

TOWSON UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

THE SEARCH FOR JESUS' FINAL STEPS:
HOW ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND LITERARY EVIDENCE REROUTES
THE VIA DOLOROSA

By

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A thesis

Presented to the faculty of

Towson University

in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts

Graduate Program in Jewish Studies

Towson University
Towson, Maryland 21252

May 2017

**TOWSON UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Ilka Knüppel Gray entitled "The Search for Jesus' Final Steps: How Archaeological and Literary Evidence Reroutes the Via Dolorosa" has been approved by the thesis committee as satisfactorily completing the thesis requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.


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Acknowledgments

There are a number of people I need to thank for helping me on my thesis. First and foremost, my Baltimore Hebrew Institute professors and Thesis Committee Members, Dr. Barry Gittlen and Dr. Susanna Garfein, for their incredible advice and assistance. Also I wish to thank my other Thesis Committee Member, Towson University's Dr. Emily Bailey, for her insightful advice.

I would also like to thank the following people and their organizations:

Baltimore Hebrew Institute and the Rose Winder Scholarship Fund

W.F. Albright Institute for Archaeological Research

Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Byzantine Collection and Joni Joseph

The librarians at Towson University's Albert Cook Library

Bar Ilan University and Aren Maier

Hebrew University and Danny Herman

University of North Carolina at Charlotte and Dr. Shimon Gibson

Loyola University and Dr. Kelly DeVries

George Washington University and Dr. Eric Cline

My proof readers: Lori Norris and Deborah Cousins

My fellow classmate, traveler, and roomie, Emily Rickens

Hershey Habibi Gray

And last but not least, my son, Tyler Robert Gray, who graduated first from Towson and encouraged me to do the same.

Abstract

THE SEARCH FOR JESUS' FINAL STEPS: HOW ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND LITERARY EVIDENCE REROUTES THE VIA DOLOROSA

Ilka Knüppel Gray

This thesis examines the route of Jesus from the time he was condemned to death until he was laid in a sepulchre as told in the New Testament Gospels. The archaeological, historical, and literary evidence for this route, now known as the Via Dolorosa, was meticulously studied. The methodology employed included analysis of primary and secondary sources supplemented by information gleaned from personal research trips to Jerusalem. Early Jewish accounts and maps were examined as well as Roman, early Christian, Muslim, and Crusader era accounts. In addition to the Gospels, this thesis employed historical records of the development of Catholic devotional practices as well as Pilgrim Diaries from Jerusalem that reference the route Jesus walked. This thesis integrated these results along with the findings of archaeological excavations in the applicable areas of Jerusalem resulting in the re-routing of the Via Dolorosa from the site of Herod's Palace to Golgotha.

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*Literary and archaeological material must be evaluated separately and
used together to reconstruct history.*

Roland de Vaux

Introduction

Almost every Roman Catholic church in the Western World contains a series of fourteen pictures or carvings known as the Stations of the Cross which represent Jesus Christ's journey in Jerusalem from the time he was condemned to death by Pontius Pilate to the time he was laid in a sepulchre as recounted in the New Testament Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.¹ The Stations of the Cross, commonly referred to as 'The Stations', are a representation of the actual Stations of the Cross along the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem's Old City. The Via Dolorosa links the stations along the path Jesus took on his final journey where the events in the conclusion of 'The Passion of the Christ' occurred.² 'Via Dolorosa' is translated as 'The Way of the Sorrows', 'The Way of Pain', 'The Way of Suffering' or as alternatively as 'The Way of the Cross'.³

But what is the Via Dolorosa? How did the stations come to be established in the locations where they are currently observed, especially since the Gospels are not identical in their account of the journey? Moreover, can the sites described in the Gospels be accurately known after 2,000 years have passed? Eric Meyers and Mark Chancey state:

Archaeological excavations can rarely identify where events described in the Bible happened and thus often can neither confirm nor disconfirm the traditions

¹ Mark is believed by scholars to be the earliest of the Gospels, written in between 65-70 CE, while Luke and Matthew were written in between 80-85 CE and John in 95 CE. Ehrman, Bart, D. (2004). *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to Early Christian Writings, Third Edition*. NY: Oxford University Press, p. 49.

² The Passion of the Christ is narrated in the Gospels (although the four versions vary) with the events starting with Jesus' arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane after the Last Supper, his trial before the Sanhedrin, his being brought for judgment to Pilate, and alternatively also before Herod Antipas, Pilate's condemning him to death, Jesus' scourging, his presentation before the crowd, his walk through Jerusalem, either carrying his cross, or being assisted by Simon of Cyrene, and concluding with his crucifixion on the cross.

³ <https://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=12022>

*that underlie holy sites. Nor can archaeology prove or disprove the historicity of many biblical stories...*⁴

While scholars may not be able to prove without a doubt the origins of traditions or the historicity of a text, archaeology can verify where certain physical buildings were located and, based on archaeology and literary sources, can make a scholarly case for where a site ‘most probably’ existed. This thesis will focus on the evidence for the establishment of the Via Dolorosa and how archaeological, literary, and historical evidence suggest revising the current map of Jesus’ route to his crucifixion in order to more accurately locate Jesus’ final steps. The thesis will result in a broader and deeper understanding of the development of the Stations of the Cross and of the reality of the historicity of those locations and of the Via Dolorosa. This thesis incorporates the cultural setting of the early first century CE Jerusalem which is set in a Jewish context. The scene of the Passion unfolds within a Jewish state in which Jesus dwelt; understanding of this is necessary to fully understand the events that unfold.

There exist several challenges to this thesis. Firstly, archaeological evidence from the period is limited. The present day Via Dolorosa is more than 12 meters (13 yards) above the pavement of the old road built by Herod the Great which existed in the first century.⁵ As Kathleen Kenyon wrote, “Archaeology can do very little to present a general picture of the Jerusalem of the period [of Herod the Great]. In almost every case in the area excavated, all structures have been removed and all evidence destroyed.”⁶ Secondly, literary sources from the first century CE without a political or social agenda are scarce.

⁴ Meyers, Eric, M. and Mark A. Chancey. (2012). *Alexander to Constantine: Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, Vol. 3*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, p. 184.

⁵ Carus, Paul. (1910). The City of Jesus and the Via Dolorosa. *The Open Court, Vol. 1910*, Issue 3, Article 4, p. 170.

⁶ Kenyon, Kathleen M. (1974). *Digging Up Jerusalem*. New York, NY: Praeger Publishers, p. 225.

Many writings, even those written to record history, contain the biases of the writer(s). Religious writings rarely record historical facts. And lastly, traditions and legends cannot be authenticated. Nevertheless, this thesis thoroughly examines available archaeological reports, literary, and historical sources, along with long-held recorded traditions, to glean information for a compelling argument to re-route the Via Dolorosa.

Statement on Methodology

Scholarly articles, books, and primary sources will be supplemented by information gleaned from past visits to Jerusalem, including research trips in summer of 2015 and winter of 2017. The thesis will explore early Jewish accounts, beginning with Josephus, as well as early Christian, Muslim, and Crusader era accounts. In addition to the Gospels, the thesis will employ the historical records and the historical traditions of the development of Catholic devotional practices as well as Pilgrim Diaries from a variety of cultures and eras that reference the route Jesus walked. The thesis will also review maps of Jerusalem in Roman, Muslim, and Crusader eras as well as maps that are more recent. Perhaps most importantly, the thesis will employ the results of archaeological excavations in the areas of Jerusalem central to this thesis. These results are reported by Nahman Avigad, Dan Bahat, Gabriel Barkay, Pierre Benoit, Magen Broshi, Virgilio Corbo, Charles Couasnon, Shimon Gibson, Kathleen Kenyon, Jodi Magness, Leen Ritmeyer, Edward Robinson, Ute Wagner-Lux, Charles Warren, Charles Wilson, and Yigael Yadin. Important secondary compilations of archaeological resources were written by James Charlesworth, Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, John Rousseau and Rami Arav, Hershel Shanks, and Yigael Yadin.

However stringent and thorough my research, many of the subjects I touch upon will remain open to debate since there are few if any definitive answers. New discoveries are continually made in Israel, but despite that fact, as Meyers states, “archaeology [can neither] prove or disprove the historicity of many biblical stories.”⁷

History of the Via Dolorosa

In the Byzantine period, 324-632 CE, the Holy Land became an important center for Christian pilgrimage.⁸ Jerome Murphy-O’Connor asserts the earliest recorded usage of the Via Dolorosa began in the Byzantine Period by pilgrims observing Holy Thursday, the day marking the event of the Last Supper.⁹ The earliest version of the route of the Via Dolorosa went from the Mount of Olives to Gethsemane, then entered the city by the present St. Stephen’s Gate. From there “it went round the city on the south to the house of Caiaphas on Mount Sion [sic], then to the Praetorium of Pilate at St. Sophia somewhere near the Temple, and finally to the Holy Sepulchre.”¹⁰ The length of the journey varied over the years. In 1422, Martinus Polonus was the first to record that the number of paces along Jesus’ path was 450.¹¹ The journey varied over the years from 450 paces to in: the year 1479 – 1,050 paces, 1508 – 500 paces, 1586 – 750 paces and in 1593 – 1,321 paces.¹²

⁷ Meyers and Chancey, *Alexander to Constantine: Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*, p. 184.

⁸ Hunt, E.D. (1982). *Holy Land Pilgrimage in the Later Roman Empire AD 312—460*. Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, p. 54.

⁹ Murphy-O’Connor, Jerome O.P. (2008) *The Holy Land: An Oxford Archaeological Guide from Earliest Times to 1700, 5th Edition*. NY: Oxford University Press, p. 37.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Thurston, *The Stations of the Cross: an Account of their History and Devotional Purpose*, p. 57.

¹² Thurston, *The Stations of the Cross: an Account of their History and Devotional Purpose*, p. 58. Thurston also points out the unit of measure of a “pace” varied among the travelers with “*passus*” connoting a single stride to some and a double stride to others.

Joan Taylor agrees with the timeframe and states that the historical and archaeological evidence clearly point to the beginning of the fourth century as the time at which pilgrimage to certain Christian holy sites began and the sites themselves were developed.¹³ Archeological and literary evidence taken together bear out the impression that Byzantine Christian holy sites were not venerated by Christians prior to the fourth century.¹⁴ Ora Limor agrees with Taylor stating that “at least since the fourth century.....Christians started to stream to historical holy places in the Holy Land.”¹⁵

In the Holy Land, “Jerusalem was the centre of pilgrimage.”¹⁶ Christians were beginning to find that pilgrimage could introduce them to the sacred. “Pilgrims were developing a very tactile spirituality. They wanted to touch, kiss, and lick the stones that had once made contact with Jesus.”¹⁷ Paulinus of Nola wrote, “The principal motive which draws people to Jerusalem is the desire to see and touch the places where Christ is present in the body.”¹⁸ The Cappadocian Theologian Gregory of Nyssa visited Palestine himself, and although he had misgivings about the new ‘vogue’ of pilgrimage, he did admit the holy places of Jerusalem were different: “God had left a trace of himself in Palestine, just as perfume lingered in a room after the wearer had left.”¹⁹

¹³ Taylor, Joan E. (1993). *Christians and the Holy Places: The Myth of Jewish-Christian Origins*. Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, p. 338.

¹⁴ Taylor, *Christians and the Holy Places: The Myth of Jewish-Christian Origins*, p. 335.

¹⁵ Limor, Ora. (2006). ‘Holy Journey’: Pilgrimage and Christian Sacred Landscape in *Christians and Christianity in the Holy Land: From the Origins to the Latin Kingdoms*. Ora Limor and Guy G. Stroumsa (Ed.). Belgium: Brepols Publishers, p. 326.

¹⁶ Pahlitzsch, Johannes and Daniel Baraz. (2006). Christian Communities in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem (1099-1187 CE) in *Christians and Christianity in the Holy Land: From the Origins to the Latin Kingdoms*. Ora Limor and Guy G. Stroumsa (Ed.). Belgium: Brepols Publishers, p.223.

¹⁷ Armstrong, Karen. (1996) *Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths*. NY: Alfred A. Knopf, p. 202.

¹⁸ Paulinus of Nola, Epistle 49:402.

¹⁹ Armstrong, *Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths*, p. 202.

During the Middle Ages, the Latin Christians split into two camps and the location of the Praetorium and Herod's Palace (alternatively thought of as either one location or two distinct locations) were variously determined to be either on Mount Zion or north of the Temple, which resulted in two different routes to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre depending upon which camp one was aligned with; one faction had churches on the western hill and one had churches on the eastern hill.²⁰ "Only in pilgrim's accounts written between 1300 and 1500 do we first begin to find references to a distinct 'Way of the Cross'."²¹

The situation became so chaotic that "around 1350, Pope Clement VI issued a bull that placed all holy sites, real or presumed, under the custody of one body; namely the Franciscan Order."²² The Franciscans then assumed the role previously played by the Knights Templar in the custody of the Holy Land.²³

Guides were Franciscan monks, sole custodians of the holy places after 1230, who recited the history and traditions associated with each town or monument or site of Biblical events to parties of visitors as they arrived [in the Holy Land].²⁴

In the early 1400's the Franciscans were beginning to point out places that were connected with "Jesus' last painful hours."²⁵ Some scholars, such as Annabel Jane Wharton flatly state that the Franciscans invented the Via Dolorosa.²⁶ Jerome Murphy-

²⁰ Murphy-O'Connor, *The Holy Land: An Oxford Archaeological Guide from Earliest Times to 1700*, 5th Edition, p. 37.

²¹ Carroll, Michael P. (1989). *Catholic Cults and Devotions: A Psychological Inquiry*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, p. 44.

²² Isbouts, Jean-Pierre. (2014). *In The Footsteps of Jesus: A Chronical of His Life and the Origins of Christianity*. Washington DC: National Geographic Society, p. 263.

²³ Wharton, Annabel Jane. (2006). *Selling Jerusalem: Relics, Replicas, Theme Parks*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p. 109.

²⁴ Tuchman, Barbara, W. (1956) *Bible and Sword: England and Palestine from the Bronze Age to Balfour*. New York: Ballantine Books, p. 45.

²⁵ Armstrong, *Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths*, p. 317

²⁶ Wharton, *Selling Jerusalem: Relics, Replicas, Theme Parks*, p. 135.

O'Connor supports the timeframe of the development of the Via Dolorosa by the Franciscans, stating that in the fourteenth century, "the Franciscans organized a devotional walk for pilgrims to follow the steps of Jesus in Jerusalem."²⁷ The Franciscan sites were "nearly all located in the northern districts of Jerusalem" thus altering the earlier version of the Via Dolorosa.²⁸ The Franciscan version of the Via Dolorosa began prior to Jesus' arrest at their monastery on Mt. Zion, went to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, then to the House of Caiaphas (the High Priest), out of the city through St. Stephen's Gate to the Garden of Gethsemane, and the churches on the Mount of Olives, and then returned to Mt. Zion via the Pool of Siloam.²⁹ Several varying and contradictory routes of the Via Dolorosa were recorded in writings and on maps. Figure 1 has an artistic rendering from 1587 (See Figure1).

²⁷ Murphy-O'Connor, *The Holy Land: An Oxford Archaeological Guide from Earliest Times to 1700*, p. 37.

²⁸ Armstrong, *Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths*, p. 317.

²⁹ Murphy-O'Connor, *The Holy Land: An Oxford Archaeological Guide from Earliest Times to 1700*, p. 37.

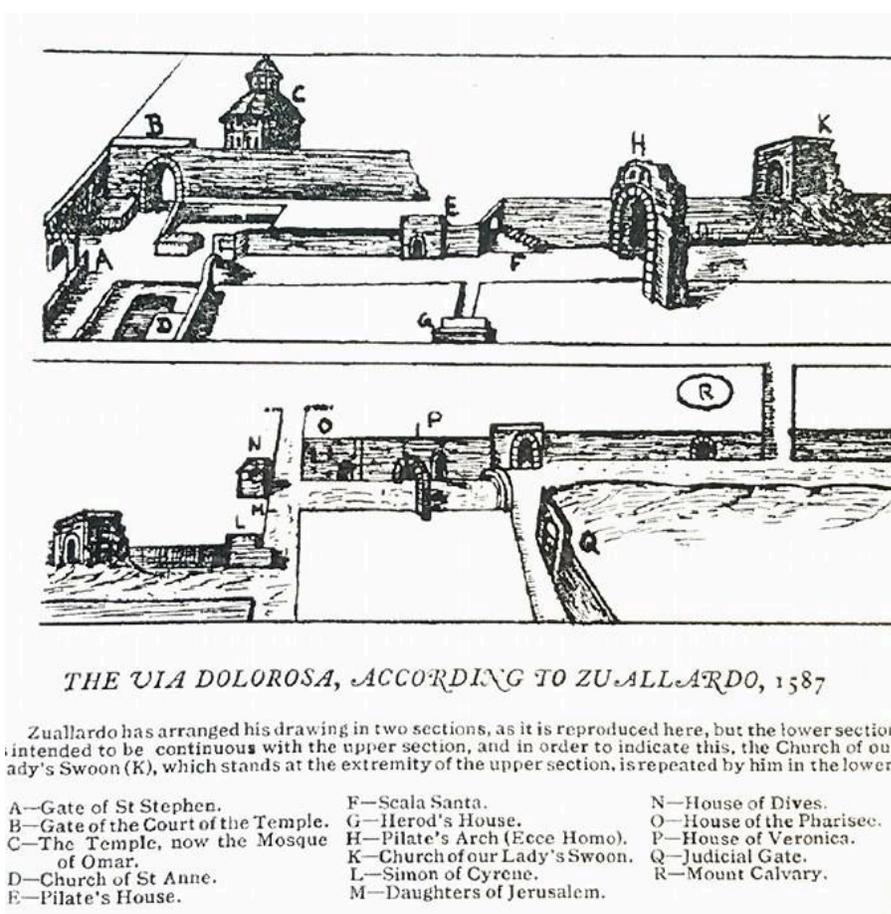


Figure 1. A version of the Via Dolorosa route according to the Pilgrim Zuallardo from 1587.³⁰

Eventually, the section of the devotional walk between the House of Pilate and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre began to attract the greatest attention of pilgrims because of the association of these locations with the final hours of Jesus. The locations along the path between the House of Pilate and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre “impressed themselves firmly on the imagination of European pilgrims.”³¹ This is the section of the devotional walk that is currently recognized as the Via Dolorosa. Even today, different factions in Jerusalem debate the Via Dolorosa’s exact route. This thesis references the route which is marked by metal discs in the Old City (See Figure 2 and Appendix A.)

³⁰ Thurston, *The Stations of the Cross: an Account of their History and Devotional Purpose*, p. 104.

³¹ Murphy-O'Connor, *The Holy Land: An Oxford Archaeological Guide from Earliest Times to 1700*, p. 37.

Figure 2 is a map of the current location of the Via Dolorosa and the Stations of the Cross as it is officially marked by metal disks and observed today by pilgrims and visitors to the Old City of Jerusalem.

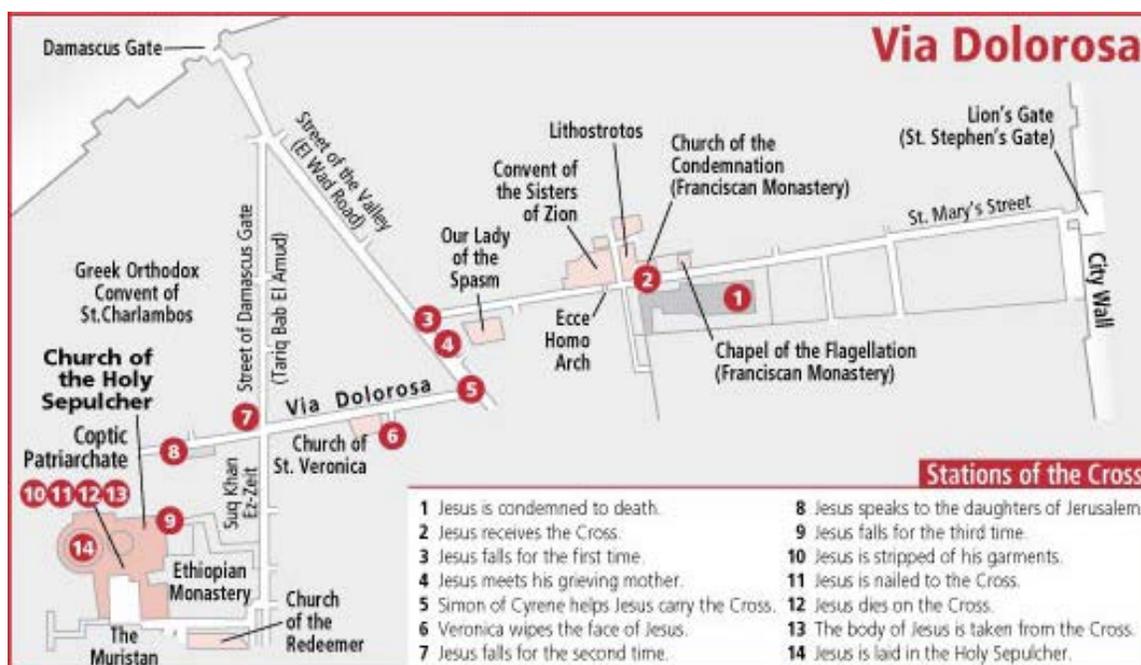


Figure 2. Map of the Via Dolorosa in the Old City of Jerusalem³²

History of the Stations of the Cross

These holy places along the Via Dolorosa were considered a stage upon which the founding events of Christianity were acted out; pilgrims began to come to Jerusalem from all over to view with their own eyes the marked sites where these events occurred. The word ‘*statio*’ (Latin for ‘location’) was applied to the different halting-places along the Via Dolorosa.³³ These artistic representations of the stopping places along the devotional

³² <http://www.edenhotel.co.il/via-dolorosa-the-extended-version/>

³³ Thurston, Herbert, S.J. (1906). *The Stations of the Cross: An Account of their History and Devotional Purpose*, London: England, UK, Burns and Oates, p. 46.

walk became known as the ‘Stations of the Cross’.³⁴ The pilgrim Egeria wrote of the pilgrim trek to Jerusalem in *Egeria’s Travels Itinerarium* in about the year 400 CE.³⁵

Murphy-O’Connor states:

A number of these pilgrims...created symbolic representation of the events of the Passion in their home countries in order to foster the devotion of those who could not make the pilgrimage [to Jerusalem].

These pilgrims, starting in the fourth century, who had experienced the Passion of the Christ in Jerusalem, brought back to the European continent the concept of the Stations of the Cross for those who could not make the journey but still wanted to experience the spiritual pilgrimage through contemplation.³⁶ The Stations came to “represent a miniature pilgrimage to the Holy Land.”³⁷ The Stations of the Cross that became established in the pilgrims’ home countries began to stress the gospel order.³⁸ Since pilgrims coming to Jerusalem expected to find what they were accustomed to elsewhere, the European tradition gradually prevailed. Thurston concluded that the modern arrangement of the Stations of the Cross were most likely the invention of Jan Pascha, an early sixteenth-century Flemish writer from Louvain. There is a well-known Stations of the Cross in Louvain, which was erected in 1505. The most famous and well known

³⁴ According to Herbert Thurston, the word ‘*statio*’ appears in Christian literature from a very early date and it may have grown out of military use of the term to designate an outpost or picket, especially for night duty. Further use of the term became used more during the Middle Ages in the sense of a halting-place in a procession or a site calling for special veneration.

³⁵ Limor, ‘*Holy Journey: Pilgrimage and Christian Sacred Landscape*’, p. 324.

³⁶ Pilgrims also brought back souvenirs; relics, pieces of the land, or bottles or flasks of Holy Water or oil to give to friends, families, and those in need of miraculous cures who could not make the pilgrimage. Famous among the Holy land souvenirs are the ampullae, small flasks made of glass, clay, or metal. Some pilgrim flasks were stamped with the image of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, some of which have survived to this day. Pilgrim flasks were found by Crowfoot and Fitzgerald at their excavation in the Tyropoeon Valley in Jerusalem in 1927, by Kenyon in Site B and Site V in her Jerusalem Excavations 1961-1967, and by Maier and Strauss in 1995 in the Byzantine – Umayyad shop buildings outside the Jaffa Gate.

³⁷ Thurston, *The Stations of the Cross: An Account of their History and Devotional Purpose*, p. 2.

³⁸ Murphy-O’Connor, *The Holy Land: An Oxford Archaeological Guide from Earliest Times to 1700*, p. 37.

representation of the Stations of the Cross is the wooden carvings by Adam Krafft, which were erected in 1490 in the churchyard of St. John in Nuremberg.

The devotional practice of the Stations of the Cross spread from Catholic churches to some Anglican, Lutheran, and Methodist churches during the following centuries. In 1686, Pope Innocent XI granted the Franciscans the right to erect Stations of the Cross in their churches.³⁹ In 1750, Pope Benedict XIV had the Stations of the Cross installed in the ruins of the Coliseum in Rome and had devotions there every Friday until 1870 when Rome came under the control of the Italian government.⁴⁰

The number of stations would vary over the centuries; at the beginning of the seventeenth century, there were eight stations. Figure 3 has Thurston's map depicting the location of the stations for the eighteenth century version of the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem.

³⁹ Carroll, *Catholic Cults and Devotions: A Psychological Inquiry*, p. 53.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

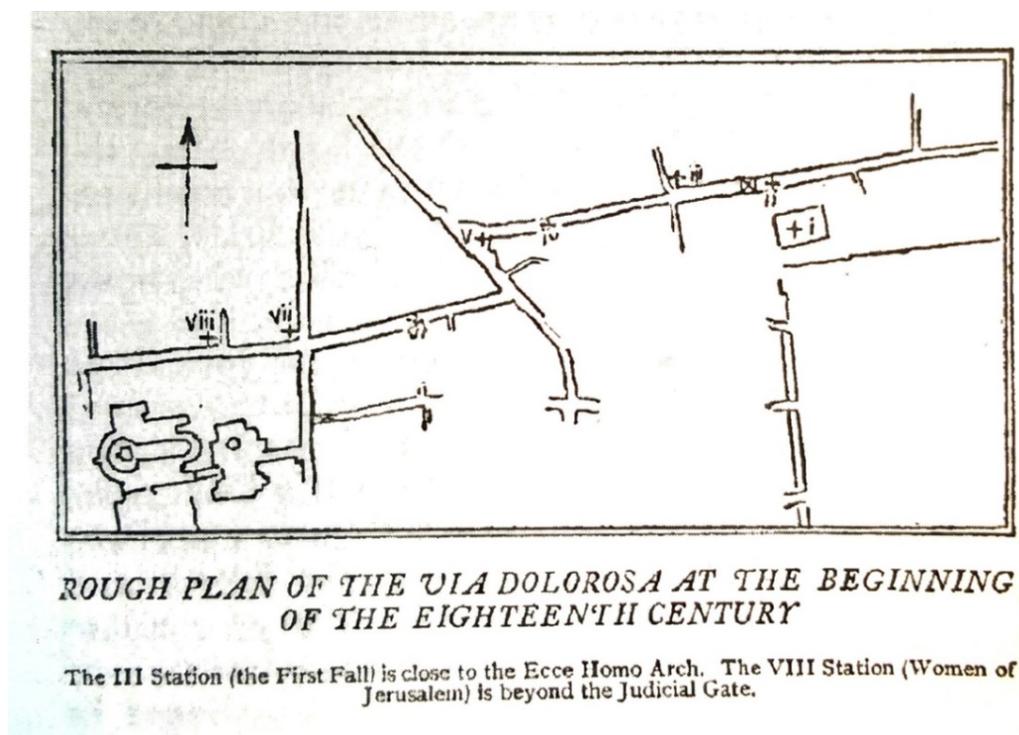


Figure 3. Thurston's map of the Via Dolorosa marking 8 stations in the 18th Century.⁴¹

The Via Dolorosa general route became fixed in its' current location in the eighteenth century but the number of the stations, including stations 1, 4, 5, and 8, were given their present location only in the nineteenth century.⁴² "In the nineteenth century... six extra stations were added at appropriate points to the stations in the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem" to become the current 14.⁴³ (The addition of the six stations extended the Via Dolorosa to within the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.)⁴⁴ In 1991, Pope John Paul II introduced a version of the Stations of the Cross with 14 stations that were based solely upon Scripture references.⁴⁵ For the purposes of this thesis, I focus on the Stations of the Cross that are

⁴¹ Thurston, *The Stations of the Cross: an Account of their History and Devotional Purpose*, p. 107.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Murphy-O'Connor, *The Holy Land: An Oxford Archaeological Guide from Earliest Times to 1700*, p. 37 and Armstrong, *Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths*, p. 336.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Puet, Tim. (2009). Stations of the Cross date back to the Fourth Century.

http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/stations_of_the_cross_date_back_to_the_fourth_century/

currently plotted out in Jerusalem along the Via Dolorosa in the Old City which are as follows:

- Station 1: Jesus is condemned to death.
- Station 2: Jesus is made to carry the cross.
- Station 3: Jesus falls the first time.
- Station 4: Jesus meets his mother.
- Station 5: Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the cross.
- Station 6: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.
- Station 7: Jesus falls the second time.
- Station 8: Jesus speaks to the Women.
- Station 9: Jesus falls the third time.
- Station 10: Jesus is stripped of his garments.
- Station 11: Jesus is crucified.
- Station 12: Jesus dies on the cross.
- Station 13: Jesus' body is taken down from the cross.
- Station 14: Jesus' body is placed in the tomb. (See Appendix A.)

This thesis will have a chapter dedicated to each station, or grouping of stations, to examine the literary documentation referring to the station(s), including but not limited to New Testament texts, historical traditions associated with the station, and the archaeological evidence that may be applicable to the station. Thusly, this thesis begins its' examination of each of the stations of the Via Dolorosa and the archaeological, literary, and historical evidence related to its' establishment.

Chapter 1

Station 1: Jesus is condemned to death.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, (Greek the praetorium) and they gathered the whole cohort around him. Matthew 27:27⁴⁶

Then the soldiers led him away into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters [the Praetorium]), and they called together the whole cohort. Mark 15:16

Then the assembly rose as a body and brought Jesus before Pilate. Luke 23:1

Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters (the Praetorium). It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover. John 18:28.

Station 1 is traditionally located at the Madrasa al-Omariya school which is about 330 yards west of the Lion's Gate in Jerusalem's Old City (See Figures 2 and 4).



Figure 4. Each location of a Station of the Cross along the Via Dolorosa in the Old City is marked by a metal disc with the station number in Roman Numerals. The only exceptions to the markings are the stations, which are located within the Church of the Holy Sepulchre since they are within the church.

⁴⁶ All scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

All four Gospels record that Jesus was taken before Pontius Pilate for sentencing after his arrest by Roman soldiers.⁴⁷ But at what location did this meeting take place? Along with Matthew and Mark, the Gospel of John specifically speaks of Jesus being taken before Pilate in the ‘governor’s headquarters’, all with notes added in the NRSV that this is the praetorium.⁴⁸

John 18:28: “*Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate’s headquarters, [The note states:] (Pilate’s headquarters, the Praetorium). It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter into the headquarters [Note is repeated] (Pilate’s headquarters, the Praetorium) so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover.*” [Emphasis added].

Franciscan Priest Donatus Baldi states “where was the house of Pontius or the judgment hall of Pilate; Here the Lord was heard, however, before He suffered; from the left side is the hill of Golgotha.”⁴⁹ While almost all scholars believe their meeting happened at the Praetorium, there has been an ongoing scholarly debate over the actual physical location of the Praetorium. What follows is a discussion of this debate.

The Praetorium Inside the City Walls

One thing that scholars agree on is that the Praetorium was located within the city walls. As Thurston wrote, “the Praetorium must have lain within the city wall, and consequently could not have been situated on Mount Sion [sp] [located outside the Zion Gate of the Old City].”⁵⁰ Some of the pilgrims’ writings mention ‘the Praetorium’ but with varying, sometimes contradictory, geographical locations. Jerome, who lived from

⁴⁷ Archaeology has proven the historicity of the person of Pontius Pilate through the discovery of the Pilate Stone located at Caesara Maritima. The Pilate stone inscription, in Latin, reads in part “Pontius Pilate Prefect of Judea”. Stern, M. (Ed.) (1980) *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism Part II*. Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities.

⁴⁸ Praetorium has also at times been translated as “palace” or “hall of judgement”.

⁴⁹ Baldi, P. Donatus. (1982) *Enchiridion Locorum Sanctorum: Documenta S. Evangelii Loca Respicientia*. Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, p. 583.

⁵⁰ Thurston, *The Stations of the Cross: An Account of their History and Devotional Purposes*, p. 182.

