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tra inerzie locali e romanizzazione*

a cura di Giuseppe Mazzilli

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BUILDING THE CITYSCAPES OF ROMAN GREECE: URBAN ARMATURES

Vassilis Evangelidis

Keywords: cityscape, monumentalization, colonnaded streets, armatures, gates

Parole chiave: paesaggio urbano, monumentalizzazione, strade colonnate, strutture urbane, accessi e porte urbane

Abstract

Following Hellenistic traditions of urban monumentality, city scaping based on carefully designed architectural vistas, accentuated long axes (colonnaded streets), and prominent visual points (gates) became one of the principal ways that the city was conceptualized over the Imperial period. This was an architecture that did not simply frame everyday activities, but directed movement, guided traffic, created vivid visual impressions, spoke about ideology, power, past, and social coherence. Small demographic ratio, lack of available resources, and underdevelopment have quite often been regarded as the main reasons that most of the cities of the Roman provinces of Greece never reached the level of monumentality that characterized cities in other areas of the Roman world. Contrary to this widely accepted academic view, the scope of the article is to show how Greek cities of the period employed armatures as one of the means for structuring their environment.

Seguendo tradizioni ellenistiche di monumentalità urbana, il disegno del paesaggio della città basato su prospettive architettoniche accuratamente progettate, accentuati assi longitudinali (strade colonnate) e prominenti punti di vista (porte) divenne uno dei principali modi in cui fu concettualizzata la città nel corso dell'età imperiale. Si trattava di un'architettura che non si limitava a inquadrare le attività quotidiane, ma che inoltre guidava il movimento, dirigeva il traffico, creava vivide impressioni, parlava di ideologia, potere, passato e coerenza sociale. Il basso tasso demografico, la mancanza di risorse disponibili e l'involuzione urbana delle città nelle province romane della Grecia sono stati spesso considerati i motivi principali per cui la maggior parte di esse non ha mai raggiunto il livello di monumentalità che caratterizzava invece i centri di altre regioni del mondo romano. Diversamente da questa visione accademica, ampiamente accettata, fine dell'articolo è invece di mostrare come le città greche dell'epoca utilizzassero le infrastrutture urbane come uno dei mezzi per strutturare il proprio spazio.

“For there was a row of columns intersected by another as long at right angles.
I tried to cast my eyes down every street, but my gaze was still unsatisfied,
and I could not grasp all the beauty of the spot at once”
(Achilles Tatius, *Leukippe and Cleitophon*, transl. S. Gaselee, 1969).

Despite its literary hyperbole, the description of Alexandria by Achilles Tatius¹ speaks about one of the greatest manifestations of Roman architecture: the creation of monumental cityscapes. The central role in this process of monumental city building held what W. MacDonald described as “urban armature”², a clearly delineated path³ through the city that provided spatial unity, urban coherence and unhindered connection between the different city parts, notably between the main gate and the central public space (forum or agora). Colonnades, elaborate pavements,

¹ *Leukippe and Cleitophon*, 5, 1, 1-5.

² MACDONALD 1986, p. 5.

³ In his influential work on the image of the city Kevin Lynch (1960, p. 45) argues that the extent to which the cityscape can be

“read” is based on five basic elements (paths, edges, nodes, regions, landmarks). Among them, paths hold a special place since they organize urban mobility and counter the fear of disorientation (*ibid.*, pp. 49-62).



Fig. 1. Sites in the Roman provinces of Greece mentioned in the text (digital map: A.).

fountains and monuments, public buildings and monumentally articulated junctions and entrances comprised the architectural elements of this urban armature, which gradually over the 2nd and early 3rd cent. AD became the core around which life in many cities was arranged and fashioned⁴. Their success lied not only in clear practical benefits (protection from heat, provision with extra commercial space and in cases separation of pedestrian traffic from wheeled or animal traffic⁵) but also in their symbolic importance as spatial / architectural representations of an orderly world and a space where a common cultural and political imagery could be phrased⁶. Splendid examples of this kind of “grand manner design”⁷ armatures are known from different cities across the empire, especially from the Roman Near East and North Africa⁸.

For Roman Greece though⁹, the relatively lower level of prosperity, the lack of available resources, funding or imperial favor have been regarded as the basic reasons that most of the cities never attained the level of monumentality that characterized other urban centers across the empire¹⁰. Contrary to this view, the current article aims to show how different cities across the Roman provinces of Greece (fig. 1) employed elaborate architecture of movement and passage as one of the means for structuring their urban environment¹¹.

Monumental streets and gates in Roman Greece: an architecture of movement and passage

In the Roman colony of Corinth, provincial capital of *Achaea*, a large building project which commenced after the refoundation of the old Caesarean colony by the Flavians (and possibly after a destructive earthquake that took place sometime between 69-79 AD¹²) resulted in the radical change of the main artery of the city, the cardinal road that led to the north entrance of the main public space, the Forum¹³ (fig. 2). The old graveled (open to vehicular traffic)

⁴ MACDONALD 1986, pp. 5-13.

⁵ BURNS 2017, p. 282.

⁶ MACDONALD 1986, pp. 29-30.

⁷ The term borrowed by the work of KOSTOF 1991.

⁸ The main case study for MacDonal was the armature of Djemila, a military foundation in western Numidia: see MACDONALD 1986, pp. 5-17. For other examples mainly from Near East, see BURNS 2017, pp. 102 (Lepcis Magna), 124 (Antioch), 144 (Gerasa), 153 (Damascus), 188 (Sagalassos), 216 (Apamea), 244 (Palmyra).

⁹ For the purpose of the current study, the term “Roman Greece” refers to all the areas included within the borders of the modern Greek state which, during the Imperial period, belonged to five

Roman provinces: *Achaea* (southern Greece), *Macedonia* (central and northern Greece), *Thracia* (north eastern coast), *Asia* (islands) and *Cyrenaica* (Crete).

¹⁰ BURNS 2017, p. 303; BINTLIFF 2012, p. 327; KARAMBINIS 2018.

¹¹ A process that, by Topoi Research Group C-6 (Cityscaping – Literarische, architektonische und urbanistische Modellierungen städtischer Räume, <https://www.topoi.org/group/c-6/>) has been defined as cityscaping, i.e. “...the process whereby urban spaces are actively shaped and modeled”.

¹² KOLAITI *et alii* 2017, pp. 108-109.

¹³ ROMANO 2000.

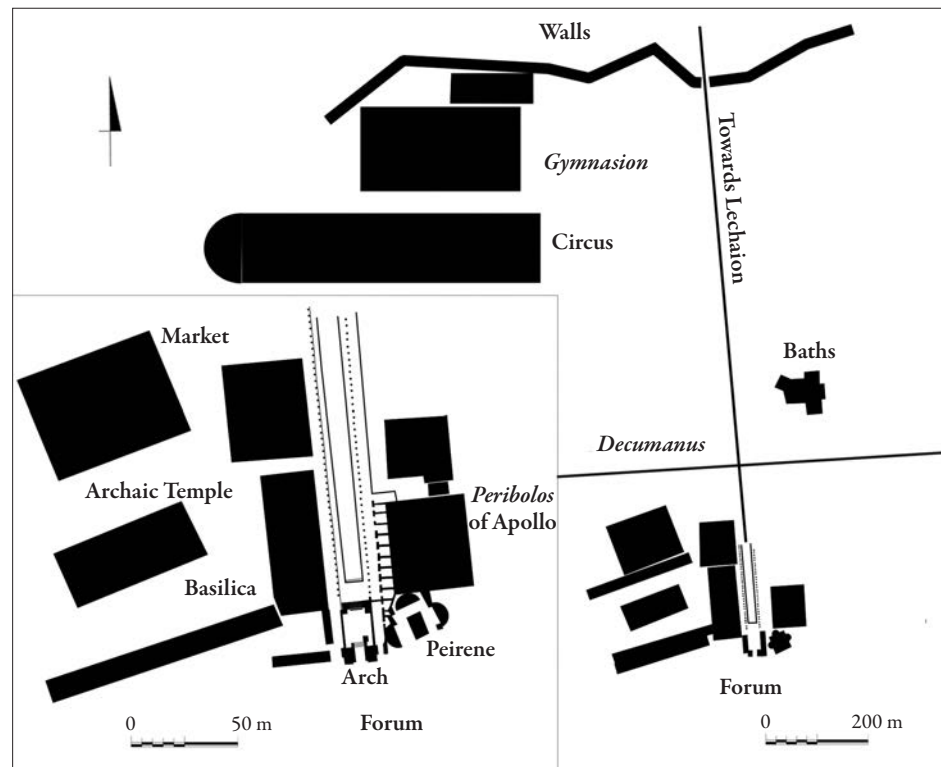


Fig. 2. Corinth, the colonnaded Lechaion street. General plan and detail (digital drawing by A.).

main *cardo* of the city, which is conventionally known as the Lechaion street (since its extension led to the main harbor of the city, the Lechaion), was paved by fine limestone plates of varying colors¹⁴ and framed by stoas with monolithic unfluted columns that bore Corinthian capitals made of Parian marble¹⁵. The western stoa shows signs of a more careful construction with a marble stylobate that follows the slope of the road towards the Forum¹⁶ while the eastern one had only a *poros* stylobate that belonged to a previous construction (the shops of an Augustan era *macellum*¹⁷) that stood in the area. Numerous fragments of unfluted columns from imported bluish Euboean marble (bases from coarse-grained island marble) that were found along the street have been attributed to the stoas¹⁸. Almost nothing survived from the entablature except some fragments from a frieze, one of which bears a Latin inscription¹⁹.

