COMMENTS ON BEDOUIN FUNERAL RITES IN THE WRITINGS OF WESTERN TRAVELERS AND EXPLORERS FROM THE LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES

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ABSTRACT
This paper aims at discussing the Bedouin funeral rites mentioned by European travelers who visited Transjordan in the late 19th and early 20th centuries; there was a focus on the inaccuracy of these accounts in referring to some particular funeral rites as being originally of Bedouins, also in generalizing them among all tribes. Such misinterpretation came from not considering the level of sedentarization of tribes, as well as cultural influences of urban and rural communities living in the same region. Two approaches were followed; the first was by interviewing members of a focus group, which was selected from a population that included clans still living a pure nomadic life, even after the sedentarization of Bedouins in the 1960’s, the other approach was by exploring the history of sedentarization of tribes under discussion. Such approaches made it possible to distinguish the original nomadic funeral rites from those of settling groups in Transjordan.

KEYWORDS: Funeral Rites, Bedouin Tribes of Transjordan and Sinai, Orientalism, Exploration of Arabia, Sedentarization of Bedouins in Jordan.