

## **CHAPTER 5      POPULAR CULT – PHOENICIA AND KOILE-SYRIA**

The satrapy of Phoenicia and Koile-Syria was part of the original Levantine territory awarded to Seleukos I after the battle of Ipsos (301 BC). However, it was not until the Fifth Syrian War (202-198 BC) that the Seleukids were able to wrest control of the region away from their Ptolemaic rivals. Although Damascus may have changed hands several times in the intervening century, the majority of the southern Levant only fell within the Seleukid sphere from the early second century BC.

The familiar problems inherent in the study of religion in North Syria – a lack of excavated sites, archaeological dominance of later phases on those sites which have been excavated, and a scarcity of historical sources – continue to haunt the study of the South. Furthermore, within two generations of the Seleukid conquest, the satrapy of Phoenicia and Koile-Syria began to fragment into independent polities – Maccabaeon/Hasmonaeon Judaea, Ituraean Chalkis, autonomous coastal cities and independent local tyrants. Seleukid political control was never as secure in the South as it was in the North. As such, it might be plausible to argue that there was less opportunity for Seleukid political wants and needs to influence the Hellenistic religious forms of Phoenicia and Koile-Syria. A further obstruction to the study of religious developments in the southern Levant is the manifest politicisation of the historical and archaeological records – that bogeyman of all historical enquiry. Ongoing political, religious and ideological friction between Israel, the Palestinian territories and neighbouring states has led to the over- or under-emphasis of the extent of Hellenistic or Jewish control and influence by different parties. Rightly or wrongly, this volume skirts the issue by dealing with Judaeon material in only a peripheral sense.

This chapter will follow the west-east, north-south itinerary set out in Chapter 4. Beginning at Umm el-Amed in the hinterland of Phoenician Tyre, we cross the Lebanon and Antilebanon ranges to Koile-Syria. The scant evidence for the Hellenistic period at Damascus is discussed before travelling south to the Panion in the foothills below Mount Hermon, Gadara and Gerasa in what would become the Decapolis, finishing at the Idumaeon temple complex at Tel Beersheba.

## 5.1 UMM EL-AMED

Nineteen kilometres south of ancient Tyre and less than a kilometre from the coast, the remains of the rural settlement at Umm el-Amed first came to European attention following the publication of the 1772 tour of Syria, Phoenicia and Egypt by Louis-François Cassas. The first scholarly investigation of the site by Comte Melichor de Vogüé in 1853 determined that the extant monumental surface remains dated to the Hellenistic period and eight years later Ernest Renan conducted the first of a series of excavations at the site. Further archaeological research was conducted by Eustache de Lorey in 1921 (unpublished) and most recently by Maurice Dunand and Raymond Duru between 1943 and 1945.<sup>1</sup> The settlement of Umm el-Amed occupied a plateau overlooking the narrow coastal strip to the west and the Wadi Hamoul to the south. The site encompassed approximately 18 hectares, much of which was covered with the remains of domestic structures. Dunand and Duru believe that the site was not permanently settled before the Achaemenid period although several flint blades and some eighth and seventh century BC Cypriot-style ceramics were found on the site which implies some form of earlier occupation.<sup>2</sup> The name of the site during the Hellenistic period may have been Alexandrouskene (Alexander's tent) although there is little archaeological foundation for the attribution.<sup>3</sup> The dominating features of the settlement were two large temple complexes, to the west and east of the plateau respectively which were constructed in the late fourth or early third century BC although there may have been an earlier predecessor (**fig.151**).<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, the claim of El-Nassery, that a *terminus ante quem* for the construction of the temples can be provided by a coin of Ptolemy I discovered inside the western sanctuary does not take into account the prolonged circulation of coinage long after its production.<sup>5</sup> The larger of the two temples, situated to the west of the plateau, was dedicated to the vernacular god, Milk'ashtart (**fig.152**).<sup>6</sup> The slightly smaller temple at the eastern extent of the plateau was probably

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<sup>1</sup> Cassas 1799: no.87; de Vogüé 1855: 37; Renan 1864: 695-749; Dunand and Duru 1962.

<sup>2</sup> Dunand and Duru 1962: 11, 19, 22 n.2., 203-4; Mellink 1965: 326.

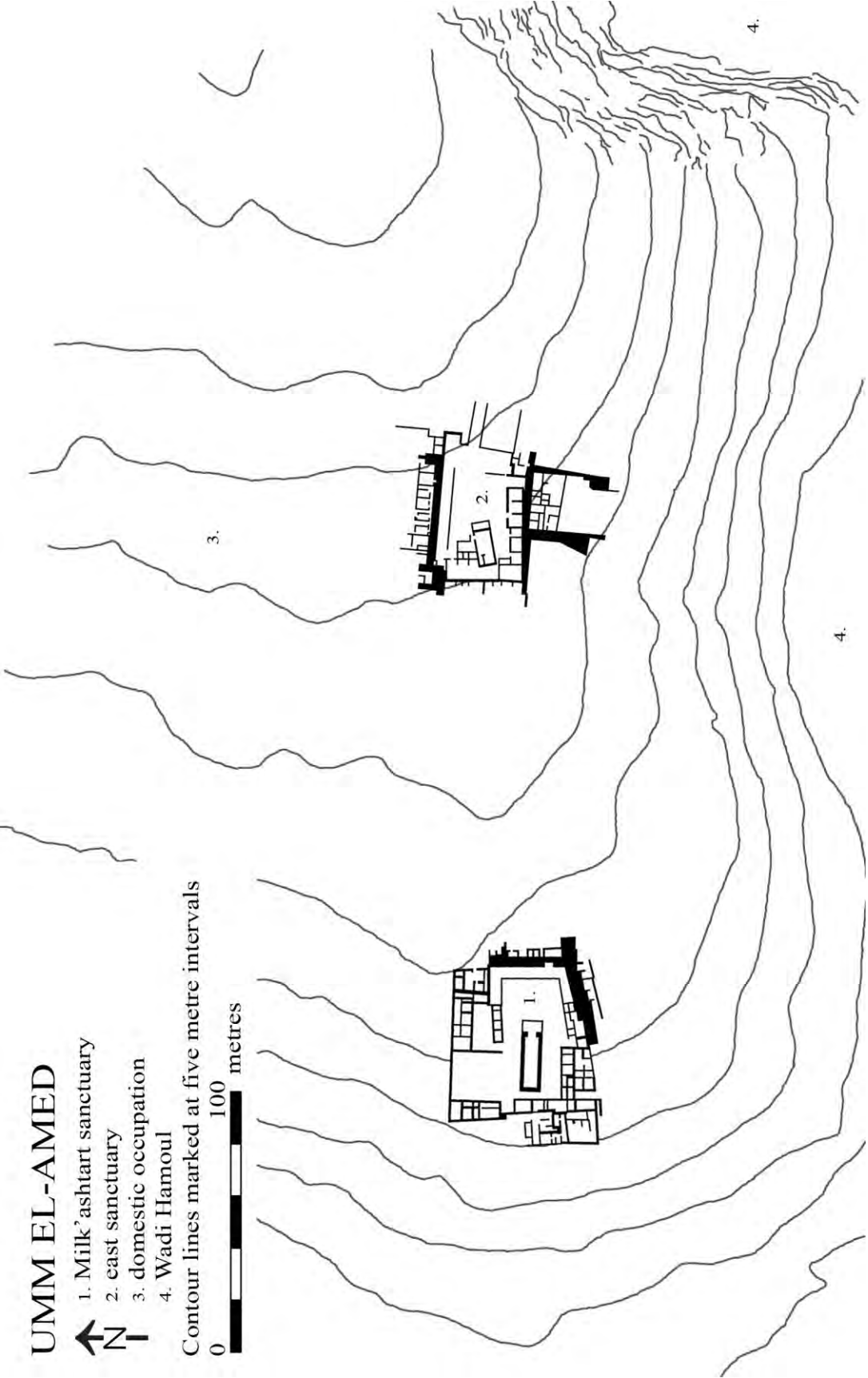
<sup>3</sup> Dunand and Duru 1962: 242.

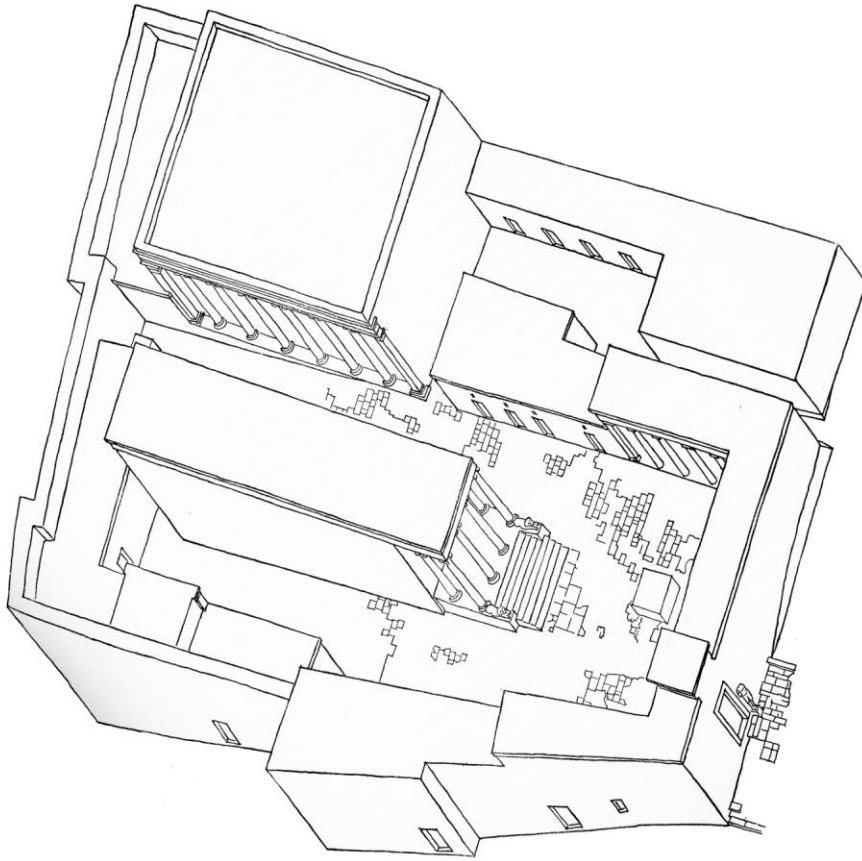
<sup>4</sup> Hannestad and Potts 1990: 118.

<sup>5</sup> El-Nassery 1966. As illustrated in Wright 2010, an issue of coinage might remain in circulation for well over a century after the date of production provided it found acceptance in the market. Within the closed economic environment of the Ptolemaic empire, a coin of Ptolemy I might be expected to remain in circulation long after the death of the king. Such a possibility is only heightened by Umm el-Ahmed's location in provincial Phoenicia.

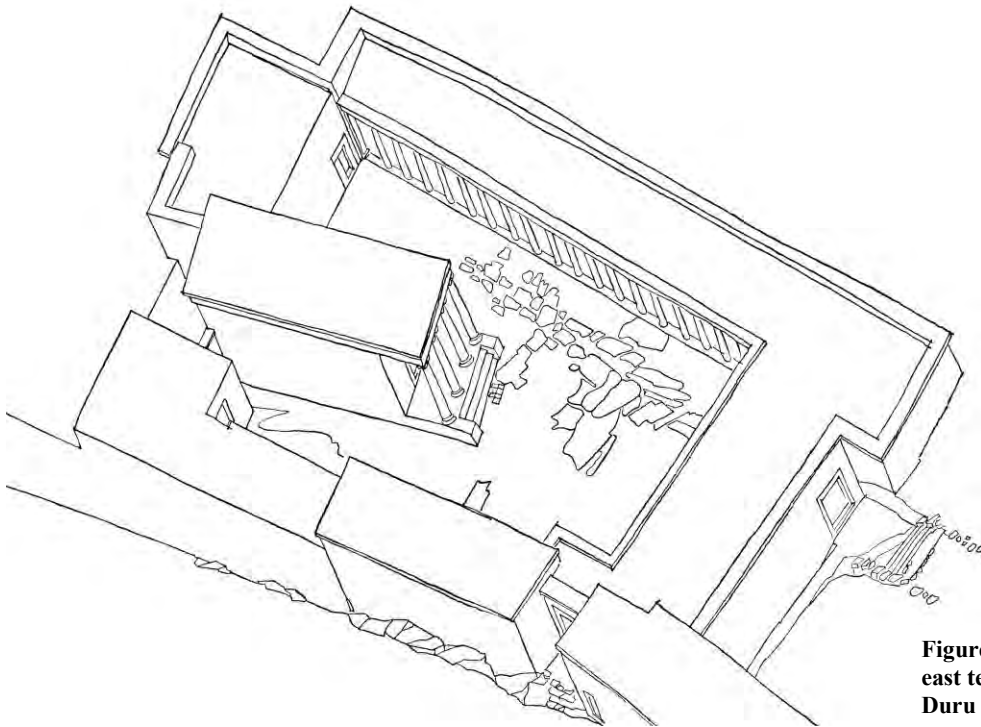
<sup>6</sup> Dunand and Duru 1962: 195.

Figure 151.  
Umm el-Amed  
(N.L. Wright  
after Dunand  
and Duru 1962:  
fig.20).





**Figure 152. Umm el-Amed west temple (Dunand and Duru 1962: fig.10).**



**Figure 153. Umm el-Amed east temple (Dunand and Duru 1962: fig.17).**

dedicated to the principal Phoenician goddess, Astarte (**fig.153**).<sup>7</sup> The excavators found no evidence of Roman period construction on the site and its importance seems to have diminished until its rebirth as a Byzantine centre of Christianity in the fourth century AD. In the absence of excavated Hellenistic sanctuaries in the larger Phoenician centres, Umm el-Amed provides an insightful archaeological window into Phoenician religion under the Ptolemies and Seleukids.

### 5.1.1 THE SANCTUARY OF MILK'ASHTART

The exact identity of the god worshipped at the larger of Umm el-Amed's two temples is ambiguous. The „Great“ temple, situated at the western end of the plateau, contained 16 inscriptions, all in Phoenician, dated to the third and second centuries BC. A number of these were dedicated to the MLK 'TTRT, Milk'ashtart, a deity further defined epigraphically as the El Ḥammon.<sup>8</sup> The Phoenician name of the god, MLK 'TTRT has been understood as the „deity of the city of Ashtarot“ to the east of the Jordan River.<sup>9</sup> The addition of the appellation El Ḥammon<sup>10</sup> has caused an alternate translation of Milk'ashtart El Ḥammon as „consort of Astarte, the god of Ḥammon“, that is, according to Clifford, the god of Mount Amanos.<sup>11</sup> Seyrig proposed a slight change, viewing the deity as the „son of Astarte, god of Hammon.“<sup>12</sup> The prevailing identification of Milk'ashtart as the god of Ashtarot (south-east of Tyre) need not preclude him from also being the god of Amanos to the north. Both places are located some distance from the Phoenician heartland, at what might be considered the metaphorical extent of Phoenician influence across the Levantine mainland just as “from Dan to Beersheba” could be used as a formulaic expression of Iron Age Israelite influence.<sup>13</sup> The titlature „god of Ashtarot, god of Amanos“ may therefore be seen as something akin to „god of the north and south“ or „god of all“ implying the deity's supreme rule. As a further alternative, Niehr views Ḥammon as the Phoenician name of the

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<sup>7</sup> Dunand and Duru 1962: 169.

<sup>8</sup> Dunand and Duru 1962: 181-96, nos.2, 6, 13-4; Pardee 1988.

<sup>9</sup> Pardee 1988: 62-7; id. 1990: 370. On Ashtarot in Jordan see for example, I *Chronicles* 6.71; *Deuteronomy* 1.4; *Joshua* 9.10, 12.4, 13.31; Kellermann 1981.

<sup>10</sup> See for example Pardee 1988: nos. II-IV, VI-VII.

<sup>11</sup> Dunand and Duru 1962: 195; Clifford 1990: 57, 60, 62. A variant of El Ḥammon is given as „god of the brazier“ although this is considered less likely by Clifford.

<sup>12</sup> Seyrig 1963: 28.

<sup>13</sup> Biran 1974: 27. Reports of, or evidence for, colonies of Phoenicians are known from inland sites such as Samareia, (Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 11.344; Lemaire 1994), Marisa (Kasher 1990: 24; Berlin 2002: 139-40), the Decapolis cities (Kasher 1990: 25; Lichtenberger 2003: 357) and perhaps Palmyra (Garbini 1998, but contra Kaizer 2002:110). An association between Phoenicia and Ashtarot is not an unreasonable conjecture.

settlement at Umm el-Amed, thereby making Milkʿashtart the god of the specific location of his temple.<sup>14</sup> This suggestion was almost made by Dunand and Duru who made the connection between Ḥammon and the modern name of the Wadi Hamoul. However, a direct equation of Ḥammon with Umm el-Amed was dismissed on chronological grounds.<sup>15</sup>

The chief god of Umm el-Amed has also been tentatively viewed as synonymous with the principal Tyrian god Melkart, the „king of the city/underworld“ whose death and resurrection brought fertility to the world.<sup>16</sup> Pardee suggests that Melkart may have been one of the titles of Milkʿashtart which later emerged as an independent pseudonym, much like the relationship between Hadad and Baʿal.<sup>17</sup> Pardee’s position is supported by the discovery of a 23cm high Hellenistic statue fragment identified as Herakles, Melkart’s *interpretatio graeca*, in one of the southern rooms of the Milkʿashtart temenos (fig.154).<sup>18</sup> In addition to Milkʿashtart, the western temenos appears to have been shared with a powerful *synnaïos theos*. Baʿal Šamīn – that ubiquitous god of the heavens – is also honoured epigraphically within the sanctuary walls.<sup>19</sup> Incidentally, this association favours the proposition of Seyrig that Melkart be seen as the son of Astarte (MLK ʾTTRT) and Baʿal Šamīn.<sup>20</sup>

The sanctuary of Milkʿashtart took the form of a large rectangular temple within a paved and walled temenos (measuring 49.5 by 24 metres) which included numerous outbuildings including a pi-shaped stoa and hypostyle hall. The temple itself was isolated from surrounding structures in accordance with normal west Semitic practice. The retaining terrace built to ensure a level surface of the temenos was constructed in the same manner as



Figure 154.  
Herakles statue  
from Umm el-  
Amed (Dunand  
and Duru 1962:  
pl.35.4).

<sup>14</sup> Niehr 2003: 45.

<sup>15</sup> Dunand and Duru 1962: 11. A biblical reference to Ḥammon (*Joshua* 19.28) implied an earlier date for the establishment of that settlement than is so far attested archaeologically at Umm el-Amed.

<sup>16</sup> Hannestad and Potts 1990: 116-9; Clifford 1990: 56, 59-60.

<sup>17</sup> Pardee 1988: 68.

<sup>18</sup> Dunand and Duru 1962: 159.

<sup>19</sup> Renan 1864: 710-26; Dunand and Duru 1962: 181-96, no.1; Niehr 2003: 45-7.

<sup>20</sup> Seyrig 1963: 28.

the earlier Ešmoun temple from Sidon but the technique was also employed at Pasargadae, Persepolis and Susa and perhaps represents residual Achaemenid influences or practices during the period of the Milkʿashtart sanctuary’s construction.<sup>21</sup>

The temple of Milkʿashtart, measuring 24 by 8.5 metres, stood on a podium built of irregular limestone blocks which raised it 1.2 metres higher than the surrounding temenos pavement. The podium fill included remains of fourth century BC Attic black-glaze ware and a number of Phoenician jars which provide a *terminus post quem* for the construction of the temple itself.<sup>22</sup> The temple was east-facing, with a single large naos provided with a typically eastern flat roof. The naos was fronted by a prostyle tetrastyle Ionic portico. Access from the temenos court was provided by eight broad steps which approached the portico from the east and by a secondary stairway which rose along the northern edge of the podium and gave access directly into the naos. The principal (eastern) stairway was guarded, at the level of the podium, by two recumbent sphinxes (or perhaps lions).<sup>23</sup> The Ionic order portico and added Greek architectural mouldings fail to conceal the entirely vernacular nature of the architecture and building techniques of Milkʿashtart’s earthly abode. The use of a podium rather than stepped krepidoma, together with the Ionic order frontispiece is reminiscent of Lucian’s description of the appearance of the great temple at Hierapolis, supposedly a contemporary construction, and may support the usefulness of Lucian’s account.<sup>24</sup>

A monumental altar was located east of the temple in the temenos forecourt. Dunand and Duru could discern little of its layout, estimating that it may have measured as large as 10 square metres.<sup>25</sup> The altar appears to have been decorated with relief carvings, many fragments of which were recovered from the area to the east of the temple. Chief among the decorated blocks was a large relief of a kneeling bull and another interesting multi-faced orthostat featuring (on two of its faces) a human male wearing a pointed cap similar to those worn by the indigenous priests of inland Syria (**figs.150, 155**).<sup>26</sup>

The hypostyle hall, measuring 19.6 by 18.8 metres, was situated north of the temple, in the north-eastern corner of the temenos. The open southern face of the hall was

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<sup>21</sup> Dunand and Duru 1962: 22 n.2, 23, 27-9.

<sup>22</sup> Dunand and Duru 1962: 20, 24; El-Nassery 1966: 284.

<sup>23</sup> Dunand and Duru 1962: 25-6; Hannestad and Potts 1990: 118.

<sup>24</sup> Lucian *The Syrian Goddess* 30. See also the discussion in Chapter 4.5.1.1 above.

<sup>25</sup> Dunand and Duru 1962: 28, 143.

<sup>26</sup> Dunand and Duru 1962:143-6.

provided with an Ionic hexastyle colonnade. Within the hall, the roof beams were supported by three further rows of six columns, of the plainer Doric order.<sup>27</sup> Hypostyle halls were prevalent throughout Asia from Egypt to Chorasnia. The building practice exhibited through the Umm el-Amed columned hall should



**Figure 155. Bull orthostat from Umm el-Amed (Dunand and Duru 1962: pl.28.1).**

therefore be seen to manifest persisting non-Greek tradition, while individual architectural features, principally the column orders, speak of a limited Hellenisation permeating the region under the Ptolemies, and later the Seleukids.

The pi-shaped Doric stoa was built at the eastern end of the sanctuary. The east run of the stoa ran the full width of the temenos, flanking the eastern propylaia. The wings returned a little under 12 metres to the north and south making the stoa a major feature of the overall sanctuary design.<sup>28</sup> A dedication inscription, again written in Phoenician, dates the construction of the stoa to 222/1 BC. Such a large modification to the sanctuary suggests a growing prosperity for the site which clearly flourished under Ptolemaic supremacy.<sup>29</sup> Between the stoa and hypostyle hall to the north and west from the stoa along the southern and western edges of the temenos were a number of ancillary magazines and chapels, several of which contained sculptural fragments.<sup>30</sup>

The propylaia was located in the southern half of the eastern run of the stoa, offset from the principal axis of the sanctuary and providing a three-quarter view of the temple façade. The portal was 2.05 metres wide, built out of large dressed stones. A Phoenician dedication dates the final form of the entrance's completion to 132/1 BC, dated in both the Seleukid era (year 180) and according to the era of Tyrians (year 143).<sup>31</sup> The year 132/1 BC marked the high point in the late Seleukid period. Antiochos VII Sidetes had successfully

<sup>27</sup> Dunand and Duru 1962: 29-34; Hannestad and Potts 1990: 118.

<sup>28</sup> Dunand and Duru 1962: 34-9; Hannestad and Potts 1990: 118.

<sup>29</sup> Dunand and Duru 1962: 181-96 no.4; El-Nassery 1966: 284; Grainger 1991: 81; Hannestad and Potts 1990: 118.

<sup>30</sup> Dunand and Duru 1962: 39-47.

<sup>31</sup> Dunand and Duru 1962: 181-96 no.1.



Figure 156.  
Egyptianised  
statue body from  
Umm el-Amed  
(Dunand and  
Duru 1962:  
pl.30.1).



Figure 157.  
Egyptianised  
statue feet and  
basis from Umm  
el-Amed (Dunand  
and Duru 1962:  
pl.30.3).



unified the fractious Levant and recently subdued Judaea and the Hasmonaean leadership. Preparations were underway for the king's *anabasis* and as a result, large quantities of money were flowing out of the royal treasury into the wider population via the army and its camp followers. Although the sanctuary must have had one or even two earlier propylaia (one dating to the initial fourth-third century BC construction phase and/or one built into the late third century BC stoa) the edifice that was to last was constructed during the brief Seleukid resurgence.

To the northern side of the exterior of the propylaia, a trapezoidal statue basis was found *in situ*. The bare feet (to the ankle) of the statue were still attached to the basis while the upper legs, torso and left arm were found in a single piece among the adjacent tumble. The statue clearly depicted a male in a stiff pose with the right foot placed squarely on the ground in front of the right. Unfortunately there is no sign of the raised right arm, nor of the head. The only clothing worn by the figure was an Egyptian style kilt

and it is clear that the sculpture was produced in a heavily Egyptianised environment (figs.156-7).<sup>32</sup> The front of the statue base carried an inscription dedicating the sculpture to Milk-ashtart El-Ḥammon from Abdesmun on behalf of his son. It may be possible to identify the sculpted figure as a representation of the god, but that the votary is represented is equally possible.<sup>33</sup> There appears to have been the foundations of a second statue base installed to the south of the portal which would have granted the propylaia a finer sense of symmetry.

A secondary entrance was located to the north, between the hypostyle hall and

<sup>32</sup> Dunand and Duru 1962: 48, 156-7.

<sup>33</sup> Dunand and Duru 1962: 181-96 no.2. Susan Downey (*pers. comm.*) has suggested that the raised hand may suggest a pose of adoration more likely to represent the devotee than the deity. However, note the raised right arm on coin depictions of the gods Sandan and Marnas, figs.26, 28-9, 44.

neighbouring storage rooms. This entrance gave direct access from the temenos to a second row of storage magazines located behind the northern wing of the stoa. Dunand and Duru posit that this secondary approach may have provided the earliest access to the temenos, before the construction of the stoa and propylaea.<sup>34</sup>

### 5.1.2 THE EAST SANCTUARY

In many ways, the east sanctuary at Umm el-Amed is comparable to its western counterpart. The temenos itself was mildly larger, forming an irregular rectangle measuring 60 by 35 metres. However, the temple and ancillary buildings within the temenos were smaller and less impressive. Like the temple dedicated to Milkʿashtart, the temple of the east sanctuary was built on a low podium (50cm high), opened to the east, was fronted by a tetrastyle Ionic portico and was accessed from the east by three large steps. The naos measured 14.5 by 7.8 metres of which the front section formed a single large hall. As in the Milkʿashtart temple, a secondary entrance led into the naos through the eastern half of its northern wall. The last (westernmost) three metres of the naos were divided by an internal wall into two unequal adytions, the northern being the narrower, measuring two metres wide while the southern adyton measured three square metres.<sup>35</sup>

The temple sat in an irregularly shaped paved court, on a different axis to the surrounding structures of the temenos. Two long porticos along the entire northern and eastern limits of the temenos formed an L-shaped stoa.<sup>36</sup> As in the Milkʿashtart sanctuary, the western and southern limits of the temenos were lined with ancillary storage rooms and/or chapels. Those to the west abutted the rear of the temple itself. The temenos could be accessed from the surrounding domestic area through three different monumental gateways, to the north-west, north-east and south-east. The gateway lintels were each decorated with an Egyptianised, winged, sun-disc with twin Uraei to left and right.<sup>37</sup> It appears that no improvements were made to the east sanctuary after its initial construction and no dedicatory inscriptions were recovered from the area. The east sanctuary can therefore be seen as secondary in importance to its western neighbour.

A large empty stone throne was recovered during Renan's 1861 excavations and removed from Umm el-Amed to the Louvre (**fig.158**). Although badly damaged it appears

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<sup>34</sup> Dunand and Duru 1962: 49-50.

<sup>35</sup> Dunand and Duru 1962: 56-9.

<sup>36</sup> Dunand and Duru 1962: 61-4.

<sup>37</sup> Dunand and Duru 1962: 69-75.

**Figure 158.**  
Throne from  
Umm el-Amed,  
now in the  
Louvre (Dunand  
and Duru 1962:  
pl.87.1).



**Figure 159.**  
Sphinx throne  
from Umm el-  
Amed (Dunand  
and Duru 1962:  
pl.67.1).



that the seat was flanked by sphinxes. The front of the backrest carries a winged sun-disc which brings to mind both the north-west gateway and Lucian's description of the throne of the sun at Hierapolis-Bambyke.<sup>38</sup> Beyond the fact that it was found in the eastern sanctuary, there is no record of its precise provenance. Fragments of a second empty stone throne were later found by Dunand and Duru within the temenos of the eastern sanctuary, among the remains of rooms 33 and 34 to the north of the temple itself. It would appear that the second throne once sat on a podium in the north-west corner of the temenos, analogous to the location of the hypostyle hall in the Milk-ashtart sanctuary. Enough material was preserved for much of the throne to be confidently restored (**fig.159**). Both flanks are formed of standing sphinxes, their wings rising to form elaborate armrests.<sup>39</sup> It is the presence of these two thrones that has led the excavators to suggest that the east sanctuary was dedicated to Astarte. However, although empty thrones have a proven epigraphic link to the Astarte cult, the spiritual presence of alternate deities were also known to have been, or are suspected of having been, represented

through the provision of an empty throne.<sup>40</sup> Be that as it may, the two thrones from Umm el-Amed with sphinx armrests can be ascribed to Astarte with little doubt. The sphinx was the perpetual creature of the goddess and the carved sphinxes on both Umm el-Amed thrones provide a striking comparison to a third, found midway between that settlement and Tyre which bore a Phoenician dedication to Astarte dated to the Hellenistic period.<sup>41</sup>

Hannestad and Potts declared "the evidence offered us by Umm el-Amed suggests that in the Hellenistic period the provincial religious architecture of Syria which, more than

<sup>38</sup> Lucian *The Syrian Goddess* 34.

<sup>39</sup> Renan 1864: 707; Dunand and Duru 1962: 168-9, pls.67, 87.1.

<sup>40</sup> For inscriptions linking similar thrones to Astarte, see Bordreuil 1985: 182-3; Davila and Zuckerman 1993. For alternate deities, see Betylon 1985 (Ašerah); Lightfoot 2003: 449-55 (the sun?)

<sup>41</sup> Davila and Zuckerman 1993. Seyrig (1959: 51-2) catalogues further examples of thrones with sphinxes from Phoenicia which has been supplemented by numerous scholars since, see Lightfoot 2003: 450 n.3.

any other of the provinces of their realm, was to be the homeland of the Seleucids, was not whole-heartedly Greek in character.”<sup>42</sup> A similar line was followed, and accentuated by Grainger who saw in the sanctuaries of Umm el-Amed “no sign of being other than the traditional Phoenician type.”<sup>43</sup> However, despite their overtly Phoenician outward expression, the assembled deities at Umm el-Amed present an underlying familiarity with the religious complexes in existence across the west Semitic world: a god of storms, a fierce fertility goddess with a dichotomy of celestial and chthonic roles, and a powerful younger god whose existence was dominated by annual death and rebirth. In the guise of Herakles-Melkart, Zeus-Baʿal Šamīn and Astarte, the same three gods were worshipped as the supreme triad of nearby Hellenistic Tyre.<sup>44</sup>

It is true that all sixteen third-second century BC inscriptions recovered from the sanctuary of Milkʿashtart were written in Phoenician. The only evidence of Greek language from the site came from the legends carried on Ptolemaic, Seleukid and Phoenician civic coinage which found their way onto the sanctuaries. Several of the Phoenician inscriptions bore the names of priests and other staff who serviced the sanctuary of Milkʿashtart: Baʿalyaton, son of Baʿalyaton, the “high-priest” of the sanctuary; Baʿalyaton son of Abdhor, “priest of Milkʿashtart” and Baʿalshamar the chief gatekeeper, son of Abdosir the chief gatekeeper.<sup>45</sup> From their names it is apparent that all were indigenous Phoenicians. There is however, another noticeable trend present in the epigraphic corpus; two of the three patronymics provided were theophoric names alluding to Egyptian deities – Abdhor, „servant of Horus” and Abdosir, „servant of Osiris”. Several other dedications exist mentioning further theophoric names derived from both Phoenicia and Egypt. Among the latter category are included Isibarak, „blessing of Isis” and Abdoubast, „servant of Bastet”.<sup>46</sup>

The onomastic evidence, combined with the repetition of Egyptianising iconographic motifs within the sanctuaries; the sphinxes, winged sun-discs, statues flanking the Milkʿashtart propylaea; all stress the persistent Egyptian cultural influence exerted over Phoenicia since the Old Kingdom. Ptolemaic political control during the formative period of Umm el-Amed’s construction merely reinforced an already existing cultural exchange. It may be significant that many of the names illustrating this Egyptian link were found in the

<sup>42</sup> Hannestad and Potts 1990: 119.

<sup>43</sup> Grainger 1991: 82.

<sup>44</sup> Seyrig 1963.

<sup>45</sup> Dunand and Duru 1962: 181-96 nos.5-6, 16.

<sup>46</sup> Dunand and Duru 1962: 181-96 nos.11-2.

patronymics of the individuals named in the dedications, suggesting that Egyptianisation was stronger in the generation before the bulk of the inscriptions were written, in the second century BC, than after the battle of Panion.

The hypostyle hall, although necessarily similar in form to its Egyptian namesakes, probably played a role more akin to the columned reception halls of Iranian tradition as at Persepolis and Aī Khanoum and that can still be seen at the Djuma mosque in Khiva (Uzbekistan). Specific architectural features, column capitals and bases and architrave mouldings, speak of an invasive Hellenisation as do the temple and stoa façades and the superficially Greek angled view of the temples from their respective propylaia. The overall architectural style, the temple podiums, flat roofs and courtyard plans perhaps owed most to west Semitic antecedents. One aspect of the material culture of Umm el-Amed which showed indisputable Hellenisation however was the ceramic assemblage. Although dominated by locally produced coarseware vessels which have been generally classed as of the “usual local type”<sup>47</sup>, most of the shapes conformed to well established Hellenistic models despite being produced in a local fabric. The incurved-rim bowls, unguentaria, lagynoi, casseroles, frequent fishplates and an amphoriskos would not be out of place on any other Hellenised site in Syria. Attic black-glaze vessels and Rhodian amphorae were present in the fourth-third century BC deposits while a noticeable increase in imported Hellenistic pottery is apparent from the early second century with the inclusion of Megarian bowls and Eastern Sigillata A into the ceramic corpus.<sup>48</sup>

It is clear that the sanctuaries of Umm el-Amed, constructed early in the Hellenistic period, represented a truly vernacular fusion of merging cultural influences. Essentially „Phoenician“, the site combined local and Iranian construction techniques and forms, with a mix of Semitic, Egyptianising and Hellenising iconography. Egyptian influence may have been strengthened during the period of Ptolemaic political dominance but appears to have waned slightly following the battle of Panion (200 BC) and the ensuing Seleukid takeover. The height of the Milk“ashtart sanctuary“s prosperity appears to have spanned the late Seleukid I period, crowned by the construction of the new propylaia in 132/1 BC. There are few remains dateable to the first century BC and the unsettled political climate in the late Seleukid II and early Roman period probably saw the demise of Umm el-Amed as a satellite of Tyre.

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<sup>47</sup> Dunand and Duru 1962: 181-96 nos.197-203; Grainger 1991: 82.

<sup>48</sup> Dunand and Duru 1962: 203-8; El-Nassery 1966: 284.

## 5.2 SELEUKID CULT AT DAMASCUS

A thriving city from the early Iron Age if not before,<sup>49</sup> Damascus was one of the few inland Syrian cities of note during the campaigns of Alexander the Great. Parmenion, the conqueror's most trusted lieutenant, was despatched to secure the city, its treasury and the resident Achaemenid harem for the Macedonian cause. Parmenion took Damascus late in 333 BC and a royal mint was established there shortly after.<sup>50</sup> The Ptolemies were certainly in control of Damascus by 274 BC although they probably seized it along with the rest of Koile-Syria in 301 BC. The output of the Ptolemaic mint was minimal, suggesting that the city was not a major centre of Ptolemaic administration in Koile-Syria.<sup>51</sup> Intermittent Seleukid control of the city and the dislocation of the north-south and east-west trade routes – the latter between the Middle Euphrates and Phoenicia across the desert via Damascus – brought about by the division of the Levant from 301 BC probably goes some way to explain the city's loss of prominence. Following the Fifth Syrian War, the reintegration of Phoenicia and Koile-Syria with Northern Syria and Mesopotamia initiated a new era of prosperity in which Damascus rose to be one of the principal Seleukid administrative and economic centres.<sup>52</sup> During the reign of Demetrios II and his successors, Damascus appears to have borne the dynastic name Demetrias, although it reverted to Damascus following the withdrawal of Tigranes II (69 BC).<sup>53</sup> By the first century BC, the city was the capital of a Seleukid principality under the brothers Demetrios III (96-87 BC) and Antiochos XII (87-84 BC)<sup>54</sup> and probably served as the capital during the joint reign of Kleopatra Selene and Antiochos XIII (c.82-c.72 BC).<sup>55</sup>

Today, there are no physical remains of Damascus' Hellenistic past. The city, which vies in popular culture for the title of oldest inhabited city in the world, has been rebuilt countless times since the fall of the last Seleukids. One fragmentary limestone relief carving of a lion or panther recovered from the courtyard of the Ayyubid citadel may be the last record of the city's Hellenistic palace. There is, as yet, no evidence for Hellenistic

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<sup>49</sup> Burns 2005: 10-6.

