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# The Family of Jesus

by John J. Gunther

*Dr. Gunther is best known for his works on Paul: notably Paul: Messenger and Exile and St. Paul's Opponents and their Background. In this paper he turns to an ancient problem in Gospel study: who were the "brethren" of our Lord? His principal conclusion appears irresistible. It is with special interest that we have observed Dr. Gunther's reference to a study by one of the joint founders of this QUARTERLY, the late Professor J. R. Mackay. In the paper mentioned in n. 16 (p. 31) Professor Mackay argued that "the other Mary" of Matt. 28: 1 was the mother of the Evangelist and wife of Alphaeus (cf. Matt. 9: 9 with Mark 2: 14).*

A FRUITFUL approach to studying the family of Jesus is through analysis of the place in it of Clopas, who is related to a Mary at the cross (Jn. 19: 25). The closest approach to a known Semitic form of the name is the Palmyrene "Qalouphai."<sup>1</sup> Much more remote is the Aramaic "Chalphai", which appears as "Chalphi" in 1 Macc. 11: 70 and probably as the purely Greek name "Alphaios" (the fathers of James and Levi), in Mk. 2: 14; 3: 18, etc., the Hebrew "Chalphiaiah" in the Talmud (Kiddushin 58b) and as the Palmyrene "Qaliphai."<sup>2</sup> Even if "Clopas" and "Alphaeus" could be equated linguistically,<sup>3</sup> they could not plausibly be equated as persons. The Syriac Gospels have "Chalphai" for "Alphaeus", but "Kleopha" (cf. the Latin, "Cleophas") for "Clopas." Even Jerome (*The Perpetual Virginity of Blessed Mary*, 15-16) would not linguistically identify "Alphaeus" and "Clopas." Luke has "Alphaeus" in Lk. 6: 15 and Acts 1: 13, but "Cleopas" in Lk. 24: 18. The Apostolic Constitutions (vi, 12-14; cf. ii, 55; vii, 46; viii, 4) and the Clementine literature (*Hom.* xi, 35; *Rec.* i, 59) distinguish between James of Alphaeus and James the Lord's brother, who had some connection thereby with a "Clopas." The correctness of "Clopas" in Jn. 19: 25 is verified by the author of the Fourth Gospel and by Hegesippus, a second-century (Syro-)Palestinian Hebrew (see below, p. 36),

1 J. B. Chabot, "Notes d'Epigraphie," *Journal Asiatique* 10 (1897), 327-28; cf. the Greek inscription found at Bosra, "Kolaphios" (W. H. Waddington 1936a).

2 Eugène Ledrain, *Dictionnaire des noms propres palmyréniens* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1886), 26.

3 "Philologically the names are distinct" (Paul W. Schmiedel, "Clopas", in *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, ed. T. K. Cheyne [London: Adam and Charles Black], i [1899], 849, 851).

both of whom knew Aramaic.<sup>4</sup> Why would they both corrupt "Chalphai" to "Clopas", while the Synoptic evangelists chose "Alphaeus"? Why did no Christian writer or translator of ancient times preserve the supposedly original "Chalphai"? If "Clopas" or something very close to it were the original name of the relative of a Mary at the cross, we should look for a closer counterpart in Greek than "Alphaeus." "Cleopas" (Lk. 24: 18) fits that requirement; it is a proper Greek name which is almost a transliteration of the Aramaic. Cleopas is a contracted form of Cleopatros (cf. Antipas-Antipatros). It is certainly the Greek name phonetically closest to "Clopas". "Silvanus", i.e. "Silas", exemplifies the practice of Latinizing or Hellenizing some Aramaic names; cf. Simon and Simeon, Jason and Jesus.<sup>5</sup> The Fourth Evangelist, who alone among Gospel writers called Simon Peter by the name of "Kephas" (the Greek transliteration of the Aramaic for rock) (1: 42), and who habitually used and explained Aramaic words (1: 38, 41-42; 9: 7; 20: 16; cf. 5: 2), apparently sought to preserve a Semitic linguistic flavor of names; hence he did not use a Greek form or substitute when mentioning "Clopas." Luke's account of the Crucifixion, however, is linguistically Hellenized: 23: 33 (cf. Mt. 27: 33; Mk. 15: 22; Jn. 19: 17); 23: 46 (cf. Mt. 27: 46; Mk. 15: 34). Moreover, in the Old Syriac and Old Latin versions of the Gospels, Clopas and Cleopas are translated alike. An attempted identification of Clopas with the Cleopas of Luke 24, of course, would have to rest on historical, and not merely linguistic, considerations. At least there is no linguistic improbability. But there would be some implausibility in assuming that Jesus appeared to someone with a Greek name, Cleopatros.

Cleopas was one of the two (Lk. 24: 13, 18) who met the Lord while travelling to Emmaus. These two (*duo ex autōn*) are associated with "Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told the apostles" what had happened at the tomb (24: 10). Cleopas related how

<sup>4</sup> Against Eusebius (*H.E.* iv, 22.8) W. Telfer ("Was Hegesippus a Jew?", *HTR* 53 [1960], 143-53) argues that he was not a Palestinian Jew, but a Greek-speaking Easterner using an anonymous Judaeo-Christian Hellenized history coming from circles where the Hebrew Gospel was familiar.

<sup>5</sup> G. Adolf Deissmann, *Bible Studies*, transl. Alexander Grieve (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1901), 315, n. 2. Other examples are given by Theodor Zahn, *Forschungen zur Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons und der altchristlichen Literatur* (Leipzig: S. Deichert), vi (1900), 343-44, no 3.

