

# Poetry and Propaganda: Anastasius I as Pompey

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**A**NASTASIUS I (491–518) was blessed with panegyrists to sing the praises of an aged emperor, and the laudatory contributions of three of them survive: Christodorus of Coptos, Procopius of Gaza, and Priscian of Caesarea. One of the themes in their propaganda was the promotion of a link between the emperor and the Roman general Pompey whose decisive victories in the 60s B.C. finally secured Roman authority in Asia Minor and the east. The notion was advanced and echoed that the emperor was descended from the Republican general and that his military victories over the Isaurians in southern Asia Minor in the 490s made him a modern Pompey. This propaganda motif has never been explored and explained. The public connection between Pompey and Anastasius depended on the awareness of Pompey's eastern conquests by emperor, panegyrist, and audience alike. At the Megarian colony of Byzantium, so it is argued here, commemorative statues and inscriptions were erected to the victorious Pompey in 62/1 B.C. and they still existed in the sixth century Roman imperial capital which the city had now become. Moreover, these Pompeian memorials provided the necessary familiarity and impetus for Anastasian propaganda in the wake of the Isaurian war.

## 1. *Celebrating Anastasius' Isaurian victory*

Early Byzantine emperors were “ever victorious.” Victory was a sign of God's favour and accompanied all the emperor's movements and campaigns.<sup>1</sup> Rarely, however, did the Byzantines experience the commemoration of a real imperial military

<sup>1</sup> M. McCormick, *Eternal Victory* (Cambridge 1986) 100–130.

victory. One such occasion was in 498 when Anastasius celebrated the conquest of the Isaurians and the end of the “bellum Isauricum.” The severed heads of the leading Isaurian rebels were retained and sent to Constantinople for public display, as was the grisly custom. In addition, the captured Isaurian generals Longinus of Selinus and Indes were paraded in chains through the streets of the city and into the hippodrome where they were subjected to the traditional rite of submission (*calcatio colli*) at the feet of Anastasius.<sup>2</sup> They had been captured only in 498, after holding out in the mountain fastnesses of Isauria for several years following the initial Roman victory at Cotyaeum in Phrygia in 493. According to a contemporary epigram, Urbicius’ recent book on tactics had assisted Anastasius’ army in routing “the Isaurians taking refuge on their rocky summits.”<sup>3</sup>

The victory scene at Constantinople may have been later represented in the vestibule of the imperial palace, the Chalke or “Golden House,” if that is the explanation for the Chalke epigram which describes the triumphant Anastasius:<sup>4</sup>

οἶκος Ἀναστασίου τυραννοφόνου βασιλῆος  
 μόνος ὑπερέλλω πανυπείροχος ἄστεσι γαίης ...  
 αὐτὸς ἐμὸς σκηπτοῦχος Ἰσαυροφόνον μετὰ νίκην  
 χρυσοφάες μ' ἐτέλεσεν ἐδέθλιον Ἡριγενεΐης,  
 πάντη τετραπόρων ἀνέμων πεπετασμένον αὔραις.

I am the house of Anastasius, the emperor, slayer of tyrants, and  
 I alone excel all cities of the earth ... My prince himself, after his  
 victory over the Isaurians, completed me, the house of Dawn,  
 shining with gold on all sides exposed to the breezes of the four  
 winds.

<sup>2</sup> Evagr. *HE* 3.35; Marcell. *Chron.* 498.2 (ed. Mommsen, *MGH AA XI* 95), *Longinus ... Constantinopolim missus catenatusque per agentem circumductus Anastasio principi et populo ingens spectaculum fuit*—most likely an eyewitness account (B. Croke, *The Chronicle of Marcellinus. Translation and Commentary* [Sydney 1995] 110). Further detail in McCormick, *Eternal Victory* 61, and F. Haarer, *Anastasius I. Politics and Empire in the Late Roman World* (Cambridge 2006) 26–27.

<sup>3</sup> *Anth.Gr.* 9.210 (transl. Paton): πετράων τ' ἐφύπερθεν ἀλυσκάζοντας Ἰσαύρους. On Urbicius: *PLRE II* 1190 “Urbicius qui et Barbatius 2,” with G. Greatrex, H. Elton, and R. Burgess, “Urbicius’ *Epitadeuma*: An Edition, Translation and Commentary,” *BZ* 98 (2005) 35–74.

<sup>4</sup> *Anth.Gr.* 9.656, with C. Mango, *The Brazen House* (Copenhagen 1959) 26–30.

The author of this epigram was probably the Egyptian Christodorus who had long carved out a successful career as an encomiast in Constantinople.<sup>5</sup> Around the same time he was preoccupied with producing in six books his *Isaurika*, an epic account of the Isaurian war and Anastasius' decisive victory.<sup>6</sup> His epic has not survived, nor any quotations from it, but doubtless it provided an opportunity to expatiate at length on every phase of the victory parade at Constantinople and on the moment when Longinus and Indes were ritually subjected to the foot of the emperor Anastasius. Christodorus had surely witnessed this scene himself.<sup>7</sup>

The rhetorician Procopius delivered his panegyric on Anastasius at Gaza on the erection there of a statue of the emperor ca. 502.<sup>8</sup> He was the leading member of the local literary elite who, like Christodorus, produced panegyrics and various other erudite *ekphraseis* on topics both classical and Christian.<sup>9</sup> In the course of his work he singled out Anastasius' achievement in vanquishing the Isaurians (*Pan.Anast.* 9–10), praising him not only for his military victory but for the even greater personal victory of sparing the defeated enemy. Procopius places the emperor above Philip of Macedon who destroyed cities he conquered and Alexander the Great, but he makes no mention of Pompey or other Roman generals.

The third panegyrist Priscian of Caesarea, however, makes much of Pompey in his panegyric on Anastasius designed for the Latin-speaking audience in Constantinople and written around 503, that is, the same time as that of Procopius in

<sup>5</sup> F. Nicks, "Literary Culture in the Reign of Anastasius I," in S. Mitchell and G. Greatrex (eds.), *Ethnicity and Culture in Late Antiquity* (Swansea 2000) 183–203, at 186.

