Mediterranean Sea
Sidon
Tyre
Mt. Lebanon
Anti-Lebanon Mts.
Mt. Hermon
Damascus
PANIAS
Caesarea-Philippi
(Panion)
PHONECIA
TRACHONITIS
GAULANITIS
BATANAEA
Gischala
Bethsaida-
Julius
Ptolemais
Chorazin
Magdala/Taricheae
Capernaum
Cana
Hippos
Sepphoris
Tiberias
Sea of
Galilee
Mt. Carmel
Nazareth
GALILEE
Gadara
Abila
AURANITIS
Caesarea
DECAPOLIS
Scythopolis
Pella
River Jordan
Sebaste
(Samaria)
Sychar
(Shechem)
SAMARIA
Gerasa
Mt. Gerizim
Joppa
Alexandrium
PEREA
Philadelphia
Jamnia
Jericho
Jerusalem
Betharamphtha
Azotus
Qumran
Bethlehem
Bethany
Ascalon
Herodium
JUDEA
Machaerus
Gaza
Hebron
Dead Sea
Masada
Raphia
IDUMEA
NABATEA
Fortress
City or Town
Tetrarchy of Philip
Tetrarchy of Herod Antipas
Administration of Pontius Pilate
Decapolis
Area under special control
0
30 Miles

1

# JESUS ON HIS LANDSCAPE

## *Mental Maps and Real Territories*

### Jesus and His Territory

Jesus is always imagined in a place: by the Jordan, at Capernaum, in the Garden of Gethsemane. These are either places mentioned in the Gospels or places revealed to us by historians and archaeologists. These localizations correspond to a need for mental order, which always links a person to a place, an existence to a residence, a body to a locality.

Besides this, the anthropological interpretation of written texts[1] emphasizes that our social imagination situates every individual in one particular space and time and within one specific social action. In his discussion of the ecology of culture, the anthropologist Tim Ingold sees human subjects as organisms that live and act within one particular existential situation of which they, together with other living beings, form an integral part.[2] In this perspective, a house is necessarily a container of human activities; a street is a route followed by travelers; and a field is the place where agricultural activity is carried out. It is the function that the individuals perform in a given context that allows us to understand its social physiognomy. It is an incontestable fact that no person exists without space. The individual characteristics necessarily manifest themselves and become concrete in the act of appropriating and modifying the spaces that are available to each person.[3]

Everyone possesses mental maps[4] that are closely linked to the place where he or she lives, and everyone has in mind a geography of the internal structure and the external boundaries of the world in which one exists and in which the others exist. This geography cannot be transmitted or reproduced by any map maker's chart. By means of places, the individual ultimately appeals to an existential meaning and an order,[5]

because as Marc Augé argues in *Non-Lieux,* the place is at one and the same time "a principle of meaning for the people who live in it and also a principle of intelligibility for the persons who observe it."[6]

Not only must Jesus be located in precise places; he must also be regarded as a person who has points of view about his own material and geographical environment. In order to reconstruct the territory in which he lived and moved, which is distant from our own territory, we are dependent on archaeological, historical, and anthropological research and, in particular, on documents of early Christianity, namely, the Gospels, which were written decades after the events of his life. This means that we are obliged to move among various maps: those of today's archaeologists, historians, and anthropologists. In all of these instances, the map depends on the conceptual universe and the experience of the one who drew it. The archaeologist and the historian give preference to certain elements (borders, communication routes, centers of habitation, monuments) and neglect others. The archaeologist who draws a map of first-century Galilee has certainly conceived an image of the region. This image guides his work, without taking an explicitly material form in the maps he draws. The historian cannot avoid the necessity of picturing (at least implicitly) the scenery within which the events that he wants to reconstruct take place. Likewise, the authors of the individual Gospels possessed a mental map of the places they mentioned in the narrative. How is it possible to get behind their social imagination, so that we can find access to Jesus' mental map? The difficulty in answering this question is caused by the fact that we are obliged to make use precisely of these Gospels and of the data that the historians, archaeologists, and anthropologists offer us.

The mental maps of a territory are constructed on the basis of a social practice and a vision of reality. The evangelists' maps are generated by the practice of the preaching of Jesus' first followers and by the memory these followers had of the events of his life. What conception and what practice generated the mental map of Jesus? When we answer this question, we must bear in mind the methodological perspectives mentioned above, and especially the ecology of culture, because place obliges every individual—and hence Jesus too—to mobilize forms of integration, of appropriation, and of use. Each one internalizes images and symbols of the natural environment that surrounds him (mountains or plains, rivers or lakes, cities or villages), and each one experiences these individually.

## Far from the Cities

In the archaeological maps of the Land of Israel (to borrow the name used by the Gospel of Matthew 2:20-21), great importance is attributed first of all to the cities with their impressive structures, their forms of habitation, and the great roads that facilitated communication. Recent historical study has shown that the construction of cities and roads[7] was one of the principal objectives of the political and administrative authorities and of the highest social strata. The world of the first century, in which we must locate Jesus, saw new urban centers arise several times alongside the centers that already existed. If we begin with Galilee,[8] or at any rate with the northern zone of the Land of Israel, we find the cities of Bethsaida, Tiberias, and Hippos-Sussita situated along the Sea of Tiberias, on its northern, western, and eastern shores respectively. Ptolemais, Dor, and Caesarea Maritima were situated on the Mediterranean coast.[9] Continuing toward the central and southern zone of the land of Israel, we find the following coastal towns: Apollonia, Ashkelon, Antedon, Gaza, and Raphia. The urban centers on the coast were city-states. In the central hinterland of Galilee were Sepphoris and Scythopolis (Beth Shean). The latter town, like Hippos, belonged to a territory known as the Decapolis, made up of ten cities situated mostly to the east of the Sea of Galilee (including Gadara, Gerasa, Pella, Philadelphia, Raphana). A network of great roads united the cities and linked them to Jerusalem and to the principal urban centers outside the Land of Israel. For example, Josephus speaks of two important roads leading to Jerusalem, the "principal road" from the north and the "public road" from the coast.[10] The large-scale system of Roman roads is thought to be later than the time of Jesus.[11]