347-420 CE, used the term ‘praetorium’ to denote the contemporary proconsul’s residence in Jerusalem, but John Wilkerson points out that “the name [praetorium] is usually used in reference to Mark 15:16 and the residence of Pontius Pilate.”⁵¹ During the first century the term ‘praetorium’ may have been used to refer to either a palace or a judicial or military seat which, in turn, creates difficulties when trying to establish the exact location of Station 1. Shimon Gibson believes that the use of the term ‘praetorium’ during the first century CE referred to the entire palace compound of Herod.⁵²

There were several locations proposed for the Praetorium over the years. One alternate location for the Praetorium in pre-Crusader times was thought to be in the Tyropoeon Valley. Pierre Benoit refutes this in his article “*Le prétoire de Pilate a l’époque byzantine*” [*The Praetorium of Pilate at the Byzantine Time*] based on archaeological findings and the literary sources of both Josephus and Philo. Benoit argued convincingly in 1984 that Pilate would stay in the palace of Herod the Great on the western hill, which was in the Upper City.⁵³

Another location for the Praetorium was presented during the Crusader Era; “[P]ilgrims were also beginning to be taught that the Praetorium, where Pilate had sentenced Jesus to death, was not in the Tyropoeon Valley...but north of the Temple Mount, on the site of the Antonia fortress.”⁵⁴ The Antonia Fortress lay northwest of the Temple Mount on an area described as “the mass of rock where the Omariyya School

⁵¹ Wilkinson, John. (1977). *Jerusalem Pilgrims Before the Crusades*. Warminster, England: Arish and Phillips, Ltd., p. 168nPraetorium.

⁵² Gibson, Shimon. (2011). The Trial of Jesus at the Jerusalem Praetorium: New Archaeological Evidence. In *The World of Jesus and the Early Church: Identity and Interpretation in Early Communities of Faith*. Craig Evans, Ed. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers Marketing, LLC, p. 104.

⁵³ Rainey, Anson and R. Steven Notley. (2006). *The Sacred Bridge: Carta’s Atlas of the Biblical World*. Jerusalem: CARTA, Jerusalem, p. 365.

⁵⁴ Armstrong, *Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths*, p. 284.

stands today.”⁵⁵ The Antonia “probably lay completely south of the road leading in from the present St. Stephen’s Gate.”⁵⁶ This change of venue “could have been inspired by the Templars, who might have wanted this holy place in their district of Jerusalem.”⁵⁷ It appears that geopolitics, rather than any archaeological discovery, reestablished the location of the Praetorium during the Crusader Era.

Today the two main contenders for the location of the Praetorium are the Antonia Fortress, located to the northwest of the Temple Mount, and Herod’s Palace located in the Upper City on the Western Hill (See Figure 5). Let us examine the evidence for both locations.

⁵⁵ Benoit, P. O.P. (1976) The Archaeological Reconstruction of the Antonia Fortress. In Yigael Yadin (Ed.), *Jerusalem Revealed: Archaeology in the Holy City 1968-1974*, 87-89, New Haven and London: Yale University Press and the Israel Exploration Society, p. 89.

⁵⁶ Kenyon, *Digging Up Jerusalem*, p. 223.

⁵⁷ Benoit, The Archaeological Reconstruction of the Antonia Fortress, p. 89.



Figure 5. Jerusalem at the time of Jesus with annotations represented by the artwork of Leen Ritmeyer. Copyright Leen Ritmeyer.

The Antonia Fortress as Praetorium?

Could the Antonia Fortress have been the location for the Praetorium? Most archaeologists have now dismissed the Antonia Fortress as a possible location based on archaeological and literary sources. When asked if the Antonia Fortress should be identified with the Roman Praetorium mentioned in the Gospels as the place where Pilate

condemned Jesus, Benoit, who has conducted numerous archaeological excavations in Jerusalem, explained “the [P]raetorium...the Roman administrative centre, was located in Herod’s palace on the western side of the city.”⁵⁸

Gibson, who has also conducted numerous archaeological excavations in Jerusalem, including the current dig on Mt. Zion, (and a dig scheduled to begin in 2019 at the location of Herod’s Palace) believes it is unlikely that Jesus was tried at the Antonia Fortress since (1) it served primarily as a military observation tower with the function of keeping an eye on the activities of Jewish worshippers on the Temple Mount, and (2) the tower was too cramped to serve as the residence and headquarters of the governing official.⁵⁹ Archaeological excavations show little of the actual structure of the Antonia has survived, except for the rock-cut base, and it appears “this ‘fortress’ was no more than a very large and high tower.”⁶⁰ This does not appear to have been a building that would have been luxurious enough for most Roman leaders. Roman leaders, such as Pilate, were more accustomed to finer accommodations. In addition, Pilate preferred not to stay in Jerusalem fulltime.⁶¹

Having visited the Madrasa al-Omariya school building myself in August 2015, I would agree with Gibson and Evans’ assessments of the Antonia Fortress being an observation tower overlooking Temple activities. If the purpose of the Antonia Fortress was to oversee the activities occurring on the Temple Mount, no better vantage point

⁵⁸ Benoit, *The Archaeological Reconstruction of the Antonia Fortress*, p. 87.

⁵⁹ Gibson, Shimon. (2009). *The Final Days of Jesus: The Archaeological Evidence*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, p. 91.

⁶⁰ Gibson, *The Final Days of Jesus: The Archaeological Evidence*, p. 91.

⁶¹ According to Evans, Pilate normally resided in Caesarea Maritima (on the Mediterranean), but at Passover and other festivals took up residence in Jerusalem, either in the Antonia (which is doubtful), which overlooked the Temple precinct, or in Herod’s Palace. Evans, Craig, A. (2006). *Excavating Caiaphas, Pilate, and Simon of Cyrene*. In James H. Charlesworth (Ed.) *Jesus and Archaeology*. (323-340). Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., p. 334.

could have existed. The windows of the school overlook the Temple Mount. You have a plain view of the north side of the Temple Mount and, if no trees existed, you can see plainly the entirety of the area up to and including the Dome of the Rock. In the Roman Period, when the Second Temple existed, a tower located in this position would have the perfect viewpoint for monitoring activity on the Temple Mount.



Figure 6. Author's own photo taken in August 2015, looking southward from the second level of the Omariyya School towards the Temple Mount.

Herod's Palace as the Praetorium?

The other possible location of the Praetorium has been conjectured to be Herod's Palace. Philo mentions Pilate as the "appointed procurator of Judaea" and speaks of Herod's Palace in Jerusalem.⁶² Josephus mentions several palaces in the Upper City on the Western Hill: the Hasmonean Palace, the palace of Ananias the High Priest, and

⁶² Alexandrini, Philonis. (1961). *Legatio Ad Gaium*. (E. Mary Smallwood, Translator and Ed.) Leiden, E.J. Brill, section 299.

Herod the Great's Palace.⁶³ According to Josephus, "His own Palace [Herod], built in the Upper City."⁶⁴ Josephus places Herod's Palace and fortifications to the south of the Jaffa Gate. Kenyon agrees that Herod's Palace was located on the Western Hill and the present day Jaffa Gate was along the north wall of Herod's Palace.⁶⁵ Mark specifically notes that the Praetorium is in "the courtyard of the palace" (Mark 15:16).⁶⁶ And of these palaces, archaeologically "only Herod's palace can actually be placed, in the northwestern corner of the Upper City, from the site of the present Citadel near Jaffa Gate and stretching southward."⁶⁷ See Figures 5 and 7.

⁶³ Avigad, Nahman. (1980). *Discovering Jerusalem*. Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc., p. 82.

⁶⁴ Josephus, Flavius. (1970). *The Jewish War* (G.A. Williamson, Trans.). London: Penguin Books, p. 81.

⁶⁵ Kenyon, *Digging Up Jerusalem*, pgs. 51 and 258.

⁶⁶ Borg, Marcus, J. and John Dominic Crossan. (2006). *The Last Week: What the Gospels Really Teach about Jesus's Final Days in Jerusalem*. New York, NY: HarperSanFrancisco, p. 143.

⁶⁷ Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem*, p. 82.

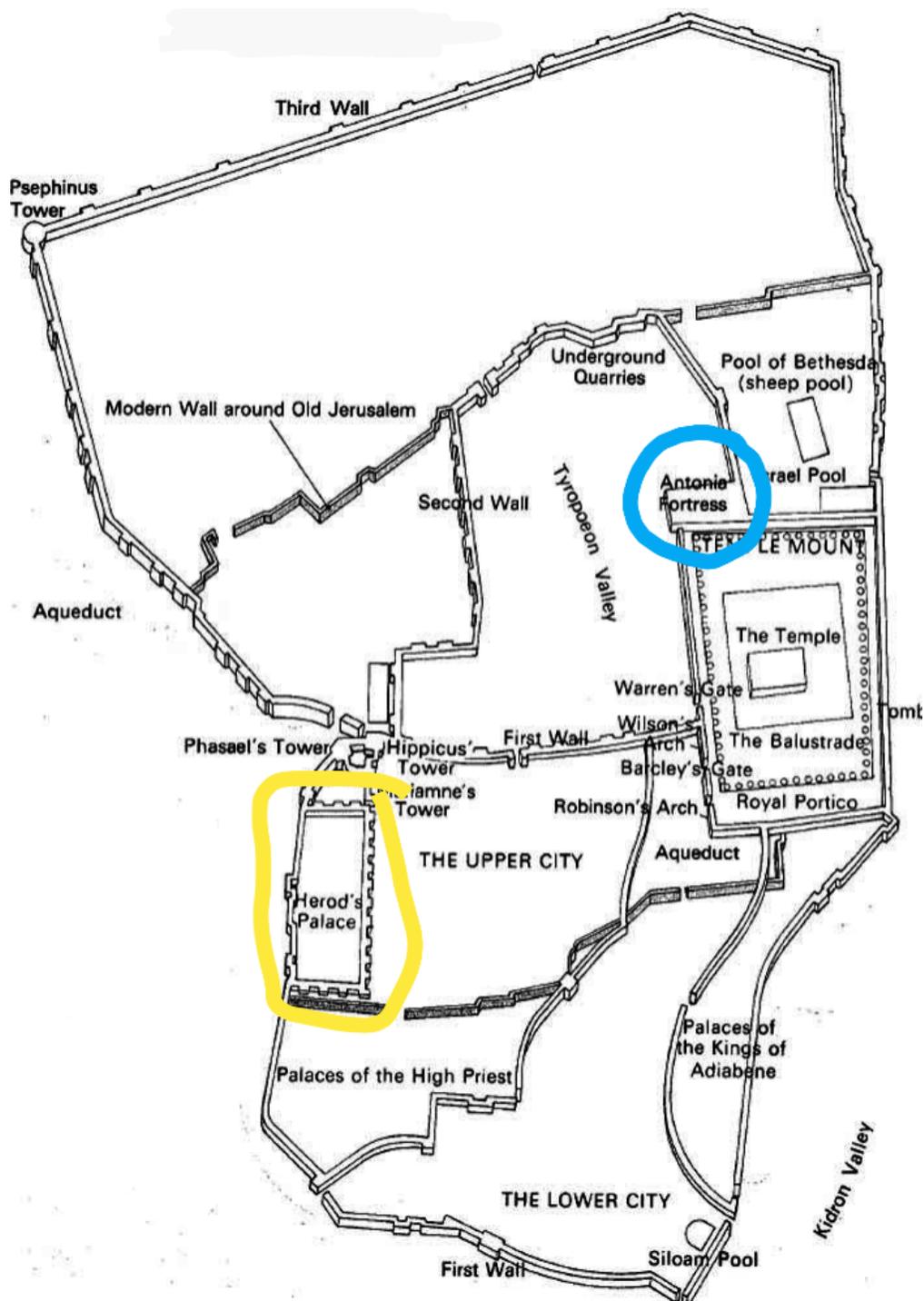


Figure 7. Location of Herod's Palace in Jerusalem is noted in yellow and the Antonia Fortress is noted in blue.⁶⁸

Herod's Palace was built beginning in 25-22 BCE.⁶⁹ According to Shimon Gibson, "Herod's palace lay at the northwest angle of the Upper City, in the area spanning the

⁶⁸ <http://www.womeninthebible.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/5-Jerusalem-HG-period.jpg>

distance between the present-day Citadel, *Kishle*, and Armenian Garden.”⁷⁰ Dan Bahat and Magen Broshi, who conducted archaeological excavations in the Armenian Garden, posit “that...the palace [of Herod] was made the seat of the Roman procurator [prefect] while in Jerusalem, and that it was also the location of the Praetorium – *the location of the judgement and sentencing of Jesus.*”⁷¹ [Emphasis added.] F.E. Peters agrees with this viewpoint as well, writing “Jesus was likely brought before Pilate in the former palace of Herod.”⁷² Murphy-O’Connor writes that;

*...it is more probable that Pilate condemned Jesus to death... at the Citadel... This was the palace of Herod where Pilate normally resided when he came up from Caesarea to ensure control during the great Jewish feasts.*⁷³

Jodi Magness not only agrees but also is unequivocal in her statement:

*...the Gospel account mentions the **praetorium**, not the Antonia: ‘Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the praetorium’ (Matt. 27:27.) The praetorium – the palace of the Roman governor in Jerusalem – was Herod’s palace, not the Antonia fortress.*⁷⁴

And according to Urban C. Von Wahlde:

Although the archaeological evidence is sufficient to identify and locate the Herodian palace, it is literary evidence that determines that this rather than the Fortress Antonia was the place where the prefect lodged. While it was once thought that Pilate resided in the Fortress Antonia, it is now clear that the Antonia, which was closer to the Temple, would have been used by the troops for close supervision of the Temple area whereas Pilate would have taken up residence in the more sumptuous quarters of the palace. This is confirmed by the

⁶⁹ Gibson notes “in the year 25 or 22 B.C., a massive podium was constructed for the palace buildings of Herod the Great.” Gibson, Shimon. (1987). *The 1961-67 Excavations in the Armenian Garden, Jerusalem. Palestine Exploration Quarterly, Vol 119, Issue 2, 81-96*, p. 95.

⁷⁰ Gibson, *The Final Days of Jesus: The Archaeological Evidence*, p. 91.

⁷¹ Bahat, Dan and Magen Broshi. (1976). *Excavations in the Armenian Garden*. In Yigael Yadin (Ed.), *Jerusalem Revealed: Archaeology in the Holy City 1968-1974*, 55-56, New Haven and London: Yale University Press and the Israel Exploration Society, p. 55.

⁷² Peters, F.E. (1985). *Jerusalem: The Holy City in the Eyes of Chroniclers, Visitors, Pilgrims, and Prophets from the Days of Abraham to the Beginnings of Modern Times*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, p. 594n.10.

⁷³ Murphy-O’Connor, *The Holy Land: An Oxford Archaeological Guide from Earliest Times to 1700*, p. 38.

⁷⁴ Magness, Jodi. (2012). *The Archaeology of the Holy Land: From the Destruction of Solomon’s Temple to the Muslim Conquest*. NY: Cambridge University Press, p. 158.

*fact that Josephus uses the term aulē (palace) only for the Herodian palace and regularly referred to the Antonia as a prygos (tower) or a phourion (fortress).*⁷⁵

Gibson, too, is among the scholars that agree, based on archaeological evidence, that “Herod’s palace on the west side of the city was the same as the Praetorium and that in its immediate vicinity Jesus was tried and condemned to death.”⁷⁶ He notes that Philo of Alexandria related the episode of the votive round shields that were dedicated in honor of Tiberius in 32 CE which made it clear that Herod’s Palace was used by Pilate not only as his residence, but also as the center of his military and civic headquarters in Jerusalem.⁷⁷ “[M]odern archaeological research has shown that the provisional Praetorium of Pilate was not where the Via Dolorosa followed by contemporary pilgrims supposes it to be.”⁷⁸

In a similar vein, the “*lithostrōton* (the Stone Pavement; John 19:13) denotes the public square in front of the Praetorium; it was paved with large stones. The Aramaic *Gabbatha* (John 19:13) denotes the ‘high’ place or the setting of the Praetorium.”⁷⁹ These terms denote that Herod’s palace is situated in the western elevated part of the city.⁸⁰ The lithostrotos currently observed along the Via Dolorosa is located under the Convent of the Sisters of Zion. The lithostrotos under the convent do indeed make up a large stone pavement; however, this lithostrotos dates to the second century CE and is most probably from the Roman Forum of Aelia Capitolina. There is an alternate location for the lithostrotos which fits much better archaeologically and that is at the Gate of

⁷⁵ Von Wahlde, Urban, C. (2006). *Archaeology and John’s Gospel*. In James H. Charlesworth (Ed.) *Jesus and Archaeology*. (523-586). Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., p. 573.

⁷⁶ Gibson, *The Final Days of Jesus: The Archaeological Evidence*, p. 91.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Thiede, Carsten Peter, and Matthew d’Ancona. (2003). *The Quest for the True Cross*. NY: Palgrave MacMillian, pgs. 65-66.

⁷⁹ Charlesworth, James, H. (2006). “Jesus Research and Archaeology: A New Perspective” in *Jesus and Archaeology*. (James H. Charlesworth, Ed.) Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, Co., p. 34.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

Essenes location proposed by Gibson, which would have been located on the western side of Herod's Palace (See Figure 8).

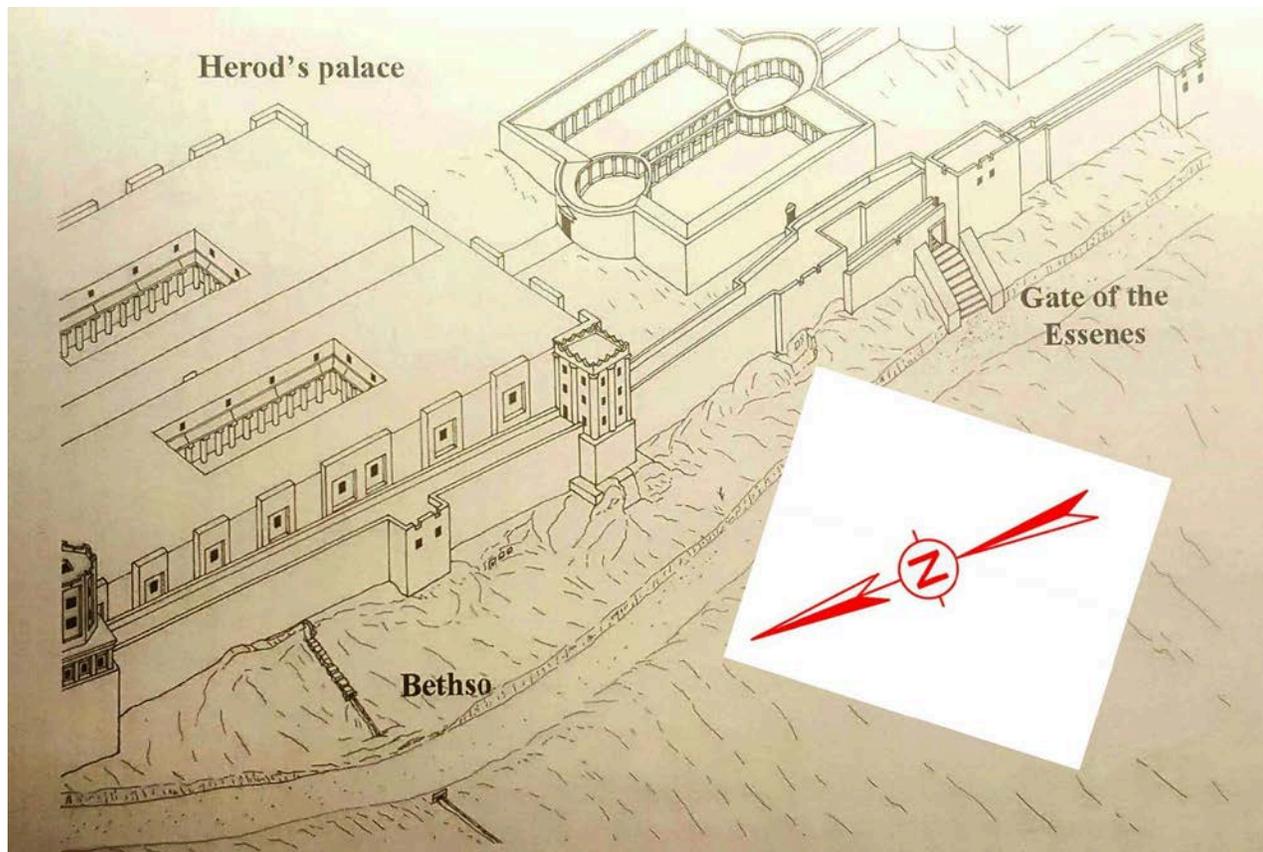


Figure 8. Reconstruction drawing of the place of the palace/Praetorium at the time of Jesus including the Gate of the Essenes proposed by Gibson. Drawing: Fadi Amirah. Copyright: Shimon Gibson⁸¹

The archaeological remains of the gate excavated in the Western Wall of Herod's Palace would have fit Josephus's description of Herod's Palace exactly by (1) being in the Upper City, (2) having the open space to address crowds, and (3) of being located on a high point.⁸² Gibson has proposed that this gate is the Gate of Essenes.

⁸¹ Gibson, *The Trial of Jesus at the Jerusalem Praetorium: New Archaeological Evidence*, p. 111.

⁸² Notley, Steven. (2015). *Jerusalem: City of the Great King Vol. 2*. Jerusalem, Israel: Carta Jerusalem, Ltd., p. 41.

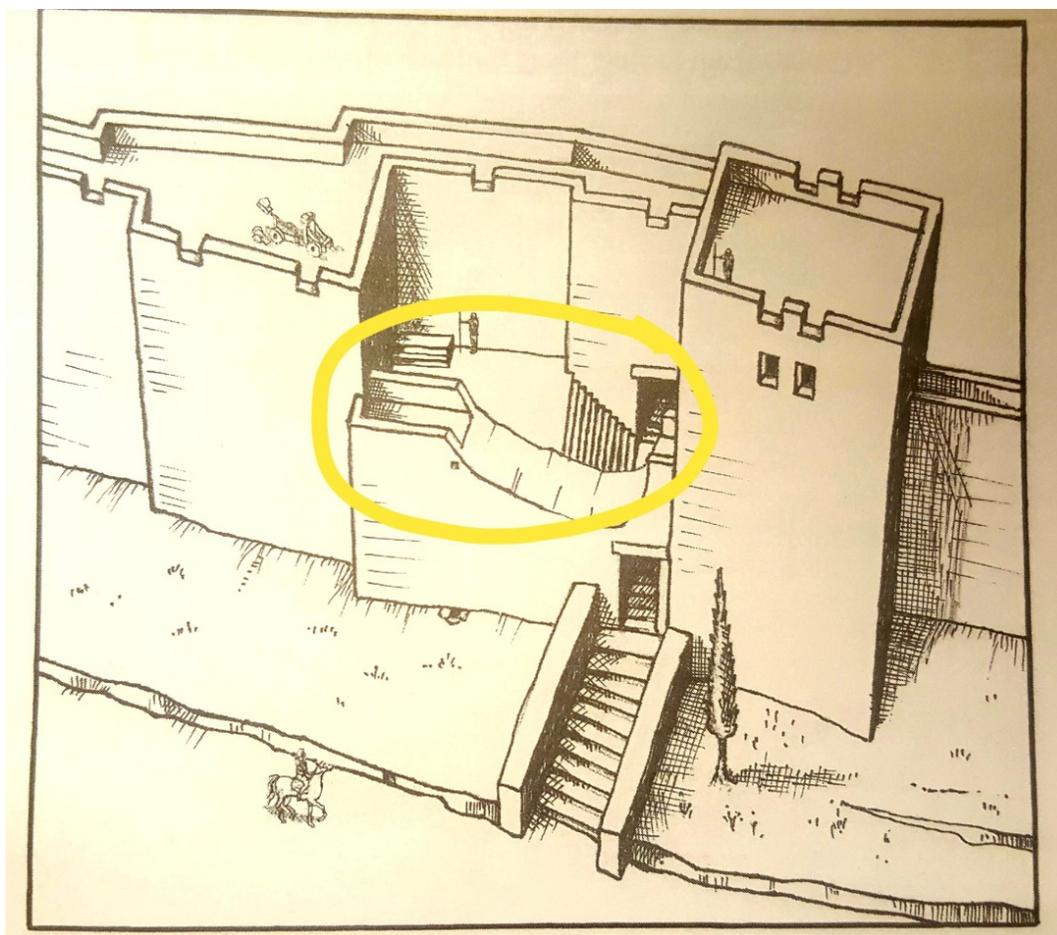


Figure 9. Reconstruction drawing of the palace/Praetorium gate. Highlighted yellow area would have been the lithostrotos. Drawing: Shimon Gibson. Copyright: Shimon Gibson.⁸³

Gibson suggests the monumental gateway (see Figure 9) within the gate in the wall that was uncovered in excavations on the western side of the Praetorium should “now be considered a reasonable candidate for the place where the trial of Jesus took place.”⁸⁴

The gateway had “inner and outer gates flanked by large towers, and these gates were separatedby a large, open, and paved court at its center.”⁸⁵ This description of a

⁸³ Gibson, *The Trial of Jesus at the Jerusalem Praetorium: New Archaeological Evidence*, p. 114.

⁸⁴ Gibson, *The Trial of Jesus at the Jerusalem Praetorium: New Archaeological Evidence*, p. 99.

⁸⁵ Gibson, *The Trial of Jesus at the Jerusalem Praetorium: New Archaeological Evidence*, p. 98.

paved court fits the New Testament description of the lithostrotos perfectly. Von Wahlde agrees with Gibson that this construction is the true lithostrotos.⁸⁶



Figure 10. The author's photograph of the remains of the approach to the excavated gate that Gibson believes is the Gate of the Essenes. This photograph is taken looking eastward towards the current Old City Walls.

In addition, the location of this excavated gate looks out on a panoramic view of the upper edge of the Hinnom Valley. Imagine it without the current trees and buildings and it fits the place of judgement described in the Gospel of John by the term ‘Gabbatha’.

‘Gabbatha’ is a derivation of the Hebrew ‘*gib’ah*’ meaning hill or elevated place.⁸⁷

There are numerous toponymical examples from the Hebrew Bible, including: Gibeon, Geba, and Gibeah.⁸⁸ This “spot would have been particularly suitable for proclamations and public trials...and crowd control would have been easy owing to the fact that it was

⁸⁶ Von Wahlde, *Archaeology and John’s Gospel*, p. 575.

⁸⁷ Notley, *Jerusalem: City of the Great King*, p. 41.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

so well defended.”⁸⁹ Figures 10 and 11 show the gateway approach which was a “series of paved steps laid in a sloping embankment bordered on either side by walls.”⁹⁰

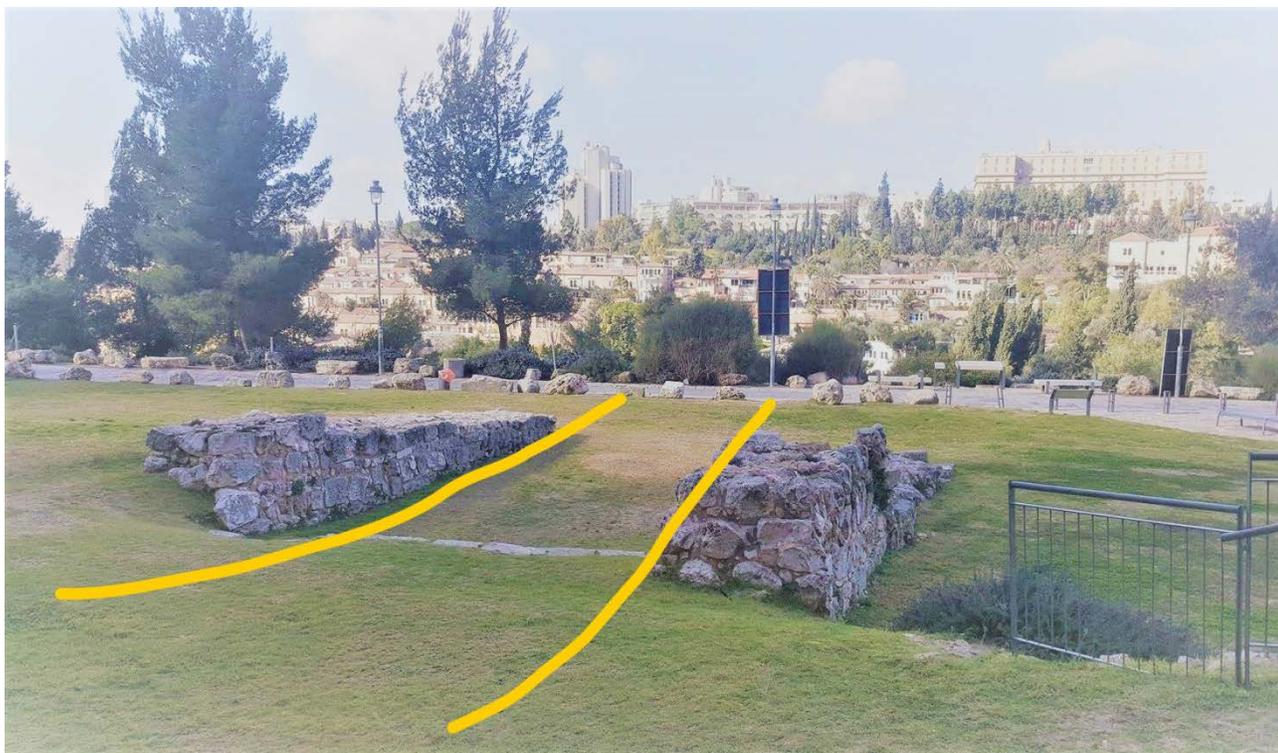


Figure 11. Author's own photograph taken in January 2017 looking westward from excavated gate remains. Yellow highlights show area of steps. The view from this point would have been extraordinary. There is a valley that lies between the walkway and distant hill.

It is clear from the archaeological and literary evidence that the Praetorium lay on the west side of the city at Herod's Palace in the area south of the Jaffa Gate, spanning from the modern day Citadel, through the *Kishle*, and into the Armenian Garden.⁹¹ Station 1

⁸⁹ Gibson, *The Trial of Jesus at the Jerusalem Praetorium: New Archaeological Evidence*, p. 115.

⁹⁰ Gibson, Shimon. (2007). Suggested Identifications for 'Bethso' and the 'Gate of the Essenes' in the Light of Magen Broshi's Excavations on Mount Zion. *Hidushim ba-arkhe'ologyah shel Yerushalayim u-sevivoteha: kovets mekharim*, Vol. 1, pp. 29.

⁹¹ There exists in Rome, at the Lateran Basilica, a set of 28 white marble steps (covered by a protective framework of wooden steps) that were reportedly brought to Rome by Queen Helena around 326 and are supposed to be the steps from the Praetorium. In the Middle Ages they were called *Scala Pilati* (Stairs of Pilate) but are now referred to most often as the *Scala Sancta* (Holy Stairs). I had the opportunity to ascend the steps in 2011 on my knees. (This is the only option to ascend the steps because it is part of the pilgrimage.) These are also allegedly the steps that Martin Luther was ascending on his knees when he

of the Via Dolorosa currently starts by St. Stephen's Gate, on the east side of the city. As Magness bluntly states "This means that the route walked by Jesus is different from the one walked by modern pilgrims [the Via Dolorosa]." ⁹² It is here at Herod's Palace, the site of the Praetorium, that Station 1, 'Jesus is condemned to death' should be located. And with that relocation, this thesis has begun the re-routing of the Via Dolorosa.

heard a voice like thunder say to him "The just shall live by faith." Romans 1:17. Thus began the Protestant Reformation.

⁹² Magness, *The Archaeology of the Holy Land: From the Destruction of Solomon's Temple to the Muslim Conquest*, p. 159.

Chapter 2

Station 2: Jesus is made to carry the cross.

And carrying the cross himself, he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. John 19:17.

Station 2 is traditionally located in the Franciscan Monastery of the Flagellation, across the road from the traditional First Station (See Figures 2 and 12). Rather than being located at the Monastery of the Flagellation, this station should be located at, or very nearby to, Herod's Palace.

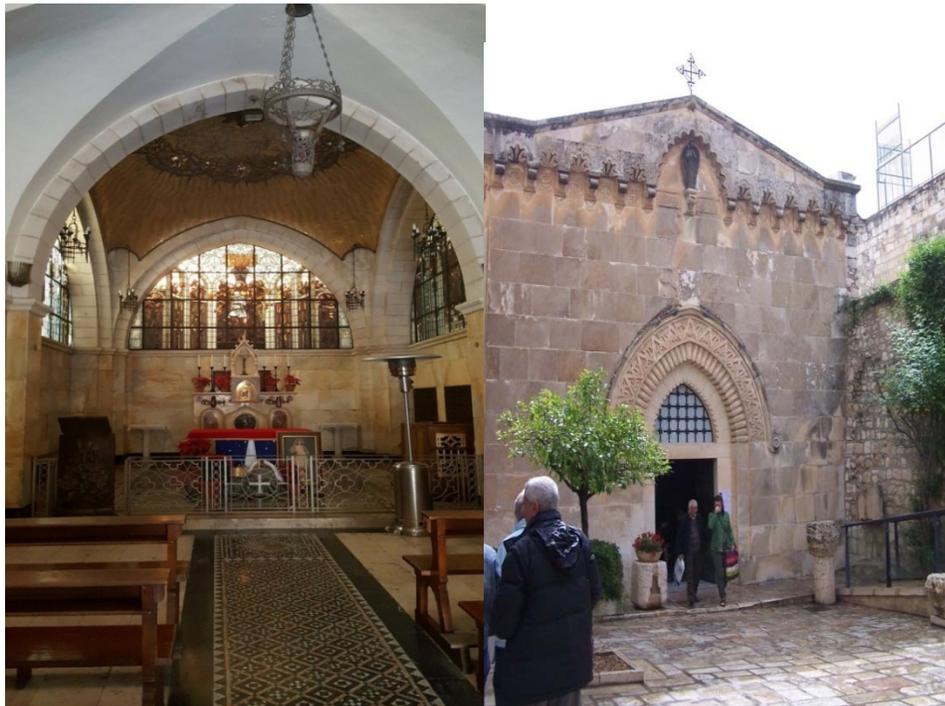


Figure 12. Author's photos of the inside and outside of the Chapel of the Flagellation located within the Franciscan Monastery of the Flagellation. The Crown of Thorns is painted on the ceiling of the chapel.

