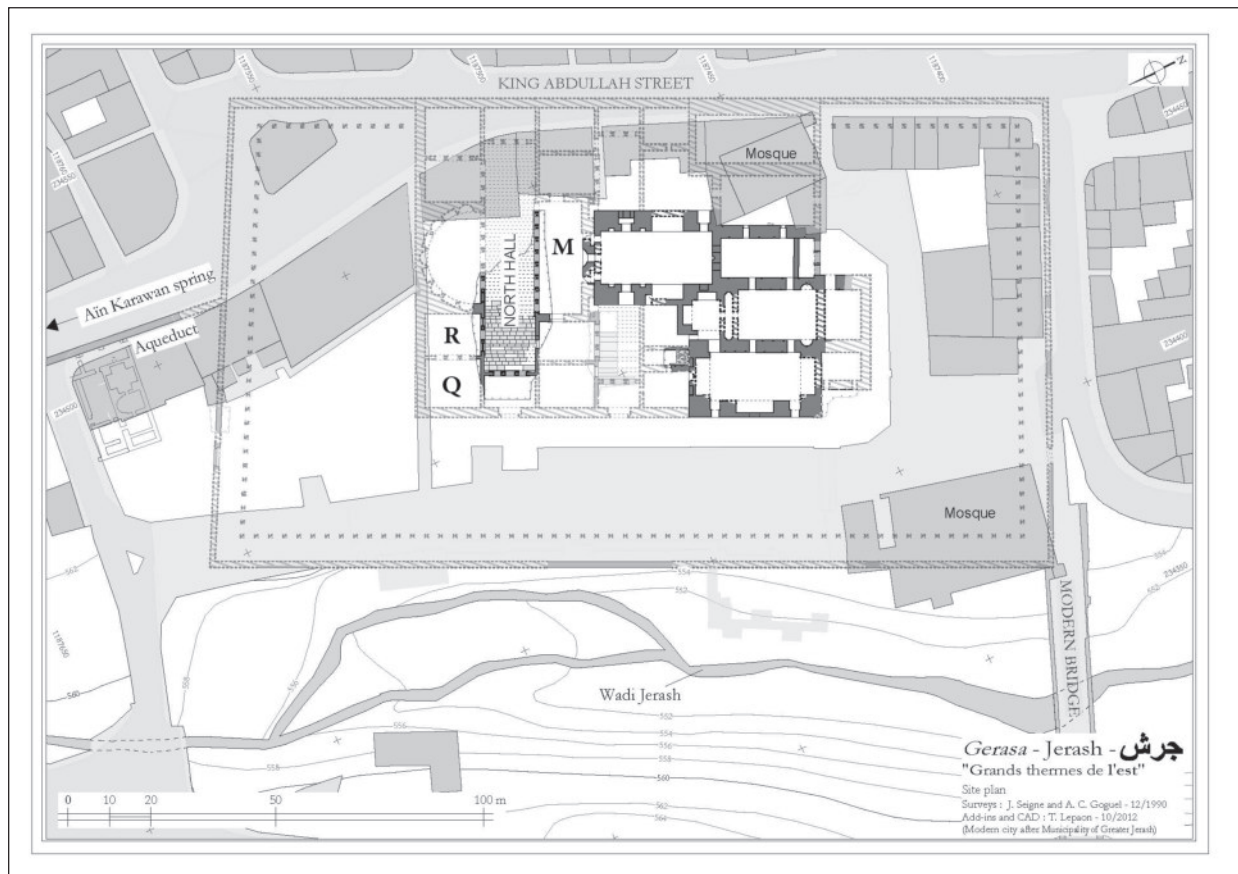


# THE GREAT EASTERN BATHS AT GERASA / JARASH REPORT ON THE EXCAVATION CAMPAIGN 2017

*Thomas Lepaon and Thomas Maria Weber-Karyotakis*

The 2017 excavation season marked the second campaign<sup>1</sup> for the archaeological exploration of the Great Eastern Baths at Jarash (Fig. 1)<sup>2</sup>. It lasted from September 5<sup>th</sup> to October 20<sup>th</sup> 2017, and was a joint venture between

the Department of Antiquities of Jordan (DoA), represented by Dr Ismael Melhelm (the director of the Jarash Antiquities Office) and Ms Eman S. al-Qor'an, the Mission Archeologique Francaise de Jerash (MAFJ), directed by Dr Thomas



1. Site map, indicating the excavation areas of the 2017 campaign in grey.

1. The project phase of 2017 was again generously funded by the *Gerda Henkel-Foundation* (Düsseldorf) and *le ministere des affaires etrangeres et du developpement international (MAEDI - Paris)*. H.E. Mr Davide Bertolotti, Ambassador of the Republic of France to Jordan, honored the team with a visit to the site on October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

2. The excavation permit issued by the DoA has the number 2017/47. We herewith extend our gratitude to H.E. The Director General of the DoA, Professor Dr. Monther Jamhawi, and to Mr. Aktham 'Abadi, the Director of the *Department of Excavation and Survey* for their support of the project.

Lepaon, and the German Jordanian University (GJU), headed by Professor Thomas M. Weber-Karyotakis. The European-Jordanian team (Fig. 2) was comprised of four members from the French mission<sup>3</sup>, four Jordanian archaeologists<sup>4</sup>, twelve students from GJU<sup>5</sup>, and fifteen experienced local workmen, most of whom were recruited from *al-mukhayyam* Suf, a local refugee camp. The excavation took place in an area in the center of modern Jarash<sup>6</sup>, which is owned by the municipality. The Abdalla Abadi Company<sup>7</sup> from Amman provided the necessary expertise regarding the stability of the modern buildings adjacent to the excavation trenches. Professor Dr. Khaled Bashayreh (Yarmouk University, Irbid) and Professor Dr. Nizar Abu Jaber (GJU) sampled various marble objects for archaeometric analysis, with the consent of the project directors and an official permit is-

sued by the Director General of the DoA Amman<sup>8</sup>. To all above institutions and personalities named, the directors of the joint archaeological project extend our thanks for their support and cooperation.

The work in 2017 resumed that of the first season in 2016<sup>9</sup> focusing on the transitional area (Figs. 1. R and Q) between the bathing complex and the so-called northern hall. Parallel to the exploration of this large area, limited clearance and a sounding was conducted in one of the rooms adjacent to the northwestern flank of the hall (Room Q) and in the south-western sector of the *exedra* (Room S). According to the excavation grid, these areas are mainly located in Squares 99-98 / 89-88.

The find materials consisted of large quantities of (mostly broken) limestone rubble, tiles, pottery, glass, colored marble slabs, some 400



2. The archaeological team of the 2017 campaign.

3. Mr. Gael Simon, archaeologist, French nationality, Ms. Katia Lagorsse, archaeologist, French nationality, Ms Anne-Marie Jouquand, archaeologist, French nationality, Ms. Daniela Baldoni, archaeologist, Italian nationality.

4. Ms Khairiyeh al-Khokhon, BA, conservator; Mr. Dheeb Hassan, BA, draftsman; Mr. Abd al-Kereem al-Awamlah, MA, and Mr. Ahmad Dhaher, BA. All Jordanian archaeologists hold a University degree in archaeology and had a long experience by field training. They all were attached to the team of GJU.

5. Mr Muhsen al-Bawab, Mr Mohammed A. Hayajneh, Ms Enas H. Qasem, Ms Hala H. Abu Hamda, Mr Ayman J. Abu Hamdiyah, Ms Diana D. Khezaqian, Ms Sawsan F. al-Bargouti, Ms Do'a H. Ta'an, Mr Zaid al-Kawaz; Mr Khaled Khresh. All students are enrolled in the MA-study track for architectural restoration and hold a DAAD-study scholarship. The participation was on the basis of a voluntary stage in architectural documentation, sponsored by the Deanship of the *School of Architecture and Built Environment* of the GJU, namely by Professor Dr. Ziad Haddad, Professor Dr. Maram Tawil, and Professor Dr. Feda Salah. The students were instructed by Professor Dr. Patric A. Kreuz (JU) and Ms Maha Salah, MA, Technical University Berlin. The GJU Vice-President, Professor Dr. Dorit Schumann,

honored the team with her visit to the site on September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

6. We owe thanks to H.E. The Mayor of *Jerash Municipality*, Dr. Ali al-Ghawghasi for granting permission, as well as to the Director of the *Department of Public Relation*, Mr. Hisham al-Banna, and to all concerned people of Jerash for their cordial hospitality, great support and vivid interest.

7. We express our sincere thanks to Mr Ammar Khammash for his advice and recommendations. Further measures of security were imposed by the installment of an iron reeling along the terrace on the eastern balk of Room M. The other trenches were secured by a fence with financial support from the Mission on behalf of the DoA Jerash.