The construction of the colonnades is related to the redesign of the north entrance of the Forum²⁰ in the form of a single bay arch with sculptured reliefs that stood on a highly raised platform²¹. The large arch, set off against its lower lying colonnades, became a central feature in the composition of the city, clearly meant to impress everyone²² approaching the Forum from the North via the colonnaded Lechaion Street. Interestingly as noticed by R. Stillwell the diminishing width of the road (from 8.40 to 7.025 m²³) near the gate helped to further accentuate the visual importance of the monument by creating what he calls a “forced perspective”²⁴. However, it was not only the architectural bulk or the commanding position of the arch that generated its monumental impact factor. The symbolism²⁵ of its elaborate sculptural decoration, as shown by C. Edwards²⁶, was an equally important element in the creation of what has been described as accumulated monumentality²⁷, a sense of awe that grows bigger as the visitor approaches the monument.

¹⁴ FOWLER, STILLWELL 1932, pp. 135-141. About the limestone paving, see *ibid.*, p. 138.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

¹⁷ WILLIAMS 1993, pp. 39-41.

¹⁸ FOWLER, STILLWELL 1932, pp. 148, 156.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 156-157.

²⁰ EDWARDS 1994, p. 273. The walls of the central platform upon which the single bay arch stood continue the lines of the stylobate of the stoas. The project has been dated to the late 1st cent. AD (FOWLER, STILLWELL 1932, p. 184; WILLIAMS, MACINTOSH, FISHER 1974, pp. 32-33). However, Edwards (1994, p. 295) based on stylistic grounds prefers a Trajanic date (ca. 117 AD, the end of the Parthian campaign) for the construction of the arch itself.

²¹ EDWARDS 1994, pp. 274-276.

²² FOWLER, STILLWELL 1932, p. 138. That there was no vehicular traffic is made evident by the fact that at a point 100 m North of the gate there were two steps 0.15 m high which extended from sidewalk to sidewalk.

²³ *Ibid.* it has been noticed how the stylobate of the north stoa followed this deviation.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

²⁵ FURHOLT, HINZ, MISCHKA 2012, p. 14.

²⁶ EDWARDS 1994, pp. 277-296. The figured reliefs that have been attributed to the arch represent a scene of an imperial sacrifice, a submission scene while there was also a weapons frieze. Edwards proposed that the scenes can be related to Trajan's victory over Parthians. For the connection with Trajan see *ibid.*, p. 295.

²⁷ About the concept of accumulated monumentality see the work of LOUKAKI 2008.

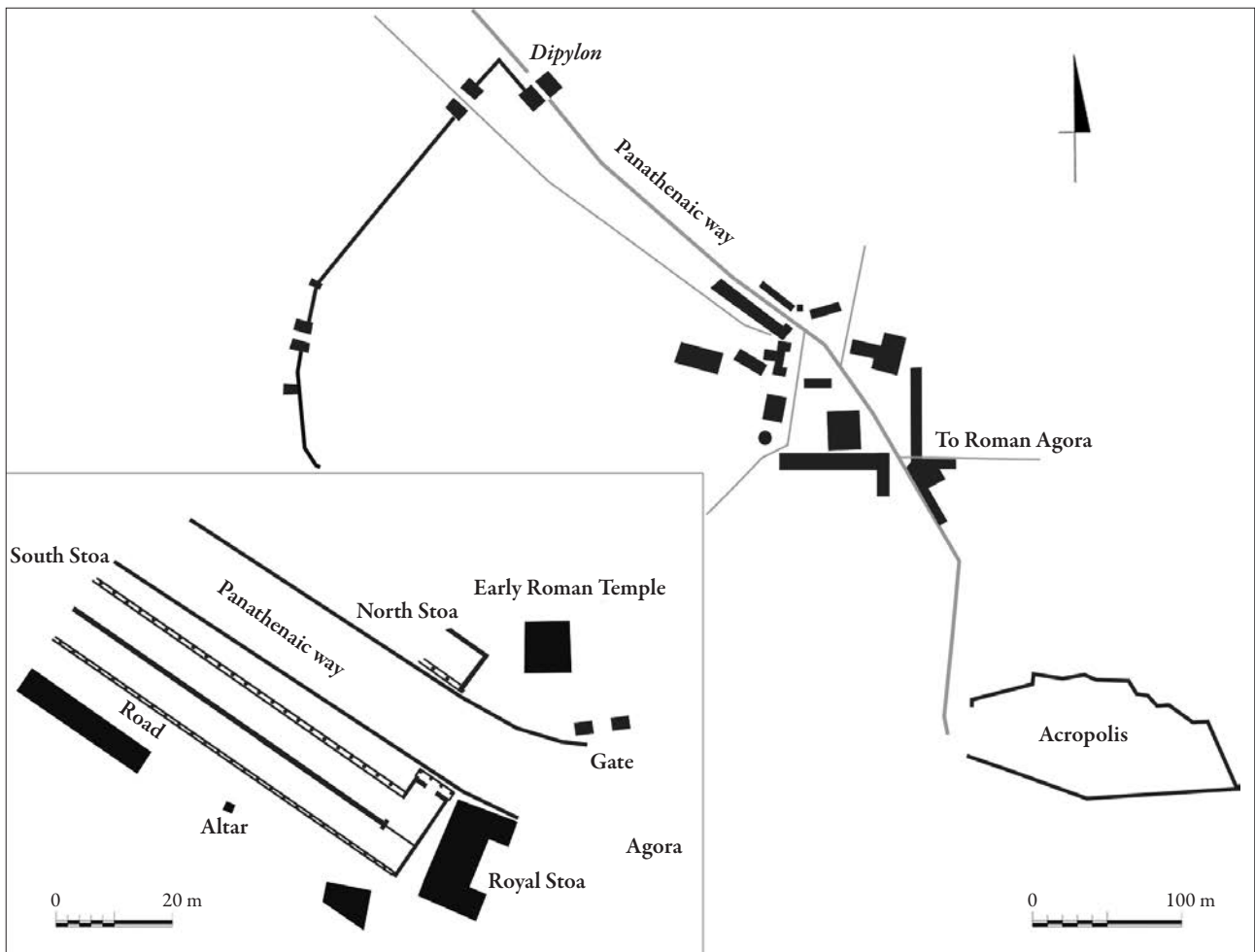


Fig. 3. Athens, plan of the stoas along the north part of the Panathenaic street and general plan (digital drawing by A.).

To this we should probably add the impact of the topography of the site itself as is characteristically envisaged by C. Edwards for the statues of Helios and Phaethon that stood – according to Pausanias²⁸ – on top of the arch in Corinth²⁹.

“I would like to think that the chariot of Helios faced the road, since the god would appear then with his sanctuary on Acrocorinth and the rising sun as a backdrop. Phaethon’s chariot would be turned to the forum”³⁰.

The large colonnaded cross city thoroughfare³¹ that ends up in a visually prominent arch announcing the entrance to the Forum reflects the basic principles of an urban armature as described by MacDonald³²; a sophisticated monumental architecture of connection and passage that channeled movement from the periphery towards the center of the city with all the connotations of power that this entailed. Within this framework, new urban topographies were created, distinct from that of previous periods. In the case of Corinth, the construction of an armature across the Lechaion street had a drastic effect not only on urban cohesion and movement within the city, but also on the monumentalization of this previously artisanal and commercial area³³.

In the other major urban center of *Achaea*, Athens, the main thoroughfare that led from the *Dipylon* Gate to the Agora and the Acropolis (the Panathenaic way), was flanked (probably sometime during the late 1st cent. AD) by two long stoas of the Doric order (fig. 3). The stoas along the street were the buildings with the longest history in the broader area of the Agora³⁴ and their successive remodeling demonstrate the importance that this architectural formation had

²⁸ *Hellados Periegesis*, 2, 3, 2.

²⁹ EDWARDS 1994, p. 263. For the relationship of natural environment and monumental landscape see BURNS 2017, p. 316.

³⁰ EDWARDS 1994, p. 263.

³¹ FOWLER, STILLWELL 1932, p. 148. It has to be noticed that the real length of the stoas remains unknown (they have been traced for only 30-40 m from the site of the gate).

³² MACDONALD 1986, p. 14.

³³ WILLIAMS 1993, p. 40. The old *macellum*, a complex of workshops, and the old basilica were all replaced by new buildings like the elaborate *Peribolos* of Apollo.

