

## Burial Customs at Jericho

by

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Evidence of occupation on the tell of Jericho lasts from the Mesolithic period, c. 9000 B. C. down to the Iron Age, probably to the capture of the country by the Babylonians in 587 B. C. For almost all this very long period, there is evidence of how the dead were buried, and for some periods the burial practices provide more evidence concerning the population than do the houses in which the people lived during life. The evidence also continues later, for though no one lived on the ancient site after the 6th century B. C., burials were still made in the neighbourhood, both in graves dug into the ruins of the town and in the surrounding area. The evidence of the way in which the inhabitants were buried not only often provides illustrations of how they had lived, but also the changes in practice provides evidence of the arrival of new groups and peoples.

The earliest evidence of the presence of men at 'Ain es-Sultan is the construction of a sanctuary by visiting Mesolithic hunters, members of a group that flourished in Palestine at the end of the Ice Age, whose remains are found, for instance, in caves on Mount Carmel and in huts near Lake Huleh; their culture has been called Natufian from finds in Wadi Natuf. The builders of the sanctuary probably only visited the spring at intervals. As far as we know, they did not live there nor bury their dead there, though their relatives in the Wadi Mughara on Mount Carmel and 'Ain Mallaha

near Lake Huleh buried their dead with elaborate ceremony.

The descendants of the builders of the sanctuary gradually settled down at Jericho, attracted by the excellent water supply of the spring, though they still lived in huts of slight construction, more suited to the wandering way of life of their ancestors. We do not know how they buried their dead. They may have disposed of them casually, but it could well be that the lack of evidence is due to the fact that the levels of this period were investigated only in a very limited area.

After about a thousand years of this transitional Proto-Neolithic period, Jericho developed into a town, with imposing fortifications which can be dated to c. 8000 B. C. The burial customs of this first full Neolithic stage, designated Pre-Pottery Neolithic A, are fully documented by the excavation finds. The inhabitants buried the dead, or at least many of them, beneath the floors of the houses. These floors were substantially constructed, with a layer of cobbles beneath a surface of mud-plaster. Into these floors were cut oval pits, to a depth of c. 0.50 m. In the pits were placed the bodies, so strongly contracted that the legs were probably tied up to the chest (pl. 1. A, B). The burials were all of single individuals, and ordinarily only one associated with any one period of a house. This might suggest that a house was

pulled down and rebuilt after its owner died, but there is not clear evidence to support this suggestion. No objects seem to have been placed with the dead person. In one case there was a bone pin on the shoulder, but it was not clear whether this secured a garment or a shroud in which he had been wrapped.

Between the Pre-Pottery Neolithic A period and the succeeding Pre-Pottery Neolithic B period there was a complete break. The stratification of the tell showed that there was a period of erosion, though its length cannot be estimated, before the arrival of newcomers, who brought with them new types of houses and used different types of flint implements and stone utensils. Their burial methods were also different, though they still buried beneath the floors of the houses. The graves, however, were not the neat, fairly deep oval of the earlier stage, but much more shallow, with hardly any defined pit at all. The bodies were usually in a flexed position, though not nearly so strongly contracted as the earlier ones (pl. 2. A). There was also a most curious very general practice of removing the cranium, usually leaving the lower jaw behind. This is well illustrated in plate 2. B, where the body is intact, the cranium missing, and the lower jaw lying displaced near by. There is no evidence that the neck was severed to remove the skull, and it appears that the body was buried and left sufficiently long for the ligaments to decay and enable the skull to be pulled off. An extreme example of the pulling to pieces of bodies to remove skulls is illustrated by plate 3. A. Within a relatively small area were the remains of at least 30 individuals. Many limbs were in articulation, but detached from the body. In the foreground of plate 3. A. for instance, are the legs of an individual lying over the torso. Each leg is in complete articulation, but they are in reversed position, one foot being to the left of the view,

the other to the right. The implication is that there was a thorough disarrangement of the bodies at a time when decay was sufficiently advanced to allow a limb to be pulled from a body but not so far that there was not still enough flesh and ligaments in position to hold together, for instance, the small bones of the feet.

This large collection of bodies must be the evidence of some disaster. Both the thorough search of this pile of dead bodies, and the removal of skulls from individual burials, can almost certainly be related to the practice of covering skulls with plaster modelled in the shape of the flesh that had once covered them, with eyes indicated by shells. In all, ten of these plastered skulls were found, seven in one deposit, two near by, and one far away at the northern end of the mound. It is reasonable to interpret this practice as a form of ancestor worship.

The highly developed urban culture of Pre-Pottery Neolithic B came to as abrupt an end as did its predecessor. There is no evidence that Pre-Pottery Neolithic B continued much after 6000 B. C. There is no precise evidence at Jericho for the date of the succeeding stage, that of Pottery Neolithic A, but from links between other Palestinian sites with settlements in Syria it is unlikely that the spread of the practice of making pottery from Anatolia and Northern Syria, where it was established by c. 6000 B. C., reached Palestine until c. 5000 B. C. The first pottery users of Jericho, who may conceivably have been descendants of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B population who had been living a non-sedentary life that left little evidence, produced an individual type of pottery of which there is little evidence elsewhere. Their way of life was primitive, and they lived in huts sunk into the ground. There is no evidence of how they

buried their dead. It is certain that they were not buried in the vicinity of the huts on the tell. It is possible that there was an external cemetery area which has not been located, but it is perhaps even more likely that the disposal of the dead was completely casual and that the bodies were just deposited outside the settlement to be dealt with by natural agencies. The next stage, Pottery Neolithic B, is marked by new types of pottery, with much wider contacts in Palestine and Syria, but with no great change in the character of the settlement and likewise no evidence as to burial customs.

In the second half of the fourth millennium, there is a very marked change in burial customs at Jericho. In the stage, in general terms Late Chalcolithic, for which I use the term Proto-Urban, rock-cut tombs in the area outside the settlement are found for the first time. Part of this area to the west of the tell was investigated in the 1930-36 excavations. The area investigated by the 1952-58 expedition to the north-west and north of the tell is shown in plate 4 covered by the refugee village established in 1948.

There is clear evidence that the tombs were in origin rock-cut chambers approached by shafts. The limestone into which the tombs were cut is, however, soft. In antiquity it suffered very considerable erosion. The date of this can be fixed between c. 2600 B. C. and 2300 B. C., for every single one of the Proto-Urban and Early Bronze Age tombs has lost its roof, whereas those of the succeeding Intermediate Early Bronze - Middle Bronze period and of the Middle Bronze Age have their roofs and shafts intact. The sudden appearance of a new method of burial is evidence of the

arrival of a new group of people. The newcomers are found fairly widespread in Palestine. The evidence of the Jericho tombs makes it possible to show that at least three groups of people were arriving in Palestine at approximately the same time, who subsequently mingled in different combinations on different sites. On all sites, the evidence comes largely from tombs; there was occupation on the settlement sites that were subsequently to become Early Bronze Age towns, but the structures were slight.

The first group to arrive at Jericho has been designated Proto-Urban A. The essence of their burial practice consisted of large communal tomb chambers containing the remains of hundreds of individuals. As found, almost all the burials were secondary, with the bodies dismembered. The first tomb of the period to be discovered, tomb A 94<sup>1</sup> was large, c. 5 m. in diameter, with the rear wall surviving to a height of 2.50 m. The entrance was flanked by two upright stones (pl. 3. B). Round the walls of the two-thirds of the tomb that could be excavated, the skulls of 113 individuals were arranged in neat rows (pl. 5. B), together with a very large number of pottery vessels, mainly shallow bowls and juglets (pl. 5. B). In the centre of the chamber was a pile of other bones, mostly heavily burnt.

The burial process was further elucidated by tomb K2<sup>2</sup>. It contained the skulls of at least 326 individuals, packed round the walls of the chamber up to four deep. In the centre were piled the other bones, numerous but far too few to match the 326 skulls. An examination of the skulls showed that they had been carefully separated from the rest of the body

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(1) Jericho I, p. 16 ff.

(2) Jericho II, p. 8 ff.

after the ligaments had decayed, and stacked with such care that even the delicate nasal bones were preserved. In the pile of bones in the centre, some were in articulation, for instance, portions of the spine. Another tomb, K3<sup>3</sup>, showed a similar piling of skulls, 65 in number, ranked three deep, and an even greater disproportion to the number of other bones, which were very scanty.

The combined evidence of the five tombs of this period excavated, in which the remains of *c.* 565 individuals were found, but for which a figure of *c.* 790 can be calculated<sup>4</sup> is that the first stage was that of human burials of intact bodies. Subsequently, no doubt as the chamber became full, the skulls were carefully separated and stacked, and the other bones disposed of. In most of the tombs, they must have simply been thrown out, but in tomb A 94, probably the earliest, they were at intervals cremated in the centre of the chamber.

The second group to arrive at Jericho, Proto-Urban B, probably mingling with their predecessors, introduced a new type of pottery and new burial customs. Their pottery is characterised by elaborate painted decoration of grouped parallel lines (pl. 6. A). Their burials, found as distinct layers in the same tombs as the earlier ones, were marked by the placing of the bodies on prepared stone platforms (pl. 6. B). Some of the bodies were disarticulated, some intact, and there was no evidence of the piling of skulls. The third group, Proto-Urban C, is not found at Jericho.

The charcoal from tomb A 94 provided a Carbon-14 date of + (or -) 3260 B. C., which the new Suess calibration suggests should be

dated to *c.* 3,900 B. C. The fringes of the Early Bronze Age have now been reached. There is indeed no break between this stage and the full Early Bronze Age, with pottery especially of Porto-Urban B type continuing into the beginning of that period, and the burials continuing to be in great numbers in large communal tombs. The pottery however, suggests the arrival of a further group, bringing more elaborate forms and a higher technique, especially in the use of a beautifully burnished red slip (fig. 1).

The tombs excavated in the northern and western cemetery area cover the length of the Early Bronze Age, perhaps some eight hundred years. A total of 9 tombs of which the largest contained evidence of 300 and the other largest 50 to 80 burials is obviously inadequate for this length of time. Only three tombs belong to Early Bronze I and II, and the rest to Early Bronze III. There may be a further area not yet located, and it is also very possible that some have been completely destroyed by erosion, since the walls of those found survived only to a height of 30 cm. or less. All tombs contained multiple disarranged burials, with hardly a single intact body. The general practice of the preceding period of clearing out the chamber at intervals and retaining skulls and offerings was continued, but there is an absence of the neat care in arranging the skulls in rows round the walls.

Tomb F 4 (fig. 2) of Early Bronze III provides the clearest evidence of the process that took place; on the evidence of the skulls it contained 89 burials. The pottery is illustrated on pl. 7. A. The fill could be classified by its character into five areas. In area B (fig. 2) in the north-west sector there were 16 skulls with hardly any long bones. Area A in the south-west sector contained hardly any bones,

(3) *Jericho II*, p. 27 ff.

(4) *Jericho II*, p. 3.

