Fuel For Lamps: Organic Residues Preserved in Iron Age Lamps Excavated at the Site of Sahab in Jordan

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First published: 8 February 2017
DOI: 10.1111/arcm.12288
Cited by (CrossRef): 0 articles

Abstract

Five Iron Age ceramic lamps from a tomb at the site of Sahab in the south-eastern part of central Jordan were analysed using gas chromatography – mass spectrometry (GC–MS). The results of this study provide data on the type of fuel used in three of these lamps. The study proposes that animal fat, possibly of ruminant origin, was used in three Early Iron Age II lamps. The material used in the other two Iron Age I lamps could not be determined due to the absence of diagnostic biomarkers. The data obtained from the lamps can be put in conjunction with the archaeological evidence on the availability of domestic animals and, most probably, use of their products at the site of Sahab during the Iron Age.