

QAṬANAH: RESCUE EXCAVATION

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The Geographical Location

The site is located near Queen Rania al-Abdulla Street towards the University of Jordan (Fig. 1), and this area is known for being a fertile land for agriculture before it was used as a residential area. The geological formation of the area merely consists of a limestone layer. The coordinates of the site: Long. 35.89460, Lat.31.98589

The Field Work

During the demolishing works of an old house, a number of caves were revealed that contained pottery and human bones. And due to the importance of the site and the findings, the archaeological rescue excavation works started in July 2011.

Ruins of burial rooms were revealed carved in the soft lime stone; unfortunately parts of the original roof was destroyed by the construction works which made it difficult to Determine the

original shape of the entrance, if either it was a shaft or an open entrance. (Fig. 2)

Architectural Analysis: The Cemetery Description

The top plan for the cemetery shows the presence of three carved in the limestone chambers for the burring.

Tomb 1: (4X5 m), it has one chamber for burring and there were 3 jars with some remains of human bones (Fig. 3) (they were in bad condition due to the high humidity).

Tomb 2: (4X9 m) it consists of two chambers, pots were found with two human skeletons remains.

Tomb 3: (4X6 m) it consists of one chamber, and it was covered with dirt and fallen stones. (Fig. 4)

The primary analysis confirms that presence of the cemetery that dates back to the Early



1. The destruction of the site.



2. The destruction of the site.



3. Tomb number 1 from inside.

Bronze IV; it consists of a number of burial rooms carved into the limestone, this type of burials known in Jordan during the Early Bronze period (3300-1900 BC).

Pottery Analysis

The excavated pottery can be classified into pots and jugs that have the Early Bronze IV characteristics were found in the tombs dates back to the EB IV. Many parallel examples in Jordan such as Umm el-Bighal Cemetery “west Amman”(Helms 1988: 329)