<sup>50</sup> Arrian *Anabasis* 2.15; Quintus Curtius *History of Alexander* 13.1-16. Price 1991a: 398-401 nos. 3197-215.

<sup>51</sup> Svoronos 1904: no.1289.

<sup>52</sup> Rostovtzeff 1932: 95-6; Cohen 2006: 242.

<sup>53</sup> Newell 1939: 83-4; Cohen 2006: 242-5; Wright 2010: 253-4 (where the refoundation is probably erroneously dated to the reign of Demetrios III).

<sup>54</sup> Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.370, 387; SC 2: 581-2; 607.

<sup>55</sup> Hoover 2005: 98-9; SC 2: 615-6; Wright 2010: 243 no.200.

Figure 160. Lion relief from Damascus (Wulzinger and Watzinger 1924: fig.13c).



Figure 161. Lion relief from Iraq al-Amir (courtesy Ross Burns).



activity on the site of the later citadel itself and if the relief fragment was Hellenistic, it may have found its way to the citadel as spolia. The relief was first noted by Wulzinger and Watzinger in 1917 but has since been lost (**fig.160**).<sup>56</sup> The legs of the animal had been truncated although it is clear that the right foreleg was raised. The left hind leg is missing in its entirety. The tail rises up over the back of the animal and the head inclines slightly to the left. The relief was dated by Wulzinger and Watzinger to the Mamluk period although there does not appear to be any foundation for their dating and the „matching“ lion relief which they identify from the Mamluk restoration of the north-west tower bears no

stylistic resemblance. However, the piece from the citadel courtyard does bear a strong similarity in both pose and style to the well known panther reliefs from the Tobiad palace (Qasr al-Abd) at Iraq al-Amir, constructed in the period 182-175 BC (**fig.161**). Weber posits a similar Hellenistic date for the Damascus relief.<sup>57</sup> Beyond this conjectural piece of evidence, Seleukid Damascus has been lost.

The old part of Damascus to the east of the Umayyad Mosque still conforms to the Hippodamian, gridded, street plan which was probably laid down during the Hellenistic period.<sup>58</sup> Likewise, to the north of the Umayyad Mosque, the layout of the Seleukid period Hippodrome (known from Josephus)<sup>59</sup> can still be vaguely discerned in the area of the Dahdah cemetery, the Madrasa Nahhasin and the al-Tawba mosque. From the slight evidence available, it becomes clear that the area of the Umayyad Mosque was central to what we know of the Hellenistic city. It is almost certain that the same space was once

<sup>56</sup> Wulzinger and Watzinger 1924: 180. I am grateful to Ross Burns for drawing my attention to the existence of the lion relief which he discussed in a paper presented at Macquarie University, 17 August 2005.

<sup>57</sup> Weber 1993: 149. On Iraq al-Amir, see Will and Larché 1991, especially François Queyrel's contribution in the same volume dealing with the sculptural decoration, 209-51; Zayadine 2004: 273-5.

<sup>58</sup> Burns 2005: 35-6.

<sup>59</sup> Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.389.

occupied by the Iron Age temple (of which one stone survives, now in the Damascus National Museum),<sup>60</sup> the great temple of Jupiter dating to the Roman period and the Christian church of St John the Baptist (the prophet's head is still believed to be housed in a shrine within the Umayyad Mosque).<sup>61</sup> Architectural elements from the Roman temple adorn the garden along the northern entrance to the mosque. The monumental remains of a west propylaia still stand where the Souq al-Hamidiyya opens into a plaza to the west of the Umayyad Mosque (**figs.162-4**) and the vestiges of the east propylaia are still present at the intersection of Sharia al-Qaimariyya and Sharia Qasr ath-Thaqafa. Given the tenacity of cultural memory and sacred space,<sup>62</sup> it would be incredible if the Umayyad Mosque was not also the location of the principal temple complex of the Seleukid period (**fig.165**).<sup>63</sup>



**Figure 162. The west propylaia, Damascus (N.L. Wright).**

<sup>60</sup> Abd al-Kader 1949; Burns 2005: 16.

<sup>61</sup> Dussaud 1922.

<sup>62</sup> See for example Seton Williams 1949: 78, n.1; Oppenheim 1965: 131; Barghouti 1984: 213; Coogan 1987: 3; Mare 1997: 277.

<sup>63</sup> Fleischer 1973: 263.

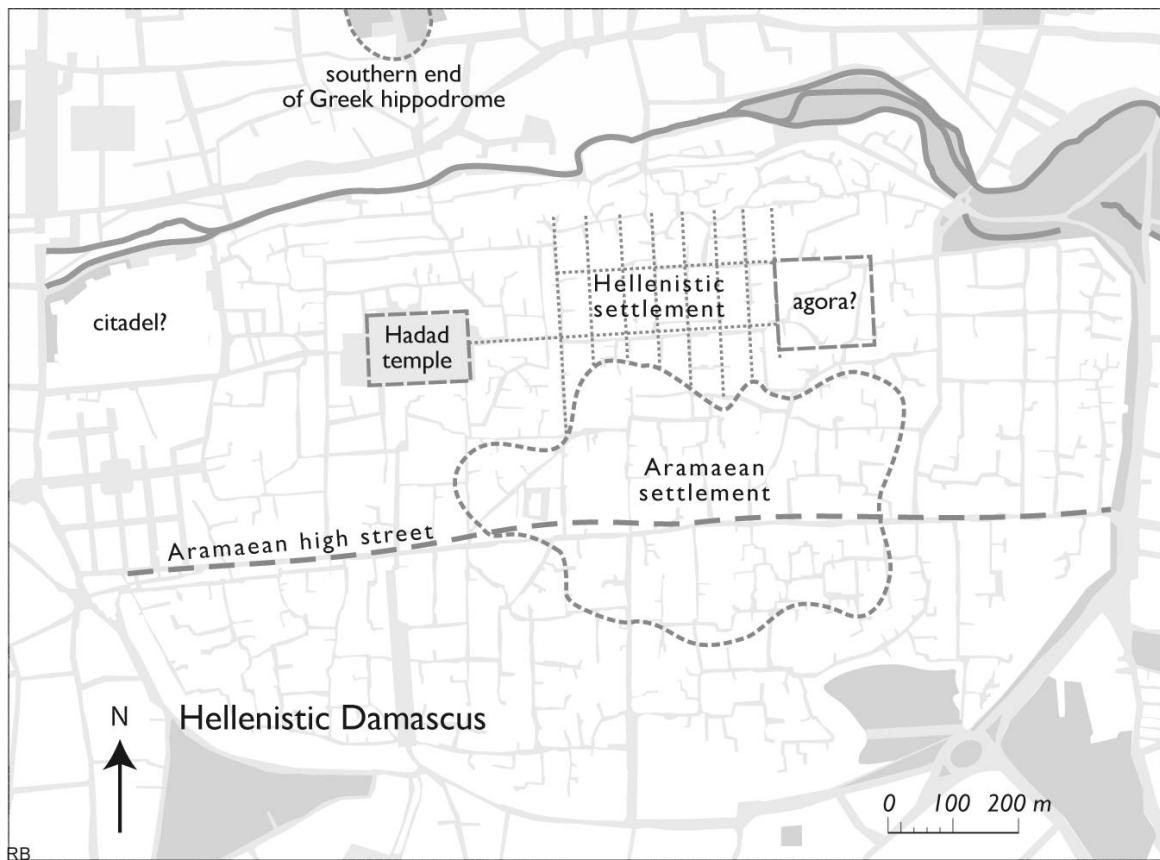


**Figure 163. The west propylaia, Damascus (N.L. Wright).**



**Figure 164. The Umayyad Mosque from the west propylaia, Damascus (N.L. Wright).**





**Figure 165.**  
Conjectural layout  
of Hellenistic  
Damascus  
(courtesy Ross  
Burns).

Although we can say little or nothing about the physical structures of Damascene religion in the Hellenistic period, the coinage produced at the city's mint is instructive regarding the nature of the Seleukid cult. The first Seleukid issues were struck at Damascus during the reign of Antiochos VII.<sup>64</sup> Until the first century BC, the city produced silver coinage on the Attic standard with the same types as the central mint at Antioch. The mint's bronze output was sporadic but did not produce any unusual types with one possible exception during the reign of Antiochos VIII Grypos. The issue in question employed the king's diademed head on the obverse and the standing Zeus Ouranios (a type otherwise restricted to silver issues, see Chapter 2.1.2.3) on the reverse. The coin issue is tentatively attributed to Damascus by Newell. Houghton, Lorber and Hoover assigned it to a mint in Phoenicia or southern Koile-Syria (based on commercial sources) but refused to commit themselves to a full attribution.<sup>65</sup> The presence of 22 examples of this coin type in a hoard discovered in the hinterland of Damascus suggests that Newell may have been correct in his

<sup>64</sup> Newell 1939: 41; *SC* 2: 351.

<sup>65</sup> Newell 1939: 77-8; *SC* 2: no.2342.

Figure 166. Jupiter Heliopolitanus now in the Istanbul museum (Fleischer1973: pl.148).



Figure 167. Jupiter Heliopolitanus now in the Louvre (Fleischer1973: pl.157).



identification.<sup>66</sup> If the type were to be attributed to Damascus it would imply that the syncretic imagery of Zeus Ouranios/Baʿal Šamīn was widely accepted by the army and populace in the city and surrounding area.

The most significant numismatic innovation undertaken by the Damascene mint was the introduction of the cult statues of the Syrian Gods, Atargatis and Hadad, on the respective silver coinage of Demetrios III and Antiochos XII.<sup>67</sup> The iconography of these issues has already been discussed above (Chapter 2.1.2.3) but it may be beneficial to repeat the main points here. The coinage of the Damascene Seleukids marks a departure from previous minting habits by representing unabashedly Semitic deities on the coinage of a major Seleukid mint. As previously stated, Damascus was the only major city held by Demetrios III before his occupation of Antioch in the year of his own enslavement (88/7 BC) and the only centre held by Antiochos XII. The iconography utilised by these kings at Damascus was therefore at the very heart of their projected self representation and ideology. Both deities are clearly represented by cult statues. The figures are shown frontally with their upper arms held rigidly against their torsos, their forearms perpendicular, projecting away from the

body to either side. Atargatis is often shown radiate and/or veiled. She holds a poppy flower in her left hand and has an ear of grain above each shoulder. Her body and legs are adorned with disc-like protuberances which may represent breasts, fruit or scales. A frontal head – probably intended to represent a *gorgonion* – stares out from the centre of her chest (figs.54-5).<sup>68</sup> Hadad wears a conical, pointed cap, he is robed and wears a cloak over his shoulders. He carries an ear of grain in his left hand and is flanked by two bulls – the same composition is seen in Roman period statues of the vernacular Jupiter Heliopolitanus (figs.56, 166-7).<sup>69</sup> The statue basis is visible on the numismatic depiction of the Hadad statue but is absent from the representation of Atargatis.

<sup>66</sup> Wright 2010: 238 nos.18-35. Note however that the monogram employed on the issue would seem to suggest an attribution to Ake-Ptolemaïs.

<sup>67</sup> On the different interpretations of the Atargatis cult statue by modern scholars, see Fleischer 1973: 264-6.

<sup>68</sup> SC 2: nos.2450-1.

<sup>69</sup> SC 2: nos.2471-2a.

We can interpret the representations of indigenous cult statues on royal Seleukid silver coinage as a manifestation of the overwhelming importance of the Syrian Gods in Hellenistic Damascus. What may be seen as quiet acceptance of the syncretic nature of the gods on the bronze issue of Antiochos Grypos, a generation later has bloomed into a wholly naturalised affair. Greek elements may still be found in abundance on the coinage of Demetrios III and Antiochos XII – the all encompassing reverse wreaths, Greek legends, obverse portraiture and the entire iconographic corpus for the bronze coinage all exhibit a concerted effort on the part of the administration to be viewed as a Hellenic regime. The main silver reverse types belie that attempt.

The depiction of the Syrian Gods on the silver coinage of Seleukid Damascus cements the city as one of the three principal centres of their worship (along with Hierapolis-Bambyke and Heliopolis-Baʿalbek).<sup>70</sup> In Chapter 3.3.4 it was posited that the use of the radiate crown by Seleukid rulers was intimately related to the cult of Atargatis and the centres of her worship. Demetrios III was the only ruler of his generation to make use of the radiate iconography. A significant relationship between Atargatis and the king is made clear in the numismatic corpus; the radiate crown adorns the goddess on the silver issues, but the king himself on the accompanying bronzes. As a legitimate successor of his father, Antiochos VIII Grypos, and the ruler of Damascus with its important sanctuary of the Syrian gods, Demetrios III was literally the last king in a position to partake in an *hieròs gámos* at one of the major sanctuaries and I would suggest that he took advantage of that position. Antiochos XII succeeded his brother at Damascus but for some reason he chose not to be represented as radiate and utilised Hadad rather than Atargatis as his patron and principal silver coin type. Perhaps, as suggested above, his brother's continuing life, even if he was a hostage at the Parthian court, prevented Antiochos from undertaking his own *hieròs gámos* thereby prohibiting the use of the radiate crown.

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<sup>70</sup> Lucian *The Syrian Goddess* 10; Josephus *Jewish War* 9.93; Justin *Epitome* 36.2.2; Macrobius *Saturnalia* 1.23.10-20; see also Dussaud 1922: 219-21; Rostovtzeff 1932: 100, 178; Avi-Yonah 1959: 8; Teixidor 1989: 71.

**Figure 168.**  
Artemis Ephesia  
now in the Selçuk  
museum  
(Fleischer1973:  
pl.18).



**Figure 169.**  
Artemis Ephesia  
now in the Tripoli  
museum  
(Fleischer1973:  
pl.34).



The cult statue of Atargatis depicted on the coinage of Demetrios III resembles the well known image of the Artemis of Ephesos, especially if one considers the disc or pendant pattern to represent breast or fruit rather than scales.<sup>71</sup> A series of other, fragmentary cult statues – all Roman in date – have been discovered in what was Seleukid Koile-Syria, at Heliopolis-Baʿalbek (numerous examples), Caesarea Maritima and Gadara among others (**figs.168-9**).<sup>72</sup> The figures have all been traditionally interpreted as statues of Artemis Ephesia. Kampen posits that prominence of the Artemis Ephesia cult in Roman Syria and Palestine was a consciously engineered development: “Perhaps Artemis was one of the deities transplanted by the Romans into the cities of the Decapolis as they attempted to „reclaim“ these cities that had been under Hasmonean rule.”<sup>73</sup> However, understanding all such deities as the Artemis of Ephesos should not be a foregone conclusion. Indeed the very existence of the late Seleukid use of the imagery at Damascus should indicate that this was not the case at all. The proximity of these sites to Damascus with its great sanctuary of Atargatis and Hadad (not to mention the great cult centre at Heliopolis) would suggest a more promising, localised, source for the origin of the Koile-Syrian goddesses than distant Ephesos.<sup>74</sup>

### 5.3 THE MOUNT HERMON PANION

The Panion, or sanctuary of Pan, was centred around a terrace with a natural cave and a complex of springs at the southern foot of Mount Hermon, immediately above the headwaters of the River Jordan. Until the last quarter of the first century BC the site remained a small rural sanctuary, free from built structures and far from any urbanised centres. The location of the sanctuary has been known to European travellers since the early

<sup>71</sup> Fleischer 1973: 263-9. For an extended discussion of the so-called breasts, see pages 74-88 in the same volume.

<sup>72</sup> Heliopolis Baʿalbek: Fleischer 1973: 273-5. Caesarea Maritima: Frova 1962. Gadara: Bol *et al.* 1990: 203-4.

<sup>73</sup> Kampen 2003: 211.

<sup>74</sup> Fleischer 1978: 327; Kampen 2003: 215.

nineteenth century, identified through Roman period inscriptions located above the mouth of the cave.<sup>75</sup> However, following an earthquake in 1837, the terrace was strewn with large fallen rocks and access to the cave itself was obstructed.<sup>76</sup> Over six seasons, from 1988-1994, the Israeli Antiquities Authority cleared the terrace and conducted the first scholarly excavations of the Panion (**fig.170**).<sup>77</sup>

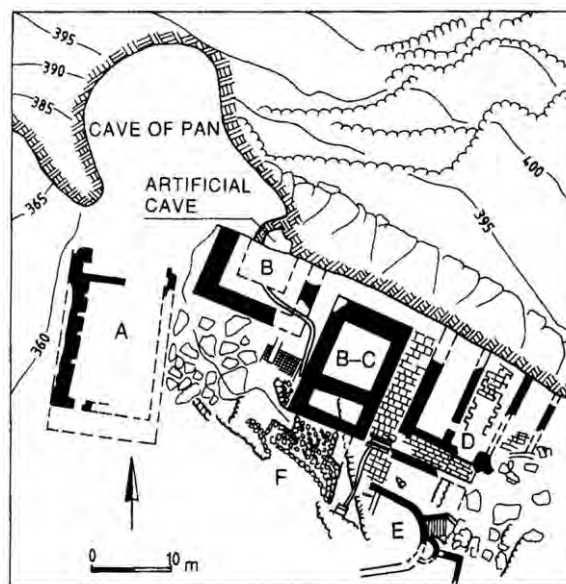


Figure 170. The Panion (Ma'oz 1996: fig.1).

Josephus describes the shrine in the first century AD as located below a mountain whose top was perpetually encased in cloud (Mount Hermon). The cave of Pan itself was veiled with thick vegetation and contained a bottomless pit with sheer sides filled with still water.<sup>78</sup> By Josephus' time the sanctuary had already undergone a dramatic redevelopment from its simplistic Hellenistic origins. Herod the Great had established a marble temple of Augustus on the site following his occupation of the southern Ituraean territories (c.23 BC), and his son Philip founded the city of Caesarea-Philippi around the once rural shrine (c.2 BC).<sup>79</sup> Worship continued at the Panion until the fourth century AD when the growing influence of Christianity spelt its ultimate demise.<sup>80</sup> By the nineteenth century the Panion had reverted to an Arcadian, idyllic, state (**fig.171**). Thomson describes the "merry laugh" of the Jordan which "swells up the sides of the echoing hills!"<sup>81</sup> This environmental setting was undoubtedly a determining factor in the original location of the sanctuary. The Hellenistic phase of the site preceded the erection of any structure or monument in the vicinity of the cave dedicated to Pan.<sup>82</sup> The evidence that does exist for cultic practices at the Panion in this period is entirely ceramic and appears predominantly Hellenic in character. There is no epigraphic, iconographic or historic evidence to suggest syncretism between the traditional Greek god of wild places

<sup>75</sup> Seetzen 1810: 15-6; Burckhardt 1822: 38-9.

<sup>76</sup> Berlin 1999: 28-9.

<sup>77</sup> Ma'oz 1995; id. 1996; id. (forthcoming).

<sup>78</sup> Josephus *Jewish War* 1.21.3.

<sup>79</sup> Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 15.344-53; id. *Jewish War* 2.9.1

<sup>80</sup> Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 7.17.

<sup>81</sup> Thomson 1862: 228-31.

<sup>82</sup> Berlin 1999: 28-9.

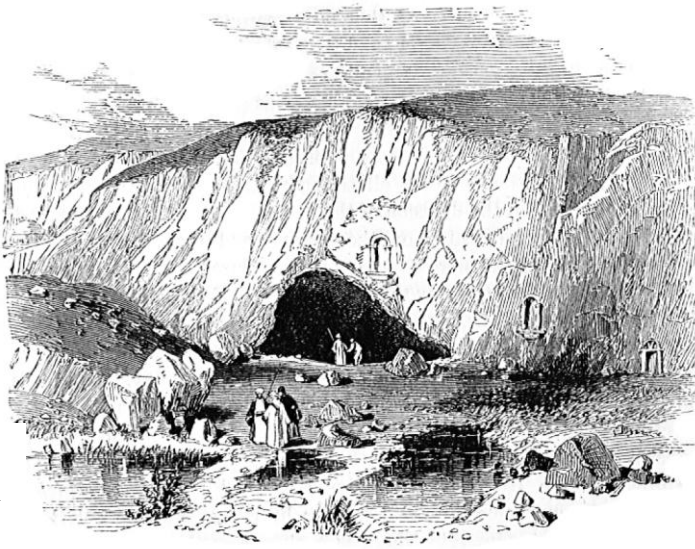


Figure 171. The Panion in the mid-nineteenth century (Thomson 1862: 229).

and a local Semitic cult.<sup>83</sup> The „natural“ form of the temenos, with no built structures conforms with the rural worship of a Greek Pan but does not provide any architectural clues that might prove or deny the presence of an indigenous influence.

Exactly when the cult of Pan was established below Mount Hermon is unclear. The

mountain itself was considered holy to the local Ituraean population and was home to many vernacular cult centres during the Greco-Roman period.<sup>84</sup> The Hellenistic ceramic assemblage at the Panion includes vessels datable from the third to mid-first centuries BC. However, many third century shapes continued to be produced well into the second century and in this instance the pottery dates can provide no more than a chronological guideline.<sup>85</sup> Polybius tells us that the battle between Antiochos III the Great and the Ptolemaic *strategos* Skopas was fought in the vicinity of the Panion in 200 BC.<sup>86</sup> This may be seen to imply a Ptolemaic foundation for the sanctuary. However, as rightly noted by Tzaferis, Polybius was writing two generations after the event in question and there is no record of the sanctuary prior to the battle.<sup>87</sup> There were fragments of Achaemenid period pottery found below the terrace although these were few and unstratified and are not believed to represent the existence of a sanctuary before the Hellenistic period.<sup>88</sup> Tzaferis posits that Pan may have been credited with the Seleukid success following the panic which spread through the enemy ranks.<sup>89</sup> The Panion could therefore be viewed as a Seleukid monument of thanks to the god for very specific divine assistance. Certainly the only built component of the

<sup>83</sup> Tzaferis 1992: 129, 131; contra Cohen 2006: 264.

<sup>84</sup> Eusebius *Preparation for the Gospel* 1.10.9. On the cult locations see Dar 1993; Aliquot 2008.

<sup>85</sup> Berlin 1999: 30.

<sup>86</sup> Polybius *Histories* 16.18.2, 28.1.3.

<sup>87</sup> Tzaferis 1992: 132-3.

<sup>88</sup> Berlin 1999: 30 n.5.

<sup>89</sup> Tzaferis 1992: 132-3.

Hellenistic sanctuary, a retaining wall built upslope from the approach ramp, does not date to before the early second century BC.<sup>90</sup>

Pan had been honoured with a new sanctuary at Athens (the cave of Pan below the acropolis) as a result of his intervention at the battle of Marathon in 490 BC.<sup>91</sup> The great-granduncle of Antiochos III, Antigonos II Gonatos, also recognised Pan's terrifying role in his victory over the Galatians at Lysimacheia in 277 BC.<sup>92</sup> Following the victory, Antigonos employed the deity for the first time as the dominant Macedonian coin type, either in the form of a shield crest (on the obverse of silver tetradrachms) or else depicting the god in the act of erecting a military trophy (on the reverse of bronzes).<sup>93</sup> Antigonos further instigated the celebration of the *Paneia* festival on Delos in 245 BC, either relating to his victory at Lysimacheia or perhaps in thanks for his victory at Andros over the Ptolemaic fleet.<sup>94</sup> It is feasible, even probable, that the Panion below Mount Hermon was recognised as sacred in similar victorious circumstances. If so, the encounter between Antiochos III and Skopas in 200 BC marks the most likely occasion.

The Pan of Hermon has been viewed as the *interpretatio graeca* of an indigenous god of the local spring but supporting evidence is almost non-existent.<sup>95</sup> There had been an earlier bāmâ sanctuary (a Semitic open air „high place“) located in the Iron Age settlement at Tel Dan (Biblical Laish) 3 km to the east of the Panion. Dan was abandoned during the Iron Age although worship continued at the bāmâ sanctuary through, Achaemenid, Ptolemaic, Seleukid and Roman domination.<sup>96</sup> As at Seleukid Jebel Khalid, the sacral aspect of Tel Dan outlived the secular reason for its existence. There are no literary references to the bāmâ sanctuary in the Greco-Roman period. A marble torso of a naked female, presumed to be Aphrodite (**fig.172**), was found in the vicinity of the Tel Dan high place but cannot be firmly attributed to the sanctuary.<sup>97</sup> A Hellenistic Greek and Aramaic bilingual inscription found during the 1976 excavations at Tel Dan does reveal that the resident deity was not provided with an *interpretatio graeca*

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<sup>90</sup> Ma'oz 1995: 5.

<sup>91</sup> Herodotus *The Histories* 6.105; Pausanias *Description of Greece* 8.54.6; Pritchett 1979: 25.

<sup>92</sup> Pritchett 1979: 32-4.

<sup>93</sup> See for example *SNG Alpha Bank* nos.986-9, 1010-45.

<sup>94</sup> Champion 2004-2005.

<sup>95</sup> Dussaud 1936b; Lipiński 1971: 16; Aliquot 2008: 85 n.45.

<sup>96</sup> Biran 1974: 40-3; Tzaferis 1992: 129-31; Fried 2002: 442-3. For a discussion of the use of the word bāmôt/bāmâ in the *Tanakh* and the *Septuagint*, see Fried 2002: 437-41.

<sup>97</sup> Biran 1974: 43.



Figure 172.  
Aphrodite from  
Tel Dan (Biran  
1974: fig.15).



but remained *theoi to en Danois* – the god of Dan.<sup>98</sup> The bāmā sanctuary and the Panion coexisted with seemingly little interaction throughout the Seleukid period. The distance of both sites from any settlement (the closest known site was the villa and associated outbuildings or village at Tel Anafa, six kilometres to the south-west)<sup>99</sup> and the rugged terrain of the Mount Hermon-Golan region resulted in a truly secluded setting. Neither sanctuary was a convenient site to visit and a pilgrimage from anywhere other than Tel Anafa would have required significant planning and preparation.<sup>100</sup>

Of the Hellenistic ceramic assemblage at the Panion, 84% of vessels were produced locally in a local fabric, made of clay sourced from the region around Mount Hermon, Gaulanitis and the Hula valley. The remaining 16% was composed of finer Phoenician black-slip ware or Antiochene or Phoenician Eastern Sigillata A together with fragments of two imported Cycladic wine amphorae.<sup>101</sup> Berlin asserts that while the ceramic assemblage may have been owned by the sanctuary, the lack of associated storage facilities (such as the magazines at the second phase of Jebel Khalid Area B and Umm el-Amed) would seem to suggest that the pottery was brought to the Panion by devotees expressly for use at the sanctuary on specific occasions. The minimal proportion of alien wares among the assemblage is indicative of the continuing vernacular and private nature of the cult during the Hellenistic period. Devotees were clearly drawn from the surrounding rural populations who “were neither well off nor generous.”<sup>102</sup>

The form of the Hellenistic vessels are even more instructive than their fabric. Over 90% of the remains consisted of cookware, almost all of which showed signs of use. Some may have been left at the cave in a votive capacity but most seem to have been used in the preparation of banquets at the sanctuary.<sup>103</sup> Menander’s classic comedy *Old Cantankerous*, produced for the Athenian *Lenaia* of 316 BC, provides an interesting, if fictional,

<sup>98</sup> Biran and Tzaferis 1978; Tzaferis 1992: 131.

<sup>99</sup> Herbert 1994; 1997; Weinberg 1971: 86-7.

<sup>100</sup> Tzaferis 1992: 129; Berlin 1999: 31.

<sup>101</sup> Berlin 1999: 31.

<sup>102</sup> Berlin 1999: 31.

<sup>103</sup> Berlin 1999: 30.

illustration of sacred dining experiences held at a Panion. The play is set at the rural shrine of Pan at Phyle in Attica where the protagonist's mother is intent on honouring the deity with a banquet in response to an encounter with the god in a dream. The devotees in *Old Cantankerous* bring all of their own accoutrements from their home in Athens – ranging from rugs and couches to cooking vessels and the sacrificial sheep – to the shrine at Phyle located in the mountains 16 km to the north-west of the city.<sup>104</sup> Despite the groans of the *mageiros*, the sacrificer-cum-cook, the banquet assumes a festive atmosphere with even the play's misanthropic namesake being incited to celebrate by the closing lines.

By the Hellenistic period (and probably much earlier) the vicinity of Mount Hermon – the highlands of Gaulanitis, Trachonitis and Auranitis together with Massyas and Abilene – was populated by Arabic Ituraeans. The Ituraeans were supposedly descended from the Biblical Yetur, one of the twelve sons of Ishmael.<sup>105</sup> Where they originated is something of a mystery but by 333 BC they controlled the mountains behind Phoenicia. Alexander the Great was forced to leave his siege-works around Tyre and lead an elite force into the mountains to suppress the „Arab“ tribesmen of the Anti-Lebanon.<sup>106</sup>

Above the Panion, on the slopes of Mount Hermon at Har Senaim, lie a number of feature-clusters interpreted as an indigenous Ituraean cult site. While the name Har Senaim was only given to the site following the Six Day War (1967), the Arabic name for the site, which is still used locally, is Jebel Halawa or Mountain of Sweetness. In conjunction with nearby Wadi „Asal, the wadi of honey, the Har Senaim cult sites have been tentatively linked to the cult of Pan as the patron of beehives.<sup>107</sup> However, there is no evidence for beekeeping at the site and the association is largely based on the presumption that the influence of the Panion was widespread among the local population. There does not appear to be any real evidence that the Greek Pan had anything to do with the indigenous cult sites at Har Senaim.<sup>108</sup>

It is difficult to ascertain how the Panion maintained a purely Greek character among a non-Greek population. There are no known Hellenic settlements in the immediate neighbourhood with the exception of the villa at Tel Anafa where the inhabitants appear to

<sup>104</sup> Menander *Old Cantankerous* 390-430.

<sup>105</sup> *Genesis* 25.15; *I Chronicles* 1.31; Schürer 1973: 562-3; Said 2006.

<sup>106</sup> Arrian *Anabasis* 2.20; Quintus Curtius *History of Alexander* 4.2.18-3.1.

<sup>107</sup> Dar 1993: 28.

<sup>108</sup> Dar 1993: 28-92.

have been highly Hellenised Phoenicians.<sup>109</sup> Are we to understand that the rural Ituraean population worshipped the Hellenic Pan in a Greek manner without instruction or Greco-Macedonian example? Or was worship at the Panion relegated to the residents of Greco-Phoenician Tel Anafa and their Hellenised attendants? It is possible that there was a much more extensive colonial population inhabiting similar villas across the rural landscape which remain unidentified in the archaeological record. The high proportion of locally made ceramics prohibits the suggestion that the bulk of devotees were making pilgrimages to the Panion from much further afield and the continued worship at the Panion does provide evidence for a more pervasive Greco-Macedonian presence in the rural areas of Syria than the literary sources would indicate.

#### 5.4 GADARA

The settlement of Gadara is located on a plateau east of the River Jordan and south of the River Hieromax (the modern Yarmuk). It overlooks the Sea of Galilee and controlled several major transport routes in the Greco-Roman period.<sup>110</sup> Although the settlement's name is almost certainly derived from the Semitic toponym „Gader“ (relating to a wall or boundary) there is only very limited evidence to suggest a pre-Hellenistic town of any size.<sup>111</sup> Gadara was controlled by the Ptolemies until the Fourth Syrian War when it was besieged and captured by Antiochos III (218 BC). The town reverted to Ptolemaic control following the battle of Raphia but was again secured by Antiochos during the Fifth Syrian War. The site must, therefore, have been occupied during the early Hellenistic period but little material evidence of a Ptolemaic phase has been uncovered.<sup>112</sup> By the late third century BC the settlement was considered the strongest and most important city of the region and this importance was probably heightened in the following generation when the city was refounded as a *polis* by Seleukos IV. At this point the settlement received new city

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<sup>109</sup> Although much of the material from Tel Anafa suggests a geographically Phoenician origin for the inhabitants, the use of certain Hellenic ceramic forms and the evidence for a non-Semitic diet prove the culturally Hellenised nature of the occupants. See for example Weinberg 1971: 108-9; Herbert 1994: 16-8; Redding 1994: 281-2, 290-2; Berlin 1997: 21-9, 94-103.

<sup>110</sup> Hoffmann 2001: 391; Bührig 2009: 98.

<sup>111</sup> Schmid 2008: 353.

<sup>112</sup> The earliest stamped amphora handle recovered from the temple area dates to 243 BC but is as yet unpublished, Claudia Bührig *pers. comm.*

walls and adopted the dynastic name Seleukeia.<sup>113</sup> As noted in Chapter 1.3, Gadara was a highly Hellenised centre and was known by the second century BC as the “new Attica of the Syrians”.<sup>114</sup> Despite its prominence in the literary record as a centre of Hellenic culture, Gadara remained small, the Hellenistic fortifications enclosing a settlement of only 5.25 hectares<sup>115</sup> – less than a fifth the size of contemporary Jebel Khalid. It remained in Seleukid control for a century before its capture and sack by the Hasmonaean king, Alexander Jannaeus (100 BC).<sup>116</sup>

The ruins of Umm Qays were first recognised as Gadara by Seetzen in 1806 although in 1812 Burckhardt erroneously suggested that the abandoned settlement should in fact be identified with Gamala. The site was included (as Gadara) in Schumacher’s 1890 survey of the Aljoun region of Transjordan but it was not until 1974 that intensive research was initiated by the Deutsches Evangelisches Institut (DEI). The DEI, in conjunction with Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (DAI) started annual excavations in 1987 which continue as a joint project with the National Museum of Berlin.<sup>117</sup> In 1995, restrictions were lifted on a military zone situated on the plateau to the north of the settlement overlooking the Yarmuk valley. A program of excavations conducted by the DAI between 1995 and 1998 revealed the remains of a large Hellenistic temenos and related features including a second century BC temple (**fig.173**).<sup>118</sup>

#### 5.4.1 THE TEMPLE

As at contemporary Umm el-Amed, the Gadara temple was built on a podium rather than a krepidoma. At Gadara, the construction debris surrounding the podium dated the extended building phase to the second half of the second century BC, well into the period of Seleukid control.<sup>119</sup> Both Gadara and Umm el-Amed therefore provide securely dated Hellenistic examples of temple podiums which lend credence to Lucian’s Seleukid date for the temple

<sup>113</sup> Polybius *Histories* 5.71.3, 5.86.7, 16.39.3; Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 12.136; Hoffman 2001: 391-3; Cohen 2006: 282-6.

<sup>114</sup> Meleager *Greek Anthology* 8.418; Geiger 1985.

<sup>115</sup> Bührig 2009: 98 n.12.

<sup>116</sup> Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.356; id. *Jewish War* 1.2.2.

<sup>117</sup> Seetzen 1810: 27-9; Burckhardt 1822: 271; Schumacher 1890; Wagner-Lux *et al.* 1978; Weber 1991 (with a detailed account of earlier investigations); Hoffmann 1993; id. 1999: 795; Weber 2002.

<sup>118</sup> Hoffman 1999: 797-8; id. 2001: 395.

<sup>119</sup> Hoffmann 1999: 806, 812; id. 2001: 395-6.

