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The Monumental Arches at Gerasa (Jarash, Jordan) and Philippopolis (Plovdiv, Bulgaria): A Case Study in Parallel Examples from the Hadrianic Era

An architectural analysis of two exquisite complexes from the Hadrianic era, namely the arches erected to honour the Emperor-architect Publius Aelius Hadrianus in Philippopolis and Gerasa, show a series of similarities. Recently, I have had an opportunity to study the similarities between the architecture of the Roman provinces of Thrace and Lower Moesia (modern Bulgaria) on the one hand and Arabia, Syria and Judea (modern Lebanon, Syria, Israel and Jordan) on the other. In relation to architectural decoration, these similarities can most often be detected in monuments of the Corinthian order. The examples analysed here, from Gerasa and Philippopolis, are exactly these kind of monuments.

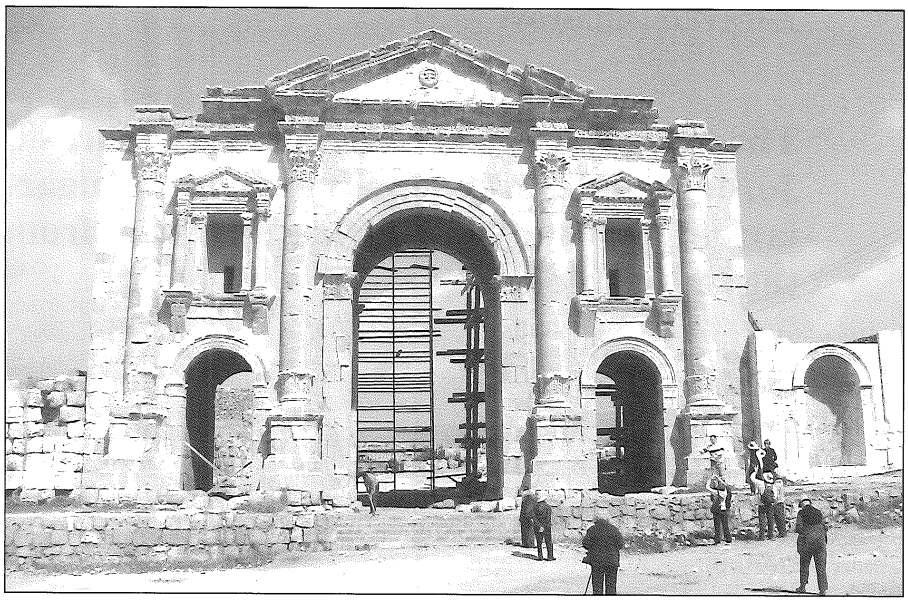
The architectural similarities can be most easily be explained by the fact that the cities in the eastern Roman provinces developed during the same time periods. However, it is also of prime importance that all — Roman Thrace, Syria, Judea and Arabia — were situated in close proximity to Asia Minor, location of the best stone-masonry schools and workshops, as well as a source of some of the highest quality and most expensive stone in the Empire. It was the urban centres in the provinces of Asia Minor that became the melting pot for cultural exchange in the Mediterranean during the 2nd and 3rd centuries. It was in this geographical area that the common architectural models were first developed and from where they spread. This observation is valid for the decoration of individual buildings, which showed a marked tendency towards the architectural orders, but also applied to building plans and the planning of major cities. However, it is just as interesting to analyse one typically Roman architectural form — such as the triumphal or commemorative arch — to examine how it was incorporated within the broader architectural solutions characteristic of the eastern part of the Empire and the Orient.

The two arches under consideration here were erected at roughly the same time to honour the Emperor Hadrian and his family, *viz.* the end of the 20s and beginning of the 30s in the 2nd century. These two monuments, both impressive in terms of their architectural ornamentation, are decoratively very similar throughout.

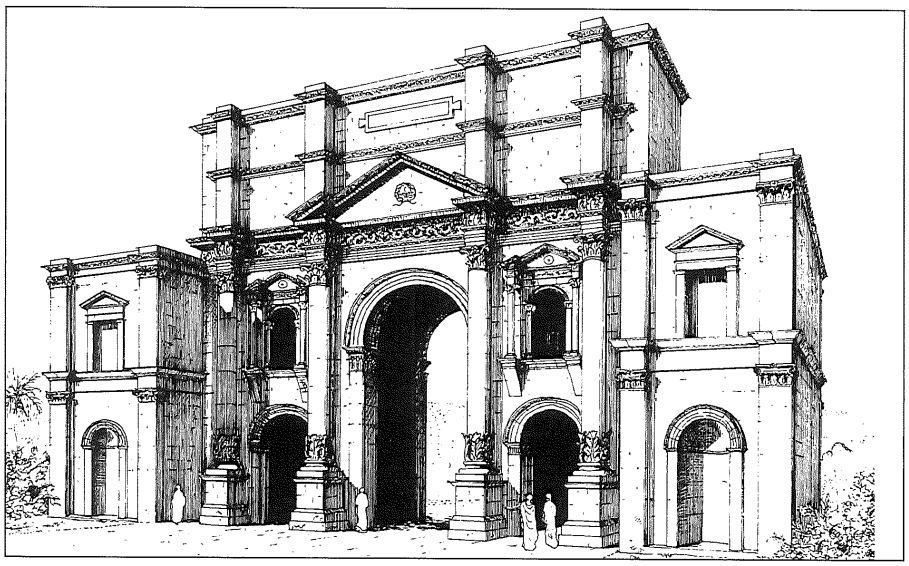
In order to establish the full extent of the similarity between these two monuments, we need to analyse all aspects of their execution, including planning of construction, city planning, chronology, function and purpose, and decorative similarities across the various levels of the order ornamentation. Their similarity demonstrates, notwithstanding the distance between Thrace and the Middle East, common principles in the development of the architectural environment in the big urban centres of the eastern Roman Empire. The main similarities between the arches in Gerasa and Philippopolis are outlined below:

