

The Jerusalem Cenaculum as an Early Christian Church ¹

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Although relatively little archaeological work has been done on the site of the alleged cenaculum in Jerusalem, the data is interesting and requires interpretation. This article would contend that the cenaculum was originally the site where the James group of Palestinian Christians met after the death of Jesus. Subsequently, after the second Jewish revolt and the rebuilding of Jerusalem as Aelia Capitolina, the site came into the possession of Roman Christians who transformed the original tradition adhering to it. This process of transformation on the site preempted the broader change that Roman Christianity wrought within Palestinian Christianity from the second century onwards.

The intention of this article is to examine the rather puzzling archaeological data provided by the Jerusalem site of the *cenaculum* or 'dining room', the room where Jesus allegedly ate the Last Supper (for details on the archaeological investigations see Pinkerfeld, 1960; Hirschberg, 1975; Broshi and Tsafrir, 1977; Puech, 1989; Pixner, 1991; Murphy-O'Connor, 1994). While the identification of the site with the Last Supper event is not sustained by biblical archaeologists today, it does raise some pertinent questions relative to the establishment of Christianity in Jerusalem in the early centuries. The sociological description of the different Jesus groups in the first generation is a matter of fervid debate, nevertheless a rather summary account of the dominant social and ritual trajectories is provided in order to explain the forces that may be supposed to have determined the particular archaeological remains. The principal interest in the argument of this article lies precisely in demonstrating how sites sacred to early Christians were shaped and even constructed according to the needs of competing interest groups

Elsewhere I have written on the methodology of studying the history of early Palestinian Christianity (Crotty, 1999), on the dominant role played by James the Just, the brother of Jesus, in that history (Crotty, 1996b), on sect formation with specific reference to early Christian history (Crotty, 1996c), and on early Roman Christianity (Crotty, 2001).

Palestinian Christianity

I would contend that, after the death of Jesus, a number of disparate groups developed within Judaism, taking their rise from the tradition associated with him. These groups differentially interpreted Jesus within the context of Jewish

messiahship (Crotty, 1996a). The phenomenon can be designated as the Jesus movement, even though there were distinct groups involved. The group led by James the Just (*ha-zaddik/ho dikaios*), a title that is well founded (e.g. Hegesippus in Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3:23.4,7; *Gospel of the Hebrews* in Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, 2; *Gospel of Thomas*, logion 2), was known within Christian circles as The Brothers (the term is used in Acts 12:17). I will return to this James group below.

A separate group was led by Peter, assisted by James and John, the two sons of Zebedee. This group stoutly defended the legitimacy of Peter's leadership with the claim that Jesus had accorded him a post-mortem vision. Such a vision was a *sine qua non* condition for succession within messianic circles of post-Exilic Judaism (Crotty, 1995). Associated with Peter may have been a council of Twelve. The ideology of the Peter group was later reflected in the group's major writings: the gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke-Acts.

Then there were the Hellenists, the most radical of these Jesus movement groups. They maintained that, because of the advent of Jesus, Judaism had been superseded and the Temple's sacrificial system and other rituals should be discontinued. This was subversive talk, which raised the ire of their compatriot Jews and led to the execution of their leader, Stephen, although the historicity of his identification and mode of execution may be questionable (Schoeps, 1949: 408ff).

Paul came on to the scene, in some way connected with a Jewish attempt to extirpate the Hellenists. His 'conversion' was a change from one Jewish faction, probably the Pharisees, to another. After joining the Jesus-movement, Paul became more and more fixed on the idea of attracting Gentiles into it, something that had happened more adventitiously with the Hellenists. This caused dissension among both those who belonged to the Jesus-movement and those outside it. First century Jews were not prone to the practice of proselytism (Goodman, 1994), and while members of one Jewish faction might certainly have tried to induce fellow Jews to join them, they were not interested in persuading Gentiles to convert to Judaism.

This sect formation, with attempts to legitimise one or other sect (Crotty, 1996c), must have proliferated beyond historical recall. The groups were all Jewish, Jesus-movement factions within a rather disorganised Jewish community of the time. First, Luke in the Acts of the Apostles and later Clement of Alexandria in his *Hypotyposesis* (in Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 2. 1-3,5) and Eusebius himself in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* would gloss over the complexities and present a more orderly account of Christian origins from the Peter group perspective.