³⁴ SHEAR 1973, pp. 373-380. The two stoas continued to be functional till the Slavic Invasion of 580s.

on the urban layout of the Imperial period city. The archaeological evidence for both stoas shows buildings that were built along the lines of traditional stoic architecture with the extensive use of second-hand material³⁵. The Northern Stoa, excavated by the Greek Archaeological Service in the early 70s³⁶, seems to be of the conventional type with a portico and back rooms, but the Southern Stoa (or “Double Stoa”³⁷) was a double sided structure with two colonnades since the building functioned as a median between the Panathenaic way and a parallel road to the South (width 6.5 m) which might have had commercial use³⁸. A Doric *propylon* (tetra-prostyle on the North and distyle *in antis* on the South) at the east end of this South Stoa³⁹ provided access between the two roads (and respectively between the two aisles of the stoa). The south colonnade that was facing the lateral road was a relatively simple building, for the construction of which material from dilapidated buildings from the invasion of Sulla (like the Arsenal) was extensively used⁴⁰. The granular gray *poros* monolithic columns were fluted only in their upper portions. A single Doric capital that was found in second use on the floor of the building suggests – according to T.L. Shear – a wooden epistyle⁴¹. On the contrary, much more impressive must have been the northern colonnade, which faced the Panathenaic Way. This is mostly deduced by the preserved remains of the foundations (wider stylobate 0.82 m opposed to 0.65 m to the South) of fine limestone which presumably held a colonnade of the Doric order.

Despite their architectural conservatism (especially if compared with more elaborate buildings like the Northeast Stoa⁴² with the colored marble and classicizing features) this was an architecture that exercised a strong visual (and psychological) impact, which is reflected in Pausanias’ description⁴³ and the more poetic one of Himerios⁴⁴. The large width of the road, the presence of numerous statues that stood in front of the colonnades⁴⁵ and the cultural connotations (as the main procession pathway of the city)⁴⁶ of the area combined with the stoas created an armature of movement towards the center of the Agora and the architectural bulk of the *Odeion* and the Temple of Ares.

Yet, their exact date is problematic. The excavators of the North Stoa preferred a late Republican or early Augustan date⁴⁷, but T.L. Shear, who excavated the south building in the 70s, seems to favor a late 1st cent. AD date due to pottery finds⁴⁸ from under the floor of the north aisle and the footing trench of the median wall. An extra indicator is the similarity with the foundations of the stoas along the road that linked the Agora with the Agora of Caesar to the East. In both cases the rubble and concrete foundations which characterize Hadrianic or other 2nd cent. AD buildings in Athens are missing⁴⁹. Nevertheless, this late 1st cent. AD date can be indicative that the idea of the colonnaded street seems to have been explored quite early on or at least parallel with the early examples in the East⁵⁰.

By the mid 2nd cent. AD⁵¹ the concept of the colonnaded street was firmly established as one of the basic means to architecturally frame streets that were already key thoroughfares. One well known example is Rhodes⁵² where the Imperial era (especially after the earthquake of 142 AD⁵³) brought a new hierarchization of the streets of the old Hippodamean urban grid⁵⁴. The North-South street P31 (fig. 4) which led from the area of the closed harbor (Mandraki) to the centre of the city and the area of the *Gymnasion*⁵⁵ was upgraded with the addition of stoas with shops opening in their rear side⁵⁶. Standing on a three stepped crepidoma and topped by capitals of the Corinthian order⁵⁷, the grey monolithic granite columns of the colonnades must have created a strong monumental impression that was further enhanced by the large width of the street (13 m) and its elaborate pavement made by the local *lithos*

³⁵ SCHMALZ 1994, pp. 71-72.

³⁶ NIKOLOPOULOU 1971, pp. 1-9. The building was never fully excavated but it seems to have been a large building over 15 m deep and possibly 70 m long. SCHMALZ 1994, p. 70.

³⁷ SHEAR 1973, pp. 370-382.

³⁸ COSTAKI 2006, p. 257.

³⁹ SHEAR 1973, p. 374.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 373; SCHMALZ 1994, p. 71; COSTAKI 2006, p. 257.

⁴¹ SHEAR 1973, p. 370 f.n. 33.

⁴² SCHMALZ 1994, pp. 73-79, about the so-called Northeast Stoa or Ionic Porch, an elaborate Augustan building which Schmalz identified as imperial benefaction. In the 5th-6th cent. AD this part of the Agora where the Augustan building and the Hadrianic Basilica stood might have transformed to a colonnaded street leading to the *propylon* of the Library of Hadrian: see COSTAKI 2006, p. 266.

⁴³ *Hellados Periegesis*, 1, 2, 4-5: “From the gate to Cerameicus there are porticoes and in front of them brazen statues of such as had some title to fame, both men and women” (Loeb transl.).

⁴⁴ *Orations*, 3, 12: “(...) *Dromos* which, descending from above straight and smooth divides the stoas extending along it on either side in which the Athenians and the other buy and sell”.

⁴⁵ For statues in front of colonnades see RYAN 2018, pp. 163-165.

⁴⁶ MAURIZIO 1998; COSTAKI 2006, pp. 199-201.

⁴⁷ NIKOLOPOULOU 1971, p. 9. This is the date that appears in THOMPSON, WYCHERLEY 1972, p. 109.

⁴⁸ SHEAR 1973, p. 377 f.n. 35

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 377 f.n. 36.

⁵⁰ The first recorded example is that of Antioch and the building programme of Herod the Great (Josephus, *Jewish War*, 1, 21, 11; *Jewish Antiquities*, 16, 5, 3). However, the earliest archaeological evidence dates to the end of the 1st cent. AD: see TABACZEK 2002, pp. 226-239.

⁵¹ BURNS 2017, p. 308.

⁵² CANTE 1986-87, pp. 175-202.

⁵³ For the earthquake and its description by Aelius Aristeidis or pseudo Aelius Aristeidis in *Orations*, 25-31, see FRANCO 2009, pp. 230-235.

⁵⁴ KONTIS 1954; MICHALLAKI-KOLLIA 2007; MAGLIO 2013, p. 1238.

⁵⁵ KONTIS 1954, pp. 9-11.

⁵⁶ CANTE 1986-87, pp. 175-202; BURNS 2017, p. 333; MICHALLAKI-KOLLIA 2007, p. 77 for the large drain with the pitched-pointed roof that has been discovered under the road.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 76. Fragments of the Corinthian capitals of the stoas have been found along the P31 road embedded in medieval buildings like the monumental complex Villaragut.

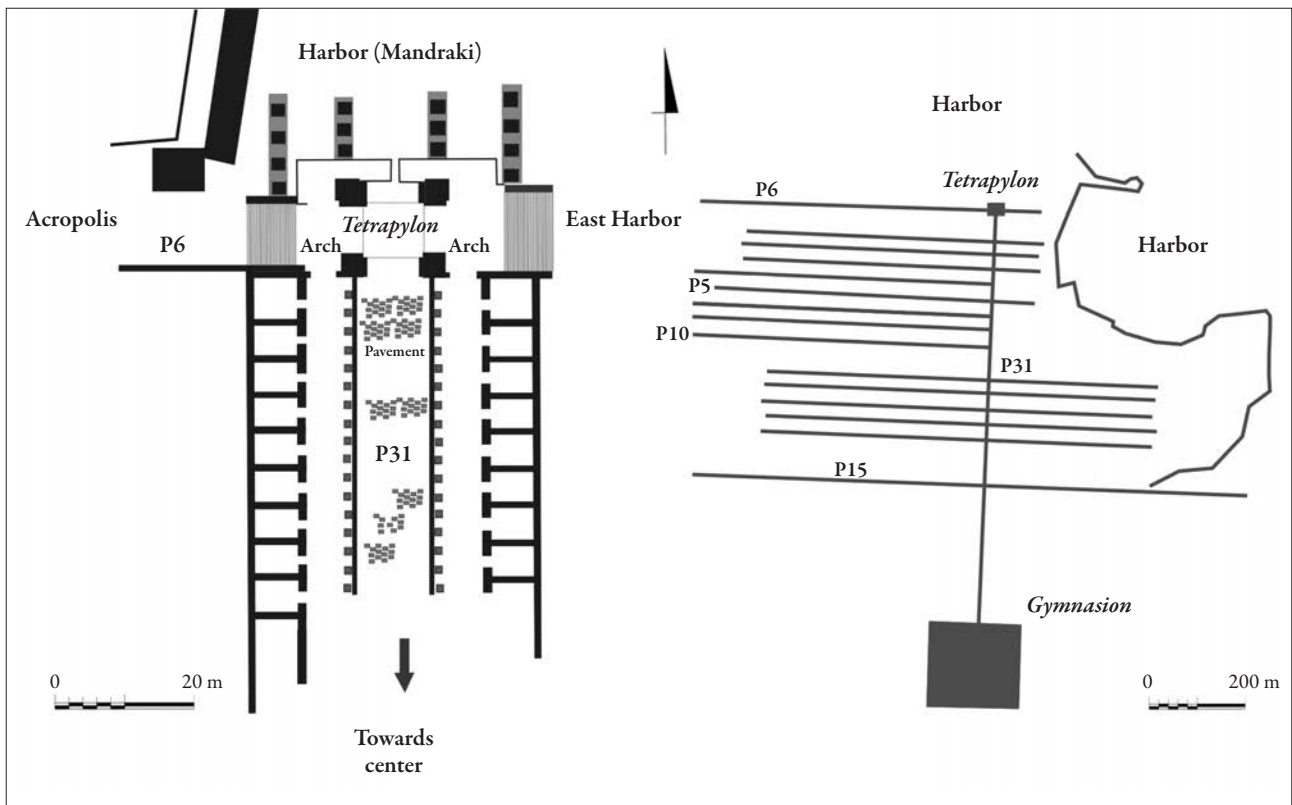


Fig. 4. Rhodes, the colonnaded road and general plan (digital drawing by A., after MICHALLAKI-KOLLIA 2007, pl. 47).

lartios, a distinctive gray blue stone. At its northern end, the street was marked by a prominent *tetrapylon*, a roofed four arched building at the centre of which the colonnaded street P31 intersected at right angles with another important street of the city, the P6 street running from the west harbor to the area of the Acropolis at the East. This was a device that added architectural emphasis to this important intersection of the urban grid where someone could enter (through a flight of stairs) the city from the lower lying area of the harbor but also move towards the East and the important sanctuary of Helios⁵⁸.

