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an account of obligation that does not reduce to context but on the contrary raises the self above its historical and social conditions. For Leibowitz too, it comes from rejecting the moral law as a metaphysical postulate that cannot withstand the reductions of empiricism but then investing halakhic obligation with the very status Kant saw in the moral law. In both cases it is crucial that human freedom and dignity are derived from the possibility of genuine obligation which involves action done without, if not against, one’s own interests.

These convergences lead me to conclude that Levinas’s account of obligation cannot be contained by what he and his readers usually call "ethics," by interpersonal normative relations. Levinas must be read as describing the self in its original exposure to the givenness of obligation, which by every right belongs to no one, not even "the other." This points to an essential ambiguity that accompanies Levinas’s thought and renders it at bottom an account of the primacy of obligation in general rather than a purely ethical account of obligation for the other person. Levinas’s philosophical anthropology thus suffers the rich ambiguities of its subject matter. Such is hardly the case for Leibowitz. He simply defines obligation on the basis of halakhic life, and so there is no surprise that only halakhic praxis attests to unconditional normative action. This has the strength of an internal explanation of halakhic life that explains its intrinsic value to those who already practice it. But there is no way for someone outside the system of halakhab to accept Leibowitz’s position without undermining his or her own integrity. For if it is the practical system of the law that has the sole privilege of producing genuine freedom and genuine service, then anyone coming from outside the system is a priori barred from every means of acting disinterestedly.

Comparing Levinas to Leibowitz allows us to see with renewed clarity how the richness of Levinas’s thought as an account of human obligation as such demands that we abandon a narrowly ethical reading of it. Having drawn extensive and somewhat surprising comparisons between these two great thinkers, we were then able to turn to Levinas’s work itself in order to find internal support for understanding his "ethics" in terms that include religious and other everyday practical obligations. By Levinas’s own light, obligations in general are given prior to the distinction between religion and ethics. Precisely because of the manifold modes and names of such obligations, the obliged self itself assumes diverse and at times antithetical forms.

The Tomb of James, Brother of Jesus, as Locus Memoriae

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La mémoire s’accroche à des lieux comme l’histoire à des événements.¹

In his monumental work Les lieux de mémoire, the French historian Pierre Nora establishes the leading role of physical places in the creation of collective memory. The English translation of Nora’s work bears the title Realms of Memory, which fails, however, to catch the full sense of the French title. For although Nora assigns to the phrase "places of memory," the loci memoriae, a much broader significance than that of particular confined spaces, he nevertheless devotes much of his discussion to untangling the convoluted interaction between inanimate sites and the conscious recollections of people and communities about their past. Physical features of a landscape—whether monuments, architectural structures, or well-

¹Unless otherwise noted, all translations in this paper are mine. The current study does not directly refer to the recent debate regarding the authenticity of the ossuary associated with James, brother of Jesus, that has infuriated both the scholarly community and the general public in the last few months; see André Lemaire, "Brutal Box of James the Brother of Jesus," BAR 28, no. 6 (2002) 24–33, 70. Naturally, the publishers of this artifact, as well as those who have disputes their findings, have channeled their efforts toward evaluating its inscription, which asserts that the bones of James were entombed in that stone box. No one involved in the current controversy has paid any serious attention to the question of where James was buried, reporting only the traditional nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century opinions on this issue (see nn. 36 and 48, below). The present study (which originated years before the topic of James’s death became so popular) aspires to fill this gap. Many thanks to Martha Himelfarb, who read a few early versions of this article and provided invaluable comments.


demarcated areas—serve as magnets that attract some abstract reminiscences and repel others, thus organizing and classifying those traditions; and those physical features become the spine or binding whereby disparate details are stitched together as cultural textures. ²

Reading this model backward, one may use memorable places and the traditions configured around them as a kind of porthole that allows a glance at the dynamics that shaped groups and societies. The following paper attempts such a reading in relation to the tomb of James, the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, and the various groups associated with the figure of James in early Christianity. After establishing the centrality of Jerusalem and the temple to the groups associated with James, I will investigate the shifting perceptions regarding the tomb as well as the dynamic textual history of a central element that became associated with it, an architectural feature known as the pterygion. The conclusions of these two separate, but closely related, studies will enable the reconstruction of a rather forgotten locus memoriae in the realm of early Christianity.

Introduction: James, Jerusalem, and the Temple

Despite considerable scholarly effort, the figure of James, the brother of Jesus, remains largely obscure. ³ For more than one hundred and fifty years the nature of the group that formed around this character, and especially the nature of the legacy of that group, have fueled a heated debate. ⁴ The major reason for the paucity of information about James’s actions and beliefs is apparently that he eventually “lost the battle.” and thus the extant writings—mainly those preserved in the Christian canon—reflect the views of his opponents. ⁵ The following discussion is therefore less about James himself than about the fragmentary traditions concerning him and the various aspects of his image cherished in the shared memory of his followers.


³ For a comprehensive survey and updated bibliography of research on this figure and the sources dealing with him, see Wilhelm Fratzer, Der Herrenbruder Jakobus und die Jakobustradition (FRLANT 139; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1987); and Roy B. Ward, “James of Jerusalem in the First Two Centuries,” ANRW II 26.1 (1992) 779–812. For James’s place in Christian thought in the Byzantine and medieval periods see the discussion below, as well as n. 42, below.

⁴ The origin of this dispute goes back to the 1840s, to the publications of Ferdinand Baur and the Tübingen school; its most recent manifestation is the debate about the theories of the Franciscans Testa and Bagatti. I do not intend to discuss here such a ramified research literature. For a fairly comprehensive bibliography, see Frédéric Mant, Bibliographie du Judéo-Christianisme (SBF 13; Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1979); and idem, “A Survey of Recent Studies on Early Christianity,” in Early Christianity in Context: Monuments and Documents (ed. Frédéric Mans and Eugenio Alliata; SBF 38; Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1993) 17–25. See also the papers collected in Everett Ferguson et al., eds., Early Christianity and Judaism (Studies in Early Christianity 6; New York: Garland, 1993).

I investigate how certain conventions about his death and burial functioned in the consciousness of those who followed James and absorbed what they considered to be his views into their teachings, as well as the manner in which these views materialized in the religious landscape this group carved for itself.

A variety of documents related to James and his group share a common trait: they emphasize the centrality of Jerusalem and the temple. These two elements figure prominently in the collective recollections of this early Jewish Christian community, to be known later as “the church of the circumcised in Jerusalem” or even “the mother of the churches.” Before the destruction of the temple, however, the Jerusalem community was merely one group of Jews among many others.6 The book of Acts, for example, features none other than Jesus himself instructing his disciples not to flee Jerusalem. In sharp contrast to Peter, not to mention Paul, both of whom leave Jerusalem and operate in many other places, the few stories told about James and his followers in this text all occur in Jerusalem or in the temple.7 When it comes to James, almost no one seems to remember him outside Jerusalem for the twenty-two years or so between Jesus’s crucifixion and his own execution.8 Preserved in Nag Hammadi codex I (the Jung Codex), the work known

6For some reason this point has been blurred in studies of the theology of the various Christian groups in those days; see, e.g., Hans J. Schoeps, Theologie und Geschichte des Judaenchristentums (Tübingen: Mohr, 1949); Jean Daniélou, Théologie du Judaéo-Christianisme (Paris: Desclée, 1958); Hans Conzelmann, Geschichte des Urchristentums (GNT 5–6; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1969); and Emmanuelle Testa, The Faith of the Mother Church (trans. Paul Rotondi; SBF 32; Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1992). Perhaps these scholars considered the emphasis on Jerusalem to be self-evident, since it was, after all, the site where the group lived, but it seems to me that the following discussion will demonstrate that the role of the city and the temple exceeded the technical sense of residence. In contrast, the studies of Pratscher and Irshai highlight this aspect, giving it the place it deserves; see Pratscher, Der Herrenbruder 110–14; and Oded Irshai, “Historical Aspects of the Christian-Jewish Polemics Concerning the Church of Jerusalem in the Fourth Century” (in Hebrew) (Ph.D. diss.; 2 vols.; Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1993) 1:4–34. See also Richard Bauckham, “James and the Jerusalem Church,” in The Book of Acts in Its Palestinian Setting (ed. Richard Bauckham; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1995) 417–27; and the studies mentioned in n. 76, below.