<sup>6</sup> *Suda* s.v. "Christodorus" (X 525): ἔγραψεν Ἰσαυρικὰ ἐν βιβλίοις ἕξ· ἔχει δὲ τὴν Ἰσαυρίας ἄλωσιν τὴν ὑπὸ Ἀναστασίου τοῦ βασιλέως γενομένην.

<sup>7</sup> Alan Cameron, *Porphyrius the Charioteer* (Oxford 1973) 153–154.

<sup>8</sup> A. Chauvot, *Procopé de Gaza, Priscien de Césarée. Panégyriques de l'empereur Anastase I<sup>er</sup>* (Bonn 1986) 97 (502); cf. Haarer, *Anastasius* 278 (503/4).

<sup>9</sup> B. ter Haar Romeny, "Procopius of Gaza and His Library," in H. Amirav and B. ter Haar Romeny (eds.), *From Rome to Constantinople. Studies in Honour of Averil Cameron* (Leiden 2007) 173–190, at 177–178.

Gaza.<sup>10</sup> Here the poet finds that while Pompey may have won victories far and wide he left the people of the high Taurus unconquered. Anastasius has now accomplished what Pompey failed to do, so he has excelled his forebear (*Pan.Anast.* 10–18):<sup>11</sup>

Nor is it strange that such a man has sprung from the mighty stock of Pompey whom Rome placed on her highest pinnacle. Who could count the triumphs Pompey so rightly won, which the Sun saw when he left and sought again the deep sea and because of which, on his journey, he had stopped amazed in the middle of Olympus? But yet, O Pompey, yield to a renowned descendant. For the race which you, the conqueror of all the world, left untamed in the high hills of Taurus, this man has defeated, uprooting utterly the seeds of war.

Later in the panegyric Priscian returns to the victory of Anastasius over the Isaurians with special reference to the trophies set up and the parade of captives in the hippodrome at Constantinople “driven to your feet” (171–173):<sup>12</sup>

This very place rightly displayed trophies to you and offered to view the fettered and defeated tyrants who were driven to your feet in the middle of the Circus spectacles.

This is probably best visualised as a traditional *calcatio colli* carried out with due ceremonial in the hippodrome, as re-

<sup>10</sup> For a 503 date: Alan Cameron, “The Date of Priscian’s *De laude Anastasii*,” *GRBS* 15 (1974) 313–316, with further discussion (favouring the same date) in Haarer, *Anastasius* 272–277. A later date (513/4): Chauvot, *Panegyriques* 98–107.

<sup>11</sup> *Nec mirum tales ex tanta stirpe creatos  
Pompeii, proprio quem culmine Roma locauit;  
Cuius quis meritos ualeat numerare triumphos,  
Quos uidit Titan linguens repetensque profundum,  
Quos medio veniens steterat miratus Olympo?  
Sed tamen egregio, Pompei, cede nepoti,  
Namque genus, quod tu, terrarum victor ubique,  
Indomitum Tauri linguebas collibus altis,  
Hic domuit penitus conuellens semina belli.*

Transl. P. Coyne, *Priscian of Caesarea’s de laude Anastasii imperatoris* (Lewiston/Queenston/Lampeter 1991) 53.

<sup>12</sup> *Ipse locus uobis ostendit iure tropaea,  
Obtulit et uinctos oculis domitosque tyrannos  
Ante pedes uestros mediis circensibus actos.*

corded by Marcellinus.<sup>13</sup> It was a scene which the Byzantines were used to seeing depicted in art and literature in a standardised form and one which they came to witness more often in ensuing decades.<sup>14</sup> Such depictions were to be found, for example, on the local imperial columns of the emperors Theodosius I and Arcadius, and possibly also those of Marcian and Leo.<sup>15</sup> In 531 Justinian celebrated in the hippodrome a dual victory over the Bulgars and Persians. To commemorate these victories the City Prefect and Praetorian Prefect together dedicated an equestrian statue to Justinian which depicted the moment of *calcatio* as the enchained Persians and Bulgars were pressed at the emperor's feet.<sup>16</sup> It is a picture also represented in the famous Barberini ivory where the equestrian Justinian reaches out to have his foot meet the outstretched hand of a captive.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, the mosaic which graced the formal entrance to the imperial palace showed Justinian and his wife Theodora receiving the Vandal and Gothic kings being led before them as captives (Procop. *Aed.* 1.10.17).<sup>18</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Quoted n.2 above. It is sometimes assumed that in the hippodrome, given the physical separation of emperor and subject, a *calcatio* was not an appropriate form of homage, rather a routine *proskynesis* would suffice. Yet Cassiodorus describes how *calcatio* took place in the hippodrome with a Roman general trampling over the backs of the captives (*Variae* 3.51.8, *supra dorsa hostium ambulantes*).

<sup>14</sup> McCormick, *Eternal Victory* 57–58, 96.

<sup>15</sup> J.-P. Sodini, "Images sculptées et propagande impériale du IV<sup>e</sup> au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle," in A. Guillou (ed.), *Byzance et les images* (Paris 1992) 43–94, at 44–47.

<sup>16</sup> *Anth. Plan.* 62, ὑπόσ', Ἰουστινιανέ, τεὸν κράτος· ἐν χθονὶ δ' αἰεὶ / δεσμός ἐχοι Μήδων καὶ Σκυθέων προμάχους, with B. Croke, "Justinian's Bulgar Victory Celebration," *Byzantinoslavica* 41 (1980) 188–195 (repr. *Christian Chronicles and Byzantine History* (Aldershot 1992) no. XIX.

<sup>17</sup> The ivory is reproduced in most works on Justinian, an accessible recent example being M. Meier, *Justinian. Herrschaft, Reich und Religion* (Munich 2004) 12.

