

PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE 2012 SEASON OF THE MADABA PLAINS PROJECT: TALL JALŪL EXCAVATIONS 2012

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Introduction

The 2012 season at Tall Jalūl, conducted by Andrews University, took place between 17 May and 8 June 2012. The excavations on the *tall* were directed by Randall Younker, Paul Gregor and Paul Ray of the Institute of Archaeology, Andrews University. Around 30 faculty, students and volunteers joined more than 15 Jordanian workers during the excavations this season¹.

Excavations at the site of Tall Jalūl began in 1992 (**Fig. 1**), with excavations in the Jalūl Islamic village beginning in 2008. For background information on Tall Jalūl, the Jalūl Islamic village and the history of excavations at the site, see Gane *et al.* 2010; Gregor 2009; Gregor *et al.* 2012; Gregor and Gregor 2009, 2010; Herr *et al.* 1994, 1996, 1997; Younker *et al.* 1993, 1996, 1997, 2007, 2009; Younker, Gane and Shqour 2007; Younker and Merling 2000; Younker and Shqour 2008.

Results of the 2012 Season at Tall Jalūl (Field W)

Field W was carefully laid out on the south-eastern ridge of the large depression on the south-eastern side of the *tall*. Work started here

during the 2010 season when four squares were opened in order to find the continuation of the water channel from Field G, anticipating that it would run straight to the depression where the remains of a water system were anticipated. The excavation of these squares brought the desired results and the continuation of the channel was revealed. However, it turned out that the channel does not connect to the water system, but rather passes the depression on its eastern ridge, going further north. By the end of the season, almost 30m of the water channel were unearthened, but some sections of the channel had been destroyed by later stone robbers.

In 2011, a section of the water reservoir was revealed along with its eastern wall. The inner side of the reservoir's eastern wall was plastered several times during the several centuries of its usage. Plaster on the bottom of the reservoir was more than 30cm thick. Material found on the bottom of the reservoir indicates that it went out of use during the 7th century BC. Three floors were also discovered outside the reservoir's wall. The earliest one was dated to the 9th century BC.

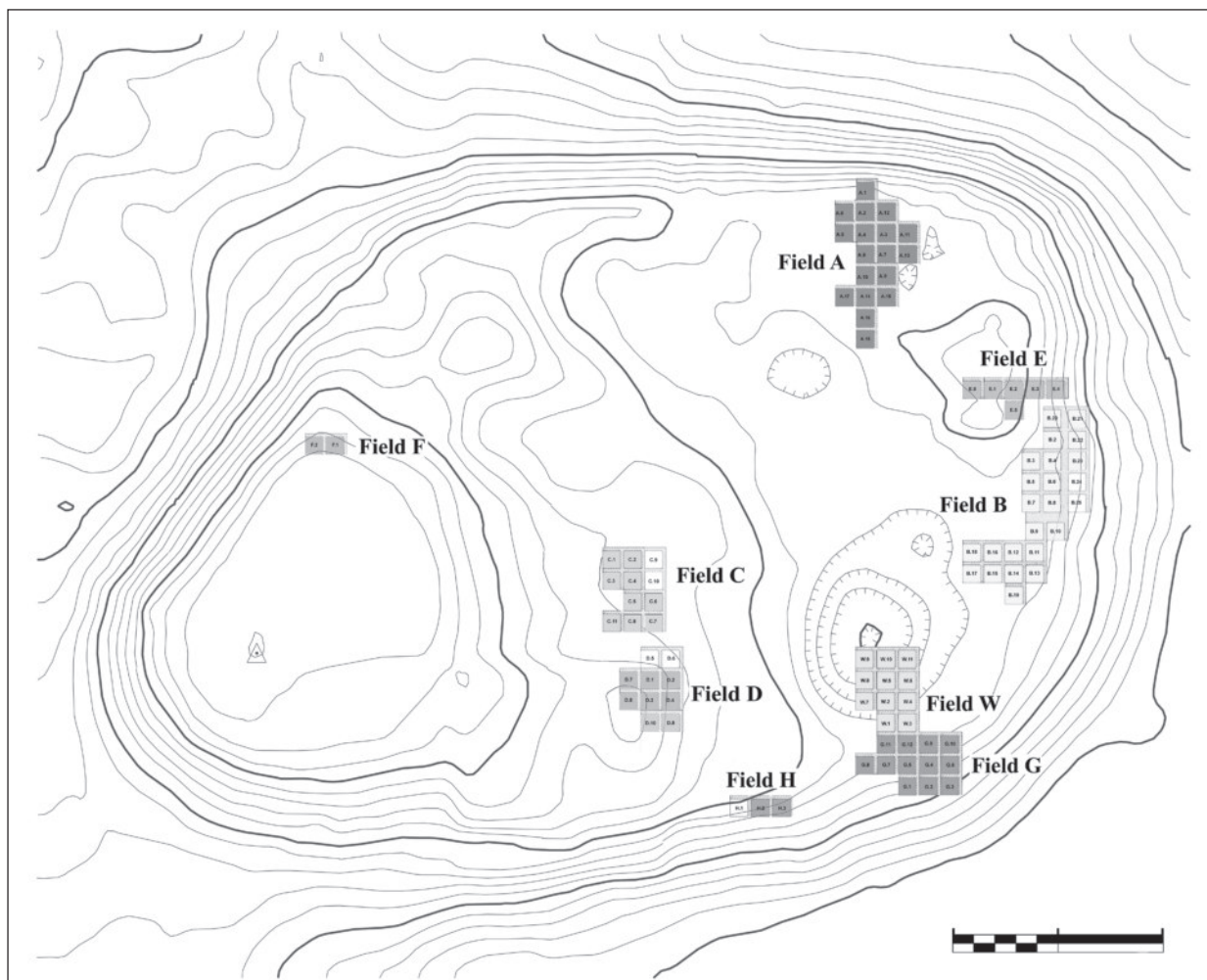
This season, in 2012, work continued in Field W. In addition to Square W.2, which was

