



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Early Stages of Urbanization in the Southern Levant - New Insights from Horvat Husham in the Judean Shephelah, Israel

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Abstract

The early horizon of the Early Bronze Age I (EBIB1) detected in southwestern Israel is characterized, among other things, by a distinct ceramic tradition that can be distinguished from that of other regional traditions in the southern Levant. Recent fieldwork in the Judean Shephelah revealed settlement systems that incorporated small rural sites and large, densely built settlements such as Eshtaol, Hartuv, H. Husham, and Tel 'Erani. The current paper will focus on H. Husham, which underwent extensive and large-scale excavations between 2022 and 2024. The results of excavations at the site include some unique features, amongst which are three pottery kilns and a ceramic production area, concentrated storage facilities, old and new architectural traditions, and burial caves within the settlement. Most outstanding is a series of cultic features and spaces, possibly reflecting a shift from open-air activities related to standing stones to an enclosed temple compound in which dozens of complete pottery vessels and other paraphernalia were unearthed. The findings at H. Husham point toward a central socio-political entity that flourished at the site during the last centuries of the 4th millennium BC. With other sites, like Tel 'Erani, it reflects the early stages of urbanization in the southern Levant.

Keywords

Early Bronze Age, Early urbanization, settlement, pottery production, cultic area

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