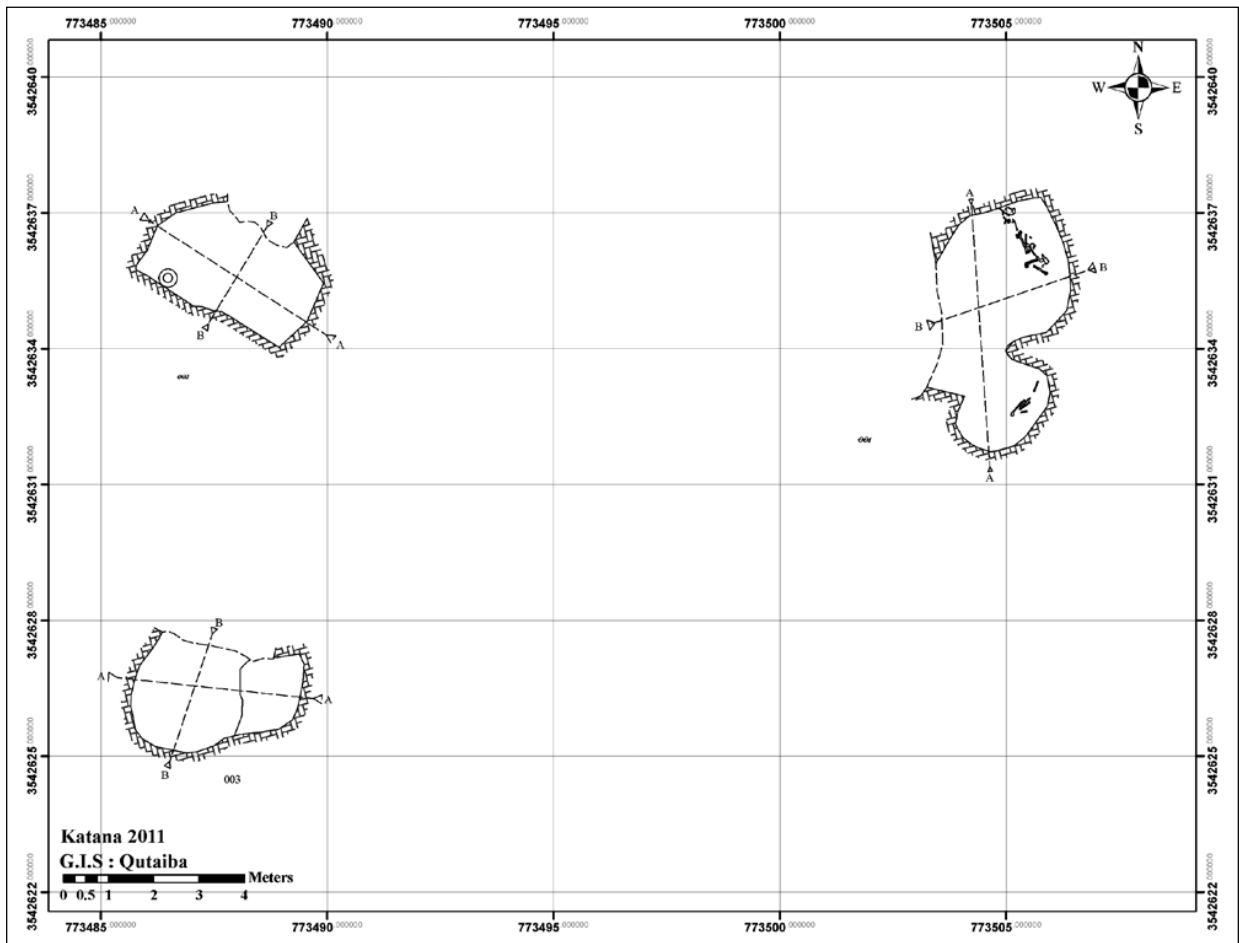
Osteology Analysis

The sorted strongly fragmented and scanty

human skeletal remains belonged to 3 individuals, 2 from Tomb1 (A and B) and one in Tomb2. The bones were covered by calcareous deposits from the limestone of the cave tomb. During the brush-cleaning, the bones smelled lightly perfumed! Bone analyses were undertaken as possible using standard macroscopic methods (related subjects detailed in Knußmann 1988, Bass 1995, White and Folkner 2005).

Tomb 1-A

Only fragmentary and scanty postcranial bones were available, neither skull nor teeth. It was possible to recognize and partly reconstruct the right humerus, clavicular shaft, incomplete



4. The top plan of the site.

long bones of the lower extremities, the vertebrae axis; C7; L2; L3 and body of L4 or L5. Few feet bones were present but were difficult to distinguish from those of individual B. The bones evidently belong to an adult individual. The trabecular bone of proximal epiphyses in some long bones indicates an age above 25 years. General bone robusticity suggest that the remains were of a male individual. The age at death of individual A could be much higher than 25 years. This is indicated by strong degenerative changes observed on the *facis articularis anterior* and *posterior* of the axis grade IV and V, with eburnation, deposits and porosity. Body surfaces of the lumbar vertebrae L2 and L3 revealed lesser degenerative changes, grade III. Small Schmorl's nodes were observed on the on C1 and the L4,5 (Fig. 5). A brown coloration was observed in the shaft's middle part of the right humerus. Within that area, a lesion-like defect penetrated the cortex and reached the tra-

becular bone. The structure could be pathologic or postnatal induced by the corrosion of an iron object placed nearby (Fig. 6). The sharp edge in the lower third of the left tibia, along the *margo anterior* is a normal anatomic variant.



5. The available vertebrae from tomb 1.



6. The long bones of individual A of tomb 1

Tomb 1-B

The very scanty postcranial fragments (Fig. 7) probably are of a young adult (~20year), indicated by recent epiphyseal fusion and ossification of available long bone parts. Though the material could be that of a female individual, evidence remains weak. The material allowed no further analyses.

