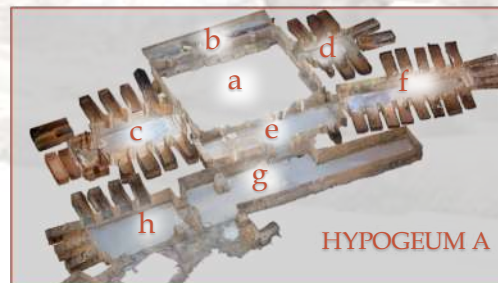




1. Hypogeum A

- a. Aule (open-air court)
- b. Original South Facade of the Complex
- c. East Burial Unit (Kline Chamber)
- d. West Burial Unit
- e. North Vestibule
- f. Philoteknos Hall (North-west Loculi Chamber)
- g. North Corridor
- h. North-east Loculi Chamber



THE HELLENISTIC CEMETERY OF SHATBY

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Ministry of Tourism & Antiquities

THE HELLENISTIC CEMETERY OF SHATBY

The Archaeological Society of Alexandria



<https://alex.arch.uoa.gr>



Young cavalry man in Macedonian dress, found in Shatby.
Alexandria, Graeco-Roman Museum 10615

THE HELLENISTIC CEMETERY OF SHATBY

Occupying an area of 3500 square meters, the Hellenistic Cemetery of Shatby is situated at the heart of modern Alexandria (district of Shatby). In antiquity, this area was just a few hundred meters outside the east walls of Hellenistic Alexandria (close to present-day Suez Canal street). The use of the cemetery began in late 4th century BCE, about a couple of decades following the foundation of the city by Alexander the Great, and continued for the following three centuries. Several Alexandrians of Shatby were first generation immigrants from areas of the Greek World including Macedon, Thessaly, Crete, Asia Minor and Cyrenaica.

The Excavations

Shatby cemetery was unearthed during the systematic excavations (1904-10) of Evaristo Breccia, director of the Graeco-Roman Museum of Alexandria. After many decades of deterioration, the site was restored and upgraded by the Archaeological Society of Alexandria, sponsored by The A. G. Leventis Foundation (2020-3). The mission also consolidated the excavation of Breccia, which had remained incomplete, due to limited means. The necropolis of Shatby yielded a variety of finds such as gravestones, cinerary urns (including Hadra Hydriae, the trademark of the Alexandrian Necropolis), minor sculptures, coinage, glassware and plenty of pottery.

Hypogeum A (1)

This impressive underground multichambered complex is articulated around a subterranean *aule* (open-air court), with rock-cut burial chambers to its west, north and east sides (a). During the 2020-3 archaeological investigation, the remnants of the south wall of the *aule* were revealed, possibly representing the original elaborated facade of the complex (b). Hypogeum A bears impressive architectural decoration, recalling those of the monumental tombs of Macedon. The walls of the *aule* are decorated with Doric semi-columns, forming a pseudo-peristyle. False-windows are traceable in the intercolumniation.

East Burial Unit, inc. Klinai Chamber (c)

This unit consists of two chambers. The first hosts 4 loculi in each long side, arranged between Ionic semi-columns. The Ionic doorframes of the loculi were originally sealed with slabs. The back wall of the chamber has a temple-like facade, with a triangular pediment, supported by four Ionic semi-columns. It provides access to the second chamber, which is occupied by two rock-cut sarcophagi in the form



The remnants of the South Façade, discovered in 2021

of symposium klinai (banqueting benches), an indication of Greek-elite lifestyle. Traits of painted decoration are still visible on the walls.

West Burial Unit (d)

A small burial chamber with 8 loculi is situated to the west side of the court. Loculi were originally sealed with slabs bearing painted decoration.

North Section (e-h)

Behind the north wall of the *aule*, there is a vestibule, the walls of which are decorated in relief with semi-opened false-windows. In the west side of the vestibule, there is a burial chamber with 17 loculi. Some of them were found sealed with slabs bearing painted or relief imitations of doorways. Above the frame of a loculus of the north side, one can still read: ΦΙΛΟΤΕΚΝΕ ΧΑΙΡΕ (farewell Philoteknos). In the east side of the vestibule, there is a stone bench and two loculi, once used as ossuaries. A gate to the north wall of the vestibule leads to another corridor with a 12-loculi burial chamber to its east side and a room for practical purposes to its west.

Hypogea B and C (2-3)

To the west of Hypogeum A, the ruins of two minor burial complexes were discovered, Hypogea B and C.

Above-ground Monuments (4)

The towers, some of which still stand in the site, were once topped with grave stelai or altars marking burials of individuals in rock-cut pits, beneath them.