<sup>18</sup> Further, the original iconographic representation of such scenes, especially on Trajan's column, led to their formulaic imitation on coins, for which see A. C. Levi, *Barbarians on Roman Imperial Coins and Sculpture* (New York 1952) 33–34. The vanquished barbarian trodden underfoot appears regularly on late Roman coins, especially those with the reverse legends VIRTUS EXERCIT. and VICTORIA AUG., but never on a coin of Ana-

Among the literary descriptions of *calcatio* there is Agathias who begins his laudation of Justinian in the preface to his *Cycle* with “Let no barbarian, freeing himself from the yokestrap that passes under his neck, dare to fix his gaze on our King, the mighty warrior,”<sup>19</sup> while around the same time Corippus begins his panegyric on Justin II with “God has granted that all kingdoms should be beneath your feet.”<sup>20</sup> He later describes the funeral pall of Justinian which draped his coffin as it lay in state in the palace in November 565: woven into the cloth was a depiction of the emperor trampling the neck of a Vandal to symbolise the conquest of Africa which had been celebrated in the hippodrome at Constantinople in 534.<sup>21</sup> Elsewhere the poet describes the soft red imperial shoes “with which the victorious Roman emperor tramples conquered kings and tames barbarian necks.”<sup>22</sup> In brief, this diverse visual and verbal testimony demonstrates that the public of Constantinople were accustomed to the sort of triumphal scene described by Priscian for Anastasius. Another contemporary depiction and literary description by Christodorus, to which we now turn, only accentuated the propaganda value of the Anastasian *calcatio*.

## 2. Statue of Pompey in the Baths of Zeuxippus

Although Christodorus’ *Isaurika* is no longer extant there is his *ekphrasis* or verse description of the various statues displayed

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stasius, so it would appear: P. Grierson and M. Mays, *Catalogue of Late Roman Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* (Washington 1992) 482–483 (index of reverse inscriptions). Numerous other examples can be traced through the indices to *RIC* IX and X.

<sup>19</sup> *Anth.Gr.* 4.3.47–48, μή τις ἐπαυχενίοιο λιπὼν ζωστήρα λεπάδνου / βάρβαρος ἐς Βασιλῆα βιημάχον ὄμμα τανύσση.

<sup>20</sup> Coripp. *In laudem Iustini* praef.1–2, *deus omnia regna / sub pedibus dedit esse tuis, regesque superbos* (ed./transl. Averil Cameron, *Flavius Cresconius Corippus In laudem Iustini Augusti minoris* [London 1976] with commentary, including other examples, at 119–120).

<sup>21</sup> 285–286, *ipsum autem in media victorem pinxerat aula / effera Vandalici calcantem colla tyranni*, with Cameron, *Corippus* 142. Procopius noted the Vandal king Gelimer making obeisance to Justinian in the hippodrome (*Wars* 4.9.12). Further detail in McCormick, *Eternal Victory* 124–129.

<sup>22</sup> Coripp. 2.107–108, *quis solet edomitos victor calcare tyrannos / Romanus principes et barbara colla domare*, with Cameron, *Corippus* 158.

in the baths of Zeuxippus at Constantinople at the turn of the sixth century, and among them was a statue of Pompey.<sup>23</sup> The Baths of Zeuxippus, located between the hippodrome and the imperial palace, were built by Septimius Severus in the early third century but were never quite finished. When Constantine established Constantinople as a new city worthy of the imperial court in 330 he completed the baths, decorating them “with columns and marbles of many colours and bronze statues.”<sup>24</sup> The statues collected by Constantine were mostly of Greek mythical and classical figures. Some of them, but not necessarily all, had previously been located in cities outside Constantinople and were transported there.<sup>25</sup> By the time of Anastasius, they were the largest and most impressive baths in the capital, but they were badly affected by the fire which engulfed that part of the city during the Nika riots in 532 and destroyed most of the statues. Although the emperor Justinian subsequently restored the building (Procop. *Aed.* 1.9.3), nearly all its contents are now lost, except for the bases of those of Aeschines and Hecuba, and possibly Odysseus.<sup>26</sup>

Christodorus’ *ekphrasis* of the Zeuxippan statuary was widely admired by generations of Byzantines and forms the second book of the *Palatine Anthology*. Only now is it receiving close scrutiny, principally for its archaeological and iconographic significance,<sup>27</sup> but more recently for its literary and rhetorical

<sup>23</sup> Cameron, *Porphyrius* 153–154.

<sup>24</sup> Jo. Mal. 13.8 (Dindorf 321.12–15 = Thurn 246.95–96), with details in S. Bassett, *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople* (Cambridge 2004) 51–58; R. Janin, *Constantinople byzantine*<sup>2</sup> (Paris 1964) 222–224.

<sup>25</sup> Bassett, *Urban Image* 39, takes at face value the claims of Jerome and others that Constantine found all the statues in other cities and purloined them for his new foundation on the Bosphorus. Certainly some of the statues in the Baths of Zeuxippus might have been imported but, as a long-established and wealthy Greek city, Byzantium would have had a large range of its own statuary.

<sup>26</sup> Bassett, *Urban Image* 163–164, 166, 179.

<sup>27</sup> R. Stupperich, “Das Statuenprogramm in der Zeuxippos-Thermen,” *IstMitt* 32 (1982) 210–235; S. Guberti Bassett, “*Historiae custos*: Sculpture and Tradition in the Baths of Zeuxippos,” *AJA* 100 (1996) 491–506 (challenging Stupperich’s thesis that the Zeuxippos sculpture was a programmatic at-

workmanship.<sup>28</sup> What has now been clarified is how the statues might have been arranged within the baths, as well as what cultural and historical meaning they were intended to convey and could still convey to the contemporaries of Anastasius. In skilfully bringing the statues to life through words Christodorus focussed on capturing the essential posture and expression in each one, at a time when Byzantines genuinely invested such statues with life and meaning.<sup>29</sup> Further, his work was probably recited to an educated audience in this very location since the richly decorated building included not only the thermal baths but also expansive spaces for lectures, speeches, recitations, and other public occasions.<sup>30</sup>

Among the statues in the Zeuxippan collection described by Christodorus were a few Roman ones: Julius Caesar, Virgil who was cast as the Roman Homer, Apuleius, and Pompey. This statue of Pompey is perhaps the most discussed of all those described by Christodorus, but it is also the most misunderstood because it was linked by the poet to the reigning emperor Anastasius. The Pompey statue has been considered a complete anomaly in the Zeuxippan collection;<sup>31</sup> there is divergence of opinion about the identity of the Pompey; no fully satisfactory attempt has been made to explain the connection here between Pompey and Anastasius; and there has been no inquiry into the origin of the Pompey statue itself.