There is no archaeological evidence of this station or the event it commemorates.

However, there is a long literary tradition that records Jesus carrying his cross. Of the Gospels, only John (above) specifically states that Jesus himself carried the cross.

Matthew 27:32, Mark 15:21, and Luke 23:36 all have versions of Simon of Cyrene being

compelled by the Roman soldiers to carry the cross for Jesus. (More on Simon of Cyrene in Chapter 5.)

What is not known specifically is whether Jesus was made to carry the crossbar, known as the *'patibulum'*, or the entire cross. According to Frederick Zugibe's forensic study on the crucifixion of Jesus Christ:

"The crucarius [intended crucifixion person] carried the crosspiece (patibulum) on the shoulders or had it tied to both arms across the back because the upright (stipes) was already mounted in the ground outside the city gates. On rare occasions, the entire cross was carried." [Emphasis added.]⁹³

Even the literary descriptions disagree on the issue of the patibulum versus the whole cross. According to John Wilkinson:

*"In two passages in the Mostellaria, a Roman comedy written by Plautus two centuries before Jesus' crucifixion, it is said that one person being executed is to 'carry the crossbar [patibulum] through the city' and then 'be attached to the upright stake [cruce]'. If this was regular practice in the Jerusalem of Jesus' day we ought therefore to picture him as carrying the 'stretcher' or 'crossbar' to the place where the upright stake was already fixed."*⁹⁴

In addition, David Gibson notes,

*Since the Romans killed so many on the cross, they kept the upright portion of the crosses, called the stipes, permanently planted in the ground. The stipes was only about seven to seven and a half feet high, because the quaternion [Roman soldier detail] had to nail the victim to the crossbeam (patibulum) and then raise the crossbeam to connect it to the stipes, by lifting, pulling up with a rope, or making the victim walk backwards up a ladder. A high cross would have made the whole process more difficult, and less efficient.*⁹⁵ [Emphasis added.]

⁹³ Zugibe, Frederick, T. MD, Ph.D. (2005). *The Crucifixion of Jesus: A Forensic Inquiry*, Lanham, MD: M. Evans, p. 46

⁹⁴ Wilkerson, John. (1978). *Jerusalem as Jesus Knew It: Archaeology as Evidence*. London: Thames and Hudson, p. 150.

⁹⁵ Gibson, David and Michael McKinley. (2015). *Finding Jesus: Faith, Fact, Forgery. Six Holy Objects That Tell the Remarkable Story of the Gospels*. NY: St. Martin's Press, p. 175.

Religious writing is often based on earlier literary works and, according to Schiller, those works are inspired by images.⁹⁶ In the early Christian period, there were three ways that artists depicted Jesus bearing the cross.⁹⁷ The first type of artistic depiction is Simon of Cyrene carrying the cross for Jesus (Matthew 27:32, Mark 15:21, and Luke 23:26); the second type (which made its appearance at the turn of the eleventh-twelfth centuries) is Jesus bearing the cross himself as in the Gospel of John (above); and in the third type of depiction is Jesus and Simon carry the cross together. In the artistic depictions, the full cross is the most common motif. This may be due to “Early Christian theologians [who] in their reflections on the Cross saw Christ bearing the Cross as a warrior bearing the symbol of victory on his shoulders.”⁹⁸

Benoit stresses a minor, but possibly very telling, detail. In his discussion of different types of crosses used in crucifixion, he states, “since a notice was put above his head [according to Matthew 27:37]...this implies that there was a vertical projection at the top. The traditional form of our crucifixes, then, is justified.”⁹⁹ Justin, the Latin Historian, also champions the Latin cross because, according to him:

*The New Testament gives no decisive indications with respect to the cross upon which Christ suffered; but it is impossible that a correct tradition should not have been formed on this point, and it is the Latin cross, the crux immissa or ordinaria [that would have been carried].*¹⁰⁰

Gunnar Samuelsson states explicitly “[t]he common interpretation that Jesus was carrying the crossbeam (*patibulum*) is not supported by the Biblical texts.”¹⁰¹ Samuelsson

⁹⁶ Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art, Vol. 2: The Passion of Jesus Christ*, p. 78n.

⁹⁷ Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art, Vol. 2: The Passion of Jesus Christ*, p. 79.

⁹⁸ Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art, Vol. 2: The Passion of Jesus Christ*, p. 78.

⁹⁹ Benoit, Pierre. (1970). *The Passion and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*. (Benet Weatherhead, Trans.) New York, NY: Herder and Herder, p. 166.

¹⁰⁰ Schaff, Philip, DD. LLD, (Ed.) (1891). *A Religious Encyclopaedia: Or dictionary of Biblical, Historical, Doctrinal, and Practical Theology*. NY: Funk and Wagnalls, p. 574

¹⁰¹ Samuelsson, Gunnar. (2011). *Crucifixion in Antiquity: An Inquiry into the Background and Significance of the New Testament Terminology of Crucifixion*. Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, p. 245.

believes the confusion about what exactly was carried by Jesus results from the interpretation of the Latin texts; while ‘cruce’ was thought to refer to ‘cross’ and ‘patibulum’ was thought to refer to ‘crossbar’, Samuelsson believes the terms cruce and patibulum were “used almost synonymously in Latin texts.”¹⁰²

My opinion is the entire cross was carried by Jesus on his trip from the Praetorium to Golgotha as the Romans would have wanted to make an example of Jesus to the residents of Jerusalem as a deterrent. Some scholars dispute that Jesus would have been singled out by the Romans since there were others around the time who had similar claims or charges of messianic authority; however, there are no literary sources found to date that relate a condemned criminal being brought before both Pontius Pilate and Herod Antipas as Jesus was, according to Luke 23:7. Therefore, this indicates to me that Jesus was considered more of a political threat. If he was then more of a threat to the Roman powers, the Roman soldiers may very well have been told to single him out in his punishment to the crowd. Also, that may have been why it was necessary, according to Matthew, Mark, and Luke for the Roman soldiers to conscript Simon of Cyrene to assist Jesus in carrying the cross. I will touch on the crossbar vs. cross issue one more time in my discussion in Chapter 5 involving Simon of Cyrene.

However, it would be virtually impossible to tell for certain what Jesus would have carried during his journey from the Praetorium to Golgotha. Since the literature is indeterminate, and the archaeology provides no data, the type of crucifixion implement Jesus carried remains open to debate.

¹⁰² Samuelsson, *Crucifixion in Antiquity*, p. 245.

Chapter 3

Stations 3, 7 and 9: Jesus fell.

There are no references in the New Testament to Jesus falling as he carried the cross. According to the tradition of the Via Dolorosa, Jesus fell three times as he carried the cross at the locations marked by Stations 3, 7, and 9.

Station 3 is traditionally located at the door of a small Polish chapel at the junction with al-Wad Road and is marked by a relief sculpture (See Figures 2 and 13).



Figure 13. Author's Photograph from January 2017 of Station 3.

The traditional Station 7 is marked by a Franciscan chapel at the Via Dolorosa's junction with Souq Khan al-Zeit (See Figures 2 and 14).



Figure 14. Author's photograph from January 2017 of Station 7.

Station 9 is traditionally located across from Souq Khan al-Zeit, south down Khan al-Zeit, and up 28 stone steps in front of the Coptic Patriarchate next to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (See Figure 2). Close by the site of Jesus' third fall is the apse of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (seen in the upper left of Figure 15).



Figure 15. Author's photograph from January 2017 of Station 9.

The motif of Jesus falling to his knees was introduced in the Late Middle Ages by artists depicting Jesus carrying the cross on his journey to Golgotha.¹⁰³ The image apparently developed in response to Passion Plays that had become popular in Europe.¹⁰⁴ The earliest recorded Passion Play occurred in 1350. The Passion Plays that developed in the Middle Ages were derived from Easter Dramas, which, in turn, were based on the liturgy of the Catholic Church.¹⁰⁵ “[T]he three falls...are ... derived from later traditions....[however], [t]he occasions when Jesus falls under the cross

¹⁰³ Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art, Vol. 2: The Passion of Jesus Christ*, p. 81.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ <http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=9033>

are...probable.”¹⁰⁶ There are no historical narratives as to why these three sites were selected as the locations for the falls.

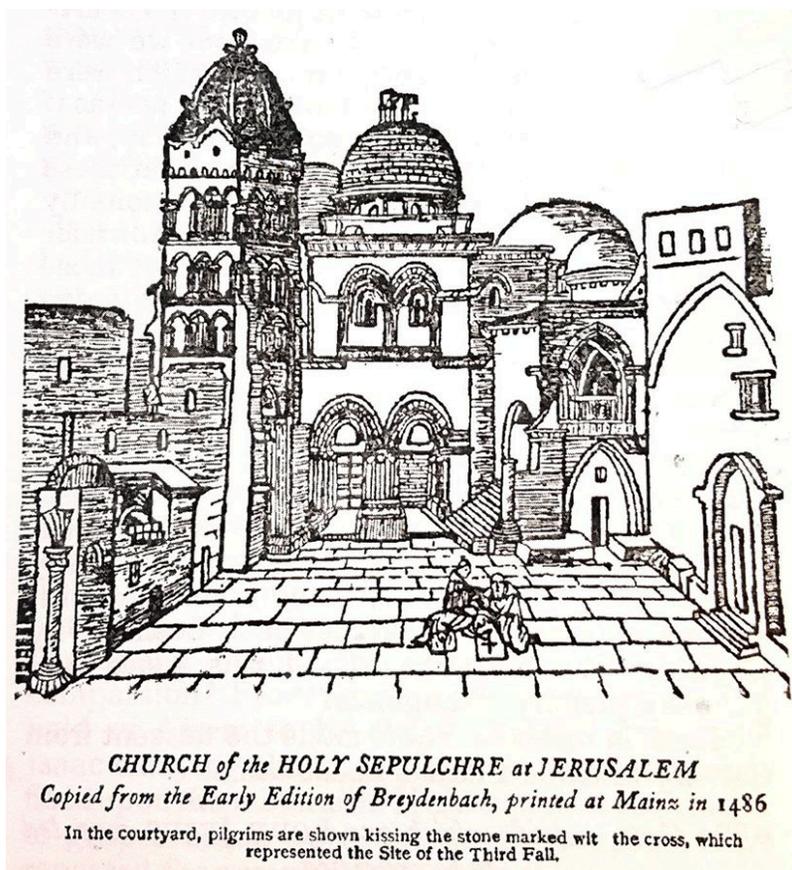


Figure 16. A 1486 rendering of the site of Station 9, the Third Fall, which in this rendition has the Third Fall located in front of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.¹⁰⁷

Did Jesus fall? There is no textual basis for this event in the New Testament nor are there any literary records of falling from before the emergence of the Passion Plays. Nevertheless, it is understandable that any person carrying either a patibulum or the entire cross could stumble and fall under the weight. The patibulum could weigh between 50-60 pounds and the entire cross could weigh between 175 - 200 pounds.¹⁰⁸ Add to that

¹⁰⁶ Benoit, *The Passion and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, p. 166.

¹⁰⁷ Thurston, *The Stations of the Cross: an Account of their History and Devotional Purpose*, p. 28.

¹⁰⁸ Zugibe, *The Crucifixion of Jesus: A Forensic Inquiry*, p. 46.

biological studies that have been conducted that estimate a person having been scourged and losing bodily fluids, such as blood, sweat, etc., would most likely be in hypovolemic shock which is fatal if not treated.¹⁰⁹ Three of the four Gospels specifically state that Pilate had Jesus scourged while the fourth, in Luke 23:16, says *I will therefore chastise Him*. This has been interpreted by some scholars to imply scourging.¹¹⁰ Scourging, or flogging, was a legal preliminary to every Roman execution, and only women and Roman senators or soldiers (except in cases of desertion) were exempt from this punishment.¹¹¹

Why does the tradition of the Via Dolorosa record that Jesus falls three times? Why not once, twice, or four times? In the ancient Near East, the number three had a tradition of being a holy or mystical number. In Christianity, three is also a spiritual number which represents the Holy Trinity; three persons in one. (The word ‘trinity’ is derived from the Latin for *Trinitas*, literally ‘triad’ from ‘trinus’, or “threefold”).¹¹² The number three appears in the Christian Bible 467 times.

In addition to the tradition of falling with the cross three times, various other “events” occurred in threes during the journey of Jesus between his arrest and Golgotha.

According to the Gospels:

- Jesus prayed three times in the Garden of Gethsemane before his arrest (Matthew 26: 36-56)
- Peter denies Jesus three times (Luke 22: 54-62)

¹⁰⁹ <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/312348.php>

¹¹⁰ De Ligouri, Saint Alphonso. (1887). *The Complete Ascetical Works of Saint Alphonso De Liquori, Vol. 5, The Passion and Death of Jesus Christ*. Martin Grimm, (Ed.). NY: Benzinger Brothers, p. 396.

¹¹¹ Hengel, M. (1977). *Crucifixion in the Ancient World and the Folly of the Message of the Cross*, trans. J. Bowden (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press). And Edwards, William D. (1998). *Christ Died Quickly on the Cross. Book of Jesus: A Treasure of the Greatest Stories and Writings About Christ*. Calvin Miller, (Ed.). NY: Barnes and Noble, p. 388.

¹¹² Trinity. (1989). In *The Oxford English Dictionary, Second Edition, Volume XVIII*. Prepared by J.A. Simpson and E.S.C. Wiener. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pgs. 541-542.

- Jesus was placed on the cross at the third hour of the day (9 a.m.) and died at the ninth hour (3 p.m.) (Mark 15: 25, 36)
- There were three hours of darkness before his death (Mark 15:33)
- Jesus was dead for three full days and three full nights (Luke 24:7)

There is no archaeological evidence of the stations commemorating Jesus' falls because of its development as a late tradition. It is understandable why Christian tradition added the falls to the Via Dolorosa as it epitomizes Jesus' suffering. And once one delves into the mystical meaning of three in the ancient Near East, it is understandable why the tradition developed with the falls occurring three times as 'three' had a long history of spiritual, mystical, and otherworldly meaning as noted above.

Chapter 4

Station 4: Jesus Meets His Mother.

There is no reference in the New Testament to Jesus meeting his Mother during his journey with the cross from the Praetorium to Golgotha. Nevertheless, literature in the Middle Ages mentions such an event. Artists of the time depicted this literary motif and a “tradition” was born.

Station 4 is traditionally commemorated at the Armenian Church of Our Lady of the Spasm (See Figures 2 and 17).



Figure 17. Author's photograph taken in January 2017 of Station 4.

The earliest literary mention of Mary, the mother of Jesus, standing by the roadside in order to see her son as he carried his cross to Golgotha comes during the Middle Ages.

The *Meditationes vitae Christi* (Meditations on the Life of Christ) was a popular and

important fourteenth century religious text which was later translated into Middle English. This and other writings “describe the path taken by Mary...to see her son.”¹¹³ *Meditationes vitae Christi* influenced Giotto’s fresco in Padua from 1305 called “The Bearing of the Cross” which is the first monumental representation of Jesus’ bearing of the cross and depicts Jesus’ mother, Mary, standing just outside the city-gate and being forced back by a soldier¹¹⁴ (See Figure 18).



Figure 18. The Bearing of the Cross from www.giottodibondone.org¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art, Vol. 2: The Passion of Jesus Christ*, p. 80.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ <http://www.giottodibondone.org/No.-34-Scenes-from-the-Life-of-Christ--18.-Road-to-Calvary-1304-06.html>

Schiller suggests the motif is also a reference to the ‘*compassio Mariae*’, i.e., “she observes her Son’s suffering, he his Mother’s compassion.”¹¹⁶ Jesus’ mother, Mary, is understood to be present during Jesus’ journey from the Praetorium to Golgotha as she was there during his ministry; in fact, she even played a role in his first miracle according to John 2:1-11. This motif of a mother bearing witness to the cruelty bestowed upon her child has endured in the literature. Benoit states that “Mary must have followed her son as close as possible.”¹¹⁷ The Gospel of John recounts Mary as being present at the crucifixion. In John 19:26, the Gospel records Jesus instructing Mary as he is being crucified, “Woman, behold your son” and to the disciple he is addressing in John 19:27, he says “Here is your mother.” The Romans did have a policy of allowing a condemned man to speak to his relatives.¹¹⁸

Thurston refers to Station 4 as one of the four “variable stations” by which he means the order of observance of those stations along the Via Dolorosa varies. The station observance and its’ geographical location varies depending on which version of the Via Dolorosa the pilgrim encountered while in Jerusalem.¹¹⁹ As with the other variable stations, there are several deviations of the station location and it relocates over time. There is no historical narrative that I have been able to discern that confirms why this station is located at its’ present site. While the previous geographical locations of the station along the Via Dolorosa have either been lost to time or, are a product of a later tradition imposed on an earlier time, the order of occurrence of the stations in the Via Dolorosa can be established by the recording of the stations in the Pilgrim Diaries.

¹¹⁶ Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art, Vol. 2: The Passion of Jesus Christ*, p. 80.

¹¹⁷ Benoit, *The Passion and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, p. 166.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ The other variable stations are Stations 5, 6, and 8.

However, the Pilgrim Diaries have to be examined with the knowledge that these accounts, while a fascinating source of information, were written at least 1,200 years after the Gospels recount the events. This type of document reflects what the traveler learned in their time which may have been a product of later tradition imposed on an earlier time and may not reflect any accuracy or historical reliability of the event. But what the Pilgrim Diaries do tell us is that by the late 1200's certain traditions concerning Jesus' final steps had started to be developed along the Via Dolorosa.

There are 31 Pilgrim diary accounts that mention Jesus meeting his Mother,¹²⁰ and only two of the 31 accounts do not list the meeting with Jesus' mother as the first of the four variable stations. The earliest mention of the encounter with Mary in the pilgrim accounts is by Ricoldo di Monte Croce, an Italian Dominican monk, in 1294; therefore, the tradition must have been established by the end of the thirteenth century. He lists the encounter with Mary directly after the encounter with the Daughters of Jerusalem but before Simon of Cyrene; as does the 1350 pilgrim account by Dublin MS.¹²¹

From 1320 (with the one exception of Dublin MS just noted) to 1744, the 31 Pilgrim accounts list the encounter with Mary as the first of the four variable stations and, therefore, for all intents and purposes, it was after the year 1320 that the station became "fixed" in its current location. According to Thurston, "Wey [in 1458] also copied into his book another account of the holy places at Jerusalem in English verse. This is seemingly of *older date than his own*."¹²² [Emphasis added.] The poem reads:

*Ther JHESU mett with his Modyr Marie
Ther sorrowyd together both He and she;
And ther the wymmen of Jerusalem*

¹²⁰ Thurston, *The Stations of the Cross: an Account of their History and Devotional Purpose*, p. 60.

¹²¹ Thurston, *The Stations of the Cross: an Account of their History and Devotional Purpose*, p. 59.

¹²² Thurston, *The Stations of the Cross: an Account of their History and Devotional Purpose*, p. 51.

*Wept on CHRYST when that He cam.*¹²³

This poem appears to have the order of the occurrence that Jesus met his Mother prior to his encounter with the Daughters (Women) of Jerusalem.

While no archaeological evidence exists of this event, and literary evidence is late and scarce, I think the precedent set in the many accounts recorded in the New Testament of Mary being present during Jesus' ministry in the three years prior to his crucifixion, plus the gospel recording of Jesus addressing Mary while he is on the cross, leads me to agree with Benoit that although, "the meeting with Mary [is] ... derived from later traditions.... the meeting with Mary is very probable" and that this scenario, of Jesus encountering his mother on his trip from the Praetorium to Golgotha, is plausible, but not definitive and a late accretion to tradition.¹²⁴

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Benoit, *The Passion and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, p. 166.

Chapter 5

Station 5: Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the cross.

As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon: they compelled this man to carry his cross. Matthew 27:32.

They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. Mark 15:21.

As they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus. Luke 23:26.

Station 5 is traditionally located on the corner where the Via Dolorosa turns west off al-Wad Road and begins to narrow as it goes uphill and is located adjacent to the Chapel of Simon of Cyrene, a building constructed by the Franciscans in 1895 (See Figures 2 and 19).¹²⁵



Figure 19. Author's photograph of Station 5 taken in January 2017.

¹²⁵ Prior to the 15th century, this location was known as "The House of the Poor Man" which was, at a point in time, a station on the Via Dolorosa.

As noted in Chapter 2, while Matthew 27:32, Mark 15:21, and Luke 23:26 all mention Simon of Cyrene, the Gospel of John does not.¹²⁶ Where was Cyrene? Cyrene was a city in North Africa located in modern Libya.¹²⁷ Cyrene in Greek means ‘place of the iris.’¹²⁸ Cyrene had a substantial number of Greek speaking Jews who had immigrated, so much so that Josephus noted in his writings, “There were four classes of men among those of Cyrene: that of citizens, that of husbandmen, the third of strangers, and the fourth of Jews.”¹²⁹ Acts 2:5-11 lists the nationalities of people staying in Jerusalem as ‘Jews, converts to Judaism, Cretans, and Arabs from every nation’ including: “inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and *the districts of Libya near Cyrene*, as well as travelers from Rome.” [Emphasis added]. There is archaeological evidence that there were people from Cyrene who visited, lived, or at the very least, died and were buried in Jerusalem. In 1941, Nahman Avigad discovered the burial place of a Jewish family from Cyrene in the Kidron Valley dating to the first century CE.¹³⁰

Why did the Roman soldiers conscript Simon of Cyrene to assist in carrying a cross for a crucifixion victim? Scholars have presented several theories: while it is not known for certain that Simon of Cyrene was a person of color, or Jewish, both possibilities have

¹²⁶ One theological argument of why John excludes Simon is that John is making the point that Jesus carried his own cross; this symbolizes that Jesus, as Messiah, bore all sins on his own and had no assistance. This argument equates Jesus carrying his own cross to Isaac carrying his own firewood up to Mt. Moriah to where his father, Abraham, is planning on sacrificing him.

¹²⁷ Isbouts, Jean-Pierre. (2013). *Who's Who in the Bible: Unforgettable People and Timeless Stories from Genesis to Revelation*. Washington, DC: National Geographic.

¹²⁸ Crowder, Stephanie Buckhanon. (2002). *Simon of Cyrene: A Case of Roman Conscription*. NY: Peter Land Publishing, p. 37.

¹²⁹ Josephus, Flavius. *Jewish Antiquities*, Book 14. Chapter 7 (115).

¹³⁰ Geva, Hillel, (Ed.). (2000). *Jewish Quarter Excavations in the Old City of Jerusalem: conducted by Nahman Avigad, 1969-1982*. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society: Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

been contemplated. Stephanie Buckhanon Crowder theorizes Roman soldiers may have picked him out of the crowd because “Simon’s skin color caused him to stand out” and thus he represented “an ethnic outsider” and because Simon’s skin color was different, the Roman soldiers “knew he was from a faraway place.”¹³¹ This theory, of course, can in no way be substantiated. Wilkinson states, “[t]hat Simon of Cyrene was forced to provide help is hardly questionable, since he is identified [*in Mark 15:21*] by his place of origin and by the names of his sons.”¹³²

When Simon of Cyrene was approaching Jerusalem, the Gospels (Mark 15:21 and Luke 23:26) record he was “coming to the city from the north or west... ‘from the country’ (i.e. fields) when he was taken and forced to carry the cross of Jesus.”¹³³ To the north and west of the First Wall of Jerusalem during that time were fields, gardens, and a quarry. (More on the quarry in Chapter 8). Pseudo-Aristeas 112 records that the neighborhoods of Jerusalem were thickly planted with olive trees and crops of corn and pulse, and that grain was grown there as well.¹³⁴ Along with the fields, gardens and the quarry north of Jerusalem was most probably a road that Simon of Cyrene would have been travelling along. “We may assume that a road or a path ran parallel to the northern stretch of the First Wall, from the outside, ascending along the edge of the Transversal Valley westward where....it joined up with the main highway leading westward in the

¹³¹ Crowder, *Simon of Cyrene: A Case of Roman Conscription*, p. 41.

¹³² Wilkinson, John. (1978). *The Jerusalem Jesus Knew: An Archaeological Guide to the Gospels*. New York: Thomas Nelson Publishers, p. 151.

¹³³ Jeremias, Joachim. (1975). *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An Investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament Period*. (Translated by F.H. and C.H. Cave). Philadelphia: Fortress Press, p. 39.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.* A pulse is a type of legume which produces a grain seed in a pod where the dried seed is harvested. Pseudo-Aristeas 112 is dated by some scholars to have been written no later than the second half of the first century CE.

direction of Emmaus and distant Jaffa.”¹³⁵ This may have been the road traversed by Simon of Cyrene¹³⁶ (See Figure 47.) In just a couple more centuries, Jerusalem would come to constitute the heart of the Roman road system because of Jerusalem’s strategic importance and its traditional centrality.¹³⁷

If this was the road that Simon used, it would have most likely have been towards a gate that allowed access into the city of Jerusalem. Jesus was presumably heading out of the city of Jerusalem (the northern line of Jerusalem’s First Wall lay to the north of the Praetorium) to the place where crucifixions were performed (See Figure 5.) Where would Jesus and Simon have met up?

Some “think that the Herodian city was laid out in the typical Hellenistic... fashion, with a uniform network of streets set at right angles to one another.”¹³⁸ Jerusalem at the time of Jesus must have been similar to the Old City of the present day in external appearance with “the narrowness of her up- and down-hill streets.”¹³⁹ If the traditions are accurate, Simon of Cyrene and Jesus would have likely crossed paths close to a gate in the walls of the city of Jerusalem. Matthew 27:32 reads “As they were *going out*, they met a Cyrenian name Simon; this man they pressed into service to carry his cross.” [Emphasis added.] In the early 1970’s, Avigad excavated a gate dating to the time of Jesus located within the northern stretch of the First Wall.¹⁴⁰ Avigad was following the topographical description of the gate in the northern part of the First Wall described by

¹³⁵ Gibson, *The Final Days of Jesus: The Archaeological Evidence*, pgs. 119-120.

¹³⁶ Gibson, *The Final Days of Jesus: The Archaeological Evidence*, p. 120.

¹³⁷ Roll, Israel. (1983). The Roman Road System in Judaea in *The Jerusalem Cathedra*. Vol. 3, p. 146.

¹³⁸ Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem*, p. 83.

¹³⁹ Dalman, Gustaf. (1935). *Sacred Sites and Ways: Studies in the Topography of the Gospels*. (Trans. Paul P. Levertoff, DD). NY: MacMillian Co., p. 276.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

Josephus in *War*; 5:4, 2.¹⁴¹ He made a strong archaeological case that the gate he found was the Gennath Gate, just to the south of the modern intersection of David Street and Habad Street. Shimon Gibson is convinced that Avigad correctly identified the remnants of the fortified gate as that of the Gennath Gate.¹⁴² (There is additional discussion of the Gennath Gate and its' location in Chapter 8.)

According to Thurston, Station 5 is also one of the four variable stations. Of the 31 pilgrim diary accounts listed by Thurston, twenty pilgrims list in their diaries the station of Simon carrying the cross for Jesus as happening directly after the meeting with Mary.

These are:

- Ricoldo – 1294
- Pipinus – 1320
- Dublin MS – 1350
- Gucci – 1384
- Swinburn and Brigg - 1391
- Breydenbach – 1483
- Gylforde - 1506
- Aranda - 1530
- Zuallardo - 1586
- Bernardino Amico – 1620
- Surius - 1646
- Parviller - 1656
- Nau – 1674
- Caccia – 1694
- Hietling – 1713
- Turpetin - 1716
- Francisco Jesus Maria – 1724
- Myller – 1735
- Antonio do Sacramento – 1736
- Horn – 1744¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem*, p. 67.

¹⁴² Gibson, *The Final Days of Jesus: The Archaeological Evidence*, p. 119.

¹⁴³ Thurston, *The Stations of the Cross: an Account of their History and Devotional Purpose*, p. 59-60.

Six pilgrim diaries state the order was Simon of Cyrene coming directly after the meeting with the Daughters of Jerusalem.

- Ogier D'Anglure – 1395
- Lochner - 1435
- Georg Pfintzing – 1436
- Wey - 1458
- Fabri – 1480
- Francisco Suriano – 1484¹⁴⁴

Four pilgrims in their diaries say that Simon of Cyrene occurred at the same time as when Jesus spoke to the Daughters of Jerusalem. Dietrich von Schachten wrote, “Christ spoke to the Holy Women in the very act of being relieved of His Cross by Simon of Cyrene.”¹⁴⁵ Aranda in 1530 states the same. Others remark that Jesus spoke to the women “as soon as the taking of the cross by Simon enabled Him for the first time to turn His head.”¹⁴⁶ Harff, in 1496, does not mention Simon of Cyrene at all. But since a meeting with the “Daughters of Jerusalem” is not listed in the New Testament, these four pilgrim mentions in relation to Simon of Cyrene are late accretions to the account.

If the physical condition of Jesus was as dire as portrayed in the Gospels the Roman soldiers would have been concerned that Jesus would die before they delivered him to Golgotha. They wanted to ensure that they could crucify him to make an example to the people of Jerusalem of what happens when one defies Roman authority.¹⁴⁷ It would have made sense that they conscripted someone to help him carry his crucifixion implement. There is no archaeological evidence of this event, but if literary sources on crucifixion and studies on the human body in response to this type of treatment are reliable, then this

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Thurston, *The Stations of the Cross: an Account of their History and Devotional Purpose*, p. 60n.

¹⁴⁷ For Christians, it is important that Jesus died on the cross, in plain view of many witnesses. Jesus' death and subsequent resurrection is the foundation of the Christian faith.

event is not improbable.¹⁴⁸ Station 5 should be located closer to the intersection of David and Habad Street in the Old City but more on this issue in Chapter 8 in the discussion of the location of the Gennath Gate.

¹⁴⁸ Zugibe, *The Crucifixion of Jesus: A Forensic Inquiry*, p. 52.

Chapter 6

Station 6: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus.

There is no reference in the New Testament to this event.

The traditional location of Station 6 is commemorated at a small chapel along the Via Dolorosa known as the Church of the Holy Face. The chapel is part of the Crusader monastery of St. Cosmos. (See Figures 2 and 20).



Figure 20 Author's own photographs of the location of Station 6 and a close up of the post with an explanation of the station in Latin.

According to Christian tradition dating to the Middle Ages, Veronica, an elderly Jewish widow, came out of her house as Jesus walked by carrying the cross on the way to his crucifixion, and was so moved with compassion upon seeing his suffering that she used her veil to wipe the sweat and blood from his face.¹⁴⁹ After doing so, Veronica realized the cloth she had used held a perfect imprint of his face created from Jesus' own blood and sweat. This "piece of fabric bearing a miraculous imprint of the face of Christ" became commonly known as Veronica's Veil.¹⁵⁰ The relic believed to be the original Veronica's Veil is currently located in Rome, in St. Peter's Basilica.¹⁵¹

Neither the use of a veil, towel, or cloth to wipe the face of Jesus, nor the resultant creation of his image on the material, is mentioned in any of the Gospels. The traditional Christian interpretation describes Station 6 thusly:

*Consider how the holy woman named Veronica, seeing Jesus so afflicted, and His face bathed in sweat and blood, presented him with a towel, with which He wiped His adorable face, leaving on it the impression of His holy countenance.*¹⁵²

Scholars have suggested that the tradition of Veronica's Veil is an amalgam of several different legends or traditions. The Gospels write about a woman with a bleeding problem in Mark 5:21-43, Matthew 9:18-26, and Luke 8:40-56. This woman is healed of her twelve year bleeding problem (almost universally interpreted as menstrual) by her faith and her physical touch of a tassel on the cloak of Jesus.¹⁵³ In the early Christian

¹⁴⁹ Veronica would later become canonized in the Roman Catholic Church.

¹⁵⁰ Hayes, *Miracles: An Encyclopedia of People, Places, and Supernatural Events from Antiquity to the Present*, p. 411.

¹⁵¹ Winter, Dave and John Matthews. (1998). *Israel Handbook*. Chicago: Passport Books, p. 130.