as the *Apocryphon of James* provides a similar picture. According to that narrative, which differs somewhat from the book of Acts, Jesus' disciples dispersed in various directions, while James ascended to Jerusalem.\(^9\) The two apocalypses associated with James, Coptic translations of which were also discovered at Nag Hammadi, bound next to each other in codex V, communicate analogous tendencies. In spite of his unfavorable opinion of Jerusalem, the writer of the *(First)* *Apocalypse of James*, dated to the second century C.E., connects James in an almost "existential" way to the city.\(^10\) The writer of the *(Second)* *Apocalypse of James* considers the temple in Jerusalem to have been the only stage for James' performance; he taught on the temple steps, foretold its destruction, and met his death immediately thereafter among its columns.\(^11\) In the same vein is the tradition about James embodied in the Pseudo-Clementine literature, in a portion that many nowadays call (after Epiphanius) the *Ascents of James*. Here too, in spite of its animosity toward the temple and what transpired there, the text considers the temple, and especially its "steps" (*gradus*; Греческий), to be the natural setting for James' activities.\(^12\)

But the tradition that most clearly affiliates James with the temple is transmitted by the second-century C.E. writer Hegesippus in a well-known fragment preserved by the fourth-century C.E. church historian Eusebius.\(^13\) The passage anchors James’ very being in the temple. While still in his mother’s womb he was considered “holy,” which in the Judeo-Christian literary context of Hegesippus implies that he was intended for the temple. He grew up as a Nazirite, refrained from wine and meat, and, reminiscent of an actual priest, spent long hours in the temple in prayer.


and supplication for the atonement of his people. It takes no great imagination to recognize that the author molded James’s figure on the prototype of the high priest entering the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement. This explains the repeated insistence that James entered the sanctuary alone (μονος), just like the high priest on that day, and directed his measures toward expiation.14 Unsurprisingly, the climax of this narrative—James’s death as a martyr—occurred in the temple as well, where he was also buried, according to traditions I will discuss below.

This story bears a striking resemblance to the (Second) Apocalypse, described above, and other literary representations of James convey similar trends. For example, the tradition transmitted by the church father Epiphanius, in the generation following Eusebius—the second half of the fourth century C.E.—depicts James as a “priest in accordance with the ancient priesthood.”15 The bloody assault on James recounted in the Pseudo-Clementine literature mentioned above, even though it does not culminate with James’s death, also happened at the foot of the altar, a place allowed to priests alone.16 Furthermore, Hegesippus establishes a clear causal relation between James’s death and the fall of Jerusalem, claiming, in contrast to Josephus’s dating of the event, that Vespasian laid siege to the city immediately after James died.17 A similar link also appears in the (First) Apocalypse of James, where Jesus prophesies that James’s departure from Jerusalem will bring war upon

14See also Bauckham, “James,” 448–50.

15Epiphanius, Pan. 29.4.2 (ed. Karl Holl, rev. Jürgen Dummer, Epiphanius [2d ed.; GCS; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1980] 1:324 line 19); see also idem, 78.13.5–78.14.2 (ed. Holl and Dummer, 2:464–65). Views differ on the source of Epiphanius’s data; some scholars believe that his information was based on another version of Hegesippus, independent of Eusebius, while others claim that Epiphanius developed and expanded the very same version. On all this see Hugh J. Lawlor, Eusebiana (Oxford: Clarendon, 1912) 10–56.


17Eusebius, Hist. Eccl. 2.23.18 (ed. Schwartz, 170 lines 23–24). For the tradition in Josephus (A.J. 20.200) and the enormous research literature about it, see Louis H. Feldman, Josephus and Modern Scholarship 1937–1980 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1984) 704–7. An interesting parallel to such a view can be found in the legend about the fall of Bethar, the final refuge of Bar Kokhba (y. Ta’anit 4, 68c, and parallels). This legend too links the killing of R. Eleazar ha-Moda‘i, who sat and prayed every day, and the capture of the town by Hadrian. A similar conception is expressed by the midrash in R. Yohanan ben Zakka’s answer to Vespasian concerning R. Tsadok, “If there is one like him in a city, you would not be able to conquer it forever.” See Lam. Rab. 1:5 (ed. Buber, 34b). The same line of thought is offered by that story’s version in b. Git., 56a, which states, “R. Tsadok sat in fasting for forty years so that Jerusalem shall not fall.” In a nutshell, the idea that the presence of a pious man safeguards the city appears already in the biblical sequence about Sodom (Gen 18: 23–32), and from there it was adopted by some Second Temple apocryphal writers; see also 2 Bar. 2: 1–2 (ed. S. Dederer, in The Old Testament in Syriac according to the Peshitta Version, pt. 4, fasc. 3 [Leiden: Brill, 1973] 1); 4 Bar. 1:2 (ed. Robert A. Kraft and Ann-Elizabeth Purinton, Paraleipomena Jeremiou [SBLIT 1; Missoula, Mont.: Society of Biblical Literature, 1972] 12). The above rabbinic portions continue this same notion; see also Pesiq. R. Kah. 13:13 (ed. Mandelbaum, 238 lines 2–4); Pesiq. R. 26 (ed. Friedmann, 131a). All of these sources confirm the Jewish origins of Hegesippus’s tradition about James.
the country. And finally, another fragment from Josephus that is cited by Origen and Eusebius, although missing from all known versions of this historian and seemingly a Christian interpolation, contains identical details and thus presents a Jewish-Christian parallel to the same views.

Identifying the Tomb of James: Scholarly Views and Some Objections

I do not intend to discuss the tangled history of the traditions about James’s martyrdom, neither that of Josephus nor those formulated in various early Christian settings. Nor do I intend to deal with the ways in which the figure of James was shaped in those settings. Rather, in this study I focus on one aspect of his martyrdom: the question of James’s burial place.

The account of James’s martyrdom in the fragment from Hegesippus situates his killing in the pterygion (πτερυγίον) of the temple (ἱερόν). Pterygion is literally a diminutive of a noun meaning “wing,” and its closest English translation

18 I Apoc. Jas. 36:16–18 (ed. Parrott, 90–92). Brown’s claim that this association can also be found in the (Second) Apocalypse of James is rather doubtful; see Kent Brown, “Jewish and Gnostic Elements in the Second Apocalypse of James (CG V,4),” NovT 17 (1975) 228. The passage only asserts that Jerusalem would be destroyed, as Jesus had said; it does not establish any connection with James’s death.


20 On these matters see Pratscher, Der Herrenbruder, 229–60; Feldman, Josephus, 704–7; Ward, “James of Jerusalem”; Irshai, “Historical Aspects,” 5–13; Alexander Böhlig, “Zum Martyrium des Jakobus,” NovT 5 (1962) 207–13; and Karlmann Beyschlag, “Das Jakobusmartyrium und seine Verwandten in der frühchristlichen Literatur,” ZNW 56 (1965) 149–78. A more recent source-critical examination of the various traditions, which exhaustively discusses the vast scholarly opinions that were offered on this topic, may be found in F. Stanley Jones, “The Martyrdom of James in Hegesippus, Clement of Alexandria, and Christian Apocrypha, Including Nag Hammadi: A Study of the Textual Relations,” SBLSP 29 (1990) 322–35. Not all sources about James emphasize those aspects of his life pertaining to Jerusalem and the priesthood; on the contrary, some of them seem to be deliberately ignoring these features and highlighting opposing ones. See, e.g., the fragment from the Gospel of the Hebrews adduced by Jerome, which is cited in Ward, “James of Jerusalem,” 793. Even though the theological picture stemming from these early traditions of the Jesus movement is very complex, it is hard to ignore the fact that the fragmentary details mentioned here belong to one fairly well-grounded facet of their discourse.
in this architectural context is “pinnacle” or “turret.” This detail was preserved almost verbatim in Coptic in the *(Second) Apocalypse of James.* According to Hegesippus, the scribes and Pharisees coerced James into coming to this elevated spot and demanded that he address the crowds in the temple area in an attempt to undermine their belief in Jesus. When they realized that he was doing the exact opposite, taking advantage of this opportunity to disseminate his faith that his brother was the Messiah, they conspired to kill him. Carrying out their plot, they tossed him off the *pterygion* and then completed the task by stoning him. The coup de grace was delivered when one of them crushed James’s head with a wooden club. Finally, Hegesippus relates that James was then buried “on the spot by the shrine (ναός)” and that this tomb, or at least the gravestone above it, still existed at the time he wrote (see below).

