

“Not to Abolish but to Fulfill”: The Eucharistic Covenant

Dr. Geoffrey E. Ludvik
Dept. of Sacred Scripture (Hebrew Bible)
Holy Apostles College and Seminary

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Holy Apostles College and Seminary

“Think not that I have come to abolish the Law and the Prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them.” (Matthew 5:17)

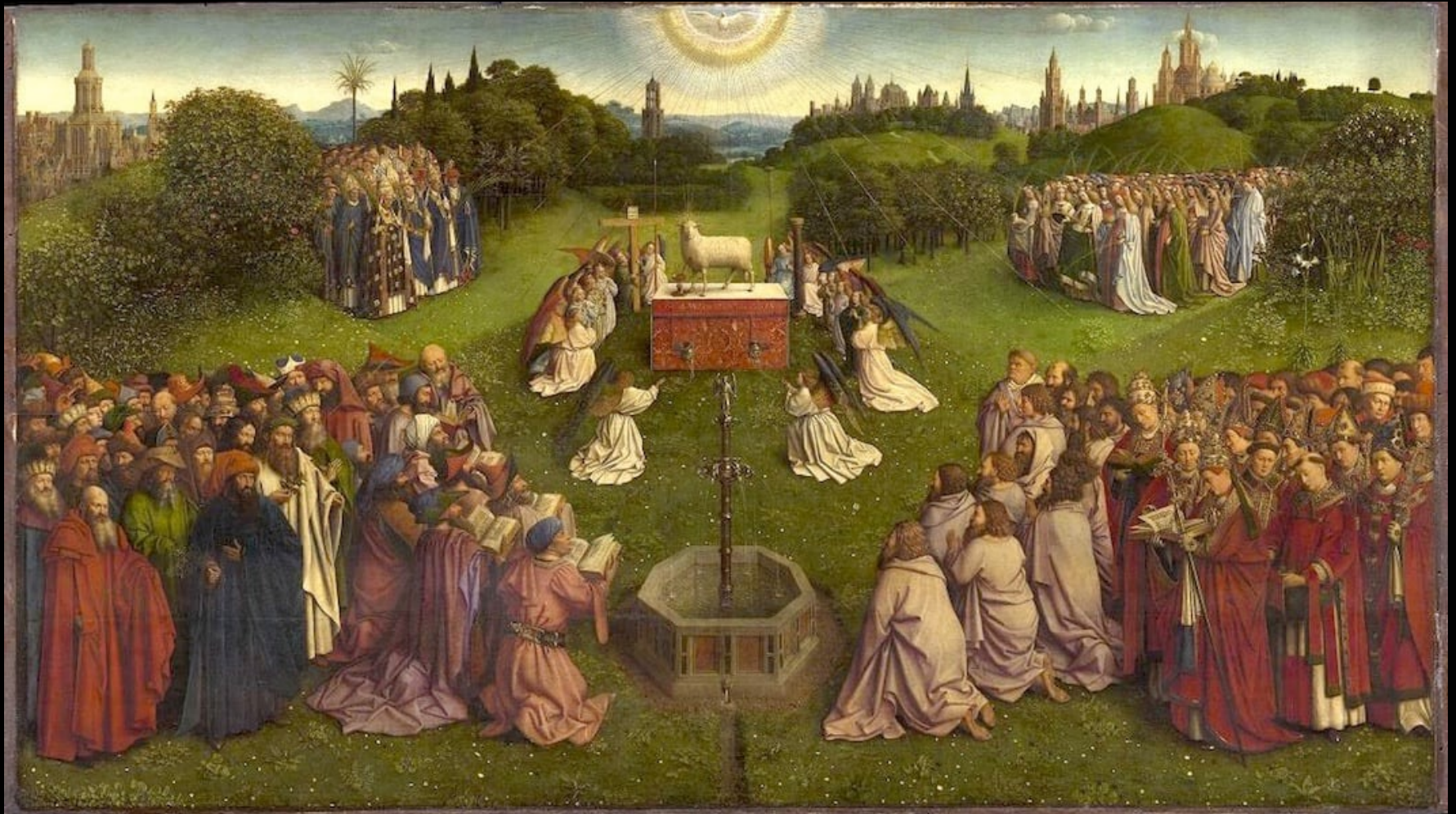


“The New Testament lies
hidden in the Old and the
Old Testament is unveiled
in the New.”

– CCC 129 citing St.
Augustine, *Quaest. in Hept.*
2, 73: PL 34,623



I. The Old Testament Context of the First Eucharist



The Lamb of God, Luke 22, and the Last Supper: Institution of the Holy Eucharist

Background: The OT Passover Sacrifice



PRIEST

HIGH PRIEST.

LEVITE.

Primary duty of priests in
OT: **to offer sacrifice**



THE TABERNACLE TENT

The entire tent was 45 feet (13.7 m) long, 15 feet (4.6 m) wide, and 15 feet (4.6 m) high. It was a wooden skeletal structure, overlaid with gold, with no solid roof or front wall (Ex. 26:15–29). Five wooden bars (overlaid with gold) passed through rings attached to each frame (Ex. 26:26–30).

The Most Holy Place was a 15-foot (4.6-m) cube, containing only the ark of the covenant (Ex. 25:10–22; 37:1–9). It was here that Yahweh would descend to meet with his people in a cloud theophany (divine appearance). The high priest could enter only once a year, on the Day of Atonement (see note on Heb. 9:7).

The framed structure was covered by four layers of cloth and skin (Ex. 26:1–14).

The table for the bread of the Presence (Ex. 25:23–30)

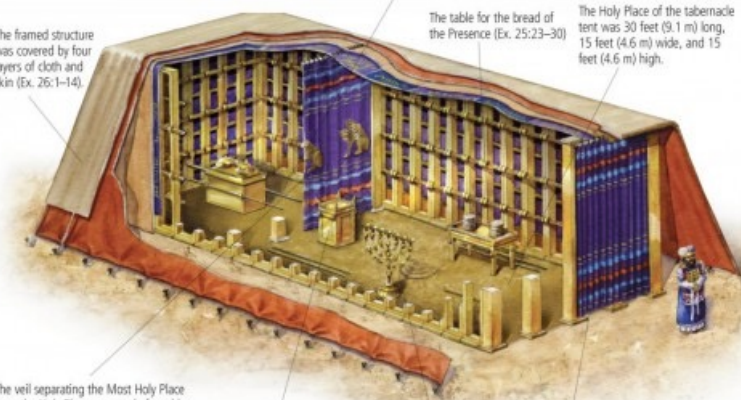
The Holy Place of the tabernacle tent was 30 feet (9.1 m) long, 15 feet (4.6 m) wide, and 15 feet (4.6 m) high.

The veil separating the Most Holy Place from the Holy Place was made from blue, purple, and scarlet dyed yarns woven with fine twined linen and embroidered with cherubim (Ex. 26:31–33). It hung on four golden pillars.

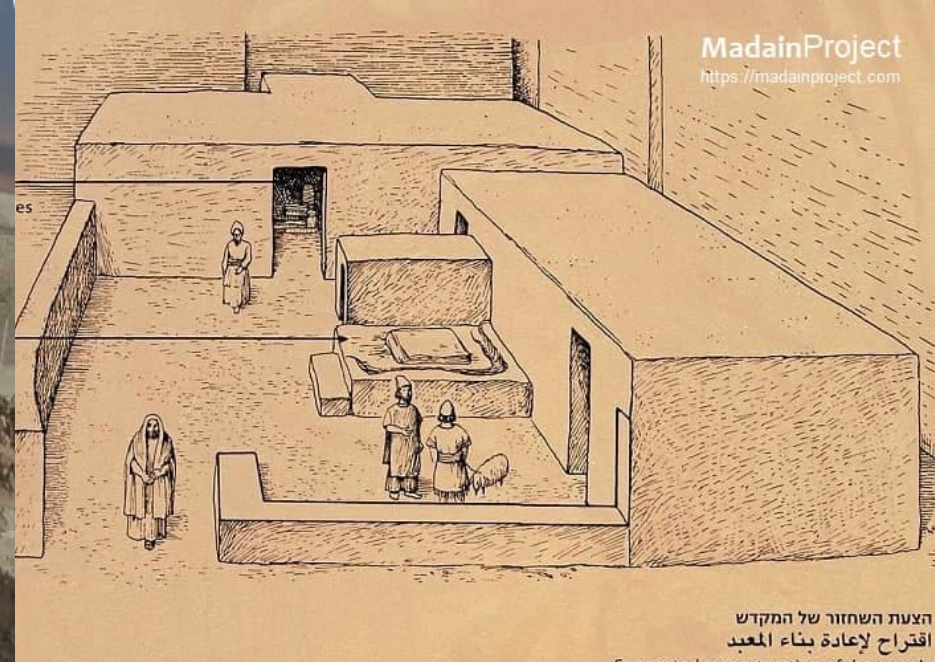
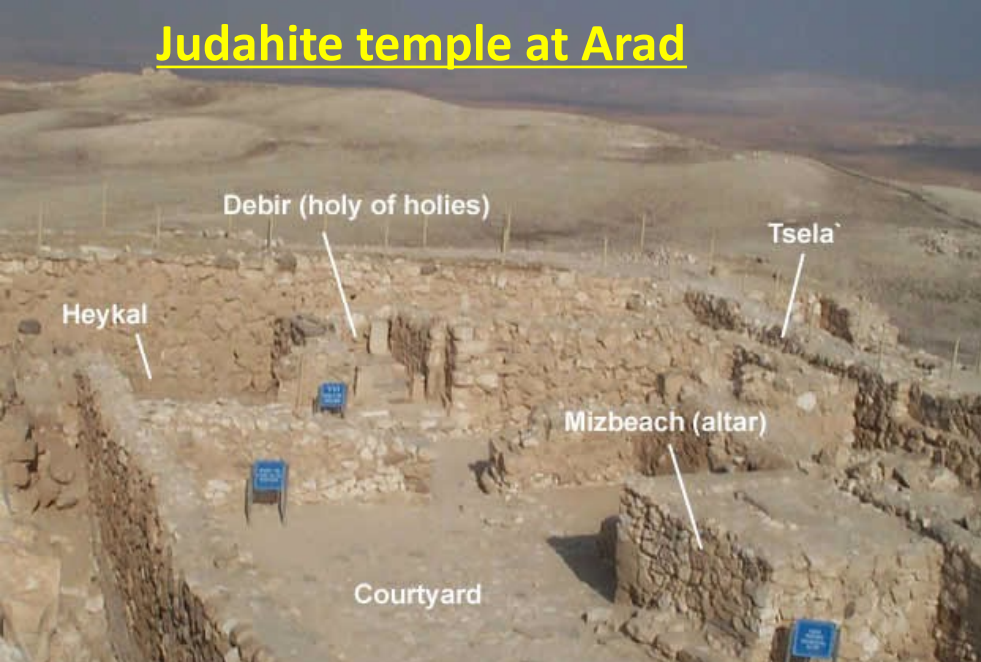
The altar of incense (Ex. 30:1–5; 37:25–29)

