



Preliminary Report on the Excavations at North Saqqâra, 1969-70

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Source: *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Aug., 1971, Vol. 57 (Aug., 1971), pp. 3-13

Published by: Sage Publications, Ltd.

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PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE EXCAVATIONS AT NORTH SAQQÂRA, 1969-70

By W. B. EMERY

THE Society resumed the excavations at North Saqqâra on November 22, 1969, and continued the work without interruption until the end of March 1970. The staff of the expedition consisted of Mr. K. J. Frazer, Professor and Mrs. H. S. Smith, Mr. Ali El-Khouli, Dr. D. M. Dixon, Miss J. Townend, Dr. J. D. Ray, Mr. J. R. Baines, Mr. G. R. Biggs, my wife, and myself.

As explained in my last preliminary report¹ our investigation of Tomb 3518 was not completed, and therefore for the first three weeks our attention was devoted entirely to a further examination of this great Third-Dynasty structure and the area surrounding it. Situated on the top of the escarpment behind the temple of Nectanebo II, the tomb is dated to Djoser and it presents several features of interest, which may be listed as follows:

1. In its exterior design the superstructure covering an over-all area of 1060 metres, is similar to other tombs of the period, but unlike them it is not a solid mass of brickwork and rubble, but contains a series of communicating rooms and magazines.
2. Unlike other tombs of the period its orientation is identical with that of the Step Pyramid.
3. The presence of a large deposit of anatomical *donaria* of Ptolemaic date directly in front of the entrance to the corridor chapel of the tomb.

Our work of the 1968-9 season had shown that the south burial shaft of the tomb connected with the end of the Upper Baboon gallery, but its complete clearance could not be undertaken at that time because of the dangerous condition of the rock in the area where it joined the underground gallery. After our masons had strengthened the walls of the shaft, it was, with some difficulty, excavated and was found to continue down to the burial chamber which had been cut through by the Lower Baboon Gallery. A considerable quantity of broken stone vessels of fine quality were recovered from the bottom of the shaft but no evidence of ownership was found.

Clearing the surface in front and behind the superstructure we had hoped to find further deposits of anatomical *donaria* or other remains of the Late Period. But in this we were disappointed, and beyond this strange cache at the entrance of the tomb no other remains of late date were found, not even pottery fragments connecting Tomb

¹ 'Preliminary Report on the Excavations at North Saqqâra, 1968-9' in *JEA* 56 (1970), 5 ff.

3518 with anything later than the Third Dynasty. The whole area outside the tomb was devoted to streets of smaller mastabas of the Archaic Period.

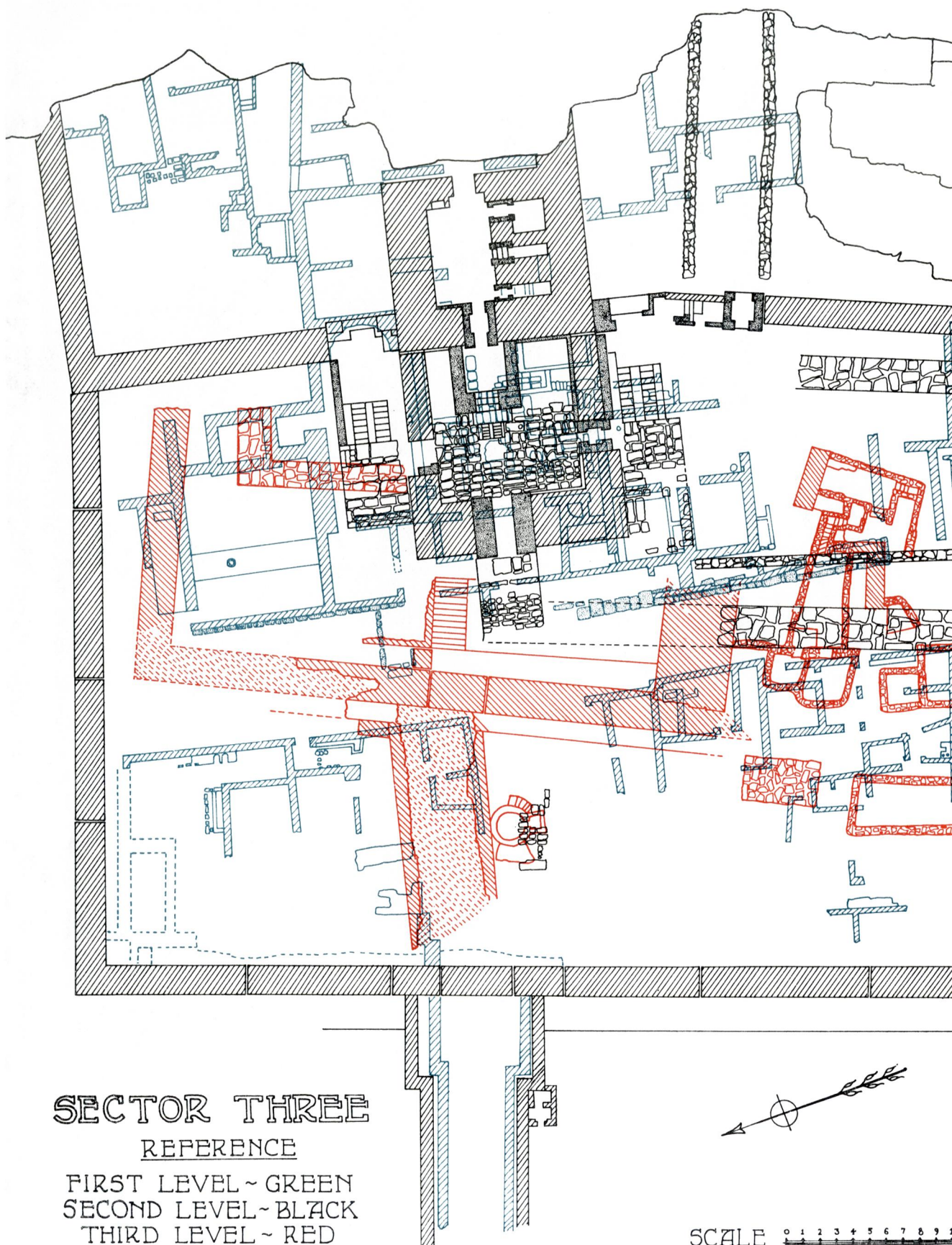
The question of the connection of this big tomb with the later installations adjacent to it is still an open one at this stage of our investigations. But on balance it would appear fortuitous, and can only be considered as one more example of the chance penetration of late galleries into the substructures of the Third-Dynasty tombs. This is a common feature of the site, but it remains a mystery why the builders of the Late Period should select an area which they knew was riddled with the burial shafts of the Archaic Period when fallow sites were available in the vicinity.

Furthermore the presence of the cache of Ptolemaic anatomical *donaria* in front of the entrance of the corridor chapel of Tomb 3518 in common with a similar deposit in the Upper Baboon Galleries, is difficult to explain, for there is sound evidence that the burial shaft of this great structure had its original filling and that there was no communication through it from the gallery to the ground surface on the top of the escarpment in Ptolemaic times.

On the completion of our research on the top of the escarpment we increased the number of our workers to 250 and turned our attention to the excavation of the lower levels of the south-east part of the enclosure of Sector 3 (pl. I). The clearance down to ground level of this area revealed a series of rough-stone huts, which from the evidence of pottery cannot be earlier than the Thirtieth Dynasty. These structures give every indication of being workers' dwellings and were probably the living accommodation of the men engaged in the cutting of the galleries. In a room of one of these houses we discovered a most curious structure, the character of which is still uncertain but which appears to be some form of primitive shrine. It has two entrances opposite each other, one blocked with stone, and both embellished with crude cavetto cornices in mud plaster. The small open entrance on the west side was surrounded by a low rough-stone enclosure and near this we recovered four Carian stelae of the same type as those recovered from the Baboon Galleries during the previous season. With them was a table of offerings inscribed with barbaric hieroglyphs.

During the course of the clearance of this area, four caches of numerous bronze figurines and situlae were discovered, all from a level higher than the stone huts. It was also here that we found three limestone plaques marked with proportion grids, probably used by the workers in the decoration of the walls of Nectanebo's temple. One of the plaques is blank, but the other two have the artists' original designs in black ink. On one is the standing figure, of either a queen or goddess wearing the vulture head-dress and holding a lotus staff, and on the other a standing bull or cow with a seated baboon.

While the main body of our workers were engaged in this surface excavation, a select group investigated the break-throughs in the south wall of the Lower Baboon Gallery discovered during the previous season (pl. II). After arduous underground work we found our way into what proved to be a side gallery leading into a new complex consisting of a main axial passage from which branched a vast maze of complicated lateral galleries opening off it on either side (pl. III). These side galleries, on average 3 metres high by 2.5 metres wide, were completely filled with thousands of sealed



