

A Cave Burial Tomb From Jabal Jofeh El-Sharqi In Amman

By
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This tomb, situated on the southeastern ridge of Jabal Jofeh overlooking the theater, was discovered by rockcutters working on the property of Badr Ed-Din Yosef, in May 1972. Upon notification the Dept. of Antiquities undertook the work of clearing and excavation at the beginning of May

The Cave (Pl. 1) apparently had been filled with rubble and stone of different sizes before it was transformed into a roughly square burial chamber (2.70 x 2.70 m.) by clearing a section of the cave and building two flimsy walls of irregularly shaped stones, rubble, and Earth, on its northern and western sides. A grave (2.40 x 1.40 x 90), (Pl. II Fig. 1) of the same building materials as the walls, was laid along the Southern side of the cave and apparently was covered by large slabs, since two of them were still *in Situ* when the grave was cleared.

The Entrance to the tomb was through a doorway (0.80 m. high and 0.45 m. wide) (Pl. 3) built in the northern wall: There was a socket on the door's Jamb, although the door itself had disappeared, and a lintel (0.85 x 0.30 m.) stood over the jambs. The floor of the chamber, which had been paved with roughly shaped stones was set below the level of door-sill and it was reached by two steps: No attempt was made to clear the passage beyond the doorway, because the accumulated debris in that section was more than five-meters high; clearing operations inside the cave

consequently were carried out through the newly formed opening in the Eastern side (Pl. II; Fig. 3)

The tomb had been disturbed and thoroughly searched in the past. This is clear from the disappearance of the entrance door, the removal of the covering slabs, and the existence of bones outside the grave. The grave contained no less than five burials, but no intact skeletons were preserved; The bodies had disintegrated and the continued action of water which had been leaking through the rock from a drain-pit above, transformed the soil into a heavy, sticky mud. The grave possibly belonged to a single family of rather poor means, as the contents and the execution of the grave might indicate.

The objects found included four pottery lamps, a Candlestick, a glass vessel, bronze and Iron bracelets, and some large-headed Iron nails (Pl. II Fig. 4). The nails indicate that some of the burials were made in wooden coffins, the wood of which had long since disintegrated. Unfortunately, the tomb yielded no coins to help in giving precision to its dating, but from the type of lamps a late 3rd or Early 4th-Century date might be postulated.

This discovery is noteworthy in view of the rarity of such tombs dated from the Late Roman period. As far as I know, the only tomb which was discovered in Amman and dated to the Late Roman period is the Luweibdeh tomb;¹⁾ The Roman

1) ADAJ, Vol. XV, 1970, pp. 37-38.

tomb discovered on Jabal Jofeh and published by Mr. Lankester Harding²⁾ is Earlier than ours.

LIST OF FINDS

J. 12933 Lamp (Pl. III; Fig. 1)

No. 1 : Disk base with two raised concentric rings; The upper part is decorated with Vertical strokes around shoulder; Dot-in-circle decoration on both sides of nozzle and a band of chevron pattern between the filling-hole and the spout. Handle, partly broken, is slightly bent backward. Two raised concentric circles around the filling-hole. Buff ware. Low firing temperature.

Lamp (Pl. III; Fig. 1)

No. 2 : A disk base with one raised circle; Vertical strokes around shoulder; Three parallel lines run from the filling-hole to the spout. Vertical handle; One raised circle around the filling-hole. It seems that the upper part has been made separately and attached to the lower part. Lamp is smoke blackened. Buff ware; no traces of slip. Low firing temperature.

J. 12934 Lamp (Pl. III; Fig. 2)

No. 1 : Flat disk base, somewhat ovoid shape; Two raised circles around filling-hole. Handle bent backward. Chevron pattern de-

coration in the Lower band of the shoulder, and slanted lines in the upper one. Greyish buff ware; Red slip applied; nozzle is smoke blackened. Low firing Temperature.

No. 2 : Lamp (Pl. III; Fig. 2)

Disk base slightly plunged in. Handle slightly bent backward slanted lines in two bands around shoulder.

J. 12932 (Pl. III; Figs. 3 & 4)

Candlestick : Rim is decorated with incised slanted lines and dots. Four vertical scratches on spout. Spout is blackened which indicate considerable use. Reddish ware; small and medium size grits of Limestone.

J. 12935

Glass Flask: (Pl. IV; Fig. 1) — Broken, pale-greenish color. Globular body, cylindrical neck and flared rim base slightly concave.

J. 12936 (Pl. IV; Fig. 2)

No. 1 : Bronze bracelet; Ends wrenched apart.

No. 2 : Bronze bracelet of square section.

No. 3 : As No. 2.

Nos. 4 & 7 : Fragments of Iron bracelets, badly corroded and oxidized.

Nos. 5 & 6 : Twisted bronze bracelets. Ends looped and twisted around the Ends of the bezels.

2) QDAP. Vol. XIV, 1969, pp. 81-94.

J. 12936 (Pl. V; Fig. 2)
Iron Bracelets. Badly oxidized.

J. 12936 (Pl. V; Fig. 1)
The objects include bronze rings, bezels, fragments of bronze rings, bracelets, hair-dressing, Bronze kuhl-stick with knobbed head, bronze kuhl-spatulae, and chain with a pale orange bead in it.

J. 12937 (Pl. V; Fig. 3)

No. 1 : Olive seed.

Nos. 2 & 3 : Two slender cylindrical beads of pale green colour.

No. 4 : Tiny bead of dark green translucent glass

Nos. 5 & 6 : Two disc beads of red glazed colour

No. 7 : Opaque blue glass bead impressed with a number of Eyes; Each eye has a dark blue central spot and white matrix.

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