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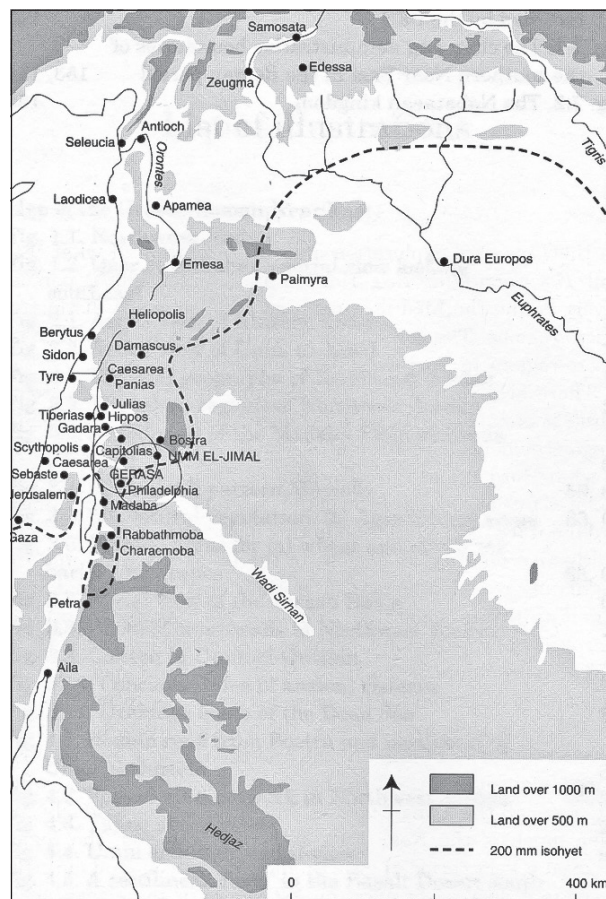
David D. Boyer

## The Ruins of Gerasa in 1816-1819: An Analysis of the Plan and Drawing Archives of William John Bankes and Charles Barry.

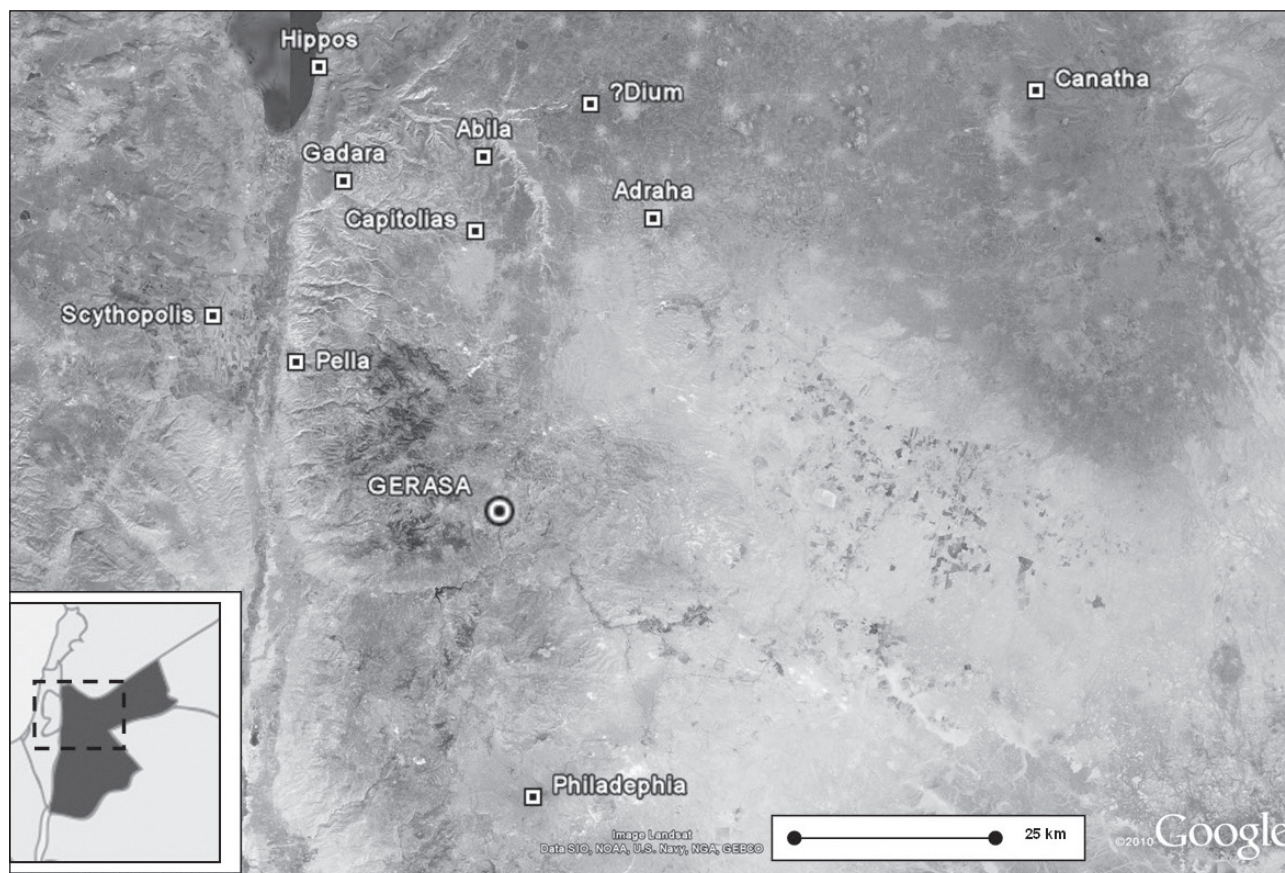
### Introduction

The ancient city of Gerasa is situated in a fertile and, at one time, well-watered valley in the eastern ‘Ajlūn highlands in north-west Jordan (FIG. 1). The valley’s natural advantages attracted human occupation from as early as the Lower Palaeolithic (Kirkbride 1958: 9-11), with evidence of more sustained levels of occupation in the Bronze and Iron Ages within the city area (Braemer 1989: 318). Archaeological evidence confirms that a Hellenistic colony had been established on the site by the end of the second century BC (Braemer 1989: 318; Kehrberg and Manley 2002: 197), one of a number of similar colonies in the region that together formed the Decapolis (FIG. 2). The city grew and flourished in the centuries following the establishment of Roman administration. A major phase of public building in the first and second centuries AD transformed Gerasa into a middle-sized provincial city within the Decapolis, second only in importance to Scythopolis. A dearth of monument construction in the third and fourth centuries AD was followed by an extended period of church building from the late fourth to early seventh centuries AD. Walmsley (1992: 350) and Gawlikowski (2004: 472) argue convincingly that the city did not merely survive the Islamic conquest in the seventh century but thrived in the early Islamic period.

However, the city subsequently declined and in AD 1225 the Arab geographer Yāqūt described it as “what was once mighty city, but is now a total ruin” (Le Strange 1890: 462). There is evidence of occupation in the late Mamlūk



1. The Near East in the Graeco-Roman Period (after Kennedy 2007: 14).



2. The Region of the Decapolis (D. D. Boyer and Google Earth).

period (14<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> centuries) at several locations within the city, including the North Theatre (Stewart 1986: 239) and adjacent Church of Bishop Isaiah (Clark 1986: 315), and it is likely that some sort of settlement continued at the site until at least the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century when the 1597 Ottoman census records a village of a dozen families (Hütteroth and Abdulfattah 1977: 164).

Modern archaeological excavations at Gerasa date from the 1920s and, while much of the city remains to be excavated, the major monuments and buildings on the west side dating from the Roman - Byzantine period are now well understood (FIG. 3).

