

Jesus and Capernaum in the Apostolic Age: Balancing Sources and Their Evidence*

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1. The Rise and Current Stage of Jesus Research

In his presidential address for the SNTS (Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas) in 2006 in Aberdeen, Seán Freyne referred to Galilee as a “laboratory”¹ in order to reflect its status as a shared area of research for exegetes, historians, archaeologists and scholars in Jewish studies over the last 30 years or so. Nowadays, Galilee is a field of research in its own right² and, as such, has entered the field of synoptic studies.³ However, perhaps more significantly, it is also part of what James H. Charlesworth calls Jesus research⁴ and is (at least partly) reflected in the *Handbook for the Study of*

* This contribution goes back to various lectures between 2008 and 2009 (held at the universities of Erlangen and Kiel) and a scientific excursion to Galilee. For the purpose of the conference in Lund and the later publication, the manuscript was expanded and translated from German into English. The article in its present form is dedicated to the memory of my close colleague and friend Prof. Dr em. Per Bilde, who died on 18 May 2014. *Requiescat in pace.*

¹ Seán Freyne, “Galilee as Laboratory: Experiments for New Testament Historians and Theologians,” *NTS* 53 (2007): 147–64. See also lately Seán Freyne, “Galilee,” in *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism* (ed. J. J. Collins and D. C. Harlow; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2010), 653–57.

² Hereby, it is possible to draw a “Karte Galiläas”; see Jürgen K. Zangenberg, “Das Galiläa des Josephus und das Galiläa der Archäologie: Tendenzen und Probleme der neueren Forschung,” in *Josephus und das Neue Testament. Wechselseitige Wahrnehmungen: II. Internationales Symposium zum Corpus Judaeo-Hellenisticum 25.–28. Mai 2006* (ed. C. Böttrich and J. Herzer; WUNT 209; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 265–94 (294).

³ See Morten Hørning Jensen, “Conflicting Calls? Family and Discipleship in Mark and Matthew in the Light of First-Century Galilean Village Life,” in *Mark and Matthew I: Comparative Readings: Understanding the Earliest Gospels in their First-Century Setting* (ed. E.-M. Becker and A. Runesson; WUNT 271; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 205–31.

⁴ See James H. Charlesworth, “Jesus Research and Archaeology: A New Perspective,” in *Jesus and Archaeology* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2006), 11–63; see also the following footnote. For a recent discussion of this topic, see James F. Strange, “Archaeology of Galilee and Judea,” in *Encyclopedia of the Historical Jesus* (ed. C. A. Evans; New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 2008), 35–41; Bruce Chilton, “Archaeology and Jesus,” in *Encyclopedia of the Historical Jesus* (ed. C. A. Evans; New

the Historical Jesus.⁵ But what do we actually mean by Jesus research? Is this term a direct translation and continuation of the traditional *Leben-Jesu-Forschung*?

In a certain sense, Jesus research follows the lines of the so-called Third Quest,⁶ which intended to contextualize Jesus in his Jewish setting⁷ but also move beyond text-centered analyses, since non-literary sources were considered to be a central basis for historical reconstruction. Therefore, at this point, we could speak of a specific paradigm:⁸ “Jesus Research is paradigmatically different from the new quest of Ernst Käsemann, Günther Bornkamm, and James Robinson and even the old quest of Heinrich Holtzmann, Adolf Harnack, and Albert Schweitzer. Whereas earlier scholars relied on source criticism and sought to ground the study of Jesus in the putative earliest sources, Mark and Q, more recent scholars see the danger of a text-centred approach, include the Gospel of John, and utilize sociology, psychology, and especially archaeology.”⁹

In this frame, there is an increasing focus on Galilee in contemporary scholarship, which frequently views Seán Freyne’s monograph from

York, N.Y.: Routledge, 2008), 32–35. This topic is not represented in classical research about the historical Jesus, e.g., Gerd Theißen and Annette Merz, *Der historische Jesus: Ein Lehrbuch* (3d ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001); John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, vol. 1: *The Roots of the Problem and the Person* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1991). Recently, however, Per Bilde refers to it explicitly in Per Bilde, *Den historiske Jesus* (Copenhagen: Anis, 2008), 123–57; Per Bilde, *The Originality of Jesus: A Critical Discussion and a Comparative Attempt* (SANT 1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013).

⁵ See, e.g., James H. Charlesworth, “Background I: Jesus of History and the Topography of the Holy Land,” in *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus* (ed. T. Holmén and S. E. Porter; 4 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 2011), 3:2213–42; Etienne Nodet, “Jewish Galilee,” in *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus* (ed. T. Holmén and S. E. Porter; 4 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 2011), 4:3221–43.

⁶ See, e.g., Theißen and Merz, *Der historische Jesus*, 28–29, with reference to Stephen Neill and Tom Wright, *The Interpretation of the New Testament 1861–1986* (2d ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

⁷ Jesus research is also characterized by selected interests in inter-religious studies; see Charlesworth, “Jesus Research,” 12.

⁸ See also Seán Freyne, “Archaeology and the Historical Jesus,” in *Jesus and Archaeology* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2006), 64–83: “Jesus Research can pose new and more precise questions to archaeology, whereas archaeology can provide a different kind of evidence to that of the literary accounts, which historians must also take seriously” (83). See also recently Jürgen K. Zangenberg, “Jesus der Galiläer und die Archäologie: Beobachtungen zur Bedeutung der Archäologie für die historische Jesusforschung,” *MThZ* 64 (2013): 123–56.

⁹ Charlesworth, “Jesus Research,” 55–56.

1980¹⁰ as the “Einsatzpunkt der modernen Galiläaforschung.”¹¹ Contemporary archaeology in Galilee¹² has identified the geographical, historical,

¹⁰ Seán Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian: A Study of Second Temple Judaism* (Wilmington, Del.: Glazier, 1980).

¹¹ Roland Deines, “Galiläa und Jesus: Anfragen zur Funktion der Herkunftsbezeichnung ‚Galiläa‘ in der neueren Jesusforschung,” in *Jesus und die Archäologie Galiläas* (ed. C. Claußen and J. Frey; BThSt 87; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2008), 271–320 (278). For a general discussion, see Seán Freyne, “Galilean Studies: Old Issues and New Questions,” in *Religion, Ethnicity, and Identity in Ancient Galilee: A Region in Transition* (ed. J. Zangenberg et al.; WUNT 210; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 13–29.

¹² See the contributions in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *Jesus and Archaeology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2006); Carsten Claußen and Jörg Frey, ed., *Jesus und die Archäologie Galiläas* (BThSt 87; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2008); and cf. various seminar groups at SBL meetings and the conference “Symposium: Greco-Roman Galilee,” arranged by Tel Hai Academic College, Kinneret College, Macalester College and Carthage College, June 21–23, 2009. – Formally, Freyne’s depiction is a contribution to the historiography about Second Temple Judaism; see also Fergus Millar, *The Roman Near East 31 BC – AD 337* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), esp. 346–47, 377–86, which still refers back to Emil Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi* (3 vols.; 3d/4th ed.; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1901–1909). Schürer’s approach to a historiography of early Judaism is continued by contributions to various topics, e.g., Martin Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem: The Clash of Ancient Civilizations* (London: Allen Lane, 2007). However, Freyne also provides fresh insights. By focusing on and limiting his historiography programmatically to Galilee, he turns Galilee into a scholarly object of its own, where New Testament studies, ancient history, archaeology and Jewish studies meet. Scholars like Richard A. Horsley (*Archaeology, History and Society in Galilee: Texts and Contexts in the Graeco-Roman and Byzantine Period* [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997]) have joined Freyne’s approach and enriched it in regard to insights from archaeology and social history (see Jürgen Zangenberg et al., ed., *Religion, Ethnicity, and Identity in Ancient Galilee: A Region in Transition* [WUNT 210; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007]). Horsley, however, still claims that Galilee played only a marginal role: “Die einfachen Menschen, die im Nahen Osten die erste Bewegung um Jeschua Bar Josef, um Jesus also bildeten, schlugen sich in einer abgelegenen Gegend des Römischen Weltreichs als Bauern und Fischer durch” (Richard A. Horsley, ed., *Die Jesusbewegungen und die Erneuerung Israels: Die ersten Christen* [vol. 1 of *Sozialgeschichte des Christentums*; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2007], 37–62 [37]). More recent archaeology questions such a statement. Reed, *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus*, esp. 100–169, is an attempt to revise the historical information about Sepphoris and Capernaum on basis of archaeological evidence in particular; on this, see also Charlesworth, *Jesus Research*, 15–19. It is in fact on basis of Freyne’s monograph that the concept of research on Galilee could be established – meanwhile, it involves topography, history, politics and archaeology, as well as social, economic and religious issues. For a general overview of approaches and methods, see James H. Charlesworth and Mordechai Aviam, “Überlegungen zur Erforschung Galiläas im ersten Jahrhundert,” in *Jesus und die Archäologie Galiläas* (ed. C. Claußen and J. Frey; BThSt 87; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2008), 93–127, esp. 94–96.

social¹³ and cultural meaning of Galilee¹⁴ and has thus moved beyond Freyne's tentative evaluation of the area.¹⁵ Jürgen Zangenberg, for instance, claims, "Durch seine geographische Lage zwischen Syrien im Osten und der dicht besiedelten Küstenregion im Westen war Galiläa in der hellenistisch-römischen Periode alles andere als abgelegenes Hinterland."¹⁶ From here, Josephus' well-known description of Galilee (*B.J.* 3.35–43) would indeed make sense.¹⁷

¹³ See also Jürgen Zangenberg and Jens Schröter, eds., *Bauern, Fischer und Propheten: Galiläa zur Zeit Jesu* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2012).

¹⁴ This differs from Christoph Böttrich, "Was kann aus Nazaret Gutes kommen? Galiläa im Spiegel der Jesusüberlieferung und bei Josephus," in *Josephus und das Neue Testament. Wechselseitige Wahrnehmungen: II. Internationales Symposium zum Corpus Judaico-Hellenisticum 25.–28. Mai 2006* (ed. C. Böttrich and J. Herzer; WUNT 209; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 295–333 (295): "Galiläa, ein kleines und abgelegenes, fruchtbares Gebiet ..." The geopolitical role of Palestine becomes evident when we examine the impact of both Jewish-Roman wars in regard to Roman self-representation; see Eve-Marie Becker, "Der jüdisch-römische Krieg (66–70 n.Chr.) und das Markus-Evangelium: Zu den 'Anfängen' frühchristlicher Historiographie," in *Die antike Historiographie und die Anfänge der christlichen Geschichtsschreibung* (ed. E.-M. Becker; BZNW 129; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 213–36. In regard to how the second war threatened Rome, cf. Werner Eck's reconstruction of Hadrian's arch in Tel Shalem: Werner Eck and Gideon Foerster, "Ein Triumphbogen im Tal von bet Shean bei Tel Shalem," *JRA* 12 (1999): 294–313, esp. 310: "Keine Provinz im römischen Reich hat jemals nach einem Aufstand ihren Namen verloren."

