

THE ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF THE CENACLE ON MOUNT ZION:  
AN EXAMINATION OF THE TEXTUAL, ARTISTIC, AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
EVIDENCE

by

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## ABSTRACT

DAVID C. CLAUSEN: The origin and history of the Cenacle on Mount Zion: an examination of the textual, artistic, and archaeological evidence  
(Under the direction of DR. JAMES D. TABOR)

Scholars have, for nearly a century, theorized about the origins of the building known as the Cenacle on southwestern Mount Zion in Jerusalem. Some suggest that it represents the surviving remnants of either or both of the large-scale churches that once stood nearby: the Byzantine *Hagia Sion* or the Crusader Church of Saint Mary. Others, however, believe that the structure predates both of those edifices and represents a more ancient religious shrine. The majority of the latter believe that the Cenacle was originally a synagogue. But this identification is inconsistent with the architecture of the majority of pre-fourth-century synagogues discovered throughout Palestine and the Diaspora. Better examples for comparison might include the pagan shrines of antiquity, especially mithraea, or, as this paper will suggest, the early Christian hall churches of the second and third centuries. More definitive conclusions can only be obtained from further archaeological excavations in and around the structure itself.

## INTRODUCTION

The term Cenacle, as used throughout this paper, identifies a two-story structure standing atop southern Mount Zion in Jerusalem. It is located south of the Church of the Dormition, west of the Muslim graveyard, north of an ancient Franciscan cloister and monastery, and east of the old American cemetery. Technically, the word derives from the Latin *coenaculum*, first used by Jerome (347-420 CE) to translate two Greek terms from the New Testament, both meaning “upper room.” In fact, today when walking toward the structure, a prominent plaque set within the walls of the nearby Church of the Dormition directs the visitor toward the “coenaculum.” Unless otherwise specified, “Cenacle” will indicate the entire two-level structure.

The first and second stories of the Cenacle became differentiated following the Christians’ loss of the eastern wing of the lower level to Muslims in 1429. Though control of this chamber would swing back and forth for a time based on the whims of the sultans and the negotiating power of Latins, the room would finally be converted into a mosque following the permanent ejection of the Franciscan friars from the entire building in 1524.

Muslims, like the Christians and Jews before them, recognized the area as having sacred significance in connection with the reign of King David. His palace was, at least by the Byzantine period, thought to have been that actually built and occupied by Herod the Great. And by the Crusader period, the tomb of David was thought to have been located on the Cenacle grounds as were the tombs of other notable Christian and Jewish figures. In time, the lower eastern chamber was outfitted with an empty sarcophagus, a cenotaph, in honor of David. Muslim control of the Tomb of David lasted until 1948

when it passed into Jewish hands after the Arab-Israeli War. Control of this room was, and still is, contested by all three faiths.

Mount Zion is notable for other Biblically-related events as well. The very name “Zion” is found scattered throughout the Hebrew Bible. In the narrative histories of the Israelites, Zion is synonymous with the City of David, the former Jebusite stronghold captured by David at the beginning of the first millennium BCE and located on the eastern ridge, or Ophel, of the present Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> After the construction of the first Israelite temple by Solomon, the geographic expanse indicated by the word Zion encompassed both the Ophel and the northern hill, once identified as Mount Moriah,<sup>2</sup> where Solomon’s temple and palace were located.<sup>3</sup> A second temple was built following its destruction by the Babylonians in 586 BCE. Ultimately, this, too, was destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE at which time Zion ceased to refer to the same location.

Late in the Second Temple period, in the time of Jesus, the City of David on the Ophel was being referred to as the Lower City, a neighborhood inhabited by the lower classes, tradesmen, shopkeepers, and the poor. Many of the city’s elites had followed King Herod to the newly-developed western hill where he built his splendid palace along its northern ridge. On the southern part of the hill, elaborate mansions were erected in what was now known as the Upper City. The entire western hill eventually took on the name Mount Zion, perhaps because, in time, it became hard to imagine that the city’s original founder could ever have located his palace amid the squalor of the Lower City.

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Sam 5:7 (= 1 Chron 11:5); 1 Kgs 8:1 (2 Chron 5:2).

<sup>2</sup> 2 Chron 3:1.

<sup>3</sup> Amos 1:2, Isa 2:3, 4:5, 8:18, 14:32, 18:7, 31:4, Mic 3:12, 4:7, Jer 8:19, 31:6, Lam 1:4, 2:6-7, 4:11, Zech 2:10, 8:2-3, Joel 2:1, 15, 3:16, Ps 20:2, 48:2, 78:68, etc.

Nevertheless, the location of David's tomb in the Lower City was not soon forgotten. The Biblical book of Nehemiah makes plain the presence of the tomb in that vicinity.<sup>4</sup> In the late first century CE, Rabbi Akiba remembered that the tombs of the kings were located near the Kidron Valley.<sup>5</sup> And as late as the twelfth century, Maimonides remained aware of this same tradition.<sup>6</sup> But in the absence of physical evidence, early Christians laid claim to the location of David's tomb, likely in connection with their belief that Jesus and his brother James, the first leader of Jesus's movement, were descendants of the line of David. Festal days for both David and James were celebrated on Mount Zion as early as the fourth century.

It was southern Mount Zion in particular that held sacred significance for early Christians after the first Jewish revolt against Rome (66-70 CE). Here it was that tradition located a "church of God" standing in the early second century. Here, too, fourth-century ecclesiastics erected a massive basilica, *Hagia Sion*, or "Holy Zion," that commemorated, among other things, the original Pentecost event and the Last Supper. After its

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<sup>4</sup> Neh 3:14-16: "Malchi'jah the son of Rechab . . . repaired the Dung Gate [in Jerusalem]; he rebuilt it and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars. And Shallum the son of Colho'zeh . . . repaired the Fountain Gate; he rebuilt it and covered it and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars; and he built the wall of the Pool of Shelah of the king's garden, as far as the stairs that go down from the City of David. After him Nehemi'ah the son of Azbuk . . . repaired to a point opposite the sepulchres of David, to the artificial pool, and to the house of the mighty men." (Unless otherwise noted, all Biblical quotations are from the Revised Standard Version.)

<sup>5</sup> Tosefta *Baba Bathra* 1.11-12: "All sepulchers should be cleared away, except the sepulcher of a king and the sepulcher of a prophet. Rabbi Akiba says: 'Even the sepulcher of a king and the sepulcher of a prophet should be cleared away.' He was told, 'But there were at Jerusalem the sepulchers of the House of David and the sepulcher of Huldah the prophetess and nobody ever touched them': to which he [R. Akiba] replied: 'Do you adduce these as evidence? There was a tunnel in them through which the uncleanness went forth to the Valley of Kidron.'" trans. in David Sielaff, "The House of David," *Associates for Scriptural Knowledge*, [http://askelm.com/temple/t040801.htm#\\_ftn22](http://askelm.com/temple/t040801.htm#_ftn22) [accessed February 19, 2015]. See also Jerusalem Talmud *Nazir* 9, 57d.

<sup>6</sup> "All graves might be removed except that of a prophet or a king [must be removed], ... graves might not be kept therein, except the graves of the House of David and the graves of Hulda (the prophetess), which were there from the days of the early prophets." *The Code of Maimonides 8: The Book of Temple Service*, trans. Mendell Lewittes (New Haven: Yale University Press: 1957), 32.

destruction by Muslims, newly-arrived Crusaders erected on Hagia Sion's ruins a similarly-sized cathedral in honor of Mary, the mother of Jesus. No other cathedral would occupy any ground upon which that short-lived shrine stood until the early twentieth century when a German Benedictine church was established to honor the legendary dormition, or "falling asleep," of the Virgin.

Throughout the first two millennia of the Common Era, therefore, a discrete area located on southern Mount Zion has been accorded sacred significance by three major religious faiths. The origin of the traditions responsible for this hallowed condition remain shrouded in a foggy miasma formed of an alchemical mixture of scripture, legend, and faith as well as historical fact. It is the purpose of this paper to attempt to sort out these complementary and competing sources. Combined with the evidence available through archaeological examination, it is hoped that some light may be shed on the origins of the ancient Cenacle.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

*ANF* – *Ante-Nicene Fathers*.

CIMRIM – Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis Mithriacae

*HE* – Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*. Translated by Kirsopp Lake. Loeb Classical Library. 2 vols. 1926. Reprint, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001.

LXX – Septuagint

*NPNF*<sup>2</sup> – *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series 2.

*HSNTA* – *New Testament Apocrypha* (ed. Hennecke/Schneemelcher, 2 vols.)

*OTP* – *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (ed. Charlesworth, 2 vols.)

*PPTS* – *Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society*

## PART I. LITERARY HISTORY OF THE CENACLE

### Evidence for a Community of Christians in Jerusalem Prior to the Fourth Century

The last verses in the New Testament which testify to the existence of a functioning assembly of Jesus's followers in the city of Jerusalem appear in the Acts of the Apostles (21:18-25). There, Paul is described as going to meet James, the brother of Jesus, and the elders in the city. Paul was subsequently arrested in the temple on the charge of bringing a gentile into the space reserved for Jews. The date of this episode is normally assigned by Biblical historians to 55-57 CE. By this time, Peter had apparently already left Jerusalem for "another place" (Acts 12:17), possibly Antioch or Rome. The Hellenist Jewish-Christians of Stephen's group had abandoned the city as well (Acts 8:4). Leadership of the Jerusalem church had by now changed hands and the family of Jesus, if not already installed in leadership roles, took over management of the affairs of the community with James serving as a kind of hereditary caliph. From all existing evidence, it is he who led the community until just before the Jewish revolt against Roman occupation.

According to information provided by first-century Jewish historian Josephus, James was executed in 62 CE during a procuratorial interregnum by the high priest Hanan ben Hanan (Anani Ananus).<sup>7</sup> Within less than half-a-dozen years, Jews in Palestine arose to rebel against the cruel mismanagement of a succession of corrupt, inefficient, or inept Roman procurators assigned to Judea following the death of the

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<sup>7</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 20.9. Christian chronicler Hegesippus (c. 110-180 CE) preserves an alternative account of the episode (cited in Eusebius, *HE* 5.23.1-19) while theologian Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-215 CE) provides an additional brief notice (*HE* 2.1.4).

penultimate Jewish king, Agrippa I (d. 44 CE). But not all Jews supported the rebellion. Despite the garrisoning of Jerusalem by leading rebel forces, many Jews chose to flee the city at various times throughout the eight-year revolt.<sup>8</sup> Among those who fled, according to some ancient accounts, were members of Jerusalem's Jewish-Christian community.<sup>9</sup> Fourth-century church historian Eusebius preserves the story, drawing his information from earlier sources.<sup>10</sup>

Meanwhile, before the war began, members of the Jerusalem church were ordered by an oracle given by revelation to those worthy of it to leave the city and settle in a city of Perea called Pella. Here they migrated from Jerusalem, as if, once holy men had deserted the royal capital of the Jews and the whole land of Judea, the judgment of God might finally fall on them for their crimes against Christ and his apostles, utterly blotting out all that wicked generation.<sup>11</sup>

An alternative tradition, possibly late, records that James, the brother of Jesus, was among those who fled prior to the war.

[Jesus] said to me, "Don't be afraid, James. You too will be arrested. [Leave] Jerusalem, for this city always gives the cup of bitterness to the children of light.

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<sup>8</sup> Masada was the last rebel stronghold to be captured by the Romans in April, 74.

<sup>9</sup> For the purposes of this paper, "Jewish-Christian" will be defined as per Joan Taylor, "The Phenomenon of Early Jewish-Christianity: Reality or Scholarly Invention?" *Vigiliae Christianae* 44 (1990): 327, that is, followers/believers in Jesus the messiah who maintained Jewish praxis.

<sup>10</sup> Eusebius borrowed from either the lost chronicles of Ariston of Pella (ca. 100-160 CE) or the likewise missing memoirs of Hegesippus (ca. 110-180 CE). The earliest reference to the flight may possibly be found in a passage within the *Pseudo-Clementine Recognitions* 1:39. 3 (2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> c. CE): "Subsequently also an evident proof of this great mystery is supplied in the fact that everyone who, believing in this Prophet who had been foretold by Moses, is baptized in His name, shall be kept unhurt from the destruction of war which impends over the unbelieving nation, and the place itself; but that those who do not believe shall be made exiles from their place and kingdom, that even against their will they may understand and obey the will of God," trans. Thomas Smith, *ANF*. Epiphanius, bishop of Salamis (315-403 CE), perhaps basing his information on Eusebius, provides a bit more topographical detail: ". . . all those who believed in Christ settled at that time for the most part in Perea, in a city called Pella belonging to the Decapolis mentioned in the gospel, which is next to Batanaea and the land of Bashan" (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 30.2.7, trans. Philip R. Amidon, *The Panarion of St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis: Selected Passages* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 95). See Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "The Cenacle – Topographical Setting for Acts 2:44-45," in *The Book of Acts in its Palestinian Setting*, ed. Richard Bauckham (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 316.

<sup>11</sup> Eusebius, *HE* 3.5.3.

This is the dwelling place of many archons, but your deliverance will deliver you from them. In order that you may know who they are and what they are like, you should [flee].... As soon as you leave, there will be war waged against this land, so weep for anyone who dwells in Jerusalem.<sup>12</sup>

Most scholars, however, prefer to accept the report of Josephus that James died prior to the war.<sup>13</sup> P. H. R. van Houwelingen suggests the winter of 66-67 CE as the likeliest period in which flight from Jerusalem would be possible.<sup>14</sup>

Once almost universally accepted, the tradition that the Jerusalem Christians fled the city *en masse* for Pella during the revolt has been increasingly disputed.<sup>15</sup> S. G. F. Brandon argues that Pella was too far away (60 miles), that departing Jewish-Christian

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<sup>12</sup> *First Revelation of James* 25.10-24, 36.17-19, trans. Wolf-Peter Funk in *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, ed. Marvin Meyer (New York: HarperOne, 2007), 325-329. The departure of James may be intended spiritually, i.e. at his death.

<sup>13</sup> In addition, Origen (184-253 CE) may have known a version of the *Antiquities* in which Josephus cites James's death as the proximate cause of the Roman siege of Jerusalem: "And to so great a reputation among the people for righteousness did this James rise, that Flavius Josephus, who wrote the 'Antiquities of the Jews' in twenty books, when wishing to exhibit the cause why the people suffered so great misfortunes that even the temple was razed to the ground, said, that these things happened to them in accordance with the wrath of God in consequence of the things which they had dared to do against James the brother of Jesus who is called Christ." (Origen, *Commentary on Matthew* 10.17. Trans. ANF). And again, "For in the 18th book of his *Antiquities of the Jews*, Josephus . . . although not believing in Jesus as the Christ, in seeking after the cause of the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple . . . says . . . that these disasters happened to the Jews as a punishment for the death of James the Just, who was a brother of Jesus (called Christ), - the Jews having put him to death, although he was a man most distinguished for his justice." (Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.47. Trans. ANF). It could be that Origen merely inferred from the sequence of events that the destruction of Jerusalem was divine punishment for James' execution. In any event, this explanation seems to have had wide currency in the early church. See for example the quotation from the *First Revelation of James* above. For another account of the attack that apparently did not end with James's death, see the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* 1.70.

<sup>14</sup> P. H. R. van Houwelingen, "Fleeing Forward: The Departure of Christians from Jerusalem to Pella," *Westminster Theological Journal* 65 (2003): 188-9. This period immediately followed the forced retreat of the Roman Legio XII Fulminata from Jerusalem and their subsequent route at Bet-Choron.

<sup>15</sup> S. G. F. Brandon, *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church* (London: SPCK, 1968), 172: "Whatever may have been the fate of the Jerusalem Church, it is not credible that it migrated as a body to the Greek city of Pella in Peraea." Gerd Lüdemann, "The Successors of Pre-70 Jerusalem Christianity: A Critical Evaluation of the Pella Tradition," in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*, ed. E. P. Sanders, Albert I. Baumgarten and Alan Mendelson (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 171: "The Pella tradition has no historical value whatsoever for the question of what happened to the Christian community during the Jewish war." More nuanced is Taylor, *Christians and the Holy Places: The Myth of Jewish-Christian Origins* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 44: "It would be rash to assume the entire Jewish community went to Pella during the first revolt."

refugees would have had to evade both their nationalist countrymen as well as Roman patrols, and that they could not have hauled sufficient supplies to sustain them for the duration.<sup>16</sup> Jerome Murphy-O'Connor accuses Ariston, the likeliest source for Eusebius's version of the story, of "special pleading," manufacturing the tale to authenticate the apostolic origins of his church in Pella.<sup>17</sup> He suggests that Pella was a most unlikely spot for Christian Jews to settle: it was a Gentile city once laid waste by the Jewish king Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 BCE) in the Hasmonean period<sup>18</sup> and then again by Jewish forces at the beginning of the revolt.<sup>19</sup> He concludes that Pellans would have had little sympathy for Jewish-Christian refugees.<sup>20</sup> Ray Pritz counters that it cannot be disputed that there were Jews (and Jewish-Christians) in Pella after the war.<sup>21</sup> Even if Ariston invented the story of the circumstances surrounding the arrival of the early émigrés, some Jewish-Christians did eventually arrive (the presence of Ariston is proof of that) though Brandon suggests these were Galileans, not Jerusalemites.<sup>22</sup> And though there were attacks against a number of cities and towns by the Jewish rebels during the revolt, Pella

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<sup>16</sup> Brandon, 171.

<sup>17</sup> Murphy-O'Connor, 316.

<sup>18</sup> Josephus, *Jewish War* 1.1104.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 2.458.

<sup>20</sup> Murphy-O'Connor, 316 n. 63 (based on the work of S. G. F. Brandon). Also William Horbury, "Beginnings of Christianity in the Holy Land" in *Christians and Christianity in the Holy Land: From the Origins to the Latin Kingdoms*, ed. Ora Limor and Guy G. Stroumsa (Turnout, Belgium: Brepols, 2006), 68. The flight of the Christians may be pre-supposed in the Gospel of Luke 21:20 "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains." Pella lies at the foot of the mountains across the Jordan. See Bellarmino Bagatti, *The Church from the Circumcision: History and Archaeology of the Judaeo-Christians*, trans. Eugene Hoade (1971; repr., Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1984), 8.

<sup>21</sup> Ray A. Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity: From the End of the New Testament Period until Its Disappearance in the Fourth Century* (1988; repr. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1992), 122-127.

<sup>22</sup> Brandon, 172.

was apparently not seriously damaged. In other nearby towns that were similarly attacked, Jews and Gentile residents banded together to repel the invaders. This might have also happened in Pella. It is also not impossible that Christians, either Jewish or Gentile, were already residing in Pella before the revolt and helped to make accommodations for any newcomers from Jerusalem.<sup>23</sup> The gospels themselves attest to activity by Jesus in the Decapolis.<sup>24</sup> William Horbury adds that the Jewish-Christian community was likely a heterogeneous group by this time, composed not only of Jews but also of Samaritans, godfearing Gentiles, and those of mixed ethnicity who might have found less racial resistance from a Gentile city like Pella.<sup>25</sup> Like Craig Koester, a number of scholars still insist that “the Pella tradition probably does recall actual first-century events.”<sup>26</sup>

One of those scholars is James Tabor who plausibly suggests that Pella need not refer specifically to the downtown area of the city but can include its immediate environs.<sup>27</sup> Just two miles south of Pella is the Wadi el-Yabis which he identifies with the “brook Cherith” east of the Jordan where Elijah once hid from King Ahab.<sup>28</sup> John

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<sup>23</sup> The Transjordan and the areas northeast of the Sea of Galilee are likely homeground for a number of early Christian groups. See, e.g. Bargil Pixner, *With Jesus Through Galilee according to the Fifth Gospel* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 106-113; Rainer Riesner, “Bethany Beyond the Jordan (John 1:28): Topography, Theology and History in the Fourth Gospel,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 38 (1987); etc.

<sup>24</sup> In Gadara, Gerasa, or Gergesa. See Mark 5:1, Matt 8:28, Luke 8:26, 37.

<sup>25</sup> Horbury, 68.

<sup>26</sup> Craig Koester, “The Origin and Significance of the Flight to Pella and Tradition,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 50, no. 1 (1989): 105. Brandon, 172, agrees but with a different explanation.

<sup>27</sup> James D. Tabor, “Wadi el-Yabis and the Elijah ‘Wadi Cherith’ traditions in Relationship to John and Jesus in the Gospel of John” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion & Society of Biblical Literature, San Francisco, CA, November 21, 2011).

<sup>28</sup> 1 Kgs 17:1-8.

reportedly baptized at Aenon near Salim which is directly across the Jordan from Wadi el-Yabis.<sup>29</sup> And Jesus, according to the Gospels of Mark and John, hid in an unnamed area across the Jordan, out of reach of Antipas, toward the end of his career.<sup>30</sup> The “little apocalypse” in chapter thirteen of the Gospel of Mark warns Judeans to flee to the mountains “when you see the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not be.”<sup>31</sup> Tabor suggests that it was to the rugged, mountainous ravine of Wadi el-Yabis that the Jerusalem Christians fled.

Not all Jewish-Christians who fled the city would have had to go as far as Pella to stay out of the way of the advancing Roman army,<sup>32</sup> and they would only have had to avoid the city for a few years.<sup>33</sup> That they did return is reflected in a number of later accounts such as that given by Epiphanius of Salamis, “But after the destruction of Jerusalem...they had returned.”<sup>34</sup> Alexander the Monk (early sixth century CE) later expanded on this tradition.

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<sup>29</sup> John 3:22-23.

<sup>30</sup> Mark 10:1, John 10:40.

<sup>31</sup> Brandon, 174, plausibly suggests that this desolating sacrilege was the erection of the legionary standards in the remains of the Jewish Temple which were the worshipped by the soldiers. See Josephus, *War* 6.6.1 § 316.

<sup>32</sup> Murphy-O'Connor, 316. Bagatti, 8, notes that in Revelation 12:6, the church, represented by the mother of Jesus, “fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which to be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.” Also, in the *Ascension of Isaiah* 4:13, the faithful are “fleeing from desert to desert” for a period of 1332 days (*HSNTA* 2:609). Both numbers, according to Bagatti, approximate the duration of the war.

<sup>33</sup> No more than eighteen months according to Murphy-O'Connor, 317, or six to seven years according to Rainer Riesner, “Jesus, the Primitive Community, and the Essene Quarter of Jerusalem,” in *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, trans. Loren Stuckenbruck; ed. James H. Charlesworth (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 202.

<sup>34</sup> Epiphanius, *De Mensuris et Ponderibus* 15, trans. James Elmer Dean, *Epiphanius' Treatise on Weights and Measures: The Syriac Version* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935), [www.tertullian.org/fathers/epiphanius\\_weights\\_03\\_text.htm](http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/epiphanius_weights_03_text.htm) (accessed July 31, 2013).

Following the capture of the city, the believers again returned to Saint-Sion, chose as second bishop of Jerusalem, Simeon son of Cleophas...ocular and auditory witness, as well as cousin of the Lord.<sup>35</sup>

Eutychius (Sa'id ibn Bīṭrīq), tenth-century Christian patriarch of Alexandria, passed on a similar tradition.

When the Christians (*nasara*), who had previously fled in the face of the Jews, had crossed the Jordan and settled in these areas, learned that [the Roman general] Titus had destroyed the Holy City and killed the Jews, they returned to its ruins and settled there. They *built a church* and chose [a] second bishop by the name of Simon, son of Cleophas. This Cleophas was the brother of Joseph who had raised Christ, our Lord. This occurred in the fourth year of the reign of Vespasian.<sup>36</sup>

According to these traditions, therefore, a number of Jewish-Christians from Jerusalem returned to the city sometime around 73/74 CE (the fourth year of Vespasian).<sup>37</sup> This is not impossible given that it was in the same year that Masada fell and thereby ended the hostilities between Jew and Roman. Some scholars deny the

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<sup>35</sup> Alexander, *Discourse on the Invention of the Cross*, trans. in Simon Claude Mimouni, *Early Judaeo-Christianity: Historical Essays*, trans. Robyn Fréchet (Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2012), 330.

<sup>36</sup> Eutychius, *Annales*, trans. in Mimouni, 331 (emphasis added). According to tradition, the leadership of the Jerusalem Christian community was awarded at this time to Simon/Symeon bar Kleophas: "After the martyrdom of James and the capture of Jerusalem which immediately followed, the story goes that those of the Apostles and of the disciples of the Lord who were still alive came together from every place with those who were, humanly speaking, of the family of the Lord, for many of them were then still alive, and they all took counsel together as to whom they ought to adjudge worthy to succeed James, and all unanimously decided that Simeon the son of Clopas, whom the scripture of the Gospel also mentions, was worthy of the throne of the diocese there [in Jerusalem]. He was, so it is said, a cousin of the Savior, for Hegesippus relates that Clopas was the brother of Joseph" (Eusebius, *HE* 3.11.1). Mimouni, 332, argues that Eutychius was not dependent on the text of Epiphanius owing to an important study by Michel Breydy: *Études sur Sa'id ibn Batriq et ses sources*, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 450 (Louvain: Peeters, 1983), that shows how little of Epiphanius's work was used in Eutychius's *Annals*. It may, in fact, be based on Eusebius (331-2 n. 85).

<sup>37</sup> Brian Capper, "The Palestinian Cultural Context of Earliest Christian Community of Goods," in op. cit., *The Book of Acts in its Palestinian Setting*, 347-48. It is worth noting that earlier scholars assumed no residual base of Christians in Jerusalem. L. Goppelt (1954), cited by A. F. J. Klijn, "The Study of Jewish Christianity," in *Early Christianity and Judaism*, ed. Everett Ferguson (New York: Garland, 1993), 102-3, insisted the church of Jerusalem as a whole disappeared into '*judaistisches Sektierertum*' ["Judaic sectarianism"]. J. Munck, "Jewish Christianity in Post-Apostolic Times," in Ferguson, ed., 112, writes, "With the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 the primitive church of Jerusalem, with its authority and significance for the whole church, vanished forever."

possibility that Jews were allowed to return to Jerusalem following the suppression of the revolt and assert that those few who attempted it did so secretively, perhaps only to bury their dead in tombs near the ruins of the temple.<sup>38</sup> This is likely incorrect as will be shown below.

Most of Jerusalem, including the Jewish temple, was toppled and burned in a deliberate and thorough attempt by the Romans to seal their victory. In the words of Josephus, who fought on the side of the rebels and then later turned against them, “Caesar gave orders that [the legions] should now demolish the entire city and temple.” The Roman general Titus left one wall standing as a defense for the garrison.

All the rest of the wall encompassing the city was so completely levelled to the ground as to leave future visitors to the spot no ground for believing that it had ever been inhabited. Such was the end to which the frenzy of revolutionaries brought Jerusalem, that splendid city of world-wide renown.<sup>39</sup>

According to Josephus, at least, returning Jewish-Christians, now under the leadership of Symeon, would have found their city entirely destroyed.<sup>40</sup> But Epiphanius, bishop of Salamis in the fourth century, knew of another tradition attached to the story of the emperor Hadrian’s (117-138 CE) arrival in Jerusalem in 130 CE.

[Hadrian] went up to Jerusalem, the famous and illustrious city which Titus, the son of Vespasian, overthrew in the second year of his reign. And he found the [Jewish] temple of God trodden down and the whole city devastated save for a few houses and the church of God, which was small, where the disciples, when they had returned after the Savior had ascended from the Mount of Olives, went

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<sup>38</sup> Hillel Geva, “Searching for Roman Jerusalem,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 23, no. 6 (1997): n.p. <http://members.bib-arch.org/publication.asp?PubID=BSBA&Volume=23&Issue=6&ArticleID=6> (accessed August 7, 2013).

<sup>39</sup> Josephus, *Jewish War* 7.1.3-4.

<sup>40</sup> According to tradition, the leadership of the Jerusalem Christian community was awarded at this time to Simon/Symeon bar Kleophas. See Eusebius, *HE* 3.11.1, above.

to the upper room. For there it had been built, that is, in *that portion of Sion which escaped destruction*.<sup>41</sup>

According to Epiphanius, part of Mount Zion was left unmolested in 70 CE.<sup>42</sup> It was, he claims, the location of the upper room of the Last Supper and Pentecost events described in the New Testament. Though Epiphanius seems to suggest that the church survived the war, Bargil Pixner and others theorize that the returning members of this first-century Jewish-Christian community actually built a new house of assembly here, the structure Epiphanius calls a “church of God.”<sup>43</sup> The sixth-century Cypriot monk Alexander echoes the tradition known to Epiphanius recording that Hadrian, “having visited and witnessed for himself the Holy City razed to the ground, apart from the church of the Christians still standing, ordered the city to be rebuilt excluding the temple.”<sup>44</sup>

Beyond the possibility that the area simply survived destruction, early Jewish-Christians may have also chosen this site due to some special significance it held during Jesus’s lifetime and in the lives of the apostles before them. Pixner believes that the walls of the modern Cenacle incorporate some of the building blocks of that post-70 CE

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<sup>41</sup> Epiphanius, *De Mensuris et Ponderibus* 14, trans. Dean (emphasis added).

<sup>42</sup> Mimouni, 325 n. 65, accepts that the southwest hill was not destroyed by the Romans. He argues that this “miraculous” delivery from annihilation gave impetus to the Jewish-Christians on the hill to refer to it as the “new” Zion.

<sup>43</sup> Pixner, *Paths of the Messiah and Sites of the Early Church from Galilee to Jerusalem: Jesus and Jewish Christianity in Light of Archaeological Discoveries*, ed. Rainer Riesner, trans. Keith Myrick and Sam and Miriam Randall (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010), 332-3. Jack Finegan, *The Archaeology of the New Testament: The Life of Jesus and the Beginning of the Early Church*, rev. ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 233, suggests that “we may suppose that the private homes with that ‘upper room’ had been converted into this church seen by Hadrian.” He notes that similar conversions occurred at Nazareth and Capernaum, etc.

<sup>44</sup> Alexander, *Discourse on the Invention of the Cross*, trans. in Mimouni, 330. Mimouni, 332, argues that the text “obviously does not depend on Epiphanius of Salamis.”

structure.<sup>45</sup> Others argue against it.<sup>46</sup> In their estimation, the Cenacle represents nothing more than the remains of the later Byzantine church that was built on southern Mount Zion in the late fourth century. The arguments for and against this position will be thoroughly examined in the chapters dealing with the archaeology of the structures there.

Scholars raise other objections against the possibility of Jewish-Christians settling on southern Mount Zion after the war. Josephus writes that after the suppression of the first revolt, the Tenth Legion *Fretensis*<sup>47</sup> was left behind encamped on Mount Zion.

Caesar ordered the whole city and the temple to be razed to the ground, leaving only the loftiest of the towers, Phasaël, Hippicus, and Mariamme, and the portion of the wall enclosing the city on the west: the latter as an encampment for the garrison that was to remain, and the towers to indicate to posterity the nature of the city and of the strong defenses which had yet yielded to Roman prowess.<sup>48</sup>

Josephus's description places the garrison just inside the western wall south of the towers built by Herod (Phasaël, Hippicus, and Mariamme), the remains of which are now collectively known as The Citadel or "Tower of David" (plate 31). Eusebius believed that the camp had been vast in scope.

At once surely and without delay on those [i.e. Jews] who rejected the Gospel of our Savior . . . the Roman army came under God's direction through all their valleys, trod down all their walls, took away from Judaea every man who could

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 333.

<sup>46</sup> Louis Hugues Vincent and F. -M. Abel, *Jérusalem: recherches de topographie, d'archéologie et d'histoire*, Vol. 2, *Jérusalem nouvelle* (Paris: Librairie Victor Lecoffre, 1922), 431; Denys Pringle, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: A Corpus*, vol. 3: *The City of Jerusalem* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 272; John Wilkinson, *Jerusalem as Jesus Knew It: Archaeology as Evidence* (1978; repr., London: Thames and Hudson, 1988), 170; Taylor, *Holy Places*, 215.

<sup>47</sup> Formally, *Legio X Fretensis*. "Fretensis" likely refers to the region from which the soldiers hailed or else a place where they had won a significant victory.

<sup>48</sup> Josephus, *Jewish War* 7.1.1.

raise his head, or was able to do anything at all, and so great was their camp that it filled the whole breadth of Judea.<sup>49</sup>

If this was the case, it would be difficult to understand how the Jewish-Christian community could have constructed their house of assembly anywhere on Mount Zion.

According to some literary evidence, however, the legionary camp may have been separated from the area to the south by open land that was left to revert back to pastoral and agricultural use.<sup>50</sup> Eusebius visited this site in the fourth century.

If our own observation has any value, we have seen in our own time Zion once so famous ploughed with yokes of oxen by the Romans and utterly devastated, and Jerusalem, as the oracle says, deserted like a lodge.<sup>51</sup>

The “oracle,” or prophecy, that Eusebius refers to is a passage from the Biblical book of Micah: “Therefore, because of you, Zion shall be plowed as a field; Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the house a wooded height.”<sup>52</sup>

Notwithstanding the fact that this prophecy originally concerned the looming threat of the Assyrian invasion of 701 BCE, this and similar prophecies were interpreted anew to reflect the state of Jerusalem, often interchangeably referred to as Mount Zion, and the southwest hill itself in the first century CE. Other patristic authors from the fourth century like Cyril, Christian bishop of Jerusalem, attest to the continued blight of the area.

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<sup>49</sup> Eusebius, *Demonstration of the Gospel* 7.1, trans. Ferrar. Eusebius refers to the fact that captured Jews were enslaved by the Romans and sent to work the mines in Egypt or to die in the arena in Rome. Those under seventeen years of age were sold into slavery. See John Gray, *A History of Jerusalem* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962), 186.

<sup>50</sup> Murphy-O'Connor, 313.

<sup>51</sup> Eusebius, *Demonstration of the Gospel* 13, trans. Ferrar.

<sup>52</sup> Micah 3:12.

Isaiah lived nearly a thousand years ago; and he beheld Sion as a booth. The city was still standing, and beautified with public places, and robed in majesty; yet he [that is, Micah] says, Sion shall be ploughed as a field, foretelling what is now fulfilled in our days. And observe the exactness of the prophecy; for [Isaiah 1:8] said, “And the daughter of Sion shall be left as a booth in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers.” And now the place is filled with gardens of cucumbers.<sup>53</sup>

Like Cyril, Eusebius also co-opted the prophecy of Isaiah.

For the daughter of Zion – by whom was meant the worship celebrated on Mt. Zion – from the time of the coming of our Savior has been left as a tent in a vineyard, as a hut in a garden of cucumbers, or as anything that is more desolate than these . . . Yea, and the beauteous Temple of their mother-city was laid low, being cast down by alien peoples . . . And Jerusalem became truly a besieged city.<sup>54</sup>

If a significant area of Mount Zion was left fallow and separated the legionary camp from its southernmost tip, it may have been possible for a small civilian community to develop there. An archaeological assessment of this possibility will be considered in chapter eight.

The “scantily attested church history”<sup>55</sup> of the seventy-year period following the Jewish revolt has led some scholars to doubt the presence of Jewish-Christians (not to mention Jews) in Jerusalem, let alone on southern Mount Zion, during those years. But there is evidence to suggest their continued presence. For example, the crucifixion of Symeon, the second Jewish-Christian leader, is recorded by Eusebius as having taken place, presumably in Jerusalem, in the ninth or tenth year of the reign of Trajan (107/108 CE).<sup>56</sup> In his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Eusebius also records a list of Christian “bishops”<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Cyril, *Catechetical Lectures* 16.18, trans. Gifford, *NPNF*<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>54</sup> Eusebius, *Demonstration of the Gospel* 2.3, trans. Ferrar.

<sup>55</sup> Horbury, 67.

<sup>56</sup> *HE* 3.32.1.

who resided in Jerusalem from the time of James, the brother of Jesus, to Judah, the last Jewish-Christian bishop before the arrival of Hadrian in 130 CE.<sup>58</sup> Also, Eusebius agrees with Epiphanius that there “was a very important Christian church in Jerusalem, composed of Jews, which existed until the siege of the city under Hadrian.”<sup>59</sup>

Hadrian’s visit to Jerusalem had significant consequences for the city. Seeing opportunity in the rubble left behind by Titus, he decided to rebuild the city.<sup>60</sup> But rather than reconstruct it as a sacred Jewish center, Hadrian redesigned it in Hippodamian style calling it Aelia Capitolina.<sup>61</sup> His intentions were to transform the city into a pagan metropolis. Upon the platform once occupied by the Jewish Temple to YHWH, for example, Hadrian raised a temple to Jupiter.<sup>62</sup> Other pagan buildings and temples were

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<sup>57</sup> Eusebius uses anachronistic language here. There were no “bishops” in the earliest days of the church though there were likely analogous leadership positions. A helpful contemporaneous comparison is sometimes made to the Essene *mebaqqer*.

<sup>58</sup> The accuracy of the list of “bishops” is debated. (See Cuthbert A. Turner, “The Early Episcopal Lists II,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 1 (1899-1900): 529-553.) Versions of the list are found in Eusebius, *HE* 4.5, 5.12, 6.10; Epiphanius, *Panarion* 66.20 (ca. 375 CE); the *Chronographica* of George Syncellus (ca. 800 CE); the *Chronographica Brevis* of Nicephorus (ca. 828 CE); the anonymous *Chronographikon syntomon* (ca. 853 CE); and the *Annales* of Eutychius (ca. 937 CE). Due to the fact that 15 bishops held the see for a period of only 70 years, Richard Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990), 70-79, has suggested that 12 of these are not bishops but members of a body of elders, like the original Twelve, who assisted the bishop. Many names from the list correspond to a roster of elders named in the *Letter of James to Quadratus*.

<sup>59</sup> Eusebius, *Demonstration Evangelica* 3.5, trans. Ferrar.

<sup>60</sup> The exact date of the founding of Aelia is debated. Roman historian Dio Cassius, *Historia Romana* 69.12.1-2, wrote that the founding in 132 CE caused the second Jewish revolt. Eusebius (*HE* 4.6.4) believed the city was founded after the revolt was suppressed, i.e. 136 CE. Hillel Geva, c.v. “Jerusalem: The Roman Period,” *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* (Ephraim Stern, ed.; New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 2:758, suggests the former is true based on coins of Aelia minted during the revolt (132-135 CE).

<sup>61</sup> The name Aelia came from that of the emperor: Publius Aelius Hadrianus; Capitolina was a reference to the Capitoline Hill in Rome, the location of a temple to Jupiter (Capitolinus). Hippodamus of Miletus (498-408 BC) as a civil engineer who pioneered the grid plan for city layouts.

<sup>62</sup> This is disputed due to confusion in the historical record. Dio Cassius, *Historia Romana* 69.12.1, (155-235 C.E.) wrote that a temple of Jupiter was constructed on the Temple Mount, though there is no record left by anyone who had seen it. The Bordeaux Pilgrim (see below) reported seeing two statues

ultimately erected as well including a temple to Venus/Aphrodite in the city's new central forum built upon a spot traditionally believed by Christians to be the hill of Golgotha where Christ was crucified. Hadrian ultimately reduced the size and overall scope of the city from its Herodian proportions. Certain literary and artistic evidence also implies that new walls were erected especially around southern Mount Zion separating the legionary camp from the southern tip where a Jewish-Christian community may have resided.<sup>63</sup>

As part of his effort to eradicate eastern "barbarism," Hadrian abolished certain religious rites like circumcision and virtually outlawed Judaism by banning the reading of the Torah and the ordination of rabbis.<sup>64</sup> As a result, by 132 CE, a second Jewish revolt broke out under the leadership of the rebels' new messiah, Simon bar Kokhba, and his ally, the Jewish sage Akiba ben Joseph. The Jewish-Christian community, some of whom were likely residing on the southwest hill, rejected the rebels' call to arms as well as Bar Kokhba's claims to messiahship. Justin, a Christian native of Palestine during the revolt, recorded afterward that "in the Jewish war which lately raged, Bar Kokhba, the leader of the revolt of the Jews, gave orders that Christians alone should be led to cruel

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of Hadrian there in 333 C.E. – probably one to the emperor and one to his adopted son and successor, (Titus Flavius Aelius Hadrianus) Antoninus Pius. Jerome (*Commentary on Matthew* 24.15) described an equestrian statue of Hadrian on the Temple Mount still there in his day (385-404 CE).

<sup>63</sup> Those attributing new walls to Hadrian which cut across the lower part of Mount Zion, separating the legionary camp from the southern tip (much as the wall runs today) range from George Adam Smith, *Jerusalem: the Topography, Economics and History from the Earliest Time to A.D. 70* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1907), 185-6, to Menashe Har-El, *Golden Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Gefen, 2004), 190. See chapter eight for an archaeological analysis.

<sup>64</sup> *Mekhilta on Exodus* 20:6. See Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C. – A.D. 135)*, rev. Eng. ed., ed. Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar and Matthew Black, 4 vols. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1973-1987), 1:555; M. Avi-Yonah, *The Jews under Roman and Byzantine Rule: A Political History of Palestine from the Bar Kokhba War to the Arab Conquest* (1976; repr., Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1984), 13.

punishments, unless they would deny Jesus Christ and utter blasphemy.”<sup>65</sup> The rebels may have been deeply suspicious not only of Jews who would not accord Bar Kokhba messianic status but who continued to maintain friendly relations with non-Jews whose violent ejection from the city the rebels so desperately sought.<sup>66</sup>

By 135 CE, after some half-million men had been killed, Hadrian and as many as six legions including the *X Fretensis* managed to suppress the revolt.<sup>67</sup> Christian writers record that Jews were banned from reentering the city or its environs but the existence and enforcement of such a ban requires further discussion as it impacts on the likelihood that a community of Jewish-Christians could have continued to reside in the city.<sup>68</sup>

Dio Cassius (155-235 CE), the Roman historian who chronicled the second Jewish revolt, is silent regarding any forced expulsion of Jews from Aelia. Evidence for the decree comes only from Gentile Christians.<sup>69</sup> The earliest witness to a banishment of

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<sup>65</sup> Justin, *First Apology* 31, trans. *ANF* (slightly revised). According to Bauckham, “The Two Fig Tree Parables in the Apocalypse of Peter” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 104 (1985): 273, a passage in the Jewish Christian *Apocalypse of Peter*, possibly written by these same Jerusalem Jewish-Christians who were suffering under Bar Kokhba at this time, reflects these circumstances: “Verily, I say unto you, when [the fig tree’s] boughs have sprouted at the end, then shall deceiving christs come and awaken hope (with the words): ‘I am the Christ, who am (now) come into the world.’ . . . Enoch and Elias will be sent to instruct them that this is the deceiver who must come into the world and do signs and wonders in order to deceive.” Bar Kochba was remembered in the Christian community for professing to perform “signs and wonders.” According to Eusebius (*HE* 4.6.2), he claimed to be “a star which had come down to them from heaven to give light to the oppressed by working miracles.”

<sup>66</sup> Taylor, *Holy Places*, 42.

<sup>67</sup> Casualty figures from Dio Cassius, *Historia Romana* 69.14.1. Likely legions called into service were the *VI Ferrata*, *III Gallica*, *III Cyrenaica*, *XXII Deiotariana*, *X Gemina*, and *X Fretensis*, indicating the size and severity of the revolt. The *XXII Deiotariana* was annihilated.

<sup>68</sup> Avi-Yonah, 51, believes the ban included, besides Jerusalem, the districts of Oreine, Gophna and Herodium. He attempts to reconstruct the original wording of the ban from the patristic accounts: “It is forbidden to all circumcised persons to enter and to stay within the territory of Aelia Capitolina, any person contravening this prohibition shall be put to death” (50).

<sup>69</sup> Klaus Bieberstein, ““Die Hagia Sion in Jerusalem: Zur Entwicklung ihrer Traditionen im Spiegel der Pilgerberichte,” in *Akten des XII. Internationalen Kongresses für Christliche Archäologie*,

Jews from Jerusalem is Ariston of Pella (ca. 100-160 CE), whose report is recorded by Eusebius in the fourth century, “Hadrian then commanded that the whole [Jewish] nation be forbidden to set foot anywhere near Jerusalem, so it could not even be seen from a distance.”<sup>70</sup>

Justin (ca. 100-165 CE),<sup>71</sup> who also refers to the ban, interprets it in connection with certain prophecies of Isaiah<sup>72</sup> as does African church father Tertullian<sup>73</sup> (ca. 160-225 CE).<sup>74</sup> In the fifth century, Sulpicius Severus (ca. 363-425 CE), a Christian writer who appears to rely on Eusebius for his knowledge of the banishment, waxes polemical in his assertion that the Jewish-Christians were forced to leave Jerusalem so that, as if by divine

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*Bonn 1991*, ed. Ernst Dassmann and Josef Engemann (Münster, Germany: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1995), 544-45.

<sup>70</sup> *HE* 4.6.3.

<sup>71</sup> Justin, *I Apol.* 47.6: “And you are convinced that Jerusalem has been laid waste, as was predicted. And concerning its desolation, and that no one should be permitted to inhabit it, there was the following prophecy by Isaiah: ‘Their land is desolate, their enemies consume it before them, and none of them shall dwell therein’ [Isaiah 1:7]. And that it is guarded by you lest anyone dwell in it, and that death is decreed against a Jew apprehended entering it, you know very well,” trans. *ANF* (slightly modified).

<sup>72</sup> Primarily Isa 1:8: “And the daughter of Zion is left like a booth in a vineyard, like a lodge in a cucumber field, like a besieged city.”

<sup>73</sup> Tertullian, *An Answer to the Jews* 13.1: “But we perceive that now none of the race of Israel has remained in Bethlehem; and (so it has been) ever since the interdict was issued forbidding any one of the Jews to linger in the confines of the very district, in order that this prophetic utterance also should be perfectly fulfilled: ‘Your land is desert, your cities burnt up by fire,’ - that is, (he is foretelling) what will have happened to them in time of war ‘your region strangers shall eat up in your sight, and it shall be desert and subverted by alien peoples.’ And in another place... ‘and your eyes shall see the land from afar,’ - which is what you do, being prohibited, in reward of your deserts, since the storming of Jerusalem, to enter into your land; it is permitted you merely to see it with your eyes from afar.” *Idem.* 13:28-29: “Since, therefore, the Jews were predicted as destined to suffer these calamities on Christ’s account, and we find that they have suffered them, and see them sent into dispersion and abiding in it, manifest it is that it is on Christ’s account that these things have befallen the Jews, the sense of the Scriptures harmonizing with the issue of events and of the order of the times.... And where will then be a daughter of Zion to be derelict, who now has no existence? Where the cities to be destroyed, which are already destroyed and in heaps? Where the dispersion of a race which is now in exile?” trans. *ANF* (slightly modified).

<sup>74</sup> The Greek chronicler, John Malalas (491-578 CE), who also reports the ban, relies on Eusebius.

providence, the abominable combination of adherence to Torah and faith in Christ (the very definition of Jewish-Christianity) would be abolished.

At this time Hadrian, thinking that he would destroy the Christian faith by inflicting an injury upon the place [Jerusalem], set up the images of demons [pagan deities] both in the temple and in the place where the Lord suffered. And because the Christians were thought principally to consist of Jews (for the church at Jerusalem did not then have a priest except of the circumcision), he ordered a cohort of soldiers to keep constant guard in order to prevent all Jews from approaching Jerusalem. This, however, rather benefited the Christian faith, because almost all then believed in Christ as God while continuing in the observance of the law [i.e., the Torah]. Undoubtedly that was arranged by the over-ruling care of the Lord, in order that the slavery of the law might be taken away from the liberty of the faith and of the church.<sup>75</sup>

It cannot be doubted that many Jews were forced to scatter due to Hadrian's suppression of the revolt. The outlawing of Judaism itself guaranteed few would inhabit the new pagan city. But it may be credulous, based on the polemics of anti-Jewish Christian writers, to accept the historicity of an imperial ban on Jews. Although Ariston's report is largely free of polemics, it may be incorrect, and those who later appealed to it evidently found the ban conducive to their faith in Gentile-Christian ascendancy. Ironically citing Hebrew prophets in support of their rejection of Judaism, these patristic authors were also subtly promulgating the notion of Roman cooperation in God's plan for Christian triumphalism. In light of the tendencies of the patristic reports, caution should be observed before accepting their statements as representative of historical events. Scholar Shmuel Safrai does not discount the historicity of Hadrian's ban, but he admits that nowhere does it appear in "Roman juristic sources" while the only testimony offered for this ban is by Church Fathers who were "prone to exaggeration and over-emphasis of

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<sup>75</sup> Sulpicius Severus, *Sacred History* 2.31, trans. Alexander Roberts, *NPNF*<sup>2</sup> (slightly modified).

the injunction.”<sup>76</sup> Current scholarship, however, with few exceptions,<sup>77</sup> accepts as genuine the report of the imperial banishment of Jews from Aelia.<sup>78</sup>

If Hadrian had expelled all remaining Jews from Aelia by edict, could, and did, any of the Jewish-Christians remain? And, if so, how did they manage it? Eusebius claimed that they did not remain, “After the siege of the Jews under Hadrian . . . the church there was composed of Gentiles in place of Jewish Christians, and the first Gentile bishop was Mark.”<sup>79</sup> While most scholars accept Eusebius’s report of Hadrian’s banishment of Jews from Aelia, many curiously question this statement. Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, for instance, calls Eusebius’s account “too neat to be historical” and (correctly) asks where all these new Gentile Christians came from.<sup>80</sup> Bargil Pixner suggests that because they refused to support the rebels, “perhaps the Jewish-Christians were not required by the Romans to leave Jerusalem.”<sup>81</sup> Klaus Bieberstein, however, considers improbable any distinction made by the Romans between Jewish-Christians and Jews.<sup>82</sup> Joan Taylor suggests that some members of the Jewish-Christian community

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<sup>76</sup> Shmuel Safrai, “The Holy Congregation of Israel,” *Scripta Hierosolymitana* (1972): 64.

<sup>77</sup> Riesner, *Essener und Urgemeinde in Jerusalem: neue Funde und Quellen* (Giessen: Brunnen, 1998), 69, seems, at least, to hint at the ecclesiastical motivation of Eusebius: “*Aber die Sprache des Kirchenschriftstellers könnte hier starker theologisch akzentuiert als historisch differenziert sein*” (“The language of the cleric scribe might be more theologically accentuated than historically differentiated in this regard”).

<sup>78</sup> Pixner, “The History of the ‘Essene Gate’ Area,” in *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* (1953-), 105 (1989), 101.

<sup>79</sup> *HE* 5.12.

<sup>80</sup> Murphy-O’Connor, 310.

<sup>81</sup> Pixner, *Paths*, 345

<sup>82</sup> Bieberstein, 545.

were able to remain in Jerusalem by denouncing their Jewish identity.<sup>83</sup> Safrai reasons that “a small group of Sages might have been able in one way or another to live in Jerusalem even though they placed their lives in danger by doing so.”<sup>84</sup> Oskar Skarsaune writes that Hadrian’s ban “may have been effectively enforced only for a short period; soon Jews would have silently filtered back into Jerusalem.”<sup>85</sup> He adds that the disappearance of the Jewish-Christian community lasted only a few years.<sup>86</sup>

Others suggest that the community may have been allowed to return to Jerusalem under the less oppressive reign of Hadrian’s successor, Antoninus Pius (138-161 CE), who at least relaxed the ban on circumcision for Jewish children.<sup>87</sup> Michael Avi-Yonah goes so far as to say that “early in the reign of the emperor Antoninus Pius the repressive edicts of Hadrian were repealed” without offering any evidence.<sup>88</sup> Simon Montefiore writes that it was during the reign of Caracalla (198-217 CE) that Rome encouraged friendlier relations with the Jews in Palestine, encouraged by the cordial contact between

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<sup>83</sup> Taylor, *Holy Places*, 43.

<sup>84</sup> Safrai, 64-65. In that regard, he has identified six instances in the Babylonian Talmud that refer to a group of Jewish sages who comprised a “Holy Congregation in Jerusalem” in the late second century. Avi-Yonah, 80, admits to the numerous references in the Mishnah and Gemara to rabbis conducting activity in Jerusalem after the ban but dismisses a number of them as “legendary.” He does leave some wiggle room: “We cannot *prima facie* assume that no Jew visited Jerusalem for 190 years,” (p. 79).

<sup>85</sup> Oskar Skarsaune, *In the Shadow of the Temple: Jewish Influences on Early Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 185.

<sup>86</sup> Skarsaune, 202. Horbury, 98, suggests a few decades.

<sup>87</sup> Herennius Modestinus (ca. 250 CE), *Corpus Juris Civilis Digesta* 48.8.11: “By a rescript of the deified Pius it is allowed only to Jews to circumcise their own sons; a person not of that religion who does so suffers the penalty of one carrying out a castration.” Trans. S. Berrin, The Center of Online Judaic Studies. [http://cojs.org/cojswiki/Modestinus\\_Corpus\\_Juris\\_Civilis\\_Digesta\\_48:8:11\\_Circumcision\\_Limited\\_to\\_Jews](http://cojs.org/cojswiki/Modestinus_Corpus_Juris_Civilis_Digesta_48:8:11_Circumcision_Limited_to_Jews) (accessed August 25, 2013). See also Schürer, 1:539; Pixner, *Paths*, 345.

<sup>88</sup> Avi-Yonah, 15. Later (p. 164), he states that the edict of Hadrian was never formally annulled; “it was evaded in practice at least as far as pilgrimage was concerned from the third century on.”

the emperor and Judah the Prince, compiler of the Midrash.<sup>89</sup> He adds that, though bribes may have been necessary on occasion, Jews could, at the very least, gain access to the Mount of Olives or the Kidron Valley when they wished.<sup>90</sup> Pixner maintains that Jewish-Christians were able to “linger on in the ruins of their old sanctuary on Mount Zion, now outside the walls of Aelia Capitolina.”<sup>91</sup>

There seems to be an inconsistency among scholars who, on the one hand, accept the accounts of the imperial ban then struggle to explain its lack of enforcement. To be sure, the “history and fate of the Christian community during the days of Roman Aelia are obscure.”<sup>92</sup> But it might be wise to hold in abeyance any firm dependency on

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<sup>89</sup> Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Jerusalem: The Biography* (New York: Random House, 2011), 145.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid. Other evidence of Jewish presence in the city at a later date includes the contentious debate that erupted in Jerusalem around 196 CE, during the episcopate of the Gentile-Christian Narcissus (185-212 CE), over whether or not Easter should be celebrated in conjunction with Passover, clearly indicates that Jewish-Christian influence remained strong. See Riesner, *Urgemeinde*, 70. This was the so-called “Quartodecimanian” (from the Latin *quarta decima* = fourteen) controversy over whether Passover/Easter should be celebrated as with Jews on Nisan 14 or on the following Sunday. Adherents to the former were called *Quartodecimani*. Also, reference might be made to a legend regarding Judah Kyriakos. This may at least attest to a Jewish-Christian presence in Jerusalem up to the fourth century. Judah supposedly helped Constantine’s mother Helena (prior to 330 CE) discover the whereabouts of the True Cross, which he knew “from some documents which had come to him by paternal inheritance” (Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.1, trans. *NPNF*<sup>2</sup>). See also Han J. W. Drijvers and Jan Willem Drijvers, *The Finding of the True Cross: the Judas Kyriakos legend in Syriac: introduction, text and translation* (Louvain: Peeters, 1997). Is there, in this story, some recollection that Jews (and Jewish-Christians) remained in Jerusalem and passed down information about where certain events in the life of Jesus transpired? According to the story, Judah’s revelation led to the discovery of the cross at Golgotha where the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was built. He supposedly converted to Christianity and was martyred during the reign of the emperor Julian (361-363 CE).

<sup>91</sup> Pixner, “An Essene Quarter on Mount Zion?” in *Studia Hierosolymitana: in onore del P. Bellarmino Bagatti*, eds. Emmanuele Testa, Ignazio Mancini, and Michele Piccirillo (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1976), 276. See also Bagatti, 10.

<sup>92</sup> Oded Irshai, “From Oblivion to Fame: The History of the Palestinian Church (135-303 C.E.),” in *Christians and Christianity in the Holy Land: From the Origins to the Latin Kingdoms*, ed. Ora Limor and Guy G. Stroumsa (Turnout, Belgium: Brepols, 2006), 98 n. 20.

Eusebius's/Ariston's report, especially in light of evidence that Jews were in the city after 135 CE.<sup>93</sup>

Some shift in power within the Jerusalem church at this time is understandable. Many Jews certainly departed Aelia and Hadrian imported pagans from all over the empire to inhabit the renewed city. The ancient list of Jerusalem bishops seems to confirm that a Gentile, or perhaps a Hellenist Jewish-Christian named Marcus (d. 156 CE), established himself as bishop. It may be that, over time, the community's obedience to the Torah became less rigorous as non-Jews continued to tip the balance of the church's membership away from Judaism. If the ban were memorialized by Hadrian in writing, its provisions may have been such that the restrictions applied only to Aelia itself, that is, inside its new walls. Southern Mount Zion was by design left outside these boundaries and may have remained accessible to the Jewish-Christian community so long as peaceful activities were pursued. Besides, there are no competing traditions of a Jerusalem Christian community anywhere else in the city or its immediate environs for this period of time.

The rededication of Jerusalem as Aelia Capitolina drew international attention to the city which led to unintended consequences. A budding interest by Gentile Christians in making pilgrimage to Jerusalem/Aelia in order to visit the sites associated with Jesus's activities is evidenced in a number of texts that begin to be written about this time.

Melito, bishop of Sardis (d. ca. 180 CE), in his letter to Onesimus, writes about how he had traveled "to the east and reached the place where these things [i.e., "concerning all

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<sup>93</sup> Another tradition that may attest to Jews and/or Jewish-Christians living in Aelia (before or after the second revolt is uncertain) concerns Hadrian's civil engineer Aquila who became enamored of either Christianity and/or Judaism. The Christian version is told by Epiphanius, *De Mensuris et Ponderibus*, 14-15 and in the 6<sup>th</sup>-century *Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila* 40.8-20. The Jewish version is told in *Exodus Rabba* 30:12.

our faith”] were preached and done.”<sup>94</sup> A few decades later, Alexander of Cappadocia, according to Eusebius, “as if in obedience to some oracle . . . made the journey from the land of the Cappadocians, where he was first deemed worthy of the episcopate, to Jerusalem, for the purpose of prayer and investigation of the [sacred] places.”<sup>95</sup> He is also credited with building (on Mount Zion?) the “library at Aelia,” described by Eusebius as being “established by Alexander, who had charge of the church there [213-251 CE]. It was here that I myself was able to gather the material for this book [his church history].”<sup>96</sup> Origen, once prelate of Alexandria in Egypt, took up residence in Palestine ca. 230-250 CE. He writes that “we have visited the places to enquire as to the footsteps of Jesus and his disciples, and of the prophets.”<sup>97</sup> Origen may be the earliest patristic writer to locate the Last Supper on Mount Zion, though his reference is cryptically worded.

Let us go in the city to the house of that person where Jesus celebrated the Pasch with his disciples . . . Let us go up to the upper part of the house . . . and from one high place [Mount Zion?] pass to another high place [Mount of Olives?], and since there are things that the faithful do not do in the [Kidron?] valley, so they ascended, to the Mount of Olives.<sup>98</sup>

The last of these early pilgrims, Firmilian (d. 269 CE) of Cappadocian Caesarea, “going to Palestine to visit the holy places, came to Caesarea and was instructed at length

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<sup>94</sup> Preserved in *HE* 4.26.14.

<sup>95</sup> Eusebius, *HE* 6.11.2.

<sup>96</sup> *HE* 6.20.1. See Finegan, 234.

<sup>97</sup> Origen, *Commentary on John* 6.24, trans. *ANF*.

<sup>98</sup> Origen, *Interpretation of the Old Commentaries on Matthew* (77), trans. from Bagatti, *The Church from the Gentiles in Palestine: History and Archaeology*, trans. Eugene Hoade (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1971), 25. Latin in Jacques Paul Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series graeca* 13, pp. 1736-1737.

by Origen in the Holy Scriptures.”<sup>99</sup> According to C. H. Turner, “it would seem that soon after 200 A.D. ‘The [Holy] Places’ was already a technical term in the language of pilgrimage, though it is clear that it applied to the Holy Land at large and not to the Holy City only.”<sup>100</sup>

A brief five-year occupation of Palestine (269-274 CE) by the Palmyran Queen Zenobia has left no record of its effect on events on the southwest hill before Rome reestablished control over the Levant. But if the testimony regarding Mount Zion is sparse in the third century, it is rich and abundant in the fourth. The legitimization of Christianity brought both clerics and laity to Jerusalem in huge numbers.

With this chapter it has been demonstrated that a possibility exists, according to literary tradition, that a group of early first or second-century Jewish-Christians might have constructed and/or occupied a house of assembly on Mount Zion. Literary testimony, of course, is not the only form of evidence that should be used in the search for the origins of the Cenacle. Artistic and, more especially, archaeological evidence will prove critical in evaluating such a claim. For now, the thread of the written word will continue to be traced into the Byzantine period in order to determine what more can be ascertained regarding the origin of the Cenacle.

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<sup>99</sup> Jerome, *On Illustrious Men* 54, trans. Ernest Cushing Richardson, *NPNF*<sup>2</sup>. <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2708.htm> (accessed: September 1, 2014). Emphasis added.

<sup>100</sup> Turner, 551.

## Literary Evidence Concerning the Cenacle from the Byzantine Period

The fourth century was a momentous one for Christianity. The emperor Constantine, already having endorsed the 313 CE Edict of Milan making Christianity legally permissible (*religio licita*), became sole ruler of the Roman world in 324 CE attributing his success in battle to the God of Christianity. As a result, Christian leaders who once kept a low profile could now bask in the sunshine of legitimacy. As a consequence, Christian bishops began to compete for prestige and imperial funding. Jockeying for political and religious influence, bishop Macarius of Jerusalem (314-334 CE) saw an opportunity for achieving prominence for his episcopate then under the overall supervision of Eusebius, the metropolitan of Caesarea. Macarius obtained Constantine's permission to excavate the sacred site of Jesus's crucifixion and burial believed to lie beneath Hadrian's temple to Venus/Aphrodite. Karen Armstrong refers to this as the first "act of holy archaeology."<sup>101</sup> Yet it remains uncertain how Macarius knew where to dig.<sup>102</sup> According to Christian convert and poet Paulinus of Nola (354-431 CE), Constantine's mother Helena, who once visited Jerusalem, inquired into the location, seeking "out not only Christians full of learning and holiness, but also the most learned of the Jews to inform her" regarding the "secret of the hidden cross."<sup>103</sup> Had the location of Golgotha been safeguarded by the Jewish-Christian community in Jerusalem? A positive answer is rendered likely only if it can be shown that Macarius did, in fact, uncover the

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<sup>101</sup> Karen Armstrong, *Jerusalem: One City Three Faiths* (New York: Ballantine, 1997), 180

<sup>102</sup> For traditions regarding this, see the legend of Judah Kyriakos and the discovery of the True Cross, in footnote 83.

<sup>103</sup> Paulinus of Nola, *Letter 31.5*, trans. P. G. Walsh, *Letters of St. Paulinus of Nola*, vol. 2 (New York: Newman Press, 1967), 130-1.

actual tomb of Jesus and locate Golgotha. Most scholars today accept the location discovered by the Byzantines as genuine.<sup>104</sup>

Having thus exposed the sacred site, Macarius obtained imperial funding for the construction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in order to commemorate it. The multiform complex consisted of the circular *Anastasis* (“Resurrection”) built over the tomb of Jesus, a rectangular basilica called the *Martyrium* (“Witness”), and an atrium covering the rock of Golgotha between them.

The leadership of the Christian community in Jerusalem, possibly ensconced on southern Mount Zion, was relocated by Macarius, or his successor, Maximus III (334-348 CE), to the new Constantinian sanctuary of the Holy Sepulchre within the walled confines of Aelia Capitolina.<sup>105</sup> Who or what, then, remained on Mount Zion?

A frustratingly brief entry in the travel diary of a Christian pilgrim from the French city of Bordeaux, who arrived in Jerusalem in 333 CE, describes the situation on Mount Zion at that time.

Inside Zion, within the wall, you can see where David had his palace. Seven *synagogues* were there, *but only one is left* – the rest have been ‘ploughed and sown’ as was said by the prophet Isaiah [Isa 1:8].<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Shimon Gibson, *The Final Days of Jesus: The Archaeological Evidence* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), 121; Finegan, 261; Wilkinson, 147-148; James H. Charlesworth, “Jesus Research and Archaeology: A New Perspective,” in *Jesus and Archaeology*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 35; Skarsaune, 184; Murphy-O’Connor, *The Holy Land: An Oxford Archaeological Guide from Earliest Times to 1700*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 49, etc. But see James D. Tabor, *The Jesus Dynasty: The Hidden History of Jesus, His Royal Family, and the Birth of Christianity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 226-27, 235-36, who locates the place of crucifixion and tomb of Jesus on the Mount of Olives.

<sup>105</sup> Whether Aelia was surrounded by walls at the instigation of Hadrian, or later, perhaps under Diocletian or even Constantine as G. J. Wightman, *The Walls of Jerusalem: From the Canaanites to the Mamluks* (Sydney: Mediterranean Archaeology, 1993), 199, suggests, walls were in place by the late third or early fourth century. See also chapter eight.

<sup>106</sup> Bordeaux Pilgrim, *Itinerarium Burdigalense* 592, trans. Wilkinson, *Egeria’s Travels*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (1999; repr. Oxford: Aris & Phillips, 2006), 30-31. Emphasis added. Günter Stemberger, *Jews and*

Both Optatus of Milevus<sup>107</sup> (ca. 365 CE) and Epiphanius of Salamis<sup>108</sup> (ca. 392 CE) also attest to the presence, at an earlier time, of seven synagogues on Mount Zion.<sup>109</sup> Bellarmino Bagatti argues that these seven synagogues were nothing more than part of an orally-transmitted, Jewish, messianic legend that was read to the pilgrim by his guide and, “as a positive fact we have it that the Bordeaux pilgrim saw on Sion only one synagogue.”<sup>110</sup> This, Bagatti concludes, was the same building called the church of God or of Christ by Epiphanius and Eusebius and is, in fact, an early form of the Cenacle. It does seem likely that the references to seven synagogues reflect an earlier, if not legendary, situation. The anonymous pilgrim writes only that they *were* there; he probably actually saw only one. It is worth asking once again how a functioning synagogue could be found in a city from which all Jews were supposedly banned since

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*Christians in the Holy Land: Palestine in the Fourth Century*, trans. Ruth Tuschling (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 91, translates, “Within the wall of Zion . . .”.

<sup>107</sup> Optatus of Milevus, *Against the Donatists* 3.2. Bieberstein, 546, cites this passage as evidence that there was no church on Mount Zion prior to the fourth-century basilica. On the contrary, he claims Optatus considers Mount Zion a “*anstoßerregende Öde*,” a desolate wasteland. It is difficult to read this negative sentiment in Optatus’s brief reference to Mount Zion “which a small stream separates from the walls of Jerusalem in Syria Palestina. On top of this there is a plateau, not very large, in which there were seven synagogues where the Jewish people could gather to learn the Law given by Moses.” (trans. Mark Edwards, *Optatus: Against the Donatists*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1997, p. 593). Optatus makes clear that his argument against the Donatists leading to his invocation of Isaiah 2:3, et. al. wherein the prophet beheld a vision of judgment was not “in Zion, but in one of its valleys . . . it was not, therefore, on that Mount Zion that Isaiah saw the valley, but on the holy mountain, which is the Church.”

<sup>108</sup> Epiphanius, *De Mensuris et Ponderibus* 14. See below.

