

This view of the steps at the southwest side of the synagogue (see Slide 86) shows quite dramatically that the synagogue is built up much higher than the surrounding terrain. This gave the building a commanding appearance, heightened by its white limestone in a town built almost totally of black basalt. Note that the foundation of the building, however, is built of finely cut black basalt. Some scholars believe that this foundation is the remnant of a first-century C.E. synagogue, destroyed by the Jewish community in the fourth century to clear a site for this beautiful and imposing synagogue. The synagogue was investigated and partially excavated by Heinrich Kohl and Carl Watzinger for the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft in 1905. Excavations at Capernaum by the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum have continued since 1968 under the direction of Father Stanislao Loffreda and Father Virgilio Corbo.

For a view of the entryways at the rear of this synagogue, see NT60: Capernaum, Synagogue.