

Review Articles

The Capernaum and Herodium Publications

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Cafarnao I: Gli Edifici della Citta, by Virgilio C. Corbo. Jerusalem: Franciscan Press, 1975. Pp. xv + 224. 25 figures. 96 photographs. 8 color plates. 19 fold-out plans (paper).

Cafarnao II: La Ceramica, by Stanislao Loffreda. Jerusalem: Franciscan Press, 1974. Pp. i + 239. 53 figures. 32 photographs. 7 color plates (paper).

Cafarnao III: Catalogo delle Monete della Citta, by Augusto Spijkerman. Jerusalem: Franciscan Press, 1975. Pp. vi + 123. 5 plates. 1 numbered photograph. 1 unnumbered plan (paper).

Cafarnao IV: I Graffiti della Casa de S. Pietro, by Emmanuele Testa. Jerusalem: Franciscan Press, 1972. Pp. v + 202. 17 figures (photographs). 36 plates (line drawings). 4 color plates (paper).

Herodion III: Catalogo delle Monete, by Augusto Spijkerman. Jerusalem: Franciscan Press, 1972. Pp. vi + 99. 2 tables (paper).

Herodion IV: I Graffiti e gli Ostraka, by Emmanuele Testa. Jerusalem: Franciscan Press, 1972. Pp. viii + 128. 63 figures (line drawings). 32 photographs. 7 tables of alphabets. 1 fold-out plan (paper).

These six volumes include the complete set of four containing the final report of the Franciscan excavations at Capernaum (Tell Hum) and two of the planned four reporting on the excavations of the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum at the Herodion, or, more commonly, the Herodium near Bethlehem.

These over-sized paperbacks (8 1/2 x 11 inches) are obviously well designed by the Franciscan Printing Press in Jerusalem, with color photographs reproduced on their covers.

Type size is large and easy to read, generous margins are provided all around, and paper quality is high. Because of this high-gloss paper, photographs are reproduced directly upon the page rather than reserved for the back of the book. Type-setting includes Hebrew and Greek fonts, which are expensive these days, but which greatly enhance the usability of the volumes by the scholarly community for whom they are intended.

The comparatively lavish use of color in these volumes may be a step in the right direction, but one wishes it might have been planned more carefully. The color certainly contributes to the high prices these books bring, even when "discounted" for impoverished scholars. The color photographs of the plaster in *Cafarnao IV* seem to the point, but the sherds chosen for illustration in *Cafarnao III* seem to be selected more for esthetic enhancement of the volume than for scientific reportage. Perhaps aerial photographs should be printed in color, but there is little reason for the trouble and expense of showing the ruins at ground level in color. In fact, from the scientific point of view, four uses of color immediately advance themselves, and only two

appear to inform the choices made in vols. I, II, and IV: (1) in the ceramics volume, vessel section color and exterior color could be illustrated, as in Smith, *Pella I*: (2) painted plaster of course can be illustrated to advantage, as in *Cafarnao IV*: (3) even soil layers could be illustrated to advantage in color, particularly to show the "destruction level" above the polychrome floor in the "*domus-ecclesia*" below the Octagon; (4) and the mosaic in the Octagon. Only the exterior finish on certain sherds has been shown in color in the ceramics volume (vol. II) and certain fragments of painted plaster in volume IV, devoted to the graffiti.

Yet these few negative comments about book production cannot detract from the overall effort, which is of high quality. Page size, format, type fonts, and so on apparently were determined well in advance of publication, so that the final product has a finished rather than an *ad hoc* appearance.

The Excavations at Capernaum were directed by Corbo between 1968 and 1972 in nine campaigns, and, incidentally, are still going on. Corbo points out (vol. I, 18) that future campaigns will concentrate within the synagogue and will seek to complete excavation of Insulae III and IV and the cemetery. But more important for understanding this series is Corbo's comment (p. 18): "The series of publications on Capernaum will be enriched by other accounts both preliminary and final. A separate volume will be devoted to the synagogue." Therefore we are *not* dealing with final reports; neither are they merely preliminary. Rather, it seems that this package contains provisionally articulated but firm conclusions with reference to dates, the understanding of the plans and functions of the buildings, and over-all interpretation of the results. Presumably, future finds could modify their conclusions in details, but not in general outline. It is important to recognize that the synagogue will have its own volume, as this in effect makes the synagogue chapter in volume I preliminary.

Another point must be made here, a point which is just now being felt in archeology in the Levant.

This report is written as reports have been composed since Albright. That is, there is exacting attention paid to ceramics and, since it is a Roman-Byzantine site, coins. The volume on the graffiti was necessary only because of the great quantity of such material from the destruction (rebuild) level below the Octagon. I raise a question not merely because the small finds do not appear anywhere (except for one ostrakon in Hebrew letters in vol. I), but because the overall aim of the excavations focuses wholly on chronology. I think the excavators would say "history," but it is clear that they pay attention to history only in the very narrow sense of chronology.

It so happens that "history" is an *interpretation*; therefore, there are many kinds of history. Hence, one might also allow several definitions of archeology. Nevertheless, it no longer seems possible to produce a report that never takes into account the wider question of culture and, specifically, an "articulation of

systems," as our friends in anthropology have so helpfully defined it. Therefore we immediately ask the question: Does Corbo plan to make any investigations into any of these "systems," such as trade, diet, (evidently bones were not saved), travel, transport, demography, city planning, types of religions represented (simply "Judaism" and "Christianity" and "Judeo-Christianity" are not enough), economy, standards of exchange, and so forth? If not, are enough data preserved in the excavations so that others could do so? In other words, does the archeologist merely describe, or does he also "explain" what he finds?

