

From Galilee to Jerusalem: Archaeology at Work

Uncovering the World of Jesus of Nazareth



Tom McCollough
Rodes Professor of Religion
Emeritus, Centre College
Director, OLLI at CCU until July
'22

- ❖ Director, Archaeological Excavations at Cana of Galilee
- ❖ Associate Director of the Archaeological Excavations at Shikhin

<

Journey to the Holy Land

March 3-12, 2023



Archaeological Excavations at Kefar Shikhin

June 3 – July 3, 2023

The Shikhin Excavation Project
shikhinexcavationproject.com

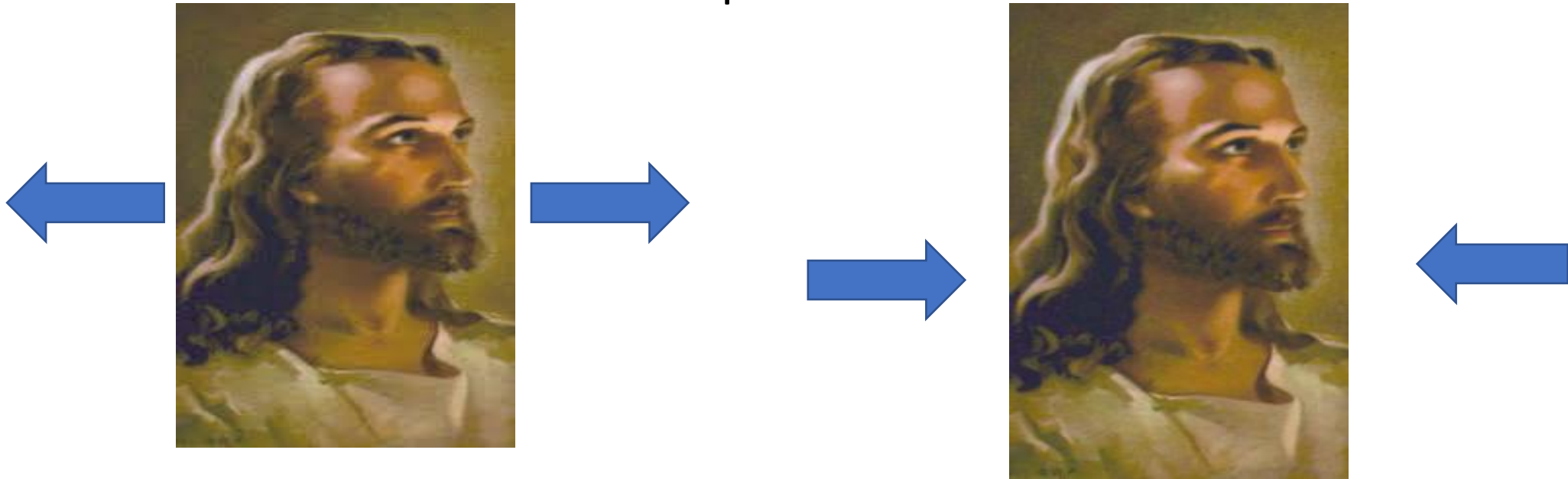
Kefar Shikhin







The Quest for the Jesus of History: Identity Derived or Imposed?



- Gospels as Historically Accurate and Thus True and Only Source
- Gospels as Problematic as Historical Source, but Can be Filtered to Recover Jesus of History
- Moral Teacher...Shedding Jewish Identity Jewish Prophet/Critic... In Apocalyptic Terms/In Economic and Social Justice Terms...Galilean Revolutionary
- The Introduction of Archaeology in the Search

From Creed to Identity
Lost To History...Given to
Us only in Myth

The Enlightenment and the End of Innocence

- The Enlightenment Assault on the Long Held Belief:
 - Gospel Writers were Eyewitnesses
 - The Text Was Composed By Way of The Work of the Holy Spirit and Thus was Inerrant
- The Elevation of Reason over Revelation/Authority of the Church:
 - Miracles do not Meet the Criteria of Reasonable/Rational Claims
 - Protestant Attack on Catholic Saints and their Miracles – Relics, etc.
 - The Rise of Deism Subverted the Idea of Intercessory Deity
 - Efforts at Harmonization Rejected and Replaced by Acknowledging Differences in Gospel Images of Jesus. The texts were written by humans for particular human communities.
 - If the Gospels were not composed to serve as sources for historical inquiry (but rather to nurture faith, give courage, legitimate status), what sort of strategy might be deployed to render our only primary sources for the historical Jesus useful? How might one cut through the forest of theology to recover some remnant of the historical?