This is what Christodorus wrote:<sup>32</sup>

καὶ πρόμος εὐκαμάτων Πομπήϊος Ἀύσονιῶν,  
 παιδρὸν ἰσαυροφόνων κειμήλιον ἡνορεῶν,  
 στειβομένας ὑπὸ ποσσὶν Ἰσαυρίδας εἶχε μαχαίρας  
 σημαίνων, ὅτι δούλον ὑπὸ ζυγὸν ἀνχένα Τάυρου  
 εἴρυσεν ἀρρήκτῳ πεπεδημένον ἄμματι Νίκης·

tempt to highlight New Rome as New Troy); Bassett, *Urban Image* 51–58, 160–185 (catalogue of statues).

<sup>28</sup> A. Kaldellis, “Christodoros on the Statues of the Zeuxippos Baths: A New Reading of the *Ekphrasis*,” *GRBS* 47 (2007) 361–383.

<sup>29</sup> C. Mango, “Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder,” *DOP* 17 (1963) 53–75; Kaldellis, *GRBS* 47 (2007) 365–368.

<sup>30</sup> Kaldellis, *GRBS* 47 (2007) 369–370.

<sup>31</sup> Stupperich, *IstMitt* 32 (1982) 225 (“Fremdkörper”).

<sup>32</sup> *Anth. Gr.* 2.398–406 (transl. Paton, slightly modified)



κείνος ἀνὴρ, ὃς πᾶσιν ἔην φάος, ὃς βασιλῆος  
 ἡγαθέην ἐφύτευσεν Ἀναστασίῳ γενέθλην.  
 τοῦτο δὲ πᾶσιν ἔδειξεν ἐμὸς σκηπτούχος ἀμύμων  
 δηώσας σακέεσσιν Ἰσαυρίδος ἔθνεα γαίης.

Pompey, the leader of the successful Romans in their campaign against the Isaurians, was treading underfoot the Isaurian swords, signifying that he had imposed on the neck of Taurus the yoke of bondage, and bound it with the strong chains of victory. He was the man who was a light to all and the father of the noble race of the Emperor Anastasius. This my excellent sovereign showed to all, himself ravaging by his arms the tribes of Isauria.

What these verses show is that the Pompey statue in the Baths of Zeuxippus was a classical *calcatio colli* representation, that is, it showed a victorious general treading his vanquished enemy underfoot. Even though the description was entirely Christodorus' creation, it was not necessarily the case, as Kaldellis posited,<sup>33</sup> that there was no suggestion in the statue itself that it was related to Pompey's victory over Isaurians in any way or that it did not include spoils of victory. To judge from the extant statue bases, all that he would have seen is a single word "Pompeios" which would have been carved in uncial capitals somewhere on the curve of the base.<sup>34</sup> The poet has therefore inferred that the depiction of Pompey trampling an enemy represented his victory over Isaurians when in the 60s B.C. the Roman general had progressively conquered the pirates off Cilicia, then King Mithridates in Asia Minor. This then provides Christodorus with the opportunity to link the Pompeian victory to a victory of the emperor Anastasius over the Isaurians in the 490s.<sup>35</sup> The poet goes even further by directly linking the family of Anastasius to the Pompey of the statue.

### 3. *Identifying Pompey*

Establishing the precise context for the statue of Pompey in

<sup>33</sup> Kaldellis, *GRBS* 47 (2007) 381.

<sup>34</sup> On the model of those of Aeschines and Hecuba: Bassett, *Urban Image* 4, 179.

<sup>35</sup> Details in Haarer, *Anastasius* 28.

the Baths of Zeuxippus requires certainty about the identity of the Pompey in question. This remains a matter of dispute. On the one hand, La Rocca has proposed that Christodorus was describing a statue of Pompey as Neptune, rather like some of the representations on coins of his son Sextus. Yet this is problematic, not least because there is nothing in Christodorus' text to suggest a Neptune motif.<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, in her recent and comprehensive discussion of the Zeuxippan statuery, Sarah Bassett concluded that the statue cannot at all signify the Republican general Pompey the Great. Rather it represents a contemporary figure, the general Pompeius who was a nephew of Anastasius and consul in 501 at about the same time Christodorus produced his verses on the statue.<sup>37</sup> As Kaldellis has shown, however, Bassett's identification cannot stand and Christodorus' Pompey can only be Pompey the Great.<sup>38</sup>

So we may proceed on the assumption that the statue of Pompey was part of the original set installed by Constantine in 330 and that it was a statue already available locally and which could easily be repurposed. In consciously including a statue of Pompey in the tableau of the baths, perhaps Constantine was himself looking forward to victory over the Persians to rival that of Pompey over other eastern monarchs. In Christodorus' context, however, the key fact is that the poet does clearly declare an ancestral link between the reigning emperor and the Roman general (ὅς βασιλῆος ἡγαθέην ἐφύτευσεν Ἀναστασίῳ

<sup>36</sup> E. La Rocca "Pompeo Magno Novus Neptunus," *BullCom* 92 (1987/8) 265–292 at 276, cf. 271–272. La Rocca's argument is very tenuous and hypothetical. At the very least, it implies that the statue of Pompey in the Theatre of Pompey at Rome was a model for that at Constantinople. This seems both unlikely and unnecessary since many such statues were available near at hand in the east where most of the others came from and, if the argument here is acceptable, even immediately local at Byzantium. They may all predate the famous statue in the Theatre of Pompey. I am grateful to Kathryn Welch for drawing my attention to this study, for providing a copy, and for expert guidance in interpreting it.

<sup>37</sup> Bassett, *Urban Image* 182, but previously argued at *AJA* 100 (1996) 504, against the claim of Stupperich, *IstMitt* 32 (1982) 225–226. who assumed the Pompey to be Pompeius Magnus.

<sup>38</sup> Kaldellis, *GRBS* 47 (2007) 377–378.

