



Fig. 26. Plan of the Northwest Quarter with all excavated trenches 2012–2016 marked (image courtesy of the Danish-German Jerash Northwest Quarter Project)

The work of the Danish-German Jerash Northwest Quarter Project, which has been ongoing since 2011, continued in 2016 and 2017 (see Lichtenberger and Raja 2017 for a summary). In 2016, a fieldwork season was undertaken between July and August and in 2017 a shorter study campaign was conducted with the participation of specialists. In 2016, Trenches S–X were excavated and preliminary reports are forthcoming (Fig. 26). Work focused on clarifying research questions that evolved around the mosaic hall on the south side of the Northwest Quarter, the large filled-in cistern on top of the hill, the early Islamic domestic contexts on the so-called Eastern Terrace, housing on the southern slope, as well as the Middle Islamic phases located on top of the hill.

One of the discoveries of the 2016 campaign was a Roman-period cistern in Trench S. A Roman-period building had stood on top of the cistern. The building and the cistern had been completely destroyed and intentionally backfilled at a later point in time. The building was a large monumental complex. The staircase leading down into the cistern held polychrome wall paintings underlining the importance of this structure. The intentional and careful closure of the complex shows that it must have been important. A sediment basin (Trench X), north of the large multi-phase cistern was excavated. This was connected

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with a concrete floor that had been partly excavated in 2015 (Trench O). The sediment basin is the oldest structure discovered north of the cistern, and it was reused in Byzantine times as the floor of a later building. These discoveries connected with water management clearly show that the Northwest Quarter developed much earlier than hitherto thought and that extensive building activity took place there already in the 1st century A.D.

On the south slope, Early Islamic housing (Trench U) provided insights into the Umayyad settlement in the Northwest Quarter. In contrast to the area next to the multi-phase cistern (Trench F) where all the Byzantine buildings were destroyed and intentionally backfilled, it is now clear that parts of the settlement further east remained in use until the earthquake of A.D. 749.

The continued excavation of the monumental Umayyad courtyard house (Trench V) on the east terrace yielded the southwestern part and the entrance of this Early Islamic building complex. The discovery of an earthquake victim in the Northwest Quarter also counts among the finds. The remains of a young person were retrieved from debris of collapsed walls and soil in the entrance corridor close to the door. Apart from this discovery, the destruction context offers insights into ceramic types and other objects used immediately prior to the destruction caused by the earthquake in A.D. 749. The continued excavation of the mosaic hall (Trench W) (Fig. 26) gave additional information about the construction of the hall, Umayyad re-use of the building, and the earthquake destruction. The excavated northwest corner of the Middle Islamic courtyard house (Trench T) attested to the multi-phase building history of this Middle Islamic edifice and was a further step in subdividing and refining the chronology of the material culture of the Middle Islamic period.

REFERENCE:

Lichtenberger, A. and R. Raja (eds). 2017. *Gerasa/Jerash: From the Urban Periphery*. Aarhus: Føllestrykkeriet AUTRYK.



Fig. 27. Photogrammetric plan of the mosaic hall (image courtesy of the Danish-German Jerash Northwest Quarter Project)