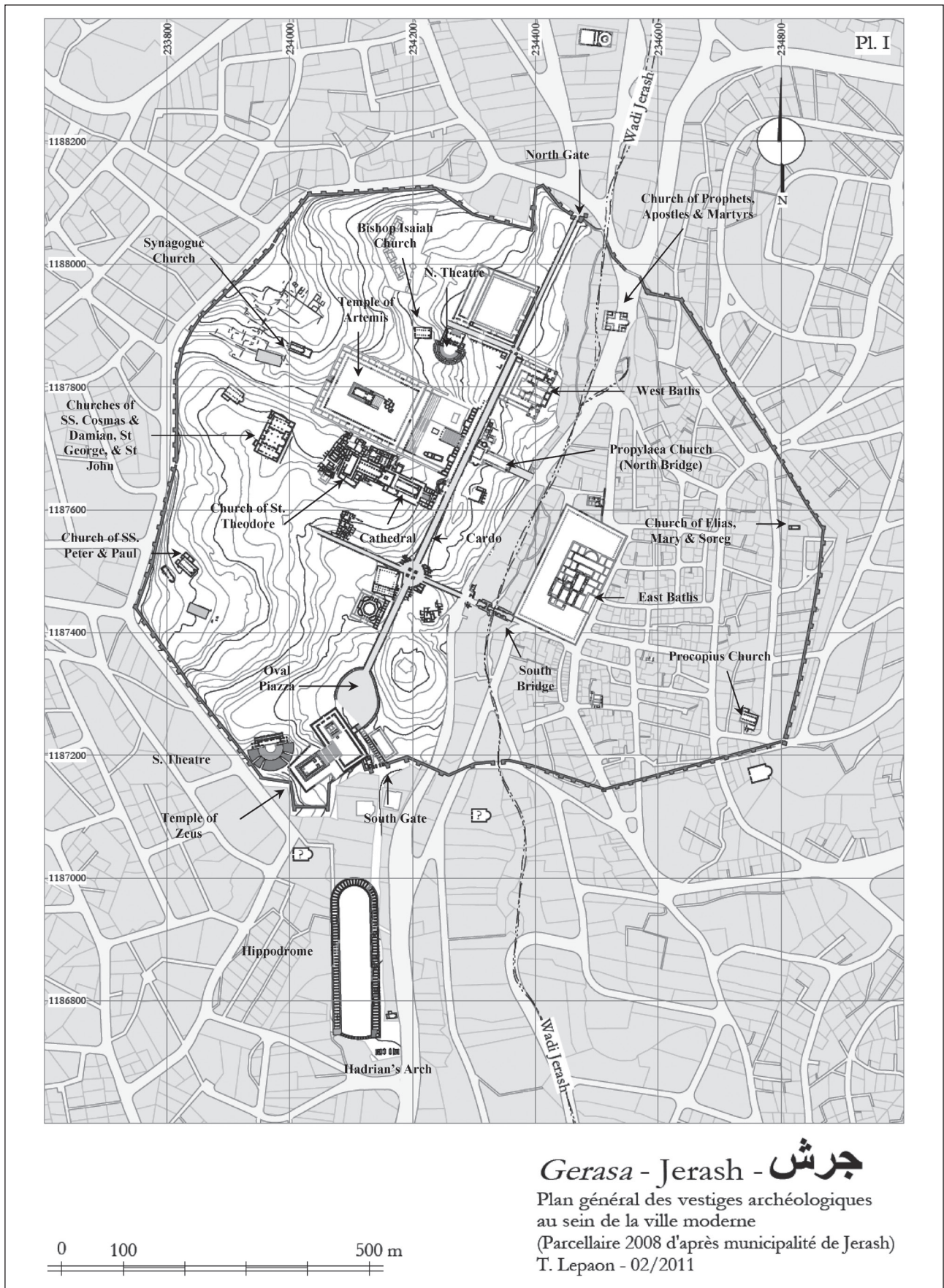
### Early European Visitors to Gerasa

The first recorded visits by Europeans were those by Ulrich Seetzen in 1806 (1810: 32-34) and Johann Ludwig Burckhardt in 1812 (1822: 251-5). Seetzen was the first to identify the

site of Jarash with that of Gerasa, despite the location being badly misplaced on the available maps. The end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815 made travel to Europe and the Near East safer. In terms of the Near East the preferred destination for many travellers was Egypt, but some also took the opportunity to visit the Holy Land and the more adventurous attempted to travel in the then dangerous territory east of the Jordan river. Eight parties of explorers are known to have visited Gerasa in the period 1816 - 1819 (TABLE 1). The visits by Bankes and Barry stand out among their contemporaries both in terms of size and length of stay, and it is argued that the quantity and quality of the historical and archaeological information recorded during these visits is a function of these factors and the skill sets of the participants.

No detailed study of the early plans of Gerasa has been published, but they are discussed in Acklom's unpublished thesis *A Forgotten Era*





3. Plan of Gerasa / Jerash, showing sites referred to in the text (adapted from Lepaon 2012: pl. 1).

**Table 1.** Explorers known to have visited Gerasa (*Jerash*) 1816 - 1819

| Visit no | Leader     | Year | Date           | Days on site | Party size* | Man days on site# |
|----------|------------|------|----------------|--------------|-------------|-------------------|
| 1        | Seetzen    | 1805 | 9 Mar          | <1           | 1           | <1                |
| 2        | Burckhardt | 1812 | 2 May          | <1           | 1           | <1                |
| 3        | Bankes (1) | 1816 | 31 Jan - 1 Feb | 2            | 3           | 6                 |
| 4        | Buckingham | 1816 | 7 - 8 Mar      | 2            | 1           | 2                 |
| 5        | Bankes (2) | 1818 | 14 - 20 Mar    | 7            | 4           | 28                |
| 6        | Bankes (3) | 1818 | 18 - 19 Jun    | 2            | 4           | 8                 |
| 7        | Barry      | 1819 | 5 - 6 May      | 2            | 6           | 12                |
| 8        | Fuller     | 1819 | 17 Oct         | <1           | 1           | <1                |

\* Europeans only, excluding servants.  
# Calculated by multiplying the party size by the number of days on site.

in *Archaeology: The Research Conducted by Early British Travellers in Palestine from C. 1670 to 1825* (Acklom 1995).

This paper presents the results of an analysis of the plans of Gerasa drawn by William John Bankes and Charles Barry that are retained in two English archives.

### William John Bankes and Charles Barry

First among the visitors that followed Seetzen and Burckhardt were parties organized by William John Bankes (1786 - 1855), who visited the site three times<sup>1</sup> between 1816 and 1818, and Charles Barry (1795 - 1860), who visited in 1819. Bankes and Barry were later to have a sustained working relationship, although they did not travel together in the Near East. They came from quite different social backgrounds. Bankes was a Member of Parliament and had a privileged upper class upbringing. He read Classics at Cambridge, was wealthy and had a thirst for knowledge of Classical culture and travel that remained with him until his death. He arrived in Alexandria in 1815 and spent the next five years travelling in the Near East

with various parties of like-minded travelling companions that he assembled on the way. Much of his time was spent in Egypt, but his travels also took him to Palestine, Syria and the Decapolis.

In contrast, Barry was the son of a middle class family who had a relatively humble education. At the time of his travels he had just qualified as an architect and, with a small inheritance, was keen to visit Europe and the Near East for professional study. His three-year overseas tour between 1817 and 1820 took him to France, Italy, Greece and the Near East. Like Bankes, Barry met a number of other travellers on his trip out to the Near East and several were to join him on his visits to ancient sites. Barry's meeting with David Baillie, a rich English traveller, was to prove particularly important. Baillie was quick to recognise Barry's artistic talents and in July 1818 he offered Barry the opportunity to accompany him as his salaried artist on a tour of Egypt, Syria and the coast of Asia Minor, an offer that Barry was pleased to accept (Adkins 1986: 52)<sup>2</sup>. On his return to England, Barry established an architectural

1. Buckingham in his *Travels Among the Arab tribes Inhabiting the Countries East of Syria and Palestine* (1825: 132, footnote) states that his separate visit to the site on 7 - 8 March 1816 was his "third visit to Jerash" after his "first hasty and interrupted visits" with Bankes. While this may infer a second visit by Bankes, Buckingham and Finati after their visit of 31 January - 1 February 1816 (*i.e.* later in February 1816), it is more likely that Buckingham counted the trips to the site on successive days (31 January and 1 February) as separate visits. Neither Bankes nor

Finati make mention of a second visit to Gerasa after 1 February 1816, and such a visit would not fit with what is known of their itinerary.

2. The claim by March (2009a: 119) that Barry was Bankes' "travelling companion and hired artist" is not correct. Barry was hired by David Baillie as his artist; the only record of Bankes and Barry travelling together in the Near East relates to the day of their initial meeting on the Nile on 13 January 1819 (Adkins 1986: 62).

career that saw him rise to become one of the leading architects in 19<sup>th</sup> century England.

Bankes and Barry met briefly by chance on the Nile in Egypt in January 1819 (Adkins 1986: 62) and on their return to England in 1820 Barry set to work on combining their joint surveying and recording efforts at Gerasa into a detailed plan of the city and high quality architectural drawings of many of the monuments, with a view to publishing the results.

### The W. J. Bankes Drawing and Plan Archive

Bankes was to become well-known for his travels in the Near East, especially Egypt, but he published virtually nothing on these travels. What is known of his visits to Gerasa in 1816 and 1818 comes largely from the contemporary publications of his fellow travellers - Thomas Legh (Macmichael 1819; Legh 1833), James Silk Buckingham (1821; 1825), Captains Leonard Irby and James Mangles (1823), and Giovanni Finati (1830) - and from the transcriptions of Bankes' travel notes by Bowsher (1997: 228-30). While few of Bankes' own notes of his Gerasa visits have survived, he was an accomplished artist and epigraphist. Fortunately much of this material survives in the archives of the Dorset History Centre (hereafter DHC) at Dorchester, England in an unpublished portfolio of drawings titled Jerash (catalogue reference D/BKL/HJ IIIA). There are 53 numbered items in the Jerash portfolio attributable to Gerasa; none are signed, although most can be attributed to either Bankes or Barry on the basis of the handwriting, and only one item is dated (the 1819 *Plan of Jerash*, attributed to Barry).

Aside from a number of plans of the city by both Bankes and Barry, the Jerash portfolio comprises detailed and well-executed plan and elevation drawings of many major monuments by Barry, separate triptychs of plans of temples and theatres prepared for the libel trial

(probably by Barry) and six watercolour scenes by Bankes.

### Plans of the City Contained in the Jerash Portfolio

Twelve of the items in the Jerash portfolio are plans of the city that can be grouped as follows.