# GADARA SANCTUARY OF ZEUS

1. propylaia
2. raised 'sacred way'
3. rock-cut basin
4. temple podium
5. enclosed rocky outcrop

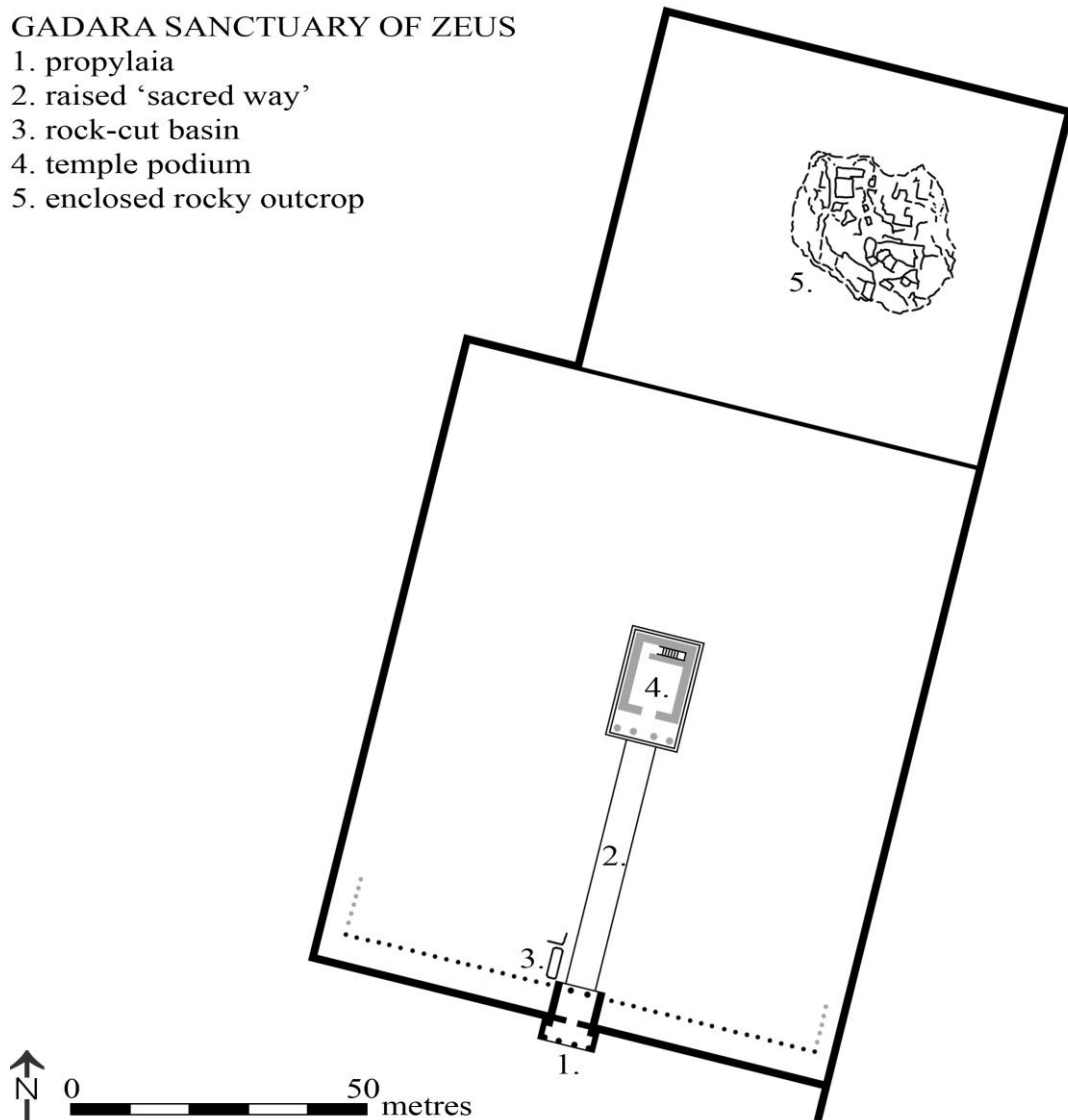


Figure 173.  
Gadara (N.L.  
Wright after  
Hoffmann 1999:  
fig.5)

podium at Hierapolis-Bambyke. The preserved height of the Gadara podium stood 2.45 metres above the Hellenistic surface level of the surrounding temenos court. The uppermost 90cm of the podium was inset by 20cm on all sides which perhaps gave the appearance of a krepidoma step without actually adhering to Hellenic conventions.<sup>120</sup>

Unusually for the Hellenistic period, the Gadara temple appears to have been oriented to the south. The northern (rear) end of the podium was built directly on bedrock. Although the temenos area was naturally sloping to the south, the

<sup>120</sup> Hoffman 1999: 799.

southern extent of the temple podium rested on a rocky spur (Hoffmann's "gewachsenen Kalkstein") which rose up three metres from the bedrock creating a solid area of foundations. The construction of the Baitokaike temple around a rock feature might suggest that the Gadara temple was sited on the spur for religious reasons. However, it is just as likely that the temple placement was pragmatic, the spur providing a natural building platform and reducing the economic strains of foundation construction. The orientation of the rocky spur may also account for the unusual southern axis of the temple.<sup>121</sup> The podium was made of local limestone and measured 11.2 by 19.35 metres. Within the podium were three partially submerged, corbelled rooms or crypts (figs.174-5). Two, running parallel and oriented north-south (2.65 by 9.85 and 2.7 by 9.85 metres respectively), filled the bulk of the podium. The third room was located at the southern end of the



Figure 174. Gadara temple podium (Hoffmann 1999: fig.4).



Figure 175. Gadara temple podium (courtesy Ross Burns).

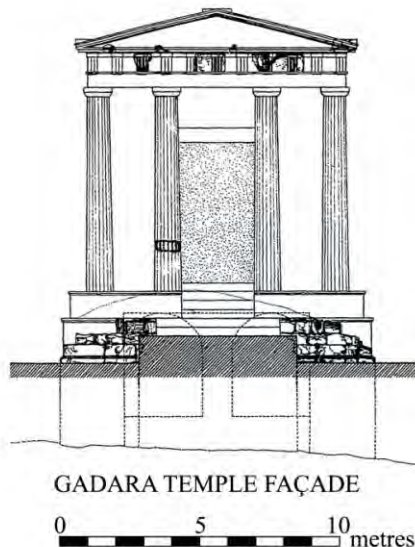


Figure 176. Gadara temple façade (Hoffmann 1999: fig.21).

<sup>121</sup> The siting of temples, shrines or altars on rock outcrops appears to be a common feature of Hellenistic Syrian religion. The example from Baitokaike is discussed above (Chapter 4.3.1) but the phenomenon is repeated at Gerasa at the Lower Zeus temple (Chapter 5.5.1) and later at the Upper Zeus temple. The whole Upper Zeus temenos was literally hewn out of the rock but during the IFAPO excavations of 1999-2000 it was discovered that within the temple podium an outcrop of rock was left standing so that the podium encases it. The adyton was built on the remains of an earlier built structure which is unable to be dated due to the overlaying standing structure. The excavators believed the construction method to be an economic use of labour, minimising the amount of quarrying required, Ina Kehrberg *pers. comm.*

Figure 177.  
Gadara temple  
frieze block  
(Hoffmann 1999:  
fig.11).



storage area or temple treasury.<sup>122</sup>

Nothing of the superstructure remains *in situ* but Hoffmann reconstructs the temple layout based upon the positioning of the three crypts – the two parallel crypts occupying the space below the naos while the southern, transverse crypt was below the pronoas (**fig.176**).<sup>123</sup> The north wall of the southern crypt could therefore bear the load of the wall between the naos and pronoas. No provision was made for the inclusion of a built partition dividing the main naos from an adyton although a system of screens or curtains should not be ruled out.<sup>124</sup> A Doric column drum, a triglyph and metope frieze block and several pieces of Doric cornicing and pediment fragments indicate that the superstructure of the temple was constructed in line with the Doric (or pseudo-Doric) canon (**fig.177**). An abundance of ceramic roof tiles testified to the gabled nature of the building and a lion-headed water spout from the horizontal sima was uncovered in the vicinity of the podium

Figure 178.  
Gadara temple  
lion-head water  
spout (Hoffmann  
1999: fig.12).



structure and ran the width of the podium (6.5 by 2.7 metres). All three rooms were connected by doorways and accessed via a stairway which led up through the northern wall opening into the naos/adyton area of the temple above. Hoffmann posits, probably correctly, that the crypts may have functioned as the opisthodomos, the sacred

further confirming the Hellenised form of the building (**fig.178**).<sup>125</sup> Small fragments of Ionic and Corinthian capitals were also recovered from the temple area although these have not been assigned to the original Hellenistic structure.<sup>126</sup>

Remains of the blocks of local limestone used to construct the temple were coated in

<sup>122</sup> Hoffman 1999: 797-8; id. 2001: 395.

<sup>123</sup> Hoffman 1999: 799.

<sup>124</sup> See for example the curtains which covered the doorway into the naos and separated the naos from the adyton of the Jerusalem Temple, see *Letter of Aristeas* 86-7; Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 12.318; id. *Jewish War* 5.212-3, 219; *I Maccabees* 4.51; *Matthew* 27.51; *Mark* 15.38; *Luke* 23.45; *Hebrews* 9.3. One curtain (or both?) was apparently removed by Antiochos IV and may have been rededicated at the temple of Zeus at Olympia, see Pausanias *Description of Greece* 5.12.4.

<sup>125</sup> Hoffmann 1999: 800; id. 2001: 395-6.

<sup>126</sup> Hoffmann 1999: 807-8.



painted plaster in imitation of marble. The plaster has been likened to the Hellenistic masonry style and the Pompeian First style wall decoration and is reminiscent of the same traditions exhibited at Jebel Khalid and elsewhere.<sup>127</sup> Without any evidence for the placement of columns, the temple façade has been reconstructed as either tetrastyle prostyle or distyle in-antis.<sup>128</sup> Several coin issues produced at Gadara during the Roman period may bear witness to the original form of the temple.<sup>129</sup> The reverse types on the coins show an enthroned Zeus Nikephoros within a tetrastyle temple. There is reason to link the Hellenistic Gadarene temple with the worship of a Zeus-like figure (see below) and we may therefore lean towards an interpretation which sees the structure as tetrastyle although this is far from certain.

#### 5.4.2 THE TEMENOS

The enclosed Hellenistic temenos measured 94.5 by 97 metres (figs.179-80).<sup>130</sup> It was entered from the south through a monumental propylaia measuring 11.45 by 7.9 metres and provided with a tetrastyle portico across its southern, or external, face. Two distinct building phases were observed by



**Figure 179.**  
Gadara temenos,  
the high place  
from the temple  
podium  
(courtesy Ross  
Burns).

the excavators although, of the whole, only the foundations and part of the threshold remain.<sup>131</sup> To east and west of the propylaia, the temenos wall was provided with an internal colonnade which was probably peristyle, extending around the entire sacred enclosure. Unfortunately, traces were only uncovered along the southern boundary.<sup>132</sup> The temenos wall itself was a massive structure, measuring 2.2 metres thick and conforming in size and construction style with the Hellenistic period city wall known from the acropolis

<sup>127</sup> Hoffmann 2001: 396. The second Hellenistic altar at the Zeus sanctuary at Gerasa was also decorated with painted plaster which exhibited elements of both Pompeian First and Second style. The structure is dated to the mid-first century BC, see Eristov and Seigne 2003.

<sup>128</sup> Hoffmann 2001: 395.

<sup>129</sup> See for example *SNG ANS* 6 nos.1305, 1309, 1321, 1324-5, 1339-40.

<sup>130</sup> Hoffman 1999: 797-8; id. 2001: 395. The measurements given by Hoffmann and Bührig (2000: 207) are 94 by 109 metres.

<sup>131</sup> Hoffmann 1999: 801-2.

<sup>132</sup> Hoffmann 1999: 798; id. 2001: 396.



**Figure 180.**  
**Gadara temenos**  
**looking north**  
 (courtesy Ross  
 Burns).



area. The wall served a double purpose. It clearly differentiated the sacred space within from the profane world without. However, in practical terms it also functioned as a retaining wall, allowing for the creation of a level surface within the naturally sloping temenos.<sup>133</sup> A similar purpose was served by the temenos enclosure at Jebel Khalid, certainly during phase three and probably in the earlier stages.

The approach to the temple was marked out by a paved path or „sacred way“ which travels north from the propylaia directly towards the podium.<sup>134</sup> At its northern end, the construction materials of the sacred way included spolia although it is unclear whether the spolia was part of the original construction or indicates a period of repair. The sacred way was raised 85 cm above the surrounding court but how access to the temple was achieved is unclear as there is no recognisable evidence for external temple stairs leading up from the path to the top of the podium.<sup>135</sup> Hoffmann posits that the *ad hoc* nature of the final approach implies that the architects may not have been familiar with this type of temple form.<sup>136</sup> Such a suggestion is certainly reasonable given the unorthodox nature of the Gadarene temple from a Greek perspective.

<sup>133</sup> Hoffmann 1999: 798, 803-4; Hoffmann and Bührig 2000: 207-9.

<sup>134</sup> Hoffmann (1999: 801) uses the term “Steindamm” or dyke to describe the path.

<sup>135</sup> Hoffmann 1999: 800-1.

<sup>136</sup> “Anzeichen für irgendeine andere Art eines Aufgangs zum Tempel jedenfalls sind nicht erkennbar, und auch Spuren für die bei Podienbauten geläufige Form des Aufgangs als vorgelegte Treppe fehlen in Gadara. Es scheint, als seien die Baumeister unsicher im Umgang mit dieser Architekturform gewesen.” Hoffmann 1999: 801 n.17.

Adjacent to the northern opening of the propylaia and west of the so-called sacred way, a rectangular basin was cut into the exposed bedrock. The basin ran parallel to the sacred way and was quite substantial, measuring 5.6 metres by 1.9 metres, with an approximate depth of 90 centimetres. Immediately to the north of the basin, a rock-cut cistern provided a suitable water source.<sup>137</sup> The situation of the basin at the entrance of the temenos suggests that the water was provided for ritual ablutions to purify those entering the sacred space. Hellenistic priests in Judaea and Babylon had to ritually bathe when entering the temple before further washing their hands and feet in a basin before approaching the altar,<sup>138</sup> and we have already discussed the presence of the limestone basin found within the Jebel Khalid temenos.<sup>139</sup> This ritualised washing was mirrored to some extent in Greek practice although perhaps more emphasis was placed on the symbolic nature of the ablutions in the Semitic rituals. Ritualised cleansing finds continuity in the biblical Psalm 26.6, “I wash my hands in innocence, and go about your altar, O Lord,”<sup>140</sup> modern Islamic cleansing rituals before prayer, and even the Catholic ritual of making the sign of the cross with holy-water before entry into a church.

To the north of the main temenos, a rocky spur which projects out over the Yarmuk valley was enclosed in a secondary temenos wall. The outcrop was pitted with bowl-like depressions and a number of man-made channels and terraces which do not appear to relate in any logical order.<sup>141</sup> A cave in the northern face of the outcrop contained fragments of a drum altar which is believed to date to the Roman period.<sup>142</sup> Hoffmann posits that the rocky area had been the original, indigenous, rural sanctuary upon which the later Hellenistic temple was based – perhaps another example of a west Semitic „high place“. This suggestion is supported by the fact that no evidence for an altar of any form has been found in the temenos proper. Instead, ritual activity appears to have continued to focus on the outcrop of natural rock. Although the pre-Hellenistic period of Gadara is not well understood, a fragment of an Iron Age terracotta statuette was found near the outcrop which

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<sup>137</sup> Hoffmann 1999: 802; id. 2001: 396.

<sup>138</sup> Hultgård 1987: 88-9; Linssen 2004: 151-3.

<sup>139</sup> Clarke *et al.* 2005: 133.

<sup>140</sup> NIV translation.

<sup>141</sup> Similar bowl-like depressions were found at the possible Edomite (Iron II) high place at Jabal al-Qšeir, see Lindner *et al.* 1996: 147.

<sup>142</sup> Hoffmann 1999: 798, 804-5; id. 2001: 396.

locates some of the earliest evidence for activity on the site at the high place and tentatively confirms the outcrop's religious importance.<sup>143</sup>

Open air „high places“ (bāmâ or plural bāmôt) were a ubiquitous feature of the Levantine cultic experience from the Bronze Age through to Late Antiquity. They feature commonly in the Old Testament as both Jewish and non-Jewish places of worship.<sup>144</sup> As we have already seen, the bāmâ at Tel Dan continued to function as a place of worship well into the Roman period and Nabataean Petra is known for its many high places.<sup>145</sup> The Biblical bāmôt sanctuaries appear to have been connected specifically with the worship of the supreme god Ba'al or the goddess Ašerah, the Bronze and Iron Age prototype of Atargatis.<sup>146</sup> Indeed the ecstatic procession of prophets described as returning from one Philistine high place might be seen as a prototype for the musical worship of Atargatis at Hierapolis and the frantic activity of her *galloi*.<sup>147</sup> The association between these two fertility deities and high places may be taken further. High place sanctuaries may have originated as the place of winnowing during the harvest season, located at high points in or near settlements in order that the wind might take away the chaff. The general association between grain production and the local fertility deity may be taken for granted, but the numerous Biblical references to prostitution taking place at both bāmôt sanctuaries and threshing floors falls within the same assemblage of cultic rites.<sup>148</sup> The act of winnowing, by its very nature, would not be expected to leave many archaeological indicators and thus to declare that all high places performed the dual role of cult place and threshing floor is impossible. Needless to say, it would also be a moot point. The worship of Ba'al and/or his consort as fecund providers at high places, even those which may not have originated as threshing floors, would have been a very natural progression for the Semitic fertility cult.

The Seleukid temple at Gadara may therefore be seen as evidence for the process of the Hellenisation of indigenous sacred space – a process which maintained the original

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<sup>143</sup> Hoffmann 1999: 805, n.27.

<sup>144</sup> See for example I *Samuel* 9.14; I *Kings* 3.2-4, 12.31, 15.14; II *Kings* 23.8; II *Chronicles* 11.14; *Isaiah* 57.5-7; *Jeremiah* 7.31; *Ezekiel* 6.3-6, 16.16-22, 20.28-31; *Hosea* 4.13. While some bāmôt sanctuaries may have incorporated built platforms as at Tel Dan, the pre-Islamic Arabic equivalent, ḥugbâ, implies secluded sacred space that is not enclosed within a building but rather an open sanctuary or high place. Ḥugbâ appear across the Arab frontier from Mecca to Edessa, see Gawlikowski 1984: 302. It may be that the Gadara high place was more in line with Arabic traditions than those of the Judaeo-Canaanites.

<sup>145</sup> See for example Robinson 1908.

<sup>146</sup> Ba'al: *Jeremiah* 19.5, 32.35. Ašerah: I *Kings* 14.23; II *Kings* 17.10-1. Oden 1977: 107; Kaizer 2002: 154.

<sup>147</sup> I *Samuel* 10.5-6; Lucian *The Syrian Goddess* 44, 50-1.

<sup>148</sup> For an example of prostitution and the threshing floor see *Hosea* 9.1; May (1932: 92 n.3, 95; id. 1939) considers the nocturnal meeting of Ruth and Boaz at the Bethlehem threshing floor (*Ruth* 3) as a sanitised example of a standard fertility ritual in which Ruth played the part of a sacred prostitute.

topographic focus of worship despite the appendage of Greco-Macedonian religious architectures to the site. There was no evidence for Greco-Roman votive offerings found on or around the high place but the presence of a Byzantine wine-press reveals that the location continued to be used throughout the later history of the site.<sup>149</sup> Any pagan offerings visible during periods of Christian or Islamic dominance are likely to have been removed and/or destroyed.

The Hellenistic temenos at Gadara does not appear to have incorporated any secondary shrine structures or magazines. This draws the sanctuary in line with the main temenos at Baitokaike and the (Roman) Zeus temple at Gerasa (discussed below), but distinguishes it from the temples at Umm el-Amed and from Jebel Khalid which were provided with storage rooms and other enclosed ritual spaces. The need for such subsidiary structures may have been mitigated by the presence of the three crypts within the temple podium. However, the crypts were surely never used for sacred dining or to accommodate pilgrims – any structures appropriate for these purposes must either have been temporary erections or located outside of the sanctuary. In the Roman period, a theatre (the so-called north theatre) with all its associated amenities was constructed immediately south of the propylaia and may have facilitated any overflow from the temenos during periods of increased ritual activity.<sup>150</sup> The area of the north theatre is the focus of a current investigation led by Claudia Bührig of the DAI, the results of which are not yet fully published. The theatre complex looks to have been a first century AD construction although earlier structures in the vicinity may have provided extra facilities to the sanctuary just as the northern temenos at Baitokaike must have provided facilities for the temple of Zeus. A second, Roman period, podium temple was built as part of the theatre complex. This second temple was built above the remains of Hellenistic period structures although the exact purpose of the earlier remains have yet to be confirmed.<sup>151</sup>

A 52cm high marble statue discovered in the temenos area in 1975 is now in the Umm Qays archaeology museum (**fig.181**).<sup>152</sup> The seated male figure is missing its head, right arm, left forearm and left foot but the extant remains leave little doubt as to its interpretation. The pose and costume conform to the archetypal Pheidias Zeus that was

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<sup>149</sup> Hoffmann 1999: 804-5.

<sup>150</sup> Segal 1995: 46-8; Sear 2006: 547. The second century AD Zeus sanctuary at Gerasa was not only located adjacent to the south theatre, but was also adjacent a separate banqueting hall, see Braun 1998: 598.

<sup>151</sup> Bührig 2010; Claudia Bührig *pers. comm.*

<sup>152</sup> Hoffmann 1999: 813; id. 2001: 396.

**Figure 181.**  
Gadara Zeus  
statue now in the  
Umm Qays  
museum  
(courtesy Ross  
Burns).



used as the basis of so much Seleukid numismatic iconography. The figure is naked to the waist but has the end of his *himation* trailed over the left shoulder. The legs are bent in a naturalistic fashion, the right foot drawn back towards the diphros while the left extends forward. The left arm is raised, the remains of the forearm indicating where the hand would have grasped an upright sceptre. The

attribute originally held in the right hand, an eagle or the goddess Nike, has been lost but the seated Zeus Nikephoros illustrated within the temple on the Gadarene Roman provincial coins<sup>153</sup> suggests that Nike would have been a more likely candidate. The sculpture dates to the Roman Imperial period but provides the best evidence as to the nature of at least one of the deities worshipped within the temenos during the Seleukid period. This presence of Zeus Nikephoros at the Gadara sanctuary has prompted Hoffmann and others to view the temple and its cult as an innovation of Antiochos IV Epiphanes.<sup>154</sup> However, as stated above, the proximity of the Hellenistic temple to the rocky high place with its grotto makes it realistic to propose a pre-existing sanctity attached to the topography. Elsewhere, such as at Baitokaike and Gerasa, a cult of the local Baʿal was attached to abnormal rocky features in the landscape. The cultural memory of such holy sites permeated Greek colonial traditions and the vernacular Baʿal was absorbed into the Seleukid consciousness as a manifestation of the omnipresent Zeus. This acculturation may have been encouraged or accelerated by Antiochos Epiphanes, but its roots surely go back to the beginning of Seleukid rule.<sup>155</sup> Interestingly, there is no evidence at all to suggest that the Hellenistic sanctuary suffered as a result of Hasmonaean occupation in 100 BC.<sup>156</sup> Rather it continued to flourish into the Roman period as is evidenced by the Roman period Zeus statue and the drum altar from the northern high place.<sup>157</sup>

<sup>153</sup> See for example *SNG ANS* 6 nos.1305, 1309, 1321, 1324-5, 1339-40.

<sup>154</sup> Hoffmann 1999: 813; Reidl 2005: 108-12.

<sup>155</sup> See Chapter 2.

<sup>156</sup> Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.356; id. *Jewish War* 1.2.2.

<sup>157</sup> Hoffmann 1999: 806-7.

From the second century AD, the thermal springs located at Amatha (modern Hammat Gader), four kilometres north of Gadara on the Yarmuk River, were developed as a suburb of Gadara with the construction of a bath complex and theatre. The site was renowned in antiquity for its therapeutic qualities<sup>158</sup> and it might be expected that the area would have been developed during the Hellenistic period. However, despite a reference by Josephus to the location early in the first century BC, there does not appear to be any material evidence for the Hellenistic use of the site. A passage in Strabo suggests that the area was considered unhealthy and avoided before the Roman period.<sup>159</sup> If Amatha was considered sacred during the period of Seleukid dominance, no trace remains to mark that veneration.

## 5.5 GERASA

Gerasa may have been founded as a Hellenised colony in the first generation of the Macedonian conquest, either by Alexander himself, or more probably, by the regent Perdikkas (323-321 BC). There were a succession of pre-Greek indigenous settlements on or near the site, remains of which have been dated from the Early Bronze to Middle Iron Ages although clear evidence for the immediate pre-Greek period is lacking.<sup>160</sup> When Gerasa passed to the Seleukids during the Fifth Syrian War the settlement could not have been inconsiderable as it was soon refounded and granted the dynastic name Antioch-on-the-Chrysorhoas (some time before 143/2 BC).<sup>161</sup> The presence of an iron strigil in the hypogean tomb of a young child dated to shortly after 162 BC confirms the presence of Hellenic or Hellenising populations in the city during the Seleukid period.<sup>162</sup> Following the disastrous defeat of Antiochos VII Sidetes in 129 BC, Gerasa fell successively under the control of the tyrants of Philadelphia, the Hasmonaeans and Pompey who may have established the city as one of the founding members of the Decapolis.<sup>163</sup>

<sup>158</sup> Eusebius *Onomasticon*; Origen *Commentary on John* 6.4.

<sup>159</sup> Josephus *Jewish War* 1.86; Strabo *Geography* 16.5; Hirschfeld and Solar 1981: 199.

<sup>160</sup> Fink 1933: 110; *Gerasa* 27-9; Glueck 1939; Kennedy 1998: 54-5; Kehrberg and Manley 2002b: 8; March 2002: 11; Cohen 2006: 248; Lichtenberger 2008: 134-5.

<sup>161</sup> *Gerasa* 30-2, 461-2 no.251; Cohen 2006: 248-9. Rostovtzeff (1932: 62) preferred to view the Seleukid city as the first Greco-Macedonian colony established at Gerasa. He dates the settlement to the reign of Antiochos IV (175-164 BC).

<sup>162</sup> Kehrberg and Manley 2002a: 197-9; id. 2002b; id. 2002c: 8; Kehrberg 2006: 299.

<sup>163</sup> Josephus *Jewish War* 1.104, 1.155-7; Fink 1933 112 n.23; *Gerasa* 33-4; Watts and Martin Watts 1992: 306; Kampen 2003: 207-8. On Pompey and the Decapolis, see Chapter 1.1 above.

Very little is known structurally of Hellenistic Gerasa.<sup>164</sup> The settlement probably centred around the location of the so-called Oval Piazza, occasionally referred to erroneously as the „forum“, located in the south of the Roman city. To the east of the piazza, the tel known as „Camp Hill“ may be the site of the original Macedonian colony while to the west, a rocky spur rises 12 metres above the piazza.<sup>165</sup> The piazza itself appears to have been a construction of the first centuries BC/AD. Before this date the area formed a steep gully between the two pieces of high ground.<sup>166</sup> It was on the high-ground to the west of the piazza that a temple of Zeus was constructed in the mid-first century AD. By that date the irregularly shaped piazza was already in place. Watts and Martin Watts prefer to locate the Seleukid settlement on the east bank of the Chrysorhoas, below the Circassian town, where they consider the nineteenth and twentieth century street plan “approximated the size and proportions” of Seleukid foundations.<sup>167</sup> However, archaeologically speaking, significantly more Hellenistic material has been discovered in the western half of the city and the occupation to the east may have been less developed before the first-second century AD Roman building programs. The placement of the core of the Seleukid city in south Jarash is supported by the fact that the Oval Piazza and the Zeus sanctuary on its distinctive of rocky terrain fail to fit within the geometrical master plan for Gerasa ascribed by Watts and Martin Watts to the Roman city. The credible theoretical lines of urban planning that constitute their first Roman phase of the city are restricted to areas north of the piazza entrance.<sup>168</sup> In the second (Hadrianic) phase of the enlargement and embellishment of the Roman city, the Upper Zeus temple and its surrounds once more defied urban planning – it was oriented on a completely different axis – even though it was drawn within the southern extension of a geometric model.<sup>169</sup> Regardless of the Seleukid centre, Hellenistic ceramic scatters, architectural fragments and burials found throughout the western half of the city

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<sup>164</sup> Parapetti 1984: 256; Cohen 2006: 249.

<sup>165</sup> *Gerasa* 17, 28, 31; Seigne 1997: 993; Ball 2001: 188; Cohen 2006: 249.

<sup>166</sup> Rostovtzeff 1931: 77.

<sup>167</sup> Watts and Martin Watts 1992: 307.

<sup>168</sup> Watts and Martin Watts 1992: 308-11.

<sup>169</sup> *Gerasa* 17, 156-7; Watts and Martin Watts 1992: 311-4. By the mid-second century AD construction of the Upper Zeus temple, the sanctuary had begun to be crowded by the first century AD South Theatre and the associated banqueting hall. The new building developments had to allow for the preceeding structures and accommodated them through the arrangement of an irregular temenos wall. However, the first century BC/AD orientation of the Zeus sanctuary was retained which was at odds with the axis of the planned city, Ina Kehrberg *pers. comm.*; J.-P. Braun, *et al.* final excavation report in preparation.

(the eastern half below the modern city is necessarily less well known) prove that the entire space of the later Roman settlement was already being used from the second century BC.<sup>170</sup>

From the period of the Jewish revolt until the late third century AD – peaking in the century of Hadrian’s visit in 129/30 AD – the settlement flourished as a magnificent example of a Greco-Roman city on the empire’s eastern frontier. Under the Byzantines, Gerasa was home to a vibrant Christian community which utilised the physical (temple) remains of the pagan past to aid in the construction of their new churches.<sup>171</sup> Contrary to Kraeling, the Muslim conquest in the seventh century AD and a series of earthquakes in the seventh and eighth centuries AD saw little impact on the productivity and vitality of the site. The settlement’s decline paralleled the decline of the north-south trade routes following the ninth century relocation of the Abbasid capital from Damascus to Baghdad. By the period of the crusades, Jarash-Gerasa was considered to have been long abandoned.<sup>172</sup> The city visited by Seetzen, and later by Burckhardt, in the early nineteenth century was still abandoned except for the occasional Arab tribesmen who caused fear among the Europeans’ guides.<sup>173</sup> Like Hierapolis/Membij, the location was chosen by the Ottoman government for the settlement of Circassian colonists in 1878, giving birth to modern Jarash.<sup>174</sup>

It is largely a fragmentary picture that needs to be pieced together in order to reconstruct the features of the Seleukid past and, among those fragments, evidence of the religious life of the city is particularly ephemeral. The long history of post-Seleukid Gerasa – Hasmonaean, Roman, Byzantine, Islamic, Circassian and modern – has resulted in the obliteration of almost all of the above-ground Hellenistic city. The rocky terrain has meant that, across the site, earlier structures were successively erased and their material reused or incorporated into later buildings.<sup>175</sup> The first archaeological investigation of Jarash was begun by an Anglo-American team in 1928.<sup>176</sup> The extent of ancient and medieval occupation has meant that excavation, survey and reconstruction work has continued to the

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<sup>170</sup> For examples see *Gerasa* 32, 138, 146, 460 nos.243, 246; Kraeling 1941: 11; Kehrberg and Manley 2001: 440; id. 2002a: 197-9; id. 2002b; id. 2002c. Most of the numerous surface scatters and stratified Hellenistic ceramics remain to be published, Ina Kehrberg *pers. comm.*

<sup>171</sup> March 2002.

<sup>172</sup> *Gerasa* 36-69; Ina Kehrberg 2000: 152.

<sup>173</sup> Seetzen 1810: 32-4; Burckhardt 1822: 252-64.

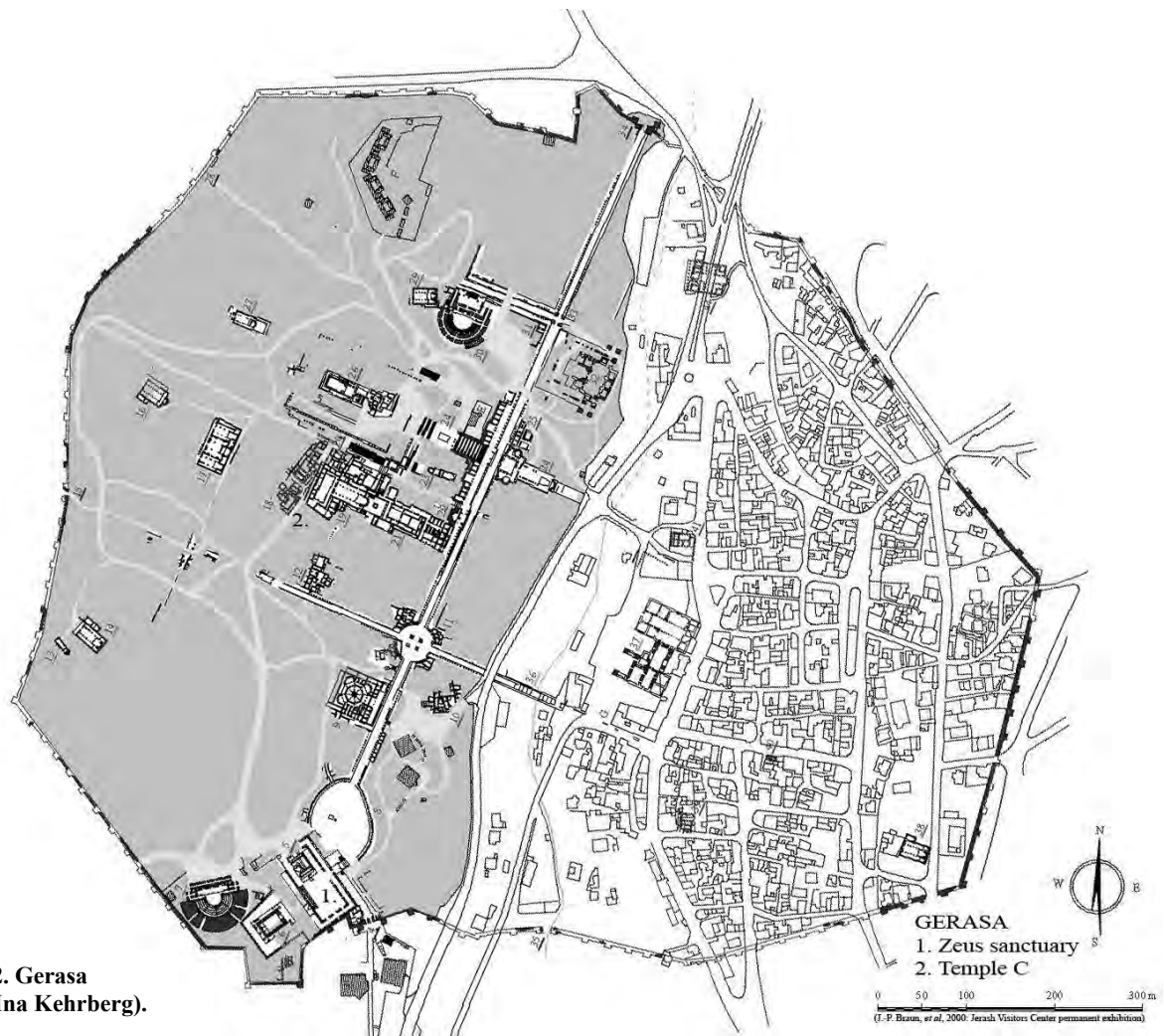
<sup>174</sup> *Gerasa* 1. See also Walker 1894 who dates the Circassian colony to 1881.

<sup>175</sup> Kehrberg 2004: 189.

<sup>176</sup> *Gerasa* 5.



Figure 182. Gerasa  
(courtesy Ina Kehrberg).



present day, conducted by teams from America, Australia, Britain, Denmark, France, Italy, Jordan, Poland, Spain, and Switzerland (**fig.182**).

### 5.5.1 A SELEUKID ZEUS SANCTUARY?

The Zeus sanctuary was first surveyed by Schumacher who used the designations “südlichen Tempels” and “bēt et-tei” to distinguish it from the more northern Artemis temple complex (Schumacher’s “Sonnentempel”).<sup>177</sup> The god honoured at the sanctuary was identified epigraphically during the Anglo-American expedition<sup>178</sup> but it was not until the 1970s when the Jordanian Department of Antiquities started preliminary excavations and restoration. The project passed to the Institut Français d’Archéologie du Proche-Orient

<sup>177</sup> Schumacher 1902: 29-32.

<sup>178</sup> *Gerasa* 17, 374 no.3, 380 no.11.

(IFAPO) in 1982 as part of the international „Jerash Archaeological Project“<sup>179</sup> and work conducted by various French teams has continued until today.

By the mid-second century AD, the sanctuary of Zeus was composed of two major terraces with a smaller intermediate „landing“ rising from the area of the Oval Piazza up to a number of grottos at the westernmost crest of the spur, enclosed by the city wall (**figs.183-5**). The first century AD lower temenos wall was incorporated in the city wall at the southern junction of the lower and upper terraces. The rocky spur was associated with early cultic activities and respected by the city fortifications, abutted by the upper temenos wall and projecting southwards and uphill around the crest of the rocky outcrops.<sup>180</sup> Josephus suggests that the Hellenistic city was already fortified but the only city walls known archaeologically were erected in the early second century AD. In the south-west, west and north-west, the city wall foundations cut through the remains of late Hellenistic necropoleis (**fig.186**).<sup>181</sup>

Kraeling suggested that the origin of the sanctuary of Zeus should be looked for in the Seleukid period and that its construction probably dates to the refoundation of the settlement as Antioch-on-the-Chrysorhoas during the reign of Antiochos IV Epiphanes.<sup>182</sup> The argument may be summarised as follows. Successive temples to Zeus were built in honour of Zeus Olympios and were initially the pre-eminent religious structures of Gerasa. The Roman period Zeus temples did not conform to the grid of the planned Roman city so they must relate to, or respect, a pre-Roman layout. The first century AD temple possessed the right of *asylia* or inviolability. Shrines possessing *asylia* were usually granted that privilege during the Hellenistic period. Further evidence for a Hellenistic grant of *asylia* is commonly derived from Josephus' story of the late second century BC tyrants of Philadelphia, Zeno Kotylas and Theodoros, who took advantage of the inviolability of Gerasa and stored their treasury within the sacred grounds.<sup>183</sup> The Hellenistic right of *asylia* was retained by the temple of Zeus under the Roman administration and was clearly a functioning aspect of the sanctuary in AD 69/70 when the suppliant Theon and his children sought safety during a time of regional uncertainty.<sup>184</sup> Antiochos IV Epiphanes favoured

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<sup>179</sup> Seigne *et al.* 1986.

