
TRAC Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference

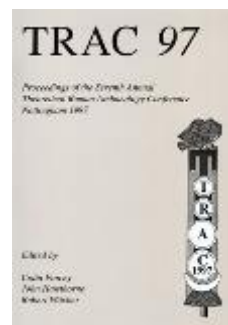
www.trac.org.uk

Paper Information:

Title: Ritual, Space and Politics: Reflections in the
Archaeological Record of Social Developments in
Leptis Magna, Tripolitania
Author: Frances Condron
Pages: 42–52

DOI: http://doi.org/10.16995/TRAC1997_42_52

Publication Date: 16 April 1998



Volume Information:

Forcey, C., Hawthorne, J., and Witcher, R. (eds) 1998. *TRAC 97: Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference, Nottingham 1997*. Oxford: Oxbow Books.

Copyright and Hardcopy Editions:

The following paper was originally published in print format by Oxbow Books for TRAC. Hard copy editions of this volume may still be available, and can be purchased direct from Oxbow at <http://www.oxbowbooks.com>.

TRAC has now made this paper available as Open Access through an agreement with the publisher. Copyright remains with TRAC and the individual author(s), and all use or quotation of this paper and/or its contents must be acknowledged. This paper was released in digital Open Access format in April 2013.

Ritual, Space and Politics: reflections in the archaeological record of social developments in Lepcis Magna, Tripolitania

by Frances Condron

Introduction

The rich collection of Latin inscriptions from Lepcis Magna is here utilised to explore changes in the appropriation of public monuments by the élite for display and personal aggrandisement. Specifically, the spatial distribution of inscriptions is used to identify variation in élite patterns of public exhibition.

The use of civic centres was an active process, changing through time, by rebuilding and construction of new monuments. Moreover, the erection of statues and holding of various festivals constantly reinforced and reified the meanings and traditions associated with the city, directed by those overseeing the events. Building programmes and major civic festivals were driven by emperors, patronised by aristocrats based in Rome, who were petitioned by locals, and, perhaps most importantly, were often funded locally (Duncan-Jones 1982). Indeed, when seeking to embellish their cities with new monuments, North Africa's élite must have been very successful in using their patrons to mediate with the emperor (Saller 1982:145ff). Lesser works required permission from the town council only. The end result was surely addressed to local needs. Some aspects of the complex negotiations and motives behind the placing of statuary in public buildings can be glimpsed from Pliny's letters, where he contemplates the mood of speeches he gave as patron at his native town of Comum (North Italy), which are to be published (*Epistles* I:8 in the appendix; cf. I:17; III:6; VII:17). Lepcis Magna's rich collection of inscriptions allows us to explore the active use of the built environment by the local élite, and thereby gain insight to the values and meanings imbued in one of the most richly ornamented towns of North Africa.

Lepcis Magna's history shows a sequence of influences from Phoenician, Greek, Carthaginian, and Roman cultures, reflected in the architecture and epigraphy (see Mattingly 1995). This paper is concerned with the monumental centre constructed from the late first century BC. Excavation has uncovered many public buildings, reflecting Lepcis' status as a regional and then provincial centre. Their grandeur testifies to both the wealth and capacity of the people of Lepcis (and North Africa in general) to adopt new means of expression from Rome and the east. Some of these buildings, both in size and architectural complexity, were on a par with those in Rome, and highlight the great achievements of the people of Lepcis.

Between the end of the first centuries BC and AD, Lepcis was embellished with a formal forum (possibly originating in the second century BC, Jones 1989) and basilica, surrounded by temples, a theatre, chalcidicum, market and amphitheatre. Under Trajan, Lepcis was elevated to a *colonia*, by which time the city had an impressive suite of public monuments, largely funded by local families. A baths complex was added under Hadrian. A further major phase of construction was instigated by Septimius Severus, a native of the city, who funded a new forum-basilica complex and colonnaded street, and refurbished the harbour (completed under Caracalla). The new forum complex is one of the best preserved examples of imperial architecture of its time, following Hellenistic and East Roman influences in layout, and richly decorated with elaborate friezes and columns (Ward-Perkins 1948, 1993). Aerial photography