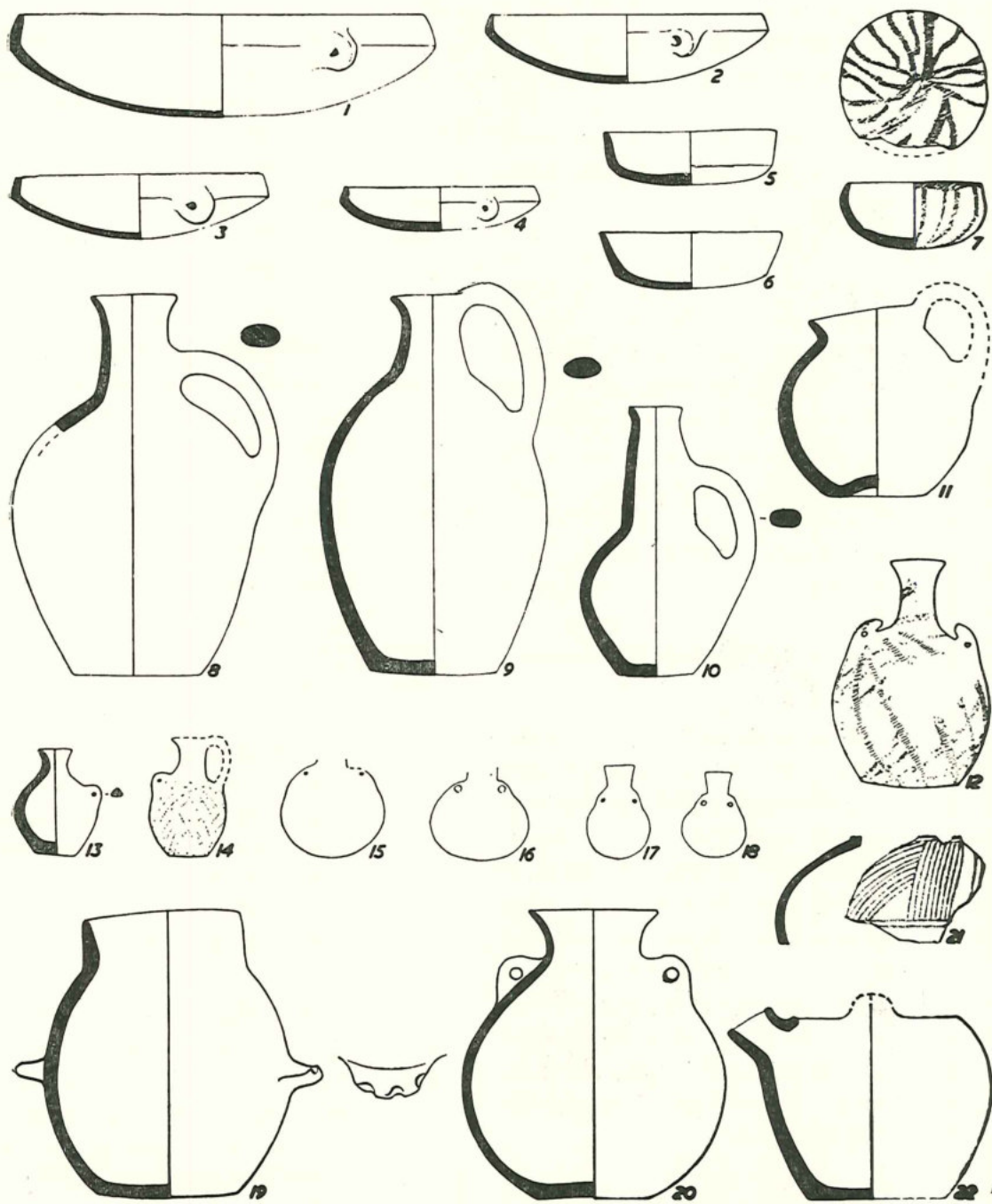
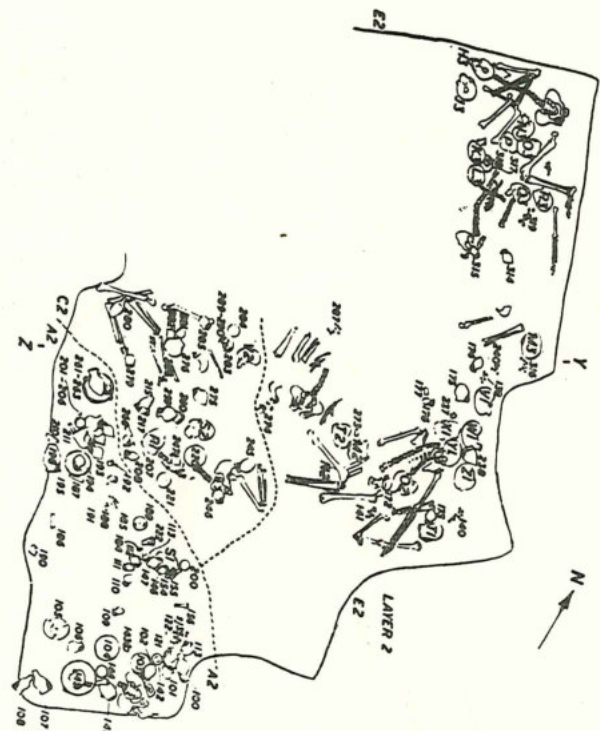


Fig. 1. Pottery from Early Bronze Age tomb A 108.



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METRES

JERICHO TOMB F.4

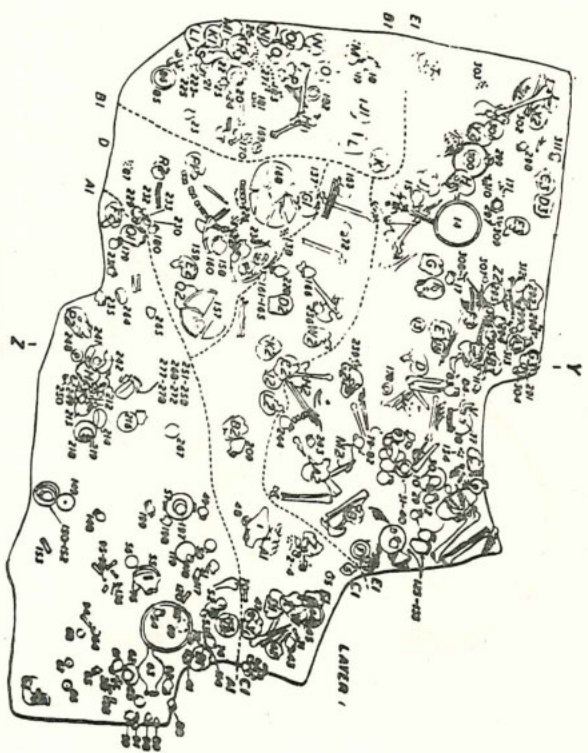
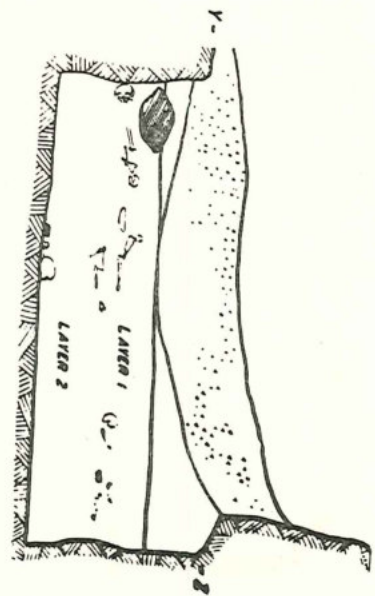


Fig. 2. Plan of Early Bronze Age tomb F. 4.

but large numbers of pots. Area C in the centre contained scattered skulls and bones, with some of the limbs in articulation. The virtually intact skeletons were found in Area E along the east side and Area D between B and A on the west side. The first stage would appear to be represented by the deposits in Area B and A. At its end, skulls were piled in one corner, pots in the other, and most of the rest of the bones were thrown out. The second clearance stage is represented by the deposit in Area C, piled against that of A. It took place at a time at which the decomposition of some of the bodies was not complete. The final stage is represented by the deposits in Areas D and E, in which burials were made in the cleared area on the east side and two or three on top of the earlier deposits on the west. These burials did not undergo any clearing-out process, but were somewhat disarranged when later bodies were put in.

A similar process of the filling up of the chamber by multiple burials, followed by a clearing-up process involving the throwing out of most of the bones, fits the evidence of all the other tombs, though the final erosion, and indeed probably phases of erosion or flooding and roof collapse during the use of the tombs, makes interpretation less easy.

The burial practices that are peculiar to the period that follows the end of the Early Bronze Age constitute the most striking example in the whole history of Palestine that this aspect of culture shows the arrival of newcomers. At Jericho the stratigraphical evidence for a break at the end of the Early Bronze Age is indisputable.<sup>5</sup> The evidence of completely new

burial customs is found throughout Palestine. For this reason I employ the term Intermediate Early Bronze - Middle Bronze period, henceforth E. B. -M. B. The change is one from multiple communal tombs, re-used over long periods with frequent clearances, to essentially individual tombs, with, characteristically, burials of single individuals, but in some subdivisions of the culture a few more. At Jericho there is also the difference that between the Early Bronze Age tombs and those of the E. B.-M. B. period there is very serious erosion. All the Early Bronze Age tombs have lost their roofs whereas those of the E. B.-M. B. period have roofs and shafts approximately intact.

These new, essentially individual, tombs appear at Jericho in a number of forms, a fact which has in itself very important implications. These can be classified under seven headings, of which four are important. In the first type, the Dagger-type tombs, shaft and chamber are small and neatly cut, usually about a metre in diameter, the shaft about 1.25 - 0.70 m. deep and the chamber only about 1.50 - 1.25 m. high (fig. 3 and pl. 7 A.). In the chamber there is normally a single individual, neatly disposed on his side in a crouched position. Many of the bodies have a dagger (pl. 7. B) lying by the arms; with others, presumed to be women, the only grave goods are beads. In a few instances, there were two burials in a single tomb. The total number of intact tombs of this type found is 45, with 60 others incomplete or re-used, and the number of individuals buried in the intact tombs is 54.

The second type is called the Pottery-type, since instead of daggers the grave goods consist

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(5) *Archaeology in the Holy Land*, p. 189 ff.