<sup>109</sup> These synagogues may reflect the seven schismatic sects of Judaism. Hegesippus (in *HE* 4.22.7), gives them as Essenes, Galileans, Hemerobaptists, Masbothei, Samaritans, Sadducees, and Pharisees. Justin (*Dialogue with Trypho* 80.4) names the Sadducees, Genistae, Meristae, Galileans, Hellenists, Pharisees, and Baptists. Epiphanius (*Panarion*, preface I.5.3) gives them as Sadducees, Scribes, Pharisees, Hemerobaptists, Ossaeans, Nasareans, and Herodians.

<sup>110</sup> Bagatti, *Gentiles*, 64.

the time of Hadrian.<sup>111</sup> Mimouni suggests that, since “Semitic-speaking Palestinians use the same term to designate a church and a synagogue,” it is possible that what was shown to the pilgrim and described as the last of seven synagogues was actually “the site of a cult by Christians of Jewish origin.”<sup>112</sup> Early Christians did refer to their assembly halls as synagogues. The first-century CE Letter of James invokes the *synagōgē* as a place of worship attended by his readers.<sup>113</sup> Lucian of Samosata (ca. 125-180 CE), a pagan writer chronicling the life of Peregrinus (d. 165 CE), refers to Christians worshipping at their synagogues.<sup>114</sup>

However, Bieberstein considers the possibility of finding a functioning Jewish-Christian facility at this time unlikely.<sup>115</sup> As shown above, the Bordeaux Pilgrim makes no explicit reference to the presence of a church or a practicing Christian assembly. And, according to Eusebius, Gentiles had been leading the church since the time of Hadrian.<sup>116</sup> Had a Jewish-Christian community continued to live on Mount Zion, according to Bieberstein, Eusebius would have mentioned it.<sup>117</sup> Could the entire Christian community have completely relocated to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre during the episcopate of

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<sup>111</sup> The presence of Jews in the city was discussed in the previous chapter.

<sup>112</sup> Mimouni, 328.

<sup>113</sup> James 2:2. According to Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Letter of James* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 222, in the context of the passage, the synagogue probably refers to an assembly of people rather than to a building.

<sup>114</sup> Lucian, *The Death of Peregrinus* 11.

<sup>115</sup> Bieberstein, 544.

<sup>116</sup> *HE* 5.12.

<sup>117</sup> Bieberstein, 545.

Macarius? Is this what Epiphanius meant by a church that existed on Mount Zion until the time of Maximus, Macarius's successor?

In the previous chapter it was shown that Epiphanius, writing in the second half of the same century as did the Bordeaux Pilgrim, recorded that, at the time of Hadrian's arrival in Jerusalem, there had been a small "church of God" located on a part of Mount Zion that had escaped destruction by the Romans.

And [Hadrian] found the temple of God trodden down and the whole city devastated save for a few houses and the *church of God*, which was small, where the disciples, when they had returned after the Savior had ascended from the Mount of Olives, went to the upper room. For there it had been built, that is, in that portion of Zion which escaped destruction, together with blocks of houses in the neighborhood of Zion and the *seven synagogues* which alone remained standing in Zion, like solitary huts, *one of which remained* until the time of Maximus [III] the bishop [334-348 CE] and Constantine the king [306-337 CE], 'like a booth in a vineyard,' as it is written.<sup>118</sup>

Both Epiphanius and the Bordeaux Pilgrim express themselves with the aid of scripture, specifically Isaiah 1:8, "And the daughter of Zion is left like a booth in a vineyard, like a lodge in a cucumber field, like a besieged city." Why this common use of the prophetic passage? It is possible that fourth-century Christians found more than a parallel with the current agricultural situation. The choice of a Biblical passage envisioning a hut, booth, or lodge standing amidst a garden, field or vineyard may have suggested to them the reality of the cultivated plot of land upon which stood the small Christian church on southern Mount Zion.

The name Zion was by now being used to describe the western hill rather than the original City of David on the Ophel. Confusion and loss of memory already led to the ruins of King Herod's palace being attributed to King David by the Bordeaux Pilgrim.

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<sup>118</sup> Epiphanius, *De Mensuris et Ponderibus* 14, trans. Dean (emphasis added).

David, who lived a thousand years earlier, could only have resided on the Ophel. The Bordeaux Pilgrim's tour guide, like many others, was unaware of the geographical and historical problems. Bagatti explains that the use of Zion in the Isaiah passage was originally meant to indicate the city of Jerusalem.<sup>119</sup> Simon Claude Mimouni suggests, however, that after the war the name Zion was transferred to the southwestern hill, now occupied by Christians, and became the New Zion miraculously left unscathed by the Roman legions.<sup>120</sup>

So was the small "church of God" referred to by Epiphanius the same as the "large church of Christ" cited by Eusebius and equivalent to the standing synagogue seen by the Bordeaux Pilgrim? Theodor Zahn, Joan Taylor, and John Wilkinson, among others, argue that these are not the same.<sup>121</sup> Louis Vincent, Bargil Pixner, and Jack Finegan, on the other hand, consider it quite likely that they are.<sup>122</sup> Michael Avi-Yonah suggests that the Cenacle is the same building as the last surviving synagogue mentioned by Epiphanius but believes that it was not built until the reign of the Emperor Julian (361-363 CE) which seems unlikely since the Bordeaux Pilgrim saw it in 333 CE.<sup>123</sup> Zahn, on

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<sup>119</sup> Bagatti, *Gentiles* 64.

<sup>120</sup> Mimouni, 325 n. 65.

<sup>121</sup> Theodor Zahn, *Die Dormitio Sanctae Virginis und das Haus des Johannes Markus* (Leipzig: Deichert, 1899), 13, wrote that he did see it but that it disappeared between 303 and 337, the date of Constantine's death, as Epiphanius contends. Taylor, *Holy Places*, 210, said that the synagogue seen by the Bordeaux Pilgrim was unused and thus not associated with the (Jewish-) Christian community. Wilkinson, *Jesus*, 165, argued that the original church described by Epiphanius was destroyed during the Christian persecution launched by Emperor Diocletian in 303 CE, thus the Bordeaux Pilgrim could not have seen it in 333 CE.

<sup>122</sup> Vincent and Abel, 450; Pixner, *Paths*, 335; Finegan, 238.

<sup>123</sup> Editor's note in Jacob Pinkerfeld, "David's Tomb": Notes on the History of the Building: Preliminary Report," in *Bulletin of the Louis Rabinowitz Fund for the Exploration of Ancient Synagogues* 3, ed. Michael Avi-Yonah (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1960), 41-43.

the other hand, argues that Epiphanius meant to imply that the small church stood next to the last synagogue.<sup>124</sup>

Bieberstein discounts altogether the possibility that the synagogue and church are the same. In fact, he contends that it was Epiphanius himself who successfully merged two unrelated traditions: the existence of an early Jewish-Christian presence in Jerusalem which he learned from Eusebius, and the continued, if remarkable, existence of a no-longer-used synagogue on Mount Zion pointed out by local tour guides to pilgrims such as the one from Bordeaux.<sup>125</sup>

Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, on the other hand, considers the possibility that Epiphanius might "have combined two slightly different descriptions of the same locale, one reflecting Palestinian, and the other Diaspora, language."<sup>126</sup> Note, for example, how Epiphanius appears to restate himself in the two parallel passages:

- A: a few houses/blocks of houses left (un-)devastated
- B: the small church of God
- A<sub>1</sub>: seven synagogues/solitary huts escaped destruction
- B<sub>1</sub>: one synagogue that remained

Zahn further asks why Epiphanius, writing 60 years after the supposed destruction of the synagogue, would bother to remember the name of the emperor and bishop under whom the building disappeared.<sup>127</sup> He suggests that it was, in fact, destroyed but in connection with another event that made its disappearance memorable. That event was the construction of a new church.

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<sup>124</sup> Zahn, 14.

<sup>125</sup> Bieberstein, 547.

<sup>126</sup> Murphy-O'Connor, "Cenacle," 309.

<sup>127</sup> Zahn, 13.

Sometime in the mid-to-late fourth century, a brand-new basilica called the *Hagia Sion*, the church of “Holy Zion,” was erected on Mount Zion and rivaled the Martyrium in size if not importance. But exactly when it was constructed, and under which bishop, and the consequences for the last surviving synagogue, or small church of God, is disputed. Do Epiphanius’s remarks imply, as Zahn contends, that some older structure on Mount Zion was physically replaced, i.e. torn down to make room for Hagia Sion? Or can his comment be understood to imply that only the presence of the Christian church (read: congregation) in Jerusalem remained on Mount Zion until it relocated into the new Church of the Holy Sepulchre, completed prior to 337 CE, as Lorenzo Perrone infers?<sup>128</sup> Bieberstein asserts that it was Epiphanius himself who developed for the new Hagia Sion a “hieros logos,” or sacred tale, linking the basilica to the apostles of the New Testament period via a presumed, though not demonstrable, early church on Mount Zion without any real proof.<sup>129</sup>

If read without any presuppositions, Epiphanius’s remarks seem clear. A small Christian church stood on Mount Zion in the early second century. It stood amidst some houses, synagogues, and other structures that were not razed in the aftermath of the first Jewish revolt. Epiphanius probably has no real idea of how many synagogues stood on Mount Zion preferring to fall back on the traditional number of seven to denote the various Jewish sects that he inferred were worshipping there. He does seem to know that one synagogue stood in that location until the fourth century. There is no reason to

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<sup>128</sup> Lorenzo Perrone, “‘Rejoice Sion, Mother of All Churches’: Christianity in the Holy Land during the Byzantine Era” in *Christians and Christianity in the Holy Land: From the Origins to the Latin Kingdoms*, ed. Ora Limor and Guy G. Stroumsa (Turnout, Belgium: Brepols, 2006), 148.

<sup>129</sup> Bieberstein, 547.

identify this lone synagogue with the Christian church unless one is trying to make the case that the Cenacle was originally an early first- or second-century Jewish-Christian synagogue.<sup>130</sup> Epiphanius did not say what happened to the small church of God and unfortunately failed to include southern Mount Zion in his litany of the places that were important in the life of Christ.

And having become flesh from Mary, [Christ] is conceived, born in Bethlehem, from Bethlehem passes over into Nazareth, from Nazareth into Capernaum, from Capernaum into Jerusalem and the sea in which he walked upon the water, and parts of Tyre and Nain and Judaea and Jericho and into Bethphage and Bethany, and into Jerusalem and the Temple and the Mount of Olives and Gethsemane, into the house of Caiaphas to the *praetorium* and to Herod, to the place Golgotha into the tomb, and even as far as Hades, into the earth and after the resurrection, into heaven.<sup>131</sup>

Epiphanius was not the only fourth-century Christian writer to fail to identify the southwest hill with locations important in the life of Jesus. Bagatti observes how Gregory, bishop of Nyssa, a visitor to Jerusalem in 381 CE, likewise excluded Mount Zion from his compendium of holy places, mentioning only the three churches erected during the reign of Constantine.<sup>132</sup> However, Gregory was decidedly ambivalent

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<sup>130</sup> Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., (Warminster, England: Aris & Phillips, 2002), 351, thinks that Epiphanius was not identifying the lone synagogue with the “church of the Apostles.”

<sup>131</sup> Epiphanius, *Ancoratus* 40.3, trans. Young Richard Kim, *Epiphanius: Ancoratus* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 119-20. See Bagatti, *Circumcision*, 11. Could Epiphanius’s comment in *Panarion* 46.5.5, written ca. 375 C.E., that “the fortress Zion once had priority, but now is cut off” imply that its former status as a headquarters for (Jewish-) Christianity had been surpassed by the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and its (Gentile) ecclesiastical hierarchy as Pixner, *Paths*, 347, contends? On this see also Riesner, *Urgemeinde*, 79. But see Amidon’s full translation in which Epiphanius seems to be discussing the relative heights of the Jerusalem hills: “Neither is [Golgotha] higher than the other places; opposite it is the Mount of Olives which is higher, and eight miles away is Gibeon, which is highest of all. Not only that, but the summit which was once on Zion, but is now cut away, was itself higher than Golgotha” (Amidon, 167). Nevertheless, the phrase “but is now cut away” is difficult to explain topographically.

<sup>132</sup> Bagatti, *Circumcision*, 11. The letters are sometimes referred to as *On Pilgrimages* and *The Letter to Eustathia, Ambrosia, and Basilissa*.

regarding Holy Land pilgrimages. Even so, it is possible that he reveals his awareness of Hagia Sion in *On Pilgrimages*.

If anyone should adduce the command spoken by our Lord to His disciples that they should not quit Jerusalem, let him be made to understand its true meaning. Inasmuch as the gift and the distribution of the Holy Spirit had not yet passed upon the Apostles, our Lord commanded them to remain *in the same place*, until they should have been endued with power from on high. Now, if that which happened at the beginning, when the Holy Spirit was dispensing each of His gifts under the appearance of a flame, continued until now, it would be right for all to remain *in that place* where that dispensing took place; but if the Spirit blows where He lists, those, too, who have become believers here are made partakers of that gift; and that according to the proportion of their faith, not in consequence of their pilgrimage to Jerusalem.<sup>133</sup>

Karen Armstrong suggests that, in a battle for ecclesiastical supremacy, Eusebius may actually have used his influence to try to block requests for imperial funding that would have allowed Maximus to develop Mount Zion.<sup>134</sup> He apparently took neither the queen mother, Helena, or Constantine's mother-in-law, Eutropia, to see Mount Zion during their respective visits to the city.<sup>135</sup> Eusebius never so much as mentioned the southwest hill in his writings after 325 CE.<sup>136</sup> Are these omissions evidence of a deliberate bias against Mount Zion, the church located there, or the group of Christians that might have once made up its congregation? Some contend that once the church hierarchy made its headquarters in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, all that remained on

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<sup>133</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *On Pilgrimages*. Trans. William Moore and Henry Austin Wilson. *NPNF2*. Online: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2913.htm>. Cited 29 November 2014. It is, of course, possible that Gregory is here simply referring to the city of Jerusalem.

<sup>134</sup> Armstrong, 186.

<sup>135</sup> Helena's visit to Jerusalem is recounted in Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 3.42-45. Eutropia's presence in the Holy Land is recounted in a letter from Constantine preserved in *idem*. 3.51-53.

<sup>136</sup> P. W. L. Walker, *Holy City, Holy Places? Christian Attitudes to Jerusalem and the Holy Land in the Fourth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 290, attributes Eusebius's reticence about Mount Zion to scholarly ambivalence, historical skepticism, and his apologetic stance against Judaism with its attendant ecclesiastical concerns.

the southwest hill was a group of suspect brothers who were intent on maintaining Jewish praxis.<sup>137</sup>

But just as the enthusiasm generated throughout Christendom over the discovery of the site of Jesus's death and entombment caused a massive basilica to be built over it, something almost equally sacred about Mount Zion surely prompted the Christian church to honor it with the construction of a major basilica on the southern portion of the hill. The four churches built by Constantine at this time were in fact situated directly on sites already considered sacred. Other churches built in Jerusalem throughout the remainder of the fourth-century were similarly located. Why should the site chosen for Hagia Sion not also have been selected for its sacred nature?

The four churches built during the reign of Constantine were erected at places already considered sacred to pagans, Jews, Christians, or Samaritans.<sup>138</sup> The church at Mamre, for example, was constructed over a Canaanite cultic shrine near a well that was sacred to Arabs, Jews, and pagans; it was where angels were said to have visited Abraham at his camp and where he set up an altar.<sup>139</sup> In Bethlehem, the church honoring

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<sup>137</sup> Bagatti, *Circumcision*, 88-9, quotes Eusebius's commentary on the Psalms (84:4 – "Blessed are those who dwell in thy house, ever singing thy praise!") in which he evidences marked hostility toward either Jews or, according to Bagatti, Jewish-Christians: "He did not say: blessed be the circumcised nor those who observed the Sabbath, nor those who carry out the other Mosaic sacrifices and corporal precepts of the Law; nor did he say those who are born of the race of Abraham, either Israelite, or the Jewish people, but simply all those who dwell in the house of the Lord."

<sup>138</sup> Joseph Patrich, "Early Christian Churches in the Holy Land," in *Christians and Christianity in the Holy Land: From the Origins to the Latin Kingdoms*, ed. Ora Limor and Guy G. Stroumsa (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2006), 359-60. For the following associated data see 361 n. 37.

<sup>139</sup> Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.4, relates this information stating that "here the inhabitants of the country and of the regions round Palestine, the Phoenicians, and the Arabians, assemble annually during the summer season to keep a brilliant feast. . . indeed, this feast is diligently frequented by all nations: by the Jews, because they boast of their descent from the patriarch Abraham; by the Pagans, because angels there appeared to men; and by Christians because He, who for the salvation of mankind was born of a virgin, afterwards manifested Himself there to a godly man," trans. *NPNF*<sup>2</sup>. According to Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 3.51, "the self-same Savior who erewhile had appeared on earth had in ages

the nativity was built in a grove over a cave considered sacred by Tammuz/Adonis worshippers and only later associated with the birth of Jesus.<sup>140</sup> The Church of the Holy Sepulchre was, as already stated, built upon the same ground once occupied by a temple to Aphrodite, itself built over a site believed to have been associated with another manifestation of the sacred: Jesus's resurrection.<sup>141</sup> The church called Eleona was built on the Mount of Olives over a cave in which tradition held that the risen Jesus had once delivered revelations to his disciples.<sup>142</sup> Eusebius summarized how Constantine "discovered three places venerable as the localities of three sacred caves: and these also he adorned with costly structures."<sup>143</sup> The pattern here is clear: sacred sites remained sacred no matter the religion whose shrine once occupied the terrain.

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long since past afforded a manifestation of his divine presence to holy men of Palestine near the oak of Mamre," trans. Ernest Cushing Richardson, *NPNF*<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>140</sup> The second-century *Protevangelium of James* 18.1, 19.2, depicts Jesus being born in a cave at Bethlehem. Origen was shown this cave in the first half of the third century (*Against Celsus* 1.51). In ca. 395 CE, Jerome, *Letter* 58.3 (to Paulinus), wrote that "Even my own Bethlehem, as it now is, that most venerable spot in the whole world of which the psalmist sings, 'the truth has sprung out of the earth,' was overshadowed by a grove of Tammuz, that is, of Adonis; and in the very cave where the infant Christ had uttered His earliest cry, lamentation was made for the paramour of Venus," trans. *NPNF*<sup>2</sup>. Apparently, sometime after 135 CE, the gentile population in Bethlehem had built a temple to Tammuz/Adonis in a grove at the edge of the city.

<sup>141</sup> Hadrian, ca. 135, built a temple to Venus/Aphrodite, perhaps deliberately, on the spot (at least later) recognized by Christians to be sacred. Finegan, 261, considers that "the remembrance of the place of Golgotha and of the tomb of Jesus on the part of the early Christians in Jerusalem is highly probable."

<sup>142</sup> Eusebius, *Demonstration of the Gospel* 6.18. The event is also featured in the second-century *Acts of John*: "And so I saw him [the Lord] suffer, and did not wait by his suffering, but fled to the Mount of Olives and wept at what had come to pass. And when he was hung (upon the cross) on the Friday at the sixth hour of the day, there came a darkness over the whole earth. And my Lord stood in the middle of the cave and giving light to me said: 'John, for the people below in Jerusalem I am being crucified and pierced with lances and reeds and given vinegar and gall to drink. But to you I am speaking, and listen to what I speak. I put into your mind to come up to this mountain so that you may hear what a disciple should learn from his teacher and a man from God . . . So then I have suffered none of these things which they will say of me; even that suffering which I showed to you and to the rest in my dance, I will that it be called a mystery . . . When he had said these things to me, and others which I know not how to say as he will, he was taken up, without any of the multitude seeing him,'" *Acts of John* 97, 101-2, trans. *HSNTA*:2.

<sup>143</sup> Eusebius, *Oration in Praise of Constantine* 9.17, trans. Ernest Cushing Richardson, *NPNF*<sup>2</sup>. See also *idem.*, *Life of Constantine* 3.41, 43.

After Constantine, other churches were built in the fourth century at sites designated by the gospels as connected with significant, if not supernatural, events in the life of Jesus.<sup>144</sup> The church at Bethany marked the tomb from which Lazarus was resurrected. The shrine at Gethsemane stood over the spot where Jesus sweated blood, praying for superhuman obedience prior to his arrest. The Church of the Holy Ascension was erected at the summit of the Mount of Olives where Christ's risen form was believed to have entered the divine realm. On no occasion was there a church built that was not situated upon a sacred spot hallowed by previous irruptions of the sacred.

Nothing in the New Testament identifies the southwest hill of Mount Zion as the location of any event recorded in the New Testament just as the location of Golgotha could not be surmised from a reading of the gospels. Only tradition identified these locations. With Golgotha, the sacrality of the site was recognized by both pagans and Jewish-Christians who both venerated it. In fact, it is likely that Hadrian deliberately chose sites sacred to Jews, Christians, or Samaritans upon which to build his pagan shrines.<sup>145</sup> He placed a statue of Jupiter on the Jewish Temple mount, another at the traditional place of Jesus's resurrection, and built a temple to Jupiter on Mount Gerizim. At Mamre, Hadrian rebuilt the compound originally constructed by Herod and placed there a shrine to Hermes/Mercury.<sup>146</sup> The entire process of choosing sacred sites, scenes of theophany and hierophany, regardless of whose god was involved, and rededicating

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<sup>144</sup> For the following details see Finegan, 159, 165-7, 178, and *passim*.

<sup>145</sup> Finegan, 261-2.

<sup>146</sup> Avraham Negev and Shimon Gibson, *Archaeological Encyclopedia of the Holy Land*, rev. ed. (New York: Continuum, 2003), 313.

them to new deities was not uncommon. As already discussed, Constantine did the same thing two hundred years later.

The Jewish-Christian tradition regarding Golgotha proved to be accurate. Why not those concerning Mount Zion? The sacred nature of a site on Mount Zion does not, of course, lead to any firm conclusions about a small church or Jewish-Christian synagogue standing there in the fourth and preceding centuries, only that such a possibility should not be excluded. Not only tradition, but the pattern of building churches atop preexisting sacred sites should not be overlooked as the primary reason for the location of Hagia Sion. If the Cenacle preserves any part of a pre-fourth-century sacred structure, it almost certainly stood on sacred ground.

Bieberstein suggests that the motivation to build a monument commemorating the dispensation of the Holy Spirit upon the first apostles at Pentecost was derived from the decision reached at the second ecumenical council held at Constantinople in 381 CE.<sup>147</sup> Among the topics of their deliberations was the question of the divinity of the Holy Spirit which had not been conclusively decided at Nicaea. The new conclave therefore added to the creed developed at that earlier council an addendum declaring the Holy Spirit to be “the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, and Who spoke through the prophets.” The coincidence in timing of the council’s emendation and the construction of Hagia Sion may be informative. However, even if funding for building Hagia Sion were released as a consequence of the council’s new understanding of *homoousios*, it does not explain the location chosen for its construction.

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<sup>147</sup> Bieberstein, 546.

If the last remaining synagogue and small church were the same, then Epiphanius's remarks can be understood to imply that the church of God stood on Mount Zion, that is, it "remained until," the bishopric of Maximus (334-348 CE). Did Maximus oversee the new construction project which perhaps resulted in the demolition of the small church of God? An affirmative answer is given by a number of scholars.<sup>148</sup> Others would date the construction of the new basilica later during the episcopate of John (387-419 CE).<sup>149</sup> The seventh-to-eighth-century *Georgian Lectionary*, does, in fact, recognize Bishop John as the prelate "who first built Sion."<sup>150</sup> If that is so, then what was Epiphanius referring to that was destroyed earlier under Maximus? It may have been the last of the seven synagogues to which Epiphanius seems, on the face of it, to refer. But then what happened to the small church? Zahn suggests that it either succumbed to dilapidation or continued to stand but no longer served its original purpose.<sup>151</sup> So neglected was it that the Bordeaux Pilgrim failed to even mention it.<sup>152</sup> However, it seems that something stood there in 350 CE when Cyril gave his lecture in which he refers to the "upper church of the apostles."

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<sup>148</sup> Taylor, *Holy Places*, 211; Walker, 286; Wilkinson, *Jesus*, 165; Vincent and Abel, 460; and Zahn, 14.

<sup>149</sup> Pixner, *Paths*, 350-351; Riesner, *Urgemeinde*, 74; Mimouni, 326; and Bieberstein, 546. See also Michel Van Esbroeck, *Les Plus Anciens Homéliaires Géorgiens: Étude Descriptive et Historique* (Publications de L'institute Orientaliste de Louvain 10; Louvain-la-Neuve: Université Catholique de Louvain, 1975), 314f.

<sup>150</sup> *Georgian Lectionary* 565, trans. Kevin P. Edgecomb, [www.bombaxo.com/georgian.html](http://www.bombaxo.com/georgian.html) (accessed October 19, 2002). Wilkinson suggests that the entry in the *Georgian Lectionary* probably indicates that John made later alterations to Hagia Sion, possibly after the discovery of St. Stephen's remains in 415 CE.

<sup>151</sup> Zahn, 18.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

But we know according to godliness One Father, who sent His Son to be our Savior; we know One Son, who promised that He would send the Comforter from the Father; we know the Holy Ghost, who spoke in the Prophets, and who on the day of Pentecost descended on the Apostles in the form of fiery tongues, here, in Jerusalem, *in the Upper Church of the Apostles*; for in all things the choicest privileges are with us. Here Christ came down from heaven; here the Holy Ghost came down from heaven. And in truth it were most fitting, that as we discourse concerning Christ and Golgotha here in Golgotha, so also we should speak concerning the Holy Ghost *in the Upper Church*; yet since He who descended there jointly partakes of the glory of Him who was crucified here, we here speak concerning Him also who descended there: for their worship is indivisible.<sup>153</sup>

It is generally assumed that Cyril here is referring to a church at a higher elevation (upper church) than the Holy Sepulchre where he is speaking, that is, one on Mount Zion.<sup>154</sup> He seems to imply that he is unable for some reason to worship there as he might like. “It were most fitting,” he says, that, just as he speaks of Christ’s crucifixion on Golgotha itself, Cyril should speak of the descent of the Holy Ghost where it happened, that is “in the Upper Church.” But for some reason he does not or cannot. Perhaps the meager facilities then available on Mount Zion were insufficient.

A recently-published, eighth-century Georgian manuscript discovered in Russia has been thought by some to date the construction of the new basilica on Mount Zion to the reign of the Emperor Theodosius I (379-395 CE). According to a list of the feasts of dedication within the text, the fifteenth of September was set aside for “the dedication of the holy and famous Sion [church], the mother of all churches, *the one founded by the*

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<sup>153</sup> Cyril, *Catechetical Lecture* 16.4.1975-76 (emphasis added). Vincent, 460, believes that it is the new basilica that Cyril is referring to. See also Zahn, 14. Bieberstein objects to the possibility that Cyril refers to Hagia Sion which he contends was not yet built at the time of this speech. He points to chapter 18 further on in the same catechetical lecture in which Cyril quotes Isaiah 1:8. However, this quote about Zion being “like a booth in a vineyard, like a lodge in a cucumber field, like a besieged city” can be taken to refer not just to the southwestern hill specifically but more broadly as the city of Jerusalem, which is Isaiah’s point of reference and is likely the context here. Note that Cyril reverts to calling the city Jerusalem, no longer Aelia.

<sup>154</sup> He may even be referring to an upper room.

*Apostles*, which was developed, expanded, and honored by Emperor Theodosius the Great, in which the Holy Spirit at Pentecost came down.”<sup>155</sup> Note that the church “founded by the apostles” was “developed and expanded” under Theodosius, not erected *ex novo*. This must mean that a church already existed on Mount Zion before Theodosius. Was this a pre-existing basilica already in need of renovations within mere decades of its construction? More likely this was a smaller church such as the one described by Epiphanius, and possibly presently embodied in parts of the Ceacle, that Theodosius expanded with the addition of a basilica. But if Theodosius was the emperor at the time of the basilica’s founding, Maximus could not have been the presiding bishop as some claim; their dates of service do not overlap.

In 384 CE, the Spanish pilgrim Egeria, who arrived in Jerusalem three years earlier, wrote in detail about the liturgical circuit around Jerusalem in which she participated.<sup>156</sup> In that part of her diary concerning the feast of Pentecost, she wrote about how at the third hour (nine o’clock – see Acts 2:15), the priests or presbyters assembled with the faithful on Mount Zion, read from chapter two of the Acts of the Apostles about how the Holy Spirit descended on the apostles on that “very spot,” which “has now been altered into a church.”<sup>157</sup> Egeria’s short text is critical for deciding the issue of the date of the construction of Hagia Sion as well as notable for offering the first textual evidence

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<sup>155</sup> Trans. Pixner, *Paths*, 349. Original text in van Esbroeck, 314f. Emphasis added.

<sup>156</sup> Perrone, 150, remarks how “the anonymous Pilgrim of Bordeaux, who visited Palestine in 333, still reflects the Jewish-biblical perspective of the Holy land” but Egeria “draws in her *Itinerary* the picture of a religious landscape standing under the sign of Christianity.”

<sup>157</sup> Egeria, *Travels* 43.2-3, trans. Wilkinson, *Egeria*, 159-60. Note that George E. Gingras, *Diary of a Pilgrimage* (New York: The Newman Press, 1970), 118-119, translates this latter as “the church now is something else.”

unequivocally associating events described in the New Testament with the location of the church on Mount Zion. Does she mean to indicate that a piece of undeveloped acreage on Mount Zion was “altered into a church” or that some other structure, where the Pentecost event was believed to have first taken place, was altered? Gingras’s translation, “the church is now something else,” would indicate a modification, replacement, or expansion by Theodosius of an existing structure. This undoubtedly refers to the church mentioned by Cyril and Epiphanius, whether or not one grants its traditional connection with the first-century apostolic community. Further comments by Egeria confirm that she was describing a recently-erected church. Her description of the liturgical visit to Mount Zion on Easter Sunday clearly states that certain events took place “where there is now this same church of Sion,”<sup>158</sup> or “where the church of Sion now stands.”<sup>159</sup> Theodosius’s reign does not rule out Bishop John as involved in some way with the project, but he may not have been the presiding bishop when construction began.

Egeria’s testimony is the key for dating the completion of Hagia Sion. The basilica apparently did not exist when the Bordeaux Pilgrim came to Jerusalem in 333 CE. If Egeria saw it in 381 CE, then it was constructed in that forty-eight-year period. If Hagia Sion was built during the reign of Theodosius I (379-395 CE) then it was not during the bishopric of Maximus or for that matter the reign of Constantine as Epiphanius might be understood to imply. Both Cyril (350-386 CE) and John (387-419 CE) served as bishops of Jerusalem during the reign of the emperor Theodosius. The reason, therefore, that Epiphanius failed to mention Hagia Sion in his list of holy places, composed ca. 375

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<sup>158</sup> *Travels* 39.5, trans. Gingras, 115.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, trans. Wilkinson, *Egeria*, 158.

CE, was because it had not yet been built. Construction of the basilica was finished sometime between the inauguration of Theodosius's reign (379 CE) and the arrival of Egeria in Jerusalem (381 CE). Construction, therefore, did not follow the decision made at Constantinople regarding the substance of the trinity but was rather coincident with it.<sup>160</sup> The basilica's ongoing construction may have encouraged further debate on the issue, however.

Cyril (350-386 CE) is the most attractive choice for the presiding bishop at the time of the construction of Hagia Sion in any event. He seems to have been a champion of the sacred nature of Mount Zion from the very beginning of his episcopacy. In his first year, for example, when the bones of James, the brother of Jesus, were supposedly discovered on the eastern slope of the Kidron valley, Cyril had them temporarily stored on Zion long before there was any basilica.<sup>161</sup> Yet they must have been placed in a structure deemed worthy of the honor. The bones lay in state for a year until a dedicated chapel could be built near the Temple on the spot where the bones were supposedly found.<sup>162</sup> Was this temporary interment in the small church of God? It was likely some sacred structure traditionally connected with the early church and, in popular belief at least, with the memory of James, the brother of Jesus. Otherwise, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre would have been a more respectable place of inhumation.

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<sup>160</sup> Bieberstein does not note the positive testimony of Egeria.

<sup>161</sup> The account appears in a tenth-century Latin document derived from a fourth-century Greek original according to Murphy-O'Connor, "Where was James Buried?" *Bible Review* 19, no. 3 (2003): 38-41. Murphy-O'Connor, nevertheless, states that "there is no reason to doubt that Cyril of Jerusalem moved the bones to Mt. Zion."

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 38. The church, perhaps built by the otherwise unknown Paul of Eleutheropolis, was known to have existed until the Crusader period. John Allegro conducted excavations near the tomb of the bene Hezir family and uncovered remnants of it there (*idem*, 40-42).

Bieberstein objects to the identification of Cyril as the presiding bishop over Hagia Sion's construction for several reasons. One of his main points of contention is that during Cyril's episcopate it was the Eleona Church on the Mount of Olives that was designated as both the "church of the apostles" and "the upper church of the apostles" owing to its slightly higher elevation (60 meters) over that of Mount Zion.<sup>163</sup> This and the suggestion, followed by Pringle,<sup>164</sup> that Eleona, not Hagia Sion, was first commemorated as the place of the Last Supper, are weak arguments for several reasons. The only textual evidence adduced by Bieberstein is the frequent use in the sixth-century *Georgian Lectionary* of the Greek term *Matheteion*, translated by Pringle as "of the disciples," to describe a cave, or the church over it, on the Mount of Olives. Bieberstein and Pringle suggest that, because several texts refer to a liturgical station at Eleona on Maundy Thursday, the location was connected with the Last Supper. The cave on the Mount of Olives is, in fact, associated not with the Last Supper but with the place where Jesus taught his disciples later that evening.<sup>165</sup> Egeria specifically states that the church of Eleona "contains the cave which on this very day the Lord visited with the apostles."<sup>166</sup> The *Georgian Lectionary* says only that the participants in the liturgical procession were instructed to "go out to the holy Mount of Olives and begin to keep vigil in the *Matheteion* until midnight,"<sup>167</sup> supposedly in order to reenact the time that Jesus spent

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<sup>163</sup> Bieberstein, 545.

<sup>164</sup> Pringle, 117.

<sup>165</sup> Finegan, 165-6.

<sup>166</sup> *Travels*, 35.2, trans. Wilkinson, *Egeria*, 153.

<sup>167</sup> *Georgian Lectionary* 642.

waiting, following the Last Supper, until his arrest (Gethsemane had no church as yet). Likewise, the entry in the fourth-century *Armenian Lectionary* for the Maundy Thursday liturgy at Eleona specifically cites scriptural passages which were to be recited in order to remind the participants of Jesus's precarious situation that evening.<sup>168</sup> In fact, after leaving the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and before departing for the Mount of Olives, the participants were instructed to gather at Hagia Sion where the account of the Last Supper from Mark 14:1-26 was read.<sup>169</sup> In summary, it was not the Last Supper that was commemorated at Eleona but the nocturnal events afterward at the cave "of the disciples" where they supposedly awaited, with their master, Jesus's betrayal and arrest. The Eleona Church on the Mount of Olives was not the "upper church of the apostles" referred to by Cyril.

In fact, as early as Egeria's visit, the entire Holy Week included multiple trips by the faithful to Hagia Sion. On Good Friday, the congregation visited Mount Zion to "pray at the column at which the Lord was scourged."<sup>170</sup> On Easter Sunday, Egeria joined the worshippers who departed together from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

[They led] the bishop with singing to Sion. When they get there, they have hymns suitable to the day and the place, a prayer, and the Gospel reading which describes the Lord coming to this place on this day, "when the doors were shut"; for this happened in the very place where the church on Sion now stands. That was when one disciple, Thomas, was not present; and when he returned and the disciples

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<sup>168</sup> These included Psalms 2:2 ("the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and his anointed"), 3:1 and 4 ("many are rising against me"; "I cry aloud to the Lord"), 41:9 ("even my bosom friend in whom I trusted, who ate of my bread, has lifted his heel against me"), 42:9 ("I say to God, my rock: 'Why hast thou forgotten me? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy'"), and 59:1 ("deliver me from those who work evil, and save me from bloodthirsty men"), etc.

<sup>169</sup> *Armenian Lectionary* 39bis. Online: <http://www.bombaxo.com/blog/biblical-stuff/lectionaries/jerusalem-tradition-lectionaries/an-early-armenian-lectionary-renoux/> (accessed December 18, 2014).

<sup>170</sup> *Travels* 37.1, trans. Wilkinson, *Egeria*, 155.

told him that they had seen the Lord, he said, “Unless I see I do not believe” [John 20:25].<sup>171</sup>

One of the oldest church-service itineraries known, the fourth-century Jerusalem liturgy of St. James, also testifies to Zion’s preeminence and its connection with the activities on Pentecost.

The sovereign and quickening Spirit...that descended in the form of a dove on our Lord Jesus Christ at the river Jordan, and abode on Him; that descended on Thy apostles in the form of tongues of fire *in the upper room of the holy and glorious Sion* on the day of Pentecost . . . We present them to You also, O Lord, for the holy places, which You have glorified by the divine appearing of Your Christ, and by the visitation of Your all-holy Spirit; especially for the glorious Sion, *the mother of all the churches*.<sup>172</sup>

In 415 CE, Bishop John had the putative remains of St. Stephen, discovered in Kephra Gamala, installed in the new basilica on Mount Zion. Pixner, who argues that Epiphanius’s small church of God remained standing beside Hagia Sion after it was built, contends that Stephen’s bones were interred in the older structure, which he calls the *sacrarium*, rather than in the new and larger basilica.<sup>173</sup> He bases his contention on a line from the *Breviarius of Jerusalem* (ca. 400 CE), a short topography or guidebook written for pilgrims to the city.

You go on from there [the Church of the Holy Sepulchre] to the basilica containing the column at which the Lord Jesus was struck. There is a mark where he held onto it. From that you go to the *sacrarium*. It contains the Stone with which St. Stephen was stoned. In the center of the basilica is the crown of thorns which they gave the Lord. There too is the Upper Room where the Lord taught his disciples when he had had the supper. There too is the Rod enclosed in a silver column.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 39.5, trans. Wilkinson, *Egeria*, 158.

<sup>172</sup> *Liturgy of St. James* 3.32, 34, trans. ANF (emphasis added).

<sup>173</sup> Pixner, *Paths*, 352.

<sup>174</sup> *Breviarius de Hierosolyma* E, trans. Wilkinson, *Pilgrims* 93.

It is possible that the presence of the stones in this sacrarium prompted John to locate Stephen's remains there. In a grand procession, "with psalms and hymns, they carried the relics of the most blessed Stephen to the holy church of Sion, where also the Archdeacon had been ordained."<sup>175</sup> Twenty-five years later, the saint's remains were relocated from Mount Zion and eventually installed in a dedicated chapel north of the city.<sup>176</sup> Pixner suggests that the empty sarcophagus was left behind for pilgrims to see but this is unlikely. Though the alleged stones that were used to lynch Stephen were on display at Hagia Sion for years (last mentioned in the seventh century), pilgrims did not report seeing the saint's sarcophagus on Mount Zion until the Crusader period.

Note that the section of the *Brevarius* cited above places the column of scourging inside the basilica. Egeria mentioned seeing it on Mount Zion as well, confirming that it was in the newly-constructed basilica at that time. The Bordeaux Pilgrim also saw the column in 333 CE, but at that time it was located in the building traditionally identified as the house of Caiaphas nearby. Jerome claimed that the column was used to hold up the colonnade of the church in 385 CE when his friend and companion Paula worshipped there.<sup>177</sup>

By the end of the fourth century, the location on which the basilica on Mount Zion was built was securely associated with the upper room of the New Testament (Mark

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<sup>175</sup> Lucian of Kephart Gamala, *Letter Regarding the Discovery of the Body of Stephen* (*Ep. de revel. corp. Steph.*) 919.1.8, trans. Hastings, c.v. "Upper Room (2)."

<sup>176</sup> In 439, the Empress Eudocia had the remains removed to a monastery on the Mount of Olives while she had a proper church built. The Church of St. Stephen was not completed until 460, the time of her death. Her tomb was located next to the church. See *Life of Melania* 58/9-244/5; *Life of Peter the Iberian* 49.

<sup>177</sup> Jerome, *Letter 108 to Eustochium* (*Epitaphium Sanctae Paulae*) 9.4.

14:12-15 and par.; Acts 1:13-14) and a number of other events recorded as having taken place there: the Last Supper (Mark 14:12-16 and par.; John 13:2-20), the appearance of the risen Jesus (Mark 16:13-18, Luke 24:36-49, John 19b-29), and the descent of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-13). Artifacts or relics associated with these and other events recorded in the New Testament were also featured. They included the column of scourging (Mark 15:15b//Matt 27:26b; John 19:1; GosPet 3.9c), the crown of thorns (Mark 15:17b//Matt 27:29a; John 19:2, 5; GosPet 3.8), the “rod,” presumably a prop representing an item connected with Jesus’s passion (Mark 15:19a, Matt 27:29-30, GosPet 3.9b), and some of the stones with which Saint Stephen was executed (Acts 7:58). And by the early fifth century, the remains of two of the heroes of the early church had already been temporarily interred on Mount Zion: Stephen and James, the Lord’s brother.

Politically, Cyril, in his struggle to elevate Jerusalem to ever-higher status in proportion to its claim to being the founding center of Christianity, capitalized on existing traditions by expanding and sensationalizing southern Mount Zion’s prestige. The line between earlier tradition and fourth-century fabrication was easily blurred in the process. Most pilgrims marveled at the sites and treated the relics as genuine. And this was only the beginning. Later centuries would see further traditions become associated with the southwestern hill while the list of its featured relics continued to grow.

The surge of pilgrims to Jerusalem in the fourth and fifth centuries likewise grew. Jerome described how “from India, from Persia, from Ethiopia we daily welcome monks in crowds.”<sup>178</sup> Many Christian women also visited the Holy Land. In addition to Egeria, Paula, and the mother and mother-in-law of Constantine, other adventurous women

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid., *Letter* 107 (to Laeta) 2, trans. W. H. Fremantle, G. Lewis and W.G. Martley, *NPNF*<sup>2</sup>.

arrived in Jerusalem at this time. Among those were Eustochium,<sup>179</sup> Fabiola,<sup>180</sup> Marana and Cyra,<sup>181</sup> Marthana,<sup>182</sup> and Melania the Elder<sup>183</sup> who traveled with her daughter, Melania the Younger.<sup>184</sup>

The Byzantine Empress Eudocia, wife of the Emperor Theodosius II (408-450 CE), took up residence in Jerusalem in 444 CE and remained there until her death sixteen years later. During that time, she oversaw repairs to the walls of the city, likely damaged from the earthquake of 363 CE, re-establishing them as they stood prior to their destruction in 70 CE.<sup>185</sup> These apparently included new walls around the southern tip of Mount Zion as well, perhaps in conscious fulfillment of the psalms: “Do good to Zion in thy good pleasure (*eudokia*); rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.”<sup>186</sup> Visual evidence of her work is preserved in the sixth-century mosaics at Madaba and in Rome (plates 1-2).

In the mid-fifth century, Eucherius, bishop of Lyons, France, (434-449 CE) and possibly a former Roman senator, made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and wrote about seeing

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid., *Letter* 108.4; Palladius, *The Lausiatic History* 41.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., *Letter* 64.8; 77.7-9.

<sup>181</sup> Theodoret, *History of Religion* 29.7.

<sup>182</sup> Egeria, *Travels* 23.3; Basil of Seleucia, *Life of St. Thecla* 2.30.

<sup>183</sup> Palladius, *The Lausiatic History* 46.

<sup>184</sup> *Life of Melania* 34-70.

<sup>185</sup> Evagrius Scholasticus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 1.22: “After having conversed with many persons of this description, and founded, as I have already said, many such seats of contemplation, and, besides, restored the walls of Jerusalem, the consort of Theodosius [Eudocia] also erected a very large sanctuary, conspicuous for elevation and beauty, in honor of Stephen, the first of deacons and martyrs, distant less than a stadium from Jerusalem. Here her own remains were deposited, when she had departed to the unfading life,” trans. Edward Walford, *Ecclesiastical History: A History of the Church from A.D. 431 to A.D. 594*. [www.tertullian.org/fathers/evagrius\\_1\\_book1.htm](http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/evagrius_1_book1.htm) (accessed August 18, 2013). See also Nicephorus Callistus, *Ecclesiastica Historia* 14.50; John Malalas, *Chron.* 357f; *idem*, *Chron. Pasch.* 585; *Placentini Itinerarium* 25.

<sup>186</sup> Psalm 51:18.

Eudocia's wall encircling Mount Zion and made remarks about the other architectural developments he saw at that time.

The site of [Aelia] is almost forced into a circular shape, and is enclosed by a lengthy wall, which now embraces Mount Sion, though this was once just outside.... Mount Sion is covered on the northern flank with dwellings for clergy and monks, and its summit, which is level, is occupied by monks' cells round the *church* which is said to have been *founded by the apostles* in honor of the place of the Lord's resurrection, because it was there that they were filled by the Spirit once promised by the Lord.<sup>187</sup>

Pixner suggests that the phrase, "in honor of the place of the resurrection," refers to the orientation of the Cenacle (small church of God) toward the tomb of Jesus.<sup>188</sup> An interior niche, part of the original foundation walls of the Cenacle (about which more will be said in chapter ten), faces the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The text may simply mean, however, that the location of the church commemorates the resurrection appearance of Jesus to the apostles on the lower floor of the church, a tradition already associated with it. The dispensation of the Holy Spirit on the apostles was also sometimes attributed to the risen Jesus.

Louis Vincent cites two additional references from this period which may reflect traditions associated with Mount Zion.<sup>189</sup> In his *Commentary on Isaiah*, the Jerusalem priest Hesychius (d. 450 CE) urged his readers to "draw near to the mystical table of Sion," signifying, according to Vincent, its association with the Last Supper.<sup>190</sup> The

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<sup>187</sup> Eucherius, *De Situ Hierusolimae Epistula ad Faustum Presbyterum* 3-4, trans. Wilkinson, *Pilgrims*, 94 (emphasis added).

<sup>188</sup> Pixner, *Paths*, 344.

<sup>189</sup> Vincent and Abel, 454.

<sup>190</sup> Mimouni, 326 n. 68 cites Hesychius as the first literary witness (5<sup>th</sup> c.) to the Last Supper being commemorated on Mount Zion. However, as shown above, the *Armenian Lectionary* of the fourth century preceded him.

soldier-saint Theodore of Amasea (d. 306 CE) was commemorated in an encomium written by Chrysippos, bishop of Scythopolis (467-479 CE), which includes a passage inviting its readers to become “a guest in the [upper?] room of Sion.”<sup>191</sup>

Recognizing the growing importance of the Jerusalem see, the Council of Chalcedon in 451 CE elevated it to the status of patriarchate. As such, it became the fifth most prominent patriarchal see in Christendom after Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria and Antioch.

Hippolytus of Thebes, whose life and writings Wilkinson dates to between 460 and 490 CE, indicates two new traditions associated with Zion at this time. He begins with a description of the Apostle John.

This is John, whom the Lord loved, the virgin and evangelist, who remained at Jerusalem, the *mother of the churches*, at his own house, to which the Apostles fled in fear of the Jews. There also was prepared the Passover. There also the first mystery was consecrated for the disciples. There also He showed the prints of the nails to Thomas. There the Apostles ordained as first bishop [James] the son of Joseph, the brother of the Lord...He [John] received the all-holy Mother of God (*Theotokon*) in his house until her assumption.<sup>192</sup>

The phrase, “mother of the churches,” confirms that Hippolytus is writing about Hagia Sion, already referred to in this way in the *Liturgy of St. James*. Hippolytus appears to be the first writer to locate the death or dormition (“falling asleep”) of Mary, the mother of Jesus, on Mount Zion. Here she is said to have resided with the apostle John. Though tradition had already identified the disciple whom Jesus loved and to whom he gave

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<sup>191</sup> Theodore was also known as Tiron or Tiro derived from the Latin word for new soldier or recruit. Legend reported that he was a soldier in the Roman legions or possibly in the Cohors Tyronum. The importance of soldiers becoming Christians at such an early date will be taken up below in chapter thirteen on the nature of the Cenacle.

<sup>192</sup> Hippolytus of Thebes, *Chronicle* 1.4-5, trans. Hastings.

custody of his mother from the cross (John 19:26-27) as John the son of Zebedee,<sup>193</sup> the location of the dormition is new information. The tradition of Mary's death on Mount Zion would have resounding consequences and lasting significance for future events on into the twentieth century.

Veneration on southern Mount Zion continued apace in the sixth century as witnessed by the pilgrim Theodosius (ca. 518 CE).

From Golgotha it is 200 paces to Holy Sion which is the Mother of All Churches: this Sion our Lord Christ founded with the apostles. It was the house of Saint Mark the Evangelist.... The column which was in the House of Caiaphas, at which my Lord Christ was scourged, has now by my Lord's command found its way into Holy Sion: and you can see the way he clung to it when he was being scourged as if the marks were in wax. His arms, hands, and fingers clove to it. It shows even today. Also he made on it the impression of his whole face, chin, nose, and eyes as if it had been wax.<sup>194</sup>

In contrast to Hippolytus, who considered Hagia Sion, or some spot nearby, to be the former house of the disciple John, Theodosius seems to identify it with "the house of Saint Mark," doubtless deducing the connection from a reading of Acts 12:12-17. Could either Theodosius or Hippolytus be so credulous as to believe that a massive, recently-constructed basilica was once a private residence? Neither seems to be referring to the surrounding grounds of Hagia Sion, that is, where a house might have once stood that was later demolished to make way for the church. Rather, they find it quite natural to assume that the structure they are referring to was once a house. Could this be the still-standing small church of God which by virtue of its contiguity with the basilica was

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<sup>193</sup> Irenaeus, *Adversus Haeresis* 3.1.1.

<sup>194</sup> Theodosius, *De Situ Terrae Sanctae* – "The Topography of the Holy Land" 7b, trans. Wilkinson, *Pilgrims*, 107. See Magen Broshi, "Excavations on Mount Zion," in *Jerusalem Revealed: Archaeology in the Holy City 1968-1974*, ed. Yigael Yadin (Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society, 1975), 85. This description is virtually repeated in the later *Brevaria* (A and B), ca. 525 CE. See Wilkinson, *Pilgrims*, 119.

subsumed under the inclusive title, Hagia Sion? While the size of the foundation stones of the existing Cenacle speak to a structure built for public rather than private use, its identification as a house is more understandable than to so characterize a basilica.

More “holy relics” soon came to be housed on Zion. Articles associated with Jesus’s passion were among them. The anonymous pilgrim from Piacenza, Italy (sometimes referred to as St. Antoninus), arrived in Jerusalem about 570 CE and found in the Hagia Sion a number of “many remarkable things, including the corner stone which the Bible tells us was ‘rejected by the builders’.”

The Lord Jesus entered this church, which used to be the house of Saint James, and found this ugly stone lying about somewhere, so he took it and placed it in the corner. You can hold it in your hands and lift it. . . . In this church is the column at which the Lord was scourged, and it has on it a miraculous mark. When he clasped it, his chest clove to the stone, and you can see the marks of both his hands, his fingers, and his palms. They are so clear that you can use them to take ‘measures’ [probably ribbons of cloth<sup>195</sup>] for any kind of disease, and people can wear them round their neck and be cured. On this column is the horn from which kings were anointed (including David), and the church also contains the crown of thorns with which they crowned the Lord, and the lance with which they struck him in the side. There are also many of the stones with which they stoned Stephen, and the small column in which they set the cross on which Blessed Peter was crucified at Rome. The Cup of the Apostles is there, with which they celebrated mass after the Lord had risen again, and many other remarkable things which I cannot remember. A monastery for women is there. I saw a human head enclosed in a reliquary of gold adorned with gems, which they say is that of Saint Theodota the martyr. Many drink out of it to gain a blessing, and so did I.<sup>196</sup>

The Piacenza Pilgrim also found it easy to equate some part of Hagia Sion or its environs with a residence, this time ascribing it to James. It seems highly unlikely that three pilgrims from successive centuries should unquestioningly accept that a massive

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<sup>195</sup> Wilkinson, *Pilgrims*, 140 n. 33, cites Gregory of Tours (ca. 585 CE) who says that many people “go to the column (of Scourging), make ribbons of cloth and put them round it . . . They take them away as ‘blessings’ to help them in sickness” (*Libri Miraculorum* 1.7).

<sup>196</sup> Piacenza Pilgrim, *Itinerarium* 22, trans. Wilkinson, *Pilgrims*, 140.

basilica was once a house. The new relics that the Italian pilgrim describes include the metaphorical “corner stone” of Psalm 118:22 (quoted by Jesus in Matthew 21:42), the horn of anointing, supposedly used by Samuel to pour oil on the forehead of King David (1 Sam 16:2), the lance mentioned in John 19:34, some artifact related to Peter’s crucifixion (brought from Rome?), the holy grail, and the head of a fourth-century Bithynian martyr. The presence of the “holy lance,” either on Zion or in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, is also attested in this century by Cassiodorus (ca. 485–585 CE)<sup>197</sup> and Gregory of Tours (ca. 538–594 CE).<sup>198</sup> Notable, too, is the presence of a nearby nunnery. A century earlier, Eucherius also described seeing “dwellings” for monks and priests “round the church.”

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<sup>197</sup> Cassiodorus, *Explanation of the Psalms* 86: “In [Jerusalem] the sacred chalice bestowed on us both communion and salvation. In it the hardest of stones revealed the footsteps of the holy Redeemer where He stood to be heard before Pilate His judge; in it the pillar witnesses the scourging of the Lord who was bound to it; in it is seen the crown of thorns which we know was set on the Lord of salvation . . . In it is preserved the reed which struck the Lord’s head . . . In it the cross of salvation and of glory hallowed that venerable place. In it remains the lance which pierced the Lord’s side . . . In it His tomb even today gives life to believers; in it the site of the resurrection raises the hearts of the faithful to heaven. There stands Sion, outstanding among mountains; there, as the disciples reclined in the dining-chamber with doors closed, the Savior miraculously entered” trans. P. G. Walsh, *Cassiodorus: Explanation of the Psalms*, Vol. 2 (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), 341-342.

<sup>198</sup> Gregory of Tours, *The Glory of the Martyrs* 6: “With regard to the lance, the reed, the sponge, the crown of thorns, and the column on which the Lord and Redeemer was whipped at Jerusalem; many who are filled with faith approach this column and tie around it cords they have woven; they receive these cords back as a blessing that will help against various illnesses,” trans. Raymond Van Dam, *Glory of the Confessors* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1988), 27.

## Literary Evidence Concerning the Cenacle from the Persian and Arab Conquests

Shortly after the turn of the seventh century, in 614 CE, the Persians, under the leadership of Khosrau II (591-628 CE), swept across Palestine and captured Aelia/Jerusalem from the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius. Historians past and present have attributed murder, looting, demolition, and the burning of sacred buildings, including Hagia Sion, to the Persian army.

Meanwhile the evil Persians, who had no pity in their hearts, raced to every place in the city and with one accord extirpated all the people . . . Then their wrath fell upon priests and deacons: they slew them in their churches like dumb animals . . . Who can count the number of those who died? For many tens of thousands were destroyed by the number of privations and diversity of hardships . . . Death on every side declared itself, since the intense heat, like fire, consumed the multitude of people, as they trampled on one another in the press, and many perished without the sword . . . When the people were carried into Persia, and the Jews were left in Jerusalem, they began with their own hands to *demolish and burn such of the holy churches* as were left standing . . . How many fled into the Church of the Anastasis, into *that of Sion and other churches*, and were therein massacred and *consumed with fire*! Who can count the multitude of the corpses of those who were massacred in Jerusalem!<sup>199</sup>

Despite the graphic and plaintive nature of the monk's report, and the general assessment of historians regarding the extensive level of structural damage and human carnage caused by the Persians, the archaeological evidence may not support it.<sup>200</sup> It is

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<sup>199</sup> Antiochus Strategius, *The Capture of Jerusalem*, trans. F. C. Conybeare, "Antiochus Strategius' Account of the Sack of Jerusalem in A.D. 614," *English Historical Review* 25 (1910): 507-508 (emphasis added). Other ancient references include the *Chronicon Paschale* 1.704 (7<sup>th</sup> c.): "In this year, about the month of June, an ever to be lamented misfortune befell us, for, together with many other cities of the East, Jerusalem was taken by the Persians, and many thousands of clergy, monks, and nuns slaughtered therein. The Lord's Sepulchre was burned and the famous churches of God, and, in a word, everything of value was ruined. The venerable beams of the cross, together with countless sacred vessels, were taken by the Persians, and the patriarch Zacharias was made prisoner by them; and all this took no long time, not even a month, but came to pass within a few days," trans. Aubrey Stewart, *Extracts from Aristeas, Hecataeus, Origen and Other Early Writers*, (PPTS 11:23). See also *The Chronicle of Theophanes A.M.* 6106.

<sup>200</sup> Gideon Avni, "The Persian Conquest of Jerusalem (614 CE) – An Archaeological Assessment," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, 357 (2010): 35-48.

certainly true that the discovery of mass graves from the sixth and seventh centuries, probably those of Christians, within and around Jerusalem “enhances the possibility that these interred were indeed the victims of the Persian massacre.”<sup>201</sup> Seven such sites have been found including one on southern Mount Zion that may be dated to this period.<sup>202</sup> Strategius wrote that “in front of the gates of Holy Sion we found 2270 [dead] persons.”<sup>203</sup> These gates may be those shown on the Madaba Map (plate 3) immediately north of the Hagia Sion church.<sup>204</sup>

Gideon Avni has concluded, however, that “the arguments for massive damage and destruction within Jerusalem were based mainly on an interpretation of the historical sources rather than on the stratigraphic contexts and the accurate dating of finds.”<sup>205</sup> According to Avni, neither the churches of St. Stephen, Eleona, or Gethsemane, or the Nea, Probatica (Bethzatha), Hagia Sion, or Holy Sepulchre sustained serious, demonstrable damage; “the archaeological record bears no evidence for large-scale destruction,” rather, “a clear pattern of continuity throughout the seventh century” is evident.<sup>206</sup> Nevertheless, other scholars insist that at least some churches must have been destroyed once and for all at this time because they are never heard of again.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>202</sup> For more details, see chapter nine.

<sup>203</sup> Strategius, 515.

<sup>204</sup> Avni, 40. This is yet another piece of evidence for the existence of Hadrian’s wall across southern Mount Zion. See chapter eight.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>207</sup> Wilkinson, *Pilgrims*, 16, on the contrary, notes that Constantine’s Eleona, the Hagia Sophia (“Holy Wisdom”), and the Nea Church (New St. Mary) were respectively replaced by something more

Despite the level of destruction caused by the Persians, the conquerors ended up taking all of the gold and silver from the church treasuries. Skilled artisans were relocated to Persia while others were detained outside the city at the Mamilla Pool where they were slain.<sup>208</sup> According to the *Chronicon Paschale*, the Jerusalem patriarch Zacharias (609-632 CE) was taken into captivity by the Persians.<sup>209</sup> He was ordered to take along with him the wood of the True Cross said to have been discovered at Golgotha. Strategius wrote that afterward groups of Jews, who were left in charge of the city for three years, began to destroy and burn churches in retaliation for the ill treatment they had received from Christians during the siege. The Persian general Razmiz came to restore order and banished the Jews from the city.<sup>210</sup> He installed a Persian governor who placed Modestus, abbot of the Monastery of St. Theodosius, in charge of repairing the city and restoring the Christian shrines including Hagia Sion.<sup>211</sup> Avni concedes that Modestus's "extensive repairs could have eliminated the evidence for large scale damages caused by the Persian sack."<sup>212</sup>

Once Modestus completed any necessary repairs, he set about welcoming pilgrims back to Jerusalem. Pilgrim guidebooks were once again proving popular with

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modest, rebuilt elsewhere, or abandoned. Wightman, 224, suggests that Modestus may have lacked sufficient time or resources to properly restore these shrines.

<sup>208</sup> Gray, 207, says that they were slain by Jews.

<sup>209</sup> Moshe Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 6.

<sup>210</sup> Wilkinson, *Pilgrims*, 15.

<sup>211</sup> Pixner, *Paths*, 353.

<sup>212</sup> Avni, 43.

the new tourists. Portions of such a guidebook, in Armenian, survive and give us contemporary information about Mount Zion.

The holy Church of Sion is one stade distant from “The Resurrection” [Anastasis church]. It is a hundred ells in length and seventy in breadth, and has eighty columns joined by arches. It has no upper room, but a wooden screen, and on the screen hangs the Crown of Thorns which they placed on the head of the Life-giver. On the right side of the church is the Upper Room of the Sacrament and a wooden cupola on which is painted the Savior’s Last Supper. On its altar the Sacrifice is offered in the upper story of Sion, and there is one Upper Room . . . beneath it is the basin in which [Jesus] washed the disciples’ feet.<sup>213</sup>

This passage seems to confirm the coexistence of two sacred buildings adjacent to one another on Mount Zion: the “holy church of Sion” (basilica) which “has no upper room,” and another structure “on the right side of the church” which has “the Upper Room.” This text is a striking piece of evidence for the separate Cenacle building. Within the upper room, according to the *Guidebook*, is artwork depicting the Last Supper. This is the first indication from the literary accounts of graphic decoration gracing the interior of the facility.

The Byzantines under Emperor Heraclius briefly retook Jerusalem from the Persians in 629 CE but maintained control for only a decade. Modestus was made Patriarch but died in his first year in office. It was during this ten-year span that Modestus’s successor, Sophronius, patriarch from 634 to 638 CE, found himself in charge of Jerusalem. During his brief patriarchate, he wrote a poem in praise of Mount Zion. Sophronius’s poem is worth repeating at some length as it sums up the New Testament events and the holy relics now associated with the site.

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<sup>213</sup> Armenian Guidebook, *On the Churches Built in Holy Jerusalem* 4-5, trans. Wilkinson, *Pilgrims*, 165.

And let me go rejoicing...and go up, / my heart overcome with awe, / and see the Upper Room, / the Reed, the Sponge, and the Lance. / Then may I gaze down / upon the fresh beauty of the Basilica / where choirs of monks / sing nightly songs of worship. / And, speeding on, / may I pass to Sion / where, in the likeness of fiery tongues, / the Grace of God descended; / where, when he had completed / the mystic supper, the King of All / teaching in humility / washed his disciples' feet. / Blessings of salvation, like rivers / pour from that Rock where Mary / handmaid of God, childbearing for all men, / was laid out in death.<sup>214</sup>

Sophronius was the second ancient witness, following the *Armenian Guidebook*, to the tradition that the footwashing, mentioned only in the Gospel of John and associated with the Last Supper, occurred on Mount Zion. This tradition will appear frequently in later pilgrim accounts and may serve as a clue to the activities that took place in the earliest days of the Cenacle. Sophronius is also the second writer to associate the southwestern hill with the death of Mary, another tradition that will become fixed in the list of sacred events that occurred there.<sup>215</sup> The “fresh beauty of the basilica” may refer to renovations completed after the Persian sack.

In 638 CE, the Byzantines were ejected from Jerusalem for the last time by warriors from Arabia inspired by the new Islamic religion. Caliph Omar ibn al-Khattab (579-644 CE), who defeated Heraclius at the battle of Yarmouk near the Sea of Galilee, commenced the first Muslim occupation of Jerusalem following its surrender by Sophronius in exchange for clemency.<sup>216</sup> Reportedly, upon entering the city, al-Khattab demanded to first be shown the “*mihrab* of David.”<sup>217</sup> Muslim coins from this period

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<sup>214</sup> Sophronius, *Anacreontica carmina* 20.43, 47-66, trans. Wilkinson, *Pilgrims*, 158-160. His verses were known as *anacreontica* because of their meter.

<sup>215</sup> Finegan, 235. The first was Hippolytus of Thebes, *Chronicle* 1.4-5, written in the fifth century.

<sup>216</sup> Wilkinson, *Pilgrims* 17.

<sup>217</sup> J. W. Hirschberg, “The Remains of an Ancient Synagogue on Mount Zion” in *Jerusalem Revealed, Archaeology in the Holy City 1968-1974*, ed. Yigael Yadin (Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration

have been found inscribed with the name *Ilya*, possibly a translation of the city's Hadrianic name.<sup>218</sup> Soon, the city would be given its new Islamic name, *Madinat Bayt al-Maqdis*, "City of the Temple," in reference to the now-destroyed Jewish sanctuary. The takeover was peaceful enough; the holy buildings were left unscathed.

In 661 CE, Muawiyah ibn 'Abi Sufyan seized the caliphate from Ali ibn Abi Talib and chose to receive his crown and his title in Jerusalem. His reign established the century-long Umayyad dynasty which lasted until 750 CE. During the reign of Caliph Abd el Malik bin Marwan (685-705 CE), construction began on the Haram al-Sharif ("the noble enclosure" or Dome of the Rock) on the former Temple mount which no Christian had bothered to occupy.

The French bishop Arculf of Périgueux made a late seventh-century (ca. 680 CE) pilgrimage to Jerusalem but kept no journal. But even though he did not commit his experiences to writing, he later related them verbally to his friend, Adomnan, an Irish abbot of Iona, Scotland. Arculf drew diagrams for Adomnan on wax tablets of the floorplans for various churches he had visited including Hagia Sion (plate 4). Adomnan faithfully reproduced the plans and, in 686-88 CE, after undertaking much additional research (in the local library), prepared a full account of the Holy Land and the journey of his friend. He included this section on Mount Zion.

Now a few brief notes are needed on the *very large Church* which has been built on it. This is a sketch to show what it is like. This is where one can see the rock

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Society, 1975), 117, suggests that this refers to the tomb of David. However, Yoram Tsafrir, "Muqaddasi's Gates of Jerusalem – A New Identification Based on Byzantine Sources," *Israel Exploration Society* 27 (1977): 154, explains that David's Tower (the Citadel) was known in Arabic as Mihrāb Dāūd. The nearby gate, today's Jaffa Gate, was called *bab al-mihrab*.

<sup>218</sup> Meir Ben-Dov, *Historical Atlas of Jerusalem*, trans. David Louvish (New York: Continuum, 2002), 171.

on which [i.e., stone with which] Stephen was stoned and fell asleep outside the city. And outside this great church, which contains places of such note, there is another rock [column?] further west, on which the Lord is said to have been scourged. This *apostolic Church* is constructed of stone, and stands, as has been said above, on a flat site on the summit of Mount Sion.<sup>219</sup>

Arculf's drawing clearly shows only one structure. Yet Adomnan writes that the pillar of scourging is "outside this great church" even though the drawing places it inside the unified structure. Is there a conflict? Does Adomnan imply two structures in his text, one a "very large church" and another designated as the "apostolic church" of stone in which the pillar is located? It is difficult to be certain because the original drawing is represented differently in different manuscripts, some showing extensions like rooms, closets, or even porticos off the main floor.

Arculf was, incidentally, the first Christian pilgrim to mention the new mosque, now known as the al-Aqsa Mosque, on the former Temple mount. As Adomnan recorded it, "in that famous place where once there stood the magnificent Temple, the Saracens have now built an oblong house of prayer, which they pieced together with upright planks and large beams over some ruined remains."<sup>220</sup> Lest Arculf's description conjure up the image of a shack, he adds that "this building can hold three thousand people."<sup>221</sup>

It was during the early Umayyad caliphate, prior to 692 CE, that a monk by the name of Epiphanius, possibly dependent, in part, on the *Armenian Guidebook*, wrote the following description of Mount Zion. It is unclear whether he actually visited the site himself but he gives evidence of a number of new traditions about the place.

