

DUNCAN FISHWICK

A VOTIVE AEDICULA AT NARBO

aus: Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik 98 (1993) 238–242

© Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, Bonn

A VOTIVE AEDICULA AT NARBO

The term *aedicula* can be used in various senses.¹ As a diminutive of *aedes*, it may denote a chapel constructed in the consecrated periphery of a temple, such as that of *Victoria Virgo* beside the temple of *Victoria* at Rome - or an isolated chapel that was really a small temple, as illustrated frequently in wall-paintings at Herculaneum and Pompeii. Other meanings include a small temple-like *baldaquin* which sheltered the cult image within the *cella*, for example that which accommodated the statue of *Jupiter* at the *Capitoline temple*, also very commonly a niche within the *cella* or *pronaos* that housed a sculpted or painted effigy of some god or hero external to the cult at the temple, as in the *vestibulum* of the *Pantheon*. The sense that concerns us here, however, is the narrower connotation of a *tabernacle-like shrine*, one so small that it could be placed on the table of offerings. What looks to be a good illustration of just such a repository is represented on coins of *Lugdunum* showing two *aediculae* placed on the *Altar of the Three Gauls*; within each can be seen two small statues, doubtless those of *Roma* and *Augustus*.² Receptacles of this kind were transportable - a wall-painting at Pompeii shows porters bearing a columned *aedicula*³ - and appear to have been manufactured and sold in the vicinity of temples to cater to the piety and pride of devotees.

Of particular interest for present purposes is the association of *aediculae* with imperial statues. A well-known inscription from *Forum Clodii*, for example, refers to an *aedicula* evidently intended for statues of *Augustus*, *Tiberius* and *Livia* in connection with rites at the altar of the *Numen Augustum*.⁴ Again, at Rome, three soldiers of the *Twelfth Urban Cohort* are recorded to have made at their own expense *imagines* of *Septimius Severus* and *Caracalla* along with an *aedicula* and an altar which they dedicated on 25th September, A.D. 202; a further text on the reverse of the stone mentions *]?plicitis columni[s]* in connection with the restoration of the shrine, which had deteriorated with age.⁵ In each instance, at both *Forum*

¹ See in general *Daremberg-Saglio, Dictionnaire* 1, 1 (1877) (1962) 92-95 with refs. (*Saglio*); *RE* 1 (1893) 446 (*Habel*). For an *aedicula* of marble holding a statuette of *Terra Mater* see *CIL* 6, 3731 (= *EE* 1, 1872, p. 218, no. 5), reproduced in *Daremberg-Saglio* 5 (1919) (1963) 80, fig. 6780 s.v. *Tellus* (*Hild*).

² *D.Fishwick, The Imperial Cult in the Latin West (EPRO 108)*, Leiden 1987, 1, 1, 124f., Pls. XIII-XVII (hereafter *ICLW*).

³ *Daremberg-Saglio*, above n. 1. (1877) fig. 137.

⁴ *Ti. Caesare tert. Germanico Caesare iter. cos.*, | ... *Aediculam et statuas has, hostiam dedicationi. Victimae natali Aug. VIII k. Octobr. duae, quae p(er)p(etuo) | inmolari adsueta[e] sunt ad aram, quae numini Augusto dedic(ata) est, VIII et VIII k. Octobr.* | ... (*CIL* 11, 3303 = *ILS* 154: A.D. 18).

⁵ *milites coh. XII urb. | ...nomina... | ... | ... | ... | ...imagines domin[o]rum nn. et aediculam et aram de | suo fecerunt; dedicaverunt | VII kal. Octob. duob. Augg. Sevelro III et Antonino Pio cos. (In postica) nomina | ... | ...[. aedicu]llam vetustate v[exatam] ...]plicitis columni[s...et] | ornamentis cum [ara? et] | signo Victoriae...* (*CIL* 6, 218 = *ILS* 2107).

