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The Madaba Plains Project @ 50

Douglas R. Clark with contributions by Lawrence T. Geraty, Larry G. Herr, Øystein S. LaBianca, and Randall W. Younker

The Madaba Plains Project (MPP) just turned 50 based on its intended beginning at Heshbon in 1967. However, the formal term MPP came into being only in the early 1980s with emerging plans to continue archaeological investigations in the region at such sites as Tall al-'Umayri and Tall Jalul. The institutional partners and individual participants are now celebrating its golden anniversary. In the process, MPP leaders are stepping back to assess whether the project has maintained its objectives and also whether it has kept up with the times.



The Madaba Plains region (Google Earth, 2017) (subsequent photos courtesy of Madaba Plains Project unless otherwise noted)
For more information, visit www.madabaplains.org and www.multi.madabaplains.org (with 50th anniversary events noted)

MPP's Beginnings

Lawrence T. Geraty (La Sierra University)

The Madaba Plains Project in Jordan traces its roots back to 1967 when Siegfried Horn (Andrews University) decided to start his own archaeological field project at the site now known as Tall Hisban, thought to be biblical Heshbon. He had contacted G. Ernest Wright, William Foxwell Albright, Roland DeVaux, Kathleen Kenyon, and Martin Noth, asking, "If you had the opportunity to excavate a new site in the Holy Land, what would be on your list?" The only site in common on all the lists sent was Tall Hisban, identified as biblical Heshbon. It was also the best option in terms of excavation logistics and feasibility at the time.

So the first season was planned to begin the first Monday in June 1967, which coincided with the beginning of the Six Day War. The U.S. Embassy had caught wind of what was happening and thus on the Friday before had counseled cancellation of the project. So all the tents and equipment were packed up and returned to the American School of Oriental Research (ASOR) in Jerusalem (later called the W.F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research) just in time. The start of the project was postponed until July of the following summer.

Why Tall Hisban? The dating of the Exodus was a much-discussed topic in those days, one of great interest to Horn, and Heshbon was renowned in the Bible as the capital of Sihon, the Amorite king, and the location of the first recorded battle following the Exodus out of Egypt. What better place to help date the Exodus and provide historical background for Sihon, the Amorites, and the emerging Israelite settlement in Canaan?

In the half century since 1967 (see sidebar) and the first seven-week expedition in 1968, staffed by 42 people, the Heshbon excavations carried out five regular seasons plus one summer at the Heshbon North Church (1968–1978), with seven seasons in Phase 2 (Hisban Cultural Heritage Project 1996–2010), and one season each year in Phase 3 (2011–2017). Tall al-'Umayri was opened in 1984 and has seen 18 excavation seasons through 2016. The first year at Tall Jalul came in 1992, and excavation teams have been in the field there for 18 seasons through 2017.

This means a total of 56 seasons of excavation among the three major MPP sites. In addition, there were several rural locations surveyed and/or excavated, as part of the hinterland surveys surrounding Hisban, 'Umayri, and Jalul. To staff these excavation and survey seasons, over 2200 people have participated, some multiple times. Directing the efforts following Siegfried Horn and Roger Boraas, five individuals started at or near the beginning of MPP: Larry Geraty in 1968, Larry Herr and Sten LaBianca in 1971, Doug Clark in 1973, and Randy Younker in 1984.

Growing with the Times

Hallmarks of the Madaba Plains Project—adopted, adapted, and/or initiated by MPP and reviewed publicly over the years—include: inter- and intra-institutional collaboration; multifaceted research designs; multidisciplinary approaches in a regional context; new theoretical constructs to explain phenomena unearthed and observed; international participation; educational field schools each season; cutting-edge technology for use in data harvesting and analysis, as well as information sharing; rapid publication schedules; and, more recently, community archaeology. Together, this multi-layered synergy and these multiperiod sites provide rich opportunities for studying various aspects of socio-cultural and political change in the Madaba Plains region of central Jordan over five millennia.

With these benchmarks in mind, in the golden glow of 50 years in the field, how has the MPP done in sticking to its principles and at the same time growing with the times? What trajectories in its long history might illustrate rigorous dedication to best practices as well as supple flexibility in the face of challenges in a changing discipline? What about objectives achieved and lessons learned? What about contributions made and perspectives shelved?

The history of MPP, while long characterized by steady commitments to best practices and serious research, is a story of transitions, significant pivots, and major changes. What began primarily with theologians on a quest to understand—even prove—components of early biblical history, morphed over time into something different.

With the encouragement of several leading biblical historians and theologians, Siegfried Horn sought and found in Heshbon an archaeological site with potential to help date the Exodus from Egypt. Given the intense debates in the mid-to-late 1900s about the nature and date of this theologically seminal event in the Hebrew Bible, Heshbon presented an ideal venue to resolve a major dilemma. Other sites that are part of the Joshua conquest narrative were falling—not to ancient Israelites, but to modern archaeologists, the results of whose work undermined their role in the story, or at least rewrote parts of it. With published reports from excavations at places like Jericho (Tell es-Sultan) and Ai (et-Tell) in the news, Horn looked to Heshbon for help to withstand the onslaught on the traditional account.

Because of the MPP's search for biblical history, the first season proved extremely disappointing. It quickly became apparent that occupation at the site of Heshbon did not pre-date the early Iron Age and thus would not be helpful in defining Late Bronze Age events described biblically in connection with the Exodus and conquest, including the famous battle between the Israelites and Sihon of Heshbon, king of the Amorites. What followed can only be attributed to Horn's broad-mindedness and the pluck of young graduate students with new ideas.

