

Zdravko Dimitrov, PhD
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences,
National Archaeological Institute with
Museum - Sofia.
Department of Antiquities
1000 Sofia, 2 Saborna Str.
Sofia
Bulgaria

zdravkodimitrov@abv.bg
zdravkodimitrov74@gmail.com
2009 Mellon Fellow at ACOR, Amman,
Jordan

Zdravko Dimitrov

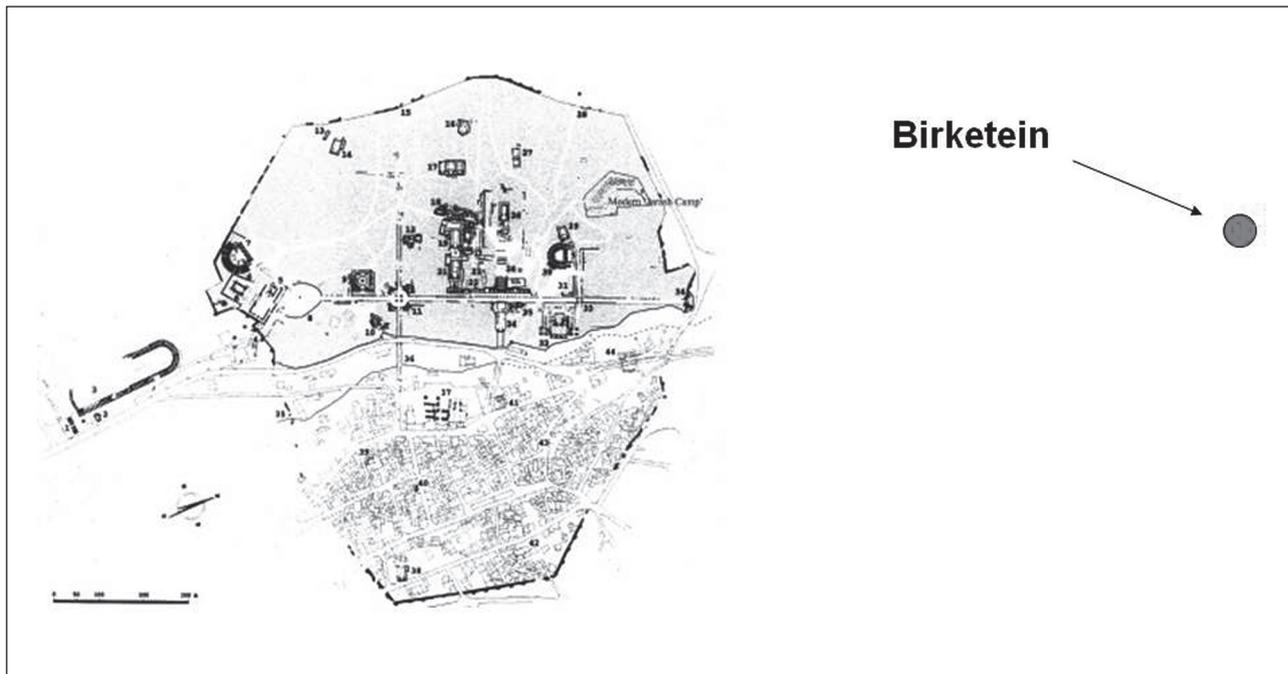
A Stage of Corinthian Order Development at Gerasa: An Analysis of the Mausoleum of Germanus

The purpose of this paper is to rekindle interest in the examination of the architectural elements and development of the orders at burial complexes in the Gerasa region during the Roman period. In this respect, the so-called Tomb of Germanus, located in the area known as Birketein and made in the Corinthian order (FIGS.1 and 2) is of particular significance. The tomb was described in the 1930s (Kraeling 1938: pl. VII b) and has also been mentioned in later sources (McCown 1943; Browning 1982: 214-216; Khouri 1986: 136-137; Segal

1988: 30-31, fig. 97-100; Scheck 1997: 191). The most useful picture of the well-preserved ruins comes from the early period of study (Schumacher 1902: 162-165, abb. 36, 37; here see FIG. 3).