Traces of colonnaded roads appear in two other important regional centers: the Cretan Gortyna and the Macedonian city of Beroia. In Gortyna the excavations of the Italian Archaeological School have shown that the main (North) road (width 9-11 m) of the city that led from the semi-urban area of the Roman circus at the East to the area of the agora at the West could have been framed with stoas already from the 2nd cent. AD (although most of the remains date to the 4th cent.)⁵⁹, while in Beroia a colonnaded road of the 2nd cent. AD seems to have crossed the city from North to South. The excavations conducted in the late 60s and early 70s in the center of the modern city brought to light extensive remains of the main paved roads of the Imperial period with a width reaching 4.50-5 m. Fragments of monolithic non fluted columns with Ionic capitals and bases that were found during the excavation across the length of the modern Mitropoleos street led the excavators to propose the existence of a colonnaded street⁶⁰.

In another important urban center of Macedonia, the provincial capital Thessaloniki, the main paved *decumanus* (known as *Via Regia*) that crossed the city from West to East attained a monumental form during the early 4th cent. AD, when the city became the seat of the emperor Galerius⁶¹. The recent Metro excavations at the center of the city⁶² have brought to light an abundance of evidence concerning this main thoroughfare during the period between the 4th-6th cent. AD when it had the form of a cross city colonnaded street adorned at its important junctions with *tetrapyla* or other public monuments⁶³. However, the original idea of this monumental formation of the streets of Thessaloniki might be traced back in the years before the Tetrarchic period and the flow of imperial revenues. As noticed by M.

⁵⁸ For the architecture of the *tetrapylon* see CANTE 1986-87 and 1996. For the position of the *tetrapylon* see MANOUSOU-DELLA 2010, p. 590, where it is related to the site where the famous Colossus stood.

⁵⁹ LIPPOLIS 2016, pp. 164-165, fig.11.2.

⁶⁰ TOURATSOGLOU, ROMIOPOULOU 1970, p. 381.

⁶¹ VITTI 1996, pp. 82-83. For a thorough analysis of the Tetrarchic

phase of *Via Regia* and its relationship with the *tetrapylon* see STEFANIDOU-TIVERIOU 2006 (esp. p. 172 fn. 39).

⁶² For a very useful overview of the excavations along the modern *Egnatia* street, see the online lecture by D. Makropoulou, <http://www.chae.gr/images/atricleimg/announcements/makropoulou.pdf>.

⁶³ MAKROPOULOU, TZAVRANI 2013.



Fig. 5. Elis, Road II (photo: A.).

Vitti, some of the main streets like the large *cardo* that led from the area of the so-called *Praetorium* to the coast (parallel with the modern Antigonidon street) might have already had a colonnaded form since the early Imperial period⁶⁴. The most conclusive evidence for monumental formation comes from the area South of the agora, where the famous architectural façade Las Incatandas⁶⁵ stood, a monumental double storey façade (of approximated length 22 m) which consisted of four two sided pillars with carved figures and Corinthian capitals. Recent studies by T. Stefanidou Tiveriou⁶⁶ have shown that the north-south orientated façade did not only function as an eastern entrance to one of the insulas South of the agora, but that it might have framed a road that led from *Via Regia* towards the south gate/*propylon* of the agora. Both in its planning and architectural framing this seems to have been a sophisticated street, a center piece of the monumental layout of the lower terrace of Thessaloniki's civic center, in which the different elements adapted in a fully functional form.

This was clearly an architecture that was developed to emphasize the role of key thoroughfares as processional, controlled approaches towards a major public space⁶⁷. Elis in western Peloponnese is a case in point. Pausanias' vivid impression of the agora of Elis⁶⁸ was dominated by the antiquity of its plan, evident in the unregulated spatial layout with its free standing stoas and the space reserved for the training of the horses⁶⁹. Nevertheless, the excavations⁷⁰ have shown that the Imperial period quarter that lay to the South-West of the agora's plateau (fig. 5) had a more regular layout with blocks of houses and workshops developing on either side of a large colonnaded road (road II) that transversed the region from North to South, leading to the south entrance of the agora⁷¹. This, stood at a higher level, and was emphasized by an Imperial period staircase that marked the north end of the road⁷². The contrast between the antique looking agora and the more regulated south suburb (dominated by habitation quarters and commercial-workshop facilities) is striking and it is exactly due to that contrast that Elis provides an extremely interesting case

⁶⁴ VITTI 1996, p. 82.

⁶⁵ SÈVE 2013. "Las Incatandas" is the name attributed by the Jewish inhabitants of Thessaloniki to the monument which stood at the area till 1869, when it was plundered and moved to Louvre.

⁶⁶ STEFANIDOU-TIVERIOU 2018, pp. 229, 230.

⁶⁷ For the link with cultic or festival processions, see BRU 2011, pp. 74-75; CAVALIER, DES COURTILS 2008; RYAN 2018, p. 167.

⁶⁸ *Hellados Periegesis*, 6, 24, 2.

⁶⁹ For the agora of Elis see TRITSCH 1932; ANDREOU, ANDREOU-

PSICHOGIOU 2009.

⁷⁰ ANDREOU 2001-04, pp. 479-496.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 488. The width of the road is almost 14 m. The exact date of the monumental formation of the street is unclear; it is generally dated to the Imperial period. As noticed by DONNATI, SARRIS 2016, p. 365, the road seems to be the continuation of the Sacred Way that led to Olympia. Geophysics have revealed the street system in the South of the agora.

⁷² ANDREOU 2001-04, p. 487 fig. 13.

for the study of urban development. The colonnaded street that crossed the habitation quarters of the city created a controlled approach towards the centerpiece of the grid, the antique looking agora which enhanced the image that the city wanted possibly to project outwards. This reflects the impact of two different (but closely interwoven) patterns on the formation of the urban environment of the Greek city, one based on promoting/preserving the highly appraised antiquity of the built environment⁷³ and the other more in line with contemporary trends for handling urban space like connecting architecture.

Interestingly this need for regularization and controlled approaches are evident not only in the large civic centers, but also in smaller cities too. In Mantinea the cardinal road, that led to the triple bay opening that marked the south entrance of the agora, a space that met radical reorganisation during the Imperial period, seems to have been framed on its east side by a stoa (possibly of the 2nd cent. AD)⁷⁴. In a much more developed form, the colonnaded street appears in the closely packed environment of the lower city of Edessa⁷⁵. There, the main paved street (width of the paved road is 4m) leading from the south gate towards the interior of the city (a segment of 82 m has been discovered) was flanked by porticoes (width of the stoas 5.5 m) which had a transitional role demarcating public (the street) from private zones (the habitation quarters that lay directly behind the stoas), but also helping the movement between the two spheres. The stoas made from columns and pillars (many of them in second use) were very reminiscent of a similar arrangement in Stobi⁷⁶, where the 4th cent. AD colonnaded *Via Sacra* led from the north-west gate to the Episcopal Center. The excavated remains in Edessa date to Late Antiquity (4th-5th cent. AD)⁷⁷. However, as noticed by the excavator P. Chrysostomou, there is evidence to indicate that the original design of the street as a colonnaded thoroughfare can be traced earlier to the early 2nd cent. AD⁷⁸.

Armatures though were not only defined by an architecture of movement, but also by an architecture of passage. In the composition of the city the main axis was frequently marked (or terminated) by a prominent building or monument⁷⁹, often in the form of an arch or monumental gate. Several such architectural features are known (from textual and archaeological sources) from Roman Greece but till now they have not received a synthetic study⁸⁰. Either as free-standing features or as entrances to buildings or compounds, they played an important demarcating role within the fabric of the Imperial period city, which was characterized by an increasing compartmentalization⁸¹. An example being the Roman colony of Philippi in Eastern Macedonia where two large double bay arches marked the section of the main *decumanus* (fig. 6) that divided the highly raised plateau of the *Area Sacra* from the main square of the Forum⁸². The street (which is conventionally called *Via Egnatia*) was a 600 m long cross city colonnaded thoroughfare⁸³ which run from the Western Gate to the East towards the Gate of Neapolis, passing through the Forum, a unit that clearly stood apart from the rest of the city. The arches clearly played an important demarcated role by assigning value to symbolic distinction and exclusivity⁸⁴, something that interestingly is apparent even in generally loosely defined spaces like the agora of Argos where a single standing, single bay arch of the 4th cent. AD marked the north entrance to the area⁸⁵.

