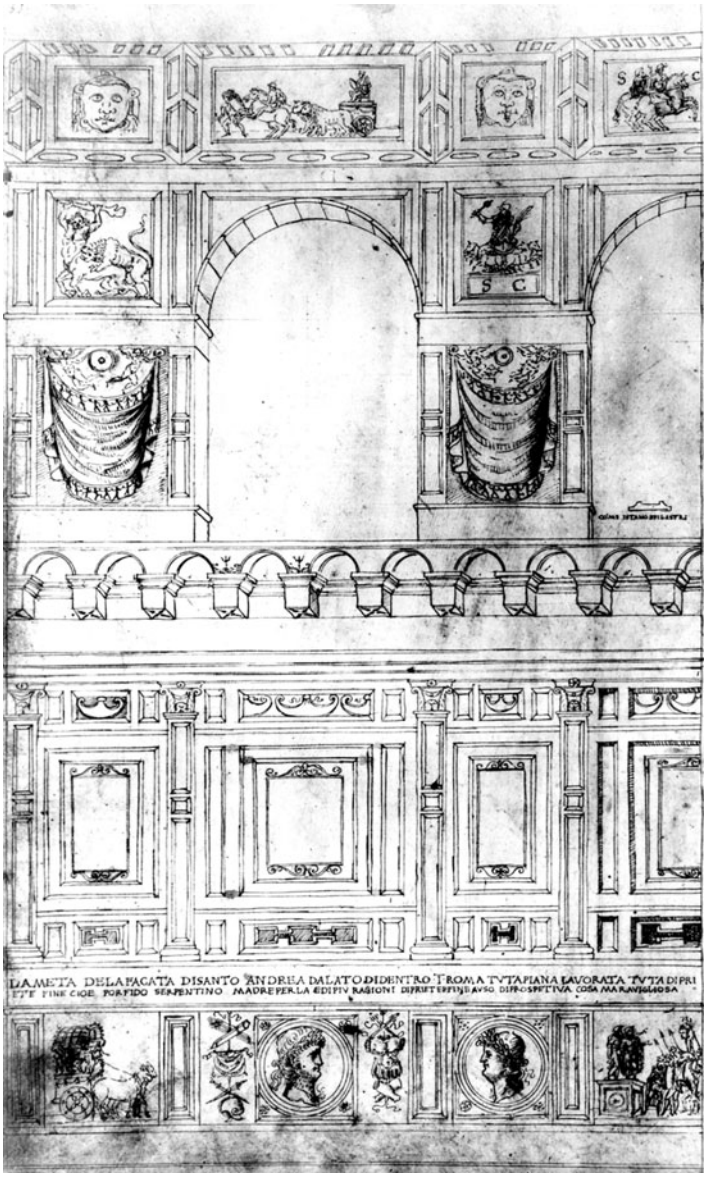

Fig. 3. Antonio da Sangallo the Younger, Drawing of the interior of Sant'Andrea Catabarbara. *(Photo: © Fototeca Unione, American Academy in Rome, neg. 466.03.)*

framed by a simulated textile border with Egyptian motifs.[21] Further documentation of a now-missing section reveals that originally there were four figures in the foreground shown fighting over the coins that had been scattered

[21] J. Osborne and A. Claridge, *Early Christian and Medieval Antiquities. The Paper Museum of Cassiano dal Pozzo (Mosaic and Wall Paintings in Roman Churches)* (London, 1996), series A, vol. II, part 1, 73–6.

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Fig. 4. Inlaid marble panel of Junius Bassus at the consular races from the basilica of Junius Bassus in Rome (Museo Nazionale Romano, Palazzo Massimo alle Terme, Rome). *(Photo: © Vanni Archive, Art Resource, NY.)*

Fig. 5. Inlaid marble panel of a tiger attacking a calf from the basilica of Junius Bassus in Rome (Palazzo dei Conservatori, Musei Capitolini, Rome). *(Photo: © Vanni Archive, Art Resource, NY.)*

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as a donation to the public, referencing the generous distribution made by Junius Bassus at the consular games to mark his concern for the public welfare.[22] A different panel illustrating a tiger attacking a calf is one of numerous scenes originally on display in the interior depicting animals in combat, reminding viewers of the animal entertainments that Junius Bassus must have sponsored during the consular festivities (Fig. 5).[23] A scene of the rape of Hylas displays the patron's literary concerns, perhaps originally alluding to a theme concerning Hercules due to the inclusion of a panel depicting the Delphic tripod (Figs 1 and 6). The interior decoration reinforced the honorific purpose of the structure through which the founder aimed to memorialize the gifts he offered to the public while commemorating his civic virtues.[24]

In the fifth century, Valila preserved and thereby appreciated the inlaid marble imagery that Junius Bassus had used for his self promotion. Valila's acquisition, restoration and conversion of the basilica demonstrate that the new owner retained memories of the founder while rethinking the tradition of benefaction. It is not clear how the property came into Valila's possession; plausibly the Goth had acquired it through a marriage alliance with a member of the Bassus family.[25] Eventually, Valila commissioned the basilica's

[22] The drawing of the full scene of the charioteer prior to the loss of the panel's lower portion appears in the Royal Collection, Windsor Castle, inventory number 9605.

[23] Two panels depicting a tiger attacking a calf are displayed in the Palazzo dei Conservatori in the Capitoline Museums, Rome; the panels displaying the scene of the rape of Hylas and the charioteer are in the collection of the Museo Nazionale Romano, displayed at the Palazzo Massimo alle Terme. These *opus sectile* works are dated to the time of Junius Bassus's consulship in 331 according to Becatti, *Scavi di Ostia* VI (above, n. 18), 196–202. For a discussion of a recent campaign to restore the panels in the Capitoline Museums, see M. Cima, 'Giunius Basso: la 'basilica' scomparsa. Il restauro delle tarsie dei Musei Capitolini', *Bollettino dei Musei Comunali di Roma* n.s. 14 (2000), 69–86, and M.P. Paoletti, 'L'intervento di restauro', *Bollettino dei Musei Comunali di Roma* n.s. 14 (2000), 86–90. Many additional features of the original inlaid marble decoration scheme are indicated by seventeenth-century drawings produced at the behest of Cassiano dal Pozzo and Cardinal Francesco Barberini; see Osborne and Claridge, *Early Christian and Medieval Antiquities* (above, n. 21), series A, vol. II, part 1, 73–6. Some of the inlaid marble decorations were recorded in Ciampini, *Vetera Monimenta* (above, n. 16), vol. I, tav. XXII, illustrating a winged centaur holding a feather and a leopard attacking a fawn; both of which are now lost.