Construction of the Two Arches

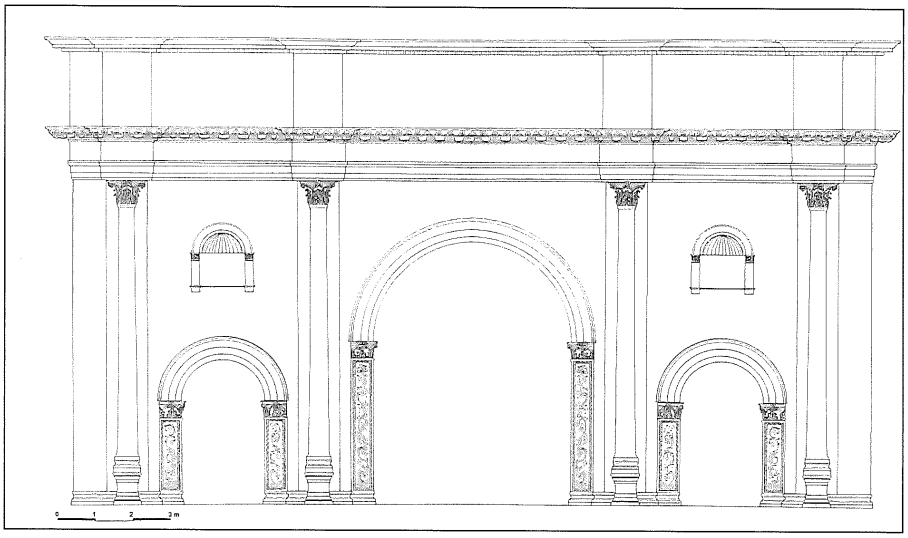
The two arches, from Gerasa and Philippopolis, are identical in general architectural terms of construction and façade (FIGS. 1-4). They are detached from all other architectural monuments, they are free-standing and both have three entrances. The height of the façades is that of the large, two-storey, monumental public buildings found in the eastern Roman cities. The two arches are also comparable in terms of proportion and volume. The main entrance at Philippopolis is 5.2 m wide, with the side entrances each being 2.2 m wide. The Hadrianic arch at Gerasa has similar dimensions, namely



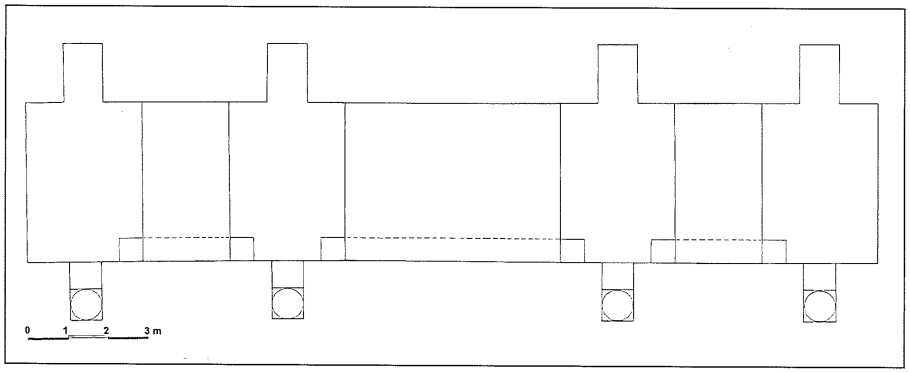
1. Hadrian's arch in Gerasa – general view, current anastylosis (photo: Z. Dimitrov).



2. Graphic reconstruction of the Gerasa arch (Browning 1982: fig. 45).



3. Graphic reconstruction of the Hadrian's arch in Philippopolis — western façade (author: Z. Dimitrov).



4. Plan of the Philippopolis arch (author: Z. Dimitrov).

5.4m for the main entrance and 2.2-2.3 m for the side entrances.

The heights of the main and side entrances are also similar: the main one at Gerasa is 10.8 m high and the side ones 5.2 m (Khouri 1986: 47). The reconstructed arch at Philippopolis gave results very similar to these measurements. There, the heights of the entrances were calculated on the basis of architectural details and the main module of the order, *viz.* the radius of the base module (which equals the lower radius of the column). The proportions are virtually identical for the entire structure. For the arch at Gerasa they are: total length 37.45 m, width 9.25 m and height 21.5 m (Khouri 1986: 47).

The Jordanian arch has been restored for some time now. This shows that ratio of the height of the central entrance to that of the two side ones is 2:1. In Plovdiv a full or partial restoration is still awaited, but the reconstruction that has been carried out to date suggests that the same 2:1 ratio applied.