8. Permit dated to October 31st, 2017 no. 4020/2/5/17.

9. Full preliminary report published in 2017: Lepaon, Th. - Turshan, N. - Weber-Karyotakis, Th. M., 2017: *The Eastern Baths at Gerasa / Jerash: Preliminary Report on the 2016 Campaign*. Edit. Digitale Publikation Gerda Henkel-Stiftung, DOI: 10.23778/ ghs. edit.2017.1; URL: <https://edit.gerdahenkel-stiftung.de/gerasa/theeastern-baths-at-gerasa-jerash>, see also here under bibliography "Report 2016".

white marble statuary fragments, and a few metal objects. All finds were moved at the end of the season into the DoA storerooms in Jarash, except for the precious marble statuary pieces, which were packed separately in wooden lockable boxes, and transferred to the storage rooms in the DoA's Jarash Directorate Office. On October 26<sup>th</sup> 2017, a complete list of these marbles was handed to the keeper of antiquities at the DoA.

## 1. The Excavation (By Thomas Lepaon).

### 1.1 Area M

Only partly excavated in 2016, area M (**Fig. 3**) was the main focus of the excavations during the 2017 season, in order to obtain more precise data for restoring the overall plan of this transitional building between the bathing complex and the northern hall. The architectural structures which make up this room are arranged on either side of the south-north axis, (symmetrical to the thermal building), forming a large rectangular space with a total surface area of 285 m<sup>2</sup>. As the soundings of the 2016 season have already shown, the floor of this transitional building in its primary use consisted of a carefully laid limestone pavement of large slabs, which are oriented with the cardinal directions.

The aim of the 2017 investigations was to clear the entire entity, in order to understand its entire occupation history, from today back to the Roman period when it was built.

#### 1.1.1. Modern Occupation of Area M

The stratigraphic sequence exposed in 2016 for the modern occupation of the area has now been confirmed throughout the entire surface of Area M. Immediately below the topsoil level, several layers relating to the most recent occupation of the site have been reported. These layers contained modern rubbish such as plastic bag fragments, clothes, pieces of iron, and modern glass. In order to save time and money, the upper parts of these topsoil layers, together with the garbage deposits, were removed with the help of a small bulldozer, under the supervision of the excavation directors and the Inspector of Antiquities from the DoA, Jarash. The accumulation of modern material dates roughly from the time of the Circassian resettlement of

Jarash until the last few decades, when the entire area had been used as a local bus station.

A sounding pit (F.550001), which was part of the rescue excavation undertaken by the DoA Jarash in 2004, is located immediately north of the central vaulted passage to the southern bathing hall (*frigidarium*). It was only partly cleared in 2016, but was fully excavated down to the Roman pavement during the 2017 season.

#### 1.1.2. Abandonment of Human Occupation in Area M

Under the modern strata were a sequence of sterile silt layers. This material had accumulated to a considerable thickness, and displayed uniform characteristics such as a dark brown hue, with a homogeneous texture and substance. The stratum produced scarcely any or no archaeological artefacts at all, and thus relates to an epoch when the area was not used for human activities. The chronological limits of these strata obviously comprise those centuries when human settlement largely ceased at Jarash, from the 'Abbassid period through to the period of Ottoman rule.

#### 1.1.3. Early Islamic Reoccupation of the Ruins in Area M

In 2016, the discovery of a wall constructed with Roman spoils in the northeastern part of Area M (MUR 55004) led to the discovery of a room-shaped dwelling (**Fig. 4**), which was obviously constructed after the demolition of the ancient monument. All the walls of this dwelling, which were cleared during the 2017 excavation, rested on a 30-50 cm thick soil deposit, which covered the Roman pavement. The remnants of this later structure were completely cleared within the limits of the excavation trenches.

Two walls, orthogonally oriented to the south and the east, formed the southwestern corner of a rectangular chamber measuring approximately 5 m in length and 2.50 m in width, occupying a space of approximately 12.5 m<sup>2</sup>. This building continues to the north and east, under the unexcavated trench balks; this extension is still totally unknown. The perpendicularly arranged walls of this room consist of numerous Roman period entablature blocks (which are partly delicately decorated), and column drums, which





3. Overview of the whole excavation area of the 2017 season.

have either smooth (Fig. 5) or spirally fluted shafts. These older architectural elements were reused as building material where they fell, after the collapse of the thermal building due to an earthquake. It should be noted that the inter-



4. Early Islamic structure constructed from Roman spolia in the northwestern sector of Room M. Taken from the east.

rior of the building had been carefully cleared of fallen material, which is only found outside the walls, and scattered arbitrarily. This fact indicates the building postdates the catastrophe, and has nothing to do with any form of recycling of the marble statues, as all of the marble statuary fragments were found underneath collapsed architectural entablature blocks.

The walls of the room were set on a foundation of carefully levelled brownish limestone blocks, which carried, lying horizontally or vertically, column drums and other Roman blocks. The southward face of this masonry, which was discovered in 2016, preserved along its interior base the remains of a layer of sediment and ceramic sherds, which formed the support for a whitish plaster coating. The masonry of the northern face is composed of a column drum, on which quadrangular blocks have been



5. Early Islamic structure constructed from Roman spolia in the northwestern sector of Room M. Detail of the southern wall spolia construction.

placed. This side of the masonry also displays plaster remains. Such careful plastering of the walls excludes an industrial function, such as a stable for cattle or as an improvised storage for goods.

However, the actual function of this room remains obscure. In light of the discoveries of 2017, the initial hypothesis of a secondary basin cannot be retained. There is no conclusive evidence which would allow a more precise specification of the use of this room. A preliminary study of the pottery indicates that the fragments which were used to support the plaster date to the Byzantine period, while sherds discovered on the floor level belong to the Umayyad and Abbasid periods. After careful documentation, and with the consent of the DoA inspector, this structure was removed by a crane, to allow exploration of the underlying structures. Due to the ancient numbering system on the joint faces of the column drums, it will be possible to attribute these pieces to the corresponding parts of the Roman colonnade in the future, facilitating an *anastylosis* of the northern hall. The removal of the elements mentioned above was inevitable for this reason also.

#### 1.1.4. *The Demolition of the Roman Building*

A similar level of destruction was revealed throughout the excavation area, apart from the interior of the early Islamic construction described above. As already evidenced by the excavation of 2016, the entire area outside this building was full of tumbled architectural blocks (Fig. 7) such as spirally fluted column shafts, decorated architraves, cornices, and other elements.

The reason for their collapse must have been a natural catastrophe, perhaps an earthquake such as those from the years 551 AD or (more likely) 749 AD. Close investigation of the collapsed building material revealed an accidental deposit distribution of elements according to their size: smaller architectural elements, such as spirally fluted column shafts, or minor column bases destined for *naiskoi* (niche frames) were predominantly discovered in the upper part of the collapse. In contrast to this, more monumental elements, such as architraves and cornices, were found in the lower part of the rubble. During the extensive excavation of this

area, we observed a peculiar scarcity, or even a complete absence of, expected architectural elements which were essential for the realization of both the northern façade cladding of the bathing complex and the southern façade, which formed a sector within the northern portico of the neighboring hall. Apart from one well preserved exception (Fig. 6), no further small Corinthian capitals which would have crowned the spirally fluted column shafts came to light. On the other hand, the excavation made it possible to identify some indurated surfaces (probably walking levels), which reflect an occasional visit to the sector, probably by people who were searching for building material. Se-



6. Small Corinthian composite limestone capital used for a smaller architectural order, with spirally fluted column drums. Found as a single object in the upper levels.



7. Room A, with the rubble of collapsed architectural elements, most probably as a result of the earthquake of AD 749.



lective stone-robbery in the period after the catastrophe could be a plausible explanation for an incomplete inventory of excavated building blocks.

These field observations led to the conclusion that a number of architectural blocks had been recovered for secondary reuse after the violent demolition of the monument, probably caused by the earthquake of 749 AD. As already noted in the previous excavation season, no evidence for the roofing of this compound was discovered. The catastrophe obviously did not cause human casualties, as no trace of human skeletons were uncovered. The isolated animal bones probably should be explained as the remains of food butchery and consumption.

#### 1.1.5. The Abandonment of Area M before the Destruction

Immediately under the strata connected to the collapse of the architectural structure in Area M, a greyish layer of soil, mixed with ashes and lime, was uncovered over the entire area of excavation. The properties of this stratum testify to the abandonment of Area M prior to the natural catastrophe of 749 AD. Among the archaeological finds from this layer, a coin testifies the abandonment of this area occurred after 642 AD. For this reason, the earthquake of 749 AD was most likely the event which caused the collapse of the Roman period building.