¹⁵ Freyne, *Galilee*, 16, limits the historical and cultural value of Galilee: "the interior of Galilee was particularly suited to a peasant style of life with people living together in close ties of kinship in relatively small and isolated settlements." For a general critique of Freyne's earlier studies on Galilee, see, e.g., Morten Hørning Jensen, *Herod Antipas in Galilee: The Literary and Archaeological Sources on the Reign of Herod Antipas and its Socio-Economic Impact on Galilee* (WUNT 2:215; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), esp. 7–8.

¹⁶ Jürgen Zangenberg, "Jesus – Galiläa – Archäologie: Neue Forschungen zu einer Region im Wandel," in *Jesus und die Archäologie Galiläas* (ed. C. Claußen and J. Frey; BThSt 87; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2008), 7–38 (14).

¹⁷ For a general discussion of Josephus and Galilee, see, e.g., Mordechai Aviam and Peter Richardson, "Appendix A: Josephus' Galilee in Archaeological Perspective," in Steven Mason, *Flavius Josephus: Life of Josephus* (vol. 9 of *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary*; ed. S. Mason; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 177–209; Zeev Weiss, "Josephus and Archaeology on the Cities of Galilee," in *Making History: Josephus and Historical Method* (ed. Z. Rogers; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 385–415; Zangenberg, *Das Galiläa des Josephus*; Joachim Jeska, "Josephus und die Archäologie," in *Zeichen aus Text und Stein: Studien auf dem Weg zu einer Archäologie des Neuen Testaments* (ed. S. Alkier and J. Zangenberg; TANZ 42; Tübingen: Francke, 2003), 110–34. – In Philo the term Γαλιλαία occurs only once (*Legat.* 326). – For Josephus' general historiographical interest in geography, see Yuval Shahar, *Josephus Geographicus: The Classical Context of Geography in Josephus* (TSAJ 98; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004); L. Huitink and J. W. van Henten, "Josephus," in *Space in Ancient Greek Literature: Studies in Ancient Greek*

However, in my opinion, the contemporary interest in Galilee appears to be the result of a much older investigation into Galilean topography, which was already underway in the nineteenth century.¹⁸ In the first half of the nineteenth century, there were Christian pilgrims or intellectuals who – in certain continuity to early Christian travelers of the second, third and fourth centuries¹⁹ – went to Palestine in order to gain autopsy. One of the most prominent examples is the English painter David Roberts (1796–1864), who travelled to Palestine in 1839.²⁰ Around the same time, the very first attempts at archaeology and excavation work took place in the area, even though these were primarily motivated by personal adventure. Nevertheless, we could argue that this marked the beginnings of what we would now call biblical archaeology.²¹ The American excavator Edward Robin-

Narrative, vol. 3 (ed. I. J. F. de Jong; MnS 339; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 199–217. – For the distinction between πόλις and κώμη, see below.

¹⁸ For the general nineteenth-century interest in the historical Jesus, see also Halvor Moxnes, *Jesus and the Rise of Nationalism: A New Quest for the Nineteenth-Century Historical Jesus* (London: Tauris, 2012); Halvor Moxnes, “The Construction of Galilee as a Place for the Historical Jesus: The Heritage of the Nineteenth Century,” in *Holy Land as Homeland? Models for Constructing the Historical Landscapes of Jesus* (ed. K. W. Whitelam; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011), 1–18.

¹⁹ One of the first Christian pilgrims who also went to Palestine “for intellectual reasons” at the beginning of the “popular movements” was Melito of Sardis. See Ora Limor, “Holy Journey”: Pilgrimage and Christian Sacred Landscape,” in *Christians and Christianity in the Holy Land: From the Origins to the Latin Kingdoms* (ed. O. Limor and G. G. Stroumsa; Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages 5; Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 321–53 (328). See also E. D. Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage in the Later Roman Empire AD 312–640* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984); Herbert Donner, *Pilgerfahrt ins Heilige Land: Die ältesten Berichte christlicher Palästina-pilger (4.–7. Jahrhundert)* (2d ed.; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2002). On later reports on pilgrimages, see Markus Schauta, *Die ersten Jahrhunderte christlicher Pilgerreisen im Spiegel spätantiker und frühmittelalterlicher Quellen* (Grazer Altertumskundliche Studien 10; Frankfurt: Lang, 2008), 17–21.

²⁰ See Wolfgang Schuler, *Im Heiligen Land: Reisebilder von David Roberts 1839* (Munich: RGA-Verlag, 1991). See also Bernhard Lang, “Der Orientreisende als Exeget, oder Turban und Taubenmist: Beiträge der Reiseliteratur zum Verständnis der Bibel im 18. und 19. Jh.,” *ZDPV* 121 (2005): 67–85. For an overview of travels to the orient between 1495 and 1836, see E. Robinson and E. Smith, *Palästina und die südlich angrenzenden Länder. Tagebuch einer Reise im Jahre 1838 in Bezug auf die biblische Geographie unternommen* (3 vols.; Halle: Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1841–1842), 1:XXV–XXXVIII.

²¹ “Biblische Archäologie ist immer Palästina-Archäologie. Aber Palästina-Archäologie ist nicht immer Biblische Archäologie: Verwendet man den Begriff der Biblischen Archäologie spezifisch, sollte man ihn auf den von AT und NT vorgegebenen Zeitraum ... bis zur römisch-frühchristlichen Epoche und auf die historische Landschaft Palästina einengen” (U. Hübner, “Archäologie: II. Biblische Archäologie,” *RGG*⁴ 1:709–11 [709]).

son (1794–1863)²² deserves a special mention here. In 1838, he discovered the remains of a synagogue in Capernaum, and, ever since, Capernaum has formed an integral part of scholarly work, even among New Testament exegetes.²³ At the time, Robinson described these ruins as follows: “Ruinen eines Gebäudes, welches durch den Aufwand von Arbeit und Verzierung alles bis jetzt von uns in Palästina Gesehene übertrifft.”²⁴ Robinson’s book – in its English as well as its German version – had a significant impact on the next generation of Biblical scholars. It is particularly interesting to examine the German history of reception. In the third edition of his book *Ein Tag in Kapernaum* (1886), Franz Delitzsch writes: “Kapernaum ist jetzt eine mit mannshohem Gras, Disteln, Bohnengewinde und Buschwerk überwachsene Stätte imposanter, bis an den See hinanreichender

²² Edward Robinson is frequently seen as the “Mitbegründer der wissenschaftlichen Topographie von Palästina”; see Johannes Madey, “Robinson, Edward,” *BBKL* 16:1375. For his important works, see Edward Robinson, *Biblical Researches in Palestine, Mount Sinai and Arabia Petraea* (3 vols.; London: John Murray, 1841); Robinson and Smith, *Palästina*; Edward Robinson, *Neue Untersuchungen über die Topographie Jerusalems: Eine Beigabe zu des Verfassers Werke über Palästina* (Halle: Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1847; Edward Robinson et al., *Neuere Biblische Forschungen in Palästina und in den angränzenden Ländern: Tagebuch einer Reise im Jahre 1852* (Berlin: Reimer, 1857).

²³ See, e.g., Anders Runesson, “Architecture, Conflict, and Identity Formation: Jews and Christians in Capernaum from the First to the Sixth Century,” in *Religion, Ethnicity, and Identity in Ancient Galilee: A Region in Transition* (ed. J. Zangenberg et al.; WUNT 210; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 231–57.

²⁴ Robinson and Smith, *Palästina*, 1:555. On the identification of Capernaum, see 1: 547–49; for the description of Capernaum as Tell Hûm, see 1:554–58: “Die Ruinen zu Tell Hûm sind gewiss sehr merkwürdig ... Es finden sich hier die Ueberreste eines grossen und bedeutenden Ortes ... Sie bestehen hauptsächlich aus den Grundsteinen und umgeworfenen Mauern von Wohnungen und andern Gebäuden, alle von ungehauenen Steinen, bis auf zwei Ruinen. Eine von diesen ist ein kleines Bauwerk nahe bei dem Ufer, das einzige jetzt noch stehende; mehr in der Nähe sieht man, dass es in späteren Zeiten mit den gehauenen Steinen, Säulen und Pilastern von früheren Bauten aufgebaut worden ist. Nicht weit davon liegen auf dem Boden die Ruinen eines Gebäudes, welches durch den Aufwand von Arbeit und Verzierung alles bis jetzt von uns in Palästina Gesehene übertrifft. Der Umfang der Grundmauern dieses Bauwerkes lässt sich nicht mehr bestimmt ermitteln ... Die Steine dieses Gebäudes waren gross; und das Ganze muss ein schönes Bauwerk gewesen sein. Das Material ist überall fester Kalkstein; wenn nicht einige Blöcke als in einen groben Marmor übergehend angesehen werden müssen. Der Charakter des Gebäudes lässt sich schwer bestimmen. Wir konnten keinen Zusammenhang der Grundmauern mit dem Ufer unterscheiden, und das Bauwerk nur für eine vormalige Kirche oder einen alten heidnischen Tempel halten. Aber das einzige entscheidende Merkmal (wenn es ein solches ist) zu Gunsten der ersteren Voraussetzung war der Umstand, dass die längste Dimension des Gebäudes sich von Westen nach Osten erstreckt zu haben scheint. Die Verwirrung ist zu gross, als dass sich irgend eine Gewissheit erwarten liesse” (1:554–56).

Trümmer.”²⁵ Interestingly enough, this description does not refer to Delitzsch’s own autopsy of Capernaum but rather to Robinson’s itineraries.²⁶

In general, excavators like Robinson have stimulated research in Capernaum and Galilean topography as well as Palestine as such. Gustaf Dalman (1855–1941) is one of the promoters of what we might best call *Palästina-kunde*. With his impressive works *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina*²⁷ and *Orte und Wege Jesu*,²⁸ Dalman successfully inspired social scientific methods that were only later derived in the field of Galilean studies.²⁹ However, it was Robinson in particular who was responsible for initiating intensive excavations in Capernaum, and it was in these excavations that modern research in Jewish as well as early Christian Capernaum took its point of departure. Contemporary research in Galilee should therefore not be viewed as an entirely new venture but as a field that connects a long-reaching tradition of investigating Palestine, Galilee and, in particular, Capernaum.

