



ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫЕ НАЦИИ

**СОВЕТ
БЕЗОПАСНОСТИ**



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ПИСЬМО ПОСТОЯННОГО ПРЕДСТАВИТЕЛЯ ИОРДАНИИ ПРИ
ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ ОТ 19 АПРЕЛЯ
1968 Г. ГЕНЕРАЛЬНОМУ СЕКРЕТАРЮ

По поручению моего правительства и в связи с приложениями к письму Постоянного представителя Израиля от 6 марта 1968 г. (A/7064/Add.1, S/8439/Add.1) имею честь обратить внимание Вашего Превосходительства на следующее.

Именно израильцы преднамеренно осквернили христианские и мусульманские Святые Места. В приложенном документе показаны факты ужасающего осквернения христианских церквей и кладбищ, расположенных на горе Сион. В течение двадцати лет израильской оккупации доступ публике к этим местам был запрещен.

Фотографии, приводимые в прилагаемом документе, демонстрируют израильские акты разрушения и вандализма. Они ясно свидетельствуют о том уважении, которое израильцы оказывают Святым Местам других религий. Полное разрушение изнутри и снаружи армянской церкви Св. Спасителя было совершено израильской армией. Ценная коллекция старых церковных одеяний была полностью разграблена израильцами.

По крайней мере четырнадцать древних могил патриархов армянской церкви в оккупированном Иерусалиме были разрушены, вскрыты и их содержимое осквернено. Две могилы были разрушены и разрыты на глубину до шести футов.

Кладбища греческой православной и католической церквей были объектом систематических грабежей со стороны израильцев. Могилы были разрушены, трупы извлечены из могил, причем останки гробов и трупов разбросаны.

* Издано также под условным обозначением A/7084.

Факты осквернения и грабежей израильцами мусульманских Святых Мест слишком многочисленны, чтобы их можно было перечислить в данном письме. Это будет предметом другого представления.

Я прошу, чтобы это письмо вместе с приложением к нему было распространено в качестве официального документа Генеральной Ассамблеи и Совета Безопасности.

Мухаммед Х. ЭЛЬ-ФАРРА
Посол
Постоянный представитель

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The desecration
of Christian Cemeteries
and
Church property
in Israel

THE INSTITUTE FOR PALESTINE STUDIES
1968

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Haddad Bldg., Chile St. (off Verdun), Beirut, Lebanon

DURING THE Arab-Israeli war last June there was much concern about the fate of the holy places in the Old City of Jerusalem. In fact, apart from the church of St. Anne, damage to Christian shrines was slight. This was not, however, the case with other Christian property in the Israeli-occupied sector of Jerusalem, belonging to the three major sects, the Latins, Greeks and Armenians. The annexation of the Old City to west Jerusalem, and the return of buildings and cemeteries belonging to them on Mount Sion after a lapse of twenty years, has revealed that these have been extensively desecrated by the occupying forces, and have fared far worse than anything in the Old City during the war.

These Christian properties are on the summit of Mount Sion, just outside the city walls to the south. From 1948 until 1967 they were technically in Israel, but the general public was forbidden access to them, and they were under the direct control of the Israeli army.

Amongst the buildings is the Armenian church of St. Saviour, by tradition built on the house of Caiaphas; it is a fifteenth-century structure, on approximately the same site as a much earlier Byzantine church. It belongs to the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem, which is also located on Mount Sion, but within the walls of Jerusalem. Since 1948 the prelates of the Armenian church have been unable to visit St. Saviour's either from Jordan or Israel. Some years ago a UN truce supervisor was asked about the church, but was unable to get inside it, the Israelis telling him it was mined. At the time, he expressed the private opinion that it was being used as an advanced Israeli machine-gun post.

The evidence of recent photographs and reports has proved this conjecture to be correct. The monastery buildings around the church were fortified by the Israelis, and the walls between individual cells demolished to make a continuous passage; the windows were filled with sand-bags, and wooden gun emplacements. It is clear that they attached considerable importance to the site, as it commanded the south-west angle of the Old City.

Less comprehensible was the behaviour of the Israeli soldiers during twenty years occupation of the buildings. The courtyard of the church

of St. Saviour is the traditional burying-place of the Patriarchs of the Armenian Church in Jerusalem, and at least fourteen of the venerable tombs were smashed open, and their contents desecrated. Two were demolished and excavated to a depth of six feet below the ground.

The interior of the church of St. Saviour is a scene of total devastation. The carved and gilded altar has been wrecked, and an altar painting lies destroyed on the floor below. The oil paintings that decorated the upper part of the north and south walls have been torn out of their frames, leaving only tattered shreds of canvas. Many of the Kütahya tiles, brought specially from Turkey by Armenian pilgrims in the early eighteenth century, have been ripped from the walls; those that have not been stolen lie smashed on the ground, along with a tangled mass of broken church furniture. The valuable collection of old church vestments has completely disappeared.

So has the well-known Byzantine mosaic,¹ which was in the basement of the monastery. Père Vincent, the distinguished French scholar, once described it as 'une très élégante mosaïque... du IV^e/V^e siècle'. It has been expertly lifted and removed. It is common knowledge that the Israeli Minister of Defence, General Dayan, has an amateur interest in antiquities; some of his troops would seem to have emulated him.

Adjacent to the Armenian church is the Greek Orthodox cemetery on Mount Sion, which to judge from the photographs now resembles a film set for the Resurrection. Practically every tomb in the cemetery is smashed. Fragments of marble crosses, angels' wings, and inscriptions lie inextricably mixed with human bones, blackened tree stumps, and the remains of rockets and shells. In contrast to the sack of the Armenian church, the damage could conceivably have been the result of the two wars, in 1948 and 1967, rather than systematic pillage. However, there is no doubt that the cemetery was also occupied by Israeli soldiers; there are well-beaten paths between the tombs, and one of the out-houses is labelled NIGHT CLUB. More graffiti, in Hebrew and English, must have been added by other soldiers to while away their time.

