



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Adorning the Dead: Personal Ornaments in the Iron II Burials of Israel and Judah

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Abstract

Mortuary practices, specifically those related to inhumation, offer a fascinating glimpse into the beliefs, customs, and social identities of not only the dead but also the kin who bury them. Adornment is common in many burials, and the deposition of personal ornaments can shed light on the many ways in which this practice is tied to expressions of wealth, gender, cultural affiliation, and status. Drawing on anthropological theory and archaeological evidence from Iron Age Israel and Judah, this paper explores how personal adornments were integral to the construction and representation of individual and group identities, functioning as active agents in shaping social personas. It examines the intentional deposition of tools, weapons, jewelry, and other items with the dead to uncover patterns in social stratification and cultural identity. A comparison of burial customs between Israel and Judah highlights how adornments not only encoded symbolic meanings but also served as deliberate communicative acts by the living, projecting messages about the deceased and their place within the broader social fabric.

Keywords

burials, personal ornaments, Israel, Judah, Iron Age II

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