“some women of our company (*tines ex hemon*)” had been amazed at the tomb and how “some of those who were with us (*tines ton sun hēmin*) went to the tomb” (24: 22, 24). The relation of Cleopas and his companion to the women is close: *ex* implies an even greater bond than *sun*. The two travellers belonged to the innermost circle before and after the Resurrection. Luke implies that Cleopas and his companion were Galileans known to Jesus. He “for many days appeared to those who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people” (Acts 13: 31; cf. 1: 11). The Crucifixion and burial were witnessed by “all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee” (Lk. 23: 49). These were the women who had gone to the empty tomb (23: 55). As Cleopas belonged with the company of the Galilean females closest to Jesus, it is highly likely that Luke was correct in indicating that Cleopas and his companion were friends of Jesus. They reported their Resurrection experience “to the eleven gathered together and those who were with them” (24: 33). It is natural to assume that the Eleven would hide in the company of the most trustworthy friends of Jesus. The apostles had long known his family (Jn. 2: 1-12) and, moved by fear (Jn. 20: 19), compassion and common grief, they would naturally be drawn above all to the family of the Lord. It is only with them and certain women that the Eleven gathered in the upper room (Acts 1: 23-14).

The close relation of the two Emmaus travellers to Jesus is both confirmed and specified by Jewish Christian traditions. Philip of Side<sup>6</sup> preserved a fragment from the Palestinian Julius Africanus stating that the offspring (*hoi peri*) of Cleopas went to Emmaus. The companion of Cleopas was either “Simon” or “James the brother of the Lord.” Origen (*Contra Celsum* ii, 62 and 68) and a marginal note in Codex Sinaiticus to Lk. 24: 18 both identify the second man as Simon.<sup>7</sup> “Clopas” had a son by that name, according to Hegesippus (see below, p. 36). As the father, Cleopas would take priority and do the speaking in the Lucan narrative (if such an identification is possible). A case can be made

<sup>6</sup> De Boor, *Neue Fragmente des Papias, Hegesippus und Pierius in bisher unbekanntem Excerpten aus der Kirchengeschichte des Philippus Sideses*, TU v, 2 (Leipzig, 1888), 169, 1.

<sup>7</sup> Zahn, *op. cit.*, vi, 530-51, n. 2; W. Bauer, “The Picture of the Apostle in Early Christian Tradition. I. Accounts”, in E. Hennecke and W. Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, transl. edited by R. McL. Wilson (Philadelphia: Westminster), ii (1965), 70-71.

for James on the basis of marked similarities of the appearance(s) at Emmaus and to James as mentioned in the Hebrews' Gospel (*ap. Jerome, vir. ill. 2*) and probably in the Memoirs of Hegesippus.<sup>8</sup> Both accounts tell of the appearance on the first day. Luke (24: 13; cf. 1, 7, 9, 21-22) is quite explicit on the time. Gregory of Tours and James of Voragine specify that the appearance to James occurred "on the third day," "on the very day of resurrection." In the Hebrews' Gospel it occurred "shortly after he arose." One may suspect that some chronological juggling has occurred, however, since Paul gives a later date (1 Cor. 15: 7). In both cases Jesus "took bread and blessed and broke it and gave it" (Lk. 24: 30; Gospel acc. to Hebrews). In both accounts only then was Jesus recognized. In both he then told of the fulfillment of prophecy concerning himself. The fact that Jesus became known to them through the breaking, distribution and reception of bread inevitably implies that both Cleopas and James were thoroughly familiar with such an experience during the Lord's earthly life. Moreover, how are we to account for Paul's omission of a Resurrection appearance to Cleopas? Paul Wilhelm Schmiedel<sup>9</sup> wrote that Paul "had spent fifteen days in the society of Peter (Gal. 1: 18) and was eager to establish the fact of the Resurrection. By *eita . . . epeita . . . eita . . . eita eschaton* (1 Cor. 15: 5-8) he unquestionably intends to enumerate exhaustively all the appearances of the risen Lord which were known to him." Whether it was James or Simon the son of Clopas who accompanied "Cleopas" to Emmaus, the motive for concealing his name may have been to pass over the apostolic credentials of the first two "bishops of Jerusalem." The Synoptic Gospels all left the Lord's family in unbelief (Mt. 12: 46-50; Mk. 3: 21, 31-35; Lk. 8: 19-21); Luke least emphasizes the split. Apparently the jurisdictional claims of the "bishop of bishops"<sup>10</sup> and of the Lord's family in Jerusalem were not favored

<sup>8</sup> Edward B. Nicholson (*The Gospel according to the Hebrews*, London [1879], 65) suggested that the "Josephus" whom James of Voragine (*Legenda Aurea*, lxvii) cites for a story of the resurrection appearance to James, is really Hegesippus, which is the same name. "The concurrence of De Voragine with Gregory [of Tours] in the insertion of the word 'Rise' seems to point to the existence of some other authority besides Jerome." The four extant forms of the story are found in Alfred Resch, *Agrapha*, TU xxx, 2 (Leipzig, 1906), pp. 248-49.

<sup>9</sup> *Art. cit.*, *Encyclopaedia Biblica* i, 851. However, the fact that James comes near the end of Paul's list suggests that he was not present with Cleopas. Perhaps in order to glorify James the tradition behind the Hebrews' Gospel pre-dated the appearance. It would be natural for the appearances (or the impressions or the narratives thereof) to Cleopas and to James (as relatives) to be similar.

<sup>10</sup> According to the Pseudo-Clementine Letters of Clement and of Peter to James.

in many circles. Hence Luke omitted the name of the companion of Cleopas, whether it was Simon or James, since each ruled over the Jerusalem church.