The 'First Quest' is initiated

- After the Loss of Innocence, What Next?

Using the Tools of Historical Inquiry pitting the Jesus Of History (and of Protestant Scholars) Against the Gospel Writers Image – Overcoming the Embarrassment of Miracles

- Hermann Reimarus (died, 1789):
 - Separate Jesus From the Followers/Gospel Writer
 - Jesus – Moral Teacher focusing of Love of God and Neighbor and Repression of Evil Desires – No Intention of Establishing a New Religion – But of Restoring Judaism and perhaps be the New King/Messiah
 - Miracles Do Not Happen – Fantasies of Disciples and Used to Enhance Jesus’s Status
- Fredrick Schleiermacher (died 1834)
 - No Miracles, No Resurrection (resuscitation) – But Jesus Does Put Before Us a Man who was Supremely “God Conscious” – The Sense of Radical Dependence on the Other

“Each individual created Jesus in accordance with his own character. There is no historical task which so reveals a man’s true self as the writing of a Life of Jesus.”

A. Schweitzer (1875 -1965) *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*

The Future Was to Be Found in Efforts at Restoring Trust in the Historical Value of the Gospel Traditions By Developing More Nuanced Filters for Recovering the Historical Core – Acknowledging Jesus = A Man of His Time (As Opposed to the 19th Century Lives of Jesus who Made Jesus into a Man of Their time)...but What sort of Man?

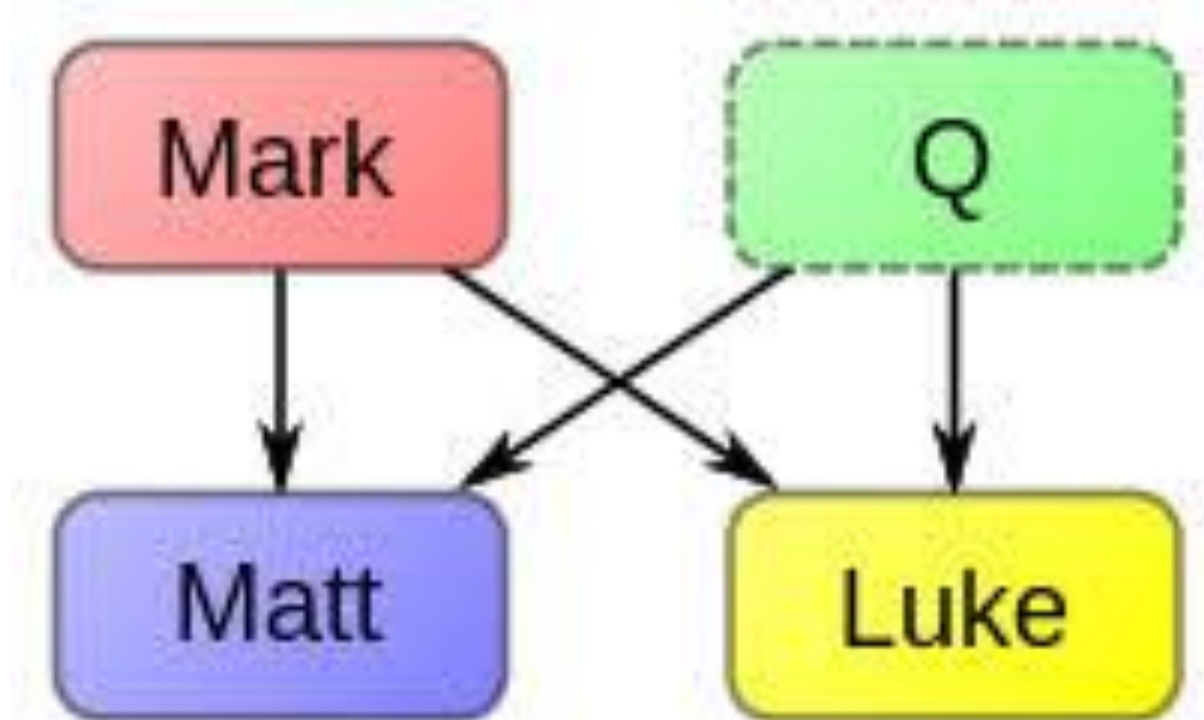
- ❖ An Apocalyptic Man...Albert Schweitzer – Jesus the [failed] Apocalyptic Visionary – The Gospels Reveal a True Portrait of the Man – A Man Fully of His Time – Not Relevant for Our Time
 - The Most Persistent, Pervasive Element of the Gospel Traditions = The Expectation of the Imminent End – This Was Jesus’s Core Concept – Bracketed by John the Baptist (the ‘end is near’) and Paul (‘the end is near’) Jesus believed the Same
 - Like other Jews of His time (Dead Sea Scrolls) who expected the End to Be Soon, Jesus also thought that was the case and as Son of Man (from Daniel/I Enoch) He Believed His Arrival Signal the Breaking in of God’s Kingdom when the World would be destroyed and God’s Kingdom would be Established in Palestine Ruled over by His Faithful
 - Jesus death would inaugurate the great tribulation and his resurrection the beginning of the general resurrection of the Dead – He Was Wrong
 - His Ethics Were therefore “interim ethics” not intended as timeless truths but specific to the short time before “The End”
- ❖ So Persuasive as to Bring to an End further Efforts to Locate Jesus of History – The End of the “First Quest”