Another important quality of these features was their visual prominence, which provided a visual focal point of almost scenographic quality⁸⁶. In Thasos a triple bay arch⁸⁷ (16.85 m long, 9.80 tall, 2.06 wide) marked the starting (or ending) point of a large paved street that crossed the city from the South-West towards the agora (fig. 7), an area that met radical reorganization over the Imperial period⁸⁸. Despite reference to the *Severi* in the dedicatory inscription (carved in the entablature)⁸⁹, the arch (conventionally called "Arc de Caracalla"), as noticed by J.Y. Marc, seems to have been part of a large project that monumentalized the main access to the agora of the city and can actually be traced back to the middle of the 2nd cent. AD. Architecturally, the monument in Thasos is a rather simple construction,

⁷³ For Messene and the impact that the past had in the formation of its built environment see THEMELIS 2018, pp. 419-436.

⁷⁴ In the early plans (FOUGÈRES 1890, p. 267) the road that led to the south access of the agora is depicted as framed by a stoa with at least 11 surviving columns. According to Fougères, this was the stoa mentioned in an inscription (*IG V 2*, 281), which records the dedication to the city by G.I. Eurykles Herculanus. However, many of the early identifications of G. Fougères need radical reexamination: see EVANGELIDIS 2014, p. 340.

⁷⁵ CHRYSOSTOMOU 2006.

⁷⁶ KITZINGER 1946, p. 114; CRAWFORD 1990, pp. 117-118.

⁷⁷ It is worth noting another (little known) Late Roman example, a colonnaded road from Sparta (see *ADelt B 50*, 1995, 1, p. 129) where, as in Edessa, the colonnades were made by second hand material.

⁷⁸ CHRYSOSTOMOU 2006, p. 304, based on numismatic finds under the surface of the road.

⁷⁹ RYAN 2018, p. 167.

⁸⁰ GREGORY, MILLS 1984, p. 427.

⁸¹ EVANGELIDIS 2014, p. 338.

⁸² SÈVE 1979, pp. 630-631.

⁸³ PROVOST, BOYD 2003. The columnar façades of the public buildings and the houses that framed its course (especially to the East of the Forum) created the effect of a colonnaded axis. A parallel road that run to the South of the Forum and divided it from other major public buildings of the Roman city like the *Palaistra* or the *Macellum* might have had also a colonnaded form already from the 2nd cent. AD.

⁸⁴ THOMAS 2007, p. 122; LAURENCE 2014, p. 409, highlights other uses (as space for lingering) that these features had than those associated only with passage.

⁸⁵ CROISSANT 1970, pp. 788-793.

⁸⁶ THOMAS 2007, p. 115, "scenographic eye catchers"; LAURENCE 2014, p. 410.

⁸⁷ MARC 1993, p. 585; GRANDJEAN, SALVIAT 2000, pp. 144-147 and fig. 97.

⁸⁸ EVANGELIDIS 2010, pp. 95-103; GRANDJEAN, SALVIAT 2000.

⁸⁹ MARC 1993, p. 588; *IG XII 8*, 382.

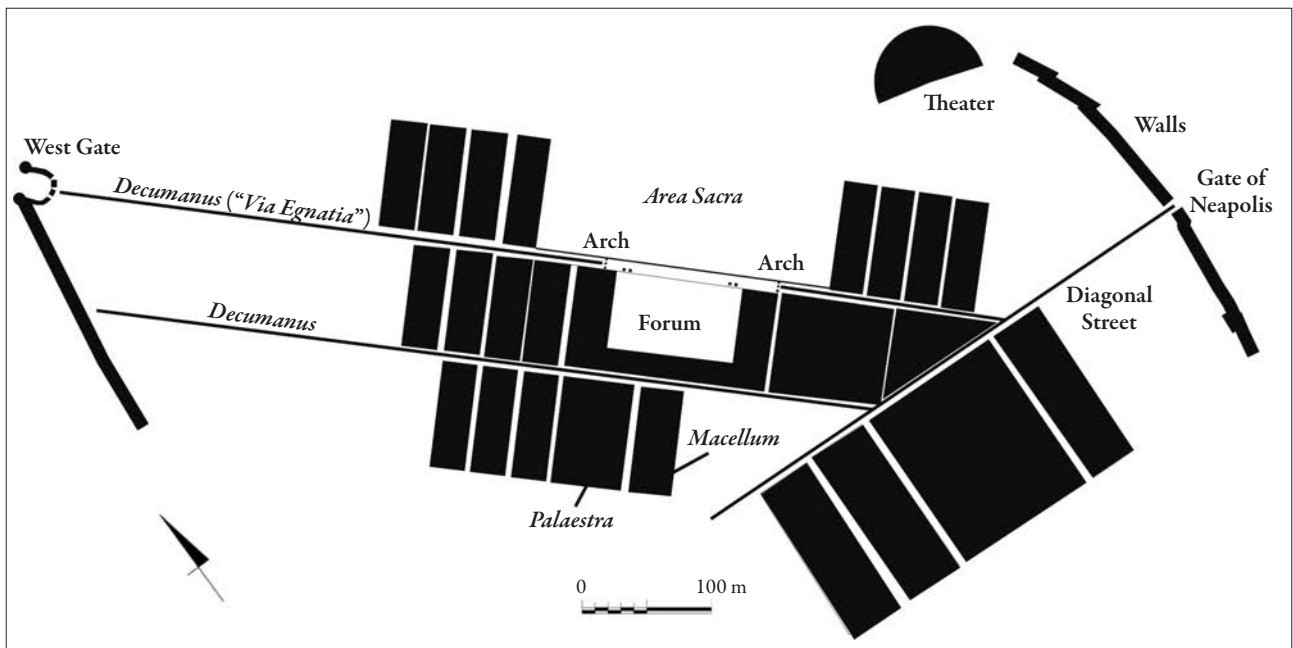


Fig. 6. Philippi, general plan of the Roman colony (digital drawing: A.).

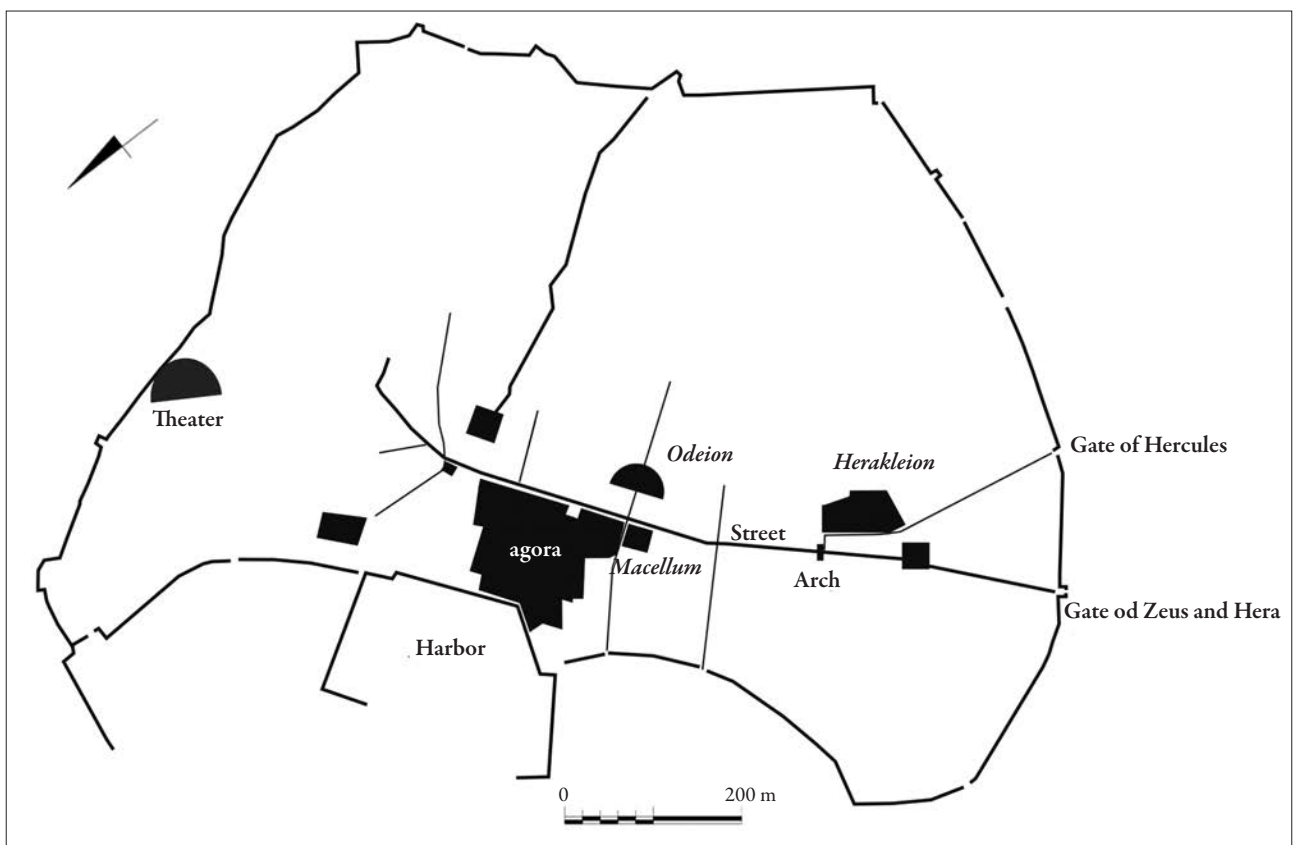


Fig. 7. Thasos, general plan (digital drawing: A.).

similar to other arches across the Roman world with the only exception that its central part towered over the lateral. The monument was not overtly decorated, and its openings were supported by monolithic pedestals bearing composite Corinthian capitals⁹⁰. For all its crudities, the monument embodies everything that was vigorous in contemporary cityscapes. One of these was visual prominence. The Thasian arch was clearly a monument that was meant to be seen

⁹⁰ MARC 1993, p. 588.