Clodii and Rome, the reference may be to a small repository that could have been placed on the altar rather than to an independent, nearby chapel. Similarly at Bovillae a defective text associates imagines aureae (presumably of the emperor) with an aedicula;⁶ near Rome the imperial slave Faustus erected at his own expense an aedicula evidently for the imagines of Nero and sanctus Silvanus, to whom he dedicated the shrine;⁷ and near the Fucine Lake the imperial freedman and procurator Onesimus looks to have made an aedicula and imagines of the emperor and the Lares, which he then donated to the college of cultores Dei Fucini.⁸

These texts provide an appropriate background against which to analyse an inscription found at Narbonne in 1877. A small fluted column of red marble bears on Allmer's reading the following dedication inscribed on the flat, reverse surface of its surviving lower part:

?I O] M | [...Co]rnelius | [...]thus | [vi vi]r Aug. | [...]as arg. II (CIL 12, 4318).

In view of the small dimensions of the column (23 x 14 cm) it was originally suggested that the piece may have come from a lararium.⁹ More recently M. Gayraud has supposed two silver statues to Jupiter placed on an elegant monument with small columns of red marble.¹⁰ Both hypotheses would accommodate a small, free-standing column but neither takes full account of where the monument may have been placed. The key factor here is that the relic was found on the so-called 'butte des Moulinassès', that is on what archaeological exploration has revealed to be the site of a vast temple. On the standard view this was the great Capitolium of Narbo, celebrated by tradition and in the verses of Ausonius (*Ordo urb. nob.* 19, 14-17) and Sidonius Apollinaris (*Carm.* 23, 39-45). Whether this identification can stand is a thorny problem that lies outside the bounds of the present discussion.¹¹ Suffice it to say that the dedication I O] M, while partly restored,¹² certainly seems to argue in support of the identity of the temple as one of Jupiter; in effect the inscription serves as a sort of identification marker. At the very least one must infer from the find spot that the fragmentary inscribed column was associated in some way with the temple.

⁶ ...l...]di aediculam v[...]ur additis vestibu[s | i]magines aureas n. v[...]ibum(?) posuerunt aream [...]runt tetrastylum marmo[reum | Fa]ustinae Aug. cum statua | in proskenio | [...]um cum statera ante | dedicationem aedis | [e]pul. dederunt | dec. et aug. (denarium) I deder[...] (CIL 14, 2416).

⁷ Neroni Caesari Aug. | et sancto Silvan[o] | aediculam cum imagin. | Faustus Caesaris | d. s. p. [f.] (CIL 6, 927 = ILS 236).

⁸ Onesimus Aug. lib. | proc. | fecit imaginibus et | Laribus cultoribus | Fucini (CIL 9, 3887 = ILS 3626).

⁹ V. Perret, *le Capitole de Narbonne*, Gallia 14, 1956, 1-22 at 6.

¹⁰ M. Gayraud, *Narbonne antique des origines à la fin du IIIe siècle*, RAN Suppl. 8, Paris 1981, 474.

¹¹ For detailed discussion see D. Fishwick, *Un don de statues d'argent à Narbo Martius*, CRAI, 1993, forthcoming.

¹² Hirschfeld supplied ?IO]M and the same hesitation - in the form of an asterix - appears under the name Iuppiter in the *Index of Gods and Goddesses*, CIL 12, p. 925. The restoration looks very probable on purely epigraphic grounds (what else can be proposed ?) and is strongly supported by the content of the inscription and the practice is clearly attests.

For more precise details we can turn to the text itself. Whether the third line should read Co]rnelius [Ina]chus¹³ or ... [An]thus¹⁴ is of marginal interest for present purposes. There is at any rate no good reason to doubt Hirschfeld's restoration in line 4 of vivir Aug(ustalis), an office which has left very considerable traces at Narbo.¹⁵ His proposed completion of line 5 in contrast ?phial]as - is surely wrong. Comparison with other inscriptions that can be brought to bear (below) tells overwhelmingly in favour of the assumption that the two objects of silver were in fact statues or statuettes, in which case the last line of the text will have read statu]as arg(enteas) (duas), as Gayraud saw. What the column records, then, is the dedication to Jupiter Optimus Maximus of two silver statues or statuettes at some unknown date to which neither the text itself nor the local context provides any clue. But if so, where were the statuae erected and whom did they represent?

