

Umm Qays-Gadara: The Large Terrace in the First Millennium AD

Umm Qays is located in northwest Jordan. The village is built on part of an extensive archaeological site, which is identified as the site of ancient Gadara of the Decapolis. The archaeological area to be discussed in this paper was excavated in 1976-1979, in 1992 and in 1997 and is documented in the archaeological-architectural survey of 1992-1993 and 1997.¹

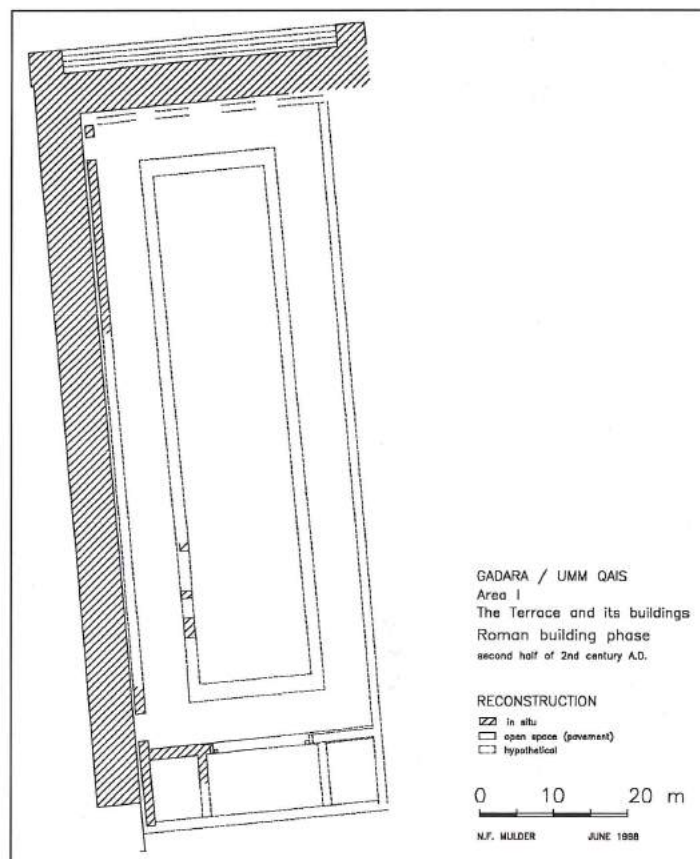
The ruins of the buildings of ancient Gadara consist of a walled city area and an extramural area. Inside the walled city (measuring ca 1100m x 450m), the eastern area is elevated, forming an *acropolis*, measuring ca 250m x 250m. The main street of the city, the *decumanus maximus*, runs from east to west and passes along the foot of the hill on which stood the acropolis on the northern side. At the bottom of the western slope of the acropolis, a large Terrace is situated, bounded on the north by the *decumanus maximus* and to the south by a Roman theatre.

The larger part of the Terrace has already been excavated and some of its buildings have been partly restored. In the following, a review of the developments of this prominent urban quarter in the course of the first millennium AD will be presented.

The Terrace was constructed in the Roman period. Some parts of the first building phase, especially on the lower level, are quite well preserved (FIG. 1).

On the north side, along the *decumanus maximus*, the lower part of the massive entrance is still visible. Here, two *res-saults* were built on either side of the façade. Probably a flight of steps between them led up to the platform of the Terrace and to the main entrance. However, the steps have not yet been excavated and the doorsill has not been preserved.

On the west side, the large retaining wall still stands to its full height. A deep trench sunk on the east side of this



1. Umm Qays. Area I. Plan of the Terrace and its buildings in the Roman building phase (reconstructed).

wall revealed that the natural slope of the bedrock had been partly cut away in order to allow the retaining wall to be built in a straight line. This wall is buttressed by a line of twenty vaulted rooms (FIG. 2). The Terrace wall, the dividing walls between the rooms and their façade

¹ U. Wagner-Lux and K. J. H. Vriezen, 'A Preliminary Report on the Excavations at Gadara (Umm Qes) in Jordan from 1976 to 1979', *ADAJ* 24 (1980), 157-161; U. Wagner-Lux, K. J. H. Vriezen, F. van den Bosch, N. F. Mulder and R. Guinée, 'Preliminary Report on the Excavations and Architectural Survey in Gadara (Umm Qeis) in Jor-

dan, Area I (1992)', *ADAJ* 37 (1993), 385-395; U. Wagner-Lux, K. J. H. Vriezen, N. F. Mulder and R. L. J. J. Guinée, 'Vorläufiger Bericht über die Ausgrabungs- und Vermessungsarbeiten in Gadara (Umm Qes) in Jordanien im Jahre 1997', *ZDPV* 115 (1999).

bond in with each other. So the east side of the Terrace rests on the bedrock, while the westside was built using buttressing constructions. In 1997 traces of a buttressing wall on the south side of the Terrace have also been found.