In the long run we address this question not merely to Corbo, *et al.*, but to all of us who labor in the dust in the Middle East. We can no longer afford to go on as though Gordon Childe is relevant only to the prehistorian, if we wish to retain our professional standing in the larger archeological community. archeological community.

After raising this question, it may seem trivial to bring up the matter of chronology, but here it is really the question of chronological norms. All four of these volumes presuppose the following chronological table:

<i>Period</i>	<i>Dates</i>
Late Hellenistic	200 B.C.E.-63 B.C.E.
Early Roman or Roman I	63 B.C.E.-135 C.E.
Middle Roman or Roman II	135-300 C.E.
Late Roman or Roman III	300-450 C.E.
Byzantine	450-638 C.E.
Early Arab	638-750 C.E.

If we examine the *Encyclopedia of Excavations in the Holy Land* (Hebrew, 1970) we find another system:

<i>Period</i>	<i>Dates</i>
Hellenistic I	332-152 B.C.E.
Hellenistic II or Hasmonean	152-37 B.C.E.
Roman I or Herodian	37 B.C.E.-70 C.E.
Roman II	70-180 C.E.
Roman III	180-324 C.E.
Byzantine I	324-451 C.E.
Byzantine II	451-640 C.E.
Early Arab	640-1099 C.E.

Another independent proposal for a chronological table is represented in James Sauer, *Heshbon Pottery 1971*:

<i>Period</i>	<i>Dates</i>
Late Hellenistic	198-63 B.C.E.
Early Roman	63 B.C.E.-135 C.E.
Late Roman	135-324 C.E.
Early Byzantine	324-491 C.E.
Late Byzantine	491-640 C.E.
Early Islamic	640-1174 C.E.

We can immediately see that there is no clear agreement, even without considering the problem of later chronology. Part of the source of the confusion here is that some authors are asking the historical question, "What is the major historical break?" and others are asking the archeological question, "What can we find that signifies a cultural discontinuity?"

<i>Date</i>	<i>Franciscans</i>	<i>Encyclopedia</i>	<i>Heshbon</i>
332 B.C.E.		Hellenistic I	
200-198	Late Hellenistic		Late Hellenistic
152		Hellenistic II	
63	Early Roman		Early Roman
37		Roman I	
70 C.E.		Roman II	
135	Middle Roman		Late Roman
180		Roman III	
300	Late Roman		

324		Byzantine I	Early Byzantine
450-51	Byzantine	Byzantine II	
491			Late Byzantine
638-40	Early Arab	Early Arab	Early Islamic

The question of terminology is another matter and devolves on agreement among archeologists. What is more troubling is not the Franciscan terminology itself, but simply that their use of the otherwise common terms "Late Roman" and "Byzantine" is in no way congruent with presently accepted usage. That is, when one reads "Late Roman" in *any* of these volumes he or she must make the mental adjustment to "Late Roman-Early Byzantine." Likewise if one reads "Byzantine" one must think "*Late Byzantine*."

This may seem to be a minor point, but as a matter of fact, such a *caveat* at a point as basic as chronological terminology alerts us to look for other anomalies in the texts. We will not be disappointed.

Before turning to a volume by volume review of this report it is necessary to sound another warning. One cannot successfully read volume I (the buildings) without having vols. II (ceramics) and III (coins) at hand. At times, particularly in the discussion of the so-called "*domus-ecclesia*" in vol. I, it is also necessary to be able to refer to vol. IV (graffiti). In order to check remarks about dating, one must have those volumes within easy reach in order to review the evidence. Corbo lightens the load for the reader with good, well-corrected references to the other volumes, wherever he feels that this is necessary.

On the other hand, Loffreda's ceramics report may be read as an independent monograph, as is also the case with Testa's treatment of the graffiti and decorations in the plaster. Fr. Spijkerman's volume on the coins suffers from his untimely death and is mainly usable as a long appendix to vol. I. This leads to the observation that it would have been more convenient and useful to have organized the material comprehensively by areas, reporting together the ceramics, coins, and other small finds from insulae with the church and Octagon. Failing that, at least an outline presentation of artifactual, architectural, and other evidence in one place would be welcome.

Cafarnaon I: Gli Edifici.

The remarks about book production above apply here also, with a few additions. For example, the fold-out plans are designed to be usable while the book is being read: when the plan is folded out, none of it is still trapped between the pages so that one must read with a ruler or hand holding the book open in two places.

An added feature of two of the fold-outs is that the three strata are printed in three colors: red, blue, and green. This gives a dramatic distinction between walls of different periods both for the plan of the Octagon, church, and *insula sacra*, and for the three sections chosen for presentation in this way. In terms of granting an immediate visual grasp of architectural strata this technique is invaluable.

Another innovation is equally striking, but might have been handled another way to give more information. Three fold-outs are *isometric* views of two of the reconstructed insulae. Plate VIII is of the *insula sacra* (Insula I) during the 4th century, complete with cutaway view of the interior of the main living quarters (those later converted into the house-church). Plate XV is an isometric of the hypothetical reconstruction of Insula II,

showing details of roofing and some cutaways of foreground rooms and courtyards.

This is an excellent technique for providing the reader with no particular expertise in the Roman-Byzantine Periods a clear view of the point being made in three-dimensional terms. But why were the insulae chosen for this treatment, and not the Octagon or synagogue? There is a section of a proposed reconstruction of the Octagon in plate V, but a cutaway isometric might have given architectural flesh and bone to the structure.