Fig. 8. Athens, detail of the stylobate and the colonnaded road that led to the Agora of Caesar and Augustus (Credit: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Agora Excavations).

from a distance (and this probably explains the height of the central part). In a landscape where optical axuality played an important role in the perception of the environment⁹¹ these gates created a framed view as they stood on the horizon; a visual act with special importance⁹².

This visual prominence was – as we have already seen in Corinth – accentuated by the addition of stoas, highly raised platforms and the construction of carefully orchestrated vistas. The latter is evident in Athens where a project of similar concept to the architectural framing of the Panathenaic street monumentalized the access from the main Agora to the closed peristyle market of Caesar and Augustus to the East⁹³. Two colonnades of the Ionic order (fig. 8) with large rooms behind them framed the paved street (estimated width 9 m) that led from the Agora to the higher lying *propylon* of Athena *Archegetis* to the East. The southern colonnade (3.50 m wide) that was excavated by the American School in the early 70s seems to belong to the larger complex that covered the south-eastern corner of the Agora, which is conventionally known as the Library of Pantainos and it is dated to ca. 100 AD⁹⁴. The northern, little known, colonnade, covered the ground to the East of the Stoa of *Attalos* and the road to the East⁹⁵. The entrance to this segment of the road (dedicated only to pedestrians⁹⁶) was marked by single bay arch (equipped by its own *krene*) that spanned the passage between the Stoa of *Attalos* and the Library of Pantainos⁹⁷. The road ended with a broad flight of steps that led to the *propylon* of the Agora of Caesar and Augustus, that stood almost 4 m higher than the level of the road⁹⁸.

The project seems to be contemporary (end of the 1st cent. AD or the early 2nd cent. AD), with the stoas along the Panathenaic way⁹⁹ but it was clearly constructed in a more uniform and more costly manner. Interestingly in this case we also know the donor of the project: an inscribed lintel-epistyle (spanning possibly the intercolumniation in front of Room 3 which might have served as an imperial cult *sacellum*) records the involvement of the *Demos* in the construction of the *plateia* (πλατεία)¹⁰⁰:

‘Ο δῆμος ἀπό τῶν [ι]δίων προσόδων
τὴν πλατεί[α]ν ἀνέ[θ]ηκεν

⁹¹ THOMAS 2007, p. 117.

⁹² MACDONALD 1986, p. 32, about how artificial horizon can be essential to human orientation; LAURENCE 2014, p. 410.

⁹³ SHEAR 1973, pp. 385-398; COSTAKI 2006, pp. 285-287.

⁹⁴ CAMP 1990, pp. 50-55.

⁹⁵ SHEAR 1973, p. 387. For a small latrine that stood at the area, see *Hesperia* 28, 1959, pp. 101-102.

⁹⁶ COSTAKI 2006, p. 286.

⁹⁷ SCHMALZ 1994, p. 197, f.n. 3; COSTAKI 2006, p. 286.

⁹⁸ SHEAR 1973, p. 390. The steps (only the southernmost have been revealed) are restored in three parallel flights. COSTAKI 2006, p. 286.

⁹⁹ For the contemporaneity of the two projects, see SHEAR 1973, p. 387. However, the divergent styles of the colonnaded streets at two different spots of the classical Agora speak clearly about different terms of funding and execution.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 389.



Fig. 9. Dion, the monument with the shields (photo: A.).

The use of the term “*plateia*” (πλατεία), which normally refers to a broad avenue lined by stoas¹⁰¹, reflects the effort (and the underlying pride) the city put into the creation of this unique passage towards the market in the East. In this architectural composition the archaizing Doric gate of *Archegetis* Athena held a central role, providing an almost scenographic vista¹⁰². However, this was not just a stage architecture, but an architectural device that exploited the original plan and the already existing features to augment them¹⁰³. The monumental effect was further enhanced by the architecture of the stoas, which – as in the rest of the complex (Library)¹⁰⁴ – reflects the long-standing Attic architectural tradition of marble craftsmanship¹⁰⁵. Despite its relatively small scale (75 m long), the street encapsulates many of the basic principles of an urban armature: architectural elaboration, visually unified monumental landscape, spatial connectivity, and a controlled approach towards a major urban space.

Nevertheless, the formation of an armature of movement must not only be seen in relation to the addition of stoas or elaborate gates. Reference to the history of the city through monuments of the past that were exhibited along the main thoroughfares could create another, very distinctive form of street monumentality¹⁰⁶. In the Roman colony of Dion for instance the trend is reflected in the reuse along the city’s main thoroughfare of the salvaged relic of a frieze coming from an old building or monument. The frieze (fig. 9), depicting cuirasses and shields, was inserted on the outer face of the terrace wall of one of the large public buildings (basilica¹⁰⁷) that framed the paved main street crossing the city from East to West. The monument, one of the few that survived from the pre-Roman city, invoked strong connotations of the Macedonian kingdom which at the time of Severan rebuilding of Dion held a special role in the imperial ideology¹⁰⁸. In other cases, the terrain itself offered the chance to create a monumental architecture of movement. In Roman Patras for instance some of the major streets, like the one discovered under the modern G. Roufou street (probably the street that led to the agora from the harbor)¹⁰⁹ were dressed in expensive Astakos stone¹¹⁰, framed by private or public buildings¹¹¹ and offered a series of successive architectural and landscape vistas as the street

¹⁰¹ On the use of the term in relation to colonnaded or broad streets see BURNS 2017, p. 11 f.n. 25; THOMAS 2007, p. 119; SHEAR 1973, p. 389 f.n. 64.

¹⁰² BURDEN 1999, p. 208, about the central role of the west Gate of Athena *Archegetis* in this part of the Agora.

¹⁰³ COSTAKI 2006, p. 287. The original plan of the monumental road might have been contemporary with the construction of the market, but its final refurbishment delayed till early 2nd cent. AD.

¹⁰⁴ SCHMALZ 1994, p. 206.

¹⁰⁵ SHOE MERITT 1969, p. 195 f.n. 34.

¹⁰⁶ MA 2013; HARMAŃSAH 2011.

¹⁰⁷ CHRISTODOULOU 2007.

¹⁰⁸ ASIRVATHAM 2010, p. 112.

¹⁰⁹ PAPAPOSTOULOU 1991, p. 310.

¹¹⁰ The role that elaborate pavements like the one in Patras, Rhodes or the pavement of the Lechaion street played in the overall monumental impression of the streets must not be overlooked because of the strong link between the use of expensive stones and grandeur: see HARTNETT 2017, p. 124.

¹¹¹ LAURENCE 2014, p. 408.

(didn't support vehicular traffic) took the gentle slope uphill. Monumentalization of the intersection of street junctions like the small paved plaza that was discovered in a central spot in Roman Patras formed¹¹² – as noticed by Thomas¹¹³ – little open spaces which produced the effect of many smaller cities within. This multifocal character with areas-districts characterized by their own monumental identity is probably one of the most characteristic manifestations of the urban landscape of the era¹¹⁴.

The development of an armature of movement in Roman Greece

Over the long period that followed the end of the Hellenistic era and the crisis of the 3rd cent. AD the course of urban development was shaped by different responses to the different sociocultural dynamics that marked the era. Recent studies have convincingly shown that the urban landscape of the cities of Roman Greece does not stand outside the currents of architectural developments in the rest of the Roman world¹¹⁵. One of this was undoubtedly the emphasis given on what W. MacDonald defined as connecting and passage architecture, the armature around which the urban layout was physically and visually organized¹¹⁶. In the treatment of the street as an architectural entity someone can see the city's responses to the properties of space (like urban coherence and visual unity¹¹⁷) that characterized much of the contemporary architecture. Unlike traditional spatial layouts, in which the space between buildings was quite often empty, the cityscapes of the Imperial period were based on the relationship between the buildings/public spaces and the architectural definition of the space between them¹¹⁸. In this context, the role of the architecturally articulated artery was significant. By controlling traffic and movement colonnaded streets and gates not only produced public environments more cohesive than previous periods, but also created an awareness of movement between the different city regions, each one of which had its own special sociocultural meaning. Movement through these features was becoming in a sense a cognitive experience of some of the principles that embodied the Roman way of life (like social hierarchy, civic grandeur, memory or even imperial presence). Ensembles like that in Corinth created what Shaher Rababeh calls "performative urbanism"¹¹⁹, a monumentality that is strongly related to the functional, visual and psychological experience of the city. In a landscape where everything was restricted on walk speed, colonnaded streets created an accumulated monumentality, an anticipation in the approach (which was further enhanced by formality and ceremony) something that could have also affected rhythms of living or even pace of walking¹²⁰. This new way of considering urban space had a tremendous impact on the overall monumental impression of the city as an orderly landscape¹²¹. Because, this was not just a theatrically staged architecture that masked the real urban grid but an architecture of function that went hand in hand with practicality¹²², addressing several problems of everyday urban life.

