

Jewish Religious Architecture

From Biblical Israel to Modern Judaism

Edited by

Steven Fine



BRILL

LEIDEN | BOSTON

Cover image: *Tisha be-Av*, Sefer Minhagim, Amsterdam: Herts Levi Bofe, 1723. Photo by Steven Fine, courtesy of Yeshiva University Libraries

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Fine, Steven, editor.

Title: Jewish religious architecture : from biblical Israel to modern Judaism
/ edited by Steven Fine.

Description: Leiden : Boston : Brill, [2020] | Series: Jews, Judaism, and the
arts ; Volume 1 | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2019017862 (print) | LCCN 2019018381 (ebook) | ISBN
9789004370098 (E-book) | ISBN 9789004370081 (hardback : alk. paper)

Subjects: LCSH: Synagogue architecture.

Classification: LCC NA4690 (ebook) | LCC NA4690 .J49 2019 (print) | DDC
726/.3--dc23

LC record available at <http://lccn.loc.gov/2019017862>

Typeface for the Latin, Greek, and Cyrillic scripts: "Brill". See and download: brill.com/brill-typeface.

ISSN 2589-5494

ISBN 978-90-04-37008-1 (hardback)

ISBN 978-90-04-37009-8 (e-book)

Copyright 2020 by Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands.

Koninklijke Brill NV incorporates the imprints Brill, Brill Hes & De Graaf, Brill Nijhoff, Brill Rodopi, Brill Sense, Hotei Publishing, mentis Verlag, Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh and Wilhelm Fink Verlag. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission from the publisher.

Authorization to photocopy items for internal or personal use is granted by Koninklijke Brill NV provided that the appropriate fees are paid directly to The Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Suite 900, Danvers, MA 01923, USA. Fees are subject to change.

This book is printed on acid-free paper and produced in a sustainable manner.

Contents

| | |
|-----------------|-----|
| Preface | vii |
| List of Figures | x |

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Introduction | 1 |
| <i>Steven Fine</i> | |

| | | |
|----|---|-----|
| 1 | The Biblical Tabernacle: from Sinai to Jerusalem | 7 |
| | <i>Carol Meyers</i> | |
| 2 | The Temple of Jerusalem in Biblical Israel | 23 |
| | <i>Victor Avigdor Hurowitz</i> ז"ל | |
| 3 | The Second Temple of Jerusalem: Center of the Jewish Universe | 51 |
| | <i>Joseph L. Angel</i> | |
| 4 | Herod's Temple: an Ornament to the Empire | 72 |
| | <i>Peter Schertz and Steven Fine</i> | |
| 5 | Synagogues in the Greco-Roman World | 96 |
| | <i>Steven Fine</i> | |
| 6 | The Ancient Synagogues of Asia Minor and Greece | 122 |
| | <i>Mark Wilson</i> | |
| 7 | Synagogues under Islam in the Middle Ages | 134 |
| | <i>Joshua Holo</i> | |
| 8 | Synagogues of Spain and Portugal during the Middle Ages | 151 |
| | <i>Vivian B. Mann</i> ז"ל | |
| 9 | Western Ashkenazi Synagogues in Medieval and Early Modern Europe | 169 |
| | <i>Eva Giurescu Heller</i> | |
| 10 | Synagogues in Central and Eastern Europe in the Early Modern Period | 184 |
| | <i>Batsheva Goldman-Ida</i> | |

Herod's Temple: An Ornament to the Empire

Peter Schertz and Steven Fine

Titus, however, declared that, even were the Jews to mount it and fight there from, he would not wreak vengeance on inanimate objects instead of men, nor under any circumstances burn down so magnificent a work [the Jerusalem temple]; for the loss would affect the Romans, inasmuch as it would be an ornament to the empire if it stood.

JOSEPHUS, *War*, 6.241



In 1966 the great Israeli archaeologist and historian, Michael Avi-Yonah unveiled his model of Jerusalem during the years leading up to the destruction of the city by the armies of Vespasian and Titus in 70 C.E. (Figs. 3.1, 4.1).¹ It is a spectacular model, representing a city that the Roman geographer Pliny the Elder (d. 79 C.E.) described as “the most famous city in the East,”² largely on account of its Temple. A century or so later rabbis taught wistfully that “whoever has never seen Jerusalem in her glory has never seen a beautiful city” and that that “whoever has never seen the temple of Herod has never seen a beautiful

-
- 1 Michael Avi-Yonah, *Pictorial Guide to the Model of Ancient Jerusalem at the Time of the Second Temple in the Grounds of the Holyland Hotel, Jerusalem Israel*, rev. ed. Yoram Tsafrir (Herzlia, Israel: Palphot, 1993); idem, “The Facade of Herod’s Temple: An Attempted Reconstruction,” in *Religions in Antiquity: Essays in Memory of Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough*, ed. J. Neusner (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 326–335; David Amit, *Model of Jerusalem in the Second Temple Period* (Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 2009). On the historiographic context of this model: A.J. Wharton, *Selling Jerusalem: Relics, Replicas, Theme Parks* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2006), 220–223; Yoram Tsafrir, “Designing the Model of Jerusalem at the Holyland Hotel: Hans Zvi Kroch, Michael Avi-Yonah and an Unpublished Guidebook,” *Cathedra* 140 (2011), 47–86, Hebrew.
- 2 Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 5.70. See Menahem Stern, “Jerusalem: The Most Famous of the Cities of the East,” in *Jerusalem in the Second Temple Period: Abraham Schalit Memorial Volume*, eds. O. Oppenheimer, U. Rappaport, and M. Stern (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi Press, Ministry of Defense, 1980), 257–270, Hebrew.



FIGURE 4.1 Model of the Herodian Temple Shrine, Israel Museum, Jerusalem
PHOTO: STEVEN FINE

building.”³ The immediate model for Avi-Yonah’s work was clearly the massive model of imperial Rome at the Museo della Civiltà Romana.⁴ Avi-Yonah’s task in building Second Temple Jerusalem was formidable – all the more so since model building allows for little of the obfuscation that is possible in academic articles – few ifs, “perhapses,” and other tools of the academic trade. Imagining the long-lost structures on the Temple Mount (as the hill was called by the rabbis after the destruction of the Temple itself) presented a particularly dicey problem.⁵ Exploration in and around the Temple Mount has been difficult

3 Babylonian Talmud, Sukkah 51b.

4 On the context for the construction of this model, Anna Notaro, “Exhibiting the New Musolinian City: Memories of Empire in the World Exhibition of Rome (EUR),” *GeoJournal* 51: 1–2 (2000), 15–22. Patricia Ann Gibson, *Rituals of a Nation’s Identity: Archaeology and Genealogy in Antiquities Museums of Rome*, Ph.D. dissertation (Los Angeles: University of Southern California, 2008), 251–254.

