

HISTORY OF THE SETTLEMENT OF ANDRONA: ARCHAEOLOGICAL-HISTORICAL EVALUATION

In the first extensive study of the central Syrian steppe areas by R. Mouterde and A. Poidebard, Androna takes a prominent place among the »villes-refuges« thanks to its favourable location with regard to traffic routes⁹¹⁸. The authors see the beginnings of the development of Isriye (Seriane), Zebed, Hanaser (Anasarth) and Androna in the 2nd and 3rd century AD and their climax as sites on the »Limes de Chalcis« in the 6th century AD⁹¹⁹. Although there is no proof for this in the sources, they attribute the fortifications of Androna as well as the buildings at Stabl Antar and Qasr ibn Wardan to imperial initiative⁹²⁰.

The importance of an irrigation system for the development of Androna was recognised at an early stage. The first comprehensive survey of the reservoirs and *qanats* of the »Marges Arides« by a franco-syrian team⁹²¹ was continued and expanded by the survey of the british team headed by M. Mundell Mango which began after the excavation of the Byzantine Bath in Androna⁹²².

Some of the theses of Mouterde/Poidebard are not tenable according to the outcome of the excavations up to now. However, all the results and theses connected with the irrigation system and agriculture are of central importance. What has to be discussed is whether the results of the excavations inside and of the survey outside the walls of Androna complement each other. I begin with an overview of the results of the survey inside the walls and the excavations that are relevant for these questions.

It has not been possible to clarify either the location of the *mansio* in the period around 300 AD or its situation in the 4th century with the excavation works in Androna up to now⁹²³. The following reflections thus concentrate on the 5th-7th centuries and link the results about the two circuit walls and the *kastron* with the evidence of the surface findings in churches and profane buildings. Whereas the tradition of the 6th century and above all the situation after the drastic events of the years 540-543 AD are at the centre of older literature, Androna's situation in the 5th century is a main focus in this present work.

THE TWO CIRCUIT WALLS

In older literature the discussion about the development of Androna concentrated on the area inside the outer circuit wall, which even in the description of Butler it is not mentioned. The inner circuit wall is made of basalt, whereas the outer wall was erected mainly out of clay bricks. The basalt wall enclosed a settlement area of about 90 ha, the outer wall, on the other hand, an area of 155 ha (suppl. 1; fig. 9). The following reflections about the way leading from the *mansio* of the late 3rd/early 4th century to the *kome* of the 5th-6th century begin with the two circuit walls.

These are the main questions concerning the inner circuit wall: At which time appeared the construction of the basalt wall sensible or necessary? Why was the wall – assuming it was completed – abandoned? Had it

⁹¹⁸ Mouterde/Poidebard 1945, I 6f. 234-240.

⁹¹⁹ Mouterde/Poidebard 1945, I 239.

⁹²⁰ For the »organisation des arrières qui est l'oeuvre du grand empereur« see Mouterde/Poidebard 1945, I 6. 238.

⁹²¹ Jaubert u. a. 1999, 32-36.

⁹²² Mundell Mango 2010, 254-268.

⁹²³ About this p. 40f. and the article about Androna in Todt/Vest 2012, 837-840.

been so profoundly destroyed, that a reconstruction did not appear sensible, or did the advanced growth of Androna suggest the erection of a new wall after a partial destruction?

The outer circuit wall was erected in the Early Byzantine period and continued to be used long after the 7th century. All questions connected with its function in the Early Byzantine as well as in the Arab period lead to the houses and churches, which were erected between the two circuit walls, and the street running from the north-west through the centre of the town to the gateway in the south-east of the settlement (**suppl. 1; fig. 16**).

The inner circuit wall was demolished completely or in part still in the Early Byzantine period and the question, what happened to the basalt material of the wall, if it was to a large extent or completely finished, concerns all the buildings in the settlement erected in the course of the 6th century. The question is whether the time of the construction of the basalt wall can be at least narrowed down with the overview of all the data and facts known up to now about Androna's main buildings.

