

INVESTIGATING DIETARY CHANGES AT TELL KAMID EL-LOZ, BETWEEN THE 2ND-1ST MILLENNIA B.C.E USING PLANT MICROREMAINS RECOVERED FROM DENTAL CALCULUS

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Tell Kamid el-Loz, identified as the site of Kumidi in the Amarna Letters, is located in the Lebanese Beqa Plain on the central trade axis between the southern Levant and the early urban centers of Syria. The tell was inhabited since the late Neolithic (5th millennium BC) and flourished during the Middle (ca. 2000-1600 BC) and Late Bronze Age (ca. 1600-1200 BC), as attested by the temples and palaces uncovered during excavation. The settlement lost its importance in the Iron Age (1200-600 B.C.), the most important find in the subsequent Persian period (600-330 B.C.) being a large cemetery. Approximately 108 burials of individuals dated between the Middle Bronze Age and the Persian period were uncovered at the site. These burials had previously been investigated within the framework of the Max Planck Harvard Research Center for the Archaeoscience of the Ancient Mediterranean (MHAAM) at the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History in Jena (MPI-SHH) to identify population genetic developments, biological relationships between individuals, their mobility and diseases. In addition, all of the individuals were radiocarbon dated. Of these burials, fifteen usable samples of dental calculus from individuals dating to the Middle Bronze Age through to the Persian period were studied using phytolith and starch analysis to understand the diversity and dynamics of individual human nutrition. Here, I will discuss the results of the micro-remain analysis carried out on dental calculus from individuals at Kamid el-Loz, and integrate this new dataset with the existing bioarchaeological data to inform on the dietary changes of its inhabitants.

Keywords

Phytoliths, Starch, Dental Calculus, Diet reconstruction, Ancient Near East, Tell Kamid el-Loz

Note/comment