[24] An argument that the basilica of Junius Bassus expresses Neoplatonic attitudes toward death is presented by C. Vout, 'Embracing Egypt', in C. Edwards and G. Woolf (eds), *Rome the Cosmopolis* (Cambridge, 2003), 177–202. Vout has argued that the basilica was funerary; yet she did not take account of the archaeological evidence that the Esquiline basilica, located inside the city walls, was one of many secular basilicas serving as private meeting halls on Roman aristocratic estates; see Guidobaldi, 'L'edilizia abitativa' (above, n. 16), 184–237.

[25] For the use of inherited domestic properties as a mechanism for signalling a family's status in the city of Rome, even by individuals who acquired properties through marriage, see J. Hillner, 'Domus, family, and inheritance: the senatorial family house in late antique Rome', *Journal of Roman Studies* 93 (2003), 129–45. I thank Michael Kulikowski for suggesting that Valila might have married a member of the Bassus family.

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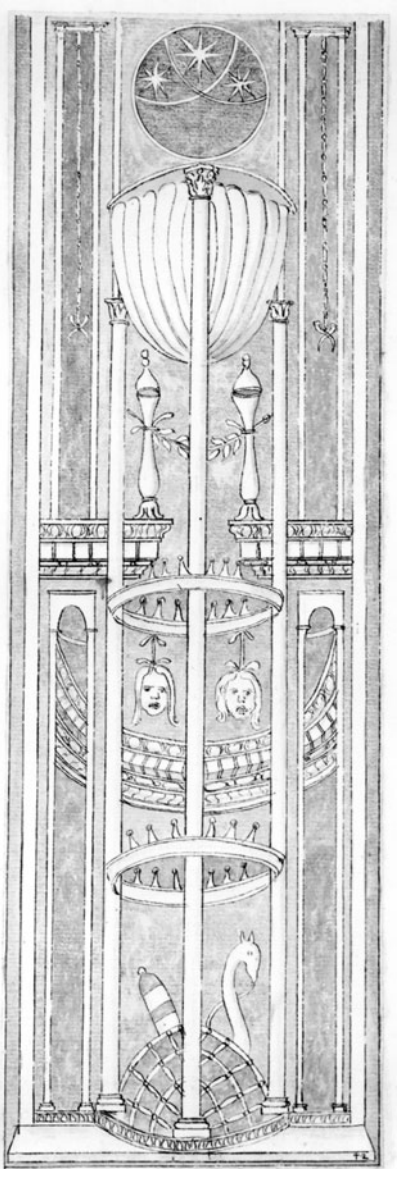

Fig. 6. Antonio Eclissi, Drawing of the Delphic tripod panel from the basilica of Junius Bassus / Sant'Andrea Catabarbara, Windsor Castle, Royal Collection Picture Library neg. no. RL 9031. Royal Collection Trust © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, 2013.

conversion into a unique church that resolutely maintained traces of its original function and documented Bassus's initial sponsorship. Christian liturgies occurring in the transformed basilica created a provocative dialogue between the honorific traditions of the Roman élite and the emerging culture of Christian patronage.

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VALILA'S PATRONAL IDENTITY

Valila reframed Junius Bassus's interior scheme, paying homage to the original founder and at the same time affirming his own position within the Christian community under the leadership of the pope. The Goth Valila had risen through the ranks from the position of a soldier to become the military commander of the western imperial troops after the death of Ricimer.[26] Yet Valila subtly denied his role as an élite soldier and Goth by pursuing patronage to affiliate himself with the Christian aristocracy. Around the time of Ricimer's death in 472, Valila began to pursue both civic and church benefactions, as documents from Rome and Cornuta (near Tivoli) attest.[27] Despite his Germanic name, Valila as a sponsor primarily sought élite status and barely pegged any of his identity on his ethnicity. Indeed, Germanic groups living in the empire often affiliated themselves with multi-ethnic military regiments in the imperial service so that they were bound together as Roman soldiers after having left their native lands.[28] Hardly a barbarian, Valila had acquired impressive property holdings that he handed over to the bishop for churches in Rome and the area near Tivoli, while he retained use of the properties during his lifetime and stipulated that his descendants could regain ownership if the bishop did not use the funds as instructed.[29] Valila's legal savvy, together with his rights as a citizen to bequeath land and dictate a last will with the protection of Roman civil law, allowed him to write a unique foundation charter for the church near Tivoli in which his family's lasting prominence could be upheld.[30]

Some variance in Valila's name as recorded in documentary sources raises the issue of masking the military associations of his Germanic sounding name. One document attests that in 471 Valila deployed two names, 'Fl(avius) Valila' and 'Theodovius', and that he had acquired the aristocratic title of 'most illustrious man' (*vir clarissimus*) after having served as the retainer of the commanding officer (presumably Ricimer) and then later as one of the most powerful military leaders in the west (*com(es) et magister utriusque militiae*). This

[26] H. Castritius, 'Zur Sozialgeschichte der Heermeister des Westrecihs nach der Mitte des 5. Jahrhundert: Flavius Valila qui et Theodovius', *Ancient Society* 3 (1972), 234–43. In sponsoring Sant'Andrea Catabarbara, Valila might have wished to emulate the half-Gothic Ricimer's own church sponsorship at Sant'Agata dei Goti; *ICUR* 2.127: *FLA RICIMER VI MAG UTRIUSQ MILITIAE EXCONS ORD PRO VOTO SVO ADORNAVIT*. See also J. Zeiller, 'Les églises ariennes de Rome à l'époque de la domination gothique', *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'École Française de Rome* 25 (1905), 128–30.

