



acor
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المركز الأمريكي للأبحاث

AMERICAN CENTER OF RESEARCH

ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

AMMAN, JORDAN

Annual Report 2023

January 1–December 31, 2023

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Our Mission



Established in 1968, the American Center of Research (ACOR) is an international, nonprofit academic institution. Our mission is to advance knowledge of Jordan and the interconnected region, past and present. ACOR facilitates the acquisition of knowledge through research and dialogue with an extensive library, archives, and residential facilities in Amman and with international fellowship and scholarship programs. ACOR promotes and supports research across a broad swath of the social, natural, and physical sciences, the humanities, and the arts. We do so through knowledge-sharing, via lectures, digital resources, publications, workshops and training programs, archaeological research, and cultural heritage preservation. ACOR serves as a conduit for cultural exchange among students, professionals, and the public in Jordan, the region, and beyond.

Front cover: Students of the Tenth Dendrochronology International Summer Course learning sampling techniques in Jordan's Dibe'en Forest Preserve.

Our activities focus on protection and promotion of cultural heritage, economic development and tourism, skills training and education, women's economic empowerment and leadership, positive youth development, private-sector development, and supporting the academic research of others.

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Message from the Executive Director



Pearce Paul Creasman
Executive Director

We are pleased to share a brief summary of ACOR's extensive work in 2023. The first two thirds of the year felt bright and something like "normal," with the return of numerous programs, fellows, and workshops that lent a vibrancy to life in our center in Amman. Sadly, with the outbreak of war in October, we experienced a sudden reminder how truly important the center in Amman is, as we were able to serve as a landing space for scholars, students, and tourists evacuating the region. ACOR's steadfast ability to stay focused on our bedrock principles enables us to continue to effectively pursue our mission: advancing knowledge of Jordan and the interconnected region, past and present. We are grateful for the support of our trustees, colleagues, patrons, partners, fellowship alumni, and donors as we fill an increasingly narrow, but critical as ever, role in support of tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

Some of our foremost efforts of the year were in bringing two essential projects to a close and starting several new ones. Our USAID-funded Sustainable Cultural Heritage Through Engagement of Local Communities Project (SCHEP), while formally ending in February 2024, saw its last year of robust activities, trainings, and workshops. Thousands of individuals were engaged in cultural heritage activities in what proved to be a stellar closure to an impactful project. Similarly, our U.S. Embassy-funded Prevention of Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property Project saw major gains in Jordan's capacity to combat this difficult issue. Both are reported in more detail in the pages that follow. New projects included archaeological survey and excavation along and in the Dead Sea, a prestigious field school in environmental sciences, and a trio of contracts with the Department of Antiquities to help preserve heritage sites. We acknowledge and thank all of our project staff and partners for helping to make these projects so successful.

Our publications program continued strongly throughout 2023. Perhaps most notable for the year is that we saw four books in Arabic come to print (freely accessible on our website), including *The Pottery of Jordan: A Manual* and *Manual for the Prevention of Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property*. We hope that these works will find widespread utility in Jordan and beyond. We advanced several of our legacy projects well and now expect the final publications of the Madaba Burnt Palace (excavated in the early 1990s) and the Temple of Winged Lions in Petra (subject to a cultural resource management initiative from 2009 to 2021) to come to print in 2024.

None of the above, or the rest you read in this annual report, would be possible without your engagement, the encouragement of the trustees, and the support of hundreds of friends and colleagues each year. Thank you for making all of this—and so much more—possible.

Library & Archive

Our library staff continued its longstanding tradition of active engagement and networking with Jordan's educational community through an open house for Jordanian students, a communications workshop for librarians, a presentation at the twenty-second annual conference of the Jordan Library and Information Association, and a lecture to the College of Archaeology and Tourism at the University of Jordan about the American Center's facilities, objectives, and fellowships program.

Library acquisitions kept the staff busy throughout the year. In addition to purchases, donations contributed to the collection. Books generously given by Edward "Skip" Gnehm, Jr., and by Linda K. Jacobs expanded our offerings on the Gulf region and the social sciences, respectively. A notably substantial donation was the Shuja Al Asad collection, adding more than 2,000 volumes in Arabic and English to the library's holdings. We are grateful to his family, particularly architect and urbanist Mohammad Al Asad, for this gift.

The archive received new material as well. Linda L. Layne and Edith Dunn each graciously donated collections to the archive. And our own U.S. office shipped about fifty boxes of largely inventoried organizational records and other documents, including audio cassette tapes, to Amman.

Title VI Grant: ACOR Digital Archive: Developing a Multimedia Teaching and Learning Resource



Our Title VI grant from the U.S. Department of Education continued to fund the digitization of photographs and other media, which are available in the ACOR Digital Archive. Among the significant additions in 2023 were many slides and other material of the Edith Dunn, Linda L. Layne, and Robert Schick collections, as well as photos from the Petra Church Project and videos of USAID SCHEP activities.

The grant also funded three U.S. Educator Fellows in 2023. Their projects, and those of some previous fellows, can be downloaded from the website: photoarchive.acorjordan.org/educator-fellows-projects.

- ◇ Monika Bachmann (Professor, Social Sciences Department, Prince George's Community College): Umm el-Jimal Fresh Water Restoration Project
- ◇ Breanna Hooks (Assistant Professor, Department of Mathematics, Santa Fe College): Ethnomathematics in the MENA Region: Exploring Mathematics through a Cultural Lens
- ◇ Rebecca J. Johnston (Assistant Professor, Department of English, Santa Fe College): The Art of Story Writing: Finding Inspiration in MENA



A portion of the new Shuja Al Asad collection, ready for cataloging. Inset: the portrait of Shuja Al Asad (1925-2022) that hangs in the reading area of the library dedicated in his name.

By the Numbers

- ◇ Books & journal volumes acquired through purchase & donation: 2,485
- ◇ Images made publicly available in the digital archive: 18,431
- ◇ Videos made publicly available in the digital archive: 80

Library & Archive, continued

Edith Dunn collection



◇ (Left) Cleaning mosaics, Jerash, Jordan, 1993 (ED_J_P_0101).

◇ (Below) Stone dwelling, Ainun village in al-Karak, Jordan, 1993 (ED_J_S_0067).



Edith Dunn, a conservator and cultural heritage specialist, documented Jordan in the 1990s. One of her trips, in 1993, was for "Preservation of Jordan's Historic Fabric: An Evaluation," a report she coauthored with Zaki M. Aslan.

Linda L. Layne collection



◇ (Left) "Kulthum and Ghaidah bringing water from a neighbor's well," Jordan Valley, Jordan, 1981-1983 (LL_J_P_0103).

◇ (Right) Schoolgirl, Jordan Valley, Jordan, 1981-1983 (LL_J_P_0111).

Anthropologist Linda L. Layne undertook fieldwork in the Jordan Valley in the early 1980s. Here she photographed rural and town life and landscapes.