The golden lampstand (Ex. 25:31–40; 37:17–24)

The veil that formed the entrance to the tabernacle was similar to the veil separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place, except that cherubim were not embroidered on it. It was suspended on five golden pillars (Ex. 26:36–37).



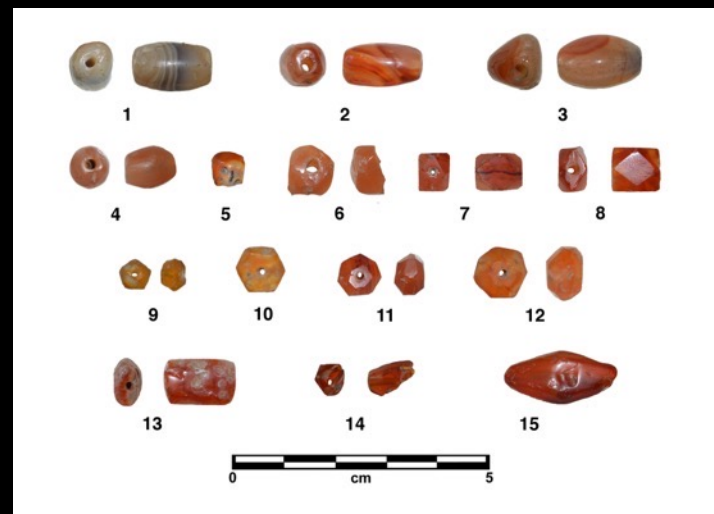
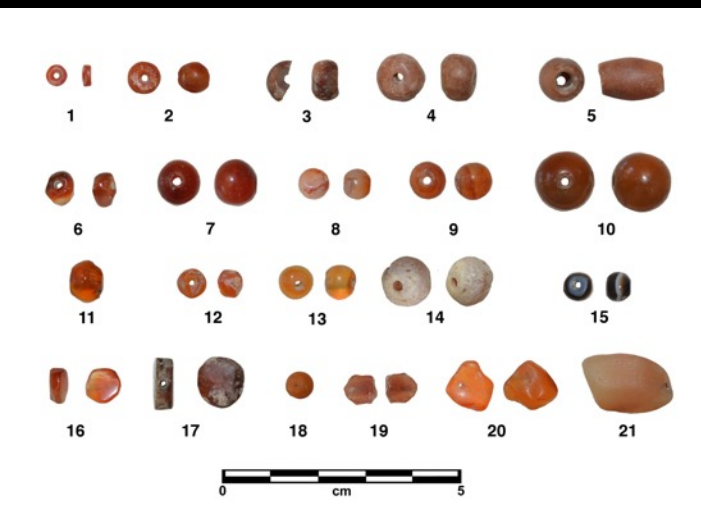
Judahite temple at Arad



הצעת השחזור של המקדש
اقتراح لإعادة بناء المعبد
Suggested reconstruction of the temple



The Temple Mount, Jerusalem



INSIDE THE HOLY PLACE

(cutaway view)

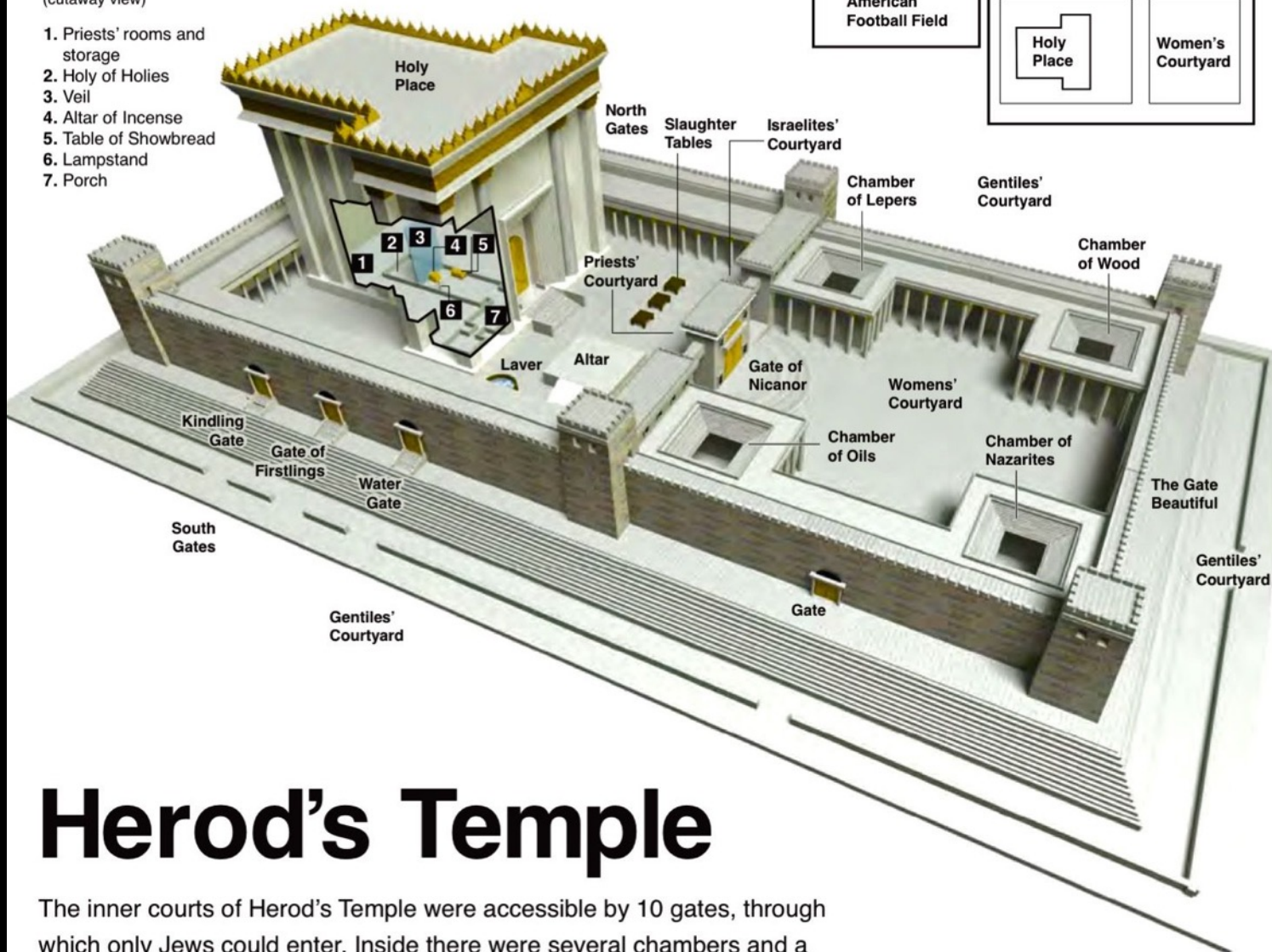
1. Priests' rooms and storage
2. Holy of Holies
3. Veil
4. Altar of Incense
5. Table of Showbread
6. Lampstand
7. Porch

Size comparison (approximate):

American Football Field

Holy Place

Women's Courtyard



Herod's Temple

The inner courts of Herod's Temple were accessible by 10 gates, through which only Jews could enter. Inside there were several chambers and a courtyard where sacrifices were made. At one end was the holy place—a two-room sanctuary used by Jewish priests. The expansive building project of Herod's Second Temple and Temple Mount was completed in approximately AD 62–64, only to be destroyed by the Romans in AD 70.