#### 1.1.6. A Recycling Yard of Marble Statuary

Under the abandonment level related to the monument prior to the natural catastrophe, the remains of an industrial recycling yard came to light. This installation facilitated the systematic destruction of marble statuary and other decorative elements from the former Great Eastern Baths. On the pavement of Area M, a large number of sculptural fragments, cladding slabs, and *Opus Sectile* of colored marble had been stored for the recycling process (Figs. 8-10). It is very probable that these objects were smashed into pieces at the spot, in order to facilitate their transport to the ovens. Among the marble fragments, eight large torsi of fine marble figures dating to the imperial Roman period came to light, which were destined for recycling in kilns or furnaces, no remains of which were uncovered in the excavated area.

On exposure to high temperature, marble decomposes and is converted into lime, which was an important material in late antique and early Islamic construction. It may be assumed that the kilns, which were probably close by,



8. Deposition of large sculptural marble fragments underneath the rubble of the destruction layer. It is obvious that the fragments had been smashed and hoarded in Room M, in preparation for recycling; they would have been burnt to produce lime.



9. Deposit of large sculptural marble fragments underneath the rubble of the destruction layer. Overview of the whole of Room M. Taken from the east.



10. Deposit of large sculptural marble fragments underneath the rubble of the destruction layer. Detail of the statuary deposit in the eastern sector.

are buried under the modern houses bordering the excavation area to the east. See the remarks below by Thomas M. Weber-Karyotakis (in his chapter on the sculptural finds) concerning the methodological consequences for the study of the sculptural decoration of the baths and the northern hall.

In the southwestern sector of excavation Area M, the remains of a quadrangular structure built of limestone blocks came to light. The underlying Roman pavement had been removed for this construction, and the foundation was laid in the soil underneath. The quadrangular construction preserves an orange clay wall isolating the interior cavity. At the bottom of this construction, a ceramic jug from the Byzantine period was unearthed.

#### 1.1.7. The Roman Phase of Area M

##### 1.1.7.1. The Staircase

At the south-west corner of Room M, an internal staircase was built into the masonry (Fig. 11). Three steps, 0.30 m in height, were cleared during the excavation. No detailed architectural study had been carried out yet. A preliminary reconstruction of an open, U-shaped staircase, with two enclosing flights to access the roofs of the antique building, appears at present to be the most likely explanation, based on the archaeological traces.



11. Solid southwestern wall of Room M, with inserted staircase.

##### 1.1.7.2 The Roman Phase Piscine

The final discovery of the excavation was the unearthing of the entire base of the monumental piscine (Fig. 12). It was sounded during the 2016 campaign, after a water supply channel coming from the bath's *frigidarium* had been cleared. The backdrop of the pool is composed of large quadrangular slabs of hard pink limestone. Along the southern flank, the entire wall of the room was lined by a parietal veneer fitted against brick masonry, which was partially uncovered in 2016.

##### 1.2 Room Q

An area of approximately 15 m<sup>2</sup> was excavated at the site of room Q (Square 24), which borders the northern hall at its northwestern flank. Already partially excavated in 1986, the present work conducted in this room made it possible to highlight the masonry, and the occupation levels dating from different periods. As already suspected during the 1984 excavation





12. Roman outdoor pool (Room M, a piscine or natatio) in the thermal building. Taken from the east.

directed by Aida Naghawi, the Director of the DoA in Jarash, the pilaster separating rooms Q and R belongs to the original phase of the hall. This supporting element was entirely unearthed in 2017. In reference to comparable architectural features from the “northern hall”, it seems possible to restore here a passageway between two columns, framed by two pilasters.

The 2017 excavation also documented the late reuse of this room before the abandonment phase of the hall, with a south-north oriented wall exposed. It is built of different sized, soft limestone blocks which had probably been reused, without any foundation and devoid of coating. It is stratigraphically associated with a thin occupation layer. This phase is characterized by the remains of a small hearth, which calcinated a part of the eastern wall of the masonry. Both the architectural and archaeological evidence affirm the late character of this ensemble.

The forthcoming ceramic study by Daniela Bondoni will determine the chronological data of this phase.

This late occupation was based directly on a patch of mosaic floor excavated in the southern and eastern sectors of the area (Figs. 13-14). The mosaic is comprised of a 0.70 m border, made of irregularly arranged large white *tesserae*, which frames a more carefully executed polychrome panel (Fig. 14). The latter is a geometric composition of thin black and red bands, combined with another geometric pattern of red and white diamonds. A gap in this floor at the southeast corner of the excavation area made it possible to study the composition of the bedding. Accordingly, it is evident that this mosaic constitutes the original floor for public circulation in this room, in a functional context with the thermal building. No later repairs to this decorative floor were observed.



13. Room Q, with a mosaic floor. Taken from the east.



14. Detail of the polychrome mosaic in Room Q. Taken from the northeast.



### 1.3 Area R

Adjacent to the east of room S, room R was excavated along its full length of 10 m and to a width of c. 4.50 m, thus covering a space of approximately 45 m<sup>2</sup> (Squares 34 and 44) (Figs. 15-16). Already partially excavated in 1986, work carried out in this room in 2017 uncovered the ancient pavement, made from large slabs of hard pink limestone. This floor showed evidence of repairs in some places, together with pieces of an older architrave. Several later installations resting on this Roman period floor testify to a secondary reuse of this area.

The southern face of these constructions had been visible since their excavation in 1986. The unearthing of their northern face in 2017 revealed the presence of coating. To the north of the latter, stonework constructed with *spolia* irregularly follows the orientation of the older Roman structures. To the east and south, rectilinear stonework forms the southeastern corner

of a room, the west-east end of which is marked by the presence of a rounded angle. All these structures preserve the remains of the plaster which covered the interior face of this room, the function of which is still undetermined.

Finally, the vestiges of a wall oriented south-north were uncovered to the east of the sector. Of poor quality construction, this wall was coated along both western and eastern faces. The latter had two coats of plaster, attesting to a sustained occupation of the room. The remains which have been uncovered so far do not allow a specific function to be assigned to this space after the Roman phase. However, the continuous presence of a plaster coating indicates that this occupation was not limited to transient squatters in the ancient structures once they had lost their original function. Only by continuing the excavations towards the north will we be able to better understand the function of these rooms over their total occupation history.



15. Room R. Taken from the east.



16. Detail of the late construction, south of the west pillar in Room R.

## 2. The Marble Sculpture- New Finds of the 2017 Campaign (By Thomas M. Weber-Karyotakis)

### 2.1. Introduction

In addition to documenting the decorated architectural blocks, the GJU team focused on the study of the marble sculptures found at the site of the northern hall and adjacent areas. The most productive area was room M, which was interpreted by our French excavation partners as a paved outdoor piscine (*natatio*) between the bathing complex and the so-called northern hall. The aim of the present campaign was to discover further evidence about the nature and arrangement of the statuary decoration for these two important complexes. Therefore, we hoped that studying the excavated marble statues where they were found would allow us to further connect them with the inscribed statue bases of the neighboring northern hall. In the course of the 2017 campaign, 109 marble statuary fragments, with different dimensions and provenances, have been registered from the excavated areas, predominantly from room M. Only marble objects which preserved some portion of their worked surfaces were fully documented by registration, measuring, drawing, and photographing. The objects in this category ranged from large sculptured torsi to small flakes. However, a considerable number of amorphous lumps or chips, with no trace of surface treatment, were also kept for later restoration purposes.

Objects which retained faint traces of color were carefully cleaned by dry brushing (without water), in order to facilitate further research on original polychromy during the restoration process. Large sculptural fragments were also dry brushed for the same reason. In the photographs which illustrate this article, they appear much darker than they will be after professional cleaning, as the surfaces are still tainted by the reddish brown soil they were found in.

Almost all statuary fragments came to light in room M under the first destruction layer, which was marked by densely collapsed rubble of massive blocks, mostly from the lavishly

decorated entablature which had collapsed during the disastrous earthquake of 749 AD. Even though this catastrophe may have caused further damage to the statues, their deposition in the stratum underneath was, however, a result of previous destructive human activities. People had intentionally accumulated and then smashed sculptures on the rubble above the limestone pavement of room M, obviously to send them for burning, in order to produce lime for domestic construction. This is definitively the reason why major parts of the torsi have not been found, particularly the heads or body extremities. The sugar-like, decayed porous surface of some of the fragments indicates they have been exposed to high temperatures. Even though there is no material evidence for a kiln or furnace, we must take into account that the sculptural fragments are the sad remains of a systematic industrial recycling process. Obviously, the sudden earthquake interrupted this activity and preserved some large parts of marble figures. As a consequence, the find position of a sculpture does not provide any clue for reconstructing its original arrangement within the northern hall. One cannot even exclude the possibility that some of the statues had never decorated either the baths or the northern hall, but had been brought from another area in the urban topography to the designated place for firing<sup>10</sup>. To our present knowledge, the hoard of marble statuary which has been uncovered was definitely destined for destruction by firing, certainly under the auspices of fundamentalist religious (Christian?) iconoclasts.