Two questions may be asked about this account: 1) What was the *pterygion* of the temple and where was it located, if it existed at all? 2) Where were the tomb and the monument, and what can this tell us about the community that established them and preserved their memory?

Much has been written about the first question, and in the past century almost every possible spot in the temple area has been proposed as that place: from the roof of the temple to the roof of the royal basilica on the south of the Temple Mount (see fig. 1), through the various entrance structures to the area, to locations on the city walls—both those surrounding the temple and its inner courts (fig. 1.A–C) and those encircling the whole compound (fig. 1.D). Scholars vigorously explored this issue not so much because of the story of James as because Matthew and Luke mention the *pterygion* as the place where the “temptation of Jesus” occurred (as discussed in detail below). Aside from the New Testament passages, Hegesippus, and the *(Second) Apocalypse of James,* the *pterygion* of the temple appears in two other sources from the first and second centuries C.E. One version of Theodotion’s translation of Daniel 9:27 rather opaque interprets the prediction of destruction, “And upon the wing of abomination (shall come one who makes) desolate,” as

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21Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 2.23.11 (ed. Schwartz, 168 line 18). A bit later in the passage (line 22) some textual witnesses read ναός, which usually denoted the inner shrine of the temple (fig. 1.A), instead of ιερόπ. I discuss this variant in n. 60, below.

22*Apol. Jas.* 61:20–23 (ed. Parrott, 142). The relation between these two texts will be addressed on p. 51, below.


referring to the “ruined pterygion.”

A second text, the Testament of Solomon, a Jewish-Christian work whose early layers are generally dated to the first and second centuries C.E., features a certain pterygion of the shrine (τοῦ πτερύγιον τοῦ ναοῦ; not ἱερόν as in most other sources) as an architectural feature of Solomon’s temple. Later, from the fourth century C.E. onward, a long-lived tradition, transmitted by pilgrims, monks, and others who visited Jerusalem, identified the pterygion with assorted spots around the city.

The numerous propositions for the location of the pterygion all emanate from the lack of any detailed description of it in the various sources. Some scholars cling to one particular piece of information and insist that it is the ultimate clue for solving the mystery. Jeremias, for example, favored the Testament of Solomon as the most reliable independent source to mention the pterygion, thus deducing that it represented the lintel of the temple gate and probably referred to the entrance of the so-called women’s court (fig. 1.C). Other scholars did not limit themselves to sources explicitly referring to the pterygion, mainly because most of those sources contain no knowledge that could contribute to a concrete identification of the site. Instead, scholars embarked on far-fetched attempts to link the pterygion with other elevated structures in the temple area. One accepted inference, which appears over and over in research literature on this subject, adduces Josephus’s sketch of the fearsome height of the royal basilica on the southern portion of the temple compound (see fig. 1) to conclude that this is the most appropriate place for the pterygion. Another suggestion associates the pterygion with the ἡμέρας (“doorway”) of the Temple Mount mentioned in the Palestinian Talmud.

The speculative nature of these conjectures is clear. It is hard to trust the Testament of Solomon, a magical text of the second century C.E. that makes purely literary use of a motif evidently well known to its readers. Likewise, it is unreasonable to attempt to identify the site solely on the basis of the information that it was high enough that a fall from the pterygion would be deadly; this

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28To the best of my knowledge, no one has yet collected the various mentions of this site from the literature of the pilgrims and other writings of the Byzantine period and discussed them critically. Partial references may be found in Jeremias, “Die ‘Zinne,’” 201–5.

29Jeremias, “Die ‘Zinne,’” 205–6 and his summary on p. 208. For more on this conjecture see n. 32, below.

30Josephus, A.J. 15.412. For scholars who hold this position, see Balz and Schneider, eds., Exegetical Dictionary, 3.191–92.

31y. Pesah 7.11, 35b. For this proposal see the extensive discussion in Jeremias, “Die ‘Zinne,’” 201–5.
criterion could describe several locations on the Temple Mount. As I will show below, based on available sources, it seems impossible to determine the nature and precise location of the original *pterygion* of the temple, or to establish if there ever was one.

It is thus preferable to shift the inquiry from the geographic identity of the site, which apparently leads to a dead end, and to focus instead on the conceptual framework in which the *pterygion* operates. I claim not only that such a framework is traceable but that the (relatively) recent discovery of the *Second Apocalypse of James*, unavailable to previous generations of scholars toiling to identify the geographical location of the *pterygion*, permits us to delineate the formative stages that shaped the collective understanding of this element. Even if we will never know exactly where the *pterygion* was geographically, it is entirely within our reach to determine its "conceptual geography," that is, the place it occupied in the consciousness of the people who used it. Two topics—the image of the *pterygion*, and its cultural and religious contexts—are the focus of the following discussion.

**Conceptual Frameworks and Their Changing Landscapes**

Importantly, all of the early traditions cited above consider the *pterygion* an integral component of the temple. This cannot be deduced simply from the literal definition of the word, which embraces "wing," "top," "edge," "corner," "point," and "pinnacle," as well as sometimes a projection of a building or even a tower or turret. Indeed, in the Septuagint, for example, the word occasionally bears these meanings without any relation to the temple. On the other hand, in the verse from Daniel cited above, however obscure, *pterygion* undoubtedly denotes a particular element in the temple, as can be inferred from the other objects that are named in the same context—namely, the altar and the sacrifices. The same holds true for the story relating the construction of the first temple in the *Testament of Solomon*, in which the *pterygion* serves as part and parcel of the building.

The nature of the *pterygion* in Theodotion’s translation of Daniel and the *Testament of Solomon*—as an organic constituent of the temple—resembles its character

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32Indeed, sharp criticism of the various suggestions has been expressed time and again in scholarly literature; ironically, however, the various critics have suggested hypotheses that are no less astonishing than the ones they condemned. Jeremias, for example, argues extensively against the positions that were prevalent in the literature before him, yet he himself bases his interpretation on the *Testament of Solomon*. And Hylarides, who disapproves of Jeremias’s thesis (and also repeats the criticism against all the earlier scholars), presents an equally ill-founded view in which the *pterygion* is presented as the official execution site of Jerusalem. See Niels Hylarides, "Die Versuchung auf der Zinne des Tempels," *JST* 15 (1961) 113–27.

in the traditions about James’s death. Hegesippus explains that the *pterygion* was chosen as the venue for James’s speech because it was “clearly visible on high,” and thus the speaker’s words would be “audible to all the people” who attended the temple on the holiday of Passover. The story thus implies that in its author’s mind, the *pterygion* was directly linked with the temple and situated within its confines. Relying on a similar spatial layout, Hegesippus located James’s tomb “on the spot by the shrine (ἐν τῷ τόπῳ παρὰ τῷ ναῷ)” (fig. 1.A).