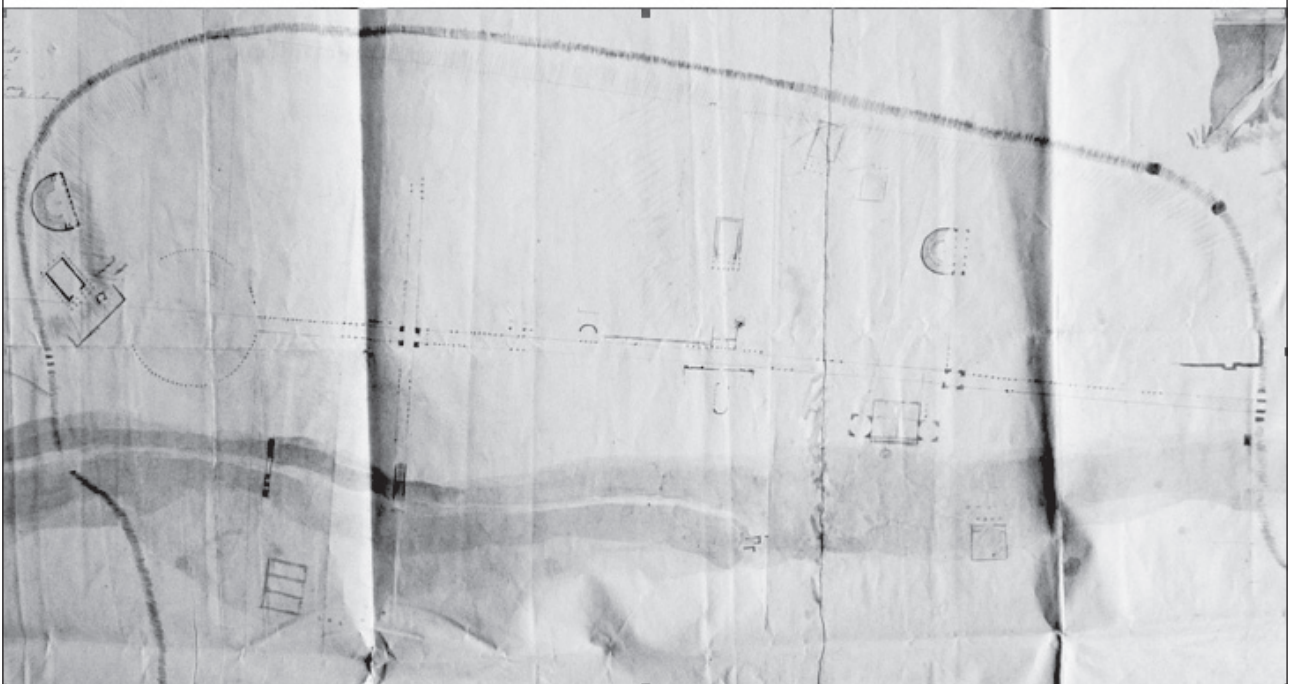
- a) A plan in Bankes' hand titled *Plan of the Ruins of DJerash in the District of Adjeloon beyond the River Jordan* drawn in 1816. There are two versions of this plan, which records details obtained by Bankes' party during their visit of 31 January to 1 February 1816<sup>3</sup>. The first version (IIIA21), probably a draft (as noted by Acklom [1995: 130]) is a single sheet made up of seven smaller sheets glued together (FIG. 4). There are extensive margin notes, an inset with a plan of the South Theatre and copies of several inscriptions. Uniquely, Ionic columns are depicted in red. There are a number of buildings shown outside the city walls that are not shown on the plan prepared by Burckhardt from his visit four years earlier, including Hadrian's Arch, the Hippodrome, a tomb located *ca.* 300 metres south of Hadrian's Arch, a small tomb or mausoleum located on a hill-top east of Hadrian's Arch, and a small structure (? tomb) 300 metres north of the North Gate. Within the walls, the plan shows two buildings south-west of the North Theatre; one is likely to be the Church of Bishop Isaiah and the other is in the approximate location of the Synagogue Church, but it has been crossed out and is probably a misplacement of the Temple of Artemis.

A second version of the plan is preserved on five separate sheets (IIIA25; 27; 34; 47; 48) that had at one time been glued together; although similar, it differs from the first in that monuments are labelled 'A' to 'S' (those marked 'B' to 'S' are described in a reference

3. This is attested by the title to a scaled-down version of the same plan that is included in the triptych of plans of the city prepared

for the libel case (DHC: IIIA18a): *Mr Bankes' Plan with his observations made in 1816.*





4. Plan of Gerasa by Bankes, 1816 (Dorset History Centre: D/BKL/HJ IIIA21).

list on IIIA25), and the plans of buildings recognisable as the Temple of Artemis, East Baths, West Baths and the Church of the Prophets, Apostles and Martyrs have changed. Plans of two buildings, interpreted as the Cathedral and a structure on the east side of the temenos of the Temple of Artemis,

have also been added.

The *Plan of the Ruins of DJerash in the District of Adjeloon beyond the River Jordan* would have been based on detailed notes and sketches taken during the 1816 visit, but these sources are not in the Bankes archive.

b) A draft of Charles Barry's plan *IERASH 1819*

(IIIA23) based on his two-day visit in May 1819 (FIG. 5). The spelling of the plan title reflects Barry's fondness for the occasional use of Roman letters in his drawing titles. Almost unique in being dated, this plan shows the full length of the colonnaded street and a number of major monuments on the west side of Wādī Jarash, with many pencilled measurements but no margin notes or descriptions of the structures. Only two structures are depicted on the east side of the *wadi*, which are now recognisable as the East Baths and the Church of the Prophets, Apostles and Martyrs. The alignment of most of the city wall is inferred and the wall is shown (incorrectly) to link with Hadrian's Arch rather than the South Gate, despite

the location of the South Gate having been added in pencil to the inked draft.

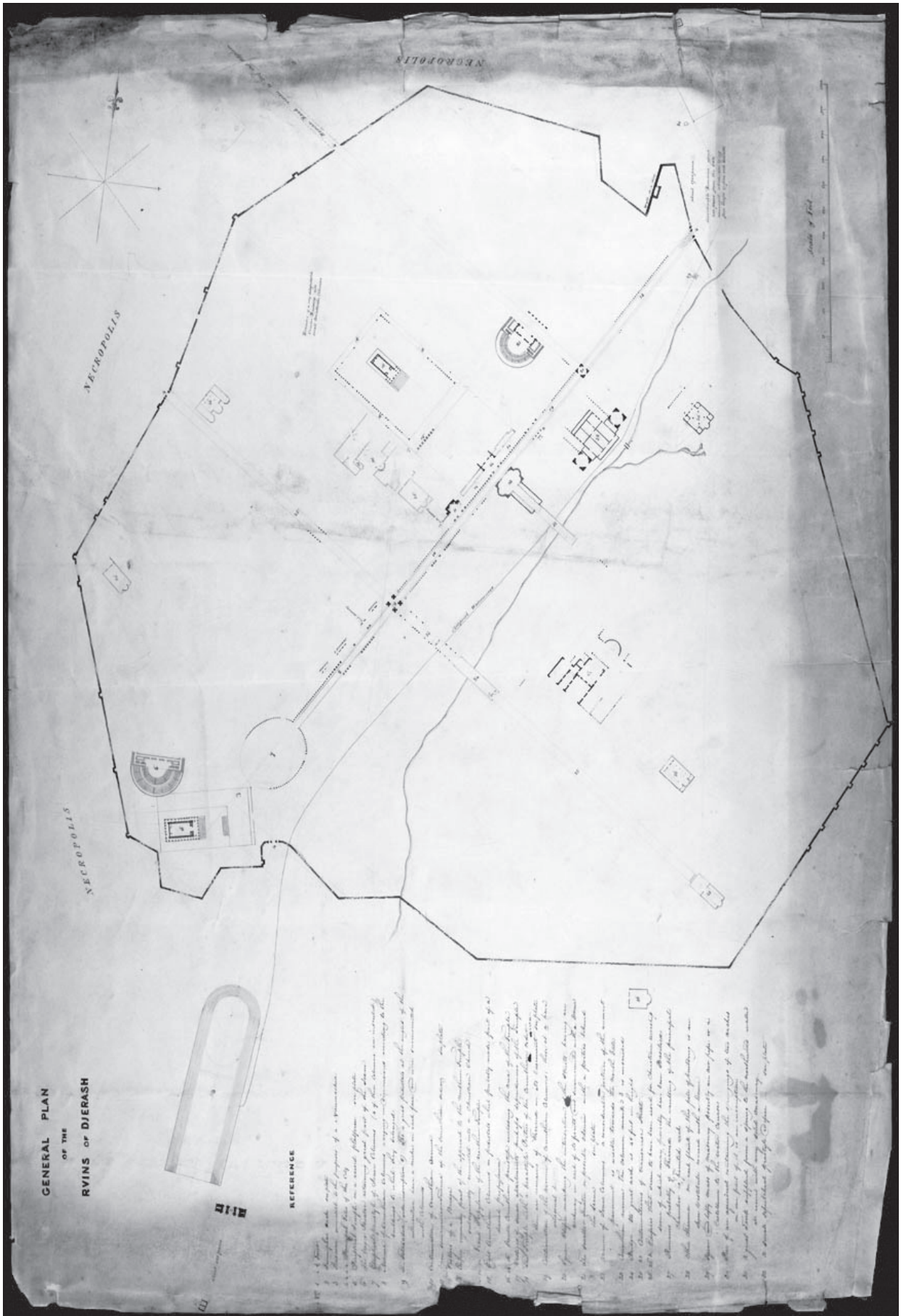
- c) A final version (IIIA1a) and draft (IIIA1b) of Barry's *General Plan of the Ruins of DJerash* drawn in 1820<sup>4</sup> (FIG. 6). Thirty-two structures (labelled '1' to '32') are referenced and described in margin notes in the final version (henceforth Barry's General Plan). The plan is in Barry's hand and his authorship is further attested in commentary on a copy of the plan (IIIA18a - see below) and Barry's own statements at the Buckingham v. Bankes libel trial (Buckingham 1826: 70-71) (henceforth libel trial).
- d) A final version (IIIA18a) and drafts (IIIA18b; c) of a triptych of plans of the city prepared by Barry on behalf of Bankes for



5. *Ierash 1819* - plan of Gerasa by Barry (404 x 285 mm) (Dorset History Centre: D/BKL/HJ IIIA23).

