

The Decapolis: History and Archaeology

6 Archaeology of the Roman period II – Cults and temples

LICHTENBERGER, A. 2003: *Kulte und Kultur der Dekapolis: Untersuchungen zu numismatischen, archäologischen und epigraphischen Zeugnissen*. Wiesbaden.

SEGAL, A. 2013: *Temples and Sanctuaries in the Roman East*. Oxford.

Cults

- Integral part of the city (*polis*) life

“...at the age of sixteen or eighteen, he is presented for admission into the city. On that day, *in the presence of an altar*, and before the smoking flesh of a victim, he pronounces an oath, by which he binds himself, among other things, always *to respect the religion of the city*. From that day he *is initiated into the public worship, and becomes a citizen.*”

F. De Coulanges 1864 (2001): *The Ancient City: A Study of the Religion, Laws and Institutions of Greece and Rome*, 106.

- Public (civic, “national” cults, local/regional festivals) – patron deities of cities, mythical founders...
- Private (ancestor worship, *collegia*, mystery religions...)
- Cult of Emperor (Roman period)

- Historical sources
- Epigraphical sources
- Numismatical sources



Arch of Marcus Aurelius, sacrifice

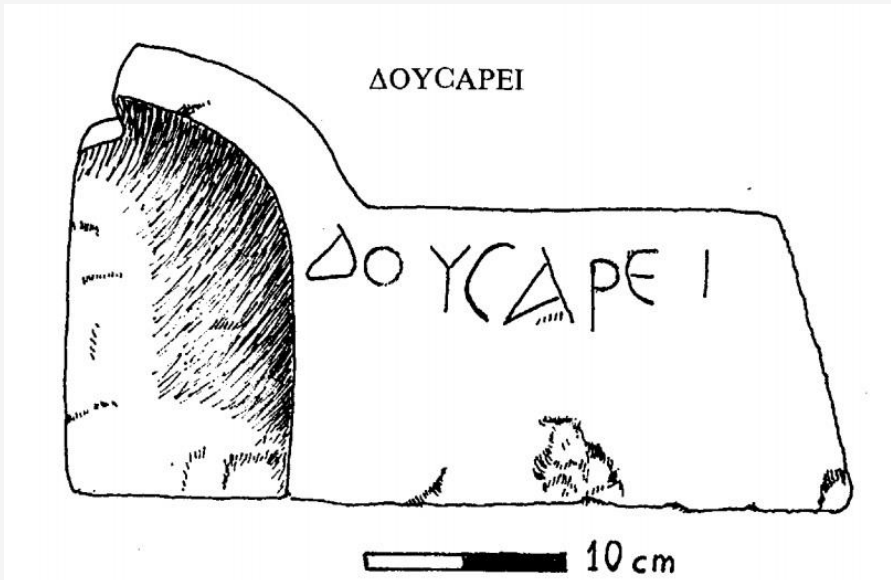
Cults

Historical sources

- Few, mostly late (e.g. Christian polemicists...)
- *De Dea Syria* by Lucian of Samosata (2nd c. CE) – describes sanctuary and cult of Atargatis/Hera/Aphrodite in Hierapolis Bambyke (Manbij), N. Syria

Epigraphical sources

- Dedications, votives, altars...
- Most rich source - hundreds of inscriptions - dedicants (onomastics), deities, occasions, practice...
- Both private and public



Dedication to Dushara, Hippos; the niche probably housed an image of the deity

Αγαθῆ τύχη.

Θεῷ Διονύσῳ κτίστη τῷ κυ-
ρίῳ Σέλευκος Ἀρίστωνος χα-
ριστήριον. Ἔτει εσ'.

“With good fortune. Seleucus son of
Ariston (dedicated this) as a thanks
offering to the god Dionysus, the lord
founder. Year 205“ (=141/2 CE)

Scythopolis, altar in the Roman Basilica
Votive offering, fulfilling a vow, dedicated to
the mythical founder (Dionysus) of the city

Cults

Numismatical sources

- Important source for the civic cults – self-representation of cities
- Occasionally includes temple structures/sacred objects (question of how accurate representation of an actual temple structure/image of a deity worshipped therein; in many cases the only evidence for a cultic structure in a given city)



12

Ob. L. Verus r., laureate
 Rev. Tyche standing r. in tetrastyle temple with central arch, holding scepter and small figure, river god swimming
 ΣΕ ΑΒΙΑΗΝΩΝ Ι Α Α Γ ΚΟΙ ΣΥ
 ΛΣ (year 230=166/7 CE)
 Abila, Bronze



1

Ob. M. Aurelius r., laureate
 Rev. Facade of tetrastyle temple with central arch between two towers, bastion in background (?), Zeus seated l. holding scepter and a Nike (?)
 ΚΑΠΙΤΩΛΙΕΩΝ ΙΕΡ ΑΣΥ ΑΥΤ
 ΘΕ (year 69=165/6 CE)
 Capitolias, Bronze



31

Ob. Ant. Pius r., laureate
 Rev. Facade of tetrastyle temple Zeus seated facing holding scepter and a Nike
 ΠΟ ΓΑΔΑΡ Ι Α Α Γ ΚΣΥ
 ΓΚΣ (year 223=159/60 CE)
 Gadara, Bronze



2

Ob. M. Antonius r., laureate
 Rev. Dome-shaped baetyl on altar with staircase
 ΔΟΥΣΑΡΗΣ ΘΕΟΣ ΑΔΡΑΗΝΩΝ
 Ε Ο (year 70=175/6 CE)
 “Dusares, god of Adraha”
 Adraha, Bronze

Cults

Tyche (TYXH)

- Fortune, destiny, luck
- From Hellenistic period onwards Tyche becomes tutelary deity of an individual city, a personification of sort

Tyche of Antioch
Early Hellenistic model by Eutychides
Attributes:
Crown - city wall - city goddess
Ears of grain - prosperity
Personification of Orontes at her feet
(river flowing through the city)



Ob. Bust of Tyche r., veiled, wearing crown-wall, palm branch above shoulder
Rev. Cornucopia from which bunch of grapes is falling
ΓΑΔΑΡΕΩΝ
KA (year 21= 44/3 BCE)
Gadara, Bronze



6



Temples

Temples, shrines, *temene*, altars

- Places of cult
- Monumental temples – focal points of public life and cultic activity

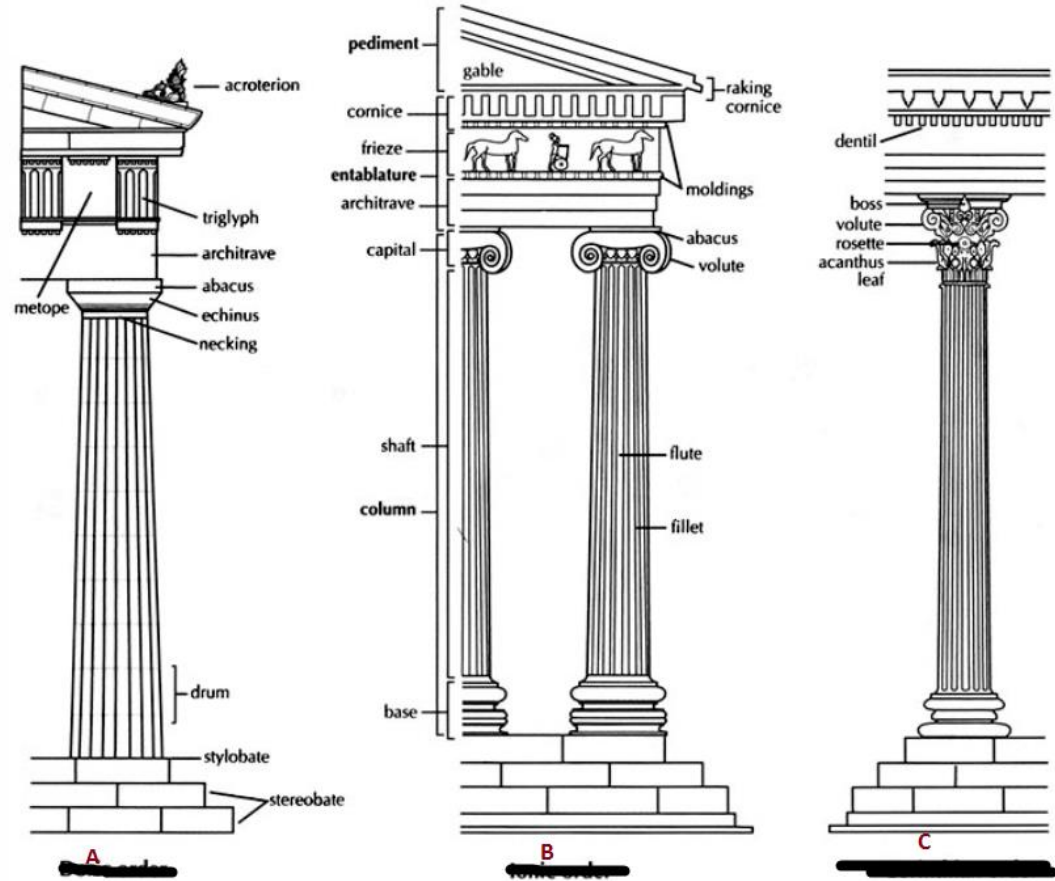
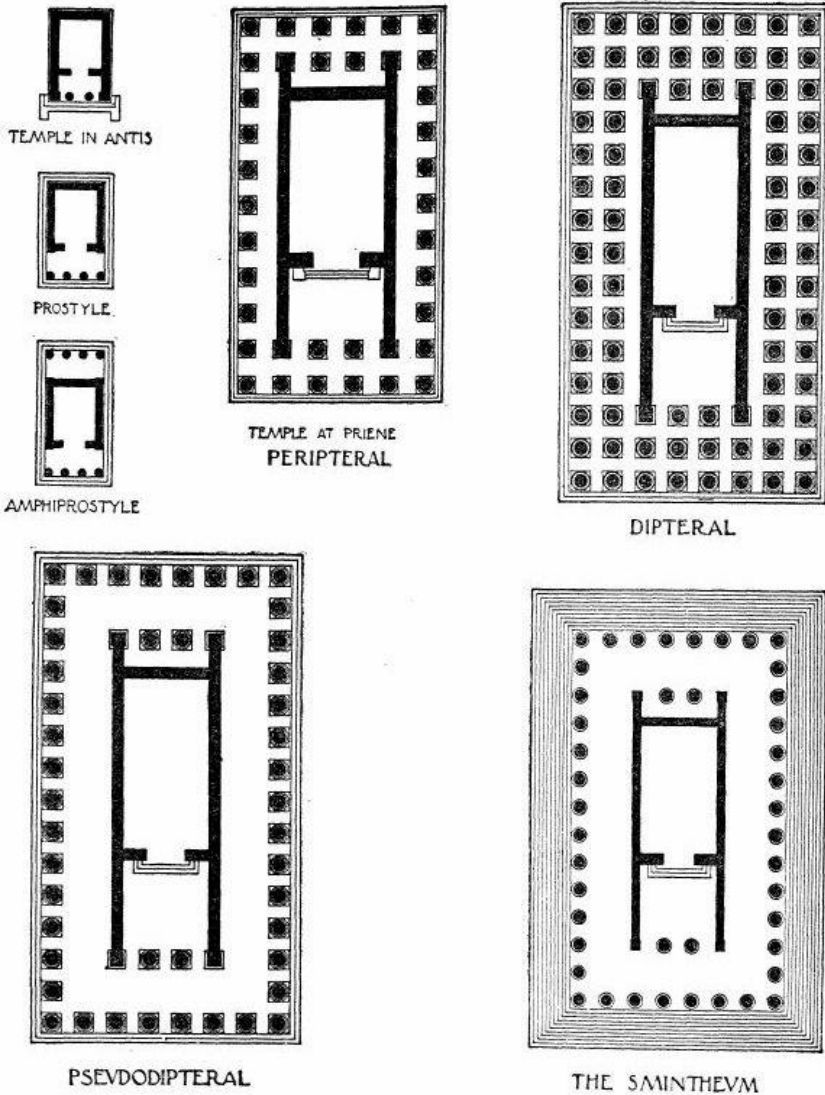
- “Vitruvian” x “non-Vitruvian”
- “Vitruvian” – mostly Greek/Roman pantheon, Emperor cult
- “non-Vitruvian” – mostly local deities, but Greek/Roman and Emperor cults also present
- Syrian (and Jewish), Arab/Nabataean plans with “Greek” architectural decor

<http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Vitruvius/home.html>

Temples

Temples, shrines, *temene*, altars

- Vitruvian temple layouts and architectural decoration

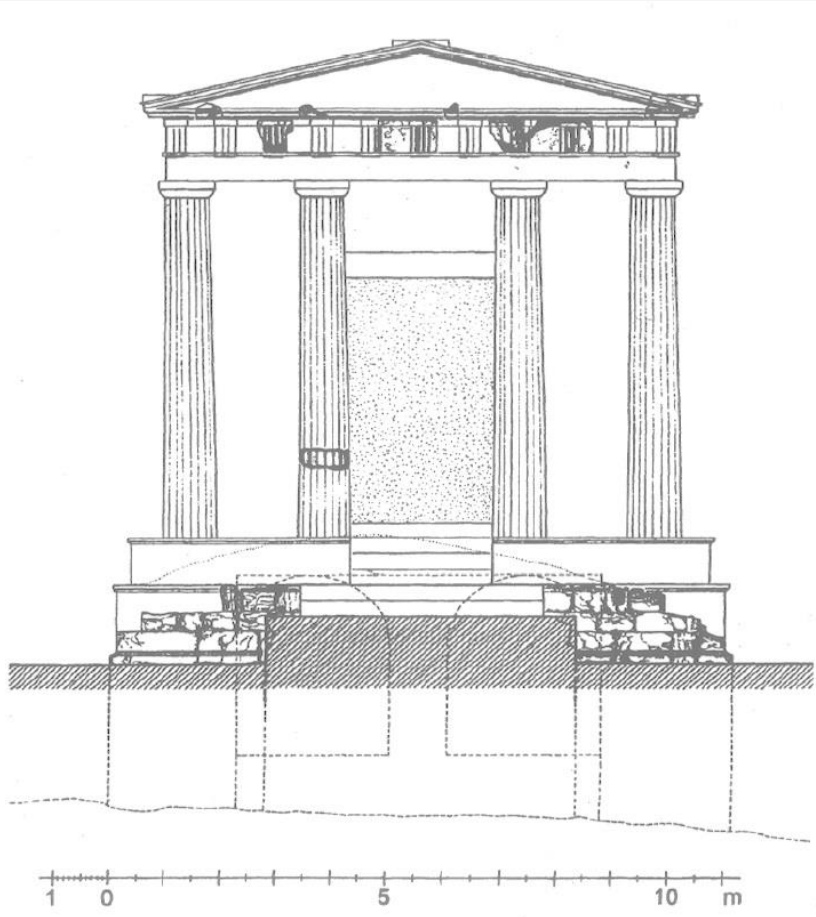


Left: temple layouts, the terminology is based on the disposition of columns

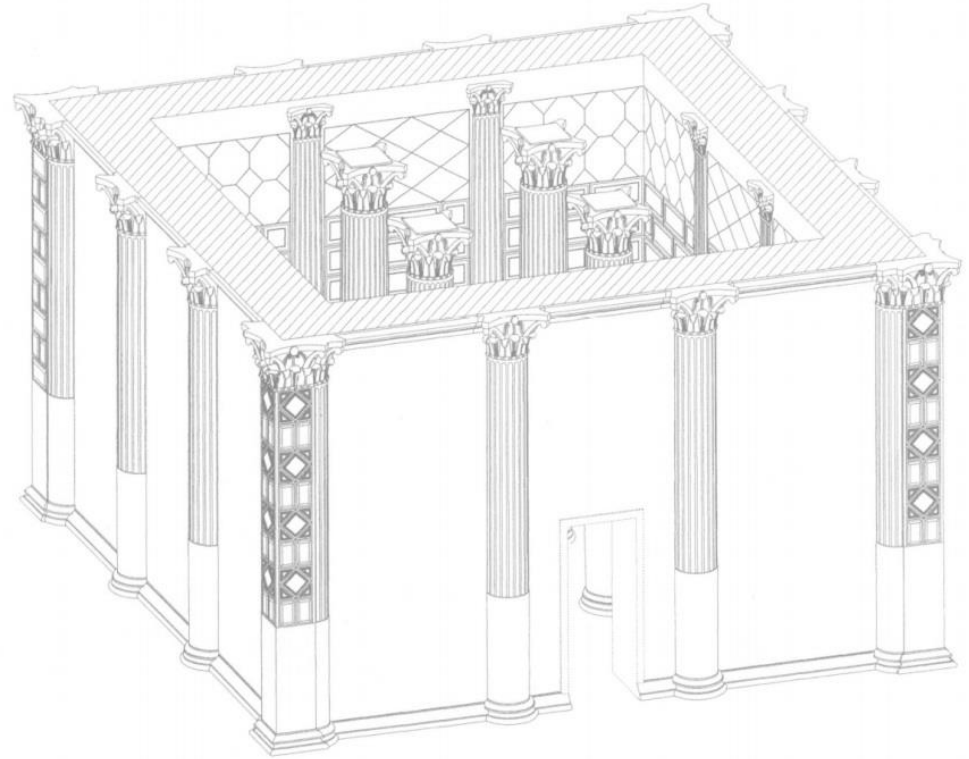
A - Doric order
 B - Ionic order
 C - Corinthian order

Temples

- “Vitruvian” x “non-Vitruvian”



- “Vitruvian” temple of Zeus in Gadara
- Distylos in antis, podium, Doric order
- Hellenistic (2nd/early 1st c. BCE)

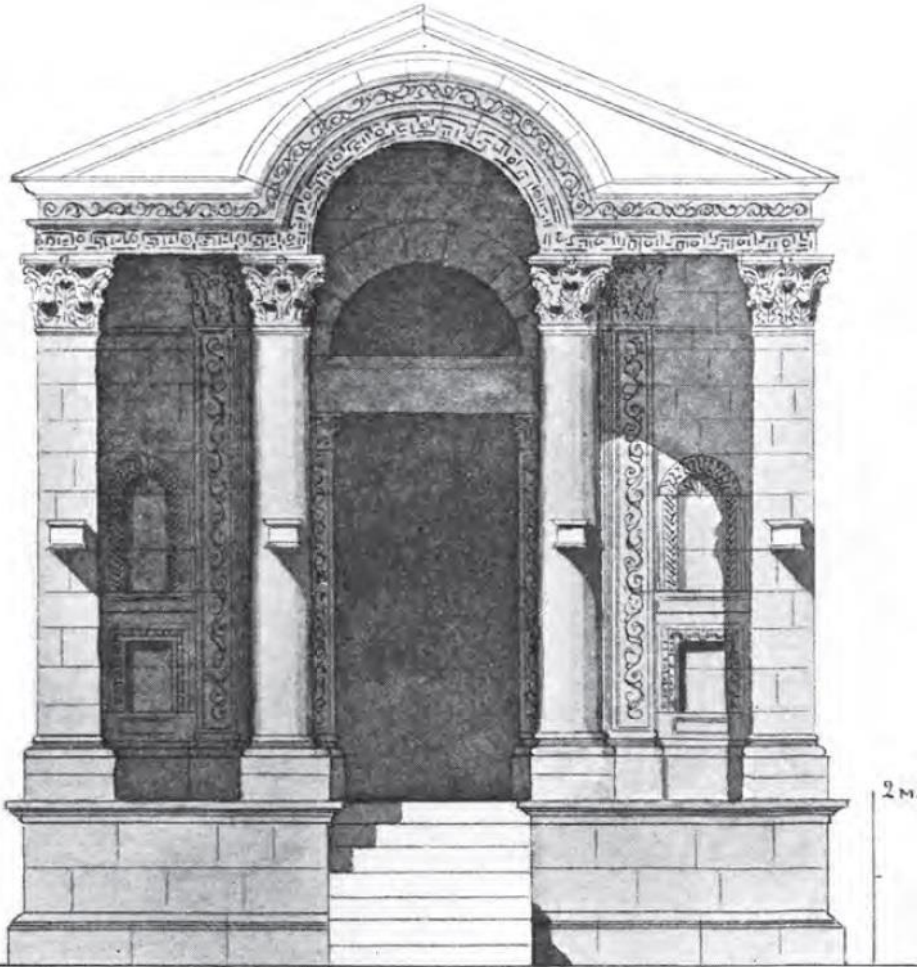


- “non-Vitruvian” temple of Zeus in Gerasa
- Pseudo-peripteral cube, Corinthian order
- Hellenistic (70/60 BCE)

Temples

Syrian Arch

- A temple entablature with arch above the central pair of columns in the temple front (entrance to the *pronaos* and *naos*)
- Typical architectural feature of Roman-period temples (2nd-3rd c.) in southern Syria and Transjordan



Southern Temple in Atil (S. Syria, mid-2nd c.)

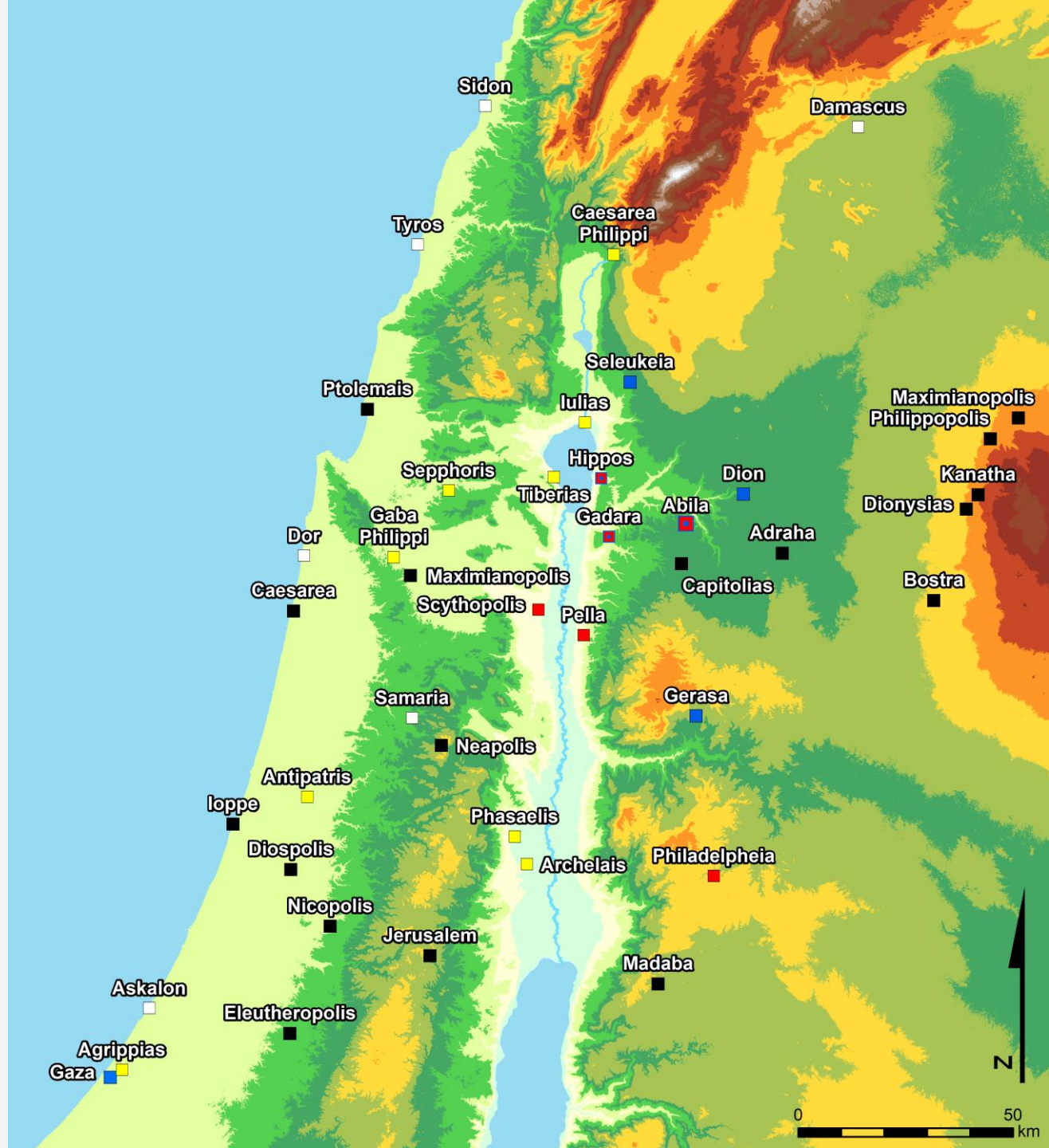


Temple of Zeus Megistos in Canatha-Kanawat (2nd c. CE)

Temples

Roman period

- Hellenistic temples less known
- Native sanctuaries –
Jerusalem, Mt. Gerizim
- Great building activity during the “Early Roman revival” in major cities
- Enlargement and monumentalization of existing sanctuaries (Jerusalem, Damascus, Palmyra, Petra...)
- Introduction of the imperial cult
- Major building surge in the 2nd-3rd c. CE – even in smaller settlement, extra-urban (rural) sanctuaries etc.



