



Fig. 2. Gadara. View from the north to the northeastern terrace with Podium Temple I and II and the North Theater (C. Bührig).

sults attained thus far, the Zeus sanctuary of Gadara appears to have remained very important during the Imperial period.

#### TALL ZIRA'A/GADARA

Jutta Häser, German Protestant Institute of Archaeology, and Dieter Vieweger, Biblical Archaeological Institute, Wuppertal, report:

The Gadara Region Project was initiated by Vieweger in 2001. After intensive surveys on Tall Zira'a in 2001 and 2002, the excavations started in 2003. Since then, five spring and summer campaigns have been carried out. They were conducted by the Biblical Archaeological Institute, Wuppertal, and the German Protestant Institute of Archaeology, and were directed by Vieweger and Häser.

#### *Excavation Area I*

Excavation area I is situated on the northwest slope of the tall (fig. 3). Investigations showed that this was the most promising area for a rapid exposure of the stratigraphy of the tall. Strata from the Early Bronze Age (EBA) to the Umayyad period could be identified. By the end of the 2007 season, 40 squares (5 x 5 m) were opened, and a depth of 4.5 m (of the proposed

12 m of cultural layers) had been reached in most of the excavated area.

The survey of the tall showed a high concentration of EBA pottery in area I. Thus far, however, only the outer layer of a massive EBA fortification wall could be excavated in the step trench beyond the Late Bronze Age (LBA) city wall. The remains of two Middle Bronze Age (MBA) strata with residential buildings were uncovered in the same part of area I, 2 m below the LBA casemate wall.

In the Late Bronze Age (14th–13th centuries B.C.E.), at least two consecutive settlements existed on the tall. For the time being, only the latest LBA stratum could be exposed. Several facts—strong fortifications, massive architecture, the high percentage (5%) of imported pottery from Cyprus and Greece—indicate that the tall was the center of an LBA city-state.

The most remarkable building of this stratum is the massive casemate wall that fortified the settlement at the northwest flank. A charcoal sample from the collapsed walls gave a radiocarbon date of between 1450 and 1300 B.C.E. with 95.4% probability. Six rooms in the casemate wall were excavated.

South of the casemate wall, a large tower was uncovered. This inward-built tower is divided into two