All walls of the Terrace were built using the *emplecton* technique.² The walls have ashlar (basalt) facings while the core consists of a mass of rubble bonded with lime mortar (*opus caementicium*). The rooms on the west side were covered with barrel vaults of white fine limestone blocks resting upon the dividing walls of basalt. The space between the vaults is filled with *opus caementicium*, and so, a flat roof was achieved. The façade of this line of rooms once had collapsed, as was revealed by the excavations just west of the rooms.³ Here the façade wall was uncovered, lying toppled over in its original order, one course next to the other. On this basis, the façade could be reconstructed, including the profiled door frames and the long horizontal cornice.⁴ The height of the façade is 3.84 m and its length is 97.42 m. It appeared that the eighth and uppermost stone layer of the façade was composed of stones with a smoothed, slab-like upper side, level with the pavement on the platform of the Terrace.

Large parts of the Roman constructions on the platform of the Terrace were demolished during later build-



2. Umm Qays. Areas I and III. Rooms buttressing the Terrace's western retaining wall. The basalt columns erected on that wall belong to the Byzantine *narthex* (looking SE).

ing phases. Some remains, however, are still *in situ* (FIG. 3). By analysing this data and by studying comparable Roman buildings in the region, we can try to present a reconstruction of the Terrace. Here, the reconstruction will be confined to the plan of the Terrace (see FIG. 1).

On top of the west retaining wall, the lower course of a basalt wall has been preserved with the remains of two large entrances: one near the north and the other near the south end (FIG. 4). These two doorways connected the enclosed area of the platform with an open passage situated on top of the vaulted rooms. On the south side, on top of the southern retaining wall, the lower courses of a wall have also been discovered. The total length of the enclosed area on the Terrace between the north façade and the south wall is 84.51 m, when measured between the inner sides of the walls. Traces of several basalt walls, built perpendicularly against the south wall, together with part of a mosaic floor indicate that some rooms were located on the south side. The area of excavation did not quite reach the outer wall of these rooms. The position of the southern outer wall in the reconstruction plan of the Terrace is hypothetical.⁵ This also means that it is still not yet clear how the Terrace and the theatre were connected.

Inside the enclosed area of the platform, the remains of a pavement made of large limestone slabs⁶ was found together with parts of a basalt stylobate (FIGS. 3 and 5). It should also be noted that the layout of the pavement is related to the course of the stylobate. The seams between the limestone slabs are perpendicular to the stylobate, viz. east-to-west on the west side and north-to-south along the south tract of the stylobate. In the area enclosed by the stylobate, the seams between the slabs are oriented east-to-west; in the central part of the platform,⁷ however, they change direction again.

In addition to the building remains *in situ*, there are traces of parts of the building that have disappeared. For instance, a robber trench in the limestone pavement on the Terrace informs us of the course of the southwest corner of the stylobate. One may obtain a provisional plan of the whole stylobate by using the N-S and the E-W axes of the platform to project a mirror-image of the tracts of the stylobate already discovered. It is difficult, however, to verify this reconstruction as the northern and eastern part of the Roman pavement are covered by later buildings.

² Cf. J.-P. Adam, *Roman Building: materials and techniques*. London, 1994, 52.

³ U. Wagner-Lux and K. J. H. Vriezen, 'Preliminary Report on the Excavations at Gadara (Umm Qes) in Jordan, 1980,' *ADAJ* 28 (1984), 87-89.

⁴ R. L. J. J. Guinée, N. F. Mulder and K. J. H. Vriezen, 'The Façade of the Vaulted Rooms Along the So-Called *Cardo* in Umm Qays (Ancient Gadara), Area III: Architectural design and reconstruction,' *ADAJ* 40(1996), 207-215.

⁵ However, the hypothetical position of the southern wall of the Terrace has not been established arbitrarily, but is mainly based on metrological analysis of the plan of the Terrace (cf. N. F. Mulder, *Bou-*

wen aan Gadara, Leiden 1998 (unpublished thesis), 94-113). For a metrological analysis of the West Theatre of Umm Qays see R. L. J. J. Guinée and N. F. Mulder, 'Gadara. The Terrace, Theatre and Cardo Quarter in the Roman Period. Architectural design integrated in the landscape: the design of the West Theatre', in: *SHAJ* VI (1997), Amman, 317-322; (see also R. L. J. J. Guinée, *Gadara, het West-theater*, Delft 1994 (unpublished thesis).