Temples

Urban

1. Vitruvian

Scythopolis
Gerasa
Neapolis
Hippos
...

2. Non-Vitruvian

Jerusalem
Palmyra
Damascus
...

Extra-Urban

1. Vitruvian

Omrit
...

2. Non-Vitruvian

Si'
...

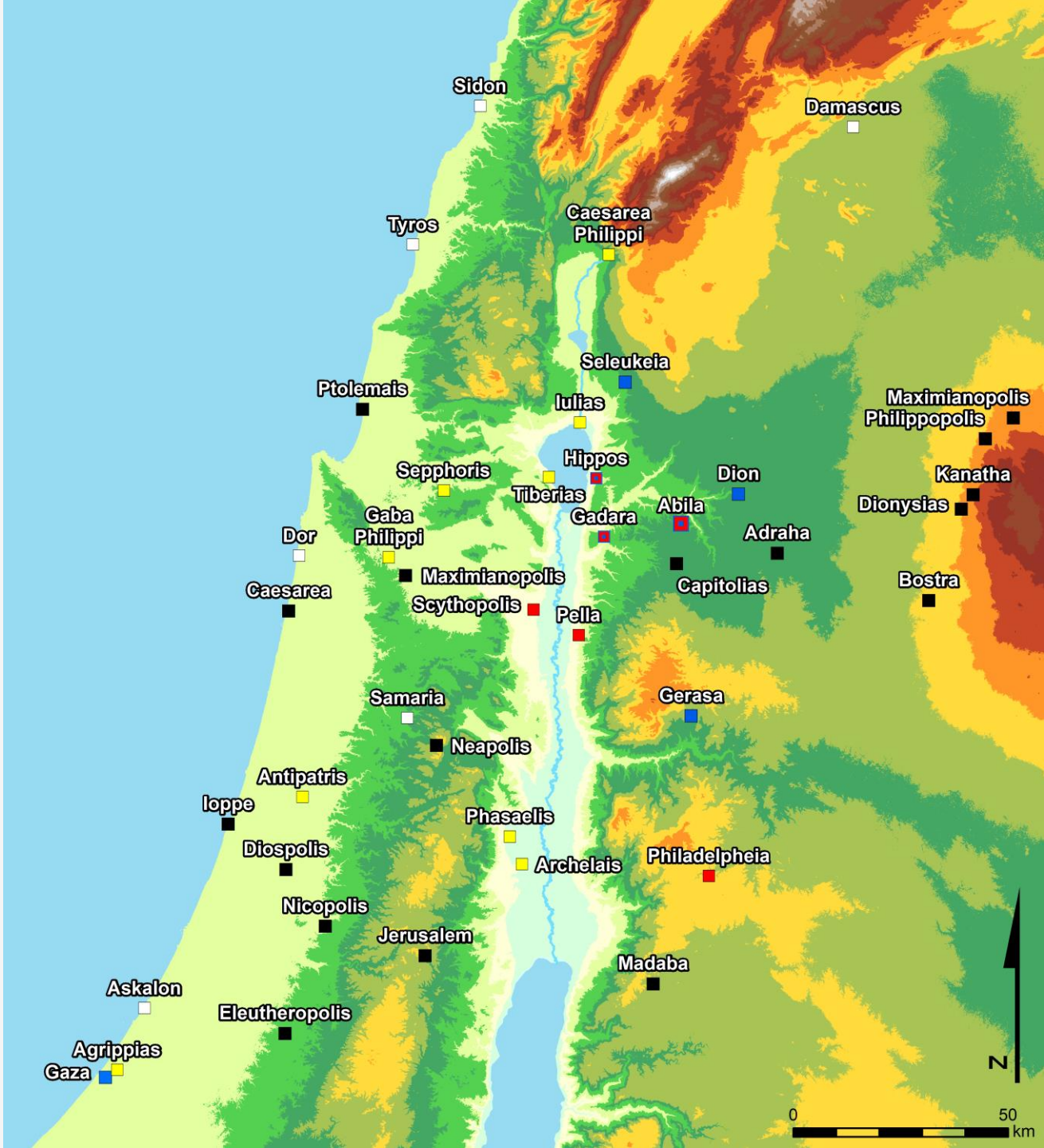
Emperor cult

1. Vitruvian

Caesarea(s)
Samaria-Sebaste

2. Non-Vitruvian

Kalybe temples



Temples

(Nysa) Scythopolis

- Better numismatical and epigraphical evidence
- Zeus, Dionysus and Tyche appear most prominently on coins
- Dionysus appear with Nysa (his nursemaid) - referring to the foundation legend of the city
- Historical Nysa probably daughter of Antiochus IV



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Ob. M. Aurelius r., laureate
 Rev. Facade of tetrastyle temple with central arch, Zeus seated l. on throne holding scepter and Nike crowning him
 ΝΥΣΑΕ ΚΟΙ ΣΥ
 ΕΤ ΖΚΣ (year 227=163/4 CE)



38

Ob. Draped bust of Elagabalus r., laureate
 Rev. Zeus and Tyche standing facing each other,
Zeus r. holding scepter pointing to infant Dionysus emerging from his thigh, Tyche l. holding scepter and infant Dionysus
 ΝΥΣΑ ΣΚΥΘ ΙΕΡΑΣ
 ΑΠΣ (year 281=217/18 CE)



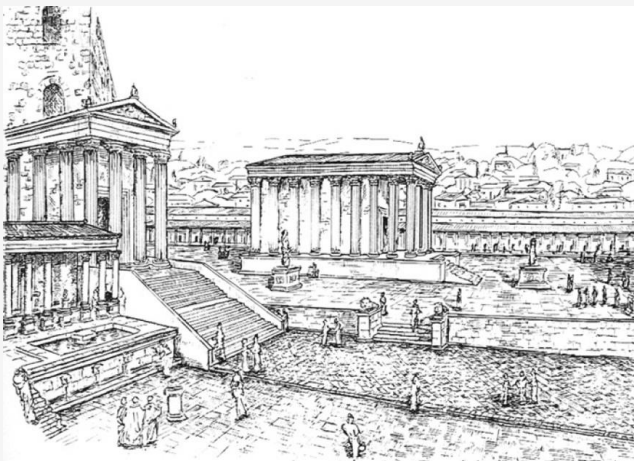
42

Ob. Draped bust of Elagabalus r., laureate
 Rev. **Tyche-Nysa seated on throne r. holding infant Dionysus in her arms**
 ...ΑΣΥ...
 ΒΠΣ (year 282=218/19 CE)

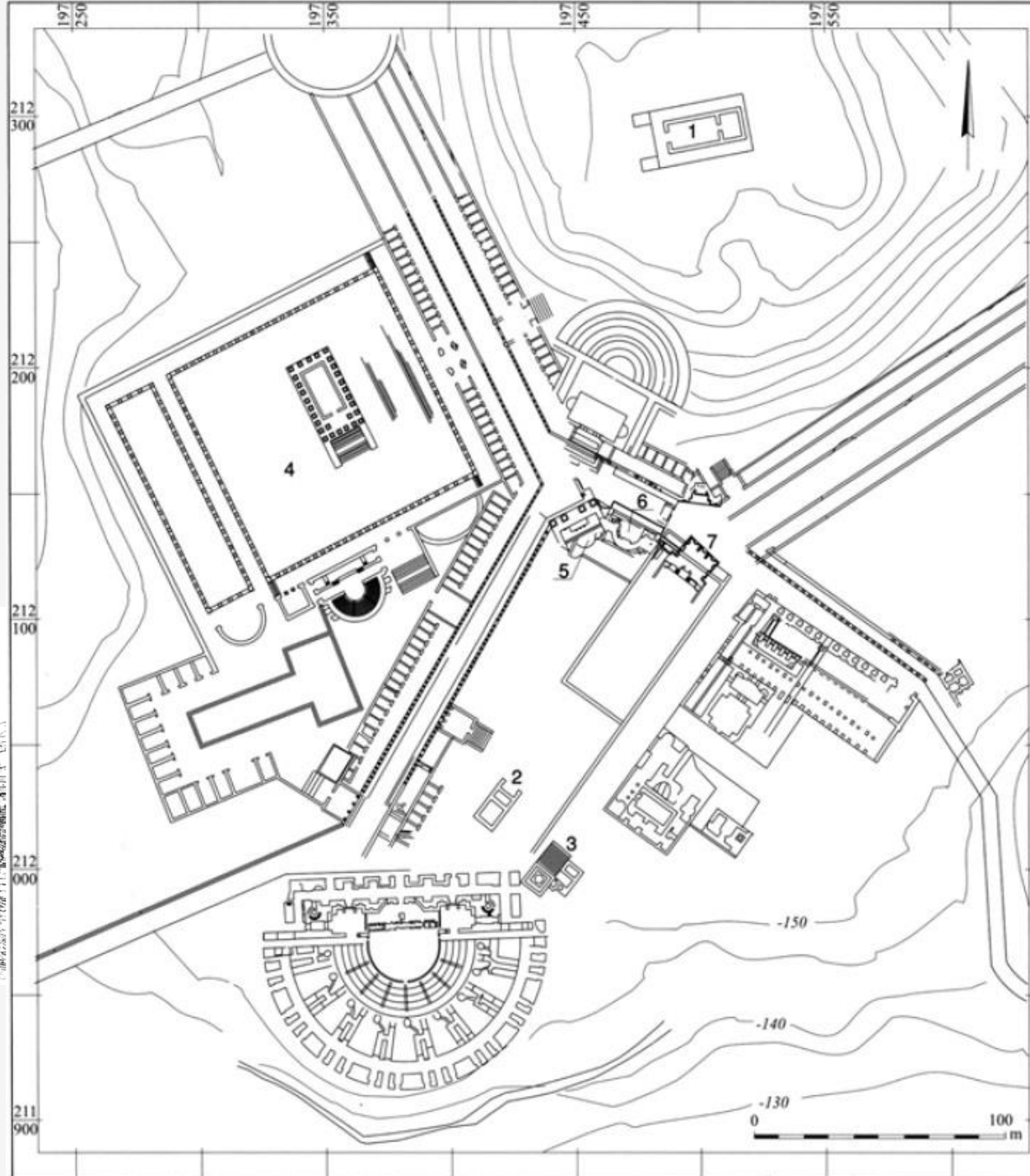
Temples

Scythopolis

- Temple of Zeus (1)
- Kalybe? Temple of Dionysus? (5)
- "Altar" (7)
- Caesareum (4)
- Agora temples (2, 3)



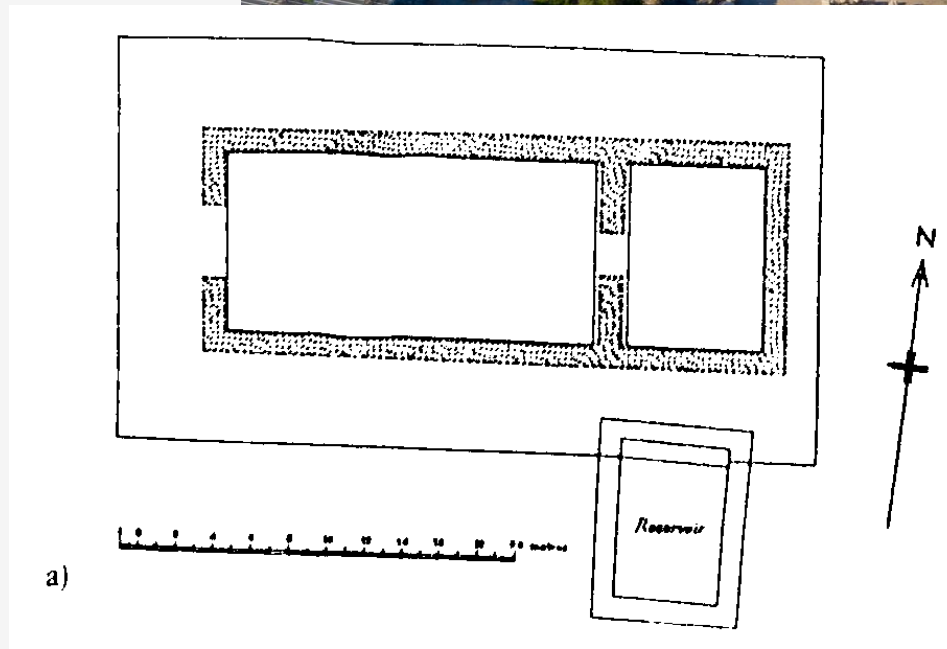
Reconstruction of agora temples



Temples

Scythopolis

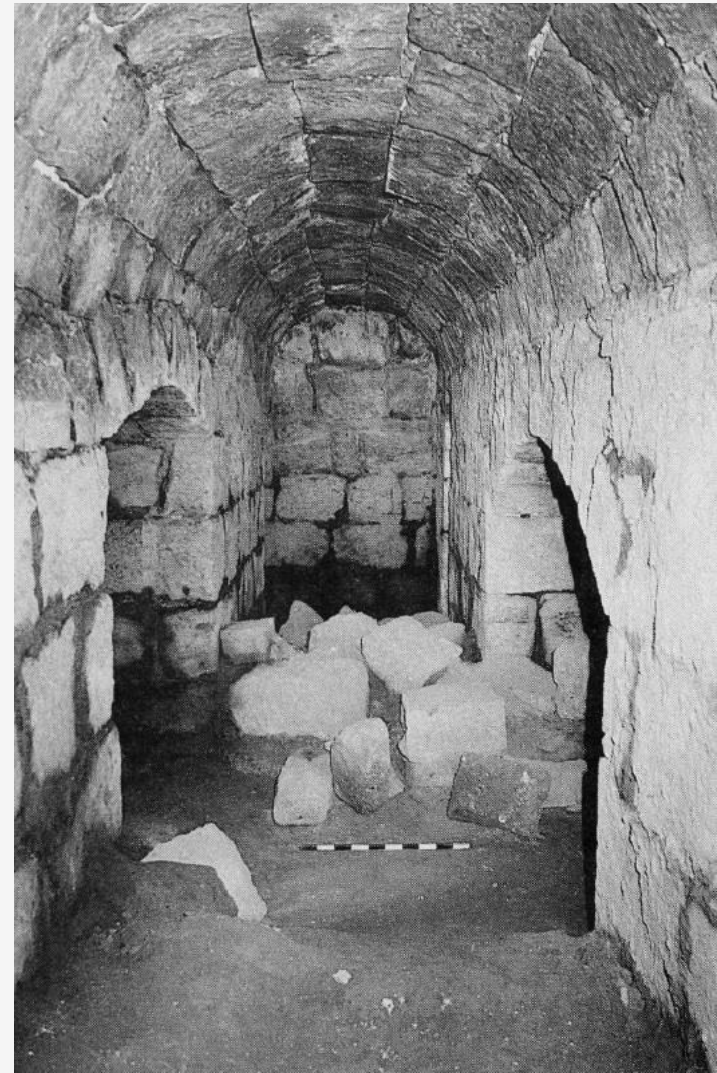
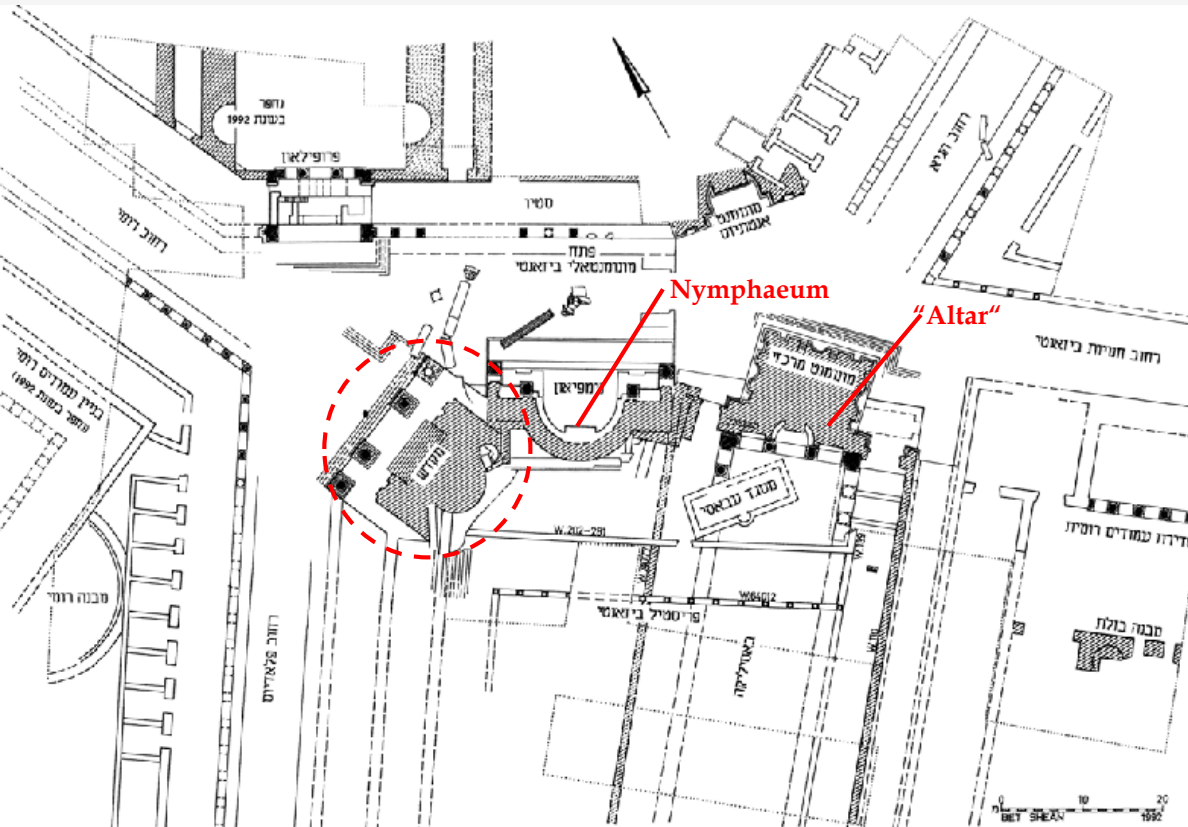
- Temple of Zeus Olympios (Akraios) on the main tell – apparently part of a larger temenos
- Probably Corinthian peripteral hexastyle with adyton
- Ca. 22x37 m
- Hellenistic foundations, surviving structure from the (early?) 1st c. CE
- Overlaid by a Byzantine church



Temples

Scythopolis

- Temple of Dionysus in the lower city? Or *kalybe* of Imperial cult
- Corinthian tetrastyle prostyle, round naos, on podium
- “Syrian” pediment – arched
- Facade ca. 20 m wide, naos \varnothing 8.25 m
- Second half of the 2nd c. CE



Vaults of the podium

Temples

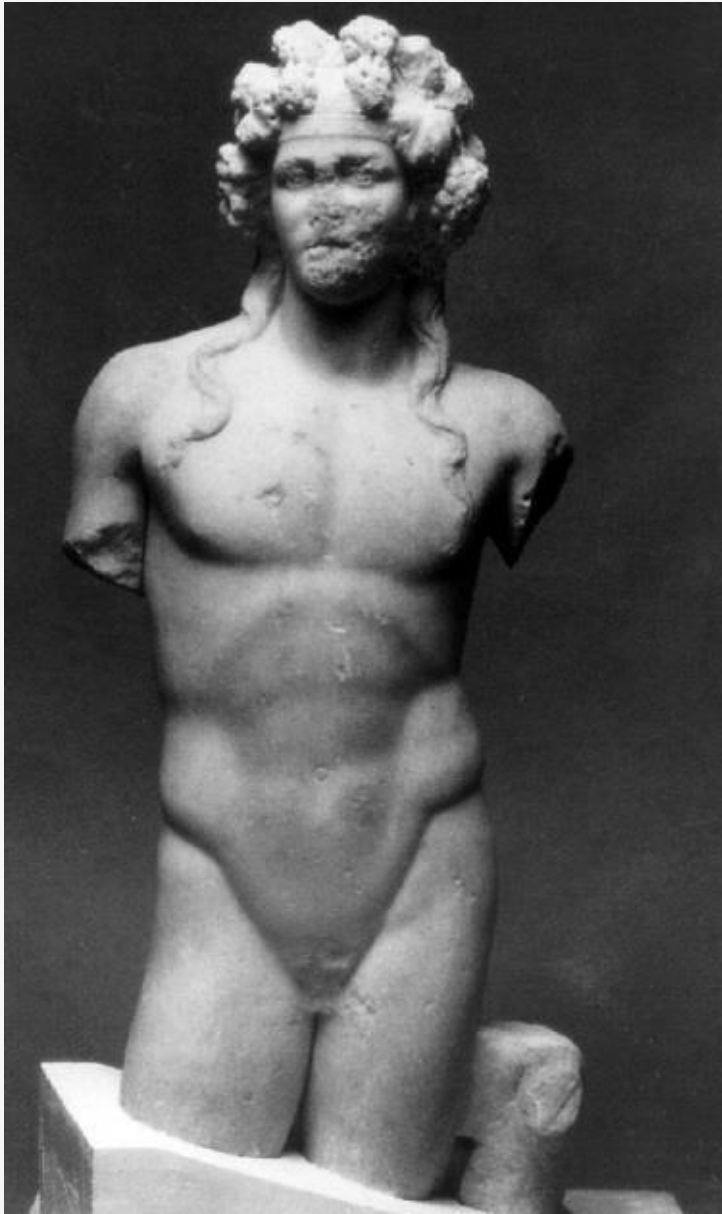
Scythopolis

Pediment of the temple in situ after earthquake 749 CE



Temples

Scythopolis



Dionysus as a nude youth with a garland of vine leaves and grape clusters; from the Roman stoa in Scythopolis 2nd c. CE

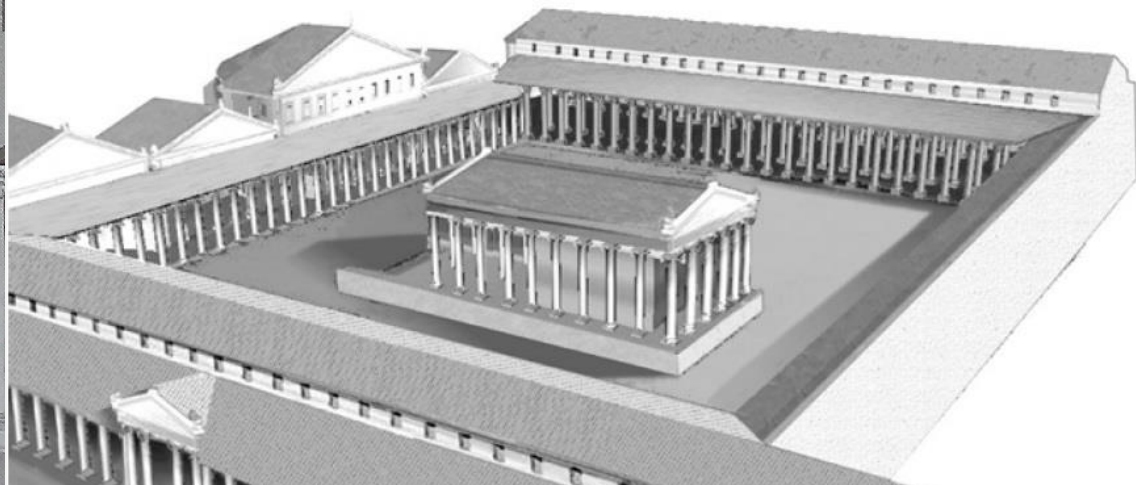
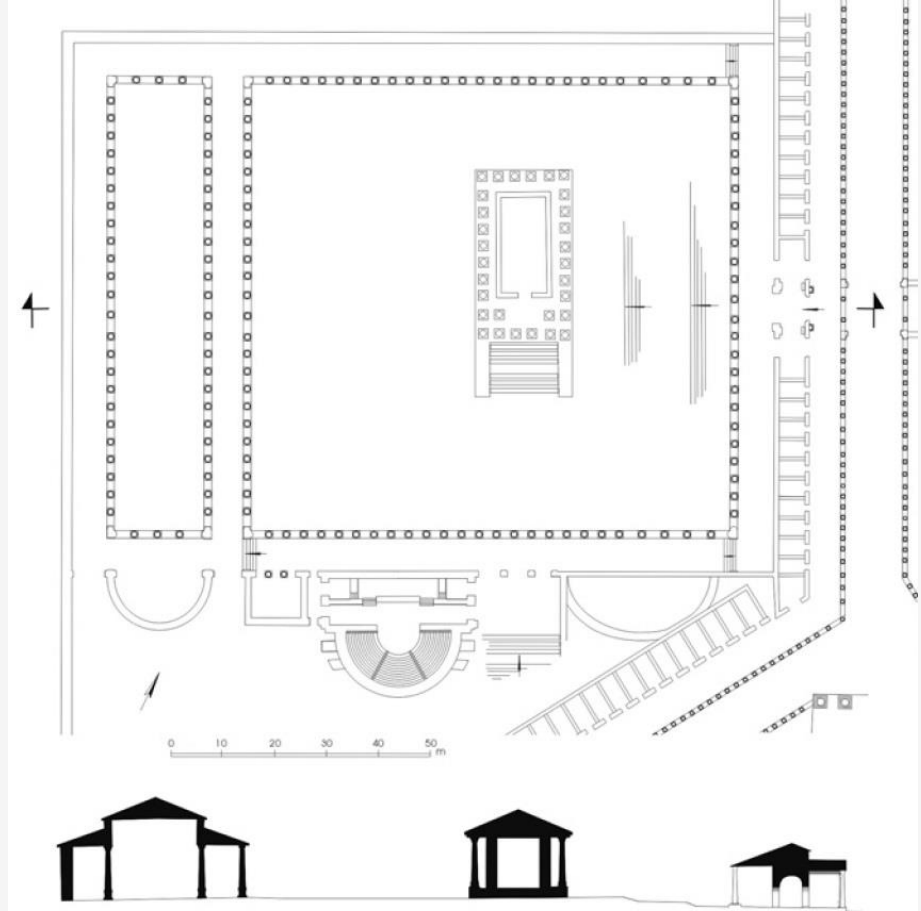
Dionysus in animal skin, from the theater in Scythopolis



Temples

Scythopolis

- Early Roman pre-Odeum public structures
- Caesareum + odeum
- First half of the 2nd c. CE
- Destroyed by earthquake 363 CE, not renovated
- Courtyard with Ionic peristyle and the temple
- Corinthian distylos in antis rooms on either side of the odeum – public halls?
- Corinthian basilica
- Ionic podium temple?