5 See Yaron Z. Eliav, *God’s Mountain. The Temple Mount in Time, Place, and Memory* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 189–236.

owing to the presence on the site of the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa Mosque and the political vicissitudes of modern Jerusalem.⁶

In constructing his model, Avi-Yonah nevertheless had considerable resources.⁷ He drew upon a century of excavation and research in Palestine, including of Herodian constructions at Masada, Herodium, Caesarea Maritima and Sebastia, and ample parallels in Roman architecture (much, more evidence is, of course, available to the contemporary scholar).⁸ He made extensive use of literary sources, first among them the writings of Flavius Josephus but also other Roman, Jewish and early Christian sources that help set the context for his imagined first century city. Avi-Yonah's model was an act of deep scholarship, bringing his creativity, erudition and caution to bear upon the project. What is most impressive about it, perhaps, is the balance and sophistication with which Avi-Yonah employed the available sources. Avi-Yonah's model was so successful that it has become the iconic image of the Second temple for Jews and Christians worldwide.⁹

We begin this discussion with Avi-Yonah's model in order to express the distinct difficulties in imagining Jerusalem, and particularly the Temple – a building that no longer exists. While neither the first nor the last to build or imagine a model of Jerusalem, Avi-Yonah's is clearly the most judicious of these attempts.¹⁰ In what follows, we present some of what is known of the

-
- 6 Robert O. Freedman, "Digging the Temple Mount: Archaeology and the Arab-Israeli Conflict from the British Mandate to the Present," *The Temple of Jerusalem: From Moses to the Messiah: In Honor of Professor Louis H. Feldman*, ed. S. Fine (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 387–400.
- 7 Yoram Tsafrir, "Designing the Model of Jerusalem at the Holyland Hotel: Hans Zvi Kroch, Michael Avi-Yonah and an Unpublished Guidebook," *Cathedra* 140 (2011), 47–86, Hebrew.
- 8 For a summary statement, see Hillel Geva, Nahman Avigad, "Jerusalem: Second Temple Period," *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, ed. E. Stern (Jerusalem: Carta, 1993, 2008), 2, 717–757 and the various reports in 8, 1806–1826. See now Orit Peleg-Barkat, *The Temple Mount Excavations in Jerusalem 1968–1978 Directed by Benjamin Mazar: Volume v, Qedem 57* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2017), and the bibliography there.
- 9 See Maya Balakirsky Katz, "Avi Yonah's Model of Second Temple Jerusalem and the Development of Israeli Visual Culture," *The Temple of Jerusalem: From Moses to the Messiah: In Honor of Professor Louis H. Feldman*, ed. S. Fine (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 349–364; Joan Branham, "The Temple that Won't Quit: Constructing Sacred Space in Orlando's Holy Land Experience Theme Park," *Harvard Divinity Bulletin* 36: 3 (2008), 8–31; Wharton, *Selling Jerusalem*, 189–197; Steven Fine and Peter Schertz, "What did the Jerusalem Temple Look Like in the Time of Jesus?, Some Reflections on the Façade of Herod's Temple," *The Gospels in First Century Judaea*, ed. S. Notley, J. Garcia (Boston: Brill, 2015), 136–144.
- 10 It is a pity that Avi-Yonah did not write a full narrative describing his process. Recent conjectural reconstructions based upon the scant evidence say much about contemporary interest in this site and the pitfalls of reconstruction/modelling. See, for example, Joseph Patrich, "The Structure of the Second Temple – A New Reconstruction," *Ancient*

Temple – sources that Avi-Yonah drew upon in his imagining of the Temple Mount and archaeological evidence discovered in the half century since he built “his” Temple. We bring together literary and archaeological sources in order to imagine both the temple complex and its place in Roman architecture of the first century. We argue that the temple was an expression in stone of the very balance that Herod sought to maintain throughout his rule between an increasingly colonized Judean culture and the emerging imperial culture of Rome. He accomplished this by lavishing resources on the building of the Temple within the parameters of Jewish religious sensibilities. In constructing this balance, Herod hoped to create a place for Judaism, with its “One Temple for the One God” (as Josephus called it¹¹) within the framework of Roman imperial relations and culture. To illustrate these points, we treat Josephus’ descriptions as a form of *ekphrasis* – as a necessarily poetic verbal presentation – rather than as a guide for model making (an activity that is fraught from the outset owing to the paucity of sources).¹² We focus upon his earliest description of the Temple in the *Jewish War*, providing a thick description of this most Roman of Jewish buildings – or is it the most Jewish of Roman buildings? – in relation to archaeological sources, Roman literature and Jewish literature beyond Josephus.

1 The Sources

Little archaeological evidence for the Herodian temple exists, though discoveries – especially excavations near the western and southern retaining walls

Jerusalem Revealed, ed. H. Geva (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2000), 260–271; Leen Ritmeyer, *The Quest: Revealing the Temple Mount in Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2006), 317–400, idem, “Envisioning the Sanctuaries of Israel – The Academic and Creative Process of Archaeological Model Making,” *The Temple of Jerusalem: From Moses to the Messiah: In Honor of Professor Louis H. Feldman*, ed. S. Fine (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 91–104; Joshua Schwartz and Yehoshua Peleg, “Notes on the Virtual Reconstruction of the Herodian Period Temple and Courtyards,” *The Temple of Jerusalem: From Moses to the Messiah: In Honor of Professor Louis H. Feldman*, 69–90; Yehoshua Peleg, *The Reconstruction of the Herodian Temple Compound in the Temple Mount*, Ph.D. dissertation (Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University, 2007), Hebrew; Joshua Schwartz, “Issues in Reconstructing a Site for Which Archaeological Evidence is Lacking: The Second Temple in Jerusalem (Herodian Phase),” *Ut Natura Ars: Virtual Reality E Archeologia : Atti Della Giornata Di Studi*, Bologna, 22 Aprile 2002. Imola (Bologna: University Press Bologna, 2007), 59–69.

11 *Apion* 2.193.

12 Barkat-Peleg came to the same conclusion independently. See her *The Temple Mount Excavations in Jerusalem 1968–1978*, 94.

of the temple carried out in the nineteenth century and since 1968 are not inconsequential.¹³ The only substantial archaeological remains are from the platform built by Herod on the site of the Hasmonean Temple Mount, which increased the size of the overall sacred precinct (*temenos*) by a full sixty percent. In order to accomplish this, Herod built massive retaining walls on the southern, western and eastern sides of the hill, undergirded by round arch construction and containing large reservoirs for water brought by aqueduct from south of Bethlehem. The Western Wall is one of these retaining walls. In his model Avi-Yonah postulated that the upper section of the retaining walls was decorated with pilasters, on the model of the Herodian Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron (Fig. 4.2, 4.3) and the nearby sanctuary at Mamre. Exploration of the northern retaining wall revealed evidence for these pilasters and the tell-tale diagonal window-sill like spacers that separated them at the base. An example was also discovered in secondary use in the Hadrianic temple that preceded the Holy Sepulchre.¹⁴ The Temple platform was reached from the south through a series of gates that led through an underground passage decorated in

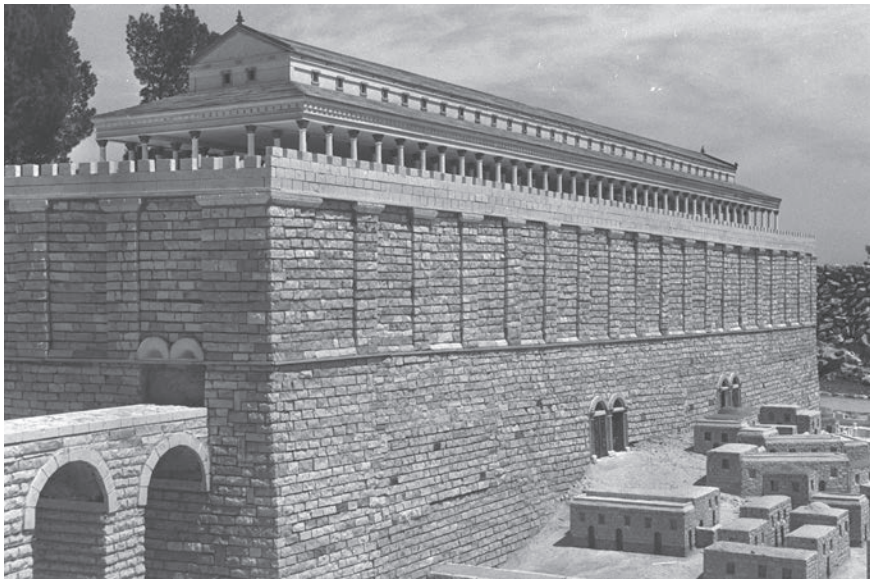


FIGURE 4.2 Model of the Herodian Temple, Southern Wall, Israel Museum, Jerusalem
PHOTO: STEVEN FINE

13 See note 8 and the bibliography there.

14 Guy D. Stiebel, "A Light Unto the Nations' – Symbolic Architecture of Ritual Buildings," *Eretz Israel* 28 (2007), 219–234, especially 222–223.



