



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Trouble within the Walls: The End of Early Bronze Age Arad as Internal Crisis

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Abstract

Situated on the fringes of the Negev desert, Israel, the late 4th to early 3rd millennium Early Bronze Age town of Arad has been interpreted as a key entrepot of exchange, connecting people and products. Excavation at Arad between the 1960s and 1980s uncovered an extensive horizontal exposure of two strata during which Arad was a densely-built walled-town containing large numbers of residential compounds as well as more public areas such as a temple complex. Despite the town's apparent importance and success, it was abandoned after ~200 years and not resettled again until the Iron Age. Arad's abandonment has largely been explained as a result of external processes: economic, climatological, or historical. Rather than looking for answers outside of Arad as has previously been done, here I turn to the evidence, uncovered at Arad itself. Based on the site's published architectural remains and radiocarbon data, I suggest that an internal crisis is just as likely to have been the cause for Arad's abandonment. Ultimately, I argue that while broader processes can indeed explain inhabitation and abandonment, consideration of external processes must not come at the expense of evidence arising from the abandoned sites themselves.

Keywords

Southern Levant, Early Bronze Age, Abandonment

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