But if isometrics are good, then why not something better: perspective drawings? Of course they are expensive, take more time, and require careful checking but their visual impact is much greater. Furthermore, it is possible to build in far more realism, as there is no distortion due to equal axes in the drawing. Perhaps the parade example of such visual reporting is difficult to find, because it is published in an article by Mahmut Akok, "Ankara Sehrindeki Roma Hamani," *Turkish Review of Archaeology* XVII-1 [1968]: 5-37, which reports on the Roman bath at Ankara with 13 plans, nine of which are in perspective.

Corbo reviews the excavations of his predecessors and then notes the contributions of these nine campaigns: (1) the synagogue is now surely to be dated post mid-4th century; and (2) a large part of the town plan has been recovered from a townlet occupied continuously from late Hellenistic to early Arab times. One must also add (p. 26) that the last campaign reported here (1968) also established the exact plan of the Octagon, discovered the baptismal font within the apse, distinguished between two building phases in the Octagon, and clarified the date, origin, and purpose of this monument. Another achievement of these campaigns is the re-opening of the question of the typology and history of ancient synagogues because of the excavators' insistence that the synagogue must be 4th century at the earliest. This is an impressive list by any measure.

The investigation of the Octagon and Insula I resulted in the discovery of three strata (not identified as strata), now well known. Numbered from the top down, they are: (1) the octagonal church ("The Octagon") in two building phases, (2) the "*domus-ecclesia*" of the "Judeo-Christians" of the excavator's "Late Roman" period, and (3) an insula founded in the Early Roman Period, used until the 4th century when one house ("St. Peter's") was transformed into a house-church.

We will illustrate the usefulness of this volume to the archeologist by attempting to follow the argument (checking in vols. II and III where necessary) as to the date of the apse and baptistry.

Corbo states that the Octagon was first built *without* the apse and baptistry. This immediately suggests something about the function of the church, namely, that it was a memorial or pilgrim church with no altar or regularly assigned clergy, such as perhaps the first octagonal of the Ascension, the Anastasia, and the Octagon at Bethlehem (Ovadia 1970: 33-34; 85-86).

In any case the evidence for this two-stage building is not so clearly presented as one might wish. Fig. 2 presents a section northeast through the apse and baptistry. This drawing clearly shows the floor marked "d" associated with the wall marked "e" ("*pavimento in battuto di chalice dei Giudeo-cristiani*" and "*muro est portico domus-ecclesia*" respectively) antedating the

Octagon but does not support the interpretation of the two phases (first without, then with apse). Section a-b drawn east-west through the apse is clearer, since another pavement about 1 m. higher than "d" evidently runs beneath the entire stone and mortar apse and baptistry. But it is fig. 3, which the reader must compare with photograph 13, that presents the "levels" of the apse and Hall 10 to the south and enables one to reconstruct the same sequence as Corbo. Pavement "C" in the photo runs *beneath* the foundation of the outer octagon and is to be associated with the earlier "Judeo-Christian" wall. Pavement "B," on the other hand, is made up to the Octagon, but runs *beneath* the apse as well. If it is truly a finished floor, then the area east of the original Octagon was conceived without an apse.

Finally, however, one must check fold-out plan VI:A ("North-south section within the sacred wall of the Judaeo-Christians on the east side"). This shows unambiguously that pavement "A" is to be associated with the Octagon. Pavement "C" is shown to run beneath the walls of the Octagon, as in photograph 13.

It is true, therefore, that the evidence is presented in such a way that one can check conclusions, after a fashion. The reservation stems from several sources: (1) All section drawings are purely interpretive, with no drafting conventions to indicate types of layers. (2) Walls and floors are not numbered in any consistent fashion on the plans, sections, and photographs to facilitate tracking a single element such as a floor (what is "Pavimento C" in one figure may be labeled in a completely new way in another [see below]). (3) There are too few elevations on plans to be able to make sense of elevation differences. (4) Section lines on plans lack arrows to indicate observer orientation, a minor detail but one that this reviewer had to supply constantly to keep track of what goes with what. (5) There is no convention in sections for trench walls, though plans sometimes use dotted lines and sometimes heavy lines to indicate trench walls. Therefore what is perfectly clear to the excavator, since he supervised the digging, is not always clear to the reader, i. e., sometimes a trench wall looks like an architectural feature in a drawing. (6) Details enlarged from section drawings do not agree with the over-all section drawing. For example fold-out plan V:CC ("East-west section on the median axis of the *insula sacra*") does not match at the apse end of the drawing with fig. 2, section c-d. In fig. 2 one must guess that Pavement "d" (=Pavement "C" of fig. 3) is associated with Wall "a" (the 4th century enclosure wall [of the "Judeo-Christians"]), while in fold-out VI:C it is shown clearly and unambiguously.

On the question of dating the structure, Corbo notes that on the basis of literary evidence it must have been built surely before 570 (Arculf) and likely before Egeria (Eteria in Corbo), whom Wilkinson dates, following Devos, between 381 and 384 (Wilkinson: 237-39). Beneath the mosaic of the Octagon is a layer of "make-up" for the mosaic that Corbo calls "riempitura" (fill). Beneath this fill is the "destruction layer" from the demolition of the previous building. Corbo notes, in describing this layer and its coin evidence (p. 97):

. . . in fact, the destruction level began directly upon the pavement, upon which we gathered a great quantity of pieces of plaster from the destroyed walls. Most pieces of plaster, also of substantial size, had not only fallen on the polychrome pavement but were held directly there by the great weight of the demolished material. In this destruction level in contact with the pavement we collected . . . 3, 4, and 18 of the catalog corresponding to Valentinus I (364-75), coins of 346-61, and another of the middle of the 4th century.

But there is more, for on p. 54 Corbo lists 11 coins, largely from the destruction level of the various rooms of *Insula I*. If one makes a distribution plot by date and number of coins (which Corbo did not do), there is a sharp peak at 402 C.E., a peak that drops off equally sharply at 408 C.E. However, Corbo points out that in the area of the *insula sacra* 172 coins were recovered, almost all of the 4th century C.E., "with some rare coins that cover also the first two decades of the 5th century."