FIGURE 4.3 Tomb of the Patriarchs, Hebron
PHOTO: ISRAEL STATE COLLECTION, AVI OHAYON

geometric and foliate bas relief (Fig. 4.4). Outside these gates were large numbers of ritual bathing pools, *miqvaot*, both public and private, used for purification before ascending to the mountain and a vast infrastructure supporting the “pilgrimage industry.” On the western side, a large arch, called Robinson’s Arch after Edward Robinson, the American explorer who discovered it in 1838, connected the southern end of the Temple Mount with the valley to the west (Fig. 4.5). Avi-Yonah believed that this arch actually connected the mount with the hill to the west (today’s Jewish Quarter); as a result of the excavations of the 1970’s, however, the model was revised and the large arch was replaced with a majestic staircase.

Nothing remains of the structures on the Temple Mount, though some geometric and foliate architectural fragments have been discovered.¹⁵ Most significant among these are: an inscription in Hebrew that apparently stood at the upper southwestern corner of the promenade that reads, “the place of the sounding [of the horn]”; an inscription in Greek that describes a donation of flooring (Fig. 4.6); and two inscriptions in Greek that warn Gentiles not to enter beyond a certain point on the Temple Mount into the area restricted to Jews (Fig. 3.2). In addition, a small stone inscribed in Hebrew with the word

¹⁵ Peleg-Barkat, *The Temple Mount Excavations in Jerusalem 1968–1978*.



FIGURE 4.4 Geometric Bas Relief Fragment from within the Hulda Gate of the Herodian Temple

PHOTO: STEVEN FINE

Qorbon, “sacrifice,” and bearing the image of a dove meant for sacrifice has been found.¹⁶ All-in-all, slim pickings.

16 On inscriptions, see: *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae, Volume 1: Jerusalem, Part 1: 1–704*, ed. H.M. Cotton et al. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 41–60. “Sources on donation to the Jerusalem Temple are assembled by Noah Greenfield and Steven Fine, ‘Remembered



FIGURE 4.5 Herodian Temple Mount, Southwest corner, with Robinson's Arch

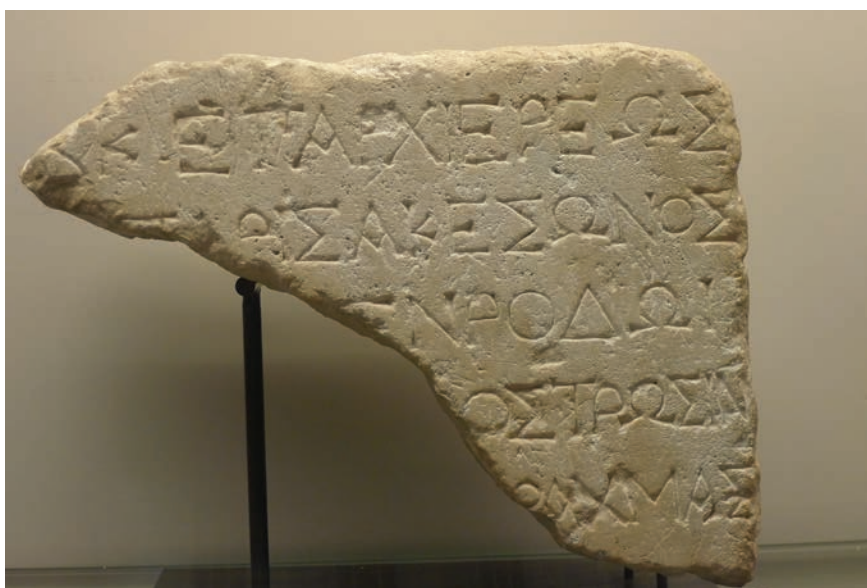


FIGURE 4.6 Dedicatory inscription by [S]paris son of Akeson of Rhodes who donated pavement to the Herodian Temple

PHOTO: STEVEN FINE

Happily, literary sources are far more numerous, starting with the writings of Flavius Josephus. Josephus actually saw the Temple before its destruction and served as a priest within its rituals. He also witnessed its destruction as well as the triumphal parade celebrating the victory of Vespasian and Titus in Rome in 71 CE.¹⁷ He describes the Herodian temple in both *The Jewish War* (5.184–247), completed around 80 CE, and a second time in his *Jewish Antiquities* (15.380–425), completed about a decade later. While he writes without the precision of the renowned architect Vitruvius (died after 15 B.C.E.), Josephus strove for general accuracy in portraying the Jerusalem Temple for his Roman audience, and any exaggeration was limited by the fact that some of his immediate readers – including his patron – actually saw the Temple.¹⁸ A sense of glory animates his descriptions, providing a Jewish counterpoint to Vitruvius' seeming truism that “The majesty of the Empire [is] expressed through the eminent dignity of its public buildings” (*Architecture*, 1.2) Josephus writes both as a Jewish apologist¹⁹ and as a client of that very Titus – the future emperor of Rome – whose glory could only be magnified if the city he conquered, Jerusalem, was wealthy, powerful, and beautiful.²⁰ Standing behind these literary descriptions, we can sense the very real “Temple of Herod,” in all of its majesty.

Josephus's writings provide the longest and most detailed extant descriptions of a temple in Roman literature, and thus are significant not only for the specifically Jewish context but also for the interpretation of imperial religion and temple architecture generally. While this genre of architectural ekphrasis is unknown from Roman sources. Pausanias in his description of Greece in the second century comes closest but he is neither systematic nor detailed in his description of temple architecture. It is common in Jewish literature, beginning with the Pentateuch's description of the Tabernacle (twice in the Masoretic text of Exodus alone), the Solomonic temple (1 Kgs 5–8), and eschatological

for Praise': Some Ancient Sources on Benefaction to Herod's Temple," *Images: A Journal of Jewish Art and Visual Culture* 2 (2008), 167–169.