The literary documentation and the socio-anthropological approach combine to show us how the higher social classes in the first century, both Judaic and Roman, moved around, especially among the major centers and along the principal communication routes. In the eyes of these elites, the Land of Israel, and Galilee in particular, looked like a collection of cities linked by great roads that avoided the minor centers. The villages were linked by a multitude of secondary routes and paths that basically followed the configuration of the territory and served the ordinary needs of the populace.[12] Networks of roads around the lake and navigational trajectories across it have been identified.[13] The archaeologist James F. Strange has demonstrated that there was "an extensive specialized agricultural and industrial production" in first-century Galilee,

as well as a "trade network . . . that connected the villages, towns, and cities of Lower Galilee, Upper Galilee, the rift and the Golan."[14] Vessels of terracotta, of ceramic, and of glass were produced and sold, as well as agricultural products and wine. This presupposed the existence of a network of unpaved roads and footpaths that linked the various production sites to the urban centers.

The map reconstructed by archaeologists is limited to the cities and to the principal roads, and this certainly means that it provides an important backdrop to the life of Jesus. It gives us little information, however, about the places where he actually moved, since the immediate objective of his existence and his place of action seem to have been almost exclusively located in rural areas and in centers of habitation that were not very important in urban and political terms. Jesus must have regarded the villages as the real vital ganglia of the territory where he preached; their complex and swarming life influenced his perceptions and his mental pictures. Although the places he frequented lay outside the major communication routes, they were crowded with people and were exposed to a great variety of influences. The fact that the greater part of production took place in the villages established a close link between them and the cities that it was their task to supply. This made them satellites of the urban centers or the important provincial capitals. John Dominic Crossan underlines this fact by pointing to Nazareth, which was united to Sepphoris by two roads that presumably saw a great deal of traffic.[15] All this explains why the villages were anything but isolated environments closed in on themselves. Lower Galilee was at the center of complex commercial trajectories. The archaeologist Eric M. Meyers maintains that the isolation commonly associated with the Galilean personality is completely inappropriate in the case of Jesus, since he grew up alongside one of the busiest commercial roads in Palestine, at the center of the provincial Roman government.[16]

There can be no doubt that we must turn to the Gospels in order to discover how Jesus imagined his own places and related to them. At once, however, we encounter a methodological problem that is well known to exegetes and affects every attempt at research into the historical figure of Jesus. Very frequently, his actions or his words are reported by more than one Gospel, but each of them locates these in different places and at different times. This is because the spatial and temporal locations offered by the Gospels are late and are not at all certain.[17] The same applies to the overall geographical scenarios of the activity of Jesus, which vary from one Gospel to another. This means that it is far from certain whether any particular action actually occurred in the

place where a Gospel narrative locates it. What the Gospels present, however, is not some abstract truth, but a truth linked to the concrete life of a man, and this makes it essential for them to attempt to transmit the memory of the times and the places at which the events occurred. Maurice Halbwachs correctly affirms that "remembering" requires more than merely general ideas: it is necessary to have recourse to facts that actually happened, since a purely abstract truth is not a "memory." A memory takes us back to concrete events of the past, whereas an abstract truth has no point of contact with the succession of events. The historical reliability of a memory is made problematic by the fact that it arises when the event is already distant in time, and verification is difficult.

The Gospels agree on one point, namely, in not locating Jesus' activity in the big cities. This has one fundamental consequence for the historical reconstruction—that his life acquires its meaning outside the urban centers and without their help. This makes the investigation harder, since there is little information about the the non-urban centers in the historical documentation; at the same time, Jesus' deliberate wish to keep away from the large centers ought to make us cautious about applying to him the urban scenario on which the historical and archaeological reconstruction of the first century has usually concentrated.

Mark's Jesus is indubitably a villager[18] who looks at the big cities and at the rest of the Land of Israel from a peripheral viewpoint.[19] He seems to choose marginality not as an expedient or a renunciation but as a point of strength. The villages of Galilee were not places where Romanization was suffered in a simply passive manner; and besides this, we are more aware today than ever before of the creative and active roles played by local and marginal circumstances in the processes of inclusion or globalization.[20] Here, we have in mind above all the political and juridical aspect of the concept of city rather than its spatial or urban dimension: we are referring to the *civitas,* not to the *urbs*. It is the political and juridical element that characterizes the Romanized cities of Galilee and the Land of Israel at the time of Jesus. The city is defined not so much by its buildings and its walls as by the body of citizens, who have the right to participate in the assembly and the senate, to which only the landed proprietors belong. Lellia Cracco Ruggini has shown how "the political bond of urban society had a primarily juridical nature, while at the same time the cities constituted only one modular element within a more complex structure." In the Roman Empire, of which the Land of Israel formed a part, "society was broken down into a series of concentric circles. One of these was the city, as an intermediary link between the family and the state." Accordingly, the Roman imperial city was not

a "structure of participation in the conduct of communal affairs" but "increasingly a structure of integration" of the provincial districts "in keeping with a broad range of duties, rights, and privileges." The empire ruled and exercised control primarily by means of the cities; for this reason, the Romans carried out "an intensive work of urbanization":

> The new provincial cities—i.e., those recognized as such by Rome—were ranked according to juridical hierarchies that were subtly graded. On the formal level, these sanctioned corresponding hierarchies of relationships of dependence and privilege vis-à-vis the Roman power, which employed this instrument consciously to nourish local patriotisms by distributing favors and legal promotions.[21]

