

THE ROMAN SECOND CENTURY GATE AT PERGE AND ITS LITERARY ASSOCIATIONS

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RESUMO: O artigo visa demonstrar como a entrada romana do século II d.C. da cidade de Perge, na Ásia Menor, pertence a um conjunto arquitetônico harmônico, construído a partir de um programa artístico mais amplo.

Assim, os vários elementos que compõem esta entrada (pátios, nichos e esculturas, colonadas) são analisados à luz de suas possíveis associações com os estilos de pintura mural e de composições literárias, adquirindo uma coerência única.

UNITERMOS: Arte romana – Arte provincial – Arquitetura romana na Ásia Menor.

The Gate at Perge

The ruins of the ancient city of Perge (περγη) site slightly inland of the Pamphylian coast of south Turkey, 16km east of Antalya (Figure 1). The site was first discussed by Lanckoronksi (1980: 61) and then excavated and published by A. M. Mansel (1949, 1956, 1975a, 1975b) and more recently by Jale Inan. Strabo (14.4.2) describes the site. The city was founded following the end of the Trojan War by emigrants from Argos led by the seers Kalchas and Mopsus and the hero Amphilochus. To date, the excavations have revealed no evidence of an archaic settlement at the site. The first mention of the town is the fourth century periplus attributed to Scyta of Caryanda.

The city welcomed Alexander the Great. The earliest remains are Hellenistic, and the standing ruins of the walls and the south gate of the lower

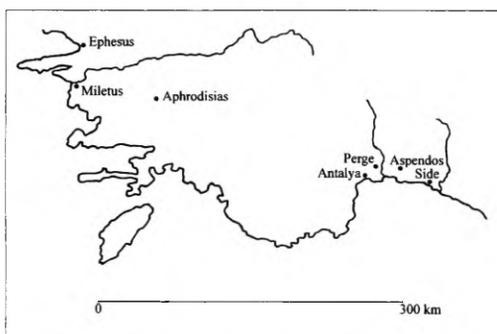


Fig. 1 Map of south coast of Asia Minor.

city date from Seleucid times. The old Hellenistic gate consists of two well-built round stone towers which flank the gateway proper. The entrance opened into a horseshoe shaped court with the two towers forming the terminal ends of the horseshoe. The horseshoe court was totally reconfigured in the years A.D. 120-122 (Figure 2). The horseshoe was opened up so that the new shape resembles more a

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bell with a depth of 20.35m. The south end was sealed by a great triple arch. The walls that connect with the towers and define the space were sheathed in marble. A two-storey columnar façade in the aedicular “Marble style” was installed, and behind the façade there were niches built into the walls (Figure 3). The niches of the lower storey contained sculptures of deities; some of these statues have survived. The upper row of niches housed representations of the legendary founders of the city including Mopsus and Kalchas. The names were inscribed on the statue bases. Included with these were statues of other legendary founders. There were also representations of two contemporary men of the city, M. Plancius Varus – the former governor of Bithynia – and his son, C. Plancius Varus. These men were the father and brother respectively of the patroness of the rebuilding project, Plancia Magna who was also the priestess of the Artemis Pergaia, Perge’s tutelary deity.

The triple bay arch that closes the courtyard had a design which shares features in common with the arches of Hadrian in the nearby city of Attaleia (Antalya) (Figure 4) and in Athens (Boatwright 1993: 195). It had a width of 20m, which is wider than the courtyard which it sealed. The middle arch was the widest at 3.40m; the two flanking arches were 2.50m. The arch was situated on a base which rose four steps above the level of the courtyard

proper, and though built of local stone was, like the sides of the courtyard, covered in marble. It continued the aedicular architecture and had a two storey façade into which were set statues of members of the Imperial families from Nerva through Hadrian. The arch served to architecturally enclose the courtyard space and to create a single structural entity. Beyond the arch to the north began the colonnaded street that was the major through-way for Perge and which ended in great fountain complex, the north fountain (Mansel 1975b: 367-372). The arch was not unlike the *scaenae frons* of a Roman theater. When in full operation the entire complex must have possessed the self-contained quality of a Roman theater.

The remodeled Hellenistic gate ensemble was preceded by a large quadrilateral space some 92m in length (Figure 5). Along the west side of this region stood the façades of a bath and a fountain and statues, the inscribed bases for which survive. One of these held a statue of Plancia Magna which does survive. The bath entrance and the fountain can be dated from their inscriptions to the reign of Septimus Severus (A.D. 193-211), but the inclusion of a statue of the benefactress of the remodeled Hellenistic gate may indicate that actual work on this region began as well during the time of Hadrian. The statue bases found in association with the fountain show dedications to Artemis Pergaia and Septimus Severus and his family.

Another marble aedicular façade closed the south side of this courtyard complex. A second gateway led out to yet another adorned courtyard space, this one rectangular and defined on the two sides by arcades. This area may also date to the period of Plancia Magna’s work, but the large marble gate erected at the south end dates to the reign of Septimus Severus. The entire complex of gates and courtyards was built and decorated over a period of about eight decades. It consisted of four gates which defined three large courtyards of changing shape. The whole complex formed a long and impressive processional route leading into the city from the south side.

Of the sculptures that once decorated the complex, several still survive and are housed in the archaeological museum in Antalya. Others can be identified from the inscriptions on the bases. In his study of the sculptures from Perge, Özgür has identified the placement of fifty individual works many coming from the bath complex (Özgür 1987, final two plans). Moving through the courtyard spa-

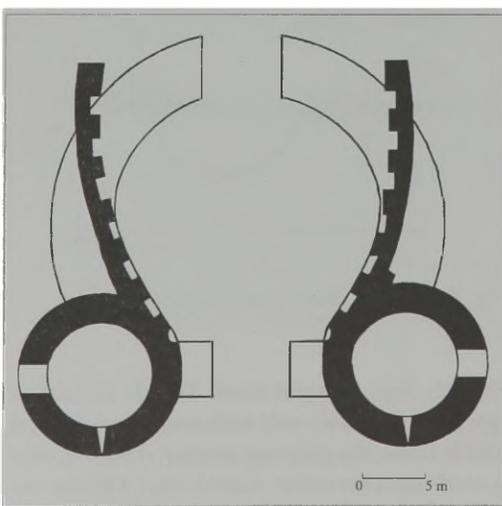


Fig. 2 - Plan of the Hellenistic Gate with the Roman gate laid over it after Lauter (1972) ill. 7.