Above the three entrances, there is a massive entablement with the characteristic architrave, frieze and cornice in Corinthian order. It is interesting to note that the entablement is executed in typically Roman fashion, on one level and across the entire width of the arch. To compensate for the different heights of the three entrances, there are two enclosed or blind ediculae — also in Corinthian order — on top of the two side entrances. The only differences in the façades of the arches in Gerasa and Philippopolis seem to be in the finishing elements that form the upper part of the order scheme. At Gerasa, the construction is crowned by a triangular pediment (Fr. *fronton*). There are similar, but smaller pediments in corresponding style above the blind niches / ediculae above the side entrances. At Philippopolis, there is nothing to suggest that pedimental constructions had been used. No remains of such an order ornament have ever been found *in situ*. To the contrary, fieldwork has yielded semi-spherical ceiling slabs for the blind niches with scallop-form decoration, also known from Gerasa. Not only do we find examples of this type of decoration at the Diana sanctuary in Gerasa, but also at Philadelphia (at the north end of the citadel) and in many cities in Syria and Lebanon (e.g. Heliopolis / Baalbek). There are other examples of Hadrianic blind niche vaults at Gerasa itself. The best example comes from the city southern gate (Fisher 1938: pl. XXXI a). This semi-spherical culmination of the construction at Philippopolis not only differs from that of Gerasa, but also shows that most probably this arch did not end with a triangular front.

Another interesting aspect of the Gerasa arch is that despite the front above the entablement, we also find an *attic* element. This is typical for triumphal arches across Italy, e.g. the arches of Titus, Septimius Severus and Constantine the Great in Rome, and the arches at Pola and Benevetto (Gros 2001: 56-94). The element is also known from western parts of the Roman Empire, e.g. Gallia, in the form of the arches in Nîmes and Orange (Gros 2001: 68, fig. 60-61). According to the reconstructions of Pierre Gros and Ian Browning (Gros 2001: 91, fig. 90-91; Browning: 104-107, fig. 45) the *attic* architectural element is also present here. The pediment above the entablement and the *attic* element serve two functions. They considerably enrich the façade decoration, while simultaneously developing the structure in vertical direction. The main reason for this was the need for Hadrian's arch at Gerasa to be a distinctive, tall and monumental architectural complex, because it was intended to be a landmark architectural feature, despite being located outside the city.

This was always one of the main functions of arches in Roman cities. They were always a key architectural feature, typically aligned on the main

axis of each urban centre. It is no coincidence they are considered "passage architecture" (MacDonald 1986: 74). Regardless of whether they were freestanding monumental structures, four-pillar constructions on main intersections or even simple gateways, in each city the arches would always been amongst the most richly decorated architectural complexes with ornamentation developed specifically for that purpose. Without any doubt they were a key feature of the urban environment (MacDonald 1986: 74-92; Gros 2001: 56; Kader 1996; Попливский 2000).

There is still no full, *in situ* reconstruction, or anastylosis, of the Hadrianic arch at Philippopolis. However, the presence of all architectural details and the main elements of the arch itself makes a precise graphic reconstruction possible (FIGS. 3 and 4). As mentioned above, the ratio between the central and side entrances is identical to that at Gerasa. A virtual reconstruction of the arch likewise comes up with a similar height and volume. The arch at Philippopolis was also topped by a fully decorated entablement in Corinthian order, executed at the same level throughout.

As mentioned above, it's true that the Philippopolis arch did not have pediment. It is however possible that this arch also had an *attic* element and horizontally levelled ceiling construction. However, this hypothesis has not yet been proven. Only a few smooth elements of external wall facing, with part of an inscription, remain today. Although only four letters of the inscription have been preserved, they are particularly interesting: *AYTO*; this may derive from the ancient Greek αυτοκρατορ. It is thus possible that these elements are parts of the wall facing of an *attic* architectural element with a builders' inscription associated with the Emperor Hadrian, or perhaps one of his successors if we allow for the fact that renovation may have taken place.

Location and City Planning (FIGS. 5 and 6)

Both arches were erected several hundred metres outside the city walls. They are both situated on major roads leading into the cities, outside the built up areas. They were built on level ground in areas where there were no other major buildings, so as to been visible from afar.

At Gerasa, the arch was erected 460 m outside the walls on the road to another major Decapolis city, Philadelphia, or modern Amman (Khouri 1986: 46).

The Philippopolis arch, which was unusually large for Thracian cities, was erected about 300 m outside the city, east of the old Hellenistic settlement on the acropolis and north-east of the Roman town on the plain. It was positioned on the biggest and most important Roman road in the south-eastern Empire, the Via Diagonalis which connected central European provinces such as Pannonia, Noricum and Raetia with territories in Asia Minor.

Both cities were subjected to later changes in their city planning, e.g. the construction of a hippodrome next to the arch at Gerasa, or at Philippolis the construction of a new city wall close to the arch during the reign of Marcus Aurelius. The latter underwent a major reconstruction still later, in the 4th century under Constantine, and was incorporated into the city walls, becoming the eastern gate of the city (Топалилов 2008: 190-191; Кесякова 1999: 93-99, fig. 113-122).

