

Tall al-Mashhad

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The persistence of the COVID-19 pandemic denied the possibility of carrying out archaeological activities in the field almost everywhere. It has, however, favored the possibility of completing previously slow documentation and publication activities. Therefore, the Tell al-Mashhad Project staff started planning the publication of data and materials that emerged in the five campaigns carried out between 1999 and 2011 at Tall al-Mashhad, at the foot of Mount Nebo, near the perennial springs of ‘Ayun Musa (Fig. 1). Archaeological research there has concentrated on the remains of two buildings, namely building B (a series of domestic structures south of the modern road, excavated in 1999 and 2000) and building A (a large, square edifice located on the top of the hill, dominating the springs and the wadi); here, after a preliminary mission in 2003, archaeological activities were carried out between 2010 and 2011, amid great difficulties due to the presence of extremely invasive clandestine excavations.

Initially, we envisaged publishing the excavation results as a single volume, including all aspects of all activities carried out, but the abundance of data that emerged encouraged the editors to plan the drafting and printing of three volumes. The first book in the series, the subject of which is the pottery from the excavation, was published in May 2021 (Benedettucci 2021) thanks to the kind availability of the Aracne publishing company (Rome) and Prof. Claudio Saporetti, who strongly desired this book to be included in the series he directs. The following volumes will instead be issued by the publisher Espera, also in Rome, which accepted our proposal to create a new series of archaeological studies. The first, mainly dedicated to the results of the excavation, is almost complete as of March 2022 and is expected to come to light in the summer of 2022. The other volume, a collection of studies on the archaeological and historical data by Italian and foreign specialists, is expected between the end of 2022 and the early months of 2023.

A further important aspect linked to the mission’s activities is the project of a traveling exhibition on the results of the excavation, in which explanatory panels and scale reproductions of the most important buildings on the site will be exhibited. The first exhibition will be held in Rome, in a location yet to be established, and that will be followed by further stops in other Italian cities.

Alongside these activities, the staff was also involved in the continuous updating of the Archaeology of Jordan website (archaeologyofjordan.mystrikingly.com), a freely available collection of thousands of links on archaeology of the Transjordanian region.





Fig. 1. General view of Tell al-Mashhad from the springs of 'Ayun Musa. (Photo by Francesco M. Benedettucci, Archaeological Mission at Tell al-Mashhad.)

Reference

Benedettucci, Francesco, M. 2021. *Tell al-Mashhad: La ceramica*. Roma: Aracne.