End of the Quest Led to Reading the Gospels as Literature – As Myth Making – The Man of History Irrelevant or Disappears

- R. Bultmann (died, 1976)
 - We Cannot Recover the Man, but by Demythologizing the text, perhaps a bare outline of his teachings (when stripped of all its irrelevant mythology) that ultimately calls one to an existential decision – Recovering the self/the authentic self
- Somewhat Ironically, in Bultmann's efforts to recover the core teachings of Jesus, the Second Quest was launched
- Bultmann employed Form and Redaction Criticism as Filters and that in turn opened the door to layering of traditions with the Expectation that if Carefully Done we could recover the True Teachings of Jesus which would point one to a True Sense of the Historical Jesus

A Second Quest – The Oldest = the Most Genuine = a Path to the True Man

- The Quest was Resumed granting the ‘time bound man’ argument and shifting to locating the ‘timeless’ message through a careful sorting of genuine message from later additions, e.g., The Markan Priority Hypothesis, The Assertion of the “Q Source” and Form Criticism



- The Gradual Inclusion of Non-Canonical Texts in the ‘Search’
 - The Gospel of Thomas in particular – Similarities with ‘Q’ suggested early Witness
- The emphasis on Q and G. of Thomas as early ‘authentic’ witnesses had the effect of Isolating Jesus from His Jewish Context – His Wise Sayings Compared to the Larger Mediterranean Religious and Philosophical Context - e.g., Dom Crossan...”Jesus as a Mediterranean Peasant - Cynic Philosopher”

Jesus and the Earliest Communities Practiced a 'Cynic-like' lifestyle

- Like Cynics:

- Jesus Challenged the Status Quo with Incisive Intellect and Wit
- Advocated Freedom from Cares of the World and Material Possessions

A Cynic has no property and rejects all conventional values of money, fame, power and reputation. A life lived according to nature requires only the bare necessities required for existence, and one can become free by unshackling oneself from any needs which are the result of convention. The Cynic's life (and the use of the Cynic's biting satire) would dig up and expose the pretensions which lay at the root of everyday conventions.