Lambs for the Temple



Bedouin Shepherd, ca. 1920 AD, Jerusalem

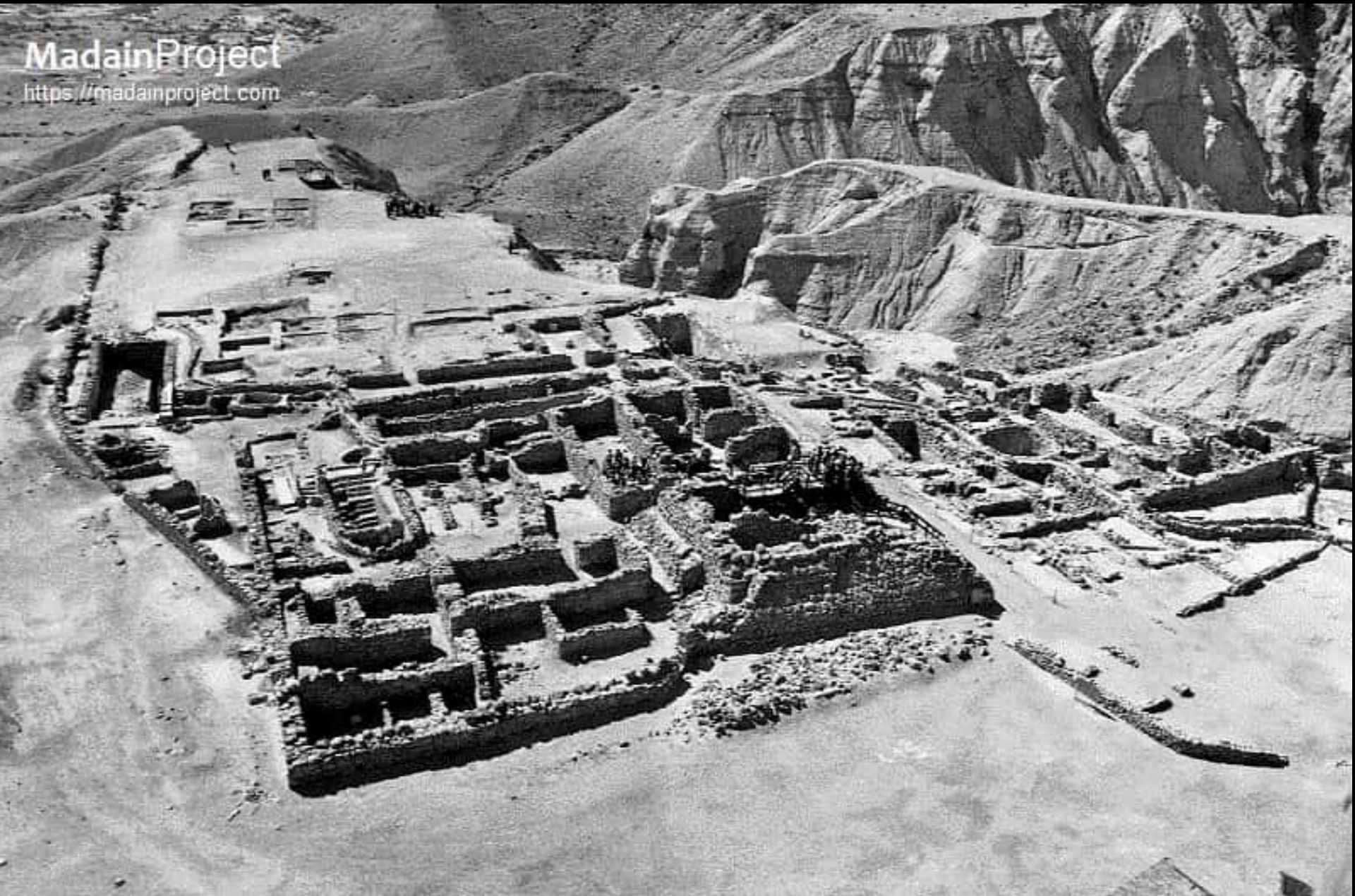
- ~ Animal bones from dump near Temple Mount dated 37 BC to 66 AD
- ~ Isotope analysis indicates “pilgrimage economy”, animals originating hundreds of miles away imported. Age profile suggests sacrificial nature.

The Passover Meal



The Qumran Essene Community

MadainProject
<https://madainproject.com>



The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Messianic Banquet

“They assemble themselves together again into one place, and when they have clothed themselves in white veils, they then bathe their bodies in cold water. And after this purification is over, they every one meet together in an apartment of their own, into which it is not permitted to any of another sect to enter; while they go, after a pure manner, into the dining-room, as into a certain holy temple, and quietly set themselves down; upon which the baker lays them loaves in order; the cook also brings a single plate of one sort of food, and sets it before every one of them; but a priest says grace before meat; and it is unlawful for any one to taste of the food before grace be said. The same priest, when he hath dined, says grace again after meat; and when they begin, and when they end, they praise God, as he that bestows their food upon them.”

--Flavius Josephus, Wars of the Jews, 2.130



When did the Last Supper occur?

Matthew, Mark, Luke: Last Supper is a Passover Meal

John: Jesus was crucified on the eve of Passover

= Contradiction?

A solution:

Multiple sacrificial calendars in use in 1st century: Essene vs. Temple

(c.f. different dates for Easter, Christmas in Catholic and Orthodox calendars today)



The Old Testament and the Eucharistic Covenant

1. Day of Unleavened Bread: in OT, Passover was followed by weeklong Festival of Unleavened Bread. **Holy Week takes place in OT context.**
2. Reclined at table with Apostles, John 13:1-20 takes place— washing of feet. **Table service and banquet with disciples has priestly overtones.**
3. **Jesus presides** at Last Supper, first to reach for cup, first to reach for bread. No lamb?: **“God will provide Himself the lamb” (Gen. 22:8)**



4. **Jesus gives thanks** (Gk. *eucharisteo*), blessing and consecrating food = Jesus shows Himself a **priest**.

5. Jesus shows Himself the **King** by stressing the coming of the Kingdom: Luke 22: 16, 18

6. "THIS IS MY BODY WHICH IS GIVEN FOR YOU. DO THIS IN **REMEMBERENCE** OF ME."

Anamnesis = memorial sacrifice prescribed by Leviticus (Lev. 24:7); liturgical act asking God to remember his covenant



7. “THIS CUP WHICH IS POURED OUT FOR YOU IS THE **NEW COVENANT** IN MY BLOOD.”

“The days are coming says the LORD God, when I will make a **new covenant** with the House of Israel and the House of Judah not like the covenant which I made with them when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt –my covenant which they broke. I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts...They shall all know me...for I will forgive their iniquity.” (Jer. 31:31-34)



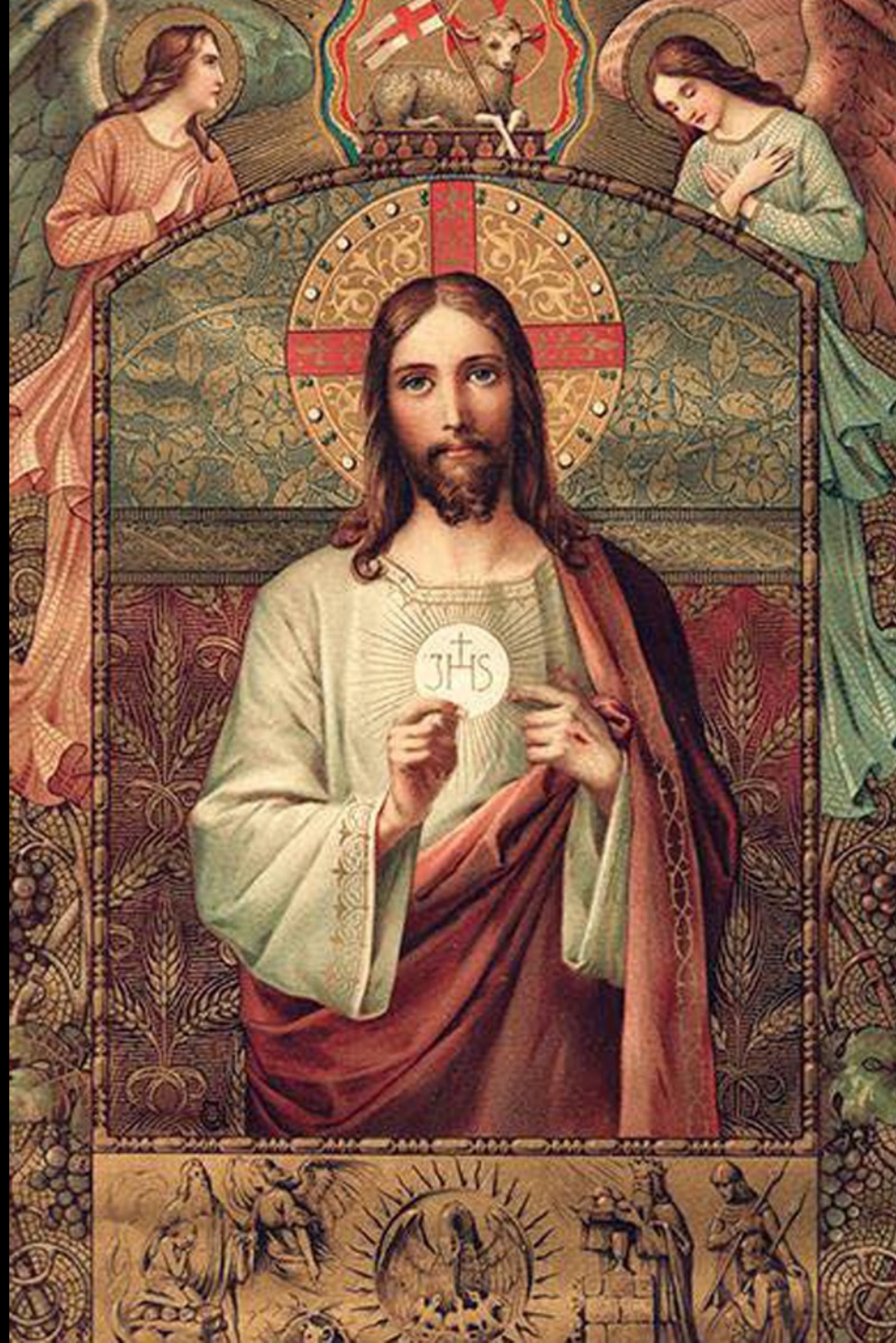
8. “You are those who have continued with me in my trials; and I covenant to you, as my Father covenanted to me, a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the Twelve Tribes of Israel.” (Luke 22:28-30, alt.)