Temples

Gerasa

- Less spectacular numismatical record, better epigraphical sources
- Two major civic sanctuaries
- Temple of Zeus (Hellenistic in origin)
- Temple of Artemis (Hadrianic-Antonine)
- Artemis totally dominates city coinage from the 2nd c. onwards

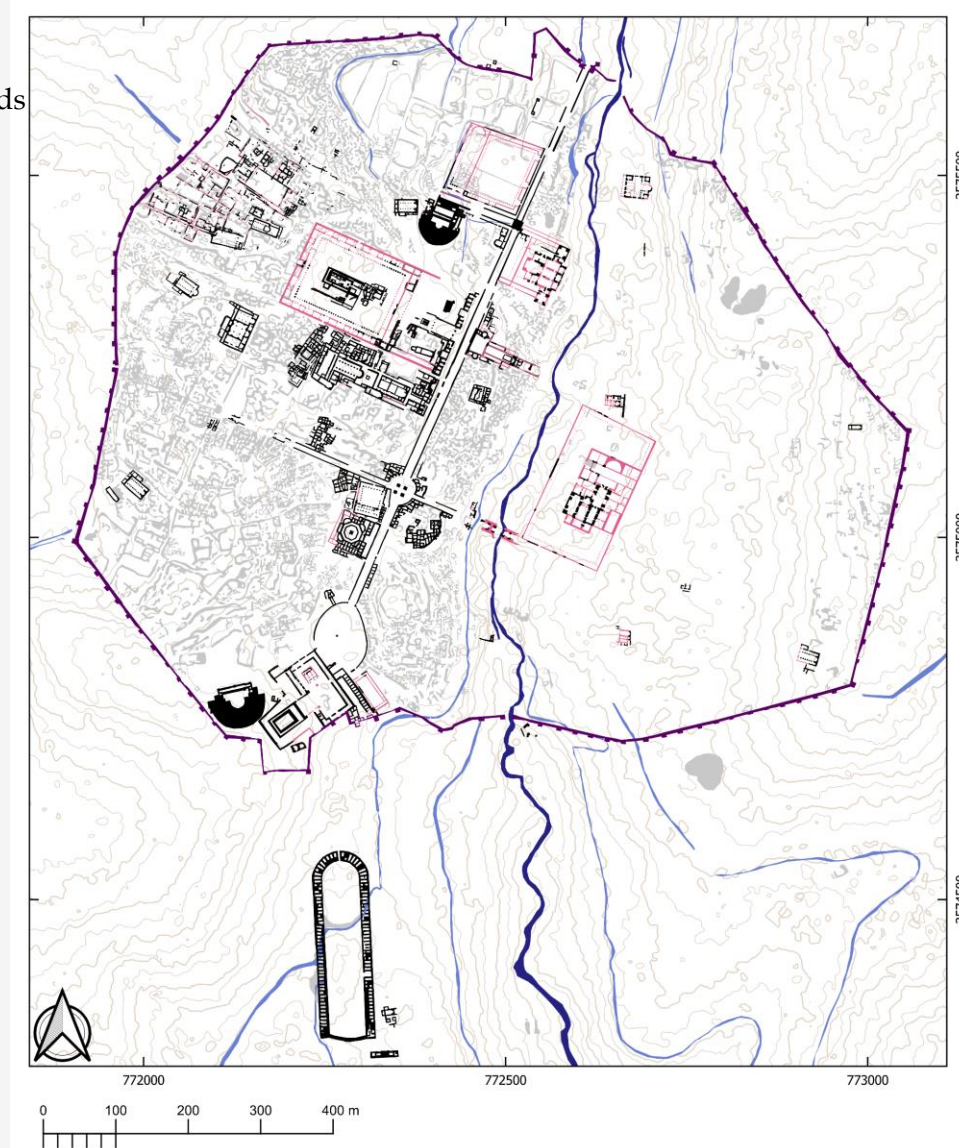


9



Ob. M. Aurelius r.,
laureate, draped and
cuirassed
Rev. Artemis Huntress
advancing r., drawing
arrow from quiver and
holding bow, hounds
running r. at her feet
APTEMIS TYXH ΓEP
no date (ca. 161-180 CE)

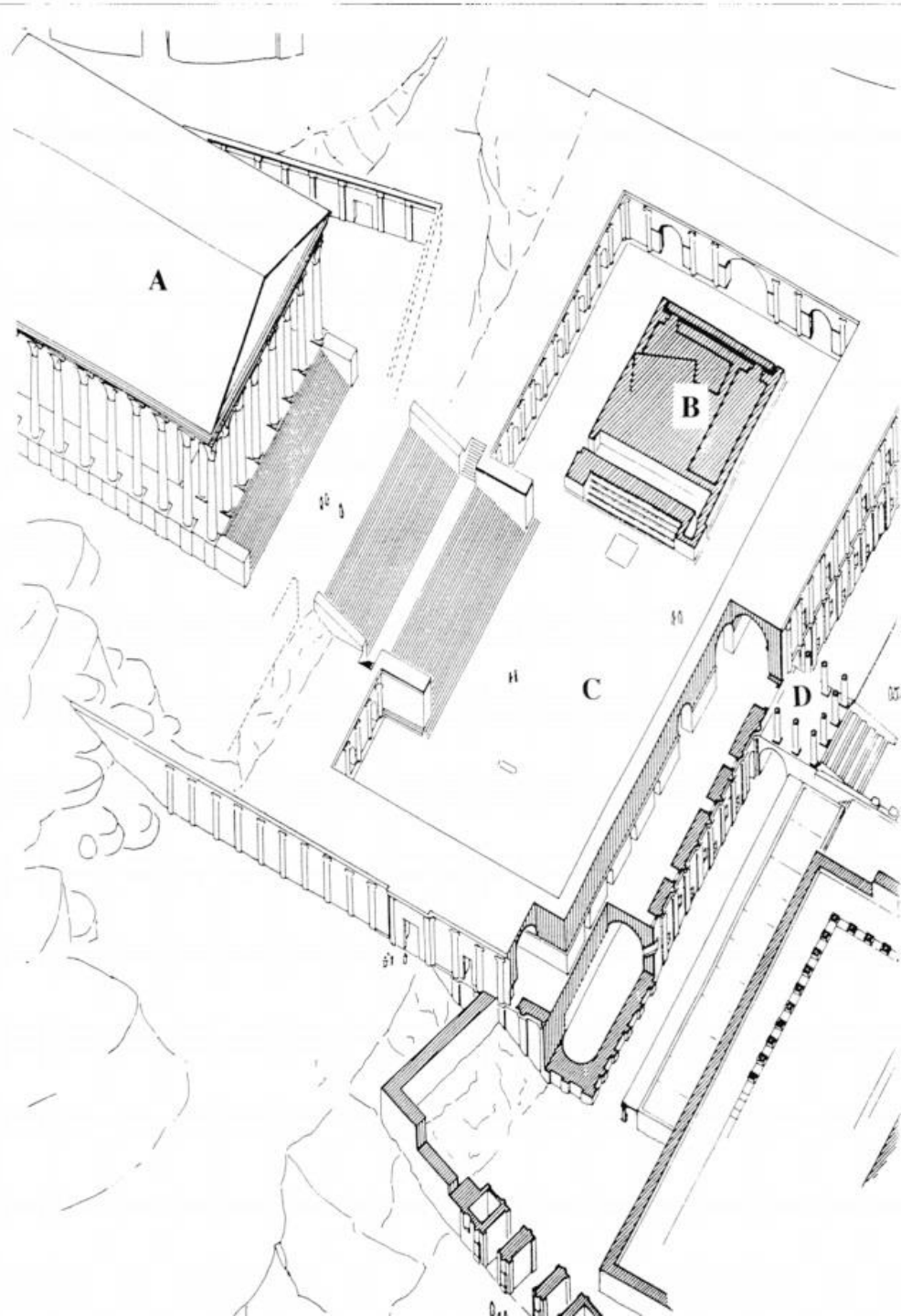
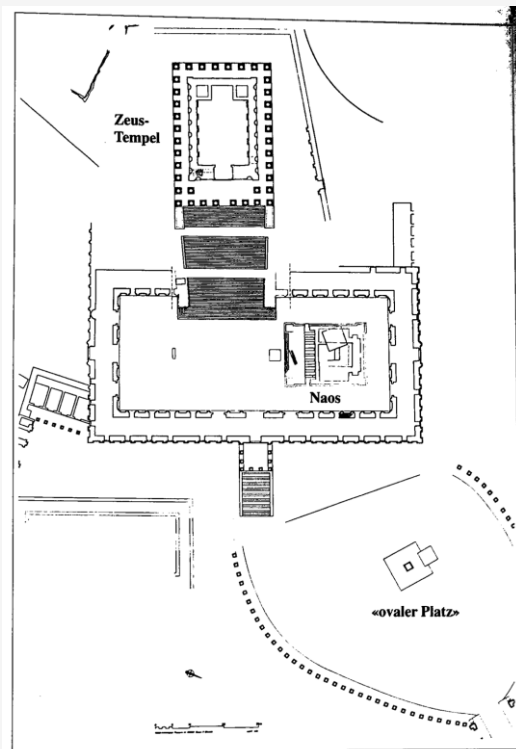
- Artemis equated with Tyche – patron goddess of the city
- Always connected with name Gerasa (and not Antiocheia) – reflection of older local cult?
- Hadrianic-Antonine temple probably replaces older structure and is built close to smaller “native” sanctuaries in this part of the city



Temples

Gerasa

- Temple of Zeus Olympios
- New temple (A) built on the hill above the naos enclosure (C, place of the altar B) in 161/2 CE (but apparently never finished)
- 28 m wide staircase leading from the lower enclosure
- Corinthian peripteral octastyle
- 3 m tall podium
- 28.3x40.2 m



Temples

Gerasa

- Temple of Zeus Olympios

The staircase, looking from the enclosure



Temples

Gerasa

- Temple of Zeus Olympios

Corinthian pilasters in the corner of the cella, niches along its outer walls

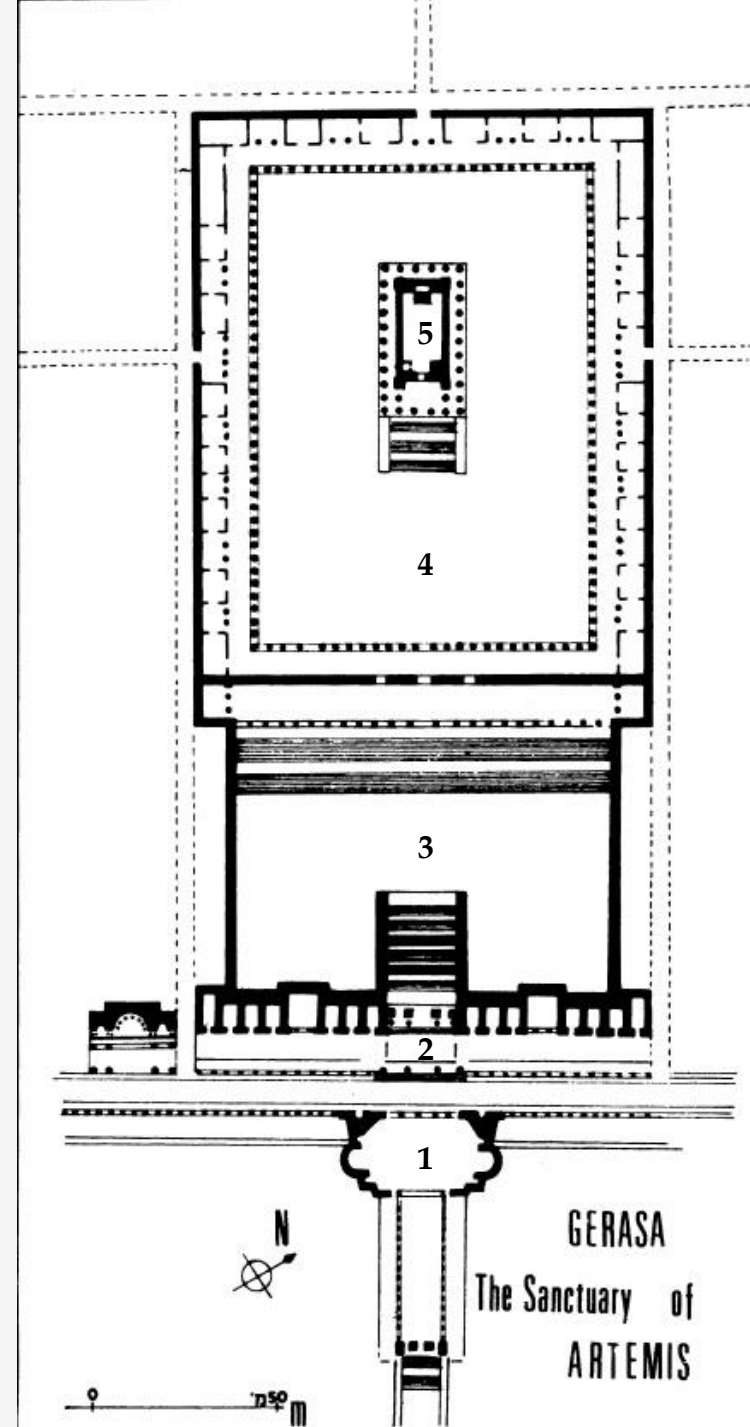


Temples

Gerasa

- Temple of Artemis
- Conceived along with the expansion of the city along the cardo to the north – cornerstone of a Hippodamian street plan
- I.e. connection with the visit of Hadrian 129/30 CE and monumental expansion of the city and its major public buildings
- Never finished

1. Propylaeum east of the cardo
2. Propylaeum west of the cardo
3. Staircase with a forecourt (lower terrace)
4. Temenos courtyard (upper terrace)
5. Temple



Temples

Gerasa

- Propylaea along of the cardo
- The trapezoidal exedrai built ca. 151 CE (after widening of the cardo)
- Wider entrance ca. 20.8 m, narrower 11.8 m
- Prolongement of the temple axis across the city (bridge over Chrysorrhoeas river, Severan arch) – another decumanus of the street grid, but monumentalized given the decoration)

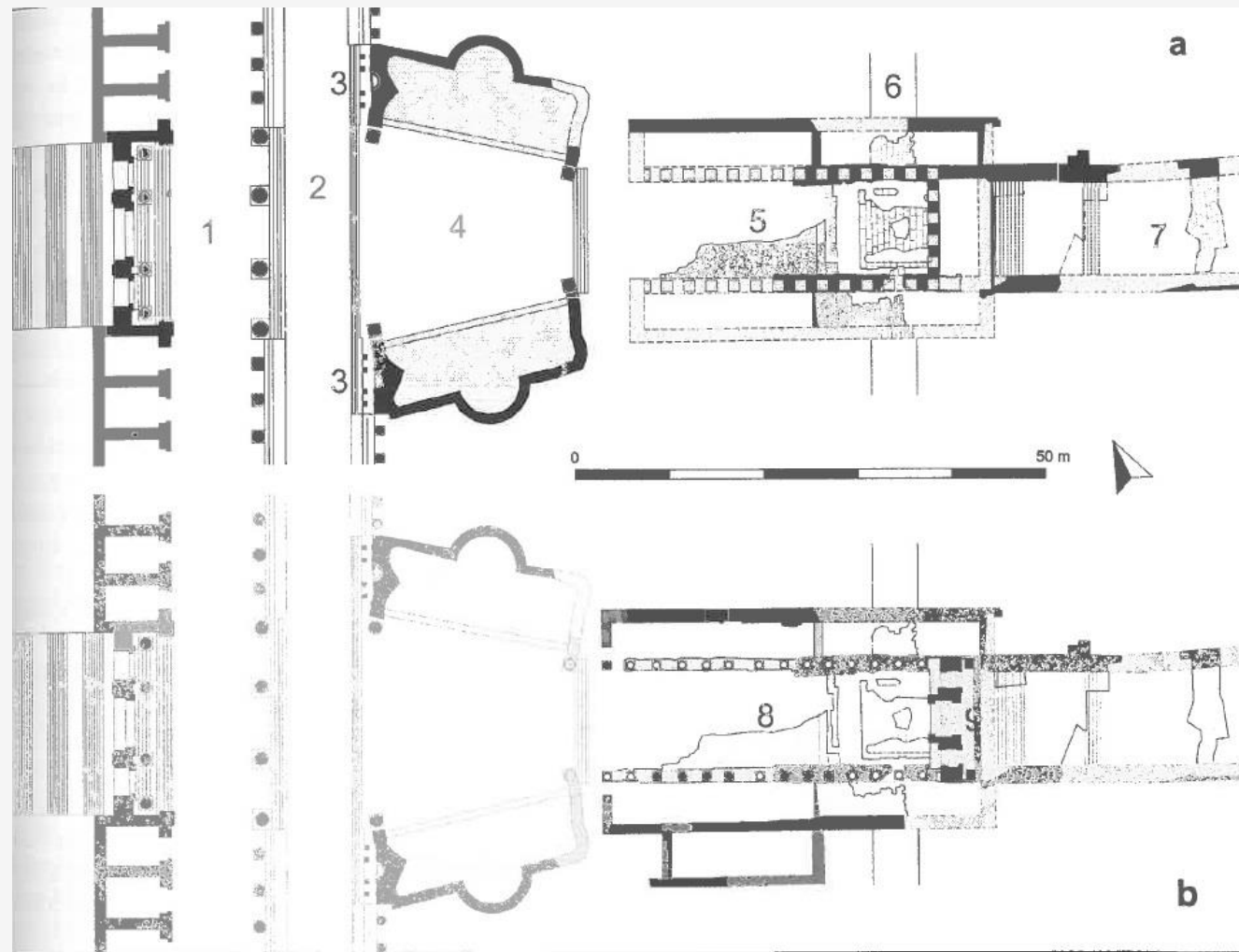


Figure 6.15. Area of the 'East Propylaea': a. The Antonine phase (standing structures in black, reconstructed in dashed lines); 1: Propylaeum of the sanctuary; 2: Cardo of the city; 3: Twin fountains with the inscriptions mentioning Attidius Cornelianus; 4: Trapezoidal Plaza with the two 'open-exedra buildings'; 5: *Triporticus*; 6: Pre-existing street crossed by the *fornix* of the viaduct; 7: Bridge over the river Chrysorrhoeas. b. The Severan phase (Severan structures in black, earlier in grey); 8: Porticoed street; 9: Triumphal arch (survey and editing by M. Brizzi and D. Sepio).

Temples

Gerasa

- Propylaea along of the cardo

The higher columns along the cardo mark western propylaeum (w. = 23 m)



Temples

Gerasa

- Propylaea along of the cardo

View from the forecourt through the propylaea to the eastern part of the city



Temples

Gerasa

- Temple of Artemis Forecourt – lower terrace, the “crown-stepped merlon structure” on the picture – earlier (pre-Antonine) sanctuary?



Temples

Gerasa

- Temple of Artemis

Forecourt (70x120 m) – lower terrace



Temples

Gerasa

- Temple of Artemis

Temenos courtyard (88x122 m), Corinthian portico, the upper terrace



Temples

Gerasa

- Temple of Artemis

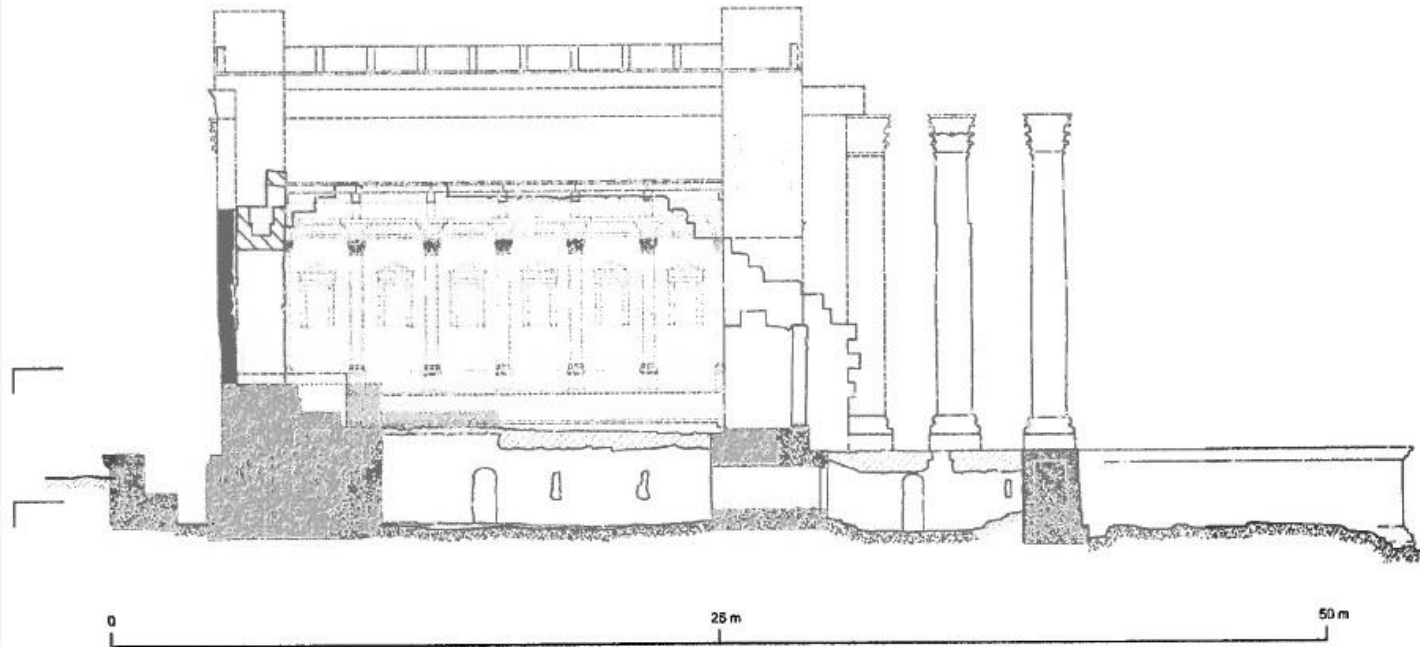
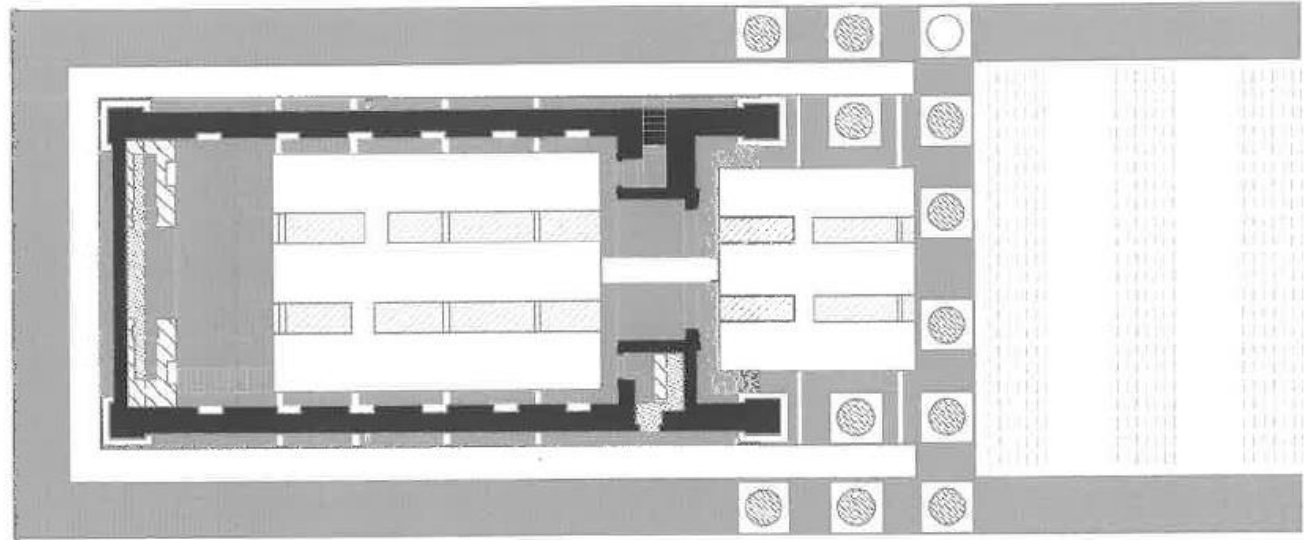
Naos