Fellowships Awarded for 2023–2024

National Endowment for the Humanities Postdoctoral Research Fellowship

- ◇ Sarah Wenner [Postdoctoral, University of Cincinnati, Classics], “South Jordan Ceramics as a Lens to Site Formation Processes”
- ◇ Sarah Islam [Postdoctoral Fellow, Princeton University/University of Bern, Co-produced Religions Project, Institute of Advanced Study], “Blasphemy: Sabb al-Rasul as a Legal Category in Medieval Islamic History”

ACOR-CAORC Postdoctoral Fellowship

- ◇ Kimberly Katz [Professor, Towson University, History], “Between Jordanian and International Law: UNRWA’s Involvement in Jordanian Court Cases”
- ◇ Suzanne Richard [Professor, Gannon College, History and Archaeology], “Archaeological Expedition to Khirbat Iskandar and Its Environs. Vol. 2: Final Report on the Early Bronze IV Area B Settlements”
- ◇ Gary Rollefson [Emeritus Professor, Whitman College, Anthropology], “Completing a Lithic ‘Library’ for Future Late Neolithic Research in the Black Desert of Jordan”

ACOR-CAORC Predoctoral Fellowship

- ◇ Nadine Fattaleh [Graduate Student, New York University, Media, Culture, and Communications], “The Genesis of the Visual Culture of the Palestinian Revolution: Amman 1968–1971”
- ◇ Molly Hickey [Graduate Student, Harvard University, Political Science], “The Political Economy of Reform under Authoritarianism”
- ◇ Alex Jreisat [Graduate Student, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Interdisciplinary Program in Anthropology and History], “Occluded Circulations: Mapping the Smuggling Histories Straddling the Jordan River”

Bert and Sally de Vries Fellowship

- ◇ Annmarie Delgado [Undergraduate Student, University of California, Berkeley, Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures], Dhiban Excavation and Development Project

Jennifer C. Groot Memorial Fellowship

- ◇ Shane Cook [Undergraduate Student, Wilfrid Laurier University, Archaeology/History], Town of Nebo Archaeological Project
- ◇ Holly O’Neil [Graduate Student, Simon Fraser University, Archaeology], Renewed Archaeological Survey of the Azraq Wadis Sectors
- ◇ Miya Pletsas [Undergraduate Student, Wilfrid Laurier University, Archaeology and Heritage Studies], Khirbat al-Mukhayyat Archaeological Project
- ◇ Anneta Savvidis [Undergraduate Student, Wilfrid Laurier University, Archaeology and Heritage Studies], Khirbat al-Mukhayyat Archaeological Project

Harrell Family Fellowship

- ◇ Timothy Loh [Graduate Student, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, History, Anthropology and Science, Technology, and Society [HASTS]], “Assistive Technologies for Deaf People in Jordan: Entanglements of Language, Religion, and Disability”

Kenneth W. Russell Memorial Fellowship

- ◇ Natalia Handziuk [Graduate Student, University of Toronto, Anthropology], Archaeological Expedition to Khirbat Iskandar

Fellowships Awarded for 2023–2024, continued

Lawrence T. Geraty Travel Scholarship

- ◇ Hafsa Al-Jandabi (Undergraduate Student, German Jordanian University, Architectural Conservation), “Old City of Sana’a Salvage: Damage Assessment and Recommendations for Post-Conflict Conservation”

Pierre and Patricia Bikai Fellowship

- ◇ Benjamin Allison (Graduate Student, University of Texas at Austin, Department of History), “Through the Cracks of Détente: The Superpowers, the Arab ‘Radicals,’ and the Coming of the Second Cold War, 1977–1984”



Attendees at an open house held at the center for Jordanian students interested in applying for fellowships. Library staff also give such presentations on campus.

S. Thomas Parker Memorial Fund

- ◇ Craig Harvey (Postdoctoral, University of Western Ontario, Classical Studies), Khirbet al-Khalde Archaeological Project

Burton MacDonald and Rosemarie Sampson Fellowship

- ◇ David Minielly (Undergraduate Student, Wilfrid Laurier University, Archaeology and History), Khirbat al-Mukhayyat Archaeological Project

Jordanian Graduate Student Scholarship

- ◇ Rudaina Almomani (Graduate Student, The University of Jordan, History), “The History of Settlement and Planning in Jabal Al-Weibdeh, Amman, Using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) between 1900 and 1990”
- ◇ Jenan Hourani (Graduate Student, The Hashemite University, Queen Rania Faculty of Tourism and Heritage, Department of Sustainable Tourism), “Exploring the Potential of Developing Abila as a Sustainable Heritage Tourism Site”

James A. Sauer Fellowship

- ◇ Bayan Mujahed (Graduate Student, German Jordanian University, Architectural Conservation), “Investigating Amman’s Modern Cultural Heritage: Mid-Twentieth-Century Single Family Houses”

Frederick-Wenger Jordanian Educational Fellowship

- ◇ Husam Hamdan (Undergraduate Student, The Hashemite University, Queen Rania Faculty of Tourism and Heritage), University Study
- ◇ Lama Khaled Maabreh (Graduate Student, Yarmouk University, Faculty of Education, Department of Curriculum and Teaching Methods), University Study

Jordanian Travel Scholarship for ASOR Annual Meeting

- ◇ Fardous Al-Ajlouny (The Hashemite University), “The Application of Laser Scanning and Photogrammetry for the Documentation, Preservation and Conservation of Miniature Figurative Ancient Pieces from Southern Levant in the Early Bronze Age (Khirbet Ez Zeraqon Miniature Figurative Pieces, Case Study)”
- ◇ Jalal Alheji (Yarmouk University), “Neolithic Lithic Sickle Blades of Tell Abu Suwwan from 2005–2008, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2022”

New Fellowship Award Amounts for 2024

The continued generous support of donors and strong endowments allowed the board of trustees to approve increases in the award amounts for our fellowships, to be effective in the 2024 award cycle. These funds should better serve to support students and scholars in pursuit of our shared mission.

The trustees also refined our travel scholarship for Jordanians, further opening the scope of the award. Each year, the newly renamed Conference Travel Award for Jordanians will assist two Jordanians resident in Jordan participating in and delivering a scholarly paper at an international conference held in the United States or Canada: one for in person, one for virtual. Recipients may pursue any field of study related to ACOR's mission.

Named Fellowship	# of Awards	Award Amount Effective 2024
Pierre and Patricia Bikai Fellowship	One award for two months <i>or</i> two awards for one month each	Residency at ACOR, stipend each month \$800
Conference Travel Award for Jordanians	Two awards: one award in person <i>and</i> one remotely	In person: \$3,500 Online: registration and/or membership
Bert and Sally de Vries Fellowship	One award	\$2,500
Frederick-Wenger Memorial Endowment	Two awards	\$2,000
Lawrence T. Geraty Travel Scholarship	One award	\$1,250
Jennifer C. Groot Memorial Fellowship	Two awards	\$3,000
Harrell Family Fellowship	One award	\$2,500
Jordanian Graduate Student Scholarship	One award	\$3,000
Burton MacDonald and Rosemarie Sampson Fellowship	One award (two options): travel grant <i>or</i>	\$2,500
	residency at ACOR and stipend	Four-week residency and travel/stipend \$1,500
S. Thomas Parker Memorial Fund	One award	\$1,750
Kenneth W. Russell Fellowship	One award	\$2,500
James A. Sauer Fellowship	One award	\$1,500 or \$500 and one-month residency



The nymphaeum at Umm Qais.

My research project at the American Center of Research is part of a larger endeavor, which is to better understand how water was used in Roman cities, especially in provinces distant from the capital at Rome. [...]

The first part of my stay at the center was spent visiting archaeological sites relevant to my dissertation and collecting data from existing archaeological remains. Hydrological features are not always included in site plans and excavation reports, so it was important that I visit each in person.

[....]

I spent most of the second part of my stay at the American Center of Research creating a database of all the hydrological data I had collected during my site visits. Additionally, I spent time in the library sifting through old excavation reports and books to which I had had no prior access. My fellowship has also allowed me to travel to other cultural heritage sites in Jordan. For instance, I got to visit Ajloun Castle, Madaba, Umm ar-Rasas, the Dead Sea, Petra, Wadi Rum, and Aqaba. Visiting Petra had a great impact on my research perspective and allowed me a means to compare how other cultures were supplying water in a different region.

[....]

Jordan is a truly wonderful place, full of rich cultural heritage, and I am lucky that I was able to fully immerse myself in its traditions.

—Clare Rasmussen

[ACOR-CAORC Predoctoral Fellowship, 2022–2023],
“Water Use in Roman Cities,” *Insights*, 14 February 2023

Tenth Dendrochronology International Summer Course

Over the past two decades, countries throughout the Middle East and North Africa have hosted the Dendrochronology International Summer Course. In 2023, the two-week field school, entitled “Tree Rings, Climate, Natural Resources and Human Interactions,” came to Jordan, hosted by the American Center, from July 31 to August 12. Prof. Ramzi Touchan and Prof. David Meko of the University of Arizona’s Laboratory of Tree-Ring Research and executive director Pearce Paul Creasman, who was also a professor in the Tree-Ring Lab before coming to ACOR, planned the course and served as instructors. Matthew Vincent, co-director of the National Inventory Project, assisted them, and Prof. Mohammad Omari, vice dean at the University of Jordan, gave guest lectures on wood anatomy and the forests of Jordan.