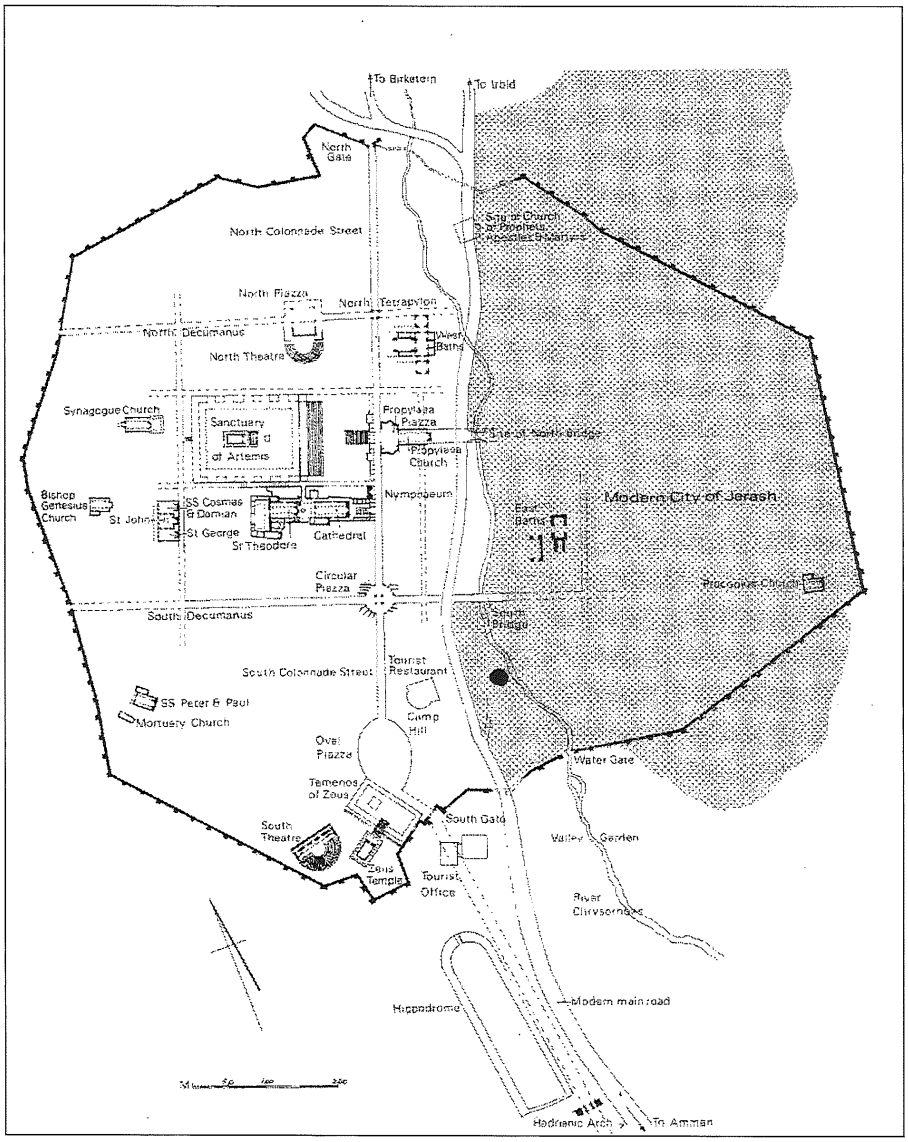
Both arches were evidently extremely significant in the eyes of civic leaders; not only did they commemorate the Emperor himself, they were also intended to welcome his ceremonial marches.

Both arches have extremely rich decoration, far removed from that of normal arch-gates marking the entrances of big Roman cities or serving as passages through city walls. These two monuments evidently had more complex functions than simply allowing access to the city.

It is for these reasons that the architecture of the arches at Philippopolis and Gerasa are identical. In particular, the decoration is characteristic of the last years of Hadrian's reign. Many such colossal public buildings with over-decorated exteriors appeared in eastern parts of the Roman Empire during the 30s of the 2nd century, e.g. the library, temple of Zeus and another Hadrianic arch at Athens, the Celsius library at Ephesus, the monumental complexes of the Asclepieion in Pergamon etc. However, it is significant that the arches at Gerasa and Philippopolis are identical, not only in the way they followed the latest architectural fashions, but also in their situations and execution.

Function: Ceremonial Arches Honouring Hadrian or his Family

The Philippopolis and Gerasa arches are both dedicated to the Emperor Hadrian and his family. According to MacDonald (1986: 75), the majority of monumental arches in the Roman Empire were



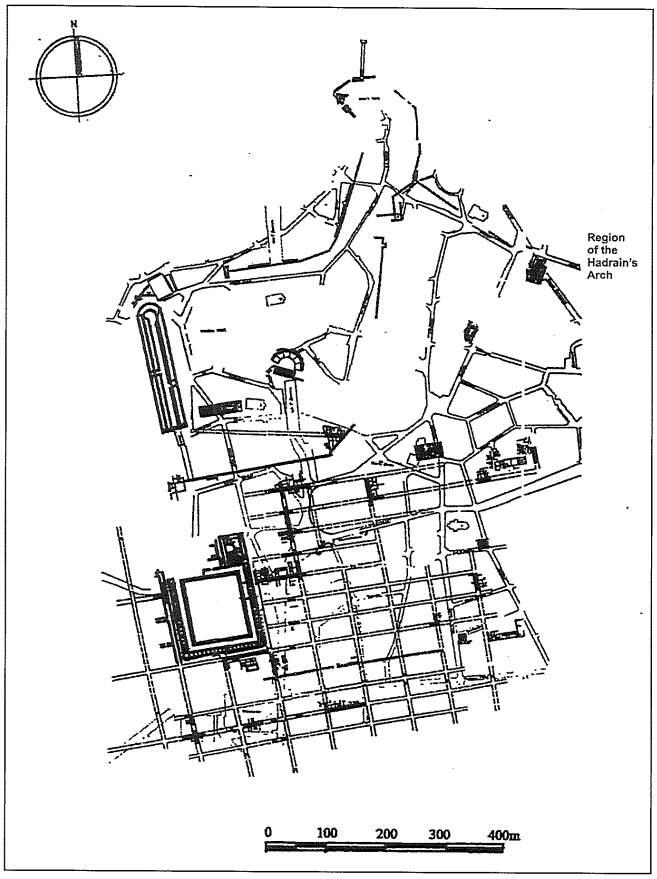
5. The Hadrian's arch within the Gerasa general city planning (Brownig 1982: 83, map 3).

honourable rather than triumphal, as was until recently considered the case. Their initial purpose was to greet the Emperor's family, but their existence was never limited to these one-off events (Khouri 1986: 26; Browning 1982: 104-105).