- 17 On Josephus and his oeuvre, see Tessa Rajak, *Josephus* (London: Duckworth Publishers, 2002).
- 18 Cf. L.I. Levine, “Josephus' Description of the Jerusalem Temple: War, Antiquities and Other Sources,” *Josephus and the History of the Greco-Roman Period: Essays in Memory of Morton Smith*, eds. F. Parente and J. Sievers (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 233–246.
- 19 Note Josephus' pride in his Jerusalem origins, see B. Mazur “Josephus Flavius and the Archaeological Excavations in Jerusalem” in Louis H. Feldman and Gohei Hata, eds., *Josephus, the Bible, and History* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989) 325.
- 20 Mary Beard address the historic neglect of Josephus as a source among classicists in: “The Triumph of Josephus” in *Flavian Culture: Culture, Image, Text* (eds. A.J. Boyle and W.J. Dominik). Leiden: Brill, 2003: 543–558.

temples in the biblical Book of Ezekiel, and in the Temple Scroll of the Dead Sea sect.²¹

The only other exhaustive descriptions of the Temple appear in Rabbinic sources, principally in the tractate of Middot (“measurements” [of the Temple]), which present an idealized image of the Temple during its final decades and were proscriptive for the anticipated building of the Third Temple. Thus, the Rabbis’ description of the Temple Mount as a square structure with sides measuring 500 cubits (around 250 m.) conforms with Ezekiel’s vision, which is projected onto the Herodian structure. Nonetheless, real knowledge of the Herodian temple and even the drama of its rituals and foibles of its servants that are incorporated into rabbinic descriptions endows them with authenticity.²² For example, the rabbis writing a century or more after the destruction parallel Josephus’ account of gifts to the temple by a number of wealthy Jews, including Monobazus (Munbaz) and his mother Helena, queen of Adiabene (in modern Kurdistan), and Nicanor of Alexandria, who donated Corinthian bronze doors.²³ The historicity of Nicanor of Alexandria is confirmed by an ossuary discovered in a sumptuous tomb on Jerusalem’s prestigious burial ground on Mt. Scopus.²⁴ Its major inscription in Greek reads “The ossuary of Nicanor of Alexandria, who made the gates” followed by the shorter Hebrew/Aramaic phrase “Nicanor the Alexandrian.” The gift of paving by [S]paris of Rhodes is, in fact, preserved in an inscription discovered to the south of the Temple Mount (Fig. 4.6),²⁵ so these gifts have a definite archaeological setting, just as they fit with the general euergetic approach to donation shared across Roman society, whereby donors eagerly inscribed their names before gods and man in their temples. Thus, although archaeological sources, Josephus’

21 See the article by Joseph Angel in this volume.

22 See Benzion Wachholder, *Messianism and Mishnah: Time and Place in the Early Halakhah* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1978) and with a focus upon questions of rabbinic authority, Naftali S. Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

23 M. Middot 1:4, 2:3,6; t. Kipp. 2:3–4 and parallels; Josephus, *War* 5.201. The relevant texts are discussed by Steven Fine and Noah Greenfield, “Remembered for Praise: Some Ancient Sources on Benefaction to Herod’s Temple,” *Images: A Journal of Jewish Art and Visual Culture* 2 (2008), 167–169. On Corinthian bronze, see: D.M. Jacobson and M.P. Weitzman, “What was Corinthian Bronze?” *American Journal of Archaeology* 96, 2 (1992), 237–248; Dan Levene and Beno Rothenberg, *A Metallurgical Gemara: Metals in the Jewish Sources* (London: The Institute for Archaeo-metallurgical Studies and Thames and Hudson, 2007), 70–72.

24 *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae*, 140–142.

25 Benjamin H. Isaac, “A Donation for Herod’s Temple in Jerusalem,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 33 (1983), 86–92; rpt. in *The Near East Under Roman Rule: Selected Papers* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 21–28. See Fine and Noah Greenfield, “Remembered for Praise,” 167.

writings and Roman parallels must – as Avi-Yonah well understood – provide the scaffolding for any imagining of the Temple, the comments of the Sages must be taken seriously in any discussion of Herod’s temple.

2 Herod’s Temple: Between Rome and Jerusalem

Josephus’ emphasis on the Temple in *War* follows the actual experience of entering the temple by beginning from the outside, just as a pilgrim would begin, and builds toward the Holy of Holies.²⁶ In this, Josephus **is** builds on a tradition that goes back at least to Herodotus and his description of the sanctuary of Zeus Belus (Bel) in Babylon (1.181) and, more locally, by Lucian in his description of the Temple of Baalbek (*De Dea Syria*, 2nd century) and Pausanias in his descriptions of the temples of mainland Greece. When listing the altars of Olympia, Pausanias [5.14.5] declares, “I will notice them in the order in which the Eleans are accustomed to offer sacrifice upon them.” Josephus opens with a description of the massive retaining walls and porticos of the Temple in which he invokes the precedent of King Solomon’s expansion of the Temple Mount as a precedent for Herod’s (*War* 5.184). Underlying Josephus’ invocation of Solomonic precedent is perhaps the notion that Herod was a second founder of Jerusalem in much the same way that Augustus positioned himself as the second founder of Rome. Thus, in *Antiquities* (15.380–87), Josephus attributes a speech by Herod to the Jewish people in which he pointedly asserts that his own massive refurbishment of the Temple is because the existing structure, dating back to fifth century B.C.E., is far smaller than the Temple of Solomon. In fact, ancient Jewish literature never refers to Herod’s building as we do as “The Second Temple,” but as “the Temple” and occasionally the “The Temple of Herod.”²⁷ It is striking that although the model for Josephus’ ekphrasis are descriptions of the Biblical Tabernacle and Solomonic Temple, he does not mention a single architect or craftsmen involved in the project. This silence mirrors the situation in Rome, where architects and workmen are anonymous, allowing all credit to accrue to the ruler. This did not stop local Jews from claiming their part in the project, notably “Simon, builder of the Temple,” a role proudly claimed in an ossuary inscription discovered in northern Jerusalem.²⁸

26 In *Antiquities*, he reverses the order, beginning instead with the *naos*.

27 B. Sukk. 51b.

28 Steven Fine, *Art, History and the Historiography of Judaism in Roman Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 21–36.

Josephus goes on to describe a gradual process by which “the level area on its summit originally barely sufficed for shrine and altar, the ground around it being precipitous and steep” was artificially extended (*War* 5.184–85). Evidence for expansion of the mountain by the Hasmoneans is found in the so-called “seam” on the eastern wall of the Temple Mount support wall, which was further expanded southward by Herod. The construction of this complex was an engineering and logistical marvel, with some stones in the supporting walls weighing about 100 tons.²⁹ Josephus goes into great detail describing the extraordinary feat of expansion, reporting, that “where its foundations were lowest, they built up from a depth of three hundred cubits [150 m];³⁰ at some spots this figure was exceeded” (*War* 5.188). Referring to the Tyropoeon Valley to the west of the Temple Mount, Josephus reports “They filled up a considerable part of the ravines, wishing to level the narrow alleys of the town” (*War* 5.188). While blocks of stone measure “forty cubits [18.3 m.]” (*War* 5.189) have not been found, stones measuring 11.2 m. were used in the southwestern corner and Western Wall; this is, incidentally, the length of stones Josephus says were used for the Temple (*Ant.* 15.392).³¹ The 43 meter tall southern retaining wall rested on bedrock and can be compared with such engineering feats in Italy as the construction of the Forum of Trajan in Rome itself. According to the inscription on the base of Trajan’s Column, about 40 m. of the Quirinal Hill was removed to create space for the forum.³² Josephus further reports that the area of the Temple Mount created an expanse that measured six stadia (*War* 5.192), A Roman stade, στάδιον in Greek, measures approximately 185 m., Josephus’ exaggerated description yielding a temple of approximately 1,110 m. in length.³³ The actual measurements of the Herodian enclosure are: 485 m. (west) x 280 m. (south) x 470 m. (north) x 315 m. (east), giving a diameter of about 1350 m. and an area of about 142,000 m² (Fig. 4.7) nearly six times the size of the sacred precinct at the pan-Hellenic sanctuary at Delphi!³⁴ Herod’s complex was far

29 Nachman Avigad, “The Architecture of Jerusalem in the Second Temple Period” in *Jerusalem Revealed: Archaeology in the Holy City 1968–1974*, ed. Y. Yadin (New Haven and London: Yale University Press and Israel Exploration Society, 1976), 14.