Scholars felt uneasy with such a positioning because it appears to contradict Jewish law. Strict halakhic rules forbid any sort of impurity in the temple area, making a grave at the site of the temple highly unlikely; indeed, a human corpse is considered the most potent source of impurity. Yet proposals that would resolve these difficulties by relocating the tomb elsewhere—for instance, to the ravine east of the city known as the Valley of Jehoshaphat (see fig. 2.3)—are totally at odds with the picture drawn by the tradition. Hegesippus repeatedly underscores the close proximity of James’s tomb to the temple. Not only does he formulate the site’s name as the “*pterygion* of the temple,” he also locates the burial site and monument, which according to him survived to his day, in the immediate vicinity of the temple’s shrine. Throughout his account, the narrator never hints, however subtly, at any difficulties this might have entailed. Furthermore, fixing the site of James’s martyrdom, and therefore also his burial spot, within the grounds contiguous to the temple derives from the inner logic of the tradition that Hegesippus recounts. After all, that tradition portrays James as someone whose entire world was molded by the temple. It accentuates the tragedy of this man, who devoted himself to atoning for the people through the temple and eventually lost his life in that very place. In the view of whoever designed this well-crafted saga, its setting needed to include nothing other than the temple and the area directly adjacent to it; that was the place where James was active, and it was there that he died and was laid to rest.

Other accounts of James’s death, whether literarily dependent on Hegesippus or not (a matter that is heatedly debated among scholars; see n. 20, above), contain details that support this conclusion. The description of the events in the *Second Apocalypse of James* is practically identical. The only site mentioned in that narrative is the temple; it is there that James was captured, and since the author does not state that he was taken away, he apparently believes that James was killed (and

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buried) in the same place.\textsuperscript{37} Likewise, the tradition in the \textit{Pseudo-Clementines} maintains that the attack on James took place next to the altar, and that in its course he was thrust down the temple steps, left for dead, and eventually rescued by his supporters.\textsuperscript{38} Comparable claims that James’s death and entombment took place in the area of the temple itself resonate in later adaptations of his martyrdom as well. Although these versions often owe a great deal to early sources (mainly Hegesippus and the \textit{Pseudo-Clementines}), they attest to the ways in which the writers who retold the early stories comprehended them. For example, an Arabic translation of a Coptic text, which was discovered and published by Agnes Smith Lewis, reports that James was buried under the temple walls, while a Latin manuscript, published by Richard A. Lipsius in the mid-nineteenth century, states that James “was buried next to the altar (\textit{prope altare sepultus est}) of the temple.”\textsuperscript{39}

This assortment of diverse sources indicates the vital role of the temple among the cluster of tropes that shaped early Christian traditions about James’s death. Established as the central location of the course of events that led to James’s martyrdom, the image of the temple was channeled into the consciousness of his followers and engraved in their shared memory. This obviously comports with the status of the temple in other stories about James, as discussed at the beginning of this paper. The same spatial organization structured the memories about his life and death.

The exact location of the tomb, if there ever was one, remains unknown. As a result of the marginality of James, one of the great losers among the protagonists of pre-Constantinian Christianity, traditions about the location of sites associated with him declined or perished. For more than two hundred years, from the days of Hegesippus and the other authors of the second-century C.E. texts discussed above down to the late fourth century C.E., the sources remain silent about any special locus related to James within the emerging religious topography of Jerusalem. Pilgrims to Palestine from the fourth century C.E. onward were no longer aware

\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Apoc. Jas.} 61:20 (ed. Parrott, 142–44). The pericope that might be considered to hint at a burial is 62:8–11 (ed. Parrott, 144), and one author who understood it that way was Brown, “Jewish and Gnostic Elements,” 228 n. 10. In contrast, Brown’s suggestion (ibid., 230) that the statement that James was dragged along the ground after he was thrown off (62:2; ed. Parrott, 144) implies that the body was taken out of the temple area is doubtful, if only because there is no hint of it in the text. On this whole issue see also Wolf P. Funk, \textit{Die zweite Apokalypse des Jakobus aus Nag-Hammadi-Codex V} (TU 119; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1976) 176–80.

\textsuperscript{38} \textit{Ps.-Clem. Rec.} 1.70.6–8 (ed. Rehm, 48; ed. Frankenberg, 74).

\textsuperscript{39} These segments and others are gathered in Félix Marie Abel, “La Sépulture de saint Jacques le Mineur,” \textit{RB} 28 (1919) 482–83. Abel, like the scholars discussed above (n. 36), assumed that the tomb could not have been located on the “sacred Mount,” as he calls it, and so was compelled to suggest other readings of these passages. Concerning later versions of James’s martyrdom, see Wilhelm Schneemelcher, \textit{New Testament Apocrypha} (trans. Robert McL. Wilson; 2 vols.; Cambridge: James Clarke, 1992) 2:478–79.
of the traditions about James’s martyrdom; the anonymous Bordeaux pilgrim, for example, comes across the “corner of a highly elevated tower” in the ruined temple compound but knows of it only as the locus of the temptation of Jesus.\textsuperscript{40} Egeria, the noblewoman who visited Jerusalem later in that century, does not mention it at all.\textsuperscript{41} Apparently, the first few centuries of the Common Era witnessed the distortion of not only characteristic traits of James’s figure and the ideological principles advocated by his followers but of the sites associated with him as well.

Only in the second half of the fourth century—most likely in tandem with the revitalization of the Jerusalem church and its intense political activity—did the figure of James regain its place of honor. For the first time in almost three hundred years, legendary accounts surfaced, reporting the miraculous recovery of his tomb, which the new accounts located in the Valley of Jehoshaphat (see fig. 2.3).\textsuperscript{42} The spirit of the times dictated that such a “discovery” would lead to the erection of some sort of structure, and we do indeed hear of a chapel that was built there at some point. The chapel in the Valley of Jehoshaphat grew into a small monastery commemorating the special days of James, now recognized as a saint, and celebrating his feasts. As befits a saint, parts of his body and other relics associated with him circulated to other portions of the city, such as the Church of Holy Zion, and arrived in locations as far away as Constantinople. From then on, the illustrious figure of St. James was forever enshrined in the shared consciousness of the Christian communities of early Byzantine and Arab Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{40}Itinerarium Burdigalense 589.12–590.2 (ed. Paul Geyer and Otto Cunz, in Itineraria et alia geographica, [2 vols.; CCSL 175–176; Turnhout: Brepols, 1965] 1:15). See also Breviarium de Hierosolyma 6 (ed. R. Weber, in Itineraria et alia geographica, 1:112). Many have missed this point; see, for example, Pierre Maraval, Lieux saints et pèlerinages d’Orient: Histoire et géographie des origines à la conquête arabe (Paris: Cerf, 1985) 261. Maraval lists the references to the pterygion in the pilgrimage literature, adding incidentally that this is also the place from which James was thrown (“ce pignac est aussi l’endroit d’où fut précipité Jacques, frère du Seigneur”), but this is precisely the detail that is not mentioned at all by any of the pilgrims!

\textsuperscript{41}See John Wilkinson, Egeria’s Travels (rev. 2d ed.; London: Aris and Phillips, 1981) 183. Wilkinson suggests that parts of the description of Jerusalem in the writing of the so-called Peter the Deacon of the twelfth century are taken from lost fragments of Egeria’s writings. But the information about James in the passage that Wilkinson cites is far too similar to the fragment of Hegesippus, and it seems much more likely that Peter, a librarian in the Monte Casino monastery, took them from Eusebius (through Rufinus’s translation or Jerome’s citations of the passage in Vir. ill. 2). For more on this see Abel, “La Sépulture,” 499.


\textsuperscript{43}To the literature enumerated in the previous note add John Wilkinson et al., eds., Jerusalem Pilgrimage 1099–1185 (London: Hakluyt Society, 1988) 44.
The colorfulness and diversity embodied in this new phase of Christian experience fit well with a report by Jerome that, in his day, some believed that James’s tomb was to be found on the Mount of Olives, as well as with traditions current a century and a half later that located the “cornerstone” (discussed below) on Mount Zion. This proliferation of traditions about James and the popularity of his figure in the rising new Christian realm of Jerusalem can also explain the role granted to him in the early Jerusalem liturgy. The Armenian version of these rites reserves a special holiday in the Church of Holy Zion in memory of “St. James and [King] David.”