<sup>180</sup> *Gerasa* 13 n.12, 18; Braun 1998.

<sup>181</sup> Josephus *Jewish War* 1.104; Kehrberg and Manley 2001; id. 2002a: 199-202; id. 2002b; Kehrberg 2006.

<sup>182</sup> *Gerasa* 30-1.

<sup>183</sup> Josephus *Jewish War* 1.104.

<sup>184</sup> Fink 1933: 114; Bickerman 1937: 118; *Gerasa* 377; Seigne 1985; Rigsby 2000.

**Figure 183. Gerasa Zeus sanctuary viewed from the Oval Piazza (courtesy Ina Kehrberg).**



**Figure 184. Gerasa Zeus sanctuary from the air (courtesy APAAME).**



**Figure 185. Gerasa Zeus sanctuary from the air (courtesy APAAME).**



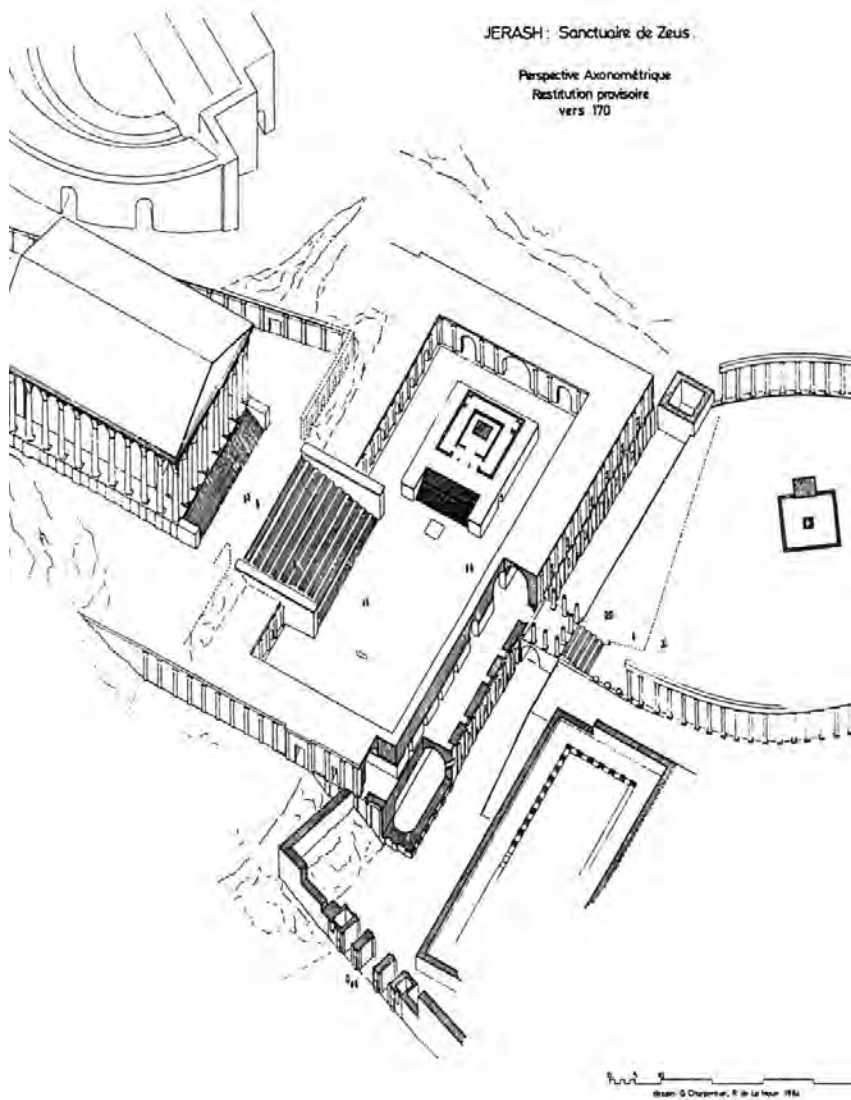


Figure 186. Gerasa Zeus sanctuary (Seigne *et al.* 1986: fig13).

the cult of Zeus and identified the god with the indigenous Baʿal.<sup>185</sup> The Gerasa Zeus sanctuary was built over a space presumed to be sacred to Baʿal Šamīn. Therefore, the Zeus temple must have been built in the reign of Antiochos IV and by the same logic, if Antiochos IV was bestowing honours upon the sanctuary then he must also be responsible for the refoundation of the city.

Kraeling's argument, based on logic but lacking any material evidence, is somewhat circular. Essentially it can be reduced to the concept that Antiochos Epiphanes favoured Zeus, therefore if there was a sanctuary of Zeus at a settlement named Antioch it must have been founded or promoted by Epiphanes. Nevertheless, the basis of the suggestion is

<sup>185</sup> While I agree fully with this assessment of Epiphanes' religious activities, Kraeling cites the temple of Zeus Megistos at Dura as evidence of the activities of Antiochos Epiphanes. That structure is now thought to date to the period after the Parthian occupation of the city, see Downey 2004b: 54-5.

generally believed to be plausible. The correlation between those Seleukid settlements which were granted dynastic names, the prominent worship of Zeus and the bestowal of the right of *asylia* is accepted by Lichtenberger who is however, critical of Kraeling's assertion that Zeus was prominent due to the earlier importance of a Ba'al who was venerated in the same locality.<sup>186</sup> Kraeling's suggestion rested on the belief that the grottos behind the later Zeus sanctuary may have been the focus of the original pre-Hellenistic worship at the site, probably related to the cult of Ba'al Šamīn. Seigne, following Kraeling (and Rostovtzeff), posited that the grottos were an Iron Age cult centre, a precursor to the Seleukid period cult of Zeus and the ultimate reason for the placement of the Hellenistic sanctuary.<sup>187</sup> This association between pre-Hellenistic and Hellenistic cult is rejected by Lichtenberger who sees no possibility for cultic continuity on the site due to the large lacuna in evidence from the sixth century BC until the presumed foundation of the Zeus cult under Antiochos Epiphanes.<sup>188</sup>

While Lichtenberger is right to approach the matter with caution, his assertion that the Hellenised settlers and their Semitic co-habitants at Gerasa bore no trace of the sort of cultural memory visible elsewhere is dangerous. As has already been discussed, such cultural memories appear quite clearly at the very similar sanctuary of Zeus at Gadara and the worship of Zeus (the Greek sky-god) at a natural depression at Baitokaike. It can still be seen in the modern vernacular understanding of the Charonion of Antioch as an effigy of the Virgin Mary and in the Christian (and subsequent Islamic) usurpation of sacred space at Hierapolis and Damascus. Lichtenberger's rejection of this kind of cultic memory stems from his wish to view Zeus as a wholly Greek dynastic god, imported by the Seleukids and worshipped by the Hellenic colonists apart from the indigenous population. Lichtenberger dismisses any syncretic possibility for the Gerasene Zeus but he nonetheless acknowledges the „orientalised“ layout of the temple during the Roman period.<sup>189</sup> It would be incredible for a population to xenophobically maintain the purely Greek worship of a deity, while simultaneously altering the physical and architectural space to reflect vernacular traditions.

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<sup>186</sup> Lichtenberger 2008: 148-50.

<sup>187</sup> Rostovtzeff 1931: 76; *Gerasa* 1938: 17-8, 28; Seigne 1997: 995; id. 2002: 13; Seigne *et al.* 1986: 41.

<sup>188</sup> Lichtenberger 2008: 135.

<sup>189</sup> Lichtenberger 2008: 145; see also Richardson 2002: 81. Regardless of its „orientalisation“ the proportions used in the construction of the lower Zeus temple may be mathematically ascribed to a sanctuary for “a god equivalent to Zeus” if not the deity himself, see Kalayan 1984: 246-7. Kalayan's hypothesis (based on Vitruvius *On Architecture* 3.1.) supposes that each Greco-Roman deity had a discernable set of symmetry and proportions that dictated the form of their temple architecture. The changing understanding of Bel as Zeus for example saw modifications made to the proportions of his temple at Palmyra (Kalayan 1984: 248).

Cultic space is dictated by the needs of the religion and rituals in question. It is unlikely to be heavily influenced by foreign traditions from which the cult is actively kept aloof.

Furthermore, Zeus' epigraphic assimilation across (Roman) Gerasa with Poseidon, Sarapis, Kronos and Helios suggests that the deity's exact nature was confused.<sup>190</sup> The most likely explanation for such a multifaceted figure would be to view the god as a clumsily Hellenised but universally supreme Ba'al. Just like Lucian's description of the many aspects of Atargatis, the Ba'al of Gerasa was Hellenised into a deity who was essentially Zeus, but with enough individuality to necessitate further distinction. An early dedication at the temple of Zeus was inscribed for one Zabdion, son of Aristomachos, Priest of Caesar, normally dated to AD 22.<sup>191</sup> While dating to over a century after the period of Seleukid control over the city, the dedication speaks of the cultural milieu present in the city. As a priest of the Imperial cult, Zabdion was clearly a man of some importance. While his patronymic is Greek, his own name is Semitic suggesting that his family were more likely Hellenised Semites than genetic Hellenes. The deity worshipped by Zabdion at the sanctuary of Zeus was a result of similar processes of acculturation – a Hellenised Ba'al rather than an untainted Zeus brought from the Greek mainland. Apart from a single second century AD inscription in which Zeus was associated with Tyche there is no evidence for the presence of a *parhedra* or consort at the sanctuary of Zeus.<sup>192</sup>

The earliest known built component of the sanctuary consisted of a simple square altar, constructed on top of a natural outcrop of rock, at the northern end of what would later become the lower terrace. Seigne dates the construction of the altar to the first quarter of the first century BC – at a time that Seleukid influence south of Damascus was very much on the wane and when direct Seleukid control over Gerasa had almost certainly ceased.<sup>193</sup> Given the presumed prominence of the Zeus cult in the Seleukid city, the lack of a built monument is surprising. According to Seigne, a monumental, walled altar, the “*naos hellénistique*” was built around the earlier structure in the later part of the first century BC and raised rocky surface surrounding the monument was terraced to produce a level court. It was not until the early first century AD (AD 27/8) that a monumental vaulted temenos

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<sup>190</sup> Fink 1933: 114; *Gerasa* 382 no. 15, 392-3 no.39.

<sup>191</sup> Fink 1933: 113-4; *Gerasa* 373-4 no.2.

<sup>192</sup> *Gerasa* 381 no.13.

<sup>193</sup> Josephus *Jewish War* 1.86-7, 1.104. Seigne 1997: 995-6.

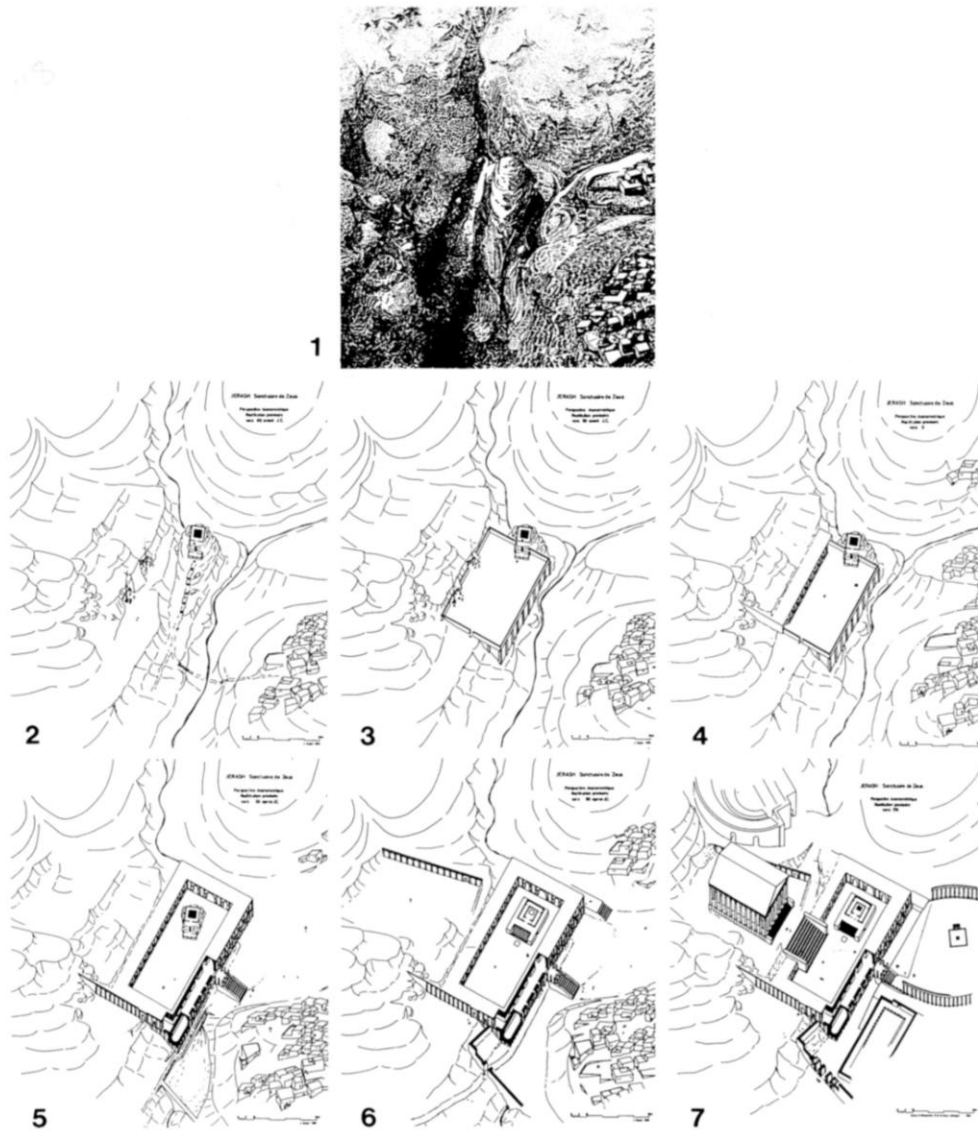


Figure 187. Conjectured reconstruction of the development of the Gerasa Zeus sanctuary (Rasson and Seigne: 1989 fig.1).

Fig. 1 — Schémas évolutifs du sanctuaire : - 1 : La zone du sanctuaire avant toute construction. Hypothèse (Dessin : J.-P. Lange). - 2 : État supposé du sanctuaire vers 80/100 av. J.-C. (Dessin : J. Seigne). - 3 : État supposé du sanctuaire vers 60 av. J.-C. (Dessin : J. Seigne). - 4 : État supposé du sanctuaire vers 0 (Dessin : J. Seigne). - 5 : État supposé du sanctuaire vers 30 ap. J.-C. (Dessin : J. Seigne). - 6 : État supposé du sanctuaire vers 70 ap. J.-C. (Dessin : J. Seigne). - 7 : État supposé du sanctuaire vers 170 ap. J.-C. (Dessin : M.A.F.J.).

wall was built around the terrace.<sup>194</sup> It was also in the first century AD (AD 69/70) when the so-called lower Zeus temple – a limestone podium crowned by a walled court – was constructed above and around the remains of the Hellenistic altars, preserving the earliest monument within the new structures (figs.187-9).<sup>195</sup> This configuration of a rocky outcrop capped by a Hellenistic altar which was itself enclosed by a later Roman structure is a

<sup>194</sup> Seigne; 1985: 104-5; id. 1989: 104-9; id. 1997: 996-8; Eristov and Seigne 2003. The upper terrace with a second Zeus temple was built in the period AD 161-6 making use of spolia from the earlier structures. The remains of the Upper Zeus temple still crown the rise today, see *Gerasa* 18, 31; Seigne 1997: 1000-1; March 2002: 28-9.

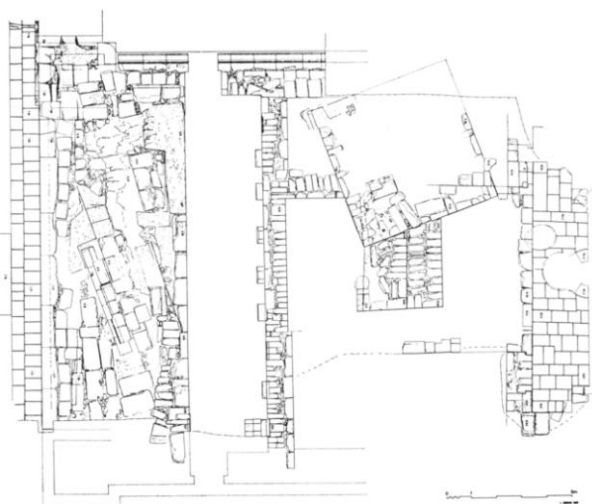
<sup>195</sup> Ball 2001: 188; Eristov and Seigne 2003: 270.



replication of the practice seen at Baitokaike.<sup>196</sup> The sacral nature of the natural topography was remembered and the associated late Hellenistic remains considered sacred enough for later populations to feel the need to preserve them within successive monuments.

The west temenos vault was covered by the second century AD grand stairway to the upper Zeus temple. Below the stair foundations, the natural terraced slope behind the temenos enclosure was retained, marked with small cavities containing ceramic fragments and ashy deposits indicative of sacrificial remains. The earliest ceramics date to the late second-first centuries BC, presumably predating and contemporary with the construction of the Hellenistic altar below. The rituals carried out on the rock terrace, only metres away from the altar, were almost certainly associated in some way. They seem to indicate a continuation of sacrifice after the construction of the lower sanctuary and may also have borne some relation with activities carried out in and around the grottos above.<sup>197</sup>

The grottos on the spur of the hill above the Hellenistic altar showed evidence that there had once been one or more irregular enclosure walls abutting the rocky spur. A large number of limestone statuette fragments representing stylised eagle-like birds of prey (**figs.190-2**), presumably votive offerings, as well as many fragmentary incense altars were recovered from the area during the IFAPO excavations undertaken by Kehrberg in 1999.<sup>198</sup>



**Figure 188.**  
Lower Zeus  
naos (Seigne  
1989: fig.2).



**Figure 189.**  
Lower Zeus  
naos (Eristov  
and Seigne  
2003: fig.1).

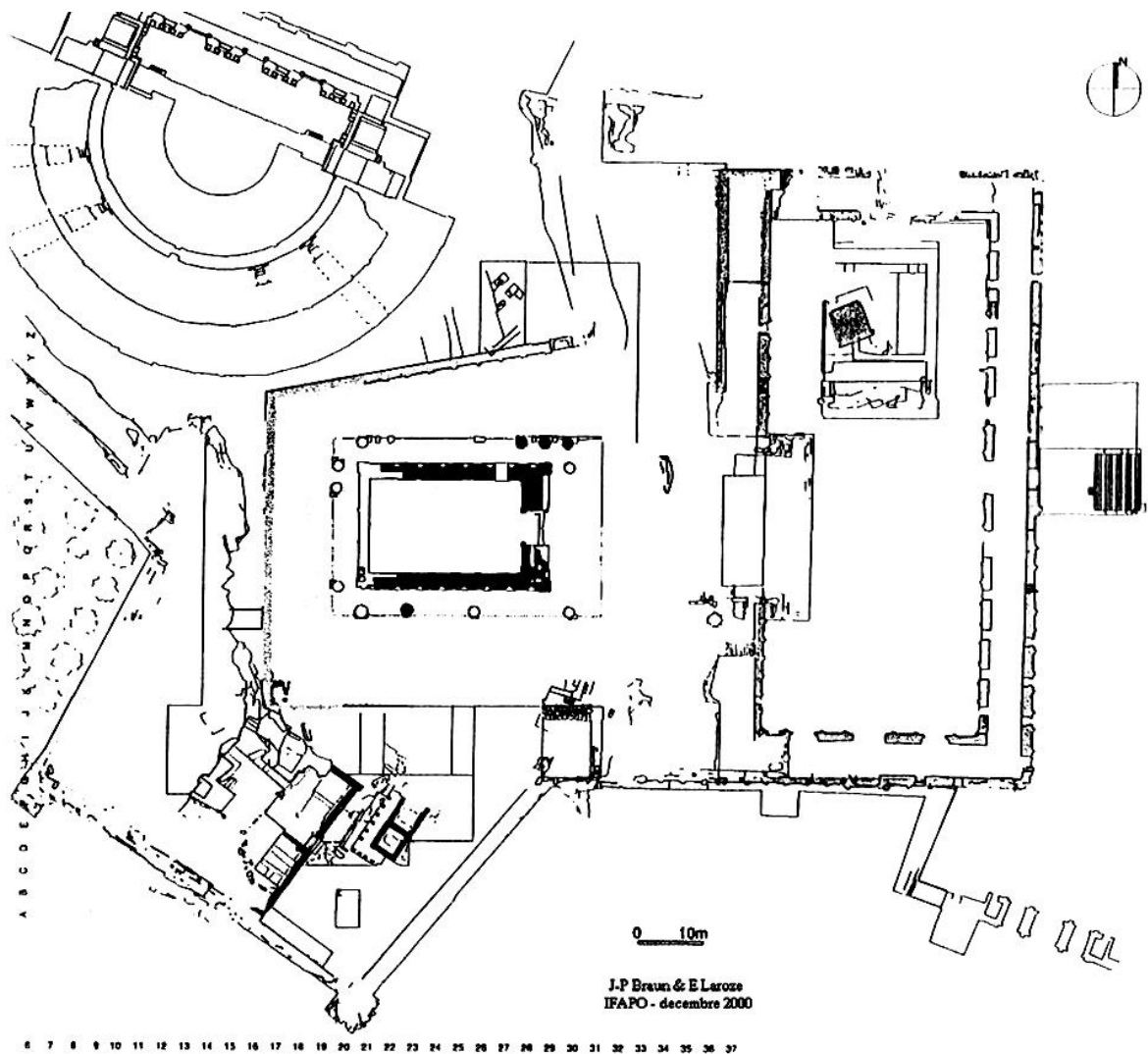
<sup>196</sup> See Chapter 4.3.1 above. See also the note regarding the placement of the Gadara Zeus temple, Chapter 5.4.1 above.

<sup>197</sup> Kehrberg 2004: 189, 192; Ina Kehrberg *pers. comm.*

<sup>198</sup> The excavations of the whole Upper Zeus temple complex were part of the IFAPO restoration project 1996-2000 directed by J.-P. Braun, the publication of their work is in preparation, for the ceramics see Kehrberg 2004.



Figure 190.  
Unpublished  
plan of the Zeus  
sanctuary and  
grotto area, E.  
Laroze and J.-P.  
Braun,  
December 2000  
(courtesy Ina  
Kehrberg).



Their context would suggest a date preceding the Roman sanctuary development but their simplistic style and fragmentary nature hinder accurate dating.

At least two second-first century BC shaft tombs were destroyed during construction of a banqueting hall between the city wall and the south temenos wall of the Upper Zeus temple, immediately below the grottos. The structure could date to the first or early second centuries AD and perhaps was designed to accompany the South Theatre or Lower Zeus temple.<sup>199</sup> The tombs were clearly not looted but carefully emptied and subsequently refilled with earth and debris. The original tomb contents appear to have been reburied elsewhere, with some debris being placed in a Hellenistic quarry cut and natural

<sup>199</sup> Braun 1997. The excavated hall may have already been destroyed by the late second or early third century AD. The upper temple construction blocked access to the banqueting hall from within the city although access could still be gained via one of the caves in the outcrop which passed below the city wall, Ina Kehrberg *pers. comm.*



Figure 191.  
Limestone  
eagle wing  
from the  
Gerasa grottos  
(courtesy Ina  
Kehrberg).



Figure 192.  
Limestone  
eagle leg from  
the Gerasa  
grottos  
(courtesy Ina  
Kehrberg).

cavity in the side of the spur referred to as „cave G18.“ The presence of the Hellenistic burials and the careful manner in which the graves were destroyed has led Kehrberg to posit that the area may have been functioning as some sort of funerary garden used for funerary feasts and a perpetual ancestor cult.<sup>200</sup> The later banqueting hall, possibly associated with the Zeus sanctuary, could be seen as evidence for the continuation of the earlier phase of site use. Seigne suggests that the site may have been of cultic significance from as early as the seventh century BC although he admits that providing fixed dates is problematic given the scant evidence.<sup>201</sup>

A close parallel for the early cultic activity behind the Zeus sanctuary at Gerasa may be found at Har Senaim on Mount Hermon. Both of the Ituraean sanctuaries at Har Senaim were composed of various irregular walled structures built up against natural outcrops of rock with similar grottos to those behind the Zeus sanctuary at Gerasa (**figs.193-5**). The site's built features appear to have included open and roofed walled structures, hearths and a single centralised burial cave and mausoleum at the foot of the rise. The assemblage of small finds is consistent with activities at ritual sites, scatterings of coins dating from the reign of Antiochos III through to the Byzantine period along with ceramic fragments of both locally made cooking ware and occasional imported table wares such as Eastern Sigillata, glass and burnt ovid-caprid bones. Of a more sacred nature, a number of betyls (upper sanctuary), stone and bronze altars and stone votive eagle statuettes (lower

<sup>200</sup> Kehrberg 2004: 192; Ina Kehrberg *pers. comm.* For the association between necropoleis and feasting among the Arab populations of the Syrian steppe, see Patrich 2005: 101.

<sup>201</sup> Seigne 1997: 995.

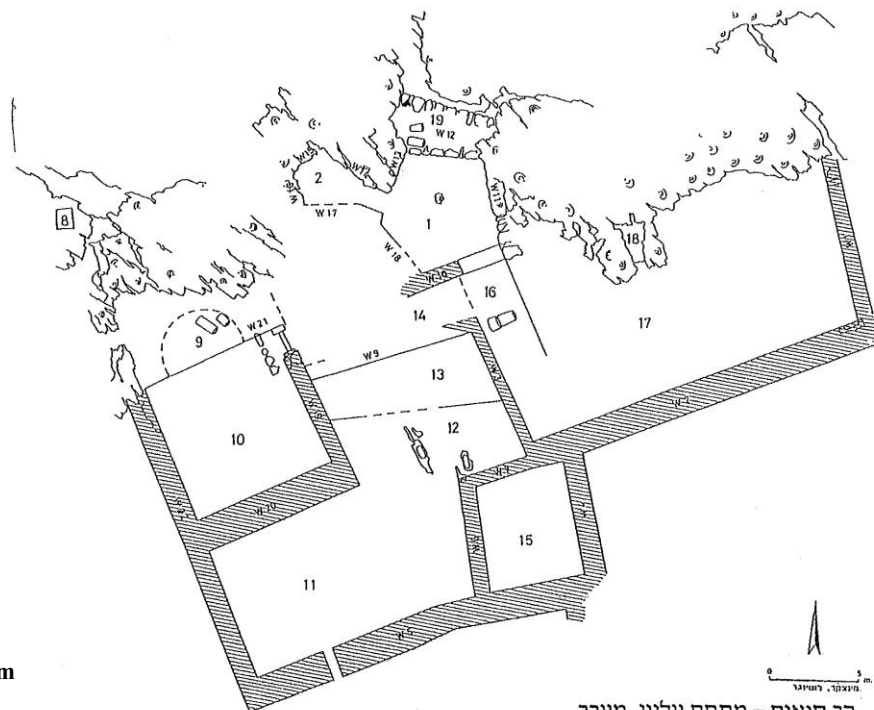


Figure 193. Upper sanctuary at Har Senaim (courtesy Shimon Dar).

21. הר סנאים - מתחם עליון, מערב.

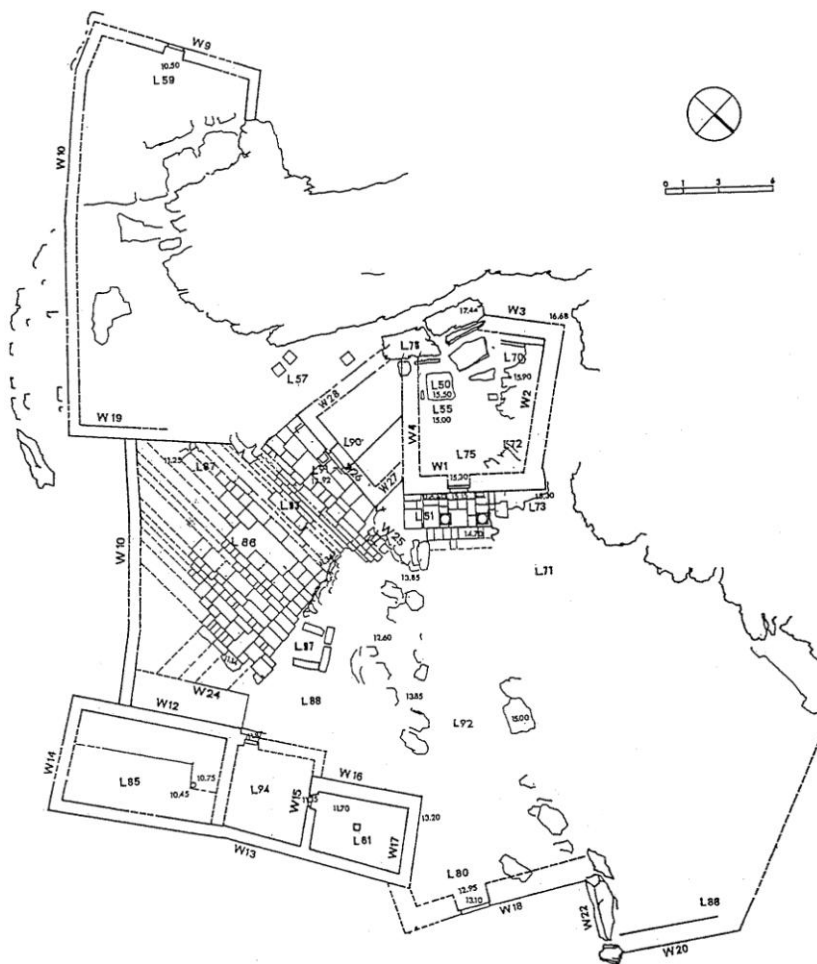


Figure 194. Lower sanctuary at Har Senaim (courtesy Shimon Dar).

43. הר סנאים - המתחם התחתון.

sanctuary) were also found at the Har Senaim sanctuaries.<sup>202</sup> The structures and materials (especially the presence of eagle statuettes) recorded at Har Senaim, closely resemble the fragmentary record of activity at the Gerasa grotto area.

Although nine inscriptions were recovered from the lower sanctuary at Har Senaim, none provide the name of the god being venerated at the site. The presence of the eagle statuettes (**fig.196**) and a Roman period altar showing a radiate bust in relief have led the excavators to suggest that the god worshipped at Har Senaim was none other than Baʿal Šamīn, either in that guise, Hellenised/Latinised as Zeus-

Jupiter Heliopolitanus, or perhaps both – as Baʿal at the upper sanctuary and Zeus-Jupiter at the lower.<sup>203</sup> It would appear that the idyllic natural setting of Har Senaim with its rocky outcrops and panoramic views unhindered by high enclosing walls was the focus of a pre-Hellenistic cult. Together with the equivalent cult site at Gerasa, they should be seen as examples of pre-Islamic Arabic ḥuḡbâ sites.<sup>204</sup> It was only in the wake of Hellenisation from the second century BC that either cult site received their first built structures which were further embellished during the later Hellenistic and Roman periods.<sup>205</sup> The mausoleum at Har Senaim and the careful treatment of the burials at the Gerasa grotto area suggest that some form of ancestor cult may have occurred in tandem with the early worship of Baʿal-Zeus at these sites.

The presumption regarding a Seleukid grant of *asylia* for the dynastically sponsored sanctuary of Zeus at Gerasa found in Kraeling and all who have followed him, is not

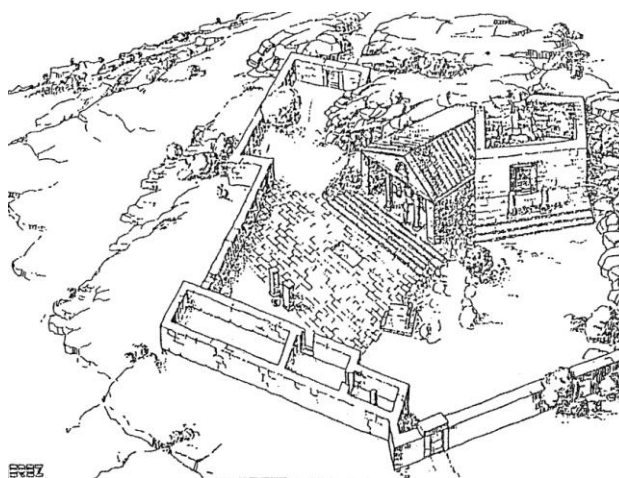


Figure 195. Conjectural reconstruction of the lower sanctuary at Har Senaim (courtesy Shimon Dar).

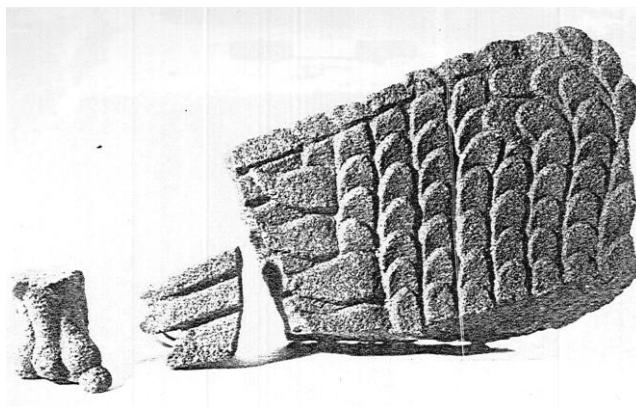


Figure 196. Basalt eagle fragments from the lower sanctuary at Har Senaim (Dar 1993: pl.44).

<sup>202</sup> Dar 1993: 28-92.

<sup>203</sup> Dar 1993: 65-9, 76-8, 87-8.

<sup>204</sup> Gawlikowski 1984: 302.

<sup>205</sup> Dar 1993: 85-6.

supported by the meagre material evidence from the site of the later sanctuary of Zeus.<sup>206</sup> Lichtenberger's argument, although opposed to Kraeling's assumption *vis-à-vis* Zeus's vernacular origins, is still based very much on the premise that the Gerasa Zeus cult was an initiative promoted by the Seleukid dynasty.<sup>207</sup> However, any cultic activities that may have been undertaken at that location – and that they did take place is almost undeniable – have left little permanent trace on the landscape. How could that be the case if the sanctuary was grand enough to warrant royal Seleukid concessions and the right of *asylia*? The sanctuary clearly exercised that right by the period of the Jewish Revolt (AD 69/70) when Theon and his children sought asylum within the temenos.<sup>208</sup> But the Jewish Revolt was essentially a reaction against 130 years of Roman influence and presence in Judaea and the rest of Koile-Syria. The period in question is 230 years after the reign of Antiochos IV Epiphanes and 140 years after the latest possible period in which the Seleukidai (in the form of Kleopatra Selene and Antiochos XIII) might have exercised influence over Gerasa. The Theon inscription is hardly incontrovertible evidence when discussing a royal Seleukid grant of privileges.

Kraeling's interpretation was ultimately founded on a single passage in Josephus' *Jewish War* in which the Hasmonaean king, Alexander Jannaeus, besieged and took Gerasa where Theodoros son of Zeno, tyrant of Philadelphia-Amman, had stored his treasure.<sup>209</sup> The insinuation that Theodoros was taking advantage of the sanctuary's inviolability is worth entertaining. Unfortunately, Josephus' accuracy at this juncture is troubling. In an earlier incident, Alexander Jannaeus is said to have captured the most valuable belongings of Theodoros son of Zeno at Gadara.<sup>210</sup> To my knowledge no-one has yet suggested that the tyrant's treasury was stored at Gadara on account of a grant of *asylia*. The disparity is never considered, yet as discussed above, Gadara did possess a significant temple and sanctuary to Zeus in this period, a feature lacking at Gerasa. In the parallel passage of one (or both) episodes in *Jewish Antiquities*, Josephus states that Alexander Jannaeus besieged and took the city of Essa where the greatest part of the treasury of the tyrant of Philadelphia was stored. In the latter passage the tyrant is Zeno rather than his son.<sup>211</sup> Both the *Jewish*

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<sup>206</sup> *Gerasa* 30-1.

<sup>207</sup> Lichtenberger 2008: 134-6.

<sup>208</sup> Fink 1933: 114; Bickerman 1937: 118; *Gerasa* 377; Seigne 1985; Rigsby 2000.

<sup>209</sup> Josephus *Jewish War* 1.104.

<sup>210</sup> Josephus *Jewish War* 1.86.

<sup>211</sup> Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.393.

*Antiquities* passage and the *Jewish War* passage regarding the capture of Gerasa provide the same secondary information about Alexander's ejection of Demetrios the governor of Gamla and thus indicate that the two passages should be seen as a doublet.<sup>212</sup> Whether the third incident relating to Gadara should be considered a further repetition of the same event remains to be seen. Regardless, Josephus provides three accounts of the capture of a settlement by Alexander Jannaeus in which he was able to gain control of the greater part of the treasury of the tyrant of Philadelphia. In each account the name of the settlement changes; Gadara, Gerasa, Essa. Is it to be believed that the tyrant's treasury was kept in two or three different locations around Koile-Syria (each claiming to be the largest portion), or has Josephus confused his narrative, providing alternative accounts of a single, or perhaps two, events? If his account is a doublet, why should more credence be given to a passage in *Jewish Wars* (citing Gerasa) rather than the *Jewish Antiquities* passage (citing Essa) when *Jewish Antiquities* is generally much more detailed for this period?