Gk. diatithemi = covenant-making; only 1 in OT involved a Kingdom: Davidic
Jesus reestablishes the Kingdom of David and Solomon in the Church
through the Eucharist.



“No casual meal, the Last Supper unfolds according to Jewish sacred meal traditions ultimately connected to the Temple and the priesthood. Most of all, this is *a covenant meal that symbolized and actualized each diner’s participation in the new covenant*, just as partaking in the Passover joined every Israelite to the Covenant of Moses, and partaking in the Essene meal joined every Essene...”

– Dr. John Bergsma, *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 119-120.



II. The Early Church and the Centrality of the Eucharist

Acts of the Apostles and the Eucharist:

Since its foundation by Jesus Christ, the Early Church's Eucharistic Theology was Catholic.

~ The rite of the “Breaking of the Bread” in Acts and Pauline Epistles



The Early Church Fathers

- ~ Highlight Eucharist and Baptism as central to life of the Church
- ~ Emphasize obedience to and unity with the Bishop, presbyters (priests), Bishop of Rome
- ~ Regard the Eucharistic presence of Christ as REAL— not merely symbolic



The Church Fathers, 11th century Kievan Rus miniature icon

St. Ignatius of Antioch (d. A.D. 110)

“I have no taste for corruptible food nor for the pleasures of this life. I desire the bread of God, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, who was of the seed of David; and for drink I desire his blood, which is love incorruptible” (Letter to the Romans 7:3 [A.D. 110]).

“Take note of those who hold heterodox opinions on the grace of Jesus Christ which has come to us, and see how contrary their opinions are to the mind of God. . . . They abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer because they do not confess that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, flesh which suffered for our sins and which that Father, in his goodness, raised up again. They who deny the gift of God are perishing in their disputes” (Letter to the Smyrnaeans 6:2–7:1 [A.D. 110]).



St. Justin Martyr (d. 165 A.D.)

“We call this food Eucharist, and no one else is permitted to partake of it, except one who believes our teaching to be true and who has been washed in the washing which is for the remission of sins and for regeneration [i.e., has received baptism] and is thereby living as Christ enjoined. For not as common bread nor common drink do we receive these; but since Jesus Christ our Savior was made incarnate by the word of God and had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so too, as we have been taught, the food which has been made into the Eucharist by the Eucharistic prayer set down by him, and by the change of which our blood and flesh is nurtured, is both the flesh and the blood of that incarnated Jesus” (*First Apology* 66 [A.D. 151]).



See more at: <https://www.churchfathers.org/the-real-presence>

Development and Elaboration of Ritual: the 2nd century AD (100's)

A description of the Eucharist in the *Didache*, a text of instructions of the second century CE.

“And concerning the Eucharist (giving of thanks) give thanks as follows: First over the cup—We give you thanks, our Father, for the holy vine of David your servant, which you have made known to us through Jesus, your servant; to you be the glory for ever. Over the broken bread—We give you thanks, our Father, for the life and knowledge which you have made known to us through Jesus, your servant; to you be the glory for ever. And after you are satiated with food give thanks as follows: We give you thanks, Holy Father, for your holy name which you have caused to dwell in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality which you have made known to us through Jesus, your servant; to you be the glory for ever... ” (*Didache* 9; Holmes ed. 1999: 260–261).

This text suggests that the Eucharist was followed by a meal. On the other hand, Justinus Martyr, while giving a similar description of the Eucharist in the middle of the second century CE, speaks only of partaking of the bread and the wine and makes no mention of a meal, only of offerings, apparently of food, which the faithful brought and the priest collected and later distributed to the needy: widows and orphans, sick people, prisoners and strangers.

3rd century Liturgical Formulae: the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus of Rome

Apostolic Tradition, Hippolytus of Rome (215 CE):

- * Records Christian liturgy in use at least in Alexandria, Rome, Ethiopia (Aksum), and Syria by end of 3rd century
- * Local liturgical variation tempered with trends towards formulae/rubrics

Part 1, Ch. 4: Liturgy at the Consecration of a New Bishop

¹And when he is made bishop, all shall offer him the kiss of peace, for he has been made worthy. ²To him then the deacons shall bring the offering, and he, laying his hand upon it, with all the presbytery, shall say as the thanksgiving:
³The Lord be with you.

And all shall say

And with thy spirit.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up unto the Lord.

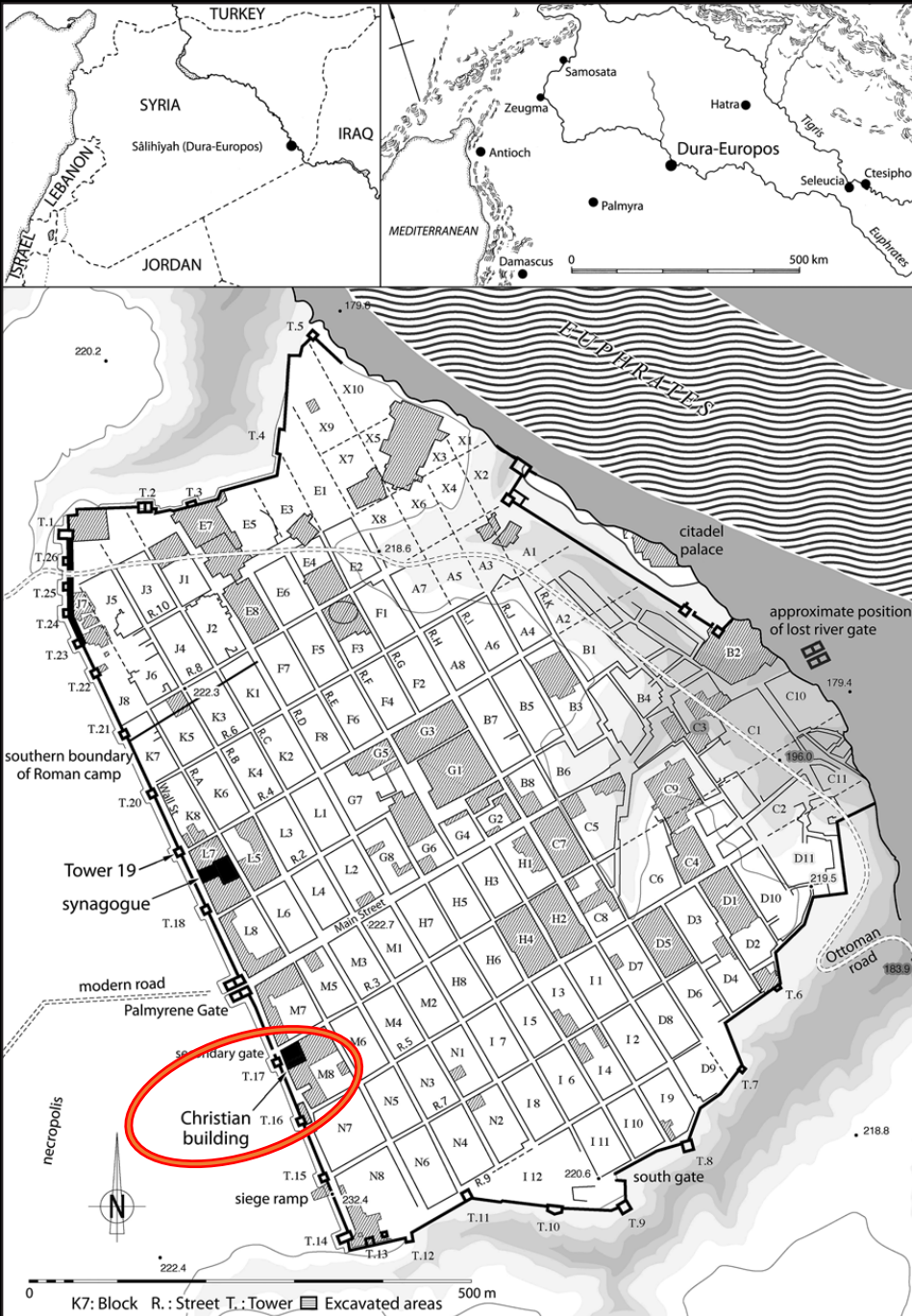
Let us give thanks to the Lord.

It is right and just.

