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A Jewish Mausoleum of the Roman Period at Qiryat Shemu'el, Tiberias

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In March–April 1976, an excavation was conducted on Bialik Street, in the Qiryat Shemu'el quarter of Tiberias (map ref. NIG 24995/74468, OIG 19995/24468) following the discovery of a basalt structure during the construction of the Yad Shiṭrit Cultural Center (Fig. 1).[1] The excavation revealed a large built tomb consisting of a courtyard, a burial chamber surrounded by two stories of *kokhim*, and a large underground chamber, which served for mass burial (Vitto 1976b; 1977a; 1992; 1993b). Based on the finds, the tomb's construction should be attributed to the end of the first–early second centuries CE. The discovery of an ossuary in one of the *kokhim* attests to the Jewish character of the mausoleum. Located on the slope overhanging Tiberias, 92 m below sea level, this tomb, 1 km west of the shore of the Sea of Galilee, is the western-most tomb of the Jewish cemetery of Roman Tiberias discovered to date.

Six weeks after the end of the excavation, a magical amulet was discovered. It was found next to the tomb in a heap of debris that had accumulated during earthworks related to the construction of the Yad Shiṭrit Cultural Center.[2]

The Tomb (Plan 1)

A large part of the tomb had been destroyed by bulldozers, and scaffoldings had already been erected (Fig. 2) before excavation commenced. Archaeological excavations were conducted

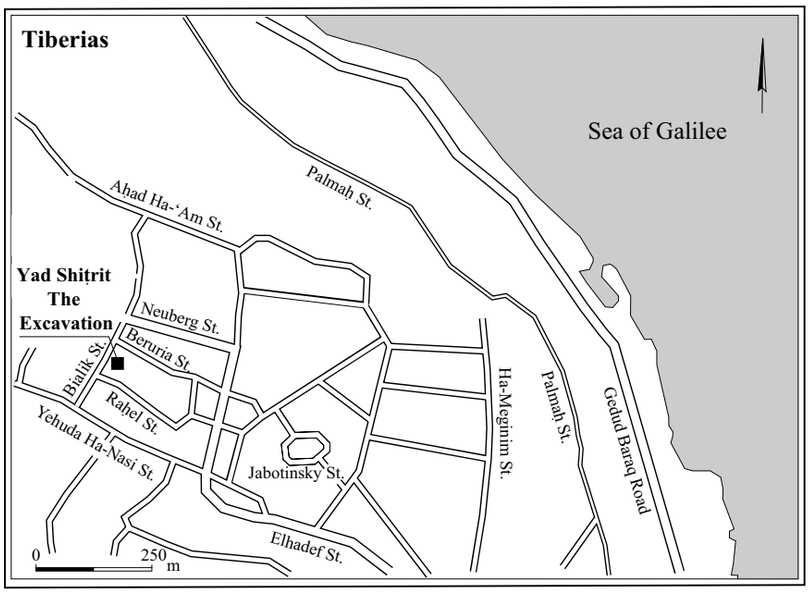
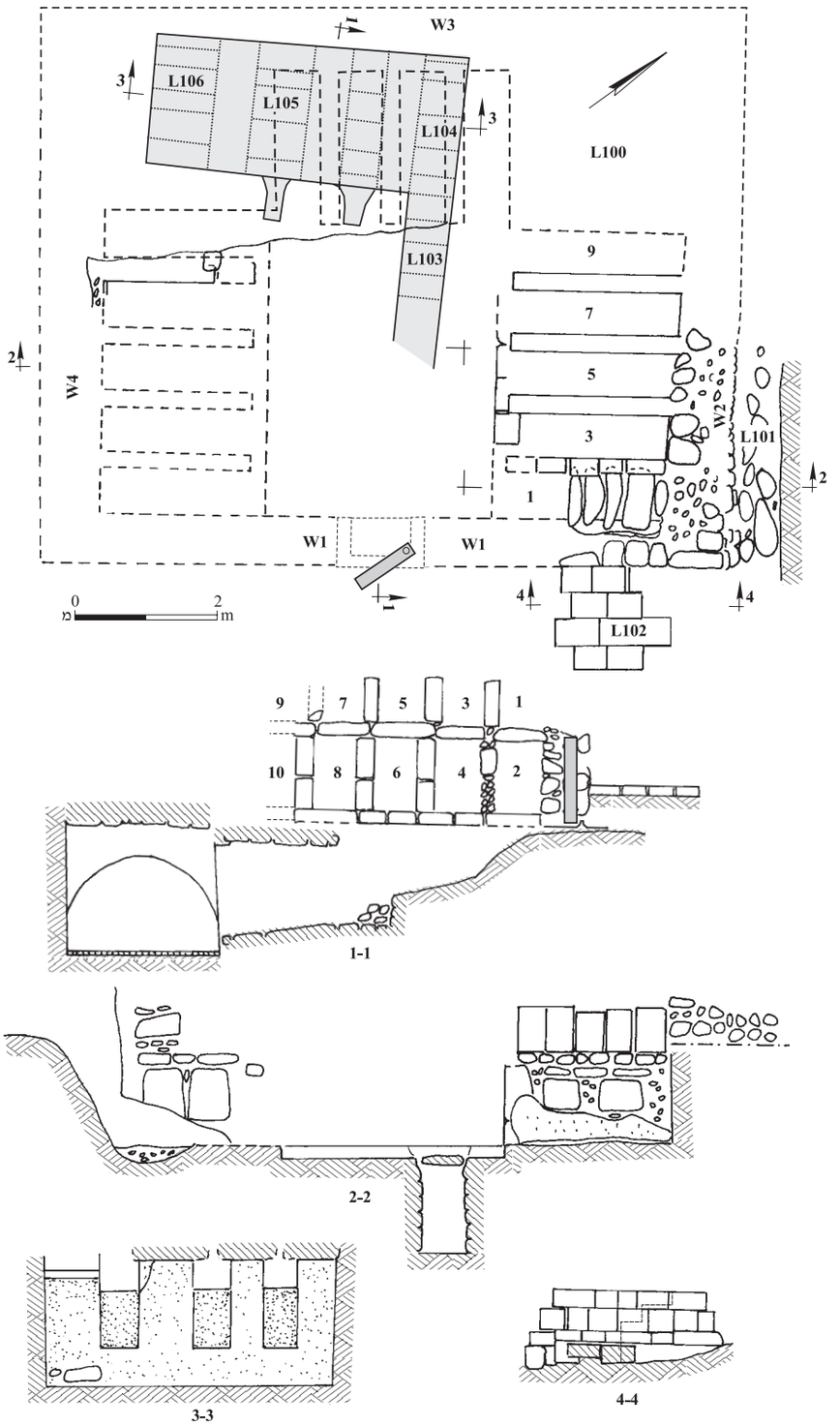


Fig. 1. Location map of the site.