In Jerusalem, The Brothers headed by James held sway until the destruction of 70CE. They never intended to disengage from Judaism, although they were in confrontation with the dominant mainstream. They had no interest in Gentile conversion, as Paul's report of his meeting with James in Galatians 2 reveals. Eventually, James' intransigent opposition to the ruling clique led to his assassination, in which the reigning High Priest, Ananus, was implicated (Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.9.1). Josephus, no friend to the Christian sects,

expressed outrage at the murder of the man known as James the Just. It is possible that James had promoted his own role as an alternate High Priest and his followers may have seen him by the 60s not only as the vicar of the messianic Jesus but as a priestly messiah², awaiting his brother's glorious return (Crotty, 1996b).

After the death of James, leadership of the Brothers of the Lord was confined to other blood relatives of Jesus, in the first place Simeon, the son of Cleopas, a cousin to Jesus (Hegesippus in Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.11.1). A dynastic succession seems to have been established.³ The group saw itself as the true descendant of Jesus and his messianic family. Some of the other Jesus movement groups, particularly the Peter group, were quite intolerant of such pretension and endeavored to downplay both James and the Brothers of the Lord. Their polemic eventually became part of the synoptic gospel record.⁴

We can be sure only of a relatively limited succession within the James group. After James' death, Simeon took over the leadership and he, in turn, was succeeded by other blood relatives.⁵ There has been considerable debate as to whether the James group translated to Pella during the pre-siege period in Jerusalem. The historicity of the Pella story has been denied in the past (Brandon, 1951) although more recent authors have tended to accept it as historical (Schoeps, 1969:22, but see Luedemann, 1989:205).

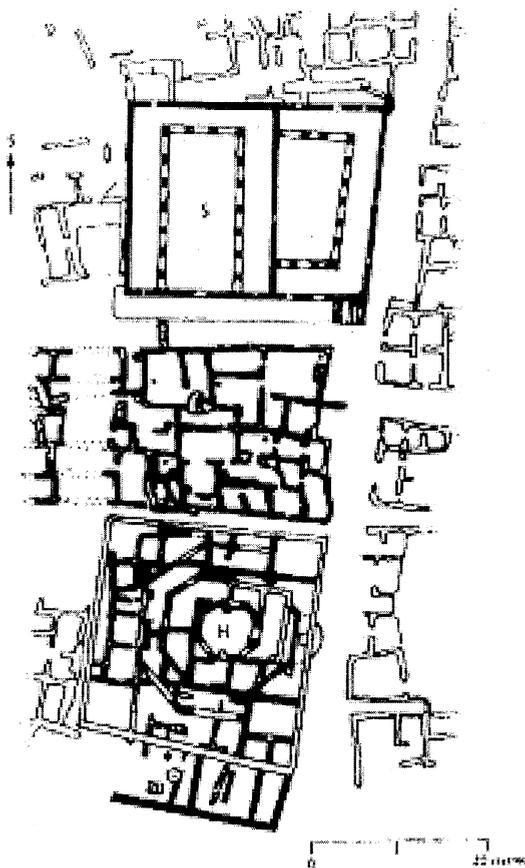
The Peter group would seem to have established itself in Antioch and from there Peter went to Rome, possibly via Corinth after the death of Claudius in 54 (Brown and Meir, 1983). Certainly all-extant texts that refer to his death and burial locate them in Rome. No other city is a contender and there would have been contenders if there had been any doubt about the place of his death and interment.

Roman Christianity moves to the East

From around 75 CE Christianity in Rome had severed any direct connection with Palestinian Christianity (see Crotty, 2001). Roman Christianity acknowledged the Jesus tradition but it claimed to have received this tradition from Peter and Paul during their domicile in Rome, as is clear in Clement's letter to the Corinthians (42, 47), even though Christianity had been brought to Rome long before the arrival of either Peter or Paul.