4. The date of this plan comes from evidence given by Charles Barry in the libel case (Buckingham 1826: 71).





6. General Plan of the Ruins of DJerash drawn by Barry in 1820 (650 x 469 mm) (Dorset History Centre: D/BKL/HJ IIIA1a).



the libel trial (Buckingham 1826). These were prepared to show Bankes' 1816 plan<sup>5</sup> (March 2009b: 79), Buckingham's plan (1821: 342; March 2009b: 80) and Barry's General Plan (March 2009b: 81) at the same scale, those of Bankes and Barry being much smaller than the original plans in the archive. The scaled-down version of Barry's General Plan is titled *Mr. Barry's plan drawn from the observations and admeasurements of Messrs. Bankes, Mangles and Irby made in 1818 collated with his own admeasurements and memorandums made on the spot in 1819*, which is consistent with Barry's comment at the libel trial (Buckingham 1826: 70-71). While there is a difference in scale and there are minor differences in detail between the version of Barry's General Plan on the triptych and Barry's larger original General Plan (IIIA1a), there can be little doubt that they relate to the same plan and have the same author. A copy of IIIA18a was published by March (2009b: 81).

### Source Material for Barry's General Plan

Much of the source material for Barry's General Plan is contained in an indexed portfolio of field sketches and rough plans included in the *Jerash* Portfolio as folder IIIA46. This folder includes an index in Barry's hand listing 24 items, of which only 13 numbered items remain in the archive. However these site numbers do not relate to the sites referenced in Barry's General Plan. The sketches are written on various sheets and scraps of paper and used envelopes, often on both sides, and frequently include measurements and *aides-mémoires*. Although undated they are likely to largely, if not wholly, date to the visits made to Gerasa by Bankes' party in 1818. Some of the material can be specifically dated by reference to Irby and Mangles (1823). For example, the survey of

Hadrian's Arch, the Cardo and the Oval Piazza can be dated to 17 March 1818 (1823: 311), the survey of the city walls to 18 March 1818 (1823: 312) and some of the churches to June 1818 (1823: 476). Acklom takes the view that most of the surveying done in 1818 was carried out by Irby and Mangles (Acklom 1995: 136), however there were also contributions from other party members. Notes and comments in Bankes' handwriting are evident on many sketches in the IIIA46 folder and, in two cases, sketches have been drawn on re-used envelopes addressed to Bankes, indicating that Bankes himself was directly involved in at least some of the survey work.

While it is likely that Barry had access to Bankes' 1816 plan, none of the information contained in this plan can be identified in Barry's General Plan with certainty. The structure that can be identified as the Church of Bishop Isaiah in Bankes' 1816 plan is missing from Barry's General Plan, and Barry has inserted the comment "Remains of a very dilapidated Circular Building with small Corinthian Columns" in the approximate position of the Synagogue Church.

Overall, perhaps 50% of the *Jerash* Portfolio can be attributed to Barry.

### The Charles Barry Archive at RIBA

Charles Barry travelled in Palestine and Syria between March and July 1819. He visited many ancient sites west of the Jordan, including the Decapolis city of Scythopolis, but his travels east of the Jordan were limited to a single tour that included the Decapolis cities of Gadara and Gerasa.

The travel diaries for Barry's entire overseas trip are retained in the archives of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) in London. Comments on the travel diaries initially appeared in a biography written by

5. The draft version of Bankes' 1816 plan (IIIA21) is shown in the triptych, presumably in error, since Buckingham's published plan more closely resembles the second version of Bankes' 1816 plan, which was clearly the version that was copied by Bucking-

ham in the window of the Convent of Nazareth in February 1816 (Buckingham 1826: 42). Further, the items labelled 'B' to 'S' in Bankes' 1816 plan (IIIA25) are labelled in the same order '1' to '17' in Buckingham's plan (Buckingham 1821: 342).

Barry's son (Barry 1867) and more recently by Adkins (1986), but the diaries themselves have not been published in their entirety. Barry's visit to Gerasa in the company of David Baillie, John Godfrey, Thomas Wyse, Captain Butler and Captain Ducane is contained in a travel diary titled *12<sup>th</sup> March 1819 at Cairo - Journey from thence to Acre 15<sup>th</sup> May 1819* (RIBA reference: SKB 400/5). Barry only spent around 24 hours at Gerasa (5 - 6 May 1819) but he wrote 11 pages of fair-copied notes in his diary, including descriptions and measurements of ten monuments and buildings.

A few of Barry's drawings and plans of his 1819 visit are retained in the RIBA archives (catalogue reference VOL/42), including a plan of the city that incorporates some of the pencilled changes in the draft version of the same plan (IIIA23) in the Bankes DHC archive. Other drawings in VOL/42 at RIBA include final drawings of views of the Temple of Zeus and South Theatre, a detailed plan of the Temple of Artemis (*Temple of Hercules*) and detailed plans of the North and South Theatres dated 1819. However, a greater number of his plans and drawings of Gerasa are in the *Jerash* drawing archive at DHC, including drafts of some of the final drawings in the RIBA archive, and the material in both archives needs to be analysed to gain a fuller understanding of Barry's contribution to the early *corpus* on Gerasa.

### Preparation for Publication

When the Bankes and Barry material from both archives is combined, a picture emerges of a large portfolio of material being prepared for publication. It was widely expected that publication of Bankes' travels would follow his return to England in 1820, in particular his extensive portfolio of Egyptian drawings and watercolours (Lewis 2007: 2). Baillie was keen to see a joint publication of material by Bankes and Barry, and in a letter dated January 1820 offered Bankes access to his portfolio of drawings by Barry to achieve this (DHC HJ: 1/125). The

preparation of the Gerasa material for publication is directly attested by Bankes himself in a footnote to Finati's 1830 publication:

*"The plans, elevations, and views, taken of this noble city [DJerash] during my several visits, were arranged some years since, so as to be almost ready for publication, but other matters calling me off from them, it has been delayed."*  
(Finati 1830: 148-9).

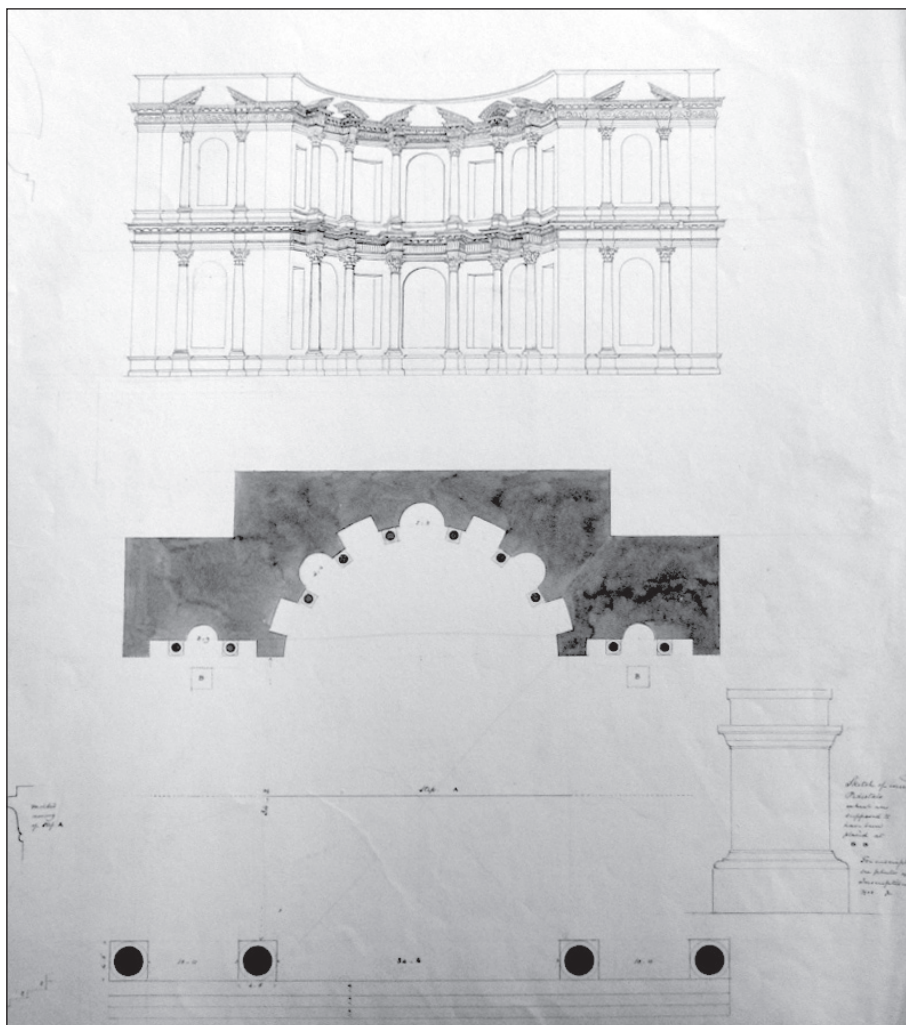
The layout of the planned publication has not survived, but the material that had been prepared for publication included:

1. Barry's General Plan;
2. Well-executed pen / ink views by Barry, drawn from his own observations in 1819, of the North and South Theatres, the Oval Piazza, the Temple of Zeus and the Temple of Artemis;
3. Final detailed plans and restored elevations for six major monuments: the Temple of Zeus, Temple of Artemis, North and South Theatres, Nymphaeum (FIG. 7) and Propylaea (FIG. 8), and plan drawings for a number of minor ones, all drawn by Barry from material largely collected by Bankes and his party in 1818;
4. Six watercolour views by Bankes.