The complex may be examined according to four different criteria:

- 1) As part of the urban system of Gerasa, especially in connection with its proximity to the Birketein complex;
- 2) As an architectural exemplar of a funerary structure, *i.e.* temple-like tomb;



1. Location of the Tomb of Germanus, 1.5 km north of the fortified area of Roman Gerasa.



2. The Corinthian order Tomb of Germanus: general view of remains today.



3. Remains of the tomb at the end of the 19th century, according to G. Schumacher (ZDPV, vol. 25, 1902, S. 162, Abb. 36).

- 3) In terms of its functions; these definitely include burial and commemoration, hence the terminological problem: “tomb”, “mausoleum”, “heroon” or another type?
- 4) In terms of architectural decoration, with invaluable data on the development of the Corinthian order, even more so bearing in mind that the details have never been under the ground or re-used.

The aim of this examination is to present a detailed architectural analysis of:

- 1) The base details and the columns;
- 2) The Corinthian capitals;

- 3) The surviving, though few, fragments of the entablature.

Architectural Analysis

Base Details

Three bases survive to the present day. The northernmost one is almost completely destroyed. The central one is buried under fallen blocks and structures built during later periods. Fortunately, the southernmost of the three bases is now accessible from all sides and, moreover, all of its elements – including the profiles – have survived intact (FIG. 4).



4. Profile of the bases: southernmost of the three bases in the mausoleum showing the scheme of the Ionic base (so-called Attic version with two *tori*, a *trochilos* between them and two listels).

The bases of the Tomb of Germanus belong to the Ionic type. They consist of a tall, rather massive plinth, two *tori*, a *trochilos* between them and two thin listels each. Thus, these Ionic bases probably belong to the so-called Attic type.

The shape of the upper *torus* of Attic bases is particularly distinctive. Usually this is the only element to display significant development of shape over time. The other elements of the Ionic base retained their conservative appearance, exhibiting hardly any changes throughout the Roman imperial period.

The Ionic bases from the Tomb of Germanus have a massive plinth upon which all the upper parts of the detail are spread. The plinths are so high that they cover almost 40% of the total height of the whole base detail.

The *tori* stand out on account of their exquisite craftsmanship, distinctive bulging shape and strongly marked convex curl. It is significant that the profiles of the upper and lower *tori* are identical. This testifies to a long-lasting tradition of high quality production. Often the upper *tori* are flat, with a reduced height and no convex curl. Both the upper and lower *tori* of the bases from the Tomb of Germanus have a perfect curve of almost the

same height. Similarly skilfully accomplished are the tips of the listels on the Ionic bases.

Columns

The three surviving columns of the Tomb of Germanus are smooth and ornament-free (FIG. 5). They have a strongly marked *entasis* in the centre of the elements.

Although seemingly simply shaped and ornament-free, this is actually far from the case. The columns are perfectly proportioned and their surfaces are expertly polished. However, it is the superb craftsmanship in the upper and lower tips of these elements that capture the eye. The ribs are formed by an *apophysis* consisting of exceptionally well-shaped elements.

In the upper part of the columns, the *apophysis*, the profiles are segmented into convex, noticeably protruding upper and lower parts, connecting the whole body of the column (FIG. 6). The *apophysis* extends considerably beyond the lower part of the column. Thus the overall appearance of the detail is very graceful and highly varied. At the same time a large, wide bed was made for the soffit of the capital.

In their lower sections, the columns also have markedly profiled areas. The profile of