THE SOUTHERN PART OF THE TOWN AND THE SOUTH-EASTERN CEMETERY

In the works up to now, which concentrated on the centre of the town, there were indications in the *kastron* of preceding buildings, however, the question whether the *kastron* was built in place of the *mansio* could not be answered with the excavations up to now; excavations in the northern wing may answer the question. The excavation works in the area of the main church have also not yet been able to clarify whether the enclosing structures stand on older sections of walls or were erected *ex novo*. On the other hand, it did emerge in the course of our works that the oldest area in the settlement is to be sought in the southern part of the present settlement which was bounded by the south-eastern cemetery in the first quarter of the 5th century at the latest (**pl. 1; suppl. 2**). The house structures seem to have been built mainly of clay bricks and without the intensive use of basalt that is so characteristic for houses in other parts of Androna (**pl. 138, 1-2**). The church there dedicated to the military saint Theodore was not examined and it is therefore completely open whether there is a connection between it and the rectangular structure, in the courtyard of which the southern church (no. 6) is located (**suppl. 2**). The »enceinte fortifiée« of the south church recalls directly the *Xeneon* of St. Theodore in Umm el Ḥalaḥil and could be one of the older structures in the southern part of Androna. The questions about the *mansio* Androna can thus only be answered by further excavations in the southern part, as well as at the centre of Androna.

THE KASTRON, THE CHURCH IN ITS COURT AND THE BYZANTINE BATH

The construction period of the *kastron* leads to the decades after the drastic events of the years AD 540-543. Not just the *kastron*, but also the bath in front of its western side was donated by Thomas, perhaps descended from Androna and Jakobos, the donor's nephew is named as being in charge of construction of the *kastron* (**pl. 148**).

The fact that the votive inscription informs, that Thomas »appeared as a *soter*« raises the question, whether there was an event or a dangerous situation that preceded the construction of the *kastron* and in what state the circuit walls were in the year 558 AD.

A large part of the questions connected with the *kastron* leads to the building complex of Qasr ibn Wardan, which was constructed a few years later (the »barracks« probably date from 561, the main building of the residence from 564, its western courtyard wing from AD 571/572 and the church against AD 570). The »barracks« have not yet been excavated, but it is already possible to recognise that they are not only smaller, but also simpler in design as a whole than the *kastron* of Androna. With the building in its courtyard as well as the design of the main door it is distinguished from the *kastron* in the neighbouring site.

The church in the courtyard of the *kastron* of Androna is also a private foundation, but it only came into being towards the end of the 6th century or in the early 7th century (suppl. 5; pl. 174). It illustrates the situation of regional workshops working in Androna some decades after the completion of the *kastron* and raises the question why it appeared sensible to erect a church in the *kastron*, and thus in the direct vicinity of the churches in the centre. The situation of this church reminds on the Syrian inscription of the Annunciation scene on a pillar in the western hall of the *kastron* (pl. 73, 2). The inscription, as also the erection of the *kastron* church, could be connected with a change in the function of the *kastron*, but after the results of our excavations the question remains open. On the other side we cannot exclude the possibility, that Abraham was the steward of the *kastron* and that on the base of this connection he donated the painting in the western hall. The *kastron* in its double function as a defensive structure and refuge does not only occupy a special position in the period of transition from the early Byzantine to the Omayyad era, it is also at the centre of all questions on the later settlement of Androna in the following centuries.

THE CHURCH BUILDINGS

The main church of the town as a wide-arcade basilica is an ambitious building which, as the church of a *kome*, invites comparison with the main church of the *kome* of Kerratin (Taroutia Emporon), the wide-arcade basilicas of Ruweiḥa and Resafa and the church buildings of the region north-east of Hama. Androna was not an episcopal see and up to now the town's ecclesiastical position is only tangible in two inscriptions: the inscription on the tomb of *chorepiskopos* Georgios in the south-eastern cemetery and the inscription on a brick from the excavation of the house which names an *anagnostos* Zacharias, thus a lector. It is completely open who donated the wide-arcade basilica and to whom it was dedicated.

The church of Kerratin was very probably built in the first decade of the 6th century (504/505 AD) and is at the end of a long series of dated house buildings of the 4th and 5th century in a site which, according to the present state of knowledge, did not have an enclosure wall but a *phourion* and a tower of defense in the centre⁹²⁴.

The Bizzos church of the *kome* Ruweiḥa was a private foundation and, like the church of Kerratin is at the end of the history of a settlement going back to the 3rd century. According to the evidence of the inscription from 491/492 AD recently found, the church of Androna was under construction or already completed in the last decade of the 5th century. According to the present state of knowledge, it is one of the oldest church buildings in the town, and the question is how large was the settlement which had developed out of the *mansio* in the late decades of the 5th century.

