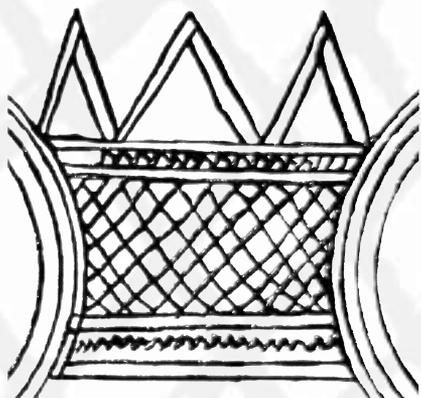


Art and Identity In Latter Second Temple Period Judaea:

The Hasmonean Royal Tombs at Modi'in



Steven Fine

Jewish Foundation Chair of Judaic Studies,
University of Cincinnati

The Twenty-fourth Annual
Rabbi Louis Feinberg Memorial Lecture in Judaic Studies

May 10, 2001

חוג ללימודי היהדות
Department of Judaic Studies,
McMicken College of Arts and Sciences

UNIVERSITY OF 
Cincinnati



The Rabbi Louis Feinberg Memorial Lecture in Judaic Studies

Rabbi Louis Feinberg (1887–1949) was ordained by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in 1916 and was valedictorian of his class. He served as rabbi of Ohel Jacob Congregation in Philadelphia from 1916–1918 and of Adath Israel Congregation in Cincinnati from 1918–1949. Founder of the Menorah Society at the University of Pennsylvania and editor of *Our Jewish Youth*, which later became the *Young Judean*, he also contributed short stories for many years to the Anglo-Jewish press under the pseudonym of Yishuvnik. He wrote with equal fluency in Yiddish, Hebrew and English, and is the author of *The Spiritual Foundations of Judaism*, which features essays in each of these languages. In addition to his many rabbinic responsibilities, Rabbi Feinberg was an energetic member of the Board of Governors of the United Jewish Social Agencies, the Jewish Community Council and the Bureau of Jewish Education.

Rabbi Feinberg was especially known for his sweetness of character and sincerity. His good cheer and love for his fellow endeared him to the entire Jewish community of Cincinnati and to thousands of others who came to visit him from across the country. Rabbi Feinberg combined the best traits of a rabbi, a teacher and a community leader. It is fitting that he has been memorialized through this named lecturship by his children, Dr. Sidney Peerless and the late Mrs. Miriam Feinberg Peerless and by his grandchildren. The Department of Judaic Studies is privileged that this series bears the name of Rabbi Louis Feinberg.

The Rabbi Louis Feinberg Memorial Lecture

- 1978 Louis Jacobs, *The Doctrine of the Zaddik in the Thought of Elimelech of Lizensk.*
- 1979 Marvin Fox, *Philosophical Foundations of Jewish Ethics: Some Initial Reflections.*
- 1980 Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *The Re-education of Marranos in the Seventeenth Century.*
- 1981 Jacob Milgrom, *The Tassel and the Tallith.*
- 1982 Lloyd P. Gartner, *The Midpassage of American Jewry, 1929-1945.*
- 1983 Henry S. Fischel, *The Enigma of the Passover Seder.*
- 1984 Joseph Dan, *Three Types of Ancient Jewish Mysticism.*
- 1985 Charles S. Liebman, *The Religious Component of Israeli Ultra-Nationalism.*
- 1986 Arthur A. Goren, *National Leadership in American Jewish Life: The Formative Years.*
- 1987 Norman Golb, *Jewish Proselytism—A Phenomenon in the Religious History of Early Medieval Europe.*
- 1988 Robert Alter, *Language as Theme in the Book of Judges.*
- 1989 Ruth W. Wisse, *What Shall Live and What Shall Die: The Makings of a Yiddish Anthology.*
- 1990 Nahum M. Sarna, *Writing a Commentary on the Torah.*
- 1991 Aaron Kirschenbaum, *Torture, Confession and American Plea Bargaining: A Jewish Legal Perspective.*
- 1992 Meir Michaelis, *Axis Policies Towards the Jews in World War II.*
- 1993 Nicholas de Lange, *Reflections of a Translator.*
- 1994 Shimon Glick, *Trends in Medical Ethics in a Pluralistic Society: A Jewish Perspective.*
- 1995 Edward Alexander, *Irving Howe and Secular Jewishness: An Elegy.*
- 1996 Ada Rapoport-Albert, *The "Dead Hassidim,": The Rehabilitation of a Hasidic Circle Following the Death of its Messianic Leader.*
- 1997 Bernard S. Raskas, *Toward a Jewish Work Ethic: Envisioning Work for the 21st Century.*
- 1998 Michael G. Chelnov, *Oriental Jewish Groups in the Former Soviet Union: Modern Trends of Development.*
- 1999 Michael J. Broyde, *Assisted Reproduction and Jewish Law.*
- 2000 Jacques Berlinerblau, *Official Religion and Popular Religion in Pre-Exilic Ancient Israel.*
- 2001 Steven Fine, *Art and Identity in Latter Second Temple Period Judaea: The Hasmonean Royal Tombs at Modi'in.*

Forward

The Rabbi Louis Feinberg Lecture is an important piece of the UC tapestry. Each year America's oldest lecture series in Judaic Studies attracts leading scholars to our campus to share their cutting edge research, their wisdom and often their good humor with our faculty, our students and the general public. Through its fine publication series, Feinberg lectures are disseminated world-wide. The lecture pamphlets are much sought after, sometimes more than a decade after publication. I personally thank Dr. Sidney Peerless for his continuing support of this marvelous local and international institution.

The Feinberg Lecture is but one program of UC's Department of Judaic Studies. Thanks to the vision of the Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati and of its former president, Mr. Benjamin Gettler, Judaic Studies has grown from being a small though vital program to a full academic department of McMicken College of Arts and Sciences. This is a monumental achievement for UC. I wish the department all success as it continues to integrate the insights of the Jewish experience into the fabric of academic life at UC. I am particularly excited by prospects of a joint MA program that Judaic Studies is developing with the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. I am optimistic regarding the outcome of this project.

The 2001 Feinberg Lecture was delivered by Professor Steven Fine, who joined the UC faculty in 2002 as the first incumbent of the Jewish Foundation Chair of Judaic Studies and department head. Professor Fine brings to UC an impeccable scholarly record as well as a broad vision of what Judaic Studies can, and should, be. Dr. Fine's exciting scholarship is well represented in this lecture. I hope that you will enjoy reading it, as I have. I wish Professor Fine, his faculty, and McMicken College all success in building the Department of Judaic Studies.

Anthony Perzigian,
Senior Vice President and Provost,
Professor of Anthropology,
University of Cincinnati

Art and Identity in Latter Second Temple Period Judaea: The Hasmonean Royal Tombs at Modi'in¹

One question from the audience at my 2001 Feinberg Lecture still stays with me, and at some level haunts me. At the completion of my survey of the archaeological remains of first-century Jerusalem and my description of the ambiguities of Jewish attitudes toward art during this period, a member of the public asked about the aesthetic quality of the artifacts and reconstruction drawings that I projected. Quite perplexed, my questioner asked: "I thought that Jews don't make such beautiful things, with such bright colors." With a simple query, this lady touched upon a fundamental construction of the relationship between Judaism and art during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The assumption that Jews are, and always were, "the nation without art"² and Judaism "...the most un-iconic (indeed anti-iconic) of religions"³ was basic to Protestant and Art Historical constructions of Judaism during those centuries, and to the self-identities of some Jews as well. Many Jews embraced their supposed aniconism, while others set out to disprove this contention. The stakes were high, for the answer was to determine how "normal" a people the Jews really were. In a forthcoming volume, *"Jewish Archaeology": Art and Judaism During the Greco-Roman Period*,⁴ I will analyze this misinformed truism in some detail as it relates to ancient Jewish art, building upon the work of scholars who have just recently begun to deconstruct this anti-Jewish bias. In this essay I will focus upon how Jews in latter Second Temple Jerusalem lived with "art," produced "art," and sometimes destroyed "art."

If we were to approach a Jew of latter Second Temple period Palestine and ask for his or her opinions on art, we would most certainly be received with hollow stares. Art as a separate category of thought is a relatively recent invention, just as the "history of art" is among the youngest of the humanistic disciplines. Reformulating the question so that our Judaeans might comprehend, we might ask what he thinks is beautiful or skillfully designed. Here we would be on more firm ground. Beauty and design, however, do not encompass all that the term "art" encompasses.⁵ Were we to point to a table made by a well-known artisan, made of marble and ivory and gold, our Judaeans might well express pleasure. If we were then

to point to a sculpture of Zeus made of the same materials by the same artisan, however, our Judaeans would most likely express disgust at the nude “idol.” As one ancient author put it: “They are made by carpenters and goldsmiths; they can be nothing but what the craftsmen wish them to be.”⁶ Issues bound to the use of “art” became extremely significant for the formation of Jewish communal identity during the Greco-Roman period.

In the pages that follow I will survey the extant literary and archaeological sources to show that Hellenistic and then Roman art were well received by Jews, and fully accepted by them—so long as this art was not seen as containing anything that Jews considered to be “idolatrous.” The shifting boundary between the acceptable and the unacceptable, between art and “idolatry,” was reflective of shifting forces within the Jewish community and the ways that Jews situated themselves within Greco-Roman culture. This discussion will focus on the tombs of the Hasmonean royal family at Modi’in. This complex, which no longer exists, provides an excellent vantage point for assessing the changing relationship between art and Judaism from the Hasmonean period (beginning 166 B.C.E.) through the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 C.E. As a measure of these trends, I will begin by describing the differing ways that I Maccabees and the Jewish historian Josephus Flavius describe the Hasmonean tombs and set these texts against the full light of the considerable extant literary and archaeological sources. Our next task will be to broadly contextualize these traditions historically. I will begin by examining Jewish participation in Greco-Roman art, focusing upon the writings of Joshua Ben Sirach and Josephus Flavius. These authors provide ample evidence for Jewish use of art forms that were common throughout the Greco-Roman world, and for the fact that Jews held attitudes toward art that were shared across this expanse. The upshot of this discussion will be that the Hasmonean tombs fit well with what we know of Jewish attitudes, fully participating in the art of the broader culture. I will set the Hasmonean monuments within developing Jewish attitudes toward the idolatrous. This essay then moves to two paired chapters that deal with issues of art and idolatry, tracing Jewish approaches from the Hellenistic period through the Roman destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. Concluding, I will summarize the trajectory of Jewish attitudes

toward the visual in latter Second Temple Judaea, refracting the discussion through the Hasmonean tombs at Modi'in.

I. The Hasmonean Royal Tombs: Keys to Understanding Latter Second Temple Period Attitudes Toward Art

The Hasmonean royal tombs in Modi'in, described in I Maccabees 13:27-29, provide a lens through which to assess the complexities of Judaeans attitudes toward Hellenistic art from the second century B.C.E. through the first Jewish revolt against Rome. This text, written toward the end of the second century B.C.E.,⁷ exemplifies Hasmonean participation in general Hellenistic art at a very early stage in their dynastic rule:

And Simon built a monument over the tomb of his father and his brothers; he made it high that it might be seen, with polished stone at the front and back. He also erected seven pyramids, opposite one another, for his father and mother and four brothers. And for the pyramids he devised an elaborate setting, erecting about them great columns, and upon the columns he put⁸ suits of armor⁹ for a permanent memorial, and beside the suits of armor carved ships, so that they could be seen by all who sail the sea. This is the tomb which he built in Modi'in; it remains to this day.

Simon the Hasmonean ruled between 143 and 134 B.C.E. The tomb complex described here is thoroughly Hellenistic in conception. No distinctively Jewish iconography is evident in this text. None of the images that were later associated with Judaism, principally the menorah, existed as icons at this early date. Were such images present, the text would certainly have mentioned them. Were this complex discovered, say, in Syria or Egypt, no one would suspect that it was a Jewish tomb. Archaeological parallels to this tomb complex are common and can help us to interpret this ancient and long-lost building. Parallels stem from Hasmonean and Roman Judaea, as well as the general Greco-Roman context. Monuments topped with pyramids, for example, have been discovered throughout the Levant. Among these are the first century B.C.E. Tomb of Hamrath at Suweida in Syria, where shields and other

military implements appear among the decorations of the tomb—just as is described in I Maccabees— and the monumental tombs at Hermel and Kalat Fakra in Lebanon.¹⁰ Maximillian Kon suggests a reasonable reconstruction of the Hasmonean complex: “It was apparently a very high rectangular structure built from ashlars which served as a base for the upper story of the monument, consisting of seven base structures in the form of towers surrounded by pilasters and crowned by pyramidal or conical tops. The wall-surfaces between the pilasters were decorated with reliefs of weapons and ships.”¹¹

Particularly important among Jerusalem parallels to the Hasmonian tombs are the Tomb of Jason¹² (figure 1) in western Jerusalem and the Tomb of Zechariah (figure 2) in Jerusalem’s Kidron Valley. Near the Tomb of Zechariah is the so-called Tomb of



Figure 1. Tomb of Jason, Jerusalem.

Absalom, which is crowned with a conical “pyramid” (figure 3)¹³ Like the Hasmonean family tombs, each of these single monuments was topped with a pyramid. Funerary monuments crowned with pyramids are well known from Herodian Jerusalem as well.¹⁴ The so-called Tombs of the

Kings, the sepulcher of the royal house of Adiabene (figure 4), is particularly relevant. Josephus describes three pyramids above this complex, which has been confirmed by the modern discovery of remains of conical “pyramids.”¹⁵ Similarly, the image of a monument crowned by three pyramids is inscribed on an



Figure 2. Tomb of Zechariah, Jerusalem.

ossuary in the Nelson Glueck Collection of the Cincinnati Art Museum (title page).¹⁶ The multiplication of pyramids above the entrance portal of the Tombs of the Kings and illustrated on the Cincinnati ossuary parallels the seven pyramids set above the Hasmonean tombs. A monument of this sort is called a *nefesh* in Rabbinic



Figure 3. Tomb of Absalom, Jerusalem.