What information about "Clopas" can be gleaned from John 19: 25? This verse presents the problem of ascertaining the number of Marys at the cross. "Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and (*kai*) his mother's sister, Mary of Clopas, and (*kai*) Mary Magdalene." From the omission of a *kai* between "his mother's sister" and "Mary of Clopas" it is proper to infer that the author intended an equation rather than a distinction. *Kai* is a word used abundantly, if not excessively, by the Evangelist. In other lists of persons (2: 12 and 21: 2) each member is connected by the conjunction. The author likes to identify sisters repeatedly (11: 39; cf. 11: 19, 21, 23, 28), even after it is no longer necessary (11: 1, 3, 5). Except for Pilate, who was sufficiently known, the Evangelist never gives a personal name without some identification or background. However, when mentioning the mother and brothers of Jesus (2: 1-12; 7: 3-10), he does not name them. From these usages we conclude that "Mary of Clopas" merely identifies the sister of our Lord's mother.<sup>11</sup>

"Mary of Clopas" could be a daughter of Clopas, but if she had been married she would be identified by her husband's name. Strictly on the basis of statistical probability in favor of marriage rather than spinsterhood, we must prefer the meaning to be "wife of Clopas", rather than the unmarried "daughter of Clopas". Another acceptable meaning<sup>12</sup> would be "sister of Clopas," but "mother of Clopas" would be both unusual grammatically and indicative of a woman too elderly to have been of much help. Whatever the relationship, Clopas and his Mary were members of the family of Jesus and his mother. What was the relation of the two Marys? One can scarcely imagine two living true sisters bearing the same name. *Adelphē* could mean "kinswoman" (Tobit 8: 4, 7; Job 42: 11), and "brother" could mean "brother-in-law" (Gen. 42: 15; 43: 5). In Ruth *yebemeth* (brother's wife) meant "brother-in-law's wife." There is no problem in thus viewing

11 For a bibliography of scholars judging Mary of Clopas to be the sister-in-law, see J. Blinzler, "Zum Problem der Brüder der Herrn," *Trierer Theologische Zeitschrift* 67 (1958), 241, n. 107. On the number at the cross see Blinzler, *Die Brüder und Schwestern Jesu* (Stuttgarter Bibelstudien, Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1967), 112-114.

12 On the various possibilities see Eric F. F. Bishop, "Mary Clopas-John xix. 25," *Expository Times* 65 (1953-54), 382-83; Blinzler, *op. cit.*, 115-16.

Mary of Clopas as sister-in-law of the Virgin.<sup>13</sup> This would make Clopas the uncle of Jesus; Mary, the wife or sister of Clopas, would become Jesus' aunt.

To summarize, "Cleopas" was closely associated with the women who saw Jesus carried from the cross to the tomb; he was a Galilean, a friend of Jesus, his family and the Eleven, and probably a companion of one of the two relatives of Jesus who became the first "bishops" of Jerusalem. "Clopas" was an uncle of Jesus and a relative of the two women who beheld the Crucifixion. The Aramaic name is not so common a one that we might reasonably expect two men with virtually the same transliterated Greek form of the name to fit such similar descriptions in Luke and John. It is even more necessary to identify them historically than linguistically.

We now encounter the crucial problem of relating these two Marys of Jn. 19: 25: to "Mary the mother of James *ho mikros* and of Joses" (Mk. 15: 40; cf. Mt. 27: 56: "and of Joseph"), to "Mary the mother of Joses" (Mk. 15: 47), to "Mary the mother of James" (Mk. 16: 1; Lk. 24: 10) and to "the other (*hē allē*) Mary" (Mt. 27: 61; 28: 1). "The other Mary" in both verses is obviously distinguished from Mary Magdalene, who is also mentioned ("Mary Magdalene and the other Mary"). Such a manner of distinction presupposes that there were *no other Marys* worthy of mention at the burial and empty tomb; no other Mary but Magdalene is ever associated with "the other Mary." For the sake of economy, *hē allē* was substituted for the cumbersome "the mother of James and Joseph," mentioned five verses earlier. Moreover, if the author of Matthew knew the Gospel of Mark (15: 47) he placed "the

<sup>13</sup> Hence neither Salome (Mk. 15: 40-41; 16: 1) nor the mother of the sons of Zebedee (Mt. 27: 56) can be made sister to Mary, by a speculative process of identification through elimination. Salome had followed and ministered to Jesus in Galilee; many other woman also came up to Jerusalem with him (Mk. 15: 41). Therefore it is quite uncertain whether Matthew intended to identify Salome *or* one of the others with the mother of the sons of Zebedee (27: 56). If he meant to identify them, why did he not bring the mother of the Zebedeids to the empty tomb just as Mark has Salome present (16: 1)? If Matthew intended to be comprehensive and to replace, rather than merely supplement, Mark, why did he not include Salome's name as the mother of the sons of Zebedee? The most logical conclusion would be that if Matthew followed Mark, Matthew had no interest in Salome and that his special interest in the mother of the sons of Zebedee found fulfillment also in Mt. 20: 20. Luke also eliminates Salome and includes Joanna with the two Marys and the other women (24: 10), just as he includes her in his list of ministering women of Galilee (8: 3). Nothing could be riskier than conjecturally to identify women selected out of a group by each Evangelist. Moreover, there is no ancient tradition that James and John were cousins of Jesus. It would be untenable to hold that they were cousins of the Lord, and that James, the so-called brother of the Lord, was also a cousin; for if "brother" meant close relative, then the restriction of the term to one James excludes its application to the other James.

