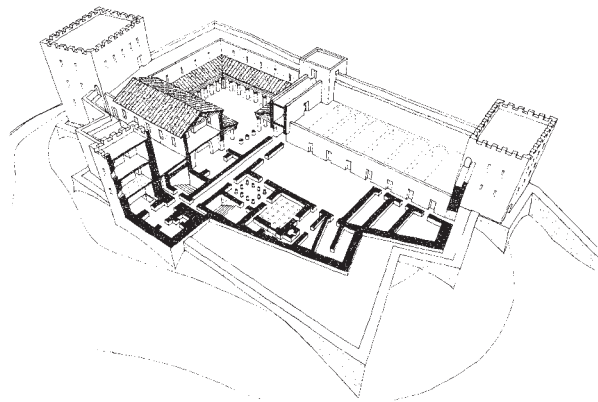


GYÓZÓ VÖRÖS
MACHAERUS I.



STUDIUM BIBLICUM FRANCISCANUM
COLLECTIO MAIOR
53

GYÓZÓ VÖRÖS

MACHAERUS I.

HISTORY, ARCHAEOLOGY AND ARCHITECTURE
OF THE FORTIFIED HERODIAN ROYAL PALACE AND CITY
OVERLOOKING THE DEAD SEA IN TRANSJORDAN

Final Report of the Excavations and Surveys
1807–2012



SUPPORTED BY



MAGYAR MŰVÉSZETI
AKADÉMIA

MILANO, 2013

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Front Cover: Theoretical architectural reconstruction of Machaerus city in the first rays of the rising Sun,
with the Dead Sea, Bethlehem and Jerusalem in the background

(© Jane Taylor, *aerial photograph from the east*, 2004).

Back Cover: Early morning helicopter photograph of Machaerus hill with the Dead Sea and Ein-Gedi
oasis in the background, aerial view from the north-east (© Jane Taylor, 2004).

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*Feleségemnek és Kisfiamnak,
Noéminek és Alexandernek,
jordániai éveink emlékére.*

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Fig. 01: The eagle's nest of the Machaerus archaeological monument complex, the former Herodian royal seat, in the first rays of the rising Sun, with the Dead Sea, Bethlehem and Jerusalem in the background (© Jane Taylor, aerial photograph from the east, 2004).

HUNGARIAN, JORDANIAN AND FRENCH
MEMBERS

OF THE

MACHAERUS RESEARCH PROJECT

(EXCAVATIONS AND SURVEYS IN 2009–2012)

FOUNDERS

PROF. IMRE MAKOVECZ, President (*Hungarian Academy of Arts*)

PROF. FAWWAZ AL-KHRAYSHEH, Director General (*Jordanian Department of Antiquities*)

PROJECT DIRECTOR (2009–2012)

DR. GYŐZŐ VÖRÖS (*Hungarian Academy of Arts*)

CORE MEMBERS (2009–2012)

TAMÁS DOBROSI (*Hungarian Academy of Arts*)

TAMÁS DÓSA PAPP (*Hungarian Academy of Arts*)

IMRE BALÁZS ARNÓCZKI (*Hungarian Academy of Arts*)

2009–2011 (THREE YEARS)

DR. ALAIN GACHET (*Radar Technologies International, France*)

2010–2012 (THREE YEARS)

MARIANN ARNÓCZKI-NAGY (*Doparum Ltd*)

ISTVÁN ÓRI-KISS (*Kissik Studio*)

2010–2011 (TWO YEARS)

ABDULLAH AL-BWAREED (*Jordanian Department of Antiquities*)

BADER AL-DWAN (*Jordanian Department of Antiquities*)

2010 (ONE SEASON)

KORNÉL EISLER (*Independent Researcher, Budapest*)

DR. PÉTER EISLER (*Hungarian Academy of Arts*)

AHMAD AL-SHAMI, Co-Director (*Jordanian Department of Antiquities*)

2011 (ONE SEASON)

ABDEL RAHIM AL-DWIKAT, Co-Director (*Jordanian Department of Antiquities*)

YAZID ELAYAN (*Jordanian Department of Antiquities*)

DOROTTYA ERZSÉBET SZÉLES (*University Student, Budapest*)



Fig. 02: Below, left, the building complex of the Pontifical Studium Biblicum Franciscanum is visible in the Via Dolorosa of the Jerusalem Old City; above, the Trans-Dead-Sea archaeological site of Machaerus hilltop is encircled on this old aerial photograph.

FOREWORD

BY

MASSIMO PAZZINI, OFM

DEAN OF THE STUDIUM BIBLICUM FRANCISCANUM

JERUSALEM

The Studium Biblicum Franciscanum is linked, from its beginnings, in a very particular and deep way with the land of Jordan and with some of its most significant places from the point of view of landscape, history, archaeology and religion: Mount Nebo, Madaba, Umm al-Rasas and the baptismal site of Jesus on the east bank of the Jordan River.