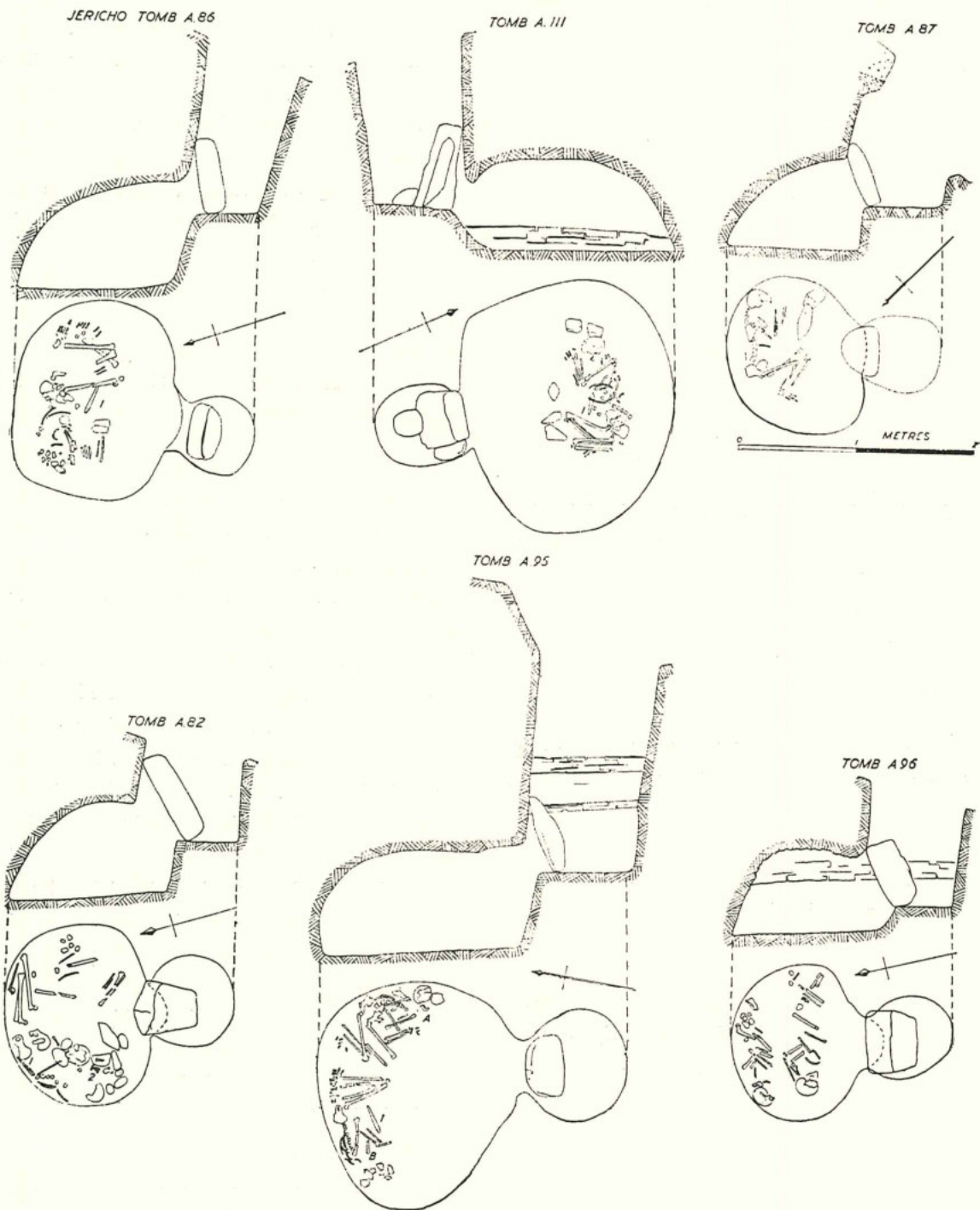


Fig. 3. Plans of E. B. - M. B Dagger-type tombs.



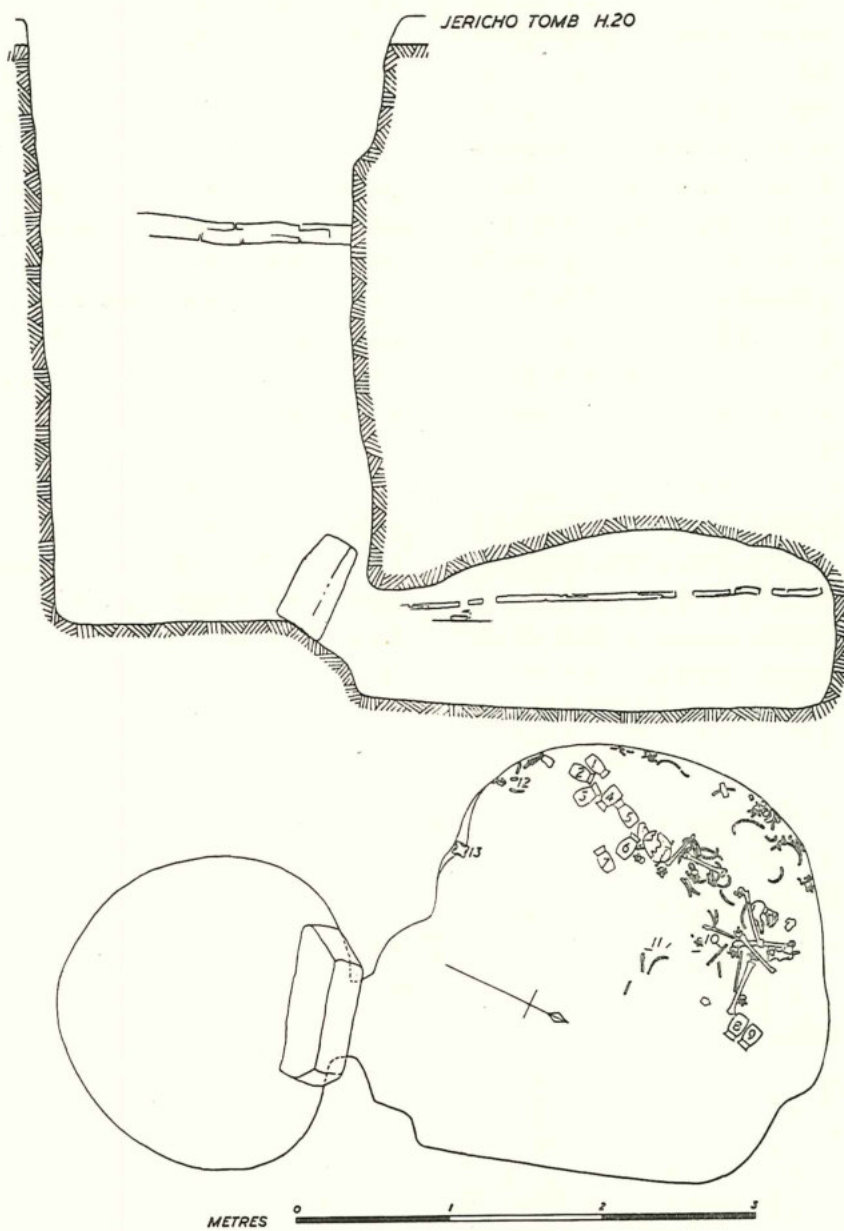


Fig. 4. Plan of E. B. - M. B. Pottery - type tomb H 20.

of pottery vessels; no weapons at all were found in this group. Other differences are even more striking. The diameter of the shaft is about 2.50 - 1.40 m., the average depth about 3.75 - 2.50 m. The tomb chamber is still low, but the average size is about 2.90 to 2.60 m. (fig. 4).

The pottery offerings consist almost entirely of small, narrow jars with flaring rims (pl. 8. A) and the characteristic four-spouted lamp of the period, usually placed in a specially cut-niche in the rock wall of the chamber. The final and most striking difference

is the treatment of the body. These large tombs contained only one individual, but almost without exception, the skeleton is completely disarranged and often incomplete. There is no doubt that the bodies were completely skeletalized before being placed in the tomb, probably gathered together in a container of cloth or a basket. Evidence for such a container was in fact deduced by Professor Zeuner from the tracks of white ants, which eat vegetable matter and not flesh. The probable conclusion from the practice of depositing such fragmentary bodies in tomb chambers which required enormous labour to construct is that the group burying in such a manner was semi-nomadic in habit. Its members were probably pastoralists, migrating to the hills during the heat of the Jordan valley summer and when they returned to their winter headquarters at Jericho, bringing with them the bodies of those of the group who had died in

the meantime, bodies reduced by the passage of time, and possibly intentional exposure to carrion birds and animals, to bags of bones. There is a certain amount of evidence that the tombs were dug in advance, and not for a particular individual, and one can perhaps deduce the existence of professional grave-diggers catering for what was obviously a flourishing market. Eighty-six intact tombs of this type were found, with 56 incomplete or disturbed, and at least 19 others were re-used during the Middle Bronze Age.

The third type of tomb has been given the name Square-Shaft. In size, the tombs of this type fall between those of the Dagger type and those of the Pottery type. It is clearly differentiated from the Pottery-type by the fact that the shafts are in plan rectangular (fig. 5). The number of tombs assigned to this category is

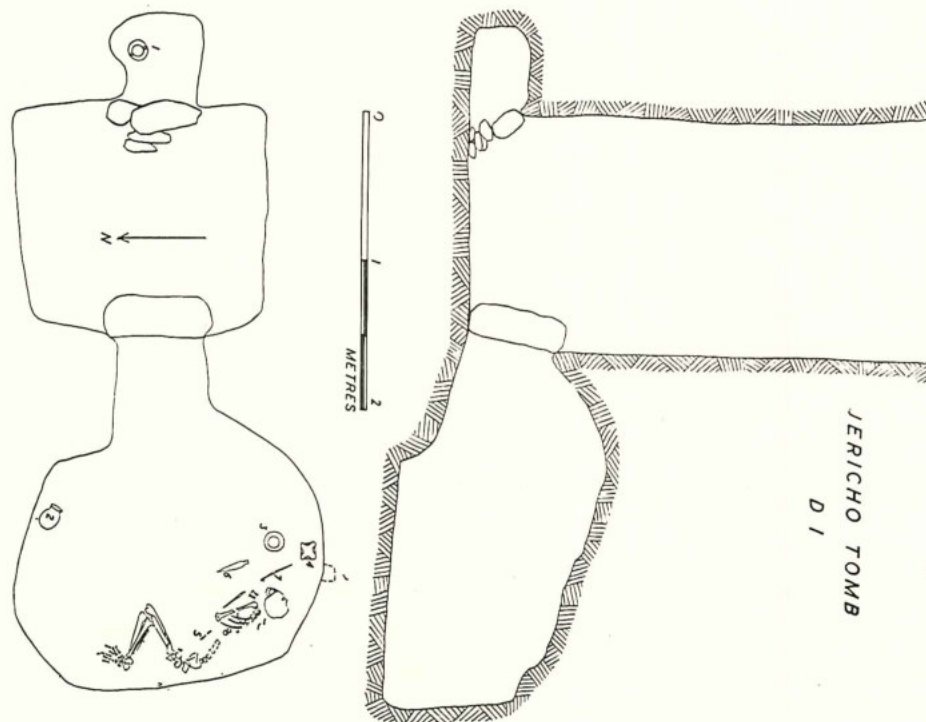


Fig. 5. Plan of E. B. - M.B. Square-shaft type tomb D I.