Christianity in Rome began a relatively short time after the death of Jesus, within the Jewish community that had been established during the mid-second century BCE in the overcrowded and unsanitary Transtiberinum area (Leon, 1960:136-137; Lampe, 1989:53-63; Crotty, 2001:6-8). Its distinctive form, with a system of autonomous house churches and presiding local presbyters, was established in Rome before the end of the first century (Peterson, 1969; Klauch, 1981). But the establishment process had then begun to work in reverse. From the late first century or early second century Roman Christianity, adhering by this stage to the Peter tradition, travelled back to the eastern regions of the Empire, first borne by Roman pilgrims and later by Christians connected with the Roman administration in the East. There, it met and interacted with the still extant Palestinian forms of the Jesus-movement.

There was a time of co-existence and overlap. In Capernaum, for instance, the archaeological layout demonstrates the rather strange juxtaposition of a Christian church and a Jewish synagogue (figure 1), the latter probably dating from the fourth century (see Taylor, 1993: chapter 12). A fourth or fifth century octagonal Byzantine church had been built over and around a room, which had been remodelled in the first century and then plastered. In the latter part of the second century this plastered wall had been daubed with graffiti, some undoubtedly written by Christians. Then in the fourth century the room had been enlarged and its ceiling formed into an arch, the whole forming a Byzantine shrine. Thus the progression was from a house or house-church to a fourth century Byzantine shrine to a fourth or fifth century octagonal church.



H = House of St. Peter

S = Synagogue

Figure 1: The archaeological site of Capernaum. Note the juxtaposition of the ruined synagogue (S) and the octagonal church of Peter's house (H).

The presumption would be that the house had been identified as that mentioned in the synoptic gospels belonging to Peter and his family. The Byzantine shrine would have singled out the house specifically, while the church would have been a Roman Christian construction postdating Constantine.

But the early Byzantine shrine need not necessarily have ever been a community church for local Jewish Christian inhabitants. Local Jewish Christians, presuming that there were such in the town of Capernaum, would have used a synagogue prior to the fourth century one but on the same site. The shrine enclosing the house of Peter would have been a way chapel catering for Christian pilgrims from the Empire who wanted to visit Peter-related sites. It would have become a specifically Christian centre, distinguishable from the Jewish synagogue and its community, only after the time of Constantine. Up until then, the two sites would have co-existed.

Records of Roman Christian pilgrims arriving in Palestine to visit sites mentioned in the canonical gospel traditions date only from the second century. By that time the physical landscape had already changed because of the widespread devastation wrought by the upheavals of the two revolts against Rome. Many landmarks would have been destroyed. During the period in which Christianity was not a *religio licita* within the Empire, the location of sites connected with the origins of any of its constituent groups would not have been a priority. Only after Constantine made Christianity a *religio licita* would those sites have become the possession of an autonomous and separate Christianity.

In 326, the year following the Council of Nicaea, Constantine's mother Helena followed in the steps of more intrepid, early pilgrims to the East. They had been satisfied with local traditions and doubtlessly fabricated sites. She bestowed the imperial seal of approval on some of the sites and thenceforward their authenticity would not be questioned until more recent times.

Nazareth's archaeology is very similar in style to that of Capernaum (see Taylor, 1993:chapter 11). The building of a new Basilica of the Annunciation to replace a dilapidated Crusader church in the 1960s revealed the remains of a Byzantine church at a lower level, dated to the fourth to fifth centuries (see figure 2). Beneath this Byzantine church there lay three caves with plastered walls, a *mikveh* or Jewish ritual bath and a third century synagogue. It would seem that the caves, whose interiors had been plastered, had been venerated by Christian pilgrims, doubtless as the site of the Annunciation. However, once again, there is no evidence that we are dealing with a community church. As at Capernaum, a way chapel has been uncovered, which would only have later become a significant centre for Roman Christian pilgrims from the Constantinian empire.

