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WHO BUILT THE ARCH OF CONSTANTINE? ITS  
HISTORY FROM DOMITIAN TO CONSTANTINE

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HARDLY anything might seem more audacious than to deny that the arch of Constantine was built in honor of that emperor; yet the really amazing thing is our failure to attend to the numerous hints that this arch had existed long before Constantine. Artists and archaeologists have always been unable to explain how an architect of the decadent age of Constantine could have given to this arch its marvellous proportions and silhouette, which set it above all other arches, even those of the golden age (Fig. 1). Historians have been puzzled by the silence of that early catalogue of the buildings at Rome, the *Notitia*, issued before Constantine's death (334 A.D.), which assigns to Constantine, apparently, only the Janus in the Forum Boarium. The same *Notitia* increases the mystery by speaking of an *Arcus Novus* on the Via Lata, which can only be the arch of Diocletian, dedicated in 303. If in 334 the arch of 303 was still the latest of triumphal arches, how could an arch have been built to Constantine in 315? Besides, a student of Roman law would argue that it was against the unbroken tenets of tradition and law to erect such an arch to an emperor who had not actually been decreed a triumph and whose victories had been not over a foreign but over a domestic foe. According to ancient literature and law, therefore, there was not and could not have been a triumphal arch of Constantine, in the sense that it was built expressly for Constantine. It is quite different if the arch could be recognized as an already existing arch rededicated in his honor.

It is my expectation to prove in this paper that the arch was built long before Constantine; also to show that its construc-

tion should probably be ascribed to the Emperor Domitian, shortly before or after 90 A.D., some 225 years before the dedication to Constantine. After the assassination of Domitian, his *memoriae damnatio* by the senate condemned to mutilation, and sometimes to destruction, all his public monuments, and especially his memorial and triumphal arches, which were closest to him, personally. The dedicatory inscriptions, the statues and reliefs in his honor, were destroyed. His works



FIGURE 1.—THE ARCH OF CONSTANTINE, SEEN FROM THE NORTH.

where spared became ownerless and could be rededicated by or to any emperor, as was the case, for instance, with the Forum of Nerva. But, throughout the second century, this arch, so strongly associated with the odious memory of a tyrant, remained unchanged and unclaimed, for during this prosperous age of the Antonines the senate continued to build special arches for each triumphing emperor. It was only during the third century, when Rome, impoverished and suffering from the frequent absence of the emperors, with an art in constant

decay, and with building operations almost suspended for a half century, resorted to makeshifts in the way of triumphal monuments. Between 203 when the senate built the arch to Septimius Severus and 303 when one was consecrated to Diocletian, we know of the erection of but a single triumphal arch, that of Gordian III, *ca.* 240. What was done by the senate during these hundred years to commemorate imperial victories? I expect to show that the senate utilized for this purpose the ex-Domitianic arch, turning this wound-scarred war-horse into a marvellous historic bulletin board, a triumphal mosaic and palimpsest, which became the quintessence of Roman history during the third century. Then, between 312 and 315, after it had thus long been purged of its original evil association and, as its inscription boasts, become "famous for its many triumphs," its evolution closed, and it was once more dedicated to a single emperor, to Constantine, after a unique and varied career, to be honored throughout the ages as a monument to the first Christian emperor.

It has been universally believed,<sup>1</sup> on the apparently unimpeachable authority of the dedicatory inscription on the arch, and on that authority alone, that when the Romans, grateful to Constantine for reëstablishing peace after his victory over Maxentius, just outside Rome, in 312, decided to commemorate the event by a triumphal arch, the architect gathered from several earlier monuments a number of bas-reliefs, statues, and architectural members, especially the main cornice, columns, and pilasters, and built all this material into the fabric of the arch as he erected it. To these spoils he is supposed to have added whatever was needed to complete the design, by the handiwork of contemporary artists, in the decadent style of the Constantinian age. Until quite recently it was supposed that the earlier sculptures that were so used were all of the time of Trajan and taken from one of his arches—either that on the Via Appia or that in the Forum of Trajan—or from some other part of his forum. But this theory, due to the current ignorance of the historic phases of Roman sculpture, was

<sup>1</sup> The Bibliography of the arch is too voluminous to be given here, and it would be superfluous. Good lists are given by Mlle. Bieber, by Sieveking, by Arndt, and by other authors of the studies quoted in the following notes.

shattered in 1889 and 1890 by Petersen,<sup>1</sup> who showed that the eight large reliefs of the attic belonged originally to a triumphal arch of Marcus Aurelius, and who also proposed a new interpretation of the eight medallions. It was suggested that the main cornice with its pilasters and columns, which were too beautiful to be Constantinian, were taken from the same arch of Marcus Aurelius, together with the statues of barbarians on the attic. Some years later,<sup>2</sup> a new impetus came from a detailed study of the eight medallions in the central zone, which led Arndt to attribute these exquisite works not to the Trajanic age, but to the neo-Hellenic art of Hadrian. An English critic<sup>3</sup> then put forward the suggestion that they were of the earlier Flavian age, were in fact Domitianic, taken from the *Domus gentis Flaviae*. Almost at once, a German archaeologist, Sieveking,<sup>4</sup> while accepting the Flavian date for four of the medallions, saw in the other four the art of Hadrian. Then, quite recently, the publication on a large scale, from casts,<sup>5</sup> of the heads in the medallions has led to an interesting discussion in which a number of critics have taken part, and in the course of which Sieveking<sup>6</sup> withdrew his dual suggestion and joined those who believe in the Hadrianic theory. It has been supposed that in these medallions, as elsewhere, the original head of the emperor was changed into a portrait of

<sup>1</sup> 'I rilievi tondi dell'Arco di Costantino,' in *Röm. Mitt.* 1889, p. 314; and 'Die Attikareliefs am Constantinsbogen,' *ibid.* 1890, p. 73. Cf. article by Monaci in *B. Com. Rom.* 1900, p. 25 ff. Later study by Petersen in *Neue Jahrb. f. Klass. Alt.* 1906, p. 522 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Arndt, in *Denk. griech. u. röm. Skulptur*, text to pls. 555, 559, 560, 565.

<sup>3</sup> Stuart Jones, 'Notes on Roman Historical Sculptures' in *B.S.R.* III, p. 213, published in 1905.

<sup>4</sup> 'Die Medaillons am Konstantinsbogen,' *Röm. Mitt.* XXII, 1906, p. 345 ff.

<sup>5</sup> By Salomon Reinach in *Revue Archéologique*, XVII, 1911, pls. I-XVII, with interesting symposium of opinions by S. de Ricci, Studniczka, and others. Cf. *Revue Arch.* XVII, 1911, p. 465.

<sup>6</sup> *Berl. Phil. W.* 1911, No. 39. The article which caused his reversal of opinion was one on the medallions by Mlle. Bieber (*Röm. Mitt.* 1911, p. 274), which illustrates the danger of basing a study as delicate, as aesthetic, and as detailed as that of Sieveking on an examination of mere photographs instead of the monument itself. It was a result which I predicted to Dr. Hülsen when he received Dr. Sieveking's article for publication. Such facile criticism without investigation of the originals ought to be discouraged, as it tends to confuse and lower archaeological standards.

Constantine when they were used on the arch; but as certain imperial heads were worked over to represent not Constantine, but some emperor or emperors of about the middle of the third century or later, critics suggested the names of Claudius Gothicus, Philip, Carus, Carinus, and even of Constantine's father, Constantius Chlorus. It therefore became necessary to suppose either that Constantine's artists had done this, which was hardly tenable, or that a few of the medallions had been used by one or more emperors of the third century in some earlier arch from which they would have been once again removed to the arch of Constantine, thus reuniting them once more with the rest of the medallions. This hypothesis also shows into what straits the Constantinian theory was forcing the best critics.

During this time no serious objection was raised to the attribution to Trajan and his Dacian victories of the four great battle scenes from a colossal frieze, now set into the passageway and the ends of the attic.

As for the sculptures of late date and poor style, they had all been ascribed to Constantine's artists: the Victories, the River Gods and Seasons of the spandrels; the keystones; the frieze; the sculptured pedestals of the columns. Quite recently, however, a dissenting voice was raised in regard to the frieze, the greater portion of which, including the triumphal procession, is ascribed by Mr. Wace to an arch or some other monument of Diocletian, a theory which would involve the wanton destruction of this monument only ten or fifteen years after its construction.<sup>1</sup>

This summary of the present attitude of critics toward the arch shows that the question has been attacked merely from the side of the aesthetic qualities of the sculptures, if we except a few valuable observations by Petersen on the main cornice and its columns and pilasters. In my own examination, the question will be studied from different points of view, and particular stress will be laid on the structural and technical problems presented both by the sculptures and by the architectural details. The solution which this study suggests will be

<sup>1</sup>Wace in *B.S.R.* III, p. 270 ff. Cf. Monaci in *B. Com. Rom.* 1900, p. 75 ff. and *Atti Pont. Acad. di Arch.* 1901, p. 107 ff. and 1904, p. 3 ff.

tested by the historical, literary, and traditional evidence: only such aesthetic questions will be raised as bear upon the problems of chronology.

In order to clear the horizon, the dedicatory inscription must first be examined. It would seem to state in precise terms that the arch was built for Constantine, and to make it futile even to discuss the question, unless we admit that this was one of the not unknown cases in which a restorer claimed to be the builder. But it is not necessary to have recourse to any such hypothesis. Paradoxical as it may seem, it is out of the mouth of the inscription itself that I can prove that the arch existed long before Constantine. It reads (*C.I.L.* VI, 1139):

IMP. CAES. FL. CONSTANTINO MAXIMO  
 P. F. AVGVSTO S. P. Q. R.  
 QVOD INSTINCTV DIVINITATIS MENTIS  
 MAGNITVDINE CVM EXERCITV SVO  
 TAM DE TYRANNO QVAM DE OMNI EIVS  
 FACTIONE VNO TEMPORE IVSTIS  
 REMPUBLICAM VLTVS EST ARMIS  
 ARCVM TRIVMPHIS INSIGNEM DICAUIT

Now, if we compare this inscription with others on triumphal arches, of which I give typical instances in a footnote,<sup>1</sup> two

<sup>1</sup> The simplest form of arch dedication is that on the arch of Titus: *Senatus Populusque Romanus divo Tito divi Vespasiani f. Vespasiano Augusto*. A contemporary example of the fuller form corresponding roughly to the formula on the arch of Constantine is that on the destroyed arch of Titus in the Circus Maximus: *Senatus Populusq. Romanus imp. Tito Caesari divi Vespasiani f. Vespasiano Augusto pontif. max. trib. pot. X, imp. XVII, cos. VIII, p.p., principi suo, quod praeceptis patris consiliisq. et auspiciis gentem Iudaeorum domuit et urbem Hierusolymam, omnibus ante se ducibus regibus gentibus aut frustra petitam aut omnino intemptatam, delevit*. Both types appear, in the next generation, on the arches of Trajan. The simpler formula, slightly expanded, is at Beneventum: *Imp. Caesari divi Nervae filio Nervae Traiano optimo Aug. Germanico Dacico pontif. max. trib. potest. XVII, imp. VII cos. VI p.p. fortissimo principi, Senatus P. Q. R.* The fuller form appears at Ancona, in which, after the imperial titles, we read: *providentissimo principi Senatus P. Q. R. quod accessum Italiae, hoc etiam addito ex pecunia sua portu, tutiorem navigantibus reddiderit*. In the previous period, we find the longer formula represented on the arch of Claudius in Rome recording the conquest of Britain: *Ti. Clau[di]*

differences will be particularly noticeable: that there are no chronological or triumphal titles given to Constantine, as is customary especially after the second century, and that the last line, in which the arch is mentioned, is an addition to the normal formula, which is unique in Rome and, in fact, in all Italy. In all other cases the inscription is a mere dedication, without particularizing what is dedicated. Normally the inscription would have ended with the word *armis*. There must be some reason for this break with traditional usage, a break which places this arch in a category of its own, and this reason must be sought for in the wording of this additional line. What is the exact meaning of *arcum triumphis insignem*? The unprejudiced Latinist would unhesitatingly translate it "this arch famous for its triumphs." Why has it not been so understood? Because such a translation would not square with the supposition that the arch was built for Constantine, since Constantine had not had even a single triumph, much less several triumphs. His triumphal entrance into Rome after the victory over Maxentius was merely a popular ovation, not a triumph, which is a matter formally voted on and decreed for certain specific deeds, including the enlargement of Roman

*Drusi f.] . . . Senatus Po[pulusque] Ro[manus] quod reges Britanniae XI devictos sine ulla iactura in deditionem acceperit gentesque barbaras trans oceanum primus in ditionem populi Romani redigerit.* Among the simpler and shorter formulas of the Augustan age, the arch at Rimini represents the fuller form (*C.I.L.* XI, 365), showing that the arch commemorated the building and repairing of Italian highways and ending: *celeberrimeis Italiae viis consilio [et sumptibus] suis muniteis.* The style thus inaugurated by Augustus in his early years, and which, as we have seen, was continued until the close of Trajan's reign, was not discontinued under the later Antonines, for it appears on the arch of Septimius Severus in the Forum: *Imp. Caes. Lucio Septimio . . . et Imp. Caes. M. Aurelio L. fil. Antonino . . . ob rem publicam restitutam imperiumque populi Romani propagatum insignibus virtutibus eorum domi forisque, S. P. Q. R.*

In all these cases the monument bearing the dedicatory inscription is left unmentioned.

