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SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY  
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# SHE'ARIM

REPORT ON THE EXCAVATIONS DURING 1936-1940

Volume I: CATACOMBS 1-4

by  
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on behalf of The Israel Exploration Society and  
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THE HEBREW EDITION OF BETH SHE'ARIM, VOLUME I  
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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- AASOR* = *Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research*  
*AJA* = *American Journal of Archaeology*  
*BASOR* = *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*  
*BIES* = *Bulletin of the Israel Exploration Society* (Hebrew)  
*BJPES* = *Bulletin of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society* (Hebrew)  
Cantineau, *Inventaire* = J. Cantineau, *Inventaire des inscriptions de Palmyre, 1930–1936*  
Clermont-Ganneau, *ARO* = Ch. Clermont-Ganneau, *Archaeological Researches in Palestine* I–11, 1896–9  
Cumont, *FDE* = F. Cumont, *Fouilles de Doura Europos, 1926*  
*DAC* = *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie, 1924*  
*EDE* = *Excavations at Dura Europos, Preliminary Reports I–VIII, 1929–1939*  
Frey, *CIJ* I = J. B. Frey, *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum* I, 1936; II, 1952  
*JPOS* = *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*  
*JQR* = *Jewish Quarterly Review*  
*MGWJ* = *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums*  
*PEFQSt* = *Palestine Exploration Fund, Quarterly Statement*  
*PEQ* = *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*  
*PJb* = *Palästina-jahrbuch*  
*QDAP* = *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine*  
*RB* = *Revue biblique*  
*REJ* = *Revue des études juives*  
*ZDPV* = *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*

## PREFACE

This volume is the first of a series which will summarize the results of the excavations at Beth She'arim in Israel. It was initially decided to publish the present volume, in its Hebrew version, upon completion of the fourth season of excavations in the autumn of 1939. Thus, the first Hebrew edition appeared in 1945, comprising a report of our activities in the ancient necropolis and city on this site during the years 1936–1940. Thirteen years later, in 1958, the second Hebrew edition appeared, expanded to include additional plans and photographs, as well as a report on the clearance of the Mugharet el-Jehennem. Only four catacombs are treated here, lying on the western slope of the hill of Beth She'arim; the Greek epigraphic material from these caves is treated in the second volume of the series, the English edition of which is currently in press.

In 1940 excavations ceased due to wartime pressures. They were resumed in 1963 under the able direction of Prof. N. Avigad for several seasons (1953–1958). Prof. Avigad's report on the results of his excavations was published in Hebrew in 1971, comprising the third volume in the series. It will appear shortly in an English edition. In the summer of 1956 the present author cleared additional catacombs on the northern slope of the hill, as well as a large building in the town. So far, only preliminary reports of these activities have appeared (cf. *Israel Exploration Journal* 6 [1956], pp. 261–262; 10 [1960], p. 264.)

In translating this report into English, it was found to be impractical to revise it and bring it up to date beyond 1958. Thus, the reader will find numerous bibliographical references in the notes to modern Hebrew works (marked with an asterisk\*) and essentially no works later than that date.

Of the Hebrew terminology, one word has been retained throughout. It is the most suitable term possible and is now often found in archaeological literature in several European languages: the Mishnaic Hebrew word *kokh*, literally meaning “grave, cave for burial”, is applied today to the deep loculi normally met with in tombs of the Roman period in this country (cf. \*E. Y. Kutscher: *Eretz Israel* 8 [1969], pp. 273–279.)

It is my pleasure to thank all those who assisted in the execution of the project at Beth She'arim during the seasons of excavation treated here, especially P. Bar-Adon, at the time my chief assistant; the architects J. Kaplan and the late I. Dunayevsky, who prepared the plans; M. Jaffe, foreman, who still acts as caretaker on the site; the Seid family, who so kindly housed our expedition; and S. J. Schweig, who prepared the

photographs. Special gratitude is felt towards J. Aviram, Honorary Secretary of the Israel Exploration Society, who greatly facilitated the publication of this present edition; to R. Grafman, who went over the translation and to A. Peli and the staff of Massada Press Ltd., for the fine work they have done in preparing and printing this volume.

B. MAZAR

## CHAPTER I THE HISTORY OF BETH SHE'ARIM

### 1 THE NAME

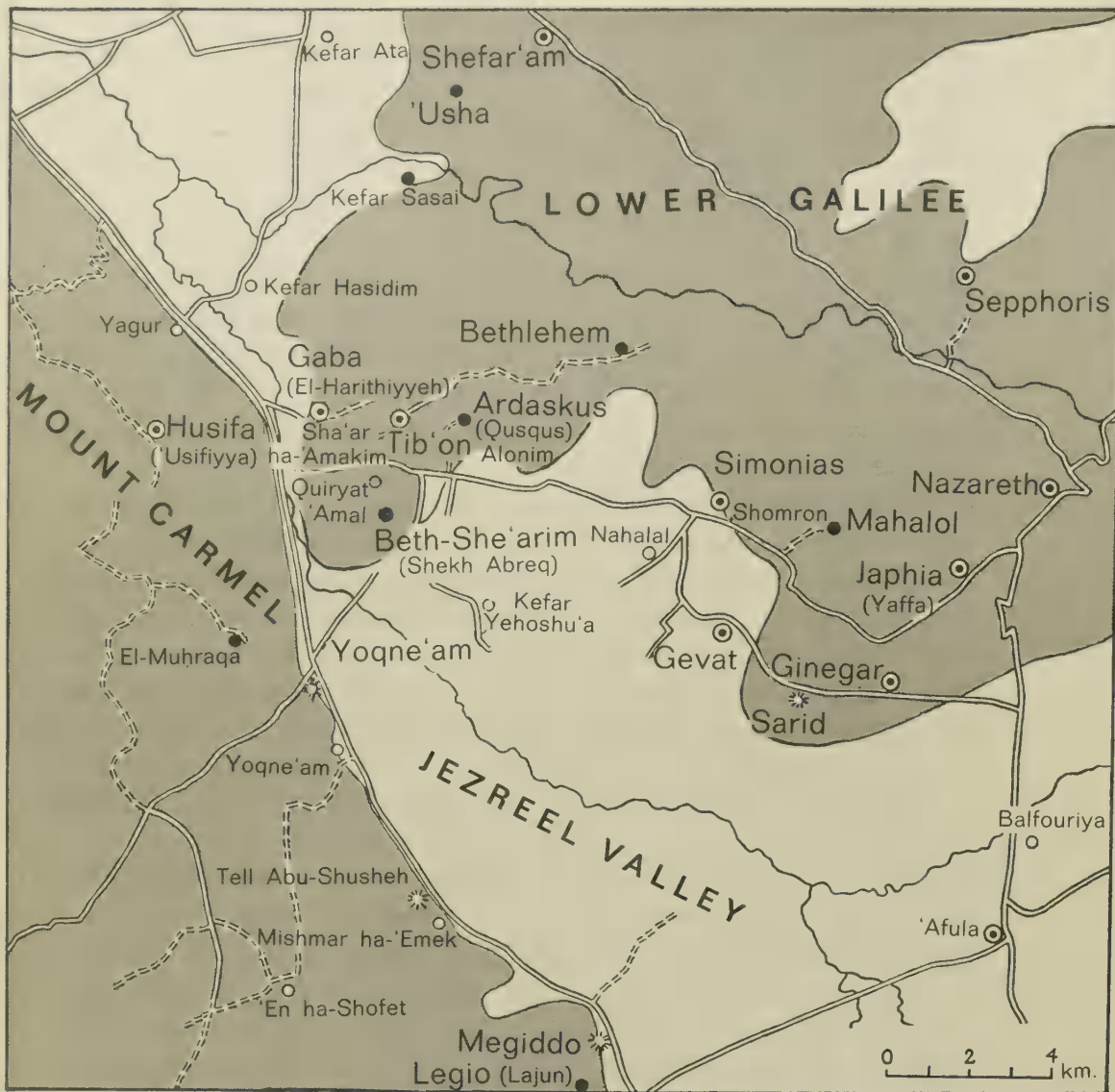
Beth She'arim is known in Jewish literary sources as a city of the late Second Temple period, and continued to exist during the centuries immediately following the Temple's destruction. Beth She'arim is mentioned neither in the Bible nor in other sources previous to the Jewish War against the Romans (66–73 C.E.). It is also missing in sources subsequent to Roman rule in Palestine.

In talmudic literature, the site is called Beth She'arim (בית שערים)<sup>1</sup> as well as בית שריי and בית שריין.<sup>2</sup> Beth She'arim is doubtlessly its original Hebrew name, whereas the other two forms were influenced by the Galilean Aramaic dialect. Josephus calls the place Βησάρα. In the Greek epigram discovered in the necropolis at Beth She'arim, the name is written Βεσαρα and in a tomb inscription at Khirbet el-Qubêbe (near Dêr 'Abû Salâme) it appears as Βισαρα.<sup>3</sup> Compound place names whose first element is *bêth* ("House") are quite common in Palestine in biblical as well as in later times.

The second part of the name — *She'arim* ("Gates") — is also common. In the Bible, two cities named She'araim are mentioned: one in the coastal plain (Josh. 15:36; 1 Sam. 17:52), and the second in the Negev (1 Chron. 4:31). As to the pronunciation of the name, I think the plural form She'arim is most likely. The Galilean Aramaic masculine plural forms שריין and שריי,<sup>4</sup> as well as the Greek Βεσαρα of the epigram and Βησάρα. in Josephus, seem to point to such a form. The other possibility, that the original was the locative She'araim<sup>5</sup> — a form<sup>6</sup> attested in many place names in Palestine, such as Karnaim, Beth Eglaim, She'araim, etc. — poses a difficulty: the expected spelling with a double *yod* (י) (בית שעריים), does not appear at all in any of the sources.

The fact that the letter *'ayin* (ע) has disappeared completely in the Aramaic and Greek forms is characteristic. We know from the Talmud that the inhabitants of Galilee and of the Jezreel Valley slurred over the gutturals, and especially the letter *'ayin*. For instance, it is well known that men from Beth She'an, Haifa, and Tib'on did not pronounce the *'ayin*.<sup>7</sup> Tib'on (Ṭab'ûn in Arabic), mentioned in this talmudic passage, is situated 1½ km north of Beth She'arim. It is no surprise, therefore, that the inhabitants of Beth She'arim, too, did not pronounce the *'ayin*.<sup>8</sup>

Another fact worth noting is the absorption of the *taw* (ת) into the letter *shin* (ש), as evidenced by the Greek spellings Βησάρα, Βεσαρα, Βισαρα.<sup>9</sup> This phenomenon occurs quite frequently in the Aramaic pronunciation and in forms of Palestinian place names, e.g., Bêsân. for Beth She'an.



✱ Mound    ● Ruin    ○ Modern settlement    ⊙ Ruin and modern settlement

Fig. 1  
Map of the Beth She'arim  
region

Neither do we lack examples of the *taw* disappearing without the influence of the letter following it.<sup>10</sup> An interesting example of this occurs in a Palmyrene inscription from Beth She'arim cemetery (no. 13), i.e., *Benafsha* instead of *Beth Nafsha*. As to the spelling of Βησάρρα with η and Βεσάρρα with ε, no difference need be postulated. Beth is written in Greek both as βηθ and as βεθ.<sup>11</sup>

## 2 BETH SHE'ARIM IN LITERARY SOURCES

Beth She'arim is mentioned for the first time in Josephus Flavius' autobiography, entitled *Life of Josephus* and written around the year 100 C.E. as an appendix to his *Antiquities of the Jews*. In Chapter 24 of this book, we find a short account of Josephus' battle with Aebutius, commander of the Roman garrison at Gaba,<sup>12</sup> in the year 66 C.E.:

*Aebutius, the decurion,<sup>a</sup> who had been entrusted with the charge of the Great Plain,<sup>b</sup> hearing that I was at Simonias,<sup>c</sup> a village on the frontier of Galilee, sixty furlongs<sup>d</sup> away from him,<sup>e</sup> set off with a hundred horses at his disposal, some two hundred infantry, and the inhabitants of the town of Gaba as auxiliaries, and by a night march reached the village where I had my quarters. I confronted him with a large force in order of battle. Aebutius, relying mainly on his cavalry, endeavored to decoy us into the plain. We, however, refused to accommodate him; realizing the advantage which his horse would have over our troops, composed entirely of infantry, should we descend into the plain, I determined to engage the enemy on my own ground. For a time, Aebutius and his men made a gallant stand; but seeing that his cavalry were useless in such surroundings, he withdrew to the town of Gaba, having failed in his object and lost three men in the engagement. I followed close behind with two thousand infantry, and on reaching the neighborhood of the town of Besara,<sup>f</sup> on the borders of Ptolemais, twenty furlongs<sup>g</sup> from Gaba, where Aebutius was stationed, I posted my men outside the village<sup>h</sup> with orders to keep strict guard on the roads, so as to prevent interference from the enemy, while we were removing the corn. Of this a large quantity, belonging to Queen Berenice,<sup>i</sup> had been collected from the neighboring villages and stored in Besara.<sup>13</sup>*

From Josephus we learn that, at the end of the Second Temple period, Besara was a large village<sup>14</sup> at the southern edge of Galilee on the border of the district of Ptolemais. In addition, we also learn that it was a Jewish settlement, whereas nearby Gaba was a Gentile city. Beth She'arim and the neighboring Jewish villages probably were part of the extensive Jewish royal holdings in the Jezreel Valley, which Agrippa I willed to his children Agrippa II and Berenice.<sup>15</sup> This large tenancy had been owned by the Herodian dynasty in whose time its area was larger and included Gaba.<sup>16</sup>

It seems likely that these large holdings initially belonged to the Hasmoneans. Josephus relates that, by order of the Senate in the time of Julius Caesar, two villages in the Jezreel Valley, which had belonged to the forefathers of the High Priest Hyrcanus II before the Jewish kingdom was subjected to Roman rule, were restored to him.<sup>17</sup> Hence, it seems that Beth She'arim and its neighborhood initially were possessions of the Hasmoneans apparently from the reign of Alexander Jannaeus on,<sup>18</sup> later falling into the hands of Herod. Actually the literary sources do not supply proof that Beth She'arim existed already during the Hasmonean period.

However, indirect evidence can be found in the historical deductions made above, as well as (and mainly) in the archaeological findings on the site. To sum up, I believe that Beth She'arim was founded by the Hasmonean kings as one of the centers of the royal estates in the Jezreel Valley and that the first residents of Beth She'arim were Jews.

What was the fate of Beth She'arim after the Jewish War? It is clear that Beth She'arim continued to exist as a Jewish city after the conflict and as a center of the Herodian dynastic holdings. We lack specific information as to the history of Beth She'arim at the end of the first century and the beginning of the second century C.E. Perhaps at this time control of the place passed from the Herodians to the Romans. From this time on we find interesting data on Beth She'arim in the Talmud. Thus it seems that Rabbi Johanan ben Nuri, a pupil of Rabban Gamaliel II and a contemporary of Rabbi Akiba, dwelt at Beth She'arim (first half of the second century C.E.). Other sages mentioned include:

a. *Rabbi Ishmael son of Rabbi Johanan ben Baroka: It happened that Rabbi Johanan ben Baroka went to Rabbi Johanan ben Nuri at Beth She'arim and found a well that didn't hold three login [a liquid measure] and he bent down and drank from it.*<sup>19</sup>

b. *Rabbi said: Once we came, myself and Rabbi Eleazar son of Rabbi Zadok, to Johanan of Rabbi Nuri at Beth She'arim, and we ate figs and grapes outside of the Succah.*<sup>20</sup>

c. *It happened that one cut a vessel at Beth She'arim and Rabbi Simeon purified it and wise men defiled it.*<sup>21</sup>

Hence, it appears that in the first quarter of the second century Beth She'arim was a Jewish agricultural settlement and the home of one of the important Tannaim. Among the visitors of Rabbi Johanan ben Nuri was Rabbi Eleazar son of Rabbi Zadok, who lived for some time at nearby Tib'on.<sup>22</sup>

The change which came about in the Jewish settlements of Galilee after the Bar Kokhba Revolt (132–135 C.E.) marked a turning point in the history of Beth She'arim. Many Jews including leaders and sages, who had been forced to leave their homes in Judah, came to Galilee, settling in Beth She'arim and its environs. The Antonine-Severine period (138–235 C.E.) was one of growth and prosperity for the Jewish settlements in the Lower Galilee. Beth She'arim, which was included in the district of Sepphoris, grew to become one of the most important centers of Judaism in the days of Rabbi Judah Ha-Nassi. In his time, the office of Nassi was widely known and honored.

According to the Talmud, Rabbi Judah dwelt at Beth She'arim for a long time, establishing there the seat of the Sanhedrin:

*The Sanhedrin was transferred . . . from Jerusalem to Jabneh and from Jabneh to Usha . . . and from Usha to Shefar'am and from Shefar'am to Beth She'arim and from Beth She'arim to Sepphoris and from Sepphoris to*

*Tiberias.*<sup>23</sup> *Rabbis taught: Justice follows justice — it went after Rabbi Eliezer to Lod, after Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai to Beror Hayil, after Rabbi Joshua to Peki'in, after Rabban Gamaliel to Jabneh, after Rabbi Akiba to Benei Berak, after Rabbi Jose to Sepphoris... after Rabbi Judah to Beth She'arim.*<sup>24</sup>

Even though we lack evidence for the date of Rabbi Judah Ha-Nassi's settling there, and the reasons that led him to establish there the seat of the Sanhedrin, we can assume that this occurred in the days of Antoninus, the Rabbi's friend; this apparently was the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (161–180 C.E.).<sup>25</sup> From the Talmud, we learn that the Rabbi received as tenancies towns and villages in various parts of the country.<sup>26</sup> It is very possible that one of these was Beth She'arim (and its immediate neighborhood), which was still considered royal lands in the Second Temple period. If this supposition is correct, then the problem of the ownership of Beth She'arim and its necropolis during the time of Rabbi Judah and his heir has been solved. The tenancy of Beth She'arim thus belonged to the Nassi-hood, and provided the income of the family of the president of the Sanhedrin.<sup>27</sup>

There is other evidence in talmudic literature as to the life and activities of Rabbi Judah at Beth She'arim.<sup>28</sup> One source tells us:

*And it happened that the daughter of Rabbi died in Beth She'arim and Rabbi entered the Beth Midrash and lectured all the day...*<sup>29</sup>

Another source hints at the magnificent buildings at Beth She'arim, some of which have been uncovered in the recent archaeological excavations: *Rabbi permitted the porch at Beth She'arim. How many pillars did it have? Rabbi Jacob bar Aha*<sup>30</sup> *said: Rabbi Hiya and Rabbi Jose, one said: six, and the other: eight. Rabbi Jacob bar Aha said: and there is no disagreement. Whoever said six did not count the two at the ends, and whoever said eight counted those two at the ends.*<sup>31</sup>

When Rabbi fell ill, he left Beth She'arim for Sepphoris:

*Rabbi was at Beth She'arim, but since he became ill, they brought him to Sepphoris, which was a high place with fragrant air.*<sup>32</sup>

Sepphoris lies on a hill 250 meters above sea level, whereas Beth She'arim is only 130 meters above sea level.

Rabbi lived at Sepphoris for 17 years<sup>33</sup> and died there. His death and subsequent funeral at Beth She'arim, where the Nassi had had a tomb prepared for himself during his lifetime, left a strong impression on his contemporaries, and the memory of this event was preserved by following generations:

*Rabbi Nahman in the name of Rabbi Manna: Miracles were wrought on that day. It was evening and all the towns gathered to mourn him, and 18 synagogues praised him and bore him to Beth She'arim, and the daylight remained until everyone reached his home...*<sup>34</sup>

After Rabbi Judah Ha-Nassi was buried in the cemetery at Beth She'arim

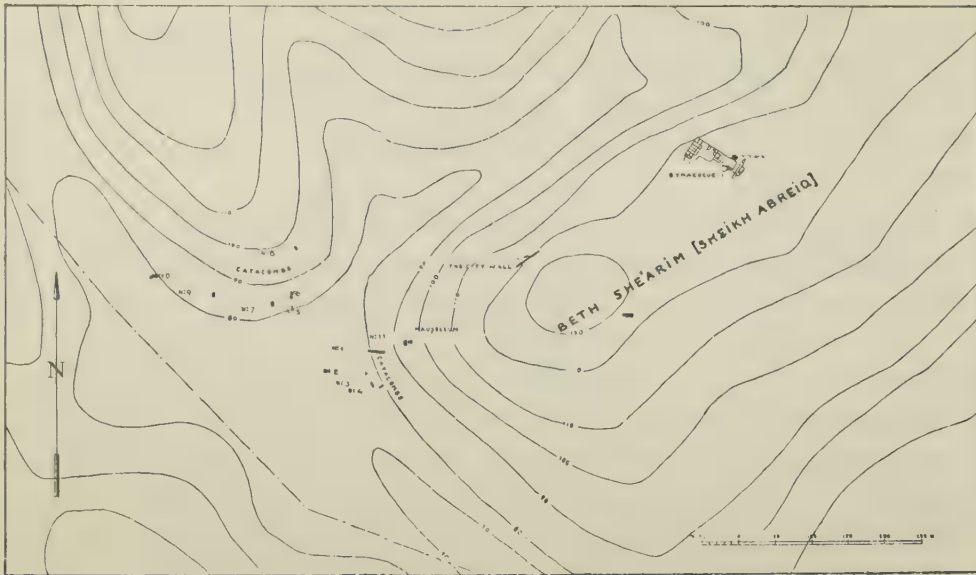


Fig. 2  
Map of Beth She'arim

(at the beginning of the third century C.E.), the site grew famous and became a central burial ground. Afterwards, Jews from Palestine as well as the Diaspora would bring their dead to be buried at Beth She'arim, as the Palestinian Talmud testifies:

*Behold, they lead him from place to place like those who are buried in Beth She'arim.*<sup>35</sup>

The last literary evidence for the existence of Beth She'arim, at the end of the third century C.E., relates that one of the later Amoraim was born there: Rabbi Menahem of Kefar She'arim, called Beth She'arim.<sup>36</sup> At that time, the town was called Kefar She'arim, although the original name Beth She'arim was known.<sup>37</sup>

The silence of the literary sources is no proof that Beth She'arim ceased to exist at the end of the Roman period. On the contrary, the archaeological excavations indicate that there was a rather dense settlement on this site in the first half of the fourth century C.E. Likewise, in the synagogue area and adjacent buildings, evidence was found proving that the city was laid waste and burnt in the middle of the fourth century C.E.<sup>38</sup> Archaeological finds therefore serve as further testimony to the events which brought about the devastation and ruin of the Jewish settlements in Palestine, the great rebellion of the Jews in the days of Constantine (337–361 C.E.) and its suppression by Gallus in 352 C.E.<sup>39</sup> Most Byzantine historians write only of the ruin of Diocaesarea (Sepphoris) in relating the suppression of the rebellion.<sup>40</sup> The Church Father Hieronymus, however, states that many cities were burnt, and that Gallus had “killed thousands of people, even babies, and burnt their cities Diocaesarea,

Tiberias, Diospolis [Lydda], and many others.”<sup>41</sup> A Hebrew source hinting at this event<sup>42</sup> supports Hieronymus. In addition, attention should be paid to the lament on the destruction of the Jewish congregations in Palestine, preserved in the collection of Geniza fragments at Cambridge.<sup>43</sup> This document perhaps deals with the events of 352 C.E., since it enumerates in definite order the congregations which suffered siege and destruction.<sup>44</sup> Unfortunately, since both the beginning and end are missing, the list of localities stops short with Husîfa (present day ‘Usifiyye on Mount Carmel) and Haifa. Perhaps in its continuation, were it in our hands, we would also have found details on the destruction of cities in Galilee.

As the excavations at Beth She‘arim clearly show, a village still existed there at the end of the fourth century and during the fifth and sixth centuries C.E. This settlement was poor and sparse. In building their houses, the inhabitants used stones from the ruins of the older city. Finally, due to the thinning out of settlement in the Byzantine period, Beth She‘arim was abandoned and became a desolate mound.

### 3 IDENTIFICATION OF THE SITE

Generations passed and not only was the site in ruins but even its Hebrew name — Beth She‘arim — was forgotten. It is not found at all in later sources, nor in the pilgrims’ literature of the Middle Ages. The new tradition created by the Jewish pilgrims of the Middle Ages, who claimed that Rabbi Judah Ha-Nassî was buried in Sepphoris (and even hallowed one of the graves there as his burial place)<sup>45</sup> has no basis in talmudic sources. Rabbi Eshtori Ha-Parî, the first scholar to survey Palestine (in the fourteenth century C.E.) was also the first who tried to determine the site of Beth She‘arim. In his book *Kaphtor va Peraḥ* (“Bud and Flower”), he suggested identifying Beth She‘arim with Sha‘ara near Jabneel.<sup>46</sup> Like Rabbi Eshtori, several Jewish scholars who studied Palestine in the last century suggested various possibilities for its identification, all of which were based on the assumption that ancient place names have survived in Arabic, albeit corrupt.<sup>47</sup> No wonder that all these hypotheses were wrong. While Jewish scholars continued to argue the identification of Beth She‘arim, other scholars sought to identify the sites of Gaba and Besara mentioned by Josephus. The first of these was Guérin, who decided upon Shêkh ‘Abrêq as the site of Gaba.<sup>48</sup> Until recently this identification was accepted by most scholars, although it raised many difficulties. On the other hand, opinion was divided over the identification of Besara, nor was any reasonable solution reached.<sup>49</sup> Klein paved the way toward a true solution in 1913 when he proved that Besara and Beth She‘arim were one and the same place. But Klein himself agreed with its proposed identification at Khirbet el-Bêḏa.<sup>50</sup> Only in 1936 was the problem

solved. On the basis of our first investigations at the necropolis of Shêkh 'Abrêq, I. Ben-Zvi suggested that these were none other than the tombs of the Dynasty of the Nassî. On hearing of these findings from the author, Professor S. Klein immediately agreed that Shêkh 'Abrêq is the site of ancient Beth She'arim. From then on, all available data on the place, its character and history have left no doubt as to this identification.<sup>51</sup>

Support for the identification of Beth She'arim with Shêkh 'Abrêq is found, first of all, in Josephus' *Life*.<sup>52</sup> According to him, Besara was located at the southern edge of Galilee, 80 stadia (14.8 km) east of Gaba ("Gaba of the Horsemen", so-called because Herod's cavalymen were settled there after being discharged from his service).<sup>53</sup> We can pinpoint Gaba's location more exactly from Josephus' geographical descriptions: in Galilee, near the Great Plain east of the Acre-Carmel area, 60 stadia (more than 11 km) west of Simonia.<sup>54</sup> On the basis of this literary information, one can fix the site of Gaba at el-Harithiyyeh (nowadays, Sha'ar Ha-'Amakim), an important strategic point near the pass from the Plain of Acre to the Jezreel Valley.<sup>55</sup>

The distances given by Josephus fit in well with geographical reality. Shêkh 'Abrêq is  $7\frac{1}{2}$  km from Simonia, and about 4 km from el-Harithiyyeh. The roads and paths which ran from Shêkh 'Abrêq to el-Harithiyyeh coincide with Josephus' description, explaining why it was necessary to place guards near Besara to prevent an unexpected attack upon the Jews gathering corn in the fields at his command.

This identification is also confirmed by talmudic sources, which place Beth She'arim in southwestern Galilee near Tib'on, not far from 'Usha and Shefar'am, the cities of the Sanhedrin.<sup>56</sup> But the most important proof of its location is the central Jewish necropolis found on the site, about which specific mention is made in the Talmud. This cemetery contained the above-mentioned Greek-Jewish epitaph, found among the ruins of the magnificent mausoleum of a third century local dignitary. There we find proof that the place was called *Βεσαρα* that is, Beth She'arim: "I left the light, poor parents mourning without pause, and brothers; oh, in [my] Besara."<sup>57</sup> Further confirmation is the discovery of the large synagogue and other buildings in the northeastern part of the city (in the third and fourth seasons of work, 1938-1940).<sup>58</sup>

All these proofs — both archaeological and literary — have made it possible not only to determine the site of Beth She'arim, but also to shed new light on the history of the city.

In its heyday, Beth She'arim was surrounded by Jewish villages and, with the exception of Gaba, there seems to have been no permanent non-Jewish settlement in the area. The best-known of the Jewish villages are Tib'on<sup>59</sup> (about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  km to the north) and Ardaskus<sup>60</sup> (called Qusqus by the Arabs,<sup>61</sup> about 2 km to the north-northeast, at the site of the present settlement of Alonim). Famous sages lived in both these localities in the

Mishnaic period; and incidentally, both the Beth Midrash at Ardaskus and the synagogue of Ṭib'on, where Rabbi Meir taught,<sup>62</sup> are mentioned. Five km northeast of Beth She'arim was the village Huriyya (today el-Huwâra), known as the home of several Sages,<sup>63</sup> and 1 km northeast of Huriyya was the large village of Bethlehem Şoraya, the home of the priestly Malkiya family<sup>64</sup> (cf. Josh. 19:15). And finally, more distant Jewish villages are recalled: Simonia and Mahalol, east of Beth She'arim; Kefar Sasai, 'Usha, Shefar'am and Afaratha<sup>65</sup> to the north; and the village of Ḥusifa ('Usifiyye), on the western Carmel. It transpires, therefore, that Beth She'arim was one of the important centers in an area heavily settled by Jews, already developed in the Second Temple period and in its peak in the days of the Tannaim and the Amoraim.

## NOTES

- 1 The spelling בית שעורים is found only in Tosefta Succot 2:2 (193, 20), quoted by \*S. Lieberman, *Tosefta Rishonim I*, p. 197. This single late version of the name of the place was Beth Se'orim בית שעורים (\*S. Klein, *Kirjath Sepher 14*, p. 169; and vid. also \*J. Halperin, *BJPES* 10 (1943) p. 64) is inconclusive since in that case the writing would be בית-סעריין, בית-סרעתה, (and cf. the omission of the *ayin* [ע] in the Galilean accent בית-סרתה).
- 2 Instead of בית-שירין in the Palestinian Talmud, Sanhedrin 87: 24b, read בית-שריין.
- 3 \*M. Schwabe, A Graeco-Jewish Epigram from Beth She'arim, *BJPES* 6 (1937): ε [v êoĩς B] εσάα [οις].  
The inscription over the opening of a burial cave at Khirbet-el-Qubeiba reads: \*Αννας θυγατ [ρός] Μαθιθία Βισαρηνη (vid. \*M. Schwabe and M. Avi-Yonah, *BJPES* 9, (1942, p. 31).
- 4 Perhaps the Galileans who spoke Jewish Aramaic created the forms שריין and שריי in the masculine plural (after omission of the *ayin*) following the nominal declension ל"ו and ל"י, such as גדיין, pl. גדיי/גדיי. According to \*Y. Kutscher, *Tarbiz* 22 (1951), pp. 187 ff. For details, vid. G. Dalman, *Grammatik des Jüdischpalastinischen Aramäisch*, 1905, pp. 192 ff. there is no room for doubt that the suffix is the dual ending. However, in the light of the fact that in Galilean Aramaic the dual was used instead of the plural ending, it is quite possible that שריין/שריי parallels the Hebrew שעורים.
- 5 \*S. Krauss, *HaOlam* (30 Feb. 1941) pp. 316–317, refers to the dual ending, relying mainly on the שעורים name for support of his thesis.
- 6 Vid. H. Torczyner, *Die Entstehung des semitischen Sprachtypus*, pp. 188 ff.; S. Yeivin, *apud* L. Waterman, *Excavations at Sepphoris, Palestine, in 1931*, p. 18.
- 7 Palestinian Talmud, Berakot 82, 4d; Babylonian Talmud, Megillah 24b.
- 8 On the omission of the *ayin* in Galilean Aramaic, vid. Dalman, *op. cit.*, pp. 57 ff., 99. And vid. now the important work of \*Kutscher, *Tarbiz* 23 (1952), pp. 43 ff.
- 9 The writing בית in the Aramaic forms does not prove, of course, that the *taw* was sounded in speech.
- 10 For example: בעשתרה (Josh. 21:27) instead of בית-עשתרה; בית-רישה (Targum of Jonathan to Exod. 22:39) instead of בית-רישא (Capitolias); באינה instead of בית-ענה (or בית-ענת, vid. \*S. Klein, *BJPES* 1/3 (1933), p. 6); Βημισώ (Josephus, *The Jewish War* 4:7:6) = בית הישימות, and so on.
- 11 Vid. \*Schwabe, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

12 On Gaba, vid. below.

a. δεκάδαρχος, *decurio*. b. Jezreel Valley. c. *Simonias* today Semunieh (Kibbutz Shimron), north of Nahalal. d. 11.1 km. e. From Aebutius' camp at Gaba. f. και περί Βήσαραν πόλιν. g. 3.7 km. h. κόμη. i. Berenice, daughter of Agrippas I and sister of Agrippas II.

13 *Life of Josephus* 24, 188/9.

14 Josephus calls Beth She'arim a city in all but one place, where he calls it a village. Cf. A. Alt, *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel* II, 1953, p. 437, on the use of the words πόλις and κόμη in the New Testament.

15 The royal holdings in the Jezreel Valley are mentioned in *Life of Josephus* 26, 126. Cf. Acts 12:20.

16 For details, vid. Herz, *PJb* 24 (1928) pp. III ff.; A. Alt, *PJb* 33 (1937), pp. 81 ff. It seems to me that the city in Lower Galilee known to us as the holding of Agrippas II (S. Klein, *Palästina Studien* I, 1, p. 10), was once part of this large tenancy. There is no reason for the conjecture that Agrippas received the city as a tenancy from the Roman emperor after the Jewish War (\*Klein, *BJPES* 7/3 [1933] p. 8). If so the large tenancy of the House of Herod then also stretched out over a large area in the western part of the lower Galilee.

17 *Antiquities of the Jews* 14:10:6, and cf. Schürer, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel mit Zeitalter Jesu Christi*\* I, pp. 345 ff. Alt, *op. cit.* p. 82.

18 And perhaps already from the days of the Hasmonean, Simon. Vid. Klein, *MGWJ* (1910), pp. 17 ff. and Alt, *ibid.*, p. 82, on Simonias as another center of the royal holdings starting from the days of the Hasmoneans. Both of them present the theory that this city was founded by Simon.

19 Tosefta Terumot 87:14 (38, 14); Palestinian Terumot 88:46a. In the Palestinian Talmud it is written: "Let Rabbi Yohanan ben Nuri go down to Rabbi Yohanan ben Broka Abba." But it seems that the version in the Tosefta is more exact. Vid. \**Sefer HaYeshuv*, p. 18, n.l.

20 Tosefta Sukkot 282 (193, 19); Palestinian Sanhedrin 87:24b. Vid. also Lieberman, *op. cit.*, pp. 197–8.

21 Tosefta Parah 85:6 (634, 31). This source belongs already to the generation after Rabbi Yohanan ben Nuri, Rabbi Simon being one of Rabbi Akiba's pupils.

22 Rabbi Eleazar said to Rabbi Zadok: "Two things led Abba from Tiv'in to Yavneh (Tosefta Neddaḥ 284—644, 16). Other versions read: "From She'arim and to She'arim."

23 Rosh Hashana 31 a–b; and vid. Genesis Rabba 97, p. 1220–1.

24 Sanhedrin 22b.

25 L. Wallach, *The Colloquy of Marcus Aurelius with the Patriarch Juda I*, *JQR* (1941), pp. 287 ff. Wallach concludes that "Antoninus Caesar, friend of Rabbi" was none other than Marcus Aurelius, and that Talmudic traditions regarding "Antoninus and Rabbi" are based on an apocryphal dialogue between Marcus Aurelius and Rabbi Judah Hanassi. Whereas G. Allon (*Victory of the Jews in Palestine... 1956*, pp. 103 ff.) believes that Rabbi Judah was active during the reigns of Septimius Severus and Antoninus Caracalla, and that the tales of Rabbi and Antoninus belong to this period.

26 For details, vid. S. Klein, *JQR* (1912), pp. 545 ff.; \**BJPES* 1/3 (1933), pp. 9–7; \**The Land of Judah*, pp. 177 ff.; *Krauss Festschrift*, pp. 66.

27 Klein, \**BJPES* 1/3 (1933), p. 8, states that the large tenancy was taken from the Nassi Dynasty by the Byzantine emperors in the fifth century, and this to a great extent caused the impoverishment of the office of the Nassi.

28 Ketubot 107b; Niddah 32a.

29 Mo'ed Qatan 21a (mss.).

30 Third generation of Palestinian Amoraim (end 3rd century C.E.), disciple of R. Yohanan.

31 Pal. Tal. 'Erubin 1, 18c top. The discrepancy between the two versions of the number of columns in the exedra at Beth She'arim—six or eight—is explained by R. Jacob bar Aḥa by assuming that there were six columns, with two more at the ends.

32 Ketubot 103b bottom: "Rabbi lies (sick) at Sepphoris and a (burial) place is prepared for him at Beth She'arim... Rabbi was (living) at Beth She'arim, but because he took sick they took him to Sepphoris, which is high and its air perfumed."

33 Pal. Tal. Kelaim 9, 32b; Ketubot 12, 35a; Tanḥuma Vayehi 3 (ed. Buber, 108a).

34 Pal. Tal. Kelaim 9, 32a–b; Ketubot 12, 35a top.—A slightly different version appears in Eccl. Rabba 7, 11: הוה דמין בציפורין... ר' נחמיה בשם ר' מנא: מעשה ניסים נעשו באותו היום. ערב שבת היה... ואיתכנסון כל קרייתא להספידא דרבי, אשרוניה בתמני' עשר כנישתא ואובלוניה לבית שערים...

35 Pal. Tal. Mo'ed Qatan 3, 81c top: "For they take him from place to place like those whom they bury at Beth She'arim." Basing on the versions in Maimonides' \**Torat ha-Adam*, and in \**Or Zarua*, S. Safrai suggests reading: אילין דקיסרין דקברין... \*Klein, *Sefer HaYishuv*, p. 142, קונתא, n.l, reminds us of the passage in the Palestinian Talmud, Mo'ed Qatan 3, 82c: כהדא גמליאל דיקונתיה קברניה: בורסאיי and suggests reading בורסאיי instead of בורסאיי; that is, the people of Bissara, Beth She'arim. E. Lapp, apud Klein, *MGWJ* (1920), p. 127, Anm. 7, thinks that דיקונתיה was a title of Gamaliel, who was apparently of the Nassi's family. And there are those who think that the coffin

of Rabbi Huna, brought to Palestine from Babylonia in Rabbi Judah Hanassi's time (Palestinian Talmud, Kelaim 9,32b) was buried in the necropolis at Beth She'arim.

36 Niddah 27a.

37 Other examples of the exchange of "Beth" and "Kefar" in place names: Beth Pagi, Kefar Beth Pagi, Kefar Pagi; Βηθηαμαρ (*On.* 56, 3) Kefar Tamartha (Megillah 16b); Κεπαραδαγων (*On.* 56, 16), Beth Dagon.

38 *Vid.* the preliminary report in \**BJPES* 6 (1939), p. 103; 9 (1942), and below, Chapter II.

39 *Vid.* on Gallus and the Jewish War, O. Seeck, *Geschichte des Untergangs der antiken Welt* IV, pp. 125, 400.

40 *Vid.* the material in \**Sefer HaYishuv*, pp. 131–2.

41 In the original: "...et civitates eorum Diocaesaream, Tiberiadem, et Diospolim plurimaque oppida igni tradidit" (Hieronymus, *Chron. ad. Olymp.* 283, ed. Helm, p. 238).

42 Pesikta Rabbati 13, 29b. Graetz (*Geschichte IV*, p. 445) was the first to prove that this sentence refers to events of Gallus' day.

43 \*S. Assaf *BJPES* 6 (1931) pp. 60 ff.

44 Cf. \*S. Klein, *BJPES* 7 (1940), pp. 107 ff. But it is also possible that this document refers to the end of the Byzantine period.

45 On this tomb, *vid.* \*E. L. Sukenik, *Tarbiz* 3 (1933), pp. 108–9. And it seems that Rabbi Ashtori Haparhi did not believe this tradition, which was opposed to certain passages in the Talmud; and thus he writes about this grave at Sepphoris: "...today the tomb of Rabbi Judah Hanassi is thought to be in a cave..." and *vid.* \*Klein, *History of Research in Palestine*, p. 56; S. Assaf, *BIES* 17 (1953), p. 156.

46 *Vid.* \*Kaftor VaFerah, ed. Lunez, p. 657. This identification was accepted by Hildesheimer, *Beiträge zur Geographie Palästinas*, p. 2, Anm. 22.

47 \*J. Schwartz, *Tevuot HaAretz*, ed. Lunez, shows the village Tur'an (on the basis of the conjecture that the Arabic name is derived from the Aramaic translation of the name She'arim: תרעין, תרעיא) and Lunez suggested identifying it with esh-Shejera.

48 V. Guerin, *Galilee* I, pp. 395 ff. Another identification (Khirbet el-Medina) was suggested by Schlatter, *ZDPV* (1893), pp. 292 ff.

49 Ohler, *ZDPV* (1905), pp. 66 ff., suggested identifying it with Ein el-Besa; Schlatter, *ibid.*, with Tell Thura; Dalman, *PJb* (1923), pp. 23 ff.; *Orte und Wege Jesu*<sup>3</sup>, p. 226, with Jedda.

50 Klein, *Zur Palästinakunde*, 1913, pp. 6 ff. It should be stated that the remains at Khirbet el-Besa and the other places mentioned in the previous footnote show no evidence of their having been important settlements during the Roman period.

51 We may note in passing that M. Noth (*ZDPV* [1938], p. 61) suggested identifying Barkon, in the geographical list of Thutmes III and in the el-Amarna letters, with Sheikh Abreiq. This suggestion has no topographical or archeological basis.

52 *Life of Josephus*, ch. 24, 115–117.

53 Josephus, *The Jewish War* 3:2:1, 36.

54 *Vid.* Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 15:5:5, 294, the sources mentioned in footnotes 52 and 53, and *The Jewish War* 2:18:1, 459. On the other Greek sources in which Gaba is mentioned, *vid.* A. Alt, *ZDPV* (1939), pp. 3 ff.; *PJb* (1940), p. 86 ff. In my opinion, there is no foundation to Alt's conjecture that Gaba is mentioned in Judith 3:9; it seems that, instead of reading Γαβαν, the correct version is that of Codex Vaticanus: Ταιβαν, today Ein Tabun (Kefar Yehezkeel). Josephus differentiates, in *Antiquities of the Jews* 15:8:5, between the camp of Herod's veterans in the Jezreel Valley and Gaba in Galilee, which Herod built and fortified for his veterans. It should be remembered that Josephus does not include the Jezreel Valley in Galilee, and thus there is little sense in seeking Gaba there. And *vid.* my article in \**BJPES* 6 (1939), pp. 35 ff.

55 At el-Harithiyeh (Sha'ar Ha-Amaqim), I found sherds and remains of a wall and houses from the Roman, Byzantine, and Arab periods, though no earlier remains were evident. Alt, *ibid.*, p. 16, identifies Gaba with Jelamet el-Mansura, about 4 km southwest of Sheikh Abreiq. This identification does not seem correct, since el-Mansura is on the slopes of the Carmel range, south of the Kishon river, i.e. outside the boundaries of Galilee. And certainly Alt's suggestion — el-Quira near Yoqne'am — is without foundation. However, it is possible that the remains of the Roman camp near Jelama (*ZDPV* [1908], p. 125) are those of the veteran's camp mentioned above. And *vid.* my article, (above) and in *HUCA* 24 (1953), pp. 75 ff.

56 Klein already mentioned this in his *Zur Palästinakunde*, and in the *Encyclopedia Judaica* III, s.v. *Besara*.

57 \*Schwabe, *BJPES* 6 (1939), pp. 5 ff.

58 Immediately after the publication of my preliminary reports on the excavations at Sheikh Abreiq (1936, 7), many scholars of Palestine agreed with this identification, including Avi-Yonah, Abel, Albright, Alt, Glück, Dalman (in a private letter), Thomsen, and others.

- 59 \**Sefer HaYishuv*, p. 73; Klein, *Palästina-Studien* I, 4, pp. 40 ff.; Dalman, *PJb* (1923), p. 27.
- 60 \**Sefer HaYishuv*, p. 73.
- 61 Dalman, *op. cit.*, p. 28; Klein, *Encyclopedia Judaica* III, pp. 298 ff.
- 62 "Once we sat before Rabbi Meir in the Academy at Ardeskes (Tosefta Erubin 9:6:4 = 148, 17; "It happened that Rabbi Meir read it in the synagogue of Tiv'in" (Tosefta Megillah II, 5 = 22319). "Abba Yossi Helikophri was a man of Tiv'in" (Makhshirin 1:33). On Rabbi Zadok and Rabbi Yohanan ben Broka, *vid.* above p.
- 63 *Vid.* \**Sefer HaYishuv*, p. 43; Klein, *Encyclopedia Judaica* V, p. 396. This village apparently was mentioned in one of the inscriptions in the necropolis at Beth She'arim (no. 115).
- 64 *Vid.* \**Sefer HaYishuv*, pp. 15 and 163; Dalman, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
- 65 *Vid.* \*M. Avi-Yonah, *Historical Geography of Palestine*, 1951, p. 134.

## CHAPTER II THE RUINS OF BETH SHE'ARIM AND ITS CEMETERY

### 1 BETH SHE'ARIM AND ITS NEIGHBORHOOD

Ancient Beth She'arim was built on one of the southern foothills of Lower Galilee, overlooking the Jezreel Valley. This hill is known by the Arabic name of Shêkh 'Abrêq (or Sheikh Ibriq); according to popular legend, this is the name of the unknown Moslem saint whose tomb lies in the southern side of the hill, a building with two white domes<sup>1</sup> (*vid.* Pl. II, 2). This hill, and all the surrounding land, was bought by the Jewish National Fund in 1925. Alexander Seid, who came to live there in 1926 as a guard of the Jewish National Fund lands and forests, found a small, impoverished Arab village built around the holy tomb. This village had been mentioned in the books of nineteenth century travelers and scholars. Green, who was the first to investigate the place thoroughly, estimated the number of its inhabitants at about 350.

The hill of Beth She'arim looks out upon an enchanting view of the Jezreel Valley and the mountains of Samaria and Galilee. This is an area famous for its beauty and fertility, for its abundance of thriving settlements as well as mounds and ruins. To the west, beyond the Kishon Brook, rises the Carmel Range, with its partly-forested heights and pinnacles, including the prominent El-Muħraqa, where there is a monastery built, according to Christian tradition, on the site of Elijah's altar.

To the south lies the plain of Megiddo (2 Chron. 45:22, Zech. 12:11) and in the background the mountains of Samaria. At the foot of the mountains can be seen a series of mounds and settlements: Tell Qêmun at the entrance to Wadi el-Milħ, the site of Yoqne'am of the Carmel, and the tell — the Jewish village of Yoqne'am; south of it Mishmar ha-Emek next to Tell Abu-Shûsheh; beyond it, Tell el-Mutesellim, the site of Megiddo, one of the most important cities in the biblical era; el-Lājûn, where a Roman legionary stood. A beautiful view also unfolds on the southeast, across the Jezreel Valley. The mountains of Gilboa and the Hill of Moreh loom in the background, and far away on the horizon are the mountains of Gilead. Northeast and north lie the hills of Lower Galilee. On their lower flanks runs the Haifa-Afula road, with its string of settlements; the best known are Semuniyye — Simonia of the Mishnah and Talmud — and south of it Nahalal. Among the mountains to the northeast is Sepphoris, which "sits on the top of the mountain like a bird" (Megilla 6, a); this was one of the most important Galilean centers in antiquity.

Beth She'arim stood not far from the main cross-roads linking the cities of the Mediterranean seaboard and Galilee with the Jezreel Valley

and Samaria. As in our day, however, the roads ran not by the mound, but at some distance from it. The important Roman road from Acre (Ptolemais) to Lājūn (Legio) was reached from Beth She'arim by a three-km-long side road. The Roman road ran along the flanks of the Carmel and the Samaria range, from the coastal plain to 'Ein Gannim (Ginnai), and thence toward the interior — Samaria (Sebaste), Shechem (Neapolis), and Jerusalem. At Lājūn the road branched off to Caesaria and the Sharon Plain, crossing the road to Beth She'an, which ran through the Jezreel Valley, and passing through Wadi 'Ara. At a distance of several hundred meters north of Beth She'arim, the Roman road from Acre and Haifa ran to the Jewish settlements in southern Lower Galilee — Simonia, Japhia, and Nazareth — whence it continued to Tiberias along the same route used today. The road from Sepphoris via Gevat and Sarid to Lājūn crossed the former road.<sup>2</sup> The other roads included: 1) those which led from Beth She'arim north to Tib'on and Shefar'am, and northeast to Bethlehem and Sepphoris; 2) the paths to el-Haritiyye (Gaba) and the settlements on the Carmel; 3) the summer roads to the Jezreel Valley. It appears that, though Beth She'arim stood in the vicinity of heavy traffic routes, it never became a traffic, trade, or passage center. It was a typical Jewish city, with most of its population engaged in farming or crafts.

## 2 THE RUINS OF BETH SHE'ARIM

Tell Beth She'arim extends over a rather large area: its length — from east-northeast to west-southwest — reaches 500 meters and its maximal width is about 200 m, not including the slopes. The ascent to the top of the hill is most difficult on the northern and western sides; in contrast, the slope is not so steep to the south and east, down to the Jezreel Valley. There is no doubt that the main entrances to the city were from the south, east, and northeast.

The ancient settlement was situated on top of the mound. This we know from the ruins of buildings, from the foundations of the walls protruding from the ground, from other architectural remains, and from broken marble slabs, potsherds, and glassware scattered over the area.<sup>3</sup> In addition, coins from the Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine periods were found on the hill. During our study of the site, we found that even on the slopes — and especially on the south — there had been houses, wells, and wine presses. We conclude that Beth She'arim at the height of its prosperity spread over an extensive area (more than 100 dunam — ca. 25 acres).

The summit is on the southwestern part of the mound at some distance northwest of the holy tomb. At this point it reaches a height of 137.80 m,

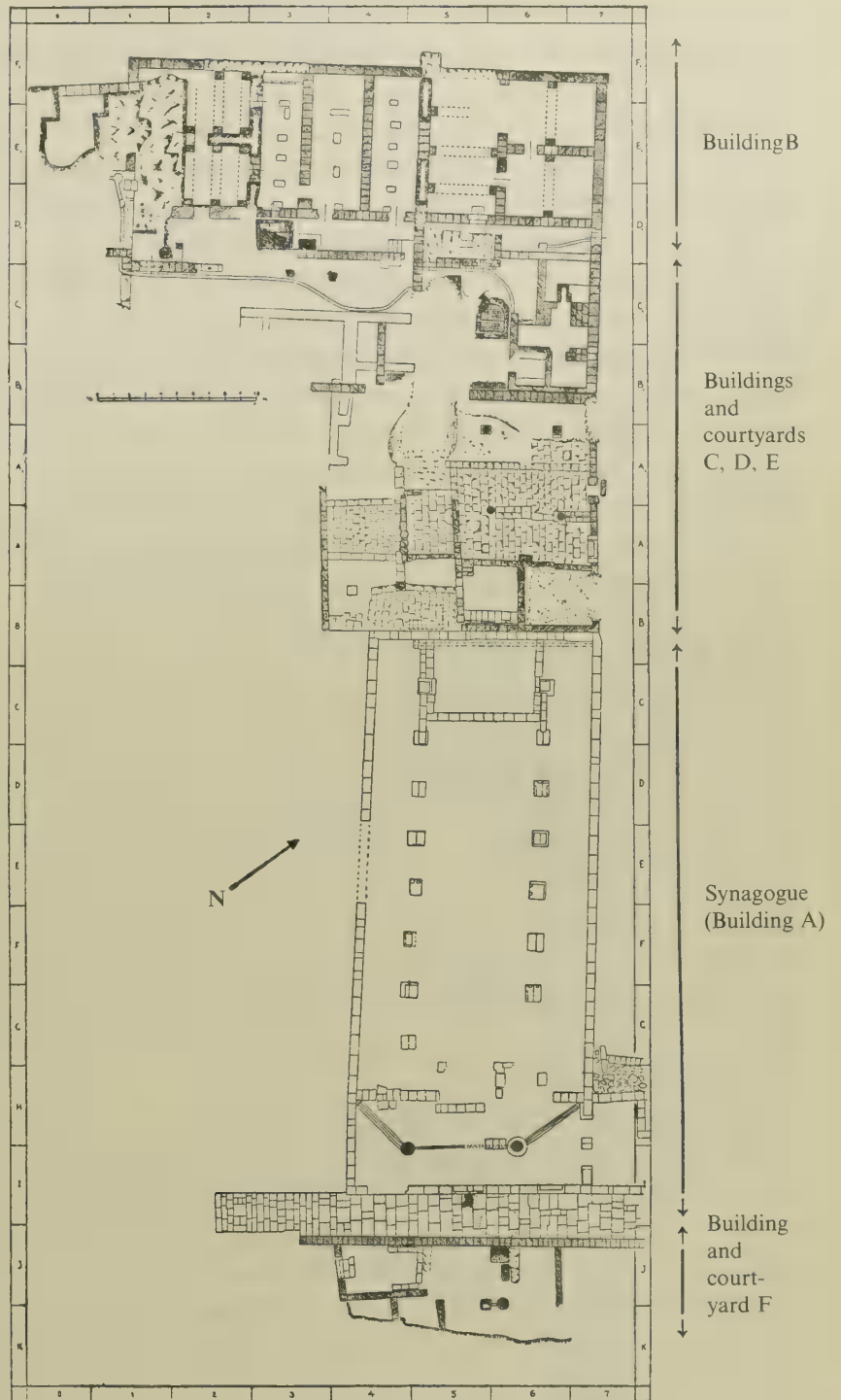


Fig. 3

Plan of the buildings and courts uncovered in the north-eastern part of the hill of Beth She'arim during the third and fourth seasons of excavations

whereas the slopes begin at about 120 m above sea level. On the northeast, the hill slopes down, only to rise again to a height of about 130 meters in the area of the large synagogue (today near the Seid house).

Beth She'arim was encompassed by a wall. In 1940, we made a trial trench in the northwestern part of the mound in order to ascertain the whereabouts of the northern section of the wall. And, indeed, we succeeded in laying bare a segment of ashlar construction, ca. 35 m long, running up to the northwest corner (*vid.* map; fig. 2). Its continuation is perhaps the wall uncovered southwest of the large building B in the northwestern part of the mound, behind the synagogue. The exterior wall of building B itself, built of large ashlars, constitutes a sort of continuation of that wall (fig. 3). The wall enclosing the city on the north and northwest was built where the incline of the hill begins, at a height of 120 m above sea level. It continues for 310 m or more, including the length of the exterior wall of building B. The wall underwent many changes during the various periods; this became clear when building B and the wall southwest of it were excavated. The building of the city-wall was begun either in the middle of the first century C.E. or at the end of it (as can be concluded from a superficial inspection as well as from finds in its neighborhood) and was completed during the second and third centuries C.E.<sup>4</sup>

The finds in the northwestern part of the mound (*vid.* plan, fig. 3) indicate that this was where the main public buildings stood from the first to fourth centuries C.E. In this part were found the ruins of the synagogue (building A) which dominated the buildings surrounding it. Various annexes and courtyards were also found. Northwest of this complex, we cleared the ruins of building B, which had been at least two storeys high. This complex of buildings excavated from 1938 to 1940, though not completely uncovered (*vid.* Pl. I, 1), extended over an area of nearly 2,000 square meters.

The excavations in the ruins of the city added to our knowledge of the history of Beth She'arim in general, and to that of the periods when the city was built in particular. Although we intend writing a complementary volume of detailed descriptions of the ruins and finds from the northwestern part of the mound, we consider it necessary here to review the results of these excavations from a chronological point of view. This area is also important to the study of the necropolis, the main subject of the present volume.

A careful study of the ruins in the area of building B has enabled us to establish five periods of building, corresponding to five periods in the history of the site. The general picture revealed in building B fits in more or less with that of the synagogue area, as is also the case with the parts of the necropolis excavated to date. In addition, the archaeological finds fit in well with the literary data on Beth She'arim. The building periods are as follows:

**Period I:** There are a few walls, not destroyed during the erection of building B (in Period II). In addition, there is a wall southwest of building B and the lower courses of the outer wall of the courtyard complexes D and E (*vid.* plan; fig. 3). Characteristic of the buildings of this period are small ashlar with rather rough, protruding bosses. The stones are generally arranged in straight courses of stretchers; all the walls built in this period rest on bedrock. This type of building can be attributed — in the light of excavations in Jerusalem, Sepphoris, and Gerasa — to the end of the first century B.C.E. and the first half of the first century C.E.<sup>5</sup> Small objects found near the wall southwest of building B, as well as in the lower layer of debris in cistern no. 3 in courtyard F, southwest of the synagogue, further point to this period. Period I at Beth She'arim lasted apparently until the second century C.E.<sup>6</sup> Several burial caves in the necropolis are of this period, and their style is similar to that of the Jewish tombs of the Herodian period in Jerusalem.

**Period II:** Building B was erected according to its original plan. The builders demolished the structures of the previous period, leaving only a few of the exterior walls, which they incorporated as interior walls within Building B. Characteristic of this period are large, well-cut ashlar, most of which have wide margins and rather smooth, flat bosses. The individual stones measure as much as  $1.50 \times 0.60 \times 0.50$  m and they are usually arranged in alternating courses of headers and stretchers. Building B excelled in its well-conceived plan, and one feels the accomplished architectural taste of its builders. Comparable material excavated in other parts of the country (such as Samaria) though sparse, enables us to establish with a fair degree of certainty that building B is of the Antonine-Severine period, i.e., the second half of the second century and the beginning of the third century C.E. To Period II belong quite a number of finds, including potsherds, broken oil lamps, and coins characteristic of the second century and the beginning of the third century C.E.<sup>7</sup> The transition from Period II to Period III evidently took place within the first three decades of the third century C.E. or, at any rate, in the first half of that century. Unfortunately, there is not sufficient evidence to determine a more exact date. Period II includes the initial building of most of the catacombs in the necropolis. The mausoleum, one of the finest examples of Jewish architecture of the first half of the third century, belongs to the end of this period. Period II was apparently the golden age of Beth She'arim, in the days of Rabbi Judah Ha-Nassi and the generation following him.

**Period III:** Many changes were made in building B, and new structures were added throughout the area investigated. Most of the ruins, as well as the tombs cleared in the necropolis, belong to this period. We have divided Period III into two phases: IIIA and IIIB.

The building of the synagogue, which is of the early type, should be attributed to the beginning of this period. It appears to be contemporary to the synagogues at Capernaum, Chorazin, and Kefar Bar'am, all built in the third century C.E. It differs from these latter only in its raised platform at the back of the nave. The architectural ornamentation in the synagogue is characteristic of the third century; the large ashlar, without bosses, well-cut and laid in straight courses, are also typical of the late Roman building style.<sup>8</sup> Already in this period, however, stones from buildings of the previous periods began to be re-used; from this time on, the architecture of the synagogue suffered from a slight disparity in style. The abundant archaeological material permits the dating of the first phase of Period III from the first half of the third century to the beginning of the fourth century C.E. The architectural style and decoration of the synagogue, as well as the many small finds, such as marble slabs with Greek and Hebrew inscriptions (apparently of the third century), plaster ornamentation on the interior walls of the synagogue, many vessels (especially oil lamps and sherds typical of the third century),<sup>9</sup> and coins of the third century C.E., all support our dating. The consistency between the ruins and small finds from the catacombs, and the buildings of Period IIIA in the city area is noteworthy. Many of the catacombs of the previous period were destroyed and new ones built. Moreover, two inscriptions from this period — on marble slabs, one found in the synagogue, the other to the north — refer directly to the necropolis. Both supply evidence of the importance of Beth She'arim as a central burial site at that time. The first inscription mentions a Jewish family from Palmyra, known also from an inscription (no. 143) in catacomb no. 4.<sup>10</sup> This fact supplies a clear synchronism between the synagogue and one of the catacombs. The second inscription mentions two notables who dealt with burial matters.<sup>11</sup>

In the second stage of Period III, the synagogue was renovated. The central door was walled up and a niche for the ark made there. Far-reaching changes were made also in the annex buildings, in the courtyards and in building B, which served in this period as a large private residence. Many ashlar from previous periods were re-used in these constructions, apparently taken from buildings destroyed or abandoned by the inhabitants. The ashlar of Period IIIB are similar to those of Period IIIA, though smaller. In general, a decline in the style of building, in ornamentation, and in execution can be felt in this period. The small finds of Period IIIB are characteristic of the first half of the fourth century C.E., especially the sherds<sup>12</sup> and coins.

At the end of this period, the buildings in the city were destroyed by fire. Evidence of this is found in the numerous ruins and in the conflagration layer within the synagogue area, as well as in building B. The date of this destruction can be fixed by an important find from building B,

a hoard of close to 1,200 copper coins, discovered in the burnt layer in the basement of the building. All the coins of this hoard are of the period of Constantine the Great (306–337) and Constantine II (337–361), minted in the first half of the fourth century.<sup>13</sup>

There is no doubt that the collection of this hoard stopped around 350 C.E., since it contains no coin from the second half of the fourth century. The treasure was accidentally overlooked by the destroyers of the building. This date agrees with the date at which the Jewish communities were destroyed by the legions of Gallus, i.e., in 352 C.E.<sup>14</sup> Further evidence for accepting this as the date of the destruction of Beth She‘arim is to be found in the synagogue<sup>15</sup> and in cistern no. 3 in courtyard F. In the cistern we found a thick layer of debris from the destroyed synagogue, including fragments of decorated plaster and marble slabs from the interior walls, as well as coins and sherds dating from the third century and the first half of the fourth century C.E. It is worth noting that in several catacombs of the necropolis we also found proof that burials ceased in the middle of the fourth century.<sup>16</sup> Consequently, the evidence is clear enough to permit dating the end of Period III to 352 C.E.

**Period IV:** Represented only by scant remains in the part of the city excavated. This settlement was renewed some time after the destruction of the city, after building B had already been covered with debris and earth. Building stones, broken ashlars, pillars, capitals, and so forth from the abandoned structures were re-used in ramshackle houses whose foundations rested on debris. In some places, buildings or rooms from the previous period were repaired and refitted as living quarters. We found remains of such buildings in the annexes of the synagogue and in the courtyards to the north. Apparently at that time part of the synagogue was repaired and the small community continued to use it as a prayer house. In this period, many oil lamps from Periods III and IV were piled up in the western corner of the synagogue.

The few finds in the city from Period IV are unmistakably Byzantine. The latest coin in the upper layer of debris in cistern no. 2, southwest of the synagogue, is of Theodosius I (379–395), and in the uppermost layer of building B a golden coin from the time of Zeno (474–491) was found. The latest Byzantine coin found in the upper layer of debris in the synagogue is of Justinus II (565–578). To this period belong a small number of Byzantine sherds and oil lamps, scattered over nearly the entire excavated area, including several of the catacombs (especially in catacomb no. 1). It would seem that in Period IV the dead were buried only in existing catacombs of the previous periods, since no newly-hewn tombs are in evidence.

**Period V:** Few and poor remains of barns and stables, built on the debris of the synagogue and the area north of it. One infers the existence of this

period from Arab sherds of the eight to thirteenth centuries C.E., and from coins of the same period, found on the surface. We suppose that Tell Shêkh 'Abrêq was used in those days by nomadic tribes encamped in the Jezreel Valley. In this period, the tomb of Shêkh 'Abrêq seems already to have become a place of worship. In this period, various caves served as shelters for shepherds and their cattle, and sometimes they were even used for burials. This is indicated by an Arabic inscription in hall 12 of catacomb no. 1 (inscription no. 77), and from an Arab oil lamp found next to a skeleton in catacomb no. 3.<sup>17</sup> We also found traces of visits in Crusader times in several of the burial halls in catacombs nos. 1, 2, and 3; the Crusader Ditericus "immortalized" his name on the ceiling of one of the rooms in catacomb no. 1.<sup>18</sup>

An examination of the mound and the systematic excavations in its northeastern part have proved that Beth She'arim was not inhabited prior to the Hellenistic period. No remains, not even a single sherd, from a period prior to the second century C.E. have been found. This makes sense in the light of the lack of a perennial spring in the immediate area: it must be supposed that this hill — like the other hills in the neighborhood — was forested before being settled in the Second Temple period.

The only spring nearby, 'Ain el-'Afi in the Jezreel Valley, southeast of the mound, flows only in the winter months, running dry the rest of the year. Next to it is a mud-bath, el-Mutba'a, where sick Arabs from all over Palestine, as well as from Egypt and Syria, used to come in search of a cure.<sup>19</sup> The only perennial spring near Beth She'arim of any great value is 'En Itzhak, 1.5 km to the south. Near it is an area of ruins from the Roman period, known as el-Itzhakiyye. It is quite possible that this small village was a suburb of Beth She'arim.

The lack of water sources compelled the inhabitants of Beth She'arim to dig cisterns and pools in various spots throughout the city area, including the necropolis. Many of the cisterns are still visible today, while others were discovered only during the excavations.

### 3 THE NECROPOLIS OF BETH SHE'ARIM

The necropolis is spread in a semicircle on the northeastern, northern, and western slopes of Tell Beth She'arim, and on the slopes of the adjoining hills to the north and west. Only south and southeast of the city, where the mound slopes down to the Jezreel Valley, have no tombs been discovered. This absence is apparently due to the specific local geology and to the expansion of the city in that direction.

The geological structure of the Beth She'arim area explains why the inhabitants of the city were able to turn these hills into a central necropolis for a period of hundreds of years. As the hills comprise soft Eocene

limestone, there were at their disposal wide expanses for hewing out large public catacombs, next to smaller familial tombs. Besides facilitating the cutting of the catacombs, the soft white limestone permitted the smooth tooling of the walls of the burial halls.

From the impressions the various tools have left on the walls, we can readily ascertain the shapes of the axes and chisels used. Where the stonemasons encountered flint pockets (unusual in the upper layers), the wall surfaces were left rough, or even unfinished. The harder limestone, found in the deeper rock layers, could be cut into building stones; basalt blocks are very rare in the Beth She'arim area.<sup>20</sup>

The excavations carried out on the western slopes of Tell Beth She'arim and on the hill northeast of it revealed parts of the largest necropolis in Palestine, one of the most important ancient Jewish cemeteries discovered so far. With the excavation of the four catacombs on the western slope, the great agglomeration of tombs in this area became evident. This was confirmed over the entire necropolis area, whether we excavated thoroughly or only examined superficially. It is clear that nearly every inch of rock suitable for cutting out tombs was utilized. Moreover, wherever the rock permitted, the ancient craftsmen dug deeper to form more storeys of burial halls, one atop the other.

We shall now consider the several parts of the necropolis:

At the edge of the mound, in the narrow area between catacombs nos. 1 and 2, a collapsed catacomb lay open even before our excavations. In the same place were a number of small burial caves, some of which were discovered when breaches were found in the walls of the tombs we were clearing. The above-mentioned catacomb was known in Arabic as Mugharet el-Jehennem (*vid.* fig. 4). It was apparently discovered several generations earlier, when part of the ceiling had collapsed near the main entrance, on the western side about 10 m northeast of the entrance to catacomb no. 2. The burial rooms were filled with loose earth which had collected there since the time they were damaged by tomb robbers who looted them completely. Furthermore, the passage of time has left deep marks on what seems to have been one of the largest and most spacious catacombs. Mugharet el-Jehennem was superficially examined by representatives of the Palestine Exploration Fund, who surveyed the area of Shêkh 'Abrêq in the fall of 1872, subsequently publishing a plan of the catacomb.<sup>21</sup>

The catacomb consists of a main hall and lateral burial rooms, hewn in its northern, eastern, and southern walls (*vid.* plan; fig. 4). It is clear that at the entrance to the catacomb there had been a courtyard (or small corridor) cut out of the rock, with steps leading down to it — similar to the courtyards and corridors of the other catacombs discovered in our excavations.

This catacomb can be described as follows:

- 1 A central room, from which broad arched openings led into lateral rooms. The arches usually rested upon pillars carved out of the rock.
- 2 The spacious rooms included few burial places. In most cases they seem to have served as storage rooms for coffins and ossuaries.
- 3 Most of the arcosolia and kokhim carved into the walls are small and could have been used only for bone depositories.
- 4 The arcosolia are carved into the walls, high above the floor.
- 5 The height of the rooms from floor to ceiling is 2.5–3.0 m, on an average.
- 6 The ceiling is slightly vaulted, and sometimes completely flat.
- 7 The walls are not cut straight, nor smoothed; and the rooms generally lack symmetry.

Although almost all of the above features have been found in other catacombs during our investigations, in this catacomb they are characteristic only of the earliest burial halls (Period II, end of the second century and beginning of the third century C.E.). At that time, the problem of maximal exploitation of space had not yet become critical.

Aside from Mugharet el-Jehennem, several small catacombs not belonging to any of the larger complexes were found near catacombs nos. 1–4. They are of various periods and were meant to be family tombs. One of them was discovered while clearing hall N in catacomb no. 1. The back wall of hall N was cracked when the arcosolium was hewed out. We crawled through this breach into the small cave to find that the burial chamber had been despoiled completely, so that there were no objects which could indicate to what period the cave belonged. There is no doubt, however, that it was hewn a long time before hall N, one of the earliest in catacomb no. 1. The style of the room in the cave is similar to that of the Jewish tombs in Jerusalem from the end of the Second Temple period. We thus consider it to date to building Period I at Beth She'arim, i.e., to the first century B.C.E. or the first century C.E. (fig. 5). Tombs of this type are also found on the slopes of the hills north of Beth She'arim.

We have already mentioned the pools and cisterns. The largest cave known at Beth She'arim is Mugharet es-Sikh, situated about 3 m north of catacomb no. 1 on the western slope of the mound. This cave was first examined by Conder.<sup>22</sup>

The entrance to Mugharet es-Sikh was blocked by the collapse of part of its ceiling, following which the entire tomb filled with earth and gravel. This tomb is 17 m long, 6 m wide, and its height from the debris on the floor to the ceiling is about 4 m. The water tank carved out of the eastern wall of the pool is 10.50 m long, 5 m wide, and ca. 6 m high from the debris on the floor to the ceiling. The walls of the cave are all coated with a thick, rough plaster, as usual in the pools and cisterns at Beth She'arim. It is quite clear that Mugharet es-Sikh supplied large quantities

of water for the local inhabitants. In my opinion, the Arabic name may very well be a corruption of the Hebrew word *shiakh* (שִׁיחַ — pit).<sup>23</sup>

An examination of the western slope of Tell Beth She'arim supports the assumption that there once existed a path leading down from the city towards Mugharet es-Sikh. This path passed near catacomb no. 11 and the mausoleum discovered on the slope of the mound, several tens of meters above catacomb no. 1 (*vid.* map; fig. 2).

In surveying the various parts of the necropolis, we shall first consider the areas which contain open caves. Some were superficially examined by Conder and his associates, while others were examined by ourselves without excavating them.

In the years 1936–1940, time did not allow us to study the northern and northeastern slopes of Tell Beth She'arim, despite clear indications of the existence of spacious catacombs and family tombs there, carved along the terraces running down from the city walls to the foot of the mound.

The visible features in the most important part of the Beth She'arim necropolis, and on the western and northern slopes of the mound, are the great variety of catacomb and tomb types, as well as the multitude of burial places. The same features also characterize other parts of the necropolis near the city area, the two northern hills which are higher than Beth She'arim (the summit of the easternmost reaches 158.80 m above sea level), and the northwestern hill which is lower than the others. The

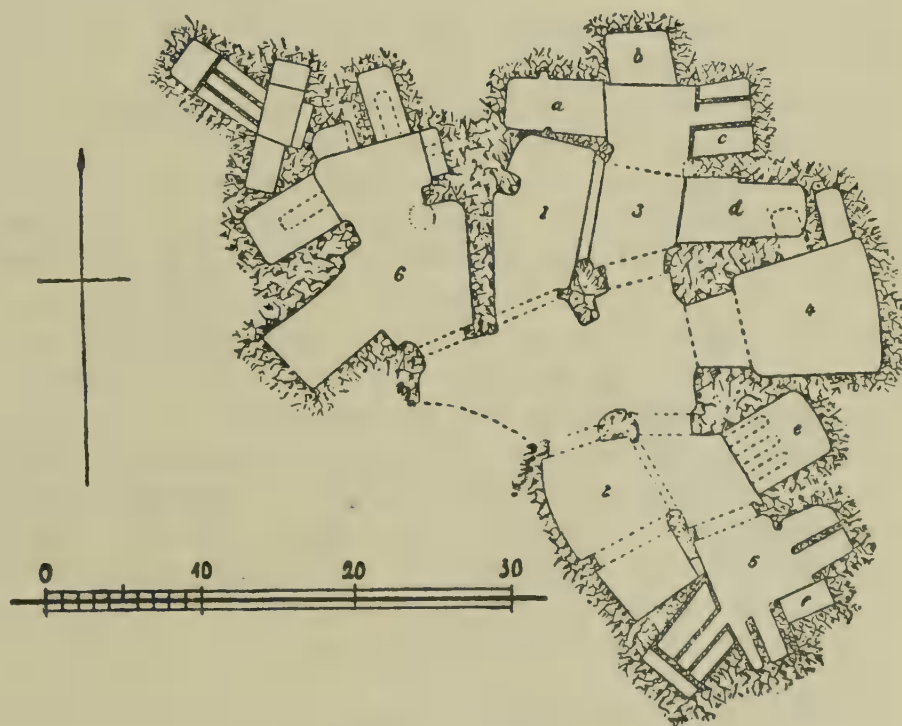


Fig. 4

Plan of Mugharet el-Ghannem  
(after PEF, Survey of  
Western Palestine, Memoirs  
I, p. 326)

ravine separating these three hills from Beth She'arim widens into a minor valley south of the northwestern hill. The latter hill, on whose slopes we discovered and cleared six catacombs (nos. 5–10), deserves special attention. From its summit (128.60 m above sea level) to its foot, the hill served as a necropolis; one still sees quite clearly the traces of its terraces and the remains of the catacomb courtyards. Catacombs nos. 5 and 10, and several of the “Great Caves” (*vid. inf.*) are on the lower terrace of the hill, about 80 m above sea level. This elevation is nearly the same as that of catacombs nos. 1–4 situated opposite them, at the foot of Tell Beth She'arim. Catacombs nos. 6, 7, and 9 are on the second terrace, whereas catacomb no. 8 is on a higher terrace (*vid. map; fig. 2*).

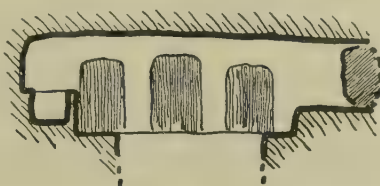
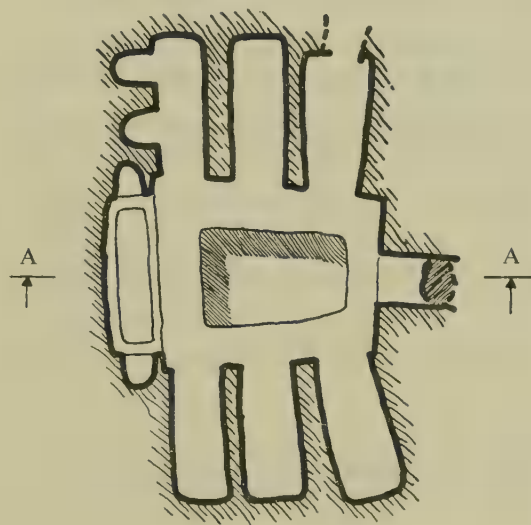
Among all the open and plundered catacombs on the northwestern hill, those called the “Great Caves” by the English scholars deserve special attention. These are a series of catacombs cut in the rock close to one another between catacombs nos. 7 and 10. The breaches in the walls of the caves allow access from one catacomb to the next. After their discovery by a peasant girl from the village of Shêkh 'Abrêq, the “Great Caves” were superficially examined by Conder and his associates.<sup>24</sup> I would like to point out that here, as in the other tombs of Beth She'arim examined and described by English explorers in the last century, no excavation of an entire catacomb, i.e., its courtyard and burial halls, was attempted. Hence, the plans of these scholars convey, of necessity, only a rough idea of the character of the tombs (*vid. the plan mentioned in footnote 24*). As to the burial halls in the English plan, the most interesting of them is the one marked no. 6. It consists of a main room (about 5.50 × 2.75 m), from the southeastern wall of which arched doorways lead into two additional rooms. These rooms have the form of rough squares. In the northwestern wall of the hall an elongated room, was hewn also with an arched doorway. The actual hall is entered by a door in the southwestern wall of the main room, whence two steps lead down into the hall. The rectangular door frame built of limestone, as well as the door which can still turn on its hinges, have been wholly preserved. The walls were utilized to the maximum for burial places (18 altogether). There are two burial types: kokhim, of which two are cut into the entrance wall, one on each side of the door; and arcosolia, with one, two, or four burial places. The trough-shaped cavities used for depositing the bones of the dead are rectangular and are cut into the shelves of the arcosolia. The walls of the hall, as well as the arcosolia, bear decorative paintings in red. It is regrettable that only traces of these have been preserved. Some of the designs include the seven-branched candelabrum (Menorah) (on walls b and c of the main room, according to the plan), rosettes, palm fronds, wreaths, and geometric motifs — usually executed in horizontal, vertical, or crisscross lines.

Besides the “Great Caves” the English scholars also examined several

burial halls on the southern slope of the hill to the northwest of Beth She'arim and several tombs on the same slope, north of the mound. Among these, we consider noteworthy the burial hall whose plan is presented in fig. 6.<sup>25</sup> In three of the hall's walls cubicles, somewhat like arcosolia, are hewn, two to each wall. In the walls of each cubicle — to the left and to the right of the entrance — shelves were carved above the floor with a narrow passage between them, leading to a third shelf hewn into the back wall. The bodies of the dead had been laid into the rectangular burial places cut into the shelves and covered with stone slabs. All this points to a well thought-out plan, exactness in execution, and an eye for symmetry and economy of space. This type of burial hall is especially significant in its similarity to several burial halls of the large catacombs of Period III (third and fourth centuries C.E.) in several points, and to tombs at Beth Guvrin<sup>26</sup> and Jerusalem.<sup>27</sup> Over the whole necropolis area there were scattered broken coffins, stone, and ceramic ossuaries (with lids shaped like gabled roofs), as well as clay tiles used to cover them. On the slope of the eastern of the two hills situated north of Beth She'arim, a large, complete limestone coffin was found, with its front and two side walls decorated in high relief. Two bull-heads and the mask of a lion

Fig. 5

Plan of a Herodian tomb-cave



Section A-A

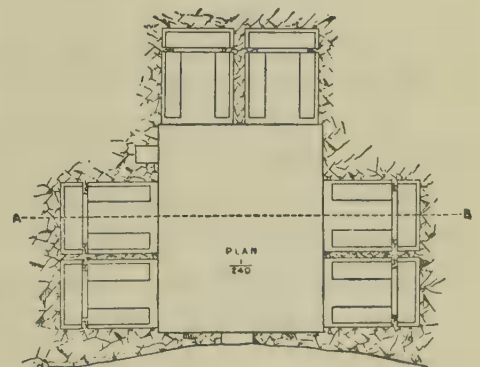


Fig. 6

Burial room at Beth She'arim

are carved *en face* on its front, with a bull-head on each side. Below these runs a relief of continuous festoons. Plain stone coffins can be seen in various places above ground level. An examination of the necropolis showed that these large coffins had been placed not only in the tombs cut into the rock, but also in mausolea erected above ground. We succeeded in discovering the remains of a magnificent stone mausoleum from the first half of the third century C.E. This is on the western slope of Tell Beth She'arim, near catacomb no. 11. In the remains of the mausoleum we found fragments of a decorated marble coffin. We have reason to think that a second mausoleum stood not far away, on a higher terrace. Remains of mausolea are to be seen also on the northwestern hill. We should not be surprised to discover a rather large number of them in this necropolis, to which they doubtlessly lent beauty. Stone mausolea were built in Syria and Palestine since the early Roman period. A considerable number of mausolea with non-Jewish coffins have been found in all parts of this country.<sup>28</sup> It can be assumed that at that time burial in mausolea was popular among wealthy Jews as well. In talmudic literature we find special mention of such mausolea near large cities.<sup>29</sup>

Finally, we shall turn our attention to the inscriptions found in the Beth She'arim necropolis before our excavations were undertaken. The English scholars who examined the exposed tombs at Beth She'arim found one single Greek inscription, ΠΑΡΘΕΝΗΣ, painted in red on the wall above an arcosolium arch in one of the burial halls on the northwestern hill.<sup>30</sup> The first Hebrew inscription to be found carved on a tomb at Beth She'arim was noted by Thiersch and Holscher, at the time of their visit in 1904. They read the inscription: בנימין בר יצחק רבן תורה.<sup>31</sup> Up to the present time we have not succeeded in relocating this interesting inscription, despite a diligent search. If the reading of these two German scholars is correct, then we are the richer for a title otherwise unknown in Jewish epigraphy: *Rabban Torah* (— רבן תורה). The proper names Benjamin and Isaac appear frequently in the inscriptions at Beth She'arim.

#### 4 THE EXCAVATIONS IN THE NECROPOLIS, 1936-1940

From the time Conder examined several caves at Beth She'arim (fall, 1871) — obtaining rather poor results<sup>32</sup> — and until we began studying the site in 1936, little material was added to our knowledge of it. Most scholars passed by Shêkh 'Abrêq without examining the remains on the mound or the open caves in its neighborhood.<sup>33</sup> Only in the short report presented by representatives of the Mandatory Department of Antiquities on April 29, 1921, do we find details on two additional caves.<sup>34</sup> In the summer of 1934, I visited Shêkh 'Abrêq but examined only the ruins discovered then on the mound.<sup>35</sup>

In March 1936, the late Alexander Seid informed I. Ben-Zvi of the discovery of a breach in the wall of one of the caves, through which he was able to crawl into decorated caves with inscriptions. Following this information, Ben-Zvi and I decided to visit the site, accompanied by Dr. G. Gerson and Prof. C. C. McCown. The breach, as we found it, was in the northern wall of Mugharet el-Jehennem. With the aid of an axe and flashlights, we toiled to clear a passage through cavities and tunnels beneath ground, to reach a series of burial-rooms in the walls of which were cut arcosolia and kokhim. On the walls and above the burial places we found a large number of inscriptions in Greek, Hebrew, and Palmyrene, as well as various drawings, all of which indicated that we were in a Jewish catacomb of the second to fourth centuries C.E.<sup>36</sup> In the wake of that discovery the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society applied to the Mandatory Department of Antiquities for a licence to conduct archaeological excavations at this site under the leadership of the author. We immediately received a favorable reply, but the commencement of excavations was delayed until the fall, due to anti-Jewish riots which began at that time.

On October 13, 1936, I set out for Shêkh 'Abrêq with P. Bar-Adon in order to organize the excavations; on October 15, Engineer Y. Kaplan and Architect M. M. Levin joined us. Levin had been a member of the American School's of Oriental Research expedition which had excavated at Bethel, and he volunteered to aid us in the first days of our excavations. We hired M. Yaffe as foreman, as well as a number of workers from Kevutzat Allonim and from Seid House.

After a superficial examination of the site, the following plan was adopted: 1 the drawing up of an accurate map of the Shêkh 'Abrêq neighborhood; 2 the study of the northwestern hill; and 3 the excavation of the series of tombs near Mugharet el-Jehennem.

Preparation of the map was entrusted to Y. Kaplan, who completed it within a few weeks. A felicitous incident led to the discovery of an interesting catacomb on the northwestern hill, afterwards designated as no. 7 (the tombs of the Himyariym), which we immediately began to clear. During the same season we also investigated catacombs nos. 9 and 10, on the southern slope of the northwestern hill.

The situation was different concerning the excavation of the tombs near Mugharet el-Jehennem where we encountered great difficulties, since their location could not be discerned above-ground, and at that time we found no other sign which would testify to their existence. We could reach them only by crawling through underground tunnels and holes. An examination of these tombs revealed that the original entrance to them was to be sought at the foot of the hill, north of Mugharet el-Jehennem. The passage between the two entrances served as a starting point for our efforts. This passage was discovered during an examination of the tombs from within, at which time we already suspected that this was part of a

rock-cut corridor. We ascertained the location of this passage by means of exact measurements carried out above-ground and started to excavate a trench from the foot of the hill toward a point determined by us.

The excavation began on October 19, and on the 21st we brought to light the wall of a rock-cut corridor belonging to catacomb no. 1. During the next few days we continued the excavation of the corridor and reached the entrance of a burial hall (hall A). After some time we found a flight of steps descending into the corridor from the west. The excavation of the corridor progressed slowly, since we had to overcome various obstacles such as great depth, debris which had collected above (1.50 m and more) and within it, the need to sift large quantities of earth and gravel, and especially the rubble in the various parts of the excavation. Here and there we had to support the walls of the corridor with wooden struts since they had partly collapsed already in antiquity. Around November 1st, we reached the lowest section of the corridor (near the entrance to halls I and J), at a depth of 9.25 m below the rock surface. At that stage we set two teams of workers excavating in catacomb no. 1. One group excavated the corridor, while the other cleared the burial halls. Kaplan took the measurements, drew up the plans and sketched the premises. Bar-Adon carefully copied the inscriptions and drawings, and recorded them in a special log. I myself kept the diary and the catalogue of small finds. The photographs were taken by V. Yessel and B. Yaffe. On November 1st, the late Prof. M. Schwabe paid us his first prolonged visit, undertaking the study of the Greek inscriptions.

The excavation of the corridor occupied the entire month of November. The entrances to the halls on both sides of the corridor were located and, on November 17, we reached the upper entrances N, O, and P. The debris from this catacomb was dumped at the foot of the hill (*vid.* Pl. I, 2). The clearing of the burial halls progressed at a more rapid pace after P. Rutenberg agreed to install electrical lighting within the catacomb (November 6). By December 13, the whole length of the corridor had been cleared and restored to its ancient form; by December 23 all burial halls excepting B, F, J, and L had been cleared of debris.

The results of the first season of excavations encouraged us to resume work as soon as possible. The second season opened on May 4, 1937, and continued throughout the summer. No changes were made in the personnel of the expedition, and the work schedule had already been determined during the first season, since there were clear indications of the existence of two other corridors south of catacomb no. 1, at the foot of Tell Beth She'arim. A thorough examination accompanied by our survey yielded the fact that one of the corridors was about 26 m south of the flight of steps which descended down into the corridor of catacomb no. 1, i.e., southwest of Mugharet el-Jehennem; and that the second was about 46 m south of the same staircase. While one working group con-

tinued excavating in hall B, J, and L in catacomb no. 1, another group set out to excavate the new corridor. The work was crowned with success and already on May 17 the rock wall of the corridor of a new catacomb — no. 3 (*vid.* map; fig. 2) — was discovered. Here, too, work presented technical difficulties: a. we had to clear the area of a large quantity of debris; b. at the northern end of the corridor we found that a stone arch over the entrance to a burial hall (hall E) had collapsed, compelling us to pay attention to every detail in its restoration; and c. over the entrance to another hall (hall D), we discovered large ashlar which had fallen from a kind of ceiling supported on one side by the natural rock and on the other by a stone wall built within the corridor. The ashlar, which had been laid one next to the other, formed the arch of this roof, built to keep the rain out of the open hall after the door was detached from the entrance. Their presence in the corridor made excavation of the catacomb difficult. The ashlar were removed after being examined and photographed *in situ*. Only on May 27 was the entrance to hall E opened, and later the remaining entrances to the halls on both sides of the corridor (A—D). On May 30 we discovered a flight of stairs descending into the corridor from the south.