The state of the third cemetery on Mount Sion, belonging to the Latin church, has been described in a recent issue of the Catholic journal, *La Terre Sainte*, by the Very Reverend Father André.² Procureur-Général in the Holy Land since 1962, he speaks with authority as he has had the task of supervising the repairs to the damaged cemetery. He begins by deploring the overthrowing of Jewish tombstones by the Arabs of the Mount of Olives — the subject of a recent Israeli White Paper — but observes that they did not, as far as is known, actually drag the corpses out of the tombs, as happened with so many Christian graves. He published several macabre photographs, showing smashed tombs in the Catholic cemetery, with the remains of coffins and the deceased strewn all around. In conclusion he rightly asks why these acts of profanation by the Israelis were not also mentioned in the White Paper.

As the non-Arab Christian communities are by no means directly involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict, one wonders what possible reason there can have been for the desecration of their cemeteries and churches. It is clear that the pillage and destruction was carried out over a period of years, suggesting that the soldiers' misconduct was condoned by successive generations of Israeli officers. Since the war the Israelis have made it quite clear that whilst some of the recently occupied territories might possibly be negotiable, the Old City is excluded from any bargaining and that they intend to stay. This must give pause for thought to the three major Christian sects in Jerusalem, in light of what has happened to their property during twenty years of occupation; they must surely view the future with apprehension, however much the Israeli government may attempt to reassure them of its benevolence.

¹ Vincent et Abel, *Jérusalem Nouvelle*, 1922; II, 497-500, fig. 183.

² R. P. Isaias André, "Profanation de Cimetières à Jérusalem" in *LA TERRE SAINTE*, (Jérusalem; Mars 1968).

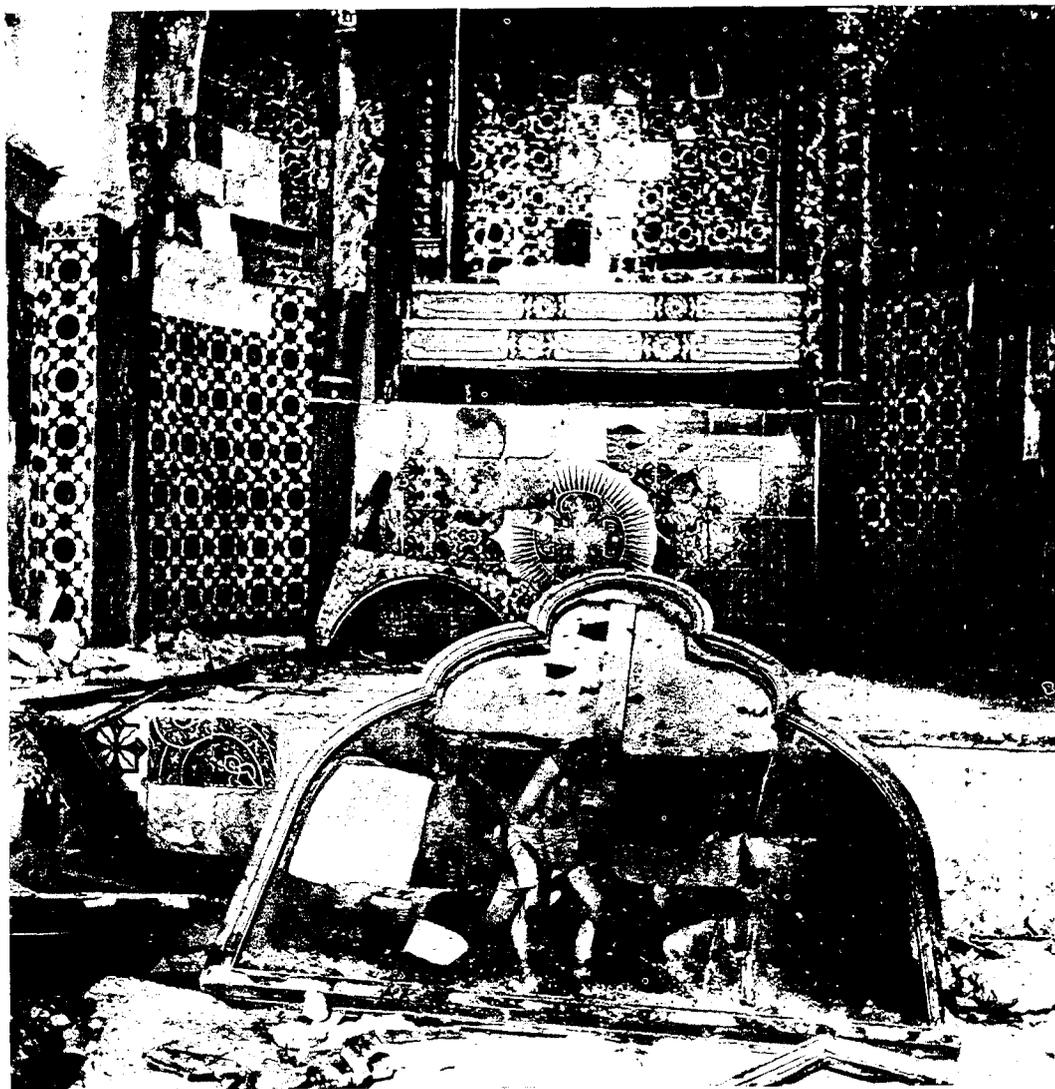


PLATE I The Church of St. Saviour; the ruined altar.