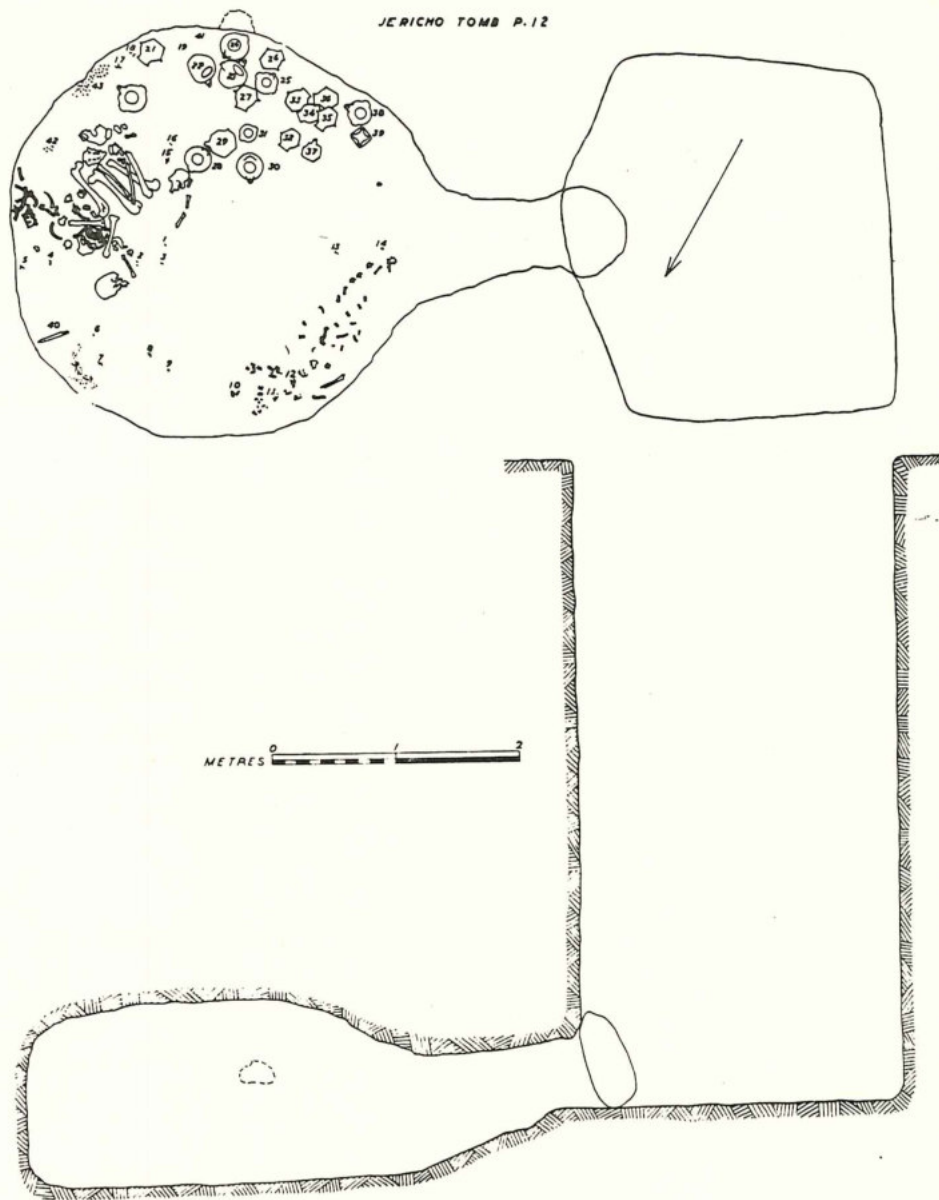


Fig. 6. Plan of E. B. - M. B. Outsize-type tomb P 12.

small, but the characteristic burial is probably intact, differentiating it from Pottery-type tombs. It is also differentiated by the fact that the grave goods contain both weapons and pottery. The daggers include a type with a square butt that is unusual in the Dagger-type tombs,

but is found in the Outsize-type tombs. The weapons also include a javelin, never found in the Dagger-type tombs. The pottery vessels are of the types found in the Pottery-type tombs, quite distinct from those found in the Outsize-type tombs. The differences make it

clear that this group, though relatively small in the number of excavated examples, must be placed in a separate category.

The fourth type of tomb is the most striking of all. It has been given the name Outsize, justified both by dimensions of the shaft and size of tomb chamber, and by number of grave

goods and the somewhat bloated pots deposited. Examples of the plans and sections of these tombs are given on figs. 6-7. The depths of the shafts reach a maximum of 7 m., and the majority range from 6 m. to 4 m.; the largest tomb chamber is 5.90 m. by 4 m. These are the extreme limits, but all are on this outsize scale, and all exceed the dimensions of the Pottery-

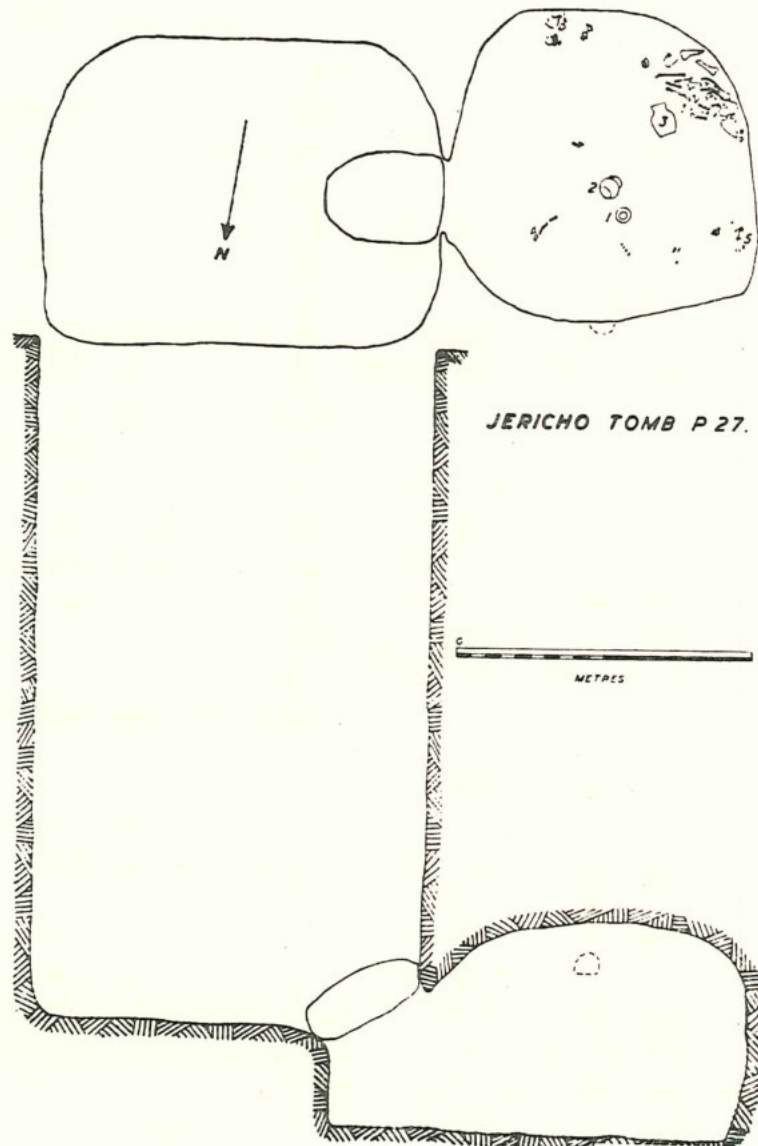


Fig. 7. Plan of E. B. - M. B. Outsize - type tomb P 27.

type tomb. The burial practice, even on this enormous scale of tomb chamber, seems to be that for a single individual, with the skeletal remains almost always completely disintegrated. A further differentiation is that the pottery vessels (pl. 8. B) that comprise the majority of the offerings are large and fat compared with the somewhat austere vessels of the Pottery-type tombs. The offerings also included a number of objects mounted in copper or bronze, not found in the Pottery-type tombs.

The other types of tombs found were the Bead type <sup>6</sup>, the Composite type <sup>7</sup> and the Multiple Burial type <sup>8</sup>. These are not important, and probably indicate various stages of mingling of incoming groups. It may be noted that the term Multiple Burial is relative only, for the single tomb of this type contained only three bodies. It was however different in other respects.

During the E.B.-M.B. period there are thus at Jericho a number of groups burying their dead in completely different ways. This diversity is confirmed in Palestine as a whole, though no single site has as many varieties as does Jericho. Some of the types found elsewhere are related to some of the Jericho types though none are identical. Pottery similar to that found in the Jericho Pottery-type tombs is, for instance, found at Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives and further north in the hill country at Khirbet Samieh. Pottery similar to that in the Outsize tombs is found at Megiddo and Beth-shan. There are connections between forms found in the single Multiple Burial type tomb and those found in the south at T. Ajjul and T. Duweir. There are these connections, but

there are many differences, some small and some very marked, and certainly groups are represented at other sites that are not found at Jericho. The conclusion can reasonably be made that there were in Palestine at this time a number of groups with allied but not identical material culture and habits. The inhabitants consisted therefore of a number of loosely allied tribes, and evidence from other sites confirms that of Jericho that some were semi-nomadic and that nowhere did they live in walled towns.

As abrupt a change marks the end of the E.B. - M.B. period as marks its beginning. The Middle Bronze Age inhabitants were once more town dwellers, and once more they buried in communal tombs. It is clear that again newcomers had arrived. Among the earliest of the burials are some on the tell itself. This is a practice found at Megiddo and T. Ajjul, but only appears in this very early stage at Jericho, perhaps indicating that the newcomers did not feel sure enough of their position to bury outside the walls, and that their numbers were still few enough to allow of space for burials within the town. In the very limited area in which remains of the Middle Bronze Age survive, two graves and one brick-built tomb were found. One of the graves had a single body, the second two. The brick-built tomb contained nine bodies, and it is clear that the practice was similar to that found in the rock-cut tombs involving the rough disarrangement of preceding burials to make room for the latest.

Apart from these burials on the tell, the burials of the Middle Bronze Age were in rock-cut tombs in the same areas as those of the preceding periods. Very many of them were in

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(6) *Jericho II*, p. 81 ff.  
(7) *Jericho II*, p. 143 ff.

(8) *Jericho II*, p. 157 ff.

fact in re-used tombs of the E.B. - M.B. period, as can be deduced both from the form of the tombs and the survival of remains of the E.B.-M.B. deposits.