He does not rest his case on the coins alone, but also on the ceramic evidence. Here is where the reader must have volume II handy, as the entire argument from ceramic evidence is cross-referenced to that volume. In fact, if one is to check out the 4th century conclusion, one must also have already read the requisite sections of Loffreda's ceramic report. But more on that later.

In any case Corbo's conclusion seems inescapable: the converging coin and pottery evidence points to the erection of the octagonal church "towards the middle of the 5th century" (p. 56). I would rather say that the converging evidence points to the *finishing* of the Octagon by mid-century, but that the beginning of construction started in the time of Arcadius (395-408) at the latest and in the time of Theodosius I (383-95) at the earliest.

One final note on Corbo's reconstruction in fold-out plan V ("Hypothetical reconstruction of the Octagonal Church erected on the ancient foundations"). There is no notice in the report of the finding of any architectural fragments such as architraves, voussoirs, roof tiles, or anything else that might have facilitated reconstruction on paper. It may be that such items have been found, but are being reserved for a future article. Be that as it may, the proposed reconstruction is no more than a sketch of the form the building might have taken. Details of piers, columns, the possibility of a dome or cupola over the central octagon, spanning of roofs, etc. are noticeably missing.

The evidence for the so-called *domus-ecclesia* or house-church is more intriguing. Here the architectural elements are all present, and none seem to be particularly sophisticated. In fact, the opposite seems to be the case, as the architect(s) seem to have relied heavily on plaster to cover the sins of omission. What is somewhat irritating in the whole presentation is that Corbo seems to believe that it is self-evident that "Judeo-Christians" (*not* "Jewish Christians") are the builders of this structure.

It is simple enough to follow Corbo's architectural argument and description of the building in chapter two. The builders erected an enclosure wall forming a rough square about 27 m. on a side, which is approximately the size of the *insula* it surrounds. The basalt-boulder house within this enclosure had walls added to the east and northeast to form an approximately square hall about 10 x 10 m. What the excavators designated Room no. 1 within this square hall was then furnished with an arch, so that the barely 6 x 6.5 m. space was two stories in height, but with no second story. This room the excavators called the *sala venerata*.

The stratigraphic discussion of the pavements of the smallest, central octagon is very complete, but needs to be augmented by the series of stratigraphically published ceramic deposits from these loci presented in *Cafarnao II* (pp. 102-18) and the coins as listed in *Cafarnao III*. In any case it is clear that we are dealing with a house founded in the Early Roman Period and used until the 4th century, when the community rebuilt it as a "church" (though "shrine" may be a more appropriate term). This edifice attracted visitors of various language backgrounds (Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, Armenian, and perhaps Latin, exactly parallel to the situation at Nazareth) who did not hesitate to scratch their religious sentiments in the painted plaster of the central hall. This building fell to the wrecker also, and the

Christian community built the Octagon on the destroyed 4th century church after Egeria's visit. Early in its history this memorial church gained an apse with baptistry and probably an altar. The invasions of the Arabs in the early 7th century marked the end of its structural history, which also evidently coincides with the demise of the town.

In other words, one finds little to argue with in the presentation of the archeological evidence itself, though more small finds might have enriched the discussion. What is a more severe and more subtle problem must engage the attention of the reviewer at the level of interpretation. Perhaps we gain the clearest insight into this problem in Corbo's discussion of an actual inscription.

On pp. 107-11 Corbo discusses an ostrakon found in Insula I under Pavement A of Courtyard 6 west of the wall of the *sala venerata*. Pavement A must date to the Late Roman-Early Byzantine Period, judging from its coins and ceramics.

The ostrakon is roughly triangular and measures 4 x 5 cm. It exhibits three lines of square Babylonian script incised before the pot was fired. Corbo observes, "The language is Hebrew and the letters are very clear, 6 mm. in height on the average."

Corbo reconstructs the text as follows:

[. . . אַתָּה.] זֶק [.]	"Purify [the pitcher]
[יִי] דְּמֹהַּ [. .]	of wine, [your] blood,
יְהִי	O Yahweh!"

Corbo also notes that if the *he* is read as a *het* in line 2, then it may be the first letter of a word such as דְּמֹהַּ, which means "fermenting wine" (KB: 312). Then the inscription would read, "Purify the [pitcher] of wine, the fermenting blood of Yahweh."

Either reading suggests to Corbo that this is a cultic text, perhaps from a cultic vessel originally used in a Judeo-Christian rite, namely, the eucharist. Corbo mentions some ancient Christian texts that might support such a contention.

On the other hand, it is much simpler to read this as an Aramaic inscription designating ownership, with the *dalet* of line 2 as "which". We expect a proper name in the missing first part of line 1, and the third letter of line 2 may be read as *samek* rather than a *mem* and the fourth letter as *het* rather than *he*. In line 3 we read a *he* for the second letter.

In that case we reconstruct the text perhaps as follows:

זֶק [.]	"N the wine-maker;
[יִי] דְּמֹהַּ [. .]	wine which he squeezed.
יְהִי [אֵטֶב]	May it be for good."

Another possible reconstruction of line one is [הַ] זֶק [יִי], "[He]zek[iah]," or some other similar name. In either case we have a simple, non-cultic text.

The reader need not consider the above as a definitive alternative proposal for reading the ostrakon in question. Rather, the intention is to point out a serious flaw in the text at a level of interpretation rather than presentation.