Plan 1. Plan and sections of the tomb.

Fig. 2. The site at the beginning of the excavation, looking north.

from the level of Bialik Street, 3.2 m above the pavement of the mausoleum's courtyard. The northeastern upper *kokhim* appeared after the removal of 1 m of modern debris (L100).

The tomb is built on bedrock, which had been quarried and leveled for this purpose. A courtyard paved with rectangular well-dressed and tightly-fitting basalt flagstones (0.20–0.55 × 0.35–0.40 m) precedes the tomb on the side facing the Sea of Galilee. Pottery sherds, including a cooking pot dating to the mid-first–mid-second centuries CE (Fig. 22:6) and a bag-shaped jar, were found on the courtyard's pavement (L102). The tomb, built within a four-walled enclosure (c. 8.0 × 9.5 m; Walls 1, 2, 3, 4), is entered from the courtyard through a doorway located in the southeastern wall (W1). Portions of the southeastern (W1) and northeastern (W2) walls (each 0.7 m thick) were uncovered. The plan of the tomb could be reconstructed by comparison with contemporaneous tombs. Wall 2 is built of large, roughly dressed stones (0.3–0.4 × 0.4–0.5 × 0.2–0.3 m) with a rubble fill. The same was probably true for W3 and W4. The space between the bedrock and W2 was filled with large fieldstones measuring up to 0.9 m in length (Fig. 3). A few fragments of cooking pots (Type 2: mid-first–mid-second centuries CE) were found among the stones (L101). Southeastern W1, built of well dressed stones smoothed on the exterior, served as the tomb's facade, overlooking the courtyard (Fig. 4).

Fig. 3. Wall 2 and large fieldstones, filling the space between the wall and the bedrock, looking northeast.

Four courses of the eastern part of W1 were preserved to a height of 1.15 m. The lowest course, 0.3 m high (built of stones 0.25–0.30 m long), was laid on the bedrock and served as part of the foundations, beneath the courtyard's

Fig. 4. Wall 1 and the paved courtyard, looking west.

floor. The second course, the first above the courtyard's floor, is 0.2 m high, stones 0.3–0.7 m long; the third course—0.4 m high, stones 0.3–0.4 m long; and the fourth course—0.25 m high, stones 0.3–0.7 m long. The wall is bound with mortar and stucco bands hide the stone joints (Fig. 5). The courtyard is accessed by a staircase built against the eastern part of W1, which descends from the eastern corner of the tomb to the doorway leading inside it. None of the stones from the staircase was preserved, but marks visible on the outer face of W1 indicate that the staircase consisted of steps 0.3 m wide and 0.25 m high, and that the stones were large and well dressed (Fig. 6; Plan 1: Section 4–4).

Bulldozers had destroyed the doorway of the tomb, but part of a basalt-stone door was discovered lying nearby (Fig. 7). Its original height was c. 1.3 m (preserved height 0.85 m) and it is 0.9 m wide and 0.16 m thick. The outer face is carved in imitation of a paneled wooden door. A vertical band 7 cm wide in the middle,

Fig. 5. Detail of W1. Note the stucco bands hiding the joints.

hewn in low relief, simulates a double-leaved door. Each leaf consists of two rectangular panels (0.20 × 0.35 m) separated by a middle rail. Hinges were added to the right stile of the door, indicating that the door opened into the tomb by pushing it from left to right.[3] Only the lower hinge survives. It is made of a circular lead piece (diam. 8 cm), hemispherical in section, projecting 2 cm from the basalt slab, thereby

Fig. 6. Traces of the staircase on the outer face of W1, looking west.

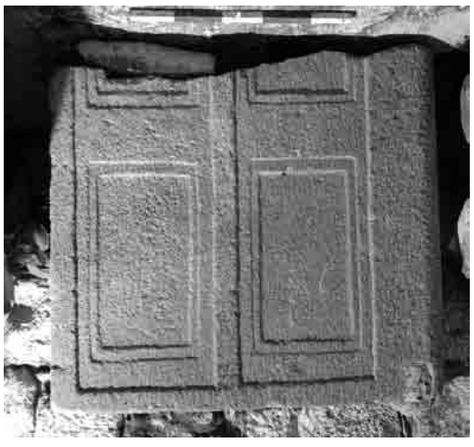


Fig. 7. Basalt door carved in imitation of a paneled wooden door.

allowing the door to revolve in the socket of the threshold. The hinge was probably fixed by means of elongated tenons inserted into the door slab like the bronze hinges attached to the doors at Bet She'arim (Avigad 1976:48–50, Fig. 21.1, Pl. 16:2). The missing upper hinge was either of lead like the lower hinge, or of stone and in one integral piece with the door slab, like the limestone doors found at Bet She'arim (Avigad 1976: Figs. 28:A, B; 37:3, 4).

Most chamber-tombs of Roman Palestine had their entrance blocked by a plain solid slab, sometimes carved with a boss to provide an exact fit. Tombs equipped with a monolithic stone door swinging on hinges are rare and are generally partly or entirely of masonry. A few variants appear among the doors. Plain limestone slabs that swing on hinges were found in the first-century-CE Akeldama Cave 2 in Jerusalem (Avni and Greenhut 1996:19, Figs. 1.30–1.32), at Ṣur Bahir near Jerusalem (Chaplin 1876; Dussaud 1912:58–59), in the Second Temple-period tomb at Ben Shemen (Reich 1982: Pl. III:1), and in the fourth-century-CE mausoleum at Gush Ḥalav (Vitto 1993a). Others, like our door, are carved with a simple paneling that imitates wooden doors, e.g., at Gedera and Gezer (Macalister 1912: Pl. CV: 40; Goodenough 1953, III: Figs. 40, 47). In a few cases, doors are decorated with various motifs such as a menorah, e.g., at

Kafr Yasif (Goodenough 1953, III: Fig. 44) and I'billin (Sapir 1953), or a human figure, e.g., at Kh. Summaqa (Oliphant 1886a:8; Goodenough 1953, III: Fig. 48) and Jaffa (Pinkerfeld 1955). The majority, however, imitate wooden doors studded with round nail heads, often with the addition of a door-knocker, e.g., at Nurit on the Gilboa' range (Zori 1977:6, No. 2, Pl. 1:4), Dabburiya (Zori 1977:108, No. 160, Pl. 24:2), Bethlehem (Macalister 1902) and, above all, the numerous limestone doors sealing the Bet She'arim catacombs (Avigad 1976:18–125). The dozen basalt doors discovered in the past in Tiberias are of the latter type (Oliphant 1886b:79–80; Rabani 1957; Landau 1967; Avissar 1973:48; Biger and Schiller 1987:61; Dudman and Ballhorn 1988:32, 35, 175; Hirschfeld and Reich 1988:117; Stepansky 1999:76*, Fig. 6);[4] thus the simple decor of our door—a plain paneling without nail heads, door-knockers or other motifs—apparently has chronological implications.