### The City Plans of Gerasa by Bankes and Barry in the Context of Contemporary and Later Works

No city plan of Gerasa had been published at the time of Bankes and Barry's visits; the first, by Burckhardt, was not published until five years after his death in 1822 (FIG. 9). Given the difficult and secretive way in which Burckhardt was obliged to take notes and the shortness of his visit - perhaps half a day (Burckhardt 1822: 253) - the detail and accuracy of the buildings and the colonnaded streets recorded on the west side of the *wadi* and his overall understanding of the topographic setting is remarkable. So





7. Plan and reconstructed façade of the Nymphaeum by Barry (372 x 509 mm) (Dorset History Centre: D/BKL/HJ IIIA42).

too is his reasonably accurate depiction of the city walls, following his circuit of the perimeter (1822: 253). Burckhardt's mislocation of features on the east side of the *wadi* is a problem also reflected in Bankes' 1816 plan and Buckingham's copy published in 1821<sup>6</sup> but, despite this, Burckhardt's depiction of the city wall and the topography within the city walls is superior to both these plans and to Barry's own 1819 plan. This error is attributed to the haste with which the early plans were drawn and the fact that, while features on the west bank of the *wadi* could readily be located by using the main colonnaded street as a baseline, there was no equivalent convenient baseline available on the

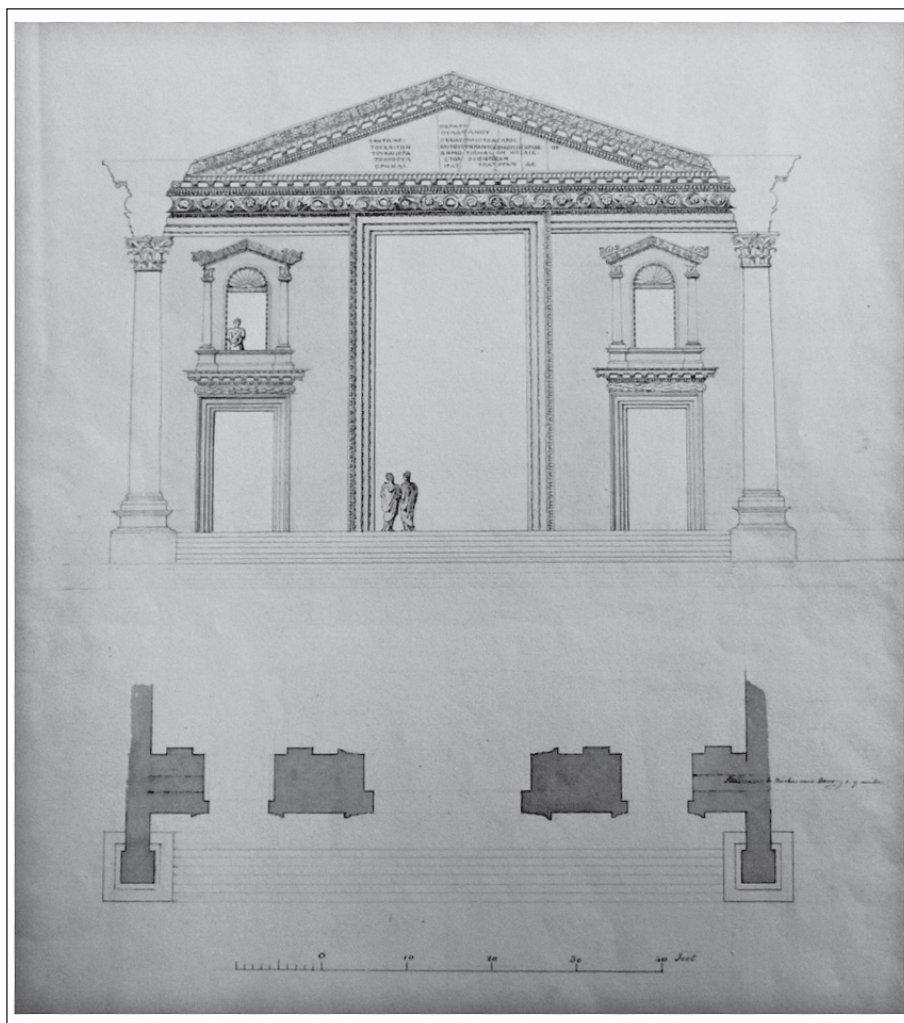
east side of the *wadi*.

Barry's General Plan is demonstrably superior in accuracy and content to anything created before it, and also to the plans published by subsequent 19<sup>th</sup> century visitors, including Rey in 1858 (1861: pls XIX-XX) (FIG. 10), Charles Warren in 1867 (Abujaber and Cobbing 2005: 78, fig. 50) and Kiepert in 1870 (Baedeker 1876: 392) (FIG. 11). Barry's General Plan includes material that is not included in Schumacher's otherwise well-executed and detailed plan of the city (1902: pl. 6) (FIG. 12) and was not convincingly surpassed until the publication of Fisher's plan in 1938 (Kraeling 1938: plan 1) (FIG. 13).

6. Buckingham himself was so confused in trying to describe what is shown on his plan that he wrote:

*"The written description here is not in perfect harmony with the plan. The last was laid down from a set of bearings taken with a good compass; the first was composed also on the spot. The*

*error is in the points of bearing only; but which of these is more correct, my recollection does not allow me to decide; so that I have suffered both the authorities to remain unaltered."* (Buckingham 1821, vol. 2: 394, footnote)



8. Plan and reconstructed façade of the Propylaea by Barry (382 x 486 mm) (Dorset History Centre: D/BKL/HJ IIIA44).

### Unique Material Shown on Barry’s General Plan

Barry’s General Plan and the original field sketches contained in DHC folder IIIA46 show an unprecedented amount of detail on a variety of monuments. They identify a number of church sites for the first time, including SS Peter and Paul, the church complex of SS Cosmas and Damian / St John / St George, the Church of St Theodore, the Propylaea Church, the Procopius Church, an unnamed church between the East Baths and the Procopius Church, and an unnamed church outside the south wall of the city near its south-east corner. Outside the city to the north, the ruins of Birketein reservoir and the Tomb of Germanus are also shown for

the first time on a plan (as an inset).

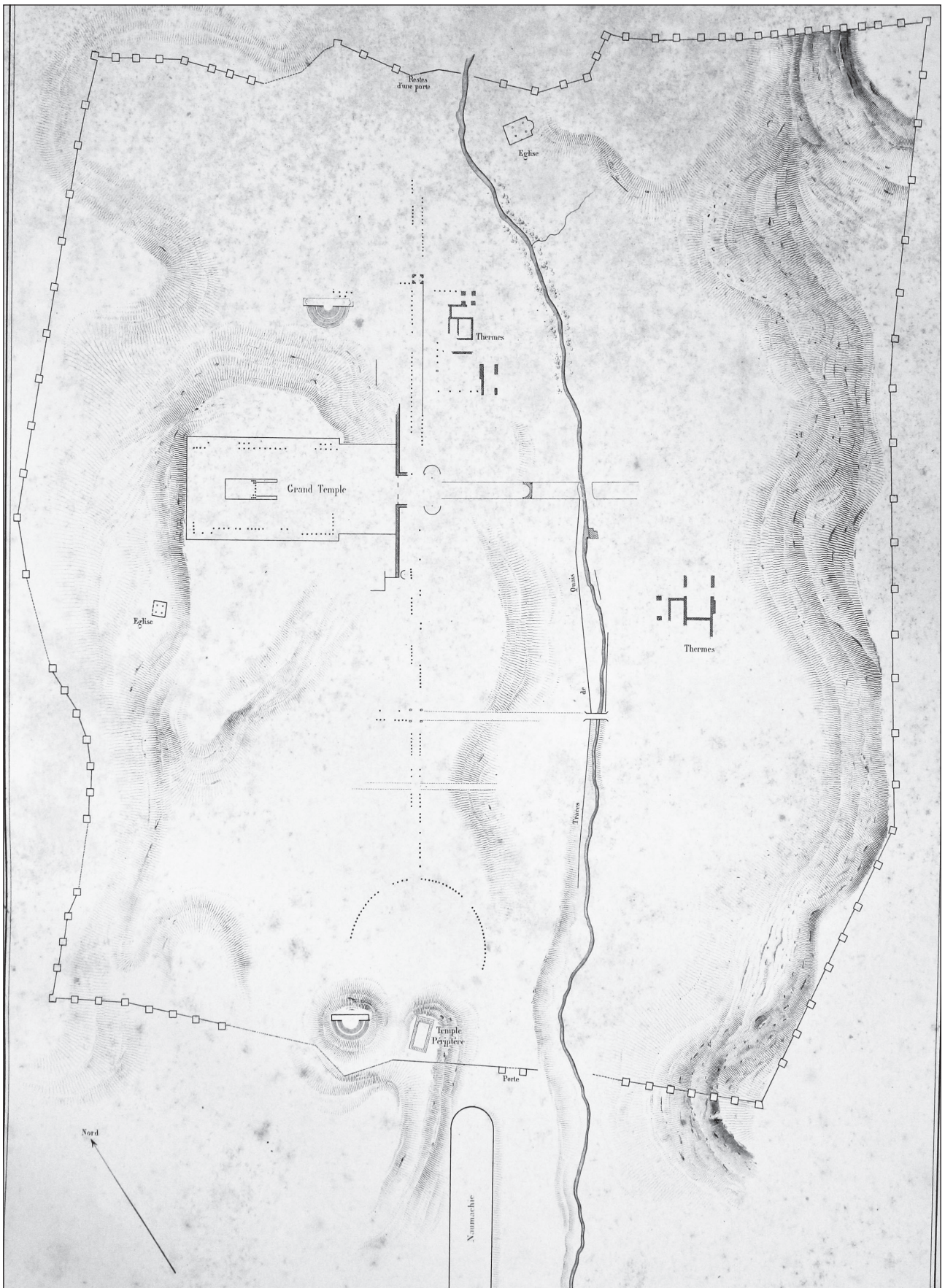
The plan and supporting documentation from the field sketches in folder IIIA46 in the Bankes *Jerash* drawing archive provide unique information on buildings in the south-east quarter of the city. This is particularly valuable as this area was largely buried beneath the Circassian village established in 1878 and was therefore not accessible to the Yale team which conducted extensive excavations within the city walls in the 1920s and 1930s. It now lies equally inaccessible beneath the modern town of Jarash apart from rare, serendipitous discoveries made during modern construction work<sup>7</sup>. Four buildings are shown in this area on Barry’s General Plan: the East Baths, the