Hebrew and cognates appear in related Semitic languages.¹⁷ In the Syriac version of I Maccabees, the Hasmonean monuments are described by the rare Syriac cognate *nafshan*.¹⁸

Military equipment of the type described in I Maccabees is extant in only one other Hasmonean artistic context. A crested helmet “of a

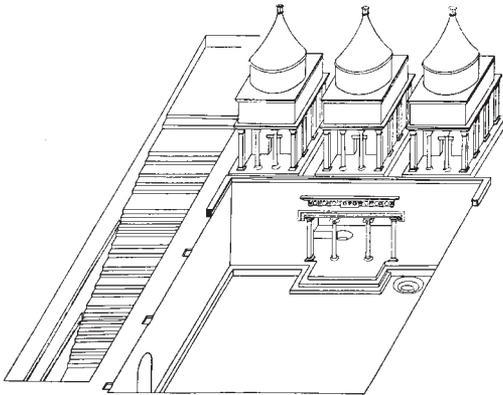


Figure 4. Tombs of the Kings, Jerusalem, Reconstruction.

Hellenistic type” appears on a double leptā (Hebrew: *perutah*, a small bronze coin) of John Hyrcanus I.¹⁹ The “suits of armor” that were set atop the columns, with “carved ships” beside them, find numerous Hellenistic and Roman parallels.²⁰ The “suits of armor,” or trophies, are a Hellenistic convention. Suits of armor set up on standards, like those described here, appear on

coins of the Hellenistic period with some regularity.²¹ In the tomb of Lyson and Kallikles, a Macedonian tomb, for example, a lunette on the southern wall of the burial chamber contains the image of a “Macedonian shield” flanked by helmet-topped corslets and hanging swords toward the corners.²² Stella G. Miller suggests that the array of armor painted

within this tomb represents either trophies or more likely is “a symbolic array of typical gear worn by members of the military class buried here.”²³ I would suggest the same for the coin of Hyrcanus and the Hasmonean tombs. Representation of weapons within funerary settings, as well as in public places such as gateways and balustrades, bouleuteria, theaters and on trophies, has a long history throughout the Mediterranean world—though not among Jews in Palestine (with the exception of Herod’s theater in Jerusalem, as we shall see).²⁴

Galleys appear on Herodian coinage, and anchors are found for the first time in Jewish coinage on a small bronze coin (*lepta*) of the Hasmonean Alexander Jannaeus.²⁵ Yaakov Meshorer believes that the Jannaeus anchor coins were “apparently struck after the conquest of the coastal cities (with the exception of Ashkelon) in 95 B.C.E. The anchor probably publicized the annexation of these areas by the Hasmonean ruler, even as Hasmonean numismatic iconography maintained considerable continuity with Seleucid coinage.”²⁶ Significantly, the image of two ships seemingly pursued by a warship was drawn on the wall of the entrance chamber of Jason’s Tomb, providing yet another concrete parallel to the Hasmonean tombs from an archaeological context (figure 5).²⁷ Rahmani goes so far as to suggest regarding Jason’s Tomb that “the original occupant of the tomb (and the probable founder of the family) was in some way connected with the naval exploits of the coast of Palestine in the years

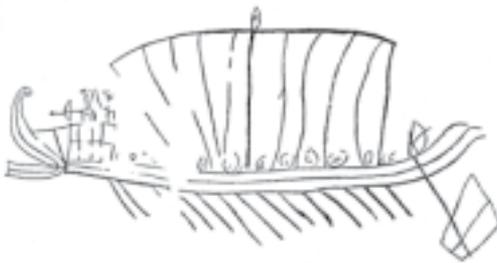


Figure 5. Drawing of a Ship, Tomb of Jason, Jerusalem.

100–64 B.C., the most probable period of the drawings.”²⁸ If this is so, then this tomb participates in a visual tradition first evidenced among Jews in the Hasmonean royal tombs. It seems that the armor and ships at the Hasmonean tombs were meant to project

Hasmonean power by sea and land. Located in the home territory of the Hasmoneans at Modi’in, on this boundary between the Judaean heartland and the conquered (or soon to be conquered) coastal plain and the somewhat distant Mediterranean Sea (approximately twenty-seven

kilometers to the west as the crow flies),²⁹ this typically Hellenistic monument presents Hasmonean military accomplishments and objectives in a concrete form that was easily understood by Jew and Greek alike. From such a distance, it is most likely that the monument could not be seen at sea.³⁰ More important for Hasmoneans looking to expand westward from their traditional habitations, however, is the fact that on a clear day the Mediterranean can certainly be seen from the hills of Modi'in. Apparently recognizing the geographic difficulties inherent in the I Maccabees description, Josephus later dropped it from his restatement of this tradition.

Of particular interest is the image of a pyramidal monument topped with an anchor on a Herodian ossuary in the Israel State Collection (figure 6). L. Y. Rahmani notes the parallel between this anchor and anchors

depicted on Hasmonean and Herodian coins, credibly suggesting that “such ornaments may have been used locally to replace statues found at the base and apex of tomb monuments abroad...” (figure 7).³¹

The anchor atop this monument, based undoubtedly upon architectural models, parallels the nautical symbolism of the Hasmonian tombs. We might further suggest that the lack of an extensive sculptural program at Modi'in reflects the type of Jewish sensitivities to which Rahmani alludes. Simon was willing to exhibit armor,

which is very close to the human

form itself, but unwilling to cross that threshold and decorate the royal tombs with unambiguously human imagery. This careful balancing is also known from Hasmonean coins. Although the models for Hasmonean coinage were clearly Seleucid, use of human imagery was not taken over from Seleucid coinage. This difference, like the constraints on



Figure 6. Image of a Funerary Monument on an Ossuary.



Figure 7. Anchor on a Lepton of Herod the Great.

decorating the Hasmonean tombs, reflects ways that Jews balanced their local concerns with full participation in “universal” Hellenistic visual culture.³²

Josephus’ reworking of the I Maccabees tradition of the Hasmonean tombs around 90 C.E. reflects changing attitudes toward the visual at the end of the Second Temple period. Basing his depiction upon I Maccabees,³³ Josephus describes the tombs in *Antiquities* 13, 211-213, as follows:

And Simon also built for his father and brothers a very great monument of polished white marble, and raising it to a great and conspicuous height, made porticoes around it, and erected monolithic pillars, wonderful thing to see. In addition to these he built for his parents and his brothers seven pyramids, one for each, so made as to excite wonder by their size and beauty; and these have been preserved to this day.³⁴

This depiction suggests Josephus’ generally positive attitude toward elegant architecture, and particularly toward elegant royal tombs.³⁵ The Hasmonean tombs “excite wonder by their size and beauty.” They are a “wonderful thing to see,” he writes. What is more fascinating, though, is what he does not say. There is no mention here of “suits of armor,” nor of “carved ships.” What is the reason for this deletion? Were the armor and ships gone by Josephus’ time? His erasure would then be nothing more than contemporization. The addition or removal of iconography from monuments is not unusual in human history, the meaning of the monument changing with ideology and the times. Alternately, did Josephus “erase” these images from the Maccabean tombs through literary device? Literary sources suggest that this might certainly be the case. In this way the Hasmonean tombs could be made to conform with Josephus’ leitmotif, whereby Jews are fundamentally antagonistic toward images. Though we will probably never know for sure, we may determine the contexts for the I Maccabees and Josephus’ descriptions within the literature and archaeology of latter Second Temple Judaea. To this task we now turn.

II. Jewish Participation in Greco-Roman Art: The Evidence of Ben Sirach and Josephus Flavius

Literary and archaeological evidence for the latter Second Temple period suggests that Jews, like their neighbors, had made the Greco-Roman artistic tradition their own. This confluence is exemplified in the Hasmonean tombs, as it is throughout the extant literary and visual sources. The most extensive discussions of the visual appear in the *Wisdom of Ben Sirach*, written around 175 B.C.E., and Josephus Flavius, who wrote during the latter part of the first century C.E. Ben Sirach and Josephus thus flank our period near its beginning and near its end, providing important windows into the development of Jewish attitudes toward “art” during the latter Second Temple period.

Joshua son of Sirach, a second-century B.C.E. priest and wisdom-writer who preceded the Hasmonean revolt by only a decade or two,³⁶ reveals a keen interest in the visual. Ben Sirach shows a special interest in Aaron’s priestly garment.³⁷ He concludes an extensive panegyric on Aaron’s garments, with a discussion of his crown:³⁸

with a gold crown upon his turban,
inscribed like a signet with “Holiness,”
a distinction to be prized, the work of an expert,
the delight of the eyes, richly adorned.
Before his time there never were such beautiful things.
No outsider ever put them on,
but only his sons
and his descendants perpetually.

Describing the Biblical priestly garments,³⁹ this panegyric revels in the vestments of Aaron the Priest and of his contemporary descendent, the high priest Simon II (c. 219-196 B.C.E.). Ben Sirach’s appreciation of art and architecture is expressed in his lavish description of Simon. Simon is presented by Ben Sirach as the culmination and high point of a list of Biblical heroes (chapters 41-50), reaching back to Enoch, through the Patriarchs, the Davidic kings, the prophets, the return to Zion, and finally to Simon:⁴⁰

The leader of his brethren and pride of his people
 was Simon the high priest, son of Onias,
 who in his life repaired the house,⁴¹
 and in his time fortified the Temple.
 He laid the foundations of the high double walls,
 the high retaining walls for the Temple enclosure.
 In his days a cistern for water was quarried out,
 a reservoir like the sea in circumference.
 He considered how to save his people from ruin,
 and fortified the city to withstand a siege.

Simon II, high priest, is here set in the mold of Biblical builders, of Solomon, who was given by God “rest on every side, that he might build a house for His name and prepare a sanctuary to stand forever,”⁴² of Zerubbabel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, who “in their days... built the house and raised the Temple, holy to the Lord, prepared for everlasting glory,” and of Nehemiah, who “raised for us the walls that had fallen, and set up the gates and bars and rebuilt our ruined houses.”⁴³ While Simon is presented as following in the path of these Biblical predecessors, his construction projects, may also be understood in terms of standard Hellenistic euergetism, public benefaction.⁴⁴ As Ben Sirach says in chapter 41, verse 19: “Children and the building of a city establish a man’s name.”

Modern scholars connect Ben Sirach’s description of Simon’s projects with a document preserved in Josephus’ *Antiquities of the Jews*. There we learn that upon his capture of Palestine from the Ptolemies, Antiochus III wrote a letter intending “to restore their city (Jerusalem) which has been destroyed by the hazards of war.” The relevant section reads:⁴⁵

And it is my will that these things be made over to them as I have ordered, and that the work on the Temple be completed, including the porticoes and any other part that it may be necessary to build. The timber, moreover, shall be brought from Judaea itself and from other nations and Lebanon without the imposition of a toll-charge. The like shall be done with the other materials needed for making the restoration of the Temple more splendid.

Victor Tcherikover argues that “it is impossible not to perceive a certain connection between the work of Simon the Just [*sic*] and the building program in Antiochus’ declaration, as Simon was a contemporary of Antiochus III. ... Simon the Just carried out what Antiochus had promised

the Jews in his manifesto."⁴⁶ For Ben Sirach, these projects were carried out by Simon alone with Divine assistance and based upon Biblical models. Antiochus is of no theological importance, and any munificence on his part would have been lost in Ben Sirach's panegyric on Simon the High Priest. If Tchernikover is correct, then Simon's reconstruction clearly fits with the way that local rulers and their Hellenistic patrons behaved in the Hellenistic world—the Jews adding a local twist to a general cultural bent.

Ben Sirach well appreciated the work of skilled artisans, considering them to be a basic part of the well-ordered city. As is typical of Greeks of Ben Sirach's social status, however, he disparages artisanship as being inferior to "wisdom":⁴⁷

The wisdom of the scribe depends on the opportunity of leisure;
 and he who has little business may become wise.
 How can he become wise who handles the plow,
 and who glories in the shaft of a goad,
 who drives oxen and is occupied with their work,
 and whose talk is about bulls?
 He sets his heart on plowing furrows,
 and he is careful about fodder for the heifers.
 So too is every craftsman and master workman
 who labors by night as well as by day;
 those who cut the signets of seals,
 each is diligent in making a great variety;
 he sets his heart on painting a lifelike image,
 and he is careful to finish his work.
 So too is the smith sitting by the anvil,
 intent upon his handiwork in iron;
 the breath of the fire melts his flesh,
 and he wastes away in the heat of the furnace;
 he inclines his ear to the sound of the hammer,
 and his eyes are on the pattern of the object.
 He sets his heart on finishing his handiwork,
 and he is careful to complete its decoration.
 So too is the potter sitting at his work
 and turning the wheel with his feet;
 he is always deeply concerned over his work,
 and all his output is by number.
 He moulds the clay with his arm
 and makes it pliable with his feet;
 he sets his heart to finish the glazing,

and he is careful to clean the furnace.
 All these rely upon their hands,
 and each is skilful in his own work.
 Without them a city cannot be established,
 and men can neither sojourn nor live there.
 Yet they are not sought out for the council of the people,
 nor do they attain eminence in the public assembly.
 They do not sit in the judge's seat,
 nor do they understand the sentence of judgment;
 they cannot expound discipline or judgment,
 and they are not found using proverbs.
 But they keep stable the fabric of the world,
 and their prayer is in the practice of their trade.