It is in this later period, in the generations following the establishment of Christian hegemony in Jerusalem, that the location of the pterygion was disengaged from its original temple context (fig. 2.1) and shifted to the southeastern corner of the Temple Mount enclosure (fig. 2.2). The establishment of the tomb in the Valley of Jehoshaphat (fig. 2.3) and its rapid growth made this a natural choice. From the vantage point of anyone standing at the foot of the mountain, on the banks of the Kidron, gazing up at the remnants of the mighty fortifications of the compound, the top of that wall appears at the southeast corner as a platform from which one who leapt or was thrown would land on the spot of the new tomb. As evident, for example, from the famous lithograph of the tomb of the sons of Hezir, which later Christians claimed to be James’s tomb, the southeast corner of the Temple Mount is the only topographical feature that dominates the panoramic view available from the tomb. Indeed, Abel voices the common trend in scholarship on the presumed location of the tomb of James in the Valley of Jehoshaphat when he maintains that the


45Armenian lectionary, readings for 25 December (ed. Charles Renoux, Le lectionnaire de Jérusalem en Arménie [Turnhout: Brepols, 1989– ] 367). Note Renoux’s comment (ibid.) that the original version referred to the biblical patriarch Jacob and not to James, the brother of Jesus. On these ceremonies, see Ora Limor, “The Origins of a Tradition: King David’s Tomb on Mount Zion,” Traditio 44 (1988) 457–62. It is worth noticing that this particular feast was still unknown to Egeria in the late fourth century. For additional, later “holy days” that were devoted to James in the various Palestinian liturgies, see Abel, “La Sépulture,” 494 with n. 3.

place where James was venerated (in the fourth century C.E., i.e., fig. 2.3) remained “close to the actual location of his death.” In that same argument he also identifies the pterygion as the southeast corner of the temple compound (fig. 2.2).

But an enormous difference separates the location of the tomb suggested by the earliest sources, especially Hegesippus, from the location proposed by the Byzantine traditions (accepted at face value by modern scholars) whose goal was to reconcile ancient traditions (whether the stories about the pterygion in the New Testament or the accounts about James’s martyrdom) with the remains of the Temple Mount still visible in the fourth century C.E. It is a difference of perspective—the direction of viewing was completely inverted, reversed by one hundred and eighty degrees. The Byzantines stood in the Kidron Valley and looked north, thus seeing the wall of the temple precinct from the outside. But the viewpoint, both physical and spiritual, of the early community of James’s followers was completely centered within the temple precinct itself (figs. 1.1 and 2.1). Standing inside the compound, they focused on the temple and its immediate vicinity (fig. 2.1). As I have shown, the events and the various sites associated with James by his early followers—the pterygion, the tomb, and the gravestone (as well as the great stone to be discussed below)—were all attached, even if only in their minds, to the structure of the temple itself and its immediate vicinity (fig. 2.1). The early sources presume an interior, rather than an exterior, perspective of the Temple Mount. Scholars were prone to project the Byzantine perspective onto the early sources, and to read the Byzantine physical circumstances into the early texts. It was thus natural for scholars to situate the pterygion in the southeast corner of the Temple Mount and the tomb of James in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and to regard these identifications as incontrovertible facts.

The problem with these reconstructions is that the earliest traditions about James, from the late first and early second centuries C.E., lack even the slightest allusion to

47 Abel, “La Sépulture,” 499: “La vénération de la mémoire du premier évêque de Jérusalem ne s’éloignait pas beaucoup du lieu de son martyr.”

48 Abel’s attempt (ibid., 485) to explain this difference between the early and Byzantine sources by arguing that at a certain point James’s body was moved from one grave to another is nothing but a harmonizing effort lacking any evidential basis. Clear examples of this process of “reading backward” are Jeremias, “Die ‘Zinne,’” 201 with n. 1; Hunt, Holy Land Pilgrimages, 155 n. 1; and Herbert Donner, “Der Felsen und der Tempel,” ZDPV 93 (1977) 1–11. The same process is reflected in the remarks of John Wilkinson on the Byzantine pilgrims; see, e.g., his comments on the description of the Temple Mount in the writings of the Bordeaux pilgrim, in Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1977) 173, s.v. “Temple”; and in “Christian Pilgrims in Jerusalem during the Byzantine Period,” PEQ 108 (1976) 86. From here it is but a short step to a “new reality” in the guides and introductory books; see, e.g., Clemens Kopp, The Holy Places of the Gospels (New York: Herder and Herder, 1963) 287 (map); and Maraval, Lieux, 33, 264. In the same vein, the publishers of the recently (re)discovered James ossuary locate his tomb “beneath the Temple,” obviously referring to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; see Lemaire, “Burial Box of James,” 32.
the southeast corner of the temple platform as the location of the *pterygion*. Even more so, the early sources contain no hint that James’s tomb was ever believed to be outside the temple area. Quite to the contrary, the early traditions cited above indicate that the *pterygion* and the tomb of James were both located at the top of the mount, immediately next to the temple ruins (i.e., somewhere in the vicinity of fig. 1.A–C or fig. 2.1). It is hard to determine what led the Byzantine establishers of the new location of the tomb of James to “turn their back” on the Temple Mount. Perhaps intentional ideological motives caused this shift; perhaps it occurred simply because the Temple Mount was not an integral part of Jerusalem at that time; or perhaps it was merely circumstantial. Our inability to discern the motives behind this act, however, should not blur its innovative aspects.

Finally, to close the historical circle, during the Crusader era, with the renewal of intense Christian activity on the Temple Mount, various spots associated with James began to be “identified” once more within the temple compound itself.49 These identifications did not supplant the Byzantine location of the tomb in the Valley of Jehoshaphat but rather existed side by side with the Byzantine traditions, creating a double system of locations. Nevertheless, traditions about James as well as the spatial layout associated with him had returned to their original home.

### Evolving Traditions about the *Pterygion*

Among the array of images and physical details incorporated into the later sources that mention the “*pterygion* of the temple,” one that stands out had not been present from the start—“the great cornerstone.” A later source illustrates this point. When the Bordeaux pilgrim recounts his visit to the temple ruins in the fourth decade of the fourth century C.E., he reports two adjoining objects: an impressive corner of a tower and a “huge cornerstone (*lapis angularis magnus)*.” He recognizes the former as the site of the temptation of Jesus, which various New Testament authors identified as the *pterygion* of the temple. To be sure, the term used by the traveler to indicate the turret of this towering structure—the Latin *pinna*—serves as the equivalent of the Greek *pterygion*. As for the latter feature, the great cornerstone, the traveler cites Ps 118:22 as a prooftext referring to this particular stone: “The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner.”50

Surprisingly, both the cornerstone and the *pterygion*, as well as the associated verse from the psalm, also appear in the *Testament of Solomon*, a legendary tale written approximately one hundred and fifty years earlier about the construction of the first temple by King Solomon. According to that story, Solomon’s building


enterprise concluded with the hoisting of a huge cornerstone (λίθος ἄρχωνυταιος μέγας) onto the "pterygion of the shrine (τοῦ ναοῦ)." Beyond human capacity, this final task hindered the completion of the project until an Arab demon named Epiphas arrived to help. King Solomon in turn, in his great joy at the completion of the project, cited the above-mentioned verse from Psalm 118—"The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner"—and applied it to this stone.\(^5\)

Scholars did not pay much attention to this parallel. Yet, although the source for the cornerstone image in the writings of the Bordeux pilgrim remains unknown, the very fact that both the pilgrim and the Testament of Solomon know of a cornerstone in the temple and associate that stone with the same biblical text cries out for interpretation. Although the verse from the psalm was very popular among early Christian writers, insofar as Jesus is recorded not only to have expounded it but also to have likened himself to that rejected stone,\(^5\) the association of the same formula with the same feature in two independent sources should not go unnoticed.

