

TALL MĀDABĀ ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT, 2010
PRESS RELEASE

SITE NAME / DISTRICT	Tall Mādabā / Mādabā
PROJECT NAME	Tall Mādabā Archaeological Project
SEASON	2010
DURATION	June 27 to July 29, 2010 (33 days)
AUTHOR	Debra Foran
DIRECTOR OF THE PROJECT	Debra Foran
SENIOR DIRECTOR	Timothy P. Harrison
NUMBER OF WORKERS	12
COST OF THE PROJECT	10, 407 JD
SPONSOR	University of Toronto Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations
DOA REPRESENTATIVE	Kholood Agrabawi

The 2010 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, two units at the southern edge of the excavated area and two at the northern edge were reopened and one new unit south of the previously excavated area was opened. The past ten 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 Early Bronze Age.

To date the remains of a series of structures dating to the Late Hellenistic period (FP 5 & 6) have been unearthed in Field B at Tell Mādabā. During the 2010 season, the new excavation unit, located on the north-west corner of the Late Ottoman house at the southern end of the site, produced more architecture associated with these 3rd – 2nd century BC buildings. The Ottoman house is clearly built on an earlier wall, composed of ashlar blocks, that has a foundation that extends to a significant depth (Figure 1). In addition, an Early Roman wall, sitting atop a large Hellenistic wall was uncovered. This construction is in line with several other walls excavated to the north of this area and obviously constitutes the southern extension of this building.

The one feature that dominates the site is the massive pre-classical fortification wall that runs north-south through the area. Recent analysis of the material from the fill sealing against the foundations of the wall revealed that this structure was originally built in the Early Bronze Age and reused throughout the Iron Age. Excavation in the south-west corner of the previously excavation area exposed more of the inner face of the wall. These efforts also uncovered a large installation that may be an Iron Age drain that led outside the city wall as well as other adjacent structures (Figure 2).

The Iron Age remains at Tell Madaba are sealed, in certain areas, by a thick layer of sheetwash. 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. Excavations at the north end of this area in 2010 continued the exposure of these remains. The sheetwash layer produced several important artefacts, including a number of Iron Age cultic objects (Figure 3).

Work also continued at the south-eastern edge of the excavated area, where our efforts focused on exposing more of the Iron Age levels at Tell Madaba. The corner of a structure, most likely associated with the squatter occupation at the end of the Iron IIB, was uncovered (Figure 4). To the south of this building is a layer of soil that was obviously severely burnt. This action did, however, help preserve certain artefacts, including a clay bulla.

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. This activity continued in 2010 with the preservation of several walls from various time periods across the site.

The 2010 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. Ziad al-Saad, Director General of the Department of Antiquities, and Mr. Ali al-Khayyat, Director of the Department of Antiquities Office in Mādabā.

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Figure 1 Reused Classical Period Wall



Figure 2 Iron Age Drain Adjacent to Fortification Wall



Figure 3 Iron Age Cultic Objects



Figure 4 Late Iron IIB Structure and Associated Destruction Layers