Most of the stone doors studded with nail heads and knockers found in Tiberias have been attributed to the late second–third centuries CE, while the finds associated with our mausoleum suggest a date in the late first or early second century CE (see below). Significantly, a first-century-CE dating is also attributed to the simple paneled door found in Cave 3 of the Akeldama tombs in Jerusalem (Avni and Greenhut 1996:26, Figs. 1.44, 1.45).

The interior of the mausoleum consists of a central burial chamber (3 × c. 4 m), surrounded on three sides by two stories of *kokhim*, originally 28 *kokhim* in all (Plan 1). All the *kokhim* on the southwestern side had been destroyed by the bulldozer and those on the northwestern side were located below Bialik Street and could not be excavated. The northeastern side consists of ten *kokhim* (1–10) built in two stories (Plan 1: Section 1–1; Fig. 8). Five of the lower *kokhim* (2, 4, 6, 8, 10) were completely preserved while only the lower course (0.6 m high) of the upper *kokhim* (1, 3, 5, 7, 9) survived (Fig. 9). The *kokhim* are entirely of masonry, 2.1 m long, 0.65 m wide and 1.05 m high. Their side-walls consist of two courses of ashlars (the lower course 0.45 m high, the upper course 0.6 m high). Irregular stone slabs (0.9 m long, 0.2–0.3 m wide), which were laid on the side-walls, form the ceiling (Fig. 10). The rectangular

Fig. 8. Two stories of *kokhim* in the northeastern wall.

Fig. 9. Remains of the upper *kokhim*, looking south.

Fig. 10. Stone slabs covering the *kokhim*.

Fig. 11. Built openings of the *kokhim*.

Fig. 12. Plaster lining the walls and floor of a *kokh*.

openings of the *kokhim* are constructed of one well dressed stone (0.75–0.85 m long, 0.2 m high) for the lintel and two well dressed stones for each post (the lower stone 0.43 m high, 0.22 m wide; the upper stone 0.61 m high, 0.22 m wide), while the built shelf surrounding the central pit forms the threshold (Fig. 11). The walls and floors of the *kokhim* are lined with two layers of plaster: a coarse plaster applied immediately on the stones covered by a thin layer of smooth white plaster (Fig. 12). None

Fig. 13. The upper *kokhim* filled with earth at time of discovery.

Fig. 14. Ossuary in *Kokh* 4.

of the *kokhim* was found blocked with a slab or stones. As a result, at the time of discovery they were filled with earth till the ceiling (Fig. 13). All the *kokhim* of the northeastern side were excavated except for *Kokhim* 9 and 10, which were beneath Bialik Street. Human bones in brittle condition and a few fragments of kraters, cooking pots, and bag-shaped jars dating to the mid-first–second centuries CE were found on the floors of the upper *kokhim* (Table 1; Fig. 22:1, 4, 5, 7).

Fig. 15. Remains of two skeletons in the ossuary.

Fig. 16. Articulated skeleton in a *kokh.*

Kokh 4 held a limestone ossuary (Fig. 14), its lid *in situ*, which contained the collected bones of two individuals (Fig. 15). Each of the three other lower *kokhim* contained a skeleton lying in a supine position on the floor of the *kokh* with the skull toward the rear, arms extended along the body and feet near the opening (Fig. 16). It should, however, be noted that the skulls were

Table 1. The Finds and Their Locations

Locus	*Osteological Remains*	*Finds*	*Remarks*
L100 (top soil)	-	Modern	
L101 (between W2 and bedrock)	-	A few sherds including a rim of a closed cooking pot (Reg. No. 15-1), similar to Fig. 22:3–6	Fill consisting of large fieldstones
L 102 (courtyard)	-	A few sherds including fragments of a closed cooking pot (Fig. 22:6) and a red bag-shaped jar (not ill.)	
L103 (passage leading to underground chamber)	A few human bones		Filled with dark brown earth
Underground chamber (Loci 104–106)	On floor: c. 35 skeletons, both articulated (heads toward the southwest) and disarticulated	L104: complete closed cooking pot (Fig. 22:2); miniature glass candlestick bottle (Fig. 22:10) L105: wheel-made knife-pared lamp (Fig. 22:8); closed cooking pot (Fig. 22:3) L106: a few body fragments of reddish bag-shaped jar (not ill.); iron nail (Fig. 22:12)	Filled with dark brown earth and stones till the ceiling. On the floor of the entire chamber (L104–106): a 35 cm thick layer of light brown earth containing a large quantity of skeletons and a few pottery and glass vessels
Kokh 1 (upper story)	-	Krater fragment (Fig. 22:1)	Lower part preserved, filled with earth
Kokh 2 (lower story)	On floor: articulated supine skeleton position, arms along body, skull 0.9 m from end of *kokh*, feet at opening of *kokh*	Small pear-shaped glass bottle on floor behind skull of skeleton (Fig. 22:11)	Filled with earth till ceiling
Kokh 3 (upper story)	Human bones (brittle)	Rim of closed cooking pot (Fig. 22:4)	Lower part preserved, filled with earth
Kokh 4 (lower story)	Collected bones of 2 skeletons in ossuary	Limestone ossuary (Fig. 23); neck fragment of Byzantine glass bottle with cylindrical funnel-mouth, decorated with trails (Fig. 25:2): intrusive in top layer of earth	Filled with earth till ceiling
Kokh 5 (upper story)	-	Rim of closed cooking pot (Fig. 22:5); rim fragment of bag-shaped jar (Fig. 22:7)	Lower part preserved, filled with earth
Kokh 6 (lower story)	One articulated skeleton, head 0.3 m from end of *kokh* one skull at opening of *kokh*	Shoulder fragment of circular mold-made lamp (Fig. 22:9); rim of PRS 10F (Fig. 25:1); intrusive in earth	Filled with earth
Kokh 7 (upper story)	-	-	Lower part preserved, filled with earth
Kokh 8 (lower story)	One articulated skeleton (in 10 cm thick layer of light brown earth on floor)	Rim fragment of closed cooking pot, Type 2 (not ill.)	Filled with earth till ceiling
Kokh 9 (upper story)	-	-	Lower part preserved, filled with earth; not excavated
Kokh 10 (lower story)	-	-	Filled with earth till ceiling, not excavated

not at the extremity of the *kokhim*, but 0.9 m from the rear of *Kokh* 2 and 0.3 m from the end of *Kokh* 6. In *Kokh* 2, a small pear-shaped glass bottle (Fig. 22:11), broken beneath the rim, was discovered between the skull and the rear of the *kokh*. It probably had a stopper that was cut when it was placed into the *kokh*, in order to spread the smell of the perfume it contained. *Kokh* 6 yielded a shoulder fragment of a circular Roman lamp (Fig. 22:9) and *Kokh* 8, the rim of a mid-first–second century CE closed cooking pot, Type 2 (not illustrated).