Corbo and the other excavators in this expedition appear to have settled on a set of presuppositions about the religious and ethnic identity of the people at Capernaum. That is, they accept as self-evident that the people of Capernaum, Nazareth, and other localities are "Judeo-Christians." As I have pointed out before, Corbo nowhere in this report advances this as a working hypothesis and then tests it against the evidence. In fact, there is

no definition of "Judeo-Christian" anywhere in the text, which suggests that Corbo and the other authors regard it as self-evident, or that it has been amply demonstrated elsewhere.

Despite the publications of Bagatti and others, there is no scholarly consensus about this idea, and therefore it is premature to adopt it without a defense. In any case, the reader is warned to use Occam's razor while perusing these volumes, since the authors did not use it in the writing, as the discussion of the ostrakon testifies.

Corbo summarizes the results of the campaigns of 1969-74 with respect to the synagogue in "part two" of this volume. These 60 pages report in more-or-less summary form on the 16 trenches excavated within the synagogue proper and the courtyard to the east. Here are the most controversial aspects of these excavations; fortunately, they are reported in an entirely sober and non-sensational mien. (The 1969 season was reported more thoroughly in Corbo, Loffreda, and Spijkerman, *La Sinagoga di Cafarnaon dopo gli scavi del 1969*, Jerusalem, 1970, including discussion of the excavations, ceramics, and coins.)

We follow Corbo in summarizing the principal results under six points: (1) The earliest structures beneath the synagogue are walls, floors, and water channels dating to the Late Hellenistic Period. (2) These structures of stratum "A" were abandoned in the Late Roman Period. (3) In this same period the synagogue was built above these structures on an artificially raised platform. (4) "In the entire area of the synagogue the levels of artificial fill of the platform are hermetically sealed by a thick layer of mortar by the laying of the stone pavement slabs (Stratum C)." In this layer the excavators found thousands of Late Roman coins. (5) The beginning of construction of the synagogue must date in the second half of the 4th century C.E. and its completion near the middle of the 5th century C.E. (6) The building was used continuously until the destruction of the city in the early Arab Period (Stratum D).

The trench by trench discussion tends to support this outline of the building history, though largely by inference. No coins or ceramics from the synagogue excavations are published here, though Corbo promises to bring this data together in the special volume devoted to the synagogue.

Corbo only summarizes the coin evidence. For example in his remarks on Trench 1, which was cut into the center, south end of the nave, he states (p. 121):

Coins and Ceramics of Trench 1. 1) The coins found in the cut of the trench belong to many levels: In the stratum above the bed of mortar we have coins SIN. [an abbreviation for Corbo, Loffreda, and Spijkerman, *La Sinagoga de Cafarnaon*, 1970] 69, nos. 1-3 of the years 383-392; 395-408; 395-450 A.D. . . .

From beneath to the stratum of mortar but at various heights in the fill we have coins SIN. 69, nos. 5-9 which date to the years 61 A.D. (?); 104-105 A.D.; 135-154 A.D.; 119-120 A.D. and the 3rd/2nd century B.C. . . .

As the coins, so likewise the ceramics found in the trench embrace the long period from the Hellenistic to the Late Roman period. Characteristically also here towards virgin soil are consistently found traces of occupation from the Hellenistic period.

But it is precisely the discovery of the thousands of coins in the fill and in the mortar that has prompted so much controversy. What could possibly be the motivation for discarding so many coppers both here and beneath the pavement of the courtyard or trapezoidal building to the east? Furthermore, the late date remains unconvincing to some, since it is at least possible that the

pavement is from the 4th-5th century, but that the edifice itself is much earlier.

In this connection, however, it seems clear to this reviewer that the evidence *as presented* confirms the late chronology proposed. For example, the layer of mortar beneath the pavement blocks is not a second installation, at least on the basis of the evidence of the photographs. Furthermore, the coins were found in the same numbers in the same kind of fill directly beneath the stylobates, which clinches the argument. The removal of the stylobate implies removal of the entire upper structure of the building.

Nevertheless, the sceptics in the archeological community will likely be convinced only if excavations beneath the floors and walls of the basalt-stone structures under the synagogue can show those structures to date to the 4th century, the proposed date for the beginning of construction of the limestone-walled synagogue. In other words, the trenches down to those buildings or the putative insula must continue to virgin soil in order to establish the stratigraphic sequence in detail.

In any case, the late date for the synagogue raises more historical problems than it solves. We know that the Theodosian Code prohibits new building by the Jewish community. Does this mean that the Code was mainly a "lofty" ideal in the minds of Byzantine jurists and politicians, much like "international law" today? The implications of a late date for the synagogues of Capernaum, Ostia, and Stobi are yet to be worked out.

To return to this report, Corbo discloses a new and very essential datum in proper architectural interpretation of this building that is not without implications for understanding religious practices within the Jewish community at Capernaum. He presents the data in such a matter-of-fact fashion that one might miss it altogether. This is the discovery of two "platforms" ("M" and "N") on either, inner side of the main entrance.

Let us review the entire discussion, brief as it is: In the main, the ancient builders set the large paving slabs of the floor of the synagogue and of the eastern court into a very thick (about 35 cm.) layer of mortar. The bed for this mortar throughout Trench 1, for example, consisted of limestone, sand, basalt, and enough air-holes to suggest deliberate fill. This fill lay everywhere in the trench, *except* in a "little square (*piazzola*) designated "M" just west of the door between the facade wall and the stylobate. Here the reader must consult photograph 52, which is inadequate, since it shows "M" in the far right background with no label in the caption. There it is visible as a mass of basalt stones at about the same elevation as the pavement mortar. One can see that the mortar bed for the pavement runs *up to* "M" but not over it. This suggests that "M" and the mortar bed for the pavement are contemporary stratigraphically. The same picture emerges from study of photograph 55 and the north-south section drawing of Trench 1 in fig. 11. A set of overhead photographs of the mortar bed and of "M" together with a clear photograph of the trench wall at the section line *and* a detailed section drawing that indicated the character of the fill and other layers auld have been a godsend to the reader.

