

ANCIENT ROCK-CUT BURIAL-CHAMBERS

AT BETHANY

For nearly two years our Studium has collaborated with the Custody of the Holy Land in a careful clearance and study of the ruins east and south of the tomb of Lazarus at Bethany. Actually a mosque dedicated to el-Uzeir occupies the area immediately next to the tomb, so it would be more accurate to speak of an exploration of the site east and south of the mosque and its courtyard. From October 25th, 1949, until July 2, 1950, the chief center of activities was the area immediately east of the mosque. There the ancient church of Lazarus, built in the fourth century and reconstructed twice afterwards, was found. Details of this discovery have been given elsewhere (1).

Work in the region south of the church and mosque began on July 2, 1950. A crooked village path divides this area into two sections. The section west of the path was cleared first; work there was completed as far as circumstances permitted on April 19, 1951. In this section there are four large halls and a few smaller rooms. One hall, (5.35 m. wide on interior [length not yet determined]), was parallel to the southern wall of the church; it had been paved with mosaics; the few remnants of the same which can still be seen resemble the lower mosaic in the nave of the church both as regards the size of the cubes and the designs, which suggests that the original hall was contemporaneous with the first church (fourth century); the same is suggested

(1) *La Terra Santa* XXV (1950), pp. 30, 87 f., 186 f., 225-232; *Tierra Santa* XXV (1950), pp. 68, 72, 247-250; *The Crusader's Almanac*, October, 1950, pp. 35 ff.; *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* XII (1950), pp. 400-404; *Around the Province* XIV (1950), pp. 116-121; 279-281; 308-312; etc.

by the thickness (70 cm.) and character of the southern wall. Towards the east this hall continues beneath the village path, which we did not disturb. At the western end there is a door to a passage, which has a second door to the right leading towards the mosque and the tomb of Lazarus on the north; whilst a third door leads to halls on the south. — The hall south of the western end of the preceding one is 5.40 m. wide from east to west and 12.30 m. long from north to south. Its northern wall is standing on the mosaic pavement of the preceding hall; this alone suffices to indicate that it is of later date; in fact it seems to be medieval. In its eastern wall there are four openings, three large ones and a small one. The two large ones at the northern end communicate with a hall east of it which contains an olive press *in situ*, which is no longer used. [This hall measures 11 m. from east to west and 5 m. from north to south; it has a smaller room 4 m. sq. at its eastern end.] The third door now opens into a modern room through which one reaches the path on the east. The fourth opening is a small one which gives access to a cave in which a Maccabean and a Roman coin were found. There is a fifth opening in the northern end of the western wall. Through it one can reach either the passage to the north or a staircase which leads up to the hall on the west which is the largest of all (2.90 - 4.85 by 47.13 m.); it extends from the mosque on the north all the way down to a road on the south. The staircase in question, near its upper end, cuts through the rock-sunk shaft in front of the entrance to a burial-chamber. In this same hall there is another tomb-chamber more to the north and a third more to the south. Numbered from south to north we may speak of them as chambers I, II and III. They are of sufficient interest to receive special notice in this preliminary report. The plans, cross-sections and designs prepared by Father Bellarmino Bagatti, O.F.M., professor of Christian archaeology at our Studium, and the photographs by Brother Roderic Deak, Father Bagatti and Father Theodoric Kernel, serve to illustrate the tombs and their contents.

A. THE TYPE OF THE CHAMBERS : ARCOSOLIA

TOMB-CHAMBER I (Figs. 1-3)

The tomb is not on the side of a hill as is so often the case in Palestine but beneath the irregular surface of the rock. To reach it one jumps into a rock-sunk shaft, crawls through a rather small nearly square door and then finds himself in a trapezoidal chamber, in which one must bend the head slightly in order not to touch the ceiling when standing inside, where one can see on three sides apse-like niches beneath each of which there is a trough-shaped grave.



Fig. 1. Entrance to tomb-chamber I.

When this burial chamber was discovered its entrance shaft was filled with earth. A photograph (Fig. 1) was taken before it had been completely cleared. In the filling we found the greater part of a clay bowl (Fig. 13, 3). Originally it seems that the top of the shaft was

covered with slabs of which one is still *in situ* near the western end. The shaft is about a meter deep, a meter and a half long and over half a meter wide. On its left (southern) wall, near the door of the tomb, a tiny cross is carved into the rock.

The door proper was closed with several stones which permitted water to ooze through. It is 50 cm. wide and 58 cm. high. Its top is flush with the ceiling of the chamber inside, but its sill is about a meter higher than the floor of that chamber. To get through such an opening one must of course crawl.

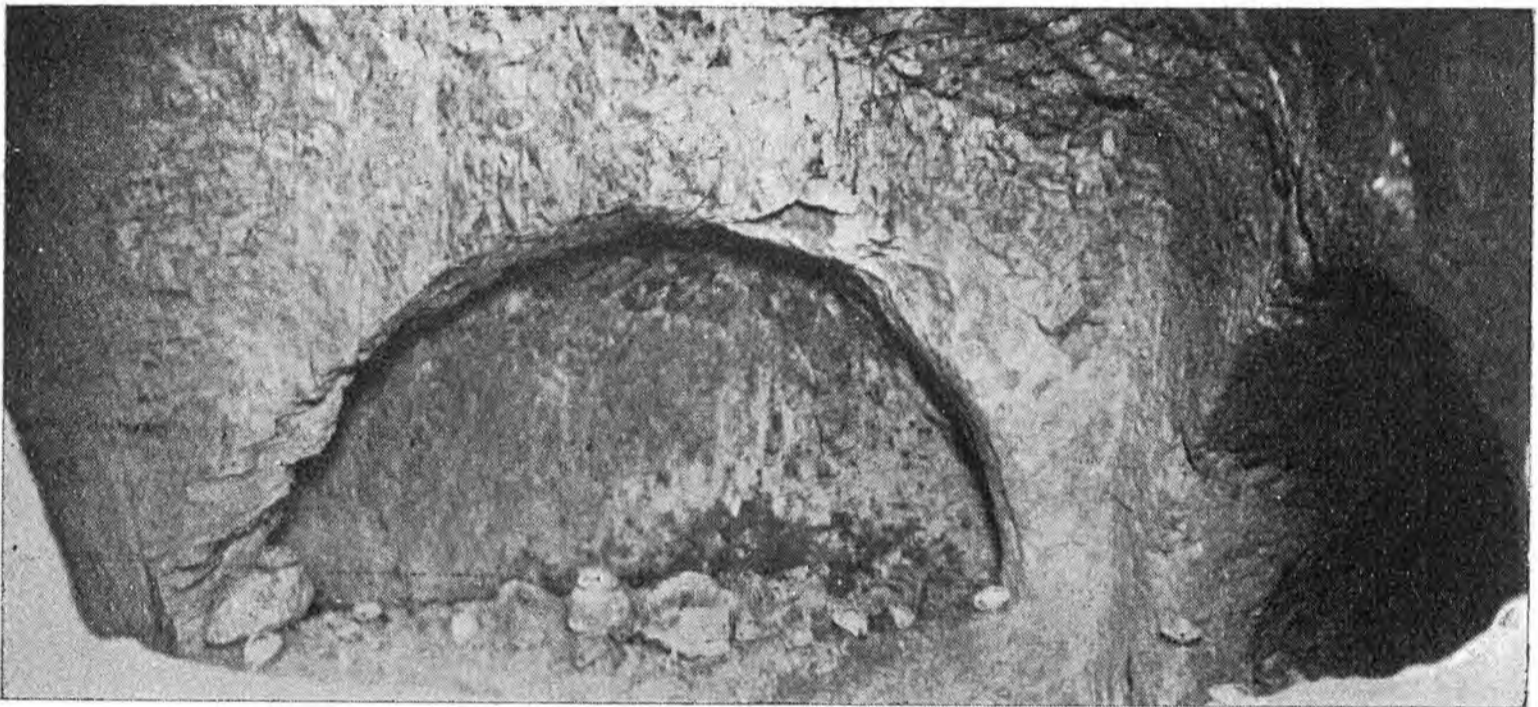


Fig. 2. Interior of tomb-chamber I: in rear, the western arcosolium; on right, the northern arcosolium before clearances. Note the clay lamps on the ledges.

Inside the door, in the chamber itself, there are two steps; in this case the second and lower one is beside the top one, not beyond it as one would expect. The floor of the chamber was covered with a thin layer of silt in which were embedded three complete clay lamps and fragments of a fourth; these were near the steps; whilst in the south-western corner there were fragments of a broken glass vase.

The ceiling is not perfectly straight nor are its corners angular; it dips slightly from the front to the back and is very slightly vaulted with rounded corners; its average height above the floor is about 154 cm.

The sides of the chamber are irregular; the narrowest side is in front; the widest in back (170 cm.), whilst the other two sides also differ in length (150 and 163 cm. respectively).

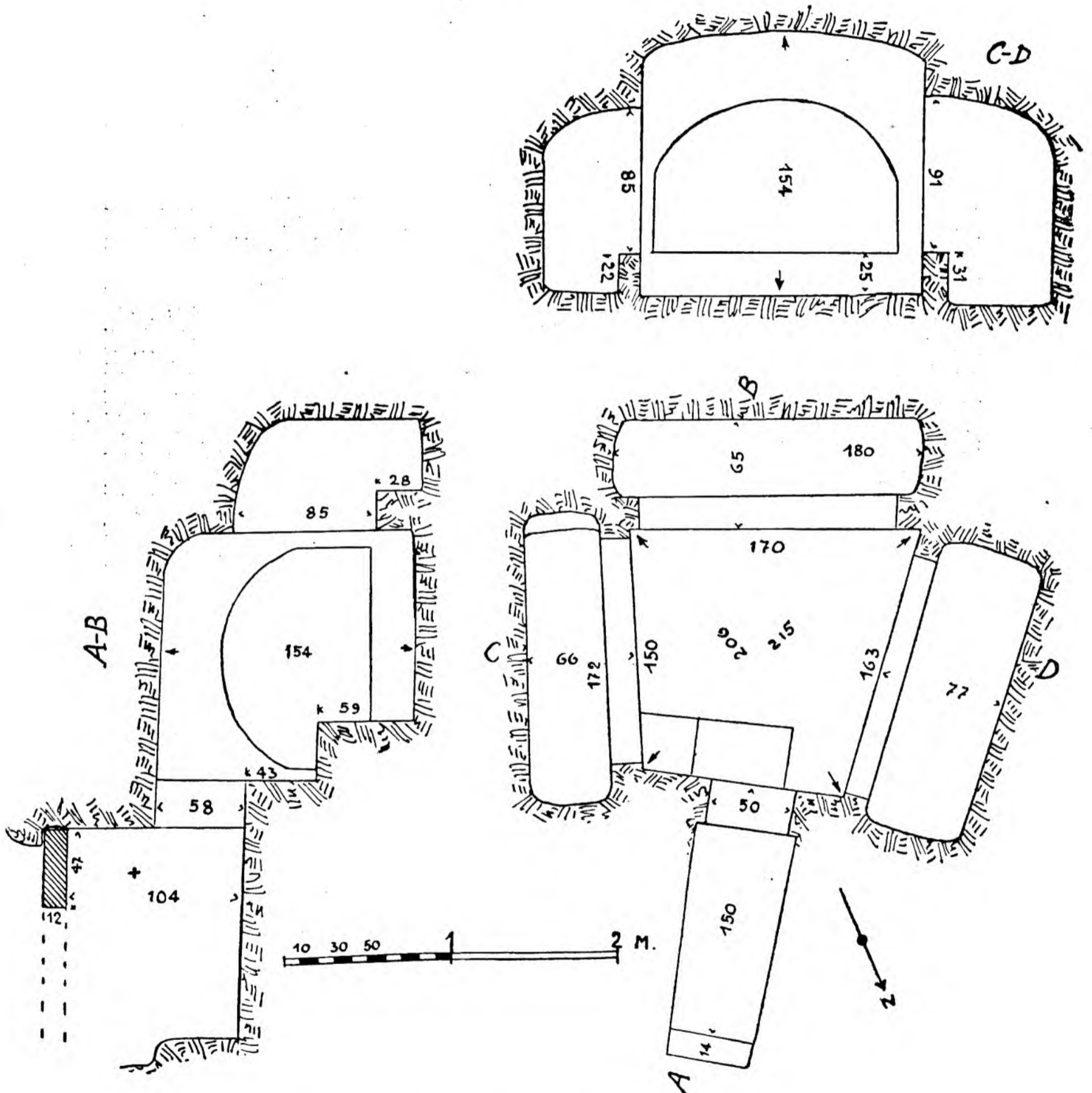


Fig. 3. Plan and sections of tomb-chamber I.