SECTOR THREE

REFERENCE

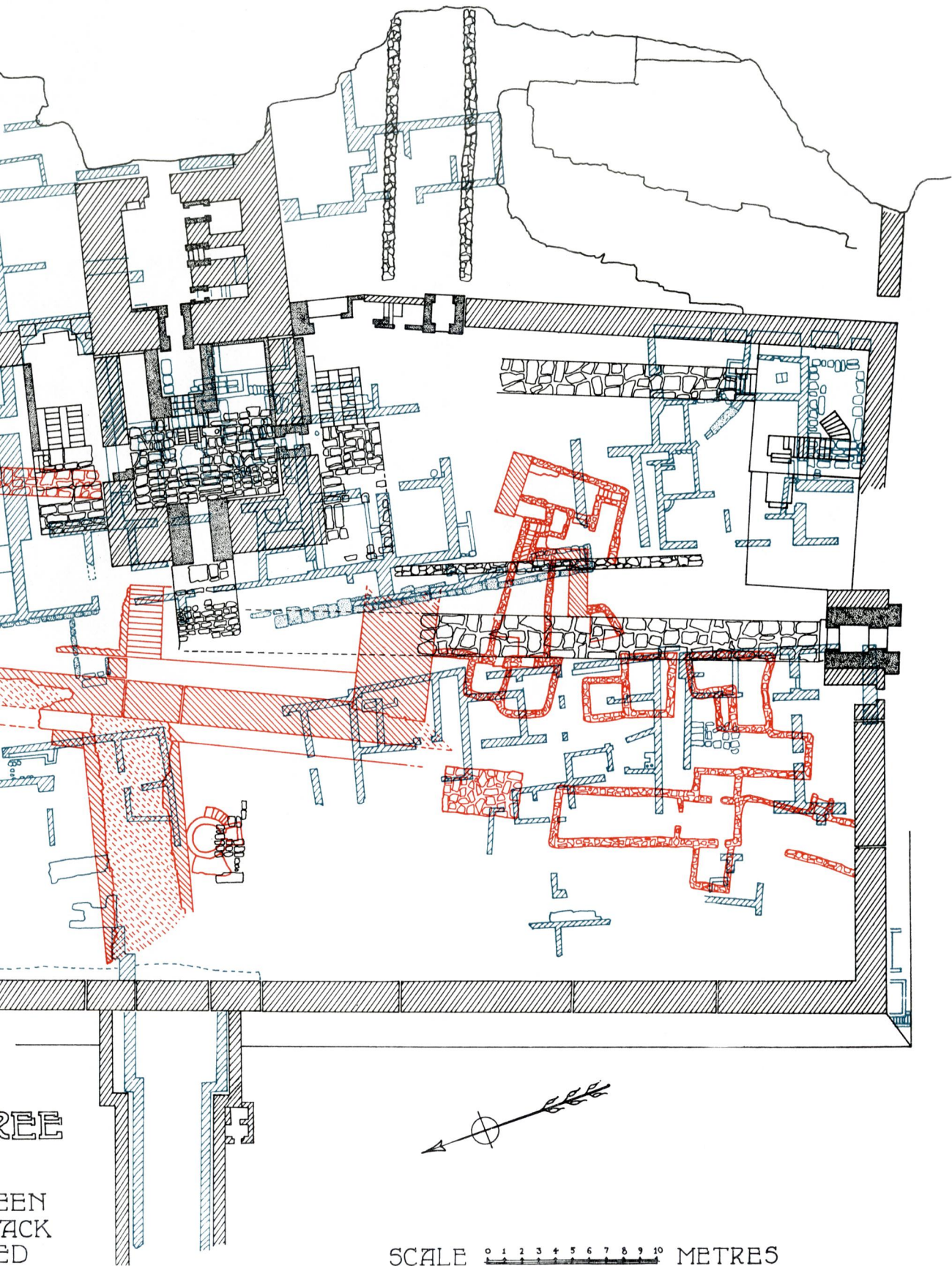
FIRST LEVEL ~ GREEN

SECOND LEVEL ~ BLACK

THIRD LEVEL ~ RED

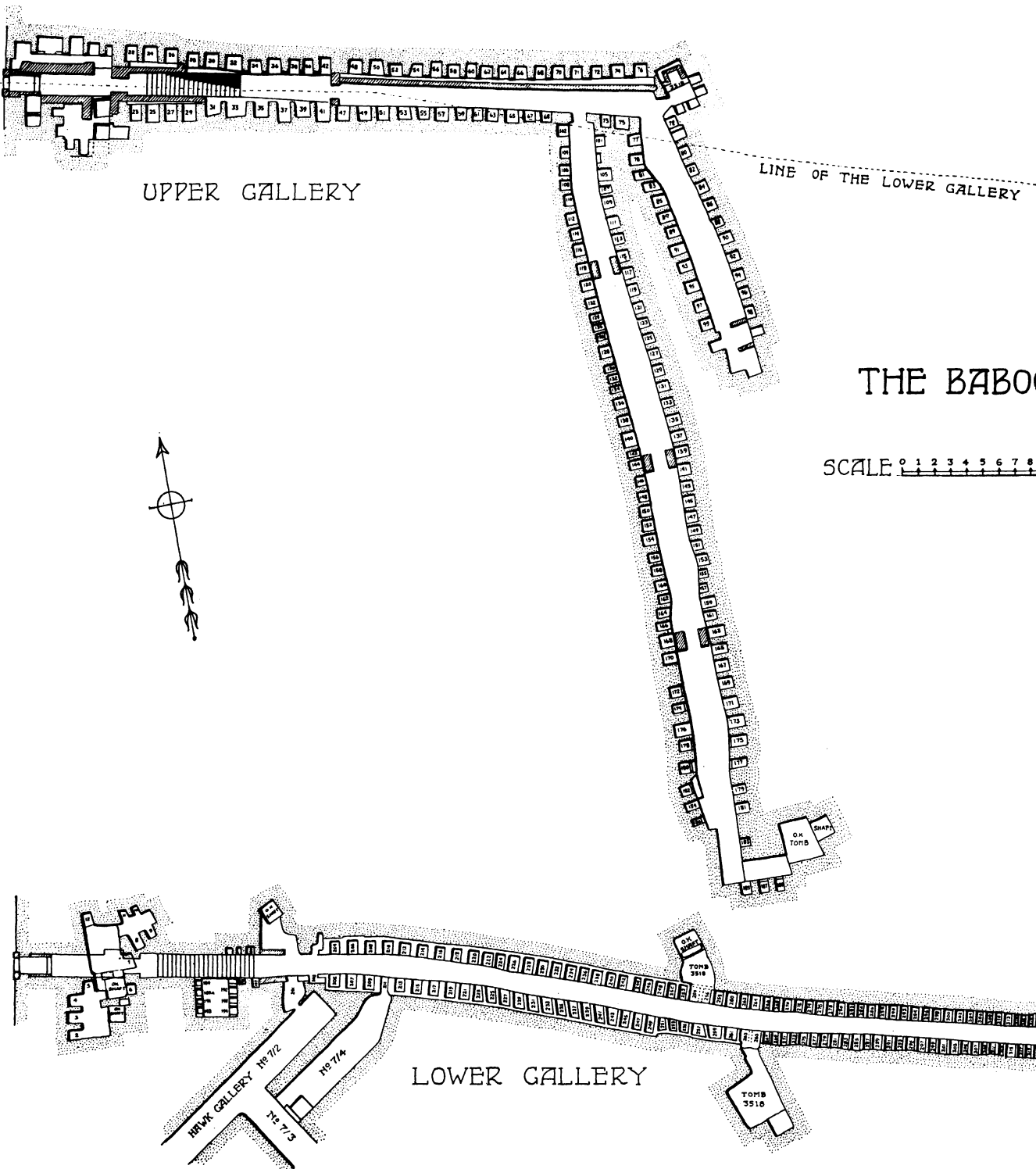
SCALE 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

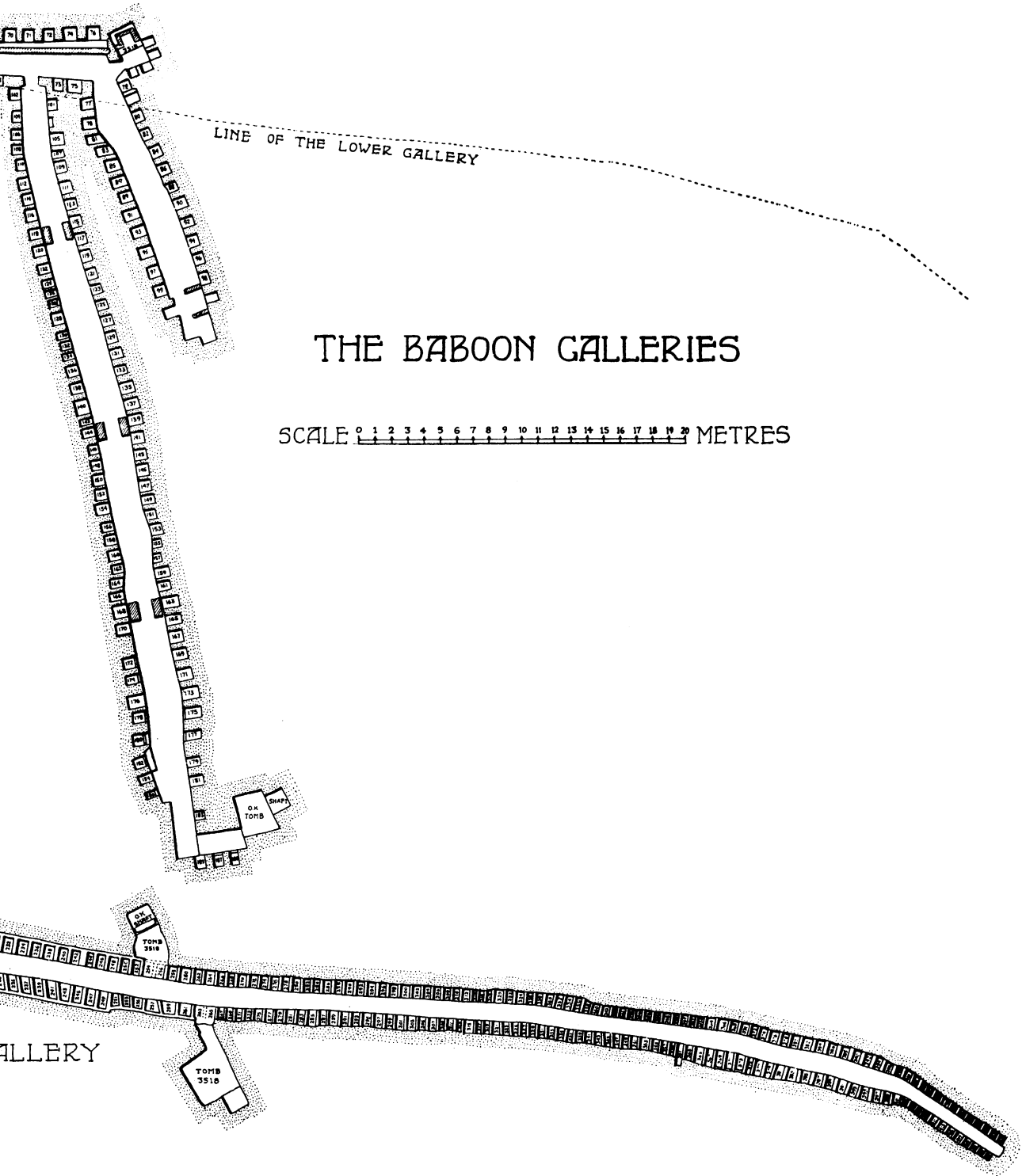
NORTH SAQQÂRA 1969-70



NORTH SAQQÂRA 1969-70

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pottery jars similar to those which we had found containing wrapped mummified ibises in the galleries some distance to the south, which we discovered in 1964. The jars however proved to contain the mummies of falcons, many of them most beautifully wrapped (pl. VI, 1).

Although this great complex had been ravaged by plunderers, many of the side galleries were intact, with doors blocked by brickwork or stone. The confusion in the axial passage was such that it was impossible to make any clearance until we had discovered the real entrance to the labyrinth. A preliminary survey indicated its general position, and it was finally located beneath a stone-paved floor of one of the Christian houses in the south-east corner of the enclosure of Sector 3 (pl. IV, 1). The removal of the Christian paving revealed a steep and serpentine stairway of stone and the brick foundations of what may prove to be the sanctuary of Ḥarendotes, which had a stone-paved causeway leading to it from the temple of Nectanebo II (pl. I).

The entrance stairway led down to a vestibule with a stone-built gateway and side rooms much disturbed by plunderers but still containing many objects of interest. With small stone coffins containing mummified falcons were hundreds of statuettes of faience, bronze, limestone, steatite, and wood, many broken and blackened by fire, but all of fine quality (pls. V ff.). But the most important find in a room in this area was a handsome bulbous limestone Canopic jar with a falcon-headed lid (pl. VI, 2). The jar bore a hieroglyphic inscription on the front. This inscription, of standard form, identifies it with Ḥapy, the son of Horus, who regularly guards the intestines, and was dedicated for the deceased King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Wahibrē (Psammetichus I). On being opened the jar revealed a resinous substance inside, presumably enclosing mummified remains not yet examined; should these prove to be of a falcon, it must be presumed that the Canopic jar was deliberately used, or re-used, for this purpose because of its falcon head. (It is notable that the Canopic jar representing Ḥapy usually has an ape's head.) If the use is indeed original, it would indicate that the falcon galleries were already in existence in the late seventh-early sixth century B.C. and were the earliest so far found on the site, a conclusion not easily acceptable on other grounds.

Beyond the entrance gateway, the confusion of broken pottery and scattered mummies made it impossible to examine any of the side passages until a complete clearance of the axial gallery had been made. Progress was fairly rapid and 10 days after the discovery we had cleared down to floor level as far as side gallery No. 16 (pl. IV, 2). At the foot of the east wall of the axial passage was a small cavity cut in the rock, in which was a wooden box containing a mummified falcon, and in front of it was a small oval-topped limestone stela (pl. V, 4). This stela inscribed in black ink has on the top the figures of an ibis and a falcon facing each other across an offering table. The text below has seven lines of demotic and the following is the translation:

May Imḥotep the great, son of Ptah, the great god, and the gods who rest here give life to Petenefertem, son of Djehō, together with Paptah, son of Djehō, whom Tamneve bore. May their house and their children be established for ever. The blessing of the gods who rest here be upon him who reads this himself. Do let there be visited upon them he who is

evil together with him who is good. Written in the Year 26, which makes Hathor Year 29 of Pharaoh, by the servant Nekhtymneve.

This stela, securely datable to 89 B.C., is the first certain written indication obtained from the site that the necropolis cult of Imhotep was associated with that of the ibises and falcons.

Opposite this votive niche is a stone-built gate leading to side gallery No. 14; on its south is a small ink drawing of the ibis and baboon forms of Thoth and Imhotep.¹

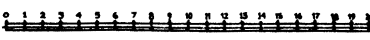
At a point 72 metres from the entrance the axial passage is blocked by a fine stone gate with a cavetto cornice (pl. IV, 3-4), which originally had a lockable door, for the pivot holes and lock socket were still preserved. Beyond this gate the passage continues for another 33 metres, when it ends with a break-through into a Third Dynasty burial-chamber containing a large empty limestone sarcophagus. The break-through had originally been blocked with brickwork. This burial installation and shaft still awaits investigation (pl. V, 2).