Ben Sirach's sense of the education and status of artisans "in the public assembly" reflects a widespread attitude toward craftsmen during the Greco-Roman period, particularly among philosophers and other men of letters. As Alison Burford notes, "No matter how useful or how beautiful the object, how essential to the physical or spiritual needs of the individual or community for whom it was made—be it hunting-knife, defense tower, or gold and ivory cult statue—the maker was in no way admirable."⁴⁸

If we jump more than two centuries, the lower social status of artisans is expressed in a document that straddles Jewish and non-Jewish realms. Jesus of Nazareth is described as a carpenter in Mark and as a carpenter's son in Matthew.⁴⁹ The Gospels register the surprise of the Nazareth villagers after Jesus, a local craftsman, had spoken impressively in the local synagogue. His speech was apparently not of the sort expected from a mere craftsman—both in Jewish and general Roman circles. For the Christian authors, this bucking of caste is a sign of Jesus' godliness.

Though Josephus describes the construction of the Second Temple in great detail, no contemporaneous artisan is mentioned in his writings. Josephus does, however, mention the artisans of the Biblical Tabernacle and of Solomon's Temple. "Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah" (Ex. 31:2) and with "him Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan" (Ex. 31:6), are discussed in glowing terms, even as Josephus reflects his age's ambivalence to artisans per se. The honor afforded the artisans by Scripture seems unusual to Josephus, who writes of Moses that:⁵⁰

he appointed architects for the works, in accordance with the commandment of God, yet those whom the people too would have chosen had they been empowered to do so. Their names—for these are recorded also in the holy books—were Basael son of Uri, of the tribe of Judah, grandson of Mariamme, the sister of the chief, and Elibaz, son of Isamach, of the tribe of Dan.

Josephus suggests that unusual attention to the “architects” is owing to their popularity—a detail unknown from Scripture,⁵¹ and perhaps more significantly, to the fact that their names are “recorded also in the holy books.” Josephus lavishes great attention upon the construction and beauty of Solomon’s Temple. Following the Biblical record, he mentions a craftsman from Tyre:⁵²

And Solomon summoned from Tyre, from Eiiromos’s⁵³ court, a craftsman named Cheiromos, who was of Naphthalite descent on his mother’s side—for she was of that tribe—and whose father was Urias, and Israelite by race. This man was skilled in all kinds of work, but was especially expert in working gold, silver and bronze, and it was he who constructed all the things about the Temple, in accordance with the king’s will....

The skill of this artisan follows the account in II Chronicles 2:12-13, where Hiram-abi (as he is called in II Chronicles) is far more skilled than in the earlier parallel account in I Kings 7:13-14. There he is identified only as a copper worker. Most fascinating in Josephus’ retelling is the reformulated genealogy of Hiram the craftsman. In II Chronicles he is referred to as “the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre,” while in I Kings “He was the son of a widow of the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre.” Josephus has given this Temple artisan Jewish lineage on both sides, and not only on that of his mother!⁵⁴ In the Biblical text Hiram-abi is a kind of transitional figure, the son of an Israelite mother and a Tyrian father who bridges the cultures and brings to Solomon the Tyrian technical skills.⁵⁵ Josephus (and later the Rabbis)⁵⁶ thoroughly judaizes Hiram. Josephus apparently held that only a pure Jew could fabricate the most important artifacts of the Temple.

In his own day the rule was even stricter. Josephus himself reports that Herod trained a cohort of priests as stonecutters and carpenters

specifically to build his Temple in the style of the age of Augustus.⁵⁷ Heir to a Biblical tradition of Tabernacle and Temple builders, Josephus emphasizes the skills and credentials of the stellar Tabernacle/Temple artisans of the past. In contrast, architects and artisans of Herod's Temple go unnamed—seemingly dwarfed by Herod's proprietary ownership of



Figure 8. Model of Herod's Temple, Holy Land Hotel, Jerusalem.

the project.⁵⁸ Only Herod, the benefactor, is worthy of mention. An ossuary discovered in Jerusalem nevertheless offers us a glimpse at those involved in the construction of Herod's Temple. An Aramaic inscription on this ossuary proudly proclaims this to be the final resting place of "Simon the Temple Builder" (figure 8)⁵⁹

Although Ben Sirach maintained the scholar's deprecation for those who work with their hands, he had a keen sense of craftsmanship and beauty—which he at times equated with costliness,

size, or wealth. He draws metaphors from architecture, for example, when he writes that "a mind settled on an intelligent thought is like the stucco decoration on the wall of a colonnade."⁶⁰ Similarly, Ben Sirach contrasts "...the man who sits on a splendid throne" and "the man who wears purple and a crown" to the impoverished.⁶¹ There does not seem to have been a lack of fine architecture in Ben Sirach's Judaea. The pleasure palace of Hyrcanus the Tobiad in Iraq El-Emir, seventeen kilometers west of modern Amman and dating after 180 B.C.E., may bear witness to the monumental architecture of pre-Hasmonean Judaea.⁶² Surrounded by a huge reflecting pool, this palace was decorated with massive relief friezes of lions and eagles. Particularly noteworthy is a fine lioness fountain, "a

provincial Greek work,” that was discovered facing toward the corner in the lowest course of blocks on the east side toward the north end of the crowning lion frieze.⁶³ Uncharacteristic in his lack of criticism (as we shall see), Josephus describes the fortress, called *Tyros*, writing that Hyrcanus the Tobiad “...built a strong fortress which was constructed entirely of white marble up to the very roof, and had beasts of gigantic size carved on it, and he enclosed it with a wide and deep moat.”⁶⁴

Josephus Flavius shared Ben Sirach’s respect for physical objects, pairing beauty and costliness in his descriptions. He assumes that his non-Jewish audience shares these values, which was indeed the case. Josephus’ descriptions of the Tabernacle and his two descriptions of the Second Temple are but the most extensive examples. Discussing the Tabernacle, Josephus builds upon the Biblical descriptions. Of the Biblical Ark of the Covenant, for example, Josephus writes:⁶⁵

Furthermore there was made for God an ark of stout timber of a nature that could not rot; the ark is called *eron* in our tongue, and its construction was on this wise. It had a length of five spans, and a breadth and height of three spans alike; both within and without it was all encased in gold, so as to conceal the woodwork, and it had a cover united to it by golden pivots with marvelous art, so even was the surface at every point, with no protuberance anywhere to mar the perfect adjustment....

Josephus describes Herod’s Temple on two occasions.⁶⁶ In *The Jewish War* 1, 401, he writes that “the expenditure devoted to his work was incalculable, its magnificence never surpassed.” The Temple, its platform and its porticos, are typical of Roman architecture in the age of Augustus.⁶⁷ This architectural fact in no way diminishes Josephus’ adulation. This appreciation for the costly, well produced, and large, I would argue, was typical of attitudes held by Jews in latter Second Temple Palestine, as it was among non-Jews during the same period.⁶⁸ Roman authors acknowledged this about Herodian Jerusalem. Cassius Dio (c. 160-230 C.E.) called the Temple “extremely large and beautiful.”⁶⁹ Even Tacitus (c. 56-120 C.E.), no friend of the Jews, described the Temple as having been built “with more care and effort than any of the rest [of Jerusalem]; the very colonnades around the Temple made a splendid defense.”⁷⁰ In short, Jews fully participated in art in ways that were wholly consonant with the general trends of the latter Greco-Roman period.

III. The Limits of "Art": "Idolatry" in Hellenistic Palestine

Though Jews were fully a part of the visual culture of the Greco-Roman world, dislike of idolatry was a dynamic and developing marker of Jewish identity throughout this period. Biblical malice toward "idols," that is, toward the religious representations of the Other, was a central marker of the "Common Judaism" of Hellenistic and Roman Palestine.⁷¹ This focus has deep roots in Biblical literature, where self-definition in response to the "polluting" cultic art of the Other is a basic principle.⁷² Jews were not against "images" per se. Witness the numerous Biblical, Second Temple, and Rabbinic descriptions and discussions of the Tabernacle, the Temple(s) of Jerusalem, and their vessels,⁷³ not to mention the allegiance of Greco-Roman period Jews to the central "icon" of the synagogue, the Torah scroll.⁷⁴ What Jews didn't like was the religious imagery of peoples whom they considered to be idolaters.

Scholars usually describe the Jewish approach to art as aniconic. Often used to denote the absence of images,⁷⁵ aniconism more correctly refers "to simple material symbols of a deity, as a pillar or block, not shaped into an image of human form; also to the worship connected with these."⁷⁶ Aniconism, "iconoclasm," the desire to destroy images, and even "iconophobia," the fear of images (as if Jews have some sort of aesthetic malady!) have all been used to describe the Jewish position.⁷⁷ The truth is that the English language has no term that succinctly represents the nuances of the Jewish attitude. The Jewish approach, which is specific in its dislike of the religious iconography of "idolators," but is positive toward specifically Jewish imagery, might be most correctly called "anti-idolic."⁷⁸

Aniconism in the sense of a "simple material image of a deity," was, however, practiced by the Nabateans during the Hellenistic period. When taken together with the "anti-idolism" of the Jews and the other Israelite people, the Samaritans⁷⁹ (and eventually of the Judaized Iturians and Idumeans as well), this contiguity of territories meant that broad swatches of Palestine were devoid of figurative "idols." It is not beyond credulity to suggest that one could travel from the lower Galilee through Samaria, Judaea, and south into Nabatea and not encounter a figurative "idol."⁸⁰

Idolatry was an important factor in Jewish perceptions of the Greco-Roman world from early in the Hellenistic period. This is expressed already, in the *Letter of Jeremiah*. This fourth-century B.C.E. Palestinian document is preserved in Greek in the Apocrypha and in Greek fragments that were discovered at Qumran. It was composed in Hebrew.⁸¹ Appended to the Biblical Book of Jeremiah at chapter six, the Second Temple period homilist extends Jeremiah's derisive attitude toward the religious paraphernalia of polytheism and turns this derision against Greek cult objects. As Charles J. Ball suggested long ago, "the idolatry that he denounces is no imaginary picture, but the reality of his own environment."⁸² Projected into the Babylonian exile, the author of this document is intent upon convincing Jews to stay away from idolatry in their midst. In his own words,⁸³

Now in Babylon you will see gods made of silver and gold and wood, which are carried on men's shoulders and inspire fear in the heathen. So take care not to become at all like the foreigners or to let fear for these gods possess you, when you see the multitude before and behind them worshipping them. But say in your heart, "It is thou, O Lord, whom we must worship."

The *Letter of Jeremiah* is quite thorough in its derision of idolatry. Missing from this polemic, however, is any explicit sense of fear or of impending violence.

During the centuries after Alexander, non-Jews knew what Jews thought of their cult images. The fact that Jews did not maintain cult images of their god was discussed by both Greek and Roman authors.⁸⁴ Some writers, early and late, showed disdain for the Jewish approach. Others, however, suggest a more positive evaluation. The Roman author Varro (116-27 B.C.E.) used the example of the Jews in support of his desire that fellow Romans might return to their ancient imageless religion.⁸⁵ If the earlier Roman practice had continued, Varro writes, "our worship of the gods would be more devout." Strabo of Amaseia's description of the Jewish cult betrays considerable respect for the Jewish position, at least in its origins. Strabo (64 B.C.E. to the twenties of the first century C.E.) writes that Moses was an Egyptian priest who "held a part of Lower Egypt" and

went away from there to Judaea, since he was displeased with the state of affairs there, and was accompanied by many people who worshipped the Divine Being. For he said and taught that the Egyptians were mistaken in representing the Divine Being by the images of beasts and cattle, as were the Libyans; and that the Greeks were also wrong in modeling gods in human form; for, according to him, God is the one thing alone that encompasses us all and encompasses land and sea.... What man, then, if he has sense, could be bold enough to fabricate an image of God resembling any creature amongst us? Nay, people should leave off all image-carving, and setting apart a sacred precinct and a worthy sanctuary, should worship God without an image.... Now Moses, saying things of this kind, persuaded not a few thoughtful men and led them away to this place where the settlement of Jerusalem now is....⁸⁶



Such positive evaluations of the Jewish attitude toward cult images must certainly have eased Jewish social integration and participation in the Greco-Roman world.



Figure 9. Tyrian Sheqel.

In differing ways, depending upon their social contexts, Jews sought to strike a balance between distinctly Jewish concerns and participation in the broader culture. II Maccabees 4:18-20 narrates one attempt.⁸⁷ This text describes participants in the Jerusalem gymnasium taking part in games in honor of Melqart/Hercules in Tyre (the same god whose imagery appears on Tyrian sheqels used in the Temple (figure 9)). The high priest, Jason, an extreme “hellenizer,” is said to have sent along

“three hundred drachmas of silver for the sacrifice of Heracles. The very bearers, however, judged that the money ought not to be spent on a sacrifice, but devoted to some other purpose, and, thanks to them, it went to fit out the *triremes* (ships).” Though participating in the games, these “Hellenizers” avoided the customary donation of funds to support sacrifices to Hercules that Jason had intended, and instead equipped ships for Tyre. As Martha Himmelfarb rightly notes, “The hellenizing Jews who made up the delegation could apparently participate in the games in good

conscience; they would surely have pointed out that the Torah does not forbid such activities. But they surely knew well that Torah does not permit idolatry, so they took pains to avoid even the *pro forma* idolatry of the entrance fee to games.⁸⁸ The exclusion of “pagan” visual imagery was a central feature of Jewish boundary construction that these “Hellenizers” did not dare traverse. No one seems to have gone so far as to bring images into the Temple. If they had, we might expect to hear of it from the books of Maccabees, Daniel or from the Greek and Roman authors!⁸⁹ The “anti-idolic” element of Jewish culture gained new prominence, I suggest, when the kind of balance that Jews developed under tolerant Ptolemaic and Seleucid rule was lost under Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Attention to idolatry grew and become increasingly more intense through the remainder of the Second Temple period.

