

SICARRI ACTIONS AGAINST ROME

Jesus and the zealots A Study of the Political factor in Primitive Christianity

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The following extracts are some of the main factors in the problem of historical tradition regarding early Christian origins and early Christian beliefs. Brandon covers the topic well and reveals some of the major problems regarding church history. Historical evidence from this period contradicts later church history based upon disinformation and a lack of historical evidence in the NT relating to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, on Aug 29 AD.70; and the later capture of Masada in AD.73 and the destruction and the deportation of the Zealot factions by the 10th Legion after a two year siege. The main thrust here is that political forces were the major factors in these developments as the Zealots were attempting to overthrow Roman rule in Judea.

Zealots were known as the (**kanaim**) in Aramaic, or **Sicarri** = Latin for **sikariwn, lestwn** in Gk, meaning brigands in the common terminology of the Romans but more accurately we would call them revolutionaries or terrorists as they were attempting to overthrow Roman rule. The **Sicarri** were called this on account of their short daggers known in Gk. as **mikra zifidia** Rabbinic sources refer to the; in Hebrew, (**sikarim**) during the siege of Jerusalem. Josephus equates the **lestai** as Sicarri the term **Zhlwths** is not a Heb word it is Gk. and therefore the Sicarri must be equated with them. In Hebrew they were called the Canaanans. Eleazar was the **apogonos** of Judas who was known in Heb as a Rabbi since he was known in Gk as **sofisths** i.e. a learned man. This was a Galilean simile for Zealot, see (Mishna Yadaim 4.8). war in Gk = **polemon** so **lhstrikou polemon** = guerilla war, Caesar = **Kaisara, crhsms amfibolos** = ambiguous oracle. Jonathan was appointed the High Priest by Vitellius and Caiphas deposed him in AD.36 and replaced him with Theophilus. (it is this High Priest who it could be argued was John the author of the Gospel.) In AD.39-40 Gaius (Caligula) orders Petronius to erect a statue of Zeus in the Temple he tries to stall and infuriates the Emperor but Gaius dies before his order to Petronius to commit suicide can be delivered. James is killed by a sword on Herods orders which was a form of execution for **political offenses**. Stoning was used as a capital charge for **religious offences**. see *Goguel, La naissance du christianisme, pp.126. 503n.3* The execution of John and James Zebedee, In AD.44 King Agrippa dies very suddenly (poison?) by the Zealots?

The Procurators of Jerusalem

AD.44-5 Cuspius Fadu
 AD.46-8 Teberius Alexander
 AD.52-62 Anonius Felix
 AD.60-64 Lecceius
 AD.64-66 Gessius Florus

Lhstwn = imposters, * Josephus relates that two new forms of Zealots originated in Jerusalem. (**eteron eidos lhston**) One group known as Sicari and the other known as the (**stifos eteron ponerwn**) i.e. the deceivers who led people out into the desert. Brandon raises the question were the forty people mentioned in Acts (23:12-15, 21, 30.) Sicari?

Acts.23:12 "When it was day the Jews made a plot and bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they had killed [Paul](#).¹³ There were more than forty who made this conspiracy. ¹⁴ And they went to the chief priests and elders, and said, "We have strictly bound ourselves by an oath to taste no food till we have killed Paul. ¹⁵ You therefore, along with the council, give notice now to the tribune to bring him down to you, as thought you were going to determine his case more exactly. And we are ready to kill him before he comes near."

²¹But do not yield to them; for more than forty of their men lie in ambush for him, having bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink until they have killed him, "Tell no one that you have informed me of this".

³⁰And when it was disclosed to me that their would be a plot against the man, I sent him to you at once, ordering his accusers also to state before you what they have against him."

Lhstwn were also known as imposters, **shmeia**= signs. *Ananus a (Sadducee) High Priest was the son of a distinguished High Priest he called a meeting of the [Sanhedrin](#) to **try James and others** charged with breaking the Law, he was convicted, stoned, and then clubbed to death at the Jerusalem Temple in AD.62. In Antiquities XX 197-200 Josephus refers to James as the brother of Jesus. Ananus is rebuked by Albinus and removed from the High Priesthood due to the complaints against him by the Jews in Jerusalem. He is replace by Agrippa see **Jos Ant. XX 200-3**. Hegeipus a Christian writing in the second century BC. stated that **James could enter the sanctuary in the Temple and he had taken Rechabite and Nazarite vows, ([Epiphanius](#) also mentions that James had taken Nazarite vows** that he was called **dikaio**s the just and that he was also called **wblias** = the rampart of the people and righteousness.) **Pas o laos** the whole people were in danger of expecting Jesus to arrive as the Messiah. James wore the **sudonas** or white linen in the Temple, [Epiphaneus](#) also states James wore the Mitre of the high priest; Epiphaneus was a bishop in Salamis on Cyprus who died in AD 403(*see Haer xxxix.3-4*) in *P.G.t.41 p.346*.