Temples

Gerasa

- Temple of Artemis
- Peripteral podium
- Corinthian hexastyle
- Podium h. = 4.3 m
- 53x22 m



Temples

Gerasa

- Temple of Artemis

Staircase (w. = 16.5 m) between *antae*



Temples

Gerasa

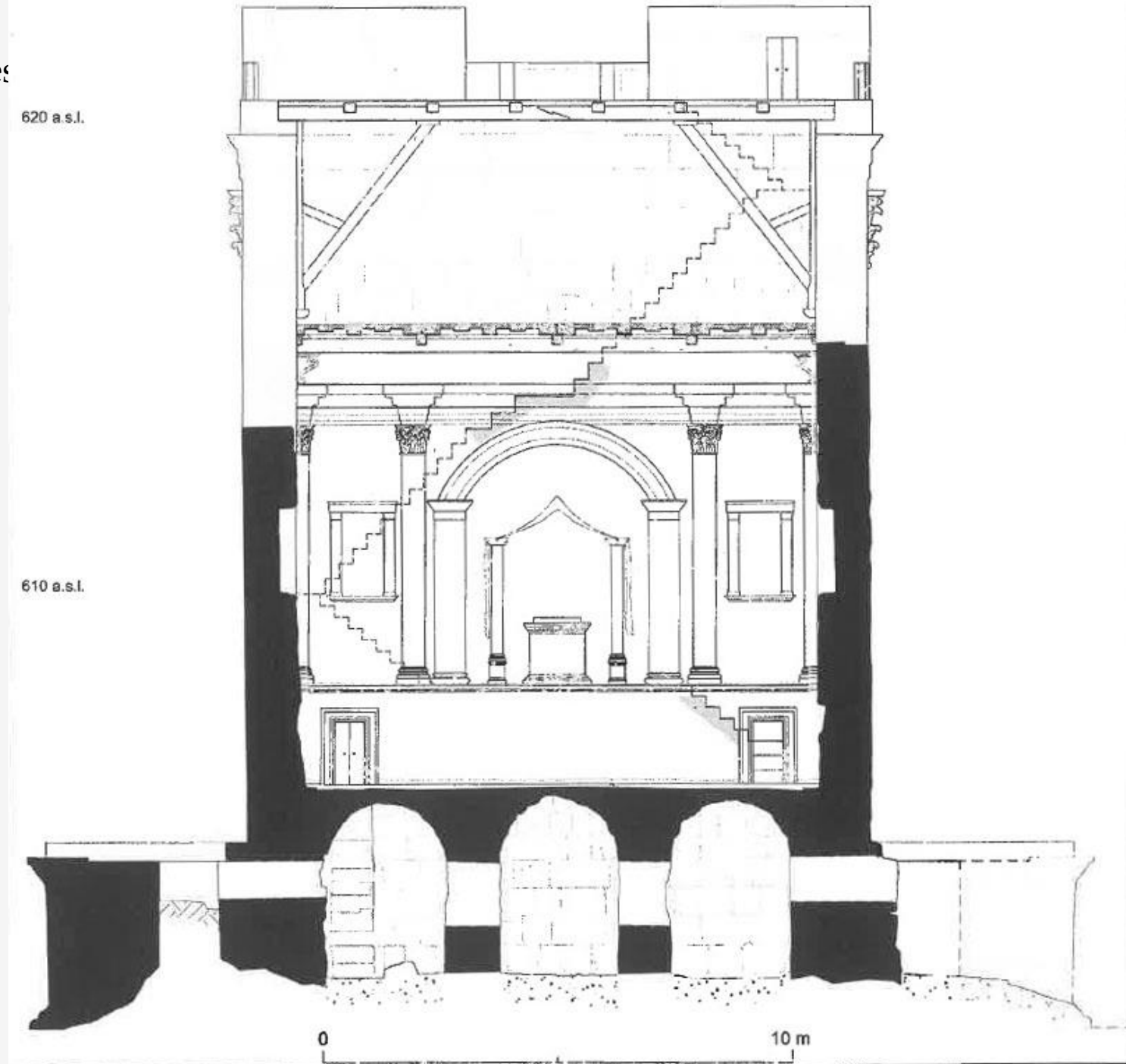
- Temple of Artemis
- *Naos* (11x17 m), with rectangular niches along the long walls, with arched *thalamos* holding the cult statue



Temples

Gerasa

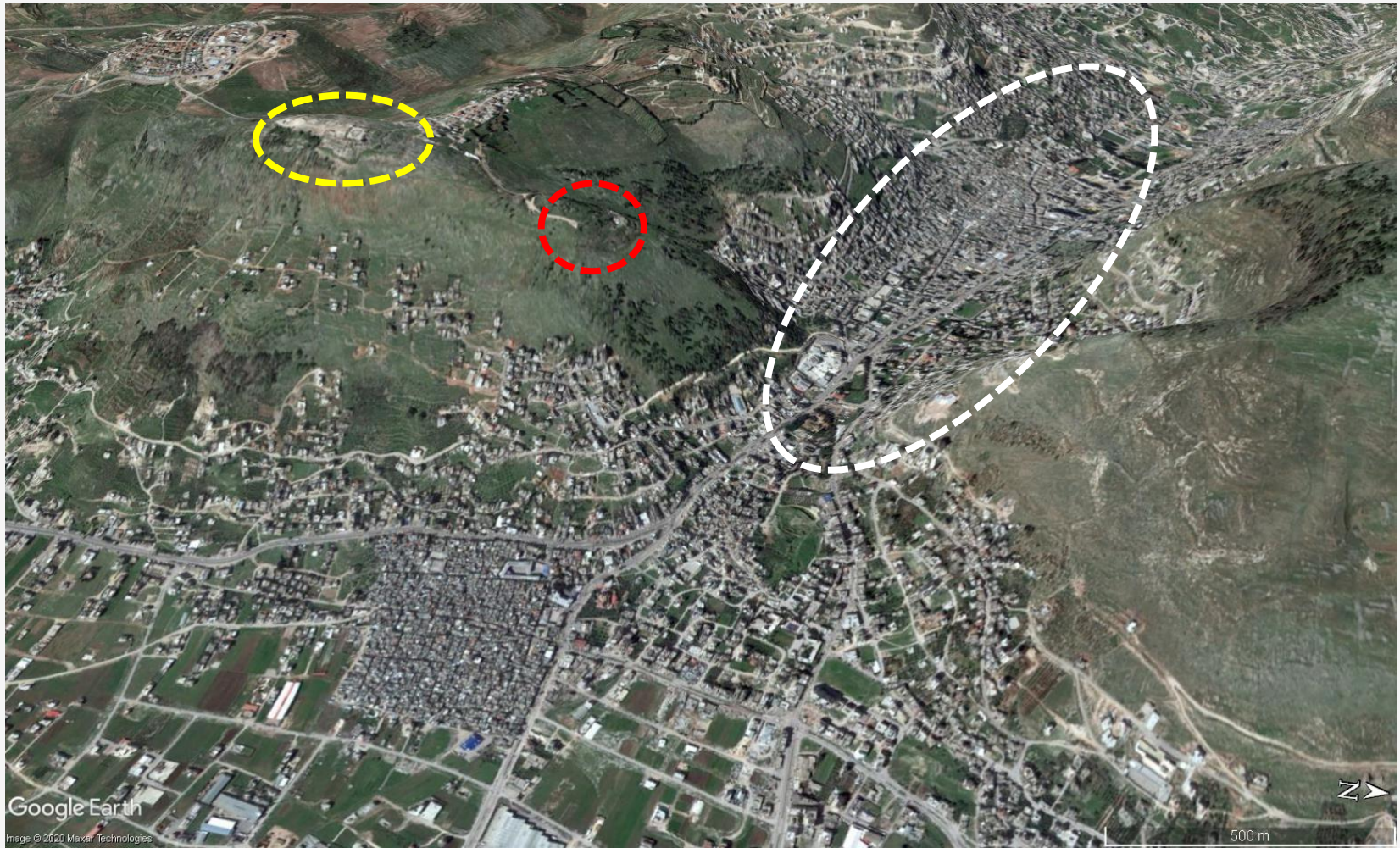
- Temple of Artemis
- Transverse cut through the temple, showing vaulted podium and ideal reconstruction of the *naos* and the roofing



Temples

Flavia Neapolis – Shekhem/Nablus

- Samaritan settlement on Mt. Gerizim destroyed by the Hasmonaeans (yellow)
- Flavian colony (Flavia Neapolis, modern Nablus, white) founded after the Great Revolt
- Temple of Zeus Hypsistos/Olympios at Tell er-Ras (northern side of Mt. Gerizim, red)
- Zeus Hypsistos = El Elyon (The God Most High) → assimilation of a Samaritan Jewish cult



Temples

Flavia Neapolis – Shekhem/Nablus

- Temple of Zeus Hypsistos at Tell er-Ras (northern side of Mt. Gerizim)



Ob. Draped bust of Antoninus Pius, laureate, r.

Rev. View of Mt. Gerizim, below in front colonnade with two arched entrances, l. one leads to the stairway, flanked by buildings (altars? shrines?). Stairway leads to a temple in three-quarter view. Another roadway flanked by trees leads from the colonnade to an altar on top of the hill r.

ΦΛ ΝΕΑΣΠΟΛΕΩΣ ΣΥΡΙΑΣ ΠΑΛΛΑΙΣΤΙΝΗΣ ("Flavia Neapolis in Syria Palaestina")

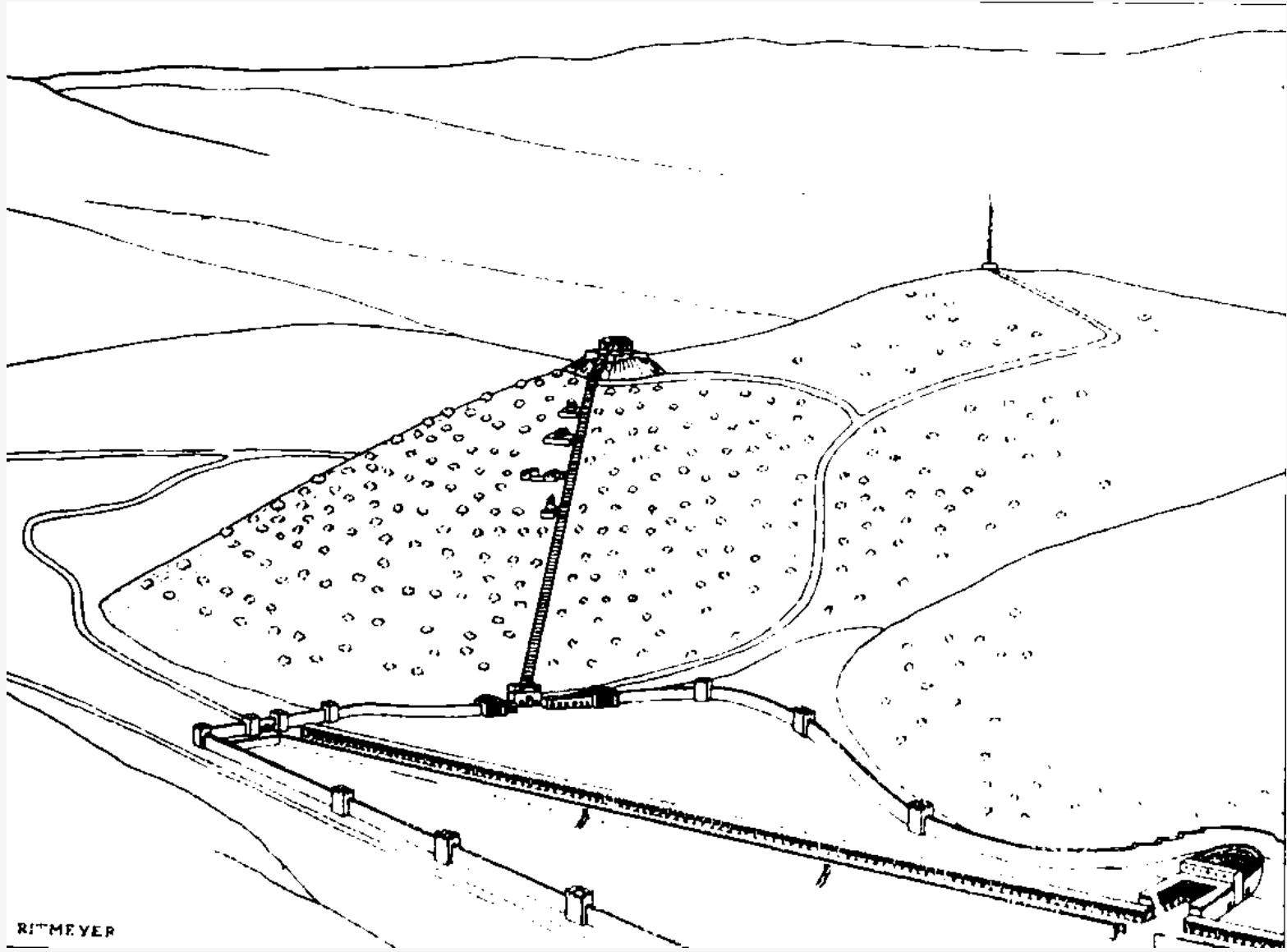
ΕΤ ΠΗ (year 88=159/60 CE)

AE medallion (53.59 g)

Temples

Flavia Neapolis - Shekhem/Nablus

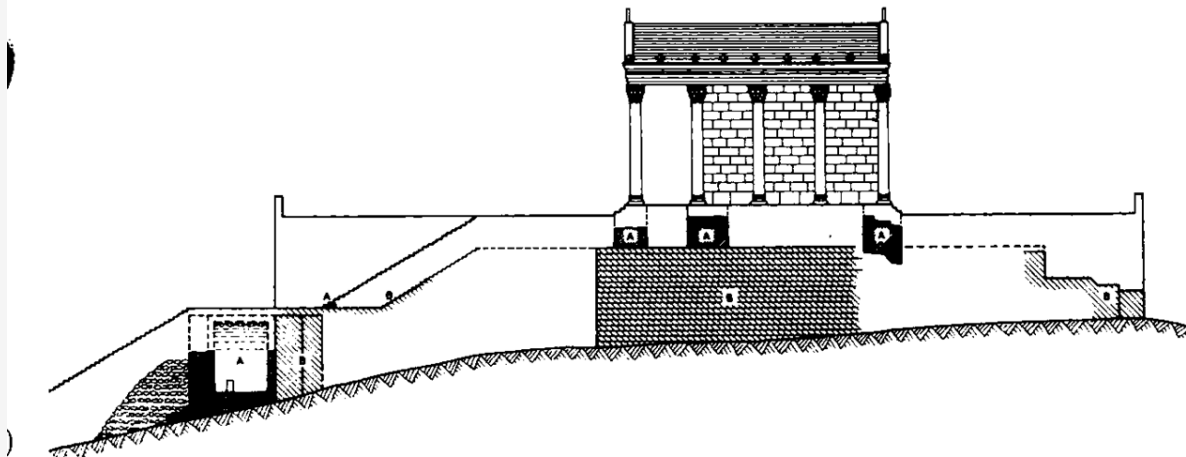
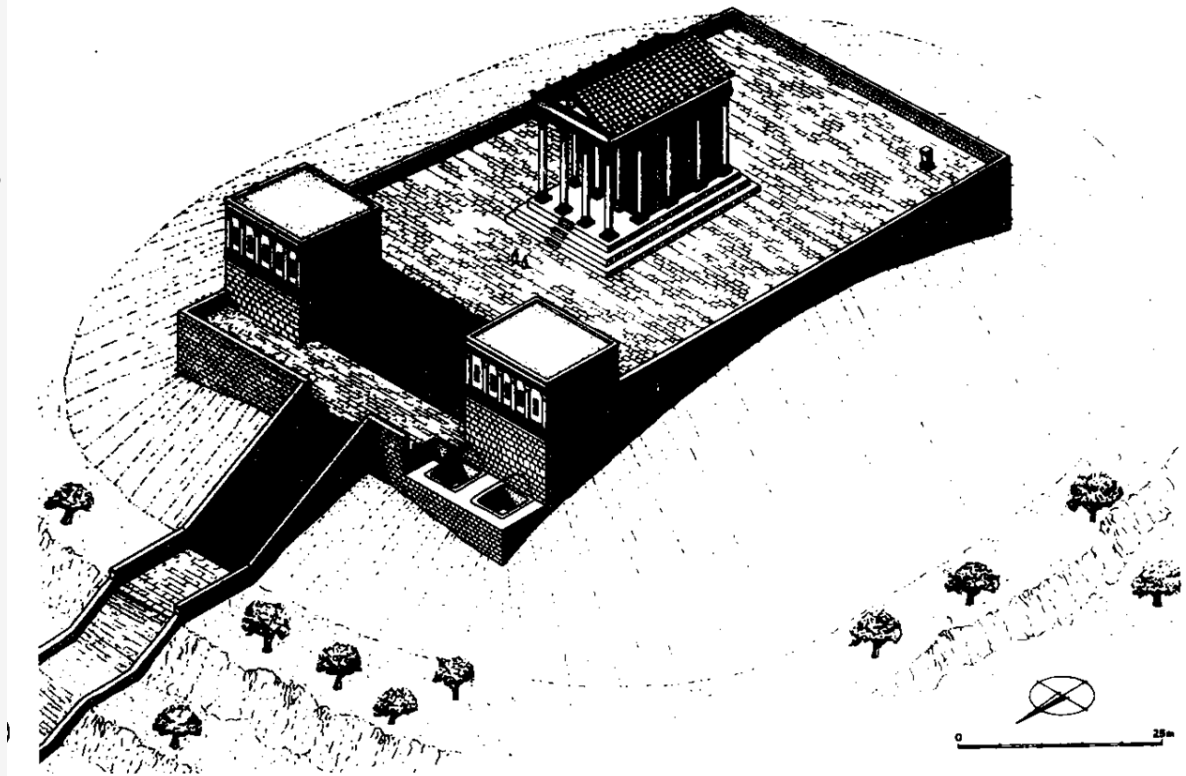
- Temple of Zeus Hypsistos at Tell er-Ras (northern side of Mt. Gerizim)



Temples

Flavia Neapolis – Shekhem/Nablus

- Two phases – Hadrian and Caracalla
- On an artificial mound
- Temenos 44x65 m
- Tetrastyle podium temple (14.16x21.5 m)
- Altar constructed on neighbouring hill (close to the ancient Samaritan temple)



Temples

Large native sanctuaries

- Jerusalem
- Damascus
- Palmyra
- All three Early Roman (from 9 BCE-32 CE)
- Works on the sanctuaries continues until mid-1st c. CE (Jerusalem) and even 2nd c. (Palmyra)

Comparison of the Solomonic temple (left) and the Temple of Herod, both represent Syrian three-room longhouse sanctuary

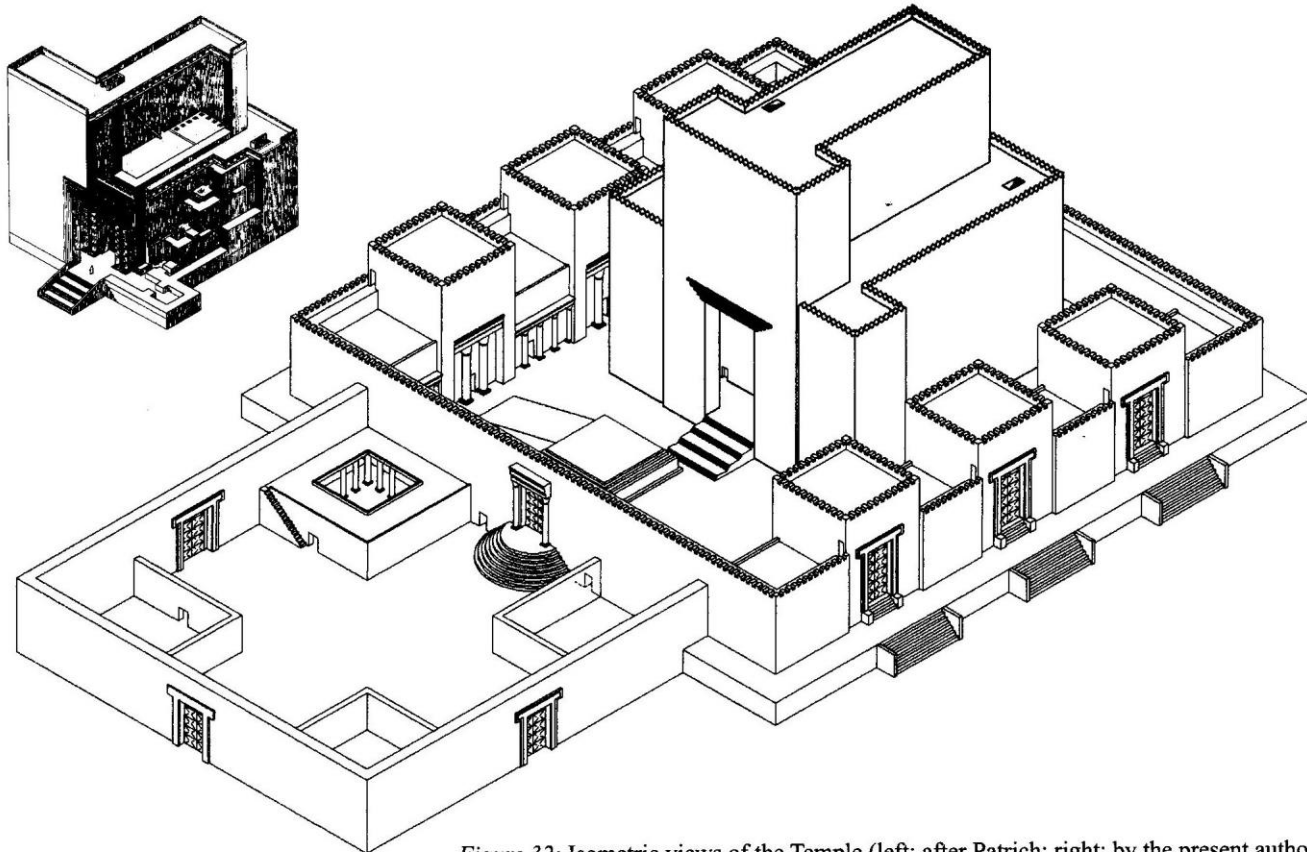
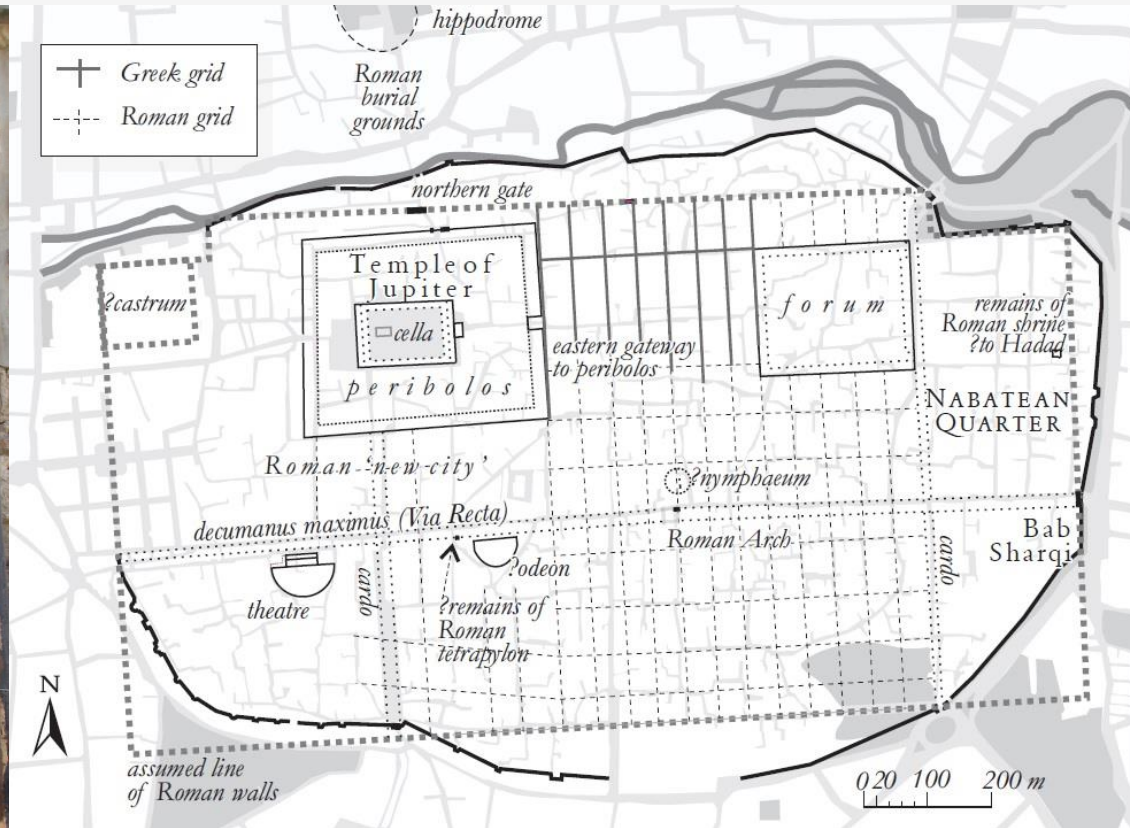


Figure 32: Isometric views of the Temple (left: after Patrich; right: by the present author).