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<sup>219</sup> Adomnan of Iona, *De Locis Sanctis* 1.18.1-3, trans. Wilkinson, *Pilgrims*, 179 (emphasis added).

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., 1.15, trans. Wilkinson, *Pilgrims*, 170.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

And to the right of the Pavement [a small church where Judas betrayed the Lord] is Holy Sion, the House of God. And at the great door on the left is the place where the holy Apostles carried the body of the most holy Mother of God after her departure. And at the right part of the same door is the vent-hole of the Gehenna of Fire, and near it is set up the stone at which they scourged Christ our God. And at the holy doors of the sanctuary are the footprints of Christ. There he stood when he was judged by Pilate. *To the right side of the altar is the Upper Room*, where Christ had the Supper with his Disciples. And in the same place tradition has it that the Pharisee boasted and the publican humbled himself.<sup>222</sup>

Architect Heinrich Renard argues that Epiphanius wrote “great gate” in order to indicate the main eastern entrance and to differentiate it from the smaller gates and side entrances to the church, thereby proving the existence of other entrances (such as one to the north as per Arculf).<sup>223</sup> Again, the “upper room,” or Cenacle, seems to be described as a separate-yet-incorporated structure south of the main altar.

The Venerable Bede (672-735 CE), who, like Adomnan had never visited Palestine, based his travel guide on the works of Adomnan and on that of other pilgrims. While the account (ca. 702 CE) is necessarily derivative, he did note that on Mount Zion, “Saint Mary died and there too is shown the place of the venerable Lord’s Supper. Also there is a marble column standing in the middle of the church, against which the Lord was scourged.”<sup>224</sup> In this, Bede is naturally in agreement with Arculf. But if he meant to refer to two structures, in which was the column of scourging? This column of scourging mentioned by Adomnan, Epiphanius, and Bede may have stood in the row of columns along the nave or the choir, “in the middle of the church.”

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<sup>222</sup> Epiphanius the Monk, *The Holy City and the Holy Places* 7, trans. Wilkinson, *Pilgrims*, 208-9 (emphasis added).

<sup>223</sup> Heinrich Renard, “Die Marienkirche auf dem Berge Sion in ihrem Zusammenhang mit dem Abendmahlssaale,” *Das Heilige Land* 44 (1900): 11-12.

<sup>224</sup> Bede, *De Locis Sanctis* v 306.5, trans. Wilkinson, *Pilgrims*, 219.

By the seventh century, tradition had firmly connected Mary's dormition with southern Mount Zion.<sup>225</sup> John of Damascus (675-749 CE) wrote homilies regarding the dormition and located Mary's residence there.

In Sion, Christ the Law-giver consummated the typical pasch . . . In Sion, Christ is seen by His apostles, risen from the dead . . . Sion is the crown of churches, the resting-place of disciples. In it the echo of the Holy Spirit, the gift of tongues, His fiery descent are transmitted to the apostles. In it St. John, taking the Mother of God, ministered to her wants. Sion is the mother of churches in the whole world, who offered a resting-place to the Mother of God after her Son's resurrection from the dead. In it, lastly, the Blessed Virgin was stretched on a small bed.<sup>226</sup>

The eighth century witnessed the rise of the Abassid caliphate from Baghdad and its takeover of Jerusalem in 750 CE following the great earthquake four years earlier. The quake was one of the most violent ever recorded, damaging more buildings than had the Persians over a hundred years earlier. Eudocia's wall was hit hard, beginning its downward spiral toward obsolescence.<sup>227</sup> The Abbasids came into possession of a virtual ruin. The city would no longer receive the lavish patronage it had enjoyed under the Umayyads and, as a result, Jerusalem would face serious neglect and abandonment.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Legends about the Virgin Mary were by now consistently including Mount Zion as the place of her death and/or assumption. The earliest evidence of Mary's immortality comes from Epiphanius who noted, though did not endorse, the tradition (*Panarion* 78.11.4, 23.9). The earliest dormition account in narrative form appears in the late fifth-century *Acts of John* by pseudo-Prochorus, likely also a product of the fifth century. A complete narrative appears in the sixth-century *Liber Requiei Mariae* ("The Book of Mary's Repose"), an Ethiopic translation of the earlier Syriac *Obsequies of the Holy Virgin*. Mary's tomb is traditionally located in Gethesemane; its earliest attestation is in the third/fourth-century *Joannis liber de Dormitione Mariae* ("Book of John about the Dormition of Mary"). Bagatti discovered first-century tombs near the so-called Tomb of the Virgin Mary in Gethesemane. See Bellarmino Bagatti, Michele Piccirillo and A. Prodomo, *New Discoveries at the Tomb of the Virgin Mary in Gethesemane*, trans. L. Sciberras (Jerusalem: Franciscan Press, 1975). See also, Stephen J. Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 9-76.

<sup>226</sup> John of Damascus, *Homily 21 on the Dormition*, trans. Mary H. Allies, *St. John of Damascene, On Holy Images, followed by Three Sermons on the Assumption* (London: Thomas Baker, 1898), 179.

<sup>227</sup> Wightman, 236.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, 235.

About thirty years later, ca. 808 CE, ambassadors from the Holy Roman Emperor Charlemagne, vying with Byzantium for influence in the Near East, visited Jerusalem. There, they sought concessions from the Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid (786-809 CE) regarding Roman Catholic claims in the city. The entourage toured the Christian sites and wrote an account for their emperor of what they saw. It included an enumeration of the clergy serving on the southwestern hill. There, they found “at Holy Sion 17 presbyters and clergy, not counting two who are dedicated to God as hermits.”<sup>229</sup> Al-Rashid allowed Charlemagne to endow and maintain centers in the city for Latin pilgrims.<sup>230</sup>

The rebel Tulunid caliphate temporarily seized Egypt and the Levant from the Abbasids in 868 CE but the rival forces reached an agreement that left the Tulunids subservient to the Baghdad caliphate. The Abbasids regained complete control of the region again in 905 CE and maintained suzerainty for the next sixty-five years. It was during the declining years of this caliphate that Bernard the Monk traveled to Jerusalem and lodged in one of those hospices previously established by “the most glorious emperor Charles [Charlemagne], where all are admitted who . . . speak the Roman tongue [i.e., Latin].”<sup>231</sup> His is the last known account of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land before the Crusades.

In this city there is another church to the south, on Mount Sion, called Saint Simeon’s, where the Lord washed the feet of his disciples, and the Lord’s crown of thorns hangs there. This is the church where we are told Saint Mary died.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> *Commemoratorium on the Churches in Jerusalem 2*, trans. Wilkinson, *Pilgrims*, 253.

<sup>230</sup> Teddy Kollek and Moshe Pearlman, *Pilgrims to the Holy Land: The Story of Pilgrimage through the Ages* (New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, 1970), 67.

<sup>231</sup> Trans. *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>232</sup> Bernard the Monk, *Itinera* 315.12-316.1, trans. Wilkinson, *Pilgrims*, 266. P. E. Dutton translates the last phrase, “. . . in it one of the dead is reported to be Saint Mary” (*Carolingian Civilization:*

There is little indication that Hagia Sion had been repaired after the earthquake and, if so, to what extent. Could “Saint Simeon’s” refer not to Hagia Sion but to an adjacent structure, i.e. the Cenacle. It is an unusual name for either building on this part of Mount Zion. Perhaps Bernard confused the Church of St. Peter in Gallicantu, on its eastern slope, with the Cenacle where all the events and relics he describes were located. It is also possible that Bernard was told that the Cenacle had been constructed by the second Jewish-Christian bishop, Symeon.<sup>233</sup>

In the early tenth century, Egyptian heirs of Sa’id, self-proclaimed descendant of Muhammad’s daughter Fatima, established the Fatimid dynasty and promptly challenged the Abbasids of Baghdad, overrunning the rest of North Africa and the Holy Land. Under this caliphate, evidence suggests, a mob composed of both Jews and Muslims attacked, burned, and looted both the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and Hagia Sion in 965 CE.<sup>234</sup> The patriarch of the former was found hiding in a tank of oil in the Anastasis from which he was dragged before being burned. Repairs were begun on both structures by the new patriarch Christodulus II (966-969 CE) but completed under his successor Thomas II (969-978 CE). A Jacobite Christian scholar and soldier from Baghdad by the name of Al-Khammar, also known as Ibn Suwar, was placed in charge of the restorations and rebuilt the dome of the Anastasis and probably effected repairs to Hagia Sion as well.<sup>235</sup> He may

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*A Reader*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2004) quoted in Brett Edward Whalen, ed., *Pilgrimage in the Middle Ages: A Reader* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 129.

<sup>233</sup> This was suggested by Vincent, 457 n. 1.

<sup>234</sup> Yahya ibn Adi (893-974 C.E.), *Annals*. Translation provided by the author. From the *Corpus Scriptor, Christianor, Oriental*, Series 3.7, in *Jérusalem: Recherches de topographie, d'archéologie et d'histoire*, ed. Louis Hugues Vincent (Paris: Librairie Victor Lecoffre, 1912), 245.

<sup>235</sup> John Wilkinson, Joyce Hill and W. F. Ryan, *Jerusalem Pilgrimage: 1099-1185* (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1988), 46.

have been on loan from the Turkish forces under Alp Takin of Damascus. Ibn Suwar was apparently killed when the Fatimids, under Caliph al-Aziz, recaptured Damascus and routed Takin's Sunni rebels.

Turmoil erupted again in the Middle East when the fanatical Shi'ite Qarmatians struggled to seize power from the Fatimids in 974 CE.<sup>236</sup> Seeing an opportunity to regain Christian control of Jerusalem, Byzantine Emperor John I Tzimiskes invaded the Holy Land as well.<sup>237</sup> While the historical details of this period are unclear, it appears that the emperor captured many cities throughout Palestine but ultimately failed to take Jerusalem. Instead, the Fatimid caliph al-Aziz regained control of the city. In the process he tore down the walls surrounding Mount Zion (Eudocia's walls) in 975 CE, deciding that the area they surrounded was too difficult to defend.<sup>238</sup> He may have been responsible for rebuilding the walls of Hadrian, once again dividing Mount Zion in half from east to west.<sup>239</sup> A gate from this period has been found constructed atop the Byzantine Nea Gate in Hadrian's wall.<sup>240</sup>

The situation stabilized, however, and peace resumed. Repair work on the Holy Sepulchre and Zion churches continued apace under the patriarchs Joseph II (981-985 CE) and Orestes (986-1006 CE) who employed the architectural services of one Syncellus, otherwise known as Sadqa bin Basar.

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<sup>236</sup> Ben-Dov, 185.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> Murphy-O'Connor, *Holy Land*, 115.

<sup>239</sup> Wightman, 237. Vincent and Abel credit al-Mu'izz.

<sup>240</sup> Broshi and Yoram Tsafrir, "Excavations at the Zion Gate," *Israel Exploration Journal* 27 (1977): 37.

Bargil Pixner believes that it was at this time that cenotaphs for David and Solomon were installed at Hagia Sion to accompany an empty sarcophagus of Stephen which he argues had been in place there since the fourth century.<sup>241</sup> However it is more likely that all three were installed at this time; they would later be found intact by the Crusaders who were the first to report their presence on Mount Zion.<sup>242</sup> The process by which the Cenacle became associated with the tomb of David, touched on briefly in the introduction to this paper, begins at this point.

The Hebrew Bible clearly states that King David “was buried in the city of David” (1 Kgs 2:10).<sup>243</sup> Modern archaeology has assured us that this was the former Jebusite city, conquered by David and located on the southeast hill of Jerusalem, that is, the original Mount Zion (called Zion I by archaeologists) also known as the Ophel (“fortified hill”).<sup>244</sup> Archaeologist Raymond Weill may have succeeded in discovering the original tomb of David on the Ophel in 1913.<sup>245</sup> David’s son and heir, Solomon, built the first Jewish temple as well as his own palace north of the City of David on Mount Moriah. That, in turn, became known as Mount Zion (Zion II).<sup>246</sup> It was likely in the

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<sup>241</sup> Pixner, *Paths*, 352.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid.

<sup>243</sup> Neh 3:16 knows the location to be on the eastern hill.

<sup>244</sup> See also 2 Sam 5:7, 9; 6:10, 12, 16; 2 Kgs 9:28; 12:22; 1 Chr 11:5, 7.

<sup>245</sup> This was confirmed in 1996 by W. Shea based on inscriptions discovered at the tomb discovered by Weill. See William H. Shea, “The Tomb of David in Jerusalem,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 34, no. 2 (1996): 287-293.

<sup>246</sup> Isa 60:14; 1 Macc 4:37, 60; 5:54; 7:33.

Herodian period, though possibly shortly after the destruction of the temple in 70 CE, that the western hill began to be called Mount Zion (Zion III).<sup>247</sup>

Josephus, in the late first century CE, believed this western hill to be the location of David's city though he does not call it Zion.<sup>248</sup> Eusebius, however, in his *Onomasticon* gazeteer of the Holy Land (published prior to 324 CE) pinpoints Mount Zion as lying south of Golgotha, i.e., the western hill, doubtless echoing earlier tradition.<sup>249</sup> Pixner believes that the Jewish-Christian residents on the hill were responsible for the appropriation of the name, "The messianic Jews [i.e., the Nazoreans<sup>250</sup>], deeply immersed in the Zion tradition of their people, needed their own Mount Zion and dared to transfer its name to their hill."<sup>251</sup>

However, the Gospel of Luke, a document contemporaneous with Josephus, identifies Bethlehem as the "City of David," the king's place of birth as recounted in Samuel 16:1. By the fourth century, many Jews, as well as Christian pilgrims, were venerating certain tombs in Bethlehem believed to belong to David and Solomon.<sup>252</sup> But also by the fifth century, Christians were holding memorial services on southern Mount

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<sup>247</sup> Pixner, *Paths*, 321.

<sup>248</sup> Josephus, *Jewish War* 5.143; *idem*, *Antiquities of the Jews* 7.62-66.

<sup>249</sup> Eusebius, *Onomasticon* Section A.189, trans. C. Umhau Wolf, [http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/eusebius\\_onomasticon\\_02\\_trans.htm](http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/eusebius_onomasticon_02_trans.htm) (accessed January 30, 2015).

<sup>250</sup> Pixner, "Nazoreans on Mount Zion (Jerusalem)," in *Le Judéo-Christianisme dans tous ses États: Actes du Colloque de Jérusalem 6-10 Juillet 1998*, ed. Simon C. Mimouni and F. Stanley Jones (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf: 2001), 299-300, describes Nazoreans as "the denomination of a clan who claimed to be descendants of David, to whom the family of Jesus also belonged."

<sup>251</sup> Pixner, "Nazoreans," 291-2.

<sup>252</sup> Eusebius, *Onomasticon*; Bordeaux Pilgrim, *Itinerarium Burdigalense* 20; Piacenza Pilgrim, *Itin.* 29. See Pixner, *Paths*, 324.

Zion for James, the brother of the Lord, as well as for King David.<sup>253</sup> Ora Limor argues that such services did not necessarily imply that the honored dead were believed to have actually been buried where the memorials took place.<sup>254</sup> Similar services, for example, were held on the southwestern hill for the bishops Cyril and John and the priestly renovator Modestus, yet they were known to be entombed elsewhere.<sup>255</sup> James was only temporarily interred on Mount Zion after all. However, these honored dead were revered as founder figures: Cyril and John built or enhanced the original Hagia Sion; Modestus made (possibly extensive) repairs to the church after the Persian invasion; James founded the Holy See as first bishop; and the Jewish King David was revered as the founder of Zion<sup>256</sup> as well as patriarch of the royal House of David to which Jesus and James both belonged. It was typical in Roman culture that any figure designated by a group as its founder would eventually become woven into its myth of origins. In this case, “the spirit of the ‘founding fathers’ permeates the edifice they have constructed.”<sup>257</sup> The church by this time had been thoroughly infused with Gentile, that is, Roman-Latin, culture. Under the influence of its liturgy, the “tradition [of David’s city] abandoned its first

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<sup>253</sup> *Armenian Lectionary* 32, celebrated on December 26.

<sup>254</sup> Ora Limor, “The Origins of a Tradition: King David’s Tomb on Mount Zion,” *Traditio* 44 (1988): 458.

<sup>255</sup> *Armenian Lectionary* 565, 1414, celebrated on December 16 and 27.

<sup>256</sup> The lectionaries cite such Bible passages as Ps 131 LXX (David’s promise to build a temple to the Lord), 2 Sam 5 (David’s capture of Zion and establishment of his city), Acts 15:1-29 echoing Amos 9:11 (the restoration of the tabernacle of David as the second foundation of Zion by James). “All these passages and hymns were intended to demonstrate that David and James were the two founders of Zion,” (Limor, 459).

<sup>257</sup> Limor, 459.

geographical base in Bethlehem and finally came to rest on Mount Zion . . . With time the abstract foundation myth was consolidated into the physical tradition of the tomb.”<sup>258</sup>

After the Arab conquest in the seventh century, Muslims, too, began venerating the tombs of David and Solomon in Bethlehem.<sup>259</sup> But they eventually succumbed to the Christian legends regarding southern Mount Zion sometime during the tenth century. Doren Bar goes so far as to suggest that the Christians inherited from the Muslims the belief that David’s tomb was on Mount Zion.<sup>260</sup> Muslims called the site Qabr al-Nabi Da’ud, or Tomb of the Prophet David.<sup>261</sup>

A tenth-century description of the southwester hill which mentions the presence of David’s tomb appears in an anonymous biography of Constantine, written to promote the newly evolving legend that Constantine’s mother, Helena, had been the one responsible for all the church construction in Jerusalem and the Holy Land in the fourth century.<sup>262</sup>

Holy Sion is on the loftiest point of the holy city, to the south, and there the blessed and holy Helena, spouse of Constans and mother of the Great Emperor Constantine founded a long and broad and immense church, and roofed it not with tiles but with lead. *Inside the rear of the sanctuary and on the right of her building she included the House of the holy Disciples*, the place where they had

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<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

<sup>259</sup> Muslim accounts of that time include Ali Harad (1170 CE): “Beit Lahem [Bethlehem] is the name of the city where Jesus – peace be with him – was born and where the tombs are from David and Solomon;” and Ibn Khaldun (14<sup>th</sup> century): “Then David the prophet died and was buried in Bethlehem.” Both quoted in Pixner, *Paths*, 324 n. 13.

<sup>260</sup> Doron Bar, “Re-creating Jewish Sanctity in Jerusalem: Mount Zion and David’s Tomb, 1948-67,” *Journal of Israeli History: Politics, Society, Culture* 23, no. 2 (2004): 262.

<sup>261</sup> Pamela Berger, “Jewish-Muslim Veneration at Pilgrimage Places in the Holy Land,” *Religion and the Arts* 15 (2011): 30.

<sup>262</sup> Wilkinson, *Pilgrims*, 387, gives a date range for the anonymous Life of Constantine of from 715 to 1009 CE, still prior to the Crusades.

hidden themselves for fear of the Jews and Christ stood by them when the doors were shut. And on the left she included the porphyry column to which Christ our God was bound when he was scourged by the Jews. On the right side of the chancel<sup>263</sup> is the holy Font and the Descent of the holy Spirit on holy Pentecost: *and to the left of the diaconicon*<sup>264</sup> *containing the Tomb of the holy Prophet David* this blessed and holy Helena made the Presentation of the holy Anaphora.<sup>265</sup>

No mention is made in the *Vita* of Solomon's or Stephen's tombs. The passage presents, however, a fascinating description of the Cenacle (house) as being "included" in or with Hagia Sion, located in the rear (east) and on the right (south). Within the building were commemorated only the hiding by the disciples after the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus and his resurrection appearance to them. The column of scourging was said to be located on the north side (left) of the building. The Pentecost event seems to have been commemorated south of the chancel near the Cenacle. The passage mentions a diaconicon which here does not appear to be the same as the house of the holy disciples. In it, and not in the house, is the cenotaph of David. When this was moved into the first floor of the Cenacle may have to do with the later construction (or eventual destruction) of the Crusader church on the same spot.

In 1009, despite the respect previous Fatimid caliphs had shown the Jews and Christians of Jerusalem, Al-Hakim (996-1021), a fanatical Shi'ite, ordered the destruction of Christian shrines in the city including the Mount Zion basilica<sup>266</sup> and the Church of the

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<sup>263</sup> Area surrounding the sanctuary.

<sup>264</sup> South chamber in which sacred objects are kept.

<sup>265</sup> *Vita Constantini* 11, trans. Wilkinson, *Pilgrims*, 391. Emphasis added. The anaphora is that part of the liturgy in which bread and wine are consecrated.

<sup>266</sup> Armstrong, 286; Pixner, *Paths*, 353.

Holy Sepulchre.<sup>267</sup> The latter “was knocked down as far as ground level, except the parts which were impossible to destroy.”<sup>268</sup> After the earthquakes of 1016 and 1033, fortifications around the city were rebuilt, possibly using fallen stones from Hagia Sion which now lay outside the walls.<sup>269</sup>

Religious tolerance resumed once Al-Hakim was replaced. In 1037, the caliph Ma’ad al-Mustansir, by special arrangement with the Byzantine emperor Michael Paphlagon (1034-1041), allowed the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to be reconstructed in exchange for the release of Muslim prisoners from Byzantium.<sup>270</sup> There is no mention in the existing record of repairs to Hagia Sion at this time.

Repairs to the Jerusalem walls were ordered by Mustansir and the inhabitants of each ethnic quarter were made responsible for their own section. Christians completed the work in the northwest area surrounding the Holy Sepulchre church after which they were awarded possession of that quarter which they largely inhabit to this day.<sup>271</sup>

Further upheaval followed in 1071 in the wake of the invasion of Palestine by the Sunni Seljuks, military commanders of the Abbasid caliphate who still retained power in Baghdad. As a result, Jerusalem fell into ruin and its population began to dwindle.<sup>272</sup> There is no evidence of building repairs to Hagia Sion under the Seljuks.

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<sup>267</sup> Ben-Dov, 186.

<sup>268</sup> Yahya el Antaki, *History* 1.195f-184, trans. Wilkinson, *Pilgrims*, 26.

<sup>269</sup> Wightman, 245.

<sup>270</sup> Kollek and Pearlman, 82.

<sup>271</sup> Wightman, 246.

<sup>272</sup> Ben-Dov, 191.

Then, after twenty-five years of relative peace, rebellion broke out in the city. It was crushed by the Seljuks who subsequently introduced a policy of repression against surviving Jews and Christians that included destroying buildings and banning pilgrimages.<sup>273</sup> As a result, the call by Pope Urban II to European Christians to support a Crusade to the Holy Land to liberate Jerusalem began to gain momentum.

The Fatimids once again regained control of Jerusalem in 1098 only one year before the Latins, who were already battling their way through Asia Minor and North Syria, arrived in force. The caliph al-Mustali immediately began re-strengthening the walls that his own forces had broken down during their six-week siege of the city when it was held by the Seljuks. Focus was trained particularly on Mount Zion where a ditch was dug and possibly a forewall reconstructed. The Fatimids expelled the Christian residents from the city fearing insurrection upon the arrival of the Crusaders.

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<sup>273</sup> Kollek and Pearlman, 86.

### Literary Evidence Concerning the Cenacle from the Crusader Period

Four hundred and fifty years after the Greek Christians lost control of the Holy Land, the European Crusaders arrived in Palestine. Southern Mount Zion was described as being in ruins. French historian Bartolf of Nangis lamented that, “as one can see from the inside” of the Hagia Sion church, “it was splendidly built in ancient times, but it was destroyed by the treacherous Saracens.”<sup>274</sup> Raymond of Aguilers, a priest accompanying the crusaders and chronicling the event, found on Mount Zion “the following holy shrines: the tomb of King David and that of Solomon and the tomb of the protomartyr, the holy Stephen.”<sup>275</sup> A military camp was established between the ruins of the church and the city wall. One prong of the three-pronged Crusader attack on the city took place here after Raymond, Count of Toulouse, took three days to fill the ditches dug by the Fatimids with bundles of sticks, brush, and debris whereupon he laid against the wall one of the three siege machines constructed on site from materials brought in the nick of time by Genoese ships recently landed at Jaffa.<sup>276</sup> On July 15, 1099, after a two-month siege, 1,500 knights and 20,000 foot soldiers took Jerusalem.<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> *Gesta Francorum Expugnatium* 12, trans. John Wilkinson, et. al., 175.

<sup>275</sup> Raymond of Aguilers, *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem*, trans. in Pixner, *Paths*, 324.

<sup>276</sup> Archaeological evidence of the ditch on Mount Zion has yet to be found. According to Wightman, 247-8, “Given that along the south-western flank of the city the Fatimid and Crusader wall-lines ran several meters inside the Ottoman wall, the ditch will probably be found just north of, or even underneath, the Ottoman wall. Broshi’s excavations between Sion Gate and the south-western corner of the Old City have shown that the Ottoman wall is founded either on ruined remains of the 13<sup>th</sup>-century Ayyubid city wall, or on deep fills and debris layers. Curiously, these layers were found to be sloping down toward the south, a possible clue to the existence of the scarp of an underlying earth-cut ditch. The ditch probably extended from near the south-western corner of the Old City across to near the Ottoman Sion Gate.”

<sup>277</sup> Gray, 236.

Baldwin, Count of Edessa, was named the first Latin king of Jerusalem and originated a family dynasty of sorts. The Crusaders must have immediately set about fortifying the city, restoring the shrines, and converting the Muslim holy places, including those on the Temple mount, into Christian houses of worship. The writings resulting from the influx of pilgrims, however, fail to give more than a hint of the derelict state of the southern Zion church in the early twelfth century perhaps indicating how quickly repairs began. Work likely continued into the 1150s.<sup>278</sup>

Baldwin opened up a postern, or small, secondary gate, in the walls of southern Mount Zion called the New Gate of Belcayre. It was likely named after the region from which the men and women came who lived just inside the wall in their own residential area. As a reward for fighting along with the Crusaders, they were given this means of directly accessing the Abbey of the Church of Holy Sion.<sup>279</sup>

The British pilgrim Saewulf arrived in Jerusalem within three years of the Crusader conquest. He gave little indication of any destruction to the church on Zion.

The church on Mount Sion is outside the wall to the south, a bow-shot away. There the Apostles received . . . the Paraclete Spirit on the day of Pentecost . . . In that church is a chapel where blessed Mary died. On the other side of the church is a chapel in the place where the Lord Jesus Christ first appeared to his Apostles . . . There he had supper with his disciples before his passion and washed their feet, and there is still a marble table there on which he had supper. In that place are the relics of Saint Stephen, Nicodemus, Gamaliel and Abibo, which were honorably laid there by Saint John the Patriarch after they had been discovered.<sup>280</sup>

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<sup>278</sup> Pringle, *Corpus*, 285.

<sup>279</sup> For this see Wightman, 262. The only functioning gate nearby allowing access to Mount Zion was the “Sion” Gate stood over the old Nea Gate at the end of the *cardo maximus*.

<sup>280</sup> Saewulf, *Peregrinatio* 19, 21, trans. Wilkinson, et. al., 107-108.

It is possible that the “relics” indicated by Saewulf were the empty sarcophagi of the saints who once lay in state on Mount Zion. As discussed above, Stephen’s supposed remains were originally discovered in the fifth century at Kephart Gamala, about twenty miles from Jerusalem. Discovered along with the protomartyr’s bones at that time were also those of Gamaliel, Nicodemus, and Abibo.<sup>281</sup> Were those also brought to Mount Zion with Stephen when his remains were briefly interred there? If they were not, then the legends have likely become confused.

Tellingly, perhaps, Saewulf only describes seeing places where events attributed to the Cenacle took place. This may imply that it was the only part of the church in any state of repair. He does refer to a chapel where Mary had died; perhaps that had also survived or been repaired since the Crusader conquest. Within a few years of Saewulf’s arrival, Daniel, a pilgrim abbot from Russia, came to Mount Zion (1106-1108). He seems to indicate that the place commemorating the death of Mary was located in a crypt beneath the older structure.

Now Mount Sion is outside the city walls to the south of Jerusalem. And here on Mount Sion once stood the house of John the Theologian and in that place there was built a great square church and it is a short stone’s throw from the city wall to the church of Holy Sion. In this church on Sion there is a chamber behind the altar and in this chamber Christ washed the feet of his disciples. From this chamber, going south, you must climb a stairway to the Upper Room; this is a chamber, beautifully made, standing on pillars and with a roof, decorated with mosaic and beautifully paved and with an altar as in a church at the east end. And here was the room of John the Theologian in which Christ supped with his disciples . . . In the same place the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles at Pentecost. In this church on the south side there is another chamber, below on the ground floor, and it is low, and it was to this chamber that Christ came to his disciples when the doors were barred . . . Here too is the sacred stone brought from Mount Sinai by an angel. And on the other side of this church, to the west, low on the ground in

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<sup>281</sup> Abibo was supposedly the second son of Gamaliel, teacher of Paul. Tradition has it that he converted to Christianity but died at age 18.

the same way is another room, and in this room expired the Holy Mother of God. And all this happened in the house of John the Theologian.<sup>282</sup>

Daniel appears confused regarding the status of the “house” of John: initially he says that it “once stood,” then later seems to indicate its continued existence since he names several events currently being commemorated within it. Perhaps he meant to imply that the house was once that of John, not that it no longer existed. He located the “house,” the same word used earlier in the *Vita Constantin*, south of the altar. Except for the footwashing, which Daniel locates behind the altar in a special chamber (diaconicon?), the events he reports were all traditionally commemorated in the Cenacle. Here, the Cenacle is described as a two-story structure which has been beautifully redecorated by Crusader artisans.

Financial support for the construction of a new cathedral may have been provided by Queen Melisende (1131-1161) of Jerusalem, a patron of the arts who gave lavishly to the church.<sup>283</sup> She also founded, and continued to richly support, a convent in Bethany.<sup>284</sup> The cathedral’s builders might have used stones from the destroyed Byzantine basilica as well as remains from Eudocia’s wall as construction material. Writing about repairs made to the church, the Jewish pilgrim, Benjamin of Tudela, remarked how, when “one of the walls of the place of worship on Mount Sion fell down . . . the patriarch commanded the priest to repair it. He ordered stones to be taken from the original wall of Sion for that

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<sup>282</sup> *The Life and Journey of Daniel, Abbot of the Russian Land* 40-41, trans. Wilkinson, et. al., *Pilgrimage*, 141-142.

<sup>283</sup> “Epistolae: Medieval Women’s Latin Letters,” <http://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/woman/30.html> (accessed January 21, 2015).

<sup>284</sup> Debra Barrett-Graves, “Melisende, Queen of Jerusalem,” in *Extraordinary Women of the Medieval and Renaissance World: A Biographical Dictionary*, ed. Carole Levin, et. al. (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 2000), 210; Jennifer Edie, “Melisende: A True Queen.” Online: <http://www.loyno.edu/~history/journal/1998-9/Edie.htm> (accessed January 21, 2015).

purpose, and twenty workmen were hired at stated wages, who broke stones from the very foundation of the walls of Sion.”<sup>285</sup> He further witnessed how the “Nazarenes” despoiled Jewish cemeteries in the area, “Some of the sepulchers had stones with inscriptions upon them, but the Christians destroy these monuments, and use the stones in building their houses.”<sup>286</sup>

The finished structure measured 72 by 36 meters, 11 meters longer than Hagia Sion and standing in its footprint. The cathedral became the second largest church in Jerusalem and featured a central nave with two side aisles. Defenses were built around the church for protection as it lay outside the city walls.

The Crusaders rededicated the church as Sancta Maria in Monte Sion in order to commemorate the death of Jesus’s mother, honoring the tradition that she had died on that very spot. To honor the new Latin church, it was chosen by Pope Innocent II in 1141 to host an ecumenical council.<sup>287</sup> An anonymous pilgrim left a record of what it looked like soon after, ca. 1145.

A beauteous church has been built in honor of the Blessed Mary. In it she passed away . . . On the left-hand side of this church there is a chapel on the place where was the judgment hall and judgment of Christ; on the right-hand side is Galilee, where the Lord appeared to Simon and the women . . . Above [second floor], near the choir, is the place where the Holy Ghost came down upon the Apostles, and in that same church there is the table whereon Christ supped . . . Below is the place where He washed the disciples’ feet, and there is the basin which held the water . . . On the left-hand side [of the main church] is St. Stephen’s altar, on the place where he was buried.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>285</sup> Benjamin of Tudela, *Masa’ot Binyamin*, trans. Thomas Wright, *Early Travels in Palestine* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1848), 84.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid.

<sup>287</sup> Pringle, *Corpus*, 264.

<sup>288</sup> Anonymous VII, *Descriptio Terrae Sanctae*, trans. Aubrey Stewart, *Anonymous Pilgrims I-VIII* (London: Palestine Pilgrims’ Text Society, 1894), 6:72.

Here, the Cenacle structure is described as an upper room “near the choir” situated above “Galilee.” This is not the first time that a place called “Galilee” was mentioned in association with the site. A Latin guide to the holy sites, written prior to 1114, also refers to “Galilee” where, “after the resurrection, Christ appeared to his disciples.”<sup>289</sup> This is likely the name given to the low, vaulted space below the upper room in which Christ’s appearance to Thomas was remembered.<sup>290</sup>

Rooms adjacent to the new church were found to be suitable quarters for King Louis VII of France when, in 1148-49, he appears to have lodged there before leaving Jerusalem after his participation in the second Crusade.<sup>291</sup> A few years later, Muslim cartographer Muhammad al-Idrisi, employed by Roger II of Sicily, described the area in a passage possibly influenced by an Arabic Christian guidebook.<sup>292</sup> He wrote that “the Church of Sion . . . is a beautiful church, and fortified. In it is the guest-chamber wherein the Lord messiah ate with the disciples, and the table is there remaining even unto the present day.”<sup>293</sup> The monk, Belard of Ascoli, in about 1155, characterized the Crusader church on Mount Zion as a “citadel,” no doubt influenced by its defense works. He noted that the “Upper Room is at the top of the Citadel, next to the wall, and this Upper Room

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<sup>289</sup> *On the Site of Jerusalem, and of the Holy Places Inside the City or Round It* 5, trans. Wilkinson, et. al., 178.

<sup>290</sup> Pringle, *Corpus*, 285. It was so-named in order to reconcile gospel accounts in which Jesus appeared to his disciples after his death in Galilee rather than Jerusalem.

<sup>291</sup> Pringle, *Corpus*, 285.

<sup>292</sup> Whalen, 276.

<sup>293</sup> Muhammad al-Idrisi (ca. 1154 C.E.), *Opus Geographicum* 34, trans. John Wilkinson, et. al., 226.

was a large paved place, in which the supper was held and in which Christ appeared to the disciples when the doors had been shut.”<sup>294</sup>

An anonymous guidebook, written in 1160, offers a description of this “beautiful church.”

To the left of that is the chapel in the place where the Praetorium had been, and Christ was judged. And on the left side is Galilee, where the Lord appeared to Simon and the women. Above, next to the choir, is where the Holy Spirit descended on the apostles, and in the same church of the table on which Christ supped . . . And lower down is the place where he washed the disciples’ feet, and the basin is there which contained the water. In that place stood Jesus . . . and there Thomas touched the Lord’s side. On the left side is the altar of Saint Stephen, where he was buried.<sup>295</sup>

The fifth Crusader king in succession, Amaury (or Amalric), Count of Jaffa and Ashkelon, enthroned in 1163, has been credited for renovations to the upper room of the Cenacle with booty he had amassed from an earlier invasion of Egypt.<sup>296</sup> John Würzburg, a German pilgrim who traveled to Jerusalem between the years 1160 and 1170, presents a very detailed description of the upper room as well as other edifices on this part of Mount Zion.

This Upper Room was found on Mount Sion . . . This Upper Room on the upper floor is large and spacious, spacious enough to contain the mysterious Supper of the Lord with his disciples . . . When the supper had taken place on the upper floor of this house, it is suitable that . . . Our Lord should use the lower floor of the house . . . in washing the disciples’ feet . . . But it is worth noting that the description of the event in the Church of Mount Sion also hints at different places. For in the left part of this church on the upper floor is a painting of the supper, and in the lower part, that is to say in the crypt, is shown a picture of the washing of the feet of the disciples . . . On Mount Sion Christ appeared to his disciples, and hence these verses are found inscribed on the west wall of the church:

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<sup>294</sup> Belard of Ascoli, *Descriptio Terrae Sanctae* 1, trans. Wilkinson, et. al., *Pilgrimage*, 228.

<sup>295</sup> *Seventh Guide* 103-104, trans. Wilkinson, et. al., *Pilgrimage*, 235.

<sup>296</sup> Montefiore, 249.

Christ, once he'd risen, did appear  
 To Galilee's disciples here.  
 Because of this, as you can see  
 This place is called 'The Galilee.'

Illustrations of these [resurrection] appearances being made are in a place on Mount Sion, in a crypt of the main church, where our Lord has also been painted washing the feet of his disciples, and with a clear description of both events . . . The disciples were assembled in the building we have described on Mount Sion . . . In this place there is still a mosaic picture in the sanctuary, in the apse of the Church, which displays this fact. For there are the Apostles, who numbered twelve, and there are pictures of each of them. And the picture contains also a likeness of the Holy Spirit coming down on them in the form of tongues of fire on each of their heads.<sup>297</sup>

John is the first to describe the elaborate paintings and mosaics installed by the Crusader craftsmen in the church. He differentiates the paintings of the Last Supper and the footwashing in the Cenacle area from the mosaics in the sanctuary behind the main altar of the cathedral that depicted the apostles and the descent of the Holy Spirit.

Heinrich Renard argues that by "left" John meant the eastern part of the church.<sup>298</sup>

John's contemporary, the German monk Theoderich, made use of John's work in his own travelogue for descriptions of places he had not actually seen.<sup>299</sup> Fortunately, however, he was an eyewitness to the situation on southern Mount Zion. In fact, Theoderich gives a highly detailed account of the site.

Most of Mount Sion is situated outside the walls of the city on the south side of it. It contains the Church joined to our Lady Saint Mary, which is well defended by walls, towers and bulwarks against the attacks of the Gentiles. This is a church in which there are religious clergy serving God under a Provost. As soon as you enter this you find to the left of the main apse a venerable place decorated with

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<sup>297</sup> John of Würzburg, *Descriptio Locorum Terrae Sanctae* 135-136, 147, 157, trans. Wilkinson, et. al., *Pilgrimage*, 254-255, 261, 266.

<sup>298</sup> Renard, 10.

<sup>299</sup> In fact, it may have been to Theoderich that John's book was dedicated. See Wilkinson, et. al., 22.

marble outside and mosaic within, in which our Lord Jesus Christ transferred to heaven the soul of his beloved Mother . . . The structure is square at the bottom and on top it bears a round ciborium.<sup>300</sup> On the right you go up almost thirty steps to the Upper Room, which is located beyond the apse. A table is to be seen there on which our Lord supped . . . In the Upper Room to the south, more than thirty paces away, is an altar where the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples. From here you go down by as many steps as you came up to this place, and in a chapel below the Upper Room is a stone niche in the wall, where our Savior washed the feet of his Apostles. On the right of that an altar stands in the place where Thomas touched the side of Christ . . . From this one goes through a passage round the sanctuary of the church, and to the left of it there is a venerable altar, under which there is no doubt that the body of Blessed Stephen the Protomartyr was buried by John, Bishop of Jerusalem . . . In front of the Choir a precious marble column is placed near the wall, which simple-minded people have a custom of walking round.<sup>301</sup>

Theoderich describes a church joined to that of Sancta Maria. This could be a metaphorical joining but probably implies two structures. The Cenacle was to the right (south) of the central apse as it should be. The place of the footwashing was clearly in the lower floor beneath the room commemorating the Last Supper. Leaving that lower room, one seems to have crossed behind the main altar of the basilica, around a sort of chancel ambulatory according to Renard, to a place in the north part of the church where there was a little shrine to Stephen.<sup>302</sup> The column of scourging has been placed before the altar in the choir/chancel. Most important is Theoderich's mention of the niche in the first floor chapel which he claimed was being used to commemorate the place where Christ washed the feet of the apostles. Later, commemoration of this event would be relocated directly beneath the Last Supper room next to the tomb of David. Is Theoderich describing the niche which can be seen in the first-floor of the Cenacle, an area now

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<sup>300</sup> A canopy that sits atop supporting columns.

<sup>301</sup> Theoderich, *Libellus de Locis Sanctis* 29-30, trans. Wilkinson, et. al., *Pilgrimage*, 297-298.

<sup>302</sup> Renard, 11.

referred to as the Tomb of David? Perhaps the commemoration echoes the memory of some other water-related activity practiced in this room: the rite of baptism.

An anonymous guide to Jerusalem, contemporaneous with Theoderich, places the “washing of the feet of the disciples . . . in front of the doors of that which is called ‘The Holy Spirit.’ To the south is the place called ‘Galilee’. . . On the opposite side, to the north, is the place where Saint Mary died . . . On the end of this side, to the east, is an altar under which Saint Stephen, Gamaliel, Abibas, and Nicodemus are buried.”<sup>303</sup> Here, another reference to “Galilee” is coupled with an indication that the burial places are (presumed to be) beneath the main church and commemorated with an altar above.

In his history of the Crusades, William, archbishop of Tyre, also mentions a niche in the Cenacle and assigned to it the same purpose although it appears to be on the second floor.

Higher than the choir of the church [on Mount Zion] stood an altar, at the place where the Savior shared the Last Supper with his Apostles. Above this is a niche in which stood the stone in which was the water that the Savior used to wash his disciples’ feet, where he appeared to them and said, “Peace be with you.”<sup>304</sup>

William does not say the feet of the disciples were washed in the niche, only that the water came from there.

A twelfth-century report composed by the Cretan pilgrim and former Byzantine soldier, John Phocas, who visited the Holy Land in 1185, demonstrates his eye for architectural detail.

Holy Sion is in front of the Holy City, lying on its right. The outer boundary of the city is as follows. There is a fortified area containing Holy Sion, the Mother of

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<sup>303</sup> *Second Guide* (ca. 1170 C.E.) 121-122, trans. Wilkinson, et. al., *Pilgrimage*, 239-240.

<sup>304</sup> William of Tyre, *Le Continueur Anonyme de Guillaume de Tyr (dit de Rothelin)* 10, trans. provided by the author.

All the Churches. This church is very large, and has a barrel-vaulted roof. Entering its beautiful gates there is on the left the House of Saint John the Theologian, in which the Most Holy Virgin stayed after the resurrection, and where she fell asleep. And in that place there is a chamber fenced in with iron rails, and at the place where the Most Holy gave up her spirit to her Son and God there are two houses. To the right of this church and on the right of the sanctuary is the Upper Room, to which there is a staircase of sixty-one steps. This church has four domed vaults [possibly a groin vault]. And in the left part of the Upper Room one sees the place where the Lord's Supper was held. In the apse of the bema [raised platform] is the Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles. And beneath this church the Washing took place. Opposite is the church at which stood the House into which Christ came to the Apostles when the doors had been locked. In this the Protomartyr Stephen was buried after he had been stoned, and was transferred to another place next to Gamaliel.<sup>305</sup>

The gates were part of the fortifications within which were a number of structures.

John describes the Cenacle as separate and to the right (south) of the sanctuary. He calls the Cenacle a church on the upper floor of which is an apse with a bema, or raised platform. On the lower floor John locates the burial of Stephen but adds (correctly) that his body had been moved to another place (the Church of St. Stephen) where he was buried next to Gamaliel. He, too, places the area commemorating the footwashing beneath the chapel of the Holy Spirit, that is, in the location of the present Tomb of David.

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<sup>305</sup> John Phocas, *Ekphrasis* 14.5-12, trans. Wilkinson, et. al., 323-324.

### Literary Evidence Concerning the Cenacle from the Mamluk Period

In 1187, the Kurdish mercenary Saladin (Salah al-Din Yusuf el-Ayyub), who had declared himself Sultan of Egypt, defeated the Crusader armies led by King Guy at the Horns of Hattin near Tiberias in Galilee. Upon Saladin's arrival in Jerusalem, Syrian-Christian inhabitants, enemies of the Latins, opened the gates for him. The sultan made his primary goal the expulsion of the infidel from the Holy Land. Shortly, Latin Christianity would be eradicated from the city.<sup>306</sup>

Saladin began desecrating the Christian churches, converting them into mosques and removing crosses, bells, and other Christian symbols from the city.<sup>307</sup> He destroyed some churches outside the walls and occupied others. His brother al-Malik al-'Adil made his residence in the Church of St. Mary on Zion. Canon Richard of London described the situation in 1192.

We went to the church on Mount Sion . . . went on to see the most holy table at which Christ deigned to sup. Quickly kissing this, we departed in a group without delay. It was not safe to enter there except in groups because of the treachery of that profane people. If the Turks find pilgrims wandering around, three here, four there, they drag them off into the inside of crypts and strangle them.<sup>308</sup>

Also in 1192, hearing of a new Crusade gathering in Europe to overthrow him, Saladin took fifty stonemasons and two thousand Frankish prisoners and used them to

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<sup>306</sup> Montefiore, 264.

<sup>307</sup> Ben-Dov, 214. See also Oded Peri, "Islamic Law and Christian Holy Sites: Jerusalem and its Vicinity in Early Ottoman Times," *Islamic Law and Society* 6, no. 1 (1999): 98.

<sup>308</sup> F. E. Peters, *Jerusalem: The Holy City in the Eyes of Chroniclers, Visitors, Pilgrims, and Prophets from the Days of Abraham to the Beginnings of Modern Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 361.

extend his fortifications and rebuild the walls around southern Mount Zion.<sup>309</sup> For this purpose he may have demolished the Crusader church in order to acquire the necessary materials.<sup>310</sup>

Some part of the church seems to have been left standing, however. It was seen from a distance by Wilbrand of Oldenburg, later archbishop of Utrecht, between 1211 and 1212, who also testifies to the new walls. “At the present time,” he writes, “[the church] is enclosed by the walls of the city.”<sup>311</sup> Wilbrand did not visit Mount Zion; he was forced to view it from the Mount of Olives. But he passed on information he gathered while there.

On [Zion’s] summit . . . there is a certain monastery, spacious and beautiful to behold, in which there also live Syrians, paying tribute to the Saracens. They show to the pilgrims who come there the place where the Lord dined with His disciples, the table on which the same Jesus Christ bequeathed the celebration of the mysteries . . . and the basin or bowl in which the Lord washed the feet of His disciples.<sup>312</sup>

The German chronicler Thietmar of Meresburg, in 1217, also saw part of the church still standing. The early thirteenth-century *Chronicle* by Ernoul lamented that, on Mount Zion, “there is only an abbey (or, ‘a church and an abbey of monks’) there, and in

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<sup>309</sup> Wilbrand gives evidence of the new walls (see below) as does the thirteenth-century Damascene historian Abu Shama. The *City of Jerusalem (La Citez de Jherusalem)*, however, notes that “these two abbeys [of Mount Sion are] outside the walls of the city . . . they abbey of Mount Sion is on the right, towards the south.” Wightman, 274, suggests that either the City refers to the period before Saladin or the first three decades of the thirteenth century when the wall was abandoned and perhaps destroyed.

<sup>310</sup> Carl Mommert, “Die Dormitio und das deutsche Grundstück auf dem traditionellen Zion,” in *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palaestina-Vereins*, vol. 21, ed. Immanuel Benzinger (Leipzig: K. Baedeker, 1898), 175, also offers as possible dates for the utter destruction of the Crusader cathedral: 1209 under the sultanate of Al-Adil I (Saphadin) or, better, 1244 during the invasion of Jerusalem by the Khwarazmians. Renard, 9, also blamed the Khwarazmians.

<sup>311</sup> Wilbrand of Oldenburg, *Peregrinatio*, trans. Denys Pringle, *Pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the Holy Land, 1187-1291* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 88.

<sup>312</sup> Wilbrand, *Peregrinatio*, trans. Pringle, *Pilgrimage*, 92.

that abbey there is a church of my lady Saint Mary.”<sup>313</sup> The church that he refers to was probably the Cenacle now attached to an abbey on the south. The abbey, according to Ernoul, was “outside the walls of the city . . . to the right of the city, to the south.”<sup>314</sup>

Denys Pringle speculates that the Cenacle may have been preserved by the Muslim rulers due to its association with the tomb of David.<sup>315</sup>

The Damascene sultan, al-Mu‘azzam ‘Isa, further restored the city walls in 1212. At that time he replaced the earlier “Sion” Gate of the Byzantines and Fatimids, located to the east side of the Roman cardo, with a “much larger gate-tower at the end of the Cardo.”<sup>316</sup> The gate and the city’s walls were torn down seven years later by al-Mu‘azzam who considered them too advantageous to Crusader siege works should the Europeans ever return.<sup>317</sup> He worried that “if the Franks took [Jerusalem], they would kill everyone there and dominate Syria.”<sup>318</sup> Contemporary Muslim historian Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad Ibn Wasil writes about the destruction.

‘Al-Malik al-Mu‘azzam sharf al-Din ‘Isa b. al-Malik al-‘Adil, ruler of Damascus, feared lest great Frank forces arrive by sea upon hearing of the strength of their comrades and of their success within Egypt [the Latins were at war with al-Malik al-Kamil in Egypt] . . . that then they would turn toward Jerusalem (for it was now fortified), and that they would gain control over it and he would not be able later to wrest it from their hands. Then he (‘al-Malik al-Mu‘azzam) began to dismantle the towers of Jerusalem and its walls which were of the mightiest and most powerful. And Jerusalem, since it had been wrested from the Franks by al-Malik al-Nasr Salah al-Din [Saladin], stood built, and every one of its towers was

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<sup>313</sup> Ernoul’s *Chronicle* 17.1, trans. Pringle, *Pilgrimage*, 151.

<sup>314</sup> Ibid.

<sup>315</sup> Pringle, *Corpus*, 268.

<sup>316</sup> Wightman, 296.

<sup>317</sup> Broshi, “Along Jerusalem’s Walls,” *Biblical Archaeologist* 40 (1977):13.

<sup>318</sup> Montefiore, 277.

planned as a fortress. And he gathered the masons and sappers and undermined the walls and its towers, and destroyed them – except David’s Tower, which he left. And when the walls were destroyed, most of the inhabitants left, for there had lived within [the city] an innumerable population and now but a few people remained.<sup>319</sup>

A contemporaneous French pilgrim guide confirmed that the Crusader cathedral on Mount Zion had, in fact, been demolished.<sup>320</sup> At least two additional pilgrim itineraries from this time also attest to the destruction of the church.<sup>321</sup> From these accounts, it appears that the Cenacle was still standing, however, and perhaps part of the east end of the main church remained recognizable.<sup>322</sup> Al-Mu‘azzam, in 1227, ordered the further demolition of Jerusalem’s fortifications, perhaps this time focusing on the Citadel.<sup>323</sup>

Al-Malik al-Kamil of Egypt took Jerusalem after his brother Mu‘azzam died in 1228. Also at that time, just as Mu‘azzam had feared, a Crusader fleet departed Italy under the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II prompting al-Kamil to cede Jerusalem (sans the Temple Mount) to the Christians who, according to the terms of the Treaty of Jaffa, would occupy it for ten years.<sup>324</sup> Al-Kamil defended the accord claiming that he was only handing over “some churches and some ruined houses.”<sup>325</sup> Meir Ben-Dov suggests that

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<sup>319</sup> Ibn Wasl, *Mufarij el-Kurub* 4.32, trans. in Broshi, “Walls,” 14.

<sup>320</sup> *The Holy Pilgrimages* 14, trans. Pringle, *Pilgrimage*, 170. This is also the period Pringle assigns to the destruction of the Crusader cathedral (*Pilgrimage*, 34; see also *idem*, *Corpus*, 268).

<sup>321</sup> *The Ways and Pilgrimages of the Holy Land* (texts A and B) 11; Anon. IX and X.

<sup>322</sup> Pringle, *Corpus*, 268.

<sup>323</sup> Wightman, 283.

<sup>324</sup> According to Wightman, 283, the terms of the treaty, “more in the nature of a private agreement between Frederick and al-Kamil,” were never made public.

<sup>325</sup> Adrian J. Boas, *Jerusalem in the Time of the Crusades: Society, landscape and art in the Holy*

during this period the Latins restored the walls on Mount Zion.<sup>326</sup> However Magen Broshi argues that “the walls of Jerusalem lay in ruins until the Turkish Sultan Seleiman the Magnificent [1520-1566] rebuilt them.”<sup>327</sup> In 1488, Italian rabbi Obadiah ben Abraham of Bertinoro, Italy, confirmed that “the greater part of Jerusalem is destroyed and desolated, not to mention that it has no walls.”<sup>328</sup>

At the end of the decade-long arrangement in which the Mount Zion cathedral may have been at least partially repaired, the son of Mu’azzam, al-Nasir al-Da’ud of Damascus, recaptured Jerusalem following an ad hoc invasion by thousands of Palestinian Arabs who forced the Christian inhabitants to take refuge in the Citadel, now commanded by the Teutonic Knights.<sup>329</sup> Frankish soldiers rescued them but al-Nasir forced the Knights’ surrender in 1240 after a 27-day siege and proceeded to destroy the new fortifications of the Citadel. He held the city for a year but political alliances required that he cede Jerusalem once again to the Franks, now engaged in their seventh crusade led by Theobald IV.<sup>330</sup> But that victory would be short lived.

In 1244, Turkish Khwarazmians, Mamluk Turks who had been pushed out of the Khwarazm region of Persia by invading Monguls, allied with as-Salih Ayyub, former sultan of Damascus and enemy of al-Nasir al-Da’ud, and temporarily overran Jerusalem

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*City under Frankish rule* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 19.

<sup>326</sup> Ben-Dov, 235.

<sup>327</sup> Broshi, “Walls,” 14.

<sup>328</sup> Quote from Broshi, “Walls,” 14. Obadiah’s travel descriptions can be found in his letters, a collection of which was first published by S. Sachs in the *Jahrbuch für Geschichte der Juden* (1863) 3:195-224.

<sup>329</sup> Wightman, 285.

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*, 286.

rampaging through the city.<sup>331</sup> Most of the Latin clergy as well as the Greek Orthodox patriarch were slain.<sup>332</sup> The Citadel was razed to the ground.<sup>333</sup> As-Salih Ayyub attempted to rebuild Saladin's walls especially those around Mount Zion.

Turkish slaves, or Mamluks, revolted against as-Salih Ayyub's successor and began their own dynasty in Cairo, "ruling the Muslim world from 1250-1517."<sup>334</sup> Mamluk sultan Baibars took control of Jerusalem in 1263 and may have begun to once again fortify the walls of the city. In any event, order was restored for a time.<sup>335</sup> Dozens of Muslim religious buildings were erected and many Christian buildings were appropriated for Muslim use, whether in ruins or not. By 1310, the Citadel was completely rebuilt.<sup>336</sup> The walls eventually fell into ruin, however. Oded Peri writes, "When the Ottomans arrived in Jerusalem [in 1516] after 250 years of Mamluk rule, not much of its Christian past and character remained."<sup>337</sup>

Perdiccas, a pilgrim from Greece, braved the new conditions under the Mamluks and managed to see part of the Cenacle.<sup>338</sup> Rabbi Moses ben Nahman (Nahmanides) arrived in Jerusalem in 1267 from Spain. He recorded the number of surviving Christians

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<sup>331</sup> Ibid., 230; Boas, 20. Mamluk ("slave") is an Arabic word that refers to the slaves of Turkish or Caucasian extraction who were purchased in Asia and trained by the Ayyubids for military service.

<sup>332</sup> Pringle, *Pilgrimage*, 7.

<sup>333</sup> Wightman, 286.

<sup>334</sup> Ibid., 287.

<sup>335</sup> Ben-Dov, 226.

<sup>336</sup> Wightman, 287.

<sup>337</sup> Peri, 99.

<sup>338</sup> Abela, J., E. Alliata, and E. Bermejo, Franciscan Cyberspot, "Christian Mount Sion: Site of the Last Supper, institution of the Eucharist and the gift of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost" <http://198.62.75.4/www1/ofm/san/TSSion003.html> (accessed August 20, 2013).

(three hundred) and Jews (two) that he could find still living in the city.<sup>339</sup> Nahmanides managed to also find and inhabit “a broken down house built with marble columns and a handsome dome” on Mount Zion, said to have once been a wing of a Crusader monastery and church, which he converted into a synagogue.<sup>340</sup>

A German Dominican priest named, interestingly enough, Burchard of Mount Zion, resided in Jerusalem in 1283.<sup>341</sup> He left one of the most detailed accounts of the Holy Land including a description of its principal city. Burchard wrote that “the whole of the ancient city together with Mount Sion remains inside the walls and is inhabited; but at this time there are very few inhabitants for a city of such size, because its inhabitants are almost continually fearful.”<sup>342</sup> The reference to the walls may mean either the defensive wall built around the church complex or the broken remains of Eudocia’s old walls around southern Mount Zion. A map included with Burchard’s published account shows walls approximating those of Eudocia in full or partial repair (plate 13). Burchard recalled the traditions associated with the Mount Zion church and wrote of the “great upper room,” indicating that it yet survived. The Dominican friar Riccoldo of Monte Croce, writing in 1288-89, gave a detailed description of the church in his pilgrimage journal confirming that fact.

We found the place where the Cenacle stood, it being largely demolished. In that place was built an enormous church, which contained on one side the chamber or place where the Blessed Virgin lived . . . On the other side, in terms of length, it

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<sup>339</sup> Montefiore, 290.

<sup>340</sup> Ben-Dov, 226; Montefiore, 291.

<sup>341</sup> Jonathan Rubin, “Burchard of Mount Sion’s *Descriptio Terrae Sanctae*: A Newly Discovered Extended Version,” *Crusades*, vol. 13, ed. Benjamin Z. Kedar, et. al. (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 181.

<sup>342</sup> Burchard of Mount Sion, *Descriptio Terrae Sanctae* 8, trans. Pringle, *Pilgrimage*, 288.

contains the place where Christ dined with His disciples . . . Below in the same place is the house where the disciples were gathered together in the evening on account of their fear of the Jews . . . There is an altar there, where we celebrated and preached, crying and weeping and fearing dreadfully to be killed by the Saracens.”<sup>343</sup>

Riccoldo’s phrasing leaves open the question of whether it was “the place where the Cenacle stood,” i.e. the area in general, that was largely demolished or the Cenacle itself. From further comments it appears the former is more likely. He describes the first floor where “the disciples gathered together” beneath the upper floor “where Christ dined with his disciples.” Both floors were therefore intact.

In a letter written after 1291, Riccoldo laments the fate of southern Mount Zion and provides a bit more description.

In the holy city of Jerusalem I found shamefully made into a stable by the Saracens that great and most holy church on Mount Sion . . . And behold! the whole abandoned place sighs without inhabitants, except that the Saracens have left unharmed the very lofty building over the place where the Apostles of your most Holy Son received the Holy Spirit, and in the same place they have their law proclaimed day and night, the hymn of the perfidious Muhammad, that is to say the Qur’an.<sup>344</sup>

Riccoldo confirms that the Cenacle was “left unharmed.”

The Mamluks were driven out of Jerusalem temporarily in 1299 when ten thousand Mongols led by Hulagu, the grandson of Genghis Khan, stormed the city. The Mongols departed after only a couple of weeks, however, and the Mamluks returned.

Around 1306-12, an anonymous disciple of Nahmanides visited Mount Zion.

Above the Siloam spring on the mount there is the fortress of Zion and there are the Tombs of the Kings and there is an old building which they call the Hall of David, oriented toward the Temple. There they light candles for the sanctity of the

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<sup>343</sup> Riccoldo of Monte Croce, *Liber Peregrinationis*, trans. Pringle, *Pilgrimage*, 366.

<sup>344</sup> Riccoldo, *Epistolae* 2, trans. Pringle, *Pilgrimage*, 366; from the edition by Röhrich (273-4) and French translation by Kappler (222).

site. It is said that this is the building of David, the place where there had been the Ark of the Lord when David brought it to his house till the Temple was built.<sup>345</sup>

Note that the writer believes that the building is oriented toward the Temple. The Cenacle clearly is not. Perhaps the pilgrim was referring to the mis-named Citadel of David on northern Mount Zion.

Meanwhile, in Cairo, al-Nasir Muhammad had been declared sultan. He arrived in Jerusalem in 1317 to begin overseeing the restoration of the Islamic holy places, especially those on the Temple Mount. Shortly afterward, in 1320, Franciscan friar Odoric of Pordenone, Italy, visited the southwestern hill and tells of a stone vessel, in the lower chapel beneath that of the Holy Spirit, from which Jesus was believed to have drawn water to wash the disciples' feet once again confirming the water rite commemorated on this floor.<sup>346</sup>

In 1335, Robert II of Savoy, King of Naples, working with Franciscan friar Roger Guerin, arranged to purchase property on southern Mount Zion from the Egyptian sultan. A Sicilian noblewoman then living in Jerusalem named Margherita, on good relations with Sultan Melek al-Nasir Mohammad, paid 1,000 gold denarii for the property which was then sold to Guerin in at least two lots for a total of 1,800 denarii.<sup>347</sup> Along with the

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<sup>345</sup> Hirschberg, 117.

<sup>346</sup> No. 767 in Donatus Baldi, *Enchiridion Locorum Sanctorum* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Press, 1982), 503-4.

<sup>347</sup> The Franciscan *Chronicon 24 Generalium* records Roger's involvement: "In the year of the Lord 1332 and 1333 this same General, upon the request of the lord Zacharias, archbishop of Saint Thaddeus in Armenia, sent many friars from the Province of Aquitaine and from other parts of the Order to go and convert the Armenian subjects of greater Armenia and other unbelievers; he also wanted to preserve their unity with the holy Roman Church. Among these friars there was brother Roger Guérin, who came from the aforementioned Province. He went to the Holy Land and obtained from the Sultan of Egypt the sacred place of mount Zion, where there is the large upper room or Coenaculum, where the Lord ate His Supper with his disciples, and also the sacred place where the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost under the form of flames of fire. In that place he built a friary for the brothers; from

Cenacle (less the lower tomb of David), the Franciscans obtained the friary and some ruined vaulted buildings immediately south of the church.<sup>348</sup> These must have once stood within the defensive walls of the Mount Zion church complex. At some point following, they made repairs to the upper room, strengthening it with “a gothic serrated roof.”<sup>349</sup> By 1335, James of Verona, an Augustinian priest visiting Mount Zion, was able to celebrate mass in upper floor of the Cenacle itself.<sup>350</sup> The friars, led by a priest chosen to serve as Guardian of Mount Zion, began to officiate over the Christian churches and monasteries throughout Jerusalem and Bethlehem. His job included assisting pilgrims with tours and lodging.

The situation from 1336 to 1341 is captured by the German pilgrim Ludolph von Suchem (Ludoph of Sudheim) who wrote that “upon this Mount Sion . . . there once was built an exceeding fair monastery called the Convent of St. Mary.”<sup>351</sup> After reciting a litany of the holy places within the Cenacle, including the sepulchers of David, Solomon “and the other kings of Judah . . . which may be seen at this day,” von Suchem writes that, in the nearby “monastery there now dwell Minorite [i.e., Franciscan] brethren, who . . . publicly and devoutly hold Divine service, except that they are not allowed to preach publicly to Saracens, and they bury their dead without the knowledge of the officers of

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that moment to this very day our friars live in that place and in the Holy Sepulchre” trans. Noel Muscat, *Arnard of Sarrant: Chronicle of the Twenty-Four Generals of the Order of Friars Minor* (1369-1374) (Malta: TAU Franciscan Communications, 2010), 684-5.

<sup>348</sup> Pringle, *Corpus*, 269.

<sup>349</sup> Pixner, *Paths*, 358; Abela, n.p.

<sup>350</sup> Jacob of Verona, *Liber peregrinationis* 1. No. 770 in Baldi, 505.

<sup>351</sup> *Ludolph von Suchem's Description of the Holy Land and of the Way Thither*, trans. Aubrey Stewart, *PPTS*, 12:101.

the city.”<sup>352</sup> A guidebook to Palestine, published in 1350, also suggests that the kings of Jerusalem were laid “under the church,” perhaps in an inaccessible area that made it subject to various legends as to just who was buried there.<sup>353</sup>

Also in 1350, Sir Jean de Mandeville described southern “Mount Zion, where there is a fair church of our Lady,” actually only the Cenacle.<sup>354</sup>

At the entrance of Mount Sion is a chapel in which is the great stone with which the sepulchre was covered . . . There also, in a wall beside the gate, is a stone of the pillar at which our Lord was scourged . . . And under that chapel, by a descent of thirty-two steps, is the place where our Lord washed his disciples’ feet, and the vessel which contained the water is still preserved; and there, beside that same vessel, was St. Stephen buried . . . In the same church, beside the altar, were all the apostles on Whitsunday, when the Holy Ghost descended on them in the likeness of fire. Mount Sion is within the city . . . at the foot of Mount Sion is a fair and strong castle made by the sultan.<sup>355</sup>

Franciscan father Nicholas of Poggibonsi, Italy, visited Mount Zion in 1350. His gloomy report is very thorough.

We entered into the square, where the church of Mount Sion used to be . . . but now they are all destroyed, such that all that remains is the apse; it is a great shame to think how holy places should remain open to the sky . . . To the south-east, there is a piece of enclosure wall, made of dry stone, and there is there a stone, like an altar, and it is white. In that place the glorious Virgin Mary passed from this world . . . the stone stands three feet above the ground . . . Standing in front of the apse of the church, which is destroyed, four paces from the wall where the Friars Minor are, there is a large stone in the ground . . . and there St. James the Less was made bishop of Jerusalem . . . To the left at the head of a drystone wall, and there is there a stone; and there St. Stephen was buried.<sup>356</sup>

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<sup>352</sup> Von Suchem, trans. Stewart, *PPTS*, 12:102.

<sup>353</sup> *Account of the Holy Land* 63, trans. J. H. Bernard, *Guide-Book to Palestine* (London: Palestine Pilgrims’ Text Society, 1894), 13. See the excavations of Pierotti and Merrill summarized in chapter nine.

<sup>354</sup> John Mandeville, *Le Livre de Messire Jehan de Mandeville*, trans. Thomas Wright, *Early Travels in Palestine* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1848), 173.

<sup>355</sup> *Ibid.*, 174.

<sup>356</sup> Nicholas of Poggibonsi, *Libro d’Oltramare*, Pringle, *Corpus*, 269.

The “dismal square” is likely the church complex once surrounded by the “enclosure wall.” Only stones mark the spots where dedicated chapels and independent structures once stood.

Nicholas described the state of the southeast part of the church, where the upper room was to be found. Interpretations as to the possible meaning of his locational cues are given in brackets.

