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Summer 7-1-2019

### Safra 2019

Paul J. Ray

Andrews University, rayp@andrews.edu

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#### Recommended Citation

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Project: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Preserving the Archaeological Park while Envisioning a New Museum (A. Polcaro, M. D'Andrea, R. Gabrielli, M. Cozzolino, G. Batocchioni, L. Romagnoli, V. Gaspari, B. Lucherini, F. Sciorilli, D. Clark and S. Richard); The Flow of Peoples, Artifacts and Ideas through Jalul (Randall W. Younker); Khirbat Safra: A Military Installation or Regular Settlement (Paul Z. Gregor); Jordan in Global Histories: the View from Tall Hisban (Øystein LaBianca); Khirbat Ataruz in the Late Iron IIB and Iron IIC Periods: Synthesizing 15 Years of Archaeological Excavation Findings (Aaron Schade and Chang-Ho Ji); The Madaba Regional Archaeological Museum Project (MRAMP): Three Years of Community Archaeology (D. R. Clark, S. Richard, A. Polcaro, M. D'Andrea, and B. Mahamid); The Ayyubid and Mamluk Khans at Aqaba (Reem Al Shqour); Jalul on the Crossroads of Great Empires (Constance E. Gane); Is Community Engagement in Archaeology Building Social Capital in Jordan? Reasoning on a Decade of Community-Oriented Projects in Jordan (Maria Elena Ronza); A Landscape of Peace at Umm el-Jimal: Using Spaces of the Mind and Spaces on the Ground to Link the Islamic Heritage of the Modern Community and the 'Pre-Islamic' Heritage of an Archaeological Site (B. de Vries, M. Hazza, D. Al Farraj, M. Al Haddad, and J. Suleiman); Archaeology Meets Astronomy: in Search of Our Origins (E. Hatziminaoglou and D. R. Clark); Searching for Petra's Non-Elite Population on the North Ridge (S. Thomas Parker); and Resilience in the Face of Regional Crises: Identifying Local Knowledge and Decision-Making at Mamluk-era Hisbān (Bethany Walker).

Project Members who chaired sessions for the Conference include Gary Rollefson (History and Archaeology of Jordan: Prehistory 3), Hanadi al-Taher (Public Archaeology and Social-Economic Development 4: Conservation and Site Management 2), and Maria Elena Ronza (Public Archaeology and Social-Economic Development 7: Museum and

Collection). In addition, Bert de Vries chaired a workshop on "Signage Manufacture at Umm el-Jimal: Creating a Microbusiness for Vandalism-Resistant Installations, and Douglas R. Clark and Marta D'Andrea chaired a workshop on "Community Engagement in Downtown Madaba: The Madaba Regional Archaeological Museum Project (MRAMP)." The Poster Session included posters by Bassem Mahamid and Abdullah al Bawareed entitled "The Rehabilitation Project of Madaba Cathedral," and Maria Elena Ronza and Eman Abdassalam entitled "Employment Through Heritage Project – EHP." The Conference Papers, as usual, will be published in the next conference volume: *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan, Volume 14*. (Paul J. Ray, Jr.)



## Safra 2019

The second season of excavations at Khirbat Safra was conducted between June 2-July 12, 2019. The excavations on the site were directed by Paul Z. Gregor, and Paul Ray of the Institute of Archaeology at Andrews University, with Ray and PhD archaeology candidate Jacob Moody functioning as Field Supervisors. Nisrin Khaed Fugh'a and Amal Rawahna served as representatives for the Department of Antiquities of Jordan.

Khirbat Safra is an approximately 2.6 acre, triangular-shaped site, located southwest of Madaba and Main, overlooking the Dead Sea, with a casemate wall system surrounding the perimeter. Excavations this season took place in two fields (B and D). Each excavation square, as in the previous season, was opened using GPS on the basis of a grid of 6.0 x 6.0 m squares laid over a topographic map created by the Department of Antiquities surveyors during the survey season in 2017.

In Field B, on the southwestern edge of the site, supervised by Paul Ray, four new squares (B4-7) were opened this sea-

son, with another (Square B3), partly excavated in 2018, being completed at this time. Bedrock was reached in parts of four of the five squares, with Square B7 being worked for only a few days.

Last season, it was discovered that in terms of the preparation for occupation, both here and elsewhere on the site, first a two-row outer wall was built directly upon the exposed bedrock, at the edge of the site. Crevices in the bedrock were filled with a hard, red-bricky, material, upon which a one-row inner wall and cross walls were added. This season, operations in Field B concentrated on tracing parts two buildings, consisting of long-room structures, sharing one wall, and connected with the broad-room casemates previously excavated.