Without discarding their interest in biblical history, MPP leadership, for the most part, moved beyond the text-based "biblical archaeology" of W.F. Albright

Periods/Ages/Eras	Approximate Dates
Early Bronze I (EB I)	3500–2700 B.C.
Early Bronze II (EB II)	2700–2500 B.C.
Early Bronze III (EB III)	2500–2200 B.C.
Early Bronze IV (EB IV)	2200–2000 B.C.
Middle Bronze I (MB I)	2000–1750 B.C.
Middle Bronze II (MB II)	1750–1550 B.C.
Late Bronze I (LB I)	1550–1400 B.C.
Late Bronze II (LB II)	1400–1200 B.C.
Iron I	1200–1000 B.C.
Iron II	1000–550 B.C.
Persian	550–400 B.C.
Late Persian-Hellenistic	400–200 B.C.
Hellenistic	200–50 B.C.
Early Roman	50 B.C.–A.D. 135
Late Roman	A.D. 135–350
Byzantine	A.D. 350–650
Islamic	A.D. 650–1918 (end Ottoman era)
Modern	1918 to Present

and G.E. Wright to an archaeology of biblical lands and peoples based more on scientific inquiry and empirical results, where certain “preferred pasts” encountered converging lines of observable evidence. Leaders also enlarged the project’s research design to include scientific research in fields like paleobotany, paleozoology, human osteology, ancient climate investigations, ceramic typology (not just for the biblical periods as was common practice at the time but particularly for the Islamic periods) and technology, anthropological models of food systems and cycles of settlement patterns, ethnographic studies of social structures, and sustainable approaches to the preservation of cultural heritage and community engagement in its presentation. These informed newly developed theoretical constructs to enhance explanation through scientific processes. Add to these theoretical and scientific innovations very practical improvements in detailed and precise recording techniques (now also utilized by many other excavation projects in Jordan) and a more sophisticated collection of data could be developed and used in expanded scientific undertakings with more reliable outcomes.

As these impulses toward enlarging research capacity and following sustainable best practices permeated the excavations at Hisban, ‘Umayri, and Jalul, so, too, did initiatives to enhance and expand the use of computer technology.



Tall Hisban (Google Earth, 2013), looking north. Major features on the acropolis include an Iron Age water reservoir and Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, and Mamluk architectural remains.



Tall Hisban aerial photo of acropolis (2016), including (left to right): Mamluk governor’s residence, Roman temple (upper left) and monumental stairs (lower center), Byzantine church, and Hellenistic tower

Tall Hisban

Øystein S. LaBianca (Andrews University)

Located at 885 m above sea level along the edge of the highland plateau that overlooks the Jordan River Valley from the east, the summit of Tall Hisban provides a panoramic view of the plains of Madaba to the east, and to the west Mount Nebo and the northern tip of the Dead Sea. Because of its commanding location, its natural endowments of annual rainfall, fertile valleys and slopes, and construction-quality limestone, Tall Hisban became a place for the performance of power by various elites, going back more than three millennia. Thus, excavations at the site have uncovered traces of a long succession of imperial powers that have influenced the material culture and daily life at Hisban over time, including the Assyrians, Neo-Babylonians, Ptolemaic Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Umayyads, Abbasids, Ayyubids, Mamluks, Ottomans, and British. Archaeological features that attest to the influence of these powers are seen throughout the site. As important, however, is what a visit to the site can teach about the adaptive strategies and resilience of local farmers and shepherds in coping with the cultural and political programs imposed by outsiders.

Tall Hisban is thus one of the best places in Jordan to learn about what a multi-millennial archaeological tell can reveal regarding the long-term history of the country. This distinction is attributable to the scientific methods and procedures of the archaeologists from Andrews University and the American Schools of Oriental Research who launched fieldwork at the site a half century ago. Although most of them were trained in biblical or classical studies, they had a strong commitment to rigorous and systematic collection, recording, and analysis of finds from all archaeological periods encountered in their excavations. They also set a standard for prompt publication of results in appropriately peer-reviewed venues.



Byzantine church on the acropolis of Tall Hisban (2010) with semi-circular apse (left), pillar bases along stylobate wall with one column restored (center), and an arch from the Mamluk governor’s residence in the background

Tall al-‘Umayri

Larry G. Herr (Burman University)

Tall al-‘Umayri is located on a natural ridge just west of the airport highway about 12 km south of the Seventh Circle on Zahran Street in Amman. One of the more important finds was a dolmen with 25 to 28 preserved secondary burials and 20 EB IB vessels, an unprecedented discovery among thousands of dolmens with no remains. Surfaces were found around the dolmen, suggesting ritual activities connected with the burials. There was also a sizeable, unfortified EB III village on the slopes of the site, the largest settlement thus far unearthed. An MB IIC (III) fortification for the site on its western side included a dry moat and a rampart. From the LB II period came a large building, still standing two to three meters high, with five rooms, three of which showed strong signs of cultic activity, including standing stones, a cultic niche and altar, chalices, lamps, and crude figurines. The niche is now being prepared for display in the Madaba Museum.

The biggest surprise was an extremely well preserved LB/Iron I settlement. Following an earthquake around 1200 B.C., the inhabitants reused the MB moat, built a perimeter wall at the crest of the rampart, and incorporated at least five houses into the wall. A fiery conflagration preserved well over 100 collared pithoi, as well as, objects from Egypt, heaps of barley, a roof roller, several bronze weapons, and the disarticulated, burned bones of five individuals, suggesting a military destruction.

Other smaller settlements occurred at the site until, in the Iron IIC period, the Ammonite government seems to have built an administrative center, probably overseeing the scores of rural farmsteads in the area. The large number of seals from this period found near the building reflect this administrative function. The site lasted into the Persian period and then supported two small farmsteads, one each in the Hellenistic and Byzantine periods.



Late Bronze Age cultic niche in the temple complex, containing standing stones, along with vessels and crude clay votive figurines

While not used at all MPP sites equally, several components of “cyber-archaeology” have become standard issue at some: high-resolution digital photography; tripod-mounted photographic boom for generating stitched, geo-referenced composite images; gigapan stereoptic photographic spheres; aerial photography; 3D UAV imaging (still and video) and projection on immersive multi-screen hyper walls; structure-from-motion photogrammetric recording; LiDAR laser scanning (resolution to 1–2 mm); GPS instrumentation (resolution to 1–2 cm); laser scanning of artifacts; RTI image reproduction; GIS platforms; digital data harvesting, storage, and open-source repositories of excavation data, like ‘Umayri’s OpenDig; as well as C¹⁴ analysis on bio samples; DNA studies on human remains; forensic facial reconstruction on 5000-year-old skulls; hand-held x-ray fluorescence and standardized color instruments; residue analysis on cooking pots; and petrographic analysis on pithoi.