5. Columns of the Tomb of Germanus: smooth and ornament-free detail.



6. Detail of the upper part of the columns: the *apophysis*.

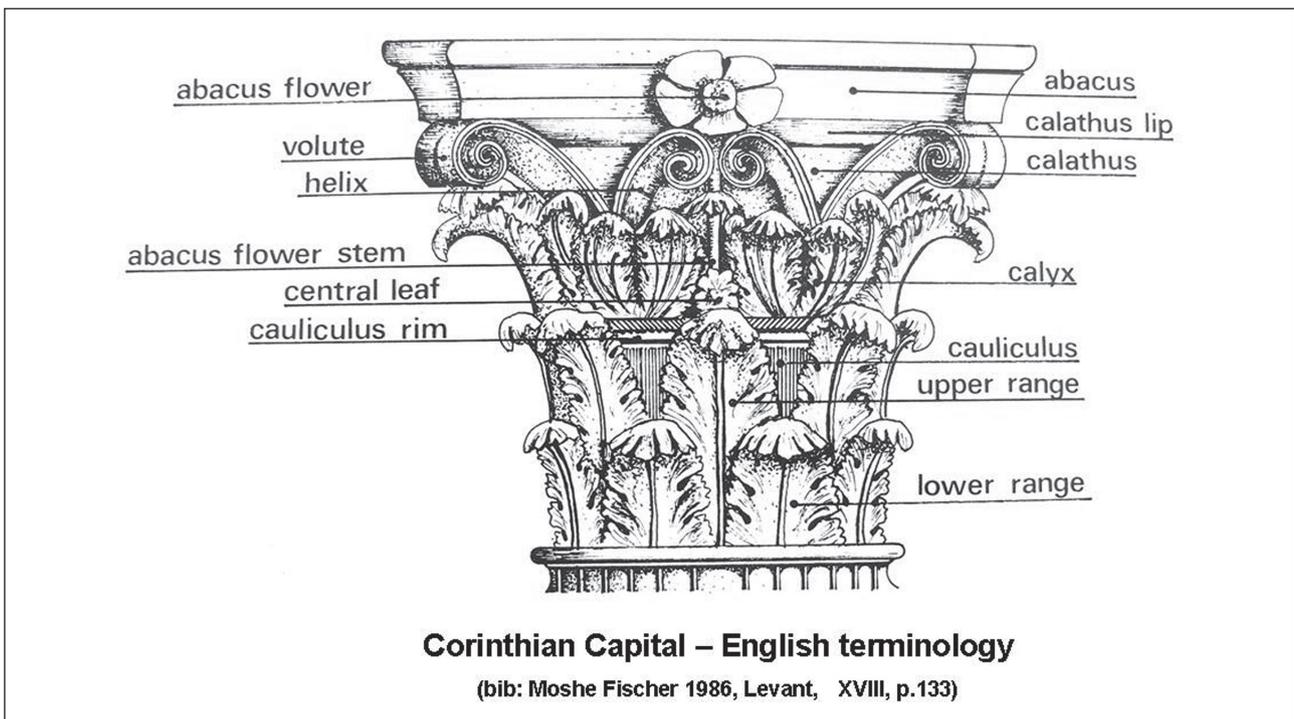
the column standing on the upper surface of the bases is especially massive and jutting (see FIG. 4).

Capitals

The capitals of the Tomb of Germanus are Corinthian, containing all the canonical elements of the order: *Korinthische Normalkapitelle* (Heilmeyer 1970: 12-14; Freyberger 1990:

1-4, beilage 1; Gros 2001: 494; here see FIG. 7 according to Fischer 1986: 133, fig. 1).

The three details consist of: (1) two rows of eight acanthus leaves each, covering the lower two thirds of the *calathos* (the basket); (2) the top third of the capitals is covered by *caulis* (*cauliculus*) and floral acanthus cups (*calyx*) with the stems of the helices and volutes spreading out of them (FIG. 8); (3) the last part



7. Corinthian capital: type with all elements in the scheme of the detail, according to M. Fischer (Levant, vol. 28, 1986: p. 133).