The Churches no. 4 and 5 to the south of the main church (pl. 13, 2-16, 3) were donated by Dometios and his wife Synkletike – residents of the place. Owing to the severe destruction, fundamental questions on both structures can only be answered by excavations. Up to now, it is only certain for the southern church that it

⁹²⁴ For this p. 103.

was a church to the Archangel. This church with its intensive combination of basalt and imported limestone and marble elements, which recall the findings of the church of Fa'lul and Ma'arata, can be dated, according to the evidence of the capitals, to the decades between ca. 490 and 510 AD (pl. 124, 3). The excavation of these two churches is one of the most important tasks for further work, as this church complex is also linked with the question whether the right of asylum was connected with it mainly or also with the main church.

The house from the year AD 528 does not date the southern church (no. 6). According to the evidence of the imported column capitals as well as of the door forms, this church was erected later than the church of the Archangel (pl. 10-12; 123, 4-5; 124, 1-3). Some features indicate that it was built between AD 530 and 550. Several important questions are connected with its construction: The church *extra muros* seems to have been erected at a time, when the basalt wall was the only existing circuit wall, but at which time began the construction of the outer wall, which placed the church between two circuit walls? Did the surrounding enclosure wall already exist as an older structure outside of the basalt wall and how is the relationship between the southern church and the church of St. Theodor (no. 7)? Excavations and geophysical prospections in the whole southern part of the site should be at the centre of future works.

The church buildings thus shift the main focus of the history of the settlement into the southern and south-western parts of the town (suppl. 2) and distinguish the findings made there from the churches in the north-eastern and north-western parts of the settlement. The few structural forms of the north-western church (no. 10) known up to now lead close to the kastron church (pl. 9, 2; 135, 2), thus probably also belong to the late period of the town. According to this overview of the churches, it becomes apparent that the period of the building of the basalt wall is a central question for the history of Androna in the 5th and early 6th century.

The evidence of the churches is to be supplemented by the findings of the *metaton* of the Archangels erected in 511/512 AD in the south-western part of the town. This inn lay inside the basalt wall and in the vicinity of the western gate and probably had no purely military function⁹²⁵.

ANDRONA IN THE 5TH AND EARLY 6TH CENTURY

Two tombs in the south-eastern cemetery from the years 427/428 and 444 AD lead into the first half of the 5th century. The inscription in the main church and the inscriptions on two door lintels, one of which has the date 499 AD (pl. 20, 1-2), belong to the last decade of the 5th century. This lintel names the Archangel Michael (pl. 22, 1) and this links it with the lintel of the »Archangels' Inn« of 511/512 AD in the south-western part of the site, the church of the Archangel and with a boundary stone in the western part of Androna (pl. 21, 1). Even if we could not clarify to which building the two door lintels belonged and to which church district the boundary stone is bounded, it is nevertheless certain that a concentration of inscriptions from the end of the 5th and early 6th century links buildings in the southern and south-western parts of Androna by naming the Archangels. Looking ahead to the publication of the excavation of the house, it has to be pointed out here that the first building phase of the excavated house complex leads to the second half of the 5th century, perhaps even already to the middle of that century⁹²⁶.

Although the excavation works have not yet covered the southern and south-western parts of the town, surveys of the surface findings thus already allow us to recognise a clear focus of the settlement history

⁹²⁵ For this see Griesheimer 2001, 138.

⁹²⁶ On this see Strube 2010, 229-236 fig. 29-35.

in the 5th century. All the findings named belong to areas which are enclosed by the inner circuit wall. The question of the planning and erection of the basalt wall should thus start out from the development of the place in the 5th century: What was the situation of the place when the construction of the wall was planned? Was the building of the wall a reaction to external threats, or had the *mansio* Androna already grown into a prosperous settlement which made »the building of a wall in a crisis-free time«⁹²⁷ possible? The accounts of the historical situation of northern Syria in the 5th century start out from the assumption of a relatively peaceful period in which the decades of the rule of Emperor Zeno (474-491) are of special significance⁹²⁸. The war against the Persians in the years 502-506 AD brought the comparatively peaceful decades between ca. 470 and the first years of the 6th century to an end. There is no clue to be found in the sources that the military events, which concentrated on Mesopotamia and Euphratesia, spread to the central Syrian regions.