Temples

Large native sanctuaries

- Damascus
- The inner precinct with the sanctuary covered ca. contemporary Umayyad Mosque (ca. 160x100 m)
- *Peribolos* (the outer precinct) covered ca. 400x250 m (~10 ha; comp. Temple Mt. in Jerusalem ca. 315x490x280x470 m ~15 ha)



Temple of Jupiter/Hadad, Damascus

Left: original doorframe of the inner precinct

Temples

Large native sanctuaries

- Palmyra
- Autonomous caravan city (oasis) ruled by group of notable Arab families native to the region
- Conquered by Romans under Tiberius, continually adopting *polis* institutions
- Elevated to *colonia* under Caracalla (213/216 CE), centre of the Palmyrene Empire under Odaenathus and Zenobia (270-273 CE), reduced by Aurelian



Temples

Large native sanctuaries

- Palmyra

2 - Temple of Bel

3 - Colonnaded street

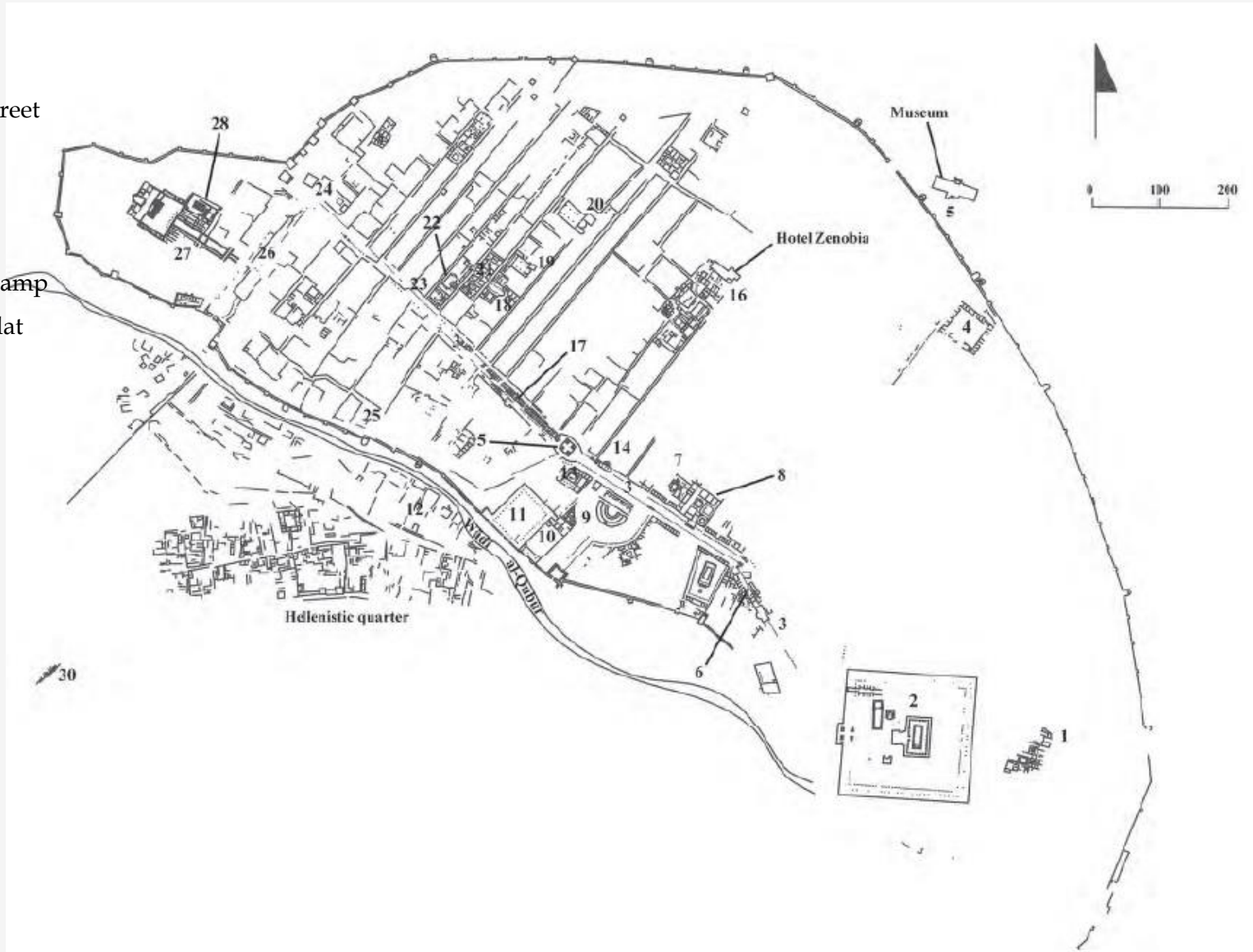
5 - Tetrapylon

9 - Theater

11 - Agora

27 - Diocletianic camp

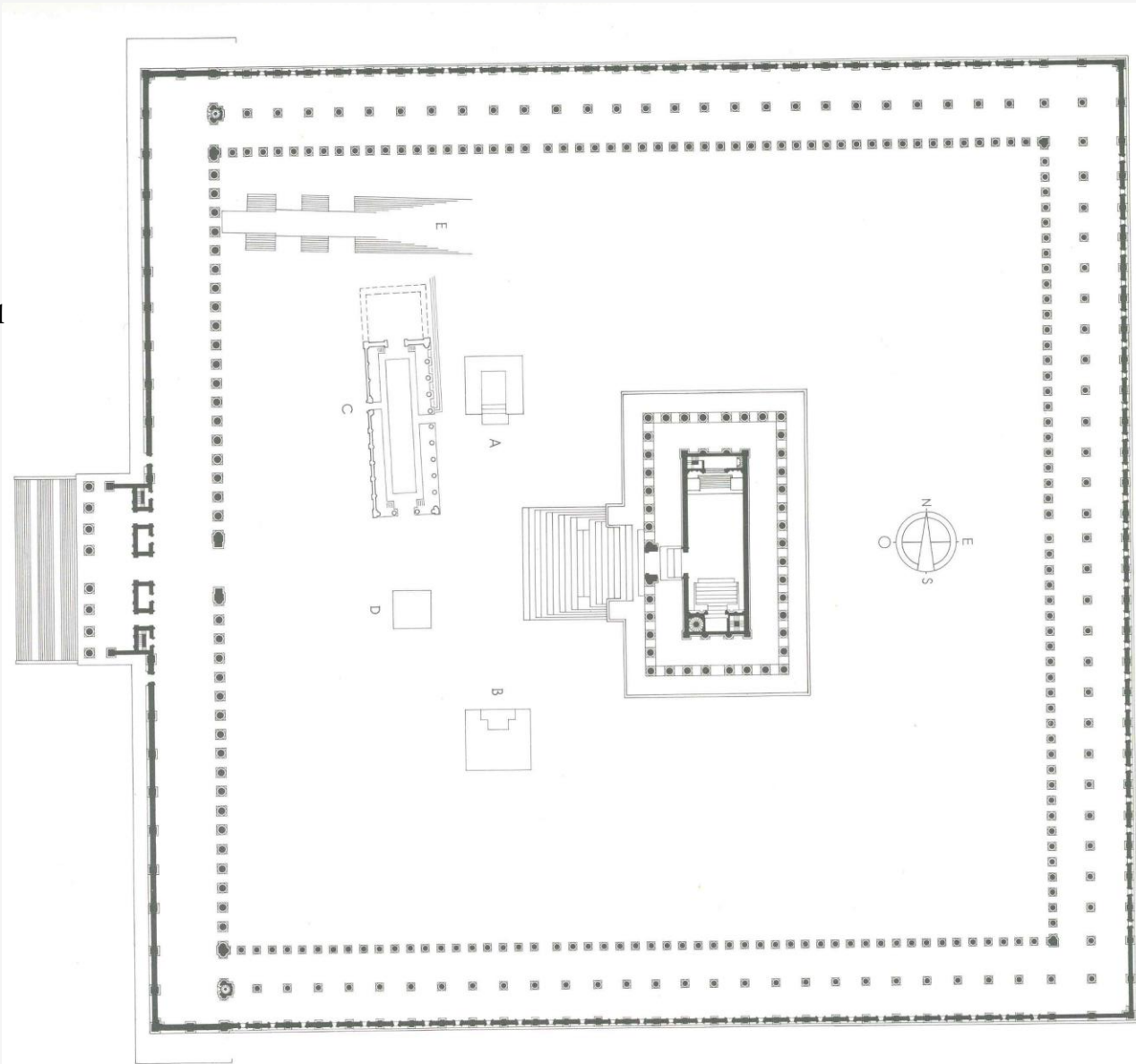
28 - Temple of Allat



Temples

Large native sanctuaries

- Palmyra
- Sanctuary of Bel
- Ca. 205x210 m
- Covering the prehistoric tell
- Temple dedicated 32 CE
- Renovations in the Antonine period
- The *temenos* (outer court) built between 80-120 CE

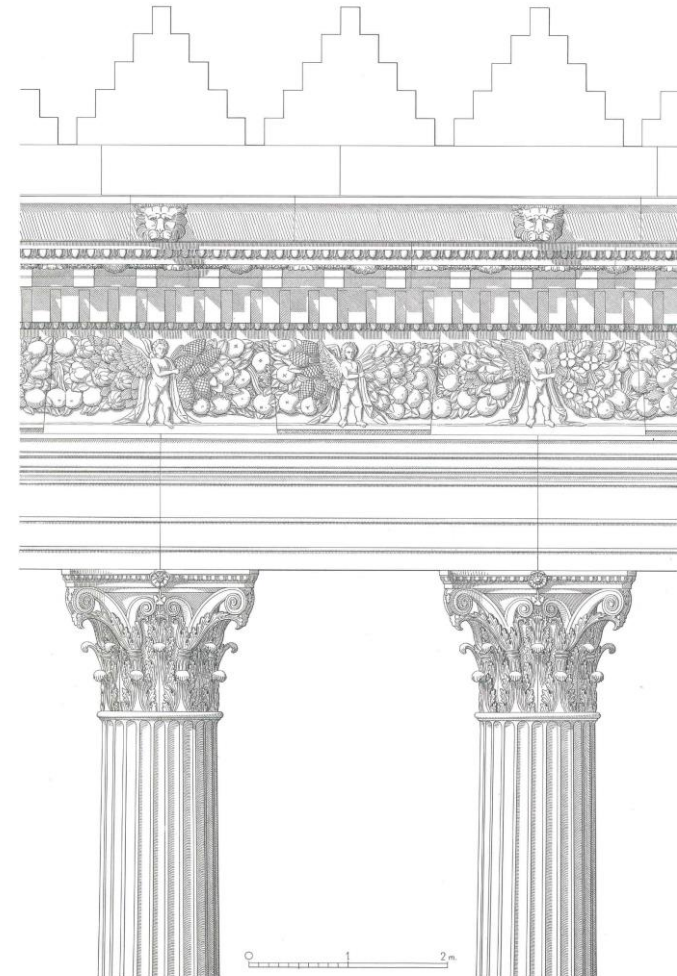
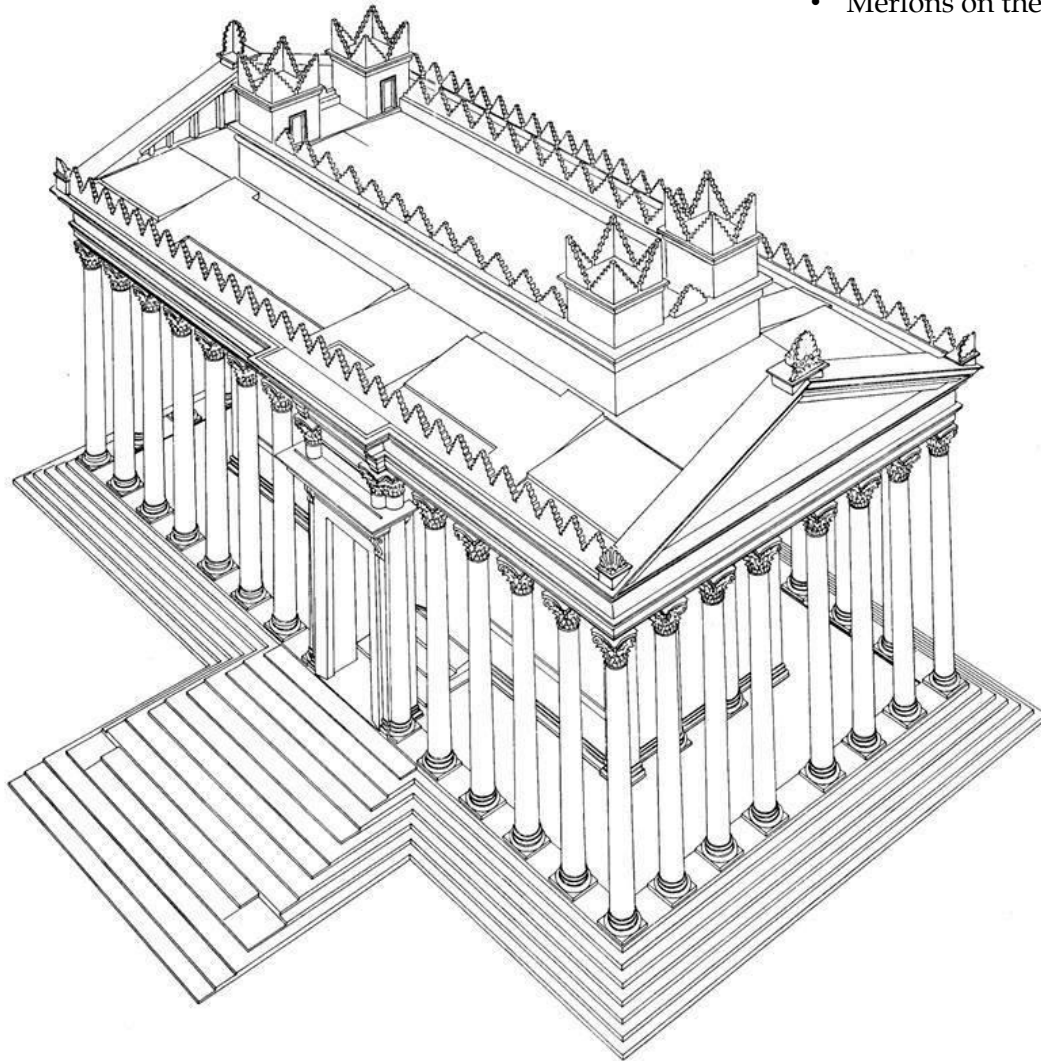


Temples

Large native sanctuaries

- Palmyra
- Temple of Bel, Yahribol and Aglibol (Moon and Sun)

- Non-Vitruvian broadhouse (entrance on the longer side)
- 39.5x13.9x14 m
- Corinthian peripteros
- Ionic half-columns on the shorter sides of the cella
- Merlons on the roof



Temples

Large native sanctuaries

- Palmyra Temple of Bel, Yahribol and Aglibol



Temples

Large native sanctuaries

- Palmyra
- Temple of Bel, Yahribold and Aglibol

The eastern *thalamos* (niche holding the images of the deities)





Temples

Large native sanctuaries

- Palmyra
- Temple of Bel, Yahribol and Aglibol The Palmyrene triad (Bel in center, Yahribol-Moon on the left, Aglibol-Sun on the right)



Temples

Temples of Imperial cult

- Vitruvian – Samaria, Caesarea Maritima, Paneas...
- *Kalybe* – open exedra temples with or without prostylos

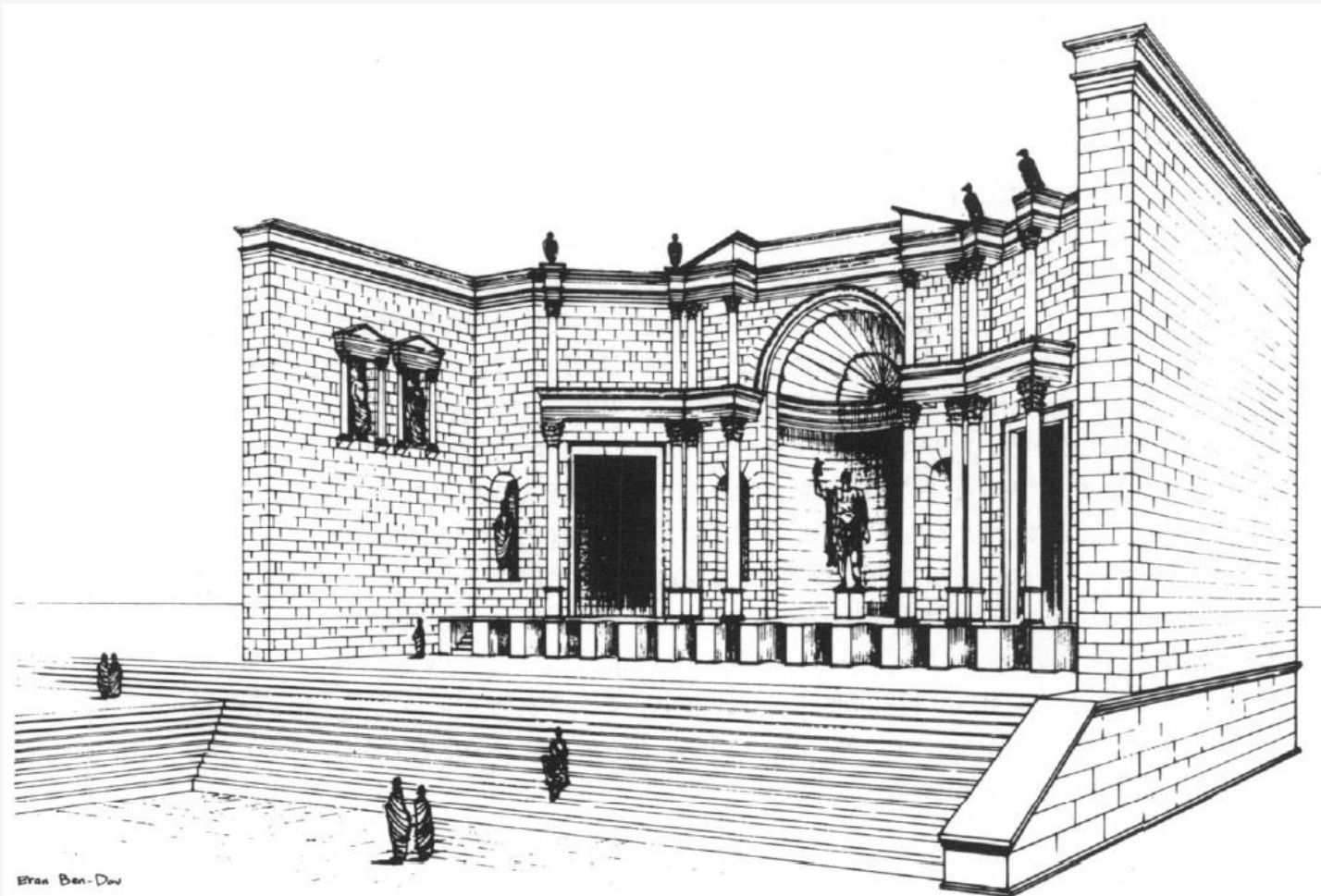
Niches containing statues of Emperor(s)

Exclusive to southern Syria!

2nd-3rd c. CE

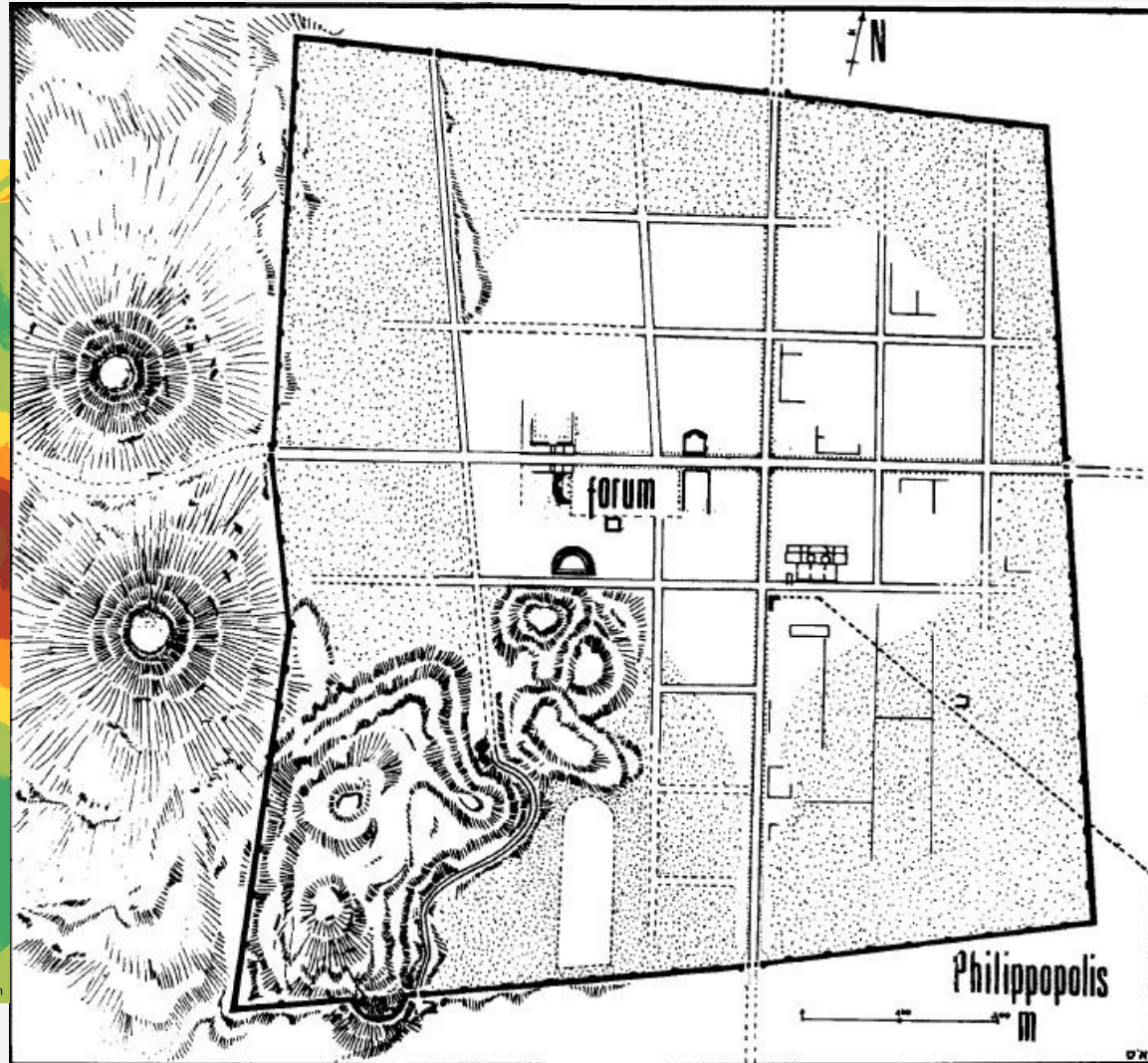
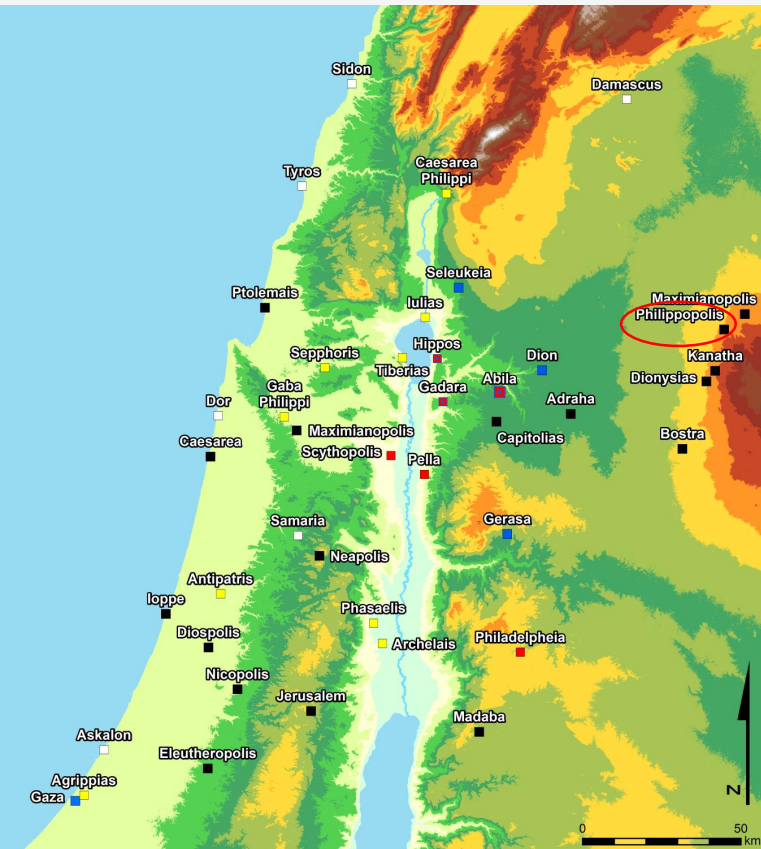
Philippopolis-Shahba