2. Research in Capernaum: Results and Open Questions

Following shorter campaigns in 1905³⁰ and 1921,³¹ excavation activities in Capernaum were continued systematically by Virgilio Corbo and Stanislao Loffreda in 1968–1969 and the following years. At this point, the focus shifted significantly to the early Christian history of Capernaum. The Ital-

²⁵ Franz Delitzsch, *Ein Tag in Kapernaum* (3d ed.; Leipzig: Naumann, 1886), 83.

²⁶ See Delitzsch, *Kapernaum*, iii.

²⁷ Gustaf Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina*, vols. 1–7 (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1928–1942); vol. 8 (ed. J. Männchen, Berlin: de Gruyter, 2001).

²⁸ Gustaf Dalman, *Orte und Wege Jesu* (3d ed.; SDPI 1; Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1924).

²⁹ See Julia Männchen, *Gustaf Dalman als Palästina-wissenschaftler in Jerusalem und Greifswald 1902–1941* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1993); Julia Männchen, “Das heilige Land: Denkmal der heiligen Geschichte – Gustaf Dalman’s Konzeption von Palästina-wissenschaft,” in *Zeichen aus Text und Stein: Studien auf dem Weg zu einer Archäologie des Neuen Testaments* (ed. S. Alkier and J. Zangenber; TANZ 42; Tübingen: Francke, 2003), 78–87; Olliver Heinemann, “Die Gustaf-Dalman-Sammlung in Jerusalem: Christ-Sein und Palästina-wissenschaft,” in *Zeichen aus Text und Stein: Studien auf dem Weg zu einer Archäologie des Neuen Testaments* (ed. S. Alkier and J. Zangenber; TANZ 42; Tübingen: Francke, 2003), 88–109.

³⁰ The excavations were conducted by Heinrich Kohl and Carl Watzinger. See Heinrich Kohl and Carl Watzinger, *Antike Synagogen in Galiläa* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1916).

³¹ The excavations were conducted by Gaudenzio Orfali. See Gaudenzio Orfali, *Capernaum et ses ruines d’après les fouilles accomplies à Tell-Houm par la Custodie Franciscaine de Terre Sainte 1905–1921* (Paris: Picard, 1922).

ian Franciscans concentrated primarily on the excavation and historical interpretation of the so-called House of Peter.³² Again, autopsy but also verification of various references to a synagogue and the “house of Simon and Andrew” found in Mark’s Gospel (Mark 1:21, 29, 33; possibly 2:1)³³ played an important role.

What kind of insights into the history of Capernaum do we gain from this? Although we cannot exclude the possibility that the later *domus ecclesiae*³⁴ was built on the former site of Peter’s house, these excavations cannot tell us how Capernaum really looked in and shortly after Jesus’ lifetime, i.e., in the first and early second half of the first century C.E.³⁵ The so-called House of Peter only provides evidence for the existence of an early *Christian* building in the fourth or fifth century C.E. A possible solution, offered by Stanislaw Loffreda, to divide the house into three distinct periods of architecture, which would also lead us back to a building with a *Christian* function in the first century C.E., cannot be approved since *Christian* architecture is not verifiable for this time.³⁶

We have to turn our attention to a later period of time, the seventh century C.E., in order to explore another settlement located east of the Franciscan area. In 1978–1982, excavations led by Vassilios Tzaferis and others in the territory of the Greek Patriarchate again raised the question of how

³² See, e.g., Stanislaw Loffreda, “Capernaum,” *NEAEHL* 1:291–295 (292). – The modern church was erected by the Italian architect Ildo Avetta and consecrated in 1990.

³³ In this context, we have to discuss how to best interpret the phrase ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτοῦ (Mark 2:15). Is this a historical reference to a house of Jesus in Capernaum?

³⁴ See also Joseph Patrich, “Early Christian Churches in the Holy Land,” in *Christians and Christianity in the Holy Land: From the Origins to the Latin Kingdoms* (ed. O. Limor and G. G. Stroumsa; Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages 5; Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 355–99 (363–65).

³⁵ While Reed, *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus*, 143, only speaks of a “marginal” significance, for scholars like Jerome Murphy-O’Connor (*The Holy Land* [4th ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998], 220), the identification of such a house in regard to Jesus’ preaching ministry is central. For a discussion of this, see Charlesworth, *Jesus Research*, 49–50.

³⁶ The octagon was built in the second half of the fifth century; during the fourth century, the building was separated from the rest of the village by a wall, while the rectangular interior (ca. 5.8 x 6.45 m) could already have been in use by a Christian community in the first century – together with “Peter’s house,” it was part of the *insula sacra*; see Loffreda, “Capernaum,” 295. Stefano De Luca tries to interpret the existence of the wall as an indication for “Christian” activity around the second century (Stefano De Luca, “Vorgeschichte, Ursprung und Funktion der byzantinischen Klöster von Kafarnaum/Tabgha in der Region um den See Gennesaret,” in *Tabgha 2012: Festschrift zur Einweihung des neuen Klostergebäudes am 17. Mai 2012: Herausgegeben von den Benediktinern der Abtei Dormitio und des Priorats Tabgha* [Jerusalem: Emerezian, 2012], 24–59 [33]). However, a specific Christian function of this building complex is not verifiable for the first and second centuries.

to reconstruct the history of Capernaum in early Christian times. The Byzantine settlement was built as a new, Christian area,³⁷ whose relation to the territory in the west remains unclear. Therefore, on the basis of both excavations, we are unfortunately unable to prove a continuous presence of early (Jewish-)Christian communities in Capernaum from the first to the fourth/fifth or seventh century C.E.³⁸ It is thus possible to claim that archaeological evidence for the history of early Christianity in Galilee up to the fourth/fifth century is limited. Even if we make assumptions about a settlement in Capernaum from the first century B.C.E. onwards, it is difficult to ascertain anything regarding its size and functional utilization during this time.³⁹ In order to discover more about early Christianity in Galilee, we therefore have to look to other fields of evidence.

Let us now turn our attention towards literary sources; for example, the *itinerarium*⁴⁰ by the Christian pilgrim Egeria, which dates back to the end of the fourth century (ca. 381–384 C.E.).⁴¹ This work is one of the earliest literary documents that not only provides evidence for the presence of earliest Christianity in Galilee but also potentially⁴² demonstrates how Peter's house was used as a "house-church" in late-fourth-century Capernaum.⁴³ Further references to Capernaum's history and topography in early Christian pilgrim literature can be found in St. Jerome, Paula and Eustochium

³⁷ Cf. Vassilios Tzaferis, "New Archaeological Evidence on Ancient Capernaum," *BA* 46 (1983): 198–204 (esp. 203–204); Vassilios Tzaferis, "Excavations in the Area of the Greek Orthodox Church," *NEAEHL* 1:295–96.

³⁸ On this, see, e.g., Richard A. Horsley, *Archaeology, History, and Society in Galilee: The Social Context of Jesus and the Rabbis* (Valley Forge, Pa.: Trinity Press, 1996), 112.

³⁹ This also applies to the question of pre-Byzantine architecture below the settlement east of the Franciscan area.

⁴⁰ On itineraries, see Wilhelm Kubitschek, *Itinerarstudien* (DAWW.PH 61.3; Vienna: Hölder, 1919).

⁴¹ For the complex field of isagogical questions – the pilgrim's name, date of travel and sources, see Georg Röwekamp, "Einleitung," in *Egeria: Itinerarium – Reisebericht: Mit Auszügen aus Petrus Diaconus, De Locis Sanctis/Die Heiligen Stätten* (trans. G. Röwekamp; 2d ed.; FC 20; Freiburg: Herder, 2000), 9–115 (esp. 12–40).

⁴² This part of the travel account (5.2) is reconstructed on the basis of Petrus Diaconus, *De Locis Sanctis* and can thus not be found in Donner, *Pilgerfahrt*, 78–79. For the criteria used to reconstruct the text, see Georg Röwekamp, "Petrus Diaconus, Die Heiligen Stätten: Einleitung," in *Egeria: Itinerarium – Reisebericht: Mit Auszügen aus Petrus Diaconus, De Locis Sanctis/Die Heiligen Stätten* (trans. G. Röwekamp; 2d ed.; FC 20; Freiburg: Herder, 2000), 310–14.

⁴³ See *Égerie: Journal de voyage* (ed. P. Maraval; SC 296; Paris: Cerf, 1982), 98; *Egeria* (ed. Röwekamp), 337. Further references are found in Patrich, "Early Christian Churches," 364.

(ca. 404),⁴⁴ in the writings of archdeacon Theodosius (between 518 and 530),⁴⁵ the so-called Pilgrim of Piacenza (ca. 570)⁴⁶ as well as bishop Arkulf and abbot Adomnanus (ca. 680).⁴⁷

In general, there are two different types of literary sources on Christian Capernaum and/or Galilee during patristic times.⁴⁸ Firstly, there are early Christian references (which date to the fourth century onwards). Besides Egeria and other selected pilgrim reports, we can appeal to Epiphanius (*Pan.* 30.11); however, his work remains somewhat inconclusive. He claims in part that Capernaum was only inhabited by Jews up to the fourth century, but he also mentions a certain Joseph of Tiberias, a convertite, who initiated church buildings in Tiberias, Sepphoris, Nazareth and Capernaum during Constantine times (*Pan.* 30.4–12).⁴⁹ According to Eusebius' *Onomasticon*, Capernaum was a Galilean κώμη ... τῶν ἐθνῶν.⁵⁰

Secondly, there are non-Christian sources, but the evidence here is rather ambiguous. In rabbinic literature, Capernaum is only mentioned twice.⁵¹ In *Qoheleth Rabbah* 1 (ca. 6th–8th century C.E.),⁵² we find evidence – contra Epiphanius – for the existence of a (Jewish-)Christian

⁴⁴ See Donner, *Pilgerfahrt*, 161. Here, Cana and Capernaum are mentioned as “witnesses of miracles.”

⁴⁵ See Donner, *Pilgerfahrt*, 191 (“Von Siebenquell bis Capharnaum sind es 2 Meilen. Von Capharnaum bis Bethsaida sind es 6 Meilen ...”).

⁴⁶ See Donner, *Pilgerfahrt*, 248 (“Ferner kamen wir nach Capharnaum zum Hause des seligen Petrus, das jetzt eine Basilika ist”).

⁴⁷ See Donner, *Pilgerfahrt*, 372.

⁴⁸ For a general discussion, see Moshe Fischer, “Kapharnaum,” *RAC* 20:43–56; Moshe Fischer, “Kapharnaum: eine Retrospektive,” *JbAC* 44 (2001): 142–67.