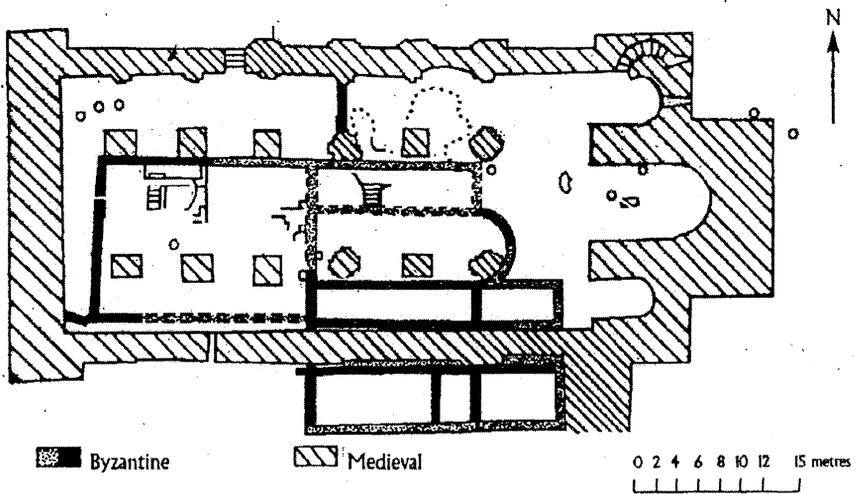


Figure 2: Byzantine and Medieval churches under the present Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth

In other words, there were Palestinian Jesus-movement people in places like Capernaum and Nazareth who presumably met and acted ritually like Jews. They would not have been particularly distinguishable from other Jews of the time nor would they have been particularly interested in religious icons such as Peter or Mary. This would fit in well with the statement of Epiphanius who claimed that the Nazarene Christians 'have synagogues and elders just like the Jews, and do not call them churches' (*Panarion* 30.18). Further, a list of priests found in Caesarea, dating from the third to the fourth centuries CE, mentions Nazareth as a place where Jewish priestly families lived (Avi-Yonah 1962: 139).

Nazareth would thus have been a residence only for Jews and probably Palestinian Jesus movement followers until the fourth century. The first mention of a Christian shrine in Nazareth comes from Egeria circa 383CE. She mentions being shown a garden 'in which the Lord used to be after his return from Egypt', a 'big and very splendid cave' and an altar. It seems that the Nazareth locals provided well for Christian visitors from the Empire. From the first part of the fourth century a small shrine must have enclosed the cave complex to which Egeria had referred. This shrine would have been demolished at the end of the fifth century and would have been replaced by a Byzantine basilica. Once more we are looking at the evidence for the co-existence of two forms of early Christianity.

But certainly by the time of Constantine any such juxtaposition of Palestinian and Roman forms of Christianity came to an end. Roman Christianity dominated and the remaining Palestinian forms of the Jesus-movement would have atrophied.

The Cenaculum in Jerusalem

Against this background it is interesting to look at certain archaeological data from Jerusalem. The so-called *cenaculum* is today found among a conglomerate of buildings to the south of Jerusalem, on Mount Zion just outside the Zion Gate. On the lower floor (see figure 3) there is a cenotaph known as the Tomb of David (figure 3 A), while on the first floor there is the Upper Room where both the Last Supper and Pentecost were said to have occurred (figure 3 B). None of these historical identifications have any verisimilitude: the upper room was built in 1342 as part of a Franciscan monastery using Cypriot craftspeople (Vincent and Abel, 1922: 423, 465), while the identification of David's tomb on this spot was first verified only in Jewish and Muslim tradition of the tenth century.

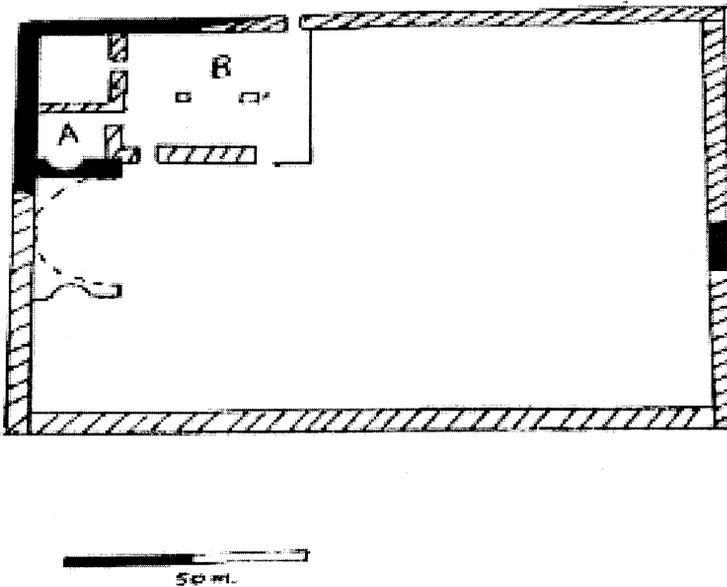


Figure 3: The cenaculum site. Excavated area is in black. The shadowed circumference marks the presumed area of Zion, the Mother of all Churches. Area A contains the cenotaph of David. Area B is the present day 'Upper Room'.