The apse-like niches on the sides also differ in depth, height and length. In depth they vary between 65 and 77 cm.; in height (measuring from the floor of the graves) between 107 and 122 cm.; in length between 172 and 180 cm. The top of each niche is lower than the ceiling of the central space and slopes down gently towards the inside.

The trough-like graves at the bottom of each niche have their floors more or less on the same level as the floor of the central space, from which they are separated by a thin wall of rock from 22 to 31 cm. high. These graves do not seem to have been disturbed since they were last used. None of them had a stone cover; they were all filled with decayed bones and a little soil that had silted in; along the ledges there were small stones; on these and between them there were numerous clay lamps; some lamps were also found inside the graves (Fig. 2). The grave on the south had a small ledge at its western end which was probably intended as a headrest; this was the normal position of the head in our graves. No other grave had such a headrest, but in several we found a movable stone in that position, which may have served the same purpose. Each grave contained a number of other small objects. The one on the left (south) contained three iron rings and a small bronze bell. The smaller ring, found near the center of the grave, probably served as a bracelet; the other two, found at the eastern end of the grave, were probably anklets. These ornaments suggest that a woman had been buried here. — The grave on the west (in back) had a few bits of charcoal at the southern end of its ledge. — The grave on the north contained a small copper vessel. At the western end of the tomb near to the northern wall there were three glass flasks: two complete and one broken. There were also several iron rings, only one complete, and an iron bar. In sifting the earth from this tomb-chamber several small iron and bronze finger-rings, an iron buckle, five small beads and four copper coins were found. Otherwise there were only two fragments of ribbed jars and fragments of vessels of the same type as those already mentioned. In all there were over 80 small objects from this tomb, of which 66 are clay lamps (Fig. 10, 1-10).

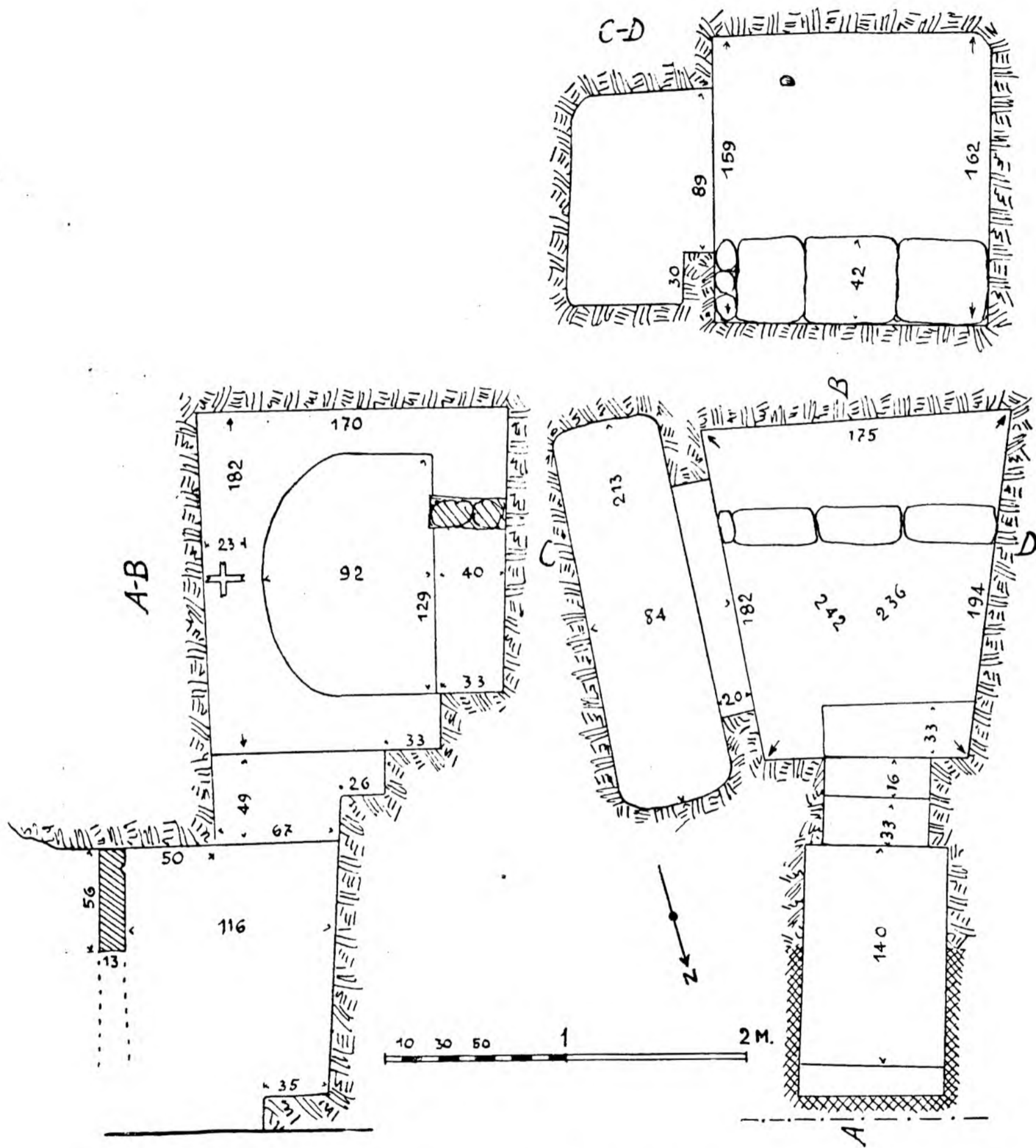


Fig. 4. Plan and sections of tomb-chamber II.

TOMB-CHAMBER II (Figs. 4 and 5)

The second rock-cut tomb-chamber is north of the first, with which it has many elements in common, though some details are different. In this case the eastern end of the entrance shaft is built up of masonry, which, in turn, was effected by the medieval staircase which exists

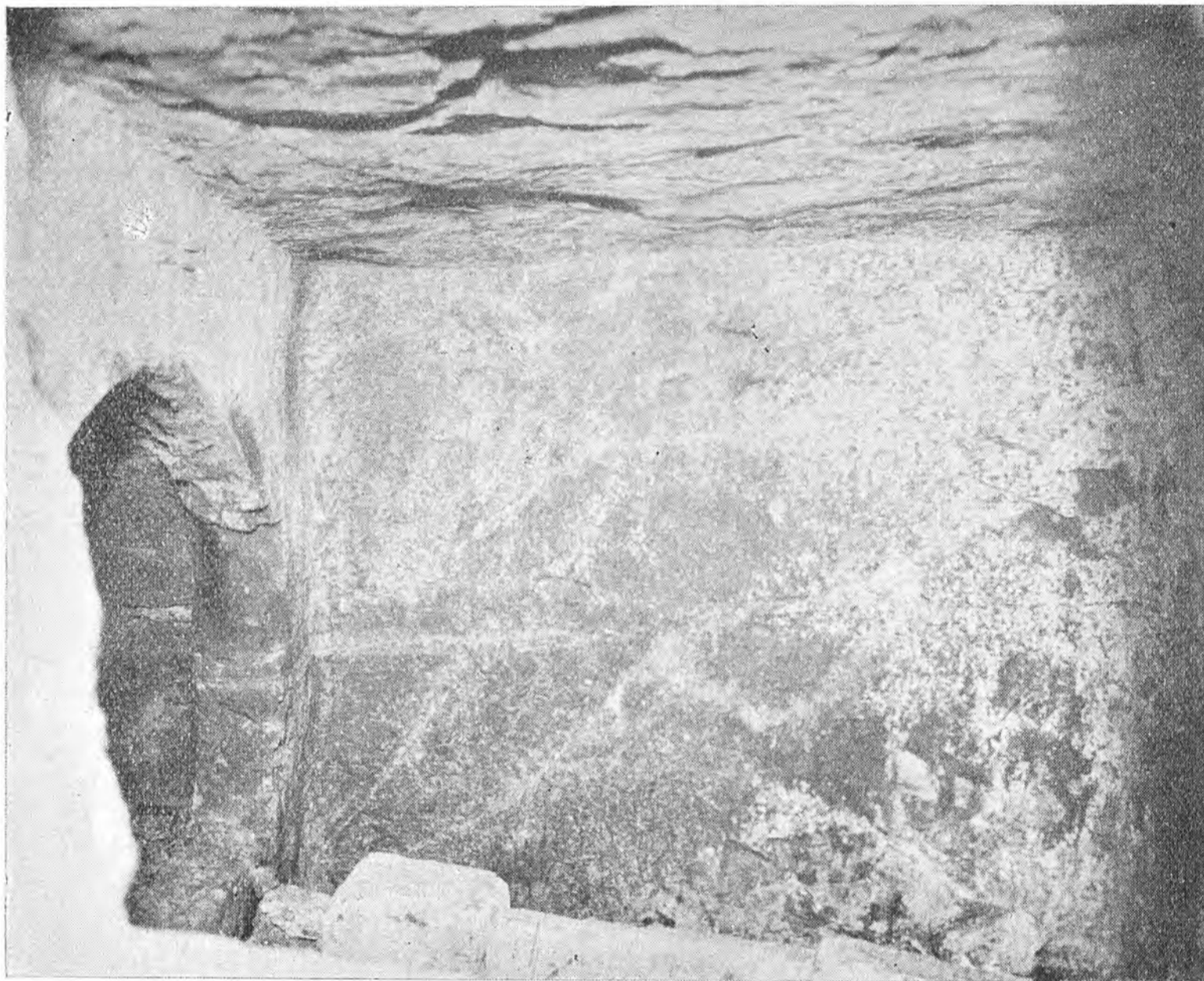


Fig. 5. Interior of tomb-chamber II: on left, arcosolium with cross; in rear, the masonry grave.

there. Three steps lead into the interior; of these two are in the doorway and one inside the chamber. In form this chamber resembles the first, but all its corners are sharply angular, not round, as in the first tomb; moreover the walls still preserve a thin coat of whitewash. But the chief peculiarity of this chamber is the fact that it has only one

lateral niche with a grave; that is on the south; on the wall of this chamber above the arch there is a carefully carved bifurcated cross. There is a second grave in this chamber, but in this case it is not in a niche, but in the central chamber and is formed by a row of four stones set on end. In the southern end of the wall behind the tomb



Fig. 6. Entrance to tomb-chamber III.

there is a tiny niche for a lamp. Both graves were filled with bones that have to a great extent disintegrated. The tomb in the central chamber also contained an iron ring. Clay lamps — 11 in all — were found in and near each grave (Fig. 10, 11-16a).

