



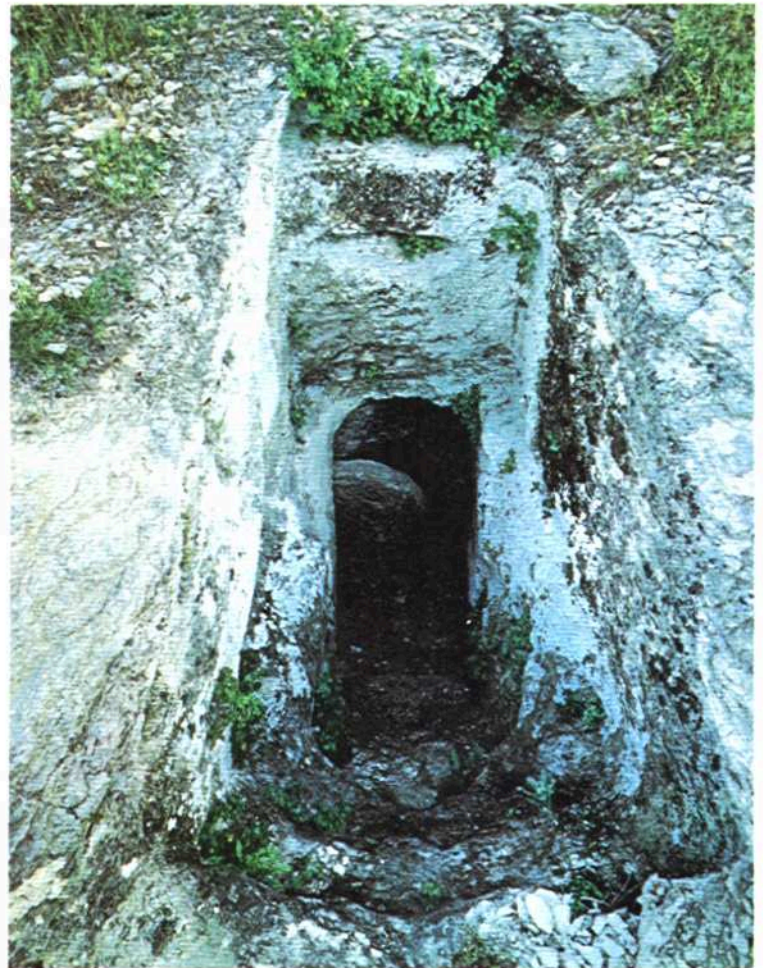
Rome's Cruel Way with Rebels

Crucifixion, a common practice in Jesus' time, was the penalty for robbery, tumult and sedition. It was reserved for slaves and foreigners, and was intended to be a form of public humiliation. The victim was nailed to a T-shaped cross through the wrists and ankles, as the hands and feet would not support the body. Ropes under the arms and a heavy peg between the legs gave additional support. Death came slowly, usually from heart failure or asphyxiation rather than loss of blood. Though many written accounts of crucifixions exist, our only tangible evidence is this ankle-bone (right) of a 30-year-old man, found with the spike still in it. The victim was crucified in the 1st century.



Preparation for a Jewish Burial

"They took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices" (Jn. 19.40). Family and friends of a dead person washed the body and anointed it (as above) with scented oils. Then, beginning with the hands and feet, they wrapped it in strips of linen and sprinkled fragrant spices between them. (The Pharisee Nicodemus, a secret follower of Jesus, brought a scented resin from India for this purpose.) Finally, the body was interred in a cave or family plot as soon as possible.



"And Joseph [of Arimathea] took the body . . . and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb" (Mt. 27.59-60). This 1st-century sepulchre near Jerusalem, owned by a wealthy family, resembles the one in which Jesus was buried. It too was sealed with a stone.