In the first half of June we worked at the excavation of the corridor and the burial halls of catacomb no. 3. Much work was carried out in hall E in particular, where we found not only a great number of decorations and Greek and Palmyrene inscriptions, but also several intact burials. Interesting results were also obtained while clearing hall B, which has outstanding decorations. During the clearance of this hall, a hole leading to a new catacomb was discovered. The latter was designated as no. 4. Our measurements proved that it was sited 6–7 meters southeast of the entrance to the corridor of catacomb no. 3. On June 9 a group of workers began a trench in the direction of the new catacomb, and on June 14 they stumbled upon a fallen arch which originally supported the entrance to one of the halls in this catacomb (hall C). On June 17, the entrance to the main hall (hall A) was opened, and immediately afterwards, the staircase leading down to the corridor from the west was discovered.

In the second half of June and in July, we continued work in catacombs nos. 3 and 4. With great care, M. Yaffe rebuilt the fallen arch at the entrance to hall C in catacomb no. 4. Most of our workers labored at clearing the debris from the corridors and burial halls, while several others cleared the arcosolia and the pits, only a few of which were found intact. Their careful work enabled us to form an idea of the different types of burials. We also gained more exact information concerning the forms of the wooden coffins and ossuaries, from the discovery of iron angles, iron and bronze nails, and fragments of wood found *in situ* in several burials. In the middle of June, the late Professor Schwabe again visited the site, in order to study the abundant inscriptions discovered in catacombs nos. 3 & 4.

Work in these two catacombs progressed so satisfactorily that by July 8 we were able to set several workers to the task of discovering the site of the catacomb near Mugharet el-Jehennem, the existence of which had already been established in the first season. On July 11, the corridor of this catacomb (no. 2) was discovered, about 26 m south of the entrance to catacomb no. 1, and after another few days we found the rock-cut staircase leading down to the corridor of the catacomb from the south. Excavations in catacomb no. 2 progressed slowly and required great effort. The main difficulty was the many modifications brought about in this catacomb already in antiquity and which resulted in an instability of the rock. Another problem was the fact that part of the ceiling near the entrance of the main hall (hall C) as well as that of two lateral halls had collapsed. Only with great difficulty did we succeed in removing the greater part of the earth, stones, and rubble which had collected there, and to restore the catacomb to its original form. Actually, only a small part remains unexcavated. The clearance of the corridor and the burial halls in catacombs nos. 2, 3, and 4 continued during the months of July and August. In the second half of July we again began work on the northwestern hill, removing debris from the burial halls of catacombs nos. 7 and 10. These had been discovered and partly excavated in the previous season. On July 28 we discovered a new catacomb (no. 5) on the southeastern slope of that hill; it is similar in structure to the catacombs on the western slope of Tell Beth She'arim. However, work on this catacomb gave very poor results. In compensation, we were sufficiently lucky to discover catacomb no. 6, which we excavated from August 6 until the end of the season. At this time we also discovered the courtyard, with its floor completely paved in mosaic, as well as two burial halls. Stones from the entrance to the catacomb and from the arch of the main hall (hall A) found in the debris of the courtyard were removed and later served as material for the reconstruction of the catacomb. In the quality of its building, this catacomb surpassed any of the other catacombs discovered up to that time at Beth She'arim and differed from them in several respects.

On August 8 we found, on the southeastern slope of the hill, north of catacomb 6, an entrance to a new catacomb which amazed us by the abundance of its inscriptions. It was designated as no. 8.

Thus during August we worked both in the area of the catacombs nos. 2-4 (*vid.* Pl. I, 2) and in the necropolis area on the northwestern hill (*vid.* Pl. II, 1). In the middle of September, J. Schweig, photographer of the Department of Antiquities, came for an extended visit, taking a large number of photographs throughout the excavation area.

Excavations in catacombs nos. 3 and 4 were completed by August 20. Work was then limited to catacombs nos. 2, 6, and 8. The second season came formally to an end on the eve of the Jewish New Year. However, members of the expedition stayed on for several weeks in order to study

the tombs found in the two seasons, to complete the plans, photographs and copies, to classify the small finds, to set up fences and dig drainage channels around the catacombs. In our spare time, we studied the city's ruins and the various sections of the necropolis.

The third season began on December 11, 1938. The same personnel continued to work, except for the architect, J. Pinkerfield, who joined the expedition for several weeks. The main task in this season was the excavation of the synagogue in the northeastern part of Tell Beth She'arim.

Excavations in the city area did not bring about any neglect of the work in the necropolis. A decorated corner stone and broken building stones, found on the western slope of Tell Beth She'arim, about 30 m east of catacomb no. 1, roused special interest. On December 28, we cut a trial trench at this point, and the next day we already found sections of a frieze with animal figures, border stones, the arch of an ornamented building and the fragment of a marble slab bearing Greek letters. Thus began excavations in the area of a building on which we spent a great deal of time during the third and fourth seasons. Work here extended over a rather wide area on the slopes of the mound, yielding a large number of frieze stones, cornice stones, arches, archivolt, engaged pillars, and ashlar — all from a ruined building which had probably been decorated on each of its four sides. In the course of the excavations it became clear that this was a mausoleum, the stones of which had rolled down the hillside at the time of its destruction. Among the debris we also found fragments of a marble coffin, decorated with reliefs with Greek mythological motifs; it had probably stood within the mausoleum. We also found many fragments of a marble slab on which a Greek epigram had been inscribed. Up to January 3, we found 39 fragments of this slab, which we succeeded in fitting together. A copy of the inscription and its photograph were sent to Prof. Schwabe, who informed us, after some time, that he had succeeded in deciphering the epigram and had even found in it traces of the place name — Beth She'arim.<sup>37</sup>

Our main task now was to find the site of the mausoleum, and the catacomb which we expected to find near it. And thus, on January 4 we came upon the courtyard of the catacomb (no. 11), about 50 m east of the main entrance to catacomb no. 1. We immediately found that many of the stones from the mausoleum had fallen into this courtyard at the time of its destruction. While clearing the courtyard we were able to study and photograph the stones, which were then removed to the place where we had gathered all the remains from the mausoleum. Up to the end of the third season we worked at the removal of the stones and earth from this courtyard, until finally we discovered its colorful and intricate mosaic floor. Because the ceiling of the main hall had caved in near its entrance already in antiquity, we were unable to complete the clearance of this catacomb during the third season. At the end of that same season we

found the foundations of the mausoleum, on a cliff rising southeast of the courtyard of catacomb 11. In January 1939, J. Schweig photographed the ruins discovered during the excavations, and on February 1, 1939, the third season came to a close.

During the fourth season, which lasted from the end of March to the middle of June 1940, excavations were mainly in the area of the city's ruins, while in the necropolis area we concentrated on catacomb 11. In this season, E. Dunayevsky worked with us instead of Y. Kaplan, as architect. On March 31, we began clearing hall A, which was completely filled with earth. Among the debris we found stones which had rolled from the mausoleum into the hall, through the collapsed ceiling. These ashlar, together with the material discovered in the previous season, enabled us to contemplate a reconstruction of this structure. The Greek inscriptions discovered in hall A were of particular interest. The late Prof. Schwabe, who visited the excavations on April 3, 1940, undertook the deciphering. On the same day the late Prof. S. Klein visited the excavations for the last time. Excavating hall A occupied April and May. Several valuable finds were made, such as an intact burial, untouched by tomb robbers, and several small finds important for the dating of the catacomb and determining the types of burials within it. In addition to the large group of workers engaged in the city's ruins, and those few working in catacomb 11, an additional small group of workers was given the task of clearing hall F in order to expedite the drawing up of the plan of the entire catacomb (June 16). This hall collapsed already in antiquity. In the middle of July, somewhat before the end of the fourth season, excavations in the necropolis came to a halt.

During the excavations conducted at Beth She'arim in the years 1936–1940, eleven catacombs came to light and were excavated: five — nos. 1 to 4 and 11 — on the western slope of Tell Beth She'arim proper; and six — nos. 5 to 10 — on the southern and southeastern slopes of the northeast hill (*vid.* fig. 2). Only five catacombs — nos. 1, 3, 5, 6, and 11 — were completely cleared and restored to their original form; work in catacombs nos. 2 and 5 still remained to be completed; and in the others — nos. 7, 8, and 10 — only single halls had been cleared of debris.

And finally, concerning the method of registration and the terminology employed in our excavation of the necropolis: In addition to the diary and the catalogue of small finds, we kept a catalogue of the inscriptions and decorations. All the latter discovered in the catacombs were carefully copied on tracing paper which, together with the photographs, served later as a basis for the work on the epigraphic and artistic material. The plans were all drawn to the scale of 1:50; to each plan, cards noting all the measurements were attached, as well as the ordinal numbers of the finds, inscriptions, decorations, and any other special data. In designating the burial places, we used a uniform system: catacombs were denoted by

MEASUREMENTS OF HALL A, CATACOMB NO. 1

<i>Locus</i>	<i>Length</i>	<i>Breadth</i>	<i>Height</i>	<i>Insc. No.</i>	<i>Ornament No.</i>	<i>Details &amp; Find No.</i>	<i>Photo No.</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
Entrance	0.55	1.50	2.05					
Opening frame	0.40	0.70	0.98				B 1	
Lintel	1.35	0.41	0.31	1				See Copy File 1
Right doorpost	0.40	0.28	0.98			Of two stones: upper 0.35 m high; lower 0.63 m high		
Left doorpost	0.40	0.30	0.98					
Threshold	0.94	0.17	0.21					
Door	0.19	0.84	1.00			Found in debris on steps in hall		See ornament Cat. p. 1
First step (at threshold)	0.30	0.88	0.35					
Second step	0.37	0.72	0.32					
Room I	1.75	1.75	2.07		Graffito A on ceiling	Slightly arched ceiling		
Arcosolium 1	2.50	1.62	0.80	2, 3, 4		On floor nearby— sealing slab (0.60 × 0.45 × 0.08 m)	F 1; F 5	See Copy File 1
Burial place	1.85	0.42	0.34			Crumbling bones, two sealing slabs in situ (0.59 × 0.43 × 0.09 m & 0.57 × 0.41 × 0.10 m)		
Burial place	1.74	0.42	0.32			“Pillow” at Western end; 0.25 m long, 0.04 m high; crumbling bones		

Fig. 7  
Sample page of register  
appended to plans

Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.); burial halls, i.e., a series of adjacent rooms with a single opening to the corridor or court of the catacomb — by capital letters (A, B, C, etc.); individual rooms (*cubiculum*) within a hall — by Roman numerals (I, II, III, etc.); arcosolia and pit burials (in the floors) — by Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.); rectangular burial places

within arcosolia or pits — by Greek letters ( $\alpha, \beta$ , etc.); kokhim — by Roman letters (a, b, c, etc.). This uniform method aided in overcoming the many difficulties involved in the study and drawing up of plans of the extensive catacombs, especially catacomb no. 1.

## NOTES

- 1 Green, Conder, Schumacher and others call the site Sheikh Abreiq; whereas others, such as Robinson, call it Bureik. The first spelling used by most of the Europeans who visited the place in the nineteenth century, fits the accents of the local Arabs. A later etiological story was created in which Sheikh Abreiq appears as the revered saint of the peasants; his name means "the sheikh of the small pitcher" (ibreik, "small pitcher"). Concerning this story, *vid.* below. On the other hand, \*S. H. Stefan, *BJPES* 8 (1949), pp. 85–6, assumed that the basis of the name is the root *b-r-h*, in the diminutive form Bureikh, Ibreikh—which appears in several place names (e.g. Kefar Ibreikh), as Stefan shows.
- 2 *Vid.* \*M. Avi-Yonah, *Historical Geography of Palestine*, p. 86.
- 3 Guerin, *Galilee* I, p. 395, still saw on the hill remains of a building built of large, well cut stones measuring 16 by 14 paces, with a pool inside. In his opinion, this was a tower.
- 4 Future volumes will be concerned with the city wall and the various other buildings at Beth She'arim, and *vid.* also \**BJPES* 9 (1942), pp. 5 ff.
- 5 *Vid.* C. N. Johns, Excavations at the Citadel, Jerusalem, *QDAP* 5 (1935), pp. 127 ff. and Pls. LXXII; LXXIII, 1; 9 (1940), p. 207; *PEQ* (1940), pp. 36 ff. Johns now thinks that the remains of buildings in the courtyard of The Citadel (see above-mentioned plates), which are very similar to those of the first period at Beth She'arim, belong to the end of the Hasmonean period and the days of Antipatus; however, this building tradition certainly continued in the smaller towns into the next period, even after the new Herodian style of building became the norm in the large cities. At Sepphoris (L. Waterman *Excavations at Sepphoris*, pls. V, Fig. 2; XVII, Fig. 2) building remains in this style are to be ascribed to the time of Herod Antipas (4 B.C.–A.D. 39); and *vid.* S. Yeivin apud Waterman, pp. 28–9. A similar building style is evident also at Gerasa, in the foundations of the *carceres* of the hippodrome (ed. Kraeling, *Gerassa*, 1938, pl. XVIIa); these apparently belong to the first century A.D. (*vid.* G. Horsfield, *ibid.*, p. 102).
- 6 The large fragments found near the wall southwest of building B are of the type found in the Jewish tombs in Jerusalem of the Herodian period. Another lamp type is typical of the end of the first century A.D. (like type IV at Antioch—O. Waage, apud G. W. Elderkin, *Antioch-on-the-Orontes* I, 1934, p. 63). Only one find from the dump near the wall, a Rhodian handle with a seal impression from the second century B.C., is earlier than this period. Among the finds, we may mention; another fragment of a Rhodian handle, found in the upper part of the dump, and several *terra sigillata* sherds, and other pottery typical of the Augustan period. In the lowest layer of the dump, in pit 3 of courtyard *f*, we found coins of Claudius and Hadrian. The earliest coins found in the upper part of the dump, near ground level, (prior to excavations) are of Alexander Jannaeus, Herod, Agrippas I, the Roman procurators in Judea (in the days of Emperor Nero), and autonomous issues from Tyre at the beginning of the second century A.D.
- 7 Typical of Period II are the rounded lamps with relief decorations, widespread in the Hellenistic-Roman world of the second century (*vid.* O. Bronner, *Corinth* IV., 2, pl. XXIII; Waage, apud Elderkin, *Antioch* I, pp. 63 ff. & pl. X), and the lamps decorated with projecting squares from 2nd century Gerass. The classification of the Roman pottery from Beth She'arim, especially that of period II, and its comparison with the material from other sites awaits more basic work; however, it is now possible to ascertain these types which belong to the second and third centuries A.D. The coins from building B and in pits 3 in this period are of Caracalla, Julia Maesa, Julia Mamaea, and especially Elagabalus, i.e. from the end of period II (the first third of the third century A.D.). However, in the dump there were also coins of Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 161–180) and Commodus (180–192). The study of the coins found in the city has not yet been completed.
- 8 On this style of building, *vid.* Vincent-Abel, *Emmaus*, 1932, pp. 67 ff.
- 9 Typical of this phase are the Beth Natif type lamps D. Baramki, *QDAP* 5 (1935), pp. 3 ff. and the imitation *terra sigillata*, characteristic of the second half of the third century (Class A, Group A in the classification of F. O. Waage, *Excavations in the Athenian Agora: The Roman and Byzantine Pottery*, *Hesperia* II, 1933, pp. 273 ff.). This pottery is known to us also from various other sites in

Palestine, *vid.* Iliffe, *QDAP* 6 (1936), pp. 17 ff. A survey of the small finds from the necropolis will be given in Chapter 6.

10 *Vid.* the second volume of this book.

11 *Vid.* \*Schwabe, *BJPES* 9 (1942), pp. 22 ff.

12 Characteristic of period II is the local imitation *terra sigillata* ware, decorated with incised and stamped decoration (rouletted ware); and other types from the Constantinian period (particularly of the type which Waage terms class V, group B, in his work quoted above, in footnote 9; and *vid.* Waage, *Antioch-on-the-Orontes* IV, pp. 43 f., 56 f.). The lamps are mostly late Roman types, such as those found at Beth Fajjar (Iliffe, *QDAP* 4, (1934), pp. 177 ff. and pl. LXXXVI), in cave 10 at Gezer (Macalister. *Gezer* III, pls. XCII–XCIV) and at Betzet (Iliffe, *QDAP* 3 (1933), pp. 81 ff.) — all of the fourth century.

13 Most of the coins from this treasure are of Constantine the Great, Constantine II (A.D. 335–340), Constans I (335–350), and Constantius II; and there are a few of Helena with Constantine, Licinius (323–307), Fausta, wife of Constantine, and his sons Crispus (died 327) and Dalmatius (died 337).

14 *Vid.* above, p. 6.

15 We found two skeletons of persons who were killed apparently while escaping from the destruction of the building. They were found on a street of the city near the stairs leading to the square before the synagogue.

16 *Vid.* below, in the summary chapters.

17 *Vid.* below, Chapters 3 and 4.

18 *Vid.* below, Chapter 3 and Pl. IX, 1

19 There is an etiological explanation of the creation of the spring and the mud-baths connecting them with the name of Sheikh Abreiq. This story is related by J. Braslavsky, *Hayada'ta et HaAaretz*, 1940, p. 162.

20 On the geological structure of the Beth She'arim area *vid.* L. Picard, *Zur Geologie der Kischon-Ebene*, *ZDPV* (1928), pp. 29, 45.

21 *Vid.* *Survey of Western Palestine Memoirs* I, pp. 325 ff.

22 *Vid.* C.R. Conder, *PEFQSt* 1873, p. 47 and *Survey of Western Palestine Memoirs* I, p. 328. Conder rightly emphasizes that it is built "on a gigantic scale".

23 The meaning of the word *shiakh* is not clear; it appears in the Talmud always together with a pit or cave. From the Baba Kama 50b it would seem that, unlike a pit or cave, the *shiakh* is long and narrow, and apparently usually open, whereas the cave is closed. At any rate, this is one of the names for a container of water. *Vid.* also *Gesenius-Buhl*<sup>17</sup>, p. 813.

24 *Vid.* *Survey of Western Palestine, Memoirs* I, pp. 349 ff., and the plan on p. 346.

25 *Vid. ibid.*, p. 345 and C. Watzinger, *Denkmäler Palästinas* II, pp. 160 ff.

26 *Vid.* Macalister-Bliss, *Excavations in Palestine*, pp. 200 ff. & pl. 91.

27 *Vid.* Abel-Vincent, *Jerusalem* II, 1926, pp. 781 ff. & Fig. 331; Galling, *PJb* (1936), p. 89.

28 *Vid.* Watzinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 99 ff.; Hamilton, *QDAP* 8 (1939), p. 64 ff.

29 Such as *נפשא דפנוטיה* at Beth She'arim (*vid.* *Sefer HaYishuv*, p. 18, Beth She'an no. 13), and *נפשא דסיריקין* at Tiberias (*vid. ibid.*, p. 60, Tiberias no. 98; S. Lieberman, *HaYerushalmi Kifshuto*, p. 292), and *vid.* also *Sefer HaYishuv*, p. 176). We may mention here the saying of Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel: "נפשות are not made for the righteous, their words are their monuments" (Palestinian Talmud, Shekalim 2:37:1); *vid.* Klein, *Corpus Inscriptionum*, pp. 60–61. This refers to a monument or mausoleum. And *vid.* \*N. Avigad, *Ancient Monuments in the Kidron Valley*, 1954, pp. 66 ff.

30 *Vid.* *Survey of Western Palestine, Memoirs* I, p. 347.

31 *Vid.* H. Thiersch & G. Hölscher, *MDOG* 23 (1904), pp. 14 ff.; and \*E.L. Sukenik, *BJPES* 6 (1939), pp. 96–97.

32 *Vid.* C.R. Conder, *Tent Work in Palestine* I, 1879, pp. 161 ff. Conder writes about his work in the caves of Beth She'arim: "Into every entrance I could find I forced a way, sometimes opening up the door with a spade just enough to force my shoulders through, and creeping into the dark chamber..." (p. 162).

33 Among the scholars who visited Beth She'arim and mentioned it briefly are E.W.G. Masterman, *Studies in Galilee*, 1909, p. 7; W.F. Albright, *BASOR* 5 (1922), p. 19; A. Alt, *PJb* (1925), p. 41; (1931), pp. 5, 39.

34 The report on Sheikh Abreiq is on the file at the Department of Antiquities and Museums.

35 *Vid.* \**BJPES* 14 (1933), p. 34. There I also reported the discovery of bowl fragments on which there were Roman seal impressions, as well as a section of a mosaic floor.

36 *Vid.* my first survey in \**BJPES* 1/4 (1933), pp. 45–46.

37 This inscription was published by \*Schwabe, *BJPES* 6 (1939), pp. 105–114, 159–177, and 7 (1940), pp. 17–21.

CHAPTER III  
CATACOMB NUMBER 1

1 THE CORRIDOR

Catacomb no. 1 includes an open, rock-hewn corridor and 16 burial halls. It is the largest of the catacombs discovered so far in the necropolis of Beth She'arim.

The corridor is long and narrow (26.25 m long) and lies on an east-west axis. The main entrance is on the western side, at the foot of the mound (*vid.* fig. 2).

A 1.75 m long flight of rock-hewn stairs leads down to the corridor. It comprises nine steps, none of which is hewn the whole width of the corridor (about 1.15 m); they are of different sizes and descent is uncomfortable. The five main steps (nos. 2, 3, 6, 8, and 9) are hewn to the right of the entrance, whereas the other four (1, 4, 5, and 7) are hewn to the left, so as to ease descent (*vid.* Pl. III, 1). The lowest step (no. 9) inclines toward the corridor. The steps were worn already in antiquity by continuous usage and by the action of rainwater flowing into the corridor.

The floor of the corridor slopes from the flight of steps toward the entrances to halls I and J. Thus, when we reach the corridor after descending the stairs, we have the impression of two high vertical rock walls enclosing us from both sides. The entrances to the halls are located in these walls. Near the steps, the floor of the corridor is 2.30 m below the top of the rock and 4 m below the top of the debris overlying the rock; in front of the entrance to hall J, the floor of the corridor is 8 m below the top of the rock and 9.20 m below the surface of the debris (*vid.* Pl. IV). Beyond the entrances to halls I and J, a rock jutting out of the floor blocks the passage separating the front (west) part of the corridor from the back (east), which continues eastward following the elevation of the rock. Thus, the corridor of this catacomb is divided in two parts: a fore part, henceforth called the "lower corridor;" and a back part, henceforth called the "upper corridor." The lower corridor is 13.75 m long; its maximum width is 1.65 m and its minimum width 0.86 m. The upper corridor is 12.50 m long; its maximum width is 2.45 m, and its minimum width 0.50 m. The two corridors are connected by a narrow, inconvenient staircase, hewn into the back wall of the lower corridor (*vid.* Pl. III, 3).

On the two sides of the lower corridor there are entrances to ten burial halls: five on the left (north) side — A, C, E, G, and I; and five on the right (south) side — B, D, F, H, and J. The entrance to an additional hall, L, is located in the back wall of the lower corridor, to the right of the staircase leading to the upper corridor. On the two sides of the upper corridor there are entrances to four burial halls: three on the left — K, M,

and O — and one on the right, N. The entrance to the last hall, P, is in the back (east) wall of the corridor (*vid.* Pls. III, IV, and V).

In the lower corridor, at first the rock walls on both sides were fairly smoothly finished in their upper section, the lower section being left rough. This catacomb had already suffered the ravages of time in antiquity: not only had rain and wind left their imprint, but also man who brought appreciable changes to the plan of the corridor. The walls were exploited for further burial halls, and from time to time the need for additional burial places forced the owners to enlarge the catacomb. For this purpose they would lower the floor level and hew new burial halls in the added wall-space thus gained. It is impossible not to notice the difference between the original wall sections and the additional parts, where the stonework is of poorer quality. The more the floor was lowered, the deeper below the original floor level were the new halls. For this reason one gains the impression of several storeys hewn out of the stone, one above the other, while the entrances to the halls located on the same wall open at different heights above floor level. In places where the floor was appreciably lowered, the entrances to the older halls remained high above the floor.

At the same time, the owners of the catacomb attempted to retain a certain symmetry in the arrangement of the entrances on either side of the corridor. When they hewed out a hall on one side of the corridor, they usually had another cut in the wall opposite, so that the entrances would face one another.

The entrance to hall A is about 3.50 m from the stairs leading down into the corridor (*vid.* Pls. III, 2, and IV). The floor of this hall lies 0.65 m below the threshold of the door. Below the entrance, the stonemasons left a ledge of rock (which wore down in the course of time) running along the wall, forming a sort of step that facilitated access into the hall. The door-frame is well preserved, whereas the door itself was found lying in the debris. The entrance to hall B lies opposite the entrance to hall A. Since the stones of the door-frame were not found, we assume that it had been taken apart by the owners in antiquity. In the wall of the corridor, 0.70 m from the entrance to hall A and 2.55 m above floor level, we found a small window opening into hall E (*vid. inf.*). The role of this window (*vid.* fig. 8) is still unclear.

From the entrances to halls A and B, the corridor slopes down a distance of ca. 2.50 m toward the entrances to halls C and D, where it narrows to 0.85 m wide. The threshold of hall C is set at the level of the floor of the corridor. The masons left a ledge of only 0.10 m running along the bottom of the wall, to prevent rainwater from flooding the hall. In contrast, the threshold of hall D, opposite, was raised 0.25 m above the floor level (*vid.* Pl. V, 2).

The threshold of hall C is placed 1.35 m lower than the threshold of hall A. It is clear that hall C was built at a later date than hall A: it was

hewn after the floor of the corridor had been lowered at this point. The same is true for hall D. The door-frames of both of these halls were preserved intact, with the doors still on their hinges (*vid.* Pl. V, 2).

On the left wall of the corridor, at some distance from the entrance to hall C and slightly above the door lintel, there is a Menorah (seven-branched candelabrum) carved in relief. The six lateral branches of the Menorah, issuing from the short stem are emphasized and separated by deep grooves. Its central branch is replaced by a smaller seven-branched candelabrum, incised in thin, rough lines (*vid.* Pl. III, 2).

In the continuation of the corridor, 0.70 m after the threshold to hall C, the left wall juts out and the floor rises to form a step, the first of a flight of steps leading up to the entrance of hall E, high (2.25 m) above the corridor floor. With the exception of the lowest step (no. 1), the steps were hewn out of the rock wall which projects at this point into the corridor. The lowest step is carved out of the rock (no. 2), 0.20 m higher than step no. 1; and the top step (no. 8), next to the threshold of hall E to the right, stands 2 m above the floor of the corridor (*vid.* fig. 8).

A similar staircase is cut into the opposite wall, which also juts into the corridor at this point. This latter staircase consists of seven steps leading up to the entrance of hall F. The treads were very small and narrow, and it would have been very difficult to carry ossuaries or corpses up these stairs unless boards were placed across the width of the corridor, resting on either side of the stairs (*vid.* Pl. V, 2).

The door-frame of hall E is well preserved, whereas that of hall F collapsed already in antiquity along with part of the right wall of the corridor. The wall of the corridor could not withstand overuse to which this catacomb was put: the deepening of the corridor, the enlargement of the halls, and the thinning of the rock resulting in fissures.<sup>1</sup> In order to consolidate the damaged section of the right wall, the owners built a stone buttress between the collapsed wall and the wall opposite at 1.50 m above floor level. This buttress was built of broken ashlar and arch stones taken from an unknown site — perhaps an arched gate to the corridor (*vid.* Pl. V, 1). After clearing the corridor of debris, we also removed this buttress, shoring up the right wall and the entrance to hall F with wooden struts (*vid.* Pls. IV and V, 2).

Beyond the flight of steps leading up to hall F, there is a niche carved out of the right wall of the corridor — 0.75 m long, 0.54 m wide, and 1.16 m high at its entrance. Its floor is flush with that of the corridor. The niche is vaulted within, the ceiling sloping down toward the back. This niche, similar to that in the corridor of catacomb no. 3 (*vid. inf.*, Chapter IV), and the hewn cubicle in the right wall of the upper corridor (*vid. inf.* p. 41), was used for storing funeral paraphernalia. From this point onwards the corridor widens, and the floor slopes down appreciably. To facilitate descent into the back part of the lower corridor, three steps

were cut into the floor, taking up the whole width of the corridor (1.20 m). Their average breadth is 0.32 m; the two upper steps are about 0.30 m high, while the lower one is 0.19 m high. These stairs end opposite the entrances to halls G and H, facing each other at a considerable height above the floor of the corridor (*vid.* Pl. III, 3). Here one sees clearly that these halls could originally be entered directly from the corridor; in the course of time, however, and with the lowering of the corridor floor, the thresholds of the entrances to halls G and H came to stand 1.90 m above the floor. The masons had left a ledge of rock about 45 cm below the thresholds of both halls. Ascent to these halls appears to have been effected by means of wooden ladders resting against these ledges. The frame of the doorway to hall G is preserved *in situ*; its door, found where it had fallen among the debris of the hall, was restored by us to its original place (*vid.* Pl. IV). About 1.25 m above the lintel a marble plaque was set into the wall of the corridor. This plaque, 0.18 m high and 0.25 m wide, bears a Hebrew inscription, incised in three lines:<sup>2</sup>

*This grave  
belongs to Rabbi Isaac  
son of Mokimos Shalom*

הקבר הזה  
של רבי יצחק  
בר מקים שלום

The marble plaque is set in a niche cut out especially for this purpose, and is affixed with a layer of clay. This is the only inscription affixed to the wall in the lower corridor, and one of three inscribed marble plaques found in the necropolis of Beth She'arim during the first four seasons of excavations.

Since the door-frame of hall H, opposite hall G, had fallen already in antiquity following the collapse of the lintel, we had to prop it up with a wooden strut. Beyond the entrances to halls G and H, the corridor slopes down, ending in a depression beside the entrance to hall J in the south-eastern corner of the corridor, opposite the entrance to hall I (*vid.* Pls. III, 3, and IV). The lowest level in the whole catacomb is located here, and the threshold to hall J is the lowest within the catacomb.<sup>3</sup>

These two halls — I and J — are the lowest and latest in the catacomb and were quarried apparently after all the other halls had become crowded with burials. The entrance to hall L in the back wall of the lower corridor was cut originally slightly above floor level, but now, due to the lowering of the floor, it stands 2 m above the depression at the end of the corridor, with its threshold 1.63 m higher than that of hall J. At present, part of the original floor before the entrance to hall L serves as a kind of roof over the entrance to hall J below (*vid.* Pl. III, 3). This “roof” is reached by a worn stair cut into the back wall of the corridor, which serves hall I as well. Of these two lowest halls — I and J — the entrance to the former is built higher. Its threshold stands 1.28 m lower than that of

hall G, and 0.60 m higher than that of hall I, 0.40 m above the lowest floor level at the end of the corridor. Hall J has suffered more than the others from the winter rains which flooded in, damaging the walls and bringing in debris. The doors and the door-frames of halls I and L were preserved *in situ*, whereas the door to hall J appears to have been removed entirely, since it has not been found.

We have already noted that the upper corridor was reached by a flight of steps cut into the back wall of the lower corridor, a sheer rock-face bounding it on the east. The height of this wall, from the depression in the floor to the top of the stairs, is about 5.50 m. The almost vertical, smooth aspect of the wall at present is doubtlessly due to the many modifications brought to the plan of this catacomb (*vid.* Pls. III, 3, and IV). The changes undergone by the staircase cut in the wall are essentially the outcome of a long chain of events, involving repeated lowering of the floor of the corridor. At first, communication between the two corridors was certainly more convenient, and the flight of steps was doubtlessly shorter. An examination of the lower corridor has shown that, before the floor was lowered and halls I and J hewn out, the floor had run more or less level below the thresholds of the entrances to halls G and H, up to what is now the “roof” above the entrance to hall J. This was the spot where the stairs started up to the upper corridor. In its present state, the steep, crooked flight of stairs is even more difficult to climb since, in the course of time, the steps wore down and were in great part destroyed. From the depression in the corridor, one has to climb onto a step roughly cut in the back wall, between the entrances to halls I and J, and then turn right (south), working one’s way up the slippery rock (or to use a ladder), to reach the “roof” above the entrance to hall J. From this “roof,” which forms a kind of landing, ascent proceeds indirectly by first winding to the left (north), to some steps cut into the wall on the left side of the entrance to hall L, then turning right to steps cut above that entrance, running in the direction of the upper corridor; one then reaches the highest section of the staircase, where the steps are more comfortable (*vid.* fig. 8 and Pl. IV).

Altogether, we counted ten more or less intact steps from the landing to the top of the staircase, in addition to the steps so deeply worn as to have lost their pristine shape. These steps grow wider as they approach the upper corridor. The upper steps (except for step no. 10) were cut so as to take up almost the entire width of the corridor, leaving a space of only 0.35–0.45 m to the left (north) wall of the corridor. The top tread (no. 10) runs across the whole width of the corridor (1.80 m).

Before reaching the upper step (no. 10), we find the entrance to hall K in the left wall; this hall is considered to belong to the upper corridor. A wide stone (about 1.50 by 0.40 m) jutting out at that entrance facilitates passage from step no. 9 to the doorway of this wall.<sup>4</sup> This entrance has

collapsed, only the threshold and the bottom stones of the door posts remaining *in situ*; the lintel and the door were found among the debris within the hall.

While clearing the space in front of hall K, we found a marble plaque (0.24 m high, 0.21 m wide, and 0.02 m thick) bearing a seven line Greek inscription (no. 78).<sup>5</sup> It reads:

ΜΗΜΟΡΙΟΝ ΛΕΟ	<i>Monument to Leo-</i>
ΝΤΙΟΥ ΠΑΤΡΟΣ	<i>ntios, father</i>
ΤΟΥ ΡΙΒΒΙ ΠΑΡ	<i>of Rabbi Par-</i>
ΗΓΟΡΙΟΥ ΚΑΙ	<i>egorius and</i>
ΙΟΥΛΙΑΝΟΥ ΠΑΛ	<i>Julianos the Pal-</i>
ΑΤΙΝΟΥ ΑΠΟΧΡΥ	<i>atinos from the gold-</i>
ΣΟΧΩΝ	<i>smiths</i>

This plaque was found covered by the debris next to the lowest stone of the right doorpost, at a height of 0.80 m above the floor. It seems that it had been affixed to the doorpost by a layer of clay, preserved in part on its back and edges. When the entrance collapsed, long after the catacomb had fallen into disuse and had filled up with debris, the plaque fell from its place and became lodged among the debris.<sup>6</sup>

The upper corridor, 0.48 m higher, is reached from the top step. From here on, the corridor continues to climb slightly until, about 2.80 m further on, it reaches the staircase ascending to the back of the corridor.

The first step, and its continuation along the left wall of the corridor to the west, are cut in front of the entrance to hall M, 3.80 m from the entrance to hall K and 0.85 m higher up. The entrance to hall M is preserved intact, though its door was found fallen among the debris in the hall.

At first sight, it seems strange that no halls were hewn out of the right (south) wall opposite the entrances to halls K and M, in contrast to the lower corridor where the halls are symmetrically arranged one opposite the other. This can be explained, however, by the fact that the rock there conceals burial places of both Mugharet el-Jehennem and hall L of catacomb no. 1. Any additional halls hewn into this wall would, of necessity, have breached into other caves or even brought about a collapse. Hence, the face of this part of the wall was left plain, except for a small niche cut opposite the smooth area on the left wall, between the entrances to halls K and M (*vid.* Plan 4).

The floor of this niche is at the same level as the floor of the corridor, and its ceiling is vaulted. It is entered from the corridor through a narrow, asymmetrically hewn passage (its width near the entrance is 0.60 m, its length from the west is 0.70 m and from the east 0.55 m). The niche itself is oval, 0.80 m long, 1.15 m wide, and about 1.20 m high. It was used apparently as a storeroom for funereal paraphernalia, like the alcove in the lower corridor.<sup>7</sup>

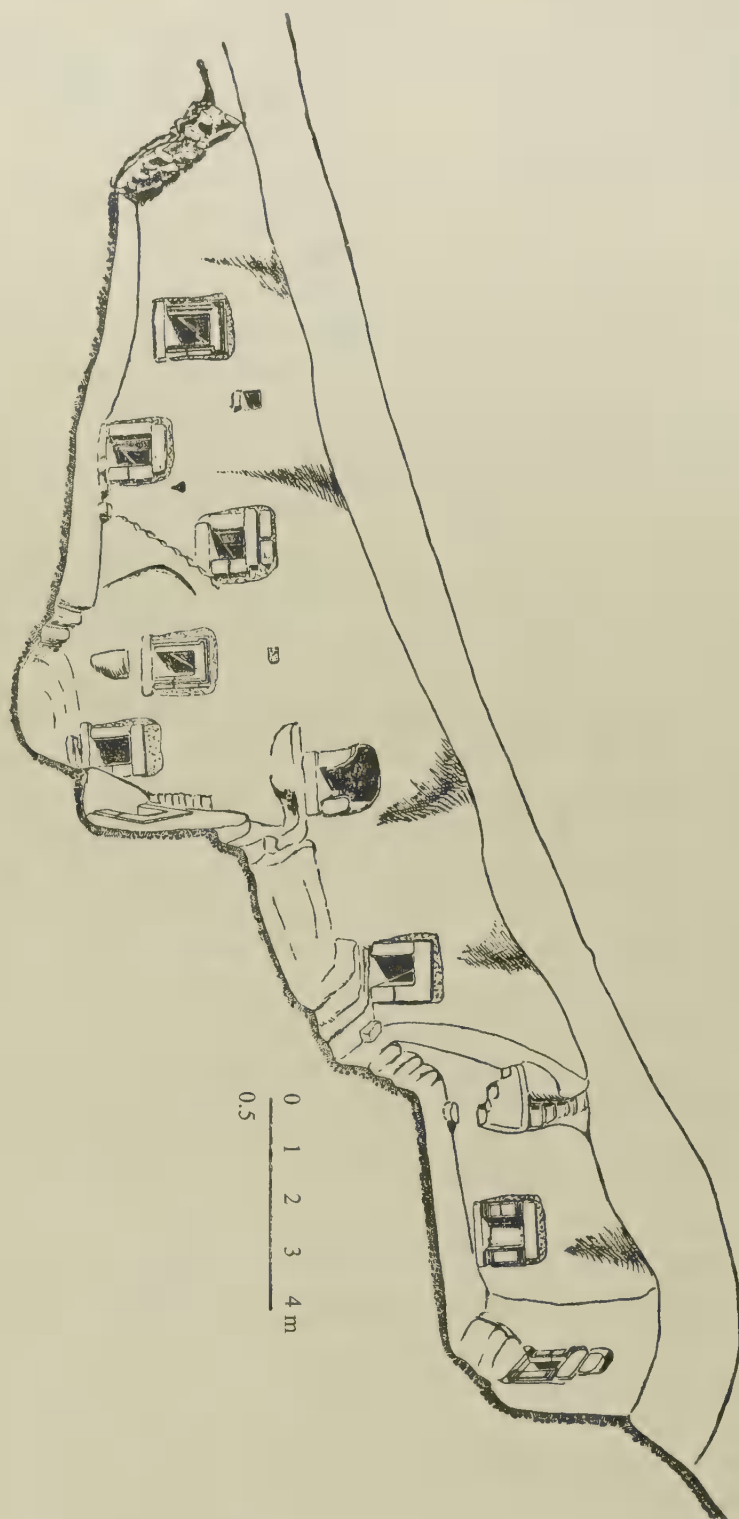


Fig. 8  
Left (north) wall of the  
corridor in catacomb no. 1  
(isometric view)

We will return to the aforementioned staircase leading to the back of the corridor, whose first two steps occupy the entire width of the corridor (1.40–1.45 m). The corridor narrows after the second step, especially at the fourth and fifth steps, where its width decreases to 0.68 m and 0.65 m respectively. At the top of the staircase, the corridor narrows even further, down to 0.50 m. From here on, it widens again, reaching 2.45 m at the end, in front of the steps leading to the entrance of hall P.

The final section of the upper corridor, about 6.50 m long (*vid.* fig. 8, and Pl. V, 3), displays no great changes in its plan throughout the generations in which it was used. The floor of the corridor rises slightly; the walls on either side were smoothly hewn, but became worn with time. The height of the rock walls reaches 2.25 m at the top of the staircase, and 3.40 m near the entrance to hall P.<sup>8</sup> Doubtlessly this part of the corridor, of a character all its own, was built before the other parts of the corridor (*vid. inf.*). Furthermore, it had a special entrance from the north, in addition to the main entrance in the west. The former opened up in the left wall of the corridor, 3.50 m from the entrance to hall O (*vid.* fig. 8). Here there is a flight of stairs ascending to the north. Following the partial collapse of the ceiling of hall O, several steps were broken, preventing us from finding the exact direction of the staircase, but it undoubtedly continued along the slope of Tell Beth She'arim. Altogether, we examined six complete steps, the lowest of which (no. 1) juts from the wall into the corridor at a height of 0.30 m above floor level, while the others are cut out of the rock wall. Step no. 2 is cut at a height of about 0.40 m above the bottom step (no. 1), which is in the corridor; from step no. 2 there are two additional steps (nos. 3 and 4) running west, reaching step no. 5 which is large and runs parallel to the wall, serving as a landing to the staircase. Here the second part of the staircase begins to ascend northward. Our examination has proved it contemporary to the back of the upper corridor.<sup>9</sup>

It has been mentioned already that the back of the upper corridor widens toward its eastern (back) end. This is due to the left (north) wall slanting to the northeast, while the right (south) wall slants even more pronouncedly to the northeast. At the place where the corridor is 2 m wide, about 4.50 m beyond the top of the stairs ascending to the back of the upper corridor, there are entrances to halls N and O which are situated on opposite walls, the first on the right and the second on the left. The masons no doubt planned the entrances to be opposite one another but, due to the slant of the left wall, the entrance to hall O does not face straight south, but south-southeast; while the entrance to hall N faces almost straight north. The last and highest hall in this catacomb, hall P, is hewn into the eastern wall of the corridor. The threshold of this hall stands more than 1 m above the floor level. In order to ease the ascent, there is a step jutting from the back wall in front of the

threshold and slanting towards it on all three sides. It is 0.40 m long, 0.25 m wide, and 0.55 m high.

The door-frames of hall N, O, and P have been preserved *in situ*, with the doors still on their hinges (*vid.* Pl. V, 3).

## 2 THE BURIAL HALLS

**Hall A.** Hall A is entered through a doorway 0.98 m high, 0.40 m deep, and 0.70 m wide, cut into the left wall of the lower corridor. The door-frame was found *in situ* (*vid.* Pl. IV); the door was found fallen inside the hall, near the entrance. The door and all parts of the door-frame — the lintel, two door-posts, and threshold — are of smoothly carved limestone. The layout of the entrance and the hall, as well as sections, are given in plan no. 2.

The threshold stone is 0.94 m long, 0.41 m wide, and 0.25 m high. The outer face of the threshold has a raised edge, while the inner face served as a sort of upper step to descent into the hall. On the left of this step there is a round socket for the lower hinge of the door.

The left doorpost consists of a single stone, 0.98 m high, 0.40 m wide, and 0.30 m thick. The right doorpost is built of two stones set one on top of the other. The upper stone is 0.35 m high and the lower one 0.63 m; their width and thickness are about equal (0.40 × 0.28 m). An oval keyhole was cut on the corridor side at the joint of the two stones.

The lintel lies on the doorposts; it is 1.35 m long, 0.41 m wide, and 0.31 m high, and is fashioned like the threshold, with an outer edge projecting downwards to permit the door to be closed tightly. On the left side of the inner face there is a socket for the hinge, corresponding to that cut into the threshold. The lintel is simply decorated: a raised band running along the top and sides frames a plain area containing an incised inscription in Greek (no. 1 in the catalogue of inscriptions). The inscription names one of the persons buried in the hall (*vid. inf.* p. 54). The raised band continues down the outer edges of the doorposts, framing the whole doorway.

The fitting of the door-frame was quite difficult since its various parts had to be joined perfectly. First, an opening was cut into the wall, 2.05 m high, 0.35 m long, and 1.50 m wide. Within this, the threshold was laid, with the doorposts upon it. Then the hinge of the door was fitted into the lower socket, to be followed by the lintel, set upon the doorposts with the upper door hinge fitting into the socket in the lintel. After setting the lintel in place, the door could swing on its hinges, opening toward the hall. The empty space between the door frame and the rock wall was filled with gravel and clay, and plastered at the outside. The entrance built in this manner was very low (0.98 m).

The door, found among the debris in the hall near the entrance, had undoubtedly been removed intentionally from its place. Treasure-seekers apparently broke into hall A via hall E, passing through the breach in the wall separating them (*vid.* Pl. VII, 1); they then tried to leave by way of the entrance under discussion. Since the door was locked, they broke the corner of the lintel near the hinge-socket, causing the door to fall to the floor of the hall. This door is 1 m high, 0.82 m wide, and 0.19 m thick. Despite the ravages of the elements, the side which had faced the corridor still bears traces of the decoration imitating a wooden door. A raised strip running vertically divides the door into two nearly equal sections; six studs carved one above the other protrude from the strip. Each of the two sections of the door is, in turn, divided into three panels, each having five studs, one in each of the corners and one in the middle. Here again are imitations of the panels of a wooden door, in truth nailed in this fashion. Characteristic of these imitations are the sunken strips between the panels. This type of decoration, found on most of the stone doors of the burial halls at Beth She'arim, is characteristic of the Roman period in this and neighboring countries (*vid. inf.*). The "upright" of the door, from which the hinges protrude, is rounded on the outer side, permitting the door to swing, whereas the other "upright," with a square socket at the center for locking the door, is flat. In the door itself, not far from the square socket, there is an iron eye for holding an iron ring; this eye had been affixed in a small hole cut through the stone. Rings are preserved attached to such eyes on several doors at Beth She'arim and were used to pull the heavy doors into place.<sup>10</sup>

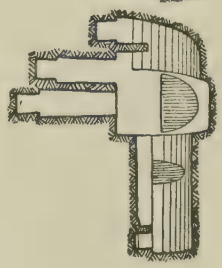
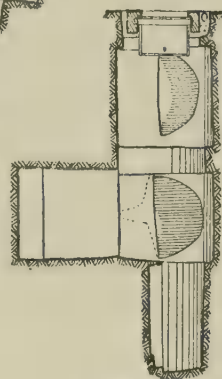
From this entrance there are two steps down to the burial hall. The first is described above; the second is 0.72 m long, 0.37 m deep, and 0.32 m high. The threshold stands about 0.70 m above the floor of the hall. The hall consists of three burial rooms in a row, one after the other. The length of the whole hall, from the threshold to the back wall of the inner room, is 7.17 m. The rooms are joined by arched passageways, the arrangement showing foresight and care, as far as symmetry of the rooms and burials is concerned.

**Room I** is 1.75 m square. At the center of the ceiling there is a graffito of composite geometric design (0.53 m in diameter), first sketched with a compass and then completed by hand. It consists of a frame of two concentric circles; between them are twelve leaves, drawn diagonally and joined end to end by lines. Within the frame is a hexagon which, in turn, contains a triangle. At the center of the entire motif is a very blurred rosette with many petals, surrounding a round button (in the middle of which can be seen the mark of the compass). The rosette is surrounded by two thin concentric circles (*vid.* Pl. VII, 4). Rosettes of six or more petals, often placed within concentric circles, are one of the most common



SECTION X

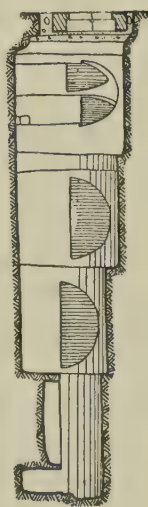
SECTION Y - C



SECTION X - D



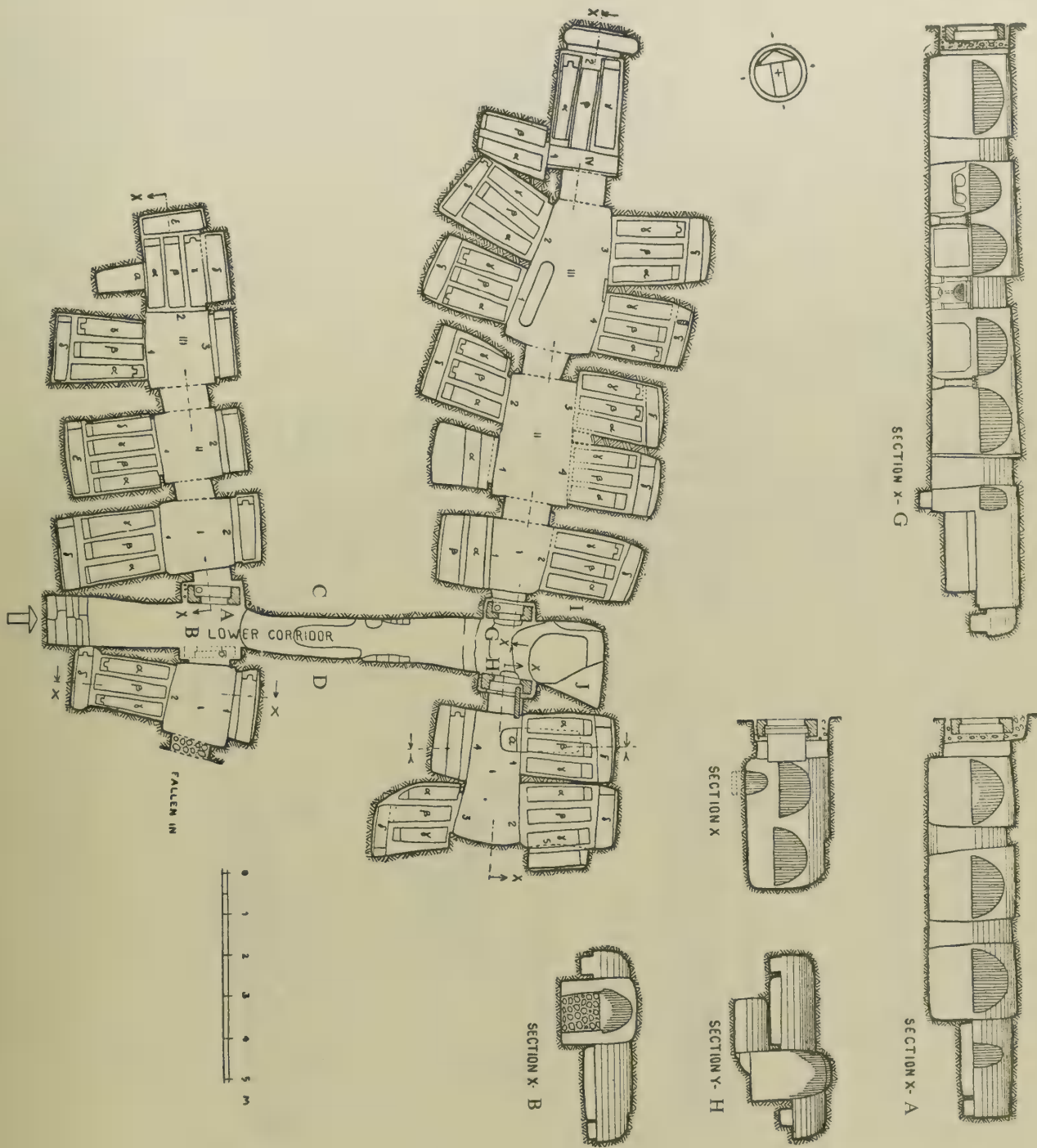
SECTION X - I



SECTION X - J



Catacomb no. 1: Plan 1



Catacomb no. 1: Plan 2



SECTION X - E

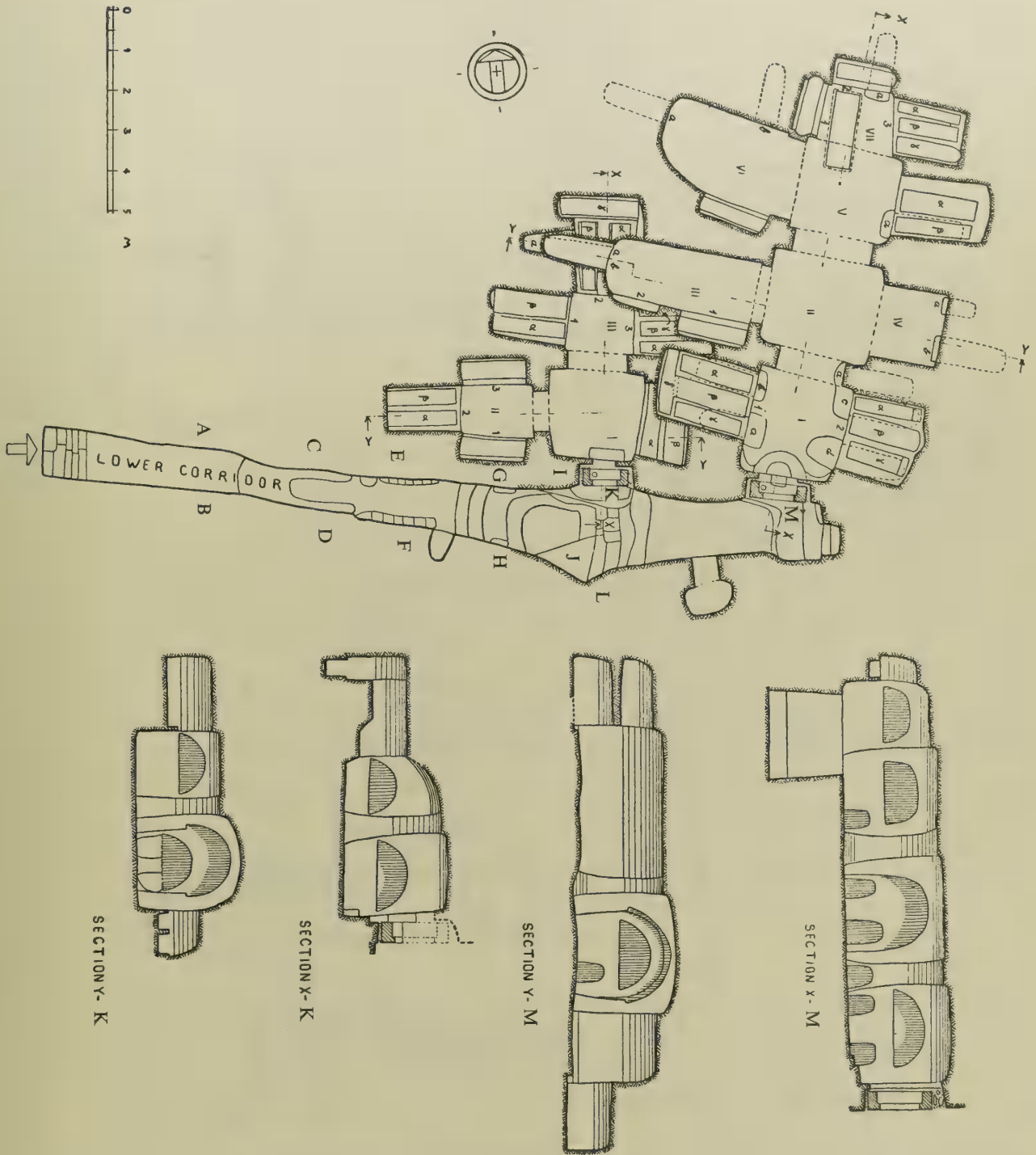


SECTION X - F

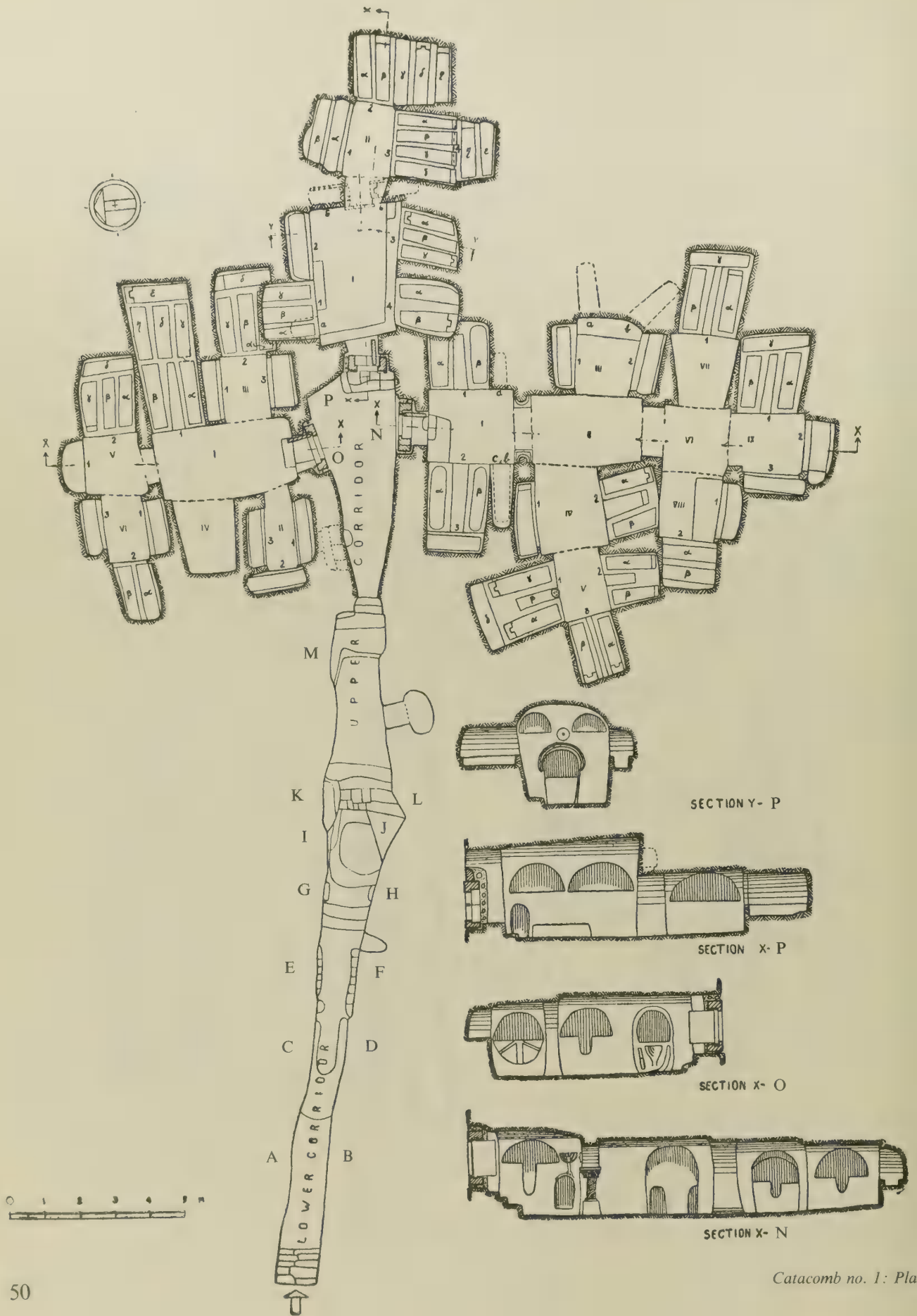


SECTION X - J





Catacomb no. 1: Plan 4



motifs in ancient art, especially Oriental.<sup>11</sup> This motif was especially popular with the Jews of Palestine in the Second Temple Period, and is commonly found on ossuaries from the Herodian Period,<sup>12</sup> and sometimes also on the walls and ceilings of burial halls.<sup>13</sup> Rosettes are common, too, in the burial halls at Beth She'arim, and in the Jewish and Christian buildings of Palestine in the Roman and Byzantine periods.

As to the hexagon and the other geometric patterns here — they are found quite often as part of the compound rosette motif used in Jewish and non-Jewish art of the Roman period, especially on architectural members, as well as on jewelry, oil lamps,<sup>14</sup> and ossuaries.<sup>15</sup> However, the composite rosette under discussion differs from all other known rosettes in its compositions.

On the two walls of the room flanking the door, arcosolia are hewn, a large one (1) in the left (western) wall, and a small one (2) opposite, in the right wall. The shelf of arcosolium 1, occupying nearly the entire length of the wall, stands ca. 1 m above floor level; it is 2.50 m long and 1.62 m wide (near the back wall it widens to 1.85 m), while the arch rises 0.80 m. In this shelf there are four burial places, separated by thin walls; three burials are carved lengthwise in the shelf ( $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ , and  $\gamma$ ), while the fourth ( $\delta$ ) is cut along the width of the back wall. The burial places measure: 1.74–1.85 m long; 0.37–0.42 m wide; and 0.22–0.34 m deep.

The bodies had been placed within the burial places, which were then covered by ashlar slabs sealed with clay. Some of the burials were coated with a thick layer of clay plaster. One stone was preserved *in situ* on the edge of burial  $\delta$ , with another stone alongside it.

An interesting feature of these burials (except for burial  $\alpha$ ) is the stone “pillow” cut at the head of each burial which had served to support the head of the deceased. In burials  $\beta$  and  $\gamma$ , the “pillow” is on the western side, and in burial  $\alpha$ , on the north; in other words, the dead were buried facing either the side of the room or the entrance to the hall. The “pillow” usually occupies the entire width of the burial place: in burial  $\beta$  it is 0.25 m long and 0.04 m high; in burial  $\gamma$ , 0.12 and 0.03 m; and in burial  $\delta$ , 0.18 and 0.03 m. All these burials were completely despoiled so that only the crumbling bones of the dead and a few glass fragments were found in them.

The names of two persons buried in this arcosolium — Porphyrios and Hannah<sup>16</sup> — are known from the Greek inscriptions on the wall of the arcosolium below the shelf (no. 2), on the wall above the arch (no. 3), on the wall to the right of the arcosolium (no. 4), and on the slope of the ceiling (no. 5).

Arcosolium 2 is cut into the wall to the right of the entrance: it is 0.68 m long and 1.68 m wide. The shelf occupies nearly all the length of the wall, and stands ca. 1 m above floor level. The arch rises 0.78 m above the shelf. This arcosolium contains only one burial place, hewn the

width of the shelf and occupying nearly all its area, leaving only a narrow edge along three sides and a wider one at the front. The burial place is 1.60 m long, 0.38 m wide, and 0.36 m deep. At the northern, narrow end of the burial, a stone "pillow" with a rectangular depression for the head juts from the bottom, 0.22 m wide and 0.04 m high. Thus, the deceased had been laid facing the entrance of the hall. This burial was plundered completely, but from the position of the leg bones preserved *in situ*, we learn that it had been placed on its back, with legs outstretched.

From the Greek inscription (no. 6) incised on the wall below the shelf, we may gather that the name of the person buried here was Jacob (*vid.* Pl. VII, 3). He seems to have been important, since not only was he buried in an individual arcosolium, but this latter had also been decorated with various graffiti. On the upper part of the wall, to the right of the inscription, three lines are incised in the form of rays of light shining down the wall. The left line passes between the letters B and E of the inscription. On the same wall, below the inscription, there is a boat incised in thin line (*vid.* Pl. VII, 3). This ship is drawn in profile, facing left. The deck is indicated by a straight, horizontal line whereas the keel is represented by a curved line sweeping from prow to stern. The two ends of the ship are similar; both are raised at right angles to the flat deck, and are indicated by straight horizontal lines meeting the ends of the curved keel at an acute angle. There is no sign of either sail or oars. Drawings of ships are common in the catacombs at Beth She'arim; most are sketched schematically, and all lack indication of the water on which they float. However, in contrast to all other ships in which both deck and keel are indicated, this one has a straight, horizontal deck. This fact, as well as the shape of the prow and stern, lead us to believe that this graffito was intended to represent a special type of vessel common, apparently, along the coasts of Palestine.<sup>17</sup>

We found a number of graffiti on the arch of the arcosolium above the shelf as well: one is situated at the center of the vault, beneath a breach leading to Hall E. The others are to the left of this breach (*vid.* Pl. VII, 2). The first graffito is the profile of a horse depicted stepping to the left, of which only the fore part is clearly visible. The drawing is very rough and the several parts of the body are not symmetrical. The head is too large in proportion to the body and drawn in absolute profile, while the eye is drawn *en face*; the neck is long and almost upright, while the body is vague. As to the forelegs — the right is raised in the act of walking, while the left is depicted straight.<sup>18</sup> The horse's hind-quarters are unfinished and vague. Another graffito, to the left of the breach in the wall (Pl. VII, 2), represents fauna, but it is not sufficiently clear to elicit its exact nature. It measures 0.32 × 0.32 m and depicts a horse with two bulls drawn one behind the other in profile; all face to the left. The horse is drawn in absolute profile; the head faces left in a

horizontal line, one of the ears pricked up. The neck is elongated and one of the forelegs is extended forward, in continuation of the line of the body. The head of the bull standing behind and lower than the horse overshadows the hindquarters of the horse. Only the head and foreparts of this bull are visible; the head is drawn *en face*, at a slight leftward angle, and the forequarters are drawn in profile, with one leg extended forward. The head is trapezoidal, with well emphasized horns indicated by double lines springing from the sides of the head. Behind and above it is the second bull; here, too, only the head, forequarters, and one leg are visible. The head, drawn *en face*, is in the form of a square, slightly wider at the bottom, with horns also of double lines springing from the sides of the head. This composition is unique at Beth She'arim, though depictions of bulls do appear on coffins,<sup>19</sup> Jewish graves,<sup>20</sup> the lintel of a synagogue,<sup>21</sup> as well as various buildings from the Roman Period, on Phoenician tombstones, etc. This motif was very common in the popular art of the East in this period.<sup>22</sup> In addition, one of the usual features of Eastern art in general, and Jewish art in particular, is the representation of the head of a bull *en face*, with the body in profile.<sup>23</sup>

Aside from this graffito, however, no other bull appears in the catacombs at Beth She'arim excavated by the author. On the other hand in catacomb no. 1 (hall K) there are two additional horses, this being one of the common subjects of popular art in this period.

Aside from the aforementioned drawings we find, on the vault of the arcosolium and on the wall above the burial, an interlaced design which appears simply to be an unfinished guilloche, similar to those encountered in architecture, mosaic floors, and oil lamps of the Roman and Byzantine periods.

An arched passageway 0.50 m long, 0.94 m wide, and 1.86 m high leads from room I to room II. It is hewn to resemble a stone-built passageway with an arch resting on pillars. On the front wall above the arch, there are two concentric semicircles and a wavy line below, incised near the edge of the arch. The engaged pillars are set one opposite the other. Between the base of the arch and the top of the pillars there are small shelf-like spaces, though no capitals are found. On the right pillar in the passage, underneath the "shelf," there is a representation of an arcade in low relief (Pl. VII, 5). It is 0.24 m high and 0.40 m wide, showing three arches supported by four columns, complete with bases and capitals. It is asymmetric — the pillar on the left being set too high, while the second from the left is too low. Noteworthy also is a horizontal line between the three capitals on the right, separating the space beneath the arches from the intercolumnation; this may be nothing more than a guide-line which the artist inadvertently incised too deep. The arcade is a favorite motif in the art of the Roman period. At Rome, the arch appears already as an artistic ornament in the first century B.C.E., whereas in architecture,

arches resting on columns came into use only in the third century C.E.<sup>24</sup> This subject, i.e., a series of columns supporting arches, served also to decorate Jewish ossuaries from the Herodian period.<sup>25</sup> Beginning with the second century C.E., we find this subject commonly used in decoration in both Eastern and Western lands.<sup>26</sup> The type of arcade described here is quite similar to the design on a Hellenistic clay mold for a coffin, now in the Odessa Museum.<sup>27</sup> A similar type of arcade is found on multiple-nozzle lamps from the third and fourth centuries C.E., found in tomb no. 36 at Gezer and tomb no. 33 at Tell en-Nasbe.<sup>28</sup> Other examples from neighboring countries, especially Syria and Egypt, show clearly that this subject was well known in the Near East even prior to its popularity in the West; it may well have originated in Syria and Palestine.<sup>29</sup> The relief under discussion clearly indicates that the Jews of Palestine in the Roman Period were familiar with this type of arcade, which served as a decorative element in Jewish art, alongside the Syrian gable representing the Holy Ark, another popular motif at Beth She'arim.

**Room II** is 1.70 m long and 1.48 m wide, and its height from the floor to the top of the vaulted ceiling is 2.10 m. Arcosolia are hewn in its right and left walls; a large arcosolium (1) in the left wall, and a smaller one (2) in the right wall. The shelf of arcosolium 1 is narrower at the outer edge (1.42 m), widening toward the back (up to 1.75 m). It is 2.32 m long and the arch rises 0.84 m. Five burial places are cut into this shelf, four the length of the arcosolium ( $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ ,  $\gamma$ , and  $\delta$ ) and the fifth, near the back wall ( $\epsilon$ ) across the width of the shelf. The burial places are 1.58–1.75 m long and average 0.35 m in width with a depth of 0.24–0.34 m.

In all of these burials there is a stone “pillow” to support the head of the dead; in burials  $\alpha$ – $\delta$  near the narrow edge on the west side; and in burial  $\epsilon$ , on the north; that is, the body faced either the room or the entrance to the room. At one end of burial  $\alpha$  we found *in situ* a stone slab (0.59 × 0.43 × 0.09 m) which had covered the burial place; it was sealed with clay plaster. Two additional stones were found *in situ* at the end of burial  $\gamma$ ; they too had been set in a layer of clay. All of these burials had been robbed, and only two of them,  $\alpha$  and  $\delta$ , still contained the bones of the deceased. The names of three of the persons in this arcosolium — IOYN, Miriam, and Kyrilos — are known from four inscriptions, one in Hebrew (no. 8) and three in Greek (nos. 7, 9, and 10), written on the wall of the arcosolium below the shelf (no. 7), on the wall to the left of the arch (no. 8), to its right (no. 9), and on the ceiling of the arcosolium (no. 10).<sup>30</sup> The first name is mentioned also in a blurred inscription on the lintel of the doorway (no. 1).

Arcosolium 2 is hewn in the wall to the right of the entrance; it is 0.61 m long and 1.51 m wide, and the arch rises 0.71 m above the shelf. This shelf occupies nearly the entire length of the wall and stands ca. 1 m

above the floor of the room. Within this arcosolium is a burial place 1.51 m long, 0.40 m wide, and 0.27 m deep. The “pillow” at the northern end of the burial place is 0.10 m wide and 0.04 m high. Two sealing stones, along with crumbling and scattered bones, were found here. Inscription no. 10a on the wall of the burial, below the shelf, indicates that a certain Kyrilos was buried here.

From room II we pass on to room III through an arched passageway, similar to that between rooms I and II. The passage is 0.60 m long, 1.12 m wide, and 1.98 m high.

**Room III** is 1.83 m long, 1.62 m wide, and 2.10 m high from the floor to the top of the vaulted ceiling. This room has two arcosolia, one on either side of the entrance — a large one (1) on the left and a smaller one (3) in the right wall; there is also a third arcosolium (2), larger than the others, cut in the back wall. All three arcosolia are hewn at a height of about 1 m above the floor level. Arcosolium 1 is asymmetrical, hewn diagonally; it is 2.30 m long and rises 0.91 m high above the shelf. The shelf is narrower at the outer edge (1.42 m), leaving a space near the wall on either side and widens toward the back wall (up to 1.70 m). It contains four burial places, three cut lengthwise ( $\alpha$ - $\gamma$ ) and a fourth ( $\delta$ ) cut the width of the shelf, next to the back wall. They are 1.61–1.82 m long and vary in width from 0.35 to 0.39 m; their depth varies from 0.20 to 0.30 m. In all these burials there are “pillows” for the heads of the dead; the “pillows” are placed near the back end, except in burial  $\alpha$  where it is in an unusual position, at the outer end. In this latter, then, the deceased was buried facing the interior of the arcosolium and not towards the room as was usual; this “pillow,” which is 0.30 m wide and 0.12 m high, also had a depression for the head of the dead. The “pillows” in burials  $\beta$  and  $\delta$  are 0.13 m wide and 0.03 m high, and have no depressions. On the other hand, the “pillow” in burial  $\gamma$  — 0.24 m wide and 0.03 m high — has a depression. Within burial  $\alpha$ , two sealing stones were found. All the burials had been robbed and only in burial  $\alpha$  were there crumbling bones.

Arcosolium 2 in the back wall of the room is, without doubt, the latest of all. It was hewn carelessly, with an eye to optimal utilization of the space available for additional burials. It occupies nearly the entire back wall, except for a small space near the walls on either side; furthermore, the interior widens towards the east, to gain space for an additional burial. The shelf is 2.35 m long, 1.45 m wide on the outer side, and about 2 m on the inner side; the arch rises 1.05 m above. It contains five burial places; four are hewn the length of the arcosolium ( $\alpha$ - $\delta$ ) and the fifth lies across the width, near the back wall ( $\epsilon$ ). In addition, a *kokh* is hewn in the middle of the left (west) wall of the arcosolium. The average measurements of the burials are 1.60–1.75 m in length, 0.40 m in width,

and 0.28 m in depth; whereas the kokh is 1.18 m long, 0.52 m wide, and 0.72 m high.

In the three burials hewn the length of the arcosolium ( $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ , and  $\gamma$ ) there are "pillows" at the ends, the deceased being laid to face the entrance. The width of the "pillows" of burials  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  is 0.17 m, whereas that in burial  $\gamma$ , which has a depression, was damaged upon an additional burial being cut here (*vid. inf.*); the average height of the "pillows" is 0.04 m. Examination of arcosolium 3 shows that originally it accommodated only four burials ( $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ ,  $\gamma$ , and  $\epsilon$ ). A small additional arcosolium (denoted no. 4 in the plan) within arcosolium 3 was added only some time later; it, in turn, contained burial  $\delta$ . Kokh *a* is also a latter addition, cut into the left (western) wall of the arcosolium. It is worth noting that this kokh contained a large number of bones; their position indicated that it was a secondary burial of bones gathered from their original burial places. Thus, the kokh served as a deposit for bones after the other burials in this hall had been filled, so as to make room for new burials. We also found a large number of scattered bones in burial  $\epsilon$ , in which apparently several bodies had been placed (though the matter has not been explained to our satisfaction). And finally, we come to the late burial hewn the width of the arcosolium, at the ends of burials  $\gamma$  and  $\delta$ ; the masons destroyed the two earlier burials and broke the "pillow" of burial  $\gamma$  while adding it. There is no doubt that this burial is of a very late period and was certainly hewn long after the original owners of the hall had ceased to bury their dead here.

Arcosolium 3 is hewn nearly the entire length of the right wall of the room, with only a small space left on either side; it is 0.59 m long and 1.55 m wide, and the arch rises 0.78 m high from the shelf. The burial place hewn in it is 1.51 m long, 0.36 m wide, and 0.27 m deep. The "pillow," as usual in this room, is at the northern end of the burial. Within the burial there were crumbling and scattered bones.

Hall A includes altogether 22 burial places, besides the later burial mentioned above. The number of dead buried in it, however, is greater than the number of burial places, if we take into account the large number of bones gathered in kokh *a*.

This hall excels in its predetermined plan, and in the consistent arrangement of the burials in its walls. In addition, it should be noted that the walls, especially in room I, had been hewn with a broad-bladed, short-hafted adz, wielded by a practised hand. The walls and ceilings were smoothed, and the cracks made in the process of quarrying were closed up.

Characteristic of this hall is the arcosolium — the vault-roofed shelf; within the shelf proper there are one or more rectangular burial places, that is troughs the length of a human body. All these burial places served for primary burial; the corpse was laid within the burial place with the head resting on a "pillow" raised above its bottom at one of the shorter

ends. The burial was sealed with ashlar, sealed with clay plaster. The maximum length of these burials is 1.91 m, while their minimum length is 1.51 m; the average width is 0.37 m and the average depth, 0.28 m. In such burials there was, of course, sufficient room for the body. Unusual in this hall is *kokh a* (1.18 m long), which served as a gathering place for bones. The *arcosolium* type here was the outcome of a long development which began in Palestine and other countries in the Hellenistic period. At first, the *arcosolium* served a single burial, consisting of a vault over a shelf on which a coffin was laid.<sup>31</sup> The first appearance of the *arcosolium* in Palestine dates from about a century before the fall of the Second Temple, alongside the *kokh*, found already in the Phoenician cemetery at Marissa, of ca. 200 B.C.E.; this became the normal type of Jewish burial in the Hasmonean and Herodian periods.<sup>32</sup> In the Hellenistic and Roman cemeteries at Jerusalem, Gezer, and other sites, we find many catacombs with *kokhim* and *arcosolia* alongside one another, or burial chambers containing *arcosolia* added alongside catacombs of the *kokh* type.<sup>33</sup> Beginning in the Herodian period, a new type of burial chamber emerged, with an *arcosolium* in each of the three interior walls,<sup>34</sup> as in the *cubiculum* of the Roman and Sicilian catacombs, where the *arcosolia* are arranged in the same manner.<sup>35</sup> Coffins or ossuaries were generally placed on the shelves of these *arcosolia*. However, already in the Herodian period there were *arcosolia* with shelves containing hewn, rectangular troughs for the corpses. This type of *arcosolium* first appears in Jerusalem as a later addition to the regular *arcosolia* chambers.<sup>36</sup> At the end of the Second Temple period, however, we find in Jerusalem burial chambers and even entire catacombs in which this type is predominant.<sup>37</sup> In the generations following the fall of the Temple, this type of burial became one of the most popular in Palestine, in general, and in Jerusalem in particular.<sup>38</sup> In this period *arcosolia* with shelves containing several graves were also frequent; in other words the *arcosolium*, originally a single place burial, came to be used for several burials, or even for an entire family. The burial hall under discussion is of this later type. Characteristic is the arrangement of *arcosolia* in the walls on either side of the entrance: an *arcosolium* with several burial places opposite one containing a single burial. We find a similar arrangement in various catacombs of the third and fourth centuries C.E.<sup>39</sup> *Kokh a* in this hall takes the place of the special room for depositing bones from the primary burials, or of an ossuary.

In hall A, no object was found which would enable us to date it. However, the character of the burials, inscriptions, and graffiti, as compared with the material from the other halls, point to the third century C.E. It was built probably already in the first half of that century, i.e., the beginning of period IIIA at Beth She'arim; it was used for burial over two or three generations. We must also assume that the owners were of

a local family, from among the inhabitants of Beth She'arim; this is indicated by the fact that the dead had been laid directly within the burial places in the arcosolia, and not within coffins or ossuaries, as would have been the case had the deceased been brought from afar.

**Hall B** is hewn into the right wall of the corridor, opposite hall A. The entrance is about 2 m high, 0.42 m long, and 1.38 m wide. The door-frame and door are missing and no remains of them could be found either in the hall or in the corridor.<sup>40</sup> From the entrance, two rock-carved steps lead down into the burial hall, the floor of which lies 0.35 m below the level of the corridor. The hall consists of two rooms, one hewn behind the other; only the first was examined. The plan and section of the hall are given in plan 2.

The first room is carelessly and asymmetrically hewn, in the form of a rough square; it is 1.58 m long, 1.56 m wide, and about 1.85 m high. The room contains two arcosolia, one on either side of the entrance: one (1) is hewn in the left (eastern) wall and is small, whereas the other (2), in the right (western) wall, is larger. The shelf of arcosolium 1 stands 0.80 m above the floor: it is 0.57 m long, 1.60 m wide at the outer side, and 0.78 m wide near the back wall. The arch rises 0.75 m from the shelf. Within this arcosolium there is only one burial place, hewn the width of the shelf and taking up nearly its entire area, excepting a wide edge at the outer edge and a narrower one near the back wall. The burial place is 1.78 m long, 0.37 m wide, and 0.33 m deep. The "pillow" is 0.21 m wide and 0.08 m high and has a depression for the head of the deceased, who thus lay facing the back of the room, contrary to custom in hall A. The burial was plundered, only the bones having been preserved. Judging by the great number of bones, it would seem that several persons were buried here, though they were left in such confusion that no conclusions could be reached regarding the original manner of burial.

Arcosolium 2 is also hewn asymmetrically into a slightly inward-slanting wall. It occupies nearly the entire length of the wall, leaving only a small space free on either side. The shelf, which stands 0.80 m above the floor, is 2.44 m long and 1.38 m wide at the outer edge; the arch rises 0.90 m above the shelf. Three burial places are hewn, the length of the shelf ( $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ , and  $\gamma$ ), and a fourth ( $\delta$ ) is cut the width at the back wall. The place where the last burial was hewn was widened on either side to accommodate a human body. The maximum length of the burial places is 1.84 m, the minimum length, 1.54 m.

In all of the burials except  $\beta$ , there is a "pillow" with a depression for the head of the deceased. The "pillows" of burials  $\alpha$  and  $\gamma$  were at the western, narrow end so that the deceased faced the room; the "pillow" of burial  $\delta$ , however, was placed near the northern edge, as in arcosolium 1. All of the burials were looted, though the bones found in them indicate

that each had contained a single body without a coffin. In general, this room is similar to the burial rooms of hall A, with which it is no doubt contemporary. The rather poor stonework in the room and the arcossolia can be explained by the fact that the rock here is less solid than in hall A, and hence more difficult to work. Thus, while arcossolium 2 was hewn diagonally to the northwest, the wall at the edge of the arcossolium near the "pillow" of burial  $\delta$  has cracked and a breach appears in the wall separating it from the corridor, near the staircase. At the time, the breach was filled with stones and gravel, but the repair was insufficient to withstand the rainwater, which in time found its way into the hall. On the floor we found heaps of bones, and it appears to have served as a sort of depository for them. We were unable to determine the number of skeletons, or the manner in which each skeleton had been placed, for the bones had crumbled to such an extent as to preclude any conclusions.

A vaulted passageway hewn in the southern wall, opposite the entrance to the room, leads to the second room; the passage is 0.43 m long, 0.92 m wide, and 1.78 m high. The masons had planned originally to cut out the second room in continuation of the first, as in hall A; after finding that the rock was not sound, however, and that the burials of another catacomb lay behind it, work here was abandoned. The passage was filled with small stones and clay plaster, up to a height of 0.96 m above the floor where the vaulting began.

This hall served as a burial place for only a short time. When it became clear that it was not suitable for this purpose, its owners removed the stones of the door-frame, as well as the door, for use elsewhere.<sup>41</sup>

**Hall C**, hewn into the left (northern) wall of the corridor, has only two rooms and is one of the smaller halls in this catacomb. The door-frame is preserved *in situ*, and the door can still turn on its hinges. The hard limestone frame and door are carefully worked and smoothly finished (*vid.* Pl. IV). The plan of the entrance and of the hall, as well as sections, are given in plan 1.

The entrance to this hall was built in a manner similar to that of hall A. First, an aperture was cut into the rock wall; it was 1.70 m high, 0.45 m long, and 1.65 m wide. Then, the threshold (0.93 m long, 0.45 m thick, and 0.35 m high) was laid down, and the doorpost placed upon it: the left doorpost (0.97 m high, 0.37 m long, and 0.30 m wide) is a single stone, while the right one (0.97  $\times$  0.45  $\times$  0.30 m) is made up of two stones, laid one on top of the other, with a keyhole cut in the joint. The lintel is 1.20 m long, 0.40 m wide, and 0.21 m high. The built entrance thus obtained is rather low and narrow: 0.97 m high and 0.66 m wide.

The door opening into the hall can still swing on the hinges fixed in sockets cut at the left side of the threshold and lintel. It is 1 m high, 0.84 m wide, and 0.18 m thick, and carved to resemble a plain wooden

door. With the exception of a narrow frame around it, the entire area of the door was carved in the likeness of a projecting wooden panel, divided into two nearly equal rectangles by a projecting strip; however, it bears no imitation of studs or other decorations usually found on such doors. The name of the owner of the hall — Θυμη — is incised and painted in red (Greek inscription no. 11) at the top of the right panel of the door, above the small hole for the iron ring.

Two stairs hewn in the rock lead from the threshold down to the floor of the hall, which stands 0.42 m below the corridor level.

The hall consists of two small rooms hewn in the rock one behind the other; the length of the hall from the entrance to the back wall is 4.90 m. In the wall between the two rooms there is a vaulted passageway.

**Room I** is 1.95 m long, 1.27 m wide, and 1.92 m high from the floor to the top of the vaulted ceiling. It has the shape of a rough rectangle, and the walls are not straight. The method of cutting and dressing the walls differs from that employed in hall A; in fact we have here an altogether different technique. In room I there are three different methods of finishing the rock surface: the ceiling, the arch above the passage to room II, and the edges of the arches above the arcosolia have been finished in the usual manner, by using a wide, straight-edged chisel; the walls were roughly cut, but not dressed, with the aid of a sharp-edged adz, whereas the areas destined to bear inscriptions or graffiti were smoothed with a scraper. Further, the walls on the right and left of the entrance are separated from the slightly vaulted ceiling by a horizontal band carved in the rock, giving the impression that the walls lean and project into the hall (*vid.* Pl. VIII, 1). This treatment gives the room a pleasant aspect, and was assumably considered to be the most appropriate for the room.

In the center of the ceiling there is a deeply incised circle (0.40 m diameter) with several lines in it; this may be an attempt to draw a rosette within a circle.

The arcosolia are cut into the walls on either side of the entrance to the room: there is a small one (1) in the left wall, and a large one (2) in the right wall. The shelf of arcosolium 1 stands ca. 0.80 m above floor level; it is 0.57 m long and 1.78 m wide; the arch rises 0.78 m from the shelf. A single burial place, cut the width of the shelf, takes up its entire area except for a narrow strip near the back wall. The burial is 0.33 m deep and near its right (northern) end there is a "pillow;" since it is only 0.10 m wide we cannot suppose that it served to support the head of the deceased. In the burial which was completely despoiled, there were only a few crumbling bones and a small sherd of a jug. Since other sherds were found on the floor of the room near the arcosolium, the jug could be reconstructed quite completely (no. 2 in the catalogue of finds).

On a narrow, horizontal band on the rock wall above the vault of

the arcosolium, there is a three-line Palmyrene inscription incised into the rock and painted in red (no. 12; *vid.* Pl. VIII, 4); this mentions Thuma daughter of Amase, a name known to us from a Greek inscription on the door (no. 11) and another, painted in red on the wall of room I, above the arch of the passageway leading to room II (no. 13; *vid.* Pl. VIII, 1). These three inscriptions prove that the burial had been cut specifically for this woman. On a small, smooth area to the right of the vault above the shelf of the arcosolium there is an incised *en face* figure of a woman, 0.17 m high. This primitive and childish depiction, scratched with a nail and left unfinished (*vid.* Pl. VIII, 3), displays a marked inability to portray a human figure. The head is exaggerated in proportion to the body, which is portrayed as a rectangle with no sign of legs. The eyes are represented by two dots; the eyebrows are drawn like two continuous arcs; the nose is indicated by a long vertical line starting at the connection of the eyebrows and continuing between the eyes; there is no indication whatsoever of the mouth; the chin is elongated; and the neck is short and incomplete. The arms, simply indicated by long lines, are not articulate with the shoulders; the right arm is extended slightly above the shoulder, while the left arm is extended obliquely downwards. The hands are portrayed *en face*; the right one shows palm outward, while the left shows the back of the hand. All five fingers are indicated on both hands. Between the right hand and the head, a sort of wing is lightly incised. The garment covering the figure's entire body is of interest — a sort of chiton indicated by diagonal warp and weft lines.