8. Model of the Corinthian capitals of the Tomb of Germanus: general view.

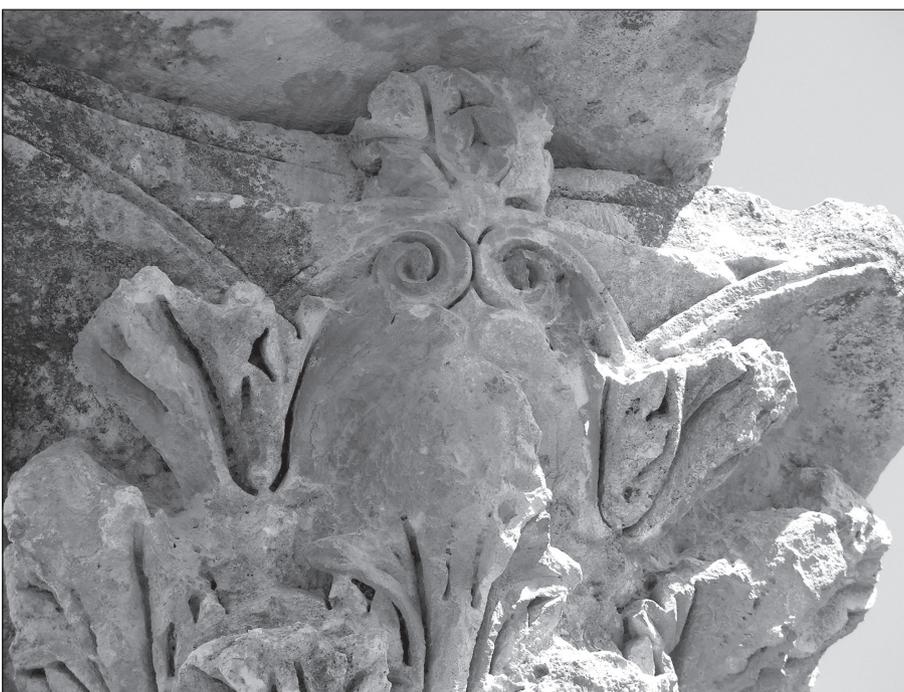
of the capitals, abacus slabs, are also abundantly ornamented (FIGS. 9 and 10).

The acanthus leaves belong to the ‘Asia Minor’ type, *i.e.* pointed acanthus (*Acanthus spinosus*). The leaves are elongated in height, but in terms of overall appearance they are spread like fans. The most significant aspect is the craftsmanship seen in the tips of the leaves. Each leaf is made of seven large lobes flanking

the axis of the leaf. Only the last lobe, the seventh, is placed at the top; it crowns the leaf and hangs back down (FIG. 11). Each lobe has four to five separate tips, very pointed in shape. The tips of the side lobes are very precisely outlined. Often these were nearly three-dimensional, but their most typical architectural and decorative element is that tips of the second pair of lobes, like the tips of the first two pairs,



9. Ornamentation of the abacus plate of the capitals: detail of the five-leaf rosette.



10. Ornamentation of the upper part of the capitals (with abacus plate): detail of the huge floral ornament in abacus, abacus flower stem, calathos lip, helices, acanthus cups (*calyx*) and *caulis* (*cauliculus*).



11. Model of the acanthus leaves in the capitals: leaves in the lower range.



12. Detail of the very deeply carved surface of the leaves: central and side grooves.

bend horizontally with their points touching the points of the tips of the neighbouring leaves. Thus, there is no empty space left between the leaves and the *calathos* is not visible, at the same time forming thin, perfect figures, identical in shape and size, *viz.* triangles, rhomboids etc. (FIG. 11).

The last, but probably the most important, distinctive feature that must be mentioned in

the description of the acanthus leaves from the Tomb of Germanus concerns the central and side grooves. They are placed along the length of the stem of the leaf and side lobes, and actually segment the acanthi. They are very deeply carved into the stone surface (FIG. 12).

The elements of the *caulis* (so-called *cauliculus*) and the cups that ‘spring’ on each facade of the capitals between the acanthus



13. Detail of the acanthus cup (*calyx*) and *caulis* (*cauliculus*).



14. Detail of the helices: relief ribs in their curls and in the grooves of the acanthus leaves.

leaves of the upper rows are made according to a very distinctive model (FIG. 10). The *caulis* is highly elongated, non-segmented, smooth and ornament-free (FIGS. 10 and 13).

The acanthus cups (so-called *calyx*) themselves are also very well-preserved (FIG. 13). They consist of very large and broadly spread two-segment acanthus leaves, which are ‘inner’ and ‘outer’. The most important element

of the cups, however, is their inner surface. The spot where the tips of the inner leaves touch was carved in the same way as the acanthus leaves at the base of the capitals (FIG. 13). At least three points of the tips on both sides of the leaves of the cup touch and form ‘elongated eyes’; the broad grooves, circling and separating the ‘inner’ leaves from the ‘outer’ ones, frame a clearly discernible shape inside the cup.