Further proof of Josephus' confusion about the events of these years can be easily found. In the same passage as Alexander's seizure of Gadara, he speaks of the capture of Amatha – a site which, as discussed above, was probably not developed until after the Roman annexation.<sup>213</sup> Earlier, Josephus stated in *Jewish Antiquities* that the people of Samareia called on Antiochos (IX) Kyzikenos for aid twice during the siege of John Hyrkanos I. In the parallel passage in *Jewish Wars* the king called upon is Kyzikenos' nemesis Antiochos (VIII Grypos) Aspendios and he is called only once.<sup>214</sup> Regarding the following generation, Josephus speaks of Antiochos (XII) Dionysos, brother of Demetrios (III), as the last Seleukid king. Not only did the Seleukidai continue to rule parts of Syria and Kilikia for another two decades after the death of Antiochos Dionysos, but it would appear that they continued to rule in Koile-Syria, at Damascus and Ake-Ptolemaïs for another decade and a half – a fact that Josephus himself acknowledged elsewhere.<sup>215</sup> By relying on Josephus, the modern discourse discussing an early date for the Gerasa Zeus sanctuary's grant of *asylia*, rests on some very unstable foundations. While the claim for a Seleukid grant of *asylia* to the sanctuary of Zeus at Gerasa is not groundless, enough doubt

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<sup>212</sup> Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.394; id. *Jewish War* 1.105.

<sup>213</sup> Josephus *Jewish War* 1.86.

<sup>214</sup> Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.276-9; id. *Jewish War* 1.64-6.

<sup>215</sup> Josephus *Jewish War* 1.99. On the reign of Kleopatra Selene and Antiochos XIII in Koile-Syria see Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.16.4; Hoover 2005: 98-9; SC 2: 615-6; Wright 2010: 243 no.200.

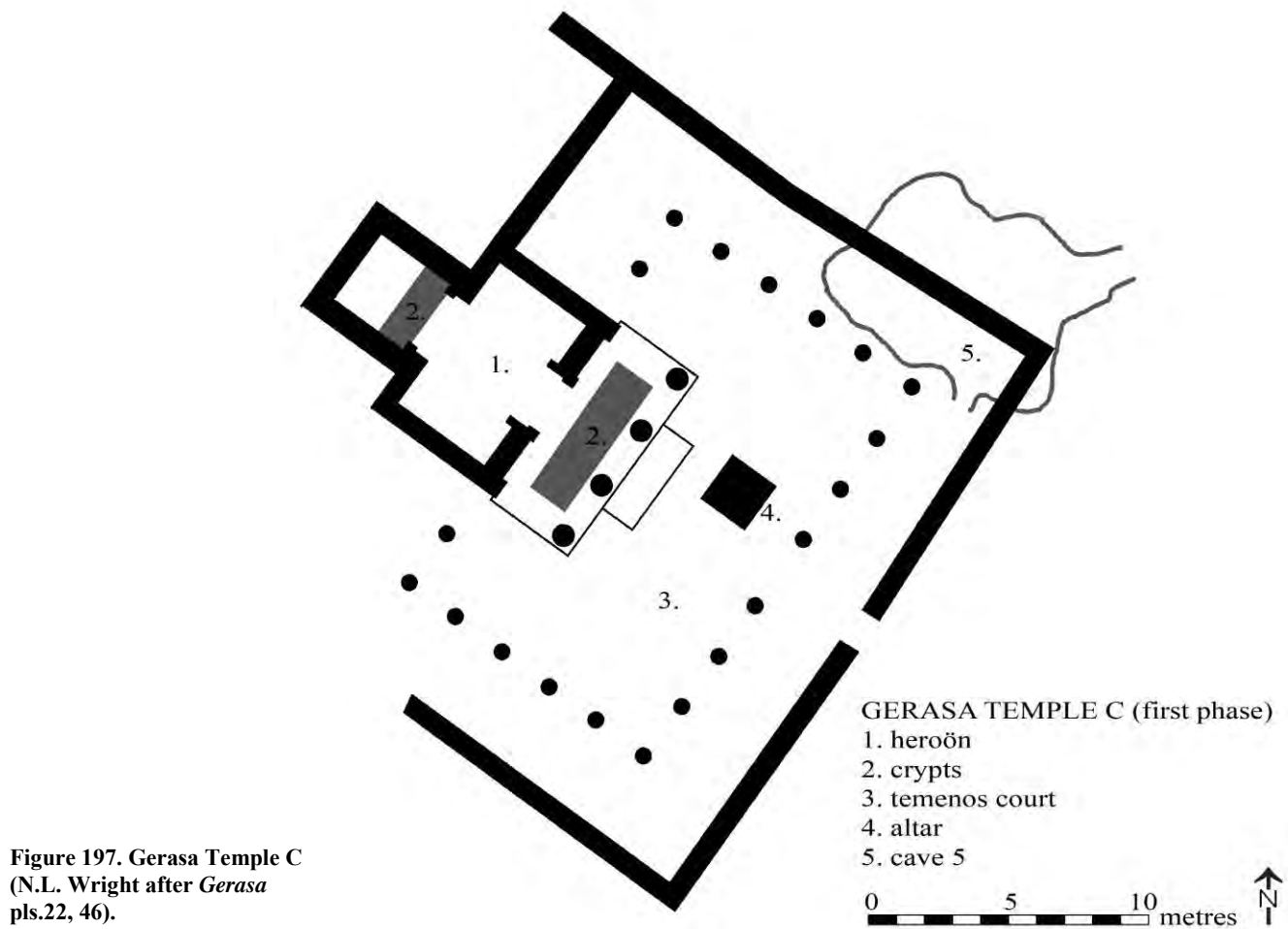


Figure 197. Gerasa Temple C  
(N.L. Wright after *Gerasa*  
pls.22, 46).

surrounds the source material that such an assertion is contentious. Direct royal Seleukid patronage for Gerasa's Zeus sanctuary should not be taken for granted.

### 5.5.2 TEMPLE C

With the Seleukid origins of the Gerasa Zeus sanctuary in question, it seems doubtful to secure a Seleukid date for any religious monument in the city. However, fragments of information provided by the structure known as Temple C can be used to suggest some form of Hellenistic religious activities (**fig.197**). Temple C is located immediately west of the church of St Theodore, south of the Artemis sanctuary. Temple C was built directly on bedrock in foundation cuts which show the same quarry marks as those underlying the upper terrain of the grottos, tombs and Zeus sanctuary. The area surrounding Temple C also

appears to have functioned as one of the necropoleis of Seleukid Gerasa.<sup>216</sup> The sanctuary is the smallest temple complex known at Gerasa, measuring 24 by 27 metres. The temple was constructed as an inverted T-shape, the pronoas (6.3 by 3.85 metres) being wider than the adyton (2.9 by 3.0 metres). Temple C was adorned with Ionic pilasters, but the tetrastyle prostyle portico employed Corinthian columns. The structure was built on a low podium, one metre above the paved temenos court. The temenos was defined by an Ionic peristyle colonnade which attached directly to the rear of the pronoas enclosing an area measuring 15.3 by 9.4 metres. A 1.6 metre square altar was situated in the centre of the paved court. The temple podium covered two subterranean crypts below the pronoas and adyton, the latter of which could be entered via a doorway in the north face of the podium.<sup>217</sup> Following the destruction of the temple superstructure in the third century AD, access to the adyton crypt was maintained with the construction of purpose-designed rooms situated immediately north of the podium – clearly the importance of the crypt’s contents outlived the sanctity of the temenos above.<sup>218</sup> A cave (Cave 5) was situated below the north-eastern corner of the sanctuary and could be entered directly from the temenos or from outside.<sup>219</sup>

Temple C has proved problematic to date, the sanctuary has produced a scattering of Hellenistic Rhodian stamped amphora handles, first century AD terra sigillata and coins ranging from the Seleukids and Hasmonaeans through to Constantine.<sup>220</sup> Cave 5 appears to have been used as a manufacturing site for the production of olive oil in the third century AD and was later used as a repository for material cleared out of the temple as waste, providing ceramic sherds datable from the first to the fourth centuries AD.<sup>221</sup> Kraeling proposes that Temple C should be dated to the mid-second century AD, contemporaneous with the neighbouring Artemis temple complex citing the stylistic date of a single Ionic pilaster capital as the principal evidence, supported by the use of the Corinthian capitals of

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<sup>216</sup> *Gerasa* 139; Ina Kehrberg *pers. comm.* Many caves were used for burials in the vicinity of Temple C, the Artemis temple and synagogue. The foundations of the second century AD west city wall, directly in line with Temple C incorporated a Late Hellenistic building; its stuccoed and painted plaster remains as well as contemporary pottery and burnt and butchered (sacrificial) bones made up the fill for the Roman foundation wall. Kehrberg interpretes the building as a naos or *heroön* from the Hellenistic necropolis; see Kehrberg and Manley 2003: 84-5.

<sup>217</sup> *Gerasa* 140-1.

<sup>218</sup> *Gerasa* 141-3.

<sup>219</sup> *Gerasa* 144-5.

<sup>220</sup> *Gerasa* 144.

<sup>221</sup> *Gerasa* 144-5.



Figure 198. The *heroön* at Pergamon (Boehringer 1937: fig.22).

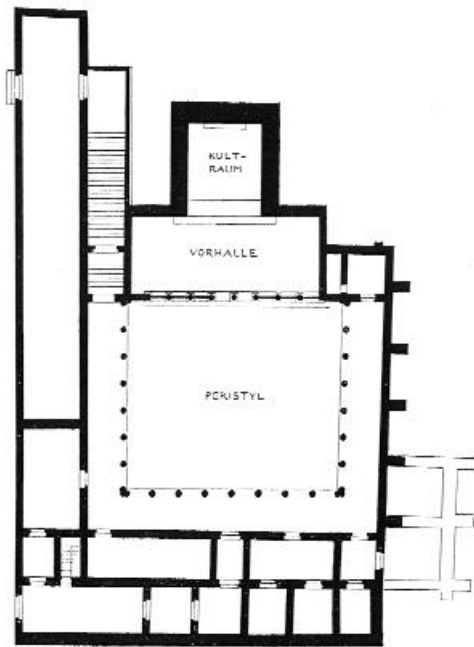
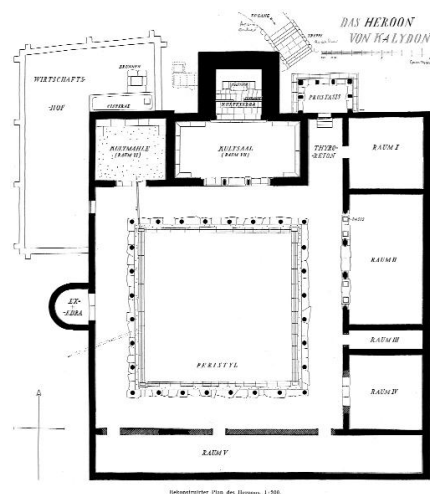


Figure 199. The *heroön* at Kalydon (Dyggve 1934: pl.5).



the portico.<sup>222</sup> Although stating that the Ionic capital was difficult to date “within even a century,” he dismissed the early dates provided by the coins, Rhodian amphorae and terra sigillata as representing “survivals” relating to the use of the area as a burial ground prior to the construction of Temple C.<sup>223</sup> Temple C’s inverted T shaped naos and attached temenos is reminiscent of the second century BC *heroön* of Attalos I and Eumenes II at Pergamon, a similar second century BC structure at Kalydon in Aitolia and the early third century BC (phase 1) *heroön* of Kineas from Aī Khanoum (figs.198-9).<sup>224</sup> Kraeling sees the crypt and inverted T-form as strong indications that the structure functioned as a *heroön* and views the use of the Hellenistic layout in the second century AD as evidence for the continued influence of Greek culture at Gerasa – the glorious Second Sophistic writ in stone.<sup>225</sup> His assertion is not wholly convincing and he admits that “any attribution of the structure must be tentative, and the more precise it is, the more difficult to uphold.”<sup>226</sup> Temple C was thickly covered with debris and not fully excavated.

Those areas that were uncovered showed that much of the temenos peristyle and paving had been robbed out for reuse elsewhere.<sup>227</sup>

Vincent proposed that Temple C might in fact represent a Nabataean temple dedicated to Dusares-Dionysos based on inscriptions found in the area of the church of St Theodore and perceived similarities with Nabataean temples at Ramm, Khirbet et-Tannūr

<sup>222</sup> Gerasa 145.

<sup>223</sup> Gerasa 146; Kraeling 1941: 9, 11.

<sup>224</sup> Dyggve *et al.* 1934: pl.5; Boehringer and Krauss 1937: 84 fig. 22; Bernard 1973: 85-111.

<sup>225</sup> Gerasa 148; Kraeling 1941: 11; Kampen 2003: 207-8.

<sup>226</sup> Kraeling 1941: 8-9.

<sup>227</sup> Gerasa 139.

and Petra.<sup>228</sup> Providing another alternative, Lichtenberger prefers to see Temple C as a sanctuary dedicated to “North Syrian Deities”, Atargatis and Hadad.<sup>229</sup> However, neither scholar’s view takes into consideration the clear *heroön* form of the temple, the Hellenistic and early Roman use of the surrounding landscape as a necropolis, nor the presence of the crypts below the pronaos and adyton.<sup>230</sup> Unlike the neighbouring Artemis sanctuary or the pagan temple-cum-cathedral complex, Temple C is not aligned with the second century AD Roman street plan. Nor does it front onto the *cardo*, but sits well to the west, behind the St Theodore complex. As demonstrated by Kraeling, a Roman temple underneath the cathedral was probably dedicated to the syncretised Dusares-Dionysos.<sup>231</sup> The inscriptions mentioning the Nabataean god found in St Theodore’s were probably from that vicinity originally, not brought there from Temple C. There is certainly good circumstantial evidence for placing a Dionysos sanctuary in the location later occupied by the Christian complex. Architectural elements of a Roman temple were incorporated into the fifth century cathedral which was superimposed above.<sup>232</sup> Additional spolia from a monumental Roman building was used in the construction of the stairs of St Theodore’s propylaia, including metope and triglyph blocks which probably date to the first centuries BC or AD. Yet more monumental architectural fragments including first century BC or AD capitals of the pseudo-Corinthian order like those discovered at the Zeus „naos hellénistique“ have recently been uncovered by Swiss excavators in the space between the church, the nymphaeum and the Artemis temple complex.<sup>233</sup> In the fourth century AD the fountain at the fountain court of the cathedral was said to flow with wine each year on the anniversary of the Gospel story of the wedding at Cana, a ritualised miracle which was probably Dionysiac in origin.<sup>234</sup> Lichtenberger’s suggestion that Temple C belonged to the Syrian Gods is wholly unsupported.

It seems that Temple C might be used to illustrate the principal of Occam’s razor; the complex – which looks like a *heroön*, is located where one might expect to find a *heroön* and is built over crypts in the tradition of *heroa* – was probably a *heroön*.

<sup>228</sup> Vincent 1939; id. 1940. The inscriptions in question are published in *Gerasa* 383-6 nos. 17-22.

<sup>229</sup> Lichtenberger 2003: 238-41; id. 2008: 144.

<sup>230</sup> Kraeling 1941: 9.

<sup>231</sup> Kraeling 1941: 8, 12-4. For a recent assessment of the relationship between Dionysos and Dusares, see Patrich 2005.

<sup>232</sup> *Gerasa* 20 n.39, 201, 222; Jäggi *et al.* 1997.

<sup>233</sup> Eristov and Seigne 2003: 273; Ina Kehrberg *pers. comm.*

<sup>234</sup> Epiphanius *Against the heresies* 51.30.1-2; *John* 2.1-11; Kraeling 1941: 12-3.

Kraeling's dating however, appears too forced. Why construct a *heroön* over a necropolis at the very date of the necropolis' closure and redevelopment? Given Kraeling's inability to date the Ionic components of the structure and the proven early use of the Corinthian order at Gerasa (as at the first century BC „maos hellénistique“),<sup>235</sup> there is no real reason to date Temple C as late as the mid-second century AD. What is more, even if some architectural elements could be firmly dated to a later period, that is not to say that they must have been part of the original structure.<sup>236</sup> Temple C's orientation and placement puts it at odds with a date after the establishment of the Roman road plan in the late first-early second centuries of our era. The foundation cuts, architectural plan, ceramics and coins all point towards a date in the second or first centuries BC. There is every reason to posit that Temple C may represent the earliest known built religious structure at Gerasa. Without further excavation, such a suggestion must remain conjectural but the possibility should be raised that Temple C was a second century BC *heroön* dedicated to the settlement's (Seleukid?) *oikist* in the Greek tradition as illustrated by the *heroön* of Kineas at Aï Khanoum.<sup>237</sup>

### 5.5.3 THE LAGYNOPHORIA

Although structural evidence for Seleukid period cultic activity at Gerasa is hard to determine, it would appear that the population partook in the *Lagynophoria*, a festival established by the Ptolemaic court in the third century BC. The festival honoured Dionysos and involved a gathering of the population from all social classes. Each participant reclined on a rush mat and ate food provided for them by the festival organiser. However, each individual brought their own wine which they drank straight from their lagynos or wine flask.<sup>238</sup> The lagynos was a narrow-necked carinated table jug apparently developed at Alexandria-by-Egypt in the early third century BC. It is most commonly found in those areas under direct Ptolemaic control: Alexandria itself, the Aegean, Cyprus, south-west Anatolia and the Levant, especially in the south.<sup>239</sup> However, lagynoi are conspicuously

<sup>235</sup> Eristov and Seigne 2003: 273.

<sup>236</sup> *Gerasa* 140.

<sup>237</sup> Graham 1964: 29.

<sup>238</sup> Athenaeus *Banquet of the Learned* 7.276a-c; Fraser 1972: 1.203-4, 2.334 n.112; Berlin (1997: 42-3) dates the foundation of the *Lagynophoria* to the reign of Ptolemy II, 284-246 BC, although Rotroff (2006: 83) is in favour of a date later in the century.

<sup>239</sup> For a sample of Levantine with lagynoi see: Antioch (Waagé 1948: nos.17-23); Jebel Khalid (Clarke 2005: 183); Umm el-Amed (Dunand and Duru 1962: 203-8); Tel Anafa, identified as both Aegean or Cypriot imports and also as locally made imitations (Berlin 1997: 22-3, 42-7); Gerasa, identified both Cypriot imports and local imitations (Kehrberg 2004: 195; id. 2006: 304); Pella (McNicol et al. 1992: 116); Philadelphia-

absent from Judaeian sites, even during the period of Ptolemaic rule. This distribution pattern is believed to derive from the more-or-less exclusive use of the lagynos in conjunction with the *Lagynophoria* as a religious festival linked to Dionysos and the Ptolemaic dynasty. The absence from (monotheistic) Jewish contexts is therefore understandable.<sup>240</sup>



Figure 200. Ceramic bull vase from the Hellenistic tomb, Gerasa (courtesy Ina Kehrberg).

The relatively low expense required to obtain a lagynos – especially following the production of regional imitations of the Alexandreian originals – meant that an individual's financial status need not prohibit participation in the *Lagynophoria*. Furthermore, the flexibility of the food provided meant that differing cultural dietary prohibitions could be easily accommodated within the otherwise „Greek“ festival. The festival could therefore “be practiced across cultural and socio-economic divides” which “probably encouraged its widespread occurrence.”<sup>241</sup> The mid-second century BC hypogean tomb excavated at Gerasa in 2001 provides explicit evidence for the practice of the *Lagynophoria* at Seleukid Gerasa. The tomb (as mentioned above) contained a single child burial with an intact assemblage of ceramic and glass toys, together with a strigil and an elaborate gold pectoral or wreath. Among the other ceramic items in the tomb were an Iranian influenced rhyton, a clepsydra, a zoomorphic vase in the shape of a bull and a lagynos (**figs.200-1**).<sup>242</sup> The bull vessel was painted with a *tainia* and decorated horns in imitation of a sacrificial victim. The model had been broken at the hind leg with the missing limb deposited outside the grave in the tomb's dromos.<sup>243</sup>

Kehrberg posits that the prevalence of funerary provenances for lagynoi suggests that *Lagynophoriae* may have taken place as part of a funerary banquet akin to the Phoenician MRZH or Hebrew *marzēah*.<sup>244</sup> Although nothing is mentioned in Athenaeus regarding a relationship between the *Lagynophoria* and burial, such a suggestion is

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Amman (Zayadine 1977-78: 27-9; Bennett 1979: 276) and Beersheba where a single example is known, identified as a possible Chian import (Coulson *et al.* 1997: no.7). Lagynoi have also been found at other major centres such as Athens, see Rotroff 2006: 82-4.

<sup>240</sup> Berlin 1997: 42-3.

<sup>241</sup> Kehrberg 2006: 302.

<sup>242</sup> Kehrberg and Manley 2002a; id. 2002b; id. 2002c; Kehrberg 2006.

<sup>243</sup> Kehrberg 2006: 300-301.

<sup>244</sup> Kehrberg 2004: 195; id. 2006: 300-1, 306.

**Figure 201.**  
Lagynos from  
the Hellenistic  
tomb, Gerasa  
(courtesy Ina  
Kehrberg).



certainly valid in light of the presence of lagynoi as grave goods,<sup>245</sup> the sacrificial practices at the Zeus sanctuary grottos with their nearby necropolis and the later banqueting hall construction directly above Hellenistic graves. The continued practice of a festival developed by the Ptolemies at Seleukid Gerasa is hardly surprising – especially so if the *Lagynophoria* was related to funerary practice. Until the Fifth Syrian War, Gerasa and all of its neighbours were part of the Ptolemaic empire. As has been demonstrated numerous times above, the disputes between

the Seleukid dynasty and their Ptolemaic cousins were political and did not carry a cultural or religious bias. Egyptian cults and culture continued to influence religious life in Seleukid Syria at every level, from the iconography of royal coin types to private dedications.<sup>246</sup>

#### 5.5.4 BIRKETAYN

Twelve hundred metres north of Roman Gerasa's north gate lay a natural spring which is known today as Birketayn, the two pools, on account of the remains of its Roman period structures (**figs.202-3**). The ruins at the spring were examined in 1931 by the Anglo-American team at which time it was determined that Birketayn was to Gerasa/Antioch-on-the-Chrysorhoas as Daphne was to Antioch-on-the-Orontes, a "semi-sacred pleasure ground watered by abundant springs."<sup>247</sup> Nineteenth century European travellers considered the location idyllic. Burckhardt described "the remains of a large reservoir for water, with some ruined buildings near it. This is a most romantic spot; large oak and walnut trees overshadow the stream, which higher up flows over a rocky bed ..."<sup>248</sup> As with many cult places located by springs such as Daphne or the Panion, it was the natural beauty as well as the abundant fertility which drew worshippers to the site.

The two pools from which Birketayn gets its modern name are contiguous, aligned north-south, and built of evenly worked limestone ashlar. The pools are 43.5 metres wide. The larger, northern pool is 67.7 metres long. At its southern end a 2.8 metre thick wall

<sup>245</sup> Kehrberg 2006: 306.

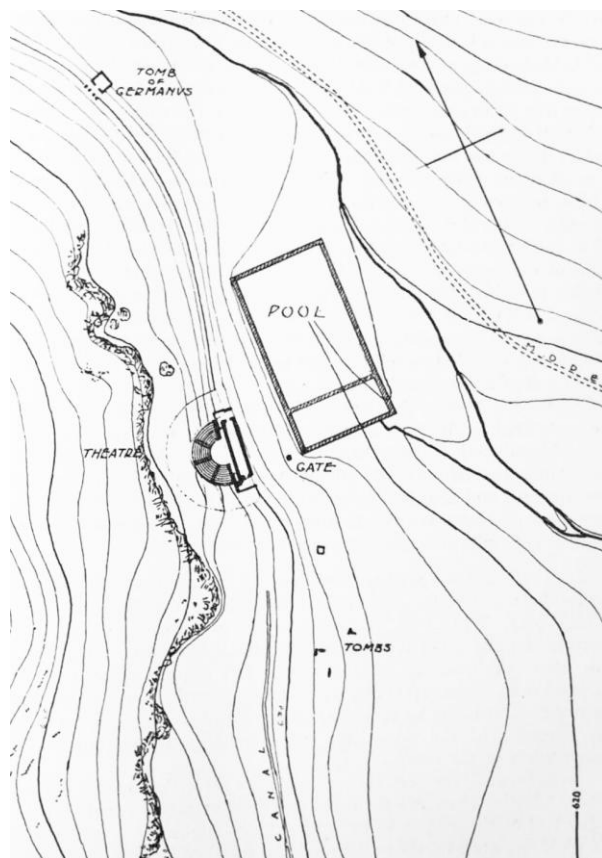
<sup>246</sup> See for example the private worship of Isis at Laodikeia-by-the-Sea (Sosin 2005) or the propylaia statue dedications at Umm el-Amed (Dunand and Duru 1962: 48, 156-7).

<sup>247</sup> *Gerasa* 8, 159.

<sup>248</sup> Burckhardt 1822: 265.

divides it from the southern pool with extends a further 18 metres. Both pools are three metres deep. The dividing wall is somewhat lower than the sides of the pool and in 1931 was noted as being submerged below the waterline. The natural spring fed directly into the southern pool and the dividing wall was fitted with sluice gates to control the level of water which flowed into the northern basin. That the pools were flooded and the wall submerged at the time of the Anglo-American investigations was presumably due to centuries of negligent water regulation.<sup>249</sup>

There is little to indicate the construction date of the pools themselves but a portico



**Figure 202.**  
**Birketayn**  
**(Gerasa 161**  
**fig.2).**

that surrounded the pools was erected in the period AD 209-211.<sup>250</sup> Some time later, perhaps in the third or early fourth century, the colonnaded pool was joined by the so-called „festival theatre“ which was associated with the festival of *Maïouma*.<sup>251</sup> Somewhere in the vicinity of Birketayn was a shrine or temple of Zeus Epikarpios („fruit-bringing“ Zeus as at Baitokaike), in whom we may recognise a Semitic fertility god such as Hadad-Baʿal Šamīn. Only an inscribed lintel is known from the building and there is no indication where the structure would have stood. The lintel was found near the mid-second century AD tomb of Germanus situated just to the north of the pools and theatre. The inscription indicates that the shrine was refounded by an auxiliary centurion returning from service abroad, which suggests a second century AD date.<sup>252</sup> There can be no date ascribed to the temple’s original construction.

Two Hellenistic coins found at Birketayn are the only indication that the site was utilised during the Seleukid period. In fact the two Hellenistic coins from Birketayn (a

<sup>249</sup> *Gerasa* 160-2; Richardson 2002: 90.

<sup>250</sup> *Gerasa* 58-9, 167, 428 no.153.

<sup>251</sup> *Gerasa* 55, 159, 162-6, 470-1 no.279; Segal 1995: 11; Sear 2006: 312.

<sup>252</sup> *Gerasa* 25, 393-4 inscription no.42; Richardson 2002: 90.

Figure 203.  
Birketayn  
(courtesy  
APAAME).



Tyrian bronze of Ptolemy II and a Sidonian bronze of Antiochos VII) were the two earliest coins recovered anywhere at Gerasa during the Anglo-American excavations.<sup>253</sup> Given the long circulation of bronze coins in Koile-Syria<sup>254</sup> a claim that there

was activity at Birketayn during the reign of Ptolemy II (283-246 BC) would be unjustified. However, the continued circulation of coinage after comprehensive regime changes – for example, Ptolemaic to Seleukid or Seleukid to Hasmonaeen/Roman – can be considered unusual. Therefore it should be safe to suggest some manner of activity took place at Birketayn during the Seleukid period if not before. The nature of that activity is impossible to pin down but it was likely the prototype of the activities carried out at the same location under the Romans. The absence of known structures dating to the Seleukid period should not prohibit us from assuming the cultic importance of the natural site. The Roman structures at Birketayn were provided as facilities for the *Maiouma*. The Semitic water festival proved especially popular (or at least notorious) in late antiquity and may have originated at the synonymous port-town located three kilometres north of Gaza.<sup>255</sup> However, this assertion has recently been contested with numerous locations across the Levant identified with the same or related names.<sup>256</sup> The term *maiouma* was derived from Semitic roots which at their most basic relate the festival to the concepts of water and rejoicing.<sup>257</sup> However, due to the moralising nature of several literary works which mention the *Maiouma*, it has come to be viewed as “an erotic and esoteric cult” although admittedly “not very well known”.<sup>258</sup>

<sup>253</sup> *Gerasa* 30, 167, 500; Cohen 2006: 248.

<sup>254</sup> See for example Wright (2010) where a hoard with a burial date after 72 BC contained bronzes dating back to the third century BC.

<sup>255</sup> Avi Yonah 1954: 41; Cumont 1911 110, no.16; Bowersock *et al.* 1999: 553.

<sup>256</sup> Belayche 2004: 14-6.

<sup>257</sup> Belayche 2004: 19.

<sup>258</sup> Richardson 2002: 90.

The celebration of the festival can be certified at seven locations around the Mediterranean, heavily concentrated in the eastern Roman provinces; Constantinople in Thrace, Nikaia and Aphrodisias in Anatolia, Antioch, Tyre and Gerasa-Birketayn in the Levant, but also at Ostia in Italy. It was a triennial, nocturnal festival held in Spring during the Greco-Macedonian month of Artemisios (May) and supposedly incorporated the mysteries of Aphrodite and Dionysos.<sup>259</sup> John Chrysostom derides a practice, often presumed to be the *Maiouma*, which saw the populace gather at a theatre in order to watch women bathing naked in public.<sup>260</sup> According to another late account, the *Maiouma* celebrated at Ostia saw the leading men of Rome descend on the port-city in order to spend a debauched month throwing each other into the sea.<sup>261</sup> Christianised Roman emperors fluctuated in their stance on the festival, ultimately banning it on account of its shameful license.<sup>262</sup> The true details of the festival are hazardous to reconstruct due to the nature of the historical sources which are predominantly Byzantine in date and thus disconnected from the festival both chronologically and culturally. Indeed, it may even be the case that later authors used the designation „*Maiouma*“ indiscriminately to describe multiple, different, festivals.<sup>263</sup> That the festival was a well structured part of civic life in the Roman East is attested archaeologically. An inscription associated with a large shallow pool at Aphrodisias honours the *Maioumarch*, an official responsible for the festival at the city.<sup>264</sup>

As indicated by its name, the presence of water appears to have been the key feature necessitated by the festival of *Maiouma*. At Ostia the water seems to have been provided in the form of the Tyrrhenian Sea, at inland sites such as Aphrodisias and Birketayn, the rites were conducted by an artificial pool. Brought back to its basic form, a joyful ceremony conducted adjacent to or in a body of water, it is possible to view the Roman period *Maiouma* as a development of the earlier purification ceremonies discussed in Chapter 4.5.1.3 in relation to Hierapolis-Bambyke and known from other centres such as Askalon or at the Aborrhas and Kanathos rivers. At Hierapolis at least, the sacred pool was used for both the ritual cleansing of the cult statues and also religious bathing or swimming.<sup>265</sup> The public bathing undertaken during the Roman period *Maiouma* can be seen as an extension

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<sup>259</sup> Malalas *Chronicle* 12.284-5; Belayche 2004: 16-7.

<sup>260</sup> John Chrysostom *Homily on Matthew* 7.7.

<sup>261</sup> John Lydus *On the Months* 4.80.

<sup>262</sup> Belayche 2004: 18.

<sup>263</sup> Belayche 2004: 15.

<sup>264</sup> Roueché 1993: 188-9 no.65.

<sup>265</sup> Lucian *The Syrian Goddess* 46.



of the divine rites. Just as the deity must be ritually purified in order to perpetuate the cycle of the seasons, so the *Maiouma* provided a publicly sanctioned venue whereby individuals could be ritually cleansed, whether in preparation for marriage, or to remove the metaphoric stain of some kind of impurity. The origin of the *Maiouma* is uncertain, but claims of lewd spectacles including nocturnal gatherings, public bathing and generally licentious behaviour are tainted by the biased nature of the historical sources.

## 5.6 TEL BEERSHEBA

The tel site nine kilometres outside of modern Beersheba was excavated between 1969 and 1976 by the Institute of Archaeology at Tel Aviv University. It is apparent that the tel was occupied continuously from the thirteenth century BC until its sack and abandonment in the late Iron Age.<sup>266</sup> Thereafter occupation was limited until the third-second centuries BC when a substantial fortress was established on the artificial hill. The fortress continued in use throughout the late Hellenistic period and into the Herodian and Roman periods before being replaced by a Roman *castellum* in the second century AD.<sup>267</sup> The name of Tel Beersheba during the Hellenistic period is unknown, but it appears as Berosaba in records dating to the Romano-Byzantine period.<sup>268</sup> Thirty-nine stamped amphora handles have been recovered from the site. All can be dated to Grace's Rhodian export periods II-V (c.240-c.108 BC) with eighteen belonging to the last period (c.146-c.108 BC). None of the handles were found in securely dated contexts but they do reveal the vitality of Beersheba in the Hellenistic period, especially in the later second century BC.<sup>269</sup>

Beersheba was considered one of the most important religious centres of Judaism from the time of the Patriarchs until the eighth or seventh centuries BC.<sup>270</sup> There is no

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<sup>266</sup> Derfler (1993: 10-1) prefers to date the destruction of the city to the 701 BC campaign of Sennacherib. However, see Yadin (1976: 5-7) and Herzog *et al.* (1977: 49-52) for the debate regarding the chronology of Iron Age Beersheba.

<sup>267</sup> Achaemenid period occupation appears to have been limited to temporary "Tax collection centres" although Derfler dates the construction of the temple complex to the last quarter of the fourth century BC, he does not provide any datable evidence earlier than the second quarter of the second century BC, see Derfler 1993: 52-3.

<sup>268</sup> Derfler 1993: 10 n.4.

<sup>269</sup> Grace 1985: 42-3; Coulson *et al.* 1997: 47-8. The lack of secure contexts may have as much to do with the excavators' diligence with the Hellenistic layers at Beersheba, as with the specific post-depositional history of the site, see Derfler 1993: 9, 11.

<sup>270</sup> *Genesis* 21.31-3, 26.23-6, 41.1-5; *Judges* 20.1; *I Samuel* 8.2; *I Kings* 5.5; *II Kings* 23.8; *I Chronicles* 21.2; *Amos* 5.5, 8.14, Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 6.32.

# TEL BEERSHEBA TEMPLE (phase 1)

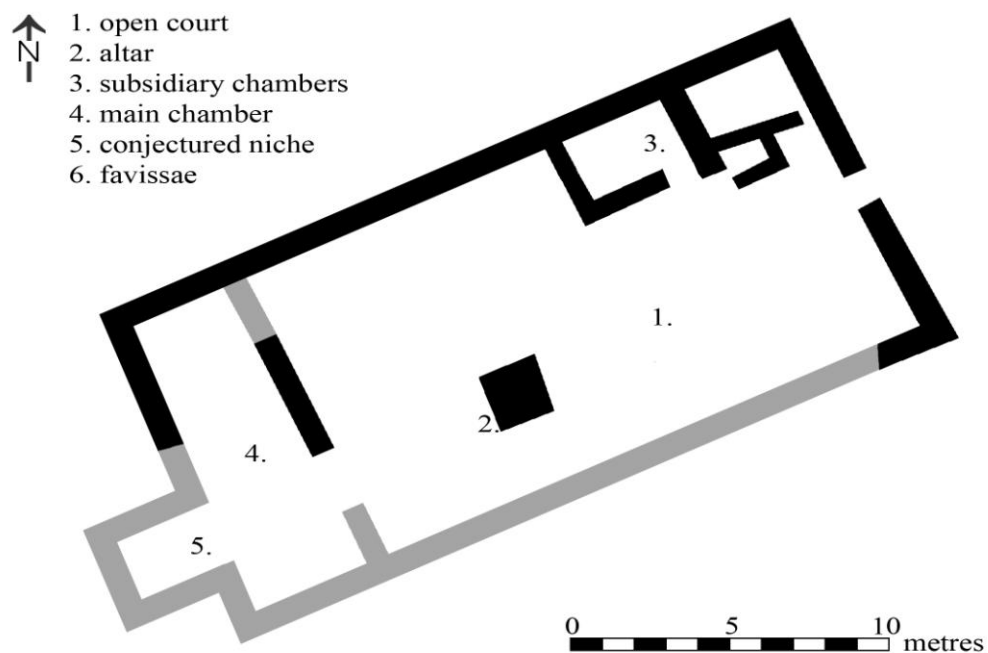


Figure 204. Hellenistic temple at Tel Beersheba, phase 1 (N.L. Wright after Derfler 1993: 193).