¹⁵² De Liguori, Saint Alphonsus. (2013). *The Way of the Cross*. London: Catholic Way Publishing, p. 13.

¹⁵³ "A woman hemorrhaging for twelve years would be permanently unclean. She had not been able to perform the prescribed *mikveh*, which would have allowed her to return to normal social interaction. Her

writing of *Acta Pilati* (Acts of Pilate) from the fourth century, the woman with the issue of blood was called Veronica, although according to Gertrud Schiller, this name was incorrectly derived from the Latin ‘*vera ikon.*’¹⁵⁴ In Latin, *vera ikon* translates as “true image.” Benoit agrees that Veronica’s Veil “appears in the fourth century as a combination of several legends.”¹⁵⁵

A mid-fourth century apocrypha writing, a Syriac manuscript entitled *The Doctrine of Addai*, tells of a similar image of the face of Jesus. This document relates how King Abgar in Edessa wrote to Jesus asking to be cured of his leprosy. Jesus responded to that letter with one of his own and sent it to the king by a messenger. But before the messenger left with the letter, Jesus “washed his face in water, wiped off the moisture that was left on the towel” and then gave the cloth to the messenger. The towel Jesus had used then contained, by some divine and inexpressible way, Jesus’ own likeness.¹⁵⁶ This cloth became known as the Image of Edessa. Joe Nickell states,

The Veronica tradition clearly derives from the Edessan one, which has been traced to an account (circa 325) by Bishop Eusebius. It mentions the Abgar-Jesus correspondence and a woman (not Veronica) with an ‘issue of blood’ who is cured when she touches Jesus’ garment.

A thirteenth century writing by Gervase of Tilbury entitled *Otia Imperialia* states “Veronica owed her name to her twelve-year hemorrhage and... ‘the Lord’s likeness they

illness was not only physical but had enormous social implications.” Getty-Sullivan, Mary Ann. (2001). *Women in the New Testament*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, p. 69.

¹⁵⁴ Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art, Vol. 2: The Passion of Jesus Christ*, p. 78.

¹⁵⁵ Benoit, *The Passion and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, p. 166.

¹⁵⁶ Nickell, Joe. (2007). *Relics of The Christ*. KY: The University Press of Kentucky, pgs. 69-70.

call Veronica' which means 'the true image of the Lord.'¹⁵⁷ A special meaning was becoming attached to the blood of Jesus as it was not the blood of an ordinary man but one who literally gave his blood to reconcile a people and their God.¹⁵⁸ The blood symbolism of the hemorrhagic woman began to represent the blood of the sacrificial body of Jesus in the Christian religion. Or as Vaz de Silva states, "One transitive implication is that the hemorrhagic woman herself is the true image of the bleeding Christ; that, in other words, the figure of Veronica – the true image of Christ in womanly shape – synthesizes the...flux and the Christ's bleeding."¹⁵⁹

The earliest mention of the tradition of Veronica in the Pilgrim Diaries is in Lochner's writings in 1435, over 1,400 years after the event supposedly occurred.¹⁶⁰ With the one exception of William Wey, the meeting with Veronica is described in 23 Pilgrim Diary accounts that mention the station of Veronica as coming nearest to Golgotha.¹⁶¹ The tradition of the location/site of Veronica's house remained vague and uncertain until some years after it is first mentioned.¹⁶² This is probably due to the story of Veronica, as well as the encounter with Mary, and the interaction with Women of Jerusalem being later additions to the tradition without any discernable historicity.

Thurston includes Station 6 as one of the four variable stations.¹⁶³ The story of Veronica in the order of the Via Dolorosa is mentioned directly after the encounter with

¹⁵⁷ Vaz de Silva, Francisco. (2008). *Archeology of Intangible Heritage*. NY: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., p. 140.

¹⁵⁸ Hayes, *Miracles: An Encyclopedia of People, Places, and Supernatural Events from Antiquity to the Present*, p. 38.

¹⁵⁹ Vaz de Silva, *Archeology of Intangible Heritage*, p. 140.

¹⁶⁰ Thurston, *The Stations of the Cross: an Account of their History and Devotional Purpose*, p. 59.

¹⁶¹ Thurston, *The Stations of the Cross: an Account of their History and Devotional Purpose*, p. 60.

¹⁶² Thurston, *The Stations of the Cross: an Account of their History and Devotional Purpose*, p. 59-60.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

Mary (Station 4) by two pilgrims, Lochner (1435) and Wey (1458). She is mentioned directly after the Women of Jerusalem (Station 8) by 13 pilgrims:

- Breydenbach – 1483
- Harff -1496
- Guylforde - 1506
- Aranda - 1530
- Zuallardo - 1586
- Bernardino Amico – 1620
- Quaresmius - 1639
- Surius - 1646
- Parviller - 1656
- Nau – 1674
- Caccia - 1694
- Turpetin - 1716
- Francisco Jesus Maria – 1724

Eight pilgrims mention Veronica directly after Simon of Cyrene (Station 5):

- Georg Pfintzing - 1436
- Fabri – 1480
- Francisco Suriano – 1484
- Dietrich von Schachten - 1491
- Hietling – 1713
- Myller – 1735
- Antonio do Sacramento – 1736
- Horn – 1744¹⁶⁴

Traditionally, wearing of a veil seems to have been a requirement for a married Israelite woman. Examples of women wearing a veil in the Hebrew Bible include Tamar in Genesis 38:14, and the Daughters of Zion in Isaiah 3:19. To remove one's veil indicated being uncovered which was demeaning and shameful for a woman such as in Isaiah 47:2-3: "Remove your veil....Your nakedness shall be uncovered"; and in the apocrypha writing Susanna 1:32: "And these wicked men commanded to uncover her

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

face, (for she was covered) that they might be filled with her beauty.”¹⁶⁵ In addition to being a symbol of modesty and virtue, the veil also indicated a woman’s married status and subordination to her husband.¹⁶⁶ Men were not supposed to look at married women, converse with women in public, or even give a woman a greeting when they passed on the street; if a man approached a veiled woman, he would be risking grave penalties.¹⁶⁷ Rabbinic legal tradition in Berakoth 4,36 and Mishnah Aboth 1,5 stated only men could speak in public. Even if a man and woman were husband and wife they were not to speak on the street if they wandered out together.¹⁶⁸ In the Mishna Ketuboth it was regarded as an inviolable Jewish custom that women should not be seen in the streets with uncovered hair (Ket. vii. 6).¹⁶⁹ Therefore, for a woman, even an elderly widow, to approach a crucifixion victim in front of her own house and offer him her veil would have been considered outside of the societal norm. Were the Medieval creators of this tradition aware of any of the Biblical and rabbinic statements on veils? Perhaps if they were learned men, especially of Bible and Talmud study; however, it is impossible to know with certainty.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁵ Bronner, Leila Leah. (1993). From Veil to Wig: Jewish Women’s Hair Covering. *The Free Library*. (2014). Retrieved Aug 07 2016 from

<http://www.thefreelibrary.com/From+veil+to+wig%3a+Jewish+women%27s+hair+covering.-a014873627>

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Tariq, Tahmina. (2013). Let Modesty Be Her Raiment: The Classical Context of Ancient-Christian Veiling. *Implicit Religion*, Vol. 16, No. 4, Equinox Publishing Ltd.

¹⁶⁸ Getty-Sullivan, Mary Ann. (2001). *Women in the New Testament*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, p. 64.

¹⁶⁹ <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/7432-head-covering-of>

¹⁷⁰ What would have the material of the veil most likely have been during the first century CE? The two most common choices for cloth would have been either wool or linen. According to Rousseau and Arav: *Wool and shearing are frequently mentioned in the Hebrew Bible: lambs provided clothing (Prov. 27:26); women bought wool and flax (Prov. 31:13); a poor man could warm himself in the fleece of a rich man’s sheep (Job 31:20); every year the king of Moab gave to the king of Israel a tribute of 100,000 lambs and the wool of as many rams (2 Kings 3:4); the first fleece of the sheep was offered to the priests (Deut. 18:4)*. Flax was the most important fiber and was grown for the production of fine linen in the area. Both Exodus 28:8 and Leviticus 6:10 record priests’ garments were made out of fine linen. Rahab hid the spies

Religious tradition considers the image on Veronica's Veil to be an *archeipoiition*; the term describes an image of miraculous origin, one made "without human hands."¹⁷¹ The image on Veronica's Veil became known as the 'True Image' because through its miraculous creation it became "a rare, genuine likeness of Christ."¹⁷² Veronica's Veil, and the Image of Edessa, became important relics because people considered possession of the 'True Image' to confirm divine approbation for emperors and church patriarchs.¹⁷³ The True Image could legitimize a civil ruler's authority or authorize new religious practices that a bishop wanted to institute.¹⁷⁴

Given this history, it is rather easy to see why the story of Veronica's Veil was incorporated into the Via Dolorosa about the time of the mid-thirteenth century even though, as Benoit states, "this story is less well authenticated."¹⁷⁵ The inclusion of the creation of the True Image on Veronica's Veil at Station 6 on the Via Dolorosa would have lent further credence to the factors of political importance and mysticism. As with the other variable stations, there is no cohesive historical narrative as to why this station

from Joshua among the harvested stalks of flax on her roof that had been set out to dry as stated in Joshua 2:6. While no archaeological evidence is possible regarding the event that took place at Station 6, there is archaeology evidence recording the farming of flax. The Gezer Calendar, found at Gezer during an archaeological excavation, dates to the 10th Century BCE and mentions the time of the "hoeing up for flax" in the agricultural year. While the cultivation of flax remained strong into the fourth century CE, Rousseau and Arav believe wool was far more common than linen based on the number of loom weights, spindle whorls, dye vats, and other artifacts used in the textile production of wool that have been found during archaeological excavations. Rousseau, John, J. and Rami Arav. (1995). *Jesus and His World: An Archaeological and Cultural Dictionary*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, p. 314.

¹⁷¹ Rousseau and Arav. *Jesus and His World: An Archaeological and Cultural Dictionary*, p. 316.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Hayes, *Miracles: An Encyclopedia of People, Places, and Supernatural Events from Antiquity to the Present*, p. 411.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Benoit, *The Passion and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, p. 166.

is located in the Church of the Holy Face. Since this story is a late accretion to tradition and is most probably an amalgam of several stories and therefore most probably exists more in the realm of legend rather than actual event.

Chapter 7

Station 8: Jesus Speaks to the Women.

A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and your children. For the days are surely coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breast that never nursed.’ Then they will begin to say to the mountains ‘Fall on us’; and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’¹⁷⁶ For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry? Luke 23:27-31.

Station 8 is traditionally located across the market street and up the steps of Aqabat al-Khanqah (See Figures 2 and 22). A cross and the Greek inscription "IC XC NIKA" on the wall of the Greek Orthodox Monastery of St. Charalambos mark the place where Jesus consoled the lamenting women of Jerusalem¹⁷⁷ (See Figure 21).



Figure 21. Close up of the Greek Inscription of Nika on Station 8 of the Via Dolorosa.

¹⁷⁶ Here Jesus quotes Prophet Hosea from the Hebrew Bible, Hosea 10:8, “The high place of Aven [another name for Bethel], the sin of Israel will be destroyed. Thorn and thistle shall grow up on their altars. They shall say to the mountains, Cover us, and to the hills, Fall on us.”

¹⁷⁷ IC XC NIKA translates as “Jesus Christ conquers.”



Figure 22 The Location of Station 8 on the Via Dolorosa, note Greek inscription in center of photo.

Only the Gospel of Luke mentions the incident that became the eighth station on the Via Dolorosa. This is perhaps the most perplexing station as one wonders why Jesus reportedly addressed this group of women.¹⁷⁸ Also, who or what the Daughters of

¹⁷⁸ This is not unsurprising since Luke's Jesus ministers to the marginalized to the marginalized including and especially women.

Jerusalem actually are or represent “remains an abstraction.”¹⁷⁹ The use of the term ‘daughter’ by Jesus was a term of affection which indicated he saw the women as part of the Nation of Israel.¹⁸⁰ The term ‘Daughters of Jerusalem’ is mentioned not only in Luke, but also in the Song of Songs. Jewish tradition reads the allegory of the relationship talked about in the Song of Songs (Song of Solomon 1:5, 2:7, 3:5, and 3:10-11, 5:8, 5:16) as the relationship between God and Israel.¹⁸¹ But there are different interpretations of whom or what the ‘Daughters of Jerusalem’ represent in the Song of Songs. Marvin Sweeney interprets the Daughters of Jerusalem to whom the ‘bride’ gives advice as simply the bride’s handmaids.¹⁸² Fourteenth Century Jewish Scholar Levi ben Gershom believes that ‘Jerusalem’ in the Song of Songs is a man and that the ‘Daughters of Jerusalem’ are the faculties of a man’s soul.¹⁸³ Othmar Keel writes the:

*‘Daughters’ is used to imply belonging; they are residents of Jerusalem....[and] are used in the Song as the stereotypical public...because these spoiled, idle, and curious women of the capital city were said to be versed in matters of love and beauty (like the Parisians in 19th century fiction).*¹⁸⁴

Marion Soards maintains that the passage in Luke “has no parallel in other known literature.”¹⁸⁵ She points out that scholars regard the text in three different ways: some

¹⁷⁹ *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 5, (Ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld). Nashville: Abingdon Press, p. 988.

¹⁸⁰ Fitzmyer, Joseph. (1985). *The Anchor Bible Series: The Gospel According to Luke I-IX*. NY: Doubleday, p. 747.

¹⁸¹ Sweeney, Marvin A. (2011). *Tanak: A Theological and Critical Introduction to the Jewish Bible*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, p. 426.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ ben Gershom, Levi (Gersonides). (1998). *Commentary of the Song of Songs*. (Translated from 14th Century writings) (Trans. Menachem Kellner). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, p. 12.

¹⁸⁴ Keel, Othmar. (1994). *The Song of Songs: A Continental Commentary*. (Trans. Frederick J. Gaiser). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, p. 49.

¹⁸⁵ Soards, Marion, L. (1987). Tradition, Composition, and Theology in Jesus’ Speech to the “Daughters of Jerusalem” (Luke 23, 26-32). *Biblica*, Vol. 68, No. 2. Gregorian Biblical Press, p. 232.

regard it as history, others as fiction, and still others “something in between these extremes.”¹⁸⁶ Soards states:

*The women are said to prove both the historical veracity of the narrative and that Luke freely invented this scene, or they are thought to illustrate the early Christian belief that OT [Old Testament – Hebrew Bible] prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus, or they are said to belong to the picture of a martyr account and thus to reveal Luke’s understanding of the death of Jesus, or they are held to symbolize Jerusalem whose fate in A.D. 70 is interpreted in the address of Jesus.*¹⁸⁷

Joseph Fitzmyer states the ‘Daughters of Jerusalem’ are clearly distinguished from the ‘Women of Galilee.’¹⁸⁸ The ‘Women of Galilee’ are a group of women who have been with Jesus since the beginning of his ministry; “they have heard his words and seen his actions.”¹⁸⁹ In other words, they are his disciples. The ‘Daughters of Jerusalem’ are not his disciples; in fact, there is no indication they know who Jesus is. These women “act as the replacement for the professional mourners prescribed in Jewish custom to accompany a corpse to burial.”¹⁹⁰ It was a custom in the first century CE to hire professional mourners to assist in the public expression of grief.¹⁹¹ Professional mourners were often women and they preceded the family and community members during the procession to the gravesite.¹⁹² If the Daughters of Jerusalem were professional mourners and since this station is close to Golgotha, it could be possible that the traditional location chosen for this station is fairly accurate.

¹⁸⁶ Soards, Tradition, Composition, and Theology in Jesus’ Speech to the “Daughters of Jerusalem”, p. 222.

¹⁸⁷ Soards, Tradition, Composition, and Theology in Jesus’ Speech to the “Daughters of Jerusalem”, p. 223.

¹⁸⁸ Fitzmyer, *The Anchor Bible Series: The Gospel According to Luke I-IX*, p. 742.

¹⁸⁹ Getty-Sullivan, *Women in the New Testament*, p. 166.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ward, Kaari (Ed.). (1987). *Jesus and His Times*. Pleasantville, NY: The Reader’s Digest Association, Inc., p. 116.

¹⁹² Marcus, Ivan, G. (2004). *The Jewish Life Cycle: Rites of Passage from Biblical to Modern Times*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, p. 209-210.

One way scholars interpret the women's sorrow is as 'certainly' for an innocent teacher, seer, or rabbi unjustly tried and condemned.¹⁹³ However, another interpretation of this Gospel and station by scholars addresses the falseness of the women's sorrow. Theologians interpret the verses to mean Jesus wants nothing to do with religious 'appearances' and he dismisses the women's falseness by telling them to cry for themselves and their children.¹⁹⁴

There were aristocratic ladies of Jerusalem who had a reputation for being very pampered; scribes recorded the measures of wine allotted to the widow of a high priest and the daughter-in-law of a VIP.¹⁹⁵ Joachim Jeremais describes a custom among the leading women of Jerusalem that they provided a narcotic wine mixed with myrrh to those being led out to be executed. In the Gospels it is recorded that Jesus is offered a sponge soaked with wine mixed with myrrh on a stick. Jeremais speculates that it could have been "the 'daughters of Jerusalem' who accompanied Jesus to his crucifixion....who provided the wine mingled with myrrh offered to Jesus."¹⁹⁶

This station incorporates the unusual theme of a first century Rabbi directly addressing women.¹⁹⁷ In the time of Jesus, there existed an overwhelmingly patriarchal

¹⁹³ Thurston, Bonnie. (1998). *Women in the New Testament: Questions and Commentary*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, p. 113.

¹⁹⁴ <http://www.internetmonk.com/archive/the-eighth-station-jesus-meets-the-women-of-jerusalem>.

Most theologians believe that in this passage, Jesus is prophesizing the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE. Since the Gospel of Luke is believed to have been written between the years 70 - 80 CE, the destruction would have been current news for the writer of Luke.

¹⁹⁵ Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An Investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament Period*, p. 95.

¹⁹⁶ Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An Investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament Period*, p. 95n.

¹⁹⁷ The Gospel of Luke not only has women more often, but a specific kind of woman. "They are women without husbands, female heads of household and business-owners, or daughters faced with circumstances their parents could not be expected to understand... genuinely independent women."

society.¹⁹⁸ A woman's movements were subject to the consent of the senior man in the family, be it her father before marriage, or her husband after.¹⁹⁹ While Jewish women were not as restricted in public appearance as Greek women, they did not have the freedom of first century Roman women. Unwed women were not supposed to leave their house without a male relative.²⁰⁰ Therefore, it would have been highly unusual for a Jewish teacher to converse with a woman in a public place. Rabbinic law taught women were not to be saluted or spoken to in the streets, and not to be instructed in the law. Testimony by women in a court of law, at the time of Jesus, was considered unreliable.²⁰¹ There has been a theory batted about for some years that Luke was actually written by a woman; perhaps this could be why this is the only Gospel that includes this story?²⁰² It is impossible to know for certain at this point in time. Soards stresses that since "there is no similar information in any other known source to indicate literary dependence or the influence of oral tradition...to suggest that Luke depends on a pre-Lukan source...[the verse] *is most likely a Lukan composition.*"²⁰³ [Emphasis added.]

Meeting the Daughters of Jerusalem is the final "variable" station, as denoted by Thurston. Thurston states the station of the Daughters of Jerusalem is recorded in 29 Pilgrim Diaries. The earliest mention is Ricoldo in 1294.²⁰⁴ That diary, as 1380's Dublin

Cooper, Kate. (2013). *Band of Angels: The Forgotten World of Early Christian Women*. NY: The Overlook Press, p. 55.

¹⁹⁸ Isbouts, *In The Footsteps of Jesus: A Chronical of His Life and the Origins of Christianity*, p. 177.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ Cooper, *Band of Angels: The Forgotten World of Early Christian Women*, p. 45.

²⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁰³ Soards, Tradition, Composition, and Theology in Jesus' Speech to the "Daughters of Jerusalem", p. 230.

²⁰⁴ Dalman records that Ricoldus [sp] was a preaching friar from Monte Crucis. "He visited Jerusalem in order that the memory of Christ's sufferings might impress itself on the mind, and that the Blood of Christ, shed for our salvation, might become unto me strength and support to enable me to preach and to die for Him, who by His Death gave life to me. Hence it was important for him to tread the way on which

MS, records the Daughters of Jerusalem as coming before Jesus' Meeting with his Mother (Station 4) and Simon of Cyrene (Station 5). The 1384 Pilgrim Diary of Gucci does not mention the Station, nor does the 1391 Swinburn and Brigg. The Daughters are listed, whether directly after Simon of Cyrene, or concurrently with Simon of Cyrene, in 16 Pilgrim diaries.

- Pipinus - 1320
- Nompar de Caumont – 1419
- Johannes Polonus – 1422
- Breydenbach – 1483
- Dietrich von Schachten - 1491
- Guylforde - 1506
- Aranda - 1530
- Zuallardo - 1586
- Bernardino Amico – 1620
- Quaresmius - 1639
- Surius - 1646
- Parviller - 1656
- Nau – 1674
- Caccia - 1694
- Turpetin - 1716
- Francisco Jesus Maria – 1724

Five Pilgrim Diaries list the Daughters of Jerusalem as occurring after Jesus' Meeting with his Mother.

- Ogier d'Anglure – 1395
- Georg Pfintzing – 1436
- Fabri – 1480
- Francisco Suriano – 1484
- Harff -1496

In the 1700's, the Daughters of Jerusalem's station is more frequently mentioned after the Station of Veronica in these four Pilgrim Diaries:

Christ walked carrying the Cross, the stations of which he describes." Dalman, *Sacred Sites and Ways: Studies in the Topography of the Gospels*, p. 346.

- Hietling – 1713
- Myller – 1735
- Antonio do Sacramento – 1736
- Horn – 1744

However, Lochner, in 1438, records the Daughters of Jerusalem after Veronica, as does Wey in 1458.²⁰⁵

There is no archaeological evidence of this station. The literary evidence documenting who the Daughters of Jerusalem are and whom or what they represent is varied and wide-ranging. I believe that Luke intends the Daughters of Jerusalem to be professional mourners. As such, since the station is located fairly close to Golgotha and could have been along the path that Jesus trod, it may be one of the more accurate traditional locations geographically. Ironically, however, I think Station 8 is included in the Via Dolorosa to accentuate the theological argument to demonstrate that Jesus foresaw the destruction of Jerusalem.

²⁰⁵ Thurston, *The Stations of the Cross: an Account of their History and Devotional Purpose*, p. 59-60.

Chapter 8

Stations 10 - 14

Stations 10 through 14 are all traditionally located within the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. The Church is a sprawling complex divided by many rooms and areas controlled by different Christian factions. As Charles Coüasnon succinctly explains:

*When one talks of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, one is speaking not only of the Tomb of Christ, but of a whole group of religious buildings of Constantinian origin, enclosing the traditional sites of the Crucifixion and of the Sepulchre of Jesus.*²⁰⁶

This complex situation leads me to present the applicable archaeological evidence for Stations 10 through 14 *en masse* in the discussion of Station 14. Station locations within the Church of the Holy Sepulchre are noted on the map in Figure 23 (See also Figure 2):

²⁰⁶ Coüasnon, Charles, O.P. (1974). *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem*. London: Oxford University Press, p. 1. Coüasnon was the architect of the Latin community in connection with the restoration work at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem in 1972.

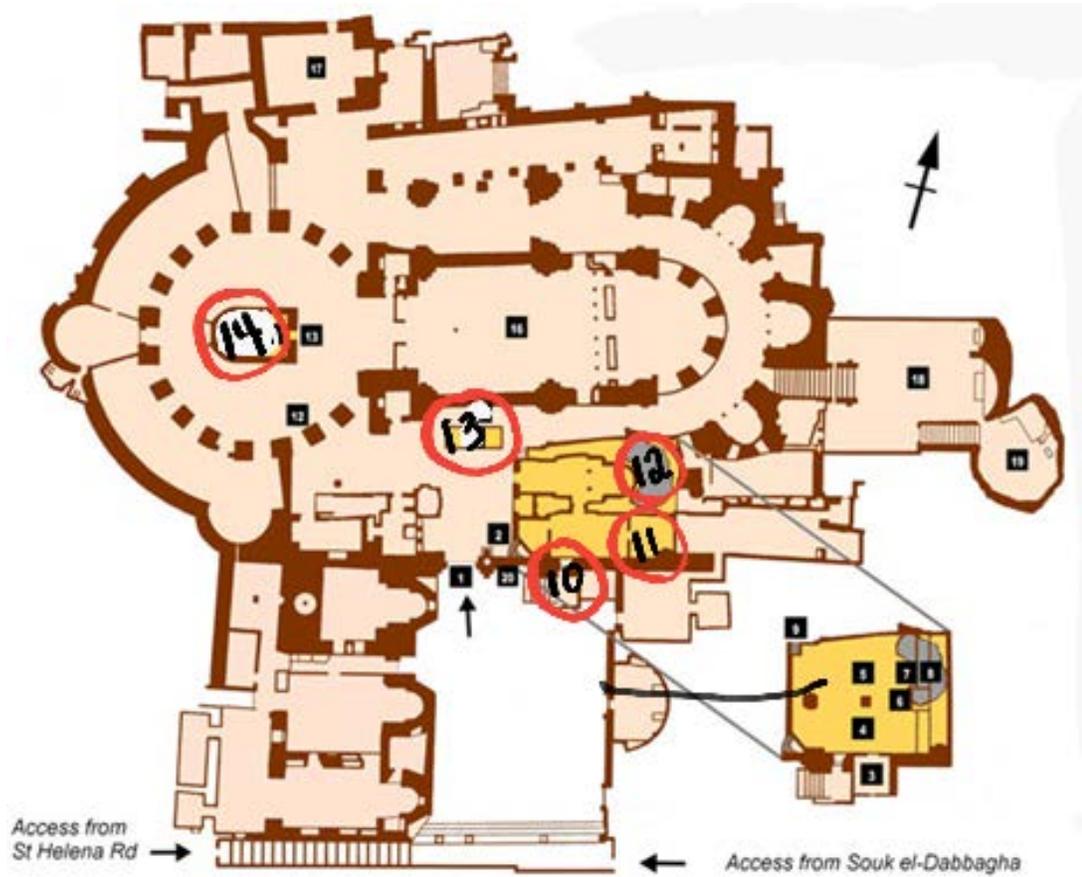


Figure 23. Floor Plan of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with Stations 10-14 marked in red.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁷ <http://www.seetheholyland.net/church-of-the-holy-sepulchre/>

Station 10: Jesus is Stripped of his Garments.

And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots. Matthew 27:35.

And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take. Mark 15:21.

Then Jesus said, “Father forgive them; for they know not what they are doing.” And the cast lots to divide his clothing. Luke 24:34.

So they said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it.” This was to fulfill what the scripture say, “they divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.” John 19:24.²⁰⁸

Station 10 is traditionally located in what is known as the Chapel of the Franks in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The stairs leading up to the chapel from the southern courtyard in front of the entrance to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre have been blocked since the time of the Crusaders (See Figure 24).

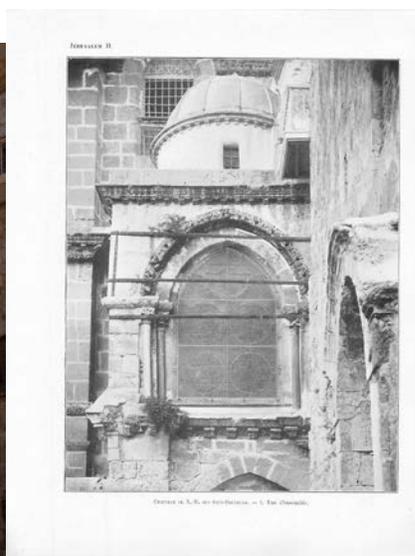


Figure 24. The photo on the left is the stairs leading up to the Station 10 which have been blocked since Crusader Times. The station is located directly on the inside of the door, called the Chapel of the Franks. The photo on the right is another view of the Chapel of the Franks from Vincent's *Jérusalem Recherches de Topographie, D'Archéologie et D'Histoire*, published in 1912. The page is one of a collection of loose plates included in Volume 2.

²⁰⁸ The note in NRSV refers to Psalm 22:18: “they divide my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.”

History of Interpretation

This station is founded upon the mention in all four Gospels. All four Gospels record a non-specific ‘*they*’ (presumably Roman soldiers) who stripped Jesus of his garments and then divided his clothes up by ‘casting lots’. While the Romans did not invent crucifixion, Crowder states they did standardize the practice by adding on additional ‘features’. “Some of the features they added [included] ... *stripping* and flogging *the offender...*” [Emphasis added].²⁰⁹ Magness notes that “male criminals routinely were stripped before being flogged and executed.”²¹⁰ Magness explains that in Roman Palestine:

*male nudity was accepted and expected in certain situations. Although stripping a criminal prior to flogging and execution was part of the process of humiliation and dehumanization, male nudity was not always associated with punishment or shameful circumstances.*²¹¹ [Perhaps this attitude lingered from the time of the Greco-Roman gymnasiums.]

There is literary corroboration that the Romans would strip the offender *prior* to execution. However, in the case of Jesus, it appears that this action was performed *after* he had already died. Rousseau and Arav believe this ‘out of sequence’ event occurred “out of respect for Jewish beliefs....the Romans in Palestine let their victims be clothed.”²¹²

Jesus’ Clothing

From the description of the crucifixion scene in John 19:23, it appears Jesus had on his person five articles of clothing:

²⁰⁹ Crowder, *Simon of Cyrene: A Case of Roman Conscriptio*, p. 48.

²¹⁰ Magness, Jodi. (2011). *Stone and Dung, Oil and Spit: Jewish Daily Life in the Time of Jesus*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdsman Publishing Co., pgs. 107-108.

²¹¹ Magness, *Stone and Dung, Oil and Spit: Jewish Daily Life in the Time of Jesus*, p. 108.

²¹² Rousseau and Arav, *Jesus and His World: An Archaeological and Cultural Dictionary*, p. 324.

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four shares, a share for each soldier. They also took his tunic, but the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top down.

Rousseau and Arav state the five pieces of clothing “would have been an outer garment, a tunic or cloak, a head cloth, a loin cloth, and a pair of sandals.”²¹³ According to John 19:23, Jesus’ tunic had no seam. A seamless tunic may have indicated an upper societal status of some of Jesus’ supporters since it was most likely donated to him and such a tunic appeared to be a rare possession.²¹⁴

*Normally a tunic was made of two square or rectangular sheets of the same width, sewn together to form a long piece. A slit was left in the seam for the head. The sides were also sewn together except at the top, where a hole was left for the arms. A more expensive type of tunic, probably worn by the High Priest [Josephus, Antiq. 3], was made of only one long piece of cloth, folded in two, with a hole cut in the middle for the head.*²¹⁵

The tunic may indeed have been a coveted piece of clothing because it is recorded in John 19:24 that the Roman soldiers did not tear the tunic into pieces but, instead, cast lots for the tunic and the other clothing.

Archaeological Evidence of Games of Chance

There are different interpretations by scholars of the meaning of the casting of lots.

Some scholars interpret the casting of lots as a way of decision making or divining.

Some scholars interpret the casting of lots more similar to gambling.²¹⁶ Either way, it is

²¹³ Rousseau and Arav, *Jesus and His World: An Archaeological and Cultural Dictionary*, p. 316.

²¹⁴ Rousseau and Arav, *Jesus and His World: An Archaeological and Cultural Dictionary*, p. 324-325.

²¹⁵ Rousseau and Arav, *Jesus and His World: An Archaeological and Cultural Dictionary*, p. 325.

²¹⁶ Schwartz, Joshua. (1998). “Gambling in Ancient Jewish Society and in the Graeco-Roman World”. *Jews in a Graeco-Roman World*. (Martin Goodman, Ed.) NY: Oxford University Press, p. 146. Gambling by Roman soldiers is corroborated by both literary history and archaeological evidence. According to Greek legend, gambling, or specifically ‘dicing’, was invented by the Lydians during the siege of Troy as a means of diverting their attention away from the suffering of their starvation. Gambling soon spread and became quite popular in Greek and Roman society. While today’s society attributes any gambling success to mathematical randomness, ancient cultures would often attribute gambling success to the gods. Thus, dicing became identified as a ‘pagan’ game which would have aroused opposition in Jewish society. In

unclear in the scholarly research how the casting of lots in a situation such as a crucifixion setting was determined. Could the casting of lots have involved use of knuckle bones similar to dice? Astragalae have been found in the “area of the Antonia Fortress in Jerusalem most likely belonged to Roman soldiers who had served there or in the vicinity.”²¹⁷ Astragalae were the knucklebones of animals, most commonly sheep or goats (See Figure 25).

