

Luweibdeh Roman Tomb¹

by
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The Department of Antiquities was informed, on July 9th, 1970, that while digging new manholes at Ibrahim Tuqan Street, in Mount Luweibdeh in Amman, two tombs grotto cut in soft limestone, in a rocky region were found (Plate I).

The first tomb is simply a small cavern in which bodies used to be placed. The accumulation of debris was thin. No skeletons or human bones were found. The cavern is roughly rectangular measuring 3.65 x 1.90 cms. Each of its sides (except the gateway side) ends with an alcove. The roof is semi-domical, 190 cms in height, starting from the center. The entrance of the tomb is approached from the north-east side, measuring 120 x 130 cms and closed with rough stones. It leads to a small open yard cut in the rock (Plate III). The floor of the cavern has been levelled out by stone sherds cut out from the roof (Plate I: 1).

The west alcove is separated with a line of rough stones. A spindical shaped pottery bottle (Plate II: 6) was found below these stones on a thin layer of debris. Separating this alcove indicates that this side of the tomb was re-used for other purposes in later times.

While cleaning the debris of the gateway a lamp (Plate II: 4) with a cross on its handle was found. It shows no sign of having been used.

The second tomb grotto,² cut in limestone is approximately four meters to the south of the first. It is 205 x 205 cms, having two loculi on each of the west and east sides and three loculi on the south side. Each loculus measur-

ing about 2.15 x 70 cms. The entrance of the tomb is approached from the northern side measuring 70 x 70 cms closed with rough stones and was quite undisturbed until the present excavation (Plate I: 2).

People living nearby said that they found some caverns similar to these tombs in the course of digging foundation trenches for their buildings.

The open area around is full of single tombs. It seems to have been an important cemetery area. Thus, we can say that this cemetery has three types of tombs:

1. Chamber tombs with alcoves,
2. Chamber tombs with loculi,
3. Single tombs in open area.

An inventory of finds is on the following page.

Most of the objects lay upon the floor of the grotto as a single-layer deposit. A pottery bottle (Plate II: 1) was found beside a human skeleton laid in one loculus in tomb No. 2. This object proves to be a parallel to two others found in a Herodian tomb at Wadi-el-Badan.³

Many pottery sherds and also Juglet (Plate II: 2) are ribbed. No positive signs, such as coins and inscriptions, were found to enable us to assign exact dates. However, the objects and sherds found are Roman and Byzantine which proves that this cemetery is Roman and was re-used in the Byzantine period.

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(*) See plates pp. 69-72.

(1) Awni Dajani, "A Herodian Tomb at Wadi-el-Badan," *A.D.A.J.* Vol. II (1953), page 78.

(2) G. Lankester Harding, "A Roman Family Vault on Jebel Jufeh," *Q.D.A.P.* Vol. XIV (1953), fig. 1.
(3) Awni Dajani, "An Herodian Tomb at Wadi-el-Badan," *A.D.A.J.* Vol. II (1953), Plate XI, Nos. 80, 81.

Inventory of finds

(Plates IV and V)

Ser. No.	J.A.M. Inv. No.	Description	Material	Fire	Slip	Remarks
1	12 457	Pottery bottle, flaring rim, tall neck.	Greyish	Med.	Red buff	Traces of brownish red paint on rim and neck. A.D.A.J. Vol. II, Pl. XI, Nos. 80, 81.
2	12 458	Juglet, cylindrical base.	Greyish	Soft	—	Slightly ribbed body, wheel made.
3	12 459	Lamp, decorated, pointed nozzle.	Slight brown	Hard	Buff ware	Vertical handle, ring base, two ridges mouth, smoked nozzle.
4	12 460	Lamp, decorated.	Light	Soft	—	Vertical handle, with cross. Two ridges mouth, unsmoked nozzle.
5	12 461	Pottery bottle, flaring rim, tall neck, almond shaped.	Greyish	Hard	Buff ware	Traces of brownish paint on rim and neck. A.D.A.J. Vol. II, Pl. XI, No. 79.
6	12 462	Spindle shape pottery bottle.	Greyish	Hard	Buff ware	Heavy body and tapering at both ends, not practical for use, missing mouth.

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