Tomb 2

The fragmentary human bone material, allocated to one individual, was mostly from the distal extremities. It also included two incomplete humeri, radial shaft. The fragments also include one vertebral, one of the left pelvic bone, two cranial, and multiple small ribs, but none of the teeth or pectoral parts. The left pelvic piece revealed a wide sciatic notch thus indicating a female burial. The femur revealed



7. All the remains available from individual B from Qatana's Tomb1.

completed epiphyseal fusion, which was not the case in the upper humeral epiphyses. This allowed estimating an 18-22 years age at death for this individual (Fig. 8). This was supported by finding no trace of any degenerative changes on the available joint surfaces. On the right tibia, just below the epiphyses, the shaft appears like a slightly deflated tube. This unusual shape in that region resulted from a relative thick blood vessel, marked by the elongated depression area, entering through the nutrient foramen, i.e. not pathologic. Few measurements were possible on some bones. The right femur and tibia length (439, 366mm respectively) might suggest a 162-165cm body height.

The use of incenses

The use of incenses, ointments and perfumes is well known from ancient Egyptian burials as attested by resin "cakes" found in pre-dynastic burials (Raven, 1990:10), their use in mummifications of subsequent dynasties and in later Graeco-Roman as well as Coptic burials (Lucas, 1930; Raven, 1990: 13; Manniche, 2009:2; Wise, 2009:68). It is probable that the custom spread from Egypt to neighbouring East Mediterranean communities, from which many of the substances were imported, i.e. Lebanon, Palestine (Lucas, 1930:51; Raven, 1990:8). Yet, the available evidence is mostly restricted to suggesting the presence of perfume vessels, such as glass, pottery, metal and others, in the buri-



8. Bones of the lower extremities from Qatana's Tomb2 burial revealing the long depression (arrow) leading to the nutrient foramen of the right tibia. Notice the trace of recent distal epiphyseal fusion of the r. femur.



9. 3d laser scan for some of the artifacts.

als, particularly in Iron Age burials as reported from Crete (Gesell *et al.* 1990: 24), Asia Minor (Isin, 2002), Phoenicia (Gras *et al.*, 1991: 138) and Palestine (Rosik, 2001:52). During the Hellenistic and Roman periods the practice became popular in both urn and inhumation burials. This was evident in Roman burials from Greater Amman area (e.g. Abu-Shmeis and Nabulsi, 2009: 521) Jerash and many of the Khirbat as-Samrā Byzantine burials, as observed by the authors.

The Surrounding Archaeological Sites and the Parallel Examples:

Through the previous studies and the archaeological surveys in the areas around the cemetery site, we were able to identify some of the archaeological sites such as; Qatanah settlement, but it dates back to the Roman times (Abu-Shmeis 2006:4), in addition to the Roman cemeteries (i.e Sports City cemetery), (Haron 2004).

It was possible to identify this site by studying the surrounding archaeological sites and the parallel examples through the previous studies and surveys. Nevertheless, the archaeological excavations did not prove any existing off during the Early Bronze Age, and in 1972 a cemetery was found near Qatanah which dates back to the EBIV. And it consists of a cave that has a burial chamber with a shaft entrance. As well as to the cemeteries found in Amman like; Jabal Taj (Dajani 1967\68), Jabal Jufah (Hadidi1982), Tilāl al-‘Ali (Suliman1985), al-Bassah (Wa-heeb 1994), and Umm al-Bighal.

And as for the pottery findings were revealed in the cemetery that dates back to the EBIV, that was proven through the features that were represented on the jars and jugs, and it is similar to the finding in Umm al-Beghal, and others.

Conclusion

The cemetery dates back to the Early Bronze Age IV as explained before, according to the evidence revealed. However, the lack of presence of settlements near or connected to the cemetery sheds the light on the question about who are these people, are they the original citizens, or are they a group of people who moved from the southern and northern parts of Syria and settled in the area during the end of the Early Bronze Age?

Through analysing the excavated tombs, we could not relate the site to any ethnic group. However, while cleaning the bones, a smell of perfume appeared and maybe this explains a new method of burying the dead in the EB IV, and it is connected with either a certain sect or an ethnic group (Fig. 9).

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