



Fig. 48. Ottoman-period settlement in 2017

The Madaba Regional Archaeological Museum Project (MRAMP) is an American-Italian-Jordanian collaboration formed in 2015 and committed to establishing a new regional archaeological museum in the city of Madaba. The ultimate objective of MRAMP is to prepare the area of the Madaba Archaeological Park West, in downtown Madaba, as the location for a new museum in order to preserve and display archaeological materials from the numerous excavations in the Madaba region. Sponsoring entities of the project include the author-affiliated institutions, in cooperation with a large number of local and international stakeholders, including USAID SCHEP, implemented by ACOR.

Specific objectives include a number of archaeological and conservational interventions; repurposing of the current Madaba Archaeological Museum; identification of an extensive network of stakeholder groups; educational collaborations; and, most importantly, an intentional, pervasive commitment to community archaeology which recognizes cultural remains as a public asset to be protected and preserved for future generations.

Up to this point in time the project has mounted two successful seasons of excavation and clearing of debris accumulated in the Ottoman-period settlement since excavations ended more than 20 years ago. An initial pilot season took place in May 2016 and a second, follow-up season in May 2017, with at least one more planned for May 2018.

In 2016, work focused on re-exposing three major architectural

## MADABA REGIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM PROJECT

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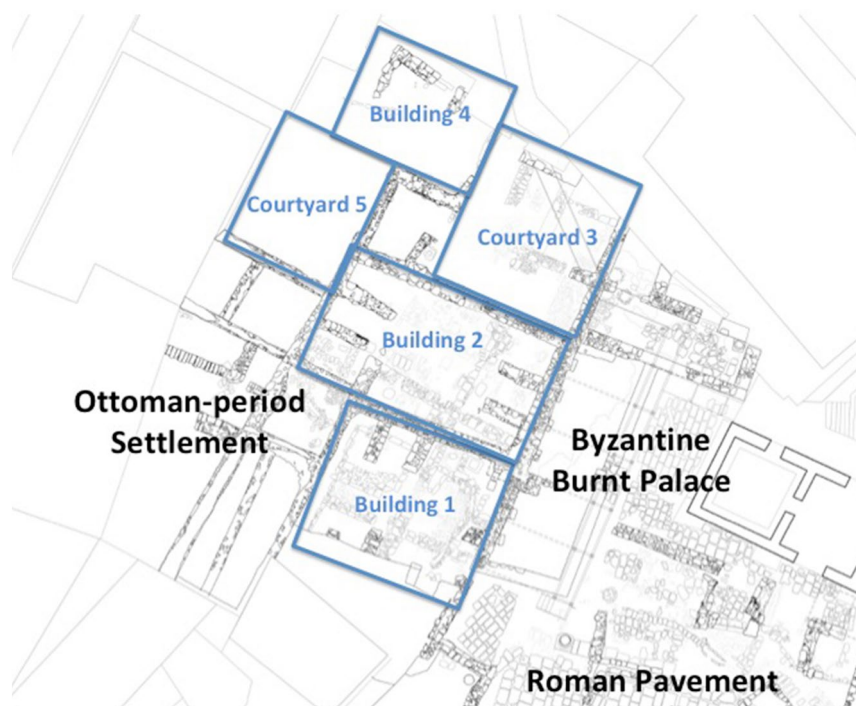
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structures aligned north–south and adjacent to the west wing of the Burnt Palace: Buildings 1 and 2 and Courtyard 3 (Fig. 48). The MRAMP team was confronted at the beginning with a dense jungle of grass and brush growing vigorously from the accumulated inter-seasonal debris since the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities/ACOR excavations of the 1990s. Before and after photos reveal starkly the problems of neglect and the promise of cleaning and clearing; the change over two weeks was dramatic. The western portion of the settlement was left untouched by MRAMP until the next year.



*Fig. 49. Topographic map of Ottoman-period settlement with structures identified*

The focus of the 2017 season was to continue cleaning operations and to document further the area of the Ottoman-period settlement (Fig. 49). In continuity with the work undertaken the previous season, the aim of these operations was to enhance the presentation of the area and further understand the superimpositions of the different exposed architectural phases. The team also expanded clearance activities to Building 4 and Courtyard 5.

As part of the design of MRAMP/SCHEP, training and capacity-building have been central components since the beginning. Examples include:

- Four workshops, two stretching into 2018. Mosaic conservation and stone wall consolidation constituted the 2017 components, both supported by the Center for Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern Studies (CAMNES) in Italy.
- The Italian National Council of Research (ITABC-CNR) supported laser scanning of the entire area in preparation for the work of architects, as well as geo-resistivity sub-surface mapping for anomalies.
- The Italian architectural firm Studio Strati of Rome prepared architectural plans of the park and created a 3D model of the future building.
- Numerous local workers and technicians were employed, many of them improving job-related skills in the field of cultural heritage preservation, with the support of USAID SCHEP.
- Local school children have visited the site to learn about the value of their heritage.
- Undergraduate and graduate architecture students from three universities—American University of Madaba, University of Jordan, and Hashemite University—have worked on academic projects related to the proposed Madaba Museum.
- An official launch in May 2017 attracted members from several communities: ambassadors, officials from the Madaba governorate and municipality, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the Department of Antiquities, descendants of late 19th century families who established modern Madaba, local business people, and other members of the community.