

**THE 1996 TELL MADABA EXCAVATIONS:
INVESTIGATIONS OF URBAN LIFE IN HIGHLAND CENTRAL JORDAN**

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The Tell Madaba Excavation Project was initiated as part of ongoing investigations into the social, economic and political life of Bronze and Iron Age communities in the Madaba Plain region of highland central Jordan. By focusing on the central site of Madaba, the Project seeks to document the changing functional relationships between an "urban" component in the regional settlement landscape, and "rural" settlements such as Tell al-'Umayri. Analysis of the component parts of a regional settlement system is crucial to a better understanding of the level of integration achieved by a regional community, and to assessing the impact on the development of complex social institutions. The 1996 season was designed to establish the stratigraphic sequence at Tell Madaba, and to assess the feasibility of further, long-term excavations at the site. This paper will present the results of these excavations, and will explore their implications for our understanding of Bronze and Iron Age Madaba.