Besides these at the site of El-Mishnaqa – Machaerus, the Studium conducted two digging campaigns, the first under the direction of the Franciscans V. C. Corbo and S. Loffreda (1978–1981) and the second under the direction of M. Piccirillo (1992–1993). Several professors of the Studium have breathed the air of Jordan taking part in the excavations on this site, all of this in terms that recall the heroic days of archaeology.

For my part I want to emphasize that the archaeologists of the SBF have shared, from the first moment, the results of their research with the international scientific community, thus helping to explain the land of Jordan and its natural, historical and archaeological evidence. The results of their research has mainly appeared in the journal of the SBF (*Liber Annuus*) and in the Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan (*ADAJ*).

The present contribution of G. Vörös ideally continues the excavations of the SBF from the data collected by our archaeologists and relying on their original drawings and photographs. Opening the book, we can breathe the same Franciscan spirit that once animated our archaeologists ... and this is for us a sure sign of true scientific and spiritual continuity.

We are therefore pleased to participate in the co-edition of this book together with the Hungarian Academy of Arts. We are also confident that this book will represent a valuable contribution to the revival and development of this area rich in history and human affairs.

Jerusalem, 29 October 2012





Fig. 03: The late Professor Imre Makovecz (1935–2011), President of the Hungarian Academy of Arts (1992–2011). Together with Prof. Fawwaz Al-Khraysheh, Director General of the Jordanian Department of Antiquities, he was the Founder of the Hungarian-Jordanian Machaerus excavations and surveys. His portrait was made by Tamás Dósa Papp in September 2009, at the beginning of our first season in Jordan.

RECOMMENDATION

BY

IMRE MAKOVECZ

PRESIDENT OF THE HUNGARIAN ACADEMY OF ARTS

BUDAPEST

My former Corvin-scholarship holder, Győző Vörös asked me to write a recommendation.

Dr. Vörös has been conducting his excavations at the Middle East already since 17 years now. I have personally visited his archaeological missions both in Egypt and Cyprus, where he had extraordinary results, and he presented them in outstanding publications for both the Hungarian and the international research communities. I have no doubts that Győző Vörös as the Director of the Machaerus Project (surveys, excavations and conservations) will prepare this scientific monograph with his best knowledge. I find very fascinating the achievements of the Hungarian excavations in the Fortified Royal Palace of King Herod the Great in Transjordan, cultural historically very significant, beside the excellent personal research skills of Dr. Vörös. He is fortunate enough that his research unit at the Hungarian Academy of Arts is supported by the excellent architects Tamás Dobrosi, Tamás Dósa Papp and Imre Balázs Arnóczki, who are personally participating in his field work in Jordan.

Győző Vörös is a very devoted researcher of Antiquity and besides holding a doctorate in architecture his interest focuses on the culture and architecture of the Ancient Middle East.

Budapest, 1 December 2010





Fig. 04: The latest Google-satellite photograph on the archaeological site of Machaerus city and its surrounding, before the modern building activities of the pilgrim hotel in August 2012.

INTRODUCTION

During the 21st century archaeological research of the Holy Land no-one can forget, that all of us are inheritors of previous generations' academic legacies. The scientific results have been accumulated, and generations are standing on the shoulders of each other, like circus artists. I felt impossible to write the first volume of the Machaerus final report series on our excavations and field surveys, as it is only the result of the last four years. The scientific surveys with new discoveries started in 1807 at Machaerus, along with the archaeological excavations in 1968. Still, this volume is the first academic monograph dedicated solely to the Machaerus archaeological site, for the reason that several important field researches remained partly or entirely unpublished.

The citadel of Machaerus was rediscovered and identified by the German (Frisian) Ulrich Jasper Seetzen (1767–1811) in 1807, and the Machaerus lower city by the French Dominican Father, Felix-Marie Abel (1878–1953) in 1909. The first excavation of the archaeological site was directed by the American Baptist Minister, E. Jerry Vardaman (1927–2000) in 1968, and the first accurate archaeological survey by the German Protestant Scholar, August Strobel (1930–2006) in 1973. Later, the Machaerus archaeological site was the research concession of two Italian Franciscan Fathers of the Jerusalem Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, Virgilio Corbo (1918–1991) and Michele Piccirillo (1944–2008), lasting thirty years (1978–2008). They also directed two excavations in 1978–1981 and in 1992–1993, respectively.

All previous excavation and survey directors have since passed away, and the same is true of the two beloved professors, who appointed me to restart the Machaerus excavations and surveys in 2009: Imre Makovecz (1935–2011), President of the Hungarian Academy of Arts from 1992 until his death, and Fawwaz Al-Khraysheh (1955–2011), Director General of the Jordanian Department of Antiquities from 1999 to 2010. However, the ruins of Machaerus, where Salome danced and Saint John the Baptist was beheaded are still overlooking the Dead Sea in Transjordan, like a royal eagle's nest. This monograph will elucidate the blurred scene of this magical biblical site, and reconstruct it as clearly as possible in the light of 21st century historical, archaeological and architectural research.