7. Examples are the discovery in 1993 of mosaics in the ruins of a building described as a “palais d’époque byzantine” east of the East Baths (Z’ubi *et al.* 1994) and the ruins of a “Church and

Roman House” (Braun 2001: fig. 1, no 39) south-east of the East Baths excavated in 1986 and referred to by Seigne (2002: 632-633).

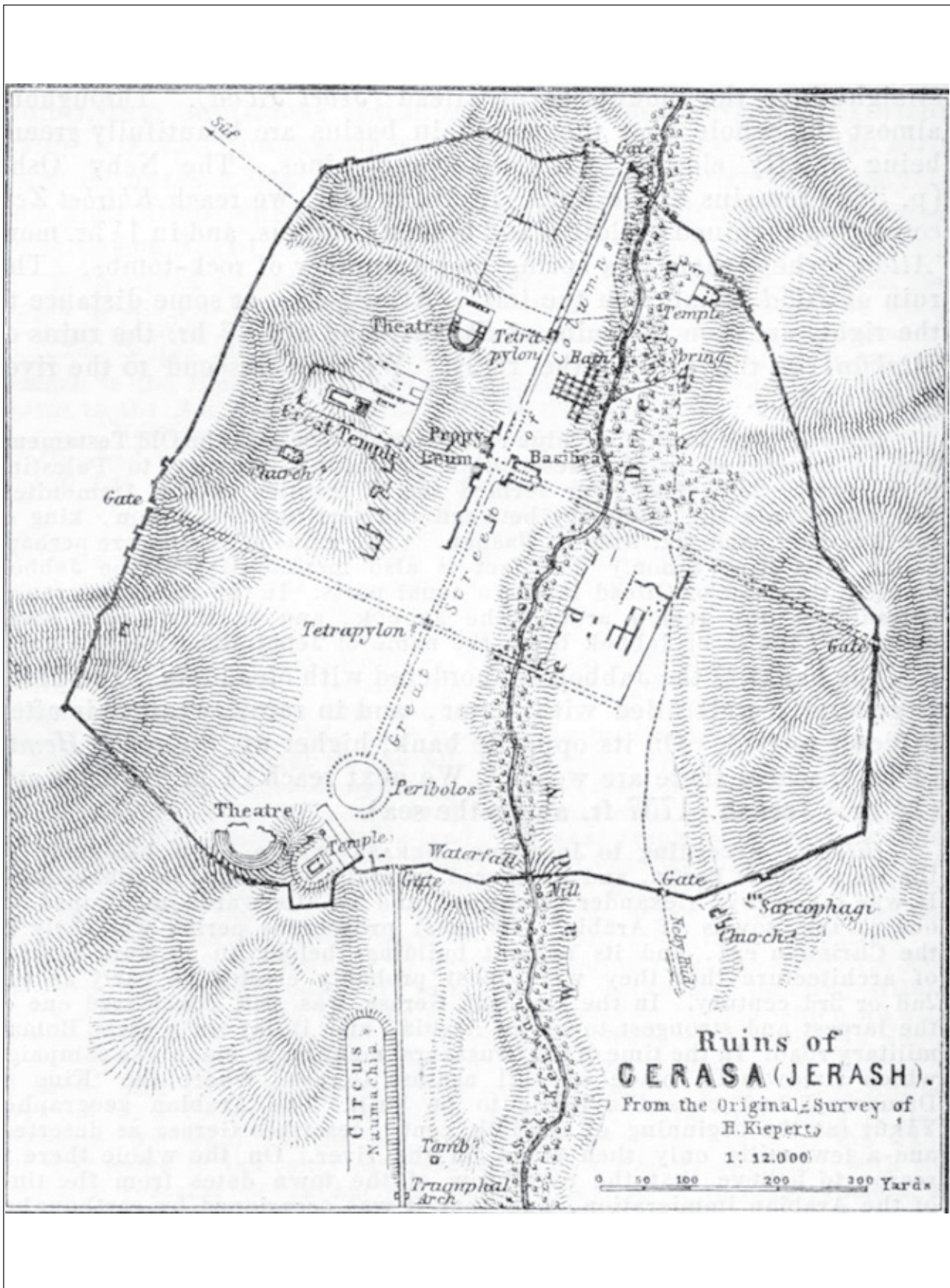






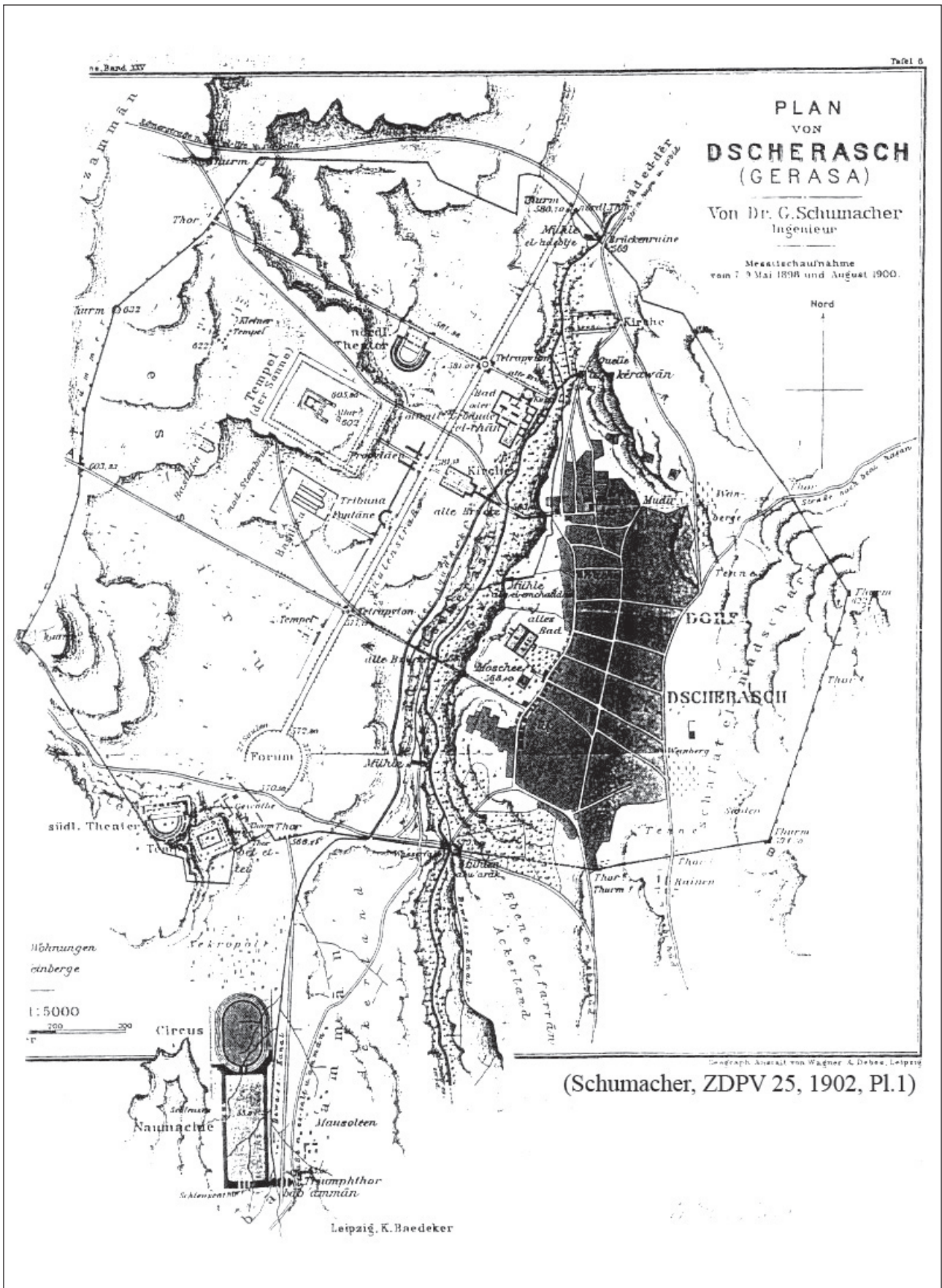
10. *Plan de Djerash* by Rey following his visit in 1858 (1861: pl. XXI).