Fig. 3 Remains of the Roman city gate. Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY S0097859 01-01-05/56.

ces from south to north, a visitor to the city in the early third century A.D. would have encountered a group of statues at the first courtyard consisting of Artemis Pergaia, and Nemesis accompanied by two unknown women (Özgür 1987, nos. 7, 23, 44). Along the west side of the quadrilateral court probably part of the fountain design were statues of Julia Soaemias – the mother of the Emperor Elagabalus – Julia Domna, and Septimus Severus (Özgür 1987, nos. 38, 39, 40). Near to the west Hellenistic tower stood the representations of Plancia Magna, an unknown priestess of Artemis Pergaia, and an unknown priest of Apollo (Özgür 1987, nos. 9, 12, 43). The bell-shaped courtyard yielded an image of one the Dioscuroi and a Hermes (Özgür 1984, nos 4, 5) as well as the inscribed bases of the legendary founders of the city and the father and brother of Plancia Magna. The arch was decorated with imperial portrait

statues accompanied by the Tyche of Perge (Özgür 1987, nos. 21, 33, 35, 37). On the other side of the arch where the colonnaded street began were representations of Isis, Serapis, and Aphrodite (Özgür 1987, nos. 26,27). At the north fountain which terminated the colonnaded street, stood two images of Hadrian, and one each of Zeus, Artemis (of the Versailles type), Apollo, and two unidentified women (Özgür 1987, nos. 1, 8, 11, 32, 34, 46, 47).

The statues can be arranged into three groupings – Imperial images, portraits of local members of the elite (probably including the representations of the unknown women, priestess, and priest), and mythological figures. The Emperor Hadrian is shown both nude and in cuirass. Septimus Severus wears a cuirass. The Imperial women, Sabina, Faustina (Figure 6), Julia Domna, and Julia Soaemias are all draped, reproducing well-known fifth and

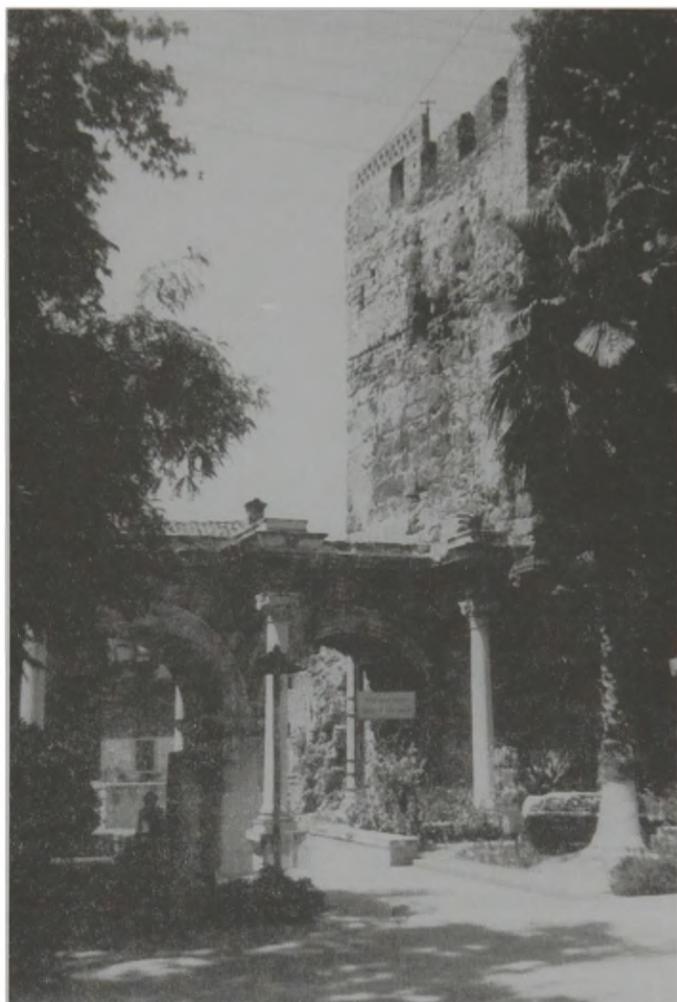


Fig. 4 View of the remains of the triple arch at Attaleia (Antalya). Mierse 1982.

fourth century female types (Özgül 1987). The portraits of Perge's female elite including Plancia Magna most commonly employ the type known as the larger Herculaneum woman which is also used for Sabina and Faustina. The grouping of two women from the south gate makes use of the fifth century Venus Genetrix type for one of the women. Unfortunately the loss of the statues of Plancia Magna's father and brother rob us of the opportunity to see if they too employed older types and if they related to the imperial images in some way as does one of the portraits of Plancia Magna.

The statues of mythological figures portray mostly divinities, many represented in fifth and fourth century styles, and some reproducing well-known Classical works. Most of the figures can be identified from their attributes and others are known from the inscribed bases. Among these mythological representations are those of the legendary founders of the city. None of the actual statues survive. Mopsus and Kalchas could have been dressed as Hellenistic philosophers in chiton and himation since they were ancient seers. This would have related them to the image of a priest of the