Said Slimani, from Algeria, takes a core sample from a tree in the Dibeen Forest Preserve.



Core sample in hand.

Dendrochronology, the science of studying the annual growth layers of trees (“rings”), can reveal information about ancient environments, which influence, among other things, their patterns, the size of the cells that make them up, and the trace elements and stable and radioactive isotopes found within them. From them, researchers can deduce variations in precipitation, temperature, soil moisture, river flows, frequency of droughts, forest fires, major forest pest outbreaks, and other phenomena important to the management of natural resources and the natural and human environment. Being created annually, tree rings are also keys to the creation of absolute chronologies for many parts of the world, including Jordan and its neighbors.

Twelve students—from six countries in the region as well as from the United States, Pakistan, and Greece—gathered in Amman. Course lectures in the seminar room and lab were complemented by trips to the Aleppo pine and oak woodlands of the Dibeen Forest Preserve, where the participants learned how to collect samples, which were prepared and analyzed back at the center.

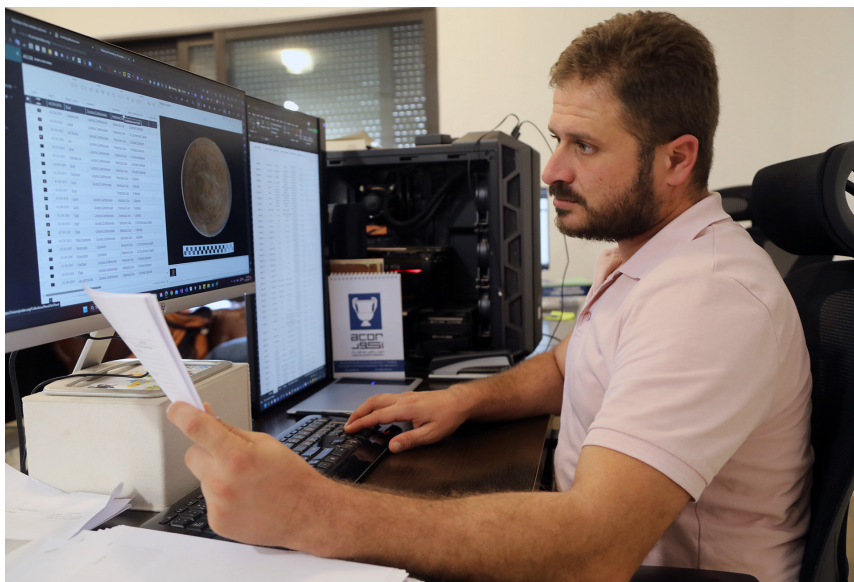
Encouraging the use of this science in Jordan and beyond through lecture and practical training sessions has important implications for a broad range of fields, from archaeology to the management of cultural and natural resources.

The National Cultural Heritage Property Database of the Kingdom of Jordan

Begun in late 2022 with the award of a \$1.9 million grant from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, the National Inventory Project (as it is informally known) has made major strides toward the goals that will engage it until 2027. Established officially with the Jordanian government's signing of a memorandum of understanding in 2023, this project will build a database and train staff in Jordan's Department of Antiquities to use it. Like the Prevention of Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property Project (pp. 20–21), the National Inventory Project promotes cooperation between Jordan and the United States and develops an important tool for restricting the illegal trade of artifacts between these two countries.



This massive database, which will contain information on Jordan's wealth of moveable cultural property, is built upon the framework of Axiell Collections, a globally recognized application with bilingual capacities used by organizations around the world—including the Library of Congress—to catalog a wide variety of objects and media. Its ability to incorporate data in both Arabic and English and its user-friendly interface were crucial considerations when the project, as determined by the Department of Antiquities, selected the software. A server purchased for the project and housed at the center hosts the database, with redundancy provided by a second server being used for the ACOR Archives. Among the other safety measures implemented were offsite database backups, comprehensive monitoring, early alerting systems, and the establishment of performance metrics, which will ensure the system's resilience, security, and scalability for future demands.



Data-entry specialist Faris Saadeh reviewing the specifications of artifacts entered into the National Inventory database.

Once the center's own personnel, among them two new staff members with experience in archaeology and technology, were trained in the use of Axiell Collections, populating the database began with what was available at the center, including pieces on long-term loan from the Department of Antiquities and material from the Temple of the Winged Lions excavations. This allowed staff to probe the database's capabilities, optimize the uploading process, augment toponyms and other terminology used within the database, and identify and resolve issues before taking on larger collections and contributions by other organizations. By the end of 2023, the National Inventory contained 7,085 records.

Staff made initial visits to the Madaba Museum, Umm Qais, the Faynan Museum, Aqaba, the Petra Museum, and the Jordan Museum to assess the status of collections there and to lay the

groundwork for future cooperation. The next step toward that cooperation was also taken: the announcement of Partnership Development Grants, which will fund the integration of datasets from museums, excavations, and obscure or overlooked collections into the database. All parties interested in contributing data to help ensure that the National Inventory is diverse, detailed, and accurate may apply for a PDG. For further information, e-mail ni@acorjordan.org.

Working with the Department of Antiquities, we developed an action plan for 2024. We hope that the National Cultural Heritage Property Database of the Kingdom of Jordan will be a benchmark throughout the region for the establishment of cultural property inventories, as well as a means for making Jordan's heritage more accessible, understood, and secure.

Preserving Jordan's Heritage: 3 New Department of Antiquities Contracts

ate 2023 saw the beginning of a trio of new conservation projects by Jordan's Department of Antiquities: at the Aqaba Church, Karak Castle, and the theater at Bayt Ras. Contracting with ACOR and other partners, the DoA is continuing to ensure that the many periods of Jordan's invaluable past remain available to the present. We are grateful to the Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, H.E. Makram Queisi, for supporting our participation in these important efforts.

Aqaba Church Rehabilitation Project

Dating from the 3rd century CE, the Byzantine church at Aqaba is thought to be the oldest known church built specifically for that purpose. The project undertook conservation and consolidation work in 2023 in collaboration with the French Institute of the Near East (IFPO), and next year the site will receive a protective open-air structure, as well as improved pathways and signage.

Karak Complex Project

European crusaders began construction of the castle at Karak in the 1140s, and the fortress was subsequently used and added to during the Ayyubid through Ottoman periods. Here the goal is to focus cultural heritage management efforts on the most urgent needs at five target sites, in partnership with experts from the Istituto Superiore per la Protezione e la Ricerca Ambientale (ISPRA).

Bayt Ras Theater Project

In Roman times, Bayt Ras was known as Capitolias. The city's theater, which once seated an audience of about 3,000, was built during that period and was out of use by the Byzantine-Umayyad period (6th–8th centuries CE). In collaboration with Tarmeen Center for the Preservation of Heritage, implementation of a comprehensive conservation plan for this once-grand structure has begun.



Conservation work at the Aqaba Church.

Underwater Archaeology at Kallirhoe/'Ain ez-Zara

In October and November 2023, in collaboration with the Department of Antiquities with the kind support of its director general, Prof. Fadi Bala'awi, the American Center undertook the first-ever archaeological diving expedition to explore the Dead Sea. Foreign scholars first became interested in the site of 'Ain ez-Zara—known in Greco-Roman times as “Good Spring,” Kallirhoe (with many variant spellings)—in the early 19th century, but it was not until 1963 that the land portion of this ancient harbor was formally surveyed archaeologically. Sixty years later, the American Center plunged into a unique season here.

Known in antiquity for its therapeutic hot springs, Kallirhoe served as the harbor for the Roman-era fortress atop Mount Machaerus. Ships would have brought goods and travelers to and from cities on the other side of the Dead Sea and, ultimately, far beyond. Even Herod the Great was reported to have called on this harbor as he sought treatment at the springs.