The Middle Bronze Age tombs have in common with those of the Early Bronze Age the practice of multiple successive burials. The methods,

however, are quite distinct. The general practice seems to have been to clear a space on the floor of the chamber for the latest body by pushing the earlier bodies and their grave goods carelessly to the rear of the tomb. As a result, a mound of disordered bones and objects was gradually built up surrounding the area in which the latest bodies were successively placed

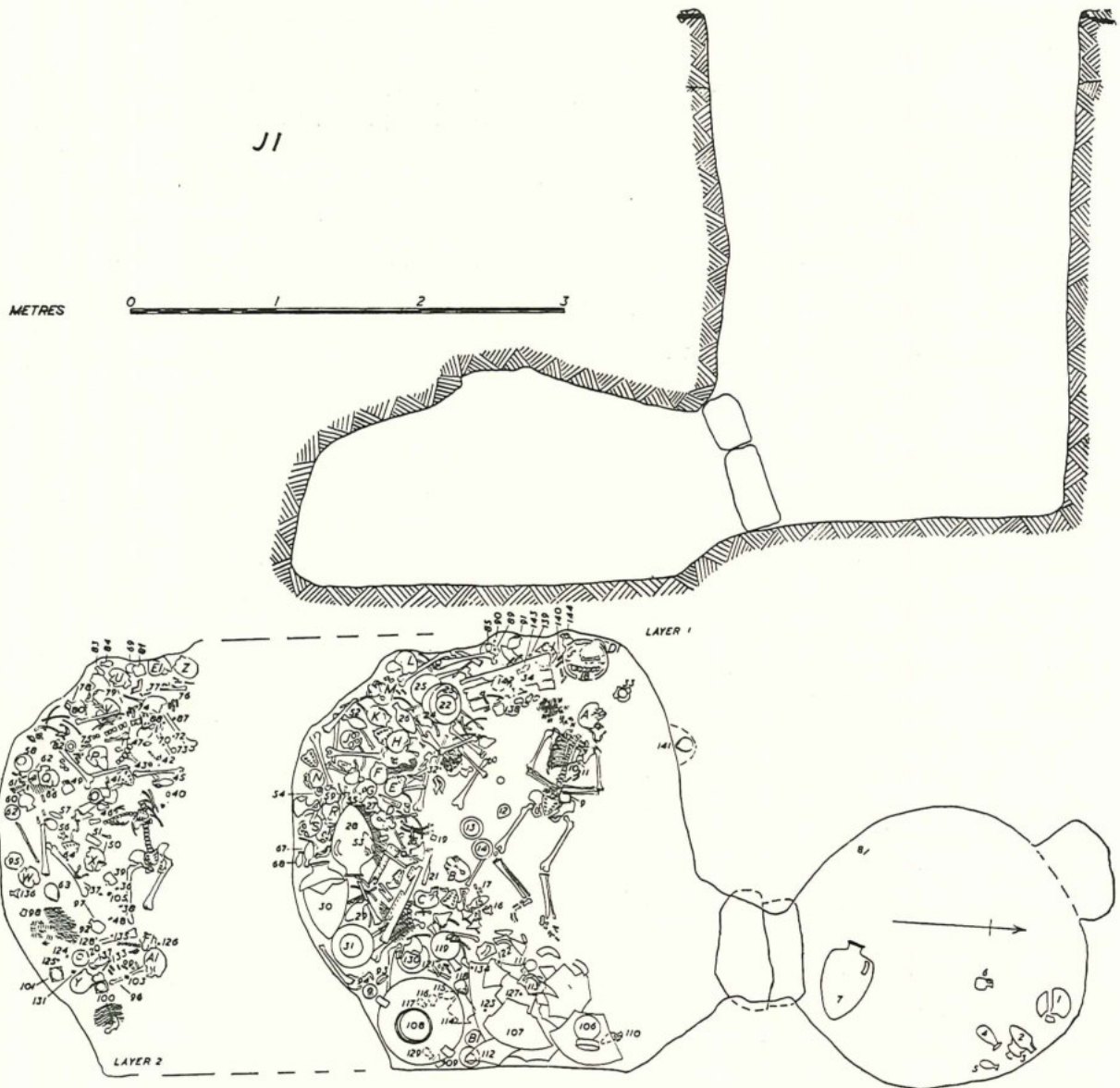


Fig. 8. Plan of Middle Bronze Age tomb J I.

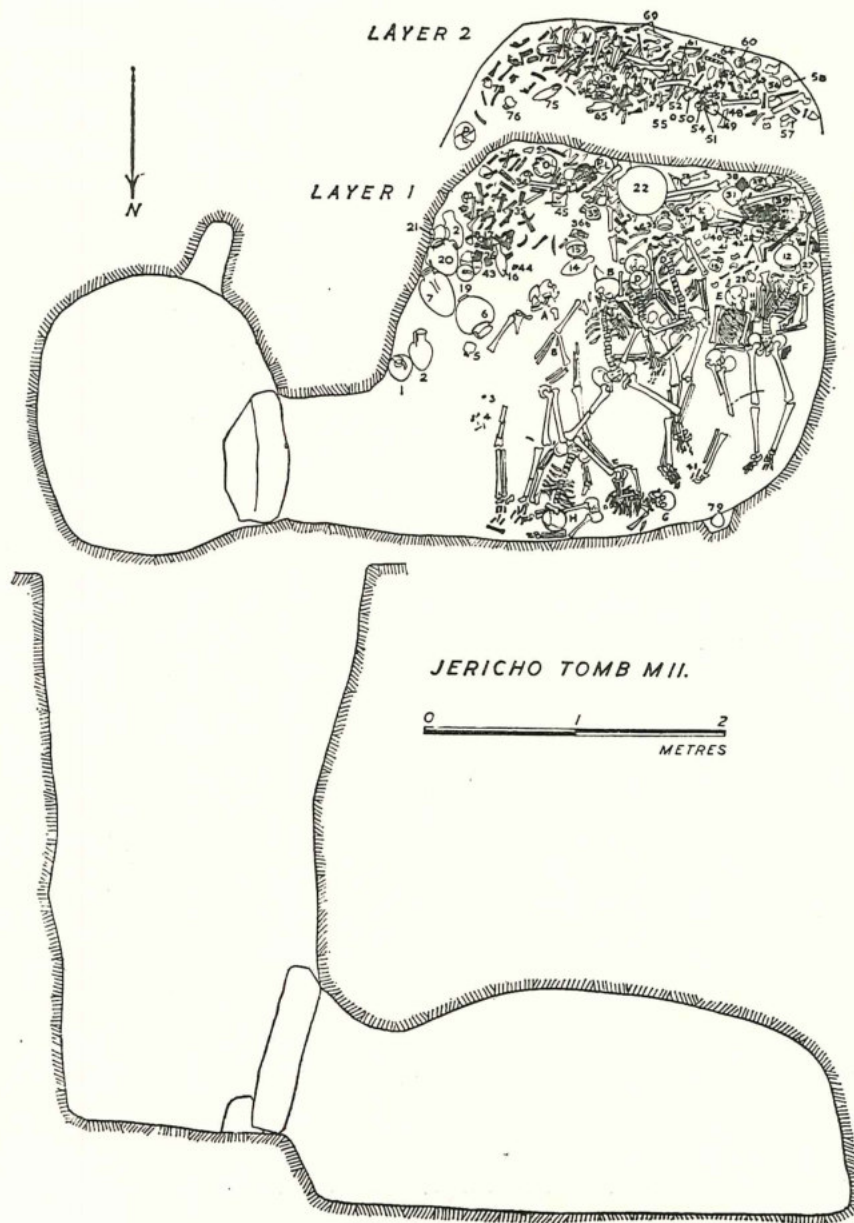


Fig. 9. Plan of Middle Bronze Age tomb M 11.

(pl. 9. A, B and fig. 8). Owing to denudation of the tops of the tombs and thus of the final burials, there is little evidence as to how the bodies in the Early Bronze Age tombs were disposed. In the Middle Bronze tombs, the bodies lie on their backs, but usually rather

untidily disposed. In a number of instances, the bodies seem to have been intentionally placed with the knees raised, for which the evidence is the twisting of the head of the femur when the legs collapsed with decay.<sup>9</sup> This

(9) *Jericho II*, p. 575.

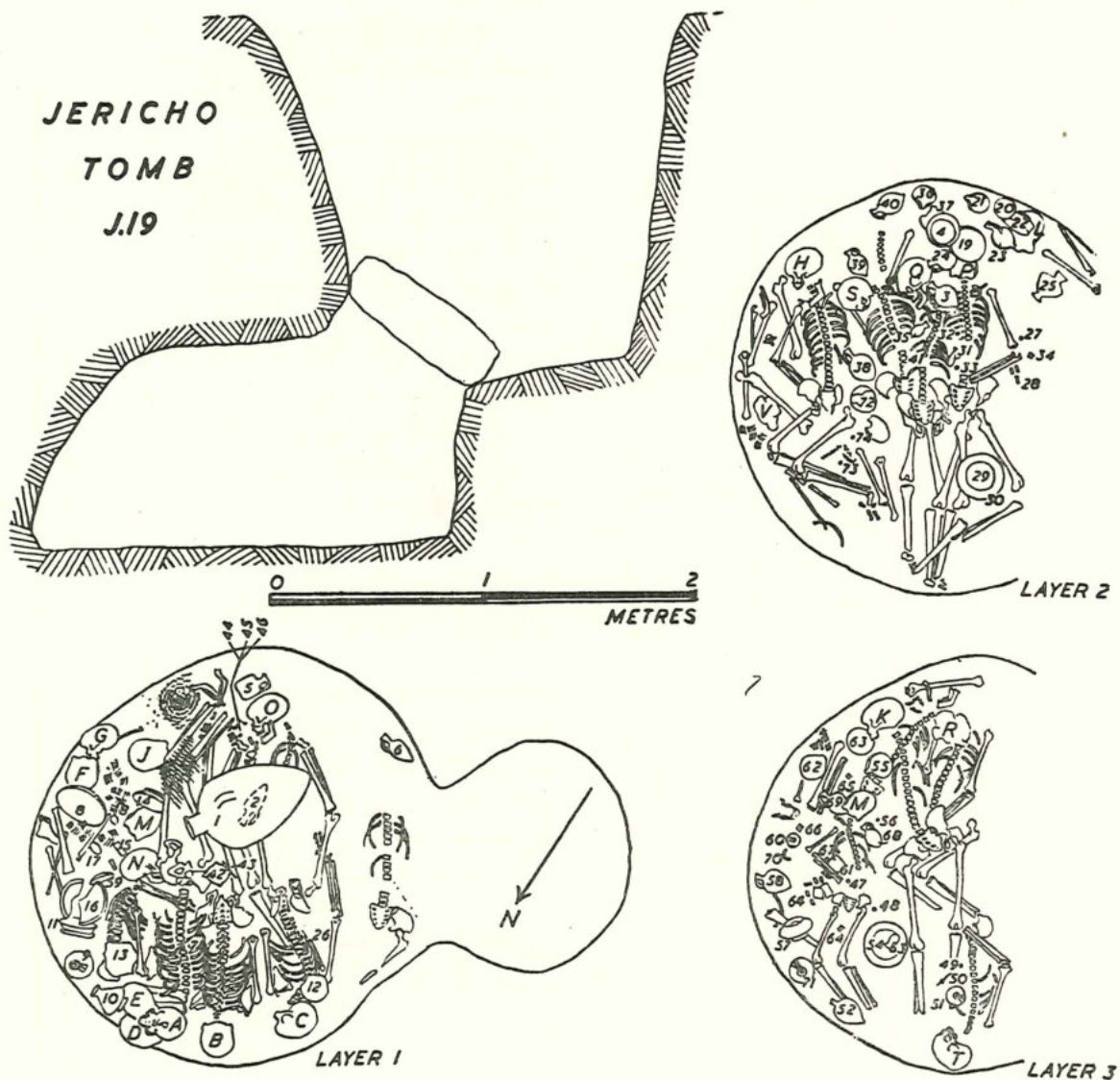


Fig. 10. Plan of Middle Bronze Age tomb J 19.

and the mounding and clearing process is illustrated in tomb M 11 (pl. 10. A and fig. 9). In this case, the remains of six earlier burials are mounded round the side of the tomb, and seven later ones were put in simultaneously, fitted in as best they could be, and the central one was certainly placed with the knees raised.