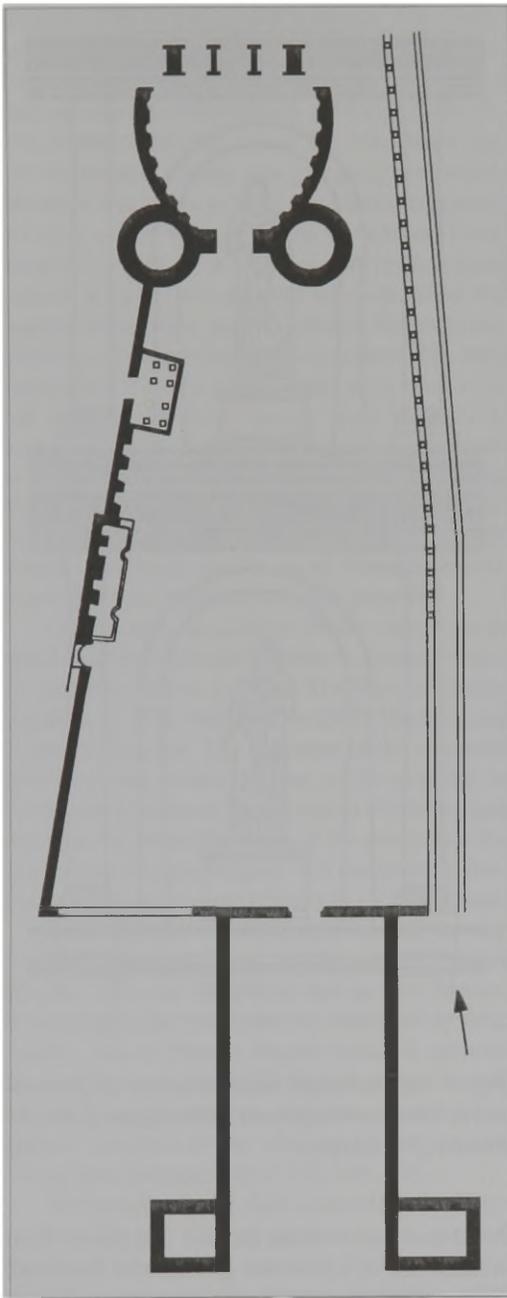


Fig. 5 - Plan of the full Gate complex after Akurgal (1985) fig. 163.

Imperial cult found in the west hall of the agora at Perge (Özgür 1987, n° 42). The other founders along with the two Plancii may well have been



Fig. 6 Statue of the Empress Faustina from the arch in the archaeological museum of Antalya. Mierse 1982.

shown in heroic nudity which would have related them to one of the images of Hadrian.

The excavations have made it possible to posit a chronology for the changes to the region of the south entrance to the city (Boatwright 1993: 192-196, Mansel 1975: 61, Lauter 1972: 1-11, Mansel 1956). The first major change was to the Hellenistic horseshoe courtyard. The horseshoe shape was changed and the space reconfigured to open up out from the gate in an oval shape that is then brutally terminated by the great triple bay arch. The Hellenistic gate itself was narrowed by means of rectangular piers added to the towers. The new interior space was covered in rich marble revetment and the aedicular façade and niches behind were divided into seven bays of two storeys on each side, thus creating twenty-eight spaces for sculpture along the side walls of the court. The date on the base of the statue of Hadrian

from the arch is A.D. 121 while the nomenclature for the figures of Plotina and Matidia indicate a date as late as A.D. 122. (Boatwright 1993: 196). The imperial imagery in this courtyard is no later than Hadrian reinforcing the idea that the work was accomplished by A.D. 122. The two inscriptions on the arch, one in Greek, the other in Latin, make clear that the reconfiguration was paid for through the benefactions of Plancia Magna. The north fountain with its Hadrianic associations may have been completed during the same period.

The presence of a statue of Plancia Magna in the quadrilateral court to the south of the Hellenistic court could well indicate that she also paid for the initial work here, but the importance of the Severan imagery and the reference to the emperor Septimus Severus in the fountain inscription makes clear that the final work in this portion was much later. The earlier work in the old Hellenistic courtyard was accorded respect since there is no evidence that there was any attempt to usurp the place of Hadrian with one of the members of the Severan Dynasty.

Program

The program of the reconfigured old Hellenistic courtyard can be reconstructed. The remains of the courtyards to the south and of the colonnaded street and north fountain are too fragmentary to allow for full understanding of the programs. The elaboration of the architecture with the aedicular façade covering and the placement of twenty-eight statue niches in the side walls and additional niches on the arch argue that there was a well planned-out sculptural program in this space (Figure 7). The program may have been repeated and further developed in the colonnaded street and on the north fountain where there was a continuation of the architectural vocabulary and the sculptural imagery. Within the courtyard the larger than life-size marble statues of major and minor Olympian deities lined the lower row of the architectural niches. In addition to those deities already discussed, there were also images of Aphrodite, the other of the Dioscuri, Pan, Heracles, and one unidentified male. The upper row of fourteen niches held the statues of Mopsus and Kalchas and also the Lapith Leonteus, the son of Kronos; Machaon from Thessaly, the son of Asklepios; Minyas the Orchomenian, grandson of

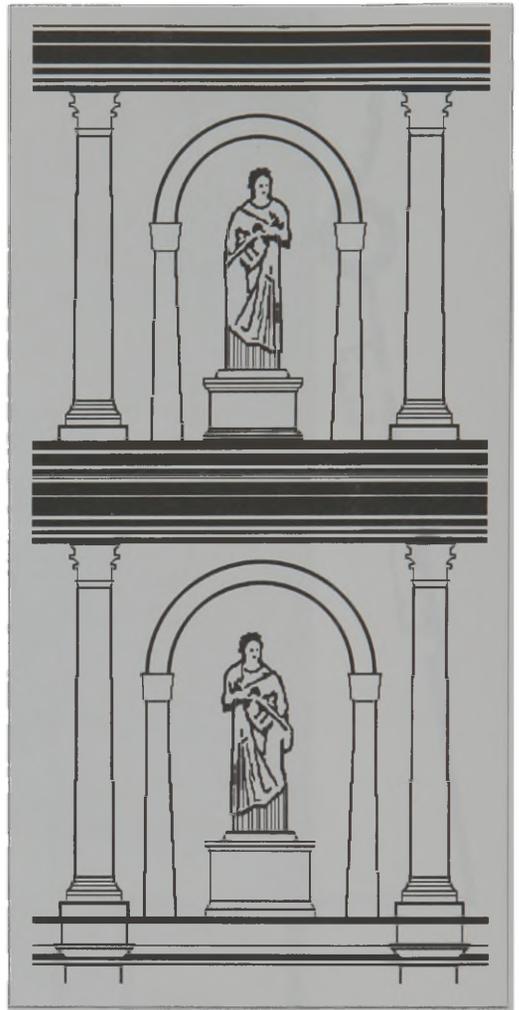


Fig. 7 Hypothetical reconstruction of the two-storey niche arrangement with statues from the Roman gate complex.