[Gessius Florus](#) This Roman governor between AD.64-66 was held responsible by Josephus for the final provocation of the Jews to rebel. In AD.66 Zealots siezed Masada under Menachem but Eleazer murders him in the Jerusalem Temple while he is praying with his bodyguard. In AD.66 Cestius Gallus legate of Syria is defeated by the Jews and retreats from Jerusalem he *loses 6,000 men in the rout* and all his heavy catapults and rams and baggage. This defeat is seen by many as a positive omen that God is on their side. In AD.67-69 Vespasian a veteran of wars in Britain is sent to Judea to crush the revolt. AD.70 on the 29th of Aug the city is captured by his son Titus. Then in AD.73 Masada is captured this was a *Zealot stronghold*.* Yadin may have found the actual lots of the last 11 survivors see:*M.Livneh and Z.Meshel Masada p.23* Ben Yair was the Zealot commander of Masada. Zealots were modelled upon the example of Phineas and the cross was seen as their symbol of sacrifice due to the high proportion who were indeed crucified.

The Jewish Christians and the Zealot Ideal

(Sacerdotal society) * *There is no surviving documentation from the Jerusalem Church after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.* In AD.68 Qumran was wiped out by a Roman force. (Mark) in his apologetic written in Rome in A.D.71? is very carefull to not antagonize his Roman readers and is writing mostly for a Gentile audience. Mathew and Luke are based upon it. (Acts) is apologetic also its thesis is the spread of the faith among the gentile nations and the chief cities of the Roman empire. (Epistles of Paul) provide the earliest evidence of Christianity. * Paul removes the historical Jesus and substitutes his spiritual ideology. He therefore removes Jesus completely from politics he becomes esoteric it is (*oi arcontes tw n tou aiwnos*) daemonic rulers of this world age who rule and who crucify the Lord of Glory (Pauls words) *ton kuriou ths doxhs*. Paul was in opposition to those who taught another gospel see (Gal.1:6-8) Paul's authority was rejected by his opponents, in fact he was called thatabortion. Paul was not an Apostle (Gal1:13-17) The Pillars of the Jerusalem church known as *stuloi* were Jesus Cephas /Peter/ and John. Paul names **James** first as sign of his authority over Peter. Peter eg. submits to James representatives when they come to see him in Antioch. (much to Paul's anger) * the question of course is why is their no information as to how James became leader of the Jerusalem church? Paul describes James as ^(Gal 1:19) *Iakwbou tou adelfou tou Kuriou* * *This is the only reference in the New Testament that the rule of the Church passed to the brother of Jesus*

Peter was the leader of the Church up to his imprisonment in AD.40-44 by Agrippa 1st. Paul met James in Jerusalem in AD.37-38 if his conversion is dated to AD.34. James had to deal with the obvious reality that under Paul the conversion of the Gentiles was becoming if not already so, a fait accompli in Antioch. Jesus however, was definately anti-Gentile. see

Mark 7:26 ^{7:26} *Now the woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by birth. And she begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. ²⁷ And he said to her, " Let the children first be fed, for it is not right to take the childrens bread and throw it to the dogs."*

where he calls Gentiles dogs ie. (*kurania*) * this reference is to relations with Gentiles in his rebuttal of the Syrio - Phoenician woman. In

Mathew 10:5-6 *Jesus orders the twelve apostles not to go to the Gentiles,* ^{Math.10:5} *These twelve Jesus sent out, charging them, "Go nowhere among the Gentile, and enter no town of the Samaritans, ⁶ but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*

(**Eis odon eqnwn mh apelfhte**, ie. do not go into the way of the nations,

Matt. 7:6 the reference to swine is a Rabbinical term for Rome or none Israelite world, (dogs = Gentiles ,therefore, this saying is refering to Gentiles.) ^{Math.7:6} *"Do not give dogs what is holy; and do not throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under foot and turn to attack you.*

Paul is sent to Rome after being imprisoned for two years in Ceasaria by Florus after the High Priest and his agent testify against him and after *forty men attempted to murder him in Jerusalem*; he was, it seems involved in violent political struggles. Paul according to tradition was sent to Rome and there probably killed on orders of the Emperor. Members of the Jerusalem church were known for being zealous of the law ie. they were **Nazirites** and were Jews. In **Alexandria** at this time the Jewish population is given by Philo as at least 1,000,000 and was according to **Acts.18:24-26** **a center of defective Christianity,ie. it was the center of Jewish Christianity or Judaism according to the followers of James ie. these people were merely a Jewish sect not Christians.** ^{Acts.18:24}

Now a Jew named Apol'los, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, well versed in the scriptures. ²⁵ He had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and beieng fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. ²⁶ He began to speak boldly in the synagogue; but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him they took him and expounded to him the way of God more accurately.

