

Known for a century, this octagonal structure only became understood as a result of the excavations of Father Corbo and Father Loffreda begun in 1968. It was built as a church in the fifth century without a congregation and without an altar. It is, therefore, understood as a church built to memorialize Jesus' ministry in Capernaum. The central octagon rests directly upon the foundations of a first-century C.E. room that was plastered and enlarged in the fourth century. In the plaster walls, Christian travelers scratched their names and prayers to Jesus in Greek, Latin, Syriac, Aramaic and Hebrew. This remodeled room may be part of the Church of Count Joseph mentioned by Epiphanius in 347 C.E. These and other historical and archaeological details suggest that travelers of the time believed that they were in the house of Simon Peter (Mark 1:29-34).