It is a fact that has some bearing on the present case that the arch of Augustus at Fano was restored under Constantine and rededicated to him a few weeks after his death, between May 22 and September 9, 337: *Divo Augusto Pio Constantino patri dominorum curante L. Turcio Secundo*, etc. The original dedicatory inscription of Augustus was left when the new dedication was added. This constitutes the main difference between the arch at Fano and the arch in Rome, whence the original inscription had disappeared about two hundred and fifteen years before the Constantinian dedication was added.

territory and the conquest of foreign foes, none of which Constantine could claim. Yet, when the arch was dedicated to him, it was famous, noted, for its connection with *several triumphs*. Not even by the greatest stretch of the imagination, or by granting a breach of immutable Roman law and custom, can one regard this expression as referring to Constantine. On the other hand, it is easy to see how the senate, by taking an arch already built, already used as a triumphal arch, and rededicating it to Constantine, could by this subterfuge honor the emperor without breaking the law.<sup>1</sup>

The second peculiarity to which I referred is the absence in the inscription of any chronological and triumphal titles such as are ordinarily given to emperors on their triumphal arches under the middle and later empire. This is the more inexplicable because in the latter part of 315, when the arch is supposed to have been dedicated, Constantine had already been given in inscriptions of 314 and 315 such triumphal titles as Germanicus Maximus, Gothicus Maximus, Sarmaticus, Britannicus, Persicus, Adiabenicus.<sup>2</sup> In the absence of chronological data in the dedication itself, the only reason there has been for the selection of 315 as the date of the arch has been the supplementary inscriptions in large letters lower down. On the northern face are: VOTIS X on the left pylon and VOTIS XX on the right pylon; and SIC X SIC XX in the corresponding positions on the southern face. It has been supposed that these two expressions were undoubtedly connected with the *decennialia* of the emperor, which took place on July 25, 315, and that they expressed the hope that his twentieth would be as auspicious as his tenth anniversary. It seems curious that no scholar should have tested the accuracy of such a conclusion, but that all have

<sup>1</sup> See the condemnation of Constantine by Ammianus Marcellinus (XVI, 10) for breaking this Roman tradition by erecting arches in Gaul to celebrate victories in wars that were civil or within Roman territory. The proper theory is referred to in Pliny's Panegyric of Trajan, where Domitian's construction of arches without corresponding additions to Roman territory is condemned.

<sup>2</sup> See Ferrero, in *Atti Acad. Sc. di Torino*, XXXII, p. 837 ff. Cf. *C.I.L.* VIII, 10064; XI, 9; also Pauly-Wissowa *s.v.* Constantinus. It is still asserted that Constantine did not receive the title *Maximus*, which is given to him on the arch, until 315, but Cagnat himself (p. 483) acknowledges that Babelon has proved (*Mélanges Boissier*, p. 53) that he had it as early as October 312.

followed one another unquestioningly. The slightest inquiry<sup>1</sup> would have disclosed the fact that neither in the case of the VOTIS or in that of the SIC was such a rule actually followed by Roman custom. In the case of Probus (276-282), though he reigned for only about *six* years, we find on his coins the expression VOTIS X et XX FEL. Constantius Chlorus, who was Augustus for only about a year, has on his coins VOT. XX SIC XXX. Gratian (361-389), at the most liberal allowance, can be given only 28 years, yet his coins have VOT. XXX MVL. XXXX. Of emperors whose coins have VOT. XX MVL. XXX Constans reigned only five years, Valentinian II about eleven, and Valens about fifteen years. The expression SIC X SIC XX is used of several whose reign was much under ten years — Galerius, Maximinus, etc. Numerous examples can be gathered from Cohen, Eckhel, *et al.* The conclusion is that the expressions SIC X or VOT. X were used or could be used of an emperor during any year of his reign from the second to the tenth.

There is, then, no ground whatever, on the basis of these expressions, for dating the dedication of the arch of Constantine in 315. It could have happened just as well in 314 or 313; or at any time, in fact, after Constantine's victory over Maxentius in October 312. This brings us back to the question of the absence of any triumphal titles in the dedication. If in 314 and 315 Constantine had assumed the titles I have enumerated above, and if they are not given in the dedication, the logical inference would be that the date of the dedicatory inscription antedates 314. I would, therefore, suggest the year 313. As will appear later, the work actually done on the arch by Constantine's artists was not so extensive as to make it necessary to allow more than a few months for its execution.

We may conclude then, merely from the dedication, that the arch, already associated with several triumphs before the time of Constantine, was dedicated to him in 313.

Now, an arch, in order to be associated with several successive emperors, would have to be built originally by or dedicated to an emperor who suffered after death the *memoriae damnatio*,

<sup>1</sup> An examination of the index of Cohen-Babelon would be sufficient to establish the baselessness of this imaginary chronological certainty.

which entailed the casting down of his statues and the erasure or destruction of the inscriptions in his honor. In the case of such a triumphal arch, the elimination of the dedicatory inscription would be supplemented by the destruction of bronze quadriga, imperial statue, trophies, triumphal frieze, and any other decorative features that connected the structure very clearly with the person and career of the emperor. It would then be a mutilated civic monument unclaimed and undedicated, which could be adapted to temporary or miscellaneous purposes, and could at any time be rededicated. To which of the emperors with both a triumphal record and the stigma of a *memoriae damnatio* can the construction of the arch of Constantine be ascribed?

This question, which it would seem almost hopeless to ask, is answered with unexpected clearness by the famous topographical



Colosseum.

Arch of  
Constantine.Arch of  
Titus.Temple of  
Jupiter Stator.

FIGURE 2. — PART OF THE HATERII RELIEF, SHOWING THE "ARCH OF CONSTANTINE" AS IT WAS IN THE TIME OF DOMITIAN.

relief from the tomb of the Haterii (Fig. 2), known to all Roman scholars as a corner-stone of Forum topography, which reproduces the principal buildings along the early part of the processional route from the funeral ceremony in the Forum to the mausoleum on the Via Labicana. The first building is the temple of Jupiter Stator at the head of the Via Sacra; the second is the arch of Titus; the third is *an arch hitherto unidentified*; the fourth is the Colosseum. The artist indicates, as

clearly as possible, that the arch of Titus is in the foreground, and that the unknown arch, by its smaller size and lower relief, is in the distance, close to the Colosseum. It is given in profile and its façade has free-standing columns. There is a sculptured frieze encircling the entire arch under the main cornice, and the attic is crowned by an imperial triumphal quadriga. An imaginary niche or arcade is cut in the end of the arch for a statue of the Mater Magna, an indication that her temple was in this section of the Palatine. Every one of these characteristics suits the arch of Constantine. This unidentified arch stands about where it does, faces in about the way it does, and has the same design, in so far as it can be seen from the end. (Compare Figs. 2 and 3.) One of the unrecognized facts about the arch of Constantine is that it probably had a sculptured frieze under its main cornice which was torn away. 'If the arch on the Haterii relief is not the arch of Constantine, what is it? Not a trace of any arch has been found in the excavation of this immediate neighborhood, nor is there any possibility that it could have stood anywhere except about where the arch of Constantine now stands. A photograph taken with the arch of Titus in the foreground to the right, with the Colosseum in the middle background, would include between them the arch of Constantine seen almost in profile.

What is the date of the arch on the Haterii relief? The relief has been generally conceded to be Flavian, or, more specifically, Domitianic.<sup>1</sup> As the arch of Titus is reproduced, which was finished by Domitian, it can hardly be earlier. As the relief represents the funeral ceremony and the opening of the new family mausoleum, and as busts found in the mausoleum are generally conceded to be of distinctly Flavian art, it cannot be later than Domitian. Consequently, the unidentified arch must belong to the reign of Domitian. The use of free-standing columns at this early date may be objected to. It has been supposed that only engaged columns were used in

<sup>1</sup> Helbig, *Führer*, Nos. 670-675; Crowfoot in *J.H.S.* 1900; Benndorf-Schoene, 343-345; Wace, 'Frag. of Rom. Hist. Rel.' in *B.S.R.* III, 3. Judgment has been based mainly on the technique of the busts found in the mausoleum, but that of the reliefs is also convincingly Domitianic. It is my opinion that the group of four divinities is somewhat later, possibly Hadrianic or Antonine.



FIGURE 3.—EAST END OF THE ARCH OF CONSTANTINE.  
(With inserted medallion and frieze cut long after construction.)

the design of arch façades until the time of Hadrian. I have, however, myself called attention to their use in the early part of Trajan's reign. So far as we can judge they had not been introduced in any arches under Augustus, Tiberius, Claudius, or Nero. The arch of Titus, begun before Domitian's accession, did not have them. But in this arch on the Haterii relief they appear, and the inference would be that it is to one of the consummate artists who worked for Domitian that the innovation was due that was slowly to revolutionize arch design. More than this, I may say that several years before I had identified the arch of Constantine as an arch of Domitian I had concluded from a study of the coinage of Domitian that free-standing columns were used in his triumphal arches. As he made himself notorious for the number and magnificence of his triumphal arches, more than any emperor either before or since, it would have been natural for his architect to innovate in their design. The equation, then, can be stated as follows: arch of Constantine = unknown Haterii arch = an arch of Domitian.

The evidence of the inscription and of the Haterii relief, which might seem to be conclusive in themselves, had, however, nothing to do either with my first doubts or with my gradually acquired certitude as to the pre-Constantinian date of this arch. This certitude I gained absolutely from the study of the construction, and it was based entirely on technical grounds which showed me how impossible the Constantinian date was. Only after this conviction had been gained and its details were being carefully worked at and sifted did I see how both the inscription and the relief fitted in with my revolutionary idea and gave to my structural argument the seal of historical corroboration. If the objections to the Constantinian date which I enumerate on p. 368 are now reread, it will be evident that they can all be explained by my proposed Domitianic date.

As a preliminary to the technical study it will be necessary to describe how a triumphal arch was built. The materials varied at different times and in different regions, but one rule always holds good, because it was the orthodox traditional method handed down from Greece to Rome: that all the decorative work was done on the monument itself *after* con-

struction. We are accustomed in modern times to the habit of cutting the ornamentation — both figured and decorative — *before* setting it in place. So it must be reiterated and emphasized that friezes, medallions, rectangular reliefs, keystones, coffered ceiling, cornices, spandrel groups, were all planned, and the blocks or slabs on which they were to be carved were built up with the structure and left rough, with just the proper projection from the mass, and were not touched until the construction was completed. Then the decorative work was begun, at the top: first the carving and then, at times, the coloring. This preliminary will make it easy to explain the real relation of the sculptures on the arch of Constantine to its structure, and to show how untenable is the current hypothesis.

First, however, a few more words as to the structure itself. The official or central Roman school — as distinguished, let us say, from the Campanian school, or from provincial schools like those in Northern Africa and Syria — began by building triumphal and memorial arches of solid blocks of travertine and tufa and then of travertine alone. This was in the pre-Augustan and Augustan age.<sup>1</sup> Before the death of Augustus, the spread of the use of decorative sculpture on arches made artists adopt a facing of marble slabs and blocks covering the travertine, that should allow of the desirable beauty of detail impossible in the coarser stone. Beginning with a thin veneer the marble facing became gradually heavier. In the time of Constantine and for some time previously the core behind the facing had ceased to be travertine and had become rubble, concrete, and brick. This is exemplified in the Janus arches of the Forum Boarium and at Saxa Rubra, near Rome. In the arch of Constantine we find the earlier technique of the travertine core, and among existing monuments a close analogy is to the arch of Trajan at Beneventum. This in itself argues a pre-Constantinian date for the structure. In the parts where brickwork is added we find Constantinian work on our arch.

<sup>1</sup> Pre-Augustan examples are at Spoleto, Aquino, Trieste, Aix-les-Bains, Carpentras, etc. Augustan examples are at Aosta, Verona, Rimini. Note the thin veneer at Aosta (Porta Praetoria), which is paralleled at Spello in the pre-Augustan gates.

It is also necessary to note that Roman builders were extremely particular not to break the course lines of their masonry, especially in the facing blocks or slabs. The sculptural decoration was not allowed to interfere with this regularity. The course lines were made to correspond to the top and base lines of the reliefs. This was easy when, as was nearly always the case, the marble facing that was left plain was built up together with the projecting facing that was to be worked by the sculptors. In the unusual cases, in later Roman times, when already finished decorative units taken from earlier monuments were embodied in the new construction, as is supposed to have been the case in the arch of Constantine, it would not be difficult to follow the same rule. No architectural critic would hesitate to deny that a Roman architect could have preferred in such a case to zig-zag his course lines rather than take the trouble to gauge their height by his material.

But we find that, in order to incorporate the sculptured slabs into the arch of Constantine the architect was obliged in some cases to cut into the course above for the length of the sculptured slab; in other cases to substitute a wider block in that course with an offset in order to have it set down on to the sculpture; in still other cases, to supplement this by the addition of a small cornice strip at the base. The obvious and imperative conclusion is that in such cases the sculptures were inserted in an already existing structure and could not possibly have been built up with it. Again, no competent architect could decide otherwise. We shall examine presently the examples of each of these methods of insertion.

Before proceeding let me recapitulate the main reasons against the Constantinian date.

(1) It does not explain the series of imperial military busts crowned by Victories set into the masonry of the minor archways. The presumption is that they represent emperors, and that they antedate Constantine.

(2) It does not agree with the fact that the majority of the sculptured decorations were inserted into the structure of the arch at some time *after* the construction. Any architect familiar with Roman work can see this.

(3) It does not explain the terrible damage done to the main

cornice while the sculptures of the attic were so little damaged, but such damage could easily have been caused in casting down the groups on the attic and the attic inscription of Domitian.

(4) It does not explain the use, in the recut sculptures, of heads of emperors other than Constantine; a fact explicable only on the supposition that the arch was connected with these emperors.

(5) It does not agree with the fact that the triumphal frieze, which is even earlier than Constantine, is cut in the already existing masonry and was neither provided for in the design nor brought from another monument.