The earth filling the *kokhim* contained a few fragments of glass and pottery vessels of Byzantine date, including the rim of a sixth-century-CE Phocean Red Slip bowl in *Kokh* 6 (Fig. 25:1) and the neck of a sixth–early seventh century-CE glass bottle (Fig. 25:2) in *Kokh* 4. These fragments serve as an indication of the time during which the mausoleum, abandoned, became filled with earth.

The floor of the burial chamber had been destroyed by bulldozers, but part of the shelf (made of dressed slabs 0.42–0.47 m long, 0.22 m high) surrounding the central pit was preserved in front of the northeastern *kokhim* (Fig. 11).

A partly hewn and partly built corridor (L103) located beneath the floor of the burial chamber (Fig. 17) leads to an underground chamber (Plan 1: Sections 1–1, 2–2). The precise location of the entrance to the corridor is unknown, but it seems to have been located in the floor of the burial chamber, just in front of the entranceway to the tomb. The corridor (0.65 m wide, 1.5 m high), preserved a length of 3.3 m, is covered with rectangular stone slabs (each 0.65 m long, 0.35 m wide and 0.15 m high). At the northwestern extremity of the corridor, a step 0.3 m high descends into a large, rectangular underground chamber (4.2 m long, 2.2 m wide; max. height 1.75 m; Fig. 18), partly hewn into the rock and partly built, located below the northwestern row of *kokhim*. Its ceiling is supported by three ashlar-built semicircular vaults (Fig. 19). The chamber's floor is the bedrock and the walls

Fig. 17. Opening of corridor leading to the underground chamber, looking nothwest.

Fig. 18. View of the corridor from inside the underground chamber, looking southeast.

and vaults are coated with two layers of coarse plaster 2.5 cm thick. The ceiling consists of stone slabs (each 0.9 m long, 0.15–0.50 m wide, 0.2 m thick) laid perpendicularly to the vaults, c. 0.45 m above its highest point (Fig. 20). There are seven to eight stone slabs per row.

The underground chamber was found filled up to the ceiling with earth and stones. Most of the dark brown earth had penetrated

Fig. 19. The underground chamber, looking northeast.

Fig. 20. Stone slabs covering the vaults of the underground chamber.

Fig. 21. Skeletons in the underground chamber.

the chamber after the mausoleum ceased to be used, but a 35 cm thick layer of light brown earth covering the floor (L104, L106) contained c. 35 skeletons, both articulated and disarticulated (Fig. 21), pottery and glass vessels, including two closed cooking pots (Fig. 22:2, 3), a miniature glass candlestick bottle (Fig. 22:10), a wheel-made knife-pared lamp (Fig. 22:8), body fragments of a bag-shaped jar (not illustrated), and an iron nail (Fig. 22:12); all date to the mid-first–mid-second centuries CE.

THE FINDS

A number of relatively well preserved finds were found on the floor of the underground chamber while the *kokhim* and the courtyard yielded only small rim fragments.

The Roman Period

Pottery Vessels

Krater (Fig. 22:1).— Neck and rim. For parallels, see Capernaum (Loffreda 1974: Fig. 37:11; Díez Fernández 1983: T21.2), Ẓippori (Adan-Bayewitz and Perlman 1990:164–165, Fig. 3:1, who suggest Shiḥin as its place of production), and Rumana (Stepansky 2002:110–111, Fig. 6:15–18). See also the example with loop feet attached to the bottom of the vessel found in a cistern at Bet She'arim–Zeid Farm (Avigad 1955: Fig. 3:4).

Date: late first–early third centuries CE. The date suggested by Johnson (1988:182–183, Fig. 7–30) at Jalame (mid-fourth century CE) is too late.

Closed Cooking Pots.— Two types were found. One complete vessel of Type 1 (Fig. 22:2) was found in the underground chamber. It is a small

Fig. 22 ▸

No.	Type	Reg. No.	Locus/*Kokh*	Description	Dimensions (cm)
1	Krater	3-1	*Kokh* 1	Red fabric 10R 5/6, few tiny white grits	D rim 39
2	Closed cooking pot	21	Underground chamber L104	Light red fabric 2.5YR 6/6 (gray section), many medium-sized white and gray grits	D rim 8.2 H 9
3	Closed cooking pot	24	Underground chamber L105	Red fabric 10R 5/6, few tiny white grits	D rim 14
4	Closed cooking pot	6-1	*Kokh* 3	Red fabric 10R 5/6, few tiny white grits	D rim 16
5	Closed cooking pot	2-1	*Kokh* 5	Dark reddish gray fabric 10R 4/2, few tiny white grits	D rim 16
6	Closed cooking pot	5-6	Courtyard L102	Red fabric 10R 5/6, few tiny white grits	D rim 16
7	Jar	2-2	*Kokh* 5	Dark reddish gray fabric 10R 4/2, many white grits	D rim 10
8	Wheel-made knife-pared lamp	22	Underground chamber L105	Reddish yellow fabric 5YR 7/6	L 9 W 6 H 3
9	Roman circular lamp	11	*Kokh* 6	Reddish yellow fabric 7.5YR 7/6; red (2.5YR 5/8) slip on shoulder dripping on the base	-
10	Miniature candlestick bottle	14	Underground chamber L104	Light green glass, iridescent	H 3.7 D rim 1.4.
11	Small pear-shaped bottle	13	*Kokh* 2 (at rear, behind a skull)	Glass color uncertain, iridescent, severely pitted	-
12	Nail	26	Underground chamber L106	Iron	Pres. L 5 D head 2.5 D shaft 1