In any case, from Corbo's discussion, the two photographs, and the section drawing one can see that the builders took special care to form a roughly 2.7 m. square installation inside the building and to the left as one enters the central door (*sic*). The plan of "M" can be seen in fig. 10, which is the plan of the edifice according to the excavations of the Franciscans. On the east side of the nave is corresponding installation "N," which is now disturbed, but which doubtless was originally of the same dimensions.

Installations "M" and "N" consist (from the top down) of a layer of strong lime mortar 5-8 cm. thick laid over 8-13 cm. of

gravel, which itself rests upon about 25 cm. of basalt flagstones (in the geological sense). These stones are visible in photograph 52. The lime mortar is devoid of casts of the pavement slabs that characterize the layer of thick mortar in the rest of the trench. Furthermore, this lime mortar is only 1/4 to 1/2 the thickness of the pavement mortar. Finally, since "M" and "N" do not extend in front of the central portal, it seems that Corbo is right to state that the *theba* reconstructed by Kohl and Watzinger (pls. II and IV) and Orfali directly in front of the main entrance is an impossibility.

One may object that it is stratigraphically possible that "M" and "N" are *later* than the paving slabs; namely, that the builders cut "M" and "N" long after installation of the pavement. This is clearly possible, but even so one is left with two platforms on either side of the main portal rather than a single installation across the nave. If the community wanted them on either side late in the history of the building, it is quite likely that they were following a conservative architectural tradition. (We must note here that Corbo insists that "M" and "N" *antedate* the laying of the pavement, p. 167.)

In this connection, Corbo and Loffreda found evidence in Locus 71 (a street) just south of the southwest corner of the synagogue that fairly begs consideration in reconstruction of *aediculae* on either side of the door as at Sardis, or even in reconstruction of an ³*arōn ha-qōdeš* or holy ark in which the scrolls would repose. Hopefully, we will find a full discussion of these fragments (illustrated here only in photographs 70 and 71) in the special volume on the synagogue, as the discussion in this volume leaves much to be desired. For example, their stratigraphic context is summed up in a single sentence: "In the pavement of the street [Locus 71] we gathered coins of the fourth century and some tens of fragments of stucco, still painted, from the synagogue" (p. 194). This situation is depicted in fig. 18, which shows "fallen stucco" *upon* the street, judging from the arrows. That placement is confirmed on p. 149: "In the area of trench 9 the final phase of the street level is indicated by broad areas of stucco coming from the ruined synagogue. This stucco is of the same type as that found by Watzinger in the interior of the synagogue."

Turning to Kohl and Watzinger, we find one photograph (no. 41 on p. 22) that does indeed illustrate four such pieces. Watzinger indicates that plaster fragments with architectural patterns and red and white colors were found inside the synagogue in front of the south facade. Similar pieces came from the southwest corner of the terrace in a much fragmented condition (p. 22). These are precisely those that Watzinger interprets as the decoration for his hypothetical *theba* alluded to above. Therefore it is a bit disappointing not to find another proposed reconstruction of *aediculae* here, arguing from the parallels at Sardis and perhaps following Sukenik. Again we must wait for the synagogue volume.

All objections aside, the recognition and description of installations "M" and "N" is a daring and important contribution and has many implications for the history of synagogue architecture. It may be of interest to note that the Franciscans' proposal to interpret these installations as platforms may find a parallel at Meiron. Meyers and Strange discovered evidence during the 1975 campaign that suggests that at least one *aedicula* may have stood west of the central entrance. Therefore it is clear that careful excavation is called for within this corresponding area in the nave of other triple-entry facades, such as at Bar^c am, Gush Ḥalav, Umm el-Amed, and Chorazin to determine if this is already an architectural convention of the period.

The conclusions as to chronology of the building are not

significantly different from what Corbo and others have proposed in earlier publications: Corbo, Loffreda, and Spikjerman, *La Sinagoga di Cafarnao dopo gli scavi del 1969*; Corbo, "La sinagoga di Cafarnao dopo gli scavi del 1972," *Liber Annuus* 22 (1972): 204-35; Loffreda, "The Late Chronology of the Synagogue of Capernaum," *IEJ* 23 (1973): 36-42. The new contributions are in the area of phases of construction and a note on building materials.

The phases of construction are (1) synagogue, (2) courtyard building, and (3) Installation 143 ("ripostiglio 143") near the northwest corner of the synagogue. The architectural difference in building the synagogue and the courtyard edifice is substantial, but not necessarily the chronology. For example, fig. 17 shows that the synagogue and the courtyard building have separate foundations, but that the height of the first course in the courtyard is exactly that of the synagogue, though the foundations are also of different heights. Furthermore Corbo points out, rightly so, that the eastern wall of the synagogue opens onto the courtyard, suggesting that the latter was a part of the original plans (p. 167).

The situation with Installation 143 at the north-west is more complicated. Corbo points out several salient facts: (1) One of the pilasters on the north wall is missing, namely, the one next to the door within this installation. (2) The synagogue door here opens *into* the installation (as at Chorazin), exactly the opposite of the other doors, which open into the synagogue. (3) It is poorly founded, sometimes directly upon the fill, though on the west upon a strong basalt foundation. (4) It is built of basalt rather than white limestone, like the synagogue proper. These considerations suggest to Corbo that (a) this installation was conceived from the beginning as part of the plan of the entire complex (witness the door) and (b) that it is nevertheless independent and served the modest purpose of storage, as his designation as "ripostiglio" suggests.