The period of peace beginning in 507 and lasting until 526 was brought to an end by the outbreak of new fighting and the Persian war of the years 527-532 AD. In this period fall the armed attacks by the Lakhmids fighting on the Persian side, who reached the city of Emesa in 528 in an attack on Phoenicia by al Mundir and in the following year pushed forward to Antioch and Chalcis⁹²⁹. If we ask about the scale of the danger to central Syria's settlements, it has to be stressed that the threat through »nomadic raids« did not first begin in the 6th century, but extended back far into the 5th century⁹³⁰. Nevertheless, the defence systems of the »villes-refuges« are assessed controversially in secondary literature.

Thus, for example, the military-defensive character of the defence systems was emphasised by P.-L. Gatier and M. Reddé, while Isaac spoke in favour of military-civil or purely civil tasks for the »smaller installations«⁹³¹. Recently the mainly military character of late Roman fortifications in the northern Syrian section of the limes has been convincingly proved on the basis of archaeological studies of four frontier fortifications⁹³². The question to what extent these results also apply to Androna's defence systems leads to the question of the financing and organisation of great construction projects, and that means also to the development of the *mansio* Androna in the 5th and 6th century.

Androna is located on a limestone plateau and so even the import of basalt from the basalt massifs located nearby was a decision which linked the principal buildings in the place to the building tradition of the basalt regions. The house structures as well as the outer circuit wall in their combination of mud bricks with basalt elements were the second constant factor of the overall picture. The third constant factor leads to the imported marble and porphyry elements (pl. 140-141), the limestone capitals with their parallels in the Limestone Massif of Northern Syria and the structural form of the wide-arcade basilica which link Androna to the cities of Antioch, Apamea, Epiphania and Emesa (pl. 123, 1-5; 124, 3).

It is important that the church(es) of the Archangels were already a private foundation and that even long before the erection of the *kastron* of Androna and the church of Qasr ibn Wardan, limestone capitals of high quality and other precious materials for the decoration of at least one of the two churches were imported to Androna (pl. 14, 2; 15, 1-2). The results of the first excavation campaign in the main church (no. 1) let one assume that already in this church the combination of the main material basalt with limestone and marble elements was an important aspect⁹³³.

The lavish construction of the wide-arcade basilica and the rich decoration of the southern church of the Archangels with imported materials convey the impression that in the course of the 5th century the *mansio*

⁹²⁷ Peschlow 2010, 78 f.

⁹²⁸ Shahid 1989, 120 ff. – Brands 2002, 224-227. – Konrad 2001, 14 f. 112-116.

⁹²⁹ Shahid 1995, 42-47. In 431 AD the Lakhmid Na'aman I attacked Seriane (Isriye).

⁹³⁰ Isaac 1990, 214 f. 255. 260. – Liebeschuetz 2006, 139-142.

⁹³¹ Gatier 2001, 105-107. – Isaac 1990, 172-178. – Reddé 1995, 121-128.

⁹³² Konrad 2001, 102. 114 f.

⁹³³ For this here p. 25. 39. 218.

Androna had developed into a prosperous settlement. In the construction of the masonry work in the »technique du Hauran«, as well as the careful finish of the basalt ashlars, the basalt wall and the wide-arcade basilica are very close to each other. Is it conceivable that not only the main church, but also the basalt wall were constructed towards the end of the 5th century?

The questions, which this thesis raises, can be limited by a look at the development of the pilgrimage centre Resafa⁹³⁴. Resafa is far better researched than Androna and as the seat of a bishop and centre of the Euphratesia does not, at a first glance, allow any comparison. At the beginning of the record on Resafa is the *castrum* from the Tetrarch period, about the design of which little is known. The first church of St. Sergios (Basilica A), erected in the early 5th century, lay at the location of Basilica B, the beginning of the construction of which is dated to the year 518 AD. Basilica B, the centralised building and large sections of the city wall erected in stone are so closely linked to each other through their architectural decoration that at the centre of more recent research is the question whether the work on the three building complexes began with the city wall, or with one of the two churches. The wide-arcade basilica, on the other hand, and that means the new church to St. Sergios completed before 518 AD, stands out from the three aforementioned building complexes as it leads to North-western Syria in its structural type as well as in basic forms of the architectural decoration, and has close parallels in the Limestone Massif of Northern Syria⁹³⁵. As it is hardly to be assumed that this important pilgrims' church was erected without a protective circuit wall, the time of its construction is closely linked with the beginning of the building of the new city wall and former location of the wall from the 5th century preceding it. If we assume that the first circuit wall – probably a mud-brick wall – led out far beyond the centre of the place and also enclosed the site of Basilica A, the beginning of the construction of the wide-arcade basilica would not be connected with the years before 518 AD and could be dated already in the final decade of the 5th century or the first decade of the 6th century⁹³⁶.

