

The Excavations at Khirbet el-Maqatir: 1995–2001 and 2009–2016

Volume 2

The Late Hellenistic, Early Roman,
and Byzantine Periods

Scott Stripling

edited by

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ARCHAEOPRESS PUBLISHING LTD

Summertown Pavilion

18-24 Middle Way

Summertown

Oxford OX2 7LG

www.archaeopress.com

ISBN 978-1-80327-211-5

ISBN 978-1-80327-212-2 (e-Pdf)

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Cover images:

Front: A map of the town at Khirbet el-Maqatir in the first century CE. Photograph courtesy of Michael C. Luddeni.

Back, *left to right*: Bryant Wood (Director 1995–2013), Mark A. Hassler (Square Supervisor), and Scott Stripling (Director 2014–2016).

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Preface

The excavations at Khirbet el-Maqtir began in 1995 under the direction of Bryant Wood and continued through January 2016, with the final three seasons under my direction. The location of Khirbet el-Maqtir within Area C of the West Bank as defined by the 1993 Oslo Accords meant that the Second Intifada (2001–2005) caused a hiatus from 2001 to 2008.

The final publication of the site builds on the work of previous researchers. The Khirbet el-Maqtir expedition advanced the regional exploration of the Biblical highlands by the Associates for Biblical Research. The exploration began with David Livingston's excavation of Khirbet Nisya (1979–2002). A new excavation at Shiloh (2017–present) continues the organization's regional approach to understanding settlement patterns from the Middle Bronze Age to the end of the Ottoman period. Israel Finkelstein's surveys in the 1980s provided valuable data on environmental, sociological, and anthropological matters.¹

Volume 1 by Bryant Wood and Boyd Seevers presents the Bronze and Iron Age remains, while Volume 2 documents the 20-dunam (five-acre) settlement in the Late Hellenistic, Early Roman, and Byzantine periods. The 2010–2016 seasons focused on these later periods that shed significant light on life in the highlands of Benjamin in the late Second Temple period.

Excavation seasons ranged from two to six weeks in length, with participants numbering typically between 30 and 70. Students and faculty from Lee University contributed significantly from 2010 to 2016 and were joined by students and faculty from the following institutions: Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, Crown College, Dallas Theological Seminary, The Master's University and Seminary, Texas A&M University, Houston Baptist University, Tel Aviv University, Tidewater Bible College, Trinity Southwest University, University of Holy Land Studies, University of Northwestern–St. Paul, Virginia Beach Theological Seminary, Wharton County Junior College, and Yale University.

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My special gratitude goes to Hananya Hizme, archaeological staff officer of Judea and Samaria and Deputy Director Benny Har Even. The excavation was conducted under their auspices. Yoav Zionet, Eyal Fierman, Miriam Hassid, and Nehora Shneler Peles provided excellent support. In the early years of the excavation, Yitzhak Magen and Yuval Peleg led the Civil Administration of Judea and Samaria. They strongly backed our efforts. I am equally indebted to Scott Lanser, the executive director of the Associates for Biblical Research, for the support that I received from my sponsoring organization. The entire board of directors deserves thanks, but I am especially appreciative of Gary

¹Israel Finkelstein, Zvi Lederman, and Shlomo Bunimovitz, *Highlands of Many Cultures: The Southern Samaria Survey; The Sites*, 2 vols. Tel Aviv Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology Monograph Series 14 (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 1997); Israel Finkelstein and Yitzhak Magen, *Archaeological Survey of the Hill Country of Benjamin* (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 1993).

Byers who served as senior archaeologist through the 2014 season in addition to his board duties. Henry Smith, administrative director, efficiently managed myriad administrative tasks that lightened my load and enabled the excavation to become one of the largest in the southern Levant. Surveyor and board member Walt Pasedag also did double duty. Local landowner Khaldoun Bakker and his family helped me in various ways, including tool storage and procurement. His sons Odai and Mohammed grew up working on the Khirbet el-Maqatir dig. Hani Miflih and Samer Abunaima from Deir Dibwan poured much of their lives into the excavation as well.

Participant fees, small donations, and occasional major donations from anonymous philanthropists funded the enterprise. I am grateful and indebted to all who donated and volunteered.

The Near East Archaeological Society endorsed the Khirbet el-Maqatir excavation. Their journal, the *NEAS Bulletin*, published several important articles on the dig. Three of their officers—Donald McNeeley, Suzanne Lattimer, and Mark Hassler—served on my senior staff and made numerous contributions.

My entire staff contributed to the organization of this volume. Special thanks go to Mark Hassler for his exceptional editorial skills as coeditor, Donald McNeeley for tireless database support, Michael Luddeni for his world-class photography, and Leen Ritmeyer and Steven Rudd for their excellent graphics. Finally, I offer kudos to the contributors of the various chapters. They exceeded my high expectations.

Scott Stripling
Richmond, Texas, 2022