The Hadrianic arch at Gerasa was built almost half a kilometre beyond the city southern gate, thus taking into account the possibility for expansion of the city territory (Khouri 1986: 47; Browning 1982: 105). This idea never came to be and in the end of the II century — the beginning of the III century some changes to the construction became inevitable. They were executed on the short sides of the arch where the pavilions — which are still there today — have been built (Browning 1982: 105, fig. 45).

The arches in Philippopolis and Gerasa are not the only arches erected outside a city. There is a similar example in Gadara where a similar complex was built on the road to Tiberia. It is dated in the early imperial era (the end of I century B.C. - I century A.D.) but it was subject to changes and alterations in II-III century (Kader 1996: 183; Meynersen 2001: 432). The function and real purpose of the Gadara construction has often been the subject of debate. It is most commonly called "Tiberian gate", but also — "Gadara's city gate", "monumental arch" or "Gadara monumental arch — *extra muros*" (Hoffmann, Kerner 2002: 114-116, Abb. 171; Kader 1996: 163, 183; Weber 2001: 531, fig. 2-3; Bührig 2001: 547-552).

However, it is very likely that this "monumen-



6. The Hadrian's arch in the general city planning of Philippopolis in the beginning of the II century (Topalilov 2008: fig. 1).

tal arch-gate" situated quite far from Gadara's west defence gate and on the road to Tiberia was in fact a manifold function complex (Mazzoni 1997: 307). There are other arches which are very similar to it and they are also outside their respective cites — for example in Tyre or Tiberias (Kader 1996: 164-165, 182-182; Weber 2001: 531, fig. 4-5).

It is equally likely that the monumental "out-of-city" arches in Gerasa and Philippopolis were also intended for such multiple functions. Most probably they were not solely built to greet the Emperor's family on one occasion and never be used again.

There is one very logical hypothesis which claims that later in their existence such "extra muros" arches were used as customs collection points. Thomas Weber suggests that passage through these arches – situated some distance away from a city's gates – was used to also move tax collection on different types of goods outside cities (Weber 2001: 535-536).

Considering this possibility of additional functions related to trade and commerce, it is possible that during different periods the arches were fitted with iron grids or other mechanisms to close them. T. Weber notes marks on the vault of the central entrance in Gerasa that could suggest their existence (Weber 2001: 535-536, fig. 11). He also thinks that a considerable part of the functions of these "monumental arches and gates" in the Middle East, especially the four close examples in Gadara, Gerasa, Tyre and Tiberias, were in fact related to trade and commerce.

In fact, the positioning of these complexes outside the cities, the possibilities to focus there "check-point" functions, adding pavilions and other buildings adjacent to them (mainly at the end if the II century — the beginning of the III century), all this comes to show that such a theory is a valid one. There also epigraphic testimonies in this direction: for example, the inscription on the arch in Dura Europos, the so-called "Palmyra gate" (Weber 2001: 536, fig. 13).

Of course, here comes the question about the monumental arch in Philippopolis, Thrace. Was this arch too among those that acquired the important commercial functions of a customs point on the main European road via Diagonalis? There is no direct date that would lead is to such a conclusion. However, if we take into account the situation in Philippopolis and the alterations around the arch, especially at the end of the II century (there is another big scale development of shops around the arch in the IV century, under the Emperor Constantine the Great (306-337)), this is a possible hypothesis.

The Same Period When the Two Complexes Have Been Erected: 129-131 A.D.

The chronology of the two arches is identical. During the last years of his reign Emperor Hadrian undertakes several long trips in the eastern parts of the Roman Empire (HA 1921: 45).

In 130 A.D. all his entourage joined him in the Middle East provinces. Hadrian first went to Palmyra and Damascus and after that was triumphally greeted in Gerasa (documented with inscriptions — see HA 1921: chapter 13, note: 120; Khouri 1986: 46). That is most probably the time that the arch dedicated to him and his family could be dated.

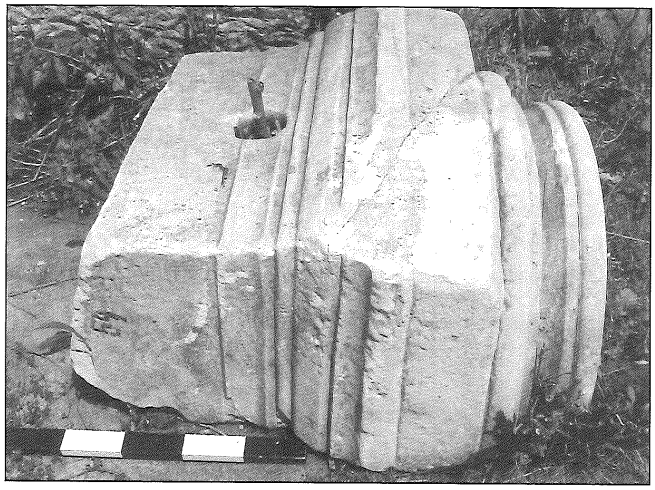
After the trips to Egypt, across all of the Middle East and Judea, Hadrian stayed for long periods in

Greece, in Athens, where he was mainly involved in architectural activities. That's the time when one of the biggest Hadrian projects — the Zeus Temple (131-132 A.D.) — was consecrated. It was around this same time (although not confirmed) that the Emperor's expedition crossed Thrace, most probably in 130 A.D. or in 131 A.D. That's the latest possible time when the Philippopolis arch could be dated (HA 1921: chapter 13, 45, note 125). There is also the possibility that this arch was dedicated to the Emperor already at the start of his long trips eastwards when he crossed the Balkans again — in 129 A.D. In both cases, the Hadrian visits to Gerasa and Philippopolis would have happened within a short time frame — 2-3 years, between 129 and 131 A.D. This allows for a precise dating of the two architectural complexes analysed here — erected in the same time and for the same purposes.