The stems of the volutes and the helices of the Corinthian capitals are exceptionally fine (FIG. 10). They are profiled, bulging above the surface of the *calathos* and have a delicately carved midrib along the entire body. The curls of the volutes have not survived to the present day, but the helices have survived intact. They are of the standard type on all facades of the capitals, *i.e.* curling like the so-called ‘inner volutes’ (FIGS. 9, 10 and 14).

The abacus flowers fall in two types: a five-leaf classic rosette (FIG. 9) and a huge floral ornament with distinctive triangular indents on the bud in its centre (FIG. 10). The most characteristic elements in the implementation of this decorative scheme are as follows:

1) Relief ribs are carved inside the grooves of the acanthus leaves and in the very curls of the helices (FIGS. 9 and 14). These thin ribs are at times three-dimensional and connect the

- separate segments of the decorative elements;
- 2) Great depth to the grooves of the acanthus leaves and cut-outs (FIGS. 11 - 14);
- 3) ‘Eyes’ formed by the tips are diverse and placed all over the surface of the *calathos* (FIGS. 11 - 14);
- 4) They are three-dimensional; some elements where the tips meet are completely separated from the stone base (FIG. 11);
- 5) These ‘eyes’ continue even to the second row of the acanthus leaves (FIGS. 8, 10 and 14).

Entablature

Only two architraves of the entablature, situated above the colonnade, have survived. They are segmented into three fascia, one above another, that are smooth and ornament-free (FIG. 15). In their soffit part, the architraves are also ornament-free; there are no profiles breaking up the overall smooth line (FIG. 16).



15. Entablature of the Tomb of Germanus: architrave blocks, front view.



16. Entablature of the Tomb of Germanus: architrave blocks, rear and soffit view.

Comparative Analysis with other Examples of the Corinthian Order from Gerasa during the period of the Principate

If one examines other examples of the Corinthian order at Gerasa, it becomes clear that the Tomb of Germanus is very close to a number of them, but with substantial differences nonetheless.

Thus, for instance, the earlier examples – those dating to the period of Trajan and Hadrian (*e.g.* Arch of Hadrian; Southern Gate) – are completely different in terms of the pattern of the base details and, even more so, the Corinthian capitals. Essentially different also are the patterns and methods of work from the Southern Theatre (late first- early second centuries; see Khouri 1986: 61).

Typical Corinthian capitals exhibiting the craftsmanship of the Tomb of Germanus appear for the first time in the southern part of Gerasa

during the second half of the second century, in the Temple of Zeus which was reconstructed in 162 / 163 AD (Khouri 1986: 58). There one can see the same connecting relief ribs in the helices and the same ‘eye’ inside the cups. The acanthus band is made according to a similar pattern.

Some of the best analogies for the Corinthian capitals, the smooth columns with highly profiled *apophysis* and the ornament-free entablature (*i.e.* in terms of the overall pattern of the order) can be found amongst the architectural elements surviving in the main street of Gerasa (*Cardo Maximus*) in the area between the Oval Square and Southern Tetrapylon (Corinthian order system dating back to the second century: Khouri 1986: 64-65, 67-68). Apart from the above-mentioned examples of base, column and entablature, in the Corinthian capitals one can also see the Asia Minor acanthus pattern, numerous ‘eyes’

between the tips of the leaves, similar cups, *caulis* and, especially, the Anatolian type of floral helices, *viz.* ‘palmetto’ helices.

The best analogies for the pattern of the Corinthian capitals from the Tomb of Germanus come from complexes in central and northern parts of Gerasa, namely the Temple of Diana, the ‘Propylaea’ leading to it (FIG. 17) and the northern main streets, as well as the Northern Theatre (FIG. 18)

and Western Baths (FIG. 19) of the town.