TOMB-CHAMBER III (Figs. 6-9)

The third tomb-chamber is north of the preceding two and closest to the tomb of Lazarus. It resembles the first in this that it has a niche

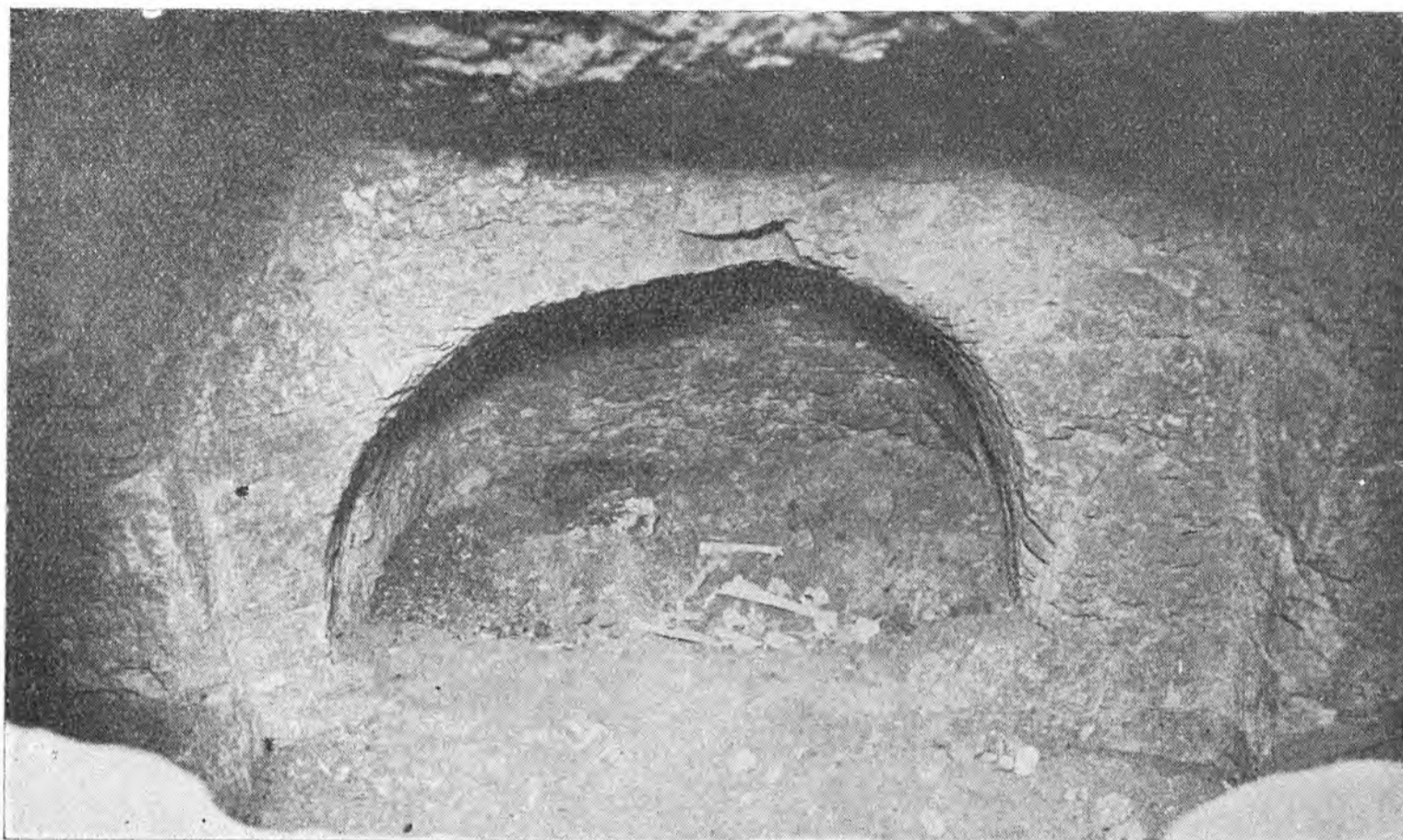


Fig. 7. Interior of tomb-chamber III: rear arcosolium before clearance.



Fig. 8. Interior of tomb-chamber III: northern (right) arcosolium with two rock-sunk graves after clearance.

with graves on three sides. It differs from the other two in this that each lateral niche contains not only one but two graves (see Fig. 8). Again all the graves were filled to the top with decayed bones and only a few complete ones. This tomb had evidently been flooded frequently as is evident from the crust of silt covering each grave. In the northern grave of the northern niche there were two skulls: one on the west and a second not very far from the eastern end. This is the only clear evidence which we have to indicate that more than one person was placed in a grave. This grave and the southernmost one in the opposite niche contained each a glass double kohl-vase or unguentarium; in one of the tubes of the first there was still a bronze kohl-spoon. The front grave in the western (or back) niche also contained a bronze hook, an iron ring and a piece of a glass rim. All the graves and the central space produced lamps — 32 in all (Fig. 11, 1-7a). In this chamber there were also more sherds of plain and ribbed pottery vessels than in the other tombs. Here there was also a large piece of an iron object.

MISCELLANEA

In the medieval wall east of the second tomb an ossuary is reused as a basin for catching water. A few other fragments of ossuaries come from this hall, where there is likewise a heavy stone lid with acroteria and a central ridge. Several coins from here belong to the Maccabean and Roman period. Everything else in this area is much later, as far as we are able to judge at present. — In this connection we may mention a number of rock-cut graves (probably four kokhim, according to oral reports) immediately north of Lazarus' tomb on Greek property. — In the church to the east of Lazarus' tomb there are also many tombs: one at the western end of the church's nave and about half a dozen in the small section of the church's portico excavated so far; if the entire portico could be cleared we would probably find many more.

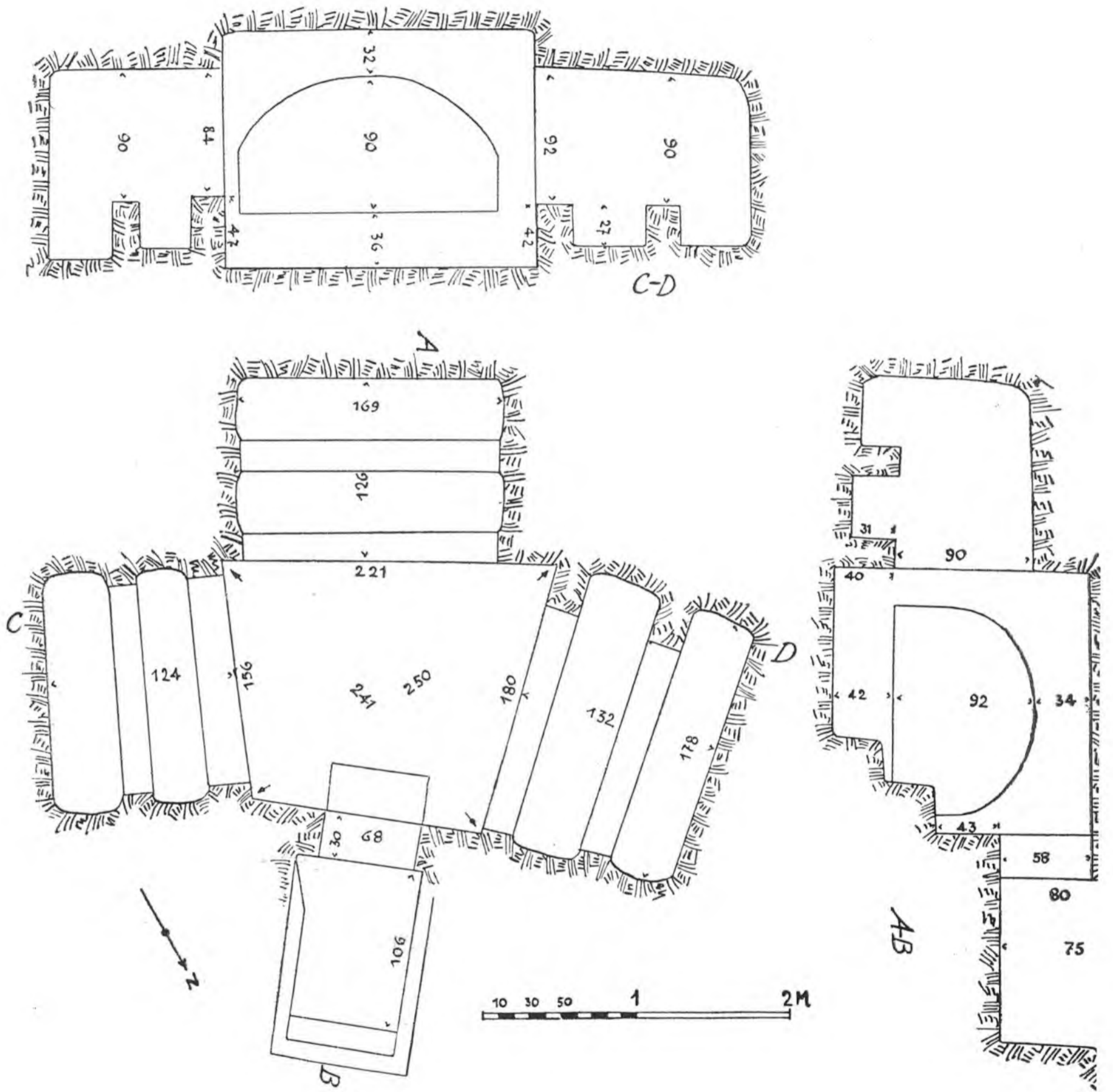


Fig. 9. Plan and sections of tomb-chamber III.

Evidently the neighborhood of Lazarus' tomb was a favorite burial place (2). Many more tombs are known from other parts of Bethany.

PARALLELS

Both in form and contents our tombs have parallels in Bethany. Information regarding other tombs of the same type as these which we are studying we owe especially to G. Gatt. One, which he describes in *Heilige Land XVII* (1873), pp. 67 f., must have been quite close to the ones which we have just described. Regarding the same he gives the following details: "In der Vorhalle, welche 1 Meter 70 Cent.

(2) In this connection it is interesting to note that according to SÆWULF, who visited the Holy Land in 1102, many bishops of Jerusalem were buried in the church of Lazarus at Bethany. "Ibi est ecclesia Sancti Lazari in qua conspicitur sepulcrum ipsius et multorum episcoporum jerosolimitanorum." The slabs covering the tombs in the portico of the church do not have inscriptions informing us who was buried there and up to date we have not yet opened them in order to find out whether the contents of the tombs would shed any light on this problem. Until the excavations throw more light on this question it may be well to bear in mind the view of H. GOUSSEN who holds that the bishops of Jerusalem or at least some of them were buried in a vault attached to the Eleona on the Mount of Olives. This he infers from the fact that the memories of certain bishops were celebrated there: that of St. Cyril, who died in 386, on March 18th; of Juvenal, who died in 458, on July 1st; on the same day was celebrated the memory of Anastasius I, who died in 478; the memory of Martyrius, who died in 486, on April 13th; of Sallust, who died in 494, on July 24th; of John III, who died in 524, on April 19th and also on July 9th; of John IV, who died in 594, on November 27th; of Modestus, who died in 634, on December 16th; of Sophronius, who died in 638, on March 11th. It should be noted that the text of the *Kalendarium* which GOUSSEN published in *Liturgie und Kunst IV* (1923), pp. 3 ff., and on which he bases his views, invariably has "Apostoleion" instead of Eleona; but he identifies the Apostoleion with the Eleona. Father F.-M. ABEL in *RB* 1924, p. 612, no. 5, endorses this view. — The same *Kalendarium* for August 26 has the memory of the archbishop Maximus II (died 348) at the Martyrion. Was he perhaps buried there? Other bishops were probably buried in the churches which they built or restored. See the list of the bishops and patriarchs of Jerusalem in *Le Patr. Latin*, pp. 15 f., for those bishops who could have been buried at Bethany, provided that we admit with Goussen and Abel that some were buried at the Eleona, others perhaps on Sion (John II?), at the Anastasis (Zacharias?) or at the Martyrium (Peter?).

lang, 60 Cent. breit und am Eingang 2 Meter hoch ist, führt eine steile Felsenstiege von etwa sechs Stufen hinab; in der Höhe eines Meter ist der Länge nach ein Rand am Felsen, und $\frac{1}{2}$ Meter höher wieder ein solcher. Der Eingang in die Grabkammer ist klein und etwas unregelmässig rund. Die Grabkammer selbst ist 2 Meter breit, 1 Meter 70 Cent. tief, 1 Meter 50 Cent. hoch. Rechts und links und rückwärts finden sich weite Eingänge in Nebengrabhöhlen in der Form von kleinen Gewölben von 1 Meter 80 Cent. Länge und Breite und 1 Meter 50 Cent. Höhe. Im Gewölbe rechts finden sich drei Troggräber neben einander, von denen das mittlere etwas grösser ist; rückwärts finden sich wahrscheinlich ebenfalls drei solche Gräber, welche in Folge des Schuttes nicht mehr recht ersichtlich sind; ebenso auch links, wo nur ein Troggrab ausgeschöpft wurde. Dasselbe ist 1 Meter 70 Cent. lang, $\frac{1}{2}$ Meter breit und tief. So konnten in diesem verhältnissmässig kleinen Raum wenigstens neun Todte beigesetzt und selbst die ganze Vorhalle durch einen mässig grossen Stein verschlossen werden." The chief differences between our tombs and this one are the number of steps in the entrance and the number of graves in each niche: three instead of only one or two.