shows further housing extending west from the city (Jones 1989; the *horrea* identified on aerial photographs are now thought to be suburban villas). When Septimius Severus was elevated to the throne, new-found wealth was obtained by his grant of *ius Italicum* to the city. However, this was short-lived, and the affluence of local families was subsequently diminished, as reflected in the lack of new building in the later third century. This was exacerbated by extensive confiscation of their lands by the Severi and their successors. The new province of Tripolitania was created around AD300, with Lepcis as its capital, though it is uncertain whether the provincial governor had a permanent residence in the city or not. The processes of change in late Antiquity are poorly understood at Lepcis. The city did not recover from the late third century decline, and subsequent development was limited to refurbishment and re-use of public buildings, particularly after the later fourth century earthquakes (Mattingly 1995:171–85). Silting of the harbour limited economic recovery (Reynolds 1995:42–5 argues for a peak of Tripolitanian oil exports under the Severi). There is at present little dated material for the end of the fourth century and beyond; the city is assumed to have been abandoned by the late seventh century. However, ongoing excavations are adding to our understanding of the later developments at Lepcis, which are now known to be more complex than simple decline and abandonment.

The monuments of the city centre were cleared and partly reconstructed in the 1920s to 1950s, and although much of the work is now published (e.g. port in Bartocchini 1958; circus in Caputo 1987; Humphrey 1986; Humphrey, Sear & Vickers 1973; reviewed by Di Vita 1990; Severan forum-basilica complex in Ward-Perkins 1993), these are to a great extent devoid of section drawings, pottery, bone, and small finds reports, focusing almost exclusively on the architectural developments of these monuments. (Ongoing excavations on private housing will redress the balance.) The current published record therefore limits exploration of detailed changes in their use and re-use.

The epigraphy has generally been used to date the inauguration and refurbishment of structures. It can also give insight into the integration of the built environment with social practice. This study explores the sources of funding for public displays, in particular the roles played by wealthy individuals, the imperial household, and the city (through the people and council). Inscriptions allow one to explore the occasions and individuals or groups behind the construction and refurbishing of buildings, the placing of statues and other more portable items. They record single events, and the associated statuary or monuments evoke memories of these past events and people. Differences emerge in the locations chosen for displays funded from these three different sources, through which one can explore the association between places and social practice, the creation of traditions, and in particular the appropriation of Roman forms outside of Rome and Italy.

Inscriptions

Almost 600 Latin inscriptions on stone have been recovered in excavations through the earlier part of this century. These have been collated by Joyce Reynolds and Brian Ward-Perkins in their 1952 *Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania*. More recent finds and revisions are available in annual editions of *l'Année Epigraphique*. The Latin epigraphy is accompanied by a lesser corpus of sixty-one Neo-Punic inscriptions, thirty-six of which are very brief funerary inscriptions), available in Della Vida & Guzzo 1987 *Iscrizioni Puniche della Tripolitania*. These were written in Neo-Punic lettering. There is also a small group of Latino-Punic texts, using Latin letters to transliterate Punic language (Mattingly 1995:160–7). Greek was also used at Lepcis, though to a much lesser degree. There is virtually no published material on graffiti or

other inscribed material. To date, the inscriptions of Lepcis have been largely used to plot a history of the town through its changing legal status, to gain insight into patterns of local government and, more recently, to add to the prosopography of the Roman Empire. This study adds a new dimension, by exploring the spatial significance of inscribed material in Lepcis.

Three types of stone were used for inscriptions: local sandstones, grey limestones from the nearby Ras el-Hammam quarries (used at Lepcis from the time of Augustus onwards), and marble (imported in bulk from the Aegean from the second century AD) (Walda & Walker 1984). The surviving corpus is obviously a partial record. Few have survived on local sandstone, which is easily eroded. Both marble and limestone were re-used as statue bases and in construction (particularly for the Byzantine Wall, Jones 1989). Thus the earlier inscriptions are expected to be particularly under-represented through erosion and re-use. Moreover, it cannot be safely assumed that the erection and refurbishment of monuments was always celebrated by the placing of honoraria, as is suggested by the lower-than-expected recording of *beneficia* in the monumental centre of Pompeii (Laurence 1994).