# TEL BEERSHEBA TEMPLE (phase 2)

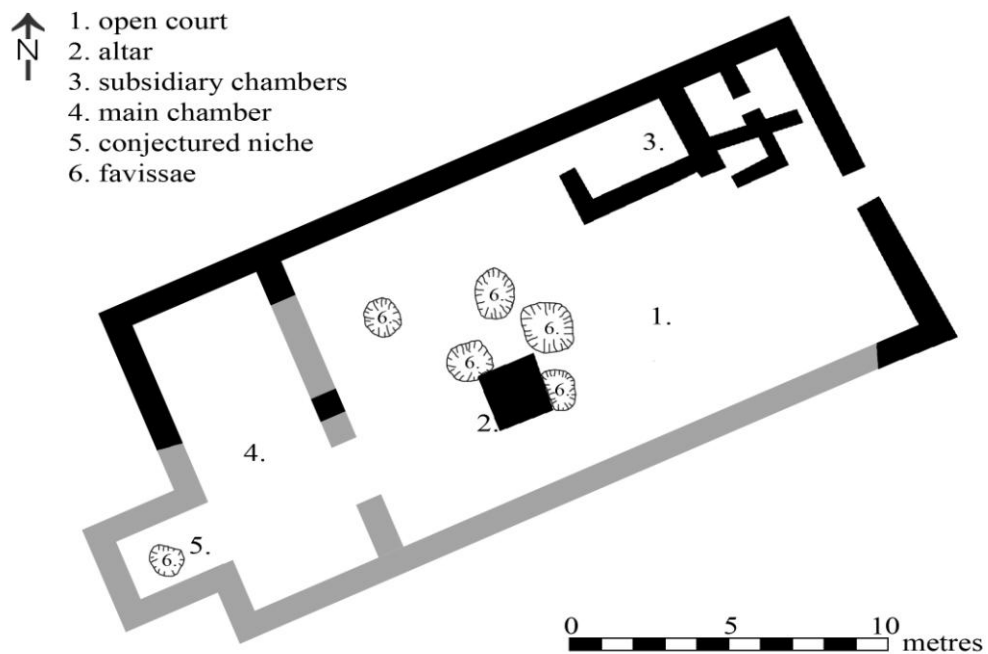
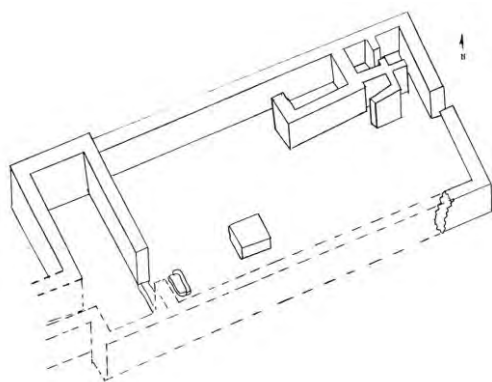


Figure 205. Hellenistic temple at Tel Beersheba, phase 2 (N.L. Wright after Derfler 1993: 193).

**Figure 206.**  
Reconstruction of  
the Hellenistic  
temple at Tel  
Beersheba, phase 2  
(Derfler 1993: 203).



material evidence for occupation on Tel Beersheba in the Bronze Age or earlier, but an Iron Age *bāmâ* has been identified within the walls of the fortified tel<sup>271</sup> which appears to have been thrown down around the late eighth or seventh century in line with the Hezekian/Josiah religious reforms.<sup>272</sup>

However, it came as a surprise to the

excavators when they unearthed the remains of a Hellenistic period temple complex during the 1971, 1972 and 1974 seasons. Of the 39 Hellenistic stamped handles found at Tel Beersheba, 19 were recovered from the temple excavations verifying the complex's importance within the Hellenistic settlement.<sup>273</sup>

The temple complex consisted of a walled court aligned north-east to south-west (figs.204-6). The principal roofed chamber was built across its south-western end, while two subsidiary chambers and an appended „alcove“ were built into the northern corner. The entire superstructure of the complex was constructed of unfired mud bricks built on foundations of unworked fieldstones. The foundations of the eastern corner of the complex incorporated the standing elements of an eighth century structure which previously occupied the site but was ruinous by the time of the Hellenistic complex's construction.<sup>274</sup> The alignment of the temple complex, 50 degrees north of due east, was apparently oriented towards the rising sun on the summer solstice. The suggestion that the focus of the temple may have been a solar cult is certainly worthy of consideration – contrary to the presumption of the excavators there is no need to assume that the Hellenistic temple should have conformed strictly to stipulations laid down in the Old Testament.<sup>275</sup> Beersheba was the southern limit of Israelite settlement in the Iron Age. Following the sack and abandonment of the city it no longer existed as a Jewish settlement and there is every reason to suspect that the Hellenistic population were Idumaeans rather than Judaeans. Idumaeans certainly occupied neighbouring Adora and Marisa (both situated north of

<sup>271</sup> The site of the *bāmâ* is disputed, see Yadin 1976: 7-14; Herzog *et al.* 1977: 53-8; Fried 2002: 448.

<sup>272</sup> Herzog *et al.* (1977: 57) and Derfler (1993: 14-5) use II *Kings* 18.22 to support their date of 722 BC, the reign of Hezekiah, for the destruction of the Beersheba *bāmâ*. However, Yadin (1976) argues that the *bāmâ* was specifically said to have been pulled down in the following century by Josiah (II *Kings* 23.8).

<sup>273</sup> Coulson *et al.* 1997: 47-8.

<sup>274</sup> Derfler 1993: 40-1.

<sup>275</sup> I *Kings* 6.1-13; Derfler 1993: 59-60, 169.

Beersheba) and remained aloof from Jewish customs and beliefs until the forced conversions of the late second century BC.<sup>276</sup> Architecturally speaking, there is no evidence for Hellenic influence in either building style or form at Hellenistic Tel Beersheba. The layout conforms wholly to the vernacular traditions.<sup>277</sup>

Two distinct building phases were identified in the Hellenistic period structure, chiefly distinguished by an apparent alteration in the site's cultic practices. This is considered to be reflective of a fundamental change in religious beliefs and traditions from Hellenistic syncretism to Judaism.<sup>278</sup> The change can be dated to the last quarter of the second century BC.<sup>279</sup> The period following the death of Antiochos VII Sidetes (129 BC) saw the Hasmonaean priest-king John Hyrkanos I free himself from Seleukid domination and assert his authority in Judaea and the adjoining territories. There are no references to Beersheba in the literary accounts of the campaigns of Hyrkanos although Derfler has argued that this is due to biases in the sources, not wishing to attribute a „pious“ act – the destruction of a pagan temple and the creation of a Jewish centre of worship – to a „bad“ king.<sup>280</sup> The insignificance of the Tel Beersheba fort and its temple during the Hellenistic period is probably just as likely the cause for its omission from the literary record.

The largest area of the temple complex was the un-roofed court measuring 18.4 by 10.1 metres.<sup>281</sup> The court contained a number of ovens along the northern wall belonging to both the first and the second phases. A noteworthy ashy deposit near one oven included pig bones. This is used by Derfler to prove the “pagan” nature of the worship at Tel Beersheba during phase one.<sup>282</sup> The presence of pig bones certainly suggests a Hellenised presence, even if it does not dismiss the possibility that the population were Semitic.<sup>283</sup> Derfler is probably correct to suggest that the ovens were used by the temple attendants to prepare for

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<sup>276</sup> Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.257-8, 15.253-5; Strabo *Geography* 16.2.34; Cohen 1990: 211-16.

<sup>277</sup> Herzog *et al.* 1977: 53.

<sup>278</sup> Derfler 1993: 3, 57.

<sup>279</sup> Three Tyrian tetradrachms (attributed to Gaza by Derfler) belonging to the second reign of Demetrios II were found mixed into the mortar of the second phase rebuilt cross-wall of the main chamber as something of a foundation deposit. They are dated either all to the period 129-8 BC or else to 128, 127 and 126 BC respectively, see Derfler 1993: 55 (dating the coins 129-8 BC) or 33, 148-151 no.119 (dating the coins 128-6 BC). The published images are not clear enough to allow the dates to be checked.

<sup>280</sup> For a discussion of the major episodes of John Hyrkanos I's reign, see Derfler 1993: 17-33.

<sup>281</sup> Derfler 1993: 39, 50.

<sup>282</sup> Derfler 1993: 44.

<sup>283</sup> Remains of pigs have been found in the Hellenised Phoenician deposits at Tel Anafa (Herbert 1994: 16-8; Redding 1994: 290-2; Berlin 1997: 23-9) and at the lower sanctuary at Ituraean Har Senaim (Dar 1993: 84). See also Appendix E.

ritual meals.<sup>284</sup> A large square altar was situated at the south-western end of the court, aligned with the entrance of the south-western chamber. Derfler dates the construction of the altar to the second phase of the temple complex although he claims that it was sunk through the second phase court surface to sit directly on the first phase floor. His interpretation reads awkwardly and is not overly convincing. Without being able to discern the presence of a foundation cut through the second phase floor,<sup>285</sup> Derfler's description suggests that the altar actually belonged to the initial phase of the temple and that the phase two floor surface was built around it. The altar's remains were found to be covered with a great amount of charcoal and a partial animal skeleton indicating that it was utilised in the second phase. Presumably this use in the second phase is what prompted the excavators to date the altar only to the second temple – the reuse of a pagan altar in a newly sanctified Jewish sacred space was considered by them to be inconceivable.<sup>286</sup>

The north-western subsidiary chamber measured 3.7 by 2.5 metres and was entered via a doorway marked by a large flint threshold discovered in its eastern corner. During the complex's first phase the chamber was equipped with a bench or platform built of stone in the western corner and an oven in the centre of the room. During phase two the chamber's entrance was moved to the western corner and a crude semi-circular bin-feature was constructed across the old doorway. Neither the stone bench-platform, nor the oven were reused in the second phase.<sup>287</sup> The north-eastern subsidiary chamber originally measured 3.5 by 2.05 metres and was entered through the western corner of the room. Unlike its western counterpart, there were no built features within the room. In the second phase the north-eastern chamber was subdivided by a rough fieldstone wall 1.6 metres from its eastern end. The excavators noted a relative lack of finds, ceramic or otherwise, from this context. Only two complete ceramic vessels were recovered, a juglet and a small bowl, both dateable to the second century BC.<sup>288</sup> The so-called alcove was formed by an L-shaped wall which extended out from the wall of the north-eastern chamber, projecting into the court. It appears to have been used only in the first phase and was thereafter abandoned. Derfler posits that the subdivision in the north-eastern chamber may have created a new space which fulfilled the same purpose as the alcove and caused the latter to be abandoned. The

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<sup>284</sup> Derfler 1993: 62.

<sup>285</sup> The few section drawings in the excavation report do not include the altar area, see Derfler 1993: 197-202.

<sup>286</sup> Derfler 1993: 44-5, 50, 55, 173.

<sup>287</sup> Derfler 1993: 46-7.

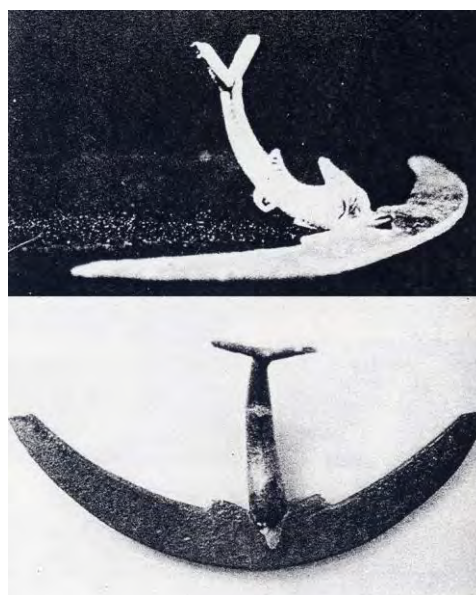
<sup>288</sup> Derfler 1993: 48-9.

same subdivision is used as evidence that the subsidiary chambers and alcove were storage magazines and service rooms for the temple's needs.<sup>289</sup> This interpretation appears to be sound.

The main south-western chamber was only preserved in its northern half, the remainder being destroyed by subsequent activity on the site. The original dimensions appear to have been 4.25 by 11.8 metres. The room was entered from the court via three steps up to an entrance in the north-eastern wall. The floor of the chamber was raised 0.95

metres above the external walking surface. There were no distinguishing features found within the chamber but the entire north-east wall was rebuilt as part of the phase two conversion.<sup>290</sup> A favissa, a ritual pit-deposit, uncovered to the south-west of the temple complex but directly aligned with the chamber's entrance and the stone altar suggests that the south-western corner of the main chamber may have been provided with a niche which originally projected south-west over the location of the favissa. The south-western chamber might then be considered the „naos“ of the complex, the niche within which the favissa was dug could be considered the „adyton“.<sup>291</sup>

Five other favissae were found within the court, clustered around the phase two altar base. These were clearly associated with the period of rebuilding between the two occupation phases and were capped by the phase two wadi-stone surface of the court. The alignment of the south-western favissa with the door of the south-western chamber and the altar, together with the fact that while other favissae clustered around the altar but respected it – none appear to have undercut the stone foundations – adds further



**Figure 207.**  
Bronze  
dolphin from  
Tel Beersheba  
(Derfler 1993:  
pl.14).



**Figure 208.**  
Egyptianised  
ivory figure  
from Tel  
Beersheba  
(Derfler 1993:  
pl.23.1).

<sup>289</sup> Derfler 1993: 47-8, 61.

<sup>290</sup> Derfler 1993: 49-51.

<sup>291</sup> Derfler (1993: 59-63) uses the Hebrew *Hekal*, the holy place, and *Devir*, the holy of holies, to much the same effect.

weight to the suggestion that the altar was an original feature of the temple complex, not a phase two addition. All favissae contained small finds which have been associated by the excavators with a Hellenistic cult combining elements of Egyptian, Mesopotamian and Hellenic origins. Further pits contained “unusual occupation debris”, deposits of bones (including pig), abundant ash and over 100 snail shells.<sup>292</sup> One favissa included a coin attributed to John Hyrkanos I, dating to the period following Hasmonaean independence (129 BC). The coin was considered too heavily corroded to provide any further corroborative dating.<sup>293</sup>

Derfler has published a full listing of the small finds of the Beersheba temple complex, but it is worthwhile listing those with a direct cultic association here, if only to demonstrate the truly varied religious influences which effected the cult in the southern Levant.<sup>294</sup> The cultic objects from phase one are provided below together with Derfler’s catalogue number in parentheses:

- A miniature Egyptian bronze crown (8);
- A bronze statuette of the Egyptian goddess Neith (9);
- A bronze figurine of a bull identified with Sarapis (10);
- A bronze figurine of a bird with a woman’s head identified as an Egyptian Ba (11);
- A bronze dolphin figurine associated by Derfler with the Nabataean deity Delphinos (12). Note that Derfler’s “wings” lack any indication of feathers and appear instead to be a large crescent moon which suggests that an association with Atargatis might be more accurate (**fig.207**);<sup>295</sup>
- An iron incense shovel (14);
- An ivory figurine of a naked female in an Egyptianised style (49) (**fig.208**);
- A faience amulet representing the Egyptian god Horus in the form of a falcon (53);
- A fragmentary faience figure with what appear to be lion’s feet (56);
- A faience spouted bowl decorated with three lion figures and a frog around the rim (57);

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<sup>292</sup> Derfler 1993: 36, 51-2.

<sup>293</sup> Derfler 1993: 56.

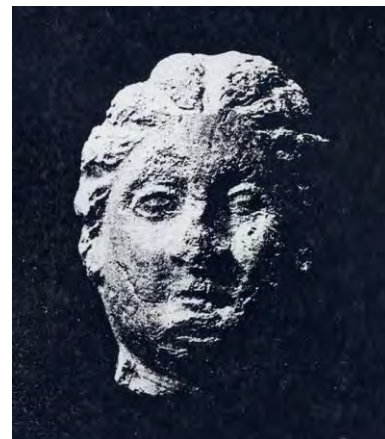
<sup>294</sup> Derfler 1993: 67-166. Unfortunately the plates, some of which are reproduced here, do not provide high quality images to supplement the limited descriptions.

<sup>295</sup> Glueck 1965: 31-60.

- Seven stone incense altars including one decorated with a monkey or baboon (76-82);
- A ceramic votive in the shape of a miniature storage jar (104);
- A ceramic bust of a Tanagra-style Greek veiled female (107) (**fig.209**);
- A ceramic bust of a bearded male with stylised hair (108). The style of the bust is reminiscent of the Jebel Khalid limestone head and the later Parthianised statuary from Hatra in Mesopotamia and Masjid-i Soleiman in Susania.<sup>296</sup> It probably represents a vernacular stylistic tradition, inspired by Hellenic contact but not in itself highly Hellenised (**fig.210**);
- A ceramic Tanagra-style statuette representing two female Greek deities, probably Demeter and Persephone (**fig.211**) (109).



**Figure 209.**  
Tanagra style  
female bust  
from Tel  
Beersheba  
(Derfler 1993:  
pl.43.1).



**Figure 210.**  
Ceramic male  
head from Tel  
Beersheba  
(Derfler 1993:  
pl.43.2).

With regard to the cultic objects, it would seem that throughout the second century BC, Egyptian traditions had the strongest influence on the religious beliefs and practices at Beersheba. This is not surprising given the general Egyptianisation seen in Koile-Syrian cult under the Seleukids, especially at a site so close to the Egyptian border. Indigenous traditions are evidenced by the dolphin pendant and male ceramic bust and the scarcest Hellenisation is visible in the Tanagra-style figurines. Phase two was distinct on account of its relative lack of small finds and the complete absence of any artefacts which could be attributed to religious practice, the “objects ascribed to this phase are utilitarian and rather austere, seemingly in line with the nature of Judean cults as reestablished by Hyrcanus.”<sup>297</sup> It is only the immediate reoccupation of the cultic complex and the ongoing use of the altar which confirm that religious practices continued after the reforms of c.125 BC although the nature of the practices had necessarily changed.

<sup>296</sup> Homes-Fredericq 1963; Ghirshman 1976: 93-4, pls. 70-1.

<sup>297</sup> Derfler 1993: 68.





Figure 211.  
Ceramic  
goddesses from  
Tel Beersheba  
(Derfler 1993:  
fig.14.1).

The stray ceramic vessel sherds unearthed during the excavation were not recorded and therefore the assemblage of vessels from Hellenistic Beersheba must be seen as incomplete. Excluding the stamped amphora handles, only 12 complete or restorable vessels are reported by Derfler.<sup>298</sup> Of these, five were imported terra sigillata (presumably Eastern Sigillata A), three fish plates and two bowls, while the remaining seven were locally produced plain wares, bowls, jugs and the miniature storage jar. All *in situ* vessels were found in phase one contexts. It is clear that even though the

architecture of the Beersheba temple complex was not informed by Greek styles, imported Greek ceramic shapes were highly represented in the recorded ceramics. By implication, this would suggest that Hellenised dining habits had been adopted by at least some of the priests and/or devotees at Beersheba.

Beersheba straddled the southernmost east-west road from the Jordan valley to the Mediterranean and it is this location on a major trading route which may have accelerated the sense of syncretism inherent in the Hellenistic world. Gods from Egypt, Syria and Greece – one struggles to find overt evidence for Derfler’s Mesopotamian influences – met and merged just as they did across the polytheistic Levant. Derfler states that the reconfiguration of the Beersheba temple in the late second century BC “clearly indicates that Hyrcanus” religious reforms were major deeds that he carried out early in his reign as a reaction to the threat of assimilation that he saw embodied in the Hellenization movement.”<sup>299</sup> Just how early in the reign of John Hyrkanos I the changes took place is debatable.

Derfler’s claim for an immediate Hasmonaean takeover and reconstruction after the death of Antiochos VII Sidetes is weakened by the inconsistency with which he dates the

<sup>298</sup> Derfler 1993: 134-40.

<sup>299</sup> Derfler 1993: 5.

Seleukid coins from the second phase foundation deposit.<sup>300</sup> Regardless, the changes appear to have been undertaken around the turn of the last quarter of the second century BC, within the reign of John Hyrkanos I. Clearly the pious lifetime actions carried out in Judaea by Antiochos (VII Sides) Eusebes and his concessional approach to coin iconography at Jerusalem did little to pacify the religious conservatives among the Jewish population whose passions were ignited by the Maccabean revolt and subsequent Hasmonaean expansion. It would appear that along with Adora and Marisa, the population at Beersheba underwent a sudden, probably forced, conversion to Judaism. The old votives and paraphernalia of the syncretic cult were gathered and buried in ritual pits within the temple complex before the sacred space was rededicated to the Jewish god Yahweh, thus effectively ending the legacy of Ptolemaic and Seleukid religious fusion at the site.

## **5.7 REFLECTIONS ON POPULAR CULT IN PHOENICIA AND KOILE-SYRIA**

In any study of popular religion under the Seleukids, it is hard to not to agree with the position of Hannestad and Potts: "... we can hardly escape the conclusion that there was no official programme of Hellenization of the religious sphere during Seleucid rule ... the Seleucid kings, like many later colonizers, encouraged traditionalism in the religious sphere."<sup>301</sup> As observed in Chapter 4, the lack of uniformity in Seleukid period religious structures is everywhere made apparent. In Phoenicia and Koile-Syria, even if the Seleukid kings had wished to impose a sense of uniformity of religious architecture and cultic practice, such a wish was hindered by erratic political control and strong non-Greek traditions.

The Hellenistic temple remains at Umm el-Amed provide a vivid reminder that the world which the Seleukidai sought to control was far older than the dynasty itself. The geographic parameters of Koile-Syria and Phoenicia meant that it has often formed an appendage to the Egyptian state, from the New Kingdom expansionism to the Pan-Arabic movements of the twentieth century. By the Hellenistic period, the local Phoenician cult was inexorably linked with Egyptian iconography and, no doubt, with Egyptianising beliefs. Egyptianisation was a constant feature in an otherwise changing world. The

<sup>300</sup> Derfler 1993: 54, for the inconsistencies see 33, 55, 148-151 no.119.

<sup>301</sup> Hannestad and Potts 1990: 123.

onomastic evidence from Umm el-Amed illustrates that under Ptolemaic control, a high proportion of Phoenician personal names included Egyptian theophoric elements. The extent of active Egyptianisation may have waned following the Fifth Syrian War and the generations born thereafter appear less likely to be named in honour of Egyptian gods.

However, to say that Egyptianisation waned in the second century BC is not to suggest that its cultural influence over the southern Levant disappeared completely, merely that adherence to Egyptian cults and the assimilation of Hellenised Egyptian culture was less likely to be pursued as a means to find favour with the ruling elite. The evidence from Tel Beersheba reinforces the picture of a pervasive Egyptian influence in the religious sphere, the majority of statuettes and amulets from the first phase testifying to the perpetuation of Egyptianisation in Idumaea even under Seleukid rule. This tenacity is also illustrated by the spread of the *Lagynophoria*. The cult which started as the state sponsored veneration of the Ptolemaic patron Dionysos spread to the limits of the Ptolemaic state and beyond. Lagynoi occur at sites across Syria but are concentrated in Phoenicia and Koile-Syria, the territories dominated by Ptolemaic Egypt for a century. The practice of the *Lagynophoria* at Seleukid Gerasa/Antioch-on-the-Chrysorhoas illustrates that the flexibility of the cult could outstrip its original meaning and be embraced generations after its purpose as a political tool had been removed.

The Seleukid appropriation of vernacular pre-Hellenistic cult seen in northern Syria is also visibly repeated in the southern Levant. This is perhaps highlighted by the ritual activity carried out at the cult centre of Damascus and the Zeus sanctuaries at Gadara and Gerasa and the sanctuary at Tel Beersheba. These sites clearly exhibit the direct adoption of pre-Hellenistic sacred space as a place of Seleukid period cult. In contrast, the Panion on Mount Hermon seemingly illustrates the imposition of a Hellenic cult upon the indigenous landscape with little evidence for syncretism. However, even at the Panion, the sacral nature of Mount Hermon and the source of the Jordan is evidenced by the neighbouring and contemporaneous indigenous cult sites at Tel Dan and Har Senaim. Given the tendency to provide supernatural residents for natural anomalies such as caves and springs, the lack of a pre-Hellenistic deity at the site of the Panion would be surprising.

At many sites across Koile-Syria it is possible to perceive that at the heart of Semitic cult was the view that natural phenomena were the earthly manifestation of a divine presence. Repeatedly we observe religious activity centred on unusual rock formations,

caves and artesian springs. Such locations were venerated before the Macedonian conquest and during the Seleukid period were accepted, adopted and appropriated by the colonial population. At all these sites, the dominance of Hadad-Ba'al Šamīn was paramount, thinly veiled in a Zeus-shaped suit. Atargatis too continued as a powerful presence in Koile-Syria, specifically at Damascus from where her influence emanated out to the surrounding areas. If the Seleukid period cult centres of Phoenicia and Koile-Syria were not totally Hellenised, it was because of the political instability which haunted the late Seleukid period, accentuated by the political and religious strength of the indigenous cultures. In Damascus it was ultimately the Seleukids themselves who were naturalised, embracing the local cult rather than enforcing their own.

## CONCLUSIONS

Cumont declared the Seleukid kingdom to be little known and the cultural processes which drove it unfathomable.<sup>1</sup> To an extent the Seleukids and their subjects remain enigmatic. Beyond anything else this research may have established, it has highlighted the enormous disparity between the “known knowns” and the “known unknowns” with regards to religion (and life in general) under Seleukid rule. No single written source provides unbiased or reliable documentation of Hellenistic Syrian religious life. No one site has produced material evidence that can provide an irrefutable narrative of cultic practice. The only known Syrian temple structures which can be qualified as specifically „Seleukid“ are those at Jebel Khalid, Umm el-Amed, Gadara and Tel Beersheba. The great cities of the Seleukid tetrapolis provide only limited clues and although the identification of the Seleukeia-Pieria temple as the Nikatoreion is likely, the excavators were not able to confirm whether the construction date should lie in the fourth-third or first centuries BC. Even at sites as extensively excavated as Gerasa, actual evidence for religious activities during the period of Seleukid domination is extremely scant. No coin, divorced from the cultural milieu in which it was produced, can speak to a modern audience with the same clarity that it held for the population for whom it was intended. However, even within the fog of historical enquiry, there is still room for optimism. By producing an integrated multidisciplinary approach to the Seleukids, this research has revealed insights which may help bring modern scholarship closer to understanding the complexities of life in the Hellenistic Near East.

This dissertation set out to provide an overview of religious beliefs and practices in Syria during the reign of the Seleukid kings. For the most part, I have attempted to dispense with the conventional Greek/non-Greek dichotomy used to discuss the Hellenistic world. Instead I have sought to view the subject of Seleukid religion from a more integrative, synthetic approach, combining archaeological and numismatic data with the historical record. Chapter 1 provided the political and cultural background on which the religious discussion of the following chapters was built. Chapters 2 and 3, dealt with religion from the perspective of the king and court and were dominated by the iconographic data provided through the numismatic record. Before the publication of Houghton, Lorber and Hoover’s *Seleucid coins*, any conclusions drawn from the corpus of Seleukid coinage were

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<sup>1</sup> Cumont 1911: 121.

compromised by the incomplete nature of the evidence. A patchwork of publications existed, dealing with individual rulers or mints, but nothing that provided a comprehensive account – ruler by ruler, mint by mint – of the Seleukid corpus. Armed with a complete numismatic data set, this dissertation has been able to provide new interpretations of the Seleukid iconographic program in light of when and where certain types were employed. Distinct patterns have emerged which show certain individuals or groups of individuals aligning themselves visually with different deities and with different sets of religious iconography. The numismatic evidence is particularly valuable for the investigation of settlements where the archaeological evidence has yet to be fully documented or where it has been destroyed or obscured by later activity. In this last respect, the discussion of Seleukid Damascus provides a case in point.

In Chapters 4 and 5, the dissertation surveyed the archaeological evidence for non-royal religious activity in Seleukid Syria. With the exception of the Charonion at Antioch, the nature of the published archaeological evidence meant that the discussion focused on data derived from public temples and shrines. As with the historical sources, the archaeological record has been shown to be incomplete and biased towards later, Roman levels of occupation. In addition, access to Hellenistic temple remains from major centres like Antioch or Damascus is impossible. So few Hellenistic temples have been excavated that the importance of remains that we do have (mostly from smaller, regional centres) is necessarily escalated out of proportion to the importance of the sites in antiquity. However, the evidence garnered from the more provincial temples still provides a broad overview of regional practices. The importance of Jebel Khalid, Umm el-Amed and Gadara are further accentuated in providing the only well published material relating to cult and cultic practice from Hellenistic Syria. The one constant at all sites was the lack of uniformity in temple or temenos design. The Seleukid rulers may have maintained a strict iconographic focus for the attention of their numismatic programs, but the regional populations worshipped in their own unique structures which drew upon a range of influences, both indigenous and imported.

Throughout this dissertation, each chapter has been provided with concluding reflections on the value of the material discussed and the patterns that may be seen in the data. Several broad observations remain to be made. Over the course of 250 years the Seleukids and their subjects remoulded their world, creating political, economic,

demographic, religious and cultural spaces that linked the familiar with the foreign. The processes of cultic assimilation at work in Seleukid Syria need not be seen as an exception to religious developments found elsewhere. Rather, within polytheistic societies syncretism should be seen as the norm – a mechanism to reconcile the meeting and competing of belief systems. Christianity (itself a result of the cultural and religious milieu of Hellenistic Syria) illustrates the development of the same processes. It continued to express a syncretic nature as it spread across western Europe, from the early adoption of traditional festivals for its own holy days to the advent of the Church of England in the sixteenth century which ultimately saw protestant doctrine fused with Catholic rituals.

The early Seleukids had stared into the proverbial abyss of Syrian religion and, by the second century BC if not earlier, had changed, having absorbed almost as many indigenous traditions as they had expounded those of their own Macedonian background. The numinous presence of pre-Greek deities clung tenaciously to the Syrian landscape. Throughout the dissertation, this divine presence has been distilled down to the concept of „cultural memory“ – the lingering knowledge passed down over generations of the sacred nature of a particular location. While the identity of the deity may have varied with a changing demographic, the sacral nature of the topography was never questioned. The Seleukids absorbed the cultural memory of their landscape and incorporated it within their own religious framework. The Macedonian hegemony over Seleukid Syria was little more than a fragile veneer, capping but not smothering the underlying traditions. One need only look at the remains of the main temenos at Baitokaike to see these processes writ in stone. Any attempt to import a foreign deity into the sacred landscape was destined to result in the dilution of both rather than the dominance of either.

The early Seleukidai promoted Apollo as their dynastic god *par excellence*. He was the dynastic progenitor and yet also manifest in the person of Antiochos I. Apollo was an emblem of the empire’s ruling Hellenised elite and yet a symbol of the continuity of Achaemenid-style kingship. After almost a century and a half of rule, the Seleukid kings began to change the focus of their patronage towards the great Syrian God. As Syria and the adjoining territories increasingly became the heart of the Seleukid realm, the dramatic rise of the syncretised Zeus in the second century BC reflected the changing demographic emphasis of the kingdom. In parallel to the shift from Apollo to Zeus, the kings embraced an active program of living apotheosis. They had been honoured by Greek *poleis* from the

first generation, but by the beginning of the second century BC the royal cult was institutionalised across the kingdom. Under Antiochos IV Epiphanes, Zeus-Baʿal and the king were fused into a single living manifestation of divine power. To the freedom-loving „Hellenised“ centres, the king’s divinity reconciled their own obedience. To the rural indigenous populations, the king perpetuated the timeless traditions of Semitic kings, he honoured the same gods and partook in the sacred marriage which would guarantee the continued cycle of the seasons.

Across the different forms of evidence – historic, epigraphic, archaeological and numismatic – the over-arching popularity and omnipresence of the Syrian God is clearly visible. Whether known as Zeus, Hadad Baʿal Šamīn or some other name, he was the supreme god of the sky and mountains, provider of fertility through his command of the rains, represented by an eagle or bull. The growth of his worship can be traced through royal Seleukid coin issues and on the ground by his presence at Seleukeia-Peria, Baitokaike, Hierapolis-Bambyke, Umm el-Amed, Damascus, Gadara and Gerasa. It was with this supreme god that the Seleukid royal cult was assimilated from its inception with the posthumous creation of Seleukos Zeus Nikator and increasingly so from the reign of Antiochos Epiphanes. Zeus-Baʿal reigned over Syria in conjunction with his consort, the Great Goddess. Represented as Tyche, Hera, Atargatis, Astarte or Isis; she was the divine manifestation of the earth’s fecundity and queen of the heavens, represented by her lion, dove, dolphin or fish. Veneration of the goddess in the Seleukid period is apparent in the archaeological record at Antioch, Seleukeia-Peria, Baitokaike, Jebel Khalid, Hierapolis-Bambyke, Umm el-Amed, Damascus and Tel Beersheba. Just as the kings incorporated their cult with the worship of Zeus-Baʿal, so the queens were associated with Atargatis-Tyche, the fortune of the kingdom and bodily manifestation of the dynasty’s fertility and continuity. The divine couple were accompanied in the Seleukid period by a whole swathe of lesser gods and goddesses, extracted from Hellenic, Semitic, Luwian and Egyptian traditions: Apollo, Pan, Herakles, Melkart, Sandan, Dionysos, Hermes, Monimos, Azizos, Harpokrates, Athena, Allât, Artemis and Eileithyia. Some of these such as Herakles and Azizos received only limited royal support while the likes of Apollo and Dionysos were assumed directly as divine pseudonyms by the kings.

On the ground, the extant evidence suggests that there was no sense of an imposed uniformity which impacted on sacred architecture. The temples at Jebel Khalid and Umm



el-Amed saw thinly veiled attempts to put a Hellenised façade on a structure which otherwise conformed wholly to vernacular traditions. The Jebel Khalid temple may have been dedicated to Atargatis or to the Syrian Gods together, although Lucian's description of the Hierapolis temple bears little relation to Jebel Khalid's physical remains. At Tel Beersheba, no attempt was made to make the temple conform in any sense to Hellenic norms. At Gadara the apparently Greek temple was built upon an indigenous vaulted podium and oriented in a way which would put it at odds with Greek practices. The evidence from Gadara, Baitokaike and Gerasa all connect the veneration of „Zeus“ to naturally occurring but unusual rock formations. These formations were presumably considered betyls in the most primal sense – the rock was literally the house of the god on earth or, if not his house, then evidence of his presence. It is surely no coincidence that all of these sites provide evidence for a pre-Hellenic population and some sense of continuity with indigenous religious traditions.

It is time for the common misconceptions, developed in the nineteenth century and perpetuated by modern works such as Green's *Alexander to Actium* to be reconsidered. This is not the first time a voice has been raised against the traditional view, indeed the last two decades have seen repeated calls for a reinterpretation of the Hellenistic East, but old prejudices die hard. This study has reinforced that the Seleukid state was an eastern empire – a metaphoric Phoenix of the Achaemenid and earlier empires, born from the ashes of Alexander the Great's conquests. The written and verbal language of rule may have changed with the coming of the Greco-Macedonians, but the language of action, the way in which the Seleukidai interacted with the physical landscape and its populations remained inherently vernacular.