- After 244 CE
- Probably part of the Imperial palace of Philip the Arab
- Facing the forum
- Central niche with a semi-dome (w.=6 m)
- w.=30 m, h.=20 m



Philippopolis-Shahba

- Older settlement re-founded by Philip the Arab (244-249 CE) – native of the town
- Roman street grid with cardo and decumanus
- Forum (with kalybe and palace?) off the intersection of decumanus and cardo to the west



Temples

Temples of Imperial cult

- Bostra – very similar to Philippopolis, intersection of decumanus and cardo



Temples

Temples of Imperial cult

- Hippos *Kalybe*
- Modest (9x17 m) structure with central niche



Temples

Temples of Imperial cult

- Hippos *Kalybe*
- Modest (9x17 m) structure with central niche

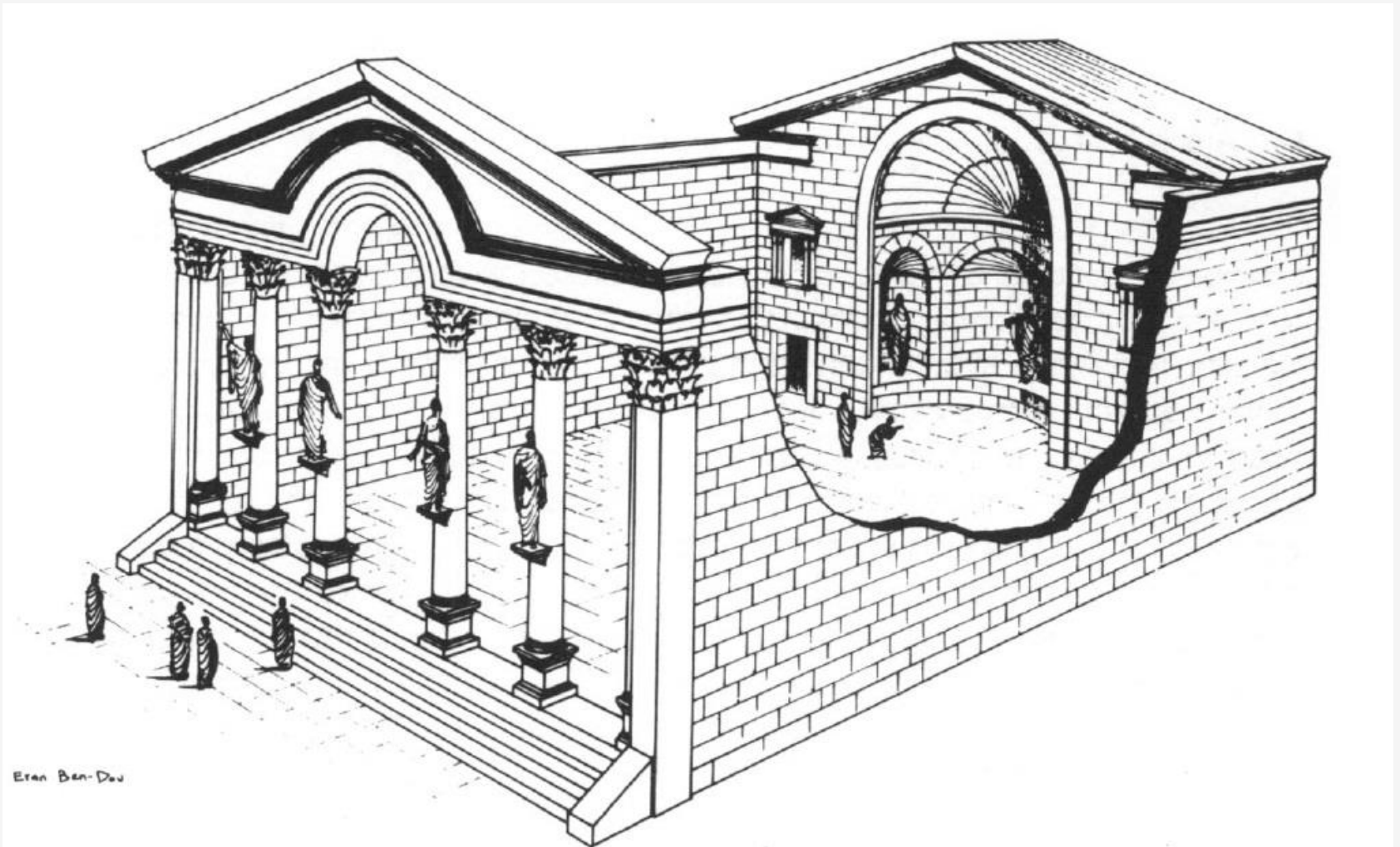
<https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/hippos-kalybe-072016-205ca6d7e0594dcf9b6dc641691afebd>



Temples

Temples of Imperial cult

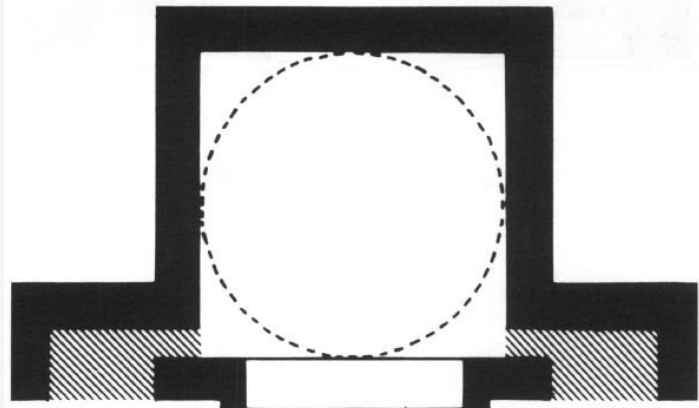
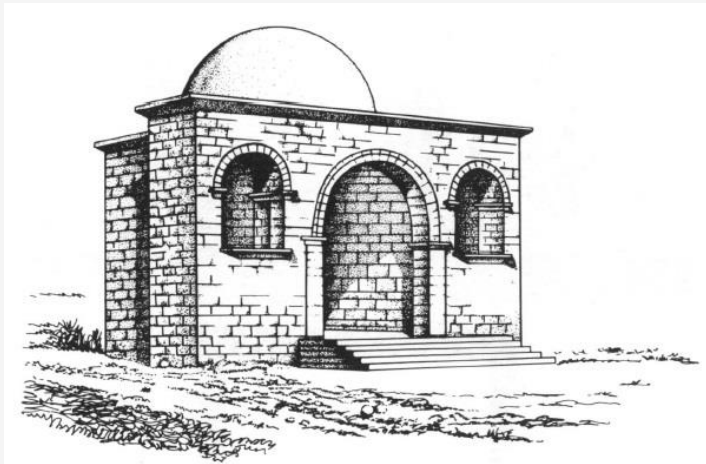
- Kanatha-Qanawat, Temple C
- Corinthian tetrastyle in antis (Syrian arch), unroofed naos (?), adyton with semi-dome exedra (w.= 6 m) with three niches – freely manipulating with Vitruvian architecture



Temples

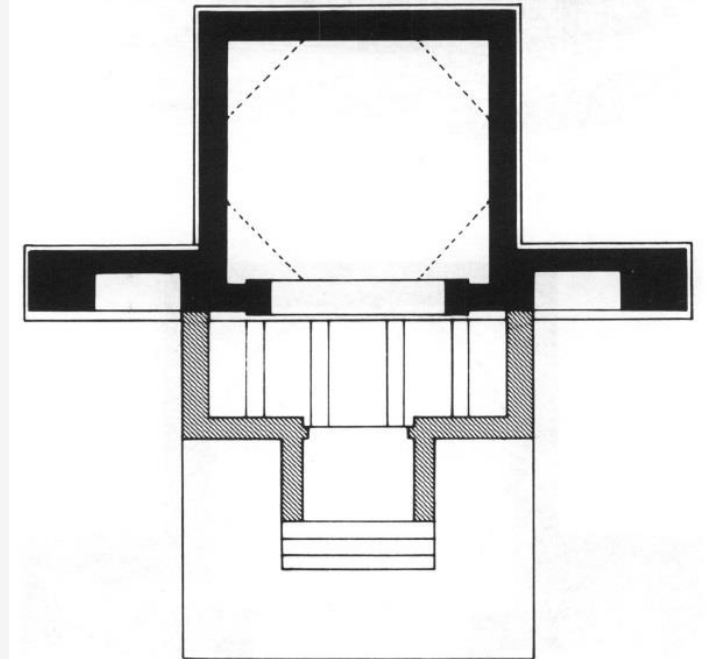
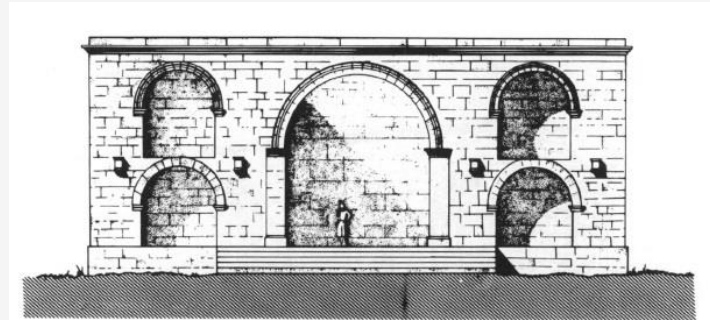
Temples of Imperial cult

- Umm e-Zeitun (10 km north of Philippopolis)
- Dedicated 282 CE
- Central domed hall, two niches in the side wings of the façade



- The central halls are very reminiscent of iwan architecture

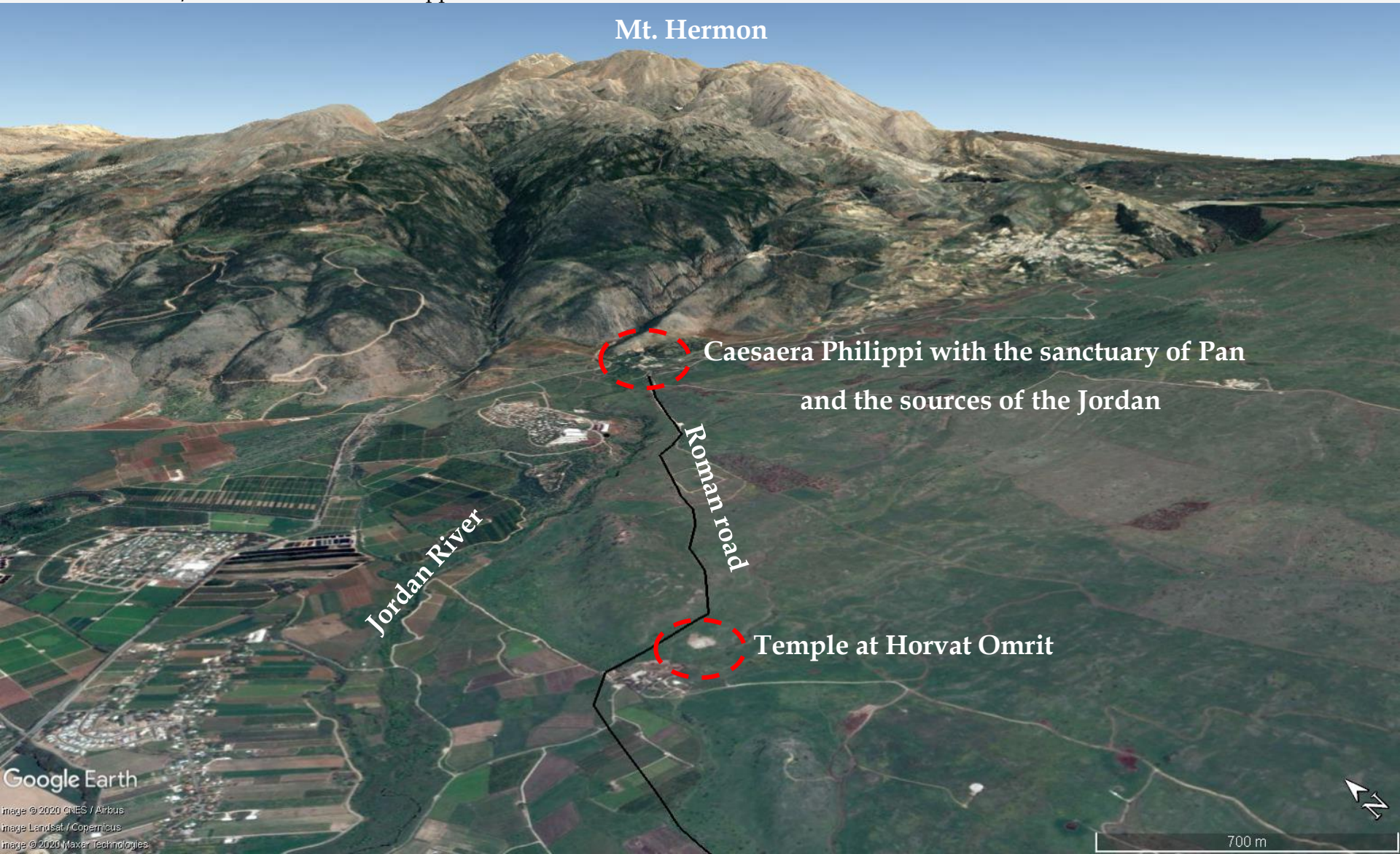
- Maximianopolis-Shaqqa (settlement refounded by Maximian in 289 CE)
- Open (unroofed?) central exedra
- Niches in the side wings of the façade
- Wide stairway leading to the exedra
- End of the 3rd c.



Temples

Rural sanctuaries

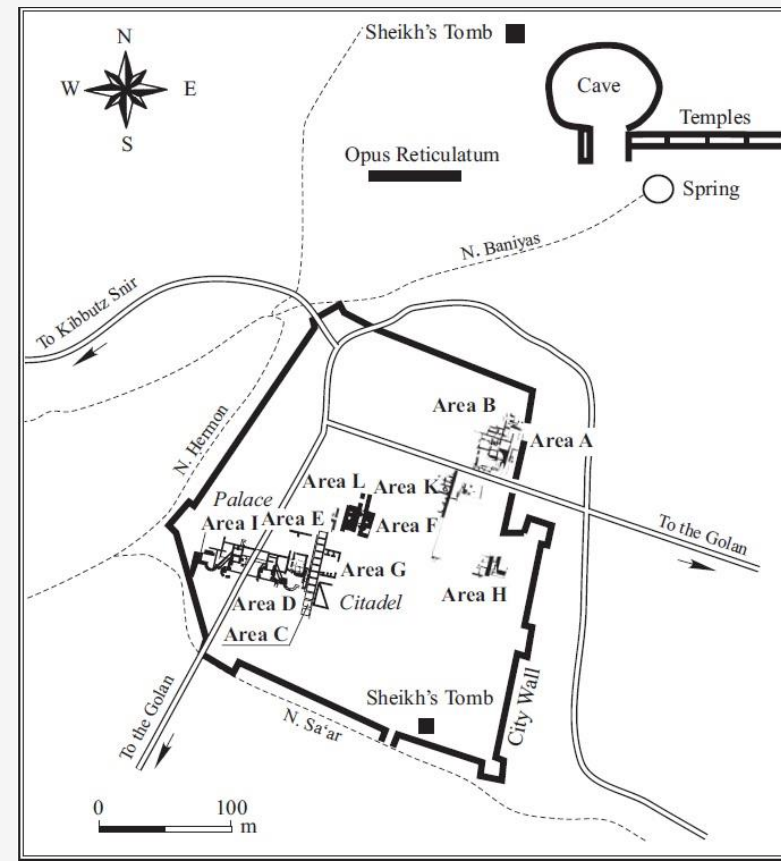
- Paneas/Paneion – Caesarea Philippi and Horvat Omrit



Temples

Rural sanctuaries

- Paneas – cult of Pan in the cave attested from the 3rd c. BCE (no architectural remains, only pottery deposits attesting preparation of meals and offerings around the cave)
- “...Antiochus's pitched battle with Scopas in Coele-Syria, at Mount Panium” Pol. 16.18 – Battle of Paneion
- “And when Caesar had further bestowed upon him [i.e. Herod] another additional country, he built there also a temple of white marble, hard by the fountains of Jordan: the place is called Panium, where is a top of a mountain that is raised to an immense height, and at its side, beneath, or at its bottom, a dark cave opens itself...” BJ 1.404
- “...and the latter of them [i.e. Philip] built the city Cesarea, at the fountains of Jordan, and in the region of Paneas...” BJ 2.168
- Shrines and sanctuaries slowly developed from the end of the 1st c. BCE
- City of Caesarea Philippi founded in 3 BCE



Temples

Rural sanctuaries

- Paneas – cult of Pan
- Pan – rustic god associated with wild nature, herds (sheeps, goats), nymphs, fertility and spring period
- Pan's flute (syrinx)
- Usually worshipped in natural caves and grottoes



Ob. Confronted busts of Titus on l. and Domitian on r., both laureate

Rev. Pan walking l., playing the syrinx he holds in the r. hand and leaning pedum over shoulder l., behind him tree trunk, small crescent in upper left field

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΓΡΙΠΠΙΑ
ΕΤΟΥΣ ΚΖ (year 27=86/7 CE)
AE coin, Agrippa II

Bronze life-size mask of Pan found at the Propylaeum in Hippos, Roman period
Note the little horns, chin beard and large ears
Unique find!



Temples

Rural sanctuaries

- Paneas – Cave of Pan
- Cult of Pan is Greek in nature and it is unclear how it was introduced into inland Syria during the 3rd c. BCE (the sanctuary/deity does not have Semitic equivalent)
- Situation in the late 2nd/early 3rd c. CE

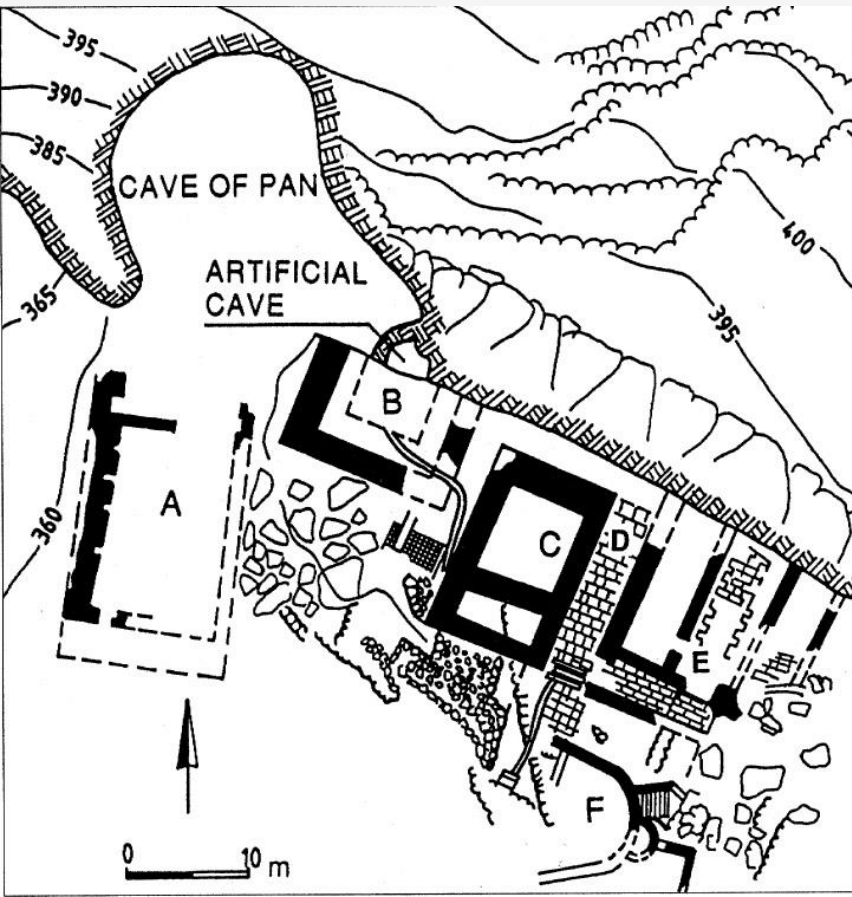
1. Temple of Augustus? – in front of the entrance to the Pan Cave
2. Courtyard of Pan and the Nymphs
3. Temple of Zeus Heliopolitanus
4. Shrine of Nemesis
5. Tomb-temple of the sacred goats
6. Temple of Pan and the dancing goats



Temples

Rural sanctuaries

- Paneas – Cave of Pan
- Temple of Augustus? (A) – Ionic tetrastyle
- Courtyard of Pan (B) – main niche (“artificial cave”) holding a cultic statue, additional niches carved in the rock around – votives, dedications (pilgrimage centre)
- Temple of Zeus Heliopolitanus (C) – Corinthian tetrastyle



Temples

Rural sanctuaries

- Paneas – Cave of Pan
- Courtyard of Pan (33)
- Temple of Pan and the dancing goats (31)



31

Ob. Draped bust of Elagabalus
r., radiate
Rev. Deity (Zeus?) standing l.,
holding patera and scepter,
behind him a tree, all in semi-
circular colonnaded area with
fence in front
ΚΑΙΣ ΠΑΝ ΙΕΡ ΑΣΥΛΑ
ΣΚΒ (year 222=219 CE)
AE coin, Caesarea Philippi

Ob. Draped and cuirassed
bust of Elagabalus r.
Rev. Pan standing nude,
looking r., playing the flute,
inside niche cut in the rock,
with fence in front, trees on
the rock
ΚΑΙ ΠΑΝ ΣΕΒ Ι ΑΥC
ΣΚΓ (year 223=220 CE)
AE coin, Caesarea Philippi



33

Temples

Rural sanctuaries

- Horvat Omrit
- Until recently unknown site, unknown dedication
- Contested as the Herodian temple of Augustus
- Three consecutive temples

Early Shrine

- Second half of the 1st c. BCE

Temple 1

- Late 1st c. BCE (Temple of Augustus?)