⁶ The dimensions of the limestone slabs vary between 2.60 x 0.85 m and 0.90 x 0.78 m.

⁷ U. Wagner-Lux and K. J. H. Vriezen, 'Vorläufiger Bericht über die Ausgrabungen in Gadara (Umm Qes) in Jordanien im Jahre 1979', *ZDPV* 96 (1980), [158-162] 159.



4. Umm Qays. Area I. SW corner of the Terrace: Roman pavement, southwestern doorway, southern terrace wall (looking W).



5. Umm Qays. Area I. southwestern corner of the Terrace: Roman pavement and stylobate, western and southern terrace walls (looking NNW).

In the reconstruction of the Roman layout on the platform (see FIG. 1), the following elements are hypothesised: the location of the two side doors in the north façade, the course of the east wall and the presence of a third room on the south side.

Furthermore, in post-Roman constructions *spolia* have been used. There are indications that some of the *spolia* previously belonged to the Roman building phase of the Terrace. From the study of these elements, information about the architecture of the Roman phase of the Terrace can be obtained. It turned out, for instance, that the basalt door frames of the Byzantine centralised church built on the platform exactly match the moldings of the northwest door frame in the Roman wall built on the west retaining

wall, that was razed to the lower stone course. Very probably, the southwest door in this wall had the same door frame, as the total amount of *spolia* reused in the Byzantine buildings is sufficient for two door frames. The (larger) door frame of the Byzantine main entrance at the north side of the platform was probably taken from its Roman precursor. The ornamentation of the door frames of the Roman phase on the platform is of the same type as the one used for the entrances of the vaulted rooms on the lower level of the Terrace; and for the door frames found at the Monumental Gate west of the walled city area, albeit on a different scale.

Other *spolia* used in the post-Roman constructions present a wide array of architectural elements: columns including bases and capitals; pilasters; postaments and pedestals; frontons; column drums; parts of cornices and friezes, etc. They are made of basalt, fine white limestone or rose breccia. It is not clear which of the *spolia* were originally used in the Roman buildings on the platform.⁸

The ceramic finds in the filling of the Terrace underneath its pavement date from the Iron Age until the first century AD. Therefore, the construction of the large Terrace had been tentatively dated to the end of the first or the second century AD. Now, comparative study of the ornamentation of the Terrace (of the door frames and the other ornamented elements) and parallel study of other Roman terraces in the region have led us to a later date: around the middle or in the second half of the second century AD.

After the analysis of these data, and based on comparative study of similar Roman buildings in other cities, an interpretation of the Terrace's function might be attempted. It has been suggested before that there was a temple on the platform;⁹ but, up to now no traces of such a monumental building have been discovered. Apart from the enclosure wall, the lower course of the main entrance in the north and the rooms on the south side, on the platform only the remains of the pavement and the stylobate have been found. The area of the pavement already uncovered is rather limited; especially in the central area of the platform, where changes in the pattern of the pavement may indicate special features. Therefore, we suggest now that the Terrace, with its massive entrance (*propylaea*) from the *decumanus maximus* and located next to the Roman theatre, may have had one of two functions: it may have served as the lower terrace of a temple higher up the *acropolis*;¹⁰ or as the site of a large public building (*basilica*).¹¹

⁸ K. J. H. Vriezen and N. F. Mulder, 'Umm Qays: The Byzantine Buildings on the Terrace. The Building Materials of Stone and Ceramics,' *SHAJ* VI (1997), [323-330] 324-327.

⁹ G. Schumacher, *Northern Ajlun*, London 1890, 62-62.

¹⁰ Cf. the Zeus Temple and the Artemis Temple in Jarash. J. Seigne, 'Recherches sur le Sanctuaire de Zeus à Jérash'; M. V. Fontana, 'The Archaeological Research in the Sanctuary of Artemis. The Intermediate Terrace,' in: F. Zayadine (ed.) *Jerash Archaeological*