The rich cultural mix of the city is revealed by the use of Latin and Neo-Punic for inscriptions, though this is masked by a decline of the latter through the first century AD (contrasting with continued use of Libyco-Punic inland, written in both Latin and Libyco-Punic lettering, Elmayer 1983; Mattingly 1995). Punic titles (such as *sufes*, *shhm*, *azrm*) were retained through the first century AD, though to a much lesser extent after Trajan's award of colonial status. Local honorary titles were translated into Latin (e.g. *ornatrix patriae*, *amator patriae*), showing continuity of local traditions in this new official language. This flexibility in the adoption of new languages extended beyond the formal arena, attested by graffiti scratched on the Arch of Marcus Aurelius, using Greek letters but Libyco-Punic language (Reynolds 1989:121). It is not safe to assume the driving forces behind the shift to Latin for public displays were Italian immigrant families, despite the almost universal use of Latin names in inscriptions from the mid-first century AD. Birley (1988) presents a convincing argument for the prominence of Liby-Phoenician families at Lepcis, the great majority of Latin names resulting from local families changing to latinised forms. In all, this testifies to an active adoption and appropriation of new forms of expression by the élite of Lepcis, which can be explored through the placing of inscribed materials in the richly ornamented public centre.

Both the choice of those to be honoured and the setting for statuary were controlled by the local council, who are often mentioned in the inscriptions of Lepcis. This seems to have been a normal practice for towns of the Roman empire, as in the *Lex Irnitana* chapter. 61:

No one is publicly to co-opt a patron ... or to confer the power of patronage on anyone, except by a decree of the majority of the decuriones. (González 1986:190).

As well as deciding which families and officials would be honoured in the city, the council were actively involved in petitioning prominent men and women of Rome on an individual basis, and the epigraphy reflects this élite manipulation of the built environment. They had a say both in who would have monuments set up in their name, and also where they would be placed. There was appropriation of certain parts of the civic centre for honouring particular individuals by the local élite.

A bilingual text (IRT 338/IPT 26), cut on a limestone stele, illustrates the audiences at which such messages and statuary were directed (translations of the Latin and Libyco-Punic texts are provided in the appendix). It records the refurbishment of the Old Forum in AD54, paid for by Balitho Anno Commodus and Caius Anno, both natives of Lepcis. The monument itself is imposing, with a lengthy Latin text in bronze letters set in the limestone, followed by the Neo-

Punic text in much smaller inscribed letters. When we look at the writing, we can also see differences in the two languages. The Latin text starts with the emperor and his offices, goes on to mention the governor of the province, and patron Marcus Pompeius Silvanus, before listing the two local men and their family, recording their funding of the columns and paving in the forum. Also of interest is what is missed out on the Neo-Punic text, which was presumably more accessible: no mention of the emperor or his officials, concentrating solely on the local family. This is a visually impressive monument; the Latin text is as much a visual as a written statement, set up more for visiting dignitaries than for local appreciation. This is surely an indication of the very local needs reflected in the construction and placing of monuments in the city. This trend is seen in most of the Neo-Punic inscriptions at Lepcis, and lets us see part of the process of 'Romanisation', or adaptation of new images and practices by the people/élite of Lepcis to address their own needs. However, these were increasingly obscured by the shift to Latin as the major language for written display.

Inscriptions From the Monumental Centre:

Although almost 600 inscriptions have been found at Lepcis, only 291 can be securely associated with individual buildings (losses resulting largely through re-use and erosion). The distribution of inscriptions is as follows:

Forum Vetus/Old Forum: 94 (including 14 late antique funerary inscriptions)

Market: 12 (including one late antique funerary inscription)

Theatre: 58 (including one funerary inscription)

Chalcidicum: 6 (including two late antique funerary inscriptions)

Hadrianic baths: 6

Colonnaded street: 6 (including two funerary inscriptions)

Severan Forum and Basilica: 59 (including six late antique funerary inscriptions)

Port area: 9 (including three funerary dedications)

Streets: 15 (mainly from arches). Under-represented through lack of fieldwork.

Mausolea (east of the city): 26

The great variation in the number of inscriptions found at different monuments is largely a result of varying archaeological fieldwork. This study focuses on the three monuments with most inscriptions, all of which have been extensively cleared: the Theatre, the Old Forum/Forum Vetus, and the new forum-basilica complex put up by Septimius Severus and Caracalla, both natives of Lepcis. The funerary inscriptions are excluded from detailed analysis, as they relate to a significant change in the use of public monuments to churches and attached cemeteries.

The inscriptions have been divided into three groups based on their physical character: blocks (inscribed on buildings, invariably recording their inauguration), panels (largely but not exclusively inscribed on buildings), and statue bases. Bases are by far the most common find, which is to be expected, as they represent the cheapest and most accessible form of investment for public display. Bases show ongoing use of buildings and spaces beyond the initial inauguration of monuments represented by blocks, and to a lesser degree, panels.