Jesus was profoundly alienated from the city *qua* nucleus of juridical structures constituted by the urban elites who aimed at integration into the empire. From this point of view, he was an unintegrated man. The Gospel of Mark clearly shows the pre-eminence of the village environment, and this is confirmed by Matthew and Luke. It is, however, true that these two Gospels attach a greater importance to the cities, as, for example, when Luke ascribes to Jesus the following words: "I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also" (4:43); but the noun *polis* in these two Gospels can also designate what in fact were only large villages.[22] But we are never told that Jesus lived in, or even entered, Sepphoris and Tiberias, or Caesarea and Scythopolis. Of all the big cities, Jerusalem is the only exception here. It is true that Mark and Matthew state that Jesus went to the "region" of the city of Tyre, that is its surrounding territories (Mark 7:24; Matt 15:21), but they do not write that he actually went *into* the city. One saying reported by both Luke and Matthew (and thus probably originating in Q, the sayings source)[23] appears to assume that Jesus was active in the cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida: "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes" (Luke 10:13/Matt 11:21). This saying probably shows us the mental map of Jesus, rather than of the evangelists. By contrasting two cities in Galilean territory with two cities in Phoenician territory, he may have expressed a symbolic contrast between Galilee (personified in Chorazin[24] and Bethsaida[25]) and the non-Judaic regions.[26] In the case of Bethsaida, Mark tells us that Jesus entered this city (8:22), but the narrative underlines that the miracle Jesus worked on that occasion took

place outside the city. Indeed, Jesus tells the blind man whom he has healed to return home without going back to Bethsaida, where he had probably been begging (Mark 8:22-26). According to the Gospel of John, no less than three of Jesus' followers—Andrew, Simon, and Philip (1:44; 12:21)—came from Bethsaida, which means that it formed a part of the identity of those who accompanied him. According to Luke (9:10-17), the place where Jesus withdrew in private and then worked the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves for five thousand persons was near Bethsaida, but not inside the city.[27] To sum up, it seems unlikely that Jesus would never have entered Bethsaida; but the city as such does not constitute the real-life scenario, still less the mental scenario, of his activity. On the other hand, Mark relates that Jesus entered the city of Sidon, to the north of Tyre on the Phoenician coast (7:31), and the city of Jericho (10:46).

Capernaum (*Kephar Nahum* in Aramaic) is a case on its own. Scholars have debated whether this inhabited site was very large or rather small:[28] Was it a small village or a city?[29] Luke and Matthew call Capernaum a "city" because they are dependent on Mark; they do not seem to have had any direct information about the place. But Mark did not have a precise concept of "city." He uses this noun to designate inhabited territory as opposed to deserted or wild places (Mark 1:35, 45; 5:14; 6:32-33). Jonathan Reed concludes that one should not press Mark's hypothesis that Capernaum was a city, and the later explicit affirmations by Luke and Matthew, to mean that Capernaum was a city in the technical sense of the term. It had a population of between 600 and 1,500 inhabitants—modest by comparison with the surrounding cities of Galilee. It was unimportant and peripheral as a political entity on the Galilean scene.[30]

John confirms the image of a Jesus who, with the exception of Jerusalem, frequented small settlements (for example, Bethany and Ephraim). The cities are bearers of historical and institutional signs that are inappropriate to the project of Jesus.[31] It is in the villages that he establishes his relationships and that the paradigms that give him identity are developed. We should not, however, overemphasize the hypothesis that Jesus categorically refused to enter the cities.

Village life is anything but simple. To frequent the villages means becoming immersed in a daily life that is both composite and problematic. In village societies and rural areas,[32] the local situations are always determined by relationships of a familiar, personal, economic, and work character. These relationships are often characterized by tensions and make an incisive impact on individual lives. There can be no doubt that

a great variety of stimuli and conditioning occurs in small, restricted areas such as villages. Despite the variety in people's emotions and relationships, however, there are many similarities in terms of material goods and of individual lifestyles. We may, therefore, suppose that there was a high density in the network of relationships in the places Jesus visited, and that this network was constrictive, since it was often generated by situations of daily life from which the individual could not escape. In order to grasp the situation that confronted Jesus, we must bear in mind that political and administrative activities, such as the collection of taxes,[33] judicial business, and military controls, were located in many villages. Jesus, however, seldom worked in the places where these institutional activities were located.

The fact that Jesus was a man of the village who avoided the cities has raised a number of questions. E. P. Sanders notes that Jesus proclaimed the kingdom to those who were rejected and to sinners, including tax collectors and prostitutes, and that one would expect that such a mission would have taken him to Tiberias, the capital, or perhaps that he ought to have gone to Sepphoris to protest against the wealth of the aristocracy. The desire to issue his appeal to the whole of Israel ought to have brought Jesus to the principal population centers. But although Jesus regarded his mission as relevant to all Israel, he worked among his own people, the villagers, and in the surrounding countryside.[34] What are we to make of this behavior?

Research into the economic-social situation of Galilee emphasizes the existence of a contrast between city and countryside, which was exploited by the landed proprietors who lived in the urban centers. (This must not be reduced to the contrast between Gentiles and Judeans,[35] since many Judeans lived in the big cities, and some of them were wealthy proprietors.[36]) As we shall see more clearly below, this contrast emerges in Jesus' own sayings and parables. We can grasp his strategy more precisely if we look at some general aspects of the relationship between city and countryside. The urban centers are certainly social poles[37] that govern, celebrate, legislate, and legitimate; they treat the periphery in terms of their own interests. They also lay claim to long histories, which they employ to define the persons and groups who reside in these centers. In the eyes of the dominant urban classes, the rural villages are not bearers of identities and recognizable historical ancestries: they are only suppliers or subordinate producers. Jesus demurs from this way of looking at things, and indeed opposes it. For him, the village is the primary locus of Judaic identity. He saw the rural units as the basis on which the entire socio-cultural structure rested.