[27] Castritius, 'Zur Sozialgeschichte' (above, n. 26), 234–5; P. MacGeorge, *Late Roman Warlords* (Oxford, 2002), 225.

[28] Amory, *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy* (above, n. 4), 13–42.

[29] D. De Francesco, *Le proprietà fondiaria nel Lazio, secoli IV–VIII. Storia e topografia* (Rome, 2004), 95–114.

[30] R.W. Mathisen, '*Peregrini*, *barbarai* and *cives romani*: concepts of citizenship and the legal identity of barbarians in the later Roman Empire', *American Historical Review* 111 (2006), 1,034–5.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0068246213000111 Published online by Cambridge University Press

document appears in the foundation charter for the now-lost church near Tivoli situated on land that Valila handed over to the bishop for an endowment.[31] Another document attesting to Valila was studied by Christian Hülsen, who identified a reserved box-seat at the Colosseum in Rome that belonged to the same individual who sponsored the Tivoli church. The amphitheatre inscription refers to 'Fl(avius) Theodobius', with a common inversion of the 'b' and 'v', indicating the same aristocratic rank (*vir clarissimus*) and the same élite post (*comes et magister utriusque militiae*) as the document from Tivoli.[32] The Colosseum inscription completely omits the Goth's family name, Valila. Yet in the Tivoli charter he uses the name Flavius Valila and Theodovius to unite his Gothic heritage with his Latinity. Due to the overlap in barbarian and military associations with his Germanic name, Valila opted to alternately include or erase his ethnicity.

Valila was eager to craft an everlasting record of his role as a lay patron of the church situated on his estate near Tivoli, the *ecclesia Cornutatensis,* which he accomplished by drafting the charter specifying how his endowment was to be used after his death. While Valila was lavish in his generosity that provided for the Tivoli church, he insisted that he could enjoy his property during his lifetime on terms that were apparently advantageous to the donor.[33] More importantly, Valila negotiated legal terms in the charter specifying that he could retain rights over the property if priests or the bishop alienated his donations intended for the church near Tivoli.[34] Valila, in the *Charta Cornutiana*, continues by insisting that, if his own desires are violated in the future, his heirs

[31] The document, the *Charta Cornutiana,* exists in a medieval copy of the fifth-century foundation charter for the now destroyed church near Tivoli of Santa Maria in Cornuta; it is published in Duchesne (ed.), *Liber Pontificalis* (above, n. 11), I, cxlvi–cxlvii: 'Fl(avius) Valila qui et Theodovius v(ir) c(larissimus) et inl(ustris) et com(es) et magister utriusque militae'. See also *PLRE* II.1147. Late antique donors wishing to leave funds for a church in perpetuity had to transfer the land to the bishop's individual control. Valila funded lighting, personnel and the building maintenance of the *ecclesia Cornutanensis*, but claimed the right to reappropriate the land for himself or his survivors if the funds were diverted to any use not specified in the charter; see J. Hillner, 'Families, patronage, and the titular churches of Rome, *c.* 300–*c.* 600', in K. Cooper and J. Hillner (eds), *Religion, Dynasty, and Patronage in Early Christian Rome, 300–900* (Cambridge, 2007), 225–61.

[32] C. Hülsen, 'Il fondatore della Basilica di Sant'Andrea sull'Esquilino', *Nuovo Bullettino di Archeologia Cristiana 5* (1899), 172. The inscription is *CIL* VI 32169: *FL(avius) THEODOBIUS V(ir) C(larissimus) ET IN(lustris) COM(es) ET MAG(ister) VTRIVSQ(ve) MILIT(iae)*. See also S. Orlandi, *Epigrafia anfiteatrale dell'occidente romano* VI. *Roma. Anfiteatri e strutture annesse con una nuova edizione e commento delle iscrizioni del Colosseo* (Rome, 2004), 320, 513–16.

[33] *Charta Cornutiana* (in Duchesne (ed.), *Liber Pontificalis* (above, n. 11), I, cxlvi): 'retento mihi usufructu vitae meae eidem ecclesiae catholicae proprietatem huius epistolae largitione transscribens, ea lege et condicione ut cum etiam fructus post obitum meum capere ceperit ac sibimet vindicare'.

[34] *Charta Cornutiana* (in Duchesne (ed.), *Liber Pontificalis* (above, n. 11), I, cxlvii): 'Illud ante omnia mea cautione prospiciens ne mecum, quod absit, observatio cultusque ecclesiae Cornutianensis videatur occidere, ut legem et condicionem ponerem donationi meae, ne umquam cuilibet antistitum presbiterorum: sibimet et succedentium vel clericorum quicquam ex his praediis vel hortis vel speciebus argeneis seu vestibus codicibus(q)ue a me supra designatis alienare in

may regain control over the property.[35] Clearly, Valila took legal measures ensuring that his memory as a donor would survive together with guaranteeing that his own salvation resulted from the lasting foundation of a church.

In Rome, Valila consolidated his élite status by bequeathing property to establish Sant'Andrea Catabarbara. For the foundation of a church dedicated to Saint Andrew, Valila made a one-time donation of the Esquiline structure together with additional property to the bishop's church. Julia Hillner has defined the process through which donors transferred property to the bishop for individual salvation due to documents specifying that patrons were concerned to see their gifts used properly for liturgical spaces. Indeed, sponsors were cautious in creating endowments in perpetuity, since permanent donations relinquished control over property.[36] Implicitly, a layman such as Valila upheld the Roman civic tradition of receiving honour in exchange for a benefaction, since the benefits redounded to the donor who technically handed over property to the bishop's church. The preservation of the original inscription within the Roman basilica indicates that Valila, whose endowments for churches in Rome and Tivoli constructed a permanent legacy for his own descendants, sought élite status for his descendants when he undertook church patronage.