(6) One is unable to explain, with this theory, how the spandrel decoration came to be drafted on a preëxisting structure.

(7) It is, we have seen, contradicted even by the dedicatory inscription.

(8) It is contrary to Roman law and custom.

(9) It is contrary to conclusions based on the *Notitia* and the Haterii relief.

We shall now proceed to the technical analysis, beginning with what is perhaps the simplest problem, that of the end medallions.

*The End Medallions* (Figs. 4 and 5). In each of the ends there is a medallion, on a level with the eight medallions of the two fronts. They are in a later style and were evidently an imitation of the series of eight. It has been assumed that they are of Constantinian workmanship, though it has been grudgingly granted that their art has pre-Constantinian elements. As a matter of fact it seems like defying the elementary standards of criticism to assert that they belong to the same time and school as the frieze or the spandrels. They seem hardly later than the middle of the third century, and might belong to the time of Severus Alexander. A comparison of these horses with those in the triumphal frieze and the Siege of Verona will illustrate the technical differences. It will be clear, later on, that even this frieze is pre-Constantinian.

If we examine the relation of these end medallions to the masonry, it is evident that they were inserted and were not

part of the original structure or facing. In order to insert the Rising Sun medallion at the east end, which was to be cut in a slab too short to correspond fully to four courses of the facing, the architect first inserted at the bottom of the cut which he made a narrow cornice strip, to serve as a decorative base.

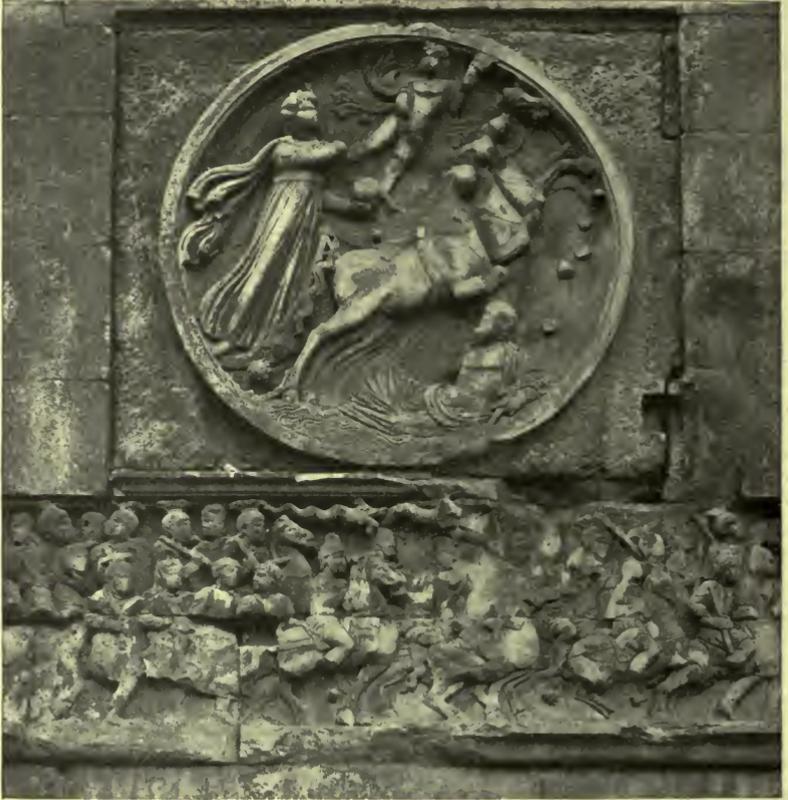


FIGURE 4. — EAST END MEDALLION, "SOL INVICTUS."

This is an evident insertion because it was against Roman custom to carve such mouldings in separate blocks. They were cut either in the top or in the bottom of a wide course, as can be seen without leaving this arch, for instance, in the moulding below the frieze on this same east end. But even with this inserted strip the slab was found not to reach to the level of the fourth course. The architect, therefore, seems to

have removed the facing above it; not only two blocks of the next course but the central epistyle block. He then shortened one of the blocks in order to admit of a new block that should project on both sides of the new medallion. In being put back the shortened block was injured. A new block was cut so as to fit down on to the medallion, and the change in the course line was almost hidden by the thin porphyry framework — now disappeared — which was brought up about to the regular course



FIGURE 5. — WEST END MEDALLION, "DIANA."

level. The jags cut in the block were plainly visible, however, at either end. After this the epistyle block was put back with some slight abrasions. On the right end the upper and lower facing blocks were not cut, but the medallion slab was cut away to fit them and the irregularity was concealed by the porphyry facing of the frame.

In the Moon medallion on the west end, the process was reversed. The two slabs that compose it (each of the other medallions is on a single slab) were longer than was needed, and instead of cutting them down to suit the coursing of the facing slabs, the two slabs of the course above were cut into. The base-moulding also was not separate, as on the east end,

but was cut in the slabs of the medallion. The numerous irregularities seem to show that the insertion was done quite late and led to considerable disturbance of the entire facing. Also, when the surface was cut down to form a square frame filled with some richly colored marble, a queer effect was produced by the narrow rim of the slab left on the right side against the courses.

The conclusion is, on technical grounds, that these medallions were inserted, in the rough block, into the structure of the pre-existing arch and then carved in imitation of the other medallions; on stylistic grounds this happened before the time of Constantine.

A. L. FROTHINGHAM.

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY,  
MAY, 1912.

*(To be continued.)*



## WHO BUILT THE ARCH OF CONSTANTINE?

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### II

#### THE FRIEZE

BEFORE continuing the detailed examination of the sculptured decoration in its relation to the structure of the arch, which was barely begun in my first paper (*A.J.A.* XVI, 1912, 3, pp. 368 ff.), I shall give a brief report of the work done on the arch during the intervening year. In October, 1912, I presented to the International Archaeological Congress in Rome my theory that the arch was built by Domitian, mutilated at his death, restored and used as a general arch of triumph until rededicated to Constantine. Thanks to the cordial and efficient coöperation of Comm. Corrado Ricci, it was possible to prepare in the course of only four days special casts and photographs for the Congress. But as they illustrated only the lower parts it seemed afterwards indispensable to test my theories by a close examination of every foot of the surface up to the top of the attic by means of scaffolds. Only by this searching study could the many puzzles be solved. Comm. Ricci granted his permission, and the Office for the Preservation of Monuments placed its corps of expert scaffold builders at my disposal for several weeks in April and May, 1913. A several-storied movable tower on wheels made it possible to return again and again to the same detail. Above it permanent platforms were built on the attic. No part of the surface was left unexamined or untouched. Even the thickness of the slabs was ascertained wherever there were cracks or holes allowing the insertion of a slender steel rod. Casts and photographs were taken of details that bore upon the problems under discussion. An experienced archaeological architect, G. Malgherini, took the measurements and profiles for a detailed series of architectural

drawings; finding, incidentally, that what had thus far been published was most inaccurate. An expert examination was begun of the marble used in various parts, in order to ascertain any differences in quarry and quality. Archaeologists and art critics were freely invited to take part in the examination and to test my theories and statements.

The arch has, therefore, been for the first time studied with the care and closeness that it deserves. It was inevitable that new problems should arise in the course of this study, and yet, while I found occasion to modify some of my opinions and to make some reservations,<sup>1</sup> it has not brought any fundamental change in my views. I have gathered a greater wealth of detail to prove the pre-Constantinian origin, and even the pre-Constantinian date (third century) of that latest addition to the structure, the attic. The materials have been gathered for a special volume; what will be used in these articles is only the part that bears on the problems of structure and age.

In regard to the contention in my previous article (p. 375), that it would have been against Roman law and custom to have built an arch to Constantine for victories in a civil war, the force of my argument was impaired by a printer's error which made me say that Ammianus Marcellinus condemned Constantine for erecting arches in Gaul to commemorate inter-necine victories. What I actually wrote, of course, was not Constantine, but *Constantius*, his son, and if the contemporary historian condemned Constantius for such an improper innovation, it is unthinkable that he should have done so with a new arch of Constantine of this very character before his eyes.

In my previous article I examined only the two late medallions on the east and west ends. I shall now examine the frieze.

The frieze is not continuous, as in the arch at Beneventum, but is in sections, as in the arch of Septimius Severus. Though it extends around the entire arch it has no unity either in height or style. There are six sections: one over each of the

<sup>1</sup> I found no travertine core (p. 381); everything within sight or touch is marble of various qualities up to the attic, where the structure is later and changes to brick and concrete. This does not, however, exclude the possibility of the use of travertine in the mass of the masonry, but it cannot be proved.

minor arcades on each face and one across each end. Those on the east and west ends belong to a triumphal procession, with an emperor entering Rome, and they overlap around the four corners on to the main faces as far as the first pilasters. The two sections on the south face represent victories leading up to the triumph; those on the north face give the popular festivities in Rome after the triumphal entrance. The universally accepted theory has been that all the parts of the frieze date from Constantine's time. The two scenes on the south are interpreted as the Capture of Verona (or of Susa), on his way to Rome, and as the defeat of Maxentius at the Milvian bridge. The north scenes are then his proclamation to the people from the Rostra in the Roman Forum and his distribution of the Congiarium after his triumphal entrance.

A dissenting voice has been raised by Mr. Wace<sup>1</sup> in a very interesting paper. Largely on the basis of the substitution of a second imperial head for the first one in three out of the six reliefs and also of the fact that Constantine did not celebrate a triumph, he ascribes the four sections of the triumphal procession, the Rostra proclamation and the Congiarium, to the next previous emperor who enjoyed a triumph; that is, to Diocletian. He leaves to Constantine only the two south scenes: the capture of Verona and the Battle of the Milvian bridge, because here he finds that there is no substitution of a second imperial head. He thinks that the four Diocletianic reliefs were removed from some triumphal monument of that emperor and finds substantiation of this in the breaks that run continuously along the base line of the reliefs, detaching them from the structure of the arch. I do not know how much attention has been paid to Mr. Wace's theory. I found myself obliged to discard it as more than improbable. The same break which runs along the base line of the reliefs he thinks Diocletianic runs also along the base line of those he thinks Constantinian. In the Battle of the Milvian bridge, where he does not believe the emperor to have been present at all, there are not only remains of the emperor's figure, but proofs of the substitution of a second imperial head; which, according to

<sup>1</sup> A. J. B. Wace, 'Studies in Roman Historical Reliefs' in the *Papers Brit. School at Rome*, IV, p. 270 sqq.

Mr. Wace's own theory, would be fatal to an ascription of this scene to Constantine. This one fact is sufficient to make his theory untenable. It has also against it facts of style and technique. He grouped the Congiarium and Rostra scenes, which are of one style, with the Triumphal Processions which are of quite different technique; whereas the two battle scenes, which he places by themselves, are undoubtedly by the same hands as the Triumph! Nor does it seem at all probable that Constantine should have allowed the mutilation of a monument built only ten or twelve years before in honor of Diocletian.

We may then conclude: (1) that no part of the frieze came from a monument of Diocletian, and (2) that, since both the basal break and the mutilation of the emperor's head are characteristic of all the reliefs on the main fronts, they must all have been treated in this way at the same time.

What must be asked is this: Is the mutilation of the emperor's heads sufficient to exclude the Constantinian origin of all these frieze reliefs? Does the break along the base line show that they were brought from some other monument; or does it show, on the contrary, that they were carved *in situ* and that the decorative work underneath the break was added? Does not the evident stylistic difference between the Congiarium and Rostra scenes and the rest show that these two scenes belong to a different period and to another emperor than the triumphal and battle scenes? If all the scenes are pre-Constantinian and attributable to more than one emperor, does their technique afford any indication of their date?

These questions will be answered in the course of an examination of each relief, beginning with the scenes preceding the triumph.

I. SOUTH FACE. (a) *Siege of Verona* (Fig. 1). The effect of the base-line cut just under the feet and cutting away the base on which they rested, though far riskier, was but little more damaging than in the Battle of the Milvian bridge; which is remarkable, seeing that there were so many feet almost or entirely in the round. Only one figure lost its feet: the soldier advancing alone to the right under the city walls. The reason for his mutilation would seem to be that the block immediately beneath him took an upward curve instead of

following in a straight line parallel with the left-hand and central cornice blocks. This involved a miscalculation, and the necessity of cutting away the feet of the only figure in the lower part of this block in order to secure, according to which theory one adopts, the insertion either of the frieze block or that of the spandrel block. It will be noted that an attempt was made to conceal the shortening of the legs by thinning them off in a very clumsy way.

There are two details which bear on the question as to whether this section was inserted or was carved *in situ*: these details are the bow of the middle archer and the lance of the soldier below him. This middle archer was carved on two slabs of the upper course. His left arm is extended so that it is mostly on the right-hand slab, holding the bow, of which the top remains against the frame. The right arm, holding arrow and string, with its forearm in the round, was, with bow and arrow, partly on one and partly on the other slab. It would have been impossible to move these slabs after carving. The damage to these delicate details which we see at present was presumably done not in ancient but in mediaeval times. Still, as it might be argued that



FIGURE 1. — ARCH OF CONSTANTINE; SOUTH FACE; SIEGE OF VERONA.

it could have been done by transportation, it is lucky that the soldier below the archer, who is carved both on the upper and lower courses, is holding a lance whose delicate shaft is cut in the round against the upper slab and connects closely and perfectly with the continuation of the shaft on the lower slab. Here at least the perfect preservation of this detail in unrestored condition is enough to prove that the slabs were all carved *in situ*, and that the damage to the archer's bow was not due to transportation. The head of the emperor, who stands to the left, with a flying Victory behind him, has not been treated as in the other cases to be studied. It is mutilated, but there was no provision for a substitution in ancient times of a second head. It is extremely difficult to decide what this difference means. Does it mean that this section does not belong to the same time and refer to the same emperor as the east and west sections? If the head was that of Constantine, must we not infer that the mutilation was accidental? But how can the accident theory seem plausible in the face of the fact that every other head in the composition is intact? It is easier to suppose that the head was made unrecognizable and that it was by mere carelessness that no second head was substituted. This supposition will be confirmed by the examination of the emperor's figure in the corresponding scene of the Victory of the Milvian bridge, as the two scenes certainly belong to the same series.