## Jesus in Galilee, in Judaea, and outside the Borders

The Gospel of Matthew gives us a piece of information that allows us to enter into the image Jesus had of his own land. This can be gleaned from the prohibition that he addressed to his disciples when he sent them out on a mission: "Do not go onto the road of the Gentiles, and do not enter into the town of the Samaritans" (10:5).[38] These words are extremely important, since they disclose precious information about the choices made by Jesus and his disciples. Most exegetes do not take seriously this prohibition against going along one precise type of road, and restrict themselves to a discussion of whether Jesus did indeed forbid preaching to non-Judeans.[39] But the "road of the Gentiles" is a real road, just as the "city of the Samaritans" is real. The forbidden road of which Matthew writes cannot be one of the Roman roads, which were not built before the beginning of the second century.[40] It is possible that the "road of the Gentiles" corresponds to what Josephus, writing at a period not far distant from Matthew, calls the "principal road" (*leophoros*) from the north to Jerusalem, which we have mentioned above. When Jesus goes to Jerusalem, according to Mark and Matthew, he avoids this road and passes through Peraea on the far side of the Jordan. He seems to prefer the minor roads that were taken by the Judeans when they moved from one village to another. This suggests that his presence in the territory was selective, limited to certain places; he was a stranger to the great currents of political-administrative communication. Jesus avoided the roads frequented by non-Judeans because he reserved his attention for the social milieus to which he himself belonged. In short, although his aims include the entire population of Israel, Jesus becomes a leader of the social strata that populate the villages—and the only way to meet these persons is to go to where they live.[41]

We must now ask how Jesus envisaged the extent of the territory of the Judeans. In order to answer this question, we must concentrate our imagination on the geographical map of all the places—internal and external, central or peripheral—that he visited; and here too we encounter a significant methodological problem. Jesus goes to places that seem to lie outside what modern scholars think of as the borders of his land. In the case of Galilee, some scholars refer to the political borders laid down by the Romans, while others look exclusively to the geographical borders. But how did Jesus conceive of the boundaries of his own territory? Did he think basically of Galilee, or did he regard the entire "Land of Israel" as his own? And did he understand the boundaries as territo-

rial, or were they defined for him by the de facto spread of the population? When modern scholars assert that he went "beyond the borders," are they arguing on the basis of a territorial criterion of their own, or was it Jesus himself who thought he was crossing a boundary?

It is possible that any attempt at an answer will fail to provide a definitive solution, but it may at least help clarify the essential problems. The first of these is the concept of the "Land of Israel," which seems to be related to an ideal land with boundaries that are not clearly defined and change from time to time. The kingdom of David is not exactly the same as the Hasmonaean kingdom or the kingdom of Herod, and the religious leaders in the various periods imagined it in diverse ways.[42] The Gospel of Matthew speaks of the Judaic territory as the "Land of Israel" with a vague extent that includes both Judea and Galilee (2:20-22). The northernmost boundaries that Josephus ascribes to the Land of Israel are farther to the north than the Roman delimitation of Upper Galilee; and a rabbinic document that may have been written in the Roman period, the so-called Baraita of the borders, envisages different borders.[43] For Josephus, the northernmost place is Niqbata of 'Ayun (the Pass of 'Ayun), roughly forty kilometers to the east of the Mediterranean coast, thirty kilometers north of the Sea of Galilee, and ten kilometers north of Tyre. This means that the eastern border of Upper Galilee is contiguous with the territory of the city of Tyre. Although it is difficult to say how Jesus envisaged the borders of the Land of Israel, it is improbable that he felt bound to accept the territorial demarcations of the Romans.

Jesus rarely speaks of his land. He does say who will possess it: "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land" (Matt 5:5), but only the Gospel of Matthew records these words. The Acts of the Apostles attribute to him the desire to "restore the kingdom of Israel" (Acts 1:6), but this passage says nothing about its extent.

Jesus and his group go beyond the Roman borders of Galilee both to the northwest and to the east. Mark writes that Jesus "set out and went away to the region of Tyre" (7:24), and we see that he covers long distances outside Galilee: "Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis" (7:31). The description of this route is somewhat obscure,[44] but it does tell us that Jesus also crossed non-Judaic territories.[45] There were, in fact, many Judeans there. Judeans certainly lived in the Decapolis, since the Hasmonaean kings, and especially Alexander Jannaeus, had taken possession of many cities there.[46] Josephus writes that there were substantial Judaic communities in Ptolemais, Tyre, and Sidon.[47]

Many Judeans lived in Tyre, and to the south of this city lay the thirteen "forbidden" villages of which the Judaic tradition speaks, where numerous Judeans lived.[48] It is therefore possible that Jesus' journey to these regions may have been motivated by the desire to address the Judaic groups who resided there. We find it plausible that Jesus looked for the lost sheep of the house of Israel also in the territories to the north, the east, and the west of Galilee, and that he believed that the restoration of the kingdom of Israel[49] must include these regions too.[50]

Recent studies have insisted strongly on locating Jesus in Galilee, defining him as a "Galilean Jew."[51] Galilee, which was divided into Upper and Lower Galilee, was not a large region.[52] Lower Galilee, where Jesus' activity may have been more intense, was more densely populated and was traversed by heavy traffic of goods and persons between the Mediterranean coast and the cities of the Decapolis. An important role was played by the districts around the cities founded by the Herods. The harbors and the numerous docks along the shores of the lake are evidence of the flourishing activity in this region.

Although he reports that Jesus crosses the border in the direction of Tyre, Sidon, and the Decapolis, Mark believes that Jesus was active primarily within Galilee. It is only on the occasion of his one journey to Jerusalem (Mark 10:32) that Jesus "went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan" (10:1). Matthew confirms this, but Luke corrects it[53] in 4:44 when he tells us that Jesus preaches in the synagogues of Judea at the beginning of his public activity. Luke, however, knows nothing of Jesus' journeys in the regions of Tyre, Sidon, and the Decapolis.[54] Luke's Jesus reaches Jerusalem by way of Samaria and Judea instead of avoiding these regions by going through Peraea on the far side of the river Jordan, as he does in Matthew and Mark.[55] We must add that all the Gospels, including John, agree that Jesus never went south of Jerusalem and Jericho. He does not enter south Judea, does not go to Bethlehem and Hebron, nor does he go to the southern Mediterranean coast.