30 The cubit, πῆχυς, is the “distance from the point of the elbow to that of the middle finger” (LSJ, s.v.) and is generally treated as approximately one-half meter; for a further discussion with additional bibliography, see Netzer, *The Architecture of Herod*, 142 n. 13.

31 Mazar, *The Mountain of the Lord*, 121.

32 *CIJ* 6.960. Lanciani (*Ruins and Excavations*, 312) claims that 700,000 – 800,000 m³ of earth and rock were moved for constructing this forum.

33 Newlyn Walkup, “Eratosthenes and the Mystery of the Stades,” Math DL: The Mathematical Sciences Digital Library, <http://mathdl.maa.org/mathDL/46/?pa=content&sa=viewDocument&nodeld=646&bodyId=1079>.

34 Avigad, “The Architecture of Jerusalem in the Second Temple Period,” 14.



FIGURE 4.7 Aerial View of the Temple Mount

PHOTO: G. ERIC AND EDITH MATSON PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, AFTER 1950

larger not only than such nearby sanctuaries as the roughly contemporaneous Nabataean Great Temple of Petra, whose precinct measures just 7560m^2 ,³⁵ but also about four times the size of what was perhaps the largest open space in Augustan Rome, the Saepta Julia.³⁶ Given the great size of the complex, its scale should perhaps be compared with such famed extra-mural sanctuaries

35 See Mazar, *The Mountain of the Lord*, 120, noting that the Herodian precinct was roughly 3.5 times the precinct of Jupiter Heliopolitanus in Baalbek; on the Great temple at Petra, M.S. Joukowsky, "The Petra Great Temple: A Nabataean Architectural Miracle," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 65 (2002), 235–248, esp. 237 (its scale) and 243 (its date).

36 On the Saepta Julia, see F. Coarelli *Rome and Its Environs: An Archaeological Guide* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2007), 289–290; Cicero (ad Att. IV.16.14) claims that the saepta Caesar originally planned was to be surrounded by a mile-long portico and even larger than the Circus Maximus, which at the time of Augustus measured about 621×118 m. and reputedly sat 150,000 people (see Coarelli, *Rome and Its Environs*, 323–326). Mazar (*The Mountain of the Lord*, 120) notes that "the *Forum Romanum* erected by Trajan was only half as large as the area of the Temple Mount"; it is not clear whether Mazar meant Trajan's Forum, which measures 185×310 m. or the *Forum Romanum*, measuring 170×250 m. (see S.B. Platner, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, rev. Thomas Ashby. Oxford: 1929, 237–245 and 230–237, respectively).

as the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, or the sanctuary of Asclepius at Epidaurus rather than the intramural sanctuaries that dominated Athens (the Parthenon, or even the Acropolis as a whole) and Rome (the Capitolium). Nonetheless, like the Capitolium and the Acropolis, the Temple Mount served as both the religious center of Jerusalem and the last line of defense in time of war.

Josephus then proceeds to the buildings atop the Temple platform. He writes that "The porticos, all in double rows, were supported by columns five and twenty cubits high – each a single block of the purest white marble, and ceiled with panels of cedar. The natural magnificence of these columns, their excellent polish and fine adjustment presented a striking spectacle, without any adventitious embellishment of painting or sculpture" (*War* 5.190). This rich description once again tests Josephus' ability to exaggerate. Moshe Fischer and Alla Stein have shown that in *Antiquities* (15.392) Josephus more accurately described the limestone of the Temple as "polished stone."³⁷ Still recent discoveries of opus sectile flooring from the Temple Mount generally support Josephus' impression (Fig. 4.8), and provide a context for the donation by [S]paris of Rhodes.³⁸ The claim that the columns lacked "adventitious embellishment of painting" is also worthy of note, in light of the vast amounts of color discovered at other Herodian sites, including bright colors – and gold – on the capitals of columns from Herod's palace at Herodian, Masada and elsewhere.³⁹ It may parallel the columns of Augustus' Temple of Apollo Palatinus (dedicated in 28 B.C.E.) in Rome in which gilded Corinthian capitals surmounted plain white marble columns.⁴⁰ Finally, the lack of sculpture is a leitmotif of Josephus' descriptions of Jewish visual culture in Judaea and would have stood in contrast with both the experience of his readers in Rome, where the temples were filled with works of art, and with his contemporary writers in Rome, such as Pliny

37 Moshe Fischer and Alla Stein, "Josephus on the Use of Marble in Building Projects of Herod the Great," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 45.1 (1994), 81–84.

38 Gabriel Barkay and Zachi Dvira, *Temple Mount Sifting Project* (Jerusalem: Temple Mount Sifting Project, 2017), 25–27.

39 Sylvia Rozenberg, "Pigments and Fresco Fragments from Herod's Palace at Jericho," Soreq and Ayalon, eds., *Colors from Nature*, 41–44; idem, "Interior Decoration in Herod's Palaces," *Herod the Great: The King's Final Journey*, eds. Sylvia Rozenberg, David Mevorah (Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 2013), 110–115; idem, "Wall Painting Fragments from Omrit," *The Roman Temple Complex at Horvat Omrit: An Interim Report*, eds. J. Andrew Overman, Daniel N. Schowalter (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2011), 55–72; Ehud Netzer, with Roi Porat, Ya'akov Kalman, Rachel Chachy, "Herodium," *Herod the Great*, eds. Rozenberg and Mevorah, esp. 148–160.

40 Stephan Zink and Heinrich Pienning, "Haec aurea templa: The Palatine Temple of Apollo and its Polychromy," *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 22 (2009), 109.



FIGURE 4.8 Reconstructed Opus Sectile Pavement thought to derive from the Herodian Temple

COURTESY OF THE TEMPLE MOUNT SIFTING PROJECT, PHOTO: STEVEN FINE

the Elder, who frequently mentions art works in their temple settings. The only exception to this absence of sculpture is Josephus' mention of an eagle.⁴¹ In the context of Jerusalem, the eagle was clearly regarded by Herod's Jewish subjects as a sign of Roman dominance, but it is also evocative of Greco-Roman temple architecture, such as the golden shield bearing a Gorgoneion that Pausanias (5.10.4) describes on the gable of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia. This lack of sculpture is significant because it shows the careful balance that Herod maintained – and Josephus asserts – between his use of Roman architectural form and conformity to Jewish values of anti-idolism in Jerusalem if not in his temples to the Emperor in Caesarea and Sebastia.

41 *War* 1.648, *Ant.* 17.149–163. See: Fine, *Art and Judaism*, 73; Albert Baumgarten, "Herod's Eagle," "Go Out and Study the Land" (*Judges 18:2*), *Archaeological, Historical and Textual Studies in Honor of Hanan Eshel* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 7–21.