Of course this theory would exclude the title "Siege of Verona" as the subject of the relief.

**SOUTH FACE.** (b) *Battle of the Milvian Bridge* (Fig. 2). This scene is more seriously damaged than any of the series, especially where the emperor stood. The photograph reproduced in Figure 3 was taken for the purpose of showing the line of cleavage along the base, which is continuous, and just as clearly as in the other cases posterior to the carving. The peculiar thing about the emperor in this scene is that he has totally disappeared and that "his place knows him no more." He stood between the Virtus who advances to the right over the arch and the river god, and the winged Victory beyond, whose head is turned backward as she leads the emperor onward. Of the emperor himself who occupied the vacant

space between Virtus and Victory, there remain only the two feet and the outline of some drapery against the background below the place where the knees were. Also, the fractures show where the outlines of the figure were. Especially conclusive is the cavity made where the head was, showing the intention, at least, of substituting a second head. It is curious that nobody appears to have noticed these facts. They either think, as Mr. Wace does, that the emperor was not present or else they see him in one of the soldiers in front of Victory. That the emperor was actually represented and that his head was hammered away as in the Triumph, the Congiarium, and the Rostra scenes, completes the upsetting of Mr. Wace's hypothesis.

In both of these scenes, while the figures are heavy and clumsy, there is considerable action, energy, and some expression. This is particularly true of the archers, of some of the horsemen, and of the Virtus. The marking of the pupils of the eyes is one of the technical points of difference between these reliefs and those of the north face, where the eyeballs are smooth, and there is no attempt, as here, at expression.

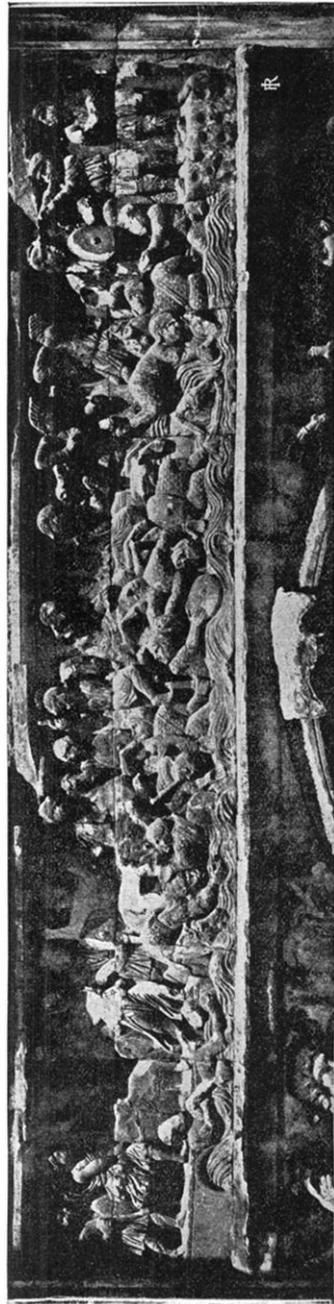


FIGURE 2. — ARCH OF CONSTANTINE; SOUTH FACE; BATTLE OF THE MILVIAN BRIDGE.

A good argument against the supposition that these scenes might have been brought from another monument is that they are so composed as not to have fitted any position but one of exactly their present length. One can imagine all the other four sections of the frieze as longer or shorter without fundamental disturbance, but the Milvian bridge scene in particular cannot be imagined as changed by addition or subtraction. It was designed for its present place, without a doubt. If it is pre-Constantinian, then the arch is also pre-Constantinian. I



FIGURE 3. — DETAIL OF FIGURE 2.

keep on using the term "Battle of the Milvian Bridge," though if the scene is pre-Constantinian, some other battle at a river must be selected as the theme.

II. EAST FRIEZE. *Triumphal Entrance of the Emperor, preceded by the Army* (Fig. 4). No continuous cornice frames the top; there is only a cornice strip under the medallion and connected with it. The cornice that serves as a base to the frieze is an important factor. Its lines, where they are preserved, are straight; its curved surface is even and of good outline. This is in strong contrast to the corresponding cornices on the main faces, and shows an earlier date. The cornice is cut in the same blocks that form the lower half of the figures

of the frieze. It will be noticed that this argues in favor of the theory that this eastern section of the frieze was carved *in situ*. Two other arguments for the same theory are: that the frieze is cut in two normal courses of marble blocks, of the same average height as the rest of the building blocks of the arch; and that the figures are cut back instead of projecting in relief from the structural line. This latter argument I have already used as tending also to show that the frieze was not planned when the arch was built, as otherwise the blocks on which it was to be carved would have been set in projection, according to the common custom.

The next point is the head of the emperor, seated in the chariot to the extreme left. The head has disappeared; not only that, but the hollow in the neck shows that the original head had in ancient times been replaced by a second imperial head. Now a technical comparison shows absolute identity of style between this section of the frieze and the already examined two sections on the south face — the Capture of Verona and the Battle of the Milvian bridge. It would follow from this clear substitution of a second imperial head that the original work could not be Constantinian, and if this is true of the eastern frieze with



FIGURE 4. — ARCH OF CONSTANTINE; EAST FRIEZE; TRIUMPHAL ENTRANCE OF EMPEROR.



FIGURE 5.—ARCH OF CONSTANTINE; WEST FRIEZE; TRIUMPHAL PROCESSION.

the emperor's triumphal entrance, then it is also true of the scenes on the south face and the west end. These scenes, therefore, cannot be incidents in the life of Constantine, but must be incidents in the life of whatever preceding emperor was commemorated in this east frieze. Perhaps the details will give some hint as to who this emperor was: the presence of camels and mules, the type of captured or carried standards, the costumes.

III. WEST FRIEZE. *Triumphal Procession with Captives and Booty* (Fig. 5). This face is in not nearly as good condition as the east face, apparently on account of the internal staircase at this end, which seems to have led both in ancient times and in the late Renaissance to considerable reconstruction, remodelling, and mutilation. This is shown in several ways: by the modern doorways, the irregular joints, the difference in the size, quality, and finish of certain blocks, such as those above the frieze on the right; the rough openings cut to give air and light to the staircase. This remodelling involved the insertion of antique fragments, especially a cornice block near the base of the staircase, which has been used as an argument for the Constantinian date of the arch, whereas it merely shows that the staircase was either built or remodelled at the time of the construction of the

attic, which was either under Constantine or in the latter half of the third century, if my theory is correct.

The ancient remodelling would seem to have been done when the frieze was carved, and in this case would antedate Constantine. A strong indication is in the arrangement of the base, which is entirely different from that of the east frieze. The base cornice is carved on the top of the course below the frieze instead of in the lower course of the frieze itself. The narrow band along the top of the frieze, which existed in the east frieze but was started so far back as to be inconspicuous, is here kept forward. The reason for this, however, is evident. It is that on the east end the figures are smaller and in two rows, superposed in rough perspective, so that the listel must recede in order not to overshadow the upper rear row of figures. This makes it the more noticeable that on the west frieze, where there is a single line of larger figures, the relief is much lower and the listel is flush with the face of the arch, that *at the right end there is no listel at all*. This is due to the fact that the two blocks in the course above this part of the frieze, which I have already noted as of a different finish (and which are probably of a finer-grained marble), are laid on a level below the rest of the course by four centimetres, just the width of this narrow band, so that in order to keep the figures of uniform size at this end it was necessary to carry them up to the full height of the slab.

At this point comes a significant observation. Two of the Roman legionaries in this section are carrying standards captured from the enemy. One is surmounted by a nude male figure; the other by a draped female figure. We might call them, for convenience, Heracles and Nike, as their type is classic. Now *the heads of these delicate statuettes touch the lower edge of the structural block* above the frieze. This bears conclusively on the question whether this frieze was carved *in situ* or was brought from some other monument and inserted in the masonry. Any architect will, I think, agree that if this block of the frieze had been already carved, it would have been impossible to use it in building the arch and to superimpose the block above it without fracturing these figurines. The same applies in a lesser degree to the crests of the four soldiers' hel-

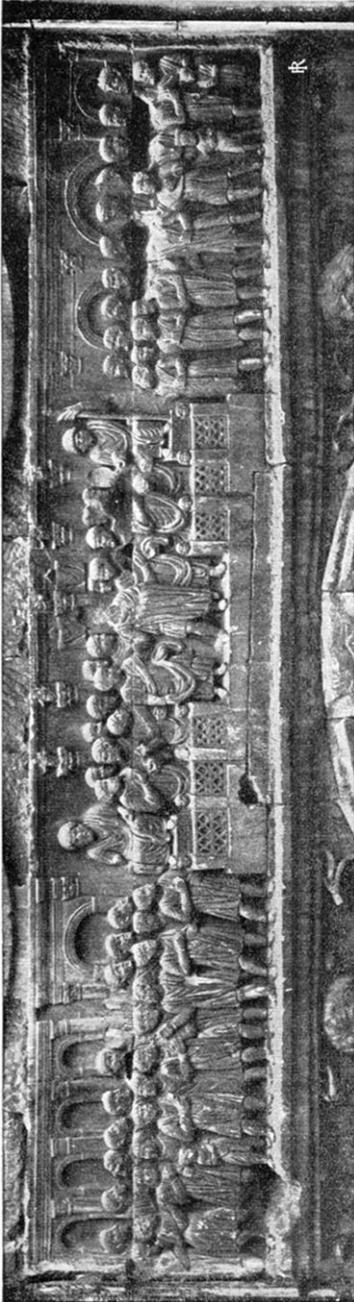


FIGURE 6.—ARCH OF CONSTANTINE; NORTH FACE; EMPEROR ON THE ROSTRA.

ments. This would dispose of Mr. Wace's theory that the frieze was brought here from a monument of Diocletian. Against this theory as applied to the other frieze at the east end is the fact that the frieze is there cut in the same block as the base cornice which is an integral part of the structure and can hardly have been brought from elsewhere.

IV. NORTH FACE. (a) *The Emperor on the Rostra*, addressing the people (Fig. 6). The break along the base line, instead of being below the feet of the figures, as it is on the south face, cuts across their legs at the ankles or above them, both here and in the Congiarium scene. In the centre the line of the cut is on a higher level through the base of the Rostra, along the entire length of the central block of the cornice below. Why is this so? The most plausible explanation seems to be that this was done in order to allow of more width for this cornice block which otherwise would have been so slender as to be easily broken in the centre. This explanation carries with it the assumption that this cornice block was inserted *after* the carving of the frieze,

and if this block, then the rest of the cornice and the spandrel sculptures. In support of this is the evident fact that the surface of the Rostra is carefully finished except only the part of it represented on this cornice block, where the surface is quite rough and done at a different and later time. The same crudeness appears in the handling of the upper part of the other two cornice blocks on which the figures of the frieze stand. The feet of the figures, below the break, are not the original feet; that is so clear as not to require argument. Not a single foot is carefully finished, in the style of the rest of the figure. In some cases, especially on the extreme right, there is not even an attempt made to fashion any feet below the break. In fact the fracture in some cases is so far above the base of the ankle that to carve new feet would have meant attaching them almost to the base of the calf of the leg. About 15 per cent of the lower leg was cut away. In so far as the frieze itself is concerned, and its connection with the cornice, the balance of evidence is in favor of its carving *in situ* and its mutilation when the spandrel decoration was added. This question will be more fully studied in connection with the spandrels.

The head of the emperor, who stands in the centre, was hammered off, and both background and neck hollowed out to receive a second head, now lost, if we assume that it was ever actually put in place.

NORTH FACE. (b) *The Imperial Congiarium* (Fig. 7). The emperor, seated on a throne and surrounded by his court, is acclaimed by the populace, while the routine work of handing out the gifts is carried on in four offices on either side. The break runs across the base in a perfectly straight line. It is even more evident here than in the preceding scene that the lower part of the figures has been cut away. I had a special photograph (Fig. 8) taken with a slight downward tilt in order to show that all the figures lost their ankles or even more, and that only in a few cases was any attempt made to replace the lost feet, even in the crudest way. The injury to the legs in some cases included a break higher than necessary. The technique is the same as in the previous relief. There is no expression; the attempt at action is like the attitudinizing of



FIGURE 7.—ARCH OF CONSTANTINE; NORTH FACE; IMPERIAL CONGLIARIUM.

puppets in a punch and Judy show. The treatment of hair and eyes differs entirely from that of the south face. The art is far poorer; one would be tempted, stylistically, to call it post-Constantinian.

The head of the emperor has disappeared. As in the previous relief there have been two successive heads, the head last lost having been set in the cavities of neck and background which had been hammered out to a considerable depth.

The same relation to the spandrels and cornice obtains here as in the previous case.

Just a word about an insignificant part of the frieze, which seems always to have been passed over without remark, though it has an interesting bearing on the whole question: I mean the returns of the triumphal procession around the four corners of the main faces up to the pilasters. There is but little room, only for a horseman, a horseman and a footman, or a couple of foot soldiers; yet these short reliefs may help toward certain conclusions. They are cut in the same marble blocks as the beginning and end figures of the main line of triumphal procession, so they favor the theory that the processional scenes were carved *in situ*. Their base line is on the

same level as that of the big frieze of the north and south faces, but their upper line is on a considerably higher level, which, if continued along these faces, would have intersected the base of the medallion frames.