We find a profoundly different pattern, incompatible with that of Mark, Luke, and Matthew, in the Gospel of John, where Jesus' activity extends to Judea—which indeed becomes the major setting for his activity. The chronological sequence of events likewise changes. After choosing five of his disciples, Jesus leaves the south of the Land of Israel and goes to Galilee, not to Nazareth (as Matthew relates), but to Cana. He then goes to Capernaum not only with his disciples but also with his mother and his brothers and stays there "only a few days" (2:12). Immediately after this, he goes to Jerusalem for the Judaic feast of Passover (2:13), where he expels the merchants from the Temple—an episode

placed by the synoptic Gospels at the end of his life. He then leaves Jerusalem and goes through the whole of Judea (3:22). He and his disciples[56] baptize, in concomitance with John the Baptizer ("He must increase, but I must decrease," 3:30). John gives us further details about the presence of Jesus in Judea. For example, he tells us that Jesus was in this region on the occasion of a feast that is not precisely identified (5:1).[57] It is true that this Gospel says that Jesus preaches throughout the whole of Galilee, but this seems to be for a brief period when he wanted to avoid Judea (7:1). He returns there for the feast of Tabernacles in the fall (7:10) and preaches in the Temple (8:59). John gives a lengthy account of his activity during this visit to the city, relating the miracle of the healing of the man born blind and the parable of the shepherd (9:1—10:21). He is at Jerusalem for the feast of Hanukkah (the dedication of the Temple, 10:22). After this, "he went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing earlier, and he remained there" (10:39).[58] Not even after the raising of Lazarus does he return to Galilee: "he went from there to a town called Ephraim in the region near the wilderness" (11:54). From this point on, we see him in Bethany (12:1), which also lies in Judea, and then in Jerusalem, where his life ends. The synoptic Gospels do not mention all these moves, with the exception of the statement in Luke that Jesus initially preached also in Judea. Finally, John does not tell us about any journey to the north of the Land of Israel in the direction of Tyre or Sidon or the regions to the east of the Sea of Galilee.

What are we to make of such significant differences? If the author of the Gospel of John knew the other Gospels, or at least Mark,[59] we are forced to hypothesize that he wanted to write a different story that would integrate and correct the other accounts. If, however, he did not know them, we are forced to admit that disparate groups of Jesus' disciples may have had no communication with one another for many decades, and that they preserved highly divergent historical memories.

It is at any rate clear that the synoptic Gospels and John allow us to see two areas exposed to the influence of Jesus. These appear to be dependent on different groups of his disciples, who apparently possess divergent maps of his activity. One of these is set in the north, in Galilee, and events tend to take place around the Sea of Tiberias. The other, in the south, is centered on Jerusalem, the incomparable religious place, but also on the places where the Baptizer worked. The two maps may have been drawn up with two different perspectives. The synoptic Gospels collect impressions of a world often (although not exclusively) constituted by fishers, craftsmen, and workers on the land; John, on the other hand, reflects a milieu that often relates itself to the Temple and to

Jerusalem, that is, to places of great symbolic importance; and this Gospel has few references to concrete scenes of daily life. The fact that the "beloved" disciple, the nameless follower of Jesus to whom this Gospel traces its own tradition (John 21:24), is thought of as a person who has good relations to the high priest (18:15) and thus appears to be close, at least to some degree, to priestly circles,[60] leads to the hypothesis that the perspective of the Fourth Gospel was born in a medium-high cultural milieu[61] that was involved in the life of the city. On the other hand, John locates the internal life of Jesus' group in only *one* place in the city, namely, in an unknown dwelling with rooms of Hellenistic-Roman type in which the Last Supper is held, followed by Jesus' discourses and his final prayer. In his presentation of the gathering at the supper, John takes the symposium as his model and gives it a prominent position in his narrative;[62] but there is nothing here that betrays any specific knowledge of Jerusalem on the part of the fourth evangelist. On the contrary, the official milieus of the Romans and the priesthood that John mentions are also present in the synoptic passion narratives.

We could perhaps conclude that there was a double *enclave* in the movement. The enclave of the north seems to have had deeper social roots in the population of the region. The synoptic Gospels frequently speak of settlements without giving their names, but they describe scenes that could take place only in one specific type of village; and the situations to which they refer are plausible. In John, we often have precise indications of places, but no events are linked to them. The Fourth Gospel contains many markers of time and space, but without any realistic connotations. To sum up, the enclave of the south seems to construct its pictures in a somewhat intellectual and abstract manner, offering us symbols that omit the territorial and concrete character of real life.

The references to the synagogues may shed light on the place occupied by Galilee in Jesus' mental map. According to Mark (1:21-29, 39; 3:1; 6:2), Jesus teaches in a number of Galilean synagogues, and important episodes take place there (Mark 12:39/Luke 11:43; 20:46). A first-century inscription from a synagogue in Jerusalem, the inscription of Theodotos, shows that synagogues (understood as buildings) already existed in the Land of Israel during the lifetime of Jesus, as John S. Kloppenborg has convincingly affirmed in a recent study. This inscription can be dated to the Herodian period or the first Roman period. It is thus earlier than 70 C.E.,[63] and the fact that the builder of the synagogue was not only "head of the synagogue" but also a son and grandson of "heads of the synagogue" proves that synagogue buildings existed at an earlier date. The synagogue of Theodotos had several functions: the reading of

Torah, instruction in the commandments, and hospitality for strangers in rooms specially set aside for this purpose. Luke pays more attention to the scenes set in the synagogue.[64] In 7:5, he mentions that the synagogue of Capernaum was built under the patronage of a centurion. In 8:41, he calls Jairus an *archōn* ("ruler") of the synagogue. As in Mark, the synagogues in Luke are places where important episodes in Jesus' life take place. Luke's attentiveness to the synagogues may perhaps be due to the diaspora situation in which he was writing. At any rate, he shows us Jesus preaching in synagogues in Judea too. The different perspectives may be due to the situation in which their authors were working, or perhaps to the materials they were using, rather than to the viewpoint of Jesus himself. It remains difficult to reconstruct his mental map in any detail.

