



Fig. 1. Gadara/Umm Qays (Jordan). Orthophoto of the construction inside the fortification wall, trench 1. (Photo courtesy of the DAI Orient Department/C. Hartl/Reiter.)

Research related to archaeological/settlement history and building history in Gadara/Umm Qays was continued under the direction of Claudia Bührig in 2018 and 2019, concentrating primarily on the area of the settlement mound, with a particular focus on the beginning of settlement development until the most recent construction on the crest of the hill during the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries. This research in the outer northwestern area of Jordan can serve as a comparative study for the settlement history of the region.

In 2018 and 2019, two sondages were carried out inside the Hellenistic fortress wall. A test trench excavated in 2015, directly neighboring the fortification wall, underwent large-scale extension in 2018–2019. Underneath a thick levelling

Gadara *Intra Muros*

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Fig. 2. *Madafeh* (living room) from the end of the 19th century in the old town of Umm Qays/Hara Foqa (Jordan). (Photo courtesy of the DAI Orient Department/C. Bührig.)

layer (which was unlikely to have been installed before the late Byzantine/early Umayyad period) were found the remains of a building with at least two stories that is suspected to belong to the early Roman period. This was constructed on the inside of the fortress wall, using a massively layered platform and the addition of a gate. The building was connected by an alleyway to the north, which ran parallel to the wall (Fig. 1). The exact construction sequence can be determined only by further excavations.

The settlement dynamics on the hillcrest during late antiquity/the early Islamic period were investigated in a further sondage, located to the northwest. The starting point for this excavation was a subterranean grave construction (hypogeum) likely belonging to late antiquity. This had already been discovered during cleaning work and was partially excavated at the end of the 1990s by the Jordanian Department of Antiquities. Remains of a building south of the grave construction appeared featuring a preserved, carefully set floor made of a large limestone slab (165 x 61 cm; 188 x 38 cm). This building complex, which was reused during the Umayyad period, including the grave construction, was probably destroyed by

an earthquake in the middle of the 8th century CE and presents, therefore, a snapshot of this destruction.

Another initiative in the old village of Umm Qays (Hara Foqa) on the hilltop concerns house construction and building techniques of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These structures are unique in their state of preservation and are largely unknown. Large courtyard houses belonging to the landowner—arranged at almost right angles and all with flat roofs and square rooms, grouped around large, undeveloped inner courtyards—as well as small-scale farmsteads forming a loose grouping of individual buildings, characterize the townscape. Typologically, the courtyard-house complexes orient themselves more towards the Palestinian-Arabian house construction of the region. The documentation of selected courtyard houses and special buildings and their urban integration and cultural value was continued in 2018/2019. Whereas local stones such as basalt and limestone were uniformly used as construction material for the masonry (mostly repurposed ancient construction material), the preserved roof constructions, in contrast, display technical diversity (Fig. 2). In a region lacking in long timber, other options for covering wide spans needed to be pursued. Some individual buildings, namely those from the first construction phase in the late 19th century, still show adjusted relief arches, upon which rested crooked beams of tamarind wood. Things changed for the buildings built during the early 20th century; adjusted arches are either missing here or continue their original function as support. Repurposed railway tracks span the entire interior. Not all buildings in the courtyard house complex could be assigned a function yet, and the destruction is so severe in some places that the design of individual components—e.g., façades—first had to be cleared by ongoing photo research.