Beginning with the Hasmonean Revolt, “idolatry” shifted to the front burner of Jewish identity formation—its flame turned high. I Maccabees suggests that Antiochus IV Epiphanes required that Jews, on pain of death, “build altars and sacred precincts and shrines for idols.”⁹⁰ Worse, even earlier “many even from Israel gladly adopted his religion; they sacrificed to idols and profaned the Sabbath.”⁹¹ I Maccabees locates the first shot of the revolt, and hence subsequent Hasmonean legitimacy, in Mattathias’ zealous slaughter of a Jew who chose to obey the king’s command to sacrifice.⁹² Idolatry is also central to Daniel, chapter 3, a text thought to reflect the persecutions of Judaism under Antiochus IV Epiphanes.⁹³ Judaeans’ contempt and fear of government-sponsored idolatry is expressed in terms of the sculpture of Baalshazar: “King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its breadth six cubits.”⁹⁴ The king, we are told, decreed that all must “fall down and worship” his statue, and that “whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace.”⁹⁵ Inter-communal tensions are reflected in the claim that “certain Chaldeans came forward and maliciously accused the Jews,”⁹⁶ of nonparticipation, a situation which we are led to believe would have gone unnoticed without their intervention. Four youthful representatives of the Jews are indeed cast into the furnace for refusing the king’s command and emerge unharmed through Divine intervention.⁹⁷ In the end Nebuchadnezzar recognizes the greatness of the Jewish God, and declares Judaism a licit religion.

With Hasmonean victory, Judaeen antipathy and activism against Hellenistic “idolatry” increased in significance. This activism is imbedded in the *Book of Jubilees*, a rewritten Bible of sectarian origins thought by most scholars to have been written in Hasmonean Judaea between 170-150 B.C.E.⁹⁸ Imagining the prelude to Abraham’s momentous departure to Caanan in Genesis 12:1, *Jubilees* projects contemporary attitudes and behaviors onto the Biblical narrative:⁹⁹

During the sixth week, in its seventh year, Abram said to his father Terah: “My father.” He said: “Yes, my son?” He said: “What help and advantage do we get from these idols before which you worship and prostrate yourself? For there is no spirit in them because they are dumb. They are an error of the mind. Do not worship them. Worship the God of heaven who makes the rain and dew fall on the earth and makes everything on the earth. He created everything by his word; and all life (comes) from his presence. Why do you worship those things which have no spirit in them? For they are made by hands and you carry them on your shoulders. You receive no help from them, but instead they are a great shame for those who make them and an error of the mind for those who worship them. Do not worship them.” Then he said to him: “I, too, know (this), my son. What shall I do with the people who have ordered me to serve in their presence? If I tell them what is right, they will kill me because they themselves are attached to them so that they worship and praise them. Be quiet, my son, so that they do not kill you.” When he told these things to his two brothers and they became angry at him, he remained silent. . . . In the sixtieth year of Abram’s life (which was the fourth week, in its fourth year), Abram got up at night and burned the temple of the idols. He burned everything in the temple but no one knew (about it). They got up at night and wanted to save their gods from the fire. Haran dashed in to save them, but the fire raged over him. He was burned in the fire and died in Ur of the Chaldeans before his father Terah. They buried him in Ur of the Chaldeans. Then Terah left Ur of the Chaldeans—he and his sons—to go to the land of Lebanon and the land of Canaan. He settled in Haran, and Abram lived with his father in Haran for two weeks of years.

This text preserves a veritable script for the proselyzation and Judaization of Gentiles—through force and persuasion. Though Abram seems to have fled Ur for his life, the Hasmoneans could act against “idolatry” with considerable impunity.

Abram's burning of the temple fits well with later Hasmonean treatment of non-Jewish cult sites. As early as I Maccabees 2:45, "Mattathias and his friends went about and tore down the altars." His son Judah burned the local temple (*temenos*) at Karnain, together with all who had sought refuge within it.¹⁰⁰ He "turned aside to Ashdod, to the land of the Philistines, pulled down their altars, burned up the carved images of their gods, plundered the cities, and then returned to the Land of Judah."¹⁰¹ His brother Jonathan returned to Ashdod, destroying the Temple of Dagon.¹⁰² Simon the Maccabee (the builder of the Hasmonean tombs) banished the original inhabitants of Gaza, resettling the coastal city with law-observing Jews, but only after having "purified their houses where there were idols." In a sort of rededication rite, he then "entered it [the city] with hymns and songs of praise."¹⁰³

Particularly relevant is John Hyrcanus I's¹⁰⁴ conversion of the Idumeans, Aristobulus I's conversion of the Ituraeans, and the destruction of temples within the expanding boundaries of Hasmonean Judaea.¹⁰⁵ The Idumeans and Ituraeans, like *Jubilees'* Terah, were expected to give up ancestral idolatry and adhere to the religion of Abraham (whose traditional tomb, not incidentally, is located in Idumean territory, in Hebron).¹⁰⁶ *Jubilees* projects this activism against polytheism back to the first Jew, even as the Hasmoneans constructed an idolatry exclusion zone in Judaea. This zone expanded with each convert and with each destroyed altar.

"Idol" worship, when forced upon Jews, occasionally adopted by Jews, or in any way in proximity to Jews or to Jewish territory, was fundamentally at odds with the "Common Judaism" of the Second Temple period. Anti-idolatry became a particularly powerful symbol of group identity for Hellenistic-period Jews, a community that came to exemplify its uniqueness through the ritual recitation of the Ten Commandments paired with Deuteronomy 6:4, "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One."¹⁰⁷ This liturgical choice, made by at least some Jews during the first centuries B.C.E., reinforced through repetition a commitment to "one temple to the one God,"¹⁰⁸ as well as reinforcing antagonism toward polytheism. The importance of this boundary marker intensified as Palestine was increasingly Hellenized, and Judaea was ever more exposed to the physical manifestations of Hellenistic religion.¹⁰⁹ The Hasmonean

program in Judaea regarding the visual, I would suggest, was intended to restore the Land of Israel to a strongly ideological and activist “anti-idolism” as Biblical ideal¹¹⁰—something well beyond restoration of the equilibrium that existed before the radical breach described in the books of Maccabees. The intrinsic political instability of the early Hasmonean era, with the Ptolemies and Seleucids distant and Rome just on the horizon, allowed the Hasmoneans a free hand to (re)construct a greater Judaea free of “idols” and “idolatry.” The result was a heightened awareness of “idols” and active antagonism against idolatry.

I emphasize that the Hasmoneans did not object to all aspects of Hellenistic art in equal measure, as the Hasmonean tombs and Hasmonean coinage demonstrate. Their concern was only with idolatrous imagery. The bubble of “anti-idolism” that they stretched over their Hellenistic kingdom was nevertheless porous. An example of tolerated imagery is, as we have mentioned, the Tyrian sheqel—the official coinage of the Temple, with its imagery of Melqart (identified with Hercules) and a Tyrian Eagle.¹¹¹ Unlike the situation during the later revolts against Rome, there is no evidence of an attempt by the Hasmoneans to replace this foreign coinage with their own silver issues. Until its destruction, good and pious Jews paid their Temple dues in the Tyrian sheqel, a coin preserving the high silver content of the Ptolemaic standard.¹¹² These coins bore imagery that in some other context might be thought to be in conflict with God and His Temple!¹¹³ There is no positive evidence that any Jews responded negatively to this imagery during the Hellenistic period. As with all areas of ancient history, however, a paucity of sources does not necessarily constitute evidence.¹¹⁴

IV. “Idolatry” and Identity in Roman Palestine: The Evidence of Josephus

The ships and trophies of the Hasmonean royal tombs were “erased” by Josephus’ time—either by iconoclasts or, perhaps in a literary sense, by Josephus himself.¹¹⁵ The breadth of Palestinian Jewish attitudes toward offending idolatrous images might well support either possibility. My intention in this section is to survey Josephus’ descriptive rhetoric of “anti-

idolism” and set it in the broader context of contemporaneous art and literature. I will thereby clarify the forces at work in his reformulated description of the Hasmonean tombs.

Josephus’ approach to idolatry is well expressed in his portrayals of the removal of the eagle from the Jerusalem Temple in 5 C.E. I will cite the text of the eagle incident as it appears in *The Jewish War* 1, 648–654:¹¹⁶

There were in the capital two teachers (*sofistai*) with a reputation as profound experts in the laws of their country, who consequently enjoyed the highest esteem of the whole nation; their names were Judas, son of Sepphoreaus, and Matthias, son of Margalus. Their lectures on the laws were attended by a large youthful audience, and day after day they drew together quite an army of men in their prime. Hearing now that the king was gradually sinking under despondency and disease, these teachers threw out hints to their friends that this was the fitting moment to avenge God’s honor and to pull down these structures which had been erected in defiance of their father’s laws. It was, in fact, unlawful to place in the Temple either images or busts or any representation whatsoever of a living creature; notwithstanding this, the king had erected over the great gate a golden eagle. This is it which these teachers now exhorted their disciples to cut down, telling them that, even if the action proved hazardous, it was a noble deed to die for the law of one’s country; for the souls of these who came to such an end attained immortality and an eternally abiding sense of felicity; it was only the ignoble, uninitiated in their philosophy, who clung in their ignorance to life and preferred death on a sick-bed to that of a hero.

While they were discoursing in this strain, a rumor spread that the king was dying; the news caused the young men to throw themselves more boldly into the enterprise. At mid-day, accordingly, when numbers of people were perambulating the Temple, they let themselves down from the roof by stout cords and began chopping off the golden eagle with hatchets. The king’s captain, to whom the matter was immediately reported, hastened to the scene with a considerable force, arrested about forty of the young men and conducted them to the king. Herod first asked them whether they had dared to cut down the golden eagle; they admitted it. “Who ordered you to do so?” he continued. “The law of our fathers.” “And why so exultant, when you will shortly be put to death?” “Because, after our death, we shall enjoy greater felicity.”

These proceedings provoked the king to such fury that he forgot his disease and had himself carried to a public assembly, where at great

length he denounced the men as sacrilegious persons who, under the pretext of zeal for the Law, had some more ambitious aim in view, and demanded that they should be punished for impiety....

The eagle was seemingly placed in the Temple complex long before this episode took place.¹¹⁷ It was apparently a festering sore that was excised by an extreme element of Jerusalem society near the end of Herod's life. Scholars have tried with little success to locate the eagle more specifically within the Temple.¹¹⁸ Many place it on the main facade of the Temple. Duane W. Roller recently placed it "over the main gate, essentially a pediment sculpture."¹¹⁹ This decision fits well with other temples of this period. The image of the eagle was often placed on the facades of temples in Rome and Syria.¹²⁰ One might mention that the image of an eagle with broad spread wings was the symbol for the god Baal Shamin, witness the large spread wing eagles that appear on lintels of the Temple of Baal Shamin in Palmyra.¹²¹ Similarly, the eagle destroying the snake appears on the coins and in the monumental sculpture of the nearby Nabatean kingdom.¹²² Peter Richardson attempts to locate the Temple eagle more specifically, taking into account his assumption that placing the eagle over the main doors would be "an offence almost too great to contemplate for most pious Jews." He therefore places it more discretely "over the gate above what is now called Wilson's arch, the bridge leading to the upper city."¹²³ Wherever it was, Herod's eagle was close enough at hand to have been a goad to Judas, son of Sepphoraeus, and Matthias, son of Margalus, and their followers.

Herod also used eagle imagery in his Judaean coinage. A rampart eagle appears on one face of a bronze lepton of Herod and a cornucopia on the other (figure 10).¹²⁴ Yaakov Meshorer notes that this issue was in circulation for some time, and is not at all rare in contemporary

numismatic collections.¹²⁵ Herod seems to have been particularly attracted to the eagle as a symbol, perhaps because of its local and Roman resonances. This is the only animal to appear on Herod's Judaean coinage. It provides a parallel in local bronze coinage to

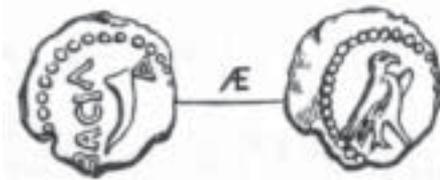


Figure 10. Eagle on a Lepton of Herod the Great.

the silver Tyrian sheqel with its eagle imagery—the “official” currency of the Temple. While the Roman eagle is generally shown with spread wings, the eagle on Herod’s coin has closed wings. This follows Hellenistic tradition, and is related to the eagle on Tyrian sheqels.¹²⁶ The eagle on the Temple facade paralleled, then, the eagles that appeared on Judaeans currency. These coins were presumably carried in the change purses by Judaeans, just as they carried Tyrian sheqels. Herod’s use of the eagle is certainly owing to the fact that this creature was the symbol of Rome. The use of the eagle on coinage and sparingly in the Temple is a good example of Herod’s attempt to balance Jewish sensibilities with and the interests of his Roman patrons.

The removal of the eagle seems to be an act of zealousness occasioned by the opportunity provided by Herod’s physical decline. It is likely that the eagle stood above the Temple, and could well have been viewed by perhaps hundreds of thousands of visitors before it was removed in guerrilla fashion by the young students of Judas and Matthias. Other, less extreme sorts of resistance to such offensive imagery were undoubtedly practiced by some Jews. One is reminded of the practice among the circle of Rabbi Johanan in third-century Tiberias to aver their gaze rather than look upon idols on the Sabbath¹²⁷ (or for that matter, by many Eastern European Jews, who would cross the street and spit each time they walked past a church). Imagery that was clearly tolerated by the majority (or minimally, to which the majority had reconciled itself) found no quarter among the religiously energized sectarians.