The skeletons of most of the earlier burials were thus largely disturbed. The way in which they were treated however varied. Tomb A 136<sup>10</sup> was originally a Dagger-type tomb and was therefore very small. In its Middle Bronze Age re-use it was used for 26 burials, but the bodies were simply piled in one on top of

(10) Jericho II. p. 465 ff.



the other, and the skeletons are mostly complete. In a number of other cases, many of the long bones were thrown out when the earlier burials were pushed to the side. <sup>11</sup>

Tomb J 19 provided evidence of a very remarkable burial practice. The tomb was originally cut as an E.B.-M.B. tomb of the Dagger-type (fig. 10) to hold one individual, or occasionally two. In its Middle Bronze Age re-use, nineteen individuals were buried one on top of the other; the chamber, like A 136, was much too small to allow of mounding and clearing. The burials were not simultaneous, and there was evidence of a certain amount of decay of the earlier bodies before the ones above were put in. The remarkable fact is that every single one of the bodies, though in other respects substantially intact, had at least one forearm and often both arms completely removed. If one takes it that each of the tombs constituted a family vault, one must conclude that the particular family burying in tomb J 19 had a peculiar practice, perhaps a belief that the dead could be dangerous, and that therefore their strength must be controlled in this way.

The equipment placed with the dead was lavish. In the tombs containing multiple successive burials such as those just described, the grave offerings, with the skeletal remains, were usually disturbed when later burials were made. Many of the pottery vessels survived, but fragile objects were considerably damaged. In a certain number of tombs, however, a number of simultaneous burials were made and the tomb was not thereafter re-opened. Most of these can be shown, from the contents, to be-

long to the very end of the Middle Bronze Age. They must belong to a period in which some disaster, such as disease, carried off a number of members of the same family simultaneously. That the tombs were not re-used may be because the disaster so shortly preceded the destruction of the town early in the 16th century B. C. that they did not have to be re-opened for later burials. The skeletons are therefore found with the offerings disposed round them just as they were originally placed. The fact that conditions in the Jericho tombs have resulted in a considerable degree of preservation of organic materials has provided a much more complete record of the offerings than is usually found.

The first point that must be made is that the offerings were purely domestic. There was absolutely nothing that could be associated with religion. Though many of the objects, such as the scarabs and the furniture, showed connections with Egypt, the inhabitants of Jericho had no interest at all in the welfare of the soul in after-life, so important to Egyptians.

There can be no doubt that what was provided for the dead was equipment for their everyday needs, the furniture of their houses, some personal ornaments and toilet equipment, and food and drink. The universal article of furniture was a table (pl. 10. B and fig. 11). Beds and stools were rare, and most people must have sat and slept on mats. Plate 11. A, tomb H 22 <sup>12</sup>, shows a whole family laid out in a row, the adults in the centre, adolescents to the right, and younger members to the left in descending order to a baby in the corner. They lie on mats, some of them with their heads propped against a table loaded with joints of

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(11) *Jericho II*, p. 576.

(12) *Jericho I*, p. 500 ff.

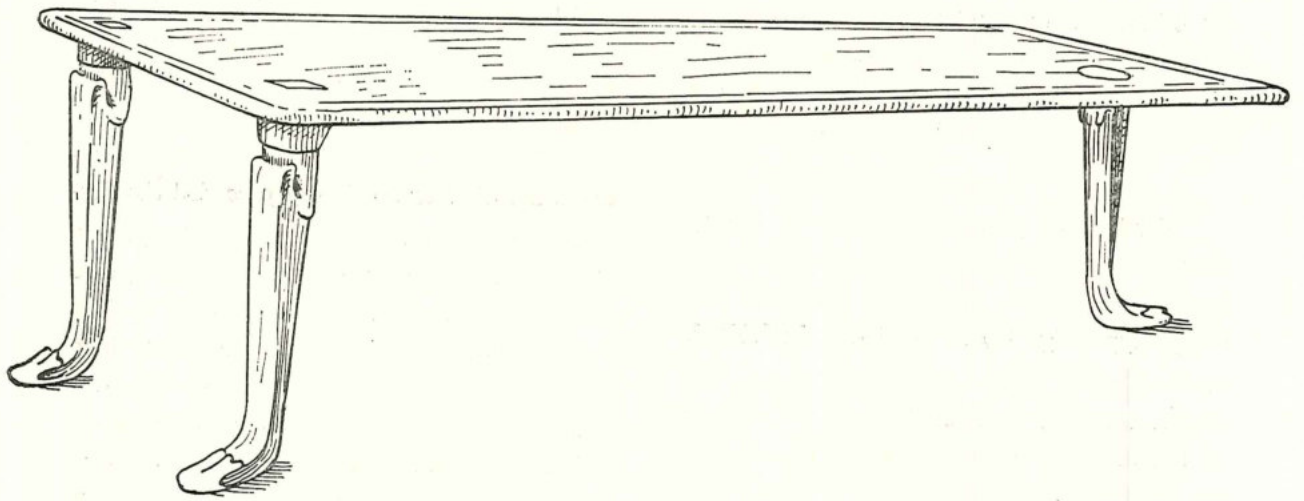


Fig. 11. Table from Middle Bronze Age tomb P 19.

meat. Round the wall of the tomb are jars of drink, and eating and drinking vessels. Baskets held a supply of toilet objects. Plate 12. A shows a basket in which were wooden combs (pl. 12. B). alabaster juglets, probably containing perfume, and material that is probably the remains of a henna-dyed wig. Figure 12 gives examples of the wooden vessels and containers provided, and plate 12. C shows the bone carvings that decorated many little wooden toilet-boxes.

Simple equipment of this nature was the general practice. In a few instances there was some evidence of a burial of a person of superior status or wealth. In plate 10. B, H 18<sup>13</sup>, the body in the centre lies on a bed; the legs of the bed, like those of the table beside it, have collapsed with advancing decay, and the top of the table and frame of the bed lie on the ground. The other bodies in the tomb, an adult, an adolescent and a child, presumably

the wife and children of the man on the bed, lie on the floor. In other examples, the place of the bed is taken by a platform of mud-bricks. Plate 11. B, tomb H 6<sup>14</sup>, shows a low platform with the head of the skeleton propped up on another mud-brick, but the body so carelessly disposed that the feet fell off the end when the ligaments decayed. Again, the other burials were disposed on the floor round the main burial.

Altogether three platforms were discovered. There are interesting points to note about both the others. In both there is a suggestion of especial wealth. Tomb J 14 was the only one to produce an appreciable amount of gold, consisting of scarab mountings and a binding. In this tomb<sup>15</sup> (fig. 13) the mud-brick platform certainly belonged to the final stage of use, together with the burials grouped round it, for in the shaft was a spare mud-brick still encased in its wooden form. The bricks were

(13) *Jericho I*, p. 486 ff.

(14) *Jericho I*, p. 453 ff.

(15) *Jericho II*, p. 312 ff.

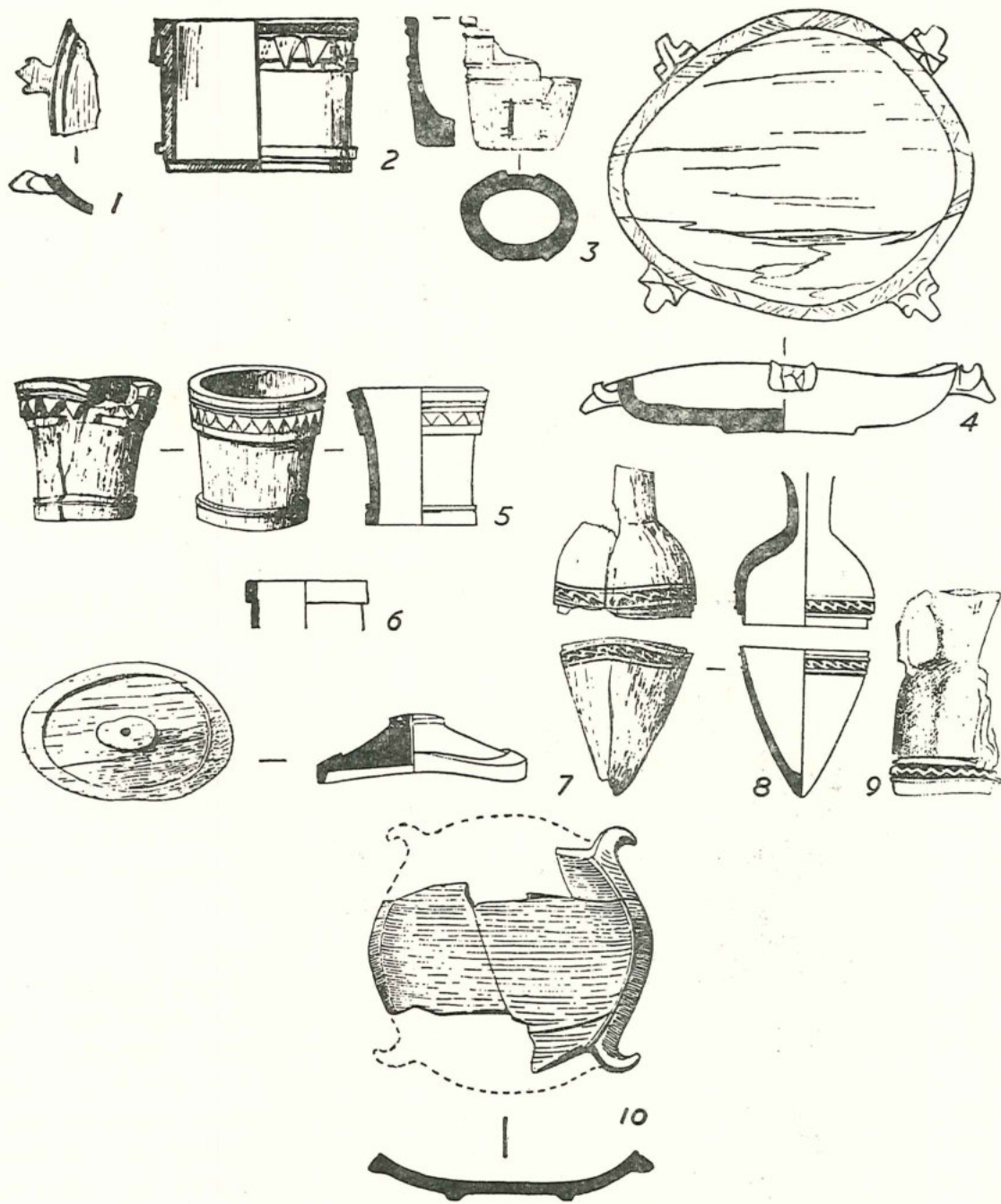


Fig. 12. Wooden vessels from Middle Bronze Age tomb.