The Armenian Church of St. Saviour, on Mount Sion, Jerusalem

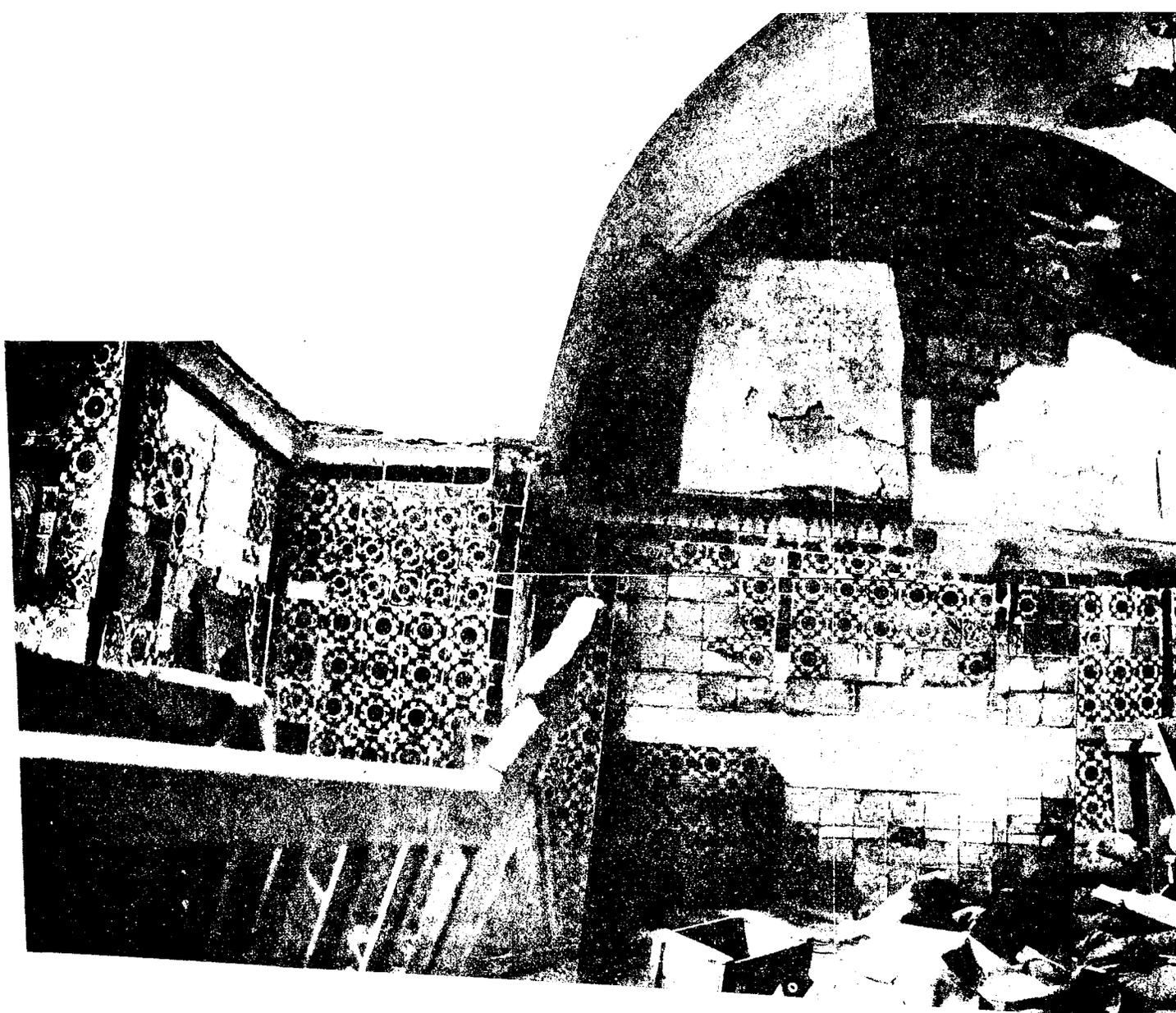


PLATE 2 The Church of St. Saviour; interior, looking north-east, showing the ruined altar and paintings, and the smashed furniture and