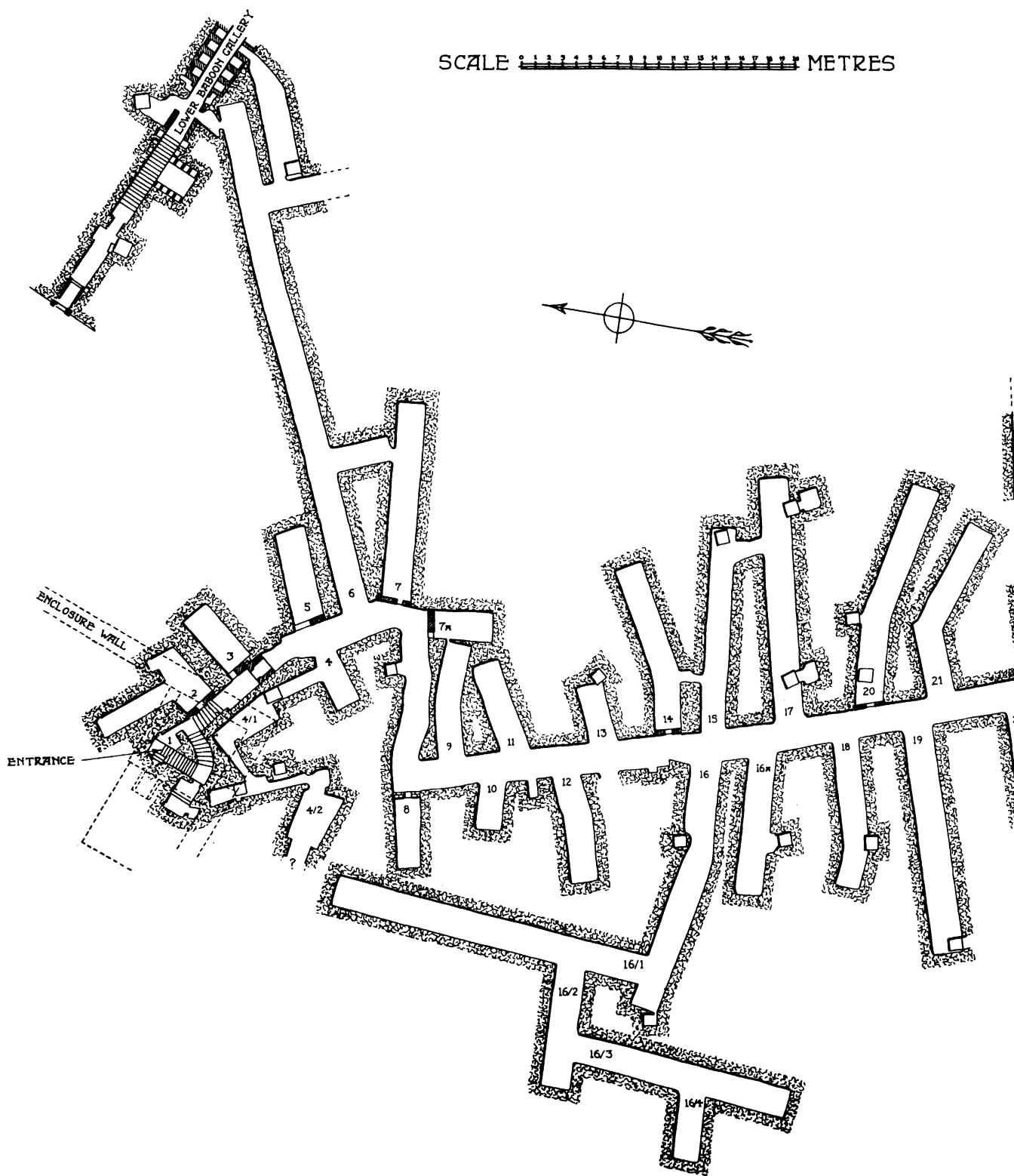
Many of the side galleries were completely blocked by the mummy pots which were stacked in orderly rows up to the ceiling, and it was obvious that anything approaching an accurate survey was impossible unless part at least of their contents were removed. This was achieved and most of the side galleries were measured with a minimum of disturbance of the stacked mummy pots. From our previous experience in the exploration of the Ibis Galleries in 1964 we believed that they contained no objects other than the stacked mummy pots and in consequence we intended to leave the contents undisturbed. However, we decided to clear completely at least one gallery and chose at random No. 16. Our clearance had not proceeded far when we were rewarded with the discovery of a large deposit comprising copper and bronze temple furniture of the most interesting character (pls. V, 3, and VII, 1). There were sixteen tall incense braziers on stands (Types 1, 2, and 3); two standard altars with high curving corners (Types 4 and 5); four hand censers with falcon-headed handles, kneeling figures of a king before cartouche-shaped pellet-boxes, and braziers held in terminal hands (Type 18); two skillets (Types 23 and 24); two libation (*hs*) jars (Type 13); two incense tongs (Types 19 and 20); seven pans (Type 17); one fine ritual *hrp*-sceptre (Type 21); one large ewer (Type 12); one cartouche-shaped casket (Type 11); five groups of miniature offering vases (Types 14, 15, and 16); eleven razors, seven vases and basins (Types 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10), and two model offering tables (figs. 1 and 2). Several of the objects had been inscribed by their donors; the dedications were to Thoth, the great god, Osiris the Ibis, and Horus the Falcon. It is evident that they belonged to ritual furniture once used in the shrines of these deities or perhaps at ceremonies which took place before the individual side gallery was closed. Similar ritual objects are shown in Ptolemaic temple reliefs, and though the date of the group requires study, it may belong to the last centuries B.C.

Further on in the gallery was a cache of bronze statuettes, which included the fine kneeling figure of a king wearing the White crown (pl. VII, 4). Also the clearance of

¹ Hurry, *Imhotep*, 58.

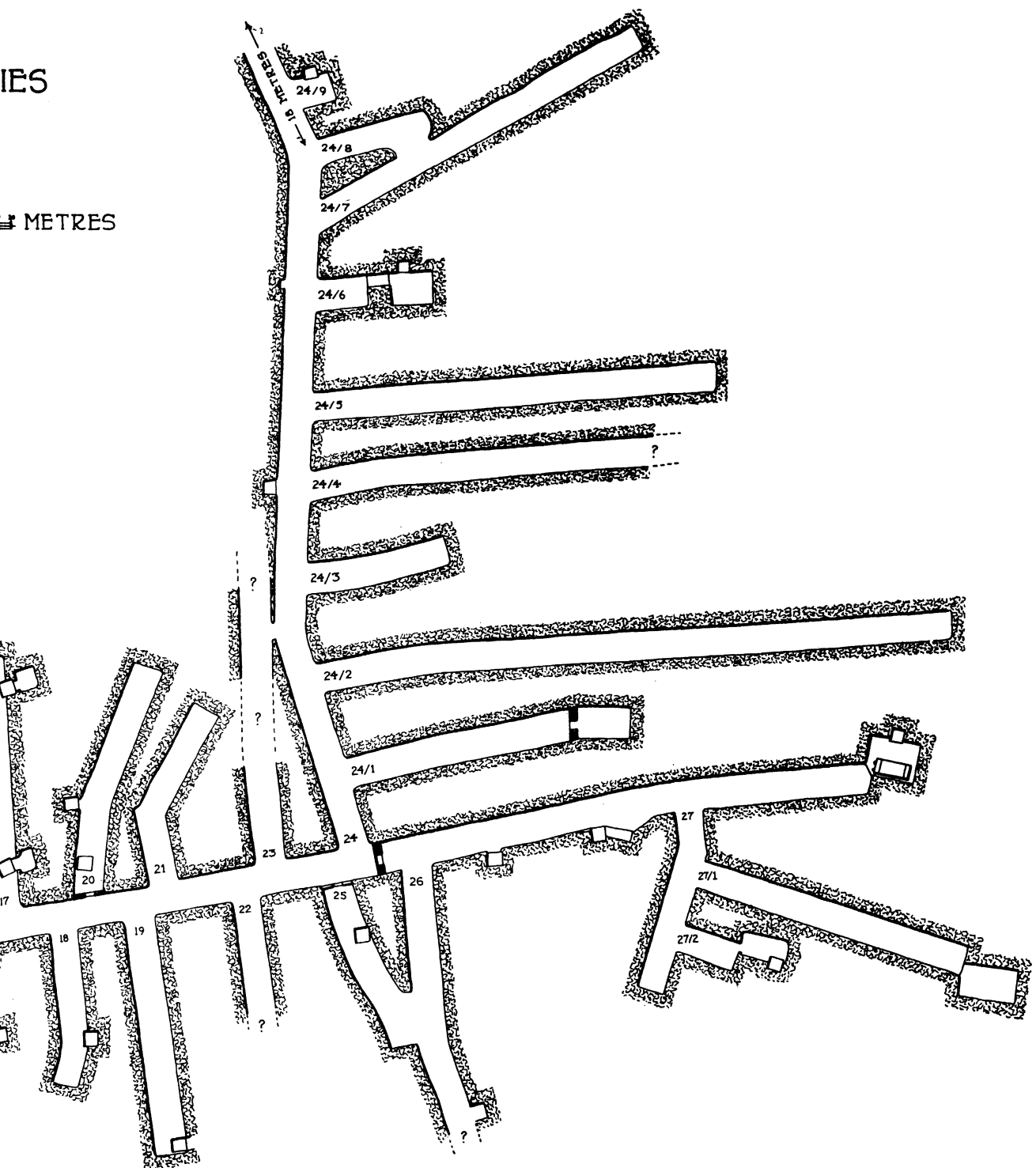
THE HAWK GALLERIES

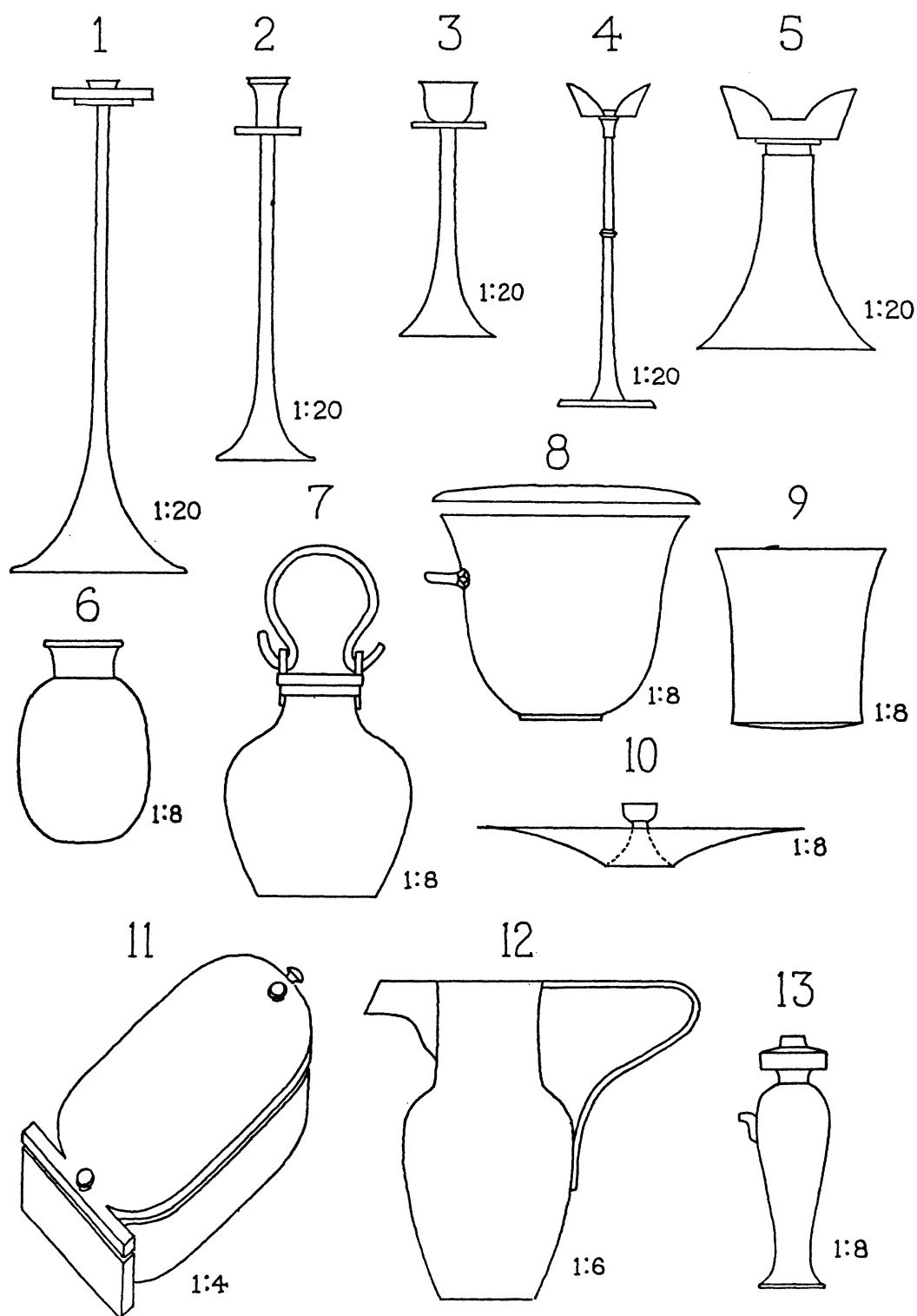
SCALE  METRES



IES

METRES





BRONZE TEMPLE FURNITURE

FIG. 1.

this complex revealed the presence of falcon mummies in wooden boxes instead of the usual pottery jars.