The MPP’s golden anniversary has provided opportunity for reflection on changing with the times as well as staying with the basics. While it began immersed primarily in biblical history, the project and its component parts quickly adapted to include several scientific lines of inquiry. These were further enhanced with new technologies and digital recording techniques. Today MPP is no less interested in its biblical roots, but has attempted to maintain an open and aggressive posture toward new approaches, seeking to wring every possible byte, KB, MB, GB, and terra byte of information from what its teams have exposed over the past 50 years.



Early Iron Age I “four-room” house at Tall al-‘Umayri, partially restored to illustrate its basic infrastructure and architectural plan (1999)



Tall al-‘Umayri acropolis aerial photo in 2016 (courtesy of APAAME, R. Bewley), showing several of the excavation fields

Tall Jalul

Randall W. Younker (Andrews University)

Tall Jalul, on a high hill that dominates the central Madaba Plains, is located 5 km east of Madaba. It is about 18 acres (7.2 hectares) in size with an acropolis located in the southwest quadrant of the tell. Important sites such as Madaba to the west, Hisban to the northwest, and Jawa to the north can be seen from the top of Jalul.

Excavations at Jalul have revealed an occupational history of nearly 5000 years, from the Early Bronze Age through the Ottoman period. Like her sister sites, Jalul witnessed political domination by a number of entities throughout its history. Both excavated remains (ceramics, inscriptions, art works) and ancient written sources paint the picture of a significant town during the Bronze Ages, undoubtedly under the control of the Egyptians during the latter part of the Late Bronze Age.



Sixth century B.C. ostrakon with Ammonite text

However, throughout the Iron Age control appears to have passed back and forth among various local entities—the Israelites (tribes of Gad and Reuben), the Moabites (under Mesha), and the Ammonites.

Ancient sources and geographic considerations suggest that Jalul was probably the ancient Levitical city of Bezer during the earlier part of the Iron Age until competing local powers (Moab and Ammon) took over. Local polities continued to control the region into the later Iron Age IIC, but thereafter these polities fell under various levels of control by foreign imperial powers—the Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Umayyads, Abassids, Ayyubids, Mamluks, and Ottomans. The “Islamic Village”—a settlement immediately to the south of the tell, where occupation ended at the close of the Persian period—seems to have become an important town in the Islamic periods as Umayyad, Mamluk, and Ottoman remains are well represented.



Iron Age I “fertility” plaque figurine from Tall Jalul (2009)

The Madaba Regional Archaeological Museum Project (MRAMP)

Douglas R. Clark (La Sierra University)

Archaeological finds from MPP excavations which are allocated to the Department of Antiquities (DOA) make their way to the Madaba Archaeological Museum, where they are stored and some pieces are displayed. This is true of more than a score of archaeological projects in the Madaba region, delineated by the area between southern Amman, the Dead Sea, the Wadi Mujib, and the eastern desert. Because conditions at the current Madaba Museum are crowded and unsustainable, an initiative was begun a decade ago to upgrade the museum displays, digitize its records, and train museum staff.

Since 2015 this initiative has been re-energized by the formation of MRAMP, an international collaboration involving institutions from the United States. (La Sierra University [CA] and Gannon University [PA]), Italy (Perugia University and Sapienza University [Rome]), and the Madaba regional office of the DOA. To this point MRAMP, with support from institutional entities and individuals, a Harris grant from ASOR, and a USAID grant administered by SCHEP (Sustainable Cultural Heritage Through Engagement of Local Communities Project) implemented by ACOR, has undertaken expeditions and maintained ongoing work to clear, clean, conserve, and consolidate the Late Ottoman period settlement in the Madaba Archaeological Park West (which includes the Burnt Palace and Church of the Martyrs). This area is planned to become the ground floor of a new state-of-the-art regional archaeological museum just across the street from the Church of St. George, Madaba’s main attraction for visitors.



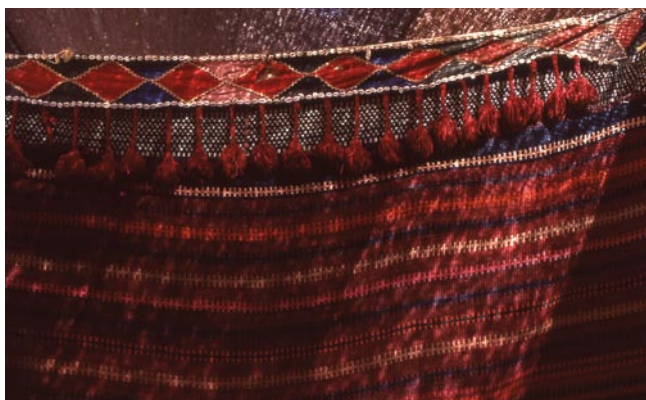
Ottoman-period domestic structures in the Madaba Archaeological Park West (2017), site of the new Madaba museum project, MRAMP (see www.mramp.org)

The MPP would like to acknowledge the support of the Department of Antiquities through its Director Generals and staff during these five decades of dedicated archaeological research. Equally deserving of our gratitude are ACOR and its directors, their encouragement and facilitation dating back to the shared beginning point of both MPP and ACOR.

The ACOR Photo Archive Project: Building a New Resource

Corrie Commisso, Senior Archival Consultant, ACOR Photo Archive Project

In one photo dappled sunlight dances on the wall of a beautifully woven Bedouin tent. In another, dozens of hot air balloons hang in the sky over Wadi Ramm. The frescoes of Quseir Amra come to life through the lens of a camera. In Palmyra, ancient columns and arches stretch across the landscape in photos taken more than half a century before the site was reduced to rubble by ISIL.



