

CHAPTER 1

An Overview of the 2006 Season of the Madaba Plains Project at Tall al-ʿUmayri

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The eleventh season of excavation at Tall al-ʿUmayri took place during the summer of 2006 from June 28 to August 2 and was sponsored by La Sierra University (Riverside, CA) in consortium with Burman University (Lacombe, AB), Walla Walla University (College Place, WA), Mount Royal University (Calgary, AB), Pacific Union College (Angwin, CA), and in affiliation with Andrews University School of Architecture (Berrien Springs, MI).

The site is located in the southern region of Amman, Jordan, about 13 km south of the Seventh Circle (Zahran), on the western side of the airport highway at the exit to Amman National Park (**fig. 1.1**; Google Earth, 31°52'00" north, 35°52'57" east). Forested ridges shelter heavily used picnic areas and an amusement park to the west and south of the site, while a housing area has been constructed on the hill to the north.

In previous seasonal reports of the Madaba Plains Project–ʿUmayri we have described the general goals and results of the earlier excavations, the layout and history of the site, and the geography and history of its vicinity:

MPP 1 (1984 season): Geraty, Herr, LaBianca, and Younker 1989;

MPP 2 (1987 season): Herr, Geraty, LaBianca, and Younker 1991a;

MPP 3 (1989 season): Herr, Geraty, LaBianca, Younker, and Clark 1997;

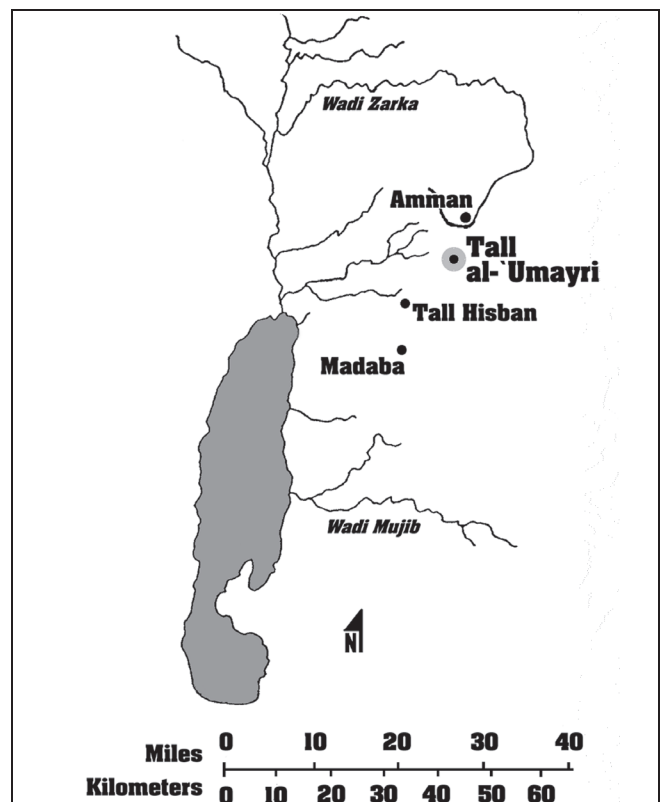


Figure 1.1. Map of central Jordan and the Madaba Plains region.

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Figure 1.2. The 2006 Madaba Plains Project 'Umayri team.

MPP 4 (1992 season): Herr, Clark, Geraty, Younker, and LaBianca 2000;

MPP 5 (1994 season): Herr, Clark, Geraty, Younker, and LaBianca 2002;

MPP 6 (1996 & 1998 seasons): Herr, Clark, Geraty, Younker, and LaBianca 2014;

MPP 7 (2000 season): Herr, Clark, Geraty, and Vincent 2017;

MPP 8 (2002 season): Herr, Clark, Geraty, and Vincent 2019;

MPP 9 (2004 season): Herr, Clark, Geraty, and Vincent 2020.

We have also published preliminary reports for each season. The following were published for the 1984–2016 seasons in the *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan*:

1984 season: Geraty, Herr, and LaBianca 1986;
1987 season: Geraty, Herr, and LaBianca, *et al.* 1989;
1989 season: Herr, Geraty, LaBianca, and Younker 1991a;
1992 season: Herr, Geraty, LaBianca, and Younker 1994;
1994 season: Herr, Geraty, LaBianca, Younker, and Clark 1996;
1996 season: Herr *et al.* 1997;

1998 season: Herr, Clark, Geraty, and LaBianca 2000;

2000 season: Herr, Clark, and Trenchard 2001;

2002 season: Herr and Clark 2003;

2004 season: Herr and Clark 2005b;

2006 season: Herr and Clark 2008c;

2006 season: Herr and Clark 2010;

2010 season: Clark and Bramlett 2011;

2012 season: Clark and Bramlett 2017b;

2014 season: Bramlett and Clark forthcoming;

2016 season: Clark and Bramlett forthcoming.

The following were published for the 1984–2010 seasons in *Andrews University Seminary Studies*:

1984 season: Geraty 1985;
1987 season: Geraty, Herr, and LaBianca 1988;
1989 season: Younker, Geraty, Herr, and LaBianca 1990;
1992 season: Younker, Geraty, Herr, and LaBianca 1993;
1994 season: Younker, *et al.* 1996;
1996 season: Younker *et al.* 1997;
1998 season: Herr, Clark, Geraty, and LaBianca 1999;
2000 season: Herr, Clark, and Trenchard 2002;
2002 season: Herr and Clark 2004;
2004 season: Herr and Clark 2005a;
2006 season: Herr and Clark 2008a;

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2008 season: Herr and Clark 2013;
2010 season: Clark and Bramlett 2012.