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Staff for the 2012 season included director Randall W. Younker, co-directors Paul Z. Gregor and Paul Ray. Sabal Zaben was pottery formator and helped with a number of logistical issues. The Field Supervisor this season was Paul Gregor. Paul Ray also served as object

registrar and dig architect. Helena Gregor was the pottery registrar and Erika Fortin was photographer. Jerry Chase and Jacob Moody oversaw GPS readings on the *tall*.

Square Supervisors for Field W included Erika Fortin, Abalardo Rivas, Ralph Hawkins, Christine Chitwood, Jacob Moody and Trisha Broy. Volunteers included Soon Bum Kwon, Brittany Colpepper, Mariana Garcia, Raul de Souza, Stephane Beaulieu, Robert Chase, Medaliz Gutierrez, Chad Shively, Tara Tellman, Jessica Ritter, Seneque Edmond, Jose Espero, Jonathan Torres, Elmer Guzman, Hanny Guzman, Karen Denmark, Heather Merizan, John Pohlman and Sharon Pohlman.

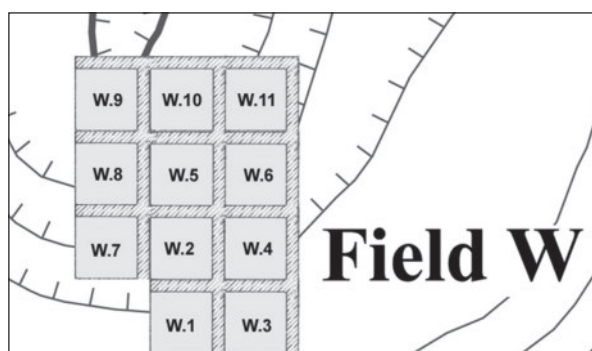


1. Jalūl topo color 2e.

worked the previous two seasons, five additional squares (W.7 - 11) were opened, being placed around the previously excavated squares (**Fig. 2**). The goal of the 2012 season was to discover the possible date of the reservoir's construction and to expose the rest of its structure. After a third season of excavation, Field W has now yielded four occupational phases consisting, in part, of structures next to the water system.