That Gatt knew of other tombs of this type at Bethany is clear from a book which he wrote four years later (3). There we read:

"Die Bethaniagrabmonumente sind zwar auch in den Felsen hineingearbeitet, aber nicht an Bergabhängen, sondern meistens auf ebenem Boden; darum kann man nie ebenen Fusses in das Innere gelangen, sondern muss immer eine Felsenstiege von mehreren Stufen hinabsteigen, bis man den Eingang erreicht. Hier findet man weder Vorplatz noch Vorhalle, sondern nur die Felsenstiege am Eingange. Dieselbe ist immer schnurgerade, kaum einen Meter breit, manchmal mehr, manchmal weniger, und hat auch bald mehr, bald weniger Stufen, in der Regel 10-12, so dass der Abstand zwischen dem oberen und unteren Ende der Stiege ein bis zwei Meter beträgt. Manchmal

(3) *Beschreibung über Jerusalem und seine Umgebung*, Waldsee, 1877, pp. 383 ff.

findet man auf mittlerer Höhe einen etwa 4 Finger breiten Rand an beiden Längenseiten, auf welchem ohne Zweifel der Stein ruhte, womit man das Grab verschloss. Der Eingang in das Innere ist fast noch enger, als bei den Jerusalem-Grabmonumenten, so dass man nur mit vieler Mühe durchschlüpfen kann. Das Innere weicht von der gewöhnlichen Anlage ganz und gar ab; man findet keine förmlich ausgebildeten Kammern, sondern nur eine aus mehreren Theilen bestehende, mehr oder weniger unregelmässige Grabhöhle. Das Innere eines Musengrabes dieser Art ist folgendermassen beschaffen. In der Mitte befindet sich ein kleiner leerer Raum, rückwärts, rechts und links findet man eine niedrige Erweiterung, in welcher die Gräber sich befinden, und zwar je 3 und 3 beisammen, so dass in einem Grabmonumente 9 Leichen beerdigt werden konnten. Manchmal zieht sich der freie Raum in der Mitte in die Länge, in welchem Falle man rechts und links je zwei Abtheilungen von Gräbern trifft, wodurch die Anzahl derselben um 6 vermehrt wird. Doch manchmal fehlen die Gräber an der rechten, manchmal die Gräber an der linken Seite, manchmal die Gräber im Hintergrunde. Das Innere ist in der Regel so niedrig, dass man selten darin aufrecht stehen kann, überhaupt ist der Raum im Inneren ungemein beschränkt. Die Gräber befinden sich ganz auf dem Boden, sind nur durch eine schmale Felsenwand von einander getrennt und erstrecken sich manchmal am einen Ende unter den Felsen hinein. Sie haben durchwegs die Form eines Troges und sind in den Felsen gehauen und können noch am ehesten als Senkgräber betrachtet werden. Es ist nicht daran zu denken, dass diese Gräber mit einer Felsenplatte zugedeckt wurden. Solcher Art sind die Bethania-Gräber, welche ganz wohl als Miniaturgrabmonumente bezeichnet werden können. Dergleichen findet man in Bethania und auf dem Oelberge, sonst aber nirgendwo in der Umgebung Jerusalems. Natürlich war auch das Grab des Lazarus in Bethanien dieser Art und mit Rücksicht darauf lässt es sich leicht erklären, warum das Grab des Lazarus vom Grabe des Herrn und der heil. Jungfrau so gänzlich verschieden sei. Die kleine Felsenstiege und der enge Eingang sind

theilweise noch vorhanden, aber die Gräber im Innern sind verschwunden und man findet daselbst nur noch den leeren Raum. Durch die Mauern, wodurch später der mittlere Raum des Grabmonumentes nach allen Seiten hin abgeschlossen wurde, wurden die ursprünglichen Dimensionen der Grabhöhle nach Länge und Breite verkleinert, die Höhe aber vergrößert. Der Umstand, dass das Grab des Lazarus dem Grabe des Herrn oder der hl. Jungfrau gar nicht gleicht, spricht daher nicht gegen, sondern für die Aechtheit desselben. Mit Rücksicht auf diese Beschaffenheit des Grabes lassen sich auch die Angaben der Evangelisten bezüglich der Auferstehung des Lazarus leicht erklären."

The facts which Gatt has put together add greatly to our knowledge of the ancient burial places at Bethany. But in order not to create a false impression it should be added immediately that there were many other types of tombs in that village. Half way between our tombs and kilometer 5 on the Jerusalem-Jericho road, on the property of Aissa Pharaon, two rock-cut chambers were found in October, 1949, which have no special arrangements inside for the burial of the dead, but in one an ossuary filled with bones was found. — Next to the same road, west of km. 5, quarrying operations carried out a little earlier in the same year brought to light a columbarium. — East of km. 5, beyond the second curve in the road, on the slope of the hill to the right (south) of the road, Salim Eff. Hussein, Assistant Inspector of Antiquities, in 1932 cleared four rock-sunk graves covered with stone slabs; two contained lead coffins of the third century A.D., which Avi-Yonah published (4). — Inside the Russian property at the eastern end of the village one can see a tomb with four kokhim. — More to the southeast, beneath the floor of the Greek Orthodox church, there are other ancient tombs whose type the writer could not ascertain. From some tomb in this neighborhood comes a good number of objects now preserved in the museum of the Flagellation in Jerusalem; they

(4) *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine IV* (1935), pp. 96 f., nos. 8 and 9, and p. 150. One coffin contained a gold ear-ring and fragments of bone pins.

were acquired in February and March, 1904. — Other tombs exist at the western end of the village on the property of the Sisters of Charity and of the Passionists and south of them (5). One on the property of the Passionists, published by Father H. Vincent (6), carries the history of this place back to the Late Bronze Age. — On the slope of the hill west of the Passionists, below km. 4 on the Jerusalem-Jericho road, there is a large chamber with both kokhim and arcosolia over benches (7). — Other reports indicate the existence of numerous other tombs of various dates (8).

Gatt says that he saw other tombs like ours on the Mount of Olives, but he does not indicate more precisely their location. Actually there are numerous such tombs on that mountain: on the eastern slope on the property of the Franciscans at Bethphage; on top of the mountain on the property of the Orthodox Greeks, known as Viri Galilaei; and on the western slope on the property of the Russians and the Franciscans (Gethsemane) (9). At Bethphage the writer recently visited three such chambers; each one has three niches like ours at Bethany; but in one chamber each niche contains only one grave; in a second, each niche contains two; whilst in the third, next to the northeastern corner of the church, each niche contains three graves; in this last-mentioned chamber the graves in the two lateral niches have their long sides parallel with the central space, but the graves in the rear niche have their narrow ends next to the central

(5) *Revue Biblique* LVIII (1951), p. 205, note 2: with kokhim.

(6) *Ib.* 1914, pp. 438-41 and Fig. 9.

(7) C. SCHICK, *Newly Discovered Rock-cut Tomb Near Bethany, Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement* 1890, pp. 249-51, plan on p. 250.

(8) Besides the unpublished reports in the Palestine Archaeological Museum's fine archives we may note an unpublished tomb referred to by E. HENSCHEL-SIMON in *QDAP* XI (1945), p. 76, in discussing a group of eight bottles which come from it and which she calls 'Persian-Hellenistic.' Those bottles are said to have put in their first appearance in about the 6th century B. C., whilst they seem to appear for the last time in this tomb of Bethany, which she thinks may be as late as the 2nd century B. C.

(9) K. GALLING, *Die Nekropole von Jerusalem*, *PJB* 1936, p. 90.

space. There is at least one more such chamber there. One of the chambers still has the rolling stone *in situ* in front of its entrance. From what has been said it is evident that all the variations in the chambers noted at Bethany are found also at Bethphage.

The remarkable cemetery at Viri Galilaei consists of a long passage flanked by at least a dozen niches in which there are not only two or three graves, but even four and five; some rock-sunk graves are in the passage itself (10).

Contrary to Gatt's experiences such burial-chambers do exist also in the more immediate vicinity of Jerusalem. On September 9, 1942, the writer saw such a chamber east of the Jerusalem-Jericho road, just opposite the road coming down from St. Stephen's Gate; it contained five niches, each with two graves; the roof of the chamber had collapsed and a tree was planted inside; it was cleared only partially when the new retaining wall of the road was built. Similar burial-chambers at other points around Jerusalem are carefully noted in a plan prepared by Galling in 1936 (11). According to him the type of chambers we are considering became popular already in the first century of our era and continued in use at least until the fourth century (12). From the fourth to the sixth century a type with rock-sunk graves in the chamber

(10) C. SCHICK, *Katakomben auf dem Oelberg*, ZDPV XII (1889), pp. 193-199; the plan is on Taf. V, facing p. 192; the contents of these tombs are briefly summarized on p. 199, but the details given there do not suffice for instituting comparisons with the contents of ours, though in general some of those objects seem to be older and others more recent than those in our tombs.

(11) *PJB* 1936, pp. 82 f., Fig. 22. Our rock-sunk graves in niches are there called "Bogentroggrab," that is, a trough-shaped grave beneath an arch. They exist in the regions which he designates Bab, Ccd, Df and Ee; they are associated with graves of the kokhim type in Bb, Df and Fc.

(12) *PJB* 1936, pp. 78 f.: "Gegen Ende des ersten Jahrhunderts n. Chr. beginnt das Bogentroggrab sich durchzusetzen, zuerst mit anderen Typen kombiniert (Abb. 19), vom zweiten Jahrhundert an als Grabform für sich, allerdings nicht sehr häufig. Ihm ist mit dem Bogenbankgrab die bogenförmig abgeschlossene Nische über die Grabstätte gemeinsam; diese selbst ist bei ihm keine Bank, sondern ein vertiefter Trog (Abb. 7; Schnitt Abb. 8)."

proper (not in lateral niches) predominated (13). Both types may have originated from a type in which the lateral niches have flat tops and may possibly go back to Persian-Hellenistic times (fifth to third century B.C.) (14). According to these principles Gatt's assumption that the tomb of Lazarus was similar to our tomb-chambers is not impossible. The views expressed here were adopted by Friedrich Nötscher in a recent work on Biblical archaeology (15). Galling himself reserved the evidence for the views which he expressed in 1936 for a later more detailed study, which, as far as the present writer knows, has not yet appeared. Until that evidence is forthcoming it may be well to bear in mind that objects found in our tombs resemble the objects found in similar tombs in various parts of Palestine and those objects, where datable, were usually assigned to the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. We are thinking of tombs carefully studied in recent years by members of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine and published in the *Quarterly* of that Department. Such tombs, assigned to the fourth century, exist at Nazareth (I, 53 f.), Askalon (II, 182 f.), Tarshiha (III, 9 f.), el-Bassa (III, 81 f.), Bait Fajjar (IV, 175 ff.), 'Ain Yabrud (VI, 54 ff.) and at the eastern end of the road outside St. Stephen's Gate, Jerusalem (VI, 153 ff.); others, assigned to the fourth-fifth century, were found at Karm el-Shaikh, Jerusalem (I, 3 ff.), at el-Jish (VIII, 45 ff.) and at Tell en-Nasbeh and

(13) *PJB* 1936, p. 79: "Im vierten bis sechsten Jahrhundert... finden sich Anlagen mit zwei oder drei trogartig ausgehöhlten Grabstellen, die zusammen mit dem Gang von einer Decke überwölbt sind; wir bezeichnen diesen Typus als Trogkammergrab (Abb. 12 and 13)." But if the graves are built up partly of stones, like one grave in our tomb-chamber II, Galling assigns them to the second half of this period. *Ib.* p. 89: "Noch jünger sind die zum Teil gemauerten Trogkammergräber im Bereich des Stephansklosters der Dominikaner (Dd); sie gehören den Christen des fünften und sechsten Jahrhunderts an und haben teilweise griechische Inschriften." — *Ib.* note 6 he refers to such masonry tombs found on the property of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem, published in the *BASOR* 47, pp. 28 ff.