- A Cynic-Like Program Emerges:
 - Criticism of the Rich and their Wealth
 - Critique of Hypocrisy and Pretension
 - Fearlessness in the Presence of those in Power and Authority
 - A Call to Voluntary Poverty
 - A Call for Shameless Begging
 - A Call to Disentangle from Family Ties
 - A Reliance on Natural Order
 - A Call to Personal Integrity and Authenticity
 - Confidence in God's Care

- Especially gained traction in pre-WWII German NT scholarship as a Way to ‘Aryanize’ Jesus – to negate his Jewish identity – The Principle of Dissimilarity
 - It was argued that Jesus was persistently in Conflict with The Jewish Establishment – Priests and Pharisees and their emphasis on Ritual and Law – Jesus Was Not one of those Jews (Dissimilar) – Rather Jesus emphasized a Religion of the Heart – Stripped of the Superficial (e.g., Sabbath rules) and inclusive (e.g., the Samaritans)
- This trajectory fed “*völkische*” or “German” theology that became associated with efforts to make the German church “judenfrei” and became a basis for antisemitism

Third Quest

- While the Second Quest advanced the ‘Search’ by introducing the Valuable Tools of Redaction and Form criticism and by showing the potential value of non-canonical texts, its drift toward dissimilarity (Jesus is not a Jew) and its intersection with Antisemitism brought renewed efforts to research and fully appreciate the Judaism of Jesus’s time and place and to understand how he fit within that Context
 - The Third Quest was Initiated and the Quest That Enfolds these Lectures
 - Stimulated by the Finding of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Qumran in 1947
- Until the Recovery of the DSS we only had Sources Telling Us About the Judaism of Jesus’s time – NT and Josephus – but Did not have Jews Speaking For Themselves



This Intense Interest in Locating Jesus Within Second Temple Judaism brought in Scholars whose interest was not necessarily (and in some cases not at all) establishing a connection between this the 'Search' and Christian Theology (e.g., historians, literary scholars, anthropologists, archaeologists and Jewish studies scholars) which made the Third Quest a real interdisciplinary and one might say 'scientific' endeavor.

In terms of archaeology in particular, It enriched the place of archaeology in Israel from almost entirely dedicated to ancient Israel to New Testament and Early Rabbinic Archaeology. While the focus of archaeology in Israel had been in the south – Judea/Jerusalem – the focus now pivoted to the north – Galilee. While the Second Quest had set its sights on finding the Mediterranean Peasant, the Third Quest sought Jesus, the Galilean Jew.

And that will be our task our focus in these lectures and in particular for the next lecture, focusing on what archaeology has accomplished in terms of what now we can say was the very complex world of Second Temple Judaism.

Before we conclude, for today, I thought I would entice you a bit with what I called a case study in the interface between archaeology and the historical Jesus...did Jesus go to the Theater?

Herodian Rule and the Dawn of Urban Culture in Galilee



Herodian Dynasty

Herod the Great

Governor of Galilee, 47-37 BCE

➤ King of the Jews, 37 – 4 BCE

➤ Archelaus, son of Herod, *ethnarch* (“ruler of the people”) of Judea, Samaria, Idumea, 4 BCE-6 CE

➤ Antipas, son of Herod, tetrarch (‘ruler of a fourth’) of Galilee and Perea, 4 BCE – 39 CE