SANT'ANDREA CATABARBARA

The renewal of the Esquiline basilica after Valila's bequest to establish a church in the 470s linked the process of converting the building with the transformation of Rome. Apart from the insertion of an altar and an apse mosaic, the fourth-century interior remained unchanged after the structure was dedicated as a church. Maintaining the integrity of the old basilica was necessary to document the process of superimposing the church onto the memories of Junius Bassus. In the inscriptions below the mosaic, as mentioned earlier, Valila's identity was juxtaposed to that of the basilica's original founder, since the Christian inscription was situated immediately above the preserved text recording Junius Bassus's munificence. As a result, Valila acquired the honours that had once accrued to Junius Bassus after the basilica on the Esquiline was transformed.[37]

aliam quolibet titulo umquam liceat, aut certe sub occasione cultus divini ad alterius ecclesiae ornatum qualicumque ex occasione transferre'.

[35] *Charta Cornutiana* (in Duchesne (ed.), *Liber Pontificalis* (above, n. 11), I, cxlvii): 'Quod etiam in his observari eadem condicione volo quae futuro tempore fuerint provacatione nostrae devotionis adiecta, quoniam largitatis nostrae praesentis perpetuam praefatae ecclesiae cupio pertinere substantiam. Quod si quicquam de alienatione a me prohibita fuerit forte temptatum, tunc ego vel heres heredes(q)ue vel successor successorosque mei vel qui illis deinceps successerint, universa quae huius donationis sunt tenore conprehensa ad suum ius proprietatemque reducant'.

[36] Hillner, 'Families, patronage, and the titular churches of Rome' (above, n. 31), 257–60.

[37] Pope Simplicius acted as the one who dedicated the church, in other words as the recipient of the donation. See Duchesne (ed.), *Liber Pontificalis* (above, n. 11), I, 249: 'Hic dedicavit …

The fifth-century inscription memorialized the monument's role as a domestic space transformed into a church. In the epigraphic text, Pope Simplicius appears as the religious founder while Valila receives credit as the donor.

> Valila's wish was to consecrate his estates to benefit you, Christ;
> To you this testator has dedicated his resources.
> Pope Simplicius, by making the adjustments for heavenly rites,
> Rendered these things truly in your service.
> And because we lack the house (threshold),
> He arranged for these things [to be] in the name of the apostolic martyr, Andrew.
> This church, as your heir, takes possession of its lawful title (*titulus iustus*)
> And, being your successor, it [the church] places mystical laws in the house.
> Come, devout people, and learn from this transaction,
> To seek the heavenly kingdom with earthly wealth (*census*).[38]

The inscription characterizes the architectural transformation as resulting from Valila's bequest to the bishop, who dedicated to Saint Andrew what had once been part of the testator's estate. Simplicius, according to the donation text, designated the church as the heir in the sense that the community held the property even if technically the bishop inherited it. Indeed, there is a parallel construction between the legitimate inheritance (*titulus iustus*) and the church's insertion of mystical laws (*mystica iura*) in the house (*domus*), because the law legitimizes Valila's donation to the bishop of Rome as well as allowing for the mystical laws that turned the pre-existing building into a church serving a community. By implication, the consecration by Pope Simplicius paved the way for practising the heavenly rites therein. Plausibly, Valila donated property for Sant'Andrea Catabarbara in a process resembling that for the titular churches of Rome, even though the Esquiline church does not number among the 29 *tituli* listed in an amendment to the *Acts* of a synod in the year 499.[39] Recently, Hillner has recognized that the phrase *titulus iustus* designates the process through which the church of Rome legitimately acquired property from private donors. She further has speculated that the list of 499 features some but not all of the titular churches in Rome, because she has claimed that the *tituli* were churches that resulted from legitimate bequests or from private

basilicam beati apostoli Andreae, iuxta basilicam Sanctae Mariae'. Here, the official biographer credits Pope Simplicius with the dedication of Sant'Andrea Catabarbara.

[38] *ILCV*, 1785: *HAEC TIBI MENS VALILAE DEVOVIT PRAEDIA CHRISTE/ CUI TESTATOR OPES DETULIT IPSE SUAS./ SIMPLICIUS QU(a)E PAPA SACRIS CAELESTIBUS APTANS/ EFFECIT VERE MUNERIS ESSE TUI./ ET QUOD APOSTOLICI DEESSENT LIMINA NOBIS/ MARTIRIS ANDREAE NOMINE COMPOSUIT./ UTITUR HAEC HERES TITULIS ECCLESIA IUSTIS/ SUCCEDENSQ(ue) DOMO MYSTICA IURA LOCAT./ PLEBS DEVOTA VENI, PERQ(ue) HAEC COMMERCIA DISCE/ TERRENO CENSU REGNA SUPERNA PETI.* The now-lost inscription was recorded by Philipp de Winghe in a manuscript in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cod. Vat. Lat. 10545, fol. 227v. The author thanks Maura Lafferty for generous assistance with the translation.

[39] The list of 29 titular churches is amended to *Acta Syn. a 499* in T. Mommsen (ed.), *MGH, Auctores Antiquissimi*, vol. 12 (Berlin, 1894), 410–15. See also J. Hillner, 'Clerics, property, and patronage: the case of the Roman titular churches', *Antiquité Tardive* 14 (2006), 59–68.

individuals.[40] After an analysis of the physical remains of the *tituli*, Federico Guidobaldi proposed that a number of the titular churches occupied formerly aristocratic houses in Rome.[41] Even if Sant'Andrea Catabarbara did not meet the full criteria to be called a *titulus* in 499, its inscription certainly used the term for a proper inheritance, *titulus iustus*, to characterize the transaction between Valila and Simplicius.