Despite the discouraging circumstances of their deposition, the statuary findings of the 2017 campaign have enriched our present knowledge of the statuary landscape of Gerasa in the Decapolis tremendously. Apart from the Alexandrian Muse by Antoneinus<sup>11</sup> and the Aphrodisian dancing Satyr holding Dionysus' babe<sup>12</sup>, it is difficult to decide on the geographic location of the ateliers where the statues had been commissioned and bought; furthermore, the archaeometric determination of the quarry sources for the marbles does not help to resolve this problem. More decisive is the question of

10. This hypothesis is corroborated by the fact that the statuary material from the Eastern Great Baths produced until now two statues of Zeus if the identification of the bearded head

fragment in Report 2016, cat.-no. 1 is correct.

11. See Report 2016, cat.-no. 5.

12. See Report 2016, cat.-no. 6.



implantation of Greco-Roman iconographic types, because this determines the extent the local Arab population participated in the inter-provincial Roman imperial culture as a proof of political loyalty, in contrast to sustained indigenous religious traditions.

As well as the major fragment of the precisely dated colossal statue of Aphrodite, donated to the city by a certain Demetrius in AD 154, six further torsi have been preserved to an extent which allows an interpretation and solid future restoration.

### 2.2. *Aphrodite of Demetrius*

The upper body of Aphrodite came to light approximately 70 cm to the southwest of the find spot of the lower body (Fig. 17) with an inscribed plinth, which was found in 2016<sup>13</sup>. It was found lying on its back, and is preserved from the zone of the navel upward, until the base of the broken neck. The head and both arms are lost. If the colossal statue had collapsed by accident under the weight of falling architectural blocks, the broken head and both arms would certainly have been found scattered in the vicinity of the *thorax*. Moreover, the edges of the oblique break surfaces of both body fragments have been battered, flaking flat chips away, obviously caused by a tool rather than a single collision with a large stone block. Nevertheless, both parts fit perfectly together, and complete the figure from the bottom of the



17. The upper torso of Aphrodite as it was uncovered, lying on its back at a distance of c. 70 cm to the southwest from where the lower torso (with plinth) was found in 2016.

plinth to a height of 208 cm (Figs. 18-20). A curved fragment which retains strands of hair (Fig. 21) found close to the upper body torso<sup>14</sup> fits onto a flaked portion of the left shoulder (cf. Figs. 18-20). A number of further fragments may also be attributed to the statue, on the basis of similar proportions and the quality of the fine to medium, crystalline grain, white-grey marble.

As already stated in the 2016 report, the Aphrodite of Demetrius is a variation of the late Hellenistic statuary type commonly called “Aphrodite of the Troade”. In its present condition, the figure appears in an equilibrated contrapposto composition, with a slight turn around its anatomic vertical axis, causing an S-shaped line from the zone of the private parts to the key bones of the neck. The right arm (which is broken at the pit) was raised, while the left one was lowered, to grasp the lappet of the towel at the height of her left thigh. The trunk of the neck suggests a slight turn of her (possibly inclined?) head to the right side. The modelling style is compact and smooth, avoiding graphic elements for shading contours, with the necessary channels produced by pointed chisels, without application of the running drill. The absolute date of AD 154 given by the inscriptional dedication carved upon the plinth provides an absolute *terminus post quem non* for the stylistic evaluation of undated sculpture found in the eastern Mediterranean.

### 2.3. *Zeus Type Florence*

An important sculptural find is a nude standing statue of Zeus; it was uncovered in 17 fragments, each of which fit together at their breaks (Figs. 23 a-f). They appeared in the accumulation of debris under the fallen architectural blocks in the southwestern sector of the piscine, a few meters west of the southwestern corner of the early Islamic structure<sup>15</sup>. The fragments were deposited roughly in the layout of human anatomy. Apart from the missing lower right hand and entire left arm, the figure can be restored to its original height, measuring 174 cm from the base of the pedestal to the top of the

13. Report 2016 cat.-no. 4. The find coordinates of the upper torso are: Room M, square 88, locus 233, on the brown clay soil and stone gravel under the destruction layer, about 30 cm above the limestone pavement of the piscine.

14. Find information: Reg.-no. 2017/33: Found on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017, in room M, square 78, locus 233.

15. Find information: Reg.-no.2017/78A-Q: Found on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017, in room M, square 89, locus 244.



18-20. The current condition of the torso of the Aphrodite of Demetrius after the 2017 excavation campaign. height 208 cm. Currently packed and stored in front of the Jarash Archaeological Museum, in the control of the DoA.

head.

It depicts an upright standing, naked man of slim athletic stature, bearded, holding the right hand lowered and extended forward. Most probably, the god held his significant attribute, the bundle of flashes, in this hand. The entirely missing left arm was emphatically raised at the pit, and the hand may have grasped a vertical stick-like object, probably a scepter. There is no doubt the interpretation as Zeus is correct, as a squatting eagle with spread wings, the heraldic holy animal of the supreme Olympian god, serves as a statuary support along the outside contour of his right lower leg (Figs. 23 d-e). The head (Fig. 23 b), with its long curly coiffure, and the full beard with curly strands parted at the chin, emphasizes the majesty of the god.

In terms of art history classification, the

sculpture can be attributed to an iconographic type richly represented during the Roman imperial period by a number of marble statues and bronze figurines, commonly named “Type Florence”<sup>16</sup> after a very famous bronze statuette which is exhibited at the *Museo Archeologico* in Florence (Fig. 22)<sup>17</sup>. The Florentine bronze figurine is the closest convincing iconographic type comparison to the newly found Gerasa Zeus to the author’s knowledge. Ernst Berger<sup>18</sup> recognized a colossal *chef d’oeuvre* of the Greek sculptor Myron, created around the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, as the archetype of this bronze statuette at Florence. This masterpiece was originally exposed as a group on one base, with statues of Athena and Herakles in the Heraion of Samos. According to Strabo (*Geogr.* XIV, 637b)<sup>19</sup>, Antonius brought the colossus of

16. C. Maderna, in: *Forschungen zur Villa Albani* 90-92.

17. Florence, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. 2574. Bibl.: M. Sofia, in: *Piccoli Grandi Bronzi* 66 no. 4.

18. Berger 1969, 66-92.

19. Overbeck Leipzig 1868, 100 no. 536.



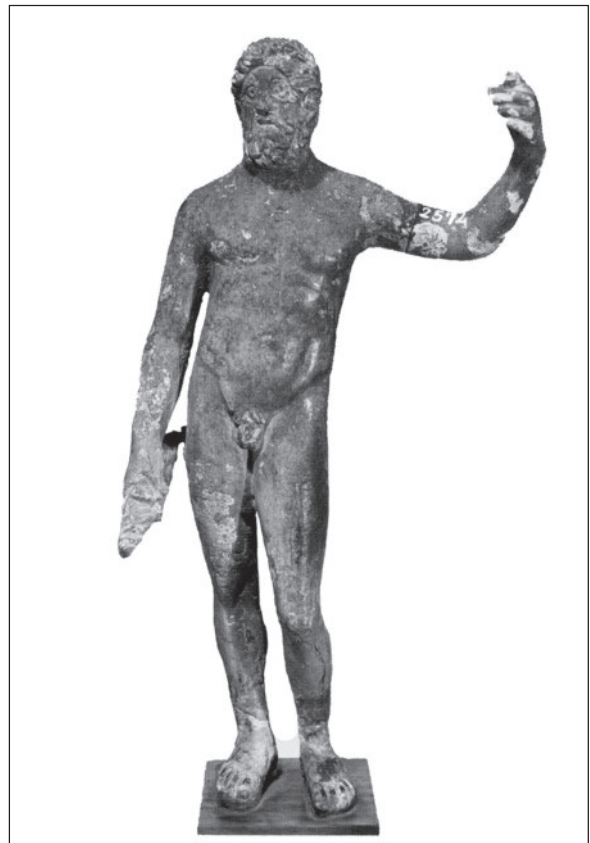


21. Fragment of a hair strand (2017/33) which fits onto a break on the left shoulder of the Aphrodite of Demetrius. Presently packed together with the torso, and stored in front of the Jarash Archaeological Museum, in the control of the DoA.

Zeus to Rome and displayed it in a small canopy temple (“*naiskos*”) on the Capitoline hill.

The famous Zeus by Myron is thought to have inspired artists in the Roman capital to create a large number of replicas and variations<sup>20</sup>. The newly found Zeus from the Eastern Great Baths at Gerasa might be one of them, not necessarily manufactured in Rome itself, but in one of the ateliers of the Roman East. The date of this replica can be determined by stylistic features; the drilling of the contour line to produce a contrast between the curly strands of the coiffure and the flesh of the cheeks is still a modest application of graphic elements produced by the “running drill”, which starts to dominate sculpture from the Severian period, and reduce the plastic volume. The bean-shaped drilling curve upon the eyeballs becomes a stylistic element in later Antonine portraiture, to indicate the light reflection on the iris.

