

Mystery Cemetery Analysis: Artifact Key

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THE ARCHER SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Further small subdivisions may be possible; this key groups burials into three levels of status—two in the normal area, plus one in the “odd” section that is walled off—two genders, and three ages

All males (Tombs 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10)

- Grave markers
- Wide coffins (children do not have coffins, except heir)
- Skeletons on back, head to south, face looking east
- Daggers/weapons
- Round metal disks (gold or silver, depending on status)

All females (Tombs 1, 2, 4, 11, 12)

- No grave markers
- Narrow coffins (children do not have coffins)
- Skeletons on back, head to north, face looking west
- Urns containing burial goods (and containing body, too, if burial is of a baby)
- Round, ruffled silver bracelets

All children (Tombs 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11)

- No coffins (heir is an exception)
- Bodies lie on back, face looking up toward the sky
- Children have colorless, translucent ornaments mimicking those of adults (fish = royal/rich male; starfish and shells = royal/rich female; round stones = lower-status male or female)
- Male children buried to south/ female children buried near mother
- Female children’s urns have a cracked surface; baby has only one ruffled silver bracelet

Indicators of “high status” for both genders and all ages (8, 9, 10, 11, 12)

- Buried in W and SW area of cemetery
- More/more valuable objects
- Gemstones
- Presence of fish or shells/starfish instead of marbles
- Black stone on feet (painted white on top for women)

Male “royal”: king and heir only (9, 10)

- Long spear
- Flint stone
- Severed arm and leg
- Letters K-I-N-G for adult, K-N-G for child

Male: “royal”(8, 9, 10) (8 may also be considered “high status” but not royal)

- Ceramic markers
- Wide purple coffin; none for children except heir
- Black stone on feet
- 2 daggers (at least one is a gold dagger)
- Colored fish ornaments
- Round gold disks
- Gemstones

Female: “royal”(11, 12)

- Narrow green coffin
- White-painted black stone on feet
- Green flowered urn to hold grave goods
- Colored shell and starfish ornaments
- Popcorn kernels
- Gemstones
- Round, ruffled silver bracelets

Indicators of “low status” for both genders and all ages (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)

- Buried in E and SE area of cemetery
- Fewer burial goods
- Presence of marble instead of fish or shells/starfish

Male: “low status”(3, 5, 6, 7)

- Metal marker
- Wide white coffin
- 1 or 2 silver daggers
- Red marble (adults)
- Silver disks
- (No black stone on feet, fish ornaments, gold disks, or gemstones)

LESSON PLANS

Male child: "low status"

No coffin; buried away from parents in southern area of cemetery

Female: "low status"(1, 2, 4)

No grave marker

Narrow white coffin

White urn to hold grave goods (girl babies are buried in urns with a cracked surface)

Blue marble

(No white-painted black stone on feet, shell and starfish ornaments, popcorn kernels, or gemstones)

Round, ruffled silver bracelets (adults)

Flat white disk ornament

Female child: "low status"(2)

Female babies are buried inside their urns (with a cracked surface) and have only 1 ruffled silver bracelet

Odd Area

In the walled-off northern area of the cemetery, gender, age,

and status clues are mixed and body parts are missing.

#13 has all the markers of a royal female, except that her urn is the wrong color and she has fish (which indicate royal males). She is missing her body, and her head is inside the urn, like a girl baby's body.

#14 has royal male markers: fish, a black stone, beads with the letters K-G; 2 letters (I-N) are missing, however, and the beads are the wrong size, color, and shape. The translucent fish indicates a young person, whereas the body is adult; and the stone is under the feet and not on top. The body is oriented in the wrong direction for a male, and has a cage instead of a coffin. Lastly, there is a dagger through (his?) ribcage, and one hand is missing.

#15 is buried in a royal female, green narrow coffin, and is oriented with her body in the correct female direction. Her head is severed from her body, however, and lies near her feet. The stone with her resembles that in a low-status burial, but is the wrong color for either males or females.