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Summer 2010

**Jalul 2010**

Paul Z. Gregor

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(Larry Herr); Pottery of the Transitional Periods of the Iron Age at Tall Jalul (Randall Younker); Umm Rujm/Kherbit Merbat Badran: Center of Ammonite Production: Late Iron IIC/Persian Periods (Adib Adu-Shmais); Arabs in the Aegean (David Graf); Changing Perspective: Petra Deserti (al-Karak) and the Landscape of Crusader Transjordan in European Cartography from the Thirteenth through Fifteenth Century (Robin Brown); The Jalul Islamic Village Excavations, 2008-2009 Madaba Plains Project (Reem al-Shqour); The Roman Port of Aila and Its Economic Hinterland (Aqaba) (Thomas Parker); "Throw Away, Form Layer A": Is the Chronology of Nabataean Common Ware Pottery the Aleatory Product of Discarding Behavior? (Yvonne Gerber); Settlement Decline or Internal Migration? "Reading" Anew the History of the Late Mamluk Jordan (Bethany Walker); and Challenges Encountered and Changes Envisioned: Learning from the Past 25 Years at Tall al-Umayri and Imaging the Next 25 (Douglas Clark).

A Poster entitled: A Second Petra? Nabataean and Early Roman Pottery from Hegra/Madâ'in Sâlih (Saudi Arabia): Differences and Similarities was also presented by Yvonne Gerber and C. Durand. (Paul J. Ray, Jr.)



## Jalul 2010

During May of 2010 a two-week miniseason of excavations was conducted at Tall Jalul and the Jalul Islamic Village. The excavations on the tell, which focused in Fields G and W, were directed by Randall Younker and Paul Z. Gregor. Excavations in the Islamic village were directed by Reem al-Shqour with Elizabeth Lesnes as Field Supervisor. Around 20 faculty, including Dr. Denis Fortin, Dean of the Andrews University Theological Seminary, and students, mostly from Andrews University and Kentucky Christian University, served as Square supervisors and technicians. Paul



Jeff Hudon in Field G Water Channel.

Ray served as architect. Hanadi Taher was the representative for the Department of Antiquities of Jordan.

The goals in Field G were to trace the water channel that was found in the 2009 season and follow the line of the city wall as it turned a corner at the SE part of the field. Unfortunately, no further remains of the city wall were found in Square G10. Either it was completely robbed out in antiquity or it turned a corner to the NW, back towards the center of the tell.

Meanwhile, 5 squares were opened in Field G and a new field (W) to trace the water channel, initially exposed during the 2009 season. The new squares (G11 and W1-4) ran along a N-S axis between Field G city wall and the presumed water shaft (Field W) in the SE quadrant of the tell. Excavation in G11 succeeded in exposing more of the water channel. However, rather than running directly to the large circular water shaft, it curved back to the NE, apparently skirting the edge of the shaft.

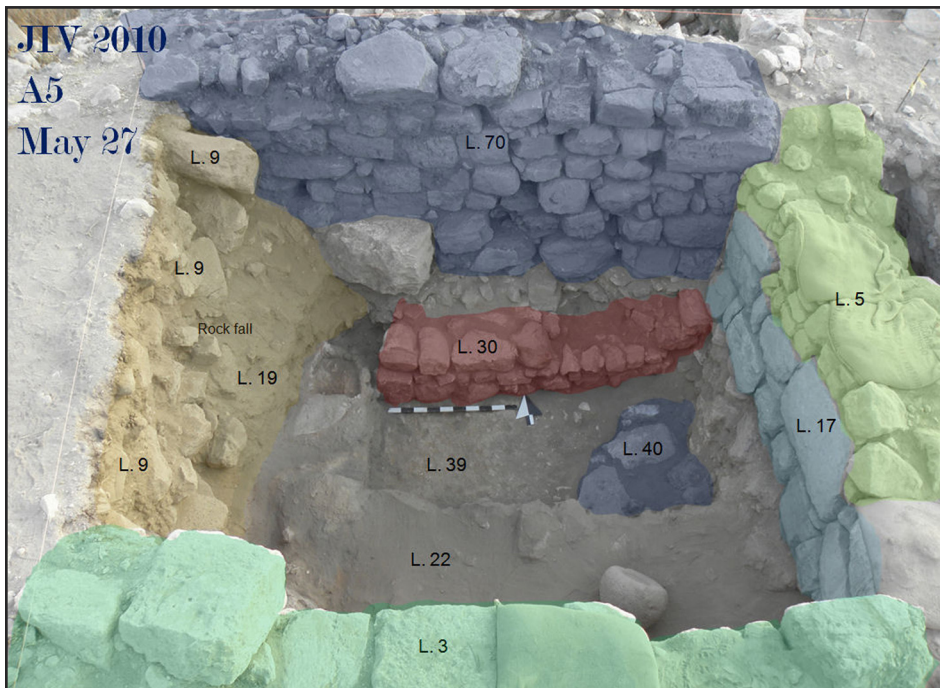
Square W1 was opened immediately north in the hope of exposing the connection of the channel to the water shaft. Because of the turn of the channel, excavation in this square was unproductive. Hence it was decided to open a square immediately to the east. Sure enough the continuation of the channel was found in the western half of the new square (W3).

