



## ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

# Connecting with the Divine: Tracing the figure of the Ritual Specialists in Early Bronze Age II-III Southern Levant through Iconographic Evidence

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## Abstract

The Southern Levantine Early Bronze Age II–III, which lasted from roughly 3100 to 2500 BCE, saw the emergence, peak, and fall of the region's first urbanization. At a regional level, it also witnessed the development of largely integrated economies based on the work of highly specialized craftsmen and the existence of a dense network of exchanges between communities. Due to the lack of written records it is challenging to prove the existence of specialists overseeing administration and cult. A detailed re-examination of the iconographic material, including cylinder seal impressions and clay figurines, can assist in elucidating aspects pertaining to regional ritual practices and identifying specialists involved in rituals and cults. The purpose of this study is to use archaeological and iconographic records to reconsider the existence of "cult specialists" in Early Bronze Age urban society. Furthermore, it emphasizes the distinguishing traits that made these figures identifiable within a shared visual code among people within the "cultural urban koine" of the Early Bronze Age.

## Keywords

Early Bronze Age, Southern Levant, ritual practices, iconography

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