γενέθλην, 403–404). Whether or not this was confected and promoted by emperor and court, it seems to have taken root in the popular imagination. Christodorus easily conflated such contemporary threads of sentiment and propaganda when he utilised his description of the statue of Pompey to compare the achievements of Pompey and Anastasius in vanquishing the Isaurians. Likewise, in his panegyric on Anastasius, Priscian finds the virtues of Anastasius scarcely surprising because he stems from the line of Pompey who had attained Rome's highest honours. Now the time has come, so Priscian asserts, for Pompey to make way for his illustrious descendant.<sup>39</sup>

As for the name itself, certainly “Pompeius” runs through the family of Anastasius. It was, as noted already, the name of his nephew who must have been born and named before Anastasius became emperor in 491, and it recurs in the names of subsequent generations of the family.<sup>40</sup> It is possible that Anastasius' father's name was Pompeius.<sup>41</sup> More problematic is the exact relationship, if any, between Pompey and Anastasius, born more than 500 years apart. It is not impossible but very unlikely that Anastasius could prove descent from Pompey. “Pompeius” was a widespread name in both east and west, perhaps reflecting the extensive legacy of Pompey the Great through the settlement of veterans and the creation of freedmen especially.<sup>42</sup> It was possibly from this diffuse process that

<sup>39</sup> *Nec mirum tales ex tanta stirpe creatos / Pompeii, proprio quem culmine Roma locauit / ... Sed tamen egregio, Pompei, cede nepoti* (10–13).

<sup>40</sup> *PLRE* II 82–83 “Fl. Anastasius Paulus Probus Saturninus Pompeius Anastasius 17,” III 1048 “Pompeius 1.”

<sup>41</sup> Alan Cameron, “The House of Anastasius,” *GRBS* 19 (1978) 259–276, at 260.

<sup>42</sup> A search of *PIR* for the first three centuries reveals 113 individuals whose name includes “Pompeius,” while in *PLRE* there are also several Pompeys who do not belong to the family of Anastasius. There are a small number of Pompeys in the Greek east, to judge from *LGN*: 3 in Vol. II (Attica), 2 in IIIA (Peloponnese, western Greece, Sicily, Magna Graecia), and 2 in IV (Thrace, Macedonia, the northern Black Sea). As for Asia Minor, the largest number of imperial inscriptions dedicated to a “Pompeius” are at Mytilene on Lesbos, followed by Ephesus: B. Holtheide, *Römische Bürgerrechtspolitik und römische Neubürger in der Provinz Asia* (Freiburg

the name of Pompeius entered and remained in the family of Anastasius.<sup>43</sup>

A putative descendant of Pompey on the Roman throne was bound to attract comparison and so Anastasius did. That he had a nephew named Pompeius doubtless heightened awareness. Indeed, Christodorus' *ekphrasis* may well have been commissioned by Pompeius the nephew of Anastasius.<sup>44</sup> Linking the two in order to enlarge the status and reputation of the reigning emperor was obviously part of contemporary political propaganda. The coincidence of military victories in the same parts of the world, known as Cilicia to Pompey and Isauria to Anastasius,<sup>45</sup> was surely too much for panegyrists and flatterers to resist. For the Byzantines, Pompey and his local military achievements were well known and close at hand. Christodorus' lost epic on Anastasius' Isaurian war can only have elaborated the comparison. Even so, it appears there were other inscribed statues of Pompey still visible at Constantinople to reinforce the panegyrists' impact.

#### 4. *Themistius and Pompey*

In May 357, a spectacular triumphal procession was held through the streets of Rome for the emperor Constantius II who was making a rare visit to the city. It is a well known episode in later Roman history, mainly because of Ammianus Marcellinus' eye-witness description of the emperor's solemn and ceremonial posture, the flying of colourful dragon flags, the

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1983) 24–25, 234–237, 480–481 (map), and G. Labarre, *Les cités de Lesbos aux époques hellénistique et impériale* (Paris 1996) 147–153.

<sup>43</sup> There is no discussion of the family background of Anastasius in the most recent study of the emperor (Haarer, *Anastasius*). C. Capizzi (*L'imperatore Anastasio* [Rome 1969] 30) had suggested that the panegyric link between Anastasius and Pompey was merely a rhetorical topos without any historical foundation.

<sup>44</sup> Kaldellis, *GRBS* 47 (2007) 379.

<sup>45</sup> In classical times the coastal region was known as Cilicia. Subsequently the Isaurians from the Taurus mountain range near the city of Isaura and elsewhere came to dominate the area. By the fourth century the former Cilicia had been divided into the Roman provinces of Isauria and Cilicia. For Christodorus' purposes the Cilicia of Pompey equated to the Isauria of Anastasius.

gleaming massed ranks of bodyguards, followed by banquets and games.<sup>46</sup> It was quite an occasion when Constantius came to town. Another spectator on that day was a distinguished visitor from Constantinople who was in Rome for the first time. He was the orator Themistius who had come to meet with the emperor as head of a delegation from the senate at Constantinople. Themistius was seeking to impress Constantius with the significance of the imperial city on the Bosphorus and the need to bolster its status and its government.<sup>47</sup>

In the course of Themistius' oration to Constantius he happens to mention the role played by Byzantium in supporting the efforts of Pompey against Mithridates in particular:<sup>48</sup>

ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἕτερα πλείω κοινὰ ταῖς πόλεσιν ἀμφοτέραις. καὶ οὐ λέγω τὰς παλαιὰς συμμαχίας, οὐδ' ὅσα ἄρτι καθισταμένη τὴν ἀρχὴν τῇδε τῇ πόλει συνεπόρισέ τε καὶ συνεξέκαμε, συμπλέουσα μὲν τῷ Πομπηίῳ, συγκαθαίρουσα δὲ Μιθριδάτην, συνεισφέρουσα δὲ ἀεὶ τὴν ἐμπειροτάτην μοῖραν τοῦ ναυτικοῦ, ὧν ἄχρι καὶ τήμερον διασώζει κοινὰ πρὸς Ῥωμαίους τρόπαια καὶ ἐπιγράμματα.

And there are other and closer ties shared by both cities. I do not refer to the longstanding alliances nor to all the assistance she gave and the combined efforts she made on behalf of this city when her dominion was but recently established, sailing with Pompey and helping in the destruction of Mithridates, always contributing as her share the most experienced squadrons of her fleet, for which even today she preserves trophies and victory inscriptions in common with the Romans.