In a similar way, one is reminded of the near riot in Jerusalem when Jerusalemites first saw trophies of armor adorning Herod’s theater in Jerusalem, a building that Josephus describes as “spectacularly lavish but foreign to Jewish custom.”¹²⁸ Our author reports that “All around the theater were inscriptions concerning Caesar and trophies of the nations which he had won in war, all of them made for Herod of pure gold and silver.”¹²⁹

When the practice began of involving them (wild beasts) in combat with one another or setting condemned men to fight against them, foreigners were astonished at the expense and at the same time entertained by the dangerous spectacle, but to the natives it meant an open break with the customs held in honor by them. For it

seemed glaring impiety to throw men to wild beasts for the pleasure of other men as spectators, and it seemed a further impiety to change their established ways for foreign practices. But more than all else it was the trophies that irked them, for in the belief that these were images surrounded by weapons, which it was against their national custom to worship, they grew exceedingly angry. That the Jews were highly disturbed did not escape Herod's notice, and since he thought it inopportune to use force against them, he spoke to some of them reassuringly in an attempt to remove their religious scruples. He did not, however, succeed, for in their displeasure at the offences of which they thought him guilty, they cried out with one voice that although everything else might be endured, they would not let images of men being brought into the city—meaning the trophies—, for this was against their national custom. Herod, therefore, seeing how disturbed they were and that they could not easily be brought around if they did not get some reassurance, summoned the most eminent among them and leading them to the theatre, showed them the trophies and asked just what they thought these things were. When they cried out "Images of men," he gave orders for the removal of the ornaments which covered them and showed the people the bare wood. So soon as the trophies were stripped, they became a cause of laughter; and what contributed most to the confusion of these men was the fact that up to this point they had themselves regarded the arrangement as a disguise for images.

These trophies could not have been so different in form from the armor at Modi'in. Only when the self-selected Jerusalemite theatergoers realized that Herod had erected faux trophies did they relent. Faux-trophies were apparently just within the realm of the acceptable, where a step over the boundary to displaying trophies was not. Herod knew this, and apparently his workmen and eventually the theatergoers (whom one might imagine would have been more inclined to participate in the delights of Roman theater than many other Judaeans) did as well. The presence of trophies must have been a particularly sore spot for Judaeans. The coins minted in honor of the governor of Syria, Caius Sosius, in 34 B.C.E. bear the image of a Roman trophy flanked by a male and a female captive.¹³⁰ Caius Sosius is here celebrated for the final victory over the Hasmoneans that brought Herod to power, a siege that included the sacking of the Temple courts and the Upper City and the butchering of Jerusalem's inhabitants.¹³¹ Herod's faux-trophies were placed in the theater to celebrate his victories in typical Roman fashion.¹³² Jewish disdain of trophies (and of Herod's

in particular) was so intense that this consideration was given precedence over the blatantly “pagan” blood-thirstiness of the games themselves— which the Jerusalem audience was somehow willing to overlook! This seeming reversal of values reflects just how potent “anti-idolism” had become for Jewish identity formation in Roman Palestine.

The incidents of the eagle and the theater trophies were directed against Herod’s iconic violations in the public domain in the holy city. Although not all Jews were agitated by this imagery, at least not to the point of revolting against Rome, radicalized groups certainly were. One could imagine this attitude spreading as tensions with Rome increased. Hellenistic imagery that smacked of Roman paganism, like the eagle and the trophy, were suspect. Pontius Pilate’s decision to bring “busts of the emperor that were attached to military standards” into Jerusalem and then to quickly remove them in the face of solid Jewish opposition was an example not only of foolish governance, but of the Realpolitik of ruling the Jews in their land during the first century C.E.¹³³ Previous procurators had entered Jerusalem using only “standards that had no ornaments,” thus maintaining the delicate balance between the Jewish right to practice their ancestral religion, the need for Jewish allegiance to Rome, and Jewish aversion to participation in the imperial cult.¹³⁴

The issue of standards was such a point of strife between Judaeans and the Roman armies that with the defeat of Judaea in 70, and capture of the Temple, the Romans “carried their standards into the Temple court and, setting them up opposite the eastern gate, there sacrificed to them, and with rousing acclamations hailed Titus as emperor.”¹³⁵ Standards were also set in the towers of the Temple by the victorious Romans.¹³⁶ As Mary Smallwood notes, sacrifice to Roman standards in the Temple itself was “the ultimate desecration of the Jewish sanctuary.”¹³⁷ Jewish dislike of standards, whether decorated or not, was even projected into Biblical prophecy by the Dead Sea sect, commenting (*peshet*) on the book of Habbakuk:

And what it says: “For this he sacrifices to his net and burns incense to his seine...” (Hab 1:16a)

Its interpretation: They offer sacrifices to their standards and their weapons are the object of their worship.¹³⁸

Josephus relates that Pilate brought his iconic standards into Jerusalem at night and set them up. Attempting to silence Jewish protesters in Caesarea, Pilate threatened them with death if they did not relent. In the end, however, he was the one who relented, “astonished at the strength of their devotion to the laws.”

For Josephus, Roman iconography represents not only political domination, but an unambiguous religious abomination. A similar attitude is described by Philo of Alexandria. The continuing tensions focused upon pagan religion reached a low point in Caligula’s attempt to enforce Jewish worship of the Imperial cult in Temple in 40 C.E.—complete with the intention to place a sculpture of the “divine” emperor and transforming the Jerusalem Temple into a shrine to his honor.¹³⁹ This provocation would certainly have exasperated a broad swath of the Jewish population, certainly increasing the receptivity among Jews of a more radical anti-iconic tendency.

Tensions regarding Roman imagery, as well as a general complacency toward it by large numbers of Jews, are expressed in the Gospels discussion of imperial imagery on coinage. In Mark 12:13-17 we read:¹⁴⁰

And they sent to him some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians, to entrap him in his talk. And they came and said to him, “Teacher, we know that you are true, and care for no man; for you do not regard the position of men, but truly teach the way of God. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? Should we pay them, or should we not?” But knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, “Why put me to the test? Bring me a coin, and let me look at it.” And they brought one. And he said to them, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?” They said to him, “Caesar’s.” Jesus said to them, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” And they were amazed at him.

The early Christian storyteller, it seems, considered active disparagement of Roman imperial coinage to be a sign of Jewish radicalism, and not a mainstream act. The New Testament author was probably also correct that the adversaries of this sort of active disparagement included Jews with a vested interest in the *Pax Romana*, including “Pharisees,” “Herodians” and at some point the early Jesus community as well (if not Jesus himself). It is significant that the copper coins minted in Judaea by the Roman governors of Judaea bore no human imagery at all,

undoubtedly in an attempt to placate the Jewish population. Silver, however, was not minted locally. Numerous coins were found at Qumran, as well as a hoard of Tyrian sheqels.¹⁴¹ Though utterly opposed to the symbols of Greco-Roman idolatry, the Qumran sectarians, like most other Jews, traded in the coin of the realm.

Our New Testament author well understood Jewish dislike of imperial numismatic iconography. In the numismatic propaganda war with Rome, images derived from the Temple cult and the flora of Palestine were minted on Jewish coins of both revolts and set opposite images of “pagan” temples, gods, and of the Emperor himself. This acceptable Jewish imagery, itself drawing upon traditions in Roman numismatics, would stand in stark contrast with *Judaea Capta* coins minted by Rome in bronze, silver, and gold denominations (figure 11). Roman minters decorated these coins with iconography that was well known from Flavian imperial sculpture. They were decorated with busts of Vespasian, Titus, or Domitian on one side of the flange, and often with images of Judaea despondently seated beneath nothing less than the potent symbol of the Roman trophy (sometimes transformed into a Judaeian palm tree trophy) planted in Jewish Judaea.¹⁴²

Josephus was no mere chronicler of past “anti-idolism.” He was also a player in enforcing it. Our author relates that in 66 C. E. he was sent as an emissary of the Jerusalem assembly (*sanhedrin*) to the Galilee with the goal of removing idolatrous imagery that decorated Herod Antipas’ palace in Tiberias. Josephus’ mission is framed as a religious one. Speaking to a group of local dignitaries, Josephus relates:¹⁴³

I told them that I and my associates had been commissioned by the Jerusalem assembly to press for the demolition of the palace erected by Herod the tetrarch, which contained representations of animals—such a style of architecture being forbidden by the laws—and I requested their permission to proceed at once with the work. Capella and the other leaders for a long while refused this, but were finally overruled by us and assented. We were, however, anticipated in our task by Jesus, son of Sapphias, the ringleader, as already stated, of the



Figure 11. Silver Denarius of Vespasian, minted in Rome.

party of the sailors and the destitute class. Joined by some Galilaeans he set the whole palace on fire, expecting, after seeing that the roof was partly of gold, to obtain from it large spoils. There was much looting, contrary to our intention; for we, after our conference with Capella and the leading men of Tiberias, had left Bethmaus for Upper Galilee. Jesus and his followers then massacred all the Greek residents in Tiberias and any others who, before the outbreak of hostilities, had been their enemies.

One can only imagine what types of images decorated the palace of Antipas. Was there an eagle, perhaps signifying to Josephus and the “Jerusalem assembly” the power of Rome? The palace of the Tobiads, with its friezes of carved lions, lionesses, panthers, and eagles is a useful parallel, but that parallel is two centuries earlier than Antipas’ palace. Architecture that served polytheistic communities in this region used images of animals to decorate public buildings, as was the practice throughout the empire. Antagonism toward such imagery reflects, it seems, a new resistance to animal images- one unshared by the Tobiads, by those who preserved their palace, or, it seems, by the Tiberian elite whom Josephus describes as having no interest in destroying Antipas’ palace.

Archaeological remains from Jerusalem and Judaea shed some light on the issue of imagery in the holy city during the first century. Geometric forms predominate on floor mosaics, stone furniture, and in funerary contexts.¹⁴⁴ Images that Josephus might have considered illicit have nonetheless been discovered. The earliest extant animal image is of a resting stag drawn on a wall of the outer chamber of Jason’s Tomb.¹⁴⁵ Fragments of fresco containing images of birds “on a stylized architectural–floral background of trees, wreaths, buildings and the like” were uncovered by Magen Broshi near the “House of Caiaphas” on today’s Mt. Zion.¹⁴⁶ A fish carved in relief on the side of a table top, a bronze fitting for a table leg in the shape of an animal paw and a bone gaming disk bearing the image of a human hand were discovered by Nahman Avigad in what is now the Jewish quarter.¹⁴⁷ A table top bearing the image of a bird was also discovered,¹⁴⁸ and two birds appear on a small stone labeled in Hebrew *Qorban*, “sacrifice,” that was uncovered in Benjamin Mazar’s excavations near the Temple Mount.¹⁴⁹ In addition, cast stucco moldings from residential buildings discovered by Mazar bear images of

various animals against a naturalistic background in a repeating pattern. These include a lion, a lioness, an antelope, a rabbit, and apparently also a pig.¹⁵⁰ The decoration on the tomb and stone sarcophagi of the royal house of Adiabene (the “Tombs of the Kings”) is floral and architectonic in the fashion of monumental art in Jerusalem. A fragment of a lead Sidonian sarcophagus found there is decorated with images of a sphinx and a dolphin.¹⁵¹ The base of the Temple menorah, as presented on the Arch of Titus, may also belong to this group (figure 12). Daniel Sperber has recently reasserted his belief that the various images were placed there during Herod’s reign.¹⁵² Kon, by contrast, dates the base to the Hasmonean period.¹⁵³ Both authors agree that the base resembles column bases discovered in the Hellenistic Temple of Apollo at Didyma in Asia Minor. The exception is that at Didyma human mythological figures appear, while on the Menorah base we find only animals



Figure 12. The Temple Menorah Relief of the Arch of Titus.

(eagles, sea monsters with fishtails, a dragon, and two winged, bird-headed dragons). Both Sperber and Kon see this as a bow to Jewish sensibilities. In light of Herod’s eagles and the Hasmonean tombs, neither position is to be rejected outright, though the evidence is hardly conclusive. Some scholars have even suggested that the base was added only once the menorah was taken to Rome.¹⁵⁴ Whether or not the Arch of Titus menorah base is an accurate reflection of the art of Second Temple Jerusalem, the fact that I entertain this possibility is indicative of the ambiguities inherent in extant literary and archaeological sources. The limited number of animal images discovered in Jerusalem support, at least in part, a statement ascribed to an early Rabbinic sage: “Rabbi Eleazar son of Jacob says: All sorts of faces (*kol ha-partsufot*) were in Jerusalem, except for the face of man.”¹⁵⁵



Figure 13. Fragment of the Interior Vault of Hulda's Gate, Jerusalem.

Visual conservatism in the public realm nevertheless finds important, if somewhat opaque, verification in the excavated remains of the Temple. These remains of public architecture reflect a lack of imagery that Josephus would well have appreciated. Meager as this evidence is, we may begin to draw some tentative conclusions. The interior vaults of Hulda's Gates, at the southern side of the Temple Mount, are decorated in geometric patterns that are highly reminiscent of sarcophagus and tomb facade decoration (figure 13). No animal or human imagery is present in

either context. Similarly, a composite capital of Corinthian and Ionic elements discovered near the Western Wall reflects both full participation in Roman art and a level of local conservatism.¹⁵⁶ The image of a wreath appears on two opposite faces—certainly a Greco-Roman icon. On the other set of faces we find a pomegranate. Pomegranates are rich in literary associations, and their image appears in Jewish numismatics of the period as well as in Hasmonean iconography.¹⁵⁷ Their use reflects Jewish sensibilities and is consistent with the lack of human or animal imagery of Hasmonean and most Roman coinage in Judaea.