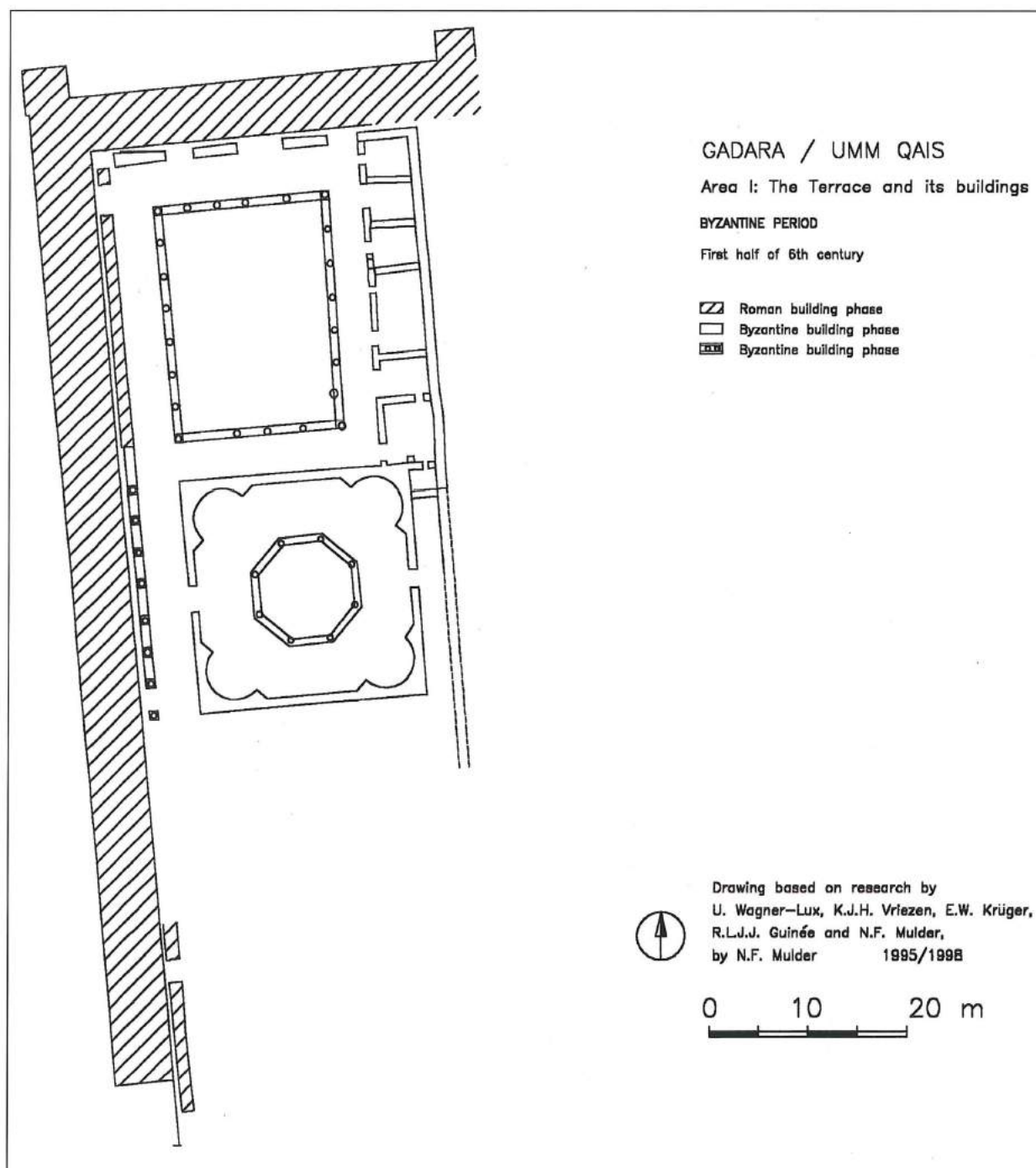
Project I 1981-1983. Amman 1986, 31-42, 58, 180-183.

¹¹ Cf. Baysān and Samaria. G. Foerster and Y. Tsafir, 'City Centre (North). Excavations of the Hebrew University Expedition' The Beth She'an Excavation Project (1989-1991). *Excavations and Surveys in Israel* Vol. 11, Jerusalem 1993, [3-32] 2-8; G. A. Reisner, C. S. Fisher and D. G. Lyon, *Harvard Excavations at Samaria 1908 - 1910*, Cambridge 1934, 213 - 219.

In the Byzantine period, new buildings were constructed, thereby radically changing the layout and function of the platform. The new buildings represent the second building phase. Their constructions reveal several subphases.

The first of these subphases has been tentatively dated to the first half of the sixth century, based on comparative

study of the architecture.¹² Then, a centralised church and a colonnaded courtyard were built on the Terrace (FIGS. 6 and 7).¹³ The church (ca 23m²) was constructed almost exactly in the centre of the platform. On its west side, a *narthex* was attached, with a colonnade of eight columns, that were erected on the Roman terrace retaining wall. The main entrance to the building was situated in the west