On shore, our assistant director for projects, Jehad Haron, and DoA representative Aktham Oweidi surveyed and excavated portions of what might have been a marketplace; meanwhile, Matthew Vincent, who directs the National Inventory Project (p. 10) was joined by C. Richard Bates of the University of St. Andrews and Martin Bates of the University of Wales for remote sensing and geological analysis of the terrestrial harbor zone. These activities provided an assessment of the general area, including site formation processes and a plan for future excavation. The waters of the Dead Sea have been anything but still since the last ice age: during these millennia, they have fluctuated by about 300 m (1,000 feet).

Orthophoto showing the archaeological site (white rectangle) and its surrounds.



Underwater Archaeology at Kallirhoe/'Ain ez-Zara, continued

In 2012, an ROV (remote-operated vehicle) sidescan-sonar survey by the DoA detected possible archaeological features within the depths, but no further underwater work was performed there until our exploration with a dive team. The Dead Sea's elevation—about 500 meters (1,500 feet) below sea level—poses complications for scuba divers, as does its hypersalinity, which makes sinking into it difficult and leads to rapid deterioration of equipment. The team of experienced divers (our executive director, Pearce Paul Creasman, Justin Schneider, Fred Fidler, and Randall Parker) met these and other logistical challenges to descend into a world reminiscent of a briny Wadi Rum, peppered with (possibly freshwater) thermal vents. During the descent, they encountered an unanticipated, and dangerous, irregularity: at about 30 meters (100 feet), a much less dense layer of water (perhaps a freshwater pocket, from underwater vents draining from the springs found on land?), causing the divers' heavily weighted bodies to sink at an unexpectedly rapid rate. Through years of experience and quick thinking, they were able to regain control of their descent, and no harm resulted.

Some of the anomalies that the DoA sonar survey had detected in 2012 are evidently natural formations, but others might be the product of human hands. Brief, and difficult, excavation of two 1x1-meter units suggests that at least one might be a stone structure built on shore during the Neolithic (7000–5000 BCE), when the waterline was considerably lower. Curiously, however, no debris from the Roman-era harbor was seen.

'Ain ez-Zara presents many questions and considerable potential for discovery—expected and otherwise—along its shore and beneath its waters, meriting additional seasons of work in coming years.

A view of the bottom of the Dead Sea.



The dive team prepares to sink into the hypersaline waters of the Dead Sea

Publications

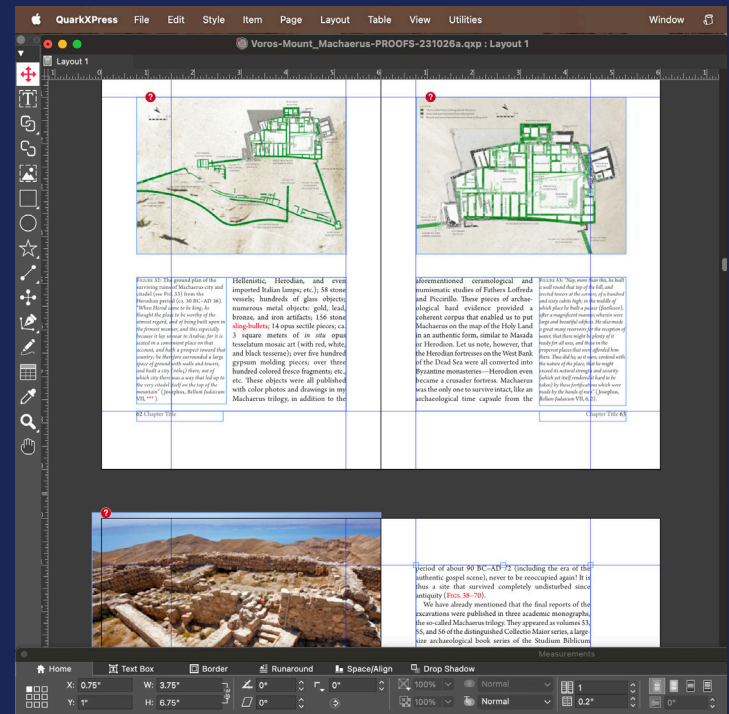
Funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities for the Temple of the Winged Lions Publication Project kept center staff and contributors to the volume well busy through 2023. There have been challenges throughout the year, but work continues apace, with completion and publication expected before the end of 2024. Project assistant Nora Al Omari began to prepare catalogs for two chapters, and the grant funded research for nine contributors during this year. Furthermore, with the kind permission of the Department of Antiquities, ceramic fragments were sent to New York University Abu Dhabi, where William G. Zimmerle will oversee their analysis. In addition, associate professor David Johnson of Brigham Young University graciously donated digitized photos from the American Expedition to Petra (AEP) excavations and site plans.

Other publications also kept staff occupied, as Győző Vörös's *Mount Machaerus* underwent copyediting, design, and typesetting, and the same process began for the Madaba Burnt Palace volume, edited by Robert Schick and Lauren Erker. (*Mount Machaerus* was published in January 2024; the Madaba Burnt Palace, too, will be published in 2024.)

English and Arabic editions of the *Manual for Prevention of Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property—Jordan*, written by Ahmed Fatima Kzzo, Jehad Haron, Aktham Oweidi, and Mohammad Naser Naser, were published. As part of the like-named project (pp. 18–19), they were made possible by a grant from the U.S. Embassy in Jordan. USAID SCHEP (pp. 16–19) funded the center's publication of the Arabic edition of *The Pottery of Jordan: A Manual*, edited by Jehad Haron and Douglas R. Clark, and two books by partner organizations (see p. 15). All of these are available for download on the website. Also posted there is a PDF of the third (2009) edition of *Arabic for Archaeologists*, revised by Robert Schick. The first edition, by Paul Lapp, debuted in 1963, followed by a second edition revised by Nancy Lapp (1971, 1990).

Library and archive staff scanned issues of the bimonthly *ACOR Newzette* dating to 1993–2000. These mini-newsletters, which reported on activities at the center, can be found in the newsletter section of the website.

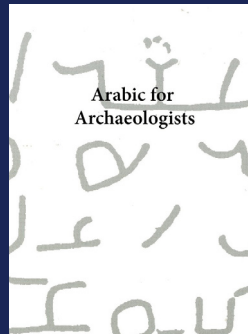
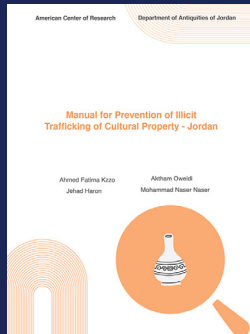
Two issues of the *ACOR Newsletter* appeared in 2023 (34.2 and 35.1), and a call went out for submissions for *Archaeology in Jordan* 4 (2022–2023 field seasons), which will be published in the fall of 2024.



Screenshot of the typesetting of Mount Machaerus in progress, October 26, 2023.