Additionally, preliminary reports of the first three seasons were published in the *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research Supplement* series: Geraty, Herr, LaBianca, *et al.* 1986 (1984 season); Geraty, Herr, and LaBianca, *et al.* 1990 (1987 season); and in the *Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research*: LaBianca, *et al.* 1995 (1989 season).

The major objective of these seasons was to continue the study of intensification and abatement cycles in settlement and land use patterns and to investigate how ʿUmayri partook in and influenced these processes throughout time and space (see Chapter 2 for details). Strategies for realizing this objective included expanding and deepening excavation, consolidation of many of the finds, and reconstruction work.

The excavations at ʿUmayri were part of the larger Madaba Plains Project, which also includes excavations at Jalul (directed by Randall W. Younker, Paul Gregor, and Constance Gane) and Hisban (directed by Øystein S. LaBianca and Bethany Walker). This report includes only the finds from ʿUmayri.

The excavations could not have proceeded smoothly without the help of Dr. Fawwaz el-Khaysheh (Director General of the Department of Antiquities in 2006), Hanadi el-Taher and Sammer Hababbeh (Department of Antiquities representatives), as well other members of the Department of Antiquities who facilitated our project at several junctures. The American Center of Oriental Research in Amman, directed by Barbara Porter and assisted by Christopher Tuttle, provided invaluable assistance and, at several times, a home away from home. During the excavation the staff was housed in Muqabalayn at the Amman Training College (ATC), an UNWRA vocational college for Palestinians. We give special thanks to its Principal, Dr. Saleh Naji, for making our stay a genuine pleasure and to chef Muhammad Ahmaru for overseeing the preparation of tasty meals three times a day (second breakfast at the site was orchestrated by our own staff). The scientific goals and procedures of the project were approved by the Committee on Archaeological Policy of the American Schools of Oriental Research.

This season the ʿUmayri team comprised 62 full and part-time foreign participants (**fig. 1.2**), including archaeologists, specialists, students, and laypersons. Additionally, Jordanians included the two representatives from the Department of Antiquities mentioned above, 22 workers hired from the nearby village of Bunayat to help with the fieldwork, a mason to help with site consolidation and restoration, and eight staff from ATC to facilitate in-camp needs, such as cooking and laundry. The co-directors were Larry G. Herr and Douglas R. Clark.

The following list of staff includes only the foreigners and some of the Jordanians working on logistics. It does not

include the paid local workers. Camp staff and specialists included Denise Herr (pottery registrar, data quality control, and assistant object registrar), Carmen Clark (object/artifact registrar), Larry Murrin (computers and database), Rhonda Root (artist), Stefanie Elkins (artist), Elzbieta Dubis (part-time artist), Caroline Waldron (nurse), Nerida Bates (physician), Muhammad Ahmaru (cook), and David Tashman (camp agent). ATC workers included six kitchen workers, two laundry operators, and several members of the administration who helped us in various ways from time to time.

The field supervisor for Field A was Robert D. Bates (Andrews University). See his report below in Chapter 3. Square supervisors included Brenda Adams, Debra Haberman, Caroline Houghton, Audry Shaffer, and Tom Venner. They were assisted by Amy Bellinghausen, Derek Bobst, Aaron Davis, Erica Hufnagel, Heather Merizon, Tyler Mitchell, Steven Salcido, Kassie Skoretz, Myron Widmer (first half), and Christina Widmer (first half).

The field supervisor for Field B was Kent V. Bramlett (La Sierra University). See his report below in Chapter 4. Square supervisors included Monique Acosta (Vincent), Ellen Bedell, Carolyn Waldron, and Janelle Worthington. They were assisted by Boris Brajnikoff, Allison Hade (first half), Lindsey Hill, Bethany Reiswig, Katie van Petten, Matthew Vincent, and Anneliese Weiss (first half).

The field supervisor for Field H was David Berge (Portland, OR). See his report below in Chapter 5. Square supervisors included Julie Cormack, Marcin Czarnowicz, Jeanne DelColle, and Don Mook. They were assisted by Erin Carr, Russell Dedul, Stefanie Elkins, Sean Haskell, Jillian Logee, Larry Murrin, Nikki Oakden, Agnieszka Ochal, and Barbara van Viersen Trip.

The field supervisors for Field L were David C. Hopkins (Wesley Theological Seminary) and Mary Boyd (Coupeville, WA). See their report below in Chapter 6. Square supervisors included Ruth Kent (second half), Greg Kremer (first half), and Mary Boyd. They were assisted by Steven Barbery (first half), Michael Dubbs (first half), Charles Harris (first half), Jennifer Harris (first half), Henry Hopkins (first half), Laura King (first half), Thomas Tipton (first half), Ferdinand Regalado (second half) and Azadeh Vafadari (second half).

We now have most of our records and database available on line at <http://umayri.opendig.org/>. This online database and archives is managed and updated by Matthew Vincent. The database is easy to navigate and use. Most of the description data and photographs are there now. We are nearing completion of a major project to digitize all data and hard-copy forms, and then upload them to this database for archiving and usage by any student or scholar. In the future we plan ATLA files of all hard copy publications.

The bibliography accompanying this Chapter is an up-to-date (June 2020) comprehensive bibliography for the site of ʿUmayri.

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