And then he shall proceed immediately:

⁴We give thee thanks, O God, through thy beloved Servant Jesus Christ, whom at the end of time thou didst send to us a Savior and Redeemer and the Messenger of thy counsel. ⁵Who is thy Word, inseparable from thee; through whom thou didst make all things and in whom thou art well pleased. ⁶Whom thou didst send from heaven into the womb of the Virgin, and who, dwelling within her, was made flesh, and was manifested as thy Son, being born of [the] Holy Spirit and the Virgin. ⁷Who, fulfilling thy will, and winning for himself a holy people, spread out his hands when he came to suffer, that by his death he might set free them who believed in thee. ⁸Who, when he was betrayed to his willing death, that he might bring to nothing death, and break the bonds of the devil, and tread hell under foot, and give light to the righteous, and set up a boundary post, and manifest his resurrection, taking bread and giving thanks to thee said: **⁹Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you. And likewise also the cup, saying: This is my blood, which is shed for you.** ¹⁰As often as ye perform this, perform my memorial.

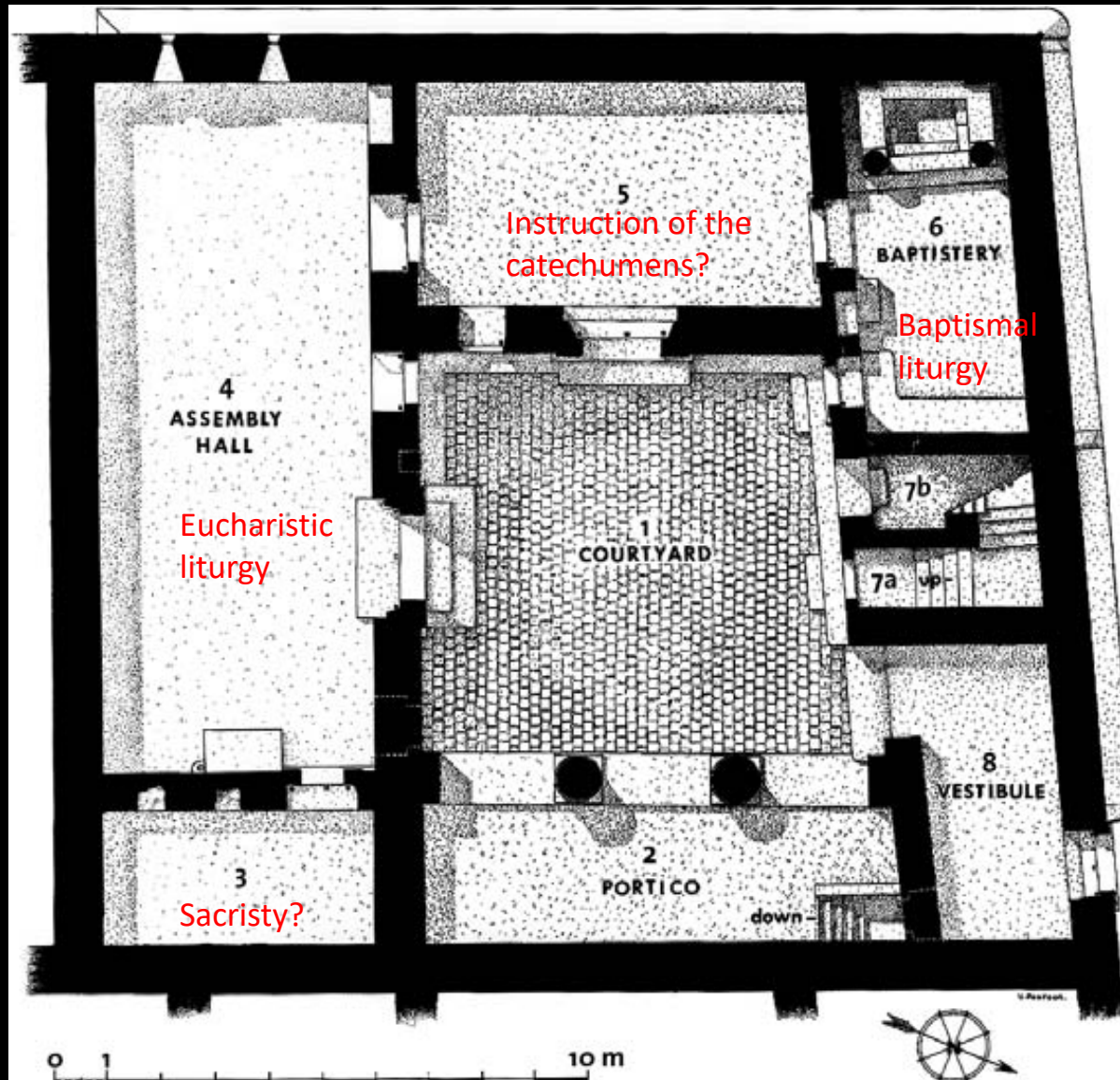
The House-Church at Dura-Europos



- * Roman city on the Euphrates River in Syria
- * Besieged, conquered by Persians in 257 CE
- * 25-50% of the population = Roman army
- * “Marketplace of religions”
- * Mithraeum, Jewish Synagogue, and Christian House Church

Fig. 2. Dura-Europos: *top*, location of this site against modern (left) and third-century (right) geography; *bottom*, plan of the site under Roman rule (adapted from James 2004, fig. 3).

Use of Space and Behavioral Reconstruction



House-Church at Dura-Europos

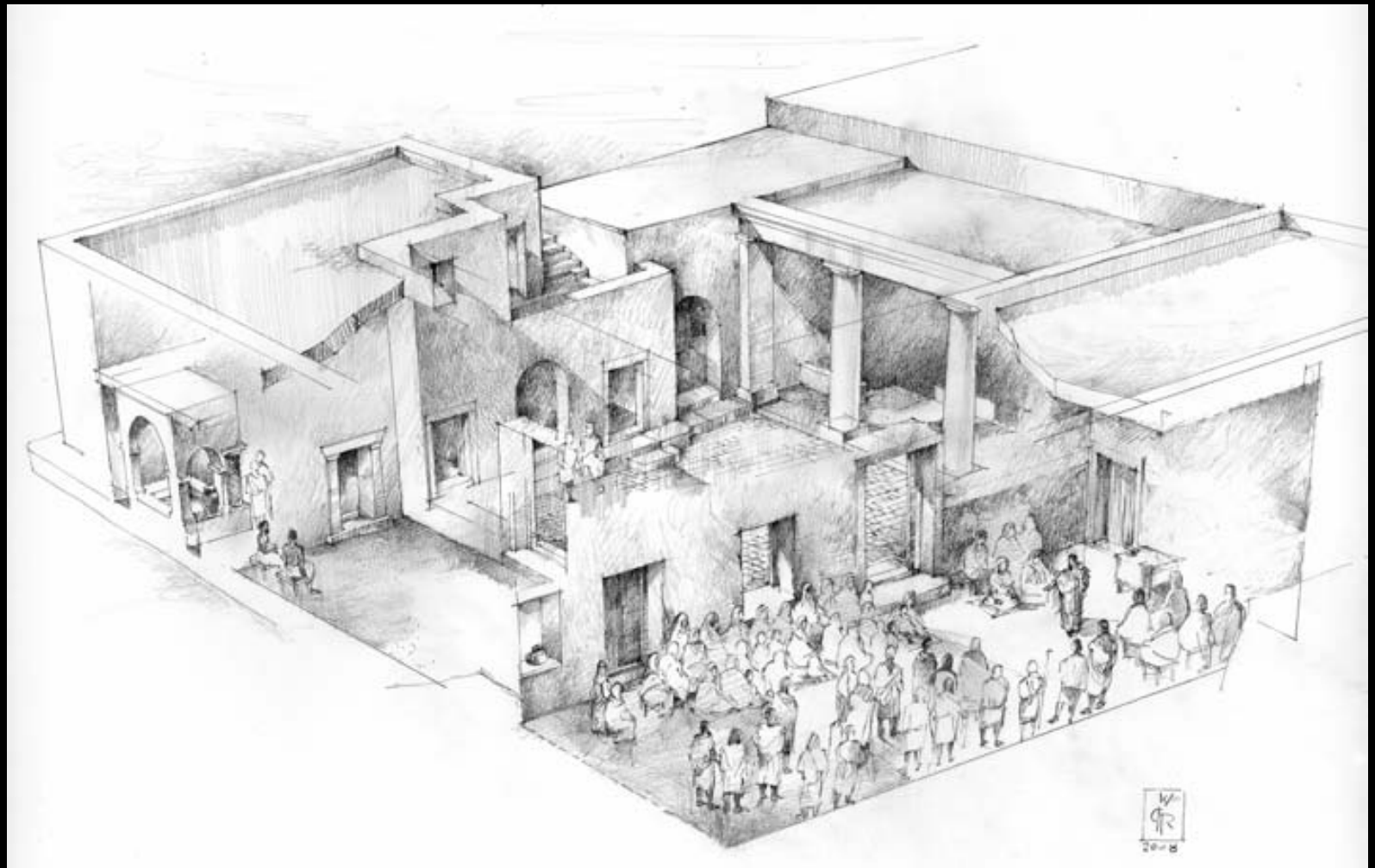


Fig. 1.4. Hypothetical reconstruction with congregants in the house-church.
(Wlodek Prosol)