Publications, continued



Online: publications.acorjordan.org

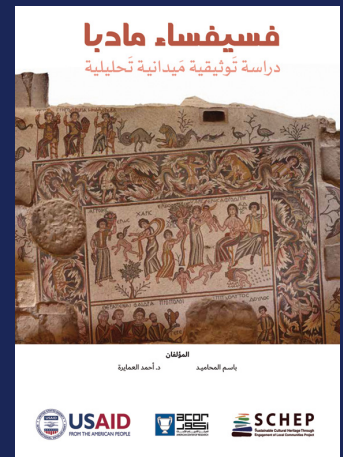
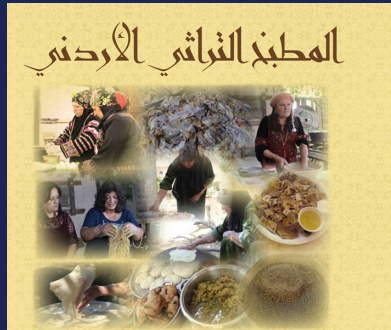
SCHEP-Supported Publications



◇ *Manual for Prevention of Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property—Jordan*
Ahmed Fatima Kzzo, Jehad Haron, Aktham Oweidi, and Mohammad Naser Naser [Amman: The American Center of Research] (in Arabic)

◇ *Madaba Mosaic: An Analytical Field Documentary Study* by Basem Mhamed and Ahmad Amireh [Madaba: Madaba Institute for Mosaic Art and Restoration] (in Arabic)

◇ *Jordanian Traditional Cuisine* by Alida Al Madaeen and Hanan Daghmash [Amman: Beit Al-Turath for Arts Association] (in Arabic)



Insights

publications.acorjordan.org/insights

January 11: Lauren Erker: "Diverging Paths: A Socio-archaeological Investigation of Rural Settlement in Ottoman Palestine and Transjordan"

February 14: Clare Rasmussen: "Water Use in Roman Cities"

May 15: Yorke Rowan: "In Small Things Remembered: Late Neolithic Material Culture of the Black Desert, Jordan"

June 20: Arpan Roy: "Toward a Romani Ethnology of Jordan"

August 17: Kimberly Katz: "Between Jordanian and International Law: UNRWA Involvement in Jordanian Court Cases, 1948–1967"

September 7: Sarah Wenner: "Recycling Refuse in Ancient Petra"

October 5: Miya Pletsas: "Being Introduced to Archaeology in Jordan at Khirbat al-Mukhayyat"

November 5: Nicolas Seth Reeves: "Places and the Past: The Bidul, the Layathna, and Narratives about Indigeneity in Petra"

December 8: Gary Rollefson: "Decoding Late Neolithic Tools and Technology in the Black Desert of Jordan"

With the conclusion of the Sustainable Cultural Heritage Through Engagement of Local Communities looming in early 2024, SCHEP devoted 2023 to its final activities.

Amman Citadel Tourist Trail

The most publicly visible of these was the Amman Citadel Tourist Trail project, which, with the support of the Ministry of Tourism and the Greater Amman Municipality, sought to improve the tourism experience for both visitors and local businesses. Focused on the route between the Amman Citadel and the Roman Theater, the project undertook analyses of the physical characteristics of the area. The stability and stormwater drainage of the Citadel's southern slope are important considerations for preserving the buildings old and new there. A local engineering design firm, Jordan Engineering Laboratories, took the lead for this part of the process. A field school held on the southern slope trained nine individuals, including five from the local community, in the basics of urban archaeology [photo, p. 25].

The local community of the Amman Citadel benefited even more widely, as engagement of the residents in the trail itself was a fundamental element of the project. Interviews, questionnaires, and a workshop provided insights into the community's needs and wants, which then guided the project's approach to providing them with opportunities. Both new and established small and micro-enterprises received support. The project provided micro-businesses with supplies and materials, and established businesses received improvements to help them support the micro-enterprises. Along the route, signs with QR codes now give tourists and other passersby more information about these local businesses by linking them with a website

Artist painting a mural to brighten public space high above the streets of Amman, another means by which SCHEP engaged the local community in the Amman Citadel Tourist Trail.

The works described here are made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of ACOR and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.



SCHEP, continued

that provides information about the establishments, their proprietors, business hours, contact information, and a map.

Online: acorjordan.org/amman-citadel-trail

Strategy for the Management of Jordan's Cultural Heritage 2023–2027 & Implementation Plan

If the Amman Citadel Tourist Trail project was SCHEP's most public-facing project of 2023, that with the greatest impact may have been its support for the Strategy for the Management of Jordan's Cultural Heritage 2023–2027 and the strategy's implementation plan. Workshops facilitated the identification of what critical projects were needed to meet the objectives of the Strategy, and this in turn led to the development of how each project aligned with the objectives, who was responsible for and what authorities would be involved with each project, what resources would be needed, and timelines. Additional workshops in monitoring and evaluation, human resource management, conservation documentation, and creative video provided key stakeholders with the knowledge and techniques needed to carry out their segments of the strategy.

ICOMOS-Jordan and JorCHP

SCHEP gave support to ICOMOS-Jordan from February through August. The organization now has a multilingual website and online member registration system, and also a plan for membership sustainability by the engagement of students at Jordanian universities through on-campus awareness sessions and through a two-day training course on sustainable development.

Development of the English version of JorCHP (the Jordan Archaeological Heritage Portal) continued as well. It is now available along with the Arabic version of the website, which makes available information and knowledge related to cultural heritage resources in Jordan.

Arabic: jorchp.com

English: jorchp.com/Default/En

Training Programs

Other training programs that SCHEP offered in 2023 covered a wide array of topics: from underwater archaeology (see p. 12–13), ground-penetrating radar, and photogrammetry to visitor-focused communication, proficiency in English, writing grant proposals, and more.

All of these activities epitomize the goal with which SCHEP was established: the empowerment of communities and individuals through the preservation and promotion of Jordan's cultural heritage.

Online: acorjordan.org/usaids-schep



Jabal al-Qala'a Tourist Trail

Points of Interest

- 1- Amman Panorama Art Gallery
- 2- Amman Panorama Heritage House
- 3- Downtown Juice Shop
- 4- Laith Print Shop
- 5- Dagger Shop
- 6- Egall Restaurant

Map Legend

- Points of interest
- Archaeological site
- Museum/Heritage Building
- Church
- Mosque
- Panoramic view
- Hotel
- Police Center
- Information Center
- Restaurant/Cafe
- Toilet
- Parking
- Main route

You are here

SCHEP, continued



Bringing Communities Together...

Training in the use of ground-penetrating radar (GPR) for Department of Antiquities staff in Irbid, September 25, 2023.



Soap-production training for the community of the Amman Citadel, October 16, 2023.



Workshop for the Strategy for the Management of Jordan's Cultural Heritage 2023-2027 implementation plan, February 14, 2023.

SCHEP, continued

... Sharing Knowledge Together



Beginners in Creative Video course for the Iraq al-Amir Ladies Association, June 11, 2023.



Conservation and documentation training for staff of the Department of Antiquities from directorates around the country, May 18, 2023.



Conservation and documentation training for graduates of several Jordanian universities, March 8, 2023.

Prevention of Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property Project

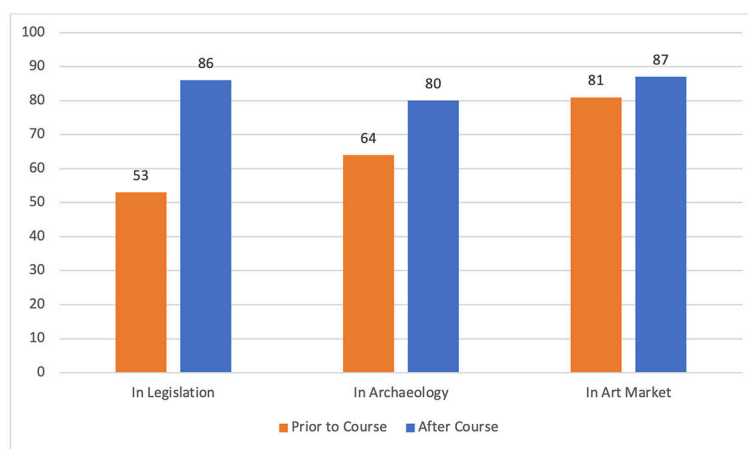
In September 2023, the Prevention of Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property Project—known more formally as Activating the Illicit Trafficking Section of the Jordanian Department of Antiquities Project—brought its two years of activities to a successful close. The project was undertaken in cooperation with the Department of Antiquities thanks to a \$209,000 grant issued by the Public Affairs Office of the U.S. Embassy in Amman. As a direct result of this project and its grant, the capacity of Jordan's Department of Antiquities to combat the illicit trafficking in antiquities grew from a single employee in an inactive program to some fifty staff stationed throughout the country armed with current knowledge of legislation, the antiquities market, and practical procedures, as well as with up-to-date equipment.