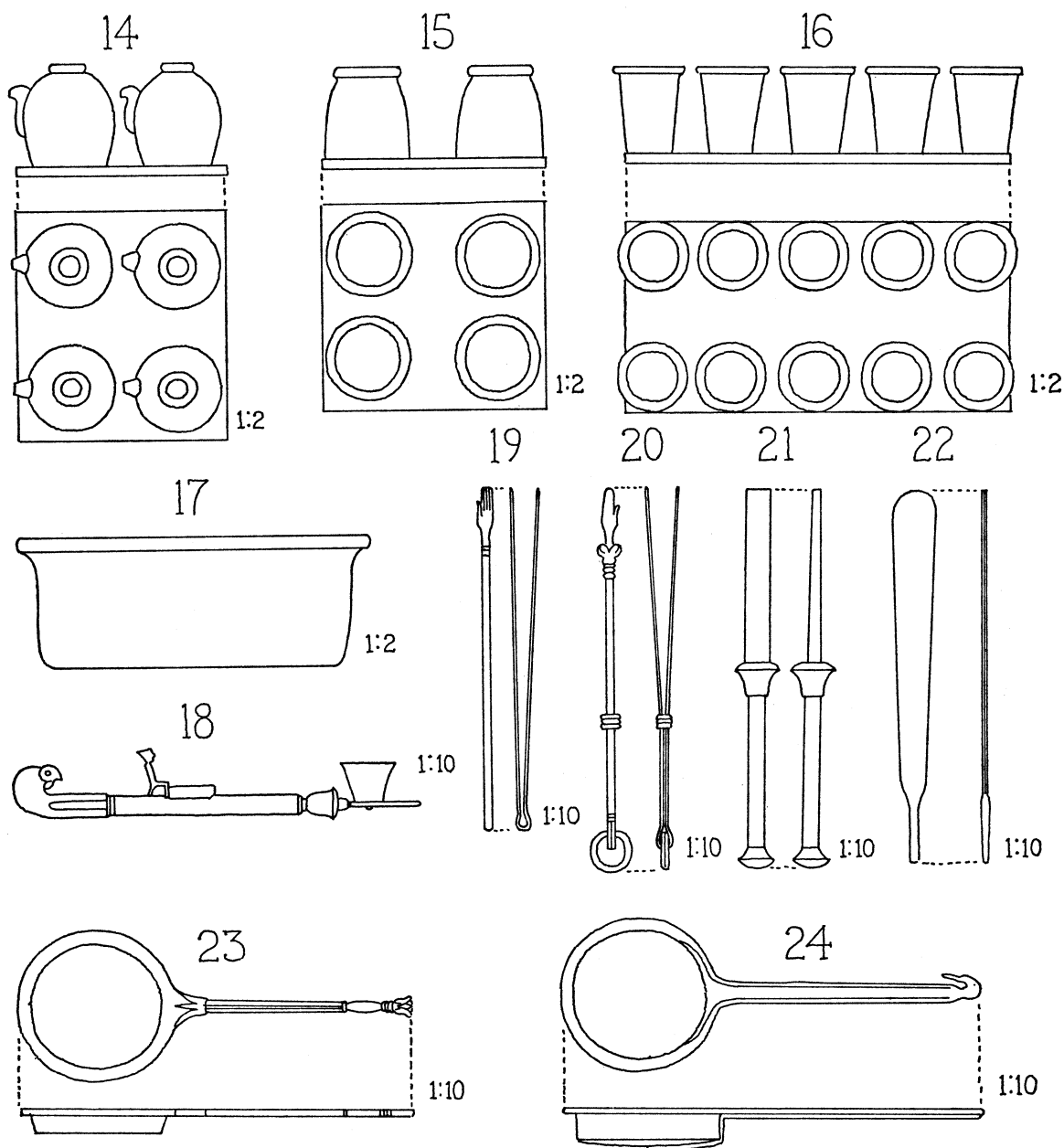
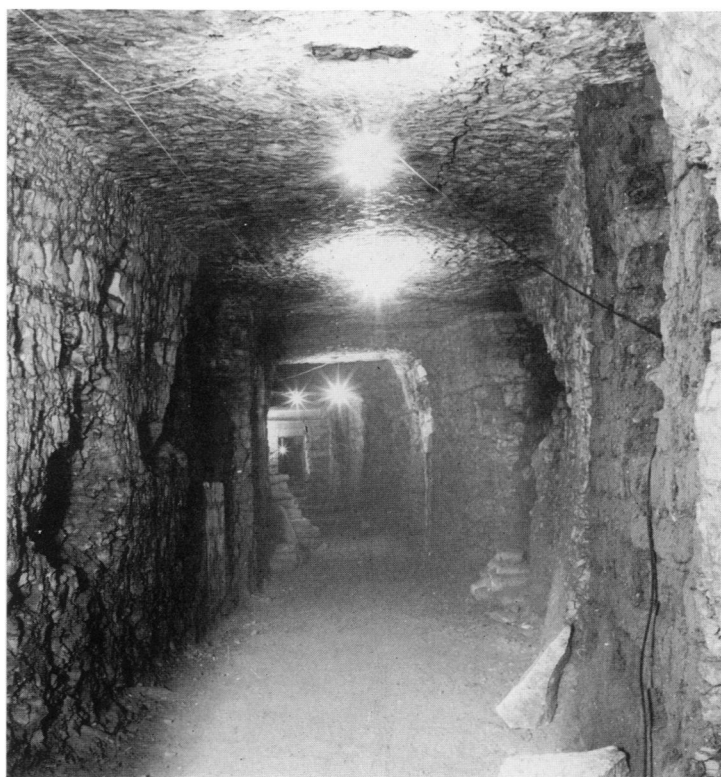


FIG. 2.

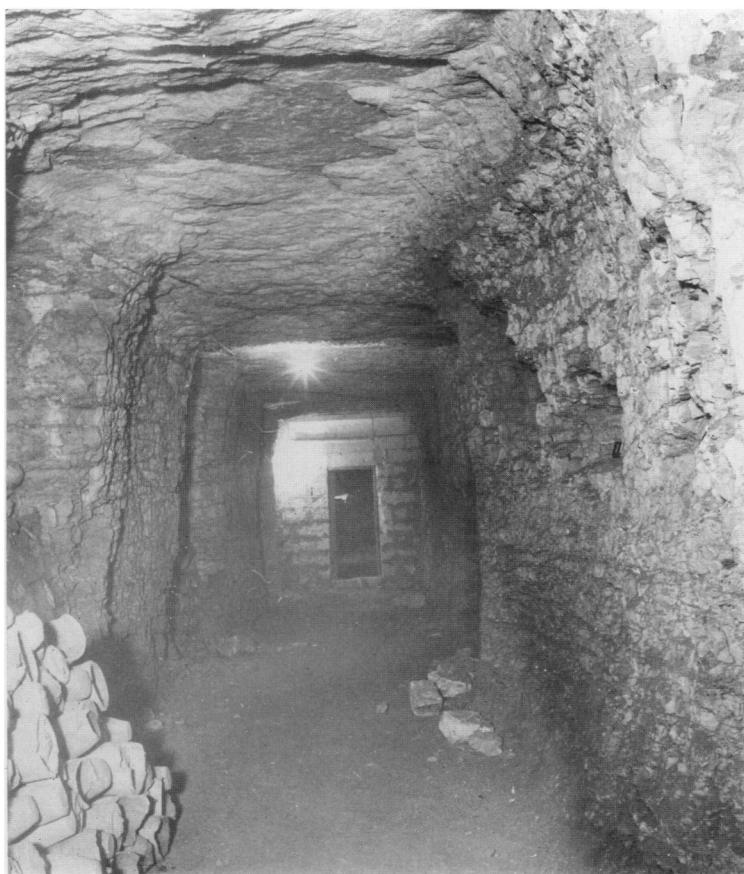
These discoveries have drastically altered our future programme with regard to the Falcon Galleries, and it now is obvious that every part of the labyrinth must be examined in detail. This will entail the removal of thousands of mummy pots, a gigantic task which we have postponed until our next season.



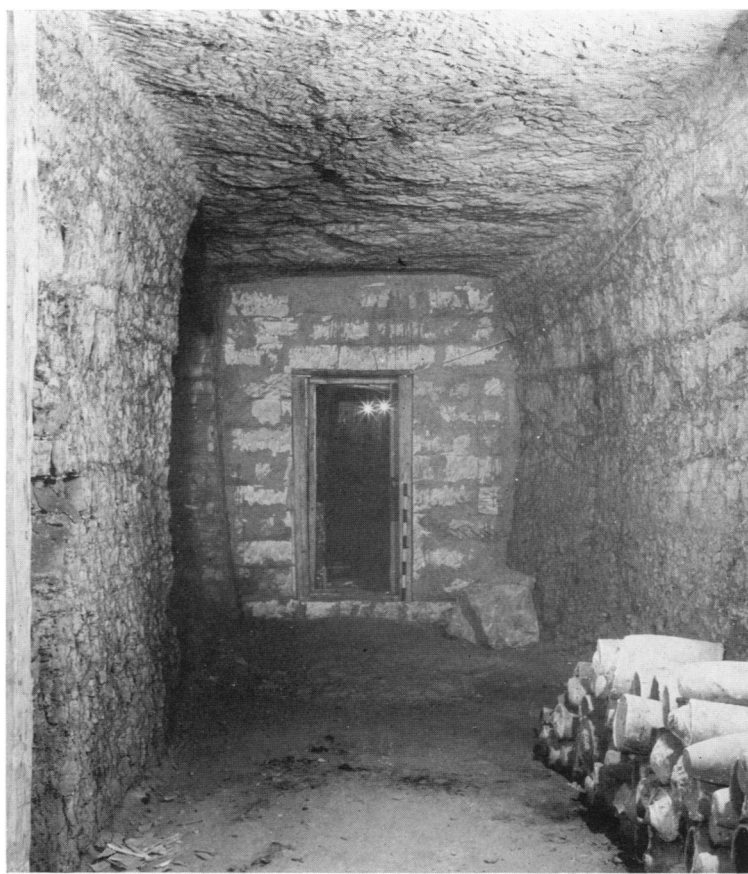
1. Stairway entrance to the Hawk Galleries



2. The axial gallery after clearance

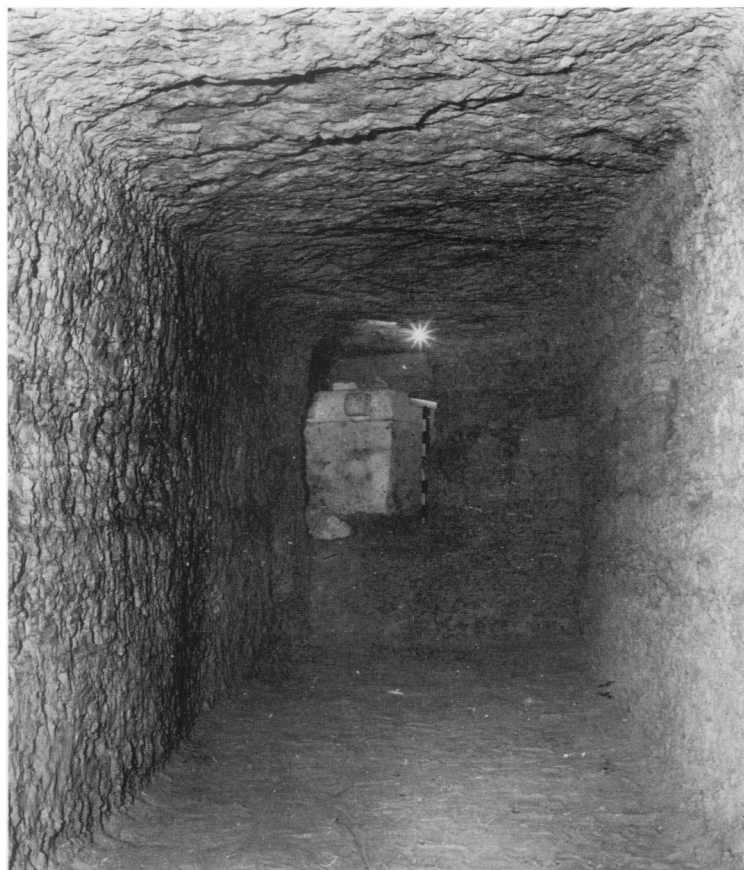


3. The cavetto gate: exterior



4. The cavetto gate: interior

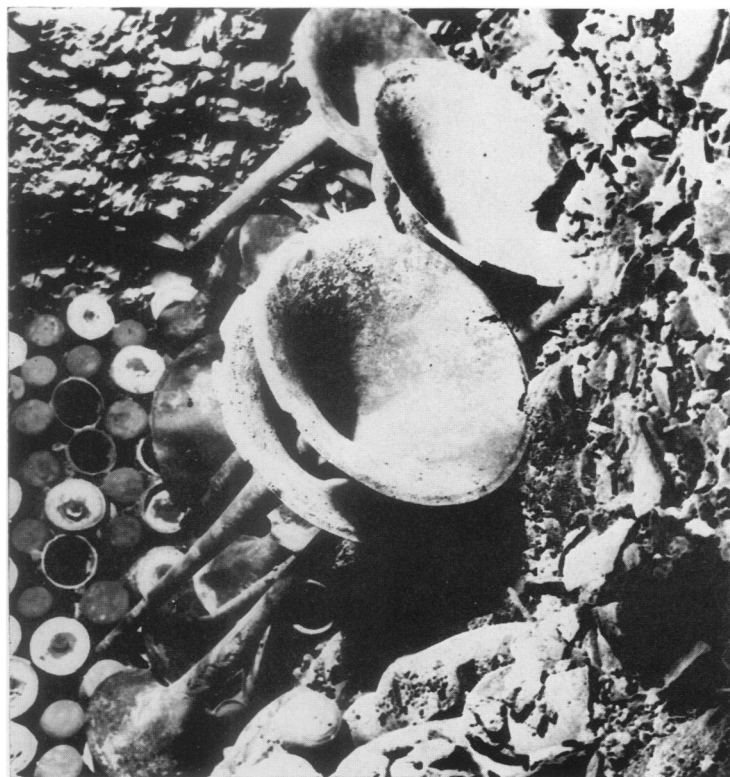
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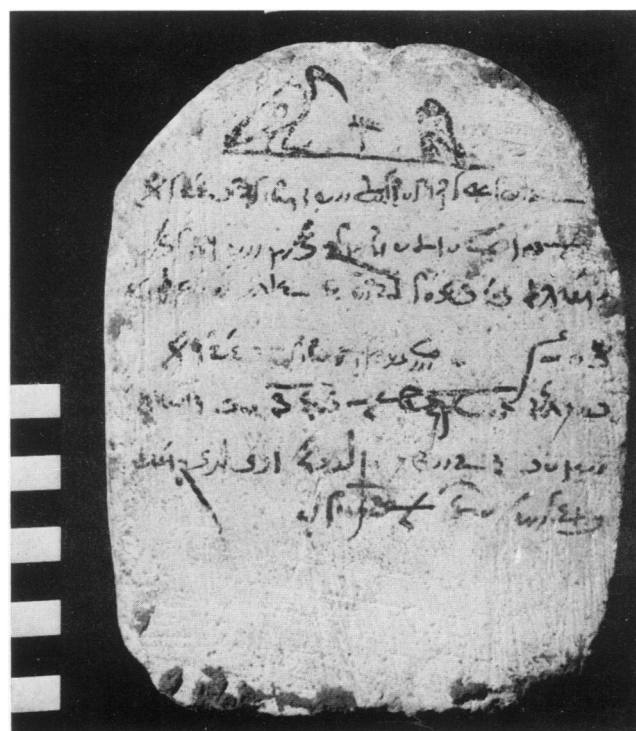
1. End of the axial gallery