We can still accept the idea that his primary horizon was that of Galilee, but we must ask whether he subsequently left this behind. Large amounts of data compel us to conclude that Jesus' environment, on the basis of which he constructed his image of his own land, was that of the Galilean villages through which he passed. It also included some places in Judea, especially the holy city, which were important to him.

Jesus' mental map was based not primarily on the territory per se, but—as we shall see below—on the people who inhabited it. His project was to seek out "the lost sheep" of all the house of Israel, wherever they were, even outside the borders laid down by the Romans. And he saw Jerusalem as the symbolic center of the Land of Israel.

We have written above that much of the identity of a person is revealed by the way in which one passes through places, making spaces one's own and "dwelling" in them. Our conclusion is that Jesus had an extremely personal and innovative ability to pass through places and dwell in spaces. His independence and opposition to the customary social patterns made him an extraordinary reorganizer of space.

## Jesus' Attitude toward Jerusalem

Why, then, did Jesus adopt the strategy of avoiding the big cities? Why did he adopt an anti-urban attitude? Recent studies of global processes have alerted us to the fact that no export of cultural models from the center to the periphery is ever received passively or accepted automatically.[65] On the contrary, there is almost always a variety of responses in the local situation.

In the first century of the Common Era, the Land of Israel experienced political events and cultural transformations linked to the process

of Romanization and to the client relationship of the local authorities vis-à-vis Rome. Recent research has shown that the effects of Romanization were not purely negative.[66] As in the case of Hellenization two centuries earlier, reactions to Roman rule were mixed. It led to conflicts in the local Judaic culture, and it is impossible to dismiss the idea that Jesus' movement was one of the attempts within Judaism to respond more or less directly to this situation.

Socio-historical studies of the various regions in the Land of Israel at the time of Jesus offer us a complex picture of the transformations that were taking place.[67] Here, we recall only the transformation by Herod the Great (37 B.C.E.-4 C.E.) of Jerusalem and various places in Samaria and the Judaic territory into a "Great Judea" with the construction of theaters, amphitheaters, hippodromes, and villas. The Temple itself underwent restoration, and Jerusalem became one of the most celebrated urban centers in the ancient world. His son Antipas (tetrarch of Galilee and Peraea, 4-39 C.E.) intensified this process. In Galilee, he reconstructed the city of Sepphoris, renaming it Autocratoris.[68] In 20 C.E., he founded Tiberias.[69] Both names were chosen in honor of the emperors Augustus and Tiberius. This "apparently introduced Greco-Roman urban culture to Galilee for the first time,"[70] and inevitably entailed a disruption of the life of the adjacent Galilean villages. Their rhythms and internal processes were changed through these interventions by the governing authorities. "It appears that in order to provide the appropriate population for a completely new royal city [that is, Tiberias], Antipas moved the populations of the nearby villages."[71] Bethsaida too, which was transformed into a city by Herod Philip, underwent a process of Romanization in the 20s.[72]

The presence of new or reconstructed cities, where some of the elite probably also spoke Greek[73] and the Roman architectural patterns became established, also altered the existential horizons of the rural population and their relationship to the political powers. The villages entered a period of uncertainty and weakness. As Richard A. Horsley has remarked, "It is precisely in such circumstances, in face of the disintegration of the communities," that social and prophetic movements of revolt are born. One example is that of the prophet Theudas, who led a crowd out into desert, like a new Moses, in 44 C.E.[74] This episode, however, took place after the death of Jesus. We know nothing of anti-Roman revolts in the two decades before the arrival of Pontius Pilate, who was certainly present in the Judaic land from 26 to 36; but popular dissatisfaction and discontent in the Judaic land seem to have increased under his rule.[75] A distinction must be drawn between Romanization

and the Roman military or political presence in Galilee. Many scholars today tend to the view that "the Roman presence in pre-70 C.E. Palestine was minimal."[76]

The society to which Jesus belonged is thus characterized by processes of growth and transformation, but also by strong tensions and waves of discontent. The uncertainties and disequilibrium, however, cannot be explained simply by referring to a situation of poverty, since we find both deprived persons and flourishing family units.[77] A considerable part of the population lived in impressive urban centers. This means that the various currents and movements that were active in the world of Jesus involved milieus of varying economic strength and social importance. As in any other place, the modalities and the gradations of this situation were linked to specific or local factors. Jesus was in contact with a composite society that was in ferment and exposed to processes that ranged from uprooting to social renewal. Although he did not live in the urban centers where decisions were taken, he was involved with people who were "especially sensitive to the processes of social ascent and descent that are beginning to occur."[78]

The fact that Jesus belonged to rural Judaic milieus does not mean that he was ignorant of the life and problems of the cities. Indeed, his anti-urban attitude makes sense only as a critical response to situations that he knew and rejected. Scholars have pointed out that it is highly improbable that he was unacquainted with Sepphoris or Bethsaida, towns that are so close to Capernaum, or that he lacked any information about their most important institutions (the theater, the political buildings, the places of recreation, or the gymnasium).[79]

The rural population had strong links to Jerusalem thanks to the pilgrimages and the solemn festivals—and Jesus was no exception. It is inconceivable that he never went to Jerusalem at any point in the period before his public preaching, at least on the occasion of one of the more important feasts. The city was the seat of religious and political power and the site of unique and irreplaceable religious rites. Economic activities were linked to the Temple, although it appears that certain forms of commerce were absent, or subject to restrictions.[80] The Temple was the symbol and the economic motor of an entire society. This made it necessary to accept living together and to cultivate a relationship both to the supreme political authorities in the land and abroad, and to the middle and lower social strata. Gerd Theissen has argued that the political attitude of the inhabitants of Jerusalem was moderate: their aim was to maintain the status quo of the city and the Temple, and they were "linked to the Temple by material interests."[81] In Jerusalem, the choice

was between integration and alienation, and Jesus could not evade this inescapable alternative. His attitude—a radical criticism of certain ways of understanding the Temple and the religious traditions—inevitably led him to adopt a stance that was out of sympathy with the population of the city.