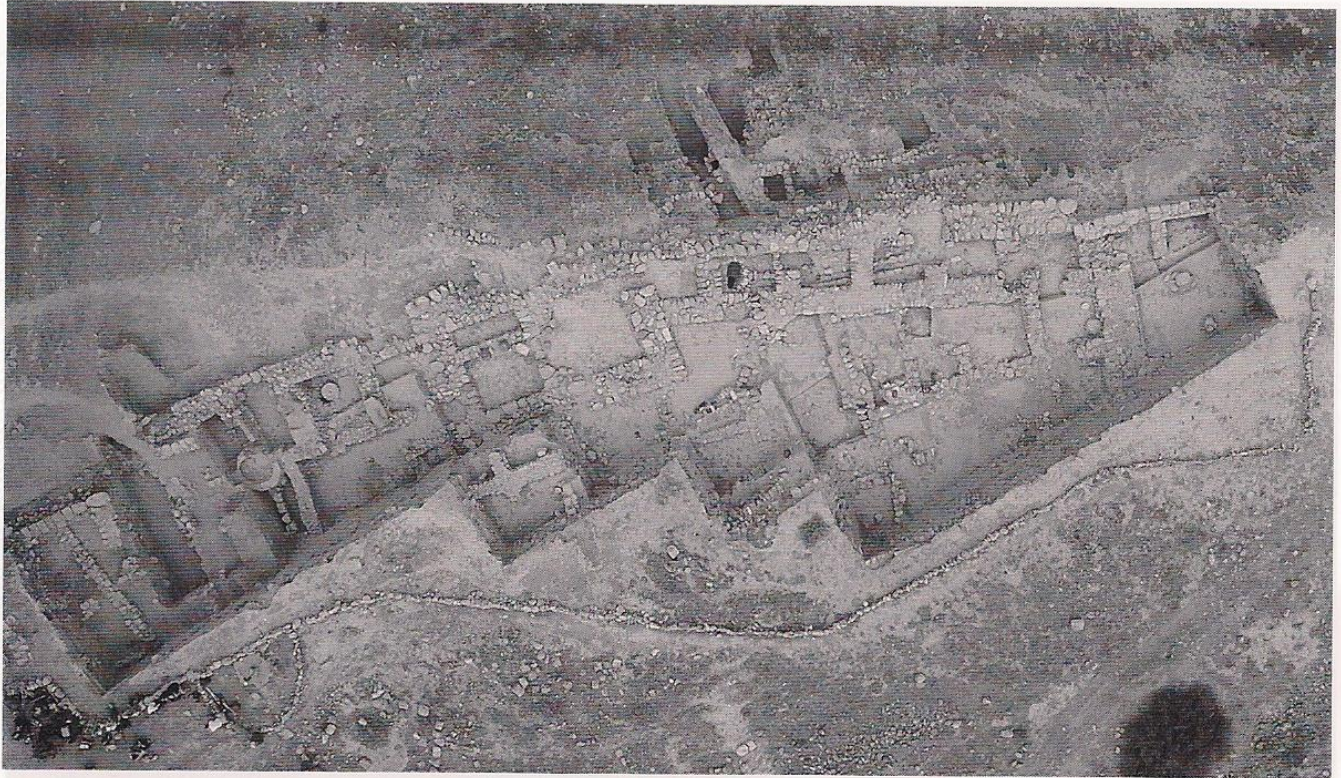


Fig. 3. Aerial view of excavations in area I at Tall Zira'a (P. Leiverkus).

pebble-paved rooms, one of them serving as a small gate sanctuary. South of the tower, a 2.75 m wide gate chamber was discovered. The gateway opens to the two lower cities to the north and the west of the tall.

At the end of the 2006 spring campaign, remains of LBA residential buildings were found on Tall Zira'a for the first time. Unlike their Iron Age counterparts, these houses have sizable ground plans.

The wealth of the city and its wide-reaching trade links are reflected in the manifold finds of this period. Among them are two scarabs, one of which (ht. 1.3 cm) bears the throne name of Apophis, ruler of the Hyksos ca. 1590–1550 B.C.E. We also found a terracotta figurine of a naked standing female in one of the courtyard houses, as well as numerous imported pottery sherds and 26 glazed faience cylinder seals (14th–13th centuries B.C.E.) created in the so-called Common Style of Mitanni glyptic. Imported faience wares from Egypt include vessels with papyrus images and rings.

The Iron I (12th–11th centuries B.C.E.) settlement displays a clear change of culture. No fortifications for this period were found, and the inhabitants used the walls of their LBA predecessors rather than create their own settlement pattern.

The architecture is very distinctive. In the northern part of the excavation area, the inhabitants of the tall dug several large pits for grain storage, built small walls for stables with some installations, and joined simple

huts to older walls. In the southern part of area I, an exceptionally large storage pit made of mud was found in the center. In addition, there is one large building with carefully constructed walls made of two or more rows of undressed stones. Two charcoal samples give a radiocarbon date for this stratum of 1220 to 970 B.C.E. and 1270 to 1040 B.C.E. with 95.4% probability.

The architecture of the Iron IIA/B stratum (10th–eighth centuries B.C.E.) suggests that the tall's population increased in this period and that the settlement developed an urban character. Even though the fortifications are not as strong as those of the LBA, the Iron II settlement was protected by a city wall. Some small finds from this stratum are quite noteworthy, such as a small bronze figurine of the god El. The burnt layer could be radiocarbon dated to between 1270 and 980 B.C.E. with 95.4% probability. This is the terminus ante quem for the deposition of the El figurine.

In the Roman and Byzantine periods (second–seventh centuries C.E.), there are again intensive building activities recognizable on the tall. Five houses can be distinguished, some with elaborate room arrangements. A stone-paved street following the contour of the slope divided the buildings into a western and an eastern section. This street was blocked by the construction of a house in a later building phase.

During the spring campaign in 2007, area I was extended to the north and south. In the southern part, directly at the edges of the original test trench, two lay-



ers of an Umayyad stratum were uncovered. In small areas, the remains of houses with paved floors and an oven were excavated.

