

TELL MADABA EXCAVATIONS, 2006
TELL MA'IN SURVEY, 2006
MUNJAZAT PRESS RELEASE

Site Names: Tell Madaba and Tell Ma'in

District: Madaba

Project Name: Tell Madaba Archaeological Project (TMAP)

Duration: June 5 to June 13, 2006 (39 days)

Number of workers: 8

Cost of Project: 5,700 JD

Sponsor: University of Toronto, Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations

Director: Timothy P. Harrison

Associate Director: Debra Foran

Assistant Field Director: Andrew Graham

Representative of the Department of Antiquities: Khaled Hawari, Abdullah al-Bawarid, and Ashraf al-Khraysheh

The primary objectives of the 2006 TMAP field season were to reopen two units in Field B in order to continue uncovering the Iron Age levels first encountered in 1998 and to complete excavations of Field C complex. The past six seasons of excavation at Tall Madaba have revealed a complex occupational sequence inside the city's fortification wall spanning the Late Ottoman period through to the Iron Age. In addition, the remains of a large building dating to the Late Byzantine/Early Islamic period built against the western face of the pre-classical fortification wall have been exposed.

Excavation efforts in Field B have succeeded in clarifying the nature of the Iron Age settlement at Madaba. A large pillared-building dating to the Iron IIB period was uncovered (Figure 1) with an earlier Iron I/IIA monumental structure underlying it (Figure 2). In addition, a sondage was conducted against the interior face of the massive fortification wall in order to establish its initial construction date. It is now apparent, from the results of this probe, that this portion of the fortification wall was built in the Iron I/Iron IIA period.

The large complex in Field C was built on a series of bedrock ledges that slope to the west. There are several features of this building that indicate it underwent two distinct construction phases, followed by a lengthy period of abandonment. The initial construction phase dates to the Late Byzantine period (6th century CE), while the subsequent renovations and abandonment date to the Early Islamic period (mid-7th to 8th/early 9th centuries CE). Excavations conducted during the 2006 season have contributed to our understanding of the overall layout of this structure. An unpaved room equipped with a large, shallow basin was uncovered (Figure 3). This installation is located next to a monumental doorway that leads to a large room paved with a polychrome mosaic floor (excavated in 2002). Extensive excavation was also undertaken on the bedrock ledges that formed the southwestern portion of the building. Several channels carved into the bedrock, a series of small retaining walls, and a large threshold were uncovered (Figure 4).

The location of this site within the urban core of the city of Madaba, within walking distance of the Madaba Museum and Archaeological Park, increases the need to consider its tourism potential. The site maintenance and presentation effort that has accompanied the

excavation project has begun preparing the site for future use as public space, for both the local population and the many tourists who visit the city each year.

In conjunction with the excavation efforts at Tell Madaba, a preliminary topographic and surface collection survey was conducted at the neighboring site of Tell Ma'in with a view to initiating excavations at this site in the future. This survey has resulted in the preparation of a topographic map of the site (Figure 5) as well as establishing a record of the various cultural phases present at Ma'in. The Iron Age and the Byzantine period constitute the main periods of occupation at the site; however, there is also a substantial Ayyubid/Mamluke presence.

The 2006 field season was conducted in collaboration with the Department of Antiquities of Jordan, which provided guidance and access to field equipment. The season's results would not have been possible without the dedicated help of Dr. Fawwaz al-Khraysheh, Director General of the Department of Antiquities, and Mr. Ali al-Khayyat, Director of the Department of Antiquities Office in Madaba.

Debra Foran
Department of Near & Middle Eastern Civilizations
University of Toronto
4 Bancroft Avenue
Toronto, ON, M5S 1C1
CANADA
debra.foran@gmail.com

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TELL MADABA EXCAVATIONS AND TELL MA'IN SURVEY, 2006



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

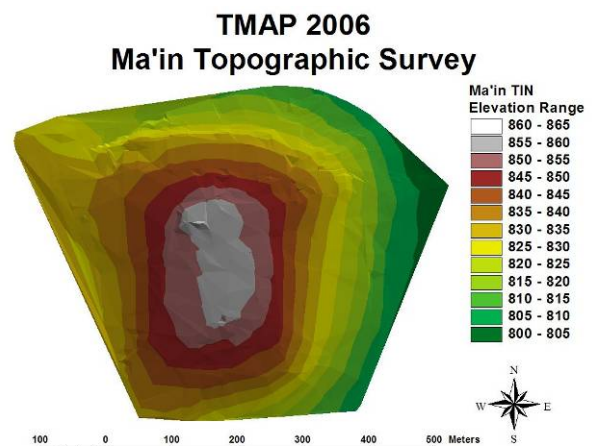


Figure 5



Figure 4