**Following Tomb Groups A70, A73, C3, C7**

The purpose behind selling tomb groups from Paul Lapp’s excavations in Bab edh-Drah (1965 & 1967) to ASOR (American Schools of Oriental Research) affiliated institutions was to increase the education and interest in Jordanian archaeology. Nancy Lapp, widow of Paul Lapp and chairperson of the ASOR Ad Hoc Committee for the 1960’s Bab edh-Drah project, wanted these items to be available for study meanwhile being on display because it would allow for them to have a life past the storage units they were sitting in upon excavation. One of the ASOR institutions that received some of the tomb groups is The Museum of Art and Archaeology at the University of Missouri. Upon reaching out to Professor Kidd Benton, the Curator of Ancient Art at the Museum of Art and Archeology in Missouri, we discovered that tomb groups C 3, C 7, A 70, A 73 are still at the Museum. Despite the two larger groups, A70 and C73, being published in the Museums catalog about 15 years ago, these tomb groups haven't been on display for a very long time. He did note, however, that the groups are available for study should any scholars want to access them. Professor Benton said the items were donated to the Museum in 1978 and that Nancy Lapp facilitated this donation. He explained that all communication between Lapp and the Museum went through former director Saul Weinberg, and former antiquities curator Jane Biers, but that none of that information is digitized. In order to accurately convey background information on the items while still calling attention to object biographies, this paper will go through three sections: Excavation Records, Historical Background/ Archival History, and Analysis. (Kidd Benton, personal communication, January 22, 2018).

**Excavation Records (A70, A73, C 3, C 7)**

**A 70**

First season of excavation: (March 14- April 14, 1965)

Staff: Paul Lapp

According to the excavation record, Tomb A 70 was well preserved. The shaft began at 0.82 m underground, and was described as being cut into a huwwar layer. The shaft was full of “hard, brown, sterile clay.”(110) The chamber was mostly circular, with one flat wall near the entryway. They note that the tomb had not been properly sealed, which allowed silt and water to get inside. Water had moved the pots around the tomb, and to various levels.

Tomb A72S had “intruded into the west wall of A 70, and stones had been placed at the juncture by the tomb cutters of A 72S.”(110) Both tombs are considered to be relatively modern, as no silting occured in tomb A 70 when A 72S was constructed. The floor of Tomb A 70 was 0.14 m lower than that of A 72S. Blocking stones were present within A 70.

The record describes how, “The disarticulated, fragmentary bone pile of A 70 lay in the center above traces of mat impression.”(110) On the left of the bone heap lay four broken skulls that lay in a relatively straight line. There were not enough bones present to represent the full articulated skeletons of four bodies. The text purports that this may “indicate selectivity in human remains deposited in the first place.”(110) They note that the amount of pottery present within the tomb would be considered unusual for four burials. They note that a basalt bowl was found against the wall on the left side of the entry.

There were a total of four adults represented in this tomb and seven pottery vessels present. The text lists the following conditions for the vessels:

#91239: black patching on base, rim chips

#91240: mended, rim fragment missing, rim chips

#91241: slip peeling, mended, part of neck and body missing

#91242: slip peeling, gray to black patching, rim chips

#91243: handle and neck broken off

#91244: slip peeling, handle and neck broken off, mended

#93380: No data listed

Measurements:

0.82 m below the surface

Maximum Shaft Diameter: 0.89m

Maximum Shaft Depth: 1.23m

Maximum Entryway Height: 0.51m

Maximum Entryway Width: 0.42m

Maximum Entryway Length: 0.12m

Maximum Chamber Height: 0.81m

Maximum Chamber Length: 1.61m

Maximum Chamber Width: >1.86m

**A 73**

First season of excavation: (March 14- April 14, 1965)

Staff: Not Listed

Excavation record not listed.

**C 3**

Second season of excavation: (October 14- November 4, 1965)

Staff: Paul Lapp, Fousad Zoghbi

According the excavation record, Tomb C 3 was found in poor condition and it was unsealed. The tomb appeared to have been “approached by a vertical shaft,”(192) though the shaft sides were not defined. The ceiling was also not defined. The stone blocking wall at the entrance was incomplete, though it is not clear if this was a result of time or the original construction. Stones were observed projecting from the surface of the northeast side. The line of the wall is described as, “approximately at a 45-degree angle to the slope of the hill and was slightly convex toward the interior.”(192). Stones, gravelly wash, and pottery sherds made up the content of the shaft fill. The chamber was oblong and rounded at the edges. The human remains and tomb goods were covered in sterile sand.