## APPENDIX A      CONCORDANCE OF HELLENISTIC AND MODERN SITE NAMES

### KILIKIA TRACHEIA and KILIKIA PEDIAS

Adana/ Antioch-on-the-Saros	Adana (Turkey)
Aigeai	Yumurtalik-Ayaş (Turkey)
Anazarbos	Anavarza (Turkey)
Epiphaneia	Gösene (Turkey)
Elaiussa	Ayaş (Turkey)
Hieropolis-Kastabala	Bodrum/Kastabala (Turkey)
Korykos	Kizkalesi (Turkey)
Lamos	Lamas (Turkey)
Magarsos	Karataş (Turkey)
Mallos	Kiziltahta (Turkey)
Mopsos/Seleukeia-on-the-Pyramos	Misis (Turkey)
Mt Amanos	Nur Dağları (Turkey)
Myriandos/Alexandreia-by-Issos	Iskenderun (Turkey)
Olba	Ura (Turkey)
Seleukeia-on-the-Kalykadnos	Silifke (Turkey)
Soli	Mezetlu-Viranşehir (Turkey)
Tarsos/Antioch-on-the-Kydnos	Gözlü Kule (Turkey)
Rhosos	Arsuz (Turkey)
Zephyrion	Mersin (Turkey)

### SELEUKIS, KYRRHESTIS and KOMMAGENE

Amhipolis/Nikatoris (?)	Jebel Khalid (Syria)
Antioch-on-the-Orontes	Antakya (Turkey)
Apameia-on-the-Orontes	Afamia (Syria)
Arethousa	Rastan (Syria)
Arsameia	Gerger (Turkey)
Baitokaike	Hosn Soleiman (Syria)
Batnai	Al Bab (Syria)
Beroia	Haleb (Syria)
Chalkis-on-Belos	Nebi Is (Syria)
Doliche	Dulük (Turkey)
Emesa	Homs (Syria)
Epiphaneia	Hama (Syria)
Europos-Carchemish (Thapsakos?)	Jerablus (Syria)
Hierapolis-Bambyke	Membij (Syria)
Kadesh/Laodikeia-near-Libanos	Tell Nebi Mend (Syria)
Kyrrhos	Nebi Houri (Syria)
Laodikeia-by-the-Sea	Lattakia (Syria)
Larissa	Shaizar (Syria)
Lysias	Qala'at Bourzey (Syria)
Mt Kasios	Al-Akra (Turkey)
Samosata	Samsat (Turkey)
Seleukeia-Pieria	Çevlik (Turkey)
Seleukeia-Zeugma	Balqis (Turkey)

## OSRHOENE

Edessa  
Karrhai  
Nikephorion

Şanlıurfa (Turkey)  
Harran (Turkey)  
Raqqa (Syria)

## PHOENICIA

Ake-Ptolemaïs/Antiocheia-in-Ptolemaïs  
Arados  
Askalon  
Berytos/Laodikeia  
Botrys  
Byblos  
Dora  
Gaza/Seleukeia  
Ioppe  
Marathos  
Orthosia/Eupatreia  
Sidon  
Strato's Tower  
Tripolis  
Tyre

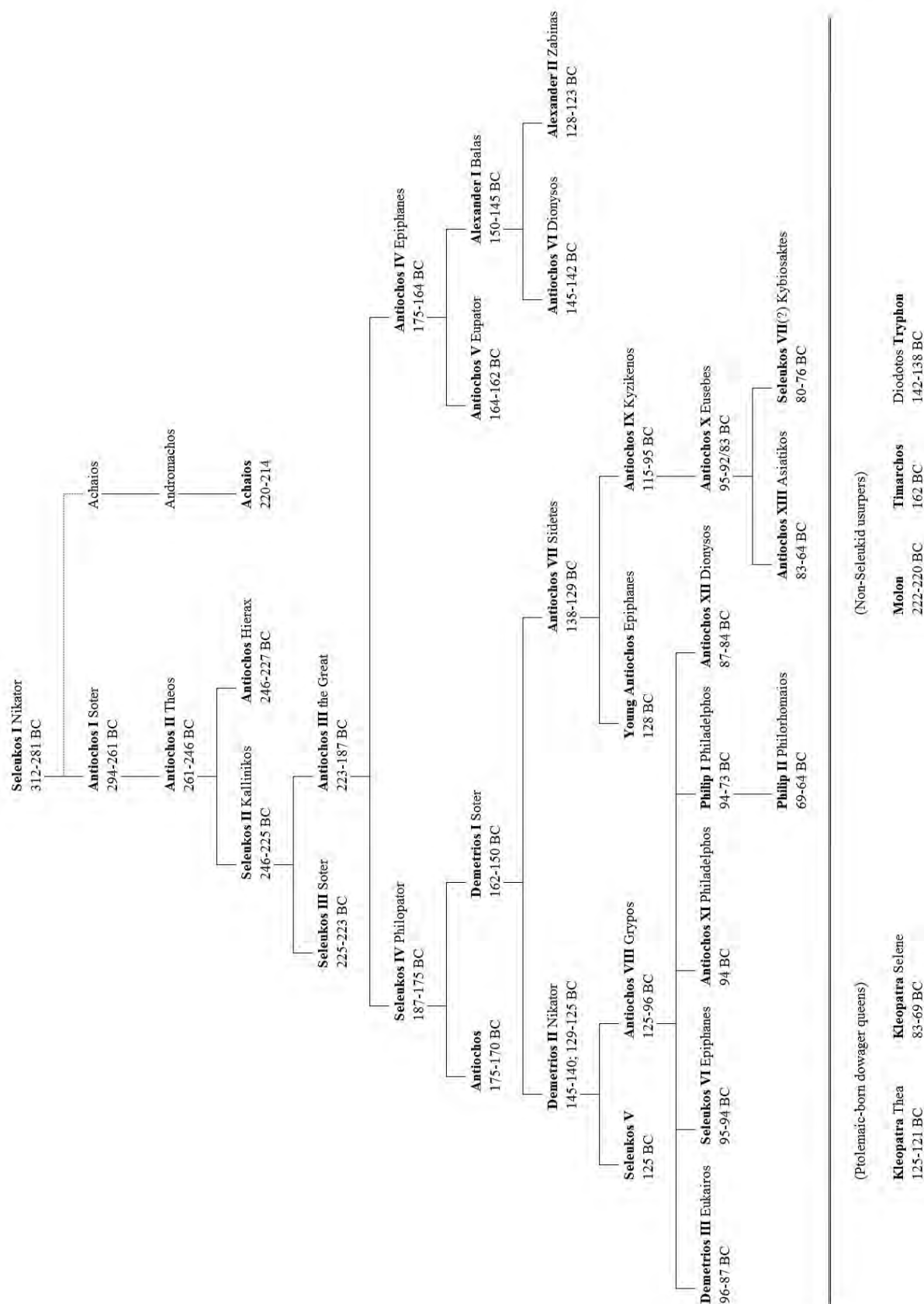
Tell Acco (Israel)  
Arwad (Syria)  
Ashkelon (Israel)  
Beirut (Lebanon)  
Batroun (Lebanon)  
Jbeil (Lebanon)  
Tell Dor (Israel)  
Gaza (Palestinian Territories)  
Tell-Aviv Yafo (Israel)  
Amrit (Syria)  
Ard Artousi (Lebanon)  
Saida (Lebanon)  
Qeysarya (Israel)  
Tripoli (Lebanon)  
es-Sur (Lebanon)

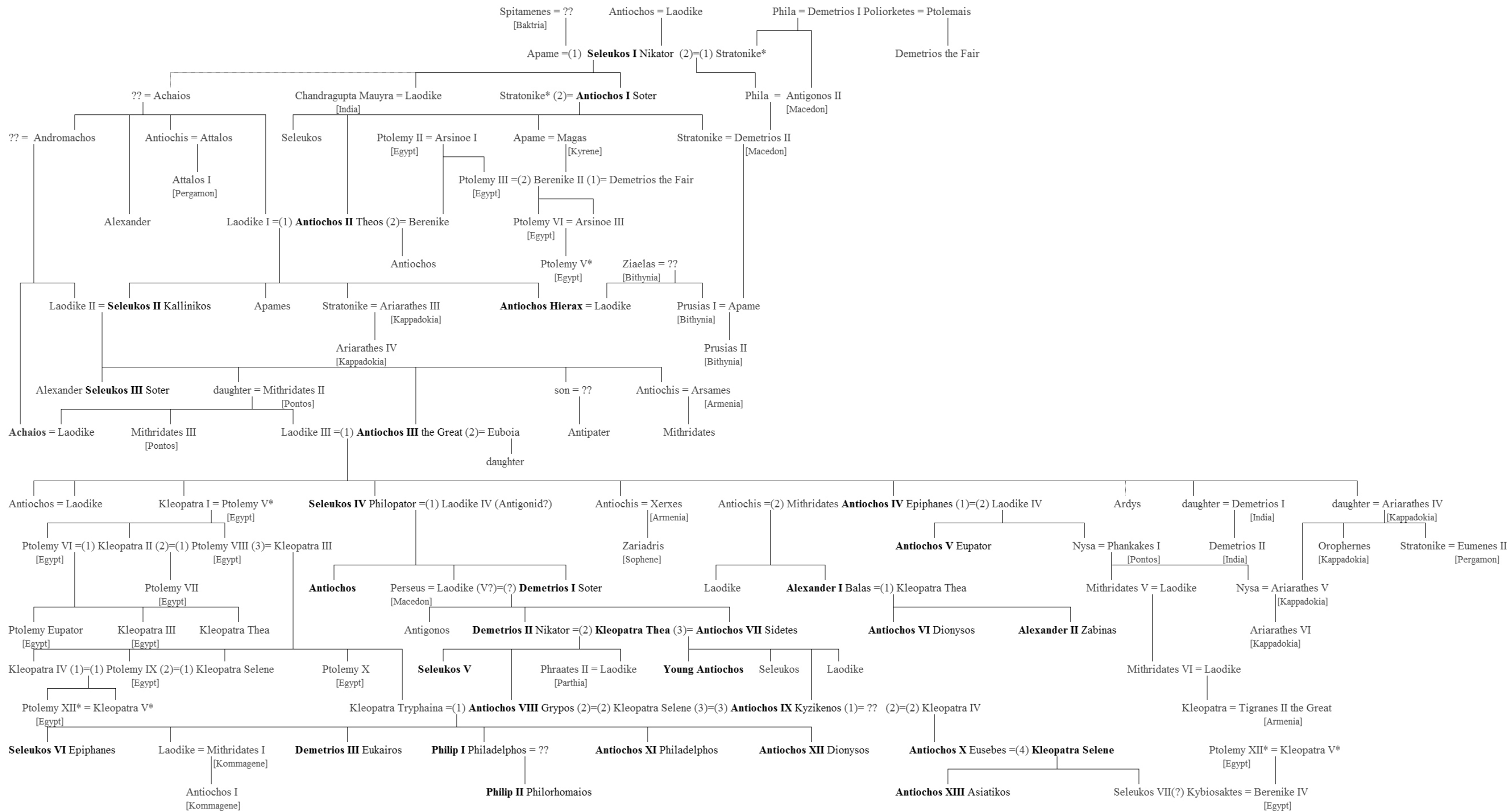
## KOILE-SYRIA, JUDAEA and ARABIA

Abila  
Adora  
Bostra  
Chalkis-under-Libanos  
Damascus/Demetrias  
Gadara/Seleukeia  
Gerasa/Antioch-on-the-Chrysorhoas  
Heliopolis-Ba'albek  
Herakleia-Arka  
Jerusalem  
Mt Hermon  
Marisa  
Palmyra  
Panion  
Pella  
Petra  
Philadelphia  
Raphia  
Samareia  
Seleukeia-Abila  
Skythopolis

Suk (Lebanon)  
Dura (Palestinian Territories)  
Bosra (Syria)  
Anjarr (Lebanon)  
Damascus (Syria)  
Umm Qays (Jordan)  
Jarash (Jordan)  
Baalbek (Lebanon)  
Tell ,Arqâ (Lebanon)  
Jerusalem (Palestinian Territories)  
Jebel ash-Sheikh (Lebanon, Syria, Israel)  
Tel Maresha (Israel)  
Tadmor (Syria)  
Banyas (Syria)  
Tabaqat Fahl (Jordan)  
Petra (Jordan)  
Amman (Jordan)  
Rafah (Palestinian Territories)  
Sebastiya (Palestinian Territories)  
Quailibah (Jordan)  
Beth Shean (Israel)

## APPENDIX B DYNASTIC STEMMA





## APPENDIX C      THE HIEROTHESSION AND THE KINGS OF KOMMAGENE

Rule by members of the Seleukid house over Syria did not totally cease with Pompey's eastern settlement in 64 BC. The Orontid kings of Kommagene intermarried with the Seleukids and to a limited extent perpetuated their rule. When Antiochos III the Great established Artaxias as satrap of Greater Armenia, princes of the old Armenian dynasty established by Orontes were appointed to rule over the upland principality of Kommagene. The region lay below the Taurus mountains on the western banks of the Euphrates river. The principality controlled the northern access routes across the river and between Anatolia and Mesopotamia. Although Kommagene was occasionally incorporated into the satrapal system of the Seleukid state, it would appear that in earlier periods it had been incorporated into the Greater Armenian kingdom. It is possible that Samos, the Orontid king of Armenia (c. 260 BC) was responsible for the foundation of Samosata, the capital of the later independent Kommagene. Likewise, his son Arsames (before 228 BC) is the likely founder of the other main centres, Asameia and Arsamosata.<sup>1</sup> The population of Kommagene differed from its north Syrian neighbours in that whilst the latter were predominantly Semitic, the Kommagenians were initially Indo-Aryan refugees pushed west of the Euphrates by the Assyrians in the seventh century BC and were thus closely related to the main populations of the Iranian plateau.<sup>2</sup>

Under Antiochos IV Epiphanes, the Kommagenian satrapy was held for the Seleukids by the *epistatos* (administrative governor) Ptolemaios who is known to have been the grandson of the Orontid king Arsames.<sup>3</sup> Ptolemaios took advantage of (Roman encouraged) disdain for the Seleukid king Demetrios I and the Maccabean revolt. In an alliance with Timarchos the rebellious Seleukid satrap of Media and Artaxias I of Armenia, Kommagene seceded from the Seleukid empire.<sup>4</sup> The secession may have taken place late in 163 BC under the Seleukid boy-king Antiochos V but the events of 162 (the invasion of

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<sup>1</sup> Redgate 1998: 63; Chahin 2001: 190-1. Jones 1937: 265 prefers Samos, king of Kommagene (140-143 BC) as the founder of Samosata.

<sup>2</sup> King 1913: 358-9.

<sup>3</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 31.19a; Sullivan 1977: 736; Redgate 1998: 68.

<sup>4</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 31.27a; Sullivan 1977: 743-6 poses the possibility of whether the „revolt“ of Ptolemaios was not in fact an officially sanctioned grant of autonomy to establish a strong subject principality to help control a rowdy Kappadokia. The Ituraean state seems to have been created in such a manner half a century later.

Demetrios and the revolts of Timarchos and Judas Maccabeus) surely consolidated Ptolemaios' position. Ptolemaios was succeeded by his son Samos of whom little is known. On his coins (the first of the Kommagenian dynasty) he appears both radiate in the tradition of the contemporary Seleukid king Antiochos VI, and wearing a tiara which recalls the dress of his Iranian/Armenian forebears and the divine figures at Nemrud Dağ.<sup>5</sup>

The son of Samos, Mithridates I Kallinikos, allied himself with the Seleukid house by marrying Laodike Thea Philadelphos, daughter of Antiochos VIII Grypos and the Ptolemaic princess Kleopatra Tryphaena. Sometime between 83 and 75 BC Tigranes II of Armenia traversed Kommagene during his great expansion of the Armenian empire and Mithridates lost his independence to become one of the vassal-monarchs at the command of the Armenian „King of kings“. <sup>6</sup> In 69 BC, Antiochos I (the son of Mithridates and Laodike and therefore the grandson of Antiochos Grypos, ruled 70-36 BC) found it expedient to ally himself with Lucullus against Tigranes II and henceforth joined the growing ranks of Rome's friendly kings. However, his succession to the Kommagenian throne took place under Tigranes and Antiochos initially appears on coins wearing the traditional Armenian tiara.<sup>7</sup> Later, as a friend and ally of Rome, the king of Kommagene faced the complicated challenge of keeping his throne throughout the Roman civil wars and in the face of the ever worsening Romano-Parthian relations – a task to which Antiochos I ultimately proved his worth.<sup>8</sup>

Antiochos I's most visible undertaking was the construction of the Hierothesion at Nemrud Dağ. His inscriptions on the mountain state that the site was to be his burial place and the location from where he would join the gods in the heavens. He bequeathed funds to enable the establishment of his cult as god-king along with the cults of his Iranian and Seleukid ancestors with special instructions for annual religious observances of his birthday (16 *Audnaios*) and the day he ascended the throne (10 *Loos*).<sup>9</sup> The monument itself took the form of a 50 metre high tumulus on top of the 2150 metre high mountain spur. To the north, east and west, large terraces were constructed to bear colossal sculptures of the king and his ancestors alongside syncretised Greco-Iranian gods, lions and eagles. To quote

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<sup>5</sup> Young 1964: 30; Sullivan 1977: 749-50.

<sup>6</sup> Sullivan 1977: 753-5.

<sup>7</sup> Appian *Mithridatic Wars* 106; Plutarch *Pompey* 38; Young 1964: 30-1; Sullivan 1977: 763.

<sup>8</sup> Caesar *Civil War* 3.4; id. *Alexandrian War* 65; Cicero *Ad familiares* 15.1.2, 15.4.4; Plutarch *Antony* 34; Butcher 2003: 90.

<sup>9</sup> Goell 1957: 4-5. It is interesting that of all the influences that contributed to Kommagenian culture and the variety of local calendars available that Antiochos should use that of the Macedonians.

Theresa Goell, the 1950s survey and excavation director: “The sanctuary is a most important monument because : 1) It is the most striking and most informative monument of the Hellenistic ruler cult. 2) It is geographically situated to present an almost perfect example of the fusion of Iranian, Hellenic and Anatolian traditions in architectural and sculptural styles. 3) It bears significant witness to the development of religious syncretism in the period just preceding our era.”<sup>10</sup>

Antiochos’ successors were not so adept at playing the Romano-Parthian game. Mithridates II chose the wrong side at Actium. He was restored to his kingdom by Octavian although the latter showed no such clemency to the dissenting Antiochos II.<sup>11</sup> Antiochos III appears to have received Roman citizenship although Rome annexed Kommagene on his death in AD 17.<sup>12</sup> There seems to have been something of a class struggle following Antiochos III’s death with the majority calling for the continuity of the monarchy whilst the aristocracy, perhaps seeing more opportunities for advancement without a king, called for unification with the Roman province of Syria.<sup>13</sup> Caligula restored the late king’s son, Antiochos IV to the throne of Kommagene in AD 37 and added parts of Armenia and Kilikia to the kingdom.<sup>14</sup> Four years later Caligula removed the king, but he was promptly re-instated in the same year by Claudius upon the latter’s succession in Rome.<sup>15</sup> In return, Antiochos founded several cities named after his patrons, Germanicopolis, Claudiopoli and Neronias in Kilikia and Germanicia Caesarea in Kommagene itself.<sup>16</sup> However, the kingdom did not long outlive its Julio-Claudian benefactors. Three years after Antiochos IV and his sons Epiphanes and Kallinikos had enthusiastically assisted Rome in the Jewish war and been influential in the promotion of Vespasian to imperial power, Kommagene was again annexed on suspicion of collaboration with the Parthians (AD 72).<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Goell 1957: 7.

<sup>11</sup> Sullivan 1977: 778, although Antiochos’ son, Mithridates III, was given Kommagene by Octavian in 20 BC, see Cassius Dio *Roman History* 54.9.3.

<sup>12</sup> Tacitus *Annals* 2.42; Sullivan 1977: 783-5.

<sup>13</sup> Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 18.53.

<sup>14</sup> Cassius Dio *Roman History* 59.8.2.

<sup>15</sup> Cassius Dio *Roman History* 60.8.1; Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 19.276.

<sup>16</sup> Butcher 2003: 91.

<sup>17</sup> Josephus *Jewish War* 2.500-1, 7.238-9; Tacitus *Annals* 2.81.1.



## APPENDIX D      JEBEL KHALID: ITS HISTORY AND ANCIENT NAME

The Seleukid settlement at Jebel Khalid was constructed upon a limestone jebel, on the west bank of the Euphrates almost due east of Antioch-on-the-Orontes.<sup>1</sup> The settlement was established shortly after 300 BC by Seleukos I or one of his agents on a virgin site – there has never been any evidence for the existence of pre-Hellenistic occupation on the jebel. The strongly fortified settlement commanded views of the Euphrates flood plain and the surrounding steppe and must have served to guard and monitor traffic both along and across the river.<sup>2</sup> Due to its strategic location and strong fortifications it is plausible to suggest that the city was established as a *katoikia* or colony of semi-retired or reserve soldiers who would garrison the area and could be mobilised in times of unrest or crisis.<sup>3</sup> This suggestion is supported by finds of official Seleukid bullae in the acropolis palace and the fact that over 80 percent of the Seleukid regal coins recovered from the site were produced at the central mint of Antioch-on-the-Orontes and appear to have been brought in quite regularly to fund a garrison.<sup>4</sup> If the metropolitan coins produced at Antioch under the kings Demetrios III and Philip I are included (as they should be), the percentage of Antiochene coins at the site increases to 88.2 percent, an almost complete monopoly. Sometime in the second quarter of the first century BC, the flow of coinage ceased and Jebel Khalid was abandoned.

On the surface, it would appear that Jebel Khalid conforms to the sad pattern of so many Hellenistic sites in Syria. Its identity is unknown, its foundation and abandonment dates are imprecise and any significant role it might have played in the history of the period has been completely lost. However, below the surface, the details of the site's history allow us to find its place within the greater Seleukid world. Across the site, excavation has shown that there appear to have been three main phases of occupation, datable through the coins, pottery and lamp fragments.<sup>5</sup> The initial settlement took place sometime early in the first

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<sup>1</sup> Geographic co-ordinates: 36°22'N, 38°10'E. The site lies immediately south of the Tishrin Dam which was completed in 1999.

<sup>2</sup> River traffic along the Euphrates is thought to have been much heavier in antiquity than in the modern period, see Comfort and Ergeç 2001: 27.

<sup>3</sup> Bar-Kochva 1979: 20-48, especially 28.

<sup>4</sup> Nixon 2006: 92-3.

<sup>5</sup> See for example Jackson (forthcoming); Wright (forthcoming).

quarter of the third century BC. The colony's layout emphasises the military role of the settlement over and above any civic concerns. The fortifications follow the line of the topography except along the river front where the land drops away in almost sheer cliffs. On entry to the site through the main (western) gate, the over-riding impression is formed by the inner fortifications around the acropolis which dominate the entry. The settlement's foundation was followed by more than a century of uninterrupted occupation before a period of renewed construction around the middle of the second century BC.<sup>6</sup> From the mid-second to the beginning of the first century BC the settlement went through an apparently prosperous phase, indicated by large-scale renovations to both public and private structures and a steady rise in the amount of coins recovered from this period.<sup>7</sup> During the successive reigns of the brothers Demetrios II and Antiochos VII (145-129 BC), the Parthians and their allies pushed westward and forced the Seleukid border back to the Euphrates. Over the ensuing years, Jebel Khalid ceased to act as just an internal checkpoint and assumed a more important role watching over the river towards the hostile pro-Parthian kingdom of Osroene to the east.<sup>8</sup>

The prosperous second phase was followed by an abrupt and intentional abandonment of the site which included the removal of anything of value and the filling of buildings with deconstruction debris. The latest coins found within this fill are metropolitan bronze issues of Antioch the last legible date reading 77/6 BC.<sup>9</sup> Leaving a short period to allow the last coins to circulate and travel from Antioch to Jebel Khalid, this can date the approximate end of the settlement to c.75/4 BC. The salvage program which accompanied the abandonment extended from personal possessions to the removal of wooden roof beams and even ceramic tiles. Sometime after the abandonment, a third phase of sub-Hellenistic squatter occupation occurred across much of the site. The term „sub-Hellenistic“ is used here to refer to unofficial occupation during the period of late Seleukid-Roman provincial transition. Materially, there is little to distinguish between this population and their late

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<sup>6</sup> This renewed construction is represented by the second phase at Area B, see Chapter 4.4.2 above.

<sup>7</sup> The use of coin finds to indicate peaks of prosperity for ancient sites is always a hazardous task given the very nature of coin production, loss and recovery. However, at Jebel Khalid there is a universal rise in the amount of coins dated to the late second and early first century BC that cannot be wholly coincidental. On the payment of the military as the principal use of coinage in the ancient world, see Cook 1958: 261; Kraay 1964: 88-90; Howgego 1990: 8-11; Martin 1996: 258-9, 282-3; Aperghis 2004:189; Melville-Jones 2006: 27-30.

<sup>8</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 48, Justin *Epitome* 36.1.1-6, 38.10.1-39.1.1; Strabo *Geography* 16.1.26-8. The first king of Osroene was Orhai, son of Hewiâ who dated the start of his reign to 132 BC, see Drijvers 1977: 867-9.

<sup>9</sup> Nixon 2008: no.125, (Jebel Khalid inv. no. 05.667a)

Seleukid forebears except for the almost complete cessation of imported fine wares<sup>10</sup> and their make-shift adaptation of the remains of pre-existing structures. A layer of fine soil separated the earlier deconstruction fill and the hard packed floors of the phase three structures indicating that the „squatter“ occupation did not happen immediately after the official abandonment.

Perhaps the key to understanding the late history of Jebel Khalid can be found in the actions of Tigranes II of Armenia. As discussed in Chapter 1, following his campaigns in Kommagene and Syria (c.74/3 BC) Tigranes founded Tigranokerta, a new capital for his empire located in northern Mesopotamia.<sup>11</sup> With the construction of the new metropolis north-east of Syria, Tigranes would have had little strategic need for a fortified river crossing at Jebel Khalid. The principal east-west transit route across the Euphrates had always been further north, at the twin cities of Seleukeia-Zeugma.<sup>12</sup> The main axis of the Artaxiad empire, between Antioch-on-the-Orontes, Tigranokerta and Artaxata, bypassed the Jebel Khalid area completely but would have reinforced the pre-eminence of Zeugma.<sup>13</sup> Tigranes certainly used this route during his march from Syria to Tigranokerta in 69 BC and it was at Zeugma that he imprisoned the Seleukid queen Kleopatra Selene.<sup>14</sup>

The need for a specifically military presence in the Jebel Khalid area was also much reduced during the reign of Tigranes. The Parthian border which had pressed against the Euphrates under the late Seleukids was pushed south towards Dura-Europos when the Armenian king conquered northern Mesopotamia. There was little reason for the philhellenic Artaxiad king to maintain a precious settlement of Hellenised soldier-colonists at what had become such a strategically unimportant location. This is especially true in light of Tigranes' desire to fill his new capital with this very same type of Hellenised soldier-colonists.<sup>15</sup> Although Appian emphasises the forced deportation of Kappadokians to Tigranokerta under penalty of confiscation of any belongings that they failed to bring with

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<sup>10</sup> Two fragments of Pompeian red cook-ware were recovered from the phase three levels on the acropolis, some Roman period Eastern Sigillata A fragments and small amounts of Julio-Claudian and Flavian glass have been found around Area B.

<sup>11</sup> Appian *Mithridatic Wars* 67, 84; Plutarch *Lucullus* 21.4, 26.1; Strabo *Geography* 11.14.15, 12.2.9.

<sup>12</sup> Pliny *Natural History* 5.86.

<sup>13</sup> Considered the gateway to Mesopotamia, see Gawlikowski 1996: 128, 133; Comfort, Adbadie-Reynal and Ergeç 2000: 99.

<sup>14</sup> Strabo *Geography* 16.2.3.

<sup>15</sup> Plutarch *Lucullus* 26.5-6. The army of Tigranes at the battle of Tigranokerta in 69 BC is described as having included a phalanx and whilst the term may sometimes be used to describe any heavy infantry, Plutarch here distinguishes between cohorts and phalanxes as well as lighter-armed troops and there is no reason to dispute that Tigranes' phalanx was armed in the Macedonian fashion and presumably drawn from ex-Seleukid Hellenised settlers.

them,<sup>16</sup> Plutarch speaks of a wider process involving the re-settlement of Greeks, Kilikians, Assyrians, Adiabeni, Gordyeni and even the nomadic Skenitai.<sup>17</sup> Strabo supports this wider population movement, claiming that among the settlers of Tigranokerta were the populations of twelve Greek cities which Tigranes had destroyed.<sup>18</sup> It should then come as little surprise that the coin supply to Jebel Khalid from Seleukid Antioch ceased around 75/4 BC, the year of Tigranes' conquest of Seleukid Syria. Shortly afterwards, the settlement was abandoned with all goods of any value removed, including timbers, roof tiles and other building fabrics that may have been considered useful to new constructions. All the evidence makes for the plausible suggestion that Jebel Khalid was among the cities that Tigranes stripped of their inhabitants to re-settle in Tigranokerta.

In 69 BC, the Roman commander Lucullus besieged the half-built Tigranokerta and following his victory over the Artaxiad king, allowed the inhabitants to return to their respective homelands.<sup>19</sup> Thus, following the above argument, five years after the abandonment of Jebel Khalid its impoverished population was free to return to its fortress overlooking the Euphrates. Following the damage caused during the scavenging process and five years of dereliction, many of the buildings were no longer functional and makeshift structures were erected above their remains. It is possible therefore to view the „sub-Hellenistic“ squatter occupation as the return of some of the original Seleukid period population who thought to resurrect their old lives in their ancestral home. However, with the farcical reigns of Antiochos XIII and Philip II cut short by Pompey in 64 BC, the imperial infrastructure that had sustained Jebel Khalid throughout the Seleukid period was no longer in place and the population received neither fresh coin supplies, nor imported luxury goods.<sup>20</sup> The settlement maintained a shadowy, insular existence until the inhabitants eventually died out or drifted off to other more prosperous locations. Only the Area B sanctuary remained to attract pilgrims or the occasional caravan. In the third century AD a temporary Roman legionary camp was erected around the now ruinous temple and following their departure, the jebel was home only to a small number of solitary Christian hermits and holy-men living in caves above the Euphrates.

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<sup>16</sup> Appian *Mithridatic Wars* 67, 84, see also Strabo *Geography* 12.2.9.

<sup>17</sup> Plutarch *Lucullus* 21.4, 26.1.

<sup>18</sup> Strabo *Geography* 11.14.15.

<sup>19</sup> Strabo *Geography* 11.14.15.

<sup>20</sup> On Antiochos XIII's recognition by Rome: Appian *Syrian War* 49; Justin *Epitome* 40.2.2; On Philip II's: Downey 1951: 151-8; On Pompey's settlement: Appian *Mithridatic Wars* 49, 106; id. *Syrian War* 49-50, 70; Justin *Epitome* 40.2.3-5.

No inscriptions have been unearthed after more than twenty years of excavations at Jebel Khalid. As a result, the settlement's ancient name remains unknown. However, there are two Seleukid settlements known textually from the region which have never been confidently identified on the ground, Amphipolis and Nikatoris. Either or both may have a claim to the site.<sup>21</sup> Galikowski has posited that Amphipolis may have been the Hellenistic name for Jebel Khalid, a position tentatively supported by Cohen.<sup>22</sup> According to Stephanus of Byzantium, the settlement of Amphipolis was situated on the Euphrates River and was called Tourmeda by the Syrians. Appian adds that Amphipolis was among the foundations of Seleukos I Nikator and the use of a Macedonian toponym supports a foundation date in the first generation of the Macedonian conquest. Pliny states that Amphipolis was a refoundation of Thapsakos although this is refuted by modern scholars and Thapsakos was probably refounded as Europos-Carchemish at modern Jerablus.<sup>23</sup> Less is known about Nikatoris. Stephanus of Byzantium is the only ancient author to use the name, he located the city on the Euphrates near Europos and claimed that it too was founded by Seleukos I Nikator.<sup>24</sup>

Since the first decades of last century, modern scholars have found arguments to view Amphipolis and Nikatoris as the same settlement, the former re-founded as the latter.<sup>25</sup> This fits well with the little that is known regarding Seleukid settlement hierarchy – settlements with Hellenic or Semitic topographic names were probably founded as *katoikoi* or perhaps just enclaves within an indigenous settlement. The grant of a dynastic name brought some change in the settlement's status and was perhaps accompanied by the elevation of the settlement to a *polis* or self-governing city with its own *boule*. Such a pattern may be seen in the progression of Syrian sites such as Pella-Apameia, Hamath-Epiphanieia, Orthoseia-Eupatreia, Gadara-Seleukeia, Gerasa-Antioch and so on, the list is extensive. Thus, if the names Amphipolis and Nikatoris were to be applied to the same site it stands to reason that the settlement was established as Amphipolis, named for the

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<sup>21</sup> Dussaud 1927: 461; Jones 1937: 217; Gawlikowski 1996: 128; Grainger 1997: 681, 756; Cohen 2006: 149-50.

<sup>22</sup> Gawlikowski 1996: 128; Cohen 2006: 150, 185.

<sup>23</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 57; Pliny *Natural History* 5.87. Thapsakos appears to derive from a Semitic term for „crossing place“ and may therefore have been applied to locations other than Europos-Carchemish, see Jones 441 n.3; Galikowski 1996: 128; Cohen 2006: 149-50.

<sup>24</sup> Stephanus of Byzantium *Ethnica* „Nikatoris“, Cohen 2006: 185.

<sup>25</sup> Dussaud 1927: 461; Jones 1937: 217; see also Comfort and Ergeç 2001: 25 (fig. 4), 43.

Macedonian city, perhaps the source of the colonists,<sup>26</sup> and later refounded with the dynastic name Nikatoris, named for one of the kings who bore the epithet Nikator. Stephanus, our only source on Nikatoris, ascribed its foundation to Seleukos Nikator. If indeed Amphipolis and Nikatoris were synonymous, we see that on a practical level he can be proved correct in that it is known from Appian that Amphipolis was established by the first Seleukid. However, we must then accept that when Stephanus compiled his *Ethnica*, he or his sources disarticulated the history of the settlement and prompted the author to list both names. Section 10 of the Peutinger Table shows Kyrrhestis and Mesopotamia and although Hierapolis-Bambyke, Seleukeia-Zeugma and Edessa are all shown, neither Amphipolis, Nikatoris nor the Syrian Tourmeda are represented. All had ceased as significant centres at the time of the creation of the map's archetype in the first century AD.<sup>27</sup> By the sixth century AD Amphipolis and Nikatoris would have been little more than names to Stephanus.

Working on the assumption that Amphipolis was not refounded within its first generation – and there is no evidence that Seleukos I refounded any of his own foundations – then we must look to the other Seleukid kings who bore the epithet Nikator to find a candidate for the founder of Nikatoris. Using the official titulature employed by the Seleukid kings the field can be reduced to three kings: Antiochos IV Epiphanes, Demetrios II Nikator or Seleukos VI Epiphanes.<sup>28</sup> Antiochos IV (175-164 BC) was an active city refounder, but appears to have usually granted the dynastic names Antiocheia or Epiphaneia. Demetrios II (145-140, 129-125 BC) would have been in a position to refound settlements in either reign and, as will be argued, was the likely king responsible for Jebel Khalid/Amphipolis-Nikatoris. Seleukos VI (95-94 BC) reigned only briefly in Kilikia and for a moment in Antioch. He would have been in no position to refound a city on the Euphrates.

To return to Jebel Khalid, the site provides no internal evidence from which to garner its ancient name. However, it is situated on the Euphrates, only 60 kilometres, less than two day's march from Europos-Carchemish.<sup>29</sup> It was initially settled in the later half of the reign

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<sup>26</sup> See for example Larisa on the Orontes, named after the Thessalian origin of the colonists, Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 33.4a.

<sup>27</sup> Bowersock 1994: 169-71, 181.

<sup>28</sup> See Chapter 3.2 above.

<sup>29</sup> Cohen 2006: 169-70.

of Seleukos I. In the second half of the 140s BC the settlement underwent a period of major building activity and started to receive a marked increase in coinage which only ceased with the site's abandonment in the 70s BC. The dramatic increase in military pay flooding into Jebel Khalid coincided with the first reign of Demetrios II and can be seen as evidence for an increase in the militarisation of the population. In response to the Parthian threat, Demetrios II was securing Jebel Khalid as a bulwark of North Syria. The Euphrates at Jebel Khalid is only four days march from Antioch making the Seleukid metropolis especially vulnerable following the Parthian domination over the east bank. Other sites show increased construction activity along the Seleukid Middle Euphrates during this period, at Djazla, Nouhaila and Siffin. All three sites appear to have been fortified as a direct result of the increasing Parthian threat in the second half of the second century BC.<sup>30</sup> It would seem that Dura-Europos too was enlarged during this period, evolving from a garrison-town into a more developed fortified and urbanised centre. It was not until the mid-second century BC that Dura received its fortifications, public buildings and Hippodamian grid street plan.<sup>31</sup> The new developments were also likely due to the heightened Parthian threat. In addition, the numismatic evidence would also suggest that it was Demetrios II who was responsible for the refoundation of Damascus as Demetrias.<sup>32</sup> The king certainly maintained an active building program during his troubled reigns.

Further evidence for activity at Jebel Khalid during the reign of Demetrios II is provided by a number of arrowheads found across the settlement. Five bronze arrowheads

have been found during the Jebel Khalid excavations (**fig.212**). All belong to the tanged bi-lobed form identified by Haynes and Snodgrass separately as “distinctively Cretan”. Four bear a monogram composed of BE across the base of the arrow.<sup>33</sup> Three of the arrowheads were found in the domestic quarter excavations, the fourth on the



**Figure 212. Cretan arrowheads from Jebel Khalid (courtesy Graeme Clarke).**

<sup>30</sup> Napoli 2000: 117-20, 128-9.

<sup>31</sup> Leriche 1996: 166-7; id. 1997; Cohen 2006: 158-60.

<sup>32</sup> Newell 1939: 83-4; Cohen 2006: 242-5; Wright 2010: 253-4 where the refoundation is probably erroneously dated to the reign of Demetrios III. See Chapter 5.2 above.

<sup>33</sup> McConchie 2009; Haynes 1951; Snodgrass 1999: 81.

acropolis. The fifth Cretan-style bronze arrow head was too badly corroded to confirm whether it too carried the BE monogram. It was found during the main gate excavations. The five arrowheads, taken as a group, are distinct from the locally produced iron arrowheads which are commonly trilobate.<sup>34</sup> Similar tanged bi-lobed bronze arrows without a monogram are known from Tarsus, Sardes and Delos while five further examples bearing the BE monogram are known, three from Egypt, one from Crete and one from Cyrene. Haynes posits that the monogram may represent a „mint mark“ locating the centre of production of the arrowheads at Berenike-Euherperides in Ptolemaic Kyrene but prefers to view it as the mark for the Ptolemaic queen, Berenike II, the monarch in whose service the unit of archers *may* have been employed.<sup>35</sup> However, with half of the known arrowheads bearing the BE monogram provenanced to Jebel Khalid, a context with no evidence of Ptolemaic involvement, the case for Queen Berenike is somewhat weakened. McConchie argues quite rightly that the arrows are probably evidence of Cretans serving in the Seleukid garrison rather than signs of a Ptolemaic occupation.<sup>36</sup> The Jebel Khalid find spots suggest that the Cretans were not just posted at the strategic fortifications and acropolis but were integrated among the existing population in the domestic quarter.