2. Third-Dynasty burial at the end of the axial gallery

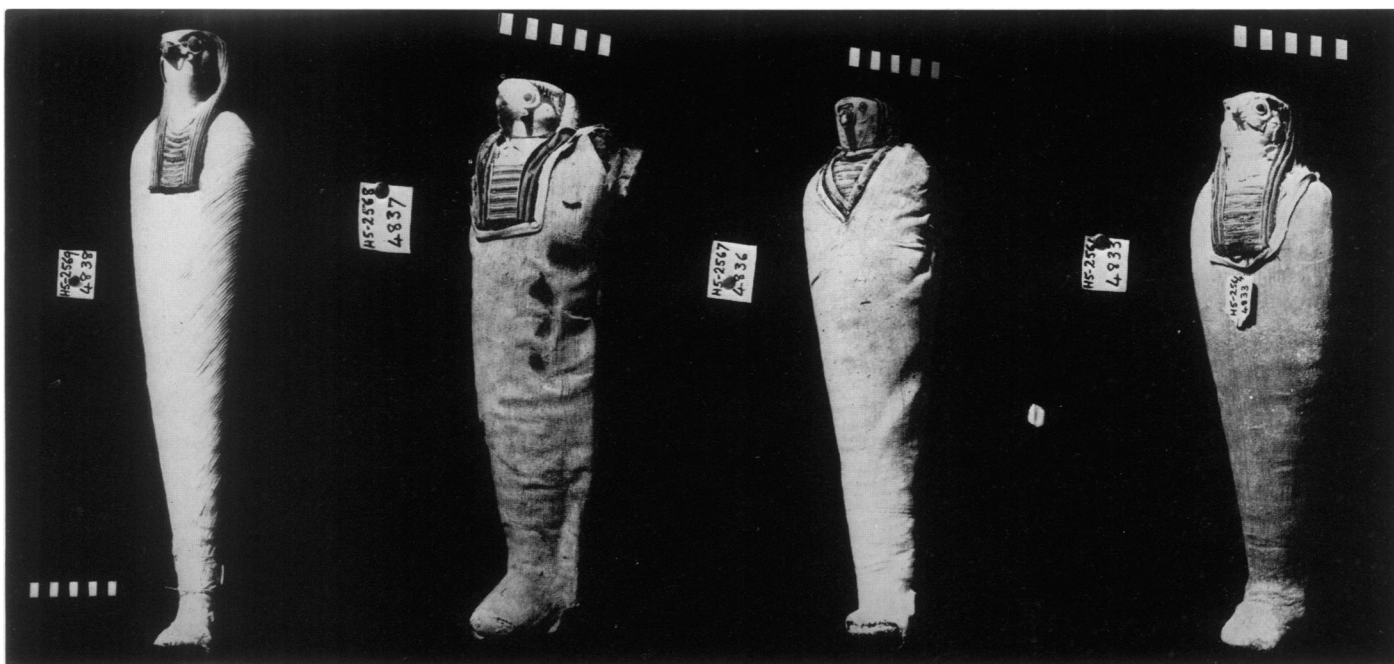


3. Temple-equipment burial with falcon mummies



4. Imhotep stela

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1. Examples of falcon mummies



2. Canopic jar dedicated for Psammetichus I

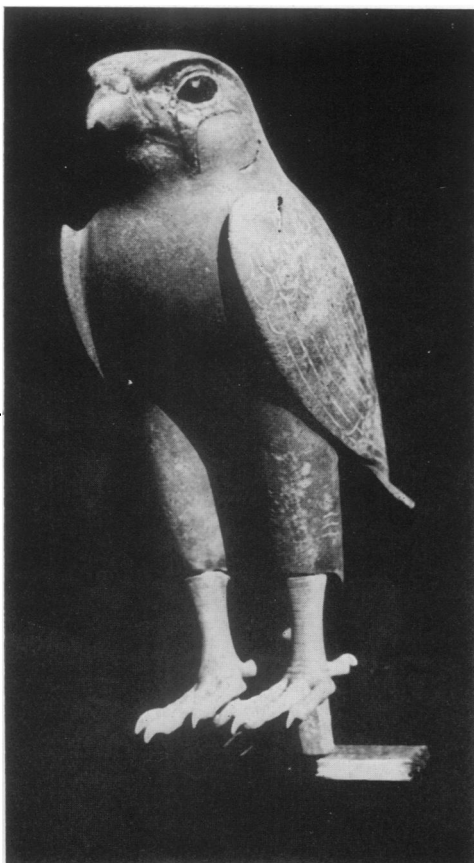
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1. Group of temple equipment from the Hawk Gallery



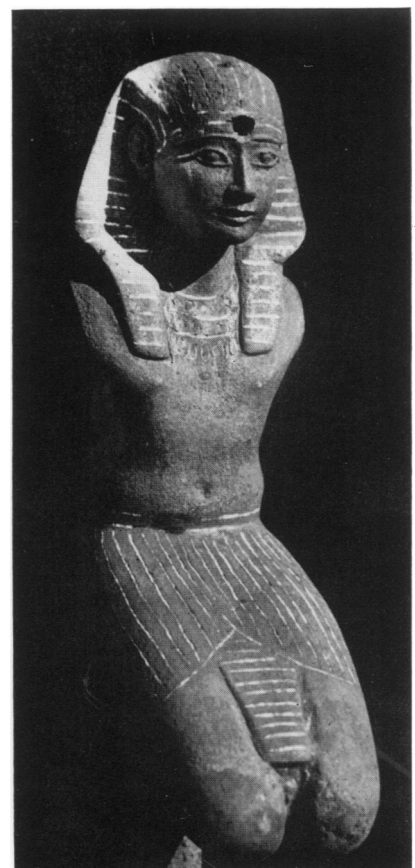
2. Bronze situla



3. Bronze falcon with eyes of obsidian inset in lapis-lazuli



4. Bronze figure of a king



5. Bronze figure of a king

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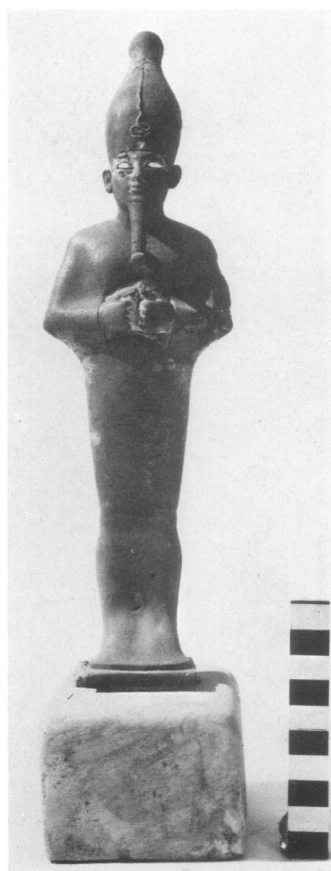
1. Schist mummiform figure of Osiris of obvious foreign workmanship



2. The same



3. Bronze figure of Osiris



4. Bronze figure of Osiris with inlaid eyes



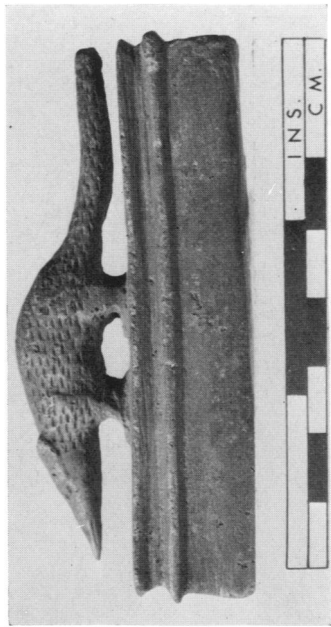
5. Bronze figure of a kneeling servant



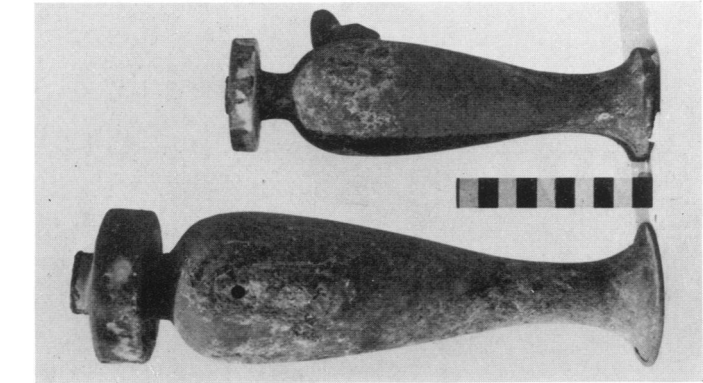
6. Bronze figure of a standing ichneumon



1. Bronze stairway pedestal for a statue of Ptah. *Serekh* of Djoser

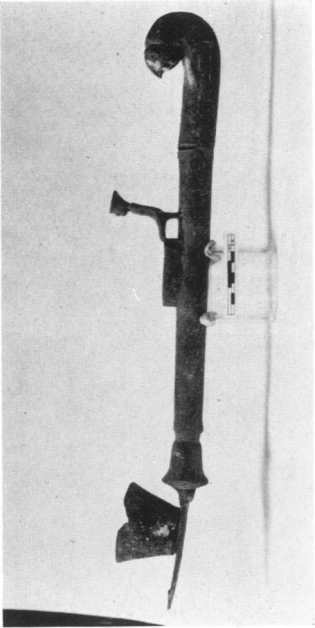


2. Bronze figure of an ichneumon on a box base

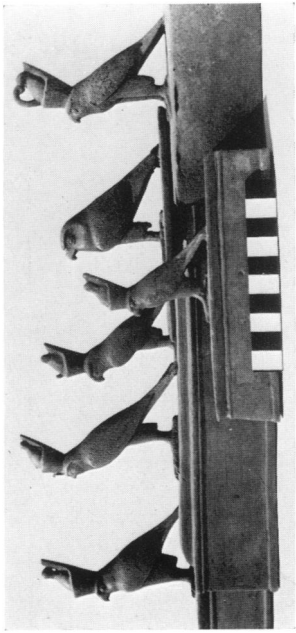


4. Examples of bronze *ḥs*-jars

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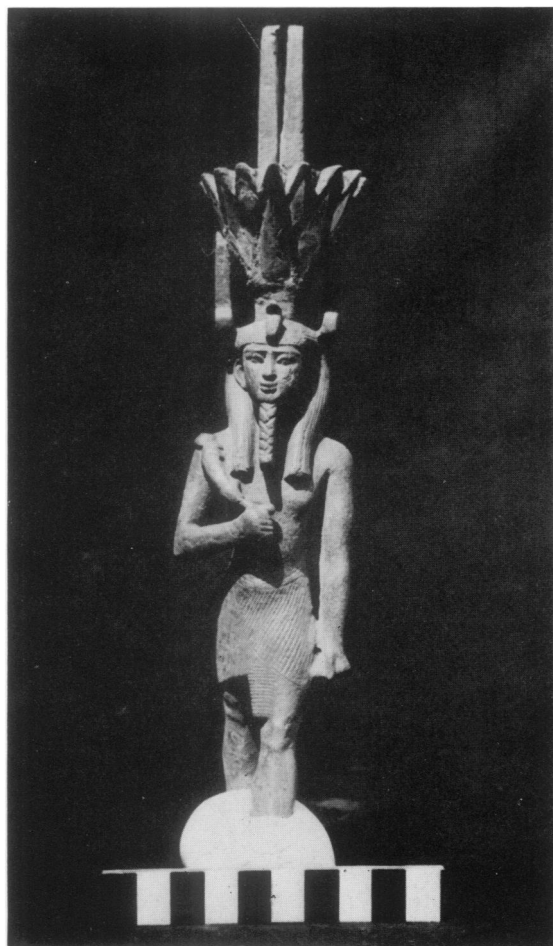
5. Bronze hand-censer



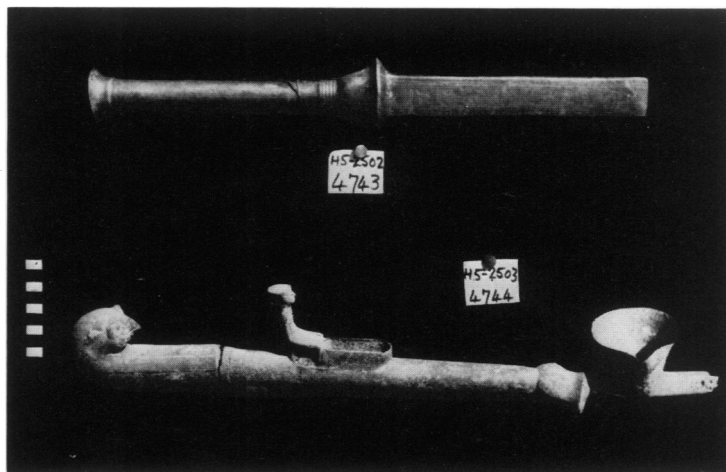
3. Examples of bronze falcons on box bases