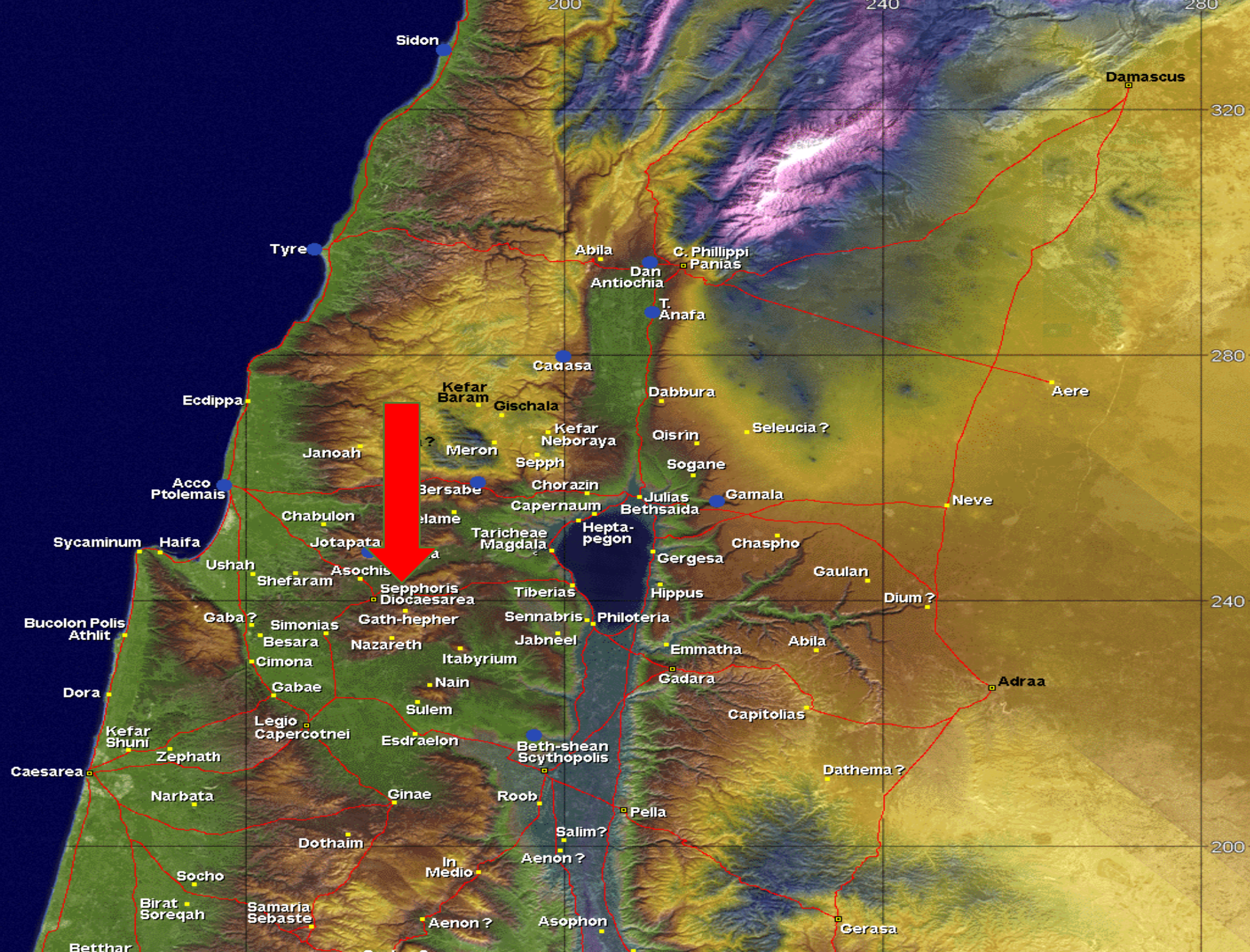
➤ Philip, son of Herod, tetrarch of Batanea, Trachonitis, Auranitis, 4 BCE – 34 CE