The first question at any rate can quickly be answered. Given the find spot of the relic, it is crucial to observe that to deposit a statue or indeed an astonishing variety of other articles¹⁶ within a temple was a procedure long established and widespread throughout the Greco-Roman world.¹⁷ Such an object was in theory an offering to the deity but in practice the rite became a conventional way of honouring the god or person represented.¹⁸ A familiar feature of this usage was the offering of a likeness of the deity whose temple it was - occasionally also of some other deity. Often enough, too, multiple representations of the deity in question would be deposited at the same time,¹⁹ much as multiple lamps, for example, might be left as offerings. If that is the situation reflected in CIL 12, 4318, then Cornelius [?]chus will have presented two silver images of a deity - either Jupiter or some other god whose identity we do not know. On either possibility, if the statues were dedicated to Jupiter Optimus Maximus, as looks to be the case, it seems reasonable - if not obligatory - to conclude that the statues were placed in a temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus.

An alternative answer to the second question is the more attractive possibility that the two silver statuae were in fact of the emperor or emperors. That two representations could refer to two emperors is a possibility that certainly cannot be excluded, though multiple statues of

¹³ So Hirschfeld, CIL 12, p. 845, 870.

¹⁴ Gayraud (above n. 10) 271, n. 161 with refs., cf. 370, 567.

¹⁵ R.Duthoy, *Recherches sur la répartition géographique et chronologique des termes sevir Augustalis, Augustalis et sevir dans l'empire romain*, *Epig. Stud.* 11, 1976, 143-214 at 182. See also in general id., *Les *Augustales*, *ANRW* 2, 16, 2, 1978, 1254-1309.

¹⁶ F.T. van Straten, *Gifts for the Gods*, in H.S.Versnel (ed.), *Faith, Hope and Worship. Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World. Studies in Greek and Roman Religion* 2, Leiden 1981, 64-151 at 78ff., noting that temples became so cluttered with votive offerings that the practice had sometimes to be restricted; cf. 105-151: votive offerings representing parts of the human body (the Greek world).

¹⁷ T.Pekáry, *Das römische Kaiserbildnis in Staat, Kult und Gesellschaft. Das römische Herrscherbild*, *Abt.* 3, 5, Berlin 1985, 55-65; Fishwick, *ICLW* (above n. 2), 1991, Vol. 2, 1, 540-550.

¹⁸ D.Fishwick, *The Statue of Julius Caesar in the Pantheon*, *Latomus* 51, 1992, 329f.

¹⁹ C.Letta, *Le imagines Caesarum di un praefectus castrorum Aegypti e l'xi coorte pretoria*, *Athenaeum* 56, 1978, 19, n. 82; R.MacMullan, *Paganism in the Roman Empire*, New Haven 1981, 42 with n. 44 and refs.

a single emperor seem to have been common enough (below). To place a likeness of the emperor or other member(s) of the imperial family in a temple is a practice based upon the rite in relation to the gods and again widespread throughout the Greco-Roman world.²⁰ As a rule, such an image would be placed in the pronaos, but occasionally it could stand in the cella or even beside the cult image as a mark of special honour.²¹ In favour of interpreting the Narbo inscription along these lines is both the number of the statues and the material of which they were made, also the circumstance that the dedication was made by a *sevir Augustalis*, that is a member of a body specifically created to serve the cult of the emperor at the freedman level.²² Multiple imperial statues or busts, usually in precious metal (gold or silver), were in fact commonly placed in temples, whether imperial or of other divinities, as the inscriptions record in abundance.²³ What is of key interest for present purposes, however, is the placing of statues of the emperor in temples at Rome,²⁴ particularly that of Jupiter Optimus Maximus. As seems clear from Pliny's account of Domitian's excesses, it was in fact standard procedure to deposit imperial images at the Capitoline temple - where Domitian had erred was in placing his own (golden?) images beside the cult statue (Pliny, *Paneg.* 52, 3) - and continuation of the practice is later reported in reference to both Caracalla (*Herodian* 4, 8, 1) and Claudius Gothicus (*Epit. de Caes.* 34, 4; *Eutrop.*, *Brev.* 9, 11, 2). That a similar rite was followed at Capitolia in the provinces is confirmed at Arsinoe at least by temple records relating to the visit of the provincial prefect Septimius Heraclitus in A.D. 215.²⁵