⁴⁹ See on this Frédéric Manns, “Joseph de Tibériade, un judéo-chrétien du quatrième siècle,” in *Christian Archaeology in the Holy Land: New Discoveries: Essays in Honor of V. C. Corbo* (ed. G. C. Bottini et al.; Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1990), 553–59; references on this also in Lorenzo Perrone, “‘Rejoice Sion, Mother of all Churches’: Christianity in the Holy Land During the Byzantine Era,” in *Christians and Christianity in the Holy Land: From the Origins to the Latin Kingdoms* (ed. O. Limor and G. G. Stroumsa; Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages 5; Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 141–73 (149). Critical in regard to this source is Günter Stemberger, *Juden und Christen im heiligen Land: Palästina unter Konstantin und Theodosius* (Munich: Beck, 1987), 66–73.

⁵⁰ The full quotation (according to Eusebius: *Das Onomastikon der Biblischen Ortsnamen*, [ed. E. Klostermann; GCS 11:1; Hildesheim: Olms, 1966], 120), is παρὰ τὴν Γεννησαρῆτιν λίμνην. Εἰς ἔτι νῦν ἔστι κώμη ἐν τῇ Γαλιλαίᾳ τῶν ἐθνῶν ἐν ὀρίοις Ζαβουλῶν καὶ Νεφθαλείμ. See also *Palestine in the Fourth Century A.D.: The Onomasticon by Eusebius of Caesarea* (ed. J. E. Taylor; trans. G. S. P. Freeman-Grenville; Jerusalem: Carta, 2003), 67.

⁵¹ See on this Str-B 1:159.

⁵² For the dating, see Günter Stemberger, *Einleitung in Talmud und Midrasch* (8th ed.; Munich: Beck, 1992), 311–12; A. Cohen, *Midrash Rabba: Ecclesiastes* (London: Bournemouth, 1951), vii–viii.

community in early-second-century Capernaum.⁵³ In the same Midrash, it is later stated that Capernaum was a place where a sinner was involved in a (Jewish-Christian) heresy (7.26).⁵⁴ The Stoic philosopher Epictetus provides information on the general existence of Christian groups – martyr-like – in Galilee in the first third of the second century C.E.,⁵⁵ yet this information is very vague.

It becomes clear that neither archaeological nor literary sources – beyond Josephus – provide a solid foundation to reconstruct the history of Jewish and early Christian Capernaum. Specifically, the earliest history of Christ-believers in Capernaum remains vague: here, archaeological and literary evidence begins only in the fourth/fifth century C.E. and does not help to shed light on earlier times; the exception to this, of course, is gospel literature.⁵⁶ Therefore, it seems accurate to state that the gospel writings remain the most important source for Capernaum’s earliest “Christian

⁵³ The text of *Qoh. Rab.* 1.8 § 4 in the German translation is “Chanina ..., der Brudersohn des R. J^hoschuas ..., begab sich nach K^hphar Nachum, u. die Häretiker (Minim ...) taten ihm etwas an ...; dann brachten sie ihn hinein ..., indem er an einem Sabbat auf einem Esel ritt ... Darauf begab er sich zu seinem Oheim J^hoschua ... Dieser brachte Öl auf ihn u. er genas ... Der Oheim sprach zu ihm: Da hierbei ... rege geworden ist ... jenes Gottlosen, so kannst du nicht im Lande Israel verweilen. Er ging von dort hinab nach Babel u. entschlief dort in seinem Frieden” (Str-B 1:159); see also Cohen, *Midrash Rabba*, 29, 210. Cf. also references in: Loffreda, “Capernaum,” 292.

⁵⁴ Str-B 1:160.

⁵⁵ See Arrian, *Epict. diss.* 4.7.6: εἶτα ὑπὸ μανίας μὲν δύνатаί τις οὕτω διατεθῆναι πρὸς ταῦτα, καὶ ὑπὸ ἔθους οἱ Γαλιλαῖοι. ὑπὸ λόγου δὲ καὶ ἀποδείξεως οὐδεὶς δύνатаι μαθεῖν, ὅτι ὁ θεὸς πάντα πεποιήκε (sic!) τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, καὶ αὐτὸν τὸν κόσμον ὅλον μὲν ἀκώλυτον καὶ αὐτοτελεῖ, τὰ ἐν μέρει δ’ αὐτοῦ πρὸς χρεῖαν τῶν ὄλων (*Epicteti Dissertationum ab Arriano Digestarum Libri IV. Eiusdem Enchiridion et ex Deperditis Sermonibus Fragmenta* [ed. I. Schweighaeuser; Epictetae Philosophiae Monumenta 1; Leipzig, 1799], 618). See on this William Horbury, “Beginnings of Christianity in the Holy Land,” in *Christians and Christianity in the Holy Land: From the Origins to the Latin Kingdoms* (ed. O. Limor and G. G. Stroumsa; Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages 5; Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 7–89 (34–35): “This dictum accords with other second-century comments on seemingly irrational Christian readiness to die, and deserves notice here because there is a fair probability that it refers to Christians under the name of Galileans, linking them with ‘Jesus the Galilean’ (Matt. 26.69) and his homeland; Justin Martyr ... envisages Jewish description of Jesus as ‘a Galilean deceiver’ (Dial. 108.2)”. For pagan sources on Galilee, see Silvia Cappelletti, “Non-Jewish Authors on Galilee,” in: *Religion, Ethnicity, and Identity in Ancient Galilee: A Region in Transition* (ed. J. Zangenberget al.; WUNT 210; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 69–81.

⁵⁶ The graffiti which have been found at Peter’s house are sometimes taken as a reference to an early presence of a Jewish-Christian community, as Emmanuele Testa, *I graffiti della casa di S. Pietro* (Cafarnaio 4; Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1972) has argued; however, they could also refer to the phenomenon of pilgrimages in the fourth and fifth centuries.

history” in first-century Galilee. In accordance, this paper aims to demonstrate how we can best make use of the gospels’ references to Capernaum. In doing so, we can connect the results of modern Jesus research and, in turn, move beyond Ernst Lohmeyer’s plea for Galilean community life which was based on a close reading of Mark 16 par. Matt 28⁵⁷ and presented in his well-known monograph *Galiläa und Jerusalem* (1936).⁵⁸ But how do we proceed from here? Firstly, on basis of current Jesus research, I will summarize what we actually know about the sea-region’s topography in order to better understand Capernaum’s geographical setting. Secondly, I will collect all the relevant information (including socio-economic information) available on Capernaum’s history in ancient times in order to illuminate the living conditions more clearly.

In current Jesus research, the region of the Galilean sea plays an important role.⁵⁹ By means of archaeological surveys and specific excavations, scholars have been able to gain important insights into the settlement history of lower Galilee. It is now clear that new cities were founded after Hellenistic times, especially at the eastern side of the sea (e.g., Gadara, Hippos/Susita). It has also been shown that, in Hasmonean time (particularly during the first century B.C.E.), there was a certain settlement policy in lower Galilee and at Golan (e.g., Gamla) whereby the northern and western coasts of the sea-region were particularly vitalized (e.g., Magdala, Tabgha).⁶⁰ Finally, it has been demonstrated that, in the Herodian period, important cities were re-founded or founded, such as Tiberias. It therefore becomes evident that, in social and economic terms, the region around the Galilean sea prospered in Hellenistic-Roman times. This impression is

⁵⁷ Stemberger, *Juden und Christen*, 70, also identifies the importance of the literary sources.

⁵⁸ See E. Lohmeyer, *Galiläa und Jerusalem* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1936). Lohmeyer based his argument on the epiphany stories in Galilee in Mark 14:28; 16:7 and Matthew 28:7, 16–20 as well as in John 21.

⁵⁹ See, e.g., Jürgen Zangenberg and Gabriele Faßbeck, “Jesus am See von Galiläa’ (Mt 4,18): Eine Skizze zur archäologischen Forschung am See Gennesaret und zur regionalen Verankerung der frühen Jesusbewegung,” in *Saxa Loquentur: Studien zur Archäologie Palästinas/Israels* (ed. C. G. den Hertog et al.; AOAT 302; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2003), 291–93. In general, see various contributions in Gabriele Faßbeck et al. (eds.), *Leben am See Gennesaret: Kulturgeschichtliche Entdeckungen in einer biblischen Region* (Mainz: von Zabern, 2003), and recently Wolfgang Zwickel, “Der See Gennesaret in hellenistischer und frühromischer Zeit,” *ZNW* 104 (2013): 153–76. Cf. already some interest in the Galilean Sea in the nineteenth century (Frants Buhl, *Gennesaret Sø og dens Omgivelser* [Copenhagen 1889]).

⁶⁰ See Zangenberg, “Jesus,” 16–28.

confirmed by Josephus in his prominent description of Galilee (*B.J.* 3.43) and in his praise of the nature and richness of the area (*B.J.* 3.516–518),⁶¹ but it is also verified in his remarks on the strategic role of Galilee in the first Jewish-Roman war (battle of Migdal; see *B.J.* 3.443–505, 522–542).⁶²

It is now important to ask what information we can gain about Capernaum in particular. Contemporary research on Galilee appears to value Capernaum as the central place of Jesus' Galilean ministry. But this gives rise to the following questions: How do scholars reach this conclusion? What kind of evidence do we have for the status and appearance of Capernaum in first-century Galilee? What can we possibly deduce from this for our reconstruction of the historical Jesus? With these questions in mind, I will now continue to discuss the results of Jesus research thus far.

(1) The only evidence for archaeological structures dating to the first century C.E. are *insulae* that were excavated in 1968. However, these only provide us with general pieces of information on Hellenistic-Roman dwelling houses.⁶³

(2) Some scholars have worked on demography⁶⁴ and road connection⁶⁵ in and around Capernaum; however, thus far, these data have failed to lead

⁶¹ Immediately before (*B.J.* 3.506–515), we find the excursus on the Galilean Sea – hereby, Josephus reveals himself as a historian (cf. Strabo, *Geogr.* 16.2, 45; Pliny, *Nat.* 5.71; Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.6.2; Pausanias, *Descr.* 5.7.4); references in Shahar, *Josephus Geographicus*, esp. 210.

⁶² See Shelley Wachsmann, “Sea of Galilee,” in *Encyclopedia of the Historical Jesus* (ed. C. A. Evans; New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 2008), 557–60 (559–60).

⁶³ See especially Hans-Peter Kuhnen, *Palästina in griechisch-römischer Zeit* (Handbuch der Archäologie 2.2; Munich: Beck, 1990), esp. 60–68, 233–52; Loffreda, “Capernaum,” 291. – References in Eve-Marie Becker, *Das Markus-Evangelium im Rahmen antiker Historiographie* (WUNT 194; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 294. – Still, the possibility of the existence of a first-century C.E. synagogue under the limestone synagogue is discussed. See Stefano De Luca, “Capernaum,” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Archaeology* (ed. D. M. Master; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 168–80.