This drawing is reminiscent, on the one hand, of graffiti on Phoenician and Palmyrene tombs and tombstones, which portray the departed or his soul and, on the other hand, the winged figures common in the popular Eastern art in general, and the cherubs and angels of Jewish and Christian art, in particular. Winged figures are not unusual at Beth She'arim, and they are discussed below in the description of hall G, in catacomb 1. In the depiction under discussion, special attention should be paid to the position of the arms<sup>42</sup> and the emphasis laid on all five fingers, features fairly frequent in the popular art of the Roman and Byzantine periods.<sup>43</sup>

Arcosolium 2 is hewn in the wall to the right of the entrance, opposite arcosolium 1. Its shelf, which stands about 1 m above floor level, takes up nearly the entire wall, except for small spaces at either end; it is 2.10 m long, 1.65 m wide at the outside (inside it widens up to 1.75 m), and the arch rises 0.85 m above the vault. This shelf is divided into two parts: in the left (southern) part there are two burials, one beside the other ( $\alpha$  and  $\gamma$ ), while in the right part there is only one tomb ( $\beta$ ), hewn in the form of a sunken pit. Burial  $\alpha$ , which is hewn to the length of the shelf, is 1.40 m long, 0.40 m wide, and 0.30 m deep. Burial  $\gamma$  is hewn the width of the shelf, behind burial  $\alpha$ ; it is 0.92 m long, 0.36 m wide, and 0.29 m deep. Both burial places are small and served, apparently, as a place for

the collection of bones; however, since the graves were emptied by grave robbers, we do not know if the bones had been placed within ossuaries or not.

Pit  $\beta$  is hewn nearly the whole length of the shelf, and inside it reaches a length of 2.12 m; its width is 0.62 m, and its depth is 1.34 m. At the bottom, its measurements decrease to those of a rectangular burial place (2 m long, 0.55 m wide, and 0.37 m deep). Leaning on the shelves surrounding it there had been four sealing stones which had crumbled and fallen to the bottom of the pit. Beneath the stones we found crushed human bones; the skull fragments found near the back wall show that the head had laid at that end. We also found iron angles, two complete ones (nos. 46 and 47 in the catalogue of small finds) and nine broken ones (no. 48), as well as fragments of nails and wood splinters. The two intact iron angles are of two arms each (in no. 46, they are  $40 \times 50$  mm each, and in no. 47 they are  $45 \times 50$  mm each). In the arms of the intact angles, as well as of the fragments, there were two (no. 46) or three (no. 47) pierced holes, in which small nails had been inserted. These nails, angles, and splinters are all that has remained of the wooden coffin in which the body had been interred. It was difficult to draw any conclusions regarding the shape of the coffin, since most of the angles and nails were scattered and corroded by the water which had seeped in after the sealing-stones had crumbled and the pit filled with debris. The coffin appears to have been about 1.80 m long and about 0.45 m wide. It was apparently built of thin wooden panels fastened with angles and nails to two frames at the ends. Eight angles were probably used. Other details were indicated by comparison with the remains of a coffin found *in situ* in a pit in hall E, catacomb no. 3.<sup>44</sup> In the back wall of the arcosolium there is a breach through which one can crawl into hall G.

The arched passageway from room I to room II, 0.55 m long, 0.80 m wide, and 1.75 m high, is hewn so as to imitate a built passage with an arch resting on pillars. The engaged pillars are carved one opposite the other; in the middle there are rough knobs set in smooth frames.

To the left of the arch, above the pillar, there is a crudely executed graffito of an animal (0.17 m long and 0.14 m high); since it is unfinished, it is difficult to discern what it represents. The intention seems to have been to depict a lion. The animal is drawn facing the entrance of the hall, with head held high; the legs are indicated by four lines, one after the other, and the tail is raised. The body is covered with a crisscross pattern, apparently a device intended to simply fill up the space so as to leave no blank area.<sup>45</sup>

Room II, which is asymmetrical, has an average length of 1.70 m, and average width of 1.70 m, and is 1.89 m high from the floor to the top of the slightly vaulted ceiling. Its walls contain three arcosolia: one (1) in the left (western) wall, another (3) in the right (eastern) wall, and a

third (2) in the wall opposite the passageway. Arcosolium 1 is actually an arched niche whose floor represents the “shelf;” it is 1.02 m long and 1.71 m wide, its width being equal to the length of the wall in which it is hewn. Two rectangular pits are hewn in the floor, side by side and running the width of the arcosolium: one near the back wall ( $\beta$ ) and the other at the front ( $\gamma$ ); the latter is only partly within the arch of the arcosolium, partly jutting into the room proper. The two pits are separated by a stone wall standing 0.70 m above floor level. Pit  $\beta$  is 0.46 m wide and 1.03 m deep; the pit tapers down to a rectangular burial place (0.35 m wide and 0.35 m deep). Of the four sealing stones resting on the shelves along the sides of the burial, three remain *in situ* (their average measurements are  $0.45 \times 0.38 \times 0.07$  m); the fourth had crumbled and fallen into the pit. In the burial we found the remains of a decayed and crumbling skeleton lying in earth. Judging by its position, the body was buried without a coffin and faced the entrance to the hall. The length of the pit  $\alpha$  occupies the width of the room (1.70 m); it is 0.50 m wide and 1.23 m deep. The pit tapers down to a rectangular burial place similar to that in pit  $\beta$  (0.37 m wide and 0.37 m deep); this burial had not been sealed with stones. It contained decayed bones, two complete iron nails (nos. 44 and 45 in the catalogue of small finds) 70 and 60 mm long, respectively, fragments of nails, and splinters of wood. Here, as in pit  $\beta$  in room I, the body surely was buried in a coffin. Several nails were found scattered on the floor of the room, as well.

In arcosolium 2, hewn in the back wall of the room, the shelf occupies nearly the entire length of the wall and stands 0.85 m above floor level. The shelf is 2.23 m long and 1.20 m wide (it widens to 1.40 m inside), and the arch rises 0.80 m above the shelf. Three burial places are cut the length of the shelf; they are 1.98–2.02 m long and 0.34–0.50 m wide.

From the “pillows” near the back ends of two of the burials ( $\beta$  and  $\gamma$ ), it was evident that the bodies had faced the entrance to the hall. Sealing stones were found *in situ* only in burial  $\alpha$ . Two such slabs had been laid on the northern edge of the burial place, plastered to each other and to the shelf with a thick layer of clay; an ashlar had been laid on top of them and plastered to them and to the shelf. Within the burial there were crumbling bones, one complete iron nail (50 mm long; no. 9 in the catalogue of small finds), two broken nails (nos. 10 and 11), and wooden splinters. Glass fragments were also found here (no. 6). It appears that the bones of the deceased were buried here either in a coffin or in a wooden ossuary.

In arcosolium 3, cut into the right (eastern) wall of the room, the shelf occupies nearly the entire length of the wall, leaving only a small space on either side. The shelf stands 0.70 m above the floor; it is 2.38 m long and 1.45 m wide, and the arch rises 0.78 m above the shelf. Three burial places are hewn the length of the arcosolium ( $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ , and  $\gamma$ ), with one hewn

the width, along the back wall ( $\delta$ ); in addition, a small kokh ( $a$ ) is cut into its left (northern) wall. The plan is similar to that of arcosolium 2 in hall A, room III (*vid. sup.*, p. 55). The burial places are 1.51–1.67 m long, and 0.29–0.34 m. wide. The kokh  $a$  measures 1.10 × 0.35 × 0.68 m.

In all four burials there is a “pillow” near the back wall. Thus, the bodies in burial  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ , and  $\gamma$  had been laid facing the room, while that in  $\delta$  faced the entrance. All the burials had been robbed so that only broken sealing stones remained in  $\alpha$  and  $\delta$ , and decayed bones in  $\delta$ . Kokh  $a$  was also robbed, and only a few bones remained.

Finally, we may note pit  $\alpha$ , cut in the floor of the room proper. This pit was hewn the length of room II encroaching on the area of the passageway between rooms I and II (*vid. Pl. VIII, 1*). Since the tomb robbers left this burial intact, it was clearly worthwhile investigating in detail. It is 1.78 m long, 0.55 m wide, and 1.52 m deep. At the bottom there is a burial place (1.83 m average length, 0.50 m wide, and 0.50 m deep) which grows wider with depth; four sealing-stones were laid resting on the ledges along either side (average measurements: 0.53 × 0.45 × 0.10 m), serving as the base for an earth fill up to the top of the pit; thus, the unpractised passed over the site as a burial. Depressions cut into the sides of the pit aided in descending into it.

After clearing the pit of earth and removing the sealing-stones, we found a well-preserved skeleton of a man laid out on a north-south axis beneath a layer of sand (*vid. Pl. VIII, 2*). The position of the skeleton indicated that the corpse had been laid on its back on the floor, facing left (east), with arms at its sides and the legs pressed together. It seems that it was of an older person. No object was found near the skeleton except a small sherd which had apparently dropped down into the pit with the earth which seeped between the sealing-stones.

In summarizing the clearance of hall C, one of the foremost points to be noted is the density of burial here. Not only were the walls utilized for burials, but the floor of room II was used as well. Another fact worth mentioning is the thinness of the eastern wall of room II, which led to several breaches in the wall and ceiling; another breach appears in the wall of arcosolium 2 in room I. This small hall accommodates fifteen burial places, including deposits of the bones of more than one person. We note further that, at first, the hall was built to accommodate a usual number of burials though even before its completion there was need to add burial pits with and without wooden coffins.

The character of the burials and the small finds in this hall enables us to date it fairly certainly. First, we may remember that hall C is later than hall A (*vid. sup.*, p. 37). As to the type of pits found here, similar examples from the third century C.E. were discovered in Nablus Road, Jerusalem (near the “Tombs of the Kings”).<sup>46</sup> As to manner of burial, they are similar to two small tomb-caves from the third century C.E.

discovered near the Y.M.C.A. building in Jerusalem.<sup>47</sup> In these latter the bodies had been laid in rectangular burial places cut into the floor; in one of them (cave tomb 1), coffins were not employed, the dead being laid out exactly as in pit *a*, room II; in the second cave, one body had been buried in a wooden coffin and another in a wood coffin apparently placed within a lead coffin. This comparative material from Jerusalem aids in dating hall C to the third century C.E. This date also fits the jug found in arcosolium 1 in room I.<sup>48</sup>

The Greek and Palmyrene inscriptions here furnish an additional basis for this chronology. Paleological evidence alone often cannot suffice for dating inscriptions, and the Greek script of inscriptions 11 and 13 is of the general type of the second to fourth centuries C.E.; however, the wording and the form of the letters in the Palmyrene inscription are reminiscent of inscriptions dated to the last generations before the fall of Palmyra.<sup>49</sup> We may note that the earliest burial in the hall (at any rate earlier than the arcosolia in room II) is that of the Palmyrene Thuma (room I, arcosolium 1) who was brought to Beth She'arim for burial, probably in a wooden coffin. This burial provides a *terminus ad quem*: the fall of Palmyra in the days of the Roman emperor Aurelian (273 C.E.). In the light of the above, it would seem that hall A was cut as early as the first half of the third century C.E., and hall C some time later, in the middle of the century. However, the period of intensive use of these halls, including the hewing of the pits in hall C, was the second half of the third century. It is impossible to determine on the basis of the results of our excavations when burial in the halls ceased. We will suffice in stating that no indications were found to indicate that these halls were in use after period III B at Beth She'arim, i.e., the middle of the fourth century C.E.

**Hall D**, hewn in the right (southern) wall of the corridor opposite hall C, is also among the smaller halls in this catacomb. At the entrance to this hall, the door-frame and door have been preserved *in situ*. The plan of the entrance and the hall, and sections of them, are given in plan 1.

The door-frame was affixed within the rock-cut opening (1.60 m high, 0.55 m long, and 1.30 m wide). The stone of the threshold is 1.20 m long, 0.47 m wide, and 0.23 m high; the sill is thin and raised on the outside, whereas the inner part serves as the only step leading down into the hall (0.32 m wide and 0.31 m high). The two doorposts flanking the door project 50 mm beyond the threshold. The right doorpost is built of two identical stones (0.42 × 0.26 m); the upper one, broken on the side facing the entrance, is 0.34 m high, and the lower one is 0.52 m high. The left doorpost is a single stone, 0.86 m high, 0.45 m wide, and 0.35 m thick. The front of either post is carved to resemble a pillar with a base and capital of sorts. Similar doorposts are found at the entrances to halls O

and P (*vid.* Pl. V, 3). The lintel (1.26 m long, 0.25 m high, and 0.44 m thick) is carelessly dressed and bare of decoration or inscription. On the other hand, the door (0.93 m high, 0.72 m wide, and 0.10 m thick) which can still swing inward on its hinges, is smoothly finished. It bears no decoration, except a narrow vertical band incised into the smooth face of the door, marking the "upright" on the side of the door with the hinges. The opening of the door-frame is 0.86 m high and 0.60 m wide.

A single step leads down into the burial room, an irregular rectangle 3.05 m long on an average and 1.15 m wide. The distance from the floor to the top of the vaulted ceiling is 1.60 m. There are arcosolia in three walls of the room (except in the entrance wall), similar to hall C, room I (*vid. sup.*, p. 60). Two arcosolia are cut next to each other in the left (eastern) wall: one (1) of normal dimensions, and the other (2) smaller than usual; both have shelves 0.60 m above the floor. The shelf of arcosolium 1 is 2.30 m long, 1.35 m wide at the front and widens towards the back wall; the arch rises 0.71 m above the shelf. In this arcosolium there are four burial places, three ( $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ , and  $\gamma$ ) the length of the shelf, and the fourth ( $\delta$ ) its width, near the back wall. They measure 1.46–1.80 m long, 0.31–0.36 m wide, and average 0.28 m deep.

"Pillows" are cut at the back end and occupying the entire width of the burials, except in  $\beta$ . All four burials were completely despoiled; only burial  $\alpha$  still contained a few bones. In addition, there is a breach in the back wall of the arcosolium, near burial  $\delta$ , through which one can crawl into hall H. The shelf of arcosolium 2 is 1.80 m long and 0.90 m wide, and the arch rises 0.73 m above the shelf. Only two burial places are cut lengthwise in it: burial  $\alpha$  is 1.72 m long, 0.38 m wide, and 0.30 m deep; burial  $\beta$  is 1.60 m long, 0.40 m wide, and 0.22 m deep. Both are asymmetrical and rather roughly cut, without "pillows." There are two other arcosolia, 7 and 8, in the right (western) wall of the room, occupying the entire length of the wall and standing 0.40 m above the floor of the room. The edge of the arch above arcosolium 8 is smoothed, and displays an incised wavy line. The shelf of arcosolium 8 is 2.30 m long, 1.60 m wide at the outer side but narrows towards the back; the arch rises 0.74 m above the shelf. It contains four burial places, three of which ( $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ , and  $\gamma$ ) are cut the length of the arcosolium; the fourth ( $\delta$ ) is cut the width, along the back wall. They measure 1.42–1.83 m long and 0.27–0.40 m wide.

As usual, two of the burials have "pillows" to support the head of the deceased: in burial  $\alpha$  (0.16 m wide), near the back wall; and in burial  $\delta$  (0.16 m wide), at the northern end. The body in this latter burial faced inward, and not towards the entrance to the hall, as usual. In addition, we found a breach in the vault of the arcosolium, leading into hall F. The shelf of arcosolium 7 is 2.10 m long (average) and 1.37 m wide at the outer side, and the arch rises 0.92 m above the shelf. Of the four burial places in it, three are cut the length of the arcosolium ( $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ , and  $\gamma$ ) and

the fourth ( $\delta$ ), a short trough, is cut its width, near the back wall. The length of the burials ranges from 1.28 to 1.67 m; they are 0.30 to 0.43 m wide and 0.22 to 0.38 m deep. Burials  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  have "pillows" near their back ends; the one in  $\alpha$  (0.30 m wide) has a depression for the head, though that in burial  $\gamma$  (0.23 m wide) has none. Arcosolium 7 was extended by the addition of another arcosolium (5) cut at the same level into its left (southern) wall. The shelf of arcosolium 5 is 3.15 m long and 1.50 m wide at the front, and 1.66 m wide at the back; the arch rises 0.83 m above its shelf. It contains six burial places: three ( $\alpha$ - $\gamma$ ) cut the length of the front of the arcosolium, and three at its back ( $\delta$ - $\zeta$ ), hewn the width. They measure 1.47-1.66 m long, 0.38-0.41 m wide, and 0.30 m deep on the average. All these burials have "pillows" with depressions. In burials  $\alpha$ - $\gamma$ , the "pillows" are placed near the back wall (south), and in burials  $\delta$ - $\zeta$  they are at the eastern end. The "pillows" occupy the entire width of the burials, and are 0.16 m wide on the average. Especially interesting are two depressions hewn 1.20 m apart in the vault of the arcosolium, on either side of burial  $\epsilon$ . A similar depression is found in the right wall of room I, to the left of arcosolium 8, near the ceiling. These depressions seem to have been intended for oil lamps used by the visitors; traces of soot found in them would support this.<sup>50</sup> We should mention here a breach in the back (southern) wall of the arcosolium, giving access to catacomb no. 2. This hole was made when the arcosolium was enlarged to the south. Arcosolium 5 was also enlarged by the addition of a tertiary arcosolium cut at the same height in its western wall. This small arcosolium, denoted no. 6, is 1.01 m long and 1.63 m wide; its arch rises 0.84 m above its shelf. Two burials are cut in it, one behind the other, the width of the arcosolium;  $\alpha$  is 1.63 m long, 0.38 m wide, and 0.30 m deep, and  $\beta$  is 1.63 m long, 0.39 m wide, and 0.30 m deep. The cutting of the back (eastern) wall of this arcosolium caused a large fissure, through which one can crawl into catacomb no. 2.

Arcosolium 3 is cut into the remaining space of the back (southern) wall of this burial room. The shelf of this arcosolium is very narrow at the outer side, and the room proper narrows down to 0.82 m toward its back wall, though it is 1.75 m wide inside. The shelf is 2.85 m long and the arch rises 0.82 m above the shelf. Of its five burials, three are cut the length of the arcosolium ( $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ , and  $\gamma$ ), the two behind being cut the width ( $\delta$  and  $\epsilon$ ). Burials  $\alpha$ - $\gamma$  measure 1.35-1.50 m long and 0.36-0.46 m wide; burials  $\delta$  and  $\epsilon$  are 1.70 m long and 0.41 m wide, on the average. The burial places are carelessly cut, with no thought to symmetry; there are no "pillows." In the wall of the arcosolium there are traces of an attempt to enlarge the shelf so as to add another burial behind burial  $\epsilon$ . An additional arcosolium (4) was hewn asymmetrically in the left (western) wall of arcosolium 3. The shelf of arcosolium 4 is 0.75 m long and 1.60 m wide, and its arch rises 0.68 m above the shelf. It contains only one burial

(1.60 m long, 0.31 m wide, and 0.39 m deep). Even a superficial survey of the plan suffices to show that arcosolium 3 (together with arcosolium 4) was planned along the lines of arcosolia 5–6; but work seems to have stopped unexpectedly, without permitting completion of the burial behind  $\epsilon$  or cutting another burial in arcosolium 4.

To sum up, Hall D contains altogether 28 burial places. It seems to have been used over a fairly long period, and in order to make room for additional burials, the rooms and arcosolia were enlarged to such an extent that in several places breaches and fissures appeared in the walls. Work in the arcosolia and burial places is not at all careful concerning symmetry or aspect; the tooling itself is rough and careless. Also typical is the fact that no inscriptions or decorations were found in this hall (except a wavy line incised above arcosolium 8). All the burials are of the same type: rectangular troughs, hewn within arcosolia, with no additional pits or kokhim. Most of the burial places are of a regular type and size, serving for primary burial; only a few of them, such as burial  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  in arcosolium 3 (which are 1.38 and 1.35 m long respectively) are of a size indicating that they served for the deposit of bones, with or without ossuaries. This supposition is supported by the fact that these burial places lack “pillows.” It is regrettable that this hall was completely despoiled and that nothing was found pointing to a date. Not even complete sealing stones were found here. However, for reasons mentioned above (p. 37 f.), it was concluded that hall D was hewn after hall A, and is approximately contemporary to hall C. It would seem that it belonged to a single family, who preserved the tradition of burial in arcosolia with rectangular burial places only.

**Hall E.** The entrance to this hall (0.80 m high, 0.42 m long, and 0.80 m wide) is in the left (northern) wall of the corridor. The door-frame and door, found *in situ*, are built of carefully dressed limestone. The plan and sections are given in plan 3. The door-frame was fitted into an aperture hewn out of the rock (1.75 m high, 0.43 m long, and 1.48 m wide). The stone of the threshold is 0.92 m long, 0.42 m wide, and 0.26 m high. The side of the stone facing the hall forms the tread of the first step leading down into it (it is 0.85 m long, 0.28 m broad, and 0.28 m high); the socket for the lower hinge of the door is on the left. The doorposts flanking the entrance rest upon the threshold; the left one is a single stone (0.80 m high, 0.40 m wide, and 0.37 m thick), while the right one (0.80 m high, 0.41 m wide, and 0.36 m thick), is built of two stones, one upon the other. The lintel, which rests upon the doorposts, is 1.33 m long, 0.45 m wide, and 0.24 m high. The space between the lintel and rock above is filled by two ashlar set next to each other. The entire door-frame is smooth on the outside, though with no inscription or decoration.

The door, which can still swing on its hinges (0.82 m high, 0.81 m

wide, and 0.14 m thick), opens into the hall. Its outer face (*vid.* Pl. IX, 2) is decorated with an imitation of a wooden door in high relief. A smooth vertical strip divides the door into two halves, each in turn divided into two panels, one above the other. Each panel is decorated with five studs carved in high relief, one in each of the corners and one in the middle. In the center of the door, there is an incised inscription of three lines (no. 14), painted in red; it mentions the head of the family buried in this hall, one Julianos Gamlos. To the right of the inscription there are two holes cut into the door certainly for the iron eye which held an iron ring used to pull the door shut. Below step no. 1 there is rock-cut step 2 (0.95 m long), leading down into the burial hall. The hall consists of three rooms placed in a row. The length of the hall, from threshold to back wall, is 6.75 m.

**Room I** is of trapezoidal form, narrower near the entrance and wider towards the back wall. It is 2.25 m long and 1.60–2.40 m wide; the height from floor to vaulted ceiling is 2.04 m. The arcosolia are hewn in the lateral walls; a large one in the left wall (1), and a small one in the right wall (2), both at about 0.85 m above the floor. The shelf of arcosolium 1 is 2.38 m long and 1.90 m wide, and the arch rises 0.74 m above the shelf. Of the four burials in it, three ( $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ , and  $\gamma$ ) are cut the length of the arcosolium, and one ( $\delta$ ), behind them, across the width. They measure 1.55–1.82 m long, 0.35–0.55 m wide, and 0.30 m deep, on the average. All these burials have “pillows” with depressions for the head. The “pillows” — aside from burial  $\delta$  — are all at the back walls of the burials. In the back wall of the arcosolium, a semicircular line marks out the place for a *kokh* intended to be 0.88 m wide and 0.77 m high. A breach on the right side, where the wall separates this arcosolium from hall A, seems to have caused this to be abandoned. The slant of the left wall caused arcosolium 1 to be cut diagonally to the left (south), and lack of caution resulted in a breach in the wall near the corridor, next to burial  $\delta$ . This breach was slightly enlarged and adapted into a “window” 0.70 m high and 0.42 m wide. The bottom of this “window” was then filled with two small ashlar, in order to form one of the walls of burial  $\delta$ . The ashlar were coated on the outside with clay plaster (*vid.* fig. 8). Arcosolium 2 is hewn in the right wall of the room; its shelf is 0.57 m long and 1.77 m wide; and the arch rises 0.74 m above the shelf. It contains a single burial, 1.69 m long, 0.41 m wide, and 0.29 m deep. Near its right (southern) side is a “pillow” (0.21 m wide) with a depression for the head. Two complete iron nails were found on the bottom of this burial (50 and 60 mm long respectively; nos. 19 and 20 in the catalogue of small finds); another complete nail (65 mm long; no. 21 in the catalogue), fragments of nails, and wood splinters were found among the debris in the burial, along with decayed bones, earth, and gravel. The bones in this burial may

have been gathered in a wooden ossuary.<sup>51</sup> Since, however, the burial was despoiled, neither the size nor the character of the ossuary can be determined. Two fragments of an oil lamp were also found here; the lamp was of a type common in the third and fourth centuries C.E. (no. 18 in the catalogue of finds). In addition, a breach was discovered in the vault, leading to hall K.

On the back wall of room I, above the arch of the passageway to room II, a Greek inscription (no. 15) is incised and painted in red; it contains only the name of the family head — also mentioned in the inscription above the door to the hall; it seems that his bones were buried in arcosolium 2. An arched passageway leads from room I to room II; it is 0.48 m long, 1.54 m wide, and 1.87 m high, from the floor to the vault.

**Room II** is cut on the same pattern as room I; its average length is 1.75 m, the average width is 2.20 m, and it is 1.92 m high from floor to vaulted ceiling. At the center of the ceiling there is a graffito of two lines meeting in an acute angle, and above them two lines crossing each other. This graffito was blurred later by a visiting Crusader who incised over it a cross with a circle in each of its four angles. He also added next to it the emblem of his Order, and wrote his name in a Gothic script — Ditericus (inscription no. 16; *vid.* Pl. IX, 1).<sup>52</sup>

Two arcosolia are cut in the wall of the room, flanking the entrance: arcosolium 1 in the left wall, and arcosolium 2 in the right wall. Both (especially no. 2) are hewn diagonally because of the slant of the walls. Their shelves stand about 0.80 m above the floor; the shelf of arcosolium 1 is 2.52 m long, 1.64 m wide at the outer edge, widening up to 2 m or more near the back wall; and its arch rises 0.78 m above the shelf. The shelf of arcosolium 2 is 2.30 m long and 1.70 m wide (on the average), and its arch rises 0.68 m above the shelf. Each arcosolium contains four burials; three ( $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ , and  $\gamma$ ) the length of the arcosolium, and another ( $\delta$ ) behind, across the width. The length of the burial places in arcosolium 1 varies between 1.72 m and 2.02 m; width varies from 0.49 to 0.54 m, and the average depth is 0.30 m. The burials in arcosolium 2 are 1.52–1.93 m long and 0.34–0.44 m wide, and their average depth is 0.27 m. There are no “pillows” in the burial places of arcosolium 1, but in all (except burial  $\gamma$ ) there are protrusions in their stead. These burials were only partly despoiled, so that several objects were found in them. Burial  $\alpha$  contained the crumbling bones of a skeleton, as well as a small glass vessel (no. 22 in the catalogue of small finds). Burial  $\beta$  also contained bones, their position indicating that they had been interred in a wooden ossuary. Near the bones there were a complete nail (70 mm long; no. 41 in the catalogue), several fragments of nails, and an abundance of wood splinters. In burial  $\delta$  there were crumbling bones and a few sherds, apparently of a large jug. In all the burials of arcosolium 2 (except burial  $\delta$ )

there are “pillows” near the back wall. All the burials in this arcosolium were despoiled.

Pit 2, cut in the floor near arcosolium 1, occupies nearly the entire length of the room; it is 1.58 m long, 0.47 m wide, and 0.22 m deep. A large breach was formed in the middle of the bottom of the pit when room II in hall C was hewn. Another pit was cut into the floor of the room near arcosolium 2; it is 1.66 m long, 0.34 m wide, and 0.16 m deep. Besides fragments of rough sealing stones, preserved covering it, the pit contained only crumbling bones. In order to provide additional room for burials, another arcosolium was begun in the right wall of the room, below the shelf of arcosolium 2; only the upper part of the vault, however, could be fitted into the space left above floor level.

An arched passageway leads from room II to room III; it is 0.34 m long, 0.98 m wide, and 1.72 m high from floor to the top of the vault.

Room II is cut in the form of a rough square: its right side is 1.52 m long, and its left side 1.25 m long; the room is 1.26 m wide on the average, and 1.85 m high from floor to vaulted ceiling. Arcosolia are hewn in the three interior walls: arcosolium 1 in the left wall, arcosolium 3 in the right wall, and arcosolium 2 in the back wall.

Arcosolium 1 is of unique form; its shelf stands one meter above the floor and is 1.13 m long and 1.08 m wide at the outer side. Its arch rises 0.86 m above the shelf. The two burials hewn the width of this arcosolium ( $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ ) are placed one behind the other, and are lengthened so as to enter into the walls on either side of the arcosolium. At the outer edge of the arcosolium, in front of burial  $\alpha$ , there is a shelf; another narrow shelf divides burial  $\alpha$  from burial  $\beta$ . Thus, the burials are much longer than the shelf is wide. Their narrow sides are rounded. Burial  $\alpha$ , the maximal length of which is 1.71 m, is 0.38 m wide and 0.30 m deep. Burial  $\beta$  is of the same measurements. Both burials have “pillows” at their left ends (that of burial  $\alpha$  is 0.22 m wide; that of burial  $\beta$  is 0.29 m wide), in both of which are depressions for the head. Only a few bones were found in them and one carefully dressed sealing-stone remained over each burial. A breach in the right side of the back wall of the arcosolium leads to a burial on a higher level, belonging to another catacomb not yet excavated. On the left wall of room III, to the right of arcosolium 1, there are two incised Palmyrene inscriptions (nos. 17 and 18) which mention the name of one of the persons buried here — תדורש, Theodoros. A very blurred Greek inscription is painted in red on the wall of arcosolium 1 (no. 19).

Arcosolium 3, in the right wall of the room, is hewn in the usual manner; the shelf is 3.32 m long and 1.45 m wide at the outside, and 1.51 m inside; its arch rises 0.76 m above the shelf. Four burials are hewn in the arcosolium: three its length ( $\alpha$ - $\gamma$ ), and another behind, hewn its width ( $\delta$ ). The average measurements of the burials are: 1.50–1.60 m

long, ca. 0.40 m wide, and ca. 0.26 m deep. In burials  $\beta$  and  $\gamma$  there are “pillows” with rounded depressions, placed at the back walls. All the burials were found empty, except  $\delta$  in which there were bones and two sealing stones (not *in situ*). A Greek inscription is painted in red on the wall of the arcosolium (no. 20). A single step running the width of the room leads up to arcosolium 3; the step is 1.25 m long, 0.15 m deep, and 0.16 m high. The shelf of arcosolium 2 stands about 1 m above the floor; it is 1.85 m long and 1.10 m wide, and its arch rises 0.82 m above the shelf. The two burials in it are cut the length of the shelf. Burial  $\alpha$  is 1.70 m long, 0.39 m wide, and 0.30 m deep. Burial  $\beta$  is 1.69 m long, 0.43 m wide and 0.28 m deep. Both have “pillows” at the back walls, 0.15 m wide on the average. Crumbling bones and sherds were found in both burials, as were sealing stones *in situ*. They were plastered one to the next and to the sides of the burial with a layer of clay, and then coated with a thick layer of clay.

Finally, there is a small pit hewn in the floor of the room along the left wall, in the corner formed by the wall and the step. This pit is 0.79 m long, 0.25 m wide and 0.20 m deep. The bones of an infant were found within it. Two intact sealing stones, *in situ*, covered the pit (their respective measurements:  $0.38 \times 0.32 \times 0.11$  m, and  $0.31 \times 0.22 \times 0.08$  m), and a broken slab which had been removed was also found.

**Hall E** has 24 burial places. In room I the arcosolia are arranged as in hall A — that is, an arcosolium with four burials opposite another containing a single burial. In contrast, rooms II and III contained only arcosolia with multiple burials. An unusual phenomenon in this hall, as compared to hall A, are the burials in coffins or wooden ossuaries, placed in the rectangular burial places of the arcosolia. This is not surprising, since we have proof that this hall was used for the burial of people from Palmyra (inscriptions nos. 17 and 18), and it may well have been that the head of the family buried in room I, Julianos Gamlos, was himself a Palmyrene. As for the shallow pits in the floor of rooms II and III, they seem to have been cut after burial in the arcosolia had ceased; the dead were placed in them without coffins. These pits are different from those of hall C.<sup>53</sup>

The determination of the date for this hall is aided by examination of the breaches made during the hewing. There are two breaches, one behind arcosolium 1 in room I, and the other at the bottom of pit 2 on the right in hall E (*vid. sup.*, pp. 69 and 71). From these we gather that room I in hall E was quarried some time after room I in hall A, and on the other hand, room II in hall E is earlier than room II in hall C. It seems that hall E was hewn in the middle of the third century C.E. and served for a number of generations. The small finds found there — especially the pottery — also bear out this date.

**Hall F**, cut into the right wall of the corridor, was partially destroyed already in antiquity by the collapse of the ceiling and of the corridor wall. The door lintel, which had fallen from its place, was found in the debris of the corridor near the entrance to the hall; the doorposts and door remained *in situ*, leaning outwards. Upon the collapse of part of the ceiling, the hall became filled with earth and rock (*vid.* Plan 3).

The construction of the door frame of this hall is similar to that in the halls described above. In the aperture of the doorway (1.65 m high, 0.48 m long, and 1.60 m wide) the threshold was first laid (1.35 m long, 0.34 m thick and 0.25 m high) and then the two doorposts (average measurements: 0.90 m high, 0.25 m wide and 0.45 m thick). The right doorpost is built of two stones set one on the other, with a keyhole at their joint. The lintel (1.20 m long, 0.44 m thick, and 0.33 m high), is decorated with a double profiled frame around the top and sides; the smooth panel thus formed within contains a blurred Greek inscription in red paint (no. 21), mentioning the name of a man who was probably the head of the family buried in this hall.<sup>54</sup>

The door is well preserved. Its front is decorated with an imitation of wooden paneling. An upright strip, on which there are five imitation studs set one above the other, divides the door into two approximately equal halves. Each, in turn, is divided into two panels, set one above the other, from which five studs protrude; one in the middle and one in each corner. An interesting detail is the relief work imitating a knocker, placed in the right half of the door between the two panels and next to a hole for an iron eye. Such imitation knockers are known from the Roman period,<sup>55</sup> in Palestine. They are found on stone doors, including several at Beth She'arim. On the front of the door, near the top, there is a Greek inscription (no. 22) in red paint, mentioning a name known to us from the inscription on the lintel (no. 21).

From the entrance, a step in the threshold, and another one hewn in the rock, lead down to the floor of the hall, about 0.40 m below. The burial hall comprises two rooms hewn in a row, one behind the other. The length of the entire hall, from the threshold to the back wall of the second room, is 5.10 m.

**Room I**, which is asymmetrical, is 2 m long, 1.80 m wide and about 2.35 m high. In its walls, flanking the entrance, and 0.90 m above the floor, there are arcosolia; one (1) in the left wall and another (2) in the right wall. The shelf of arcosolium 1 is 1.57 m long and 1.65 m wide at the outside, and 1.85 m wide inside. The arch above it is in great part destroyed. Two burial places are carelessly cut into the shelf, one behind the other, with a wide space between them: one burial ( $\alpha$ ), the length of which occupies the entire width of the arcosolium, is 0.45 m wide and 0.33 m deep; the second ( $\beta$ ) is 1.70 m long, 0.43 m wide, and

0.31 m deep. Another arcosolium, cut into the wall at floor level below arcosolium 1, was not completed; not even one burial place was cut in it. The shelf of arcosolium 2, in the right wall of the room, is 2.40 m long 1.90 m wide at the outside and 2.25 m inside, and its arch rises 1.20 m above the shelf. It contains five burials, four cut the length ( $\alpha$ - $\delta$ ) and another cut the width of the shelf, near the back wall ( $\epsilon$ ). The burials are 1.65–2.10 m long, 0.35–0.45 m wide and 0.30 m deep, on the average. Blurred letters on the wall above arcosolium 2 indicate that there had once been here an inscription in red.

Rooms I and II are connected by an arched passageway (0.68 m long, 1 m wide and 2.25 m high), cut to resemble a built passage, with an arch resting on pillars.

**Room II** is 1.70 m long, 1.50 m wide on the average, and 2.10 m high from the floor to the top of the slightly convex ceiling. The walls of the room, flanking the entrance, contain arcosolia hewn in the usual manner: an arcosolium containing a single burial (1) cut in the left wall, opposite an arcosolium containing four burials in the right wall (3), both with shelves standing 1.10 m above floor level. The shelf of arcosolium 1 is 0.57 m long and 1.65 m wide; the arch above it is partly damaged. The burial within is 1.60 m long, 0.37 m wide and 0.34 m deep. The shelf of arcosolium 3 is 2.35 m long, 1.60 m wide at the outside, and 1.80 m inside; the arch rises 0.75 m above the shelf. It contains four burials, three cut lengthwise in the shelf ( $\alpha$ - $\gamma$ ) and one its width ( $\delta$ ), near the back wall. They are carelessly hewn and measure 1.70 m long, 0.49 m wide, and 0.30 m deep on the average. In the right wall of the room, below the shelf of arcosolium 2, there is a kokh hewn at floor level; it is 1.20 m long and 0.60 m wide, and its height from the floor to the top of the vault is 0.80 m. Basing on the quantity of crumbling bones found in it, the kokh apparently served as a place for the collection of bones.

Arcosolium 2 is hewn in the back wall of the room, opposite the entrance. Its shelf, which stands 0.90 m above the floor, is 1.85 m long and 1.25 wide; the arch rises about 0.90 m above the shelf. The two burials are cut in it lengthwise, one beside the other: one ( $\alpha$ ) is 1.65 m long, 0.44 m wide, and 0.25 m deep; the second ( $\beta$ ) is 1.65 m long, 0.42 m wide and 0.25 m deep.

**Hall F** contains altogether 15 burial places and an unfinished one. The character of the burials shows that it was contemporary to Hall E; in both we find the arrangement of two burial places cut lengthwise in the shelf of the arcosolium in the end wall of the hall, as well as attempts to cut an arcosolium in the wall below a raised arcosolium, at floor level. A special detail worth mentioning is a kokh in Hall F, hewn in the wall

of room II below the shelf of arcosolium 3; as against this, in Hall E there are pits in the floor of rooms II and III. Hall F also differs from Hall E in that the burials in the former are of rougher and asymmetrical workmanship, and "pillows" are lacking. Apparently Hall F did not serve for any lengthy time for burial. Once it was clear to the owners that the rock in this hall was too soft, and that behind it other burial halls had already been quarried, additional work was stopped. In Hall F there were no small finds to aid in determining its date, except sherds of ribbed ware belonging to the Roman period; since there are reasons to believe that this hall is contemporary to Hall E, it can be assumed that it dates to the third century C.E., and probably served for the burial of one or two generations of a single family.

**Hall G**, cut out of the left (northern) wall of the corridor, is one of the largest and handsomest halls in this catacomb (*vid.* Plan 2, and Pls. VI and IX–XII). The entrance to it is 0.98 m high, and 0.53 m wide. The door frame is preserved *in situ*, and the door, which had fallen into the hall near the entrance, was restored to its place (*vid.* Pl. VI).

The door frame was fitted into an aperture 1.70 m high, 0.48 m long and 1.30 m wide, cut in the rock-wall. The threshold is a single stone (1.20 m long, 0.49 m thick, and 0.20 m high); its outer edge is raised and flattened to form a sill; the part facing the hall serves as the first step leading down into it. The doorposts (average measurements: 0.98 m high, 0.24 m wide, and 0.40 m thick) rest upon the threshold, flanking the entrance. The right post is built of two stones, fitted one on the other, with a square keyhole at the joint. The lintel (0.96 m long, 0.37 m thick, and 0.23 m high) rests on the doorposts and is decorated with a double moulding along the top and sides. The resulting panel, open at the bottom, bears an incised and painted Greek inscription (no. 24) which mentions Rabbi Isaac the son of Mokim, known also from Hebrew inscription no. 23, on the marble plaque fixed in the wall of the corridor high above the lintel (*vid. supra* p. 39, and Pl. VI). The double frame on the lintel continues along the doorposts, running down to the bottom. The space between the door frame and the rock is filled with stones, gravel and clay, and is plastered over on the outside.

The door is well preserved (1 m high, 0.62 m wide, and 0.17 m thick) and decorated with reliefs similar to those on the door of hall A (*vid. supra*, p. 45). On the upper part of the door there is a Greek inscription (no. 25) in red paint, mentioning Isaac the son of Mokim and Jose[ph] (*vid.* Pl. X, 4).

From the entrance, two steps lead down into the burial hall: the first is part of the threshold and the second is hewn out of the rock; the distance from the sill to the floor of the hall is about 0.60 m. The hall consists of four rooms cut one behind the other, in a row.

**Room I**, which is asymmetrical, is 1.70 m long, 1.45 m wide on the average and 2 m high from floor to slightly convex ceiling. The walls and ceiling were smoothly dressed by a practised hand, and decorated with various motifs. A horizontal band separates the side walls of the room from the vaulting of the ceiling.

At the top of the ceiling there are several motifs incised or drawn in red paint. They are: 1 a graffito of four concentric circles drawn with a compass and then painted red; the sharp mark of the compass is visible at the center; 2 a drawing in red paint of concentric circles, which are blurred; 3 a small circle painted in red; 4 a wheel painted in red; from its center ten spokes fan out to the rim, which consists of three concentric circles with zigzags between (a similar motif is found on the ceiling of room II — *vid. infra*); it is a common decorative element on Hasmonean coins, ossuaries, oil lamps and in Jewish architecture in general;<sup>56</sup> 5 a rosette of six petals within a circle, (this popular motif has already been discussed above, pp. 45 and 51).<sup>57</sup>

The arcosolia are in the side walls of the room, on either side of the entrance: a small one in the left wall 1 and a larger one opposite it, in the right wall 2. The shelf of arcosolium 1 stands 0.95 m above the floor; it is 1.30 m long, and 1.75 m wide at the outside (inside it first widens out, then narrows again toward the back); its arch rises 0.75 m above the shelf. The two burials, one behind the other across the width of the shelf, occupy nearly the entire space, leaving only a wide rim at the front. Burial  $\alpha$  is 1.80 m long, 0.40 m wide, and 0.29 m deep. A Greek inscription (no. 26) between the two burials, indicates that a Rabbi Isaac was interred in burial  $\alpha$ ; this undoubtedly was Rabbi Isaac son of Mokim, the head of the family which owned the hall (cf. inscriptions nos. 23–25). As to burial  $\beta$ , it was probably that of his wife. On the wall of the room, to the right of the arcosolium, there is a peculiar daubing in red paint, possibly representing a crab.

The shelf of arcosolium 2 stands 1.05 m above the floor; it is 2.20 m long, and 1.55 m wide (on the average), and its arch rises 0.75 m above the shelf. The left (northern) corner of the shelf was destroyed in antiquity, together with a large section of the outer wall of the arcosolium and part of the floor of the room. This occurred when a 4.50 m long section of the bottom of the right (eastern) wall of hall G collapsed (in rooms I and II, *vid. the plan*). This was caused by a breach which appeared in the wall separating halls G and I during the quarrying of hall I, at a lower level.

Arcosolium 2 contains four burials: three the length of the shelf ( $\alpha$ – $\gamma$ ), and one across its width, near the end wall ( $\delta$ ). Burials  $\alpha$  (1.64 m long, 0.39 m wide, and 0.29 m deep),  $\beta$  (1.65 m long, 0.35 m wide, and 0.32 m deep), and  $\delta$  (1.37 m long, 0.32 m wide, and 0.30 m deep) are intact, while the front of burial  $\gamma$  (1.68 m long, 0.39 m wide, and 0.32 m deep)

was destroyed. In two of the burials,  $\beta$  and  $\gamma$ , there are “pillows” near the back wall (0.20 m average width); that in burial  $\gamma$  has a round depression for the head.

The front wall of arcosolium 2, below the shelf, is decorated with various motifs, well preserved on the undamaged portions (*vid.* Pl. IX, 4). At the upper edge of the wall there is a horizontal stripe incised deeply into the rock. Below this there is the word ΣΑΛΟΜ painted in red (inscription no. 27); to its right there is a rough, carelessly executed drawing of a ship.

Lower down on the wall of the arcosolium there is an incised depiction, in relief and painted in red, of which only the right side is preserved. This composite depiction shows, from right to left: a lion, a palm tree, a gate painted in red, and a man. The lion is presented in profile, as though about to spring to the left, towards the palm tree and the man; its head, represented with bristling mane, is slightly raised; the legs are extended forward; the tail is raised, with the tip pointing back. The palm tree dominates the lion on its right and the gate on its left. It is drawn. The rectangular trunk is covered with a crisscross pattern; the fronds are represented by curved lines issuing from the top of the trunk, three on either side; the leaves drawn in the form of small squares. Such depictions are found in the popular art of the East in the Roman period.<sup>58</sup> The decorated gate, of which only the upper part has been preserved, is small in comparison with the tree; it is schematically drawn, with the lintel depicted as a horizontal line below the arch. Especially interesting in this composition is the relief of the man presented *en face*. Here, too, only the upper part remains (*vid.* Pl. IX, 3, 4). The incised outlines of his face and left hand are easily recognizable, though the eyes, nose and mouth, painted in red, are blurred. The hand is raised above the shoulder; we may suppose that the right hand, too, was raised in the same manner. Moreover, in the debris on the floor of Hall I there were fragments of the broken wall, bearing parts of this relief — a man’s legs held straight next to each other, facing left. It is clear that this is the upright figure of a man with hands upraised in prayer.<sup>59</sup> Though only the right part of the depiction is preserved, it appears to portray a popular subject in Jewish and Christian art, that is, “Daniel in the lion’s den” (Daniel 6: 17 ff.). This biblical motif appears on the floor of the synagogue at Na‘aran, which is accompanied by the inscription דניאל שלום; the picture there is so damaged that only one of the lions can be recognized, alongside were traces of Daniel praying.<sup>60</sup> In Early Christian art this is a very popular subject, frequently portrayed in churches, in catacombs, and on sarcophagi.<sup>61</sup> We must also remember that, especially in the earliest depictions, such as that in the Flavian Gallery, Daniel is portrayed praying while standing on a high place, flanked by lions about to pounce on him.<sup>62</sup> In addition, we often find a palm or some other tree; there are depictions

in which Daniel is shown between lions and palm trees, arranged symmetrically on either side.<sup>63</sup> As to the gate, we may suppose that it is the gate of the den. This motif, referring to one of the most revered characters in the biblical period, fits in well with the general character of hall G, with its Jewish motifs and Hebrew inscriptions, and with the title Rabbi on several of the burials.<sup>64</sup>

The names of the persons buried in arcosolium 2 — members of the family of Rabbi Isaac son of Mokim — are known to us from the Greek inscriptions painted in red on the wall to the left of the arcosolium (no. 28) and above the arched passageway leading to room II (no. 29).<sup>65</sup>

The passageway from room I to room II (*vid.* Pl. X, 3) is 0.55 m long, 1.15 m wide, and 1.97 m high. It is hewn to resemble a built passageway with an arch resting on pillars 1.25 m high. The front wall, along the edge of the arch, is decorated with a wavy line, with a semicircle above it. Higher up is Greek inscription no. 29.

**Room II** is hewn in the form of a rough rectangle, 3.05 m long, 1.75 m wide, and about 2.25 m high from floor to ceiling. The ceiling is nearly flat in the center, but near the walls to the left and right of the entrance it is curved. It is decorated with various drawings in red paint (*vid.* Pl. XII, 2), enclosed within a carelessly drawn, rectangular frame (2.55 × 1.55 m), each side of which consists of two parallel lines with a zigzag between them. A similar strip is drawn through the center of the rectangle, dividing it lengthwise into two halves: a wider section on the right and a narrow one on the left. In the right section, near the entrance to the hall, there is a somewhat blurred drawing of a lion in profile, facing the entrance. Despite its poor state, the details are still easily recognized: the face of the lion, the half-open mouth, the large round eye, the mane represented by small semicircles above the head and neck. All four legs appear: the two forelegs are slightly bent; the right rear leg is straight and the left one extended slightly forward.<sup>66</sup> The lion's tail is bent over its back, with the tip raised.<sup>67</sup> The lion is set within two concentric circles with a zigzag line between them. In the left section, near the lion, there is a wheel with eight spokes, with a rim made up of two concentric circles with a zigzag between them (*vid. supra*, p. 76).

The arcosolia are hewn into the side walls of the room: two (1 and 2) in the left wall, and two (3 and 4) in the right wall. The shelf of arcosolium 1 stands a meter above the floor; it is narrow (1.23 m) at the outer side, and widens inside to 1.50 m; it is 1.56 m long, and the arch rises 0.78 m above the shelf. Only one burial is cut in it, the width of the arcosolium, in the middle (1.35 m long, 0.41 m wide and 0.31 m deep). The outer wall of the arcosolium, below the shelf, is decorated in a unique manner: in the upper part there are two large, incised circles, one next to the other and connected at the bottom by a thin band. Two somewhat slanted

lines on either side serve as a sort of frame for the whole. It seems that this arcosolium was the burial place of an important person; to judge by the size of the burial place, and the lack of a "pillow," the bones of the deceased had probably been buried here in an ossuary.

In the narrow area between arcosolia 1 and 2, the wall is decorated with a relief of a pillar supporting, as it were, the arches of the arcosolia on either side (*vid.* Pl. XI, 1 left, and the section of hall G). The pillar, standing on a high pedestal with no base, widens somewhat toward the top and is crowned by a very narrow capital. Above the capital is a sort of abacus in support of the arches of arcosolia 1 and 2. Between the pillar and the capital, and between the capital and the abacus, there are deeply incised lines filled with red paint. Another red line divides the capital horizontally into two halves; the abacus is covered with a criss-cross of incised and red painted lines, forming a net-like pattern.

Arcosolium 2 is carelessly hewn and tends to the right (north). Its shelf stands 1.55 m above the floor; it is 2.12 m long, 1.13 m wide at the outer side and 1.80 m wide inside; the arch rises 0.88 m above the shelf. Four burials are hewn in it; three lengthwise ( $\alpha$ - $\gamma$ ) and one behind them, across the width ( $\delta$ ). They measure 1.26–1.82 m long, 0.39–0.42 m wide, and 0.25–0.37 m deep. In burials  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ , and  $\gamma$  there are "pillows" near the back; in the "pillows" of  $\beta$  and  $\gamma$  (0.20 and 0.16 m wide, respectively) there are depressions for the heads, whereas the "pillow" of burial  $\alpha$  (0.24 m wide) has none. In the middle of the outer wall of the arcosolium, below the shelf, there is a raised panel (0.94 m high and 0.91 m wide), square and smooth (*vid.* Pl. XI, 1), with a seven-branched candelabrum drawn in red paint. Much of the drawing is blurred. In each of the corners of the tablet there are concentric quarter circles painted in red, which form a sort of frame for the candelabrum. Two Greek inscriptions also appear in red, one on the left (no. 32), and the other on the right (no. 33) of the candelabrum. The inscriptions contain the names of persons buried in arcosolium 2: Joseph and his mother. A very blurred word is written in red paint higher up, above the candelabrum (inscription no. 31). On the wall of the room itself, below the ceiling and to the right of the arcosolium, there is a Greek inscription in red paint, mentioning "Joseph the Lesser" (no. 34).<sup>68</sup>

Arcosolia 3 and 4, in the right wall of the room, were destroyed in the fore-parts, together with a large part of the wall during the quarrying of hall I (*vid.* Pl. X, 1). Only the back parts of the shelves are preserved. The average measurements of the shelf of arcosolium 3 are ca. 2.20 m long and 1.50 m wide. Of its four burials, three ( $\alpha$ - $\gamma$ ) are cut lengthwise and another ( $\delta$ ), behind them, lies across the width. Only burial  $\delta$  is preserved in its entirety (1.45 m long, 0.40 m wide, and 0.33 m deep). There are "pillows" in burials  $\alpha$ ,  $\gamma$ , and  $\delta$  (0.30; 0.20, and 0.24 m wide, respectively). On the wall of the room, above the arch of the arcosolium

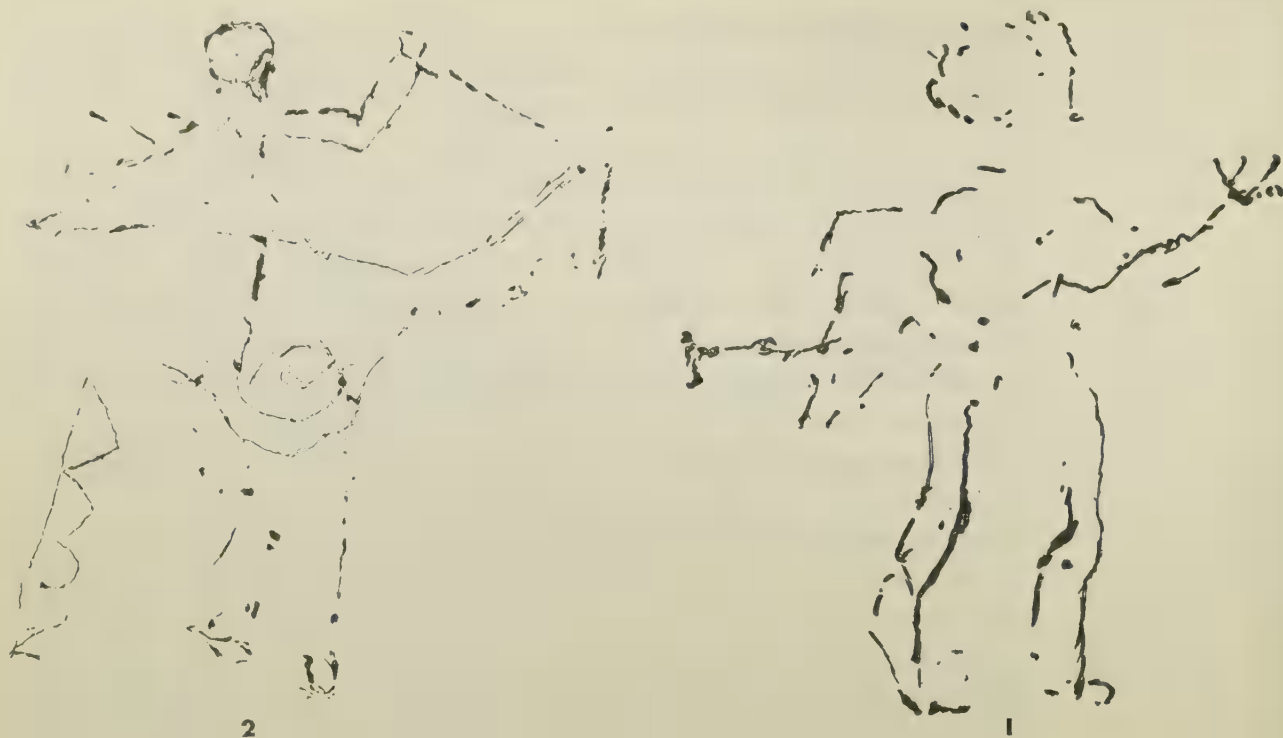


Fig. 9  
Winged figures

and to its left, there is a Greek inscription in red paint, mentioning the name Zenobia (no. 30).

The shelf of arcosolium 4 is about 2.20 m long and 1.45 m wide near the back wall; its arch rises 0.75 m above the shelf. It contained four burials, three lengthwise ( $\alpha$ - $\gamma$ ) and one behind them, the width of the shelf ( $\delta$ ); burials  $\gamma$  (1.55 m long, 0.36 m wide, and 0.37 m deep) and  $\delta$  (1.44 m long, 0.36 m wide, and 0.25 m deep) are preserved whole, whereas only the back parts of the other burials remain. In burials  $\beta$  and  $\gamma$  there are “pillows” with square depressions, near the back wall. Sealing-stones were found *in situ* in burial  $\gamma$  and, to the right, in burial  $\delta$ ; they are fixed in place and coated over with clay-plaster. The crumbling bones of a man were found in burial  $\delta$ . A Greek inscription (no. 35), painted in red on the wall of the room to the right of arcosolium 4, and below it, an incised inscription in Hebrew (no. 36), both mention “Judah the Lesser” (Pl. XI, 2), buried here.

An arched passageway (0.66 m long, 1.02 m wide, and 1.76 m high) leads from room II to room III. The façade above the arch is decorated with drawings in red paint, mostly blurred. In the center of the wall above the arch, there is a drawing of a seven-branched candelabrum standing on a tripod; below it are a palm frond (*lulab*) on the left, and an indistinct object, on the right, probably a ram’s horn (*shofar*). The Greek inscription ΤΟΠΟΣ ΤΗ[Σ ΕΙΡΗ]ΝΗΣ (“the place of peace”; inscrip-

tion no. 37) is written along the wall, on both sides of the candelabrum. Lower down, a red strip runs along the edge of the arch (*vid.* Pl. XII, 1).

The entrance imitates a built passageway with an arch resting on pillars (*vid.* Pl. X, 2), which are finer than those in the passageways described above. The pillar on the left (1.08 m high) is carved in high relief, in imitation of a gate with two columns supporting an architrave, topped by an arch. The left column rests on a sort of Ionic (?) base, set on a square, high pedestal. It is crowned with a round narrow capital with no sign of an abacus between it and the architrave. The right column is less finely executed; it rests on a round base set on a pedestal; there is no sign of a capital, and the architrave rests directly on the pillar. It may be unfinished. The entire area between the columns, from the floor to the architrave, is filled by a Menorah in high relief, the seven branches issuing forth from the central stem, separated from one another by deep grooves. The stem, which is fairly long, widens towards the bottom and ends in a broad ring projecting even more from the surface than the upper part of the stem; this ring is set within a round depression at the base. The base itself is fairly high and wide, and displays a decoration of vertical lines in the center.

The pillar supporting the right end of the arch here is carved in a manner similar to that on the left, though the work is careless and left unfinished. The pillars on both sides of the passage had been damaged in part already during the carving process, and thus it was impossible to give them a pleasing or finished aspect. Both stand on a high square plinth without bases. Nor is there any sign of capitals or an architrave, as on the left side; instead an archivolt in low relief rises above the pillars. On the inner part of the pillars, beneath the archivolt, there is a low relief of an arched gate, and in the space within the gate the rock was left rough. In addition, a netlike pattern is incised in the lower area of the right column; this pattern appears also in Jewish tombs at Rome and other sites.<sup>69</sup>

On the arch of the passageway, above the right pillar, two winged figures are drawn in red paint, one behind the other facing the entrance to the hall; both are quite blurred. One figure (*vid.* fig. 9a) is drawn full-size, in profile. The head is blurred, but the outspread hands are quite clear. The left arm is raised somewhat above the shoulder, while the right arm appears to be lowered. A wing is clearly visible on the back of the figure, drawn in a natural manner stemming from the shoulder. The legs are drawn in walking position. The second figure (9b) is more difficult to make out; it, too, stands upright and is in profile. The head is small in relation to the body, and there is an indication of a beard; the arms are spread out, and wings can be seen on either side of the body. Winged figures are not uncommon in the catacombs at Beth She'arim (*vid. supra*, p. 61); this is hardly surprising, since this motif was very

popular in the Roman period,<sup>70</sup> and representations of cherubs and angels are frequent in Jewish art of this era.<sup>71</sup> In the present case, special note should be taken of the fact that these figures are drawn on the arch of the passageway connecting the two rooms.

**Room III** is asymmetrical and narrows towards the back wall; it is 3.75 m long, 2.05 m wide near the entrance from room II, and 1.30 m wide near the entrance to room IV. It is 1.97 m high from floor to flat ceiling, and the walls and ceiling were smoothed, as in the two previous rooms. Four arcosolia are hewn in its walls: two (1 and 2) in the left wall, and two (3 and 4) in the right wall. In each of the shelves, four burial places are hewn; three lengthwise ( $\alpha$ - $\gamma$ ) and one the width, along the back wall ( $\delta$ ).

The shelf of arcosolium 1 stands 1.20 m above the floor; it is 2.24 m long, 1.42 m wide at the outer side and 1.65 m near the back wall; its arch rises 0.76 m above the shelf. The four burials measure: 1.51–1.68 m long, 0.37–0.42 m wide, and 0.28 m deep, on the average. In burials  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ , and  $\gamma$ , there are “pillows” near the back wall; in burial  $\alpha$ , the “pillow” is 0.17 m wide, with a round depression; in burial  $\beta$ , 0.13 m; and in burial  $\gamma$ , 0.21 m, with a small round depression for the head. All the burials had been despoiled, and in only two of them were there some remains left. In burial  $\beta$  there were a small iron tool whose purpose is not clear (no. 69, in the catalogue), sherds, and crumbling bones. In burial  $\delta$ , near crumbling bones, there was the top part of a pitcher (no. 70) of a type most frequent at Beth She‘arim during period IIIA.

The outer wall of the arcosolium, below the shelf, is decorated in the center with a sort of projecting panel, 0.97 m high and 0.87 m wide. In the middle of the panel there are lines of red paint, perhaps traces of a seven-branched candelabrum. The corners of the panel are notched to form a sort of frame for the two inscriptions incised in the wall on either side: the one on the left is bilingual, Hebrew and Greek (nos. 38–39), and the one on the right is in Hebrew (no. 40). The first mentions Rabbi Parigoris, and the second, Isaac son of Rabbi Joseph (*vid.* Pl. XI, 3 a–b). Another Greek inscription, no. 41, in red paint on the wall above the arch of the arcosolium, is partially obliterated.

In the rock wall between arcosolia 1 and 2, there is a relief of a column resting on a high base. It is crowned by a capital and abacus (*vid.* Pl. XI, 3 b) on which the arches of arcosolia 1 and 2 rest. The capital is somewhat wider than the column and very flat; it is decorated with an incised network of lines. The abacus is slightly wider than the capital and similar to it in detail. Between the abacus and capital, and the capital and shaft, there are thin lines incised and filled with red paint.

The shelf of arcosolium 2 stands 1.20 m above the floor; it is asymmetrically hewn and tends definitely to the right (north). Its average length

is 2.50 m, it is 1.51 m wide at the outer side, and 1.60 m inside; its arch rises 1.83 m above the shelf. The length of burial  $\alpha$  is 1.83 m; of burial  $\beta$ , 1.80 m long; and of burial  $\gamma$  and  $\delta$ , about 1.50 m; the widths vary from 0.31 to 0.39 m, and the depths are 0.23 to 0.40 m.

There are “pillows” in burials  $\beta$  and  $\delta$ ; in burial  $\beta$ , near the back wall (0.26 m wide), and in burial  $\delta$  near the northern end (0.13 m wide), with a round depression for the head. At the edge of burial  $\delta$ , above the “pillow,” a sealing stone is preserved *in situ*, fixed in place with clay. A Greek inscription (no. 46) painted in red on the wall of the arcosolium is obliterated except for a few obscure traces.

The shelves of arcosolia 3 and 4, hewn into the right wall of the room, stand 1.07 m above the floor. The shelf of arcosolium 3 is 2.20 m long, 1.48 m wide at the outer side, and 1.40 m wide near the back wall; its arch rises 0.84 m above the shelf. The burial places measure 0.93–1.85 m long, 0.34–0.38 m wide, and 0.24–0.42 m deep. There are “pillows” in burials  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ , near the back walls: in burial  $\alpha$ , the “pillow” is 0.22 m wide and has a round depression for the head; in burial  $\beta$ , it is 0.20 m wide. Near the northern edge of burial  $\delta$  a dressed stone was placed the width of the trough and fixed in place with clay. In this manner, burial  $\delta$  was shortened to 0.93 m, and thus it probably served for the bone collection or to hold an ossuary.

At the center of the outer wall of the arcosolium, below the shelf, there is a large circle (0.82 m diameter) carved in relief. Four peculiar signs — the meaning of which is unknown — are incised within it. There are two on the right side, one above the other:  $\blacktriangledown$  and  $\blacktriangleright$ ; and two on the left side, also one above the other:  $\blackcross$  and  $\blackleftarrow$ .<sup>72</sup> Above the last sign there is a sort of branch or an incomplete attempt to incise a Menorah.

The names of the persons buried in the arcosolium are known from the Greek inscriptions written on its walls in red: above the arch of the arcosolium on the right (no. 43); on the left (no. 44); and within the arcosolium on the back wall, above burial  $\delta$  (no. 45).<sup>73</sup> On the outer wall of the arcosolium there are a few unclear incisions.

In the wall between arcosolia 3 and 4 there is a column supporting their arches, carved in low relief. It stands on a pedestal and is crowned by a low, plain capital. An attempt undoubtedly had been made to center this column so as to place it symmetrically opposite the one between arcosolia 1 and 2, and to give the room a pleasing architectural form.<sup>74</sup> This was unsuccessful because of the overly careless manner in which the whole room had been hewn.

The shelf of arcosolium 3 is 2.40 m long, and 1.66 m wide; its arch rises 0.80 m above the shelf. The burial places within measure 1.38–1.74 m long, 0.35–0.38 m wide, and 0.25–0.46 m deep. Only in two of them are there “pillows” near the back walls: in burial  $\alpha$  (0.17 m wide), with no

depression; and in burial  $\gamma$  (0.26 m wide), with a round depression. In burial  $\delta$  there is a protuberance near the northern end instead of a “pillow.” Three Greek inscriptions appear in red on the wall of the arcosolium below the shelf: one on the right (no. 47), the second in the middle (no. 48), and the third on the left (no. 49). Inscription no. 48 mentions a woman buried in this arcosolium, “Lady Esther” (ΚΥΡΑ ΕΙCΘΗΡΑ).

In the floor of the room near arcosolium 1, there is a pit (no. 4); it is 1.70 m long, 0.37 m wide, and 0.32 m deep. The pit is rectangular, with the short sides rounded; in general, it is similar to the shallow pits of hall E (*vid. supra*, p. 71–72). It had been covered with dressed stones, one of which remains *in situ* (0.53 × 0.40 × 0.12 m) near the northern end. Within this burial there were crumbling bones and the fragment of an oil lamp (no. 72 in the catalogue of small finds) of the type characteristic of period III at Beth She‘arim.

Between room III and room IV there is an arched passageway 0.75 m long, 1.30 m wide, and 1.97 m high. It, too, is hewn to resemble a built passage, with an arch resting on tall pillars (1.20 m). On the right-hand pillars, beneath the arch, there is a bilingual inscription; in Greek and Hebrew (no. 50–51), written in red, and mentioning Rabbi Joseph son of Isaac (*vid. Pl. XI, 3a*).

**Room IV** is about 2.90 m long, 1.72 m wide and 2.07 m high from floor to slightly vaulted ceiling. This room is of unique form, and its walls were quarried and dressed more roughly than the three previous rooms. In the front of the room there is a sort of cubicle, as wide as the room and 0.58 m long. Arcosolium 1 is hewn in the left wall of this cubicle. Beyond the cubicle, in each of the side walls of the room there is a shelf at a height of 1.35 m above the floor of the cubicle. Between them is a narrow passage, 0.35 m higher than the floor of the cubicle, leading to arcosolium 2, cut in the back wall of the room.

The shelf of arcosolium 1 stands 1.05 m above the floor of the cubicle. It is very narrow at the outer side (0.60 m), but widens to 1.25 m within; careless work led to a breach in its left wall (into arcosolium 2 in room III); to avoid further breaching, the arcosolium was given a slight tend to the right (north). The shelf is 1.90 m long and its arch rises 0.73 m above it. Two burial places are hewn lengthwise: burials  $\alpha$  (1.85 m long, 0.36 m wide, and 0.40 m deep) and  $\beta$  (1.84 m long, 0.39 m wide, and 0.43 m deep). In both there are “pillows,” without depressions, at their back walls. In addition, two sealing stones, plastered to each other and to the edges of the arcosolium, were found *in situ*. The names of the persons buried here, Abraham and Samuel (ΑΒΡΑ ΚΑΙ ΣΑΜΗ), are known to us from Greek inscription no. 52, painted in red on the wall of the room above the arch of the arcosolium.

The shelves hewn in the walls of this room resemble large sarcophagi. The left shelf is 2.35 m long, 0.52 m wide at the outer side (next to the cubicle) and slightly wider near the end wall of the room. It contains a sort of pit whose maximal length is 2.10 m; it is 0.46 m wide and 0.72 m deep. At the bottom, it tapers to the size of a normal rectangular burial place ( $\alpha$ ) 0.37 m wide and 0.44 m deep. On the shelves surrounding it on the long sides, four sealing stones had been placed, two of which remain *in situ*. There is a “pillow” (0.30 m wide) near the back wall with a round depression for the head. It is clear that the sealing stones laid over the rectangular burial place formed the bottom of an additional burial; the upper burial, too, was closed with sealing stones and a layer of mortar. The right shelf is 2.35 m long, 0.70 m wide at the outer side and narrower at the back wall of the room. It contains burial place ( $\gamma$ ) 2.12 m long, ca. 0.50 m wide, and 0.48 m deep. There is a “pillow” (0.20 m wide) near the back wall of the burial place. At the edge of the burial, a sealing stone is preserved *in situ*, with a thick layer of mortar overlaying it; within the burial were crumbling bones and a small bronze sheath (no. 75 in the catalogue of small finds). On the outside wall of the burial, on the front of the shelf, there are two inscriptions: one is in Hebrew, thinly incised (no. 53), and a second is in Greek, in very blurred red paint (no. 54). Both mention Rabbi Joseph, a person known to us from the inscription above the arch of the passageway (no. 50–51).

The passage between the two shelves was also exploited, at a later date, for the hewing of a burial place. This burial ( $\gamma$ ) is about 2 m long, 0.39 m wide, and 0.88 m deep. It was sealed with sealing stones, four of which remained *in situ* (average measurements:  $0.46 \times 0.15 \times 0.09$  m) and which were covered with a layer of clay-plaster. In the back wall of the room, some distance above the floor (1.25 m), is arcosolium 2. The shelf of the arcosolium is 0.61 m long and 1.35 m wide; its arch rises 0.68 m above the shelf. Only one burial is hewn here, the width of the arcosolium, with the short sides cut into its right and left walls. It measures 1.85 m long, 0.39 m wide, and 0.42 m deep. At the outer limit of the shelf, in front of the burial, there is a wide strip of rock; behind it is a narrow strip near the back wall; thus the burial place is much wider than the opening of the shelf in front, and its short sides are rounded.<sup>75</sup> Two sealing-stones (on either side) are preserved *in situ* plastered over with a thick layer of clay-plaster; the two stones that had been in the middle were removed by tomb-robbers, who tumbled them into the burial. A Greek inscription (no. 55), painted in red on the wall above the arch of the arcosolium, mentions the name Joseph, who was buried in room IV. Finally, there is a shallow pit hewn in the cubicle at the front of the room; it occupies nearly the entire area of the cubicle (1.70 m long, 0.41 m wide, and 0.33 m deep), and is without doubt very late, being hewn after the room had been exploited to the full.

**Hall G** contains 44 burial places, though the number of dead interred here is greater. There is considerable crowding of burials in the two inner rooms, especially in room IV. It would seem that hall G was intended initially to be a three-room hall with arcosolia, but after the work was completed, the need for another room (IV) was felt, and later even the floors of rooms III and IV were utilized.

In hall G there are three types of burials: a) arcosolia with shelves for one, two or (usually) four burials; b) shelves cut in imitation of sarcophagi, with a simple burial; and c) shallow pits. Type b is found only in room IV, and type c (the latest in this hall) is found in rooms II and IV. We may note here that type b was reserved at Beth She'arim for the burial of individual prominent persons, and usually two of such shelves were hewn in the walls the length of a room, with a narrow passage between them (as in the present case).<sup>76</sup> As for type c, it was used only because of the density of the burials.

The burials in the arcosolia and shelves served apparently for primary burial, since in most of them there was sufficient room for a whole body, and in about half of them there are "pillows" for the head. Exceptions are the small burials, such as burial  $\alpha$  in arcosolium 1, room II, and burial  $\delta$  in arcosolium 2, room III, which apparently were used for the collection of bones (either with or without ossuaries).

A study of the inscriptions in hall G shows that a single family was buried there over at least four generations — the family of Rabbi Isaac son of Mokimos, and his brother Joseph.<sup>77</sup> In addition, it is clear that this family — apparently Palmyrene in origin, as the family name would indicate — not only bore Hebrew names (Isaac, Joseph), but also used the title "Rabbi." Another interesting fact is the religious spirit of the family. Not only is the inscription on the marble plaque (no. 73) in Hebrew, but so are several other inscriptions;<sup>78</sup> most of the personal names mentioned in the Greek and Hebrew inscriptions are biblical; and the most frequent word is *Shalom*, written in both Hebrew and Greek. The epithet  $\delta\sigma\iota\omicron\varsigma$  ("pious" "godly") is also popular in this hall.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, in the numerous decorations, both reliefs and drawings in red paint, Jewish subjects are prominent, including the Menorah and the representation of Daniel in the lions' den.

The types of burial places in hall G, the decorations and the inscriptions allow us to fix its date. The study of the general character of the hall in comparison with the others, and examination of the breaches in its wall, are also most informative. It follows that this hall was quarried after hall A, and is about contemporary with hall E; and that it pre-dates halls C and I. Hence, it was hewn prior to the middle of the third century C.E., for the use of the family of Rabbi Isaac and of Mokimos. The small finds, too, are of the same period (from the burial places: nos. 69, 70, 72; from the floor of the hall: nos. 68, 71; and the sherds from the Roman

period). The lowering of the floor of the corridor between the entrances to halls G and H, and the difference brought about between the level of the floor of the corridor and that of these entrances, occurred apparently a short time after the hewing of hall G; henceforth, wooden ladders were used to ascend from the corridor to the entrances (*vid. supra*, p. 39). Near the end of period IIIB, the entrance to hall G was sealed and burial ceased there, as well as in hall H opposite. Many generations later, Crusaders visited hall G, entering through hall I; they incised crosses and knightly coats-of-arms on the walls of room I and on the arch of the passageway between rooms II and III, and even defaced the relief of the Menorah carved in this passageway (*vid. Pl. X, 2*).

**Hall H**, quarried in the right wall of the corridor opposite hall G, is one of the smallest halls in the catacomb (*vid. Plan 2*). The entrance to it is 0.96 m high and 6.62 m wide (*vid. Pl. III, 3*, on the right hand). The frame of the entrance, which was in a state of collapse already in ancient times, was affixed in an aperture hewn in the rock wall (1.75 m high, 0.48 m long and 1.45 m wide). The manner in which it was built is similar to that described above. There is no inscription or any kind of decoration on the lintel or on the outside of the doorposts. The door, which is 0.97 m high, 0.78 m wide and 0.15 m thick, was found *in situ*, but it can no longer turn on its hinges, for the entrance frame has collapsed. The front, facing the corridor, is decorated in the usual manner: a raised vertical strip, with six studs in it one above the other, divides the door into two halves; in each half there is a single panel, decorated with five projecting studs, one in the center and four in its corners. In the right half, close to the hole for an iron eye, there is an imitation door knocker in high relief.

A step in the threshold and one cut out of the rock lead down 0.50 m to the floor of the hall.

Hall H consists of a single room, hewn as an asymmetrical rectangle which widens considerably near the back wall. The room is 3.20 m long, 1.10 m wide near the entrance, approximately 1.60 m wide near the back wall; it is 2.03 m high from floor to ceiling, which latter is slightly vaulted. The walls and ceiling are roughly cut and dressed, without any inscription or decoration except for a horizontal band carved between the sloping ceiling and the walls, to the right and left of the entrance (as in hall G). Four arcosolia are hewn in its walls: two in the left wall (1 and 2) and two in the right wall (3 and 4), all placed symmetrically opposite one another. Arcosolia 1 and 2 stand 0.60 m above the floor of the room, and arcosolia 3 and 4 stand 0.80 m above the floor.

The shelf of arcosolium 1 is 2.37 m long, 1.40 m wide at the outer edge and 1.55 m wide near the back wall; the arch above it is approximately 0.80 m high. It contains four rectangular burial places; three ( $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$  and  $\gamma$ ) its length (average measurements: length 1.60 m, width 0.35 m and depth

0.30 m), and another ( $\delta$ ) its width, near the back wall (1.55 m long, 0.37 m wide and 0.28 m deep). In all of them there are “pillows” for the head of the deceased: in burial  $\alpha$ , approximately 0.18 m wide; in burial  $\beta$ , 0.18 m wide; and in burial  $\gamma$ , 0.32 m wide, near the back walls: and in burial  $\delta$ , 0.20 m wide, near its left (north) wall. In burials  $\beta$  and  $\gamma$ , crumbling bones and fragments of sealing stones were found.

The shelf of arcosolium 2 is 2.40 m long and 1.40 m wide at the outer edge (it widens inside, then narrows again near the back wall); the arch rises above approximately 0.80 m. It contains four burial places: three ( $\alpha$ - $\gamma$ ) the length of the shelf and another ( $\delta$ ) its width, near the back wall (the average length is 1.55 m, width 0.40 m and depth 0.30 m). In all of these burials, except burial  $\beta$ , there are “pillows” without depressions (average width 0.25 m). One can pass into hall F through a breach in the wall of this arcosolium. Arcosolium 2 was widened by the addition of a small arcosolium hewn on the same level into its right (south) wall. This arcosolium 5 is 0.50 m long and 1.43 m wide; the arch rises 0.78 m above the shelf; burial place is hewn the width of its shelf (1.32 m long, 0.37 m wide and 0.37 m deep), with a “pillow” (0.14 m wide) near the left (east) wall. Opposite arcosolium 2, in the right wall of the room, is arcosolium 3, hewn in a peculiar fashion. The arcosolium was hewn with its length stretching obliquely toward the left (south), with its right (north) wall curved; this may have been to avoid damaging the wall of arcosolium 4, where the head of the family apparently was buried. However, the plan of the hall shows that there was no need for this. The shelf of arcosolium 3 is 3 m long, only 1 m wide at the outer edge; it widens within in an asymmetrical fashion; the arch above it is 0.78 m high. In the shelf are hewn four burial places: one ( $\alpha$ ) is cut obliquely the length of the shelf, near the rounded right wall (1.28 m long, 0.30 m wide, narrowing near the back wall, and 0.26 m deep); two are to the left of burial  $\alpha$ , cut the length of the shelf ( $\beta$  — 1.42 m long, 0.36 m wide and 0.30 m deep; and  $\gamma$  — 1.28 m long, 0.35 m wide, and 0.21 m deep); and another ( $\delta$ ) is behind burials  $\beta$  and  $\gamma$ , cut the width of the shelf (1.30 m long, 0.29 m wide and 0.20 m deep). Although there are “pillows” in burials  $\alpha$  (near the back wall) and  $\delta$  (near the left wall), it is assumed that these small burial places were used for the collection of bones (with or without ossuaries).

The shelf of arcosolium 4 is 0.96 m long, and 1.72 m wide; the arch above it is 0.81 m high. A single burial place (1.70 m long, 0.37 m wide and 0.33 m deep) is hewn in the middle of it, the length of the arcosolium (as in arcosolium 1 in hall G, room II). A “pillow” (0.18 m wide) with a rounded depression for the head, is located near its right (north) wall. Some bones and two sealing stones were found in this burial, though not *in situ*. This burial seems to have been intended for an important person, possibly the head of a family.

It is noteworthy that on the floor of hall H, several small iron nails were found (average length 50 mm), probably scattered when the burials were robbed (no. 76 in catalogue of finds). There is a breach in the back wall of the arcosolium through which one can enter hall D; it was made during the hewing of arcosolium 2 in hall D. In the left wall of the room, below the middle of the shelf of arcosolium 1, there is a vaulted kokh (*a*) whose floor is 0.30 m below the level of the floor of the hall. It is 1.37 m long, 0.57 m wide (at the bottom) and 0.86 m high. In it there were the crumbling skeletons of several persons and a complete jug (no. 85) of the type prevalent in period III at Beth She'arim. The stone which sealed the kokh was found *in situ*, and the burial had not been robbed. A breach in the corner of the kokh, came about during the hewing of hall J.

Hall H contains fifteen burial places (including those for collecting bones). All the burials, arcosolia, and the kokh were hewn in the walls to the right or to the left of the entrance, whereas the back wall was left intact. We may note that the owners of the hall made no attempt to decorate the hall, no drawings or inscriptions having been found. The hall was not widened southwards because it was realized that the rock was too brittle, there being so many burials behind it. The arrangement of the arcosolia in the walls of the room is similar to that of hall G. Kokh *a* here was apparently intended for collected bones. When we come to fix the date of hall H, several facts have to be taken into account; especially important is the fact that hall H is similar to hall G, which is in the left wall of the corridor. In addition, the door of this hall is similar to that of hall F. The breaches in the walls of the arcosolia in the hall indicate that this hall had been quarried prior to halls D and J. Finally we must note the jugs and the sherds found in the hall and which belong to period III. Thus, it is clear that hall H dates from approximately the same period as hall G, and was hewn close to the middle of the third century C.E.; it was used as a burial place only for a short period. It seems also that the hall was owned by only one family, and that the head of the family was buried in the burial place in arcosolium 4.

**Hall I**, which is hewn in the left (north) wall of the corridor, is one of the largest and latest halls in the catacombs (*vid.* Plan 1). The entrance, 0.90 m high and 0.58 m wide, is located at the end of the lower corridor (*vid.* fig. 8). The door frame (found *in situ*) and the door (which can still turn on its hinges) are of limestone dressed in the usual manner.

The aperture for the entrance (1.85 m high, 0.52 m long) and the construction of the frame are similar to those already described. The lintel and the doorposts are smooth on the outside and are undecorated; an inscription seems once to have been painted in red above the lintel, though it has faded with the passage of time.

The door (0.97 m high, 0.69 m wide, and 0.16 m thick) was broken

at the lock and in the corner above it, apparently by tomb robbers who tried to leave the hall through the entrance. The front of the door was badly damaged by the elements, but traces of the usual decoration imitating a wooden door can still be discerned. The floor of the hall, 1 m below corridor level, was reached by a step in the threshold and three additional stone steps, built on a ledge cut out of the rock. This stairway was destroyed. The hall includes four rooms: three (I, III and IV) are hewn in a row, one behind the other, and the fourth (II) is in the right wall of room I. The maximum length of the hall is 7.20 m; its maximum width is 4 m. The walls and ceiling are well cut and smoothed, whereas the arcosolia are rough and carelessly executed.

**Room I** is asymmetrical in form; it is approximately 2.30 m long, 1.85 m wide and 2.12 m high from floor to ceiling. The latter is almost flat at the center and slopes toward the walls, to the left and to the right of the entrance. The upper part of the left wall of the room and about a third of the ceiling were destroyed and had collapsed already during the hewing, together with the upper part of the left wall and part of the ceiling in room III (*vid.* Pl. X, 1). They caved in as a result of the destruction of the wall of hall G, which was hewn earlier. This forced a change in the plan of room I. The floor of the hall was lowered and the arcosolia hewn in the left walls of rooms I and III, below the level of the cave — in (arcosolium 1 in room I and arcosolium 1 in room III). The shelf of arcosolium 1 in room I stands about 0.70 m above the floor of the room; it is 0.70 m long and 1.98 m wide; the upper part of the arch is broken. A burial place is hewn the width of the shelf; it was lengthened by extending it into the right wall of the arcosolium, where it is rounded. The burial is 2.17 m long, 0.50 m wide and 0.52 m deep. Near its left end is a very large “pillow” (0.53 m wide). In this burial there were many bones, an iron nail (no. 82 in catalogue of finds), a fragment of a glass object (no. 81), an iron knife (no. 83) and sherds. A wooden coffin or an ossuary in which bones were deposited had been placed here. Other iron nails (no. 80) were found on the floor of room I, probably scattered when the tomb was robbed. An arched passage, 2.03 m high, 0.33 m long and 1.27 m wide (on the average), leads from room I to room II; it is hewn to resemble a built passageway with an arch resting on pillars. The right side of the passage is destroyed whereas on the left side the pillar (1.30 m high) juts out, leaving a narrow space between it and the end of the arch.

**Room II** is 1.75 m long, 1.42 m wide and 2.10 m high from floor to arched ceiling. Three arcosolia are hewn in its walls at various heights; one in the right wall (1); the second in the left wall (2); and the third in the back wall (3). The shelf of arcosolium 2, which stands about 1.08 m

above the floor of the room, is 0.62 m long and 1.60 m wide; the arch above it is 0.83 m high. The burial place, which is hewn its width, was lengthened by extending it into both the right and left walls of the arcosolium. The burial place is 1.78 m long, 0.42 m wide and 0.38 m deep; its short walls are rounded and near its right side there is a "pillow" (0.16 m wide), with a rounded depression for the head.

The shelf of arcosolium 1 is 2.30 m long, 1.62 m wide at the outer edge and widens to about 1.80 m near the back wall; the arch above it is 0.82 m high. The shelf stands only about 0.65 m above the floor of the room. Four burial places are hewn in it; three its length ( $\alpha$ - $\gamma$ ) and one its width near the back wall ( $\delta$ ). Burials  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  are almost identical in size (approximately 1.60 m long, 0.39 m wide and 0.30 m deep), burial  $\gamma$  is shorter (1.41 m long), whereas burial  $\delta$  (1.82 m long) is as long as the width of the shelf. This latter, too, enters a little into the left wall of the arcosolium, where it is rounded. There are "pillows" near the back ends of two of the burial places in burial  $\alpha$  (0.16 m wide) and in burial  $\beta$  (0.13 m wide); in burial  $\delta$  the "pillow" (0.13 m wide) is placed near the left side. A breach in the back wall of the arcosolium allows access into hall J.

The shelf of arcosolium 3 stands about 1.03 m above the floor of the room. In order to ease ascent to it, two small steps were cut in the rock wall below the shelf; their average length is 0.35 m, and they are 0.20 m and 0.28 m high, respectively. The shelf of the arcosolium, which is narrow at the outer side and widens within, is 2.12 m long, 1.26 m wide at the outer edge and 1.60 m wide near the back wall, and the arch above it is 0.80 m high. Four burial places are hewn in it: three its length ( $\alpha$ - $\gamma$ ) and one its width, near the back wall ( $\delta$ ); the length of burial  $\alpha$  is 1.62 m; that of burials  $\beta$  and  $\gamma$ , 1.52 m; and that of burial  $\delta$ , 1.60 m; they are 0.31-0.39 m wide and their average depth is 0.33 m. In all of the burials there are "pillows" (average width 0.15 m): in burials  $\alpha$ - $\gamma$ , near the back side; and in burial  $\delta$ , near the rounded left side. All four burials had been looted except for burial  $\alpha$ , in which there were crumbling bones. Two incised inscriptions (nos. 56-57), the thin lines of which are very vague, were discovered on the outer wall of the arcosolium, below the shelf.