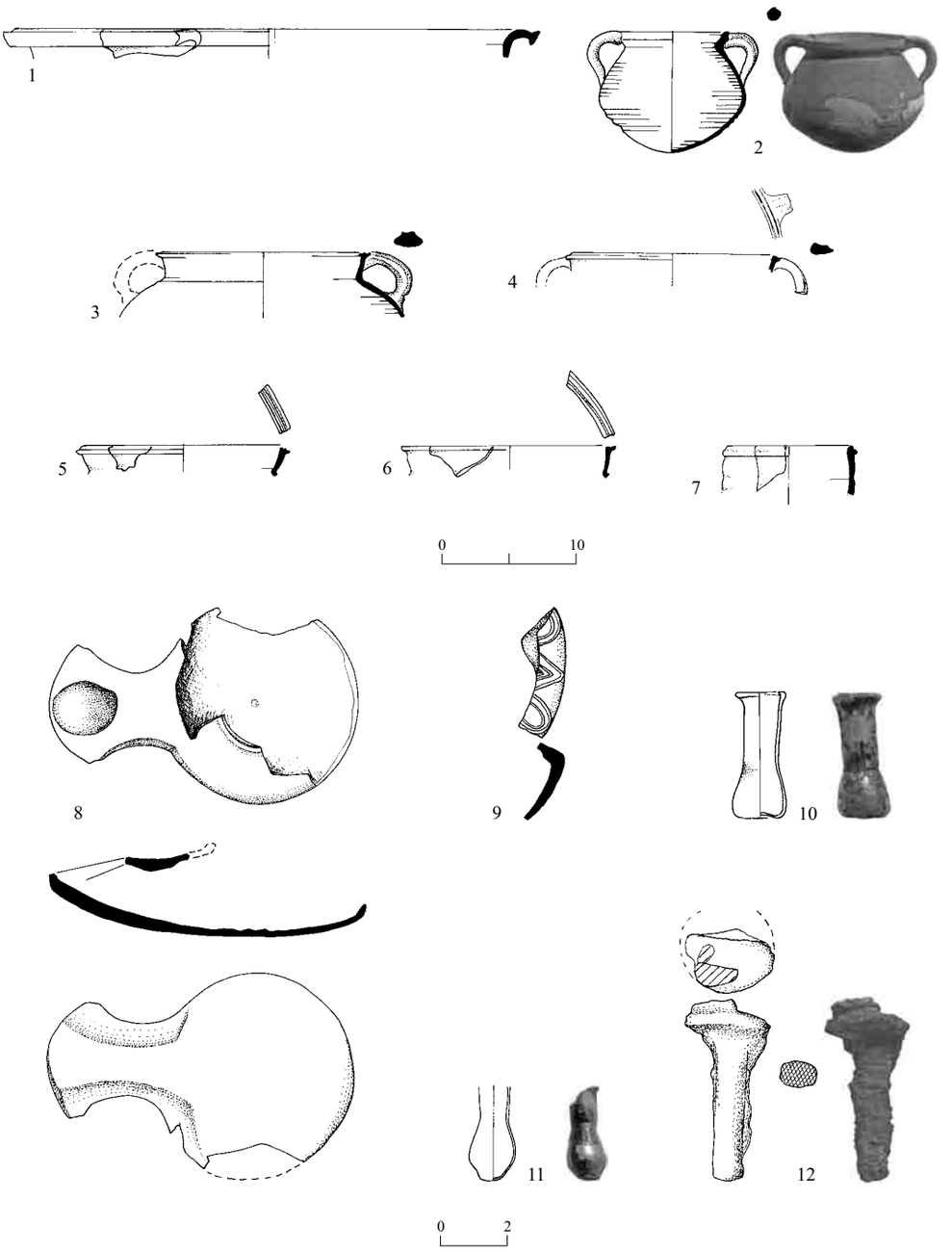


Fig. 22. Finds from the Roman period.

two-handled cooking pot with a thin wall (0.15 cm thick), short everted neck, thickened rim, globular body with shallow ribbing on the lower part, and a rounded, slightly conical, unribbed base. For parallels, see Loffreda 1976:339–340, Fig. 7:23 (Magdala, Sector D, Phase 2, which he dates to 70–135 CE).

One example of Type 2 (Fig. 22:3) was found, also in the underground chamber. It has a short vertical neck, a flattened rim with two pronounced grooves, a smooth shoulder, and two handles extending from the rim to the shoulder. For parallels, see the tomb at Magdala (Loffreda 1976:28, Fig. 8, dated by him to 70–135 CE); Capernaum (Díez-Fernández 1983: T10.6a); and Kefar Ḥananya (Adan-Bayewitz 1993:126–127, Form 4b). The excavators of the latter two sites suggest dating this type to the mid-first–mid-second centuries CE.

In addition, small rim fragments of cooking pots, probably also belonging to Type 2, were found in *Kokh* 3 (Fig. 22:4), *Kokh* 5 (Fig. 22:5) and *Kokh* 8 (not illustrated), in the courtyard (L102; Fig. 22:6), and in L101 among the stones filling the space between the bedrock and W2 (not illustrated).

Jars.— Small fragments of jars with a high straight neck and a thickened rim were found in the underground chamber, in several *kokhim*, and in the courtyard (L102), e.g., Fig. 22:7, from *Kokh* 5. For parallels, see Díez Fernández (1983: T1.6), who suggests dating this type to the mid-first–mid-third centuries CE. See also at Ḥorbat Ḥazon, where Bahat (1974:163–165, Figs. 3–5) dates the pottery found in Pit 1 to the second–third centuries CE; a re-examination of the pottery from Pit 1 shows that most vessels may be dated to the end of the first–mid-second centuries CE.

Lamps.— Figure 22:8, found on the floor of the underground chamber, among skeletons, is a wheel-made knife-pared lamp with a rounded body, almost straight sides, sloping shoulders, a narrow rim with a low ridge around the filling hole, a flat base, and a splayed nozzle, knife-pared on sides and base. The wick hole is blackened, attesting that the lamp had been used. For parallels, see Gunneweg and Perlman 1984–1985; Barag and Hershkovitz 1994:28–33, 43 (Type CIII).
Date: Barag and Hershkovitz attribute the Narrow Rim Type CIII to the Zealots' occupation of Masada (66–74 CE). In Jerusalem, the production of knife-pared lamps seems to have ceased in 70 CE, but outside Judea, especially in the Galilee, their use continued at least until the Bar Kokhba Revolt in 132–135 CE (Hershkovitz 1987:319; Díez-Fernández 1983:33, 45). See also in Naẓerat (Bagatti 1969: Fig. 192:6) and Capernaum (Loffreda 1974:90–91, 186, Photo 24:2, Fig. 36:11).

Figure 22:9 is a shoulder fragment of a Roman circular lamp decorated with a pattern of oves and triangles in relief. The pattern on this lamp is unusual, however, lamps of this kind are found in the Eastern Mediterranean from the last third of the first to the third centuries CE (Hershkovitz 1987:319; Wexler and Gilboa 1996).

Glass Vessels
Two glass vessels contemporary with the use of the tomb were found:

Miniature Candlestick Bottle (Fig. 22:10).— A complete bottle with a slightly flaring rim folded inside, a cylindrical neck somewhat constricted at the base, slanting walls, and a slightly concave base—Barag's Type 21:17 (Barag 1970). For parallels, see Karanis (Harden 1936: Pl. 10:833); Jerusalem (Kahane 1961:130–131, Fig. 3:8, Pl. 18:1); Kh. Farwa (Reich 1991:124, Fig. 7:4, 6); and Jerusalem, Akeldama Tomb (Winter 1996:98, Fig. 5:5:1).
Date: late first–early second centuries CE.