Yet not all the evidence is in, since the stairs up to the north side suggest a purpose more in keeping with that of the model illustrated in Kohl and Watzinger, pl. VI, namely, a staircase leading up to the second story gallery. This reviewer would like to point out that the *structure* of 143 (not counting the staircases) misses only 20-25 cm. from being exactly centered on the western aisle. A storage room could be built anywhere. Furthermore, it seems odd that stairs to the exterior of the installation would lead simply to a storage shed. Surely this interpretation needs to be reexamined.

It is clear that we are dealing with the building sequence rather than with the larger question of relative chronology. The ancient builders first erected the synagogue, then the courtyard building and Installation 143, though these latter two could be contemporary.

One further comment: fold-out plan XI (the synagogue) is invaluable for following the discussion in the text. The section drawings of each trench were also exceptionally useful. Top-plans of each trench to go with the section drawings would have been equally useful.

Part 4 of this volume is devoted to the insulae. Corbo is quite correct that "The excavations of the insulae will be very useful for an ever more complete knowledge of the city" (p. 173).

This section of vol. I is illustrated with 14 photographs and 8 fold-out plans. The author refers us to the monographs on the ceramics and coins where appropriate and in general summarizes clearly the evidence for understanding the outlines of the archeology of this part of the excavations. Yet what is missing is as important as what is included.

One misses a division of the material into strata or phases. For

example, from the section drawings published in pl. XIV it is quite clear that we are dealing with only the last period in the plan of Insula 2 in pl. XIII. In other words, pl. XIII illustrates walls of all four strata all together. One therefore sorely misses a sequence of plans, smaller perhaps, that separate the walls and floors: a plan of Stratum "A"; a plan of Stratum "B," and so on.

I would like to remark parenthetically that it is very difficult to use the plans and section drawings as they now exist, since the walls do not carry their own taxonomy. Thus, in the section drawing (fold-out pl. XIV) Section A-A, one notes that Room 67 appears to be bounded on the east by an Early Roman wall, since Pavement D is made up to it. But which of the two walls drawn to the west is the one in pl. XIII (the plan)? After measuring (possible since both plates are published at the same scale), it is clear that it is the first of the two walls. Then what is the westernmost wall in Section A-A? If the walls carried their own number or letters, the reader would be spared many puzzles of this nature.

Another glaring omission is the lack of any comparative discussion of the insulae from Chorazin (Yeivin, "Excavations at Khorazin," *Eretz-Israel* 11 [1973]: 144-57, esp figs. 3 [2nd-4th centuries] and 4 [5th-6th centuries]), Meiron (Meyers, Meyers, and Strange, "Excavations at Meiron, in Upper Galilee — 1971/1972 . . ." *BASOR* 214 [1974]: 2-25, fig. 4), and southern Syria (Butler, *Syria*). Hopefully we have much to learn from such comparative discussions, and Roman and Byzantine housing in ancient Palestine has deserved far more attention than we have given it in the past.

But what seems strangest of all is the omission of any discussion of the architecture, small finds, ceramics, and coins in an over-all interpretation of the history and culture of Capernaum from its founding through the Arab conquest. One might object, and perhaps rightly so, that this would take another entire volume. Yet even an outline of such a careful interpretation would keep this from being merely another presentation of the trees without reference to the forest. Corbo's detailed, careful discussion guides the reader along a path full of switchbacks wherein every rock and plant is pointed out (well, the main ones anyway), but without leading him to the vista that enables him to comprehend the significance of the parts that he has observed. This does not mean that the book is a failure. On the contrary, it is one of the most valuable contributions to Roman-Byzantine archeology in the eastern Mediterranean in some time. Rather, the omissions that characterize the discussion of the insulae characterize the entire work and tend to undermine but not erase its usefulness to the historian, the student of comparative archeology and culture, the researcher into post-biblical Judaism, and perhaps others.

Cafarnao II: La Ceramica.

With this volume Loffreda demonstrates that he is one of the more important archeological ceramicists working in the Roman and Byzantine Periods. He has presented the corpus in logical order, with clear exposition and has arrived at important conclusions.

Our earlier remarks about book production appertain here, though a few more critical notes are in order. The seven color plates do not enhance the scientific usefulness of this volume. Six are devoted to illustrating sherds of late red wares (termed here rather awkwardly *terra pseudo-sigillata*) while pl. 7 after p. 208 shows four lamps. It is not at all clear why these particular sherds, and not others, grace these plates.

Parenthetically, this reviewer found it necessary to *search* for each color plate, as the index to the color plates on p. 13 does not include page numbers. The reader will have to enter the page numbers himself.

Again as with vol. I, the reader must convert the chronological notations to more familiar terms. Nevertheless a table of errata and a complete and useful set of indexes appear beginning on p. 12, including invaluable correlations of photographs and line drawings ("figures"). Not all the black and white photographs are well reproduced, and this reviewer could not always distinguish between poor photography and poor plate production. For example, photograph 15 (p. 65) depicts stamped Hellenistic jar handles, but it is virtually impossible to make out any details of the stamps from the photograph. Unfortunately, these sherds appear nowhere else as line drawings. The three lines of text describing these handles are all that is provided.

One of the decisions that the archeologist always faces in the publication of pottery is whether to publish by type or by locus. We can all be grateful to Loffreda that he has elected to do both.

The first part of the book is a more or less standard descriptive presentation by types. Loffreda orders the corpus in eight "classes," five of which have neutral alphabetic designations: "Class A," "Class B," . . . "Class F." The seventh class is *terra pseudo-sigillata*, and the eighth comprises lamps.