Baptistry of the House-Church at Dura-Europos





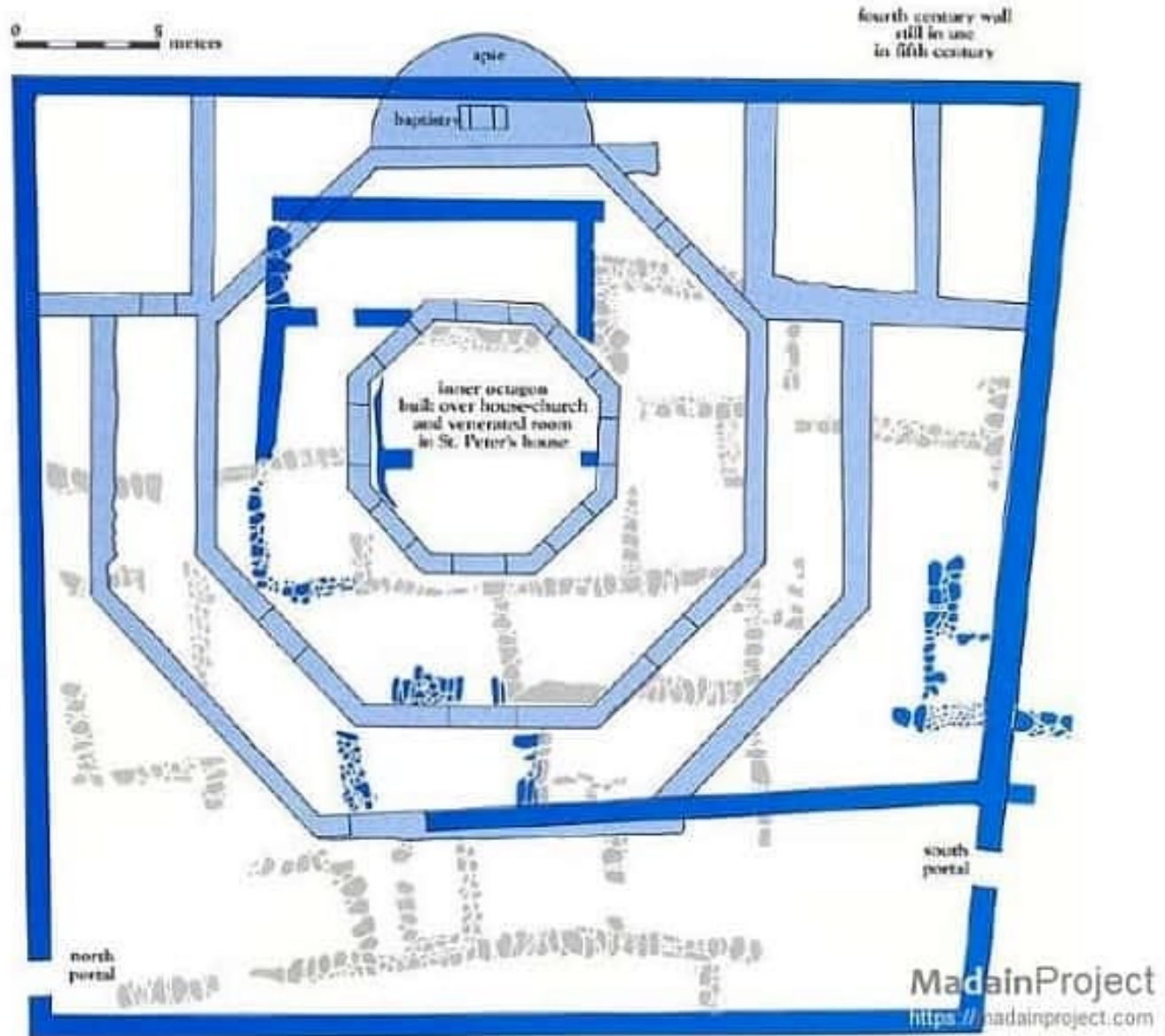
Baptistery Frescoes

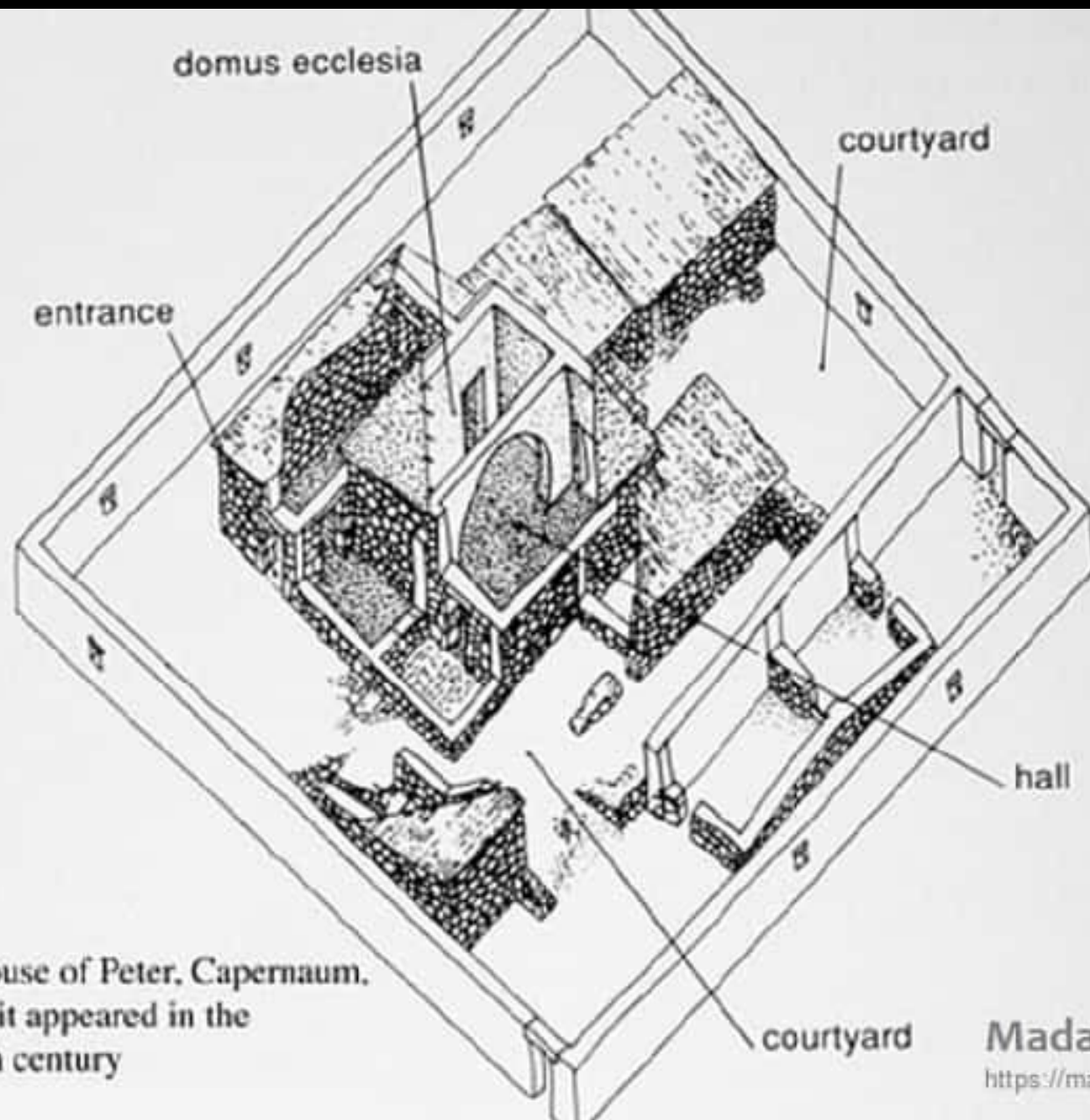


House-Church at Capernaum



House-Church at Capernaum





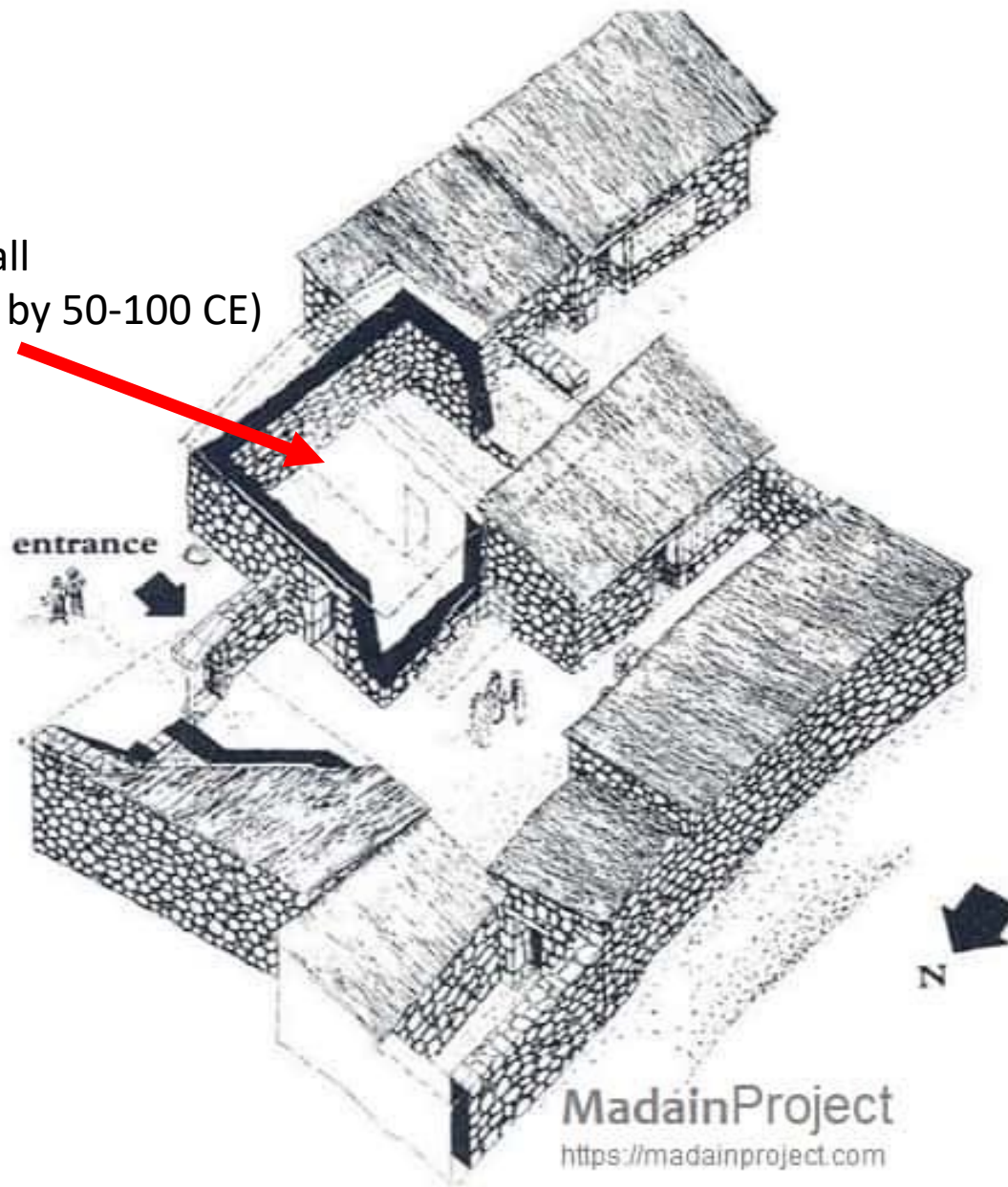
House of Peter, Capernaum,
as it appeared in the
5th century



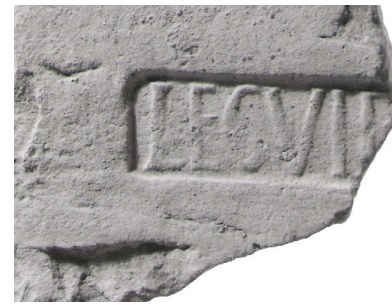
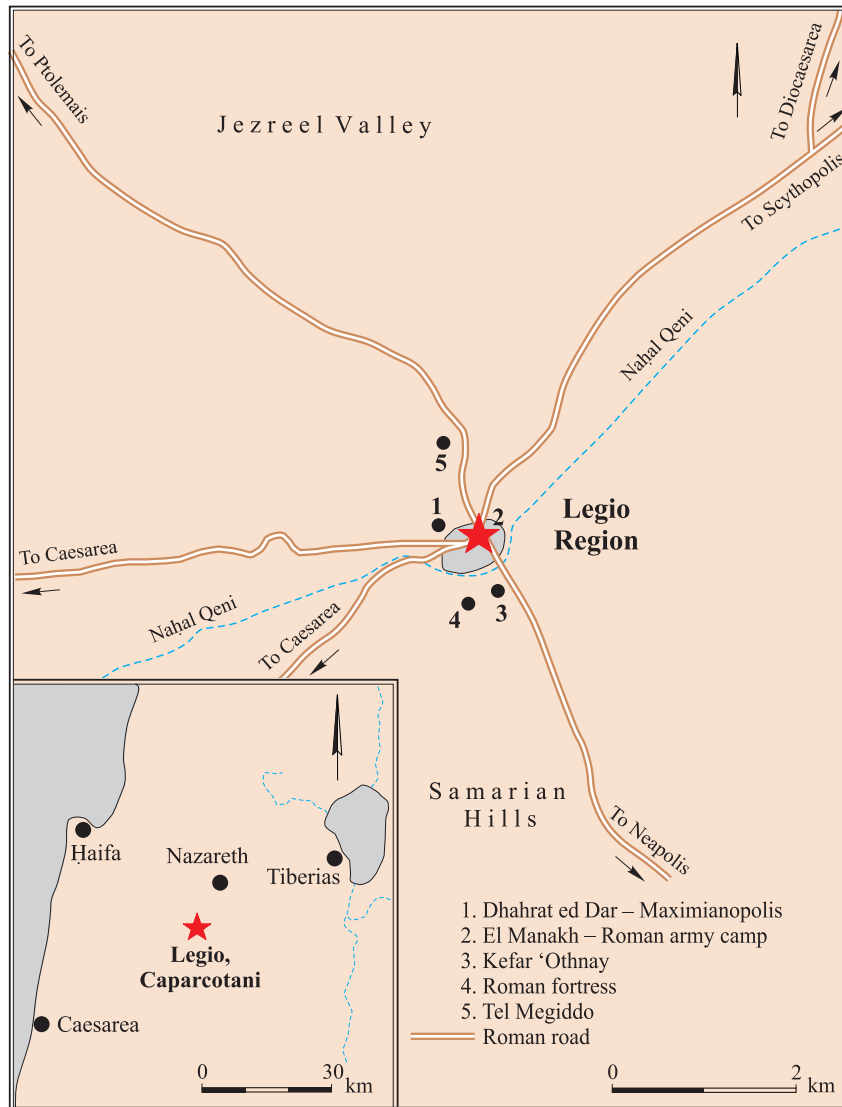
MadainProject
<https://madainproject.com>

Plaster floor of the *Domus Ecclesia* at Capernaum: mid-1st century CE

Plastered inner hall