This study explores the date-range of inscriptions found at the Theatre and two fora. Each monument is represented by an individual plot (shown in figure 1), dated by imperial dynasty where applicable (the right hand portion of each plot shows inscriptions which can only be dated to the nearest century or so). Discussion then moves onto the nature of funding, identifying changes through time and also variation in the groups using each monument for display.

Theatre:

The theatre was inaugurated in AD1/2 (funded by Annobal Rufus and his father, Himilcho Tapapius, local civic leaders). It could seat 30,000, which is significantly greater than estimates for the town's population of c.10,000 (though perhaps greater in the first century AD), and presumably audiences included many from Lepcis' populated *territorium*. The complex was heavily used, and refurbished and modified through the whole of the Roman period. As well as the auditorium and stage, there was a portico and temple to the north, and a further shrine within the theatre (Bandinelli 1966:81–83; Di Vita 1990).

The total number of inscriptions from the Theatre is 57 (excluding a late funerary inscription), of which 55 can be dated to the nearest emperor or century. Inscribed dedications peak under the Severi (Septimius, Caracalla and Geta, and the rest of the family), followed by a sharp decline. The monument continued as a place of display into the fourth century, but with markedly less popularity compared with the earlier period.

Old Forum/Forum Vetus:

This formed the focus of the Roman centre. Its origins may lie in the mid-second century BC, the inscription marking its dedication around 5BC–AD2 (IRT 520) possibly commemorating refurbishment (Jones 1989). More buildings were added through the first century AD, in the following order: Temple of Rome and Augustus; Temple of Liber Pater (patron deity); Basilica and Curia; Temple of Magna Mater. A new temple was added under Trajan, and another temple dedicated to Antoninus Pius (by Calpurnia daughter of Quintus, a local woman); a small exedra was constructed under the Severi; Constantine I rebuilt the burnt-out basilica; in the early fifth century the Trajanic temple was converted into a church. Thus the forum was a religious, administrative and social centre.

This complex has yielded the most inscriptions: eighty (excluding funerary monuments), of which seventy-three can be dated. The inscriptions show a flurry of display under Augustus and the Julio-Claudians, with a peak under the Severi; although this is followed by a sharp decline, the forum remained a focus for display into the fourth century. Overall, the date-range of inscriptions is similar to that for the Theatre, though the latter seems to have retained more popularity in the third-fourth centuries than the Old Forum.

Severan Forum-Basilica Complex:

This complex was funded and dedicated by Septimius Severus (though completed under Caracalla). The forum and temple (to the Divina Domus of the Severans) were inaugurated by AD216. It is a very beautiful and ornate complex: the Forum portico column interstices carry alternating heads of Medusa and Nereids. The Basilica has carved marble pilasters, on the right depicting the labours of Hercules, and on the left, myths of Lepcis' patron deities Dionysus/Liber Pater (similar to those on the Severan arch; see Ward-Perkins 1993 for detailed description and illustrations). In the fifth century the south-west vestibule of the south-east nave was converted into a synagogue.

Of the 53 inscriptions found in the complex (excluding six late funerary monuments), 43 can be dated. The comparative lack of dedications made under the Severi, in comparison with the fourth century is partly due to work on the site having continued until AD216, and presumably ongoing imperial interests in the subsequent use of this space. As with the Old Forum and Theatre, there is a low occurrence of later third century dedications, and it is not until the fourth century that the new forum complex became popular as a centre for display.