Square W2, immediately to the north of W1, likewise failed to expose the channel, but a small stretch of a Persian-period wall, running parallel to the edge of the channel in a NE/SW direction, was uncovered. Square W4 to the east of W2 succeeded in exposing the end of the water channel. Unfortunately, it was robbed out on its northern end where it would have tied into the water shaft. Nevertheless, the length of the channel clearly took it inside the rim of the water shaft, indicating some kind of integrated relationship of these two elements of the water system. At this point, it appears as if the channel was intended to drain off overflow from an artesian spring that fed the water shaft.

The goal for the Islamic Village was to continue to trace the southern extent of the Islamic complex (possibly a khan). This season an additional square (A5) was opened immediately to the south of A2. Bedrock was not reached; however, at least three occupational phases were discerned within the room inside this square.

The Phase 3 occupation consisted of a wall (L. 30), an earth surface (L. 39) and a pavement (L. 40), representing the earliest use of the room, the ceramics dating its construction to the Umayyad period. Phase 2 was dated to the Mamluk period, at which time the current shape of the room took place. Three stone walls (3, 5/17, and 70) were uncovered forming the north, east, and south (L. 3) perimeters of the room; the western wall was not exposed. The room was vaulted, its axis running generally E/W as opposed to the rooms to the north which ran on a N/S axis. It was also divided by a partition wall, which ran north to south in the western part of the square. Curiously, no door was found into the room during this phase. Two floor surfaces and four tabuns were found in association with this phase, after which the room was destroyed and buried, with fallen stones and earth covering it from the collapsed vault.

The room was reconstructed later in the Mamluk period (Phase 1) at which time the upper parts of the walls were rebuilt. It is uncertain whether the roof was vaulted at this time, though the partition



Jalul Islamic Village Field A, Square 5.

wall was reestablished and a new floor laid. This room, too, was eventually abandoned or destroyed. (Randall W. Younker, Paul Z. Gregor and Reem S. Al-Shquor)



## Dever Lecture

On Oct. 26, 2009 Dr. William Dever, professor emeritus of Near Eastern Archaeology at the University of Arizona, presented a lecture entitled *Did God Have a Wife?* for the Horn Lecture Series. The focus of the lecture was on archaeological evidence for folk religion.

Dever began by focusing on Dan, where there is evidence of local cult worship at the city gate. Here five standing stones (*māššēbôth*) were found. Inside the city there was a high place (*bāmāh*) from the 9th/8th centuries BC with a four-horned altar and full three-roomed temple complex. This is evidence for the type of things that Hezekiah and Josiah tried to stamp out in their reforms. Other four-horned alters have been found at Beersheba and Arad.

He then focused on figurines and other representations of the gods. Since the Bible forbids graven images, one

wouldn't expect to find figurines, but they exist at Dan and many other sites. At Tirzah a number of female figurines were found including half-nude depictions carrying mold-made cakes baked for the queen of heaven (cf. Jer). Dever argues that this type of figurine is a priestess or goddess representing the queen of heaven, Asherah or Astarte. A model temple (*naos*) was also found at the site, with columns, a crescent and the stars of the Pleiades, representing the queen of heaven. Other model shrines have been found at sites throughout the region with altars, chalices, cult stands, astragali (for divining) and female figurines, always representing Asherah. Asherah is sometimes depicted as a nude female riding on or holding a lion with each of her hands.

Dever believes that the Bible is an ideal record of Israelite religion in Jerusalem. However, 100s of animal and female figurines have been found at the site. Over 3000 of the bird-face type have been found, indicating mass production. The religion of the countryside is also mentioned in the Bible as worship condemned. At Lachish a village shrine was found. Dever believes that women administered the rites at these types of household shrines. Also at Lachish an

Egyptian Bes figurine, and a jar with an inscription reading "a gift for Elat" were found. These artifacts are evidence of folk religion, and a belief in the afterlife, as well as a number of deities. Asherah is mentioned 40 times in the Hebrew Bible, most of the time referring to a tree, but about six times referring to the deity herself; the two are always connected.

Dever then moved to depictions and inscriptions. At Khirbet el Qom (biblical Makkedah) an 8th-century BC inscription was found that mentions a man being blessed by Yahweh and his Asherah. At Arad a full-fledged temple was found with three rooms, including a holy of holies that contained two horned altars and two massebot. The deities represented were perhaps Yahweh and Asherah. These objects were found plastered under the floor, evidence, Dever believes, for the reforms of Josiah. At Kuntillet Ajrud, scenes on large jars depict priests or worshipers, the sacred tree and a lion. An inscription on one reads "may PN be blessed by Yahweh of Samaria and his Asherah." Asherah is always associated with fertility, partially nude, with wide hips and exposed breasts. These aspects are indications of childbirth, plentitude, and fruitfulness, important factors in ancient Israel due to the great number of infant mortalities. Dever believes that monotheism is not a gift, it was an achievement and it took the Israelites until after the destruction of the temple, in Jerusalem, to focus solely on Yahweh, as images of female deities disappear after the return from exile. (Owen Chesnut)



William Dever.