



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

From Villages to Villas? The transformation of the Jordan Valley at the end of the Iron Age

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Abstract

Between c. 650-300 BCE the East Jordan Valley transitions from a landscape of residential settlements to one of largely abandoned tells marked by numerous pits and/or ephemeral surfaces and walls. In a few cases (e.g. Tell es-Sai'diyeh, Tell el-Mazar and perhaps also Tell Iktanu and Tell el-Hammeh) large and well-constructed buildings exist as isolated structures on the tell's summit, and there is one example (Tell el-Mazar) of a substantial cemetery. Assemblages from this period contain a surprisingly large number of finds indicative of international trade and administrative practices (e.g., ostraca, seals, imported pottery, metal vessels, cuboid incense altars etc). The contrast between the patchy and uneven architectural evidence and the cosmopolitan artefactual evidence raises question regarding the political economy underlying these patterns. In this paper we will examine i) the comparative stratigraphy of post-Iron II occupation in the Jordan Valley, clarifying both the substance and sequence of this settlement pattern; 2) the possible military/administrative v. commercial agricultural implications of these finds (cf. Khries 2018) in light of the "Estates v. Forts" debate (Faust 2018; Kletter and Silverman 2021) over contemporary isolated structure in Israel/Palestine.

Keywords

Jordan, Jordan Valley, Persian, Iron Age Settlement Patterns

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