Bedouin tent inner wall (courtesy of ACOR Photo Archive, The Jane Taylor Collection)

This is just a taste of what you might find in ACOR's extensive archive of more than 100,000 historical photos from Jordan and throughout the Middle East—an archive ACOR is now working to digitize and make accessible to researchers around the world. The archive includes large photo collections from internationally renowned author and photographer Jane Taylor and journalist Rami Khouri, as well as ACOR's institutional records and smaller collections from archaeologists, dating back to the late 1950s.

With the aid of a four-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education's competitive American Overseas Research Centers program, the digitization project officially launched spring 2017. But much like any other archaeological project, launching the digital archive required a lot of survey and legwork before "digging in."

Numerous considerations needed to be evaluated against the end goal of creating a useful resource for scholars involved in cultural and natural heritage preservation and management. How would the photos be described? What kind of data would we include with each photo? Would the data be in English, in Arabic, or both? Where would the files be stored—both the digital and physical copies? And perhaps most important—how could ACOR best share this amazing collection with others?

As the newly formed archival team considered options for the best digital platform for managing and sharing the collection, we knew that the chosen platform would be a critical decision, and one that would influence many other aspects of the project: storage choices, metadata, naming, and organizing files.

After reviewing a wide variety of options, the team chose Starchive by Digital ReLab, a digital asset management (DAM) platform that is revolutionizing access to media for clients ranging from musicians like Bob Dylan to media archives like the Sherman Grinberg Film Library. Starchive is the brainchild of an archaeologist-turned-digital-media-archivist, whose work in the field led him to see the need to archive more than just historical objects, namely

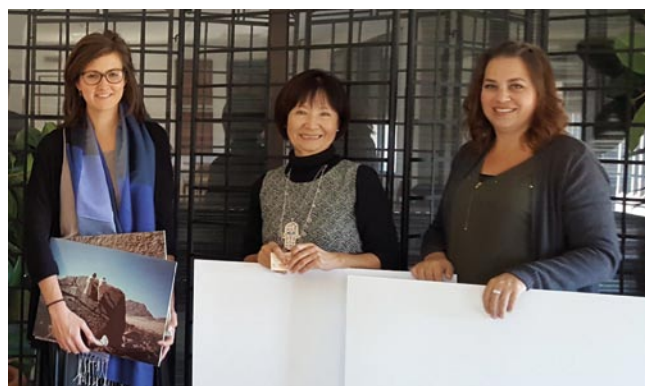
the contextual details that create valuable historical records and help researchers make better connections among the past, the present, and the future. As a result, the platform is designed to accommodate any type of media, all kinds of metadata, and any type of media storage setup.

Starchive's advantages for the photo archive were immediately obvious: description data about the photos could be captured and searched in both Arabic and English, mapping and location data could be included, and users of the platform had access to robust search options, could create their own collections of images, and could easily download watermarked images for use in their projects. Visually, the platform was simple and pleasing, and intuitive for users to navigate.

Beyond its obvious applications for the photo archive project, Starchive was also chosen for its enormous potential as an archival platform for ACOR's archaeological sites and projects. ACOR will be working closely with Digital ReLab in the coming months to explore Starchive's possibilities as a tool for archaeologists. As ACOR recently acquired the project archive of the 'Aqaba-Ma'an Archaeological and Epigraphic Survey (AMAES), directed by the late William (Bill) Jobling of the University of Sydney, this archive could prove to be a good testing ground for extending Starchive's use as an archival platform for archaeological projects.

As the ACOR Photo Archive prepares to make its public debut in fall 2017, ACOR is becoming well-known in Amman among other local and international organizations as a leader in archival practice. In addition to launching the photo archive project, the library and archive team will also be hosting a series of workshops on archival methods for libraries, museums, collections, and archives in Jordan, covering topics such as standards and strategies for digital archiving, disaster planning, and sourcing local materials for conservation.

More information about the photo archive project is available at photoarchive.acorjordan.org, and while the publicly available digitized collection will be growing and evolving over the next four years, ACOR's archival team is always available (archives@acorjordan.org) to assist with reference requests for images and other supporting media that may not yet be digitized.



Humi Ayoubi, ACOR Head Librarian, flanked by Jessica Holland and Corrie Commisso (right), of the ACOR Photo Archive Project while installing photos from the archive of the late William Jobling before Glenn Corbett's April 19 public lecture

Update of USAID SCHEP—Sustainable Cultural Heritage Through Engagement of Local Communities Project

Nizar Al Adarbeh, SCHEP Chief of Party, and Barbara A. Porter, ACOR Director

In the six-month period from January to June 2017, USAID SCHEP—implemented under ACOR—has been busy on many fronts. Grants were given to three new sites for projects in Wadi Ramm, Aqaba, and Madaba, and the Umm el-Jimal Project received a second-phase grant which in this period continued trail creation and other aspects of site management (see www.ummeljimal.org). The Temple of the Winged Lions CRM Initiative also continued to receive support.

The discovery in November 2016 in Bayt Ras, north of Irbid, of a Roman-period, underground tomb with amazing wall paintings has led to the formation of a consortium among several entities with different expertise—the Department of Antiquities of Jordan (DOA), Le Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), Institut Français du Proche Orient (IFPO), Istituto Superiore per la Conversazione ed il Restauro (ISCR), and Istituto Superiore per la Protezione e la Ricerca Ambientale (ISPRA). SCHEP's CHR (Cultural Heritage Resource) Projects Lead Jihad Haron and Conservation Coordinator Fareed AlShishani are leading the complex efforts to coordinate the activities in the tomb, including those involved for its protection and security with the assistance of the local DOA offices. This exciting project awaits a formal launch in Irbid to allow consortium members to provide information on their efforts.