Josephus himself reflects upon Herod's construction and upon the king's propensity to walk a very narrow line between what was acceptable and unacceptable in his Judaeen building projects:¹⁵⁸

...But because of his ambition in this direction and the flattering attention which he gave to Caesar and the most influential Romans, he was forced to depart from the customs (of the Jews) and to alter many of their regulations, for in his ambitious spending he founded cities and erected temples—not in Jewish territory, for the Jews would not have put up with this, since we are forbidden such things, including the honoring of statues and sculptured forms in the manner of the Greeks,— but these he built in foreign and surrounding territory. To the Jews he made the excuse that he was doing these things not of his own account but by command and order, while he sought to please Caesar and the Romans by saying

that he was less intent upon observing the customs of his own nation than upon honoring them. On the whole, however, he was intent upon his own interests or was also ambitious to leave behind to posterity still greater monuments of his reign. It was for this reason that he was keenly interested in the reconstruction of cities and spent very great sums on this work.

Josephus did not believe for an instant that Herod's "transgressions" were imposed from without. He was fully aware that Herod's own inclinations caused him to engage in a building program that paralleled that of his patron, Augustus. He even suggests that Herod "apologized" to his subjects for his indiscretions. Be that as it may, Josephus fully recognized the boundaries maintained by Herod in Judaea, limits that the king tested severely but did not overstep. Thus, he built temples and made Jewishly illicit images only "in foreign and surrounding territories."¹⁵⁹ Most interesting is a unique fragment of a washing basin from Herod's bathhouse in his palace at Herodion, south of Jerusalem. Ehud Netzer discovered there a terracotta fragment bearing the sculpted image of a bearded head, identified by the excavator as the moon god Selinos.¹⁶⁰ This small bit of evidence may suffice to suggest Herod's use of "pagan" imagery within his private domain. On a larger scale, Josephus describes sculptures of his daughters that Agrippa I placed in his palaces at Caesarea Maritima and Sebaste (though apparently not in Jerusalem nor in the Galilee). He makes no explicitly negative comment on the existence of these images. Nevertheless, his graphic descriptions of the rude ways that these statues were treated by the non-Jews of those cities may reflect an implicit judgment:¹⁶¹

...and all who were there on military service—and they were a considerable number—went off to their homes, and seizing the images of the king's daughters carried them with one accord to the brothels, where they set them up on the roofs and offered them every possible sort of insult, doing things too indecent to be reported.

For Josephus, Jewish attitudes were the constant, while Herod and those who came after him were deviant. I would nuance Josephus' monochromatic apology, suggesting that a somewhat narrow range of

attitudes existed in latter Second Temple Judaea. This “non-idolic” stance was generally taken for granted by Jews. Attitudes became increasingly politicized during the last centuries before the Temple’s destruction, in response to political, social, and religious complexities caused by Greco-Roman domination. This increasing strictness, often expressed as an ideology of “anti-idolism,” undoubtedly affected different groups within society in differing ways. Josephus presents his Roman readers with a strict response to Roman visual culture as a whole in his apologetics for Judaism. In light of his part in the destruction of Antipas’ palace, his attitude was no doubt heartfelt.

Let us return to the Hasmonean tombs. Were the sculptures of armor and ships intentionally removed from these tombs sometime before Josephus’ day by Jews who came to consider them “too” Hellenistic? One could imagine a situation where the isolated and less politically sensitive imagery at Modi’in could be removed in accord with stiffening Judaeen resistance to Greco-Roman iconography—whether by local authorities, or perhaps by zealots who could act in Modi’in in ways that would be impossible in Roman Jerusalem. Increased exposure to, and sophistication regarding, the broader Greco-Roman world brought on by Herod’s building projects and increased Roman presence in Judaea, might certainly have encouraged a hardening of some Jewish attitudes. This scenario would reflect an intensifying stance against idolatrous imagery among elements of Judaeen society. Just as Josephus erased the seemingly errant reference to viewing the monument from the sea, he could well have removed reference to no longer extant sculpture.

Alternately, did Josephus “erase” the Hasmonean ships and armor himself? Josephus’ oeuvre as a whole emphasizes to the Roman audience the wholesale incompatibility of “idolatrous” imagery with Judaism. This subnarrative begins with the theater and eagle incidents in *War* and *Antiquities*, continues throughout his retelling of the Biblical narrative in *Antiquities*, his account of the palace of Antipas incident in the *Life*, and with discussion of the Decalogue in his last work, *Against Apion*. Writing with obvious reference to images of Roman deities (particularly of the Emperor), Josephus asserts in *Against Apion* that: “No materials, however costly, are fit to make an image of Him; no art has skill to conceive and represent it; The like of Him we have never seen, we do not imagine,

and it is impious to conjecture.”¹⁶² Elsewhere in *Apion*, Josephus adds that God “forbade the making of images, alike of any living creature, and much more of God.”¹⁶³

The consistency of Josephus’ approach led him even to condemn King Solomon. Regarding the brazen laver of the Temple and the decoration of Solomon’s throne, Josephus writes:¹⁶⁴

As he advanced in age, and his reason became in time too feeble to oppose to these the memory of his own country’s practices, he showed still greater disrespect for his own God and continued to honor those whom his wives had introduced. But even before this there had been an occasion on which he sinned and went astray in respect of the observance of the laws, namely when he made the images of the bronze bulls underneath the sea which he had set up as an offering, and those of the lions around his own throne, for in making them he committed an impious act.

In Scripture, Solomon’s throne and the brazen laver are reported with no tinge of a negative evaluation.¹⁶⁵ For Josephus, however, the sin of illicit imagery is the ultimate offense of Solomon’s old age. Significantly, in the Biblical account Solomon’s sin was not iconographic, but rested in the construction of idolatrous high places for the Moabite god Chemosh and for Molech, the Ammonite god. Louis Feldman argues that Josephus used the charge of illicit imagery as a cover, protecting “the wisest of all men” from the far more abhorrent charge of out-and-out idolatry.¹⁶⁶

Josephus screens imagery in Solomon’s Temple that might be construed to be illicit. Regarding the Cherubim, the Biblically ordained winged creatures that hovered over the Ark of the Covenant, he writes evasively: “as for the Cherubim themselves, no one can say or imagine what they looked like.”¹⁶⁷ Josephus’ description of the Temple veil is similarly apologetic, though the apology is less apparent. Following the Septuagint to II Chronicles 3:14, our author writes that the veil was “...a cloth brightly colored in hyacinth blue and purple and scarlet, which, was, moreover, made of the most gleaming soft linen.”¹⁶⁸ Josephus fails to mention the Cherubim decorating the veil that, according to the Biblical text, Solomon “wove on it.” This ellipsis is not a matter of divergent Biblical versions, but rather is an example of intentional reworking of the Biblical description. It is consistent with Josephus’ description of the veil of the

Biblical Tabernacle. There he writes: “But before the gates, extending to a length of twenty cubits and a height of five, was a tapestry of blue and crimson, interwoven with blue and fine linen and beautified with many and diverse designs, but with nothing representing the forms of animals.”¹⁶⁹ Josephus’ elimination of the Cherubim from the veil of Solomon’s Temple is a good parallel to the trophies and ships of the Hasmonean tombs. It is possible that he used the same method in both contexts—erasing a secondary element that contradicts the broader “anti-iconism” of his narrative.

The evidence that speaks most loudly for this interpretation is Josephus’ own silence over the golden calf incident in his retelling of Biblical history in *Antiquities*.¹⁷⁰ The golden calf does not exist in Josephus’ rewritten Bible. No degree of reinterpretation (the path taken by Philo, Pseudo-Philo, and later by the Rabbinic Sages), it seems, could have undone the devastation that the image of Jews serving the golden calf on Moses’ watch might have done to Josephus’ apologetics! Did Josephus himself “erase” the armor and ships through his rewriting of Maccabees, just as he erased the incident of the golden calf, the sphinxes from the veil of Solomon’s Temple, and had earlier come to Galilee to physically “erase” the sculpted animal imagery from Antipas’ palace? This was certainly not beyond the powers of our author.

Conclusion

The hypothetical late Second Temple period Judaeans with whom we began this discussion would have been stymied if asked for his opinions regarding “art.” Even still, our Judaeans would certainly have known what he found visually pleasing when he saw it. Much of the Greco-Roman visual heritage would have been known and perhaps appreciated by him. The glories of Jerusalem, the beauty of the Hasmonean tombs, and the fine craftsmanship of well-made household vessels might all have been within his experience. At the same time, our Judaeans would have had definite limits regarding acceptable visual imagery. “Idolatrous” foreign iconography was forbidden, at least in principle. With the Hasmonean revolt the exclusion of idolatry became an active (and at times activist) feature of communal identity, though Hellenistic art *per se* was not problematic. The Hasmonean tombs, architectural structures that fully reflect the visual vocabulary of their time, are a fine example of Hasmonean participation in Hellenistic art. I would argue that the intensification of “anti-idolism” beginning with the Hasmoneans was a neoconservative attempt to restore an imagined situation that existed before the traumatizing rule of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Over the almost two centuries between the construction of the Hasmonian tombs and Josephus Flavius’ depiction of these monuments, the attitudes of many Jews toward Greco-Roman visual culture became increasingly more strident. This stringency may simultaneously reflect both greater integration into that culture and a desire by some to restrict connections with it through the construction of social boundaries. This transformation is well reflected in Josephus’ writings and in other latter Second Temple period sources. This process is exemplified in the construction and subsequent transformation of the Hasmonean royal tombs at Modi’in.

Endnotes

1 This essay is dedicated to my mother, Jane Fine, and to the memory of my father Leonard Fine. I thank my colleagues Steven Bowman, Louis H. Feldman, Frederic Krome, Jerome Lund, Glenn Markoe, Gila Safran Naveh, Tessa Rajak and Richard Sarason for their insightful comments. A preliminary version of this paper was delivered at a conference on "The Jews in the Hellenistic World" at Ben Gurion University, on January 9, 2001.

2 The title of M. Olin's *The Nation Without Art* (Omaha: University of Nebraska Press, 2001). See also K. Bland, *The Artless Jew: Medieval and Modern Affirmations and Denials of the Visual* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

3 J. Elsner, *Imperial Roman and Christian Triumph: The Art of the Roman Empire AD 100-450* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 215. Elsner's position has changed dramatically since then. See his "Cultural Resistance and the Visual Image: The Case of Dura Europos," *Classical Philology*, 96, no. 3 (2001), 282-299.

4 Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, forthcoming.

5 On "art" in the English language, see *The Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 1: 657-59.

6 *Letter of Jeremiah* 6:45. *The Revised Standard Version* is cited throughout. The version of the Septuagint consulted was edited by A. Rahlfs, *Septuaginta* (Stuttgart: Privilegierte württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1959).

7 T. Fischer, "Maccabees, Book of," tr. F. Cryer, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. D. N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 4:441.

8 The Greek reads simply *epoiesen*, "made." Translating, the Mosul edition of the Pshitta uses the verb *gelaf*, carved. See *Biblia Sacra: Pshitta* (Beirut: Typis Typographiae Catholicae, 1951).

9 *Panoplies*. See H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 1298.

10 See J. Fedak, *Monumental Tombs of the Hellenistic Age: A Study of Selected Tombs from the Pre-Classical to the Early Imperial Era* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 140-50.

11 M. Kon, "Jewish Art at the Time of the Second Temple," *Jewish Art*, ed. C. Roth (London: Vallentine, Mitchell, 1971), 53.

12 L. Y. Rahmani, "Jason's Tomb," *Israel Exploration Journal* 17 (1967), 61-100.

13 N. Avigad, *Ancient Monuments in the Kidron Valley* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1954), 73-132, Hebrew.

14 See L. Y. Rahmani, "Jerusalem's Tomb Monuments on Jewish Ossuaries," *Israel Exploration Journal* 18:220-225; idem, *A Catalogue of Jewish Ossuaries in the Collection of the State of Israel* (Jerusalem: The Israel Antiquities Authority, The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1994), 31-34.

15 Ant. 20, 95; M. Kon, *The Tombs of the Kings* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1947), 73-79, Hebrew.

16 See my "Another View of Jerusalem's Necropolis During the First Century: A Decorated Ossuary from the Nelson and Helen Glueck Collection of the Cincinnati Art Museum," forthcoming in the *Journal of Jewish Studies*. A second ossuary in the Israel State Collection bears images of six freestanding pyramidal monuments on their sides and lid. Rahmani, *Catalogue*, no. 473. This piece is thought to derive from the Hebron hills.

17 E. Ben Yehuda, *A Complete Dictionary of Ancient and Modern Hebrew* (Jerusalem: Makor, 1980), 8: 3749, Hebrew; M. Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli, and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (New York: Traditional Press, 1982), 926; D. R. Hillers and E. Cussini, *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 390.

18 *Biblia Sacra: Pshitta*, ad. loc.; K. Bruckelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum* (Hildesheim, Zurich, New York: Georg Olms, 1982), 441; A. Kahana, *Ha-Sefarim ha-Hitzonim* (Tel Aviv: Hozaath M'qoroth, 1937), 2:162.

19 Samuels, C. W., P. Rynearson, Y. Meshorer, *The Numismatic Legacy of the Jews As Depicted By A Distinguished American Collection*, ed. P. Rynearson (New York: Stack's Publications, Numismatic Review, 2000), no. 37; Meshorer, *Ancient Jewish Coinage*, 1:66-67. Crested helmets also appear on the coins of Herod Archelaus. See 2:32-33.

20 See J. Goldstein, *The Anchor Bible: I Maccabees* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1976), 474-75. On Roman trophies, see G. C. Picard, *Les trophées romains: Contribution à l'histoire de la religion et de l'art triomphal de Rome* (Paris: E. De Boccard, 1957), pl. viii, xi.