New light on this issue, which elucidates the stages in the formation of this cornerstone tradition, may be shed by the martyrdom passage in the (Second) Apocalypse of James. In his account of James’s capture by his opponents, the author of the apocalypse enumerates two spots where James stood. The first, regardless of the uncertain meaning of the relevant Coptic word, undoubtedly represents the author’s attempt to render the Greek pterygion.\(^5\) The second location is absolutely clear: the great cornerstone. Like others who have pondered this passage, I cannot resolve the question of how James could have been standing in two spots


\(^{5\text{2}}\) For some of the more popular examples, see ibid., verse 23, n. b; and R. J. McKelvey, "Christ the Cornerstone," NTS 8 (1961–1962) 352–59. An additional interesting parallel is Barn. 6.3–4 (ed. Kirsopp Lake, The Apostolic Fathers [2 vols.; LCL; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1912] 1:358), which alludes to this verse in the context of its criticism of those people who interpret it literally and put their trust in an actual stone. This may echo the identification of a particular stone in Jerusalem, as indicated by the Bordeux pilgrim. See also the Coptic Apocryphon of Jeremiah 28 (ed. K. H. Kuhn, "A Coptic Jeremiah Apocryphon," Mus 83 [1970] 95–135, 291–350, at 302–3), a late (fourth-fifth century c.e.) text that conveys a fully developed legend about the cornerstone of the temple with no connection to the other features discussed here (I owe this reference to Kirstie Copland, and I am also grateful for her help and advice on the Coptic material throughout this paper). Concerning the motif of the stone in biblical imagery, which undoubtedly affected the religious thinking of whoever shaped the traditions about Jesus and James, see Ithamar Gruenwald, "God the ‘Stone/Rock’: Myth, Idolatry, and Cultic Fetishism in Ancient Israel," JR 76 (1996) 428–49. Gruenwald’s study complements my presentation here: It examines the motif from the abstract aspect of ideas, while my own remarks reflect the way these ideas encountered the real world (I thank Prof. Gruenwald for referring me to his study).

\(^{5\text{3}}\) Apoc. Jas. 61:21–22 (ed. Parrott, 142). For the various alternative translations from Coptic, see Walter E. Crum, A Coptic Dictionary (Oxford: Clarendon, 1939) 421. See also the editor’s hesitation in the notes of Parrott, 142–43.
simultaneously, or explain the need for this dual positioning. Nor do I hold the key
to the mystery of the great cornerstone; its origin and purpose remain uncertain.
The author of the Testament of Solomon, for example, maintained that the stone
provided the material used for the erection of the pterygion, but this seems rather
to be a harmonizing explication of an existing tradition in which the two items are
operating side by side.

Yet, despite all the unknowns, the traits common to these three disparate
sources—the story of James’s martyrdom as it appears in the (Second) Apocalypse
of James, the legend about the building of the temple in the Testament of Solomon,
and the tradition featured by the Bordeaux pilgrim—reflect the same conceptual
setting. Their geographic backdrop centers on the temple (note that both the
Bordeaux pilgrim and the Testament of Solomon present it as Solomon’s temple),
and within this landscape they highlight two adjacent constituents— the pterygion
and the “great cornerstone.” At some point, not in the (Second) Apocalypse but
in the two other texts, the verse from Psalm 118 was linked to the cornerstone
and continued to serve as its prooftext for centuries.54

What prompted the shared texture of these traditions? The common mention
of the pterygion would seem to suggest that they should all be associated with the
New Testament account of the temptation of Jesus, and that this account should
in fact be identified as the source of inspiration for all the others.55 In their stories
about the series of temptations with which Satan tested Jesus, both Matthew
and Luke include an incident that occurred in precisely the site under discussion
here, the pterygion of the temple.56 The elements of this episode comprise an
independent literary unit: an exposition presenting the site of the event, followed
by a hermeneutic contest between Satan and Jesus, both of whom substantiate
their positions with biblical verses.57 Even the author of Luke, although he treats
the whole cycle of temptations rather freely and interchangeably, preserves intact
the inner structure of the pterygion experience as well as its content (except for

54Scholars who did not recognize the realistic dimension of these documents have missed this
point entirely; Funk (Die zweite Apokalypse des Jakobus, 175 n. 1), although noticing that all three
texts share the “great stone,” nevertheless returns to Jeremias’s view (see nn. 31–32, above, and
n. 55, below). But at the time when Jeremias produced his study, the (Second) Apocalypse of
James was still buried in the ground at Nag Hammadi, and Funk did not consider the possibility
that this new discovery could highlight aspects unrecognized by Jeremias. Funk’s claim that
Hegesippus’s story was shaped by the verse about the “cornerstone” in Ps 118:22 (LXX Ps
117:22) compounds the error since the two major features—the great stone and the verse from
the psalm—are precisely what is missing from Hegesippus, surfacing only in the Testament
of Solomon and the (Second) Apocalypse of James. This point was also missed by Brown, “Jewish
and Gnostic Elements,” 227.

55So Jeremias, “Die ‘Zinne,’” 200, and many others.
57The author of Mark does not include such a pericope in his temptation sequence at all; see
Mark 1:12–13.
some minor details). Indeed, the accepted explanation for the relation between the New Testament temptation passage and other pterygion traditions holds that the gospel tradition, gradually rising to the status of Scripture, impelled other writers to draw upon its motifs.

This interpretation, however, presupposes the superiority of the New Testament passages about the temptation in the worldview of those who produced the other traditions. Such a perspective focuses on the temptation of Jesus and, while taking its details for granted, seeks an appropriate way to construe its meaning. This situation, however, may not have been the case in the first few centuries of the Common Era—prior to the consolidation of the New Testament into a homogeneous and prominent document—when the above-mentioned traditions, such as those found in the (Second) Apocalypse of James, were formulated.

A different set of challenges confronts those attempting to reconstruct the physical context and ideological tendencies embodied in the passages in their formative stage and their function in the life of the communities that produced them. In this setting the nature of the pterygion assumes greater importance. Did the author of the passage in Matthew and Luke create the name of the place out of whole cloth? If so, what was he trying to achieve? Readers who focus on the events that transpired there—Satan’s attempts to entice the future Messiah—and their New Testament legacy are liable to impose the events on the geography and arrive at peculiar conclusions, like that of Hyldahl, who claimed that the pterygion was the official execution site of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish high court, in the Second Temple period.58 If, however, one does not assume the priority of the New Testament traditions about the pterygion, such maneuvers become superfluous.

Indeed, the tradition handed down by Matthew and Luke does not endow the pterygion with any real substance. This site is not mentioned anywhere else in the documents incorporated into the New Testament, nor is it involved in any other event. Such omissions indicate that the name of the place was already registered in the mind of the audience targeted by the authors who recorded the temptation story. Rather than making the first use of the pterygion image, the New Testament passage seems to be relying on its established reputation.

Comparing the pericope about the temptation of Jesus in Matthew and Luke with the account in Hegesippus about the martyrdom of James reveals striking similarities in both the name of the site, the pterygion, and the events that unfolded there—namely, a deadly fall. Furthermore, both narratives represent analogous, though opposite, tendencies in the world of the Jesus movement. Both contemplate the combination of death and the dissemination of the belief in Jesus the Messiah, but the passage about James articulates a rather positive view of such a “martyrdom,”

58Hyldahl, “Die Versuchung.”
whereas the temptation story remains reserved about it (after all, Jesus turned down Satan’s proposal). Within these contrasting narratives, the pterygion serves an identical function: it is high enough that a fall from it would be fatal; it is centrally located so that it could be observed by the multitudes; and most importantly, it is incorporated in the structure of the temple, the heart of Jewish life at the time. This analysis suggests that the pterygion, or the idea of such a place, already held a certain significance for the authors and their readers. The prestige of the pterygion led authors and readers alike to associate it with major events of their shared ethos and to formulate around it various traditions, until it was finally memorialized as a pilgrimage site for Byzantine Christians.