The inscription emphasizes Valila's intentions as a testator even though the text may have been installed after the donor's death. Clearly, the first line underlines the patron's wishes regarding the one-time donation of his estates. Further, the church is the designated successor of the testator rather than the donor's family members. In addition, Valila implicitly hoped to gain salvation or access to the heavenly kingdom by donating his earthly wealth to the bishop's church, which plausibly was the donor's primary concern. A titular church designated a foundation in which a legitimate donation from a private source established liturgical space for the Christian community of Rome. As private foundations, the titular churches necessitated proper procedures for transferring private property to the bishop's church. In some cases, such as the *titulus Pammachii*, the titular church was actually named for a lay founder. Yet the management of property and the formation of endowments was a concern of both priests and the bishop, whose interests sometimes clashed with those of the donor. Hillner's investigation of the term *titulus* in donation documents has pointed out that the word was used when private individuals made donations for churches in singular acts that maximized the donor's oversight, avoiding perpetual endowments for which there was no control.[42] In other cases, the titular priests may have played an important role, either in collecting individual donations or in the oversight of patrimonies technically controlled by the bishop but typically administered by the individual priests.[43] According to Kristina Sessa, the word *titulus* indicates the legal process through which private property was transferred to the bishop of Rome; yet a titular church was one in which a titular priest played an instrumental role in providing for the financial and

[40] Hillner, 'Families, patronage, and the titular churches of Rome' (above, n. 31), 237–48, 257–61.

[41] F. Guidobaldi, 'Roma. Il tessuto abitativo, le domus e i tituli', in A. Carandini, A. Momigliano and A. Schiavone (eds), *Storia di Roma* (Turin, 1993), vol. 3.2, 76; F. Guidobaldi, 'L'inserimento delle chiese titolari di Roma nel tessuto urbano preesistente: osservazioni ed implicazioni', in F. Bisconti and P. Pergola, *Quaeritur, inventus, colitur: miscellanea in onore di Umberto Maria Fasola* (Vatican City, 1989), 383–96.

[42] Hillner, 'Families, patronage, and the titular churches of Rome' (above, n. 31), 259. The concerns of the lay aristocracy to control their donations that they implemented by founding titular churches was mitigated by the sometimes divergent goals of the bishop; see J.A. Latham, 'From literal to spiritual soldiers of Christ: disputed episcopal elections and the advent of Christian processions in late antique Rome', *Church History* 81 (2012), 327.

[43] K. Sessa, *The Formation of Papal Authority in Late Antique Italy: Roman Bishops and the Domestic Sphere* (Cambridge, 2012), 230–5.

liturgical needs of a community.[44] As a result, Valila technically may not have produced a titular church; yet the practices of lay donations associated with the *tituli* apply to his last will.

The emphasis on the donor in the fifth-century inscription from Sant'Andrea Catabarbara attests that Valila acquired the long-standing honours that accrued through patronage; indeed, the survival of pagan imagery on the interior together with the preserved testimony to Junius Bassus's status must have benefited Valila rather than the pope. The inscription accords a high degree of prestige to Valila, naming him prominently in the first line where he presumably wished to receive credit. Given Valila's concern to orchestrate the specific use of his property in the *Charta Cornutiana*, there is no evidence that the Goth simply handed over his property on the Esquiline so that Pope Simplicius could proceed in forming a church. Rather, Valila shaped a church in which the lay testator and his heirs were recorded as patrons so that the original donor's identity came to the fore. Finally, Valila explicitly drew upon the ideal of architectural conservation as a late antique project in which the restorer accrued the fame of the original founder.[45] Expanding upon the old concept of patronage, Valila altered the tradition of restoration as benefaction by pursuing a legitimate donation (*titulus iustus*) to the bishop that allowed the lay donor to dictate the terms of the transformed building's continued use as a church.

Valila's identity resulted in part from a provocative dialogue between the fifth-century apse mosaic and the preserved inlaid marble imagery originating from the time of Junius Bassus. The now-lost apsidal decoration can be witnessed only in a seventeenth-century drawing illustrating six apostles flanking Christ, who donates the law to Saint Peter in a traditional format for Roman apsidal schemes (Fig. 7).[46] In the mosaic, Christ appears at the centre of paradise, indicated by the four rivers below his feet: with his left hand he gives the scroll of the law to Saint Peter, while with his right arm he blesses Saint Paul. By showing Christ handing over the law to the apostle of Rome, the mosaic of Sant'Andrea Catabarbara highlighted the transference of authority to Saint Peter as the origin of papal authority over the Roman church.[47] Implicitly, Pope Simplicius, identified by name in the inscription, consecrated the formerly secular hall for Christian liturgies. The transformed purpose of the late antique basilica thus formed the basis for the building's ultimate meaning as a church. A crucial component of the architectural reuse at Sant'Andrea Catabarbara involved the pictorial assertion that Christ, whose image dominated the apsidal composition installed in the

[44] Sessa, *The Formation of Papal Authority* (above, n. 43), 233–4.

[45] Thomas and Witschel, 'Constructing reconstruction' (above, n. 3).

[46] The papal donation implies that Valila was a Nicene Christian. For a comparison of Valila with Ricimer's Arian patronage of Sant'Agata dei Goti in Rome, see R.W. Mathisen, 'Ricimer's church in Rome: how an Arian barbarian prospered in a Nicene world', in A. Cain and N. Lenski (eds), *The Power of Religion in Late Antiquity* (Surrey, 2009), 307–26.

[47] For the significance of images showing Christ handing the law to Saint Peter, see C. Davis-Weyer, 'Das Traditio-Legis-Bild und seine Nachfolge', *Münchner Jahrbuch der Bildenden Kunst* n.s. 12 (1961), 20, 36.