Tomb C 3 is believed to be a single burial tomb, as there was only one adult human skull. The skeletal remains were fragmented. The layout of the remaining bones suggest an articulated burial. It is possible that the head was laid out to the north, next to a flat stone, and the feet laid to the south.

The text lists four pottery vessels discovered in the chamber, one near the skull, two below the leg bones, and one inside the blocking wall. There was a fragment of bone found that had been altered by humans, and is suspected to had been used as a whistle. There was also a group of beads that is suspected to have been found in the original position, around the neck of the deceased.

The text lists the following conditions for the vessels:

#91860: rim chips

#91861: added shoulder band, slashed, gray patches, rim chipped

#91862: added shoulder band, slashed, gray patches, rim chips

#91863: lime encrusted (sic), most of the neck and ½ of the body broken

Measurements:

Maximum Shaft Diameter:

Maximum Shaft Depth: 1.33m

Maximum Blocking Wall Height: 0.54m

Maximum Blocking Wall Width: 0.33m

Maximum Blocking Wall Length: 0.75m

Maximum Chamber Height: 0.80m

Maximum Chamber Length: 1.90m

Maximum Chamber Width: 0.90m

**C 7**

Second season of excavation: (October 14- November 4, 1965)

Staff: Paul Lapp, Fousad Zoghbi

Tomb C 7 was discovered under the northeast floor of a charnel house. The construction of the charnel house caused immense damage to C 7, which was almost completely destroyed. There were no human remains present in C 7. Like many other tombs in Cemetery C, there were a broken pieces of a juglet present. A carinated bowl sherd that was discovered within Charnel House C 4 was suspected to have been apart of Tomb C 7.

**Historical Information**

The tomb groups were excavated from Early Bronze Age (EBA) cemeteries located in Bab adh-Dhra’, which is suspected to be the biblical land of Sodom and Gomorrah. According to the Follow the Pots Project (FTPP), the EBA encompasses the societies that existed around 5,600-4,000 years ago. The FTPP states, “For the very first time during this time period, people built the earliest towns and cities with large fortification walls surrounding them. Thus, we link the EBA with the emergence of urbanism, or the invention of city-life.” (FTPP,1) The cemeteries of Bab adh-Dhra’ encompass the full scope of the EBA, approximately 3,600-200 BCE.

According to FTPP, the tombs are not located near the Dead Sea Basin settlements. This suggests that the peoples using the cemeteries had to travel in order to bury their dead. The remains present in these tombs are the result of secondary mortuary practices. FTTP states that, “...people collected the bones of their dead, which had been buried elsewhere years earlier, traveled with these bones and grave goods to rebury the skeletal remains and the grave gifts in the cemeteries.”(1) Some of the excavation records describe the human remains as, “possibly articulated.” This refers to the bones that are believed to have been set out in an anatomical order, as opposed to found in a pile.

The tombs at Bab adh-Dhra’ are shaft tombs. FTTP describes shaft tombs as, “...[having] a central circular shaft, dug 2-4 meters into the earth, and chambers excavated off the bottom of the shaft. Each shaft tomb at Bab adh-Dhra` had anywhere from one to five chambers for each shaft.”(1)

The secondary burial practices at Bab adh-Dhra’ are interesting clues to the way EBA peoples considered death. What could be the purpose of removing someone’s remains years after death and traveling to put them somewhere new? Perhaps these practices were implemented to keep the dead closer to a new settlement. Maybe this was part of a belief system regarding the dead and the afterlife. The fact that some of the tombs were constructed for new burial, while others were reused might point to some semblance of social hierarchy. Further, tomb A 70 contained the remains of four separate people, with an unusually low number of grave goods. This could indicate that these were people of a lower social status, with significantly less means.

Many of the tomb goods seem to have been repaired at some point. This could mean that they are the original grave goods from the first burial. Instead of making or purchasing new gifts, the same pottery vessels were repaired and repurposed. Does this mean that there is significance in the specific grave good? Or is this simply a question of means and resources?