There is another suggestion. Had the designer of the arch planned to carve a frieze at this point when the arch was built, he would certainly have made the two courses in which it was to be carved of exactly the same height, so that the figures would correspond in size at all points. As we see, this was not done. The top of the second course over the minor arcades is



FIGURE 8. — DETAIL OF FIGURE 7.

on a lower level than that of the corresponding course beyond the framing pilasters near the corners, so that any one running his eye along the main face, can see at a glance that the cavalry and infantry in the returns at the corners, and belonging to the Triumph, reach a higher level. This is another argument against the theory that the frieze was cut when the arch was built, to supplement the projection argument, and favors the pre-Constantinian date for the structure.

If one takes the trouble to analyze the grouping of the three decorative elements above each minor arcade,—spandrels, frieze, and medallions,—what is the impression one receives? Is it not that the designer was hampered and cramped in some way? If he could have set the medallions at any point in the

structure, why did he set them so low that he was obliged to flatten the circle of their base most ungracefully in order to make room for the frieze? And if he was free to set the frieze where he chose, why did he crowd it down on the archway so closely as not to give himself the room to run the cornice on an even line back of the keystone? The arch of Severus shows the normal distance between archivolts and cornice. Once it is admitted that the medallions had been in place long before the carving of the frieze and spandrels, the puzzle explains itself.

What seem to be the results of this study of the six sections of frieze?

In five sections the emperor is present. In each case his head is mutilated; in one of these cases it was made unrecognizable and in the other four another imperial head was substituted. As the only remaining section is part of the triumphal procession and is in the same style, it cannot be separated from the rest. Therefore, whatever this mutilation of the emperor entails is entailed for all six sections.

What is this consequence? Unless we suppose the arch to have been mutilated in favor of some emperor subsequent to Constantine, which seems unlikely,<sup>1</sup> the consequence is the following dilemma. Either the entire frieze was brought from other monuments, dedicated to other emperors, whose heads

<sup>1</sup> *Did Constantius mutilate his father's arch?*

For the sake of argument, and in order to exhaust every possible hypothesis, I would offer the suggestion, merely as a suggestion to be taken into consideration, that when the Emperor Constantius entered Rome in triumph in April, 357, he may have been guilty of mutilating his father's arch, and in some cases have substituted his own portrait for that of his father. Ammianus Marcellinus describes quite cynically this absurd travesty of the older triumphs, and possibly the emperor distributed a *Congiarium* and assembled the people in the Forum for a remission of taxes, after having entered in triumphal procession with imaginary captives and counterfeit booty. If it should be admitted that in order to commemorate this event certain scenes on the arch were made to apply to Constantius, then it would still be possible to connect Constantine with the "Siege of Verona" and the "Battle of the Milvian bridge" because the mutilated emperor in these scenes might then be Constantine.

Constantius remained only a month in Rome, however, leaving in May, and in view of his absolute indifference to the city both before and after this visit, and his unpopularity there, it seems hardly worth while to consider this suggestion at all seriously.

were removed or mutilated so as to use Constantine's head in their place; or else the frieze was carved *in situ* and the same process was employed.

The examination has shown that of these two alternatives the latter should be adopted because of proofs given in more than one relief that transportation of the finished reliefs without fracturing details that are still intact would have been impossible, and these proofs are supported by the improbability of securing from the spoils of other monuments appropriate scenes that would exactly fit the length of the places to be decorated, as well as by other minor arguments that need not be repeated.

If the entire frieze, then, was carved *in situ*, it was carved in pre-Constantinian times, as is proved by the mutilation and substitution of the imperial heads. Was it all carved at the same time? Were the original imperial heads all of the same predecessor of Constantine? We have found that a well-defined difference in style and technique separates the frieze into two groups. In one group are the battle-scenes on the south face, the two short ends, and the returns around the ends with the triumphal procession. In the second group are the Rostra and Congiarium scenes on the north face. The two groups, having been carved at quite different times, presumably refer to two different emperors, both of whose portraits were destroyed to be replaced by heads of Constantine.

It would be idle to speculate at present as to the identity of these two predecessors of Constantine, except that on stylistic grounds they can hardly antedate the middle of the third century. The important and fundamental fact is that the frieze, if these premises are correct, proves the existence of the arch before Constantine.

A. L. FROTHINGHAM.

PRINCETON, September, 1913.

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## WHO BUILT THE ARCH OF CONSTANTINE? III

### THE ATTIC<sup>1</sup>

IN the field of Roman historical reliefs the only rival to the series of eight colossal panels in the attic of the Arch of Constantine is the decoration of the arch of Trajan at Beneventum. I mean, of course, these eight supplemented by the three reliefs in the Museo dei Conservatori, making a group of eleven—a twelfth being missing—and all being supposed to have originally formed a group of twelve which decorated a monument of Marcus Aurelius.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Stuart Jones thought that this monument was the triumphal arch built in this emperor's honor in 176 on the Capitoline, for the double triumph over the Germans and Sarmatians. The twelve reliefs are supposed by him to depict the main episodes of this double war, and to have been arranged in groups of four on each main face of the attic and two on each end. I would entitle the eight panels on the attic as follows:

North Face	1. <i>Adventus Augusti</i>	2. <i>Profectio Augusti</i> <sup>3</sup>
(beginning at the left)	3. <i>Congiarium P. R.</i>	4. Captives before the Emperor
South Face	1. <i>Rex . . datus</i> <sup>4</sup>	2. Captives before the Emperor
	3. <i>Adlocutio</i>	4. <i>Lustratio</i> .

<sup>1</sup> For previous papers see *A.J.A.* XVI, 1912, pp. 368 ff. and XVII, 1913, pp. 487 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Strong, *Roman Sculpture*, pp. 291 ff. and 392 ff.; Stuart Jones, in *Papers Brit. Sch. at Rome*, III; pp. 251 ff.; Petersen in *Röm. Müt.* 1890, pp. 73 ff.

<sup>3</sup> The latest explanation, that this scene relates to the emperor's triumphal entrance into Rome, does not seem to me to suit the treatment of the scene, which shows the emperor and his suite about to mount horse and take to the road—which welcomes him; a scene frequent on the coins.

<sup>4</sup> There are coin types which favor both interpretations: that now commonly adopted, that the emperor is here dismissing the praetorian veterans at the end of the war, and that which seems preferable to me, that the emperor is here assigning a king to some barbarian nation, as was usually done in these wars. The type of men here portrayed does not seem to me Roman but oriental. The praetorian interpretation seems to me excluded not only on

In April-May, 1913, I was able to study the panels of the attic more closely than any archaeologist had been privileged to do, on the scaffolding built for me on the attic, as I have described in a previous article. During the course of more than a week I handled and examined every detail, and made photographs. I also examined the interior brickwork, concrete, and stonework of the attic. My conclusions did not agree with the theory of an



FIGURE 1.—RELIEFS AT EAST END OF SOUTH FACE, ARCH OF CONSTANTINE  
 (a) *Adlocutio* (wide frame) Lucius Verus series  
 (b) *Lustratio* (narrow frame). Marcus Aurelius series

original single arch with twelve attic reliefs, from which these eight were taken. I tried not to allow my feeling that such an overloaded attic was inherently improbable to influence my judgment. It was for internal reasons only that I felt obliged

this account, but because a careful examination of the coins shows that where the figure at the foot of the tribunal is prominent and with his back squarely turned to the emperor, and the emperor's hand is extended over his shoulder, as in the relief, the scene is invariably the presentation of a king. On the other hand, where the subject is the dismissal of the praetorians, the officer does not back squarely to the emperor; is in the background, often in smaller size, and the figures addressed are in uniform, holding standards.

to adopt the theory that these reliefs originally belonged to at least two distinct arches: one an arch erected not to Marcus Aurelius alone, but to Lucius Verus and Marcus Aurelius, for the Parthian triumph of 166 A.D.; and the other an arch built ten years later, in 176, to Marcus Aurelius alone. These reasons are as follows:

(1) If they had been all prepared for one attic, the heavy moulding which forms the frame for each one and is cut in the same immense slab, would be of uniform outline and size. This is, however, not the case, but the frames vary enormously, and do so not carelessly but so that they fall into two distinct groups, which can readily be distinguished even at a distance. This can be seen in Figure 1, which gives the two reliefs at the east end of the north face. The narrow frame is used in the right panel, the

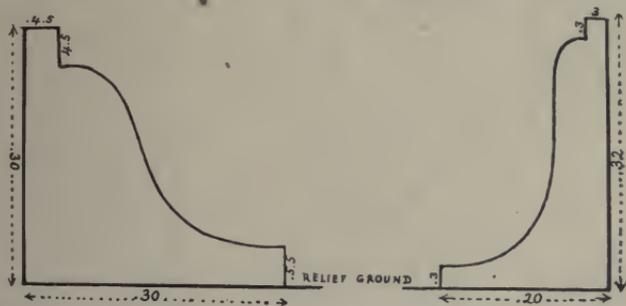


FIGURE 2.—PROFILES OF TWO TYPES OF FRAMES OF PANELS

wide frame in the left panel. Here the upper part is much restored, but follows the original lines. It will be seen later that the division of the reliefs into two groups according to the frame-outline corresponds to that on the basis of style. In Figure 2 I give the profiles of the two types. The difference is too great to be accidental. It would alone seem sufficient to forbid deriving both groups from the same attic.

(2) There is a distinct difference in style. The two left-hand reliefs on the north face show an exquisite finish, a Hellenic idealism and a grace of attitude and movement, which are less evident in the two corresponding reliefs on the right side of the same face. The figures of Roma and Fortuna, from the *Adventus* (Hellenic) are given in Figure 3. The two reliefs on the extreme left and extreme right of the south face are stylistically similar to the left-hand group of the north face. This is proved, for example, in the relief on the right end by the charming Hellenic Camillus

(See Fig. 1, b. and Fig. 6). On the other hand the two other reliefs on the south face—those near the centre—are in the same more typically Roman manner of the right-hand pair on the north. A glance at Figure 1 will show another difference between the two series: the base of the left-hand relief is five centimetres lower than that of the right-hand relief. Another stylistic difference which is very marked is the treatment of beards and hair. That of the "Hellenic" series is shown in Figure 4, representing the Senate, in the *Adventus* scene. The figure is a fine example of the highly finished style. The beard and hair are in continu-



FIGURE 3.—ROMA AND FORTUNA  
(Hellenic style)



FIGURE 4.—SENATUS  
(Hellenic style)

ous sweeping locks, with only a moderate use of the *staccato* effects of the deep drill. The very different treatment of the "Roman" series can be studied in Figures 5 and 9 where the treatment is coarse, with universally deep drill work and stronger contrasts.

If we examine the framing of these groups it appears that the four "Hellenic" reliefs, if I may so refer to them, have the narrow frame, while the four "Roman" reliefs have the wide frame. This again can hardly be a coincidence.

(3) The third point will, I think, make it possible to date these two series as well as to confirm them. It has to do with the

military standards. In the extreme right-hand relief on the north face, where a barbarian chief and boy appear as suppliants before the emperor, the main, central standard has the medallion portraits of two emperors, surmounted by Victory (Fig. 5). This relief belongs to the "Roman" series. On the other hand, the extreme right-hand relief on the south face has a standard with a



FIGURE 5.—HEADS AND STANDARDS  
IN NORTH 4 (Roman style)



FIGURE 6.—HEADS AND STANDARDS  
IN SOUTH 4 (Hellenic Style)

single imperial portrait medallion. This is one of the "Hellenic" series (Fig. 6).

Now Lucius Verus shared the empire with Marcus Aurelius (161-180) until his death in 169. Marcus Aurelius was sole emperor from 169 till 177, when he made his own son Commodus co-Augustus. During this period two triumphs were celebrated. The first, in 166, was for the Parthian war (161-165) and was in honor of both emperors. To an arch commemorating this triumph the reliefs of the series to which the standard with the

double portrait belongs should be referred. They cannot possibly refer to the Germanic-Marcomannic wars when Marcus Aurelius ruled alone. The second triumph was in 176, seven years after the death of Verus and one year before Commodus was made Augustus. Only the series to which the standard with the single portrait belongs can be connected with this triumph; for Marcus Aurelius did not assume the title Germanicus till 172, and that of Sarmaticus not till 176.

The importance of these images of the emperors on the standards can hardly be doubted. It was to them that the soldiers swore allegiance. The well-known passages in Tacitus<sup>1</sup> indicate that these portraits were movable and could be exchanged in the medallions on the standards on the accession of a new emperor. The presence of one or of two portraits on a standard may be taken as absolute proof that at that time the empire was ruled by a corresponding number of emperors. So far as I know, this deduction has never been made, nor the importance of these images appreciated in their historic bearing. I have other cases where they give equally important results in the way of historic identification.

Two questions may here be asked. The first is: Why do not both emperors appear in the first series, relating, as I contend, to the Parthian war? The answer is, that although this war was carried on under the auspices of both emperors, it was only Verus who took an active part in it, Marcus Aurelius not even visiting the East. In the coins illustrating the episodes of this war Verus appears alone quite frequently. The second question is: We have in the Capitoline reliefs untouched portrait heads of Marcus Aurelius, whereas we have none of Lucius Verus. What proof is there of any Parthian arch of Verus, to which such a series of reliefs as those I imagine could have belonged? In the first place the *Notitia* speak of an *Arcus Veri* on the Via Appia, which we have every reason to believe was for the Parthian triumph, as I have proved that arches for eastern triumphs were built on the Via Appia and for northern triumphs on the Flaminia. Besides, there is a relief in the Torlonia collection belonging probably to this series, in which the emperor has always been thought to be Verus. Though I have seen a photograph of it, I have not been able to examine this relief, owing to the inaccessibility of the collection. I do not venture to assert that this relief was from

<sup>1</sup> *Hist.* III, 12, 13, 14, 31.

the *Arcus Veri*, but I do suggest that the *Arcus Veri* may have been despoiled to decorate the arch of Constantine.

