



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

The Iron Age Persian period Transition in Judah: A View from the Dead Sea Oasis of En-Gedi

MASHIACH A.^{1*}

¹ Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Israel

*Corresponding author

Abstract

The transition between the Iron Age and the Persian period in the sixth century BCE has long been considered an elusive phase in the archaeology of the southern Levant. While early commentators suggested that this period saw a significant settlement gap, subsequent perspectives have contested this notion, advocating for a considerable level of continuity, thereby sparking a heated debate. Using detailed analysis of change patterns in the pottery of Judah during the 7th–5th centuries BCE, recent scholarship has provided a more data-driven understanding of the material culture of Judah during this timeframe, allowing more precise historical reconstructions to be made. This lecture will present a new perspective on this issue, drawing from recent excavations at the oasis of En-Gedi, on the western shore of the Dead Sea. By examining ceramic assemblages from stratified sequences, it is argued that contrary to the common view, En-Gedi remained inhabited during the transition from the Iron Age to the Persian period, while witnessing potential social and economic shifts following the fall of the Judahite monarchy. These insights highlight En-Gedi's role as a central hub on Judah/Yehud's eastern border and illuminate the history of Judah and the southern Levant in the mid-1st millennium BCE.

Keywords

Levant, Desert Oases, Excavations, Judah, Pottery Analysis

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