Appolos of Alexandria a Christian is criticized and corrected by Paul as being incorrect in his belief that he need only be baptized by John and was not aware of the Holy Spirit. It is also very interesting to note that Paul never visited Alexandria at least in the NT records. Was this because he knew he would never be able to preach his false teaching in such a Jewish mileu? Peter left Jerusalem after his arrest and imprisonment from Herod's prison but the NT does not tell us where he went; surely such an important historical fact is not likely to be left out. It is likely that he went to Alexandria the largest Jewish center outside of Judea or perhaps Corinth or Rome?

G.R.Driver (Judean Scrolls pp.236, 239-42, 244) and C.Roth (Hist Background Dead Sea Scrolls pp.22ff) both these authors equate the Qumran sectaries with the Zealots. And as Jesus states very clearly in Mathew he is not bringing peace to Judea.

Math.10:34 *" Do not think that I have come to bring peace on Earth, I have not come to bring peace, but a sword."³⁵ For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;³⁶ and a man's foes will be those of his own household."*

This passage proves that Jesus was a revolutionary not a pacifist. His disciples carried concealed weapons as indicated in the following Gospel accounts

Luke.22:38 " And they said, "Look, Lord here are two swords." And he said to them, "It is enough." *Mark.14:47* But one of those who stood by drew his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear. *Matt.26:51* And behold, one of those who was with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest, and cut off his ear.⁵² Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. *John.18:10-11*¹⁰ Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's slave and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus. ¹¹ Jesus said to Peter, " Put your sword in its sheath; shall I not drink the cup which the father has given me?"

Boanerges probably means violent in reference to the two Apostles John and James both the sons of Zebedee, both executed by Herod according to Eisler and we know that James was executed for *treason* ie. a political crime. **Judas Iscariot** his name gives much difficulty it may mean Sicarri if the text has been corrupted to this more benign form. It could have been written as **O sikarios to O sikariwths** Barjona in **Matt.16:17** = an outlaw or rebel in the Rabbinical literature the (xxxxxx) destroyed the Roman images, see (Talmud. Git.56a) * Brandon refutes the Pella evidence see his " The Fall of Jerusalem pp.170-72 " He claims his evidence is solid and without a good rebuttal.

Eusebius in his "Eusebius His Eccle. IV.V.1-4 lists 15 [Jewish Bishops](#) of Jerusalem in succession, therefore there was no continuity between the Jerusalem sect of James and the so called Christian church later placed on the Aelia Capitolina. The **Ebionites** claimed Paul was Simon Magus, Brandon also quotes this statement and gives the following ref: *Schoeps. (Theologie pp.128ff. 257 and pp.420-7, and 448-50. also Ungemeinde pp.17-19 and Cullman, Le Probleme pp.243-50)*

Markan Gospel: An Apologia ad Christiano Romanos

Mark was the first Gospel to be written and therefore we need to know two things, one, why was it written, and two when was it written. According to Brandon it was written in Rome in AD.75 in other words it was written at the very important time of the destruction of Judea. It seems to have been written in Rome as the Latinisms in the text are also supported by a strong tradition that it was written in Rome. In AD.71 Vespasian ordered all Jews to pay tribute to Rome in leu of the Temple tax which they had earlier paid to Jerusalem; this poll tax was 2 drachmas annually. Mark mentions the Temple curtain was torn from top to bottom when Jesus was killed *Mark.15:38* Jewish legend states that Titus cut it with his sword when he entered. (Gittin. 56b.in S.B. Kommentar 1, 1044, pp.946ff) Eisler, in his King Jesus 1,161-2 and notes. Titus ordered the whole city destroyed and razed to the ground, only three towers were to be left behind. see, Josephus War VII:1-3 *** certain old Mss in Latin give *iudes zelotes* for **Qaddaios** in **Mark.3:18**. The word Zealot or in Aramaic Canana which transliterated into Gk is Kananatou

(**Mark.3:18**) why does Mark not explain this title? (**O Zhlwths**) given later by Luke see Lukes lists (**Luke. 6:15**) (**Acts. 1:13**) Luke wrote 15y after Mark therefore he could state what Mark was afraid to record at an earlier time. Mark's *tendenz* is to avoid any reference which reminds the readers of the correlation between the followers of Jesus and the Zealots. Mark also does not explain why Jesus was charged by the High Priest with attempting to destroy the temple but was crucified by the Romans on the charge of sedition. He was arrested by an armed force which John significantly calls a "Cohort" a specific term for a very large Roman force ie. about 400 to 600 men. (**speiran**) Matt. however only mentions Jewish authorities as being involved. Mark therefore, has ignored this fact.