As for the ascription to Marcus Aurelius rather than to Verus of the figure of the emperor in the various reliefs of the attic, there is not the slightest reason for it. The present imperial heads are all modern, made in 1731, for Pope Clement's restoration. For more than two, or perhaps three, centuries before that time the emperor had in each case been headless. In all probability the missing heads were of Constantine, and these were easily detached because they had themselves taken the place of other heads and had been loosely fastened on. These other heads were themselves not those of the original emperor, I believe, but a *rifacimento* of the latter part of the third century. This is a point which will now be cleared up, so far as is possible.

The next point is: When were these eight reliefs placed on the attic of the arch? The matter is simple enough for those who follow the old theory that the arch was built by and for Constantine; but if the arch had been in existence since the time of Domitian and the attic that we now see takes the place of the original attic that was destroyed, it becomes a question whether the attic belongs to the Constantinian restoration or to a slightly earlier one of the third century.

In so far as the structure of the attic is concerned, it has already been noted, that whereas the whole of the arch up to the attic is of solid structural marble, the attic is a hollow construction in the form of a barrel vault of rubble and brick, against which the eight carved panels were set. A study of the construction shows that it cannot be earlier than the last half of the third century; its date would range approximately from 270 to 315, so far as can be judged from the brickwork facing. It might have been built under any emperor from Aurelian to Constantine.

The next clue is historic. The attic would be connected with a restoration of the arch due to some triumph of an emperor previous to Constantine, or to Constantine's restoration. Diocletian's triumph would be eliminated, as it was commemorated both by the *Arcus Novus* of the Via Lata and the pair of memorial columns in front of the Curia. The most probable occasions seem to be the triumphs of Aurelian (273) and of Probus (279).

The third clue is by far the most important. It is the head of the praetorian prefect. There are several instances of the inten-

tion of Roman sculptors of historical reliefs to give an exact portrait of the emperor's chief of staff, who was next in importance to the emperor himself in time of war. He stands close to the emperor, usually behind him; he is with him when he is on the raised platform. On the arch of Beneventum, beside fine portraits of Licinius Sura and Hadrian is one of Livianus as praetorian prefect. Out of the eight reliefs of this attic, six have the *praefectus praetorio*.

The reason for his absence in the other two is obvious. In one case all the figures beside the emperor in the entrance scene (North 1) are ideal figures—Virtus, Fortuna, Felicitas and Mars. There is no place for mortals. In the other case the subject is a congiarium to the people; a civil scene in which the praetorian prefect, who was a purely military functionary, took no part. His place was taken by the *praefectus urbi* or *praefectus annonae*.

In the six reliefs where the *praefectus praetorio* appears, the head is a portrait study of one and the same man, and this man is supposed by Mr. Jones to be M. Bassaeus Rufus, known to have been the praetorian prefect of Marcus Aurelius at the time of the Marcomannian-Sarmatian wars (168-177). But in studying this figure even from a distance I had suspected for a long time that the head had been recut and was not, as has always been supposed, the original portrait. When I was able to examine the reliefs close at hand, this suspicion became a certainty. The head had been worked over to change it from a portrait of a prefect of Marcus Aurelius or Lucius Verus<sup>1</sup> to one of a prefect of the later emperor under whom the reliefs were placed on the attic. In only two cases was it thought necessary to change the heads, those of the emperor himself and his prefect. The rest of the figures were not important enough to count. In the case of the head of the emperor himself, as it was always in the round and at quite a distance from the background, it was easier and better to cut off the original emperor's head and substitute an entirely new head of the reigning emperor. This is what was done. But these substitutes became quite easily detached and were lost or removed before the Renaissance. It is only a conjecture to say that they were heads of Constantine; this is quite a probable conjecture, however, and Constantine may have replaced an earlier substitute, as will become evident from what

<sup>1</sup> The prefect of the Parthian war was L. Furius Victorinus (159-167).

follows. On the reliefs in the Conservatori the original heads both of Marcus Aurelius and his praetorian prefect remain.

The head of the prefect presented quite a different problem from that of the emperor when it became necessary to change it. It was not even in high relief, so that it could not be removed, but must be recut *in situ*. The rest of the figure was not touched. I have photographed two of these heads, and they are given in Figures 7 and 8. Even a superficial glance will, I think, satisfy any unprejudiced observer that *the technique of this head differs radically from that of every other head in any of these attic reliefs.*



FIGURE 7.—RECUT HEAD  
PREFECT IN SOUTH 1  
(*Rex datus*)



FIGURE 8.—RECUT HEAD  
PREFECT IN SOUTH 2  
(*Captives*)

This fact was granted by every one who ascended the scaffold to examine the reliefs. In Figure 9, a typical group of heads shows the technique of the original sculptor. They are in the familiar Marcus-Aurelian style. This original style shows the extreme use of the drill, with deep grooves at right angles to the surface and undercutting; with curly hair and beard; strong contrasts; dramatic expressiveness; full lips, usually parted; deep-set eyes; fairly good modelling. If we turn to the prefect's head, we find that the drill is used in quite a different way, not driven deep and at right angles but diagonally; that the only deep grooves are some that were not obliterated in the recutting in parts usually less

prominent and closer to the background; that there is no undercutting or contrast of light and shade; that the hair is cut down so as to follow, instead of concealing, the outline of the head. The mouth also has thin lips; the moustache is almost or entirely eliminated, and the lips tightly closed. There is little or no modelling of facial planes, the forehead being marked with sharp lines such as the original artist never used. The treatment is crude throughout, showing a period of decadence quite unsuited



FIGURE 9.—GROUP OF HEADS  
IN SOUTH 1 (Roman Style)

to the age of Marcus Aurelius.<sup>1</sup> If any one should be inclined, nevertheless, to argue that the requirements of portraiture might have forced the sculptor to a flat treatment of hair, thin lips, etc. he may be referred to the untouched head of the prefect on one of the reliefs in the Palazzo dei Conservatori, where the technique is not different from that of the rest of the reliefs. The prefect here accompanies the emperor on horseback, before whom two barbarian chiefs are kneeling. In this untouched head there is

<sup>1</sup> The split in the neck of Figure 8 appears to have been due to damage done to the relief, probably in the course of taking it down from its original position or setting it upon the arch of Constantine. The parts above the break are original, not restored.

just enough resemblance to our heads to show the common origin; how the later sculptor had to work on a face with aquiline nose, bald forehead, and rather straggling beard. I may say, also, that in the case of one of the attic reliefs, that of the Via Flaminia (North 2), the original head of the prefect, almost entirely concealed behind the emperor's head, appears to have seemed so inconspicuous as to have been left almost, if not entirely, untouched.

Granting, therefore, that in five cases out of six the head of the prefect was recut to resemble the prefect of the ruling emperor at the time of the transfer of the reliefs to the attic, does the technique of this recutting give any indication of the date when this transfer was made and, if so, how does it agree with the date indicated by the brickwork of the attic? We know that the dramatic, contrastful style of Marcus Aurelius lasted, with ever diminishing value, through the reign of Caracalla (†217). The time of Alexander Severus (222-235) seems to have been transitional, with a return to delicacy of effects. Then there begins a thin, flat, dry style, with increasing loss of technical ability and life, with stippling often used in place of channelling, with shallow (instead of deep) grooves, with thin lips, flat eyebrows, eyes à *fleur de tête*, hair trained flat, and beard thin and hardly changing the contour of the chin. This style lapsed into crudity after the time of Claudius Gothicus (268-270). Then, under Diocletian (285-305), an abortive revival took place which continued under Constantine. It did not pervade the entire field, but by the side of inept and lifeless works, there are others, such as the base of Diocletian's memorial column in the Forum and some statues of Constantine and his family. Here we find the law of frontality and a successful use of contrasts of light and shade and a return to deep grooves outlining the figures against the background. In any case, as Constantine, immediately after his victory over Maxentius in 312, abolished the praetorian guard and the office of military praetorian prefect, it is obvious that no portrait of such a non-existent official would have been cut in his time.

Evidently there is only one point in this evolution where the recut prefect's head will fit into the scheme: the period after the death of Claudius Gothicus and before the accession of Diocletian, between 270 and 284. Sculpture was decadent, but it had not yet entirely lost the ability to portray individual traits. None of the characteristics of the styles of Diocletian and Con-

stantine are present. The period is then circumscribed to the years of the triumphs of Aurelian and Probus. Between these two triumphs I will not venture to decide. This question is of minor importance. The vital point is that this head was not recut in the time of Constantine. I consider that these five heads of the prefect, recut in the time of Aurelian or Probus, may be regarded as a conclusive proof that the attic was rebuilt at that time and not under Constantine. Their evidence coincides with that of the historic probability and that of the structure of the attic.

A great deal has been said about Germanic and Sarmatian types and costume in connection with these reliefs, and this would militate against connecting any of them with an oriental campaign. As I cannot enter into a detailed description of the subjects in this paper, I shall merely call attention to the fact that the use of trousers and mantles of this type was common, as everybody knows, to Orientals as well as to the north-Europeans of this time. In the relief of the standard with the two imperial images, which I have considered to be the leading panel of the "Parthian" series, there are two barbarians. In the scene of the "Inauguration of the King" there are five or more barbarians. The types, especially in the latter relief, seem to fit an oriental race as well as a Germanic race, or even better. A study of the heads from this last scene (Fig. 9) will show what I mean. Of quite a different type are the two prisoners, one with his hands tied behind his back, who are being roughly haled before the Emperor. These are of the north-European type: heavier of build and shaggier of hair.

All that I have attempted to do in this paper is to give the evidence furnished by the reliefs for dating the attic and for deciding whether they are themselves taken from one or from more than one monument. A complete description will be reserved for my general volume on the arches of Rome and Italy.

A. L. FROTHINGHAM.

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY.

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## WHO BUILT THE ARCH OF CONSTANTINE?

### IV. THE EIGHT MEDALLIONS OF DOMITIAN<sup>1</sup>

IN THE papers thus far published on the arch, after the introductory paper in which I sought to prove that it was built by Domitian (87-96 A.D.), I studied some of the sculptures that were added to the original arch during the third and fourth centuries; either by cutting them in the Domitianic masonry, as was the case with the triumphal frieze across the east and west ends, or by transferring them bodily to the arch from some other structure, as was the case with the attic reliefs and the friezes on the north façade, or else by carving them expressly for the arch and inserting them, as in the case of two medallions of the east and west ends, and the spandrel figures.

In the present paper I shall attack the even more fundamental subject of sculptures which I attribute to the original decoration of the arch, and therefore to the reign of Domitian himself. While my general thesis cannot be said to stand or fall by this test, it will be greatly strengthened if I am able to show that sculptures generally conceded to belong, by their artistic qualities, to the time of Domitian, are so related to the structure of the arch as to make it seem almost or entirely certain that they formed part of the original construction; and also that they and their surroundings were afterward modified during the changes to which the arch was subjected before and during the time of Constantine, in such a way as to add to the probability that they were there already, before these changes took place.

Such sculptures I believe to be the eight medallions of the two main façades, and the four keystones of the minor arcades, only one of which, however, has escaped more or less complete destruction.

The eight medallions are in two groups: those in Figure 1 are the group on the south façade; in Figure 2 are those on the

<sup>1</sup> See *A.J.A.* XVI, 1912, pp. 368 ff., XVII, 1913, pp. 487 ff., and XIX, 1915, pp. 1 ff.

north façade. Any apparent differences are due to the different weathering and light. Their average diameter is *ca.* 2.35 m., and they are carved in a single slab of marble. They are grouped in pairs over each of the minor openings of the arch in a panel; Figure 3 will show how they were connected with the decorative scheme.



FIGURE 1.—MEDALLIONS ON THE SOUTH FAÇADE OF THE ARCH OF CONSTANTINE (from Mrs. Strong, *Roman Sculpture*)

These eight medallions have attracted more attention and admiration than any of the other reliefs, not only on account of their artistic merit, but from the mystery that surrounds them. There is a unity of theme running through all of them; it is the hunting exploits of some emperor. Who this emperor was cannot be proved, but I believe him to be Domitian. The

scenes were so harmlessly impersonal that it was not felt necessary to destroy them when the arch was dismantled after Dómitian's death. The changing of one of the imperial heads into a portrait of another emperor, conjectured by different critics to be Claudius Gothicus or Carus or Philip,<sup>1</sup> and of another original imperial head into one supposed to be Carinus or Con-

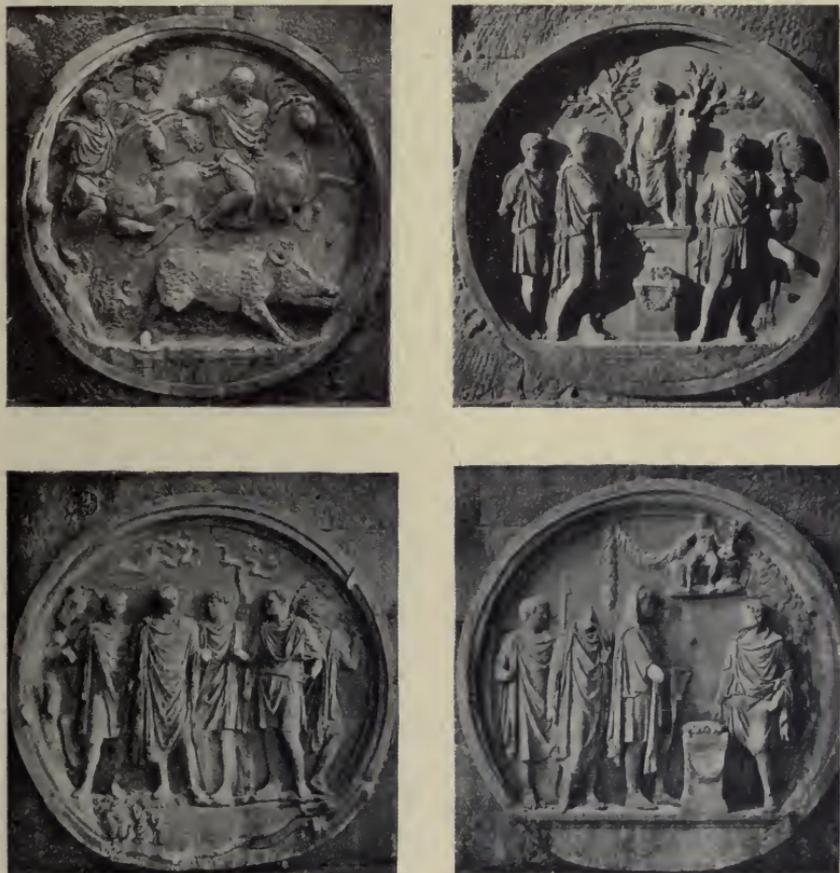


FIGURE 2.—MEDALLIONS ON THE NORTH FAÇADE OF THE ARCH OF CONSTANTINE (from Mrs. Strong, *Roman Sculpture*)

stantius Chlorus,<sup>2</sup> has puzzled recent critics who vary in their

<sup>1</sup> This is the Sacrifice to Hercules (N. 4), where the imperial head is so evidently recut away from the sacrificial headdress.