What is striking about Themistius' observations of Rome is that he had already noticed in the city trophies and victory inscriptions commemorating Pompey's great triumph celebrated there in 61 B.C.<sup>49</sup> Several statues with inscribed bases were

<sup>46</sup> Amm. Marc. 16.10, illuminated by J. Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus* (London 1989) 231–238.

<sup>47</sup> Details in P. Heather and D. Moncur, *Politics, Philosophy and Empire in the Fourth Century. Select Orations of Themistius* (Liverpool 2001) 114–125, with J. Vanderspoel, *Themistius and the Imperial Court* (Ann Arbor 1995) 101–103.

<sup>48</sup> Them. Or. 3.42d–43a (ed. R. Maisano, *Discorsi di Temistio* [Turin 1995]); transl. Heather and Moncur.

<sup>49</sup> App. *Mith.* 116–117, Plut. *Pomp.* 45; with M. Beard, *The Roman Triumph*

erected and it was near one of them, in the Theatre of Pompey where the Roman senate was meeting in 44 B.C., that Pompey's great rival Julius Caesar was famously cut down. The emperor Augustus later had the statue relocated to a marble archway just outside the theatre (Suet. *Aug.* 31.9). For Ammianus in 357 the Theatre of Pompey (16.10.14), where the famous statue was, still stood out as one of the city's most splendid buildings. There were other such Pompeian memorial statues in Rome as well, notably the equestrian one standing on the *rostra* (Vell. Pat. 2.61.2), and that attributed to the *negotiatores* of Agrigentum in Sicily.<sup>50</sup> Constantius II, Ammianus, and Themistius probably saw and read the inscriptions detailing the scale of Pompey's conquest and the resulting riches which Pliny (*HN* 7.97–98) carefully recorded.

More important, Themistius makes clear that there were still visible at Constantinople trophies and honorary inscriptions for Pompey similar to those at Rome. Although not noted in the extensive modern literature on Pompey as far as can be ascertained, Byzantium had clearly played a significant support role for Pompey in his eastern campaigns by supplying her share of top-flight warships for which she was obviously well placed.<sup>51</sup> Byzantium had evidently provided ships and soldiers earlier to both Cotta and Lucullus who had successively confronted Mithridates in nearby Chalcedon (App. *Mith.* 71) and then Cyzicus, ultimately forcing Mithridates to retreat to Byzantium (Eutrop. 6.6.3), before escaping with his fleet back through the Propontis. A century later a delegation from Byzantium appeared before the emperor Claudius seeking a

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(Cambridge [Mass.] 2007) 7–41; J. van Ooteghem, *Pompée le Grand* (Brussels 1954) 281–289; and R. Seager, *Pompey. A Political Biography* (Oxford 1979) 77–78.

<sup>50</sup> *CIL* I<sup>2</sup> 2710 (*AE* 1937, 11; *ILLRP* 380), although this is contested. The inscription may refer to an earlier celebration in 81 B.C. commemorating victories in Sicily and Africa: L. Amela Valverde, "Inscripciones honoríficas dedicadas a Pompeyo Magno," *Fa ventia* 23 (2001) 87–102, at 98.

<sup>51</sup> Byzantium was seen to occupy a key strategic position at the mouth of the Bosphorus, controlling the Black Sea trade, as noted by both Polybius (4.38.1–10) and Cassius Dio (75.10.1–6) who had visited the city four centuries apart.

tax remission for their city. The basis of their case was the supply and reinforcement of generals and armies they had been faithfully rendering to the Romans for decades, including to Pompey (Tac. *Ann.* 12.62). In the aftermath of his victory over Mithridates in 62 B.C., and presumably previously over the Cilician pirates in 66, Byzantium was able to honour the Roman general. At the same time, as elsewhere, the general himself was in a position to reward the local Byzantine contribution to his achievement, hence Themistius' multiple Pompeian "trophies and inscriptions" (τρόπαια καὶ ἐπιγράμματα) still observable at Constantinople in the fourth century. The fact that Themistius clearly links the Byzantine memorials of Pompey to Byzantium's own role in his victories over Mithridates, and presumably the pirates, implies that the statues and inscribed bases he knew were originally Byzantine, not Pompeian dedications of other cities imported into the city as part of Constantine's building program centuries later.

Obviously such monuments will have been located in the first century B.C. part of Byzantium which was later built around by Septimius Severus in the early third century, then on a much grander scale by Constantine in the 330s. The likely place for such memorials to Pompey was in the *Strategion*, the agora of the city with its Egyptian obelisk and other triumphal accoutrements.<sup>52</sup> The *Strategion* had been built by Alexander the Great and was an ideal assembly point for armies, as indicated by Xenophon who knew it personally as the "Thracian square" (*An.* 7.1.24, *Hell.* 1.3.20).<sup>53</sup> Here was presumably the launching

<sup>52</sup> F. Bauer, *Stadt, Platz und Denkmal in der Spätantike* (Mainz 1996) 224–228; Janin, *Constantinople* 431–432. The *Strategion* is usually located around the modern Istanbul rail terminus but it may actually be more accurately placed east of the terminus and closer to the sea, as proposed by C. Mango, "The Triumphal Way of Constantinople and the Golden Gate," *DOP* 54 (2000) 173–188, at 187–188.

<sup>53</sup> *Patria* 2.59 (statue relocated from Chrysopolis by Constantine). On Alexander as model for Pompey: D. Michel, *Alexander als Vorbild für Pompeius, Caesar und Marcus Antonius* (Brussels 1967) 48, 51, and D. Spencer, *The Roman Alexander* (Exeter 2002) 18–19, although Pompey's extant portraits do not indicate any overt iconographic emulation of Alexander (cf. R. R. R. Smith, "Greeks, Foreigners, and Roman Republican Portraits," *JRS* 71 [1981] 24–38, at 35).

point for Byzantium's contingent sent to support Pompey.