(14) *PJB* 1936, p. 93.

(15) *Biblische Altertumskunde*, Bonn, 1940, p. 102.

its neighborhood (16). These are the tombs which we will primarily consider in studying the contents of our tombs, but the comparison could be usefully extended to numerous other tomb-groups of this type found all over Palestine, especially those at Gezer.

B. THE CONTENTS OF THE TOMBS

I. CLAY LAMPS (Figs. 10-13)

The clay lamps are by far the most numerous and most characteristic objects found in the burial-chambers; originally there must have been over 110; of these 97 are still complete; the rest are broken or incomplete. Figures 10 and 11 illustrate the principal characteristics. Similar lamps were found in the tombs at or near Tell en-Nasbeh. Those finds were so thoroughly discussed by C. C. McCown (17), that the reader will be served best if we correlate our lamps with those. All of our lamps belong to McCown's molded Byzantine types (II, D ff.).

LARGE LAMPS.

The lamps illustrated in Fig. 10, 1-3 and Fig. 11, 1 belong to McCown's type E (pp. 60 f.). They may be distinguished from the rest by their size, being, as a rule, larger than the others. Forty of our lamps belong to this group: 38 from tomb I and one from each of the other tombs. On the spout 38 of these lamps have as an ornament a so-called "candlestick;" one, a cross; two, ringlets; and another, a straight line flanked by two curved ones. Around the central opening all except four have radial strokes as ornaments; the four exceptions have a vine ornament; one of the larger group has a zigzag line be-

(16) C. C. McCOWN, *Tell en-Nasbeh I*, Berkeley and New Haven, 1947, pp. 112 ff.

(17) *Tell en-Nasbeh II*, pp. 59 ff.

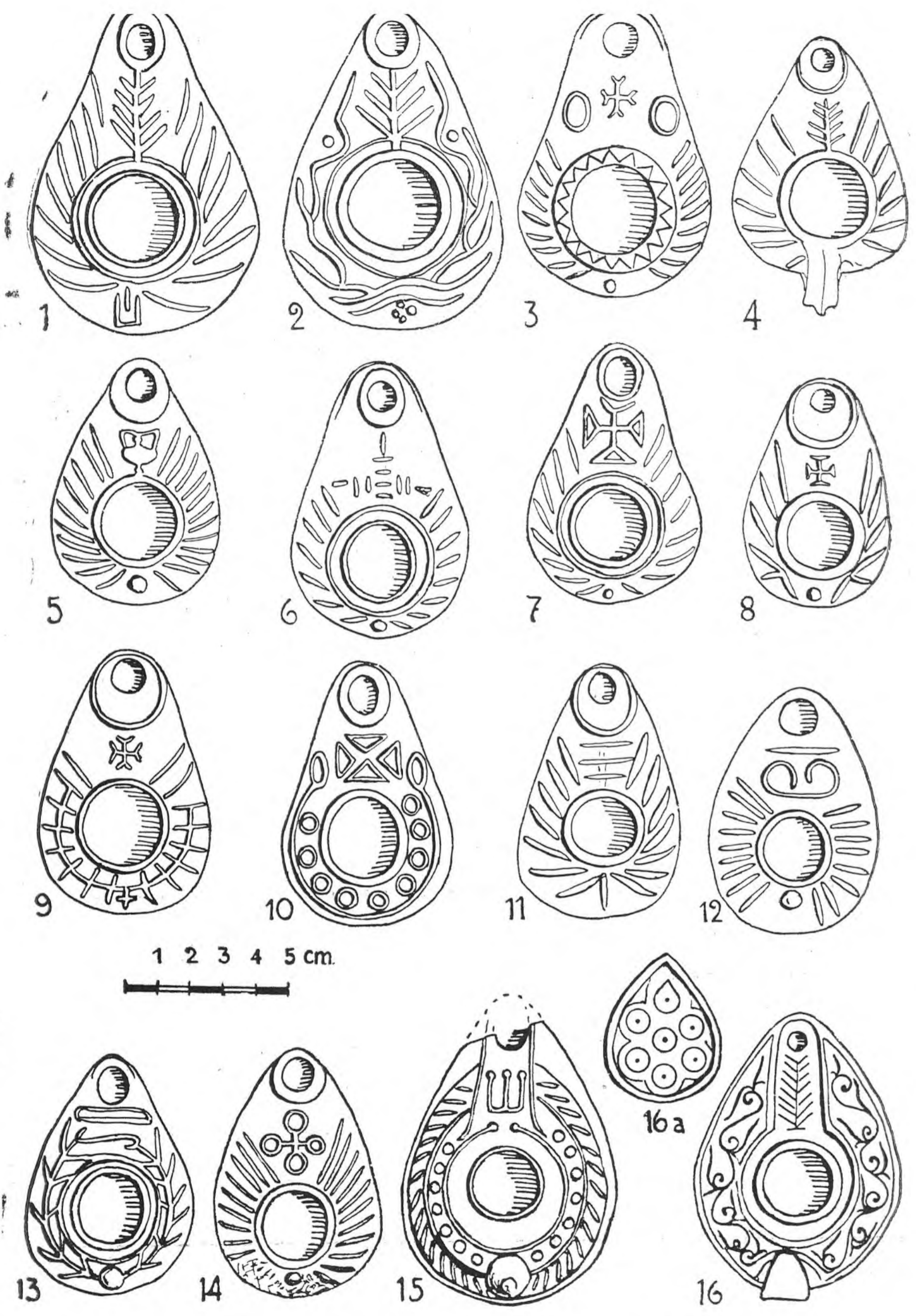


Fig. 10. Clay lamps from tomb-chamber I (1-10) and II (11-16a).

tween the rays and the central opening. None of these lamps has a handle; instead of it they have either nothing at all (15), or only a small pellet (about 7), or four pellets (4), or a vertical line alone (5) or combined with a U-shaped design (7), or a crosslet (1). Note that the lamp illustrated in Fig. 10, 3, which differs in so many respects from the rest, is smaller than the rest and could be equally well grouped with the small types.

Lamps of type E, according to McCown, appear to be confined to the neighborhood of Judea and were certainly in use from the fourth to the sixth century.

The two lamps illustrated in Fig. 10, 15 and 16 could be assigned to the preceding group by virtue of their size, but they are distinguished from that group in many ways, especially by the channel on their spouts. Both come from tomb II and are the only lamps of this type found in our tombs. At Tell en-Nasbeh they are also rare — only three examples (Type J). This surprised McCown, since, according to him, this type is so common all over the eastern Mediterranean area in the Byzantine period (from the fourth to at least the seventh century). He tries to account for their rarity by the fact that the tombs as yet excavated at Tell en-Nasbeh represent mainly fourth and fifth century occupation, and that this type had not yet made its way to favor in the Judean area. The same explanation may hold also for the Bethany tombs. The second of our two lamps differs from all the rest not only by the channel on its spout, but also by the palm in the channel, by the delicate vine ornament along the sides, by the stump handle and above all by the heart-shaped base with a group of circlets enclosing a pellet inside. — All the other lamps have a ring base without any ornament. — In the Flagellation museum, Jerusalem, there are quite a few lamps of this type which Father Bellarmino Bagatti has discussed in *Faenza* XXXV (1949), pp. 98-103; the closest parallels are nos. 10 and 10a on p. 100. Father Bagatti reaches the conclusion that this type of lamp was in use from about the 7th to the 11th century; the group with the more delicate ornaments, like ours, should be assigned

to the earlier part of that period. From this it would follow that tomb II was used at least up to the seventh century.

Two other lamps of the larger type (Fig. 11, 6 and 7) come from tomb III. The former represents McCown's group D (p. 59) and the

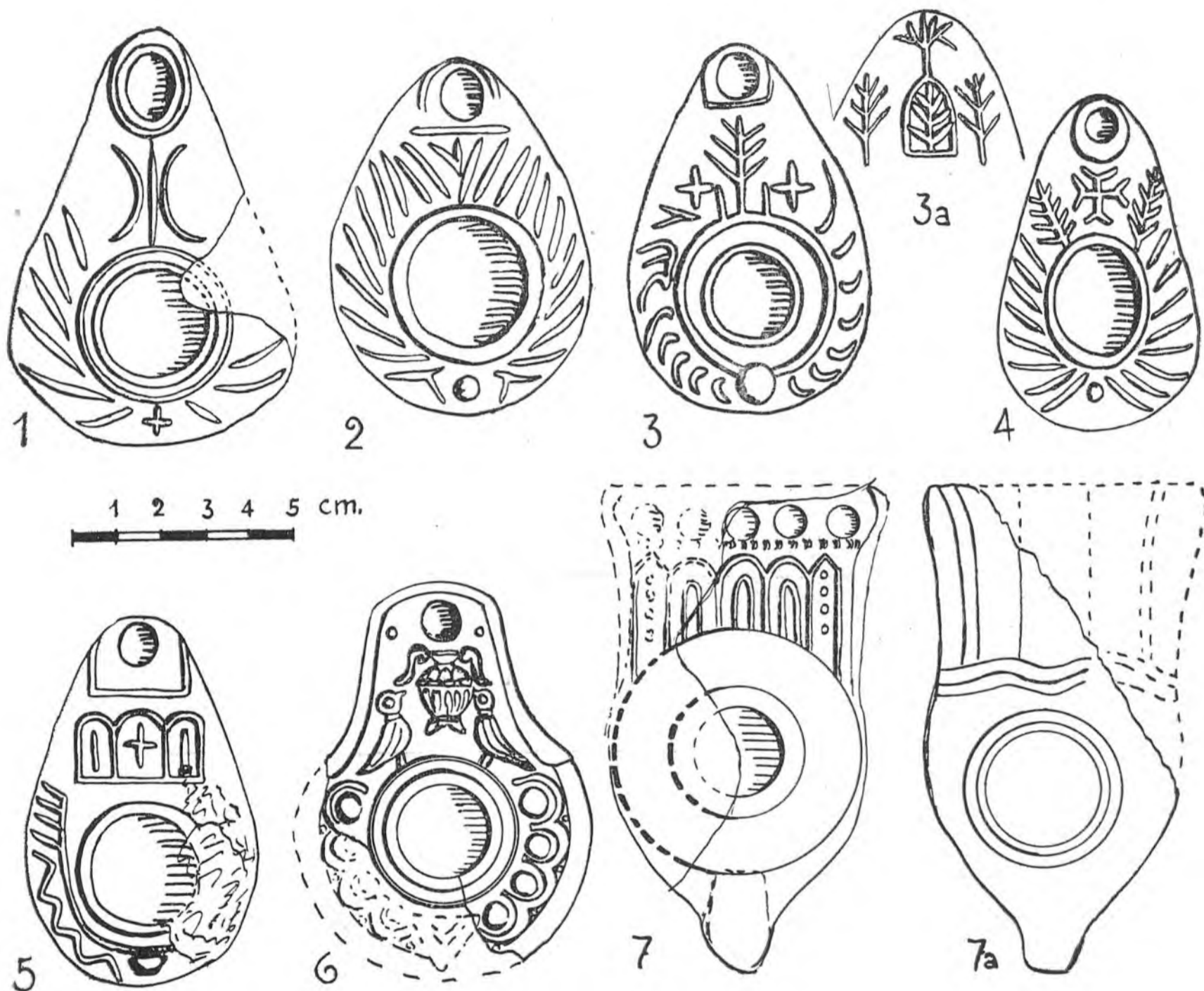


Fig. 11. Clay lamps from tomb-chamber III.

latter his group L (pp. 62 f.). As here, so at Tell en-Nasbeh the two types were associated in the same tombs and are evidently contemporaneous. — One of the D-group with a cross on its spout (Fig. 14)

was found at Bethany in 1903. — McCown is strongly inclined to date these lamps to the fourth century though he does not overlook the evidence for a later date, possibly in the fifth and sixth century. Their distribution also seems to be limited to Judean territory.