Ares; and Labos from Delphi; and Rixos from Athens, son of Lykos and grandson of Pandeion. These constituted the *ktistai*, the city founders. Missing from the group is Amphilochos who appears in the Herodotus and Strabo accounts. However, several of the figures included are known to have their own identities and stories but have no literary associations with Perge: Leonteus, Machaon, and Minyas. These are not major mythological players and their presence here as *ktistai* must reflect a local force at work. Labos and Rixos are local

creations with no recognized pedigrees. There may have been a cult to the Rixos operating in Perge since the statue base references the hero's foot as a relic of some type (Merkelbach and Sahin 1988: 97-170, Mansel 1956: 109-110, n° 79). The heroes that are recognized among this grouping are minor. Machaon was a hero at Troy, and Minyas is famous because of the actions of his daughters. Even Mopsus and Kalchas are not important mythological figures. Kalchas was the seer who identified the anger of the goddess Artemis towards Agamemnon. Mopsus accompanied the Argonauts. The two supposedly fought a battle of the seers over a fig tree which cost Kalchas his life (Rose 1959: 279). It may be possible to relate some of the city founders to some of the divine figures, Mopsos along with Heracles and the Dioscuri made the journey on the Argo. Kalchas was obviously associated with Artemis. Machaon was the son of Asklepios whose father Apollo is represented in the program.

On the arch, in addition to the statues recovered there were also dedications to Artemis Pergaria, to Divus Nerva, to Divus Traianus, to Plotina Augusta, to Diva Marciana, to Diva Matidia, and to Sabina Augusta. The inclusion of the emperors in divine form relates this part of the program to the representations of the Olympian divinities, and removes this from the realm of the every day. By placing the Artemis Pergaia with the imperial portraits it links the imperial family to local concerns.

Included with the representations of the city founders were the father and brother of Plancia Magna. They are described also as city fathers. Interestingly, the two males are identified by their familial ties to Plancia Magna which is unusual for men (Jameson 1965: 56). Plancia Magna herself was of local importance and was accorded the epithet "daughter of the city" on one of the city inscriptions (Mansel 1956: 119, abb. 69).

Boatwright is quite right in asserting that Plancia Magna's gate at Perge presents a new image of the Greek cities in the context of Roman imperial rule. The luxury of the fittings, the high quality and elegance of the carving of the inscriptions, the sheer volume of sculpture testified to the wealth of Plancia Magna and also of the city of Perge itself. The statuary honored the ancient history of the city in the presentation of the city founders and at the same time celebrated the present prosperity with the images of members of the Plancii and of other elite families. The Plancii had become impor-

tant not just in Perge but throughout the Hellenized world of Asia Minor (Mitchell 1974: 27-49). Into this parochial display are set the emperors, present and past, and select members of their families. Interestingly, Plancia Magna dedicated the arch not to the Emperor but to her city, an unusual practice (Boatwright 1993: 197-199).

To understand the foundation on which the sculptural program of the Gate rests requires a consideration of three cultural factors: 1) the developments in visual vocabulary that occurred in Roman painting and sculpture during the late Republic and early Empire; 2) the rise of *ekphrasis* as a literary construct with a parallel in the visual arts; and 3) the role of Second Sophistic rhetoric in the cities of Asia Minor during the first and second centuries A.D.

Visual Vocabulary

It has become increasingly clear to students of Roman art that by the first century A.D. individual works were often elements in larger programmatic compositions. They could be essential items in public architectural ensembles such as the Baths of Caracalla (Marvin 1983: 34-384) or could be integrated with other pieces in sculptural or painting assemblages. In such arrangements the individual works became participants in a visual conversation which actively engaged the spectator (Warden and Romano 1994: 228-254). This sophisticated use of the visual arts which rendered them as far more than decorative accents may have begun in the late Republic with groupings of paintings in third style wall paintings in the house of Pompeii and Herculaneum.

During the first century A.D. sculptures became more and more engaged in the producing large scale narrative compositions. These could represent single episodes, as in the story of Odysseus and the giant Polyphemos shown on the Pollio fountain at Ephesus on the west coast of Asia Minor, a monument of the late first century A.D. (EMC 1989: 451). In other instances several individual episodes would be joined together to form a single, larger composition as in the sculptural ensemble from the grotto of Tiberius from Sperlonga on the west coast of Italy. Here the individual sculptural groupings are best understood as responding to one another

in a large composition. In both examples, the artists of the first century A.D. can be understood to be developing an approach first tried in the Hellenistic period (Pollitt 1986: 111-126). Works like the Pollio fountain in Ephesus show artists struggling to distill the essence of a narrative into a single image. The quest to find single, significant scenes which can represent long and complicated stories is an old concern of Greco-Roman art and can be traced back to the Archaic period and neck of the Nettos vase where the painter had tried to capture the essential features of the same story as the designer of the Pollio fountain.

The grouping of individual statues in the grotto at Sperlonga, which each capture a narrative moment of quite different stories, must be considered the out growth in sculpture of the developments on third and fourth style wall painting. The individual units were each self-contained and were carefully placed around the chamber to create specific sight-lines for the viewer. The intent must have been to emphasize each group in a particular manner, at least in relation to the viewer who was outside the confines of the area containing the sculpture. The individual sculptural groups must have been designed to resonate with one another, and the stylistic similarities of the individual compositions would have allowed for them to be comfortably related one to the other. The grotto at Sperlonga functioned like the individual third and fourth style rooms in the houses of Pompeii and Herculaneum. In these the walls were covered with painting of elaborate architecture into which were inset painted narrative panels. The mythological narratives were also reduced to single images, distillations of complicated plots into single images which were intended to resonate with the other painted images on the walls of the room (Thompson 1960/1961: 41).