Among the Byzantine "trophies and inscriptions" known to Themistius in the fourth century, some at least of which were located in or around the *Strategion*, was probably the original statue of Pompey which Constantine set up in the Baths of Zeuxippus at Constantinople in the 330s. Another may have been the so-called "Gothic column" which still stands in the garden of the Seraglio just beyond the Topkapi Palace.<sup>54</sup> Certainly, in the time of Anastasius this enigmatic monument was known as the work of Pompey the Great. According to a contemporary, John the Lydian:<sup>55</sup>

Pompey the Great erected the monument of Fortune which stands in Byzantium. After hemming in Mithridates there with his Goths he dispersed them and captured Byzantium. The evidence for this is the Latin inscription on the base of the column which reads thus: "*To Returning Fortune for the defeated Goths*" (*Fortunae Reduci ob Gothos devictos*). Later the place became a tavern.

There are some fundamental problems with interpreting this monument in the light of John's passage, not least the fact that there were no such people as "Goths" anywhere near Pompey or Mithridates in the first century B.C. Rather the column most likely belongs to a period centuries later when a Gothic defeat was worth commemorating at Constantinople by a dedication to *Fortuna Redux* thereby implying that the victor returned safely after the conquest. Two possible occasions contend, namely the 270s (Claudius) and the 330s (Constantine), although the 380s

<sup>54</sup> U. Peschlow, "Betrachtungen zur Gotensäule in Istanbul," in *Tesserae. Festschrift f. Engemann* (Münster 1992) 215–228. The column was located in or near the forum of Leo according to K. R. Dark and A. L. Harris, "The Last Roman Forum: the Forum of Leo in Fifth-century Constantinople," *GRBS* 48 (2008) 57–69, at 65–68.

<sup>55</sup> Jo. Lyd. *De mens.* 4.132: ὅτι τὴν ἱσταμένην ἐν τῷ Βυζαντίῳ στήλην τῆς Τύχης Πομπήϊος ὁ μέγας ἔστησεν, ἐνταῦθα τὸν Μιθριδάτην συγκλείσας μετὰ τῶν Γότθων, καὶ τούτους διασκεδάσας τὸ Βυζάντιον εἴλε. καὶ μαρτυρεῖ τὸ ἐπὶ τῆς στήλης τοῦ κίονος ἐπίγραμμα Λατίνοις γράμμασιν, ὃ δηλοῖ τάδε: Τῇ Τύχῃ τῇ ἐπανασωστικῇ διὰ τοὺς νικηθέντας Γότθους. ὁ δὲ τόπος ὕστερον καπηλεῖον ἐγένετο.



(Theodosius I) cannot be discounted.<sup>56</sup> In addition, it has been suggested that the Pompey mentioned here by John is the nephew of Anastasius and that the column commemorates his involvement in the defeat of the Gothic federates of Vitalian in 515.<sup>57</sup> Again, this is unlikely. John would have known the nephew of Anastasius and, like Christodorus, it is inconceivable that he confused him with the conqueror of Mithridates. Another plausible explanation is that the column was originally erected by or for Pompey in 62/1 to mark his blockade and expulsion of Mithridates from Byzantium but centuries later was added to a new base or, simpler still, the original Pompeian dedication to *Fortuna Redux* was partly erased and replaced.<sup>58</sup> Be that as it may, the fact remains that by the time of Anastasius and possibly too by Themistius' day, the column's original rationale had been lost and it was taken to commemorate a local Byzantine victory of Pompey over Mithridates. The "Gothic column" further underscores Pompey's role in contemporary Byzantine ideology under Anastasius and the awareness of his many memorials at Constantinople.

##### 5. *Pompeian memorials in the east*

Some sense of what Pompey's other Byzantine victory trophies, those noted by Themistius, might have looked like can be gained from considering briefly those still extant and scattered throughout the cities of the Roman east.<sup>59</sup> Many of these inscriptions have only recently been discovered. Like Byzantium, the cities were all presumably involved in providing material support for the Roman expeditions between 67 and 62 against the pirates in Cilicia/Isauria and Mithridates who

<sup>56</sup> Peschlow, in *Tesserae* 228.

<sup>57</sup> R. H. W. Stichel, "Fortuna Redux, Pompeius und die Goten," *IstMitt* 49 (1999) 467–492, esp. 487–492.

<sup>58</sup> Peschlow in *Tesserae* 226–227 (but assigning it to second century on stylistic grounds); Mango, *DOP* 54 (2000) 177. John's obscure reference to a tavern may denote the transformation of a temple of Fortune nearby the column (proposed by C. Mango, *Le développement urbain de Constantinople IV<sup>e</sup>–VII<sup>e</sup> siècles* [Paris 1985] 72).

<sup>59</sup> Details of all dedicatory inscriptions can be found in Amela Valverde, *Faventia* 23 (2001) 87–102, with the western ones, set aside here, at 96–100.

controlled most of Asia Minor. On Pompey's long procession to Rome from Pontus in 62, weighed down with unprecedented booty and captives, the general and his army enjoyed several celebratory interludes.<sup>60</sup> Honorific speeches, contests, inscriptions, statues, and other memorials were generated everywhere they went. After burying the vanquished Mithridates at Sinope the Roman army wintered at Amisos (Samsun) before setting out for Ephesus (App. *Mith.* 113, 116), which means Pompey would have passed down the Bosphorus on his slow march to Rome, stopping at Byzantium in the spring of 61.

Local festivities for Roman achievements are recorded for Mytilene, Rhodes, and Athens (Plut. *Pomp.* 42.4–6). In fact at Mytilene there are a large number of inscriptions, presumably to be explained by it being the home of Pompey's close companion and historian Theophanes of Mytilene.<sup>61</sup> At Byzantium there was also a statue of Theophanes, the base of which has survived. It is dedicated to "Gnaios Pompeios Theophanes" and commemorates his restoration of civic liberty and ancestral cults. It is possible that the statue was erected to commemorate Theophanes' role in having Pompey secure the liberty of Byzantium, as Louis Robert once thought.<sup>62</sup> Other sites with dedicatory inscriptions honouring Pompey are Argos (*AE* 1920,

<sup>60</sup> Nicely expressed by van Ooteghem, *Pompée* 268: Pompey "effectua son voyage vers Rome avec une lenteur calculée, accueillant de bonne grâce les témoignages d'admiration qui venaient de partout"; cf. Seager, *Pompey* 52.