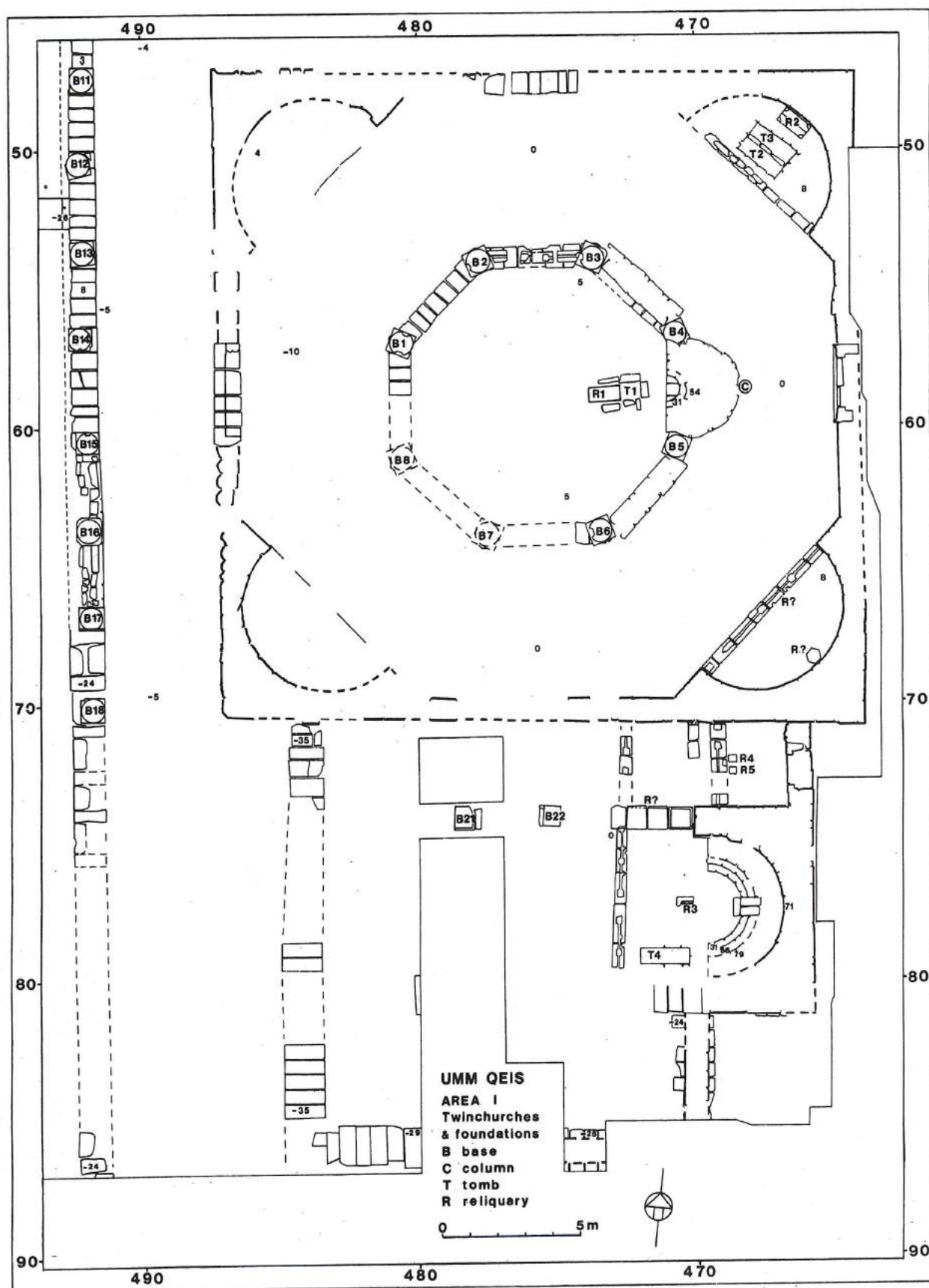


6. Umm Qays. Area I. Plan of the Terrace and its buildings, first Byzantine building phase (first half of the sixth century).

¹² Cf. the Church of St. George at Izra', the Cathedral at Buṣrā and the Church of St. John at Jarash. H. C. Butler, *Early Churches of Syria*, Princeton 1929, 122 - 125; J. W. Crowfoot, *Churches at Bosra and Samaria*, (Brit. School of Archaeol. in Jerusalem, Suppl.

Paper 4, 1937); C. H. Kraeling, *Gerasa. City of the Decapolis*, New Haven 1938, 241 ff.

¹³ U. Wagner-Lux and K. J. H. Vriezen, *o. c.* (footnote 1).



7. Umm Qays. Area I. Plan of the Byzantine twin churches and foundations.

wall. Another door was located in the east wall; this doorway was blocked at a later date.

