

Fig. 1.1. Map of the project area courtesy of Talal Akasheh, Hashemite University, Chrysanthos Kanellopoulos, and American Center of Oriental Research, Amman

---

# I. Introduction

BY PATRICIA MAYNOR BIKAI

## GENESIS OF THE PROJECT

Beginning in 1991, the American Center of Oriental Research (ACOR) worked on the excavation of the Petra Church, a large structure in the heart of Petra, with exceptional mosaics. On Jan. 2, 1994, on a visit to that project, Thomas A. Dailey of the United States Agency for International Development, Pierre M. Bikai, the director of ACOR, and this author, decided to walk up the hill above the Petra Church. When we reached the top, we had stopped to enjoy the view when Pierre said, “I’m standing in a church,” and Tom responded, “And I’m sitting in the apse.” See fig. 1.2. It turned out



Fig. 1.2. Tom Dailey at the Ridge Church, Jan. 2, 1994

that this church, which would be dubbed the Ridge Church because of its location, had been known in the early 20th century, but then it was apparently forgotten.

It may have been described by A. Musil who described two churches in the general vicinity (1907: 105–6, 108, fig. 76), but matching his descriptions to either of the two known churches is difficult (see Schick 2001 on Musil and on history of Christianity in Petra). The Ridge Church definitely appears on A. Kammerer’s map (fig. 1.3) of 1929.

The Ridge Church is located at the northwestern edge of the Byzantine-era city and is just inside the city walls which run along the ridge overlooking Wadi Abu ‘Ullayqa. Its location on a sandstone ridge that rises to 924 masl subjected the structure to severe erosion. Most of the stones of the walls and the other architectural elements had been washed down or pushed down the slopes to the north and south of the structure.

The damage was clearly visible during that first visit in 1994, and it was decided to begin a limited project to consolidate the remains in order to prevent further erosion, and there ensued a series of short “seasons” (usually one week) devoted to clearing the structure and consolidating it.

In the Spring of 1998, however, two large Nabataean tombs were discovered simultaneously. This would result in the expansion of the project as detailed in Chapter 2, “The Excavation Seasons.” There were a total of 12 seasons. Megan A. Perry and S. Thomas Parker continued the project, albeit in a different area to the east; see Parker and Perry 2013, 2017, and in press.

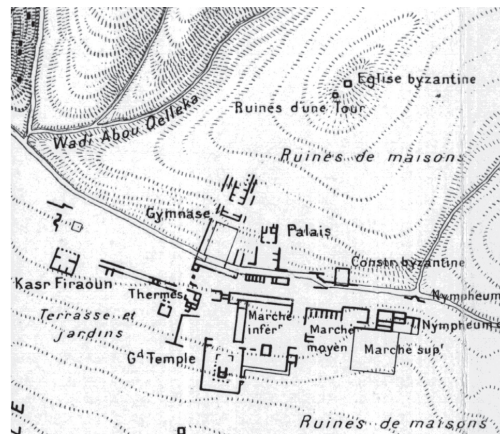


Fig. 1.3. A. Kammerer 1929, detail of Carte III; the “Eglise byzantine” is the Ridge Church.

---

## REFERENCES

- Kammerer, A.  
1929 *Pétra et la Nabatène*. Paris.  
Musil, A.  
1907 *Arabia Petraea II: Edom*. Vienna.  
Parker, S. T., and M. A. Perry  
2013 Petra North Ridge Project: The 2012 Season. *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 57: 399–407.  
2017 Petra North Ridge Project: The 2014 Season. *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 58: 287–301.  
In press Petra North Ridge Project: The 2016 Season. *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 60.  
Schick, R.  
2001 The Ecclesiastical History of Petra. In Z. T. Fiema; C. Kanellopoulos; T. Waliszewski; and R. Schick, *The Petra Church*. American Center of Oriental Research Publications 3, 1–5. Amman.

## PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1994  
Bikai, Pierre M.  
Petra: The Square Courtyard Building. *ACOR Newsletter* 6.2: 7–8.  
Bikai, Patricia M.  
Petra: The Ridge Church. *ACOR Newsletter* 6.2: 10–11.  
Bikai, Patricia M., and Pierre M. Bikai  
ACOR Excavations at Petra. *Liber Annuus* 44: 634–36.  
1995  
Bikai, Patricia M.  
Petra. Ridge Church Project. Pp. 530–31 in *Archaeology in Jordan*, edited by P. M. Bikai and D. Kooring. *American Journal of Archaeology* 99: 507–33.  
Petra, Ridge Church. *ACOR Newsletter* 7.2: 9–10.  
1996  
Bikai, Patricia M.  
The Ridge Church at Petra. *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 40: 481–86.  
Petra, Ridge Church. *ACOR Newsletter* 8.1: 10.  
Petra, Ridge Church. P. 531 in *Archaeology in Jordan*, edited by P. M. Bikai and V. Egan. *American Journal of Archaeology* 100: 507–35.  
1997  
Bikai, Patricia M.  
Petra. Ridge Church. Pp. 533–34 in *Archaeology in Jordan*, edited by P. M. Bikai and V. Egan. *American Journal of Archaeology* 101: 493–535.  
The Ridge Church in Petra. *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 6: 339–42.  
1998  
Bikai, Patricia M.  
Petra: North Ridge Project. *ACOR Newsletter* 10.1: 5–6.  
1999  
Bikai, Patricia M.  
Petra. North Ridge Project. Pp. 510–11 in *Archaeology in Jordan*, edited by V. Egan and P. M. Bikai. *American Journal of Archaeology* 103: 485–520.  
Bikai, Patricia M., and Megan A. Perry  
The Petra North Ridge Project. *Occident and Orient: Newsletter of the German Protestant Institute of Archaeology in Amman* 4.1 & 2: 44–45.  
Perry, Megan A.  
Petra: North Ridge Project. *ACOR Newsletter* 11.1: 10–11.  
2000  
Bikai, Patricia M., and Megan A. Perry  
Petra: Blue Chapel Complex. *ACOR Newsletter* 12.1: 1–2.

- 
- Petra. North Ridge Project. Pp. 582–83 in *Archaeology in Jordan*, edited by V. Egan, P. M. Bikai, and K. Zamora. *American Journal of Archaeology* 104: 561–88.
- 2001  
Bikai, Patricia M., and Megan A. Perry  
Petra North Ridge Project Tombs 1 and 2: Preliminary Report. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 324: 59–78.  
Petra: North Ridge Project. *ACOR Newsletter* 13.1: 8–9.  
Petra. North Ridge Project. Pp. 453–54 in *Archaeology in Jordan*, edited by S. Savage, K. Zamora, and D. Keller. *American Journal of Archaeology* 105: 427–61.
- 2002  
Bikai, Patricia M.  
North Ridge Project. *ACOR Newsletter* 14.1: 1–3.  
The Churches of Byzantine Petra. *Near Eastern Archaeology* 65.4: 271–76.  
Bikai, Patricia M., and Megan A. Perry.  
Petra. North Ridge Project. Pp. 450–51 in *Archaeology in Jordan, 2001 Season*, edited by S. Savage, K. Zamora, and D. Keller. *American Journal of Archaeology* 106: 435–58.  
Perry, Megan A.  
*Invisible Remains, Remains of the Invisible: Reconciling History and Archaeology at Post-Byzantine Petra* (with Patricia M. Bikai). Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, New Orleans, LA.  
Life and Death in Nabataea: The North Ridge Tombs and Nabataean Burial Practices. *Near Eastern Archaeology* 65.4: 265–70
- 2003  
Bikai, Patricia Maynor  
The Blue Pulpit. *ACOR Newsletter* 15.1: 1–2.  
Perry, Megan A., and Patricia M. Bikai  
Petra: North Ridge Project. Pp. 468–69 in *Archaeology in Jordan, 2002 Season*, edited by S. Savage, K. Zamora, and D. Keller. *American Journal of Archaeology* 107: 449–75.
- 2004  
Bikai, Patricia M.  
Petra: North Ridge Project. *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 8: 59–63.  
Small Choices in Conservation. Pp. 99–108 in *Science and Technology in Archaeology and Conservation* (First International Conference on Archaeology and Conservation, Aug. 12–17, 2002, Jordan), ed. Talal S. Akasheh. Granada.
- 2007  
Perry, Megan A., and Patricia Maynor Bikai  
Petra's Churches: The Byzantines and Beyond. Pp. 435–43 in *Crossing Jordan: North American Contributions to the Archaeology of Jordan*, eds., T. E. Levy, P. M. M. Daviau, R. W. Younker and M. Shaer, London.
- 2009  
Bikai, Patricia Maynor  
Le chiese nel versante nord di Petra / The Churches of the North Slope of Petra. Pp. 72–73 in *Da Petra a Shawbak: Archaeologia di una Frontera*, eds., Guido Vannini and Michele Nucciotti. Florence.
- 2012  
Bikai, Patricia M., and Megan A. Perry  
The Abandonment of Petra. *Remains of the Invisible: Post-Byzantine Archaeology of Petra's North Ridge*. Pp. 95–99 in *La Transgiordania nei secoli XII-XIII e le 'frontiere' del Mediterraneo*, eds. Guido Vannini and Michele Nucciotti. BAR International Series 2386, Oxford.