21 L. Anson, *Numismata Graeca: Greek Coin-Types* (London, L. Anson, 1911-1914), Part 2, 106-12.

22 S. G. Miller, *The Tomb of Lyson and Kallikles, A Painted Macedonian Tomb* (Mainz am Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1993), 48-49.

23 Miller, *The Tomb of Lyson and Kallikles* 49.

24 Ibid, 51.

25 Meshorer, *Ancient Jewish Coinage*, 1: 62, 2: 13, 18, 23, 28, 31-33, 79.

26 Ibid., 1:62. See U. Rappaport, "On the 'Hellenization' of the Hasmoneans," *The Hasmonean State: The History of the Hasmoneans During the Hellenistic Period*, eds. U. Rappaport and I. Ronen (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 1993), 87, (Hebrew); A. Kindler, "Hellenistic Influences on Hasmonean Coinage," *The Hasmonean State*, 113.

27 Rahmani, "Jason's Tomb," 69-72; R. Patai, *The Children of Noah: Jewish Seafaring in Ancient Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 75, 147-48; N. Kashtan, "Seafaring and Jews in Graeco-Roman Palestine: Realistic and Symbolic Dimensions." *Mediterranean Historical Review* 15, no. 1 (2000): 22-23.

28 Rahmani, "Jason's Tomb," 97.

29 Y. Aharoni and M. Avi-Yonah, *The Macmillan Bible Atlas*, 3rd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1993), 206.

30 J. Goldstein believes this to be an ancient misreading of the text. See Goldstein, *The Anchor Bible: I Maccabees*, 471, 475.

31 Rahmani, *Catalogue*, 31; R. Hachlili, *Jewish Ornamented Ossuaries of the Late Second Temple Period* (Haifa: The Reuben and Edith Hecht Museum, University of Haifa, 1988), no. 11; Y. Meshorer, *A Treasury of Jewish Coins from the Persian Period to Bar-Kochba* (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 1997), 31, 35, 40, 47, 61, 64, 67, 73, 93, 100, Hebrew. Add to these the image of a monument on a "Darom-type" oil lamp published by V. Sussman, *Ornamented Jewish Oil Lamps* (Warminster: Aris & Philips, Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1982), 56-7, cat. no. 60.

32 See Rappaport, "On the Hellenization," 87-8.

33 On Josephus' use of I Maccabees, see I. M. Gafni, "On the Use of I Maccabees by Josephus Flavius," *Zion* 45, no. 2 (1980), 81-95, Hebrew. Gafni notes that "Josephus felt free to rewrite major portions of his source" (English summary). Translated as "Josephus and One Maccabees," *Josephus, the Bible and History*, eds. L. H. Feldman and G. Hata (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 116-31. L. H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrayal of the Hasmoneans Compared with I Maccabees," *Josephus and the History of the Greco-Roman Period: Essays in Memory of Morton Smith* eds. F. Parente and J. Sievers (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), 41-68. For a comparison of the I Maccabees and Josephan passages, see Goldstein, *I Maccabees*, 475.

34 The edition and translation of Josephus generally used in this study is *Josephus Flavius, The Complete Works, Loeb Classical Library*, tr. H. St. J. Thackeray, R. Marcus, A. Wikgren, and L. Feldman (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1926-1965).

35 As, for example, the royal family of Adiabene (discussed above). The most recent article on the Herodian royal tomb is J. Magness, "The Mausolea of Augustus, Alexander, and Herod the Great," *Hesed ve-Emet: Studies in Honor of Ernest S. Frerichs*, eds. J. Magness and S. Gitin (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 213-30.

36 Alexander A. Di Lella, "Wisdom of Ben-Sira," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. D.

N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:932. I have intentionally not discussed the Persian period coins of Yehud, with their obvious Greek influence, since evidence external to them that might help in their interpretation is essentially lacking. See N. Kokkinos (*The Herodian Dynasty: Origins, Role in Society and Eclipse* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 82.

37 Sir. 45:6-13. See also: M. H. Segel, ed., *Sefer Ben Sira ha-Shalem* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1953); Z. Ben-Hayyim, *The Book of Ben Sira: Text, Concordance and Analysis of the Vocabulary* (Jerusalem: Academy of the Hebrew Language and Shrine of the Book, 1977), Hebrew.

38 Sir. 45:12-13.

39 See Ex. 28:2-42.

40 Sir. 50:1-5.

41 Referring to the Temple.

42 Sir. 47:13.

43 Sir. 49:12-13.

44 On this neologism, see: A. J. S. Spawforth, "Euergetism," *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth, 3rd ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 566.

45 Ant. 12, 141. V. Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1959), 80-81.

46 Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization*, 80-81.

47 Sir. 38:24-34.

48 A. Burford, *Craftsmen in Greek and Roman Society* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1974), 13.

49 Matt. 13:53-58, Mk. 6:1-6, Lk. 4:16-30.

50 Ant. 3, 104-6.

51 b. Berakhot 55a makes a related comment, referring to Ex. 35:31. This unusual show of respect is unprecedented in the literature of the ancient Near East. Compare the texts discussed by C. Cohen, "Was the P Document Secret?," *The Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society* 1, no. 2 (1968), 41-44.

52 Ant. 8, 76-78.

53 Hebrew: Hiram or Hiram.

54 Oddly, this text has not been noticed by scholars dealing with Jewish identity during this period.

55 W. Johnston, *1 & 2 Chronicles* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 1:310-11.

56 See L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1968), 6:295, note 61.

57 Ant. 15, 390.

58 See Ant. 15, 380-425.

59 Rahmani, *Catalogue*, no. 200.

60 Sir. 22:17

61 Sir. 40:3-4.

62 P. W. Lapp and N. I. Lapp, "Iraq El-Emir," *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, ed. E. Stern (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society and Carta; New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993) 646-9. E. Netzer, "The Enchanted Palace Built by Hyrcanus the Tobiad in Transjordan," *Qadmoniot* 36, no. 2 (1998), 117-22, Hebrew; C. C. Ji, "A New Look at the Tobiads in 'Iraq El-Emir," *Liber Annuus* 45 (1998), 447-440.

63 D. K. Hill, "The Animal Fountain of Iraq el-Amir," *Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research* 71 (1963), 45-55.

64 Ant. 12, 230.

65 Ant. 3, 134-5.

66 War 5, 184-227; Ant. 15. These texts were discussed most recently by 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: E. J. Brill, 1994), 233-46.

67 See most recently D. Jacobson, "Herod's Roman Temple," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 28, no. 2 (2002), 18-27, 60-61.

68 See also the Greek Additions to Esther, 15:6 where Ahasuerus is described "seated on his royal throne, clad in all his magnificence, and covered with gold and precious stones; he was an awe-inspiring sight." See also Tobit 14:16-17, Rev. 21:21.

69 Cassius Dio, *Historia Romana* 17:3, M. Stern, ed. *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1980), 2:350-51.

70 *Historiae* 5.12:1 in Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors*, 2:22, 30.

71 The term "Common Judaism" was coined by E. P. Sanders. The fullest statement is his *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 BCE-66 CE* (London and Philadelphia: Trinity International, 1992). Sanders underplays, however, the significance of dislike of idolatry. See 243-46.

72 For Biblical attitudes, see the most recent studies by T. N. D. Mettinger. *No Graven Image? Israelite Aniconism in its Ancient Near Eastern Context* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell International, 1995); "Israelite Aniconism: Developments and Origins," in *The Image and the Book*, ed. K. van der Toorn, (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 173-204 and the bibliography cited there. R. Goldenberg, *The Nations that Know Thee Not: Ancient Jewish Attitudes toward Other Religions* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 9-27, surveys Biblical attitudes. For a broad discussion of Second Temple period attitudes, see pages 33-80.

73 This focus is emphasized by B. Wacholder, *Eupolemus: A Study in Judaeo-Greek Literature* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1974), 173-74; On Rabbinic discussion of the Tabernacle/Temple and its cult objects, see R. Kirschner's comments in his edition of the *Baraita de-Meleket ha-Mishkan* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 1991), 80-83.

74 See my *This Holy Place: On the Sanctity of the Synagogue During the Greco-Roman Period* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1997), passim.

75 Mettinger, *No Graven Image?*; idem, "Israelite Aniconism," 173.

76 The *Oxford English Dictionary*, 1: 172, defines aniconic as "Applied to simple material symbols of a deity, as a pillar or block, not shaped into an image of human form; also to the worship connected with these. Hence aniconism...., the use of, or worship connected with, such symbols." See also the entries on "iconic," "icon," "iconism" (7:608-9). Mettinger, "Israelite Aniconism," 199, attempts to finesse this definitional problem by describing the "cults where there is no iconic representation of the divine (anthropomorphic or theriomorphic) serving as the dominant or central cult symbol" as observing *de facto* aniconism," as opposed to Israelite "programmatically aniconism." See also idem, *No Graven Image?*, esp. 16-27.

77 Mettinger, *No Graven Image?*, 17. See especially D. Freedberg's discussion of "the myth of aniconism" in his *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1989), 54-81; Bland, *The Artless Jew*, passim.

78 I construe "anti-idolic" to be a subset of the existing term "anti-idolatry." "Anti-idolic" focuses upon the Jewishly objectionable visual aspects of non-Jewish religion, on objects that Jews construed as "idols." Many thanks to the staff of the Oxford Dictionary of the English Language for discussing with me the issues involved in coining this neologism. Ludwig Blau ("Early Christian Archaeology from a Jewish Point of View," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 3 [1926]: 179) reached conclusions similar to my own, stating that "Idols were not to be tolerated in the holy land, and yet from all this nothing can be gathered with reference to the attitude of the Jews towards images of a private character."

79 A study of Samaritan attitudes is a desideratum. The consistency of "anti-idolic" attitudes in the Samaritan Pentateuch, taken together with the lack of iconic elements from the Hellenistic period Samaritan Temple on Mt. Gerizim and later synagogue art,

support the notion that Samaritans, like Jews, were generally “anti-idolic.” See I. Magen, “Mount Gerizim—A Temple City,” *Qadmoniot* 23, nos. 3-4 (1990), 70-96, (Hebrew); *idem*, “Samaritan Synagogues,” *Qadmoniot* 25, no. 3-4 (1992), 66-90, (Hebrew); R. Pummer, “Samaritan Synagogues and Jewish Synagogues: Similarities and Differences,” *Jews, Christians and Polytheists in the Ancient Synagogue: Cultural Interaction During the Greco-Roman Period*, ed. S. Fine (London: Routledge, 1999), 143-44. Aniconism was practiced by the Nabateans into the first century. On the Nabateans: J. Patrich, *The Formation of Nabatean Art: Prohibition of a Graven Image Among the Nabateans* (Jerusalem: Magnes and Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990), Mettinger, “Israelite Aniconism,” 193-99.

80 For a later period, see N. Belayche, *Judaea-Palaestina: The Pagan Cults in Roman Period (Second to Fourth Century)* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 14.

81 7Q2 (7QpapEpJer gr). On the date of the *Letter of Jeremiah*, see C. A. Moore, *The Anchor Bible: Daniel, Esther and Jeremiah: The Additions* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1987), 326-27. Documents from the Hellenistic diaspora are discussed in my *Art and Judaism*, section 2.

82 Charles J. Ball, “Epistle of Jeremy,” in *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*, ed. R. H. Charles (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 1:596.

83 *Letter of Jeremiah* 6:4-6.

84 Hecataeus of Abdera, in Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors*, 1:26, 28, lines 3-4; Tacitus, *History*, 9:1 (Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors*, 2:21, 28; Cassius Dio, *Historia Romana* 37, 17:2 (in Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors*, 2: 349-51). See also Livy, in Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors*, 1:330. Due to the brevity of his preserved statement, Livy’s evaluation cannot be discerned. See the discussion by Bland, *The Artless Jew*, 60-62.

85 Varro, in Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors*, 1:208.

86 Strabo of Amaseia, *Geography*, 14, 35, in Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors*, 1:294, 299-300.

88 M. Himmelfarb, “Levi, Phinehas, and the Problem of Inter-marriage at the Time of the Maccabean Revolt,” *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 6 (1999), 21-22. See also E. Bickerman, *The God of the Maccabees*, tr. H. R. Moehring (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1979), 41; Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization*, 166-67; D. Mendels, *The Land of Israel as Political Concept in Hasmonean Literature* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1987), 141-42.

89 Elias Bickerman compares this silence to responses to later attempts to place images of Caligula and Nero in the Temple, deducing, quite reasonably, that no such idol was set up. See Bickerman, *The God of the Maccabees*, 68. See also Himmelfarb, “Levi, Phinehas,” 21.

90 I Macc. 1:46.

91 *Ibid.*, 1:43.

92 *Ibid.*, 2:15-28.

93 On the date of Daniel, and of this tradition within Daniel, see L. F. Hartman, *The Book of Daniel* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1977), 9-18. Hartman (p. 159) interprets this tradition as a response to these persecutions.

94 Dan. 3:1. See also 2:31 ff.

95 *Ibid.*, 3:6. See also I Macc. 2:15-28.

96 *Ibid.*, 3:8.

97 *Ibid.*, 1.

98 On the date of *Jubilees*, see *The Book of Jubilees*, tr. J. VanderKam (Louvain: Peeters, 1989), v-vi.

99 Jub. 12:1-15, tr. J. VanderKam.

100 I Macc. 5:43-44; II Macc. 12:26-27.

101 I Macc. 5:68. See the comments of S. Zeitlin, *The First Book of Maccabees: An English Translation*, tr. S. Tedesche, Commentary by S. Zeitlin (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), ad. loc. For the chronology of these events, see Goldstein, *I Maccabees*, 161-74.