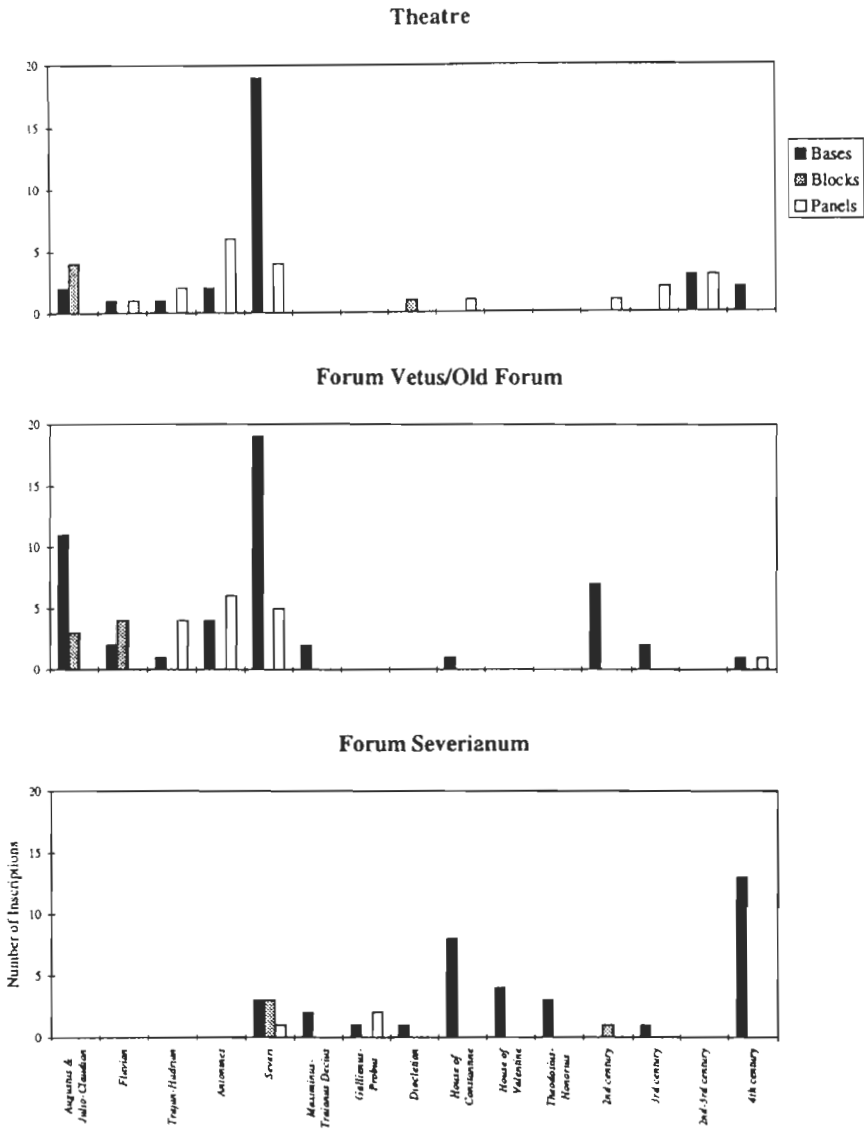


Figure 1. Dated epigraphy from the theatre, Old Forum and Severan forum complex

Discussion

Inscriptions from both the Theatre and Old Forum show their popularity as centres for display from Augustus to the Severi, though with a marked decline thereafter. Many inscriptions have survived from the first century BC to the Severi, compared with subsequent periods, despite re-use and erosion, suggesting an initially rapid and extensive adoption of Roman forms of display and aggrandisement. The sudden drop in dedications to the emperors after the Severi was universal across the empire (Jacques 1989), but this is not a full explanation for the paucity of private dedications in the later third century at Lepcis. This is made more extreme by the survival of earlier dedications which suggests the lack of inscribed material from the mid-third century. This indicates a sudden change in practice, perhaps as locals limited references to the emperors when making dedications, thus removing the main means of dating such material. This is an area that needs further research. Whatever the explanation for the later third century 'gap', there is surviving fourth century epigraphy. By this date the arena for display seems to have shifted to the Severan Forum and Basilica, compared with the few contemporary inscriptions from the Theatre and Old Forum. Indeed, it may have taken some time for the new monument to become fixed as a centre in the minds of the élite. This attitude is partly summed up in inscription IRT 566 from the Severan complex, where the statue awarded to Flavius Petasius around AD300 was set up in the '*foro nouo Seuerialano*' which had been completed almost eighty years previously (alternately, reference to the 'new forum' may have been a simple way of distinguishing between the two fora). The important associations made by the people of Lepcis with the old centres of town, the élite families, the patrons honoured there, made the Old Forum and Theatre the places to be seen, the places to be associated with. Members of eminent families continued to make their mark alongside their ancestors, reinforcing their 'ownership', which was repeated at the Theatre by controlled seating arrangements during exhibitions. Such strong traditions may have taken more than the construction of a grand new complex to encourage a move; hence the prominence of the Severan forum complex for display by the fourth century, seemingly at the expense of the Old Forum and Theatre.