In the interior of the square church, semi-circular apses were introduced in the four corners, so that the hall of the church itself is octagonally shaped. An octagonal stylobate encloses the central area and is surrounded by an ambulatory, paved with *opus sectile*. On each corner of the stylobate, a column is placed. The central area was partitioned off from the ambulatory by chancel screens in the five western *intercolumnia* (B3-B6), by walls in the southeastern (B5-B6) and northeastern (B3-B4) *intercolumnia* and a semi-circular podium in the eastern *intercolumnium* (B4-B5). The area could be entered via an opening in the chancel screen in the northern *intercolumnium* (B3-B2). The floor of the central octagon was paved with large limestone slabs in the western part and with *opus sectile* in the eastern part. The central area was the *sanctuary* of the church and beneath the floor level, in front of the semi-circular podium, a reliquary was found: a finely-worked stone chest with two compartments standing on bedrock (FIG. 7: R1). The chest contained only a fine-grained sand filling.¹⁴ The bedrock below the chest was hewn out to form a grave (FIG. 7: T1). The finds point to an original inhumation below the centre of the church and a secondary placement of a double reliquary.

The northeastern apse was separated from the ambulatory by a partition-wall (preserved to a height of 0.69m). In the centre of the semi-circular wall, a reliquary was placed on stone blocks: a small sarcophagus, the remains of plaster covering its outside show parts of a cross (FIG. 7: R2). Two graves secondarily have been inserted into the *opus sectile* floor of the apse (FIG. 7: T2, T3).

The SE apse was partitioned off from the ambulatory by a chancel screen and apparently functioned as a chapel. A low hexagonal column found standing against the centre of the semi-circular wall is interpreted as a reliquary stand (FIG. 7: R?). Near the northern end of the apse, two extra sockets in the threshold and a circular depression in the *opus sectile* floor may be the traces of another piece of liturgical furniture. This was probably a reliquary stand as well (FIG. 7: R?).

The northwestern and the southwestern apses were damaged so badly that they do not reveal any traces of furniture or use.

During the same building phase in the northern part of the platform, a colonnaded courtyard was constructed. The courtyard can be entered by means of three entrances located on the lower stone courses of the northern facade of the Roman platform. The middle entrance is situated on the centre line of the original platform. The central

space of the courtyard was open to the air and paved with stones of rose breccia and fine white limestone. The surrounding *porticus* was paved with basalt stones. A line of rooms along the eastern side of the platform open out into the eastern *porticus*.

In the construction of the walls of the courtyard, the same types of masonry are used as for the walls of the centralised church. The building materials consist to a large extent of *spolia* of basalt and limestone. As for the basalt *spolia*, door frames and columns, it is quite likely that they were originally used for the Roman buildings on the platform.¹⁵

To the south of the church already described, a second church has been uncovered: a three-aisled basilica (FIGS. 7 and 8). This church was built against the south wall of the centralised church and represents the next subphase in the Byzantine building activities.

The *sanctuary* is situated in the eastern part of the nave, separated from the western part by a chancel screen (FIG. 9). In the threshold extra sockets are carved. Through the opening in the middle of the screen, the



8. Umm Qays. Area I. The Byzantine twin churches and colonnaded courtyard (looking N).



9. Umm Qays. Area I. The basilica's *sanctuary* (looking NE).

¹⁴ Sand filling in a reliquary, cf. P. Donceel-Voûte, 'Le Role des reliquaires dans les Pélerinages', *Akten dex XII. Internationalen Congresses für Christliche Archäologie. Jahrbuch für Antike und*

Christentum, Ergänzungsband 20,1 Münster 1995, [184 - 205] 185f.

¹⁵ Cf. K. J. H. Vriezen and N. F. Mulder, *o.c.* (footnote 8).

sanctuarium can be entered. A *synthronos* is located on the east side of the *sanctuarium*: remains of three lines of seats and a prominent place for a *kathedra*. The floor of the nave was once paved with marble tiles. In front of the *kathedra* and below the floor level, part of a stone reliquary container was discovered (FIG. 7: R3).¹⁶ In the south part of the sanctuary, a grave was sunk into the floor (FIG. 7: T4).

The east part of the north aisle is fenced off by a chancel threshold with an entrance through the screen on the north side. In the centre of the threshold, an extra socket was hewn out and on the east side two marble-lined reliquary containers were sunk into the floor (FIG. 7: R4; R5). In the east wall of the aisle, the frame of a door, that once opened into a room, situated east of the basilica, is still visible. This doorway was blocked secondarily. West of the chancel threshold, a line of building stones is situated just below floor level, which may be the remains of a north-south wall. Further west in the north aisle, a second chancel threshold was found, that was in line with the threshold across the nave.