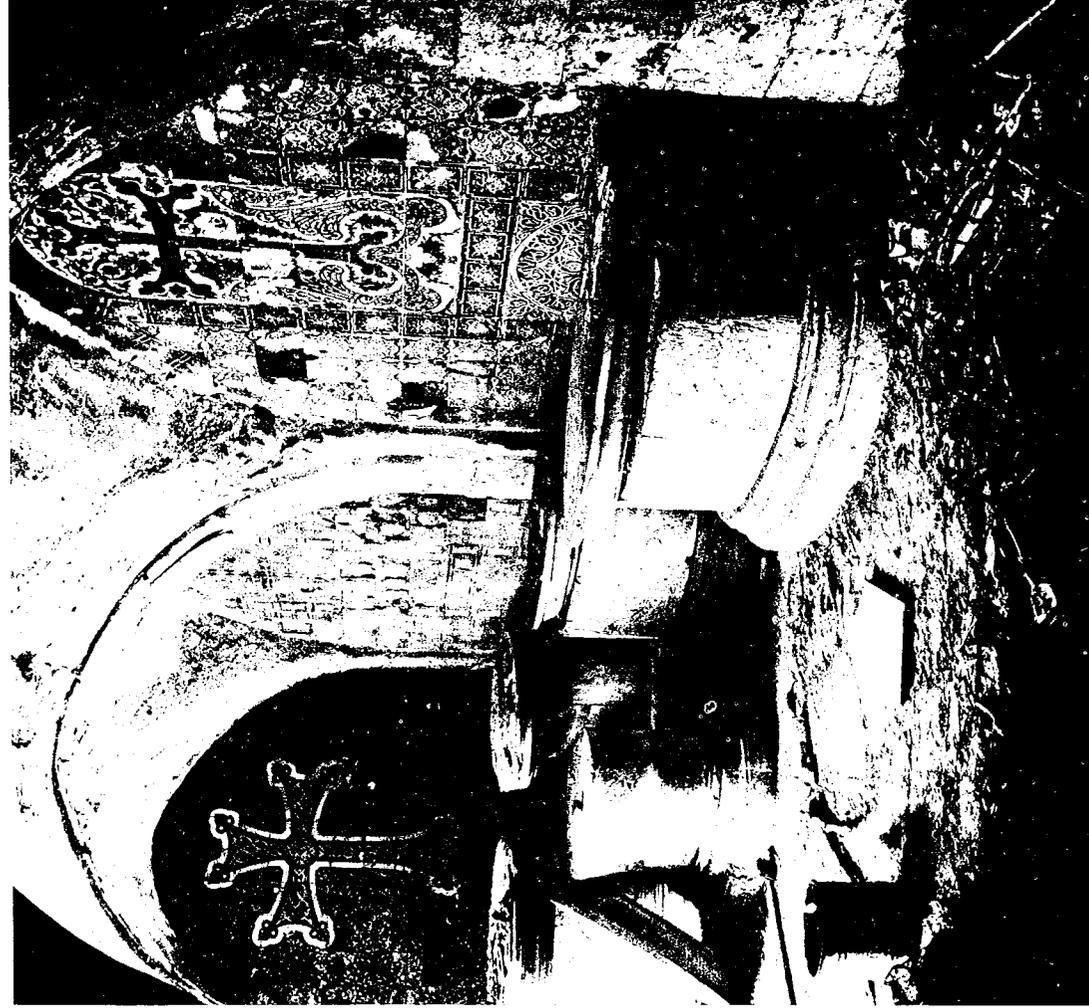


PLATE 3 The courtyard outside the Church of St. Saviour. On the left, a ruined altar; in the centre, the lower part of the Armenian monastery adjacent to the church, fortified by the Israeli army — under the arcade, desecrated tombs of the Armenian Patriarchs of Jerusalem.

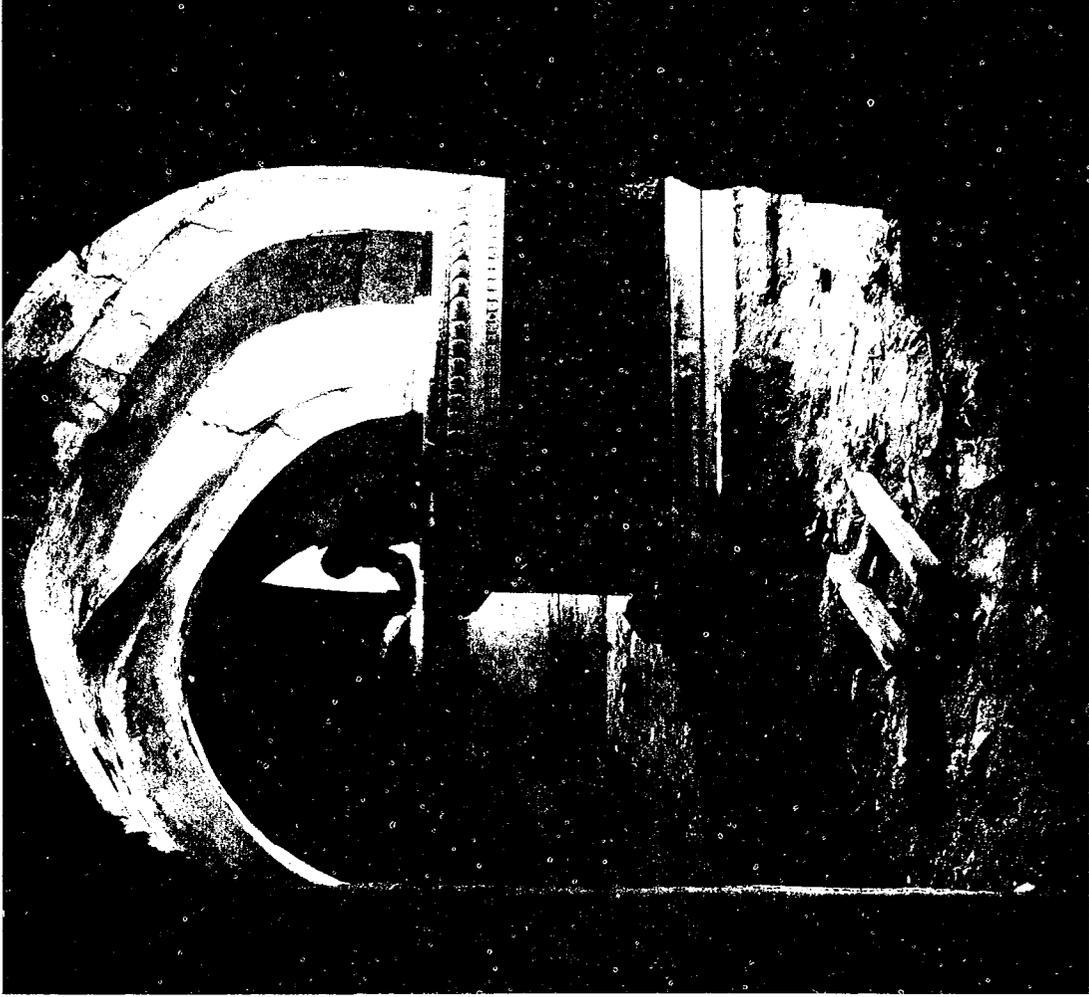


ury tile-work. To the right of the centre of the north wall, the remains of an Israeli gun-emplacement, pierced through the wall itself.





P L A T E 4 Several of the tombs of the Armenian Patriarchs of Jerusalem, desecrated by the Israeli army.



P L A T E 5 Desecrated tombs of the Armenian Patriarchs; the tomb in the foreground has had its marble sides removed, exposing the interior.