Josephus goes to great lengths to assert that the Jewish populous supported Herod's reconstruction of the Temple, and his avoidance of images is just one example of his care for Jewish concerns. Herod is thus portrayed as a qualified ruler, an appropriate protégé of Augustus, and quite different from the incompetent Roman governors of the first century under whose watch the relationship devolved to war. Like his patron, who boasted in the *Res gestae divi Augusti* of restoring 82 temples in 28 B.C.E. and constructing numerous others throughout his rule, Herod literally constructed his legitimacy in the eyes of his subjects.⁴² Josephus (*War* 15.388–390) reports that Herod pre-empted possible concerns about his ability to complete such a vast undertaking by agreeing not to remove the old structure until all the supplies were at hand for erecting the new building. He also trained a thousand priests in the skills they would need as masons and carpenters, presumably because only priests could enter the inner precinct of the complex (*Ant.* 15.390). Such sensitivity – even as he transformed the Temple into what Titus is said to have called an “ornament of the Empire” – is for Josephus a central feature of Herod's project and can be paralleled in Rome, for instance, in the care that Sulla took in rebuilding the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus in Rome, a reconstruction that differed from the destroyed structure only, according to Dionysios of Halikarnassos (4.61), in its extravagance. Like Herod, Sulla's legitimacy as a ruler could be questioned as he had gained power through a civil war and had only occupied Rome after a bloody battle.

Porticoes bounded each side of the temenos (Fig. 3.1), but the most magnificent of the porticoes, the *Stoa Basileios*, the “Royal Stoa,” extended along the south side of the Temple Mount (*Ant.* 15.411–16). Josephus extols the building's height, remarking the view atop the platform was literally dizzying and impenetrable (*Ant.* 15.411–12). Josephus describes a structure containing 162 columns arranged in three rows of free-standing columns and a fourth row of engaged columns (the Artemision in Ephesus, famous for the splendor and number of its columns, had but 127).⁴³ Each column was 8.2 m. high and had a circumference equal to that of three men with outstretched arms, comparable in their proportions to the monolithic columns of the porch of Pantheon in Rome.⁴⁴ Josephus' description of the circumference is borne out by columns

42 Paraphrasing Richard Sennett, *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization* (New York: Norton, 1994), 94.

43 Possibly the number 162 refers only to free-standing columns, as Peleg-Barkat argues (Peleg-Barkat, *The Temple Mount Excavations in Jerusalem 1968–1978*, 100).

44 Josephus gives the measurements for this building in feet, rather than cubits, for reasons that remain obscure. There is no indication whether he means a Greek foot or a Roman foot; depending on the foot used, the width of the building would be, either 32.5 m. or

found in the vestibule of the Hulda Gate.⁴⁵ Each column was surmounted by a Corinthian capital, the order which had come to dominate sacred architecture in Augustan Rome.⁴⁶ The columns formed three aisles with a combined width of about 32 m. (two side aisles about 9 m. wide and a central nave 14 m. wide); the side aisles were 15 m. high, while the middle aisle soared to 30 meters. On its western side, the stoa was connected to the city by Robinson's Arch.⁴⁷ The stoa's function remains uncertain. It was perhaps a public space, though Ehud Netzer believed that it was also designed as a kind of royal precinct where Herod could receive foreign dignitaries.⁴⁸ The form of the basilica parallels the contemporary buildings in Rome, the Basilica Aemelia and Basilica Julia, which bounded the southwest and northeast sides of the Forum Romanum, were reconstructed in the aftermath of the fires of 14 and 9 B.C.E.⁴⁹ Both the form *Stoa Basileia* and resources that Herod lavished on the building can be compared to the Basilica Aemilia in Rome, which Pliny (*Natural History* 36.102) describes as one of the most beautiful buildings in the world. In Netzer's opinion, Herod was motivated to make this structure as grand as possible in order to emphasize his presence on the Temple Mount without violating the sanctity of the Temple itself (which he could not enter because he, unlike his Hasmonean predecessors, was not a priest, let alone the High Priest).⁵⁰ If Netzer is correct in his assessment of Herod's motives, then Herod is doing exactly what

31 m. (Peleg-Barkat, *The Temple Mount Excavations in Jerusalem 1968–1978*, 96–97 [for a discussion with additional bibliography for why Josephus gives the dimensions in feet rather than cubits]). The monolithic columns of the porch of the Pantheon, about 1/4 taller than those Josephus describes, are regularly encircled by groups of four tourists holding hands.

45 See B. Mazur, *The Mountain of the Lord* (Garden City, NY, Doubleday and Company, 1975), 125, 141 (with a photograph of a monolithic column with a Corinthian capital in the Hulda Gate), and 150 (a photograph of the Byzantine vestibule of the Golden Gate with columns taken from the debris of the Temple porticos).

46 John Stamper, *The Architecture of Roman Temples* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 68, 81–83.

47 Netzer (*Architecture of Herod*, 173) believes that, due to its magnificence, the gate was intended “primarily (and perhaps even exclusively) for the use of the king and his guests when he visited the Royal Portico.”

48 Netzer, *Architecture of Herod*, 170–171.

49 The foundations of the Basilica Julia, the larger of the two basilicae and the one most associated with the family of Augustus (the original basilica, begun by Julius Caesar himself, supplanted the earlier Basilica Sempronia) measure 101 × 49 m. (F. Coarelli, *Rome and Environs: An Archaeological Guide* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), 71–74).

50 Netzer, *The Architecture of Herod*, 170.

Augustus was doing in the Forum Romanum – both rulers imposed their own presence on the most iconic public spaces of their respective cities.⁵¹

Herod's use of porticos to define a public space parallels the form's use in Rome and, even earlier, in Athens (where the Middle Stoa and Stoa of Attalos define the agora). In the northeast of the Temple Mount, the porticos formed a corner while the northwest was dominated by a fortified tower known as the Antonia, perhaps the first structure Herod built in Jerusalem (see *War* 5.238–246). Named for Herod's first Roman patron, Mark Antony, the tower dominated the temple compound and had staircases to both porticoes.⁵² The interior of the Antonia was lavishly appointed (in Josephus' words [*War* 5.241], "from its possession of all conveniences, it seemed a town, from its magnificence a palace") and housed, in Josephus' time, a Roman cohort (about 500 armed men). With its construction, the Antonia thus gave Herod a palace next to the Jewish Temple as well as the means to militarily control the Temple and its compound. In this respect, the Antonia parallels the Augustan buildings on the Palatine in Rome, where Augustus dedicated a new temple to the god Apollo in 28B.C.E. on land he donated to the city. This lavishly decorated temple was central to Augustus' reorganization of Roman religion and stood, not coincidentally, beside Augustus' own villa on the Palatine Hill in Rome.

Josephus continues his "tour" of the Temple Mount, crossing the Court of the Gentiles, paved "with all manner of stones." Josephus most likely means that the pavement was in opus sectile, a staple of Herodian architecture (and fine Roman architecture in general) that appears in the Herodian palaces at Cypros, Masada and Jericho, and recently in remains from the Temple Mount as well.⁵³ Josephus continues that "one found it [the second court] surrounded by a stone balustrade [called the *soreg*⁵⁴ by the rabbis], three cubits high and of exquisite workmanship; in this at regular intervals stood slabs giving warning, some in Greek, others in Latin characters, of the law of purification, to wit that no foreigner was permitted to enter the holy place" (*War* 5.194). The backs

51 Ehud Netzer, *Architecture of Herod*, 137–178. Cf. Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Time of Augustus*, tr. Alan Shapiro (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1988), 79–82.