Herod and His Sons Ruled and Built Like Romans

Herod's Jerusalem and Caesarea – Roman Colonization Manifest
in Urbanization

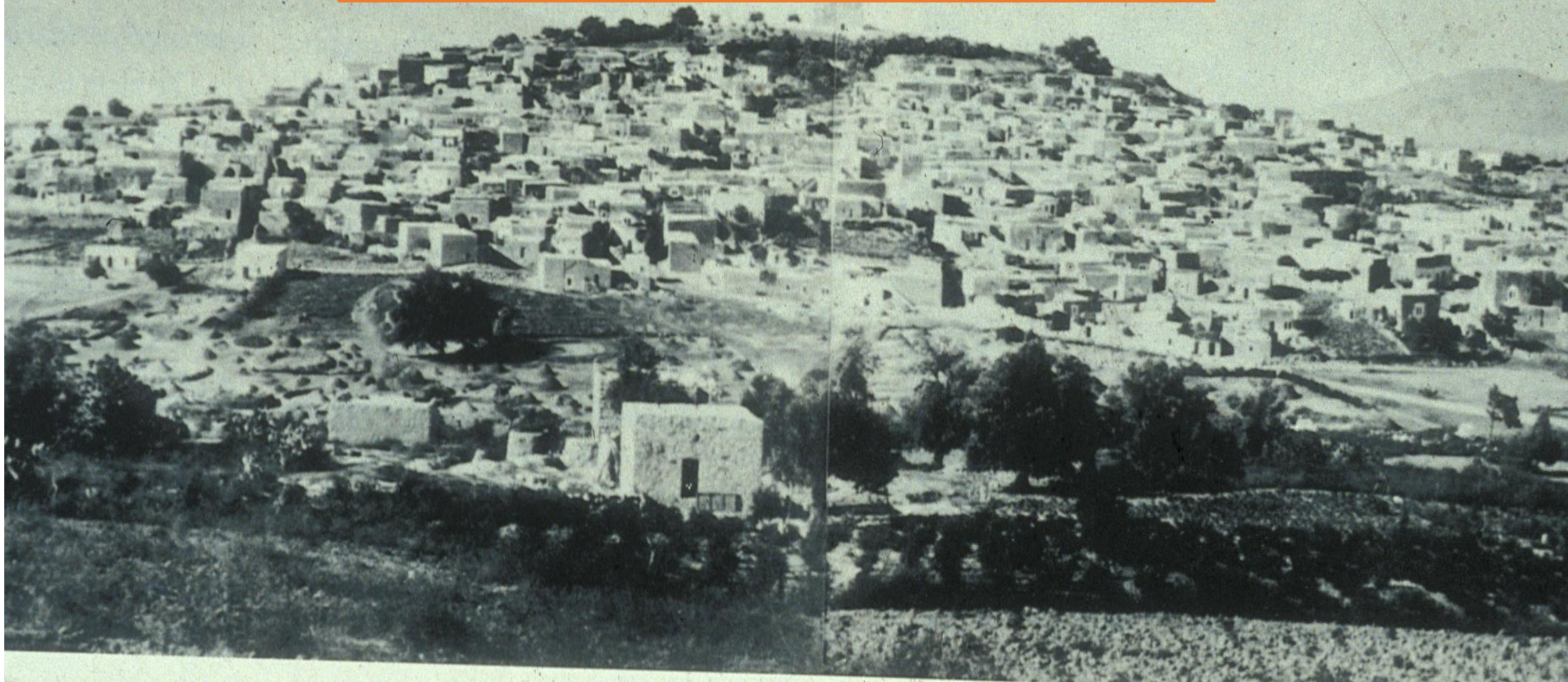
Organized space/built like a Roman
Architecture Used to Express Power, Prestige and
Wealth – Bringing Order/Civilization Thru Urban
Centers and by Mapping onto the Landscape A
Grid (Hippodamian Grid – Vitruvius)

Roman Urban Landscapes Include a Theater
For Herod Antipas, Two Galilean Urban Centers:
Sepphoris and Tiberias