The Jewish archaeologist Pinkerfeld identified that the room containing the cenotaph of David has three floors beneath what can be seen today: Crusader, late Roman or Byzantine and a stone pavement from the second to the third century (Pinkerfeld, 1960:42-43). The least that can be concluded is that a building stood on this site in the second to third century. Is there any documentary evidence to elucidate the original purpose of that building?

In 394 Epiphanius wrote that when Hadrian came to Jerusalem in 130 CE he found the city in ruins, but he did remark on

the little church of God on the spot where the disciples went to the upper room on their return from the Mount of Olives after the Ascension of the Redeemer. It was built there, namely on Zion, which escaped destruction, and the houses around Zion and seven synagogues which remained isolated in Zion like huts, one of which survived into the time of bishop Maximus and of the emperor Constantine, like a shanty in a vineyard, as the Scripture says. (*De mensuris et ponderibus* 14)

This reference to Isaiah 1:8 is repeated by the Bordeaux Pilgrim who visited Jerusalem in 333 CE (probably later than Epiphanius, since he had been raised in Palestine).

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. (cited in Wilkinson, 1981: 157-158)

Both writers affirm that in the fourth century there was still a synagogue on Mount Zion and that its perduring character had been foretold by an Isaian prophecy.

Historically, the existence of a fourth century synagogue in Jerusalem would need to be questioned since there was no established Jewish presence there at that time. After the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE the city was left virtually a ruin. The walls had been largely demolished; the rich houses in the upper part of the city were destroyed, including Herod's palace; the Tyropoeon valley was filled with masonry and had silted up. Roman soldiers of the Tenth Legion had set up a camp within the city limits near Herod's three great towers (Josephus, *History of the Jewish Wars*, 7.1.1-2).

At some stage after the 70 CE destruction, Jews returned to the Mount Zion region. They could well have worshipped in the seven synagogues mentioned by Epiphanius, since the Temple Mount was no longer available to them. Among these Jews would have been the Jesus-movement people under the leadership of a blood relative of James and Jesus. There is reason to believe that they too met in one of the seven synagogues, remembering that they would have followed a Jewish ritual. Fourth and fifth century lectionaries tell us that in the Byzantine period a memorial service for David and James the Just was held in the church mentioned by Epiphanius, on Mount Zion on December 25 (Limor, 1988). This liturgical service would have at a much later date led to the identification of physical tombs for the two holy men: James' in the Armenian cathedral and David's in the lower floor room of the church. This memorial service, however, would indicate that the synagogue, one of the seven, had been the home of the James group who commemorated both the founder of Israel, David, and their own Jerusalem leader, James the Just.

Then in 118 CE Hadrian became Roman emperor. He was an inveterate traveller within the confines of his Empire and he left behind many visible signs of

his beneficence in the form of monuments. In 130 he came to the ruined Jerusalem and determined to rebuild it as a gift to the Roman colony of Judaea. He decided that it would be called Aelia Capitolina, combining his own name (Publius Aelius Hadrianus) and that of the gods of the Roman Capitol to whom the new city would be dedicated (see Armstrong, 1996:chapter 8). While these plans were executed by Hadrian in good faith, the Jews saw them as a final assault on their religious heritage.

A second revolt was led by Simon Bar Koseba (known by the nickname Bar Kokhba, 'the Son of the Star') and his uncle, the priest Eleazar. With the Tenth Legion absent from Jerusalem quelling guerilla attacks, Simon took control of Jerusalem and held it for three years. By then the Romans had marshalled their forces and recaptured the city, tracking down Simon in one of his Judaeian strongholds. All Jews were thenceforward banned from entering Jerusalem and Judaea, and they moved to Galilee. The decree reads uncompromisingly:

It is forbidden for all circumcised persons to enter or stay within the territory of Aelia Capitolina; any person contravening this prohibition shall be put to death. (see Avi-Yonah, 1976: 50-51)