102 I Macc. 10:83-85.

103 I Macc. 13:47 and Zeitlin's comments. For further examples, see I Macc. 5:44, 10:84.

104 Ruled 135-104 B.C.E.

105 See S. L. Derfler, *The Hellenistic Temple at Beersheva, Israel*, Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1984, esp. 86-92. Derfler suggests that after the destruction of a Hellenistic temple in Beer Sheva around 125 B.C.E. by Hyrcanus I, when cult objects were "destroyed or buried" and the building was "modeled and resanctified in order to conform to traditional Yawistic practice." Derfler does not provide positive evidence for Judean usage or for other "Judean cults re-established by Hyrcanus" (ibid.). While the destruction of this structure by Hyrcanus seems reasonable, it seems just as reasonable to me that the local population rededicated the temple, and not Hasmoneans. On the destruction of the Samaritan temple on Mt. Gerizim, see Magen, "Mount Gerizim-A Temple City."

106 L. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 324-26; S. J. D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1999), esp. 109-39.

107 E. E. Urbach, "The Place of the Ten Commandments in Ritual and Prayer," *The Ten Commandments as Reflected in Tradition, and Literature Throughout the Ages* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1985), 127-46, (Hebrew). On the question of the *Shema* in Jewish prayer of the Second Temple period focusing on Qumran, see D. K. Falk, *Daily, Sabbath and Festival Prayers in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1998), 47-54, 113-16, 248-50; R. S. Sarason, "The 'Intersections' of Qumran and Rabbinic Judaism: The Case of Prayer Texts and Liturgies," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 8, no. 2 (2001), 179.

108 Ag. Ap. 2, 193.

109 Describing the cities of the seacoast, from Sidon and Tyre south to Ashkelon, the author of the Book of Judith (4:8) describes the armies of Holofernes who "demolished all their shrines and cut down their sacred groves."

110 W. D. Davies, *The Territorial Dimension of Judaism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1982), 44-47.

111 Compare Sanders, *Judaism*, 243.

112 Kindler, "Hellenistic Influences," 103.

113 The Rabbinic sages were well aware that the Tyrian sheqel was standard for use in the Temple. See Meshorer, *Ancient Jewish Coinage*, 2: 7-9; *idem*, "One Hundred Ninety Years of Tyrian Shekels," *Studies in Honor of Leo Milenberg*, eds. A. Houghton, S. Hurter, P. E. Mottahedeh and J. A. Scott (Wetteren, Belgium: Cultura, 1984), 171-79. Meshorer goes so far as to suggest that Tyrian sheqels were minted in Jerusalem under Herod after the closure of the Tyrian mint in 19 B.C.E.

114 See my "Review of Shaye J. D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties*," *Archaeological Odyssey* (November/December 2000), 56, 58.

115 See Goldstein, *The Anchor Bible: I Maccabees*, 475.

116 Compare Ant. 17, 149-63.

117 A. H. M. Jones, *The Herods of Judaea* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938), 148. Compare E. R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* (New York: Pantheon, 1953-1968), 8:123-24; Meshorer, *Ancient Jewish Coins*, 2:29; P. Richardson, *Herod: King of the Jews and Friend of Rome* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), 15-18.

118 This debate is mediated by Richardson, *Herod*, 16-17.

119 D. W. Roller, *The Building Program of Herod the Great* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 178.

120 M. Grant, *Herod the Great* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), 207-9.

121 Paul Collart and Jacques Vicari, *Le Sanctuaire de Baalshamin a Palmyre* (Rome: Institut Suisse, 1969), 2: xcvi.

- 122 Grant, *Herod the Great*, 208.
- 123 Richardson, *Herod*, 18.
- 124 Meshorer, *Ancient Jewish Coinage*, 2: 13, 29-30.
- 125 Meshorer, *A Treasury of Jewish Coins*, 66-67.
- 126 Meshorer, *Ancient Jewish Coinage*, 203, n. 76.
- 127 Jerusalem Talmud, Avodah Zarah 3:1, 43b-c.
- 128 Ant. 15, 268.
- 129 Ant. 15, 272-279.
- 130 Picard, *Les Trophées Romains*, 243; Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule*, 57-59; H. A. Grueber, *Coins of the Roman Republic in the British Museum* (London: British Museum, 1910), 2: 506, no. 146; H. St. J. Hart, "Judaea and Rome: The Official Commentary," *Journal of Theological Studies*, New Series 3 (1952), 180.
- 131 War 1, 351-6, Ant. 14, 477-86.
- 132 See Picard, *Les Trophées Romains*, 283. Picard suggests that Herod's placement of triumphal trophies in a theater was inspired by the Forum of Pompei in Rome.
- 133 Ant. 18, 55-59; C. H. Kraeling, "The Episode of the Roman Standards in Jerusalem," *Harvard Theological Review* 35 (1942), 263-89; Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule*, 160-62, 165-66.
- 134 M. Pucci Ben Zeev, *Jewish Rights in the Roman World: The Greek and Latin Documents Quoted by Josephus Flavius* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 471-81.
- 135 War 6, 316.
- 136 War 6, 403.
- 137 Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule*, 324-325; Picard, *Les Trophées Romains*, 343.
- 138 *Pesher Habbakuk*, col. 5, line 12 to 6, line 5. B. Nitzan, *Pesher Habbakuk: A Scroll From the Wilderness of Judaea (1QpHab)* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1986), 169, Hebrew. This translation follows F. García Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English*, tr. W.G. E. Watson (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), par. 1764-65.
- 139 Philo of Alexandria, *Embassy to Gaius*, tr. F. H. Colson (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1971); Ant. 18, 257-309; Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule*, 239-245; *idem*, "Philo and Josephus as Historians of the Same Events," *Josephus, Judaism and Christianity*, eds. L. H. Feldman, G. Hata (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987), 114-29.
- 140 See parallels in Matt. 22:15-22, Luke 20:20-26.
- 141 Y. Meshorer, "Numismatics," *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, eds. L. H. Schiffman and J. C. VanderKam (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 2: 619-620.
- 142 See St. J. Hart, "Judaea and Rome," 176-94 and my "On the Development of a Visual Symbol: The Date Palm in Roman Palestine and the Jews," *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 4 (1989), 105-18.
- 143 Life 12, 65-67.
- 144 Cataloged by R. Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish Art and Architecture in the Land of Israel* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), 9-127.
- 145 Rahmani, ("Jason's Tomb," 72-73, 97) does not discuss the date of this drawing, though it seems to date to the Hasmonean period.
- 146 M. Broshi, "Excavations in the House of Caiaphas, Mount Zion" *Jerusalem Revealed*, ed. Y. Yadin (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1975), 58 and pl. 3.
- 147 N. Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1980), 168-70, 193, 200.
- 148 Photographed by the author at the Reuben and Edith Hecht Museum of the University of Haifa.
- 149 M. Ben Dov, *In the Shadow of the Temple: The Discovery of Ancient Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1982), 160.
- 150 *Ibid.*, 150-151. In a private communication L. Feldman queried, "How do we

know that the building was that of a Jew?" In this he is completely correct. Nevertheless, the owner of this building does not seem to have had any scruples, religious, political, or otherwise, against maintaining this structure within meters of the Temple Mount.

151 Kon, *The Tombs of the Kings*, 71.

152 D. Sperber, "Between Jerusalem and Rome: The History of the Base of the Menorah as Depicted on the Arch of Titus," *In the Light of the Menorah: Story of a Symbol*, ed. Y. Yisraeli (Jerusalem: Israel Museum and Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1999), 50-53; *idem*, "The History of the Menorah," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 16 (1965), 147-52. Sperber puts undue stress upon Rabbinic attitudes.

153 M. Kon, "Jewish Art at the Time of the Second Temple," 54-55.

154 See H. Strauss, "The Date and Form of the Menorah of the Maccabees," *Eretz Israel* 6 (1960), 122-29, Hebrew.

155 Tosefta Avodah Zarah 5:2. See G. J. Blidstein, "The *Tannaim* and Plastic Art: Problems and Prospects," *Perspectives in Jewish Learning* 5 (1973), 18.

156 Israel Antiquities Authority IAA 1994-3643, published in J. Goodnick Westenholz, ed. *Sacred Bounty Sacred Land: The Seven Species of the Land of Israel* (Jerusalem: Bible Lands Museum, 1998), 130.

157 Meshorer, *A Treasury*, 37-39, 44-47; Westenholz, *Sacred Bounty*, 33-37, 150-54, N. Avigad, "Excavations in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem, 1969/70 (Preliminary Report)," *Israel Exploration Journal* 20, 1-2 (1970), 3-5.

158 Ant. 15, 328-30.

159 D. M. Jacobson, "Herod the Great Shows his True Colors," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 64, no. 3 (2001), 103, goes so far as to suggest that "at heart [Herod] was an 'unrepentant' pagan, who paid mere lip service to his adopted Jewish faith." See also Jacobson's "King Herod's Heroic Public Image," *Revue Biblique* 95, no. 3 (1988): 386-403.

160 E. Netzer, *The Palaces of the Hasmoneans and Herod the Great* (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 1999), 106, Hebrew.

161 Ant. 19, 357. See also Ant. 15, 23-30, and compare J. Gutmann, "The Second Commandment and the Image in Judaism," *Beauty in Holiness: Studies in Jewish Customs and Ceremonial Art*, ed. J. Gutmann (New York: Ktav, 1970), 12.

162 Ag. Ap. 2, 190.

163 Ag. Ap. 2, 75. Compare Blidstein's assessment of Josephus in "The *Tannaim* and Plastic Art," 15-16.

164 Ant. 8, 194-195, and note "a," ad. loc.

165 I Kings 11:7.

166 L. H. Feldman, "Josephus as an Apologist to the Greco-Roman World: His Portrait of Solomon," E. Schüssler Fiorenza, ed., *Aspects of Religious Propaganda in Judaism and Early Christianity* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1996), 77; *idem*, *Josephus' Interpretation of the Bible* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1998), 617-18; P. Spilsbury, *The Image of the Jew in Flavius Josephus' Paraphrase of the Bible* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 184-85; C. T. Begg, "Solomon's Apostasy (1 Kgs. 11, 11-13) According to Josephus," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 28, no. 3 (1997), 303-5.

167 Ant. 3, 137. On the Cherubim, see Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 1:81, 5:104, n. 94; 3:158-159, 6:65, n. 333.

168 See note "a" to Ant. 8, 72.

169 Ant. 3, 113. See also Ant. 8, 145 and Feldman's comment in "Josephus as an Apologist," 77.

170 On Josephus' Aaron, see L. H. Feldman, *Studies in Josephus' Rewritten Bible* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1998), 55-73. On the golden calf incident in Josephus and other ancient Jewish writers, see 59-62.

STEVEN FINE is the first incumbent of the Jewish Foundation Chair of Judaic Studies and is head of the Department of Judaic Studies at the University of Cincinnati. This Feinberg lecture, delivered May 10, 2001, marked Dr. Fine's introduction to the Cincinnati community. He joined the U.C. faculty in the Autumn of that year.

Professor Fine received his doctorate in Jewish History from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and his MA in Art History from the University of Southern California. He is the author of *This Holy Place: On the Sanctity of the Synagogue During the Greco-Roman Period* (Notre Dame University Press, 1997). His *Sacred Realm: The Emergence of the Synagogue in the Ancient World* (Oxford University Press, 1996) accompanied an exhibition of the same name which he curated at Yeshiva University Museum. *Sacred Realm* was awarded the Philip Johnson Award for Excellence in Published Exhibition Catalogues of the Society of Architectural Historians. Dr. Fine's edited volume *Jews, Christians and Polytheists in the Ancient Synagogue: Cultural Interaction During the Greco-Roman Period* (Routledge, 1999) was a finalist for the Charles H. Revson Foundation Award in Jewish-Christian Relations of the National Jewish Book Council. *A Crown for a King: Studies in Memory of Prof. Stephen S. Kayser*, edited with W. Kramer and S. Sabar (Magnes Museum and Gefen), appeared in 2000 and *Liturgy in the Life of the Synagogue*, a volume edited with R. Langer, is in press. Steven Fine is co-author of *Where God Dwells: A Child's History of the Synagogue* (with L. B. Fine. Torah Aura Press, 1999) and founding editor of *AJS Perspectives: The Newsletter of the Association for Jewish Studies*. Dr. Fine's current project is entitled "Jewish Archaeology": *Art and Judaism During the Greco-Roman Period*. Nearing completion, this volume will be published by the Jewish Publication Society of America.

Cover and title page illustration: Image of a Funerary Monument with Three Pyramids on an Ossuary, from the collection of Nelson and Helen Glueck, Cincinnati Art Museum.

Photo Credits

Cover and title page, Courtesy of the Cincinnati Art Museum, by permission of Glenn Markoe; Figures 1, 2, 3, courtesy of www.HolyLandPhotos.org; Figures 8, 13 by Steven Fine; Figure 4, after B. Mazar, *The Mountain of the Lord*, 231; Figures 5, after L. Y. Rahmani, "Jason's Tomb," 70-71, Courtesy of the Israel Exploration Society; Figure 6, after Hachlili, *Jewish Ornamented Ossuaries*, no. 11; Figures 7, 11, from the Alan I. Casden Collection of Ancient Jewish Coins, as represented in *The Numismatic Legacy of the Jews*, coin 48 rev., 144 rev.; Figure 9, T. E. Mionnet, *Description de médailles antiques, grecques et romaines avec leur degré de rareté et leur estimation* (Paris: Testu, 1806-13, 8, pl. 17, no. 4); Figure 10, after F. Madden, *History of Jewish Coinage* (London, B. Quaritch, 1864), 112; Figure 12, after Z. Ephron and C. Roth, *ha-Omanut ha-Yehudit* (Ramat Gan: Massada, 1957), 126, 127.



Department of Judaic Studies
McMicken College of Arts and Sciences
University of Cincinnati
PO Box 210169
Cincinnati, Ohio 45221-0169