other Mary" in the place of "Mary the mother of Joses." Or, even if the literary dependence should be reversed, the parallelism of the accounts remains. The natural meaning of *he alle Maria* is that only one Mary is intended here, and she may be identified with either the mother of Jesus or with Mary the wife of Clopas. Was the mother of James and Joses deemed to be unworthy of mention by the Fourth Evangelist? If our Lord's mother were present at the cross, as the Fourth Gospel narrates, her name was either suppressed or disguised by the Synoptics.<sup>15</sup> The same is true of Mary of Clopas, though possibly her subordinated name (Jn. 19: 25) might have been unknown to Matthew and Mark, neither of whom mentions Clopas. There is good reason to believe that there was a gradual disguising of the Virgin's identity, at least as far as the empty tomb appearance was concerned. Mary is most fully identified in the crucifixion narratives of the earliest Gospels (Mk. 15: 40; Mt. 27: 56).<sup>16</sup> She is mentioned only after Mary Magdalene (and Joanna, in Lk. 24: 10). Luke's (24: 10) "mother of James" could be the mother of any of three apostles. John 20: 2 later reports only Mary Magdalene at the tomb, though the use of "*we know (oidamen)*" presupposes that originally someone else had been present. The Gospel of Peter (12: 50-51) has Magdalene accompanied by "her (female) friends," who are left unnamed. Finally, the long ending of Mark (16: 9ff.) has only Magdalene present. What apologetic forces have been at work? These developments are counter to the tendency of tradition to give names and to develop personalities. In ridicule, sceptical Jews might have asserted that Mary knew where Jesus was buried, and Jesus' brothers stole the body, as part of a family hoax in which the brothers would take over leadership of the religious movement. The absence of explicit mention by the Gospels of the brothers' presence at the cross and resurrection appearances may reflect similar preaching difficulties. Or, it may have been claimed that Jesus' mother was an unreliable witness. She couldn't believe her son was dead. She was so distraught that she forgot where the tomb was, and consequently she went to the wrong one. Or, if the Jews were already (*ca.* A.D. 85-90) claiming that she was an adulteress (Origen,

14 For a bibliography of those equating the Synoptic Mary and Christ's mother, see Blinzler, *art. cit.*, *Trierer Theol. Zeit.* 67 (1958), 226, n. 60.

15 One can hardly attribute to accident the Synoptics' omission of the name of Mary. She was too significant a person to overlook in favour of (the names) of otherwise unknown women.

16 At the burial and empty tomb Matthew (27: 61; 28: 1) refers to her cryptically as merely "*hē allē Maria*." John R. Mackay ("The Other Mary," *Expository Times* 40 [1928-29], 320) justly wrote: "The expression—'the other Mary' . . . sounds in one's ear a note of tender feeling. The expression is uncommon: there seems to lurk a depth of significance behind that uncommonness."



*Contra Celsum* I, ix, 1, 32-33).<sup>17</sup> her testimony would be all the more valueless. The need for a male witness (namely, Peter) to the empty tomb in later apologetic is apparent from the addition of Luke 24: 12 in the prevailing manuscript traditions; the awkward location of this gloss (taken from Jn. 20: 2-10) bears witness to its function.

If these were the motives at work in disguising the presence of Mary at the empty tomb (and at the cross as well, where the same ladies were present), this Mary, the mother of James *ho mikros* and Joses, is to be identified with whomever the church wished to disguise. There initially was little problem of ignorance or confusion within the church. Commenting on Mk. 15: 40, C. F. D. Moule<sup>18</sup> writes: "This way of distinguishing another Mary suggests that her sons were still known to the Christians among whom these traditions were treasured." Since the presence of the mother of the Lord might cause far more difficulty in presenting a convincing case for the empty tomb than would the presence of Mary (the wife) of Clopas, we may tentatively conclude that the Lord's mother was also mother to James and Joses. Confirmation comes from the ostensibly parallel relations of Mk. 6: 3 and Mt. 13: 55, where the Nazarenes ask rhetorically of Jesus: "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?" It is noteworthy that James is placed before Joses, as in Mt. 27: 56 and Mk. 15: 40, and that the older two sons are selected to be named. Moreover, Mk. 6: 3 and 15: 40, 47 both read "Joses," while Mt. 13: 55 and 27: 56 read "Joseph."<sup>19</sup> Mark uses the unusual form of the name, although in 15: 43, 45 he spells "Joseph" (of Arimathea) in the common way. Is it likely that at the cross would be representatives of two well-known households with a mother named Mary and children named James and Joses? Or that both households would consist of relatives of Jesus and Clopas? Since an unnecessary multiplication of figures would strain one's credulity, we must look upon these "James and Joses" as the children of a Mary at the cross and as "brothers" of the Lord as well. The deduction gains support from the identity of James *ho mikros*. The ordinary meaning of this term is "the little one," "the short." Such scholars as Zahn, J. B. Lightfoot and Walter Bauer have understood it to signify a smallness of stature. "The younger" and "the less" are

<sup>17</sup> Joseph Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, transl. Herbert Danby (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1947), 22-24, 36.

<sup>18</sup> *The Gospel According to Mark* (Cambridge University Press, 1965), 130. For the various views of their identity see Blinzler, *op. cit.*, 73-82.

<sup>19</sup> Hans von Soden, "Adelphos," in Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, transl. and ed. by G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans), i (1964), 144, n. 2.

strained translations; *ho neōteros* or *ho elassōn* would more accurately convey such meanings. The epithet of R. Samuel, *ha-katon*, the most likely equivalent of *ho mikros*, literally means, "the little". Rendel Harris<sup>20</sup> has argued cogently that Jesus himself was of small stature. In this context, too, we may call attention to the traditions that Jesus was similar in appearance to James and Judas (Thomas); his brethren all were short.<sup>21</sup> The existence of two disciples named James necessitated the use of distinguishing epithets, but neither "the Less" or "the Younger" would be appropriate for the Lord's brother as head of the Jerusalem church; or at least such an epithet would be short-lived.