An arched and very wide passage (1.41 m high, 0.38 m long and 1.41 m wide) leads from room I to room III; it is cut like a built passage, with an arch resting on pillars. The left side of the arch is destroyed, whereas the right is well preserved; it rests on a pillar carved in high relief, jutting into the hall. The pillar is topped by a lintel decorated with oblique lines, incised and painted in red; the abacus, which is indicated above the lintel, is divided in two parts by a horizontal line, incised and painted in red (*vid.* Pl. XI right). The pillar is smooth on the side facing room III; at the top of the pillar, below the base of the arch, there is a high relief of a large circle (0.30 m in diameter).

**Room III** is asymmetrically hewn; its left wall is slightly rounded; it is 2 m long (on the average), 1.80 m long (on the average) and it is 2.03 m high from floor to arched ceiling. Two arcosolia are hewn in its walls: (1) in its left wall; and (2) in its right wall.

The shelf of arcosolium 1 stands only about 0.40 m above the floor; it is approximately 2.20 m long and approximately 2 m wide; the arch above it is only 0.40 m high. The wall above the arch of the arcosolium was destroyed (*vid.* Pl. X, 1). Four burial places are hewn in the shelf, three its length ( $\alpha$ - $\gamma$ ), and another its width, near the back wall ( $\delta$ ); they are 1.58–1.95 m long, 0.41–0.50 m wide and 0.24–0.33 m deep. In two of the burials,  $\alpha$  and  $\delta$ , there are “pillows” (0.24 and 0.20 m wide, respectively), with round depressions for the head. In burials  $\alpha$ ,  $\gamma$  and  $\delta$ , there were crumbling bones and sealing stones, on the edge of burial  $\gamma$  there was a sealing stone coated with a layer of plaster. The name of the persons buried in this arcosolium is known from Greek inscription no. 58, incised on the wall above the arch of the arcosolium, to the left.

The shelf of arcosolium 2, which stands approximately 0.95 m above the floor, is 2.25 m long, 1.72 m wide at the outer edge, approximately 1.95 m near the back wall; the arch above it is 0.81 m high. Four burial places are hewn in the shelf: three its length ( $\alpha$ - $\gamma$ ), and another its width, near the back wall ( $\delta$ ). Burials  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  are of almost equal size (1.58 m long, approximately 0.45 m wide and 0.32 m deep). Burial  $\gamma$  is smaller (1.53 m long, 0.36 m wide and 0.34 m deep), while burial  $\delta$  is the largest (1.85 m long, 0.39 m wide and 0.34 m deep). In burials  $\gamma$  and  $\delta$  there are “pillows” with round depressions (0.17 m and 0.23 m wide respectively); in burial  $\beta$  the “pillow” (0.18 m wide) has no depression; in burial  $\alpha$  there is no “pillow.” Many sealing stones were laid in burial  $\gamma$ , apparently by tomb robbers. A Greek inscription is incised on the outer wall of the arcosolium, below the shelf (no. 59).

An arched passage leads from room III to room IV; it is 1.75 m high, 0.30 m long and 1.20 m wide. To the left of the passage there is a sort of pillar in high relief, resting on a pedestal and seemingly supporting the arch; on the right, the wall is plain. The arch of the passage is lower than the ceiling of room III, being hewn almost at the level of the ceiling of room IV, which is much lower than that of room III. Thus, the impression created is that the arched passage is a part of room IV (*vid.* Pl. X, 1).

**Room IV** is 1.65 m long, 1.40 wide and 1.77 m high from floor to arched ceiling. Three arcosolia are hewn in its walls; one (1) to the left, the second (2) in the back wall and the third (3) to the right. The shelves of the arcosolia are hewn at different heights above the floor: 1 — at the height of 0.55 m, 2 — at 0.80 m, and 3 — at 0.60 m.

The shelf of arcosolium 1 is 2.27 m long and 1.60 m wide; the arch rises 0.92 m above it. No less than eight Hebrew and Greek inscriptions

are incised or painted (in red or green) on the slope of the ceiling above the arch of the arcosolium, on the wall to its right, and on the wall of the arcosolium, below the shelf (*vid.* Pls. XII–XIII). In this arcosolium members of a priestly family were buried, as is evident from a bilingual inscription, in Hebrew and Greek, incised on the slope of the ceiling (nos. 61–62), and from a Hebrew inscription painted in red on the wall to the right of the arcosolium (no. 67). One of the Greek inscriptions (no. 65), also incised on the slope of the ceiling near inscriptions nos. 61–62, mentions  $\text{ΙΗCOYC APAΠHHNΩ}$ ; it seems, then, that the priestly family buried here came from the Galilean town of Arab (Araba), home of the Petahyah family of priests. A seven-branched Menorah is carelessly incised to the left of the inscription; to its right, between it and the Hebrew inscription "כֹּהֲנִים" ("priests": no. 62), there is a group of many shallowly incised, perpendicular lines crossed by two horizontal lines (*vid.* Pl. XIII, 1).<sup>80</sup>

The shelf of arcosolium 2 is 2.52 m long, 1.32 m wide at the outside and widens to about 2.05 m near the back wall; the arch above it is 0.82 m high. A Greek inscription (no. 72) is painted in red on the outer wall of the arcosolium, below the shelf, and another Greek inscription (no. 73), also painted in red, is found on the back wall of the arcosolium, above the shelf.

The shelf of arcosolium 3 is 2.25 m long and 1.58 m wide at the outer side (it widens in the center, but near the back wall it narrows again and is rounded); the arch above it is 0.77 m high. On the outer wall of the arcosolium, below the shelf, there are two inscriptions: one, on the right hand (no. 69–70), is bilingual, in Hebrew and Greek; and the other, on the left hand (no. 71), is in Greek.

In each of the three shelves there are four burial places: three ( $\alpha$ – $\gamma$ ) the length of the shelf, and another ( $\delta$ ) behind them, the width of the shelf. The burials measure as follows: in arcosolium 1 the average length is 1.55 m and the average width, 0.40 m; in arcosolium 2 the length is 1.61–1.75 m, the average width 0.42 m and the depth 0.35 m (except for burial  $\delta$ , which measures  $0.80 \times 0.49 \times 0.06$  m); in arcosolium 3 the length is 1.40–1.65 m, the average width, 0.40 m and the average depth, 0.30 m.

In all the burials which are hewn the length of the arcosolia there are "pillows" near the back wall; the "pillows" in burials  $\alpha$  and  $\gamma$  in arcosolium 1, and burials  $\beta$  and  $\gamma$  in arcosolium 2, have round depressions for the head, the "pillows" in the other burials have no depressions; the "pillows" are of various sizes (0.16 m–0.28 m wide). A large "pillow" (0.30 m wide) with a depression is located near the left side of burial  $\delta$  in arcosolium 2, as well.

In all the burial places of arcosolium 1, and in burial  $\gamma$  of arcosolium 3, there were crumbling bones. A great number of bones were found also in burial  $\delta$  of arcosolium 2, which seems to have been used as a deposit for

collected bones. In most of the burials, sealing-stones and fragments of stones were also found. Traces of a Greek inscription (no. 68) were preserved on a small stone found in a burial in arcosolium 1; it seems that this fragment is from the right wall of hall G, and was used to cover the above-mentioned burial long after the wall had collapsed.

Hall I includes a total of thirty burial places, all of the regular type, that is, rectangular troughs within arcosolia, with no other types of burial. It is interesting to note that, except for two arcosolia which contain only single burial places (in rooms I and II), all the other arcosolia have four burial places. We also found support for at least two of the burials having served as repositories for the collected bones of several persons. It also seems that a wooden coffin (or ossuary) stood in arcosolium 1 of room I; it is quite probable, however, that some of the other burials, which had been robbed completely, once held coffins or, more probably, wooden ossuaries.

In order to establish the date of hall I, it should first of all be remembered that it is one of the latest halls in the catacombs (*vid. supra*, p. 39), and its quarrying was started, as we have seen above (pp. 76; 90), after rooms I and II in hall G had already been used for burials for quite some time. Examination of the breaches in the walls of hall I also indicates that it is later than any of the other halls in the lower corridor, except for hall J. Of special importance, chronologically, are the fragments of pottery and glass which were found in this hall; most are of types common at Beth She'arim in period III (the first half of the fourth century C.E.) and some can be related to period IV (the Byzantine period). Some Arab sherds were also found; they were left here by "visitors" and tomb robbers of the Middle Ages.

Examination of the inscriptions in hall I (nos. 56–73) indicates that members of various Galilean families were buried in this hall; furthermore, these families were of various social strata. One of the deceased interred in room II apparently bore the title "Rabbi" (inscription no. 56–57). Arcosolium 1 of room III apparently contained the remains of a person from Gabra (inscription no. 58), whereas the members of a priestly family, originating according to an inscription (no. 65), from Arab were buried in room IV.<sup>81</sup> Hall I seems to have been used as a public burial hall for several generations; room IV there — in which the priests were buried — is one of the latest within it.

To sum up the results, in hall I, we have found that it was first hewn approximately at the end of the third century C.E., and that many burials in this hall date from the fourth century C.E. It is more difficult to determine when burial here ceased, though it seems to have been in use until the beginning of the fifth century C.E. In contrast to halls described above (A–H), hall I seems to have been used as a burial place also in period IV at Beth She'arim; that is, during the early Byzantine period.

**Hall J**, situated at the extremity of the right wall in the lower corridor, is the lowest and, without question, the latest of all the halls in catacomb no. 1 (*vid.* Plan 1, and *supra*, p. 39). The entrance to this hall (0.78 m high, 0.40 m long and 0.59 m wide) is in the south-east corner of the corridor, with the wide platform in front of hall L forming a sort of roof above it (*vid.* Pl. III, 3).

The frame of the entrance, affixed in a rock-cut aperture (1.63 m high, 0.55 m long and 1.20 m wide), was found *in situ*; the door, however, has disappeared. The frame is smooth on the outside, with no decoration on the lintel or doorposts. From a step in the threshold one descends another rock-cut step into the hall. This second step, which is 0.28 m high, runs the entire length of the western wall of room I, to the right of the entrance. Hall J is the only hall in the catacomb whose entrance is not situated on the major axis, but in a corner. The hall consists of four rooms hewn in a row, one behind the other; its length from threshold to back wall is 8.40 m. In all the rooms the stonework is crude, and rain-water, which has seeped into the hall from the corridor, damaged its walls. No decorations or drawings were found.

**Room I** is 1.75 m long, 1.20 m wide and approximately 2.00 m high from floor to arched ceiling. In its right (north) wall there is an arcosolium whose shelf stands only about 0.35 m above the floor. Three burial places are hewn the length of the shelf (1.65 m long, 0.40 m wide and 0.44 m deep, on the average). In the right wall of the arcosolium there is a small negligently hewn kokh (*a*) which narrows towards its back wall; its maximum length is 0.64 m, its width at the outer side is 0.41 m and its height approximately 0.30 m. All the burials had been robbed completely. The rectangular burial places seem to have been used for primary burial, whereas the kokh was meant for collecting bones. There is a breach in the back wall of the arcosolium, leading into hall H. There is no arched passage between rooms I and II.

**Room II** is hewn at a somewhat lower level than room I, and is in the shape of a rough square 1.80 m long, 1.85 m wide and 2.07 m high from floor to arched ceiling. A fissure in its ceiling penetrates into the floor of hall L; this dates from the time the hall was quarried. In the walls of room II there are two arcosolia: one (1) in its left wall; and a second (2) in its right wall. The shelf of arcosolium 1 stands only about 0.30 m above the floor; it is 0.83 m long and 1.80 m wide at the outer side; and its arch rises 0.71 m above the shelf. The single burial place in it occupies almost the entire width of the shelf and penetrates into the left wall of the arcosolium; it is 1.90 m long, 0.53 m wide and 0.51 m deep. A breach in the wall of the arcosolium leads to room II of hall I. The shelf of arcosolium 2 stands about 1 m above the floor; it is almost square

(approximately 1.80 m × 1.80 m), and the arch above it is 0.84 m high. Three burial places are hewn its length (as in room I); their partly broken walls are approximately 1.70 m long, 0.43 m wide and 0.42 m deep. No individual finds were discovered in room II, except for a fragment of an Arab lamp, found in the debris on the floor. An arched passageway leads from room II to room III; it is 0.50 m long, 1.90 m wide and 2.23 m high, and is hewn to imitate a built passageway with an arch resting on pillars. Only the right-hand pillar has been preserved, whereas the one on the left was destroyed.

**Room III** is 1.95 m long, 2.05 m wide and 2.25 m high from floor to arched ceiling. Its floor is hewn at a level even lower than that of room II. The arcosolia are hewn in the walls to the right and left of the entrance; one (1) in the left wall; and the other (2) in the right wall. Their shelves stand about 1 m above the floor of the room, and each contains four burial places: three ( $\alpha$ - $\gamma$ ) the length, and another ( $\delta$ ) the width, near the back wall. The shelf of arcosolium 1 is 2.20 m long, and 1.64 m wide at the outer side; the arch above it is 0.80 m high. The shelf of arcosolium 2 is 2.25 m long, 1.75 m wide at the outside, and the arch above it is 1.70 m high. The burial places measure as follows: in arcosolium 1: 1.54–1.72 m long, 0.43 m wide, and 0.43 m deep, on the average; in arcosolium 2: 1.54–1.64 m long, 0.43 m wide, and 0.45 m deep, on the average. Only in the burials at the back of the two arcosolia ( $\delta$ ) are there “pillows” for the head. In arcosolium 1 there is no depression in the “pillow” (0.2 m wide), and in arcosolium 2 the “pillow” (0.14 m wide) has a rounded depression. Nothing was found in any of these burial places. An arched passageway leads from room III to room IV; it is 0.47 m long, 1.50 m wide and 1.95 m high.

**Room IV**, at the back of the hall, is lower than the other rooms and the workmanship is much finer. It is 1.88 m long, 1.65 m wide and 1.90 m high from floor to arched ceiling. In three of its walls there are arcosolia: (1) in the left wall; (3) in the right wall; and (2) in the back wall. The shelf of arcosolium 1 stands about 1 m above the floor; it is 2.35 m long and 1.60 m wide, and the arch above it is 0.74 m high. The shelf of arcosolium 3 stands about 1.10 m above the floor; it is 2.30 m long and 1.72 m wide, and the arch above it is 0.65 m high. In each of the two shelves there are four burial places, three the length of the arcosolium ( $\alpha$ - $\gamma$ ) and a fourth behind them, the width of the shelf ( $\delta$ ). The burial places are asymmetrically cut; their average measurements are 1.52–1.65 m long (except for burial  $\delta$  in arcosolium 3, which is 1.72 m long), 0.43 m wide, and 0.40 m deep. Only in burial  $\delta$  of arcosolium 1 is there a kind of “pillow”, 0.16 m wide. In these burials only a few sherds were found. Arcosolium 3 stands about 1.15 m above the floor; it is 2.21 m long and

1.60 m wide, and the arch above it is 0.64 m high. The burial places in this arcosolium had been deliberately destroyed, and only the remains of the walls which separated the burial places testify to their existence.

The names of the persons buried in the arcosolia of room IV are known to us from the Greek inscriptions incised on the walls above arcosolium 1 (inscription no. 74; Pl. XIII, 2), above arcosolium 2 (no. 75; Pl. XIII, 3) and on the slope of the ceiling above the arch of arcosolium 3 (no. 76).

Hall J includes altogether twenty-seven burial places, all of them (except for the small *kokh a* in room I) rectangular troughs within arcosolia. It is noteworthy that in rooms I and II there are arcosolia with one or three burial places, all other arcosolia in rooms III and IV have four burial places. These burial places seem generally to have been used for primary burial, for no nails or iron angles indicating the use of coffins or wooden ossuaries were found here. Only *kokh a* seems to have been used for the collection of bones, after the burial places in room I had become filled, and the need to make room for additional burials felt. Examination of the lower corridor (*vid. supra*, p. 38) and of the breaches in its walls and ceiling aided in determining the date of hall J. It seems clear that it is later not only than hall L above it, and hall H to its right, but also hall I to its left. Hence, hall J was quarried at the beginning of the fourth century C.E., that is, in period IIIB at Beth She'arim, and it continued in use for several generations, possibly even as late as the beginning of the fifth century C.E. This date is supported further by the many pottery fragments of periods IIIB and IV at Beth She'arim. The other sherds found in this hall are Arab (period V) and it seems that the site was often visited during the Middle Ages. Visitors even damaged some of the burial places in several arcosolia, especially in arcosolium 2 of room IV, which had been used as a hearth (evident from the charcoal and the fragments of cooking utensils found here and on the floor of the room). No evidence has yet been found to indicate that burial continued here during period V. Nor can we determine whether this hall belonged, in periods IIIB and IV, to one or to several families; only the inscriptions found in the last room allow us to state, at the most, that members of a single family were buried in this room (IV).

**Hall K** is quarried in the left (north) wall of the corridor (*vid. plan 4*). Its entrance is at a rock platform projecting from the wall near the bottom of the stairway which leads to the upper corridor (*vid. supra*, p. 40 and fig. 8). The frame affixed in the aperture of the entrance (2.10 m high, 0.52 m long and 1.58 m wide), was largely destroyed already in ancient times; only the threshold (1.23 m long, 0.49 m wide, and 0.36 m high) and fragments of the doorposts which stood on it, remain *in situ*. The lintel and door were found among the debris in the burial hall. Remnants

of a geometric design in high relief can still be seen on the front of the door. A marble plaque with an incised Greek inscription (no. 78) was found near the right doorpost, on the stone platform at the entrance of the hall (*vid. supra*; p. 41, and Pl. XV, 1).

Hall K consists of three burial rooms: two (I and III) are hewn in a row, one behind the other, and a third (II) is cut in the left (west) wall of room I. The length of the entire hall is 4.85 m, and its maximal width is about 4.50 m.

**Room I** is asymmetrical, 2.20 m long, 1.90 m wide near the entrance and 2.30 m near its back wall. Its height from floor to slightly vaulted ceiling is 2.55 m. The walls were dressed and smoothed by skilled hands and embellished with various decorations which lend the room a pleasant aspect (*vid. Pl. XIV, 1*).

In room I there is only one arcosolium (1), hewn in its right wall. Its shelf stands about 0.75 m above the floor of the room; it is shorter on its left side and longer on the right; its average length is 1.85 m, and the arch above it is 0.73 m high. In the shelf there are two burial places, one behind the other along its width; burial  $\alpha$ , which was extended into the left wall of the arcosolium (ca. 1.90 m long, 0.38 m wide and 0.26 m deep); and burial  $\beta$  (the same length as the shelf, 0.40 m wide, and 0.26 m deep).

Four inscriptions painted in red belong to this arcosolium; a long very blurred Hebrew inscription (no. 79) on the wall of the room above the arch of the arcosolium; a Greek inscription (no. 80) on the wall to the left of the arcosolium; another Greek inscription (no. 81) inside the arcosolium, on its right wall above burial  $\alpha$ ; and a third Greek inscription (no. 82) also inside the arcosolium, on the back wall above burial  $\beta$ .

These inscriptions, as well as Hebrew inscription no. 84 (painted in red on the back wall of the room, to the right of the arched passage to room III), indicate that this arcosolium was the burial place of a person named Judah.

The wall of the room below the shelf of arcosolium 1 is decorated with various motifs; of special interest among them is the graffito of a man leading a horse (*vid. Pl. XIV, 2*). The man is represented at full length, walking to the left. The head and the legs are presented in profile whereas the eye, body and right arm are shown *en face*. Noteworthy are the prominent, fleshy nose which runs straight from the narrow forehead, the narrow mouth, the large elliptical eye and the eyebrow above it; the ear is not indicated, and there are no signs of a beard or a moustache; the hair is curled, the locks being indicated by short lines incised perpendicular to the contour-line of the skull; the curls cover the top and back of the head; an arched, incised line above the head may also be noted. The neck is short and thick. The body is depicted as a rectangle,

with arms extending from the shoulders and having no organic connections with the body; the right arm is stretched forward and the forearm is bent at a right angle, downwards. All five fingers are indicated in the hand; they hold, or rather touch, an object resembling a club (or whip) which hangs from the hand. The left arm is extended at shoulder level, with the forearm (with no indication of the hand and the fingers) raised up so as to hold the bridle of the horse, near its chin. The man is dressed in a very short Roman tunic reaching his thighs; his waist is girded with a belt indicated by two parallel lines. Behind him (near the lower edge of the tunic, to the left) appears the end of a dagger (?). The horse is depicted in profile, at a higher level than the man. Among the details we may note the representation of the mouth, the left ear and the mane; the eye and the harness of the horse are blurred; the two left legs are carved so as to hide the right ones,<sup>82</sup> the tail, longer than the hind leg, hangs somewhat obliquely and ends in a thick tuft.

The subject in itself, a man leading a horse, is quite common in Eastern art of the Roman period and occurs at Dura-Europos,<sup>83</sup> and on the coffins of Palmyra.<sup>84</sup> The general nature of the graffito also indicates that it belongs to the Eastern art of the Roman period, even though special features are noted which would point to a definite prototype. One should add that the manner in which the man holds the club is typical of folk art in the East in this period — starting with the Nabatean statuettes from Khirbet el-Tannur and continuing with the figures in Byzantine mosaic floors. The arched line above the head of the man seems to be intentional and was incised at the start of work on the figure, but it should not be taken as an uncomplete halo.

On the wall of the arcosolium, below the horse, there is a rough and very crude sketch of a human figure (*vid.* Pl. XIV, 2). This figure, possibly incised, by a visitor in the Middle Ages, is reminiscent in many details of graffiti in the tombs of Beth She'arim and Beth Guvrin.<sup>85</sup> To the left of it and left of the graffito of the man and horse, there are nine concentric circles drawn with a sharp compass; the largest is 0.55 m in diameter.

The back wall of room I also displays various motifs, with Hebrew and Palmyrene inscriptions nearby (*vid.* Pl. XIV, 1).

Of special interest is the sunken relief of a man riding a horse (*vid.* Pl. XV, 2), carved on the right side of the arched passage to room III; it is on the same level as the shelf of arcosolium I to its right (*vid.* Pl. XIV, 1). In order to emphasize the theme a deep groove was carved around it, separating it from the wall surface; the sunken areas were then covered with red paint. The rider is depicted sitting upright on the horse; his head, and hands are shown *en face*. The nose runs obliquely from the narrow forehead; the mouth is very narrow; the eye is elliptical with the pupil emphasized; the ear is especially well carved. The hair is arranged similar to that of the above-mentioned relief, but here the curls are denoted by

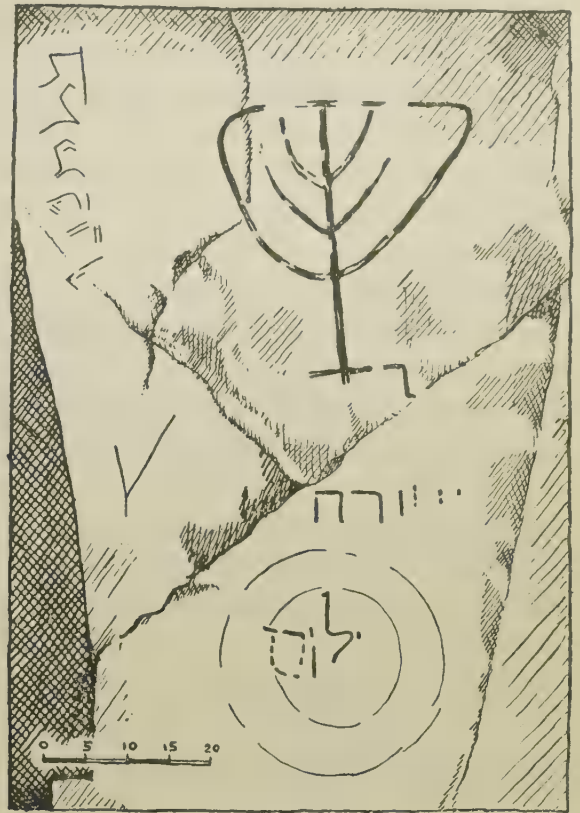
two rows of squares. There are also traces of a beard on the chin and jaw, as indicated by short vertical cuts between two parallel, horizontal lines. The arms are attached to the shoulders with no organic connection; the right arm is extended forward and the bridle of the horse lies on the palm of the hand; the left arm is raised behind the head; in this hand the rider holds a kind of a stick, brandished obliquely forward; above his head. It may be nothing more than a whip with which the rider is about to beat his horse. He is wearing a short Roman tunic reaching to his thighs, and is girded at the waist. There are faint traces of the high boots worn by horsemen, as well. The horse is depicted in profile; its mouth, ear and harness are well depicted, whereas no eye can be seen; the man, is indicated by small squares of the type denoting the hair of the rider. The horse seems to be walking down a slope. All four legs are shown in the relief; its right foreleg is bent at the knee as if about to step forward, whereas the other legs are almost straight; yet one can notice some movement in them too. The tail is very long and ends in a thick tuft.

The two reliefs are quite similar, in general, and were probably executed by the same person, following familiar patterns and models. It seems evident, however, that the relief of the rider excels that of the man leading a horse in terms of the workmanship. This sort of representation, of a soldier riding a horse, is one of the common motifs in Eastern art during the Roman period, and there are many features common between the rider discussed and those in the art of Palmyra, Dura-Europos and other places in Syria and Palestine (especially among the figurines of Beth Natif) of the same period; some features are also common to equestrians in Parthian and Sassanian art.<sup>86</sup> The resemblance is evident in various details, such as in the military dress,<sup>87</sup> the mode of riding,<sup>88</sup> the representation of the horses,<sup>89</sup> the manner in which the whip is held above the head<sup>90</sup> and in the hair.<sup>91</sup> Yet, one cannot deny the unusual nature of these two reliefs, especially the presentation of both the man and the horse in profile — an uncommon feature in Eastern (in contrast to Western) art of the above period. The general nature of the reliefs, when compared with the material given above, allows us to relate them to the third-fourth centuries C.E.

There is a definite and close connection between the two reliefs, arcosolium 1, and the Hebrew and Greek inscriptions in red on the right and back walls of the hall, which mention a person named Judah. In one of these inscriptions, which is very blurred (no. 79), an appellative of praise is also preserved הטוב ("the Good").<sup>92</sup>

The series of drawings in red paint on the back wall of room I is arranged symmetrically on both sides of the arch of the passage from Room I to room III; the motifs are placed higher on the wall than the relief of the rider (*vid.* Fig. 10 and Pl. XIV, 1). First we may note the Menorahs to the left and right of the top of the arch; each one stands

Fig. 10  
 Graffiti and inscriptions in  
 room I, on the wall to the  
 right of the arched passage to  
 room III



on a tripod, with a bar holding the oil-lamps above the branches. The Menorah on the right is quite well preserved, whereas the one on the left is rather blurred. Under the right-hand Menorah there is a blurred inscription in Hebrew: "Judah." Below there are two incised, concentric circles with a Hebrew inscription in the center: "Shalom." Left of the first inscription is the mark V. Under the left Menorah, too, is the word "Shalom," corresponding to the same inscription on the right side. Below this decorative inscription is another decoration, apparently no more than an incomplete Menorah casually painted in red.

In addition to these decorations and inscriptions, all of which are painted in red and constitute one unit, we should mention two Palmyrene inscriptions on this wall: the first (no. 83: fig. 10) is of only one line; it is incised partly in double lines on the wall to the right of the arch of the passage; the second (no. 86; Pl. XV, 6) is of three lines and is painted in dark green on the wall to the left of the arch of the passage. Both of them are written vertically from top downwards, and both mention a woman named Bath-malechos. The Palmyrene inscriptions relate to the burial in room III (*vid. infra*). Among the few finds in room I, there was a limestone bowl (no. 14 in the catalogue of finds) with traces of dried red paint (ocher) in it; it stood in the north-western corner of the room, near the passage to room II. This bowl is no more than a vessel for the

red paint used for the inscriptions and drawings.

An arched passage (approximately 2.08 m high, 0.44 m long and 1.00 m wide) leads from room I to room II; it is hewn in imitation of a built passage, with an arch resting on tall pillars (about 1.40 m). On the walls of the arch, to the left of the passage, the word “Shalom” is written in Hebrew.

**Room II** is a rectangle measuring 1.76 m long, 1.26 m wide and approximately 1.95 m high from floor to arched ceiling. This room is much lower than room I. Three arcosolia are hewn symmetrically in its walls: (1) in the left wall; (3) in the right wall; and (2) in the back wall. The shelf of arcosolium 1 stands about 0.70 m above the floor; it is 0.85 m long and 1.56 m wide; the arch above it is 0.67 m high. One burial place is hewn in it the length of the arcosolium; it occupies the entire length of the shelf and is 0.44 m wide and 0.27 m deep. Crumbling bones and three sealing stones were found within the burial place. A bilingual inscription in Hebrew and Greek (nos. 90–91; Pl. XV, 3) is painted in red on the wall of the room, to the left of the arch of the arcosolium; it mentions the name of the deceased here, “Nehemiah.”

The shelf of arcosolium 2 stands about 0.60 m above the floor of the hall; it is 0.82 m long and 1.12 m wide; the arch above it is 0.80 m high. Two burial places are hewn the length of the arcosolium; burial  $\alpha$  (1.70 m long, 0.40 m wide and 0.30 m deep) and burial  $\beta$  (1.72 m long, 0.37 m wide and 0.28 m deep). Two sealing-stones were preserved *in situ* at the edges of each of the burial places; they were fixed to the walls and plastered over with a layer of clay. On the wall to the right of the arch of the arcosolium there is a Hebrew inscription painted in red, mentioning the name “Leontis” (no. 93; Pl. XV, 7), a name also mentioned in an inscription on a marble plaque (as the head of the family buried in hall K).

The shelf of arcosolium 3 stands about 0.90 m above the floor of the room; it is 0.65 m long, 1.50 m wide at the outer edge and slightly widens within; the arch above it is 0.60 m high. Here, too, a single burial place is cut the width of the shelf; its length occupies the entire width of the shelf; it is 0.48 m wide and 0.28 m deep. One complete nail (70 mm long; no. 15 in the catalogue of finds), fragments of nails and wood splinters (no. 16 *ibid*) were found within the burial — remnants of an ossuary which had been deposited here. On the wall above the arch of the arcosolium, to its right, there is a three-line Greek inscription painted in red, with the addition of a word in Hebrew: “Shalom” (no. 92; Pl. XV, 5); the inscription states that Sarah daughter of Nehemiah and mother of the priestess (Lady Maria) was buried here.<sup>93</sup>

An arched passage leads from room I to room III; it is hewn to resemble a built passage, with an arch resting on pillars. The passage is 2.33 m high, 0.45 m long and 1.45 m wide.

**Room III**, which is much smaller and lower than room I, is 1.40 m long, 1.52 m wide, and 2.00 m high from floor to ceiling, which latter is vaulted on all sides except towards the back wall. Three arcosolia are hewn in its walls: (1) in the left wall, at 0.90 m above the floor; (3) in the right wall, at 0.55 m; and (2) in the back wall, 0.60 m above the floor (*vid.* Pl. XIV, 1). In general, the walls are smooth, especially in the upper parts, as in the other rooms.

The shelf of arcosolium 1 is 1.90 m long and 1.20 m wide at the outer edge; the arch above it is 0.73 m high. This shelf is divided into two parts: on its left (southern) side is a burial place within a pit-burial ( $\alpha$ ); within its right (northern) side is a burial place of the usual type ( $\beta$ ). Burial  $\alpha$  occupies almost the entire length of the shelf (1.85 m); it extends somewhat into the back wall at the bottom and is 0.57 m wide and 0.75 m deep. At its bottom is a rectangular burial place 1.95 m long, 0.54 m wide and 0.45 m deep. Nails and wood splinters (nos. 15–16 in the catalogue of finds) were found on the bottom. The long, narrow ledges left on the longer sides of the burial were utilized to support the sealing-stones, of which only two were found *in situ*. These latter served as the bottom of another burial, placed above; this second burial was covered at the level of the shelf with other sealing-stones. Burial  $\beta$  is 1.74 m long, 0.37 m wide and 0.31 m deep.

Arcosolium 3 occupies the entire length of the right wall of the room. The shelf of the arcosolium is 2.00 m long, 1.35 m wide at the outer edge and widens slightly toward the inside; the arch above it is 0.77 m high. Three rectangular burial places ( $\alpha$ – $\gamma$ ) are hewn one beside the other, almost the entire length of the shelf; (except for a rather wide ledge at its front); they are 1.80 m long, 0.38 m wide and 0.27 m deep on the average. All the burials were covered with ashlar, some of which were preserved *in situ* at the edge of the arcosolium.

Arcosolium 2, hewn in the back wall of room III (*vid.* Pl. XIV, 1), is the largest in this hall. The shelf of the arcosolium is narrow at the outer side, about 1.30 m, but widens within up to 2.00 m near the back wall. Its maximum length is 2.45 m; the arch above it is 0.81 m high. Two burial places ( $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ ) are hewn the length of the arcosolium; another ( $\gamma$ ), behind them, is cut the width. All these are pit-burials. There is also a kokh ( $a$ ) hewn in the left (western) wall of the arcosolium. A rounded ledge at the right of the shelf should also be mentioned; it is hewn in the wall of the arcosolium and is probably an unfinished attempt to add another burial place. The outer wall of the arcosolium is damaged, as is the partition wall between pit-burials  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ . Burial  $\alpha$  is 1.65 m long, 0.51 m wide and 0.85 m deep. There is a rectangular burial place in its bottom, 1.65 m long, 0.41 m wide and 0.31 m deep. Stone slabs were laid on the ledges left on the long walls of the burial; two of them were found *in situ* at the edge of the burial, plastered to the sides with

clay, whereas the other two were found within the burial. These stones had probably been used for another superimposed burial as evidenced by the crumbling bones found on top of them. This additional burial in turn had been covered with sealing-stones, one end of which rested on the ledge in the left wall of the arcosolium and the other end of which had been placed on the partition between burials  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ . Pit-burial  $\beta$  is 1.80 m long, 0.52 m wide and 1.16 m deep. In its bottom is a rectangular burial place which lengthens at its bottom to about 1.94 m; it is 0.49 m wide and 0.44 m deep. On the ledges left on the long walls there were three sealing-stones still *in situ*. This burial, then, was also used for a double burial, one above the other. Pit-burial  $\gamma$ , near the back wall of the arcosolium, extends to the left, into its left wall; it is 2.09 m long, 0.72 m wide and 1.15 m deep. In its bottom is a rectangular burial place which lengthens at the bottom to about 2.22 m; it is 0.55 m wide and 0.53 m deep. Two sealing-stones were *in situ*, on the ledges left on its long walls, at the right side. Kokh (*a*) hewn at the level of the shelf in the center of the left wall of the arcosolium, is wide at its outer side and narrows (to about 0.27 m) near its back wall. The kokh is 1.30 m long and its maximal height is 0.68 m. In the middle of the kokh and to its width was a sort of partition built of dressed stones, plastered together and to the walls of the kokh with clay; two of these stones are preserved *in situ*. Behind the partition there were bones piled in no particular order on the bottom of the kokh. Finally we should note that arcosolium 2 was enlarged by stages; at first only burials  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  were hewn in its shelf, and in time burial  $\gamma$  and kokh *a* were added. Altogether, this arcosolium contains seven burial places. The names of the persons buried in arcosolium 2 are known from the inscriptions on the wall above its arch, though most of them were blurred when the upper layer of the rock surface peeled off under the action of water and air. Of special interest is Palmyrene inscription (no. 94; Pl. XV, 4), the name Bath-maleches carved in large letters in a central position above the arch of the arcosolium. Below it are traces of a Greek inscription (no. 95) mentioning the name Mokim. Only traces were left of two additional Greek inscriptions, one thinly incised (no. 96a) and the second painted in red (96b)—both situated to the left of inscription no. 94 and slightly lower. The latter two inscriptions are closely connected with the inscriptions in room II (nos. 90, 91 and 92), and their condition indicates that they are later than inscriptions nos. 94 and 95.

Of the isolated finds discovered on the floor of room III, we may note especially the pottery sherds and fragments of glassware typical of the Roman period, iron nails and fragments of nails (no. 17 in the catalogue of finds). Finally, there is a breach in the back wall of room III, to the right of inscription no. 94, through which hall M can be entered.

Hall K contains altogether nineteen burial places. The common type

is the arcosolium in whose shelves are hewn rectangular troughs; the arcosolia in rooms I and II, and arcosolium 3 in room III are of this type. Only in arcosolia 1 and 2 of room III are there pit-burials intended for double, superimposed burials. In one of these burials ( $\beta$ ), there were traces of a coffin or wooden ossuary which had stood on the bottom of the burial place; there is reason further, to suppose that there had been coffins also in the burials of arcosolium 2, removed later, when the burials were emptied for reuse. These burial places should be compared to the burial in arcosolium 2 in hall C, room I (*vid. supra*, p. 63). Remnants of wooden ossuaries were found also in arcosolium 3 of room II (*vid. supra*, p. 103). *Kokh a* in arcosolium 2 contains evidence of bone collection without an ossuary apparently gathered from the burials in the same arcosolium. An interesting detail in hall K is the absence of "pillows." The small number of burial places in relation to the other halls should also be noted, except for arcosolium 2 in room III, which is more crowded.

The first conclusion to be drawn from the results of the clearance in hall K is the fact that both the archeological and the epigraphical material point to two different periods in the rooms here: period A (earlier) and period B (later). To period A belong room I (except for arcosolium 1), the arched passageway to room III, and room III (without its later additions). The owner of the hall in this period was a Palmyrene woman, Bath-malechos, who is mentioned in inscriptions nos. 83, 86 and 94. It is quite clear that the hall initially was intended to be used as her and her family's burial vault: of the other members of her family, only one is known to us by name, a man called Mokim (no. 95). These inscriptions together form a single unit and belong only to arcosolium 2 in room III. It is to be noted that in this period it was customary to bury the dead in rectangular troughs hewn within pits in the shelves of arcosolia; the dead were brought from Palmyra in coffins or ossuaries and buried in the burial places of room III. Room I was used in period A only as a kind of corridor. From the above it appears quite clearly that there were few burials in this period, when this hall briefly belonged to the Palmyrene family. The hall underwent a decisive change after it passed into other hands, i.e. to a family known from Greek inscription no. 78, on the marble plaque found in the entrance to the hall. The father of this family is Leontius, a goldsmith, and his sons are Rabbi Parigoris and Julianos the Palatinos. The first was undoubtedly buried in arcosolium 2 of room II, as indicated by Hebrew inscription no. 93. The second is apparently none other than Nehemiah (nos. 90-91), who was buried in arcosolium 1 in the same room. As for the third, it is nearly certain that he was Judah, who was buried in arcosolium 1 in room I. In any case, it is quite evident that arcosolium 1 of room I, all of room II, and the additions in room III belong to period B. It seems, too, that the bones of Bath-malechos and her family were removed and reburied in *kokh a*; the emptied burial places were then

reutilized in period B, for members of the family of Leontius and Nehemiah. This supposition is based on the study of inscriptions nos. 96a and 96b, which are later than nos. 94 and 95. Period B is characterized by decorations and inscriptions painted in red and forming a single unit in contrast to the Palmyrene inscriptions of period A. Likewise characteristic of period B are the Hebrew names and their alternates, which are written in both Hebrew and Greek, as is also the greeting "Shalom," — in contrast to the Palmyrene inscriptions and the Greek inscription no. 95 of period A, in which only Palmyrene names are mentioned. To period B also belong the two Menorahs drawn in red paint, the relief of the horseman (which is framed in red paint), and the representation of the man leading a horse. The two reliefs relate to arcosolium 1 in room I, and to the Greek and Hebrew inscriptions mentioning the Judah buried in that arcosolium. To period B belongs also the stone bowl with traces of ocher in it. Generally, it is to be noted that the family of Bath-malechos owner of the hall in period A, was entirely different from that of Leontius, owner of the hall in period B. The latter were much more Jewish in spirit, witness the language, names, titles (e.g. רבי אם הכהנה: "Rabbi": "mother of the priestess"), the greetings, and even the decorations (among which the Menorah takes pride of place). The only exceptions are the reliefs; if it is remembered, however, that they relate to the Judah (who apparently is Julianos)<sup>94</sup> the Palatinos mentioned on the marble plaque, then even this fits in, i.e., the artist did not hesitate in especially depicting this dignitary, who occupied an official position in the Roman government.

In determining the date of the hall we are aided not only by its general nature and the material dealt with above, but also by its relationship to the other hall, and to the breaches found in its walls. From them we can infer that room III is later than hall M and that room II is later than room I in hall E. It is also quite clear that it precedes the late halls I and J. In relation to period A in the hall, we may first note its similarity to hall C in terms of burial form and in its belonging to a Palmyrene family; and further, in both of these halls women held the chief position and seem to have been the owners of the hall: Thuma in hall C and Bath-malechos in hall K. If we add to all this the paleographic evidence relating the Palmyrene inscriptions to the last generation before the destruction of Palmyra,<sup>95</sup> it can be determined that the hall was quarried in the middle of the third century C.E. In this context it is interesting to note that women as owners of tombs appear only in the third century C.E., but no earlier. In relation to period A, it can thus be concluded that it came to an end close to the time of the destruction of Palmyra. This would completely correspond to the archeological finds, which indicate that the hall was used as a place for burial only for a short time in period A. The beginning of period B cannot be determined exactly on the basis of the excavations; on the other hand, nothing would indicate that there was a gap of more than one

generation. It would seem that the hall passed into the possession of the family of Leontius at the end of the third century or, at the latest, at the beginning of the fourth century C.E. The hall was enlarged during period B, room II being added as already noted above. A comparison to hall G aids somewhat in fixing the date of the hall. The length of period B in hall K can be inferred from the fact that burial there was interrupted apparently at this time for more than two or three generations; burials later were discontinued in this hall altogether. There is no single find to indicate that burials there continued after period III B at Beth She'arim. Apparently it went out of use close to the destruction of Beth She'arim by the armies of the Gallus, that is to say, in the middle of the fourth century C.E.

**Hall L** is hewn in the back wall of the lower corridor (*vid.* Plan 3). Its entrance is 0.93 m high and 0.68 m wide. In front of it there is a small platform which is reached by a worn step from the depression at the end of the lower corridor (*vid. supra*, p. 40, Fig. 8, and Pl. IV). The frame of the entrance is preserved *in situ* and the door can still turn on its hinges. The front of the door is carved in relief to resemble a wooden door; it displays only sunken panels, similar to those of wooden doors (*vid.* Pl. III, 3)<sup>96</sup>. One descends into the burial hall by a step in the threshold. The hall consists of three small rooms hewn in a row, one behind the other; its maximal length is 6.05 m.

**Room I** has the form of an irregular rectangle, 1.85 m long and 1.33 m wide; its height from floor to the top of the arched ceiling is approximately 1.65 m. The floor of the room slopes down from the entrance toward the interior, and the walls are skillfully dressed and smoothed. Traces of red paint indicate the former presence of drawings and inscriptions. Two small arcosolia are hewn in the walls of the room at about 0.70 m above the floor. Arcosolium 1 is hewn in the left wall; its shelf is 0.60 m long and 1.85 m wide; the arch above it is 0.76 m high. Arcosolium 2 is hewn in the right wall; its shelf is 0.72 m long and 1.70 m wide; the arch above it is 0.71 m high. In each of them there is a single burial place cut the width of the arcosolium. The one in arcosolium 1 is 1.77 m long, 0.40 m wide and 0.36 m deep; and that in arcosolium 2 is 1.70 m long, 0.45 m wide and 0.35 m deep. On the wall above the arch of arcosolium 2 there had been a Greek inscription in red paint; it is almost entirely effaced; above it was an Arabic inscription, later incised (in period V):

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحِيمِ (= بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحِيمِ)

“In the name of Allah the Merciful”<sup>97</sup> (inscription no. 77). There is no clear evidence that this burial was used by Arabs in period V, though this

is a possibility. In any case, it is now clear that Arabs visited this hall frequently; this is indicated not only by the Arabic inscription but also by the many fragments of Arabic pottery. It would seem that the Arabs entered the hall through the breach in the arch of arcosolium 2 in room II, to which it is possible to crawl from Mugharet el-Jehennem.

An arched passageway leads from room I to room II; it is 0.47 m long, 1 m wide and 1.65 m high. On the front wall, close to the edge of arch, there are traces of a geometric decoration, a semicircle painted in red.

**Room II** is 1.64 m long and 1.33 m wide; it is 1.71 m from floor to arched ceiling. Two arcosolia with shelves are hewn in its walls, standing about 0.80 — above the floor. Arcosolium 1 is hewn in the left wall; its shelf is 2.35 m long and 1.57 m wide; the arch above it is 0.75 m high. Arcosolium 2 is hewn in the right wall; its shelf is 2.35 m long and 1.44 m wide; the arch above it is 0.74 m high. Once there had been four burial places in the shelf of arcosolium 1; all however were destroyed — most probably by Arab visitors. In the shelf of arcosolium 2 there are three burial places ( $\alpha$ - $\gamma$ ) its length, and one ( $\delta$ ), behind them its width. The average measurements of the burial places are: 1.52 m long, 0.35 m wide and 0.30 m deep: burial  $\delta$  is only 1.42 m long. In two of the burials  $\alpha$  and  $\gamma$  — there are “pillows” near the back walls.

An arched passageway connects rooms II and III; it is only 0.15 m long and 1.35 m wide. Carved on the wall to the left of the passage is a kind of pillar which appears to support the narrow arch, whereas the wall to the right of the passage is bare.

**Room III**, which is very small, is 1.10 m long and 1.40 m wide; it is 1.66 m high from floor to arched ceiling. In three of its walls there are arcosolia at about 0.70–0.80 m above the floor; (1) in the left wall, (2) in the back wall, and (3) in the right wall. The shelf of arcosolium 1 is very narrow at the outer side (about 0.98 m), though it widens within to about 1.25 m; it is 1.80 m long and the arch above it is 0.80 m high. Three burial places are hewn the length of its shelf, one beside the other (average measurements: approximately 1.58 m long, 0.30–0.34 m wide and 0.26 m deep). In each of these burial places a “pillow” is hewn near the back wall. The shelf of arcosolium 3 is also narrow at the outer side (about 0.96 m); it widens within, however, to about 1.60 m. It is 2.25 m long and the arch above it is 0.75 m high. Four burial places are hewn in it; three ( $\alpha$ - $\gamma$ ) lengthwise and a fourth ( $\delta$ ) behind them, the width of the arcosolium (their average measurements are: 1.58 m long, 0.35 m wide and 0.28 m deep). Near their back walls burials  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  have “pillows” with square depressions for the head of the dead.

The shelf of arcosolium 2, which occupies the entire length of the back wall of the room, is 0.32 m long and 1.42 m wide; the arch above it is 0.85 m high. In it there are four burial places: three ( $\alpha$ - $\gamma$ ) its length

(average measurements: 1.64 m long, 0.35 m wide, and 0.27–0.31 m deep), and one ( $\delta$ ) behind them, its width (only 1.48 m long). In all the burials, except  $\beta$  there are “pillows” and in one of the ( $\gamma$ ) there is a rectangular depression in the “pillow”, for the head of the deceased.

Hall L contains altogether twenty-one burial places, all of the type common at Beth She‘arim, i.e. burial troughs in arcosolia, with no additional kokhim or pit graves. It seems that these graves were used for primary burial only, because all were sufficient for a whole, and in this hall no traces of a coffin or wooden ossuary were found; moreover, in half of the burials there were “pillows” for the head. In fixing the date of this hall it is important to take into account the fact that it preceded halls I and J, and was quarried before the deepening of the lower corridor below the level of the entrances to halls G and H (*vid.* p. 40). It would seem, then, that hall L is one of the early halls in the lower corridor, and that it is close to the time of hall G. If this is correct, work on it would have begun around the middle of the third century C.E., when it was used as the burial place of a single family, and only for a short time. The burials of hall L were completely despoiled in ancient times, and all that has remained are a few sherds from the third century C.E. Most of the pottery found on the floor and in the burial places, including a large sherd from a pinched-saucer oil lamp (no. 85 in the catalogue of finds) is from the Arab period (period V), witnessing that the Arabs frequented it in the Middle Ages — as in hall J.

**Hall M**, one of the largest and earliest in catacomb I, is hewn in the left (northern) wall of the upper corridor (*vid.* Plan 4). The frame of the entrance (1.02 m high, 0.50 m long and 0.73 m wide) which is affixed in a rock-cut aperture, is of limestone (in a manner already described in previous halls), smoothly dressed and with no decoration on the exterior; it is well preserved, though the door has fallen into the hall beside the threshold. The door (1.04 m high, 0.75 m wide, and 0.17 m thick), although damaged, still bears traces of ornamentation imitating a wooden door, decorated in an unusual manner. A raised panel, occupying almost the entire surface of the door, is divided by a projecting vertical strip into two equal halves; each of these is further divided into three square panels set one above the other and separated by projecting strips; in each of the squares there are two projecting triangles; the apexes of which meet, forming a bow-tie pattern ( $\bowtie$ ). This interesting ornamentation is found on several other doors at Beth She‘arim and is common on doors of the Hellenistic-Roman period.<sup>98</sup>

A small step in the threshold, and two rounded rock-cut steps projecting from the wall of the entrance, lead down into the hall; to the right and to the left of the rock-cut step there is a kind of ledge projecting the entire length of the entrance wall, including the corners. Descent to the floor is

about 0.60 m. Hall M consists of seven burial rooms: four (I, II, V and VII) are hewn in a row, one behind the other; the others are lateral rooms cut in the walls of the hall to its left (III and VI) and right (IV). The length of the entire hall is 10.55 m and its maximal width is 8.45 m.

**Room I** has the form of an irregular cube: it is 2.50 m long and 2.24 m wide, its height from floor to slightly arched ceiling is 2.50 m. In general, the walls are roughly dressed except for the back wall, which was skillfully smoothed. Two arcosolia are hewn in the walls to the right and left of the entrance: (1) in the left wall and (2) in the right wall. The shelf of arcosolium 1 stands about 1.10 m above the floor of the room; it is 2.38 m long and 1.75 m wide; the arch above it is 0.90 m high. Four burial places are hewn in it: three ( $\alpha$ - $\gamma$ ) the length of the arcosolium and another ( $\delta$ ) behind them, its width. The burial places are 1.55–1.68 m long, 0.41–0.44 m wide and 0.25–0.35 m deep, except for burial  $\beta$ , which is 0.52 m wide and 0.56 m deep. In all these burials there were crumbling bones, and in burial  $\beta$  there were also four iron nails (75–90 mm long) and a great number of nail fragments and wood splinters (nos. 32–36 in the catalogue of finds) all apparently from a wooden coffin which had been placed here. It should be noted that burial  $\beta$  was deepened in order to serve as a receptacle for a coffin. In all the four burials there were also sealing-stones, none of which (except for two in burial  $\delta$ ) were *in situ*. On a fragment of a sealing-stone found in burial  $\gamma$ , there is painted in red the Greek inscription ICAK/ICAK (no. 100). The names of the other persons buried in this arcosolium are mentioned in a Greek inscription which ends with the Hebrew word “Shalom” (no. 97). This inscription, also painted in red, is on the wall to the left of arcosolium I and slightly below it.

Two kokhim were hewn in the wall of the room below the shelf of the arcosolium; their bottom is slightly below the level of the floor in the room. One (*a*) is on the left side and the other (*b*) on the right side. Kokh *a* is 1.17 m long, 0.57 m wide and 0.83 m high; in it there were crumbling bones mixed with earth and sand, apparently the remains of only one person. Kokh *b* is 1.56 m long, 0.54 m wide and 0.86 m high: it also contained crumbling bones. In the openings of the kokhim there were grooves cut for the ashlar sealing them, which had been plastered within these openings. The sealing-stone of kokh *a* was found *in situ* (its measurements are approximately 0.50 × 0.45 × 0.15 m). On the smooth face of this stone there is a well-preserved drawing in red paint. (*vid.* fig. 11, 1).

The central place in this drawing is occupied by an alcove or niche, depicted as a gate with two pillars; above the two pillars is a gabled roof, the two extremities of which end in *acroteria*. This roof is much larger proportionally than would be proper. The pillars and roof, which are painted in red, are decorated with geometric designs: squares and triangles

where the rock shows, arranged on the pillars symmetrically, one opposite the other.<sup>99</sup> An interesting detail is a round object suspended from the middle of a string fastened by both ends under the gable roof, near its apex; this, no doubt, is the "eternal light" which burns before the ark in the synagogues.<sup>100</sup> In the center of the alcove is a square ark, supported by slender legs, two of which can be seen in front. The ark is depicted as open, with no indication of doors; it has two compartments (above and below the middle line) in each of which is a furled scroll, laid obliquely.<sup>101</sup> The niche is flanked by two seven-branched candelabra, one to a side. Each of these stands on a tripod, and above the branches, can be seen the bar that supports the oil lamps, though the lamps themselves are depicted clearly only in the lefthand Menorah.<sup>102</sup>

The subject portrayed on this sealing-stone is one of the most common in ancient Jewish art; it occurs in synagogues in Palestine and abroad, in catacombs, on tombstones, on gold glass from Rome, etc. In all of these instances we frequently find representations of the Holy Ark ("hekhal") or an Ark between two Menorahs.<sup>103</sup> In this drawing, however, there are several details which deserve special attention: first of all, the fact that the ark is standing within an alcove and not all by itself as is common in similar arks, represented as standing between two Menorahs but with no indication of its usual place in the synagogue. The legs on which the ark stands are reminiscent of those of the arks of Na'aran and Jericho, and a bronze from Na'ane.<sup>104</sup> There is no doubt that in all these cases the intention was to depict a movable ark which usually stood in an alcove in the synagogue,<sup>105</sup> but could be moved if the Torah scrolls kept in it were needed.<sup>106</sup> Finally, mention should be made of the fact that in Rome the ark was usually depicted with its doors open, whereas in the drawing of arks in Palestine (and also of Dura-Europos), and in the one in catacomb no. 4 at Beth She'arim (*vid.* Pl. XXXII), the ark is always depicted with doors closed. However, the ark here is open with no indication whatsoever of doors. There is a similarity, too, between this ark and that in the synagogue (?) depicted on the Bar-Kokhba coins.<sup>107</sup>

A small stone found in the debris on the floor close to the above-mentioned sealing-stone bears on one of its smoothed sides a Hebrew inscription in red paint: "שלום ליודן" (inscription no. 98). This stone fits exactly into the space between the top of the sealing-stone and the ceiling of kokh *a*; thus, it is assumed that it had been placed there, plastered into the opening of the kokh with clay. Thus Judan is probably the person buried in kokh *b*.

At the opening of kokh *b* there was an ashlar similar to that found near the opening of kokh *a*; this stone (0.57 × 0.40 × 0.16 m) was not *in situ* though there is no doubt that it once closed kokh *b* and had been removed by tomb robbers. On the smooth surface of the sealing-stone there is a drawing in red paint (*vid.* fig. 11, 2), quite similar to that

described above. To the right of the drawing is inscription no. 99, painted in red: KY/PAA/NN/A (“Lady Hannah”). The alcove in the center of the drawing, also with Menorahs at either side, differs from that described above. The alcove itself is arched at the top and crowned with a gabled roof (resembling a Syrian gable) resting on pillars and having *acroteria*, as in the above drawing. However, the gabled roof here is drawn with more sense of proportion. Within the arch there is a conch and just under the apex of the gable there is a suspended eternal light.<sup>108</sup> The pillars supporting the gable are drawn as rectangles, decorated at the bottom with geometrical patterns similar to those on holy arks.<sup>109</sup> In the middle of the alcove, below the conch, there is a long, narrow rectangle decorated with the representation of a cord. The explanation which comes to mind in the light of various examples of holy arks, such as those drawn on a stone from the synagogue at Peki’in or the one on the mosaic floor at Beth Alpha,<sup>110</sup> is that this is the closed door of a Holy Ark. But since the rectangle is not at all similar to a door, it is more probable that this is a rolled-up Torah scroll, set upright and bound with a cord. If so, the two drawings depict alcoves in synagogues in which Torah scrolls were kept. In one there is an ark containing two scrolls; in the other there is a large Torah scroll. The artists may well have had actual examples of such alcoves before their eyes, and may have seen them at Beth She‘arim itself.<sup>111</sup> The Menorahs on either side of the alcoves (Fig. 11, 2) stand on tripods, and their branches seem to have supported bars to hold the lamps; now, only the bar of Menorah to the left, with the seven lamps, can be seen.

The shelf of arcosolium 2, hewn in the right wall of room 1, stands about 1.05 m above the floor of the room; it is 1.85 m long and 1.90 m wide; the arch above it is 0.87 m high. Three burial places are hewn in it the length of the arcosolium. The middle burial ( $\beta$ ) is the largest (1.81 m long, 0.51 m wide, and 0.37 m deep), and it is obvious that a wooden coffin had once stood in it. The two other burials ( $\alpha$  and  $\gamma$ ) large rectangular troughs (approximately 1.60–1.70 m long, 0.40 m wide, and 0.28 m deep) have “pillows” near their back walls. In all three burials, only a few bones and sealing-stones were found. In the right wall of the room, beneath the shelf of the arcosolium there are two kokhim *c* opposite *b*, and *d* opposite *a* in the left wall. At the openings of the kokhim there are wide grooves carved in the floor of the room, probably to hold the sealing-stones, though only one was found near the opening of kokh *c*, and that not *in situ*. Kokh *d* (1.70 m long, 0.68 m wide, and 0.79 m high) was found empty, whereas in kokh *c* (1.70 m long, 0.50 m wide, and 0.81 m high) there were a few bones, nails and fragments of nails (no. 51 in the catalogue of finds), indicating that a wooden coffin had stood here.

Room I is connected with room II by an arched passageway (0.60 m long, 1.68 m wide, and 2.34 m high), hewn in the form of a built passage



Fig. 11  
Drawing in red paint on  
sealing stones

with an arch resting on pillars. The front wall, to the right of the passage, is decorated with a high relief of a circle (a wreath?). In the right wall of the arched passage there is a kokh (1.74 m long, 0.61 m wide, and 0.81 m high), with a groove in the floor at its opening. This kokh is similar in form to those in room I.

**Room II** was used only as a corridor from room I to the other rooms in hall M. It is 2.42 m long, 2.75 m wide, and its height from floor to slightly arched ceiling is 2.60 m. An arched passageway (0.33 m long, 1.42 m wide, and 2.15 m high), hewn in its left wall, leads to room III. In the right wall of room II there is a small room (IV) where a wide arched passageway hewn in its back wall (0.62 m long, 1.95 m wide, and 2.44 m high) leads to room V.

**Room III** is of peculiar shape; the workmanship in it is very rough. The room is long and narrow; its back wall is rounded, and the ceiling is vaulted. It is 3.72 m long and 1.48 m wide (near the arched passage); its height from floor to ceiling is 2.08 m. In its left wall there are two arcosolia. The shelf of arcosolium 1 is 0.65 m long and 1.72 m wide; the arch above it is 0.85 m high. A single burial place is hewn the width of the arcosolium; its length being equal to that of the arcosolium; it is 0.38 m wide and 0.29 m deep. In it there were crumbling bones and three sealing-stones, not *in situ*. Arcosolium 2 is very small; its shelf is 1.16 m long and only 0.20 m wide; the arch above it is 0.83 m high. It seems that it was not finished. In the back wall of the room there are two kokhim, one above the other; kokh *a* (1.70 m long) is hewn below the level of the floor of the room, and kokh *b* (1.67 m long) is at a height of only 0.15 m above kokh *a*. The kokhim were found empty. Two breaches in the back wall of the room were made during the hewing of room III; the right wall of this room, however, was not exploited for burials.

**Room IV** has the shape of an irregular rectangle; it is 1.67 m long and 1.75 m wide; its height from floor to ceiling (vaulted, in all directions, except toward the entrance) is 1.95 m. In the back wall of the room there are two kokhim, one beside the other, below floor level. One is large (*b*) and the other smaller (*a*); at their openings there are grooves in the floor for the sealing-stones. Kokh *b* (1.74 m long, 0.62 m wide, and 0.95 m high) is of special interest because, although the sealing-stone had been moved from its place and damaged by tomb robbers, it contained along with crumbling bones thirteen long nails scattered on its bottom (no. 52 in the catalogue of finds), and several whole and broken lamps. These lamps (nos. 53–58) are of types characteristic of the third century and the first half of the fourth century C.E., i.e. period III at Beth She'arim. It would seem that a wooden coffin was employed in Kokh *b*, and that the lamps were placed near the opening before it was closed with a stone. Kokh *a* (0.69 m long, 0.47 m wide, and 0.77 m high) may have been used for the collection of bones or for the burial of a child.

**Room V** is 2.25 m long and 2.50 m wide; its height from floor to slightly arched ceiling is 2.60 m. In the right wall of the room there is a very carelessly hewn arcosolium, the shelf of which stands 1 m above the floor; it is 2.30 m long and 1.50 m wide, and its arch is 0.82 m high. In it there are only two burial places, hewn the length of the arcosolium:  $\alpha$  (2.05 m long, 0.52 m wide, and 0.80 m deep), and  $\beta$  (1.85 m long, 0.39 m wide, and 0.27 m deep). In both burials sealing-stones were found, two of them still *in situ* at the end of burial  $\alpha$ ; they are coated with a thick layer of clay. In the wall of the room, below the shelf of the arcosolium, there is a kokh (1.73 m long, 0.50 m wide, and 0.80 m high); at its opening there is a

groove in the floor for the sealing-stone.

**Room VI.** In the left wall of room V, an opening leads to room VI, which is roughly and carelessly hewn. It is 3.50 m long and approximately 2.05 m wide; its height from floor to arched ceiling is 2.05 m. The left and the back walls of the room are rounded, and only the right wall is cut approximately straight. The room contains a single arcosolium in the left wall — and two kokhim: one (*a*) in the back wall and the other (*b*) in the right wall. The arcosolium is roughly and carelessly hewn. Its shelf is 0.52 m long and 1.73 m wide; the arch above it is 0.70 m high. It contains a single burial place, the length of which occupies the width of the shelf. It is 0.35 m wide and 0.28 m deep. The kokhim are of approximately equal size (1.60 m long, 0.52 m—0.58 m wide, and 0.82 m high). All these burials were robbed in antiquity.

**Room VII** is cut into the back wall of room V, with no special passage. The room is small, wide at its entrance and narrower towards the back wall; it is approximately 1.50 m long, 1.90 m wide near the entrance and 1.60 m at the back. Its ceiling, which is vaulted on all sides except towards the entrance, is lower than the ceiling of room V (the height of the room from floor to ceiling is 2.50 m). The walls of this room are more skillfully cut than in the other rooms, except for the spots where there were pockets of flint in the rock (*vid.* Pl. XVI).

In three walls of the room there are arcosolia: (1) in the left wall, (3) in the right wall and (2) in the back wall. A single burial place cut in the shelf of arcosolium 1, which is 0.61 m long and 1.38 m wide; the arch above it is 0.88 m high. The burial was lengthened by extending it into the walls of the arcosolium (it is 1.53 m long, 0.38 m wide and 0.27 m deep). Crumbling bones and two covering stones were found within it. Three burial places were cut the length of the shelf in arcosolium 3, which is 1.75 m long and 1.38 m wide; the height of the arch above it is 0.86 m. One of the burials ( $\gamma$ ) is larger (1.85 m long); its back wall is rounded and continued into the wall of the arcosolium. The two other burials ( $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ ) are of regular size (their average length is 1.62 m); all the burials are 0.31–0.39 m wide and 0.22–0.28 m deep. In the shelf of arcosolium 2 (0.60 m long and 1.45 m wide, the height of the arch above it is 0.80 m) there is a single burial place occupying its width, rounded at one side and continuing into the right wall of the arcosolium (1.55 m long, 0.37 m wide and 0.23 m deep). Kokh *a* is cut into the wall of the room below arcosolium 2, slightly lower than the level of the floor; it is 1.63 m long, 0.53 m wide and 0.78 m high. In the opening of this kokh there is a groove for a sealing-stone. Finally, we may mention a pit-burial hewn in the floor; it occupies the entire length of room VII and part of room V (*vid.* Pl. XVI). The pit-burial is 2.00 m long, 0.60 m wide and 1.82 m deep. At the bottom

of the pit there is a rectangular burial place which had been lengthened towards the bottom (2.10 m long, 0.60 m wide and 0.44 m deep). The ledges left along the long walls of the burial served to support the covering stones. After clearing the pit of the debris accumulated there, it appeared that it had never been used, as no bones or other finds, not even covering stones, were discovered.

Hall M is one of the largest in the catacomb, though it includes only thirty burial places. In this hall there are three types of burials a. arcosolia; b. kokhim; c. pit-burials. Type c is found only in room VII and is probably the latest of all. It seems that at first this hall contained a small number of kokhim and arcosolia, and was intended mainly as a storage place for coffins and ossuaries, most of which were laid on the floor.<sup>112</sup> In any case, we may suppose that the arcosolia in rooms I and VI (and certainly the kokh hewn in the passageway from room I to room II), are from a late period and were added after the hall was complete. The rectangular burial places in the arcosolia and most of the kokhim were used partly as repositories for wooden coffins (remnants of which were found in several burial places) and partly for burials without coffins. In this hall we found no signs whatsoever of bone gathering in the arcosolia or in the kokhim. Examination of the breaches in the back wall of room III, and study of the general nature of the hall, aided in determining the date of hall M. It transpires that room III here was hewn before room III in hall K, i.e., before the middle of the third century C.E. — which makes it one of the earliest halls in the catacomb. As for the general nature of the hall, one should note that it is more spacious than any other hall, and work on it certainly began before the need to save space was felt in this catacomb. The start of work on hall M can not be dated exactly, though there are indications that this occurred about one generation before the hewing of hall K, i.e. at the beginning of the third century C.E. It is quite possible that work on it began even earlier. In a later period, apparently in the second half of the third century, several arcosolia, kokhim and the pit-burial were added, while in several rooms the burial places began to be crowded. To this late period also belong the inscriptions and drawings in red paint in room I; this is true also of the lamps from kokh *b* in room IV. The members of the family buried in room I during this period bear biblical Hebrew names (Isaac, Hananiah, Judah-Judan, Hannah). The inscriptions in this room are Hebrew and Greek; the common greeting “Shalom” is written in Hebrew letters, and the motifs of the drawings on the burial stones are all Jewish. From this point of view it is interesting to refer to the drawings and inscriptions in red paint in halls G and K. There are finds which would indicate that this hall was used for burial after period IIIB at Beth She‘arim.

**Hall N**, the largest hall in catacomb no. 1, is cut into the right wall of the

upper corridor (*vid.* Plan 5 and Pls. XVII–XVIII). The entrance to it is 1.00 m high, 0.40 m long and 0.55 m wide. The door frame, which is built in the same manner as those of the previous halls, was found *in situ*, with the door still able to turn on its hinges (*vid.* Pl. V, 3–4). The face of the lintel and the doorposts is decorated entirely differently from those found on any other entrance in this catacomb. The decoration of the lintel consists of a projecting margin, inside which runs a band carved in an egg-and-dart pattern. This decoration frames the upper edge of the lintel, both of its sides and continues down the length of the doorposts. To encompass the rectangular panel of the lintel, its lower edge is decorated with a carved band with a rope pattern, which also runs down the length of the doorposts and frames the actual entrance. The rectangular panel within the lintel frame is plain and bears no inscription. The door is decorated with relief carvings of the common type. The space between the door frame and the rock wall was filled with stones and clay, and plastered on the exterior. The uppermost stone of the righthand doorpost, which had fallen into the hall, was restored by us to its place (*vid.* Pl. V, 4).

A step cut in the threshold, and a flight of three narrow steps hewn in rock, lead down to the floor of the hall, about 1.10 m below the level of the corridor level. Hall N includes nine burial rooms: four (I, II, VI and IX) cut in a row, one behind the other, and the others in the walls of rooms II and VI, to their left (III and VII) and right (IV–V) and VIII). The overall length of the hall is 11.60 m, its maximum width is 8.10 m.



Fig. 12  
Graffito of a ship with sail

**Room I**, which is narrow near the entrance and widens near the back wall, is 2.45 m long and 2.10 m wide (on the average), and 2.37 m high from floor to slightly arched ceiling. The walls of the room are skillfully cut and dressed, whereas workmanship of the roof is of lesser quality. Everything here points to efforts towards a symmetrical arrangement of the burials in the walls (the arcosolia and the kokhim), with various drawings and reliefs to decorate them. Two arcosolia are hewn in opposite walls of the room; arcosolium (1) in the left wall, and arcosolium (2) in the right wall.

Arcosolium 1 (1.40 m long and 1.70 m wide); consists of two shelves hewn lengthwise; they stand about 1.45 m above the floor of the room, and between them is a very narrow passage which stands only about 0.55 m above the floor level (*vid.* Pl. XVII, 2). Along each of the shelves there is a hewn burial place:  $\alpha$  (1.82 m long, 0.54 m wide and 0.29 m deep) to the left, and  $\beta$  (1.67 m long, 0.50 m wide and 0.84 m deep) to the right. In the wall to the right of arcosolium I there is kokh *a* (1.54 m long), which is raised about 0.20 m above the floor of the room and is rounded at the back. The front of the kokh is emphasised by a smooth frame (*vid.* Pl. XVIII, 3). Since all these burials had been robbed, nothing was found in them except a few bones in burial  $\alpha$  and sealing-stones in burial  $\beta$ . A number of graffiti can be seen on the walls of the room to the right of the arcosolium, and on the outer wall of the burial which was slightly damaged: a. a six-petalled rosette within a compass-drawn circle; b. three six-petalled rosettes drawn by hand — some of them left uncompleted; c. an incomplete wheel; d. a circle. In addition, two inscriptions were thinly incised in the wall: one of them (no. 101) consists of the word “Shalom” written from the top downwards; it seems that the second one (no. 101a), which is very blurred, had this same word (*vid.* Pls. XVII, 2; XVIII, 3). Of special interest is the high relief of a Menorah (0.65 m high) set on a tripod, carved above the frame of kokh *a* (*vid.* Pl. XVIII, 3). The stem and the seven branches issuing from it, especially the tops of the branches, were well smoothed and finished, whereas the spaces between the branches were left rough to add emphasis.

Two shelves are hewn the length of arcosolium 2 (2.55 m long and 1.75 m wide); they stand about 1.30 m above the floor of the room and between them is a narrow passage leading to another arcosolium (3) hewn in the back wall of arcosolium 2. A burial place is hewn the length of each shelf. The two burials are negligently cut and their short walls are rounded (average measurements: 1.72 m long, 0.42 m wide and 0.30 m deep). A burial place is hewn the width of the shelf in arcosolium 3 (1.48 m) as well. In all three burials there were sealing-stones; two such stones covering the back half of burial  $\beta$ , were found *in situ*, sealed to its walls and to the arcosolium wall with clay. A detail observed in this, as well as in other arcosolia is worth noting: inside the arcosolium the lower

sections of the walls are left rough so as to provide a better hold for the clay, while the walls in the upper sections are well smoothed (*vid.* Pl. XVIII, 1). On the outer wall of the shelf of burial  $\alpha$  in arcosolium 2, there is a graffito of a ship sailing from left to right (fig. 12). It is somewhat similar to the sail-less ship drawn on the wall in hall A (*vid.* p. 52), though here the narrow prow rises higher above the deck than the stern, while close to the prow there are lines radiating from the deck indicating the sail. Greek inscription no. 102 cut on the outer wall of burial  $\beta$  mentions that it contained the remains of a person named Julianos. In the wall of the room, left of arcosolium 2 there are two kokhim (*b* and *c*), one above the other and opposite kokh *a*. Kokh *b*, the bottom one, stands about 0.25 m above floor level and is 1.62 m long; kokh *c*, which is cut 0.25 m above *b*, is larger (1.82 m long). The burials were robbed completely, but it seems that in these two kokhim, and also in kokh *a*, the bones had been deposited in wooden ossuaries. This is supported by the presence, among the debris on the floor near the kokhim, of several iron angles (no. 63 in the catalogue of finds) as well as a piece of bronze (no. 59), all of which are remnants of wooden ossuaries scattered by the tomb robbers.

An arched passage (0.50 m long, 1.45 m wide, and 1.97 m high) leads from room I to room II. Its front wall was decorated with two high reliefs arranged symmetrically on both sides of the passage arch, at a height approximately 1.50 m above the floor of the room. Each of the reliefs represented a bowl with fruit projecting from it. The relief on the left is only partially preserved; the upper rim of the bowl is damaged, as is the fruit (*vid.* Pl. XVIII, 3); the relief carved on the right side of the passage is completely preserved on a broken chunk of the rock wall, found on the floor (*vid.* Pl. XVII, 2).

The passage is hewn in the form of an arch supported by engaged pillars (*vid.* Pl. XVII, 1–2). The pillar on the left (0.60 m high) is spirally fluted and provided with a round, double-moulded base resting on a square pedestal. The pillar is topped by a trapezoidal capital supporting a kind of abacus decorated on its lower edge with a rope-like moulding. The abacus seems to support the arch of the passage. The front of the capital is decorated with stylized leaves carved in low relief and symmetrically arranged on either side of a circle at the center. The leaves are perpendicularly set and elongated, with veins indicated by grooves. Above the two leaves, at the corners, there are small circles. There is no parallel to this decoration on the capitals of the Roman period, but it would seem that the mason intended to imitate a capital decorated with leaves and rosettes similar to those employed in the decoration of the stone ossuaries found in Jerusalem.<sup>113</sup> On the narrow face of the capital, facing room 1, there is a common chevron V pattern, inverted (*vid.* Pl. XVIII, 3).

The series of graffiti on the arch of the passage above the capital (*vid.* Pl. XVIII, 2) deserves special attention: a. an incomplete Menorah of

which only the central branch and the three right hand branches can be seen; b. a Menorah with seven branches standing on a square base; c. the thinly incised contour of an *ethrog* (citron) placed to the right of the Menorah base; d. an incomplete amphora and, below it, e. another amphora with a narrow neck, handles stretching from rim to shoulder and a stump base; f. an upright *lulab*. Such a series of motifs, cultic objects and common Jewish themes, is very common in Jewish catacombs and synagogues, as well as on tombstones and other Jewish objects, especially gold-glass. These very same cultic objects appear in the same arrangement — sometimes with the addition of a holy ark, scroll or similar object. Moreover, we find parallels for this set, exact even in the details of the drawings of the Menorah, amphora, *ethrog* and *lulab*.<sup>114</sup> This, then, is the prevalent series of motifs in Jewish art in the East as well as in the West.

On the right side of the passage only a part of the pillar supporting the arch is preserved. The mason managed to finish the pedestal and had started on the decoration of the capital and column when part of the wall was destroyed in a collapse of the rock. The large chunk of rock bearing the graffiti of bowl and fruit, the capital, and the upper part of the pillar was discovered on the floor during clearance of the hall (*vid.* Pl. XVII, 1–2).

**Room II**, which has the form of an irregular rectangle, is 3.15 m long and 2 m wide; its height from floor to flat ceiling is 2.08 m. It was used as a sort of passage between room I and the other burial rooms. Its walls are well finished, though undecorated. On the left wall of the room, near the above-mentioned pillar, there is an incised cross enclosed in an elliptic frame (*vid.* Pl. XVII, 2). This is similar to that of the “horoscope” found at Dura-Europos.<sup>115</sup>

**Room III** is narrow near the entrance and widens gradually towards the back wall; it is 2.20 m long and 1.70 m wide (on the average); its height from floor to slightly arched ceiling is 1.75 m. In the walls on both sides of the entrance there are small arcosolia standing approximately 0.70 m above the floor. Arcosolium 1 is in the left wall, and arcosolium 2 in the right wall. Each one contains a single burial place cut the width of the shelf (average measurements: 1.60 m long, 0.42 m wide, and 0.24 m deep). In the slightly rounded back wall of the room there are two kokhim at floor level: kokh *a* on the left side (1.52 m long), angling off somewhat to the left, and kokh *b* on the right (1.65 m long), angling off to the right. This manner of cutting kokhim into the back wall of a burial room is not common in the catacombs at Beth She‘arim.<sup>116</sup> In the floor of the room, in front of the kokhim, there is a depression running across the entire width of the room, it appears to be an unfinished pit-burial (only 0.16 m deep).

**Room IV** is approximately 2.35 m long and 1.92 m wide; its height from floor to slightly arched ceiling is 1.82 m. The walls and the two arcosolia in them, to the right and left of the entrance, are well finished, although asymmetrically hewn. Especially well-finished are the left wall and arcosolium 2 cut in it. The length of this arcosolium (1.58 m long and 1.75 m wide) is occupied by two shelves which stand about 0.65 m above the floor and are separated by a wide passage only slightly raised above floor level (*vid.* Pl. XVII, 3). In each of the shelves there is a burial place set lengthwise: one of them ( $\beta$ ) is very short (1.28 m) while the other ( $\alpha$ ) is longer (1.51 m). In the “pillow” cut at the back wall of the latter there is a round depression for the head. The burials are 0.45 m wide and 0.25–0.23 m deep. The shelf of arcosolium 1 stands about 0.80 m above the floor; it is 0.65 m long and 1.85 m wide. In the shelf there is a burial place cut the width of the shelf. The burial place is 0.44 m wide and 0.30 m deep, and contains a “pillow” for the head. All the burials in room IV were completely robbed, so that nothing was left in them but a few sealing-stones.

**Room V** is situated in the back wall of room IV. It is rectangular and its floor, the level of which is slightly higher than that of room IV, rises towards the back wall. Its walls and arched ceiling are skilfully dressed and smoothed (*vid.* Pl. XVII, 3). The room is 1.92 m long and 1.37 m wide; its maximum height is 1.70 m. In the walls there are three arcosolia which stand about 0.70 m above floor level; arcosolium 1 is in the right wall, 2 in the left wall, and 3 in the back wall. The length of arcosolium 1 (2.45 m long and 1.75 m wide), there are two shelves which stand about 0.75 m above floor level. Between them is a narrow passage only slightly raised above the floor. Each of the shelves contains burial place; the left one ( $\alpha$ ) is 1.58 m long, while the right one ( $\gamma$ ) is 1.64 m; both are 0.45 m wide and 0.32 m deep (on the average). Near the back wall in either burial place there is a “pillow” with a rounded depression for the head. Near the back wall of the arcosolium there is an additional burial ( $\delta$ ), 1.92 m long, 0.39 m wide and 0.25 m deep. At a later time the entrance of the narrow passage between the shelves was blocked with a stone, and thus turned into a very small, 1.10 m long burial place ( $\beta$ ). It seems to have been used for a child. The length of arcosolium 2 (ca. 1.55 m wide and long) is divided between two shelves separated by a narrow passage which is slightly raised above the floor of the room.

Each shelf contains a burial place cut its length; burial  $\alpha$  is 1.43 m long, while burial  $\beta$  is 1.36 m long; their average width is 0.40 m and their depth 0.25 m. In either burial there is a “pillow” placed near the back wall. In arcosolium 3, in the back wall of the room (1.78 m long, and 1.25 m wide), there are two shelves raised about 0.75 m above floor level, with a narrow passage between them continuing to the back wall of the

arcosolium (*vid.* Pl. XVII, 3). Each shelf contains an ordinary burial place (1.67 m long, 0.40 m wide and 0.26 m deep, on the average), near the back wall of which is a “pillow” with a rounded depression for the head. All these burials were plundered so that they contain nothing but crumbling bones, pottery and glass fragments from the Roman period.

Between room II and room IV, hewn in its back wall, there is an arched passage 0.65 m long, 1.40 m wide, and 0.85 m high (*vid.* Pl. XVII, 1). In the rock on the left side of arch of the passage, at about a man's height, there is a graffito reading ΑΒΓΔΕΖΗΘ (inscription no. 103). This is the only *Abecedarium* ever found in a Jewish tomb, whether at Beth She'arim or any other site. Such inscriptions, whether in Greek or in Latin and similar to the one just described, are very common in non-Jewish and Christian tombs in both the West and the East (as at Dura-Europos). They were thought to have apotropaic powers, i.e., to ward off evil.<sup>117</sup>

**Room VI** has the form of an irregular rectangle; it is 1.80 m wide and is of approximately the same length; its height from floor to arched ceiling is 1.92 m. Like room II, it was used only as a passage to the three rooms hewn in its walls: room VII in its left wall; room VIII in its right wall; and room IX in its back wall. There are no arched passages leading into these rooms. On the smooth wall to the right of the entrance to room VII, there are the thinly incised lines of a blurred Hebrew (?) inscription (no. 104), and beside it two concentric circles.

**Room VII** is narrow near the entrance (1.45 m) and widens toward the back wall (about 2.93 m), in which is hewn its only arcosolium. The room is 2.10 m long and the height from floor to arched ceiling is 1.55 m. Two shelves separated by a narrow passage are hewn the length of the arcosolium. The shelves stand about 0.75 m above the floor level and each contains a burial place ( $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ ; both 1.74 m long, 0.40 m wide and about 0.21 m deep). The narrow passage between them, raised about 0.40 m above the floor, leads to a third shelf hewn the width of the arcosolium, near its back wall; this shelf also contains a single burial place ( $\gamma$ ; 1.65 m long, 0.38 m wide, and 0.28 m deep). Only one burial ( $\alpha$ ) has a “pillow” cut near its back wall.

**Room VIII** is 1.92 m long and 1.68 m wide; its height from floor to slightly arched ceiling is 1.67 m. In its left wall there is a small arcosolium (1) whose shelf stands about 0.75 m above the floor; it is 0.60 m long, and 1.61 m wide. It has a single burial place cut its width. The shelf of arcosolium 2, at the back wall of the room, stands about 0.85 m above floor level (1.40 m long and 1.46 m wide), and contains two burial places hewn across its width (their length is equal to the width of the shelf;

they are 0.40 m wide and 0.26 m deep). An attempt to cut a large pit-burial occupying almost the entire length of the room near the wall of arcosolium 1, was abandoned at a depth of about 0.20 m.

**Room IX**, hewn in the back wall of the hall (*vid.* Pl. XVII, 1), is narrow near the entrance and widens slightly on the right side; it is 2.20 m long and approximately 0.70 m wide; its height from floor to arched ceiling is 1.85 m. Three arcosolia are hewn in its walls; arcosolium (1) in the left wall; (2) in the back wall; and (3) in the right wall. Two shelves are hewn the length of arcosolium 1 (2.30 m long, 1.70 m wide), and stand about 0.90 m above floor level; each contains a rectangular burial place ( $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ : 1.68–1.75 m long, 0.45 m wide and 0.27–0.33 m deep). The narrow passage between them, which is raised only slightly above the floor, leads to a shelf hewn the width of the arcosolium near its back wall. This third shelf also contains a single burial place ( $\gamma$ : 1.85 m long, 0.37 m wide and 0.26 m deep). The shelf of arcosolium 2 (0.62 m long, 1.55 m wide) stands only about 0.55 m above floor level. A single burial place is cut across its entire width and continues into the left (southern) wall of the arcosolium; the burial place is 1.75 m long, 0.41 m wide and 0.27 m deep. Near its right wall is a specially cut depression in which two identical glass flasks were buried, beneath a layer of earth and clay (no. 79 in the catalogue of finds). This find points to a custom to which no parallel has been found in the catacombs here.

Hall N, includes in its nine rooms a total of thirty-four burial places, besides two incomplete pit-burials in rooms III and VIII. The most common type of burial in this large hall is the arcosolium with two raised shelves separated by a narrow, usually short passage, often leading to a third shelf at its back. This type of arcosolium with two or three shelves is common at Beth She'arim. We have already discussed the burial rooms dating from the third and fourth centuries found at various sites in the country and containing arcosolia of the type dealt with above.<sup>118</sup> In addition to this type of burial, we find in hall N arcosolia of the regular type containing one or two rectangular troughs, as well as kokhim. The pit-burials here were certainly added very late, probably because of the shortage of space; they seem, however, to have been left incomplete and were never used. All the burials, except the kokhim, were apparently used for primary burial without coffins, as there was sufficient place (in most of them) for burying the complete body, and no remains of coffins were found. In some of the burials there are "pillows" with depressions for the head. It seems that only in the kokhim were the dead buried in wooden ossuaries (or coffins), at least in those of room I. As regards the date of hall N, it should first be noted that it is similar in several aspects to hall M, since its original plan was also that of burial rooms grouped around central passage rooms (or corridors) without any thought to space

economy. The crowding of burial places, as evident in the back rooms, occurred later when the number of burials in this hall increased. It should also be mentioned that the types of burials discussed above certainly date from the third and fourth centuries C.E., and that the pottery is all from period III at Beth She'arim. Thus, it can be concluded that hall N was hewn in the first half of the third century C.E., (possibly at its beginning). We do not know when burial in it ceased, though we may assume that the hall served as a burial place for several generations, possibly even until the end of period IIIB at Beth She'arim.

**Hall O** is hewn in the left wall, at the end of the upper corridor opposite hall N (*vid.* Plan 5). Its entrance is 0.45 m long, 0.70 m wide and 0.87 m high. The door frame was built in the manner described above, as in other halls, and is especially similar to that of hall D (*vid. supra*, p. 65). The two doorposts flanking the entrance jut out from the threshold, and the outer face of each is carved in the form of a pillar with capital and base, whereas the lintel is plain (*vid.* Pl. V, 3 and fig. 8 on p. 42). The door — which is not decorated is preserved *in situ* and can still turn on its hinges.

The floor of the hall stands about 0.80 m below the level of the corridor and is reached by descending a step cut in the threshold and two additional rock-cut steps. The hall includes six burial rooms, two of which (I and V) are hewn in a row one behind the other; two (II and VI) are cut in the left (western) wall of room I, one (III) in the right wall of the same room, and another (VI), in the left wall of room V. The entire hall is 6.80 m long. Its walls and ceiling are mostly rough, though in some isolated places the walls are finished and even decorated with reliefs and graffiti.

**Room I**, the main room of the hall, has the form of an irregular rectangle, 3.80 m long, 2.00 m wide and 2.25 m high from floor to flat ceiling. The only arcosolium (1) in this room is hewn at the end of its right wall; it is 4.20 m long and 1.50 m wide (near the wall in which it is hewn). Its length is divided into shelves separated by a narrow passage. The shelves stand about 1.10 m above floor level, and each contains a burial place ( $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ : approximately 1.80 m long, 0.80 m wide and 0.30 m deep). The narrow passage between the two shelves, which is only slightly raised above the floor, leads to a large shelf behind, which has four burial places hewn in it — three the length of the arcosolium ( $\gamma$ ,  $\delta$ , and  $\eta$ : 1.50 m long, 0.39–0.48 m wide and 0.25–0.30 m deep) and one across its width near the back wall ( $\zeta$ ; 1.80 m long, 0.46 m wide and 0.21 m deep). In the latter burial, there is a “pillow” with a depression for the head. Crumbling bones and sherds were found in burial  $\alpha$ , whereas in the other burials only the sealing-stones were left, some of them *in situ*. The Greek inscription (no. 105) incised on the wall above the arch of the arcosolium, and painted in red,

has been damaged by water, but traces of it are still quite visible.