I saw from below . . . that the church was built above a vault [the Tomb of David]. On entering into the said vault [of the Last Supper room], to the left I found another vault [chapel of the Holy Spirit], higher than the first, and this is the most ancient work that there is in Jerusalem . . . Now see, above the said vault [Tomb of David], a church was made for the Christians, all pictured with mosaic work; but now it is destroyed, such that there is no more than an apse, with a window facing southeast; and in the window there is a large white stone, and there the Apostles came together and remained in prayer. Being all gathered there, God the Father sent the Holy Spirit in the form of fire, on the day of Pentecost . . . The church inside is 24 ft. long and 16 ft. wide . . . and at the end of the church is the altar . . . and to the right of the high altar, in the face of the south wall, there is an arch 7 ft. wide and at its foot two stone steps [*bema?*] and above a large lamp which always burns. And there [in the lower vault] Christ had the Holy Supper with the Apostles.<sup>357</sup>

This is fascinating, if confusing, testimony. Nicholas saw the remains of mosaic images in a church “above the said vault” (i.e. over the Tomb of David), that is, the chapel of the Holy Spirit built “for the Christians.” In it he describes a broken apse facing east. A second-story niche is still visible in the 1609 floorplan drawn by Bernardino Amico (plate 20) though this may, in fact, be a Muslim *mihrab*. Windows face southeast as would be expected. The Pentecost event has always been traditionally assigned to the second floor. Nicholas gave the dimensions for the Pentecost room as 24 by 16 feet (7.32 by 4.88 meters) which is analogous to modern measurements of the eastern room on the

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<sup>357</sup> Ibid., 270.

second floor (approximately 30.8 by 14.4 feet or 9.39 by 4.39 meters). Nicholas must have entered the Last Supper room from the north (as can be done today).<sup>358</sup> To his left (eastward), he saw a room that was higher still (the floor of the chapel of the Holy Spirit is 7.22 feet/2.2 meters higher than the Last Supper room). An altar apparently stood against the east wall around the niche. In the (blocked?) south wall was a seven-foot arch with perhaps a stone platform in front. Despite Nicholas's clear statement that the arch was in the south wall, Denys Pringle makes it out to be the north wall and describes the arch as part of the remaining arcade of the Crusader church's nave.<sup>359</sup>

An anonymous Greek guidebook reported that a colorful new relic was now observable in the Cenacle, "There is also to be seen the stone that the angel carried away from Mount Sinai. The stone is blackish and of changeable color and is the size of a man with both arms extended."<sup>360</sup> The account is confused, however, and may actually refer to a relic found at a nearby church.

In 1365, Peter I of Cyprus attacked Alexandria resulting in reprisals by Muslim rulers against Christians as far away as Jerusalem. The friars on Mount Zion were arrested and taken to Damascus where they died in captivity. Permission was eventually given for a new community of Franciscans to settle in the convent.<sup>361</sup> By 1377, twenty

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<sup>358</sup> Amico's drawing does not show a northern entrance to the upper floor.

<sup>359</sup> Pringle, *Corpus*, 276. Pringle writes as if Nicholas was describing first floor conditions, hardly likely given the current Muslim control of the Tomb of David. As the tomb was not given over to Robert II of Savoy, King of Naples, in the purchase of 1333, and was returned to the Franciscans during the sultanate of Barsbay (1422-38), it must have been under Muslim control between those dates.

<sup>360</sup> Anonymous Graecus, *De Locis Hierosolymitanus* 2.3, trans. Pringle, *Pilgrimage*, 385.

<sup>361</sup> *Le Pelerinage de Grethenios VII* (ca. 1400); see Pringle, *Corpus*, 270.

friars were back in service to the churches on Mount Zion, at the Holy Sepulchre, and in Bethlehem.<sup>362</sup>

The first literary report to follow this episode comes from the mayor of Bordeaux, Thomas Brygg de Swinburne, written in 1392, over a thousand years after his anonymous predecessor from that city left the first written record of the situation on Mount Zion.

In the church, in a crypt, are the Tombs of David and Solomon, the kings of Jerusalem. South of the Lord's church is a great altar, beneath which is located the place in which the Holy Spirit came down upon the apostles in tongues of fire on Pentecost. On the right side of the altar of the Most High, is the altar where Christ ate the Last Supper with His disciples, instituting the sacrament . . . Above the high altar, on a kind of uncovered terrace, the Holy Spirit came down upon the apostles . . . Below is a chapel in which St. Thomas felt the wounds in the side of Christ.<sup>363</sup>

Johann Schiltberger of Bavaria visited the southwestern hill a few years later [ca. 1395] and described the buildings that he saw there.

When one is on Mount Syon, there is a chapel in which is the stone that was over the holy sepulchre; there is also a pillar to which our Lord was bound, when the Jews scourged him. In the same place was the house of Annas . . . At the top of thirty-two steps, is the place where our Lord washed the feet of his disciples; near the same place, Saint Stephen was buried . . . In the same chapel, near the high altar sat the twelve holy apostles on the day of Pentecost . . . At this same place, our Lord celebrated the Passover with his disciples . . . Below the mount is a beautiful castle which was built by the king-sultan. On the mount are buried King Soldan and King David, and many other kings.<sup>364</sup>

In the same year, Ogier d'Anglure saw on Mount Zion "two large stones," one commemorating the place where Christ sat and preached, the other showing where his mother sat and listened.

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<sup>362</sup> Abela, n.p.

<sup>363</sup> Thomas Brygg de Swinburne, *Voyage d'un maire de Bordeaux au XIV<sup>e</sup>*, trans. provided by the author from *Archives de L'Orient Latin*, vol. 2 (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1884), 355.

<sup>364</sup> *Bondage and Travels of Johann Schiltberger a Native of Bavaria, in Europe, Asia, and Africa 1396-1427*, trans. Buchan Telfer (London, 1829), 59.

Near this first stone is a chapel attached to the Church of Notre Dame, in which chapel are the Tombs of David and his son Solomon, kings of Jerusalem; and within the chapel is a crypt in which David wrote the Psalter . . . In the Church of Notre Dame of Mount Zion – that is to say, in the very place where the great altar of this church is located – Our Lord Jesus Christ had the Last Supper for his apostles . . . right near the altar, on the left hand, is the sacred spot where Our Lord washed the feet of his apostles . . . Outside the church near the cloister is a chapel of St. Thomas . . . Right above this chapel is the place where Our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to his apostles when he sent them the Holy Ghost in tongues of fire.<sup>365</sup>

The Russian archimandrite Grethenios, who viewed this part of Mount Zion at the turn of the century, gave a straightforward account of the situation there.

The Holy Temple Sion, the mother of all churches, a building of the prophet David, is in ruins; one arch of the altar stands . . . And behind the altar, to the left, is the burial place of St. Stephen, the first martyr . . . We saw, at Holy Sion, the room in which occurred Christ's Holy Communion . . . and where the Holy Spirit descended on the saintly disciples and apostles. Downstairs from the room of the Holy Spirit, is the cell where Christ appeared to his disciples after eight days . . . Also below Holy Sion, we saw the Tomb of King David. The Frankish monks have control of Holy Sion.<sup>366</sup>

In 1418, the anonymous Lord of Caumont gave a brief description of the arrangements of the shrines writing that “inside the church, the high altar is located in the place where Jesus Christ celebrated the Last Supper . . . Then, out of the church is the Cenacle where the Apostles received the Holy Spirit . . . Descending into the convent chapel [is] where Jesus Christ appeared to St. Thomas.”<sup>367</sup> The description here is confused, written as if the large Crusader church still stood and the Last Supper

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<sup>365</sup> *Le saint voyage de Jherusalem du Seigneur d'Anglure*, trans. Roland A. Browne, *The Holy Jerusalem Voyage of Ogier VIII, Seigneur d'Anglure* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1975), 30-1.

<sup>366</sup> *Le Pelerinage de Grethenios VII*, trans. provided by the author from B. de Khitrowo, *Itinéraires Russes en Orient* (Geneve: Jules-Guillaume Fick, 1889), 175-6.

<sup>367</sup> Nompars de Caumont, *Le Voyage d'outre-mer à Jérusalem*, trans. provided by the author from *Croisade et Pèlerinage: Récits, Chroniques et Voyages en Terre Sainte XII<sup>e</sup>-XVI<sup>e</sup> Siècle* (ed. Danielle Régnier-Bohler; Paris: Robert Laffont, 1997), 1091.

continued to be commemorated in it. He is clearly referring to the Cenacle yet the chapel of the Holy Spirit is said to be “out of the church.” Perhaps the Last Supper room and Cenacle were divided by a wall as it is now and the writer is treating them as separate structures.

A year later, in 1419, Zosimus, Russian merchant and hiero-deacon of the hermitage of St. Sergius, wrote about the “mother of all churches.” He confirms that the Franciscans remained in charge. Making note of the buildings surrounding the Cenacle, he writes that “the house of Anne and Caiaphas remains standing; Saracens reside there. The house of Joachim and Anne, the parents of the Blessed Virgin, are the same. The house of John the Theologian is on the path to Holy Sion.”<sup>368</sup>

By 1421, a new attraction was added to the Cenacle: the kitchen in which the Paschal lamb was prepared for the Last Supper and “where also the water was warmed for washing the disciples’ feet.”<sup>369</sup>

The Franciscan friars eventually obtained control of the lower-floor tomb of David and, during the sultanate of al-Ashraf Sayf-ad-Din Barsbay (1422-38), made extensive repairs to it.<sup>370</sup> Flemish nobleman Gilbert de Lannoy was a visitor to Mount Zion immediately after the beginning of Barsbay’s sultanate. Not providing much in the way of architectural information, he makes some curious remarks about seeing “the

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<sup>368</sup> Zosimus, *Du Diacre Zosime VIII: Vie et Pelerinage*, trans. provided by the author from B. de Khitrowo, *Itinéraires Russes en Orient* (Geneve: Jules-Guillaume Fick, 1889), 212-13.

<sup>369</sup> *John Poloner’s Description of the Holy Land*, trans. Aubrey Stewart (London: Palestine Pilgrims’ Text Society, 1894), 14.

<sup>370</sup> Abela, n.p.

sepulchers of the kings David, Salomon, and of the other twelve” near where Simon “the just and fearful” was likewise buried and where Stephen was buried “the second time.”<sup>371</sup>

But that same sultan took the tomb of David away from the Franciscans in 1429 after receiving complaints from resident Jews. Rather than giving control to the plaintiffs, however, Barsbay turned the chamber into a mosque.<sup>372</sup> It was then returned to the Franciscans a year later. A year after that, in 1431, the pilgrim Mariano of Siena was able to enter the ground floor of the Cenacle though the Chapel of the Holy Spirit above remained in ruins.<sup>373</sup> Repairs commenced and, in 1437, Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy, a heavy financial contributor to the Franciscans, sent a stained glass window bearing his coat of arms for installation in the chapel.<sup>374</sup>

Arriving in Jerusalem at about this time (1435-1439) was Cordoban traveler Pero Tafur who left the most extensive pilgrim account of this part of Mount Zion from this period. Pero was greeted in Jerusalem by the prior of the abbey who saw to his comfort.

This monastery of Mount Sion is situated on one side of the city on the highest point, and in it are many places where our Lord worked great miracles. There is also a lofty tower in the vault of which, when the disciples were gathered together, our Lord appeared to them in tongues of fire – this was the feast of Pentecost. From here one can see the sea of Sodom and Gomorrah, which they call the Dead Sea, where once were five cities. Beneath this tower is also a chapel where our Lord appeared to Saint Thomas the apostle and told him to put his hand into his side, and many other things also happened in this place. At the entrance, in the center of a street, is the house of the Virgin Mary, and close to it, behind the

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<sup>371</sup> Gilbert de Lannoy, *Voyages et Ambassades de Messire Guillebert de Lannoy...1399-1450*, trans. provided by the author from Gilbert de Lannoy, *Voyages et Ambassades de Messire Guillebert de Lannoy...1399-1450*, ed. Constant Lock-Philippe (Mons: Société des Bibliophiles, 1840), 55.

<sup>372</sup> Pringle, *Corpus*, 270.

<sup>373</sup> Ibid.

<sup>374</sup> Ibid.

monastery, is the place where our Lord partook of the Last Supper with his disciples.<sup>375</sup>

Pero described a complex of buildings although only artistic renderings from that time confirm whether the grounds were enwalled (plates 12-13). Pero seems to separate the place of the Pentecost event (“a lofty tower”) from the place of the Last Supper (close to the center of the street, near the house of Mary, behind the monastery). Yet he locates the chapel commemorating Christ’s resurrection appearance to Thomas, traditionally located on the first floor of the Cenacle, beneath the tower (lower floor? in its shadow?). Is the Cenacle being described as a tower? Is the Last Supper now commemorated in a separate location? The former is more likely as later accounts confirm that the Holy Spirit chapel remained over the tomb of David room (see Fabri’s account below).

Repair work to the Cenacle continued under Barsbay’s sultanate but came to a halt suddenly in 1452 under the new sultan al-Zahir Sayf al-Din Jaqmaq.<sup>376</sup> As part of a city-wide anti-Christian pogrom, he ordered the new construction destroyed and returned control of the tomb of David room to Muslims. A mosque, a Sufi convent, and a Muslim pious foundation were established there.<sup>377</sup> The Jewish pilgrim Meshullam ben Menahem of Italy wrote a contemporary account noting that “the place of David’s burial is a house which has a great iron door, and the Moslems take care of the key and honor the place and pray there.”<sup>378</sup> Louis de Rochechouart, bishop of Saintes, saw the situation in 1461.

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<sup>375</sup> Pero Tafur, *Travels and Adventures 1435-1439*, trans. L. Letts, *Pero Tafur: Travels and Adventures 1435-1439* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1926), quoted in Whalen, 319.

<sup>376</sup> Pringle, *Corpus*, 270.

<sup>377</sup> Peri, 100.

<sup>378</sup> Meshullam Menachem da Volterra, *Viaggio in terra d'Israele*, trans. in Berger, 32.

We climbed Mount Zion where there was a small church and the convent of brothers minor. As soon as it was possible, the brothers minor celebrated a high mass . . . There was a painting there depicting the Last Supper. To the right is the place where Christ washed his disciples' feet; there is an altar and a painting depicting the scene. Leaving the church, we went to the spot where the Apostles stood when the Holy Spirit descended in them. The Duke of Burgundy began building here a beautiful and remarkable chapel called Chapel of the Holy Spirit, but not more than five years later, the infidel and treacherous Saracens have looted and destroyed it from top to bottom. From there we went down to the small cloister of the monastery. There is a small chapel where Christ appeared to Thomas Didymus.<sup>379</sup>

In 1462, the Franciscans were allowed to make repairs to the upper room but again this was destroyed in 1468 by Muslims after the death of Sultan al-Zahir Sayf al-Din Khushqadam.<sup>380</sup> In 1475, an anonymous monk from Smolensk confirmed that the Franciscans had at least managed to occupy their “beautiful convent” on Mount Zion.<sup>381</sup> He also saw the house of the Virgin and, behind it, the house of the apostle John.

An anonymous Parisian pilgrim, visiting the southwest hill in 1480, commented that the Franciscan monastery was “in fairly good shape” but that the church that had once stood there “was destroyed by the Saracens.” A few details not found in other pilgrim accounts include that the body of Stephen was buried “to the side [the east], toward the Valley of Siloam, enclosed by a wall.”<sup>382</sup>

[The main altar of the Cenacle] indicates the place of the Last Supper. To the right another altar indicates the place of the footwashing. Above this site, a chapel, torn down by the Saracens, used to indicate the place where the Holy Spirit descended. Above said chapel (of the Cenacle) is the place where the Savior appeared to his

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<sup>379</sup> *Journal de Voyage à Jérusalem de Louis de Rochechouart, évêque des Saintes – 1461*, trans. provided by the author from Régnier-Bohler, *Croisade*, 1145-6.

<sup>380</sup> Pringle, *Corpus*, 271.

<sup>381</sup> ps.-Ignatius of Smolensk, *Le Pelerinage*, in Khitrowo, 156.

<sup>382</sup> Could this be the same Cenotaph that continues to stand in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit above the tomb of David on the lower floor?

apostles . . . And nearby is the cistern from which the water was taken that the Savior used to wash his apostles' feet.<sup>383</sup>

Swiss Dominican theologian Felix Fabri, who stayed in the convent on Mount Zion from 1480 to 1483, tells how the Christians lost access to the Tomb of David room which resulted, he said, from a combination of Jewish intrigue and Muslim jealousy.

The Jews have many times begged the Soldan [sultan] to give them that place, that they may make an oratory of it, and they beg it of him even to this day . . . [The sultan stated] "We Saracens also count David holy, even as the Christians and the Jews do, and we believe the Bible as they do. Wherefore neither the Christians nor the Jews shall have that place, but we will take it for ourselves." He thereupon came to Jerusalem and blocked up the door by which one entered that chapel from inside the monastery, desecrated the chapel, turned out Christ's altars, broke the carved images, blotted out the paintings, and fitted it for the worship of the most abominable Mahomet, making a door on the outside by which the Saracens could enter it when they pleased . . . And because the place above it, over the vaulted roof of the chapel, belonged to the Christians . . . And a great and costly chapel had been founded there . . . in the place where . . . the Holy Spirit came down . . . The Soldan caused this chapel also to be destroyed, its vault to be thrown down, and its door blocked up, that the Christians might not walk about upon the vaulted roof of the mosque: and so the brethren have lost those two precious holy places.<sup>384</sup>

Felix left a highly detailed and fascinating account of his visit to the Holy Land. Though extremely lengthy, parts of his journal provide vivid and emotional descriptions of the conditions on this part of Mount Zion at this time. He commented that the "wall which encloses the garden [on the southeast spur of the hill, near the Convent of Sion] stands on the edge of steep stone cliffs, and there may be seen at this day the exceeding ancient wall of Sion, and the foundations of her towers."<sup>385</sup> Wightman confirms that "by

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<sup>383</sup> Anonymous, *Le Voyage de la Sainte Cyté de Hierusalem*, trans. provided by the author from L. Heidet, "Das heilige Sion oder die Stätte Mariä heimgang," *Das Heilige Land* 43 (1899): 150.

<sup>384</sup> *The Book of the Wanderings of Brother Felix Fabri*, trans. Aubrey Stewart, *Felix Fabri*, vol. 1, part 1 (London: Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society, 1896), 303.

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1, part 2, 334; comment by Wightman, 294.

the later 15<sup>th</sup> century most of the wall around Mount Sion and along the Kidron slope had collapsed.”<sup>386</sup> Fabri’s description of the broken Crusader church is poignant.

The church is not large, because it is only a part of the church of Sion. In the old time when the Christians bore rule in the land there was a great church on that spot, which the Saracens have destroyed as far as the apse or chapel which joined the choir or the church on the right-hand side. . . . The ruins of the old choir and church are still plainly to be seen. . . . The old choir of the church of Sion . . . is utterly destroyed, save the eastern part, where a part of the wall is still standing, with the broken vault hanging above it. . . . In this place we stood for a good while, and mourned over the ruins, and looked round us with sorrow at the scattered stones of the sanctuary. Here once stood an exceeding great church.<sup>387</sup>

Here Felix explains how the Muslims stopped short of taking the destruction further than the apse which connected to the church (Cenacle) on the right-hand (south) side. Next, he visited the Cenacle.

On the inside of the church there is a way up some stairs from the place where the Holy Spirit was sent down to the top of that piece of broken vault. I went up these stairs, and found above the broken vault a pavement of polished marble of diverse colors, wherefore I suppose that once there was another church up above, on the top of the church and choir. Thus the church of Sion must have had three consecrated stories – that is to say, the crypt beneath the earth, the church built upon the earth, and another decorated chamber above the church.<sup>388</sup>

Fabri’s “crypt beneath the earth” may be the lower floor of the Cenacle now partially buried by debris from centuries of destruction causing an elevation of the surrounding ground level. However, the later discovery of a charnel house below the grounds of the church makes this uncertain.<sup>389</sup> Perhaps Fabri mistakenly assumed from

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<sup>386</sup> Ibid.

<sup>387</sup> Ibid., 287, 305-6.

<sup>388</sup> Ibid., 306.

<sup>389</sup> See chapter nine.

the condition of the roof with its marble floor that it had once been the floor of a third story. Felix described the “convent gate, which led out into the public road.”

[The gate is] a strong iron-bound one, which when closed is fastened with chains and iron bolts, and this is because of the rage of the infidels, lest they should . . . riot to burst in and sack the convent, as, indeed, they once did. Traces of this may be seen in the dormitory near the rosary and the library, where there once were fair cells built with arched roofs, which they destroyed, and cast down their vaults, and will not at this day suffer them to be rebuilt as they were before. They are very lightly and easily moved to attack the Christians, and rage furiously against them, wherefore the brethren shut themselves in firmly, lest when the heathen rise in tumult they should be able to do mischief.<sup>390</sup>

Felix may have been describing the remains of the surrounding defensive walls built by the Crusaders. Since the friars were able to shut and lock the gate, this may explain the additional door cut into the tomb of David by the Muslims. Perhaps the Cenacle was located adjacent to this wall and a portal was installed for their egress.

Admitting to a bit of intrigue, Felix describes how he and his fellow pilgrims, overcome by curiosity, were led by several of the Franciscan brothers to spy on the Tomb of David mosque. Wishing to peek inside, and waiting patiently for an opportunity, they soon got their chance.

The Saracen keeper of the mosque one day trying to open the door and shut it quickly, hampered the lock with the key, so that they key would not move the iron bolt; so he went away leaving the mosque open: and it remained open as long as I was in Jerusalem, and more than ten times I have gone into it and looked round it . . . The chapel is a long one, with a vaulted roof, and has two windows on its eastern side, and a marble Tomb on its north side. The paved floor is covered with mats. Two lamps hang in it, and there is no altar, no painting, no carved work, only bare whitewashed walls.<sup>391</sup>

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<sup>390</sup> Ibid., 300.

<sup>391</sup> Ibid., 304.

Felix describes the tomb of David room much as it is today however all remains of plaster on the walls which were whitewashed by the Muslim caretakers is gone.<sup>392</sup> The sarcophagus is not marble as Felix believes, but Palestine breccia, a rock consisting of broken fragments that can be thought to resemble marble.<sup>393</sup>

In 1486, the new sultan, Qaitbay, returned Mount Zion, less the tomb of David room, to the Franciscans but banned Jews from ever approaching the church or the convent, a ban that lasted until 1917.<sup>394</sup> His actions resulted from a kindness once shown to him by the Guardian friar, Francis Rosso of Piacenza.<sup>395</sup> Prior to Qaitbay's rule, he and a companion had been confined to the city by the presiding sultan as punishment for rebellion. As rebels, they were prevented from traveling more than a mile outside the city or from entering a Muslim home. Rosso, however, "a shrewd man, knowing too well that the fortune of this unhappy world, lucky or unlucky as it may be, is not stable but turns as the wheel, and for this these men could easily return to favor with the sultan, he received them not as prisoners but as they were, lords."<sup>396</sup> His hospitality paid off, but only for a short time.

An anonymous pilgrim from Rennes, France, visited Mount Zion during this period.

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<sup>392</sup> The last remnants of this were removed by Jacob Pinkerfeld in 1951.

<sup>393</sup> This was not the only place Felix snuck into. One night, he worked his way into St. Anne's church which had by then become a *madrassa*. His contemporary, Arnold von Harff, a German aristocrat, even dressed as a Muslim and snuck onto the Temple Mount. See Montefiore, 298.

<sup>394</sup> Ibid., 300.

<sup>395</sup> Bellarmino Bagatti, intro. to *Treatise on the Holy Land*, by Fra Francesco Suriano, trans. Eugene Hoade (Jerusalem: Franciscan Press, 1949), 4.

<sup>396</sup> Francesco Suriano, *Treatise on the Holy Land* (ca. 1485), trans. in Peters, 424.

Turning to the door along the length of the church [of Mount Zion], we saw the sepulchre of David where Christians do not enter . . . [After] about eight or ten steps, we entered the church of Mount Zion served by the religious observance of the order of St. Francis, who began singing high mass . . . Then we went beside the high altar, on the right hand, in a chapel whose altar is located in the place where God washed the feet of the Apostles . . . We then went out of the church by the front door, at the head of our procession. We entered a courtyard fashioned like a terrace by climbing about twenty steps. We found a dry stone wall, formerly built by the Moors to prevent you from advancing to where the Apostles received the Holy Spirit . . . because close by, underground, is the Tomb of David in which they say we are not worthy to set foot . . . From there, we descended into the court and passed by the a small dormitory with the brothers and we reached the cloister and the chapel of St. Thomas.<sup>397</sup>

In 1488-89 the Franciscans built a new chapel of the Virgin Mary outside the Cenacle with the aid of a local emir, Daqmaq al-Na'ib. Qaitbay's health declined in 1494, however, after a plague had swept through Egypt. The Franciscans applied to regain control of the tomb of David room but their petition was denied and their new chapel was ordered destroyed. In that same year, the Latin cleric Pietro Casola arrived in Jerusalem from Italy and lamented that "if it were not for the prohibition of the Moors, the friars [on Mount Zion] would do great things. As to building, they can do nothing, and if they do any repairs in the house they do them very secretly."<sup>398</sup>

A few years later, when Arnold von Harff made a tour of the east from 1496 to 1499, he lodged with the Franciscan friars on southern Mount Zion and described what he saw.

We visited first the holy places in the monastery of Mount Sion and climbed a little stair in their chapel to the high altar. This is the place where our Lord Jesus ate the Last Supper with his disciples on Holy Thursday . . . On the right hand of the high altar is an altar. This is the place where our Lord Jesus, after the Last

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<sup>397</sup> *Récit anonyme d'un voyage à Jérusalem et au mont Sināi*, trans. provided by the author from Régnier-Bohler, *Croisade*, 1183-4.

<sup>398</sup> Pietro Casola, *Canon Pietro Casola's Pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the Year 1494*, trans. Margaret Newett, (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1907), 254.

Supper, washed his disciples' feet . . . We went further outside the chapel, on the right hand, to a chapel which is now walled up, since the heathen will not suffer us Christians to visit it. But we looked through a window into the chapel. This is the place where our Lord, after he had risen, appeared to his blessed mother and the disciples in the burning fire . . . We continued down a small stair to a little chapel, where is the place where Jesus Christ, after he had risen, appeared to his disciples behind closed doors. Here Saint Thomas thrust his finger in the blessed side of our Lord Jesus, when he would not believe and thereby believed.<sup>399</sup>

Von Harff appears to be describing the upper floor of the Cenacle as it looks today. Adjacent to the Last Supper room to the east and up a small flight of stairs is a room directly over the tomb of David that is walled off with restricted access. This is apparently the room in which von Harff peered through the window.

During Francisco Suriano's second three-year appointment as Guardian of Mount Zion (1512-1515), he programmatically began acquiring properties near the Cenacle.<sup>400</sup> He wrote a book relating his life and times in the Holy Land for the benefit of his sister, a nun in Foligno, Italy. Supplemented by information from indulgence tables, and location and distance charts, Suriano provides much from personal experience. In the chapters about Mount Zion, the friar laments the loss of the Crusader cathedral which "once contained all the other mysteries but now it is all in ruins, except one aisle containing the Cenacle and the chapel of the Holy Ghost."<sup>401</sup> His description might be taken to imply that the Cenacle was once incorporated within the Crusader church, as a southern aisle.

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<sup>399</sup> From *The Pilgrimage of Arnold von Harff, Knight from Cologne, through Italy, Syria, Egypt, Arabia, Ethiopia, Nubia, Palestine, Turkey, France and Spain, which he accomplished in the years 1496-1499*, trans. Malcolm Letts (1946; repr. Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprints, 1967), revised and quoted by Whalen, 355.

<sup>400</sup> Bagatti, *Treatise*, 9. Suriano previously served from 1493-96.

<sup>401</sup> Suriano, *Treatise* 58, trans. Hoade, 122.

He makes some other archaeological observations based on the exposed foundations of the destroyed church.

The length [of the Crusader church on Mount Sion] is 100 braccia<sup>402</sup> and the width 50: it has three naves, all covered with slabs of the finest marble with a mosaic floor. Of which building nothing remains save the apse of the high altar, the Cenacle of Christ and the Chapel of the Holy Ghost.<sup>403</sup>

Suriano continues with a history of the devastation brought on by recent events.

This [Chapel of the Holy Ghost] in 1460 was erased, destroyed and ruined by the fury of the populace, and it was rebuilt by the great Duke Philip of Burgundy . . . who spent 14,000 ducats to make it more beautiful than before . . . This chapel then so beautiful and so ornate out of envy and hate for the Christian faith was again by the fury of the populace brought to ruins and at the same time were destroyed and broken all the rooms and cells of the cloister within the place. And the reason of such ruin were the . . . Jews, because they told the Saracens that under the chapel was the tomb of David the prophet. When the Lord Sultan heard this he ordered that the tomb and place be taken from the Friars and dedicated to their cult, and so it was done. And the Saracens considering it a shame that the Friars should celebrate above them, who regarded themselves as superior, destroyed it.<sup>404</sup>

The father guardian of the Franciscan monastery in Angoulême in southwestern France, Johannes Thenoud, visited Suriano in 1512. He notes with despair how the chapel “where our Dear Lady lived . . . [and] repeatedly rebuilt,” was now “destroyed to the walls.”<sup>405</sup> He, too, observed that the tomb of David room was a mosque. Thenoud places the “main altar of our monastery” in the Last Supper room. “Farther down,” he says, “is

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<sup>402</sup> One braccia was about 26 or 27 inches. Thus the size of the previous church was estimated by Suriano to be about 217 by 108 feet (66 by 33 meters). This is the size of the Byzantine basilica rather than the Crusader church indicating that the earlier foundations were still quite visible.

<sup>403</sup> Suriano, *Treatise* 59, trans. Hoade, 123.

<sup>404</sup> Ibid.

<sup>405</sup> *Le Voyage d'Outremer (Egypte, Mont Sinay, Palestine) de Jean Thenaud Gardien du couvent des Cordeliers d'Angoulême suivi de La Relation de l'Ambassade de Domenico Trevesan auprès du Soudan d'Egypte – 1512*, ed. Ch. Schefer (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1884), 107-8. Trans. provided by the author from L. Heidet, “Das heilige Sion oder die Stätte Mariä heimgang,” *Das Heilige Land* 43, no. 3 (1899): 149.

another altar where [Christ] washed the disciples' feet." But "farther up," he writes, "in front of the church before sunrise [to the east], [is] the place where the Apostles received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost."

## Literary Evidence Concerning the Cenacle from the Ottoman to the Modern Period

In 1516, the Ottoman sultan Selim I (the Grim) defeated the Mamluk army at Aleppo and gained control of the Middle East on behalf of the empire for the next four centuries.<sup>406</sup> Though never setting eyes on it, his son Sulayman (“Suleiman the Magnificent,” 1520-1566) beautified Jerusalem, restoring the walls and gates, leaving them largely as they are today. Southern Mount Zion was once again left outside the city. A case recorded in the Sharia court archives of Jerusalem spells out how Muhammad Tcheleby al-Naqqash was entrusted with building the new walls and, running out of building materials around this part of Mount Zion, took apart the walls of buildings located nearby including some belonging to the Franciscan convent.<sup>407</sup>

Douai silk merchant and pilgrim Jacques le Saige visited Mount Zion in 1518 and lamented that “nothing is locked up, for people and animals get in.” He attended mass in the chapel to which six steps led, followed by three more steps at the door. “The main altar of this chapel stands in the place where the Savior sat as he held the Last Supper . . . To the right is another altar: here he washed his disciples’ feet. To the left is yet another altar: this is the place where he gave them his holy body.”<sup>408</sup>

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<sup>406</sup> Montefiore, 303. Ottomans were Turkish Muslims from Asia Minor originating with the House of Osman (Osmanlis, Ottomans). They were once employed by the Seljuk sultans of Iconium to protect their eastern frontiers. See Gray, 260.

<sup>407</sup> Amnon Cohen, “The Expulsion of the Franciscans from Mount Zion: Old Documents and New Interpretation,” *Turcica* 18 (1986), 151.

<sup>408</sup> *Voyage de Jacques le Saige de Douai à Rome, Notre Dame de Lorette, Venise, Jérusalem et autres saints Lieux*, nouvelle édition, ed. H.-R. Duthilloeul (Douai: Adam d’Aubers, 1851), trans. provided by the author from L. Heidet, “Das heilige Sion oder die Stätte Mariä heimgang,” *Das Heilige Land* 43 no. 3 (1899): 148-9.

Between the years 1520 and 1523, Rabbi Moses Basola of Italy visited Jerusalem. He writes that, “On Mount Zion there is a place for [Christian] priests, like the *conventi* of Italy. Adjoining it is an iron door; they say that David and Solomon are buried there. The Ishmaelites [Muslims] never allow anyone to enter these two places.”<sup>409</sup>

At the end of 1523, the sultan expelled the Franciscans from the Cenacle and their monastery. An inscription was placed on the east wall of the second floor recording its permanent conversion into a mosque by Shaykh al-Sahmsi Muhammad al-‘Ajjami on 8 January 1524.<sup>410</sup> At the same time, a *mihrab* (Muslim prayer niche), oriented toward Mecca, was built into the lower southern wall (and remains there still).<sup>411</sup> The entire Islamic shrine dedicated to Nabi Da’oud, the prophet David, was placed under the administration of the family of Sufi sheikh Ahmad al-Dajani, a trust his descendents held until 1948 (they continue to tend the grounds to this day). Greffin Affagart, a French knight, observed the Cenacle at this time.

There is still at present the same house of Cenacle in the same form as when it was within the monastery of the Cordeliers friars. The house has two vaults, one atop the other; the lower vault is constructed like a storeroom or a cellar, but the upper one is made like a large vaulted room; above there are two large pillars that support the vault and are around twenty *toises* [about 40 meters!] in length and ten [20 meters!] in width. The brothers wished to make of it their church; but over the past fifteen to twenty years, the Turks have profaned it through their contemptible rituals and have taken it from the Brothers . . . At the end of the Cenacle toward the east there was another room or chamber in which the blessed apostles were assembled when the Holy Spirit descended and the Christians had made of it another beautiful chapel, but the Turks destroyed it. The vault below the holy

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<sup>409</sup> Trans. M. Swartz in Peters, 486.

<sup>410</sup> Pringle, *Corpus*, 271.

<sup>411</sup> Paolo Cuneo, “The Urban Structure and Physical Organization of Ottoman Jerusalem in the Context of Ottoman Urbanism,” in *Ottoman Jerusalem: The Living City 1517-1917*, vol. 2, Sylvia Auld and Robert Hillenbrand, eds. (London: Altajir World of Islam Trust, 2000), 214 n. 11. See also Pixner, *Paths*, 358.

Cenacle remains in the possession of the Friars . . . Far beneath the vaults are the sepulchers of the kings of Jerusalem, such as those of David, Salomon, and the others. Around the Friars' cloister there is the chapel of Saint Thomas.<sup>412</sup>

But in 1525 the friars were once again allowed to occupy some rooms in their convent on southern Mount Zion and, in what must have become an exasperating routine by that time, were again expelled twenty-five years later.<sup>413</sup> Muslims in that period gained permanent control of the cloister and the nearby grounds. The Franciscans took up residence in a bakery. Pilgrims could continue to visit but only at night after bribing the Muslim guards. At some point between then and 1639, the Chapel of the Holy Spirit was converted into a *maqam* (Muslim tomb/shrine) covered by a dome erected upon the roof.<sup>414</sup> A simple, cylindrical minaret, measuring 10.2 meters (33.5 feet) in height, was constructed over the western end of the building, a “site rare in the city.”<sup>415</sup> It was intended to be symbolic of Islamic sovereignty, a signpost to foreign travelers entering the city.<sup>416</sup> A *qubba*, or small domed structure supported by slender columns (including a re-used Crusader-era capital), was constructed over the steps that led from the upper room to the tomb of David room below.<sup>417</sup> Over the years, parts of the Cenacle may even have been removed and used elsewhere in Ottoman Jerusalem. For example, a rose window that was installed at the *sabil*, or public water fountain, at the Chain Gate, or Bab

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<sup>412</sup> Greffin Affagart, *Relation de la Terre Sainte*, ed. J. Chavanon (Paris: Librairie Victor Lecoffre, 1902), 101-102, trans. provided by the author.

<sup>413</sup> Pringle, *Corpus* 271.

<sup>414</sup> Cuneo, 214. See also Pringle, *Corpus*, 271.

<sup>415</sup> Ibid.; Yusuf Natsheh, “The Architecture of Ottoman Jerusalem, in Auld, 643.

<sup>416</sup> David Myres, “An Overview of the Islamic Architecture of Ottoman Jerusalem,” in Auld, 334.

<sup>417</sup> Myres, 336-7, speculates that the qubba may have been installed as late as the late 17<sup>th</sup> or very early 18<sup>th</sup> century.

al-Silsila, may have come from the Cenacle as did an almost intact archway that was used at Sabil Bab-Nazir.<sup>418</sup> Some engaged columns, possibly from Mount Zion, can be found at Sabil al-Wad.<sup>419</sup> At the same time, multiple star-shaped grills over stained glass, called *qamariyyat*, were installed in place of earlier window grilles in the Cenacle's second floor.<sup>420</sup> These alterations are believed to have constituted the first major architectural activity in Jerusalem undertaken by the Ottomans.<sup>421</sup> However, for most of the next three hundred years, Ottoman rule in Jerusalem was generally marked by neglect and corruption; pilgrimage declined significantly.<sup>422</sup>

In 1546, an earthquake destroyed five rooms of the former Franciscan convent including the northern and eastern porticos.<sup>423</sup> A 1548 court record shows that the convent then consisted of forty rooms on two floors as well as a courtyard measuring 16 by 13 meters (52.5 by 42.6 feet).

An inspection of the structure was conducted by the *qadi* (Muslim judge) Ahmad Nassuh in 1551.<sup>424</sup> His report describes the lower floor room as "a depressed and oblongated place [stretching] from East to West and called 'the table room' and there is

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<sup>418</sup> Myres, 354.

<sup>419</sup> Ibid.

<sup>420</sup> Finbarr B. Flood, "The Ottoman Windows in the Dome of the Rock and Aqsa Mosque," in Auld, 450.

<sup>421</sup> Natsheh, 597.

<sup>422</sup> Kollek and Pearlman, 178.

<sup>423</sup> Cohen, 151.

<sup>424</sup> Natsheh, 614.

[also] a kitchen and a[nother] room which has a well for the collection of rain water.”<sup>425</sup>

Dimensions were given, oddly, as 22 meters in length (“from West to the interior of the kitchen”) by 3.75 meters in width (approximately 72 by 12 feet). The room with the well was 3.75 meters wide also. This lower floor was said to stretch beneath “the upper mosque with the new *mihrab*,” probably the former Last Supper room. Within the decade the last vestiges of Franciscan occupation were permanently removed from Mount Zion. Boundaries of the new Muslim area were recorded in *firman*s (decrees) of 1560, 1561, and 1613.

In the South of the old wall which stretched East of the orchard of Safi al-Din ibn Fawwar; in the East, a plot of land of the *waqf* [pious foundation] of the Salahiyya religious college (*madrassa*) up to the vegetable garden (*hakura*) of Jacob the Christian stone-cutter; in the North the road leading to the above-mentioned convent and elsewhere which separates between the [...] convent up to the tomb (*turba*) of the Greek Orthodox; and in the West the Gaza tower and the old wall.<sup>426</sup>

It was also around 1551 that “precious carpets” were hung in front of the niche in the tomb of David, obscuring its presence for generations until its existence was all but forgotten.<sup>427</sup> In 1562, Muhammad ibn Nammar al-Mi’mar was appointed as the designated builder for the tomb of David complex.<sup>428</sup> From this time forward, Jews were only allowed to view the tomb, actually the *maqam* on the upper floor above it, on Shavuot (Pentecost), the traditional date of David’s death.<sup>429</sup> This is ironic since this

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<sup>425</sup> Cohen, 153.

<sup>426</sup> *Sijill* archives of Jerusalem, Vol. 40, pg. 378. See Cohen, 155.

<sup>427</sup> Hirschberg, 117.

<sup>428</sup> Natsheh, 620.

<sup>429</sup> Hirschberg, 117.

room was for centuries commemorated as that in which the Holy Spirit descended on the apostles also at Pentecost. Christians were allowed, on special occasions, to view the room of the Last Supper.<sup>430</sup>

In 1598, Sicilian Don Aquilante Rocchetta came to Mount Zion and wrote a particularly descriptive account of what he saw adding some structural information.

To the south, one could see, though a wooden lattice, the mosque in which was the Tomb of David. To the west, on the right, is another room, at the place where the Passover lamb was roasted. Next to this room is the staircase with ten steps that leads to a room above the room of the foot washing. The vaulting is supported by two arches, similar to the vaulting in the room below, borne by two columns. This is the room of the Last Supper . . . and thus, the place is called Coenaculum: Cenacle. Father to the south there is the room where the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles.<sup>431</sup>

English traveler Henry Timberlake arrived in Jerusalem just after the turn of the century. He visited this part of Mount Zion where his guides “showed me the house where the Virgin Mary dwelt, which was near unto the temple . . . Hence I was brought to the place where” the Last Supper, the Pentecost, and Christ’s appearance to doubting Thomas took place and “near to this place upon Mount Syon, the Virgin Mary died.”<sup>432</sup> In 1610, George Sandys, another English traveler and later American colonist, journeyed to Jerusalem. His descriptions are more precise than Henry’s. “Turning on the right hand, we went out at the port [gate] of Sion. South hand, not far from thence, on the midst of

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<sup>430</sup> Ibid.

<sup>431</sup> *Peregrinatione di Terra Santa e d’altre provincie di Don Aquilante Rocchetta Cavaliere del Santissimo Sepolcro. Nella quale si descrive distintamente quella di Christo secondo gli Evangelisti* (Palermo: Alfonzo Dell’Isola, 1630). Trans. provided by the author from L. Heidet, “Das heilige Sion oder die Stätte Mariä heimgang,” *Das Heilige Land* 43 (1899): 147-8.

<sup>432</sup> Henry Timberlake, *A True and Strange Discourse of the Travails of two English Pilgrims* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1616), 16-17.

the Mount, is the place, as they say, where Christ did eat his last Supper.”<sup>433</sup> He also saw where the Resurrection appearance and Pentecost occurred but also two new events: the place “where Peter converted three thousand; and where, as they say also, they held the first Council, in which the Apostles’ Creed was decreed.”<sup>434</sup> The church, he says, was “subverted by the Saracens, in the selfsame place [where] the Franciscans had a Monastery erected; who in the year 1561 [sic] were removed by the Turks; they building here a Mosque of their own, into which no Christian is permitted to enter.”<sup>435</sup>

In 1697, Henry Maundrell, former professor at Oxford, made an Easter pilgrimage to Jerusalem and visited this part of Mount Zion on April 5. He wrote in his journal how the Cenacle had become a mosque. Near to a well were the “ruins of a house in which the blessed Virgin is supposed to have breathed her last.”<sup>436</sup>

Further structural developments and enhancements took place, mostly with regard to the tomb of David room. While acting as governor of Egypt, Bairam Pasha (1626-1628) donated 1,000 silver coins as well as textiles to the room for its restoration.<sup>437</sup> In 1817, the governor of Sidon and Tripoli, Sulaiman Pasha al-Adil, restored the *maqam* on behalf of Sultan Mahmud II.<sup>438</sup> In time, the entire site was developed into a greater

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<sup>433</sup> George Sandys, *A Relation of a Journey Begun AD 1610* (London: W. Barrett, 1621), 185.

<sup>434</sup> Sandys, 185.

<sup>435</sup> Ibid., 186.

<sup>436</sup> Henry Maundrell, *Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem at Easter A.D. 1697*, in *Early Travels in Palestine*, Thomas Wright, ed. (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1848), 467.

<sup>437</sup> Robert Hillenbrand, “Introduction: Structure, Style, and Context in the Monuments of Ottoman Jerusalem,” in Auld, 14.

<sup>438</sup> Hillenbrand, 14, 29.

complex “with many estates endowed as *waqf* [Islamic religious endowment] for the benefit of the maqam and the mosque.”<sup>439</sup>

At the start of the nineteenth century, Jerusalem was “still a small town in the Ottoman Empire, lacking all but religious significance,” in the *pashalik*, or province, of Damascus.<sup>440</sup> There were “2,000 Jews, fewer than 3,000 Christians, and about 4,000 Muslims.”<sup>441</sup> A *mutesellim*, or civil governor, was directly responsible for keeping the peace and collecting taxes.<sup>442</sup> In 1831, Egyptian forces under the control of Albanian commander Muhammad Ali Pasha and his son, Ibrahim Pasha, seized Jerusalem. They would control it for nine years. During that time they ended the practice of collecting revenue from bribes paid by Christian monasteries in order to hold processions, repair churches, etc., and from pilgrims who were required to pay a tax when entering the city.<sup>443</sup> A Muslim rebellion in 1834 was quickly put down but Christians and Jews were made to suffer by rioting crowds. The Ottomans, under a reformed Turkish regime, regained control in 1840 with the help of Britain and other powers.<sup>444</sup>

Around this time, London painter William Henry Bartlett described the bleak conditions on Mount Zion.

Its dull slopes, once covered with towers and palaces . . . are now terraced and ploughed, and but sustain a poor crop of wheat and sprinkling of olive trees.

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<sup>439</sup> Natsheh, 597.

<sup>440</sup> Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century: The Old City* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1984), 104-5.

<sup>441</sup> Ibid.

<sup>442</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>443</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>444</sup> Ibid., 111.

Broken paths descend into the valleys below; and a flock of goats, with a solitary shepherd, or at long intervals an Arab woman, slowly mounting the steep ascent, alone relieve the melancholy vacancy of the scene, which in general is silent as the grave.<sup>445</sup>

Bartlett wrote of lepers living near the Zion Gate<sup>446</sup> and Swiss physician Titus Tobler lamented Muslims living in caves fit only for animals.<sup>447</sup> Perhaps these suffering souls were drawn to the Turkish hospital built into the renovated monastery.<sup>448</sup>

British banker Sir Moses Montefiore was one of the few non-Muslims from this period to be allowed to enter the tomb of David room of the Cenacle in 1839.

It was a spacious vaulted chamber, supported in the center by a column. At the futher end we saw a trellised window, on the right of which was an arched folding door. Being led to the spot, we beheld through the lattice the tomb, covered with richly embroidered carpets. In the center was an Arabic inscription, "This is the tomb of our Lord David," on either side of which were the double triangles known by the name of "the shield of David." On the one corner of the tomb hung a rich silk sash and a pistol, the offerings of Ibrahim Pasha . . . We recited several psalms, and went away much gratified.<sup>449</sup>

Jacques Mislin (1807-1878), a Monsignor from Alsace, traveled to the Holy Land in 1848 and again in 1855. He described this last trip in his book, *Les Saints Lieux: Pèlerinage a Jérusalem*. His visit also included a rare visit to the mosque for which he gives a detailed account.

I visited the tomb of David April 1, 1855 . . . We at once descended a staircase of only six or eight steps into a low vaulted chamber, which , so far as I can judge, is situated exactly under the Church of the Institution of the Eucharist, of which it is

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<sup>445</sup> William Henry Bartlett, *Walks about the City and Environs of Jerusalem*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Arthur Hall Virtue, 1852), 60-61.

<sup>446</sup> Bartlett, *Jerusalem Revisited* (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1862), 72.

<sup>447</sup> Titus Tobler, *Topographie von Jerusalem und seinen Umgebungen*, vol. 2 (Berlin, 1854), 98.

<sup>448</sup> François-René de Chateaubriand, *Travels in Greece, Palestine, Egypt, and Barbary, during the years 1806-1807* (New York: Van Winkle and Riley, 1814), 295.

<sup>449</sup> Moses Montefiore and Judith Montefiore, *Diaries of Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore*, vol. 1 (Chicago: Belford-Clarke, 1890), 180.

only the crypt. No doubt it was one of the three churches, placed one on the other, mentioned by Fabri . . . After passing through the vestibule we arrived at the part corresponding with the single nave of the church above. Here however the nave is divided into two by a row of massive piers of rock in the middle, supporting the vaulted roof. The latter half, or rather part of this crypt, for it is smaller than the other, is separated by a transverse railing, and is itself divided by another railing at right angles to the former, so as to form two spaces at the southern end of the chamber. The entrance is by that on the right hand, and the tomb occupies almost the whole of that on the left. We entered the former chamber, which I will call the *mihrab*, because in it is the niche for prayers.<sup>450</sup> The room was almost entirely filled by the tomb of David . . . The place in which we were was very dark, and the neighboring chamber was even worse; so that all that we could see on the other side of the railing separating us from it, was a carpet, which was not enough to satisfy our curiosity. Kiamil Pasha remarked to the Sheikh that we were come to see the tomb; he then opened the door with a very good grace. The Pasha kneeled down and pressed the fringe of the carpet covering the tomb to his mouth and forehead for a moment and then allowed us to examine it at our pleasure. Before us was a sarcophagus about seven feet high, and twelve long. It was covered with seven very rich carpets [plate 8]. The upper was blue silk with large deeper colored stripes; it was worked over with texts from the Koran. In the middle of the sarcophagus there is also a square piece of stuff richly embroidered, with a gold fringe; on it also are texts from the Koran, worked in gold thread. It was the gift of the Sultan Abdul-Medjid. The second carpet is bright blue with flowers worked in silver thread. The others are well worn and less rich than these. From the roof, a canopy of silk is suspended, striped white and blue. The Sheikh who accompanied us raised a corner of the carpet, so that I was able to touch the sarcophagus; but owing to the many folds of the cloth, I had great difficulty informing an opinion of its shape and material. Observing that I was not yet satisfied, he then took courage and raised the whole of the carpet from the part where there was the best light. By this means I saw the entire front of the sarcophagus, which appeared to me to be made of unpolished grey marble. In the middle was a medallion of darker color, and I asked its meaning. The Sheikh informed me that it marked the position of the Prophet's navel. I examined the walls; they are covered with earthenware tiles with a blue pattern on a white ground. Bronze lamps are place here and there around the tomb. Near the door, on the left hand on going out, is a chain suspended from the wall, with oblong links. The Sheikh told me it was a model of one made by David himself.”<sup>451</sup>

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<sup>450</sup> This is the small niche cut into the southern wall after the Muslim takeover of the tomb. The large niche in the northern wall behind the sarcophagus is not mentioned, probably because it was covered with the “canopy of silk” suspended above.

<sup>451</sup> Jacques Mislin, *Les Saints Lieux: Pèlerinage a Jérusalem*, vol. 2 (1858; repr. Paris: LeCoffre Fils et Cie, 1876), 477-479, trans. by Thomas George Bonney from Ermete Pierotti, *Jerusalem Explored being a Description of the Ancient and Modern City*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: C. J. Clay, 1864), 212-213, slightly modified.

Ermete Pierotti, from Modena, Italy, was both archaeologist and engineer. He was employed by Soraya Pasha, Ottoman governor of the new and independent province of Jerusalem, to serve as architectural consultant to the Temple Mount renovations from 1854 to 1861. He also secured access into the tomb of David room, four years after Mislin, benefitting from “much expenditure of money and patience.” With perhaps a more experienced eye, Pierotti attempted to correct some of the observations made by Mislin.

The description of M. Mislin is very accurate, but I am able to make the following additions to it: . . . The sarcophagus is not of unpolished grey marble, but of whitish Palestine breccia, called marble by the ancients, from its resemblance in working and polish. The greyish color is due to its age, and perhaps also to the bad light or to the shade cast by the upraised carpets on the small part of it that was examined. The medallion does not mark the position of the Prophet’s navel, as the Sheikh said, but is a simple decoration attached to the sarcophagus; it is repeated on each of the other sides. Neither is it of darker marble, but as it is continually kissed by devotees, its color has been altered. The form of the sarcophagus is a rectangular parallelepiped, formed of different blocks of breccia well fitted together without mortar. The lid is *à dos d’âne*, of several pieces of stone [joined together]; at least so it appears at each end, but in the middle and on the top I have been unable to detect the divisions. All this shows that it is not a real sarcophagus, but only an imitation or cenotaph erected on the spot to conceal something below. On lifting up the mats at the corners of the chamber and near the tomb, I found that the pavement is laid upon the rock, which corresponds in its nature with that exposed all about the upper part of Sion. I carefully examined the north side and the base of the monument, in the hope of discerning signs of an opening, but in vain. When I asked the Sheikh for information on the point, he appeared surprised at my question, and from that moment endeavored to get me out of the place as quickly as possible; and under the circumstances I had no choice but to comply.<sup>452</sup>

For the rest of the century, Turkey came to oppose its western-style reforms. A group called the “Young Turks” advocated “war against foreigners [and] the independent

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<sup>452</sup> Pierotti, 213-214, slightly modified.

revival of the Ottoman Empire.”<sup>453</sup> After 1878, Britain and France, frustrated with developments in the Empire, began to annex portions of it including Cyprus, Egypt, and Tunisia. For their part, the Ottomans entered into an alliance with Germany. In 1898, the sultan sold a large parcel of land on southern Mount Zion to the Kaiser for the purposes of erecting a new Catholic Church to honor the dormition of the Virgin.

In 1916, during the First World War, the Arab Sherif Hussein bin Ali led a revolt against the Young Turks for abandoning the tenets of Islam and helped to turn the tide against Ottoman control in the Middle East. The Armistice of Mudros in 1918 ended the hostilities of World War I and the old empire was partitioned among the allies. Britain assumed control of Palestine and occupied it for the next twenty-eight years.<sup>454</sup>

Under Ottoman and British rule, the different nationalities in Jerusalem . . . had felt free for the most part to move about the city and had enjoyed the freedom to worship at most of the holy sites without any special difficulties. During the period of the British Mandate, prayer at and pilgrimage to the holy places was guaranteed under a law known as “The Status Quo at the Holy Places.”<sup>455</sup>

Refusing to change the customary procedures that had been in place for centuries, the British allowed the Muslims to retain control of the Cenacle though Christian pilgrims were to be allowed to view the upper room. No Christian services could be performed there, however. Sometime after 1920, perhaps defiantly, a highly decorative *mihrab* was constructed and installed in the traditional room of the Last Supper that stood

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<sup>453</sup> Ben-Arieh, *Old City*, 118.

<sup>454</sup> Kollek and Pearlman, 194.

<sup>455</sup> Bar, 260.

in front of the older, smaller one.<sup>456</sup> Other renovation work was also carried out at this time in the courtyards as well as in the apartments around the hall.<sup>457</sup>

The British mandate ended in 1948 and the State of Israel was established, immediately followed by the Arab-Israeli Civil War which ended in 1949. The new state of Israel occupied all but the West Bank and East Jerusalem (both belonging to Jordan) and the Gaza Strip (belonging to an Arab All-Palestine government). Cut off from most of their holy places, Jews in West Jerusalem began to sacralize David's tomb, the "only prominent site left within the boundaries of western Jerusalem."<sup>458</sup> Divided as to the authenticity of the tomb, Jews nevertheless rallied to southern Mount Zion and the tomb as "the State of Israel's central religious site."<sup>459</sup> Control of the structure was initially given over to the Diaspora Yeshiva and repairs to war damage caused by missile strikes were made in 1950.<sup>460</sup> At that time, a limited archaeological examination was conducted (see chapter ten). Religious ceremonies began immediately afterward. A palm tree, symbolizing the house of David, was planted and a massive menorah erected. The Israeli Ministry of Religion and Mount Zion Committee then took control of the building, converting the tomb of David room into a synagogue and establishing it as a national pilgrimage site for the Jewish people. Christian pilgrims were invited to visit both the Cenacle and the synagogue as well.<sup>461</sup>

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<sup>456</sup> Myres, 327.

<sup>457</sup> Ibid.

<sup>458</sup> Bar, 261.

<sup>459</sup> Ibid., 264.

<sup>460</sup> Control was later ceded to the Israel Ministry of Religions.

<sup>461</sup> Pixner, *Paths* 359.

After the six-day war in 1967, Jerusalem became unified under Israeli control and the importance of David's tomb on Mount Zion diminished once access to previously-inaccessible holy sites became available. Pre-eminent among these was the Western Wall of the Temple Mount. Religious activities, such as weddings and bar mitzvahs, once celebrated on Mount Zion were now conducted at the Wall. But by the 1980s, "large-scale pilgrimage movements to the graves of saints" brought a resurgence of interest in Mount Zion and to the holy sites there.<sup>462</sup> The subsequent explosion in the number of archaeological investigations in the area has brought attention once more to the rich history of the western hill for both Jews and Christians.

Recently, Israeli news sources have reported that the Catholic Church has made attempts to gain control over the upper room of the Cenacle.<sup>463</sup> To date, the Israeli Prime Minister's office has made no remark about the effort. The city administrators of Jerusalem released a statement in February, 2014, saying that "the state of Israel and the Jerusalem municipality are paying special attention to the Mount Zion compound, with the goal of improving and updating the infrastructure and the municipal service, and of calming tension."<sup>464</sup> Pope Francis conducted mass in the Cenacle on May 26, 2014, the first time since the Franciscans were finally expelled from the complex in the sixteenth century.

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<sup>462</sup> Bar, 273.

<sup>463</sup> For example, *Arutz Sheva 7: Israeli National News*, [www.israelnationalnews.com](http://www.israelnationalnews.com); *The Jewish Press*, [www.jewishpress.com](http://www.jewishpress.com); etc.

<sup>464</sup> Maayana Miskin, "Report: Vatican Pushing for Control of Mount Zion," *Arutz Sheva* 7, 19 February 2014, accessed 23 January 2015, <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/177615>.

## PART II. ARTISTIC RENDERINGS OF THE CENACLE

### Artistic Renderings of the Cenacle

#### A. Introduction

Eyewitness testimony regarding the Cenacle is not limited to written reports by those who visited Jerusalem throughout its history. Visual representations were also recorded, providing images in the form of sketches, mosaics, frescos, woodcuts, engravings, architectural drawings, and photographs. Many illustrations are derivative, relying on existing representations to create new productions with few, though sometimes critical, alterations. Some imagery is based solely on literary descriptions, created by artists who never set foot in the Holy Land. Others, however, are based on personal observation and reflect the artists' own impressions of the details of specific structures and city design. All, however, have a certain value because, whether they were drawn *ad vivum* or based upon the descriptions or works of others, they ultimately portray the condition and arrangement of Jerusalem as acknowledged by the people of their time. A sample of these artistic representations of the Cenacle, created between the fourth and seventeenth centuries are discussed in this chapter. The images themselves are featured in the accompanying plates. From a study of these images, it is hoped, more evidence can be brought to bear on the question of the original and continuing independence of the Cenacle as a standalone structure.

## B. Mosaic: Church of Santa Pudenziana, Rome (fourth century)

The fourth-century church at Santa Pudenziana in Rome was created from the remains of a second-century bath house.<sup>465</sup> The church features a mosaic (plate 1), the date of which has been fixed to between 402 and 417 CE based on an inscription which remained visible in the mosaic until the sixteenth century.<sup>466</sup> The Santa Pudenziana mosaic is considered to be “the oldest extant apse composition of a non-funerary monument in Rome.”<sup>467</sup> The image depicts Christ seated on a throne with six apostles seated to either side of him. Immediately behind each group of six men are female figures representing the Jewish and Gentile factions of the church.<sup>468</sup> Just above the figure of Christ is the cross standing upon Golgotha. To the left and right of the hill of the skull are a number of buildings, possibly the first artistic rendering of Christian Jerusalem in the Byzantine period.<sup>469</sup> At least one critic, however, believes the representations to be Roman structures standing just outside the Santa Pudenziana church at the time the mosaic was created.<sup>470</sup> Nevertheless, most scholars concede that these are the major churches of fourth-century Jerusalem. The round building to the left of the cross is often identified as the rotunda, or Anastasis, of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. However,

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<sup>465</sup> Bianca Kühnel, *From the Earthly to the Heavenly Jerusalem: Representations of the Holy City in Christian Art of the First Millennium* (Frieburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1987), 63.

<sup>466</sup> Ibid.

<sup>467</sup> Ibid.

<sup>468</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>469</sup> Thomas F. Matthews, in a recent publication, identifies the scene as a “cityscape of Jerusalem.” See W. Eugene Kleinbauer, review of Matthews, *The Clash of the Gods: A Reinterpretation of Early Christian Art*, *Speculum* 70 (1995): 940. Kühnel, 63, considers it a depiction of heavenly Jerusalem in the guise of the Constantinian city.

<sup>470</sup> J. R. Stracke, “The Apse Mosaic at Santa Pudenziana, Rome.” Cited 18 August 2013. Online: [www.aug.edu/augusta/iconography/staPudenziana/apse.htm](http://www.aug.edu/augusta/iconography/staPudenziana/apse.htm).

there is as yet no consensus as to the identification of the buildings to the right of the cross. One suggestion is that the octagonal-looking building is the “Inbomon,” or Church of the Ascension built on the Mount of Olives.<sup>471</sup> Bianca Kühnel identifies it as the Martyrium, yet another part of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre complex; she suggests that it had an elaborate, possibly octagonal, apse in accord with Eusebius’s description, “The emperor now began to rear a monument to the Savior's victory over death, with rich and lavish magnificence.”<sup>472</sup> The archaeological reconstruction of the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem has shown, however, that it featured an octagonal apse surrounding the cave of the birth of Jesus.<sup>473</sup> If the building standing on the hill behind the foreground structures is the Eleona church, as Richard Mackowski and Jack Finegan suggest,<sup>474</sup> the mosaic would feature the three Constantinian churches of the early-to-mid fourth century: Holy Sepulchre, Nativity, and Eleona.

However, Mackowski, Finegan, and Bargil Pixner identify the octagonal structure as Hagia Sion and the building to its immediate right, as the Cenacle.<sup>475</sup> Finegan considers the two buildings in the right foreground to “represent the Church of Sion (the

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<sup>471</sup> Kühnel, 66.

<sup>472</sup> Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 3.33. See Kühnel, 66-67.

<sup>473</sup> See Bagatti, *Gentiles*, 175-184. Kühnel, 66, based on the arguments of G. B. de Rossi, who suggests that there was originally a frieze at the base of the apse that already depicted both Bethlehem (and Jerusalem), argues that two such representations would be unlikely.

<sup>474</sup> Richard Mackowski, *Jerusalem – City of Jesus: An Exploration of the Traditions, Writings, and Remains of the Holy City from the Time of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 150; Finegan, 235.

<sup>475</sup> Mackowski, 150; Finegan, 235, 268; Pixner, *Paths*, 350.

pointed-roof building, probably octagonal in the form of a memorial church) and beside it the Cenacle (. . . and the southern city wall and gate at the extreme right).”<sup>476</sup>

Given the date proposed here for the construction of Hagia Sion (379-381 CE), it seems doubtful that enough time would have elapsed for it to become immortalized in Rome when the apse mosaic at Santa Pudenziana was completed. Not only that, there are serious problems with the theory that a previous church, octagonal in form, was built on southern Mount Zion prior to the actual Hagia Sion basilica, and on the same spot.<sup>477</sup> No archaeological evidence for such a structure has ever been found. The timing, rather, favors the identification in the mosaic of the three Constantinian churches built in Jerusalem and Bethlehem. No sighting of Hagia Sion is warranted.

#### C. Mosaics: Church of Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome (fifth, sixth, and thirteenth century)

Two mosaics in the fifth-century church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome are important in any study of the Cenacle’s origins. The first to be discussed (plate 1) was created in the central panel of the apse and represents the Dormition of the Virgin. Originally designed in the fifth century, the mosaic was later reworked in the thirteenth, “without entirely changing the subject matter” however.<sup>478</sup> Updates include the figures of the two Franciscans and the layman with his medieval cap below the image of the Virgin

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<sup>476</sup> Finegan, 235.

<sup>477</sup> Pixner, *Paths*, 350, agrees with Finegan regarding the octagonal church.

<sup>478</sup> Jacopo Torriti, Web Gallery of Art, “Mosaics in Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome (completed 1296),” [http://www.wga.hu/html\\_m/t/torriti/mosaic/](http://www.wga.hu/html_m/t/torriti/mosaic/) (accessed January 3, 2015).

in repose.<sup>479</sup> Medieval enhancements also include the representation of Mount Zion in the upper left corner with its Crusader-era church, surrounded by a fortification wall. Within the wall are two buildings augmented by a column surmounted by a cross.

The two-story structure within the compound and to the left is an obvious representation of the Cenacle. H. Henkels observes that the upper story is “closed off by an apse-like niche.”<sup>480</sup> Henkels draws attention to the column and suggests that it is a representation of the column of scourging mentioned frequently in the pilgrim accounts.<sup>481</sup> The royal personage leaning out over the parapet in prayer has been convincingly argued as a representation of King Robert of Naples who purchased the Cenacle for the Franciscans in 1333.<sup>482</sup>

The walled tower within the overall enclosure is likely the Crusader church of Santa Maria. Whether the thirteenth-century restorer, Jacopo Torriti, found his inspiration for the complex from other artistic renderings, from first-hand observation, or from written accounts remains uncertain. But it serves as circumstantial evidence, at least, that the Cenacle was not incorporated within the Crusader church when they both stood on Mount Zion.

The second mosaic from this church to be considered (plate 2) is the sixth-century depiction of Jerusalem created on an adjacent wall. It is a schematic image, typical of the times and similar in style to the Santa Pudenziana mosaic (see above) and in the Madaba

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<sup>479</sup> “The Papal Basilica: Santa Maria Maggiore,” [http://www.vatican.va/various/basiliche/sm\\_maggiore/en/storia/interno.htm](http://www.vatican.va/various/basiliche/sm_maggiore/en/storia/interno.htm) (accessed January 3, 2015).

<sup>480</sup> H. Henkels, “Remarks on the Late 13<sup>th</sup>-Century Apse Decoration in S. Maria Maggiore,” *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 4 (1971), 146-7.

<sup>481</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

<sup>482</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

map mosaic (see below). Within the walled city are various significant buildings. The rust-colored roofs likely identify them as churches, just as they do in the Madaba map mosaic of the same period. Clearly visible is the round rotunda of the Anastasis. To its right is the Martyrium. Behind it, however, is another sacred structure. Candidates for its identification include the New Church of Mary Theotokos (Nea Church) or Hagia Sion. What tips the argument in favor of the latter is the adjacent building with its iconic, lean-to roof also visible in the Madaba map mosaic next to what is inarguably Hagia Sion. The view is from the north – Stephen’s Gate/Damascus Gate is in the foreground. The columns can be seen inside the gate indicating the beginning of the *cardo maximus*. Hagia Sion and the Cenacle would be properly positioned at the southern end of the city within Eudocia’s walls. They are located similarly in the contemporaneous Madaba map mosaic. If this identification is correct, then the sixth century will have produced two artistic renderings that give evidence to the standalone nature of the Cenacle, independent of Hagia Sion and not incorporated within it.

#### D. Mosaic Map: Church of Saint George, Madaba, Jordan (sixth century)

The floor mosaic discovered in the early nineteenth century in Madaba, Jordan, is a visual representation of the Holy Land (plate 3). Its date of composition has been narrowed to between 560 and 565 CE based primarily on the detailed features of the city of Jerusalem. The entire mosaic is estimated to have been 16 meters long by 6 meters wide (52.5 by 19.5 feet), some of which has been destroyed.<sup>483</sup> Over 2,300,000 tiles are

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<sup>483</sup> Yoram Tsafir, “The Madaba Map,” in *Holy Land in Maps*, ed. Ariel Tishby (Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 2001), 66.

estimated to have been used to complete the scenic visualization that stretches from Salim, south of Beth She'an, to the Nile Delta.<sup>484</sup> The eastward-facing city of Jerusalem occupies center stage and is nearly ten times larger in scale than other locations on the map.<sup>485</sup> Scholars have determined that the map's features were based on a combination of Eusebius's *Onomasticon* gazeteer (ca. 388 CE), a Roman road map, pilgrim's maps depicting the Holy Land, and direct visual observation.<sup>486</sup>

Within the city of Jerusalem, shown enclosed by the walls built during Queen Eudocia's residency, are realistically-detailed structures that existed in the third quarter of the sixth century. The eastern side of the city (on top) is seen from the inside; the western side from the outside. Churches are indicated by their red, sloping roofs, "typical of Byzantine churches."<sup>487</sup> Hagia Sion is clearly visible just inside the southern wall. To the right, according to Pixner and Mackowski, among others, and also sporting a red roof, is the Cenacle.<sup>488</sup> Louis Vincent interprets the structure adjacent to Hagia Sion as either a diaconicon of the basilica or a monastery.<sup>489</sup> This is quite unlikely. There is no evidence that any other monasteries were given red roofs or are even depicted in the mosaic.<sup>490</sup> The

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<sup>484</sup> Kenneth Nebenzahl, *Maps of the Holy Land: Images of Terra Sancta through Two Millennia* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1986), 24.

