



George Bass Photographic Collection

Collection Overview

Creators:	George F. Bass (1932-2021)
Dates:	December 1955-January 1956 (inclusive)
Provenance:	Held by George Bass until donated to ACOR in 2012, due to the efforts of Joan MacIver [sister of ACOR Director Barbara Porter (2006-present)]. Deed of Gift signed February 2019.
Terms of Use:	All copyrights are held by the American Center of Oriental Research (ACOR). Photos in this collection are free to use for academic, research, and scholarly projects. Please contact ACOR for non-watermarked images. Commercial use is granted on a case-by-case basis.
Cite collection as:	The George Bass collection at the American Center of Oriental Research (ACOR), Amman, Jordan.
Related materials:	The ACOR Library collection includes works about, written by, and featuring the work of George Bass. View search results here. The ACOR Photo Archive website regularly shares articles about its collections. Read more here.
Physical location:	ACOR Archive, Amman, Jordan.
Collection processing notes:	Processed 2017-2019 with funding from a Title VI Fiscal Year 2016 American Overseas Research Centers grant from the U.S. Department of Education.
Processing history:	ACOR Library and Archives team (2017-2019): Corrie Commisso, Samya Kafafi, Carmen (Humi) Ayoubi, Razan Ahmad.

Scope and Contents

The George Bass Photographic Collection features 64 photos of cultural heritage sites, landscapes, and people in Jordan, the West Bank, Syria, and Lebanon. The physical collection is comprised of 64 35mm Ektachrome slides and 19 pages of copies (typed on a word processor) of Bass's letters home, held in a grey binder with two CDs, one containing a Word Perfect copy of the text (un-openable) and another containing copies of the UN pamphlet on Palestine that Bass refers to in his letters. Bass gave the collection the title: "Christmas Eve at Bethlehem Near East Trip 1955-1956".

Bass described the collection as: "A collection of slides taken on a trip I took to the Holy Land from the



American School of Classical Studies at Athens, accompanied by fellow students Margaret Larson and Elizabeth Courtney, during the Christmas/New Year's break of 1955-1956. The photos are accompanied by copies of letters, mostly or all to my parents, describing the trip, through Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon, as it transpired." (Deed of Gift, February 2019.)

Biographical Note

George Bass trained in Near Eastern and Classical archaeology before pioneering techniques for excavating underwater archaeology at Texas A&M University. Bass is now known to many as the founding father of this field. Bass was the director of the first archaeological expedition to excavate a shipwreck (the Bronze Age wreck found at Cape Gelydonia, Turkey in 1960). Bass also directed the University of Pennsylvania museum's excavations of the Byzantine shipwreck at Yassı Ada (1961-64) in Turkey, which was the first of its kind to be completed on the floor of the Mediterranean and on a wreck with substantial hull remains. Bass founded the Institute of Nautical Archaeology (INA) in 1972. The INA began excavating the Late Bronze Age shipwreck on the eastern shore of Uluburun (Grand Cape/Kas) with Bass as director in 1984.

The collection is useful as a visual document of sites, showing many prior to urban development or restoration (e.g. Jarash, Jordan), and also as a record of the role of such field visits in Bass's early scholarly academic life may have influenced his later career trajectory. Bass's letters mention influential figures in regional archaeology such as Dr. Albright, who described Bass as "one of my best students" and who was Bass's MA professor at John Hopkins, where Ray Cleaveland (who features in Bass's photos and letters) was also a graduate assistant; Rev. Msgr. Patrick Skehan (Bass refers to as Father Skehan), Director of the Albright Institute in Jerusalem in 1955 when Bass visited; and Kathleen Kenyon (Bass refers to as Miss Kenyon), who excavated in Jericho (Tell es-Sultan, 1952-58) on behalf of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem.

Publications by George F. Bass

Books

- Bass, George F. 1966. *Archaeology Underwater*. England: Penguin Books.
- Bass, George F. and van Doorninck, Jr., Frederick H. 1982. *Yassı Ada: A Seventh-Century Byzantine Shipwreck*. College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press.
- Bass, George F. (ed.) 2005. *Beneath the Seven Seas*. New York: Thames & Hudson Inc.

Publications about the George Bass Collection

Articles

- Commisso, Corrie. 2017. "A Journey Through the Near East". ACOR Photo Archive blog. https://photoarchive.acorjordan.org/?page_id=154 [Accessed February 2019].

Language: English with Arabic transliteration for place names.