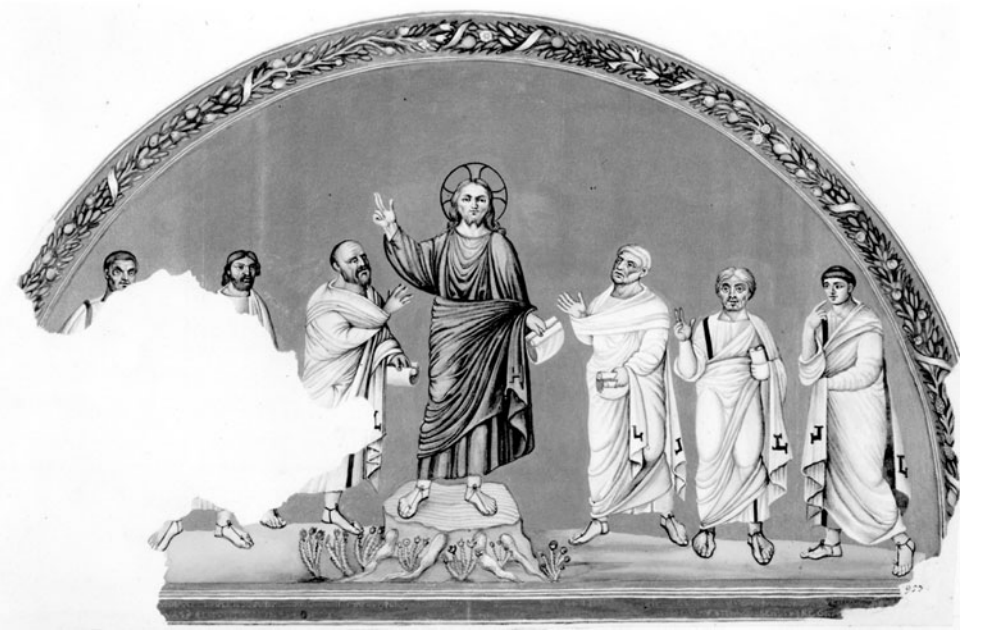

Fig. 7. Drawing of the apse mosaic of Sant'Andrea Catabarbara in Rome from the Cassiano dal Pozzo Collection, Windsor Castle, Royal Collection Picture Library neg. no. RL 9172. Royal Collection Trust © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, 2013.

church, supplanted the formerly domestic basilica in which Bassus had once presided. Finally, the fourth-century decorations remained on view, hinting that there was a subtext to maintaining an affiliation between Valila and Bassus family members: this alliance provided the Goth with a Roman aristocratic identity.

RECONTEXTUALIZING PAGAN IMAGERY

In the Christianized basilica, Valila's preservation of pagan imagery on the interior is more difficult to explain than maintaining the panels indicating Bassus's status as consul. One drawing prepared in the 1630s for the Cassiano dal Pozzo collection shows a now-lost *opus sectile* panel from the basilica featuring the Delphic tripod dedicated to Apollo (Fig. 6).[48] Both a phallus and a python emerge from the base of the tripod, indicating its apotropaic purpose. These attributes belong to Delphic Apollo and attest to Junius Bassus's commitment to polytheistic rites. An adjacent scene illustrating the rape of Hylas depicts the legendary tale of an attractive young man whom Hercules pursued; the image points towards the late antique literary interest in love that confers immortality

[48] Becatti, *Scavi di Ostia* VI (above, n. 18), 202–4.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0068246213000111 Published online by Cambridge University Press

(Fig. 1). Pairing the image of Hylas with the Delphic tripod alludes to terracotta reliefs illustrating the struggle between Hercules and Apollo over the Delphic tripod from the Palatine Temple of Apollo in Rome; this traditionally all-male precinct resounded with memories that Hercules had been punished for cross-dressing while under the servitude of Queen Omphale.[49] In a general sense, the rape of Hylas panel from the Esquiline basilica refers to Hercules having abandoned a military campaign against the Argonauts to search for his same-sex lover, calling viewers' attention to the gendered connotations of putting aside arms. Given the display in the fourth-century basilica, the image implies that Junius Bassus sought to achieve fame through his erudite allusions to Hercules and Hylas as ones who had stepped down from their military posts. Plausibly, fourth-century audiences understood the parallel between Hercules and Bassus in the light of the patron's promotion from a military post to the lofty status of praetorian prefect and then consul.

The panel featuring the rape of Hylas prompted further considerations of gender and sexuality in the original context of the Bassus basilica (Fig. 1). Hylas is shown wearing only a red cape as two nymphs lustfully subdue him in a rare image of rape initiated by women. In legends, Hylas appears as an emblem of male beauty that sparked Hercules's attention. After their separation, Hercules and Hylas never did reunite, as the latter had been abducted by the water nymphs.[50] The *opus sectile* panel from the late antique basilica does not portray Hercules, since it focuses on the moment when Hylas, shown in the nude, was victimized by the two female nymphs accompanied by a personification of a spring at the far right. The figure of Hylas emphasizes sexual passivity, since Romans viewed male submission to female desires as an inversion of normative masculinity.[51] Nevertheless, Hylas's beauty earned him immortality, which Theocritus contrasts with Hercules's loss of heroism after deserting combat to seek the youth; passivity in love trumps passivity in battle.[52] Hylas, it could be argued, launched submission as an unexpectedly masculine virtue. The image in the late antique basilica points toward an identity that Junius Bassus embraced; perhaps the consul used the depiction of Hylas to adduce parallels between Hercules sacrificing his military virility and Hylas forsaking sexual dominance. Both Hercules and Hylas raise gender issues that focus on unconventional paths along which men pursued lasting fame while negotiating masculinity. Junius Bassus presumably appreciated that the Hylas and tripod panels in the basilica made erudite allusions to the consul's

[49] T. Welch, 'Masculinity and monuments in Propertius 4.9', *American Journal of Philology* 125 (2004), 61–90.

[50] Statius, *Silvae* 1.5.22, 2.1.106–36; for a discussion of recent restorations to this panel, see R. Paris, 'Il pannello con Hylas e le ninfe della basilica di Giunio Basso', *Bollettino di Archeologia* 6 (1990), 194–202.

[51] G. Halsall, 'Gender and the end of empire', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 34 (2004), 22–3.

[52] Theocritus, *Idyll* 13.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0068246213000111 Published online by Cambridge University Press

own unprecedented route to fame, the details of which unfortunately remain obscure.