An alternative motive for the disguising our Lord's mother at the cross and resurrection might be the fact that Jesus was alienated from his family for a major portion of his ministry. Jesus had much to say about the love of a father, but nothing about a mother's love. Family relations were secondary: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, . . . he cannot be my disciple" (Lk. 14: 26; Mt. 10: 37-38; cf. Mt. 10: 35; Lk. 12: 51-53). Jesus and his mother had nothing to do with each other (*ti emoi kai soi*) until his "hour had come" (Jn. 2: 4), i.e. until his last twenty-four hours and his glorification (Jn. 7: 30; 8: 20; 12: 23, 27; 13: 1; 17: 1); until then she did not accept his road to martyrdom. When a woman in the crowd praised Jesus, "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked!", Luke 11: 27-28 reports, "But he said, 'Blessed rather (*menoun*) are those who hear the word of God and keep it.'" The same point is made in Mk. 3: 31-35 (cf. Mt. 12: 46-50; Lk. 8: 19-21). When "the ones from beside" Jesus (*hoi par' autou*) thought he was "beside himself" and "they went out to seize him" (Mk. 3: 21), "his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside they sent to him and called him." They wished him to be spared the ridicule and persecution which belonged to the lot of prophets like John the Baptist. When Jesus was told that they were outside asking for him, he replied "Who are my mother and my brothers? And looking around those who sat about him, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister, and mother.'" That is, those who followed him and listened to him at his feet were those who were hearing the word of God and doing His will. Because his family was not yet doing so, he contrasts them with his followers. They had become his new family. Tertullian made the

<sup>20</sup> "On the Stature of our Lord," *BJRL* 10 (1926), 112-26; *The Twelve Apostles*, (Cambridge: W. Heffer, 1927), 60-64.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, cf. 57; Acts of Thomas, ch. 37.

following perceptive comment on the passage in his *Adv. Marc.* iv, 19:

He was justly indignant, that persons so very near to Him "stood *without*", while strangers were *within* hanging on to His words, especially as they wanted to call him away from the solemn work He had in hand. He did not so much deny as disavow (*abdicavit*) them . . . He transferred the names of blood relationship to others, whom he judged to be more closely related to Him by reason of their faith . . . For them He substituted the others, not as being truer relatives, but worthier ones.

Discipleship, rather than blood kinship, was the primary test of belonging to the family of Jesus. Those who put family ties ahead of following him were spiritually dead (Mt. 8: 21-22). But "every one who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for my name's sake, will . . . inherit eternal life" (Mt. 19: 20; Lk. 18: 29b-30). Jesus, after his family was mentioned, stated that as a prophet he was "not without honour except in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house" (Mk. 6: 4; Mt. 13: 57). Because "even his brothers did not believe in him" (Jn. 7: 5) when he was preaching in Galilee, he refused to see his family when they called to him. He made it clear to his family that they would not be obedient to God's will and be his mother and brothers until they listened to him and left the rest of the family and followed him. This abandonment of ties to his own earthly family may well account for the ironic Synoptic reference to "Mary, the mother of James the Short and of Joses."

How long did this alienation from his family last? It began after the wedding in Cana and subsequent stay at Capernaum, where Jesus spent a few days with his mother, brothers and disciples (Jn. 2: 12). Among the women who accompanied Jesus and the disciples and provided for them in Galilee were Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Susanna (Lk. 8: 2-3); the mother and sisters of Jesus are conspicuously absent in this passage. His brothers were still unbelievers at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles (Jn. 7: 2, 5). Mary, the mother of James and Joseph, however, joined the women ministering to Jesus in Galilee, and "came up with him to Jerusalem" (Mk. 15: 40-41) from Galilee (Lk. 23: 55); they "had followed Jesus from Galilee" (Mt. 27: 55-56; Lk. 23: 49). *Pantes hoi gnōstōi autō* (23: 49) suggests the inclusion of his relatives. She was among the Galileans who came up with him to Jerusalem and saw the resurrected Lord (Acts 1: 11; 13: 31). The mother and brothers of Jesus are explicitly mentioned as being present with the eleven disciples in the upper room (Acts 1: 14). Resurrection appearances had been crucial for the faith of Clopas (and Simon?), for James, and for Mary herself, if we are correct in deducing that she was present with Mary Magdalene at the empty tomb. The presence of the mother and aunt of Jesus at the cross and his solicitude

for Mary (Jn. 19: 25-27) indicate a personal rapprochement. He re-acknowledged her as his mother (*ibid.*; Mk. 3: 34). The presence of some of his family at the cross contrasts favourably with the absence of the disciples. James must have become a follower of Jesus in some sense prior to the resurrection appearance. For, the resurrected Lord was made manifest, "not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses . . ." (Acts 10: 41), as Peter said. Could James have risen to leadership if he had remained alienated from Jesus unto His death? How could James have been prepared for the resurrection appearance? The Gospel according to the Hebrews (*ap. Jerome, de vir. ill. 2*) clearly implies that James was present at the Last Supper. "James had sworn that he would not eat bread from that hour in which he had drunk the cup of the Lord until he should see him risen . . ." The basis of this vow was the Lord's prophecy in Mk. 14: 25. There is nothing unusual about the presence of James. The brothers had urged Jesus to attend the Feast of Tabernacles with them (Jn. 7: 3) in Jerusalem; it would be odd if they were not in contact with him at his final Passover. Mk. 14: 17 tells of the arrival of Jesus and the Twelve in a "large upper room furnished and ready" (Mk. 14: 15; Lk. 22: 12). There is no need to exclude others from being present, though the Synoptic Gospels are indifferent to their presence. Lewis Johnson<sup>22</sup> asked: "Does not the wording of Mk. 14: 20; 'One of you shall betray me, one of the twelve' suggest the presence of others?" This room may have been the same place of rendezvous where Christ later appeared (Lk. 24: 33 ff.; Jn. 20: 19 ff.) and where the mother and brothers of Jesus later gathered with the Eleven (Acts 1: 13-14). It was their home (*ibid.*; Jn. 19: 27; 20: 10). Peter, the Beloved Disciple and Mary Magdalene, after seeing the empty tomb, returned here (Jn. 20: 10, 18). A room safe from arrest would be necessary on such occasions. It was in "the upper room" that the inner group of witnesses "ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead" (Acts 10: 41). Stronger evidence for identifying the upper rooms and for associating the family of Jesus with the apostles before the crucifixion is that the fact that Clopas (and Simon?) knew where to find "the eleven and those who were with them" (Lk. 24: 33). The contact of the Virgin and Mary of Clopas with the other women further presupposes that the family of Jesus was in contact with him and the disciples at the end, although all this is absent from the Synoptic Gospels. Yet this contact of Jesus with his family during Passion Week does not necessarily imply that all yet viewed him as the Messiah; family love and honor or acceptance of his fate as a prophet (Mt. 5: 12; 23: 29-37; Lk. 11: 50; 13: 34) could provide sufficient explanation.