SCHEP has organized with Hashemite University the Applied Diploma in Archaeological Surveying and Cultural Heritage Documentation. In April, the fourth phase took place at ACOR and concentrated on digital photography, 3D laser scanning, and 3D photogrammetric modeling with the practicum at Khirbat Salameh in front of ACOR and at Ghawr as-Safi. Fortunately several of those involved in this specialized training have been able to undertake survey activity, for example in the north at Bayt Ras as well as in the south at Petra. A short film was produced through the support of USAID Jordan that features the surveying course.

A major part of every USAID project entails Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and the SCHEP team exchanged its experience with many USAID implementing partners at the USAID Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Conference in May. There Nizar Al Adarbeh presented “GIS Techniques in Developing an Effective M&E System.”



In the SCHEP booth at the May MEL conference (from left): Fareed AlShishani, Hussein Khirfan, Raneen Naimi, Sofia Smith, Shatha Abu Aballi, Zaid Kashour, Nizar Al Adarbeh, and Barbara Porter

May was indeed a very busy month and it also included the official launch of the Madaba Regional Archaeological Museum Project (MRAMP) on site in the Madaba Archaeological Park West—an ACOR project in the 1990s. There a new consortium of

universities and experts from the U.S., Italy, and Jordan prepared the site by clearing, cleaning, conserving, and planning for a museum that would incorporate Ottoman-period vernacular architecture (see p. 5). There is a major training component to this initiative for students and for the current Madaba Museum staff. Qusay Alshawabkeh, the site steward, was very involved in the May 18 visit of school students on International Museum Day as coordinated by Raneen Naimi, SCHEP Outreach and Awareness Intern, with the DOA and the Ministry of Education, for local schools around all of the nine SCHEP sites.



Doug Clark addressing the audience at the May 17 official MRAMP launch with representatives from local and national stakeholders along with local community and project consortium members, such as the DOA Madaba office, in the Madaba Archaeological Park West

SCHEP's mandate includes strengthening Jordanian university programs involved in cultural heritage and to that end SCHEP supported in April the First International Workshop on Applications of Geomatics Engineering in Natural and Cultural Heritage Conservation and Management co-organized with Al Al-Bayt University. There were some 200 participants including USAID officials and the project director from Umm el-Jimal Bert de Vries and the project leads for Community-Based Rock-Art and Epigraphic Recording (CB-RAER) in Wadi Ramm where they introduced to local community members—along with Zeyad es-Salameen, professor at Al Hussein bin Talal University—techniques of documenting with RASI (Rock Art Stability Index).



CB-RAER Project leaders in Wadi Ramm at the Al Al-Bayt Conference. From left George Bevan (Queen's University), Kaelin Groom (University of Arkansas), and Casey Allen (University of Colorado, Denver)

There have been several SCHEP-sponsored lectures at ACOR (see p. 8) which have helped spread awareness of SCHEP activities. SCHEP has also been able to show the projects to USAID and U.S. State Department officials as well as Jordanian tour guides and school groups. For more general information, do visit www.usaidschep.org and also follow USAIDSCHEP on Facebook for videos and regular updates.

Fellows in Residence (January–June 2017)

ACOR National Endowment for the Humanities Post-Doctoral Fellows

Geoffrey Hughes, Anthropology, London School of Economics;
Nation and Agnation: Kinship, Conflict, and Social Control in
Contemporary Jordan

Gary Rollefson, Anthropology, Whitman College; Lithic Technologies and Social Identities: A Comparative Analysis of Chipped Stone
Tool Production in Jordan's Badia

Pierre and Patricia Bikai Fellow

Vivian Laughlin, Archaeology, Andrews University; Serapis in
Hisban: A Historical Narrative of Enculturation of an Ancient
Jordanian City

Kenneth W. Russell Fellow

Felicia de Pena, Archaeology/Anthropology, University of California,
Berkeley; Reduction Sequences of the Epipaleolithic in the Levant:
Communities of Practice and Knowledge Transmission



Gary Rollefson



Felicia de Pena



Geoff Hughes



Vivian Laughlin

Public Lectures at ACOR (January–June 2017)

January 24—Monther Jamhawi (Director General of Antiquities of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan) “A New Perspective for the Protection of Threatened Cultural Heritage”

February 22*—James Fraser (Curator of the Levant, The British Museum) “The Visible Dead: Dolmens and the Landscape in Bronze Age Levant”

March 14—Konstantinos Politis (Hellenic Society for Near Eastern Studies)—SCHEP Sponsored Lecture—“Unknown Safi: Tourism and Heritage at the Lowest Place on Earth”

April 11—Glenn J. Corbett (ACOR Associate Director)—SCHEP Sponsored Lecture—“Experiential Tourism in Petra”

April 19*—Glenn J. Corbett (ACOR Associate Director) “Archaeology in the Attic: Preserving Archival Treasures of Jordan's Past”

May 16*—Timothy Harrison (University of Toronto and Visiting Professor at the American University of Beirut) “Sea Peoples and neo-Hittites in the ‘Land of Palistin”

May 21—Douglas Clark (La Sierra University), Marta D'Andrea (Sapienza University), Basem Mahamid (Department of Antiquities, Madaba), Andrea Polcaro (Perugia University), and Suzanne Richard (Gannon University)—SCHEP Sponsored Lecture—“A New Regional Archaeological Museum in Madaba”

*Available as Video Lectures on ACOR's website www.acorjordan.org



Monther Jamhawi, Director General of Antiquities(right), and Mamdouh Bisharat



Konstantinos Politis (right) and Ghassan Salti



James Fraser (left) and Jehad Haron



Glenn Corbett at Archive Lecture



Tim Harrison (right) and Ghazi Bisheh



Glenn Corbett lecturing on experiential tourism in Petra



Soizik Bechetoille-Kaczorowski and husband Samuel at Madaba Museum lecture

My History with ACOR and Reflections on Importance of Support

Moawiyah M. Ibrahim, ACOR Board Member and Professor Emeritus of Near Eastern Archaeology

ACOR was established in 1968, after the occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem by Israel in 1967. East Jerusalem was the base for ASOR which was founded in 1900 and was operating in the entire region. The establishment of ACOR in Amman aimed at serving researchers and projects operating in Jordan to work closely with the Department of Antiquities and other Jordanian agencies.