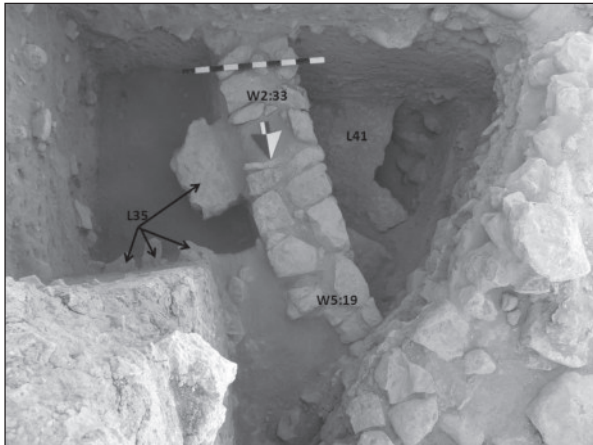
Occupational Phase 1 (Early Bronze Age III / IV)

Work continued this season in Square W.2 with the hope of revealing the date of the reservoir wall. Three superimposed floors were discovered during the 2011 season. In order to preserve the lowest floor (W.2:25), only a small area (approximately 2.0m² and 30cm deep) was excavated to find the date of its construction. Material found in the fill under the floor may date to the 10th



2. Jalūl topo color 2a.

century BC. This season, the area of excavation was enlarged in order to find as much material as possible to date the construction of the reservoir wall. Under this floor 1.2m of fill was found, below which a small wall (W.2:33=W.5:19) was revealed (**Fig. 3**). This wall was constructed of small and medium roughly-hewn boulders. Its two rows were 60cm wide, the excavated sec-

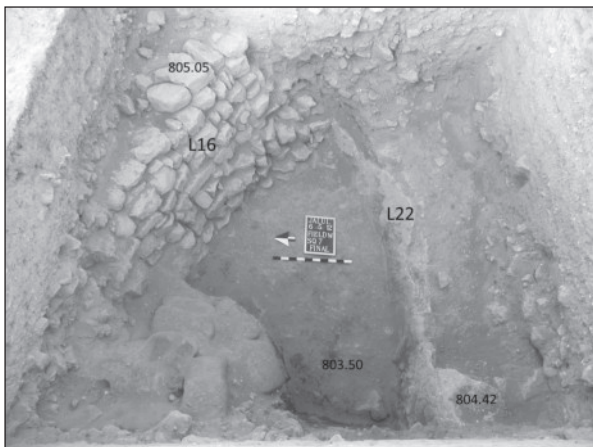


3. Early Bronze Age wall.

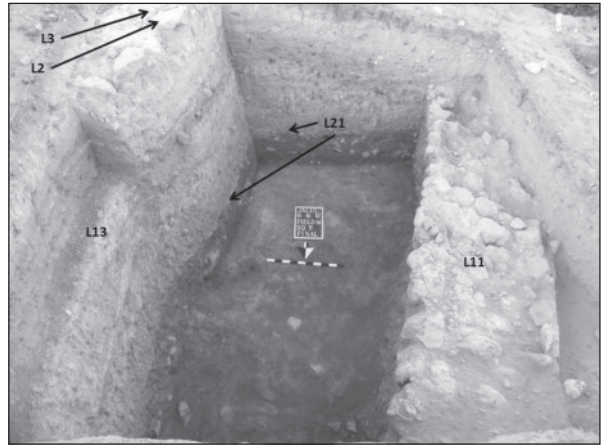
tion being 3.5m long and two courses high. The wall probably belonged to a domestic building. A dirt floor (W.2:35) and stone fill were found on its eastern side. Pottery found on the floor and around the wall was of Early Bronze Age III / IV date. The majority of sherds belonged to holmouth jars and bowls. Also, several ‘envelope’ ledge handles were discovered. The wall, which sits on 1.0m of fill, dated to the same period. Under this, bedrock (W.2:41) was reached. The EB wall (W.2:33=W.5:19) was cut by the reservoir wall (W.2:19=W.7:22=W.11:11), clearly showing that the latter was built later.

Occupational Phase 2 (9th century BC)

Occupational Phase 2 was present in Square W.2, and in Squares W.7 and W.11, as excavated this season. It seems that the water reservoir was built during this phase; its walls were found in Squares W.7 (Fig. 4) and W.11 (Fig. 5). So far about 12m of the reservoir’s eastern wall



4. Water reservoir.



5. Water reservoir and floors.

(W.2:19=W.5:11=W.11:11) has been revealed. Wall W.7:22 turns sharply, creating its southern perimeter; it seems that the reservoir had an oval rather than a circular shape. The reservoir wall was well-constructed, with the interior side covered by a thick layer of plaster. Evidence of plaster was not found on Wall W.11:11 as this side of the wall was in the balk, but is visible on Wall W.7:22 where a good portion of its face was exposed. This wall was replastered several times owing to extensive use of the reservoir, which functioned until the 7th century BC and went through several stages of rebuilding, as evidenced by the two contemporary floors found outside the reservoir wall in Square W.2 (L23 and L13=L17) during 2011 season.