Based on these two indicative features, the newly found Gerasa Zeus should be dated to the reign of Commodus; that is, the decade between



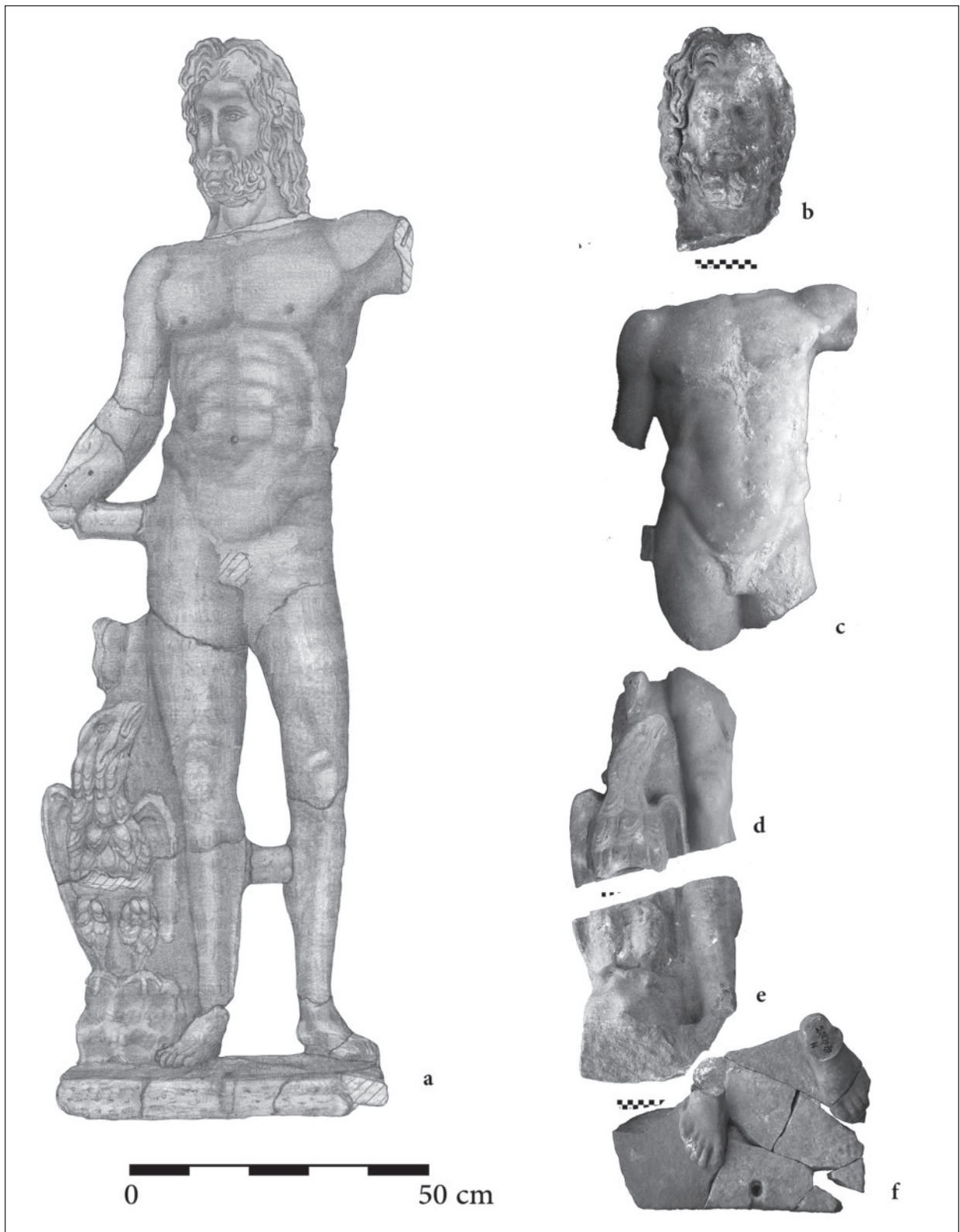
22. Bronze statuette of Zeus, evaluated as a fairly exact Roman copy in reduced size after the colossal statue of Zeus by Myron. Florence, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. 2574.

180 and 190 AD. This means there is a chronological interval of about 30 years between the Aphrodite of Demetrius and the Gerasa Zeus. The sculptor of the latter adopted (more or less consciously) a blend of Hellenistic sculpture, by the slender proportions of the male anatomy and the “Pergamene” touch of the idealized bearded head.

The newly found statue of Zeus is important not so much because of its artistic quality (which is mediocre), but rather for the information it provides about the local cultural history of Gerasa and the *Provincia Arabia*. It is one of the best-preserved Roman sculptures known today from the territory of the modern Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and the only human sized representation of the main divinity of Gerasa. As is known from the inscriptions on the seats of the *bouleuterion/ odeion*<sup>21</sup> (formerly known as the “northern theatre”) Zeus, together with

20. For a list of replicas and variations in two main groups see A. Leibundgut 1980, 10-12.

21. Seigne - Augusta-Boularot 2005a, 339-435; Seigne - Augusta-Boularot 2005b, 297-310.



23 a-f. Reconstruction drawing of the 17 fragments of the statue of Zeus (2017/78 A-Q) by Dheeb Hassan (a), total height: 174 cm. Photos of selected fragments: (b) the head, (c) torso, (d) upper part of statue support, with representations of the upper half of the eagle and right thigh of Zeus; (e) lower part of the legs of the eagle and the right calf of Zeus; (f) restitution of the pedestal, with both feet seen from above.



other Olympian gods, played a role in the city as the tutelary divinity of one of the leading urban tribes. We may assume with a high degree of probability that the statue uncovered in 2017 did not serve a purely decorative function in Gerasa; it was certainly a memorial of political self-identification for an influential Arab tribe from the local population.

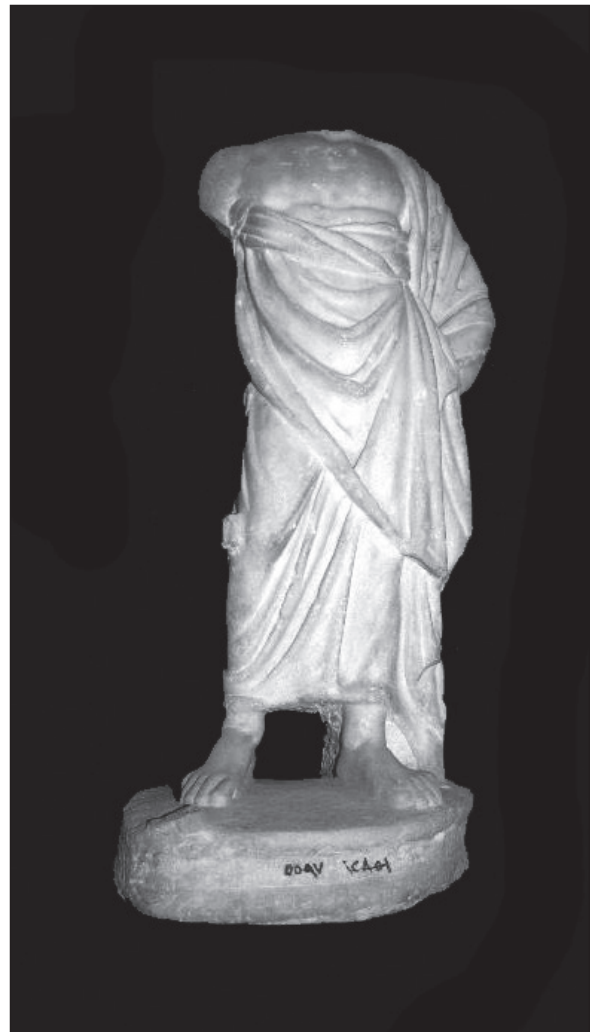
All remaining fragments of this statue, together with some smaller flakes which may belong to it, were safely packed in a wooden chest and delivered into the custody of the DoA in Jarash on October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

#### 2.4. *Asclepius, Similar To Types Este / Eleusis 30*

A second male torso, which was broken into two big pieces, was found associated with several large fragments from other figures (Figs. 8-10)<sup>22</sup>. The upper part was deposited upright, inclined forward in the northwestern sector of the basin. The lower fragment was uncovered after the torso of Apollo had been removed, as it was immediately underneath and parallel to it, lying face down on the ground. The stratigraphical context was the same as that for the sculptures described above; in a soil deposit underneath the destruction rubble, approximately 30 cm above the Roman pavement. The head, right arm, parts of the left hand, and both feet, together with the pedestal, are missing. Several smaller marble fragments from the same archaeological context fit with the torso<sup>23</sup>.