⁶⁴ The Synoptic Gospels define Capernaum as πόλις (Mark 1:33; Matt 9:1; Luke 4:31). How do we best make sense of this? (a) We might suppose a lack of knowledge or terminological unclarity. Even Josephus remains vague in regard to demography: on the one hand, he claims that the smallest village in Galilee consisted of 15,000 inhabitants (*B.J.* 3.43, see above), but, on the other hand, when designating Capernaum as κώμη (*Vita* 72), he points to a distinction between κώμη and πόλις. (b) Do the gospels simply intend to distinguish between “inhabited and uninhabited places” (Reed, *Archaeology*, 168)? (c) The difference between πόλις and κώμη does not lie on a quantitative, but rather on an institutional level: κώμη defines a city, while πόλις rather refers to a city with Hellenistic infra-structure. Did the gospel writers – because of various elements of Hellenistic city culture in Capernaum (see J. Zangenber, “Kapernaum – Zu Besuch in Jesu ‚eigener Stadt‘,” in *Leben am See Gennesaret: Kulturgeschichtliche Entdeckungen in einer biblischen Region* [ed. G. Faßbeck et al.; Mainz: von Zabern, 2003], 99–103 [100–

to a consistent picture of Capernaum's infra-structure and socio-cultural setting.

(3) The dating of the synagogue in Capernaum is still an important subject of debate since, in the best case, it could provide us with vital information about the development of the cultural and institutional role⁶⁶ of the synagogue during the first to the fifth century C.E.⁶⁷ However, even by looking at the sub-structures of the synagogue (in other words, the basalt floor and wall), we can only gain vague evidence⁶⁸ to date it to the first century C.E.⁶⁹ Some scholars try to support this evidence with an appeal to language history in regard to συναγωγή. Accordingly, συναγωγή in Mark

101]) – intend to define this place in accordance to institutional terminology? The present article cannot extend to a discussion of this; for more information, see Reed, *Archaeology*, and his discussion of the “archaeology of public space” (148). In contrast to Eric Meyers and James F. Strange (*Archaeology, the Rabbis and Early Christianity* [London: SCM, 1981], 58), who estimate there were 12,000–15,000 inhabitants in Capernaum, Reed estimates there were 600–1,500 inhabitants in first-century Capernaum (*Archaeology*, 152). – For a general discussion, see Charlesworth, *Jesus Research*, 17. Loffreda, “Capernaum,” 292, states: “The period of maximal expansion of the village began in the fourth century CE.”

⁶⁵ The question of road connection is another important aspect regarding Capernaum's geographical and cultural meaning in the first century C.E. While Reed (*Archaeology*, 146–48) limits the geographical significance of Capernaum and states that “it was not on a major international trade route” (148), James F. Strange (“First Century Galilee from Archaeology and from the Texts,” in *Archaeology and the Galilee: Texts and Contexts in the Graeco-Roman and Byzantine Periods* [ed. D. R. Edwards and C. T. McCollough; SFSHJ 143; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997], 39–48 [41]) presumes a Galilean “trade network,” which connected upper and lower Galilee. – For a general discussion, see Becker, *Markus-Evangelium*, 285–97.

⁶⁶ It is important to know whether we can assume the presence of a Roman *centurio* in Capernaum. See, e.g., Mark A. Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus* (SNTSMS 134; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), who, in his chapter on “Jesus and the Centurion” (50–56), classifies the centurion “as a Herodian officer” (55).

⁶⁷ See Carsten Claußen, “Jesus und die Versammlungen Galiläas: Zur Frage nach der Bedeutung ἡ συναγωγή,” in *Jesus und die Archäologie Galiläas* (ed. C. Claußen and J. Frey; BThSt 87; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2008), 227–44 (237–38). Cf. in general Anders Runesson, *The Origins of the Synagogue: A Socio-historical Study* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2001); Anders Runesson et al. (eds.), *The Ancient Synagogue from Its Origins to 200 C.E.: A Source Book* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

⁶⁸ Cf. the skepticism of Kuhnen, *Palästina*, 191, 229.

⁶⁹ Evidence for synagogues in first-century C.E. Palestine can only be found in Jerusalem (Theodotus-inscription), Gamla, possibly Capernaum, Herodian Jericho and Masada, possibly Qiryat Sefer (north of Jerusalem), Modi'in (north-west of Jerusalem). See James F. Strange, “Synagogue,” in *Encyclopedia of the Historical Jesus* (ed. C. A. Evans; New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 2008), 612–16.

1:21 could be a label for a meeting place (“Versammlungsplatz”) in the first century rather than a definite building.⁷⁰

(4) Other observations have generated new questions: How should we interpret the fact that, until now, no *miqweh* has been found in Capernaum?⁷¹ Does this kind of *ex negativo* evidence tell us anything relevant about the religious profile of Capernaum and the people living there? Are there enough stone vessel fragments to show that people kept some sort of purity *halakhah*? Similar questions occur when scholars intend to define the origin and the religious identity of Galilean people in contrast to the Samaritans or the Judeans⁷² and, on basis of this, describe Jesus’ own genius.⁷³ From here, further wide-ranging questions can be discussed, such as the relation of Hellenism and Judaism in Hellenistic-Roman Palestine⁷⁴ or the spreading and status of the Greek language at that time.⁷⁵ Most re-

⁷⁰ Claußen, “Jesus,” 239.

⁷¹ See, e.g., Charlesworth, *Jesus Research*, 18.

⁷² See Reed, *Archaeology*, 23–61. For the lexicon, see Seán Freyne, “Behind the Names: Galileans, Samaritans, *Judaioi*,” in *Galilee and Gospel: Collected Essays* (WUNT 125; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 114–31.

⁷³ For this discussion, see David Flusser with R. Steven Notley, *The Sage from Galilee: Rediscovering Jesus’ Genius* (4th ed.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2007), and the review by Shira L. Lander, *CBQ* 70 (2008): 601–3.

⁷⁴ Martin Hengel’s (*Judentum und Hellenismus: Studien zu ihrer Begegnung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Palästinas zur Mitte des 2. Jh.s v.Chr.* [3d ed.; WUNT 10; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1988]) ideas about Palestinian Judaism as Hellenistic Judaism (see also Martin Hengel, “Judaism and Hellenism Revisited,” in *Hellenism in the Land of Israel* [ed. J. J. Collins and G. Sterling; CJAn 13; Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001], 6–37) have been questioned recently – cf., e.g., Lee I. Levine, *Judaism and Hellenism in Antiquity: Conflict or Confluence?* (Seattle, Wash.: University of Washington Press, 1998), esp. 11–15. This is also true in regard to Jesus research; see, e.g., Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture*. – Cf. various important contributions in John J. Collins and Gregory Sterling (eds.), *Hellenism in the Land of Israel* (CJAn 13; Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), e.g., John J. Collins, “Cult and Culture: The Limits of Hellenization in Judea” (38–61); Seán Freyne, “Galileans, Phoenicians, and Itureans: A Study of Regional Contrasts in the Hellenistic Age” (184–215); Shaye J. D. Cohen, “Hellenism in Unexpected Places” (218–43). Cf. also various contributions in M. Mor et al. (eds.), *Jews and Gentiles in the Holy Land in the Days of the Second Temple, the Mishnah and the Talmud: A Collection of Articles* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi Press, 2003).

⁷⁵ See Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture* (e.g., 164), who questions the knowledge of Greek language in Galilee – this has consequences for the reconstruction of Q. See also Stanley E. Porter, “Jesus and the Use of Greek in Galilee,” in *Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluations of the State of Current Research* (ed. B. Chilton and C. A. Evans; NTS 19; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 123–54 (esp. 153–54); Horsley, *Archaeology*, 154–75; Peter W. van der Horst, “Greek in Jewish Palestine in Light of Jewish Epigraphy,” *Hellenism in the Land of Israel* (ed. J. J. Collins and G. Sterling; CJAn 13; Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 154–74; James C. VanderKam, “Greek at

cently, evidence for the import of oil-lamps from Jerusalem to Galilee in Herodian times has provoked new questions about the socio-economic status of the Galilean sea-region and its trading connections with Judea.⁷⁶

(5) Thus, it may prove more fruitful to examine the practice of Galilean fishing,⁷⁷ since this could help provide a more general picture of the economic and social-historical situation of the sea-region.⁷⁸ In 1986, an ancient boat was discovered in Kibbutz Ginnosar.⁷⁹ Since the boat can be dated to the first century C.E., it provides a valuable insight into the practice of fishing at the time; with a length of 8.2 m and a breadth of 2.3 m,⁸⁰ this boat could prove that – as claimed in Josephus as well as the gospel writings⁸¹ – there were in fact comparatively large boats in transit on the Galilean Sea.⁸² This indication is approved by findings that suggest there was a comparatively large harbor at Magdala,⁸³ which, in turn, also implies the existence of wealthy boat owners in the region.

What can we deduce from this picture about the sea-region regarding Jesus' Galilean ministry? Seán Freyne emphasizes how the region of the Galilean Sea was not only important in commercial terms (for example, fishing) but also in therapeutic terms, since therapeutic baths – dating to the last third of the first century – have been found in Hamath Gader or Hamath Tiberias. It seems plausible that ill people frequently came to this area (see Josephus, *Vita* 403–404), so Jesus' mission at the sea-region

Qumran," in *Hellenism in the Land of Israel* (ed. J. J. Collins and G. Sterling; CJAN 13; Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 175–81.

⁷⁶ See Morten Hørning Jensen, "Purity and Politics in Herod Antipas's Galilee: The Case for Religious Motivation," *JSHJ* 11 (2013): 3–34.

⁷⁷ See Mendel Nun, *Ancient Stone Anchors and Net Sinkers from the Sea of Galilee* (Ein Gev: Kibbutz Ein Gev Tourist Departement, 1993).

⁷⁸ See Jensen, *Herod Antipas*, 172–75.

⁷⁹ For the excavations and findings, see various contributions in Shelley Wachsmann (ed.), *The Excavations of an Ancient Boat in the Sea of Galilee (Lake Kinneret)* (Atiqot 19; Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 1990). For more information on this, see Omar Cohen, "... ein Schiff wird kommen ...: Die Bergung und Restaurierung eines 2000 Jahre alten Bootes am See Gennesaret," in *Leben am See Gennesaret: Kulturgeschichtliche Entdeckungen in einer biblischen Region* (ed. G. Faßbeck et al.; Mainz: von Zabern, 2003), 147–52. The boat is exhibited at the Yigal Alon Museum in Ginnosar; see <http://www.bet-alon.co.il/> A flat ocean-going boat, dating back to the Persian Time, is exhibited at the Hecht Museum at the University of Haifa: Ma'agan Mikhael Ancient Ship; see http://mushecht.haifa.ac.il/archeology/maagan_ship_eng.aspx

⁸⁰ Cohen, "Schiff," 149.