To explore the difference in the placing of statuary in these three monuments in more detail, the following section focuses on the sources of funding as revealed by the epigraphy.

Comparison of Sources of Funding

This section concentrates on the statue bases, which indicate ongoing use of public spaces, and include a wider range of people as they represent lower levels of investment in comparison with construction of new buildings or refurbishment. Although statues could be set up to commemorate new building work, they were also placed to honour patrons, new officials of the province, and local families. Both the selection of individuals to be honoured and the location of these statues was controlled by the local council which is mentioned in many inscriptions. Public buildings were supplemented by statues, which are testimony to élite competition and munificence. Where the source of funding can be identified, it has been placed in one of two groups: public (from local civic/community funds) and private (from individuals or families). The group of statue bases used in this comparison includes some that could not be dated, invariably placed by local families making no reference to the emperor or African official. The third row of figures shows the total number of inscriptions found at each complex, to show the prevalence of bases which indicate the source of funding compared with those that do not, and other inscribed forms.

	<i>Theatre</i>		<i>Old Forum</i>		<i>Severan Forum-Basilica</i>	
Public	9	35%	19	41%	35	83%
Private	17	65%	27	59%	7	17%
Total inscriptions	57		80		53	

The Theatre and Old Forum housed inscriptions of roughly the same date-range (see figure 1), and the surviving bases show similar ratios of public to private sources. This is in marked contrast to those from the Severan forum complex, which contained a greater number of later inscriptions. Here, significantly more were funded by public sources, which seems to indicate a change in epigraphic habits. As well as the delay in the use of the new forum-basilica complex by the élite, there is also a reduction in the ratio of private individuals involved when inscribed dedications seem to increase in the fourth century. However, this is possibly specific to the Severan complex, which may have remained under imperial control long after its completion, contrasting with other public monuments.

This raises some interesting questions which can be addressed by looking in more detail at who was being commemorated by these statues. These details were obtained by working through the epigraphy of Lepcis recorded by Reynolds & Ward-Perkins (1952), and subsequent additions in *l'Année Epigraphique*. A few trends emerge:

Theatre:

- Many men from the highest echelons of the Roman government were placing dedications to the emperors, particularly to Augustus, Antoninus Pius, and the Severi. The dedicators were not residents of Lepcis, but generally officials posted to Africa.
- Some local aristocratic families placed busts for their members (male and female).
- Honours for the emperors, particularly the Severi, were set up through civic funds.

Old Forum:

- Compared with the Theatre, relatively more dedications were put up by locals to honour their families.
- There is an increase in dedications to the emperor under the Severi from a variety of people.
- The epigraphy seems to represent a wide range of dedicators, including a centurion, a builder, and a freedman.

Severan Forum and Basilica:

A significant number of patrons were honoured by the city (virtually all surviving inscriptions are dedications to patrons). This includes local officials being honoured for particular events, alongside the wealthier provincial administrators that were petitioned by the city.

Suggestions on the Reflection of Social Developments in Lepcis Magna

Material from Lepcis suggests that it is possible to identify variation in the use of the built environment through the epigraphic record, despite problems surrounding re-use and erosion. Similarities in the date-range of surviving inscriptions from the Old Forum and Theatre can be taken to suggest basically similar post-depositional histories for the epigraphy of these complexes. However, detailed examination of who was being honoured by the placing of statuary reveals differences.

The Old Forum was more popular for the commemoration of local families and individuals,

perhaps through close association with the curia, and the numerous temples and processions that formed part of this complex. Processions to and from the council house passed through spaces ornamented with statuary dedicated to the emperors but also to locals, presumably from families which contributed members to the city council which in turn selected who was to be honoured and where. This may have been viewed as the heart of the city for local élites up to the early third century; although buildings were maintained beyond this date there is very little inscribed material which can be reliably placed in the fourth century or later. Displays may have continued but were no longer commemorated in an archaeologically visible fashion.

The Theatre emerges as the most prestigious arena for display, with many statues dedicated to the imperial household and provincial governors, but not to the exclusion of local families. Presumably official visitors were treated to displays and festivals held in the Theatre, something which continued into the fourth century, though as at the Old Forum on a much reduced level.