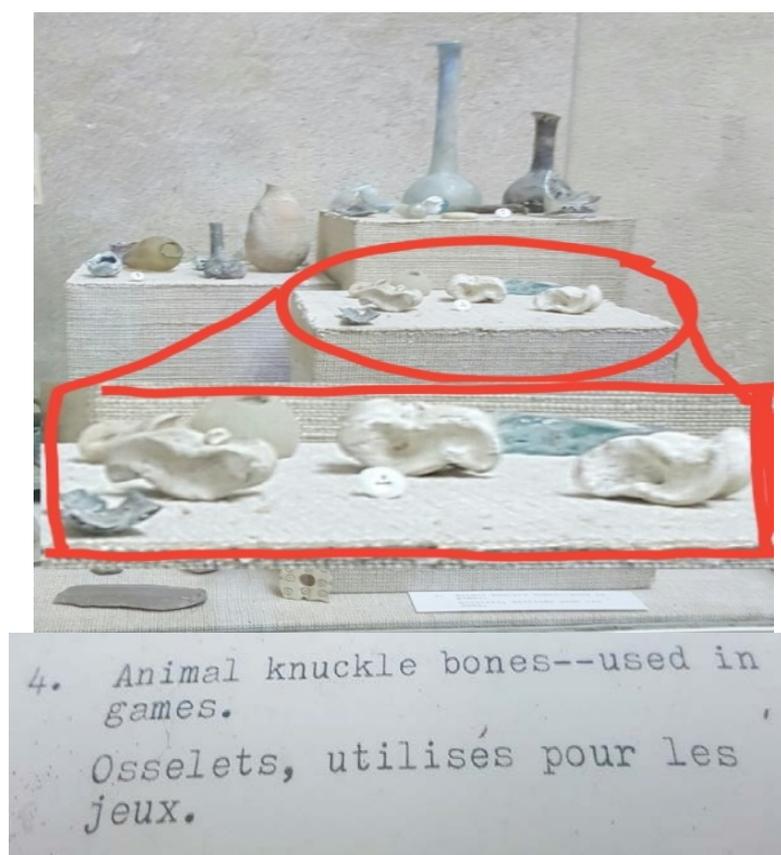


Figure 25. Astragalae from a display case in the Bible Lands Museum in Jerusalem, Israel.

in addition to being a pagan activity, gambling was most closely associated with taverns and brothels which was, as Joshua Schwartz notes, “not something about which rabbis....would have been happy.” There are two prohibitions against gamblers in the Mishnah. Mishnah R. Sh. 1:8 states that ‘dicers’ and ‘pigeon flyers’ (both terms connected with gambling) are ineligible to testify regarding the New Moon. Mishnah Sanh. 3:3 prohibits ‘dicers’ or ‘dice-players’ and ‘pigeon flyers’ from giving testimony in general. Schwartz states that a reference to the casting of lots by priests during the division of sacrificial meat listed in Mishnah Shab. 23:2 reflects the practice in late Second Temple times.

²¹⁷ Schwartz, “Gambling in Ancient Jewish Society and in the Graeco-Roman World”, p. 159.

Archaeological evidence of games of chance have been discovered in Jerusalem as well as other cities where Roman soldiers were known to have been stationed. Games played with dice were a favorite Roman gambling pastime. “Roman dice are well documented in archaeological finds. They were made of bone and were marked like modern ones.”²¹⁸ A number of dice dating to the Roman period were discovered in the Galilean city of Sepphoris, which is located three miles from what the New Testament records as Jesus’ hometown of Nazareth.²¹⁹

Gaming boards from the first century CE have also been found in two Roman built cities, Sepphoris and Aelia Capitolina. When I visited Sepphoris in 2015, I observed an ancient engraving of a Twelve Men’s Morris gambling board game scratched onto the surface of the Decumanus, thought by scholars to have been etched by Roman soldiers.²²⁰

²¹⁸ Rousseau and Arav, *Jesus and His World: An Archaeological and Cultural Dictionary*, p. 326.

²¹⁹ Schwartz, “Gambling in Ancient Jewish Society and in the Graeco-Roman World”, p. 161. Some scholars believe Jesus and his father Joseph may have helped build the city of Sepphoris as they were trained artisans who lived within walking distance.

²²⁰ The decumanus maximus was the major east-west road of a Roman camp or city.



Figure 26. Author's photograph of Roman soldiers' gambling board game of 12 Men's Morris at Sepphoris dating from approximately 200 CE.

Avigad found gaming boards on the Cardo in Jerusalem from the time of Aelia Capitolina when he excavated the Jewish Quarter in the Old City.



Figure 27. Author's photograph of the remains of the excavated Cardo in Jerusalem from the time of Aelia Capitolina.

The existence of gambling dating to the time of Jesus has been confirmed by archaeological evidence. Whether or not this evidence substantiates any corroboration of the casting of lots cannot be verified. However, the literary corroboration of the custom of stripping crucifixion victims lends an air of authenticity to the activities described in Station 10. Whether these activities occurred in the location of the Chapel of the Franks designated as Station 10 located in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre cannot be proven nor disproven by the existing evidence, however the station is in very close proximity to the crucifixion site and, therefore, could quite possibly be fairly accurate geographically.

Station 11: Jesus is Nailed to the Cross/Jesus is Crucified.

And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots. Matthew 27:35.

It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. Mark 15:25.

When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Luke 23:33.

There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. John 19:18.

Station 11 is traditionally located in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the Chapel of the Nailing to the Cross (See Figure 28). The Shrine in the Chapel marks the place where tradition holds that Jesus was nailed to the Cross within sight of His Mother according to Matthew 27:55-56 and John 19:25. This station is often referred to as 'Golgotha' which means 'the place of the skull' in Aramaic. (In Latin, the name is *Calvaria*, or also commonly, Calvary.)



Figure 28. Author's Photo of the Shrine located in the Chapel of the Nailing to the Cross which is where Station 11 is located in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Crucifixion in the Literary Record

Crucifixion has been described as a particularly heinous execution method. Crowder states:

*Although crucifixion originated with the Persians, the Romans were notorious for subjecting rebellious slaves and seditious provincials to this type of death. It was the most wretched of deaths, reserved for the lowest classes and the most heinous crimes. Some of the features [the Romans] added including hanging a placard describing the crime around the prisoner's neck, stripping and flogging the offender, affixing the crossbar with ropes or nails to the prisoner's arms and attaching the condemned's feet to the cross with nails or rope. The cross was then erected for public display, and death resulted from exposure, thirst, exhaustion and trauma.*²²¹

Crucifixion is known to have occurred before and after the time of Jesus. "Mass crucifixions in Judea are mentioned under Alexander Janneus."²²² In addition to Alexander Janneus in 103-76 BCE, there are other literary mentions of crucifixions:²²³

- Darius the Great crucified Babylonian rebels
- Alexander the Great crucified Tyrians
- The Carthaginians crucified insubordinate generals
- Romans crucified the Spartacus slaves who revolted.

In fact, by the time of the slave revolts led by Spartacus between 73-71 BCE, the Romans had become so efficient at crucifixion that they crucified 6,000 victims and lined the roads from Rome to Capua with crosses, a distance of 119 miles.²²⁴ There exists abundant literary evidence of crucifixion in the Roman period. Examples include the

²²¹ Crowder, *Simon of Cyrene: A Case of Roman Conscription*, p. 48.

²²² Fitzmyer, Joseph. (1978). "Crucifixion in Ancient Palestine, Qumran Literature, and the New Testament." *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, Vol 40, No. 4, p. 495.

²²³ Montefiore, Simon Sebag. (2011) *Jerusalem, the Biography*. NY: Alfred A. Knopf, p. 112n.

²²⁴ Gibson and McKinley, *Finding Jesus: Faith, Fact, Forgery. Six Holy Objects That Tell the Remarkable Story of the Gospels*, p. 175.

references to crucifixion mentioned by Josephus and the two mentions in the Qumran texts, 4QpNah and 11QTemple.²²⁵

Crucifixion during the first century CE was a Roman method of execution; not a Jewish method.²²⁶ The traditional method of execution preferred by Jews during the time of Jesus was stoning, with burning, beheading, and strangulation used as well.²²⁷

Romans adopted crucifixion as an “official punishment for non-Romans for certain legally limited transgressions at the end of the first century BCE.”²²⁸ They usually reserved the sentence of crucifixion for “provincials, criminals, and slaves.”²²⁹ Roman citizens were usually exempt from crucifixion, except for instances of high treason or crimes against the state.²³⁰ John Dominic Crossan and Jonathan Reed agree that “crucifixion was not the punishment of citizens and aristocrats, but of slaves and servants, peasants and bandits.”²³¹ According to Luke 23:2, Jesus is accused of perverting the Nation of Israel, forbidding the payment of the taxes to Caesar, and also of blasphemy by reportedly saying he was the Messiah or the King of the Jews.

There is a lack of reported crucifixions in Jerusalem under the reign of Herod the Great in 37-4 BCE; this was probably not because Herod was a lenient and merciful ruler but, instead, because Herod wanted to avoid “upsetting Jewish sensibilities.”²³² Josephus described the crucifixion of Jews after the time of Jesus in 70 CE during the fall of Jerusalem:

²²⁵ Rousseau and Arav, *Jesus and His World: An Archaeological and Cultural Dictionary*, p. 76.

²²⁶ Gibson, *The Final Days of Jesus: The Archaeological Evidence*, p. 90.

²²⁷ Gibson, *The Final Days of Jesus: The Archaeological Evidence*, p. 108.

²²⁸ Tzaferis, Vassilios. (1985). “Crucifixion: The Archaeological Evidence.” *Biblical Archaeology Review*, Vol. XI, No. 1, Jan/Feb 1985, p. 48.

²²⁹ Zugibe, *The Crucifixion of Jesus: A Forensic Inquiry*, p. 55.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Crossan, John Dominic and Jonathan L. Reed. (2001). *Excavating Jesus: Beneath the Stones, Behind the Texts*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, p. 289.

²³² Gibson, *The Final Days of Jesus: The Archaeological Evidence*, p. 108.

*The soldiers out of rage and hatred amused themselves by nailing their prisoners in different postures; and so great was their number that space could not be found for the crosses nor crosses for the bodies.*²³³

Crucifixions were carried out by the Romans according to certain rules and crucifixion “was initiated methodically with utmost precision.”²³⁴ David Gibson notes that there were teams comprised of specially trained Roman soldiers who carried out the crucifixions. A team was known a *quaternion* and comprised of five members: four soldiers and their leader, a centurion, known as the *exactor mortis*.²³⁵ Jesus had interactions with Roman soldiers earlier than his crucifixion, however, these soldiers are probably not the same ones tasked with the implementation of the crucifixion. Matthew 27:26, Mark 15:15, Luke 23:25, and John 19:16 all state that Pilate “handed over” Jesus to ‘them’ to be crucified. It is inferred that the ‘them’ would be the Roman soldiers who were either in charge of crucifixion or they took them to the quaternion that were. As noted in Station 10, Jesus’ clothes were split four ways. Most likely, the centurion did not take part in the casting lots as the men under his command would have. The centurion is mentioned specifically in Matthew 27:54, Mark 15:39, and Luke 23:47 immediately after the death of Jesus on the cross because, according to the Gospels, this battle hardened, crucifixion specialist declares of Jesus, “Truly this man was God’s son!”²³⁶

Vassilios Tzaferis states crucifixion was sanctioned “by special persons authorized by the Roman courts.”²³⁷ Tzaferis continues:²³⁸

²³³ Fitzmyer, “Crucifixion in Ancient Palestine, Qumran Literature, and the New Testament”, p. 498.

²³⁴ Zugibe, *The Crucifixion of Jesus: A Forensic Inquiry*, p. 55.

²³⁵ Gibson and McKinley, *Finding Jesus: Faith, Fact, Forgery. Six Holy Objects That Tell the Remarkable Story of the Gospels*, p. 175.

²³⁶ Mark 15:40.

²³⁷ Tzaferis, “Crucifixion: The Archaeological Evidence”, p. 48.

Outside of Italy, the Roman procurators alone possessed authority to impose the death penalty. Thus when a local provincial court prescribed the death penalty, the consent of the Roman procurator had to be obtained in order to carry out the sentence.

Pontius Pilate, who was the supreme Roman authority in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus, would have had to be the person who ordered Jesus' execution by crucifixion. Josephus, in *Antiq.* XVIII.64, and Tacitus, in *Annales* XV.44.3, both corroborate the sentence was carried out by Pilate.

The Romans preferred to hold their crucifixions in a geographically prominent area; this method ensured more people saw the executions and it would hopefully act as a deterrent against criminal activities or insurrection. The practice of crucifying victims on a high point was substantiated by Ute Wagner-Lux of the German Protestant Institute of Archaeology (GPIA) who concluded after his excavation under the Church of the Redeemer, that:

*Golgotha was probably at a high elevation that was greatly visible as mentioned in Mark 15:40, Matthew 27:55, and Luke 23:49. The difference in height between the "garden" stratum and Golgotha in the Holy Sepulchre is considerable.*²³⁹

See the topographical chart/map in Figure 29.

²³⁸ Zugibe, *The Crucifixion of Jesus: A Forensic Inquiry*, p. 48.

²³⁹ Serr, Marcel and Dieter Vieweger. (2016). "Golgotha: Is the Holy Sepulchre Church Authentic?" *Biblical Archaeology Review*, May/June 2016, Vol. 42, No. 3, p. 66.

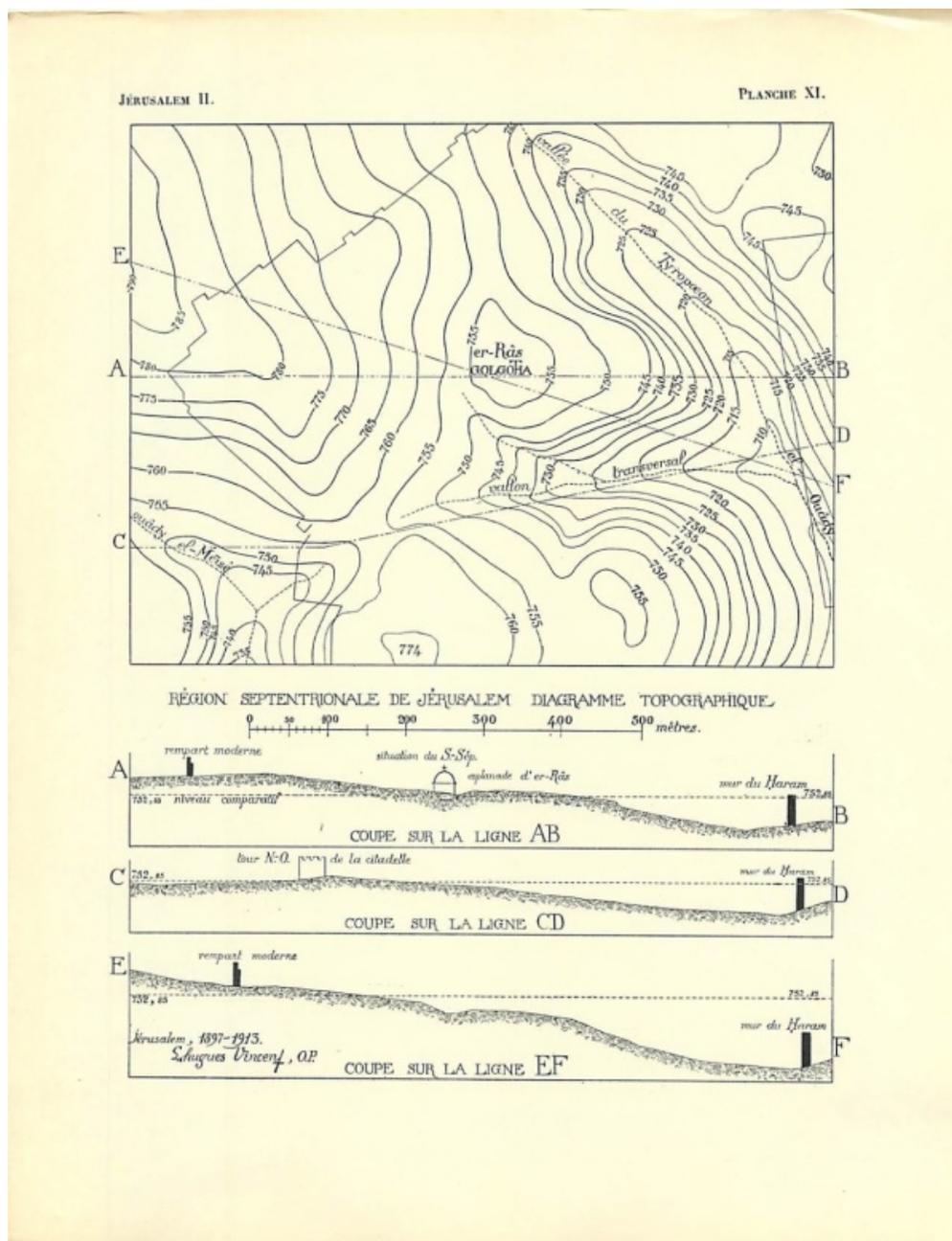


Figure 29. Vincent's topographical map of Golgotha from *Jérusalem Recherches de Topographie, D'Archéologie et D'Histoire*, Plate XI.

Crucifixion in the Archaeological Record

No archaeological evidence yet exists pertaining specifically to the crucifixion of Jesus. In fact, to date, there has only been one archaeological discovery of evidence of crucifixion. But what has been discovered corroborates what was recorded in the literary

record regarding the Roman practice. Tzaferis, digging in Giv'at ha-Mivtar in 1968, found three burial caves in a large necropolis dating from the Second Temple period.²⁴⁰ In the caves were five ossuaries dating to the first century CE. One of the ossuaries contained the skeletal remains of a young man, aged 24-28 years, old whose right heel bone was pierced by a seven inch long nail thought to be the type used for crucifixion (See Figure 30).

*The nail first had been driven through a small piece of olive wood, probably to prevent the foot from moving off the narrow head of the nail.... The nail in the heel, when driven into the hard olive wood of the upright beam, bent at its sharp end, forming a hook.*²⁴¹



Figure 30. The heel bone and nail from the ossuary of Yehohanan. (Photo credit: Courtesy the Israel Museum, photographer: Ilan Shtulman)²⁴²

Because the nail was bent when driven into the heel, it would have been quite difficult apparently to remove, so the Roman soldiers left it as is rather than expend the energy and time to remove it.

From the inscriptions in Hebrew on the side of the ossuary, it is believed that the young man was a Jew and his name was ‘Yehonathan ben [the son of] Hagkol’.

²⁴⁰ Tzaferis, “Crucifixion: The Archaeological Evidence”, p. 48.

²⁴¹ Rousseau and Arav, *Jesus and His World: An Archaeological and Cultural Dictionary*, p. 76.

²⁴² <http://www.timesofisrael.com/in-a-stone-box-a-rare-trace-of-crucifixion/>

Although it is not possible to know the crime that Yehonathan was accused of, Tzaferis wrote :

*Given the prominence and wealth of the family, it is unlikely that he was a common thief. More likely he was crucified for political crimes or seditious activities directed against the Roman authorities.*²⁴³

Yehonathan also had his both of his legs shattered prior to death.²⁴⁴ The injury of his right tibia and his left shin bone eerily echo the action described in John 19:32:

Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. [The breaking of the legs was to hurry the victim's death. Since Jesus had already died, it was unnecessary to perform the procedure on him.]

The archaeological discovery of the heel with the nail demonstrated that crucifixion victims were not always buried in a mass grave, left on the cross to rot, or left out for carrion as previously documented in literary sources.²⁴⁵ This crucifixion victim was buried in his family tomb, illustrating that it was possible for other crucifixion victims, such as Jesus, to be buried in a tomb. In my discussion of Station 13, I describe the tomb site where Jesus is traditionally thought to have been buried.

Perhaps as more archaeological evidence of crucifixion is discovered, more scholarly discussion can take place. But for now, "Beyond the heel-bone, there are only texts."²⁴⁶

²⁴³ Tzaferis, "Crucifixion: The Archaeological Evidence", p. 53.

²⁴⁴ Fitzmyer, "Crucifixion in Ancient Palestine, Qumran Literature, and the New Testament", p. 508.

²⁴⁵ Crossan and Reed, *Excavating Jesus: Beneath the Stones, Behind the Texts*, p. 289.

²⁴⁶ Samuelsson, *Crucifixion in Antiquity: An Inquiry into the Background and Significance of the New Testament Terminology of Crucifixion*, p. 297.

Station 12: Jesus Dies on the Cross.

From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "This man is calling for Elijah." At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. Matthew 27:45-50.

When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At three o'clock, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani" which mean, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "Listen, he is calling for Elijah." And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see if Elijah will come to take him down." Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. Mark 15:33-37.

It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, while the sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Having said this, he breathed his last. Luke 23:44-46.

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), "I am thirsty." A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. John 19:28-30.

Station 12 consists of the traditional Rock of Golgotha on which it is said the cross upon which Jesus died had stood. Matthew 27:33, Mark 15:22, and John 19:17 all mention Golgotha. Luke 23:33 simply refers to the place of crucifixion as the Place of the Skull. Under the altar pictured, there is a small, round opening approximately six inches in diameter in the silver covering through which one can insert their hand up to the elbow to touch the Rock of Golgotha. In the bedrock that lies under the altar there is a large rift that, according to tradition, was caused by the earthquake that occurred the moment Jesus died (See Figure 31).



Figure 31. Note the altar in Station 12 in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre under which the monk is praying. Under this altar is located the hole through which the bedrock can be reached.²⁴⁷

History of Interpretation

Without the death of Jesus on the cross, there would be no Christianity. However in the very earliest beginnings of Christianity, the cross held a negative connotation because it represented an Imperial Authority's power to crucify.²⁴⁸ However, by the time of Mark's Gospel, believed to have been written between 65 - 70 CE, the cross had begun to emerge as a symbol for life over death.²⁴⁹ As the story of Jesus dying on the cross began to spread, the motif of his hanging on the cross became the ultimate symbol of Christianity.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁷ <http://carta-jerusalem.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Via-Dolorosa-12th-Station.jpg>

²⁴⁸ Borg and Crossan, *The Last Week: What the Gospels Really Teach about Jesus's Final Days in Jerusalem*, p. 28.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁰ The Catholic Church's crosses, referred to as crucifixes, have Jesus hanging on the cross while Protestant Churches use the plain cross as their symbol of Christ.

Literary Sources and a Biological Study

Literary sources and discussions of Jesus dying on the cross are numerous with most written much later than the actual event. Jesus' Apostles and disciples carried on the Oral Traditions before the first writings. There is a theory that there was one source of Jesus' sayings written down in 50 CE which is known as the "Q" document.²⁵¹ The earliest documented writings are the Gospels, with Mark being the earliest of these.²⁵² The writings of Paul of Tarsus, known as the Pauline Epistles, were sent by Paul to early Christian churches and date to 57-63 CE.²⁵³

"Crucifixion, said Josephus, was 'the most miserable death'".²⁵⁴ The reasons for this description are the length of time it took victims to die and the painful position they were placed in prior to death. Dr. Frederick Zugibe, a medical doctor, conducted a study of a crucifixion basing his hypothesis on the descriptions of Jesus' crucifixion in the Gospels and crucifixions accounts in other non-New Testament literary sources. Dr. Zugibe found as he performed his forensic reconstruction that he could disprove asphyxiation or myocardial infarction as the cause of death. He theorizes that Jesus died as a result of both traumatic and hypovolemic shock.

No archaeological evidence specific to Jesus dying on the cross exists. However, interestingly, there is literary evidence of sponges which are referred to in Mark 15:36 (above). Sponges dipped in wine and mixed with myrrh were sometimes offered to those being led out to be crucified. Myrrh has been used to alleviate pain, among other uses,

²⁵¹ Dunn, James. (2003). *Christianity in the Making Volume 1: Jesus Remembered*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, p. 159.

²⁵² See dates outlined on page 2.

²⁵³ Tabor, James, D. (2012). *Paul and Jesus: How the Apostle Transformed Christianity*. NY: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, p. 3.

²⁵⁴ Montefiore, *Jerusalem, the Biography*, p. 112.

and when used for pain, is applied orally.²⁵⁵ As mentioned in Chapter 7, Jeremais speculates that it may have been “the ‘daughters of Jerusalem’ who accompanied Jesus to his crucifixion....who provided the wine mingled with myrrh offered to Jesus”.²⁵⁶ However, as Danny Herman of Hebrew University pointed out during our class of “Archaeology of the New Testament” in the Summer of 2015, there are literary sources that mention Romans used sponges attached to sticks or reeds to cleanse themselves after using the restroom, similar to today’s use of toilet paper,²⁵⁷ so it may have been the Romans soldiers who offered Jesus wine on the sponge as an insult and torment. In reading this particular verse again, with this knowledge in mind, it appears to me that it was the later as the Roman soldiers do not appear to be the type to soothe a dying victim.

The Gospel of John refers specifically to the sponge being placed on a branch of hyssop.²⁵⁸ Some theologians interpret this mention as a reference back to the instructions of Passover in Exodus 12:21-22 indicating the use of hyssop represented that Jesus was the Passover Lamb to be slaughtered.²⁵⁹

Does Station 12 mark the actual crucifixion spot? It is on a high point illustrated in Figure 29. But more on the archaeology of the location in the discussion on Station 14.

²⁵⁵ WebMD. <http://www.webmd.com/vitamins-supplements/ingredientmono-570-myrh.aspx?activeingredientid=570&activeingredientname=myrh>

²⁵⁶ Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An Investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament Period*, p. 95n.

²⁵⁷ Koloski-Ostrow, Ann Olga. (2015). *The Archaeology of Sanitation in Roman Italy: Toilets, Sewers, and Sanitation*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, p. 123. And author’s notes from Summer 2015 class “Archaeology of the New Testament” at Hebrew University.

²⁵⁸ Hyssop was a plant that grew practically anywhere in the area of the Near East as the species as a whole is drought resistant.

²⁵⁹ Exodus 12:21-22: Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go, select lambs for your families, and slaughter the Passover lamb. Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood in the basin. None of you shall go outside the door of your house until morning.”

Station 13: Jesus' Body is Taken Down from the Cross.

After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen clothes, according to the custom of the Jews. John 19:38-40.²⁶⁰

This station is traditionally located in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, directly upon entering the church from the southern courtyard. Jesus' body is traditionally said to have been laid upon the Stone of Unction which is directly inside the entrance to the church (See Figures 23 and 32).



Figure 32. Author's Photo: Stone of Unction in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre where tradition holds that Jesus' body was laid upon for preparation for the Tomb.

²⁶⁰ The New Oxford Annotated Bible notes that these pounds were Roman pounds; "A hundred (Roman) pounds, about 34 kg (75lb)". *The New Oxford Annotated Bible 3rd Edition*. (2001) (Ed. Michael Coogan). New York, NY: Oxford University Press, p. 180n.

Historical Interpretation

All four Gospels recount the story of Joseph of Arimathea who asked Pilate for the crucified body of Christ.²⁶¹ Once Jesus was taken down from the cross, the crucified body would have had to have been buried soon after death as is the Jewish custom.²⁶² Jesus would have been buried, but the question is where? There was a strong concept of family burial that existed in both the First and Second Temple Periods.²⁶³ However, there is no mention in the New Testament or early Christian period literature of Jesus being buried in the family tomb in Nazareth (if such a tomb existed) as one may expect according to tradition. Bodies were prepared for secondary burial by first being buried in a primary burial for a year which allowed the flesh to decay off the bones. After the year had passed, relatives would collect the bones and place them in a limestone ossuary.²⁶⁴

*Jewish burial practices of the late Second Temple period reveal a corresponding importance placed on both the individual and the family. This is reflected in the plan of the loculi tomb consisting of a chamber, several loculi and a standing pit, which provided for individual burial of ...ossuaries in separate loculi while at the same time allowing a family to be buried together in the same tomb.*²⁶⁵

Some of the ossuaries had the names of the deceased carved into them.²⁶⁶ The ossuaries found in the rock-cut tombs around Jerusalem had inscriptions in Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic illustrating these were the most important languages spoken during the time period.²⁶⁷

²⁶¹ Matthew 27:57-60, Mark 15:43-46, Luke 23:50-53, and John 19:38-41.

²⁶² Marcus, *The Jewish Life Cycle: Rites of Passage from Biblical to Modern Times*, p. 208.

²⁶³ Hachlili, Rachel. (1988). *Jewish Ornamented Ossuaries of the late Second Temple Period*, p. 5.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Ossuaries were discovered in tombs found around and on all sides of the Jerusalem hills.

²⁶⁷ Dalman, Gustaf. (1935). *Sacred Sites and Ways: Studies in the Topography of the Gospels*. (Trans. Paul P. Levertoff, DD). NY: MacMillian Co., p. 279.

Literary Sources on Jesus' Burial

Joseph of Arimathea asked for, and was granted permission, to take the body of Jesus from the Cross. But who was Joseph of Arimathea; was he an actual person? There is no evidence to date proving one way or the other. In the literary record, the Gospel of Mark refers to him as a member of the Sanhedrin (thus he was Jewish) and, possibly, a follower of Jesus. Outside of the Passion narratives, the New Testament does not mention Joseph of Arimathea at all. However, Joseph of Arimathea is mentioned in literary sources outside of the New Testament. He is written about in the fourth century *Gospel of Nicodemus*. Early church historians mention him as well, including Irenaeus (125-189), Hippolytus (170-236), Tertullian (155-222), and Eusebius (260-340).

Crossan theorizes that the Gospel writers derived the fictional person of Joseph of Arimathea from the non-canonical Gospel of Peter; however, Gerald O'Collins and Daniel Kendall refute Crossan's theory in their paper, "*Did Joseph of Arimathea Exist?*" O'Collins and Kendall state there are scholars, such as Stanley E. Porter, Joseph Fitzmyer, and Rudolf Bultmann, "who acknowledge a historically reliable core in the story of Joseph of Arimathea burying Jesus' body after the crucifixion."²⁶⁸ Murphy-O'Connor suggests Joseph of Arimathea was an addition to a more private text.²⁶⁹

My belief is that Joseph of Arimathea may have been an actual person for several reasons. The Gospel writers are very specific about him, that he is rich, he is a follower of Jesus and they name the town he is from, Arimathea, which is believed to be

²⁶⁸ O'Collins, Gerald and Daniel Kendall. (1994). "Did Joseph of Arimathea Exist?" *Biblica*, Vol. 75, No. 2, p. 236.

²⁶⁹ Murphy-O'Connor, Jerome. (2012). "The Authenticity of the Holy Sepulchre". *Keys to Jerusalem: Collected Essays*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, p. 164.

associated either with the town of Ramleh or Ramathaim-Zophim mentioned in 1 Samuel 19. Bultmann described the story of Joseph of Arimathea as “an historical account which creates no impression of being a legend.”²⁷⁰ The argument gets additionally strengthened since Joseph of Arimathea is mentioned in a non-New Testament literary source. Where the story gets stretched a little thin, and is most likely more in the realm of legend than fact, is during the Middle Ages when the poet Robert de Boron writes that Joseph of Arimathea became the ‘Keeper of the Holy Grail’ and traveled with the Holy Grail to Britain.²⁷¹ So while Joseph of Arimathea may have been an actual person, his story expanding into a legend makes it almost impossible to find a solution to the question of whether he actually existed.

The amount of myrrh and aloe mentioned in John 19:39 is very large amount; so large it would have been sufficient for a royal burial.²⁷² Myrrh is mentioned in the Hebrew Bible as a perfume and as an ingredient in the anointing oil for use in the Tabernacle.²⁷³ Myrrh is only mentioned one other time in the New Testament outside of the Passion narratives, in Matthew 2:11, and that is when it brought as a gift for the Christ Child. “While there is no evidence in the Bible [NT] for the use of myrrh as a burial perfume, there are in extra-biblical sources (e.g. Herodutus, *History* ii.86).”²⁷⁴

²⁷⁰ O’Collins and Kendall, “Did Joseph of Arimathea Exist?”, p. 236.

²⁷¹ De Boron, Robert. (1990). *Joseph of Arimathea: A Romance of the Grail*. (Translated from Medieval French by Jean Rogers.) London: Rudolf Steiner Press, p, 9.

²⁷² Kruse, Colin, G. (2003). *The Gospel According to John: An Introduction and Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., p. 374.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

The Legend of the True Cross

As for the cross itself, there are varying traditions of what happened to it once Jesus' body was removed from it.²⁷⁵ The Medieval version of the Legend of the True Cross has Queen Helena, Emperor Constantine's mother, finding it in Jerusalem in 325 CE.