The back wall of room I, to the left of the arched passage to room V, is decorated with the rough carving of a Menorah with six branches (*vid.* Pl. XIX, 2). Of the sunken frame around it, which was intended to emphasize the Menorah, only the left side was completed. The six upright branches issuing from the stem are separated by deep, broad grooves. It is noteworthy that Menorahs with six branches are rare in the catacombs at Beth She'arim (e.g. *vid. supra*, p. 38).<sup>119</sup>

**Room II**, which is very roughly hewn, has the form of a narrow, elongated rectangle (2.30 m long and 0.75 m wide). The ceiling of the room and the three arcosolia in it — 1 in the left wall; 2 in the back wall; and 3 in the right wall — were all badly damaged when a section of the left wall of the upper corridor collapsed. The arcosolia are hewn the length of the walls, and each has a single burial place. On the outer wall of arcosolium 1, below the shelf, we found a rough graffito of a Menorah with seven branches, four to the right and three to the left of the stem. The branches are separated by thin grooves and meet at a sharp angle, hardly appearing to issue from the stem.

**Room III** is 1.83 m long and approximately 1.30 m wide; its height from floor to arched ceiling is 1.88 m. The walls are not smoothly dressed and the two arcosolia 1 to the left, and 2 to the right, are not symmetrically opposite one another. Both arcosolia stand about 1 m above floor level. In the shelf of arcosolium 1, which is 0.53 m long and 1.65 m wide, a burial place is hewn across its width (its length corresponds to the width of the shelf and it is 0.42 m wide and 0.21 m deep). Crumbling bones and sherds were found within.

Arcosolium 2, in the back wall of the room, is negligently hewn. Its shelf stands about 0.85 m above floor level; it is 2.42 m long and 1.25 m wide at the opening, then widening out to about 2.60 m on the right side. The shelf contains four burial places, three ( $\alpha$ - $\gamma$ ) its length and another ( $\delta$ ) behind them, cut across its width (they are 1.55–1.62 m long, 0.37–0.42 m wide and 0.27–0.37 m deep). On the outer wall of the arcosolium, below the shelf, there is a Menorah flanked by two pillars, carved in high relief; this relief occupies almost the entire wall of the arcosolium, except for a narrow band above it, along the upper edge, and a rough area below (*vid.* Pl. XIX, 3). The Menorah has the form of a semicircle resting with its convex side on a short stem which seems to issue from the rough rock near the floor of the room. Around the base of the semicircular section of the Menorah and surrounding stem there is a wide, sunken frame; the branches issuing from the stem are separated from one another and from the frame by grooves. Only the three branches on its left side are clearly visible; the branches of the right side are slightly blurred or were never

completed, whereas the central branch is lacking altogether, or possibly was never carved. The two pillars flanking the Menorah are also carved in relief, though they appear, also, to be unfinished. The shelf of arcosolium 3 is 0.74 m long and 1.42 m wide, and here too, a single burial place is cut across its width. Since the burial place is slightly longer than the width of the shelf, it continues into the left wall of the arcosolium; it is 0.55 m wide and 0.33 m deep.

The small **room IV** (2.10 m long, 1.60 m wide and 1.85 m high from floor to arched ceiling) is roughly hewn and contains no burial places. It may have been realized that the rock of the wall was too weak and that beyond were burial places belonging to the rooms on the left (room II) and right (VI). Another assumption is that the room was intended initially for storing coffins or collected bones (in ossuaries?). The breach in the section of floor of room IV near hall M dates, no doubt, from the time the room was hewn.

**Room V**, in the back wall of the previous room, is cut in the form of an irregular square; it is 1.62 m long and approximately 1.68 m wide; its height from floor to slightly arched ceiling is 2.00 m. In its back wall there is a small incomplete arcosolium (1), and in its right wall a large arcosolium (2). In arcosolium 1, the arch and the shelf (which stands about 1.10 m above floor level) are entirely finished, though a large fissure in the shelf and the back wall caused the interruption of work; no burial place was cut into the shelf. The graffito on the wall of the arcosolium was also left incomplete; it seems that it was intended to depict a large ship, but only the curved outline of the keel, running in one sweeping line from one end of the arcosolium wall to the other, can be distinguished. The shelf of arcosolium 2 (2.20 m long, 1.45 m wide and 0.80 m high to the top of the arch above it) stands about 1 m above floor level. It contains four burial places: three ( $\alpha$ - $\gamma$ ) cut its length, and another ( $\delta$ ) behind them, cut the width of the arcosolium (average measurements: 1.40 m long, 0.35 m wide and approximately 0.30 m deep). Only sealing-stones and a few bones were found in them. Most of the outer wall of the arcosolium, below the shelf, is decorated in shallow relief, preserved in its entirety except for the upper part, which apparently broke during its execution (or was never carved). The relief seems to depict a ship from the side (*vid.* Pl XIX, 1). One can see the curved keel; at the extremities are the stern and prow, and from its center a straight mast rises vertically, indicated by a wide, grooved band. The mast is apparently supported by two sheets, fore and aft, indicated by narrow, grooved bands running obliquely to the ends of the curved keel. These details are common in representations of ships in Eastern art and in the drawings of boats and ships at Beth She'arim; because the upper part of

the relief is missing, however, no conclusions can be drawn as to what type of vessel was intended.<sup>120</sup>

**Room VI** is cut into the left wall of room V. It is rectangular, with the floor raised slightly above that of room V. It is 1.90 m long and approximately 1.16 m wide; its height from floor to slightly arched ceiling is 1.60 m. It contains three arcosolia: 1 out into the left wall; 2 in the back wall; and 3 in the right wall. All three arcosolia stand about 0.95 m above floor level. The shelf of arcosolium 1 is 0.62 m long and 1.50 m wide; the height of the arch is 0.73 m. Across its width there is a burial place, the length of which is equal to the width of the shelf. The shelf of arcosolium 3 is 0.60 m long and 1.36 m wide; the height of the arch above it is 0.90 m. The burial place across its width is continued some distance into the left wall of the arcosolium. Both these burials are 0.43 m wide and 0.24 m deep. On the outer wall of arcosolium 3, below the shelf, there is a graffito of a Menorah consisting of three concentric semicircles, and a vertical line representing the stem. Such representations of Menorahs are frequent at Beth She'arim. Along the shelf of arcosolium 2 (1.70 m long and 1 m wide), there are two burial places (1.56 m long, 0.38 m wide, and 0.52 m deep). In none of the three arcosolia was there anything besides several sealing-stones.

Hall O includes in its six rooms a total of twenty-four burial places. The type of arcosolium usual in this hall has a single shelf with one or four rectangular troughs.

The only exception is arcosolium 1 in room I, the length of which are cut two shelves separated by a narrow passage leading to an additional shelf, situated at the back of the arcosolium. This type of arcosolium is found in halls M and N, where the back shelf is widened to contain four burial places. Noteworthy in hall O is the lack of kokhim or pit-burials as well as the absence of "pillows" in the burial places, except for the special burial in arcosolium 1 of room I. Also unusual is the existence in this hall of a central chamber from which the secondary, side rooms are entered. An interesting detail here is the lack of burials in chamber IV, which tentatively is assumed to have been used for the storage of collected bones.

In the dating of hall O, its similarity to halls M and N is significant in several respects. Also of note is the small number of burials in relation to the size of the rooms (except for arcosolium 1 in room I, which is more crowded). It can, therefore, be supposed that the hall is early and was cut before a serious lack of burial space was felt in this catacomb. Furthermore, the fissure running from the floor of room IV to the ceiling of room IV in hall M indicates that hall O is later than hall M. It seems, then, that hall O was cut before the middle of the third century C.E. and was used for burial over several generations. The general nature of the hall, the

scattered finds and a Greek inscription point also to this date. In any case, it appears that the hall ceased to be used prior to the middle of the fourth century C.E., for there is not even a single find from this hall to testify to the continuation of burial here after period III at Beth She'arim. In conclusion, it should be mentioned that the pre-eminence accorded to the Menorah among the decorations in this hall is witness of the Jewish spirit of the family whose burial it was.

**Hall P** is cut into the back wall of the upper corridor (*vid.* Plan 5). The door frame (0.82 m high, 0.45 m long and 0.55 m wide) is built like those of halls D and O, and the outer face of the doorposts is similarly carved (*vid.* Pl. V, 3: cf. *supra* pp. 65, 124). The frame is well preserved, with the door still able to turn on its hinges; the door and lintel are smooth and plain on the outside. From the low, narrow entrance, a step cut in the threshold, as well as two rock-cut steps, lead down to the floor of the hall, which stands 0.50 m below the level of the corridor. The bottom step is actually part of a ledge running the entire length of the wall of the entrance, from whence it turns the corner and continues the entire length of the right wall of the first room and continues the length of the right wall of the room and part of the length of the left wall. The hall includes two rooms in a row, and is 7.60 m long.

**Room I** is an irregular rectangle which widens toward the back wall; it is 3.70 m long and 2.10 m wide near the entrance wall; its height from floor to slightly arched ceiling is 2.70 m. The walls are well dressed and smooth, for the most part, whereas the ceiling is dressed in the regular manner and not smoothed. Separating the walls on the right and left and the ends of the arch of the ceiling, there is a horizontal band cut into the rock (as in hall C and G). In the walls flanking the entrance, there are two arcosolia (1 and 2) in the left wall and two (3 and 4) opposite them, in the right wall; they stand about 1.25 m (on the left side) to 1.50 m (on the right side) above floor level. Access to the arcosolia was facilitated by the low shelf mentioned above, running around most of the room (*vid.* Pl. XX, 1) at a height of about 0.30 m above the floor.

Three small rectangular burial places are negligently hewn into the shelf of arcosolium 1 (approximately 1.55 m long and wide), placed one beside the other the length of the arcosolium (their average length is 1.35–1.45 m); these were probably used for collecting bones or for children. Close to the left corner of the room, in the wall below arcosolium 1, there is a small *kokh a*; (0.73 m long, 0.54 m wide and 0.80 m high), which was closed with a slab. On its floor were found collected bones. Across the width of the shelf in arcosolium 2 was cut a single rectangular grave. The shelf is 0.70 m long and 1.80 m wide at the outer side, and it widens toward the interior. The length of the burial place equals the

width of the shelf; it is 0.45 m wide and 0.30 m deep. In both arcosolia (1 and 2) there were only displaced sealing stones.

Along the shelf of arcosolium 3 (1.75 m long and 1.42 m wide) there are three burial places (average measurements: 1.50–1.60 m long, 0.37 m wide and approximately 0.25 m deep). Two of them ( $\alpha$  and  $\gamma$ ) have “pillows” with depressions for the head: in burial  $\alpha$  it is placed near the back wall; in burial  $\gamma$  near the front wall. In the middle burial ( $\beta$ ), there were gathered bones surrounded by iron angles, small nails and wooden splinters (no. 67 in the catalogue of finds), indicating the former existence here of a wooden ossuary.

Two burial places ( $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ : 1.65 m long, approximately 0.45 m wide and 0.26–0.35 m deep) are carelessly cut into the shelf of arcosolium 4 (1.85 m long and 1.50 m wide). Near the back wall of burial  $\beta$  there is a “pillow” with a small rounded depression for the head. Sealing-stones were found in the burials; one of them, covered with a thick layer of clay, was found *in situ* at the back of burial  $\alpha$ . On the outer wall of this arcosolium, below the shelf, there is a graffito of a ship (*vid.* Pl. XX, 1, 2). This ship is presented in profile, sailing from left to right. The keel is represented by a single curved line, drawn from prow to stern. On the deck, which is indicated by two parallel lines, there is a sort of a cabin or tent (which occupies two-thirds of the deck space with a flat roof supported by uprights, of which two are presented en face. Roof and beams are indicated by strips with a criss-cross pattern; similar strips decorate the hull of the ship.<sup>121</sup> We may note that cabins and tents on ships are often mentioned in talmudic literature,<sup>122</sup> and they were common in ancient ships, in general.<sup>123</sup> The two very small protuberances placed on deck to the right of the cabin,<sup>124</sup> and the branches at the extremities of both prow and stern, are of unknown significance. Such branches, apparently palm fronds, appear also in the drawings of ships at Dura-Europos.<sup>125</sup> This ship — like several others at Beth She‘arim — has no sail, oars or rudder. Most certainly the artist intended to depict a small vessel, probably employed for the transport of the dead to the Holy Land.<sup>126</sup>

An arched passage, 0.80 m long, 1.05 m wide and 1.80 m high, leads from room I to room II. The end wall of room I, above the passage, was used for arcosolia and was decorated with unusual reliefs (*vid.* Pl. XX, 1). The two small arcosolia, symmetrically placed on the left (5) and the right (6) of the wall above the arched passage, are cut about 2.05 m above floor level. Across the width of the shelf of arcosolium 5 (0.58 m long and 1.18 m wide) there is a burial place which occupies almost the entire shelf and even continues slightly into the right wall of the arcosolium. The shelf of arcosolium 6 (0.64 m long and 1.36 m wide) also contains a single burial place, cut across its width and entering deeply into the left wall of the arcosolium (the length of the burial is 1.52 m). In this burial place

there is a “pillow” with a depression for the head. It is clear that the burial in arcosolium 6 was a primary burial, whereas the one in arcosolium 5 was probably intended for bone gathering. Obviously both these burials could have been reached only with ladders. The portion of wall separating the two arcosolia is decorated with the high relief of a bowl filled with fruit (the latter broken off), similar to those found in hall N (*vid. supra*, p. 119); below the bowl there is a narrow projecting band (about 5 cm), running along the edge of the arch of the passage and framing it. This arch has a definite horseshoe shape to it; it, too, is an unusual feature at Beth She‘arim, though this type of arch is found in an isolated instance in Syria, as well as in the Sassanian architecture of approximately the same period as at Beth She‘arim.<sup>127</sup>

**Room II** has the shape of an irregular rectangle which narrows towards the back wall; it is approximately 2.10 m long, and its height from floor to arched ceiling is 1.72 m. In the walls of the room there are three arcosolia, standing about 0.80–0.85 m above floor level arcosolium 1 in the left wall, 2 in the back wall, and 3 in the right wall. Arcosolium 1 is carelessly cut and its shelf (approximately 1.05 m long and with a maximum width of 2.03 m) contains two burial places cut its width, one behind the other: burial  $\alpha$ , which is large, occupies the entire width of the shelf and even continues into the walls of the arcosolium (it is 2.08 m long); burial  $\beta$  is smaller (1.72 m long). The burials are respectively 0.39 m and 0.37 m wide, and 0.29 m and 0.26 m deep respectively. In burial  $\alpha$  there were crumbling bones along with nails (no. 42 in the catalogue of finds) and fragments of iron angles, i.e., the remains of a wooden ossuary. In burial  $\beta$  only bones were found. The sealing-stones of the two burials were preserved *in situ*; they had been plastered over with a layer of clay. On the outer wall of the arcosolium there are three inscriptions in red paint: a Greek inscription of one line, on the left side (no. 106); a second Greek inscription of two lines, on the right side (no. 107); and a Hebrew inscription (no. 108) painted in dark red, situated to the right of inscription no. 107, and even overlapping its first line (*vid. Pl. XXI, 3*). There is another Greek inscription (no. 109) painted in red within the arcosolium, on the right wall above burial  $\alpha$ . From the Greek inscriptions we learn that this arcosolium contained the remains of Isaac (son of) Thoutha, and Jacob (son of) Thoutha. The Hebrew inscription is later and relates, perhaps, to the bones deposited in the ossuary in burial  $\alpha$ , after it was emptied for a secondary burial.

The shelf of arcosolium 2 was widened to the right as the need for additional burial places arose: it is 1.95 m long is as wide on the outside as the width of the back wall of the room (1.10 m), and it widens towards the inside to about 2.75 m. It contains five burial places hewn the length of the arcosolium: the three foremost burials ( $\alpha$ – $\gamma$ ) are 1.70 m long,

1.40 m wide, and 0.24–0.29 m deep, whereas the back ones ( $\delta$ ,  $\epsilon$ ) are a bit smaller. In three burials ( $\beta$ ,  $\delta$ , and  $\eta$ ) there are “pillows” near the back walls; in one ( $\delta$ ), the “pillow” even has a rounded depression. In most of the burials only crumbling bones were found, though in one of them ( $\eta$ ) there were iron nails (no. 65), apparently from an ossuary. On the outer wall of the arcosolium, below the shelf, there is a two-line Greek inscription painted in red (no. 114).

Along the shelf of arcosolium 3 (1.80 m long, and 1.92 m wide) there are four burial places (measurements; 1.60 m long, 0.30–0.38 m wide, and 0.24–0.28 m deep), all of which contain “pillows” near the back walls. In four of the burials there were crumbling bones; in burial  $\beta$  there were also two iron nails and splinters of wood. In burial  $\delta$ , seven iron angles, nails and nail fragments (no. 64) were also found. These remains indicate that burials  $\beta$  and  $\delta$  had held wooden ossuaries. In the back wall of arcosolium 3 there is an additional arcosolium (4) whose shelf (1.08 m long, and 1.55 m wide) contains two burial places, one behind the other across the width of the arcosolium: in one ( $\eta$ ) there is a “pillow” for the head, and the other ( $\zeta$ ) contained bones and fragments of nails and iron angles. The outer wall of the arcosolium, below the shelf, bears various inscriptions painted in red. Especially interesting is Greek inscription no. 110, in the center of the wall: ΜΑΓΝΑ/ΓΛΩΣΣΟ/ΚΟΜΩΚΙΤΕ (“Magna lies in the ossuary, Pl. XXI, 4); this seems to belong to burial  $\beta$ , where there were remains of an ossuary. A two-line Greek inscription (no. 111) and, below it, a one-line Greek inscription (no. 113) are painted in red on the left side of the wall; between them is a two-line Hebrew inscription (no. 112).

In summarizing the results of the excavations in hall P, the first thing to be noted is its peculiar character in comparison to the other halls. The first room is characterized mainly by the great height at which the arcosolia are placed, and by the shelves cut the length of the right and left walls. Such shelves are sometimes found in other catacombs, as in catacomb 6. The back wall of room I is unique in its two arcosolia, cut so high above the floor that they can be reached only by ladder, and in its horseshoe moulding carved above the arched passage. In contrast, room II is an ordinary and very crowded burial chamber. Altogether the hall contains twenty-five burials, of which thirteen are in room II (which is much smaller than room I). The usual type of burial here is the arcosolium with a shelf, into which are cut one or several rectangular troughs; the exception is *kokh a* in room I. Most of the burials appear to have been used for primary burial, but a significant number of them contained clear evidence of bone collection in ossuaries; in *kokh a*, however, the bones were deposited without an ossuary. Inscription no. 110 also testifies to the collection of bones in ossuaries. Because of the frequent use of

ossuaries in hall P, we are led to assume that it served as a burial place for persons not resident at Beth She'arim. This assumption is supported by one of the inscriptions (no. 111) in which, in addition to the name Isaac, there appears the term APABENOY which certainly indicates that the deceased had been brought from the city of Arab (cf. *supra*, p. 93).<sup>128</sup>

Especially important for establishing the date of hall P is the fact that, similarly to halls N and O, it represents a unit within the complex of the upper corridor of the catacomb. There are also several features in common with halls N (cutting of the walls; relief of a bowl of fruit) and O (the door frame). In spite of its peculiar character, we can determine that work on it started in the first half of the third century C.E. The hall was probably used for burial for several generations, as is indicated by the great density of burials, felt especially in room II. From the above-mentioned inscriptions (nos. 107 and 108), the hall seems to have changed ownership at least once. It is assumed that the arcosolia of room II were widened in a later period, during which ossuaries were used intensively. It should be noted that in burial ε in arcosolium 2, which is certainly an unusual burial, there were traces of an ossuary. It is more difficult to ascertain when burial in the hall ceased, but it would seem that it was no longer in use after the first half of the third century, or, at the very latest, after the middle of that century. In any case, we have no single find which would testify to burials in this hall after the end of period III at Beth She'arim.

### 3 SUMMARY

Catacomb no. 1 is the largest of the catacombs discovered and excavated so far at Beth She'arim. As it is the richest of all in terms of burial types, architectural decorations, ornamentation and inscriptions, it has been accorded a special attention and is described in detail.

We have seen above that the catacomb comprises, besides the open corridor, sixteen rock-cut halls. A hall consists of a single burial room or, in most cases, of a series of interconnected rooms, with a single entrance from the corridor. Almost all the door frames are preserved *in situ* (except for hall B, where the frame is missing), and in many of them the heavy stone door could still turn on its hinges. The examination of this catacomb, and other catacombs, revealed that in various halls the door was locked<sup>129</sup> when the necropolis was abandoned, and that the tomb robbers who later tried to enter or to leave by way of the entrances, had to break the door or the corner of the lintel where the socket was placed and lift the door from the frame. Apparently each entrance had a special key which fitted the lock in the doorframe. It seems that the keys were kept by the Burial Society (similar to the *collegium funeraticum*

in Rome)<sup>130</sup> or — more probably — by the guardians of the necropolis, appointed by the Society, who resided in Beth She‘arim.<sup>131</sup> Mention should be made here of the cubicle cut in the upper part of the corridor, and the kokh which is in the lower part (*vid.* p. 41); these apparently were used to store the paraphernalia of the morticians.

The sixteen halls comprise fifty-five rooms, with no less than 380 burial places. Except for two halls (D and H), all halls consist of several interconnected rooms, i.e. two (B, C, F, L and P), three (A, E, and K) or four rooms (G, I, and J). Only the three largest halls consist of a larger number of rooms: in O — six, in M — seven, and in N — nine chambers. In the regular type of hall, the rooms are cut into the rock consecutively in a row, with burial places in all of them. Usually the rooms are separated by an arched passage, which is sometimes cut as if the arch rested on pillars with capitals and bases. The large halls (M, N and O) were planned initially with lateral burial rooms entered from the main chamber or from a central passage room. We may add that hall K initially had only two burial rooms; that is: room I, which served as a passage to burial room III behind it; this is an unusual phenomenon at Beth She‘arim. The average height of the rooms in the burial halls is 2.00 m but in some cases it reaches about 2.50 m and even 2.70 m (in hall P). The ceiling is usually slightly arched, but there are also flat or actually arched ceilings depending on the location.

Almost all the halls are very crowded, and in order to achieve space for additional burials the rooms were widened to the point that the rock separating halls and rooms was quite thin. Similarly, in many cases the floors and the free spaces in the walls were exploited for cutting additional burial places; wherever possible, the burial places themselves were also widened. The density is particularly felt in the smaller halls, especially in those used for several generations, as for instance hall G, the four rooms of which contain forty-four burial places; or hall P, the two rooms of which contain twenty-five burial places, as against thirty-seven in the big hall M, or twenty-four in the six rooms of hall O.

The burial places in the halls are of several types, already described in detail above. In this catacomb the prevalent type of arcosolium<sup>132</sup> is that with one or several (usually four) rectangular burials cut in the shelf. Burial places of this type are found in all the halls but some of them (e.g., D, I and L) include only this type of arcosolia. The rectangular burials are often the length of a man’s body, and they were generally used for primary burials, though there are also many shorter burial places, probably used for children or — as evident in several cases — as repositories for gathered bones or for ossuaries in which bones had been deposited. There are some cases in which the burial places had been deepened so as to permit double burials, one above the other. Typical of many of the arcosolia is the “pillow” projecting from the bottom of the

burial place, near one of its short walls; this sometimes had a depression for the head (*vid.* for instance Pl. XXI, 2). The burial was closed by ashlar seated with clay (*vid.* p. 57, and Pl. XVIII, 1). The arcosolia are usually cut into the walls of the room, symmetrically arranged one opposite the other, in the walls flanking the wall of the entrance; for example: an arcosolium containing four rectangular troughs opposite an arcosolium with one such trough. In some individual rooms or in the back rooms of a hall, the arcosolia are usually cut into three of the walls (excepting the wall of the entrance). There is no doubt that this is the most common and prevalent type of burial in Palestine in general, and especially at Beth She'arim, in the first centuries C.E. (*vid. supra*, p. 57). A slightly different type of burial is found in a few halls (N and O); it is an arcosolium in whose walls there are two shelves standing above floor level and separated by a narrow passage which, in most cases, leads to a third shelf near the back wall of the arcosolium. Each shelf contains a single burial place (*vid.* Pl. XVII, 1). This type, known also at other sites in Palestine, is typical for the third and fourth centuries C.E. (*vid. supra*, pp. 24, 124). An infrequent type of burial, somewhat similar to this one just described, is the shelf cut in imitation of a coffin and containing a single rectangular trough.<sup>133</sup> Usually, two such shelves were cut into the walls on both sides of the entrance to the room, with a narrow passage between them. This type of burial is found only in hall G (pp. 86–87) and in two other catacombs at Beth She'arim (*vid. infra* Chapter IV).

Very common in the catacomb no. 1 is the kokh cut into one of the walls of a room or in a wall inside an arcosolium. Kokhim are found in most but not in all the halls; they are lacking altogether in some halls which contain numerous burials (such as halls C, E, G and I). Most of the kokhim are small; some reach a length of about 0.64–0.73 m (in halls J, M and P), whereas others are 1.10–1.37 m long (in halls A, C, F, H, K and M). These kokhim served as storage places for bones transferred from other burials and several of them contained the gathered bones of several persons (*vid.* pp. 41, 56, 83). In contrast, only in halls M and N were there kokhim suitable for the length of a man's body; in these the dead or the gathered bones were buried in coffins or ossuaries (*vid.* pp. 94–98). Long kokhim are typical of Palestine beginning in the Hellenistic period, and were adopted by Palestinian Jews in the Hasmonean and Herodian periods (*vid.* p. 57). They are also mentioned in talmudic literature.<sup>134</sup> It should be noted that the small kokhim are mere additions to arcosolia in the burial rooms, whereas the larger ones were intended as independent burials. The kokhim were closed with sealing-stones which were plastered into the apertures with clay.

Another common type is the pit-burial cut into the floor. It was adopted mainly in halls where the lack of burial space was most felt. There are two types of pit-burials: deep or flat. At the bottom of the deeper

pit-burials there is a burial place the covering slabs of which were laid on ledges left for that purpose on the long walls of the trough. These pit-burials were usually destined for primary burials, and there are instances where skeletons were found *in situ* (*vid.* Pl. VIII, 2), though others were used as repositories for coffins (*vid.* pp. 63–64). A good example of a deep pit-burial cut near arcosolia and a kokh is found in one of the rooms of hall M (*vid.* Pl. XVI). The shallow pit burials, in comparison, were used for primary burials without coffins, and were closed by ashlar set on top. The existence of these pit-burials in the catacomb recalls a passage in the Palestinian Talmud: “At first they were buried in pits; when the flesh was eaten, the bones were collected and buried in wooden coffins.”<sup>135</sup> We know from other sites in Palestine that these pit-burials are typical of the third-fourth century C.E. (*vid. supra* pp. 64 f., 72).

The ancient custom of bone gathering<sup>136</sup> prevalent among the Jews of Palestine during the Second Temple period as well as the entire period of the Talmud and Mishna, is often mentioned in the Halachic literature and was very common at Beth She‘arim; this is proven by the finds from many of the burials in this catacomb. The bones of the dead were collected and reinterred in burials in an arcosolium or a kokh, with or without ossuaries; sometimes the burials (rectangular troughs in an arcosolium or kokhim) served as places for depositing the bones of several persons or for several ossuaries. Sometimes the room itself served as a storage place for collected bones and in some cases these were found in heaps directly on the floor of the room (hall B; *vid.* p. 58), or the floor space was used for coffins and ossuaries (*vid.* p. 116). In many arcosolia, kokhim and pit-burials, iron nails and angles, as well as wood splinters, were found. They are remains of ossuaries and differ in their measurements (generally smaller) from the remains of the large wooden coffins which were used in primary burials.<sup>137</sup> It is worth noting that in catacomb no. 1, only wooden coffins or ossuaries are in evidence, whereas in other catacombs there were also remains of coffins and ossuaries made of other materials, such as lead, pottery and stone (including marble).<sup>138</sup>

The fact that the sixteen halls of this catacomb contain 380 burial places in some of which there were multiple burials, indicates its public character. From the sources mentioned above (pp. 13–14), and especially from the epigraphic material discovered during the excavations; it is absolutely clear that the necropolis of Beth She‘arim was a central burial place not only for the Jews of Palestine but also for the Jews throughout the Near East. At least in four halls of this catacomb (C, E, G and K) there were, during the period of the Talmud, burials of Jews from Palmyra, and in three of them (excluding G) this is indicated not only by the personal names but also by Palmyrene inscriptions. The custom of bringing the bones of the dead in coffins or ossuaries from the Diaspora

(especially Babylon) to Palestine is known also from Talmudic sources.<sup>139</sup> This custom first spread at the end of the second century C.E.<sup>140</sup> The central nature of the place and its connections with the Jewish communities of the Near East raises important questions concerning the epigraphic, and the decorative material discovered here, especially in catacomb no. 1.

The decorations and ornaments in this catacomb mainly represent the folk art common in Palestine and its neighboring countries during the days of Roman rule. This art is the outcome of a long process of development, whose roots are in the ancient artistic tradition of these countries. During the Hellenistic and Roman periods it underwent constant change, under the strong influence of Hellenism, on the one hand, of Parthian and Sassanian art on the other hand. The fusion of these two elements with the folk art of Palestine and Syria, and especially the Jewish art of that period, has already been noted and clarified<sup>141</sup>; the same is true regarding the gradual increase of the Oriental elements within it. This fusion is quite evident also at Beth She'arim, especially in the catacombs. The ornamentation and decorations are generally rough and inexact, or even incomplete, which generally makes it difficult to form an idea of their true character and style. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that we have here a folk art associated with burial customs which developed over the generations. It seems that the artisans who hewed the halls not only executed the architectural ornamentations but were also concerned with the upkeep of the rooms and burials, decorating them with graffiti, carvings in relief, or paintings; i.e., they undertook work which demanded a certain expertise, similar to that of the artisans who made mosaic floors. On the other hand, some of the drawings and graffiti, as well as inscriptions painted or incised by the relatives of the deceased or by visitors, lack any preplanned order and are carelessly executed. We may note that the quality of ornamentation and decoration depends largely upon the quality of the rock and the manner in which it had been dressed. We must also remember that, with the passage of time, the decorations and inscriptions were damaged and blurred by the action of rain-waters, peeling of the rock surface, or human vandalism.

A consistent artistic style is primarily evidenced in the door frames and doors. The general structure of the door frame, the stonework and the designs which frequently appear on them, especially the high reliefs on the doors (imitating wooden doors), are all quite typical of both Palestine and the neighboring countries in the Roman period. The manner in which the rooms and burials are executed, the finishing touches, and the forms of the arches of the passages between rooms and the pillars on which they rest, show that the special methods employed by the stonework were in the prevalent artistic tradition. This is particularly obvious in the combination of the graffiti and painting with the architectural ornamentations (*vid.* p. 78 f.). This combination, known already from the tombs

at Marisa, became common in the art of Palestine and the neighboring countries in the Roman and Byzantine periods,<sup>142</sup> and was adopted also in popular Jewish art.

The series of decorations on the walls of the rooms and burials, i.e., in reliefs, painted drawings and graffiti, display an abundance of motifs. Some are frequent in the art of the period in general, while others are prevalent in Jewish folk art in particular, especially those which are part of the artistic tradition related to Jewish burial. In this connection we may mention the six (or twelve) petalled rose, either compass-drawn or made by hand, and the complex geometrical decorations which developed from it. This subject, which is very common at Beth She'arim (*vid. e.g. p. 45*), was universal in ancient art, though especially popular among the Jews in the second Temple period. It is the most common decoration on the ossuaries from the Herodian period, as well as later, in synagogues and on Jewish tombs. This is true also for the wheel (*vid. pp. 76, 116*) and concentric circles, whether hand or compass-drawn — as well as for other geometric motifs and stylized plants.

At Beth She'arim, the group of Jewish motifs is especially interesting. The primary place among them is occupied by the Menorah, and in this respect the situation here is similar to that in Jewish tombs in the Diaspora, e.g., in the catacombs of Rome. The Menorah usually has seven branches, depicted in various manners; there are cases, however, where it has only six branches (*vid. p. 125*); in catacomb no. 2 there are drawings of a Menorah with more than seven branches (*vid. infra, Chapter IV*). Near the Menorah there sometimes appears (in halls G and N) the *lulab* (palm frond), *ethrog* (citron), *shofar* (ram's horn) and oil jar. On two burial stones (in hall M) there is an Ark of the Law depicted inside an alcove flanked by seven-branched Menorahs (*vid. p. 110 ff.*). All these are common ritual objects, Jewish motifs which became prevalent in Jewish folk art both in the East and the West. Among these belongs apparently also the net-like ornament depicted in halls G and I (*vid. pp. 81, 93*). We should also mention the representation of Daniel in the lion's den in hall G, which is similar to the depictions of this episode in Early Christian art, as well as in the mosaic floor of the synagogue at Na'aran.<sup>143</sup> This is the first instance in which a biblical theme was discovered in a Jewish catacomb, and it dates from about the same time as the biblical depictions on the walls of the synagogue at Dura-Europos. One may note that only in a few of the halls of this catacomb — (G, I, K, M, N and O) are Jewish motifs emphasized. In all of these halls, except the last, the Hebrew and Greek inscriptions also indicate that the families whose members were buried there were steeped in Jewish lore.

Among the drawings in the necropolis of Beth She'arim in general, and among those of this catacomb in particular, representations of animals and persons are prominent.

In this respect, the tombs at Beth She'arim can justly be compared to the Jewish catacombs at Vigna Randanini in Rome and to the Jewish cemetery of Monteverde<sup>144</sup> on the one hand, and to the ancient synagogues of Palestine, especially of the later type, on the other hand. It is not surprising that the lion is frequently depicted (*vid.* pp. 62, 77–78), since this motif was popular among Jewish artists, and figures frequently in the ornamentation of synagogues, especially beside the Ark of the Law (as in one of the reliefs in catacomb no. 4; *vid.* Pl. XXXIV). It should be noted that the persons who decorated the tombs at Beth She'arim were experts in this subject and they employed various models in their representations of lions. Other animals, such as oxen and horses, are less frequent (*vid.* pp. 52 f.), whereas birds (especially doves), often depicted in the Jewish catacombs of Rome, are not at all represented, except in one graffito in catacomb no. 2. Among the representations of persons, one should first mention the relief of a man riding his horse and, behind him, another man leading a horse — in hall K (*vid.* pp. 99–100). We have already noted that these subjects were common in Eastern art in the Roman period. We may add that depictions of humans are found mainly in the Palmyrene halls, such as halls A and C in catacomb no. 4. Perhaps a specific and considerable influence is involved here, i.e., the direct influence of Palmyra, which can be detected in both style and character of the representations. The same is true of the winged figures, as depicted in the Palmyrene halls C and G. Although winged beings (angels and cherubim) are not rare in synagogues and Jewish catacombs,<sup>145</sup> it is almost certain that the tomb artisans at Beth She'arim were influenced in their representations by Gentile artists, and apparently by Palmyrene tombstones (*vid.* pp. 61, 100).

A special problem is presented by the ships. Only in the catacomb under consideration do we find this subject in the five halls: A, G, N, O and P. We have already noted above (p. 52, 129) that generally they are sailing vessels of a type common in Palestine. It is very probable that the artisans intended to depict the small ships commonly employed in coastal trade and fishing,<sup>145</sup> by which means ossuaries may well have been transported to the shores of Palestine. Yet, on the other hand, the very fact that this subject is represented, and its wide distribution in the catacombs, denotes the influence of Gentile Eastern (especially Egyptian) and Greek funereal art, in which this motif occupied an important place. It is to be noted that drawings of ships on Jewish tombs of that time were extremely rare outside Beth She'arim.<sup>147</sup>

Among the remaining subjects, the architectural motifs are especially interesting: the arcade (*vid.* p. 53), arched gate (*vid.* p. 81), columns crowned by capitals (*vid.* pp. 79, 119), and various geometrical decorations have all been discussed above; and we have shown that most of them were found already on Jewish ossuaries of the Herodian period.

All this points to a series of motifs with which the tomb artisans were familiar, and which were common and prevalent in the Jewish artisan circles already in the days of the Second Temple. As regards foreign influences, especially from Palmyra, it is assumed that they were introduced by the Jews of the diaspora who brought their dead to Beth She'arim for burial. Among the artisans there may well have been Palmyrenes, as well. The decoration and ornamentation is highly indicative of the central character of the necropolis, a fact made very clear by the epigraphical material. This leads also to the question of the beginning of the custom of bringing Jewish dead from the Diaspora, especially Palmyra, for burial in the necropolis at Beth She'arim. The investigation of the history of catacomb no. 1 is of utmost importance in answering this question.

We have already noted, in the detailed discussion of the corridor and the individual halls, that the upper corridor is early. The fact that halls M, N and O belong to an early period is clear not only from the details of the finds there but also, and especially, from their general nature. These are spacious halls whose central rooms are connected with the secondary rooms by wide, arched entrances and which initially contained only a small number of burials. They apparently were hewn at a time when there was no need to conserve space. In this factor they are similar to Mugharet el-Jehennem, which is certainly of the earlier type;<sup>148</sup> they are also similar to Hall A in catacomb no. 11, which dates from the beginning of the third century C.E.<sup>149</sup> In hall P, which is hewn in a different style, we can also note that it is of an early type at Beth She'arim, resembling hall A in catacomb no. 6, which belongs to the first half of the third century — judging by the finds (coins and objects). In determining the relative ages of the various halls, it is important not only to examine the general nature of the halls, the types of burials, the finds and the inscriptions, but also to note the breaches in the walls separating one hall from the next. Such investigations clearly show that hall M is earlier than hall O, and earlier than hall N as well; it seems, then, that it is the earliest hall in the catacomb, or in any case, one of the earliest. Its quarrying was begun no later than the beginning of the third century C.E., i.e., still in period IIIB at Beth She'arim (*vid.* p. 116). After halls N, O and P had been completed, the four halls constituted a single unit with a small corridor (or courtyard) which was reached by a flight of stairs cut into its northern wall (*vid.* p. 43). In the back part of the corridor, the first hall to be quarried was hall A (apparently together with hall B, opposite); it is most likely earlier than halls C, E and G (*vid. supra*, pp 37, 72, 86). In front of this hall, too, there initially was a small rock cut courtyard with a separate entrance, the flight of stairs of which descends into the catacomb from the west. Thus, halls A (B?) and M–P, and the courtyards in the front of them, were quarried independent from one another. One

should note the lack of evidence for foreign burials in halls A, M, N or O (as for P, *vid. infra*). The halls apparently were intended initially for local residents alone, a conclusion arrived at in relation to catacomb no. 11 as well.

The widening of the lower courtyard and its transformation into a corridor began with the quarrying of halls E and G and those opposite them, halls F and H as well as hall L, all from approximately the same period. From the examination of the breaches it becomes clear that these halls were hewn after hall A and before halls C and D and of course before the later halls, I and J. They thus are ascribed to the first half of the third century C.E., close to its middle (*vid. pp. 72, 86, 106 f.*). It is clear that hall E contains burials of persons from Palmyra, as is evident from the two Palmyrene inscriptions (nos. 17 and 18); in hall G, at least the head of the family owning the hall bore a clearly Palmyrene name. The extension of the lower corridor and the hewing of these halls completed the connection between the upper and lower halls; at the same time the flight of stairs leading from the lower corridor to the upper one was hewn (*vid. p. 42*), providing a continuous corridor 25–26 m long. Only afterwards was the deepening of the corridor begun in its fore part, where halls C and D are located; at approximately the same time work began on hall K. Halls C and K, which date from the middle of the third century C.E. were both intended for the burial of Palmyrenes, as is evident from the Palmyrene inscriptions and names (*vid. pp. 65, 106*). In this light, we can determine that the burials of persons from Palmyra began some time before the middle of the third century C.E., and that most of the Palmyrene halls in this catacomb date from the middle of that century (period IIB at Beth She'arim). This assumption, based on the archaeological data, is supported also by the epigraphic material. It also is in keeping with the historical assumption that Beth She'arim first came to fame as a central burial place only some time after Rabbi Judah Hanassi.

The end of the period in which Palmyrenes used the necropolis of Beth She'arim can be fixed exactly: the destruction of Palmyra by the Romans, in 272/3 C.E. If so, for a few decades in the third century C.E., the dead were brought from the city in the heart of the desert to Beth She'arim in coffins and ossuaries: this custom was common already at the time of the ascendance of Palmyra, in the days of Odenathus (260 C.E.) and continued during his entire reign and that of Zenobia, when the city's influence spread as far as Palestine and Egypt.<sup>150</sup>

Ownership of several of the halls changed at the end of the third century. In hall K we were able to determine the separate periods; at first the hall served families from Palmyra, as is evident from the names of the deceased and the Palmyrene inscriptions; later the hall belonged to a much-respected family whose members bore mainly Jewish names, mostly biblical (or their Greek parallels) and Jewish titles ("Rabbi",

“Cohen”); several inscriptions are written in Hebrew, and the decorative motifs are clearly Jewish. In halls M and P, it was also possible to determine that at the end of the third century C.E., they belonged to families of considerable Jewishness. Hall I was hewn at this time, and it, too, has Hebrew inscriptions; many of the deceased there had Hebrew names and were of a priestly family from Arab. In hall P, too, there was another burial from Arab (inscription no. 111); this apparently is the famous city of priests called Arab (a), in Lower Galilee. Starting in the second half of the third century, this catacomb may have served as a burial place for prominent families from the towns of Palestine, especially from Galilee. In hall G four generations of a single family are represented: some of them bore the title “Rabbi” (in several forms); the head of the family had a clearly Palmyrene name, whereas the other members of the family have other names. In the hall there are also many Hebrew and Greek inscriptions, though none Palmyrene. We might conclude from the above that the head of the family came from Palmyra but that his sons, Isaac and Jacob (who were the first to be buried here) had settled in Palestine, apparently at Beth She‘arim.

The lowest and the latest halls in the catacomb are halls I and J, as already mentioned. The former was apparently quarried already at the close of the third century C.E., and the latter at the beginning of the fourth century C.E. As a result of the lowering of the floor in the corridor (to facilitate hewing these halls), the connection between the entrances of halls G and H and the floor of the corridor was cut and they could be reached now only by ladders; ascent of the flight of steps from the lower corridor to the upper one also became very difficult (*vid.* p. 38 ff.). Thus, it seems that the halls were finished already at the beginning of the fourth century C.E. and that the catacomb was then in its last period of use and expansion. Excavations in the catacomb discussed indicate that burial ceased in all the halls (except I and J) at the end of period IIIB, i.e., the middle of the fourth century C.E. This in itself can be explained only as the result of an event which led to the abandonment of the necropolis. As already noted above (*vid.* p. 19), this could only have been the destruction of Beth She‘arim by the Roman legions of Gallus, in the year 352 C.E. Only in halls I and J is there evidence to prove continued burial in period IV, i.e., until the beginning of the fifth century C.E. (*vid.* pp. 94, 97). During this late period, heaps of earth and stones piled up in the corridor, and when there was need to shore up part of the wall of the corridor near the entrances to halls E and F, a buttress was constructed from stones, on top of a thick layer of earth (*vid.* Pl. V, 1).

During the fifth century catacomb no. 1 was abandoned entirely, and with the passage of time the entire corridor became covered with gravel and earth. In period V, the Arab period, Arabs frequented several of the halls as indicated by the Arabic inscription in hall L (*vid.* p. 107) and by

the sherds and lamps in halls I and J. There is evidence, too, of the visits of Crusaders, and perhaps also Mamelukes, in halls E, G and I as well as in several other catacombs in the neighborhood. These visitors left behind them various traces, mainly graffiti of coats-of-arms, of the type prevalent during the later Crusades, i.e., the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries C.E. (*vid.* Pls. X, 2; XII, 1); they display carving techniques used only at the end of the Crusader period. This period is also evidenced by the Gothic script of the signature of one of the visitors, "Ditericus," apparently a German knight who left his name on the ceiling of hall E (*vid.* p. 70; Pl. IX, 1). It is to be noted that the custom of "decorating" the walls of holy or ancient sites with inscriptions and drawings, and especially with emblems, was widespread at the end of the Middle Ages (take, for example, St. Catherine's monastery in Sinai).<sup>151</sup> Felix Fabri (in the fifteenth century) scolds the pilgrims of noble families, especially Germans, who used to practice such vandalism during their visits to this country.<sup>152</sup> Examination of the catacombs on the western slope of Beth She'arim proves that both Arabs and Crusaders penetrated into catacombs nos. 1, 2 and 3 through Mugharet el-Jehennem, by crawling through breaches in the walls separating them, i.e., by the same underground tunnels through which we first made our visit, prior to discovering the corridors of the catacombs (*vid.* p. 21).

## NOTES

1 The Palestinian Talmud tells of a collapse in the catacomb of the Nassi Dynasty. Abodah Zara 3, 1. Such incidents certainly were not rare at Beth She'arim.

2 For details on this inscription (no. 23), *vid.* below Chapter 5.

3 The absolute height of this threshold above sea-level is 74.27 m, whereas the threshold of hall P in the upper corridor, the highest in this catacomb, is 83.40 m above sea-level.

4 Its threshold is 5.36 m higher than that of hall J.

5 *Vid.* Pl. XV, 3.

6 I expressed a similar thought in the excavation diary on the day we discovered the plaque (15 Dec., 1936); there I wrote: "It can be supposed that the plaque fell from the door post after the corridor was already covered with a layer of earth, i.e., after burial in this catacomb had ceased... it is possible that the plaque had been plastered initially to the upper stone of the right door post, or to the angle formed by the lintel and the door post."

7 *Vid.* above, p. 38.

8 Whereas the height of the debris above the rock at this spot is about 1.40 m.

9 Concerning the chronological question, *vid.* below, at the end of this chapter.

10 For details on the entrances and doors at Beth She'arim, *vid.* below, appendix A.

11 *Vid.* E. Weigand, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 1914, pp. 212 ff.

12 *Vid.* Watzinger, *Denkmäler Palästinas* II, pp. 75 ff.

13 Such as on the ceiling of a burial chamber in Jerusalem R.A.S. Macalister, *PEFQS* (1900), pp. 54 ff.

14 Such as R. Dussaud, *Monuments palestiniens et judaïques*, p. 118 (a Jewish door); H. Kohl & C. Watzinger, *Antike Synagogen in Galiläa*, 1966, p. 30 (Capernaum); F. Cumont, *Fouilles de Doura Europos*, Atlas, 1926, pl. XCI, 5; D. Baramki, *QDAP* 5 (1935), pl. VII, 3.

15 *Vid.*, e.g., L.H. Vincent, *RB* (1925), p. 261, fig. 4.

16 The inscriptions are discussed in detail in the second volume of this book.

- 17 We find no other examples of this motif, either in Egypt or among the graffiti at Dura-Europos and in Palestine, discussed below. The deck should be compared to that of a ship on a coin of Elagabalus (A.D. 218–22) G. Contenau, *Syria* 1 (1925), p. 42, fig. a.
- 18 Cf. the relief of a horse in hall K, pl. XV, 7.
- 19 Vid. below p. 25.
- 20 Vid. Frey, *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum* I, p. 148, no. 209. N. Müller, *Die Inschriften der jüdischen Katakombe am Monteverde zu Rom*, p. 92, no. 102. A relief of two bulls is also found over the entrance to a tomb at Gezer—Macalister, *Gezer* II, p. 356, fig. 184.
- 21 Vid. *Survey of Western Palestine* I, p. 256.
- 22 Vid. L. Malren, *Jahrbuch, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut* (1928), pp. 114 ff.
- 23 E.G. the bull on the relief from the synagogue at Kefar Bar'am; vid. E.L. Sukenik, *The Ancient Synagogue at Beth Alpha*, p. 51, fig. 50.
- 24 Vid. Avi-Yonah, *QDAP* 10 (1941), pp. 142 ff.
- 25 Vid. *Qovetz, Jewish Palestine Exploration Society* 3 (Music Volume), p. 31, pl. 51 (a stylized decoration consisting of three arches serving as a frame for rosettes); and especially Watzinger, *Denkmäler Palästinas* II, p. 75, Abb. 6.
- 26 Vid. Avi-Yonah, *op. cit.*
- 27 Vid. Watzinger, *Griechische Holzarkophage der Zeit Alexanders des Grossen*, 1905, p. 60, Abb. 119.
- 28 Vid. especially Macalister, *Gezer* III, pl. C1, 15.
- 29 Vid. Avi-Yonah, *op. cit.*, pp. 143 ff.; and J. Strzygowski, *L'ancien art chrétien de la Syrie*, 1936, pp. 83 ff.
- 30 For details on the inscription, vid. below, Chapter 5, and the second volume of this book.
- 31 Vid. Hiller von Gartringen, *Thera* II, pp. 271 ff.; H. Pagenstecher, *Nekropolis*, pp. 144 ff.
- 32 Watzinger, *Griechische Holzarkophage...* pp. 62 ff.; Gallig, *op. cit.*, pp. 86 ff. Macalister already remarked: "Kokhim and arcosolia seem to have been used quite indifferently at the same periods" (Macalister, *PEFQSt* (1901), p. 226).
- 33 In Jerusalem; Gallig, *op. cit.*, pp. 73 ff.; at Gezer: Macalister, *Gezer* I, p. 309; II, pl. LVI, 8–9, etc.
- 34 At Gerasa: C.S. Fisher apud C.H. Kraeling, *Gerasa*, pp. 560 off.; and so on at other sites. Chambers with arcosolia next to those with Kokhim are found in most of the magnificent tombs in Jerusalem, such as the Tomb of the Kings.
- 35 Vid. O. Wulf, *Altchristliche und byzantinische Kunst* I, pp. 38 ff.; C.M. Kaufmann, *Handbuch der christlichen Archäologie*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 122 ff.
- 36 Such as the tombs described by Gallig, *ZDPV* (1936), pp. 122 ff. Here, the kokhim are also a later addition.
- 37 Such as the tomb of Simeon the Just in Jerusalem (Ch. Clermont-Ganneau, *Archaeological Researches in Palestine* I, pp. 267 ff.) which still belongs to this period, and especially the tomb discovered in Rehovot (\*Sukenik, *Qovetz* 2 [1925] pp. 98 ff.). The latter includes three rooms: two with arcosolia, and one which served as a depository for ossuaries.
- 38 Vid. Gallig, *PJb* (1936), p. 90. A decorated tomb near Tell Zakarieh (Clermont-Ganneau, *ARP*, II, pp. 353 ff.) consists of one room with two arcosolia in the right wall, two in the left wall, and one in the back wall (opposite the entrance).
- 39 Especially in Malta; vid. E. Becker, *Malta sotterranea*, 1913, pp. 21 ff.
- 40 Vid. pl. IV (the lintel lying in the entrance does not belong to this hall, but rather to hall F).
- 41 In my opinion, there is no reason to believe that initially there was no door here.
- 42 Like the small statues from the Roman period published by W.J. Moulton, *AASOR* 1 (1922), pp. 80 ff.; and one of the graffiti in the tombs at Beth Guvrin (vid. Avi-Yonah, *QDAP* 10 (1941), p. 126 & pl. XXVII, 6–7).
- 43 Cf., e.g., *Excavations at Dura Europos* VI, pl. XLIX, etc.; Chabot, *Choix*, pl. XXIII, 4 (for the frescoes in the synagogue at Dura-Europos, \*E.L. Sukenik, *The Synagogue at Dura-Europos and its Frescoes*, 1947, pp. 130–131, on the figures of "souls" in the panel of the "vision of the dry bones"); and in addition, Sukenik, *The Ancient Synagogue at Beth Alpha*, pl. 19 ("sacrifice of Isaac").
- 44 For details, vid. appendix B: coffins and wooden ossuaries.
- 45 From this point of view, cf. the drawings of animals on the votive altars at Gezer, which in Macalister's opinion are from the Hellenistic period (*Gezer* II, p. 443, Fig. 525), and graffiti of animals at Dura-Europos (for example, *EDE* VI, p. 123, Fig. 4).
- 46 Vid. A.C. Dickie, *PEFQSt* (1896), pp. 305 ff.; R.W. Hamilton & S.A.S. Husseini, *QDAP* 4 (1934), pp. 170 ff.; cf. especially type A in the latter article, Fig. 1. And vid. also Gallig, *PJb* (1936), p. 79. Pits together with arcosolia occur also in several tombs of the third and fourth centuries A.D., such as in the catacombs of Malta (Becker, *Malta sotterranea*, p. 21) and Sicily (J. Fuhrer & V. Schulte, *Die altchristlichen Grabstätten Siziliens*, 1907, p. 264).

- 47 Vid. J.H. Iliffe, *QDAP* 4 (1934), pp. 72 ff. and pl. XLV–XLVII. Iliffe thinks the tombs belong to the second–third centuries C.E., on the basis of the small finds; at any rate, they are not as late as the fourth century.
- 48 On the pottery, vid. below, Chapter 6.
- 49 Vid. below, Chapter 5.
- 50 Depressions like these are found in the arcosolia burials of Beth She'arim as well as at other sites; in an arcosolim burial from the fourth century A.D., there were two candles in such a depression; vid. S.A.S. Hussein, *QDAP* 4 (1934), pl. LXXXIV, 4 and vid. also S. Yeivin, apud L. Waterman, *Second Preliminary Report upon the Excavations at Tel-Umar* (the domed tomb).
- 51 It is difficult to suppose that the corpse in this rectangular burial place was interred in a coffin, since it is not sufficiently long, and the nails found within too short.
- 52 Concerning Ditericus, vid. below, the end of this chapter.
- 53 Cf. the shallow pits in the tombs near the Y.M.C.A. in Jerusalem (Iliffe, *QDAP* 4 (1934) pl. XLV–XLVI), of the third century A.D.
- 54 Vid. the second volume of this book.
- 55 Vid., e.g.; *PEFQS* (1926), p. 66; *ZDPV* (1886), pp. 79, 84 (Tiberias).
- 56 Vid. L.A. Mayer & A. Reifenberg, *JPOS* (1939), p. 325 & pl. XXIX, 8.
- 57 The two drawings discussed here can be seen in Pl. X, 3.
- 58 Vid. *EDE* VI, p. 128, fig. 13; J. Lassus, *Inventaire archéologique de la région au nord-est de Hama* II, 1936, pl. XL, 1. Concerning the palm tree in Ancient Near Eastern Art in general, vid. H. Danthine, *Le palmier-dattier et les arbres sacrés...*, 1937, passim.
- 59 For this type of representation of a praying man, vid. Du Mesnil du Buisson, *Les peintures de la synagogue de Doura-Europos* 1939, pls. XXX, etc.
- 60 Vid. H.L. Vincent, *RB* (1921), pl. XVI, 6.
- 61 Vid. C.M. Kaufmann, *Handbuch der christlichen Archäologie*, 1922, pp. 317 ff.; J. Strzygowski, *Orient oder Rom*, pp. 92 ff.; G. Wilpert, *I sarcofagi cristiani antichi* II, *Testo*, 1932, pp. 256–8; H. Leclercq, *DAC* IV, pp. 221 ff.
- 62 Vid. Kaufmann, *ibid.*, p. 317; and W. Neuss, *Die Kunst der alten Christen* (1926), Abb. 15.
- 63 Vid. for example *Dictionnaire d'archéologie Chrétienne et de liturgie*, VI, p. 288, Fig. 3577.
- 64 The word ΣΑΛΟΜ above the depiction may actually be the remains of a longer inscription like that at Na'aran (דְּבִי־אֵל שְׁלֹמֹם).
- 65 The inscriptions in hall G are discussed in detail in the second volume.
- 66 Cf. the lion in the zodiac of the mosaic floor at Beth Alpha; Sukenik, *The Ancient Synagogue at Beth Alpha*, pl. 10, and *Survey of Western Palestine*, I, p. 319 (the synagogue at Khirbet Semaka).
- 67 Cf. Sukenik, *JPOS* (1935), frontispiece.
- 68 For details, vid. the second volume of this book.
- 69 Vid. Frey, *CIJ* I, nos. 148, 291a, 494, 682, etc.
- 70 Vid. Ingholt, *Berytus* 2 (1935), p. 62 (Palmyra); Leclercq-Cabrol, *DAC* I, col. 2115–22.
- 71 Such as in the Jewish synagogues: Ben Zvi, *JPOS* (1933), p. 95 (Ramat Naftali), Schumacher, *Across the Jordan*, p. 249 (ed. Dikeh); Du Mesnil du Buisson, *Les Peintures de la synagogue de Doura-Europos*, p. 59 & pl. XXVIII. As to the out-stretched arms, vid. *ibid.*, pls. X, XXXIX, XL, 1.
- 72 These are not Phoenician or Aramaic numerals or letters (cf., e.g., charts by F. Rosenthal, *Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatisch-Ägyptischen Gesellschaft* 41, 1, pp. 8, 11 ff.) even though the sign is similar to the Phoenician number 20, and others to various Semitic numbers and letters. Moreover, these are not signs such as those appearing in the Roman catacombs; vid. De Rossi, *Roma Sotterranea* III, pp. 42 ff., and N. Müller, *Die jüdische Katakomba am Montverde zu Rom*, 1912, p. 83. \*L.Y. Rahmani, *BJPES* 12 (1934), 24 thinks that these are Mongolian figures of the type called *tamgha*, which the Mamelukes adopted. If this supposition is correct, then the Mamelukes also visited this hall.
- 73 For details, vid. the second volume of this book.
- 74 This manner of decorating a burial room in which there are several arcosolia is also to be found in the above-mentioned tombs near Tell Zakariah; vid. p. 143, footnote 38.
- 75 Cf. above, p. 71 (hall E, room III, arcosolium 1).
- 76 We also found this type in the later rooms of hall A and C in catacomb no. 4, where Palmyrenes are buried (vid. below, Chapter 4).
- 77 For details, vid. the second volume of this book.
- 78 Vid. below Chapter 5.
- 79 Vid. S. Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine*, 1942, p. 71.
- 80 This graffito is similar to an ornament found in Jewish tombs in Europe; vid. Frey, *CIJ* I, nos. 221, etc., and cf. also p. 81.
- 81 Vid. below, chapter 5; for further details vid. the second volume. On the basis of the inscriptions in room IV, it is not certain whether priests were buried in all of the arcosolia of the room, though it

- seems that the room was initially intended for a priestly family.
- 82 Cf. this type of a horse, e.g., to the Beth Natif figurines; vid. D. Baramki, *QDAP* 5 (1935), pl. IV.
- 83 Vid. *EDE* V, pl. XIV.
- 84 Vid. H. Ingholt, *Berytus* 2 (1935), p. 65 & pls. XXVI, XXVII, 1.
- 85 Vid. above, p. and pl. XXVI, 3.
- 86 Vid. especially Baramki, *QDAP* 5 (1935), pl. IV, F. Cumont, *Fouilles, de Doura-Europos, texte*, pp. 271 ff.; M.I. Rostostovtzeff, *Excavations at Dura-Europos*, Preliminary Report II, pp. 194 ff.; M. Avi-Yonah, *QDAP* 10 (1941), pp. 127 ff.; C. Hopkins, *Berytus* 2, (1936), pp. 8 ff.
- 87 The military tunic and high shoes are known as the dress of equestrians in the Roman army; vid., e.g. *Germania Romana* III, Taf. VI ff. (on the tombstones of soldiers).
- 88 Cf. e.g., the relief of the man riding on a donkey, holding a stick in his hand (*EDE* II, pl. XI, 2) and figurines of the equestrians from Beth Natif (Baramki, *op. cit.*), as well as the equestrian depicted on a lamp from Palmyra (*Syria* [1936], pl. LII, no. 34).
- 89 Cf. especially the horses in the Beth Natif figurines and the horse in the first relief; vid. also Hopkins, pp. 19 foll.
- 90 Vid. *EDE* IV, pl. XXVII, 4 & pp. 182 foll.
- 91 Cf. Avi-Yonah, *op. cit.* pl. XXIII, 7; Sukenik, *The Ancient Synagogue at Beth Alpha* pl. 10; in the Beth Natif figurines (Baramki, *op. cit.* pl. IV-V) locks like this can be seen, but apparently there they depict the brim of the hat. Vid. also the coiffure in the statues of Khirbet-el-Tannur, N. Glueck, *AJA* (1937), p. 370, Fig. 9, etc.; also Ingholt, *Berytus* 3 (1936), pl. XXIII.
- 92 Concerning the relation between the Judah who is buried in arcosolium 1 and inscription no. 78 on the marble slab, vid. the second volume.
- 93 For details, vid. the second volume.
- 94 Vid. below chapter 5.
- 95 Vid. H. Ingholt, *Acta archaeologica* 3 (1932), pp. 1 ff.; *Berytus* 2 (1935), p. 62.
- 96 This kind of graffiti on stone doors has been found in various places in Palestine, such as Gezer (Macalister, *Gezer* III, pl. CV, 40), in Shechem, and others. Cf. the door depicted on an ossuary from Jerusalem. E.J. Sukenik, *Jüdische Gräber Jerusalems um Christi Geburt*, 1931, Taf. 2.
- 97 For palaeographic reasons, this inscription may be related to the eighth-ninth centuries A.D.; vid. below the end of this chapter.
- 98 Vid., e.g., Pagenstecher, *Nekropolis*, p. 89, Abb. 59 (a door depicted on a burial-stone).
- 99 These geometric designs are typical of holy arks; vid. e.g. *QDAP* 6 (1936), pl. XIX (the ark depicted in the mosaic floor in Jericho).
- 100 Vid. E.L. Sukenik, *The Ancient Synagogue at Beth Alpha*, p. 24 and pl. 9.
- 101 Scrolls within inner compartments often appear on arks of law, in graffiti found in catacombs, on tombstones and on gold-glass from Rome. Cf. the scroll from which sprouts the staff (the "column" in the language of the Talmud), on which the scroll had been rolled. (vid. the scroll in the upper compartment, Fig. K, 1), cf. H.W. Beyer & H. Lietzmann, *Die jüdische Katakomben der Villa Torlonia in Rom*, 1930, Taf. 4; Frey, *CIJ* I, 380, no. 518; CXLIII; vid. Th. Birt, *Die Buchrolle in der Kunst*, 1907, pp. 288 ff.; idem, *Kritik und Hermeneutik*, 1913, p. 329.
- 102 Such lamps are depicted on many seven-branched Menorahs, but only rarely are they well depicted (a good example: Muller-Bees, *Die Inschriften der jüdischen Katakomben am Monteverde zu Rom*, p. 40, no. 31).
- 103 For details, vid. Sukenik, *op. cit.*, pp. 20 ff.; and idem, *Ancient Synagogues in Palestine and Greece*, pp. 52 ff., and also Frey, *CIJ* I pp. 378 ff.; Beyer-Lietzmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 22 ff.
- 104 Vid. Sukenik, *The Ancient Synagogue at Beth Alpha*, p. 21, Fig. 24; p. 24, Fig. 27; Baramki, *QDAP* 6 (1936), p. 73 & pl. XIX. It seems to me that the Holy Ark depicted on the mosaic floor of the synagogue at Beth Alpha also stands on legs, three of which are seen from the front (Sukenik, *op. cit.*, pls. 8 and 9), Compare also the Christian ark depicted in a mosaic floor at Ravenna (fifth century); J. Wilpert, *Die römischen Mosaiken und Malereien der kirchlichen Bauten... III*, 1916, Taf. 49; K. Galling, *JPOS* 12 (1932), p. 47.
- 105 Concerning the synagogue alcoves in which the ark was placed, vid. in details L.A. Mayer & A. Reifenberg, *JPOS* 19 (1939), pp. 320 ff.
- 106 Vid., e.g., Mishnah Ta'anit 2, 1: "...כיצד מוציאין את התיבה לרחובה של עיר..."
- 107 Vid., A. Reifenberg, *JPOS* (1931) pp. 51 ff.; idem, *Ancient Jewish Coins*, 1940, p. 26 & pl. XII.
- 108 Cf. Sukenik, *op. cit.*, pl. 8. Regarding the conche, cf. *ibid.*, p. 25, Fig. 26; p. 29, Fig. 34; \*idem, *The Synagogue at Dura-Europos and its Paintings*, pl. 4 and Fig. 15. For the alcove in the synagogue of Capernaum which is decorated with a conche, cf. Kohl & Watzinger, *Antike Synagogen in Galiläa*, p. 37, Abb. 37; and in the buildings of the Roman period in general: E. Weigland, *JAI* 29 (1914), pp. 63 ff.

- 109 Cf., e.g., \*Sukenik, *op. cit.*, p. 29, Fig. 35.
- 110 Vid. Ben-Zvi, *PEFQSt* (1930), p. 210; (1931), pp. 22 ff. and Sukenik, *The Ancient Synagogue at Beth Alpha*, pl. 8.
- 111 On the situation of the Holy Ark in the synagogue discovered in Beth-She'arim, vid. \**BJPES* 6 (1939), p. 102; 9 (1942), p. 7.
- 112 Like in hall A. in catacomb no. 11; vid. \**BJPES* 8 (1941), p. 20.
- 113 Cf. M. Gisler, *Das Heilige Land I*, 1935, p. 16.
- 114 Vid., e.g., Muller-Bees, *Die Inschriften der jüdischen Katakombe am Monteverde zu Rom*, p. 101, no. 112; p. 118, no. 129, etc.; Frey, *CIJ I*, p. 269, no. 243; p. 281, no. 364; pp. 374 ff. and especially Muller, *Die jüd. Katakombe am Monteverde zu Rom*, pp. 68 ff. The oil container is often found in synagogal decoration in Palestine and abroad, on Jewish lamps, and even in the Jewish coins, some scholars consider it to represent the oil-jug of Hanukka (vid. \*M. Narkiss, *The Coins of the Jews*, p. 64; \*idem, *The Hanukka Lamp* p. 2).
- 115 Vid. *EDE II*, pl. LV.
- 116 Vid. also Macalister, *Gezer III*, pl. LVII.
- 117 Vid. \*Schwabe, *BJPES* 5 (1938), p. 79 ff.
- 118 Especially in Beth-Gurvin and Jerusalem, as well as Gezer (vid., e.g., Macalister, *Gezer III*, pl. CVIII); vid. also above, p. 25. A burial room which is slightly different from this, of two shelves with rectangular troughs, has been described above, p. 84.
- 119 Depictions of a Menorah with six branches (i.e. lacking the central branch) are not common in ancient Jewish art; Menorahs with less than seven branches are very rare in general; but vid. Cabrol-Leclercq, *DAC VI*, 2, p. 2048; Muller-Bees *op. cit.*, pp. 153, 149, in connection with a Menorah of five branches.
- 120 Although we could assume that the artisan intended to depict the lower part of a wheel, or an anchor these assumptions seem less feasible.
- 121 A network design is common in depictions of boats; it is also found in the ship carved on one of the walls in catacomb no. 10.
- 122 Vid. e.g., Nega'im 12, 1: "בית עגול ... בית הבנוי בספינה ... על ארבע קירות אינו מטמא בנגעים ואם ... מטמא" "בית עגול ... היה מרובע, אפילו על ארבעה עמודים, מטמא" Cf. also Ohalot 8, 5; Tosafta Shabat 10, 16.
- 123 Vid. A. Koster, *Das antike Seewesen*, p. 18; G.S.L. Clowes, *Sailing Ships*, passim; and compare the graffito of a ship in Pagenstecher, *Nekropolis*, p. 97, Abb 66.
- 124 Cabins such as this also appear on the deck of the ship mentioned in footnote 121, above.
- 125 Vid. especially *EDE v*, pl. XXXIV, 3.
- 126 Cf. M. Avi-Yonah, *QDAP* 10 (1941) p. 115. This opinion is based on the assumption that ossuaries or coffins were brought to Beth-She'arim also by sea.
- 127 Vid. for details H.C. Butler, *Syria* 2 (1920), p. 299 & pl. XXV; E. Herzfeld, *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran II*, 1930, p. 80; A.U. Pope, *A Survey of Persian Art I* 1938, pp. 508–510. A similar type of arch may possibly appear in an ossuary now at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. In the Christian churches in Syria it appears apparently only at the end of the Byzantine period, as in the basilika at Ruweiha: J. Mattern, *A travers les villes mortes de Haute Syrie*, 1933, pp. 20 ff.
- 128 Vid. the second volume for details.
- 129 For details about the manner in which the doors were locked, vid. appendix A.
- 130 For the burial societies and the gathering of bones, vid. S. Klein, *Jüd. — Pal. Corpus Inscript.*, p. 5; \**Bulletin of the Institute of Jewish Studies, Hebrew University*, p. 43; and also S. Klein, *Tod und Begräbnis in Palästina zur Zeit der Tannaiten*, 1908, pp. 59 ff.
- 131 The tenement houses of the guardians of the necropolis are apparently mentioned in Mishnah Erubin 5, 1, and in Tosafta Erubin 6 (5), 4–5 (ed. Zukermandel, p. 144); vid. \*S. Klein, *BJPES* 5 (1938), p. 112.
- 132 The Hebrew edition here used the term מקמורה, a Talmudic term pointed out to me by Professor S. Lieberman. In the first Hebrew edition, the term כופיה was used, basing on the word כפיא, found in Palmyrene and meaning a vaulted room (vid. Ingholt, *Berytus* 2 1935 pp.105, 118).
- 133 We may possibly compare the words of Tosafta Ohalot 10, 7 (ed. Zukermandel, p. 607): "A coffin which is cut in the rock and covered..."
- 134 In Mishnah Baba Batra 6, 8, it is stated that the length of the kokh is 4 cubits, whereas in the inscription above the kokh in a tomb in the Kedron valley (whose length is 1.56 m), 2 cubits are mentioned. (Vid. \*Sukenik, *Tarbiz* 6 [1936], pp. 193–194.) The large kokhim in halls M and N have different measurements — from 1.50 to 1.85 m.
- 135 Palestinian Talmud, Moed Katan, 81, 3–4.
- 136 This custom was known in Palestine beginning in the Chalcolithic period and up to today (among the Beduin of the Gaulan); vid. P. Bar-Adon & \*S. Yeivin *BJPES* 5 (1938), p. 102–103. For the gathering of bones in the period of the Mishnah, vid. S. Klein, *op. cit.*, pp. 98 ff.; S. Kraus, *REJ*

(1934), pp. 1 ff.

**137** Details on the ossuaries are given in appendix B. The word גלוסקמה, used as a term for a wooden box, in which bones were gathered, also appears in an inscription (no. 110) in the above mentioned catacomb; vid. above, p. 131. Yet in Talmudic literature the word ארון appears also to have been used in place of גלוסקמה.

**138** This fact reminds us the words of Semahot 13: ואם היתה של אבן ושל חרס תשבר ושל עץ תשרף. "ארון שפינהו אסור בהנאה, ואם היתה של אבן ושל חרס תשבר ושל עץ תשרף". We may also assume that at Beth-She'arim the coffins were made in special workshops, as in Jerusalem at the end of the Second Temple period (vid. \*Sukenik, Tarbiz 7 [1936], pp. 108–109).

**139** Vid. Palestinian Talmud, Kelaim, 9; 34, 2; Ketubot 12; 35, 1; Babylonian Talmud, Moed Katan 25, 1; and especially Semahot 10. This custom became prevalent in spite of the fact that the Palestinian sages were of the opinion that "there is no privilege other than to live in Eretz-Israel while alive, and not in burial (there) after death"; and even more sharply, "in your lifetimes you do not come (to Eretz-Israel) and you would come and defile the land in your death?" In contrast the prevalent opinion held that anyone buried in Eretz-Israel was as if buried under the altar (Tosefta, Aboda Zara 4, 3, etc.). Vid. also S. Klein, *BJPES* 5 (1940), p. 110.

**140** Vid. \*G. Allon *BJPES* 8 (1947).

**141** Vid. especially M. Rostovtzeff, *Dura and the Problem of Parthian Art*, 1935, passim; M. Avi-Yonah, *QDAP* 10 (1941), pp. 105 ff.

**142** Vid. C.C. McCown, *QDAP* 9 (1939), p. 25.

**143** To the bibliography in nn. 38–41, we may add E.L. Sukenik, *Magnes Festschrift*, pp. 178–179.

**144** Vid. N. Müller, *Die jüdische Katakomba am Monteverde zu Rom*, pp. 89 ff.; Camrholl-Leclercq, *DAC* VI, pp. 604–610.

**145** Vid. Frey, *Biblica* 15 (1934), p. 231.

**146** From this point of view, the depictions of ships found in Mugharet el-Channem (pl. XXIII) are of interest.

**147** Vid., e.g. Frey, *CIJ* I, p. 44.

**148** Vid. above p. 30. We have already seen that Mugharet el-Jehennem preceded the hewing of part of the corridor and the halls in its south wall; vid. also pl. XXII, 2.

**149** Vid. \**BJPES* 6 (1939), p. 103; \*Schwabe, *BJPES* 6 (1939), p. 36.

**150** For the history of Palmyra, vid. M.J.G. Fevrier, *Essai sur l'histoire politique et économique de Palmyre*, 1931; for its Jewish population, vid. especially A. Büchler, *Schwartz Festschrift*, 1917, pp. 150 ff. and also J. Cantineau, *Grammaire du Palmyrenien épigraphique*, 1935, p. 153; \*G. Allon, *History of the Jews* . . . II, p. 168 ff.

**151** Vid. Rabino, *Le Monastère de St. Catherine*, pp. 50 ff.

**152** Vid. Felix Fabri, *Palestine Pilgrims Text Society* VII–X, 1897, VII, pp. 249–250; 259; XI, pp. 86–7. The coats of arms are discussed in detail in an unpublished work by \*L.J. Rahmani, *Crusader Coats-of-Arms in Palestine, Syria and Cyprus*; vid. also his article in \**BJPES* 12 (1945), pp. 24–25.

## CHAPTER IV CATACOMBS NUMBERS 2—4

To the south of catacomb No. 1, on the Western slopes of the hill of Beth She'arim, there is a row of catacombs, hewn into the rock. Three of these were discovered and excavated by us: Nos. 2, 3 and 4 (*vid.* fig. 2). Typical of all three is a small corridor or courtyard, to which one descends by a flight of rock-cut stairs, and in the walls of which are entrances to the burial halls, like in catacomb No. 1 described above.

Catacombs Nos. 1–4 are adjacent to one another. The entrance to No. 2 is at a distance of 20 m South of the entrance to No. 1, and 20.50 m North of the entrance to No. 3. Between the entrance of No. 3 and that of No. 4 to the South East, there is only 5.5 m. Catacombs Nos. 3 and 4 were cleared in their entirety and restored to their ancient form, whereas catacomb No. 2 was excavated and examined only in its main section because of extensive damage within, which brought about great technical difficulties.

### 1 CATACOMB NUMBER 2

This catacomb (*vid.* Plan 6) includes a small courtyard and three burial halls. The entrance to the courtyard is from the South, on the edge of the hill. One descends to it by a flight of steps of an overall height of 1.5 m. Its five carelessly cut steps are quite wide, taking up most of the courtyard. The lowest step, near the back (north) wall of the courtyard, is rounded. The courtyard is also carelessly hewn, and it seems that the artisans intended it to be square, though through their negligent work the northern and eastern walls are too long. The average length of the courtyard is 2.40 m and its average width 2.50. The floor is 2.50 m below the rock surface, and 4.30 m below the surface of the debris overlying the rock. In each of the vertical walls of the courtyard, except the southern wall with the flight of stairs, there is an entrance to a burial hall: A in the western wall, B in the eastern wall, and C in the northern wall opposite the flight of steps.

**Hall A**, the smallest, is entered through a doorway with a built frame. The frame and the door, which can still swing on its hinges and displays the conventional carved imitation of a wooden door, are preserved *in situ*. In contrast, the ceiling of the hall collapsed already in ancient times, so that the hall was filled with earth, stones and gravel (*vid.* Pl. XXII, 1).

Hall A consists of one room hewn in the form of an irregular square (approximately 2.05 m × 2.05 m). In three of the walls of the room, excepting the entrance wall, are hewn arcosolia: the one in the left wall (1) is large; and with four rectangular burial places in its shelf; the second (5), in the right wall, is small and has one rectangular burial place: arcosolium 2, in the back wall, originally had two shelves cut along it above floor level, and a narrow passage with between them leading to a third shelf cut in the back wall of the arcosolium.<sup>1</sup> In order to create room for additional burial places, however, the arcosolium was widened on either side; two rectangular burial places were hewn the length of the left shelf, one behind the other; and on the back shelf, only one rectangular burial place. In this arcosolium there are altogether six burial places of 1.55–1.75 m length each, whereas those in arcosolia 1 and 2 are 1.62 m–1.95 m long. It seems that they were used for primary burial, for all of them are sufficiently large to receive a corpse. In most of them bones and sealing-stones were found, and in two on the right shelf of arcosolium 3 there were hewn “pillows” for the head of the deceased. It is noteworthy that in this hall no remains of coffins or ossuaries were found.

In hall A there are, altogether, eleven burial places. It seems that it was used as a family tomb for a short time. No signs of inscriptions or decorations were found. Among the few finds mention should be made first of a fragment of a lead cylinder (no. 129 in the catalog of finds) that had perhaps been used as a case for a papyrus or parchment scroll, similar to the lead cylinder from Period IIIB discovered in the city area.<sup>2</sup> It was found near the bones in burial place β of arcosolium 3. In addition, on the floor of the room, there were fragments of a long glass vial (no. 111) as well as sherds and glassware relating to Period III at Beth She‘arim.

**Hall B**, quarried in the eastern wall of the courtyard, is of the longer type of halls, in which the rooms are hewn in a row, one behind the other (*vid. sup.* p. 133). At the entrance to the hall, the stone frame and the conventionally decorated door were preserved *in situ*. A step at the threshold and two additional steps within lead down into the hall. The maximal length of the hall is 10.20 m; it consists of four rooms (I–IV) connected by arched passageways. The burial places are hewn in the usual manner, that is, in the shelves of arcosolia. The ceiling of the hall is slightly arched, and stands 2.15 m above the floor in room I, and approximately 2.00 m in the other rooms.

**In room I** (2.25 m long and 1.75 m wide) there are two arcosolia: one (1) in the wall to the left of the entrance, and the second (2) in the wall to the right; each contains one rectangular burial place (1.88 m long). Bones and sealing slabs were preserved in both graves, which were surely used for primary burial. In no. 1 there was a “pillow” with a depression for

the head of the deceased. The room is decorated with many drawings and carvings, some of which are well preserved.

In the center of the ceiling there is an intricate geometric design painted in red (0.56 m diameter). The two outer circles, which act as the frame for the whole, and the two inner circles in its center were scribed with a sharp compass; at their center can still be seen the mark made by the point of the instrument. Between the outer and inner circles there is an ornamental design of eight leaves, touching at their tips. Geometric decorations of this type are common in the tombs at Beth-She'arim (*vid. sup.* p. 137). On the ceiling beyond this decoration one can see two other motifs drawn with a compass, one beside the other: a. five concentric circles; and b. a geometric decoration whose frame consists of two concentric circles with the space between filled by a zigzag, and in the center, two smaller concentric circles, connected by hatchings to the frame. In the center of each of the circles there is a clear mark made by the sharp point of the compass.


Further graffiti and drawings in red paint can be found on the right wall of the room and on the arch of arcosolium 2. On the wall to the right of this latter, there is a circle containing two lines crossing to form an ; the entire surface of the circle is filled with red dots. A replica of this design appears also on the wall to the left of the arcosolium. It seems that the craftsmen drew this motif from a more complicated pattern, i.e., from the rosette found on ossuaries, in synagogues, etc. where the free space between the leaves is filled with dots. Under the above-mentioned drawing, i.e., on the wall to the left of the arcosolium, a second, very blurred drawing is preserved; it is a candelabrum with nine branches, standing on a tripod. Over the right branches of the candelabrum is another one, of seven branches (i.e., a menorah). It, too, stands on a tripod, and above the branches there are dots apparently indicating the seven lamps. Below the menorah is yet another candelabrum of eight branches; it is carelessly incised and somewhat effaced (*vid. fig. 13*). The three candelabra attract special attention because of the varying number of their branches. As to the one with eight branches, a similar menorah is depicted on a decorated stone from the synagogue at Eshtemoa.<sup>3</sup> The nine-branched candelabrum is of particular interest because one like it appears on a brick from the Jewish catacomb at Monteverde in Rome,<sup>4</sup> as well as one on a Jewish tombstone of the fifth century C.E., found in the area of Zoar (next to a depiction of a five-branched candelabrum).<sup>5</sup> It may be that the picture illustrated a שרגא דחנוכתא (Babyl. Talmud 45.1), a Hannukah wickhole lamp, from which the upright Hannukah candelabrum later developed. The same possibly should be said about the candelabrum with eight branches; it is noteworthy that Jewish lamps with eight wicks were known already in the Roman and Byzantine periods, and a multi-wick lamp is mentioned in the Talmud in connection with Hannukah



Fig. 13  
Drawing in paint and two  
graffiti of Menorahs

(Babyl. Talmud, Shabbat, 23,1.)<sup>6</sup> There is, therefore, reason to assume that the artisan intended to depict, besides the menorah, two types of Hannukah candelabra one of nine branches, and another of eight branches.

A further set of blurred graffiti is found on the left side of the arch of arcosolium 2, above the shelf. It consists of: a. a wheel with thirty spokes; b. a boat depicted in profile and sailing to the left, incised with a very fine line to the right of the former. The bottom of the boat is represented by a single curved line that sweeps from prow to stern, forking out on the left. The mast rises at the middle of the boat, supported by two shrouds which descend to the prow and the stern; all these details are indicated by lines. However, there is no indication of a deck. The sail, attached to the mast, is depicted by a netlike pattern easily distinguishable on the right side of the mast; though on the left it seems to be furled. In the boat, to the left of the mast, stands the full length figure of a man. It is very obscure, but as far as one can see it is drawn *en face*, its right arm stretched out above the level of the shoulder, whereas the left one is parallel to the body. The figure is draped in a kind of long tunic, drawn in an oblique criss-cross. It is noteworthy that this is the only drawing of a man standing in a boat which has been found to date in the catacombs of Beth She'arim. As to the type of the boat depicted, it is similar in several aspects to the rough carving of a boat found on the wall of catacomb no. 10, and to the boat found depicted at Gezer, in a burial of the Roman period.<sup>8</sup> The human figure is similar to one found in drawing

“c”, in catacomb no. 1 (*vid. sup.*, p. 61 and Pl. VIII, 3); they resemble one another especially in their posture, in the gesture of the hands and in the garment.

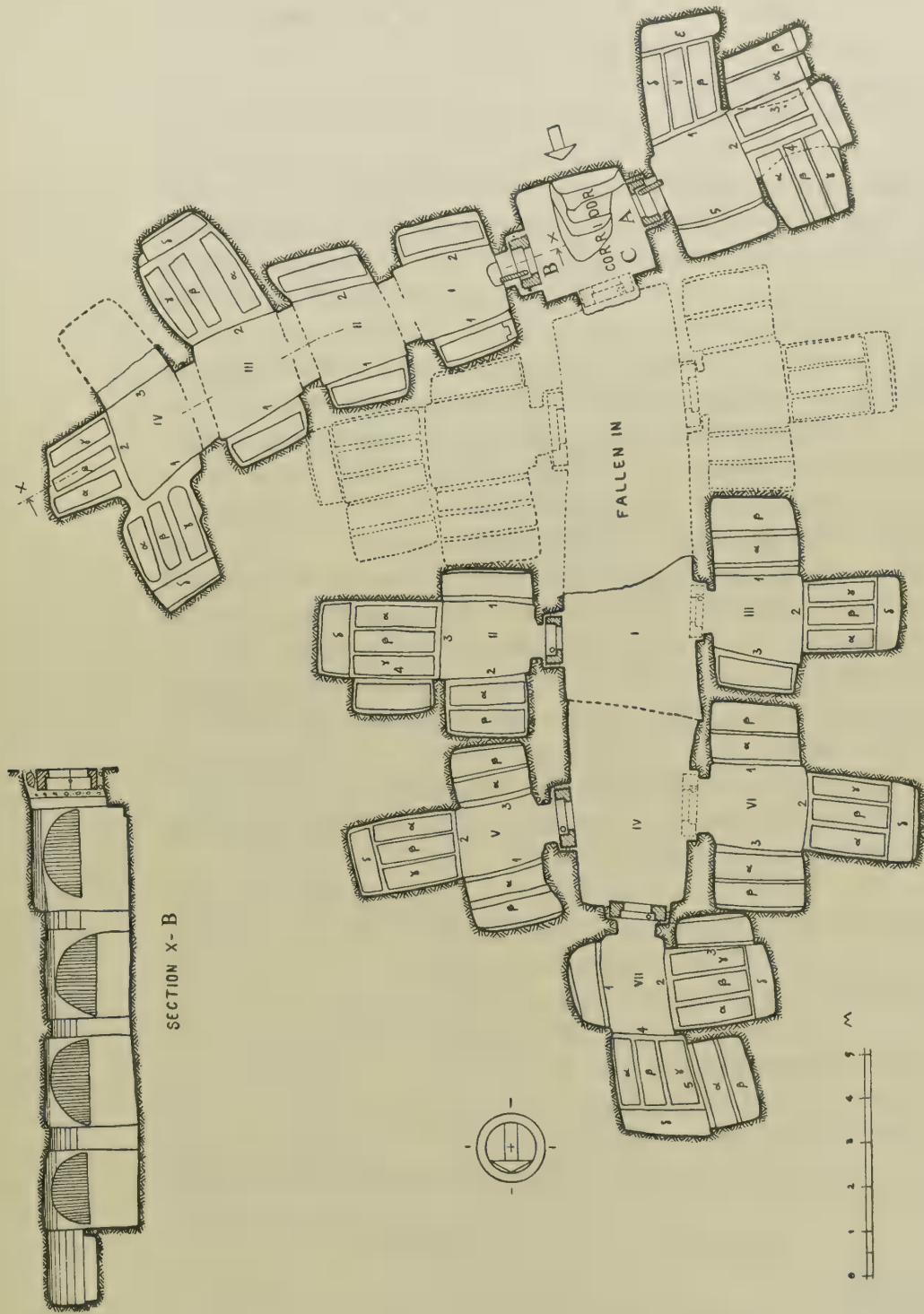
A difficulty arises when we come to interpret the contents of the depiction. On the one hand it is possible to find parallels to it in pagan funereal art, and the artist may have taken his subject from foreign sources; on the other hand it is not impossible that he wished to express a biblical theme, such as Noah in the ark. This theme is depicted often and in various forms in churches and in early Christian catacombs. Another detail from the story of the Flood appears in the mosaic floor of the synagogue at Gerasa. It is worth noting that the ark is usually depicted as a huge vessel, but sometimes there is instead a large boat in which Noah stands praying.

To the left of the boat there is a schematic tree (in the form of a vertical line from which spring the branches which are depicted by oblique lines). Under the boat there is a circle in which three lines cross at its center. All of these decorations are very blurred.

**Room II** (2.00 m long and approximately 1.80 m wide) is hewn in a form similar to that of room I though it is not decorated, except for two graffiti on the ceiling. They are two concentric circles drawn by hand, and four concentric circles drawn with a compass. Hewn in its left wall, under the arcosolium, is a coat-of-arms from the late Crusader period; it is triangular, with a chevron, in three levels of relief. There is no doubt that the Crusaders entered the hall through catacomb no. 1 (*vid. infra*).