The ban would have applied to all Jews and, consequently, to Palestinian Jesus-movement people. However, even during the establishment of Aelia Capitolina and certainly during its subsequent settlement, some of the Greek and Syrian colonists would have been Roman Christians. Here we can only speculate. It is entirely possible that they could have taken over the synagogue on Mount Zion used earlier by their Palestinian Jesus-movement predecessors. It was outside the boundary of Aelia Capitolina and would not have been included in the general refurbishment of the city wrought by Hadrian. This would be in accord with what Eusebius wrote on the changed character of the population of Aelia Capitolina:

And thus, when the city had been emptied of the Jewish nation and had suffered the total destruction of its ancient inhabitants, it was colonized by a different race, and the Roman city which subsequently arose changed its name and was called Aelia, in honor of the emperor Aelius Adrian. And as the church there was now composed of Gentiles, the first one to assume the government of it after the bishops of the circumcision was Marcus. (Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 4:6)

These Roman Christians would have inherited the tradition that, despite the modest size of the synagogue, it had been the site where the disciples had met after the death of Jesus, a tradition that they too esteemed. They took it over and the synagogue became the 'little church of God' mentioned in the already cited text of Epiphanius. Some rebuilding might have taken place to explain the second to third century floor noted by Pinkerfeld.

Over the years Aelia Capitolina rose above the earlier city's levelled ruins and was dedicated to Jupiter, Juno and Minerva. It was typically a Roman colonial city with a monumental entrance in the north beneath the more modern Damascus Gate and from the square inside this gate two *cardines* ran almost its length. In 289 CE

the Tenth Legion finally left and the city then required perimeter walls for its defence.

The ongoing conspicuous Roman Christian presence in Aelia Capitolina, despite times of persecution or discrimination, can be illustrated by the appointment of Alexander as bishop during this period. He had come on a pilgrimage in 212 CE. He was forced to become the auxiliary bishop to the aged Narcissus, whom he then succeeded. He was influential enough to be able to set up a public library within Aelia (Murphy-O'Connor, 1994:300-301).

By the beginning of the third century, despite the official ban being still operative, Jews began to enter the city once more but on a very restricted scale. After 250 CE they were allowed to enter and mourn the destruction of the Temple from the Mount of Olives and the ceremony of commemorating the day of the destruction, Tisha b'Av, began some time thereafter. But there was no established Jewish presence in the city, such as would justify identifying an active synagogue in the fourth century.

The 'little church of God', presumably in the hands of Roman Christians, was reconstructed in the fourth century (hence Pinkerfeld's Byzantine floor level) and became known as the 'Upper Church of the Apostles' during the time of Maximus' episcopacy (335-349), as was cited above in Epiphanius' text. Certainly, in 348 CE Cyril of Jerusalem was able to identify this church under that name (*Catechetical Lectures* 16:4). During the fourth century, tradition linked the church with the descent of the Spirit at the festival of Pentecost as related in Acts 2. This was a Roman Christian tradition and the 'little church of God' had advanced from being the site for the congregation of the James group to being the site for the meeting of the Peter group and therefore the site of Pentecost. Then, in the fifth century it became the 'Zion, Mother of all the Churches'. A niche in a six metre broad wall behind the present-day cenotaph of David was probably a recess in the exterior wall of the apse of this extensive church (see figure 3 A).

Because the Pentecost event had taken place in an 'upper room' (Acts 1:13: *hyperoon*) and the Last Supper also took place in an 'upper room' (Mark 14:15/Luke 22:12: *anagaion*) the site also attracted the tradition of the Last Supper in the fifth century.

Conclusion

What then had taken place on Mount Zion? The following is a hypothetical reconstruction that endeavours to link the archaeological data with the background discussion on early Christianity. There was originally a synagogue on Mount Zion that had been used by the Palestinian Jesus-movement people associated with the James group. Epiphanius was able to identify this original synagogue as the residence of Jesus' disciples in Jerusalem, and it was therefore very likely the place intended in the text of Acts to which Peter sent a message to 'James and The Brothers' after his release from prison (Acts 12:17). It would have been used up until the Jewish Revolt, unless the James group did move out of the city and settle temporarily in Pella. After the destruction of Jerusalem in 70CE, usage of the synagogue (in whatever state it might have been) was resumed by the same James