Temple 2

- Late 1st/early 2nd c. CE



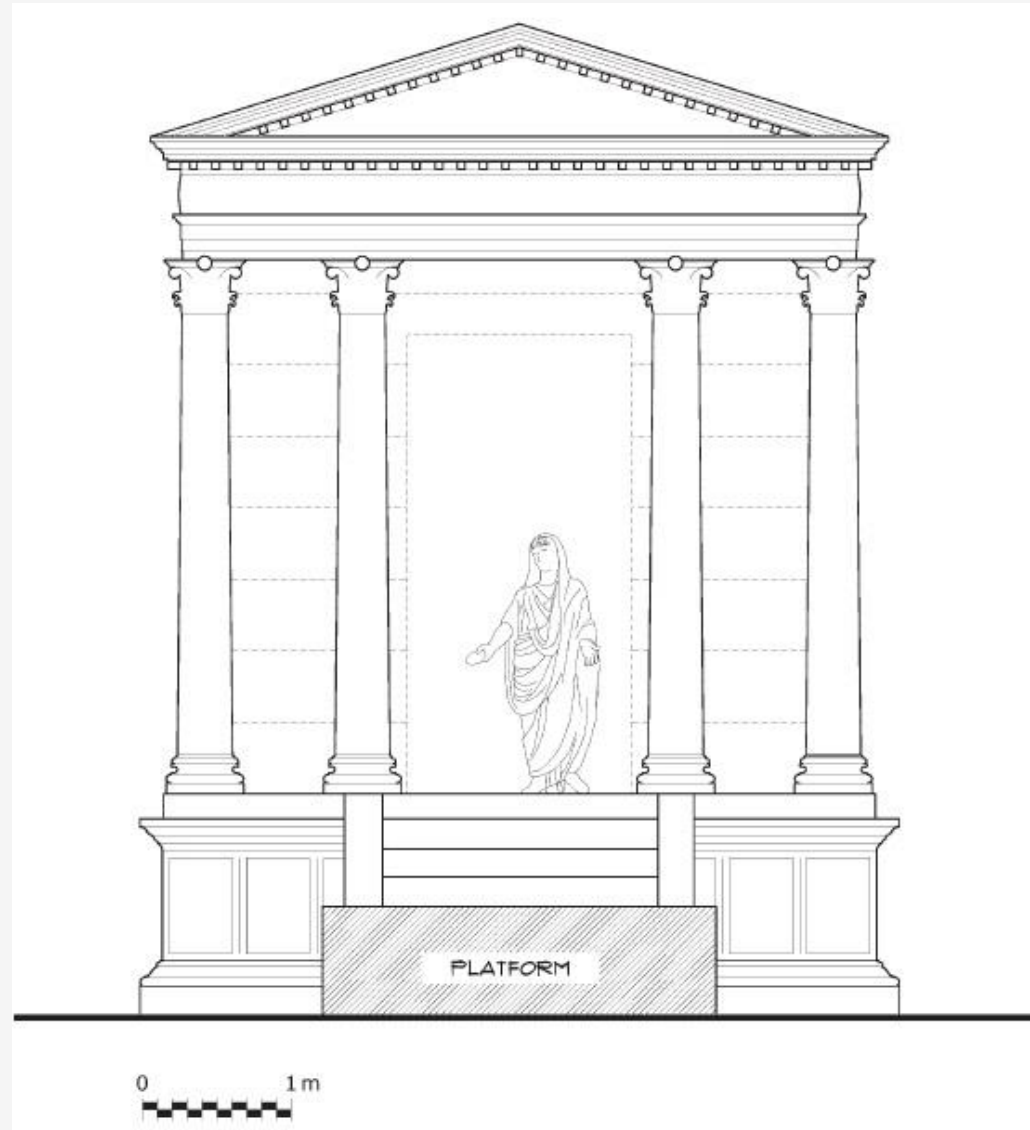
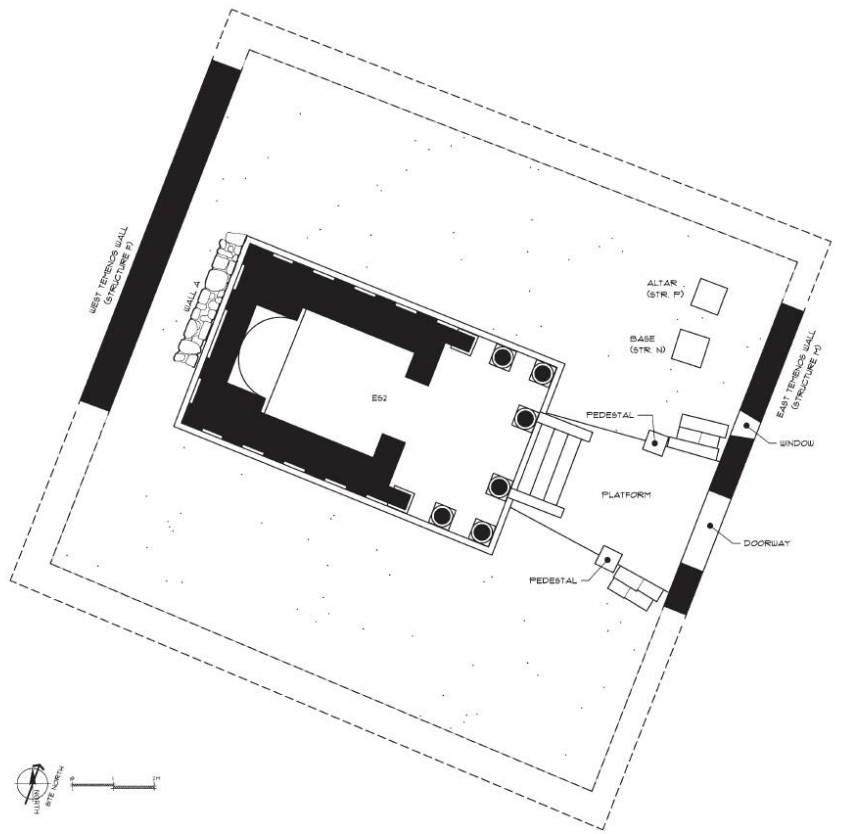
Temples

Rural sanctuaries

- Horvat Omrit

Early Shrine

- Second half of the 1st c. BCE
- Small podium Corinthian pseudoperipteral tetrastyle (8.4x5 m)
- Roman in nature



Temples

Rural sanctuaries

- Horvat Omrit
- Early Shrine podium overlaid by later temples 1 and 2



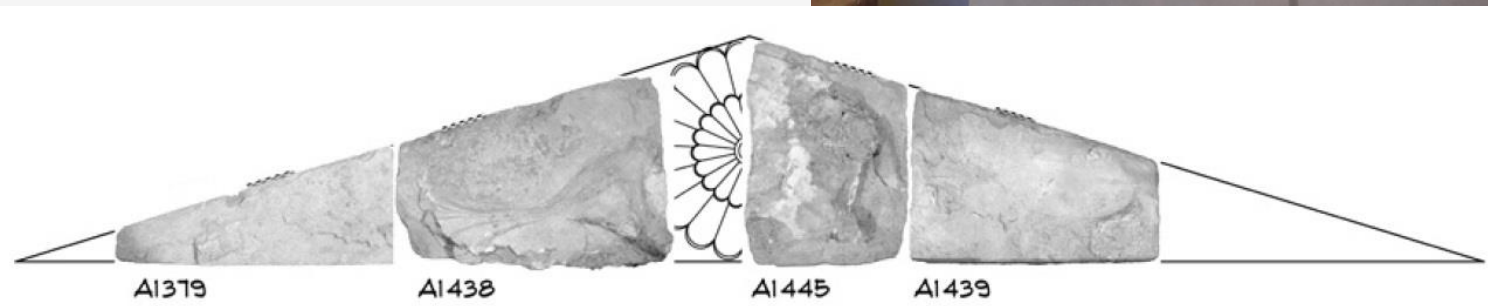
Temples

Rural sanctuaries

- Horvat Omrit
- Outer wall of the Early Shrine
- Stucco decoration
- Corinthian pilasters, floral frieze
- Rosette - carefully embellished type typical of the Herodian Period



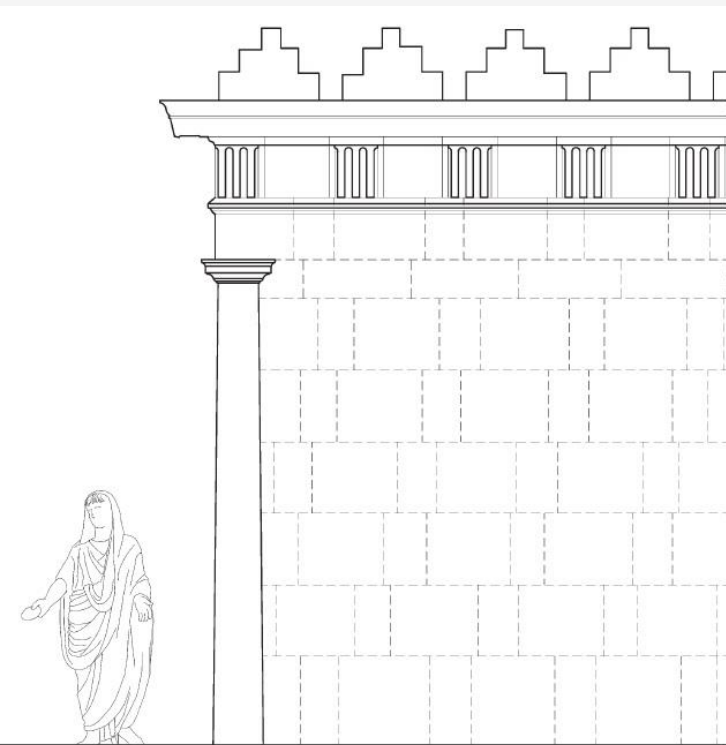
- Pediment



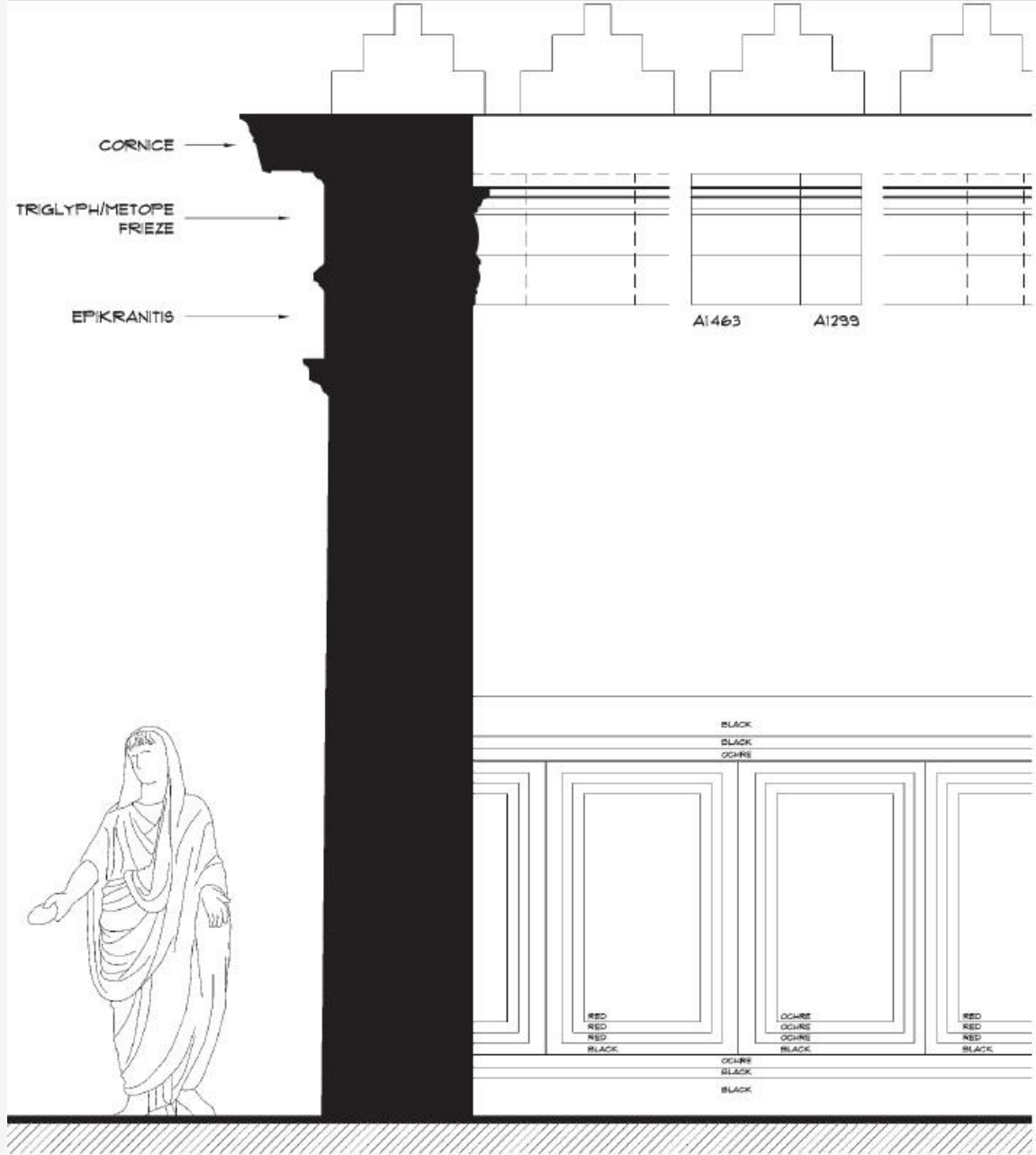
Temples

Rural sanctuaries

- Horvat Omrit
- Temenos wall of the Early Shrine
- Doric frieze
- Merlons
- Stucco and fresco (First style) decoration
- More “native” in nature



0 0.5m



Temples

Rural sanctuaries

- Horvat Omrit
- Temenos wall of the Early Shrine

Altar and statute pedestal in situ



Temples

Rural sanctuaries

- Horvat Omrit
- Temples 1 and 2

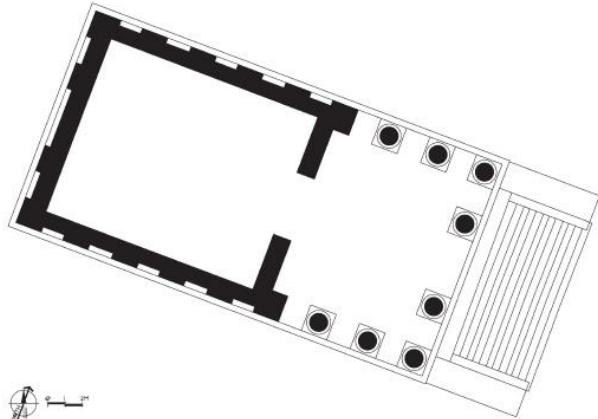
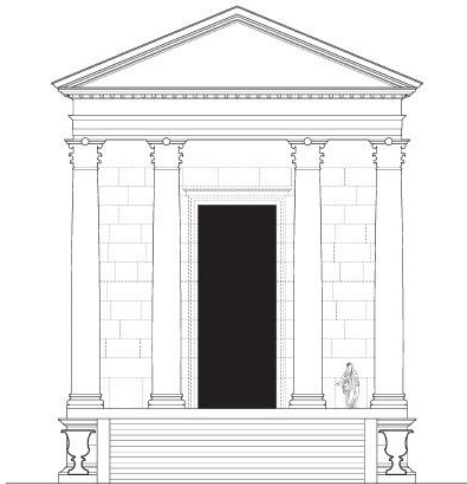
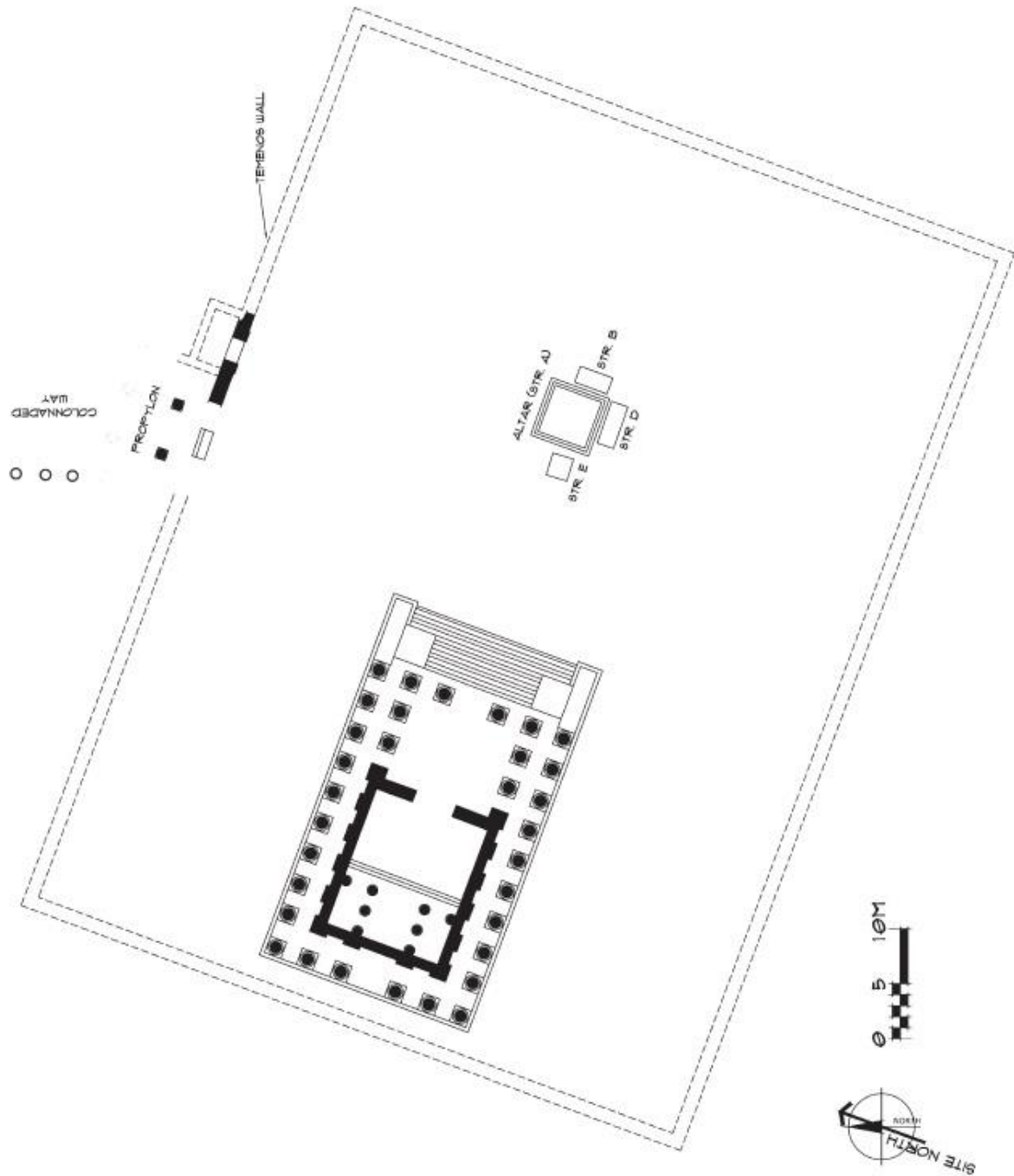


FIGURE 18 Reconstructed plan of T1.



0 2 M



Temples

Rural sanctuaries

- Horvat Omrit
- Temples 1 and 2

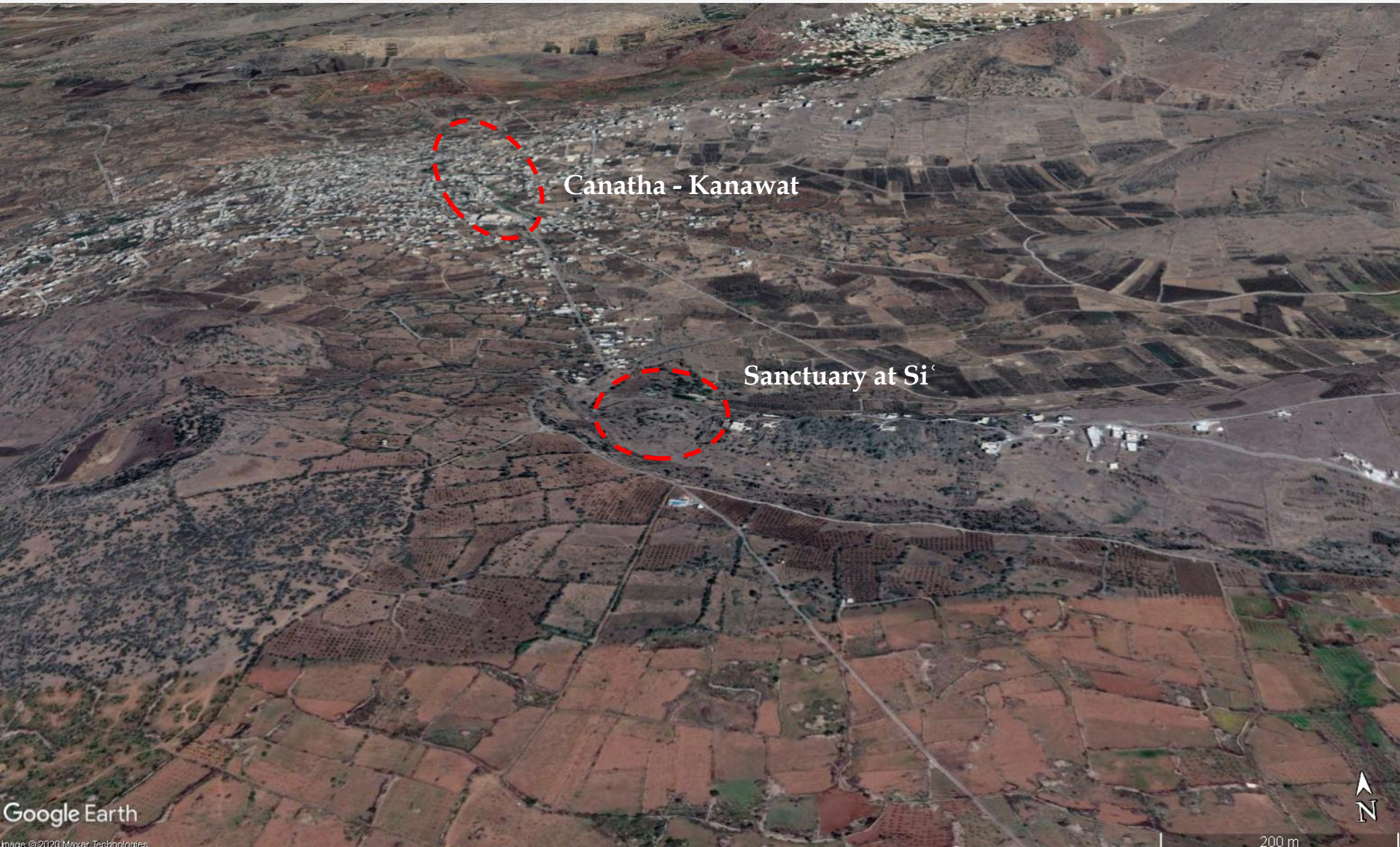
Courtyard of the temenos, with stairs of the podium of Temple 2 on the left



Temples

Rural sanctuaries

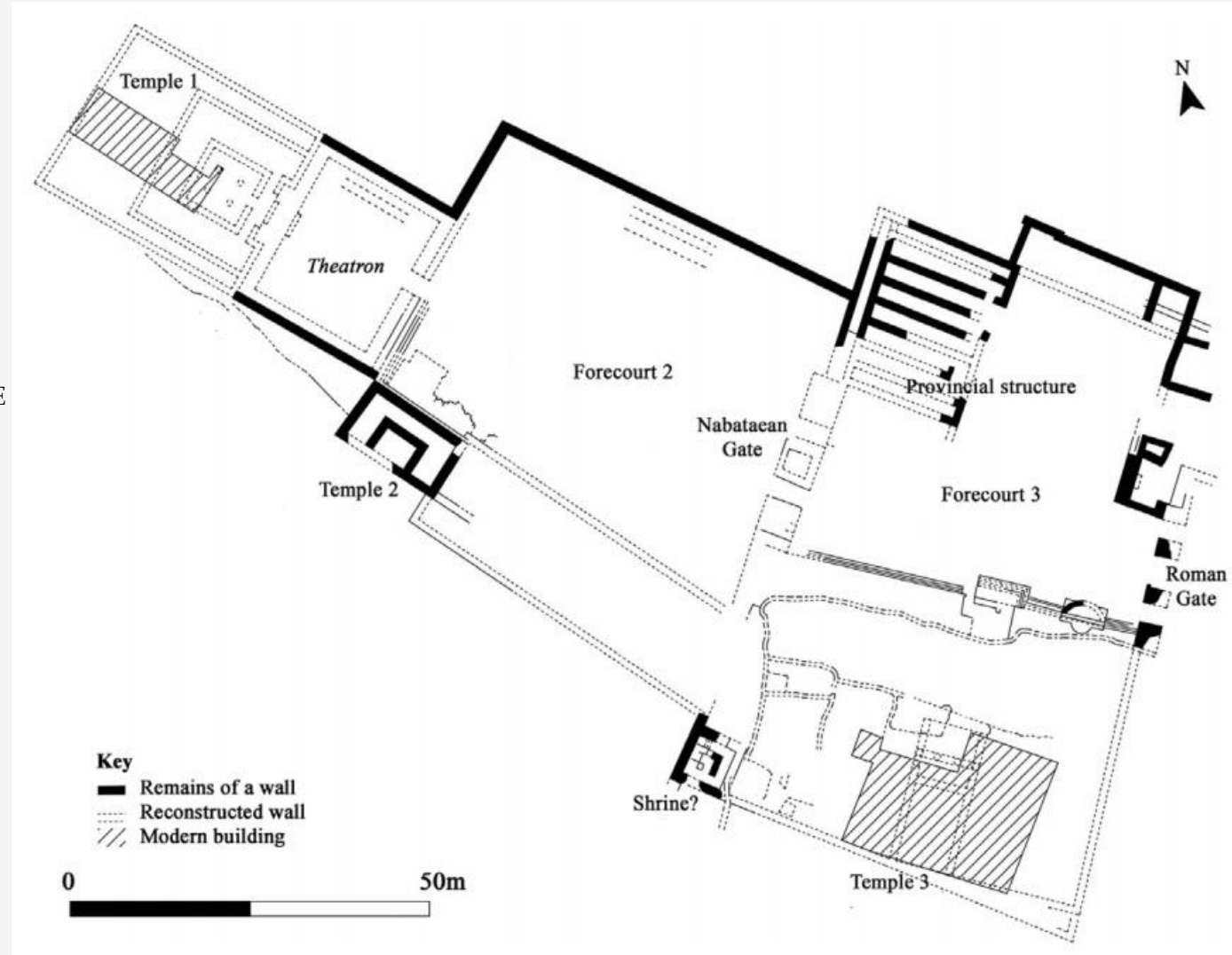
- Si' (also Sia/Seeia/Seia)- Nabataean/Syrian sanctuary in the Jebel el-Druz, 2 km SE of Canatha