In 2023, second-level training courses were given to nine selected DoA employees—three women and six men—who had completed the first level in 2022. Inspectors, museum curators, and section heads who came from Amman, Aqaba, Balqaa, Irbid, Karak, Ma'an, Madaba, and Zarqaa, these participants had work experience at the department that ranged from two to twenty-four years in various capacities. The course covered different aspects of local legislation, international conventions and memoranda of understanding, cases of artifact forgery, cases of artifact repatriation, and an exercise on requesting the return of illicitly trafficked artifacts. Some of the course lecturers were invited to give their talks in person; others presented in the form of recorded lectures that were translated and subtitled in Arabic or English, as appropriate. In-person lectures and trainings were led by Prof. Fadi Bala'awi, director general of the Department of Antiquities. Ms. McKenzie Louw, cultural affairs officer at the U.S. Embassy in Jordan, presented on United States-Jordanian cooperation and the results of the memorandum of understanding related to import restrictions on Jordanian archaeological materials.

Because variation among national laws creates difficulties for the prevention of illicit trafficking, making international and bilateral agreements crucial, it was important to feature speakers who could address broad perspectives: Dr. Ali Ahmad Farhan, former director of the Antiquities Restitutions Directorate in Egypt, on Egyptian cases and the return of cultural property under the UNESCO 1970 convention; Prof. Patty Gerstenblith, distinguished research professor of law and faculty director [DePaul University], on the legal situation in the United States, United Kingdom, Switzerland, and Jordan; and Dr. Noah Charney, founder of the Association for Research into Crimes against Art, on authentic and fake artifacts. A visit to DoA headquarters provided an opportunity for the trainees to learn about confiscation cases, and fake versus authentic from Mr. Aktham Oweidi Abbadi, DoA director of excavations, and Mr. Mohammad Nasser, head of the DoA's Fighting Illicit Trafficking Unit. Mr. Abbadi and Mr. Nasser also explained the protocols used between the Department of Antiquities and law-enforcement entities in cases related to cultural heritage. Dr. Ahmed Fatima Kzzo, the project director, concluded the course with a summary of the most important issues and instruction on how to request the return of a stolen artifact and how to prove its ownership and illegal exportation.

Survey courses before and after these trainings revealed significant gains in knowledge among the participants, as well as their approval of the courses and a desire for additional, more in-depth training.

Equipment that the project provided for the Anti-Trafficking Unit included computers, cameras and related photographic tools, and printers and scanners for barcodes and QR codes. Training was provided for QR coding, which will facilitate the cataloging and tracking of confiscated artifacts, an objective being carried out by another project sponsored by a separate State Department grant, the National Cultural Heritage Property Database of the Kingdom of Jordan (a.k.a. the National Inventory; see p. 10). Presentations at five international conferences and for other initiatives in Jordan (including a lecture to employees from the General Organization of Antiquities and Museums in Yemen), as well as



Knowledge-assessment results of the trainees throughout all the training courses.

Prevention of Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property Project, continued

an active X/Twitter account, publicized the project, its work, and the issues surrounding the illicit trafficking of antiquities. The project was also the subject of two scholarly papers.

To sustain the project goals after its closing and to provide a source of support for DoA staff involved with anti-trafficking measures, an open-access manual (in English and Arabic editions) and a webpage were created in 2023.

Online:

Project webpage: acorjordan.org/prevention-of-illicit-trafficking-of-cultural-property-project

Learning materials and manual: acorjordan.org/prevention-of-illicit-trafficking-resources



The project is made possible by the generous support of the American People through the United States embassy to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan's public affairs section. The content of this web page is the responsibility of the American Center of Research and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Embassy, Department of State, or the United States Government.



Subtitled lectures, either remote or recorded, such as this one by Association for Research into Crimes against Art founder Dr. Noah Charney, give project participants access to learning opportunities and experts that would otherwise be out of reach. Experience during the pandemic has made the center's staff particularly able to provide such services.

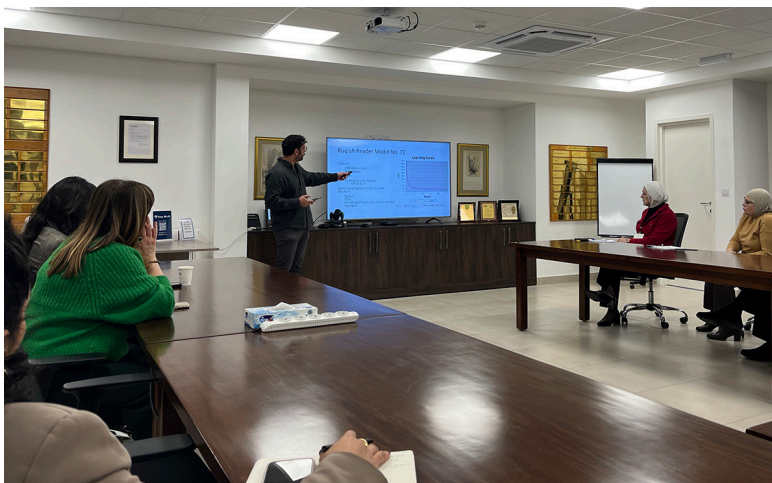


The reputation of American Center of Research staff expertise brings them invitations to participate in events of global significance. Here, Matthew Vincent, co-director of the National Inventory Project, moderates a breakout group discussion of the International Workshop on Technology Solutions to Disrupt Illicit Trafficking in Cultural Property, organized in London by the U.S. Department of State's Cultural Heritage Center in December 2023. Experts also came from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the British Museum, and other respected organizations. Participants and representatives from INTERPOL, Europol, and the governments of Brazil, France, Poland, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States took part. Among the U.S. governmental departments were the FBI, Homeland Security Investigations, Customs and Border Protection, the U.S. Army, and the Smithsonian Institution.

Public Events

2023 Spring Lecture Series

- ◇ March 13: “States of Subsistence: The Politics of Bread in Contemporary Jordan” by José Ciro Martínez (ACOR-CAORC Postdoctoral Fellow, 2019; Department of Politics and International Relations, University of York)
- ◇ April 5: “Sustainable Tourism in the Middle East: Nature and Heritage Conservation” by Lubna Qaryouti (United Nations Environmental Program)
- ◇ May 5: “Geology and Fossils from Jordan” by Abdalla Abu Hamad (Department of Geology, University of Jordan) and Ikhlas Alhejo (Department of Geology, University of Jordan)



In addition to public lectures, there are lectures given by fellows that are open to staff, fellows, and other researchers at the center. Here, Alex Jreisat (ACOR-CAORC Predoctoral Fellowship, 2023–2024) presents “Court Vision: Spatializing Ottoman-era Court Records Using Ruq’ah Reader.”

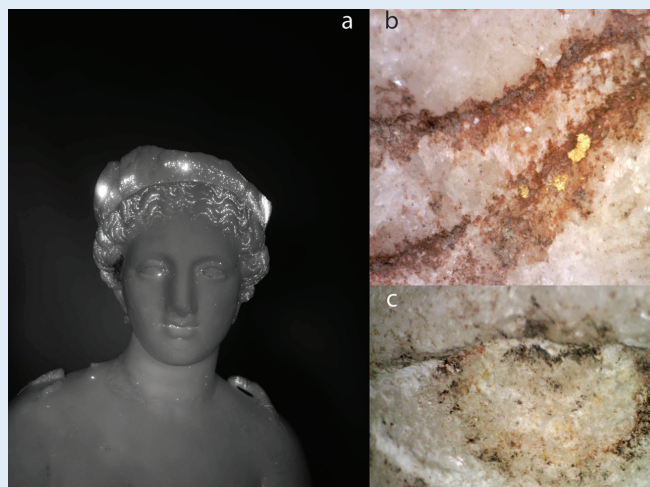
2023 Fall Lecture Series

War in the region had an impact on our offerings, resulting in only two of the originally scheduled four presentations.