clearly made on the spot, as is indeed the practice today, and the unneeded one was left in the shaft, and remained intact since the shaft

was not re-opened. On the platform is the burial of a child, and burial F must have been meant to be on it, but in fact it is half on, half

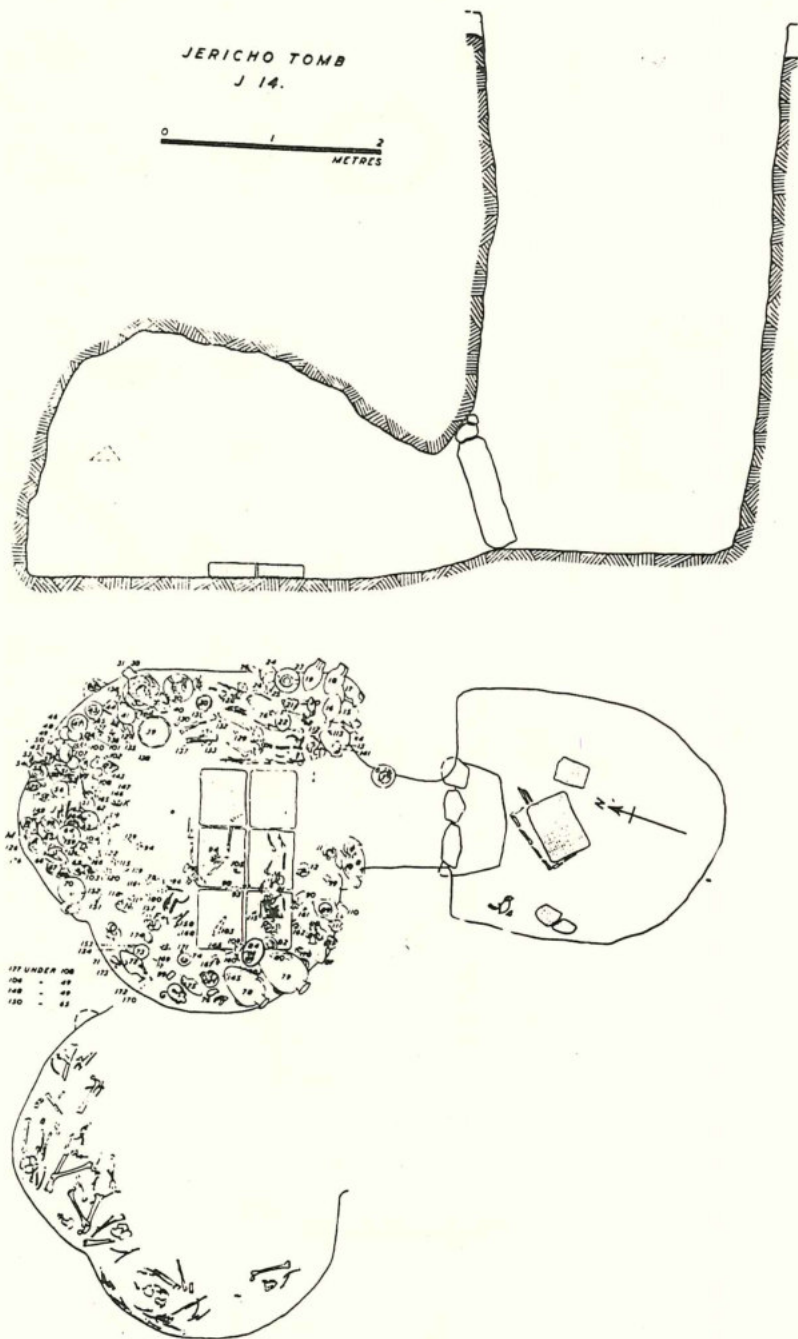


Fig. 13. Plan of Middle Bronze Age tomb J 14

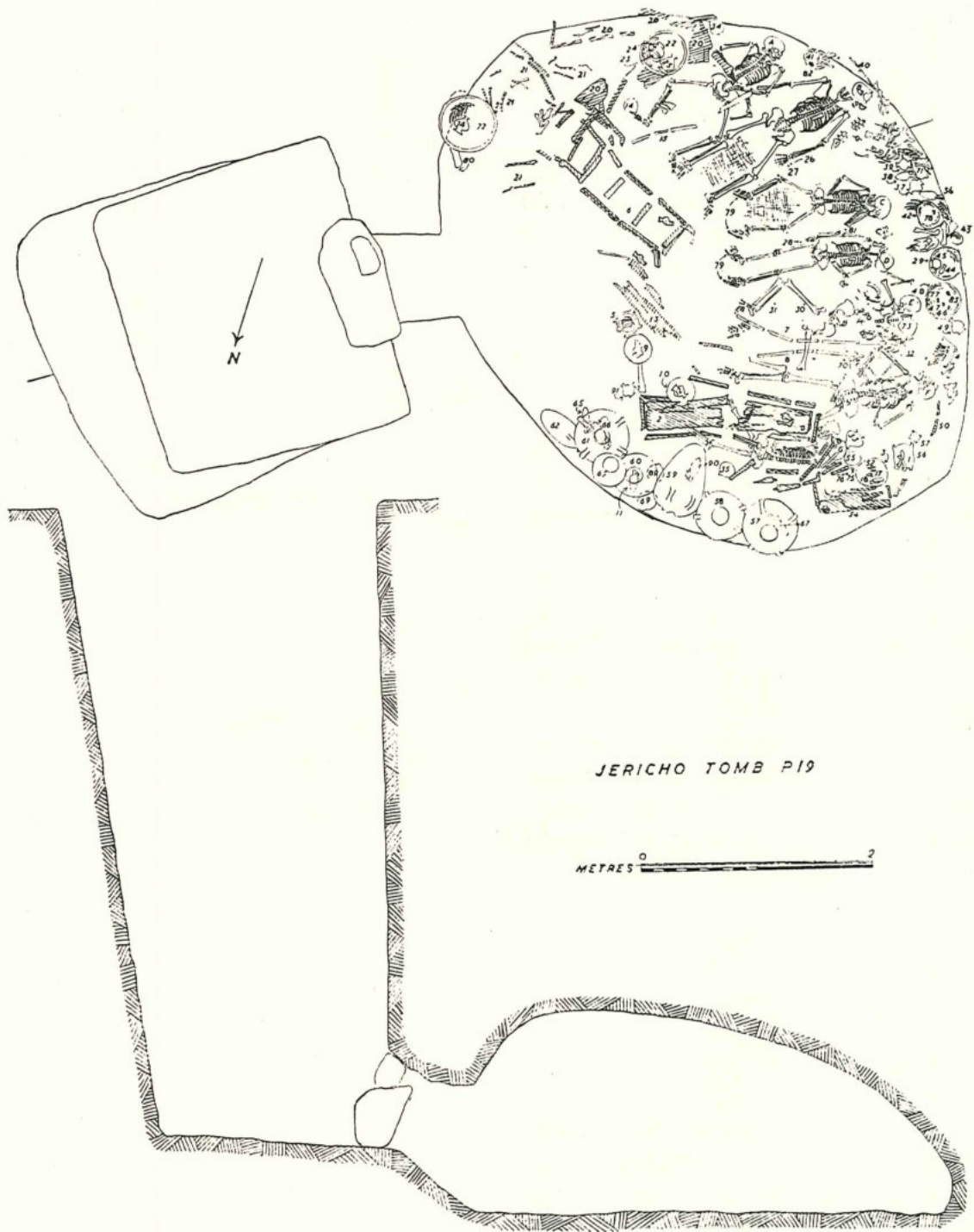


Fig. 14. Plan of Middle Bronze Age tomb P 19.

off. Is this an example of carelessness in the disposal of the body of even important persons, or must one deduce that life was not extinct when the tomb was closed?

The platform in tomb P 21 was three courses of bricks high, whereas the others were only one course. One body had been placed on the platform and two beside the platform on the floor. In all of them, the bones were considerably disarranged.

In the case of the body on the platform, one femur lay on the chest, the other in a reversed position in a crack in the platform. The skull was in articulation with the top vertebrae, but the ribs and lower vertebrae were completely disarranged. The other bodies were in similar disorder, with groups of bones, including hand and foot bones, in position and others much displaced. This disarrangement of the bodies was not a case of transferring the bodies to the tomb when they were partially decayed, as shown by the articulation of hand and foot bones, and by the fact that in most cases the displaced bones lie not far from their correct position. The tomb in fact represents the one certain example found at Jericho of tomb robbing. There must have been precious objects associated with the bodies, probably on the arms and round the necks, for the upper parts of the bodies suffered most disarrangement. It was noticeable that there were no scarabs or toggle pins in the tomb, so the latter may have been of gold and the former gold mounted, as in tomb J 14. There is thus again support for the theory that only for individuals of importance was some sort of bed or couch provided. There were slight traces that the other two burials lay on beds, but wood in this tomb was ill-preserved, perhaps a confirmation that it was re-opened for robbing. The richness of the

burials must have been considerable to induce the robbers to re-excavate the fill of the 4.56 m. deep shaft.

Tomb P 19 was particularly richly equipped with furniture, with two tables, two large stools and probably three others. The plan, fig. 14, shows seven skeletons laid out in a row with their heads to the wall. Six of the skeletons were undisturbed, but skeleton E, that of a woman aged about 28, had the bones of its legs considerably disturbed, one tibia lying well away in the front of the chamber. This skeleton must therefore belong to the earliest burial, and have been considerably decayed when the other bodies were put in. These bodies were those of two adult males, a boy and three girls. The remarkable thing is that all six had been killed by one or more violent blows on the head with a blunt instrument. It looks very much like an execution, but one can hardly deduce that it represents the entourage of a grand lady sent to accompany her in after life, for there would surely not have been the interval after her death. There is another significant point. The two adult males and the boy lack their right hands. An oriental practice, still occasionally found today, is to strike off the hands of a thief. The probable explanation is that tomb robbers, perhaps the males, were caught in the act of robbing the tomb of an important lady, and that they and the other members of their family were executed and placed in the tomb with her, perhaps with some sort of idea that they might serve her as a penance in the after-life.