<sup>22</sup> "Who Was the Beloved Disciple?," *Expository Times* 77 (1966), 158.

From this digression let us return to classifying the members of the family of Christ. Hegesippus confirms that Clopas was the husband of Mary, the sister-in-law of the Virgin. According to Eusebius (*H.E.* iii, 11), "Hegesippus relates that Clopas was the brother of Joseph." Hegesippus also called the son of Clopas, Symeon, "the cousin of the Lord" (*ibid.*, iv, 22.4). He was "the son of the Lord's uncle, . . . the son of Clopas" (*ibid.*, iii, 32.5; cf. 3). Either from Hegesippus or by his own deduction Eusebius (iii, 11; iii, 32.3-4) tells that Clopas was mentioned by "the scripture of the Gospel"; the Gospels referred to "Mary the wife of Clopas." Eusebius' fragments of Hegesippus make no mention of the Fourth Gospel. While Hegesippus may have known that Clopas was mentioned in John (19: 25), certainly he did not deduce from Scripture that Clopas was the father of Simeon; and even if he had deduced that Clopas was the brother-in-law of the Virgin Mary, he must have been dependent on unwritten Hebrew Christian tradition (iv, 22.8) for his stories about Simeon. In this tradition Simeon would have had to be identified. Epiphanius (*Haer.* 78.7) also relates that Clopas and Joseph were brothers.

It must remain an open question whether this Simeon is the Simon who is mentioned among the four brothers of Jesus (Mk. 6: 3; Mt. 13: 55). There is no reason why both Joseph and Clopas, who had a Symeon on their family tree (according to Lk. 3: 30), could not have had a son with the same very common name. They both had a wife named "Mary." The recurrence of family names is illustrated by that of "James (Jacob)", the father of Joseph (Mt. 1: 15) and a (grand)son of Judas the Lord's brother.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, nothing prohibits the inclusion of both the sons of Joseph and son(s) of Clopas under the general wider, inclusive designation as "brothers" of Jesus. In either case, the mere fact that a "Symeon" was the cousin of Jesus sheds no light on the question of how James, Joses and Judas were related to Jesus. For, Judas and James are often described as being related to the Lord in a different way than "Symeon" was.

Hegesippus, who called Simeon the cousin (*anepsios*) of the Lord (Eusebius, *H.E.* iv, 22.4), identified James as the brother (*adelphos*) of the Lord (Eusebius, ii, 23.4). Hegesippus did not relate James to Clopas, since "brother of the Lord" was a sufficiently complete definition of James' position in the Lord's family. If James were

<sup>23</sup> In a fragment of Hegesippus' Memoirs, the grandsons' names are given as Jacob and Zoker (De Boor, *op. cit.*, 169). However, the monk Epiphanius (*Life of Mary*, 14) and a Menology cited by C. F. Matthaei (*Evangelium sec. Matth.*, Riga, 1778, 138) calls these two, "sons (*huioi*)", which apparently "was a variant for "*huiōnoi*" in some manuscripts of the *Memoirs*" (Hugh J. Lawlor, *Eusebiana*, Oxford [Clarendon, 1912], 44-45).

the son of Clopas, why would Hegesippus not so designate him, as he did Symeon? Schmiedel<sup>24</sup> noted:

It is only of Symeon, second "bishop" of Jerusalem, that Hegesippus says he was son of Clopas and cousin of Jesus. If Hegesippus had regarded the four "brethren of Jesus" as his cousins, he would surely have designated Symeon's successor also (James the "brother" of Jesus) as son of Clopas, and Symeon himself, by whom in this case the Simon of Mk. 6: 3; Mt. 13: 55 would be meant, he would have designated as brother of James.

Assuredly Hegesippus would not be so careless as to apply the description *adelphos* to James if he meant *anepsios*, the term he applied to Simeon. Agapius,<sup>25</sup> after relating accurately that "In the 8th year of Nero the Jews attacked and killed James, the brother of Christ, at Jerusalem," adds: "Simon, son of Clopas, who was his cousin, governed the people for 42 years." Epiphanius, who had access to some reliable Hebrew Christian traditions, wrote that Simeon was the cousin (*anepsios*) of James the Just (*Haer.* 77, 14). Evidently, Epiphanius, who like Eusebius (*H.E.* ii, 1.2) viewed James as the son of Joseph by an earlier marriage, also considered Simeon to be the son of Clopas and therefore as standing in a different relation to Jesus than did James. Luke (Acts 1: 14; 12: 17; 21: 18) and Paul (Gal. 1: 19; 1 Cor. 9: 5) and Josephus (*Antiquities* xx, 9.1) join the Synoptic tradition and Hegesippus as witnesses that James was the brother (*adelphos*) of Jesus. So do the Hebrews Gospel (*ap.* Jerome, *de vir. ill.* 2: "my brother"), *Clem. Hom.* (xi, 35.4: "called the brother of my Lord") and the Liturgy of St. James (*adelphotheos*).<sup>26</sup>