The south aisle was damaged, to a large extent, by modern building and living conditions. However, it is clear that the construction differs from that of the north aisle. The east wall of the south aisle is not a continuation of the wall of the north aisle and the nave, but instead, this wall is set 3.70 m westwards. The west wall and large parts of the south wall of the basilica have been demolished. The course of these walls, however, could be established from the course of their foundations. The Byzantine architects used a large section of the older Roman basalt stylobate as the foundation of the west wall. They created a similar foundation for the south wall, and for the other walls of the south aisle as well, using large basalt slabs, which they took from the Roman stylobate. These foundations have largely been preserved.¹⁷

It has been established that the remains of the basilica itself represent two distinct building phases: the *synthronos* was introduced into the basilica only secondarily. In the earlier layout of the basilica, a large apse was situated at the east end of the nave. Also the blocked doorway in

the east of the north aisle is an indication that the basilica was once remodeled. This remodeling may clarify two other facts: 1) the two chancel thresholds in the north aisle and 2) the difference in length of the south aisle when compared with the two other aisles. The line of building stones immediately in front of the east threshold of the north aisle are in line with the back wall of the south aisle. Assuming that these stones are the remains of a back wall, then, originally, both aisles were equal in length and the apse of the nave protruded eastwards from the almost square hall of the church. Therefore, there was only one chancel screen across the north aisle (i.e., the west one) closing off a small chapel, where probably relics were kept on the south side (FIG. 7: R?),¹⁸ and east of this assumed wall there was a room which could be entered from the east by a door on its east side.¹⁹ Later, this room was turned into a second chapel by blocking the doorway, tearing down the existing back wall of the north aisle and introducing the second chancel screen. The remodeling may have been executed at the same time as the installation of the *synthronos* in the *sanctuarium* in the nave. The first layout of the building was constructed sometime after the completion of the centralised church, as the basilica is built against this church and their walls do not bond. The similarities between the two buildings²⁰ suggest that the interval between the construction of the two churches may have been rather limited. The construction of the centralised church can be tentatively dated to the first half of the sixth century. If the original layout of the basilica had a transversal chancel screen, starting in the north aisle and continuing across the nave (and the south aisle?), then a date at the end of the sixth century or later may be suggested for the first building phase.²¹ The remodelling of the basilica may be dated in the Umayyad period, based on the pottery found below the *sanctuarium* floor.

The relation between the two churches may be studied by comparing them to other multiple churches. The separate churches in such complexes are known in some instances to have had different functions.²² This may be evident in the case of a combination of a genuine centralised church with a basilica, for example the complex of the

¹⁶ Probably the altar of the basilica was situated above this reliquary, cf. P. Donceel-Voûte, *o. c.* (footnote 14), 198-200; M. Piccirillo and E. Alliata, *Umm al Rasas, Mayfa'ah. I. Gli Scavi del Complesso di Santo Stephano*. (PSBF, CM 28), Jerusalem 1994, 117.

¹⁷ In this way the building technique of the southern aisle differs from the one applied in the northern aisle in so far as the foundations of the walls of the southern aisle basalt slabs are laid level with the Roman limestone slabs, whereas the walls of the north aisle foundation trenches have been dug through the limestone slab pavement.

¹⁸ Between the two chancel thresholds in the northern aisle, a small area of the floor situated against the partition wall to the *sanctuarium* was raised just some centimetres to the same level as the floor around the two reliquary containers in the eastern part of the aisle. This area of raised floor was paved with *opus sectile*. Cf. U. Wagner-Lux, K. J. H. Vriezen, F. van den Bosch, N. Mulder and R.

Guinée, *o. c.* (footnote 1), 387: fig.2.

¹⁹ For similar rooms next to the central apse and only accessible from outside, see for instance the two eastern rooms of the Theotokos Church on Mount Gerizim; A. Ovadia, *Corpus of the Byzantine Churches in the Holy Land* (Theophaneia 22), Bonn 1970, 140 - 141, Pl. 57.

²⁰ Besides the correspondence between the two churches in floor levels, wall thickness, measurements of *synthronos* steps, ornamentation (*opus sectile*, marble tiles, glass tesserae tile covering), particularly the use of virtual identical *spolia* for both churches must be considered.

²¹ A. Ovadia, *o. c.* (footnote 19), 196-197.

²² Cf. for instance the Triple Church at Jarash, where each of the constituent churches is dedicated to different saint(s): to St. George, St. John and to SS. Cosmas and Damianus.

Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem or the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem; here the centralised church is built over the holy site and in the adjacent basilica the Eucharist was celebrated.