#### *Excavation Area II*

Area II is situated on the northern part of the slope. In spring 2007, 11 more squares were opened to the north and east sides of the previously excavated area II. The total excavation area is now 400 m<sup>2</sup>. To the north, the outer limit of the plateau was reached.

In 2006, we uncovered a room and a large courtyard that were constructed in various stages during the Roman-Byzantine period and used again in the Umayyad period. The continuation of the large courtyard to the north could be found in the squares opened in spring 2007, as well as in the balk in the northwest.

#### *Excavation Area III*

In spring 2007, investigations started in the southern part of the tell. This area was chosen because of the visible building remains on the surface and a large vaulted underground cistern known since 2001. It is suspected that a large Roman villa occupied the area.

#### BARSINIA

Lamia El-Khoury, Yarmouk University, and Mohammed Hatamleh, Jordanian Department of Antiquities, report:

The joint project between Yarmouk University and the Department of Antiquities of Jordan, directed by El-Khoury and Hatamleh, undertook the second season of archaeological excavation at Barsinia between 17 June and 2 August 2007.

The work this season concentrated on the middle-western part of the site, in areas B and C (fig. 4). The project excavated a domestic complex (used in different periods) that consisted of a number of rooms; walls of medium-sized, roughly cut stones and preserved in some cases up to eight courses; and different levels of flagstone-paved floors. Ceramics collected from this complex show that it had been in use from the Late Hellenistic period to the Abbasid period. Most of the pottery assemblage, however, dates to the Late Roman and Byzantine periods. The reuse of the structure in the Early Islamic periods (Umayyad and Abbasid) entailed the rebuilding of some walls of the older structure and the addition of some smaller walls. The Early Islamic occupation of the site complicated the

stratigraphic evidence by making it difficult to distinguish the structural features of individual phases. The reused ancient floors, however, seem to have survived intact in most of the rooms.

The function of the building in its pre-Islamic phases is still unclear; however, the structure in its Islamic phases had a domestic nature. Among the materials and features discovered were three tabuns (ovens), the largest of which is 1.30 m in diameter and 1 m deep. Three complete pottery lamps were also recovered.

#### PELLA AND JARASH REGION

Kate da Costa, University of Sydney, reports:

The Borders of Arabia and Palaestina Project (BAP) is developing a new methodology based on targeted ceramic sampling to determine the route of Roman provincial borders.<sup>1</sup> The project is using the area between Pella and Jarash as a case study (fig. 5) and will sample ceramics from up to 20 sites along the supposed route of the border between the Roman provinces of Palaestina and Arabia. For part of its length, this border is now thought to be Wadi Yabbis (also known as Wadi Rayyan), but east of the watershed, there is little indication of the borderline. We are collecting all ceramics found in our sampling squares but are focusing on material from the third to seventh centuries C.E.

In late 2006, the first field season targeted sites previously identified by Mittmann,<sup>2</sup> the Wadi Yabbis survey,<sup>3</sup> or the Wadi Ziqlab survey.<sup>4</sup> Ceramics processing continued into 2007. The team included students from the University of Sydney and Macquarie University. The participating staff included director Kate da Costa, field director Franz Reidel, surveyor Hugh Barnes, archaeologist Mel Kennedy, illustrator Toni Licciardo, and Department of Antiquities representative Khaled Junaideh.

At each site, we attempted a maximum recovery of ceramics by positioning our 5 m and 1 m collection squares in areas with relatively dense surface material. In addition, artifacts were collected from the excavated topsoil of one of the 5 m squares. Most of the sites selected for sampling were simply identified in previous surveys as having ceramics from the Roman-Byzantine period, with no additional information. Additionally, those sites surveyed by Mittmann have been subject to more than 40 years of intensifying development and are now under villages or towns that barely existed in

<sup>1</sup> The project is funded by an Australian Research Council Discovery Project Grant and Fellowship. We would like to thank the Council for British Research in the Levant, Amman, for logistical support. Additional images are available on the AJA Web site (<http://www.ajaonline.org>), under "Image Gal-

lery." See also the project Web site (<http://acl.arts.usyd.edu.au/bap>) for additional information and images.

<sup>2</sup> Mittmann 1970.

<sup>3</sup> Palumbo et al. 1993.

<sup>4</sup> E.g., Banning 2001.