Judas must be seen as the brother of James rather than as the brother of Simeon, son of Clopas. Hegesippus wrote: "There still survived of the family of the Lord the grandsons of Jude, His brother after the flesh, as he was called (*tou kata sarka legomenou autou adelphou*) (*ap.* Eusebius, *H.E.* iii, 20.1). Rendel Harris<sup>27</sup> commented: "He calls Jude not only a brother of the Lord but a brother according to the flesh, which is as strong a statement, almost, as language will allow." From a different angle Schmiedel<sup>28</sup> observed: "*kata sarka legomenou* can mean only that he regards . . . Jude as 'brother' of Jesus in a modified sense. He appears, then, to favour the assumption of the *partheneia* of Mary at Jesus' birth." The fraternity of James and Judas is apparent also from the ascriptions of the canonical epistles in their name: "*Ioudas Iēsou Christou doulos, adelphos de Iakōbou*" and "*Iakōbos . . . kuriou Iēsou*

<sup>24</sup> *Art. cit.*, *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, i, 852.

<sup>25</sup> *Patrologia Orientalis*, ed. Graffin and Nau, 7, 492-93.

<sup>26</sup> Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons), i (1882), 268.

<sup>27</sup> *Op. cit.*, 76.

<sup>28</sup> *Art. cit.*, *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, i, 852.

*Christou doulos.*" The status of Joses is more obscure. That he was the brother of James and Judas may be inferred from two clues. At the cross was Mary, the mother of James and Joses (Joseph) (Mk. 15: 40; Mt. 28: 56). His mention here (cf. Mk. 15: 47) and in second place in the lists of *adelphoi* (Mk. 6: 3 and Mt. 13: 55) indicates his relative significance, though admittedly this could be based on factors other than proximity of kinship to the Lord.

While the exact relation of the Simeon of Mk. 6: 3 and Mt. 13: 55 to Jesus cannot be ascertained with any confidence, this obscurity creates no ambiguity in the nature of the kinship to Jesus of James, Judas and Simeon the son of Clopas. James and Judas are each consistently referred to as *adelphos*, and Simeon as *anepsios*. These two categories are confirmed by the virtual certainty that Clopas was the brother of Joseph and the husband (or brother) of a "Mary" and the uncle of Jesus and the brother-in-law of the Virgin. Her presence at the cross and empty tomb as "the mother of James the Little" (i.e. the *adelphos* of Jesus) is the only intelligible explanation of the otherwise contradictory and puzzling Gospel accounts. That the mother of the Lord was also the mother of James and Judas is supported by much other evidence. Joseph did not know Mary "until (*heōs*) she had borne a son" (Mt. 1: 25). Jesus was her first-born (*prōtotokos*) son (Lk. 2: 7; variant to Mt. 1: 25 in CDW etc.). Why was Jesus not called the "only son (*monos* or *monogenēs*)" of Mary? Luke used *monogenēs* in 7: 12. No attempt to negate the natural meaning of these statements can be convincing unless accompanied by an explanation of why such careless, misleading or ambiguous terminology was employed by the Evangelists, their sources and by the "editor(s)" of Mt. 1: 25. Surely they did not take it for granted that all who heard or read these phrases would know or assume that Mary was perpetually virgin. For example, the Ebionites, non-Christians and some catholic Christians (e.g. Tertullian) thought explicitly to the contrary. As Bishop Lightfoot conceded,<sup>29</sup> Tertullian "seems to imply that the Lord's brethren were his brothers in the same sense in which Mary was his mother" (*adv. Marc.* iv, 19; *de carne Christi* 7; *de monogomia* 8). Such an admission from one who was so strenuous an advocate of asceticism is worthy of notice." In his controversy with Helvidius,<sup>30</sup> Jerome (*The Perpetual Virginity of Mary*, 19) had to admit that Tertullian was a witness to Joseph's paternity of the "brothers." Much earlier all of the New Testament writers except those two (Luke and Matthew) had failed to report the Virgin Birth, perhaps

<sup>29</sup> *Dissertations on the Apostolic Age* (London and New York; Macmillan, 1892), 32.

<sup>30</sup> Rosemary Ruether, "The Collision of History and Doctrine: The Brothers of Jesus and the Virginity of Mary," *Continuum* 7 (1969), 94.

because Mary had "kept it in her heart and pondered it" (Lk. 2: 19). If this belief could not universally be taken for granted among proto-catholics, the belief in her *perpetual* virginity could be far less assumed. In fact, the first hint of the latter belief is found in the *Ascension of Isaiah* 11: 9 (cf. 4-5).

The same problem of why easily misunderstood terminology was used, recurs with regard to *adelphos* versus *anepsios*. The Greek term for "brother" was more precise than the Aramaic, and in Jewish writings in Greek, *adelphos* in the singular as a physical kinship meant true brother.<sup>31</sup> A broader sense is known, however.<sup>32</sup> Why did Paul call James *adelphos tou kuriou* (Gal. 1: 19; cf. 1 Cor. 9: 5) if he meant "cousin"? In Col. 4: 10 he used the appropriate and precise term *anepsios* to describe the relationship of Mark to Barnabas. A further question may be pressed concerning the meaning of the "relatives of the Lord according to the flesh."<sup>33</sup> *Adelphoi* would be an ill-chosen word in all sources if no person were physically akin to Jesus. Why would they continue to be honoured in Palestine if they had not one iota of actual physical kinship to Jesus? How could James, Simeon and Judas's (grand)sons have risen to leadership? There is no positive evidence that either James or Judas were cousins of Jesus.