Jesus certainly went to Jerusalem during his public activity, but John and the synoptics portray his visits differently. The Johannine Jesus went to Jerusalem as often as five times, following the Judaic festal calendar; the other Gospels report only one visit. What can we say about the historical reliability of these two divergent accounts? As we have seen, Luke relates that Jesus had preached in Judea too, even before he chose his first disciples (Luke 4:44), and this may mean that the evangelist knew traditions about events in Jesus' life that took place in Jerusalem. It is difficult to see why we should prefer one account rather than the other.

We should not forget, however, that the two versions agree at least on one point, namely, that Jesus went to Jerusalem to take part in the feast of Passover. This means that he appeared to some extent integrated into this feast alongside the pilgrim masses that made their way to the city. He looked like an observant Judean who fulfilled a festal duty dictated by tradition: he accepted the representative character of the places and of the religious systems.

Let us leave aside here the question why he went to Jerusalem. We shall look only at his relationship to the city. He was a man of the village—how much information did he have about the city in its institutions and mechanisms, and how did he in fact experience it? It is possible that he concentrated on particular places in Jerusalem, either because of his own spiritual attitude or because of his social position, but the Gospels say nothing in detail about how Jesus lived in the city. We gain information about his behavior in Jerusalem from the discussions with the groups that met him and engaged in polemic against him (Pharisees, scribes, priests), rather than from precise events that occurred in the city. Prior to his dramatic arrest, our information concerns the human subjects rather than the *places* or the public events in Jerusalem—and as we have seen, the mention of places in the Gospel narratives is historically less reliable than the narrative of the events that are located there. As Maurice Halbwachs writes, to speak of particular places helps to reinforce the memory of actions and events that are now finished and far away.[82] This means that the localization may often be the effect of a mechanism of memorization mobilized long after the events took place; this may be the case with the miracle at the pool of Siloam or the presence of Jesus in the portico of Solomon

(John 9:7 and 10:23), as well as with the location in the Temple of the discussion about purity that survives in an otherwise lost Gospel.[83] The primary purpose of these localizations is to recall a miracle or an important discussion.

We know nothing of Jesus' relationship to particular locations, but the same is not true of his attitude toward this city: he behaved like a person who did *not* belong to it. He never on any occasion led the life of an established citizen of Jerusalem who was at home there. We see this from the fact that during his visit, he entered the city in the morning, but left it at the close of day (Mark 11:11-12; 13:3; 14:3; 14:26; Luke 21:37; 22:39; Matt 21:17; 26:6; 26:30), and was welcomed in milieus or by persons he knew. He did not even have friends in the city with whom he could stay overnight, but he had such friends in the nearby village of Bethany (according to Mark), or in the village where a man made ready an ass[84] for his so-called triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

Several episodes shed light on Jesus' attitude toward Jerusalem. All the canonical Gospels describe his activity in the holy city in the days before he is arrested and put to death (Mark 11:1-1:11; Luke 19:28-22:6; Matt 21-25; John 12:12-50),[85] but there is an enormous difference between John's narrative and that of the other three Gospels. The great discussions that Jesus had in Jerusalem according to Mark, Luke, and Matthew are entirely absent in John. In the Fourth Gospel, Jesus went to the city five days before the Passover feast (12:12). In addition to the Last Supper with the disciples (chs. 13-17), John relates only three episodes: the triumphal entry (12:12-19), the scene in which Jesus hears a voice from heaven (12:20-36), and a discourse delivered in a place and at a time that are unspecified (12:44-50). If we add the scene in Bethany where Mary anointed him with perfumed oil, we have a total of four episodes. In the synoptics, on the other hand, we find a total of fourteen episodes before the arrest,[86] and some of these give us detailed information about Jesus' attitude to the city.

Jesus was perhaps in the village of Bethany in the house of Simon the leper (Mark 14:3-11). He wanted to be in the city for the Passover, so he sent his disciples (Mark 14:12-17/Luke 22:7-14/Matt 26:17-20) to Jerusalem to look for a suitable place, giving them only one direction: "A man carrying a jar of water will meet you" (Mark 14:13). Once this man had been identified, Jesus led the guests to a room already prepared on the upper floor of the house. It is symptomatic that people offered Jesus what was necessary for the customary rites, now that the Passover was at hand. In Mark and Luke, Jesus seemed to have some acquaintance with the city: he knew the habits of the city and he was aware that he could

count on someone to offer him a room for supper with his disciples. It is possible that his host was one who accepted Jesus' message, but this is not mentioned in the narratives. The fact that he sends two disciples into the city agrees with his custom of sending people ahead of him to the places where he wanted to receive hospitality (cf. Luke 9:52). According to the synoptic Gospels, Jesus *wanted* to celebrate the Passover supper in Jerusalem: he seemed to regard the location of the celebration as essential.[87]

In another incident, while he was walking around in the Temple the day after he had expelled the merchants, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came up to Jesus and asked him "what authority" he had for interfering with what went on in the Temple precincts. Here the Gospels (Mark 11:27-33; Luke 20:1-8; Matt 21:23-27) present a confrontation between Jesus and those who governed the sanctuary and were not willing to permit anyone else to exercise authority over the cultic spaces. This is why they protested against Jesus, who appeared to possess authority, but was completely foreign to the system constituted by the Temple.