(excavators argue by 50-100 CE)



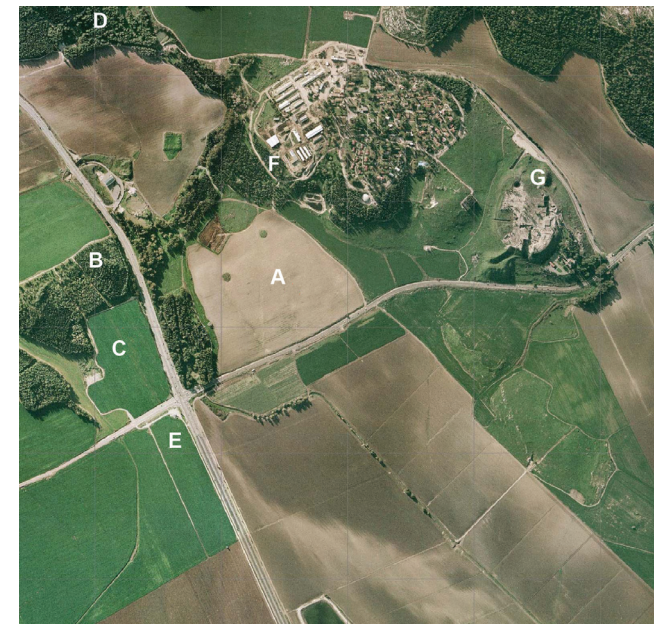
Christian Church at Legio, Israel



Roof tile bearing the stamp of the Sixth Legion Ferrata.



Roof tile bearing the stamp of the Second Legion Traiana (courtesy of H. Abu 'Uqsa).



- A Roman legion camp
- B Roman fortress
- C Kefar 'Othnay
- D Nahal Qeni
- E Megiddo junction
- F Maximianopolis
- G Tel Megiddo

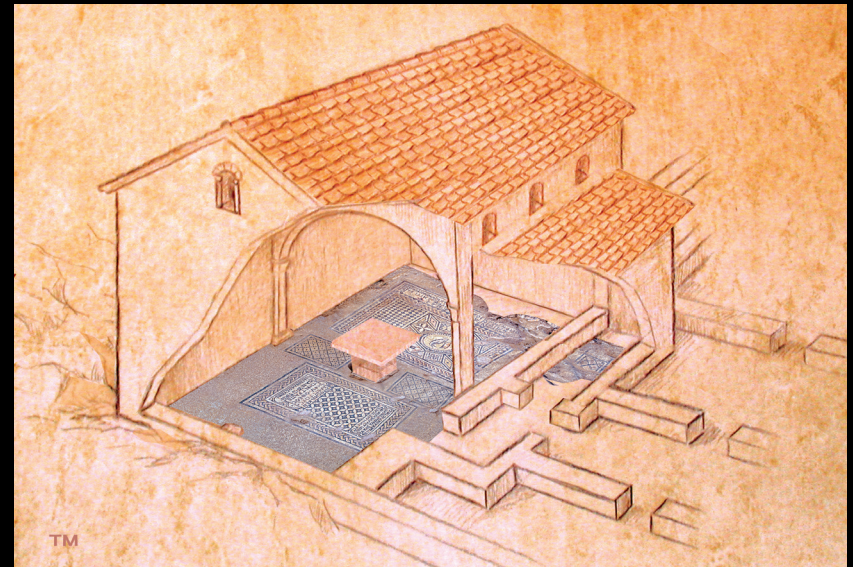
Aerial photograph of the Legio region, looking west (produced by the Israel Nature and Parks Authority).