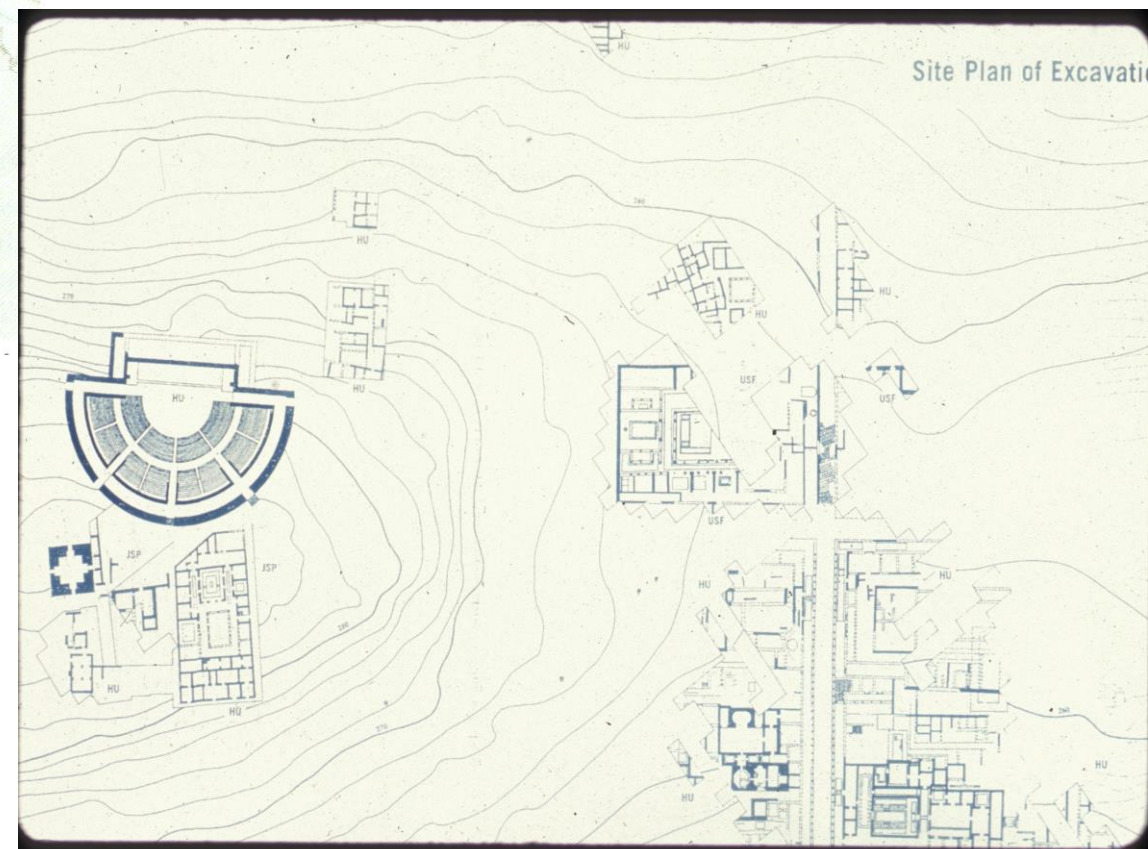


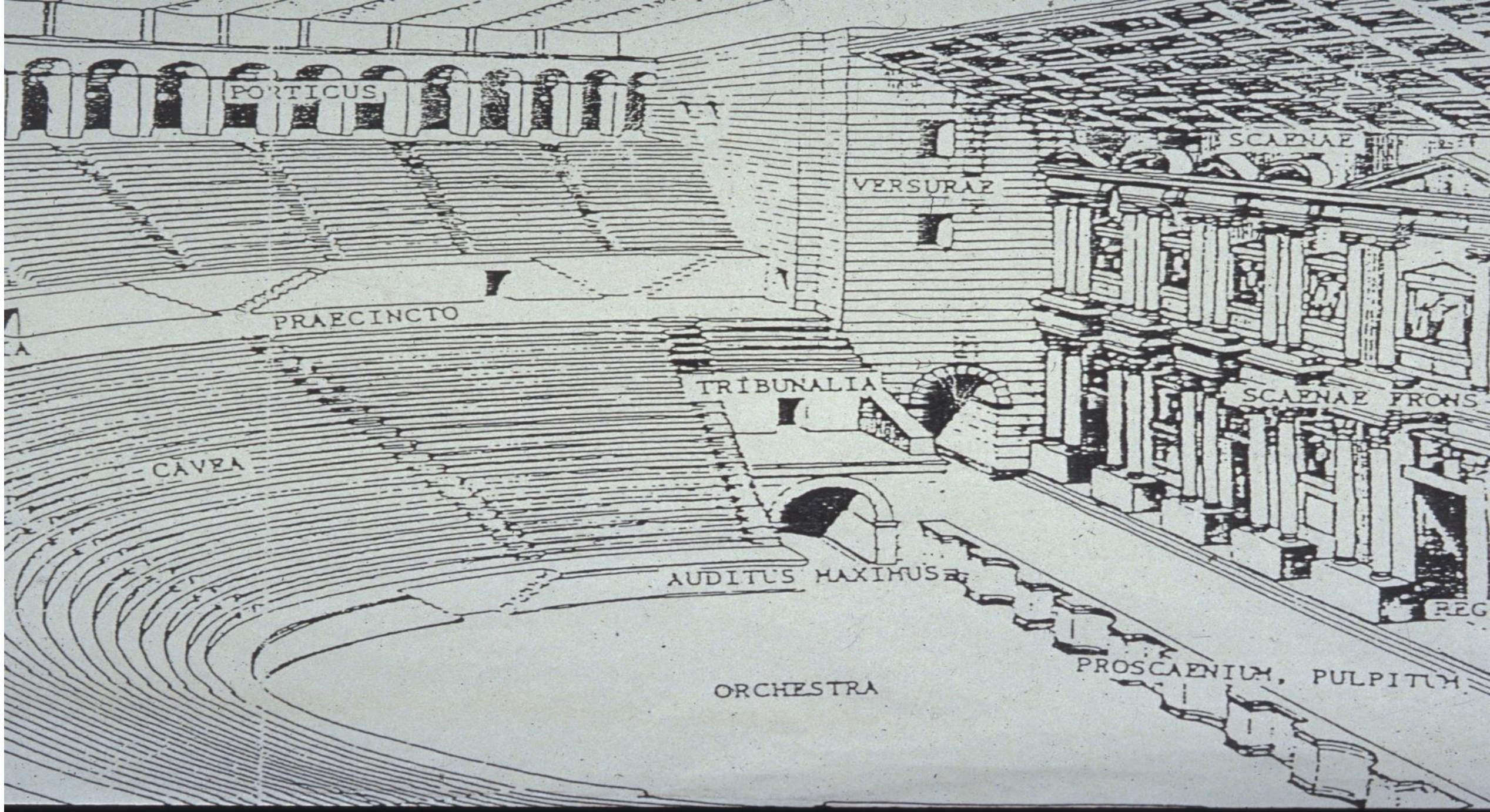


Suffaria - 1940









PORTICUS

SCAENAE

VERSURAZ

PRAECINCTO

TRIBUNALIA

SCAENAE FRONS

CAVEA

AUDITUS MAXIMUS

REG

ORCHESTRA

PROSCAENIUM, PULPITUM



Did Jesus Go to the Theatre?

Intimations of Plausibility

- ❖ Proximity of Nazareth to Sepphoris – 3 miles north of Nazareth
- ❖ The Gospels Identifying Joseph and Jesus as a *tekton* – ‘handyman’
–
“Many who heard [Jesus] were astonished, saying, ‘Where did he get all this?...Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary...” Mark 6:2-3
Their work would be likely in the construction of Sepphoris
- ❖ The Archaeological recovery of a Theatre in Sepphoris with foundations identified (via pottery and carbon 14) to the early Decades of 1st Century as would be Expected in a Herodian/Roman-style Urban Space

Intriguing Gospel Passages:

- “And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others.” Matt 6:5-6
- “And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.” Matt 6:16
- “Troy is in smoke, let us weep for Troy. Like a mother hen clucking over her fluttering chick, I shall lead your song of sorrow.”
Euripides, *Trojan Women*
- “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! Behold your house is forsaken and desolate.” Jesus, Matt 23:37-38 and Luke 13:34-35

Could it be that watching a tragic hero pursue his fate to his inevitable destiny prompted Jesus to set his face toward Jerusalem as the only appropriate arena in which to challenge the establishment and be executed?