⁸¹ See Mark 1:20; John 21:2–3; Josephus, *Vita* 164; *B.J.* 2.239. See also Jensen, *Herod Antipas*, 173.

⁸² See again Jensen, *Herod Antipas*, 173.

⁸³ See Jürgen Zangenberg, "Archaeological News from the Galilee: Tiberias, Magdala and Rural Galilee," *Early Christianity* 1 (2010): 471–84 (475–76), with reference to Stefano De Luca and www.magdalaproject.org

would indeed make sense.⁸⁴ Of course, Jesus might have been reluctant to visit Herodian places such as Tiberias, which were popular among Herodian elites, so we might suppose that Jesus acted “among the shades” of these regions.⁸⁵ In this way, Capernaum would have been a suitable departure point for Jesus’ activities. However, this would also mean that Jesus took programmatic advantage of the popularity of the region, even though he limited his contacts to political authorities. Against this background, Jonathan L. Reed’s interpretation of Capernaum as a purely peripheral area, which was thus perfect for Jesus’ mission,⁸⁶ no longer seems plausible. Instead, current Jesus research⁸⁷ has led to a higher ranking of lower Galilee’s social status, especially the sea-region, including Capernaum.

At this point, we can make the following preliminary conclusion: In Hellenistic-Roman times, the Sea of Galilee was established as an important economic and cultural zone, which formed the center of Jesus’ Galilean ministry. This statement could have far-reaching consequences for Jesus research.⁸⁸ “Jesus wirkte in den Dörfern und Kleinstädten am Ufer

⁸⁴ Freyne, “Laboratory,” 159.

⁸⁵ See Freyne, “Laboratory,” 159: “Jesus operated as both healer and teacher in the shadow of the cities, but did not enter either Sepphoris or Tiberias, it would seem.” However, this view does not yet take into account the possible role which Magdala played (cf. Stefano De Luca). On the other hand and as we know, a critical attitude towards cities like Sepphoris and Tiberias can already be found in Josephus, *Vita* 375, 381, 384. See Seán Freyne, “Die soziale Welt Galiläas aus der Sicht des Josephus,” in *Jesus und die Archäologie Galiläas* (ed. C. Claußen and J. Frey; BThSt 87; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2008), 75–92 (80).

⁸⁶ Capernaum is “in short, the perfect place for Jesus’ ministry” (Reed, *Archaeology*, 169). Reed does not sufficiently take into account the geo-strategic role of Capernaum. In the time of Herod Antipas (4 B.C.E.–39 C.E.), Capernaum was located at the border of the trans-Jordan tetrarchy of Philip (4 B.C.E.–34 C.E.). For more information on this, see Becker, *Markus-Evangelium*, 291.

⁸⁷ Unfortunately, Meier, *Jew*, 41–166, evidently limits himself to literary sources.

⁸⁸ Therefore, the question about the role of the so-called “peasants” in the Jesus movement has to be re-evaluated to account for research into the historical Jesus, since an elementary group of addressees might be found (as fishermen) around the Galilean sea-region. For more information about the lake as an elementary space of memory, see also Rene Baergen, “Jesus on Water: In a ‘Definite Place’ Called the Lake Region,” in *Holy Land as Homeland? Models for Constructing the Historical Landscapes of Jesus* (ed. K. W. Whitelam; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011), 97–115. For a contrasting view, see William R. Herzog II, “Warum die ländliche Bevölkerung Jesus folgte,” in *Die Jesusbewegungen und die Erneuerung Israels: Die ersten Christen* (vol. 1 of *Sozialgeschichte des Christentums*; ed. R. A. Horsley; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlags-haus, 2007), 63–88. Accordingly, the parables with their agro-cultural metaphors can only partly shed light on the primary group of addressees; consequently, Karl-Heinrich Ostmeyer (“‘Urgestein der Jesusüberlieferung?’ Die synoptischen Gleichnisse als historische Quelle für die galiläische Umwelt Jesu,” in *Jesus und die Archäologie Galiläas* [ed. C. Claußen and J. Frey; BThSt 87; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2008], 185–

des Sees Gennesaret, ihre Welt ist der primäre soziale Bezugspunkt seiner Aktivitäten.”⁸⁹ Such an impression is testified by the gospel writings, so it hardly seems accidental that Jesus’ missionary activities, such as commissioning and exorcisms, began around the sea-region (e.g., Mark 1:16–34)⁹⁰. Fortunately, in this respect, we are in possession of “Zeichen aus Text und Stein”⁹¹ when reconstructing the historical Jesus. However, as Jürgen Zangenberg identifies, “Zeichen aus Stein” cannot simply be used as a quarry for Jesus research: “Es gibt keine direkte Brücke von der Archäologie zu Jesus von Nazaret, wohl aber war Jesus Teil der galiläischen Gesellschaft ..., die sich mit Hilfe der Archäologie erforschen lässt.”⁹²

Rather, “Zeichen aus Stein” are material sources independent of literary documents – no more, no less. They have to be interpreted in order to provide evidence. Material culture as such is limited in its significance. We thus need to reflect on a well-defined use of material sources – their evidences and their limits. On the basis of this critical methodological reflection, we might attempt to collect evidence and, in accordance with this evidence, to reconstruct how Capernaum could have looked when Christ-believers appeared on the scene, shortly after Jesus’ life and mission. According to William Horbury,⁹³ we might best call this period the “apostolic age.” Since material evidence is limited up to 62 C.E., we will return to the gospel writings. The gospel writings are the earliest, *de facto* the only, (literary) sources which could possibly provide information about Capernaum’s “Christian” history and setting in the second half of the first century.

208 [esp. 208]) questions how fruitful an investigation of the parables can be for research in Galilee.

⁸⁹ Peter Busch et al., “Er predigte in ihren Dörfern und Synagogen‘ – Die archäologische Forschung am See Gennesaret und die frühe Jesusbewegung,” in *Leben am See Gennesaret: Kulturgeschichtliche Entdeckungen in einer biblischen Region* (ed. G. Faßbeck et al.; Mainz: von Zabern, 2003), 153–63 (160).

⁹⁰ See already Eric F. F. Bishop, “Jesus and Capernaum,” *CBQ* 15 (1953): 427–37. – This article cannot extend to a discussion of whether the exorcism in the synagogue of Capernaum (Mark 1:21–28) can be compared to the Sermon on the Mount or Luke 4:16–30 in regard to its theological programmatics, as John Chijioko Iwe argues it can (*Jesus in the Synagogue of Capernaum: The Pericope and Its Programmatic Character for the Gospel of Mark: An Exegetico-Theological Study of Mk 1:21–28* [Rome: Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1999]).

⁹¹ See on this Stefan Alkier and Jürgen Zangenberg (eds.), *Zeichen aus Text und Stein: Studien auf dem Weg zu einer Archäologie des Neuen Testaments* (TANZ 42; Tübingen: Francke, 2003).

⁹² Zangenberg, “Jesus,” 36.

⁹³ See Horbury, “Beginnings,” 11–13.

3. Capernaum in the “Apostolic Age”

Galilee and Capernaum were discovered or re-discovered as Christian regions from the time that the first Christian pilgrims went to Palestine and Galilee and wrote their itineraries. However, besides the debate on the origin of Peter’s house, what do we know about Capernaum in earliest Christian times? How did the history of “Christian Capernaum” begin?

Let us proceed by briefly reconsidering the value of literary sources. It is not the case that the gospel writings can be read either as sources for the reconstruction of the historical Jesus or simply as a later redactional⁹⁴ “Teil einer narrativen Konzeption”⁹⁵ of the evangelists. Instead, they should be considered primarily as *historical as much as literary sources – i.e., as pre-historiographical concepts – for the earliest history of the post-Easter Jesus movement in Galilee*. In this sense, they can also be used as carriers of Jesus traditions, particularly in the “apostolic and post-apostolic age,” i.e., until 62 or 135 C.E.⁹⁶ Moreover, with their topography of Galilee, they are – apart from isolated remarks in Acts⁹⁷ – *de facto* the only sources which present local evidence for an early Christian memory of Capernaum before the fourth century C.E.⁹⁸ However, thus far, the gospel writings as

⁹⁴ In regard to the literary function of the gospel narratives when depicting a Galilean topography (e.g., Mark 4:35–41; 6:45–52), see also Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, “The Jesus of Mark and the Sea of Galilee,” *JBL* 103 (1984): 363–77: “The Sea of Galilee is the geographical focal point for the first half of the Gospel of Mark” (363). Mark intentionally structures his narrative – in accordance with ancient historiography (see, e.g., Katherine Clarke, *Between Geography and History: Hellenistic Constructions of the Roman World* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999]; references to this in Zangenberg, “Das Galiläa des Josephus,” 273–74) – in respect to topography, even though he (in contrast to Josephus, e.g., *B.J.* 3.35–58) does not insert geographical digressions (on the historiographical function of the excursus on Galilee, see Zangenberg, “Das Galiläa des Josephus,” 273–76). For a recent discussion of this, see Bärbel Bosenius, *Der literarische Raum des Markusevangeliums* (WMANT 140; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlagshaus, 2014).

⁹⁵ Böttrich, “Was kann aus Nazaret Gutes kommen?,” 295.

⁹⁶ This periodization is based on Horbury, “Beginnings,” 11–13, who distinguishes between two periods: the “Herodian, and in Church history an apostolic age” (up to 62 C.E.) and a “post-Herodian and ecclesiastically post-apostolic age” (up to 135 C.E.). Hereby, the martyrdom of James and the ending of the second Jewish-Roman war act as a watershed.

⁹⁷ Cf. Γαλιλαία (Acts 9:31; 10:37; 13:31); Γαλιλαῖος (Acts 1:11; 2:7; 5:37). Only the adjective Ναζωραῖος occurs more frequently in Acts (2:22; 3:6; 4:10; 6:14; 22:8; 24:5; 26:9). Lohmeyer, *Galiläa*, 52 concludes from a lack of Galilee traditions in Acts that this area was completely Christianized at that time: “So setzt also die Apostelgeschichte voraus, daß ... Galiläa wie Jerusalem die Heimat des urchristlichen Evangeliums ist.”