Eusebius wrote that the apse of the Basilica built by Constantine is built directly over the site where the True Cross was found.²⁷⁶ Shimon Gibson agrees that the "basilica was constructed, not to honour the tomb, but to honour the 'saving sign' of the cross."²⁷⁷

Mentions of relics of the True Cross in literary sources are well attested to from the latter half of the fourth century CE onward.²⁷⁸ The earliest literary mention is by Cyril of Jerusalem written about 348 or 350 CE.²⁷⁹ Gregory of Nyssa recorded in 370 CE that at his sister's funeral she carried a fragment of the True Cross around her neck.²⁸⁰ Jerome mentions people worshiping in front of the True Cross in *Letter 47 to Desiderium*, written in 393 CE, and *Letter 108 to Eustochium*, written in 403 CE. The legend appears in 395 CE in the account *De Obitu Thodosii* (the funeral oration of Emperor Theodosius the Great) by Ambrose, Bishop of Milan.²⁸¹ Given all this literary tradition, Stephan Borgehammar states "The presence of a cross in Jerusalem, thought to be that of Christ,

²⁷⁵ The Medieval Poem "*The Story of the Holy Rood*" traces the wood that Jesus was crucified on from Adam, through Moses, and then David, who brought the tree to Jerusalem. Morris, Richard. (1871). *Legends of the Holy Rood: Symbols of the Passion and Cross-Poems In Old English of the Eleventh, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Centuries*. London: N. Trübner and Co., Paternoster Row, p. 62-86.

²⁷⁶ Drijvers, Jan Willem. (1992). *Helena Augusta: The Mother of Constantine the Great and the Legend of Her Finding the True Cross*. Leiden, The Netherlands: E.J. Brill, p. 88.

²⁷⁷ Gibson, Shimon, and Joan E. Taylor. (1994). *Beneath the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Jerusalem: The Archaeology and Early History of Traditional Golgotha*. London: Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund, p. 84.

²⁷⁸ Borgehammar, Stephan. (1991). *How the Holy Cross was Found: From Event to Medieval Legend*. Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell International, p. 87.

²⁷⁹ Drijvers, Jan Willem. (2004). *Cyril of Jerusalem: Bishop and City*. Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, p. 26.

²⁸⁰ Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross was Found: From Event to Medieval Legend*, p. 87.

²⁸¹ Nickell, *Relics of The Christ*, pg. 80.

is thus an indisputable fact from at least the 340's on."²⁸² Corbo stated that based upon his archaeological excavation, the cistern where Helena is said to have found the cross dates to the eleventh or twelfth century; so much later than the date Helena supposedly found the cross there.²⁸³

There is no archaeological evidence of this event. Any cross that may have been found cannot be proven to have been the actual cross upon which Jesus was crucified. In legal terms, it would be said the chain of custody and control of the cross was lost. Even Cyril of Jerusalem, the earliest writer to mention the True Cross, said the "whole earth is full of the relics of the Cross of Christ."²⁸⁴ Nevertheless, the Legend of the True Cross is important because it is the one of the most influential traditions factoring into the location of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

²⁸² Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross was Found: From Event to Medieval Legend*, p. 88.

²⁸³ Bahat, Dan. (1986). "Does the Holy Sepulchre Church Mark the Burial of Jesus?" *Biblical Archaeology Review*, 12:03, May/June 1986, p. 44.

²⁸⁴ Drijvers, Jan Willem. (2004). *Cyril of Jerusalem: Bishop and City*. Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, p. 26.

Station 14: Jesus' Body is Placed in the Tomb.

So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb, which had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away. Matthew 27:59-60.

Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. Mark 15:46.

This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it in a rock-hewn tomb where no one had ever been laid. Luke 23:52-53.

Now there was a garden in the place where Jesus was crucified, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. So because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and the sepulchre was nearby, they laid Jesus there. John 19:41-42.

The traditional Tomb of Jesus is located under the Edicule which is situated in the middle of the Anastasis of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (See Figures 2 and 33).



Figure 33. A view from the ceiling of the Anastasis of the Edicule which stands over the traditional Tomb of Christ.²⁸⁵

²⁸⁵ <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2017/03/jesus-christ-tomb-jerusalem-restored-collapse-tunnels/>

History of the Site

The Gospels tell us that Jesus was buried in a sepulchre that had never been used and that it was nearby the crucifixion site. This event would have been taken place between the years 30 and 33 CE.²⁸⁶ Ten years later, the place of his crucifixion was incorporated into the city of Jerusalem by the expansion of the Third Wall.²⁸⁷ The site then was buried under immense piles of rubble brought in by the Romans to level the area as Hadrian built his temple to Venus or Aphrodite on top of the site.²⁸⁸ Eusebius records that the Temple of Aphrodite had buried “the Savior’s cave”.²⁸⁹ Bahat confirms the location of the construction of Hadrian’s Temple:

On the site of the former seventh-century B.C. quarry and first-century B.C. orchard garden and cemetery, where the Holy Sepulchre Church was to be built, Hadrian constructed a giant raised platform – that is, a nearly rectangular retaining wall filled with earth. On top of the platform, he built a smaller raised podium, and on top of the podium, he built a temple. Although the remains of the Hadrianic wall enclosing the platform are scant, its existence is clear.²⁹⁰
[Emphasis added.]

The Hadrianic platform type enclosure appears to purposely attempt to duplicate the Herodian enclosure at the Temple Mount (both the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem were built on same type of raised platform); perhaps purposely to accent that the temple to the God of the Hebrews was now surpassed by the temple to Venus/Aphrodite.²⁹¹ This theory is boosted by the discovery of a portion of the

²⁸⁶ Biddle, Martin. (1999). *The Tomb of Christ*. Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing Ltd., p. 1.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Other literary sources describe it as a tribute to Venus. Simon Sebag Montefiore maintains it is a temple to Jupiter. Eusebius. (1999). *Life of Constantine*. (Averil Cameron and Stuart G. Hall, Translators). Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 132.

²⁹⁰ Bahat, Dan. (2006). *The Holy Sepulchre Church – Jesus’ Tomb*. In *Where Christianity was Born: A Collection from the Biblical Archaeology Society*. Hershel Shanks, (Ed.). Washington DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, p. 181.

²⁹¹ Bahat, *The Holy Sepulchre Church – Jesus’ Tomb*, p. 182.

Hadrianic enclosure wall, Wall 408, found during Virgilio C. Corbo's archaeological excavation. There were small white indentations on the south [outer] side indicating that the wall had pilasters protruding in the exact manner as on the outer wall of Herod's Temple Mount²⁹² (See Figure 34.)

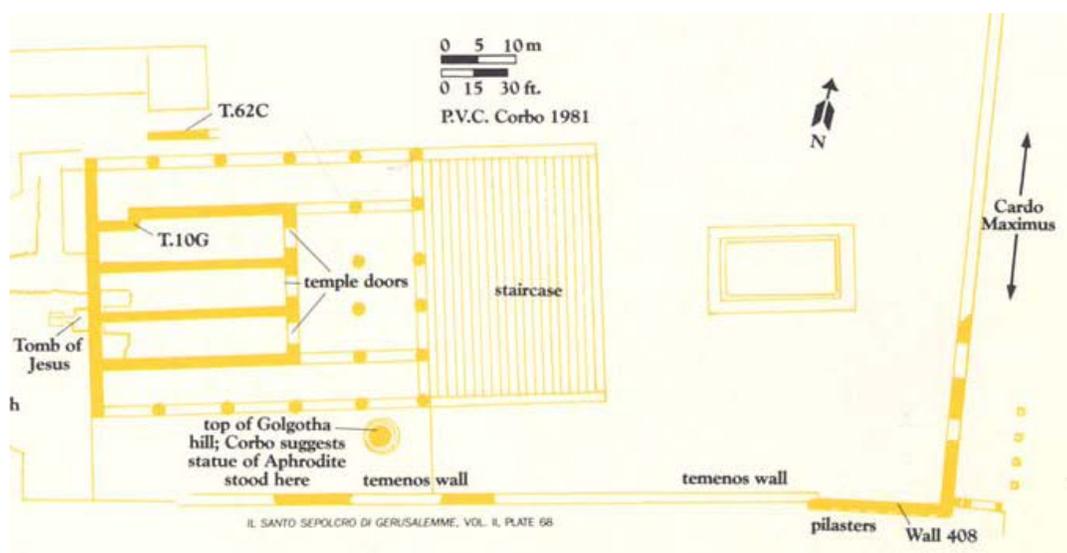


Figure 34. The reconstruction is by Corbo, who proposes that Hadrian's temple included a tripartite rectangular structure with three niches in which stood statues of Venus, Minerva and Jupiter.²⁹³

As mentioned above, p. 95, Queen Helena, the emperor's mother, was shown the site of Jesus' crucifixion and burial when she visited Jerusalem in either 325 or 327 CE. After Helena's visit and 'discovery' of the True Cross (or perhaps just slightly before), the Christian Community, upon Constantine's orders, destroyed the Hadrianic Temple, the enclosure, and the fill that it contained for it represented to them "Hadrian's attempt

²⁹² Corbo, Virgilio, OFM. (1981). *Il Santo Sepolcro Di Gerusalemme: Aspetti Archeologici Dalle Origini al Periodo Crociato, Volume II*. Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, Plates 40 and 41, Photo 93.

²⁹³ Bahat, Dan. (2007). Does the Holy Sepulchre Church Mark the Burial of Jesus? *The Burial of Jesus*. (Ed. Kathleen Miller) Washington DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, p. 18.

to obliterate forever not only Jesus' tomb, but the adjacent rock of Golgotha where he had been crucified."²⁹⁴

In the literary record, Constantine ordered Bishop Macarius to “purify the place, demolish the pagan temple, excavate the original tomb within and build there a basilica that would be ‘the finest in the world’.”²⁹⁵ The sepulchre of Jesus was apparently discovered when the high ground behind the basilica was leveled to accommodate the building of the planned bishop's palace and the Grand Baptistery.²⁹⁶ Eusebius writes that Constantine had a rotunda built over Jesus' tomb.²⁹⁷ The rotunda was known as ‘Anastasis’ meaning ‘resurrection’.

Corbo's archaeological excavations revealed three main building periods of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre: the Constantinian structures from the fourth century, eleventh century restorations by the Byzantine Emperor Constantine IX Monomachus, and the twelfth century Crusader Period structure.²⁹⁸ Even though today there is one massive building covering this area, archaeological excavations have found there were originally three buildings built over the crucifixion site and the sepulchre (See Figure 35).

1. The *Anastasis* was built over the sepulchre.²⁹⁹
2. The *Triportico*, sometimes known as the Holy Garden, which lay in between the Anastasis and the basilica.
3. And the *basilica*, built by Constantine and referred to as the ‘*Martyrium*’ which was “built on the site where, by the grace of the Lord (after two hundred and thirty-three years had gone by) the Lord's Cross was discovered, hidden underground, together with the crosses of the two robbers”.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁴ Bahat, *The Holy Sepulchre Church – Jesus' Tomb*, p. 183.

²⁹⁵ Montefiore, *Jerusalem, the Biography*, p. 154.

²⁹⁶ Wharton, *Selling Jerusalem: Relics, Replicas, Theme Parks*, p. 18.

²⁹⁷ Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, p. 135.

²⁹⁸ Corbo, *Il Santo Sepolcro Di Gerusalemme: Aspetti Archeologici Dalle Origini al Periodo Crociato, Volume II*, Plate 1.

²⁹⁹ Biddle, *The Tomb of Christ*, p. 7.

³⁰⁰ Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims Before the Crusades*, p. 174.

The Martyrium was similar to other churches that Constantine patronized in that it was a Roman civil basilica modified for liturgical use. It was a large structure which was divided internally by rows of columns which processed from the entrance located on the *Cardo* in the East towards the altar which was framed by a grand apse in the West³⁰¹ (See Figure 35).

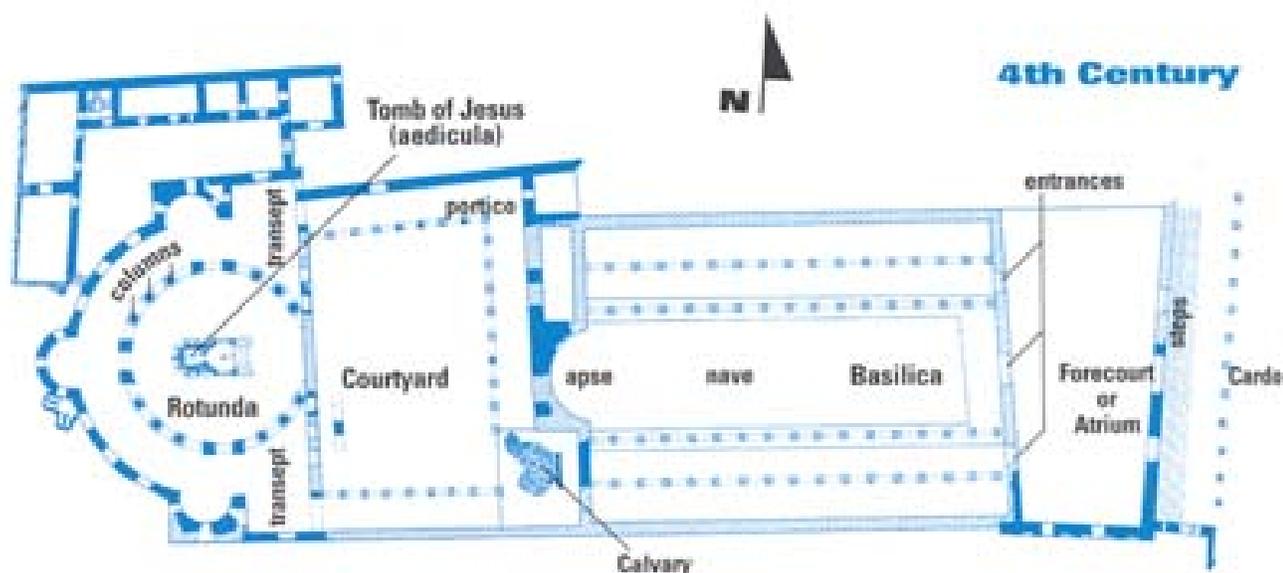


Figure 35 The Floor Plan of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre from the Fourth Century.³⁰²

Coüasnon believed the tomb remained exposed to the open air until after Constantine's death and it was only after his death that the Anastasis was finally built to the west of the Holy Garden/Triportico and the Martyrium (the Basilica Church) (See Figure 36).³⁰³

³⁰¹ Wharton, *Selling Jerusalem: Relics, Replicas, Theme Parks*, p. 18.

³⁰² http://members.bib-arch.org/bswb_graphics/BSBA/26/06/BSBA260602410.jpg

³⁰³ Coüasnon, *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem*, p. 3.

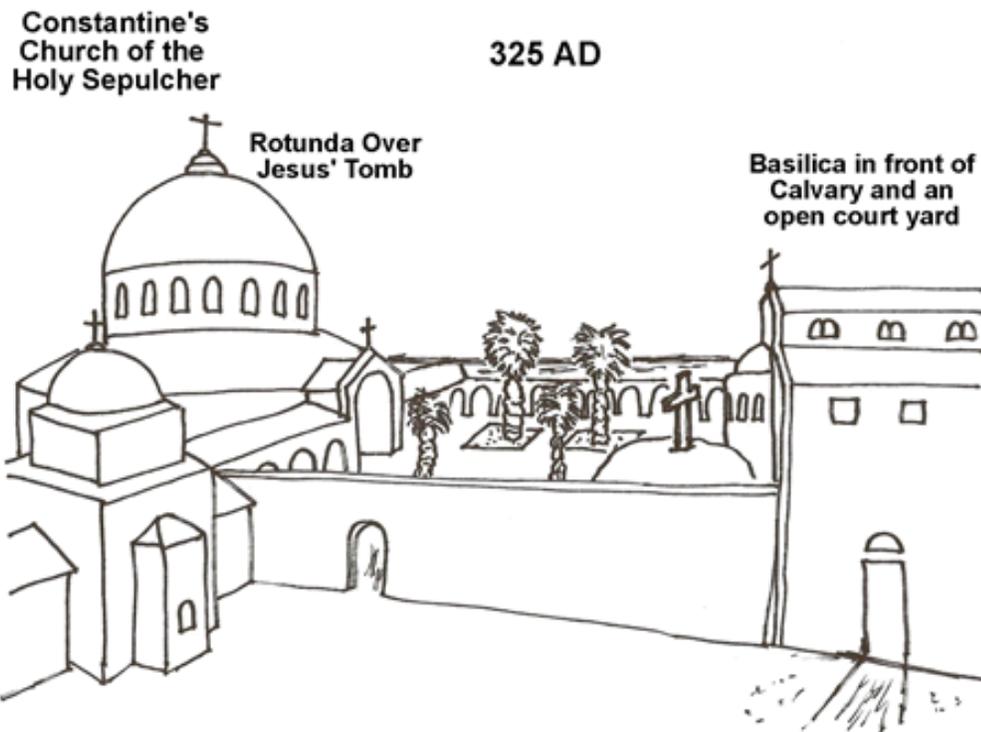


Figure 36 A view of the Constantine Church from the side.³⁰⁴

Corbo disagreed and argued the Anastasis was part of the original Constantinian construction and design. Bahat believes that Corbo is correct on the timing of construction³⁰⁵ and Martin Biddle agrees with Corbo and Bahat that the Anastasis was built to cover the Edicule and that the Edicule (the English word based on the Latin ‘*aedicule*’ meaning ‘little house’)³⁰⁶ was built over the tomb in 325/6.³⁰⁷

It took over ten years to build the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Constantine’s Martyrium was consecrated on Saturday, September 13, 335.³⁰⁸ Walker states the church then became “the first object of Christian attention in 325 and it retains that primacy to

³⁰⁴ <http://www.generationword.com/jerusalem101-photos/holy-sepulcher/holy-sepulcher-325-450.gif>

³⁰⁵ Bahat, *The Holy Sepulchre Church – Jesus’ Tomb*, p. 187.

³⁰⁶ Biddle, *The Tomb of Christ*, p. 5.

³⁰⁷ Biddle, *The Tomb of Christ*, p. 7.

³⁰⁸ Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross was Found: From Event to Medieval Legend*, p. 99.

this day.”³⁰⁹ The Martyrium basilica was completely destroyed on October 18, 1009, at the command of Caliph Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah.³¹⁰ All that remains today of the three original buildings in the complex is the semicircular western wall of the Anastasis rotunda.³¹¹

Between the years 1042 and 1048 CE Constantine Monomachus attempted to restore the complex built originally by Constantine. However, as Corbo states:

*The Crusaders, who conquered Jerusalem in 1099, could not be satisfied with the poor restoration of the Holy Sepulchre which Constantine Monomachus had conducted fifty years earlier in very difficult circumstances: they soon undertook radical innovations which were completed fifty years later, in 1149. The Constantinian complex, made up of three main units (Anastasis, Triportico, Martyrium), was already reduced to two blocks (Anastasis, Triportico) by Constantine Monomachus, who stressed the centrality of the Anastasis by building [an] apse...in front of the Tomb of Jesus. The Crusaders followed the leading idea of Monomachus....they built the imposing Chorus Dominorum in the old area of the Triportico, following the EW axis of the Anastasis; they erected the splendid façade on the S side, and for the first time they included Calvary in this unitary complex, the focal point of which was the Tomb of the Lord in the Anastasis.*³¹²

The Crusader Church, completed on July 15, 1149, has survived to the present day despite fires and earthquakes (See Figure 37).³¹³

³⁰⁹ Walker, *Holy City, Holy Places? Christian Attitudes to Jerusalem and the Holy Land in the Fourth Century*, p. 235.

³¹⁰ Ibid. This destruction and more by the ‘Mad Caliph’ (as some referred to him) is thought by many scholars to have helped create the Crusades almost a century later.

³¹¹ Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross was Found: From Event to Medieval Legend*, p. 99.

³¹² Corbo, *Il Santo Sepolcro Di Gerusalemme: Aspetti Archeologici Dalle Origini al Periodo Crociato, Volume I*, p. 233.

³¹³ Coüason, *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem*, p. 20.

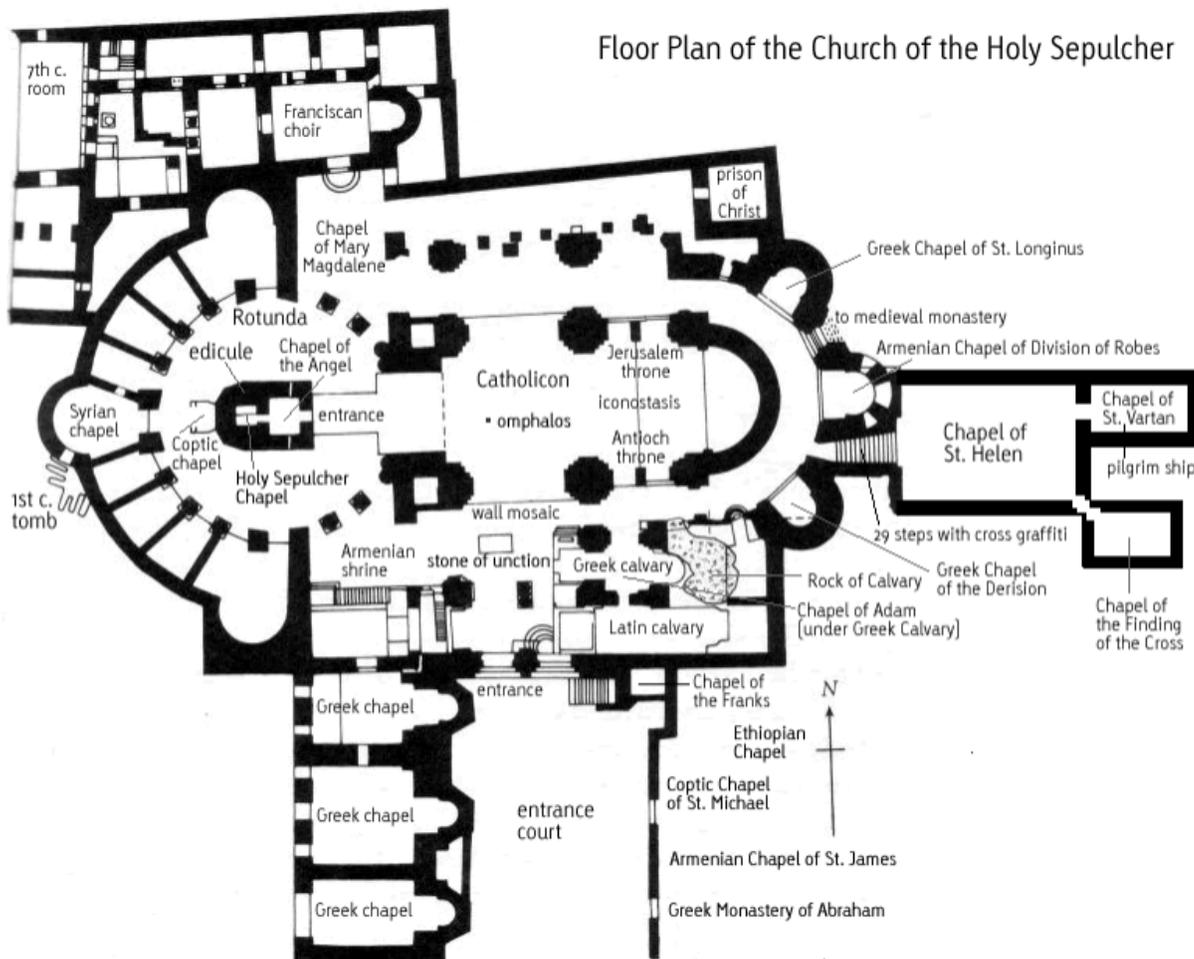


Figure 37. Current day floor map of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre³¹⁴

Literary Records of the Location of the Tomb

The Gospels' descriptions of the location of the tomb are the earliest literary records.³¹⁵ There are few, if any, literary records outside of the Gospels pertaining to the location of the tomb prior to the fourth century. One of the few literary accounts after the first century but prior to the fourth century is from the second century and is in a Greek dramatic work, *Peri Pascha* (On the Passover), possibly written between 160-170 CE. The work refers to Melito of Sardis who was the bishop of Sardis in Anatolia and an

³¹⁴ <http://www.sacred-destinations.com/israel/jerusalem-church-of-holy-sepulchre>

³¹⁵ Matthew 27:60, Mark 15:46, Luke 23:53, John 19:41

authority in early Christianity. He is asked regarding Jesus “Where has he been murdered?” and Melito replies, “In the middle of Jerusalem.”³¹⁶ Melito repeats further in the work, “You killed your Lord in the middle of Jerusalem.”³¹⁷ What mattered then and now was that in Melito’s day the site of the Jesus’ crucifixion was apparently pointed out in the middle of Jerusalem.³¹⁸ Therefore the site must have been incorporated into the city either in the first or early second century, most probably when the Third Wall was built about 43 CE.

Drijvers writes in his study of Cyril of Jerusalem that Jerusalem and its church experienced significant changes in the fourth century. The building of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre by Constantine raised Jerusalem within a few decades from a city of minor importance to one of the foremost cities of the Christian World.³¹⁹ Beginning at that time, there are numerous literary accounts of the location of the tomb, including Eusebius, the Pilgrim of Bordeaux, and Egeria. The Pilgrim of Bordeaux, who crossed the city from the Zion Gate to the Nablus (Damascus) Gate, wrote in the year 333 CE,

*To the left [there is] the hillock of Golgotha, where the Lord was crucified. A stone’s throw from there is the grotto, where His body was placed and arose on the third day. Ibidem there was recently constructed, on the orders of the Emperor Constantine, a Basilica, a church of admirable loveliness.*³²⁰

The Pilgrim of Bordeaux also described early Byzantine traditions that remembered the place where Jesus was flogged as being on the Western Hill.³²¹ Steven Notley states,

With the recognition that the Roman prefect was at Herod’s former palace on the western hills, the Byzantine tradition may be a vestige of a pre-Byzantine memory

³¹⁶ Biddle, *The Tomb of Christ*, p. 60.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Biddle, *The Tomb of Christ*, p. 61.

³¹⁹ Drijvers, *Cyril of Jerusalem: Bishop and City*, p. xi.

³²⁰ Coüasnon, *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem*, p. 16.

³²¹ Notley, *Jerusalem: City of the Great King*, p. 43.

*concerning the location of Jesus' Roman incarceration, flogging and condemnation to death.*³²²

Some question the validity of the location based on scarcity of records between 33 CE and the fourth century. Wilkerson maintains the place names used in the pilgrim accounts of Jerusalem in the Byzantine and Abbasid periods continued to be used through the Crusader Period.³²³ Of the 39 cities that existed in Judea at the time of Jesus, 32 are still cities today.³²⁴

The irony in Hadrian's covering up the site of the Holy Sepulchre was that it "produced the opposite effect. Memory of the tomb was reinforced by bitterness. Its inaccessibility caused it to be remembered all the more vividly."³²⁵ As Biddle states:

*We have no specific record of why Makarios [sp] chose this spot. It has usually been assumed that he was relying on a tradition preserved with the Christian community in Jerusalem. And it...is a powerful argument in favour of the survival of precise topographical knowledge of the location of the sites of the crucifixion and burial since their disappearance beneath Hadrian's structures in 135. Parrot... declares... 'The tradition was compelling: it was there and nowhere else.'*³²⁶

But was the tradition based on the collective memory enough to validate the location of the tomb of Jesus? Limor states "It would seem indeed that for quite a long time, perhaps until the beginning of the fourth century, Christians were not interested in defining sacred spaces or in creating a sacred map." The Bagatti–Testa Hypothesis argues that "many Christian holy places are genuine because Jewish-Christians identified and preserved sites which were meaningful in the life of Jesus, from the time of his ministry *without interruption* until the fourth century." [Emphasis added.] Simon Sebag Montefiore

³²² Ibid.

³²³ Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims Before the Crusades*, p. 24.

³²⁴ Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims Before the Crusades*, p. 15.

³²⁵ Murphy-O'Connor, "The Authenticity of the Holy Sepulchre", p. 169. This is similar in a sense to how the destruction of the Jewish Temples caused them to be remembered as well.

³²⁶ Biddle, *The Tomb of Christ*, p. 58.

writes, “It is likely that the present Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which encloses both the place of crucifixion and the tomb, is the genuine site since *its tradition was kept alive by local Christians for the next three centuries.*”³²⁷ [Emphasis added.] And, while Murphy-O’Connor states that Christians of Jerusalem knew where Jesus had been buried,³²⁸ Joan Taylor disputes the theory of Bagatti and Testa in how the Christian holy places originated. Taylor refutes the theory by stating there was not enough of a Jewish-Christian presence in Judea from the middle of the second century forward to maintain the traditions. Although Taylor herself admits in *Christians and the Holy Places: The Myth of Jewish-Christian Origins*, that it is possible that some members of the church abandoned Jewish practice at this time and continued to live in Aelia Capitolina.

I counter the arguments of scarcity of Jewish/Christian peoples not maintaining the collective memory. Place traditions of Native Americans are remembered by those who would camp at certain geographical sites on a seasonal basis and continue to return generation after generation for centuries and their ‘memory traditions’ survived intact. A recent example of memory traditions occurred in 2016 when Inuit oral tradition helped archaeologists discover the missing ship ‘*Terror*’ in none other than Terror Bay, Nunavut, Canada.³²⁹ The ship had been missing for 168 years. For the sites in Jerusalem, this gap of time between the reported occurrence of the events and the delineation by Constantine would have been approximately 250 years *at the most*. The Medieval Old English poem ‘*How de Hali Cros was Fundin Be Seint Elaine*’ states the

³²⁷ Montefiore, *Jerusalem, the Biography*, p. 113.

³²⁸ Murphy-O’Connor, “The Authenticity of the Holy Sepulchre”, p. 181.

³²⁹ <http://www.roughingafterthewhistle.com/Thread-Inuit-Oral-Tradition-Outshines-Modern-West-Again>

site was hidden for 200 years.³³⁰ If a place is important enough for a people to remember, it can be preserved and passed down to the next generation.

Additionally, there is physical evidence of a Christian presence during the first or second century CE and it is located directly underneath the present day Armenian Chapel of St. Vartan in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (See Figure 37). There is a drawing of a boat with an inscription that was discovered during archaeological excavations in the 1970's in the Chapel of St. Vartan.³³¹ This drawing is believed to date to either the first or second century CE and therefore would be the earliest Christian graffiti.³³² The drawing is 26 inches long by 12 inches high (See Figure 38). Charlesworth describes the



Figure 38 Photograph of the drawing of the boat found at St. Vartans. Photo credit: Magen Broshi.³³³

³³⁰ Morris, *Legends of the Holy Rood: Symbols of the Passion and Cross-Poems In Old English of the Eleventh, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Centuries*, p. 108.

³³¹ Charlesworth, "Jesus Research and Archaeology: A New Perspective", p. 36.

³³² Gibson and Taylor, *Beneath the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Jerusalem: The Archaeology and Early History of Traditional Golgotha*, p. 32.

³³³ *Ibid.*

inscription just below the drawing of the boat and it's possible translations:

The inscription seems to be domine ivimus. If the inscription was made by Christian pilgrims, perhaps from Rome...then it probably means 'O Lord, we came (or have arrived.)'...Benoit pointed out the inscription seems to reflect the Latin of...Psalm 122.... 'Let us go (or we are going) to the house of the Lord'. It is conceivable that Christians...made the sign of a boat, an early Christian symbol, and saluted their arrival at (or near) the place at which they most likely thought Jesus had been crucified, buried, and resurrected.³³⁴

Coüasnon states “a tomb inside the city would have seemed very improbable if the tradition had not already existed...to bear witness to the authenticity of the venerated site.”³³⁵ Borgehammar stresses the point:

Several authors have pointed to how significant it is that in the 320's Golgotha and the Holy Sepulchre were sought in the civic centre of Aelia, in spite of the fact that Christ was known to have been crucified outside the city walls. This points to a strong tradition about the location in the Christian community of the city. It is also striking that important heathen structures were razed to uncover the holy place. Our sources, beginning with Eusebius, deplore the fact that a heathen sanctuary had been built on the site of Salvation. They claim that this was action purposely meant to offend the Christians and to stop them from honouring the site.³³⁶

The irony here is, as Borgehammar points out (much as Murphy-O'Connor stated above), “the pagan monuments helped to fix the location of Golgotha and the Sepulchre in the minds of Christians, until the day when they could be removed.”³³⁷

Archaeological Evidence of the Location of the Tomb

Can archaeology determine if the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre meets the site descriptions in the Gospels of the crucifixion and the tomb of Jesus? John 19:20 states Jesus was buried near the city and John 19:41 describes the site as a garden and in that garden was a sepulchre. If the traditional site is to be defended as the authentic

³³⁴ Charlesworth, “Jesus Research and Archaeology: A New Perspective”, p. 36.

³³⁵ Coüasnon, *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem*, p. 7.

³³⁶ Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross was Found: From Event to Medieval Legend*, p. 97.

³³⁷ Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross was Found: From Event to Medieval Legend*, p. 98.

location, it must answer the essential requirement of being outside the city at the time of Jesus.³³⁸ The additional following elements would need to be established

archaeologically:

- Evidence of a Quarry/Garden/Orchard
- Evidence of Tombs/Cemetery
- Evidence the site was outside the Jerusalem City Walls.