There is no coherent explanation for the continued display of the Hylas panel inside Sant'Andrea Catabarbara. Yet could Hylas be considered an appropriate figure for inclusion within a fifth-century church? One might see Hylas as standing in for the Christian ideal of a martyr enduring suffering, since Christian hagiographic texts affirmed the saintly submission to pain in non-sexual contexts.[53] Further, early Christian literary approaches to masculinity affirmed the virtue of the male saint experiencing pain, and this differed subtly from the ancient affirmation of masculine aggression.[54] None the less, one would be hard pressed to affirm a positive Christian reading of the defiantly immodest Hylas scene. In the end, Christian viewers saw Hylas neither as a model of masculinity nor as a precursor to the self-sacrifice of the martyrs, since such interpretations would have been forestalled by the image's explicit sexual content.[55]

Curiously, the fifth-century transformation of Junius Bassus's basilica did not cause the racy panel depicting the abduction of Hylas to be removed. While baptismal symbolism might have been applied to the nymphs submerging Hylas in water, there is little evidence suggesting that the sexual content of the rape image fostered an association with ritual cleansing. In addition, the Christian author Prudentius, in his poetic invective against the pagan senator Symmachus, is offended by Hylas being honoured at a temple on the Aventine Hill in Rome. The author, writing in the first decade of the fifth century, objects to the rites continually celebrated at an ancient shrine in Rome established long ago by members of the Pinarii family.

> The passion of Heracles, who was famous for his love of the soft boy, became excited as if on the decks while Argon thrashed about on the sea, and he was ashamed that he did not remain under the skin of the Nemean [lion] during sex and to seek out Hylas as if he were an unmarried man. And now the [members of] the Pinarian house celebrate by singing in a temple that is situated on the slope of the Aventine Hill.[56]

[53] C.A. Barton, 'Savage miracles: the redemption of lost honor in Roman society and the sacrament of the gladiator and the martyr', *Representations* 45 (1994), 41–71. I extend my appreciation to David Defries for bringing this article to my attention.

[54] 'B. Shaw, 'Body/power/identity: passions of the martyrs', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4 (1996), 278–87.

[55] Gregory of Nyssa's discussion of themes from Plato's *Symposium* theorizes masculine love under a feminized definition: Gregory of Nyssa, *The Soul and the Resurrection*, ed. and trans. C. P. Roth (Crestwood (NY), 1993); see V. Burrus, *'Begotten Not Made': Conceiving Manhood in Late Antiquity* (Stanford (CA), 2000), 112–22.

[56] Prudentius, *Contra Orationem Symmachi*, 1.115–21, ed. H.J. Thomsen (Cambridge (MA), 1949), 358–9: 'Herculeus mollis pueri famosus amore/ ardor et in transtris iactata efferbuit Argo, / nec maris erubuit Nemea sub pelle fovere / concubitus et Hylam pereuntem quaerere caelebs. / Nunc Saliis cantuque domus Pinaria templum / collis Aventini convexa in sede frequentat'.

Even if Prudentius expresses a narrow view of gender roles to register his complaints against Hercules, the Christian author vehemently objects to the cults of both Hercules and Hylas practised in Rome. Yet, in the same poem, Prudentius redeems classical images as works of art after they had been cleaned up by removing the taint of sacrifice. 'Wash clean the marbles spattered with the stain of putrid blood', writes Prudentius addressing aristocrats. 'Let the statues, the works of great artists, be allowed to remain once cleansed. Let them be the country's most treasured ornaments.'[57] With reference to the élite's interest in classical traditions, Prudentius only accepts the legacy of classical antiquity if the past instigated cultural transformation when aristocrats underwent religious conversion to Christianity. Prudentius mentions that a 'Bassus did not hesitate to surrender to Christ and to lift up the proud stock of a patrician clan to meet the age that was to come'.[58] Prudentius implies that the lasting fame of the Bassus family resulted from the conversion of some of its members.

Strategies for maintaining some physical traces of polytheism indicate that fifth-century Roman audiences enjoyed classical culture as long as it was firmly bracketed in the past. One method of situating paganism in a distant age was to impose literary or artistic readings that masked offensive themes. Macrobius's *Saturnalia*, a text now dated to the 430s, records that the élite of Rome proudly displayed their erudition concerning the minutiae of pagan religious practices.[59] Macrobius demonstrates in his fictional account of the discussions among powerful senators that learning about pagan religion fostered the rhetorical abilities of poets, hinting that the old religion could be admired for advancing literary skills.[60] Comprehensive knowledge of the classics characterized the élite during the fifth century; thus pagan art could be enjoyed for upholding literary standards, and knowledge of these traditions could Romanize a foreigner. In addition, recontextualization severed an artwork's link to its original purpose, such as when the Hylas panel was juxtaposed to the apsidal mosaic with Christ and the apostles. Preserving the ancient representations of Hylas and the tripod must not have represented a throwback to polytheistic rites, but rather introduced an allegory for the transformation of Rome.

[57] Prudentius, *Contra Orationem Symmachi* (above, n. 56), 1.501–4: 'Marmora tabenti respergine tincta lavate, / O procures! Liceat statuas consistere puras, / Artificum magnorum opera; haec pulcherrima nostrae / Ornamenta fiant patriae'.

[58] Prudentius, *Contra Orationem Symmachi* (above, n. 56), I.558: 'non Bassorum dubitavit / prompta fides dare se Christo stirpemque superbam / gentis particiae venturo attollere saeclo'.

[59] The date in the 430s is argued by A. Cameron, 'The date and identity of Macrobius', *Journal of Roman Studies* 56 (1966), 25–38; S. Panciera, 'Iscrizioni senatorie di Roma e dintorni', in *Epigrafia e ordine senatorio, Atti del colloquio internazionale AIEGL* (Rome, 1982), 658–60.

[60] J.F. Matthews, 'Continuity in a Roman family: the Rufii Festi of Volsinii', *Historia* 16 (1967), 507.

IDENTITY AND ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION

A preservationist strategy ensured the upkeep of the fourth-century marbles from the basilica of Junius Bassus, due in part to laws and ancient traditions dictating that civic structures and their ornaments be maintained. For example, in the year 458 a legal text from Majorian's Fourth Novel complains that, 'under the pretense that the materials are needed for public works, the beautiful structures of ancient monuments are being pulled down in order that something small be repaired'.[61] To counter destruction, legislation guaranteed the city's integrity by finding new functions for buildings that no longer served their original purposes.[62] Even after considering the late antique legislation that fostered heritage conservation, preserving polytheistic decoration within a church invites further reflection.