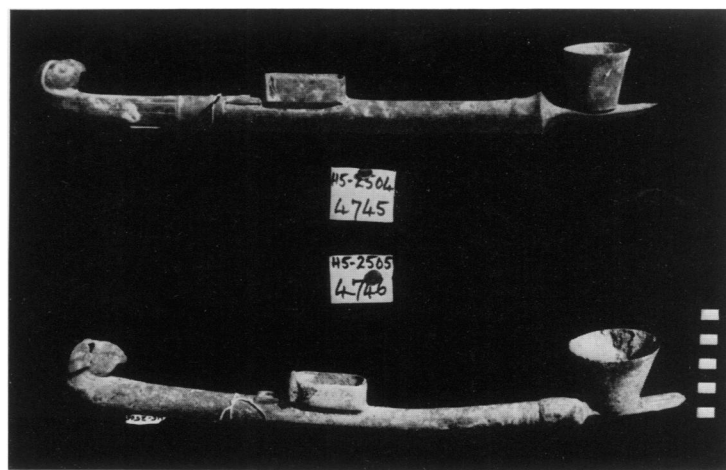
6. Cartouche-shaped box of bronze



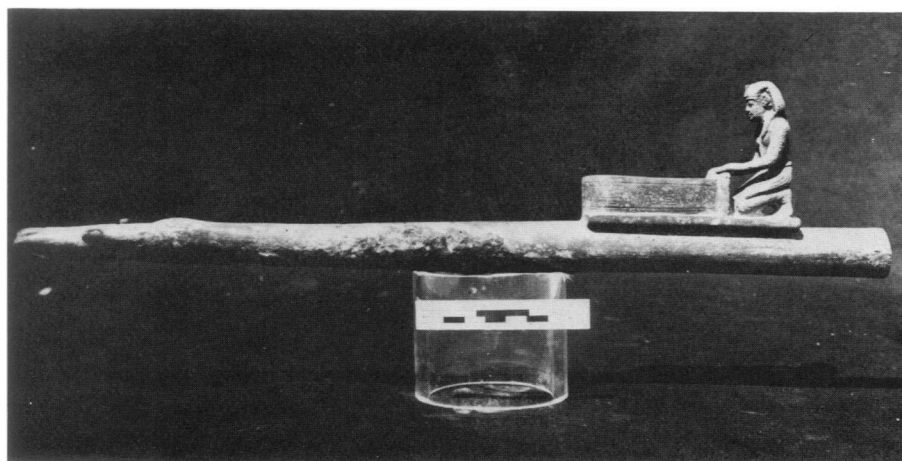
1. Bronze figure of Nefertem. The lotus crest is inlaid with faience and glass



2. A bronze *hrp*-sceptre and bronze hand-censer

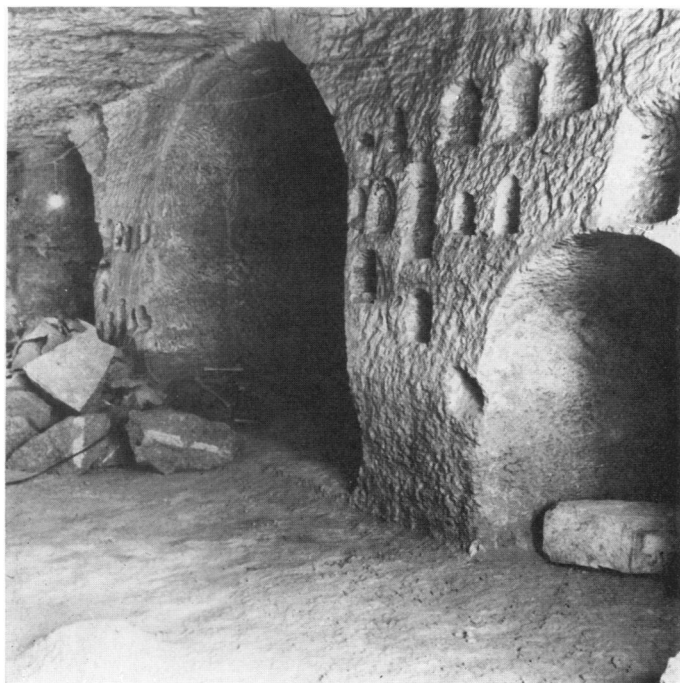


3. Two bronze hand-censers

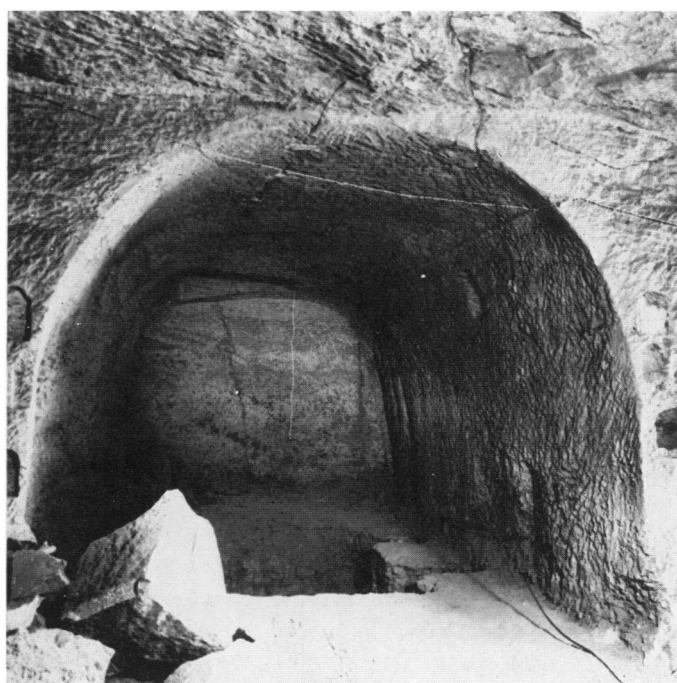


4. A bronze hand-censer with the kneeling figure of a king holding the incense pellet-box

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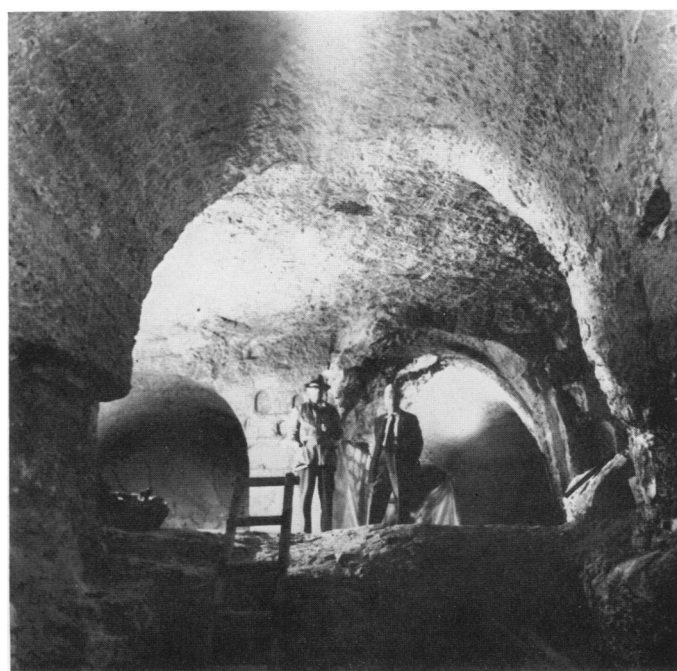
1. Stelae niches in the Iseum



2. Vault 1 of the Iseum

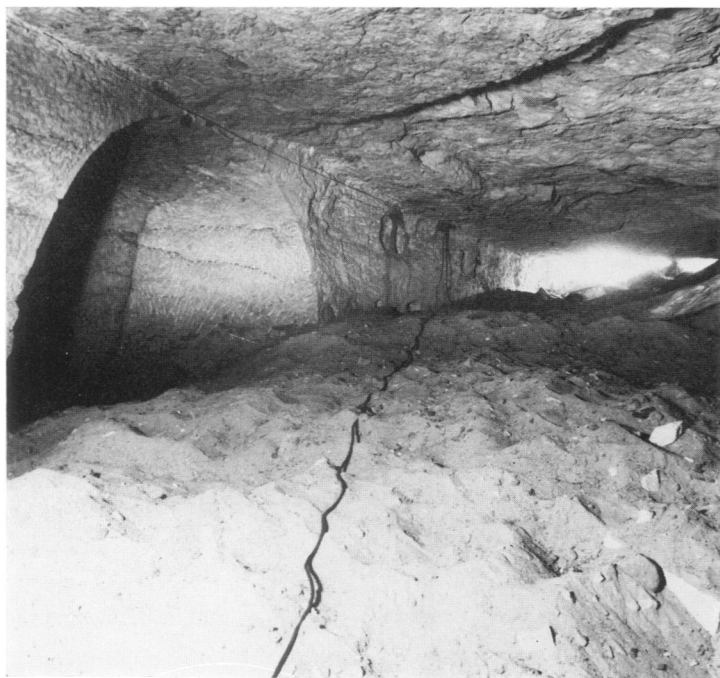


3. Vault 3 of the Iseum

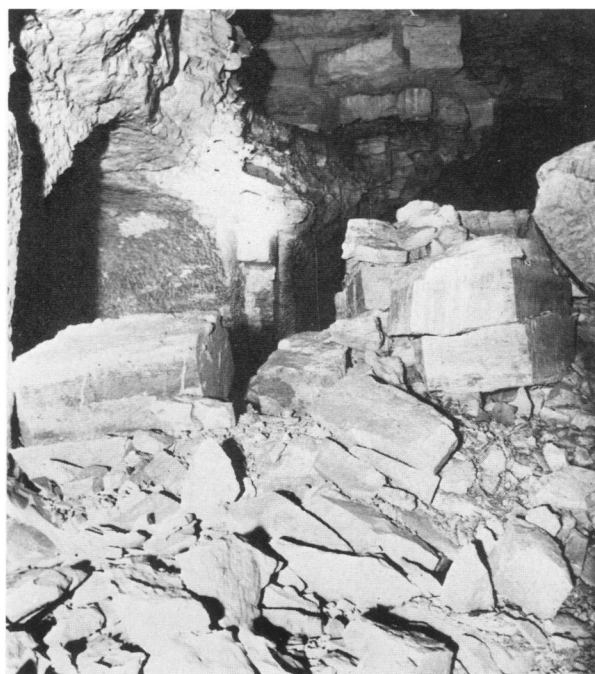


4. Interior of vault 3

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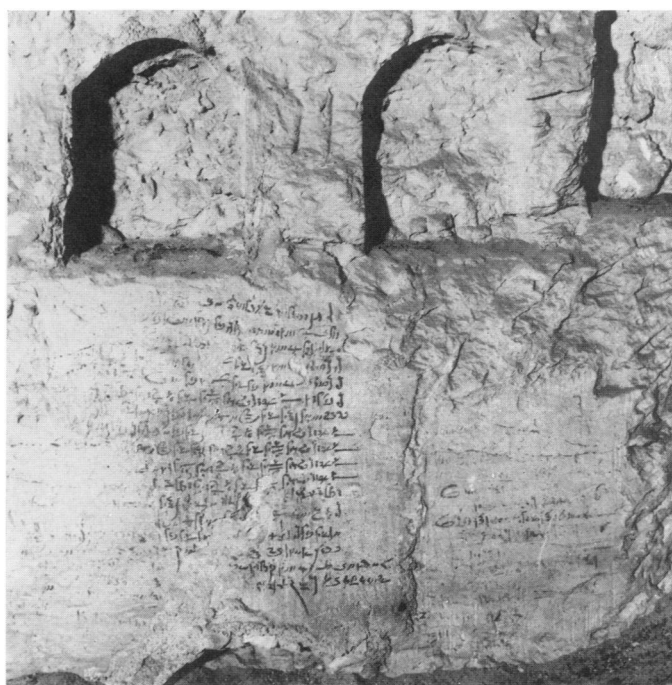
1. Entrance to the Iseum



2. Main gallery of the Iseum blocked by fallen rock



3. Another view of 2



4. Stelae niches and graffiti

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Burials of falcons and ibises have been found associated at several different sites, notably at Kôm Ombo, Abydos, and Thebes. Though there is as yet no evidence that the Falcon and Ibis Galleries merge at Saqqâra, and though a considerable distance separates them, it must be pointed out that many galleries in both installations have not yet been fully explored. Moreover, it is notable that some of the communication passages of the Ibis mausoleum go in the direction of the Falcon Galleries, and that demotic graffiti on the masonry blockings and gates blocking some of the side galleries of the falcon installation bear dedications to Thoth the Ibis more frequently than they do to Horus the Falcon.

Concurrently with the work in the Falcon Galleries, excavation by a main body of workers was conducted in the areas both north and south of the south wall of the enclosure of Sector 3. On the surface, a large area of mud-brick buildings was investigated to the south-west of the main temple enclosure (Sector 3). These buildings were cut down to foundation level, and their purpose cannot as yet be ascertained. One solid square brick foundation packed with rubble may have provided the podium to a small peripteral temple or the like, and other buildings were clearly too large to be purely domestic. This emphasizes that the whole escarpment below the temple site down to the valley bottom must once have been a large temple town, and is an integral part of the site requiring excavation. It is from this area that the most important and interesting demotic ostraca were recovered and it was here that we uncovered a stone causeway leading up from the valley which may well have been the main route of access to the site.

But the principal target of our research this season was that which had for so long eluded us; the burial place of Isis, Mother of Apis. Numerous fragments of limestone bearing demotic ink inscriptions referring to Isis, Mother of Apis, which were found in Sector 1 in 1966, indicated the existence of a second Serapeum in the vicinity. This was largely confirmed by the discovery in 1968 of a limestone block bearing a relief of Nectanebo II worshipping the Apis and a cow-headed goddess.¹

To complete our season's excavation the main body of our workers were moved to clear the area north of the temple between the face of the escarpment and the west wall of the enclosure (Sector 3). We received some encouragement in the discovery of some cattle bones showing traces of mummification and fragments of a wooden sledge similar to those found in the Bucheum at Armant. Further encouragement for the clearance in this area was obtained with the discovery in the sand fill behind Shrine D of a cache of bronze objects. The group, certainly temple equipment, consisted of a number of beaten bronze vessels, two situlae, and hand censers of the finest workmanship. It will be recalled that a similar deposit was discovered in this area during a preliminary clearance of this area last season.²

With these discoveries we had every reason to suppose that at last we were on the right track, and so we commenced the clearance of the face of the escarpment which up to that time had remained untouched except at its higher levels. On February 9, in the extreme north-east corner of Sector 3, close to the dividing wall between it and

¹ *JEA* 55 (1969), pl. ix.

