

TALL MĀDABĀ ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT, 2011
PRESS RELEASE

SITE NAME / DISTRICT	Tall Mādabā / Mādabā
PROJECT NAME	Tall Mādabā Archaeological Project
SEASON	2011
DURATION	June 12 to July 21, 2011 (40 days)
AUTHOR	Debra Foran
DIRECTOR OF THE PROJECT	Debra Foran
SENIOR DIRECTOR	Timothy P. Harrison
NUMBER OF WORKERS	14
COST OF THE PROJECT	11, 860 JD
SPONSOR	University of Toronto Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations
DOA REPRESENTATIVE	Kholood Agrabawi

The 2011 field season of the Tall Mādabā Archaeological Project concentrated on the continued excavations in Field B and new excavations in an area now called Field D. The primary objectives of this season were to further investigate the extent of remains from the Iron Age located on Mādabā's West Acropolis and locate the north-eastern extension of the city's fortification wall. With this goal in mind, three units at the south-western edge and two at the north-eastern edge of the previously excavated area were reopened, one unit south of the previously excavated area was reopened and a new unit was opened in the same area. In addition, an exploratory trench was opened in a new area to the north of Field B. The past eleven 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.

The one feature that dominates the site is the massive pre-classical fortification wall. Excavations in the south-west corner of the previously excavated area continued in 2011, exposing more of the inner face of the wall and reaching some of the earlier Iron IIA and Iron I levels (Figure 1). In order to further document the extent of this fortification wall, a new field was opened to the north of the current excavation area. The top of the wall was uncovered and mapped (Figure 2), thus adding to our knowledge of the defensive system of the city's acropolis.

The Iron IIB phase of occupation (FP 8) at Tell Madaba is represented by a pillared building exposed in the previously excavated area. The earlier Iron IIA remains (FP 9) consist of a large multi-roomed building. Excavations at the north end of this area in 2011 continued the exposure of these features (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 IIB and IIA levels.

Excavations at the southern end of the site continued in 2011, exposing more of the Early Roman and Late Hellenistic architecture present elsewhere in Field B (Figure 4). Efforts were made to clarify the relationship between these structures and the city's fortification wall.

Finally, some excavation assistance was provided to the local Latin Church located just to the east of the site. A small trench was excavated against a wall exposed during

cleaning work in a basement room of the church, and the nature of the late 19th century fill within this room was ascertained.

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 2011 with the preservation of several walls from various time periods across the site.

The 2011 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 the 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 Excavations along inner face of fortification wall



Figure 2 Outer face of fortification wall in new field



Figure 3 Iron IIB remains in Field B



Figure 4 Late Hellenistic and Early Roman remains at southern end of Field B