Small Pear-Shaped Bottle (Fig. 22:11).— It has a cylindrical neck slightly constricted at the base, a pear-shaped body, and a flat base with a pointil mark (traces of glass from the pointil). For parallels, see Barag 1970: Type 21:20; Israeli 2003:208, Nos. 240, 241.
Date: late first–early second centuries CE.

Miscellaneous

Iron Nail (Fig. 22:12).— One example (end of shaft broken) was found in the underground chamber, among the skeletons. It has a round head and the shaft has a square section.

Ossuary (Fig. 23)

The ossuary found *in situ* in *Kokh* 4 contained the remains of two skeletons (Fig. 15).[5]

Description.— IAA No. 82-501. Limestone. Rectangular. 90 × 44 cm, H 44 cm, Th 7 cm. Vaulted lid (H 23 cm). Comb-dressed marks visible. Plain. Cf. Rahmani 1994:231, No. 753.

Magical Amulet (Fig. 24; see n. 2)

Description.— IAA No. 76-562. Hematite. Transverse broad oval 31 × 24 mm (obv.), 24.5 × 17.5 mm (rev.), 4 mm thick. Shape: F1 (flat obverse/face and reverse/rear; beveled, slightly rounded edge).[6] Upper right corner broken.

Obv.: A bearded man seen in profile, stooping to right, about to cut four stalks of corn with a sickle. The face is represented by short strokes, four horizontal for the chin, mouth, nose and eyes and one vertical for the forehead. The stroke of the nose is slightly longer than the others. The beard is made of four small strokes—three diagonal and one vertical—stuck to the chin. The neck seems like a tube connecting the body with the head. The torso, the same width along all its length, with no rendering of the muscles, is bent forward on the diagonal. The arms seem to be made out of wood. The left arm, the same width for its entire length, is held out forward, slightly bent at the elbow with the hand hidden behind the first ear of corn. The right arm is vertical, also slightly bent at the elbow, with the upper part somewhat wider than the forearm. All the fingers of the right hand are closed except for one, which holds a long-handled sickle, whose handle is represented over the hand instead of enclosed by it. The legs are also wood-like but the calf is enlarged. The foot is rendered by two strokes as if added to the leg. The man wears a conical cap, falling on his neck, and a short tunic fixed at the waist by a belt that reaches the knees and forms vertical wrinkles. The torso is not clothed. The legs are naked and he seems to be barefoot. He stands

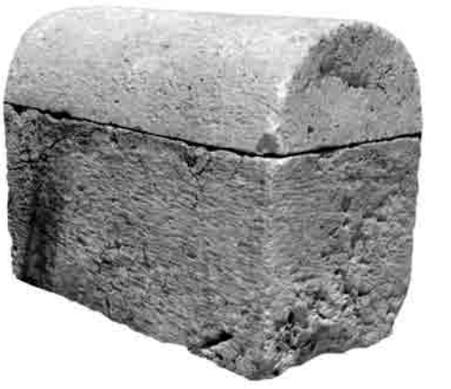


Fig. 23. Ossuary.

Fig. 24. The amulet.

on a thin horizontal stroke, slightly rising to the right side of the gem, representing the ground. To the man's right are three stubbles of corn cut to half their height and five stalks of corn with vertical bristles still standing. On his left is a five-toothed fork standing on its handle. Something is hanging on it, probably his clothes. Between the fork and the man is a tree, resembling a palm tree with two fronds.
Rev.: Greek inscription reading σχ□ων, incised in square letters.

Discussion.□ The scene represents a reaper, bent forward to cut stalks of corn with his sickle. The letters of the inscription are not mirror-written, indicating that the gem was not a seal but an amulet with magic powers. □□□□ is a late form of ἰ□□□□, which is the genitive plural of ἰ□□□□, meaning hip.[7] This inscription indicates that the amulet was used as a remedy for pains in the hips like sciatica or lumbago, an interpretation confirmed by the inscription on an amulet representing a reaper published by Seyrig (1935:50; see also Bonner 1950: 272–273, Pl. 6:125), which reads σχίων θεραπία, "for the cure of the hips", and by two reaper amulets reading ἐ□□□□□□□□□(□□ὶ) □ὺ □ὸ□ῶ, "I work and I do not suffer". The theme of the reaper stooping to cut stalks of corn appears on several gems and amulets of the Roman period, many bearing the inscription σχίων. They belong to a group of what are called magical (or gnostic) amulets, mostly originating in Syria, Palestine, Asia Minor or Egypt, which represent Egyptian deities, motifs from the Mithriac cult, or other themes that were used to cure specific complaints, such as digestive problems, colic, fever, fertility, eye diseases or sciatica (King 1887; Bonner 1950; Delatte and Derchain 1964; Maaskant-Kleibrink 1978:350; Zazoff 1983:349–362; Philipp 1986; Zwierlein-Diehl 1991; Michel 1995). Most of the published gems and amulets depicting a reaper are found in private or museum collections and their exact provenance is unfortunately unknown (Furtwängler 1896: 285, 311, Pl. 57:7698, 8492; de Ridder 1911: Nos. 3488, 3489, Pl. 30; Delaporte 1920: A1266; A1267; Walters 1926: No. 2166; Petrie 1927: Pl. 11:8A; Fossing 1929: No. 999; Seyrig 1934:10–11; 1935:50; Bonner 1950:71–77, Pls. 5–6: Nos. 115–127; Goodenough 1953, II:289; 1953, III: Figs. 1206, 1207; Maddoli 1963–1964: No. 976; Delatte and Derchain 1964:196–200, Nos. 261–269; Sena Chiesa 1966:283, Pl. 38:752–754; Scherf 1970:41–42, Pl. 17:131; Schwartz and Schwartz 1979:188–189, Nos. 53, 54; Zwierlein-Diehl 1991:83–84, Pl. 15:21; Henig 1994: No. 340), but the majority seems to have been bought from dealers in Syria and neighboring regions (Bonner 1950:251). In addition to the example discussed here, a few amulets depicting a reaper were discovered in excavations in Israel, including one at Caesarea (Hamburger 1968: No. 123, Pl. 6), three at Shiqmona (Elgavish 1994:140, 145, Fig. 125), a small fragment found on the surface at Tiberias, in Area B of the salvage excavation conducted near the Sewage Processing Plant in 1989–1990 (Amitai-Preiss 2004:188, Fig. 117), and another small fragment discovered at Bet She'an in Area L in a Byzantine context (Khamis 2006). The variations between these amulets are minimal: the number of stalks of grain varies between three and six; the legs of the man are usually exposed but sometimes he is wearing leggings; the design may be surrounded by the *ouroboros*—the snake holding the end of his tail in his mouth. There are also a few differences in the stone used, in its shape, and its dimensions. Hematite was the most common stone for reaper amulets but other stones were also used, such as amethyst, carnelian or limonite. Their shape may be round, upright oval, or transverse oval.