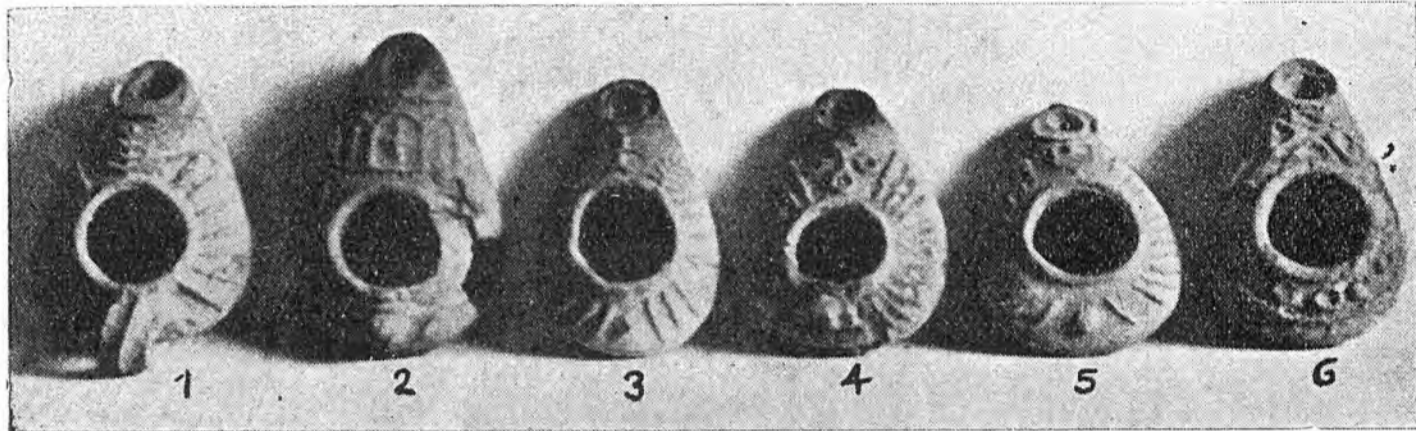


Fig. 12. Clay lamps: 1 corresponds to Fig. 10, 4; 2 to Fig. 11, 5; 3 to Fig. 11, 4; 4 to Fig. 10, 14; 5 to Fig. 10, 5; 6 to Fig. 10, 10.

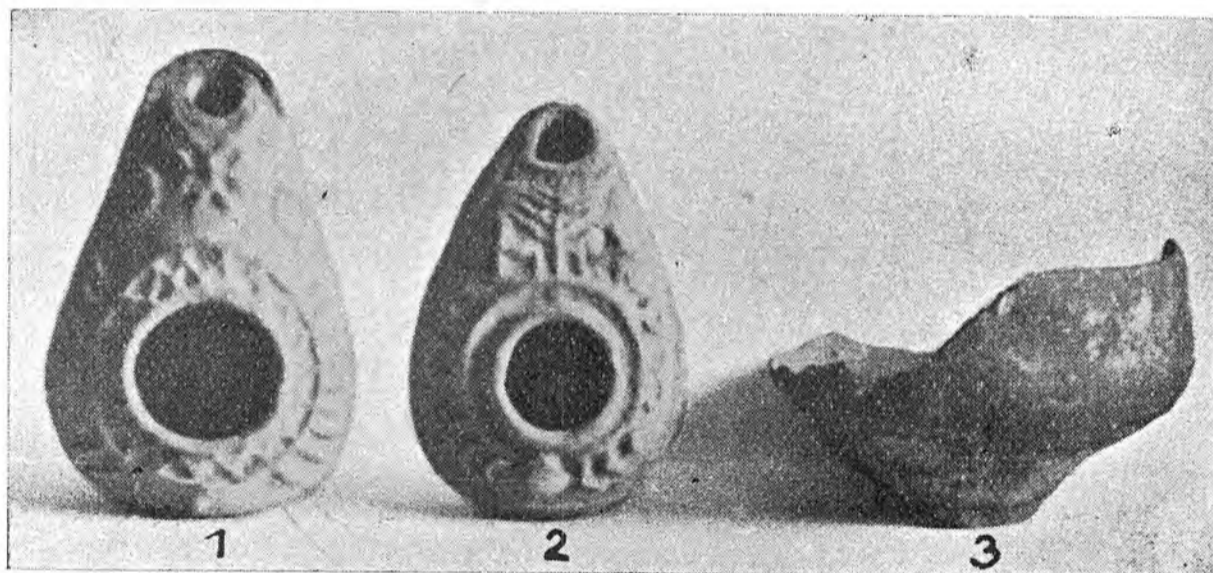


Fig. 13. Clay lamps (1 corresponds to Fig. 10, 3; 2 to Fig. 11, 3) and bowl (3).

SMALL LAMPS.

The remaining 64 lamps are all small and belong to McCown's types F-I and K. There were 27 of these lamps in tomb I, 8 in tomb II and 29 in tomb III.

The lamp illustrated in Fig. 10, 4 belongs to McCown's type K. The characteristic of this group is the loop handle. It is found on only one more fragment from our tombs. Also at Tell en-Nasbeh it is rare, occurring only three times; and the only parallels which McCown could find were from Gezer. The handle is evidently a rare feature, but otherwise the lamp is evidently closely related with all the rest. On its spout it has the so-called "candlestick" motif as an ornament; the same ornament occurs alone on 29 of these small lamps and twice in connection with crosses; that is 31 times in all. In this

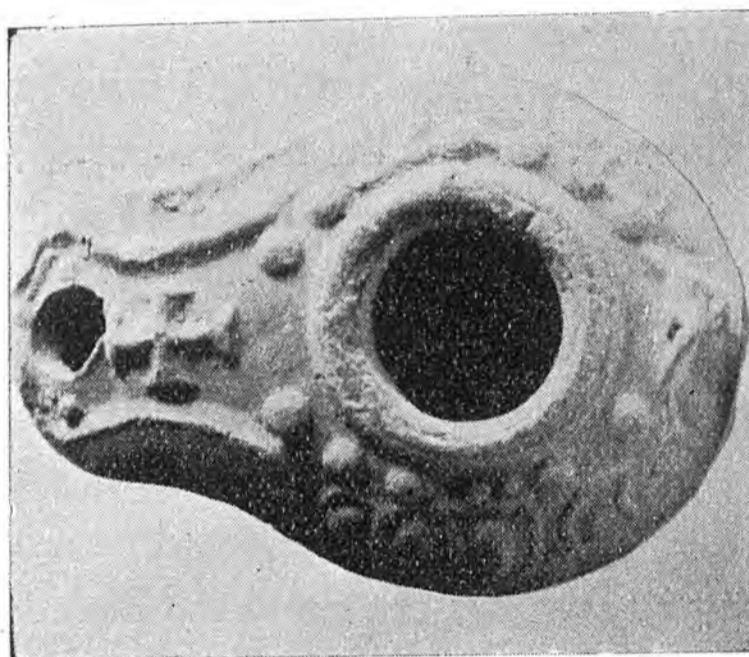


Fig. 14. Clay lamp found in Bethany in 1903, now in the Flagellation museum, Jerusalem.

respect the small lamps resemble the large ones. All told, 69 of our lamps have this decoration between the two holes. Some archaeologists prefer to use this feature of the molded lamps as a *fundamentum divisionis*. In this case over half of our lamps would belong to the "candlestick" type. — Around the central opening our lamp has only rays as an ornament. It is by far the most common ornament of our lamps; in fact it is found on at least 59 of the smaller lamps; since 37 of the large lamps have this same ornament, there are 96 lamps in all which are decorated in this way; only in three cases is another

ornament (zigzag line, wavy line and pellets) associated with the rays. At Tell en-Nasbeh tombs 23, 13 and 19 are characterized by their "rayed" lamps (*op. cit.* I, pp. 116 ff.); a reference to their plans in figures 17, 18 and 20 shows that they are all of the *arcosolia* type like our tombs at Bethany.

The other small lamps from our tombs belong to McCown's types F ff. On the spout they have besides the candlestick ornament, referred to already above, some 5 or 6 other motifs. The amphora (Fig. 10, 5) occurs only once on these lamps, but is found once more on the "outgoing square nozzle" type (Fig. 10, 6). — The cross occurs on about 15 small lamps: 6 from tomb I, 3 from tomb II and 6 from tomb III. The bifurcated cross is the most common; it is found in all three tombs; twice in both the first and second and three times in the third. The cross with a straight line at the end of each bar (Fig. 10, 8) occurs twice; with triangles at the end of the arms (Fig. 10, 7) or instead of the arms (*ib.* 10), once each; with circles at the end of each arm, once (*ib.* 14); in one case semicircles have a cruciform arrangement and in another simple lines are disposed more or less in the same way (*ib.* 6); twice the cross has the simplest Greek form. In Fig. 11, 3 two small Greek crosses flank the candlestick; note that in this case the tip of the lower side of the lamp is also decorated with twigs: one in a frame, another above it and two at its sides (*ib.* 3a). (Note that in Fig. 11, 4 the cross is flanked by two twigs.) In Fig. 11, 5 the simple Greek cross is inside an arch; two lateral arches contain simple vertical ornaments suggestive of candles (or columns [?]).

The use of the cross on these lamps suggests that the tombs were used as burial places by Christians. It may also suggest that other ornaments on the lamps have a religious significance.

The remaining ornaments on the spouts are simple linear designs.

In Fig. 10: no. 11 has three horizontal lines; no. 12 has an horizontal line and below it two spirals, like no. 1672 in *Tell en-Nasbeh* II, Pl. 73; no. 13 has a loop; Fig. 12, 2 has an horizontal line above an uninterrupted series of rays (see *Tell en-Nasbeh* I, p. 126, 11).

Around the central opening these small lamps have not only rays but also a herringbone or vine design, a wavy line and a series of circlets enclosed by a band ending in loops, exactly like on a lamp at Tell en-Nasbeh (II, Pl. 73, no. 1667); for the herringbone motif see *ib.* nos. 1661, 1665, 1671, 1677. Note also the lunettes on our Fig. 11, 3.

Instead of the handle the small lamps, like the large ones, may have merely a pellet (41), or a vertical line (6), or a cross (1), or nothing (about a dozen).

The ornamentation of our Byzantine lamps is discussed by Gal-ling (18). Like the cross, so the two doves facing an amphora, the three arches suggesting a temple, the candlestick, vine and palm may all have religious significance.

II. GLASS

Only tombs I and III contained objects made of glass (not tomb II).

UNGUENTARIA.

Tomb III produced two unguentaria (Figs. 15 and 16). They resemble each other very closely. Both consist of a double tube of transparent glass nearly 10 cm. high and of a handle forming five loops (two on the side and three above) 7 to 8 cm. high. Around the tubes there are dark blue threads as ornaments. In one of the tubes the kohl-stick with one end flattened and the other crowned with a vitreous substance was preserved.