The male portrayed is of a youthful, slender and athletic stature (Figs. 25-28). His outfit is characterized by a long Greek cloak (*himation*) wrapped around the lower body, drawn from the back over the right shoulder, and falling in a long perpendicular fold of drapery along the left contour of the body down to the calf. This portion of the fabric covers the left arm, which is slightly angled at the elbow, with the covered hand stemmed into the left hip. The cloak is taken up at the height of the navel, and rolled to a thin hem which horizontally transverses the abdomen. A triangular piece of fabric falls forward, covering most of the thigh of the right

leg, which is forward and bent at the knee; the lower part of the leg is bent side wards toward the back. The *himation* is worn without underwear; thus the uncovered portion of the chest is naked. Smaller fragments from the drapery were found in the same stratigraphic contexts, and a number of them fitted the breaks on the perpendicular cascade of folds along the figure's left side. In the pit of the lowered right upper arm, the trunk of an object remains, undoubtedly the upper end of the *caduceus*, a stick with a winding snake, the main attribute of the medical god Asclepius. The god was thus posed



24. *Marble statue of Asclepius, Type Este/ Eleusis 30 from Syria (exact provenance unknown). height 63.5 cm. Damascus, National Museum, inv. 5597 / 12851.*

22. Find information: Reg.-no. 2017/71A-B: Found on October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017 in room M, square 98, locus 252.

23. These are mainly fragments of the drapery cascade running from the left side of the cloak: Identified firmly fitting pieces

are the following: reg.-nos. 2017/34.54.62.63.110.113. All of them have been packed together with the two torsi and were delivered to the custody of the DoA Jerash, on October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017.



25-28. Torso of Asclepius (reg.-no. 2017/71A-B). Type Este/ Eleusis 30. height 110 cm; Storage, Jarash DoA.

in a relaxed stance leaning on this stick, with his body slightly inclined to his left side. It seems very possible that this Asclepius from Gerasa was part of a group inside the baths, together with his divine daughter, Hygieia / Salus, who may have been on the left- side.

Several hundred marble statues of Asclepius have been found throughout all the regions and provinces of the Roman Empire, which has resulted in an elaborate sculptural typology in the literature, with a number of sub-types and variations. Due to the limited frame of this preliminary report, we are not able to provide a detailed discussion here. Nevertheless, the relaxed pose, leaning with the weight of the inclined body on top of the *caduceus*, with the bent right arm covered by fabric and stemmed into the hip, points to a similarity to the sculptural types Este or Eleusis 30<sup>24</sup>. Replicas and variations of these related types are variously attested in the coastal cities along the Phoenician and Palestine littoral, such as Sidon/ Saida, and Caesarea Maritima. Despite the repetition of the pose and the garment, the concept and

style of the drapery displays great variety, such as that of a well-preserved torso from Damascus in Syria (Fig. 24)<sup>25</sup>.

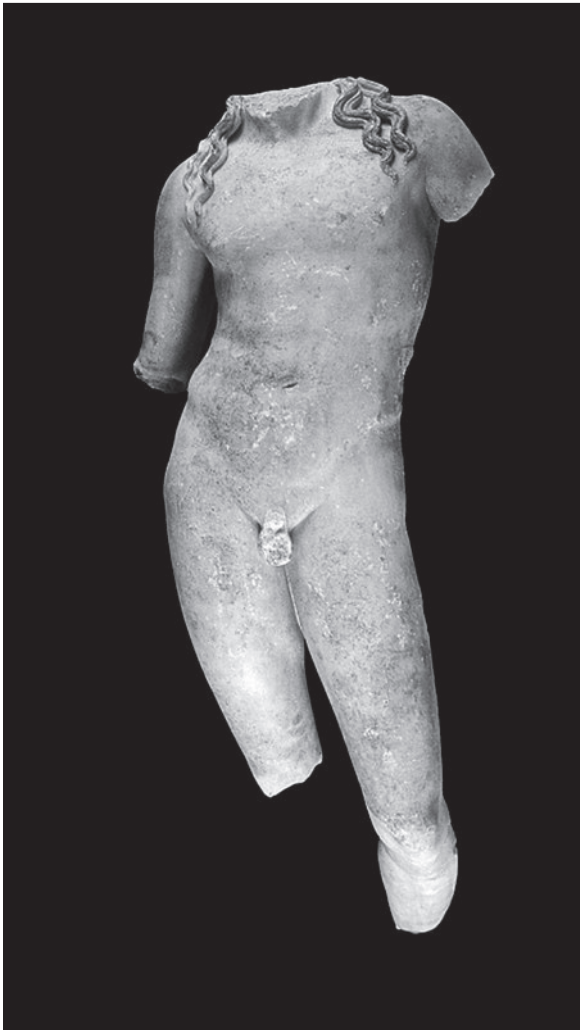
The date of production for the new Gerasa Asclepius is considerably earlier than that of the Zeus statue. The complete lack of drilled channels in the drapery points to the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, while the inorganic character of the cloak, which appears more like a thin metal foil rather than a textile, resembles the style of the provincial reliefs at the *Hadrianeum* at Rome (dated to AD 145)<sup>26</sup>. The style and finishing lacks the exquisite quality of the “Dancing Muse Miletus” by the Alexandrian sculptor Antoneinus, son of Antiochus, dated to AD 118/ 119<sup>27</sup> by its inscription. However after cleaning some of the drapery fragments which are broken from the Asclepius-torso (see FN 23) with water, it was discovered they have a smooth, porcelain-like surface, with the characteristic ivory-colored patina which gives a glimpse of the magnificent „*sfumato*“-surface of the Antoneinus-Muse. The Asclepius torso can possibly be attributed to the period between 140 and 150

24. See Meyer 1988, 119-159; Meyer 1994, 7-55.

25. Damascus, National Museum, inv. 5597 / 12851, provenience unknown, acquired on the local art market on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1948. H 63.5 cm; W 27.5 cm; D 19.4 cm. White fine crystalline marble with bluish veins. Bibl.: unpublished.

26. Cippollone 1978-80, 41-47.

27. See Report 2016, cat.-no. 5. For the probable date of the belonging inscriptional base re-used in the Circessian suq at Jerash see now Gatier – Bader – Aliquot – Sartre – Yon 2017, 345.



29. Torso of Apollo from Berytus, Beirut. National Museum, inv. 2017.

AD; at the present stage of research, this date appears to be most likely. The sculptural workmanship, on the other hand, is flat and somewhat dull, lacking variation of detail and deeper shadowing for the under-cuttings.

### 2.5. Apollo (or Dionysus ?)

A third male torso, which is entirely nude (Figs. 29-32) was found deposited in the same cache of fragments as the Asclepius torso above and the Melpomene fragments below, lying on its back (Fig. 10)<sup>28</sup>. The head, both arms and both legs, together with the pedestal, are missing. The surface of the body is, in parts (especially in the area of the genitals), battered or worn. There is an oblong, vertical, whitish

28. Find information: Reg.-no. 2017/62. Found on October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017 in room M, square 98, locus 252.



30. Apollo Daphnephorus from Samaria-Sebaste. Amman, Jordan National Museum (Ras al-'Ain). no inv.-no.

trace incrustation of lime running vertically downwards from the middle of the breast (*sternum*). The right part of the buttock (*glutaeus*) was found as a separate fragment<sup>29</sup> in a near-by stratigraphic context, which fits with the corresponding break of the torso (Fig. 31-32).

The torso is of a nude, gracile person of male gender with a relaxed stance. It is thought to be a 'boyish age', because no trace of public hair can be recognized, even though this part of the body has been intentionally damaged. The right truncated thigh is advancing, which indicates that the full weight of the body rested on the left leg. The equilibrated moving posture causes a flat curvature of the *linea alba* from the *abdomen* to the *thorax*. The right shoulder,

29. Find information: Reg.-no. 2017/ 65 A: Found on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017 in room M square 98, locus 252.





31-34. Naked male torso of a god, Apollo? Dionysus? (reg.-no. 2017/62). height 76 cm. Storage, Jarash DoA.

together with the remnant of the upper arm is slightly raised, while the left shoulder appears to be lowered. The break at the left pit gives no evidence for the pose of the missing arm. It may possibly have been lowered also, with a slightly backward pose. The groin lines run steeply from the genitals to the hips, while the hip musculature is not emphatically articulated by modeling. Long wavy strands of hair remain, falling from both sides upon the shoulders.

Youthful naked male torsi of this type can be interpreted in a variety of ways. Most commonly, they represent a youthful Apollo or Dionysus in Roman sculpture, but alternatives such as Attis, Ganymedes and others are possible. No decisive attributes remain on the Gerasa torso which could lead to a conclusive decision. The motif of a lowered right arm trunk excludes identification with the common Lykeius-type for both Apollo and Dionysus, as this always depicts the right arm raised above the head. If the newly found Gerasa torso could be determined to be associated with the Melpomene which was found in the same stratigraphic context, it would favor a tentative interpretation as Apollo, but this can by no means be a con-

vincing argument. The arbitrary deposition of the hoarded fragments in the whole complex of room M exhorts the researcher to remain prudent.