The distinctive character of the burials and tombs of the various periods from the Neolithic to the Middle Bronze Age has been emphasized. Those of later periods are also distinct, but are less well illustrated at Jericho. The 1952 - 58 excavations produced no evidence

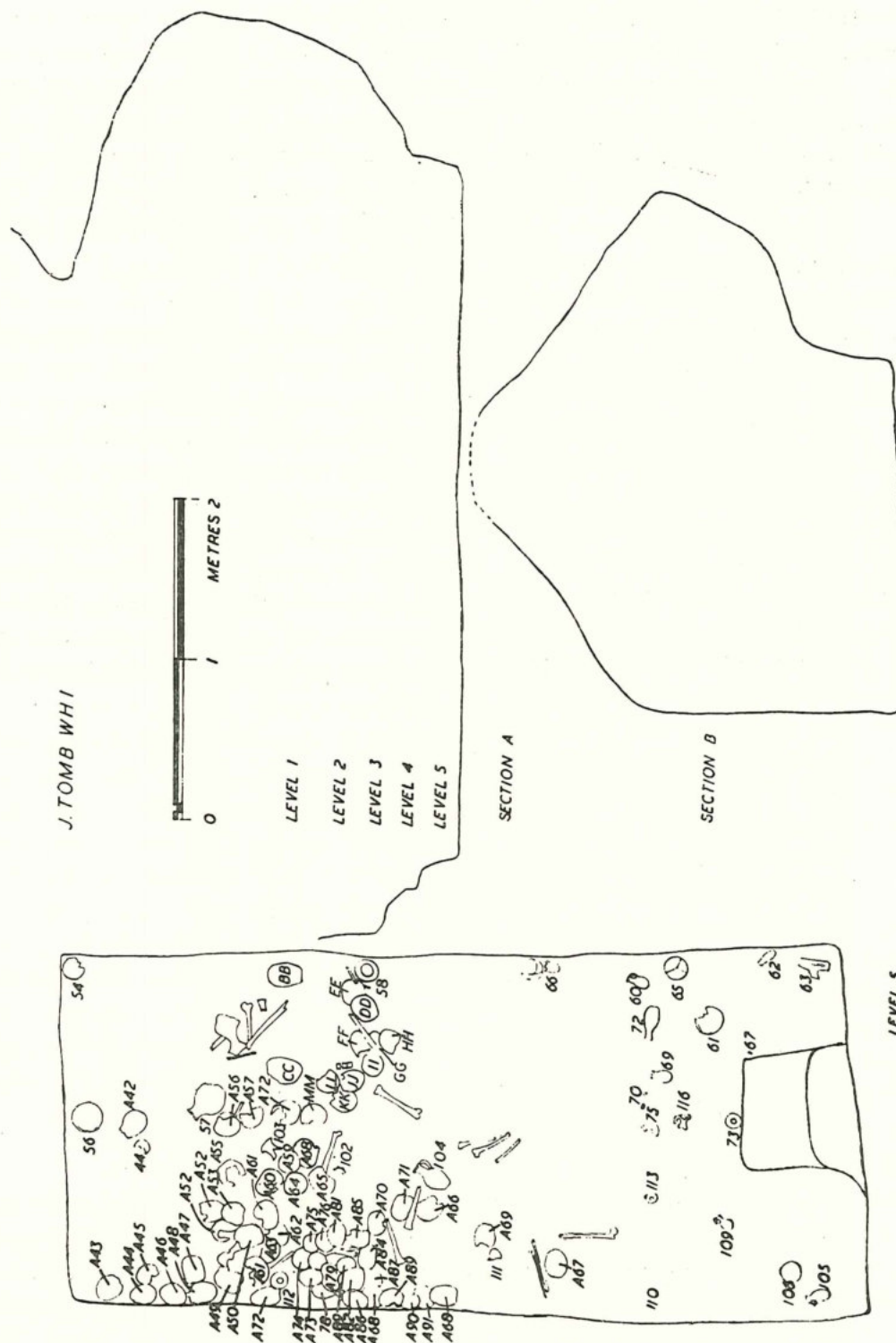


Fig. 15. Plan of Iron Age tomb WH I.

for Late Bronze Age burials. Three tombs found in the 1930-36 excavations produced evidence of burials of this period in tombs of the Middle Bronze Age, above the remains of that period. During the brief re-occupation in the Late Bronze Age, it would therefore appear that the burial practices of the preceding period were continued.

Thereafter there was a gap in occupation at Jericho. One Iron Age tomb of 10th century B. C., date was found as a rock-cut chamber in the same area as the Bronze Age tombs. It contained the remains of 12 individuals, but it was so eroded that nothing could be learnt concerning the disposition of the bodies. The tombs of the period, 8th to 6th centuries B. C., when the town site was fully re-occupied, are of an entirely different character, and lie in a different area, or the low ridge to the west of the tell. They consisted of caves, natural or artificial, in the side of the hill,

approached by steps from the surface of the slope. The largest, WH I<sup>16</sup> contained 146 burials (fig. 15). All the bones were in complete disorder. It is probable that a process of piling earlier burials to the rear and of throwing out most of the bones except the skulls, similar to earlier practices, was followed, but too few tombs were excavated, and the effects of denudation were too disturbing, for firm generalisations to be made.

Tell es-Sultan ceased to be a town in the early 6th century B. C. For some centuries there may have been little occupation in the area. It is firmly attested again only from the Herodian period in the late 1st century B. C. The Herodian centre had, however, moved south, to the water-supply of the Wadi Kelt. Tell es-Sultan was not re-occupied, and was in fact used for burials of the period. These are found especially at the north end, and consist of graves in which the body lies in a shallow

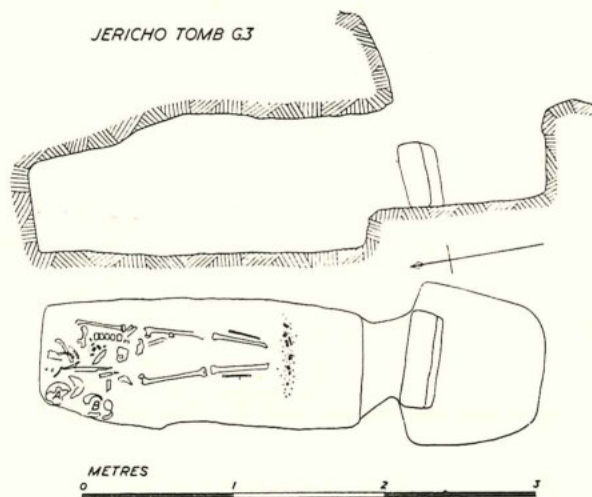


Fig. 16. Plan of Roman tomb G 3.

(16) *Jericho II*, p. 491 ff.



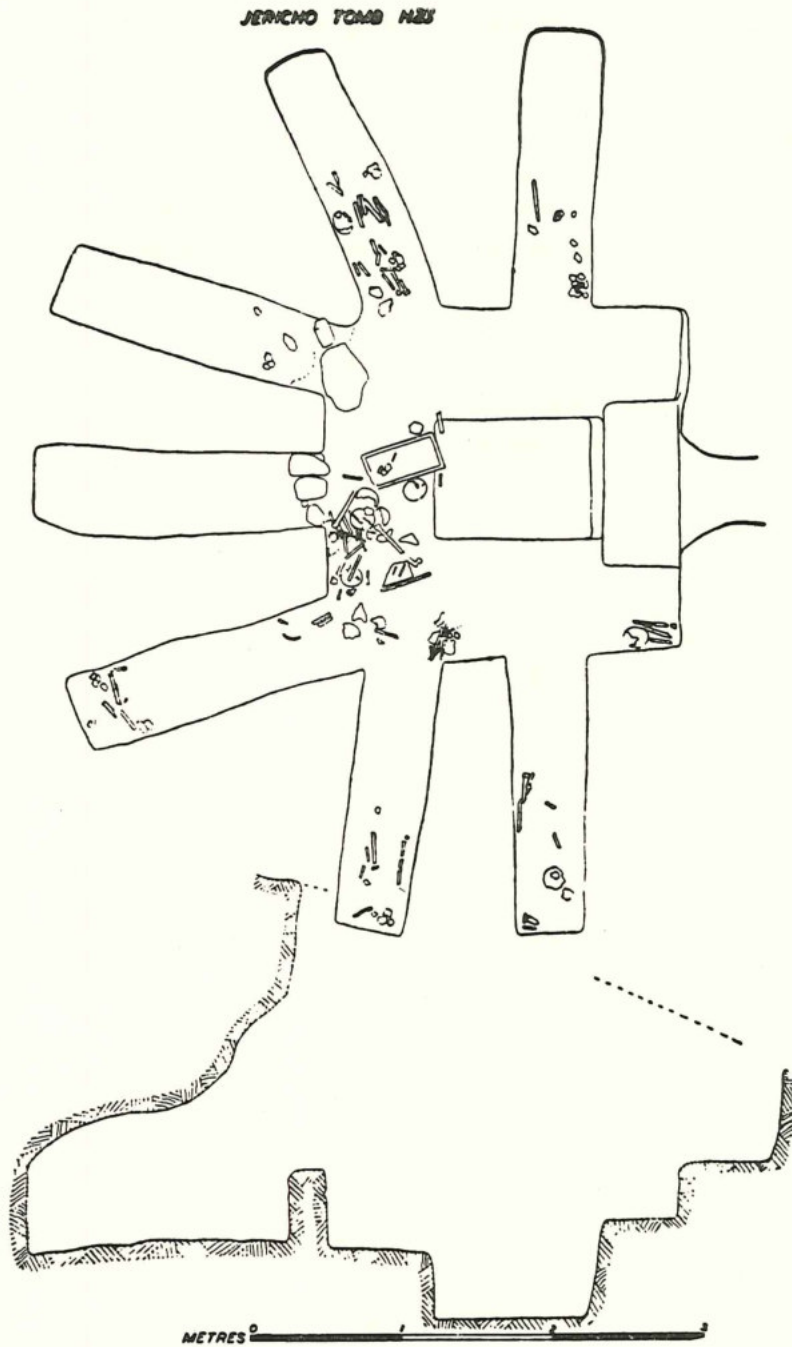


Fig. 17. Plan of Roman tomb H 23.

recess cut at the base of one of the sides of the grave; sometimes the recess is covered with mud-bricks. This form of grave is identical with

those found at Qumran. There were also burials in the tomb area to the north of the tell. A few represent a re-use of earlier tombs.

Some were in graves, either ordinary trenches, or in form similar to those on the tell. The distinctive tomb type of the period was that of a shaft from which the body, sometimes in a coffin, was pushed into a loculus, of which the narrow end opened into a shaft. Variations ranged from a single loculus (fig. 16) to seven (fig. 17). Bones from earlier burials were often preserved in stone caskets or ossuaries, carved with simple geometric patterns, a practice well-known in Jerusalem. Finds in these tombs at Jericho are closely comparable with those from Qumran II, which came to an end

at the collapse of the First Jewish Revolt in A. D. 70. This date probably also marks the end of Herodian Jericho.

Burials at Jericho cover a period of at least eight thousand years. The distinctive features of the successive periods are a most useful indication of major change in the background of dominant groups. Details that can be deduced of the way of life of the population add greatly to the evidence from the town site. Jericho is fortunate that so many unrobbed tombs have been discovered.

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