52 Netzer, *Architecture of Herod*, 120–126, who notes the almost complete lack of archaeological data for both this and the earlier, Hasmonaean, tower known as the *baris*. For Netzer's reconstruction of the Antonia, see Ehud Netzer, "A New Reconstruction of Paul's Prison: Herod's Antonia Fortress," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 35 (2009), 44–51, 71 (critiqued by Leen Ritmeyer: <http://www.ritmeyer.com/2009/02/02/the-antonia-herods-temple-mount-fortress/>). For a discussion of the dimensions of the Antonia, see Amit, *Model of Jerusalem*, 49. **For a possible recent discussion of the Baris,**

53 Barkay and Dvira, *Temple Mount Sifting Project*, 25–27.

54 m. Middot 2:3.

of the two Greek inscriptions confirming this injunction are unfinished, suggesting that they were incorporated into the balustrade. The more complete of the two, now in the Istanbul Museum, reads: “No foreigner is to enter within the balustrade and forecourt around the sacred precinct. Whoever is caught will himself be responsible for (his) consequent death” (Fig. 3.2).⁵⁵ Significantly, Philo of Alexandria (*Leg.* 212) mentions the prohibition of gentiles entering beyond this point, though not the inscriptions, and Paul of Tarsus was accused of violating this prohibition (Acts 21:26–30). The interdiction of non-officiates and the defiled into increasingly sanctified sections of temples was a feature of many Hellenistic temples, as Elias Bickerman has shown; in the Roman context, such restrictions are known, for instance, at Shrine of Ops in the Regia in the Forum Romanum, which only the pontifex maximus (high priest) and vestal virgins were allowed to enter.⁵⁶

Josephus then goes into great detail to describe the Temple, “the holy place,” itself. Aware that it no longer existed, he seems to have wanted to preserve it in words. As with all ekphrastic writing, it is really impossible to reconstruct this structure with any certainty. To cite just one passage:

It was approached from the first by fourteen steps, the area above was quadrangular, and screened by a wall of its own. The exterior height of this, actually forty cubits, was disguised by the steps, the interior altitude was but five and twenty; for the floor being built on a higher level, the whole was not visible from within, a portion being concealed by the hill. Beyond the fourteen steps there was a space of ten cubits between them and the wall, forming a level terrace. From this again other flights of five steps led up to the gates. Of these there were eight on the north and south, four on either side and two on the east – necessarily; since in this quarter a special place of worship was walled off for the women, rendering a second gate requisite.... The west end of the building had no gate, the way there being unbroken. The porticoes between the gates on the inner side of the wall in front of the treasury chambers, were supported by exceeding beautiful and lofty columns; these porticoes were single, but, except in point of size, in no way inferior to those of the lower court. Of the gates nine were completely overlaid with gold and silver, as were also their door-posts and lintels; but one, outside the sanctuary, was of

55 CII/P 2, 42–43.

56 Elias J. Bickerman, “The Warning Inscriptions of Herod’s Temple,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 37 (1947), 387–405, who primarily discusses Greek comparanda. On the division of the space within the temple precinct, see Joseph Angel in this volume.

Corinthian bronze, and far exceeded in value those plated with silver and set in gold. Each gateway had two doors, and each door was thirty cubits in height and fifteen in breadth.... (*War* 5.195–202)

According to Josephus, nine of the gates were overlaid with gold and silver and rose 15 m. high and as many wide and were set between within a gate house (or tower-like chambers) measuring 15 x 15 m. and rising 40 m. high (*War* 5.203)⁵⁷ Assuming the accuracy of Josephus' measurements, these 15 m. gates, then, were slightly larger than the bronze doors of the Curia Julia (senate house) in the Forum Romanum,⁵⁸ dedicated in 28 B.C.E. as well as the original doors of the Pantheon in Rome, dedicated 118–125 C.E.⁵⁹ Even if they were, in fact, somewhat smaller, they were certainly most impressive. In general, though, the temple compound was divided into three sections – following the precedent of the Tabernacle and Solomonic temple (with definite Near Eastern parallels).⁶⁰ These sections were defined largely by their degree of exclusivity, with the temple itself, of course, as the complex's heart, which only the High Priest could enter.

Finally, Josephus reaches the Temple shrine itself. He describes the façade in exquisite detail:

The sacred edifice itself, the holy temple, in the central position, was approached by a flight of twelve steps. The façade was of equal height and breadth, each being a hundred cubits ... The first gate was seventy cubits high and twenty-five broad and had no doors, displaying unexcluded the void expanse of heaven; the entire face was covered with gold, and through it the first edifice was visible to the spectator without in all its grandeur and the surroundings of the interior gate all gleaming with gold fell beneath his eye. But, whereas the sanctuary within consisted of two separate chambers, the first building alone stood exposed to view, from top to bottom, towering to a height of ninety cubits, its length being fifty and its breadth twenty. The gate opening into the building was, and I said, completely overlaid with gold, as was the whole wall surrounding it. It

57 Netzer (*The Architecture of Herod*, 170) notes that in *middot* the dimensions are given as 20 x 10 cubits.

58 The Curia Julia was rebuilt several times, but apparently according to the same plan. The current doors are reproductions of the originals, which can now be seen (with later modifications) in the Basilica of St. John Lateran, in Rome, where they were moved by Pope Alexander VII; see Claridge, *Rome*, 70–72.

59 See Claridge, *Rome*, 204.

60 See the comments of Victor Hurwitz in this volume.

had, moreover, above it those golden vines, from which depended grape clusters as tall as a man; and it has golden doors fifty-five cubits high and sixteen broad ... (*War* 5.207–211).

Josephus continues, describing the interior of the *naos*, the shrine, particularly the purple curtain, the menorah and the table of showbread, followed by the clothing of the high priest. Images of both the table and the menorah appear as early as lepta minted by the last Hasmonean king, Mattathias Antigonus (minted in the course of his unsuccessful struggle against Herod), inscribed in stone plaster in first century Palestine, and on the Arch of Titus (Figs. 3.3, 3.4). The menorah is portrayed in bas relief on an ashlar from the Magdala synagogue (Fig. 5.1).⁶¹ The Migdal ashlar shows the menorah standing atop a pedestal, which would be likely within a Roman Temple. While the form of the menorah may be regarded as unique to the Jerusalem Temple, large lampstands were common furnishings for all ancient temples. Even the curtain can be paralleled by similar objects in the temples of Ephesian Artemis and Olympian Zeus (Pausanias 5.12.2). The curtain at Olympia, the most prestigious pan-Hellenic shrine in Greece, was dedicated by Antiochus and may be the curtain which Jewish sources report Antiochus carried off from the Jerusalem Temple in the second century B.C.E. (Antiochus also sought to rededicate the Jerusalem temple to Olympian Zeus). More than that, the images of the showbread table and of the menorah served, it seems, as stand-ins for sculptural images of the God of Israel both for Romans and Jews, both appearing in the Arch of Titus relief and the table on tetradrachm of the Bar Kochba Revolt (132–5 CE).⁶²

The actual structure of the Temple façade is open widely to interpretation. The façade is described by Josephus as being 100 cubits square, covered with “massive plates of gold,” with a large portal and a large golden vine hung with gigantic golden fruit above the door. The exact locations covered with gold are unclear and are further obscured by Josephus’ description that the Temple as appearing from a distance as a snow-capped mountain (*War* 5.222–23). Avi Yonah took a rather conservative stance toward gold, using it for external trim, but not as a facing for the Temple; nor did he include the golden vine in his reconstruction. In contrast, Leen Ritmyer has taken a rather maximalist

61 See Fine, *Art and Judaism*, 148–154; idem, “The Magdala Ashlar: From Synagogue Furnishing to Media Event,” *Ars Judaica*, 13 (2017), 27–38.

62 On this aspect of the Arch of Titus, see: Jodi Magness, “The Arch of Titus at Rome and the Fate of the God of Israel,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 59: 2 (2008), 201–217. On the Bar Kochba coins: Dan Barag, “The Table of the Showbread and the Facade of the Temple on Coins of the Bar-Kochba Revolt,” *Ancient Jerusalem Revealed*, ed. H. Geva (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1994) 272–276; Fine, *Art and Judaism*, 86.