At this stage of the author's research, the best comparisons with the new Gerasa torso are a torso found at Berytus/ Beirut (**Fig. 33**)<sup>30</sup>, and an almost completely preserved marble statue representing Apollo Daphnephorus from Samaria-Sebaste<sup>31</sup>, which is currently part of the collection of the *Jordan National Museum* in Amman/ Ras al-'Ain (**Fig. 34**). Compared with the recently discovered Gerasa Torso, the Berytus Apollo has a similar stance, but is a mirror image, while the Samaria Apollo reflects the stance more precisely. Both of the comparative statues were originally displayed with a tripod on their right side, and for this reason their identification as Apollo stands beyond any doubt.

In its present condition, the Gerasa torso retains only the rendering of strands of hair upon the shoulders, which have all been done by a pointed chisel. For this reason, a preliminary dating to around the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, during the earlier phase of the Antonine reign, can be considered.

30. Beirut, National Museum, inv. 2014, found at Berytus, near the Nymphaeum at rue Emir Beshir, in the Lazariye suburb. H 140 cm; Bibl.: Jidejian 1973 fig. 98. 100; Doumet-Serhal - Maila-Afeiche - el-Dahdah - Rabate 1998, 105 figs. 44; 175;

Friedland 2001, 468.

31. Crowfoot - Kenyon 1957, 74 no. 7 pl. X 1-4; Gersht 1996, 440 fig. 13; Fischer 1998, 159-160 no. 183; 198 figs. 183a-b; Friedland 2001, 468.

## 2.6. Melpomene and Two Unidentified Muses

Three other torsii (reg.-nos. 2017/51. 56A-C. 57), all without heads, came from two different squares in the Roman pool. They represent seated female figures clad in classical Greek garments; thick cloaks (*himatia*) and long under-shirts (*chitones*). Two of them came to light in the vicinity of Asclepius and Apollo (**Fig. 10**)<sup>32</sup>, while the third was found to the west of the Aphrodite torso<sup>33</sup>. One of them is preserved from the pedestal to the base of the neck; although the other two lack upper bodies, two large fragments of the right breast could successfully be matched to one of them, which has been identified as the Muse Melpomene<sup>34</sup>. All three marble torsii are definitively smaller than life size<sup>35</sup>.

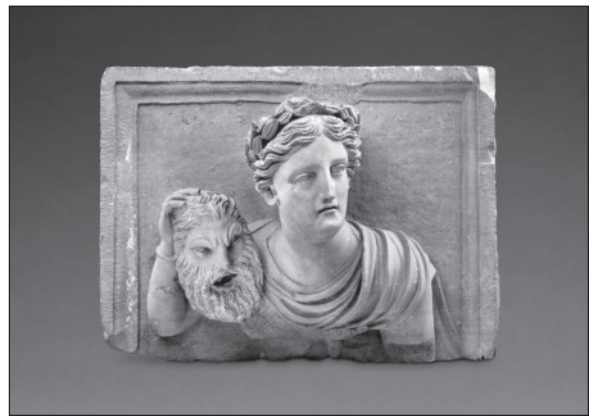
None of the three seated torsii would have had a portrait head depicting a person, as representations of noble ladies of the Gerasene society. Statues of this genre are well known in the Roman East<sup>36</sup> but in almost all cases they must be classified as funeral portraits. In contrast to such individual portrait statues, all three of the Gerasene female statue fragments are shown enthroned on a rocky ground rather than on a chair. However, representations of tutelary urban goddesses (in Greek *Tyche*, plural *Tychai*) are commonly represented on rocks, frequently with the legs crossed over each other. The most famous of these *Tychai* was that of Antiocheia, cast in bronze during the early Hellenistic period by the Greek artist Eutychides<sup>37</sup>. In addition, nymphs which were thought to live in grottos or trees are frequently shown sitting on rocks.

Another divine group of maidens squatting on rocks are the nine Olympian Muses. According to Greek religious imagination, these goddesses accompanied and patronized the human arts and sciences<sup>38</sup>. They were thought to reside in the mountain range of Parnassos in southern

Boeotia, where a charming valley with a sanctuary of the Muses near the city Thespies, at the eastern slope of Mount Helicon, is visited until today<sup>39</sup>.

One of the newly found Muses (**Fig. 35-38**) from Gerasa can be precisely identified by her attribute. She supports a long haired theatrical mask with her right thigh. Due to the expression of horror, with staring eyes and an opened, grimacing mouth, this mask depicts tragedy. This genre of theater was the domain of Melpomene, who is thus represented by the Gerasene torso<sup>40</sup>. Her missing feet were carved separately, and fitted to prepared cavities by *anatyroseis*. This special sculptural treatment is probably explained by the representation of the *kothurnoi*, rather thick-soled laced or half-open boots traditionally worn by Athenian tragic actors<sup>41</sup>. The comic counterpart to Melpomene is the Muse Thalia, who is represented in Petra by a limestone bust which decorates the monumental gate area of the *temenos* of the Qasr al-Bint temple (**Fig. 39**)<sup>42</sup>.

As the two remaining female statues (**Figs. 40-47**) have very similar dimensions and poses to the torso of Melpomene, they could possibly



35. Bust of Thalia, the Muse of comedy. Limestone relief from Petra, found in the vestibule of the *temenos* gate. Wadi Musa, Petra Visitor Center, J.P. 516; JMA 1434.

32. Find information: Reg.-no. 2017/51: Found on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017 in room M, square 98, locus 252; reg.-no. 2017/56 A-C: Found on September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017 in room M, square 98, locus 252.

33. Find information: Reg.-no. 2017/57: Found on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017 in room M, square 77, locus 116.

34. Reg.-nos. 2017/41. 44.

35. Heights of reg.-no. 2017/51: 73 cm; reg.-no. 2017/56 A-C: 62 cm; Reg.-no. 2017/57: 52 cm.

36. Weber 2015, 583.

37. Cf. *LIMC* I.1 (Munich 1981) 840-851 s.v. Antiocheia (J.-

Chr. Balty).

38. Cf. Murray 2008, 199-219.

39. Roux 1954, 22-48.

40. See *LIMC* XXX.

41. Cf. the still most extensive description of the Athenian actor boot in Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft, Vol. 11 (Stuttgart 1922) 1520-1526 s.v. Kothurn (M. Bieber)

42. Wenning – Hübner 2004, 165 no. 12.8 with note 47 (with further discussion and literary references on the identification of this Muse).



36-39. Torso of enthroned Melpomene holding a tragic mask on her thigh (reg.-no. 2017/56A-C). Height 62 cm. Storage, Jarash DoA.



40-43. Torso of an enthroned Muse (Urania?) (reg.-no. 2017/51). height 72 cm. Storage, Jarash DoA.

also be representations of Muses. Moreover, the drapery of their cloaks is almost identical, and their poses differ only in the representations of their right hands and the crossing of their feet. In conclusion, they certainly originate from the same workshop and were commissioned as a pair. However, due to the lack of specific attributes, it is impossible to name them with certainty. The better preserved one (Figs. 34-40) has her right hand lying outstretched on her right thigh, with the battered palm directed upward in order to support the missing attribute,

(Fig. 41 in particular). The fingers are badly damaged, most probably lost when the missing object was broken off. It seems possible that she held a celestial globe in her hand; if this was the case, an identification as Urania, the Muse of Astronomy, would be a feasible proposition. The astral character of Urania is further indicated on colored mosaics by a dark blue *himation*, which sometimes depict embroidered golden stars. Whether this torso preserves traces of such painting will only be evident after professional cleaning of the marble surface. The



third female counterpart (Figs. 44-47) extends the hand of the lowered right arm on its corresponding thigh; however, it is entirely covered by a portion of the cloak.