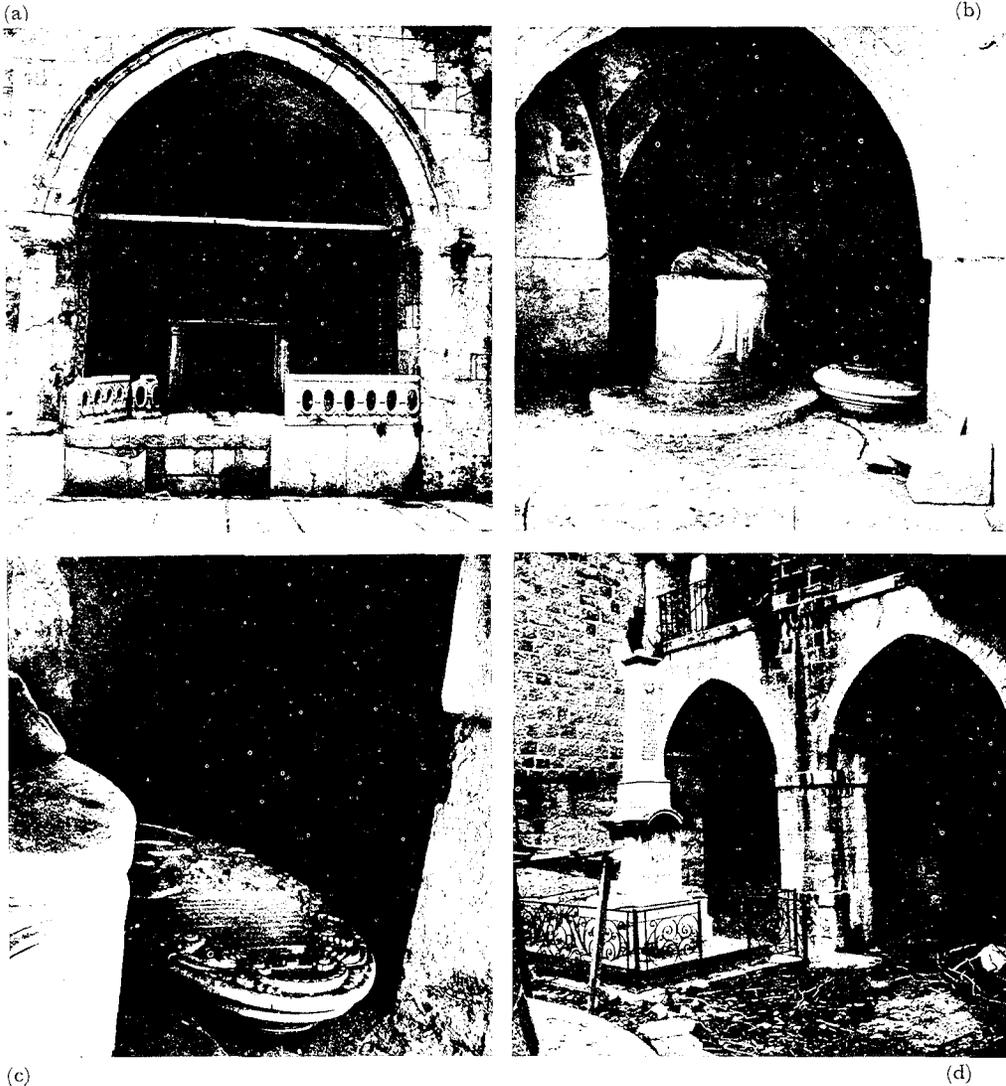


PLATE 6 (a) Damaged altar in the courtyard of the Armenian Church of St. Saviour, with the painting removed.
 (b) One of the tombs of the Armenian Patriarchs; the cover has been removed, and a sandbag substituted.
 (c) detail of (b), beyond which is the hole excavated beneath two other tombs.
 (d) courtyard to the east of the Church of St. Saviour, showing damage to monument, with the oval inscription removed.

