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ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Uncovering a Vanishing Megalithic Landscape and new Stratigraphic Profile: the Khirbat Iskandar, Jordan Excavations

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Abstract

Khirbat Iskandar is a site lying astride the ancient “King’s Highway” between Madaba and Dhiban in central Transjordan. The site is well known for its extraordinary and continuous occupation at the enigmatic EB III urban/EB IV non-urban transition, ca. 2500 cal BC. In the 2023 and 2024 seasons of excavation, new Dept. of Antiquities directives encouraging survey unexpectedly led to the discovery of a second megalithic landscape in the vicinity, apparently overlooked by Nelson Glueck’s survey of the site (1939). Using cutting edge technology, the team documented a vast megalithic landscape of 31 features on the Umm il-Idham hillside behind the site, pointing to a vast ritual landscape from EB I-IV. This new discovery mirrors the findings at the southern edge of the mound, where both a wadi survey and the cleaning and cutting of a roadcut section allowed the reconstruction of the complete stratigraphic profile of the site. Contiguous work, using methods of preventive archaeology in the preservation and restoration of the newly discovered (and unexcavated) southeast gate will ensure the sustainability of the emergent fortifications. The new discoveries transform our understanding of the ancient settlement of Khirbat Iskandar and its strategic role throughout the Early Bronze Age.

Keywords

Khirbat Iskandar, Early Bronze Age, Jordan, Megalithic, Restoration

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