On the other hand, if we assume that Basilica A was the church of the newly created metropolis, a beginning of construction in the first decade of the 6th century, perhaps after the peace treaty of 507, and that means as part of a huge construction program, is conceivable⁹³⁷.

All the reflections on the history of the settlement of Androna cannot start from the »normal case« of an older mud brick wall being replaced by a stone wall from a later period. However, the discussion of the construction time of the wide-arcade basilica and the city wall of Resafa in relation to the Persian wars of 502-506 and the period of peace following them is instructive. In Resafa the construction of the wide-arcade basilica is at the end of a longer development and speaks in favour of the fact that special importance was attached to this type of building towards the end of the 5th century and in the first decade of the 6th century. The choice of this type of building in Androna towards the close of the 5th century is thus of great importance and is to be considered within the context of the buildings of this type in Resafa, Ruweiḥa and Kerratin (Taroutia Emporon). It speaks for a development of Androna which made the planning of major construction projects possible in the last quarter of the 5th century at the latest, but leaves open whether the basalt wall was erected towards the end of the 5th century or not until the early 6th century. This means: The construction of the main church and the works on the basalt wall could have been planned nearly contemporarily in the final decades of the 5th century. However, it is also not to be ruled out that the basalt wall was erected in the first decades of the 6th century, when Androna's two large churches had already been completed.

⁹³⁴ See Konrad 2001, 14f. – Brands 2002, 212-231.

⁹³⁵ For this Strube 2002, 100-112. – Brands 2002, 45-52.

⁹³⁶ Brands 2002, 224-226.

⁹³⁷ On this Strube 2002, 106.

ANDRONA IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 6TH CENTURY AND IN THE 7TH AND 8TH CENTURY

In literature up to now, the theses on the development of Androna have concentrated on the 6th century and above all on its second half. In the sources on Syria's situation after the conquest of Antioch in 540 AD, there are no indications that the military events spread to the regions of central Syria, however, some aspects do point to a continuing threat through hostile nomad tribes even in the later 6th century. On the other hand, the tribe of the Ghassanids allied with the Byzantines do play a role in the theses of Liebeschuetz and Shahid, who attribute the progressive development of the settlement to the fact that in the 6th century the Ghassanids expanded their area of influence beyond Resafa towards central Syria⁹³⁸. The sources as well as the inscriptions in Androna do not support this thesis.

The results of the outside survey of the british team enlarged our knowledge about agricultural and industrial activities in Androna's hinterland. Four reservoirs, the system of qanats and several sites near Androna were studied. The question of the extent of the agricultural area and whether it was attached to Androna in the 5th or 6th century remained open⁹³⁹.

The results and main theses can be summarised in the following manner: The expansion of Androna »may have been the work of one or more economically powerful private individual(s), such as Thomas, prepared to meet the challenges of its environmental position«. Surplus production in Androna could have made the place part of a »Euphrates supply network« that included Chalcis, Beroea and Hierapolis⁹⁴⁰. »It would provide a good example of reciprocal economic activity between city and countryside⁹⁴¹«. The basis for these theses was the study of the irrigation system and the rural economy in the area around Androna which, with the dating of two of the reservoirs in the 6th century shifts the main stress of the development of the town to the 6th century. It is assumed for the period before the »addition of irrigation systems« in the 6th century that only barley and other cattle fodder were produced and the place was probably dependent on contacts to places in other regions »for other agricultural supplies«⁹⁴². Thus according to this thesis, the cultivation of several sorts of cereals and fruit trees, the production of olive oil and wine, whose central importance for Androna are proven, were only made possible through an irrigation system in the 6th century and the question is raised: »Were Androna's wine, grain, olive oil, pork, wool and, possibly, mutton and salted fish destined for the army?«⁹⁴³.

The excavation works within Androna's walls, which have up to now only covered a comparatively small part of the extensive ruins of the town, do not come in all points to the same result as the Survey outside of the walls. In view of future works, I therefore endeavour to keep the following argumentation close to the archaeological findings.