group until the Second Revolt in 132-135CE when they, like other Jews, were denied further access to the city. The area remained probably largely unkempt until Hadrian rebuilt Aelia Capitolina. With a new population, there came Roman Christians from various parts of the Empire, no longer immediately recognisable as Jews. They inherited the synagogue as a sacred place, with its traditions associated with James the Just and perhaps Jesus' post-mortem appearances to that group. From being a James group synagogue, it became a Roman Christian church, but it still retained the exterior physical shape and tradition of a synagogue and attracted the Isaian prophecy known to Epiphanius and the Bordeaux Pilgrim. It was rebuilt in the fourth century and first re-named as the Upper Church of the Apostles. It was no longer the memorial of the original residence of James and his followers but the memorial of the place where the Peter group had resided and where Pentecost, as recorded in Acts 2, took place (Cyril of Jerusalem *Catechetical Lectures* 16:4; Egeria 43:3). Later still in the fifth century it became known as Zion, Mother of all the Churches, by which time it was connected with the two Roman Christian traditions of Pentecost and the Last Supper.

The history of the *cenaculum* fits in with the vicissitudes of early Christian history. Christianity had moved from its Palestinian cradle to Rome and back. Within these parameters its character had changed. In Palestine the Jesus-movement remained within the confines of Judaism or at least on its perimeter. On being transported to Rome, due to historical and social influences there, it underwent significant change. This new form of the Jesus-movement or Roman Christianity was taken back into colonised Palestine by pilgrims, Roman bureaucrats and artisans. There it was first juxtaposed with Palestinian Christianity as can be seen in the vestiges of Capernaum and Nazareth. However, due to the exclusion of Jews from Jerusalem in 135CE, the *cenaculum* site anticipates the process of incorporation whereby Roman Christianity could transform a Palestinian Christian institution while yet retaining something of its original *élan*.

Endotes

¹ I would like to thank Nicholas Crotty for the design of the three figures.

² See Crotty (1996b). The text of Hegesippus in Eusebius reveals some disconcerting data about James wearing priestly vestments and having the right to enter the Holy of Holies (in Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 2, 23.6; 78:13). In similar vein, Epiphanius maintained that he wore to *petalon* of the High Priest on his forehead (*Haereses* 29:3; 78:13). These items can best be explained by James' assumption of a High Priestly role as the priestly messiah.

³ The theory of a dynastic succession has been disputed by some moderns (e.g. Von Campenhausen, 1950-1:133-144) but accepted in a certain form by others (e.g. Stauffer, 1951:1ff).

⁴ The synoptic and Johannine sources are adamant that the family of Jesus or 'The Brothers' had viewed his public activities with jaundiced eyes. In fact this leads to the denial on the part of Jesus that he wishes to retain such blood relationships (see Mark 3. 31-35; Jn 7:3-5). In Mark 6:4 the unexpected reference to the prophet being rejected would also seem to indicate that there was historical tension with the immediate family. Mk 15:40 with its reference to James *ho mikros* may be an overt jibe at the brother of

Jesus. In John 7:3-5 there is the claim that the 'The Brothers' of Jesus want him to go to Jerusalem and leave Galilee behind. He rejects their call just as he had rejected the intervention of his mother at Cana. In both cases he refers to the time when such activity would be appropriate. John's gospel will reinstate the 'mother of Jesus' in the sacred time of the death of Jesus but not the brothers; they are replaced by the Beloved Disciple, the new son of the mother.

⁵ Eusebius, who compiled a list of community leaders up to the time of the dispersion of Jews from Jerusalem, claims that the successor of James in Jerusalem was Simeon, the son of Cleopas (*Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.11.1). Simeon would have been the cousin of Jesus if the information in John 19:25 can be trusted. It has otherwise been claimed that he was Simon, the brother of Jesus named in Mark 6:3. Two other pieces of evidence need to be considered. Hegesippus deals with the search by Domitian Caesar personally (which could hardly be historically correct) for descendants of the house of David (in Eusebius *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.19.1-3.20.7). He discovers descendants of Jesus who are subsequently dismissed as harmless country workers. The important point derived from this reference is that blood descent from Jesus was still recalled and esteemed. The other is a reference by Julius Africanus that in the east Jordan area there were Christians descended from the line of the Saviour (In Eusebius *Historia Ecclesiastica* 1.7.14).

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