CHAPTER LI

BURIAL PLACES NEAR THE NOLA, STABIAN, AND NOCERA GATES

No part of the highway leading from the Nola Gate has yet been excavated. In the year 1854, however, excavations were made for a short distance along the city wall near this gate, and thirty-six cinerary urns were found buried in the earth. In or near them were perfume vials of terra cotta with a few of glass. Here in the pomerium, the strip of land along the outside of the walls, which was left vacant for religious as well as practical reasons, the poor were permitted to bury the ashes of their dead without cost. In some cases the place of the urn was indicated by a bust stone; often the spot was kept in memory merely by cutting upon the outside of the city wall the name of the person whose ashes rested here.

There was another cemetery of the poor a short distance southwest of the Amphitheatre, south of the modern highway. It lay along a road which branched off from the highway leading to Stabiae and ran east in the direction of Nocera. Sepulchral remains were found here in 1755–57, and again in 1893–94, when further explorations were made. They consist of cinerary urns, buried in the earth, with small glass perfume vials in or near them, and a bust stone to mark the spot. A few of the stones are of marble and bear a name; the great majority are roughly carved out of blocks of lava, and if a name was painted on the front it has disappeared.

Of special significance, in connection with these burial places, is the arrangement for making offerings to the dead. In order that libations might be poured directly upon the cinerary urns, these were connected with the surface of the ground by means of tubes. In one instance a lead pipe ran from above into an opening made for it in the top of the lead case inclosing an urn.
More often the connection was made by means of round tiles; in the case of one urn, three tiles were joined together, making a tube five feet long. The upper end of the libation tube did not project from the ground, but was placed just below the surface and covered with a flat stone; over this was a thin layer of earth, which the relatives would remove on the feast days of the dead. Pagan antiquity was never able to dissociate the spirit of the dead from the place of interment; the worship of ancestors was in no small degree the product of local associations.

In the vicinity of these remains is a sepulchral monument of modest dimensions, which, as we learn from the tablet over the entrance, was erected by Marcus Petasius Dasius in memory of his two sons, Severus and Communis, and of a freedwoman named Vitalis. There was no floor in the burial chamber; the urns were placed in the earth and marked by bust stones, among which was one set up for Dasius himself, with the initials M. P. D.

The Stabian Road has been excavated for but a short distance near the gate. The only monuments completely cleared are two large, semicircular benches, like those of Veius and Mamia (p. 409). At the rear of each is a small sepulchral enclosure in which the urns were buried. The memorial tablet belonging to the monument nearest the gate has disappeared, but two boundary stones at the corners of the lot bear the inscription: *M. Tullio M. f. ex d[ecurionum] d[ecr[eto],—*To Marcus Tullius son of Marcus, in accordance with a vote of the city council.' The Tullius named was perhaps the builder of the temple of Fortuna Augusta (p. 132).

The inscription of the second bench, like that of Mamia, is cut in large letters on the back of the seat: *M. Alleio Q. f. Men. Minio, II v. i. d.; locus sepulcralae publicae datus ex d. d.,—*‘To the memory of Marcus Alleius Minius son of Marcus, of the tribe Menenia, duumvir with judiciary authority. The place of burial was given in the name of the city by vote of the municipal council.'

A third bench, close to the second, lies under a modern house and has not been uncovered. Further from the gate a rectangular seat, probably belonging to the same series of monuments, was discovered in 1854; it was built in memory of a certain Clovatius, duumvir, as shown by a fragment of an inscription that came to light at the same time. From still another tomb are reliefs with gladiatorial combats, now in the Naples Museum.