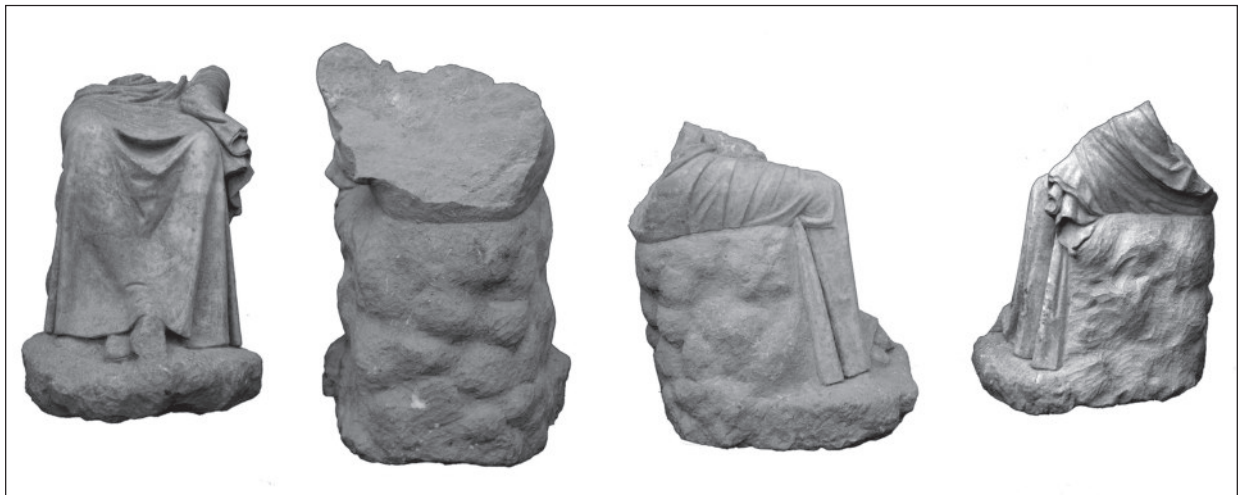
Groups of the Olympian Muses have been discovered in various parts of the Roman Empire: A good starting point for further research would be, for instance, the nine seated Muses excavated during the reign of Pope Alexander VI. (1492-1503) in the southern theatre (*odeum*) of Emperor Hadrian's villa in the Albanian mountains at Tivoli, Lazio<sup>43</sup>. Compared to this, the sculptural assemblage from Jarash can be considered as the most complete arrangement of seated Muse statues which have been discovered in the Levant from the Classical period.

To understand where these newly discovered Muse statues may have come from within the ancient city of Gerasa, we need to consult monuments which were found in excavations prior to the 2017 campaign. It is, therefore, appropriate to include information about statuary finds from previous excavations as part of the context of these newly discovered pieces, which may supplement our knowledge. The first is an inscribed plinth fragment of a variant of the type known as the dancing Muse Miletos<sup>44</sup> which was found in the northern hall during the 1986 DoA excavation. This bears the signature of the Alexandrian sculptor Antoninus, and was commissioned for display at Gerasa by a certain Lysias, son of Ariston, most probably in the

years 118/119 AD. The surface of the pedestal displays the same rocky ground as that of the three new statues. If the reading of the date of dedication is correct, it falls into the first years of the reign of Hadrian (AD 117-138), a full decade before the Emperor himself visited Gerasa and held his winter camp in the city (129/130 AD).

The second is a marble torso of a standing Muse, commonly assigned as “*the Muse with the book scroll type Miletus*” (Fig. 48), which has been restored from several fragments and is on display at the Citadel Museum in Amman<sup>45</sup>. C. S. Fischer reported finding the abdominal fragment of this statue, lying in the area of the so-called oval forum, in 1938<sup>46</sup>; Asem Bargouti and Zeidan Kafafi conducted excavations in this area on behalf of *The University of Jordan* in the 1980s. This perhaps provides evidence for the location of a sanctuary of the Muses (Greek *Museion*) near the southern theatre, within the topography of Gerasa, where the nine Muses would have originally been located.

The restored statue can be attributed to a series of predominantly Roman reproductions of a statuary type, the lost original of which goes back to the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC; this typological archetype had been inspiring sculptors and coroplasts in western Asia Minor since the Hellenistic period. A fine marble torso from Astypalaia, now in the British Museum, is dated from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the mid 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BC, and



44-47. *Torso of an enthroned Muse, unidentified (reg.-no. 2017/51). height 52 cm. Storage, Jarash DoA.*

43. Still the most valuable treaty of this important group is by Raeder 1983, 48-52; more recently also Rausa 2002, 43-51.

44. See Report 2016 cat.-no. 5.

45. Weber 2002, 492 no. C 18 pl. 125A-D (unrestored); Weber 2007, 224 fig. 4a-b.

46. C. S. Fisher, in: Kraeling 1938, 158 pl. XXXI C.



48. Marble torso of the Muse type „with the book-scroll“ from Gerasa. Amman, Jordan Archaeological Museum (the Citadel). no inv.-no.

small-sized reproductions in terracotta, such as the Myrina-types preserved at Paris, cannot be ruled out either<sup>47</sup>. A marble specimen of this type, produced by a Rhodian atelier, had already arrived as an import to the Levantine coast by the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, according to F. Kabus-Preißhofen<sup>48</sup>. It was found on Tall Hadra at Ascalon in 1924<sup>49</sup> and is stylistically

47. Schneider 1999, 135-136 no. 15 pl. 42c.

48. Kabus-Preißhofen 1989, 147 note 585.

49. Today on display at Jerusalem, Israel Museum, inv. S. 928, H. 58 cm. Bibl.: Wenning 1983, 111-112 pl. 16,4; Fischer 1989, 139 no. 104; 167 with fig.; Schneider 1999, 135-136 no. 15 pl. 42c; Figueras 2012, 17 fig. 57. Erlich 2009, 13 is not aware of the Rhodian Hellenistic parallels and claims an Augustean origin of the Ascalon-Muse due to her working material, a marble from Carrara, cf. Fischer 1989, 138.



49. Marble head of Polyhymnia from Gerasa. Replica of the type of the co-called Thespiads from Tivoli. Amman, Jordan Archaeological Museum (the Citadel). inv. J 1837.

close to a contemporary late Hellenistic torso of unknown provenance in the Egyptian Museum at Cairo<sup>50</sup>.

The third example of previously known Muses from Gerasa is a less than life-sized marble head of a young maiden (fig. 49)<sup>51</sup>; unfortunately, its exact provenance in Jarash is unknown. Identification of the personality represented by this head fragment can almost certainly be determined by the attribute of the flower wreath and the coiffure; both have close analogies to the statuary type of Polyhymnia of the so-called Thespiads, a famous late Hellenistic group of the nine Muses. Based on a text from Pliny<sup>52</sup>, W. Amelung first associated a group of Muses accompanied by Apollo Musagetes, which was found in 1774 in the villa of Cassius at Tivoli and later added to the collection of the Vatican Museums<sup>53</sup>, with a sculptural ensemble which had been transported by Mummius from Thespies in Beotia to Rome, where it was erected in the vicinity of the shrine of Felicitas.

50. Edgar 1903, 16 no. 27 pl. 5.27; Pinkwart 1965, 193 no. 9; Wenning 1983, 111-112; Schneider 1999, 135 no. 14 pl. 43.

51. Amman, Jordan Archaeological Museum (citadel), inv. J. 1837. H 28 cm; Bibl.: Weber 2002, 489 no. C 9 pl. 123a; Weber 2007, 222-223 fig. 2.

52. *Nat. Hist.* XXXIV, 69 and 36, 39.

53. Rome, Vatican, Museo Pio-Clementino, Sala delle Muse, inv. 287; W. Amelung, *Die Basis des Praxiteles aus Mantinea* (Munich 1895); Weber 2007, 223 note 7 figs. 3a-b.

The three marble Muses found in the transitional basin between the Great Eastern Baths and the so-called northern hall during the 2017 campaign considerably enrich our knowledge of these divinities in Gerasa during the Hadrianic and early Antonine periods. The reason why they were moved at this time from the context of the local *Museion* near the Oval Forum to be exhibited at the baths remains undetermined for two reasons. First, none of the hitherto known inscribed statue bases in the northern hall make any reference to the re-erection of a Muse statue. Secondly, the industrial character of the



50-51. Colossal left marble hand (reg.-no. 2017/ 47. height 18 cm; width 15 cm. Found under the floor of the early Islamic installation in the northeastern area of Room M. Storage, Jarash DoA.

collecting area for recycling marble sculpture in the former Roman piscine does not exclude the possibility that the statues had been brought from another architectural context in Gerasa in order to be smashed and then burned for lime.

### 3.7. A Colossal Left Hand

After the removal of the two orthogonal walls, built from *spolia* from the Umayyad/Abbasid installation (Figs. 4-5), the excavation continued to expose the strata beneath its earthen floor. Immediately underneath, the fragment of a large hand (Figs. 50-51) lying on its back came to light<sup>54</sup>. It was broken at the wrist, with the hand grasping a stick-like object of unclear nature, the ends of which were also lost. The tip of the thumb, including the nail, has broken off, while the backs of the bent fingers display a sugar-like decay of the original marble surfaces. This was caused by partial exposure of the upper part of the hand to high temperatures, testifying to the process of recycling marble by burning it to lime.

The hand itself is of remarkable interest, since it is considerably larger than that of a person. Its proportions and the structure of the marble corresponds with the Aphrodite of Demetrius (Figs. 18-20). However, it is not possible that it is a fragment from this torso, as it is a left hand, which is partly preserved on the Aphrodite statue.

We may thus conclude that the colossal Aphrodite was not unique in terms of its size in the sculptural landscape of ancient Gerasa. Regrettably, the nature of the colossus to which this hand belonged remains obscure.

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54. Find information: Reg.-no. 2017/47. Found on October 5<sup>th</sup>,

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22. after Marco Sofia, in *Piccoli Grandi Bronzi 2015*: p. 66 Fig. 4.
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