Although the archaeological evidence presented in the previous pages varies greatly in terms of quality, the overriding impression is that different cities across Roman Greece adapted to the growing tendency from the late 1st cent. AD to treat the urban landscape as a whole. Within this context, the orthogonal street tradition¹²³ required the formation of new architectural morphologies like the construction of elaborate armatures which secured architectural unity and enhanced the monumental aspect of the landscape by broadening the range of uses provided by it. This was neither an easy nor simple task. The superimposition of these architectural features (with all the difficulties that such projects entailed) on the preexisting (quite often haphazard) grid of centers with a long history like Athens, Beroia or even the much smaller Elis reflects in the most eloquent way the process of transition towards a new urban entity, the Imperial period city¹²⁴.

The architectural language of these armatures was comprised by varied types of orders and architectural elements that were all blended in the urban environment of the Greek cities¹²⁵. Some adhered to easily recognizable Classical or Hellenistic archetypes like the Doric order of the stoas along the Panathenaic way or the Attic-Ionic order of the small colonnades along the road leading to the Agora of Caesar, some (especially after the end of the 1st cent. AD) were

¹¹² PAPAPOSTOULOU 1991, p. 311. The monumental character of the area between the modern roads Vlachou and Miaouli was comprised by a large three naved *Nymphaion* (2nd cent. AD), a stoa, and several pedestals for statues and reliefs that all framed the open space. See also *ADelt B* 35, 1980, 1, p. 182.

¹¹³ THOMAS 2007, p. 117.

¹¹⁴ LAURENCE 2015, p. 181; LAURENCE 2014, p. 406.

¹¹⁵ For an overview of recent discoveries in the archaeology of Greece during the Imperial period see DI NAPOLI *et alii* 2018. For developments in the treatment of urban space in Roman Greece see FOUQUET 2019; DICKENSON 2017; VITTI 2016; EVANGELIDIS 2010; EVANGELIDIS 2014.

¹¹⁶ MACDONALD 1986, pp. 4-30.

¹¹⁷ On visual unity see KLINKOTT 2014.

¹¹⁸ THOMAS 2007, p. 115.

¹¹⁹ RABABEH, AL RABABY, ABU KHAFAJAH 2014.

¹²⁰ THOMAS 2007, p. 115 f.n. 114.

¹²¹ MACDONALD 1986, p. 30; THOMAS 2007, p. 115; BURNS 2017, pp. 312-314; RYAN 2018, p. 167.

¹²² HARTNETT 2017, p. 50, about the various activities in the streets.

¹²³ MARTIN 1974, pp. 176-185; BEJOR 1999, pp. 15-21; EMME 2013, pp. 159-180.

¹²⁴ COSTAKI 2006, p. 243. On the role of the gates and colonnades as an expression of the city's common identity see ALSTON 2002, p. 321; RYAN 2018, p. 159; THOMAS 2007, p. 121, who spoke about the "collective prestige of the city".

¹²⁵ MACDONALD 1986, p. 18.



Fig. 10. Maroneia, the monumental 2nd cent. AD *propylon* (photo: A.).

western Roman, like the arch in Thasos or the arch of Lechaion in Corinth, and some had a more “eclectic” character like the gate/façade Las Incantadas in Thessaloniki or even the Arch of Hadrian at Athens¹²⁶. Available resources, traditions of craftsmanship but also aesthetic-cultural preferences (see for instance the preference for Roman type monuments in the colonies) might have played an equal role in the choice of style or type. This typological diversity has been highlighted by recent studies¹²⁷ which have shown that under the surface of an apparent conservatism, the architecture of Roman Greece had clear ties with the contemporary architecture of the East and that of the West; ties that were to play an increasingly important role in the formation of the urban environment. The architectural features that comprised this environment were not mere copies, an architectural patchwork of borrowed features, but constitutive elements of a new urban syntax (what MacDonald called “imperial synthesis”), which increased the social and symbolic importance of space. Within this context, monumentality (in this case the monumental effect of a colonnaded street) could have been even achieved with the use of second hand material. In cities with a long history like Athens, the abundant and ready to be used architectural material from old or destroyed buildings (like the Arsenal which provided the material for the stoas along the Panathenaic way) was difficult to be ignored, thus it must have played a determinant role in any building project¹²⁸. The reuse of architectural material has quite often been seen as symptomatic of impoverishment and the employment of *spolia* is surely what we would expect when the local councils or the elites would have restricted financial means. However, it’s worth pointing out that in many cases (as is also the case with the stoas along the Panathenaic way in Athens or the Late Antique example of Edessa) the *spolia* were used together with new material which was treated so as to imitate the old. This is probably indicative that the use of *spolia* has not only to do with mere economics but also with the wish to give a certain political, aesthetic or even religious message¹²⁹. This is evident in many buildings where second hand material was extensively used as is the case of the “frieze with the shields” in Dion¹³⁰. The use of old material is clearly a process that must be seen within the historical context in which it took place, which, besides its clear practical aspect, favored eclecticism and antiquarianism.

All these things make it risky to draw simple parallels between armatures from Roman Greece and other better documented cases from Roman East or North Africa. Instead, the colonnaded streets and gates encountered in Roman Greece must be viewed as the products of the broad diffusion of spatial and architectural ideas, the application of which was favored by the nature of the Roman world itself¹³¹. As with other aspects of the material culture of the period this is the common framework within which the evidence from Roman Greece must be understood and discussed¹³².

Understanding urban development within a broader context is of extreme importance, especially if it is seen in relation to the well-established view of urban and rural decline that seems to characterize the era¹³³. A recent

¹²⁶ ADAMS 1989, p. 13.

¹²⁷ VITTI 2016.

¹²⁸ For reuse and recycle in Roman material culture see NG, SWETNAM-BURLAND 2018, pp. 1-24. For reuse in Roman constructions, see BARKER 2012; BERNARD, BERNARDI, ESPOSITO 2008.

¹²⁹ ALCOCK 2002, pp. 53-58, about the “itinerant temples” in Athens.

¹³⁰ CHRISTODOULOU 2007.

¹³¹ EVANGELIDIS 2019, p. 309.

¹³² VERSLUYS 2014.

¹³³ ALCOCK 1993, pp. 24-32; BINTLIFF 2008, pp. 22-23.

quantification of urban density in Roman Greece (with focus on the province of *Achaea*) by M. Karambinis¹³⁴ seems to further support the idea that Roman rule tended to favor the existence of fewer cities, which, besides some exceptions like Hadrianic Athens, never managed to reach the prosperity levels (evident in the size, scale, elaboration and number of building projects) that characterized other areas of the empire¹³⁵. Yet, a growing number of archaeological evidence coming from rescue excavations and systematic urban projects¹³⁶ speak about the existence of urban landscapes that had incorporated many of the features and spatial arrangements that characterized the contemporary architectural framework. Most importantly this kind of evidence comes not only from the large urban centers such as Athens, Corinth or Patras, but also from medium sized cities like Sikyon¹³⁷, Aigeira¹³⁸, Opous at Lokris¹³⁹ or even Abdera and Maroneia from coastal Thrace¹⁴⁰ (fig. 10). Even in cases like Megalopolis, which Strabo¹⁴¹ describes as “a great desert” or Demetrias in Thessaly which was restricted to the area around the harbor, the archaeological research has brought to light evidence (public buildings, houses, commercial facilities) that contradicts the idea of a passive, abandoned or underdeveloped landscape¹⁴². It is clear that under the contradiction, the archaeology of Roman Greece hides a far more complicated reality¹⁴³.

The changes observed in the archaeology of the built environment therefore cannot be simply interpreted depending on dualities like prosperity/decline. They seem rather to indicate a process that entailed many different levels of completion and execution. Some of these projects like in Corinth, Rhodes or even Athens must have been conceived and executed on a grand scale with the use of costly materials, while others, due to the finite sources of income that is so eloquently described by Karambinis¹⁴⁴, on more modest forms, like for instance the simple Doric stoas that framed the road in Elis. Despite the divergences in scale and elaboration, the execution of these projects poses some interesting questions concerning the nature of the city during the Imperial period. The will on behalf of the local councils to invest in the development of these projects (even when these were executed with meagre means) underlines the importance that this architecture of passage and movement had assumed as an indispensable part of the status of the city and the quality of life. This seems to be analogous to developments in other areas of the Roman world. Because, over the course of the Imperial period even the smaller cities of Greece were integrally involved to networks and influences which stretched across the Roman world¹⁴⁵ and were fueled by *pax romana* and an extensive network of roads and sea routes, that secured high mobility – connectivity¹⁴⁶. Certain set of conditions that peaked during the Imperial period like inter-city rivalries¹⁴⁷ seem to have even further accelerated processes like the construction of monumental landscapes.