<sup>485</sup> Ibid.

<sup>486</sup> Herbert Donner, *The Mosaic Map of Madaba: An Introductory Guide* (Kampen, The Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1992), 21-27; Tsafir, 68.

<sup>487</sup> Rehav Rubin, *Image and Reality: Jerusalem in Maps and Views* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press, 1999), 20.

<sup>488</sup> Pixner, *Paths*, 349 and *passim*; Mackowski, 146.

<sup>489</sup> Vincent and Abel, 452.

<sup>490</sup> There was, for example, a monastery attached to the Nea Church along with a pilgrim's hospice, hospital, and library, yet no indication of these was made in the Madaba mosaic. See Wightman, 216.

representation of these two adjoining structures mirrors that of the mosaic on the wall of the contemporary Church of Santa Maria Maggiore (see above). These two mosaics together represent the best visual evidence for the independent status of Hagia Sion and the Cenacle.

E. Sketch: Adomnan of Iona, *De Locis Sanctis* (after Arculf) (ca. 670 CE)

As noted in chapter three, the French bishop Arculf made a late seventh-century (ca. 680 C.E.) pilgrimage to Jerusalem but failed to keep a journal. Instead he narrated his experience from memory and perhaps drew diagrams of what he saw for his friend Adomnan of Scotland. On wax tablets he inscribed the floorplans for various churches he had visited. Adomnan faithfully reproduced the plans and included them in a full account of the Holy Land and the pilgrimage journey of his friend. It included a section on Mount Zion.

Now a few brief notes are needed on the very large Church which has been built on it. This is a sketch to show what it is like. This is where one can see the rock on which [i.e., stone with which] Stephen was stoned and fell asleep outside the city. And outside this great church, which contains places of such note, there is another rock further west, on which the Lord is said to have been scourged. This apostolic Church is constructed of stone, and stands, as has been said above, on a flat site on the summit of Mount Sion.<sup>491</sup>

When viewing the various manuscript versions of the original drawing (two are included in plate 4), it is necessary to reverse direction and recognize that the structure is drawn as Arculf entered it, that is, from a northern entrance. Architect Heinrich Renard suggests that a north entrance was installed for worshippers arriving from the Zion gate

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<sup>491</sup> Adomnan of Iona, *De Locis Sanctis* 1.18.1-3.

(north is at the bottom, south is at the top).<sup>492</sup> Arculf's drawing, however, clearly shows only a single structure. Within the building, in the southeast corner, is the place commemorating the Last Supper. In the southwest corner is the location identifying the descent of the Holy Spirit. These are exactly the reverse of many descriptions but they do seem to indicate that both areas are within one building. Is it the Cenacle, the basilica, or both?

The drawing is very simplistic and not without problems. For example, though the drawings show Christ's pillar of scourging in a central location, Adomnan wrote that the pillar was "outside this great church." Note also that in the text, Adomnan seems to describe two structures: a "very large church" and a stone building which he calls the "apostolic church." The sketch and verbal description, therefore, must not be separated when treating his evidence.

Curious, too, are the two "rooms" connected to the main building: one to the east and one to the north. One manuscript version identifies the eastern room as the place which held the stone upon which St. Stephen was executed. William Sanday suggests that the other room also represents an additional object of veneration featured outside the main structure as later indicated in the Bede floorplan (see below).<sup>493</sup> It might be argued that the east room is in reality the central apse of the church but this fails to explain the similarly drawn northern room. It is not impossible that Arculf meant to indicate that the commemorative places in the southern portion of the drawing were located in an annex, a

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<sup>492</sup> Renard, 10. Later, he argues, the Crusaders kept the northern portal while also constructing a large western entrance.

<sup>493</sup> William Sanday, *Sacred Sites of the Gospels with illustrations, maps and plans* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903), 86-7.

stone church of the apostles. It is also possible that separate chapels representing the events believed to have once taken place in the little stone structure were recreated within the great basilica.

Renard warns that Arculf's rendering should not be given great weight with regard to its correctness.<sup>494</sup> He does not credit Arculf with either copying down the details of the holy sites or of drawing sketches. And he insists that Adomnan's was only a quickly-executed rendering. Theodor Zahn, however, argues that the pilgrim brought the drawings with him on wax tablets.<sup>495</sup> Regardless, Renard considered the drawing to be too mechanical and amateurish to be able to draw any conclusions about the church's size and shape.<sup>496</sup>

#### F. Sketch: Bede, *De Locis Sanctis* (ca. 702-3 CE)

In his travel guide to the Holy Land, the Venerable Bede gathered together existing reports on the holy sites circulating at that time. In his publication, *De Locis Sanctis* ("On the Holy Sites"), he presents a floorplan of the Cenacle that is very similar to that of Arculf (plate 4). He portrays the church not as a rectangle as per Arculf but as a square. Karl Mommert suggests that the Holy Zion church of Bede's time consisted of a "single nave, whose vaulted ceiling was borne by four stone walls together with a column erected in the middle of the church . . . which implies a room of very limited

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<sup>494</sup> Renard 12.

<sup>495</sup> Zahn, 8.

<sup>496</sup> Renard, 12 n. 1.

dimensions.”<sup>497</sup> The small size of the overall structure, Mommert suggests, resulted from severe damage to Hagia Sion following the Persian invasion in 614 CE and Modestus’s subsequent repairs. He concludes that “the church of Modestus appears to have only encompassed the old shrine of the Cenacle,” a structure that might have held about 120 persons.<sup>498</sup> But the *Commemoratorium*, dated by John Wilkinson to ca. 808 CE, gives the dimensions of the church as “39 dexteri long and 26 wide,” about 195 by 130 feet (59.4 by 39.6 meters), too large for the small structure Mommert suggests.<sup>499</sup>

Renard considers Bede’s sketch so naïve and distorted that errors and discrepancies are certain.<sup>500</sup> Bede does identify the second of the two adjacent “rooms” left unexplained by Arculf. Within the east room was “the rock upon which Lord Jesus stood bound to the columns.” The northern room continues to hold the “marble rock upon which the protomartyr Stephen was stoned.”

G. Psalter, marginal illustration: Chludoff Psalter, Moscow Historical Museum, cod. 29d (ninth-tenth century)

One of the earliest and most famous of the Byzantine marginally illustrated psalters is the Chludoff Psalter.<sup>501</sup> The Chludoff is one of a number of Byzantine Psalters

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<sup>497</sup> Mommert, 168.

<sup>498</sup> Ibid.

<sup>499</sup> Wilkinson, *Pilgrims*, 256. Mauritius Gisler, “Sancta Sion und Dormitio Dominae: Ihre Verbundenheit im Grundplan,” *Das Heilige Land* 79 (1935): 11, gives the length of the dext[e]ri as a double-step, or about five feet.

<sup>500</sup> Renard, 13.

<sup>501</sup> Oleg Grabar, “A Note on the Chludoff Psalter,” in *Okeanos: Essays presented to Ihor Ševčenko on his Sixtieth Birthday by his Colleagues and Students*, ed. Cyril Mango and Omeljan Pritsak (Cambridge, MA: Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard, 1983), 262.

that, scholars suggest, depicts, in the marginalia, the basilica on Mount Zion complete with the human personification of the heavenly Jerusalem/Zion.<sup>502</sup> Folio 51r (plate 5) of the psalter depicts a Byzantine basilica with a tower, two side aisles, a clerestory (series of high windows) in both the central nave and aisles, and three apses (the far aisle and apse are hidden).<sup>503</sup> Three doors are arguably shown beneath the lower clerestory. Figures at the bottom of the illustration include the female personification of Zion to the right pointing upward toward the church. To her left is King David and to his left, King Saul who speaks with Doeg the Edomite (1 Sam. 22:9) about David.<sup>504</sup>

A number of scholars have persuasively identified the basilica as Hagia Sion.<sup>505</sup> Islamic scholar Oleg Graybar, however, interprets this and the structure in the illustration of fol. 86v as the Jerusalem Temple. Mati Meyer suggests rather that each is a depiction of a “walled city consisting of a gold-topped, marble-veined portico.”<sup>506</sup>

The corner of two walls with a ladder leading up to a curtained doorway is visible beneath the basilica in 51r and in all the other similar renderings from psalters shown in plate 5. Graybar identifies the three arched openings as entrances on the side of the structure which, he concludes, represents its façade.<sup>507</sup> The lower portion, in his opinion,

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<sup>502</sup> Mati Meyer, “The Personification of Zion in Byzantine Psalters with Marginal Illustrations: Between Eschatological Hopes and Realia,” *Ars Judaica: The Bar-Ilan Journal of Jewish Art* 5 (2009): 7.

<sup>503</sup> Meyer, 9.

<sup>504</sup> Ibid.

<sup>505</sup> Meyer, 12; Annabel Jane Wharton, “Jerusalem’s Zions,” *Material Religion* 9 (2013), 225; André Grabar, “Quelques notes sur les psautiers illustrés byzantins du IX<sup>e</sup> siècle,” *Cahiers archéologiques* 15 (1965): 61ff. See O. Grabar, 263.

<sup>506</sup> Meyer, 9.

<sup>507</sup> O. Grabar, 262.

is “the corner of a large building, with, to the right, a majestic portico and, to the left, an entrance closed by a curtain and preceded by a long flight of steps.”<sup>508</sup>

Grabar describes the entire image as a representation of the Temple Mount during the Umayyad period when a group of large buildings ran along the southern walls of the Haram al-Sharif; and the Al-Aqsa mosque at this time featured a number of lateral entrances and a new façade complete with portico as shown here.<sup>509</sup> However, two points may be made against that interpretation. First, the psalm which the illustration is meant to represent: “Do good to Zion in thy good pleasure; rebuild the walls of Jerusalem” (Ps 51:18), is unlikely to have been chosen by Christians to represent Muslim shrines. Secondly, King David, standing next to the ladder, was recognized by Christians, Muslims, and Jews of this period as having a connection with southern Mount Zion, specifically by the belief that his tomb was located there.

But if the church depicted is Hagia Sion, might the lower structure represent the Cenacle? That is the suggestion of Annabel Wharton who interprets the lower structure as a “foundational level, undercroft, or lower church.”<sup>510</sup> The steps, she adds, may represent those that lead to the upper room of the Cenacle.

If this is a representation of the Cenacle standing beneath Hagia Sion, there are certain problems of orientation to be considered. Since the apse of the actual basilica faced east, the structure below the basilica must be situated to its north; it, too, is equipped with an entrance on the east. This, of course, is not where the Cenacle was

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<sup>508</sup> Ibid.

<sup>509</sup> O. Grabar, 264.

<sup>510</sup> Wharton, 226.

located. Meyer, who does not identify any part of this illustration as the Cenacle, contends that the depiction is typological, an odd combination displaying the church's eastern apse and western portico entrance below it, one that "defies the physical structure of any church."<sup>511</sup>

However, the ladder may be the key to understanding this composition. The basilica likely does represent the heavenly Zion: the ladder is the figurative means by which the divine edifice is reached. This becomes evident from other depictions which also show the ladder reaching only to the first floor. Whether the Cenacle is intended to be included in these images of Hagia Sion is questionable but not impossible.

#### H. Crusader Maps – An Introduction

After the conquest of the Holy Land in 1099 by the Latin Crusaders, maps and other illustrations depicting Jerusalem began to appear in the Latin world. Approximately fifteen such maps are known from this time.<sup>512</sup> Eleven of these fall into the category known as T-in-O maps due to their circular outline divided in the interior by a cross. Milka Levy-Rubin suggests that all of these images derive from a single exemplar that became popular and led to numerous imitations.<sup>513</sup> The cross within the city is formed schematically by the streets of Hadrian's Aelia Capitolina: the north-south *cardo maximus* and the east-west *decumanus maximus*. It is only from the fourteenth century forward that more detailed depictions of the city, including Mount Zion, will begin to

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<sup>511</sup> Meyer, 12.

<sup>512</sup> Milka Levy-Rubin, "Crusader Maps of Jerusalem," in Tishby, 136.

<sup>513</sup> Ibid.

appear.<sup>514</sup> However, several of these Crusader maps are notable for their representation of the sacred structures on the southwestern hill.

I. Map: *Situs Hierusalem*, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, Brussels, Bib. Regia No. 9823-4, fol. 157 (ca. 1150)

One of the first and most popular maps of the T-in-O variety is the Brussels map which was frequently included in books about the Crusades (plate 6).<sup>515</sup> This map comes from an eleventh- or twelfth-century edition of the *Gesta Francorum* (“On the Deeds of the Franks”).<sup>516</sup> It is oriented with east at the top; therefore, Mount Zion can be seen to the right outside the Zion Gate (at the three o’clock position). Though the depiction is believed to include elements derived from personal observation (churches are shown but so are marketplaces and lesser streets), the map is likely based on a Byzantine original that was published along with a tenth-century pamphlet entitled “How the City of Jerusalem is Situated” (*Qualiter est sita Civitas Jerusalem*).<sup>517</sup> The likelihood of that suggestion is enhanced by the fact that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre retains its pre-Crusader design showing the various shrines as architecturally joined.<sup>518</sup> The structure standing upon Mount Zion is drawn below the two pilgrims walking toward the city. This depiction shows that the Church of Sancta Maria has been completed together with its

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<sup>514</sup> Mordechai Lewy, “An Unknown View of Mt. Zion Monastery by the Flemish Old Master Pieter Coecke van Aelst (1502-1550) as Evidence to His Pilgrimage to Jerusalem,” *Jahrbuch der Staatlichen Kunstmuseen in Baden-Württemberg* 44 (2007): 62.

<sup>515</sup> Nebenzahl, 32.

<sup>516</sup> Ibid.

<sup>517</sup> Ibid.

<sup>518</sup> Ibid.

protective wall. The stylized image, however, gives us little detail about the presence of a standalone Cenacle though the entire structure is curiously labeled as such, perhaps implying that the two structures were incorporated within the same floorplan. However, other Crusader maps will show things differently.

J. Map: *Jerusalem*, Universitetsbibliotek, Uppsala, Sweden, C 691 fol. LXXXVI (twelfth century)

The Uppsala Map is yet another but more impressive map of the T-in-O variety (plates 7-8). It, too, was part of a twelfth-century manuscript, inserted between two Crusader-era compositions: the *Historia Hierosolymitana* by Robert Monachus, and the *Gesta Francorum*.<sup>519</sup> Once again the orientation is to the east. At the bottom of the city (west), are two roads leading out, one toward Bethlehem, the other toward Mizpeh. Mount Zion appears to the southwest (between four and five o'clock). Three commemorative sites in two buildings are featured here. The smaller, upper building with the green roof is labelled the Cenacle. Above it is another label commemorating the moment when Jesus washed the feet of the disciples. Clearly the artist intended to represent two independent structures, the Crusader cathedral and an independent Cenacle.

K. Map: *Jerusalem*, The Hague, Netherlands, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 76 F5, fol. 1r (ca. 1170)

The so-called Hague map of Jerusalem is another in the T-in-O style (plate 9). Like the Uppsala map, it depicts two independent structures on Mount Zion. The larger of

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<sup>519</sup> Levy-Rubin, 136.

the two standing just outside the Zion Gate is labelled as the Cenacle. Renard, however, suggests that it is the Church of Sancta Maria “naively indicated” by the two golden circles on either side of the central tower, perhaps representing chancel turrets, or mini-towers, attached to the walls on either side of the altar.<sup>520</sup> However, just below and to the left of this structure is a building with a label beneath it that reads “Mont Syon.” This, too, has a gold circle (there are similar circles all over the map) above what appears to be a non-symmetrical lean-to structure colored in gray. Is this the cathedral with its attached Cenacle? More likely, one of the two independent buildings is intended to represent the Cenacle and one the cathedral, both drawn in stylized fashion. Around the outer circle of the city just to the left of the “Mont Syon” building are the words “Procession of the Spirit,” perhaps indicating the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost which was commemorated by a liturgical procession at one or the other of these shrines. The nearly obliterated green structure to the right is the ever-present tomb of Rachel in Bethlehem.

L. Map: *Jerusalem*, Paris, France, Bibliothèque Nationale, Fonds Latin, 8865 fol. 133 (ca. 1260)

The so-called Paris map, the last of the T-in-O examples to be discussed (plate 10), embodies the compositional arrangement of the preceding maps and portrays Mount Zion as occupied by two structures, one called simply “Syon,” and the other designated as the Cenacle. Below that is the tomb of Rachel and the Church of the Nativity, both at Bethlehem. Though clearly these Crusader maps originated with a single *Vorlage*, only the Brussels map differs from the rest by representing a single sanctuary on Mount Zion.

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<sup>520</sup> Renard, 9.

M. Map: *Jerusalem*, Cambrai, France, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 466, fol. 1r (twelfth century)

The Cambrai map exhibits a completely different arrangement of Jerusalem from the T-in-O schema (plate 11). The rhomboid shape encloses a city that has been drawn realistically by an artist familiar with the city.<sup>521</sup> The streets wind in a serpentine fashion probably due to the initial placement by the artist of the significant buildings followed by the interconnecting roadways.<sup>522</sup> Here, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is shown in its Crusader form with “new bell tower, twin domes, and renovated square on the south side.”<sup>523</sup> The Church of Sancta Maria on Mount Zion, located in the bottom left corner on the road leading from the Mount Sion gate, is depicted in Crusader form as well. It has several new towers and an east-facing apse. Whether the rectangular structure at the base of the church is meant to indicate surrounding walls, a side aisle, or the Cenacle is uncertain.

N. Map: *Jerusalem*, by Marino Sanudo, British Library, MS Add. 27376, fol. 189v (1320)

Marino Sanudo was a wealthy aristocrat from Venice who toured the Holy Land in an effort to drum up support back home for another Crusade. The reports generated by his journeys were collected in a work entitled *Liber Secretorum Fidelium Crucis* (“The Book of Secrets for the Believers of the Cross”) and presented to Pope John XXI. Sanudo was apparently not a skilled artist and, in order to include maps in his publication, he

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<sup>521</sup> Rubin, 33; Levy-Rubin, 139.

<sup>522</sup> Rubin, 33.

<sup>523</sup> Levy-Rubin, 139.

retained the services of Pietro Vesconte of Genoa, a specialist in navigational sea charts.<sup>524</sup> Vesconte was among the first to work with compass and grid in an attempt to produce precise, realistic maps.<sup>525</sup> The maps for *Liber Secretorum* were drawn to Sanudo's specifications. The four that were included depict the Holy Land, the eastern Mediterranean, and the cities of Acre and Jerusalem (plate 12).<sup>526</sup>

It is not possible to determine for certain whether Sanudo ever saw Jerusalem. His text appears to rely on the pilgrimage account of Burchard; Vesconte repeats several of Burchard's descriptive errors.<sup>527</sup> Nevertheless, Vesconte's depiction of the city, again with an eastern orientation, is considered "a milestone in its cartographic approach."<sup>528</sup> His map of the Holy Land has been hailed as the "first modern map of Palestine."<sup>529</sup>

Vesconte's depiction of southern Mount Zion shows it to be enclosed by the city's walls. These walls are generally presumed to have been destroyed in 1219 by Abd al-Malek al-Mu'azzam Isa long before Sanudo's pilgrimage. Some scholars believe, however, that "such a detailed presentation of the wall's outline was no doubt achieved by exact and professional copying in the field."<sup>530</sup> It is possible that what is being shown reflects a situation in which the walls were destroyed in some areas, weakened in others,

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<sup>524</sup> Sanudo may have prepared the maps for the first edition of his work published in 1306 but then afterward relied on Vesconte. See Nebenzahl, 42.

<sup>525</sup> Levy-Rubin, "Marino Sanuto and Petrus Vesconte," in *Holy Land in Maps*, ed. Ariel Tishby, (Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 2001), 74.

<sup>526</sup> Rubin, 34.

<sup>527</sup> Nebenzahl, 43.

<sup>528</sup> Lewy, 63.

<sup>529</sup> Nebenzahl, 42.

<sup>530</sup> Levy-Rubin, "The Sanuto-Vesconte Map of Jerusalem," in Tishby, 140.

and partially standing elsewhere. Other maps from this era likewise portray the walls as at least partially standing.

Within the walls surrounding the southwest hill is another walled enclosure protecting several buildings. One is labelled “Cenaculum.” Which of the three buildings is intended to be the Cenacle is uncertain. Based on later maps, it is possible that the two small house-like structures are those commemorated as belonging to St. John and the Virgin.<sup>531</sup> If that is the case, the longer structure might represent the Cenacle. To the northeast is a vaulted structure marked with a cross with a label that reads, “here the Virgin passed away.” The shape and style of the icon may indicate that these are the remains of the Sancta Maria cathedral though it is curiously standing outside the walls encircling the other buildings. A stretch along the southern wall sports a label that reads, “tomb of the kings.” The tower of David stands at the northern edge.<sup>532</sup> Sanudo’s Jerusalem map later appeared in the *Chronology* of Paulino Veneto in 1323.

O. Map: *Jerusalem*, by Anonymous, (known as “Burchard’s Map”), Biblioteca Laurentiana, Plut. LXXXVI, no. 56, fol. 97 r (fourteenth century)

Also from the fourteenth-century comes this anonymous map sometimes attributed to Burchard of Mount Zion (plate 13). It first appeared attached to his pilgrim account written in 1283<sup>533</sup> and it is considered to be quite liberal, even imaginary, in its

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<sup>531</sup> Levy-Rubin, “Sanuto-Vesconte,” 141. See also the “Burchard map” below.

<sup>532</sup> The Latin caption outside the western wall of Zion below the Tower of David reads, “lower Zion spring which Osias [Isaiah 22:8-1] assuaged diverting the waters to the western Tower of David, to the interior pool that is at St. Anne’s.”

<sup>533</sup> Lewy, 62-3.

depiction of the city.<sup>534</sup> Burchard lived in Jerusalem so the likelihood that he is responsible for the map's errors is doubtful (although he made demonstrable errors in his text). Southern Mount Zion is depicted similarly to its appearance in Sanudo's map. It is also surrounded by walls and within its confines are the Cenacle in the center south, the house of Mary to its north, the house of Caiaphas to its south, and the "tomb of David and other kings" to the west. Remains of the Crusader cathedral are not indicated.

P. Map: *Jerusalem*, by Sebald Rieter, München: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod.

Iconog. 172 (ca. 1475)

Sebald Rieter was in Jerusalem during the second half of the fifteenth century and he wrote a book about his trip.<sup>535</sup> Some scholars believe, however, that Rieter copied his map from a source he found while on pilgrimage (plate 14).<sup>536</sup> His depictions are fairly accurate though some remain schematic. Rare in maps of this vintage are images of people, animals, and trees which Rieter includes. Remnants of the demolished city wall can be seen on the southern edge of the Temple mount and around the southwestern tip of the Cenacle in the upper left corner. The stairs at the corner of the southern wall help to identify the Cenacle as does the dove flying overhead, typically symbolic of the Holy Spirit. Among the complex of buildings adjacent to the Cenacle may be found a monastery.<sup>537</sup> Also on the southwest hill, according to the labels, are the house where St.

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<sup>534</sup> Rubin, 36.

<sup>535</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>536</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>537</sup> Lewy, 63.

Mary spent the last fourteen years of her life following the resurrection of her son, a stone marking the place where Mathias was selected to replace Judas, another stone indicating where Jesus preached the word of God, and the place where Stephen was buried together with Sts. Gamaliel and Abibo after being transferred here from Kafar Gamla.<sup>538</sup> Note the three persons drawn facing the door of the Cenacle. Mordechai Lewy suggests they are a Muslim family, two adults and a child, who represent those who are now singularly permitted to enter its lower chamber in which the Tomb of David mosque is located.<sup>539</sup> There appears as yet no dome or minaret.

Q. Woodcut: *The Holy Land*, by Erhard Reuwich, in Bernhard von Breydenbach, *Sanctarum Peregrinationum in Montem Syon* (Mainz, 1486)

When the nobleman Bernhard von Breydenbach departed from Germany on his pilgrimage to the Holy Land he took with him a number of friends including professional artist Erhard Reuwich who later prepared many woodcuts from his on-site illustrations for inclusion in Breydenbach's forthcoming *Sanctarum Peregrinationum*. His map of Jerusalem (plate 15) shows the city as if looking west, though the rest of the region is portrayed facing east.<sup>540</sup> The artist's decision to portray Jerusalem from this vantage point sparked many imitations; this view became the "canonical" view of the city as observed from the Mount of Olives.<sup>541</sup> Southern Mount Zion is portrayed in a rather desolate and

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<sup>538</sup> Ibid., 64 n. 16.

<sup>539</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>540</sup> Rehav Rubin, "Bernhard von Breydenbach," in Tishby, 80.

<sup>541</sup> Lewy, 65.

isolated manner.<sup>542</sup> The Cenacle can be distinguished by its two-story elevation (under the words “Mont Syon”). Below, in Latin, is a label pointing out the commemorative nature of the hill including the upper room of the Last Supper, the descent of the Holy Spirit, and the place of election of Mathias as twelfth disciple.

R. Watercolor ink drawing: by Conrad Grunenberg, *Description of Travel from Constance to the Holy Land*, Badische Landesbibliothek Karlsruhe, Cod. St. Peter pap. 32 (1487)

A knight from the patrician class, Conrad Grunenberg of Constance was a distinguished artist. His depiction of Mount Zion appears to show the remains of one of the upper walls (plate 15). The pilgrim Felix Fabri described how only the eastern façade of the chapel of the Holy Spirit was visible when he saw it. This standing wall faces south in Grunenberg’s illustration but may be that wall. Other buildings stand adjacent to the Cenacle, which is still shown within partially erect walls, but they are not further identified.

S. Fresco: Santa Maria degli Angioli, Lugano, Switzerland (1530)

The fresco in this Franciscan church is attributed to Italian artist Bernardino Lanino (plate 16).<sup>543</sup> Mount Zion is shown within the erect, or partially destroyed, walls of the city. For the first time, a Muslim dome appears atop the Cenacle. Lewy suggests that the artist never saw Jerusalem and did not faithfully depict the city. As evidence, he

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<sup>542</sup> Ibid.

<sup>543</sup> Lewy, 65.

cites Lanino's representation of the Dome of the Rock which Lewy believes has been painted twice (one in front of the other) perhaps due to his reliance on multiple sources. Nevertheless, this appears to be the only artistic representation from this time period that shows a dome on top of the Cenacle. Notably, the dome is correctly placed on the eastern end of the building. The painting has been turned so that the viewer sees the south wall with the dome on the east side even though the overall view is toward the west. A small wall bisects the compound and extends from the door of the lower floor of the Cenacle to what may be a monastery. To its left is an unidentified, roofless structure, apparently in a state of disrepair.

T. Ink sketch: by Pieter van Aelst (1502-50), private collection

Flemish painter Pieter van Aelst prepared this sketch (plate 19) while visiting Jerusalem. He observed the city from the unique position of the Hill of Evil Council in the neighborhood of Abu-Tor.<sup>544</sup> The Cenacle complex appears in the lower left although it is the western façade rather than the south wall that is shown.<sup>545</sup> Stairs are drawn on the left wall that lead up to the second floor. The entrances along the façade appear to agree with those in the elevation diagram of Bernardino Amico (see below). No dome is visible. Lewy suggests that this image is the last to be made while the Franciscan friars still occupied their monastery on Mount Zion.<sup>546</sup>

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<sup>544</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>545</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>546</sup> Ibid., 74.

U. Hand-colored etching: *Jerusalem, the Holy City*, by Frans Hogenberg, in *Civitates Orbis Terrarum* by Georg Braun and Frans Hogenberg (Cologne, 1575)

Flemish engraver and cartographer Frans Hogenberg and theologian Georg Braun together published the six-volume *Civitates Orbis Terrarum* in Cologne in 1575.<sup>547</sup> The multi-volume set included 363 views and city plans of the Holy Land including this view of Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives (plate 17).<sup>548</sup> The map became one of the most popular of its kind. Several buildings occupy the Mount Zion compound, enwalled in a half-moon pattern as in the maps of Marino Sanudo and pseudo-Burchard. The Cenacle may be identified as the building with the dome-topped structure at its end. If it is a minaret that is shown, then it is positioned correctly at the west end of this rectangular structure. The only other architectural candidate for the Cenacle is the flat-roofed building south of the two towers with its connecting hall or breezeway. The latter appears to be two stories tall and its eastern wall would be realistically depicted.

V. Copper plate engraving: by Christiaan van Adrichom, *Urbis Hierosolyma Depicta*, Jewish National & University Library (1584)

Delft, Netherlands, native Christiaan van Adrichom originally planned to publish a three-part history of the Holy Land but he died before issuing any but the first volume.<sup>549</sup> It was this initial issue that contained the depiction of Jerusalem shown here as well as nine other maps (plate 18).<sup>550</sup> Braun and Hogenberg published Adrichom's

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<sup>547</sup> Ariel Tishby, "Frans Hogenberg," in Tishby, 146.

<sup>548</sup> Ibid.

<sup>549</sup> Nebenzahl, 90.

remaining volumes posthumously. They also included a revised version of Adrichom's Jerusalem map in the fourth volume of their *Civitates Orbis Terrarum*. Whereas Adrichom had depicted the city facing eastward, Braun and Hogenberg's reproduction is oriented with north on top.<sup>551</sup> Adrichom did not visit Jerusalem and scholars suggest he relied on sources such as the pilgrim account of Burchard and that of Eton college professor William Wey.<sup>552</sup> It has also been suggested that Sanudo's map was consulted but Adrichom himself identified the maps of Jacob Zeigler and Tilemannus Stella as his sources though they do not equal in richness of detail the work of Adrichom.<sup>553</sup> The map is intended to represent Jerusalem in the days of Jesus. However, many representations rely on the contemporary situation in the city.

Mount Zion appears to occupy the entire southern end of the city. But Adrichom confuses the southeastern City of David with the Upper City located in the southwest. The Cenacle sits beside St. Stephen's tomb. The "blessed house of Mary" lies to the east of the Cenacle, the "Tabernacle of Zion" to the north, and the "Palace of Caiaphas and of the high priests" to the west. Little is to be gained historically from this depiction other than to note the separation of the Cenacle from Stephen's tomb and Mary's house.

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<sup>550</sup> Shai Cohen, "Christian van Adrichom," in Tishby, 96.

<sup>551</sup> It is Adrichom's version that is shown here. The revised map is more widely seen.

<sup>552</sup> Nebenzahl, 90.

<sup>553</sup> Cohen, 96.

W. Drawings: Ground plan and elevation of the Cenacle, by Bernardino Amico, *Trattato delle Piantee Imagini de I Sacri Edificii di Terra Santa*, Rome, 1609

Bernardino Amico, a native of Gallipoli, was a friar of the Franciscan order. As such he was assigned to Jerusalem in 1593 where he carried out his plan to artistically reproduce all the city's shrines with architectural exactitude.<sup>554</sup> His intention was to provide models for artists in Europe who would benefit from accurate drawings made according to scale.<sup>555</sup> Once the drawings were back in Rome, artist A. Tempesti shaded and engraved them for reproduction.<sup>556</sup> The descriptions are brief and the legends concise.

The elevation view of the Cenacle (plate 20) is from the west demonstrating the existence of the now missing western façade with its stepped entrance that is also visible in the ground plan. Amico could only visit the second floor of the Cenacle and any first floor rooms that did not impose upon the mosque. The sarcophagus shown in room B of the ground plan, perhaps once attributed to Stephen, is a duplicate of the one below it in the Tomb of David mosque. This room, formerly the chapel of the Holy Spirit, was now a Muslim *maqam*; note the *mihrab* in the eastern wall. Compare Amico's drawing with that of Vincent (plate 29) which shows a wall bisecting the room just south of the *mihrab*. Rooms D and E were, and continue to be, those associated with the Last Supper.

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<sup>554</sup> Bagatti, introduction to Bernardino Amico, *Plans of the Sacred Places of the Holy Land*, trans. Eugene Hoade (Jerusalem: Franciscan Press, 1953), 2.

<sup>555</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>556</sup> Ibid.

## X. Conclusion

A wide variety of artistic renderings of the Cenacle from throughout the centuries gives the clear, if slightly inconsistent, impression that this structure was from before the rise of Hagia Sion in the fourth century, an independent structure not resulting from the erection of either its Byzantine neighbor or the later Crusader cathedral. It, too, suffered continuous damage from both human and natural forces and reflects its centuries of repair in the current composition of its building materials especially as found in the exterior walls. Nevertheless, three successive religious faiths have maintained this building, refusing to let it succumb either to the elements or to wanton destruction, recognizing its sacred character regardless of the myths invoked to explain its uniqueness. Clearly this building, in its earliest form, was sited on ground that was initially characterized as marking an episode of hierophany on southern Mount Zion. The subsequent churches built alongside this primitive form resulted from each successive community's efforts to honor and venerate the many and various sacred events and relics that attest to its consecrated nature.

### PART III. ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE CONCERNING THE CENACLE

#### The Archaeology of the Occupation of Mount Zion from 30 to 135 CE

##### Introduction

Chapter one reviewed the literary evidence for a Jewish-Christian community on southern Mount Zion in the century following the crucifixion. This chapter will now consider archaeological and anthropological, as well as textual evidence to determine whether a continuous Jewish-Christian presence might have existed on the southwest hill from before the first revolt to the reign of Hadrian. The socio-economic status of pre-70 CE Mount Zion, as determined by archaeological and literary investigation, will also be discussed and compared for consistency with the presumed socio-economic level of the followers of Jesus as described in the New Testament. Literary traditions and archaeological investigations of the proposed house of Caiaphas will be incorporated into the discussion to consider class differentiation with respect to locality. Also connected with this subject is a brief comment about the theory of Bargil Pixner that a community of poor Essenes inhabited southern Mount Zion in the first century and that this had an impact on the disciples' decision to locate their base of operations there. In the following section, archaeological evidence related to the possibility that a pre-70 CE structure could have survived the first revolt will be addressed as will the social and political conditions on Mount Zion in the period following the first Jewish revolt including the presence of the newly-arrived tenth legion. Finally, archaeological evidence for the existence of walls around the city during and immediately after Hadrian's reconstruction of Jerusalem as Aelia Capitolina will be considered.

## The Location of the Upper Room on Mount Zion

### A. Socio-Economics and the Literary and Archaeological Record

Objections to the presence of a pre-70 CE Jewish-Christian community anywhere on Mount Zion have been raised based on archaeological evidence that demonstrates that the western hill, known as the Upper City in Jesus's time, was wholly populated by wealthy priests and other aristocratic members of the royal and retainer classes and thus unsuitable for followers of Jesus.<sup>557</sup> Excavations have supported the consensus opinion that many civic and religious elites began, in the first century BCE, to locate their residences just south of King Herod's new palace. This socio-economic environment, it is claimed, was ill-suited to hosting a band of itinerant Jewish peasants, who, according to one model of the early Jesus movement, embraced poverty, eschewed the wealthy, and thus failed to find support among the upper classes.<sup>558</sup> It may well be, however, that such a claim is an exaggeration that excludes certain evidence to the contrary that can also be gleaned from the New Testament.

The Gospel of Luke identifies a number of financially-secure followers of Jesus who reportedly became patrons or patronesses of the early movement. If this information is historically accurate, these followers might have been able to afford higher-quality residences.<sup>559</sup> Joanna, wife to Chuza, the manager of Herod's estate (Luke 8:2-3), is one

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<sup>557</sup> Taylor, *Holy Land*, 208: "Certainly, the socio-economic character of this part of Jerusalem would make it very unlikely that Christians had their main center in this quarter."

<sup>558</sup> Ibid.: "The early Christians were not an upper-class movement, and it would be very surprising indeed to find their principal base among the residences of the very chief priests, Herodians, and other privileged persons they most scorned."

<sup>559</sup> The Fourth Gospel may hint that the Beloved Disciple, known, or even kin, to the high priest, may have been host to Jesus and the disciples for the Last Supper.

such case in point. No doubt a resident of Tiberias, she appears to have had resources at her disposal, perhaps due to her husband's position within the retainer class, to fund the Jesus movement as well as the social connections to attract other like-minded investors.<sup>560</sup> Along with Joanna, the early messianic community appears to have consisted of an anonymous group of "women," as Luke collectively calls them (Acts 1:14), who "provided for [the Jesus party] out of their means" (Luke 8:3).<sup>561</sup> Luke later identifies one of these wealthy female followers of Jesus as Mary who owned a large house in Jerusalem.<sup>562</sup> Her domicile is featured in a story in the Acts of the Apostles that takes place after Peter escaped from the prison of Herod Agrippa I (ca. 43/44 C.E.).

[Peter] went to the house (*oikos*) of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying. And when he knocked at the door of the gateway (*thuran tou pylōnos*), a maid name Rhoda came to answer. Recognizing Peter's voice, in her joy she did not open the gate (*pylōna*) but ran in and told that Peter was standing at the gate. They said to her, "You are mad..." But Peter continued knocking; and when they opened, they saw him and were amazed...he described to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, "Tell this to James and to the brethren."<sup>563</sup>

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<sup>560</sup> Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 4.19.1: "That certain wealthy women accompanied Christ, and ministered to him of their possessions, and among them the wife of the king's steward, is taken from prophecy," trans. Canon Ernest Evans, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), [http://www.tertullian.org/articles/evans\\_marc/evans\\_marc\\_10book4\\_eng.htm](http://www.tertullian.org/articles/evans_marc/evans_marc_10book4_eng.htm) (accessed August 24, 2013). See also Carla Ricci, *Mary Magdalene and Many Others: Women who followed Jesus* (trans. Paul Burns; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 154-155: mention of Joanna "accords with Luke's tendency to mention people of high social standing." Also Ross Shepard Kraemer and Mary Rose D'Angelo, *Women & Christian Origins* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 117: Joanna "is of relatively high social status." Also Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 166. According to Kraemer and D'Angelo (p. 56), persons in positions such as steward were "often legally slaves."

<sup>561</sup> But see Ludemann, *Early Christianity According to the Traditions in Acts: A Commentary*, trans. John Bowden (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 27: "for purely linguistic reasons it seems more likely that the women should be seen as the wives of the disciples. Were they female followers of Jesus, one would have expected the article before *gynaixin* ['women']. Moreover, when the women disciples of Jesus are mentioned in the Gospel they are almost always defined more closely." Nevertheless, "the existence of women disciples as members of the earliest Jerusalem community is also a historical fact" (p. 31).

<sup>562</sup> Ben Witherington, III, *Women in the Earliest Churches* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 146: "Luke portrays Mary as a widow" and "as financially well-to-do." But see n. 9 below.

<sup>563</sup> Acts 12:12-17.

If, as some scholars suggest, this episode preserves historical details, it reveals a number of important pieces of information about the dwelling of John Mark's mother.<sup>564</sup> It may be assumed that her house was in Jerusalem although this is nowhere explicitly stated. The sense of Luke's story is that the house was relatively close to the prison in which Peter was held (whether this was the Antonia fortress adjacent to the Temple, a dungeon in Herod's palace, or a cell in the crypt of Caiaphas's house is uncertain). Commentators who presume that the house must have been rather large and expensive are surely correct as it boasted both a courtyard and a gated (*pylōn*) entrance.<sup>565</sup> The relative wealth of the owner and size of the house is confirmed by Mary's employment of a servant and by the added notice that there were numerous people within.

Other property-owning disciples are featured in the Book of Acts. These include Barnabas (Acts 4:36-37) who sold a field for the benefit of the Jerusalem community. Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1), a married couple, sold property in order to donate the proceeds to the group. Manaen (Acts 13:1) was a member of the court of Herod Antipas and likely well-to-do. Nicodemus, a secret admirer of Jesus according to the Gospel of John, may be identified with Nicodemus ben Gurion, aka Bunai, a wealthy, devout Jew who opposed the Zealots during the revolt against Rome in the late 60s.

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<sup>564</sup> Ludemann, *Early*, 146: "It is historically probable that Mary and her maid Rhoda were members of the Jerusalem community...similarly, Mary's house in Jerusalem is probably a historical fact."

<sup>565</sup> But, according to Ivoni Richter Reimer, *Women in the Acts of the Apostles: A Feminist Liberation Perspective* (trans. Linda M. Maloney; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 241: "the single reference to a *pulōn* ["gateway", "porch"/"vestibule"] seems to me too little to permit us to conclude that Mary had great wealth." She notes that Simon the tanner had a *pulōn* (Acts 10:17) and "exegetes utter not a word about any supposed wealth of the despised tanner!" The text does not specifically say that Mary was the owner of the slave: "Rhoda behaves as if she were not a slave" by asserting herself in Mary's house (p. 242).

The archaeological evidence is not entirely consistent, however, with regard to the economic prosperity of the inhabitants on Mount Zion. In a 1971-72 excavation, near one of the locations thought to have been occupied by the house of the high priest Caiaphas (now the Armenian Church of St. Savior), Magen Broshi found evidence of affluent residents who likely were among those who moved to Mount Zion sometime after the earthquake of 31 BCE.<sup>566</sup> Broshi determined that the area had become densely populated during the following century. In his area of excavation north of the Cenacle, residential dwellings were determined to have been mostly two- and three-story houses. Some had fresco wall murals. They “leave no doubt that this quarter was occupied by the more affluent residents of Jerusalem.”<sup>567</sup> An excavation led by Shimon Gibson and James Tabor, currently underway on southern Mount Zion east of the Cenacle, has likewise uncovered an expensive home likely belonging to a wealthy priest of the first century.<sup>568</sup>

Yet not all of the evidence supports a high standard of living on the southwest hill. In 1983, Bargil Pixner conducted excavations south of the Cenacle that uncovered more modest first-century homes prompting him to suggest that there may have been a number of different economic zones on southern Mount Zion.<sup>569</sup> A row of Herodian/Roman-period domestic walls were discovered that belonged to a number of poorly built

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<sup>566</sup> Broshi, “Excavations in the House of Caiaphas, Mount Zion,” in *Jerusalem Revealed: Archaeology in the Holy City 1968-1974*, Yigael Yadin, ed. (Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society, 1975), 58.

<sup>567</sup> Ibid., “Mount Zion, 83.

<sup>568</sup> “Mount Zion Dig Reveals Possible Second Temple Period Priestly Mansion, Abandoned and Preserved,” University of North Carolina, <http://publicrelations.uncc.edu/news-events/news-releases/mt-zion-dig-reveals-possible-second-temple-period-priestly-mansion-abandon> (accessed September 17, 2013).

<sup>569</sup> Pixner, *Paths*, 370. On page 367 he laments that “too little importance is given to the fact that in the southern part of Mount Zion, some poorly built buildings were found in our excavations, unlike the affluent Herodian houses excavated by M. Broshi on Mount Zion.”

houses apparently abandoned during the first Jewish revolt in 67-68 CE.<sup>570</sup> The additional discovery nearby of more modestly-sized *miqva'ot* and ancient oil presses cut into the bedrock are also, in Pixner's view, indicative of less affluent residents.<sup>571</sup>

#### B. Social Stratification and Geographical Proximity: Archaeology and the House of Caiaphas

What is to be made of the close proximity of the Cenacle to the location of the house traditionally identified as belonging to the high priest Caiaphas not more than twenty meters away? It seems counter-intuitive that the earliest Christian community would have chosen to locate itself here, only a stone's throw from the house of the very high priest who not only delivered their messiah to Pilate for crucifixion but who continued to persecute them as well (Acts 4:1-21; 5:17-40). Here again, answers from both the archaeological and literary record are inconclusive. The location of Caiaphas's house on the grounds of the Armenian Monastery of St. Savior is not assured. A competing tradition, equally old, locates his residence further east on the slope of Mount Zion at the site of the Church of St. Peter in Gallicantu. Scholars are divided as to which is the actual location.<sup>572</sup>

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<sup>570</sup> Ibid., 371.

<sup>571</sup> See also R. Riesner, "Essener und Urkirche auf dem Südwesthügel Jerusalems (Zion III): die archäologisch-topographischen Forschungen von Bargil Pixner OSB (1921-2002)," in *Laetare Jerusalem: Festschrift zum 100jährigen Ankommen der Benedictinermönche auf dem Jerusalemer Zionsberg*, Nikodemus C. Schnabel, ed. (Münster: Aschendorf, 2006), 217.

<sup>572</sup> Pixner, *Paths*, 257; Pringle *Corpus*, 346-7, 365; and Riesner, "Primitive," 204, decide for the Church of St. Peter in Gallicantu. Murphy-O'Connor, *Holy Land*, 119; Wilkinson, *Jesus*, 136; and Finegan, 245, decide for the Church of St. Savior.

The earliest testimony to the location of Caiaphas's house comes from the anonymous pilgrim who traveled to Jerusalem from Bordeaux, France, in 333 CE.

As you leave Jerusalem to climb Sion, you see down in the valley on your left, beside the wall, the pool called Siloam . . . Climbing Sion from there you can see the place where once the house of Caiaphas used to stand, and the column at which they fell on Christ and scourged him still remains there.<sup>573</sup>

Jack Finegan believes that the “most natural reading” of this text describes a place high on the hill near St. Savior's. Pixner disagrees. His tracing of the pilgrim's steps shows that a location near St. Peter in Gallicantu is more likely what the pilgrim describes. Regardless, Christian churches were eventually erected on both sites. The remains of the original church beneath St. Savior's at the top of Mount Zion date to the sixth century;<sup>574</sup> those beneath St. Peter in Gallicantu date to the fifth.<sup>575</sup> Pixner finds additional evidence to support his choice of St. Peter in Gallicantu in the sixth-century Madaba mosaic map.<sup>576</sup> In the mural, Pixner has identified the remains of a church, signified by a few remaining tiles of a red roof, that he believes can be seen in the general area where the church now stands.<sup>577</sup> No such tiles appear on any building in the location of St. Savior's.

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<sup>573</sup> Bordeaux Pilgrim, *Itinerarium Burdigalense* 592.

<sup>574</sup> Finegan, 243.

<sup>575</sup> Ibid., 244. Murphy-O'Connor, *Holy Land*, 119, makes it the sixth century but adds that certain “structures, cellars, cisterns, stables” date to the Herodian period.

<sup>576</sup> Pixner, *Paths*, 260.

<sup>577</sup> Red tiles signify sacred structures like Christian churches.

### C. Sectarian Influences: Archaeology and the Jerusalem Essenes

Bargil Pixner has championed the identification of the remains of a gate (first discovered in 1894 by Frederick Bliss and Archibald Dickie) in the ruined foundations of an ancient wall that once surrounded the southern portion of Mount Zion as the “Gate of the Essenes” mentioned by Josephus.<sup>578</sup> According to Pixner’s interpretation of the remaining sills, the gate was first installed by King Herod on behalf of the Essenes after they were forced to move to Jerusalem following the destruction, by enemy activity in 37 BCE and by an earthquake in 31 BCE, of their commune in Qumran.<sup>579</sup> Pixner argues that the gate allowed the Essenes to leave their residences within the walls of Jerusalem for the purpose of relieving and then purifying themselves outside.<sup>580</sup> These Essenes, according to Pixner, remained in Jerusalem until the Jewish revolt in 66-70 CE. He proposes that, if a group of Essenes resided on southern Mount Zion at the time of Jesus, and if it can be shown that Jesus and his disciples were in some way connected to these Essenes, then by extension the Jesus movement would have been closely connected to the southwest hill. Though the identification of the sills has largely been accepted as the remains of the Essene Gate as described by Josephus, little consensus has been reached regarding the establishment of a so-called “Essene Quarter” on southern Mount Zion. Other scholars have suggested that it is at least as likely that the Essenes lived outside the walls and utilized the gate when they wished to come into the city to go to the Temple.<sup>581</sup>

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<sup>578</sup> Josephus, *Jewish War* 15.371.

<sup>579</sup> Pixner, *Paths* 194.

<sup>580</sup> *Ibid.*, 213-14.

<sup>581</sup> Horbury, 73.

Still others look for the Essene Gate elsewhere.<sup>582</sup> It simply remains uncertain where the Essenes resided at this time and unproven that they were intimate with Jesus and the disciples in Jerusalem.<sup>583</sup>

In conclusion, the possibility cannot be disproven on socio-economic or archaeological grounds that Jesus's disciples maintained a presence on southern Mount Zion prior to 70 CE. Such a presence would lend credibility to the notion that events described in the New Testament and later commemorated on the southwest hill actually occurred there. If Jesus and his disciples had conducted activities there, perhaps in a singular structure made available for their use, could it have survived the war?

#### The End of the First Revolt on Mount Zion

##### A. Archaeological Evidence of Destruction

Based upon his excavations, and despite Epiphanius's comments to the contrary, Bargil Pixner concluded that southern Mount Zion had indeed been destroyed in 70 CE along with the rest of the city. In 1983, he discovered a thick layer of ash over the steps of a Jewish *miqveh* located in front of the present Dormition Abbey. Within the ash, coins from the first and second years of the revolt were found, though none were discovered

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<sup>582</sup> Gibson, "Suggested Identifications for 'Bethso' and the 'Gate of the Essenes' in the Light of Magen Broshi's Excavations on Mount Zion," in *New Studies in the Archaeology of Jerusalem and its Region* (Joseph Patrich and David Amit, eds.; Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem Institute of Archaeology, and Moriah – The Jerusalem Development Co., 2007): 25-33, esp. 29: "a gateway complex of definite Second Temple period . . . along the western Old City wall [outside the Citadel]. . . is this gate that I am now going to suggest is the Gate of the Essenes." Other suggestions include the modern Dung Gate, the Valley Gate, and a location somewhere in the southeast wall. See Riesner, "Josephus' 'Gate of the Essenes' in Modern Discussion," *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* (1953-), 105 (1989):105-109.

<sup>583</sup> Gibson, "Bethso," 31, suggests "rejecting the hypothesis put forward by Pixner that there was a separate Essene Quarter in the southern part of the Upper City on traditional Mount Zion, in the close proximity to an exclusive aristocratic and priestly neighborhood situated in the shadow of Herod's old palace."

from the period immediately afterward.<sup>584</sup> Although evidence is limited in this section of the city, many archaeological excavations throughout Jerusalem have uncovered similar evidence of widespread destruction. A number of excavations conducted in the 1970s confirmed extensive devastation throughout Jerusalem in 70 CE including at the Temple complex. There, excavators uncovered tremendous piles of gigantic ashlars (squared stones of from three to five tons each) that covered the public courtyards and streets around the southwest corner of the Temple mount. Other excavations in the Jewish Quarter (plate 33) exposed the destruction of several large, elaborate mansions by intense fire. However, not all archaeologists are convinced of the extent of the damage caused by the Roman victory.

Meir Ben-Dov does not believe the destruction of the city to be as complete as Josephus describes.<sup>585</sup> He concludes that the Temple continued to stand at a considerable height following the Roman attack as demonstrated by the fact that many pieces of it have been found atop Byzantine remains suggesting that the complete destruction of the Temple did not occur until the Persian sack of 614 CE.<sup>586</sup> Ben-Dov also suggests that many of the city's fortifications were left standing as were a number of houses, at least up to the second story.<sup>587</sup>

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<sup>584</sup> Pixner, *Paths*, 331.

<sup>585</sup> Stemberger, 51.

<sup>586</sup> Ibid.

<sup>587</sup> Ibid.

B. Social Stratification and Geographical Proximity: Archaeology and the *Legio X Fretensis* on Mount Zion

The *Legio X Fretensis*, *V Macedonica*, *XII Fulminata* and *XV Apollinaris* began their five-month siege of Jerusalem in 70 CE.<sup>588</sup> After the suppression of the revolt, *X Fretensis* became the sole legion assigned to maintaining the peace throughout the province of Judea from their new military camp in Jerusalem. The source for this information originates with Josephus.

Caesar ordered the whole city and the temple to be razed to the ground, leaving only the loftiest of the towers, Phasaël, Hippicus, and Mariamme, and the portion of the wall enclosing the city on the west: the latter as an encampment for the garrison that was to remain, and the towers to indicate to posterity the nature of the city and of the strong defenses which had yet yielded to Roman prowess.<sup>589</sup>

C. W. Wilson suggested in 1906 that the legionary camp occupied the entire western hill before it contracted in size with the re-founding of the city as Aelia Capitolina to an area encompassing only the modern Armenian and Jewish quarters (plate 33).<sup>590</sup> Michael Avi-Yonah and Yoram Tsafrir suggest that the camp was smaller in size, analogous to Wilson's second phase, and envision its eastern limit at Jews' and Habad Street in the Jewish Quarter.<sup>591</sup>

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<sup>588</sup> Fergus Millar, *The Roman Near East 31 BC – AD 337* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 75. Strangely, the only inscriptions from the Roman period mention legions not generally assumed to have been stationed in Jerusalem. On the Zion gate, near the legionary camp, was found an inscription in secondary use mentioning the *Legio III Cyrenaica*. East of the Damascus Gate, an inscription referring to the *Legio XI Claudia* was discovered. See Geva, "The Roman Period," 2:760.

<sup>589</sup> Josephus, *Jewish War* 7.1.1.

<sup>590</sup> Cited by Geva, "Searching," n.p.

<sup>591</sup> Geva sites both Avi-Yonah, *Carta's Atlas of the Period of the Second Temple: The Mishnah and the Talmud* (Jerusalem, 1966) and Tsafrir, *Zion – the South-western Hill of Jerusalem and its Place in the Urban Development of the City in the Byzantine Period*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1975).

Archaeological excavations conducted in the 1970s by Hillel Geva have led him to challenge previous assumptions that the legionary camp extended to the southern part of the western hill.<sup>592</sup> Geva suggests that actually only a small detachment of the legion remained in Jerusalem after the destruction of the city.<sup>593</sup> Little more than a few tiles and water pipes stamped with the legion's mark were found to show that they were ever there.<sup>594</sup> Geva surmises that, other than their barracks headquarters established below the three towers once belonging to the palace of Herod the Great, their structures were made of wood and thus temporary in nature. But though "there is insufficient evidence as to the plan, dimensions and features of the Roman camp in Jerusalem," Geva did at least confirm "the existence of living quarters of the Tenth Legion here."<sup>595</sup> In addition, he determined that other, similarly-sized camps were located in and around the city as well.<sup>596</sup> The camp likely encompassed an area approximately 400 by 500 meters (437 by 547 yards, about 49 acres) and, if typically laid out, was divided by two main, intersecting streets: the north-south *cardo maximus* and the east-west *decumanus maximus*.<sup>597</sup>

The restricted nature of the camp on northern Mount Zion makes it less improbable that a community of Jewish Christians might have inhabited the southern

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<sup>592</sup> Geva, "Searching," n.p.

<sup>593</sup> Ibid.

<sup>594</sup> Geva, "Excavations in the Citadel of Jerusalem, 1979-1980: Preliminary Report," *Israel Exploration Journal* 33 (1983): 64-65.

<sup>595</sup> Geva, "Citadel," 67.

<sup>596</sup> Ibid., "Searching," n.p.

<sup>597</sup> Wightman, 195.

part. John Gray concurs that “a nondescript settlement had grown up around the Roman camp of the Tenth Legion on the south-west hill.”<sup>598</sup> The various attestations of an agricultural area perhaps separating the camp from the southern area are instructive here. According to Pixner, Israeli archaeologists have confirmed the agricultural nature of parts of southern Mount Zion at this time supporting the report by Eusebius and others that the area had been ploughed over.<sup>599</sup> Also, the regular procedure of the Roman legions of constructing walls around military camps should not be overlooked regardless of the current lack of sufficient archaeological evidence. The evidence is not non-existent, however. In the Citadel, Broshi found “a few fragmentary walls attributed to the late Roman-early Byzantine periods” consisting of “resued ashlar cut down and laid with their margin-dressed surfaces facing in all directions.”<sup>600</sup> In 1964, Kathleen Kenyon conducted excavations in the area of the Armenian Quarter and found fragmentary evidence of Roman occupation from the first to the second centuries.<sup>601</sup> She did not conclude that these were military in nature though “their exceedingly fragmentary state makes it difficult to be certain.”<sup>602</sup> She also found bricks stamped with the Legion’s mark though she could not find conclusive evidence of a wall. G. J. Wightman suggests that

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<sup>598</sup> Gray, 188.

<sup>599</sup> Pixner, *Paths*, 342.

<sup>600</sup> Geva, “Citadel,” 64.

<sup>601</sup> Kathleen Kenyon, “Excavations in Jerusalem, 1964,” *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 97, no. 1 (1965), 20.

<sup>602</sup> *Ibid.*

“traces of a southern wall for the camp may yet be uncovered just inside the Ottoman wall within the Armenian Garden, an area that has never been investigated.”<sup>603</sup>

It is highly unlikely that the soldiers would leave themselves vulnerable. There were other social and religious factors at play here, too. The legions routinely kept their camps enclosed behind walls as if the area inside were sacred ground.<sup>604</sup> Within the camp, shrines were constructed to hold the legionary standards and for worshipping the official gods, including the emperor. It is thus highly unlikely that the camp of the tenth legion had no walls. Prior to the arrival of Hadrian and the construction of the walls of Aelia, the legion must have constructed a more rudimentary enclosure. That no survival of these materials exist today is not hard to understand. Over centuries of construction and destruction, of invasion and repulse, as buildings went up for religious reasons and were brought down for competing religious and political reasons, not to mention the needs of the everyday citizen to obtain materials for his own personal requirements, those wall materials have all but vanished. After Hadrian, we might infer that the walls of Aelia served the same purpose as the camp walls, to shut out the non-Roman.

Geva points to the area known as Legio in Megiddo as an example of a Roman camp with conditions similar to what he proposes for Jerusalem in which “no substantial remains of a Roman military camp have been found.”<sup>605</sup> However, the work of Yotam Tepper, and before him, Gottlieb Schumacher, has uncovered a Roman fortress belonging

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<sup>603</sup> Wightman, 195.

<sup>604</sup> John Helgeland, Robert J. Daly, and J. Patout Burns, *Christians and the Military: The Early Experience*, ed. Robert J. Daly (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 48.

<sup>605</sup> Geva, “The Camp of the Tenth Legion in Jerusalem: An Archaeological Reconsideration,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 34 (1984): 252.

to the *VI Legio Ferrata* atop a spur of El Manakh hill in Megiddo surrounded by an earthen rampart that served as its defining walls, therefore calling Geva's comparison into question.<sup>606</sup> There may not be "absolute proof" of the archaeological kind that Geva insists on finding,<sup>607</sup> but this is, of course, only one form of evidence.

It is worth recounting the testimony of the Bordeaux Pilgrim in 333.

Inside Zion, within the wall, you can see where David had his palace. Seven synagogues were there, but only one is left – the rest have been 'ploughed and sown' as was said by the prophet Isaiah [Isa 1:8].<sup>608</sup>

This wall is difficult to understand if we assume it is the remains of the pre-70 CE wall of Herod's time that surrounded the entire southwest hill.<sup>609</sup> It appears rather to be quite close to the structures which it encloses, namely, the palace of Herod (mistakenly attributed to David). A wall running close to the line of the present Old City wall across southern Mount Zion seems the likeliest interpretation of the pilgrim's account.<sup>610</sup> Though "no remains of the 'wall of Sion' have yet been found," Wightman understands that the one that the pilgrim is referring to "must be the city wall between the 'House of Caiaphas' and Tower of David."<sup>611</sup> The seventh-century pilgrim Arculf describes the

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<sup>606</sup> Yotam Tepper and Leah Di Segni, *A Christian Prayer Hall of the Third Century CE at Kefar 'Othnay (Legio): Excavations at the Megiddo Prison 2005* (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2006), 12-13.

<sup>607</sup> Geva, "Camp," 245.

<sup>608</sup> Bordeaux Pilgrim, *Itinerarium Burdigalense* 592, trans. Wilkinson, *Egeria*, 30-31 (emphasis added).

<sup>609</sup> This is unlikely as, according to Wightman, 207, "it is virtually certain that at this time the First Wall's south-western sector and southern trace were still in ruins, and that the southern part of Mount Sion along with the south-eastern hill lay outside the walled town."

<sup>610</sup> See also further discussion in connection with establishment of a mithraeum and *domus ecclesiae* below.

<sup>611</sup> Wightman, 207.

same wall: “One section of the wall with its towers has no gates. This is the stretch along the northern edge of Mount Sion (which overlooks the city from the south), from the Gate of David as far as the eastern side of the Mount, where there is a cliff.”<sup>612</sup> According to Wightman, “this must be a reference to the south-western section of the Late Roman wall, the only one which can be said to have run across the northern summit of Mount Sion.”<sup>613</sup> Occupation of southern Mount Zion by civilians after 70 CE remains a distinct possibility. Could the inhabitants have built for themselves a synagogue?

There is evidence to suggest that synagogue construction waned across Palestine after 70 CE, not to resume until the late second or early third centuries.<sup>614</sup> Yet we are left with a fourth-century tradition that seven synagogues stood on Mount Zion throughout some portion of the Roman period. Both the Bordeaux Pilgrim and Epiphanius attest to it. For reasons discussed above, it is less likely that any synagogues could have been built in Jerusalem after Hadrian than after Titus. It seems unlikely that there is no historicity at all behind the tradition that some synagogues stood on southern Mount Zion prior to the fourth century. There must have been some evidence shown to the pilgrim of their previous existence, perhaps ruined foundations. If Jews resided in Jerusalem after the destruction of the Temple, they surely met somewhere for religious purposes. There is literary evidence of a number of synagogues in Jerusalem prior to the first revolt.<sup>615</sup>

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<sup>612</sup> Adomnan, *The Holy Places*, 1.v224.5-6, trans. Wilkinson, *Pilgrims*, 169-70.

<sup>613</sup> Wightman, 229.

<sup>614</sup> Rachel Hachlili, *Ancient Synagogues – Archaeology and Art: New Discoveries and Current Research* (Boston: Brill, 2013), 55.

<sup>615</sup> From literary sources we know of several synagogues in Jerusalem. The New Testament Acts of the Apostles (6:9) refers to from one five. Rabbinic literature speaks of grossly inflated numbers of Jerusalem synagogues. Levine, 58, cites the following sources: 480 synagogues (*Yerushalmi Megillah* 3.1.73d; *Pesikta deRav Kahana* 15:7, *Song of Songs Rabbah* 5:12, *Lamentations Rabbah* 2:4 and *Proem*

Surely some remained or new ones were built. Though the evidence remains inconclusive it does not seem impossible that one or more synagogues might have stood on southern Mount Zion for some portion of the Roman period. Whether the Cenacle was one of these remains to be addressed.

### C. Hadrian's Walls?

Though little archaeological evidence has turned up to help locate the walls belonging to the Tenth Legion's camp after 70 CE, there is some evidence that the lower part of Mount Zion was separated from Aelia Capitolina after 135 CE. Such walls remain, however, a matter of debate.<sup>616</sup>

Magen Broshi and Yoram Tsafrir write that "it is generally held that the city wall of Late Roman Jerusalem was first built on the same course as" the modern Old City wall though they suggest that "this wall was built at the end of the third century A.D."<sup>617</sup> Tsafrir claims that "it can be proven that the earliest wall following this line was erected towards the end of the third century A.D. in the time of Aelia Capitolina."<sup>618</sup> They add that when Eudocia built new walls in the sixth century surrounding the lower southwest

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12); 481 synagogues (*Yalqut Shim'on*i, Isaiah, 390); 460 synagogues (*Yerushalmi Ketubot* 13.1.35c); 394 synagogues (*Bavli Ketubot* 105a).

<sup>616</sup> Ben-Dov, 141, is among those that say Hadrian did not establish new walls. The Israeli Antiquities Authority states that the walls destroyed in 70 CE were not rebuilt until the end of the third or early fourth centuries. "The Conservation of Jerusalem's City Walls," Israel Antiquities Authority, [http://www.antiquities.org.il/jerusalemwalls/hstry\\_06\\_eng.asp](http://www.antiquities.org.il/jerusalemwalls/hstry_06_eng.asp) (accessed December 19, 2014), but decline to credit their builder. Wightman, 205, credits either Diocletian, who may have constructed walls after transferring the *X Frentensis* to Eilat on the Gulf of Aqaba, or Constantine who may have sought to protect the new Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

<sup>617</sup> Broshi and Tsafrir, 34-6.

<sup>618</sup> Tsafrir, "Muqaddasi," 155.

hill, the walls of Hadrian gradually disappeared. The remains of a Byzantine gate that some have identified as the Nea Gate were found in the proposed Roman wall located 120 meters south of the church of the same name.<sup>619</sup> It is clearly visible in the Madaba mosaic map.<sup>620</sup> Tenth-century Arab topographer Muqaddasi named the southern gates along this wall of Aelia. From east to west, they are Bāb Sihyūn (Zion Gate),<sup>621</sup> Bāb an-Nia (Nea Gate) or Bāb at-Tih (Gate of the Desert Wanderings),<sup>622</sup> Bāb al-Balāt (Gate of the Court or Gate of Pilate),<sup>623</sup> Bāb Jubb Armiyā (Gate of Jeremiah's Pit or Dung Gate), and Bāb Silwān (Gate of Siloam).<sup>624</sup> And even though Broshi and Tsafrir found no evidence of the Late Roman wall in their excavation of the Zion Gate, they conclude that “we see no reason, on the basis of our severely limited excavation, to discard the proposed course of the Late Roman wall.”<sup>625</sup>

Hillel Geva, however, while agreeing that “the Roman occupation level on the western hill undoubtedly had a military character,”<sup>626</sup> denies that it was fortified<sup>627</sup> and

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<sup>619</sup> Broshi, “Walls,” 14.

<sup>620</sup> Wightman, 222, claims that “the map omits any clear reference to the Late Roman southern wall, which would have been depicted between Holy Sion and the Nea . . . Omission of the Late Roman southern wall from the map supports the impression gained from the Piacenza pilgrim's description, that the wall had been mostly abandoned or built over by the late 6<sup>th</sup> century.”

<sup>621</sup> According to Wightman, 239, “this is the first historical notice of a Sion Gate after the Persian sack of 614” though its exact location is debated.

<sup>622</sup> A spelling error might indicate that the proper name for this gate is ‘bab an-niah’ referring to the nearby Nea Church. Tsafrir, Sharon, and Bahat accept the change. Wightman, 240, awaits “more positive evidence.”

<sup>623</sup> Yoram Tsafrir and Dan Bahat suggest “balat” is a corruption of Pilate (see next note). Others derive the word from the Latin *palatium*, “palace” or “court.” See Wightman, 240-1.

<sup>624</sup> Tsafrir, “Muqaddasi,” 153, 159.

<sup>625</sup> Broshi and Tsafrir, 36.

<sup>626</sup> Geva, “Camp,” 244.

discounts the opinion that Aelia was “designed on the traditional plan of a Roman military camp” wherein “the present Old City’s walls preserve the fortification line of Aelia Capitolina.”<sup>628</sup> Meir Ben-Dov also doubts whether Aelia had a city wall; if it did, he suggests, remnants of the destroyed pre-70 CE wall were likely used to build it.<sup>629</sup> Geva concludes that “there is no proof that . . . a new defense wall was erected during that period.”<sup>630</sup>

Part of that proof, as Broshi and Tsafir indicated, may be found in the sixth-century Madaba mosaic map of Jerusalem (plate 3). Just to the left (north) of the building universally recognized as Hagia Sion, are what appear to be the remnants of a wall with two gates, located near where the current Old City wall is today.<sup>631</sup> Just above this is the gate that sits at the end of the *cardo maximus* just outside the Nea Church. Perhaps it is the Nea Gate as suggested by Nahman Avigad.<sup>632</sup>

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<sup>627</sup> Ibid., 248.