The Emperor's relationship with Thrace and his attention to this province is by no means undermined by his known preferences for Greece, Asia Minor, Egypt, Palestine and Syria (it should not be forgotten that Hadrian used to be a *proconsulus* in Syria). In addition to the activities in Philippopolis mentioned here he also gave his name to one of the most important Roman cities in the Balkans — Hadrianopolis (modern Edirne, north-west Turkey).

It is with these trips that Hadrian and his family made to Philippopolis and Gerasa that the erection of the two arches is linked. They have been dedicated to the Emperor and to his closest allies in the two city councils. Apparently, these gestures from the local aristocrats come as a response to the privileges Hadrian addressed to the provinces, especially at a period of very active imperial policy in the end of the 20-ies and the beginning of the 30-ies.

7. Gerasa arch pedestal.



8. Philippopolis arch pedestal.

8a. Attic base (Ionic order) from a pedestal of the Philippopolis arch — a detail showing the toruses and the trochilus.

The Similarities in the Decoration Schemes — Pedestals, Bases, Columns, Capitals and Entablements

The most important analogies between the architectural complexes in Philippopolis and Gerasa can be established by analysing the façades decoration schemes. They demonstrate the use of one and the same models of the Corinthian order — from the bases up to the cornices details.

Pedestals and Bases from the Arches in Gerasa and Philippopolis (FIGS. 7, 8)

In both complexes we have pedestals with Ionic bases of Attic version. The pedestals are of significant height and they create an additional elevation of the entire order construction along the vertical

axis. In both cases the pedestals are unornamented and consist of two tall, deeply carved and very well moulded ledges — upper and lower.

The bases that end these details are Ionic of the so-called "Attic versions". It is interesting that the execution of the bases is very similar. The upper and lower toruses are perfectly carved and evenly undulated. The upper torus manifests a standard height and profile. This perfect execution of the two toruses in Attic bases and the trochilus between them is characteristic for the Roman provinces of Syria, Judea, Arabia Petraea and this long-term phenomenon is sustained by the III century complexes. In Roman Thrace, however, such an exquisite execution of the carvings is typical for the Hadrian era and the era of the last Antonines. After the end of the II century the upper torus loses both its perfect proportions in height and its fine convex carving and clean profile.

Smooth Columns (FIGS. 9, 10)

Smooth unadorned columns are the choice for vertical support elements for the façades of both arches. The complexes in Gerasa and Philippopolis use

9. Smooth column from the Gerasa arch.

10. Smooth column from the Philippopolis arch.

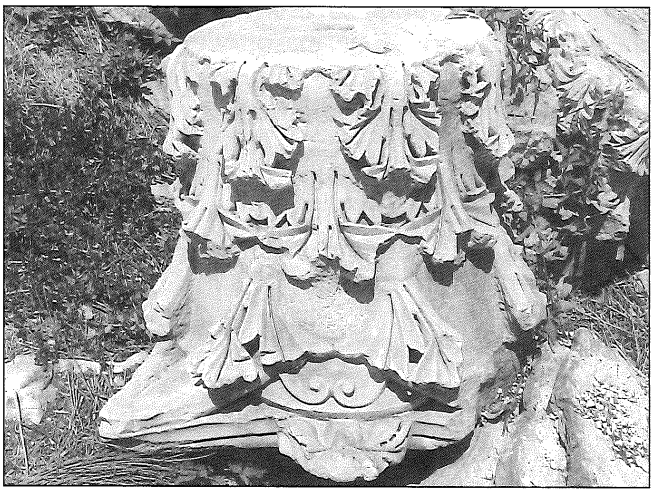
simplified models, although the general practice during this era was to decorate the columns and pilasters with fluting. This however does not undermine the quality of the vertical elements. In both arches, they manifest perfect proportions and exquisite workmanship for the upper and lower ends of the columns (*the apophyge*).

In both arches we also find a pronounced entasis in the central area. This is very much visible in the original column in Gerasa — the detail has been preserved like that already before the restoration (Browning 1982: fig. 44). The column in Philippopolis has fallen on the lane of the main street in front of the arch, but measuring its diameter at various points also shows the existence of entasis.

Capitals (FIGS. 11, 12)

The order used in both arches is the Corinthian order and their capitals are one of the best examples

11. Corinthian capital from the Gerasa arch.



12. Corinthian capital from the Philippopolis arch.

fro this order in Syria and Thrace. The capitals in the Gerasa arch are with full apparatus with two rows of distinct and deeply carved acanthus leaves of the so-called "elongated" or "pointed" version — *acanthus spinosus*. The elements that form the upper third of the capital are also all present — volutes, helices, caulises and acanthus cups. However, the most impressive are the richly ornate abacus blossoms and stems. One should also note the accentuated by its profiling uppermost part — the mouth of the calathus — and the dense ornamentation of the profiled side of the abacus slab.