**Room III** (approximately 2.10 × 2.10 m) is hewn in a similar plan, except that arcosolium 2 (to the right) is widened considerably and its shelf has four rectangular burial places: three the length, and behind them, another one the width. On the wall of this arcosolium there were two Greek inscriptions: one (no. 115) is incised and painted in red; the other (no. 116) is painted in red only. From inscription no. 115 we learn that this arcosolium contained the remains of a man from Baka (ΒΕΚΗΝΩ); apparently the Galilean settlement mentioned by Josephus as Βάκα,<sup>10</sup> today el-Bukeia (Peki'in). This place was definitely settled by Jews in the Roman period, as is evidenced first of all by the remains of a synagogue from this period;<sup>11</sup> midrashic sources also mention the “cave of Baka” as the hiding place of R. Simeon ben Yoḥai.<sup>12</sup> The assumption that our arcosolium was used as a burial place for a man (or a family) from the Galilean village of Baka is supported by the fact that in catacomb no. 1 there were buried people from Arab (*vid. sup.*, pp. 93, 132), also in Galilee.

**Room IV** (1.70 m long and approximately 2.00 m wide) is very carelessly hewn and in each of its three walls there is a large arcosolium. In the shelf



Catacomb no. 2: Plan 6

of arcosolium 1 (on the left hand) there are four rectangular burial places, three the length and another one, behind, the width; in arcosolium 2 (in the back wall of the hall), only three burial places are hewn the length of the shelf. All of these arcosolia had been damaged by the collapse of the ceiling, and arcosolium 3 was almost completely destroyed. It is worth noting that in arcosolium 2 there were minor fragments of a marble coffin, decorated in relief; larger pieces of it were found near the mausoleum (*nefesh*) near catacomb no. 11. There is no doubt that the coffin had deliberately been broken and its pieces were scattered over a wide area; some of them fell into the arcosolium through the hole in the ceiling.

Hall B contains altogether nineteen burial places. All the burial places in this hall are of one type: arcosolia, with shelves having one, three or four burial places. These latter are generally 1.63–2.00 m long; only in room IV are they shorter. The general measurements of the rectangular burial places, and the complete lack of coffins or ossuaries seem to prove that they served specifically for primary burials. In this respect, as well as in the manner of the rooms being hewn in a row, one behind the other, this hall is similar to several in the fore-part of catacomb no. 1, especially hall A, quarried in the first half of the third century C.E. Examination of the holes in its walls, especially a breach found in arcosolium 1 room 1 (which had been made during the hewing of hall L in catacomb no. 3), led to the conclusion that this hall was made prior to Period III. We know little about the persons buried here, except for one who is mentioned in two inscriptions; one of these testifies that he was a physician by profession, and a member of a family from Baka; the second gives his name as לוליאנוס בן יצחק (Lolianus [Julianus] ben-Isaac no. 116). Note-worthy also is the fact that most of the themes in the drawings and graffiti in room 1 are of Jewish inspiration.

**Hall C**, which is quarried into the back (north) wall of the courtyard, is the largest and most elaborated in the catacomb. Since its anterior part was severely damaged, its excavation involved serious technical problems which prevented the complete removal of the debris amassed there.

Examination of the hall shows that it underwent considerable modifications during the period of its use. It transpires that according to its initial plan it should have been a regular burial hall. This is indicated by the aperture at the entrance, hewn in the back wall of the courtyard and intended for a door frame and door like in the other halls; it seems, however, that after a considerable portion of the anterior part of the hall had caved in, it was converted into a long corridor, of which only the posterior part was roofed over. The open (anterior) section of the corridor thus formed is 7.00 m long and 2.50–2.80 m wide and slopes down from the entrance toward the hall. This roofed part is 7.50 m long and 2.90 m wide, and approximately 2.00 m high; it narrows progressively towards its

back wall. (The anterior, unroofed part is indicated in the plan by the letter A, and the roofed part by the letter B.) It can also be assumed that the corridor, whose overall length is 14.50 m, was extended only after it became apparent that the anterior part was unstable.

In the walls of this corridor, to the left and right of the entrance, there were burial rooms; because of the collapse, only a superficial examination could be conducted in part A. There were found in its walls two entrances cut opposite each other. They led to destroyed rooms 1.5 m from the entrance of the corridor: one in the left wall (I) and the other in the right wall (II). Two additional entrances, also leading to destroyed burial-rooms were cut opposite one another in the walls of the corridor about 4.5 m from its entrance (III and IV). Of these four rooms, only room II has been examined. It transpires that it included two chambers, with arcosolia hewn in its walls. The door-frame and the door, which still turns on its hinges and was decorated, as usual, in imitation of a wooden door, were preserved *in situ*. It seems that the frames of the entrances were constructed after the collapse of the ceiling in the corridor. During our examination of the corridor, a worn bronze coin was found near the entrance to room II (no. 128 in the catalogue of finds), apparently from the time of Trajan.<sup>13</sup> As for the posterior, roofed part of the corridor, all five rooms hewn in its walls were cleared of debris: V and VII in the left wall, VI and VIII opposite them, in the right wall, and IX in the back wall, facing the entrance to the corridor. We may note that between parts A and B of the corridor, there were no signs of construction destined to protect the roofed part of the corridor; hence it is not surprising that rainwater penetrated through the open entrance and damaged the walls of the corridor, and allowing earth to accumulate till finally it was covered by a thick layer. This is probably the reason why entrance frames were affixed to the doorways of the five rooms, as well. However, this is indicated mainly by the entrance-ways themselves, since most of the frames and doors have disappeared, probably when the tombs were robbed. In the entrance to room V only the threshold and doorposts were found *in situ*. Within the debris in the corridor beside the entrance to room IV there were found the smooth fragments of the door lintel, (on which can be discerned traces of an inscription painted in red) and the door (carved in the usual imitation of a wooden door). The upper part of the projecting vertical strip which divides the door into two panels bears the very blurred drawing of a seven branched candelabrum, painted in red.

A complete lintel and a doorpost were found among the debris on the floor of the corridor, close to room VIII, they apparently having belonged to its entrance. On the smooth surface of the lintel there is a Greek inscription of two long lines, painted in red (no. 117); its continuation appears on the doorpost (no. 118). The entire inscription was well preserved except for the last letters on the doorpost. It mentions two

persons, ΙΑΚΩ (Jacob) and ΙΟΥΔΑC (Judah), the partners of Parigorios and Alexanderos. This may allude to a joint ownership of the burial room.

All the burial rooms are of the same type: small, square and undecorated, roughly and carelessly cut. In the walls of each room three arcosolia are hewn: one in each of the walls to the sides of the entrance, cut opposite one another, and a third in the back wall facing the entrance. The shelves are of various sizes, and they contain from one to four rectangular burial places in which the bodies had been placed apparently without coffins; in any case, no remnants of coffins have been found.

Occasionally the arcosolia had been widened, or an additional arcosolium hewn in one of the inner walls, for additional burial places. In general little can be learned of the types of burial in these rooms, as they were completely robbed and partly destroyed.

This five-room hall included a total of forty-three rectangular burial places. Of the few finds from the floor of corridor B we should first mention a lamp (no. 126) of the type common at Beth She'arim in Period III, and a broken glass unquenterium (no. 127); both of them were found on the threshold to Room I. Many sherds were collected, especially ribbed fragments, and others in imitation of terra sigillata, all from Period III. Among them is a sherd incised with an unclear, cursive Greek inscription – possibly the name ΛΟΛΛΟΥ (no. 114). All these finds relate to the third century and the first half of the fourth century C.E. We may note that there is nothing in hall C, or in halls A or B, to indicate that they were in use after Period III, i.e. after the middle of the fourth century C.E. As for the dating of the posterior part of hall C, attention should be paid to the fact that the breaches cut in the arcosolia of room V permit access to hall D of catacomb no. 1. Examination of the breaches indicates that Room V is later than hall D. Thus, if work on it is assumed to have begun in the middle of the third century (*vid. sup.* p. 68), room V would not have been hewn before the second half of the third century.

## 2 CATACOMB NUMBER 3

This catacomb (*vid.* Plan 7) includes an open corridor and five halls. It excels in its fine plan, to which no major modifications had been made such as occurred in the two catacombs discussed above. It also excels in the harmony between the stonework and its decoration; and it is also better preserved. Yet, from the technical point of view, the excavation of this catacomb was difficult since huge amounts of debris had to be removed.

The corridor of the catacomb runs along a north-south axis (with a westward trend). The entrance to the corridor is from the southern, with a double flight of stairs leading down into it; the overall elevation of the

flight of stairs is about 3.00 m and its length about 2.65 m (*vid.* Pl XXIV, 1). The main flight, descending almost from the center of the entrance, consists of eight steps all of which are about 1 m wide, except the bottom one which is smaller, rounded and slanting towards the floor of the corridor; its tread is worn by continued use. To the right of this flight, between it and the eastern wall of the corridor, a flight of auxiliary steps was cut in order to ease the descent; it consists of six very comfortable steps, as wide as those of the main flight. The space between the main flight and the western wall of the corridor (about 0.60 m wide) was cut out to the level of the floor of the corridor and served as a passageway to the chamber hewn in the front wall of the corridor. This chamber, which is arched inside, had certainly been used as a storage place for burial paraphernalia, similar to the niche in the corridor of catacomb no. 1 (*vid. sup.* p. 41).

The corridor is hewn as an irregular rectangle, 1 m long and very wide near the entrance (about 2.70 m), narrowing towards the middle (about 2.30 m), and widening again near the back wall (about 2.50 m). The floor of the corridor is almost level and stands about 3 m below the top of the rock, and 4.80–5.00 m below the debris that accumulated there. While walking along the corridor one has the impression of advancing between two high, smoothly cut, vertical walls, especially in places not exposed to the elements.

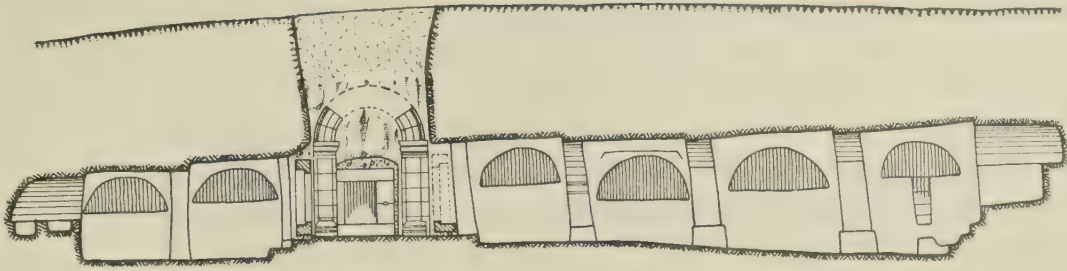
On the two sides of the corridor are the entrances to four burial halls: two are on the left side (A and C), and symmetrically placed opposite them are two on the right side (B and D). An entrance to an additional hall (E) is located in the back wall of the corridor, opposite the flight of stairs (*vid.* Pl. XXIV, 2). Attempts to decorate the walls of the corridor can also be seen here. Noteworthy are two graffiti in the wall of the corridor: one is a *tabula ansata*,<sup>14</sup> in the wall between the entrances to halls B and D (*vid.* Pl. XXIV, 3), and the other is a relief of an arched gate, between the entrances to halls A and C.

In **Hall A** the stones of the door-frame and the door are preserved *in situ* (*vid.* Pl. XXIV, 2). Of special interest are the doorposts; in front, they are in the form of pillars with bases and capitals jutting beyond the threshold (compare halls, D, O and P of catacomb no. 1; pp. 119 f. and 124), whereas the lintel and the door are plain. A step in the threshold leads down to the floor of the hall which consists of three small rooms: two (I and II) are hewn one behind the other and connected by an arched passageway, while the third (III) is in the left wall of room I. Here the stonework is rough and the walls are undecorated. Rooms I and II are irregular squares and rather high (about 1.75–1.85 m), whereas room III is a rough rectangle, only about 1.5 m high. In the walls of the rooms are hewn the usual *arcosolia* with rectangular burial places (length 1.50–1.85 m). In

most of them there were bones and sealing stones. In room III the arcosolia to the right and left of the entrance contain shorter burial places (about 1.40 m), while in the back wall there is a very small and roughly cut arcosolium with a shelf only 0.70 m long and 0.63 m wide; this could have been used only for collecting bones. It can be assumed that this last arcosolium was added late. Of the few finds from this room, mention should be made of a broken glass plate (no. 98), a small glass vial with round base (no. 99), and a number of sherds typical of Period III. An Arab lamp (no. 91) and a few Arab sherds were also found here; hence, it is assumed that burial continued here also in Period V. This small hall, which follows the regular plan of halls containing arcosolia, includes altogether eleven burial places.

**Hall B** is one of the richest in burial types and decorations. Its entrance is low and narrow; the door-frame and the door are preserved *in situ*. On the smooth lintel there are traces of a blurred Greek inscription painted in red (no. 119). The door-frame is built as usual (*vid. sup.* pp. 44, 75), as is the door front, which is cut to imitate a wooden floor (*vid. Pls. XXIV, 3; XXV, 1*). A step in the treshold and two additional rock-cut stairs lead down to the floor of the room, about 0.60 m below the corridor level. In addition to main room I which is almost square, the hall includes a small rectangular additional room (III), hewn in its back wall, and as well as room II, also of a roughly square shape, and cut into the right wall of room I. The overall length of the hall is 2.75 m and its width is 4.00 m. The ceiling of room I, 2.25 m high, is almost flat, whereas in the other rooms it is arched and much lower. The walls of rooms I and III are beautifully cut and smoothed whereas the stonework in room II is less perfect. In room I there are two arcosolia, one above the other in the wall to the left of the entrance; in the shelf of the upper one (1) there is only one burial place (1.55 m long); in the lower one (2) there are two (1.56–1.63 m. long), cut one behind the other the width of the arcosolium (*vid. Pl. XXV, 1*). Such an arrangement is rare in the Beth She‘arim catacombs, but is found in Mugharet el Jehennem, nearby. On the wall of the room, to the left of the upper arcosolium, there is a seven-branched candlebrum standing on a tripod, incised and painted in red; the zig-zag lines cut under each of the six branches and on either side of the central branch, attempt to depict the decoration of the menorah in the Temple, the “bud and flower” motif. Another menorah, the shaft of which is depicted without a base, is incised in double lines on the wall between the two arcosolia.

Of greater interest is room III (*vid. Pl. XXV, 2*). In its back wall there is an arcosolium carelessly cut at a great height above the floor (about 1.45 m); in the shelf there is only one burial place hewn to its width (1.72 m long). This arcosolium is reached by a flight of three narrow steps (of



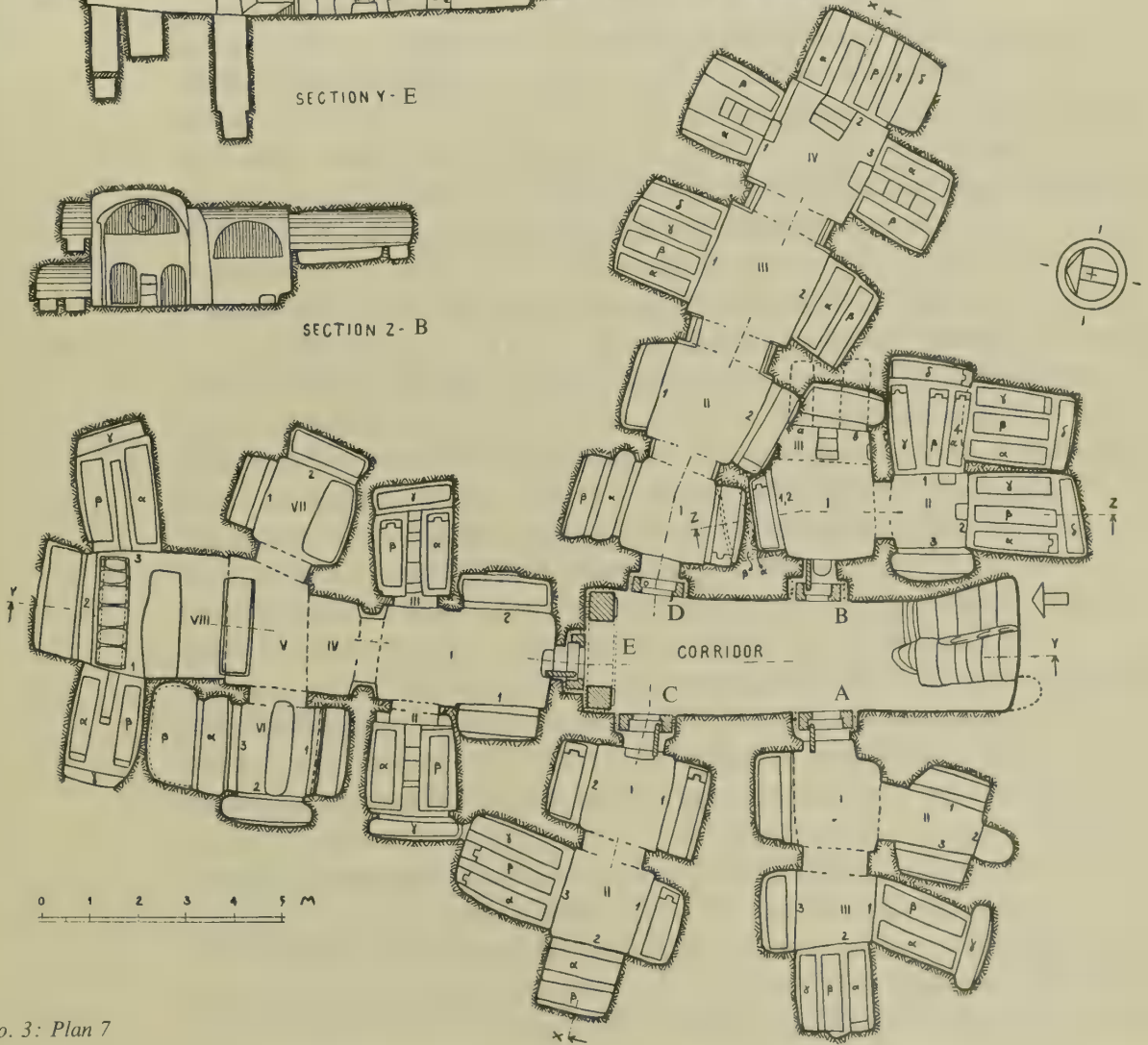
SECTION X - C, D



SECTION Y - E



SECTION Z - B



Catacomb no. 3: Plan 7

an overall height of 0.80 m) cut out of the rock in the center of the room. In the wall, flanking the stairs are two kokhim, of different sizes: the one to the left is 1.35 m long; the one to the right, 1.65 m. The sealing stones, removed from their places by tomb robbers, were found nearby. The arcosolium may have served as the burial place of the head of the family owning the hall. It is noteworthy that the entire room III, and especially the arcosolium in question, was decorated with an unusual number of graffiti and drawings, though no inscription mentioning the names of the owners of the hall was preserved. In addition, a series of decorations on the wall below the shelf of the arcosolium represents, from right to left: a. an incomplete goblet incised and painted in red; b. a shofer; c. a rectangular vessel with a circular base and a perpendicular handle;<sup>15</sup> d. a very blurred drawing, possibly a menorah, of which only traces of the stem and tripod are left; e. a square ark with double doors, standing on two legs, with upper corners ending in acroteria. Drawings b.–e., painted in red, are very blurred, but when discovered it was still possible to copy them.

It seems that this row motifs are standard ritual objects represented in synagogues, catacombs and on various objects (“gold glasses,” lamps etc.). As to the first motif, a similar pattern is found on coins from the period of the First Revolt as well as on the Arch of Titus, where apparently one of the liberation vessels used in the Temple is depicted.<sup>16</sup> Decoration c. apparently represents an incense shovel, part of the set of sacred objects.<sup>17</sup> Decoration e. is, in many respects, similar to the drawing of the movable ark depicted in hall M (*vid.* fig. 11), except that it has double doors, as is common on the drawings of arks in synagogues (*vid. sup.* pp. 110 f.).

On the arch of the arcosolium there is a carving in high relief of a bowl, from the center of which projects a knob (*vid.* Pl. XXV, 2) connected to the rim by twelve leaves painted in red, but very blurred. This relief recalls that of the fruit filled bowls in halls N and P of catacomb I (*vid. sup.* pp. 119, 130); the leaves, however, seem to indicate that the artisan perhaps tried to combine this theme with that of the twelve-petalled rosette.<sup>18</sup> On the arch of the arcosolium two more drawings are found: a. a circle with four lines crossing in its center; b. a six-leaf, whirling wheel enclosed in a circle, of a common Roman period type, especially in Jewish art, found on ossuaries,<sup>19</sup> in Jewish tombs,<sup>20</sup> etc. Finally we may mention a horizontal rectangle in which two diagonals are drawn, painted in red on the incline of the ceiling, above the arch of the arcosolium.

The walls left and right of the arcosolium are also decorated. On the left wall are drawn in red paint (*vid.* Pl. XXV, 1): a. a circle with four crossing lines; b. a rolled scroll (apparently enclosed in a sheath) set upright, reminiscent of the Torah scroll on the sealing stone found in hall M of catacomb I;<sup>21</sup> and c. a menorah (blurred) on a tripod, on the leg

and branches of which there are hatchings which seem to symbolize the "bud and flower" motif. On the right wall are (*vid.* Pl. XXV, 2): a. a menorah on a tripod, drawn in red, with the stem and branches hatched as above; b. a relief (somewhat damaged) of a conch, the ribs of which indicated by red and dark-brown lines. The conch is of the type of decoration most common in Roman art in general, and especially in Jewish art; nor is it rare at Beth She'arim. One should pay attention to the combination of relief and drawing in paint in this conch, which technique is especially characteristic of this room. To sum up, the decorative material of this room displays a unity of character, as if it were the work of a single artisan using obviously Jewish themes together with general themes commonly employed by the Jewish artisans of those days.

In rooms II the most striking feature is the great density of burials. Except for the small arcosolium in the wall to the right of the entrance, where only one rectangular burial place was cut to its width, the arcosolia in the wall opposite the entrance and to its left are very large, each containing four burial places. In the right wall of the last arcosolium there is an additional arcosolium, also containing four burial places. Thus, thirteen burial places are to be found in the four arcosolia. Most of them contained "pillows" with depressions for the heads of the deceased, and in almost all of them sealing stones were found. Further, all the burial places are sufficiently large for primary burial. An interesting detail is the great height at which the shelves of the large arcosolia are cut; this necessitated a step in front of each arcosolium.

Hall B, in its three rooms, contains a total of nineteen burial places in arcosolia and two kokhim. It seems that all of the burial places were used for primary burial, whereas the kokhim were used for bone collection, either in ossuaries or not. All the burials in this room had been robbed completely; a number of pottery sherds of the Eastern *terra sigillata* type, fragments of ribbed vessels and a broken lamp (no. 114) were found on the floor of the hall, pointing to a Period III date, i.e., the third century and the first half of the fourth century C.E. An examination of the general nature of the hall, the burials and the decorations confirms this dating. Noteworthy is the Jewish spirit displayed by the family buried here, as is shown by the place of honor accorded to the menorah and the other Jewish motifs in the decoration of the hall.

**Hall C** is the smallest of the halls in this catacomb. The door frame and door, preserved *in situ*, are plain. A step in the threshold and two additional rock-cut steps lead down to the floor of the hall, which consists of two rooms (I and II), one behind the other and connected by an arched passage. The overall length of the hall is approximately 4.20 m. The two rooms have the shape of rough squares and their walls are carelessly dressed. In room I there are two small arcosolia; in the walls to either

side of the entrance, each one containing a single burial place. In room II are three arcosolia; one in the wall to the left of the entrance, containing a single burial place; another, in the wall to the right of the entrance, containing three burial places hewn its length, and a third one, in the back wall, with two burial places across its width. In this small hall there were only eight burial places (in five arcosolia), with “pillows” having depressions for the head of the deceased, in most of them. All the burials in this hall had been despoiled completely.

**Hall D** is one of the largest in this catacomb. When the corridor was cleared, four large, dressed stones were found affixed above the entrance to this hall. They were set one beside the other forming a roof above the entrance to the hall, supported on one side by the natural rock of the corridor, and on the other side by a wall of small rough stones erected in the corridor itself. Obviously this roof was built in ancient times, to prevent the penetration of rain-water and debris into the hall, left open by the destruction of the door frame. The remains of this construction have been examined and cleared away from the corridor. The lintel, found among the debris in the hall, is smooth and bears traces of an inscription painted in red (no. 120). The door, also found in the hall, is carved with two panels, separated by a vertical strip. Each panel is divided into three smaller square panels one above the other. In the upper and lower small panels there are projecting triangles with apexes touching at the center ( $\nabla$ ): the left middle panel contains a circle circumscribing a projecting decoration in the form of an x; the right middle panel is also decorated with a circle, with an iron eye to which a ring, serving to shut the heavy door had been attached. This kind of decoration, or similar ones—all different from the more conventional types described above—is encountered on several doors in the catacombs (*vid. sup.* p. 109).

The floor of the hall is reached by a step in the threshold, found *in situ*, and an additional rock-cut step. The hall consists of four rooms (I–IV), hewn one behind the other in a row (*vid.* Pl. XXVI, 1). The hall is approximately 10 m long and 1.85 m wide, in room I, while rooms III–IV are 2.30 m wide. The floor slopes inwards increasing the height of the hall inwards from 2.10 m (in room I) to 2.70 m (in room IV). The rooms are rough squares, with arcosolia cut in the walls on either side. The shelves of the arcosolia contain from one to four rectangular burial places; room IV is an exception (*vid. infra*). The stonework in some of the arcosolia is of excellent quality (*vid.* Pl. XXVI, 5). The rooms are separated from one another by arched passageways cut in the shape of built-up entrances, with an arch resting on pillars with bases. Of special interest is the left pillar in the passage between rooms I and II the top of which is carved and painted in red in imitation of a capital. On the arch above the capital is a roughly incised and very primitive figure of a man *en face*

(*vid.* Pl. XXVI, 3) In some respects the graffito is very similar to other such depictions at Beth She'arim (*vid. sup.* pp. 61, 99 f.). Noteworthy are the extended arms, raised above shoulder level, and the hands, which have only four fingers.

Special attention is due also to the set of graffiti above the arch of the passageway between rooms II and III, on the right side (*vid.* Pl. XXVI, 2). They are, from right to left: a. a seven-branched candelabrum on a tripod; b. an unclear design; c. beneath b. the figure of a man, *en face*, with horizontally extended arms,<sup>22</sup> apparently holding some object in his hand; and d. an incomplete menorah. There are also two butterflies carved on the arch of this passageway, on the right side (*vid.* Pl. XXVI, 4) these seem to be no more than attempted depictions of the "souls" of the departed as represented in Greek artistic tradition, not generally adopted by Jewish art.<sup>23</sup> This motif does not recur in any of the catacombs excavated in Beth She'arim.

In each of the three walls of room IV there is a hewn arcosolium containing two shelves with a narrow passage cut between them (*vid. sup.*, p. 134). In all three arcosolia (1, 2 and 3), the shelves and narrow passageways are cut high above the floor of the room—the shelves at about 1.50–1.75 m and the passageway at about 0.50–0.95 m. To facilitate access, steps were cut in front of them. Arcosolia 1 and 3 have only one step in front, whereas arcosolium 2 is reached by a flight of three steps (*vid.* Pl. XXVI, 1). An interesting detail is the steps cut in the passages between the shelves in arcosolia 1 and 3 (for the latter, *vid.* Pl. XXVI, 6). Arcosolium 2 was widened towards the right where a secondary smaller arcosolium was hewn in its wall. The rectangular burial places cut in the shelves are of the conventional type.

Hall D contains nineteen burial places in its four rooms, all within arcosolia. All seem to have been used for primary burial, since they are long enough to contain the whole bodies of the dead. In two of them (in rooms I and II) there were "pillows" for the heads of the deceased. None of the burial places would indicate the collection of bones, nor were any fragments of ossuaries found. Concerning the data of the hall, the types of the burials, and especially the arcosolia in room IV would seem to point to Period III (the third century and the first half of the fourth century; cf. *supra*, pp. 25, 135). The fragments of pottery found in this Hall are also to be related to this period. And finally, it is worth mentioning that the graffito figures described above were evidently not the work of the artisans who decorated the tombs, but probably the casual drawing of relatives or other visitors; it is quite obvious that we have here attempts to depict the "soul" of the dead side by side with a conventional Jewish symbol—the Menorah.

**Hall E**, quarried in the back wall of the corridor, is the main hall in this

catacomb; it excels in the variety of its burial places, in its decorations and in its inscriptions. The hall entrance is interesting from an architectural point of view, and even more so is the arched portal built before the hall entrance (*vid.* Pl. XXIV, 2–3). This portal, whose purpose is ornamental, consists of two pillars (1.90 m high) built of four courses of well-dressed, large ashlar supporting an arch built of smaller stones set above the doorway. The joints between the stones are coated with lime-plaster. Both pillars are carved in high relief so as to resemble semi-detached columns, with bases and capitals decorated with mouldings. The pillars were preserved *in situ* whereas only four stones of the arch were left intact, two on each side. Since most of the stones of the arch and the facing of the corridor wall above it were missing, reconstruction was impossible. We may note that this kind of portal was found in several of the other catacombs at Beth She'arim, i.e., at the entrances to hall C of catacomb no. 4 (*vid.* Pl. XXXV, 1), halls A and B in catacomb no. 6, and hall A in catacomb no. 11. The evident uniformity in architectural style would indicate that it was familiar to a majority of stone masons working in the catacombs. We may add that in the rock walls between the lintel and the arch above it, there usually was an additional ornament; the conch motif, though this decoration often was effaced by the action of the element.

We may note, further, that the top of the doorway is hewn in the form of a very accurate ellipse (*vid.* Pl. XXIX, 2). The beautifully built door-frame here is reserved *in situ*; the lintel and the door posts are smooth on the outside while the door, which still turns on its hinges is decorated in relief. The front of the door is divided vertically into two sections by a projecting strip, each section being divided into three square panels. In the panels of the left section, there are from top to bottom: a rosette of six petals within a circle; a square divided vertically into two halves by a projecting strip; and two triangles with their apexes meeting at its center. Of the panels in the right section: the upper and lower ones are decorated with the same sort of triangles as in the lower left panel; and in the middle panel there is a circle with an iron eye. Thus the ornamentation of the door is in general, similar to that of the door to hall C, the only difference being the rosette, not found so far on any other door at Beth She'arim; it is frequently encountered however, on stone doors of the Roman period.<sup>24</sup> The floor of the hall, 0.60 m below the level of the corridor, is reached by three steps, one in the threshold, another, rock cut, and a third one, built. The hall consists of eight rooms, with the four main rooms (I, IV, V, VIII), hewn one behind the other in a row. Two side rooms are hewn in the walls of room I: room II, to the left of its entrance, and room III, to the right. Two other side rooms are hewn in the walls of room V: room VI, in the left wall, and room VII, in the right one. The stonework is better in the main rooms, and less accurate in the side rooms. It is noteworthy that rooms IV–V served as a kind of a corridor

leading from room I to the other rooms, similar to the passage rooms in halls M, N and O in catacomb no. 1 (*vid. sup.* p. 133). The overall length of the hall is approximately 10.00 m and its maximum width is 7.00 m. In room I the ceiling is almost flat, with a horizontal rock-cut band separating it from the walls, as in halls C and G of catacomb no. 1. In the other rooms the ceiling is arched or slightly curved. The height of the main rooms is over 2.00 m, whereas the side rooms are lower.

**Room I** has the shape of a rough rectangle. In the wall on either side of the entrance there is an arcosolium: 1 in the left wall and 2 in the right; beyond them are the arched passageways leading to rooms II and III. Each of the arcosolia contains a single burial place hewn the width of its shelf. It seems that both were used as honorable burial places. Arcosolium 1 is decorated only with a sunken strip along the edge of the arch. On the wall to its right are incised the seven branches of a menorah, but instead of its stem there is a depression for a lamp (*vid.* Pl. XXIX, 1, 3). Soot marks indicate that visitors used to light lamps here.<sup>25</sup> Arcosolium 2 is much more elaborate, with a conch carved in high relief at the center of its back wall, above the shelf (*vid.* Pl. XXIX, 4).

On the wall below the shelf of arcosolium 2 there is a drawing in red paint of a seven-branched menorah on a tripod; by it is a partly effaced Greek inscription (no. 122). Both this inscription and another blurred Greek inscription painted on the wall to the right of the arch of the arcosolium (no. 121), apparently mention the name of the head of the family buried here.

On the wall of the room, to the left of arcosolium 2 (i.e., between that arcosolium and the passageway to room III), there is in high relief the upright image of a man presented *en face*, carrying a menorah on his head (*vid.* Pl. XXIX, 3, 5). The face of the man is somewhat vague, but the body is well preserved. His right arm cannot be seen and the left one is indicated merely by two parallel lines. The man wears a Roman military tunic reaching to the middle of his thighs (cf. Pl. XIV, 2) and fastened with a belt at the hips. The folds of the garment are indicated by vertical and oblique lines. The rock beneath the feet of the figure has been left intentionally rough. The menorah with its seven branches, the stem carved as a column with twisted flutings, and the tripod base, are all rather well executed. Square shapes incised just above the branches of the menorah may depict the lamps or flames. This theme has no parallel in the Jewish art of this period. And yet, there is little reason to assume that this is an original composition. The original of this motif theme may possibly be found in a conventional Greco-Roman motif, i.e. a human figure carrying a lamp or lamps on its head; in our instance, however, instead of the usual vessel the figure supports a menorah.<sup>26</sup> It should be remembered that in the Christian art of the Late Byzantine period in

Palestine, a similar theme of a standing man carrying a cross on his head is encountered.<sup>27</sup> Did the Christian artists see the Jewish use of such motifs as that in our relief and adopt it by replacing the Jewish symbol with a Christian one?

In the wall above the right branch of the menorah, there is a recess for a lamp, similar to that in the opposite wall (*vid. sup.*) though of rougher workmanship. To the right of the menorah stem is the thinly incised image of a peculiar bird, with both wings and long legs outlined. This is the only graffito of a bird found in the necropolis of Beth She'arim.

On the back wall of the room, to the right of the arched passageway leading to room IV, are incised two candelabra. One has five branches, topped by a horizontal line, and the second is a seven-branched menorah; both stand on tripods. On the left wall of the room, near the entrance to room IV, there is a Greek inscription painted in red (no. 123).

The tiny **rooms II and III**, hewn in the walls of room I, were both intended for only three burial places each. The entrances to them are cut in the shape of built-up passageways, with arches resting on pillars. The floor in both passages is cut higher than that of room I. In each room two shelves are hewn in the walls on either side of the entrance, raised above the floor level; each of them contains a rectangular burial place, hewn so as to imitate a coffin. The narrow passageway between the two shelves leads to an arcosolium hewn in the back wall, the shelf of which also contains a single burial place. These small rooms are of a type similar to room IV in hall G of catacomb no. 1 (*vid. sup.* pp. 85–86, 134).

Room I is connected with room IV by a passageway hewn in the form of a built-up passage whose arch rests on strongly projecting engaged columns. Each of the columns stands on a square pedestal without a base, and is topped by an ornamented capital above which the arch rises (*vid.* Pls. XXIX, 3 and XXVIII, 1). The artisans seem to have tried to smooth the rock and give this passageway the finest possible aspect.

**In room IV**, which is actually the main passage-room, two menorahs are carved in high relief on the walls, on either side of the above passageway, close to its columns. Of great interest is the 1.70 m high menorah on the left side (*vid.* Pl. XXVII). Its seven branches are separated by deep grooves, and widen at the top so as to give the impression that they support lamps. The menorah's tall stem stands on a base which widens at the bottom and seems to stand on the floor of the room. The second menorah, on the opposite wall, is similar but somewhat taller (1.75 m) and not so well executed. Its stem, which is damaged, stands on a pedestal rounded at the top and square at the bottom.

**Room V** is merely a continuation of room IV, serving only as a passage to rooms VI (in the right wall), VII (in the left wall), and VIII (in the back

wall). The entire width of its floor is taken up by a pit, 2.00 m deep, 2.00 m long and 0.60 m wide. At the bottom the pit narrows down to the size of a rectangular burial place 1.94 m long, 0.50 m wide and 0.60 m deep. In the latter there were bones, with scattered fragments of nails and angles, from a wooden coffin; skull fragments were found near the right wall (*vid.* Pl. XXX, 2–3). Two of the sealing stones, which had not been removed by the tomb robbers, were found *in situ*.

**Room VI**, hewn in the left wall of room V has the shape of a rough rectangle. On the left wall of the passage to this room is a Greek inscription (no. 124) painted in red. The room contains three small arcosolia: 1 in the wall to the left of the entrance, 3 in the right one, and 2 in the wall opposite the entrance. In the shelf of arcosolium there is a pit about 1.15 m deep, at the bottom of which is a rectangular burial place, emptied by robbers. In the shelf of arcosolium 3, which was badly damaged by a cave-in, there is a pit similar to that in arcosolium 1; at its bottom, also there is a burial place ( $\alpha$ ). In this burial under a layer of dirt, there was an almost completely disintegrated skeleton (*vid.* Pl. XXX, 1). The corpse had been laid on its back, with arms pressed close to the body and the legs extended. During our clearance, no trace of the lower leg bones was found, whereas the thigh bones were well preserved; the person buried here may have been a cripple. The name of the deceased is known from a Greek inscription (no. 125) painted in red on the wall of the arcosolium. Behind the pit in arcosolium 3 there is a burial place ( $\beta$ ) which has been completely destroyed. Arcosolium 2, in the back wall of the room, contains a single burial place across its width (1.90 m long). Within it only crumbling bones were found.

On the wall of the arcosolium there is a bi-lingual inscription in red paint (nos. 125/7: Pl. XXVII): in the center, in Greek (ΘΑΡΣΙ/ΙCΘΗΡΗΚΕ/ΑΜΦΑΙΘΑ — “Be courageous Esther, who is also Amphaitha”), and at the sides, in Palmyrene (נפש אסתר — “The soul of Esther”). In the floor of the room, to its length, there is a pit hewn 1.93 m long, 0.52 m wide and 0.46 m deep. On the basis of its dimensions, it belongs to the shallow-pit type found also in catacomb no. 1 (*vid. sup.*, pp. 134 f.); but unlike the pits there it contained a coffin, as is indicated by nails and wood fragments found on its bottom. Near the back wall of the pit there were twisted gold threads (no. 115 in the catalogue of finds); these apparently were plaited within the hair or braids of the woman buried here.

**Room VII**, very carelessly hewn in the right wall of room V, has the form of an irregular square. Two arcosolia are hewn in its walls: (1) in its left wall, and (2) in its back wall. Each one contains a single burial place the width of the arcosolium. On the right side of the room, near the wall, is a deep pit hewn to the length of the room and measuring 1.57 m long, 0.72 m wide and 1.70 m deep. In its bottom is a 0.55 m deep burial place,

the bottom of which was extended to 2.37 m. This pit, too, was found emptied by tomb robbers.

**Room VIII** is at the back of the hall (*vid.* Pl. XXVIII, 3). In three of its walls there are arcosolia: a large one in the left wall (1), and two smaller ones, in the back (2) and right (3) walls. Arcosolia 1 and 2 are of the type also found in several halls in catacomb no. 1; that is, with two high shelves and a narrow passage between them, raised slightly above the floor of the room and leading to a third shelf cut in the back wall of the arcosolium (*vid. sup.*, p. 134). Each shelf contains a single burial place. These latter measure 1.50–2.00 m long, except grave  $\gamma$ , at the back of arcosolium 1, whose length is only 1.15 m (it seems to have been used for the collection of bones). In arcosolium 2 there is only one burial place, cut length-wise in the shelf; the measurements of this grave are unusual: 2.40 m long, 0.64 m wide, and approximately 0.70 m deep. On the right side, the sealing stones have been preserved *in situ* joined to the walls with clay plaster. In the back wall of the arcosolium there is a breach, giving access to hall B of catacomb no. 2. The names of the persons buried in the three arcosolia are known from inscriptions painted in red; on the wall of arcosolium 1, to the left, is a Greek inscription (no. 128); on the wall of arcosolium 3, to the right, is another Greek inscription (no. 129); and on the wall of arcosolium 3, to the left, is a Palmyrene inscription (no. 130). There is also a Greek inscription (no. 131) inside arcosolium 3, on the wall to the left, close to its arch. Arcosolium 2 apparently contained the remains of a prominent person bearing the Palmyrene name עתתן. He is mentioned in two other Palmyrene inscriptions: one (no. 132) on the wall of the arcosolium under the shelf, and the second (no. 133) on the wall above the arch of the arcosolium.

In the floor of Room VIII there are two pit burials hewn across its width: one of them is shallow (in the center of the room): the other is deeper (near its back wall). The shallow pit is 2.20 m long, 0.65–0.78 m wide and 0.90 m deep. At the bottom there were nails, angle irons, and remnants of a wooden coffin. Their condition permitted a reconstruction of the form of the coffin, carried out by the late J. Pinkerfeld (*vid.* Pl. XXX, 5).<sup>28</sup>

The measurements of the coffin were established from the position of the angle irons, which had fallen to the bottom of the pit as the coffin disintegrated, and from the distance between them (*vid.* Figs. 1 and 9 in Pl. XXX, 5). The coffin appears to have been 1.90 m long and 0.45 m wide. It was made of thin wooden planks joined by means of angle irons and nails, and had wooden frames at its head and foot. In the corners of the angles traces of wood of the thickness of the planks were preserved, i.e. 15 mm. This thickness is further confirmed by the examination of 16 nails, on which a thin line indicates the joint between the wooden frame

and the planks (Fig. 4, 7, 8 in Pl. XXX, 5).

The thickness of the timbers of the frame is evident from the fact that the long nails are entirely covered with traces of wood, i.e., the timbers were somewhat thicker than the entire length of the nails, less the 15 mm representing the thickness of the planks. Since the nails were found straight, it is evident that there had been no need to bend them over, further indicating that they did not jut out of wood inside the coffin. All these factors would indicate that the thickness of the frame timbers was about 65 mm. The direction of the grain of the planks (indicated by arrows in Fig. 7 and 8 in Pl. XXX, 5) shows that four angle irons were attached to the planks horizontally, for the grain follows the length of the angle arms (Fig. 7 in Pl. XXX, 5), in the case of the upper angles. The other angles show the direction of the grain to follow the width of the angle arms (Fig. 8 in Pl. XXX, 5), and these surely were fastened to the bottom of the coffin, along its side. The bottom planks undoubtedly suffered more from moisture.

Two boards used as a support for the coffin had been nailed to the bottom planks, at a distance of 30 cm. from its ends. This was indicated here by two rows of four nails parallel to the shorter sides of the coffin. The coffin seems to have had a lid, which was attached to the timbers of the frame in a manner similar to the fastening of the bottom planks to support the boards. The small nails and flat iron plaque (Fig. 6 in Pl. XXX, 5) were apparently used to affix various accessories to the coffin; the nails seem to have been hammered into plaques and not into the planks.

Figures 9–12 (in Pl. XXX, 5) show the reconstruction of the coffin, with its cross-sections. This coffin differs entirely from the coffins of the Hellenistic period found in Egypt, in which elaborate wooden pegs were employed in the joinery. Remnants of a coffin similar to this have been found in a cemetery from the Roman period (of the second century C.E.) near the Y.M.C.A. in Jerusalem.<sup>30</sup>

The second pit-burial (2.30 m long, 0.60 m wide, and 1.46 m deep) is of the deep type already described above. In its bottom there was a burial place (2.37 m long, 0.49 m wide and 0.46 m deep) containing only crumbling bones. On the ledges left in the long walls of the pit there were six sealing stones *in situ*; only one of them had fallen into the pit (*vid.* Pl. XXX, 4).

Hall E contains altogether twenty-six burial places in its eight rooms. Characteristic of this hall is the variety of burial place types, which include; a. arcosolia with a single burial place on the shelf; b. arcosolia with two shelves cut along the side walls and a narrow passage between them, leading to a third shelf hewn in the back wall; each shelf contains a single burial place; c. shelves hewn in imitation of a coffin and containing a single burial place; d. deep pits cut in the shelf of an arcosolium, with

a single burial place at the bottom; e. deep pits hewn into the floor of a room, with a single burial place at the bottom; and f. shallow pits in the floor of the room. All these types are found also in the various halls of catacomb no. 1, where they were dealt with in detail.<sup>31</sup> The only type of burial not found in this hall is the *kokh*. The burial types support the dating of this hall in the third century C.E. This is evidenced, first of all, by burial types d and e, in most of which remnants of wooden coffins were found. It has already been explained above (pp. 64 f.) that these burial types, typical also of the Palmyrene hall C in catacomb no. 1, date from the third century C.E. Another chronology basis is furnished by the Palmyrene inscriptions the style and characters of which point to third century (up to the destruction of Palmyra in 272/3 C.E.). We have also mentioned that the inscriptions in this hall are partly Palmyrene and partly Greek, whereas the names of the deceased are Hebrew, Palmyrene and Greek. In these inscriptions the following names are mentioned יצחק, שרה, (ΑΜΦΑΙΘΑ) אסתראמפאיתה, עתחן, (ΒΑΡΑΒΑΙ) בר אבאי, and קירינוס. An examination of the inscriptions supports the assumption that the deceased were of one family originating in Palmyra. The Jewish character of this family is apparent not only from the biblical Hebrew names, but also from the decorations, i.e., the reliefs, drawings and graffiti of the seven-branched menorah.

Among the few scattered objects found in this hall mention should be made, in addition to those noted above, of the few angle irons and iron nails found on the floor of rooms I (nos. 88 and 90 in the catalogue of finds) and VIII (no. 92), as well as a fragment of a bronze ornament (no. 89)—all of which are from wooden coffins. In addition, sherds of pottery and eastern *terra sigillata* vessels from the Roman period were found.

Finally, clear evidence of the visit of the Crusaders in this hall was found. They entered it by way of catacomb no. 2 through the breach in arcosolium 2 of Room VIII, and left behind them various marks on the walls of the rooms, such as incised coats of arms, crosses, and certain hewer's marks (*vid. sup.* p. 87).

### 3 CATACOMB NUMBER 4

This catacomb consists of an open corridor and four burial halls hewn in its walls. In general, it was preserved in a better condition than the three catacombs described above, and suffered less from tomb robbers and the effects of time; this despite the fact that great heaps of debris and stones had accumulated in the corridor and in the halls. As described above (p. 148), a space of rock separated the entrance to catacomb no. 3 from that of catacomb no. 4. In the south-southeastern section of this space

there is a flight of stairs leading down to catacomb no. 4. It consists of eleven steps, six of which are hewn to the width of the rock space; they are almost equal in size and quite comfortable. The five lower steps are cut out of the front north-northwestern wall of the corridor; they are narrower, not so well cut, reaching almost to the middle of the corridor.

The corridor itself runs to the north-northwest. It is hewn as a rough rectangle, approximately 6.00 m long and 2.25 m average width (left of the flight of stairs it widens to about 2.50 m). The entrance mentioned above is in the long wall of the corridor, and not in one of the short walls as in catacombs nos. 1–3. The floor of the corridor is lowest in its center, near the flight of steps; at their right it descends to some 3.55 m below the rock surface, and 5 m below the top of the debris above the rock. At the left side of the staircase the floor rises by two steps, creating a sort of landing before the entrance to hall A situated in the east-northeastern wall of the corridor (*vid.* Pl. XXXI, 1). The walls of the corridor are vertical and in general are smoothly dressed, as can be seen in the better preserved sections.

In each of the four walls of the corridor there is an entrance to a single burial hall: to A in the narrow wall to the left of the flight of stairs: to B in the narrow wall to its right: to C in the long wall facing it; and to D in the right side of the front wall. Apparently halls A and C were quarried first, hall B sometime later, and finally hall D. In order to hew the opening to hall D, it was necessary to encroach upon several of the steps leading down into the corridor.

On the floor of the corridor there were sherds from the Roman period, a small glass vial (no. 122 in catalogue of finds), a large fragment of another vial (no. 119), and a copper coin of the Emperor Valerius (251–260 C.E.). The coin was discovered in a pile of debris near the entrance to hall A.

**Hall A**, one of the main halls in this catacomb, excels in the types of its burial places, reliefs, drawings and inscriptions. The door frame and the door are preserved *in situ*. The lintel and the door posts are smooth on the outside, whereas the face of the door, which can still turn on its hinges, is decorated in high relief, partly effaced. A projecting vertical strip divides the door into two halves, each subdivided into three panels. In the top and bottom panels there are two vertically set triangles meeting at their apexes (  $\nabla$  ); in the left middle panel are two blurred triangles meeting horizontally at the apexes (  $\triangleright\triangleleft$  ); in the right middle panel there is a circle in which is affixed an iron eye (*vid.* Pl. XXXI, 1).

A rock cut step leads down to the floor of the hall (*vid.* Pl. XXXI, 2) which consists of a main room (1) and six burial rooms symmetrically hewn in its walls: rooms II, IV and V in its left wall: rooms III and VI in its right wall; and room VII in the back wall.

Main **room I** is in the form of a rough rectangle, 5.50 m long, 3.25 m wide and approximately 2.20 m high. Its ceiling is almost flat in the center and slopes slightly toward the corners of the walls to the right and left of the entrance. In general, the walls were well cut and dressed, except for where the workers had encountered flint. This room was intended to serve as a corridor to the side burial rooms, and thus only two arcosolia were hewn in its walls; one (1) in the wall to the left of the main entrance (between the entrances to rooms II and IV); and the second one (2) opposite, in the wall to the right of the entrance (between the entrances to rooms III and VI).

Remains of a skeleton and a few other items were found in the rectangular burial place of arcosolium 1 (1.84 m long). They include a fragmentary bronze bracelet (no. 102 in the catalogue of finds), a small silver spatula for cosmetics (no. 103), a small bronze ring (no. 104) and a glass whorl (no. 105). All these personal articles were found in the middle of the bottom of the burial place and indicate that a woman was buried here. At the time the arcosolium was discovered, the burial was still covered with several stone slabs; apparently it had not been completely emptied by the tomb robbers, though arcosolium 2 was found empty.

Carved on the wall to the left of arcosolium 1, in the space between it and the entrance to room II, is a relief of a menorah (*vid.* Pl. XXXI, 3). The branches issuing from the solid long stem are separated by deep grooves; they broaden at the top as if supporting lamps. The stem stands on a base rounded at the top, but it was apparently damaged during the carving, and was thus never finished.

A Greek inscription of three lines was painted in red higher up on the same wall, in the space between the arch of the entrance to room II



Fig. 14  
Human figures, incised and  
drawn, in arcosolium 2,  
room II (in hall A)

and the left branches of the menorah. The inscription (no. 134) reads: ΛΕΟΝΤΙΟΥ ΠΟΛΜΥΡΗΝΟΥ/ΤΡΑΠΕΖΙΤΟΥ/ΗΜΕΙΣ (“We are the sons of Leontius the Palmyrene, Banker”). This inscription, then, relates to a Palmyrene family probably buried in room II. A second Greek inscription (no. 135) of five lines is incised on the wall between arcosolium 1 and the entrance to room IV. A third Greek inscription (136) is written in red paint on the wall opposite the hall entrance, between the entrances to rooms IV and VIII; it relates to a family buried in rooms IV–V.

An arched entrance leads from room I to room II. On the front wall, close to the edge of the arch, there is a red painted band consisting of a wavy line and a half circle. On the arched surface, to the right, there is an incised, full length figure of a man represented in profile. The head is turned to the right, as are the rectangular body and the legs. On the wall to the right of the figure there is an incised, netlike ornament similar to those found in halls G and H in catacomb no. 1 (*vid. sup.* pp. 81, 93).

In the small **room II** are three arcosolia: the first (1), in the wall to the left of the entrance, contains four burial places; the second (2), in the wall opposite the entrance, contains four burial places; and the third (3) in the wall to its right, contains only one burial place. In arcosolia 1 and 2 the burial places are arranged in the usual manner, i.e., three the length of the shelf, and one behind, across its width. Only in arcosolium 1 burial  $\delta$ , is there a pillow for the head of the deceased. The burial places are of the usual size: 1.60–1.95 m long. Almost all of them had been robbed in ancient times; in burial  $\alpha$  of arcosolium 1 there were scant skeleton remains, some nails (from a wooden coffin or ossuary), and a small glass vial (no. 107), while in burial  $\delta$  there were a few bones, a fragment of a nail, and a fragment of a worn bronze coin. Since angles and iron nails were found also on the floor of the room, we may assume that the dead had been buried here in wooden coffins or ossuaries.

At the left side of the arch of arcosolium 2, one notes two human figures incised one above the other. The upper figure had been scratched with a nail and depicts a man *en face*, standing to his full height; the eyes are indicated by two dots under curved eyebrows; the nose by a vertical line and the mouth by a horizontal line. The ears are also outlined, whereas the chin is not indicated at all; the body is represented by a rectangle, with clothing indicated by blurred lines. The obliquely extended arms are indicated by double lines, whereas each of the two legs is represented by a single line, with no indication of toes. The second figure is drawn in red paint, also *en face*; in some details, however, it differs from the other figure: the eyebrows are absent; the arms issue from the shoulders as long lines with all five fingers indicated; the right arm is extended horizontally, whereas only the left upper arm is extended and then bent at the elbow, with the forearm and hand pointing downwards. Further,

the garment is indicated by a netlike pattern of lines. These figures certainly represent the “souls” of the dead, a motif encountered also in catacombs nos. 1 and 3 (*vid. sup.* pp. 61, 163).

From Room I a narrow arched entrance leads down, by means of a step, to room III. This entrance is opposite the entrance to room II. The front wall near the arch of the entrance is decorated with a painted red band consisting of two semicircular lines, between and above which is a pattern of linked, stylized leaves.

In **room III** there are two arcosolia: one (1) located in the wall to the left of the entrance of the common type, and containing a single burial place; the second (2), very small and seemingly unfinished, located in the wall to the right of the entrance. The owners of the hall may not have had time to enlarge the room to suit it for burials.

A high (2.30 m) arched entrance leads from room I to rooms IV and V, hewn one behind the other. Room IV is asymmetrically cut, being narrower near the entrance and growing wider near the back. An unusual feature here is the two steps taking up the entire width of the floor and leading to an arched passageway situated 0.17 m above the floor level; this connects room IV with room V. In the left wall of room IV there is an arcosolium containing a single burial place across its width (1.85 m long); in the right wall there is another arcosolium (2) with two burial places cut across its width, one behind the other (1.55 and 1.80 m long). Both burial places have pillows for the head of the deceased. An attempt had been made to widen the arcosolium and hew a third burial place ( $\gamma$ ) behind the others, but the work was not completed. A Greek inscription of two lines is painted in red on the wall of the room, above the arch of this arcosolium (no. 137). Room V is very small and rectangular (about 1.50 long and 1.15 wide); in its left wall there is an arcosolium (1) containing three burial places cut to its length; in the right wall there is another arcosolium (2), containing four burial places (three lengthwise in the shelf and another behind, across its width); and in the back wall of the room there is a third arcosolium (3), containing three burial places cut to its length. These latter are of regular length, 1.55–1.82 m, some having “pillows” for the heads of the dead. Most of them contained crumbling bones and fragments of pottery; some of the sealing stones had originally been plastered with clay to the walls of the burial. On the right wall of the room, above the arch of arcosolium 2, there is a Greek inscription painted in red (no. 138); its continuation is painted in the passageway from room IV to room V. This inscription, like no. 136 in room I, mentions members of a family buried in room V.

**Room VI**, is entered through a high arched (about 2.07 m) passageway. It has the shape of a rough rectangle, 1.85 m long and approximately 1.50 m

wide; in its walls there are three arcosolia: one (1) in the left wall; a second (2) in the back wall; and a third (3) in the right wall. Arcosolia 1 and 2 each contain four burial places: three cut lengthwise in the shelf and a fourth behind, across its width. In arcosolium 3, however, there is only one burial place, cut across its width. The burials are of the common type (1.40–1.95 m long); in arcosolium 1 they have “pillows,” two of which have round depressions for the head. As all these burials had been robbed, only sealing stones, a few Roman sherds, and crumbling bones were found within them.

An arched passageway leads to room VII, which is longer and wider than is common in most of the burial halls; it also excels in its beauty and the quantity of its decorations (*vid.* Pl. XXXII, 1). The passageway is cut in the form of a built-up entrance with an arch resting upon engaged pillars. The arch above and to the left of the pillar, is decorated with a menorah flanked on either side by a geometric motif (*vid.* Pl. XXXIII, 5). The menorah which has the form of a stylized plant, is both carved and painted in red; the seven branches issuing from the stumpy, tree-like stem are separated by deep grooves. The menorah is framed by a deep groove painted in red, which serves to throw it further into relief. To the right of the menorah, incised and painted in red, is a compass-drawn rosette consisting of six petals within a circle. A larger, more complex motif appears in red to the left of the menorah; it consists of an incomplete, compass-drawn rosette within a circle, in the center of which is a whirling wheel. We may also note a peculiar symbol, similar to the letter tau, incised in the rock to the left above the menorah frame.

There appear to have been decorations also on the right wall of the arched passageway, but this section has been damaged so that only traces of red paint indicate that various figures had once been drawn there.

**Room VII** is hewn as a rough rectangle (3.70 m long, 2.75 m wide, and ca. 2.50 m high). The ceiling and the walls had been well dressed. The slightly arched ceiling and the walls are separated by a hewn, horizontal band. In the back of the room the ceiling is decorated with a series of motifs drawn in red paint, harmoniously forming a single ornament (*vid.* Pls. XXXII, 1; XXXIII, 2). Close to the center of the ceiling there is a complex geometric motif consisting of a compass-drawn circle enclosed by a wavy-line circle; at its center there is a wheel with eleven spokes. The rim consists of two concentric circles with the space between filled by zigzag lines (*cf. sup.* p. 76); the space between the outer circle and the rim of the wheel is filled with stylized branches. A rectangular band ending in a rosette runs from this complex geometric design in the direction of the back wall. This band consists of three parallel lines with the spaces between filled with zigzag lines. The rosette is a basic, compass-drawn design of six petals within a circle; the free spaces between the

petals, however, are filled by various geometric motifs, mainly triangles. Finally, we may mention three long, parallel lines running perpendicular, to the right and left of the band, completing the ornamental pattern.

In the walls of the room there are three arcosolia: one (1) to the right of the passageway; a second (2) to the left; and a third (3) in the back wall. In arcosolia 1 and 2 the shelves are narrow at the front and widen toward the back; in each there is a single, burial place, cut across the shelf. In arcosolium 2 there is a "pillow" with a depression for the head of the deceased. A very blurred Greek (?) inscription is painted in red on the wall below the shelf of arcosolium 2.

Two large shelves are hewn in the right and left walls, beyond arcosolia 1 and 2, toward the back of the room. They resemble coffins, and stand about 1.52 m above the floor; each one contains a single burial place, obviously of a prominent person. Fragments of stone and traces of clay found here indicate that the burials had been covered with stone lids and layers of clay. The passage between the shelves stands a little higher than the floor of the room and leads to arcosolium 3. The walls of the shelves are decorated with various motifs, some of them unusual. The upper part of the narrow front wall of the shelf on the left is decorated with a carved relief (0.82 m high) depicting a holy ark (Pl. XXXIV, 1). This is represented as a portico with four columns, each with a base and capital. In the center of the ark is a closed double door. The entire structure stands on a platform outlined as a band interrupted in the middle to allow for a flight of five narrow steps leading up to the high threshold of the entrance frame. The door is similar to several of the stone doors of burial halls in the catacombs, e.g., the door to hall L of catacomb no. 1.<sup>32</sup>

Above the narrow lintel of the entrance there is a conch which is too large in relation to the relief as a whole. This is topped by a double arch terminating on either side in a horizontal section resting on the capitals of the pillars. An interesting detail is the lion standing, seemingly, on the capitals of the pillars to the right of the entrance, facing the conch. This lion is rendered in profile, with a single foreleg resting on the inner capital and a single hind leg resting on the outer capital. The artist seems to have intended depicting two lions, facing one another, but never completed his design. In similar representations of holy arks, the lions are represented flanking the ark, standing on the floor. At Beth Alpha there appears in addition a bird on either side of the roof, possibly intended to symbolize the cherubim in the Temple.<sup>33</sup> There is also a vase with a *lulab* (?) on a pedestal in the intercolumnar space to the right of the entrance of the ark.

This relief displays a motif quite common in ancient Jewish art, both in Palestine and abroad.<sup>34</sup> A good example is the holy ark portrayed above the niche of the synagogue at Dura-Europos,<sup>35</sup> which differs from

ours only in a few structural details. It is clear that distinction should be made between the holy ark of the type described above and the movable ark depicted as standing in a niche by itself (*vid. sup.* pp. 110 f.). We may assume that holy arks of this type were familiar to the artists in local synagogues and that they endeavored to depict them as best as they could. The ark flanked on both sides by pillars supporting a roof or arch seems to be a more elaborate form of the usual niche where the Torah scrolls were kept, built into the front wall of the synagogue, facing Jerusalem. Similar niches are rendered on the sealing stones of hall M in catacomb no. 1 (*vid. sup.* pp. 110–112). The stairs in the relief under consideration show that the holy ark the artist had in mind was built high above the floor of the synagogue. This situation is found in some ancient synagogue types such as at Dura-Europos, Nave and Eshtemoa.<sup>36</sup>

The Palmyrene name (BAPAZABΔA) of the man interred in the burial place hewn in this shelf is known from the Greek inscription (no. 140) painted in red on its long wall. Part of the front wall of the right shelf was broken away, destroying a part of the relief there (in both the long and the narrow walls). On the front of the narrow wall of this shelf there is a pillar with capital, base and pedestal in high relief, seemingly supporting the relief above it (*vid.* Pl. XXXII, 3). This latter (0.50 m high) is carved on the narrow wall, corresponding symmetrically to the holy ark described above; it too depicts a portico of four pillars with capitals and bases, but in its center stands a tall menorah. Above the menorah is a large, unfinished conch, in turn topped by an arch resting on the pillars, like that in the relief opposite. To the right of the arch there is a lion rampant in profile, facing the conch; it stands with its hind legs on the section over the capitals, and with its front legs on the arch. Its head rising somewhat above the arch, is represented *en face*; its forelegs are blurred, whereas its hind legs are clearly seen. The outer hind leg is vertical, while the one behind it is bent forward; the tail is arched high above its back (*cf. sup.* p. 67). It is regrettable that the relief was damaged on the opposite flank, but it seems reasonable to assume that the artisan meant to depict two lions facing one another. We may also note a vase and a lulab in the intercolumnar space on the right side, and the figure of a man standing with extended arms, in the intercolumnar space to the left.

The meaning of this relief is not altogether clear, but it seems not to be a mere parallel to the holy ark on the wall of the left shelf opposite. It probably represents an architectural feature seen in some synagogue; in other words, this relief, too, has some connection with a holy ark. We know that the arks in ancient synagogues (from the third and fourth centuries) sometimes had small niches built on either side. In the synagogue at Eshtemoa there were three niches in the front wall, built at about 2.80 m above the floor of the hall: a large one in the center, probably for a holy ark, and two smaller ones on the sides.<sup>37</sup> The small niches were

probably intended for menorahs, as it is indicated by a Jewish relief of the Roman period, illustrating the above-mentioned motif.<sup>38</sup> If so, the artist intended to depict such a niche as best he could, with the menorah which stood in it. We may remember that the representation of the holy ark between two menorahs is one of the most common themes in ancient Jewish art.

The long wall of the right shelf was decorated with various reliefs and incised motifs, some of which were damaged when the corner of the shelf was broken. Of what is left, we may note a long horizontal band, projecting from the upper part of the right wall and ending at the left side in a sunken relief of a man's head and a banded leaf pattern: the latter runs from the edge of the wall to the head of the man and is underlined by a band with a pattern of projecting squares (*vid.* Pl. XXXIII, 3). The head is emphasized by the sunken frame carved round it. It is in profile, turned to the right; the elliptical eye and the ear, however, are rendered *en face*. Of special interest is the treatment of the hair, consisting of two rows of curls indicated by squares; the beard is indicated by a horizontal row of hatchings on the lower cheek. This head is very similar to that of the Palmyrene horseman in the relief in hall K of catacomb no. 1 (*vid.* Pl. XV, 2; pp. 99–100). They may have been carved by the same artists, or by a fellow of the same school. We may remember that in both reliefs Palmyrenes are depicted, for here in this hall, a Palmyrene Jew was also buried.

The passage between these two shelves leads to arcosolium 3, hewn in the back wall of the room (*vid.* Pl. XXXII, 1). Since its shelf stands about 1.42 m above the floor of the passageway, two steps were provided for access; a low one taking up the entire width of the back wall between the two shelves, and a second one cut about 0.84 m above the floor. This latter step is in the form of an engaged column which tapers towards the round base and pedestal on which it stands. To make ascent easier, an arched depression was hewn into the wall above its tread. Two lions are carved on the wall above the step, flanking the column symmetrically (*vid.* Pl. XXXII, 2). The one to the right is in high relief and painted red; it is depicted in profile, jumping down towards the step. Its forelegs and one of the hind legs are stretched forward, whereas the other hind leg is stretched backwards; its mouth is open, with teeth bared and tongue extended. The tail is curved and its tip raised. Further, one elliptical eye is shown *en face*; and a projecting ear and the mane are indicated by hatching. In power of conception and expression, and in details of execution, this lion exceeds all other representations of lions in the catacombs at Beth She'arim, including the two lions previously mentioned. The artist probably had in mind some particular statue of a lion, perhaps of a type found in synagogues, flanking the holy ark.<sup>39</sup> The second lion is incised in a fine line painted in red, now very faded. It, too, is depicted

in profile, though not jumping down, but rather springing toward the arcosolium above it. Its head is very blurred; its paws are clearly extended forward, and the tail curves. Between the two lions, and below the shelf of the arcosolium, there is a very blurred Greek inscription painted in red (no. 141), apparently mentioning the names of the people interred in arcosolium 3.

Arcosolium 3 is well hewn, and decorated inside and out with drawings in red paint. At the opening of the arch, there is a line with a zigzag line above it, following the curve of the arch down almost to the shelf. Within the arcosolium, the ceiling is decorated with various geometric designs (*vid.* Pl. XXXIII, 1), and the back wall is covered with a complex geometric pattern. This latter drawing covers the entire surface of the wall and is framed by a line fringed with elongated semi-circles. From the top of this frame there starts a band of two parallel lines with zigzags between, running along the top of the vault. The two lines, too, are fringed with elongated semi-circles, which resemble teeth. Parallel lines, perpendicular to the band, link it to a horizontal line running around the walls on either side of the vault, somewhat above the shelves. These drawings blend well with the decorations on the extension wall of the arcosolium and the ceiling of the room. Their arrangement indicates a planned, composite decoration. From this point of view, arcosolium 3 may be compared to various other tombs, especially to the arcosolia in the catacombs in Rome and several cave-tombs in Palestine, also decorated in such a manner, some motifs being composite, some from the plant and animal worlds, and others purely geometric.<sup>40</sup>

In the shelf of arcosolium 3 there are two burial places, cut one beside the other the length of the arcosolium. They are of regular size, and both executed with special care. Near the back wall of each is a hewn “pillow” with a depression for the head of the deceased. No doubt these burial places were intended for prominent persons.

**Hall A** of catacomb no. 4 consists of seven rooms containing a total of forty-two burial places. The hall is very spacious, and work on it obviously commenced prior to any lack of burial space having been felt. Its plan is similar to that of the early halls in catacomb no. 1, where the lateral rooms are entered from the main room. All the burials in this hall, except two, are of the usual type, i.e., arcosolia with burial places cut in the shelves. Most of these are of regular size (1.55m–1.95 m long) and were used for primary burial, as is confirmed by the “pillows” found in some of them. Shorter rectangular burial places (about 1.40–1.50 m long) were found in several arcosolia of room VI. In rooms I and II there were, interestingly, fragments of angles and nails from coffins on ossuaries. Atypical are the burial places situated one beside the other in room VII. They are hewn in the form of large coffins, each containing a single burial

place, like those in hall G, room IV, in catacomb no. 1.

The character of the hall and the types of burials allow the hall to be dated fairly certainly to the third century C.E. The various decorations, especially the relief of the holy ark and the human head in room VII, as well as the Greek inscriptions (one of which, no. 134 mentions the name Leontius, a banker from Palmyra), would serve to confirm this dating. Most of those interred here were probably members of this Palmyrene family, brought to be buried here before the destruction of Palmyra. This is supported by the Roman sherds found in the hall, as well as by the coin struck under Valerianus, found in the corridor among the debris from hall A.

The inscriptions in this hall are in Greek, though most of the names mentioned are Hebrew: שמואל, יעקב, יוסי, and לזי (Λαζε — abbreviated form of the name Elazar, Lazar). Other names here are Greek or Greek equivalents of Hebrew names: only one is Palmyrene ברזבדא.

The family whose members were interred in this hall were educated in the Jewish tradition, as indicated not only by their Hebrew names, but also by the decorations on the walls. We have already pointed to the prominent place accorded to such obviously Jewish subjects as the Menorah and the holy ark.

**Hall B** is hewn in the south-western wall of the corridor, opposite hall A, and to the right of the flight of stairs leading down to the corridor. Its door frame was preserved *in situ*, with the door still turning on the hinges. The front of the door is decorated, like several other doors at Beth She'arim (and like the door of the holy ark, Pl. XXXIV), with a projecting vertical strip dividing it into two halves, each sub-divided into sunken rectangles similar to the panels of a wooden door. Two steps lead down to the door of the burial hall, which consists of two small rooms hewn one behind the other connected by an arched passageway. The burial places are of the regular type: hewn into the shelves of arcosolia.

In **Room I**, a rectangular 2.30 m long, 1.50 m wide and 1.95 m high from the floor to the arched ceiling there are two arcosolia: (1) in the wall to the left of the entrance containing a single regular burial place (1.73 m long), the second (2) in the wall to the right of the entrance, containing five burial places, three of which are hewn the length of the shelf, with the other two behind, across its width (1.70–1.80 m long); in three of the graves there are “pillows” with depressions for the head of the deceased.

In **Room II** roughly square (1.50 by 1.50 m approximately, and 1.70 high from floor to the arched ceiling), there are also two arcosolia: one (1) in the wall to the left of the passage, and the second (2) in the wall to its right. There is no burial in the back wall. In each of the arcosolia there

are four burial places: three cut the length of the shelf and one behind, across its width. All these except burial  $\delta$  in arcosolium 1, are smaller (1.44–1.60 m long) than the average.

In hall B there are altogether fourteen burial places in four arcosolia. The hall is hewn in the manner of the small halls of catacomb no. 1, and seems to have been used for a very short period only. Nothing was found in it except ribbed sherds typical of Period III at Beth She'arim; some of these finds were from arcosolium 1 of room I.

**Hall C** is hewn in the center of the long wall of the corridor, opposite the five steps leading down to it. It is one of the two large halls of the catacomb and excels in its burial types, decoration and inscriptions. The entrance to this hall is especially interesting from an architectural point of view. The section of the corridor wall including the entrance to the hall was once faced with a built stone wall in the middle of which, in front of the entrance, there was an arched passage, a kind of ornamental portal (*vid.* Pl. XXXV, 1). A similar portal was discovered at the entrance to hall E in catacomb no. 3 (*vid.* p. 164). Counterparts of this wall and portal have been found at the entrances to hall A and B of catacomb no. 6, and at the entrance to hall C of catacomb no. 11. The stone facing, built on a step slightly higher than the rock floor, had fallen already in ancient times. Most of its stones were found among the debris in the courtyard and could be restored to their place. This facing appears to have covered the rock wall on either side of the entrance to hall C, as well as the entire area above it, up to the surface of the rock. It was constructed of a single row of ashlar of various sizes, beautifully cut and dressed on the outer face, and set in straight courses. The maximum height of the arched gate at the middle of the wall was 2.90 m, and its width was approximately 2.00 m. The arch, exactly a semi-circle, is built of ten small voussoirs, the faces of which form a moulding. The arch is supported by engaged pillars whose capitals and bases also bear mouldings. The 1.75 m high pillars are carved in high relief on the six lowest courses of the wall. The width of the opening between them is 1.30 m. Behind the gate is the opening to the hall. The portion of rock-wall above the lintel and up to the built arch has been damaged by the elements, but it may have been decorated with a conch similar to that in hall E of catacomb no. 3.

Walls and constructed gates of this type have been found in other catacombs here as well, a fact seeming to indicate that the artisans at Beth She'arim in the third century C.E. were familiar with such an architectural style, surely based on even older traditions. This assumption receives further support from the tomb cave at Khirbet Farwe, 12 km northeast of Nablus. During the excavations carried out there by Baramki on behalf of the Mandatory Department of Antiquities in 1943, a wall-facing with an arched gate in its middle was found in the courtyard of

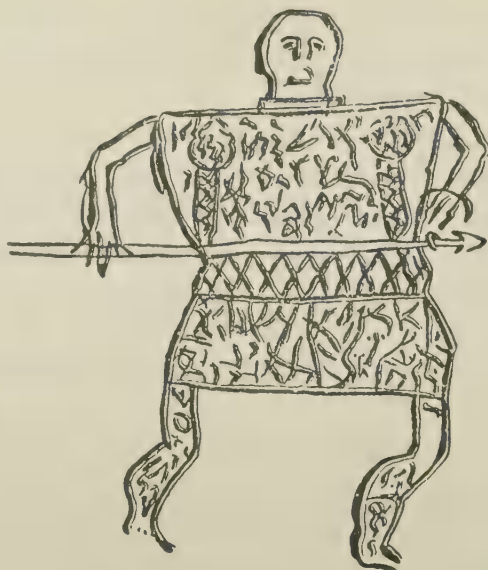


Fig. 15  
Graffito of Germanos the son  
of Isaac the Palmyrene

the cave, built in front of the entrance to the burial chamber; that tomb-cave, however, belongs without doubt to the first or second centuries, C.E., judging from the coffins and other items found there. Further, the arch is of an older style than the one at Beth She'arim.

The stones of the door-frame are preserved *in situ*, whereas the door had been removed, apparently by tomb robbers, and was found lying on the threshold. Above the lintel there is a two line Greek inscription, the two last letters of which are carved below, on the right door post (no. 142; Pl. XXXV, 1). The inscription mentions a Palmyrene Jew, Samuel ben Isaac (שמואל בן יצחק) whose family was buried in this hall (*vid. infra*). The front of the door is decorated with the same motifs found on other doors: a projecting vertical strip dividing the surface of the door into two halves, each sub-divided in three square panels, one above the other. The upper and lower panels are decorated with two triangles set horizontally and meeting at the apexes; in the middle panel on the right there is a circle with an iron eye at the center (*vid. Pl. XXXVI, 1*). Two steps lead down into the hall, consisting of three rooms hewn one behind the other (*vid. Pl. XXXV, 2*). The maximum length of the hall is 13.70 m.

**Room I**, of trapezoid shape, is spacious, narrow near the entrance and widening out towards the back. It is 5.25 m long, 3.70 m wide (average), and 2.45 m high. The ceiling, damaged for the most part, is flat in the middle, slanting slightly towards the corners. The walls were skillfully smoothed and contain six arcosolia: three in the wall to the left of the entrance (1, 2 and 3) and three in the wall to the right (4, 5 and 6), placed symmetrically in opposing groups, as in hall A of the same catacomb.

The shelf of arcosolium 1 stands only about 0.70 m above the floor of

the room. Three burial places are cut to its length (1.50–1.60 m long); one ( $\alpha$ ) included a large quantity of collected bones. Along the edge of the arch, above the arcosolium there is a projecting band and, higher up on the right wall, an incised Greek inscription of two lines: ΓΕΡΜΑΝΟCΙCΑΚΙΟΥ/ ΠΑΛΜΥΡΗΝΟΥ (Germanos [son] of Isaac, the Palmyrene) (no. 143), who apparently was the brother of Samuel ben Isaac (no. 142), mentioned above. To the left of the inscription is a remarkable graffito of a human figure in full length (*vid.* Pl. XXXVI, 2). He is wearing the garments of a soldier and is represented *en face*, except for the legs which are drawn in profile. The face, eyes, nose and mouth are all indicated by hatched lines and dots. The artist did not stress these features, however, nor did he indicate hair style or ears. In contrast, the square body with enormous chest is exaggerated in relation to the head, with special emphasis on the details of the garments. The Roman military tunic is girded at the hips and leaves the thighs bare. The entire tunic is decorated with various designs, and even the shoulder straps and buckles are indicated. The belt is indicated by two parallel lines with crisscross between. The arms and legs are stuck onto the body without any organic connection. The arms bend down to end in five fingers. The soldier holds a spear in his right hand, carried horizontally, with the shaft across the body, above the belt, with the head pointing to the right, towards the arcosolium (*vid.* fig. 15). The artist seems to have attempted to depict the legionnaire Germanos the son of Isaac, of Palmyra, in arcosolium 1, and whose name was written on the wall to the right of this graffito. Above the left shoulder of the figure, on the same wall, there is another human figure, represented *en face*. He has a round head, wide shoulders, obliquely extended arms, and legs but no feet. He seems to hold a spear, but the line indicating this weapon is very thin, bent and vague. This may be no more than a rough imitation of the above representation of the soldier.

On the wall to the right of the arcosolium, at the level of the shelf, there are two incised figures of men, one beside the other (*vid.* Pl. XXXVI, 3). Both are depicted *en face*, except for the legs which are drawn in profile. In the right figure the head is exaggerated in relation to the body, the eyes are depicted by two big dots, the arched eyebrows and the elongated nose by thick lines, and the hair, which seems to stand on end, by many thin lines. The body is represented as a rectangle which widens slightly towards its lower side; the short tunic which covers it is indicated by criss-cross lines, except for the smooth belt worn on the hips. The arms, springing from the shoulders with no organic connection, end in five fingers grasping a spear or, more probably, a three pronged fork (*fuscina*) pointed to the right. The figure's feet are directed to the left, apparently indicating that the man is stepping towards the figure on his left. The head of this second figure is also exaggerated in relation to the body though the lines of the face are blurred. This figure is depicted

wearing a kind of oversized headgear or shawl encircling the head; it covers the left shoulder and drapes down obliquely to the left. The body is represented as a small rectangle, with the tunic indicated by criss-cross lines. The right arm springs from the shoulder in an unnatural manner, and the hand—with all five fingers—holds an unclear object, possibly a shield (*scutum*). The left arm appears to be covered by the headgear. The small legs of the figure are directed towards the figure to its right, as if walking towards it. There is little doubt that there is an organic connection between these two figures and that the whole is a composite picture of a duel. These may be gladiators during a fight—the right one being the *retiarius*, having already cast his *rete* (= net; indicated by the shawl) onto his opponent, and is still holding his *fuscina*, poised in his right hand. The second figure is the *secutor*, holding his *scutum* in the right hand, while his left hand is already covered by the *rete*.<sup>42</sup> In spite of its being foreign to the Jewish spirit, this subject is depicted here in the usual popular style of the tomb decorators at Beth She'arim. In the Roman period, gladiatorial duels were common and popular, even among the people of the East; the existence of Jewish gladiators, such as those depicted here, thus should not surprise us.<sup>43</sup> The subject in itself is very common in Eastern popular art, especially on coffins and lamps, it is found also on a lamp discovered in catacomb no. 1 at Beth She'arim (fig. 23:4).<sup>44</sup> Only after Constantine prohibited gladiatorial contests (Codex Theod. XV, 12, 1), during his visit to Beirut in 325 C.E., did this subject become rare in the East, until it finally disappeared. If the interpretation of the graffito is correct, it is likely that another of the three burial places in arcosolium 1, where Germanus the son of Isaac had been interred, also contained the remains of a gladiator, related to Germanus and a member of the Palmyrene family owning the hall.

Arcosolium 6 is hewn in the right wall of the room, opposite arcosolium 1. In its shelf there are four burial places: three ( $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ ,  $\gamma$ ) to its length, and another ( $\delta$ ) behind them, its width; their measurements are conventional (1.57–1.80 m long). In burials  $\alpha$ ,  $\gamma$  and  $\delta$  there were crumbling bones, fragments of pottery typical of Period III, and stone lids (three of them *in situ*, at the sides of burial  $\delta$ ). In burial  $\beta$  there were bones, iron nails and two bronze hooks (nos. 109 and 110 in the catalogue of finds) belonging to a wooden coffin, and a bronze belt buckle (no. 112). In this burial, then, the deceased had been interred in a wooden coffin.

Arcosolia 2 and 5 are hewn opposite one another in the middle of the walls to the left and right of the entrance; they stand higher above the floor of the room than arcosolia 1 and 6. Arcosolium 2 contains two burial places of the common type, hewn one behind the other the width of the shelf, whereas arcosolium 5 has only one burial place.

The shelf of arcosolium 3, situated at the end of the left wall, is about 1.50 m above the floor of the room (*vid.* Pl. XXXV, 2), and could be

reached by a ladder. It contains four burial places: three its length, and one behind, running the width. Their measurements are regular (1.50–1.70 m long) and two of them ( $\alpha$  and  $\gamma$ ) contain “pillows” with depressions for the head of the deceased. In one of the burials ( $\alpha$ ) there were bones, iron nails and wood fragments, remnants of a wooden coffin or ossuary. A Greek inscription of three lines (no. 144) is carved on the wall of the arcosolium below the shelf, and another one of four lines (no. 145), appears on the wall above the arcosolium. Both of these mention a woman, Sarah, also called Maxima. One of the inscriptions (no. 145) opens with the word ΜΙΧΗΝΗ (Μισσηνή). The woman seems originally to have been from Mesene, i.e., מישן, in southern Babylonia.<sup>45</sup>

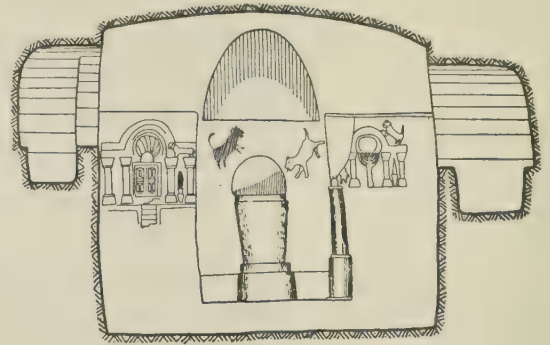
In arcosolium 4 there are three burial places hewn the length of the shelf; they are of the usual measurements and all of them contained crumbling bones and sealing stones.

Finally, we may mention two pit burials, hewn in the floor of the room near the right wall (*vid.* Pl. XXXV, 2): one ( $\alpha$ ) near arcosolia 5 and 6, and the other ( $\beta$ ) behind it, close to arcosolia 4 and 5. Both of them are of the shallow type, similar to those found in catacombs nos. 1 and 3; they certainly should be related to the third century C.E. (*vid. sup.* pp. 64 f., 71, 168 f.). In pit ( $\alpha$ ) (1.58 m long, 0.35 m wide, and 0.35 m deep) there were remains of a skeleton and of a wooden coffin (nails and wood splinters). In pit  $\beta$  (1.82 m long, 0.42 m wide and 0.30 m deep) there was a crumbling skeleton, laid out on the floor face upwards, without a coffin. The pit had been covered by five sealing stones, all preserved *in situ*.

On the smooth back wall of the room, to the left of the passage to room II, there is a set of rough and incomplete graffiti (*vid.* Pl. XXXVI, 5). They include, from left to right: a. a strange, large animal represented in profile, facing right; it has a big head and an open mouth; b. the figure of a man, drawn in profile and facing right, situated slightly below figure a. Figure b. actually includes two peculiar heads, drawn one behind the other and attached to one another; only on the foremost head (which is over-size) are details of the face indicated, including an elliptical eye (was the intention to depict a mask?); the lower part of the body is not complete; c. an animal drawn in profile, opposite figure a., facing left; its head is represented by a rough circle; the eye is indicated by a dot, the tail by a horizontal line, and the legs by four perpendicular lines ending in horizontal strokes pointing leftwards, to indicate it is walking in that direction; this may depict a lion; d. and e. two figures incised one beside the other to the right of b. and below figure c; d. is a very rough drawing of a quadruped; e. is a rough sketch of a falling man; f. a drawing of a falling man situated below figures c, d and e; the man is represented diving headlong with the body in profile, whereas the head is *en face*, as if turned sideways; the details of the face are well drawn in dots and lines; the hair, indicated by lines springing from the skull (like those of



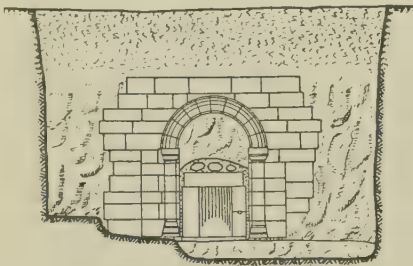
SECTION X-A



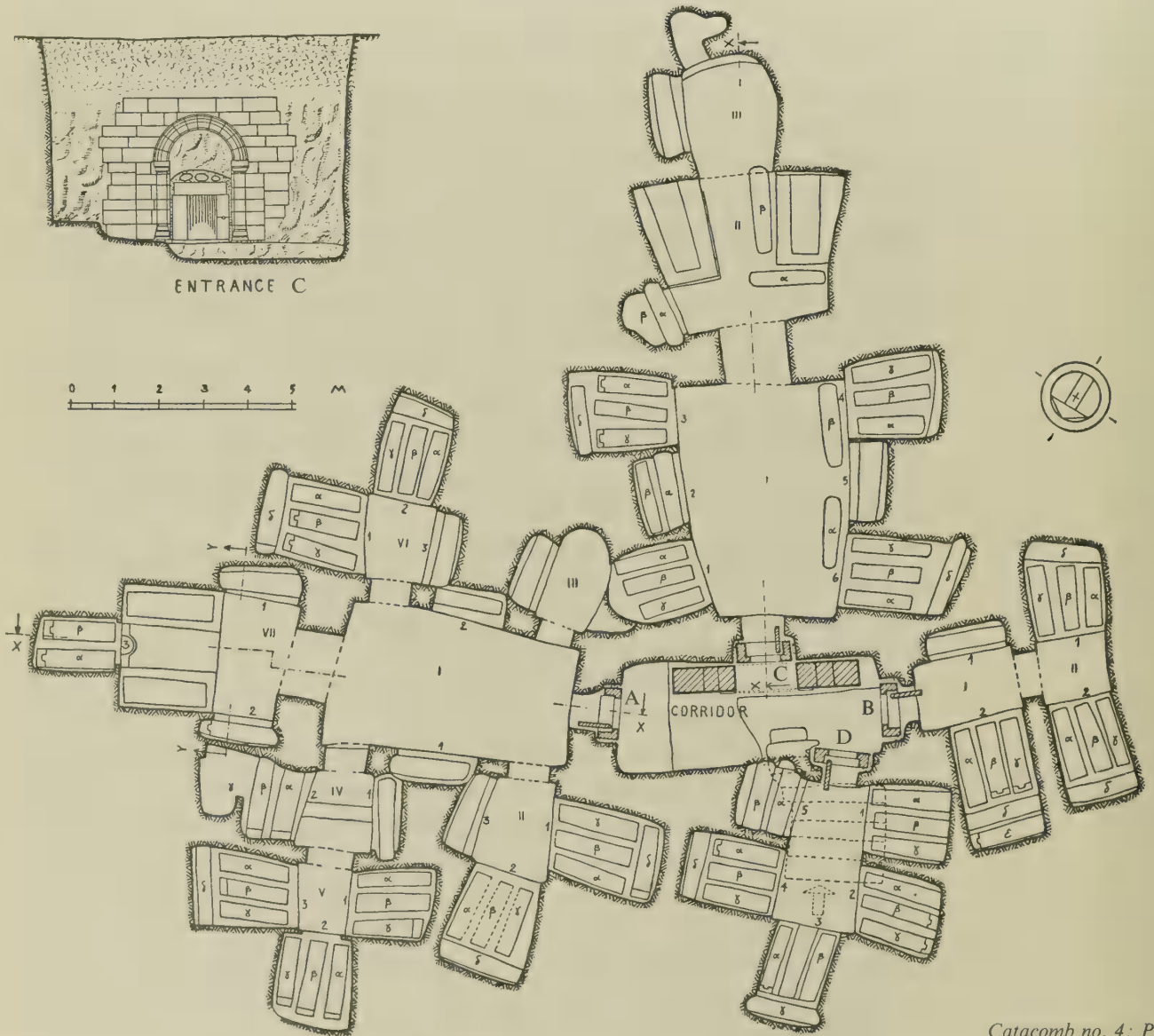
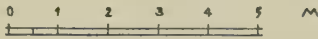
SECTION Y-A



SECTION X-C



ENTRANCE C



Catacomb no. 4: Plan 8

Pl. XXXVI,3) seems to stand on end from fear; the body, indicated by a rectangle, is covered by a tunic decorated with crisscross lines, the hem ending in a band decorated with a net-like pattern; the legs are indicated by two long lines ending in feet; the hanging arms are represented by double lines running in continuation of the lines of the body; all five fingers of the hand are indicated.