- ◇ September 11: “Reviving Polymathy in Contemporary Education: Integration of Interdisciplinary and Cultural Contexts to Enhance Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Curricula” by Salwa Al-Noori (School of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, University of Washington)
- ◇ September 20: “Game Boards from Petra” by Bilal Khrisat (Petra Archaeological Park and Tourism, Petra Development Tourism Regional Authority)

Recorded lectures are available on our YouTube channel: youtube.com/acorjordan1968

On May 2, the center was pleased to host the **Aphrodite-al’Uzza Conservation Collaborative**, a workshop that could be attended in person in the seminar room or online, with live translation of the presentations into Arabic. The focus of this event was a remarkable pair of marble statues of Aphrodite—retaining traces of their ancient paint—unearthed from a 4th-century CE domestic context by the Petra North Ridge Project prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The workshop addressed their discovery, ancient historical and cultural contexts, ancient repairs, and recent conservation. For the program, visit: anthropology.ecu.edu/aphrodite-workshop-acor.



Abdoun Community Archaeology Project



Students from Al Qasid Institute in Amman at a workshop we held on the interpretation of pottery and volunteered with us.

Thanks to partnership with the Department of Antiquities and funding from the U.S. State Department Educational and Cultural Affairs/Council of American Overseas Research Centers grant that established the Abdoun Community Archaeology Project in late 2021, staff and volunteers continued to make discoveries in 2023, the second full year of excavation in this bustling neighborhood of Amman. Predicated on the idea that engaging local communities in archaeology is important to encourage appreciation and support for the field and for history, the project explores a site that has been occupied since the early 1st millennium BCE (early Iron Age I). Excavations this year revealed an unfinished stone building block carved in a Hellenistic style resembling that found in Iraq al-Amir and, to our surprise, a Byzantine wine press. Other such presses have been found at another site not far away, suggesting a relationship between these areas. These discoveries demonstrate that Abdoun offers even more of interest than we originally anticipated, promising to reveal more clues about the society, agriculture, and economics in Byzantine times, and our volunteers get the opportunity to take part in unearthing it.

Volunteers joined us in 2023 for a collective total of about 600 hours. Most were Jordanians from the local community, but expatriates likewise contributed. With diverse demographics of origin and age, volunteer days are vibrant and engaging, filled with many perspectives that all have at least one thing in common: a love for archaeology and history.

Volunteer dates for 2024 may be found on the project webpage: acorjordan.org/abdoun-community

Families volunteering to dig at Abdoun.



Preserving Yemen's Heritage: A Capacity-Building Program

The American Center has a strong history of offering, in partnership with other organizations, cutting-edge training programs in cultural resource management, particularly for groups from Yemen and Iraq. In January 2023, the Petra National Trust, in collaboration with the American Center, conducted Preserving Yemen's Heritage through Physical Interventions and Capacity Building, a program for employees of Yemen's General Organization of Antiquities and Museums/Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Information designed to cultivate their core knowledge and expertise in site preservation and management.

Yemen's need for skilled professionals with up-to-date knowledge and expertise in the preservation and protection for heritage sites is particularly urgent due to the danger that civil war poses to its significant cultural and archaeological heritage. The capacity-building program was designed to equip ministry employees with the skills and knowledge in heritage preservation and management that will help them lead site-based intervention projects and implement international best practices. Assessments indicate significant improvement in the trainees' knowledge, and the participants rated the program highly.

Those who lent their expertise included, among others, director general of the Department of Antiquities Fadi Bala'awi (conservation) and several ACOR staff members: Hanadi Al Taher (rescue excavations), Jihad Haron (site assessment, monitoring, and evaluation), Ahmed Kzzo (international conventions), John Shearman (management of restoration projects), and Matthew Vincent (databases).



Participants and lecturer Basem Mhamed on the steps of the Cultural Hub Bayt Yaish, location of the Petra National Trust offices.

Topics Covered

- ◇ GIS, Site Documentation, and Surveying
- ◇ Rescue Excavations
- ◇ Conservation
- ◇ Site Condition Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation
- ◇ International Conventions for Heritage Sites
- ◇ Restoration Projects Development and Management

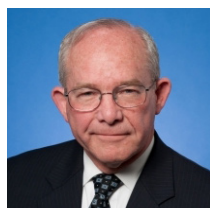
ACOR: Bringing the Past into the Future

Young volunteers from the community contribute to beautifying the area of the Amman Citadel Trail (pp. 16-17). The future of the past is theirs...

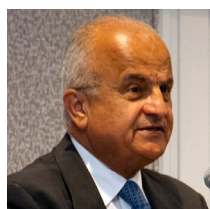


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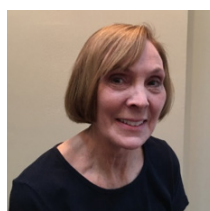
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American Center board of trustees and friends at dinner at Kellari Taverna in Washington, D.C., on April 14, 2023, the evening before the spring board meeting. In the foreground: Jennifer Ramsay (left) and Megan Perry (middle).

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Many donations were made in memory or in honor of others. For complete details, see *ACOR Newsletter* 35.1 and 35.2.

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A student applies knowledge she gained during the SCHEP archaeological field school on the southern slope of the Amman Citadel.



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Statement of Financial Position

Balance Sheet

	December 31, 2023	December 31, 2022
Assets		
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	474,749	432,796
Investments	7,901,099	7,067,218
Grants remaining (unspent amounts)	3,195,631	4,033,183
Other current assets	<u>252,168</u>	<u>182,625</u>
Total current assets	<u>11,823,647</u>	<u>11,715,822</u>
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	<u>2,127,521</u>	<u>2,216,077</u>
Total assets	<u>13,951,168</u>	<u>13,931,899</u>
Liabilities		
Total liabilities	<u>181,855</u>	<u>158,711</u>
Net Assets		
Unrestricted	8,414,157	7,675,891
Temporarily restricted (including Grants remaining)	3,591,956	4,367,435
Permanently restricted	<u>1,763,200</u>	<u>1,729,862</u>
Total net assets	<u>13,769,313</u>	<u>13,773,188</u>

Income Statement

	December 31, 2023	December 31, 2022
Income		
Grants revenues	2,327,342	1,746,599
Contributions	138,490	142,323
Local revenues	119,120	146,352
Investment income	1,051,215	(1,529,128)
Other	<u>31,698</u>	<u>1,882,693</u>
Total revenues	3,667,865	2,388,839
Expenses		
Grants expenses	(1,279,981)	(946,264)
Occupancy	(123,068)	(146,295)
Management and general expenses	(1,131,368)	(1,182,436)
Depreciation	(115,953)	(117,443)
Fundraising and program development	<u>(119,220)</u>	<u>(99,344)</u>
Total expenses	(2,769,590)	(2,491,782)
Surplus/(shortfall) for the year	898,275	102,943
Surplus/(shortfall) for the year excluding unrealized investment gains/losses and depreciation	201,797	113,150

Strategic Pillars

Pillar I: Advancing Knowledge

The American Center of Research is a center for scholarly excellence spanning the social, natural, and physical sciences, the humanities, and the arts. ACOR serves a diverse set of scholars, students, and the public from North America, Jordan, and the region, and it has strong cooperative relationships with national and international scholarly institutions and governments.

Pillar II: Preserving & Recording Cultural Heritage

The American Center of Research fosters the preservation and study of tangible and intangible cultural heritage in their natural environments as a core aspect of its mission. Advancing economic development and educational opportunities with local communities is integral to these efforts. Through its own initiatives and by assisting those of national governments, local communities, and international projects and institutions, ACOR seeks to preserve, explicate, share, and record the rich history of Jordan and the region. Within the region, ACOR's efforts encompass all temporal bounds, cultural frameworks, and scholarly disciplines.