In the museum of the Flagellation (19), among a dozen unguentaria from various places (Capharnaum and Valley of Josaphat near Jerusalem), there are two which come from Bethany. The one is

(18) *ZDPV* 46 (1923), pp. 17 ff.

(19) B. BAGATTI, *Guida al Museo*, Gerusalemme, 1939, p. 68, n. 89.

labelled "Tomb near the Stone of Colloquy, 9/2/04;" the other, "Jan. 1905." These two also resemble each other very closely, but differ somewhat from the two described above. In this case the glass is greenish (not light blue, as in the other two); moreover, the tubes have vertical ribbing and are without the decoration of threads; finally, the handles form only three loops (two small lateral ones and one large one on top). In fact none of the unguentaria in the museum which have preserved their handles have three loops above the mouth of the vase.

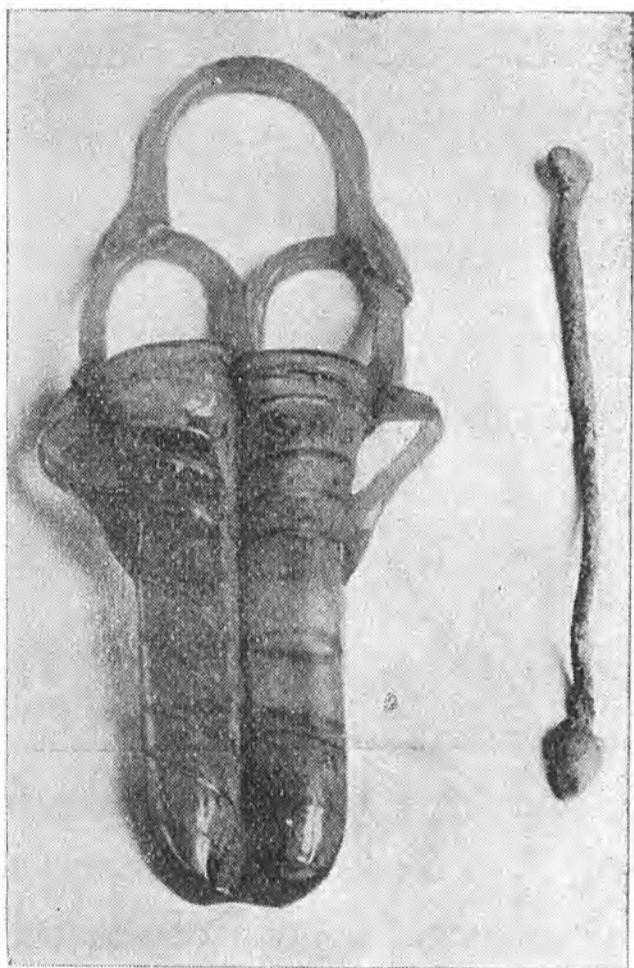


Fig. 15. Glass unguentarium and bronze kohl-stick from tomb-chamber III.



Fig. 16. Glass unguentarium from tomb-chamber III.

The Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine reports similar vases from fourth century tombs at Nazareth (I, 53 f.), Tarshiha (III, 9 f.), Bait Fajjar (IV, 175 ff.), 'Ain Yabrud (VI, 54 ff.),

St. Stephen's Gate, Jerusalem (VI, 153 ff.) and from the fourth to fifth century tomb of el-Jish (VIII, 45 ff.).

Harden (20) calls "the double unguent-bottle with basket-handle" "the "type fossil" of the period." — Not one of those illustrated has the triple loop above like ours; all those which Harden assigns to the fourth century have a single large loop above the tubes, whilst the somewhat later el-Jish vase has about eleven loops arranged fantastically. Our two lamps occupy a middle position.

For an unguentarium from a fourth century tomb at Beisan see *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement* 1932, Pl. V, Fig. 10 (after p. 148); for another from Gezer, see *Gezer* I, Tomb 139, 2. In *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palaestinaverains* XII (1889), pp. 24 ff., J. P. van Kasteren, S.J., describes a tomb with arcosolia at ed-Duweime, near Beit Jibrin, in which such a vase was found (not illustrated).

F. Neuburg, *Glass in Antiquity*, illustrates a number of unguentaria from Palestine (Pl. XVII, 57, a-c; XIX, 64-68; XXIV, 83, 3). The one on Pl. XIX, 68, preserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, has a handle like the two from our tombs; it is dated by Neuburg to the period from 400 to 600 A.D.

FLASKS.

The rest of our glass vessels come from tomb I; there are two complete flasks and the fragments of three broken ones. The one (Fig. 17) is 127 mm. high; the body is about 60 mm. in d. and 47 mm. high; the neck is slightly wider (35 mm.) near the mouth than near its base (about 29 mm.); the base is concave. The glass has a light greenish color.

The second complete flask (Fig. 18) is 95 mm. high; its globular body is about 60 mm. in d. and 57 mm. high; the cylindrical neck is 42 mm. in d. at the mouth. In this case the base is also concave, but the color of the glass is light blue.

(20) *Iraq* XI (1949), p. 156.

The three other flasks are represented by only fragments of the body, but the necks are complete in two cases. The one of blue glass is slightly flaring like the two preceding ones and almost as long as the first (77 mm.); its mouth has lips nearly 2 mm. thick, whereas the rest of the vessel has a wall only about half that thick, as in the two preceding vessels. Moreover, the mouth is not straight but slanting; its diameter is 33 mm.

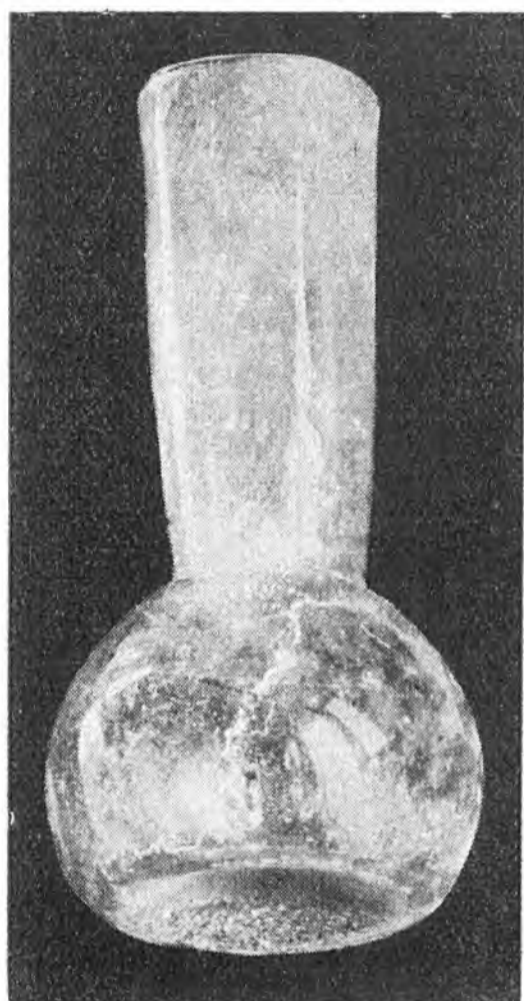


Fig. 17. Glass flask from tomb-chamber I.



Fig. 18. Glass flask from tomb-chamber I.

The other two necks differ from the preceding three in this that the neck is cylindrical, whilst only the mouth is flaring or funnel-shaped. In the one case the glass is light blue with a faint iridescent film and the neck is about $10\frac{1}{2}$ cm. long; the flaring mouth is 28 mm. in d.; its narrowest part is only 15 mm. in d. The other neck has a yellowish color with purplish iridescence; it is only about 3 cm. long, but the mouth, now broken, was a rather large splayed opening.

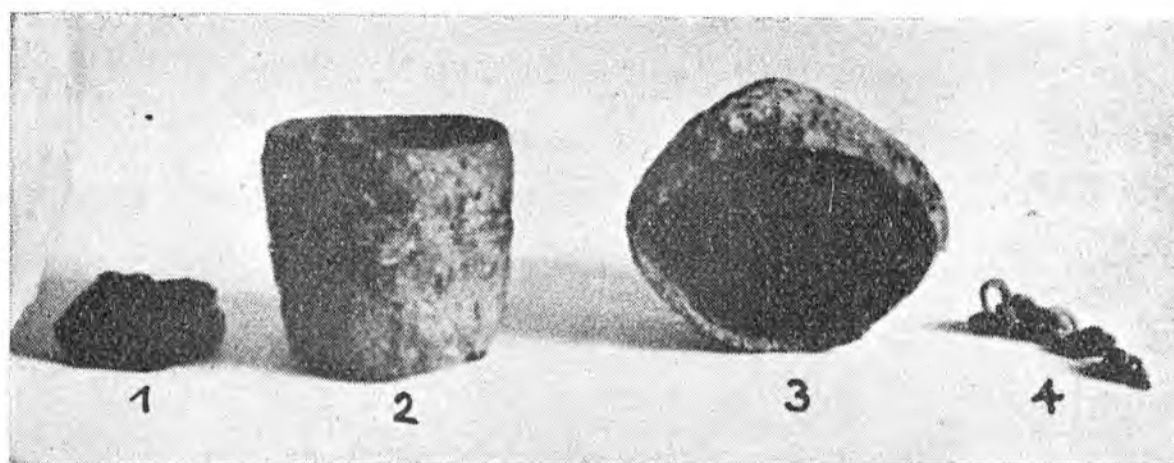


Fig. 19. Copper vessel (2-3) and its contents (1).

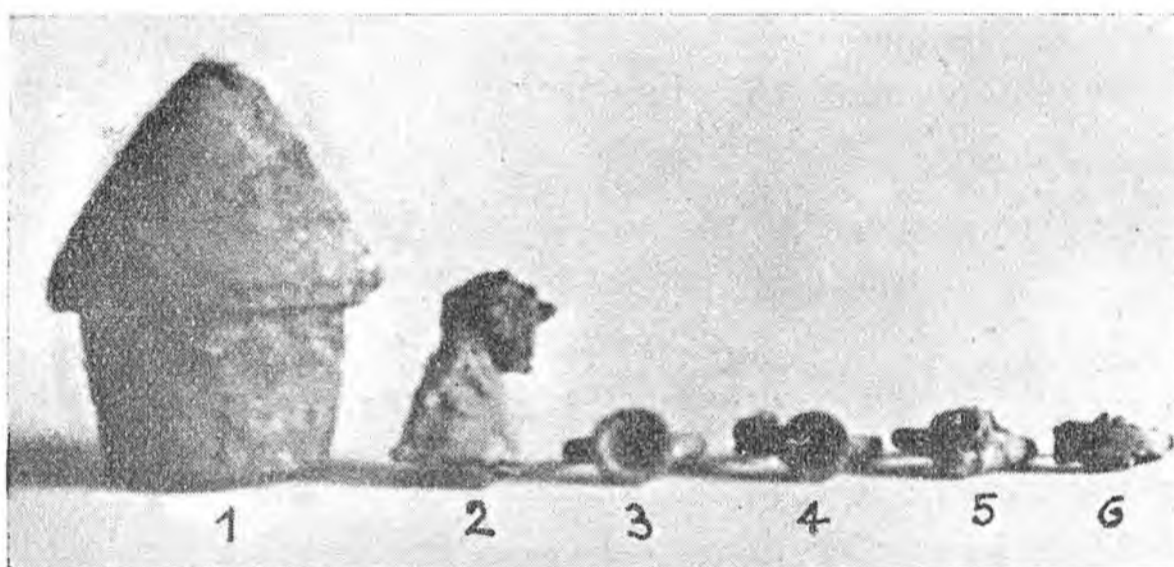


Fig. 20. Copper vessel (1), bronze bell (2) and rings (3-6).