Over the years, the figure of the pterygion and its associations continued to change, and some of these developments may still be discerned. While in the New Testament stories of Jesus and in Hegesippus’s account about James, only the pterygion appears, a second, closely related entity—the “great cornerstone”—surfaces along with it in other traditions, which therefore should probably be dated to a later stage. Two second-century C.E. sources—the Testament of Solomon and the (Second) Apocalypse of James—link the “great cornerstone” with the pterygion, and remnants of this coupling were preserved until the time of the Bordeaux pilgrim. Such an analysis reveals a two-stage process in the crystallization of the pterygion image. First came traditions in the lore of the early Christian communities about significant events, either historical or legendary, that took place at the pterygion. The sources expressing this phase include the passages about the temptation of Jesus in Matthew and Luke and the passage about James preserved by Hegesippus. In the second phase the tradition was enhanced by the addition of the “great cornerstone.” This stage also features the development of folkloristic legends about the pterygion, such as the one in the Testament of Solomon, and the configuration of a biblical prooftext as an allusion to the site. The two sources conveying the events about James’s martyrdom—Hegesippus and the (Second) Apocalypse of James—delineate the axis along which the representation of the site matured: the great cornerstone is absent from the former but does appear in the latter.

The literary proliferation of traditions involving the pterygion reached its zenith in the second stage. It was then followed by a third phase, in which the traditions faded. This third chapter in the story of the pterygion is clearly demonstrated by the writings of the Bordeaux pilgrim. While his itinerary still includes the pterygion and the great cornerstone and indicates some knowledge of their associated lore, namely the story about the temptation of Jesus and the application of the psalm verse to the cornerstone, other components of the site’s legacy have already begun to dissolve. The figure of James and the sites associated with him, all dominant factors in the earlier portrayal of the pterygion, have been “eliminated” from the picture. It would not be long before the ancient depiction of this feature would be forgotten altogether.
But this does not mean that the cluster of images and details associated with James were doomed to vanish completely. Traditions tend to fluctuate, and when they no longer retain their old shape, they are reinvented in a new one. In the case under discussion, this reinvention occurred in the Byzantine era. Christian inhabitants of Jerusalem at that time were no longer familiar with the anonymous Jewish authors among the Jesus movement or within the community of James in the late first and early second centuries. Undoubtedly they were also far removed from first-century moral, ideological, and religious views. Yet when they encountered the traditions preserved in writing, such as the fragment from Hegesippus in Eusebius and the segments in the _Pseudo-Clementines_, they revived them, while shifting their geographical arena from the temple to the lower Kidron Valley (see fig. 2).

The Temple Mount as a Sacred Cemetery

What endowed the _pterigion_ of the temple with such importance for the early followers of Jesus and James? Hegesippus concludes the story of James’s burial next to the temple by adding that “his gravestone still remains by the shrine [of the temple] (ἐτὶ αὐτοῦ ἡ στήλη μένει παρὰ τῷ ναῷ).”⁵⁹ Such a proclamation is neither an integral part of the narrative about James nor relevant to the content of the tradition reported there. The double ending of the story, of which this sentence is part, seems to mark the seam between the segment quoted by Hegesippus and the closing remark he attaches to it.⁶⁰ In other words, after conveying the tradi-

⁵⁹Eusebius, _Hist. Eccl._ 2.23.18 (ed. Schwartz, 170 lines 21–22). Contra Dennis E. Groh (“The Onomasticon of Eusebius and the Rise of Christian Palestine,” in _Papers of the Ninth International Conference in Patristic Studies, Oxford, 1983_ [ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone; 4 vols.; StPatr 18; Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1985] 1:27), who ascribes the remark “his gravestone still remains by the shrine” to Eusebius and compares it with that writer’s habit in his _Onomasticon_ of concluding a geographical account with the statement that the situation at a particular site continues “until this very day.” Groh’s reading of the passage stumbles on both linguistic and literary grounds. Eusebius consistently uses the expanded, biblically rooted, and therefore almost formal formula ἐτὶ νῦν (“until this very day”), not the ingenuous temporal adverb ἔτε (“still”). See also Robert L. Wilken, _The Land Called Holy: Palestine in Christian History and Thought_ (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992) 100. Furthermore, in the absence of distinguishing punctuation such as colons and quotation marks, competent writers like Eusebius utilized literary techniques to distinguish a quotation from their own words. This could not be clearer than in the current passage, where Eusebius brings Hegesippus’s segment to a close with the statement, “This account is given at length by Hegesippus” (2.23.19).

⁶⁰Noting this, Schwartz (p. 170) concluded that the two endings of the story cannot function together: “zwei Schlüsse der Erzählung, die neben einander nicht stehen können”; i.e., they cannot come from the same author. On the other hand, his assertion in the critical apparatus that the phrase locating the site παρὰ τῷ ναῷ is a scribal error due to homoioteleuton (the same phrase παρὰ τῷ ναῷ appears once before in the same context, which could signal that the eyes of a scribe skipped from one to another) does not seem persuasive. This version is witnessed by all the Greek manuscripts as well as by the Syriac translation (ed. William Wright and Norman McLean, _The Ecclesiasti-
tion about James’s martyrdom, Hegesippus brings the passage to a close with a personal observation about the site in his own days. This does not imply that he knew anything reliable about James’s burial site; perhaps he did, perhaps he did not. It does, however, provide a glimpse of how the place was seen in those days. A statement by a local second-century C.E. writer that the burial place of James right next to the (ruined) shrine of the temple had been preserved down to his time sheds considerable light on the status of that place in this period.

In general, tombs of publicly acclaimed figures do not just endure fortuitously for decades; someone has to retain the memory of the deceased and ensure at least some minimal maintenance of the grave. Written at around the same time as Hegesippus, the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* provides a glimpse into the activities that commemorated such places: “Thus we, at last, took up his bones, more precious than precious stones, and finer than gold, and put them where it was appropriate. There the Lord will permit us to come together according to our power in gladness and joy and celebrate the day of his martyrdom.”61 This phenomenon immediately brings to mind another tomb in Jerusalem whose memory seems to have been preserved by the early Christians—namely, that of Jesus himself.62 Indeed, tombs of saints, especially those whose deaths attested to their faith and thus strengthened the faith of others, were regularly incorporated into the believers’ shared memory and religious practice.63

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A colorful blend of traditions often blossomed around such localities. Legends about the person buried there and exaggerated tales associating that site with other important figures were two important factors that shaped the public's consciousness about such places. The tradition reported by Hegesippus typifies the first model: a touching and gripping story, comprising both tragic and heroic elements, about an important personage from the past, which also emphasizes the religious aspect of the protagonist's "testimony" before his death. Most importantly, the details of the past are funneled into a specific physical point—a tomb or monument existing in the present. The palpable reality of the present and the literature from the past interact in a reciprocal dance: the tradition predicates the site's special quality, while the site in turn sustains the tradition and anchors it in the present.64

The area of the ruined Jewish temple functions as the stage, and later as the pilgrimage site, for another renowned figure in early Christian legacy, namely Zechariah, whose tale is retold many times in both Jewish and Christian settings. The sources about the martyrdom of this character were gathered carefully, and his persona, blending together more than one person, has been extensively studied, so that there is no need to repeat the details here.65 Four issues are significant for the present study. First, the presentation of Zechariah as linked with the temple, and sometimes even as an actual priest, parallels the way James is configured by Hegesippus. Second, the situation of Zechariah's martyrdom adjacent to the altar—a location repeated, in one form or another, by most early sources—corresponds to the tradition about James as rendered by the Pseudo-Clementine literature. Josephus's remark (B.J. 4.343) that Zechariah was slain in the middle of the temple is also reminiscent of the location of James’s martyrdom in Hegesippus. Similar proclivities for placing the martyrdom of early Christian figures in the temple

Rise and Function in Latin Christianity (Haskell Lectures on History of Religions n.s. 2; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981). Even though most of Grabar’s and Brown’s discussions are devoted to later periods than the one at issue here, they too assert that the beginning of these processes was very early. For a discussion concentrating on Palestine, see also John Wilkinson, "Jewish Holy Places and the Origins of Christian Pilgrimage," in The Blessings of Pilgrimage (ed. Robert G. Ousterhout; Urbana: University of Illinois, 1990) 41–53, as well as n. 70, below.