<sup>628</sup> Ibid., 239.

<sup>629</sup> Cited in Stemberger, 52.

<sup>630</sup> Geva, “Camp,” 240-1.

<sup>631</sup> Tsafir, “Muqaddasi,” 156.

<sup>632</sup> Nahman Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1980), 227.

## Archaeology of the Major Churches on Mount Zion

### A. Introduction

Modern archaeological interest in the sacred structures on southern Mount Zion arose with the 1899 acquisition, by the German Kaiser Wilhelm II from the Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid II, of a piece of property contiguous with that upon which the former churches of the Byzantine Hagia Sion and the Crusader Church of St. Mary stood. The plot was located in the northwest sector of an area loosely known to the indigenous Muslim population as Nebi Daud (the “grave of David”). The land was subsequently transferred by the Kaiser to the German Association of the Holy Land and the Archbishopric of Cologne for the purpose of constructing a shrine in honor of the dormition, or “falling asleep,” of Mary, the mother of Jesus.<sup>633</sup>

Journal articles, including those published in the Association’s *Das Heilige Land* by Dominican priest and Jerusalem resident Louis Heidet (1850-1935), began appearing in 1899.<sup>634</sup> Their ultimate purpose seems to have been to confirm the exact spot upon which tradition said that the Virgin Mary had passed away (in order to ensure that the floor plan of the new church would incorporate it). Part of Heidet’s research included a history of the Cenacle as well as that of the Byzantine and Crusader churches.

Catholic theologian Carl Mommert (1840-1910), who visited the site four times between 1879 and 1897, compiled his own survey of the requisite literature but also took measurements and made a visual inspection of the Cenacle though he conducted no

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<sup>633</sup> Mackowski, 142.

<sup>634</sup> See L. Heidet, “Das heilige Sion oder die Stätte Mariä heimgang,” parts 1-3 in *Das Heilige Land* vol. 43, nos. 2-4 April/July/October 1899: 93-100, 146-154, and 168-179.

archaeological investigation as such. His work frequently takes issue with conclusions reached in an earlier history of the Cenacle prepared by Swiss physician Titus Tobler (1806-1877).<sup>635</sup>

At this time, few non-Muslims had ever been allowed to enter the Cenacle's lower, eastern rooms including that occupied by the tomb of David. Guards prohibited entry to the building and even the theoretically accessible upper floor could often only be entered with payment of *bakshish*.<sup>636</sup>

#### B. Ermete Pierotti (fl. mid-19<sup>th</sup> century)

Ermete Pierotti, from Modena, Italy, was both archaeologist and engineer. Employed by Soraya Pasha, Ottoman governor of Jerusalem, to serve as architectural consultant to the Temple Mount renovations from 1854 to 1861, Pierotti was one of the few non-Muslims to gain access into the tomb of David room in 1859 after "much expenditure of money and patience."<sup>637</sup>

The sarcophagus [of David] is not of unpolished grey marble, but of whitish Palestine breccia, called marble by the ancients, from its resemblance in working and polish. The greyish color is due to its age, and perhaps also to the bad light or to the shade cast by the upraised carpets on the small part of it that was examined. The medallion does not mark the position of the Prophet's navel, as the Sheikh said, but is a simple decoration attached to the sarcophagus; it is repeated on each of the other sides. Neither is it of darker marble, but as it is continually kissed by devotees, its color has been altered. The form of the sarcophagus is a rectangular parallelepiped, formed of different blocks of breccia well fitted together without mortar. The lid is *à dos d'âne*, of several pieces of stone [joined together]; at least so it appears at each end, but in the middle and on the top I have been unable to

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<sup>635</sup> Titus Tobler, *Zwei Bücher Topographie von Jerusalem und seinen Umgebungen*, vols. I-II (Berlin: Reimer, 1853-4).

<sup>636</sup> Vincent and Abel, 421.

<sup>637</sup> Pierotti, 213. Pierotti's visit to the tomb followed that made by Msgr. Jacques Mislin four years earlier (see chapter 6).

detect the divisions. All this shows that it is not a real sarcophagus, but only an imitation or cenotaph erected on the spot to conceal something below. On lifting up the mats at the corners of the chamber and near the tomb, I found that the pavement is laid upon the rock, which corresponds in its nature with that exposed all about the upper part of Sion. I carefully examined the north side and the base of the monument, in the hope of discerning signs of an opening, but in vain. When I asked the Sheikh for information on the point, he appeared surprised at my question, and from that moment endeavored to get me out of the place as quickly as possible; and under the circumstances I had no choice but to comply.<sup>638</sup>

Pierotti became convinced that a chamber had been cut into the bedrock beneath the tomb of David sarcophagus. He cited various literary sources as evidence that such a cavern did indeed exist and might be the actual tomb of King David. These traditions included the story reported by Josephus that King Herod had once attempted to rob the tomb until two of his guards were mysteriously killed trying to enter it. Dio Cassius reported that the tomb had mysteriously collapsed in the time of Hadrian.<sup>639</sup> Benjamin of Tudela told a miraculous story about two workmen toiling on southern Mount Zion who inadvertently discovered a hidden cavern “supported by pillars of marble encrusted with gold and silver, and before which stood a table with a golden scepter and crown.”<sup>640</sup> This was identified as the tomb of David but a search of the cavern was abandoned after certain ominous events prevented them from further exploration. Finally, in 1363, the Florentine Sophia degli Arcangeli, who built a hospice on Mount Zion, inadvertently stumbled upon an underground cavern as she began developing a site in the Latin cemetery in order to add space in which to bury pilgrims who had died on their journey. Such evidence prompted Pierotti to locate a series of steps on the western side of the

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<sup>638</sup> Pierotti, 213-214, slightly modified.

<sup>639</sup> Dio Cassius, *Historia Romana* 69.14.2: “For the tomb of Solomon, which the Jews regard as an object of veneration, fell to pieces of itself and collapsed, and many wolves and hyenas rushed howling into their cities.”

<sup>640</sup> Benjamin of Tudela, *Masa’ot Binyamin* 85.

southwest hill below the ridgeline which led to a cave-like opening. The entrance, he discovered, “had once been larger and had been reduced in size by masonry so that it could be closed with a stone. The rock . . . showed traces of the iron tools with which it had been wrought, and also exhibited the small holes made to admit clamps of iron or lead to fasten down the stones that were laid upon it.” This entrance, he concluded, must have led into the Tomb of the Jewish Kings. In order to proceed further into the cavern, Pierotti had to remove “a quantity of skulls, masses of bones, and other materials.”<sup>641</sup> Within he found “a huge vault, which I perceived to run under a large portion of the cemetery above . . . It is now almost full of bones, which are thrown in whenever they are found in digging graves.”<sup>642</sup>

Although I saw the beginning of the corridor on the east, I was unable to enter it, as it was quite filled with rubbish, and I have only inferred [in his plan – see plate 30] its junction with the chamber containing the sarcophagus which passes for David’s Tomb. I found over a large part of the cavern the marks of the tools used in excavating it. At some places there appeared to be the upper parts of doorways; these might be entrances into other vaults; the mass of rubbish however made it impossible to determine this. I also thought that the vaulting was supported by piers; but was unable to satisfy myself on this point, as what I saw might have been caused by a settlement of the ground above that had brought the roof into contact with the rubbish accumulated inside, which was in such quantities, that I could not without great labor have distinguished the one from the other. As then I cannot conceive this great work undertaken for any other than an important purpose, I believe that it is the vestibule of the Tombs of the Jewish Kings.

During his investigations of the area, Pierotti drew a floorplan and elevation of the Cenacle (plate 30).

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<sup>641</sup> Ibid. 216.

<sup>642</sup> Pierotti, 215.

### C. Selah Merrill (1837-1909)

U.S. Civil War chaplain Selah Merrill worked as an archaeologist for the American Palestine Exploration Society from 1874-1877. He also served as United States Consul in Jerusalem on three separate occasions from 1882 through 1907. While digging graves at the American mission on southern Mount Zion, he discovered a large plastered floor six feet beneath the soil upon which “were many human bones.”<sup>643</sup> During the excavations by the German architect Renard (see below), the plastered floor was once again uncovered along with “a mass of human bones” which “formed a great bed or layer of pretty uniform depth 12 inches thick . . . The number of skulls was appalling.”<sup>644</sup> This layer of bones, already determined to extend over an area of some thirty by fifty feet (nine by fifteen meters), continued beyond the German property into that of the American mission, the full extent of its boundaries yet undetermined. The skeletal remains of from three to five hundred people were found to have been “simply thrown or dumped here indiscriminately two or three deep and covered with earth.”<sup>645</sup> The question remains whether these are the remains of massacres following the Persian conquest of Jerusalem in 614 CE and/or are in some way related to the cavern earlier discovered by Pierotti and extending from the western side of Mount Zion to an entrance beneath the Cenacle. Are the bones all randomly strewn or is there a subterranean tomb beneath the site of the Byzantine and Crusader churches that pilgrims in previous centuries once referred to as a “crypt?”

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<sup>643</sup> Selah Merrill, “Notes from Jerusalem,” *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 35 (1903): 154.

<sup>644</sup> Ibid.

<sup>645</sup> Ibid.

D. Heinrich Renard (1868-1928)

German architect Heinrich Renard was chosen to design the Church of the Dormition. He arrived in Jerusalem in May, 1899, to conduct a site survey. Part of his preliminary work included excavating and clearing the German property. He also managed to make an inspection of the Cenacle. Though barred from penetrating most of it, he and construction architect Theodor Sandel (1845-1902) along with his son Benjamin (1877-1941), became the first modern Westerners to take accurate measurements and make detailed sketches of the site.

They determined that the architecture of the upper floor, measured at 15.4 by 9.45 meters (50.5 by 31 feet),<sup>646</sup> was representative of the fourteenth century, not surprising given the restoration attempts during that period by the Franciscan fathers. Further calculations showed that the Cenacle stood 771.5 meters (2,531 feet) above sea level.<sup>647</sup> Its overall height ranged from 4.5 to 5.5 meters (14.75 to 18 feet). The lower floor was one-to-two meters (3.3 to 6.5 feet) below grade due to centuries of accumulation of structural debris and household rubbish.<sup>648</sup>

Excavations conducted within the German property helped enable Renard to establish a footprint for Hagia Sion as well. Work began near the southeast corner of the American cemetery. There they found exposed ashlar that were determined to predate the Crusader period. Remains of the foundations of the western and northern walls of Hagia Sion allowed Renard to estimate the church's footprint at 60 by 40 meters (197 by

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<sup>646</sup> Renard, 7.

<sup>647</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>648</sup> Ibid.

131 feet) and establish that it was built as a double-naved structure of from three to five aisles.<sup>649</sup> Discovered within the boundaries established by the walls was a neatly plastered, stepped pit suggesting a bath (ancient *miqveh*?) lying adjacent to a pear-shaped cistern which probably fed it.<sup>650</sup> Another nearby pit was determined to have been a collection tank for an olive press.<sup>651</sup> Of these features, only the press, according to Renard, was likely in use when the foundations of Hagia Sion were laid.<sup>652</sup>

Renard speculated that most of the archaeological evidence for Hagia Sion had been removed over the centuries by neighboring residents who carted off the neglected materials for use in building homes, stables, etc.<sup>653</sup> Only the remains of a few columns, some white marble capitals, and marble lattice work testified to the decorative elements of the old church.<sup>654</sup> With regard to the location of the Cenacle, Renard proposed that it stood adjacent to Hagia Sion; it was not enclosed by it.<sup>655</sup> This means that the Cenacle building was either already in place when Hagia Sion was built or, less likely, it was built contemporaneously with Hagia Sion for reasons unexplained.<sup>656</sup> Renard's reconstruction of the later Crusader church also left the Cenacle outside its walls (plate 33).<sup>657</sup>

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<sup>649</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>650</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>651</sup> Ibid.

<sup>652</sup> Ibid.

<sup>653</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>654</sup> Ibid.

<sup>655</sup> Ibid., 14 and diagram page 18-19.

<sup>656</sup> But see the suggestion by Vincent below.

<sup>657</sup> Renard, diagram page 11.

E. Louis Hugues Vincent (1872-1960)

Some two decades after Renard's work in Jerusalem, and some ten years after the completion of the Church of the Dormition (construction lasted from 1900 to 1910), Dominican friar Louis Vincent completed an extensive survey of Renard's work papers as well as the area that again included the Cenacle and the grounds of the former Hagia Sion.<sup>658</sup> Visual inspection of the Cenacle's walls confirmed for Vincent its construction history, found among the layers of Byzantine, medieval, and Arab-period elements.<sup>659</sup> He determined that the architecture of the upper room largely reflected the work of Cypriot builders of the fourteenth century.<sup>660</sup> Nevertheless, certain later appointments were evident such as the Arab-period dome (*qubba*) over the interior stairwell<sup>661</sup> and the Arabic plaque on the wall in the upper room commemorating the date of the conversion of the site into a mosque (January 8, 1524).<sup>662</sup>

Working only on the second floor,<sup>663</sup> Vincent took note of the two disparate components of the building: the long rectangular western section oriented east to west and the elevated, but smaller and rectangular, eastern section oriented north to south.<sup>664</sup>

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<sup>658</sup> Vincent began his investigations in 1898, resumed them in 1906 and 1907 and completed them in January, 1920. See Vincent, 424 n. 1.

<sup>659</sup> Vincent and Abel, 422.

<sup>660</sup> Ibid., 423.

<sup>661</sup> Ibid., 430.

<sup>662</sup> Ibid., 471.

<sup>663</sup> Vincent obtained measurements of the first floor by retaining the services of a Muslim informant identified by Mauritius Gisler. From these, and discussions with the informant, he created a ground floor plan. In this drawing, no niche is described, probably owing to the fact that it was covered with curtains and long since forgotten. See Vincent, 429.

<sup>664</sup> Vincent and Abel, 424.

This latter section was itself divided into a square chamber to the north, covered by a dome supported by squinches with multiple projections, and a rectangular room to the south with pointed vaults and a large, bricked-in door in the southern wall.<sup>665</sup> The square chamber to the north stood immediately above the lower tomb of David room and possessed its own cenotaph marking the location of the one below it.<sup>666</sup> Actual entry into the room was blocked by a heavy gate through which Vincent was able to briefly observe the interior. This area was once known as the Chapel of the Holy Spirit.<sup>667</sup>

Vincent was able to gain access to the terraced roof and confirmed the disjointed nature of the two large sections of the Cenacle. He noted the Arab-period dome atop the tomb of David section and its lack of conformity with the exterior lines of the building.<sup>668</sup> Also on the roof, he observed the Muslim minaret and a small lead-covered dome, both dating to the sixteenth century.<sup>669</sup>

An examination of the exterior walls of the Cenacle revealed no organic north wall as such but rather crude partitions inserted between two massive pillars, each two meters wide by three meters thick, with engaged columns on either end.<sup>670</sup> The two large central columns are, in Vincent's view, the last survivors of the interior columns of the Crusader church which, he speculates, enclosed the Cenacle, its north side being open to

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<sup>665</sup> Vincent and Abel, 424. This may be the arch referred to by Nicholas of Poggibonsi (see above). A squinch is a straight or arched structure across an interior angle of a square tower to carry a superstructure such as a dome.

<sup>666</sup> Ibid. This cenotaph was made of wood, according to Pierotti, 215.

<sup>667</sup> Ibid., 472.

<sup>668</sup> Ibid., 424.

<sup>669</sup> Ibid., 472.

<sup>670</sup> Ibid. 424. See also Gisler, 6.

the cathedral's interior.<sup>671</sup> Turkish dwellings now lay adjacent to the Cenacle on this side.<sup>672</sup>

The east wall that stands above the Muslim cemetery of the Daouâdneh was especially revealing.<sup>673</sup> Vincent noted the large foundation blocks at the base of the wall (plate 23).<sup>674</sup> These blocks, most evident in the eastern and southern walls, date from relatively late in the Byzantine period, according to Vincent.<sup>675</sup> He discerned that these stones are of secondary use, originally intended for, or previously used in, another structure.<sup>676</sup> Vincent concluded that in the second half of the fourth century, but no earlier than 350 CE, Byzantine builders acquired these stones from nearby pagan temples lying in ruins, and also from the remains of structures erected by the tenth Roman legion.<sup>677</sup> Nevertheless, Vincent did not discount the possibility that an earlier form of the Cenacle existed here prior to this one, though its history remains accessible only from the literary record.<sup>678</sup> In his view, this potentially earlier structure was demolished by Bishop Maximus when he began constructing Hagia Sion.<sup>679</sup> Unlike many scholars who have

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<sup>671</sup> Gisler, 6.

<sup>672</sup> Vincent and Abel, 472.

<sup>673</sup> According to Vincent and Abel, 425, this name was originally reserved for the families who were charged with guarding the sanctuary of Neby Daoud. It gradually came to indicate the entire clan who resided there. In the early century it was used as an honorary title for the entire Muslim population of the quarter.

<sup>674</sup> Noted by the municipal engineer in 1859.

<sup>675</sup> Vincent and Abel, 431.

<sup>676</sup> Ibid.

<sup>677</sup> Ibid., 439. As indicated above, Geva has found no evidence of any legionary structures.

<sup>678</sup> Ibid., 440.

<sup>679</sup> Ibid., 450. Mackowski suggests the ashlar originated with Bishop Makarios in 335 C.E.

determined that no part of the Cenacle pre-dates the fourth century, Vincent dealt with the evidence offered by the Madaba mosaic.<sup>680</sup> He identified the building to the right of Hagia Sion in the map as either the diaconicon of the basilica or else a monastery.<sup>681</sup> He did not dismiss entirely the prospect that it might be evidence of a deliberate Byzantine reimagining of the earlier upper room of the disciples though he did not consider the present Cenacle to be the remains of that reconstruction.

Vincent established the main axis line for Hagia Sion differently than Renard and criticized Renard's omission of the Cenacle from Hagia Sion's overall structure.<sup>682</sup> He claimed that the surest means of establishing the Byzantine date of the intact masonry of the wall at A-A1 (the only point where intact archaic structures were found on the German property) is by comparing it with the southern and eastern walls of the Cenacle, which Vincent had already determined to be Byzantine (plate 21).<sup>683</sup> To bolster his proposal for the overall homogeneity of the two structures, he noted that by extending a line from the south wall of the Cenacle westward a connection can be made to the remains of wall z-z1 (plate 22).<sup>684</sup> He also asserted that the east wall of the Cenacle is too parallel to A-A1 for these not to be part of the same large structure.<sup>685</sup> Vincent envisioned the beginning of an angled extension emanating from the ruined northeast corner of the

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<sup>680</sup> Taylor, *Holy Places*, 218, referred to the Madaba map but only to the building universally recognized as Hagia Sion. She did not address the structure to its right.

<sup>681</sup> Vincent and Abel, 452.

<sup>682</sup> Ibid., 435.

<sup>683</sup> Ibid., 436.

<sup>684</sup> Ibid.

<sup>685</sup> Ibid.

Cenacle that at one time anchored the southern end of a round or polygonal eastern apse.<sup>686</sup> This apse, he proposed, would have been as wide as the distance between A-C1 and B-B1, that is, 12 meters (39 feet), the distance also between the central rows of columns.<sup>687</sup> By applying a distance equal to the length of the eastern wall of the Cenacle to the northern row of columns, Vincent estimated the placement of the north wall of Hagia Sion, just where Renard had previously located the northern boundary of its central nave.<sup>688</sup> Vincent imagined Hagia Sion to be similar in design to the Byzantine Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem, roughly 60-62 meters long by 34 meters wide (197-203 by 111.5 feet) divided into five aisles with a singular eastern apse. Interestingly, Vincent proposed that the Crusaders shifted the footprint of their church northward leaving the area of Hagia Sion's southern aisles free for a new chapel dedicated to the memory of the original Cenacle. Evidence for the shift comes from the ruins of the Crusader church's northwest corner, ruins that show no evidence of construction elements older than the Crusades (this is the footprint Renard identified for the Byzantine basilica).<sup>689</sup>

As a consequence, Vincent's new proposed siting shifted the location of the chapel of the dormition of Mary in the old Hagia Sion church to a point south of the modern Church of the Dormition, meaning that the twentieth-century Benedictine structure no longer incorporated the traditional site within its floorplan. His proposed location could not have been well-received by the resident Benedictines. Vincent's investigation,

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<sup>686</sup> Ibid.

<sup>687</sup> Ibid.

<sup>688</sup> Ibid.

<sup>689</sup> Vincent and Abel, 437.

however, succeeded once and for all in establishing the western and eastern wall foundations of the Byzantine and Crusader churches.

#### F. Mauritius Gisler (1855-1940)

The Benedictine Gisler was one of the first inhabitants of the new Dormition Abbey built on the same grounds acquired by the Kaiser. In 1935, he published his review of Renard's and Vincent's studies and offered his own conclusions based on an excavation he conducted in the garden west of the Dormition church (formerly the American cemetery).<sup>690</sup> His efforts were directed toward establishing the positions of the northern and southern walls of the old churches to determine once and for all whether the Dormition church stood over the northern portion of Hagia Sion as Renard had originally determined. Digging down to bedrock, he discovered four corner-foundations belonging to a stepped porch that stood immediately in front of the western wall of Hagia Sion and provided access to the elevated narthex (plate 23).<sup>691</sup> Gisler dated this series of finely dressed stones to the Byzantine period.<sup>692</sup> Establishing the center point of the porch led him, by extension, to fixing the east-west axis line of the basilica.<sup>693</sup> He determined the distance from this axis line to the northern wall of the Cenacle to be 19.8 meters (65 feet). Applying this measurement to the north side of the axis line (reflecting the symmetrical design of Byzantine basilicas of the period), he established the location of the northern

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<sup>690</sup> Gisler, 6-9.

<sup>691</sup> Ibid., 8. F-G-H-J in his diagram.

<sup>692</sup> Ibid.

<sup>693</sup> Ibid., 9.

wall. This northern wall line crossed over recently discovered foundations now lying under the Dormition Church.<sup>694</sup> According to Gisler, therefore, Hagia Sion was 39.6 by 54.8 meters (130 by 180 feet) long (plus 4.6 meters [15 additional feet] for the narthex) and did not include the Cenacle within its walls.<sup>695</sup>

The width of the porch (12.2 meters/40 feet) was also assumed to match the width of the narthex and nave. A report from ca. 660 CE written by the Armenian pilgrim Anastasius noted that there were 80 columns in Hagia Sion.<sup>696</sup> With that, Gisler determined that the church featured five aisles with four rows of columns spaced ten feet apart.<sup>697</sup> Thus, each of the four flanking aisles was estimated at 6 meters (20 feet) in width.<sup>698</sup>

The elegant Byzantine proportions of Gisler's reconstruction were determined not to have been carried over by the Crusaders when they built atop the ruins of Hagia Sion. Their slimmer design, based on the juxtaposition of two 90 by 90 foot (20.4 by 20.4 meter) squares, was interrupted by the enclosed Cenacle on the southeast corner.<sup>699</sup>

Gisler used the Madaba map mosaic as evidence against Vincent's suggestion that Hagia Sion enclosed the Cenacle. The building depicted to the right of Hagia Sion, he

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<sup>694</sup> Ibid.

<sup>695</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>696</sup> Ibid., 8. Gisler cites Anastasius of Armenia, *The Seventy Armenian Convents of Jerusalem*, trans. Father Leontius Alishan, Archives de l'Orient Latin, Vol. II, 394.

<sup>697</sup> Gisler, 11.

<sup>698</sup> If the axis line divides the 40-foot nave in half, and the distance from the axis line to the north wall of the Cenacle is 65 feet, then 45 feet (65 less 20) remains on each side for aisles. Two 20-foot aisles plus five feet for columns and walls is appropriate.

<sup>699</sup> Gisler, 12.

observed, has its own entrance, supports a simple lean-to roof, and appears to be an annex rather than an element of new construction.<sup>700</sup> Gisler also relies once again on the testimony of Anastasius. If the Cenacle was the southeast corner of Hagia Sion, as Vincent surmised, there would be no columns in that portion of the church and thus tightly crowding the 80 columns seen by Anastasius to the point that only a meter of clearance would have existed between them.<sup>701</sup>

G. Emanuel Eisenberg (1934 - )

Trial soundings in front of the Dormition Church were conducted in 1983 by Emanuel Eisenberg.<sup>702</sup> His excavations uncovered the northwest corner of the Crusader church verifying the slimmer profile established by Gisler. He, too, considers that the Cenacle was once a part of the Crusader church. Eisenberg's reconstruction of that edifice measures 72 by 36 meters (249 by 118 feet) aided by the discovery of the central doorway buried under the Dormition bell tower. Additional digging exposed "fragmentary rooms, partly rock-hewn and plastered with grey and white plaster" on the west side of the door plus a clay oven and two coins, or *perutot*, dated to the second year of the first Jewish revolt. On the eastern side, a *miqveh* was found covered with black plaster and, four meters north of that, a square cistern, partly rock-hewn and partly of ashlar with a barrel-vaulted roof, was discovered. Two columns thought to have

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<sup>700</sup> Ibid.

<sup>701</sup> Ibid.

<sup>702</sup> E. Eisenberg, "Jerusalem: Church of the Dormition," in *Excavations and Surveys in Israel* (Jerusalem 1984), Eng. trans. of *Hadashot Arkheologiyot*, 1984-5, p. 47.

belonged to Hagia Sion's atrium (porch) were located in the southeast part of the property in an ancient refuse dump.

#### H. Summary

To summarize, Renard located Hagia Sion north of the Cenacle, leaving the latter free-standing and therefore potentially older. The Crusader church likewise did not encompass the Cenacle. Vincent shifted the location of the Byzantine church southward encompassing the area of today's Cenacle. He allowed for the possibility that something similar to the Cenacle may have preexisted Hagia Sion, but is now nowhere in evidence. The Crusader church, on the other hand, was built north of the Cenacle area upon which a commemorative Cenacle structure was created by the Crusaders over remains of the southeast corner of Hagia Sion. Gisler, with additional archaeological evidence, determined that Hagia Sion did not include the Cenacle. The later church of St. Mary did, however. Eisenberg agreed. In 1983, Bargil Pixner, taking advantage of excavations for the purpose of the installation of a sewer near the Church of the Dormition, was able to locate the southwest corner of the front foundation of the Crusader church.<sup>703</sup> He found that it aligned with the southern wall of the Cenacle, suggesting to him that the one enclosed the other.<sup>704</sup>

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<sup>703</sup> Pixner, *Paths*, 354-5.

<sup>704</sup> Ibid.

Michael Avi-Yonah wrote in 1993 that “Renard’s view, especially his location of the church’s site, is more widely accepted by modern scholars.”<sup>705</sup> It appears more than demonstrable that the Cenacle was a separate structure before the Byzantine basilica was built. In 1997, scholars Rainer Riesner, Eugenio Alliata, Frederic Manns, and Bargil Pixner inspected the rarely accessible northeastern room of the upper floor. There, they “could observe that in the so-called ‘Chapel of the Holy Spirit’ above the ‘Tomb of David’ the outer wall of the Hagia Sion can be seen,”<sup>706</sup> demonstrating that the Cenacle originally stood south of the Byzantine church.

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<sup>705</sup> Michael Avi-Yonah, s.v. “Jerusalem: Mount Zion,” in *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, vol. 2, Ephraim Stern, et. al., eds. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 778.

<sup>706</sup> Riesner, “What Does Archaeology Teach Us About Early House Churches?” *Tidsskrift for Teologi og Kirke* 78 (2007):179; *idem.*, “Urkirche,” 227-30.

## Archaeology of the Cenacle

### A. Jacob Pinkerfeld (1897-1956)

The only archaeological examination of the Cenacle itself came after the 1948-9 Arab-Israeli War. The resulting so-called Green Line boundaries left Israel with control of southern Mount Zion. Rocket attacks caused damage to the Cenacle but before repairs were effected, Israeli archaeologist Jacob Pinkerfeld was selected to study it in 1951. Pinkerfeld's initial report of his findings (no final report followed due to his untimely death) highlighted four key discoveries: (1) the condition and date of the exterior walls, (2) the presence of a large niche in the north wall on the first floor, (3) the successive layers of the first floor itself, and (4) several pieces of plaster bearing graffiti.<sup>707</sup> Brief as the report is, it remains the only modern archaeological examination of the Cenacle to date. Future examiners would have to be content with Pinkerfeld's report, visual inspections, other non-intrusive examinations, and the extensive, though inconclusive, literary and artistic record.

### B. Four Key Discoveries

#### 1. The Lower Course of Ashlars

Pinkerfeld confirmed Louis Vincent's earlier observation that the lower ashlar in three of the exterior walls of the Cenacle (north, south, and east) were recycled, that is, not originally cut for this structure (plate 23). Pinkerfeld dated the exterior stones to the late Roman period, ca. 135-325 CE, a time frame he thought best represented the

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<sup>707</sup> A preliminary report, "David's Tomb' Notes on the History of the Building" was published by Pinkerfeld in Hebrew as *Bishviley Omanut Yehudit*, Merhavia, 1957.

Cenacle's first phase of construction (and one with which this paper generally agrees). Digging to bedrock at the Cenacle's northeast corner (see his photograph, plate 24) he appears to have demonstrated that "the foundation stones form a straight vertical line and are not interlocking in any way with any other structure to the north," offering evidence "that the Cenacle building was from the start a building by itself. Its ashlar therefore were not part of the [Byzantine] Hagia Sion."<sup>708</sup> Vincent had earlier suggested that this part of the wall continued to turn eastward to form an apse.

Bargil Pixner disagrees with Pinkerfeld's dating of the ashlar, however. The lower courses of stones on the east and south walls, he claims, are "attributed by most archaeologists" not to the Roman period but to the earlier Herodian period, i.e. before 70 CE.<sup>709</sup> He concluded that the building's first phase of construction could be much earlier than Pinkerfeld's dating suggests. Pixner does concur with Vincent and Pinkerfeld that the stones were not "originally hewn for this building . . . They were brought here from elsewhere and reused."<sup>710</sup>

That these stones were brought to this site from elsewhere is indicated by their irregular sizes (according to Vincent, from 91 to 104 cm [36 to 41 inches] in height and 50 to 104 cm [19.6 to 41 inches] in width) and by the damage done to their corners, presumably from being roughly transported to the site.<sup>711</sup> Joan Taylor considers the sizes

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<sup>708</sup> Pixner, "Nazoreans," 298.

<sup>709</sup> Ibid., *Paths*, 333. These archaeologists are not identified.

<sup>710</sup> Ibid.

<sup>711</sup> Ibid. The idea is that a planned structure would use even rows of blocks of similar size. On page 336, Pixner suggests the stones may have come from the damaged Citadel. How the congregation managed to get them from under the noses of the tenth legion is not explained.

of the blocks to be inconsistent with the suggestion that this was once a synagogue.<sup>712</sup> She agrees that the ashlar are from the first century but insists that only the Byzantines of a later period (ca. 325-638 CE) would have possessed the resources to move such blocks; any first-century Jewish-Christian builders would have used fieldstones and built a smaller synagogue.<sup>713</sup> The next higher course of stones she identifies, along with Vincent, as being from the Crusader period. Therefore, the contention that the lower course is Roman is to presume that the Crusaders found no Byzantine remains in this area, a “very unlikely” situation, she suggests.<sup>714</sup> Taylor’s objections seem to be partially based on speculation as to what the Jerusalem Christian community of the first few centuries of the Common Era was economically or mechanically capable of doing. Whether or not the Cenacle was once a synagogue, evidence from around Palestine shows that Jewish houses of assembly built in antiquity were sometimes constructed of heavy ashlar. Some were founded and funded by single wealthy individuals.

As for her skepticism as to whether Crusader-era structural elements could sit directly atop Roman ruins with no Byzantine courses in between, several possibilities present themselves. No Byzantine repair work may have been needed in this area because severe damage to the Cenacle did not occur until shortly before the first Crusade. Or, Crusader builders may have found it necessary to clear away earlier Byzantine restoration work due to its dilapidated condition.

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<sup>712</sup> Taylor, *Holy Places*, 215.

<sup>713</sup> Ibid., 216.

<sup>714</sup> Ibid., 217.

Oskar Skarsaune agrees that the walls are too massive to have ever been used for a small synagogue and therefore must be the ruins of a later Byzantine structure.<sup>715</sup> Denys Pringle also considers the reused ashlar characteristic of Byzantine masonry.<sup>716</sup> Katharina Galor and Hanswulf Bloedhorn, on the other hand, suggest that the Cenacle is the remaining portion of the rebuilt Crusader church from 1229 CE.<sup>717</sup>

Rainer Riesner argues that the shape and design of the original structure and the use of heavy ashlar would have been consistent with other first-century synagogues.<sup>718</sup> Among them is the synagogue at Qiryat Sefer (first-to-second century CE). But Skarsaune notes some odd features about the original walls of the Cenacle (plate 24). For example, the southern wall extends “way beyond the natural limit of the building’s west side” and there is no trace of a western wall at all or of the necessary corners “if there were any.”<sup>719</sup> However, Skarsaune is apparently only considering the tomb of David portion of the first floor when he suggests that the south wall extends beyond its “natural limit.” The Cenacle was originally larger than that. John Wilkinson, who argues that the Cenacle is the remainder of the Byzantine church, makes much of the fact that the north wall, of which the niche is part, does not line up or extend westward beyond the tomb of

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<sup>715</sup> Skarsaune, 189.

<sup>716</sup> Pringle, *Corpus*, 272.

<sup>717</sup> Katharina Galor and Hanswulf Bloedhorn, *The Archaeology of Jerusalem: From the Origins to the Ottomans* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 189

<sup>718</sup> Riesner, *Urgemeinde*, 59.

<sup>719</sup> Skarsaune, 189.

David room.<sup>720</sup> One response might be that this wall was torn down to provide open access to, and visibility of, the Cenacle from the Byzantine church.

Bellarmino Bagatti, referring to the Herodian ashlar, writes that because they “are very big...could not belong to the premises of an ordinary family.”<sup>721</sup> Ordinary houses, he proposes, were not constructed of such building materials.<sup>722</sup> This was a special-purpose building created for one reason which has never been characterized as anything other than religious in nature.

## 2. The Niche

On the interior of the north wall on the first floor, Pinkerfeld discovered a large niche (plate 25). After its interior plaster surfacing was removed, it measured 2.4 meters (7.87 feet) in diameter, 1.2 meters (4 feet) in depth and 2.44 meters in height. Pinkerfeld believed the niche to be similar to those found in other synagogues in which such spaces were used to house Torah scrolls.<sup>723</sup> The niche was determined (incorrectly) to be oriented toward the Temple mount area and, with that, Pinkerfeld concluded that the structure must have been a synagogue.

Pixner, however, upon re-examination, determined that the niche was not oriented toward the Temple mount but further northwest toward the Church of the Holy

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<sup>720</sup> Wilkinson, *Jesus*, 169-70.

<sup>721</sup> Bagatti, *Circumcision*, 118.

<sup>722</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>723</sup> Pinkerfeld, in his preliminary report, cited, by way of comparison, the synagogues at Eshtemoa in the southern Judean hills and Naveh in the Hauran. Hirschberg, 116, adds the synagogue at Arbel in Galilee to the examples. Unfortunately, the first building phase at Arbel has been dated to the fourth century (Hachlili, 59). The niche was not introduced until its second building phase in 6<sup>th</sup> to mid-8<sup>th</sup> centuries (Hachlili, 60).

Sepulchre, the reputed place of Jesus's burial and resurrection. This indicated to him that the building was not originally a Jewish synagogue but a Jewish-Christian one oriented toward a Christian shrine.<sup>724</sup>

Jerome Murphy-O'Connor argues that "it is impossible that the niche . . . could have belonged to a synagogue."<sup>725</sup> Skarsaune adds that the niche is off-center in the wall making it unlikely that this was the focus of the congregation's attention as it generally is in synagogues with Torah niches.<sup>726</sup> Taylor suggests that the niche is too high, at 1.92 meters (6.3 feet) above the original floor, to be a scroll niche and, like Skarsaune, believes it to be too large for Torah scrolls.<sup>727</sup> It is large enough for a sarcophagus, she adds, and suggests that it would be more suitable for housing Byzantine relics that were to be kept out of reach of the public.<sup>728</sup> Other scholars agree that the niche was originally part of the Byzantine basilica.<sup>729</sup> Wilkinson's reconstruction of the basilica, however, incorporating interior facing niches flanking a central apse, is entirely unique (plate 25).<sup>730</sup> In Krautheimer's exhaustive survey of Byzantine churches,<sup>731</sup> there is no evidence

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<sup>724</sup> Pixner, *Paths*, 329. Oddly, Pixner suggested that this is the sole survivor of three (!) such niches that once graced the building. See *ibid.*, "Nazoreans," 298. Pixner does not further elaborate on where the other two niches would be located. Surely he would not agree that this was one apse of the triapsidal Byzantine basilica championed by Pringle, et. al., in which the Cenacle was but one of two sacristies

<sup>725</sup> Murphy-O'Connor, *Holy Land*, 117.

<sup>726</sup> Skarsaune, 189.

<sup>727</sup> Taylor, *Holy Places*, 215; Skarsaune, 189.

<sup>728</sup> Taylor, *Holy Places*, 215.

<sup>729</sup> Wilkinson, *Pilgrims*, 351; *idem.*, *Jesus*, 170.

<sup>730</sup> Wilkinson, *Jesus*, 168.

<sup>731</sup> Richard Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Penguin, 1986).

of any other church with such a design.<sup>732</sup> Why such a strange architectural feature would be incorporated here on southern Mount Zion, and only here, is not explained.

The niche, explained as a structure to house Torah scrolls, appears to be the primary reason for Pinkerfeld's identification of the Cenacle as a former synagogue. It is true that most synagogues housed a Torah shrine, their most significant feature.<sup>733</sup> Nearly every synagogue had one.<sup>734</sup> The Torah shrine was an architectural stone structure normally found on the Jerusalem-oriented wall; it was used to house the ark that contained the scrolls<sup>735</sup> and served as the focus of attention in the interior of synagogues.<sup>736</sup> In post-70 CE synagogues, the congregation inside the hall prayed facing the Torah shrine.<sup>737</sup>

The holiest object in the synagogue was the Torah scroll encased in a wooden Torah Ark; it was permanently or temporarily stored in apses or niches during worship, at least in third- and fourth-century buildings.<sup>738</sup> The plan of synagogue buildings first and foremost provided for a prominent location for the Torah shrine that would house the

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<sup>732</sup> The Nea Church has been discovered to have had two interior apses flanking the central apse. But all of these face east. See Avigad, 232-4.

<sup>733</sup> Hachlili, 5.

<sup>734</sup> Ibid., 163.

<sup>735</sup> Ibid.

<sup>736</sup> Lee I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 303; Hachlili, 221.

<sup>737</sup> Hachlili, 163.

<sup>738</sup> Ibid.; Levine, 186.

Torah Ark.<sup>739</sup> In Palestine, this innovation seems to have originated only after the destruction of the Temple.<sup>740</sup>

The Torah Shrine might be fashioned in the form of an aedicula, a niche, or an apse.<sup>741</sup> Niches were built into the interior wall and, in some synagogues, a bema, or platform, was placed in front of it.<sup>742</sup> Two forms of niche have been found: semicircular and rectangular.<sup>743</sup> The niche consisted of the following elements which helped determined its shape and character and have been found in various combinations: (1) a façade of two or four columns, (2) an arch or gable supported by columns, (3) a conch which decorates the vaulted upper part of the niche, arch, or gable, (4) a base on which the niche is built, and (5) a flight of stairs leading up to the niche.<sup>744</sup> The niche in the Cenacle features none of these.

The ruins of only two structures, proposed to be synagogues from the Second Temple period in Palestine, have niches with which we might compare the one in the Cenacle.<sup>745</sup> The synagogue at Gamla, northeast of the Sea of Galilee in the Golan Heights, has been dated to the first century BCE.<sup>746</sup> It is “the only building that can be

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<sup>739</sup> Hachlili, 6.

<sup>740</sup> Ibid., 162, 221.

<sup>741</sup> Ibid., 163.

<sup>742</sup> Ibid., 164.

<sup>743</sup> Ibid., 182.

<sup>744</sup> Hachlili, “The Niche and the Ark in Ancient Synagogues,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 223 (1976): 43.

<sup>745</sup> The others are at Masada, Herodium, Qumran, Qiryat Sefer, Hammath Et-Tuwani and possibly at Capernaum, Migdal, Horvat ‘Ethri and Chorazim (now lost). Riesner, *Urgemeinde*, 61; *idem*, “Primitive,” 200, recognized the value of comparing Gamla with the Cenacle.

<sup>746</sup> Levine, 51.

safely identified as a synagogue from the pre-70 Galilee-Golan region.”<sup>747</sup> The main hall has a niche in the northwest corner wall; it is not oriented toward Jerusalem.<sup>748</sup>

The possible synagogue at Jericho has been dated to the first half of the first century BCE. The floor level of the niche is 50 centimeters below that of the aisles, that is, on the same level as the nave, and is situated in the northeast corner of the structure; it is divided into an upper and lower half.<sup>749</sup> The upper portion is 1.55 meters wide by 1.2 meters deep (5 by 4 feet). Its discoverer, Ehud Netzer, suggested that it “was probably used to store Torah scrolls and other books.”<sup>750</sup>

If the hall at Jericho is a synagogue, it would be the earliest Second Temple synagogue known.<sup>751</sup> Once again, its niche is not oriented toward Jerusalem which lies toward the southeast, but the focus of the congregation is more or less in that direction.

After the destruction of the Temple, but prior to the fourth century, synagogue building apparently declined precipitously. Only two discovered so far in Palestine from this period feature Torah shrines.<sup>752</sup>

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<sup>747</sup> Zvi Ma'oz, “The Synagogue of Gamla and the Typology of Second-Temple Synagogues,” in *Ancient Synagogues Revealed*, Lee I. Levine, ed. (Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society, 1981), 52.

<sup>748</sup> Levine, 51.

<sup>749</sup> Ehud Netzer, “A Synagogue from the Hasmonean Period Recently Exposed in the Western Plain of Jericho,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 49 (1999): 212.

<sup>750</sup> Netzer, 213.

<sup>751</sup> Levine, 69.

<sup>752</sup> Hachlili, *Ancient*, 74, writes that at Hammath Tiberias B (South) at its earliest IIB level (first half of the third century C.E.), the synagogue “had a small niche (about 1.20 m deep) in the extended northeastern corner.” Moshe Dothan, “The Synagogue at Hammath-Tiberias,” in Levine, *Revealed*, 65, however, writes that “we see that in the synagogue of Level IIB . . . there was no permanent location for the Torah shrine,” and that in the fourth-century IIA level, “steps led up into a raised cell . . . This apparently became the permanent location for the Torah shrine, for which there was no provision in the earlier synagogue.” In *idem*, *Hammath Tiberias: Early Synagogues and the Hellenistic and Roman Remains*

The synagogue at Nabratein, northwest of the Sea of Galilee, has been dated to between 250 and 306 CE making it the earliest known synagogue west of the Sea of Galilee.<sup>753</sup> Unfortunately, though it bears no evidence of a niche, there is the possibility that an aedicula stood on one of the platforms; it was attached to the interior southern wall and was likely used to house Torah scrolls.<sup>754</sup> That wall faced Jerusalem.

Sometime after the mid-third century, renovations to the synagogue at En-Gedi near Masada (synagogue II, stratum IIIA)<sup>755</sup> resulted in the creation of a rectangular niche measuring 1.10 by .35 meters (3.6 feet by 1 foot). It was created within the north wall facing Jerusalem.

Patterns of diaspora synagogue construction may be relevant to the study of the Cenacle since Jerusalem was a frequent destination for diaspora Jews at least several times each year. The potential for bringing ideas in architectural design from outside Israel should not be discounted.<sup>756</sup>

Renovations to the synagogue at Dura-Europos in Syria conducted between 150 and 200 CE led to the construction of a small Torah niche in the western wall facing Jerusalem.<sup>757</sup> Columns and an arch were built to surround the niche, creating a kind of

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(Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1983), 21, Dothan acknowledges the existence of the IIb niche but does not suggest that it was used for scrolls.

<sup>753</sup> Hachlili, *Ancient* 56.

<sup>754</sup> Ibid.

<sup>755</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>756</sup> A synagogue in use since the first-century C.E. in Ostia, Italy, features a niche which was, however, probably not installed until the fourth century. See L. Michael White, "Synagogue and Society in Imperial Ostia: Archaeological and Epigraphic Evidence," *The Harvard Theological Review* 90 (1997): 28-9.

<sup>757</sup> Levine, "The Synagogue of Dura-Europos," in *idem*, *Revealed*, 173.

aedicule, and “affording the Torah shrine an elegant appearance.”<sup>758</sup> The niche was painted during the mid-third century (plate 26).<sup>759</sup> It stood 1.06 meters (3.5 feet) above the floor with four stairs leading up to it.<sup>760</sup> (The niche in the Cenacle is 1.92 meters from the floor, nearly twice as high.)

A second-century CE synagogue at Priene, Turkey, fabricated in a renovated house, features a niche, or better, a rectangular apse, in the east wall facing Jerusalem.<sup>761</sup> Archaeologist Eleazar Sukenik first recognized the niche as evidence that the structure was a synagogue. A carved menorah was also found near it.

In Sardis, Turkey, a stepped apse with three niches was created in the western wall of the early third-century CE synagogue in its second stage of renovation. Andrew Seagar described the lower portion of the apse as “a podium of large, hewn blocks . . . Above the ashlar podium, the apse is entirely of brick except for a small quantity of rubble in the core . . . The apse seems to have been an afterthought.”<sup>762</sup>

The second- or third-century CE synagogue at Stobi in Macedonia features an apse facing eastward. This synagogue was also a renovated dwelling in which the

<sup>758</sup> Levine, *Ancient*, 331.

<sup>759</sup> Hachlili, *Ancient* 184.

<sup>760</sup> Hachlili, “Niche,” 43; Taylor, *Holy Places*, 215.

<sup>761</sup> Gideon Foerster, “A Survey of Ancient Diaspora Synagogues,” in Levine, *Revealed*, 165.

<sup>762</sup> Andrew R. Seagar, “The Building of the Sardis Synagogue,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 76 (1972), 427.

occupants continued to reside on the upper floor while the lower floor was used for liturgical purposes.<sup>763</sup>

From the few remains of synagogues with niches in the pre-fourth-century period, some comparisons can be drawn with the Cenacle. The size and height of the Cenacle niche and its distance above the floor are unusual in comparison with Torah shrines discovered so far. A number of shrines did employ stairs in order to access the recess but the Cenacle's height may be an extreme example.

The Cenacle, located in southwest Jerusalem, possesses a niche that points, if it is intended to point anywhere, to the north. From its proximity to the Temple (ruins) it would have been a simple matter to orient either the niche or the structure's primary wall towards it. Neither option was chosen. However, to suggest that Jewish Christians in this period directed a Torah shrine toward a place of Jesus's execution and entombment in light of his subsequent resurrection is even more problematic. The gospel traditions do not say that Jesus was ultimately interred on Golgotha but that he was buried elsewhere in the *kokh* belonging to Joseph of Arimathea, wherever that was.<sup>764</sup> The surviving elements of the Cenacle's earliest foundations might suggest that the building was constructed to face toward the east. Its elongated east-west axis makes this possible.

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<sup>763</sup> White, *Building God's house in the Roman World: Architectural Adaptation among Pagans, Jews, and Christians* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 71.

<sup>764</sup> The Gospel of Mark (15:46) leaves the location of the tomb unspecified. Matthew (27:60) refers to it as Joseph's tomb which Joseph had hewn out of the rock. Luke (23:53) makes it a new tomb in which no one had ever before been laid. The *Gospel of Peter* (6.24) locates the tomb in the "garden of Joseph." The tradition that locates the crucifixion on Golgotha need not also have included the location of the burial. The discovery of ancient tombs under Hadrian's temple to Venus/Aphrodite may have been unexpected. Whether these tombs were unused at the time of the crucifixion, much less situated in a garden, is contested.

Indeed, the location of the niche in the extreme northeast corner makes it highly unlikely that, if this were a synagogue, the niche was its point of orientation. According to Levine,

There are three possible ways to determine [a synagogue's] orientation: 1) the external direction of a building, indicated by its façade, doors, or adjacent atrium, thus following pagan models; 2) the internal design of the main hall, indicated by the placement of columns, benches, *bima*, and Torah shrine; and 3) the direction of prayer for the 'Amidah, which with rare exception requires facing Jerusalem. It would appear that the focus of attention and activity from within the hall should be the primary and decisive factor in determining orientation.

We cannot now know for certain where the façade was located. It clearly was not on the east wall. No clues within the architecture suggest that the primary entrance was in the south and, in any event, purpose-built shrines generally have facades on the short wall in a rectangular plan. The western wall remains the most likely option for a main entranceway thereby indicating an east-west orientation for the entire structure.

### 3. The Floor

During his excavation, Pinkerfeld was able to examine the original stone layer of the first floor. "In the floor there are several levels, in descending order, marble slabs from the Turkish period, a plastered floor of the Crusader period, a mosaic floor of the early Byzantine or late Roman period, and a stone pavement" which likely belonged to the original building.<sup>765</sup> The lower level is the most important for dating the origin of the building.

[Seventy] cm. below the present floor level another floor of plaster was found, quite possibly the remains of a stone pavement. Some small fragments of smooth stones, perhaps the remains of this pavement, were found slightly above this level.

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<sup>765</sup> Finegan, 238.

... It is certain that this floor belonged to the original building, i.e. to the period when the northern wall and its apse [niche] were built.<sup>766</sup>

Layering smooth stones over plaster and applying a mosaic overlay constituted “common practice in Byzantine churches” according to Taylor and therefore is not an indication that the floor was formed in an earlier period.<sup>767</sup> This pavement mosaic was indeed found to be of a geometrical design typical of the late Roman or early Byzantine periods but, according to Mimouni, it belongs to the middle layer of the floor and not the lower, original one.<sup>768</sup> Mimouni agrees with Pinkerfeld that this lowest level should definitely be dated prior to the fourth century.<sup>769</sup> Mackowski argues that the stone pavement, “probably also a mosaic,” belongs to the original “first-century building.”<sup>770</sup> Taylor’s argument is ultimately not persuasive. The underlying stone floor might have been laid at any time whether or not the mosaic overlay was applied by Byzantine artists.

With one exception, synagogue floors of the Second Temple period do not appear to have featured mosaics. Floors were either of unpaved, compressed soil or fashioned

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<sup>766</sup> Pinkerfeld, 43.

<sup>767</sup> Taylor, *Holy Places*, 216.

<sup>768</sup> Mimouni, 334.

<sup>769</sup> Ibid.

<sup>770</sup> Mackowski, 145.

from stone slabs.<sup>771</sup> The Migdal I structure (50 BCE to 100 CE) is the only early Galilean synagogue to feature a mosaic pavement over pebbles and plaster.<sup>772</sup>

Two early Judean synagogues had plastered floors.<sup>773</sup> The room identified as a synagogue at Masada had a floor of ash lime plaster.<sup>774</sup> The stage III, phase II synagogue at Modi'in (first century BCE) also had a plastered floor.<sup>775</sup> 'En Gedi I (end of the second to early third century CE) is the only other synagogue in our period of interest to have a mosaic-covered floor.<sup>776</sup>

With these exceptions, the earliest mosaic floors have only been found in synagogues dated to the third century.<sup>777</sup> They constituted the primary decorative elements of the room<sup>778</sup> usually featuring very simple designs.<sup>779</sup> These generally appear

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<sup>771</sup> At Gamla (first century BCE to first century CE) the synagogue was found to have an unpaved floor where mats were probably used on the compressed soil by worshippers (Hachlili, *Ancient*, 26-7). Most of the Galilean synagogue floors were composed of stone slabs while plastered floors were the rarest form of pavement (Hachlili, *Ancient*, 250). Kafr Misr I (early third century) is one example (Hachlili, *Ancient*, 59). Among the Galilean synagogues, the one at Capernaum (possibly first century CE) features an earlier, underlying floor that was probably constructed of basalt stones just like the floor of the small first-century Migdal II building identified by its excavators as a synagogue (Levine, *Ancient*, 67).

<sup>772</sup> Hachlili, *Ancient* 33-4.

<sup>773</sup> In Judea, the small building at Qiryat Sefer (first to early second century CE) was paved with flagstones (Levine, *Ancient*, 65; Hachlili, *Ancient* 35-6). The south Judean synagogue, Horvath Rimmon I (mid-third century), had a floor of crushed lime on a foundation of small stones (Hachlili, *Ancient*, 58). The (possible) synagogue at Horvat 'Ethri (first-to-second century) had a floor of beaten earth like that at Gamla (Hachlili, *Ancient*, 36).

<sup>774</sup> Hachlili, *Ancient*, 31.

<sup>775</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>776</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>777</sup> Levine, *Ancient*, 338.

<sup>778</sup> Hachlili, *Ancient*, 251.

<sup>779</sup> Levine, *Ancient*, 337.

only in the later stages of earlier buildings.<sup>780</sup> The likelihood that the earliest floor layer of the Cenacle was originally covered in mosaic, therefore, increases with the proposed date of the structure.

#### 4. Plaster Chips with Graffiti

At floor level, Pinkerfeld found pieces of fallen wall plaster that bore “traces of Greek letters.”<sup>781</sup> They have never been published due to the deaths of Pinkerfeld and epigraphist Moise Schwab<sup>782</sup> but were shared in 1962 by Baruch Lifschitz with Bellarmino Bagatti and Emmanuel Testa who have provided transcriptions and interpretations.<sup>783</sup> There are three sets of graffiti written in cursive Greek “for which the reading and interpretation are extremely difficult”<sup>784</sup> since they are mere abbreviations (plate 26).

It is regrettable that better care was not taken during the recovery of these precious samples. James F. Strange outlines the proper procedure for the collection of such artifacts.

When one begins to find large pieces of fallen, painted plaster, it behooves the excavator to keep a clear record of the location from which each piece comes. That is, it is the archaeologist’s job to record each piece or group of fragments separately. Polaroid photos are invaluable aids, as are labeled top plans and

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<sup>780</sup> Ibid.

<sup>781</sup> Pinkerfeld, 43.

<sup>782</sup> Mimouni, 334 n. 90.

<sup>783</sup> Emmanuel Testa, *Il Simbolismo dei Giudeo-Cristiani* (Jerusalem: Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, 1962), 492.

<sup>784</sup> Mimouni, 334 n. 90.

discursive prose recording orientation of each piece and location from fixed reference points.<sup>785</sup>

Doubtless, Pinkerfeld was not provided sufficient time or funds for a proper excavation and his untimely death apparently prevented a complete report. Nevertheless, problems in collection can affect the meaning and importance of the graffiti. It can only be hoped that Pinkerfeld's original notes might one day be recovered and properly published.

The first graffito is four Greek letters ("NCBI") which were interpreted by Testa as: "Conquer (N[ιχα]), O Savior (C[ωτερ]), Pity (B[οηθ]I?)."<sup>786</sup> The second sample was determined to be unreadable due to its poor condition. The third graffito is a long Greek inscription which Testa interpreted as: "O (IOY) Jesus (IH[σοϋ])! That I live (ZH[σω]). O Lord (KY[ρι]E) by the Autocrat (AYTOKPATOPΟΣ)."<sup>787</sup>

Testa's transcriptions and translations have faced criticism before.<sup>788</sup> His drawings have been shown at times to poorly reflect the actual marks on fragments he has published.<sup>789</sup> His translations often hint of Jewish-Christian bias. Without access to the original plaster pieces, interpreters are restricted to using Testa's drawings. Perhaps that is the reason that no other epigraphists have bothered to reinterpret the findings. With the

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<sup>785</sup> James F. Strange, "The Capernaum and Herodium Publications, Part 2," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 233 (1979): 65.

<sup>786</sup> The capital sigma was often rendered with "C" rather than the later, more frequent "Σ."

<sup>787</sup> Riesner, *Urgemeinde*, 62, translates this last as "Oh Jesus, Lord of Lords, that I might live!"

<sup>788</sup> Here, by the word transcription is meant the systematic representation of the text of one writing system into that of another. Translation is representing the meaning of a source language into a target language (in this case, English).

<sup>789</sup> Strange, 66. On page 69, Strange laments that throughout his examination of Testa's work on graffiti from Capernaum "the data simply do not seem to support his transcriptions."

popular caveat in mind that fools tread where angels fear to go, perhaps a fresh look at these graffiti will spark further discussion.

The first graffito of four letters is obviously composed of abbreviations, made either by contraction or suspension. The nu and sigma are underlined by strokes making this plain. According to B. H. McLean, “abbreviation by contraction is rare in Greek inscriptions prior to the fourth century A.D.”<sup>790</sup> Under the premise that the Cenacle, and perhaps the graffiti (though this is difficult to determine), are pre-fourth century, it will be assumed that the abbreviations here are by suspension, meaning that letters have been omitted from the end of the word.<sup>791</sup> Testa has mixed the forms of contraction with his interpretation. The first and second letters he treats as suspensions, the final two as a contraction eliminating letters in between. This seems inconsistent and the interpretation itself is clumsy. The phrase, “Conquer, O Savior, Pity!” is a mixed bag of concepts which together fail to achieve any coherence. This author is not aware of the phrase being used anywhere else.

Rather than mix the abbreviation method, it seems best to hold to the probability that all four letters are meant to begin words for which the remaining letters have been omitted. A desire to scratch a coherent expression that would be recognizable to others viewing the inscription ought to be considered as the primary incentive driving the original scribe. In McLean’s list of common Greek abbreviations, only the sigma, standing for the word *Sōter*, appears and coincides with Testa’s interpretation. This word,

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<sup>790</sup> B. H. McLean, *An Introduction to Greek Epigraphy of the Hellenistic and Roman Periods from Alexander the Great down to the Reign of Constantine (323 B.C. – A.D. 337)* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 51.

<sup>791</sup> McLean, 51.

therefore, should prove the key to interpreting the entire phrase. Given, then, that this is a Christian inscription, and this is not at all assured, a more straightforward interpretation might be “N[αζωραῖος] Σ[ωτήρ] Β[ασιλεύς] Ἰ[ουδαίς]” or “N[azarene] S[avior] K[ing of the] J[ews].” It is possible that the outlying marks, the omicron-nu in the upper right of the diagram and the iota with an understroke (?) at the bottom are germane to the inscription but difficult to determine from the drawing.<sup>792</sup>

The second inscription has been rendered untranslatable by Testa and no other scholar has apparently tried to interpret its meaning. Two possible solutions are offered here. The first character may be a combination of an iota with an eta, perhaps an abbreviation by suspension of the word for Jesus (ἸΕ[σοῦς]), popular among the *nomina sacra*. The second character has a stroke above it indicating that it is to be treated as an abbreviation. Yet it, too, is a combination of letters. It appears to combine a lambda and a nu. One suggestion for this abbreviation by contraction (abbreviation by suspension is not possible as there are no Greek words beginning with either letters together in either order) is “Λ[υτρῶθη]Ν[αι]” or “redeemed.”<sup>793</sup> If we grant with McLean that certain letters “can easily be confused” or “misread” especially when the surfaces have “deteriorated or been damaged,” we might suggest that the final character in this string is not a lower case nu but a partial capital upsilon, “Υ”. If that is the case, an obvious choice for interpreting this letter is as an abbreviation for Υ[ἱος] or “son.” Perhaps the meaning is something like “Jesus, the redeemed son.” The partial scratch following the last character may be meant to be part of this string but it is not obvious from the drawing.

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<sup>792</sup> Horizontal strokes above and below letters are common signs of abbreviation. See McLean, 56.

<sup>793</sup> This suggestion, of course, violates the rule used in the first interpretation that all contractions should be made similarly. However, not only is this graffito different from the first in that it utilizes compendia but the combination of letters cannot begin any Greek word.

A better solution to this second graffito might be derived by flipping the fragment on its head. The first character then becomes a lambda “Λ.” The next character is a combination of a nu “Ν” and an upsilon “Υ”. The final character is an eta “Η”. Because the order of the two central letters cannot be determined (either ΝΥ or ΥΝ) both possibilities must be considered. (Whether the initial vertical scratch is meant to be an iota is unknown.) Many combinations of Greek words might be suggested in order to interpret this graffito. It is tempting to see the similarities in meaning among the words for wash (Λ[ούω]) as in baptism, wash the feet (Ν[ίπτω]) as in the footwashing of the disciples by Jesus, and water (Υ[δωρ]) as a clue to its interpretation.

The third graffito offers some possibility of a comprehensible statement. Again, Testa’s interpretation may not be the correct one. Epigraphist Leah di Segni, while granting the possibility of Testa’s translation of the first graffito, suggests that “the interpretation of [the] text seems extremely unlikely; indeed [the] text does not seem to be supported by the drawing, except for the word in” line four (“autocrat”).<sup>794</sup> Testa, Bagatti, and Mimouni suggest that the “Autocrat” in this line refers to David, “whose tomb would be found ‘near us,’ if one is to believe the apostle Peter (see Acts 2:29, as well as Psalm 110) and which would seem for this reason honored on this site.”<sup>795</sup> Bagatti adds that even though the cenotaph of David was not installed in the Cenacle until the Crusader period, the feast of David was celebrated here, along with that of James, the brother of Jesus, since the Byzantine period. He suggests that, unless the third “graffito

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<sup>794</sup> Leah di Segni, “Late Roman (?) Graffiti from ‘David’s Tomb’ on Mount Zion,” in *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae: A Multilingual Corpus of the Inscriptions from Alexander to Muhammad*, Volume 1: *Jerusalem*, Part 2: 705-1120, Hannah Cotton, et. al., eds. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 111.

<sup>795</sup> Mimouni 334 n. 90.

can be explained differently by reason of the letters IH, common among the Judaeo-Christian graffiti, we are authorized to consider it Christian.”<sup>796</sup>

Taylor considers the graffiti unlikely to be that of first-century Jewish-Christians “in view of the fact that the language of the graffiti is Greek as opposed to Aramaic.”<sup>797</sup> While little can be said one way or another about the presumed date of the inscriptions, her conclusion based on language is not compelling if for no other reason than that it negates her earlier statement regarding the prolific international communications within the earliest church.<sup>798</sup> Recent scholarship has embraced the diversity of the composition of the first Jewish-Christian congregation in Jerusalem recognizing the complexity of its economic, social, cultural, educational and especially linguistic character.<sup>799</sup>

### C. Pinkerfeld’s Conclusion: A Synagogue

Pinkerfeld, followed by Michael Avi-Yonah in the editor’s note to the summary report,<sup>800</sup> suggests that the earliest form of the Cenacle was a Jewish synagogue. Neither entertained the notion that it might be a Christian church or pagan temple.<sup>801</sup> In fact, the

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<sup>796</sup> Bagatti, *Circumcision*, 121.

<sup>797</sup> Taylor, *Holy Places*, 216.

<sup>798</sup> Ibid., 42 and *passim.*, especially, “It is probably best to imagine that there continued to be frequent exchanges between the Jerusalem church, the churches founded by missionaries from Jerusalem (such as the church of Rome), and the Pauline churches.” How would this be accomplished if no one in Jerusalem could write in Greek?

<sup>799</sup> Acts presents very early on in the story of the Jerusalem church a Greek-speaking element that Luke identifies as “Hellenists” (Acts 6:1). They were certainly Jewish-Christians as was Paul who demonstrably wrote and spoke in Greek. Priests, who joined the sect (Acts 6:7) were literate and perhaps the Pharisees (Acts 15:5) were as well. Other examples should not be necessary.

<sup>800</sup> Michael Avi-Yonah, editor’s note in Pinkerfeld, 43.

<sup>801</sup> Though Avi-Yonah later considered the possibility of its Christian character. See Avi-Yonah, “Mount Zion,” 778-9.

report concludes by saying that the structure “could not in its first building period have served as a place of worship for either Christians or Moslems.”<sup>802</sup> Their decision was solely based on the presence of a niche in the north wall and perhaps implied by the Cenacle’s location in Jerusalem. The report states further that “the fact that the niche of the heightened apse, points towards the Temple Mount and the resemblance of various architectural details with those of the ancient synagogues at Eshtemoa and Naveh allow us to conclude that we have here the remains of a synagogue from the first centuries after the destruction of the Temple.”<sup>803</sup> Other scholars, including Bellarmino Bagatti, Émile Puech, J. W. Hirschberg, and Simon Mimouni agree that it was originally a Jewish synagogue.<sup>804</sup> But does the evidence support this identification as a Jewish structure? It is to this question that the next chapter will be addressed.

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<sup>802</sup> Pinkerfeld, 43.

<sup>803</sup> Ibid.

<sup>804</sup> Bagatti, *Circumcision*, 116-122; Emile Puech, “La synagogue judéo-chrétienne du Mont Sion,” *Le Monde de la Bible* 57 (1989): 336.

## PART IV. THE NATURE OF THE CENACLE: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

### The Cenacle as a Synagogue

As discussed to some degree in the last chapter, the Cenacle is believed by some scholars to have once been a synagogue. This conclusion was based largely on the discovery of a niche in the northeast corner wall on the lower floor. But there are other structural features, the presence of which is considered necessary before declaring with any confidence that the Cenacle was once a synagogue. For example, nearly all ancient synagogues featured some combination of elements including a courtyard, distinctive entrances, a main hall, benches, columns, decorations, and some sort of unique internal arrangement.<sup>805</sup>

Several possible origins for the architectural design of early synagogues include: (1) secular Hellenistic halls such as the *ecclesiaterion* (meeting place of a Greek council), the *bouleuterion* (meeting place of citizens of a Greek *polis*), or the *telesterion* (hall with rock-cut seats for the practice of the Eleusian mysteries); (2) assembly halls (*pronaoi*) of the eastern pagan temples; (3) Egyptian houses of worship found principally in Alexandria; or (4) the courts of the Second Temple such as the Court of Israel.<sup>806</sup> Some architectural elements are common to both religious and secular structures including benches and columns.<sup>807</sup>

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<sup>805</sup> Levine, *Ancient*, 292.

<sup>806</sup> Strange argued that the arrangement of the columns separating the benches from the center of the hall imitated the Women's Court in the Temple. See Hachlili, *Ancient*, 45.

<sup>807</sup> Hachlili, *Ancient*, 222.

Stone benches are almost always found running along two or three walls of ancient synagogues.<sup>808</sup> According to Rachel Hachlili, “the most important and outstanding feature, and the central element in public buildings of the Second Temple period, is the stepped benches erected along the walls of the hall facing the focal point in the center.”<sup>809</sup> Rarely have no traces of stone benches been found in excavated synagogues.<sup>810</sup>

Synagogues were constructed with benches of the same material and at the same time as the walls<sup>811</sup> though wooden benches and mats sometimes supplemented stone benches in many synagogues.<sup>812</sup> Mats may have replaced benches altogether in those very few synagogues that had no fixed benches at all.<sup>813</sup> But according to Hachlili, only those halls that featured benches as well as columns should be identified as synagogues.<sup>814</sup> “The most important and distinctive element of these Second Temple period communal synagogue structures are the benches lining the walls.”<sup>815</sup> Most were two-to-three rows deep, some molded, some plastered, arranged around the interior walls.<sup>816</sup>

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<sup>808</sup> Levine, *Ancient*, 313.

<sup>809</sup> Hachlili, *Ancient*, 43.