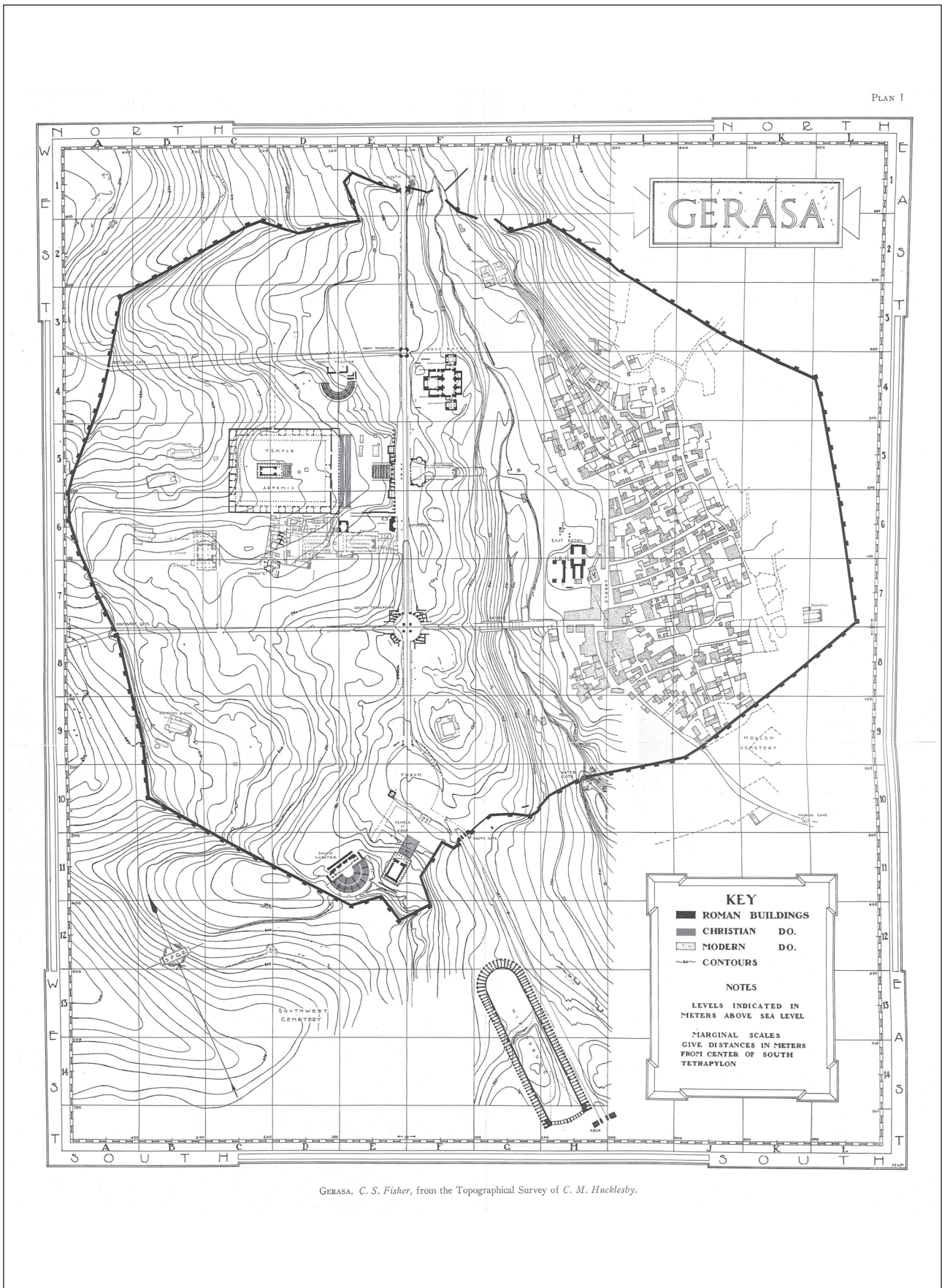
11. *Ruins of Gerasa (Jerash)* by Kiepert, following his visit in 1870 (Libbey and Hoskins 1905: 187); an earlier version of this plan was published by Baedeker (1876: 392).



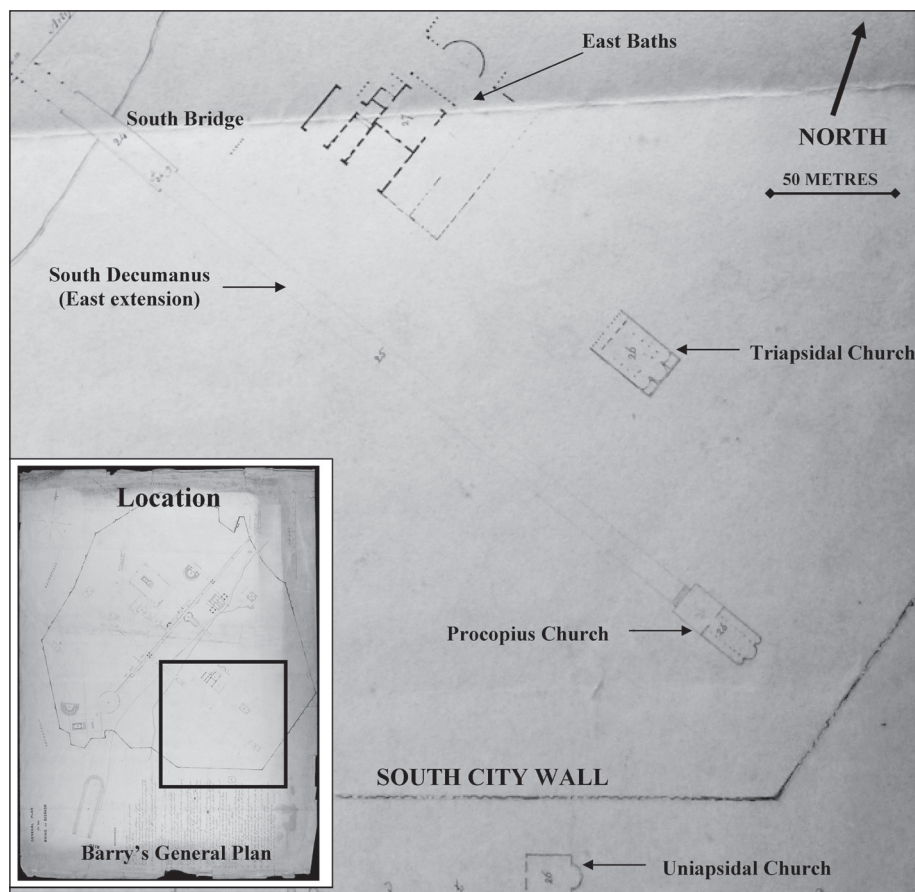


12. Plan von Dscherasch (Gerasa) recorded by Schumacher in 1898 - 1900 (1902: pl. 6).





13. Gerasa by C. S. Fisher (Kraaling 1938: plan 1).



14. Detail of Barry's 1820 General Plan showing the south-east quarter of the city (Dorset History Centre: D/BKL/HJ IIIA 1a).