What these varied testimonia suggest, then, is that the two silver objects offered by the *sevir* Cornelius []chus may very well have been statues or statuettes of the emperor. If so, it now becomes possible to propose an alternative hypothesis regarding the original context of the small marble column at Narbonne. The piece itself is lost and all that we now have is the information recorded on its entry into the Musée Archéologique in 1877 along with the facsimile of the inscription in the *Corpus*.²⁶ Even so we have sufficient data to suggest that

²⁰ For the origins of the usage in the Republican period see K.Tuchelt, *Frühe Denkmäler Roms in Kleinasien. I Roma und Promagistrate*, *IstMitt Beiheft* 23, 1979, 15. See further refs. above, n. 17.

²¹ Fishwick, *ICLW* 2, 1, 547, cf. 543.

²² See in general *ICLW* 2, 1, 609-616.

²³ Cf. Fishwick (above n. 11) citing, for example, *CIL* 12, 6038 = *ILS* 6964, ll. 26f. (Narbo); *CIL* 2, 4230 = *ILS* 6930 (Tarraco); *CIL* 13, 1769 = *ILS* 3208 (Lugdunum); *CIL* 8, 2586 = *ILS* 3281 (Lambaesis); *CIL* 10, 7257 = *ILS* 939 (Mt. Eryx).

²⁴ Cf. *Tac. Ann.* 13, 8, 1 (Temple of Mars Ultor); *CIL* 6, 543 = *ILS* 3544 (temple of Silvanus); *CD* 72, 31, 1; see further *CIL* 14, 5326 (temple of Venus and Roma).

²⁵ Fishwick, *ICLW* 2, 1, 550f. with refs. n. 459. On the view of Pekáry (above n. 17) 96, a parallel example in the West may occur at Brescia, where he suggests that a series of imperial statues (none of which has survived) could have accompanied a fragmentary list giving the names of 'good' emperors along with those of princes who received the *tribunicia potestas*. On the provenance and general significance of these fasti see G. Di Vita-Evrard, *Les 'fastes impériaux' de Brescia*, *Epigrafia. Colloque A.Degrassi*, *Coll. de l'école franç. de Rome* 143, Rome 1991, 93-117.

²⁶ I am much indebted for information to Y.Solier, Conservateur au Musée Archéologique, Narbonne.

the piece will have originally formed part of a small aedicula that housed the two silver offerings. Particularly striking is that surviving representations of such aediculae reveal how in some cases they resembled a lararium with two columns supporting either end of a pediment; in other cases several columns are shown.²⁷ Equally of interest, a mention of columns associated with an aedicula is preserved in the inscription of the freedman notary Callistus, found at Hippo Regius: ...Callistus lib(ertus), tab(ularius), aedic(ulam) marm(oream) colum[nis ornatam fecit idemque dedicavit or de sua pecunia fecit] (ILAlg 1, 3991). One may compare the reference to ?]plicitis columni[s] in CIL 6, 218 (above, p. 238). As seems clear from its recorded size and the description given in the Corpus, the Narbo column lacked its upper part but otherwise conformed closely to the appropriate characteristics: 'columellae marmoreae rubrae pars inferior', reports Hirschfeld. Above all, the fact that Cornelius used the flat, reverse side to record his gift of silver statues strengthens, if not confirms, the hypothesis that the piece did in fact originate from just such a receptacle. As for where the aedicula with its contents will have stood, the circumstance that part of its one surviving column was found on the 'butte des Moulinassès' strongly suggests that the aedicula was in fact deposited at the temple. In that case it must have stood either in the vestibulum or more likely, in view of the precious metal of the statuae, on the floor of the cella - perhaps on a bench - where it will have taken its place as an offering alongside the numerous other votives that doubtless cluttered the temple floor.

University of Alberta

Duncan Fishwick

²⁷See above, n. 3; further figs. 134, 134bis, 135.