

A BRONZE AGE TOMB GROUP

Form

HABLET EL AMUD, SILWAN VILLAGE LANDS

The Pottery of the "Middle Bronze Age I" in Palestine has aroused much interested discussion recently. Dr. Kathleen M. Kenyon discovered in Jericho many tombs of this period for which she proposes the new name of Intermediate Early Bronze-Middle Bronze Period.¹ Dr. Ruth Amiran objects to the new nomenclature and keeps the usual name of "Middle Bronze Age I"², and refers to a tomb of this period discovered in 1941 in Silwan. Full records of this find are preserved in the Palestine Museum and can be inspected. The contents of this rich tomb make a useful addition to our knowledge of the pottery of the period, throw further light on the burial customs, and so merit publication. Furthermore the situation of the tomb shows that this standard domestic pottery occurs also in the hill-country, at least near Jerusalem.

The tomb was excavated in September, 1941, by the Palestine Department of Antiquities. It was situated at Hablet el-Amud in Silwan village lands, and lies between Kilometer 3 and 4 on the Jerusalem-Jericho road.

The cave was approached through a square shaft originally about two meters deep, from which a narrow entrance led into the tomb. It is possible that the large stone seen in the foreground of (Pl. XXXII: a) may have been the sealing of the entrance, but the original report makes no reference to this. The tomb is cut in soft huwar rock, apparently with flint implements, and has two chambers.

The First chamber is roughly oval in plan, and contained evidence of burials at its south-east and north-west corners. The bones are either disturbed or disarticulated, a skull lies by itself in the middle of the east side; more bones were found in the middle of the cave and along the east wall see plan (Pl. XXXI). In this chamber were found nine jars of different sizes and shapes (Pl. XXXII: b, cf. 1-9 of Pls. XXXIV & XXXV). Detailed description of these is given in the list of objects, while the positions are indicated on the Plan. A lamp with four nozzles (Pl. XXXIV: 10) was found in a niche in the wall (Pl. XXXII: b, at meter stick) (see Jericho I, p. 180) specially cut for it in the north west corner of the chamber, and a second lamp was found on the floor below the niche. x

The second chamber is roughly rectangular in plan (Pl. XXXI) and contained limb bones along the east wall and a few others about the middle of it, but no sign of a skull. Five pots were found (Pl. XXXIII: a, cf. 11-15 of Pls. XXXIV, & XXXV), and a four-nozzled lamp Pl. XXXIV: 16 was found in the specially prepared niche near south west corner of the chamber (Pl. XXXIII: a & b

¹ Dr. K. M. Kenyon — *Excavations at Jericho, Vol. I, p. 180.*

² Dr. Ruth Amiran — *The Pottery of the Middle Bronze Age I in Palestine (Israel Exploration Journal, Vol. 10, No. 4, 1960).*

near top of meter stick). A second lamp was found on the floor at the south east corner. One of these lamps has a rounded base. Detailed description of these is given in the list of objects.

All these objects were visible before the two chambers were cleared. Nos. 1, 2, 4-8, 11, 12 & 14 have remains of dried liquid or food inside, round the inner faces of the pots.

On clearance, no further discoveries were made in the first chamber, but in the second chamber many beads of different varieties were found together near the north wall of the chamber (Pl. XXXVI). They appear to be component parts of a necklace. Those listed under (Pl. XXXVI: 1) are fifteen beads, more or less of the same size; they are all carnelian and are spherical, bi-conic and barrel in shape. Pl. XXXVI: 2 consists of ten smaller disc beads, also carnelian; the holes are pierced by a blunt instrument resulting in a hole countersunk from both sides. No. 3 comprises two beads, one of blue paste, ribbed, the other of glazed paste, barrel shaped. No. 4 are four small beads, carnelian, spherical shape. No. 5 are perhaps two pieces of inlay, carnelian, disc-shaped; they are not pierced, but the larger of the two has a bevelled edge; the faces of both are polished. No. 6 are 208 small paste beads, cylindrical and disc-shaped; they formed the bulk of the necklace. No. 7 are 15 tiny snail shells; these are not pierced and probably represent a natural deposit, though they were found closely associated with No. 6. These beads are closely paralleled by those from Jericho tombs G. 16 & G. 65 (*ibid* p. 233). Pl. Nos. 8-11 are four bronze pins, plain, circular in section except at one end where they are square and tapering, and show clear signs of having been mounted in wood (?). No. 12 are eight rivets (see Jericho Tomb H. 17, G. 16, G. 37 etc. p. 225).