In yet another instance, the synoptic Gospels stage the confrontation between Jesus and his adversaries by means of a parabolic narrative that relates how the tenants forfeit their right to cultivate the vineyard (Mark 12:1-9; Luke 29:9-19; Matt 21:33-41). It is highly likely that the Markan version is a theologization of the original parable. Kloppenborg has suggested that Jesus told a story about a wealthy landowner who lived in a city far away from his vineyard and attempted in vain to get the fruits of the harvest from the vine dressers.[88] The context of the parable would thus be the antagonism between the city and the countryside. Mark localizes it in the Temple in order to use it with reference to the antagonism between Jesus and the religious authorities, and Matthew accentuates this perspective even more strongly. It is improbable that Jesus did in fact tell this parable in the Temple, although it is likely that clashes and debates with the religious authorities occurred during his preaching activity.

Another episode relates to the occasion when Jesus "watched the crowd putting money into the treasury." We find this in Mark 12:41-44, followed by Luke 21:1-4. The donations by pilgrims were a normal action in the city, something that happened every day as part of a series of religious acts supervised by those who were responsible for the Temple. It was normal for those who could give larger sums to draw attention to what they were doing. Jesus commented on this scene by praising the merits of the poor woman who donated only a few small

coins (Mark 12:41-44).[89] We are told that Jesus addressed these reflections only to his own disciples, but his comment expressed a harsh criticism of what goes on in the sanctuary and revealed an attitude that was utterly alien to the administrative apparatus of the Temple—an attitude that is closely parallel to the gesture of violent wrath directed against the merchants. This confirms that although Jesus felt that he did not belong to the city, he was not indifferent to its cultic and identity functions. It was the symbolic importance of Jerusalem as an irreplaceable religious center that impeled him to oppose the system of urban living, while at the same time demonstrating his attachment to the fundamental value of the Temple.

Two actions that certainly took place in Jerusalem reveal the extreme importance of the city and the Temple in the eyes of Jesus: the royal entrance into the city and the expulsion of the merchants from the Temple. The synoptic Gospels agree in situating the latter event at the end of Jesus' life, while John puts it almost at the beginning of his narrative as a kind of overture to the drama that will subsequently unfold; but all four Gospels place the triumphal entry of Jesus to Jerusalem, sitting on an ass, at the end of his life. Both these actions betray a tense and openly polemical relationship to the urban world.

In reality, Jesus needed Jerusalem because it was the locus of the most important religious symbols of the people of Israel, and it was there that the projects he was pursuing must be publicly manifested. But he could not avoid clashing with the conservative milieu of the city and the current religious practice there. His anti-urban attitude was reinforced by his critique of the way in which the traditional religion was practiced, and this ineluctably led to a situation of conflict that found expression in words reported by Luke and Matthew (who found them in Q): "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!" (Luke 13:34; Matt 23:37). This exclamation was indubitably directed against the political and religious authorities of the city, because Jesus drew a distinction between the Jerusalem "that kills the prophets" and prevented him from acting, and its "children" whom he wanted to "gather."

In Jesus' eyes, urban society was a world apart. One example of his hostility to this foreign world of cities in general is the parable of the son of a wealthy rural landowner who foolishly squandered his goods in the city and was ruined (Luke 15:11-31).[90] He found salvation by returning

to his father's house, from which he had wanted to emancipate himself—and where he found natural and definitive protection. In this parable, Luke locates the message of Jesus in the scenario of antagonism between the city and the countryside, where the city expresses the negative pole of values in which one can get lost. The city has the power to ruin or destroy the individual. It also appears as a place where the traditional laws, such as the prohibition of eating pork, are not respected: the son became the slave of a man who kept pigs. Once the son of the wealthy man lost all his possessions, he was compelled to serve a pig breeder in the city.

Jesus' distance from the urban world was similar to his distance from the Romans.[91] His contacts with their world seem to have been exceedingly rare, and perhaps not taken on his own initiative; the case of the centurion (Luke 7:1-10) is an exception, and is presented as such. Some scholars have doubted whether this man was a Roman, since neither Luke nor Matthew (Matt 8:5-13) specifies this, and the imperial military presence in Galilee was small at that time; the term *hekatonarchēs* could also apply to a non-Judeans official of Herod's army.[92] According to the Gospel of Luke, the encounter with this official is surrounded by considerable reserve and a complex ceremonial. Jesus offered his services only in order to heal the centurion's servant; no political motives were involved. This attitude of distance is confirmed by his criticism of the Herodian milieu, if we are to believe Luke when he tells us that Jesus called Herod a "fox" (Luke 13:32). And this shows how profoundly suspicious Jesus was of the Romanization that relied on Herod's clientele. Some scholars see an affinity between the Cynic philosophy and Jesus' preaching, or the convivial Greco-Roman style that he sometimes seemed to practice (on this, see below); but this remains an indirect influence. It is not evidence of a positive view of the imperial authority and politics. It is true that the Roman governors had a direct relationship with the Judean population only in those territories that they administered directly, but the Roman influence (though indirect) was decisive also in the regions governed by Herod Antipas or Herod Philip, and Romanization permeated every aspect of life, generating transformations that became irreversible.

Although no one can avoid the cultural influences of a globalizing society, it remains possible to react against this society and even to oppose it within certain limits. The style and the behavior of Jesus seem distant from the Roman milieu, and this is not surprising, since the urge to refuse integration is generally stronger where an innovative response

can be seen. Jesus' reaction to the central system and to the urban world tended to be located in the villages and the rural areas where he judged it still possible to combat integration or to resist Romanization.

Jesus took his place in a somewhat limited territory in the world of his days, that is, in the Land of Israel; and he invited the village people to remain rooted in this territory—without migration, without territorial expansion, and without making any conquests.