⁹⁸ See already Adolf von Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, vol. 2: *Die Verbreitung* (4th ed.; Leipzig: Hinrichs,

literary concepts are rarely understood as historical sources for the earliest history of Galilean Jesus movement and/or Christianity.⁹⁹

I believe that Jesus research could benefit from understanding the gospel writings as pre-historiographical – i.e., literary as well as historical – sources for the apostolic age, so I will now pose the following questions: What does the topography of Galilee in between 30 and ca. 70 C.E. indicate? What can it tell us about local carriers and settings of Jesus traditions? In this context, how should we read passages such as Q 10:15 (= Luke 10:15; Matt 11:23): “And you, Capernaum, up to heaven will you be exalted? Into Hades shall you come down!”¹⁰⁰

As Table 1 shows, the canonical gospel writings link the transmission of Jesus traditions to specific places in Galilee. They do this differently from how the so-called apocryphal gospels¹⁰¹ deliver Jesus traditions. So what is the relevance of these ca. 50 references to Galilee for the apostolic age?

Firstly, we can identify a qualitative and quantitative emphasis on places located around the *sea-region*: (a) nearly half the Galilean places mentioned here are located around the Sea of Galilee, such as Bethsaida, Capernaum, Magdala, Tiberias and Chorazin. In the case of Gerasa (Mark 5:1) and Dalmanoutha (Mark 8:10), Mark insinuates a certain proximity to the sea-region. (b) Even beyond concrete localizations, all the gospel writers frequently make reference to the sea region in various ways (e.g., Mark

1924), 642–43. – Even though this evidence is based on Jesus-traditions, the post-Easter epiphanies (Mark 16:7; Matt 28:7, 16–20; John 21) might point to the activity of early Christian movements around Galilee. See also Jürgen Zangenberg, “From the Galilean Jesus to the Galilean Silence: Earliest Christianity in the Galilee until the Fourth Century CE,” in *The Rise and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries of the Common Era* (ed. C. K. Rothschild and J. Schröter; WUNT 301; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 75–108.

⁹⁹ See also Seán Freyne, “Christianity in Sepphoris and in Galilee,” in *Galilee and Gospel: Collected Essays* (WUNT 125; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 299–307. By saying that “all the gospels written about the year 70 or afterwards have a very positive attitude towards Galilee, especially in contrast to Judaea, and in particular Jerusalem” (344), Freyne *de facto* points to the narrative function of Galilean topography rather than to the value of what Jesus traditions reveal about the history of Galilee in the apostolic age.

¹⁰⁰ Translation according to James M. Robinson et al. (eds.), *The Critical Edition of Q: Synopsis including the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, Mark and Thomas with English, German, and French Translations of Q and Thomas* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 186.

¹⁰¹ The only references to Galilean topography that can be found in Wilhelm Schneemelcher (ed.), *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen in deutscher Übersetzung*, vol. 1 (6th ed.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1990), are the following: *Gospel of the Ebionites* (cf. Epiphanius, *Pan.* 30.3.2–3; Schneemelcher, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, 141); *Gospel of the Nazarenes* (cf. “Historischer Lukaskommentar” on Luke 10:13 in MS Clm 6235, fol. 56^r; Schneemelcher, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, 136); *Epistle to the Apostles 5* (16) (Schneemelcher, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, 208–9).

Table 1: Overview on Galilean places

Place	Synoptics	John
*Bethsaida/Βηθσαιδά ¹⁰²	Mark 6:45; 8:22 Matt 11:21 (Q) Luke 9:10; 10:13 (Q)	John 1:44; 12:21
(*)Possibly Gergesa (?), ¹⁰³ instead of Gerasa or Gadara (Γερασσηνός, ¹⁰⁴ Γαδαρηνοί ¹⁰⁵)	<u>Mark 5:1</u> Matt 8:28 <u>Luke 8:26, 37</u>	
(*)Dalmanoutha/Δαλμανουθά ¹⁰⁶	Mark 8:10	
Caesarea Philippi/Banias/Panias/Καισάρεια Φιλίππου ¹⁰⁷	Mark 8:27 Matt 16:13	
Cana/Κανά ¹⁰⁸		John 2:1, 11; 4:46; 21:2
*Capernaum/Καφαρναούμ ¹⁰⁹	Mark 1:21; 2:1; 9:33	John 2:12; 4:46; 6:17,

¹⁰² Josephus, *B.J.* 2.168; 3.57, 515; 4.454; *A.J.* 18.28, 108; *Vita* 398, 399, 406. See Abraham Schalit, *Namenwörterbuch zu Flavius Josephus* (suppl. 1 to *A Complete Concordance to Flavius Josephus*, ed. K. H. Rengstorff; Leiden: Brill, 1968); Aviam and Richardson, "Josephus' Galilee," 177–209; Christa Möller and Götz Schmitt, *Siedlungen Palästinas nach Flavius Josephus* (BTA.VO.B 14; Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1976). See also Gottfried Reeg, *Die Ortsnamen Israels nach der rabbinischen Literatur* (BTA.VO.B 51; Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1989).

¹⁰³ No reference in Josephus.

¹⁰⁴ Gerasa (city of the Decapolis); see Josephus, *B.J.* 1.104; 2.458; 3.47; *A.J.* 13.393.

¹⁰⁵ Gadara (place in the Gaulanitis); see Josephus, *A.J.* (12.308); 13.375.

¹⁰⁶ No reference in Josephus. The name "Dalmanoutha" can be interpreted as follows: "Man denkt im Anschluß an par Mt 15,39 an Magada bzw. Mageda, ein Dorf, das nach Euseb im Gebiet von Gerasa lag. Wahrscheinlicher aber ist Dalmanuta auf Migdal Nuna-ja (Turm der Fische) zurückzuführen. Dalman bringt diesen Namen mit Magdala zusammen" (Joachim Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* [2 vols.; 5th ed.; EKK 2; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1998], 306); cf. Joel Marcus, *Mark 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 27; New Haven, Conn.: Doubleday, 2000), 498: "In any case, Mark locates Dalmanutha on the western, more Jewish shore of the lake..." Cf. also Jürgen K. Zangenberg, "Observations on the Function, Character and Location of the New Testament Toponym Γεννησαρέτ (Mk 6:53; Mt 14:34)," in *Jesus, Paul and Early Christianity: Studies in Honour of Henk Jan de Jonge* (ed. R. Buitenwerf et al.; NovTSup 130; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 439–70.

¹⁰⁷ Josephus, *B.J.* 2.168; 3.443, 510; 7.23; *A.J.* 18.28; 20.211; *Vita* 74; as Νερωνάς, *A.J.* 20.211.

¹⁰⁸ Josephus, *Vita* 86.

	Matt 4:13; 8:5 (Q); 11:23 (Q); 17:24 Luke 4:23, 31; 7:1 (Q); 10:15 (Q)	24, 59
*Magadan/Magdala (Τα- richea)/Μαγαδάν/ Μαγδαλά (Ταριχέα) ¹¹⁰	Matt 15:39	
Nazareth/Ναζαρέθ, Ναζαρέτ ¹¹¹	Mark 1:9 Matt 2:23; <u>21:11</u> <u>Luke 1:26; 2:4, 39, 51</u>	John 1:45, 46
Nazara/Ναζαρά	Q = Matt 4:13; Luke 4:16	
Nain/Ναΐν ¹¹²	Luke 7:11	
*Tiberias/Τιβεριάς ¹¹³		John 6:1, 23; 21:1
*Chorazin/Χοραζίν ¹¹⁴	Q = Matt 11:21; Luke 10:13	

5:1; Matt 4:18; John 6:1; Luke 5:1: θάλασσα [τῆς Γαλιλαίας {τῆς Τιβεριάδος}]; λίμνη Γεννεσαρέτ; for instance, as a waterway on which Jesus travels through Galilee (Mark 4:35; 5:1; 6:47) or simply as a place of residence (e.g., Mark 1:16; 3:7). (c) We can assume that this affinity to places around the sea-region was not initiated by the gospel writers themselves but was already part of the traditional material. This is because the Sea of Galilee appears across a range of sources and source materials (Q, Mark, Matt, Luke, John); not by coincidence, two out of three correspond-

¹⁰⁹ Josephus, as Καφαρναούμ (= fount of Gennezaret), *B.J.* 3.519; as Κεφαρνωμός (= place in Galilee), *Vita* 403.

¹¹⁰ Josephus, as Ταριχάϊαν/Ταριχέαι (cf. also Herodotus, *Hist.* 2.15.113), e.g., *B.J.* 1.180; 2.252, 573, 596–597, 599, 602; *A.J.* 14.120; 20.159 (in *B.J.* all in all 18 times; in *A.J.* all in all 2 times; in *Vita* all in all 18 times).

¹¹¹ No reference in Josephus. For later literary sources, see, e.g., Eusebius, *Onom.* 238; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 30.11.10. No references in Talmud and Midrash (Str-B 1:92); but cf. *Baraita of Twenty-Four Mishmarot* 18 (see Samuel Klein, *Beiträge zur Geschichte und Geographie Palästinas* [Leipzig: Haupt, 1909]); *Qoh. Rab.* 2.8.

¹¹² No reference in Josephus. Josephus only knows a Jewish Nain (*B.J.* 4.511, 517). Further literary sources: Gen 49:14 (cf. Str-B 2:161).

¹¹³ Josephus gives 26 references in *B.J.* (e.g., 2.168, 193); 9 references in *A.J.* (e.g., 18.36, 38); 32 references in *Vita* (e.g., 31, 42, 43).

¹¹⁴ No reference in Josephus. Further literary sources: Eusebius, *Onom.* 174.23; *b. Menah.* 85a.

ing Galilean places mentioned¹¹⁵ in all gospel writings (Capernaum, Bethsaida) are located at the sea. Thus, it seems reasonable to state that these places do not only relate to the ministry of the historical Jesus (multiple attestation)¹¹⁶ but continue their meaning throughout the apostolic age.

Secondly, *Capernaum* plays a particularly eminent role here. (a) In all the gospels, Capernaum is most frequently mentioned as a Galilean region. Does this also imply that Capernaum could be the “Haftpunkt” of Jesus traditions during the apostolic age? (b) After all, there is no other place which is connected to Jesus’ activities in such a positive sense; while Jesus fails with his preaching in Nazareth (see Luke 4:16–30; Mark 6:1–6; Matt 13:53; cf. also John 1:46), his mission in Capernaum is varied and successful.¹¹⁷ The redactional note in Matt 4:13 (“and leaving Nazareth he went and dwelt in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulon and Naphtali,” RSV) could well be a later reflection of Capernaum’s privileged position.¹¹⁸ Thus, the gospel writings document that the Sea of Galilee played an important role during the early history of transmitting Jesus traditions and that Capernaum in particular was at the center of this process.

But what exactly can we learn from this regarding the meaning of the sea-region and of Capernaum during the apostolic age? Thus far we have established that Capernaum was not simply a minor or peripheral place in the apostolic age. On the contrary, it is mentioned five times in Q and Mark (see Table 2).