In the inscription of the donor of the *kastron* of Androna, Thomas »appears as *soter*«, a formulation which probably refers to an event or a situation that led to the construction of the *kastron* at the centre of the town⁹⁴⁴. It is conceivable that the construction of the *kastron* was preceded by a an event in which the basalt wall was destroyed to such a great extent that, in view of the far advanced development of the place, it was decided to erect a new wall, enclosing a larger settlement area⁹⁴⁵. It is uncertain whether the wall

⁹³⁸ Liebeschuetz 2006, 144-146. – Shahid 1995, 373-385. 562-567.

⁹³⁹ See the detailed preliminary report in Mundell Mango 2010, 278-286.

⁹⁴⁰ Mundell Mango 2010, 281.

⁹⁴¹ Mundell Mango 2010, 286.

⁹⁴² Mundell Mango 2010, 284.

⁹⁴³ Mundell Mango 2010, 281.

⁹⁴⁴ For this p. 102 f.

⁹⁴⁵ Although the wall was demolished over wide sections, the southern part was probably particularly affected. The clay brick wall is at least discernible there in the sequence of towers.

was complete when it was destroyed, but after the results of our investigation its demolition began in the 6th century. The outer circuit wall enlarged the settlement area by ca. 65 hectares, and the local tradition of mud brick walls, extending far back into the past, was taken up again in its construction⁹⁴⁶.

It is certain that the mud brick wall was erected in the Early Byzantine period. However, the works up to now have not been able to clarify whether its construction was begun in the first half of the 6th century, against the middle, or in the later 6th century⁹⁴⁷.

The importance of private donors for the erection of profane as well as religious buildings is confirmed in the 6th century by the donors of the church in the courtyard of the *kastron*, the church no. 3 to the west of the main church and an inscription dated 552 AD in the south wall of the Omayyad bath which very probably belonged to a church⁹⁴⁸. Nevertheless, the distance between the aforementioned churches, which were simple in their architecture and decoration, and the main churches of the place is so great that it raises the question of Androna's situation in the later 6th century.

Even more strongly marked is the contrast between the *kastron* on the one hand and the church in its courtyard and the churches in the area between the enclosure walls on the other hand (**pl. 9, 1; suppl. 1**)⁹⁴⁹. The *kastron* as a private foundation and through its rich decoration with imported materials leads back to the southern church of the Archangels. But in individual features of its construction it is so closely linked to buildings from about the same time in Qasr ibn Wardan that the organisation of the building operation and the historic position become the central question for both sites⁹⁵⁰. On the other hand, the *kastron*-church and the churches nos. 8 and 10 document the situation of local workshops towards the end of the 6th century and invite comparison with the situation of local workshops of this period in other regions of northern Syria⁹⁵¹.

The *kastron* was begun in 558 and completed after just 18 months in 559 AD⁹⁵². The completion of a building complex with two-storey wings of ca. 13 m in height in such a short period – provided there was not basalt material available left from the demolition of the inner circuit wall – could only be achieved with a large number of experienced workmen (**pl. 178-184**). The »barracks« in Qasr ibn Wardan, smaller and simpler as a whole, were probably completed in AD 561. Whether they were begun later than the building of Androna, or whether the construction ran in parallel to the *kastron* of AD 558-559, at all events it seems to have been finished before the residence dated 564, the western wing of its courtyard structure dated 571/572 and the church erected against AD 570. On the base of these dates, a period of about 10 years should thus be presumed for the completion of the three buildings.

It is certain that the *kastron* of Androna was a private foundation and this is also true for the Byzantine bath complex in front of its western side. In Qasr ibn Wardan, the main inscription in the residence does not mention a name, but we find a name on the main capital of the church (**pl. 137, 3**): On the rear of the capital, opposite the cross monogram of Georgios, is an eagle⁹⁵³. The door of the courtyard of the residence names a Georgios without a title (**pl. 137, 2**), however, the distance between this door and the main doorway of the residence is so great that the said Georgios can be connected only with the completion of the courtyard. The question whether the Georgios of the courtyard and the Georgios of the church are identical depends on the interpretation of the eagle on the rear of the capital.

The opinions about the founder of the buildings in Qasr ibn Wardan and about their function diverge widely. F. de Maffei proposed to identify Georgios on the courtyard door with a *stratelates* Georgios and

⁹⁴⁶ For this p. 21.

⁹⁴⁷ For this p. 73f.

⁹⁴⁸ For this p. 273 and Strube 2010, 231 fig. 28.

⁹⁴⁹ For this p. 216f.

⁹⁵⁰ For this p. 245-247.

⁹⁵¹ For this p. 218-220 and Strube 2002, 213f.