- Did Jesus Go the Theatre?

- Yes, likely the case

If so, Was he Shaped by that Experience?

Yes, but not so much the theatre itself as the Urban Space
that Was the Context for the Theatre

Push Him in the Direction of Itinerancy – No Possessions
Replacing Kingdom of Herod/Rome with the Kingdom of God
Jesus Became an Economic Reformer – A ‘Jubilee Prophet’ –
manifest in his ‘Free Food/Free Healing’

Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!'...Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid...Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there and say to them, 'The Kingdom of God has come near to you.' But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into the streets and say, ' Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you.'" Q/Lk 10:4-12

A Theology of Itinerancy

- Kingdom of God is a not A place
- Roman Urbanization and Commercialization disrupted kinship safety nets, village cohesion and just land distribution – creating a class of the dispossessed – the destitute – “Blessed are the destitute” (οἱ πτωχοί)
- Reciprocity
- Healing (Spiritual gift) and Eating (Material gift) – the Itinerant brings healing and the Householder distributes food
- Just Distribution of Land not possible in Herodian Galilee but Just distribution of Food is possible - *Agape* – To Share the Gifts of God No Sandals, No Bag – A True Interdependence – A Profound Sense of Loving Neighbor

In Uncovering Galilee, we may have begun to Uncover the
Historical Jesus