65The mutual relations between sites and saints were extensively discussed in Hippolyte Delehaye, Les légendes hagiographiques (2d ed.; Brussels: Bureaux de la Société des Bollandistes, 1906) 45–51, 190–201; see also 253–56.

can be detected in other traditions as well.\textsuperscript{66} Third, some of the traditions about Zechariah include a new element—that his blood turned to stone—which recalls the stone that appears in some of the traditions about James. Finally, and most important, the Temple Mount becomes a pilgrimage site associated with the death of both James and Zechariah. In conjunction with Hegesippus’s report about the gravestone of James, as well as the convoluted tradition about the pterygion and the cornerstone, Christian visitors to the ruined temple site also identified the spot of Zechariah’s slaughter as “next to the altar” and recorded a variety of legends associated with this incident. A contemporary rabbinic text adds that the sightless and the lame would be healed there.\textsuperscript{67}

Another tradition that fits well with the image of the Temple Mount as the locus of sacred tombs is witnessed by the myth about Adam’s burial under the foundation stone. Only vague recollections of this notion are preserved here and there. Isaiah Gafni, who collected and studied the material, convincingly argues that the belief about Adam’s interment at Golgotha echoes an early conviction that located the site at the Jewish temple. As with many other pieces of Jewish lore, later Christian authors transferred this tradition to the Holy Sepulcher.\textsuperscript{68} Elusive as it might be, the folkloristic traditions surrounding Adam’s tomb add another facet to the representation of the Temple Mount as a sort of sacred cemetery. Unexpectedly, rabbinic sources corroborate the existence of such notions. For example, one tradition reports that human bones were found in one of the temple’s chambers; another legendary account claims that temple attendants unearthed the skull of Araunah the Jebusite under the altar; finally, a well-known and admittedly peculiar rabbinic statement asserts that “one who is buried under the altar (is) as if he is buried under the glorious throne.”\textsuperscript{69}

Generally speaking, many studies demonstrate that tombs of important figures, mostly with roots in the biblical past, occupied the cultural landscape and daily experience of Second Temple Jews.\textsuperscript{70} Criticized by many, even within the Jesus movement, this trend nevertheless retained its vitality in the generations following the destruction of the temple, as illustrated by works such as the *Lives of the Prophets*

\textsuperscript{66}E.g., the martyrdom of Tabitha in *Apoc. El. (C)* 6 (ed. Georg Steindorff, *Die Apokalypse des Elias* [Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1899] 120–25; ch. 4 in Charlesworth’s numeration).

\textsuperscript{67}Lam. Rab. 4:14 (Buber, 149). Other sources on Zechariah are listed in n. 65, above.


\textsuperscript{69}m. ‘Ed. 8.5; y. Pesah 9.1, 36c; Abot R. Nat. version a 26 (ed. Schechter, 41b). See Samuel Krauss, *Qadmoniot ha-Talmud* (in Hebrew) (2 vols.; Berlin: Benjamin Harz, 1924) 1:1.109–11, who deduces from these sources that burial was indeed practiced on the Temple Mount (or in the numerous tunnels underneath its surface).

\textsuperscript{70}Recently a bibliography and a review of research on this topic were presented in David Satran, *Biblical Prophets in Byzantine Palestine* (SVTP 11; Leiden: Brill, 1995) 22–25.
(Vitae Prophetarum), which emphasizes the motif of the tomb as a cultural topos. In an apparent reflection of the religious environment of Late Roman and Byzantine Palestine, numerous graves reported in this text, whether factual or fictional, are said to house a person who ended his life as a martyr, having been killed by the authorities or the people. Such was the case for the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Micah, Amos, and Zechariah. The resemblance to James is clear.

The most significant analogy to the traditions about James's burial place on the Temple Mount pertains to the Holy Sepulcher, the site of Jesus's tomb at Golgotha. Even a superficial glance at the wide array of sources that attest the emergence of this locality reveals patent similarities to the story of James. Both individuals, central figures in their circles, died in tragic circumstances, each struggling to defend the rightness of his chosen path. In both cases, the threat felt by others lest the teachings of this individual be disseminated served as the main incentive for killing him. Both were buried in the immediate vicinity of the place where they were killed, and their tombs acquired a sacred status. Seeing the situation this way and knowing (in hindsight) the whereabouts of Golgotha only strengthen the conclusion that the Temple Mount is indeed the appropriate place to locate James's tomb.

Conclusions

When did the awareness of holy burial sites on the Temple Mount take shape, and what induced the authors among the disciples of Jesus and the followers of James to mold these geographical designations the way they did? It is hard to answer these questions. As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, various sources hint that the temple ranked high among some early Christian groups. For example, traditions that locate the major events of Jesus’s childhood in this institution, as well as the assertion that Mary too grew up in the temple among the priests, tally with Hegesippus’s portrayal of James. In the same vein, the Letter to the Hebrews, despite its criticism of the existing temple system and its consequent emphasis on the heavenly Jerusalem, depicts Jesus as the high priest who enters the holy of holies, atones for the people, and defies the traditional priesthood. Other Christian works, such as the final version of the Testament of Levi, also polemicize against the temple priesthood. Moreover, there is a correspondence between the negative attitude toward the sacrificial cult in the temple, as articulated in, among

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71Ibid., 118–20. For a view opposing these inclinations, see, e.g., Matt 23:29.
other sources, the Letter to the Hebrews, and the fact that some Christian writers tend to position James as a great opponent of temple rituals. Such an assessment surfaces in the writings of the fourth-century church father Epiphanius, who cites a tradition about James’s critique of temple offerings, attributing it to the Ebionites. The passage in Hegesippus also utters a dual, rather conflicting stance on this issue. James is perceived as a priest, on the one hand, and as a competitor of and substitute for the priesthood, on the other. It is difficult to determine whether these presentations voice one or many streams of thought within the Jesus movement; as mentioned at the beginning of this discussion, much of this material is still shrouded in mist.

Likewise, due to the paucity of sources, the actual events that led to and followed James’s death remain unknown. For example, the passage in Josephus describes a more moderate version of the proceedings that set James’s killing in motion, in which the temple and the Temple Mount do not appear at all (see n. 19, above). Was James really buried on the Temple Mount? The numerous cavities underneath the platform provide potential sites aplenty. One cannot know for sure, and for the purpose of the present study it does not really matter. Even though it appears implausible that temple authorities in the Second Temple period would allow a corpse to be entombed there, someone no later than the middle of the second century C.E. had patterned the tradition in Hegesippus according to that very mode. The landscape envisioned in that spatial organization spread in the popular imagination until different forms of it were embedded in the apocalyptic writings unearthed at Nag Hammadi and in the legends retold in the Testament of Solomon. Reverberations of the same paradigm, however faint, could still be heard at the time of the Bordeaux pilgrim. The people who designed these configurations clearly considered the space near the temple to be a place of religious value—not the temple itself but rather, in the words of Hegesippus, the area “near the shrine.” The fragmentary traditions reflecting this line of thought display the seeds of a new spatial order and the consolidation of a new holy site: not the temple itself, but the area in which it was located. Likewise, the temple worship with its associated laws of purity and its classic symbols—the altar and the holy of holies—were supplanted by other concerns and new objects: the pterygion, the great cornerstone, James’s tomb, and the monument of his gravestone. All in all, this study of the evolving traditions about the death and burial of James contributes to our knowledge of the history of the Temple Mount, and illuminates as well a relatively obscure chapter in the story of early Christianity.

73Heb 7:27; Epiphanius, Pan. 30.16.7 (ed. Holl and Dummer, 1:354–55).
76Noticed by Gustafsson, “Hegesippus’s Sources,” 229–32. See also Pratscher, Der Herrenbruder, 110–14; and Frederick F. Bruce, Peter, Stephen, James and John: Studies in Early Non-Pauline Christianity (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1979) 116–17.
Fig. 1. Second Temple Compound. Based on Mor Ben-Dov, In the Shadow of the Temple (trans. Inna Friedman: Jerusalem: Keter, 1982). 86-99, with permission from the author.

Fig. 2. Jerusalem's topography. © Yaron Z. Eliav, all rights reserved.