

A ROMAN FAMILY TOMB AT AMMAN CITADEL HILL

by
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This tomb was discovered accidentally on July 26, 1980 while workmen were leveling ground for a new sewerage line in the area situated north of the Amman Citadel Hill at the road junction leading to wadi el-Haddadeh and down town Amman. The discovery was reported immediately, and the Department of Antiquities took over excavation of the tomb; ten labourers were employed to lift and carry, and the actual clearance and recording was done by Mr. Hifzi Haddad, Chief Inspector of Antiquities assisted by Mr. Tayseer Atayyat, Inspector of Antiquities at the Department. The plans, photographs and preliminary description of the tomb, and its contents were prepared by both inspectors, to whom the writer wishes to express sincere thanks and appreciation.

Description of the tomb and its contents:

The tomb complex appears to have been originally a natural cave, which had been completely prepared including the main hall by chiseling. Two benches raised 0.35 m above floor level at the east and south sides of the central main hall were also found to have been chiseled from natural rock. In the west side of this main hall was found a loculus 1.40 m deep and raised 0.35 m high above floor level. The doorway to the tomb was located south of this loculus and sealed with undressed stones reinforced with mud (Pl. LXXXII). There was no attempt to extend excavation beyond the doorway as such excavation would have

endangered the main road leading from Jabl el-Hussein down to the city center and in which case a diversion of vehicular traffic was absolutely necessary and that would have created chaos not only in the tomb area but also in the city as a whole.

The stone sarcophagi were discovered in the main hall and located parallel to each other at the east side of the hall. The first sarcophagus on the west measured 1.75 x 0.55 x 0.85m while the second sarcophagus laid west of the first, measured 1.60 x 0.55 x 0.85 m. Both sarcophagi have similarly decorated lids, consisting of carved triangles on the four corners, and stylized crescent shape garlands over six-petaled rosettes in the center on both sides of each lid (Pl. LXXXIII, 1). Each sarcophagus was found to contain the bones of a man and a woman mixed with bracelets and broken glass bottles (LXXXIV.). The smaller sarcophagus contained in addition a badly corroded bronze coin which seems to have belonged to emperor Pupineus (238 A.D.)¹ Pl. LXXXIII, 2 a plain silver bracelet twisted at the ends, and three bronze rings, one of which is in the shape of joined decorated oval circles. Four pottery lamps with moulded decoration and a piriform juglet were found on the floor of the main hall east of the two sarcophagi. Lamps 1 and 4 belong to the 2nd Century A.D.², while 2 and 3 are dated to the 3rd Century A.D.³. (pl. LXXXV).

Judging from the style and technique of the tomb and its contents, it must have been in use during the 2nd and 3rd Centuries A.D.

1. R.A.G. Carson, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum* London 1962, VI P. 251 & PL. 43,11.

2. G. Bisheh, *ADAJ* XVIII (1973) P. 65, & PL.

XXXVII, I.

3. O. Broneer, *Terra Cottalamps, Corinth*, Vol. IV, Part II Cambridge, 1930. Type XXVIII Pl. XIII-XVII (3rd - 4th Century A.D.).

Inventory:

<i>Exc. No.</i>	<i>Plate</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Burial</i>
1.	LXXXV	Pottery lamp, pear shape, long splayed nozzle, grooved stump handle, decorated with moulded dots arranged in concentric circles around wide filling hole Buff ware covered with brownish slip.	Main hall
2.	LXXXV	Pottery lamp, circular shape, small circular nozzle, grooved stump handle, decorated with moulded small concentric circles spaced at equal distance around wide filling-hole, dark grey ware with calcite grits.	Main hall
3.	LXXXV	Pottery lamp, oval shape, small circular nozzle, grooved stump handle, wide filling-hole buff ware, covered with brownish slip.	Main hall
4.	LXXXV	Pottery lamp, pear shape, long splayed nozzle, grooved stump handle, decorated with moulded floral design around wide filling-hole, buff ware covered with brownish slip.	Main hall
5.	LXXXV	Lower half of pottery juglet, dark grey ware, traces of ribbing.	Main hall
6.	LXXXVI	Lower half of ribbed pottery juglet flat disc base, dark grey ware.	Main hall
7.	LXXXVI	Pottery juglet, piriform shape, moulded rim, ribbed body, flat disc base, dark grey ware.	Main hall
8-17	LXXXVI	Broken glass bottles of various lengths; No. 9 is complete and has dark colour.	East sarcophagus
18.	LXXXVII	Twisted Silver bracelet	West Sarcophagus
19-20.	LXXXVII	Plain bronze rings	West Sarcophagus
21.	LXXXIII, 2	Bronze Coin of Papienus obv. Laur. Head of emperor, Inscr. around: (Faint) ob. IMP. CAES. M. CLOD. PAPIENUS. AUG. Rev. Liberalitas draped, Standing front, head L., holding abacus in r. hand and cornucopiae in L. Inscr. around LIBERALITAS AVGVSTORVM; in ex.S.C.	West Sarcophagus
22 (a)	LXXXVII	Bronze ring in the shape of joined and decorated oval circles.	West Sarcophagus
22 (b)	LXXXVII	Bronze ring seen in Profile	

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