I happened to witness the development of ACOR and to work closely with all its directors. It started in a small apartment with limited facilities and small research projects. In the 1980s the fundraising campaign was started to buy the land and construct the present building in Tla'a Ali opposite the University of Jordan.

Already in 1971 when I met with George Mendenhall when I came back from Germany to join the Department of Antiquities, we had discussed the importance of introducing courses in epigraphy and Semitic languages. Thus when I joined Yarmouk University in 1979 and established the Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology with a separate Department of Epigraphy, George Mendenhall was invited to be a guest professor to run the department with Axel Knauf and Fawwaz Al Khaysheh.

When Henk Thompson was ACOR's Annual Professor (1971–1972), we started a close cooperation in identifying the

Ammonite towers surrounding Amman and conducted the excavations at Khirbat al-Hajjar, southwest of Amman. The two Ammonite statues found there were published by me in *The Annual of the Department of Antiquities (ADAJ)* in 1971. In January 1972, my wife Buthaina and I joined Henk Thompson on a trip to Iraq and Kuwait. For all of us it was the first visit to both countries. It was also our honeymoon as we had just gotten married! We had the opportunity to visit major Iraqi sites, including Babylon, Nippur, those in the Diyala, Samarra, Assur, Tell as-Suwwan, and al-Hadar, and Neo-Assyrian sites in the north. We also visited Kuwait's Failaka Island and met the Danish excavators there.

Bastian van Elderen followed Henk Thompson in directing ACOR from 1972 to 1974. Bastian was involved in the excavations at Masuh as he was interested in Byzantine archaeology. We had close cooperation with him at the Department of Antiquities and we initiated the joint project entitled the "Archaeological Heritage of Jordan" in order to update Lankester Harding's book *The Antiquities of Jordan*; a manuscript was produced but the project was never completed.

I already knew James (Jim) Sauer and his father in 1963 during the first season of excavations at the Palestinian site of Tell Ta'anak led by Paul Lapp. Jim and I had the opportunity to learn from Paul

about excavation techniques and pottery reading. I remember spending many night hours classifying the pottery from the various areas of the site. The cook on that dig was Mohammad Adawi (Abu Ahmad) who became ACOR's chef in 1968 and he plans to retire in June 2018 at the 50-year mark.

Jim served as the Annual Professor directing ACOR in fall 1974 and then became the first long-term Director in 1975 (until 1981). He organized a course on understanding pottery for students and other interested individuals, which was very popular. Khair Yassine and I teamed up in with Jim Sauer in 1975 and 1976 to undertake the Jordan Valley Survey on behalf of the Department of Antiquities, the University of Jordan, and ACOR. This survey became a major reference for archaeologists and other researchers involved in the Jordan Valley. In 1985–1986, my family and I spent a whole year at the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania as I received a Fulbright scholarship on Jim's recommendation. We spent much time together discussing the results of the Jordan Valley Survey and other issues of archaeology in the region as well as having family visits. My contact with Jim and his family continued until he sadly passed away in 1999.



Moawiyah Ibrahim (right) and Jim Sauer in the 1980s (photo courtesy of M. Ibrahim)

Cooperation of course continued with ACOR during the time of David McCreery, Bert de Vries, und Pierre Bikai. The ACOR Library was essential for our graduate students and faculty at Yarmouk University's Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology. In terms of my career, I was a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Richmond in Virginia from 1992–1993 after which we went to Sultan Qaboos University in Muscat, Oman where we spent ten years. In 2004 we returned to Amman and our contact with ACOR intensified, especially after Barbara Porter became Director in 2006 and I joined the Board of Trustees in that year. I now serve on two ACOR Board committees—Library and Fellowship—and it is a real joy to be part of these two committees which reflect positively on researchers and students who benefit from these two entities.

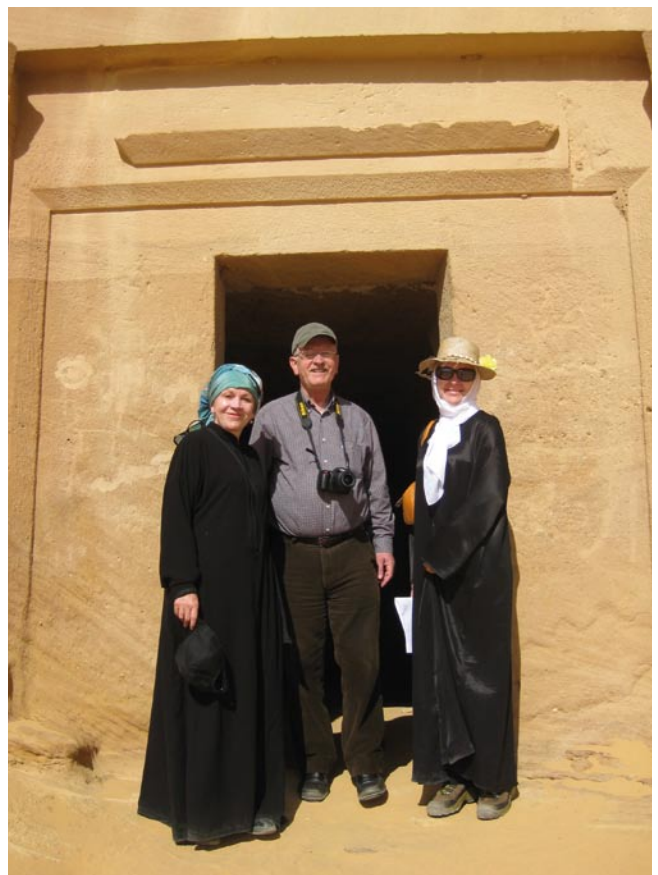
The interconnections with Barbara Porter were not restricted to ACOR activities as we were able to organize field trips in Jordan and outside. Two special trips are well remembered. The one to Oman took place in January 2010 when we spent one week traveling around the country with Margaret Huber, then the Canadian Ambassador to Jordan. We meet many of my old friends and students there and visited the major archaeological sites. The other trip was in spring 2009 to Saudi Arabia where—in the company again

of ambassadors—we visited Medain Saleh, Al 'Ula, and Tayma, the latter at the time of the German excavations led by Ricardo Eichmann and Arnulf Hausleiter. Thus from 1972 to 2010, I have traveled with ACOR directors who became friends.