<sup>61</sup> *IG* XII.2 140–142, 144–145, 147 (*IGR* IV 49–53); *Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 751 (*ILS* 8776); *IG* 150 (*IGR* 56; Labarre, *Lesbos* 275 no. 17); 163 (*IGR* 55; Labarre 276–277 no. 19); *Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 693 (*SEG* XLIX 1087); *IG* 164–165 (*IGR* 79a–80a); 202 (*IGR* 54; Labarre 275 no.16); *IG* XII Suppl. 39; V. I. Anastasiadis and G. A. Souris. "Theophanes of Mytilene: A New Inscription Relating to His Early Career," *Chiron* 22 (1992) 377–382 (*SEG* XLII 755; Labarre 274 no.15).

<sup>62</sup> L. Robert, "Théophraste de Mytilène à Constantinople," *CRAI* (1969) 42–64, at 53–54 (repr. *Opera Min. Sel.* V 561–583), cf. Labarre, *Lesbos* 275–276 no. 18, and B. K. Gold, "Pompey and Theophanes of Mytilene," *AJP* 106 (1985) 312–327, at 324. Prolonged consideration of its dialectal features (demonstrably Aeolic but in a Doric town) later led Robert to propose that it originated in Lesbos and was brought to Constantinople by the emperor Constantine as part of his program for adorning the new imperial capital in about 330 ("Théophraste" 54–57; Bassett, *Urban Image* 230).

81), Claros,<sup>63</sup> Delos,<sup>64</sup> Demetrias (*IG* IX.2 1134), Ilium,<sup>65</sup> Miletopolis (*ILS* 9459), Miletus,<sup>66</sup> Philadelphia (*TAM* V.3 1427), Samos (*IG* XII.6 352), Side (*Side* 64), and Soli, renamed “Pompeiiopolis” (*IGR* III 869). They were variously erected by “the people,” “the people and the youth,” the *koinon*, or even the “Pompeian society” (τὸ κοινὸν τῶν Πομπηιαστῶν). Across these various inscriptions, Pompey is referred to as the “great general,” “builder,” “patron,” and “benefactor.” Sometimes there is mention of him being saluted “*imperator* for the third time,”<sup>67</sup> which probably indicates a local commemoration of the triumph at Rome in 61. Most of these titles reflect similar ones previously accorded to Alexander the Great and for most of them Pompey was the first Roman recipient.<sup>68</sup>

A fine example of these inscriptions, perhaps the style of record at Constantinople familiar to the contemporaries of Anastasius, is one of those at Ilium, discovered in 1987. It is part of the base for a large statue of Pompey, visible from both land and sea, and was erected by “the people and the youth” (ὁ δῆμος καὶ οἱ νεῖοι). Pompey is hailed as “*imperator* for the third time” (τὸ τρίτον [αὐτοκράτορα]), “patron and benefactor of the city” (πάτρωνα καὶ εὐεργέτην τῆς πόλεως) who has preserved mankind from “barbarian wars and the dangers of pirates” (ἀπὸ τε τῶν βαρβαρικῶν πολέμων [καὶ τῶν πειρατικῶν κινδύνων] thereby “restoring peace and security on land and sea” (ἀποκαθεστακότα δὲ [τὴν εἰρηνὴν καὶ τὴν ἀσφάλειαν καὶ κατὰ γῆν καὶ κατὰ θάλασσαν).<sup>69</sup> Although no such Byzantine

<sup>63</sup> J.-L. Ferrary, “Les inscriptions du sanctuaire de Claros en l’honneur de Romains”, *BCH* 124 (2000) 331–376, at 341 (*SEG* LI 1589), with further discussion in L. Amela Valverde, “La ‘nueva’ inscripción de Pompeyo Magno en Claros,” in *Acta XII Congr. Int. Epigr.* (2002) 41–48.

<sup>64</sup> *Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 749A; *IDelos* 1641, 1797.

<sup>65</sup> *I.Ilion* 74; *SEG* XLVI 1565 (see below).

<sup>66</sup> *Milet* VI.1 253 = K. Tuchelt, *Frühe Denkmäler Roms in Kleinasien I* (Tübingen 1979) 188.

<sup>67</sup> *Milet* VI.1 253; Tuchelt, *Denkmäler* 125–126. Pompey had previously been hailed *imperator* and celebrated triumphs at Rome in 81 and 71 B.C.

<sup>68</sup> Michel, *Alexander* 49.

<sup>69</sup> E. Winter, “Stadt und Herrschaft in spätrepublikanischer Zeit: eine neue Pompeius-Inschrift aus Ilium,” in E. Schwertheim and H. Wiegartz

inscriptions survive, we know they once existed. They would have contained similar details honouring Pompey's victories and Byzantium's contribution of substantial numbers of ships and warriors. Since the victory over the Cilician pirates in 66<sup>70</sup> came from the same broad region later known as Isauria where Anastasius had achieved victory in the 490s, it was natural to link the two achievements.

#### 6. *From Pompey to Anastasius*

Still visible at Constantinople in the fourth century, so we learn from Themistius, were several memorials commemorating Pompey's eastern victories. Thanks to Christodorus we can presume that at least one of them in the Baths of Zeuxippus in the late fifth century helped propagate a public connection between Pompey and the current emperor Anastasius. It was the existence of these Pompeian trophies and inscriptions at Constantinople and elsewhere which stimulated and reinforced the propaganda motif in both Greek and Latin and enabled it to succeed. As poets themselves, Christodorus and Priscian would have been more familiar than most with the epigrams and inscriptions on statue bases throughout Constantinople, an advantage denied Procopius at Gaza. Playing on points of literary correspondence between past and present was an integral part of their craft. It resonated particularly with an audience whose urban environment was replete with statues and dedicatory inscriptions, but at a time when meaningful historical links with the city's Roman heritage could still be invoked and amplified.<sup>71</sup>

July, 2008

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(eds.), *Die Troas. Neue Forschungen zu Neandria und Alexandria Troas II* (Bonn 1996) 175–194 [SEG XLVI 1565].

<sup>70</sup> In Pompey's triumph at Rome there was a separate display for the victory over the Cilician pirates with captured pirates in tow but not bound (App. *Mith.* 117).

<sup>71</sup> I am indebted to Anthony Kaldellis for overhauling an earlier version of this paper and to the *GRBS* readers for further refinement.