⁹⁵² Even if the inscription mentions the completion of the whole building, work on the interior decoration of the rooms is hardly included.

⁹⁵³ Strube 1983, 63f. 63 note 28. In the presentation of this capital, I pointed out that the eagle on the reverse side perhaps refers to the official position/function of Georgios. See also p. 239 note 765.

assumed that the buildings go back not to private, but state initiative⁹⁵⁴. By comparison, according to P.-L. Gatier and D. Genequand the Qasr ibn Wardan building complex formed the centre of a landowner's domain, was a private residence⁹⁵⁵.

Without the excavation of the »barracks«, which are fundamentally important for understanding the buildings of Qasr ibn Wardan, only some reflections on the historical situation of the buildings of both sites can be presented. They start out from F. W. Deichmann's study⁹⁵⁶ on army units' participation in the manufacture of fired bricks, the evidence of the production and use of fired bricks for buildings in Antioch, Beroea, Apamea and Emesa and connect them with the results for the participation of local working groups from the neighbouring basalt regions in Androna and Qasr ibn Wardan.

The complexity of the construction operations in both sites is highly instructive about the contacts to the large cities of northern Syria and the transport of materials over long distances: Workshops from the neighbouring basalt regions, experienced in the special masonry technique of basalt, met together with special army units which took over the production of substantial quantities of bricks⁹⁵⁷; precious materials from Greece, Asia Minor and the area around the capital were imported for the interior decoration (pl. 58, 3-4; 59; 60, 1-2; 140-141) and combined with columns and limestone capitals produced in workshops of Northern Syria (pl. 123, 1-5; 124, 3).

It is important that the imported materials in the church of Qasr ibn Wardan already had preliminary stages in Androna's churches, and were thus not an absolute innovation in the region. But nothing makes the complexity of building operations in Qasr ibn Wardan so clear as the construction of the vaultings⁹⁵⁸ and the combination of limestone capitals with massive impost slabs of basalt – a combination imitated years later in the church of the kastron of Androna (pl. 108, 3; 112, 1-2; 175-176).

What does the special position of the kastron of Androna tell us about the situation of the place in the second half of the 6th century and how does the situation of the small site of Qasr ibn Wardan with its enclosing wall of mud bricks and the building complex in the centre appear seen from Androna?

Some decades after the completion of the kastron and the bath in front of its western side, the church in the court of the kastron was donated by a private individual (suppl. 5; pl. 174). The reuse of basalt ashlar for the exterior walls, the pier capitals reduced to the basic form (pl. 122, 4) and the great irregularities in the elaboration of elements made of limestone and basalt characterise the situation of workshops in the late period of Androna⁹⁵⁹. The overall picture is comparable to the gateways in the outside wall (pl. 34, 2-3), the street connecting the two gates (pl. 35, 1-2) and everything we know up to now about the churches nos. 3 and 10 (pl. 135, 2).

Although, up to now, in all the churches of the town we are dependent on observations about the surface findings and only one house of many preserved house complexes has been excavated, a climax in the development of the site towards the middle of the 6th century and a clear change towards the end of the century is becoming apparent. However, it has to be recorded that decisive stages in this development lead

⁹⁵⁴ De Maffei 1995, 105-187. The linking of the Georgios on the courtyard door with the *stratelates* Georgios is problematic, because nothing in the cross monogram of the court refers to an official status of Georgios. However, the reference to the governor's palace in Bosra in this article is important. The thesis that the building complex does not go back to a private donor, is supported by the character of the inscription on the southern door of the residence. See also Grossmann 2000, 1.

⁹⁵⁵ Gatier 2001, 105. – Genequand 2012, 383-384. This thesis cannot convince as it does not go into fundamentally important statements on the relationship between the residence, the kastron and the church. On this also p. 246.

⁹⁵⁶ Deichmann 1979, 486-500.

⁹⁵⁷ The extensive production of fired bricks not only suggested contacts between the groups of artisans working in Androna and Qasr ibn Wardan but was really required for the organisation of the building operations in both sites. For the participation of arms units see Isaac 1990, 207. He assumed that they would work without payment: »army building was cheap – there were no labour costs« – an unconvincing thesis which raises many questions.

⁹⁵⁸ Grossmann 2000, 1-8.

⁹⁵⁹ For this p. 211.

to the late 5th century and the first decades of the 6th century, the results thus suggest to clarify with further excavations Androna's situation in the 5th century.

