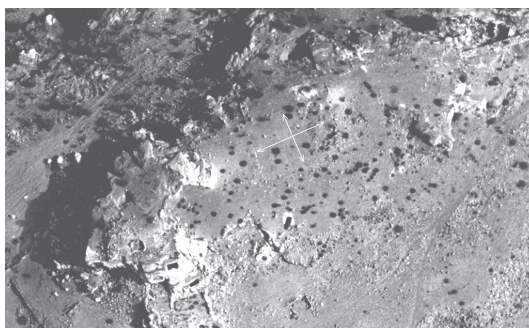


*Aerial views, May 26, 1993, by J. Wilson Myers and Eleanor Emlen Myers; courtesy of the Kenneth W. Russell Trust, ACOR. The upper photo shows Umm al-Biyara at lower left and the Petra Church just to the right of top center. The central photo shows the Petra Church at center and the location of the Ridge Church marked towards the top (just right of the tether). The lower detail view shows the location of the unexcavated Ridge Church with the apse to the right.*







*His Royal Highness Prince Raad Bin Zeid*

This excellent publication concerning the excavations of the Ridge Church and the Blue Chapel in Petra is the culmination of many years of work carried out by the American Center of Oriental Research (ACOR), in coordination with the Department of Antiquities of Jordan and the Petra Park and supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and many others, including members of the local communities.

The Petra Church was the first Byzantine complex to be excavated on the Petra North Ridge. I vividly recall the terrific excitement in 1991 when this major structure was discovered. The extraordinary mosaics uncovered there—hitherto unknown in Petra—also added a new dimension to Jordan's art history. The discovery in December 1993 of the Petra scrolls greatly enhanced information about sixth-century Petra and some of the people who lived there at that time.

One day in January 1994, just at the end of ACOR's main work on the Petra Church, Patricia Bikai along with ACOR Director Pierre Bikai and Thomas Daily climbed the hill above the Petra Church to admire the view over the city of the Nabataeans. Thus was the Ridge Church re-discovered, quite by chance.

After excavations began on the Ridge Church, it was only a matter of time before the Blue Chapel complex down the slope would also be revealed. Excavations of the Blue Chapel and its environs connected the spatial, historical, and cultural links among the three fascinating structures on the same hillside.

The story of the North Ridge Project shows ACOR's ardent commitment to Petra and to the preservation of Jordan's history and culture. Few of Petra's archaeological sites had been excavated, documented, or restored before the middle of the 20th century. Today, scholars and visitors can enjoy remarkable restorations of some of Petra's most consequential buildings and monuments—the Petra Great Temple, the Roman Road, the Temple of the Winged Lions, the Petra Church, and finally the Ridge Church and the Blue Chapel. We Jordanians, indeed all who love history and culture and believe in its preservation, are grateful that this important work was undertaken and this publication completed.

*Raad bin Zeid*