<sup>2</sup> The Sacrifice to Apollo (N. 2), which is not really a sacrifice, as the head is not veiled. It is probable that the original head was veiled and that in the recutting the drapery was cut away.

identifications. Another interesting change of the same class is the complete substitution (not recutting) of a head of Constantine for that of the original emperor.<sup>1</sup> In all four of these south medallions the emperor's head is enclosed in a circular nimbus,<sup>2</sup> a rare official Roman case of the recognition of the Sun-cult as the religion of the state, analogous to the recognition of the Mithraic cult by Diocletian in the base of his Memorial Column to which I recently called attention in this *JOURNAL* (XVIII, 1914, pp. 146 ff.), where Mithra himself has the nimbus, not, in this case, a simple but a rayed circle. Recent studies have made it abundantly clear that, for several years after the time when the Arch of Constantine was remodelled and dedicated to him, Constantine was officially regarded as a Sun worshipper.

The imperial heads in the four medallions on the opposite or south façade present quite a different puzzle. Only in one case is the head at all preserved—in the Sacrifice to Diana (S. 4). Here there is no fracture at the neck. The head is original. Neither is there any trace of recutting in third century technique. Yet it is difficult to assert that the features are Domitianic, because they have been so badly obliterated by fire. In fact Miss Bieber believes the face recut into a portrait of Constantine! In the Bear Hunt (S. 3) the entire face has been calcined away, but the neck shows again that there was no substitution; though whether there was recutting we have absolutely

<sup>1</sup> The Boar Hunt (N. 1) and the Lion Hunt (N. 3). In both cases the break at the neck is quite clear.

<sup>2</sup> It is supposed that the nimbus was added by Constantine; and there are still critics who believe it to be due to his conversion to Christianity; and for this reason Philip the Arab is identified with one of the other heads because there is a tradition that he had secretly become a Christian. There is really no foundation for such a fantastic notion. It arises from the quite general ignorance as to the history of the nimbus in pre-Christian and non-Christian spheres. To keep in the sphere of Roman imperialism, there is a notable example of a medallion of the Emperor Diocletian with a nimbus of this same pattern. Now, no one can accuse Diocletian of being a Christian! His nimbus is a sign of his adoption of the solar cult of Mithra in the same way as its use in the case of Constantine is a sign of his worship of the Sun god Apollo. I am preparing material for the history of the nimbus or sun-glory, and this includes examples of practically every century of Greco-Roman art from the fourth century B.C. to the middle Roman Empire. The Christian nimbus was a pure case of the adoption of a perfectly well-known "pagan" symbol, and was due to the association—often expressed—of Christ with the divine Sun. It was plagiarism, pure and simple. During the third century A.D., the prevailing worship was Sun worship.

no means of knowing. In the Departure for the Chase (S. 1), the loss of the head is absolute, also apparently by fire, primarily, and by fracture, secondarily. Finally, in the Sacrifice to Silvanus, besides extensive damage by fire there was a violent fracture, apparently due to the impact of some heavy object falling from above, which split off the whole front of the torso as well as the head. Evidently, then, the current opinion that the four imperial heads on this face were left intact is unprovable in at least two cases, and may be considered only as a probability.

It is only on stylistic grounds that they can, therefore, be ascribed to Domitian; except that in the one case where the original head seems untampered with and merely injured—the Sacrifice to Diana—the evidently delicate and beardless face belongs apparently to an early emperor of the Domitianic type, which would exclude almost any other possibility.

Older critics had attributed the medallions to the reign of Trajan. With the progress made during the last two decades in a critical knowledge of Roman sculpture, two opinions were brought forward, almost simultaneously: one attributing them to Hadrian and the other to Domitian. The majority of critics appear to have adopted the Domitianic theory, which seems to be convincing. Of course it also fits perfectly into my theory of the arch and its decorative history. But, it will not be necessary for me to repeat here the arguments on the Domitianic side.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> They may be seen in brief in Mrs. Strong's *Roman Sculpture*. The promulgator of the Hadrianic theory was Paul Arndt in Bruckmann's *Denkmäler*, pls. 555, 559, 560, 565, published in 1903. The Domitianic theory was presented by Stuart Jones in *Papers of the British School at Rome*, III, pp. 216–271, from a study of the medallions in 1904. This was a great advance on Petersen's monograph in *Röm. Mitt.* IV, 1889, pp. 314–339, where the Trajanic date is still unquestioned. There is a symposium of opinions of Sieveking, Studniczka, Reinach, Espérandieu, S. de Ricci and Bieber in *Revue Archéologique*, XV, 1910, pp. 118–129 (with fine cuts of the heads), p. 170; 1911, p. 465. Sieveking published a detailed study in *Röm. Mitt.* 1907, pp. 365 ff., in which he made a difference between the medallions on the north side, which he thinks Hadrianic and those on the south which he believes to be Domitianic. This theory was opposed by Miss Bieber in *Röm. Mitt.*, 1911, pp. 214 ff., 'Die Medaillons am Konstantinbogen.' She shows how apparent differences in style between the south and north medallions are only apparent and due to different weathering and to different effects of light and shade which affected the photographs on which Sieveking largely based his opinion. Sieveking's partial retractation appeared in *Berl. phil. Woch.* 1911, No. 39. To this explanation of apparent differences I would add the greater damage inflicted on the south medallions by fire.

This paper will deal with the reliefs entirely from the structural point of view, without discussion of questions of style or subject. I make a slight exception in the next few remarks because of a bearing on the questions discussed.

The first exception relates to the heads of emperors already spoken of as changed by substitution or recutting, on the four north medallions: two of the new heads being of Constantine and the other two of two different emperors who cannot be identified with certainty, but are usually thought to belong to the second half of the third century. All four have the solar nimbus. What explanation of these changes can possibly be given on the basis of the old theory that the arch was built by Constantine? The only plausible suggestion that I have noticed makes Constantine the author of all these changes. That he had only two of his own heads used and that for the other two he made portraits of two earlier emperors is supposed to be due to his desire to do honor to and assert family connection with previous Flavii and imperial solar worshippers. Constantine's historians claimed Claudius Gothicus as an ancestor of Constantine, and tried to connect him with the earliest Flavii. But there is a fatal flaw in this argument. Its authors seem unaware of the fact that the heads of these two other emperors—whether they are Philip, Carus, Carinus or some others—are executed in a technique simply impossible in the time of Constantine. This technique, which was current only between *ca.* 230 and 275 A.D., was characterized by abuse of "stippling," flat and thin hair, eyes *à fleur de tête* and other peculiarities which I have noted in a previous paper. It is absolutely distinct from the work done in the time of Diocletian and Constantine.

The real explanation of the changed heads seems to me to be simply this: When the arch was associated during the course of the third century with the triumphs of different emperors, some sculptures were added or changed to record each triumph. In another paper I shall study the eight half figures of emperors crowned by Victories which were inserted in the masonry of the two minor arcades to celebrate their triumphs. These figures are in the various manners of third century sculpture. Apparently it is two of these emperors whose heads were cut on the medallions, probably at the same time that their triumphant figures were inserted in the arcades below.

I merely refer to this detail of the medallions in order to show

that it favors my contention that they formed part of the arch as early as the third century and before, and were modified *in situ* to adjust them to the decorative features that were added and to the remodelling of parts of the arch surface. A more detailed discussion of the heads will be in order in the future paper on the eight imperial portraits of the minor arcades.

Just one more remark before entering upon the constructive discussion. The injury to many of the medallion heads with the greatest projection has already been discussed, as being due partly to fire and partly to the impact of something heavy falling from above. For instance, in the "Sacrifice to Apollo," the head of Apollo and that of the emperor's attendant with the horse were both broken off, recovered and reattached. These heads projected sufficiently (10 to 18 cm.) not to be protected by the frame. I have not questioned the current opinion that the emperor's head is here the original head worked over. But the point is debatable. There is an evident break at the neck; a magnifying glass will, I think, show traces of it even in Figure 2. It may easily be argued that the whole head was done in the time of the emperor whose portrait it is; or, as in the two other cases, the head may have been reattached immediately after the damage done at Domitian's death, and then recut in the third century. In any case, the fractures in these and other figures of the medallions, especially where they are diagonal or almost vertical, distinctly favor my contention that the medallions were damaged by the bronze figures and groups, the marble slabs and statues that were cast down from the attic after the death of Domitian.

Entering now into the heart of my argument, there are five main characteristics that bear on the structural relation of the medallions to the arch: (1) their shape; (2) the shaving of the lower curve of several of them; (3) the closeness of the joints; (4) the treatment of the surface around them; (5) the marble veneer of the enclosing panel.

I. *Shape of the Medallions.*—It has been taken for granted that the single slab on which each medallion is carved was circular and corresponded exactly to the outline of the enclosing frame. Both of these suppositions are wrong. The frame, in the first place, is not a perfect circle. It is so for about three-quarters of its circumference, but the other quarter, corresponding to its base, has been given a slight flattening, a depressed curve which

is so carefully graduated as to have remained unnoticed. In the Boar Hunt scene on the left end of the north side (N. 1) this blunting amounts to four centimetres, as the width of 2.39 m. is reduced in the height to 2.35 m. It must be remembered that the four centimetres are taken from about a quarter of the circumference.

Far more important than this is another fact of which I became aware only when I studied the medallions very closely from the scaffold. It is that this circular-appearing slab rests on a square base; that from a quarter to a fifth of the lower circumference of its frame is not fitted into a slab cut with a curved edge to receive it, as is the case with all the rest of the circumference, but that what appears to be a separate base block is in reality an integral part of the medallion. The true outline of

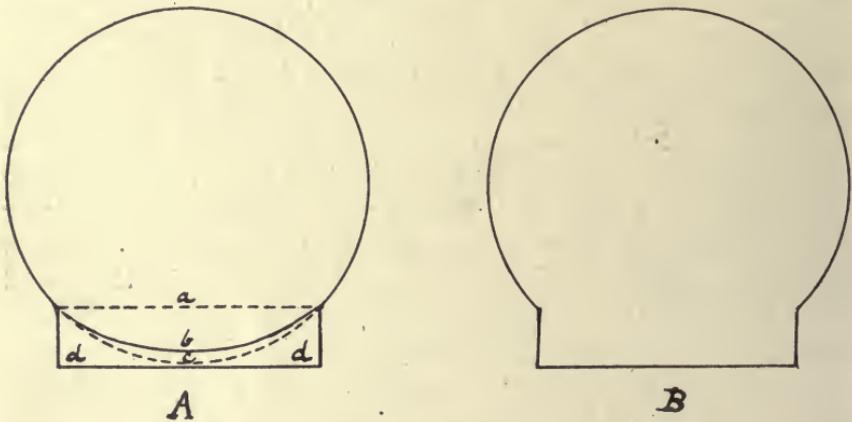


FIGURE 3.—SACRIFICE TO APOLLO (N. 2)

(A shows base-line of figures (a); actual outline of cornice (b); perfect circle (c); and squared base (d). B shows the plain block outline)

the medallion block is given in Figure 3, where in (A) the dotted line stands for the true circle at the base, and the black line for the outline of the actual medallion cornice, while in (B) is the actual shape of the block in which the medallion is cut.

The architects to whom I communicated my discovery of the square base of the medallion blocks were of the opinion that it was a strong argument in favor of my theory that the medallions were an original part of a Domitianic arch, especially in view of the extreme closeness of the joints. In confirmation I ought to call attention to the fact that these medallion blocks are not thin slabs that could easily be transferred. I tried to gauge

their thickness, but found it impossible to run into the joints the thin steel skewer which I had brought for the purpose. Only a long slender hat-pin could be inserted! I ran it to its end without meeting any obstacle so I know that the blocks are more than 35 centimetres thick; how much more I cannot say.

II. *The Cut in the Base of some Medallions.*—The difference between the slight flattening of the lower part of the circle on the north side in medallions 1-3, which was evidently planned at the outset by a keen-eyed and truly aesthetic artist, and the more obvious and crude flattening on the south side has never been noticed, much less explained.