---

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many, many individuals and institutions made this project possible. Those directly associated with a particular season are also acknowledged in Chapter 2.

Virginia Egan was the assistant director for the first seven seasons; Megan A. Perry was assistant director for seasons nine through twelve. Pierre M. Bikai was the architect for the first six seasons; Chrysanthos Kanellopoulos, the architect for the remainder of the project.

Participants: Peggie Abujaber, Hazem al-Abed, Georg Alpers, Aysar Akrawi, Karen Asfour, Nasri Atalla, Arwa Badran, Jane Baxter, Don Belt, Lily Belt, Amparo Bettini, H.E. the Ambassador of Italy Romualdo Bettini, Gerti Bierenbroodspot, Neal Bierling, Carmen Clark, Doug Clark, Arlie Culclough, Thomas A. Dailey, Benjamin Dolinka, Georgianne Dunn, Shishir Dutta, H.E. the Ambassador of the United States Wesley Egan, Aisling Fox, Roy Grohs, Janice Hagginbotham, Waleed Hazbun, Elaine Imady, Ali Jabri, Widad Kavar, Eileen Kilpatrick, Jon Lindborg, Ryan Lindborg, Tupou Lindborg, Leo Malai, Ansam Malkawi, Lys Marigold, Skye Qi Marigold, Jo Molloy, Kathleen Molloy, Maureen Molloy, H.E. the Ambassador of Canada Michael Molloy, Tara Molloy, H.R.H. Princess Muna, H.E. the Ambassador of Switzerland Gian Federico Pedotti, Maria Pedotti, Nuha Al Radi, H.R.H. Prince Raad bin Zeid, H.R.H. Princess Majda Raad, Shari Saunders, Alex Schill, Janice Schill, Caroline Serré, Gabriela Smetánková, Marie Smetánková, Irena Smetánková, H.E. the Ambassador of the Czech Republic Tomáš Smetánka, Dorothy Bently Smith, Zoe Sujon, Cheryl Sukhtien, Douglas Sutton, Cathy Warrick, Paula Williams-Brown, Stanley Zappa, and Maroussia Zimmermann.

There were workers from the Bedul, Amareen, Sayadeen, and Liathnah tribes. They were supervised by foreman Hussein Hamad; the chief “discoverer” was pick man Mohammad “Hamoudi” Nuweyja.

Na’if Zaban undertook the restoration of the ceramics and other objects, as well as restoration in the field. Other conservation work was undertaken by Fatma Marii. Thanassis Gritzapis and Nikolaos Kiritsis restored the pulpit (see Chapter 10). The restoration of the colonnade of the Blue Chapel was undertaken with the help of Engineer Hassan Saffarini. Sultan Yassin of Al-Sharkeyon created the replacement capitals and bases for the restoration of the Blue Chapel. Tarmeem International, under the supervision of Munther al-Kharouf, implemented the restoration.

The Department of Antiquities of Jordan was an active partner in the project and appreciation goes to Ghazi Bisheh, Fawwaz al-Khraysheh, Su-leiman Farajat, Hani Falahat, Mohammed Showbaki, and Tahani M. H. Al Salhi. Help was received from Kamel Mahadin, Shahadeh Abu-Hdeib, and Sa’ad al-Rawajfa of the Petra Regional Council.

The staff of the American Center of Oriental Research (ACOR) were also partners in this endeavor: Carmen Ayoubi, Pat Masri, Nisreen Abu al-Shaikh, Kathy Nimri, Mohammed Adawi, Sa’id Adawi, and Abed Adawi, who helped with all phases of the project. Former ACOR Director Barbara A. Porter facilitated this publication and aided in many other ways. Pearce Paul Creasman, the present ACOR director, oversaw its final stages.