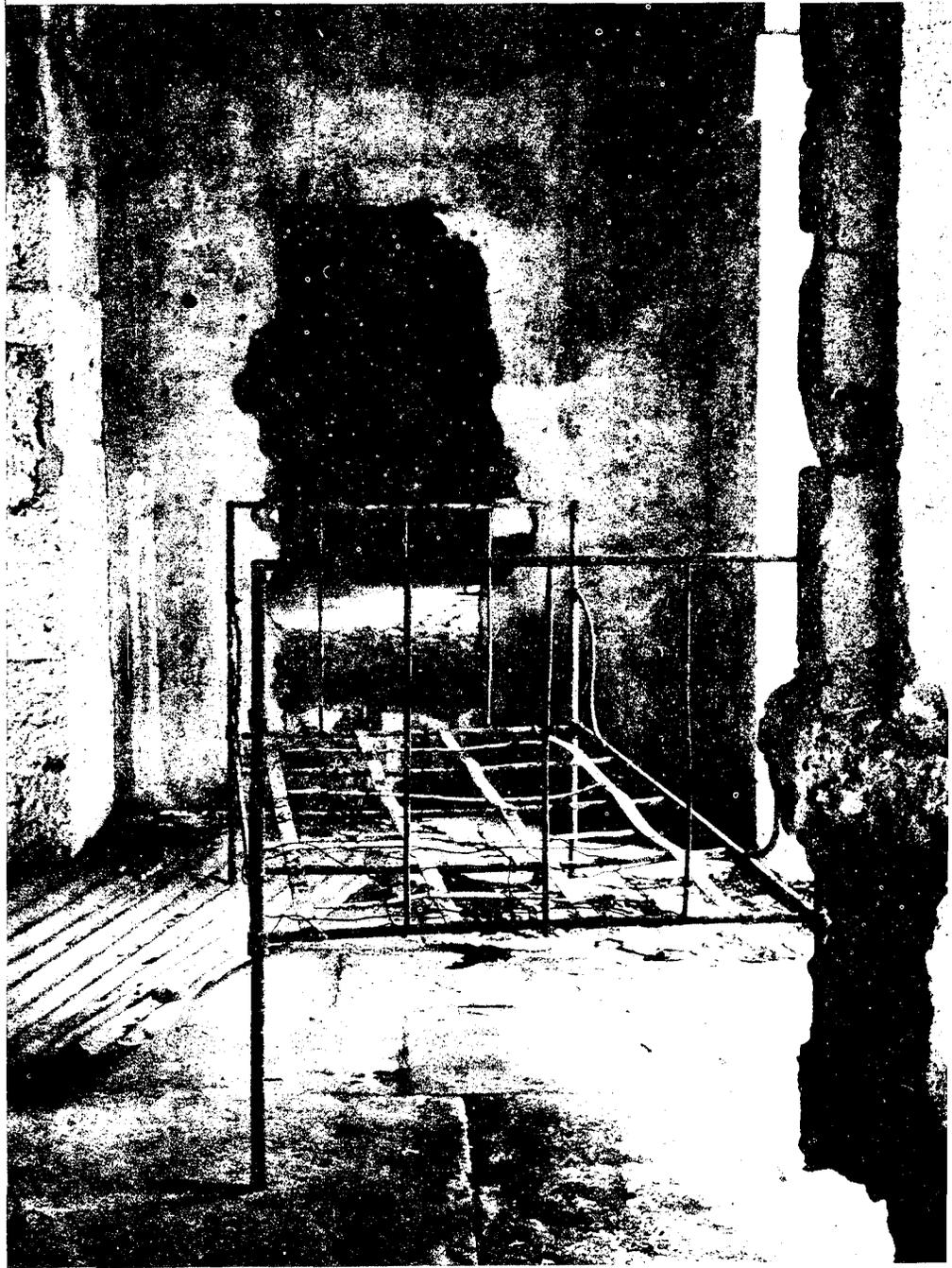


PLATE 7 In the Armenian monastery adjacent to the Church of St. Saviour. The walls between the individual cells have been smashed through to make a continuous passage.



PLATE 8 In the Armenian monastery; a sandbagged Israeli gun emplacement on the first floor.

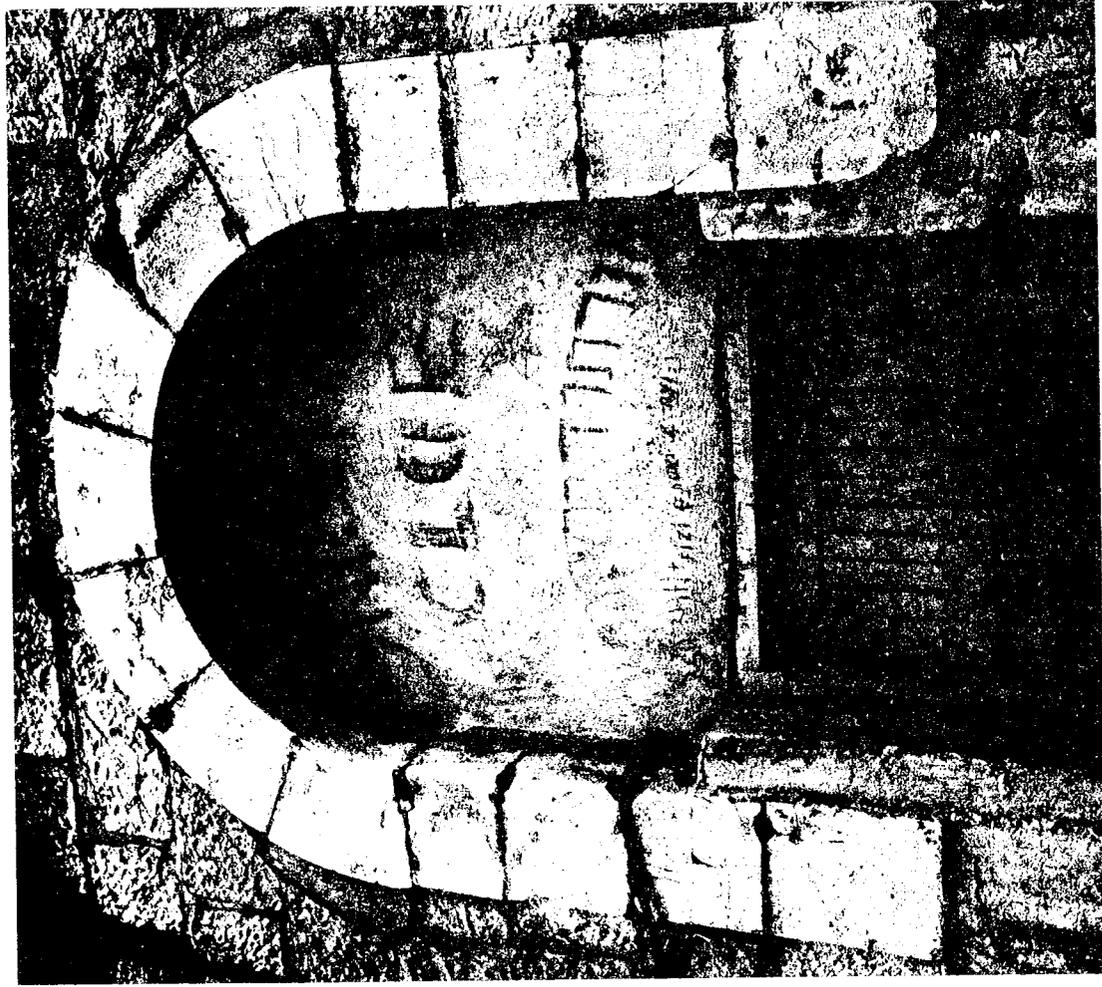


PLATE 9 Graffiti on the doorway of one of the outhouses in the cemetery, used by the occupying Israeli soldiers: 'NIGHT CLUB', 'ARE YOU LONESOME TONIGHT?...'