In these examples – the Pollio fountain, the Sperlonga groupings, and the third and fourth style wall paintings in houses at Pompeii and Herculaneum – the key shared element is narrative. For each, the artists found the moment in the narrative that conveys the essence of the story. To do this, the artists worked with visual description. They created settings, emphasized costume elements and visually recognizable attributes, and set the figures into dramatically charged scenes where gestures and movements that convey easily understandable meanings.

Ekphrasis

There developed during this same period a literary analogue, *ekphrasis*. *Ekphrasis* became a common literary device in the first century B.C. It is a descriptive pause in a narrative, a moment when the action ceases and the chronological push of the plot is suspended. The items described can be landscapes, buildings, battles, storms, or works of art. While such lapses can be found in almost all narrative structures – and there are examples of *ekphrasis* in Greek literature as early as Homer – it is in Latin literature of the late first century B.C. that the device becomes a specialized element in composition. It can be found in Virgil (Fowler 1991: 25-35) and even Catullus (Laird 1993: 18-30). These descriptive passages have a strongly visual aspect and allow the reader to form the image in the mind's eye. This quality to the Latin descriptions separates them from early Greek examples, such as Homer's, where the passages lack the same visual intensity (Leach 1988: 27-72).

The ekphrasis in Virgil is sometimes to describe single works of art. This is similar to the way that it can be used by the writers of the Greek romances of the late first, second, and third centuries A.D. In such settings, the descriptions set-up a situation, prefigure the later action in the plot, or establish particular relationships (Bartsh 1989: 34-37). The orators and writers of the Second Sophistic movement, which flourished in the coastal cities of Asia Minor, also used ekphrasis of art works as a composition device. The most famous examples is the *Imagines* of the Elder Philostratus, a work of the third century A.D. In these examples the descriptions of static scenes present paintings along the sides of a gallery in the sea side villa of a wealthy individual in the region of the Bay of Naples. The scenes are mostly mythological, but the actual descriptions provided by Philostratus are short and lacking in particulars about the painting. Instead they allow him to display arcane knowledge of the larger series of events or sequence of myths that are invoked by the specific presentation in the painting (Lehmann-Hartleben 1946: 16-44). Philostratus's approach to the paintings in this private seaside gallery would suggest that there was an idea current that viewers of narrative painting would take time to contemplate the scenes represented and use

them as a vehicle for a thoughtful consideration of the subject of myth as a whole.

Such uses of *ekphrasis* seem to match what is being done with third and later fourth style narrative wall paintings. In single rooms several painted narratives could be arranged along the walls. Each individual scene is self-contained and has its own narrative. The viewer is forced to determine the specific narrative episode, to consider how it distills the essence of the larger story of which it is but one part, and to find how it relates with the other painted scenes with which it shares the chamber. Such activity gives meaning to the entire room and turns the individual scenes into parts of a large composition in which the static moments are understood to have a non-temporal and non-narrative relationship with one another. Something similar must have informed the specific choices of scenes and the arrangement of the sculptural groupings in the grotto at Sperlonga.

Ekphrasis within the context of a literary narrative work halts the action of the plot by the insertion of a static element which bears some type of relationship with the active aspects of the plot itself. *Ekphrasis* used by a Second Sophistic orator supplies a means for the erudite exegesis of arcane aspects of the myth or the story represented in the work described. Both literary uses of *ekphrasis* testify to a high level of visual sophistication on the part of the readers or listeners. Literate Romans were prepared to look closely at works and to be visually captivated by paintings and sculptures. They were willing to actively engage art pieces. Therefore certain types of paintings or sculptures, those that portrayed frozen moments from a narrative – individual representations, self-contained, and standing aloof – must have operated as they do in the *Imagines*, as the *entrée* to the larger consideration of the meaning behind the work. For Philostratus, the painted representations do not have any type of association with a plot line, but in the works of novelists, they often do; one narrative is embedded into another. In a similar manner, the groupings of paintings in third and fourth style rooms or of sculptures in the grotto of Sperlonga could have operated both as means to enter into the contemplation of the specific story captured in the image and to a consideration of the relationships of stories embedded within stories. The *ekphrasis* passages as well as the individual painting and sculptures may have been intended to provoke an emotional response from the reader, listener, or

viewer, one in which the ethical implications suggested by the description or by the actual image played a significant role (Morales 1996: 188-209, Brilliant 1984: 69-70). It may also have been the case that present setting in which the works were displayed was part of the intellectual ambiance. The whole premise for Philostratus's discussions of the painting is the education of the ten year son of the villa's owner who accompanies him on his walk through the gallery. In the same vein, the diners at the grotto of Tiberius's villa at Sperlonga, may have wondered about their own involvement in the current political drama being played out during dinner.

Ekphrasis and Roman Theater

The third and fourth style narrative paintings, the sculpture at Sperlonga, the *ekphrasis* in romance novels must all be considered developments in the sphere of private art. Only in the orations of some of the Second Sophistic writers can one argue for a greater public exposure to these artistic constructs. Within the confines of private art, the works can be and usually are small and intimate and allow for the dialogue between viewer and viewed to be leisurely. There is no need for the full impact of the work to be immediate, it can unfold as the viewer contemplates it. This is unlike the situation for public art in the Roman world. The nature of public commissions usually requires that the specific objects be large enough to be easily seen from some distance. The statues on the Pollio fountain at Ephesus or placed in the architecture of the Baths of Caracalla are over life-size. They are, in fact, colossal. To function effectively, they must make their visual impact rapidly. They may have layers of meaning that can be slowly stripped away, but there must be at least one immediately comprehensible meaning to the work or it will fail as a public statement. These features of public art limit the degree to which they can have developed in association with the *ekphrastic* literary tradition which belongs more to the sphere of private art. However, there is another way in which the *ekphrastic* mode does relate to the public art commissions. Theater prospered during the Imperial period as evinced by the quantity of theaters built throughout the Roman world beginning with the reign of Augustus. In addition to the traditions of staged comic and tragic works inherited from the Greeks, performers and writers developed mime and panto-

mime as important types of theatrical entertainment. As early as the mid-first century B.C. a kind of tableaux vivant had entered the stage repertoire, though these were most often part of victory processions in Rome. When Pompey celebrated his triumph over Mithradates, King of Pontus, the victory procession lasted two days and included hundreds of captives representing the fourteen nations and nine hundred cities that Pompey had defeated. The actual families of the defeated kings and generals formed part of the procession. Whether these figures were expected to reenact the battles and the defeats is not clear from the text, though someone carried painted placard which showed scenes from the battles (Plutarch, Pompey, 45.1-46.1). Beacham has proposed that the allegorical statues that decorated Pompey's theater in Rome may have represented the defeated fourteen nations that were featured in the procession (Beacham 1992: 246, n° 13).