With the exception of those near the Herculaneum Gate, the most important tombs yet discovered at Pompeii are in a group beyond the Amphitheatre, excavated in 1886–87. They are six in number, and lie close together on both sides of a road which ran east from the Nocera Gate, bending slightly to the north (Fig. 246). This road was not in use in the last years of the city; the stones of the pavement and sidewalk had been removed. The monuments, however, were large and stately, erected by people of means, and the ruins are characteristic and impressive. The tombs were built of common materials, stucco being used on exposed surfaces instead of marble. The simplicity of construction, and the shapes of the letters in the election notices and other inscriptions painted on them, suggest a relatively early date, which is confirmed by the age of the coins found in the urns; the monuments belong to the early decades of the Empire.

The first tomb at the right (No. 1 on the plan) was built in the form of a commemorative arch, with pilasters at the corners. Above was a low cylinder surmounted by a truncated cone, on which stood a terminal member in the shape of a pine cone, found near by. The cinerary urn was buried in the earth below an opening in the floor of the passage under the arch (shown in the plan). No name appears in connection with this monument.
Another monument of the arch type, that of Mancius Diogenes, is seen on the opposite side of the street (5; Fig. 248). The structure is shallow, the vaulted opening low. On the top of the arch were three niches, in which stood three travertine statues; two of these, both of women, have been preserved, and are of indifferent workmanship. A marble tablet was placed in front, over the vault, with the inscription, P. Mancio P. [liberto] Diogeni ex testamento arbitratu Manciae P. [libertae]

Fig. 247.—View of two tombs east of the Amphitheatre.
That at the left is No. 3 on the plan; the next is No. 4.

Dorius, — 'To the memory of Publius Mancius Diogenes, freedman of Publius Mancius; (the monument was erected) in accordance with the terms of his will, under the direction of Mancia Doris, freedwoman of Publius Mancius.'

There is a curious ambiguity in this inscription; we cannot tell whether Doris, seemingly the wife of Diogenes, was manumitted by the Publius Mancius who gave him his freedom, or by Diogenes himself after he had gained his freedom and was entitled to use the name Publius Mancius. Four bust stones stood in front of the tomb and two at the rear, arranged as indicated on the plan; those in front are seen in our illustration.

The tomb at the left of that just described (4; Fig. 247) is of interest as showing the result of an attempt to blend the arch type with that of the temple. A passage roofed with a flat vault runs through the middle of the first story. The second story had the appearance of a diminutive temple with four Corinthian columns in front. The niche representing the cela was of the full width of the tomb, and occupied two thirds of the depth; the other third was given to the portico. Four statues of tufa coated with stucco that were found here probably stood under the portico or in the intercolumniations, where they would best be seen from below; three were statues of men, the fourth of a woman.

The arrangement of the five bust stones in the vaulted passage is indicated on the plan. The three nearest the street entrance bear the name of a freedman, L. Caesius L. l. Logus, — 'Lucius Caesius Logus, freedman of Lucius Caesius,' and of Titia Vesbina and Titia Optata, both evidently freedwomen manumitted by a lady named Titia. We are probably safe in assuming that the two inmost stones, without names, are those of Caesius and Titia, husband and wife, who gave Logus, Vesbina, and Optata their freedom, and built the monument. It was not necessary to place the names of the builders upon the commemorative stones, because they were doubtless given in the memorial tablet in front, which has disappeared. Coins of Augustus and Tiberius were found in the urns.

One tomb (2) has the form of a niche, resembling those of the two children near the end of the Street of Tombs (p. 425), but larger and more costly than they. The corners are embellished with three-quarter columns, which have Doric flutings and composite capitals. On the walls at the entrance we see, modelled in stucco, doorposts with double doors swung back. Two marble bust stones, the places of which are indicated on the plan, show where the urns of the two most important members of the family, Apuleius and his wife Veia, were buried; their names doubtless appeared in an inscription on the front of the monument. In one of the urns was found a coin of
Tiberius of the year 10 A.D. The other was enclosed in a lead case, and a lead libation case was extended from the ashes through both covers to the surface.