Pillar III: Engagement

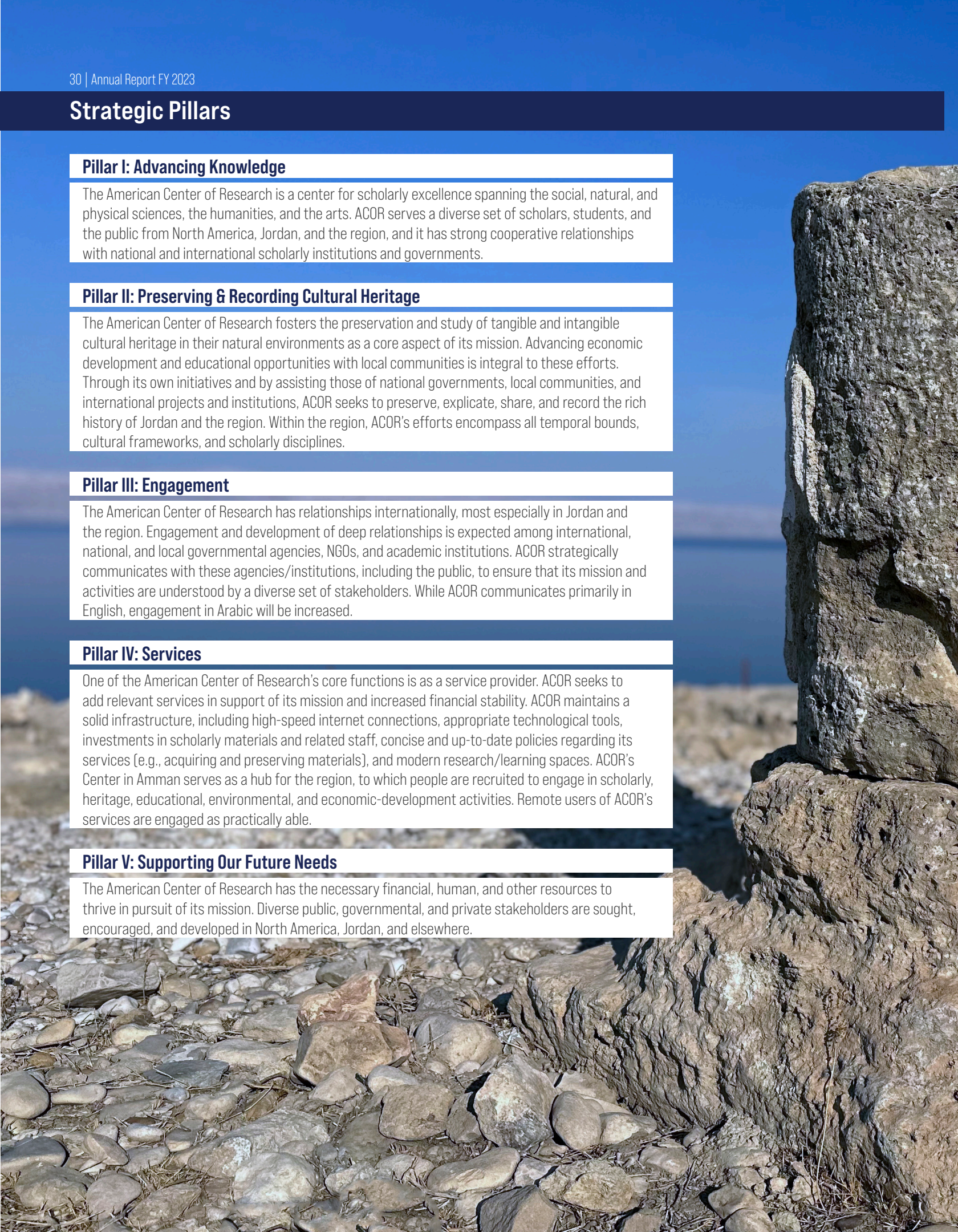
The American Center of Research has relationships internationally, most especially in Jordan and the region. Engagement and development of deep relationships is expected among international, national, and local governmental agencies, NGOs, and academic institutions. ACOR strategically communicates with these agencies/institutions, including the public, to ensure that its mission and activities are understood by a diverse set of stakeholders. While ACOR communicates primarily in English, engagement in Arabic will be increased.

Pillar IV: Services

One of the American Center of Research's core functions is as a service provider. ACOR seeks to add relevant services in support of its mission and increased financial stability. ACOR maintains a solid infrastructure, including high-speed internet connections, appropriate technological tools, investments in scholarly materials and related staff, concise and up-to-date policies regarding its services (e.g., acquiring and preserving materials), and modern research/learning spaces. ACOR's Center in Amman serves as a hub for the region, to which people are recruited to engage in scholarly, heritage, educational, environmental, and economic-development activities. Remote users of ACOR's services are engaged as practically able.

Pillar V: Supporting Our Future Needs

The American Center of Research has the necessary financial, human, and other resources to thrive in pursuit of its mission. Diverse public, governmental, and private stakeholders are sought, encouraged, and developed in North America, Jordan, and elsewhere.



*Column base and drums,
'Ain ez-Zara.*



Advancing knowledge of Jordan and the interconnected region, past and present.

We warmly invite you to join us in carrying forth this mission. Please learn more about our current initiatives and how you can become a supporter at acorjordan.org. To receive electronic and print newsletters, input your preferred address at acorjordan.org/mailling-list. You can also find us across social media platforms.

The conditions at ACOR were splendid. ACOR has been an ideal place to work, and the equipment (computers, scanners, printer) were in excellent condition. Ryder Kouba offered his Librarian/Archivist skills freely and usually with fine humor. Zovi was superb at organizing things, as were Lina, Saja, and Fayzeh, and Chef Abu Khalid is a grand gifted cook. [...] The entire staff, from administration to housekeeping, were pleasant and very helpful.

—Gary Rollefson (ACOR-CAORC Postdoctoral Fellow), 2022–2023

I had the opportunity to participate in the Khirbat al-Mukhayyat Archaeological Project in Jordan for my first field school as an undergraduate from Wilfrid Laurier University thanks to a Jennifer C. Groot Memorial Fellowship award from the American Center of Research. I enjoyed working alongside my peers, the local community, and professors, including Dr. Debra Foran.

[...]

Overall, my field-school experience was more than I could have ever expected. Khirbat al-Mukhayyat was so beautiful and everyone on the project was very helpful. I learned much through excavating and enjoyed learning about Jordan's complex history. The Near East has such interesting archaeology, and I hope to come back and study more in Jordan.

—Miya Pletsas (Jennifer C. Groot Memorial Fellow, 2022–2023)

[...] I cannot praise the ACOR staff and leadership enough. They were absolutely fantastic. [...] As I've mentioned to my colleagues, my experience at ACOR was so positive that I plan to go back regularly just to get academic work done, even if I am not in need of local primary source material. As a co-working facility, Pearce Paul and the staff have done an amazing job creating a space that is comfortable to work in and also provides all of the needs and luxuries required for a scholar to be productive. The internet at ACOR is actually faster than what I have at my university in the US. The rooms and AC as well as food arrangements are also far more comfortable than what I have at my university and hence I was able to be quite a bit more productive.

—Sarah Islam (ACOR-CAORC Postdoctoral Fellow, 2022–2023)

None of this work would have been possible without the NEH post-doctoral fellowship and ACOR fellowship, and I am exceedingly grateful to the NEH and ACOR for facilitating my study. In addition, I would like to thank ACOR, and specifically Zovi Mananian, for ensuring the comfort of my stay, helping me obtain the equipment necessary for my research, and finding and cleaning workspaces I used for the majority of my time in Jordan. The ACOR library proved, as always, to be immensely helpful for identifying comparative materials. Finally, the collegiality and friendliness of the ACOR staff, other fellows, and residents helped the time away from my family pass quickly and productively.

—Sarah Wenner (ACOR NEH Postdoctoral Fellow, 2022–2023)



Students on Wilfrid Laurier University's Khirbat al-Mukhayyat Archaeological Project, directed by ACOR trustee Prof. Debra Foran. One of the students on the excavaton, Miya Pletsas, received the Jennifer C. Groot Memorial Fellowship for 2023–2024.

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