A remarkably acute observation of John R. Gay<sup>34</sup> merits quotation: "It is simply unthinkable that Mary and Joseph could have left behind their twelve-year old only Child in a city at festival time and not worried about Him for a day. It is more than possible that they might have left their twelve-year-old oldest Child, if they were burdened by the care of several younger children." In addition to his brothers, Jesus also had at least three sisters (*hai adelphai autou . . . pasai*: Mt. 13: 56). It is equally significant that the brothers and sisters of Jesus are always found in the company of Mary, the mother of Jesus, rather than Mary of Clopas. This suggests that they are the Virgin's children rather than mere nephews and nieces.

<sup>31</sup> Klausner, *op. cit.*, 234, n. 34.

<sup>32</sup> Blinzler, "Simon der Apostel, Simon der Herrenbruder, und Bischof Symeon von Jerusalem," in *Passauer Studien, Festschrift für Bischof Dr. S. K. Landersdorfer*, Passau, 1953, 45, n. 70; *art. cit.*, *Trierer Theologische Zeitschrift* 67 (1958), 234-35; *op. cit.*, 39-48. Blinzler gives examples of the broader meaning. P. Gaechter ("Die 'Brüder' Jesu," *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie* 89 [1967], 458-59) adds further illustrations from the O.T., the *Thousand and One Nights* and modern Bedouin usage.

<sup>33</sup> "Hoi kata sarka *suggeneis*," who were "called '*desposunoi*' (belonging to a master) because of their relation to the family (*genos sunapheian*) of the Saviour" (Eusebius, *H.E.* i, 7.11 and 14; citing Julius Africanus); they drew their genealogy from memory and records.

<sup>34</sup> "Was Our Lord an Only Child—Luke ii. 43-46?," *Expository Times* 71 (1959-60), 53.



Were the relatives of Jesus eventually reckoned among his disciples or apostles? Acts 1: 2, 13-14 brings the remaining eleven apostles by name "together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers." If Clopas (Simeon) and James had seen the risen Lord during the "forty days" before the Ascension (Acts 1: 3), they must have been among those described by Peter as "us who were chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead" (Acts 10: 41). Indeed this latter group of witnesses was chosen from among those mentioned in Acts 1: 13-14 (cf. Lk. 24: 33-35; Jn. 20: 19-30). Clopas, (Simeon) and James, whose witness to the resurrection was acclaimed, were considered "apostles" in the sense used in Lk. 24: 49 (cf. Jn. 20: 21-23) and 1 Cor. 9: 2; 15: 4-9. These three relatives became apostles by virtue of witnessing both separate resurrection appearances and those which were witnessed also by the others who gathered in the upper room. In 1 Cor. 9: 5 Paul states his rights as an apostle to be like those of "the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas." This group apparently consists of those who had seen the Lord (9: 1). James, the Lord's brother, is designated an "apostle" in Gal. 1: 19. Therefore, it is legitimate to describe as "apostles" all the "brothers" of the Lord who had seen him risen from the dead.

In light of the fact that the "brothers" of Jesus were "apostles," the question of their relation to the Eleven can be pursued. As witnesses, at least, the "brothers" acquired equal rank with the Eleven. Their initial disbelief was counterbalanced by blood kinship to Jesus and by their being of the "family of David." It was on this latter ground, actually, that James and Simeon were apprehended by the Romans (Eusebius, *H.E.* ii, 32.3; iii, 20.1). But did any of the "brothers" belong to the Twelve as well? Curiously, among the latter are found James of Alphaeus, Judas of James and Simon the Zealot. Joses, who is unmentioned, can be excluded from consideration. James of Alphaeus must also be excluded because Alphaeus cannot satisfactorily be equated with Clopas. Moreover, because Peter and Andrew, James and John are designated as pairs of brothers (Mt. 10: 2), the lack of any corresponding brother for James of Alphaeus shows that the Evangelist knew of none among the Twelve.<sup>35</sup> However, there is no compelling reason against either Judas or James or Simon the Zealot as members of the Twelve and of Christ's family. It would be awkward to claim that two brothers were included and two excluded; the Eleven and the "brothers" of Acts 1: 13-14 must be in large part exclusive. Yet not entirely, since the group was of apostles who were united, and Luke had no more simple way to tell who was

<sup>35</sup> Blinzler, *art. cit.*, *Passauer Studien*, 36-37; *op. cit.*, 119-29.

present. He did not list the brothers as he did the Eleven. Furthermore, Acts 5: 29 ("Peter and the apostles"), Mk. 16: 7 ("his disciples and Peter") and 1 Cor. 9: 5 ("the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas") indicate a union, rather than a distinction, between the Eleven and Peter or the Lord's brothers.

It is perhaps easier to conceive of a relative of Jesus as zealous for the law (Acts 21: 20; Gal. 1: 14; 2 Macc. 4: 2) and toward God (Acts 22: 3; Rom. 10: 2) than as zealous for political revolution.<sup>36</sup> But a very weighty objection to the hypothesis of Simeon as one of the Twelve is the silence of ancient tradition. The successor of James was merely "the son of Clopas and cousin of the Lord" whom Eusebius deduced from Hegesippus' account to have seen and heard the Lord (*H.E.* iii, 32.3).

The conclusions of this paper are simple. James, Joses and Judas were sons of Mary and Joseph. Mary of Clopas was their aunt. Their paternal uncle, Clopas, was the father of Simon. The alienation of Jesus and his family was being overcome during Passion Week. His mother was present at the Crucifixion.

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<sup>36</sup> In spite of Samuel G. F. Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots* (Manchester University Press, 1967), 243-45.