The building complex of Qasr ibn Wardan is not linked to the development of the site in which it is located, however, it can not be separated from Androna's overall situation. The construction of the *kastron* in Androna created security after a threat which we cannot determine exactly, but which was very probably related to the situation after the conquest of Antioch in 540 AD and the armed events of the following years. There is some evidence that the planning of the buildings of Qasr ibn Wardan also took place in reaction to this situation. It is conceivable that with the stationing of a troop unit and the seat of a higher-ranking civil servant or military officer would have been created a military base for the region and a supply base from where Chalcis and Beroea as well as Epiphania and Emesa could be reached in a relatively short time. The leading architect in charge, familiar with the further development and transformation of traditional church forms, as well as triconchal structural forms, was very probably called in from one of the large cities of Northern Syria. This thesis on the building complex of Qasr ibn Wardan would raise far fewer questions than its interpretation as a rich landowner's residence.

ANDRONA IN THE PERIOD AFTER THE ARAB CONQUEST

The results on the Omayyad bath at the centre of Androna and on the later use of the *kastron* in the 7th and 8th century contain the most important evidence on Androna's situation after the wave of Arab conquests⁹⁶⁰. Not only the Kufic inscriptions (pl. 87, 1-2), but also the ceramic findings link both buildings together⁹⁶¹. The Omayyad bath has not yet been studied, but the procedure in the case of the use of material is already extremely meaningful. The bath is the only building up to now in Androna in which the local limestone was used intensively, nevertheless it is only to be found in the rooms in the southern part of the building, whereas the northern part was erected completely out of basalt spolia (pl. 139, 1-4). A large part of the spolia comes from houses, a door lintel in the southern façade dated 552 AD very probably belonged to a church, jamb blocks reused as floor slabs are very close to door forms in the main church, the column drums, capitals and doors lead to main buildings in the centre of Androna and the square bases in the southern wall of the northern hall are probably to be attributed to the portico of the street in front of the western side of the bath or to column bases of buildings in the centre (pl. 139, 2)⁹⁶².

For the work in local limestone the construction supervisor of the bath had experienced workmen in sites in the vicinity of Androna – such as for example Rasm el Aḥmar – at his disposal⁹⁶³. With the intensive import of basalt Androna – erected on a limestone plateau – had a special position in the region. However, the exclusive use of basalt spolia in the Omayyad bath represents a break with the building tradition of Androna and the neighbouring basalt regions. It raises the question whether the financing of the building, a short construction time or the situation of the basalt-quarries nearby were decisive for this⁹⁶⁴.

The numerous spolia indicate that the destruction and damaging of several buildings at the centre of the town preceded the construction of the bath. It has to be asked: Did the fire in the south-western and southern wings of the *kastron* (pl. 56, 2; 79, 5), which was perhaps preceded by an earthquake, also destroy other buildings in the town centre; is there a connection between the collapse of individual parts of the

⁹⁶⁰ See also Strube 2010, 228f. 230 fig. 25-28.

⁹⁶¹ See p. 171 f.

⁹⁶² For this see p. 84 note 304.

⁹⁶³ Mouterde/Poidebard 1945, I 174f. 217.

⁹⁶⁴ There is a lack above all of studies on the basalt quarries to the west of Androna. See p. 90 note 325; 245 note 792-793.

kastron before the 9th century and the possible abandonment of the Byzantine bath in the 8th century⁹⁶⁵; is the destruction in the town centre perhaps connected with events after the wave of the Arabic conquest in the 7th century?

The fact that for the later settlement of at least the central regions of Androna in the Omayyad period a bath was erected lets one assume that this later use was not intended to be of short duration. But for whom was the bath erected? Was the population in the second half of the 7th and of the 8th century still mainly composed of farmers and was the irrigation system at that time still so far intact that the traditional cultivation of cereals, fruit trees, wine and olive trees could be continued⁹⁶⁶? Up to now the results of works at Androna do not allow far-reaching conclusions. But the fact, that the excavated house-complex in the north-eastern part of Androna was reused after the 7th century (pl. 138, 1-2)⁹⁶⁷ showed, that answers to these questions are to be expected above all from the rich heritage of houses in Androna.

⁹⁶⁵ Mundell Mango 2008, 74. 79.

⁹⁶⁶ See Mundell Mango 2008, 75-79.

⁹⁶⁷ Strube 2010, 235. – Strube 2008, 59. 67 fig. 19c-f; 69 fig. 27-

29.