Temples

Rural sanctuaries

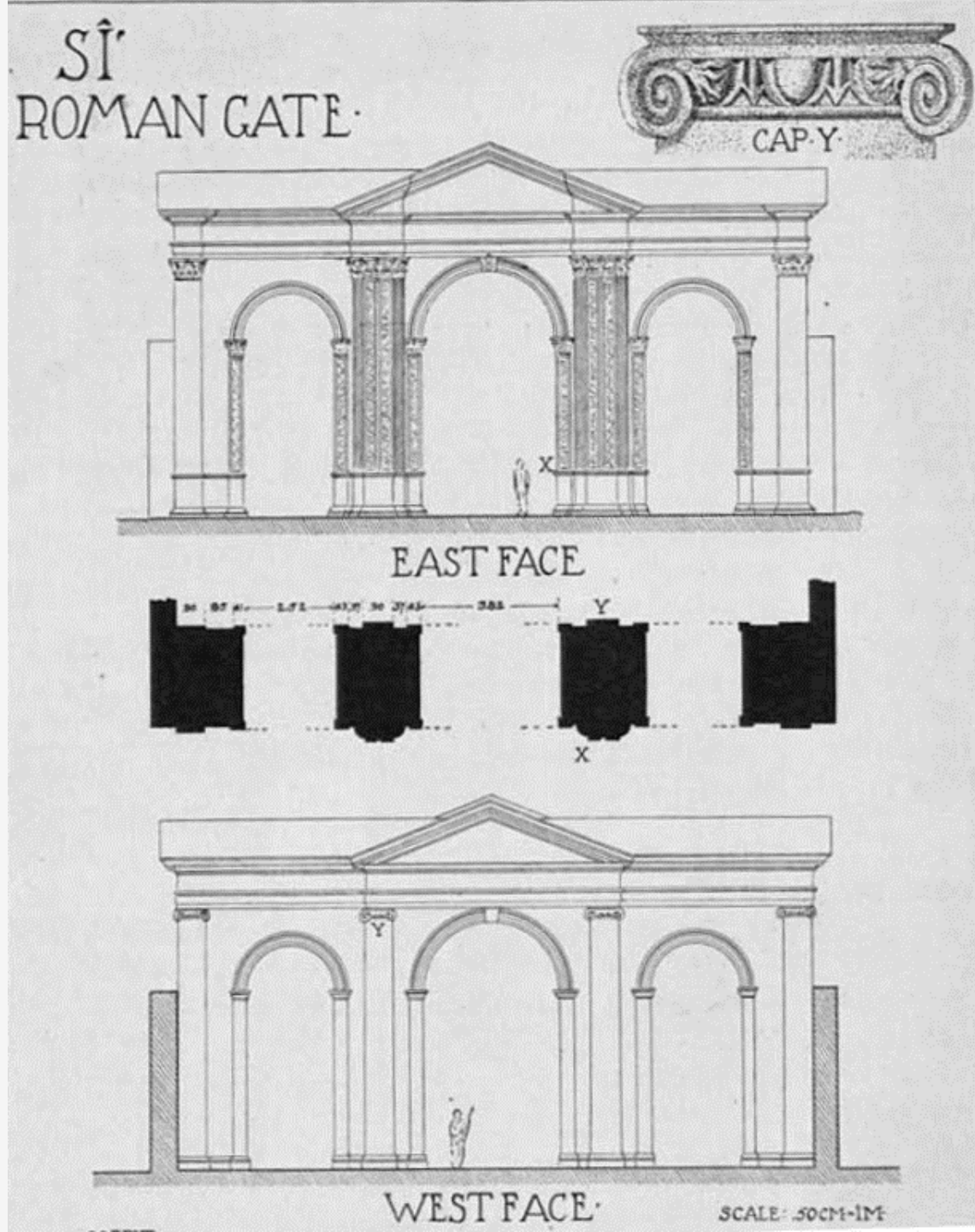
- Si'
- Rich epigraphic evidence – Nabataean and Greek dedications and votives (including king Herod, Philip, Agrippa I and Agrippa II)
- 1st c. BCE-2nd/early 3rd c. CE
- Processional road coming from the valley to the north
- Bathhouse in front of the sanctuary – pilgrimage centre



Temples

Rural sanctuaries

- Si'
- The Roman gate
- Three passageway monumental arch

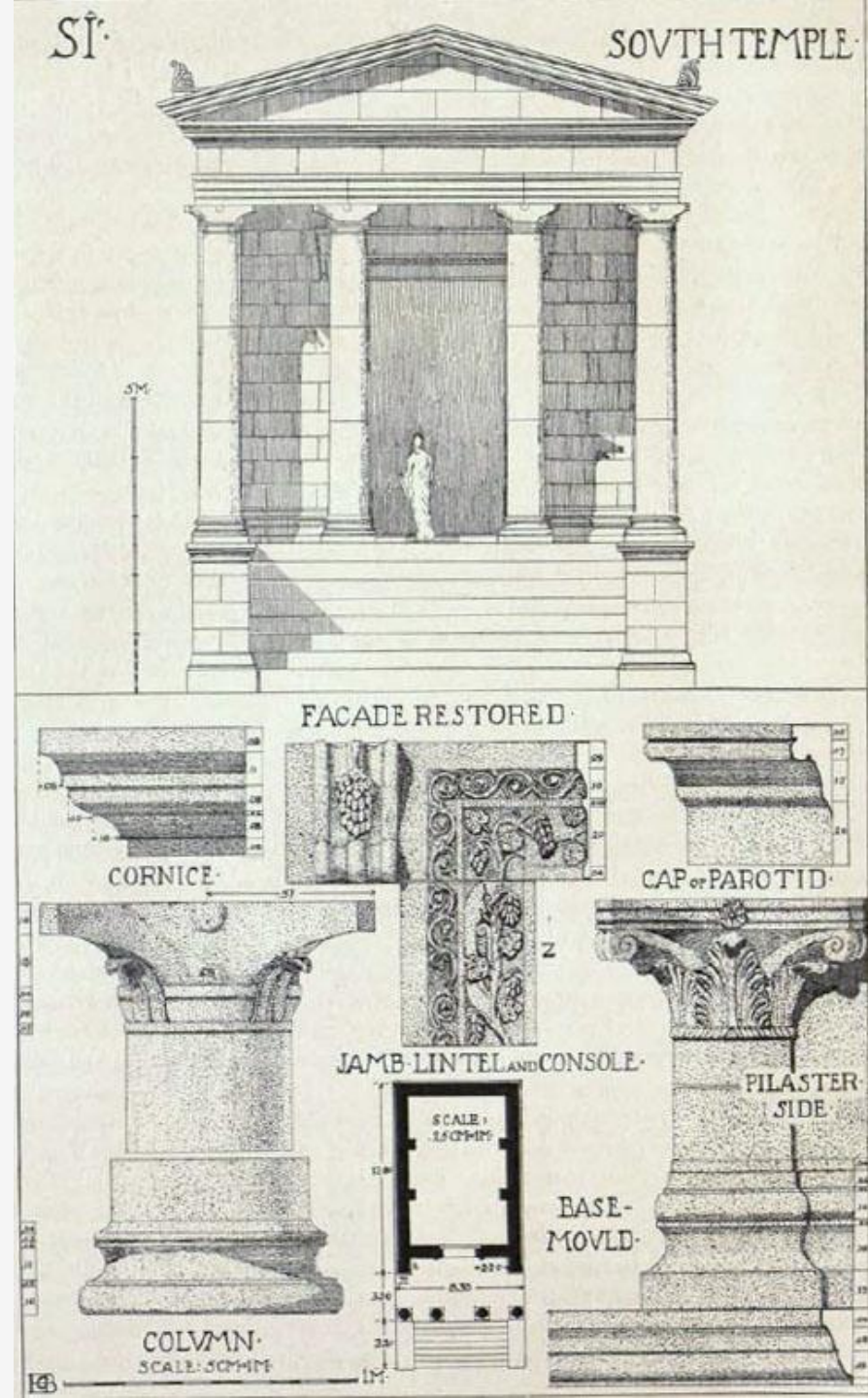
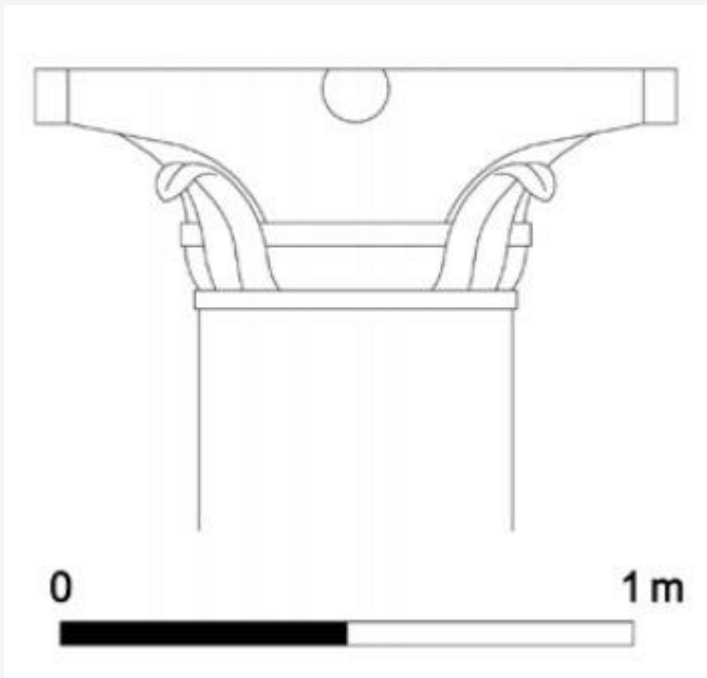


Temples

Rural sanctuaries

- Si'
- The South Temple
- Podium (h. = 2.5 m) tetrastyle prostyle (8.3x19.2 m)
- Heterodox Corinthian capitals on pilasters inside the naos
- Nabataean capitals in the facade
- Last quarter of the 1st c. BCE-first half of the 1st c. CE

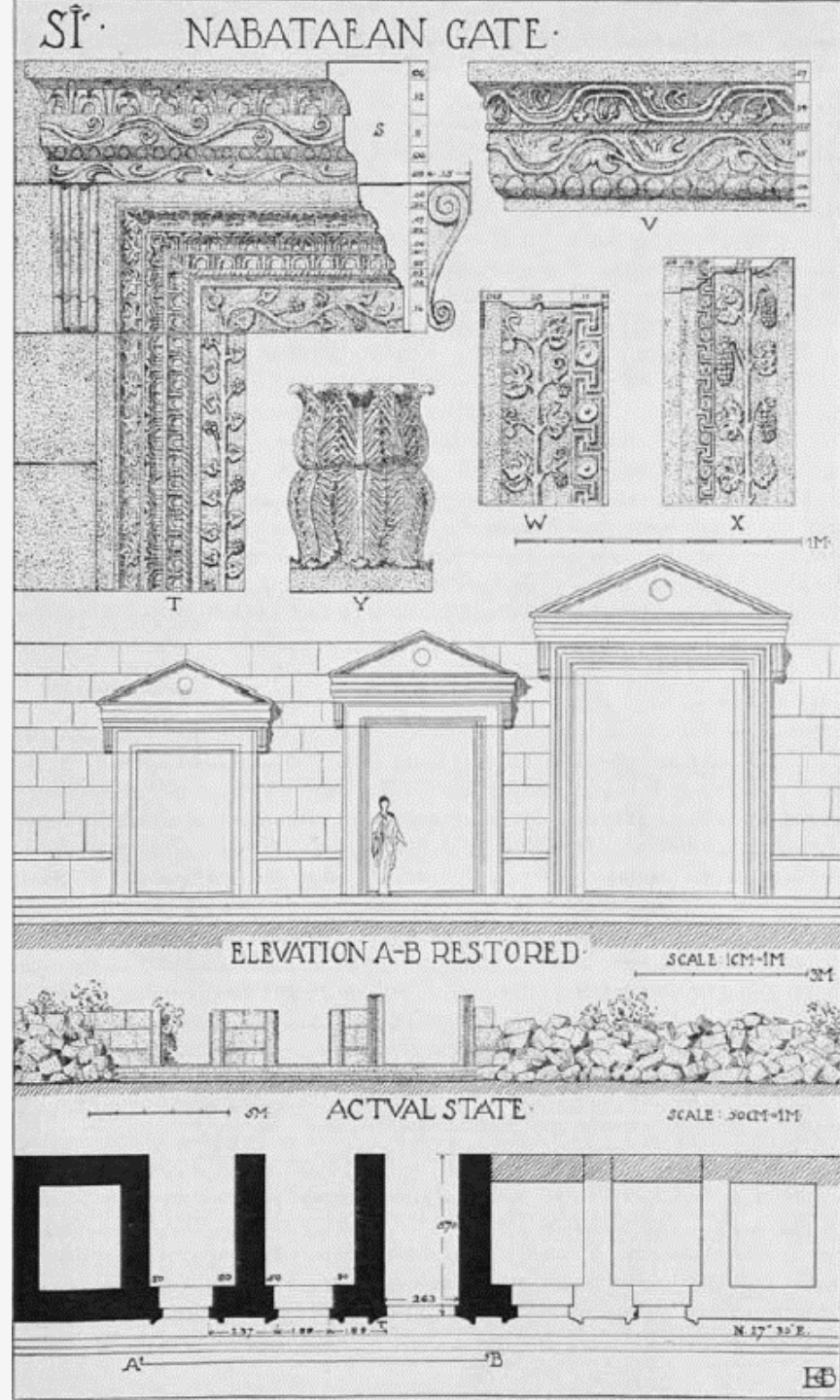
Nabataean capital (exaggerated concave abacus, with acanthus leaves below)



Temples

Rural sanctuaries

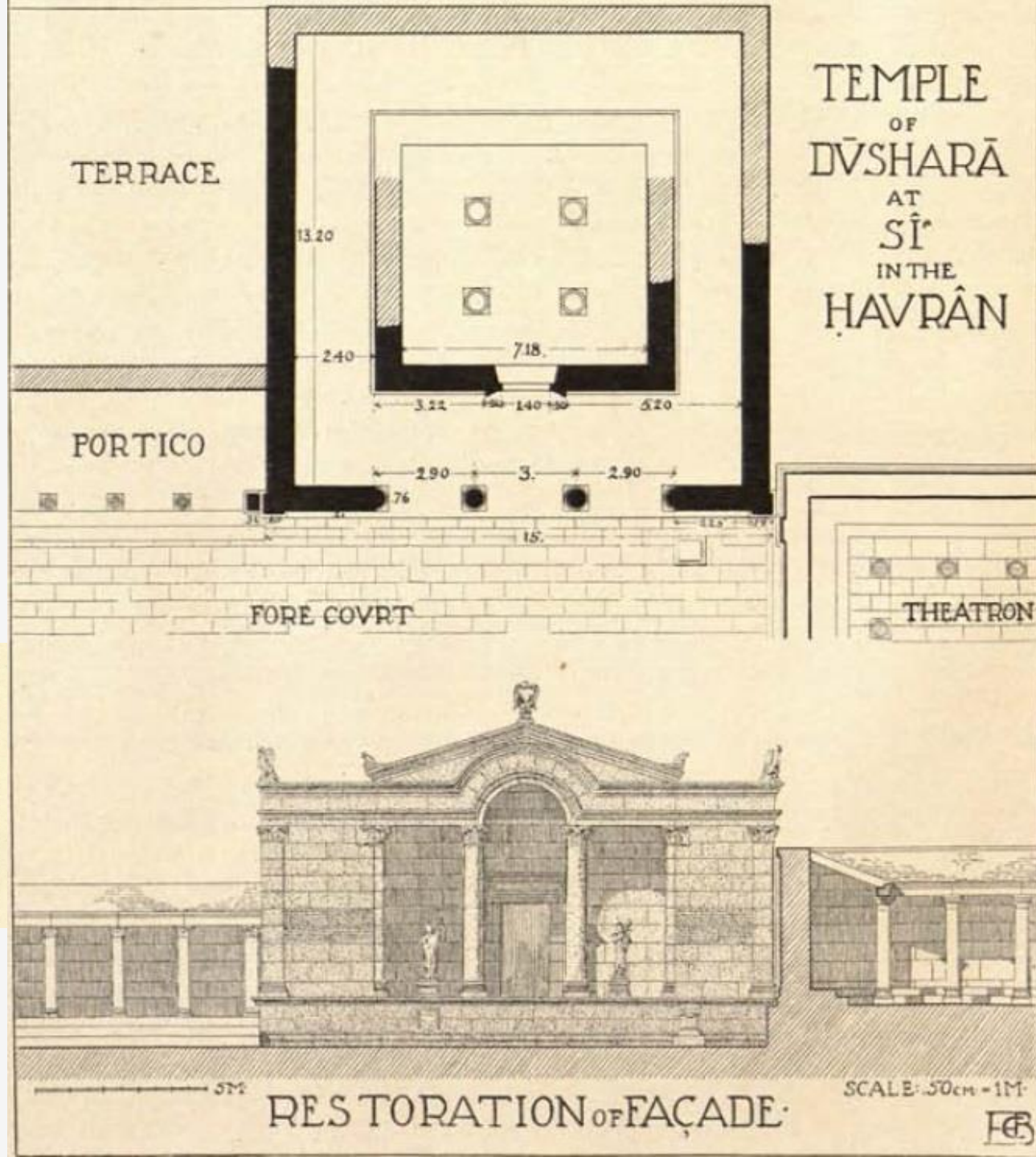
- Si'
- Nabataean Gate
- Asymmetrical - three different sizes of passageway
- The floral frieze of the doors is throughout Nabataean in style



Temples

Rural sanctuaries

- Si'
- Temple 2 (Temple of Dushara?)
- Nabataean concentric temple
- Outer enclosure 13.2x13.2 m
- Unclear if roofed or not
- Inner 7.8x7.8 m with 4 columns (comp. Hellenistic Naos of Zeus in Gerasa)
- Syrian arch hypothetical



ΣΕΕΙΑ ΚΑΤΑΓΗΝΑΥΡΑ
ΝΕΙΤΙΝΕΣΤΗΚΥΙΑ

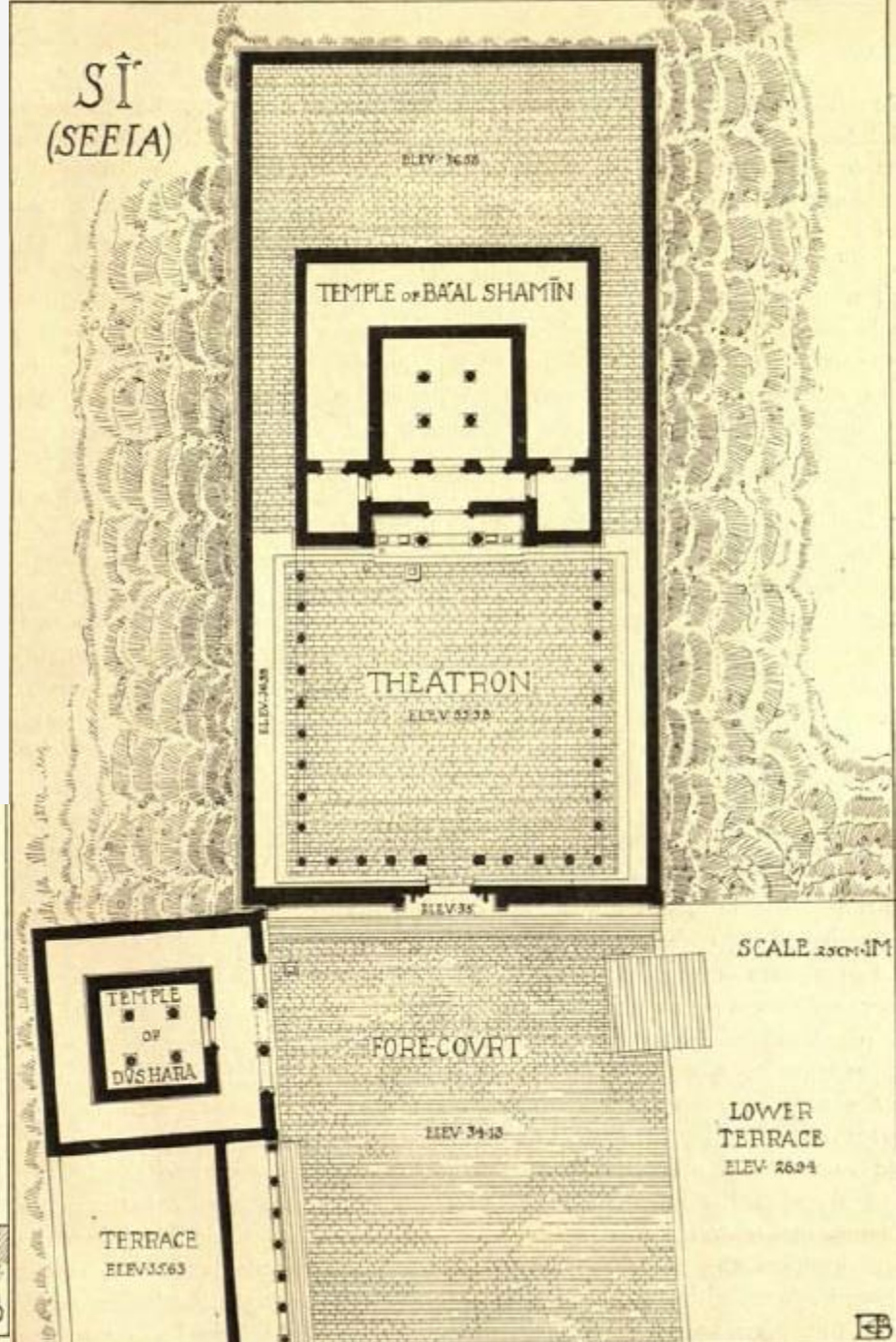
ܫܫܝܐ ܟܬܘܪܝܢܝܘܪܐ
ܢܝܬܝܢܝܫܬܝܟܝܝܐ

Votive inscription on a statue pedestal set against the wall of the Temple 2
Gr. "Seeia standing over the land of Hauran"
Nab. "This is the image of S'Y'W"

Temples

Rural sanctuaries

- Si'
- Temple 1 (Temple of Ba'al Shamin)
- Enclosure 25x52 m
- Peristyle courtyard (theatron)
- Concentric sanctuary 18.8x19.5 m with distylos in antis between pair of tower antae
- Combination of concentric and frontal-axial plan



Temples

Rural sanctuaries

- Si'
- Sculpture



Keystone of arched gate of the inner sanctuary of Ba'al Shamin, showing the radiate bust of the deity

(Right) heterodox Corinthian capital with a human figure

(Right) Fragments of eagle, Temple of Ba'al Shamin

(Far right) Man in a tunic (priest? dedicant?)

(Lower right) winged Nike



Temples

Winged Nike/Victoria

- Common votive and decoration in the 2nd-3rd c. CE in Southern Syria
- Common Hellenistic type, related to Nike of Samothrace (on the left)



Winged Nike from Bedřich Hrozný's excavation at Sheikh Sa'ad, S. Syria



Temples

Brief summary

- Prominent place in the civic cults is occupied by Tyche and patron deities of individual cities (most often Zeus)
- Pre-eminent place of Zeus Olympios in the cities of Decapolis has roots in the religious policy of Antiochus IV – conscious import of new Greek cults in the Hellenistic period in the context of Seleucid dynastic cult
- Local deities might be sometimes assimilated with Tyche and/or patron deity of a city (apparently Artemis in Gerasa)
- Cult of Pan in Paneas cannot be connected with Semitic equivalent and represents very curious import
- Overall both Greek (/Roman) and Semitic deities are worshipped side-by-side
- Numismatic evidence for cults and sanctuaries is valuable but must be used with caution (especially regarding the temple buildings in places that were not excavated)

- Southern Levant offers unusual variety of architectural forms
- Vitruvian temples are common throughout the region
- “Native”/“Non-Vitruvian” temples quickly adopts Hellenistic and Roman architectural decoration and features (Palmyra, Si‘ ...)
- Many sites are blending elements of Graeco-Roman, Nabataean and Syrian architectural and artistic tradition in one place (Si‘)
- Syrian arch and use of niches on the inner and outer walls of temple naos is typical of the development of architectural decoration in the Roman period in the Levant
- Tendency for monumental precincts within the urban setting, starting with ancient native sanctuaries (Jerusalem, Damascus...) and spreading further

- Kalybe temples represent unique development of a temple plan exclusively dedicated to the Imperial cult, often incorporating very Eastern features (domes, iwan) and at different times it only plays freely with “Vitruvian” models and types
- The openness of the kalybe temples to the main public spaces of the cities (agora/forum, main streets) and lack of separation of the assumed sacred space betrays their main function – Imperial propaganda to the masses