Any support for ACOR will certainly reflect on the research in the region and on Jordanian as well as international students and researchers in Jordan. Many of the activities mentioned here (i.e., library, hostel operations, lectures, archaeological and heritage projects) can be sustained and enhanced through donations to ACOR. It is an institute that plays an important role in Jordan and has for almost 50 years. I wish it many more.



Moawiyah Ibrahim and Barbara Porter in Oman (photo by M. Huber)



Moawiyah Ibrahim with Ambassadors Margaret Huber and Andrea Reichlin at Medain Saleh (photo by B.A. Porter)

ACOR Annual Appeal Results 2016 and 2017

Funds and Endowments	Fiscal Year 2016	Fiscal Year 2017
Annual Fund	\$ 86,834	\$ 133,277
Annual Library Support	\$ 11,042	\$ 17,580
ACOR General Endowment	\$ 800	\$ 550
ACOR Jordanian Graduate Student Scholarship Fund	\$ 10,572	\$ 881
Anne C. Ogilvy Memorial Library Endowment	\$ 3,100	\$ 1,100
Pierre and Patricia Bikai Fellowship Endowment	\$ 1,680	\$ 325
Bert and Sally de Vries Fellowship Endowment	\$ 1,230	\$ 2,925
Frederick-Wenger Jordanian Educational Fellowship Endowment	\$ 200	–
Jennifer C. Groot Memorial Fellowship Endowment	\$ 3,697	\$ 4,744
Harrell Family Fellowship Endowment	\$ 5,000	–
Burton MacDonald and Rosemarie Sampson Fellowship Endowment	\$ 80	\$ 75
Kenneth W. Russell Memorial Fellowship Endowment	\$ 284	\$ 50
James A. Sauer Memorial Fellowship Endowment	\$ 2,130	\$ 1,925
ACOR Middle East Studies Association (MESA) Scholarship Fund (initiated 2016)	–	\$ 1,000
Petra Church Conservation Endowment	\$ 5,050	–
Petra Church Conservation Initiative	\$ 2,850	–
Temple of the Winged Lions (TWLCRM) Initiative	\$ 1,000	\$ 491
Total	\$ 135,550	\$ 164,923

Donations to ACOR (January–June 2017)

General Donations to the Annual Fund

Anne Aarnes; Susan Ackerman; Bjorn Anderson; Bill Burns and Lisa Carty; Steven Collins; Michèle Daviau; Bert and Sally de Vries; Anne Dunn; Mary Emerson; Jerry Fischer and John Turner; Paul Fitzpatrick; James Fraser; Lawrence T. Geraty in honor of Barbara A. Porter's 10th Anniversary at ACOR; Seymour Gitin in memory of James Sauer; Susan Griggs; Bridget Guarasci and Mani Potnuru; Gemma Hall in memory of Lewis Hall; Ellen Porter Honnet; JoAnne and Samuel Juett; The Wang Family Foundation (through the auspices of Laura W. Young); April Michas; Anne Morgan and Brent Mashburn in honor of Barbara Porter and her father Dwight Porter; Jenifer Neils; Megan Perry; Thomas Pickering; Nancy Polich; Barbara Reeves; Gary O. Rollefson; Anne Roos; Suzanne and Jaroslav Stetkevych; Herbert Stetzenmeyer in honor of Robert Houston Smith of the Wooster Expedition to Pella; Judith Woods

Annual Fund Donations for Library Support

Council of International Educational Exchange (CIEE); Aina Boraas (for the Roger S. Boraas Library Support Fund and General Library Support); Nita Dawson; Bert and Sally de Vries; King Fahd Center of the University of Arkansas (through the auspices of Thomas Paradise); Randolph B. Old; John P. Oleson; Jean A. Peyrat; Bonnie Sampsell; Herbert Stetzenmeyer in memory of Khalid Al Asaad of the Palmyra Department of Antiquities; Christopher A. Tuttle in honor of Humi Ayoubi

Pierre and Patricia Bikai Fellowship Endowment

Lawrence T. Geraty

Bert and Sally de Vries Fellowship Endowment;

Bert and Sally de Vries; Lawrence T. Geraty; Rami G. Khouri; Aylette Villemain

Jennifer C. Groot Memorial Fellowship Endowment

Barbara Reeves; Penny and Peter West in memory of Jennifer Groot

MacDonald Sampson Fellowship Endowment

Lawrence T. Geraty; Rami G. Khouri

James A. Sauer Memorial Fellowship Endowment

Lawrence T. Geraty; Rami G. Khouri

Temple of the Winged Lions (TWLCRM) Initiative

Valerie Hird; The Wang Family Foundation (through the offices of Laura W. Young)

Anne C. Ogilvy Memorial Library Endowment

Robin M. Brown

ACOR MESA Fellowship Fund

Barbara A. Porter

Donations to ACOR Library (January–June 2017)

Shatha Salman Hasan Abu Aballi; Rawan Abu Sakha; Sawzan Adel Al Fakhry; Ayman Ibrahim Alshraideh; Karin Bartl; Jacques Bujard; Suniti Chuthamas; Seymour Gitin; Edward W. Gnehm Jr.; Reem Habayeb; Donald O. Henry; Martha S. Joukowsky; Melissa Kennedy; Riad Al Khouri; Thomas E. Levy; Achim Lichtenberger; Burton MacDonald; Joan Porter MacIver; Fatma Marii; Anastasia Moskvina; Bernd Müller-Neuhof; Serge Nègre; Joan Kathryn O'Donnell; Randolph B. Old; Rubina Raja; Gotthard G.G. Reinhold; Rana Safadi; Aseel Sawalha; Robert Schick; Zina Sultan; Sarah Tobin; Thomas Weber-Karyotakis; Daniel Waugh; Karyn Wesselingh; Noor Ziadat