<sup>810</sup> Levine, *Ancient*, 314. Levine gives as examples Sardis and Sepphoris.

<sup>811</sup> Hachlili, *Ancient*, 50.

<sup>812</sup> Levine, *Ancient*, 314.

<sup>813</sup> Ibid.

<sup>814</sup> Hachlili, *Ancient*, 50.

<sup>815</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>816</sup> Ibid., 149.

From Palestine, the evidence from pre-fourth-century synagogues regarding benches is overwhelming. Gamla (first century BCE to first century CE), the earliest purpose-built synagogue structure to have been discovered in the Golan to date, features, below elevated aisles, a series of stone benches around all four walls.<sup>817</sup> The phase 1 Courtyard House at Jericho (75/50 to 31 BCE) had benches even before its later conversion into a synagogue.<sup>818</sup> The Modi'in phase I, stage 2 synagogue (late second to late first century BCE) had benches as did its later Herodian incarnation (phase II, stage 3, first century BCE).<sup>819</sup> At Masada, a converted synagogue that dates from the period of its occupation by the Sicarii (66-74 CE), the hall is surrounded on all four sides by benches arranged in four tiers.<sup>820</sup> The hall at Herodium, also overrun by revolutionaries during the revolt, had several rows of benches.<sup>821</sup> There were stone benches on three sides of the synagogue identified at Qiryat Sefer in Judea (first to second century CE);<sup>822</sup> the building identified as a synagogue at Migdal II in Galilee (first centuries CE) had five rows of benches.<sup>823</sup> The synagogues at Hammath Et-Tuwani (first century BCE to second

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<sup>817</sup> Levine, *Ancient*, 52; Hachlili, *Ancient*, 27.

<sup>818</sup> Hachlili, *Ancient*, 28.

<sup>819</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>820</sup> Levine, *Ancient*, 58-9; Hachlili, *Ancient*, 31.

<sup>821</sup> Levine, *Ancient*, 60.

<sup>822</sup> Levine, *Ancient*, 65; Hachlili, *Ancient*, 36.

<sup>823</sup> Levine, *Ancient*, 67; Hachlili, *Ancient* 33. Netzer has concluded that the original first-century building was a water facility, not a synagogue, and that it functioned as a nymphaeum.

century CE),<sup>824</sup> Nabratein I (ca. 135-250 CE),<sup>825</sup> and Kafr Misr I (early third century) all had benches.<sup>826</sup>

In the diaspora, the synagogue at Delos, a house taken over and adapted by a local Jewish community, is probably the oldest known synagogue anywhere.<sup>827</sup> Renovations conducted late in the second century BCE, and again in mid-first century BCE, led to benches being fashioned around the main hall; a carved marble chair (*thronos*) was also formed in the middle of the short wall opposite the entrance.<sup>828</sup> The Jewish assembly hall

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<sup>824</sup> Hachlili, *Ancient*, 26.

<sup>825</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>826</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>827</sup> White, *House*, 64.

<sup>828</sup> Ibid., 64-5. Levine, *Ancient*, 325, noted that special seats identified as the Seat of Moses have been found in a number of ancient synagogues. Besides the one at Delos, others were discovered in the third-century C.E. synagogue at Dura-Europos, one next to the Torah shrine at En-Gedi (2<sup>nd</sup>-early 3<sup>rd</sup> c.), one in the fourth-century synagogue at Chorazin and at Hammath-Tiberias. See Craig A. Evans, *Jesus and His World: The Archaeological Evidence* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2012), 60. Their character varied greatly. In the context of the Cenacle, one cannot help but be reminded of the “throne of James” reported by Eusebius (*HE* 7.19.1) that “has been preserved to this day.” Eusebius added that the succession of brethren, i.e., Jewish and Gentile Christians, continued to honor it in the fourth century. It is quite tempting to identify this throne as a seat of Moses, either from the Cenacle or another synagogue. A seat claiming to be this throne is located in the Armenian Cathedral of St. James in Jerusalem. See John Painter, *Just James: The Brother of Jesus in History and Tradition*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 2004), 154. According to the pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* 10.71, “Theophilus, who was more exalted than all the men of power in that city [Antioch], with all eagerness of desire consecrated the great palace of his house under the name of a church, and a chair (*cathedra*) was placed in it for the Apostle Peter by all the people” (trans. Thomas Smith, *ANF*). Rabbinic literature knew of the throne. *Pesikta de-Rav Kahana* 1.7: “‘The top of the throne was rounded in the back’” (1 Kgs 10:19) means, according to Rabbi Aha, that the throne resembled the seat of Moses’; *Exodus Rabba* 43.4 (on Ex 32:22): Moses ‘wrapped himself in his cloak and seated himself in the posture of a sage’; and *Song Rab.* 1.3 §1: ‘The house of study of Rabbi Eliezer was shaped like an arena, and there was in it a stone which was reserved for him to sit on.’ For these see Evans, 162 n. 26.

at Dura-Europos was outfitted with benches around its walls.<sup>829</sup> Those without footrests may have been used by women.<sup>830</sup>

According to Hachlili, benches are, among religious structures, “one of the most important differences between synagogues, temples, and churches and they are found only in the synagogues, not in any temples or churches in the area. There are no benches in Hellenistic and Roman temples.”<sup>831</sup> The Cenacle is particularly striking in this regard. It shows no trace of ever having had benches.

According to Hachlili, “from the beginning the fundamental synagogue plan took the form of a hall divided by columns into nave and aisles”<sup>832</sup> with benches along the interior walls.<sup>833</sup> These traits were “almost universal.”<sup>834</sup> David Amit contends that excavated structures should only be considered synagogues if they possess benches as well as columns.<sup>835</sup>

Supporting columns have been found in nearly every ancient synagogue.<sup>836</sup> Early synagogues such as those at Gamla, Masada, Herodium, and Qiryat Sefer are square or rectangular in proportion and are surrounded by interior columns and benches, “an

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<sup>829</sup> White, *House*, 94.

<sup>830</sup> Carl H. Kraeling, *The Synagogue. The Excavations at Dura-Europos Conducted by Yale University and the French Academy of Inscriptions and Letters, Final Report 8, Part I*, ed. Alfred R. Bellinger (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956), 16.

<sup>831</sup> Hachlili, *Ancient*, 151.

<sup>832</sup> *Ibid.*, 220.

<sup>833</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

<sup>834</sup> *Ibid.*, 220.

<sup>835</sup> Cited in Hachlili, *Ancient*, 45.

<sup>836</sup> Levine, *Ancient*, 316.

arrangement facilitating communal participation, be it for political, religious, or social purposes.”<sup>837</sup> And while no columns have been discovered at the Judean synagogue at Hammath Et-Tuwani (first century BCE to second century CE),<sup>838</sup> they are prominent at Modi’in (synagogue II, stage 3), Horvat ‘Ethri (first to second century CE), and Eshtemo’a (second/third century or late third/early fourth century CE). In Galilee, early synagogues with columns include Migdal I (50 BCE to 100 CE), Nabratein (135 to 250 CE), and Kafr Misr I (early third century CE). The synagogue at Dura, however, did not feature columns.

The presence of columns as both a structural necessity and an ornamental feature are thus characteristic of synagogues from the earliest period forward. The lack of orienting columns on the ground floor of the Cenacle (tomb of David area) is striking in this regard. The two central columns now found in the structure are of Byzantine or Crusader date and have nothing to do with its questionable origins as a synagogue. If such columns were replaced over the centuries by restoration efforts, there appears to be no evidence of it.

According to Lee Levine, “the façade of sacred buildings in antiquity – and thus their orientation – was eastward, toward the rising sun, and this was as true of pagan temples as it was of Christian churches and the two Jerusalem temples.”<sup>839</sup> Synagogues, however, whether located outside of Israel or within, were normally oriented toward

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<sup>837</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>838</sup> Hachlili, *Ancient*, 26.

<sup>839</sup> Levine, *Ancient*, 306.

Jerusalem and the Holy Land.<sup>840</sup> After the destruction of the temple, synagogues took on greater liturgical meaning and showed more consistency with regard to this orientation pattern.<sup>841</sup> Structurally, orientation was achieved by arranging the interior columns in rows aligned with the direction of Jerusalem, or by constructing a Torah shrine in or against the Jerusalem-oriented wall.<sup>842</sup> Prayers offered within were thus directed toward the Holy City. The reason behind directionally-oriented prayers was likely found in scripture.<sup>843</sup>

Archaeologically, Jerusalem-orientation is consistently found in synagogues built after the third century<sup>844</sup> though earlier examples have been noted above. In Galilee, the synagogues at Capernaum I (first century CE) and Nabratein I (135-250 CE) are oriented toward Jerusalem by their façades and Torah shrines. The synagogues at Masada (first century CE), Qiryat Sefer (first to early second century CE), and En Gedi I (second to early third century CE) are oriented by their façades.

The orientation of the Cenacle is open to question. The niche is not the focal point of the interior hall positioned as it is in the northeast corner wall. The earliest façade of the structure, if as argued here it was originally independent of the later basilicas, is now missing. However it is highly likely that the building was intentionally oriented on an

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<sup>840</sup> Ibid., 599.

<sup>841</sup> Ibid., 181.

<sup>842</sup> Ibid.

<sup>843</sup> 1 Kings 8:20, 30 commands that, with regard to “the house for the name of the Lord,” the people of Israel should “pray toward this place.” Dan 6:10 indicates that the prophet, as was his habit, “went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem; and he got down upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously. See Levine, *Ancient*, 302.

<sup>844</sup> Levine, *Ancient*, 306.

east-west axis with its façade in the west wall and the focus of prayer toward the east.<sup>845</sup> Again, strictly speaking, this is not the direction of the temple but rather points to the Kidron Valley and the Mount of Olives beyond. In most synagogues, some latitude is given by scholars to directionality as builders in antiquity did not possess accurate maps or global positioning systems. To be considered properly oriented, synagogues situated in Palestine north of Jerusalem should generally face south while those in southern Judea should face north. Synagogues in the western diaspora should face east, and those in the east should face west in order to be counted as directionally-oriented. According to Levine, if anomalous orientations occurred, it was due to ignorance, indifference, convenience, or some other factor.<sup>846</sup>

With regard to the Cenacle, no latitude should be given to its directionality; the builders could see the Temple if they wished to orient their hall toward it. It must therefore be assumed that its external and internal elements were constructed with precision if they were built with directionality in mind at all. An eastward facing structure is the most reasonable assumption. Reasons for this orientation are considered in chapter twelve.

Water installations near pagan, Jewish, and Christian houses of worship were common in antiquity.<sup>847</sup> Basins, too, were standard equipment in temples for the purpose

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<sup>845</sup> A western façade of the Cenacle was drawn by Bernardino Amico in 1609 (plate 20). Gideon Foerster included the Cenacle as one of several fourth-century synagogues whose entrance is on the east (?) and apse (niche) on the north (Gideon Foerster, “The Synagogues at Masada and Herodium,” in Levine, *Revealed*, 29 n. 9). Others he noted were Eshtemoa and Horvat Susiya which he called “broadhouses” representing a hybrid plan. There is no indication that the Cenacle, or any structure that stood here, ever had an eastern entrance.

<sup>846</sup> Levine, *Ancient*, 305.

<sup>847</sup> *Ibid.*, 309.

of purification before prayer; with regard to synagogues, “washing symbolizes the need to act in awe and holiness while” within.<sup>848</sup> *Miqveh*, Jewish ritual baths, have been frequently found near Judean synagogues.<sup>849</sup> In fact, synagogue structures were not only commonly erected on a hill or other high place or in the center of the town but also near a source of water.<sup>850</sup>

According to Levine, water installations were always to be found outside the main hall of the synagogue, “yet were clearly related to the ritual conducted inside.”<sup>851</sup> The Greek “Theodotus inscription,” discovered by Raymond Weill during excavations in the southern part of the City of David in Jerusalem (1913-14), provides insight into this feature.<sup>852</sup> Along with offering a place to study scripture, this Jerusalem synagogue also served as a hostel and provided a bath house, or *miqveh*, for visiting pilgrims, although its exact location and purpose remains unknown.<sup>853</sup>

At several synagogues, the water facilities were simply holes in the ground that collected water indicating perhaps that the location was chosen on purpose, and in part, for this reason.<sup>854</sup> Man-made pools found near a number of synagogues include stepped cisterns. It is debatable whether these served as *miqveh*, however. At Gamla (first century

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<sup>848</sup> Ibid., 309.

<sup>849</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>850</sup> Hachlili, *Ancient*, 6.

<sup>851</sup> Levine, *Ancient*, 308.

<sup>852</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>853</sup> Levine, *Ancient*, 55, 309.

<sup>854</sup> Ibid., 309, 311.

CE), a cistern was found just outside the synagogue along with a small basin, perhaps for washing hands.<sup>855</sup> The *miqveh* dates from the period of the revolt (66-7 CE).<sup>856</sup>

Stepped cisterns have also been found near three synagogues from pre-70 CE Judea. At the Modi'in synagogue (phase I, stage 2; second to first century BCE), for example, "a sort of sitting bath" was found in the courtyard.<sup>857</sup> It was still being used in the phase II, stage 3, synagogue period (mid-first century BCE to first century CE).<sup>858</sup> Also, next to the synagogue at Jericho (phase 2) (75/50 to 31 BCE), a water system with a *miqveh* was found<sup>859</sup> as was a basin similar to that found at Gamla.<sup>860</sup> Levine speculates that these basins were used for washing hands and feet and were generally placed "in the middle of the courtyard (atrium), just outside the main entrance to the synagogue, or in the hall, or narthex, leading from the street into the synagogue sanctuary."<sup>861</sup> At Herodium (first century CE), a stepped cistern, or *miqveh*, was found just outside the hall.<sup>862</sup>

Other Judean synagogues from after the revolt also featured *miqva'ot*. Two *miqva'ot* were found beside the courtyard at Horvat Ethri (first to second century CE).<sup>863</sup>

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<sup>855</sup> Levine, *Ancient*, 52; Hachlili, *Ancient*, 27.

<sup>856</sup> Levine, *Ancient*, 52.

<sup>857</sup> Hachlili, *Ancient*, 34.

<sup>858</sup> Ibid.

<sup>859</sup> Levine, *Ancient*, 68; Hachlili, *Ancient*, 27.

<sup>860</sup> Hachlili, *Ancient*, 27.

<sup>861</sup> Levine, *Ancient*, 308.

<sup>862</sup> Levine, *Ancient*, 60; Hachlili, *Ancient*, 28.

<sup>863</sup> Hachlili, *Ancient*, 36

A small plastered room at Qiryat Sefer (first to early second century CE) may have once enclosed a *miqveh*.<sup>864</sup> At Eshtemo'a (second/third or late third/early fourth century CE) a cistern cut from bedrock was discovered at the foot of one of the pillars.<sup>865</sup>

Levine notes that basins, fountains, and wells have been discovered in courtyards or entranceways to many Diaspora synagogues as well.<sup>866</sup> These have been found in Sardis (late third century CE), Dura-Europos (third century CE), Ostia (first to third century CE), and Priene (second to third century CE) and, according to Levine, are mentioned in inscriptions from Sidé and Pamphylia in Asia Minor.<sup>867</sup> At Delos (second to mid-first century BCE), a cistern was found that may have served as a *miqveh*,<sup>868</sup> and a room in the synagogue at Ostia (first-to-fourth century CE) may contain evidence of a *miqveh*.<sup>869</sup> Possible reasons for the use of these *miqva'ot* might include purification prior to the partaking of sacred meals or reading from the Torah.<sup>870</sup>

The custom of performing ablutions before engaging in sacred worship was well known in the ancient world. Following the destruction of the Second Temple, and throughout late antiquity, the number of *miqva'ot* in Jewish communities declined precipitously. It would seem that the destruction of the Temple diminished the importance of ritual purification among the Jews, and there was thus less need for *miqva'ot*.<sup>871</sup>

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<sup>864</sup> Ibid.

<sup>865</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>866</sup> Levine, *Ancient*, 281.

<sup>867</sup> Ibid.

<sup>868</sup> Ibid., 101.

<sup>869</sup> Ibid., 258.

<sup>870</sup> Ibid., 45 n. 2.

<sup>871</sup> Ibid., 310.

A number of cisterns and *miqva'ot* have been found near the Cenacle although it would be difficult to build anywhere on Mount Zion without this being so. Bargil Pixner suggests that the whole area is “a network of cisterns, baths, and caverns.”<sup>872</sup> Nevertheless, cisterns were discovered between the foundation walls of the Byzantine basilica by Renard.<sup>873</sup> Pixner found a *miqveh* located in front of the present Dormition Abbey.<sup>874</sup> Eisenberg later found, on the eastern side of the church, a *miqveh* covered with black plaster and a square cistern, partly rock-hewn and partly made of ashlar.<sup>875</sup> A major *miqveh*, possibly a public facility with dual steps leading in and out of the pool, is located in the Greek Orthodox seminary garden. The anonymous pilgrim who visited Mount Zion in 1480 reported seeing a cistern near the Cenacle where “the Savior used to wash his apostles’ feet.”<sup>876</sup>

The implications for the Cenacle being a synagogue due to the proximity of *miqva'ot* are mixed. Archaeological evidence has shown that, although most of these reservoirs have been found associated with synagogues in Judea, their construction near them declined after the war.

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<sup>872</sup> Pixner, “Essene Quarter,” 271.

<sup>873</sup> Renard, 16.

<sup>874</sup> Pixner, *Paths* 331.

<sup>875</sup> Eisenburg, 47.

<sup>876</sup> *Le Voyage de la Sainte Cité de Hierusalem.*

### The Cenacle as a Mithraeum

There are alternative paradigms with which to compare the Cenacle that may better suit its features, or lack thereof, than a synagogue. One is suggested by conditions in place on Mount Zion following the failed revolt of the Jews in 70 CE. According to Josephus, as has been shown, Titus left a contingent of the *Legio X Fretensis* encamped on Mount Zion as well as in various outposts surrounding Jerusalem. The size of the contingent and extent of the camp has been debated but it now seems certain that the entire legion did not remain. Nevertheless, their camp occupied a commanding position near the remaining towers of Herod's palace on northern Mount Zion. This vexillation of the *X Fretensis* was charged with keeping order in the demolished city for over sixty years before Trajan recalled some portion of them to join his army along the Euphrates to fight against the Parthians. During their absence, nationalistic, messianic Jews revolted once again, perhaps even succeeding in capturing Jerusalem for a short time. The returning *X Fretensis*, along with five other legions and a number of Danubian auxiliaries, recaptured the city after which the emperor Hadrian thoroughly paganized it, rechristening Jerusalem Aelia Capitolina, and installing new roads and erecting new shrines throughout.

The soldiers of the *X Fretensis* who remained behind after the revolt were just like soldiers anywhere else in the Roman army at that time: notoriously superstitious. They habitually made daily supplication to their gods for health and victory.<sup>877</sup> Centurions ensured that daily devotions were carried out by their men and often established shrines

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<sup>877</sup> Franz Cumont, *The Mysteries of Mithra*, trans. Thomas J. McCormack from the 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. French ed. (Chicago: Open Court, 1903), 42.

out of their personal resources to honor the deities that protected the soldiers.<sup>878</sup> Personal concern for the afterlife led to the adoption by soldiers of various eastern mystery cults later introduced to the Latin West after repeated military action along the Euphrates and into Parthia. These cults offered Romans a return to ancient religious rituals with an emphasis on rebirth. One of these, and perhaps the most pervasive throughout the Roman army, was the cult of Mithras.

The Parthian deity Mithras likely first made its way into the military pantheon via the *Legio VIII Augusta* whose soldiers were worshipping the god while posted in Moesia (modern Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Romania) along the southern Danube River in the early first century CE.<sup>879</sup> Also at about that time, the *Legio XV Apollinaris* was transferred from the east around 70 CE, after assisting with the war against the Parthians and the suppression of the first Jewish revolt, to Carnuntum in Pannonia northwest of Moesia also along the Danube.<sup>880</sup> These two legions were among the earliest adopters of Mithraism. When the *XV Apollinaris* was ordered back to the Euphrates forty years later, it was replaced by the *XIV Gemina* whose soldiers subsequently adopted the mystery faith.<sup>881</sup> That Mithraism was pervasive in the military for centuries thereafter is reflected in the comments of Tertullian (160 – 220 CE) who lamented how, “Mithra . . . sets his marks on the foreheads of his soldiers.”<sup>882</sup> The church father may have been referring to a

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<sup>878</sup> Ibid., 41; Manfred Clauss, *The Roman Cult of Mithras: The God and His Mysteries* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 21.

<sup>879</sup> Cumont, 52.

<sup>880</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>881</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>882</sup> Tertullian, *Prescription Against Heretics* 40, trans. Peter Holmes, *ANF*.

physical mark made on the foreheads of the faithful in a fashion similar to the mark of the tau placed upon the foreheads of “the men of Jerusalem,” i.e. the Christian sign of the cross.<sup>883</sup>

Shrines to Mithras, called *mithraea*, have been found across the Roman world. Ideally, the worship of Mithras was to be conducted in a cave. Naturally, in urban areas and other regions where this was not practical, temples were constructed, sometimes below ground, to mimic caves.<sup>884</sup> The main room, or *crypta*, of the *mithraeum* was deliberately kept small in size for small congregations.<sup>885</sup> It generally took the form of a square or rectangle with a central aisle and raised *podia*, or benches, along either side. These were sometimes fashioned of tamped earth and were for the purpose of reclining during the consumption of the sacred ritual meal. Within the *crypta*, a raised niche often stood at one end in which sacred statues or bas-reliefs were placed. At times, the niches were lined with pumice to imitate a cave.<sup>886</sup> These niches might be covered by a curtain separating the niche from the nave<sup>887</sup> with an altar placed before it. As with early synagogues and Christian house churches, *mithraea* were often fashioned within existing structures with modifications made to accommodate liturgical requirements. Decorative

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<sup>883</sup> Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 3.22. See Finegan, 351.

<sup>884</sup> Clauss, 44. There is literary, if not archaeological, evidence that pre-fourth century Jewish-Christians also celebrated their cult in caves. Mimouni, 305, 320-1, suggests that nothing prevents the supposition that Jewish-Christians used the caves such as at Golgotha and Bethlehem for cult up to the time of Hadrian. Afterward the caves would have reverted to pagan use probably until about 313 CE.

<sup>885</sup> Clauss, 42. If space became a problem more *mithraea* would be constructed.

<sup>886</sup> *Ibid.*, 50

<sup>887</sup> *Ibid.*

embellishments ranged from elaborate to non-existent. Archaeological evidence exists for mithraea from a very early date.

An early mithraeum, established by the *cohors XXXIII voluntariorum civium Romanorum*, was discovered in Nida (near modern Frankfurt, Germany) and dates to about 90 CE.<sup>888</sup> A basalt stele found there depicts three niches in which the figure of Mithras, as well as his torch-bearers Cautes and Cautopates, stand. At Carnuntum in lower Austria, a centurion of the *XV Apollinaris* dedicated a new mithraeum in the second century CE. A third-century mithraeum in Poetovio (modern Ptuj, Slovenia) featured four monuments dedicated by soldiers of the *Legio V Macedonica* and *XIII Gemina*. There, the remains of an almost entirely destroyed niche were found.<sup>889</sup> On the opposite frontier, at Dura-Europos, a mithraeum that was also founded by soldiers was built in a private house between 167 and 171 CE. It was commissioned by archers from Palmyra in Syria who served in the Roman legions.<sup>890</sup> In approximately 210 CE, renovations led to the construction of an elevated, arched niche behind the altar. Seven steps led up to the niche in which two bas-reliefs stood (plate 27).

Unfortunately, few shrines to Mithras have been found in Syria or Palestine. The only certain mithraeum in the region was discovered in Caesarea Maritima, home to the legions occupying Palestine including the *X Frentensis* and the *V Macedonica*, both of

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<sup>888</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>889</sup> *CIMRM* 1487.

<sup>890</sup> Nigel Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities, and Civilians in Roman Syria* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 145, finds attractive the theory that Mithraism was picked up by officers of Palmyrene *numeri* (units of the Roman army) based on the Danube frontier and brought to Dura Europos as a specifically military cult.

whom participated in the quashing of the first Jewish revolt. The *V Macedonica* was later sent to the Danube bringing additional Mithras worshippers to the region.<sup>891</sup>

The mithraeum at Caesarea Maritima was constructed out of a first-century CE grain vault near the front of the harbor.<sup>892</sup> The chamber was already oriented on an east-west axis. Measuring 65 feet long by 17 feet wide and 13 feet high (19.8 by 5 by 4 meters), the modified storage facility featured benches along either long side of the vault.<sup>893</sup> These benches were 20 inches wide and 14 inches high (50.8 by 35.5 cm) and were covered in plaster as was the floor. Another bench-type structure ran along the eastern wall and behind it was fashioned a base for an altar.<sup>894</sup> Many lamps and lamp fragments dating to the late third and fourth centuries were found as was a marble medallion featuring a typical bas relief of Mithras slaying a bull.<sup>895</sup> Frescos, now faint and difficult to identify, were discovered on the south wall, one of which appears to represent a kneeling figure perhaps participating in an initiation ritual.<sup>896</sup> Though the lamp pieces are of relatively late date, Hopfe and Lease speculate that “the materials discovered represent the last in a series of Mithraea in this vault.”<sup>897</sup> Pottery examination suggests that the Mithraic renovations could have been introduced as early as the late first

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<sup>891</sup> Gary Lease, “Mithra in Egypt,” in *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity*, ed. Birger A. Pearson and James E. Goehring (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 128.

<sup>892</sup> Lewis Moore Hopfe and Gary Lease, “The Caesarea Mithraeum: A Preliminary Announcement,” *The Biblical Archaeologist* 38 (1975): 2-10.

<sup>893</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>894</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>895</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>896</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>897</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

to early second centuries CE.<sup>898</sup> Being a public storage facility, it may be the only mithraeum yet discovered to have been “owned and administered by the municipality” rather than privately maintained.<sup>899</sup> Though no niche was found in the renovated grain storage building, the early presence of the Mithras cult in the city that served as the headquarters for the Roman legions in Judea is suggestive.

Legionaries were not only worshippers of Mithras but of other deities identified with the military including Jupiter Dolichenus whose shrines have been found located next to mithraea in a number of locations including Commagene and Dura-Europos.<sup>900</sup> And Franz Cumont suggests that “no country of the Orient furnished a greater number of Roman soldiers than Commagene,” a territory bordering the Parthian empire, where

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<sup>898</sup> According to Jeffrey A. Blakely, “Ceramics and Commerce: Amphorae from Caesarea Maritima,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 271 (1988), 35: “Vault 1 had been constructed as a warehouse but early in the second century it was converted into a Mithraeum, a function it served until the mid- to late third century, when it appears to have been reverted into a warehouse.” See also Steven E. Sidebotham, review of “Caesarea Maritima: The Pottery and Dating of Vault 1: Horreum, Mithraeum and Later Uses,” by Jeffrey A. Blakely in *The Joint Expedition to Caesarea Maritima Excavation Reports IV* (Lewiston, N.Y.: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1987), *American Journal of Archaeology* 94 (1990), 363-4. “The vault was converted into a Mithraeum (ceramic phases 3-9) in the late first/early second-mid/late third centuries. It was in these levels that archaeologists found painted wall plaster, a small marble medallion depicting Mithraic scenes including Mithras *tauroctone* and lamps associated with the cult of Mithras in the second and third centuries. It was probably at this time that holes were cut in the vault ceiling to admit light into the cult area” (364).

<sup>899</sup> Hopfe and Lease, 10.

<sup>900</sup> According to Michael P. Speidel, *The Religion of Iuppiter Dolichenus in the Roman Army* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978), 4: “The earliest known document of the Dolichenian religion outside Commagene is a military one: a building inscription of a temple to Iuppiter Dolichenus at Lambaesis in Africa, dedicated by the commander of the legion there in A.D. 125/126.” Both cults entered the Roman world at the same time, i.e., after Pompey subdued the Cilician pirates in 67 BCE. Pollard, 146, suggests that the cult may have been brought to Dura-Europos by legionaries of the *Legio XVI Flavia Firma* from Samosata in Commagene.

Mithraism was deeply rooted.<sup>901</sup> Soliciting the aid and succor of the cultic gods, however, would have required religious structures not allowed in Roman camps.<sup>902</sup>

Only the official Roman deities were to be worshipped within the camp's walls. Shrines built for this purpose, especially to house the legionary standards, were always provided.<sup>903</sup> That made it necessary for worshippers of the gods of eastern cults, such as Mithras or even the growing number of believers in Christ, to go outside the camp for veneration.<sup>904</sup>

As already mentioned, the *X Frentensis* remained in the area until at least the third century. Did the encamped soldiers of the legion occupying Jerusalem, along with their later comrades from the Danubian auxiliaries, construct mithraea in the formerly Jewish city?

By the time of Hadrian's Aelia, the erection of pagan shrines throughout the city was in full force. The Mithras cult had earned the acceptance of the soldiers of many legions including those that served in Judea. The Cenacle building was located on southern Mount Zion below the primary legionary camp of the *X Frentensis*. Just as these soldiers had the wherewithal to construct edifices, siege-works, and other feats of engineering as demonstrated in 74 CE at Masada, so, too, they likely had the ability to construct a four-square temple.

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<sup>901</sup> Cumont, 41.

<sup>902</sup> M. C. Bishop, *Handbook to Roman Legionary Fortresses* (Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Pen and Sword, 2012), Kindle edition.

<sup>903</sup> According to John Helgeland, et. al., 49, the standard generally bore the image of the eagle symbolizing Jupiter Optimus Maximus but specific images related to the individual legion were often included

<sup>904</sup> Helgeland, et. al., 49.

Is it possible to explain the Cenacle as a pagan shrine constructed by soldiers of the legion and later abandoned before renovation by Christians for their liturgical use?

According to Richard Krautheimer, this unlikely.

[Christians] shied away from pagan temples to such a degree that neither they nor even their sites were occupied by the Church before the late fourth century in the East . . . Just as important, no pagan religious building was adaptable to the needs of Christian worship. The temples of the old gods . . . had been designed to shelter an image, not to accommodate a congregation of both laymen and clergy. To be sure, the sanctuaries of the Neo-Pythagoreans, of Baal, Mithras, the Great Mother, and Attys, all oriental cults, were designed to hold small congregations numbering twenty or thirty, assembled along a central passageway and subordinate to a priest officiating at an altar.<sup>905</sup>

Nevertheless, the Cenacle features a niche not unlike those found at other mithraea. It is quite suitable to framing a large statue or bas-relief of the god. The building's eastern orientation is commensurate with pagan shrines in general and its location just outside the possible line of Hadrian's wall, or the wall of the military camp, is suggestive. There have been a number of accounts of a crypt beneath the structure itself. Was a mithraeum constructed below ground?

The building's sturdy construction and adequate dimensions would not have been lost on religious groups seeking a suitable assembly hall should the Romans ever abandon it, Krautheimer's comments notwithstanding. On the other hand, there is no evidence of any interior design specifically indicative of a mithraeum. No podia or seating of any kind are evident, as already discussed, and it would be difficult to characterize the observable facility as cave-like. Also, under what circumstances would legionary Mithras worshippers have abandoned the structure early enough so that its

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<sup>905</sup> Krautheimer, 41.

pagan origins would have been forgotten after Christian adoption? Therefore, if the Cenacle was neither Jewish synagogue nor pagan shrine, is there a better alternative?

The Cenacle as an *Aula Ecclesiae*

Having examined the possibility that the Cenacle was once either a synagogue or a mithraeum, it now remains to be seen whether the building was from the beginning a Christian hall of assembly. Perhaps it was even built by those same soldiers whose motivation for building a mithraeum on the same grounds was previously examined. The fact that Christian soldiers served in the military in the centuries before Constantine is demonstrable from both literary and archaeological evidence.

Eusebius repeats a story that was initially told by Apolinarius who lived in Melitene in eastern Cappadocia.<sup>906</sup> Apolinarius resided next to the camp of the *Legio XII Fulminata* and recounted how one of its vexillations was sent to aid Marcus Aurelius then occupied with fighting Germans on the Danube in 173 CE. The legion had become trapped and lacked for water. Christian members of the legion began to pray for rain and were rewarded with a thunderstorm that filled their barrels and ultimately enabled them to be victorious. The same story was also told by the Roman secular historian Dio Cassius who otherwise credited the efforts of an Egyptian magician for the downpour.<sup>907</sup> The very same event is commemorated on a column in Rome which depicts Marcus himself imploring Jupiter Pluvius for the miraculous change in weather.<sup>908</sup> It is, of course, doubtful that Marcus knew of any Christian involvement with the victory. Nevertheless, it is quite likely that Christian legionaries prayed for rain just as hard as any of the other

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<sup>906</sup> Eusebius, *HE* 5.4.3-5.7.

<sup>907</sup> Dio Cassius, *Historia Romana* 82.8.1-10.5.

<sup>908</sup> The column of Marcus is in Piazza Colonna, Rome.

soldiers.<sup>909</sup> It may be significant that the *XII Fulminata* had been in Judea. Led by Cestius Gallus, they were once nearly obliterated in 66 CE by Jewish rebels in the early stages of their first revolt. It was while serving in Judea, perhaps, that some soldiers may have first encountered representatives of the new Christian faith.<sup>910</sup>

Tertullian wrote ca. 211 CE about Christian legionaries in his *Treatise on Idolatry*.<sup>911</sup> He was the best informed of all the church fathers on the inner workings of the military and its activities within camp walls. He knew that Christians serving in the legions often compromised their faith by doing so and he warned them about confusing the popular cult of Mithras with Christianity despite their similar practices and beliefs. The competition between the two faiths and their followers among the ranks is exemplified in a situation in Africa described by Tertullian. The *Legio III Augusta* was exempting devotees of Mithras from wearing the honorary wreath as a reward for valor due to the conflict it presented with their faith; believers insisted that Mithras himself was the only crown they acknowledged.<sup>912</sup> Christian soldiers had been unsuccessfully lobbying for a similar, faith-based exemption.<sup>913</sup>

The pre-fourth century *Apostolic Traditions*, often credited to Hippolytus, speaks negatively about Christians in the legions and advocates their excommunication from the

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<sup>909</sup> Only four years later, Marcus allowed the persecution of Christians in Lyons-Vienne.

<sup>910</sup> Many recruits of the *XII Fulminata* came from the upper Euphrates near Edessa.

<sup>911</sup> Chapter 19.

<sup>912</sup> Tertullian, *de Corona* 15. Adolf Harnack, *Militia Christi: The Christian Religion and the Military in the First Three Centuries*, trans. David McInnes Gracie (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), 74, writes that “it would be surprising to find this in any other legion in the East at that time, with the exception perhaps of the *legio X Fretensis*.”

<sup>913</sup> See Harnack, 59, 83.

church.<sup>914</sup> Yet martyred Christian soldiers, including those who suffered under the Decian persecution (ca. 250 CE), were routinely honored and celebrated by the laity. Soldiers who converted and were sometimes executed for their beliefs included such figures as Pudens, the adjutant in charge of the Roman prison in Carthage (ca. 202 CE). Mortified by the savage treatment of Christians in the arena, he was said to have converted to Christianity.<sup>915</sup> Basilides, in charge of executions in Alexandria, ended up protecting the Christian martyr Potamiaena from harsh treatment by the crowd on her way to the gallows (ca. 205 CE).<sup>916</sup> He later converted on account of her courage and, refusing to take the military oath, was beheaded. Likewise, in Alexandria, a soldier named Besus (ca. 250 CE), also in charge of guarding Christians on their way to execution, found himself in the same situation as Basilides and, objecting to the treatment of the prisoners by the crowd, was himself executed.<sup>917</sup> Marinus (ca. 260 CE) of Caesarea in Palestine, likely serving in the *X Fretensis*, lost his promotion to the rank of centurion as well as his life by refusing to sacrifice to the emperor and thereby compromise his faith.<sup>918</sup> Maximilian (ca. 295 CE), a draftee from Tebessa in Numidia, refused to take the military oath despite an official hearing in which the prosecution introduced testimony to the effect that other Christians were serving in the legions without similar conflicts of

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<sup>914</sup> *Apostolic Traditions* 17-19. If by Hippolytus the tract can be dated to the early third century. Others suggest that it is a fourth-century collection of various source materials spanning the 2<sup>nd</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> centuries.

<sup>915</sup> *The Martyrdom of Perpetua, Felicitas, and their Companions*.

<sup>916</sup> Eusebius, *HE* 6.5.

<sup>917</sup> According to Dionysius of Alexandria in Eusebius, *HE* 6.41.16.

<sup>918</sup> Reported by Eusebius, *HE* 7.15, and in *The Martyrdom of St. Marinus*. Marinus probably fell victim to the Valerian persecution ca. 257 CE. Eusebius also refers to the house church in Caesarea in connection with the story.

conscience.<sup>919</sup> Other early military martyrs of record include the centurion Marcellus (ca. 298 CE) at Tingis in Mauretania,<sup>920</sup> Dasius and Julius the Veteran (ca. 303 CE) at Durostorum in Moesia,<sup>921</sup> and Tipasius (ca. 304 CE) in Quingentani, Mauretania,<sup>922</sup> these latter being victims of Diocletian's persecution. Eusebius writes that the Diocletian persecution, in fact, began in the army where "the supreme commander . . . was just making his first attempt at persecuting the soldiers – separating into classes and thoroughly sifting out those serving in the camps, giving them a choice whether they would obey and enjoy the rank they held, or else be deprived of it."<sup>923</sup> It is justifiable, of course, to conclude that many more soldiers baptized into Christianity found ways of serving without bringing undue attention to themselves. This is also supported by archaeological evidence described below.

Could soldiers serving in Jerusalem have been responsible for constructing a Christian house of assembly outside the walls of Aelia? Might this location have been chosen by them after hearing Jewish-Christian traditions that located certain New Testament events on southern Mount Zion? Could this facility have later been turned over to local Christians for their exclusive use following the near abandonment of the city by the legions, or perhaps during the targeted persecution of Christian soldiers, both of which occurred in the third century? It is first necessary to explore the evidence for the

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<sup>919</sup> *The Acts of Maximilian.*

<sup>920</sup> *The Acts of Marcellus.*

<sup>921</sup> *The Martyrdom of the Saintly Dasius* and *The Martyrdom of Julius the Veteran.*

<sup>922</sup> *The Acts of Tipasius.*

<sup>923</sup> Eusebius, *HE* 8. 4. See also 8.1.7

existence of churches in the late Roman Empire prior to Constantine and the inclusion of soldiers among the worshippers.

The term *aula ecclesiae* (“hall church”) was coined by L. Michael White after the German *Saalkirche* introduced by Adolf Harnack in the 1920s.<sup>924</sup> The term *Aula ecclesiae* describes an intermediary architectural step between the *domus ecclesiae* (“house church”) and the standard basilica, such as Hagia Sion, of the fourth century. According to White, church halls began to appear in the last half of the third century. The typical structure is characterized by a rectangular dining hall flanked by additional halls for the baptistery and martyrium.<sup>925</sup> Prior to the introduction of these new or highly renovated structures for Christian liturgical use, accommodations were made in private homes (*domus ecclesiae*) also sometimes architecturally or artistically refashioned for worship.

Kristinia Sessa reminds us that “arguments for the pre-Constantinian building and ritual use of” such structures “rest heavily upon textual evidence.”<sup>926</sup> The earliest clear reference to a Christian church structure as such may be found in the sixth century CE Syriac *Edessene Chronicle*. An entry (no. 8) for the year 201 CE reports flood damage incurred by “the temple [*haikla*] of the church of the Christians.”<sup>927</sup> Although the

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<sup>924</sup> White, *House*, 197 n. 100, who cites Adolf Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den Ersten Drei Jahrhunderten* (2 vols.; 4<sup>th</sup> German ed.; Leipzig, J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1924), 2:615.

<sup>925</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

<sup>926</sup> Kristinia Sessa, “*Domus Ecclesiae*: Rethinking a Category of *Ante-Pacem* Christian Space,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 60 (2009): 96. A full collection of these can be found in White, *The Social Origins of Christian Architecture* Volume 2: *Texts and Monuments for the Christian Domus Ecclesiae in its Environment* (Harvard Theological Studies; Valley Forge, Pa.: Trinity Press, 1990).

<sup>927</sup> White, *House*, 118.

historicity of the passage was brought into question by Walter Bauer who suggested that it was a later orthodox interpolation,<sup>928</sup> White argues for its authenticity, stating that the entry “probably reflects a building that had become publicly identifiable to locals as a Christian meeting place.”<sup>929</sup> The flood itself was an historical event, he notes, and the Syriac *haikla*, as used in that period, could mean either “temple,” “holy place,” or “palace/hall” without necessarily reflecting anachronistic overtones of later orthodox, monolithic structures. Other examples of references to early churches as physical structures (rather than simply congregations of people) can be found in the writings of the church fathers.

Origen (185-254 CE) once contrasted the Christian church with the Jewish synagogue, a place he recognized as a physical structure in which worshippers stood and prayed as they did in the synagogue “built by a centurion” referring to Luke 7:5.<sup>930</sup> Jews, he writes, liked to pray in synagogues and on “broadway corners,” whereas Christians love to pray in churches. Further evidence of churches as structures may be found in Origen’s *Homily on Exodus* in which he expounded on Exodus 1:21.

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<sup>928</sup> Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, trans. Philadelphia Seminar on Christian Origins (1971; repr., Mifflintown, PA: Sigler Press, 1996), 13-14. Bauer cited as evidence the Chronicle of Dionysius of Tell Mahrê (776 C.E.) that contains the same account without reference to the church. Also, the entry in the Edessene Chronicle for 313 C.E. notes that “Bishop Kûnê laid the foundation for the church in Urhâi [Edessa]. His successor Scha’ad built and completed it.” Bauer contends that this is the initial building of the first Christian church in the city.

<sup>929</sup> White, *House*, 118.

<sup>930</sup> Origen, *On Prayer* (trans. William A. Curtis, *ANF*).

But if you should see how the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, teaching the fear of God, make the houses of the Church and fill the whole earth with houses of prayer, then what is written will appear to have been written rationally.<sup>931</sup>

Minucius Felix (ca. 200 CE) recorded the disdain for Christians expressed by the pagan Caecilius who lamented their “abominable shrines [*sacraria*] of an impious assembly [that] are maturing themselves throughout the whole world.”<sup>932</sup> Cyprian (ca. 200-258 CE), bishop of Carthage, hints at the interior arrangement of his church in his description of the ordination of a reader named Celerinus:

What else behooved to be done except that he should be placed on the pulpit [*pulpitum*], that is, on the tribunal of the Church; that, resting on the loftiness of a higher station, and conspicuous to the whole people for the brightness of his honor, he should read the precepts and Gospel of the Lord, which he so bravely and faithfully follows? (Cyprian, *Epistle* 33)<sup>933</sup>

Evidence of the existence of a church in Cirta, Numidia in North Africa, comes from a report, dated May 19, 303, recording an official search of its contents.<sup>934</sup> White suggests that the structure may have been a renovated house equipped with a library.<sup>935</sup> Another church is identifiable from a municipal street survey at Pannapolis in Upper

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<sup>931</sup> Origen, *Homily on Exodus* 2.2, trans. Ronald E. Heine, *Origen: Homilies on Genesis and Exodus* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 243. Sessa, 99, understands the passage as metaphorical, evocative of symbolic space rather than physical structures.

<sup>932</sup> Minucius Felix, *The Octavius of Minucius Felix* (trans. ANF).

<sup>933</sup> Cyprian, *Epistle to the Clergy and People, About the Ordination of Celerinus as Reader* 33.4, trans. Robert Ernest Wallis, ANF.

<sup>934</sup> White, *House*, 122.

<sup>935</sup> Ibid.

Egypt at the end of the third century.<sup>936</sup> Lactantius (250-325 CE) reports the destruction by fire of a church in Nicomedia in Asia Minor during the persecution of Diocletian.<sup>937</sup>

A church in Judea was associated with the centurion Cornelius who was reportedly baptized by Peter in Ceasarea (Acts 10:2).<sup>938</sup> In 333 CE, the Bordeaux Pilgrim visited “the Bath of Cornelius the centurion, who gave much alms.”<sup>939</sup> Paula, in 385 CE, “saw Cornelius’s house, a church of Christ.”<sup>940</sup> Although archaeological evidence for this structure has yet to be found, the house was apparently converted into a church in an early period.

Nearby, the house of Philip the deacon (and/or apostle – Acts 1:13, 6:5) was converted equally early into a house church (*domus ecclesiae*). Paula visited the “small house and the room occupied by the four virgin prophetesses,” Philip’s daughters.<sup>941</sup> The Latin word Jerome uses for “room,” *cubiculum*, “was a standard word for a room within

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<sup>936</sup> Ibid.

<sup>937</sup> Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum* 12, trans. J. Vanderspoel, <http://people.ucalgary.ca/~vandersp/Courses/texts/lactant/lactpers.html> (accessed January 31, 2015).

<sup>938</sup> Luke identifies Cornelius as belonging to the Italian cohort, possibly the *Cohors II miliaria Italica civium romanorum voluntariorum*, a contingent of archers stationed in Syria but not definitely known to have been there before 69 CE. By this time, Titus had set up his headquarters in Caesarea as commander of the *X Frentensis* as well as the *V Macedonica*, *XV Apollinaris*, and *XII Fulminata* in preparation for the siege of Jerusalem. We cannot be sure that Luke has chronologically located the story correctly or that the figure of Peter was not employed later to validate an existing gentile church in Caesarea that stood in his time. Nevertheless, according to Ben Witherington II, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 346: “auxiliary units . . . were used in Palestine both before, after, and perhaps even during the reign of Herod Agrippa I,” thus “we cannot rule out the Italian cohort being in the area well before A.D. 69.” Whether Cornelius was centurion in Caesarea before or after 69 CE is a matter of debate. See also Millar, 70-76.

<sup>939</sup> Bordeaux Pilgrim, *Itin.* 585, trans. Wilkinson, *Egeria*, 26. Wilkinson, 26 n. 3, notes that “bath” refers to the place where Cornelius was baptized, doubtless in his house.

<sup>940</sup> Jerome, *Epitaph on Saint Paula* (Letter 108) 8.2, trans. Andrew Cain, *Jerome’s Epitaph on Paula: A Commentary on the Epitaphium Sanctae Paulae* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 51.

<sup>941</sup> Ibid.

the Roman household which could be used for any number of domestic activities . . . but in Jerome it frequently has the added connotation of a private chamber set apart for ascetic activities such as prayer, fasting, and the reading of Scripture.”<sup>942</sup>

Eusebius implies the widespread construction of churches prior to the Christian persecution by Diocletian that commenced in 303 CE.

But how can anyone describe those vast assemblies, and the multitude that crowded together in every city, and the famous gatherings in the houses of prayer; on whose account, not being satisfied with the ancient buildings, they erected from the foundation large churches in all the cities?<sup>943</sup>

Archaeological evidence for the existence of Christian halls of assembly is more limited for a number of possible reasons. One is that continuous renovations tended to obliterate evidence of earlier Christian occupation. But two examples, one a *domus ecclesiae*, the other an *aula ecclesiae*, are especially useful here. These document not only the existence of Christian churches in the region during the first half of the third century but their military connection as well.

The near-perfect preservation of the house church at Dura-Europos is due to the efforts of Roman legionaries who, in 256 CE, buried it and a number of other buildings that stood near the city walls in order to broaden their defenses in the face of Sassanian invasion. Three stages of development at the site were recognized by its excavator, Yotam Tepper. The third stage included the renovation of a private house for use as a church. Graffiti helped to date the renovation to between 232 and 256 CE. The 5.15 by 12.9 meter (16 by 42 foot) room was converted into a hall by removing a dividing wall

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<sup>942</sup> Cain, 222.

<sup>943</sup> Eusebius, *HE* 8.1.5.

in order to provide space for 65 to 75 people.<sup>944</sup> The only furnishing as such was a platform, or *bema*, 1.47 meters long and 0.20 meters high (4.8 feet by 7.8 inches). There were no benches and no columns in the room. To the left of the *bema*, however, was a “molded mass of plaster containing an aperture at the top; there is nothing to indicate what object it held.”<sup>945</sup> It may have served as a *thalassa* for washing the Eucharistic vessels or a holder for a water jug from which the speaker could moisten his throat.<sup>946</sup> Rainer Riesner suggests that it “could serve as a holder for a torch or lampstand” to light the text used by a reader standing on the *bema*.<sup>947</sup> If that was the purpose of the *bema*, then the congregation would have faced east when focused on the reader.<sup>948</sup> (Tertullian once commented on the well-known characterization of Christians who prayed toward the east.<sup>949</sup>) On the west wall a baptismal font was found that consisted of a basin beneath a canopy supported by two columns (plate 27). A large niche was discovered in one of the walls of the baptistery. At .60 meters high, .88 meters wide, and .43 meters deep (2 by 2.88 by 1.4 feet), the niche stood 1.61 meters (5.3 feet) above the floor (this is very close to the distance of the Cenacle’s niche above the floor).<sup>950</sup> The top was later arched to

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<sup>944</sup> Graydon Snyder, *Ante Pacem: Archaeological Evidence of Church Life Before Constantine* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2003), 132.

<sup>945</sup> Snyder, 132-3.

<sup>946</sup> Carl H. Kraeling, *The Christian Building. The Excavations at Dura-Europos Conducted by Yale University and the French Academy of Inscriptions and Letters, Final Report 8, Part 2*, ed. C. Bradford Welles (New Haven: Dura-Europos Publications, 1967), 144.

<sup>947</sup> Riesner, “Archaeology,” 160.

<sup>948</sup> Benches were installed around three walls of the outer courtyard which Riesner, “Churches,” 161-2, suggests were intended either for overflow from the main hall or for the instruction of catechumens. If so, it is striking that no bench was installed along the west wall.

<sup>949</sup> Tertullian, *Apology for the Christians* 16.

<sup>950</sup> Kraeling, *Christian*, 24.

match the font.<sup>951</sup> A ledge beneath the niche may have been combined with it to serve as a station for the application of holy oil in connection with baptism.<sup>952</sup>

Various frescos featuring episodes from the Bible cover the walls surrounding the baptistery.<sup>953</sup> These may in fact be the most ancient of Christian paintings. Riesner suggests that the baptistery resembles an *arcosolium* tomb, perhaps based on Paul's contention that baptism was like being "buried with Christ into death."<sup>954</sup> That grim notion may be reflected in the fresco depicting the women at Christ's tomb.

Inscriptions in the baptistery and main hall help assure the complex's Christian identification. One graffito, a cross in four parts, perhaps reflecting Jewish-Christian symbolism, was found under a later layer of plaster which may indicate the Christian nature of the site at its earliest phase.<sup>955</sup>

Carl Kraeling attributes the creation of the Christian building to precisely the time that the Roman garrison in Dura was strengthened.<sup>956</sup> To the *Cohors II Ulpia Equitata* which had been stationed there since 165 CE, coincidentally the period that Christianity is suggested to have first come to Dura,<sup>957</sup> were added the *Cohors XX Palmyrenorum* and

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<sup>951</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>952</sup> Ibid. 151.

<sup>953</sup> These included the Good Shepherd, Adam and Eve, the Woman at the Well, David and Goliath, the Healing of the Paralytic, and Peter and Jesus Walking on the Water.

<sup>954</sup> Romans 6:3-4. Riesner, "Archaeology," 163.

<sup>955</sup> Riesner, "Archaeology," 164.

<sup>956</sup> Kraeling, *Christian*, 109.

<sup>957</sup> Ibid., 106-7.

elements of the *Legia IV Scythica*, *XVI Flavia Firma*, *III Cyrenaica* and *X Fretensis*.<sup>958</sup>

Thus, the Christian building was created “precisely during the years when the military garrison was being built up” and the Christian community “was swelled by members of that garrison.”<sup>959</sup>

Contemporaneous with Dura is the church discovered in Megiddo, the oldest one yet identified in Israel if not in the Roman world.<sup>960</sup> The site is located on the edge of the Jewish village of Kfar Othnay (Latin: Caporcotani). It was once part of a region known as Legio due to the encampment there of the *Legio II Traiana* and *VI Ferrata* in the second and third centuries CE.<sup>961</sup> Only the foundations, the floor, and sections of the walls remain. The 5 by 10 meter (16.5 by 33 foot) room located in the southwest corner is just one among others within the larger residential and administrative structure. The discovery of military artifacts and bakery equipment helped to identify the overall building as belonging to the legionary administration. What positively identifies the room as a church are the three mosaic inscriptions on the floor surrounding two large stones which served as the base for a Eucharistic table. According to epigraphist Leah di Segni, the inscriptions read as follows.

- 1) The God-loving Akeptous has offered the table to God Jesus Christ as a memorial.

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<sup>958</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>959</sup> Ibid.

<sup>960</sup> Edward Adams, “The Ancient Church at Megiddo: The Discovery and an Assessment of its Significance,” *The Expository Times* 120 (2008), 62.

<sup>961</sup> Vassilios Tzaferis, “Inscribed ‘To God Jesus Christ’: Early Christian Prayer Hall found in Megiddo Prison,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 33 (2007), digital edition, n.p. In fact, in the same area, a bronze statuette of the Roman god Lar was found. Lars was often a revered as a household god and statues or paintings could be found in niches or shrines.

2) Gaianus, also called Porphyrius, centurion, our brother, has made the pavement at his own expense as an act of liberality. Brutius carried out the work.

3) Remember Primilla and Cyriaca and Dorothea and moreover also Chreste.<sup>962</sup>

The inscription regarding “brother” Gaianus, a Roman centurion, was placed next to a medallion-style mosaic that features in its center two fish facing opposite directions, “a distinct Christian symbol for Christ.”<sup>963</sup> Also, the words “God Jesus Christ” in the Akeptous inscription are written as *nomina sacra*, perhaps the earliest epigraphical evidence of its use ever discovered.<sup>964</sup> The presence of women’s names in the inscriptions indicates either that they were relatives of the soldiers or else women from the civilian population.<sup>965</sup> If the latter is true, then the room might have been shared with fellow Christians from the surrounding area.

The early third-century date of the Megiddo church given by its excavator has been challenged by both Vassilios Tzaferis and Joe Zias. Each would date the prayer hall to the latter half of the third century. They reason that the presence of Christians in the Roman army was more acceptable in a later period<sup>966</sup> and that Christians enjoyed a period of relative peace in those days.<sup>967</sup> It is also claimed that the liturgy needed sufficient time

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<sup>962</sup> Translation by di Segni in Adams, 64-5.

<sup>963</sup> Tzaferis, n.p.

<sup>964</sup> *Nomina sacra*, or “sacred names,” is a way of writing, via abbreviation, certain holy words or names. This graffito is one of the earliest inscriptional references to Jesus. See Adams, 66; Tzaferis, n.p.

<sup>965</sup> Primilla, Cyriaca, Dorothea and Chreste. Akeptous is the Greek form of the female Latin name Accepta. See Adams, 65. Chreste was a typical slave name. See Riesner, “Churches,” 167. He suggested that these women may have been office holders.

<sup>966</sup> Adams, 66.

<sup>967</sup> Tzaferis, n.p.

to develop to include the type of sacrament that required specialized furnishings implied by the presence of the eucharistic table base.<sup>968</sup>

Historians are in agreement that the latter half of the third century, between the persecutions of Decius (250-251 CE) and Diocletian (303-313 CE), was a relatively peaceful period for the empire and for Christians in general.<sup>969</sup> Nevertheless, all of the 28 coins found in the church room date to the second and third centuries and the bulk of the potsherds found atop the mosaic floor were dated to the third century with only a few dated to the fourth.<sup>970</sup> According to Kraeling, there is no doubt that “by the end of the third century Christian congregations in the major cities of the Mediterranean basin had, and even corporately owned, church buildings.”<sup>971</sup>

Other archaeological examples of early churches are available from Rome. According to the *Liber Pontificalis* (12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century), the Roman bishop Marcellus (308-9 CE) “appointed 25 parish churches as dioceses in the city of Rome to provide baptism and penance for the many who were converted among the pagans and burial for the martyrs.”<sup>972</sup> Certain *tituli* churches associated with Christian personalities prior to 313 CE may provide evidence for early church structures.

The basilica Church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo in Rome, constructed at the end of the fourth century, was built over the presumed home of two Roman soldiers, John and

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<sup>968</sup> Ibid.

<sup>969</sup> Helgeland, et. al., 87; Riesner, “Churches,” 166.

<sup>970</sup> Adams, 65.

<sup>971</sup> Kraeling, *Christian*, 128.

<sup>972</sup> *The Book of the Popes (Liber Pontificalis)*, trans. Louise Robes Loomis (New York: Columbia University Press, 1916), 38.

Paul, martyred during the reign of Julian the Apostate (361-63 CE). Excavations below revealed a tenement of as many as five buildings and twenty rooms dating from the first to the fourth century. The Christian decorative murals in the enlarged room, formed by joining it with a nearby bath house, help to date this *domus ecclesiae* to before 250 C.E.<sup>973</sup>

The lower levels of the Basilica de Sant’Anastasia al Palatino in Rome may have once been occupied by third-century parishioners who “may have had the use of one of these vaulted rooms and that one or another of its presbyters lived in the rooms upstairs.”<sup>974</sup>

From all of these examples, some comparative comments can be made. Like the Cenacle, none of the excavated buildings featured benches or columns though each was a rectangular room. One church featured a niche as well as a baptistery in the form of an aedicula, another, the remains of a eucharistic table. Several were associated with, or were located adjacent to the camp or headquarters of the Roman legions. All were constructed before the middle of the third century. Three halls feature Greek inscriptions.<sup>975</sup> Only one was directionally oriented.

The Cenacle is also an elongated hall. Absent from its interior are any signs of benches or interior, orienting columns. It features no evidence of furnishings but does include a niche. It, too, is located hard by a camp of the Roman legions. Yet the Cenacle fails to fit neatly into either category of *domus ecclesiae* or *aula ecclesiae* as so far

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<sup>973</sup> Krautheimer, 29.

<sup>974</sup> Kraeling, *Christian*, 132.

<sup>975</sup> The Greek words for “Jesus Christ (be) with you” were found in one of the graffiti in the church at Dura. See Adams, 66.

understood. It appears to have been neither a private home nor does it appear that it was, in its original form, flanked by additional halls.

The primary focus of early churches was the dining room, generally located on the top floor.<sup>976</sup> Simple furnishings would only have consisted of a table and surrounding couches forming a *triclinium*.<sup>977</sup> It is no longer possible to know the original purpose of the second story of the Cenacle but it is likely, given the times, that it was used for dining or other communal activity. Baptisms might have been performed at any nearby source of water such as a fountain, well, or bath.<sup>978</sup> However, it should be recalled that the lower floor of the Cenacle was for centuries designated as the place of the footwashing at the Last Supper. Did this commemoration echo an earlier purpose perhaps associated with the niche? Could the niche have once held a baptismal laver, perhaps a smaller version of the copper vessel designated by Moses (Ex 30:18)? In the second temple period, these lavers were used by the officiating priests each morning to wash their hands and feet (plate 28).<sup>979</sup> In the Cenacle, initiates might have ascended a set of wooden stairs, like the stone steps at the church in Dura, toward the niche, in full view of the congregation, where they were baptized with the water from the laver. Or the niche may have housed a simple basin as at the Dura church. Baptismal basins were found in the small southern chamber of the fourth-century Church of Eleona on the Mount of Olives and at the early-

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<sup>976</sup> Krautheimer, 24.

<sup>977</sup> Ibid.

<sup>978</sup> Ibid.

<sup>979</sup> "The Laver," The Temple Institute. Online: <https://www.templeinstitute.org/laver.htm>. Accessed 20 January 2015.

third-century Christian complex at Aquileia in Italy.<sup>980</sup> Other furnishings, possibly wooden and movable, might have included a bishop's chair, like the "throne of James" (or seat of Moses) reported by Eusebius, and a table for the eucharist.<sup>981</sup> If the Cenacle had been constructed by Christian soldiers of the Tenth Legion, it might have originated anytime after 70 CE. An earlier date is preferable to allow time for its military past to fade but not so early as to preclude the possibility of a fair number of soldier converts. Thus, a time no earlier than the second century, but no later than the early third, is suggested.

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<sup>980</sup> Kraeling, *Christian*, 147.

<sup>981</sup> Krautheimer, 26.

## Conclusion

As shown above, it is highly unlikely that any part of the Cenacle pre-dates 70 CE. How close to the fourth century could it have been constructed if it was remembered as the “church of the apostles”? That designation has been frequently understood to imply a genetic connection with the first generation of Jerusalem believers. But this is not necessarily obvious. The title “church of the apostles” may only have been meant to indicate that the structure on this site primarily commemorated, not an event in the life of Jesus, but one associated with his followers, i.e. the Pentecost. What the Cenacle most likely represents is a hybrid Christian building: a rather simple but early elongated hall that preceded the later, more specialized structures built in the latter half of the third century. Its niche derives from the architecture of the Jewish synagogue or pagan mithraeum representing either Jewish Christian or Gentile Christian influence or both. The building’s eastern orientation likewise stems from Jewish or pagan antecedents which would be continued by Byzantine architects in later centuries. The lack of benches or orienting columns reflects a break from Jewish forms and a propensity for civic-style architecture. The plaster inscriptions, in Greek just as they are in the mosaics and graffiti from early third-century churches, help to confirm its Christian milieu.

Whether the Cenacle was first built by legionaries as a pagan hall and then transformed into a Christian church or whether it was built *ex novo* as a Christian shrine by the military or by a mixture of Jewish and Gentile Christian civilians cannot for the moment be determined. More archaeological work needs to be done in the Cenacle. The mosaic floor of the Megiddo church makes it doubly imperative that the underlying mosaic floors of the Cenacle be uncovered to reveal the symbolism that may help to

determine its purpose and date. Additionally, the lowest course of ashlar should be dated by a process that seeks to fix the period of the composition of its mortar. Many advances in the radiocarbon dating of limestone, not to mention the dating of organic material in clay-based mortar, can be brought to bear to help fix the date of the earliest construction. In the absence of such specific evidence, this paper will propose a date for the first (recoverable) stage of the construction of the Cenacle to the second or, at the latest, the early third century CE. Scholars have noted that a more distinctively Christian and material culture began to emerge from 165 to 212 CE culminating with the Edict of Antoninus which declared that all free men in the Empire were to be given citizenship.<sup>982</sup> According to White, “this period seems to correspond with the emerging needs within the Christian community for specially articulated places of worship.”<sup>983</sup> Also, it may be that in the larger cities like Jerusalem, these architectural adaptations occurred long before they appeared in the rest of Palestine and the Diaspora.<sup>984</sup> The Cenacle’s architectural arrangement may have even inspired the construction of other Christian facilities throughout parts of the empire.

It is not impossible that Hadrian “saw” the structure in the early second century but neither is it hard to imagine that, as in other things, Epiphanius confused the matter and temporally associated an early Christian building with a surviving Jewish synagogue and a legend about seven Jewish sects and their synagogues on Mount Zion. It is difficult to understand why the Bordeaux Pilgrim did not describe, or was not shown, a standing Christian edifice at the time of his visit to southern Mount Zion. He saw what he thought,

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<sup>982</sup> Snyder, 163-5; White, *House*, 118.

<sup>983</sup> White, *House*, 118.

<sup>984</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

or what was described to him, as a lone synagogue, possibly mischaracterized, but nevertheless a religious shrine perhaps temporarily abandoned by its Christian congregation once it moved into the new Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Perhaps it would take Byzantine builders another few decades before they would honor the ancient structure with the raising of the magnificent Hagia Sion, a tribute to its worthy but simpler ancestor on the southwestern hill of Mount Zion.

## PLATES

Plate 1



Mosaic, Church of Santa Pudenziana, Rome ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa\\_Pudenziana](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa_Pudenziana))



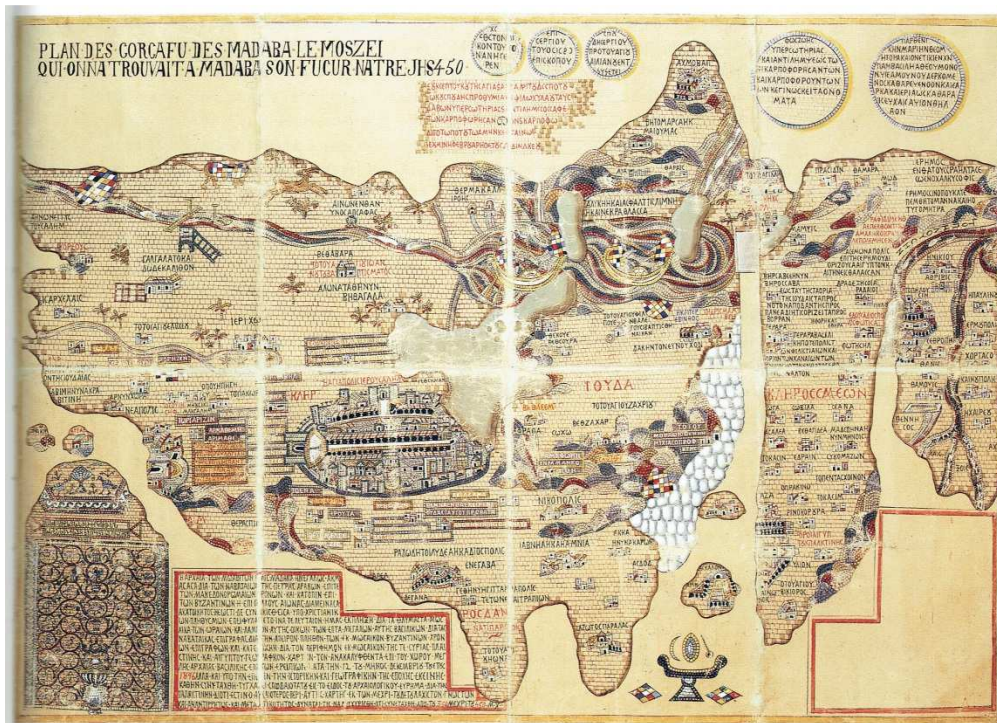
Mosaic, Church of Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome ([http://www.wga.hu/html\\_m/t/torriti/mosaic/5scene5.html](http://www.wga.hu/html_m/t/torriti/mosaic/5scene5.html))

Plate 2



Mosaic, Church of Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome (Rubin, *Image and Reality*, pg. 18)

Plate 3

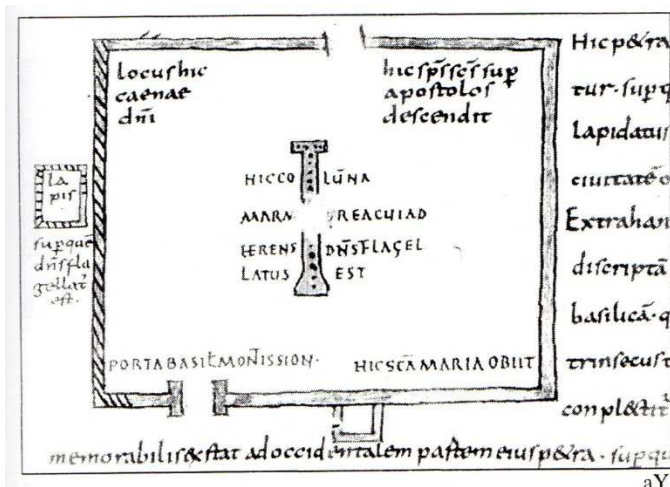


*Plan des corcafu des Madaba le moszei . . .* (Drawing of the Madaba Map) (1897, gouache (?) on paper. The Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem. The Eran Laor Cartographic Collection. Tishby, p. 67.