Let us first examine Q and Mark individually. In Q, the reference to Capernaum is indeed significant. Together with Bethsaida, Chorazin and Nazara, Capernaum is one of the few places mentioned in Q.¹¹⁹ Besides

¹¹⁵ Certain places are only mentioned in specific gospels. This is the case with Cana in John, Nain in Luke, Magadan or Magdala in Matthew or Dalmanoutha in Mark.

¹¹⁶ In terms of multiple attestation, we might suppose that all three places are related to Jesus’ historical ministry – for the criteria, see, e.g., Stanley E. Porter, *The Criteria for Authenticity in Historical-Jesus Research: Previous Discussion and New Proposals* (JSNTSup 191; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), esp. 82–89; Tom Holmén, “Authenticity Criteria,” in *Encyclopedia of the Historical Jesus* (ed. C. A. Evans; New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 2008), 43–54 (49): “An attestation in two or more independent sources means that the tradition or motif in question is earlier than these sources. An early tradition or motif, again, has on average a greater probability of authenticity than a later one.” – In regard to the origin of these traditions in M and L, see also Udo Schnelle, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (6th ed.; UTB 1830; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 195–97.

¹¹⁷ See on this also Böttrich, “Was kann aus Nazaret Gutes kommen?,” 322.

¹¹⁸ Various Cana traditions can be found in John – possibly because of a competition with Capernaum (John 2; 4:46). On basis of this, should we presume an early Jesus movement in Cana (cf. Freyne, “Christianity,” 300)?

¹¹⁹ Cf. Q 10:13; 4:16; 7:1; 10:15.

Table 2: *Capernaum in Q and Mark*

Q 7:1: [And it came to pass when] he ... ended these sayings, he entered Capernaum.¹²⁰

Q 10:15: “And you, Capernaum, up to heaven will you be exalted? Into Hades shall you come down!”

Mark 1:21: And they went into Capernaum; and immediately on the sabbath he entered the synagogue and taught (par. Luke 4:31; Matt 4:13).¹²¹

Mark 2:1: And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home.

Mark 9:33: And they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, “What were you discussing on the way?” (cf. Matt 17:24).

Jerusalem (Q 4:9; 13:34), these four Galilean places are in fact the only Palestinian locations the Logia Source refers to explicitly.¹²² Since Q is, in general, hardly characterized by locally defined traditions, the double-reference to Capernaum must have some significance; it moves Capernaum close to Jerusalem regarding its relevance for the transmission of Jesus traditions.¹²³ Moreover, Capernaum also seems to be important for the carriers of Q. However, can we also deduce from this – as Jonathan L. Reed does¹²⁴ – that the Q community¹²⁵ was concretely localized in Capernaum? I am skeptical about this hypothesis, since neither reference to Capernaum

¹²⁰ Translations of Q are according to Robinson et al. (eds.), *The Critical Edition of Q*.

¹²¹ Translations of Mark are according to RSV.

¹²² Besides, we find Sodom (Q 10:12; 17:29), Sidon (Q 10:13–14) and Tyrus (Q 10:13–14).

¹²³ The references to Capernaum and Jerusalem exhibit some parallels in that both places are mentioned in the context of a narrative tradition (Q 7:1; 4:9) as well as in the context of a “Städteklage” viz. a “Wehe-Ruf” (Q 10:15; 13:34).

¹²⁴ Reed, *Archaeology*, 182: “Since the few narrative sections of Q are obviously the work of the Q community and cannot be placed on the historical Jesus’ lips, they present by inference the unreflective spatial imagination of the Q community, in which an act of Jesus can only be located in one place, Capernaum of the Galilee.”

¹²⁵ For the localization of Q in Galilee, see John S. Kloppenborg Verbin, *Excavating Q: The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), esp. 255–61. The localization of Q in Galilee is related to the question regarding the stage of Hellenization in Galilee (including knowledge of Greek), on which see above. – Cf. also Milton Moreland, “The Jesus Movement in the Villages of Roman Galilee: Archaeology, Q, and Modern Anthropological Theory,” in *Oral Performance, Popular Tradition, and Hidden Transcript in Q* (ed. R. A. Horsley; SemeiaSt 60; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 159–80 (173), who intends to continue the “Lokalkolorit-Forschung” in regard to Jesus research and its socio-historical implications by valuing “the sayings of Jesus as responses to the social world of Galilee.”

in Q 7 and 10 reflects a positive relation to this place at the Galilean sea. It therefore seems implausible that Q was directly linked to Capernaum. Instead, both references seem to express a critical attitude towards Capernaum, which becomes quite evident in the “Woe” in Q 10:15. In Q 10:15, Jesus articulates “Woes” against Bethsaida and Chorazin,¹²⁶ and, in this frame, he also rebukes Capernaum and announces judgment.¹²⁷ The scolding of Capernaum could perhaps be interpreted as a reaction to how Jesus followers were rejected when they intended to pronounce the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ orally and by means of deeds (see Q 10:9–12). However, the critical attitude towards Capernaum is also inherent in Q 7:1–9. This narrative about the healing of the centurio’s servant in Q 7:1–9 indicates how Jesus criticizes the lack of belief in Israel (Q 7:9) while singling out the pagan centurio as a positive example.

Thus, Q 7 and Q 10 reveal a critical attitude towards Capernaum. This tendency becomes even more evident when compared to how Capernaum is depicted in *Mark*. Here, Jesus begins his ministry as a miracle worker programmatically in Capernaum (1:21), continues it from here (2:1) and even extends it to the familiar environment of Jesus disciples (e.g., 1:29–31). It seems as though Mark 1–3* contains a collection of various miracle and controversy stories which are related to Capernaum.¹²⁸ These chapters display certain *Lokalkolorit* that points to a setting of Jesus stories in and around Capernaum. Accordingly, we might expect early Christian carriers of the Jesus tradition in and around Capernaum, who – in analogy to how the passion narrative was formed in Jerusalem – would have delivered the memory of Galilean Jesus traditions in a pre-Markan stage. Such a localization of carrier groups in and around Capernaum does not necessarily imply – as Ernst Lohmeyer claims – that Mark was written in Galilee.¹²⁹ However, what we see is that Mark 1–3 identifies a more positive attitude towards Capernaum, which might already lie on a pre-Markan level and which, in any case, is (still) evident in Mark’s literary account. In contrast to these relatively positive tendencies reflected in Mark, the references to Capernaum in Q do not point to a specific interest, neither do they mention

¹²⁶ Here, it is reasonable to set aside the question of whether Q 10:13–15 – as Kloppenborg et al. claim (see Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q*, esp. 147) – belongs to the redactional material of Q.

¹²⁷ See Klaus Berger, *Formgeschichte des Neuen Testaments* (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1984), 198. Even though this rebuke has topical elements and – in terms of *Formgeschichte* – might be part of prophetic “Unheilsansage” (Berger, *Formgeschichte*, 205–6), it does have “Gerichtscharakter.” Nevertheless, the “Kapernaum-Schelte” renounces οὐαί and thus seems to be moderate compared to the rebukes directed against Bethsaida and Chorazin (Q 10:13–14). See also Bishop, “Jesus,” 436.

¹²⁸ See Becker, *Markus-Evangelium*, esp. 286–96.

¹²⁹ Lohmeyer, *Galiläa*.

a positive attitude towards this place; instead, they indicate negative experiences and an almost indifferent attitude and, as such, they reflect the *ethos* of non-residential “Wandercharismatiker” (Gerd Theißen).¹³⁰

4. Results and Perspectives

To conclude, I would like to summarize the results of our investigation into Capernaum by distinguishing the various periods of time, beginning with Jesus’ missionary activities and ending with the writing of Mark:

(1) In regard to reconstructing the *historical Jesus*, we have seen that the Galilean sea was an important economic and social zone in Hellenistic-Roman times. It was here that Jesus’ mission in Galilee had its geographical center. Accordingly, the primary receivers of Jesus’ message would have been located at the sea-region rather than in the Galilean *Hinterland*. Even if it was subordinate to cities like Tiberias or Caesarea Philippi in a political sense, it is clear that Capernaum plays an important role. Historically, we can be certain that Capernaum was an important point of departure for Jesus’ missionary activities, since it is named in all relevant sources (Q, Mark, John: multiple attestation).

(2) In regard to reconstructing the history of Galilee in the *apostolic age*, we can hardly speak of Galilee as a *terra christiana*,¹³¹ especially since archaeological evidence is scarce and literary sources are limited. However, at this point, we should not undervalue the meaning of the gospel writings as literary sources. In a historical sense, the gospel writings act as literary documents that testify the ongoing meaning of Capernaum and the sea-region in the early history of the transmission of Jesus traditions. Processes of transmission can thus be linked to certain places. At the same time, the gospel writings also function as “literary memory,” in that they construct a memory about Galilean places that soon become *Haftpunkte einer Gedächtniskultur*. At this point, it might be better not to contrast their historical and literary significance; they rather merge in the medium of pre-historiographical narratives.

However, this still does not provide us with a profile of which role Capernaum played in such a historiographical encounter. Since Mark and Q differ significantly in how they value Capernaum, we also acquire an impression of how various groups of carriers as much as literary media are more closely or more distantly related to Capernaum. While the carriers of pre-Markan Jesus traditions render a more positive memory of local traditions which might reflect Jesus’ success in his activities as a miracle-

¹³⁰ See, e.g., Gerd Theißen, *Das Neue Testament* (Munich: Beck, 2002), 25–29.

¹³¹ Cf. Lohmeyer, *Galiläa*, 52.

worker and a participant in controversial discussions, the carriers of Q look back at Capernaum with a relatively critical or even negative attitude. Interestingly enough, it is Mark's pre-historiographical construct of a literary memory about Capernaum that gains acceptance in the longer run while the attitude towards Capernaum as documented in the Q collection of sayings becomes less important.

(3) Accordingly, the narrative topography of Galilee that we meet in the *gospel writings* (esp. Mark 16; Matt 28) might refer to historical instances as much as it occurs as a literary concept that is also shaped by Mark and subsequently continued by Matthew. The gospel writers followed up what was already an inherent tendency of their sources and developed this further. However, by transmitting the traditions and expanding on this topography (see, e.g., Matt 4:1), they do in fact appear as the only sources for Jesus' mission in Galilee in the apostolic age. The transmission of memories herby is one side of the coin. The other side is that, by constructing these memories within a narrative account, the gospel writers begin to contribute to the shape of a "sacred landscape." As such, Capernaum appears when Egeria writes: "*In Capharnaum autem ex domo apostolorum principis ecclesia facta est ...*"¹³²

¹³² *Egeria: Itinerarium*, 336. – I would like to thank my colleague Prof. Dr Jürgen Zangenberg (Leiden) for fruitful comments on the manuscript, Sarah Jennings (Aarhus) for her careful language revision, and Dr Tobias Hägerland (Lund) for his editorial support.