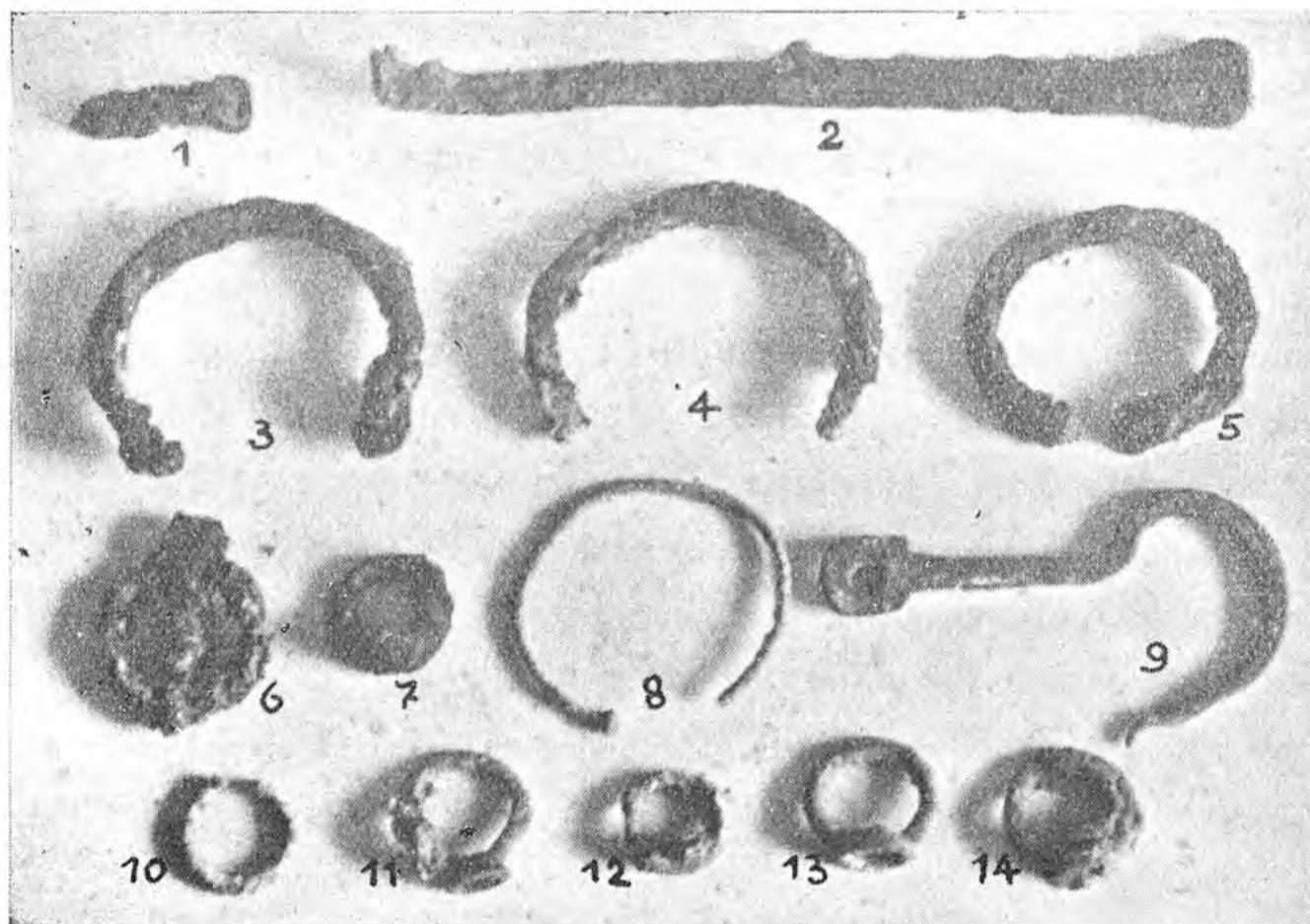


Fig. 21. Iron and bronze objects.

From a tomb near the Stone of the Meeting at Bethany comes a similar flask, which was found on February 9, 1904. It is 100 mm. h.; its body with a concave base is globular; its neck cylindrical; the glass bluish. The other vases in the Flagellation museum, registered as coming from Bethany, March, 1904, do not have their provenance indicated more precisely. The one is 116 mm. h.; has a concave base; a globular body with slanting corrugations (60 x 80 mm. d.); the neck is a simple funnel starting at the shoulder (56 mm. in d. at mouth); the glass is bluish. The other is 144 mm. h.; the body is somewhat ovate; the neck is funnel-shaped; the glass greenish. — It appears that all three flasks are closely related to the first three from our tombs. — In the Flagellation museum there are at least a dozen others from unregistered sites.

Similar flasks occur in the tombs which contain other material resembling ours at Nazareth (*QDAP* I, Pl. XXXIII, 5), Askalon (*ib.* II, Pl. XLVIII, 14), el-Bassa (*ib.* III, Figs. 23, 25, 26), at the eastern end of St. Stephen's road in Jerusalem (*ib.* VI, Pl. XLII, first). — Quite a few may be seen in the museums of Jerusalem.

Note that in tomb I there were also five beads of colored glass.

III. METAL

Besides the bronze spatula mentioned in speaking of the unguentaria our tombs contained a few other metal objects (Figs. 19-21).

IRON is represented by half a dozen whole or broken much rusted rings (Fig. 21, 1, 3-5), 4 to 5½ cm. in d., which served as bracelets or anklets; none of the rings are closed; on at least two tips there are smaller ringlets (*ib.* 1 and 3). Two smaller rings only 15 mm. in d. may have served as ornaments of fingers or some practical purpose on garments (*ib.* 7). Another ring about 22 mm. in d. has a tongue across its center suggesting a buckle (*ib.* 6). Finally, there is a bar 177 mm. long and 8 to 20 mm. wide which has a bent nail in its widest end (*ib.* 2).

BRONZE OR COPPER is represented by a round band 52 mm. in d. with a ball-head; the broken end probably also had an enlarged rounded tip (*ib.* 8); two more such balls — one larger, the other smaller than the one on the ring — were found. There are also five finger-rings with round bands (*ib.* 10-14; Fig. 20, 3-6); three have preserved bezels, but in only one is there preserved a piece of the glass ornament which it contained. There is likewise a small bell with horizontal incised rings around its exterior surface; the clapper is of iron; the top is encased in an iron net or something like it (Fig. 20, 2). A large hook is well preserved (Fig. 21, 9).

All these iron and bronze objects have their parallels in tombs of the *arcosolia* type in Palestine. But there is one object for which it was more difficult to find a parallel. It is a copper vessel consisting of two parts: the lower part is cylindrical or better slightly splayed, 5 cm. h. and 4 cm. in d. below and 5 cm. on top (Fig. 19, 2); the upper part is cone-shaped; it too is 5 cm. high and about 52 mm. in d. below (*ib.* 3; Fig. 20, 1); in its pointed tip there is a piece of a chain; other links of this chain were found nearby (Fig. 19, 4). On the exterior this lid has fine horizontal lines incised. On the interior this vessel was filled with black charcoal (*ib.* 1), similar to other fragments found lying on the edge of at least one tomb. A vase just like this one is preserved in the museum at St. Anne's convent, Jerusalem (no. 1856). There it is called a lantern and compared with an object from Egypt which looks somewhat like it. It is suspended from a stick held by a soldier. The Egyptian object may be a lantern, but how could these two vases serve to give light? They have no opening whatsoever around their sides or top. The charcoal in our vase demonstrates that it served as a charcoal container. If this was ignited it could only have burned if air got inside between the upper and lower part; the smoke could have escaped through the opening on top containing the chain. This little vase, therefore, seems to be a small addition to the furniture of tombs as known to us from other sources.

In connection with these metal objects we may call attention to an amulet which is preserved in the museum of the Flagellation and is said to have been found in Bethany in 1903. It is illustrated and described in the Guide to the museum, pp. 55 f., Fig. 25. On the one side a horseman with an aureole is spearing a prostrate demon; below is a lion and around the top a Greek inscription which says: One God, who conquers evil. On the opposite side there is a large bird, which, according to H. Seyrig (21), is an ibis attached to an altar and holding a serpent in its beak. Above in Greek we read: Hippos and Mylos.

For this latter scene see Seyrig (22); for the former, besides the examples given by Schlumberger (23), see also the one from el-Jish (24). It is on exhibit in the Byzantine section of the Palestine Archaeological Museum and described in the catalogue under nos. 1565 and 1566. The horseman is said to be Solomon who was believed to be a master of magic. Another example in the museum of Notre Dame de France in Jerusalem is published in the catalogue of that institute on p. 27. The relation of the text on the obverse to other closely related texts on the buildings of Syria is discussed by W. Prentice (25).

* * *

This comparison of our tombs with similar ones throughout Palestine establishes the fact that they belong to a group which in form and contents has been assigned to the Byzantine period. Our tombs I and II would fit best into fourth and fifth century contexts, whilst tomb II seems to belong to a slightly later period. It is a period in

(21) *Syria* 1949, p. 374.

(22) *Berytus I* (1934), p. 2.

(23) *Mélanges d'Archéologie Byzantine*, Paris, 1895, pp. 125 ff.

(24) N. MAKHOULY, *QDAP VIII* (1939), p. 49 and Pl. XXXII, 1, n 2.

(25) *Greek and Latin Inscriptions*, New York and London, 1908, pp. 21 f.; see also G. KITTEL, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament III*, p. 99, line 47 and pp. 101 f.; he refers to a special work by E. PETERSON entitled *Εἷς Θεός*, 1926, pp. 280, 296 ff.

which the pagan custom of placing food in tombs is no longer in vogue, but articles of personal adornment, cosmetic articles and, above all, lamps are still very common. The crosses on the lamps and on at least two of the tombs (I and II) characterize them as Christian. — The three-lobed form of the chambers suggests a close relation with early memorial churches of the same form (26). — For Bethany the discovery of this Christian cemetery, consisting of three small chambers with eleven graves destined for an even larger number of persons, is of special interest, since it illustrates a period in which our interest has already been aroused by other sources of information (27).

APPENDIX

THE COINS FROM TOMB-CHAMBER I

Before going to print Brother Nazzareno Moretti, in charge of the galvanoplastic office at St. Savior's convent, Jerusalem, found time to clean the four coins from tomb-chamber I. In the process the smallest coin, less than a centimeter in diameter, crumbled to pieces. — The next in size, 11 mm. in d., is of copper; on its one side it seems to be a blank at present, whilst on the other there seems to be a Victoria. — The third copper coin is 17 mm. in d.; on its obverse there is the bust of a City-goddess facing right, wearing a turreted crown; on its reverse, a galley with one or the other letter. For the moment the date of this and the two preceding coins remains doubtful and their evidence should not be stressed. But the fourth coin is a silver denarius of Gordian III, who reigned from July, 238, to March, 244 A.D. On the obverse we can easily make out the bust of the emperor facing right; head, laureate; inscription: IMP(erator) GORDIANUS PI(us) FEL(ix) AUG(ustus); on the reverse the

(26) See S. SALLER, *The Memorial of Moses on Mount Nebo I*, Jerusalem, 1941, pp. 23 ff.

(27) See D. BALDI, *Enchiridion Locorum Sanctorum*, Jerusalem, 1935, pp. 451 ff.

emperor is on horseback facing left; the inscription reads: P(ontifex) M(aximus), TR(ibunicia) P(otestate) III, CO(n)S(ul), P(ater) P(atriciae). This coin, therefore, is of the year 240 A.D. If, for example, the el-Bassa tomb is to be assigned to about the year 396 A.D. on the evidence of coins of Valens (before 378), Theodosius (379-395), Arcadius (383-408) and Honorius (398-423 A.D.), in spite of the form of the lamps, which suggest a later period (28), then our tomb I should be assigned to an earlier period both on the evidence of the coin of Gordian and on the evidence of the other material.

FR. SYLVESTER SALLER, O.F.M.

(28) *QDAP* III, pp. 81 ff.