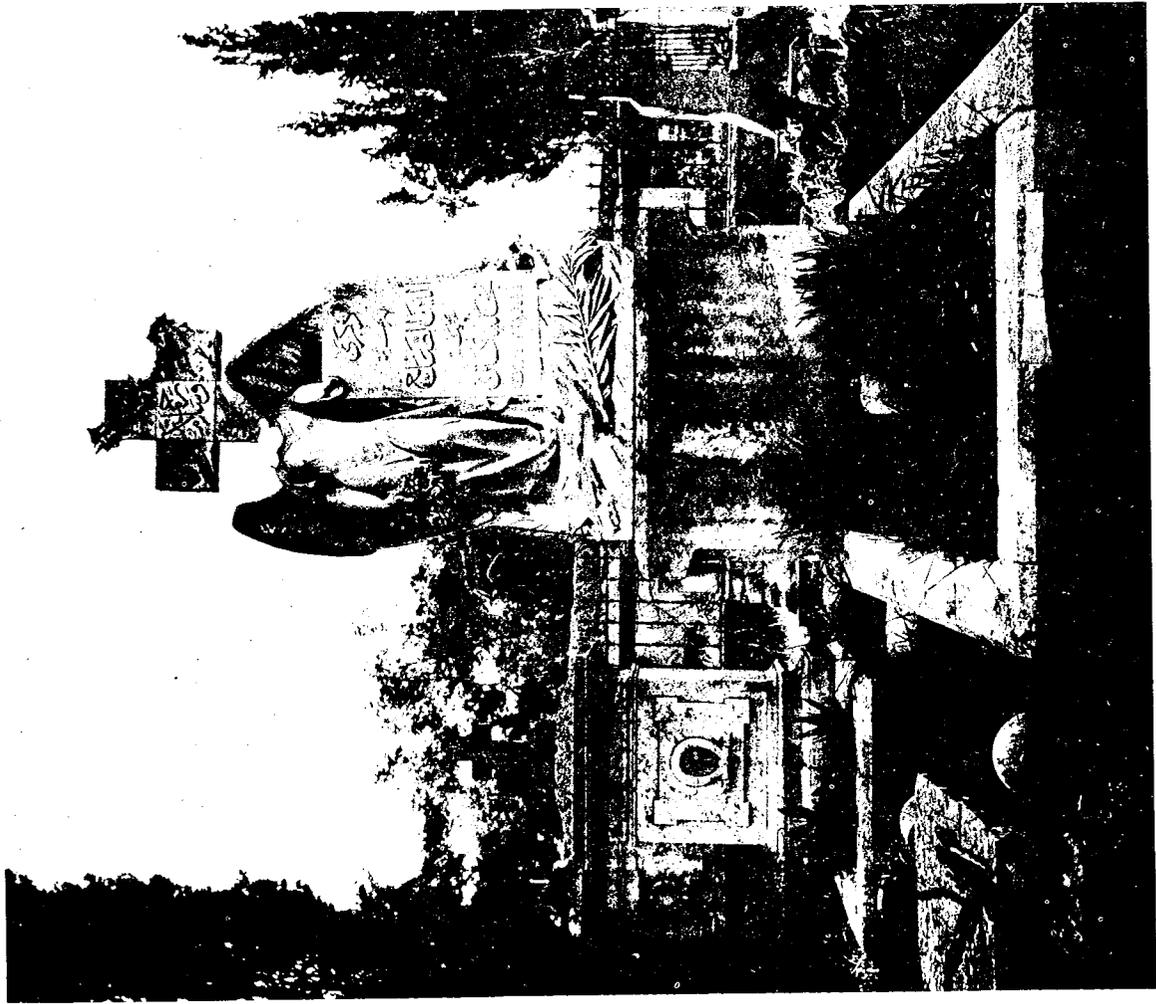
PLATE 10 Smashed tomb in the Greek Orthodox cemetery.



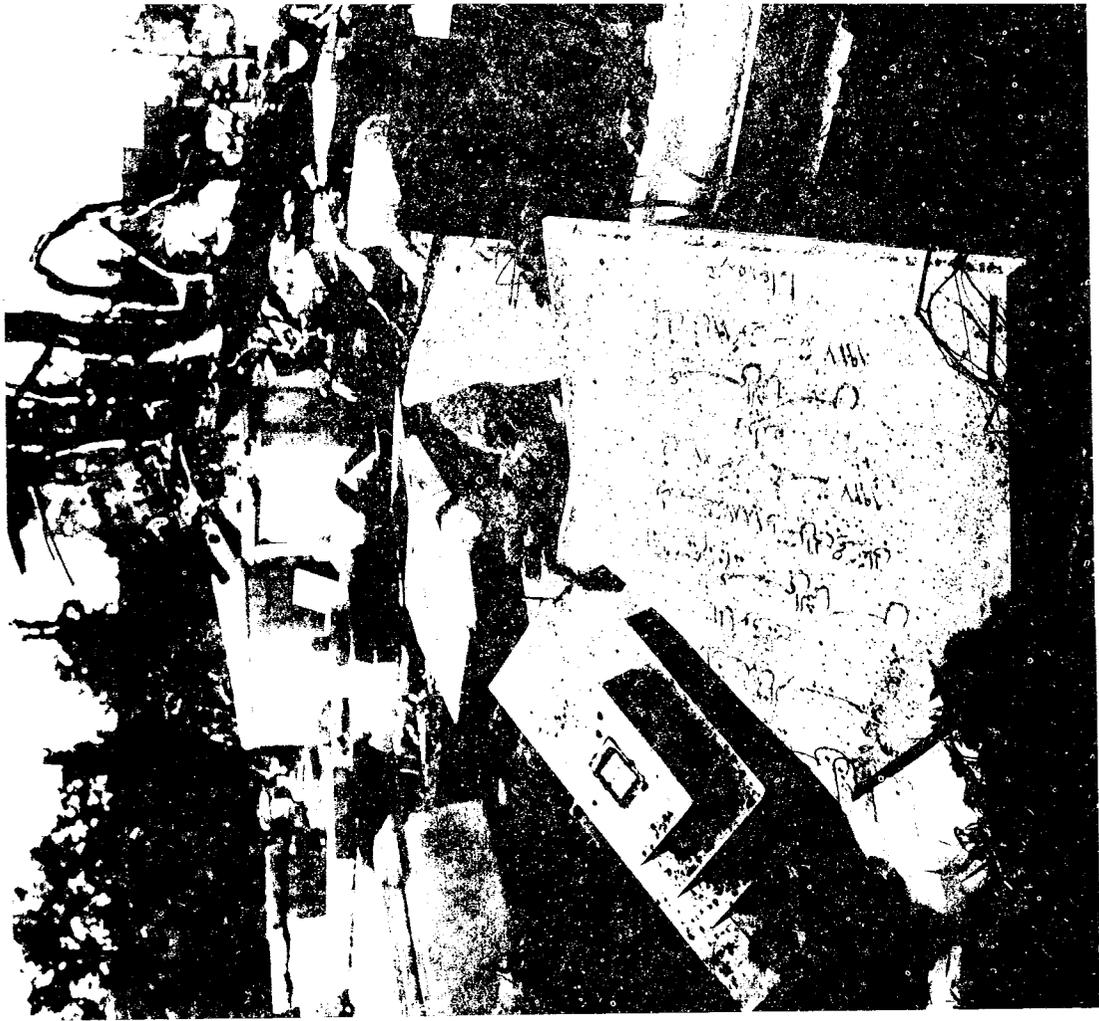
PLATE 11 The Greek Orthodox cemetery, looking north.