Evidence of a Quarry/Garden/Orchard

Bahat, among others, has stated that the area where the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is currently located covers a large limestone quarry belonging to the seventh or eighth century BCE.³³⁹ Corbo published a three volume report on his excavation in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and, according to him, the quarry was continuously used until the first century BCE when the quarry then became a garden or orchard. Corbo based this his determination on the find of a layer of arable soil above the quarry. Magen Broshi and Gabriel Barkay do not mention this layer of soil in their excavation report of the Chapel of St. Vartan in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; however, they did find a floor of beaten earth from Iron Age II above the quarry fill which made them conclude the “area was residential from the late eighth century [BCE] to the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem [587 BCE].”³⁴⁰ Coüasnon writes, “The ancient quarry [under the Church of the Holy Sepulchre] was filled in by the time of Christ.”³⁴¹

Kenyon describes how her excavations in Site C, in the area of Muristan (directly to the south of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre) showed “with confidence” that the

³³⁸ Parrot, André. (1957). *Golgotha and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre*. (Trans. Edwin Hudson). NY: Philosophical Library, p. 15.

³³⁹ Bahat, *The Holy Sepulchre Church – Jesus’ Tomb*, p. 178.

³⁴⁰ Bahat, *The Holy Sepulchre Church – Jesus’ Tomb*, p. 194n.

³⁴¹ Coüasnon, *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem*, p. 39-40.

seventh century BCE quarry discovered in her excavation was outside the seventh century BCE city of Jerusalem.³⁴² Her excavation revealed that “nothing intervened between the seventh-century B.C. surface and the second-century A.D. fill” creating a “strong supposition that throughout this time the area...remained outside the occupied area, and therefore presumably outside the walls [of Jerusalem].”³⁴³ Wagner-Lux in his excavations under the Church of the Redeemer states the “stratum above the quarry with traces of gardens or fields can be dated to the first century AD.”³⁴⁴ He continues, “The quarry found at the bottom of this excavation indicates that this area was outside the city wall in Jesus’ time.”³⁴⁵ The Church of the Redeemer lies southeast of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre as noted in Figure 39. I would concur with these scholars’ interpretations of the archaeological evidence and agree that the area under the Church would have been outside the city walls of Jerusalem in the first century CE.

³⁴² Kenyon, *Digging Up Jerusalem*, p. 231.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁵ Serr and Vieweger, “Golgotha: Is the Holy Sepulchre Church Authentic?”, p. 29.

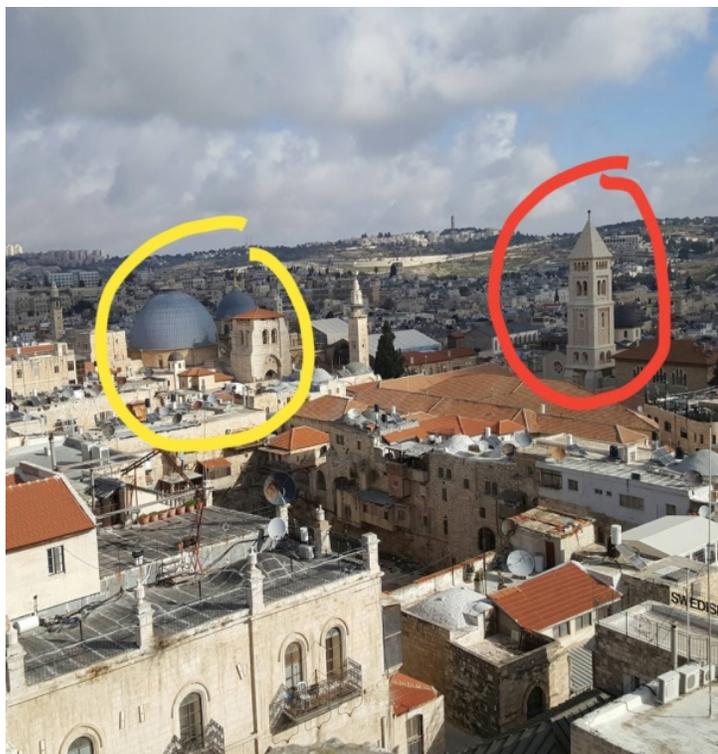


Figure 39. Author's photograph taken Jan. 10, 2017, from on top of the Tower of Phasael looking Northeast. The Church of the Redeemer is circled in red, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is circled in yellow.

Evidence of tombs/cemetery

The custom of burying family together in burial caves was inherited by the Israelites from the Canaanites.³⁴⁶ The common practice was for a family burial cave, or area, to be outside the town limits.³⁴⁷ Bahat states that simultaneous to the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre becoming a garden/orchard in the first century, areas within it starting being used as a cemetery because *at least four tombs dating from this period have been found in the area* [Emphasis added] (See Figures 40 and 41).³⁴⁸ Charles Warren also

³⁴⁶ Mazar, Amihai. (1990). *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible: 10,000-586 BCE*. NY: Doubleday, p. 521.

³⁴⁷ Marcus, *The Jewish Life Cycle: Rites of Passage from Biblical to Modern Times*, p. 209.

³⁴⁸ Bahat, *The Holy Sepulchre Church – Jesus' Tomb*, p. 178.

records finding Jewish tombs under the church in his excavation reported in *The Survey of Western Palestine*.³⁴⁹



Figure 40. Author's photograph taken in July 2015 of the First Century Tombs located under the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Jeff Chadwick refutes the location of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre as the actual burial place of Jesus. He states “From the tenth century BC through the first century AD...tombs were not constructed west of the inhabited areas of Jerusalem....The primary reason for this seems to have been connected with the prevailing winds”³⁵⁰ and the rabbinic prohibition of impurities west of the Temple. Rousseau and Arav weigh in with,

If burial customs in the first half of the first century CE preclude burials and their attendant impurities west (windward) of the Temple, then the crucifixion and burial of Jesus could not have taken place at the site of the Church of the Holy

³⁴⁹ Warren, Charles, and Claude Reignier Conder. (1884). *The Survey of Western Palestine – Jerusalem*. London: The Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund, p. 321.

³⁵⁰ Chadwick, Jeffery, R. Revisiting Golgotha and the Garden Tomb. *The Religious Educator*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2003, p. 17.

*Sepulchre, which is almost exactly due west of the Holy of Holies.*³⁵¹ [Note the qualifier ‘if’ at the beginning of the statement.]

However, this theory is discredited by the archaeological discovery of first century CE tombs located directly under the Church of the Holy Sepulchre thereby establishing the area was used as a cemetery during the first century CE.

John 20:5 states that John did not go into the Tomb immediately and that he had to stoop down in order to see into the interior of the sepulchre.³⁵² This Gospel passage agrees with archaeological discoveries of tombs of that time period. Cemeteries are scattered all around Jerusalem and the most common type of tomb are all rock-hewn tombs which have “a square room entered through a *small square opening* which could be closed by a large stone.”³⁵³ [Emphasis added.] Magness states:

*“Under the temple [of Venus/Aphrodite] was a rocky area containing rock-cut tombs with loculi dating to the late Second Temple period. Constantine cut back the rock to isolate the loculus that reportedly had contained Jesus’ body, which he enshrined in a circular domed structure called the Rotunda. A few loculi belonging to this cemetery are still preserved outside the walls of the Rotunda....The presence of these loculi indicates that this area was a Jewish cemetery in the time of Jesus and therefore lay outside the walls of the city. This is the closest archaeology comes to verifying the authenticity of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, although it is impossible to prove that Jesus’ body was laid to rest in one of these loculi.”*³⁵⁴ (See Figures 40 and 41.)

³⁵¹ Rousseau and Arav, *Jesus and His World: An Archaeological and Cultural Dictionary*, p. 169.

³⁵² Parrot, *Golgotha and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre*, p. 46.

³⁵³ Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible: 10,000-586 BCE*, p. 521.

³⁵⁴ Magness, *The Archaeology of the Holy Land: From the Destruction of Solomon’s Temple to the Muslim Conquest*, pgs. 323-325.

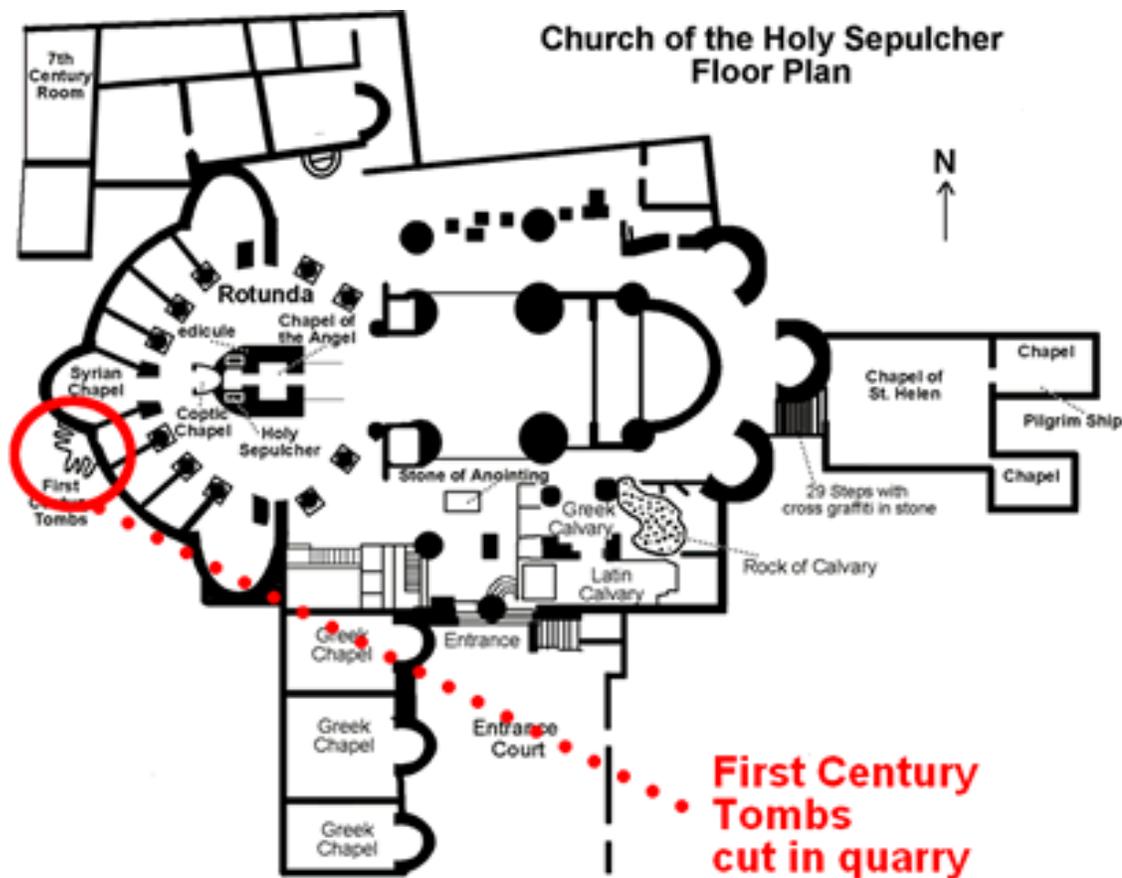


Figure 41. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre Floor Plan with red circles indicating the location of the 1st century tombs discovered under the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.³⁵⁵

Outside the Jerusalem City Walls

Bahat points out the strongest argument in favor of the authenticity of the site of Jesus' burial in what is now included in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was that it must have been an unlikely site when pointed out to Constantine's mother Queen Helena in the fourth century.³⁵⁶ In the fourth century, the site would have been in a crowded, urban location enclosed within the city walls. That the site was not outside the current city walls must have seemed strange to a pilgrim at that time.³⁵⁷ Therefore, the first century status of the area below the Church of the Holy Sepulchre must be discerned,

³⁵⁵ <http://www.generationword.com/jerusalem101/52-holy-sepulcher.html>

³⁵⁶ Bahat, *The Holy Sepulchre Church – Jesus' Tomb*, p. 184.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

specifically around 30-33 CE, in order to arrive at a definitive conclusion as to whether or not the area lay outside the first century CE Jerusalem city walls.

Kenyon wrote of her excavations at Site C in the area of Muristan immediately to the south of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre³⁵⁸ in Jerusalem:

There is one most crucial problem concerning the Gospel story on which our [archaeological] excavations have thrown most unexpectedly clear light. This is the problem of the authenticity of the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, built by Empress Helena... and believed to cover the site both of the Crucifixion... and of the Holy Sepulchre. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre today lies in the very heart of Jerusalem. Everything in the Gospels leads one to expect that the place of Crucifixion was outside the walls, and that the burial had to be by all Jewish laws.³⁵⁹ ...The answer, of course, is that the walls of the present Old City are not those of the time of the Gospels.³⁶⁰

To determine if the site remained outside the city, the location of the city walls must first be established. The First Wall's location is agreed upon by almost all scholars, as is that of the Third Wall, based upon both Josephus's descriptions and archaeological excavations. "The 'First Wall', that is to say the most ancient one, is that located the furthest inside the city."³⁶¹ (The north-west angle of the First Wall was discovered in the courtyard of David's Citadel.³⁶²) See Figures 42-44.

³⁵⁸ Kenyon, *Digging Up Jerusalem*, p. 227.

³⁵⁹ Kenyon, *Digging Up Jerusalem*, p. 226.

³⁶⁰ Kenyon, *Digging Up Jerusalem*, p. 227.

³⁶¹ Coüasnon, *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem*, p. 8.

³⁶² Geva, Hillel. (1983). Excavations in the Citadel of Jerusalem, 1979-1980: Preliminary Report. *Israel Exploration Journal*, Vol. 33, No. 1 / 2, p. 55.



Figure 42. Author's own photograph from Jan. 2017 of the First Wall remains (highlighted in yellow) in the Citadel looking North to South.

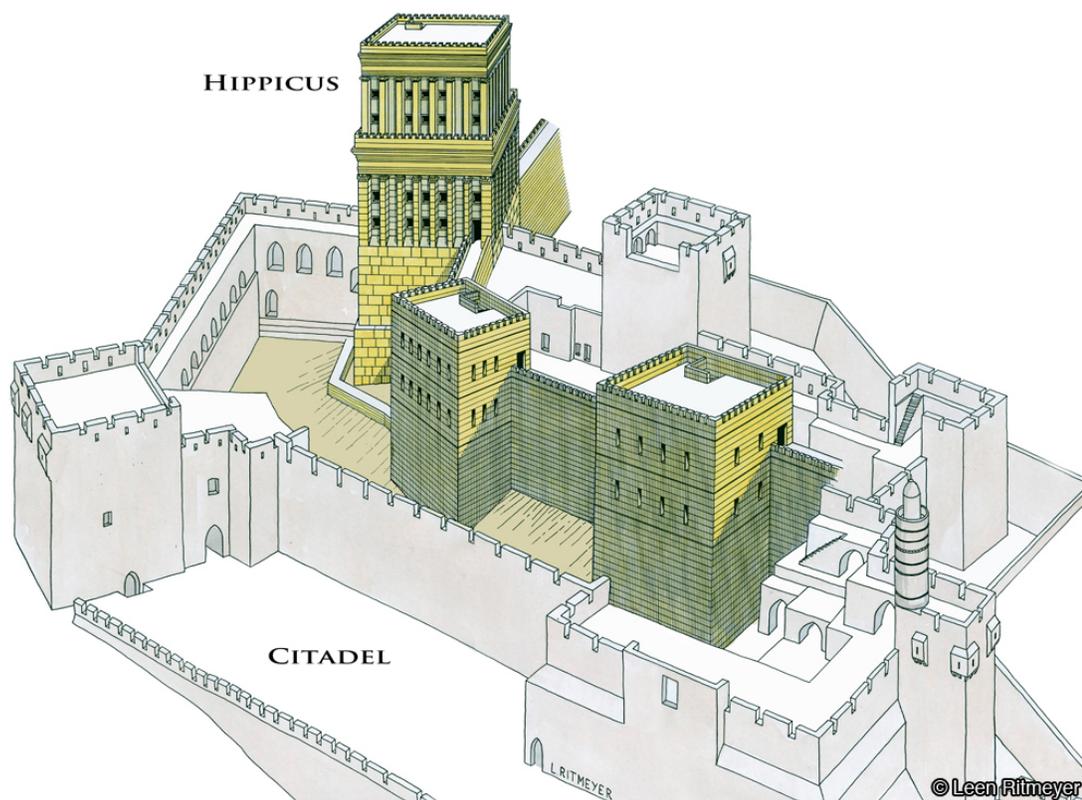


Figure 43. Leen Ritmeyer's drawing of the First Wall bending at its Northeast corner looking southwest to northeast. Drawing and Copyright by Leen Ritmeyer.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is located 230 meters to the north of the First Wall.³⁶³ According to Josephus, Herod Agrippa ordered what is referred to as the Third Wall (See Figure 43) built about 10 to 15 years after Jesus' crucifixion.³⁶⁴

³⁶³ Coüasnon, *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem*, p. 9.

³⁶⁴ Josephus, *War*, 2:11:6, 218.

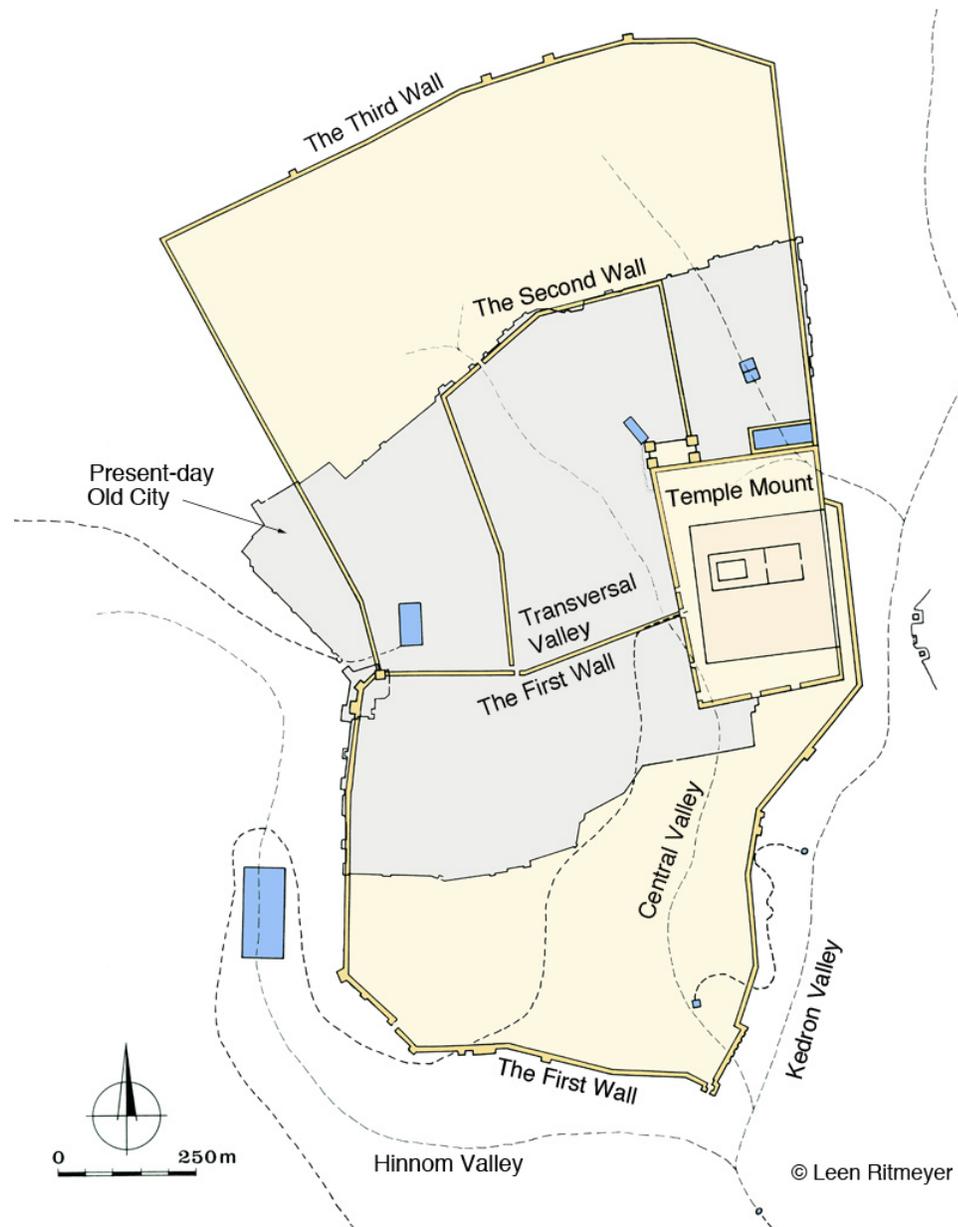


Figure 44. Drawings of the First, Second, and Third Walls of Jerusalem in the first century CE. Drawing and copyright by Leen Ritmeyer.

However, it is the illusive Second Wall that can make or break the site's authenticity. The search for the Second Wall can still elicit strong reactions from scholars. The Second Wall appears to have been a short wall: it had only 14 towers compared to the

First Wall's 60 and the Third Wall's 90 towers.³⁶⁵ Kenyon offered up three choices for the lay of the Second Wall (See Figure 45). However, Kenyon concluded that her excavations at Muristan demonstrated that the Second Wall must lie east of her dig location, and therefore, east of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.³⁶⁶

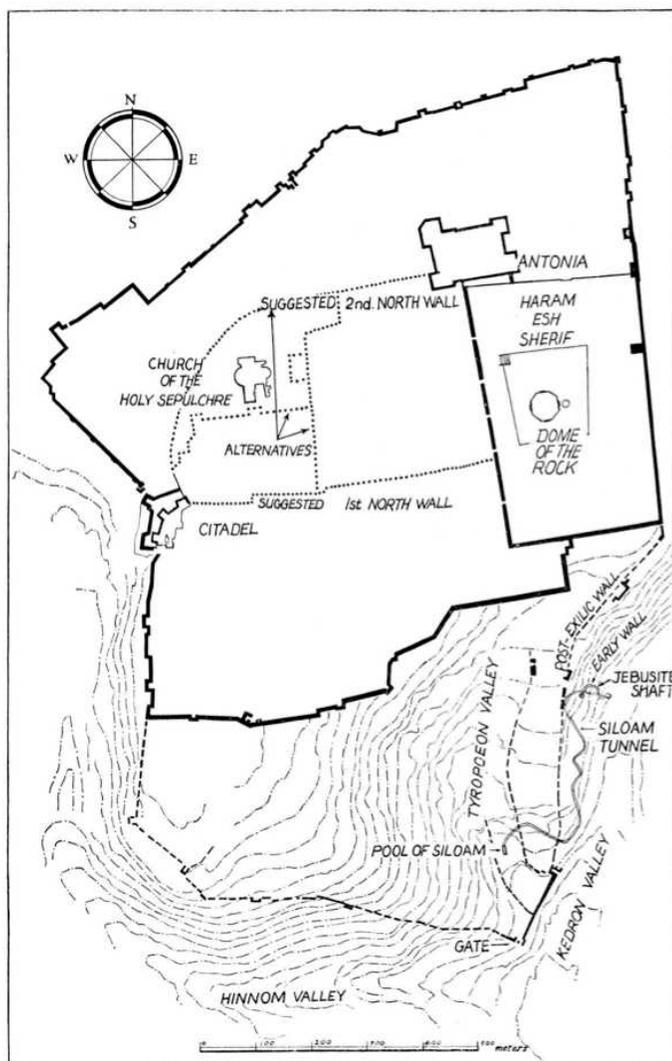


Figure 45. Map of Kenyon's three alternative choices for the track of the Second Wall.³⁶⁷

³⁶⁵ Schein, Bruce, E. (1981). "The Second Wall of Jerusalem". *The Biblical Archaeologist*, Vol. 44, No. 1, p. 22.

³⁶⁶ Kenyon, *Digging Up Jerusalem*, p. 234.

³⁶⁷ Kenyon, *Digging Up Jerusalem*, p. 233.

Coüasnon stated “The *Cardo Maximus* was... constructed, *following the line of the ‘second Wall’* along its south-north stretch, after which it continued in a straight line to the neighbourhood of the Damascus Gate.”³⁶⁸ [Emphasis added.] Borgehammar agreed and stated:

*A reasonable guess is that it [the Second Wall] followed the line of the *Cardo Maximus* of Roman Jerusalem, since a razed wall provides both a cleared space and solid foundations for a road. If this is right, the second wall went east of Golgotha which thus lay outside the city.*³⁶⁹

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is noted on the oldest cartographic representation of Jerusalem, the Madaba Map, which dates to the sixth century CE.³⁷⁰ On the Madaba Map, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre abutting the *Cardo Maximus* can clearly be seen (See Figure 46).

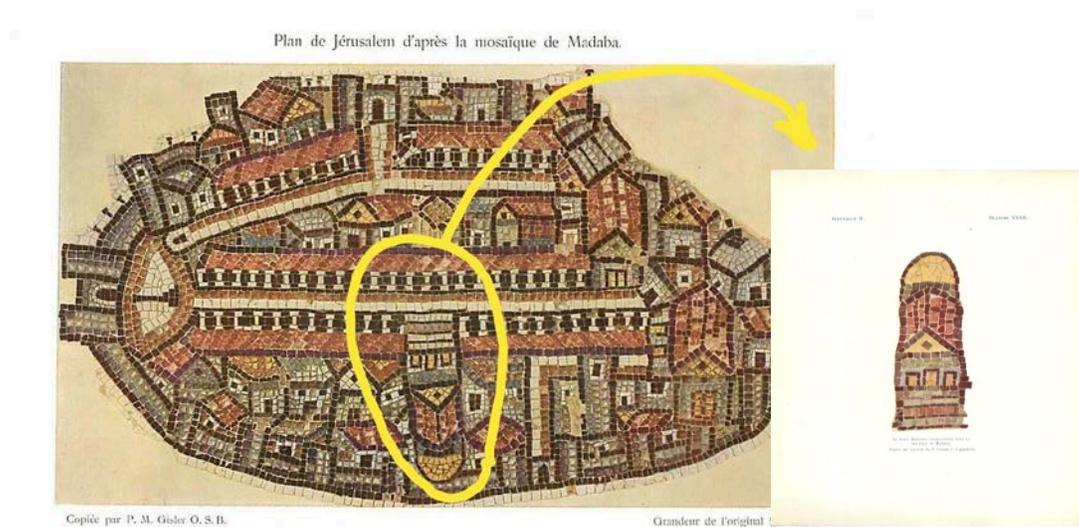


Figure 46. Images of the Madaba Map and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre from Vincent's *Jérusalem Recherches de Topographie, D'Archéologie et D'Histoire*, Plate XXXII.

Integral to the argument of the location of the Second Wall, is the location of the gate known as the Gennath Gate. Hebrews 13:12 reads “Therefore, Jesus also *suffered outside*

³⁶⁸ Coüasnon, *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem*, p. 11.

³⁶⁹ Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross was Found: From Event to Medieval Legend*, p. 96.

³⁷⁰ Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem*, p. 211.

the gate, to consecrate the people by his own blood.” [Emphasis added.] Matthew 27:32 reads “As they were *going out*, they met...”. [Emphasis added.] John 19:17 in part reads, “he [Jesus] *went out* to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha.” [Emphasis added.] Are these New Testament passages alluding to a gate? It seems likely. If so, was this gate known as the Gennath Gate? (See Figure 47.)

Josephus reported in *War 5:146* that the only gate in the northern section of the First Wall was called the Gennath (Garden) Gate “apparently because it led to the outskirts of the city, where there were orchards and gardens.”³⁷¹ The gates of Jerusalem were oftentimes named for the points of destination outside of the city, for example: the Jaffa Gate and the Damascus Gate.³⁷² Josephus, in *The Jewish Wars*, only mentions the Second Wall three times. He describes it thusly: “The second wall started from the gate in the first wall which they called Gennath, and encircling only the northern district of the town, went up as far as Antonia.”³⁷³ Kenyon stated her belief:

*The second north wall ran from the Gate Gennath on the old wall; ‘it only encompassed the northern quarter of the city, and reached as far as the tower Antonia....The reason for this passionate argument is that on the question of the line of the second north wall depends the problem of whether the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre can be authentic....The Crucifixion took place when the second north wall formed the city boundary....The most generally held opinion has been that the Gate Gennath was a little north of the Citadel.’*³⁷⁴

³⁷¹ Rainey and Notley, *The Sacred Bridge: Carta’s Atlas of the Biblical World*, p. 368.

³⁷² *Ibid.*

³⁷³ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁴ Kenyon, *Digging Up Jerusalem*, p. 232.

the Temple].”³⁷⁷ “The fact that the main city gate from the late First Temple period was located just to the east of this [Gennath] gate lends weight to this identification.”³⁷⁸

Murphy-O’Connor opined:

*where and when the ‘second wall’ turned east is much less important than the line it took when it left the Gennath Gate. [While] this gate has never been identified with certitude....there is only one candidate, the Hasmonean Gate excavated by Avigad at the northern edge of the Jewish Quarter between Habad Street and the Jewish Quarter Street.*³⁷⁹ (See Figure 48.)



Figure 48. Author's photo of the colored tiles on the Cardo marking the location on the Cardo of the Gennath Gate location excavated by Avigad.

³⁷⁷ Murphy-O’Connor, “The Authenticity of the Holy Sepulchre”, p. 182.

³⁷⁸ Ritmeyer, Leen and Kathleen. (2009). *Jerusalem at the Time of Jesus*. Jerusalem, Israel: Carta, Jerusalem, p. 37.

³⁷⁹ Murphy-O’Connor, “The Authenticity of the Holy Sepulchre”, p. 183.

Murphy-O'Connor continues that the gate identified by Avigad,

*...has one important argument in its favour. A line running north from this point in the 'first wall' passes east of the Iron Age quarry discovered at two points in the Muristan [Kenyon], in St. John's Garden [Kenyon], and beneath the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer [Vriezen].*³⁸⁰

Wagner-Lux agrees with Kenyon as he conducted his excavation in the Church of the Redeemer after her excavation, "The Second Wall must be somewhere east of today's Church of the Redeemer."³⁸¹

It is not known for certain who the builder of the Second Wall was although Kenyon believed it was Herod the Great.³⁸² Schein agrees, stating:

*It seems that after Herod strengthened the first wall with the three great towers in the area of his palace and built the Temple platform, he evidently decided to enclose the suburb to the north of the city as a further defense for the main part of Jerusalem. He added a second defense line to the vulnerable eastern half of the first wall after it passed the natural defense of the hill to the south of David's Street. The stone quarry, in turn, acted as a defensive moat for the new wall's vulnerable west side.*³⁸³

The line of the second wall is believed to have run just east of the quarry based on the topography of the Muristan and the rapid drop-off of the valley and the hillside just to the east. The wall would have been much easier to defend if it turned toward the Antonia at the northeast corner of the stone quarry.³⁸⁴ This line would also fit Josephus' description of the Second Wall.³⁸⁵ Leen Ritmeyer states that the location of both the First Temple period Main Gate and the Gennath Gate was dictated by the same topographical

³⁸⁰ Murphy-O'Connor, "The Authenticity of the Holy Sepulchre", pgs. 183-184.

³⁸¹ Serr and Vieweger, "Golgotha: Is the Holy Sepulchre Church Authentic?", p. 29.

³⁸² Ibid.

³⁸³ Schein, "The Second Wall of Jerusalem", p. 26.

³⁸⁴ Schein, "The Second Wall of Jerusalem", p. 25.

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

consideration, “to defend the city wall along the Transversal Valley”, a known weak spot in the city’s defenses.³⁸⁶ Murphy-O’Connor agrees stating:

*It would be extraordinary if the builders of the ‘second wall’ did not avail themselves of the defensive advantage of this ready-made ditch. In other words, it is highly improbable that the ‘second wall’ lies west of the quarry.*³⁸⁷

It is possible that the Second Wall was located exactly where the central street for Byzantine Jerusalem was eventually laid (the Cardo), and if that were true, all traces of the Second Wall may have been removed.³⁸⁸ If that is the case, archaeology may not ever be able to determine for certain the course and location of the Second Wall.

In light of the above analysis, the traditional site of Jesus’ crucifixion and burial, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, was indeed situated outside of the Jerusalem city walls in the time period 30-33 CE.

Results of the Archaeological Excavations of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre:

Bahat believes the Constantinian rotunda could have “very likely” been built over the true site of Jesus’ burial.³⁸⁹ Bahat’s arguments include:³⁹⁰

- The site was a turn-of-the-era cemetery.
- The cemetery, including the tomb believed to have been Jesus’, had been buried for nearly 300 years.
- The memory of Jesus’ tomb survived despite Hadrian’s burial of it with fill, an enclosure, and a temple, which speaks to its authenticity.
- The Christian community was never dispersed during this period and its succession of bishops was uninterrupted also supports the accuracy of the preserved memory.

³⁸⁶ Ritmeyer, Leen and Kathleen, *Jerusalem at the Time of Jesus*, p. 37.

³⁸⁷ Murphy-O’Connor, “The Authenticity of the Holy Sepulchre”, pgs. 183-184.

³⁸⁸ Schein, “The Second Wall of Jerusalem”, p. 25.

