



Funerary Dinning or Offerings for the Dead? Archaeobotanical Evidence from the Shaft Tombs at Petra, Jordan

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There is substantial evidence from ancient literary sources and archaeological remains for the practice of funerary dining and offerings to the dead, such as ceramics and faunal remains. However, mortuary behaviors rarely are explored using evidence from plants. This paper seeks to gain a better understanding of the role of plants in this type of ritual context through the analysis of botanical remains recovered from tomb contexts in Petra. Excavation of several rock-cut shaft tombs on the North Ridge in Petra dating to the Nabataean period (1st centuries B.C.E. and C.E.) aimed to learn more about the lives of ordinary people in the city through the recovery of bioarchaeological evidence and artifacts. Several tombs were excavated over three seasons (2012, 2014 & 2016) and recovered human remains as well as burial goods aid in a better understanding of the civic population and their cultural funerary practices. Analysis of archaeobotanical remains recovered from sediment samples taken from the tombs indicates the presence of a variety foodstuff such as *Triticum* sp. (wheats), *Hordeum vulgare* (barley), *Lens culinaris* (lentil), *Vitis vinifera* (grape), *Ficus carica* (fig) and *Phoenix dactylifera* (date). These finds provide intriguing evidence of materials either consumed or offered to the dead during ritual feasting. This study, in association with the continued analysis of bioarchaeological remains and ceramics expands our knowledge of funerary dining and contributes to a broader understanding of local diet and ritual in the ancient world.