Unfortunately, written sources provide minimal evidence of the terms of funding and the decision-making process behind the monumentalization of the streets¹⁴⁸. We can only guess that, as in other building projects, there were three major sources of funding: imperial sponsorship, municipal funds, and donations by local notables (the last two sometimes inextricably linked together due to the elite nature of the local councils). Imperial sponsorship could have applied in the construction of *Via Regia* in Thessaloniki where Galerius created an example of early 4th cent. AD monumentalism. But, in most of the cases we examined above, the decisions were most probably taken at the level of the local council, with the funds being drawn from local resources as is illustrated in the example of the “*plateia*” in Athens¹⁴⁹. Based on evidence from similar projects in Asia Minor and elsewhere¹⁵⁰ we can assume that a great part of the funding most possibly also came from private benefactors, through the act of euergetism¹⁵¹, often motivated by the personal advancement of ambitious individuals, who wanted to establish themselves in the hierarchy of power by demonstrating commitment to the community¹⁵².

¹³⁴ KARAMBINIS 2018. One of the basic conclusions of this quantification study is that the number of self-governing cities in Roman Greece was much smaller than in Classical-Hellenistic period, with almost 40 cities being abandoned and 70 cities being absorbed by larger centers.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 293-297, 307. Karambinis draws his conclusions based on evidence from 53 sites and six generic categories of public buildings (agoras, theatres, *odeia*, *stadia*, aqueducts, baths).

¹³⁶ A good example is the systematic urban survey of Sikyon: see LOLOS, forthcoming.

¹³⁷ According to TRAINOR *et alii* 2018, p. 72, “the evidence from Sikyon is consistent with the results from other surveys which suggest that population rates of urban centers in the Peloponnese not only did not diminish but also in several cases actually increased”.

¹³⁸ HINKER, forthcoming; HINKER 2018. Evidence from Aigeira supports reconsideration of the traditional view of the decline of the city during the Roman period with clear signs of economic vitality as evident in the pottery but also in the construction of new large public buildings like the so-called “*Tycheion*”.

¹³⁹ ZACHOS 2018.

¹⁴⁰ On Abdera, PAPAIOANNOU 2010. About Maroneia, see *ADelt B* 29, 1973-74, 2, pp. 800-802.

¹⁴¹ *Geographica*, 8, 8, 1.

¹⁴² FRITZILAS 2018, for Roman period Megalopolis; DI NAPOLI 2005, p. 517, about how material evidence from Megalopolis has “demonstrated a strong vitality during Imperial times”; TRIANTAPHYLOPOULOU 2012, for Roman period Demetrias.

¹⁴³ MACLEROY-OBIED 2016, p. 203, about how “ancient sources provide contradictory representations of the actual state of the settlements/landscape in the Aegean during the Imperial period”.

¹⁴⁴ KARAMBINIS 2018, p. 306.

¹⁴⁵ SWEETMAN 2012.

¹⁴⁶ VERSLUYS 2014, p. 17.

¹⁴⁷ MACDONALD 1986, p. 19.

¹⁴⁸ BURNS 2017, pp. 316-318.

¹⁴⁹ SHEAR 1973, p. 389.

¹⁵⁰ RYAN 2018, pp. 159-162.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 152 f.n. 7, and pp. 158-162 about the execution of large civic projects and the role of elites; BURNS 2017, p. 320.

¹⁵² RYAN 2018, p. 179.

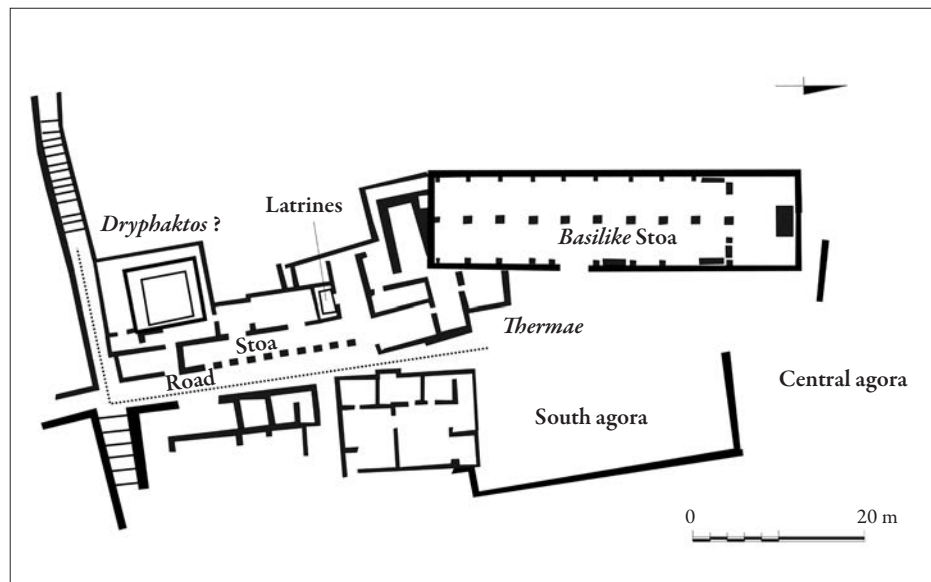


Fig. 11. Thera, the south access to the agora (digital drawing by A.).

Nevertheless, given the lack of textual evidence, the exact nature and height of these private benefactions remains unknown. They could have ranged from the dedication of a single stoa, like the one that *G.I. Eurýkles Herculanus* dedicated in Mantinea¹⁵³, to the dedication of individual columns or capitals¹⁵⁴. Since we know very little about the logistics behind the construction of large armatures we cannot exclude the possibility that such projects could have been carried out by schemes of collaborative funding either between different members of the elite¹⁵⁵ or between the *Demos* and private benefactors (as was probably the case with the complex of Pantainos in the Athenian Agora)¹⁵⁶. However, this was by no means a standardized process¹⁵⁷. Different terms of funding, different sources of influence, and different levels of accessibility to local or external resources (e.g., good quality stones) determined the individual character of each project and its pace of completion.

The last issue to concern us is the role of these features as indicators for monumentality. If we return to the description of Alexandria by A. Tattius and similar descriptions of other armatures by contemporaries¹⁵⁸, we can realize the linkage between this architecture of movement and the image of the city as a monumental landscape¹⁵⁹. As more inclusive concepts of monumentality come forward it becomes clear that the defining quality of a monumental building or structure lies not only in its bulk, scale and elaboration but also in its meaning or how it was perceived by the audience. This kind of monumentality derives its content from the intention, the will to create something that can create an impression on the visitor. In Thera for instance, the columnar facades (2nd cent. AD) that framed the small paved road that led to the terraced agora from the South have been interpreted by C. Witschel¹⁶⁰ as a crude attempt on behalf of the earthquake stricken city to cityscape the narrow-terraced terrain and create something that would have approximated the effect of a colonnaded road (fig. 11). Undoubtedly the small road at Thera cannot be perceived as a colonnaded street even in the broader sense of the term¹⁶¹. Nevertheless, it can be regarded – in a local context – as monumental as long as its energy is directed outward and its associated with a meaningful element. If we see the armatures as this meaningful element in the layout of the ancient city, the setting of a number of activities of the public or private sphere, then the spatial permanence that it is reflected in the colonnades and gates speaks about a very important step in the way that people over the Imperial period conceptualized their environment. What is clearly needed is spatial studies like the application of “Space Syntax” in the analysis of the built environment of Ostia¹⁶², that will relate this architecture to a better understanding of movement and circulation within the city¹⁶³ but also involve questions regarding its social significance and the effect it had on everyday life and urban experience¹⁶⁴.

¹⁵³ IGV 2, 281.

¹⁵⁴ EVANGELIDIS 2010, p.146.

¹⁵⁵ RYAN 2018, p. 161.

¹⁵⁶ MARTIN 1974, p. 66; RYAN 2018, p. 160 f.n. 28.

¹⁵⁷ MACDONALD 1986, p. 19.

¹⁵⁸ BURNS 2017, pp. 12-16.

¹⁵⁹ MACDONALD 1986, pp. 15-17, about the pictorial evidence concerning armatures and how closely the notion of Roman urbanism was related to the architectural features of the armature.

¹⁶⁰ WITSCHHEL 1997, p. 39.

¹⁶¹ MACDONALD 1986, p. 44.

¹⁶² For the application of “Space Syntax” in the analysis of the built environment of Roman Ostia, see STÖGER 2011. For its use in archaeological methodology, see THALER 2005, pp. 324-326. The application of the Space Syntax’s methods of spatial analysis can provide new insights into the interrelations between the individual spaces that make up the layout of a city.

¹⁶³ COSTAKI 2006, p. 145.

¹⁶⁴ LAURENCE 2015.

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