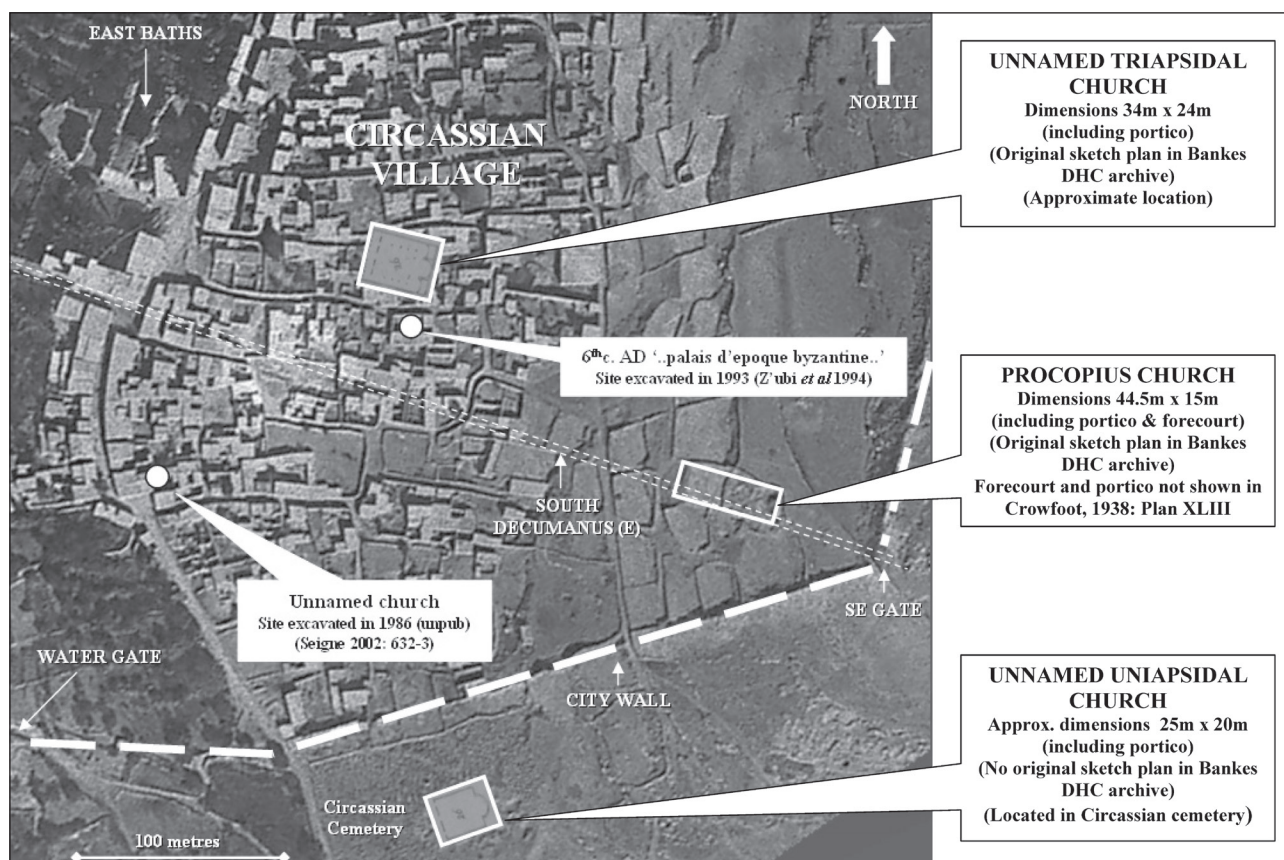
is the only surviving information on this church. Crowfoot had noted it on Barry's General Plan when he accessed the Bankes drawing archive in the 1930s and, although he was uncertain of the building's internal arrangement, he recognised the unusual feature of chambers behind the side apses (Crowfoot 1941: 70). The location of this triapsidal church has attracted some discussion. Saller thought that the Church (Chapel) of Elias, Mary and Soreg approximately 200 metres north of the Procopius Church might have been part of it (Saller 1982: 269). March (2009a: 54) places "Bankes' Church" south of the alignment of the eastern continuation of the South Decumanus, perhaps confusing the location with that of the unnamed church excavated in 1986 located 140 metres south-east of the East Baths (Braun 2001: fig. 1, no 39). The triapsidal church on Barry's General Plan is located north of the South Decumanus, and this location is confirmed by reference to the original sketch in the Bankes archive (Boyer

forthcoming). The location of this church and the other buildings in the south-east quarter on Barry's General Plan is shown at FIG. 15 with reference to a 1926 aerial photograph.

### Arab Occupation of the Site in the Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century

The records of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century western visitors give an insight into the level of occupation and activity at the Gerasa site prior to Circassian settlement. Permanent occupation of the site had ceased sometime after the Ottoman census in 1597 and before Seetzen's visit in 1806. The Jerash (Jaräs) settlement was small even in 1597 - some 12 families, perhaps 50 persons in total - compared with 58 families at Mansür and 56 families at Muqbilā, two villages near Sūf (Hütteroth and Abdulfattah 1977: 164). In 1597 agricultural production near Jarash included wheat, barley, olives and vines, but water milling was also important, an activity that had been associated with Jarash





15. Churches in the south-east quarter of Gerasa overlain on 1926 aerial photograph (aerial photograph from Yale University Art Gallery: Negative Gerasa-b207~01 b-207).

since at least the 13<sup>th</sup> century as noted by Yāqūt (Le Strange 1890: 462)<sup>8</sup>.

Despite the absence of a permanent settlement - the nearest sizeable villages at the time of Seetzen's 1806 visit were Sūf (7.5 km upstream from Jarash) and Kitti (6 km to the west) - the early 19<sup>th</sup> century visitors found plenty of evidence for seasonal agricultural activity. Burckhardt noted in 1812 that the waters of Wādī Sūf irrigated the "narrow plain of DJerash" and that the inhabitants of Sūf owned olive groves on the sides of Wādī ed-Deir (1822: 250). In early 1816 Buckingham observed water from the Qairawan spring being carried by an aqueduct to irrigate cultivated corn fields established in the Hippodrome (1821: 344) and that fields were being ploughed and sown following drought-breaking rain (1821: 351). The early 19<sup>th</sup> century reports

shed little light on which tribes were involved in the farming activities, an exception being Hall's 1827 report that members of the Aduan tribe returned to the Jarash area during the harvesting season (Hall 1852: 48). The seasonal residents obviously made do with whatever accommodation they could find during their seasonal occupation, as noted by Layard in 1840:

*"Arab families, some of whom were living in tents, others in the vaulted chambers of temples or in tombs; others, again in huts rudely constructed of fragments of ancient buildings."* (Layard 1887: 136)

The lack of a permanent settlement on the site is somewhat puzzling given the area's natural endowment of rich soil, strong springs

8. The Circassians brought a number of water mills into use in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but the technology predated their arrival by many centuries. Reports of water mills in the Jarash area are scattered throughout the records of early 19<sup>th</sup> century visitors. For example, Warren's 1867 town plan shows a mill

on Wādī Jarash near the East Baths and another on Wādī ed-Deir north of the town (Abujaber and Cobbing 2005: 78, fig. 50); Merrill reported one or two mills operating in 1875, three years before the arrival of the first Circassian settlers (Merrill 1881: 283).

and high rainfall, so the reason(s) are likely to lie elsewhere. Abujaber (1989: 27) describes how the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a period of instability in Transjordan amongst the settled people, as a result of their combined mistreatment by the Ottoman government and local *bedouin* tribes, leading to periodic migration. As a result, villages were periodically abandoned and reoccupied; for example, the village of Kitti was occupied in 1806 (Seetzen 1810: 34), abandoned in 1811 (Burckhardt 1822: 251), reoccupied by March 1818 (Irby and Mangles 1823: 315) and abandoned again by 1867 (Warren 1870: 302). Notes by the early visitors show that populations in the more permanent villages in the district also fluctuated; for example, 40 families are reported to be living in Sūf in 1812 (Burckhardt 1822: 250), there were forty to fifty dwellings in 1816 (Buckingham 1821: 349)<sup>9</sup> and 100 families were living there in November 1830 (Robinson 1837: 243). However, by 1837 the village had been reduced to “une trentaine de misérables maisons une église grecque tout à fait ruinée” (Bertou 1837: 163-64).

### **Contributions to Our Archaeological and Historical Understanding of Gerasa.**

The archival records of the expeditions to Gerasa by Bankes and Barry add very significantly to the corpus of early records of the site and represent an important information resource for scholarly research across a number of disciplines. The observations and drawings by Bankes and Barry record visits made at a time when the city area was not occupied, and may not have seen permanent habitation since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. These visits also occurred 60 years before the changes to the site that followed Circassian settlement and before the 20<sup>th</sup> century impacts of excavation and restoration. The Bankes and Barry records therefore provide a historical ‘snapshot’ of the

condition of the ruins in 1816 - 1819.

Rough sketches of monuments recorded by Bankes’ party in 1818 and retained in the Bankes *Jerash* drawing archive are identified as the core material for Barry’s detailed and skilfully drafted portfolio of plans and drawings prepared for a publication - a goal that, sadly, was not realised. Nevertheless, most of the elements of this publication portfolio are fortunately retained in the archives at DHC and RIBA and are available for study. It includes material on sites for which there is no other record, or which were to suffer further ruin by earthquake and human intervention before being recorded more fully when excavated in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The material includes information on at least two churches in the south-east quarter of Gerasa that have since disappeared.

Barry’s General Plan of Gerasa drawn in 1820 is one of the highlights of the archived material. Clearly superior to anything that preceded it - and also to the published plans of Rey, Warren and Kiepert that followed - 82 years were to pass before work of similar quality was published by Schumacher. It may be argued that another 36 years were to pass before it was superseded by Fisher’s plan published by Kraeling (1938). Similarly, Barry’s detailed architectural drawings of key monuments predate those of Schumacher by 82 years and in many cases are superior in quality.

The early 19<sup>th</sup> century explorers also record a picture of rural life in the Jarash area over the 70-year period prior to Circassian settlement. Far from being an ‘empty quarter’, there is evidence of farming activities little changed from those listed in the returns of the Ottoman census conducted over 200 years earlier, although by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century human settlement had become seasonal rather than permanent. Evidence of water being used for the irrigation of crops and to supply the water mills - sometimes re-using ancient aqueducts -

9. Buckingham’s reported population of 500 men, women and children - an average of around ten family members per household - may be an overestimate if his count of “forty to fifty dwellings”

is correct. Hütteroth and Abdulfattah (1977: 43) assume an average of five family members per household.



alludes to a more enduring form of farming than opportunistic sowing and harvesting of crops in good seasons.

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