ACOR acknowledges with deep gratitude the ongoing in-kind support of Royal Jordanian for the Temple of the Winged Lions CRM Initiative

ACOR Photo Archive Project



Balloon rally in Wadi Ramm in 1992 (courtesy of ACOR Photo Archive, The Jane Taylor Collection)

ACOR is pleased to announce the launch of the ACOR Photo Archive Project funded by the American Overseas Research Centers Grant from the Department of Education. As a first step in making this extensive archival collection available to researchers, the ACOR Library has begun to process, digitize, and make fully accessible (and searchable) online a majority of ACOR's major institutional and donated photographic holdings. The first major collection to be processed is that donated by Jane Taylor when she moved from Jordan to England in December 2015 after many years in Jordan.

Links to archive: <https://acor.digitalrelab.com/>
<https://photoarchive.acorjordan.org/>
Instagram ID: @acorarchives

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www.acorjordan.org

ACOR e-mail addresses in Amman:

acor@acorjordan.org
reservations@acorjordan.org
(for hostel bookings)
library@acorjordan.org

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**ACOR – The American Center of Oriental
Research**

April 2017 Board Meeting

The ACOR Board of Trustees' annual spring meeting took place at The Elliott School of International Affairs at The George Washington University and was presided over by ACOR Board President Randolph B. Old. The Board Members of the Class of 2017 were re-elected to the Class of 2020 but for David McCreery who was elected to be a trustee emeritus. Four new Board members were nominated to that class, Anne Aarnes, Claus Gielisch, Jenna Morton, and David Nickols. The Board agreed that Associate Director Glenn Corbett would take on the role of Grants Officer upon his return to the United States in the fall and that a search for a new Associate Director in Amman should be undertaken. Plans for ACOR's 50th Anniversary in 2018 were a focal point of discussion.

ACOR Trustees

Class of 2018: H.E. Mr. Mohammed Asfour; Dr. Moawiyah M. Ibrahim;

Dr. Øystein S. LaBianca; H.E. Mr. Hazem Malhas; Dr. John P. Oleson;
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Ex officio: Dr. Barbara A. Porter

To share your stories about ACOR to honor
our 50th anniversary, please send them to:

ACOR50@acorjordan.org

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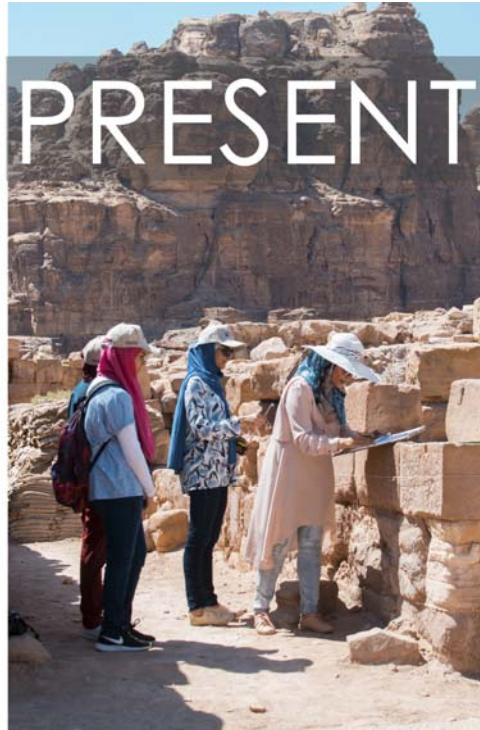
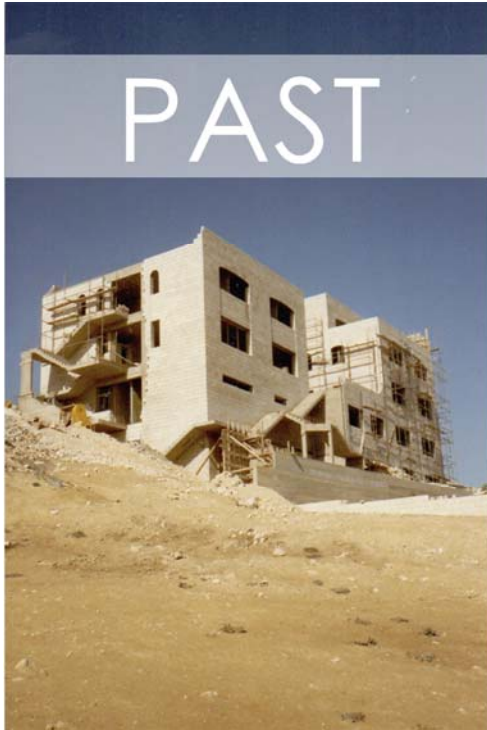
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FALL 2017



Past: ACOR building under construction in 1985 (Photo by Jay Guikema)

Present: Documentation specialists working in Petra in 2017 (Photo by Yusuf Ahmed)

Future: Children at an educational outreach event at The Children's Museum in Amman (Photo by Yusuf Ahmed)

GIVE TO ACOR

Advancing knowledge to support Jordan's past, present and future

In January 2018, we mark our 50th year. ACOR is an institution that makes archaeological fieldwork possible in Jordan and inclusive to local communities. We are deeply rooted in research and promote the study of ancient and modern Jordan. Our center supports academic pursuits of American, Jordanian, and international researchers, and we now offer vocational training programs for Jordanians interested in cultural resource management. We believe in the pursuit of knowledge.

Invest in knowledge, invest in ACOR. Help us advance knowledge for the next 50 years. Help us to launch the careers of future generations.

Thank you for making our work possible!



FALL 2017

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