The names of Apuleius and Veia are obtained from two other bust stones, in front of the niche. One reads, Festae Apulei f[iliae] vix[ui] ann(os) XVII,—‘To the memory of Festa, daughter of Apuleius, who lived seventeen years.’ The other

has simply [C]onviva Veiae vix an. XX,—‘Conviva, slave of Veia, lived twenty years.’ An as of the time of the Republic was found in the urn of Conviva; and a square tile, the upper end of which was closed by a piece of marble, served as a libation tube for the urn of Festa.

The two remaining tombs are of the temple type, one (3; Fig. 247) having pilasters at the corners, the other half-columns at the corners and on the sides (6). The first has a vaulted sepulchral chamber, entered from the rear. On the inside of the wall next the street are three low niches, the top of which is nearly on a level with the sidewalk; each of them contained an urn. Directly over the inner niches, in the outside of the wall and opening toward the street, are three other niches, shown in the illustration, in the bottom of which were libation tubes leading to the urns below. Relatives could thus pour their offerings of wine or oil upon the urns without entering the sepulchral chamber. Lava bust stones were placed against the back of the outer niches. The hair on one of them is treated in a manner to indicate that a woman is represented. The entrance of the tomb was closed by a large block of lava. On account of the arrangement for offering libations from the outside, it was not necessary to make the burial vault easy of access.

The entrance to the other tomb (6; Fig. 248) was in front, and closed by a door of limestone. It led, not to a sepulchral chamber, but to a stairway by which one ascended to the second story. Here statues were placed, but the exact form of the upper part cannot be determined. The finding of five tufa capitals suggests that the second story may have been a columnar structure, like that of the tomb of the Istacidii; when the excavations are carried further east enough other fragments will perhaps be found to make a complete restoration possible. One of the statues is of a man holding a roll of papyrus in his hand, with a round manuscript case, scrinium, at his feet.

Among the inscriptions painted on these tombs were two, relating to gladiatorial combats, which have already been mentioned (p. 221). One of the election notices, oddly enough, refers to a candidate for an office in Nuceria: L. Munatium Caeserninum Nuceriae II vir. quing. v. b. o. v. f. (for duumvirum quinquennalem, virum bonum, oro vos, factis),—‘Make Lucius Caeserninus quinquennal duumvir of Nuceria, I beg of you, he’s a good man.’ As long as the relations of the Pompeians and Nucerians were friendly, the highway between the two towns was doubtless much travelled by the citizens of both places.

If the visitor pauses to think of the religious feeling which the ancients manifested generally in relation to their burial places, it gives somewhat of a shock to see notices even of a semi-public character painted in bright red letters upon tombs.
All such inscriptions, however, are surpassed in ludicrous incongruity with the purpose of the monument by the following advertisement regarding a stray horse: 

*Equa siquei aberavit cum semuncis honerata a. d. VII Kal. Septembres* (corrected into Decembres), *convenito Q. Deci[m] Q. l. Hilarum . . . L. l. . . . chionem, citra pontem Sarni fundo Mamiano.*—'If anybody lost a mare with a small pack-saddle, November 25, let him come and see Quintus Decius Hilarus, freedman of Quintus Decius, or . . . (the name is illegible), freedman of Lucius, on the estate of the Mamii, this side of the bridge over the Sarno.' The two freedmen were very likely in partnership, working a farm belonging to the family, one representative of which we have already met, Mamia the priestess (p. 410).

A more serious desecration of burial places, after offerings to the dead ceased to be made by relatives, or a family became extinct, was probably not uncommon. Different families had different gods, and those of one household were quite independent of those of another. Ordinarily a man had no reason to fear or respect the gods of his neighbor; notwithstanding the associations of worship connected with tombs, the general feeling toward them was very different from that manifested toward temples, where local divinities or the great gods were worshipped. The most stringent regulations of the emperors could not prevent the ransacking of the tombs about Rome for objects of value, and the removal of their materials of construction for building purposes. The superstructure of two of the monuments near the Herculaneum Gate had disappeared apparently before the destruction of the city, and of the tomb of Porcius only the core remained.