FIGURE 4.9 Model of the Herodian Temple by Leen Ritmeyer
COURTESY OF YESHIVA UNIVERSITY MUSEUM

approach to gold, covering the façade entirely with sheets of this metal (Fig. 4.9).⁶³ While the use of gold for architectural decoration was broad in Rome, no imperial building is said to have been decorated this lavishly in the time of Herod, although Herod would have been familiar with the gilded roof tiles used in the Sullan reconstruction of the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on Rome's Capitoline Hill following its destruction in 83B.C.E. (Pliny, *Natural History* 33.57). Following the destruction of the same temple in 69 CE, Vespasian rebuilt it exactly like the previous structure (although apparently taller) while his son, Domitian, rebuilt it again following a fire in 80 C.E. on an even more lavish scale, using (according to Plutarch, *Publ.* 15.3–5) 12,000 talents of gold for gilding. Josephus undoubtedly saw both versions.⁶⁴ Literary sources also suggest that the homes of the wealthy were sometimes covered with gold, most famously the gilded walls and vaults the Domus Aurea, Nero's "Golden House" (Suetonius *Nero* 31.2).⁶⁵ In addition, we note the use of gold in the decoration

63 Ritmeyer, *The Quest*, 377.

64 Ellen Perry, "The Same, but Different: the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus through Time" in B.D. Wescoat and R.G. Ousterhout, *Architecture of the Sacred: Space, Ritual, and Experience from Classical Greece to Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). The Flavian emperor Domitian reportedly undertook an even more extravagant rebuilding of the temple following the fire of 80 CE, expending 12,000 talents on gilding the surfaces (Plutarch, *Publ.* 15.3–5. See also R.H. Darwall-Smith, *Emperors and Architecture: A Study of Flavian Rome* (Brussels: Latomus, 1996), 105–110); Brian Jones, *The Emperor Domitian* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 1993), 1, 92, 96.

65 In fact, the "Gilded Vault" of the Domus Aurea has recently been examined by an international team and its lavish polychromy – which included copious amounts of gold – recovered. See: Catia Clementi, Valeria Ciocan, Manuela Vagnini, Brenda Doherty, Marisa Laurenzi Tabasso, Cinzia Conti, Brunetto Giovanni Brunetti, Costanza Miliani, "Non-Invasive and Micro-Destructive Investigation of the Domus Aurea Wall Painting Decorations," *Analytical and Bioanalytical Chemistry* (2011) 401, 4, 1815–1826.

of the capitals in theater of the Herodian palace at Herodion,⁶⁶ capitals decorated with gold from the northern palace on Masada⁶⁷ and Josephus' testimony that columns in the Temple were decorated in gold.

Avi-Yonah reflected in print on his reconstruction of the now-iconic temple façade.⁶⁸ He drew upon imperial temple imagery, particularly as refracted through the image of the Temple as a tetrastyle that appears on the coins of Bar Kochba, and on the façade of the Torah shrine of the Dura Europos synagogue, completed before 245 CE. He also drew upon the architecture of the temple of Baal Shamin in Palmyra, particularly for the pilasters that run vertically upon the squared Jerusalem Temple façade. All of this is both highly fanciful, and in many aspects, has proven right. Despite Herod's evident familiarity with Augustan (and, more generally, Greco-Roman) architecture, Avi-Yonah's temple has a flat roof and follows the architectural idiom that had developed in the Near Eastern milieu of ancient Judaea. While a shrine adhering to Near Eastern conventions may appear incongruous in a Greco-Roman *temenos*, it should be seen as part of Herod's balancing act as a monarch closely connected to the circles of Augustus ruling over a Jewish population with its own distinctive and closely held traditions.

In much of this essay, we have looked for physical parallels for the Herodian Temple complex with a particular focus on Rome and, especially, Augustan Rome. There is, however, no direct parallel in Augustan Rome to the scale and multi-purpose function of the Herodian temple complex. In terms of an open space where vast crowds might assemble, one might refer to the Augustan structures of the northern Campus Martius, which included not only large open spaces but also his mausoleum, an *ustrinum* (for the cremation of his remains), an *horologium*, and the Ara Pacis, one of his most important religious structures. A closer parallel, however, might be Augustus' other great complex of buildings, the Forum Augustum. Like Herod's temple complex, the Forum Augustum provided a multi-purpose space in the heart of urban Rome. Among other activities transferred to the new forum were a number of law courts and a new space for the reception of foreign delegations (parallel to Netzer's suggestive speculation regarding the use of the Stoa Basileia). The centerpiece of the forum, the temple of Mars Ultor, introduced the cult of the god of war into Rome's *pomerium*, sacred boundary, for the first time in Roman history. Many of the practices traditionally associated with temple of Jupiter Optimus

66 Netzer, Porat, Kalman, Chachy, "Herodium," esp. 148–160.

67 Gideon Foerster and Naomi Porat. *Masada v: The Yigael Yadin Excavations 1963–1965: Final Reports. Art and Architecture* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1995), pl. XVI.

68 Avi-Yonah, "The Facade of Herod's Temple An Attempted Reconstruction."

Maximus, the central sanctuary of Republican Roman religion, were shifted to the new temple of Mars. For instance, it became the site of coming of age ceremonies, where boys assumed the toga *virilis* (marking their passage to youths of military age) as well as the site from which commanders set out for their foreign posts; it was here that the senate met to discuss awarding triumphs and where triumphators now dedicated their scepters and crowns. More intriguing, perhaps, is the dedication of military trophies at the new temple, suggesting a parallel with Josephus' report that Herod surrounded the Temple with spoils taken from "barbarians" (gentiles) and Arabs in (*Ant.* 15.402).

The rabbis of the second century who taught that "he who has never seen the temple of Herod has never seen a beautiful building" were undoubtedly correct. This "One Temple to the One God," as Josephus put it, was massive and extravagantly ornamented, even when placed within the visual culture of the Augustan age. Still, none of us have ever "seen" this building, and all that remains of it are the massive remains of its retaining walls and platform, and a small number of other stone shards and inscriptions. The literary remains are nonetheless rich, though not sufficient to actually model with precision what a visitor to Jerusalem actually "saw." When placed within the context of Roman architecture of the period this material allows the skilled interpreter to imagine – in impressionistic terms – what the Temple of Herod actually "looked like." This is what Michael Avi-Yonah did in constructing his model of the Temple, now at the Israel Museum. This stunning achievement, and the imaginative powers of the viewer, allow at least a glimpse into what Josephus saw, and of the "ornament" that Titus destroyed in August, 70 CE. The Temple of Jerusalem was architecturally a Roman complex, one designed to serve the unique God of Israel. It represented in stone the kind of hybrid identity that Herod, his Roman sponsors and many Jews – particularly aristocrats – hoped to achieve. In 70, of course, this complex balance, expressed in stone, was torn asunder by revolt and physically by the Roman tenth legion under the general – soon emperor – Titus Flavius Vespasianus. The holy vessels – the golden menorah, the table of showbread, silver horn and the Law of Moses were brought to Rome in a triumphal parade memorialized to this day in the reliefs of the Arch of Titus (Fig. 3.3, 3.4).⁶⁹

69 On the Arch and its *Nachleben*, see Steven Fine and Jacob Wisse, eds., *The Arch of Titus: From Jerusalem to Rome and Back*, forthcoming.