The presence of a unit of Cretan archers at Jebel Khalid lends circumstantial weight to the argument that Demetrios II may have been influential in the settlement's change of status and heightened prosperity. Demetrios II initially overthrew his cousin Alexander I and seized power in Syria with an army of Cretan mercenaries and the support of Ptolemy VI.<sup>37</sup> Following his coup (145 BC), Demetrios disbanded the Seleukid army as unreliable and installed his Cretan supporters in positions of power – Bevan's "Cretan tyranny" – a move that was ultimately unsuccessful and saw riots in Antioch and unrest across the kingdom. Nevertheless, the early years of Demetrios' rule saw the advancement of the Cretan mercenaries as the only permanent armed force in Syria.<sup>38</sup> On the death of Ptolemy VI in the same year, Demetrios sent the Ptolemaic army back to Egypt but retained the elephants for his own use.<sup>39</sup> If the mysterious BE monogram was indeed a badge of a Cretan

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<sup>34</sup> McConchie 2009.

<sup>35</sup> Haynes 1951; McConchie 2009.

<sup>36</sup> McConchie 2009.

<sup>37</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 32.9c; Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.86, 13.103-10; Justin *Epitome* 35.2.2-3; I *Maccabees* 10.67.

<sup>38</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 33.4; Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.129-30, 13.135-41; I *Maccabees* 11.38, 11.45-51; Bevan 1902: II.223-35; Griffith 1935: 168-9.

<sup>39</sup> Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.120.



unit in Ptolemaic service, perhaps that unit or even that unit's arsenal was retained along with the Ptolemaic elephants? Although Cretan mercenaries were an endemic feature of Hellenistic warfare, the presence of professional Cretan archers at Jebel Khalid was made most likely during the demilitarisation of the established Seleukid military under Demetrios II. Demetrios' reign appears to be one of heightened activity and attempted consolidation across his fragmenting empire. The post-145 BC increase in Jebel Khalid's prosperity makes it a likely candidate for the Seleukid colony of Amphipolis, refounded under Demetrios II Nikator and granted the dynastic name Nikatoris.

## APPENDIX E SACRIFICE AND SACRED DINING

Sacrifice, Greek *thusia*, was a feature of religious practice for all cultures of the Mediterranean and Middle East and can be viewed as the single most important ritual act in civic religion.<sup>1</sup> The basic tenet behind the act of sacrifice was „I give in order that you may give“ – epitomised by the Latin *do ut des*. Furthermore, among both Hellenic and Semitic populations, sacrificial ritual and communal dining were integrally linked.

In early 400 BC, Xenophon and the remains of the Ten Thousand passed from Mesopotamia into Armenia and were overjoyed to discover villages well stocked with wheat, wine, pulses and most importantly sacrificial victims.<sup>2</sup> The Greek soldiers were perhaps not concerned with the ability to sacrifice so much as the availability of fresh meat but Xenophon’s expression provides a perfect illustration of the technical rule that meat from domesticated animals was only consumed as part of the proceedings of a blood sacrifice.<sup>3</sup> As further evidence for this custom, there was no distinction in Greek between the role of a butcher, an individual performing a sacrifice, or a cook, the title *mageiros* was used indiscriminately for all three.<sup>4</sup> According to Herodotus, no Egyptian would touch a Greek dining implement nor make contact with the mouth of a Greek because of the association between these objects and Hellenic sacrificial rituals which differed from those of Egypt.<sup>5</sup> Whether Herodotus is a trustworthy source on Egyptian customs is beside the point, implicit is that Greek sacrifice and dining coincide. However, it is hard to reconcile this generalisation with the archaeological evidence. At Jebel Khalid and elsewhere, animal bones are commonly found in domestic contexts, pressed into floor surfaces or in domestic dumps. Perhaps we should understand these remains as the result of home-sacrifices?<sup>6</sup> Written sources also fail to mention the fate of elderly or sick animals. To sacrifice imperfect animals to the gods was impious and yet it would be dubious to suggest that the produce of such animals would have gone to waste.<sup>7</sup> To suggest that the meat and skin of

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<sup>1</sup> Detienne 1989: 6; Zaidman and Pantel 2002: 30-1.

<sup>2</sup> Xenophon *Anabasis* 4.4.9.

<sup>3</sup> Detienne 1989: 3, 11; Parker 2004: 139, n.22; *OCD* „animals in cult“ 93.

<sup>4</sup> Detienne 1989: 8, 11; Wilkins 2000: 369-70; Zaidman and Pantel 2002: 33.

<sup>5</sup> Herodotus *The Histories* 2.41.

<sup>6</sup> For an early example see Homer *Odyssey* 4.418-38.

<sup>7</sup> To use a modern analogy from rural northern Syria today, a culture of scarcity means that absolutely nothing is thrown away without exhausting every possible use – even old plastic bags are kept well beyond the point usefulness and ingeniously recycled by the village children to make slings for hunting birds and hares.

domestic animals that died outside of sacrifice in the Hellenistic period was left to rot is inexplicable.

Despite this disparity between the written and material records, the importance of the communal meal within sacrificial ritual is reinforced by numerous examples in the classical literature.<sup>8</sup> In the *Odyssey*, Nestor sacrifices a heifer to Athena. While the beast has its horns gilded to make it pleasing for the goddess, the deity's portion is confined to a tuft of hair and the thigh bones wrapped in fat, covered by a small portion of the raw meat which is then burnt.<sup>9</sup> The remainder of the beast was roasted on skewers and consumed by the assembled human company. The skin and horns were generally given to the temple or priest. The same division of the sacrificial victim (an ox) was being prepared for a sacrifice to „the Nymphs“ before the death of Aigisthos of Mycenae.<sup>10</sup> Again, it was the sharing of the sacrifice among the guests that appears to have been a major component of the ritual. In Aristophanes' *Birds*, Peisthetairos worries that the sacrificial victim (a goat) is too small for the crowd that has assembled,<sup>11</sup> while in *Old Cantankerous*, Knemon observed with much annoyance that the sacrifice at the shrine of Pan was more party than piety. Indeed as discussed in Chapter 5.3 the family of the protagonist is described as bringing all manner of dining couches and rugs into the shrine for the celebration. One character even insists that no one should refuse an invitation to eat at the banquet following a sacrifice.<sup>12</sup> While the examples cited above are fictitious accounts, the sacrifices were not intended to be seen as marvellous or strange by the audience. Rather, they were intended to be familiar accounts around which the fictitious narrative revolved. Fourth century BC epigraphic testimony from a cult association in Attica supports the literary evidence with a decree that the official in charge of the sacrifice was to distribute a set share of the sacrificial victim to each member of the assembled devotees.<sup>13</sup>

Although certain deities were ritually awarded specific animal sacrifices, (such as the pigs sacrificed to Demeter during the *Thesmophoria*)<sup>14</sup> most attempts to identify the recipient of a sacrifice through the anatomy of its victim are doomed to failure due to the pragmatic Greek approach to worship. The archaic Athenian law-maker, Drakon, stated that

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<sup>8</sup> Gill 1974: 123-6.

<sup>9</sup> Homer *Odyssey* 3.430-74.

<sup>10</sup> Euripides *Electra* 780-840.

<sup>11</sup> Aristophanes *Birds* 860-90.

<sup>12</sup> Menander, *Old Cantankerous* 390-480, 610-20.

<sup>13</sup> Sokolowski 1969: no.20.

<sup>14</sup> Burkert 1985: 242-6.

the population should worship the gods in accordance with the laws, but that an individual must worship privately within their means.<sup>15</sup> Perceptions of piety had changed little by the early Hellenistic period and Theophrastus reinforced the belief that it is not the type, amount or cost of the sacrifice that concerned gods, but the ethics behind the devotee's choice of beast that mattered<sup>16</sup> – such appears to have been common practice. As Burkert notes so concisely, “The most noble sacrificial animal is the ox, especially the bull; the most common is the sheep.”<sup>17</sup> It is notable that in standard Hellenic practice, the sacrificial beast was always domesticated, most commonly oxen, sheep, goats and pigs.<sup>18</sup> An analysis of the representation of sacrificial victims in the Greek world through epigraphic sources, votive offerings and iconographic representations on painted pottery has confirmed that the cost of the species to be slain played perhaps the biggest factor in its selection. In non-specific art works (painted pottery) bovine victims (costing 40-90 drachms) are by far the most prominent sacrificial beasts. However, official state calendars specify the sacrifice of sheep (of both sexes, 4-17 drachms) at public festivals, while personal votive offerings most often illustrate pigs (20-40 or only 4 drachms for piglets) as the chosen victim.<sup>19</sup> The idealised fiction depicted in the painted pottery contrasts with the more pragmatic prices of reality as portrayed in the votives. It is clear that in most cases, the animal remains related to a sacrificial dump are of little help in divining the identity of the deity being worshipped.

Lucian goes into some details about the animals that were sacrificed at Hierapolis-Bambyke in the second century AD: bulls, cows, sheep and goats were the regular offerings. Pigs were excluded from rituals, although Lucian is ambivalent as to whether this was caused by the animals being considered impure or particularly sacred. A similar contradiction surrounds doves which were considered holy and were thus sacrosanct, yet to touch one caused the individual to be polluted.<sup>20</sup> Cumont explains this ambivalence as a symptom of evolutionary nature of Syrian cult in which certain entities and actions were considered sacred and/or profane as a result of an “original confusion” which had failed to differentiate between prohibitions.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Porphyry *On Abstinence* 4.22.

<sup>16</sup> Theophrastus *On Piety* fr.7.

<sup>17</sup> Burkert 1985: 55.

<sup>18</sup> Detienne 1989: 8-9.

<sup>19</sup> van Straten 1987.

<sup>20</sup> Lucian *The Syrian Goddess* 54.

<sup>21</sup> Cumont 1911: 120-1.

Some recorded Semitic sacrifices took a similar form to their Hellenic counterparts. Lucian describes what sounds like standard Hellenic sacrificial feasts as part of the process of pilgrimage to Hierapolis except that the fleece (the victim was a sheep) was used in further ceremonies, not immediately handed over to the priest.<sup>22</sup> A variant form of sacrifice at Hierapolis saw animals brought before the altar where a libation was poured, the victim then returned home with the devotee where it was sacrificed and again eaten at a feast.<sup>23</sup> Although necessarily distinct from a „public“ temple ritual, once home the sacrifice was presumably carried out in a similar manner. The ritual also fused the process of blood sacrifice directly with the bloodless libation ceremonies at Hierapolis.

A cuneiform tablet from the Rēš temple at Uruk dating from the second century BC provides great insight into the sacrifice and ritual meals provided for the gods who shared the sanctuary.<sup>24</sup> The produce was provided by the extensive land holdings of the temple. Four meals were presented before the cult statue of the sky god Anu daily, a main and a second in the morning and a main and second meal in the evening. The quantity and nature of each meal as laid out in the tablet are quite specific.<sup>25</sup> The daily offerings consigned to Anu totalled a vast quantity; 52 containers of beer, 16 of wine, one of milk, 30 loaves and accompanying fruit and cakes, 50 sheep, eight lambs, two oxen, one calf, seven ducks, three geese, four mice, 30 *marratu* birds, 40 turtledoves, three ostrich eggs and three duck eggs. All meat offerings were slaughtered before presentation but there was no tradition of holocausts during the daily rituals.<sup>26</sup> Further offerings were consigned to the other deities sharing the Rēš temple, Antu, Ištar and Nanāja and of course larger meals could be expected during festivals or if the king happened to be present in the city.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Lucian *The Syrian Goddess* 55.

<sup>23</sup> Lucian *The Syrian Goddess* 57.

<sup>24</sup> *TU* 38, see Linssen 2004: Chapter 3.

<sup>25</sup> The main morning meal comprised a total of six golden containers of barley beer, five of labku beer, one of *nāšu* beer, one of *zabābu* beer, four of wine, an alabaster container of milk, eight loaves of bread, a combination of choice dates, Dilmun dates, figs, raisins and *ḥiṣṣaātu* cakes in equal weight to the loaves, seven first quality sheep, one *kālū* sheep, one adult ox, one suckling calf and ten sheep of lesser quality. The second morning meal contained the same liquids, breads and fruit except for the milk which was omitted. The meat offerings of the second meal were still extensive, although of lesser value: six fat, pure sheep, one *kālū* sheep, five fat sheep of lesser quality, one adult ox, eight lambs five ducks, two ducks of lesser quality, three geese, four *uṣummu* mice, 30 *marratu* birds, 20 turtledoves, three ostrich eggs and three duck eggs. Each of the evening meals included the same liquid offerings, again without the milk, seven loaves and an equal weight of fruit and cakes, four fat, pure sheep, one *kālū* sheep, five sheep of lesser quality and ten turtledoves, see Linssen 2004: 132-6.

<sup>26</sup> Linssen 2004: 158.

<sup>27</sup> Linssen 2004: 135.

Of the five sacrificial processes allowed to the Jews in *Leviticus*, three conformed closely to wider Mediterranean practices. Fellowship, Sin and Guilt offerings<sup>28</sup> required the specified animal to be slaughtered before the altar. Blood was sprinkled around the altar and portions of the beast, predominantly the fat, offal and head, were arranged and burnt while the majority of the meat was kept and eaten by the priest.<sup>29</sup> West Semitic agricultural cult too bore many parallels to Greek practice. Devotees brought their flocks to a central shrine where they were butchered and devoured as part of a common meal in which the god, priests and commoners all received a share. Meat was only eaten in conjunction with sacrifice, and every part of grain production and consumption is related directly to the god/s.<sup>30</sup> Supposing that Babylonian sacrificial-dining traditions did not differ overly from their western neighbours, it is possible to view the immense divine consumption at the Uruk Rēš temple as the measure of the enormous number of priests and other staff that must have attended to the temple on a daily basis.

Although the burnt remains from the potential sacrificial dump located in Jebel Khalid Area B<sup>31</sup> have yet to be analysed, the Jebel Khalid acropolis building did include a small open-roofed court with an *in situ* drum-altar (room 3) as discussed above.<sup>32</sup> The distribution of identifiable remains from the sacrificial deposits in room 3 follows the above noted Hellenic trends, although there are two less common intruders. Sheep and/or goats make up more than half of all diagnostic bones (55.43%), followed by bovine remains (14.13%). This is well in line with Clarke's assessment that the altar was used in the worship of the official dynastic gods. The next largest group represented is pig (13.04%) which would be equally appropriate for Hellenic worship, but unusual if the deity worshipped was Semitic. The burnt remains of land-fowl (11.96%) are less common but not unusual as evidence of Greek practices although as noted above, birds formed a common sacrificial offering at Seleukid Uruk. Most curious of all the animal remains from Jebel Khalid acropolis room 3 were burnt equid bones which amounted to 5.43% of the diagnostic remains.

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<sup>28</sup> *Leviticus* 3.1-17, 4.3-35, 5.14-9.

<sup>29</sup> *Leviticus* 6.25-9, 7.2-18.

<sup>30</sup> *Deuteronomy* 12.5-7; *I Samuel* 2.13; *Hosea* 4.10, 5.6, 8.13; May 1932: 94. See also the potential relationship between threshing floors and sacred high places in Chapter 5.4.2 above.

<sup>31</sup> See Chapter 4.4.2 above.

<sup>32</sup> Clarke 1994:72-3; *JK* 1: 33; Clarke 2003: 10-1; see Chapter 2.3 above.

The horse was highly unusual as a Greek sacrificial victim, mentioned only rarely and in a context where the sacrifice was not usually followed by the consumption of the victim. It is most commonly associated with funerary offerings at elite burials.<sup>33</sup> In a unique situation, a filly was sacrificed by the Boiotians before the battle of Leuktra (371 BC) as a substitute for a maiden demanded by a dream.<sup>34</sup> The sacrifice of donkeys in a Greek context is equally rare, known only in connection with Priapos whose ithyphallic nature was associated with the presumed virility of the donkey.<sup>35</sup> However, two second millennium BC Ugaritic texts (RS 1.002 and RS 24.266) mention a ritual which did involve the sacrifice of a donkey. While the purpose of the sacrifice in RS 24.226 is unclear, a donkey was offered to Ba'al together with a variety of other beasts including a bull, sheep and a number of birds.<sup>36</sup> The combined sacrifice of different species on a single occasion at Ugarit illustrates a pan-Semitic custom which continued at Seleukid Uruk and reoccurs at Lucian's fire-festival at Hierapolis-Bambyke.<sup>37</sup> The donkey of RS 1.002 was sacrificed specifically "to cement political accord between ethnic groups" and between the mortal and divine world. It is believed that (as in the rare Greek examples) the donkey at Ugarit was probably not eaten after its sacrifice.<sup>38</sup> It would be attractive to relate the Seleukid acropolis equid sacrifice to the Ugaritic precedent, a symbol of the unification of colonists and their indigenous co-habitants but of course such an association, while not completely fanciful, is otherwise unfounded. As the Boiotian example illustrates, in a world where the divine communicate directly with individuals, the inexplicable cannot be ruled out.

Holocausts, *šrp* (Ugaritic) or *'olāh* (Hebrew), formed another common west Semitic sacrificial ritual. It varied from blood sacrifices in that no part of the animal was eaten by the assembled mortals.<sup>39</sup> The choice of animal was dependant on the occasion and even the sex and age was strictly regulated.<sup>40</sup> As in the blood sacrifice the animal was killed at the altar and butchered according to precise instructions. Although the skin was granted to the

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<sup>33</sup> *OCD* „sacrifice, Greek“ 1344. The burial of ritually killed chariot horses at their owners' funerals is known for Bronze Age burials from the Argolid, Attica and Crete and continued on Cyprus as late as the seventh century BC, see Burkert 1983: 51 n.10; 1985: 34; Kosmetatou 1993. A similar ritual was carried out at the funeral of Patroklos (Homer *Iliad* 23.171-84) although all of these examples clearly fulfilled a very different function to the later activities in the Jebel Khalid palace.

<sup>34</sup> Pausanias *Description of Greece* 9.13.3; Plutarch *Pelopidas* 21-2.

<sup>35</sup> Burkert 1983: 69.

<sup>36</sup> Pardee 2002: no.13.

<sup>37</sup> See Chapter 4.5.2.3 above.

<sup>38</sup> Pardee 2000: 234; 2002: no.22 section V.

<sup>39</sup> *Leviticus* 1.2-14, 5.7-10, 6.8-13; Porphyry *On Abstinence* 2.26; Pardee 2000: 234; Lightfoot 2003: 503-4.

<sup>40</sup> *Leviticus* 1.2, 1.14, 22.19-20. The victim was always a flock or herd animal without defect, cattle, sheep, goats, doves and pigeons being stipulated as appropriate.

priest or temple, the flesh and bones were wholly consumed by fire, the ashes later removed to be deposited in a ritually clean area.<sup>41</sup> The thick ash and burnt bone deposits in the southwest of the Jebel Khalid temenos may represent a similar ritual deposit of sacrificial „waste“.<sup>42</sup> It certainly appears that Lucian refers to a holocaustic variant when he describes the spring festival known as the “Fire-festival” or “Torch” at Hierapolis-Bambyke.<sup>43</sup> During the Hierapolis Fire-festival, tall trees were cut down and erected as pillars in the temenos of the temple. Live, domestic animals were hung from the pillars, as were other expensive adornments (gold, silver, cloth), the whole composition was then set alight. In contemporary (east Semitic) Babylonia, holocausts were conducted on occasion but were not the standard for sacrifice during daily rituals.<sup>44</sup> For the Greeks, ritual holocausts were predominantly confined to the worship of chthonic deities and veneration of the dead (although there were of course exceptions).<sup>45</sup>

Common to both Greek and Semitic sacrifice of all periods were the so-called bloodless offerings, the “deposition” of various kinds of food (mostly cakes, fruit and libations) at a location designated for the god to receive it.<sup>46</sup> At the Prytaneion in Athens, a table was set for the Dioskouri which was provided daily with “cheese, a barley cake, ripe olives and leeks.”<sup>47</sup> As noted above, regular offerings of loaves and date cakes set out on wooden or golden tables were part of the daily cultic ritual at the Rēš temple in Seleukid Uruk as they doubtless were across Babylonia and presumably in all Semitic areas.<sup>48</sup> In Judaea, offerings of flour formed one of the five accepted sacrificial media.<sup>49</sup> Fine flour, oil and incense were given to the priests who kept a portion of the flour and combined the rest into cakes which are burnt. Alternatively, the devotee could offer fruit cakes which were again partially burnt with the remainder being kept by the presiding priest. Small altars suitable for the burning of cakes or incense have been uncovered in Hellenistic contexts at Jebel Khalid, Umm el-Amed, Gadara, Gerasa and Tel Beersheba, testifying to the widespread practice of the ritual. Libations were equally common in Greek and Semitic

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<sup>41</sup> *Leviticus* 1.5-13, 6.8-13; Hultgård 1987.

<sup>42</sup> See Chapter 4.4.2 above.

<sup>43</sup> Lucian *The Syrian Goddess* 49. See also Chapter 4.5.2.3 above.

<sup>44</sup> Linssen 2004: 165-6.

<sup>45</sup> Burkert 1985: 63-4. For one notable exception, see Pausanias’ account of the worship of Artemis Laphria at Patrai (*Description of Greece* 7.18.7).

<sup>46</sup> Gill 1974: 117-8.

<sup>47</sup> Gill 1974: 121.

<sup>48</sup> Linssen 2004: 129; 140-2.

<sup>49</sup> *Leviticus* 2.1-14, 5.11-3, 24.5-9.



traditions with wine used for celestial deities but utilising pure water, milk or honey for chthonic gods.<sup>50</sup>

At various points in this study, the issue of dietary prohibition has been touched upon. The most extensive list of dietary prohibitions imposed on populations of the Levant may be found in *Leviticus* book 11. Among land animals, only those that chew on cud and have cloven hooves were considered clean, while the camel, hyrax (a large rodent native to the Levant and Africa), rabbit, swine, weasel, rat and lizard were singled out as being particularly unclean.<sup>51</sup> Of marine creatures, only fish were permitted to be touched or eaten.<sup>52</sup> Most carnivorous birds and bats are listed as unclean as were all insects with the exception of locusts and related *orthoptera*.<sup>53</sup> In addition, the Jews were also instructed that the consumption of the blood or fat of any animal was strictly forbidden.<sup>54</sup>

Lucian of Samosata notes that at Hierapolis fish, doves and swine were considered so sacred or so unclean that devotees of Atargatis were forbidden from touching, sacrificing or consuming them. These customs were apparently practiced across Syria.<sup>55</sup> As a result, doves in particular were to be found living in great numbers in settlements sacred to the Syrian Goddess, at Hierapolis-Bambyke particularly, but also at Askalon where Philo Judaeus reported that the birds abused their immunity and created a nuisance.<sup>56</sup> At Jebel Khalid which, as we have seen appears to have followed Hierapolitan religious traditions,<sup>57</sup> there is a noticeable lack of fish bones found in Hellenistic deposits. Although so-called fish plates occur in abundance across the site, only a single casserole cooking pot has been discovered and that was not in a domestic context. Aside from being a standard Greek cooking shape, casseroles were used extensively for the preparation of fish.<sup>58</sup> Euphrates fish are eaten with relish by the modern villagers and the lack of Hellenistic period fish bones or the cook-ware suitable for fish cooking appears deliberate, probably a result of an intentional abstinence from an abundant food source. In contrast, fish bones were present in

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<sup>50</sup> Aeschylus *Libation Bearers* 125-56; Zaidman and Pantel 2002: 41.

<sup>51</sup> *Leviticus* 11.3-8, 11.26-31.

<sup>52</sup> *Leviticus* 11.9-12. This is at variance with North Syrian traditions.

<sup>53</sup> *Leviticus* 11.13-23.

<sup>54</sup> *Leviticus* 3.17, 7.23-7, 19.26.

<sup>55</sup> Lucian *The Syrian Goddess* 14, 54; Athenaeus *Banquet of the Learned* 8.346e-e; Porphyry *On Abstinence* 2.61; Xenophon *Anabasis* 1.4.9; see also Chapter 4.5.1.3 above.

<sup>56</sup> Eusebius *Preparation for the Gospel* 8.14.50.

<sup>57</sup> See Chapter 4.5.3 above.

<sup>58</sup> Berlin 1997: 94; Clarke and Jackson (forthcoming).

quantity in the Hellenistic layers at Tel Anafa together with numerous casserole dishes providing some indication of the culturally Hellenised nature of the population.<sup>59</sup>

One of the most widely held Semitic prohibitions was against the consumption of pigs.<sup>60</sup> The Emesene born emperor of Rome, Elagabalus (AD 218-223), was said to have given away all manner of tame animals as largess with the exception of swine which he abstained from in accordance with „Phoenician“ laws.<sup>61</sup> However, despite the indigenous prohibition, swine were utilised and kept in large numbers around the Hellenised civic centres as illustrated by the Christian gospel accounts of Jesus at Gadara or Gerasa where exorcised demons fled into a herd of two thousand domestic pigs.<sup>62</sup> As noted above, swine were the third most common victim sacrificed at the acropolis room 3 altar at Jebel Khalid. Domesticated pigs appear to have been eaten for the first time at Tel Anafa in the late-second to early-first centuries BC. Interestingly enough this was the phase which saw a Hellenised family unit from Tyre or Sidon take over the occupancy of the Tel Anafa villa.<sup>63</sup> As with the consumption of fish, the dietary acceptance of pork is indicative of the highly Hellenised nature of the Phoenician settlers. The ceramic assemblage supports this view, “suited to a wealthy and cosmopolitan lifestyle and similar to those of the large Hellenistic Greek cities of the eastern Mediterranean.” Although the source of much of the villa’s crockery was southern Phoenician, the forms were highly Hellenised.<sup>64</sup>

Although the Ituraeans and Idumaeans were both Semitic populations, the sanctuaries at Har Senaim and Tel Beersheba have both produced rare evidence for the sacrifice of pigs.<sup>65</sup> The Har Senaim excavators posited that pig remains might be evidence for the Phoenician ritual of Ba‘al-Adonis mentioned in the Old Testament,<sup>66</sup> although here too we might see evidence of Hellenisation creeping into even the most vernacular of sanctuaries.

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<sup>59</sup> Redding 1994: 281-2; Berlin 1997: 21-2, 94-103.

<sup>60</sup> Porphyry *On Abstinence* 2.9, 2.61.

<sup>61</sup> Herodian 5.6.9.

<sup>62</sup> *Mathew* 8.30-3 (locating the event at Gadara). See also *Mark* 5.11-4 and *Luke* 8.32-4 who locate the same event in the territory of Gerasa.

<sup>63</sup> Herbert 1994: 16-8; Redding 1994: 290-2; Berlin 1997: 23-9.

<sup>64</sup> Berlin 1997: 21-2.

<sup>65</sup> Dar 1993: 84; Derfler 1993: 44, 52.

<sup>66</sup> *Isaiah* 65.4, 66.17.

## ANCIENT SOURCES

- Aelian *On Animals*.  
Aeschylus *Libation Bearers*.  
\_\_\_\_\_ *Persians*.  
Appian *Mithridatic Wars*.  
\_\_\_\_\_ *Syrian Wars*.  
Apuleius *Metamorphosis*.  
Aristophanes *Birds*.  
Aristotle *Economics*.  
Arrian *Anabasis*.  
\_\_\_\_\_ *Events after Alexander*.  
Athenaeus *Banquet of the Learned*.  
*The Bible* (New International Version).  
*Book of the Laws of Countries*.  
Cassius Dio *Roman History*.  
Caesar *Alexandrian War*.  
\_\_\_\_\_ *Civil War*.  
Cicero *Ad familiares*.  
\_\_\_\_\_ *De lege agraria*.  
\_\_\_\_\_ *In Verrum*.  
\_\_\_\_\_ *Nature of the Gods*.  
*Code of Hammurabi*.  
Diodorus Siculus *Library of History*.  
Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Roman Antiquities*.  
Ephippus of Olynthus *Fragment*.  
Epiphanius *Against the Heresies*.  
Euripides *Bacchae*.  
\_\_\_\_\_ *Electra*.  
Eusebius *Chronicle*.  
\_\_\_\_\_ *Ecclesiastical History*.  
\_\_\_\_\_ *Onomasticon*.  
\_\_\_\_\_ *Preparation for the Gospel*.  
Granius Licinianus *History of Rome*.  
Herodotus *The Histories*.  
Homer *Iliad*.  
\_\_\_\_\_ *Odyssey*.  
Iamblichos *Mysteries*.  
*Itinerarium Burdigalense*.  
John Chrysostom *Homily on Matthew 7.7*.  
John Lydus *On the Months*.  
Josephus *Jewish Antiquities*.  
\_\_\_\_\_ *Jewish War*.  
Julian *Misopogon*.  
Justin *Epitome*.  
Juvenal *Satire*.  
*The Koran*.  
*Letter of Aristeas*.  
Libanius *Oration*.  
Livy *History of Rome*.  
Lucian *Alexander the False Prophet*.  
\_\_\_\_\_ *Anacharsis*.  
\_\_\_\_\_ *Assembly of the Gods*.  
\_\_\_\_\_ *Dionysus*.  
\_\_\_\_\_ *Double Indictment*.  
\_\_\_\_\_ *Heracles*.  
\_\_\_\_\_ *The Liar*.  
\_\_\_\_\_ *Nigrinus*.  
\_\_\_\_\_ *Perigrinus*.  
\_\_\_\_\_ *On Sacrifice*.  
\_\_\_\_\_ *Saturnalia*.  
\_\_\_\_\_ *The Scythian*.

_____ <i>The Syrian Goddess.</i>	_____ <i>Artaxerxes.</i>
_____ <i>The Way to write History.</i>	_____ <i>Crassus.</i>
_____ <i>Zeus Cross Examined.</i>	_____ <i>Demetrios.</i>
_____ <i>Zeus Tragoedus.</i>	_____ <i>Lucullus.</i>
_____ <i>Zeuxis.</i>	_____ <i>Lysander.</i>
I <i>Maccabees.</i>	_____ <i>Moralia.</i>
II <i>Maccabees.</i>	_____ <i>On the fortune of Alexander.</i>
Macrobius <i>Saturnalia.</i>	_____ <i>Pelopidas.</i>
Malalas <i>Chronicle.</i>	_____ <i>Pyrrhus.</i>
Mark the Deacon <i>Life of Porphyry of</i> <i>Gaza.</i>	_____ <i>Themistocles.</i>
Meleager <i>Greek Anthology.</i>	Polyaenus <i>Stratagems.</i>
Menander <i>Old Cantankerous.</i>	Polybius <i>Histories.</i>
<i>Mishnah Sukkah.</i>	Porphyry <i>On Abstinence.</i>
Nonnus <i>Dionysiaca.</i>	Propertius <i>Elegies.</i>
Origen <i>Commentary on John 6.4.</i>	Ptolemy <i>Geography.</i>
Papyri codices:	Quintus Curtius <i>History of Alexander.</i>
<i>P. Dura.</i>	Stephanus of Byzantium <i>Ethnica.</i>
<i>P. Enteuxeis.</i>	Strabo <i>Geography.</i>
<i>P. Hamburg.</i>	<i>Suda.</i>
<i>P. Oxyrhynchus.</i>	Tacitus <i>Annals.</i>
<i>P. Petrie.</i>	<i>Teaching of Addai.</i>
<i>P. Zenon.</i>	Theophrastus <i>On Piety.</i>
Pausanias <i>Description of Greece.</i>	Trogus <i>Prologue.</i>
Petronius <i>Satyricon.</i>	Theodoret <i>Life of St Simeon.</i>
Plato <i>Laws.</i>	_____ <i>Religious History.</i>
Pliny <i>Natural History.</i>	Vitruvius <i>On Architecture.</i>
Plutarch <i>Agesilaus.</i>	Xenophon <i>Anabasis.</i>
_____ <i>Alexander.</i>	_____ <i>Cyropaedia.</i>
_____ <i>Antony.</i>	_____ <i>Hiero.</i>
	_____ <i>Memoirs of Socrates.</i>

## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ADAJ</i>	<i>Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan.</i>
<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archaeology.</i>
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt.</i>
<i>ANSMN</i>	<i>American Numismatic Society Museum Notes.</i>
<i>APAAME</i>	<i>The Aerial Photographic Archive for Archaeology in the Middle East.</i> University of Western Australia ( <a href="http://www.classics.uwa.edu.au/Aerial_archaeology">www.classics.uwa.edu.au/Aerial_archaeology</a> ).
<i>BASOR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research.</i>
<i>BMC Syria</i>	<i>Catalogue of Greek coins in the British Museum: Seleucid kings of Syria.</i> 1878. London: British Museum Publication.
<i>CHI-X</i>	<i>Coin Hoards</i> , volumes 1-10. 1975-2008. London: Royal Numismatic Society.
<i>CIG</i>	Franzius, I. (ed.) 1977: <i>Corpus Inscriptionum Graecorum</i> (vol. 3). Hildeshiem: Georg Olms.
<i>CRAI</i>	<i>Comptes rendus de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles lettres.</i>
<i>CSE 2</i>	Hoover, O.D. 2007: <i>Coins of the Seleucid empire from the collection of Arthur Houghton part II.</i> New York: American Numismatic Society.
<i>Gerasa</i>	Kraeling, C.H. (ed.) 1938: <i>Gerasa, city of the Decapolis: an account embodying the record of a joint excavation conducted by Yale University and the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem (1928-1930), and Yale University and the American Schools of Oriental Research (1930-1931, 1933-1934).</i> New Haven: American Schools of Oriental Research.
<i>Gertrude Bell diaries</i>	The Gertrude Bell diaries, University of Newcastle upon Tyne Special Collections Department.
<i>Historia</i>	<i>Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte.</i>
<i>IGCH</i>	Thompson, M., Mørkholm, O. and Kraay, C.M. 1973: <i>An inventory of Greek coin hoards.</i> New York: American Numismatic Society.
<i>JDAI</i>	<i>Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts.</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies.</i>

- JK 1* Clarke, G.W., Connor, P.J., Crewe, L., Frohlich, B., Jackson, H., Littleton, J., Nixon, C.E.V., O’Hea, M. and Steele, D. 2002: *Jebel Khalid on the Euphrates volume 1: report on excavations 1986-1996*. Sydney: Mediterranean Archaeology Supplement 5.
- JK 2* Jackson, H. 2006: *Jebel Khalid on the Euphrates volume 2: the terracotta figurines*. Sydney: Mediterranean Archaeology Supplement 6.
- JK 3* Jackson, H. and Tidmarsh, J. 2009 (forthcoming): *Jebel Khalid on the Euphrates volume 3: the pottery*. Sydney: Mediterranean Archaeology Supplement 7.
- JRS* *Journal of Roman Studies*.
- Macedonia I* *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum ANS 7, Macedonia I: cities, Thraco-Macedonian tribes, Paeonian kings*. 1987. New York: American Numismatic Society.
- Macedonia II* *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum ANS 8, Macedonia II: Alexander I – Philip II*. 1994. New York: American Numismatic Society.
- Meditarch* *Mediterranean Archaeology: Australian and New Zealand journal for the archaeology of the Mediterranean world*.
- NC* *Numismatic Chronicle*.
- OCD* *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. 1996. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- OGIS* Dittenberger, W. (ed.) 1970: *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae: supplementum sylloges inscriptionum Graecorum* (vol. 1). Hildeshiem: Georg Olms.
- RPC* Burnett, A., Amandry, M. and Ripollès, P.P. 1992: *Roman provincial coinage I: from the death of Caesar to the death of Vitellius* (2 volumes). London: British Museum Press.
- RRC* Crawford, M.H. 1974: *Roman Republican coinage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- SC 1* Houghton, A. and Lorber, C. 2002: *Seleucid coins, a comprehensive catalogue part I: Seleucus I through Antiochus III* (2 volumes). New York: American Numismatic Society.

- SC 2* Houghton, A., Lorber, C. and Hoover, O. 2008: *Seleucid coins, a comprehensive catalogue part II: Seleucus IV through Antiochus XIII* (2 volumes). New York: American Numismatic Society.
- SchwMbl* *Schweizer Münzblätter.*
- SchwNumRu* *Schweizerische Numismatische Rundschau.*
- SHAJ* *Studies in the history and archaeology of Jordan.*
- SIG* Dittenberger, W. 1914-1924: *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecorum* (3rd ed. 4 volumes). Leipzig: Hirscl.
- SNG Alpha Bank* *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum Greece II, the Alpha Bank collection: Macedonia I, Alexander I – Perseus.* 2000. Athens: Alpha Bank.
- SNG ANS 6* *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum the collection of the American Numismatic Society part 6: Palestine-South Arabia.* 1981. New York: American Numismatic Society.
- SNG Levante* *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum Switzerland I: Levante-Cilicia.* 1986. Berne: Credit Suisse Berne, Numismatic Department.
- SNG Spaer* *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum Israel I: The Arnold Spaer collection of Seleucid coins.* 1998. London: Italo Vecchi.
- Syria* *Syria: revue d'art oriental et d'archéologie.*
- Topoi* *Topoi Orient-Occident.*
- ZPE* *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik.*

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