Area Q at Kefar 'Othnay Settlement



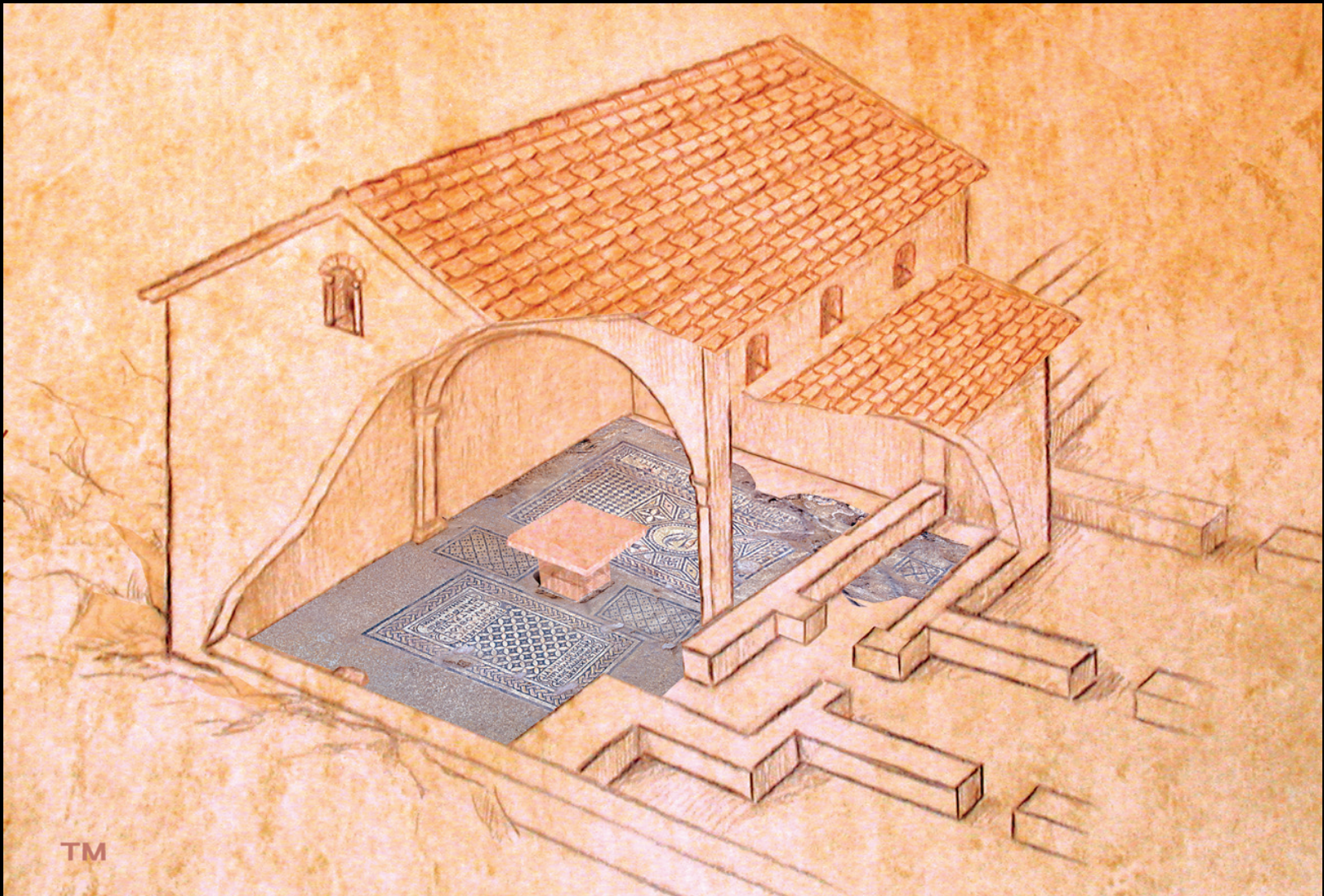
Reconstruction of the Legio area: the outskirts of the settlement (Area Q) in the foreground; the Roman army camp in the background (by T. Melchin).

3rd century CE: officers quarters, associated settlement for semi-permanent legionary outpost. One of the structures was revealed to be a Christian prayer hall.



Reconstruction of the Christian prayer hall (by T. Melchin).

Christian Prayer Hall at Kefar 'Othnay (Legio)



Reconstruction of the Christian prayer hall (by T. Melchin).



Christian Inscriptions: Women and Soldiers Support the Church

Γαιανὸς ὁ καὶ Πορφύρι(ο)ς (ἐκατοντάρχης) ἀδελφὸς ἡμῶν φιλο-
τειμησάμενος ἐκ τῶν ιδίων
ἐψηφολόγησε. Βρούτι(ο)ς ἡργάσατα[ι].

Gaianus, also called Porphyrius, centurion, our brother, has made the pavement at
his own expense as an act of liberality. Brutius has carried out the work.



Προσήνικεν
Ἀκεπτοῦς
ἡ φιλόθεος
τὴν τράπε-
ζαν Θεῷ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ
μνημόσυνον.

The god-loving Akeptous has offered the table to God Jesus Christ as a memorial.



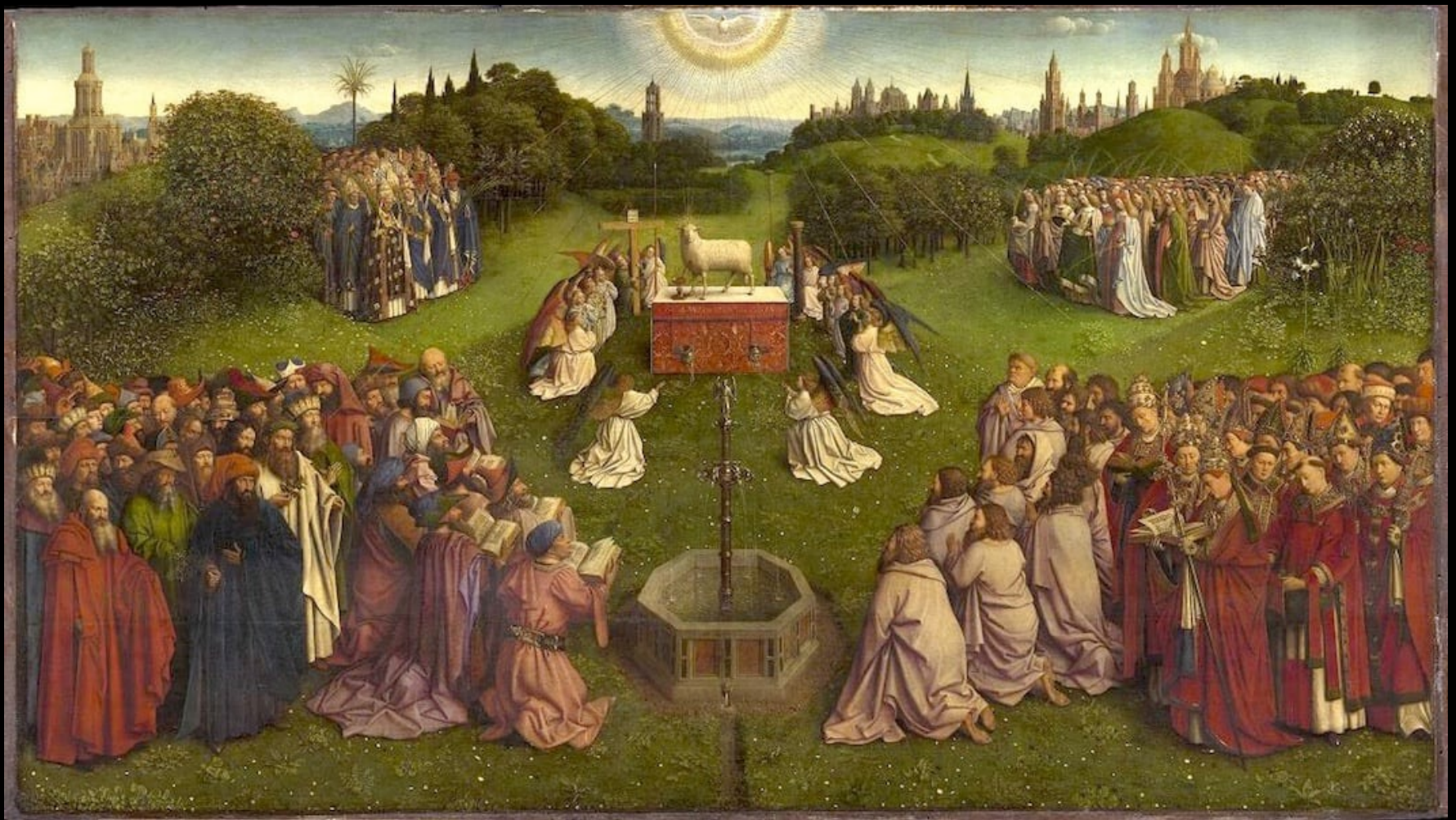
The Akeptus Inscription.

Μνημονεύσατε
Πριμίλλης καὶ Κυρι-
ακῆς καὶ Δωροθέας,
ἐτι δὲ καὶ Χρήστην.

Remember Primilla and Cyriaca and Dorothea, and moreover also Chreste.



The Women Inscription.



“The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life” (CCC 1324)

“No casual meal, the Last Supper unfolds according to Jewish sacred meal traditions ultimately connected to the Temple and the priesthood. Most of all, this is *a covenant meal that symbolized and actualized each diner’s participation in the new covenant*, just as partaking in the Passover joined every Israelite to the Covenant of Moses, and partaking in the Essene meal joined every Essene...”

– Dr. John Bergsma, *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 119-120.

