

TALL MĀDABĀ ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT, 2009
PRESS RELEASE

SITE NAME / DISTRICT	Tall Mādabā / Mādabā
PROJECT NAME	Tall Mādabā Archaeological Project
SEASON	2009
DURATION	July 5 to August 6, 2009 (33 days)
AUTHOR	Debra Foran
DIRECTOR OF THE PROJECT	Debra Foran
SENIOR DIRECTOR	Timothy P. Harrison
NUMBER OF WORKERS	9
COST OF THE PROJECT	5,180 JD
SPONSOR	University of Toronto Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations
DOA REPRESENTATIVE	Kholood Agrabawi and Ammel Khaled Rawahneh

The 2009 field season of the Tall Mādabā Archaeological Project concentrated solely on excavations in Field B. The primary objective of this season was to further investigate the extent of remains dating to the Early Roman/Nabataean, Hellenistic, and Iron Age periods located on Mādabā's West Acropolis. With this goal in mind, one unit, at the southern end of the previously excavated area, was reopened and three new units, one at the northern of this same area and two at the southern edge of the site, were opened. The past nine seasons of excavation at Tall Mādabā have revealed a complex occupational sequence inside the city's fortification wall spanning the Late Ottoman period through to the Iron Age (Figure 1).

The history of the reoccupation of Mādabā during the Late Ottoman period is well known. The Field B excavations have exposed numerous walls associated with the visible architecture on the site, in addition to several installations that were surely associated with these 19th century structures (FP 1). Two walls associated with the Late Ottoman house on the northern edge of the site, a stone-built septic tank, and a large cistern can now be added to this field phase (Figure 2).

To date the remains of a large structure dating to the Late Hellenistic period (FP 5 & 6) have been unearthed in Field B at Tell Mādabā. During the 2009 season, more of this building and other contemporary structures were uncovered (Figure 3). This new information allows us to add to the plan of the 3rd – 2nd century structure that was built just inside the pre-classical fortification wall on the western side of the acropolis. Other remains dating to the same phases were excavated on the southern edge of the site; however, the construction of 19th century and modern structures has destroyed most of the vestiges of the Late Hellenistic occupation in this location.

During the 2007 season, the earliest occupation phase on the west acropolis was exposed along the inner face of the city's fortification wall. This provided a clear occupation sequence that began in the Late Bronze/Early Iron I (FP 10) and continued until the late Iron IIB (FP 7). The 2008 excavations successfully revealed that the thick layer of sheet-wash that seals in the Iron Age remains is not present everywhere on the tell. This fact was further confirmed by the work undertaken during the 2009 field season.

The latest Iron Age phase at Tell Mādabā (FP 7) dating to the late Iron IIB period consists of what has been termed a 'squatter' occupation. The earlier Iron IIB phase (FP 8),

is represented by a pillared building exposed in the previously excavated area. Architecture uncovered in 2008, previously thought to belong to the later 'squatter' phase, should instead be associated with the earlier Iron IIB occupation (FP 8). The construction style and ceramics associated with this structure have enabled us to relate it to the pillared building. In addition, the architecture and soil layers under this phase are clearly associated with the earlier Iron I/Iron IIA occupation (FP 9) (Figure 4). Iron II material was also recovered from the southern edge of the site. Although no architecture was exposed, the ceramics and objects recovered confirm the extent of the settlement dating to the Iron IIB at Tell Mādabā.

The location of this site within the urban core of the city of Mādabā, within walking distance of the Mādabā 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.

The 2009 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 Mādabā.

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

August 15, 2009



Looking North



Looking South

Figure 1 Field B Excavation Area



Southern Face of Northern House



Stone-built Septic Tank



Cistern

Figure 2 Remains from the Late Ottoman Period (FP 1)



Figure 3 Late Hellenistic (FP 5 & 6) Structure



Figure 4 Iron I/Iron IIA (FP 9) Occupation