

# Coin Dates Tomb As Early Christian

Archæology

## Bronze Piece From Mint of Herod is the Clue

A TOMB in Palestine used during the first years of the Christian era has been explored by Dr. William F. Bade, of the Pacific School of Religion. The tomb was found near the site of Tell en-Nasbeh, which Dr. Bade believes to be the town of Mizpeh mentioned importantly in the Bible. The site is seven miles north of Jerusalem.

Reporting his discoveries to the Archæological Institute of America, Dr. Bade said that a bronze coin is the most valuable clue to the age of the tomb. Because of the peculiar political conditions in Palestine just after the birth of Christ, the age of the tomb can be estimated within a few years by this single bit of bronze. The coin bears a wreath on one side and the prow of a war-galley on the other, and was from the mint of Herod Archelaus, who succeeded his father, Herod the Great, as ruler of Judea. Archelaus was cruel and so unpopular that his reign was brief. He was deposed about six years after the birth of Christ.

"It is extremely unlikely that coins of Archelaus circulated more than a year after his banishment," Dr. Bade said, "and this for two reasons: first, he was so hated by the Jews that they probably removed all signs of his rule as soon as possible; secondly, Herodian rule ceased altogether in Judea after the removal of Archelaus."

Judea, he explained, was then placed under the immediate rule of the Roman Empire, and this fundamental change of administration would have brought a change of coinage.

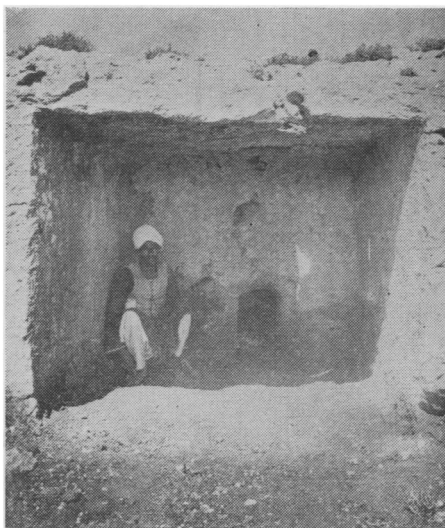
Two lamps were found in the debris of the tomb, and many glass beads with marked opalescence, probably due to long burial. A find of unusual interest was a small die, which was worn as an ornament, and bears the impression of what appears to be a donkey rearing in front of a human figure with upraised arm.

"The design quite naturally suggests Balaam's ass and the angel," Dr. Bade pointed out. "In view of the fondness of antiquity for mock representations of enemies, one can scarcely help wondering whether this seal involves a mocking allusion to Archelaus."

The tomb had been rifled some years ago by an Arab purveyor of

antiquities, but a variety of objects remained, all of particular interest, like the tomb itself, because of their definite reference to the beginning of the Christian era. Other nearby tombs were also explored in the search for the burial grounds of the ancient community at Tell en-Nasbeh, and Dr. Bade reported the finding of a number of rock tombs, some containing pottery of the types made in the Iron Age of 750 B. C. and earlier.

Entrance to newly excavated Palestine tomb of the days of Christ. A coin from the mint of the hated Herod Archelaus dates the tomb with reasonable certainty.



The five tombs examined range from the beginning of the Age of Iron down to the late Roman period, and Dr. Bade hopes that as new discoveries are made in the region it will be possible to obtain a clearer conception of changes in architecture of tombs in Palestine through the days described in Biblical history.

Work of the archæologist is hampered in this region by the past activities of Arabs who used to hunt the tombs and extract antiquities to be sold to tourists. Under British rule, this occupation has become too precarious from a legal standpoint, but many sites are already pillaged, so that their significance is obscured.

HOW the oldest, most fragile furniture ever found in a royal Egyptian tomb was restored from a condition like cigar-ash dust to its

at the same meeting by Dows Dunham of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

Mr. Dunham accompanied Prof. George Reisner in the recent excavation of the tomb of Queen Hetepheres I at Giza. Her tomb, dating from the fourth dynasty which ruled Egypt some 5,000 years ago, is the oldest tomb of Egyptian royalty ever found with its complete furnishings of gold work, jewelry, and household furniture.

The alabaster sarcophagus of the queen was in a little rock chamber, and all about the floor was a deep laid mixture of decayed wooden furniture originally cased in gold sheets, stone and copper vessels, pottery, textiles and baskets, panels of wood inlaid with gold and faience, and a blending mass of rubbish, stone chips, and dust.

For 280 days, the staff and native assistants worked with a precision and care that exceeds any technique of detectives preserving the evidence at the scene of a mysterious crime. Detailed plans of the floor surface were made, with every visible object drawn in, gold being represented by red, wood by purple, and other materials by black, Mr. Dunham explained. A camera shooting from above, with powerful electric lamps ranged at vantage points, made photographic records of the same area.

Before most of the wood, cloth, or basket work could be touched safely, it had to be treated with a solution applied with a medicine dropper, and even with this preservative coating it was advisable to lift the smaller objects with forceps. The gold casings of the furniture proved a valuable guide to the original dimensions of the objects, for the wood itself had long since fallen into a state of collapse or had shrunken within the pieces of the golden cases.

When one layer of the funeral trappings was removed, the whole process of charting, photographing, and removing of exhibits was repeated for the next layer beneath. Each bit of royal jewelry or furniture was numbered, measured, sketched, and ticketed as it was taken from its dusty resting place, Mr. Dunham reported.

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