² *JEA* 56 (1970), 7.

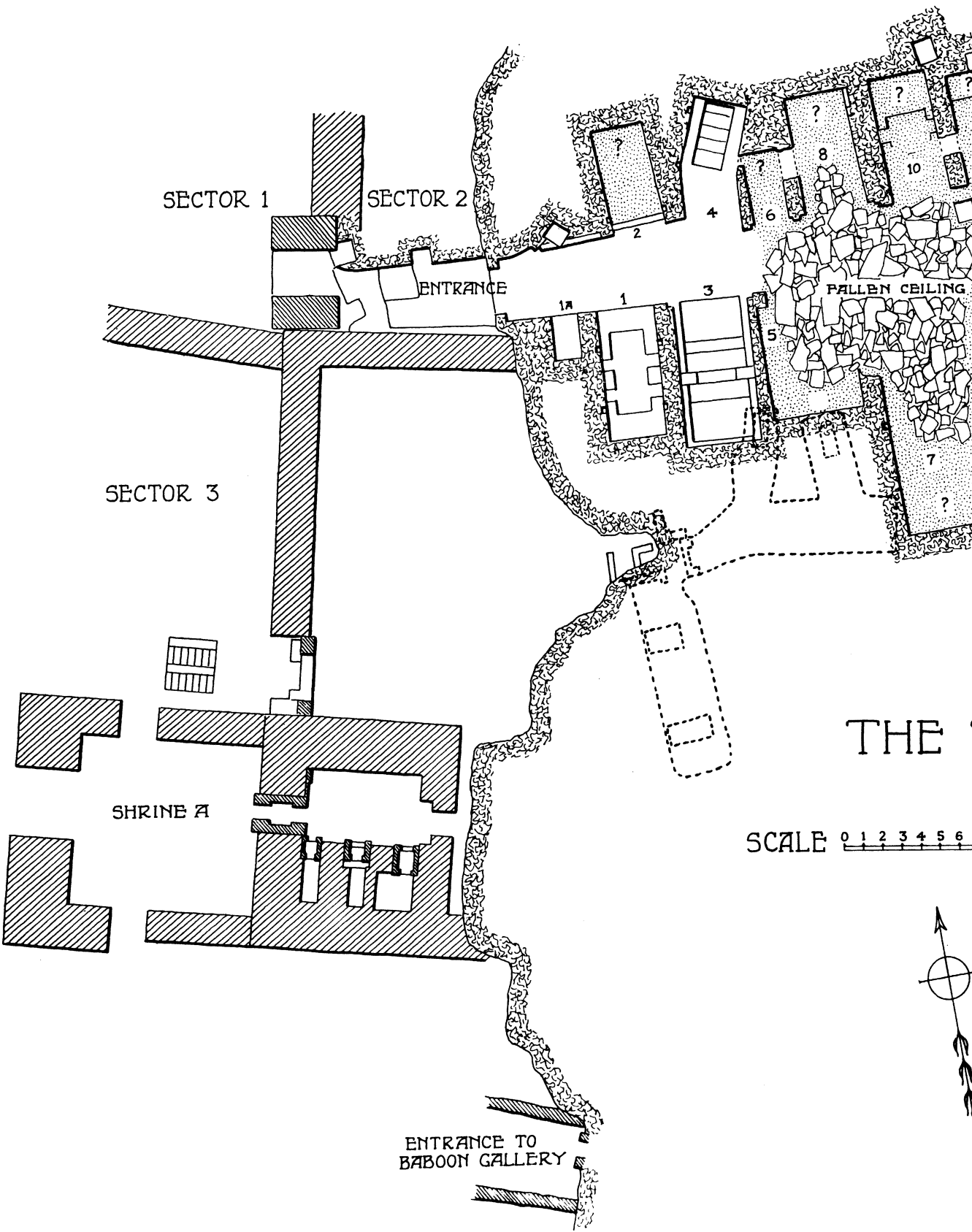
Sector 2, we found a small rock-cut room and in it the mouth of a pit which when cleared revealed an opening in its west wall, obviously the work of plunderers. Entering we found ourselves in a large rectangular rock-cut chamber with vaulted roof. This in turn led into a flat-roofed main gallery running east into the rock face, 3.5 metres wide and 2.5 metres high, from which vaulted side chambers led off on either side, some small, others of massive dimensions (pl. XII). Filled as it was with sand and fallen rock, and obviously ransacked by ancient plunderers, it was impossible at this stage to do more than a preliminary exploration of it, but it was obvious at a first glance that we had, at long last, discovered the burial place of the Isis cows and a counterpart of the Serapeum (pl. XIII).

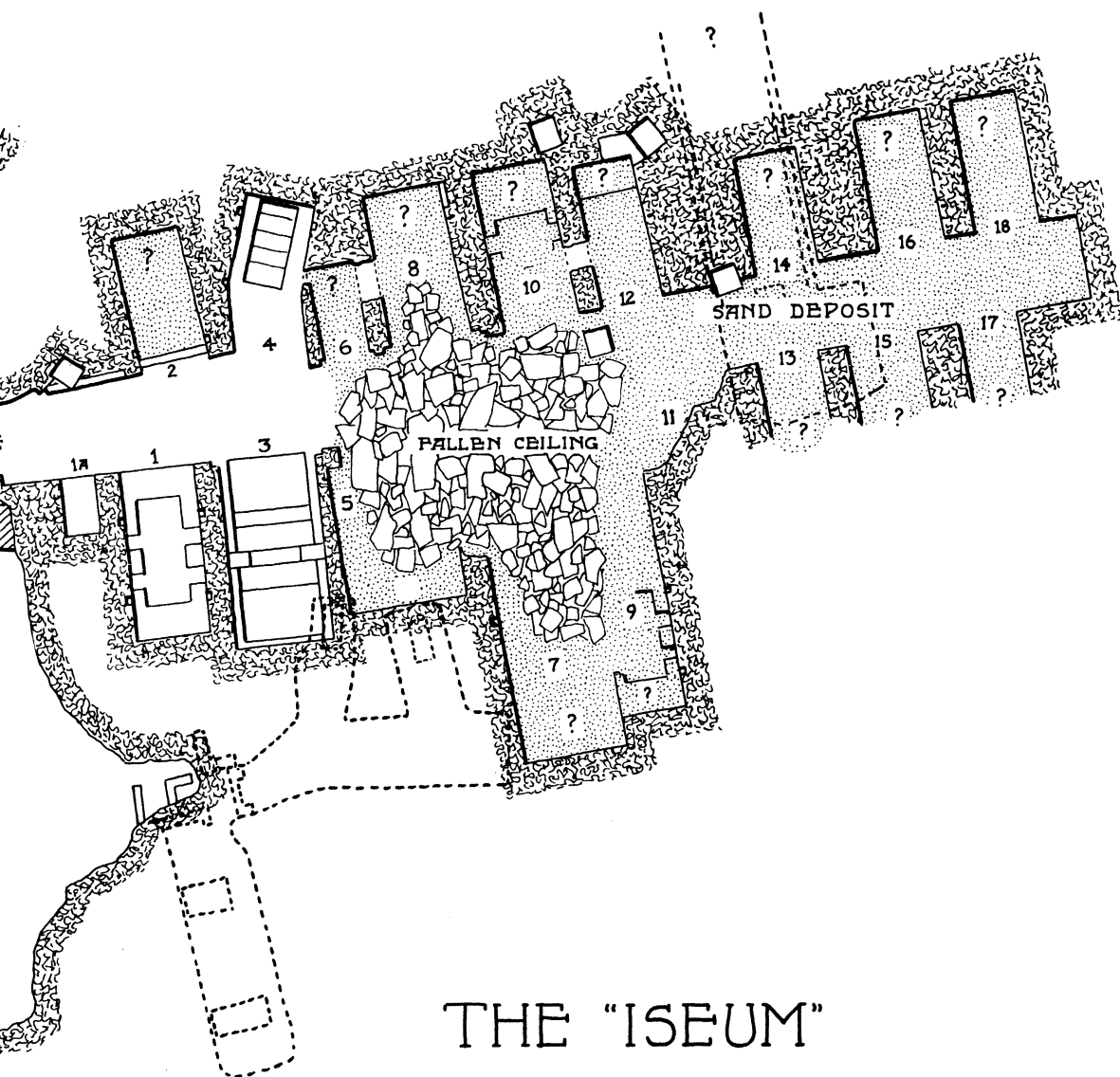
In the vaulted side chambers were visible smashed fragments of great granite sarcophagi and the scattered bones of bovines, while on the rock walls of the main gallery there were visible demotic stelae intact or partially intact in their niches, and several demotic graffiti on the walls (pl. XIII). The construction, dimensions, and multitude of niches for private stelae correspond exactly with those of the Serapeum of the Apis bulls, discovered over a century ago by Mariette. Like the burial installations in the Serapeum, the rock-cut vaults were originally lined with small limestone blocks perfectly set. Similar material was used to block the side chambers after the funeral ceremonies had been completed and it is now evident that the fragments of masonry bearing ink inscriptions referring to Isis, Mother of Apis, which we found in the courtyard of Sector 1 in 1966, came from this stonework.

A rapid survey soon revealed the general direction of the proper entrance and this was eventually uncovered immediately behind an unfinished limestone gateway, the purpose of which had puzzled us in 1966.¹ Only just wide enough to admit a sixty-ton sarcophagus (pl. XII, 1), the opening of the entrance greatly facilitated the progress of our work, so that before the end of the season we were able to clear four of the first side burial vaults. Beyond this the main gallery is blocked by a great fall of rock from the roof and further progress was impossible, because any attempt at clearance might cause a further collapse. Considerable work of an engineering and mining character lies ahead of us before a further advance into the interior is possible, and this will be a major task for us next season (pl. XII, 2-3).

Meanwhile, with considerable difficulty, Mr. Frazer was able to make a preliminary survey of what lay beyond the fallen rock and also to discover the existence of a large transverse passage above it, as yet too dangerous to explore. In the four burials examined, numerous objects were found, blue faience amulets and cylinder beads from the netting which covered the mummies of the cows. Also scraps of gilded wood, probably from the magnificent canopies which we know originally covered the sarcophagi. However, the most interesting and puzzling object recovered from Vault I was a plaque of gessoed and painted wood (fig. 3). Unfortunately in poor condition, the painted design on one side was sufficiently clear to show the figures of a bull and a cow being led in procession by two male and three female human figures depicted in a style, dress, and gestures totally un-Egyptian and similar in many respects to the line work on some

¹ *JEA* 53 (1967), 143.





THE "ISEUM"

SCALE 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 METRES



of the Carian funerary stelae discovered during the excavations last season.¹ The plaque, which can hardly be later than the fourth century B.C., shows no sign of having been part of a box or other form of furniture.

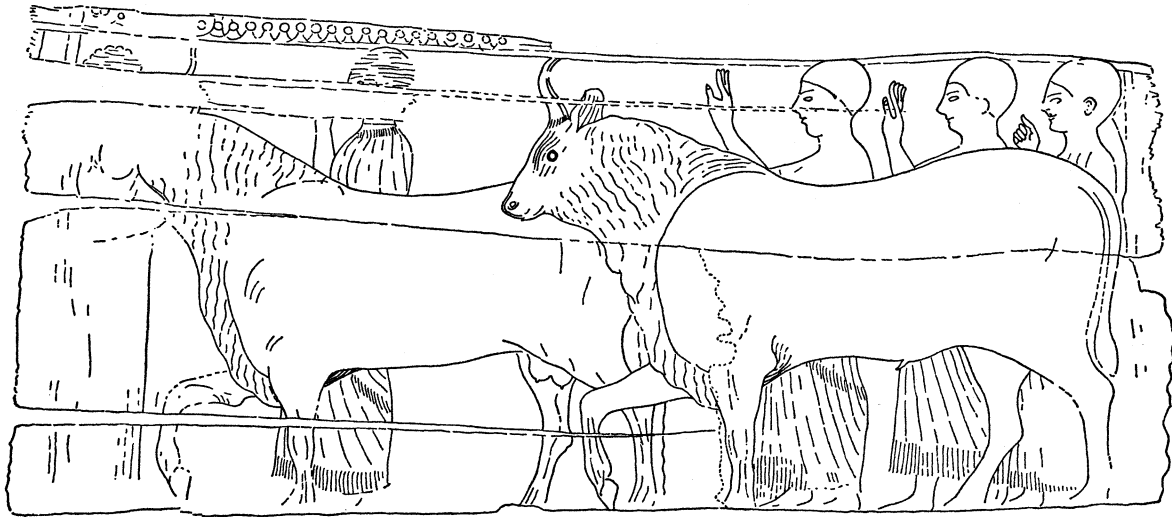


FIG. 3.