These "classes" are the least usable feature of this otherwise splendid presentation. In all fairness I must point out that, for the most part, discussions of Mediterranean pottery have not yet benefitted from Shepherd's *Ceramics for the Archaeologist* or other such monographs, and one need not fault Loffreda for a shortcoming that we all share. Nevertheless, his "classes" are a mixture of categories. Classes A-F refer to what heretofore archeologists have rather loosely termed "wares" (paste, finish, and firing), but *terra pseudo-sigillata* is a class comprised of paste and form, while the last category is form and function.

Even the paste descriptions seem uncomfortably subjective: color is not recorded by Munsel number or equivalent; hardness is not estimated by any scale; grit size, color, and distribution are not presented by any quantitative measure. The reader nowhere finds any systematic color notation for exterior finish, interior finish, and vessel section. In other words, the descriptions of paste, finish, and form are too sketchy to inform thoroughly readers who do not already know these wares.

Part 2 of this monograph contains an important selection of pottery from 25 loci (rooms or other architectural features). Loffreda presents one sherd from each type of vessel from beneath several successive floors for illustration in groups. This is an invaluable tool for use in checking evolution of types and the stratigraphic conclusions, though loci from beneath the synagogue are conspicuously missing.

The usefulness (and some limitations) of this part of the book may be illustrated by referring to figs. 30-32 (pp. 102-4). These drawings depict the ceramics from bottom to top, or from earliest to latest, from beneath three successive pavings of the southern courtyard of the *insula sacra*.

The drawings reveal a clear evolution of certain forms: collared water jars surely evolve from complex to simple rim; bowls with strongly everted lip move from hemispherical to carinated body; and cooking pots with a single groove within the rim and low collar change to groove *outside* the rim and high collar.

One weakness in this otherwise invaluable presentation is that type-notations do not appear on the plates. For example, Loffreda classifies the collared water jars shown as Type "A1" from Pavement C, Type "A1" from Pavement B, and Type "B"

from Pavement A, but only in his *text*. Cross-references to the coin volume could have helped the reader to gain a clearer view of the chronology. This lack of references to the coins is largely true of the rest of the book.

Loffreda's discussion (pp. 102-4) more or less requires the reader to have at hand clear plans and section drawings. The sections appear on pp. 138-40, but there is *no* indication on the single, small plan of the site (fig. 29, p. 100) where these section lines lie. Finally, not all ceramic data figure in the line drawings, though some mentioned in the text are surely quite important. For example, Loffreda mentions that in addition to the vessels he shows in fig. 31 he found two fragments of Herodian lamps and two bases from circular lamps with a slight nozzle.

For some odd reason Loffreda has chosen to split the chronological discussion from the description. Section 3 of the book (pp. 141-88) contains a treatment of the dating evidence by families.

Immediately the reader encounters two problems in using this section: (1) In order to read all the information and conclusions about any one ceramic family, one must turn back and forth from the first to the third sections. This is merely an inconvenience. (2) There is little argument from parallel evidence. This is much more serious.

For example, beginning on p. 150 Loffreda summarizes his evidence for the evolution of the seven types of cooking pots that are described on pp. 29-33 and 45-47. He mentions that his Type A4 has appeared at Nazareth, Kfar Kanna, Tiberias, Magdala, Tell Anafa, and Sepphoris, but there are no footnotes and too few in-text references to enable the student of Roman and Byzantine ceramics to pursue the matter in detail. This is particularly frustrating when he cites no fewer than 11 localities on p. 155 for his discussion of *piatti-tegami* ("Galilean bowls" in the nomenclature of the Khirbet Shema^c and Meiron excavation team) with only five references to the literature.

Naturally, readers who are already well read in Roman and Byzantine ceramics of this region will know where to look. But other archeologists or perhaps graduate students will find more hints than hard references.

This brings us to another, less pungent point. This monograph would have benefitted greatly from inclusion in it of Loffreda's article on the evolution of the "Galilean bowl": "Evoluzione d'un piatto-tegame secondo gli scavi di Cafarnao," *Liber Annuus* 19 (1969): 237-63. One might even argue that the whole system is easier to grasp by first reading Loffreda's ceramic essay in *La Sinagoga de Cafarnao dopo gli scavi del 1969* (Jerusalem, 1970). Furthermore Loffreda has just published a similar corpus from Magdala in the Bagatti festschrift (Jerusalem: Franciscan Press, 1976). This is at the moment the single most important supplement to this volume in print.

The section on the late red wares is detailed, useful, and well organized. Loffreda appeals to J. W. Hayes as his guide both for form and for his discussion of the stamps. It is just possible, nevertheless, that those forms found at Capernaum that are not listed in Hayes, *Late Roman Pottery* (1972), deserve more thorough treatment than they receive. In any case Loffreda has given us an important tool for understanding these wares in the eastern Levant.

Probably the major shortcoming of this book from a modern standpoint is the lack of cultural and historical conclusions. For example, although Loffreda recognizes that the "Galilean bowl" is likely a northern product, he does not seek to identify whether forms represent the general material culture or, conversely, only the regional culture. Therefore there are no attempts to correlate historical, economic, or other types of evidence with the evidence

from Capernaum itself. It would be very interesting to know whether the ceramic types tend to bear out Avi-Yonah's surmise from Matt 9:9 that Capernaum was situated near a border (*The Holy Land from the Persian to the Arab Conquest*: 138). It would be even more interesting to attempt to develop criteria for making that judgment.

This book is a true *sine qua non* for anyone working in the archeology of the Roman and Byzantine Periods in the Holy Land. It is *not* useful to the historian or comparative culturist or biblical scholar. Perhaps one day the ceramic text useful to both camps will be written. In the meantime this volume must appear in any complete archeological library.

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