

later in use together when the synagogue was occupied. Room and chamber remain a puzzle, but the most likely explanation is that the first is for the study, copying and care of sacred texts, and that the second is a kind of genizah in which such texts might be stored, particularly after they were too worn to be usable.

In the last week of digging another structure appeared, this time under the synagogue floor. A probe revealed that the eastern end of the synagogue is founded on an artificial terrace which covers a chamber entered by a flight of stairs, both cut into bedrock, both known to the builders of the terrace and so, presumably, of the synagogue. The chamber is probably neither a cistern (it is much too shallow) nor a tomb (its form has no parallel in the two dozen or so tombs on or near the site whose forms are known). It may be a domestic storage chamber but it most resembles the ritual bath discovered this year on the east slope of the hill (see VIE below). Most of the excavating and recording of this chamber was done after the dig had officially ended, by volunteers and staff who realized that such a tantalizing find could not be left incomplete (and who refused to leave before getting to the bottom of this new puzzle!). As a result, the chamber was fully excavated, all finds processed, and final architectural plans of it prepared within a week of its discovery; with the data complete, the staff can now try to understand and explain it during the fall and winter in the United States.

4. The building at Kh. Shema<sup>c</sup> is important finally because so many of its architectural members