



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Closer to the Gods: an organic residue analysis of chalices from the Iron Age Southern Levant

SHEAVES P. 1*

¹ University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

*Corresponding author

Abstract

This paper explores organic compounds burned in chalices from various contexts in the Iron Age Southern Levant to gain a better understanding of cult practices in public and private spaces. This enables better understanding of the nature and impact of cult practice in socio-economic lifeways in the Iron I period, a time during which virtually no contemporary records exist and very little is known. Chalices from funerary, temple, domestic and palace contexts at the site of Pella in the north Jordan Valley have been investigated using organic residue analysis, specifically lipidomics. Chalices from similar contexts from other contemporary sites, including Beth Shan, Tall es- Saidiyeh and Ba'qah Valley Cave A4, have also been analysed. By moving beyond single contexts, 'Closer to the Gods' compares the intersection between ritual practices in public, private, temple and secular contexts, first at one site and then on a regional level. This allows consideration of the degree to which cult practice is shared across associated sites. The broad archaeological narrative would encourage a view that 'Canaanite lowland' culture shared cultic beliefs, but this remains to be established at a granular/functional level, as current assessments rely overly on architectural, funerary and ceramic assemblage similarities.

Keywords

Chalice, Cult, Trade, Aromatics, Organic Residue Analysis

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