Events such as triumphal processions in which the defeated played an active role in a staged event which took place in the city streets performed before the general population of the city brought the language of theatrical entertainment to a mass audience. At the same time, the practice of creating theatrical forms to reference historical narratives served to blur the distinction between present and past as well as between reality and fiction. This blurring may have become even fuzzier in the Imperial age when condemned criminals were executed in theatrical stagings of famous stories – pantomimes in which someone actually died. Martial records that during the reign of Titus a criminal was torn apart by a bear as part of the staging of the story of the bandit Laureolus in a theatrical work of the same name (Martial, *De Spec.* 9 (7)). Suetonius records a pantomime performance of the story of Pasiphae and the bull which featured copulation between a woman and a bull (Suetonius, Nero, 12). Tertullian wrote of a staging of Hercules' death in which the actor was forced to die on the pyre (Tertullian, *Apol.*, 15.5).

These examples suggest that visual spectacle had become a common feature at the popular level in Rome and in other cities of the Empire. Theatrically staged events – in which pantomime, with its emphasis on gesture and its origins in dance (Beacham 1992: 140-153), featured significantly – taught audiences how to respond to visual language as well as spoken dialogue. The vocabulary of gestures which both performer and audience

needed to master was quite extensive and sophisticated to judge from the comments of Lucian who notes that a dancer in a pantomime was expected to create through gesture and movement alone such recognizable characters as a lover, an angry man, a mad man, and a grief stricken man. Moreover, the audience knew the conventions well enough for specific representations that they reacted negatively when a performer playing the role of Chronos devouring his children instead presented Thyestes committing the same act (Lucian, *De Saltatione*). The Roman populous then was sensitive to visual messages, was ready to read historical events in terms of contemporary stagings, was open to theatrical experiences as a part of the every day visual environment of a Roman city.

Artists began rendering verbal narratives into visual images early in the history of Roman art, continuing to explore an interest developed by Greek artists and first found as early as the Sumerian period of Mesopotamian art (Winter 1985: 11-34). The problem for the artist is always whether the story line is best presented as a series of simultaneous representations in which several episodes are introduced to make the basic point clear or whether the essence of the story can be distilled to a single image, a monoscenic rendition (Weitzman 1970: 13-17). The two versions of the "Blinding of Polyphemos" the one on the Pollio fountain at Ephesus and the other in the grotto at Sperlonga offer glimpses of these two approaches in works both of the first century A.D. The Pollio fountain represents the narrative with two distinct episodes presented in a single composition, Odysseus handing the cup of wine to Polyphemos and to the side the preparation of the stake. The Sperlonga group shows only the scene of the stake about to be jabbed into the giant's eye. The monoscenic representation places great demands upon the artist for it requires that the image be chosen with care since it must convey several individual episodes in one frozen moment. At the same time, it must be able to suggest the complexity of the story line that is captured in the tableaux. The difficulty of making such selections may explain why painters working in the third and fourth styles tended to recycle the same images again and again.

The development of *ekphrasis* as a standard feature in the writings of romance novelists and of Second Sophistic orators tended to work to integrate the visual with the verbal, to tie together image and

text. This may have been even stronger if indeed there did develop during the Hellenistic period a practice of providing textual illustrations in scrolls (Weitzmann 1970: 77-81). Great sculptural ensembles, like groups of wall paintings or like small illustrations in scrolls served to reference more than what was actually seen. For a population used to reading beyond the image, the individual work could provide a starting point for a deeper consideration of meaning or subject suggested by the scene. In the case of grouped wall paintings or purposely juxtaposed sculptural units, the meanings of the individual pieces could be tied to the larger composition in which there was an intentional interweaving of associated meanings and interpretations.

The Gate at Perge, Second Sophistic Thought, and Imperial Iconography

The structure into which the individual statues were set in the new version of the old Hellenistic court at Perge was a modification of the *scaenae frons* of a Roman theater. Interestingly enough, the great *scaenae frons* of the theaters of Perge itself and of nearby Side were not constructed until after the middle of the second century (Akurgal 1985: 329-339) and could not have provided a model for the gate ensemble. The design, with layers of architectural elaboration forming a façade for the wall and into which was placed sculpture, can be seen as early as the mid-first century A.D. in the theater at Arausio (Orange) in southern France, and no doubt was known at several other places, perhaps even the Roman version of the theater at Miletus on the west coast of Asia Minor.

There were adequate examples of the *scaenae frons* theater type to have served as a model for the architects of the gate at Perge. However, the relationship is purely formal, the use of architecture which includes sculpture as an integral feature. There is another architectural ensemble, itself probably indebted to theater architecture, which must have provided the real prototype for the gate at Perge. In the middle of the first century A.D., two generations before the gate at Perge was redesigned, the city of Aphrodisias in western Asia Minor, built a great sculptural complex intended to honor the Imperial family of the Julio-Claudians. The Sebasteion at Aphrodisias obviously played on the association between the patron goddess of the city,

Aphrodite, and the patron goddess of the Imperial family, Venus. The Sebasteion at Aphrodisias consists of two parallel, two-storey porticoes that flank a central processional way about 14m wide and running ca. 80m in length. At the west end, the processional space terminates with a propylon which was decorated with architectural members defining niches into which sculptures were set. The propylon of the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias is among the earliest examples of the aedicular style which also distinguishes the gate at Perge. The statues set into the architecture of the propylon at Aphrodisias included images of the Julio-Claudian family, the Imperial family of the middle first century when the ensemble was built. Along with the Imperial family there were representations of the hero Aeneas and the goddess Aphrodite. The upper storeys of the two side porticoes held sculpted relief panels that consisted of both iconic images such as the Emperor Augustus accepting the bounties of the earth and the command of the seas and narrative panels with mythological scenes.

