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Jalul 2017

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Survey Probe.

Unfortunately, the most likely places for gate areas (near the northwestern and northeastern corners of the site) have been obliterated to create a path for pickup trucks and flocks of sheep and goats to pass. A huge cistern is located about 300-400 m northwest of the site.

A topographic map of the site was created, which will be used to facilitate future excavations, and four benchmarks were established that will be used in future excavations as control points for the various excavation areas.

The preliminary ceramic repertoire from the survey, along with several grinding stones and spindle whorls, suggesting domestic and textile production, would seem to indicate that Khirbet Safra is representative of a typical walled settlement found throughout the region in the Iron Age. The site covers more than one hectare in area, and is one of the biggest Iron Age sites located between Madaba and Wadi Zarqa Main. As such, it certainly played an important role in that region. (Paul Gregor)



During the 2017 season (June 25-July 28), Andrews University continued excavations at Madaba Plains Project: Jalul. Excavations on the tell were directed by Paul Z. Gregor. The field archaeologist was Robert Bates of the Institute of Archaeology, at Andrews University. Issa Siriani and Taher Gonmeen served as representatives for the Department of Antiquities of Jordan.

Field B, on the eastern side of the tell, was originally opened in 1992, at which time two superimposed flagstone pavements were found. The lower pavement extended from Squares B4, 6 and 8, and seals against a revetment wall, while the upper pavement went from Squares B2-5, 7 and 9. The lower pavement was initially dated to the early 10th/9th century BC, and the upper pavement to the 9th/8th century BC.

In order to provide firmer construction dates for the two pavements, two probes were opened in 2016, one in Square B2 where the upper and lower pavements were superimposed, and the other in Square B6. The probe in Square B2 revealed the continuation of the lower pavement from Squares B4 and 6 as well as the revetment wall. However, in Square B2 the lower pavement was located 0.40 m below the revetment wall instead of sealing against it, as in Square B6.

In 2017, a probe was opened on the north balk of Square B4, in a section which had not previously been excavated. The purpose of this probe was to trace the lower pavement and determine the point where it no longer continued to seal against the revetment wall. An area approximately 2.0 x 3.0 m was opened, the upper pavement flagstones removed, and the soil excavated. In the process of excavation, it was discovered that one of the stones of the upper course of the revetment wall was not fully supported by the course below, and was offset laterally outward by 0.10-.015 m, only supported by soil and chink stones. When the supporting soil was excavated, it was found

that revetment wall changes direction by ca. 10 degrees east, causing it to pass over the lower road in Square B2.

As in Square B6, it was found that the new section of the lower pavement in Square B4 seals against the revetment wall, suggesting their contemporaneous construction. If so, it would also suggest a later phase of construction, with the revetment wall being diverted from its original path, over, rather than parallel, to the lower pavement in Square B2.

Alternatively, it is possible that the revetment wall was added later, following the construction of the lower pavement, to deal with erosion, with the westernmost part of the section in Squares B4 and 6 being pulled up to accommodate the wall construction. If so, it would seem that only some of the lower pavement (sections found in parts of Squares B4, B6 and B8) would have been exposed at that time, while in Square B2 it would have been completely covered with debris.

In terms of dating, the ceramic evidence suggests that the lower flagstone pavement was built in Early Iron II, a date consistent with the material found earlier. In addition, no evidence of hard-packed surfaces or possible dirt roads, as suggested in 2016, were found in Square B4, in 2017.

Some questions still remain regarding the relationship of the revetment wall to the lower pavement in Square B2. Further excavation is needed on the west side of the revetment wall in Squares B2 and B4 in order to determine the relationship between it and the lower pavement.

Field W was originally opened in the 2010 season in order to explore the nature and function of the water channel and its relationship to the water reservoir, discovered in Field G during the 2007 and 2009 seasons. Altogether, 17 squares have been opened in Field W during the 2010-2012, and 2014-2016 seasons. In 2017, work continued only in two squares (W15 and W16) that were opened, but not finished in 2016.

An additional section of the perimeter wall on the southern side of the reservoir has been discovered in Square 15, and for

the first time, part of its western wall (in Square W16). As in other sections, where this wall has been found (on the east and southern sides of the reservoir), it was found to be plastered. Unfortunately, no new sections of the reservoir floor were uncovered this season.

A large section of the Square W15 covers the area outside the reservoir. Here, a surface or floor has been discovered. As in Squares W2 and 11, on the eastern side of the reservoir, it dates to 10th century BC, and overlies Early Bronze Age material.

Overall, the reservoir appears to have been constructed during the 10th century BC, and went out of use sometime during the latter part of 7th century BC. (Paul Gregor and Robert Bates)



Square B4 Probe.

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