The model of the Philippopolis arch is identical. The capitals of the façade columns are again with full apparatus containing all the elements of the Corinthian order decorative scheme. There are perfectly executed and markedly separated acanthus leaves in two rows, spreading to the sides. We also see distinct helices with full curves, wide volutes (although today their endings are broken), perfect acanthus cups and caulises. It is also important to note that the caulis is formed of one part and without fluting — a principle transferred from Asia Minor and one which we also see in Gerasa. This is a feature characteristic for the execution of Corinthian capitals with full apparatus in Asia Minor (Heilmeyer 1970: Taf. 23-27; Freyberger 1990: 125, Taf. 44-46). It is significantly different from the Italic versions where the caulis is most often with fluting and very elongated (Heilmeyer 1970: Taf. 52-56, 59; Freyberger 1990: 54-58, Beilage IV b, Beilage V, 6-7, Taf. 17-18).

As a general rule the stone masons from Asia Minor and the east pay greater attention to the abacus blossoms and the stems that come out of them. This is the case both in Gerasa and Philippopolis. In the Thracian monument from Philippopolis the element that stands out is the huge, spread and deeply carved with drill acanthus leave — it takes half of the abacus slab profile and it plays the role of an abacus blossom (FIG. 12). We find the same example of a glorious "eastern" version of "abacus blossom" in the Corinthian capitals in Gerasa. Again, it represents acanthus leaves in accentuated relief (FIG. 11).

In terms of style ad execution the acanthus leaves themselves are also of elongated, eastern version in both monuments, Gerasa and Philippopolis (Heilmeyer 1970: 164-172, Taf. 31-39). The leaves are widely spread and divided into five or seven palms, distinctly marked by the individual and spreading sideways cuts. Deeply cut "figures" are formed between these acanthus cuts. This is a decoration model very typical of Hadrian monuments in Aphrodisia (the terms) and in Pergamon (the Asclepieion) (especially those as if broken in the middle acanthus cuts as in Philippopolis).

We can establish with certainty that the prototype of the acanthus leaves that cover the arches in Gerasa and Philippopolis with full apparatus is similar and that it originated in the stone masonry schools of Asia Minor — the Aphrodisian and the Ephesus-Pergamonian schools.

In these cases we can observe the same influences on the architecture of the eastern provinces brought in the late Hadrian era by such original sources of architectural decoration (especially when it comes to the Corinthian order) that are the Asia Minor urban centres with their advanced traditions in stone carving.

Freezes and Pilasters Ornamentation (FIGS. 13, 14)

Here again we come across similar models that one more time originate in Asia Minor stone masonry centres (Bammer 1980: 69-70, Abb. 1-2). The same decoration schemes have been used for the freeze fields in Gerasa and for the pilasters of the main and side entrances in Philippopolis. The horizontally elongated freeze fields in Gerasa and the vertical fields of the Philippopolis pilasters are covered by absolutely identical "acanthus stems, shoots and leaves, formed in circles in the middle of which there are big rosettes". This is decoration of the type "Acanthus scroll-works" (the German language terminology is also very precise *Akanthus*

13. Ornamentation from the entablement freezes of the Gerasa arch.

14. Ornamentation of the pilasters on the passages of the Philippopolis arch.

Rankenmotive). This model was identified and introduced in science as a decoration model already by J. Toynbee, on of the first researches of the Hadrian architectural decoration (Toynbee 1936).

The boom in this particular type of acanthus ornamentation — in circles that covers all kind of architectural fields, although mainly freezes and pilasters — is characteristic primarily for the Hadrian reign and mainly in the eastern provinces. Masterpieces of unique beauty which have been since followed and copied during centuries can be found in Aphrodisia, Smyrna, Baalbeck (Helliopolis), Side, Ephesus and many more (Perkins, Toynbee 1950: 30-37, Pl. XX-XXVI).

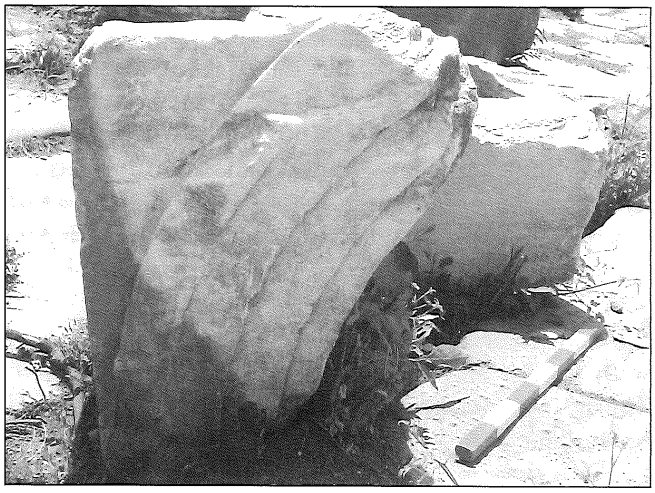
Both in Philippopolis and in Gerasa the acanthus curved around big four-, five- or six-leaves rosettes, but also around big leaves. A main principle in the execution of this decoration is again the fine, lacework stone masonry. The stems and little shoots are fluted, the leaves have many cuts, the rosettes are in high relief and are also finished with drill.

The decoration model, its execution and the copying of the original scheme are entirely from Asia Minor. They manifest the same origin as the model for the Corinthian capitals.