³⁸⁹ Bahat, *The Holy Sepulchre Church – Jesus’ Tomb*, p. 183.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

What was Kenyon's conclusion? She states "We have not, of course, proved that the Church *is* on the site of Calvary [Golgotha] and the Sepulchre, but we have shown that it *can* be."³⁹¹ [Emphasis added.] Magness states "The Gospel accounts of Jesus' burial appear to be largely consistent with the archaeological evidence."³⁹² Craig Evans states "What the Gospels depict is consistent with what is known from archaeology and from literary and epigraphical sources."³⁹³ Walker states "The Jerusalem tradition had established a site so difficult to admit, that it must have taken all the weight of an extremely strongly rooted tradition to make such an improbability acceptable."³⁹⁴

The archaeological evidence points to the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre as being the most probable site of Jesus' crucifixion and burial. While there is no way to prove with certainty that Jesus was crucified and buried at this site, the archaeological evidence that the site was a quarry and later a cemetery, and that the site was outside the Jerusalem city walls in the early first century CE, means that the preponderance of evidence outweighs any other claim. And although the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was built approximately 300 years after the time of Jesus, there is thus no reason to reject the authenticity of the site.³⁹⁵

³⁹¹ Kenyon, *Digging Up Jerusalem*, p. 234.

³⁹² Magness, *Stone and Dung, Oil and Spit: Jewish Daily Life in the Time of Jesus*, p. 171.

³⁹³ Evans, Craig. (2003). *Jesus and the Ossuaries: What Jewish Burial Practices Reveal about the Beginnings of Christianity*, Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, p. 15.

³⁹⁴ Walker, *Holy City, Holy Places? Christian Attitudes to Jerusalem and the Holy Land in the Fourth Century*, p. 243.

³⁹⁵ Most scholars accept the authenticity of the tradition of the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre as being the site of Jesus' crucifixion and burial, including: Charlesworth, Bahat, Corbo, Coüasnon, Kenyon, Wagner-Lux, Murphy-O'Connor, and Magness.

Conclusion

This thesis has demonstrated that the current Via Dolorosa walked by modern pilgrims is incorrect. As meaningful and influential as the Gospel narratives of the Passion of the Christ is to millions of Christians, we now know the current route is located where it is because of the authority bestowed upon the Franciscans by the Pope to oversee the route. The pilgrim influenced route lies in the area of Jerusalem over which the Franciscans had ownership. The route to the crucifixion site would have begun in the west of the city and not in the east since the Praetorium that the Gospels refer to is Herod's Palace and not the Antonia Fortress.³⁹⁶ Based on the archaeological, historical tradition, and textual, especially New Testament, evidence cited in above discussions, I have re-routed the route that the Gospels posit for Jesus' final steps.

The re-routing of the Via Dolorosa would begin at the Praetorium, Herod's Palace, and end at Golgotha, probably accurately described in the Stations of the Cross 10-14 in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. If the route was direct, it would have gone from the Praetorium through the Gennath Gate leading out of the city walls to Golgotha. As for this route, the distance can be determined. By my calculations, a walk from the area of the Praetorium to Golgotha would have been approximately 700 meters or 3,000 feet.³⁹⁷ Can it be deduced that Jesus' journey was along this short path?

The unknown factor is whether the route was direct. No maps exist of the city of Jerusalem at the time of Jesus in the first century CE. However, the street layout of

³⁹⁶ Dalman is in agreement: "if the judgment hall was....the castle of Herod, then the route to the place of Crucifixion must have begun in the west and not in the east of the city". *Sacred Sites and Ways: Studies in the Topography of the Gospels*, p. 347.

³⁹⁷ Parrot states, "[F]rom the Praetorium to the traditional site of Golgotha the distance in a straight line is not great: about a quarter of a mile." Parrot, *Golgotha and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre*, p. 38.

Jerusalem was probably in the Hellenistic Hippodamean grid style.³⁹⁸ If the grid style of streets is correct, a plausible route would have been Jesus leaving the Praetorium at Herod's Palace, taking the present 'David Street' as far as the area of today's three parallel 'souks', close to where today's Habad Street and the Jewish Quarter Street are located, and then moving northward to Golgotha out of the city through the Gennath Gate.³⁹⁹ Shimon Gibson's map illustrates a route very similar to the one I have suggested (See Figure 49).

³⁹⁸ Rousseau and Arav, *Jesus and His World: An Archaeological and Cultural Dictionary*, p. 161. The Hellenistic Hippodamean grid style would have been streets laid out at right angles to one another.

³⁹⁹ Benoit states Jesus "would have left Herod's Palace, the present-day 'Tower of David', taken the present 'David Street' as far as the three parallel 'souks', [and] followed these northwards...".³⁹⁹ Benoit, *The Passion and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, p. 164. Notley notes: "Certainly he was executed within the vicinity, and access from Herod's Palace, the Praetorium, would have led through the Gennath Gate – in all likelihood marking the line of the first-century Way of the Cross." Notley, *Jerusalem: City of the Great King*, p. 45

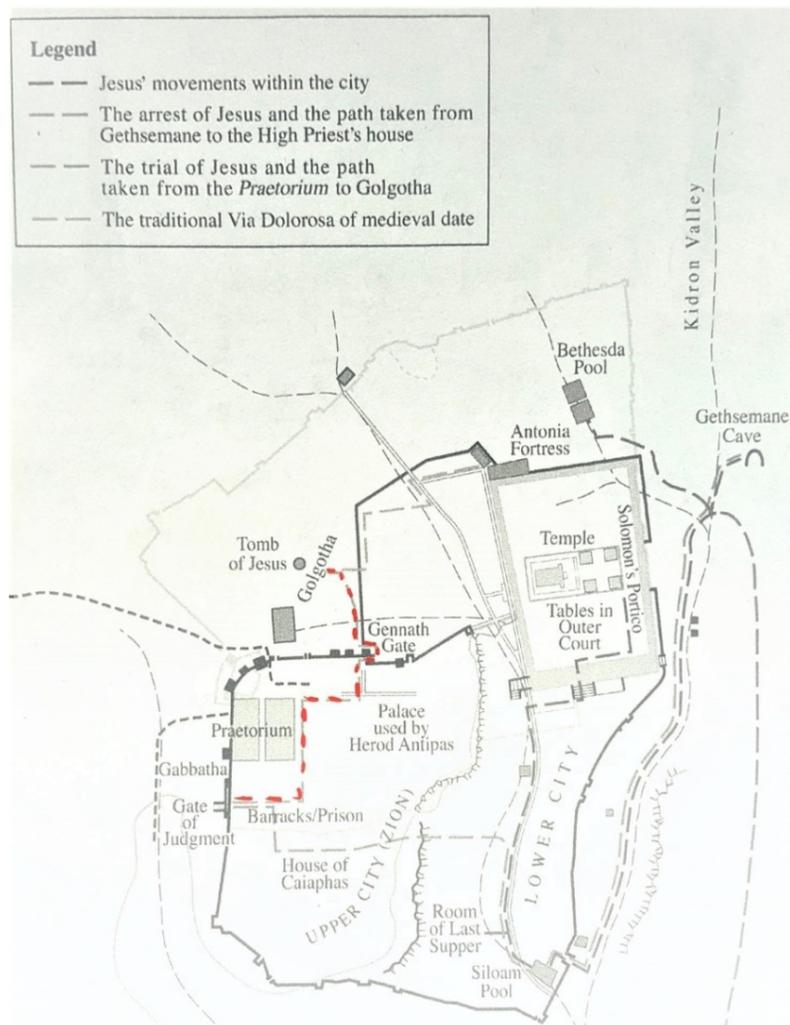


Figure 49. Shimon Gibson's map of the path Jesus would have taken from the Praetorium to Golgotha, passing through the Gennath Gate, highlighted in red.⁴⁰⁰

Literary evidence exists that the Roman authorities would take condemned persons on a circuitous route through Jerusalem in order that more of the city's inhabitants be allowed to have a closer view. Josephus states in *Ant. xx, 136* that Claudius orders the tribune Celer to be dragged through the city of Jerusalem in front of the city's inhabitants before being executed. Parrot also agrees to such a jagged path along the way to Golgotha as he points out that the victims of crucifixion were “*made to follow a longer route, through... the streets.... of the city, the custom being to create a greater impression*”

⁴⁰⁰ Gibson, *The Final Days of Jesus: The Archaeological Evidence*, p. 49.

*among the population by allowing them to have a closer view of those about to be executed.”*⁴⁰¹

The distance from the Praetorium to Golgotha can be deduced from the street patterns but where along this path the Stations of the Cross would have occurred is nebulous. Even if the street theory is correct, only Station 5, where Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the cross, can be mapped with some degree of probability at the excavated gate in the Jewish Quarter – the gate conjectured to be the Gennath Gate. Station 2, Jesus is made to carry the cross, most probably would have happened near or at the Praetorium. Station 4, Jesus meets his mother, and the fall stations, 3, 7, and 9, while possible or even probable occurrences cannot be substantiated by any contemporary evidence. Moreover, Station 6, where Veronica wipes the face of Jesus, and Station 8, where Jesus speaks to the women, probably did not in fact take place but were added later because of later pilgrimage tradition or political motives. The Stations of the Cross 10-14 are most likely in the area now covered by the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

There is no way to recreate the exact route other than the beginning, the midpoint, and the ending. Therefore, until any future revealing archaeological or literary discoveries are made, let this route, Herod’s Palace as the Praetorium, the midpoint of the Gennath Gate, and the ending at Golgotha, become known as the more accurate avenue that Jesus would have traversed.

⁴⁰¹ Parrot, *Golgotha and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre*, p. 38.

Appendix A

The living Jesus rises from the tomb

"And the Angel said to the women: 'He is not here.'"

(Mark 16:6)

Christ has died... Christ has risen... Christ will come again....

ALLELUIA... ALLELUIA... ALLELUIA



Relief of Christ rising gloriously from the tomb. It is in the Franciscan chapel near the Holy Sepulchre in the Basilica of the Resurrection.

ENGLISH

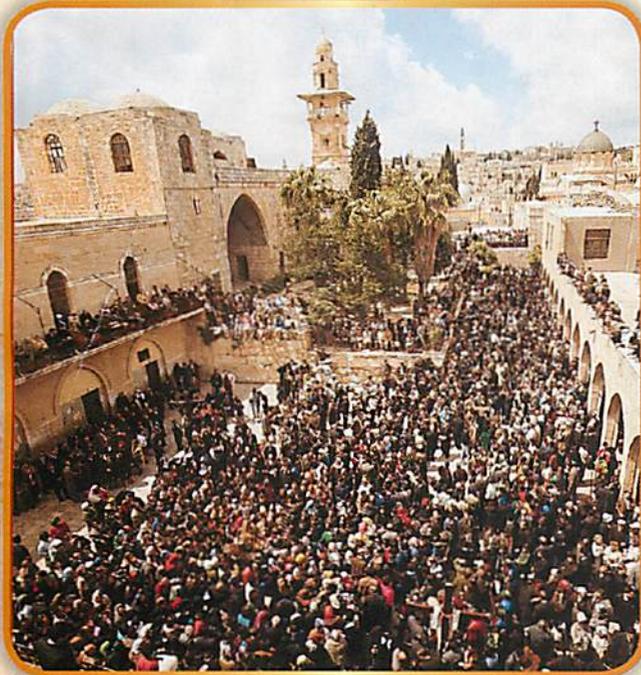
VIA DOLOROSA



1

FIRST STATION OF THE CROSS**Jesus is condemned to death***"Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium"*

(John 18:28)



The courtyard of Omariye College is crowded each Friday afternoon when Franciscans start the devotion of the Way of the Cross. The minaret (left), traditionally named "Antonia Tower", marks the site of the Roman Fortress where Jesus was condemned.

2

SECOND STATION OF THE CROSS**Jesus Takes up the Cross***"Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him."* (John 19:1)*"Then he handed Him over to them to be crucified".*

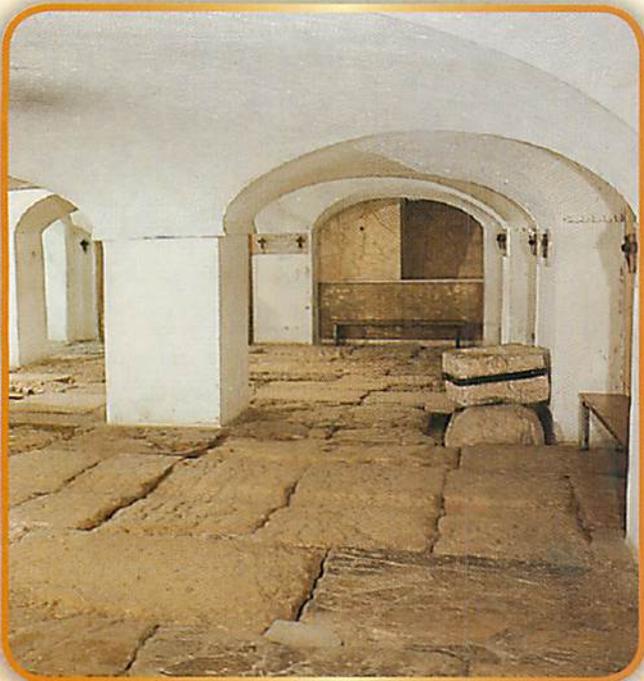
(John 19:16)



Chapels of the Condemnation and Flagellation. The two chapels of the Franciscans stand partially over the Lithostrotos where Jesus traditionally was condemned to death.

The Lithostrotos

"And the soldiers led Him away, into the hall called the 'Praetorium', and clothed Him with purple and plaited a crown of thorns and put it on His head" (Mark 15:17)



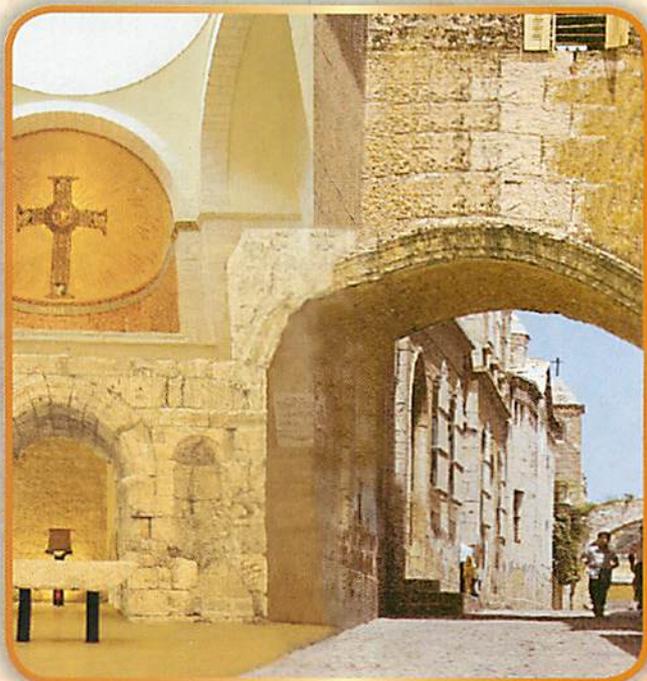
Under the Ecce Homo Convent is a large stone pavement, probably the Roman Forum of Aelia Capitolina, built by Hadrian (2nd Century A.D.)

Here was the beginning of the Passion of Jesus:

- His Condemnation (Lithostrotos)
- The crowning with thorns (the Game of the King)
- The beginning of the Way of the Cross (the Roman road with the striated stones)

The "Ecce Homo" Arch

"And Pilate said to the crowd: 'Behold the Man!'"
(In Latin: **Ecce Homo**) (John 19:5)

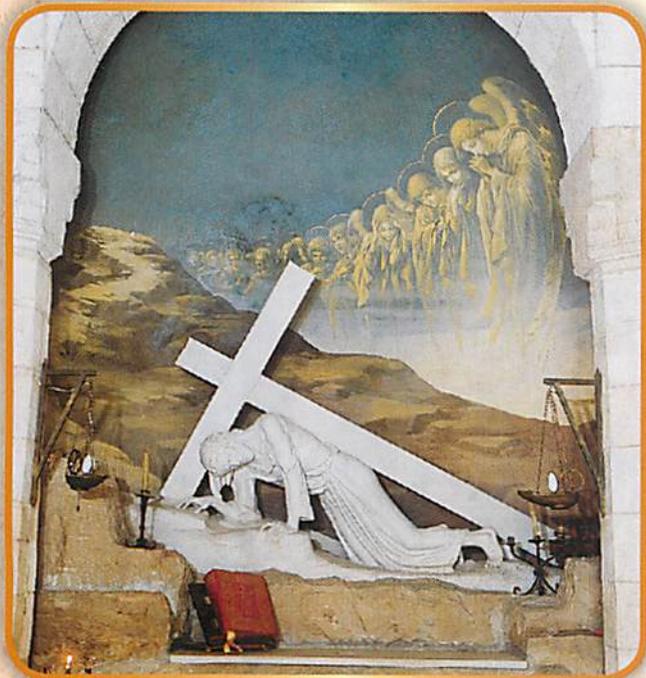


Originally part of a triumphal gate in Hadrian's Aelia Capitolina (2nd Century A.D.), the arch span continues into Ecce Homo Basilica, the traditional spot where Pilate presented the tortured Jesus to the crowd saying, "Behold the Man!"

3

THIRD STATION OF THE CROSS**Jesus falls under the Cross for the first time**

"He who would console me and give me back my life is far from me." (Lamentations 1:16)

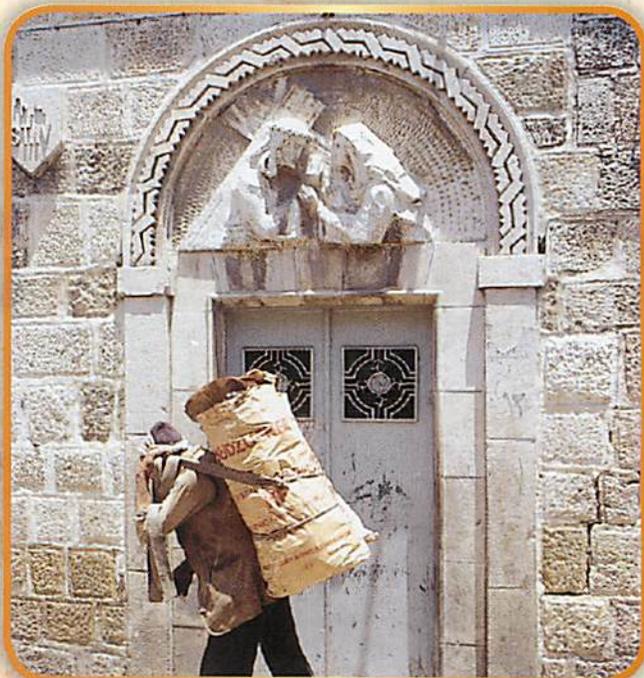


At a corner on El-Wad Road stands the Polish chapel. A high relief above the entrance, by Thaddeus Zielinsky, shows Jesus falling under the cross.

4

FOURTH STATION OF THE CROSS**Jesus meets His Mother**

"All you who pass, look and see: is any sorrow like the sorrow that afflicts me?" (Lamentations 1:12)



Tradition says that Our Lady stood by the roadside in order to see Her Son. Here, in this little Armenian Catholic chapel, her grief and her sadness are remembered.

5

FIFTH STATION OF THE CROSS

Simon the Cyrenian is forced to carry the Cross

"They enlisted a passer-by, Simon of Cyrene, father of Alexander and Rufus, who was coming in from the country, to carry His Cross" (Mark 15:21)



The Fifth Station of the Cross is marked by a Franciscan oratory at the site where the Via Dolorosa ascends steeply to Golgotha.

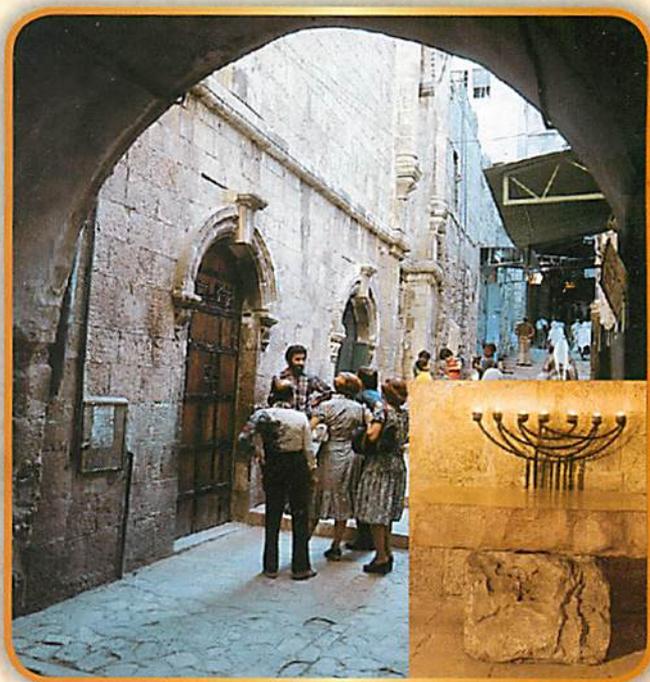
6

SIXTH STATION OF THE CROSS

Veronica wipes the sweat from Jesus' face

"May the Lord's Face shine upon you."

(Numbers 6:25)

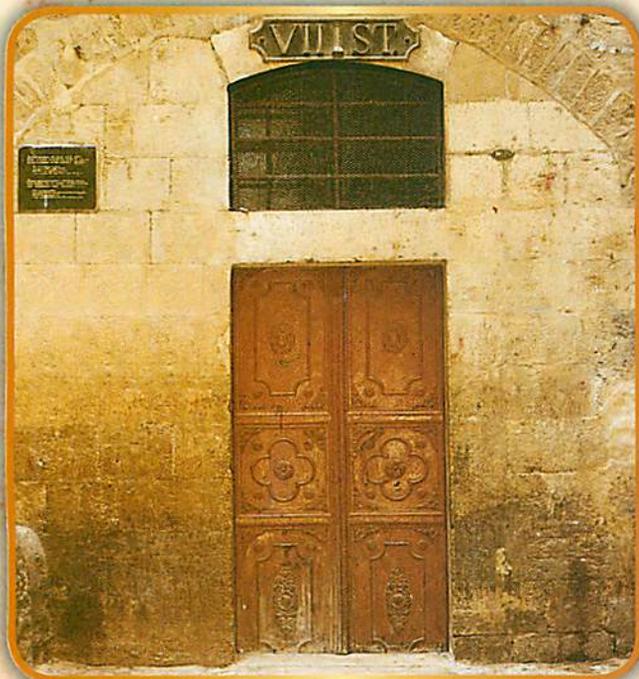


Alter with candelabrum within the chapel of the convent of the Little Sisters of Jesus. It was beautifully restored in 1953 at the traditional site of Veronica's house. Below are ancient remains, possibly of the monastery of Sts. Cosmas and Damian, built in 546-563.

7

SEVENTH STATION OF THE CROSS**Jesus falls for the second time**

"With their affliction, He was afflicted. In His love and His pity He redeemed them." (Is. 63:9)



A great Roman column, housed in a Franciscan chapel, marks Jesus' second fall, just as He was leaving the city through a gate. Tradition tells us that His death notice was posted here. Hence the Christian name for the site: "Judgment Gate".

8

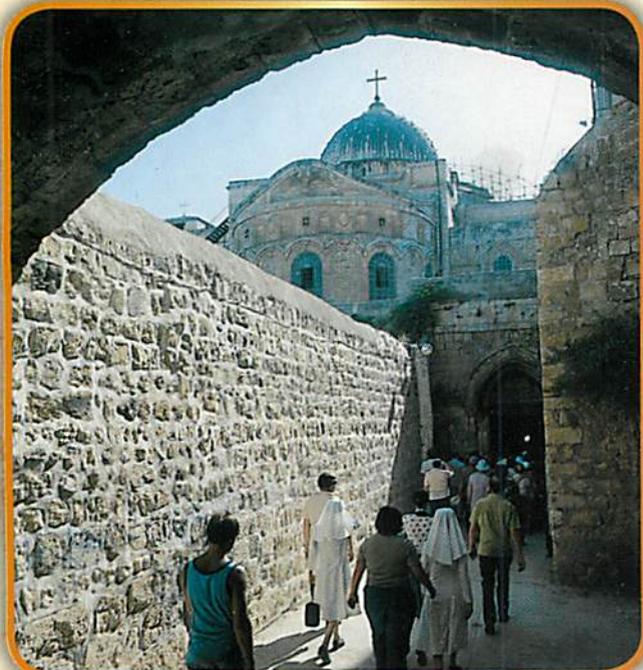
EIGHTH STATION OF THE CROSS**Jesus consoles the women of Jerusalem**

"Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over Me. Weep rather over yourselves and your children. For if green wood is treated thus, how will the dry wood be treated?" (Luke 23:28)



The Eighth Station is marked by a Latin Cross on the wall of the Greek Monastery

9

NINTH STATION OF THE CROSS**Jesus falls for the third time***"I have come to do your will, O God." (PS 40:8)*

A Roman Column marks the Ninth Station. Close by are the apse and roof of the Holy Sepulchre Basilica, a reminder that Jesus collapsed within sight of the place of his Crucifixion.

10

TENTH STATION OF THE CROSS**Jesus is stripped of His garments***"From the sole of the foot to the head are bruises and sores and bleeding wounds." (IS 1:6)*

The next five Stations of the Cross are within the Basilica. Stairs lead up to the Chapel of the Stripping of Jesus' Garments.

11

ELEVENTH STATION OF THE CROSS

Jesus is nailed to the Cross

"They have pierced My hands and My feet. They have numbered all my bones." (PS. 22)

"He came to the Place of the Skull (in Hebrew "Golgotha") where they crucified Him." (John 19:17)



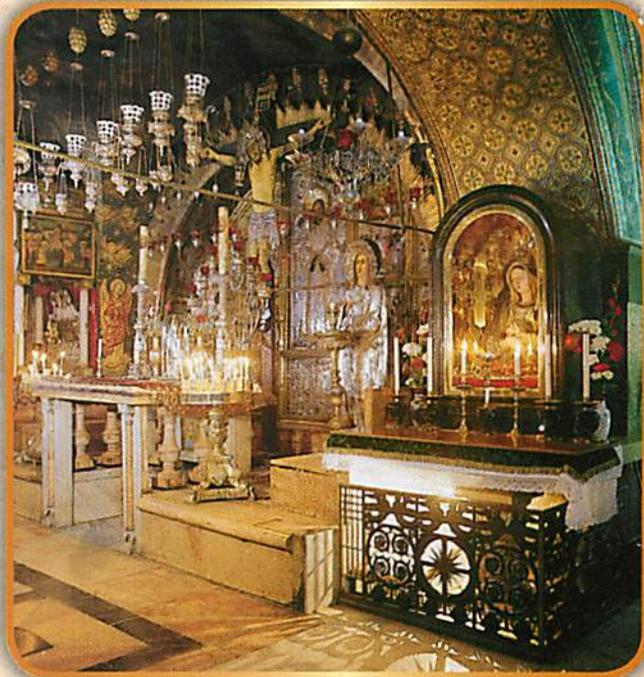
The main Latin shrine, wonderfully redecorated with mosaics in 1938, marks the place where Jesus was nailed to the Cross, within sight of His Mother.

12

TWELFTH STATION OF THE CROSS

Jesus dies on the Cross

"Jesus cried, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachtani?,' that is 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?,' once more uttering a loud cry, Jesus gave up His spirit." (Matt. 27:50)



This Greek altar, ornamented in Eastern style, stands over the Rock of Calvary. It is over the place where the crosses of Jesus and the two thieves were erected. In the bedrock beneath is a large crack caused by an earthquake that took place on the day Jesus died. The little altar between the main ones on Calvary is adorned with a statue in wood, fashioned in the 16th Century and sent from Lisbon in 1778. It recalls the grief of Mary and symbolizes the eternal grief of mothers at the death of their children.

13

THIRTEENTH STATION OF THE CROSS

Jesus is taken down from the Cross

“Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the council, and a disciple of Jesus, went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took the body of Jesus down.” (Luke 25:53)
The Mother of Jesus was there.



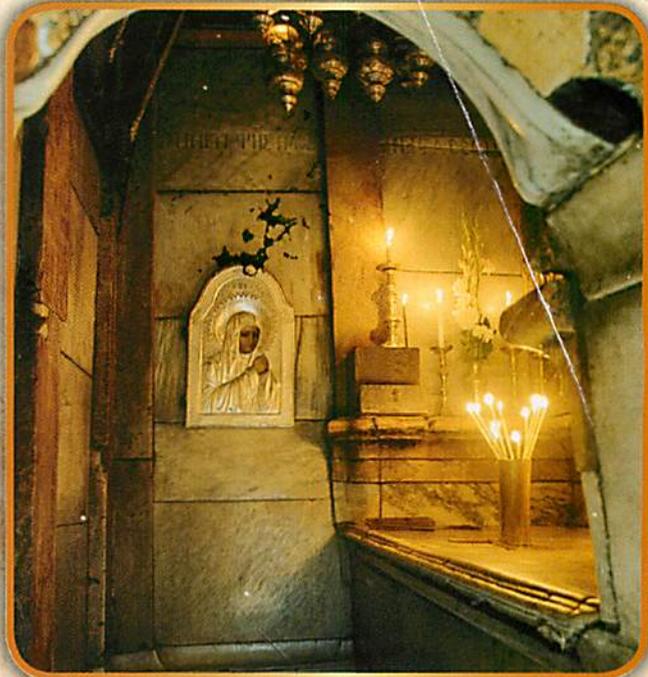
Stone of the Anointment were they put Jesus after his death.

14

FOURTEENTH STATION OF THE CROSS

Jesus is laid in the Tomb

“And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean, linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb which he had hewn out in the rock. Then he rolled a stone before the entrance of the tomb.” (Matt. 27:59)



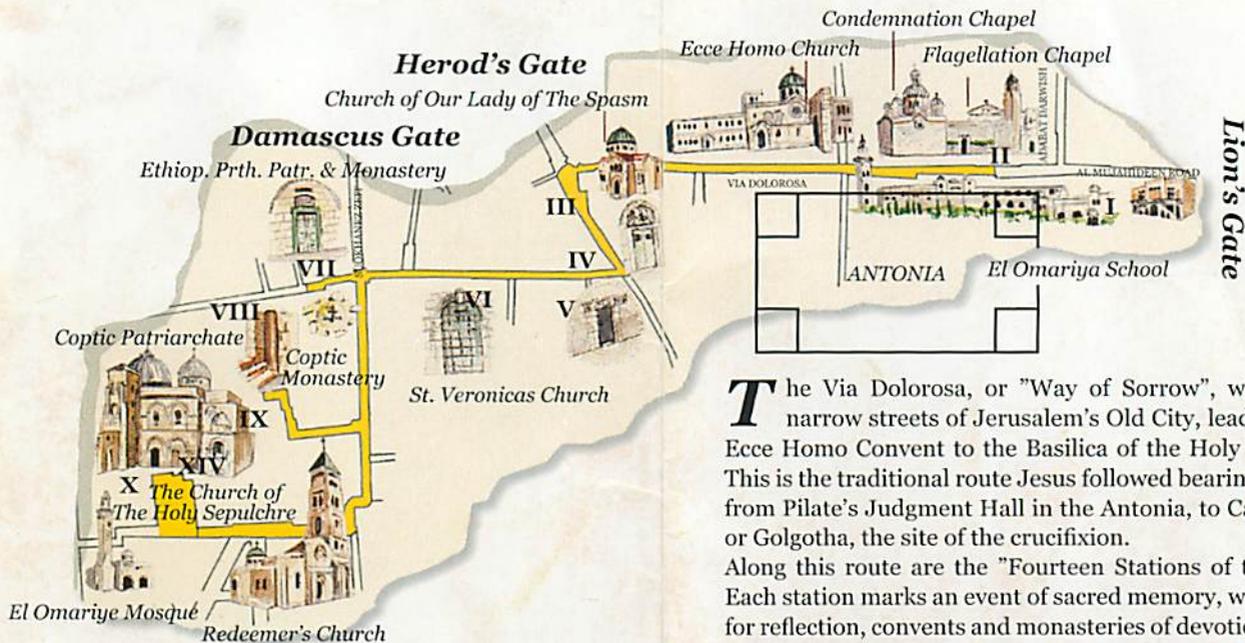
Christendom's most sacred place. The site of Jesus' burial and Resurrection, housed in its own chapel, is the focal point of the entire Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, erected by the Crusaders on Byzantine foundations, dating to the time of Constantine the Great.

VIA DOLOROSA

WHAT IS A "HOLY PLACE"?

It is not, actually, the place where Jesus walked. It is:

- Where the Church venerates a mystery of Christ's life.
- A place sanctified by the prayers of the Faithful.



The Via Dolorosa, or "Way of Sorrow", winds along narrow streets of Jerusalem's Old City, leads from the Ecce Homo Convent to the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre. This is the traditional route Jesus followed bearing His cross from Pilate's Judgment Hall in the Antonia, to Calvary Hill, or Golgotha, the site of the crucifixion.

Along this route are the "Fourteen Stations of the Cross". Each station marks an event of sacred memory, with chapels for reflection, convents and monasteries of devotion, and the sacred basilica for commemoration – along Christendom's most hallowed road.



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