From the limited area of the gallery so far investigated a considerable quantity of inscribed material has been recovered and, following a preliminary study, Professor Smith reports as follows:

The most important finds are 68 stelae, whole or fragmentary, recovered from the debris of the main gallery and the vaults, having fallen or been wrenched from their niches in the walls (pl. XII, 4). Together with the graffiti, stelae *in situ*, and the inscribed stones from the fine limestone blockings of certain of the vaults, there are in all now 98 dedicatory inscriptions of the persons who took part in the excavation of vaults and the burial ceremonies of the Mothers of the Apis. Two of these inscriptions are in hieroglyphic, two in late hieratic, one in Greek, and the remainder in demotic. In type the texts correspond to those of the private stelae from the Serapeum. The simplest type lists the 'souls of Osiris Apis and (of Isis, Mother of Apis, and) the servants of the living Apis' who assisted at the burial of a sacred cow; or were members of the family, live or dead, of the dedicator. Most of the stelae, however, bear at the beginning the date of the burial of the cow, and often a more or less elaborate statement of the work done by the dedicators of the stelae, who occasionally bear the title 'necropolis workman'. The details include the opening of the 'Resting-places of Isis, mother of the Apis', the ancient name for the whole site; the excavation and building (i.e. masonry?) of the burial vault; the dragging of the sarcophagus; and the burial and its associated ceremonies. In rare instances the number of men involved is given, with the number of days' rations issued to them for each activity, and the quantities of oil and clothing given them. In a specific instance, two stelae record that the 'salvation'—i.e. death—of the Mother of Apis occurred at 'Beryton-of-Pharaoh(?)' in the land on the north of the suburbs of Saïs in 'month 3 of summer of Year 31 of Ptolemy son of Ptolemy, the god who averts evil' (i.e. Ptolemy II Philadelphus); the 'Resting-place of Isis was opened on the second day of the second month of Inundation', that is two to three months later; the work of excavating the vault (*knhy*) of the Cow is dated 'ninth day of the second month of

¹ *JEA* 56 (1970), 6.

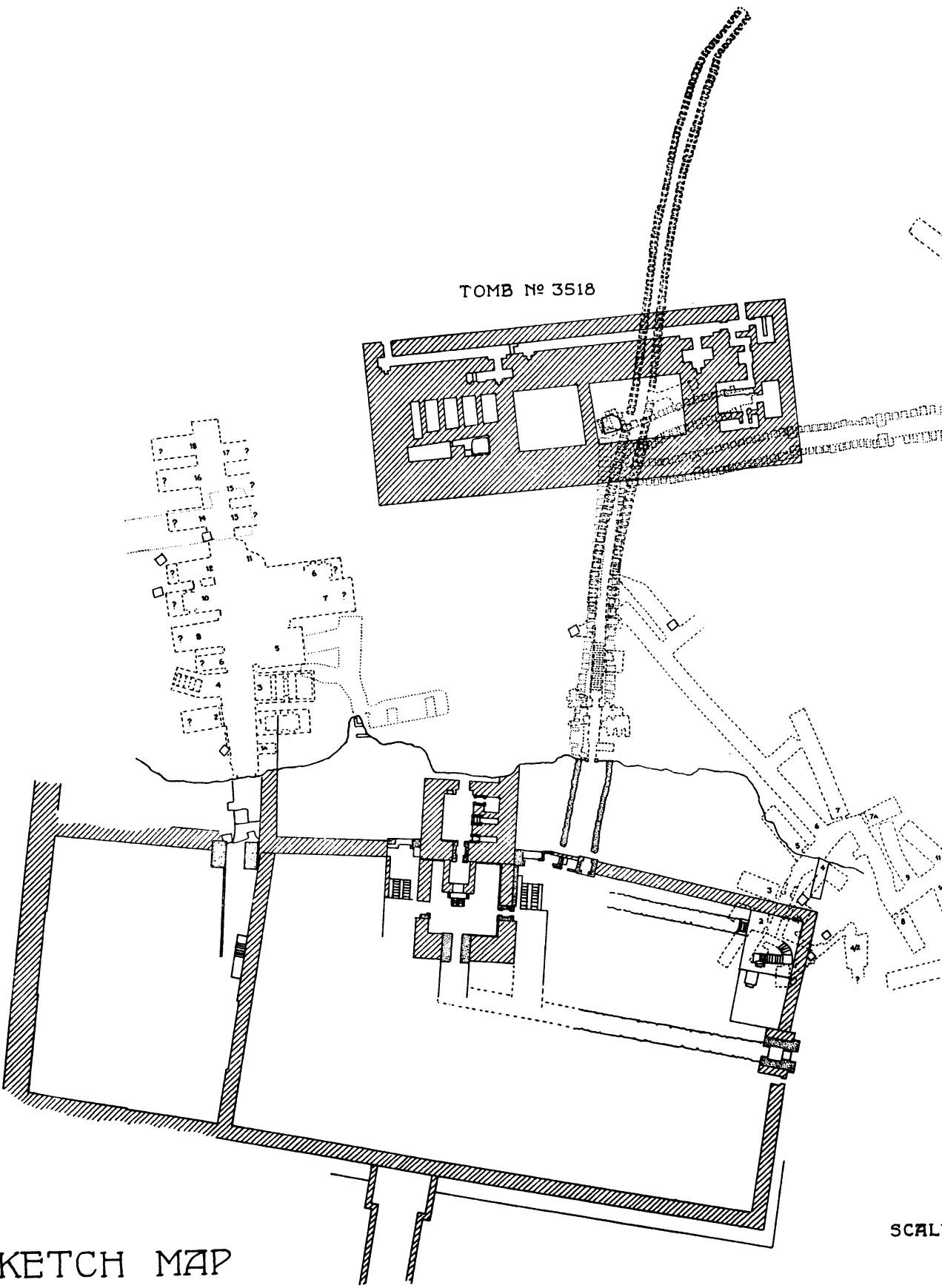
Inundation', seven days later, while the actual burial, if given by the date at the top of one of the stelae, took place on 'the ninth day of the fourth month of Inundation', sixty days after the beginning(?) of the work on the burial vault. Several of the longer stelae include a blessing on any man who shall read the stela and bless the names of those who appear upon it, and a few a corresponding curse: 'He who shall break it, his name shall be cut out of all the temples of Egypt.' Often it is simply Osiris-Apis and Isis, Mother of Apis, who will bless the reader of the stela, but sometimes a longer list of deities is invoked, including Thoth the twice great, Harendotes, Imhotep the great son of Ptah, Anubis, Osiris-Onnophris, and perhaps the ram of Mendes. In one case these deities are said rather to 'bless (*sm*) the work'. It is notable that most of the deities named now appear to have cults on our site. On the stelae found so far the cow is not represented, but in two instances the Apis bull is shown. The cow herself is most regularly referred to as Isis, but sometimes as Taese, 'She who belongs to Isis'.

The inscriptions so far recovered give dates ranging from 393 B.C. to 41 B.C., though most belong to the early part of that range, as is natural, since they come from near the entrance to the gallery, where one would expect the earlier burials to have been made. 19 burials in 350 years roughly corresponds to the 41 burials made in 650 years in the Saïte-Ptolemaic portion of the Serapeum. The earliest burials were in year 1 of Psammuthis and in the reign of Hakor. There was a flurry of activity in years 6-8 of Nakhtnebef (374-372), including at least two burials. There were then burials in years 5 and 9 of Nakhtarehe (355, 351 B.C.) and one in years 3-5 of Alexander (329-327 B.C.). The next certain burial is in year 9 of Alexander IV (308 B.C., while the young king's death was still officially concealed), followed by another in the 17th year of a Pharaoh Ptolemy, who may be Ptolemy I Soter (294 B.C.). The burial of the cow who died in Saïs took place in years 31-32 of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (253 B.C.). Burials recorded in years 2 and 8 may belong to Ptolemy IV Philadelphus (219, 213 B.C.). Of later burials at present there is record only of one in the reign of Ptolemy Epiphanes, and of one in year 11 of Queen Cleopatra, 'when the Queen was in the land of Khor'; this can only well refer to Cleopatra VII when she met Anthony in Cilicia after Philippi (41 B.C.). This series gives a reasonable pattern of intervals of from 10 to 20 years during the fourth and early third centuries B.C. At present the evidence is clearly very incomplete, and speculation on what happened to a Mother of Apis if she outlived her divine son, and the many associated problems, would be premature. The association of the stelae with the niches in the gallery is a matter of difficulty, since the niches are rough-hewn and the plaster embedding the stela has generally fallen away; even if placed with confidence, it may remain uncertain to which of the adjoining burials the stela refers; and it is always possible that later stelae have been inserted out of true position for space reasons. Of the burials in the chambers so far accessible, No. 1 was possibly that of 372 B.C.; No. 2 must almost certainly have belonged to the reign of Alexander or Alexander IV, more probably the former; No. 3, a large and splendid burial, may very possibly be that of 355 B.C., while for Nos. 4 and 5 there is no satisfactory evidence. No. 6 certainly dated to year 18 of a Pharaoh whom palaeography would suggest to be one of the Nectanebos. A fairly satisfactory progression from the entrance inwards is thus obtained, but no satisfactory location emerges for the burials in years 6-8 of Nakhtnebef, quite apart from those of the XXIXth Dynasty, the evidence for which comes from blocks found in 1966-7.

As the ancient title 'Resting-places of Isis, Mother of the Apis' was considered rather too cumbersome, we have for brevity's sake provisionally named the site the 'Iseum'.

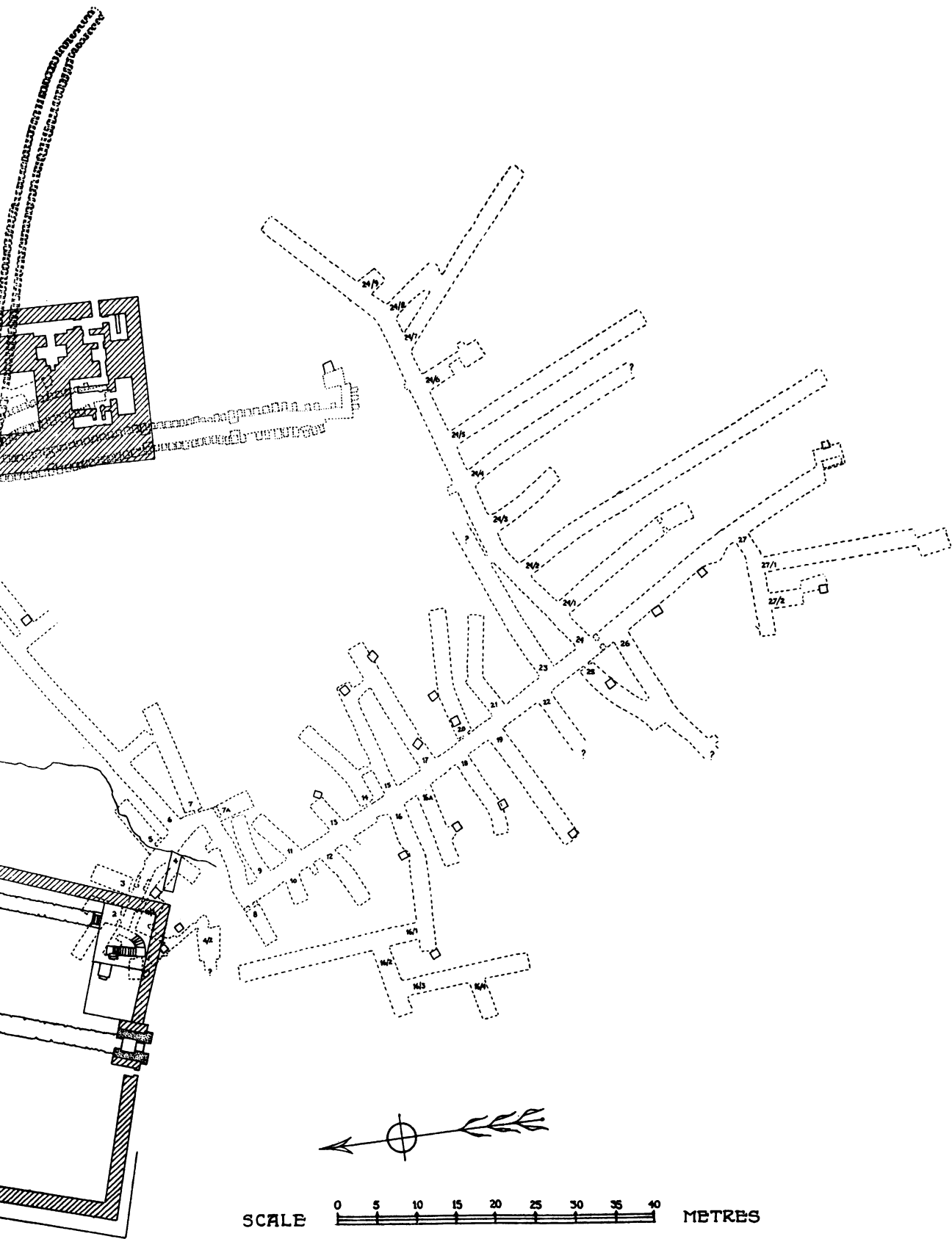
Before closing down the season's work we sank a test pit in the paved floor of the inner chamber of Shrine A, where signs of subsidence suggested the existence of a substructure. From this we recovered a few scattered cow bones and the revelation of a

TOMB № 3518



SCALE

SKETCH MAP
AREAS H4-5-6 G4-5-6



NORTH SAQQĀRA 1969-70

wall cut in the rock which leads towards the face of the escarpment. Further investigation was impossible without the removal of overhanging rock fallen from above and large-scale clearance would also entail the moving of part of the temple fabric. There can be little doubt that a structure of some sort existed here, over which Nectanebo II built his shrine, and it is tempting to think that below may exist an entrance to an earlier part of the 'Iseum', which would probably have escaped the attention of the Christian iconoclasts who destroyed the pagan sanctuaries after the edict of Theodosius in A.D. 379.