The formal design parallels between the Aphrodisias Sebasteion construction and the gate at Perge are quite close. Both feature architectural settings which use a modification of the *scaenae frons* as the device for the presentation of individual sculpted units. The statues are placed in rising tiers, and there is an intermingling of mythological with real representations. The statues in the Sebasteion were intended to be related to one another so that the image of Aphrodite provides a linkage with the city itself, with the figure of the mythological hero Aeneas – who was her son and came from Asia Minor (Troy) and founded Lavinium in Italy – and the with Julio-Claudian family whose patron deity she was. She is described on the Sebasteion as the ancestral mother of the divine Augusti (Erim 1986: 111). The mythological panels may have been arranged to stress a message of Roman and Greek reconciliation. The myths represented were all of Greek origin and permitted the residents of Aphrodisias to view the advent of Roman power and control as somehow a development out of Greek culture itself (Smith 1990: 100).

There is, however, a major difference that separates sculptures at Perge from many of those at Aphrodisias, and for that matter from the other sculptures so far considered, they are not narrative. The sculpted remains from the gate at Perge are all single statues, all self-contained with no con-

nections with other sculptures in the gate setting. They do not interact with one another. Of the three groups – Imperial images, portraits of the *Plancii* and other leading citizens, and mythological representations including the city founders, only the Imperial portraits would appear to connect with any of the pieces from the Sebasteion in Aphrodisias. Yet, the dismissal may be too quick. While the representations of the mythological founders of the city do not appear narrative, they are, in fact, attached to stories – narrative which may have been understood to be historical – furthermore, they only really work when placed against the narrative backdrop. There is a group of sculptures on the Sebasteion that work in a similar way, the ethnic images, representations of the conquered peoples shown as female personifications. A similar kind of association may have lain behind the images on the theater of Pompey which also may have featured sculpted personifications of the vanquished. These, of course, had earlier been represented by real people, selected captives standing in for the mass of humanity now subject to Rome. These figures – both the living marchers and the stone images – function because of specific historical narratives which give meaning to the forms, the story of the individual conquest which, according to Plutarch, were illustrated on placards carried in the procession. Mythological narrative is probably not exactly the same as historical narrative, but the mythological founders represented on the second tier of the sculptures on the gate at Perge are being presented as historical figures, thus the incorporation of truly historical members of the family of *Plancia Magna* with the legendary founders.

These statues on the gate at Perge evidence the physical manifestation of an intellectual and cultural conceit that gained great popularity in the cultural life of the Greek cities of Asia Minor during the Imperial period. It has been discussed partially already in association with the Greek romances. The writers of these works normally chose to set their plots in the ancient past, in the time before Roman conquest when the eastern Mediterranean was Greek. The plots, such as the opening of Xenophon's *Ephesian Tale* (1.2), are full of local color, references to features and places and cults of local importance which give to these novels a sense of place and that place is the eastern Mediterranean world of the Greek cities from Ephesus to Alexandria.

This sense of place can be given a physical

manifestation by referencing the mythological founders of the specific cities. These individuals, secondary heroes at best, often had no meanings what so ever outside of their local contexts. In Ephesus a second fountain, this time of Trajanic date, features the youth *Androklos*, the legendary founder of the city who is otherwise of no significance (Mierse 1994: 290, *EMC* 1989: 48). The sense of place was exploited by the orators of the Second Sophistic movement as well as the romance writers. Unlike the novelists whose works must have been read, the orators recited their pieces as formal oratorical exercises.

The individual orators of the Second Sophistic were important people within their respective cities. It was their duty to represent their cities before the emperor. They counted on the elite of the cities to serve as their patrons, elite like the *Plancii* of Perge. In their works, some of which were written expressly to entertain the emperors in their visits to the old Greek cities, the Second Sophistic authors chose highly esoteric themes, often both arcane and archaic. They set their recitations in the pre-Roman Greek world (Kennedy 1974: 17-22, Bowie 1970: 3-41). The specific subjects were often obscure and the language cultivated for the formal presentations was Attic Greek of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. They favored the styles of *Isocrates* and *Demosthenes* (Oliver 1953: 873). The Second Sophistic had become an important cultural force in the cities of the west coast of Asia Minor. The resident sophists were major figures in the cultural life of these cities. The same individuals who paid for the great public monuments within the cities also patronized the sophists. It is against this backdrop of literary and visual artistic output that focused on the past, that worked on sophisticated interrelationships of the parts, that used visual images as a means of suggesting something beyond that which was represented, that the program of the gate at Perge must be read.

For a second Sophistic orator such as *Aelius Aristides*, it was quite normal to bring obscure mythical and divine figures into a rhetorical presentation with historical purport such as the *Leuctran orations* or the prologue to the prose hymn of *Dionysus* (Behr 1986 orations XI, XII, XIII, XIV, and XV). Though his great work, *The Roman Oration*, postdates the Gate at Perge by at least two decades, it nonetheless contains enough elements in common with the Gate that a comparison of the two can

provide some insight into how the gate functioned a visual form of Second Sophistic oratory. Aristides wrote his *Roman Oration* probably while resident in Rome during the spring and summer of A.D. 149. His friend and former teacher, the orator Herodes Atticus, was also present in the city as consul ordinarius. It is massive work intended to set forth several interrelated themes all in some way connected with the notion of Rome as the embodiment of the ideal state, a conceit consciously developed from the Platonic notion of the ideal city state (Oliver 1953: 874-887). Within the text of the *Oration*, which was intended for public recitation, Aristides presents several concepts which closely relate to the visual concepts found on the Gate at Perge. First there is the clear call to pride in the city's prosperity. For Aristides this is the prosperity of Rome, but the Gate at Perge proclaims the same pride, made even more emphatic if the colonnaded street behind and the fountain at the north end of the street were part of the original commission. The materials, the scope of the work, the volume of the carved architectural members, and the large quantity of statuary all suggest great wealth. In Aristides view the army plays a significant role for it assures the peace that permits the prosperity to flourish. Moreover, the military made those who served in it part of the larger Empire, causes them to lose their parochial zeal to become citizens of the Roman Empire and protectors of all that Empire (Oliver 1953: 70-75). The martial aspect is clearly present in the composition with the figure of the ruling Emperor, Hadrian, dressed in cuirass. The conceit is old, had been used for emperors from the first century A.D., but here it functions as an element in the larger program. Perhaps most important is the overarching notion that the workings of the divine mind can be seen in the functioning of the Imperial government; the order of the Empire is a reflection on earth of the order of the Universe (Oliver 1953: 888). A similar conception must underlie the whole ensemble of the Gate with its clear hierarchy of parts presented in a façade architectural structuring which supports the various units and visually manifests the hierarchy. Everything is carefully ordered.