It is clear that we have here a composite scene of specific meaning, though this latter escapes us for the time being. The drawing is primitive and very carelessly executed, though some of the details, e.g. the falling man with his head turned to the side, indicate that the artist had in mind traditional, popular motifs in Eastern art.<sup>46</sup>

A few disparate finds were made in the debris accumulated on the floor of the room: iron nails (no. 94), three bronze angles (no. 95), fragments of iron angles (no. 97), a bronze ring (no. 96), and a high relief of a cornucopia carved on a piece of limestone (no. 143), which proved to be a rock-fragment from arcosolium 2. This is the only portrayal of a cornucopia to be found by us at Beth She'arim.<sup>47</sup>

An arched passageway hewn in the middle of the back wall leads from room I to room II (*vid.* PL. XXXV, 2). In the right wall of the passage there is a rough, incised imitation of a gate, consisting of an arch resting on two pillars. In this passage, near the right wall, we found a lamp (no. 113) of the common in Period III at Beth She'arim.

**Room II**, also hewn in the shape of a trapezoid, narrows near the entrance and widens towards the back; it measures 3.35 m long; 3.15 m wide near the passage to room I, and 4.75 m wide near the back wall; its height is 2.60 m. The ceiling is similar to that of room I. In the left wall, near the entrance, is arcosolium 1, the shelf of which contains only one burial place of the common type and hewn its width ( $\alpha$ ); work on another burial place ( $\beta$ ) was begun behind the first one, though never completed. By the left wall of the first burial, two sealing stones were found *in situ*, set one on top of the other and coated with lime plaster. The name of the woman buried here is mentioned in two Greek inscriptions: the first (no. 146) is carved on the wall of the arcosolium below the shelf, and the second (no. 147) on the arch of the arcosolium, to the left.

Towards the end of the room there are two coffin-shaped shelves hewn one beside the other, one in the left wall and the other in the right wall. Both shelves stand about 1.75 m above the floor, with a wide passage between them, leading to room III. In each of the shelves there is a single burial place of the common type, probably used for the interment of some prominent person. The arrangement and form of the shelves is similar to that of room VII, hall A, though of much rougher work with no decorations. The name of the man buried in the right shelf is mentioned in a partly blurred Greek inscription painted in red on the short wall; the name reads

יצחק (בן) שמואל Isaac the son of Samuel, (no. 148). This may very well be the son of the "Samuel the son of Isaac" mentioned on the lintel above the entrance to the hall (no. 142). If so, he too was a scion of the Palmyrene family to whom the hall belonged.

In the floor of room II there are two shallow pit burials: one ( $\alpha$ ) is cut the width of the room, in its anterior part, in front of the right shelf; the other ( $\beta$ ) was cut lengthwise in the floor of the passage between the two shelves, close to the right shelf. In pit ( $\alpha$ ) (1.76 m long, 0.35 m wide, and 0.24 m deep) there was an entirely crumbling skeleton; the four sealing stones of the burial were found *in situ*. In pit  $\beta$  1.96 m long, 0.34 m wide and 0.34 m deep there was a crumbling skeleton laid face upwards; three sealing stones of this burial were found *in situ*.

There is no arched passageway leading from room II to room III. Entrance to the latter is indicated by two engaged pillars, complete with bases and capitals, flanking the doorway (*vid.* PL. XXXV, 2).

**Room III**, which is very carelessly hewn and unfinished, is 2.70 m long and about 2.00 m wide. Its vaulted ceiling is also carelessly hewn. The only arcosolium within it is in the left wall; in the shelf of the arcosolium there is a single burial place cut its length. An attempt to widen the room is readily noticed, especially in the back wall, but work seems to have stopped here before a more pleasing aspect could be effected.

**Hall C** contains twenty-five burial places altogether beside an incomplete burial place in arcosolium 1 of room II. Three types of burials can be distinguished here: a. arcosolia in the shelf of which are one to four burial places; b. coffin-shaped shelves containing a single burial place; c. shallow pit burials hewn into the floor of the room. All three types are found also in hall G of catacomb no. 1 (*vid. sup.* p. 86), as well as in hall E of catacomb no. 3 (*vid.* pp. 169 f.), both quarried in Period III. The coffin-shaped shelves are similar to those found in room VII of catacomb no. 4. It is noteworthy that remnants of wooden coffins were found not only in several of the arcosolia, but also in the two pits. This type of burial is encountered also in tombs in the Jerusalem area, dating from the first century C.E.<sup>48</sup> In general, this hall—like hall A in the same catacomb is very spacious, there having been no want of burial space at the time of its hewing. It would seem that only rooms I and II were hewn at first; only later, when no further burial places were left, were the pit burials made in the floor; work to enlarge the hall by adding room III was also begun but not completed. From the examination of the burials it can be assumed that the hall dates to the third century C.E., work on it apparently beginning already in the first half of that century. Individual finds, like the lamp (no. 113) and fragments of pottery, both from Period III, prove important in establishing the date of the hall.

The ornamental gate built at the entrance to the hall, and the graffiti on the walls would agree with this dating. The Greek inscriptions also provide chronological support; one of them explicitly describes a member of the family owning the hall as coming from Palmyra. The suggested date of the hall is, thus, well founded. In any case, it is clear that this hall was not used after Period IIIB, i.e., after the middle of the fourth century C.E.

We have already noted above that the head of the family (or one of its heads) was Samuel the son of Isaac, whose name appears on the lintel of the entrance (no. 142). The Palmyrene Germanus, the son of Isaac (no. 143), buried in room I may have been his brother, and Isaac the son of Samuel (no. 148), buried in room II, was likely his son. Thus, the hall appears to have belonged to a Palmyrene family, one of whose scions was a legionnaire, and another apparently a gladiator. Only the biblical Hebrew names common in this family indicate them to have been Jewish, whereas the graffiti point to a foreign milieu. In clear contrast to the findings in Palmyrene halls A in catacomb no. 4 and E in catacomb no. 3, no explicit Jewish subject or symbol was found in this hall. We may assume that this was a family converted to Judaism, as Palmyrene proselytes are mentioned in our ancient literature.<sup>49</sup>

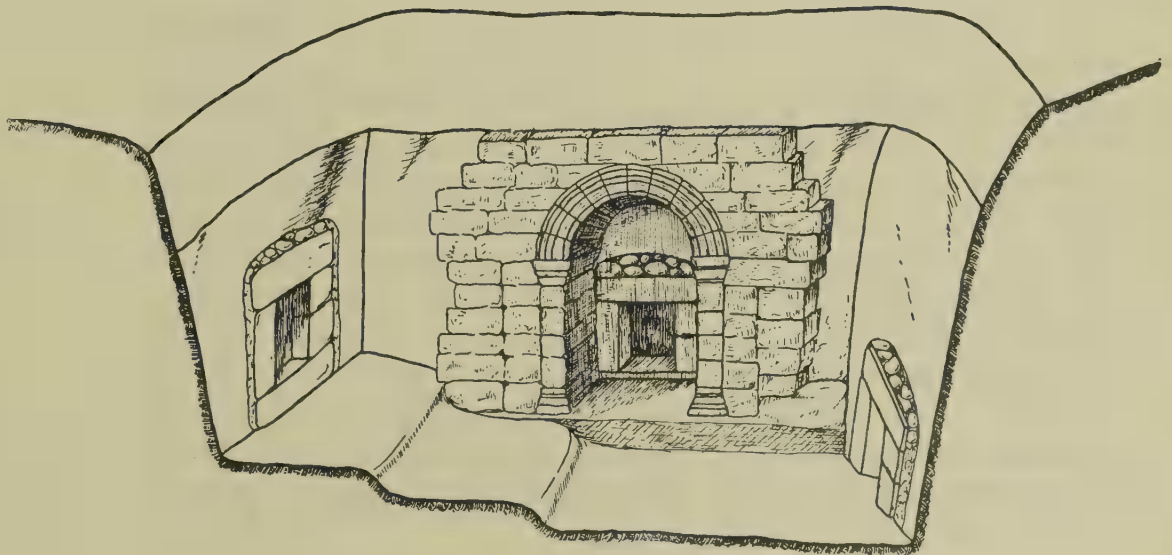


Fig. 16  
Court of catacomb no. 4:  
view from the stairs

**Hall D** is quarried in the front wall of the corridor, opposite hall C, and to the right of the flight of steps leading down. As already mentioned above (p. 171) the lower stairs were encroached upon during the cutting of the opening for the entrance to the hall, when its stone frame was affixed. The door frame was preserved *in situ*; its lintel rests on the doorposts and, on the right side, also on one of the stairs. The lintel is decorated with moulding which continues down both doorposts (compare the entrance to hall G, Pl. VI). The smooth panel within the lintel frame bears a one line Greek inscription (no. 149) ending in an ivy leaf (*vid.* Pl. XXXVI, 4).

Two steps lead down to the roughly hewn burial room, which has the shape of an irregular rectangle (3.25 m long, 2.50 m wide, and 1.90 m high—from floor to the flat ceiling). Its walls contain five arcosolia: two (1 and 2) in the wall to the left of the entrance; two (4 and 5) opposite them, in the wall to the right; and one (3) in the back wall. Arcosolia 1 and 2 each contain three burial places cut the length of the shelf; in arcosolium 5 there are two burial places cut across its width; in arcosolium 4 there are four burial places, three cut the length of the shelf, and one behind, across the width. In arcosolium 3 there are two raised shelves, to the right and to the left, with a narrow passage leading to a third shelf cut in the back wall. Each of the shelves contains a single burial place. All the burial places are of conventional size (1.52–1.80 m long), except for one ( $\delta$  in arcosolium 4) which is shorter (1.40 m long). In four of the arcosolia (2, 3, 4) the burials contain “pillows” with depressions for the head of the deceased. In some of the burial places, there were bones, potsherds and sealing stones.

This small hall includes fifteen burial places, all except arcosolium 3 of the common type, i.e. arcosolia with two to four burial places cut in the shelves. Arcosolium 3 is of the type found in several other burial halls described above, of the third-fourth centuries (*vid. sup.* p. 134). The type of arcosolium 3, the great resemblance between the decorations of the entrance frame to those of halls A and G of catacomb no. 1 (*vid. sup.* pp. 44, 75), and the potsherds, which are of the type of Period III, all clearly indicate that this hall was quarried in the third century C.E., apparently in its later half. As already stated (p. 171), hall D is the latest of the halls in catacomb no. 4.

From the excavations in catacomb 4, it is clear that interment in its halls ceased, at the very latest, in the middle of the fourth century C.E., i.e., at the time of the destruction of Beth She‘arim by the Roman legions of Emperor Gallus (*vid. sup.* p. 19).

## NOTES

- 1 This type of arcosolium is discussed above, p. 134.
- 2 Vid. \**BJPES*, 9 (1942), p. 17.
- 3 Vid. Mayer & Reifenberg, *JPOS* (1939), p. 323 & pl. XXIX, 4.
- 4 Vid. Müller-Bees, *Die Inschriften der jüd. Katakombe am Monteverde zu Rome*, p. 149, no. 167; \*M. Narkiss, *The Hanukka Lamp*, p. 71.
- 5 Vid. \*I. Ben-Zvi, *BJPES* 10 (1943), pp. 37–38 and pl. I; \*E.L. Sukenik, *Kedem* 2, p. 87, Fig. 3.
- 6 Vid. \*Narkiss, *op. cit.*, pp. 1 ff.
- 7 This decoration is common in the art of the Roman period in general and especially in the Jewish art, vid., e.g., L. Oliphant, *PEFQSt* (1884), p. 42; A. Alt, *ZDPV* (1928), pp. 218 ff. Taf. 16.
- 8 Vid. M. Macalister, *Gezer* III, pl. CXIV, 1c; and also M. Avi-Yonah, *QDAP* 10 (1940), pp. 148 ff. concerning the types of sailing ships in Palestine (in the Roman period).
- 9 Vid. especially Cabrol; *DAC* I, 2, pp. 2709 ff.
- 10 "... Beer-Sheba, from which beginning... is taken the breadth of the Upper Galilee, as far as the village Baqa, which divides the land of the Tyrians from it" (*Jewish War* 3, 3, 1).
- 11 Vid. \*I Ben-Zvi, *Shear Yishuv* II, p. 1 ff.
- 12 \**Pesikta d' Rab Kahana* (ed. Buber), 886; Eccl. Rabba 10, 11. On these sources, vid. also \*J. Braslavski, *BJPES* 3 (1936), p. 24 ff. (opposing the view held by Ben-Zvi, *op. cit.* p. 12).
- 13 According to the definition of M. Narkiss. Of course no conclusions can be made from this find concerning the date of the catacomb, as it was found among many much later finds.
- 14 For this motif, which is common in art, vid. M. Avi-Yonah, *QDAP* 14 (1952), p. 67.
- 15 Decorations b and c were reproduced in \**BJPES* 5 (1938), p. 68, Fig. 5, nos. 6, 8.
- 16 Vid. \*M. Narkiss, *Coins of the Jews*, p. 63; A. Reifenberg, *Ancient Jewish Coins*, p. 21, pl. X; maybe they meant "a cup of gold", *Mishnah Tamid* 3, 4, etc.
- 17 Vid. M. Narkiss, *JPOS* (1935), pp. 41 ff.; Mayer-Reifenberg, *JPOS* 1939, pp. 325 foll., \*S. Yeivin *Mozna'im* (1936), p. 204 ff.; and vid. Avi-Yonah, *BJPES* 8 (1947), p. 21; \*Sukenik, *Kedem* 1, p. 95.
- 18 On the other hand this relief reminds one of the metal bowls with a rosette motif on the bottom; these are found already in the Persian period; vid. Iliffe, *QDAP* 6 (1936), pp. 184 ff. & pl. XC.
- 19 Vid. e.g., \*Sukenik, *Mazie Memorial Volume*, p. 68, Fig. 6.
- 20 Vid. e.g., *Survey of Western Palestine, Memoirs* II, p. 313; Dussaud, *Les monuments palestiniens et judaïques*, p. 88, no. 118.
- 21 Vid. above, p. 111; and also p. 145, Footnote 101.
- 22 Cf. especially the engravings in the tombs at Beth-Guvrin; vid. Avi-Yonah, *QDAP* 10 (1941), pl. XXVII, 6.
- 23 For the butterfly as the symbol of Psyche and of eternity, vid. Roscher, *Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie* III, pp. 3234 ff.
- 24 Vid. Dussaud, *Les monuments palestiniens et judaïques*, p. 88, no. 118; 168; Lassus, *Inventaire archéologique de la région au nord-est de Hamma* I, pp. 24, Figs. 24 and 170.
- 25 Cf. above, p. 67.
- 26 It is noteworthy that at Bezira Basra of Edom, a Middle Iron Age lamp was found; it was attached to a base in the form of a woman. Vid. N. Glueck, *AASOR* 18–19 (1939), p. 36.
- 27 Vid. Avi-Yonah, *QDAP* 10 (1941), p. 132 & Fig. 3.
- 28 Vid. the survey by I. Finkerfeld in my article, *The Excavations at Sheikh Ibreiq (Beth She'arim)*, *JPOS* 18 (1938), p. 49.
- 29 Vid. C. Watzinger, *Griechische Holzarkophagen aus der Zeit Alexanders des Grossen*, 1905.
- 30 Vid. J.H. Iliffe, *QDAP* 4 (1934) p. 74, Figs. 4–6. The reconstruction of Iliffe is not satisfactory for several reasons, especially in the instability of the bottom of the coffin.
- 31 Vid. the summary above, pp. 132 ff.
- 32 Vid. pl. III, 3; and above, p. 107; we may postulate that the above-mentioned relief depicts a double door, as in Holy Arks, yet I think that the perpendicular line is merely an unsuccessful indication of the raised vertical band dividing the door into two panels, which is typical of the stone doors at Beth She'arim.
- 33 Vid. Sukenik, *The Ancient Synagogue of Beth Alpha*, p. 20 ff.
- 34 Vid., e.g., Reifenberg, *JPOS* 11, pp. 51 ff.; Sukenik, *Ancient Synagogues in Palestine and Greece*, pp. 52 ff.
- 35 Vid. Rostovtzeff, *Dura Europos and its Art*, pl. XXI; may it be mentioned that a portico with four columns and an ark standing in the center was already depicted on the coins of Bar-Kokhba; vid. \*Narkiss, *Coins of the Jews*, pp. 65–66; and Reifenberg, *Ancient Jewish Coins*, pp. 25–6 & pl. XII. We may also note that on the reverse of these coins there is a *lulab*, whereas in the above relief the

*lulab* appears between the two right-hand pillars.

36 Vid. especially Mayer-Reifenberg, *JPOS* 19, pp. 319 ff.

37 Vid. \*L. A. Mayer and A. Reifenberg, *BJPES* 9 (1942), p. 43.

38 Vid. Mayer-Reifenberg *PEFQSt* (1937), pl. VII, 2; cf. also the double Holy Ark at Capernaum, according to the reconstruction of Kohland Watzinger (*Antike Synagogen in Galiläa*, p. 37), where one alcove apparently was used for an Ark and the other for a Menorah.

39 Vid. especially Sukenik, *The Ancient Synagogue of Beth Alpha*, pp. 29–30; and also *PEFQSt* (1885), p. 90.

40 Vid., for instance, C.C. McCown, *QDAP* 9, pp. 1 ff.

41 In catacombs nos. 6 and 11 we found clear proof for dating them in the third century; vid. \**BJPES* 5 (1938), pp. 58 ff.; 9 (1942), p. 18.

42 On gladiators, their various types and weapons, vid. K. Schneider, *apud* Pauly-Wissowa, *Supplementband* III, cols. 760 ff.

43 For Jewish *ludarii*, vid. the Babylonian Talmud, Gittin, 47, a: "ריש לקיש זבין נפשיה ללודאי" and the Palestinian Talmud, Gittin 4, 46b; מעשה; וואם מכר עצמו ללודים אפילו פעם אחת אין פודין אותו; באחד שמכר את עצמו ללודים, אתא עובדא קומי רבי אבהו, אמר: מה נעשה מפני חייו עשה!"

44 Vid. also Avi-Yonah, *QDAP* 10 (1941), p. 135.

45 For Mesene, vid. Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencyclopädie* XXIX, 1931, col. 1082 ff. Maisler, *JPOS* 18, p. 48. For the Jewish population at Mesene vid. e.g. Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 37, 2; Betza 36, 1.

46 Cf. Avi-Yonah, *QDAP* 10 (1941), p. 135.

47 For this motif on Jewish coins, vid. \*M. Narkiss, *Coins of the Jews*, p. 67.

48 Vid. J.H. Iliffe, *QDAP* 4 (1934), pp. 74–75; and above p.

49 Vid. A. Büchler, *Schwartz-Festschrift* 1917, pp. 150 ff. There is reason to assume that these Jews reached the country during the reigns of Odenathus and Zenobia (258–272 A.D.). For the Jews of Palmyra, etc. the bibliography mentioned on pp. 143 f., footnotes 46, 47 and 150, and also, J. Schwartz, *Société Archéol. d'Alexandrie*, Bulletin 40 (1953), p. 77.

## CHAPTER V THE HEBREW AND PALMYRENE INSCRIPTIONS

### 1 INTRODUCTION

In the eleven catacombs excavated at Beth She'arim during the years 1936–1940 about two hundred inscriptions came to light. They constitute a wealth of material for a knowledge of Jewish culture in the period of the Talmud. They appear on the doors and lintels of hall entrances, on the walls of burial rooms, and especially above the burial places and on the walls of the arcosolia; some are on the ceilings and arched passages within the arcosolia, on sealing stones and on stone lids. In addition, there are two marble slabs bearing inscriptions: one in Hebrew (no. 23), the other in Greek (no. 78).

Most of the inscriptions are incised or painted on the soft rock of the burial rooms; others are found on the hard stone of the doors and lintels. The most common pigment used is red (ocher), though a few inscriptions are in dark green or black. Often an inscription was first incised and then painted in red for emphasis. A nail seems generally to have been used for incising, and a brush or feather for painting the inscriptions.

Only few of the inscriptions are well preserved; many have been damaged or effaced by rainwater, or by the peeling of the rock surface. Sometimes inscriptions were completely erased, only a few traces being left. In various places the inscriptions have vanished because of collapse or breaches made in the walls or burial places. We may, therefore, assume that the number of inscriptions had been much greater than was found during the excavations.

The main purpose of the writers of the inscriptions appears to have been to designate the burial places of particular persons within the catacombs, to direct the visitor or, in many cases, to indicate ownership of a room or hall. This is the reason for duplicate inscriptions, two or even three in one or two languages, at the hall entry and within. In only one instance was the name of the head of the family (in hall G in catacomb no. 1) inscribed on a marble slab fixed in the corridor, as well as on the lintel, the door, and inside the hall. In large public catacombs, such as catacomb no. 1, in which not only the dead from Beth She'arim were buried, but also those from other parts of the country and the Diaspora—an even greater need was felt for inscriptions, mainly to indicate the names of the deceased. That various inscriptions may well have been written by relatives as a sign of affection for the deceased, with no intention of directing the visitor, should also be taken into account. This sort of inscription includes such greetings as שלום “Peace,” and expressions of sorrow, as חבל “Woe.”

Most of the inscriptions are in Greek. Some are bilingual, Greek-Hebrew or Greek-Palmyrene; others are in either Hebrew or Palmyrene. The Greek epigraphic material from catacombs nos. 1-4 will be discussed in volume II of this book, begun by the late Prof. M. Schwabe, who dealt with this material from the beginning of excavations at Beth She'arim, and now completed by B. Lifshitz. The great proportion of Greek inscriptions, as against the Semitic ones, is apparent upon considering that, of the 114 inscriptions preserved in catacomb no. 1, only twenty-two are in Hebrew (among them some of only one word) and six in Palmyrene; the remainder, except for the inscription from Crusader times (no. 16) and a late Arabic one (no. 77), are all Greek. Thus, the Semitic inscriptions constitute merely a quarter of the total in this large catacomb. The proportion of Semitic material diminishes further when we examine the inscriptions in catacombs nos. 2-4: in catacomb no. 3 only four Palmyrene inscriptions were found, the other being in Greek; in catacombs nos. 2 and 4, all the inscriptions are in Greek; and the same is true in catacomb no. 11. A great number of Semitic inscriptions, however, especially in Hebrew, was found in catacombs nos. 6 and 8. In catacomb no. 7, too, all the inscriptions are in Greek, except for the interpolation in Hebrew concerning the Himyarites. A similar situation prevails in Jaffa, where the ancient Jewish necropolis contains only six Hebrew or Aramaic inscriptions and one Hebrew-Greek bilingual, as against sixty Greek inscriptions.<sup>1</sup> At Beth She'arim there were Semitic inscriptions in a high proportion of the burial halls of catacomb no. 1; Hebrew inscriptions in halls A, G, I, K, M, N and P; and Palmyrene in halls C, E and K. We may also note that in the obviously Palmyrene halls the inscriptions are in Greek and Palmyrene (as in halls C and E in catacomb no. 1, and in hall E of catacomb no. 3), or only in Greek (in halls A and C of catacomb no. 4).

The Hebrew and Palmyrene inscriptions are all in cursive scripts, as was usual in the Roman Period; the peculiar Palmyrene script here is typical of the third century C.E. Most of the inscriptions were carelessly and hastily executed, with no attempt at calligraphy, no proper spacing or careful orthography. The only exceptions are such Palmyrene inscriptions as nos. 12 and 94, the latter being in an ornate Palmyrene script. Of a special style also is the ornate Hebrew inscription (no. 23) on a marble slab (fig. 17, 1). This script is found also on several fragmentary Hebrew inscriptions on pieces of marble slabs, found in the city area.

The orthography of the Hebrew inscriptions is in complete accord with the pronunciation common among Jews in the period of Talmud, that is, plene. Thus, we find ריבי ביריבי כהנים as well as מירים and ביחמיה. In transliterating the Greek names, there is a lack of consistency: the name Κύριλλος is once written as קרילס (no. 8) and once as קרלוס (no. 168);

3	2	1	
א א	א א		א
ב ב	ב	ב	ב
	ג		ג
ד ד	ד ד		ד
ה	ח ח	ה	ה
ו	ו ו		ו
		ז	ז
ח ח	ח ח	ח	ח
	ט		ט
	י י	י	י
כ	כ כ		כ
ל	ל ל	ל	ל
מ מ	מ מ	מ	מ
נ נ	נ נ		נ
ס ס	ס		ס
ע			ע
פ	פ פ		פ
	צ	צ	צ
ק	ק ק	ק	ק
ר	ר	ר	ר
ש ש	ש ש	ש	ש
ת	ת		ת

Fig. 17  
 Script of the Hebrew (1-2)  
 and Palmyrene (3) inscriptions  
 in catacombs nos. 1-4

Παρηγόριος is written as פאריגרי (no. 38); and the name Λεόντιος as לאונטיס. The orthography of the Palmyrene inscriptions generally fits the pronunciation at Palmyra proper, though a few interesting cases may be noted — *vid. infra* nos. 12, 17, 132.

The contents of the Hebrew and Palmyrene inscriptions are very simple. Usually they mention the name of the deceased, sometimes together with the name of the father, the common valediction “shalom” or the exclamation שלום. Sometimes the title or the status is mentioned and, more rarely, some term of endearment or a date. More complex inscriptions are rare.

The names mentioned in the Hebrew inscriptions are of the type common among the Jews of Palestine and the neighboring countries, and are prevalent in the Greek inscriptions at Beth She'arim, as well. In the Hebrew inscriptions of catacomb no. 1 there are biblical Hebrew names: Judah (and also יודן Judan); Joseph; Isaac; Miriam; Nehemiah and Ruth. The Greek names, which may also be translation-equivalents of Hebrew names, include פאריגרי and לאונטיס and קרילס and the Palmyrene name מקים. Familial relation is often indicated by the word בר or בן “son.” The obvious Aramaic influence on everyday Hebrew is displayed in such words as בר “son” and שת “year,” in place of the Hebrew בן and שנה respectively; Aramaic שלם is once substituted for שלום (no. 112). In Hebrew inscriptions the burial place is called קבר, נפש or מקום. More elaborate inscriptions begin with the words: ...הקבר הזה של—“This tomb belongs to...,” or ...המקום הזה של—“This place belongs to...” The word של relates, of course, to the word following (שלריבי, שלכהנים). This is the common formulation during the period with which we are concerned, and is found also in the inscriptions at Jaffa (*vid.* no. 23). In addition, we find the form נפש פלוני (no. 91). The most common valediction in the Hebrew inscriptions, as in the Greek and Palmyrene, is “Shalom.” In the Greek inscriptions it appears sometimes in Hebrew characters, and other times in Greek (Σαλλόμ, Σαλόμ); in some cases it represents an inscription by itself. A unique inscription is שלום ליודן (no. 98). The exclamation הבל “Woe” is found in both Hebrew and Palmyrene inscriptions. A date seems to be intended in Hebrew-Aramaic inscription no. 112—a fact worth mentioning since dates are rare in the Jewish inscriptions of Palestine.<sup>2</sup> The only titles mentioned in the Jewish inscriptions are ריבי and ביריבי; רבי is written once in an inscription on a marble slab (no. 23). This title appears in the Greek inscriptions as ριβι or ριβιβι, abbreviated as ρ. Many members of the family of Rabbi Isaac the son of Mokim (רבי יצחק (בן מקים) buried in hall G, were given the title ריבי, and one of them is denoted ביריבי (no. 40). The members of a priestly family buried in hall I, room IV, place special emphasis on their status, as in two inscriptions one of which is bi-lingual—nos. 61/2; and the other Hebrew—(no. 67). For the inscription mentioning Benjamin the son of Isaac, “Rabban

Torah,” (בנימין בר יצחק רבן תורה) see above, p. 26.

In the Palmyrene inscriptions there are clearly Palmyrene names, such as Amase; Mokimos, Bath-malechos and Thuma, as well as Greek names written in a peculiar transliteration: תדרש (nos. 17–18) and דרון (no. 130). The name Esther (no. 126), although biblical, is not clearly Jewish and is found also in non-Jewish Palmyrene inscriptions (in the form אסתרא). However, in the Greek inscriptions mentioning Palmyrene Jews, we find biblical Hebrew names such as Jacob and Isaac. For comparison, we may note the personal names in Jewish bilingual inscription, Greek and Palmyrene, found at Palmyra and dating from 212 C.E.: זבידא, שמואל, לוי, יעקוב.<sup>3</sup> In the Palmyrene inscriptions the burial place is called בת נפשא (or בנפשא; no. 12), or נפשא (א). The opening formulas are: ... דנהפשה והנפש ד... (no. 86); (no. 12); נפש פלוגי (no. 126); and also ... דנהפשה והנפש ד... (no. 132). In one Palmyrene inscription we find the greeting “Shalom” in Hebrew script (and not Aramaic שלום; no. 18). We have already mentioned that the exclamation חבל “Woe” in both the Hebrew and the Palmyrene inscriptions was quite common also at Palmyra. Finally, we may mention that in Palmyrene inscription no. 86 there appears to be a date, if we are correct in reading שח in line 3; indeed, in most elaborate Palmyrene epitaphs, a date is given.

The Hebrew and Palmyrene material found in catacombs nos. 1 and 3 is scanty, giving us only a limited picture of the use of these languages among the Jews burying their dead at Beth She‘arim. However, its value increases when we examine the total graphic material from Beth She‘arim, analyzing the Hebrew and Palmyrene inscriptions within the general framework of the Greek inscriptions. The epigraphic and linguistic problems will be treated more thoroughly in a subsequent volume of this book.

Finally, we may note again that the Palmyrene inscriptions are from the third century C.E. (*vid. infra* in the comments on the individual inscriptions), while most of the Hebrew inscriptions are from the third and the fourth centuries C.E.

## 2 THE INSCRIPTIONS IN CATACOMB NUMBER 1

No. 8. Hebrew inscription; in hall A, room II, to the left of arcosolium 1 (*vid. sup.* p. 54); incised וקירילוס ומירימ *Cyrillos and Miriam*. The first letter is blurred. The last letter is in the form of *het*, though it could be *he* or final *mem*, as can be learned from other Hebrew inscriptions. From the Greek inscription in the same room it is apparent that Κύριλλος (nos. 10 and 10a) and Μαριαμένη (nos. 9 and 10) are intended here. The spelling מירימ is reasonable here *plene* spelling being common at Beth She‘arim (ריבי, ביריבי, כוהנים, etc.). The name Miriam and מריה—Μάρια, an abbreviated

form) was very popular during the period of the Second Temple. The Greek transcription, *Μαριάμη*, frequent in the literature of the Second Temple period, as well as on ossuaries (beside *Μάριαμ*),<sup>4</sup> would point to a pronunciation such as *Mariam* (מַרִּים), in turn the source of the Hellenized form *Μαριαμένη*. The Jews of Beth She'arim in the third century C.E. however pronounced the name as *Miriam* (מִרְיָם), as is proven by the *plene* spelling in this very inscription.

The two names mentioned here were common among the Jews of the Roman Period. It is noteworthy that the name *Κύριλλος* appears in Hebrew inscription no. 168 as *קרליוס*. This is another indication of the inconsistency in the spelling of Greek names here.

No. 12. Palmyrene inscription (*vid.* Pl. VIII, 4); in hall C, room I, above arcosolium 1 (*vid. sup.* p. 61); incised and painted in red.

בנפשא	<i>Tomb</i>
דתמא	<i>of Thuma</i>
אמשא	<i>[Daughter of] Amase</i>

The inscription is written in vertical columns, similar to Palmyrene inscriptions nos. 83 and 86 in hall K of catacomb no. 1; nos. 126 and 130 in catacomb no. 3; and nos. 164 and 165 in catacomb no. 8. The reader must tilt his head to the left in order to read it. This form of writing is encountered in Syrian and Palmyrene inscriptions,<sup>5</sup> such as the monumental Palmyrene inscription preserved at Constanza (third century C.E.).<sup>6</sup>

The word *בנפשא* can be interpreted only as *בה נפשא* "House of the soul," i.e., tomb. The assimilation of *taw* without its affecting the following letter occurs often in Aramaic, especially in place-names in their Aramaic pronunciation or form (*vid. sup.* pp. 1–2).

In the Palmyrene inscriptions of Beth She'arim, the place in which the dead were laid to rest is called *בה נפשא* (no. 86), i.e., *בית הנפש*, *נפש* or *בית הנפש* (nos. 126, 132 and also in Hebrew inscription no. 91). The expression *μνημα* appears in Greek inscription no. 11 in parallel to the expression *בנפשא* in the present inscription. In one case, the word *נפש* is translated by *ψυχή* (no. 189) in the sense of a tomb.<sup>7</sup> The concept *נפשא*, *נפש* underwent several stages of development: the soul of the dead; the symbol of the soul of the dead; a marker or stele on the tomb of the dead; the tomb itself; the mausoleum.<sup>8</sup> In Palmyrene inscriptions, as well as in Nabataean inscriptions, the word *נפשא* means "the soul of the dead," as well as the stele symbolizing it; and the tomb in which the dead was buried.<sup>9</sup> In talmudic literature the word is also found in the sense of a tombstone or mausoleum.<sup>10</sup> It is possible then, that *נפשא*, *נפש* = tomb, is merely an abbreviated form of *בית הנפש*, *בה נפשא*. *Thuma* [daughter of] *Amase* is the name of the woman buried in arcosolium 1, room I, hall C



This formula is common in Hebrew and Judeo-Aramaic epitaphs, as in the inscriptions from the Jewish cemetery at Jaffa.<sup>20</sup> The title ריבי in Hebrew, or its Greek rendering ρίββι (or ρίβι) and its abbreviation ϐ, are found especially in hall G, though only in this inscription is it found in the 'defective' spelling רבי. The familial relationship is indicated by the Aramaic word בר, "son," though בן is more common in the Hebrew inscriptions, and also in hall G (*vid. nos.* 40, 50); the word בר is once written in Greek characters βάρ (no. 29). The name of the father is Mokimos doubtlessly the head of the family buried in hall G. The Greek spelling of this name is found in other inscriptions, such as those on the lintel of the entrance to hall G: ῥ Εἰσάκιος Μόκιμου; this name is obviously Palmyrene; it has been found in its original form, מקימו, in an inscription from the year 8 C.E.<sup>21</sup> and is one of the most common Arabic names at Palmyra. The pronunciation can be deduced from the Greek spellings Μοκειουος and Μοκιμος;<sup>22</sup> the latter is found in the inscriptions of Beth She'arim. The dropping of the final *waw* is peculiar to the spelling of the name here. This name may appear also in the Greek inscription from the synagogue at Capernaum—if Prof. Schwabe's reconstruction is correct: Μο[κα]μου.<sup>23</sup>

The greeting "Shalom" at the end of line three is not truly incised into the marble slab, but rather scratched in a thin line; it may be a later addition. The script on the whole excels in clarity and artistic execution, and is of the monumental type characteristic of this period, i.e., the second to fourth centuries C.E.

No. 36. Hebrew inscription (*vid. Pl. XI, 4*); in hall G, room II, left of arcosolium 4 (*vid. sup. p. 80*); incised.

יהודה	<i>Judah</i>
הקטן	<i>the Lesser</i>

Above this inscription there is a Greek inscription painted in red (no. 35) which begins with the word "Peace." Both this inscription and inscription no. 34 (also in Greek),<sup>24</sup> may indicate that "the little one" is not an appellative (compare with יהונן בן הקטן, Avodah Zarah VIII, 12; or שמואל הקטן, a Tanna contemporary of Rabban Gamaliel), but rather a word of endearment for a child. This inscription may be compared with the Palmyrene inscription from Dura-Europos: מקימו # קטן.<sup>25</sup>

No. 38. Hebrew inscription (*vid. Pl. XI, 2*); in hall G, room III, on the wall to the left of arcosolium 1 (*vid. sup. p. 82*); incised

פאריגרי	<i>Parigoris</i>
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Beneath the Hebrew inscription there is written in Greek (no. 39): ῥ [ρββι] Παρηγόρις = ρ ΠΑΡΗΓΟ/ΡΙC . The title ריבי does not appear here

in front of the name. The name itself can be translated as either מנחם or נחמיה; it is encountered in talmudic literature spelled as פריגרי and is common in Graeco-Jewish inscriptions.<sup>26</sup> The *plene* spelling, with *alef* (א) for α in foreign names, is rather rare in Hebrew and Aramaic inscriptions of this period.<sup>27</sup>

No. 40. Hebrew inscription (*vid.* Pl. XI, 3b); in hall G, room III, on the wall of arcosolium 1, on the right side (*vid. sup.* p. 82; incised

יצחק בן	<i>Isaac son of</i>
יוסף בירי	<i>Joseph Rab-</i>
בי	<i>bi</i>

This inscription excels in its flourish, as if the writer was imitating a monumental script. The final *nun* of the second word serves as a kind of frame on the left side of the inscription, forcing the two last letters of the word ביריבי to be written below the second line. The title בן־רבי is prevalent in talmudic literature and in the Jewish epigraphic material from the period of the Talmud,<sup>28</sup> such as the inscriptions from the Jewish cemetery at Jaffa,<sup>29</sup> the synagogue at Isfiye<sup>30</sup> and the synagogue in Hamath-Gader.<sup>31</sup> The *plene* spelling is found in one of the inscriptions from Jaffa.<sup>32</sup>

No. 50. Hebrew inscription (*vid.* Pl. XI, 3a); in hall G, on the wall of the passage from room III to room IV, on the right side; in red paint.

... יוסף	<i>...i Joseph</i>
בן יצחק	<i>Son of Isaac</i>

The first letters are blurred, but the Greek inscription (no. 51) below the Hebrew leaves little doubt that the intention was רבי, or ריבי.

No. 62. Hebrew inscription (*vid.* Pl. XII, 3); in hall I, on the slope of the ceiling above the arch of arcosolium 1; incised,

... כוהנים	<i>... Priests</i>
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Before this word there are unclear traces (of script?). Above the Hebrew, on the ceiling, there is the Greek word ΙΕΡΕΩΝ (“of priests”). Note-worthy is the *plene* spelling employed here.

No. 67. Hebrew inscription (*vid.* Pl. XII, 6); in hall I, room IV, right of arcosolium 1; in red paint.

המקום הזה	<i>This place</i>
של כוהנים	<i>belongs to priests.</i>
חבל	<i>Woe!</i>

The inscription has been blurred by water, but a thorough examination

of the traces reveals that the suggested reading is correct; in the last line, the last letter is unclear and the middle letter is closer to a Palmyrene *Bet* than to a Hebrew one.

The style is reminiscent of inscription no. 23, though instead of *הקבר* there, the word *המקום* is employed, in the sense of a burial place.<sup>33</sup> The exclamation “Woe,” an expression of love for the deceased, is frequently encountered in Jewish and non-Jewish inscriptions in Aramaic and Hebrew, and especially in Palmyrene and Nabataean.<sup>34</sup>

No. 69. Hebrew inscription; in hall I, room VI, on the wall of arcosolium 3; incised,

רות *Ruth*  
רות *Ruth*

The name *Ruth* is written twice in Hebrew and twice in Greek (no. 70), as an expression of affection for the deceased. This biblical name is not often used in the period of Talmud.

No. 79. Hebrew inscription; in hall K room I, on the wall

הטוב.....ה'... [J]ud[ah].... the good  
.....ר'...ג'... ... r... n...

This relatively long inscription has been damaged badly by the action of rainwater. The first letters can be reconstructed only by assuming that they formed the name *יהודה*, mentioned also in Greek inscriptions nos. 81, 82 and Hebrew inscription no. 84, also found in this room. All the letters of the word *הטוב*, at the end of line one, are clear except for the *tet*, which is somewhat blurred. This word is meant as an expression of affection and praise.<sup>35</sup> Of line 2 only traces of letters have been preserved.

No. 83. Palmyrene inscription (*vid.* fig. 10, p. 99); in hall K, room I, on the wall to the right of the passage to room III; incised,

בתמלכו *Bath-malechos*

The inscription is written vertically, like Palmyrene inscription no. 12, (*vid. sup.*, p. 198). The name *Bath-malechos*, obviously Palmyrene, appears in Palmyrene inscriptions in the two forms: *בתמלכו* and *בתמלכי*. The name is copied once in Greek letters: *Βαθ Μαλεχην*, though the name *מלכו* usually appears as *Μάλεχος* or *Μάλιχος*.<sup>36</sup> It is interesting that the last four letters of the inscription (*מלכו*) are incised with double lines.

No. 84. Hebrew inscription (*vid.* fig. 10, p. 98) in hall K, room I, on the wall to the right of the passage to room III; in red paint.

יהודה *Judah*

The two first letters have been blurred by the action of rain-water, though

the traces left leave no doubt as to the reading. The name Judah is mentioned also in Greek inscriptions nos. 81 and 82.

No. 85. Hebrew inscription (*vid.* fig. 10, p. 99); in hall K, room I, on the wall to the right of the passage to room III; in red paint.

שלום *Peace*

This greeting is repeated three times in this room (nos. 87, 88 and 89) and also at the end of Greek inscription no. 92.

No. 86. Palmyrene inscription (*vid.* Pl. XV, 6); in hall K, room I, on the wall to the left of the passage to room III (*vid. sup.* p. 101); in dark green paint.

בת נפשא דנה *This tomb*  
דבתמלכו מק.א *Bath-malechos MQ..*  
...שת..... *.....the year (?)..*

The inscription is written vertically like Palmyrene inscription nos. 12 (*vid. sup.* p. 198), 83, etc. Outwardly, it is very similar to inscriptions nos. 164 and 165 in catacomb no. 8, which are also written vertically. The script closely resembles the cursive Palmyrene script of the third century C.E., though it should be noted that, as in no. 12, several letters (such as *gimmel* and *shin*) appear in slightly differing forms.

For בת נפשא דנה, *vid. sup.* p. 198.<sup>37</sup> In Palmyrene, the demonstrative masculine singular pronoun דנה is placed after the noun. The wording here ... בת נפשא דנה ד... is typical of burial inscriptions and dedications at Palmyra.<sup>38</sup> We have already discussed the Palmyrene name Bath-malechos (no. 83). The letters *mem* and *kof* two more blurred letters and the letter *alef* are visible at the end of the line. We may possibly suggest the reading א מקימ assuming that the name of Bath-malechos' father was Mokimos; the *alef* would belong to a following word. Below inscription no. 94, which is incised above the burial place of this woman, there twice appears the name ΜΟΚΙΜΟΣ (no. 95). The third line of the inscription is very blurred, though close to its end the letter *shin* can be seen clearly; the letter following, however, can just be recognized as a *taw*. If so, this might be the word שת ("year"), the next two blurred letters indicating a numeral.

No. 87. Hebrew inscription; in hall K, room I, on the wall to the left of the passage or room III; in red paint

שלום *Peace*

*Vid. sup.* no. 85.

No. 88 Hebrew inscription; in hall K, room I, in the passage to room II, on the left; in red paint,

שלום *Peace*

*Vid. sup.* no. 85.

No. 89. Hebrew inscription; in hall K, room I, in the passage to room II, on the right; in red paint.

שלום *Peace*

*Vid. sup.* no. 85.

No. 91. Hebrew inscription (*vid. Pl. XV, 3*); in hall K, room II, on the wall left of arcosolium 1 (*vid. sup.*, p. 102); in red paint.

נפש ניהמיה *Tomb of Nehemiah*

The *nun* at the beginning of the inscription is very blurred. The formula ...נפש, is repeated also in Palmyrene inscription no. 126: נפש אסתר; here the word first is used in the sense of a tomb. The spelling of ניהמיה and its transliteration in Greek (no. 90; and compare Νεεμίας in the Septuagint), indicate the pronunciation prevailing at that time.

No. 93. Hebrew inscription (*vid. Pl. XV, 7*); in K, room II, on the wall to the right of arcosolium 2 (*vid. sup.* p. 102); in red paint.

לאונטיס *Leontios*

The inscription is quite clear, except for the letter *tet*. The name is common among Jews in the period of Talmud and is mentioned in Talmudic literature, mostly as ליונטי (Palestinian Talmud, Demay, 26, 3 etc.). In an inscription in the synagogue at Hamath-Gader, it appears in the form ליאנטוס.<sup>39</sup> We have already seen that this period is characterized by a lack of consistency in the Hebrew transliteration of foreign names (*vid. sup.* p. 197, no. 8).

The name is certainly that of Λεόντιος, "of the goldsmiths," to whom was dedicated the marble slab bearing Greek inscription no. 78 (Pl. XV, 1), affixed in the entrance to hall K (*vid. sup.* p. 98).<sup>40</sup> This man was buried in arcosolium 2 of room II.

No. 94. Palmyrene inscription (*vid. Pl. XV, 4*); in hall K, room III, on the wall above arcosolium 3 (*vid. sup.* p. 104); incised.

בתמלכו *Bath-malechos*

This inscription appears above the burial place of Bath-malechos, to whom inscriptions nos. 83 and 86 in room I were dedicated (*vid. sup.*). The inscription excels in its monumental Palmyrene script.

No. 98. Hebrew inscription (*vid. fig. 18*); in hall M, room I, on a stone which rested on the sealing stone in the opening of kokh a (*vid. sup.*, p. 111); in red paint.

שלום *Peace*  
ליודן *to Judan*

This form, of blessing someone with peace, is not found in the Jewish

Fig. 18  
Hebrew inscription no. 98

שלום  
ליודן

epigraphy of Palestine, whereas at Palmyra there are epitaphs which read: מקימו בר חגגו שלם לה “Mokimos son of HGGW Peace unto him.”<sup>41</sup> The name Judan (= Judah) is very common in talmudic literature and in the Jewish inscriptions of Palestine.<sup>42</sup>

No. 101. Aramaic inscription; in hall N, room I, on the wall to the right of arcosolium 1 (*vid. sup.*, p. 118); incised.

ם  
 ל  
 ש  
 Peace

The letters are somewhat blurred. This is the Aramaic form of “Shalom” written vertically from the bottom upwards; it is very common in Palmyrene and Nabataean epitaphs. It could, however, be the name of a woman, as encountered in inscriptions on ossuaries found in the Jerusalem region. The script is influenced by cursive Palmyrene, and the inscription was certainly executed by a man who knew Palmyrené.

No. 101a. Hebrew inscription; to the right of no. 101; incised.

שלום Peace

The two middle letters are blurred.

No. 104. Hebrew inscription; in hall N, room VI, at the entrance to the room, on the wall to the right of room VII; incised in thin lines. The inscription includes seven or eight letters, of which only the last one, a *tet* and the middle one, a *yod* are clear.

No. 108. Hebrew inscription; in hall P, room II, on the wall of arcosolium 1 (*vid. Pl. XXI*, 3, and above p. 130); in dark red paint.

The inscription is only partly blurred, yet no satisfactory interpretation is forthcoming. The last letter written above the last letters of Greek inscription no. 107 is quite certainly a *shin*. The preceding letter could be *pe*, if we restore the bottom horizontal stroke of the letter, of which only dots survive. The previous letter is slightly blurred at the bottom, and is a *waw* or *nun*. Conjecturally, we can suggest the reading *נפש*. The first three letters have no meaning whatsoever; the first is similar to *het*, the second to *yod* and the third to a Palmyrene *taw*, though it could be taken as a Hebrew *lamed*. It has been suggested to read the inscription: *בית נפש*, but the first letter is certainly not a *bet*. This inscription appears to be from a period later than that of Greek inscription no. 107.

No. 112. (Hebrew-) Aramaic (?) inscription; in hall P, room II, on the wall of arcosolium 3, on the left side (*vid. Pl. XXI*, 1, and p. 131); in dark red paint.

... ירח מרחש      *And the month of Marhes*  
 ... שתת                      *Year .....*

This inscription is squeezed in between two Greek inscriptions nos. 111 and 113, which join.

Most of the inscription is blurred. The first letter is not clear and could possibly be *waw*, although traces of two horizontal lines, above and below, may point to some other letter, such as *nun* or possibly even *Bet*. The next three letters appear to be ירה. The next letter is certainly *mem*; the horizontal, bottom stroke of the letter is blurred. After the letter *mem* we can clearly see the letters רחש. The letters following the *shin* are blurred. The second line starts with a letter similar to *shin* lying on its side, like ε. The next two letters are two *taws*. The following letters, ending the line, cannot be discerned.

Because many of the letters are completely effaced, interpretation of the inscription is difficult. A date may appear here, i.e., ... בן ירה מרחשון שנת ת... or ... ת. ירה מרחשון שנת ת... If this assumption is correct, then this inscription is simply a continuation of Greek inscription no. 111, which mentions the name of the deceased: “Isaac... of Arab (ab).” As for the mention of the month and the year, we have an analogy in three Jewish-Aramaic epitaphs from the Zoar region, of the fifth and the beginning of the sixth centuries C.E. These inscriptions mention the reckoning of the sabbatical years and the number of years since the destruction of the Temple, together with the month of death: דמית בריש ירח מרחשון משתה קדמיתה דשמטתה שנת תלת מא ושתין ורבע שנין לחרבן בית מקדשה or דמיתת בירח שבט שנת ג דשמטתה and also דמיתת ביום תלתה בחדעשר יומין בירח אלול בשנת דשמטתה.<sup>43</sup> The word שנת can be interpreted as an Aramaism, and read as שנתת. The last *taw* can be taken as the first letter of the word תשע (“nine”), or as a letter serving as a numeral (= 400?). The employ of letters for numerals is found already on ancient Hebrew coins, as well on one of the inscriptions found near Zoar.<sup>44</sup>

### 3 THE INSCRIPTIONS IN CATACOMB NUMBER 3

No. 126. Palmyrene inscription (*vid.* Pl. XXVII); in hall E, room VI, on the wall of arcosolium 2 (*vid. sup.*, p. 167); in red paint.

#### בפש אסתר *Tomb of Esther*

The two words flank the Greek inscription, which mentions “Esther, also called Amphiatha” (no. 127).<sup>45</sup> This Palmyrene inscription is vertically written, like inscriptions nos. 12, 83 etc. (*vid. sup.*, p. 198); the first word is written in a space within the Greek inscription, whereas the name is written to the left. The term here for “tomb” has been discussed above, p. 198. As for the name, it appears in the Greek inscription here as Ἰσθήρα (but in Greek inscription no. 48 as Εἰσθήρα). This is a common name among Jews,<sup>46</sup> but at Palmyra it was also used by Gentiles.<sup>47</sup> The inscription is written in a cursive Palmyrene script. Special attention should be paid to the dot above *Resh*, common in the Palmyrene script of the second

and third centuries C.E.<sup>48</sup>

No. 130. Palmyrene inscription; in hall E, room VIII, on the wall of arcosolium 3, on the left (*vid. sup.*, p. 168); in red paint.

..... [D]oron, Woe!  
[ד]ורן חבל

The inscription is written vertically (*vid. sup.*, p. 198). The first line is completely effaced, and only traces of the first letter of the second line are left. The rest of the inscription can be reconstructed by referring to Greek inscription no. 131. The name דורן (= Δώρος) is not Palmyrene; it may be an abbreviated form of a Greek name (Θεόδωρος?), to which a Semitic suffix had been added, as is also used in abbreviated names.<sup>49</sup> The exclamation at the end, as in many Palmyrene epitaphs,<sup>50</sup> has been dealt with above (*vid. p.* 202). The script is a Palmyrene cursive. Above the letter *resh* there is a dot (as in no. 126); *nun* appears in the final form: all other letters are of the usual type. This script is definitely typical of the third century C.E.

No. 132. Palmyrene inscription; in hall E, room VIII, on the wall of arcosolium (*vid. fig.* 19; *vid. sup.*, p. 168); in red paint.

והנפש והנפש ד  
עתחן  
And O, O tomb of  
Atan

The first line is written horizontally, the second vertically, as is common in an entire series of Palmyrene inscriptions at Beth She'arim (*vid. sup.*, p. 198). The wording of the inscription is unusual. *He* is an abbreviated form of the exclamation *הא*.<sup>51</sup> For comparison, we may note the following Palmyrene inscription:<sup>52</sup>

והנפשא דה  
מוליא בשמש  
חבל חירן בר  
ירחי חבל

In one inscription we find *והא נפשא* instead of *והנפשא*.<sup>53</sup> The name *עתחן*, obviously Palmyrene, is often mentioned in Palmyrene inscriptions and in Greek inscription no. 131: ATAN.<sup>54</sup> The inscription is in a cursive Palmyrene script; most of the letters are of the common type, though several, such as *he* (written like ח) and *yod* (written like י), are of a peculiar type, similar to the Hebrew.

No. 133. Palmyrene inscription; incised and painted in red on a rock fragment in the arch of arcosolium 2.

עתחן Atan

Arcosolium 3 thus served as the burial place of a man of this name from Palmyra (on this name *vid. sup.*, no. 132). The script is a cursive Palmyrene.

והנפשא דה  
עתחן

Fig. 19

Palmyrene inscription no. 132

NOTES

- 1 Vid. \*Schwabe, *Sefer HaYishuv* I, pp. 44, 60 ff.; and also Frey, *CIJ* II, p. 172–212.
- 2 Vid. \*Schwabe, *Sefer HaYishuv* I, p. 41.
- 3 Vid. Cantineau, *Inventaire* VII, p. 12, no. 4.
- 4 Vid. \*Sukenik, *Luncz Memorial Volume*, pp. 195–196; \*Kraus *Festschrift*, p. 92; \*Gulak-Klein *Memorial Volume*, p. 134.
- 5 Vid. Lidzbarski, *Nordsemitische Epigraphik*, pp. 125 ff.; Littman, *Semitic Inscriptions*, p. 90.
- 6 Vid. Lidzbarski, *Ephemeris* III, pp. 29 ff.; Taf. IV.
- 7 Vid. \*Schwabe, *Maasef Yavne* 3, p. 59.
- 8 Vid. Lagrange, *Etudes sur les religions sémitiques*<sup>2</sup> p. 209; St. H. Cook, *The Religion of Ancient Palestine*, pp. 19–20.
- 9 Vid. especially Cantineau, *Inventaire* VIII, pp. 4–5; Ingholt, *Berytus* 2, pp. 38 ff.
- 10 Vid. S. Klein, *Jud.-pal. Corpus Inscriptionum*, pp. 58; 60; 89. In Greek, as found in Sozomenos, *Hist Eccl.* 7, 27; Νεφσαμεμανᾶ. Vid. in detail \*N. Avigad *Ancient Monuments in the Kidron Valley, the Kidron Valley*, 1954, pp. 66 and ff.
- 11 Vid. Cantineau, *op. cit.* IV, p. 21, no. 13; VIII, p. 7. One must distinguish between it and the private masculine noun תימא (Θαίμα in Greek; vid. Ingholt, *Berytus*, 3, p. 105).
- 12 Vid. Cantineau, *Inscriptions palmyreniennes*, p. 18, no. 21 (מש) אמש; Cantineau, *Inventaire* VIII, no. 17: ...אמשי... חבל/ מלכו בר תימא.
- 13 Vid. Cantineau, *Grammaire du palmyrénien épigraphique* pp. 6–31 and the plate on p. 34; Rosenthal, *Die Sprache der palmyrenischen Inschriften* (MVAG 41, 1), pp. 9 ff.
- 14 Vid. Rosenthal, *op. cit.*, p. 11, footnotes 4, 5.
- 15 Vid. *CIS* II, no. 4094. At Palmyra this name is the equivalent of the name זבדלה; but our inscription may refer to Yehonathan or Mathithyahu. The name Θεόδωρος is common in Graeco-Jewish epigraphy.
- 16 The form אכשדרא is found beside אכסדרא = ἐξέδρα. the final sigma is always transliterated as Vid. Cantineau, *op. cit.*, pp. 43; 155–7.
- 17 Cf., e.g., אלכסדרס, דמס, אלקמס (Ἀλκιμος); and vid. Cantineau, *ibid.*
- 18 Cf. Cantineau, *ibid.*, p. 34.
- 19 \*Schwabe, *BJPES* 5 (1938), p. 83.
- 20 Vid. \**Sefer HaYishuv* I, p. 80, no. 1: "הקבר הזה של רב/יודן הכהן ברב"; *ibid.*, no. 2: "הדא קבורתא" "הקבר הזה של מליוש בת יהודה". Cf. also Frey, *CIJ* I, p. 474, no. 661: "דיוון ברה דרבי טרפון בירבי".
- 21 Vid. Cantineau, *Inventaire* IV, no. 27. The original form is found, in my opinion, also in an inscription on an ossuary from a Judeo-Palmyrene tomb near Jerusalem (vid. Klein, *Jud.-pal. Corpus Inscriptionum*, p. 30, no. 82): "דה קוקא (מ...)/קימו חבב/זיטר וסרה וברתה/חבל".
- 22 Vid. Cantineau, *Inventaire* VII, p. 15; Ingholt, *Berytus* 3, p. 104; *EDE* VI, p. 249. Vid. also Cantineau, *Grammaire du palmyrénien épigraphique*, p. 60.
- 23 Vid. Sukenik, *Ancient Synagogues in Palestine*, p. 71 and see also \*Ben-Haim, *BJPES* 13 (1946), p. 142.
- 24 Vid. \*Schwabe, *Sefer HaYishuv* I, pp. 170, 171.
- 25 Vid. R. du Mesnil du Buisson, *REE* II, 1936, p. XXI, no. 10.
- 26 Vid. \*Schwabe, *Kraus Jubilee Volume*, p. 80; p. 80; \**Sefer HaYishuv* VI, Jaffa, nos. 20, 62, 63; Sukenik, *The Ancient Synagogue of El-Hammeh*, p. 59.
- 27 Cf. the spelling מאכסימוס (Maximus) in Palmyrene, Goldmann, *Die palmyr. Personennamen*, p. 4.
- 28 Vid. Poznanski, *Schwartz-Festschrift*, p. 478.
- 29 Vid. \**Sefer HaYishuv* I, p. 80, Jaffa, nos. 1, 2, 3, 6 and 9.
- 30 Vid. Avi-Yonah, *QDAP* 3 (1933), p. 129.
- 31 Vid. Sukenik, *op. cit.* p. 49.
- 32 In the above book in footnote 29: no. ביריבי 3 and cf. no. 9 — BHPEBI.
- 33 Cf. to the inscription from Jaffa (\**Sefer HaYishuv* I, p. 80, no. 5): [מק]ום הציעתו שלעזר בן יהושע: מאמאום שלום שלום. Although the restoration of the first word is not certain, and [של]ום has suggested as an alternative.
- 34 Vid. Klein, *Jud.-pal. Corpus Inscriptionum*, p. 30: P. Joüon, *Syria* 19 (1938), pp. 186 ff.
- 35 Vid. parallel to "righteous, pious, faithful", was a fairly common expression of affection and was widely used to praise the deceased. Vid. S. Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine*, 1942, p. 72.
- 36 Vid. Ingholt, *Berytus* 3, pp. 106–7; Goldmann, *op. cit.*, p. 32; Rosenthal, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
- 37 For בית=בת, vid. Cantineau, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
- 38 Vid. Cantineau, *ibid.*, pp. 130, 147.
- 39 Vid. Sukenik, *The Ancient Synagogue of El-Hammeh*, p. 54.
- 40 Vid. \*Schwabe, *BJPES* 5 (1938), p. 87 ff.

- 41 Vid. Cantineau, *Inventaire* IV, p. 27. The usual version in Jewish inscriptions is שלום על, and so in the epitaph of Esther from the Zoar region: שלום שלום עלת (vid. \*Ben-Zvi, *BJPES* 10 [1943], p. 37; \*E. L. Sukenik *Kedem* 2, p. 86; rather than עלת, one should probably read עלה).
- 42 Vid. Klein, *op. cit.*, p. 37; Sukenik, *The Ancient Synagogue of El-Hammeh*, p. 48.
- 43 Vid. \*Ben-Zvi, *BJPES* 10 (1943). p. 35 ff.; \*Sukenik, *Kedem* 2, pp. 84–87.
- 44 Vid. \*Ben-Zvi, *op. cit.*, p. 37; and also \*Narkiss, *Coins of the Jews*, pp. 40, 58.
- 45 Vid. \*Schwabe, *BJPES* 5 (1938), pp. 94–95.
- 46 This name is written in Graeco-Jewish inscriptions as Ἀσθήρ or Ἐσθήρ. In an inscription from the Zoar region אסתר (vid. \*Ben-Zvi, *op. cit.*, p. 37).
- 47 Vid. Cantineau, *Inventaire* IV, pp. 4–5: אסתר. The more common form is אשתרא. Vid. also Rosenthal, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
- 48 Vid. Cantineau, *Grammaire du palmyrénien épigraphique*, the alphabetical table opp. p. 30.
- 49 For this addition, vid. Goldman, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
- 50 Vid. Cantineau, *op. cit.*, p. 140. And so already in the Judeo-Palmyrene inscription on an ossuary from Jerusalem: Klein, p. 30, no. 82.
- 51 Vid. Cantineau, *op. cit.*, p. 130.
- 52 Vid. Cantineau, *Inventaire* VIII, p. 10, no. 8.
- 53 Vid. Cantineau, *ibid.*, p. 9, no. 6; and also, Rosenthal, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
- 54 Vid. Goldman, *op. cit.*, pp. 10 f.; Rosenthal, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

## CHAPTER VI THE SMALL FINDS

In the catacombs of Beth She'arim, few items were found *in situ*, in comparison to the great number of burial places. This fact is easily understood when one remembers that most of the graves had been robbed by treasure seekers in ancient times or in the Middle Ages, especially during the Crusades. But in almost every burial spared by the plunderers, objects were found, mostly personal possessions. They had been placed there together with the dead, as was usual in the ancient world in general, including among Jews — a custom still practiced in the period of Talmud.<sup>1</sup> As an example, let us take the burial place in arcosolium 1 room I in hall A, catacomb no. 4; here we found a silver cosmetic spatula, a glass whirl, a copper ear-ring (*vid.* Fig. 25), and a fragment of a bronze bracelet (*vid. sup.*, p. 172) — all obviously a woman's possessions. Sometimes only a pottery jug (*vid. sup.*, p. 89) or a glass ointment flask (p. 173) was found. But there also were burials into which broken objects had intentionally been placed; concealed in one burial, in a depression especially prepared for them, there were two upper parts of glass flasks (*vid. sup.*, p. 123). In a pit burial, spared by the robbers, nothing was found except a single potsherd (p. 64). In some of the pits only bones and remnants of wooden coffins were found (*vid. sup.*, pp. 168 f.). In others there were twisted gold threads which apparently had been plaited into the hair of the deceased woman buried there in a wooden coffin.

Only a small portion of the items were found in the burial left intact by the tomb-robbers, or in disturbed burials. Most were found among the debris accumulated on the floors of the burial halls or in the corridors and courts. This, of course, made it difficult to conclude whether the various personal articles had been deposited for the use of the dead or whether they had been used by the visitors. This is so especially in relation to the lamps, for among the lamps found scattered in the burial rooms some must have been used by relatives of the dead during their visits; some had even been put in especially prepared recesses carved in the walls of the rooms (*vid. sup.*, pp. 67, 165). Two lamps were found to have been used as receptacles for the red paint used by the daubers of the inscriptions and drawings (no. 23 and 120 in the catalogue of finds). However, several of the burials had one or two lamps placed near the bones of the dead (p. 114). The articles used by visitors also includes a limestone bowl with traces of red paint, also apparently used as a receptacle (p. 101). It is not completely clear whether the broken iron key (no. 130 in the catalogue of finds), found on the floor of hall A in catacomb no. 6 was used by the visitors to lock the door, or whether it had been placed in

one of the burials, as was the custom in that period.<sup>2</sup>

The objects found in the necropolis are basically similar in quality to those found among the ruins of the city itself. The pottery and its dating at Beth She'arim, especially in the buildings uncovered in the area of the city, have been discussed briefly above (Chapter II, 2). A clearer picture of the pottery and glassware will be contained in a subsequent volume, dealing with the excavations conducted in the city proper. Most of the pottery and other objects belong to Period III, is, to the third and first half of fourth centuries C.E. In comparison, the finds that can positively be ascribed to Period II (the second and beginning of the third centuries) are few; and this is all the more so concerning Period I (mainly the Herodian period). Sherds that are clearly Byzantine (Period IV) were found in some burial halls. These are the halls which continued in use even after the middle of fourth century C.E., when burial ceased in most of the catacombs (as, for instance, halls I and J in catacomb no. 1). Some items from the Arab period were also found, especially from the period of the Crusades (Period V); they were found in several of the burial-halls of catacombs nos. 1 (halls G, J and L) and 3 (hall A). It is noteworthy that most of the pottery and glassware from the necropolis from Periods III and IV are incomplete and often of rough finish, a clear indication that they were of local production. We may also mention that many of the finds from the city and from the necropolis display are quite similar in style, technique and decorations. Consequently, we may conclude that much of the pottery and glass-ware was made locally. An example in point are the lamps with stylized leaf pattern, a great number of which were found (*vid.* Fig. 24). Indeed, during the excavations in the city proper,

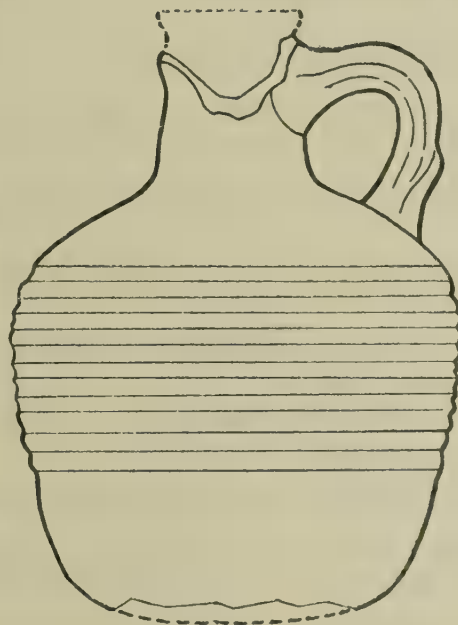


Fig. 20  
Ribbed jug (2:1)

a building was discovered which apparently was a workshop for the production of glassware. It was established in Period III and continued in use in Period IV.<sup>3</sup>

### Pottery

It has already been noted only few of the pottery objects found in the necropolis can positively be related to Periods I and II at Beth She'arim. Some pottery forms are reminiscent of those of the Late Hellenistic period. Some fragments of spindle bottles and juglets are of types common in the Herodian period.<sup>4</sup> Some two-handled pots, jugs and cups relate to the first and second centuries. All are made of levigated clay, fired hard and excelling in thinness. These vessels are ribbed, in most cases the ribbing being of the floating spiral type. Some *terra sigillata* ware was also found. Most was collected from the debris in the corridor and hall M of catacomb no. 1, and in catacombs nos. 6 and 11.

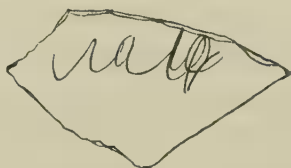


Fig. 21  
Ostracon in cursive Greek  
script

A majority of the pottery discovered in the catacombs is from Period III in Beth She'arim, that is, from the third century and the first half of the fourth century C.E. Typical for this period are the jugs with one handle and, usually, flaring rim and some have pinched mouths. The elliptical body is ribbed—generally the ribbing is deep, and the base is flat. The clay is usually levigated, the firing hard, and the color is light red or sometimes light grey (*vid.* Fig. 22, 4–5). The cylindrical jug with flat base is also typical; its dense ribbing covers the entire body and base (*vid.* Fig. 22, 6). Fragments of jugs with flaring and pinched rims were also found. The bodies are cylindrical, with high ribbing; they are typical of the third century.<sup>5</sup> There are also many fragments of two-handled pots, bowls, amphorae, flasks, goblets and cups. Most of these are ribbed and were used for ointments and cosmetics. Typical of this period and the next are the local wares, mostly plates of Eastern *terra sigillata* ware; they are sometimes decorated with incised ornaments and impressions made by a roulette. Only fragments have been found (*vid. sup.*, p. 35, n. 12), and one bears a cursive Greek inscription (Fig. 21; and *vid. sup.*, p. 156).

In the corridor and in halls I and J of catacomb no. 1 and also in catacomb no. 2, there was a great amount of pottery from Period VI, i.e., from the Byzantine period. The majority are ribbed vessels which differ from those of the previous period in their craftsmanship, the style

and in the roughness of their ribbing. Black potsherds with ornaments drawn in white paint, typical of the Late Byzantine period, were also found.

In catacombs no. 1 and 3, sherds from Period V were found. They include Arab sherds, some of them glazed, which had been left by visitors, shepherds and tomb robbers.

### Lamps

The lamps and lamp fragments found in the necropolis are of many shapes and forms. Most of them are of rough, brittle ware, with no decorations. Others are of clean, levigated clay, fired hard and decorated on the face and sometimes also on the base. In catacombs nos. 1 and 3 there were several lamp fragments which testify to a tradition stemming from the Herodian period; these are lamps with nozzles having curved extremities and elliptical wick holes, similar to the fragment found in hall B of catacomb no. 3 (*vid.* Fig. 22, 2). In catacomb no. 1 there were also a few fragments of round nozzled lamps, typical of the second century C.E. (*vid. sup.*, p. 34, note 7). Most of the lamps and lamp fragments, however, are of the type common in the third and fourth centuries, C.E., similar to those found in cave-tombs and other places whose date is corroborated by other finds.<sup>6</sup> Of great importance is the fact that some of the lamps (*vid.* Fig. 23, 3–6) and lamp fragments were preserved *in situ* in one of the kokhim in hall M of catacomb no. 1 (*vid. sup.*, p. 114). Most are of the type prevalent in the third century C.E. as at Beth Natif.<sup>7</sup> This lamp is rounded, the oil-hole small and decorated roundabout with a rosette (Fig. 23, 1, 5)<sup>8</sup> or with a gladiatorial contest (Fig. 23, 4).<sup>9</sup> The rounded nozzle has a round wick-hole; the base is decorated with two projecting, concentric circles with an incised branch in the middle (Fig. 24, 1)<sup>10</sup> or of three branches forming a semi-circle (Fig. 23, 3). These lamps have a knob-handle which is sometimes folded on top (Fig. 23, 5). Of a peculiar type is a lamp (Fig. 23, 6) which has an elongated stump nozzle and an elliptical wick-hole.

The type of lamp most commonly found at Beth She'arim is of the third century and the first half of the fourth century C.E. Some examples of this type are given in Fig. 24. Typical is the piriform lamp, or the lamp approaching the "slipper" type, which became prevalent in Palestine starting with the period of Constantine; these lamps do not yet have the "radial stroke" decoration so characteristic of the later types.<sup>11</sup> Typical is the decoration running around the border of the lamp. This is a kind of impressed palmettes pattern,<sup>12</sup> sometimes replaced by rosettes (Fig. 24, 6). Sometimes the base, too, is decorated with an impressed decoration of a rosette or palmette. Of special interest are the lamps represented in Fig. 24, 1 and 2. The first bears two impressed palmette patterns together with two horse-shoes within two concentric circles. The second



Fig. 22  
Lamps and various pottery  
found in the catacombs



Fig. 23

Lamps found in the catacombs

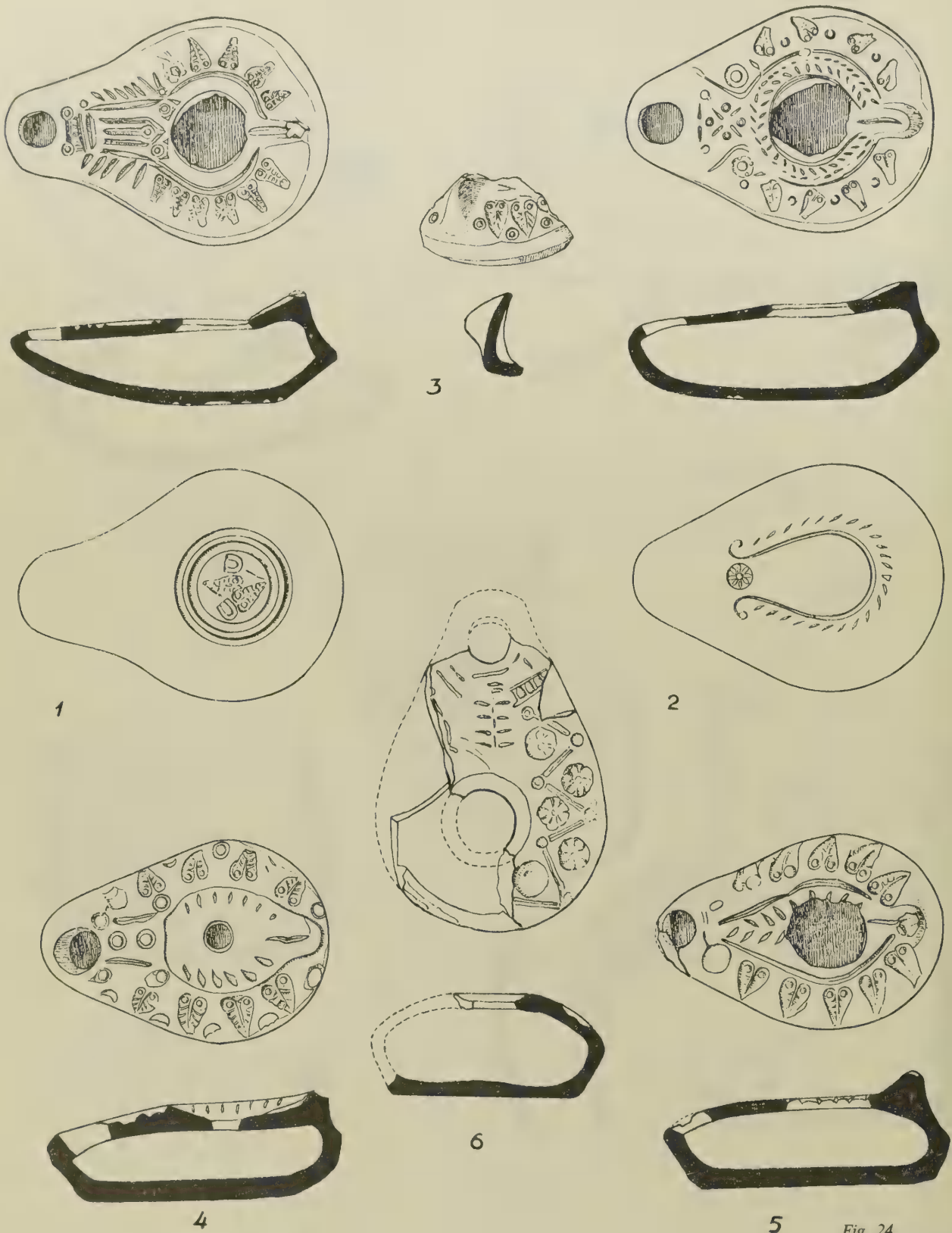


Fig. 24  
Lamps found in the catacombs

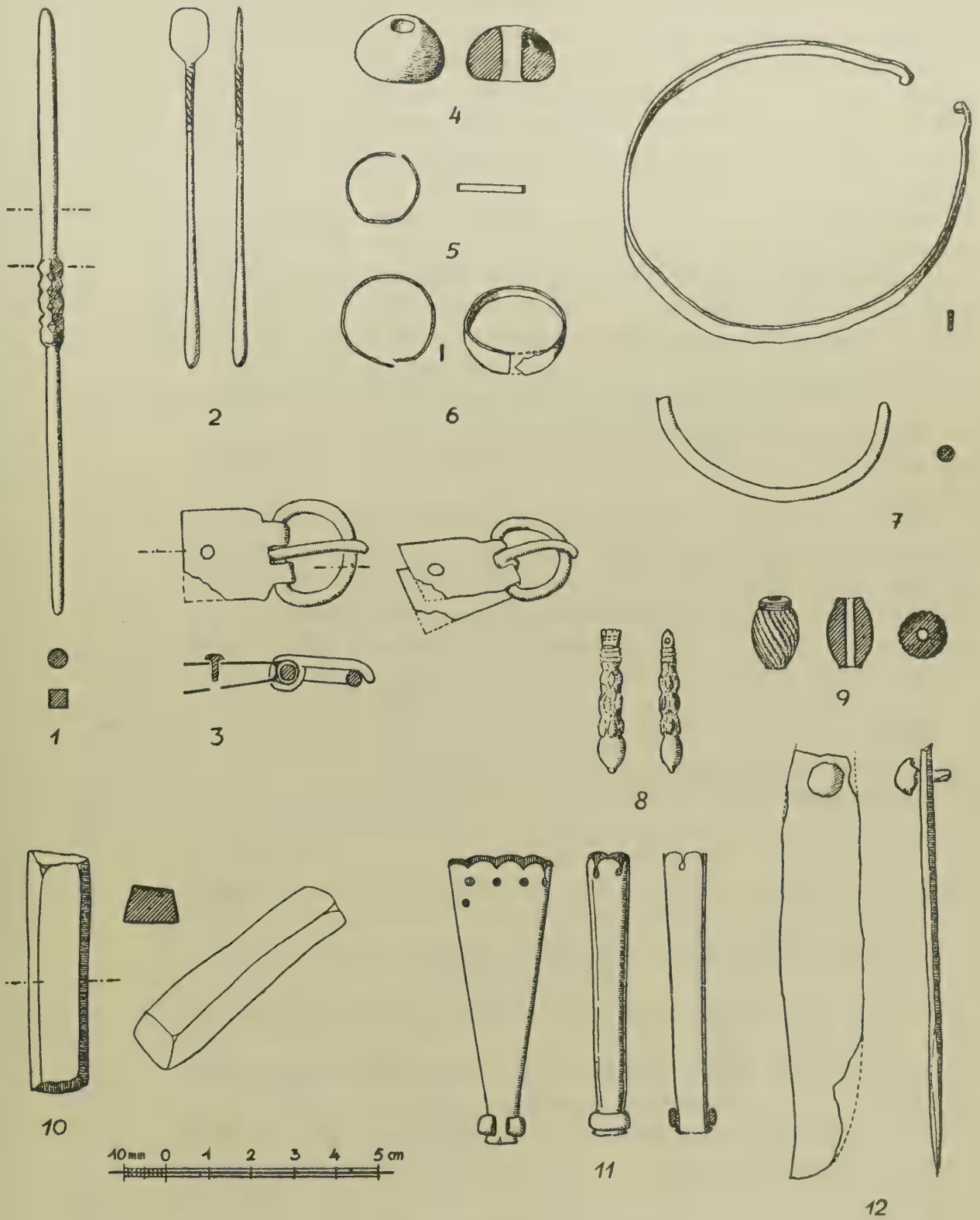


Fig. 25  
 Various finds from the  
 catacombs

has a spiral decoration and a rosette. It is noteworthy that none of these lamps was found *in situ*, though most are from ancient halls which were not used for burial after Period III at Beth She'arim, such as hall C in catacomb no. 4 (Fig. 24, 5) or hall A in catacomb no. 6 (Fig. 24, 1). One of the lamps (Fig. 24, 4) was found near the threshold of room I in hall C of catacomb no. 2 (*vid. sup.*, p. 156). Many lamps and lamp fragments of this type were found in the area of the city ruins, especially in the synagogue. It would seem, then, that they were made in local workshops. Another type, also common in the third and fourth centuries, C.E. is the large lamp with wide, straight nozzle, slightly rounded at the end, with an oversized wick-hole, projecting knob handle, and rounded base (Fig. 22, 3).<sup>13</sup> To the first half of the fourth century belong the fragments of a piriform lamp decorated with hatching and dots, found in hall E of catacomb no. 1 (Fig. 24, 2). Only a few lamp fragments, found in the corridor and hall J of catacomb no. 1, and not *in situ*, belong to Period IV. Among them we should mention lamps of the slipper type and those decorated with a tree and strokes, i.e., lamps relating to the Byzantine period.

Period V (the Arab period), is represented by a lamp fragment of the pinched bowl type, found in hall L (*vid. sup.*, p. 108), and fragment of another lamp with a handle folded on top and decorated geometric designs, found in hall J of catacomb no. 1. We may also mention a complete lamp (no. 91 in catalogue of finds) typical of the early Arab period,<sup>14</sup> found in hall A of catacomb no. 3 (*vid. sup.*, p. 158).

### Glassware

The few intact glass items and the many glass fragments found in the catacombs relate in part to Period III, that is, to the third and fourth centuries C.E. Most are quite thin, fine and transparent; they differ from Byzantine ware not only in these aspects, but also in the sparseness of applied thread decoration. Only few glass objects were found well preserved mostly in catacombs nos. 6 and 11.

The crude form of most of the articles points to their having been produced locally, blown or moulded in workshops at Beth She'arim.<sup>15</sup> The moulded vessels are distinguished by their thickness; some are decorated with various designs.

Very typical are the small cosmetic and perfumed vessels, with narrow, elongated necks to prevent rapid evaporation, and flat or pointed bases. These vessels sometimes are square, with indentations in their sides. They are blue or greenish in color, or sometimes silver, with a black patina.

In hall C of catacomb no. 2 (*vid. sup.*, p. 156), there also were fragment of a double unguentarium i.e., a double flask with two handles and decorated with glass threads—a type common to the third and

fourth centuries. It was most probably used as a receptacle for two different kinds of scent.<sup>16</sup> Among the other glass objects, of which only fragments were preserved, we may mention candlestick bottles, two-handled bowls, tall goblets and cylindrical flasks, mostly without handles, and a glass spindle whorl (Fig. 25, 4). A thorough description of the glass articles discovered at Beth She'arim will be given in volume on the excavations within the city proper.

### Metalware

First we should mention a small silver spatula (Fig. 25, 2), most certainly used for removing cosmetics or other ointments from high-necked flasks. Noteworthy also is a bronze "kohl" stick (Fig. 25, 1); it is decorated at the middle with a series of cubes. This stick was found in hall G of catacomb no. 1. The rings and earrings (Fig. 25, 5–6) found in the catacombs are of copper, as are the bracelets (Fig. 25, 7). A belt-buckle of bronze (Fig. 25, 3) was found in a burial in hall C of catacomb no. 4; similar belt-buckles have been found in burials of the Roman and Byzantine periods.<sup>17</sup>

As for iron, we must first mention knife blades of the type prevalent in the Roman period. In hall G of catacomb no. 1, there was a blade with a perforation, still containing an iron rivet (Fig. 25, 12).<sup>18</sup> In addition there was an iron hook, wrought so as to form a loop at its end. The nature of this object is as yet unclear. A fragment of a key was also found (*vid. sup.*, p. 210).

Twisted gold threads were found in a pit burial in hall E of catacomb no. 3; they most probably had been plaited into the hair or braids of a woman (*vid. sup.*, p. 167).<sup>19</sup> A small (7 cm long) lead cylinder, found in a burial in hall A of catacomb no. 2. (*vid. sup.*, p. 199) had apparently been used as a scroll sheath.<sup>20</sup>

### Coins

Only a few coins were found in the catacombs. A bronze coin, worn and corroded, which was found in hall C of catacomb no. 2, dates apparently from the time of Trajan (*vid. sup.*, p. 155). A somewhat worn coin of Valerian was found in the corridor of catacomb no. 4 (*vid. sup.*, p. 171). On its obverse appears the emperor's bust, with the legend: *SALON VALERIANVS NOB CAFS*; on the reverse are figures of the emperor and of the goddess of Hope holding a flower in her hand, with the inscription *SPES PVBLICA*.<sup>21</sup> A bronze coin from a burial in hall A of catacomb no. 4 (*vid. sup.*, p. 173) is too worn to permit identification. Two other bronze coins were found on catacomb no. 6: one is of E. Cagabalus (218–222 C.E.), minted in Acre; the other is of Maximianus Hercules (286–305 C.E.). All three positively identified coins are of the third century C.E.

## Various Finds

A limestone bowl with traces of red paint in it, has been mentioned above (p. 210). In several of the burial halls there were small objects of jewelry, such as a mother-of-pearl pendant (Fig. 25, 8) and a bone bead (Fig. 25, 9). Also interesting is a rectangle of antimony, found in hall M of catacomb no. 1 (Fig. 25, 10); it most probably had been used for cosmetics.

The lower part of a bronze scabbard (Fig. 25, 11),<sup>22</sup> found in hall G of catacomb no. 1 is of the Crusader period. We have already mentioned (p. 87) that Crusaders visited this hall, and it evidently was they who left it behind.

## NOTES

1 For the Talmudic sources which mention the depositing of articles in tombs, vid. \*G. Alon, *BJPES* 8 (1941), pp. 111–112.

2 For this custom, vid. \*S. Yeivin, *BJPES* 8 (1941), pp. 22 ff.; G. Alon, *ibid.*, pp. 107 ff.

3 Vid. \**BJPES* 9 (1942), pp. 16–17.

4 Such as the articles from Ramat Rachel, in \**Mazie Memorial Volume*, p. 28 and pl. D, 1–2, 7: p. 70, Fig. H; \*P. Kahana, *Yohanan Levi Volume*, 1949, pp. 91 ff.

5 Such as the jar pictured in *QDAP* 5 (1935), pl. III, 5 (from Beth Natif). Interesting comparative material was found in a third century tomb in the neighborhood of Amman; vid. G.L. Harding, *QDAP* 14 (1952), pl. XXV–VI. (On the jar in figure 20 see p. 60).

6 Vid. especially Iliffe, *QDAP* 3 (1932) p. 48; 4 (1934) pp. 177–8.

7 Vid. Baramki, *QDAP* 5 (1935), p. 7 & pls. VI, VII, XI. Cf. also Waage, *apud* G.W. Elderkin, *Antioch-on-the-Orontes* I, pl. X, no. 700 & pp. 65–66.

8 This motif is common on the lamps of the period; vid. Baramki, *ibid.*, pl. VI, 7; Macalister, *Gezer* III, pl. LXXXII, 13; Horsfield, *QDAP* 9 (1939), pls. XXI, 62; XLV, 429; and vid. also the lamp fragment, Fig. 22, 1, found in hall G of catacomb no. 1.