The Severan forum-basilica complex was used in a different way, and was very much associated with official, civic petitions to patrons (both those from the city and others based at Rome), with little use by locals for private display. This difference no doubt resulted from changing epigraphic habits through time, though perhaps also greater control over the placing of honoraria in the Severan forum-basilica complex compared with the two other monuments. It is no coincidence that the fourth century increase in dedications coincides with Lepcis' elevation to provincial capital, with the creation of the new province of Tripolitania. The new Severan complex was selected as the centre for displaying honours to the city's patrons and provincial governors, above other parts of the city. These later dedications reflect the changing nature of patronage in the later Roman empire, showing the increasing dominance of imperial servants and provincial officials (Saller 1982), and fewer attempts or successes by local families to forge links with prominent individuals in the emperor's court or at Rome. It may also reflect a reduction in the use of this form of display by private individuals, perhaps from as early as the mid-third century. Late antique funerary inscriptions abound in Lepcis, yet were not apparently accompanied by dedications to the living.

Further work remains to be done, in particular on the apparent 'gap' in mid-late third century inscriptions. Up to the mid-third century the epigraphy documents active, conspicuous use of the civic centre by the local élite for display, but after that date it is increasingly difficult to observe private initiatives. Was there decline, or simply change by dropping dedications to the emperors, removing our ability to date these actions? In the absence of securely stratified material it is not possible to address this issue.

Nevertheless, this study has shown the potential of a city's epigraphy to reveal complex associations between the population and their built environment, even when detailed, stratified archaeological evidence is not available. Significant is the delay between the completion of the elaborate Severan forum complex and the placing of honorary statuary, reinforced by the different motives behind their erection compared both with earlier practices at the Old Forum and Theatre, and lack of fourth century comparisons. Architectural evidence from the three monuments studied here shows continued repairs and refurbishment through to at least the fifth century, with final abandonment of the city perhaps as late as the seventh century. Decline in the use of the Old Forum and Theatre for the placing of inscribed statuary can only be explained as a change in élite practice to a less visible form of display. This suggests it is possible to observe the creation and maintenance (and decline) of traditions in the use of the built environment which complement our assumed notions of public buildings in antiquity – development sequences based on architectural evidence need not coincide with contemporary appreciation or use of civic centres.

Acknowledgements

I must mention Duncan Cloud, who has given invaluable assistance in the translation of some of these inscriptions. Thanks also to David Mattingly and my anonymous referee for useful suggestions. I do, however, take responsibility for the conclusions.

Appendix

Pliny *Epistles* book I, letter 8, to Pompeius Saturninus (1969:40–42, trans. B. Radice)

'... I intend to ask you to take another look at the speech I delivered to my fellow-citizens at the official opening of the library at Comum... I can then revise it before committing myself whether to publish it or suppress it... it is the actual subject-matter rather than my treatment of it which is holding me back... It makes me seem rather carried away by my own praises, and this increases my diffidence even if I limit myself to a few simple words, especially as I am obliged to dwell on my own generosity as well as that of my relatives... nothing could have been more valuable to me than to set out the reasons for my generosity. I was thereby enabled first to dwell on noble sentiments, then to discern their virtue by prolonged reflection, and so finally to avoid the reaction which follows on an impulsive handing-out of gifts... I trained myself to some extent to think less of my riches, for though we all seem to be born slaves to money-saving, my love of liberal giving, long and deeply reasoned, has freed me from these besetting bonds of avarice, and my generosity seems likely to win more praise because I was led to it from principle and not out of mere impulse. I had also to consider the fact that I was not paying for public games or a show of gladiators but making an annual contribution towards the maintenance of free-born children... I was considering the general interest rather than my own self-glorification when I wished the purpose and effect of my benefaction to be known, but my present idea of publishing the speech may perhaps make me seem to be furthering my own reputation instead of benefiting others... This was delivered not as a public speech in the open, but before the town council in their senate house, so that I am afraid that it is hardly consistent at this point to court by publication the popular favour and applause which I avoided when I was speaking. I put the doors and walls of the senate house between myself and the populace whom I was trying to benefit, so as not to appear to court their favour; but now I feel that I am going out of my way to display my powers and thus win over those whose sole concern with my benefaction rests in the example it sets.'

Pliny *Epistles* book 3, letter 6, to Annius Severus (1969: 90, trans. Betty Radice)

Relating to a Corinthian bronze of an old man Pliny has bought, and wishes to place as a dedication in a public place in his native Comum, northern Italy. He writes to Annius Severus, asking him to:

... carry out a commission for me... and give immediate orders for a pedestal to be made?
Choose what marble you like, and have it inscribed with my name and official titles if you think they should appear too.