The maintenance of late Roman art within Sant'Andrea Catabarbara suggests that Christianization was not necessarily a destructive process, but rather one that resulted in a provocative interplay between polytheistic traditions and Christian insertions. Briefly, Valila preserved pagan imagery from the basilica of Junius Bassus so as to associate his own personality with the building's layered architectural past. Valila's negotiation of Gothic ethnicity with the culture of Latinity offers a parallel to the superimposition of Christian mosaics onto the fourth-century imagery at the Esquiline basilica. Judging from the maintenance of patronal imagery depicting Junius Bassus at his consular games, Valila wished to elevate his own status by associating himself with an earlier civic benefactor.

Valila lived through the collapse of the west as a realm with its own emperor within the larger Roman Empire, since the last western ruler, Romulus Augustus, was deposed in 476. During the period when Valila prepared for his civic gift to Pope Simplicius, donating to imperial authorities was probably impossible in the west and the church presented a more likely recipient of a major gift. In the will that rendered lawful title (*titulus iustus*) to the pope for the purposes of ensuring that the testator's wishes be upheld, Valila negotiated for some control as he donated his estate to the bishop's church.[63] In addition, Pope Simplicius was anxious to earn civic authority through a strategic alliance with a member of the lay élite. A generation after Valila, the Ostrogothic King Theoderic positioned himself as if an imperially sanctioned ruler in the west and restored ancient buildings in Rome such as the aqueducts, the Circus Maximus and the Theatre of Pompey; these projects erased the rough edges from Theoderic's Ostrogothic identity.[64] Theoderic returned to the secular patronage that Valila

[61] *Novellae Maiorianai* 4.1 (*Leges novellae ad Theodosianum pertinentes*, ed. P. Meyer and T. Mommsen (Berlin, 1905), 161): 'Dum necessaria publico operi saxa finguntur, antiquarum aedium dissipatur speciosa constructio et ut parvum aliquid reparetur, magna diruuntur'.

[62] *Codex Theodosianus* 1.15.1 (*Theodosiani libri XVI*, above, n. 2).

[63] Hillner, 'Families, patronage, and the titular churches of Rome' (above, n. 31), 235–7.

[64] Theatre of Pompey: Cassiodorus, *Variae* 4.51 (ed. 'T. Mommsen, *MGH, Auctores Antiquissimi* 12 (Berlin, 1894)); Circus Maximus: Cassiodorus, *Variae* 3.51; aqueducts:

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0068246213000111 Published online by Cambridge University Press

could not have upheld in the 470s, suggesting that the uncomfortable melding of secular and Christian traditions at Sant'Andrea Catabarbara resulted from a patron who was restricted to church sponsorship. Valila maintained the fourth-century inlaid marble panels inside the transformed secular basilica on the Esquiline in order to update ancient traditions of patronage while nevertheless preserving the memories of Junius Bassus. The status of the original benefactor had been recorded for generations, indicating to Valila that architectural transformation could instigate a revision of Roman honorific culture while the memories of the city's built heritage and its aristocratic patrons were preserved all the while.

CONCLUSION

The conversion of the hall on the Esquiline into the church of Sant'Andrea Catabarbara created a parallel between the physical transformation of the structure and Valila's personal identity. The juxtaposition of pagan and Christian decorative schemes resounded with the patronage goals that Valila pursued as the donor of property to the church, but the meaning of the imagery remains somewhat elusive. For example, did Valila retain the pre-existing decorations that Junius Bassus produced in defiance of Pope Simplicius, who might not have wished the Hylas scene to remain *in situ*? The preserved imagery produced originally for the Esquiline basilica hinted toward the integrity of Rome's pagan past even after the conversion into a church. Inlaid marbles preserved within the fifth-century church turned the imagery of Rome's senatorial legacy into the building blocks for constructing Valila's *Romanitas*. The fifth-century transformation memorialized the past while acknowledging the temporal shifts and the alteration of memories.

Valila's aristocratic Christianity also expressed the fact that élite identity had undergone a transformation after the early fourth century when Junius Bassus lived, since ethnicity, élite status and property holdings conditioned an individual's aspiration for salvation. The dialogue between Roman traditions and the layered identity of Valila as a Goth, a Roman senator and a military commander contributed to his Christian model of patronage. Fragmented pieces from Rome's past were maintained on the interior of Sant'Andrea Catabarbara, providing a physical expression of Valila's status as a Roman Goth turned Christian aristocrat.

Ironically, the ultimate destruction of this church's decoration was a result of what some Romans during the late Renaissance viewed as a barbarian form of behaviour. In the late sixteenth century French monks believed that the mortar

Cassiodorus, *Variae* 7.6. See also G. della Valle, 'Teodorico e Roma', *Rendiconti della Accademia di Archeologia, Lettere e Belle Arti di Napoli* n.s. 34 (1959), 119–32; M.J. Johnson, 'Toward a history of Theoderic's building program', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 42 (1988), 73–96.

holding together the tesserae of the apse mosaic at Sant'Andrea Catabarbara contained pieces of martyrs' bones. For cures, these monks effectively demolished the walls of the Esquiline church to ingest the supposedly healing plaster. By the seventeenth century, the destructive behaviour of the French monks came to the attention of the early modern author Giacomo Grimaldi, who called them 'barbarians', since their desire for cures imperilled the Roman monument.[65]

Address for correspondence:
Dr Gregor Kalas
School of Architecture, University of Tennessee, 1715 Volunteer Blvd, Knoxville, TN 37996-2400, USA.
gkalas@utk.edu

[65] Giacomo Grimaldi in the seventeenth century wrote, 'Galli illi barbari, qui ecclesie ipsae Sancti Antonii deserviunt, crassa ignorantia destruunt, et mixturae glutinum, quo incrustationes tenentur, recipiunt ad febres sanandas'. This passage is quoted in Becatti, *Scavi di Ostia* VI (above, n. 18), 184.

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