The Vaulted Parts of the Passages in the Arches — the Archivolts (FIGS. 15, 16)

The vaulted passages of the complexes studied here present a stark contrast to the rich ornamentation of the freezes, the pilasters and the capitals. They are clean and simplified. The so-called archivolts are divided into one strip in profile on the top and three fascias beneath it, protruding from the archi-

15. The vaulted parts of the passages (archivolts) of the Gerasa arch.



16. The vaulted parts of the passages (archivolts) of the Philippopolis arch.

trave. The execution in the two arches is identical in terms of decoration and segmentation along the vertical axis. The passages in Gerasa and Philippopolis are identical in construction, parameters and space volumes, but also — in decoration terms.

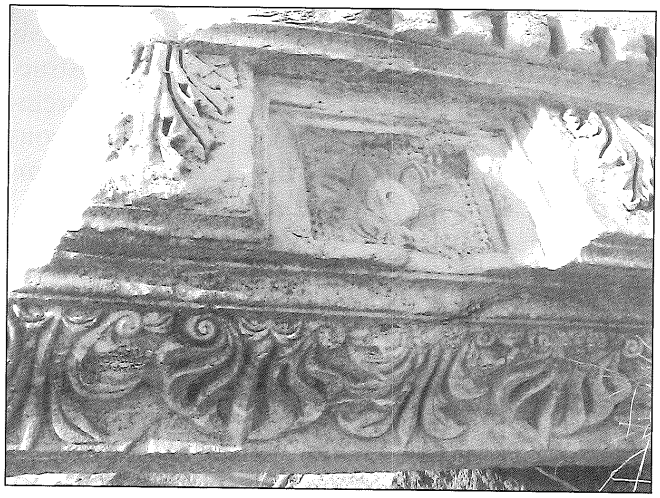
Cornices (FIGS. 17, 18)

The cornices in Gerasa and Philippopolis are the uppermost parts of the order in both arches and they also show full similarities on the two criteria that I have stressed in this analysis — the decoration and its style of its execution. The decoration scheme consists of sima (Greek: *simos*) with upright and unbound palmettos, geison divided in consoles which are decorated with acanthus leave and fields covered with rosettes. Both Corinthian cornices end with dentils. There is only one difference. The Philippopolis scheme is a bit more simplified than

17. Corinthian cornices of the Gerasa arch.

17a. Corinthian cornices of the Gerasa arch — pediment, detail.

18. Corinthian cornices of the Philippopolis arch — full segment.



18a. Corinthian cornices of the Philippopolis arch — detail of the sima and the geison.

the one in Gerasa which is extremely rich and with ornamentation also on the geison front, as well as on the dividing strips between the geison and the sima and the geison and the dentils. The Ionic cyma and the astragal (bead-and-reel ornament) are widely used as secondary decorative motives.

However, the two complexes are absolutely identical when it comes to their execution. We find similarities in the high relief, in the clear shaping of the palmettos in a similar fashion with no bond and without "reversed palmettos" and in the close ratios and profile (vertical carving) of the entire Corinthian cornice.

The models copied in the cornices of Gerasa and Philippopolis are among those examples where the prototype is easily identifiable as originating in Asia Minor. The decoration schemes of the simas,

the consoles and the fields of the geison are a product of practices that we find in Flavian, Trajanic or Hadrianic public urban complexes in Ephesus, Pergamon, Miletus and the other famous centres mainly on Asia Minor west coast (Strocka 1981; Strocka 1988: 296-297, 300-303, 306, Taf. 44, 45, 47; Bammer 1980: 72-73, Abb.5-6).

A great number of the decoration practices of Asia Minor masters become fashionable and are transferred to the capital Rome, mainly in late Hadrian building works at the end of the 20-ies and 30-ies in the II century. The mutual influences between Rome and the East during the entire Hadrian era have significant influences on all grandiose monumental buildings across the Empire that tend to follow the fashionable tendencies (Strong 1953: 118-151; Strocka 1988: 291-307).

To **conclude** this detailed architectural analysis of city planning decisions, planning and constructive decisions for the arches and mainly their architectural decoration we can specify the main reasons for the similarities between the architectural forms in Roman Thrace and the Middle East.

The most important reason is that in the beginning of the Antonine era (the end of the I century — the beginning of the II century) these two big zones of the eastern parts of the Roman Empire were subject to the same influences on the architectural environment of their quickly developing cities. During the Trajan-Hadrian era in the territory of modern Northern Jordan and in what is modern Bulgaria (Thrace and Moesia) there is boom in urban life. The high level of urbanisation in these eastern territories of the Roman Empire results in the pronounced need for a significant number of monumental public buildings. These buildings are typical products of their times and as architectural examples they are primarily influenced by the geographically closest and most active in "exporting" architectural prototypes and decoration methods centres which are the stone masonry centres in Asia Minor — Ephesus, Pergamon, Aphrodisia, Miletus, Smyrna, Side, Perge and Nicomedia.

The two monumental arches — in Gerasa and in Philippopolis — are monuments from the same era and they are a product of this accelerated development of architectural complexes in the two far from one other zones of the East-Mediterranean area of the Roman Empire. They are direct proof of the activity of Asia Minor masters and their followers, but they are also the result of the Princeps Hadrian policy. His is a reign when great attention is paid to monumental ceremonial entities of the urban architectural environment.

Without doubt, these architectural complexes which are related to the Emperor Hadrian visits in these eastern centres of the Roman Empire. They have significant scientific value, but also — great value as part of the global cultural heritage whose monuments we have to not only analyse, but also preserve accordingly.

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