Building 1, the westernmost structure, was traced to the northwest from the broad-room casemate structure in Square B1, throughout Square B4, and much of Square 6. Its eastern wall, which is shared with Building 2 is completely extant, but most of the western wall is located in an area that, is as yet, unexcavated. This wall was traced for a short distance before it disappeared in to the west balk of Square B4, just beyond a postern (side) entrance, to the west. The main entrance to the building is on the north side of the building, with what appears to be the bedrock footing to a ghost wall, on its western end.

The outline of Building 2 is clearer than its western neighbor, and was traced throughout parts of all five squares (B3-7) excavated this season. With the exception of a few short sections, still within unexcavated balks, its walls are completely exposed. The western wall, which is shared with Building 1, and its parallel to the east, were traced slightly over 12 meters to the northwest from the broad-room casemate structure in Square B3, to the south. The entrance to the building is in the northwest corner, as opposed to the center, of the north wall. The building is subdivided on its southwestern side by a small room, with its entrance on the east, from the main room. Further to the north, located on a shelf of bedrock, on top of

which it was partially paved with cobble stones, the building is further subdivided by a pillar, and a short section of wall, with another entrance into the main room at its northern end.

Several use layers (beaten-earth surfaces) were discovered in both buildings. The first occupation layer was located just above the red-bricky fill material, placed in the undulations of bedrock. Throughout Iron Age I, at least two additional beaten-earth surfaces were laid. The earlier of these two occupational layers was apparently destroyed by a conflagration, as evidenced on the eastern side of Square B5, of Building 2, but which is unattested in Building I. It would appear to be the same fire that destroyed buildings in other areas (Fields A, C-D) of the settlement. Under the destruction debris, part of a collar-rim pithos was found, on the floor. Later, perhaps during early Iron Age II, still another beaten-earth surface was laid above a fill layer. In Building I it appears that at least two of these surfaces were connected with stone thresholds, placed in the doorway of the postern entrance, presumably to keep everything level on both sides of the wall. A destruction, probably by an earthquake, sometime during the early Iron Age II, as noted last season, occurred, leaving considerable ruins, as well as penetrating through two of the earlier floor levels.

Preliminarily, it would seem that Building 1 represents a two-room house (one long room and one broad room), while Building 2 is a three-room house (one broad room and two long rooms).

In 2018, in Field D, supervised by Jacob Moody, two squares were excavated (D1 and D2). This season four new squares (D3-6) were opened and completely excavated. Their locations were chosen with the intent to help better understand the architecture in Field D and to provide a chance to excavate between the casemate walls that were visible on surface. The portions of Squares D3 and D4 that were located outside the outer city wall were left unexcavated. In general, the earth matrix in Field D is very shallow, with bedrock being, in some cases, only 10 cm below the surface, so



Field B excavation at Khirbat Safra.

these squares were quickly taken down to bedrock, after which the balks were removed to provide a clearer picture of the obstructed architectural remains, yielding the discovery of at least one casemate room and part of the gate complex.

One complete casemate room was uncovered this season, portions of which were found in Squares D3, D4, and D6. The southwest corner of another possible casemate room may have been uncovered in Square D6, but further excavation is needed to verify this. Another small room was also uncovered in the western portion of Square D6. Some occupational surfaces were found in Squares D3, D5, and D6. These surfaces were just above bedrock and in some places level with small exposed portions of the bedrock. They were made of flat, hard-packed earth, and some had flat-lying pottery on top of them. All of this pottery dated to the Iron Age I.

Part of the city gate complex, with its accompanying installations, and the various walls that make up different rooms, was found this season. The gate is located between Squares D3 and D5, with the westernmost part of Square D3 representing half of the gate, and the easternmost part of Square D5 making up the other half. There is a clear 2.5 m break in the outer city wall, and within this gap is its threshold. Outside this threshold, to the north, are paving stones that have been

worn smooth from use. Bordering these pavement stones, both to the east and west, are two long, rectangular stones that run perpendicular to the threshold. Their exact purpose is unclear, though they seem to narrow the gate entrance, and were perhaps used as supports for something above them. Further research on possible parallels is needed. Entering the city, just inside the threshold, to the south, a surface was found, with cobbles and earth used to level the ground with the sloping bedrock. The roadway, inside the gate is lined by two large walls, with benches installed up against them. Two long rooms paralleling the gate and entrance street, on the east and west, help to make up the gate complex. The eastern room has been fully excavated, and has a doorway into the room from the street. The portion of the western long room, found so far in Square D5, seem to match its eastern twin. A similar doorway into this room is suspected, but excavation to the south is needed to confirm this.

After the Iron Age I occupation, there was a destruction/abandonment phase. These abandonment layers were found just below topsoil and consist of mostly Iron Age I sherds with a few Iron Age II diagnostic pieces. Some Byzantine period sherds were also found in the loci nearest to the topsoil. (Paul Gregor, Paul Ray and Jacob Moody)