Judging by the pots and the beads found in the cave, it can be dated to the Middle Bronze Age I or Early Bronze-Middle Bronze Period. Parallels to the jars found in this tomb were found at Tell el-Ajjul (*cf.* Petrie — *Ancient Gaza I* Pl. XLI); Tell ed-Duweir (*cf.* Tufnell — *Lachish IV — The Bronze Age —* Pl. 20, 66-67); and in a cave discovered on the Mt. of Olives in 1884 (*cf.* P. E. F. *Excavations in Palestine*, Pl. XLV); but the closest parallels are from the Jericho Tombs.

As our tomb has a square shaft, it would be natural to connect it with Dr. Kenyon's third category, i. e. Square-shaft type, but there are significant differences both in plan and in contents. The outstanding difference in plan is that it is a double chambered tomb, whereas those so far published from Jericho are single chambered. It would seem possible from the plan Pl. LV in *Ancient Gaza I* that tomb 226 of this period has a square shaft and two chambers, and Lachish tombs 2032 & 2037 appear to open off a single shaft (*Lachish IV* p. 276). As regards the contents it differs from Jericho in that the bodies are disarticulated which according to Dr. Kenyon occurs in her Pottery type tombs. In the case of the lamps each chamber had one in the niche and one on the floor, and in the one Square shaft tomb so far published by Dr. Kenyon (*J.* 4 p. 256/7) the lamp is said to be in a depression in the floor. A further connection with the Pottery type is the presence of copper pins and beads, and the absence of daggers. From this evidence it would seem that this tomb is an overlap between Dr. Kenyon's Pottery type and Square shaft type tombs.

LIST OF OBJECTS

FIRST CHAMBER

- 1 — Jar; Ht. O. 270m.
Ovoid, with large slightly concave base, short neck and flaring rim. Top of shoulder combed and decorated with pricked oblique lines.
Gritty grey ware, grey slip. (Museum cat. No. 41. 961).
- 2 — Jar; Ht. O.272m.
similar to 1 (Museum cat. No. 41. 964)
- 3 — Jar; Ht. O.276m.
similar to 1 (Museum cat. No. 41. 965)
- 4 — Jar; Ht. O.220m.
Globular, with large concave base, short neck and flaring rim. Incised parallel rings round top of shoulder. Gritty buff ware.
(Museum cat. No. 41. 962)
- 5 — Jar; Ht. O.244m.
Globular, with large concave base, short neck and flaring rim. Row of notches round top of shoulder. Light brown ware. (Museum cat. No. 41. 963)
- 6 — Small Jar; Ht. O.158m.
Roughly ovoid, with concave base, thick neck and flaring rim. Reddish ware. Encrusted. (Museum cat. No. 41. 966)
- 7 — Small Jar; Ht. O.150m.
Ovoid, with slightly concave base, short, thick neck and straight rim. Light brown ware. Encrusted. (Museum cat. No. 41. 967)
- 8 — "Tea Pot"; Ht. O.118m.
Oblate in form, with large convex base and hole-mouth. Cylindrical spout and tiny ledge-handle. Decorated with rows of incised lines on upper part, wavy between straight. Gritty pinkish buff ware.
(Museum cat. No. 41. 969)
- 9 — Broken Pot; Ht. O.093m.
Globular, with large flat base. Decorated with incised parallel lines round shoulder. Red ware. No visible rim. (Museum cat. No. 41. 968)
- 10 — Lamp; O.048 x O.150 x O.150m.
Four pinched nozzles and flat base. Red Ware. Encrusted (Museum cat. No. 41. 970)

LIST OF OBJECTS

SECOND CHAMBER

- 11 — Jar; Ht. O. 250 m.
Ovoid, with concave base, short neck and out-turning rim and small lip for pouring. Shoulder irregularly combed with two rows of vertical combed lines and four rows of dots connecting the three horizontal combed lines. Buff ware. (Museum cat. No. 41. 972)
- 12 — Jar; Ht. O.270m.
Globular, with large concave base, short neck and flaring rim. Shoulder combed and decorated with oblique rows of dots. Fine parallel horizontal black lines inside rim. Light red gritty ware. Encrusted. (Museum cat. No. 41. 973)
- 13 — Jar; Ht. O.228m.
Similar to 11, but shoulder irregularly combed with lines of vertical combing connecting the two horizontal lines. Buff ware (Museum cat. No. 41. 971)
- 14 — Jar; Ht. O.224m.
similar to 13 (Museum cat. No. 41.975)
- 15 — Small Jar; Ht. O.110m.
Spherical, with flat base, short neck and slightly flaring rim. Incised horizontal lines above middle of body, and round top of shoulder. Drab ware. (Museum cat. No. 41. 974)
- 16 — Lamp; 0.157 x 0.157 x O. 053m.
Four pinched nozzles and rounded base. Pinkish buff ware. (Museum cat. No. 41. 977)
- 17 — Lamp; D. O.140m.
Four pinched nozzles and flat base. Soft red ware. Fragmentary. Similar to 10 (Museum cat. No.41. 976)

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