All of these monumental complexes date back to the Antonine period (Browning 1982: 148, 165-176; Khouri 1986: 83, 86, 89, 100-101, 104-107). The first phase of the construction of the Northern Theatre, with Corinthian details – probably closest in terms of pattern and style to the Tomb of Germanus – was in 164–165 AD (Khouri 1986: 89).



17. Corinthian capital from the Propylaea complex leading to the Temple of Diana at Gerasa.



18. Corinthian capital from the Northern Theatre at Gerasa.



19. Corinthian capital from the Western Baths at Gerasa.

Corinthian capitals and details of earlier temples and sanctuaries were re-used in some of the early Christian complexes in Gerasa. Amongst them, though we cannot date them precisely, are magnificent analogies made according to Anatolian patterns, quite likely by master stonemasons from Asia Minor. These include column capitals from the so-called Triple Church, from St John and others from the Cathedral and St Theodor. This Corinthian scheme can also be seen in the Eastern Baths.

Chronology

On the basis of epigraphic material from the epistyle, all authors date the monument to the second half of the second century, *viz.* “*Centurion of the Roman army GERMANUS was the son of Molpon and after his retiring he lived in Gerasa and was buried in the region*

of Birketein” (Schumacher 1902: 163, abb. 37; Kraeling 1938: pl. 116 a; Merkelbach and Stauber 2002: 352).

According to McCown the tomb dates to the period of the Antonines, and Khoury provides a chronology from the mid-second century onwards (Browning 1982: 215-216; McCown 1943; Khoury 1986: 136-137). However, far more important is the fact that there are dozens of architectural and decorative features that not only confirm this chronology, but also contribute by making it more precise, especially on the basis of direct analogies with artefacts from the other monumental complexes at Gerasa.

As this is a separate stage in the development of the Corinthian order at Gerasa, it should be noted that the Tomb of Germanus can be dated on the basis of its decoration as follows:

1) General dating: between the Great Temple

of Diana (150 AD) and the Nymphaeum (*ca.* 190 AD);

- 2) Precise dating: the 60s of the second century, in the time of Marcus Aurelius. By and large, exact similarities can be seen in the methods used on Corinthian capitals from the Temple of Zeus and the Northern Theatre, dating to the period 162 - 165.

Influence and Inspirations in the Architectural Patterns of the Corinthian order of the Tomb of Germanus

The Corinthian details from this burial - memorial complex are crucial in advancing our understanding of Antique art in the Middle East and, more specifically, of the development of the Corinthian order in the territory of Gerasa.

The model for the Corinthian capitals comes from Asia Minor in terms of its decorative scheme. Similarly important is the likely fact that these Corinthian capitals were carved by Anatolian stonemasons. The following observations are, in my opinion, clear evidence in support of this conclusion:

- 1) The *caulis* is not segmented; it is ornament-free and strongly elongated, like examples from Ephessos and Pergamon;
- 2) The acanthus leaves follow an ‘Anatolian pattern’ in all aspects;
- 3) A typical feature in the work of master stonemasons from Asia Minor is that the tips bend horizontally and their points touch one another in a very widely spread fashion;
- 4) Overall three-dimensionality;
- 5) Fretwork technique can be seen in some places, particularly on the tips of some of the leaves;
- 6) The stems and curls of the helices are very diversely ribbed;
- 7) The abacus flowers and, especially, the inner element of the cups were also made in accordance with Asia Minor methods;

- 8) Perhaps the most prominent Asia Minor element in the workmanship is the presence of thin relief ribs carved in the helices and also in the grooves of the leaves; this is a common and very popular method of Aphrodisians.