Evidently there must originally have been the same slight flattening as on the north. But, for some reason this original outline was modified at some time. The outline was flattened at least twice as much, in a crude fashion. When this was done



FIGURE 4.—SACRIFICE TO SILVANUS (S. 2); TRIMMED BASE

the encircling frame-moulding must have been so seriously encroached upon that at the extreme base it must have been practically obliterated. It was consequently seen by the stone-cutters that in order to conceal this defect it would be necessary to shave off the face of as much of the lower part of the medallion frame as was affected by this change of outline. In this way the outline of the frame was totally done away with. The tooling of the new surface is very rough and shows its late date, in a period of decadence. In the last medallion on the right there was evidently a slight variation in level, because it was found necessary to trim the bottom but very slightly. The "Sacrifice to Silvanus" (S. 2) in Figure 4 is typical of the three south medallions 1-2-3 in the amount of the trimming.

In order to make the whole matter perfectly clear, I give in Figure 5 a diagram based on the "Sacrifice to Silvanus." It

shows how the vertical line of the square medallion base corresponds to the horizontal base line of the relief and that this point of intersection is the point where the designer broke the line of the circle in order, apparently, to give an appearance of greater stability to his base. This is represented by the dotted line. Then, when the frieze was inserted, the base was trimmed crudely to the present line—not as evenly as in the cut—making a small gap between medallion and frieze.

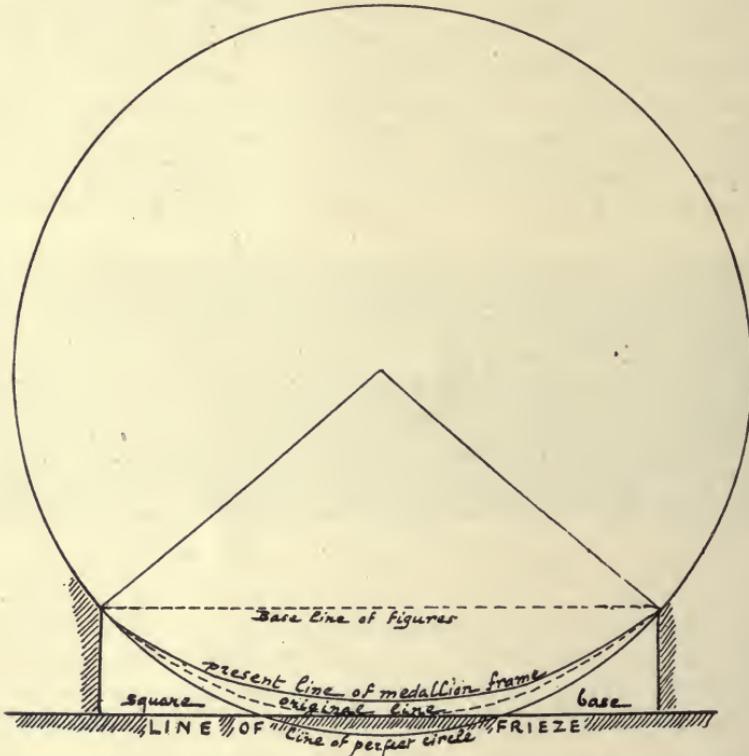


FIGURE 5.—SACRIFICE TO SILVANUS (S. 2); SHOWING VARIATIONS

What was the reason for this mutilation? It seems to me perfectly evident. It constitutes, in fact, one of the most cogent reasons for believing the medallions to be part of a Flavian arch. One has only to note that if this change had *not* been made there would have been absolutely no space between the medallion frames and the friezes below them! Whether the friezes were inserted or were carved in the existing masonry makes no practical difference. At whatever time the frieze was carved or inserted it became absolutely necessary to cut away part of these

medallion frames in order to continue without interruption the panelling of colored marble veneer around the entire medallion.

To a lesser degree the same process was required on one only of the north medallions: the one on the extreme right, the "Sacrifice to Hercules." Here the flattening needed was considerably less, but is quite evident and accompanied by a similar but less extensive cutting away of the frame and lower surface.<sup>1</sup>

III. *Close Joints, Surface Tooling and Veneer.*—If the medallions had been taken from an older monument and been built into the arch in the course of construction in the time of Constantine, they would have been fitted into a wall built of already prepared blocks, which would have been set with their faces sufficiently in retreat to allow of receiving a marble veneer without the need to cut them back again. The architect would in that case have been perfectly free to place them at any height and in any relation to the other decorative features that he chose. He would have arranged the sculptured friezes under the medallions in such a way that each should not interfere with the other, but they should have an adequate space between them for the enclosing marble veneer.

Now, it is perfectly evident that things did not happen in this way. We have already seen that the architect could not have been free to correlate as he pleased the friezes and medallions, but was obliged to mutilate half of the medallions to get room for the friezes. Also a glance at Figure 7 will show that the use of a veneer could not have been present in the mind of the architect when the medallions were set in the arch because the blocks were refaced and cut back *in situ*, when the medallions were already in place, if we can trust the evidence that stares at us from the panels.

There is a great difference between the south and north sides in the condition of the surface of the panels. On the north we can study it as it was originally recut, some time in the third century; but on the south side it is impossible to be at all sure of the date of the present surfacing, which is a pot-pourri of rough and smooth masonry, with occasional wide joints. The masonry of the north side shows extraordinarily close joints everywhere.

<sup>1</sup> In the medallion to the left—the Lion Hunt—it is not easy to say whether there may not be a slight blunting because, as the body of the lion both interrupts the frame in any case and also gives a naturally irregular outline, the question is an open one.

Moreover, the courses are formed, at the base, of vertical, not of horizontal blocks, giving much wider courses, and showing how the designer planned the masonry with due regard for the insertion of the medallions at this level. In connection with the closeness of the joints, I would call attention to the contrast with the loose joints on the upper line of the friezes, as a further indication that these friezes were inserted.

The next point is the tooling of the surface of the panels. I am inclined to believe that these panels were not formed around the medallions at the time of the first restoration of the arch; that is to say when the columns were added, the main cornice restored, and the *resaults* added to it above the columns. It seems as if when the pilaster responds to these columns were set into the arch the original surface still existed. Of course, the theory that I hold of successive additions during the third century in connection with the triumphs of different emperors, involves a different date for, let us say, the insertion of each pair of friezes. The two north friezes were set in, I believe, at a different time from the two south friezes; and the triumphal friezes on the two short east and west ends, with their short returns on the north and south fronts, belong to a third and still later date, as they presuppose the existence of the other friezes.<sup>1</sup> I shall not enter into this question here, and mention it merely because it was necessary to say this in order to explain that the panelling of the north face was done at a different time from that of the south face (probably earlier) and this may explain the difference in technique.

I do not think that, on reflection, any critic would contend that the use of a veneer in these panels was part of the original plan. There are two reasons not already mentioned. The first is that where a marble facing is found it is set against a core of rubble, of brick, or, in earlier times, of travertine. But in this arch the structure itself is of marble blocks, so that marble upon marble is like painting the lily. The application of a marble veneer to a marble structure must therefore be due to circumstances arising after the erection of the structure. The second

<sup>1</sup> If there had been no friezes already on the main faces of the arch when the triumphal procession was cut into its surface, there is no doubt in my mind that this procession would have started on the left end of the north face and occupied the spaces over the minor arcades. It is quite abnormal that it should be split up as it is; it is so by *force majeure*, owing to pre-existing circumstances.

reason is the special nature of the facing. The rule is that where there is a marble facing to a structure it consists of more or less heavy slabs. Only in a few early Augustan structures such as the Porta Praetoria at Aosta and the city gates of Spello was there a use of thinner slabs; but even in these cases the marble



FIGURE 6.—ARCH OF CONSTANTINE FROM THE NORTHEAST

is considerably thicker than the veneers on the arch of Constantine and was not colored. In fact, the technique of these veneered panels is a unique example of the transfer to the exterior of a structure of a process elsewhere used only for interior wall decoration. We are familiar with the use of colored marble veneers in the halls of Roman basilicas, thermae, palaces, etc., and with the transmission of this brilliant and permanent form

of interior decoration to Byzantine religious and civil art. The fact that only on the arch of Constantine, if I am not mistaken, is it used on an outside wall, is a further proof that it was not an



FIGURE 7.—ARCH OF CONSTANTINE; SOUTH FAÇADE, WESTERN PANEL

original but an emergency method, to solve a difficult problem of re-surfacing.

Before attacking the details of the treatment of the panel sur-

faces, the question of the surface of the arch masonry must be at least glanced at in so far as it affects these problems. The best view for this purpose is that given in Figure 6 looking diagonally from Northeast to Southwest; that is, across the north façade from the east end. This shows the original Domitianic masonry, practically untouched, of the whole short end, up to the main cornice and around the corner of the main face as far as the pilasters. It is plain how the triumphal frieze was cut into two courses of the old blocks in the third century and brought around the corners as far as the pilasters. Then, beyond the pilasters, the surface was cut away, a little earlier in the third century, around the pairs of medallions, in order to connect the medallions with the newly inserted friezes, and leaving these medallions as an oasis in a desert of third



FIGURE 8.—SACRIFICE TO APOLLO (N. 2);  
TOOLING MARKS

century work. For, in the centre, even the archivolts of the main arcade were recut. The architectural part of this transformation will be treated in another paper.

At present I shall merely say that the surface around the medallions was cut back between 11 and 12 centimetres, and that, after architrave above and sculptured frieze below had been used to frame the panels at top and bottom and pilasters at the sides, a coat of cement from 4 to 5 centimetres thick was spread over the ground of the panels and against this were set thin veneer slabs of various colored marbles, fastened also by lead, and forming a brilliant ground for the medallion reliefs. The veneering slabs varied in thickness from 0.75 to 1.5 centimetres. We cannot say what was the color scheme of the veneer, because it was almost entirely torn away during the Middle Ages. In prizing

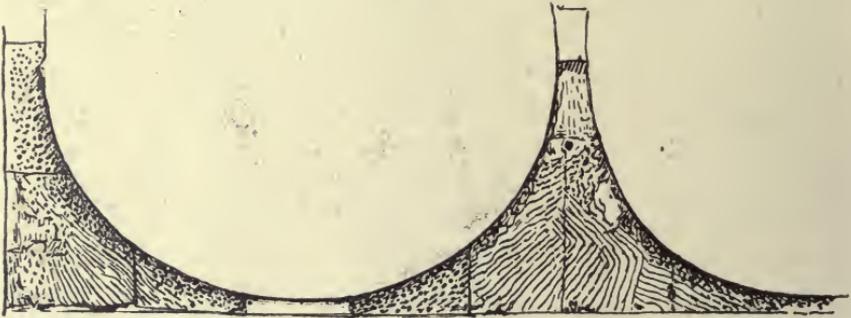


FIGURE 9.—TOOLING AT BASE OF BOAR HUNT AND SACRIFICE TO APOLLO (N. 1-2)

off the veneer a few fragments at the narrowest points were left—too small and few in number to tell much of a story. Many bunches of the cement backing remain. At intervals the square holes for the lead can be noted.

Except for the places where some cement remains we can study the tooling of the marble blocks, which is of course rough and intended to be concealed. Now, the technique of this tooling is interesting. In fact I believe it to furnish the strongest of all the arguments in favor of my theory that when the surface was cut away the medallions were already a part of the arch.

The tooling marks can best be studied on the north face, where the treatment, as I have already said, is quite different from that of the south face. There are two important peculiarities of this tooling: (1) that it is often continuous from one slab to

another across the joints; and (2) that its lines are extremely irregular and diagonal, being evidently determined in their direction, their changes, and juxtapositions by the previous presence of the medallions.

The facts can best be studied in the panel which contains the Boar Hunt and the Sacrifice to Apollo (N. 1-2), illustrated in Figures 7, 8, and 9. A piece of veneer remains at both top and bottom of N. 1, at the bottom of N. 2, and between them in the centre. The top piece is 12 cm. wide; the bottom pieces 7 cm. wide; the piece between the medallions is 16 cm. wide. All but the latter, which is porphyry, seem to be white marble. The porphyry fragment is 0.75 cm. thick, is set 5 cm. away from the surface of the masonry and 5.5 cm. back of the medallion frame.

The block forming the medallion base is very roughly and irregularly cut away near the frame of the medallion, so that the



FIGURE 10.—BASE OF SACRIFICE TO HERCULES (N. 4)

surface is not flat but curves concavely, especially at the narrower part of the neck, as if the work had been done after the frieze had been put in position.

The inference to be drawn from the direction and length of the tooling lines is extraordinarily clear. While this is comparatively evident in the photographic illustrations of Figures 7 and 8, I have made it plainer by a careful linear facsimile in Figure 9. The three characteristics I have already mentioned are here: The continuation of the lines across the joints; the fact that the tooling does not, as would be natural, follow the rectangular lines of the blocks; but that its lines are varied so as to show that they were conditioned by the medallion frames.

In Figure 10 is the lower part of N. 4 (Sacrifice to Hercules) where it is very plain how crudely the bottom was shaved away to make room for the frieze, which would otherwise have come directly against it. The light shining on the left curve of the

base shows how there is no joint below the point where it intersects the last vertical joint; that is, how the slab rises on a square base.

The reason then for considering the medallions an original part of the arch are:

(1) That they are of Domitianic art, and that the arch is Domitianic;

(2) That they are innocuous and generic in theme and so could be spared by the iconoclasts at Domitian's death;

(3) That they set in the masonry of the arch with perfect joints of the best period and with a square base that forms part of the course masonry;

(4) That they were already in the masonry when its face was cut back all around them to add the marble veneer, as is shown by the tooling;

(5) That they were already there when the friezes below were carved or set in, as is shown by the way it became necessary to mutilate their base line in order to leave any space between them and the frieze;

(6) That the changes in the imperial heads harmonize with the idea that the arch was used to commemorate triumphs of emperors of the third century before the time of Constantine.

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