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**Jalul 2014**

Paul Z. Gregor

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Around 180 AD, there existed a thriving Christian community at Syracuse as evidenced by the catacombs there. Meanwhile, on the western side of the island, the catacombs at Marsala/Lilybaeum appeared. In the late 3rd century, the philosopher Porphyry, then living at Lilybaeum, wrote against the Christians, lending credence to a prominent Christian community existing in this city. The question then is what did the early church in the western-most part of the island look like, and how early did the church actually exist as an organized entity? Thus, we come to San Miceli.

San Miceli is a basilica dedicated to the archangel Michael. The site was discovered in 1893 when a gold coin was found in an agricultural field. Antonio Salinas started the excavation, and just a few centimeters below the ground mosaics appeared. He discovered three different phases of the church, built one on top of the other, evidenced by three different mosaics built in the same fashion. According to Salinas, the first church was pre-Constantine, and included inscriptions in both Latin and Greek. In all, 58 tombs were discovered in the basilica area. In one of these, a medallion of Gratian, the Roman Emperor from 375-383, was found, helping to establish a date for this tomb. In addition to the basilica, the mosaics, and the tombs, a Roman village was discovered not far away.

Research this summer focused on both the Roman village (Field A) and the basilica (Field B). The Roman village is being excavated by Christopher Chadwick, who presented the next part of the lecture. The focus of his research is an attempt to locate the shift from pagan to Christian culture within village life. Two squares were originally laid out, but work was concentrated primarily in one, where walls and a flagstone floor were soon found. On the basis of their thickness, the walls may belong to a monumental building of some sort, but this will need to be determined by further excavations. Roman glass, a destruction layer, and pottery dating from the 5th century onward were also found.



Michelle Berglin and Justin Singleton in Field B burial.

Michelle Berglin ended the lecture, focusing on the basilica (Field B). Excavation here began with an already-known mosaic floor in the north aisle, and along the northern wall of the basilica, previously excavated by Salinas. Approximately 9.0 m of mosaic were reexamined, but at its eastern end, (under what was previously thought to be a wall, by Salinas, but now determined to be rock tumble), a bird motif, different from the geometric patterns already known from the mosaic, was discovered. In addition, a second wall, believed to be from an earlier basilica, was discovered outside of the already-determined north wall of a later basilica. Another find was a previously-unexcavated burial outside what is believed to be the eastern wall of the basilica. The burial, dating to the 6th century, was stone lined on the top and sides, and contained the complete body of an elderly woman (age determined by dental ware and sex by the presence of earrings beside the skull), along with parts of a second body. The grave also included a whole jug, dating from 4th to 6th century, along with one and a half rings and a coin. Based on these findings, as well as

the rather large number of burials earlier discovered by Salinas, it is believed that this is a mortuary basilica. As this might be the earliest-known basilica on the island, Berglin's future research will attempt to understand the change from pagan to Christian worship practices.

The fieldwork at San Miceli, is only one aspect of the research of the Institute of Archaeology in Sicily, and future excavations are already being planned with much work going into preparations for expanding these two fields. (Justin Singleton)



## Jalul 2014

The 2014 season of excavations at Tall Jalul was carried out from June 1-20 by faculty and students from Andrews University. The excavations were directed by Paul Z. Gregor and Constance Gane of the Institute of Archaeology at Andrews University. Mr Adnan Al-Rafayah served as representative for the Department of Antiquities of Jordan. Excavations on the tell took place only in one field this season: Field W (the Reservoir).

During the 2010 season, Field W was opened in order to explore the nature and function of the water channel that was partially uncovered in Field G during the 2007 and 2009 seasons, and its relationship to water reservoir. Eleven squares have been opened in Field W during the 2010, 2011, and 2012 seasons, with work continuing in Squares W9 and 10 during this season.

Following the discovery of reservoir wall and its floor in Square W5, during the 2011 season, balks from the surrounding squares eroded and collapsed, filling Square W5 with up to 2.5 m of material. The first week of this season was spent clearing these debris. To prevent further collapse of the remaining balks, from other squares, they were also removed at this time.



Christine Chitwood in Jalul Reservoir.

Excavation was then continued in Squares W9 and 10, which were opened during the previous (2012) season, at which time the sherd material suggested that the reservoir was constructed during the 10th century BC. The goal this season was to reach the floor of the reservoir, and in the process to ascertain the time when the structure went out of use. Preliminary pottery readings, from the current season, suggest that the reservoir ceased to function during Late Iron Age II (7th-6th centuries BC).

It is possible that the floor of the reservoir was accessible on its eastern side, where a small stair-like structure was discovered, this season, in Square W10. The actual function of this structure, however, is yet to be determined, since it

has been only partially excavated. (Paul Gregor, Constance Gane and Helena Gregor)



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