After the construction of the reservoir, a thick layer of fill was brought in and laid outside its wall. The fill was tightly packed, creating a foundation for Floor W.11:21=W.2:25, which was used as street and gave access to the reservoir. The floor / street was made of beaten earth surfaced with packed pebbles, which were apparently intended to create a rough walking surface that would reduce the risk of pedestrians slipping.

Later, during the same century, 50cm of fill (W.11:18-20) was brought in to create a foundation for another floor (W.11:17=W.2:24). This floor was mainly constructed of lime plaster, as seen in Square W.2. In Square W.11, however, the same floor (W.11:17) seems to have been made of beaten earth filled with pebbles, as in the earlier floor. Since the reservoir wall and all the floors were partially damaged by stone robbers, it was impossible to see where and why the

builders changed materials in constructing the same street surface. The reason might have been that Floor W.11:17 was closer to the entrance of the reservoir and was therefore more exposed to water spillage. The entrance to the reservoir, however, has not yet been discovered.

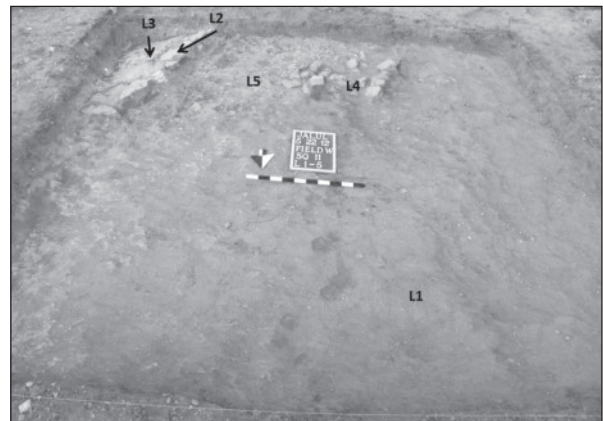
Occupational Phase 3 (8th century BC)

This occupational phase is found in Square W.11 and possibly W.7. As mentioned above, the southern reservoir wall was found in Square W.7, but it seems that the reservoir was partitioned by another wall (W.7:16) which was found inside the reservoir itself (Fig. 4). Since only one side of the 'partition' wall was revealed, it is not possible at this point to determine its function and size with any certainty. It was built with medium boulders; its southern side sloped at an angle and was not plastered. It is possible that southern wall of the reservoir was damaged and could no longer function properly, so its constructors built another one in its place. Future excavations will likely provide an answer to this problem. Since this 'partition' wall was built inside the reservoir, it reflects a later addition; we therefore provisionally assign it to Phase 3.

This phase was also revealed in Square W.11. The third floor surface (W.11:13) was found here, being a continuation of the same floor found earlier in Square W.2 (Locus 13=17). It was constructed on approximately 60cm of fill. The floor itself was made of beaten earth, packed with pebbles similar to the previous two (Fig. 5). It also functioned as street or road, apparently leading to the entrance of the reservoir.

Occupational Phase 4 (7th century BC)

This phase of occupation was found only in Square W.11 and consisted of a fragmentary continuation of the water channel (W.2:2, 3) found in earlier seasons. This feature was located in the south-eastern corner of the square (Fig. 6). The stones which were used in its construction were small- to medium-sized boulders which were roughly hewn before they were laid in place. The channel was constructed in the same manner as found in previously excavated squares. So far about 50m of the channel have been discovered, running from Field G and passing along the reservoir on its eastern side. No evidence has been found so far to indicate



6. Water channel.

its relationship with the reservoir. Further excavations should reveal the answer to this question.

A post-7th century BC fill was found in most of the squares. One of the objects of interest found in the fill in Square W.7, between Loci W.7:16 and 22, was a stone with an ink drawing on it (Object Reg. # J0899) (Fig. 7). Our initial



7. Jalūl rock drawing.

impression is that it is a stylized depiction of an Islamic fort or *khān* - perhaps one that existed at Jalūl. It seems to show the plan of a square structure with four corner towers and four gates, with another structure in the center. Pointed crenellations or battlements seem to crown the towers and walls. More study needs to be undertaken before a definitive interpretation of this drawing can be made.

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