Today these pottery ancient pottery vessels continue to live new lives. Several of them were excavated and sold off to academic institutions in the hopes that they would be cared for, researched, and displayed. Many more have been looted and sold to tourists and collectors alike. Many tourists jump at the chance to own a pot that might be thousands of years old, and could have been touched by a biblical figure. Looters and the subsequent merchants that sell these pots are a part of the story of these pots. It is them who give them this new, if controversial, life. The Follow the Pots project includes these people in research, in order to get a complete scope of these objects history and biography. The researchers stated that they, “... might encounter opposition from fellow archaeologists as we placed archaeologists and looters as equal voices in the discussion of archaeological landscapes” (Kersel,Chesson,2) However, ignoring the fact that these pots have value to the communities that surround them, even if that value is only monetary, is ignoring a huge part of the lives of these pots. Also, considering who would buy these pots, and the fact that these markets exist and are in demand are important in the biography of the pots. It is also important for archaeology in general, as we can learn how to better protect and promote artifacts.

**Archival History**:

In attempting to understand the distribution of the tomb groups and eventually where the pots have been placed, we must take into consideration their archival history. In researching the archival history for Tomb Groups C 3, C 7, A 70, A 73 the array of letters that have been archived, help successfully track the pots and their original transfer from Jordan to the University of Missouri. Throughout vigorous coordination and planning the pots were able to make their trip from Jordan to different institutions around the world, from Australia, Canada and the United States in order to be studied. In 1978, the Jordanian Department of Antiquities gave permission for the export of pottery from twenty-four shaft tombs and three channel houses from Paul W. Lapp’s excavations in 1965 and 1967. The transfers were then made possible by the creation of Ad Hoc committee, which gave way for the American School of Oriental Research to make arrangements for the distribution of material under the chairmanship of Nancy Lapp.

During this time, there were strict guidelines institutions needed to follow in order to asses that they were interested in obtaining one the tomb groups for their institutions. In a letter written to Ted, on February 25, 1978, Nancy Lapp expresses her concerns with the agreements for the tombs. She indicates that in the conditions, “they hope to keep the groups together and not split up, that they belong to an institution and not individuals, Jordan given credit and no scholarly information be published before Tom’s and Walt’s” (Lapp, 1978). In looking at documentation there are clear letters on which the University of Missouri contacts and coordinates with Nancy Lapp with their original wants and needs, they reached out to her via letter on January 23rd 1978, and stated in accordance to their wants which tomb groups interested them the most. Tomb Groups C 3, C 7, A 70, A 73 were ironically at the bottom of their list. In order to be considered to receive a tomb group, an institution must have reached out to Nancy Lapp, and the ASOR by February 23, 1978.

In reading the letters sent between institutions and Nancy Lapp and other members, the main concern was funding/pricing of the pots. The University of Missouri, purchased their Tomb Group which consists of 14 pots, 1 vase for $266. + $25. equaling $291. USD Originally, the vase was priced at $50 but was brought down to $25. According to the letter archives, on February 19, 1981 only a few years after the arrival of the Tomb Groups to the University of Missouri, they sent a letter expressing to Nancy Lapp that the University had removed the pots from display and placed them in storage. But, would always be easily accessible for study purposes as long as someone reached out to the department

**Analysis**

Earlier, it was mentioned that Professor Benton believed the tomb groups to be donations from Nancy Lapp. After doing research, we’re aware that the Museum of Art and Archaeology actually purchased these tomb groups.The lack of digitization can most likely explain the reason that Professor Benton, and the rest of the Museum, believes the groups to be donations. Labeling something as a donation makes it far easier to keep hidden in storage, because after all paying for something and then not putting it on display would, ultimately, be a waste of money. In the article *Object Movement: UNESCO, language, and the exchange of Middle Eastern artifacts* by Morag Kersel, it is noted that the movement of objects started in order to promote education, relationships, and a general understanding of people across the world. Kersel specifically states that objects should be used to “promote cultural exchange, not economic trade…” (Kersel, 279). Perhaps the Museum is neglecting to take direct ownership of the tomb groups because they do not want to claim the economic responsibility. While this is merely speculation because we’re not sure if they’re aware that the Museum purchased the tomb groups and they’re not sharing the information, or if they truly have no idea, but the desire to not buy someone's culture could be a reason behind trying to avert financial responsibility. However, having the items readily available by keeping them on display would ensure that, no matter if they bought the tombs are not, the items are being respected and honored the way they were intended to be.

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