

Fig. 40. Aerial image of Tell with Fields (by Matt Vincent)

The 2016 season of excavation at the Madaba Plains Project site of Tall al-'Umayri was focused on four field locations (Fields H, J, L, and P) (Fig. 40) and one hinterland survey location (Site 84). Due to ongoing land-ownership issues at the site, we have been unable to excavate beyond the 2016 season, although analysis of finds and preparations for publication continue apace.

Excavation at the southwestern corner of the 'Umayri acropolis in Field H succeeded in identifying the southern perimeter wall in that location, already suspected of lying beneath Stratum 6 Wall 2 and dating through several periods of reuse at least as far back as Stratum 12 (Fig. 41). In the process, this work exposed an important destruction layer from the end of Stratum 12 that sealed against the wall, helping excavators connect the well-known Stratum 12 western defense system with that along the southern slopes. The discovery of Stratum 12 remains here adds to our knowledge of the extent and nature of the occupation and destruction in a new area of the tell. Recovered artifacts and pottery, related to food storage and preparation, as well as textile production, attest to the domestic nature of the structure which was exposed by means of a small probe.

Elsewhere on the southern acropolis, in Field L, specific objectives for 2016 included attempts to locate and date more of the presumed perimeter wall in the southern portion of the field adjacent to Field J and to understand the Iron I stratigraphy nearby through the continuation of a probe begun during the 2012 season. The main goals of the 2016 season were largely

## TALL AL-'UMAYRI

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met. Fragmentary remains of two large walls (15 and 16) were identified, with Wall 16 possibly being a perimeter wall dating to the Iron Age I. To the north of the wall several superimposed surfaces were uncovered, the earliest, likely from Stratum 12, representing a domestic area which contained one crushed jar on its side; at least four nearly whole pithoi in situ in the same area come from Stratum 10. Nearby to the east and from the Late Iron II Period, there appeared surfaces as well as a large circular stone-lined bin. Stratum 12 was also represented in several earth layers and some architecture in the eastern portion of Field L.

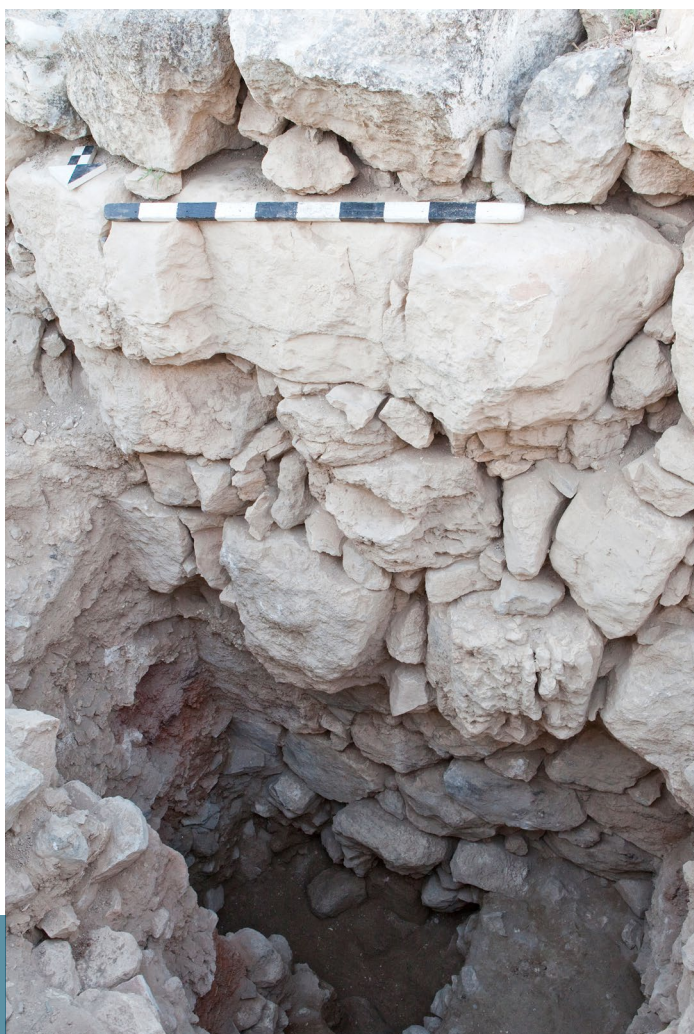
Excavation in a series of squares down the southern slope in Field J, begun in 2014, further established that the southern side of the tell was fortified in the Early Iron I Period (Stratum 12) with a packed-earth rampart, similar to that on the western side of the tell. Probes through the rampart down to bedrock in several locations revealed that it was not preceded by a Middle Bronze Age rampart as had been the case on the western side. An ash layer on the top of the Stratum 12 rampart may be the result of the massive fire that destroyed the site ca. 1200 B.C. A Stratum 6 rampart overlay the detritus of the Early Iron Age version.

Work on the southeastern shelf near the dolmen continued to ground-truth GPR data from 2013. Here, in Field P, excavation in the vicinity of two bedrock anomalies indicated by the GPR data did not reveal tombs but rather natural fissures and gaps in the limestone bedrock shelves. While some apparently domestic features were uncovered in Field P, most areas excavated to bedrock did not yield remains.

At Site 84, several of the best examples from 30 agricultural installations were cleaned and photogrammetry was conducted. These features represent utilization and increased exploitation of the agricultural landscape in the 7th and 6th centuries B.C.

Project Website:

[www.mabadaplains.org/umayri/](http://www.mabadaplains.org/umayri/)



*Fig. 41. Perimeter Wall in H 7K02 with Stratum 12 construction phase at the very bottom (photo courtesy of Douglas R. Clark)*