IRT 338 Reynolds & Ward-Perkins 1952:102

Latin:

To Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus, victor of Germany, son of Drusus, chief priest, granted tribunician power 13 times, hailed emperor 17 times, consul 5 times, censor, father of the country; Marcus Pompeius Silvanus, consul, centumvir, governor and patron of Lepcis, made this holy place and dedicated it. Quintus Cassius Gratus, praetor to the governor of Crete and Cyrenae, legate to the praetor of the province of Africa, through his son Caius Anno, in the name of his son, he dedicated the columns, the land and the forum, at his own expense. Balitho Anno Commodus, adopted son of Marcus in his last will, took care to do the work.

Punic:

G'y ben Hanno, in the name of G'y his grandson, by his son M'qr he covered the columns and the space and paved the forum at his own expense, as the work required. Baalyaton Gmd' who entered in as son by M'qr through the writing of the affairs of the family of G'y ben Hanno, had this work executed and brought it to completion.

Bibliography

- Bandinelli, R.B. 1966. *The Buried City. Excavations at Leptis Magna*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.
- Bartoccini, R. 1958. Il Porto Romano di Leptis Magna. Rome.
- Birley, A.R. 1988. Names at Lepcis Magna. *Libyan Studies*, 19:1–19.
- Caputo, G. 1987. Il Teatro Augusteo di Leptis Magna. Scavo e Restauro (1937–1951). Monografie di Archeologia Libica III. Rome: 'L'Erma' di Bretschneider.
- Della Vida, G.D. & Guzzo, M.G.A. 1987. *Iscrizioni Puniche della Tripolitania (1927–1967)*. Rome: 'L'Erma' di Bretschneider.
- Di Vita, A. 1990. Il teatro di Leptis Magna: una rilettura, *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 3:133–146.
- Duncan-Jones, R. 1982. *The Economy of the Roman Empire: Quantitative Studies*. (Second edition.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Elmayer, A.F. 1983. The re-interpretation of Latino-Punic inscriptions from Roman Tripolitania, *Libyan Studies*, 14:86–95.
- González, J. 1986. The Lex Irnitana: a new copy of the Flavian municipal law, *Journal of Roman Studies*, 76:147–243.
- Humphrey, J.H. 1986. *Roman Circuses. Arenas for Chariot Racing*. London: Batsford.
- Humphrey, J.H., Sear, F.B. & Vickers, M. 1973. Aspects of the circus at Lepcis Magna, *Libya Antiqua*, 9–10:25–98.
- Jacques, F. 1989. L'urbanisme en Italie et en Afrique romaines, *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 2:238–244.
- Jones, G.D.B. 1989. Town and city in Tripolitania, *Libyan Studies*, 20:91–106.
- Laurence, R. 1994. *Roman Pompeii: Space and Society*. London: Routledge.
- Mattingly, D.J. 1995. *Tripolitania*. London: Batsford.
- Mattingly, D.J. & Hitchner, R.B. 1995. Roman Africa: an archaeological review, *Journal of Roman Studies*, 85:165–213.
- Pliny the Younger *Letters of the Younger Pliny*. (trans. B. Radice 1969.) Harmondsworth, Penguin.
- Reynolds, J.M. 1989. Twenty years of inscriptions, *Libyan Studies*, 20:117–126.
- Reynolds, J.M. & Ward-Perkins, J.B. 1952. *Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania*. Rome: British School at Rome.
- Reynolds, P. 1995. *Trade in the Western Mediterranean, AD400–700: the Ceramic Evidence*. Oxford: Tempus Reparatum. British Archaeological Report International Series 604.
- Saller, R.P. 1982. *Personal Patronage Under the Early Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Walda, H. & Walker, S. 1984. The art and architecture of Lepcis Magna: marble origins by isotopic analysis, *Libyan Studies*, 15:81–92.
- Ward-Perkins, J.B. 1948. Severan art and architecture at Lepcis Magna, *Journal of Roman Studies*, 38:59–80.
- Ward-Perkins, J.B. 1993. *The Severan Buildings of Lepcis Magna. An Architectural Survey*. Dept of Antiquities, Tripoli, SPLAJ/Society for Libyan Studies Monograph 2. London: Society for Libyan Studies.