Of our two churches, the centralised one was constructed first in the centre of the Terrace. It was a *memoria* (a *martyrion*) with a *sanctuary* in the middle of the church, where a grave was kept. This grave must have been the original focus of the *memoria*, its orientation (and consequently the orientation of the later reliquary) does not correspond to the orientation of the church, but follows the direction of the seams in the older Roman pavement. The area of the grave was distinguished in the layout of the *sanctuary* by the use of a special pattern of *opus sectile* pavement.²³ Subsequently, a double reliquary was placed in the grave, thereby increasing the number of relics. This trend to increase the number of relics may also be observed elsewhere in the *memoria*: the reliquary in the northeastern apse and the hexagonal reliquary stand in the southeastern apse are probably placed secondarily as the areas of their emplacement are not singled out in the pattern of the floor pavement. The two graves in the northeastern apse and the traces of liturgical furniture in the southeastern apse reveal a secondary emplacement, as the floor pavement had been disturbed in order to insert them.

The church of the basilica type was constructed at a later date. Here, the same increase of relics may be observed: in the remodeling of this church an extra chapel was added in the north aisle. It is not clear, however, whether the reliquary-container and the grave in the *sanctuary* of the nave belong to the second phase or had already been inserted in the original layout of the basilica.

It may be assumed that, with the increase of the number of relics, in addition to the graves of outstanding members of the community, these churches became more and more important.²⁴

Therefore, with the constructional activities in Byzantine times, a new layout and a new function of the buildings on the massive Terrace between the *acropolis* and the Lower City to the west was started. The ecclesiastical compound commenced in the first half of the sixth century with the construction of the *memoria* (*martyrion*) in the centre of the platform. Here, before the grave (later: double reliquary) in the central *sanctuary*

the life of the martyrs was commemorated and the liturgy was celebrated, attended by people assembled in the ambulatory. Visitors could gather in the colonnaded courtyard and circulate along the chapels in the corners of the church hall. Processions might have been held. In the second half of the sixth century or later, the basilica was added; here, the Eucharist could be celebrated. It is not known whose relics were kept in this church compound.

Apart from these churches, the remains of at least four other churches have been found among the ruins of ancient Gadara. Three were discovered in 1974 and they are of the centralised type.²⁵ The fourth church is described in this volume by Al-Daire and that church may also be characterised as a memorial church. As the name of Gadara does not seem to figure in the historical sources dealing with pilgrimages, we may ask whether the martyr-cult in these *memoriae* (*martyria*) attracted many pilgrims from far away.²⁶ For the Christians in ancient Gadara, however, the relics and the venerated graves played a role in the liturgical calendar. And it may be assumed that these various churches had their place in an organisation of stationary liturgy.²⁷

During the excavations, it has been established that, on the floors of both churches, the centralised one and the basilica, a layer of white sand had accumulated (0.05-0.40 m high), before the church walls collapsed. On this sand deposit and underneath the debris of the churches, intact pottery of the Umayyad period was found. This data lead to the conclusion that apparently in the second part of the Umayyad period the churches were not maintained and the roofs collapsed, allowing a layer of sand to accumulate inside the buildings. People lived inside these ruins until the walls collapsed during an earthquake. Possibly this was the same earthquake which destroyed so many buildings in nearby cities, like Pella: the earthquake of 749.

After that, the process came to an end. The Terrace was constructed in the second century AD as a monumental complex situated on a conspicuous site in ancient Gadara, overlooking the Lower City to the west. In the Roman period, the platform housed a large public area; in the Byzantine-Umayyad period it accommodated an impressive ecclesiastical compound. After the earthquake, however, it was not used again for building until modern times.

²³ Donceel-Voûte, 'L'inévitable chapelle des martyrs', in: M. Lamberigts and P. van Deun (eds), *Martyrium in multidisciplinary perspective. Memorial L. Reekmans*, Louvain 1995, [179-196] 186-187.

²⁴ Donceel-Voûte, *o. c.* (footnote 23) 189-191; Donceel-Voûte, *o. c.* (footnote 14), 192-198; M. Piccirillo and E. Alliata, *o. c.* (footnote 16), 118-119.

²⁵ U. Wagner-Lux, E. W. Kruger, K. and T. Vriezen, Bericht über

Oberflächenforschung in Gadara (Umm Qes) in Jordanien im Jahre 1974, *ADAJ* 23 (1979), [31-39] 35, 37, Pl. V. 1; VII. 2.

²⁶ P. Donceel-Voûte, *o. c.* (footnote 14), 188-193.

²⁷ J. F. Baldovin, *The Urban Character of Christian Worship The Origins, Development, and Meaning of Stationary Liturgy* (*Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 228), Rome 1987, 36-37, 248-249.