The entire complex is designed with one overall idea which governs all other aspects, the emperor as the state. This is a conceit also clearly present in the *Oration* (Oliver 1953: 893-894), but it is an older notion which had been taking shape since at least the century prior, probably since the

time of Augustus according to Wickert (Wickert 1949: 128). The position of Emperor is rendered supreme in the composition of the Gate by the inclusion not just of the ruling emperor but of the divine forms of Nerva and Trajan, all placed on the axial line of the architectural ensemble against the backdrop of the triple arch as a *scanae frons*.

Conclusion

The relationship between the complex of the Gate at Perge and the developments in *ekphrasis* among the authors of Greek novels is not at all direct. Much closer are the connections between the novelists and the painters of the third and fourth style rooms and the sculptors responsible for great narrative programs such as the grotto at Sperlonga. What they all do share is the construction of complicated visual forms that depend upon a audience willing to invest time in reading and relating the parts. In both the literary and visual forms, the image represented is but the starting point for a deeper consideration. They suggest the direction in which the investigation must move. The Gate at Perge would not work, were it not for an audience prepared to engage the images. In a similar vein, the developments in pantomime and theater suggest that the mass audience had become conditioned to actively participating in the performance by knowing and understanding the meanings of gestures and character relationships. Such sensitivity permitted the designers of the Gate to arrange the forms and assume that the viewer would begin to make the appropriate associations. However, with the Second Sophistic writings, the Gate does appear to resonate. This should not be surprising, since it may well have been within the setting of the old Hellenistic courtyard, now reconfigured as a theatrical space, that orators delivered welcoming recitations, encomiums, to the visiting emperor or his representative. In such a setting, the obtuse references of the orator played against the equally arcane references of some of the sculpture, and yet the important items, the present civic prosperity, the pride of Greek heritage, the celebration of Empire and the recognition of the Emperor as the embodiment of it all would be easily understood in both the verbal and visual compositions.

There does remain one odd feature about the

Gate which cannot be explained by literary or artistic developments in other media. The presence of Plancia Magna and her father and brother. They can be read within the iconographic structure of the local setting. In other words, they are the new founders of the city and as such are represented with the original founders, but how do they relate to the Imperial aspects of the composition? The Plancii were an old Italian family. They had come to exploit Asia Minor in the wake of its inclusion into the empire during the Late Republic. This was not a happy time in the history of the region. There is no information about the family during this period. In fact, the first appearance in the epigraphic record is the middle of the first century A.D. (Jameson 1965: 54), but it must be assumed that in the earlier centuries the family did well, at least to judge by their prosperity in the first half of the second century. Tacitus (*Hist.*, 2.63) records that Plancius Varo was ex-praetor in A.D. 69. Mitchell has proposed that he entered the senate during the reign of Nero and that following this he held a number of important provincial posts under Vespasian, legate in Achaëa followed by legate in Asia, and finally proconsul in Bithynia (Mitchell 1974: 29-29). A member of an old Italian family which had prospered in the provinces of the east now assumed high ranking positions in the Imperial administration of the region. The family was connected with other similarly important provincial families in a network which may well have served to keep some sense of Italianness alive in these families several centuries after they had immigrated. Jameson notes that as late as the second century A.D. the community of Italians in Attaleia were still aware enough of their origins that they claimed the

status of a Roman colony (Jameson 1964: 101). Something of this self-identification, this refusal to fully merge with the Greek world in which they now operated and in which they had done so for over two centuries, may be evidenced in the appearance of a Latin as well as a Greek inscription for the Gate at Perge. Latin inscriptions are not unknown in Greek speaking Asia Minor, but they are not the norm (Mitchell 1974: 37). To some extent the prominence which Plancia Magna accords the present generation of her family serves to testify to the achievements of her father, and perhaps also her brother, as members of the Imperial administration. At the same time, the dedication of the Gate is to the city of Perge and not to the Emperor. The references are all local and therefore all Greek. By the second century A.D. the numbers of senators from the East had increased to become a significant number. Plancius Varo was one of these, and like most of his eastern colleagues, his roots were Italian (Oliver 1953: 893, Lambrechts 1936: 183-201). The Italian foundation to the families was coming to have more than just local significance, but under Hadrian, the Greek heritage also received a significant boost. In A.D. 132 the Emperor established the Panhellenion at Athens, a new Hellenic league. This establishment gave support to the revival of Greek identity, particularly as it could be envisioned before the advent of Rome. The Panhellenion post-dates by a decade the Gate at Perge, but the ideas for a Greek revival are already present. The Gate then celebrates the Plancii themselves, as new founders of the city of Perge, as leading citizens of Italian origin in service to the Emperor, and as players in the revival of Greek sensibility.

MIERSE, W.E. The Roman second century gate at Perge and its literary associations. *Rev. do Museu de Arqueologia e Etologia*, São Paulo, 7: 49-64, 1997.

ABSTRACT: This article intends to explain how the Roman second century Gate at Perge belongs to a harmonious architectural complex, built up according to a broad artistic program.

The several elements of the Gate (courtyards, niches and sculptures, colonnades) are analysed in the light of their possible associations with the different wall painting styles and with literary compositions, acquiring thus a unique coherency.

UNITERMS: Roman art – Provincial art – Roman architecture in Asia Minor.

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