PLATE 12 The Greek Orthodox cemetery, north-west angle.



P L A T E 13 The Greek Orthodox cemetery, looking west.



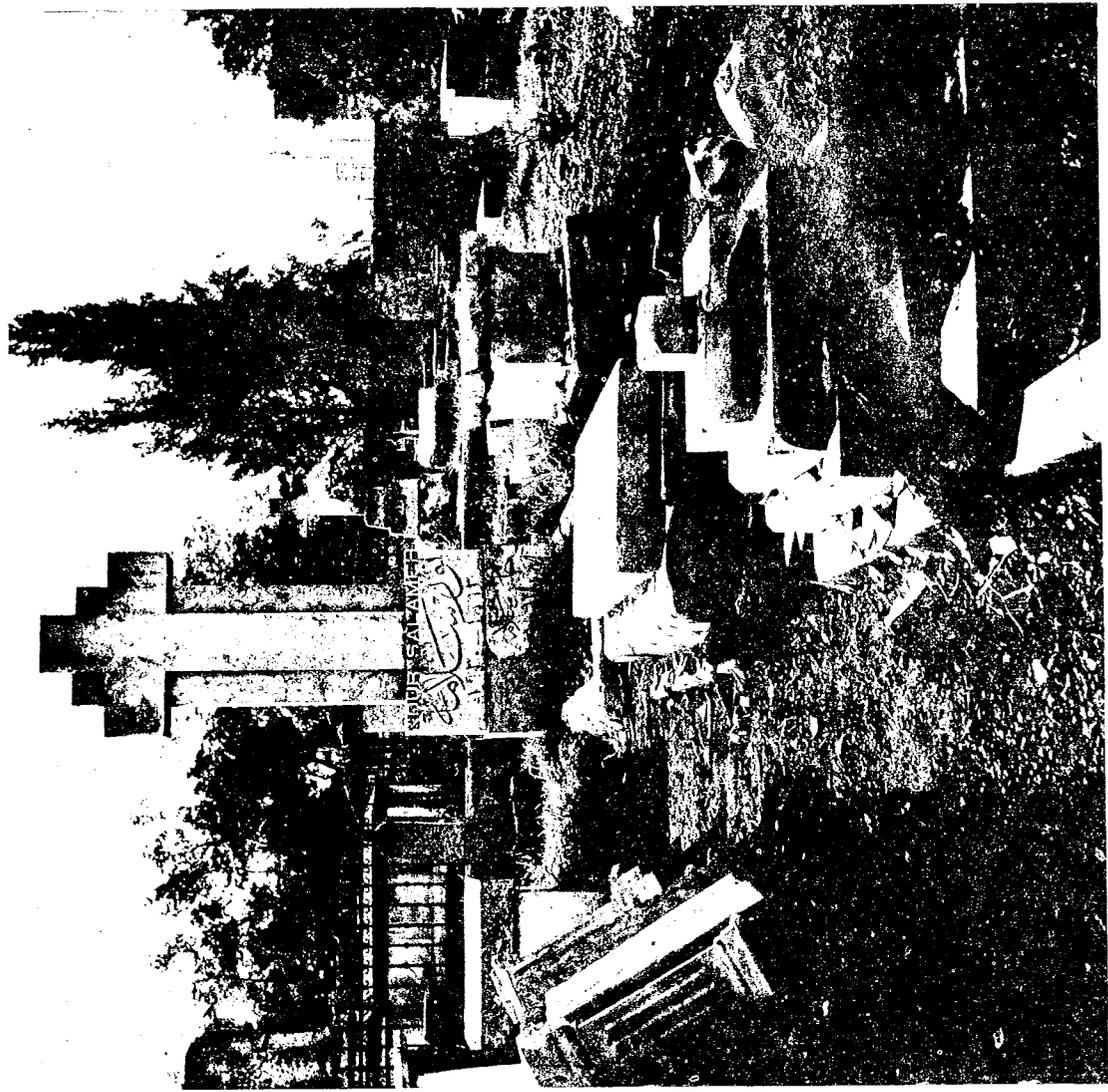
P L A T E 14 The Greek Orthodox cemetery, looking north-west.



PLATE 15 The Greek Orthodox cemetery, looking north. The apertures in the cemetery wall have been blocked; beyond the wall are the ramps of the Old City of Jerusalem.



PLATE 16 (a), (b), (c), (d) Details of the Greek Orthodox cemetery, and the smashed tombs. (d) shows the Church of the Dormition, on Mount Sion, beyond the cemetery wall.



P.L.A.T.E 17 Smashed tombs in the Greek Orthodox cemetery; looking west.