How was the amulet worn? Amulets were certainly kept on their owner's body so that their magical power could relieve pain. Apart from two examples of reaper's amulets, one heart-shaped and the other trapezoidal, which have a projection above pierced for a cord to be worn as pendants (Bonner 1950:126, 127), there is no indication as to how these amulets were worn. Egyptian portraits painted in

encaustic and tempera dating to the second century CE represent amulet cases suspended from brown cords—probably of leather—slung round the neck of male deceased (Walker 2000:85–86, No. 46, 99–100, No. 61; Tomlin 2004). The Tiberias amulet was probably worn set in a bronze finger-ring like the amulet engraved with a figure of Abrasax on one side and a Greek inscription on the other set in a gold ring found in the Thetford Treasure (Johns and Potter 1983:88–89, No. 13; see also Henig 1983:30–32, and especially n. 10 for references about amulets set in rings at Silchester and Aesica).

Technique and Dating. Pliny (*NH* 33:4) might already be referring to charms when he writes "Now, indeed, men are also beginning to wear on their fingers Harpocrates and figures of Egyptian deities". A few gems representing a reaper are attributed to the first century CE, but they were not magical (Bonner 1950:271, Pl. 5:114; Fossing 1929:157, Pl. 12:999; Scherf 1970:41–42, Pl. 17:131; see also Aquileia, three gems produced by the 'workshop of the Nymph', whose activity apparently dates to the first century CE [Sena Chiesa 1966:283, Pl. 38:752–753]). However, most of the amulets depicting a reaper date to the second–third centuries CE (Philipp 1986:17). The Tiberias amulet is striking in its stylization, with no attempt at natural rounded forms or indication of muscles. Legs and arms are represented like wood-sticks and facial features are indicated by short parallel strokes. This style is between Maaskant-Kleibrink's "rigid chin-mouth-nose style" and her "incoherent grooves style", both of which she dates to the end of the second–third centuries CE (Maaskant-Kleibrink 1978: 321, 326). Henig (1988:151) suggests dating the "incoherent grooves style" to c. 140 CE onward. The Tiberias amulet should thus be attributed to the Antonine period, some time in the mid-second half of the second century CE.[8] A reaper, wearing a conical cap or bareheaded, appears on the reverse of a few Alexandrian coins of Antoninus Pius dated 141/142 CE (*BMC Alex.*:LVII–LVIII, 128, Pl. 12:1092; Bonner 1950: Pl. 22:1). The question of whether coin-die engravers were inspired by the gem-cutters or vice versa has been much debated. There are certainly strong links between gems and coins and in many cases motifs on gems antedate those on coins (Vollenweider 1966; Toynbee 1967:266; Henig 1978:130–140; Rahmani 1981). As for the reaper, a few small gems (not magical) dating to the first–early second centuries CE (e.g., Bonner 1950: Pl. 5:114) depicting the scene as a genre subject may have inspired the Antoninus Pius coins, which were perhaps minted to celebrate a good harvest year. Whether under the influence of these coins or independently, the theme became popular and the majority of the reaper's amulets were produced from the Antonine period onward. Interestingly, the idea that the work of the reaper was harsh and caused back problems continued into the Byzantine period, when it became somewhat of a cliché. On the mosaic floor of the church of St. George at Mekhayyat/Mount Nebo, which bears depictions of hunting and harvest scenes, a reaper cutting corn with a short-handled sickle is represented as an old man, bald and bearded, who is not just stooping forward like on the Roman amulets and coins but is hunch-backed (Saller and Bagatti 1949:71, Pl. 25; Bagatti 1984:274, Fig. 147).

Since the amulet was discovered after the excavation, in debris that had accumulated during earthworks, its original finding spot is uncertain. The suggested dating to the Antonine period is slightly later than the date based on the finds relating to the mausoleum (see below). It is, however, possible that the *kokhim* in the southwestern row destroyed by the bulldozers accommodated burials of a somewhat later date. Another possibility is that the amulet was lost by a visitor to the tomb.

The Byzantine Period

A few Byzantine pottery and glass fragments were found in the earth that filled the *kokhim*

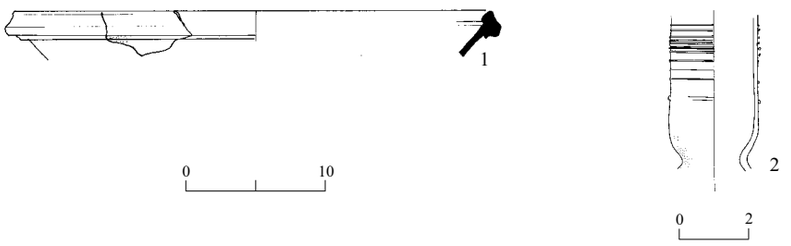


Fig. 25. Finds from the Byzantine period.

No.	Reg. No.	*Kokh*	Type	Description	Dimensions (cm)
1	10-4	6	Phocean red-slip bowl, Type 10F	Red fabric 10R 5/8, slip	D opening 34
2	9	4	Bottle, decorated with trails	Yellowish glass, turquoise trails	D neck 2.5

after they ceased to be used. Figure 25:1, found in the top earth layer filling *Kokh* 6, is the rim of a Phocean Red Slip bowl (formerly Late Roman C) Type 10F, which Hayes (1972; 1980) calls the "developed sixth-century CE version". Figure 25:2, found in the earth filling *Kokh* 4, is a fragment of a glass bottle (rim missing) with a cylindrical or funnel-mouth neck constricted at the base, decorated with thin turquoise trails wound spirally around the neck. This is a frequent bottle type in the Eastern Mediterranean, e.g., at Bet Yeraḥ (Delougaz and Haines 1960: Pl. 60:6, Tomb 4), Kursi (Barag 1983:38, Fig. 9:5, 6, with further references), Tiberias (Johnson 2000:84, Fig. 24:39), and Kh. el-Shubeiqa (Gorin-Rosen 2002:317–319, Fig. 8:39, 41, 42). See also Israeli 2003:172, Nos. 189, 190.

Date: end of sixth–early seventh centuries CE.

CONCLUSION

The date of the use of the mausoleum is chiefly based on the finds retrieved from the underground chamber, which were better preserved than those from the upper chamber. These finds point to a time spanning the last decades of the first century CE to the first third of the second century CE. The few fragmentary finds from the upper chamber are attributable to this time span even though some of them, e.g., the krater, seem to have continued in use at other sites over a longer period—the first–early third centuries CE. The limestone ossuary discovered in *Kokh* 4 fits such a date (Rahmani 1994:24) and the basalt door carved with simple paneling provides further evidence for this date: tombs fitted with doors carved with nail heads and doorknockers are generally attributed to the late second–third centuries CE (Stepansky 1999).