Robert Daniel helped with several issues over the years. Valuable advice was received from Thomas A. Dailey, Martha Joukowsky, G. W. Bowersock, Othman and Rosemary Bdeir, Marjo Lehtinen, and Scott Quaintance.

Assistance with individual pieces was received from Ammar Khammash, Gary Rollefson, Elise A. Friedland, Helena Sokolov, Michael Macdonald, Claudia Sode, Ada Yardeni, Thomas R. Paradise, James A. Harrell, Lorenzo Lazzarini, Peter Warnock, and Robert Wenning.

The ground plan was created by Pierre M. Bikai, Virginia Egan, Patricia Maynor Bikai, Megan A. Perry, Chrysanthos Kanellopoulos, Anna Hendrik, and Fawwaz Isaqat. Plans such as figs. 1.1 and 2.1 are based on a map of Petra created by Talal Akasheh, Hashemite University, Chrysanthos Kanellopoulos, and American Center of Oriental Research, Amman. Other drawings are by Chrysanthos Kanellopoulos, Platon Konstandopoulos (Sixton), Megan A. Perry, and Thad Wasklewicz. Editing was undertaken by Virginia



---

Egan, Kathryn Parker, Akacia Propst, Emily Edwards, Madison Long, Robert Schick, and Barbara Porter.

The photos are by Patricia Maynor Bikai and Megan A. Perry unless otherwise noted either individually or as a group. The photographs on page ii are courtesy of Suha Shoman. The photograph of fig. 2.51 is by George of Photo Crystal. Bruce Zuckerman and Marilyn Lundberg of the West Semitic Research Project created the photographs for NRP catalogue nos. 161, 373, 375, and 553–60. Peggie Abujaber, Virginia Egan, Artemis A. W. Joukowsky, and J. Wilson Myers and Eleanor Emlen Myers provided other photographs. Chrysanthos Kanellopoulos created the graphics on the cover, which was designed by Andrea Atalla.

The drawings of the pottery were made by Abeer Al Nuaimat, Larissa Najjar, Qeis Tweissi, Sherry Robinson, Monjed Qassim, Ahmed al-Momani, Pierre M. Bikai, Patricia Maynor Bikai, Andi Shelton, Catherine S. Alexander, Pamela Koulianos, Sarah Wenner, and Sherry Hardin; most of the drawings were inked by Cammie Jennings, Lauren Souther, Timothy Shortley, William Broughton, and R. Taylor Montgomery.

Work in the 1999 through 2002 seasons was partly funded by income from ACOR's Petra Endowment, a grant from the United States Agency for International Development. For the 2001 season, a donation was given in honor of Dan and Gert Vos of Ada, Michigan; and for the 2002 season, a donation was given by the Dick and Betsy DeVos Foundation. In-kind donations of laborers, as well as use of the Ludwig Burckhardt Centre, were made by the Department of Antiquities. In-kind donations were given by Karen and Mohammed Asfour, and by the Petra Regional Planning Council (thank you to Shahadeh Abu-Hdeib and Sa'ad al-Rawajfa). This volume was produced with funding from the ACOR Publications Endowment.

The following contributed to this volume: Deirdre Grace Barrett, Pierre M. Bikai, G. W. Bowersock, Julian M. C. Bowsher, Robert W. Daniel, Traianos Gagos, Ali Jabri, Chrysanthos Kanellopoulos, Lys A. Marigold, J. Wilson Myers and Eleanor Myers, S. Thomas Parker, Megan A. Perry, Michele Piccirillo, Olli Salomies, Micaela Sinibaldi, Stephen V. Tracy, and Christopher A. Tuttle.

Isabelle Ruben oversaw the production of this volume, which was printed at the National Press in Amman.

All of these contributions are very much appreciated. A very special thank you goes to Virginia Egan, Chrysanthos Kanellopoulos, Megan A. Perry, and my husband, Pierre Bikai, for their many, many efforts on behalf of this project.

We remember Nasri Atalla, Shishir Dutta, Traianos Gagos, Fawwaz Isaqat, Ali Jabri, Fawwaz al-Khraysheh, Marjo Lehtinen, Eleanor Myers, J. Wilson Myers, Michele Piccirillo, and Scott Quaintance, all of whom we lost too soon.



*Fig. 1.4. View of the Blue Chapel from the northeast; produced by Thad Wasklewicz of the Terrain Analysis Laboratory, Department of Geography, East Carolina University*