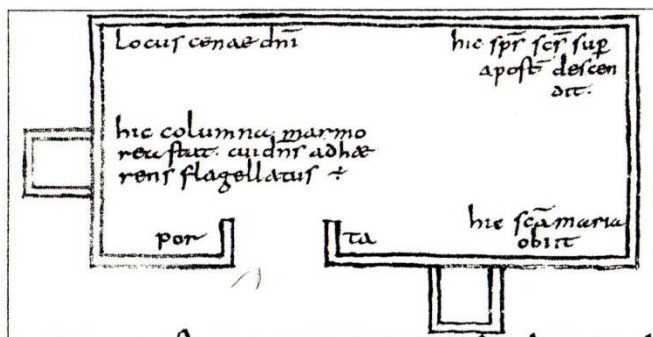


Madaba Map: Jerusalem ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madaba\\_Map](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madaba_Map))

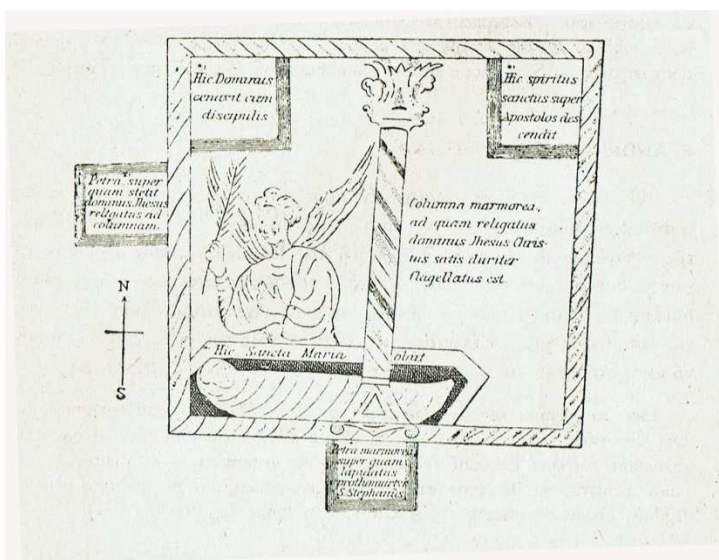
Plate 4



Adomnan's sketch from Arculf, MS Vindobonensis 458 (Wilkinson, *Pilgrims*, 375)



Adomnan's sketch from Arculf, MS Zürich, Rheinau 73 (Wilkinson, *Pilgrims*, 376)

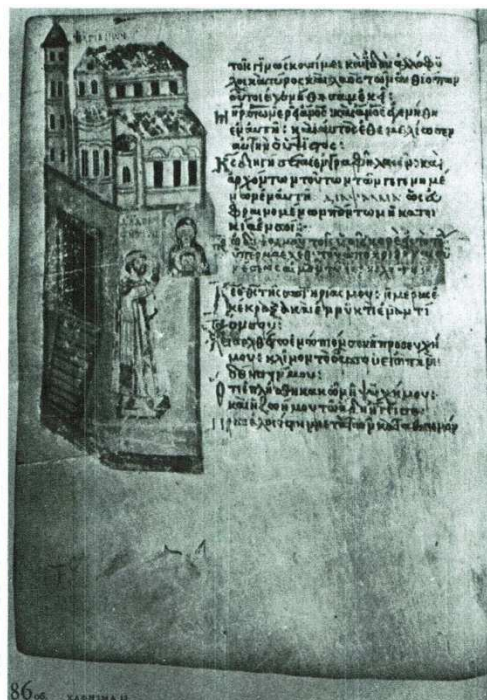


Bede's sketch from Arculf (Baldi, *Enchiridion*, 741)

Plate 5



Chludoff Psalter, fol. 51r (Meyer, 10)



Chludoff Psalter, fol. 86 (Oleg Grabar, p. 267)



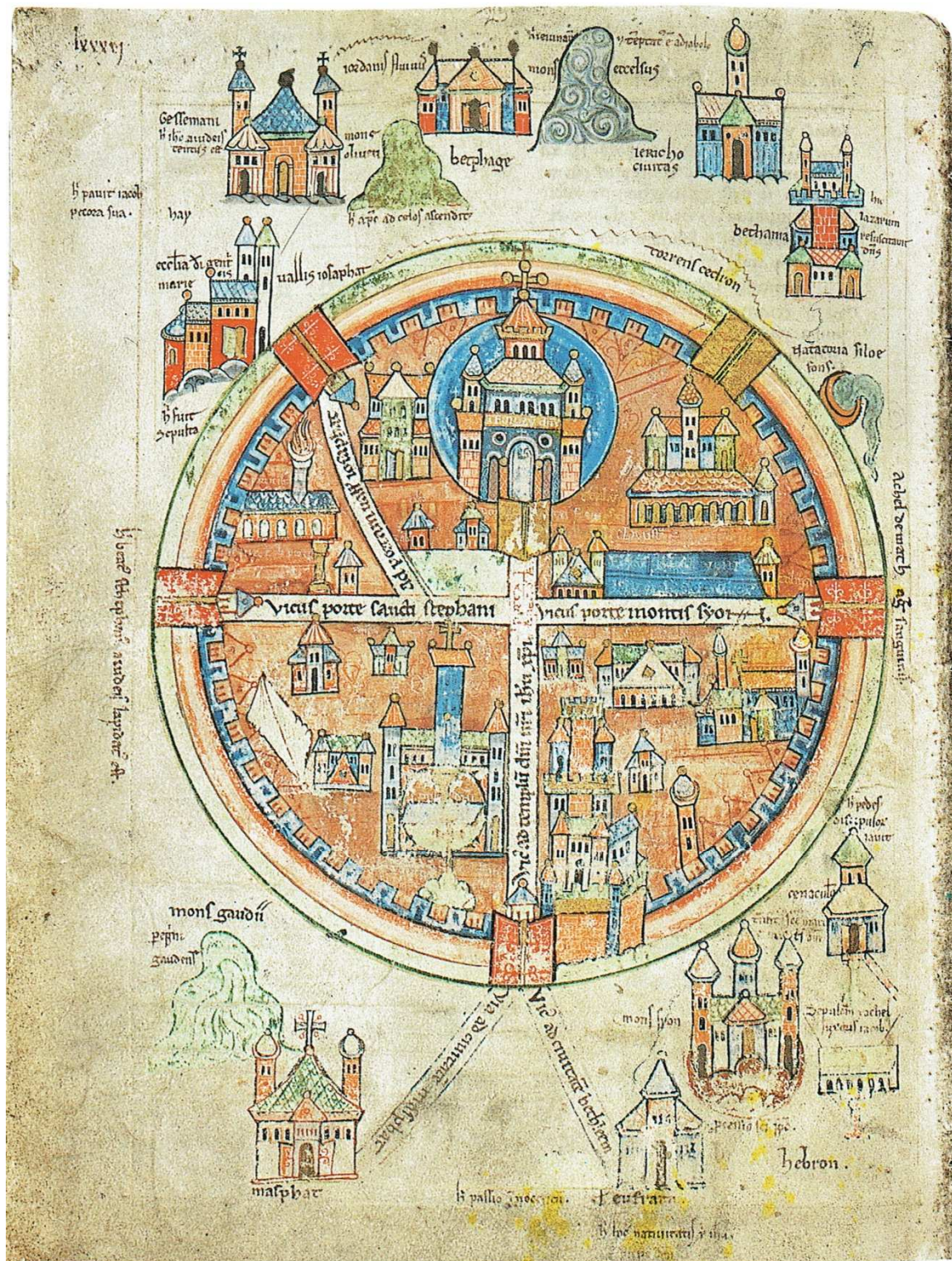
The Personification of Zion: Theodore Psalter (left) and Barberini Psalter (Meyer, 11)

Plate 6



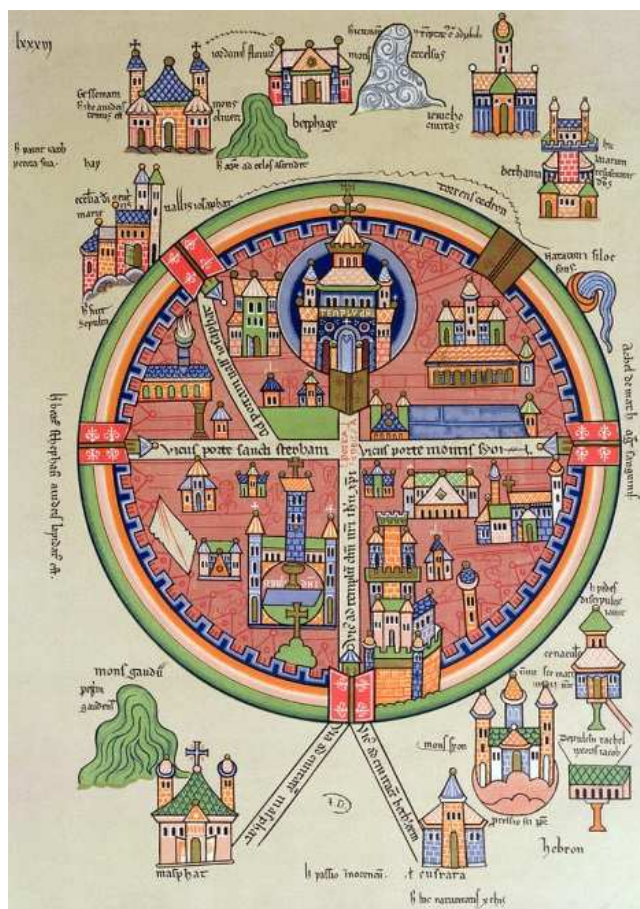
*Situs Hierusalem*, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, Brussels, Bib. Regia No. 9823-4, fol. 157 (Rubin, pg. 28)

Plate 7

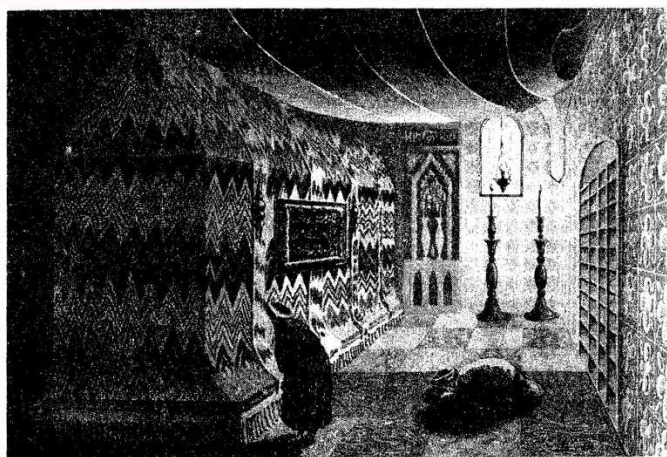


Map of Jerusalem, Uppsala, Sweden, Universitetsbibliotek, C 691 fol. LXXXVI (Rubin, pg. 29)

Plate 8



The Uppsala Map of Crusader Jerusalem after R. Röhrich

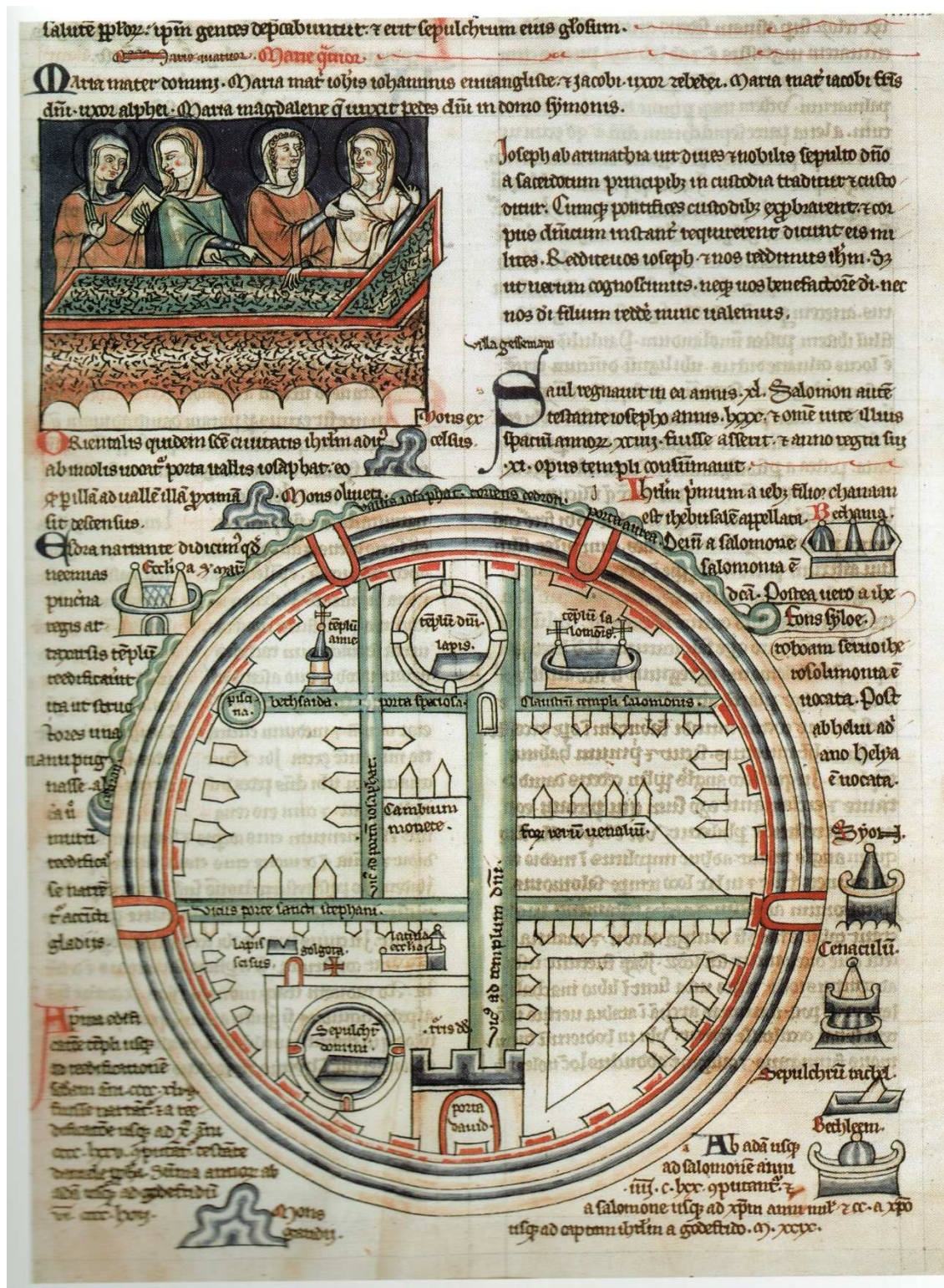


"David's Tomb" on Mt. Zion (Barclay, p. 209)

19<sup>th</sup> century representation of "David's Tomb." (Ben-Arieh, *Old City*, 316)



Plate 10



Map of Jerusalem, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Fonds Latin, 8865 fol. 133 (Rubin, pg. 31)

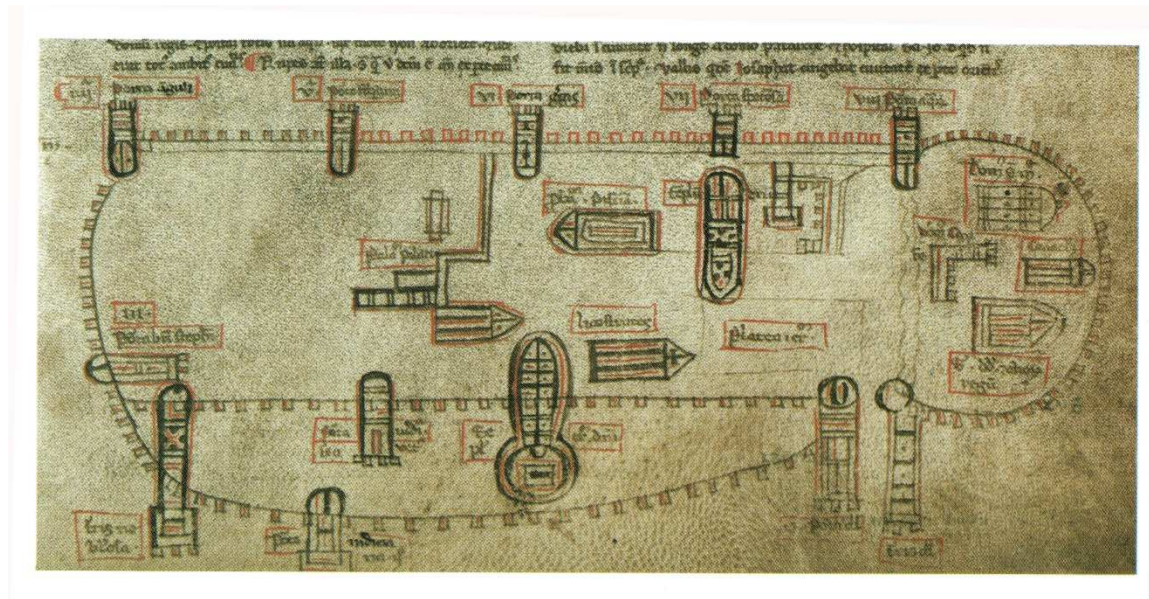
Plate 11



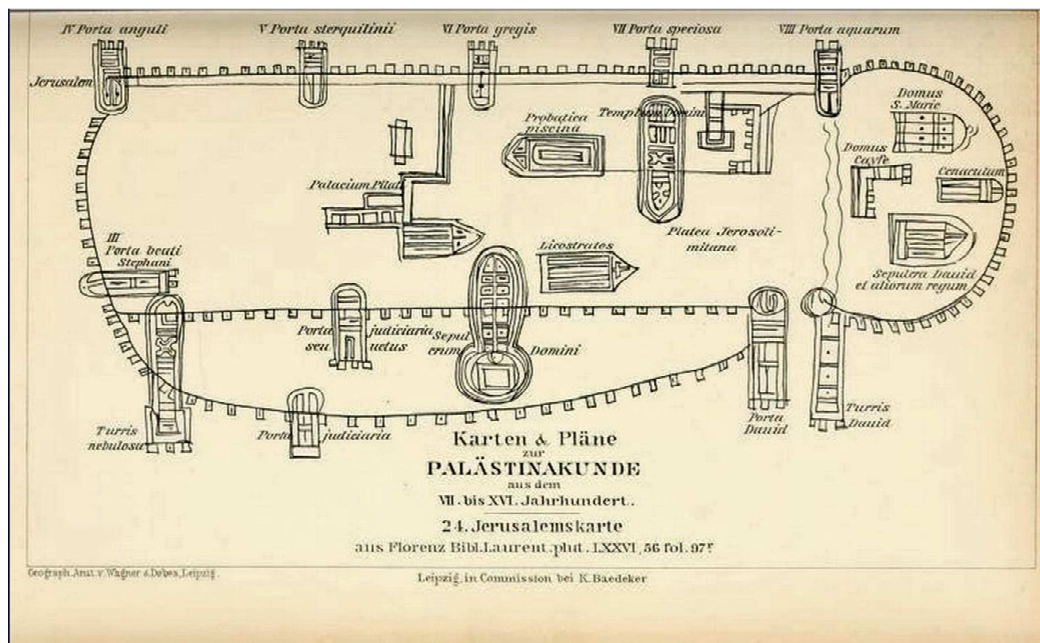
Map of Jerusalem, Cambrai, France (Rubin, p. 32)



Plate 13

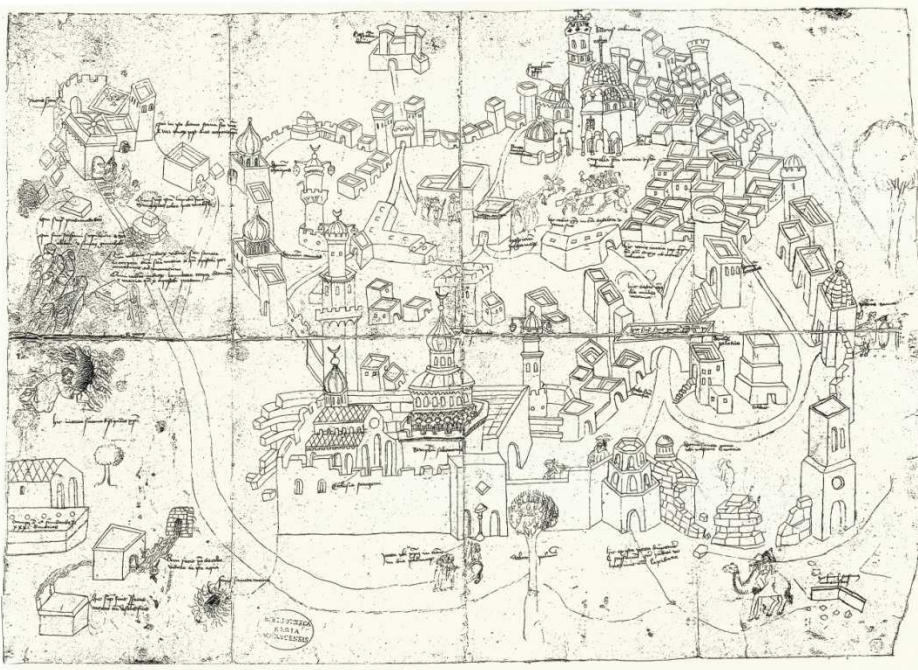


Map of imaginary Jerusalem, from a MS of Burchard of Mount Zion, Bibliotheca Laurentiana, Plut. LXXXVI, no. 56, fol. 97r. (Rubin, p. 37)



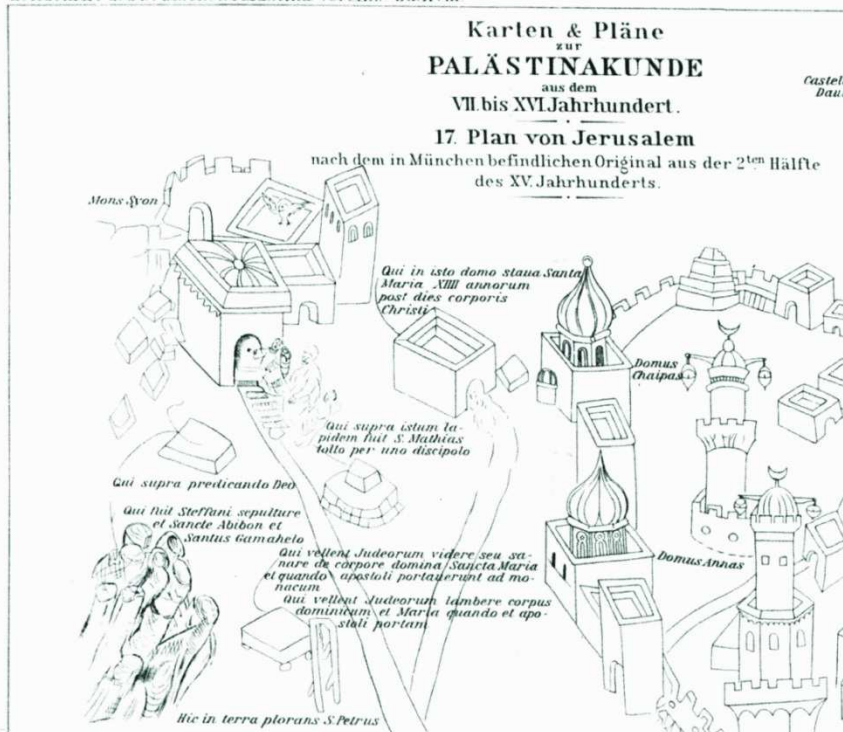
Drawing of Burchard's Map (*Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palaestina-Vereins*, vol. 21, Immanuel Benzinger, ed., Leipzig, 1898)

Plate 14



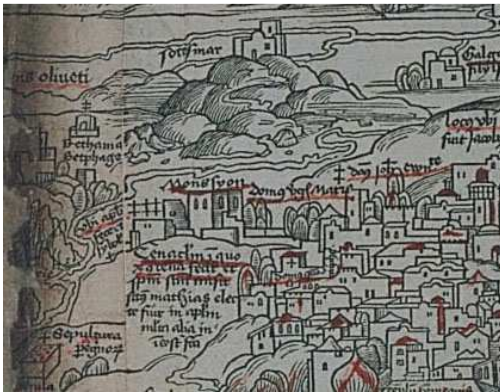
Map of Jerusalem, Sebald Rieter, München: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Iconog. 172 (Rubin, pg. 39)

Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins Bd XVIII



Drawing, Rieter Map, close-up of Mount Zion (from Reinhold Röhrich, "Karten und Pläne zur Palästinakunde aus dem 7. – 16. Jahrhundert," Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins (1878-1945) 18 (1895): plate 7)

Plate 15



Jerusalem, woodcut, with close-up of Mount Zion, Erhard Reuwich  
 (<http://www.jnul.huji.ac.il/dl/maps/jer/html/jer030.htm>)



Jerusalem, watercolor ink drawing, Conrad Grunenberg (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/bibliodyssey/3992479001/>)

Plate 16

Fresco, Santa Maria degli Angioli, Lugano, Switzerland (<http://blog.rowleygallery.co.uk/in-lugano/>)

Santa Maria degli Angioli, close-up of Mount Zion

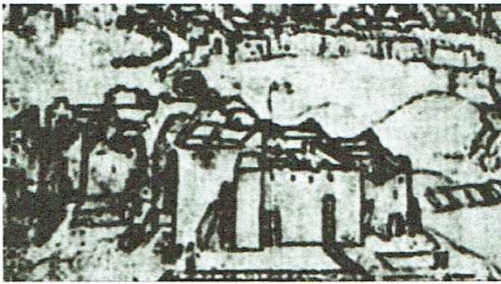




Plate 19

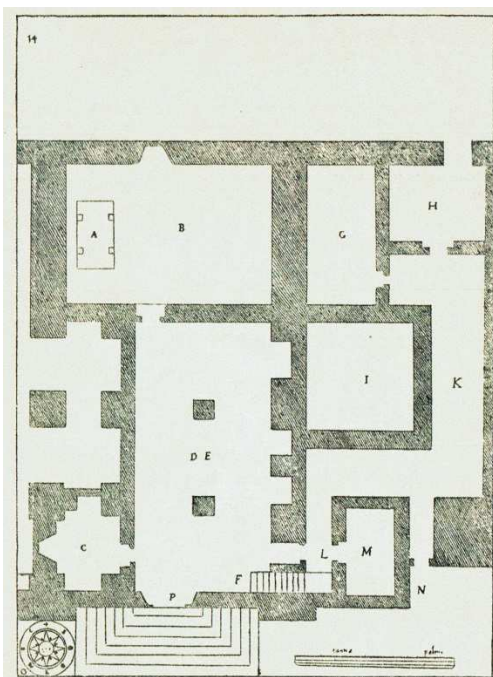


Jerusalem, ink drawing, Pieter Coecke van Aelst (Lewy, p. 67)

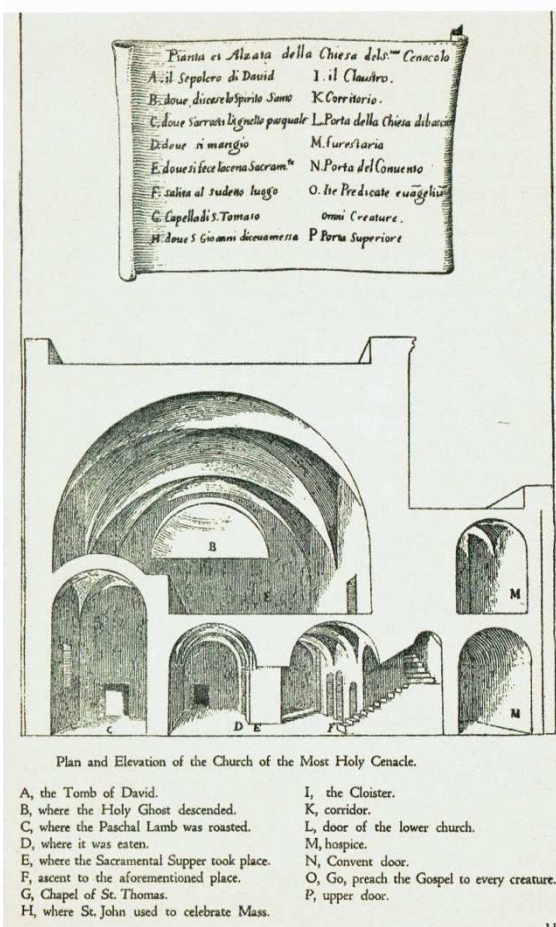


Close-up, Cenacle, from ink drawing of Jerusalem by Pieter Coecke van Aelst (Lewy, p. 70)

## Plate 20

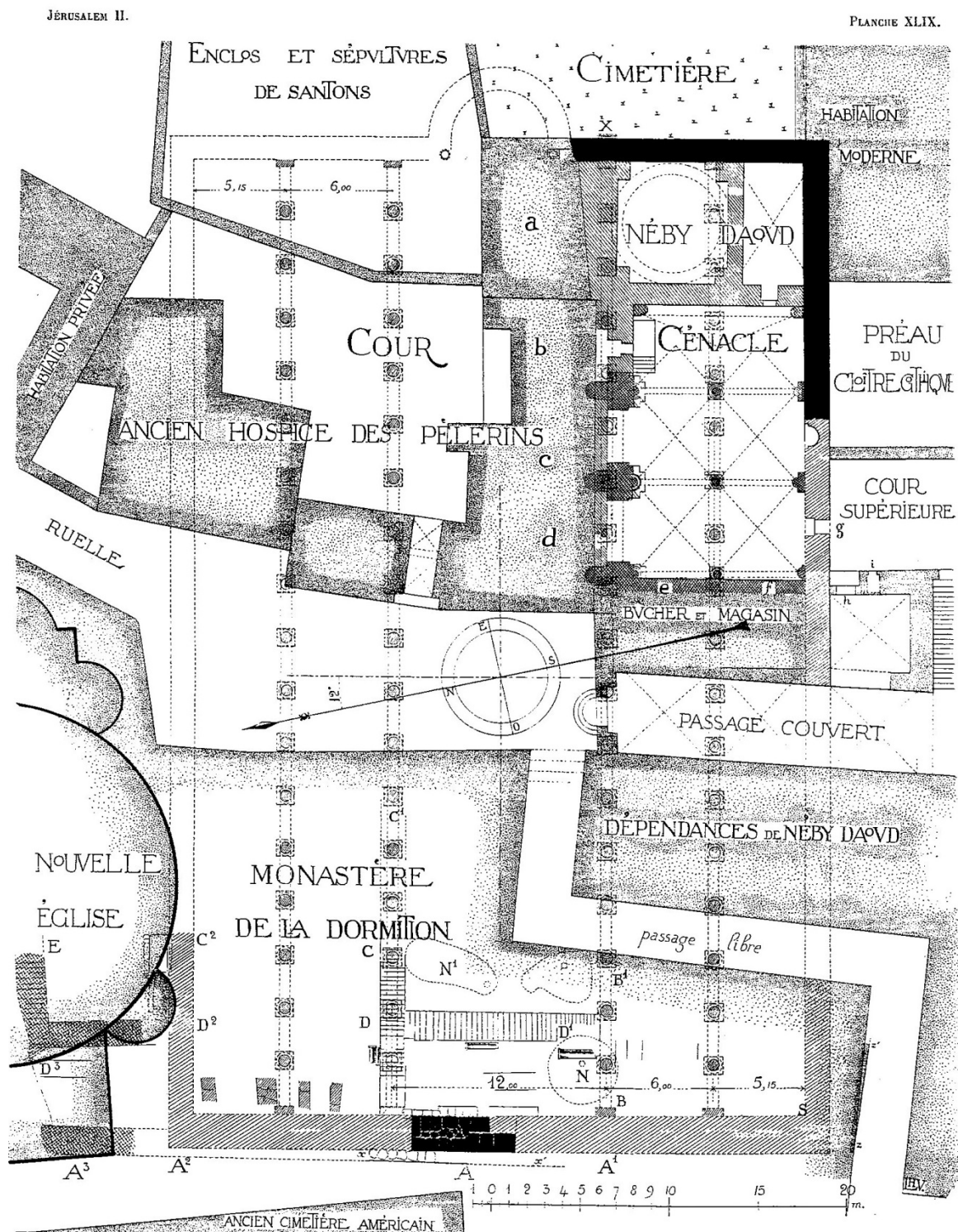


Cenacle, floor plan and elevation,  
Bernardino Amico  
(*Plans of the Sacred Edifices of the  
Holy Land*, 71, 73, legend translated  
by Eugene Hoade)



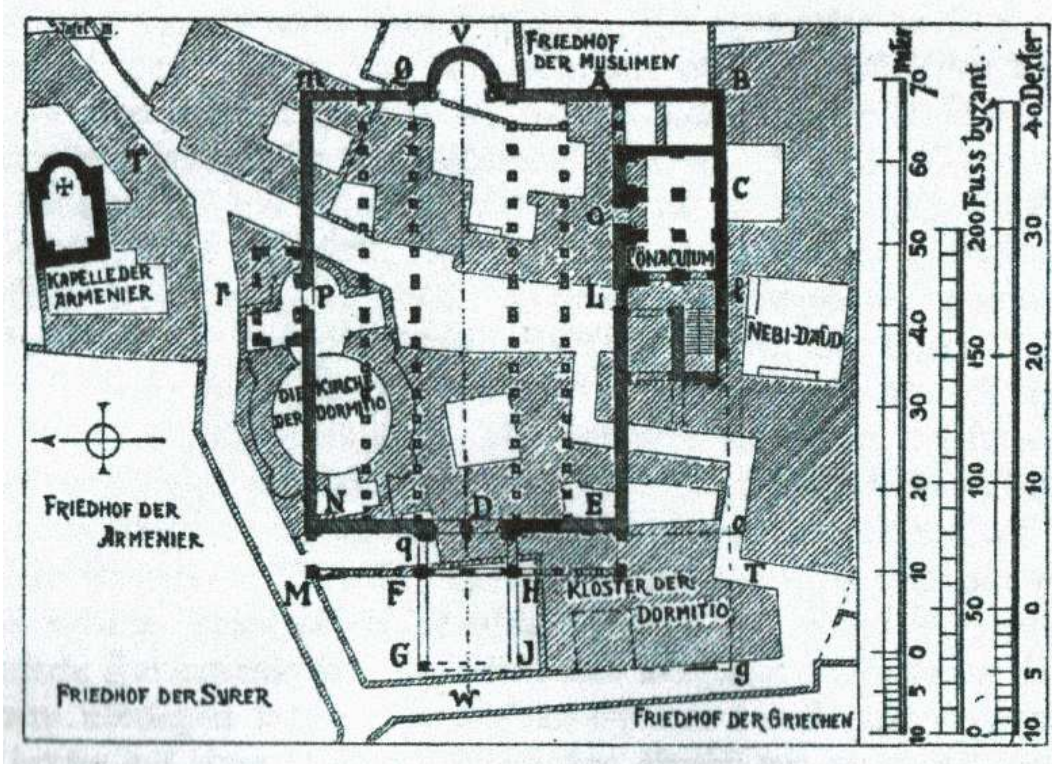


## Plate 22

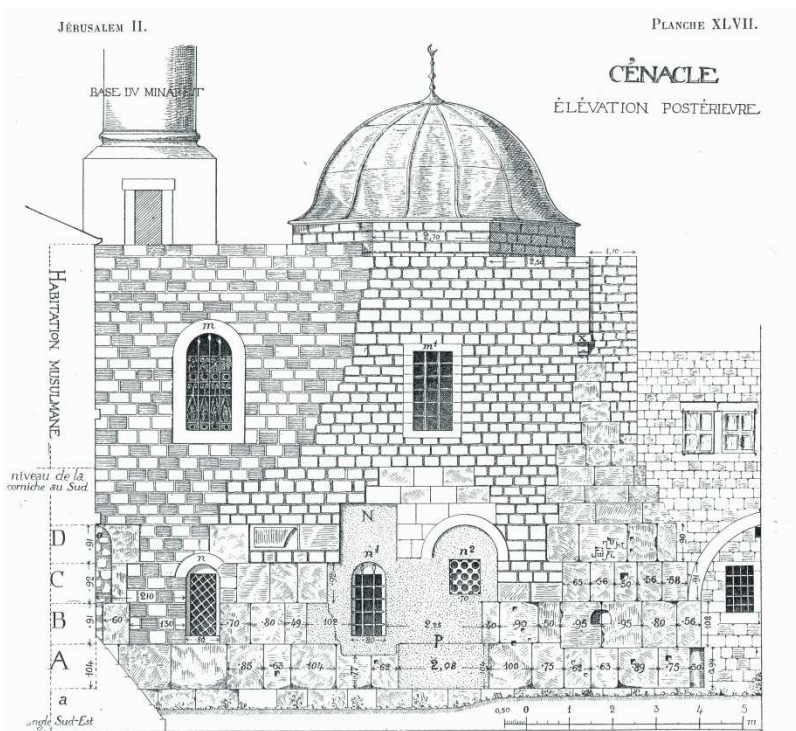


Siting of Hagia Sion, Louis Hugues Vincent (Vincent, Plate 49)

Plate 23



Siting of Hagia Sion, Mauritius Gisler (Gisler, 4)



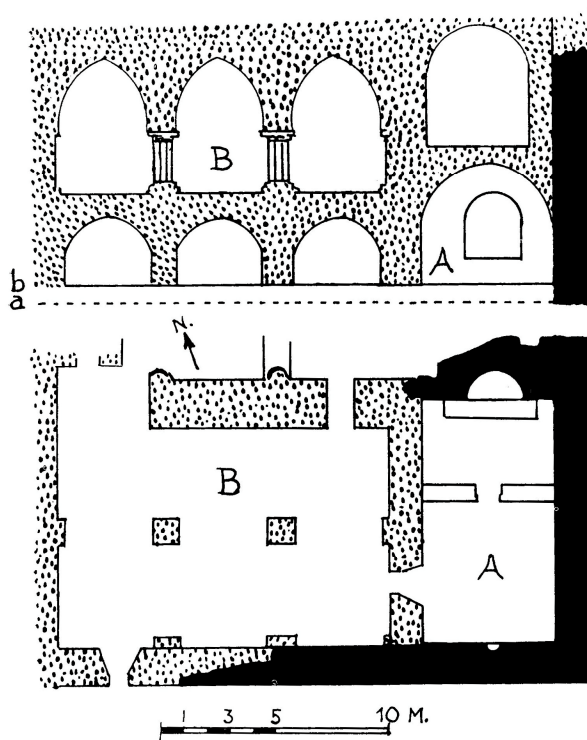
Cenacle, eastern wall elevation, Louis Hugues Vincent (Vincent, plate 47)

## Plate 24



2. The early wall.

Cenacle, photograph of the northeast corner, Jacob Pinkerfeld (Pinkerfeld, report)



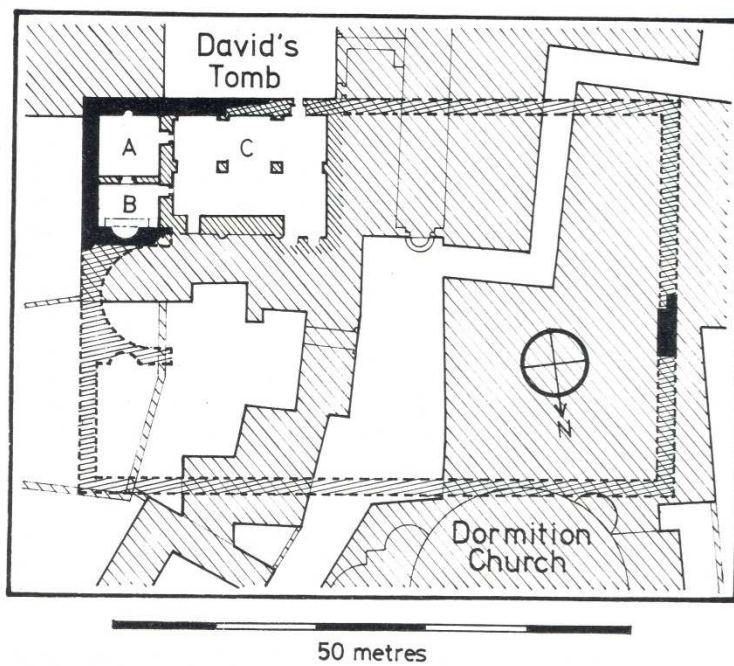
Elevation and floorplan of the Cenacle today. Dark black areas represent the location of the oldest ashlars.

## Plate 25



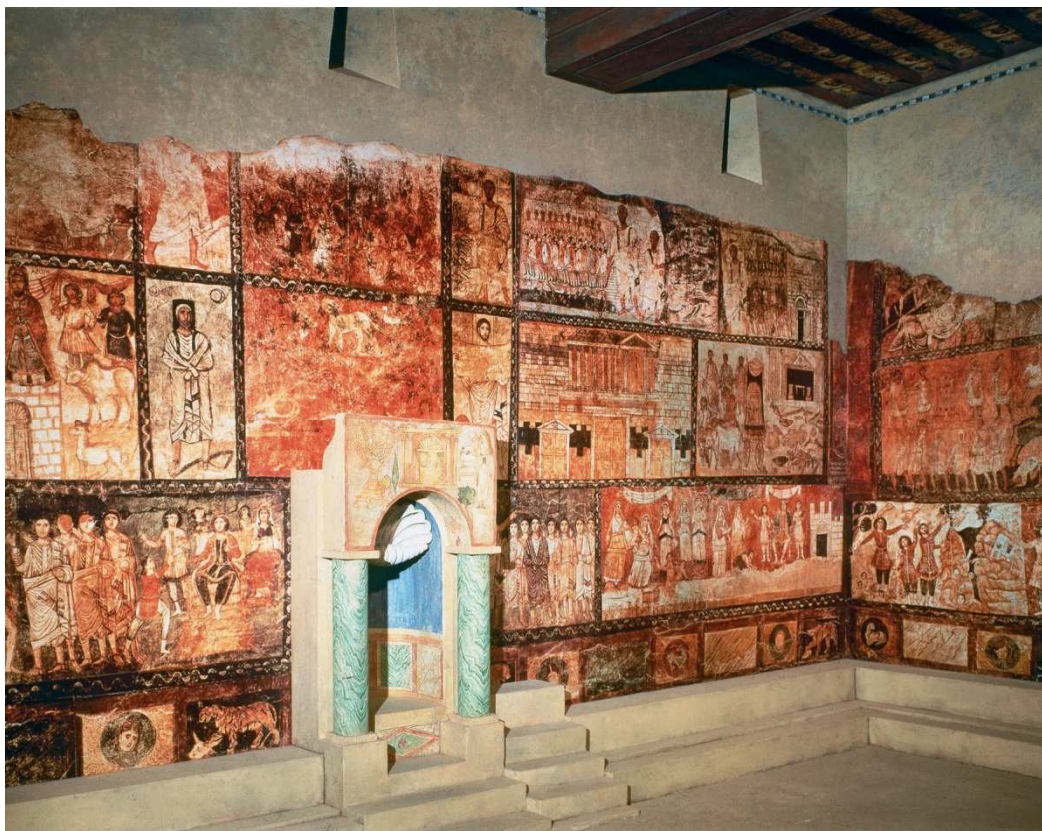
1. The cenotaph and apse.

Cenacle, photograph of niche in "tomb of David," Jacob Pinkerfeld.

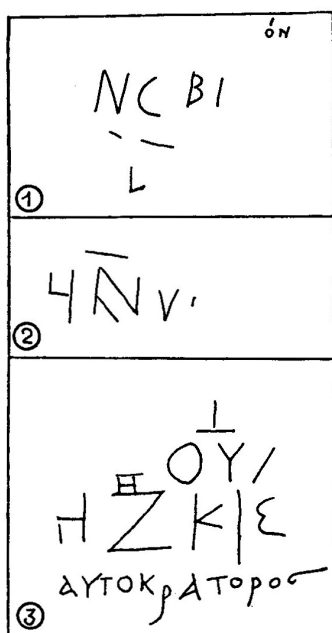


Reconstruction drawing, Hagia Sion, John Wilkinson (Wilkinson, *Jesus*, 168)

Plate 26



Dura-Europos, photograph of synagogue niche (<https://technologysecurity.wordpress.com/2014/09/24/what-dura-europos-means-to-jews-and-christians/>)



Tracing, graffiti from the Cenacle, Emmanuel Testa

Plate 27



Dura-Europos, photograph of mithraeum ([http://archive.archaeology.org/online/features/dura\\_europos/](http://archive.archaeology.org/online/features/dura_europos/))



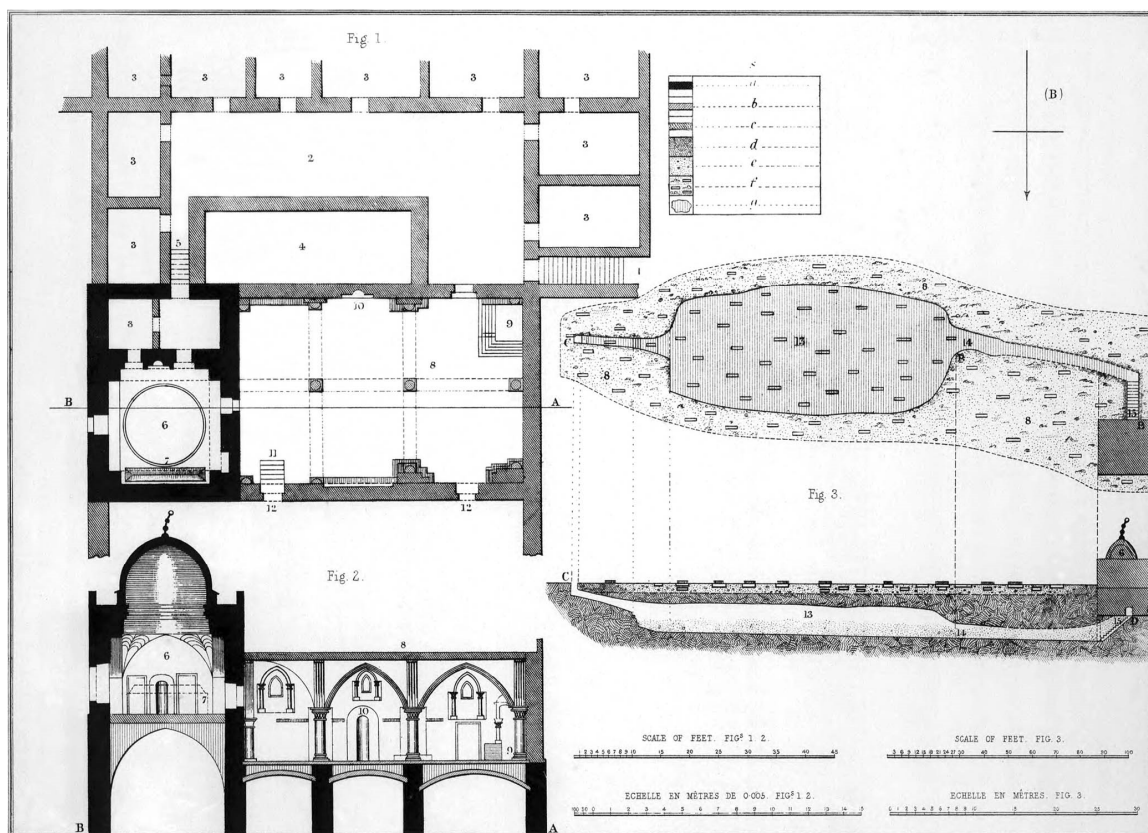
Dura-Europos, photograph of Christian church niche  
(<http://aromagosa.easycgi.com/parishcommunity/Archaeology/Dura.htm>)

Plate 28

Mosaic laver (<https://www.templeinstitute.org/laver.htm>)Mosaic laver (<http://www.bible-history.com/tabernacle/TAB4untitled00000190.htm#4fb55f5b>)Mosaic laver (<http://www.templesecrets.info/bronzesea.html>)

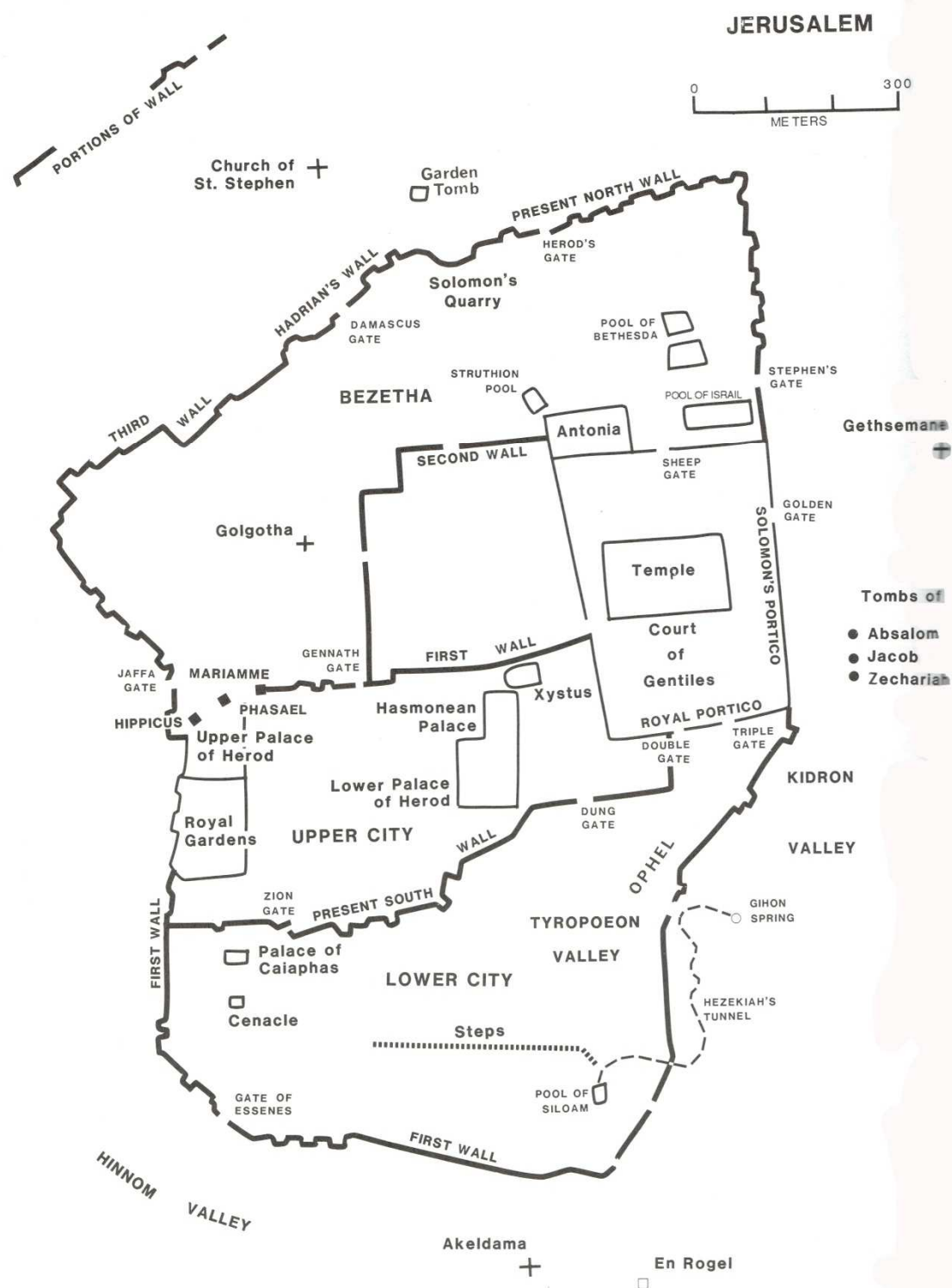


## Plate 30



Cenacle, floor plan and elevation; underground cavern, Ermete Pierotti (Pierotti, plate 46).

Plate 31



Plan of Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus

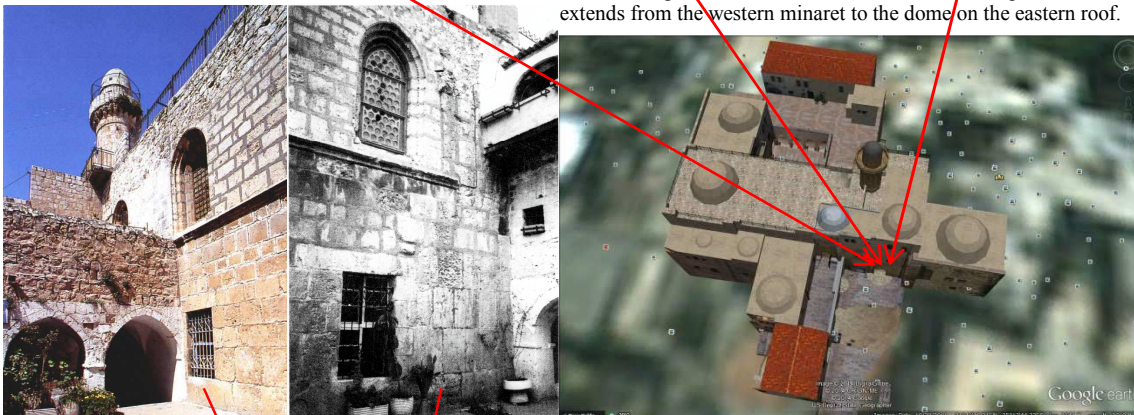
Map, Herodian Jerusalem (Finegan, 184)

Plate 32



Above: north side of the Cenacle

Below: Google Earth re-creation of the Cenacle complex. Cenacle extends from the western minaret to the dome on the eastern roof.



Above and below: south side of the Cenacle adjacent to the cloister.



Left: east wall of the Cenacle above the Muslim graveyard.

Below left: southwest corner, interior, upper room, Cenacle. Below right: Renard's drawing, west wall.

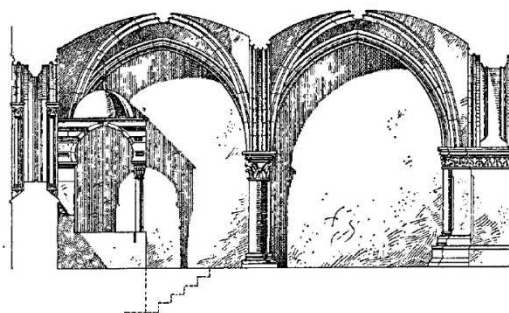
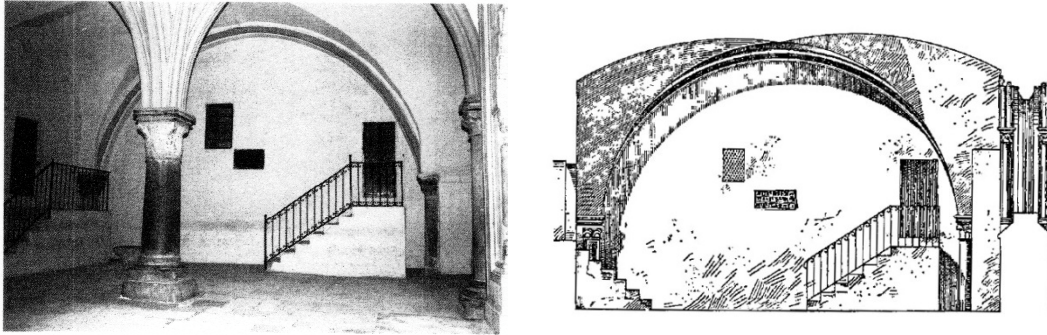
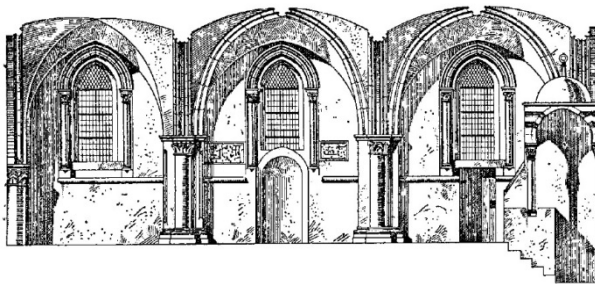


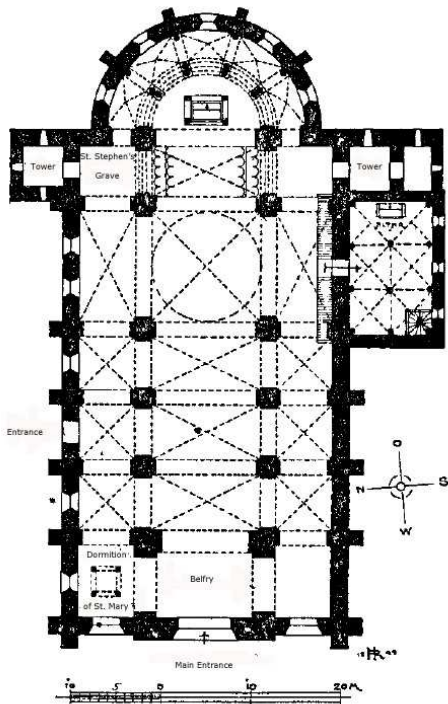
Plate 33



Above: east wall of Cenacle and Renard's drawing. Note Arabic plaque.

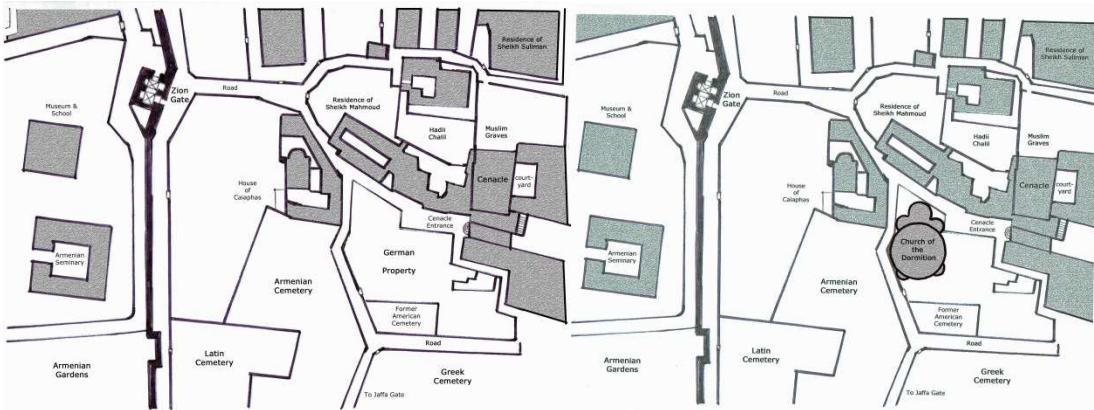


Above: south wall as drawn by Renard.

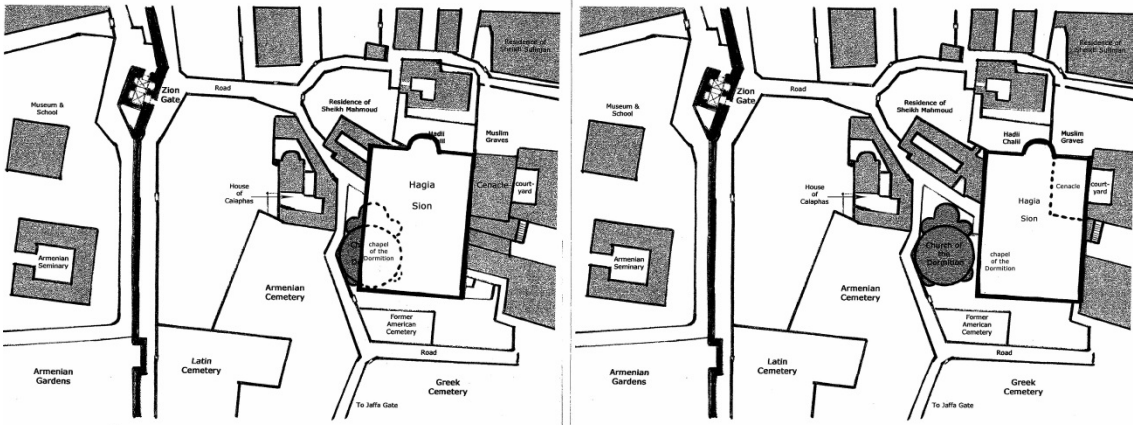
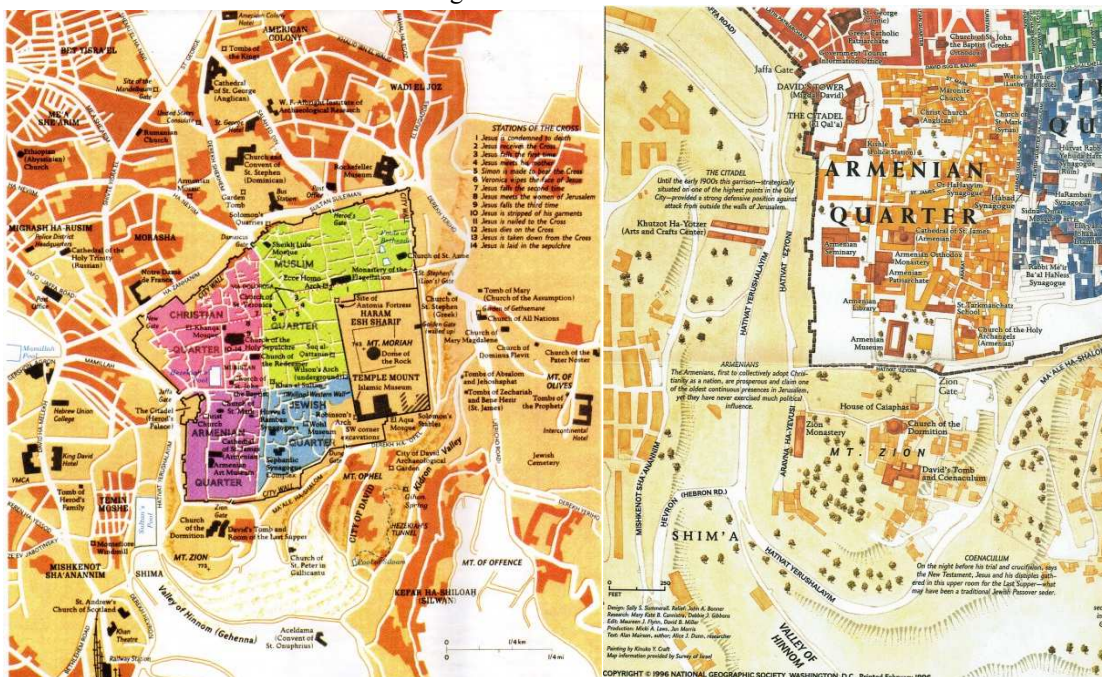


Renard's floorplan reconstruction of the Crusader Church of Sancta Maria (Renard, 11)

Plate 34



Above Left: Mt. Zion in 1900. Above right: Mt. Zion after construction of Church of the Dormition.

Above Left: Renard's siting of Hagia Sion. Above right: Vincent's siting of Hagia Sion.  
Below Left: Modern Jerusalem. Below Right: Modern Mount Zion.

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## APPENDIX: DATES OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE

1005-965 BCE	Reign of David
968-928 BCE	Reign of Solomon; first Jerusalem Temple constructed
922 BCE	Israel divided into southern kingdom of Judah, northern kingdom of Israel
587 BCE	Fall of Judah to Babylon; destruction of first Jerusalem Temple
520-515 BCE	Second Temple constructed
332 BCE	Alexander captures Jerusalem
300-198 BCE	Hellenist Ptolemies of Egypt rule Palestine
198-142 BCE	Hellenist Seleucids of Syria rule Palestine
167-63 BCE	Hasmoneans rule Palestine
63 BCE	Roman general Pompey captures Jerusalem
45 BCE	Antipater the Idumean appointed procurator of Judea by Caesar
43 BCE	Antipater killed; succeeded by sons Phasael and Herod
40-37 BCE	Herod appointed King of the Jews by Rome, conquers Judea
8-6 BCE	Birth of Jesus of Nazareth, John the Baptist
4 BCE	Death of Herod the Great
26 CE	Completion of Herodian Temple Mount in Jerusalem begun 19/20 CE
30	Death of Jesus of Nazareth
62	Death of James, brother of Jesus
ca. 64	According to Eusebius and Epiphanius, Jewish-Christians flee Jerusalem for Pella
66	First Jewish revolt against Rome

70	Romans capture Jerusalem, destroy city and Temple; tenth legion remains
73	Romans capture Masada
74	According to Epiphanius, Alexander, and Eutychius, Jewish-Christians under the leadership of Simeon, cousin of Jesus, return to Jerusalem, build a church
130	Emperor Hadrian arrives in Jerusalem; according to Eusebius and Epiphanius, a Christian church is standing on Mount Zion
132	Second Jewish revolt against Rome led by Bar Kokhba
135	Romans capture Jerusalem; according to Eusebius, Jerusalem bishopric passes to Gentile Christians; according to several Christian writers, Jews banned from the city
ca. 240	Origen may connect Mount Zion with the place of the Last Supper
313	Constantine legalizes Christianity
333	Anonymous pilgrim from Bordeaux leaves first detailed itinerary of pilgrimage to Jerusalem; sees a lone synagogue on Mount Zion “inside the walls”
335	Church of the Holy Sepulchre constructed
350	Cyril recalls the “upper church of the apostles,” associates it with Pentecost; has bones (ossuary?) of James, brother of Jesus, temporarily stored in the church on Mount Zion
ca. 375	Epiphanius associates the “upper room” of the New Testament with that part of Mount Zion that “escaped destruction”
379-381	Hagia Sion (“Holy Zion”) church on Mount Zion constructed
381	Egeria witnesses to a place on Mount Zion that has been “altered into a church”; she associates Hagia Sion with a resurrection appearance of Christ; sees the column of scourging in the church
4 <sup>th</sup> c.	An entry in the <i>Armenian Lectionary</i> instructs Last Supper passages be read on Mount Zion; the <i>Liturgy of Saint James</i> refers to Hagia Sion as “the mother of all churches”

415	John II has the bones (ossuary?) of St. Stephen temporarily stored on Mount Zion
438	Empress Eudocia arrives in Jerusalem, builds walls around Zion
560-565	Madaba map mosaic is completed, shows Cenacle standing next to Hagia Sion
ca. 571	Birth of Muhammad
6 <sup>th</sup> c.	Mosaic at Santa Maria Maggiore completed, shows Cenacle adjacent to Hagia Sion
614	Persian Conquest of Jerusalem
629	Byzantine Emperor Heraclius retakes Jerusalem
638	Arab Conquest of Jerusalem by Omar ibn al-Khattab
661-750	Umayyad Dynasty
691	Dome of the Rock constructed
701	al-Aqsa Mosque constructed
750-975	Abassid Dynasty
975-1099	Fatimid Dynasty
1099	Crusaders capture Jerusalem
1187	Saladin captures Jerusalem
1187-1229	Ayyubid Dynasty
1229-1244	Crusaders capture Jerusalem twice
1244	Khwarizmian Turks capture Jerusalem for Ayyubid sultan
1250-1516	Mamluk Dynasty
1516-1831	Ottoman Period
1538-1541	Suleiman the Magnificent rebuilds walls of Jerusalem
1831-1839	Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt captures Jerusalem

1839-1917	Ottomans recapture Jerusalem
1920-1948	British Mandate period
1948	State of Israel founded; begins Arab-Israeli War
1949	Arab-Israeli War ends; Jerusalem divided
1967	Six-day War; Israelis capture all of Jerusalem
2000	Pope John Paul II visits Jerusalem
2014	Pope Francis holds mass at Cenacle