9 Cf. Baramki, *op. cit.*, pl. VI, 1.

10 A similar decoration was found on a lamp from the fourth century; Iliffe, *QDAP* 3 (1933) p. 87, Fig. 16.

11 Cf. Iliffe, *QDAP* 4 (1934), pp. 177–8.

12 A similar design was found on a lamp from the fourth century. Iliffe, *QDAP* 3 (1933), p. 86, Fig. 11, though it is inferior in execution.

13 As to the form and decoration, vid. Macalister, *Gezer* III, pl. CXI; Makhoully, *QDAP* 8 (1938), pl. XXX, 2c. 16; and especially Iliffe, *QDAP* 4 (1934), pp. 177–8 & pl. LXXXVI, 2, nos. 6, 13.

14 Lamps of the same type (Hamilton, *QDAP* 10, [1941], p. 49, Fig. 23, no. 29) and similar ones were found at Khirbet el-Mefjer; Baramki, *QDAP* 10 (1941) pl. XVII–XVIII.

15 Vid. above, pp. 211 f. for the glass workshop found among the ruins of the city. We may mention that crucibles for melting glass were found, some containing lumps of glass.

16 Cf., e.g. Macalister, *Gezer* III, pls. CII, 139; CXIII, 19. A brush is occasionally found in vessel; vid. Iliffe, *QDAP* 4 (1934), pl. LXXXV, 3.

17 Vid., e.g. Makhoully, *QDAP* 8 (1938), pl. XXXI.

18 Cf. Macalister, *Gezer* III, pl. XCVI.

19 Vid. S. Yeivin, *apud* Waterman, *Preliminary Report upon the Excavations at Tel Umar* II, p. 49.

20 Cf. Waterman, *ibid.*, I, p. 61 & pl. XII, 2. This sort of cylinder with remnants of papyrus within it was found also among the ruins of the city, and vid. *BJPES* 9 (1944), p. 17.

21 Cf. A. Alföldi, *Berytus*, 4 (1937), pl. XII, 1–3 & pp. 45 ff. The coin was apparently minted in the East.

22 Cf. Johns, *QDAP* 5 (1935), p. 50, Fig. 16, no. 10.

## APPENDIX

### 1 Openings and Doors

From the detailed description of the burial halls in catacombs nos. 1 to 4 we learn that most of the door-frames were preserved *in situ*, in many cases with the door still on its hinges. The door-frames and the doors are of limestone or a harder stone. In one of the halls in catacomb no. 7 there was a heavy basalt door, certainly quarried at a considerable distance.

In the description of the halls, especially in catacomb no. 1, the manner in which door-frames were assembled and the doors affixed to them, as well as the carvings decorating the doors, lintels, and door-posts, have been presented in great detail, (*vid. sup.*, p. 45). We may add that most of the doors are decorated in relief, imitating the decorations of wooden doors. Typical is the projecting vertical strip dividing the door lengthwise into two roughly equal panels. The decorations in each panel are of two different types, consisting mostly of imitations of studs and sunken panels, as often found on wooden doors (*vid. Pls.*, V, 4; XXV, 1; *sup.*, pp. 45, 73, 75). The sunken panels alone are characteristic of another type of door (*vid. Pl. III, 3*). Very common is the type with decorated

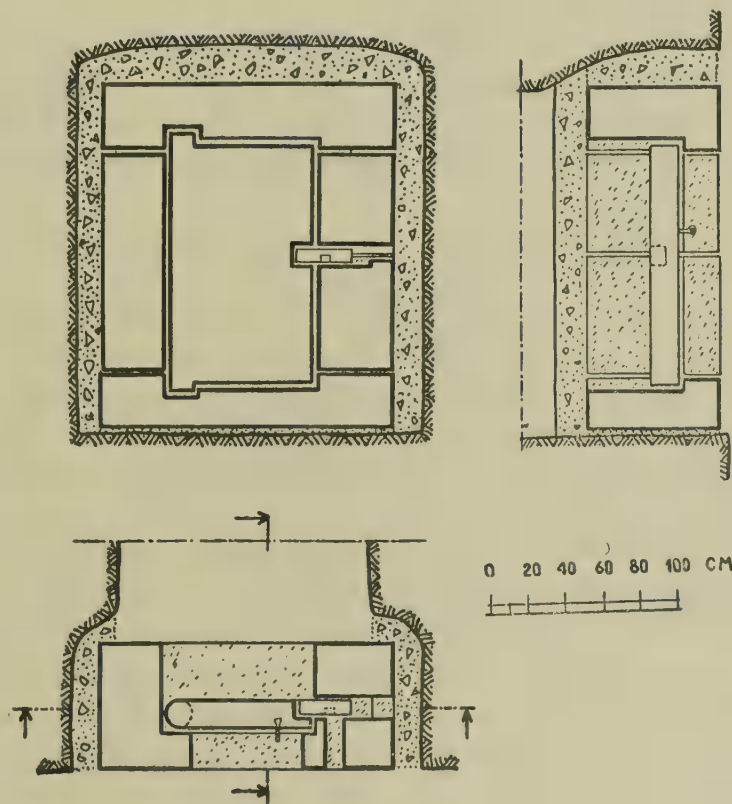


Fig. 26  
Doorway to hall, the door  
and its lock

panels on either side of the vertical strip, containing geometrical patterns such as triangles and squares, symmetrically arranged, sometimes with a circle, rosette or X-shaped pattern (*vid.* Pls., XXIV, 2–3; XXXI, 1; XXXVI, 1; *sup.*, pp. 162, 171). The doors sometimes are smooth and divided lengthwise into two rectangles by an equally smooth vertical strip (*vid. sup.*, p. 58); in other cases the doors are left plain (*vid.* Pl. V, 2; *sup.*, p. 128), or have an imitation knocker (*vid. sup.*, pp. 73, 87).

The door which turns on hinges, opens into the hall, and was shut by pulling a ring attached to an iron eye on the front, close to a depression made for the bolt. The eye was set in a small hole cut in through door (*vid.*, e.g., Pl. XXXVI, 1). It was made fast in the door frame and locked with a key.

In many of the halls, the doors seem to have been kept locked (*vid. sup.*, p. 132), each entrance having its own key. Of special interest are the bolts which have been preserved, especially in catacombs nos. 6 and 11. The bolt consisted of a small, rectangular stone bar, with one (or several) holes into which a key could be inserted through a key-hole cut in through outer face of the door post. The bolt was set within a groove carved horizontally on the inner side of the door at the joint of the two stones of which it was built (*vid.* Fig. 26). The latter was locked by the key, which slid the bolt along the groove till its end was inserted into a corresponding socket cut into the door.

## 2 Wooden Coffins and Ossuaries

In many of the burial places, remnants of wooden coffins and ossuaries were found. These include nails, iron angles and bits of wood. An even larger number of nails and iron and bronze angles (*vid. sup.*, p. 188) were found among the debris in the burial-halls and the corridors of the catacombs.

It is quite certain that at Beth She'arim it was the custom first to bury the dead in wooden coffins (primary burial), and then to transfer the bones to wooden ossuaries (secondary burial; see above p. 135). Remains of one of the large coffins, found in a pit-burial in catacomb no. 3, hall E, were in a condition permitting its reconstruction (*vid.* Pl. XXX, 5; *sup.*, p. 169). This type of coffin (or similar types) was deposited in some of the burial places such as in pit burial  $\beta$  in room I, and in arcosolium 2 of room II, in hall C of catacomb no. 1; (*vid. sup.*, pp. 63–64), kokhim (as in *c* in room I, and *b* in room IV, both in hall M of catacomb no. 1). and pit burials (*vid. sup.*, pp. 167, 188). There is no doubt, however, that a considerable number of burial places were intended for smaller coffins, or rather ossuaries. It is interesting to note that similar iron nails, indications of wooden ossuaries, were found in Jewish cave-tombs at Jerusalem, dating to the end of the Second Temple period.<sup>1</sup> We may also note Greek inscription no. 111: "Magna lies in an ossuary," found

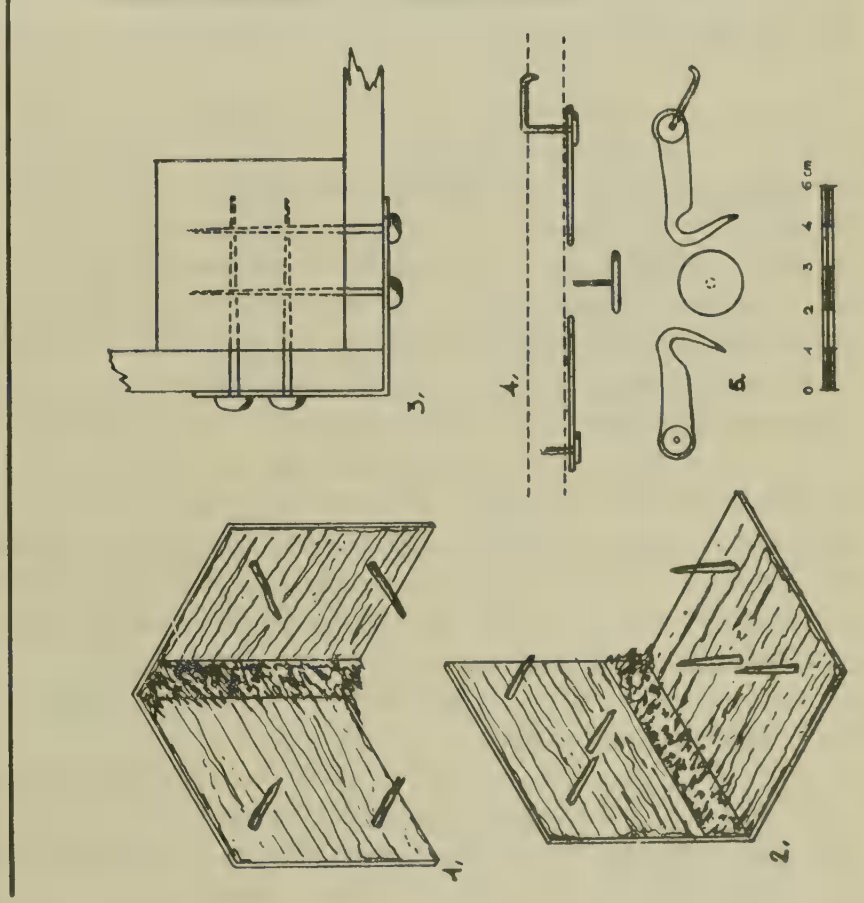
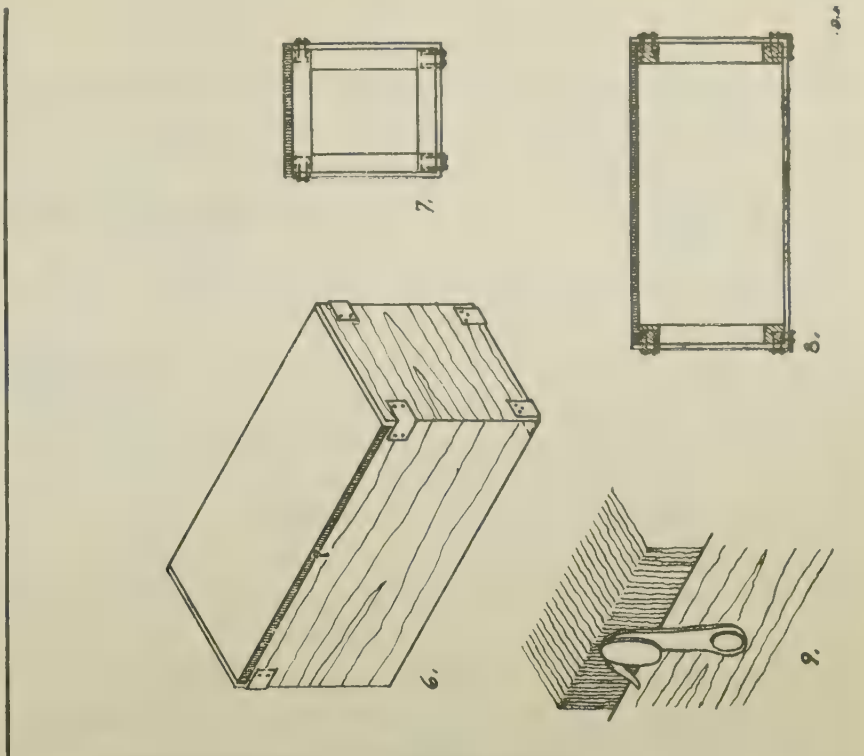
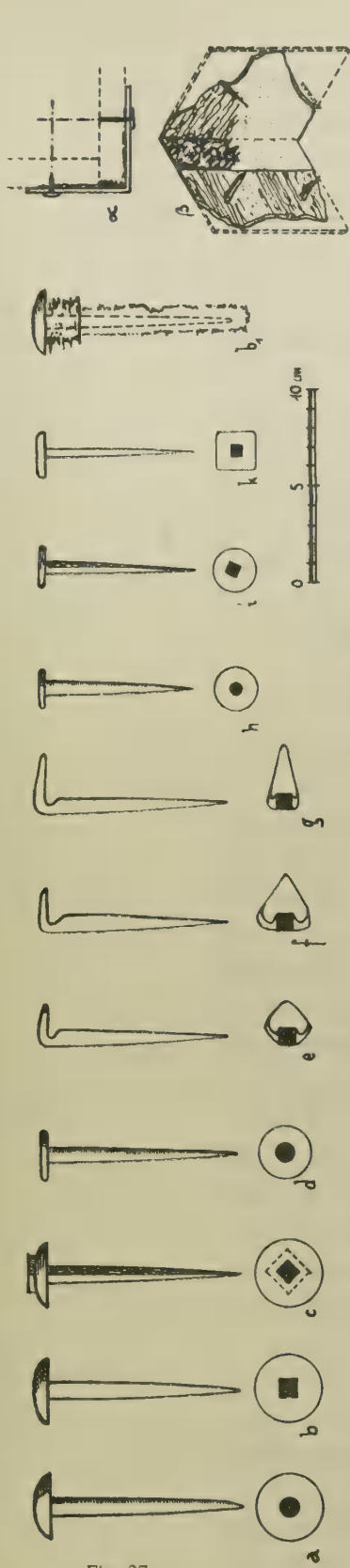


Fig. 27  
Nails from the ossuaries;  
reconstruction of an ossuary  
and its furnishings (see  
Appendix II)

written on the wall of an arcosolium in hall P of catacomb no. 1. In one of the burials of the same hall there were fragments of iron angles and nails (*vid. sup.*, p. 130). In addition, in catacomb no. 11 there were a stone lid and fragments of a stone ossuary, probably used for gathering bones (*vid. sup.*, p. 135).

At Beth She'arim no burials have been found with remains of ossuaries preserved *in situ*. This explains why their exact dimensions are not known. But from the few less-disturbed burials containing angles and nails, the following could be determined: a. the length of the burials does not exceed 1.50–1.60 m., indicating that they could not have been used for larger coffins; b. the angles and nails are smaller than those used in the larger coffins. Sometimes a collection of bones was found in the center of the burial, with remains of an ossuary scattered around it (*vid. e.g., sup.*, pp 129–130). The various types and lengths of nails are clearly shown in fig. 27. There are also differences in the size and thickness of the angles. In general, however, the main difference between the ossuaries and the coffins seems merely to have been a matter of size.

The late J. Pinkerfeld attempted to reconstruct the ossuaries on the basis of the material discovered (Fig. 27; drawings 6–8 show the reconstruction with cross-sections). The ossuaries seem to differ from the coffins in the characteristic manner in which the bottom angles are affixed; in the ossuaries the bottom boards are fastened to the shorter sides, and not to the long boards as in the coffins (Pl. XXX, 5, Fig. 12). This is evidenced by the direction of the wooden fibers preserved inside the angles of the ossuaries. The latter most probably did not have bases like those on the large coffins. The lids seem to have been attached to the ossuaries by hooks which turned on a nail driven into the side of the ossuary. Two bronze hooks of this kind were found in a burial place in catacomb no. 4, hall C, together with nails and iron angles (*vid. Fig. 27, 4–5*); one of the hooks turned to the right, the other to the left. They probably had been fastened to the lid of the ossuary by bronze nails with large heads, one of which was discovered in the debris of hall C.

Finally, we may mention the small nails and iron or bronze plaques found in several halls. They had probably been used in various fixtures attached to the coffins or ossuaries.

### 3 Mugharet-el-Jehennem

In our survey of the necropolis of Beth She'arim, special attention was paid to a destroyed, open catacomb located south of catacomb no. 1, and known by the Arabic name of Mugharet el-Jehennem (*vid. sup.*, pp. 21 and 27). The representatives of the Palestine Exploration Fund who visited here in 1872 superficially examined, and even published the plan of, the sizeable burial hall of this catacomb, discovered after part of its ceiling had caved in close to the entrance (*vid. fig. 4*).

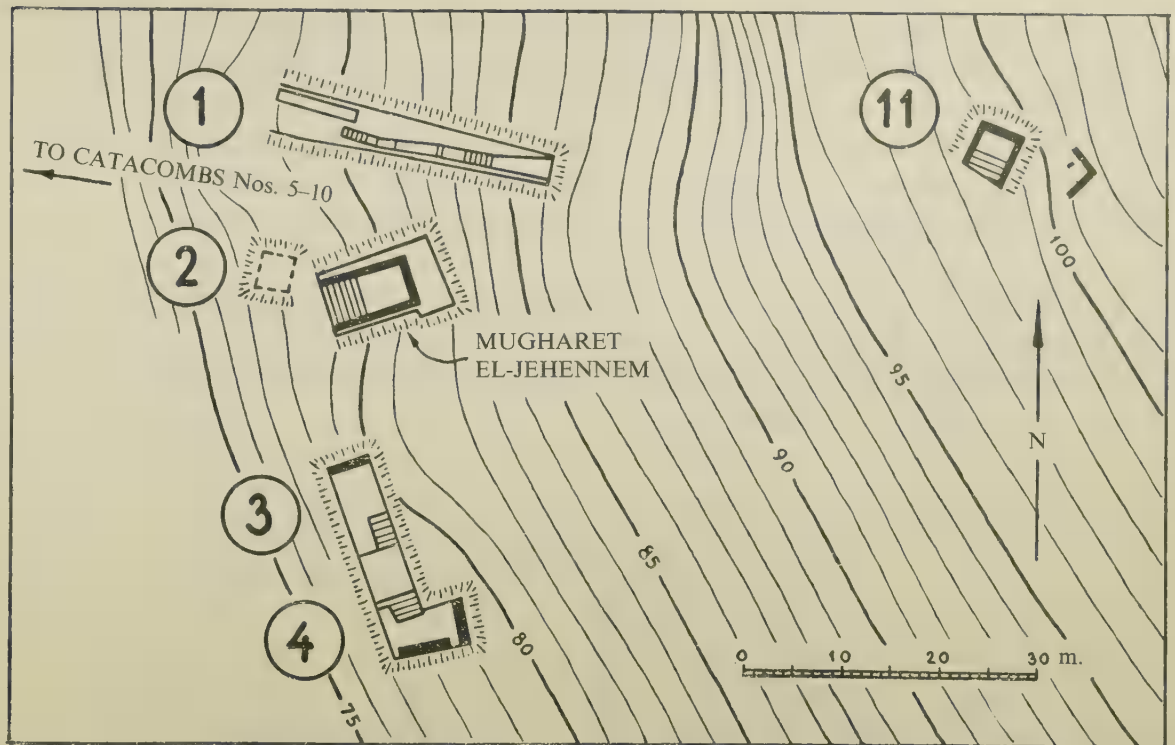


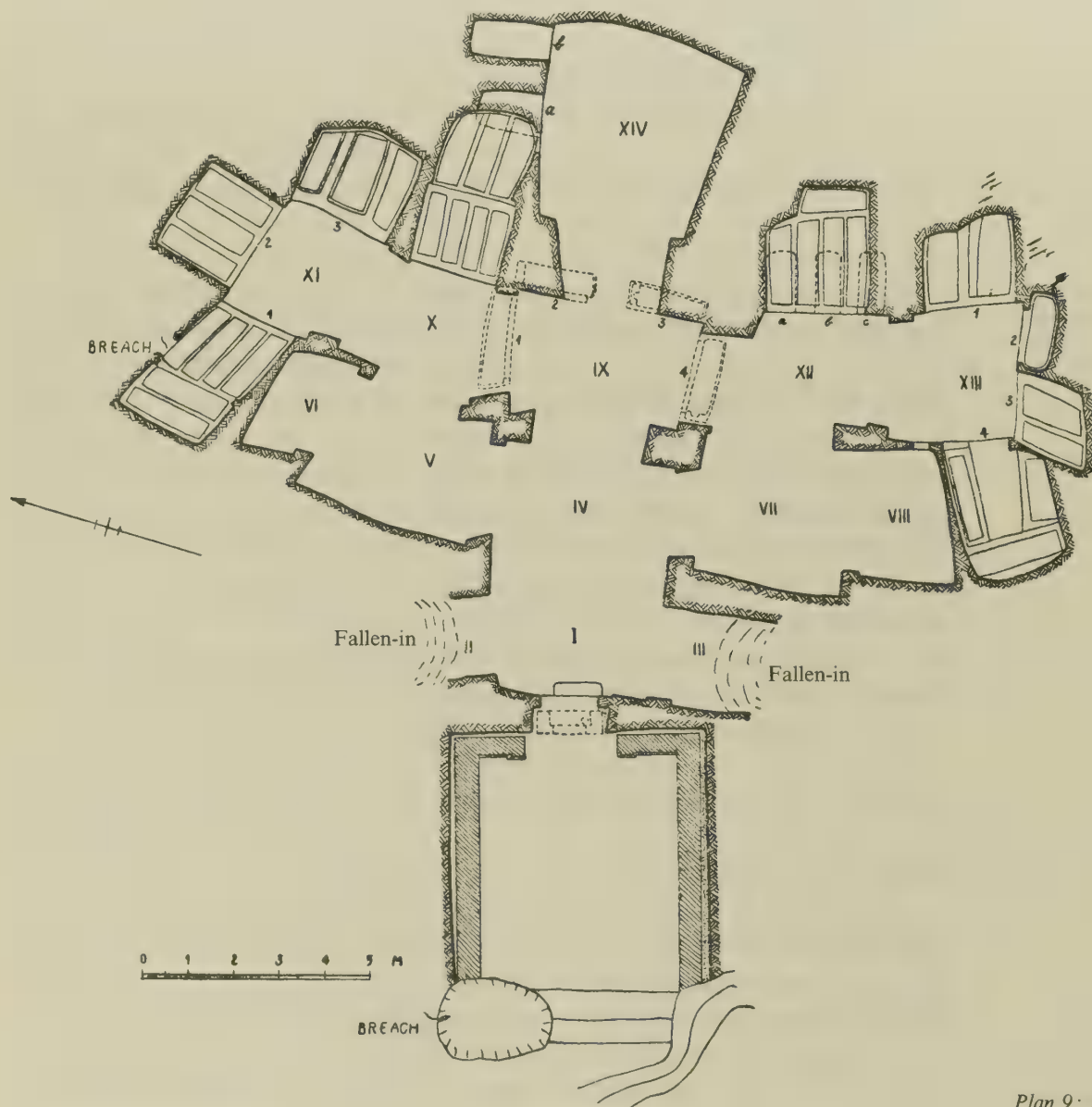
Fig. 28  
Catacombs on the western  
slope of the hill of Beth  
She'arim

During recent excavations, this catacomb was examined by teams of the Israel Exploration Society; in the summer of 1956, the main part of the burial hall and the court were cleared, but because of the considerable debris filling several of the rooms, work was not completed (*vid.* Plan 9). The plan of Mugharet el-Jehennem differs from those of adjacent catacombs nos. 1-4, but is similar to the plans of catacombs nos. 6 and 11.<sup>2</sup> It includes a square court and a single burial hall hewn into its back wall. A wide flight of steps, built on rock-cut steps, leads into the court, which lies below the surface. The walls of the court, faced with regular courses of ashlar up to the rock surface,<sup>3</sup> and an arch resting on pillars with capitals and bases, located on the facade of the entrance to the hall, opposite the flight of stairs, seem to have adorned the court, as in the courts of catacombs nos. 6 and 11 (*vid.* Pl. XXII, 2). Only one of the stones of the arch was preserved *in situ*, most of the others being found in the heaps of debris in the court and in the hall. Here also were found stones of the door frame, which was completely destroyed when the ceiling collapsed.

The burial hall is similar to, and even larger than, the large halls discovered in the upper part of catacomb no. 1 (*vid.* Plan 5; p. 50). It includes four rooms hewn in a row (I, IV, IX and XIV); the first three served as central rooms, with arched passages leading to burial rooms on the right and left. Some of the rock-hewn arches seem to rest on pillars. Only a few burial places were found in the fourteen rooms, and

only the side rooms X–XI and XII–XIII are burial chambers of the usual type, with arcosolia cut in their walls. In room XII there were three kokhim hewn one beside the next in the wall beneath the shelf of the arcosolium. In contrast, no burial places were found in rooms V–VI and VII–VIII, and in the large room XIV there are only two kokhim. It is obvious that the latter rooms were used for the storage of coffins or ossuaries, simply placed on the floor.

From a decorative point of view, central room IX is of special interest; in three of its walls the arcosolia are hewn above the arches of the passages, at a great height above the floor: an arcosolium above



Plan 9: Mugharet el-Jehennet

the passage to room X, another above the passage to room XII, and two arcosolia hewn above the passage to room XIV (*vid.* Plan 9).

There are few graffiti and reliefs in this hall, but they constitute an important addition to the collection of ornaments and decorations found in the other catacombs. First we may mention the two ships, represented on the western wall of room I to the right of the entrance to the hall; one is lightly incised to the right, below the capital of a pillar carved in relief and which seems to support the arch of the passage from room I to room II (Pl. XXIII, 1). The second is more deeply incised in the wall, between the pillar and the hall entrance (Pl. XXIII, 2). The first is the common type of coaster drawn from the side, with sail and steering oars, and a large jar, on deck; this latter may hint at it having been used for the transport of wine or oil. Such vessels may well have been employed in the long-distance transportation of the bones of deceased persons being conveyed for burial at Beth She'arim. (*vid.* p. 138).

The second depiction is more interesting. This ship, too, drawn in profile and, like in other boats at Beth She'arim, the deck and keel are represented by curves running from prow to stern. This clearly is a vessel of some capacity strongly constructed, with a large sail and several cabins on deck. Interesting also are the flat at the prow and the two steering oars at the stern. This ship is similar to the large sailing craft incised on a wall in catacomb no. 10,<sup>4</sup> and has various parallels in Roman and Byzantine art.<sup>5</sup>

Among the decorations in this hall we may also note a panel carved in relief on the eastern wall of room III; it is divided into squares of equal size each decorated with a different geometric design (Pl. XXIII, 3). There is also a menorah carved in high relief on the right (southern) wall of the passage between rooms I and IV; its branches are very blurred, though the stem is well preserved.

One of the most important finds in this hall is an Arabic inscription in black ink, on the eastern wall of room III, to the left of the panel (Pl. XXIII; 4). This eleven-line inscription, written in cursive script, is an elegy; the three last lines contain the signature of the writer and the date: A.H. 287, i.e., 900 C.E.<sup>6</sup>

In summing up the results of the excavations at Mugharet el-Jehennem, one must first emphasize that its plan is quite similar to those of catacombs nos. 6 and 11. The quality of the masonry in the court and the nature of the burial hall (i.e. no regard for economy of space), as well as the corpus of decorative motif, allow us to date the beginning of quarrying here to a relatively early period, probably the beginning of the third century C.E. We may assume that the hall was enlarged by stages, and that the rooms with arcosolia hewn in their walls were later added to it. It is difficult to determine exactly when burial here ceased, though there is reason to assume that it was abandoned after the first half of the fourth

century, C.E. Mugharet el-Jehennem seems to have been visited often during the Arab period, as especially indicated by the Arabic inscription of the year 900 C.E. mentioned above.

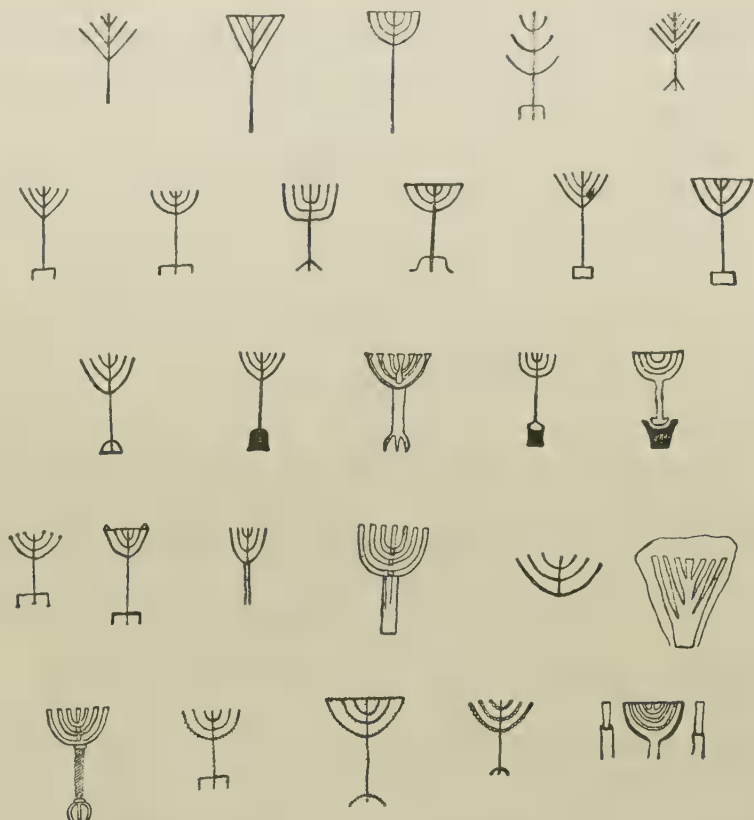


Fig. 29  
Types of Menorahs in the  
catacombs

#### NOTES

1 Vid. Clermont-Ganneau *ARP* I, p. 414; \*Sukenik, *Tarbiz* 1. (1930), pl. 3; \*Maisler and Stekelis, *Mazie Memorial Volumes*, p. 14-30. As for the nails found in one of the kokhs in a cave-tomb at Ramat Rachel, Stekelis assumed (*ibid.*) that they may have been a decoration for the leather band with which the dead was girded; in my opinion, however, they are remains of ossuaries.

2 Vid. \**BJPES* 5 (1938), pp. 58-61; 9 (1941), pp. 17-18.

3 On the facing of the walls in the courtyards of the catacombs with ashlar, a custom prevalent in Jerusalem at the end of the Second Temple period, vid. \*M. Cohen, *Tombs of the Kings*, 1947, pp. 42-43.

4 Vid. \**BJPES* 4 (1937), p. 118, Fig. 2.

5 Mr. A. Ben-Eli, Director of the Maritime Museum in Haifa, is now studying the depictions of the boats and ships found at Beth She'arim.

6 Vid. \*U. Ben-Horin, *BIES* 21 (1957), pp.





**PLATE I**



*1. Excavations on the northeast slope of the hill; looking south*  
*2. Catacombs nos. 1-4 (left to right) on the western slope of the hill, during excavations; looking east*

**The Catacombs:  
General View**



1. Catacombs nos. 7 (left), 6 (center) and 8 (right) on the hill northwest of Beth She'arim; looking north
2. Sheik's tomb ("weli") on the southern part of the hill; looking south

**The Catacombs:  
General View**

**PLATE III**

1. *Front part of the corridor ;  
looking west*
2. *Front part of the corridor  
and the entrances to halls A  
(near the stairs in the  
background) and C (in  
front) ; looking west. Note  
the Menorah incised above  
the entrance*



3. *Entrances to halls G  
(top left), I (below it), H  
(top right), J (below it),  
and L (top center), and the  
stairs leading to the upper  
corridor ; looking east*

**Corridor of Catacomb no. 1**

PLATE IV



*View from entrance on west  
(after excavation)*

**Corridor of Catacomb no. 1**

PLATE V



2



1

3



4



1. Entrances to halls C (left) and D (right), and the stairs leading to halls E and F; looking east (during excavation). Note the stone-built buttress.
2. Same, after excavation
3. Entrances to halls N (right), O (left) and P (center); looking east
4. Entrance to hall N

Corridor of Catacomb no. 1



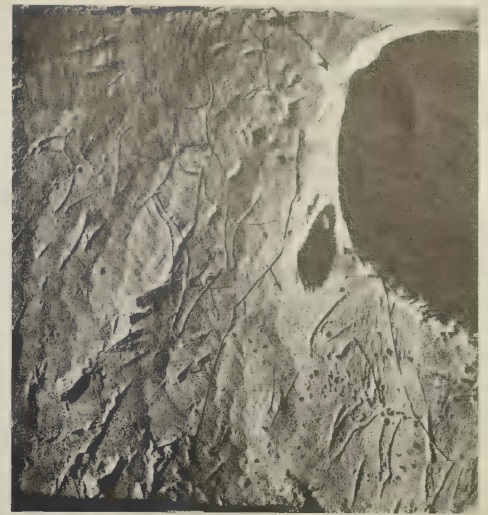
*Marble plaque with incised Hebrew inscription (no. 23) affixed on the wall of the corridor, above the entrance; on the door lintel is a Greek inscription (no. 24)*

**Entrance to Hall G in  
Catacomb no. 1**

PLATE VII



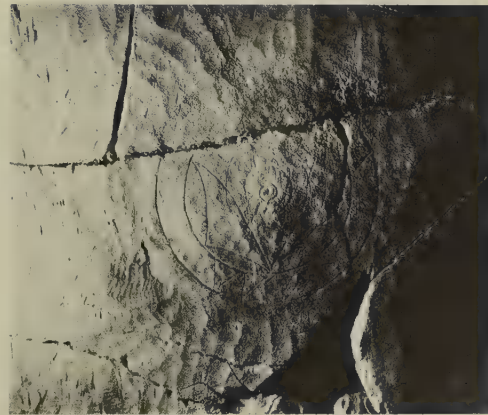
1



2



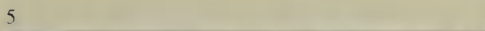
3



4



6



5

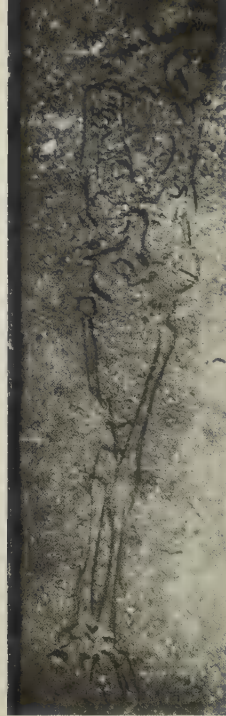


1. View of the hall from the entrance
2. Graffiti on the vault of arcosolium 2, room I
3. Graffiti and a Greek inscription (no. 6) on the wall of the same arcosolium
4. Graffito on the ceiling of room I
5. Low relief of arcades on the wall of the passageway from room I to room II
6. Greek inscription (no. 9)

Hall A in Catacomb no. 1



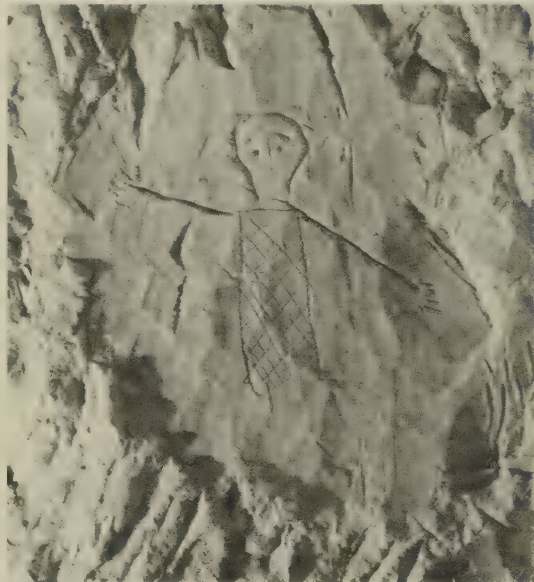
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2



5



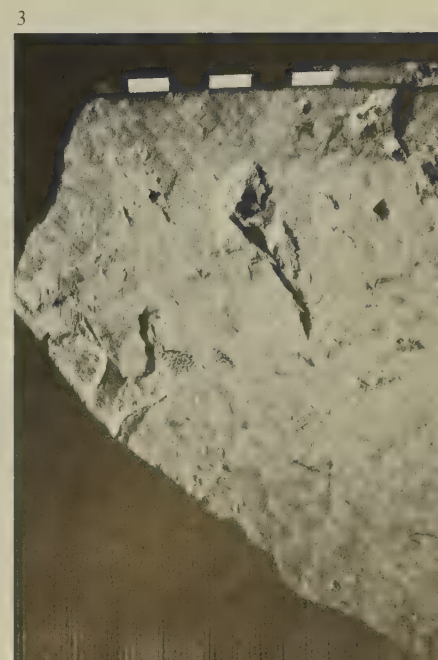
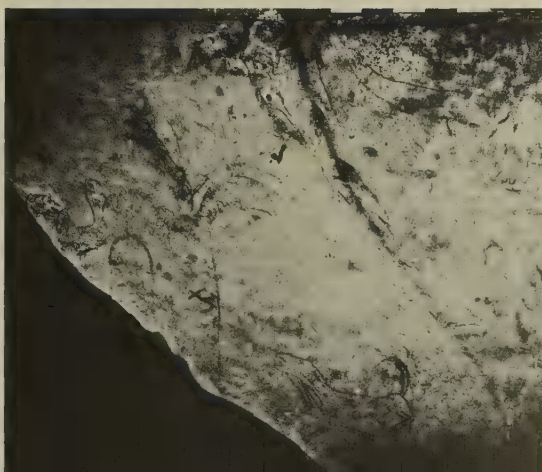
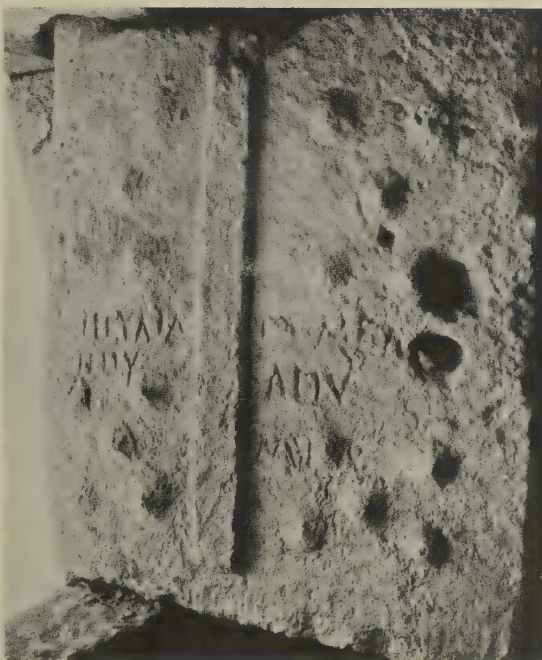
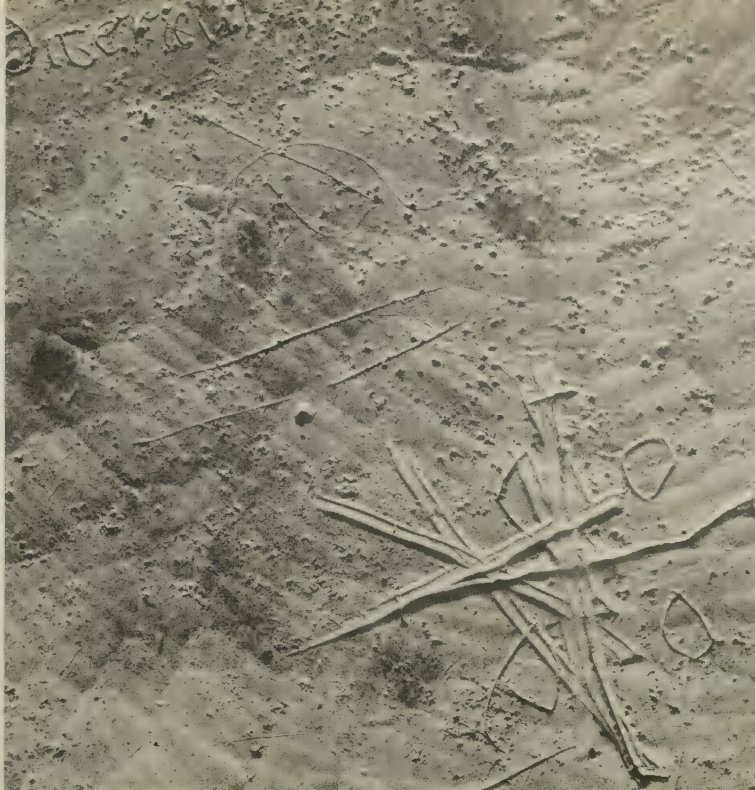
3



4

1. View of the hall from the entrance
2. Skeleton discovered in a pit-burial seen in 1
3. Graffito on the vault of arcosolium 1, room I
4. Palmyrene inscription (no. 12) above the same arcosolium
5. Greek inscription (no. 11) on the door of the hall

PLATE IX



1. Graffito and inscription (Ditericus) on the ceiling of Room II, hall E
2. Door of hall E (opened) with Greek inscription (no. 14)
3. Greek inscription (no. 27) with drawings of a ship and Daniel in the lions' den, on the wall of arcosolium 2, in room I of hall G.
4. Left Side of 3

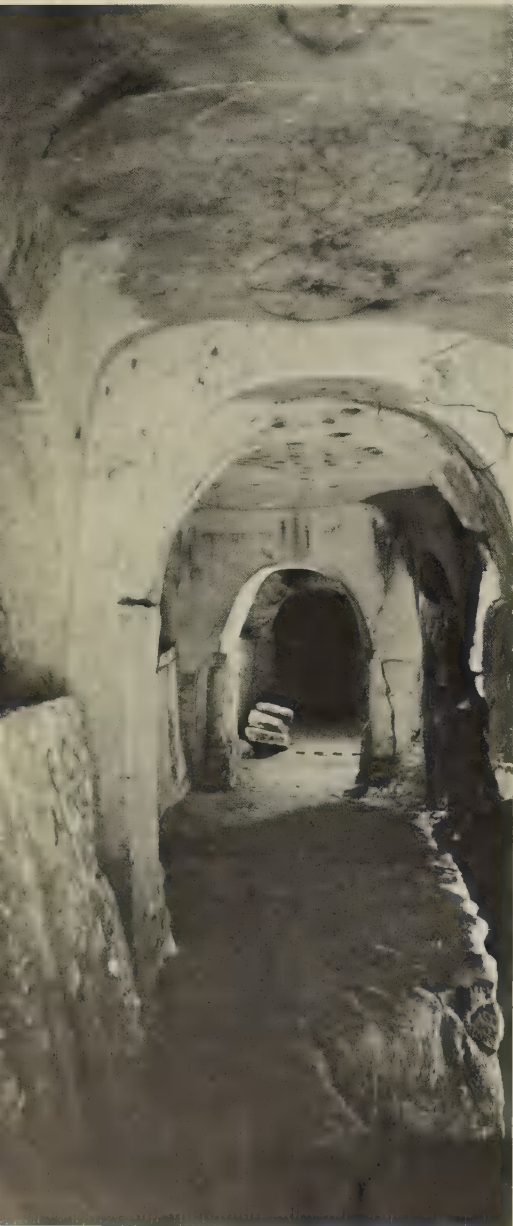
Halls E and G  
in Catacomb no. 1



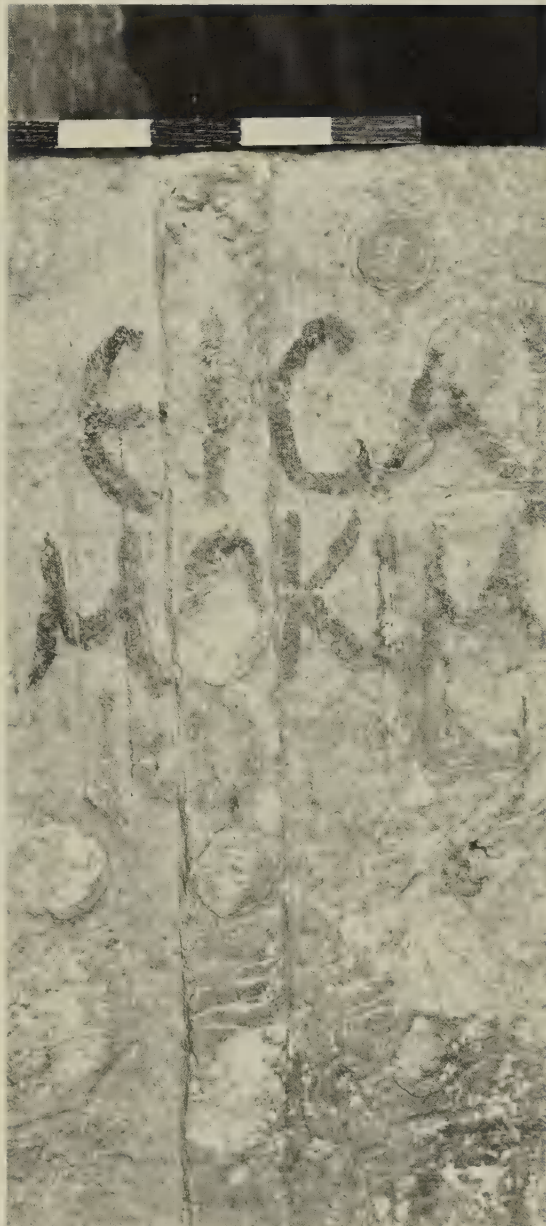
1



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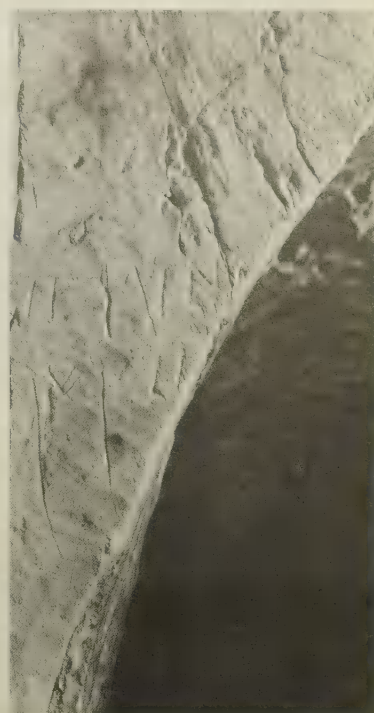
1. View of halls I (foreground) and G (top left), seen from the entrance of hall I
2. Left wall of the passage between rooms II and III in hall G
3. View of hall G from the entrance
4. Door of hall G with Greek inscription (no. 25)

**Hall G in Catacomb no. 1**

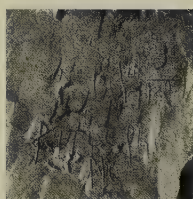
PLATE XI



1



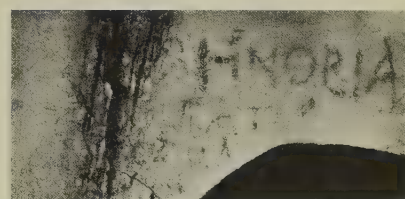
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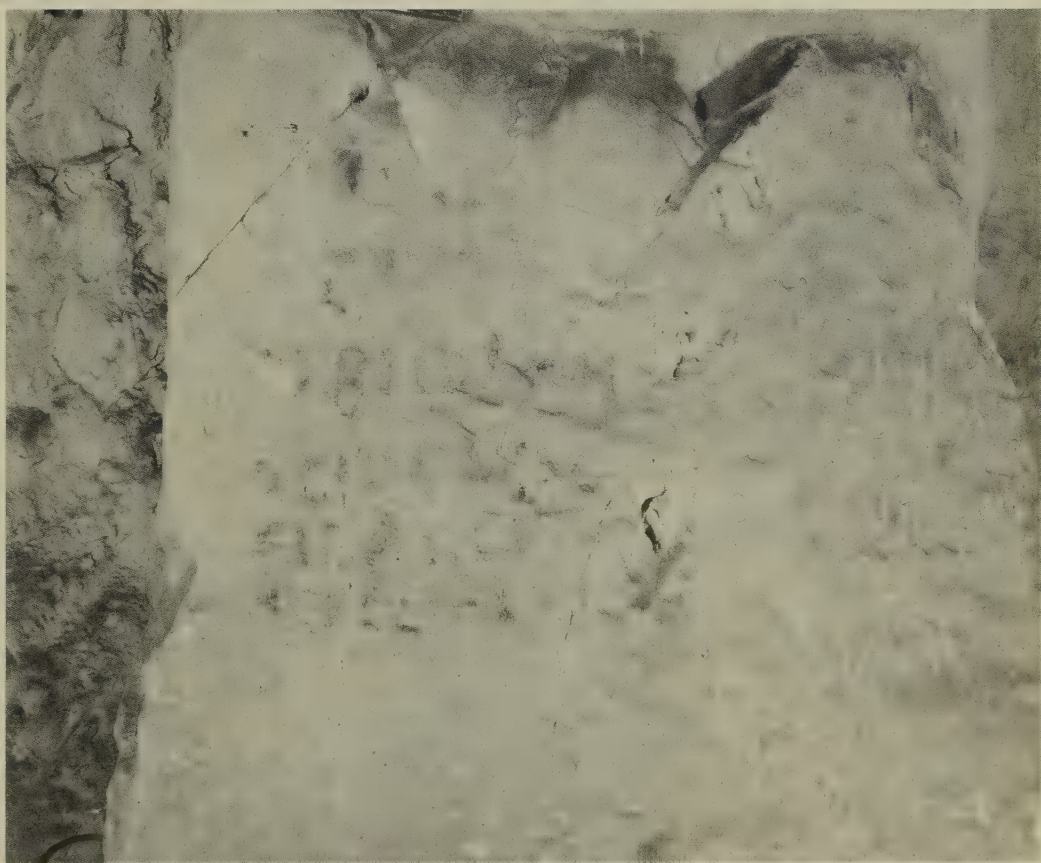
3a



b

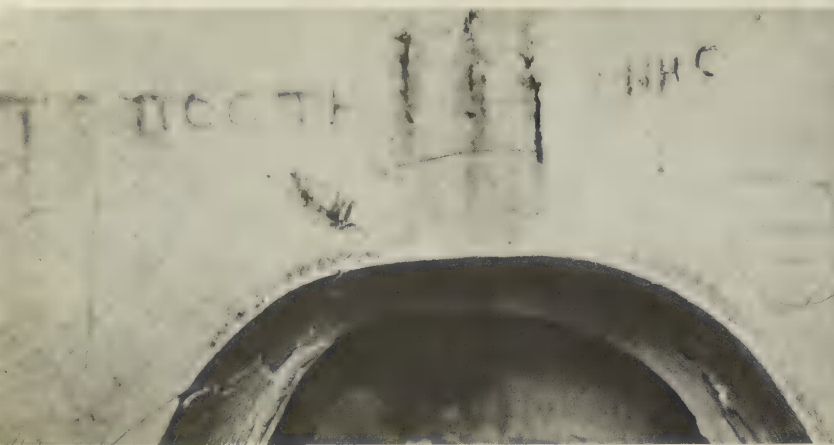


c

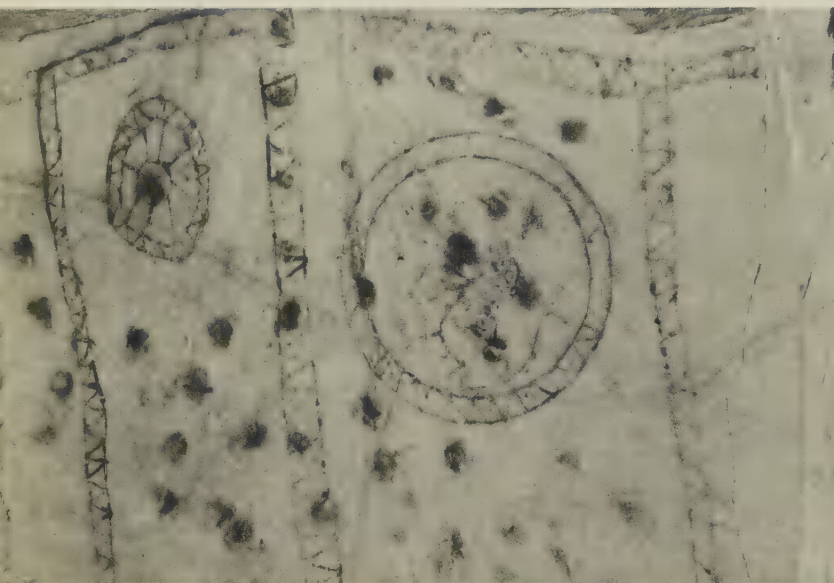


1. Greek inscriptions (nos. 32 and 33) and drawings
2. Bilingual inscription, Hebrew (no. 38) and Greek (no. 39)
- 3a. Bilingual inscription, Hebrew (no. 50) and Greek (no. 51); b. Hebrew inscription (no. 40); c. Greek inscription (no. 30)
4. Bilingual inscription, Greek (no. 35) and Hebrew (no. 36)

**Inscriptions in hall G  
of Catacomb no. 1**



1



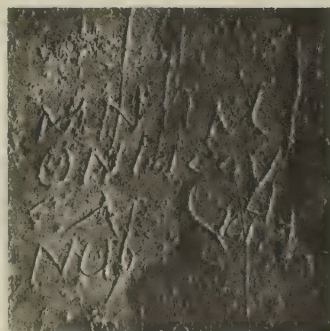
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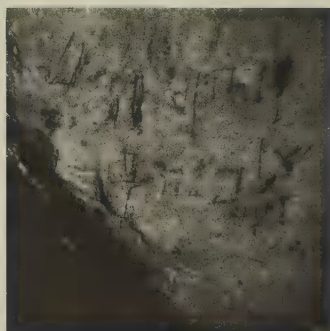
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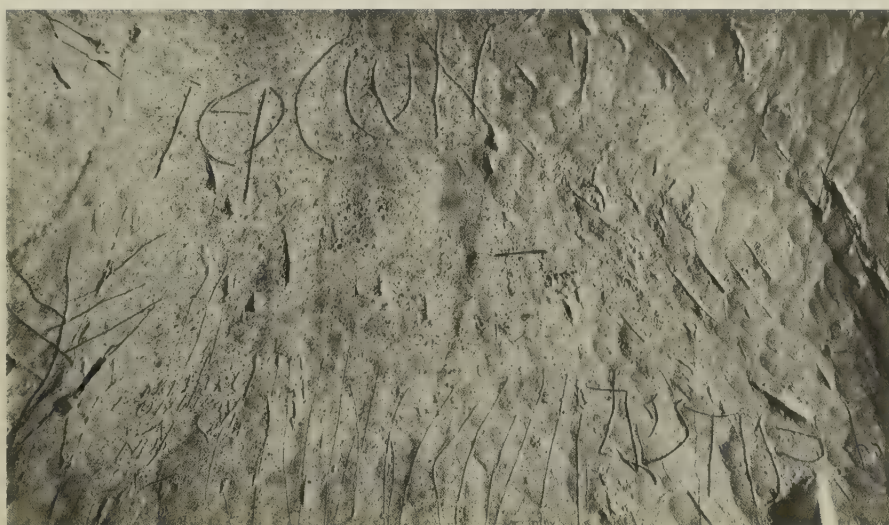


6

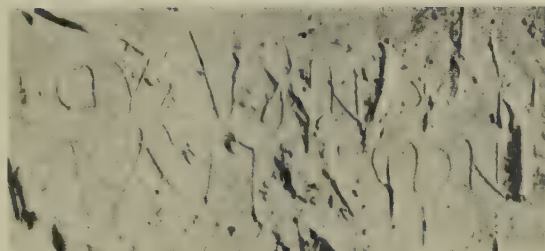
1. Greek inscription (no. 37) and drawings above the passage between rooms II and III of hall G
2. Decorated ceiling of room II
3. Inscription (no. 62) in hall I
4. Greek inscription (no. 65)
5. Greek inscription (no. 60)
6. Hebrew inscription (no. 67)

**Inscriptions in Halls G and I of Catacomb no. 1**

PLATE XIII



1



2



3

1. Greek (nos. 61, 63-66)  
and Hebrew (no. 62)  
inscriptions and graffiti on  
the ceiling of room IV in  
hall I

2. Greek inscription (no. 74)  
in hall J

3. Greek inscription (no. 75)  
in hall J

Inscriptions in Halls I and J  
of Catacomb no. I



1

2



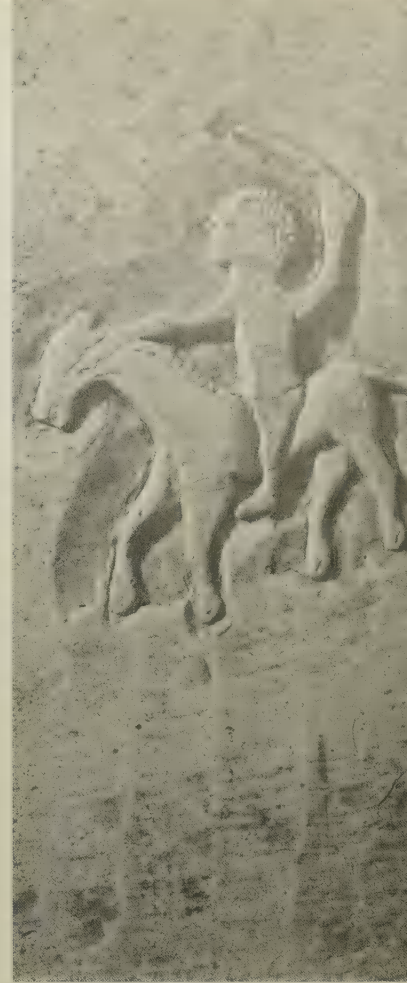
1. View of the hall from the entrance

2. Graffiti on the wall of arcosolium I in room 1

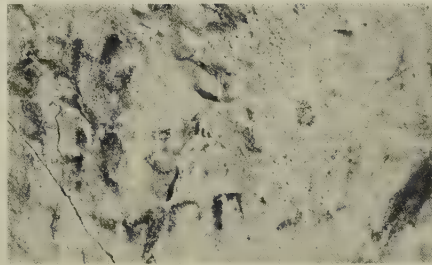
Hall K in Catacomb no. 1



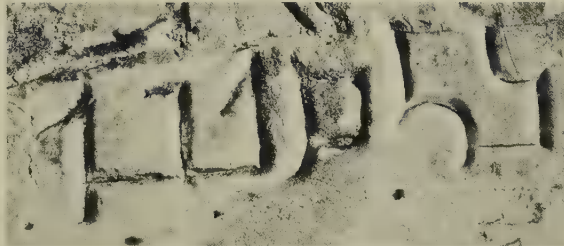
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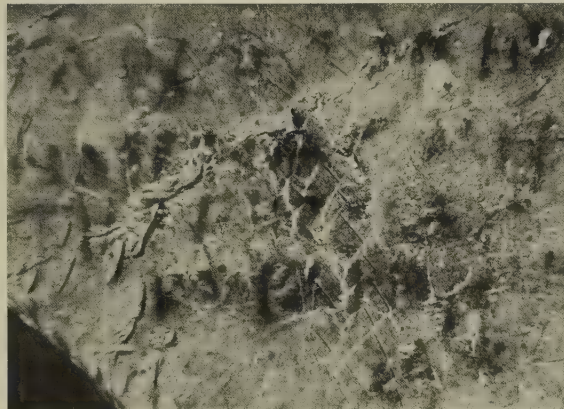


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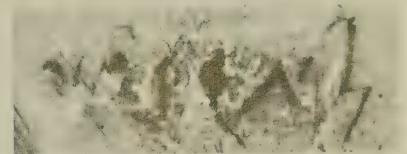


6

1. Marble plaque with Greek inscription (no. 78) found near the hall entrance
2. Sunken relief of a horse and rider
3. Bilingual inscription, Greek (no 90) and Hebrew (no. 91)
4. Palmyrene inscription (no. 94)
5. Greek inscription (no. 92)
6. Palmyrene inscription (no. 86)
7. Hebrew inscription (no. 93)



5



7

**Inscriptions and Relief in Hall K of Catacomb no. 1**



*1. Arcosolia, kokh and pit-  
burial in room VII*

**Hall M in Catacomb no. 1**

PLATE XVII



1



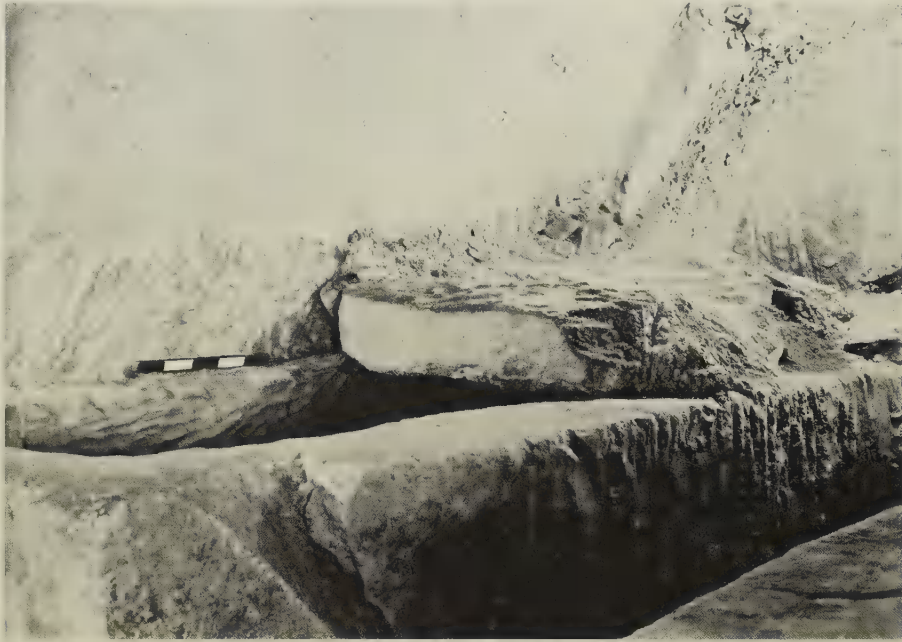
2



3

1. Arcosolium 1 and kokh a  
in room I, and the passage  
to room II  
2. View of the hall from the  
entrance  
3. Rooms IV and V

Hall N in Catacomb no. 1



1



2

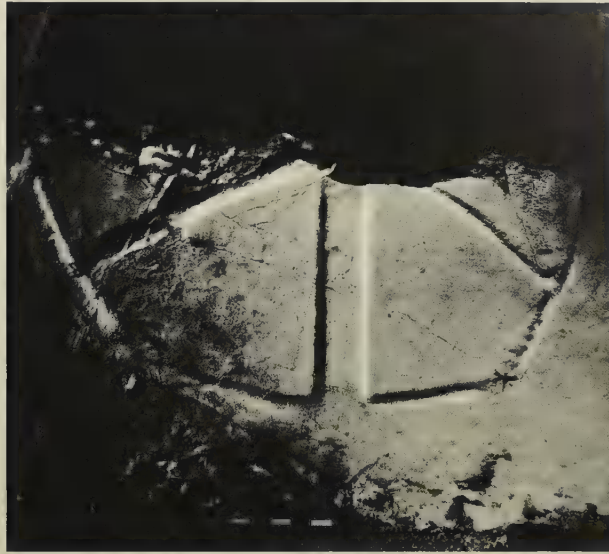


3

1. Burial place with sealing-stones in arcosolium 2
2. Capital of the pillar supporting the arch of the passage to room II; on the arch, series of graffiti
3. Kokh a and the relief of a Menorah above it; on the right, the pillar in 2

**Burials and Decorations in Hall N of Catacomb no. 1**

PLATE XIX



1



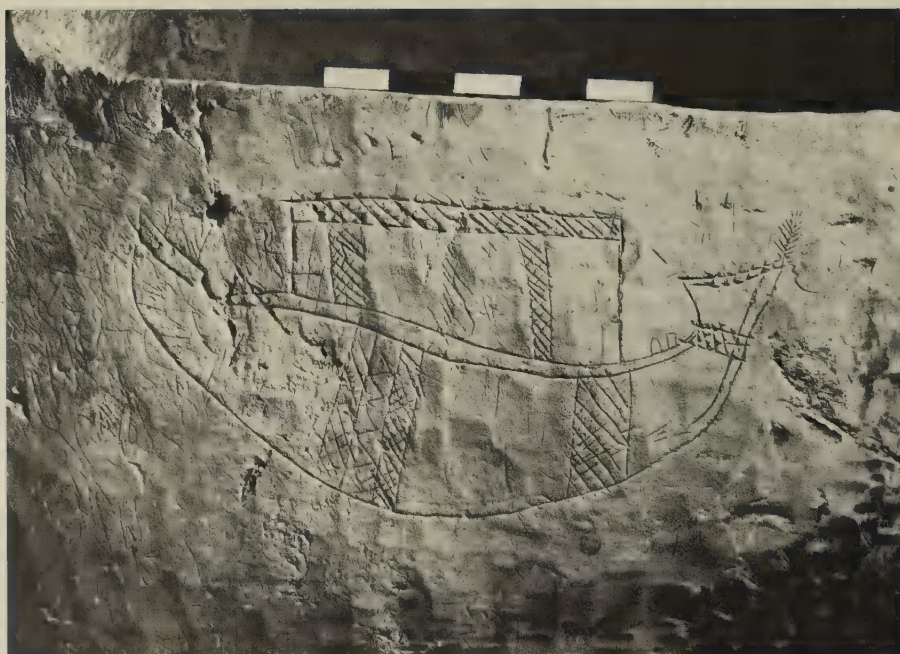
2



3

1. Relief of a ship(?)
2. Relief of a Menorah
3. Another relief of a Menorah

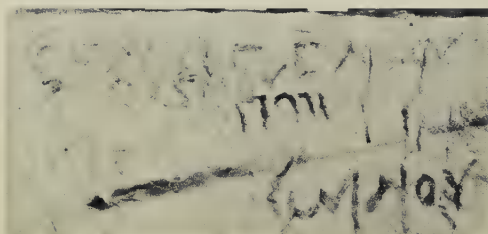
Reliefs in Hall O in  
Catacomb no. 1



1. View of the hall from the entrance
2. Graffito of a ship on the right wall of room I

Hall P in Catacomb no. 1

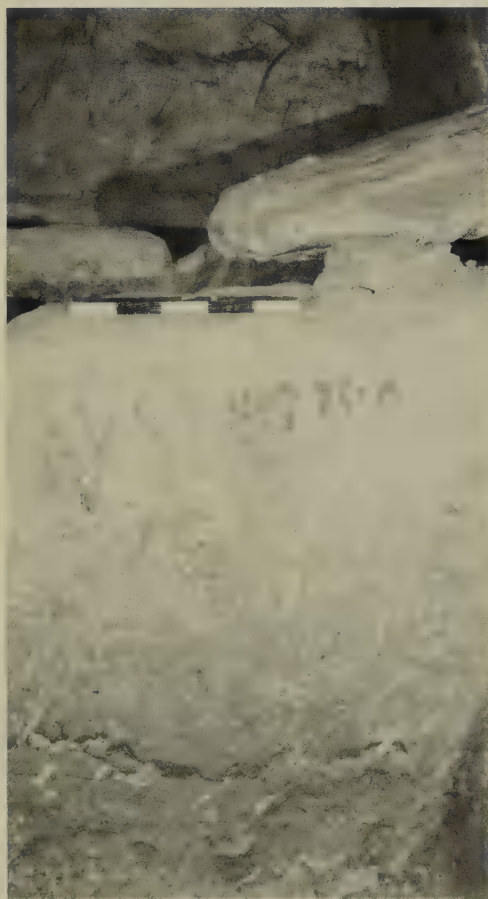
PLATE XXI



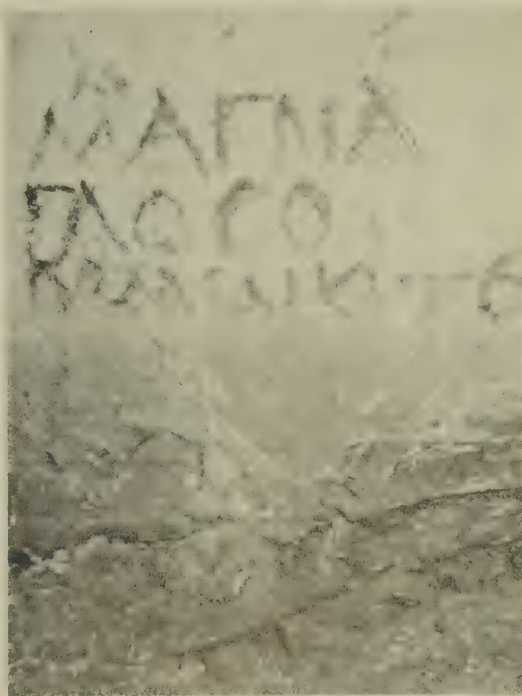
1



2



3



4

1. Greek (nos. 111 and 113) and Hebrew (no. 112) inscriptions in room II
2. Burial place in arcosolium 4, Room I. Note the "pillow" with a depression for the head of the deceased.
3. Hebrew (no. 108) and Greek (no. 107) inscription
4. Greek inscription (no. 110) in room II

Hall P in Catacomb no. 1



1. Hall A in catacomb no. 2;  
general view from the east,  
above
2. Courtyard and the entrance  
to hall A in Mugharet el-  
Jehennem

Hall A in Catacomb no. 2  
and Mugharet el-Jehennem

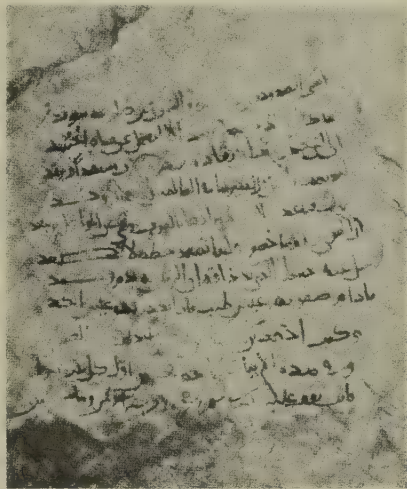
PLATE XXIII



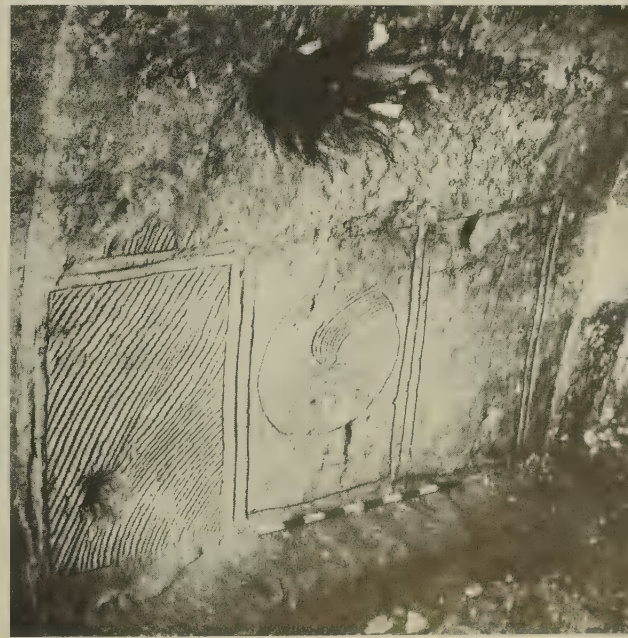
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1



4



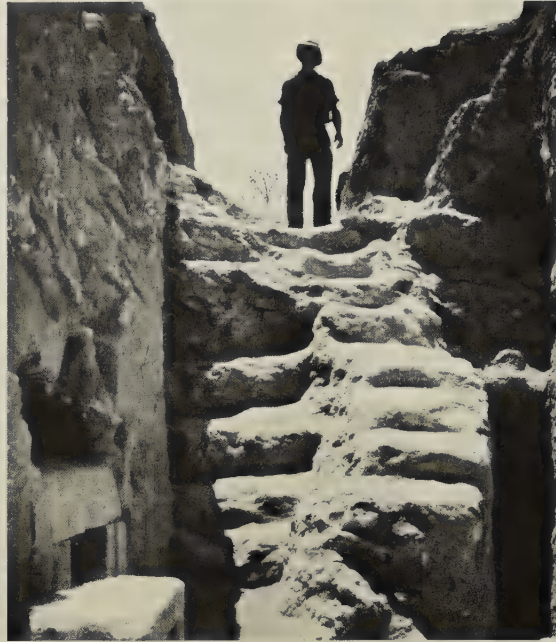
3

1. Representation of a ship with a jar set in its center
2. Representation of another ship
3. Wall relief of decorated panels
4. Arabic inscription

Hall A in Mugharet el-Jehennem



2



1



3

1. Stairs leading down into the corridor; view from north
2. Entrances of halls A, C (left) and E (center); view from south (from the stairs)
3. Entrances of halls B (right), D (left) and E (center); view from south (from the front of the corridor)

Corridor of Catacomb no. 3

PLATE XXV



1



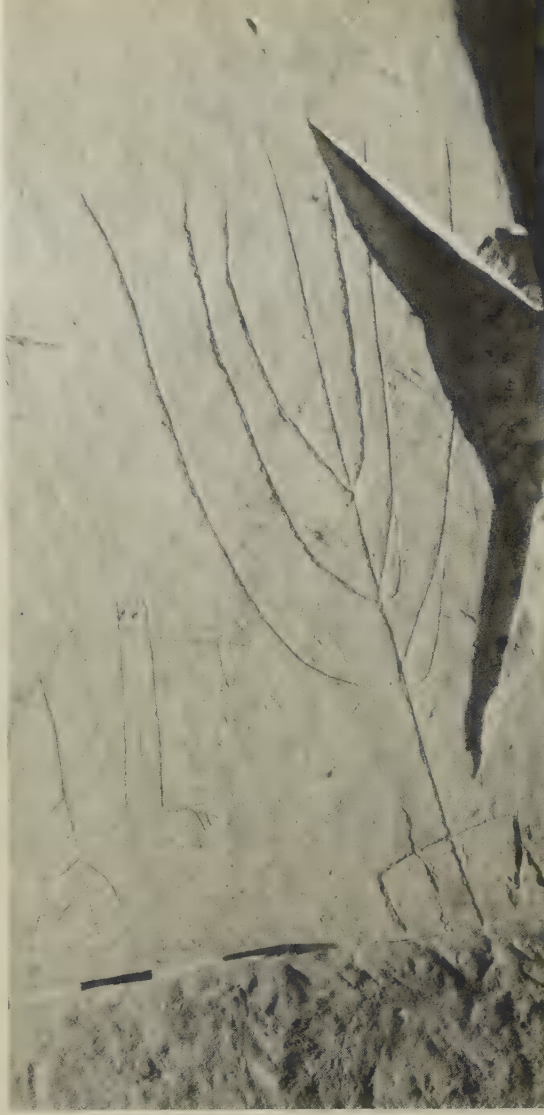
2

*1. Entrance of the hall,  
arcosolia in the left wall of  
room I and decorations on the  
walls*

*2. Room III*



1



2



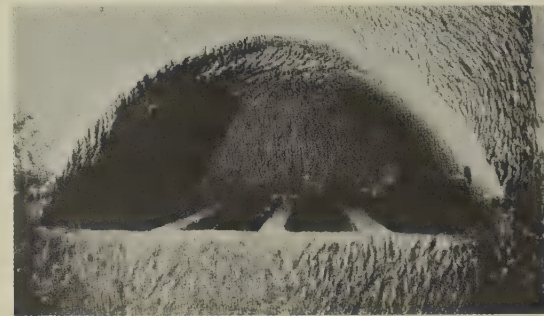
6



3



4



5

1. View of the hall from the entrance
2. Graffiti on the arch of the passage between rooms II and III
3. Graffiti in the passage between rooms I and II
4. Graffiti in the passage between rooms II and III
5. Arcosolium 1 in room III
6. Arcosolium 3 in room IV



*Room IV, relief near the  
entrance from room I, and  
bilinguual inscription,  
Palmyrene (no. 126) and  
Greek (no. 127)*



1



2

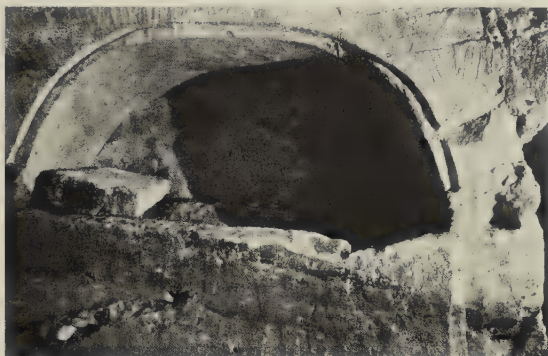


3

1. Fore part of the hall; view from room V
2. Greek inscription (no. 124) in room IV
3. Back part of the hall; view from room I

Hall E in Catacomb no. 3

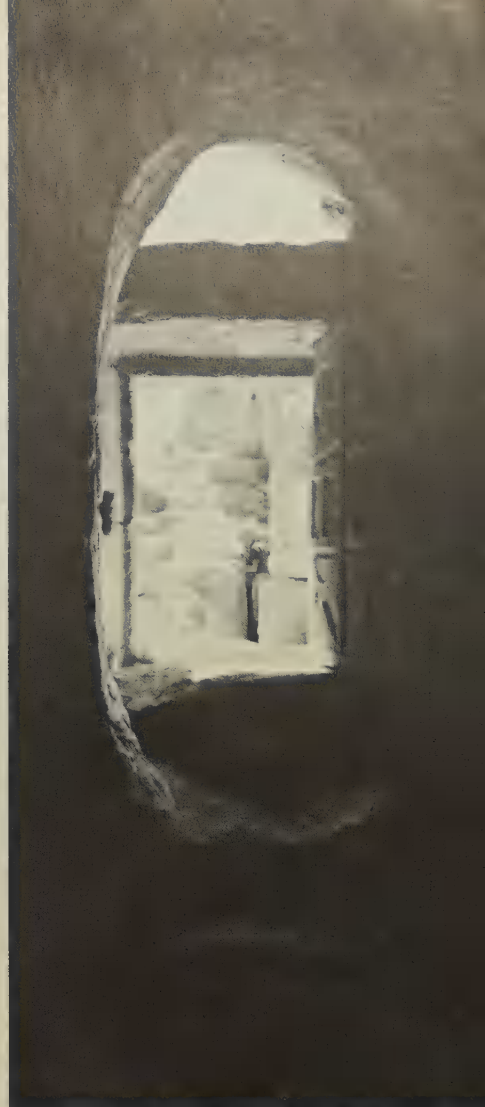
PLATE XXIX



1



3



2

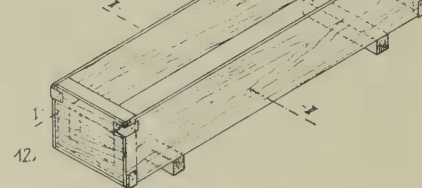
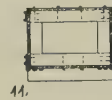
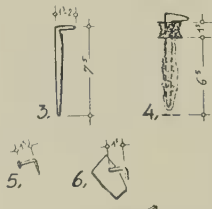
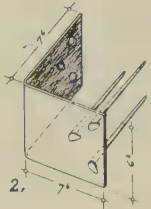
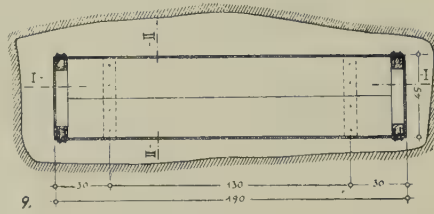
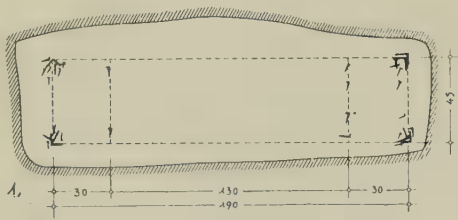


4



5

- 1. Arcosolium 1 in room I
- 2. Entrance of the hall; view from room I
- 3. View of the hall from the entrance
- 4. Arcosolium 2 in room I
- 5. Relief of a man supporting a Menorah on his head; view of room III



1. Skeleton within a pit-burial in room VI  
 2-3. Pit-burial in room V  
 4. Burial place in a pit-burial in room VIII; some of the sealing stones in situ  
 5. Reconstruction of a wooden coffin

Hall E in Catacomb no. 3

PLATE XXXI



1



2



3

1. Entrance of the hall
2. Fore part of the hall;  
view from room VII
3. View of the hall from the  
entrance

Hall A in Catacomb no. 4



1

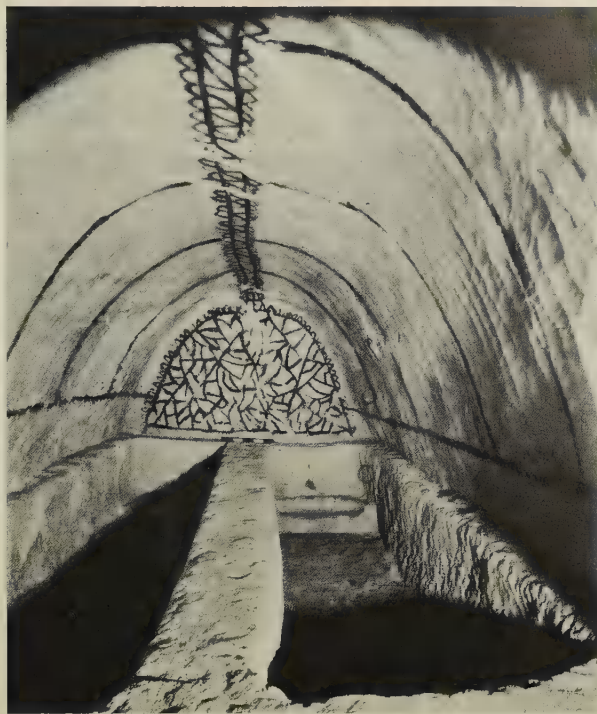
2

3



1. View of room VII and the passage between it and room I. Note the decorations
2. Ascent to arcosolium 5 and the lion relief
3. Sunken relief of the Ark of Law within a synagogue (?)

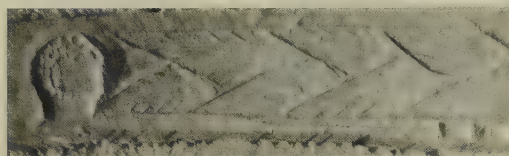
Hall A in Catacomb no. 4



1



2

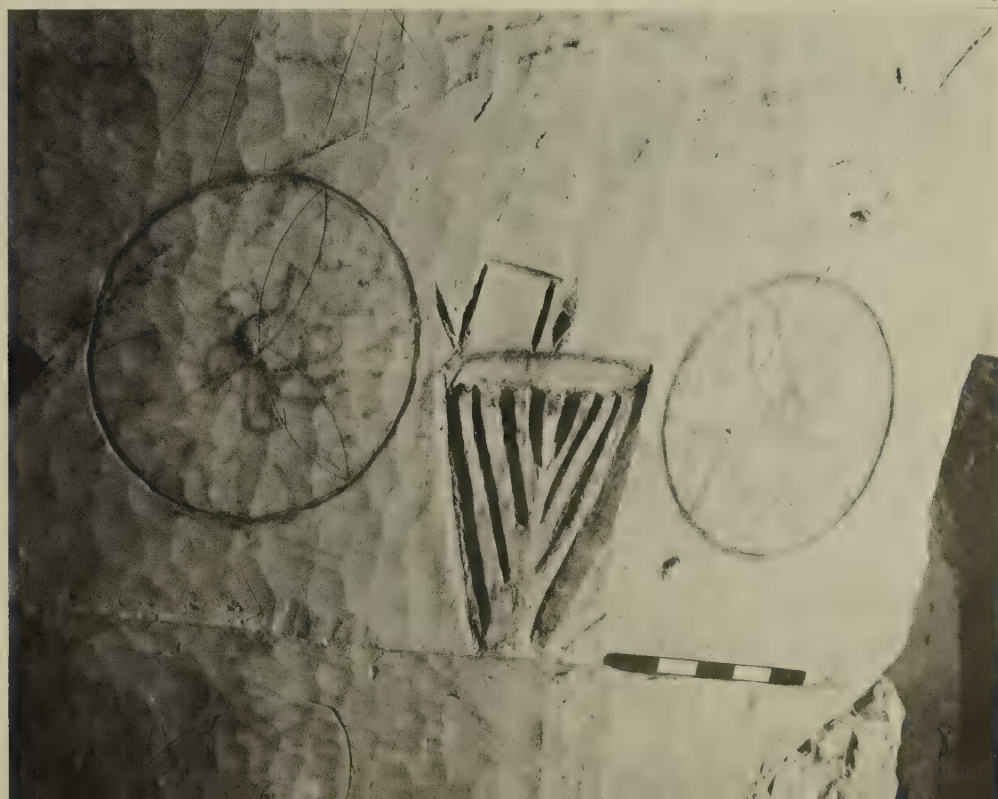


3



4

5



1. Arcosolium 5 and its decorations
2. Painted decorations on the ceiling of the room
3. Sunken relief of a man's head and a leaf pattern on the wall of burial 4
4. Greek inscription (no. 140) on the wall of burial 3
5. Decorations on the arch of the passage between rooms I and II



*Sunken relief of Ark of Law  
on the outer wall of burial in  
room VII*

**Hall A in Catacomb no. 4**



1. Entrance of the hall and the arch built above it; view from the corridor
2. View of the hall from the entrance

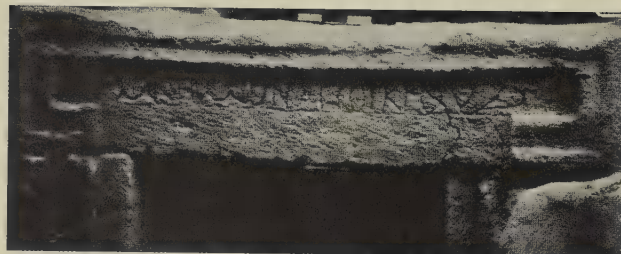
Hall C in Catacomb no. 4



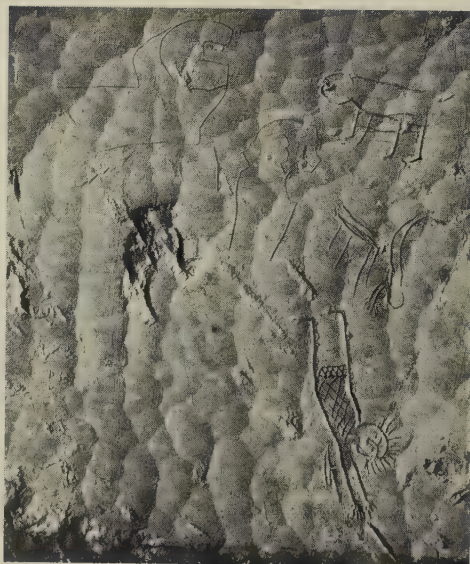
1



2



4



5



3

1. Door of hall C
2. Graffito of a Jewish soldier from Palmyre in hall C
3. Graffito in hall C, room I
4. Entrance of hall D, with Greek inscription (no. 149) on the lintel
5. Graffito in hall C, room I

Hall C and D in Catacomb no. 4