

# Forward vs Backward Momentum

Post by “Don” of September 28, 2024 at 7:44 AM

Speaking of "inscriptions"...



A Hellenic or Roman Marble Statue Face (2nd-1st Century BC), of a goddess defaced with a Christian cross during the Late Antique Period. The cross was carved by a Christian, who damaged the face representation of the goddess. Crosses were also sometimes carved on ancient statues to Christianize them for reuse as images of saints. The artifact is now located in the Archeological Museum of Samos in Greece.

"From the 6th Century BC, through the 4th Century AD, sculpture had been created and destroyed, stolen and repositioned, but always prominently displayed and used in the context of Corinthian religion, economic activity, and urban life. Yet from about the 5th Century, creation of new work dropped off rapidly, preceded by a decline in technical ability and availability of raw materials, and closely followed by the defacement and then destruction of most of what existed in public and private contexts.

Between the 5th-10th Centuries, the only new sculpture created at Corinth was in the form of architectural members or Christian reliefs for church decoration, while ancient sculpture of "pagan" or "secular" significance alike was steadily marked with crosses, defaced, cut up, reused, or melted down. This new attitude to sculpture was a fundamental change of Late Antiquity, as individually and collectively people both ceased to create new sculpture, and undertook the actual physical destruction of most of what existed.

This late antique change in attitude to sculpture happened all across the Roman Empire, and led both individuals and groups to behave toward the sculpted environment in new and hostile ways."

Amelia R. Brown, "Crosses, noses, walls and wells: Christianity and the fate of sculpture in late antique Corinth" (copied from Twitter/X @archeohistories)