The ossuary and the *kokhim* arrangement attest to the Jewish character of the mausoleum finds. Yet the combination of *kokhim* for individual burial and of an underground chamber for mass burial is unusual in Jewish tombs. Mass burial often suggests a hecatomb, which may be due to plague or war. As far as I know there was no event which may have necessitated mass burial in Tiberias by the end of the first–early second centuries CE; no strong earthquake is recorded in the region during this period (Amiran, Arieh and Turcotte 1994) and neither of the two Jewish revolts resulted in massacre (see below). The so-called Antonine plague, which raged in Egypt and Rome in 165–168 CE, is too late to be connected with the finds recovered in the underground chamber (Duncan-Jones 1996). In addition, the careful way in which the underground chamber is built leaves no doubt that it had been planned as an integral part of the mausoleum and not added hastily. It was clear during the excavation of the underground chamber that some of the skeletons were disarticulated for having been pushed aside while others—obviously the last

buried—were in full articulation. This indicates that burial in the underground chamber was not conducted at one and the same time, but lasted over a particular span of time. Evidence of primary and secondary burial is also found in the upper part of the mausoleum where the *kokhim* accommodated both extended skeletons and an ossuary containing collected bones.

The construction and use of the mausoleum seems to have taken place some time between the first and the second Jewish revolts against the Romans. In Tiberias, the period of the first revolt (66–70 CE) passed without bloodshed or destruction because its population surrendered to the Romans without a fight (Josephus, *Jewish War* 3:89, 8; Avissar 1973:80). The population of Tiberias increased greatly following the revolt, welcoming the many Jews who fled their destroyed houses throughout the country. The Roman emperors granted Tiberias a certain degree of autonomy out of appreciation for the loyalty of its inhabitants during the revolt. In 100 CE, the city came under Roman rule and became a prosperous and important center in Galilee. During the Bar Kokhba Revolt in 132–135 CE, Tiberias again surrendered to the Romans, a deed which once more spared its inhabitants from massacre and destruction.

When Herod Antipas founded Tiberias in c. 18–20 CE, Jews had been reluctant to settle in the new town because of the discovery of tombs during the digging of its foundations, which rendered it unclean (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 18:37–38; Avi-Yonah 1950–51: 162). According to tradition, Rabbi Shim'on bar Yoḥai is said to have purified Tiberias from its tombs after the Bar Kokhba revolt, thus permitting *cohanim* and observant Jews to settle there (Genesis Rabbah, Shabbat 35b; Dudman and Ballhorn 1988:55–58). Several sages settled in Tiberias, where they founded colleges and were buried in its cemetery. As a result, the place became an important burial center for Jews from all over the country and even the Diaspora (Judilovitz 1950; Toledano 1967; Avissar 1973:215–218; Vilnai 1987). The large cemetery located on the hillside is mentioned by many visitors to Tiberias over the centuries, including Mukkadasi in 985 CE (Le Strange 1890:334) and Benjamin Metudela in 1165–1173 CE (Asher 1840:81). In the twelfth century CE, R. Jacob ben Nathaniel (Adler 1930:95) writes that the tombs were the height of a house, a description which fits our mausoleum (Toledano 1967; Avissar 1973:215–216). Several tombs of the ancient cemetery of Tiberias were excavated in the past (S.J. Rotschild in 1920; N. Makhouly in 1935, 1941 and 1946; IAA/Mandate Archives, Tiberias file, Rockefeller Museum, Jerusalem; Landau 1967; Vitto 1976a, 1977b, 1981) and three mausolea similar to the one under discussion were discovered, including one discovered in 1951 on Elhadef Street by Rabani (1957) and two in 1996 on Palmaḥ Street by Stepansky (1999), one of which bears a Greek inscription (Damati 1999). On the basis of the finds recovered in these three mausolea they were dated to the second half of the second–third centuries CE. The relative remoteness of our mausoleum—c. 900 m west of the westernmost known tombs of the ancient cemetery (Stepansky 1999: Fig. 1)—may be due to its slightly earlier date, but it is interesting that so far no other tomb was found in this area.

NOTES

[1] Following the partial destruction of the tomb by a bulldozer while digging the foundations of the Yad Shiṭrit Cultural Center on Bialik Street (Qiryat Shemu'el) in Tiberias (Block 15002, Parcel 4500) a three-week excavation (March 22–April 4, 1976) was conducted at the site by the author on behalf of the Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums (IDAM, now the Israel Antiquities Authority; Permit No. A-614) with eight workmen from Maghar. Nathanel Tefilinsky (Regional Antiquities Inspector),

Elisheva Ballhorn (Curator of the Archaeological Museum of Tiberias), Naomi Bernick, Solel Boneh, and the Tiberias Municipality assisted in the administration of the excavation. The plans were drawn by Israel Vatkin and prepared for publication by Natalia Zak. Field photographs were taken by Ze'ev Radovan and the author. Moshe Hoffman restored the pottery and Ella Altmark cleaned the metal finds. The finds were drawn by Irina Lidsky and photographed by Tsila Sagiv. The author extends her deepest gratitude to them all. Following the excavation, a remaining portion of the tomb was included in the construction of Yad Shiṭrit, where it is still visible today.

[2] The amulet was discovered by Miriam Avissar during a visit to the site by the Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. My thanks to her for transferring the amulet to the IDAM and allowing me to include it in this publication. The amulet is currently on exhibit at the 'En Dor Museum, on loan from the IAA; my thanks to the curator Carmela Arnon for her assistance.

[3] Most basalt doors found in Tiberias have their hinges on the right-hand side and open by pushing them into the tomb from left to right (see e.g., Rabani 1957: Fig. 2; Stepansky 1999: Plan 3, Fig. 11), while at Bet She'arim, the limestone doors have their hinges on the left-hand side and open by pushing them from right to left (see e.g., Avigad 1976: Figs. 3, 25, 28, Pls. 4:1, 12:1, 14).

[4] Stone doors that imitate wooden doors in tombs are known from other sites dating to the Roman period, for example at Palmyra (Amy and Seyrig 1936: Pls. 28–29), Bosra (Sartre-Fauriat 2001, I: Fig. 45), and in Phrygia (Waelkens 1986). The Museum of Damascus possesses several basalt stones, yet unpublished, which are very similar to the Tiberias doors (Sartre-Fauriat 2001, II:134).

[5] The osteological material was briefly examined by Joe Zias and reburied immediately after the excavations; the remarks here are based on notes taken at the site by the author.

[6] Following the typology developed by J. Boardman and E. Zwierlein-Diehl (see Maaskant-Kleibrink 1978:60; Henig 1978:35, Fig. 1).

[7] For an explanation and bibliography about the omission of an unaccentuated vowel before sigma followed by a mute, see Seyrig 1934; Bonner 1950:72–73.

[8] My thanks to Martin Henig of Oxford University for kindly giving his opinion on the date of the amulet.

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