Conclusion

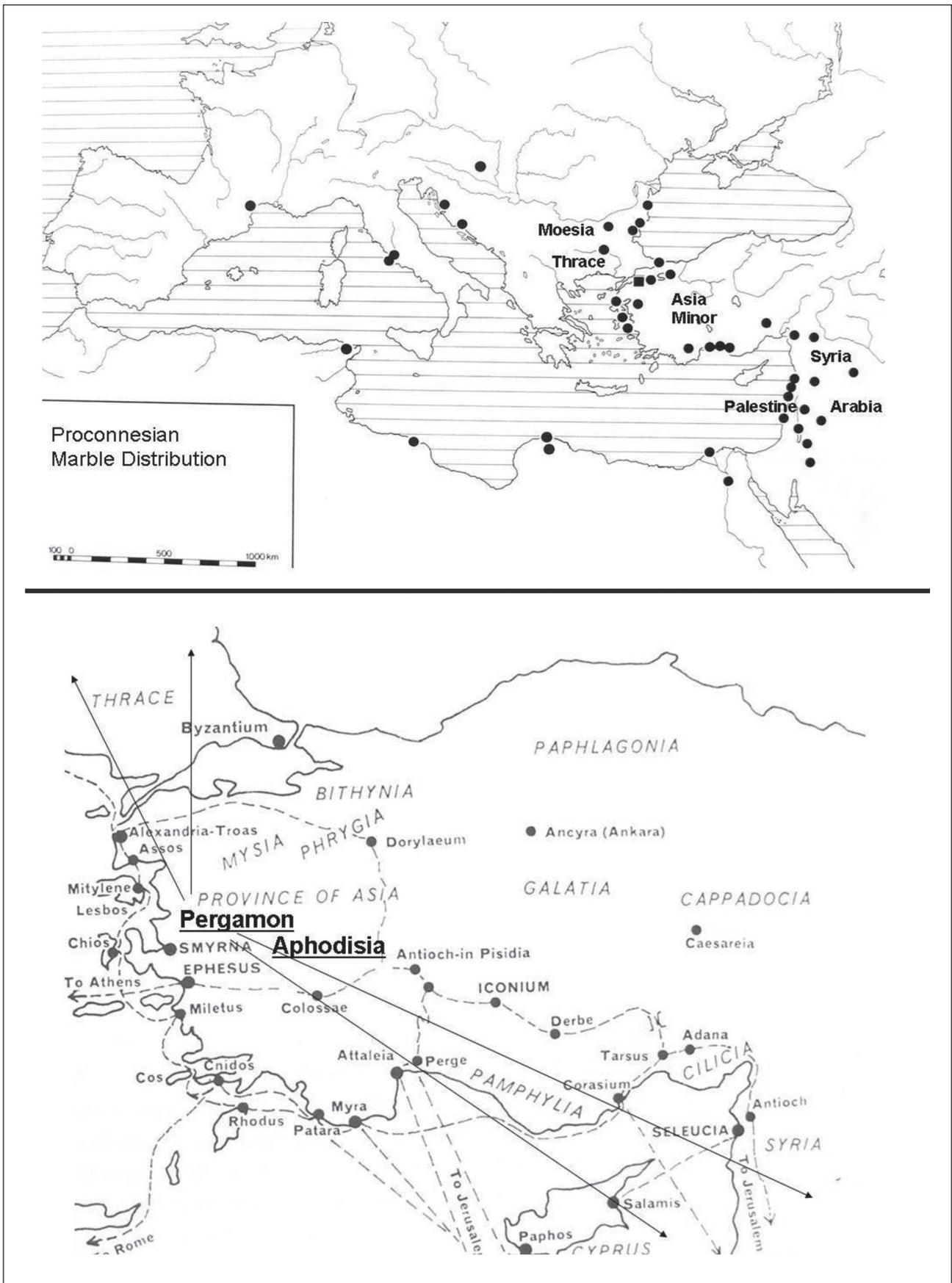
In sum, I would like to emphasise that the Corinthian details from the Tomb of Germanus are some of the most fascinating and precisely shaped architectural elements in this style. The decoration of the temple-like complex was produced during the 60s of the second century, during the Principate of Marcus Aurelius.

The Mausoleum of the Roman centurion Germanus was certainly erected with the investment of considerable resources, and with its decoration being entrusted to the so-called ‘travelling stonemason groups’ who worked in various parts of the Empire with different kinds of marble, *e.g.* Proconnesian, but also with local stone (FIG. 20).

The stonemasons carving the Corinthian details on the Tomb of Germanus came from Asia Minor; their presence in Gerasa appears to be evidenced beyond any doubt. However, this conclusion should be tested with future analyses of other architectural complexes, especially those in the northern part of the town (FIG. 20).

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