There is no evidence outside the Gospels for the release of a Roman prisoner on the request of the populace. (Josephus makes no mention of this incident) and it is therefore probably false. John does not mention it either. Is there a connection between Bar Abbas and Jesus? ie. a political and religious attack against Rome? which is not truly described? Paul in **Romans.11:17ff** states clearly that the Gentile Christians are a wild olive shoot grafted contrary to nature into the cultivated Olive tree. Mark uses the Roman term centurion ie. **Kenturiwn** to describe the conversion of the Roman officer this seems a rather apologetic story designed to serve his purposes.

The concept of the Pacific Christ

Mark written in A.D.71 Matt in A.D. 80-85 and Luke in A.D. 80-85.* Mark and Mathew both say that Jesus appeared to his disciples in Galilee, see **Mark.14:28, 16:7., and Matt.28:7,10,16.** Luke however, states it occurred in Jerusalem on the Mount of olives **Luke.24:49., and Acts. 1:4.,** Is Mark here attempting to avoid the implication that Jesus was in Jerusalem at the time of the great disturbance in the city? so he had the parousia appear in Galilee. Luke was perhaps written in Archæ by a Pauline Christian who opposed the Jewish Christians in Alexandria as in **Acts.18:26** where Paul's friends need to expound the way of God more carefully to the *Alexandrian Apollos* Eusebius states that Luke was a native of Antioch see "Hist Eccl.III.IV.6., Brandon feels Mathew was written in Alexandria for the following reasons.

- very strong Jewish community there
- Long tradition of association with the Jewish centre in Jerusalem
- Paul never attempted to preach there
- Peter played some important part in its formation
- It was the second largest city with a Jewish pop outside Jerusalem 1,000,000 according to Philo.

In A.D.73 Vespasian ordered the destruction of the temple at Leontopolis by the governor Lupus in Egypt. Built in 170 B.C. by Onias a chief priest who sought refuge from the Selucid king Antiochus Epiphanes. The site was excavated by Petrie in 1906 who found it was based upon the Jerusalem temple. see Hyksos and Israelite cities pp.19-27. sacrifices were offered great masses of burnt calf and lamb bones were found.

Sicarri sought refuge in Alexandria because the Romans had entered from the North about six hundred of them were murdered by the Romans after the Alexandrian Jews refused to hide them. * Mathew is the only Gospel writer who relates that Jesus crossed into Egypt with his family about 12y and remained there as a child. **Matt.15:21-5, and Mark.7:24-30** * the legend of Isis and her son Horus is a direct reflection of the Mosaic myth and also the story that Jesus is in effect a second Moses. ie. Isis fleeing from Seth in the Delta. Mathew states Peter is the true founder of the church, this corroborates Acts which " vaguely " states that Peter went to that " other " place ie. perhaps Alexandria. * More MSS of Mathew are found in Egypt than any other Gospel MSS. The Gospel of Thomas and the Nag Hammudi texts are also from Egypt. **aqvs**, innocent, **Balein**, peace.

Jesus and the Zealots

Flavians triumph influenced Mark's gospel written in Rome in A.D. 71 ie. the Jews and not the Romans killed Jesus. * But Mark concealed from his Gentile readers that Simeon was a Zealot by using the Aramaic word transliterated into Gk **Tou Kananaion** with no explanation of its meaning even though his readers would not have understood this word written in a foreign language. Judas of Galilee founded the Zealot movement of which Jesus had at least one of his disciples as a member. * Jesus never makes any negative remarks about the Zealots but he does about both the Sadducees and the Pharisees why is this? His raid upon the Jerusalem temple was an attack upon the power base of the Jerusalem priesthood see the insurrection in **Matt.21:10** by A.D. 66 the High Priest was being chosen by lot according to the Zealot procedure, ie. the older aristocratic control over this position had been broken by the Zealots. The Zealots assassinated the High Priest Jonathan during the governorship of Felix A.D. 52-60 and then in A.D. 66., took over the temple elections.

Brandon claims that Jesus must have denied the validity of giving any tribute to Rome as he was supported by the people who hated Romans and he also had Zealots in his inner circle. see pp.346-7. He also made a triumphal entrance into the city upon an Ass as a fulfillment of the scripture regarding the Messianic King and this was followed by an attack upon the Temple. John does not describe who was crucified with Jesus why not? the word used in the other Gospel accounts for these two men is the Roman term for Zealots ie. **lestes** a term of contempt.

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