Subject Headings

In accordance with the Library of Congress Subject Headings and Place Name authorities.



Subjects:

Middle East
Cultural Heritage
Architecture--Middle East
Photography
Aerial Photography
Landscapes
History
Archaeology
Mosaic floors

Persons:

George F. Bass
Margaret Larson
Elizabeth Courtney
Ray Cleveland

Original Format:

35mm color photographic slides

Geographic:

Middle East
West Asia
Jordan--History
Syria--History
Lebanon--History
Palestine--History
West Bank
Jerusalem
Jarash (Jordan) / Gerasa (Extinct city)
Ba'albakk (Lebanon)
Jubayl (Lebanon)
Damascus (Syria)
Tadmur (Syria)

Organization and Arrangement of Collection

The collection is arranged by geographic region. The George Bass collection includes photographs from Jordan, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria.

Series 1: Jordan

Series one includes photographs of cultural heritage and archaeological sites and landscape photography in Jordan. Subjects include: Jerash (Hadrian's Arch, Oval Piazza, Roman Theater, Temple of Artemis, Byzantine church, Nymphaeum, Temple of Jupiter), Bedouin tents, The Dead Sea, Amman (Roman Theater).

Series 2: West Bank

Note on Metadata: ACOR Archive uses the 'West Bank' to refer to the areas in Historic Palestine that Bass visited in 1955-56. Where possible, ACOR has included place names in English, transliterated Arabic, and Hebrew describing sites in Jerusalem.

Series two includes photographs of architecture, landscapes, people, and cultural heritage and archaeological sites in the West Bank. Subjects include: Jerusalem (Al Aqsa Mosque/*Masjid Al Aqsa*, Dome of the Rock/*Qubbat al-Sakhrah/Kippat ha-Sela*, Mount of Olives/*Jabal al-Zaytun/Har ha-Zeitim*, Gethsemane /*Aljusmania/Gat Shmanim*), Bethlehem, Jericho/*Ariha* (Hisham's Palace/*Khirbet al Maffjar*).

Series 3: Lebanon

Series two includes photographs of cultural heritage and archaeological sites in Lebanon. Subjects include: Baalbek (Temple of Jupiter, Temple of Bacchus, Temple of Venus), Byblos/*Jubayl*, and an in-flight aerial shot of a mountain range in between Beirut and Amman.



Series 4: Syria

Series two includes photographs of architecture, landscapes, people, and cultural heritage and archaeological sites in Syria. Subjects include: Damascus (Azem Palace, Museum of Damascus), and Palmyra/*Tadmur* (Great colonnade, Triumphal Arch, Arab Castle).

Condition Notes

Due to sellotape affixed to the original slide mounts, some of the images in the George Bass collection show the effects of the adhesive on the film, distorting the color into orange halos. ACOR Archive has uploaded these complete images, as well as cropped copies, to share the history of the slides in the collection as photographic objects worthy of study themselves.

About this finding aid:

Prepared by:	Jessica Holland
Last update:	19 June 2021
Language:	Arabic finding aid in progress (2019)
Bibliography:	<p>“Finding Aid: The George F. Bass Papers”. American School of Classical Studies in Athens. https://www.ascsa.edu.gr/index.php/archives/george-bass-finding-aid [Accessed: February 2019]</p> <p>Bass, George F. 1966. <i>Archaeology Underwater</i>. England: Penguin Books.</p> <p>Bass, George F. and van Doorninck, Jr., Frederick H. 1982. <i>Yassi Ada: A Seventh-Century Byzantine Shipwreck</i>. College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press.</p> <p>Bass, George F. 1986. “A Bronze Age Shipwreck at Ulu Burun (Kas): 1984 Campaign”. <i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>. 90 (3): 269–296. doi:10.2307/505687. JSTOR 505687.</p> <p>“Cast of Characters: The Dead Sea Scrolls and Why They Matter”. 2012. <i>Biblical Archaeology</i>. https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-artifacts/dead-sea-scrolls/cast-of-characters/ [Accessed: February 2019].</p> <p>“Patrick W. Skehan”. The Catholic University of America. https://cuexhibits.wrlc.org/exhibits/show/biblical-scholarship/contents/patrick-w--skehan [Accessed: February 2019].</p> <p>“Introduction”. Institute of Nautical Archaeology. https://nauticalarch.org/introduction/ [Accessed: February 2019].</p> <p>Kenyon, Kathleen M. 1960. <i>Excavations at Jericho, 1957-58</i>. London: PEF.</p>