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The Archaeology of Roman Palestine

by Mark A. Chancey and Adam Porter



Herodium's fortress was built on top of a natural hill, which was raised by the addition of many tons of soil to create an artificial mound. Although strongly fortified, the fortress included a garden and luxury apartments and thus was quite comfortable. *Photo courtesy of Werner Braun.*

The Roman period in Palestine began when the Roman General Pompey conquered the region in 63 BCE. According to Josephus, Pompey besieged the Temple in Jerusalem (*Jewish Antiquities* 14.58–67). After breaching its northern wall, he subdued the Judeans and pulled down Jerusalem's city walls. There is no archaeological evidence of this siege, but this is to be expected, as Herod rebuilt the Temple (see below), and it suffered a more protracted and damaging siege in 70 CE. After securing Jerusalem, Pompey

removed non-Jewish territory from Jerusalem's control, restoring "Hippus, Scythopolis, Pella, Dium, Samaria, Marisa, Azotus, Jamneia, and Arethusa ... to their own inhabitants." He also rebuilt Gadara (*Ant* 14.75). Again, there are no architectural remains to corroborate Josephus' description, but the cities of the Decapolis (a group of non-Jewish cities in Transjordan) celebrated their "liberation" from Hasmonean control by initiating a new era, an inauguration reflected in the dates on their coins (Spijkerman 1978: 15).

Shortly thereafter, in 57 BCE, the Roman senate appointed Gabinius, who had assisted Pompey in the siege of Jerusalem, as governor of Syria (Ant 14.82). When Alexander, a Hasmonean scion, rebelled against Rome, Gabinius invaded Judea again. Alexander captured three fortresses—Alexandreion, Hyrcania, and Machaerus—which Gabinius besieged. Alexander sued for peace, and Gabinius demolished the three fortresses. At Machaerus, the large cone of debris on the steeply sloping hill below the fortress provides archaeological confirmation of Gabinius' destruction (Corbo and Loffreda 1981: fig. 6). Hyrcania and Alexandreion have been identified, but not excavated.

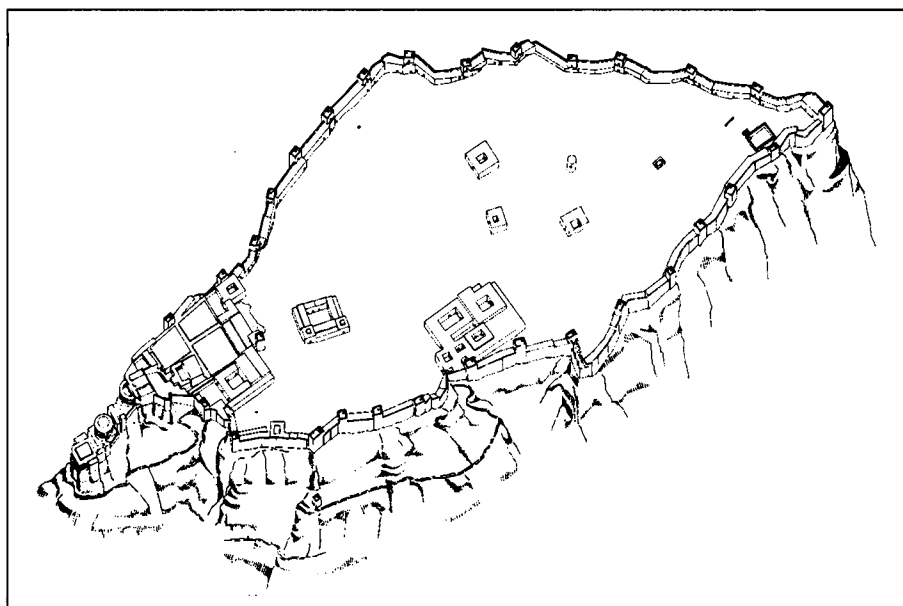
Gabinius also reorganized the government of Judea: He devolved power from Jerusalem to five local *synedria* (or

councils), located in Jerusalem, Sepphoris, Adora, Jericho, and Betharamatha (Ant 14.91; Porter 1999). Perhaps as a consequence, the cities remained important parts of Herod's government and subsequent administrations. According to Josephus, Gabinius also rebuilt parts of Samaria (Ant 14.87–88, War 1.166). Excavations have revealed walls, streets, and insulae reflecting a city grid system, which probably dates back to Gabinius' time in the mid first century BCE.

The most important political event in the second half of the first century BCE was the Parthian invasion. In 40 BCE, the Parthians overran most of Syria and, perhaps bribed by the Hasmonean, Antigonus, the Parthians installed him as ruler of Judea. It is unlikely that the Parthians intended to hold Syria, but the invasion frightened the Romans and

shaped their eastern policy for the next century. The Parthians slew Herod's elder brother, Phasael, but Herod escaped, traveling to Rome. There, the Senate named him King of Judea and gave him the task of conquering his kingdom. This took Herod until 37 BCE. There is no archaeological evidence of either the Parthian invasion of 40 BCE or of Herod's conquest of his kingdom.

It was only after Herod became king and consolidated his authority that archaeological data began to supplement the literary accounts of the period. In particular, Herod's enormous construction program changed the face of Jerusalem and dramatically affected Judea and Samaria, the central portions of his kingdom. Our presentation of the archaeological remains of Herod's building project will follow Richardson's "educated guesses" (Richardson 1996: 197–202) about the sequence in which they were constructed.



The various buildings on the Masada mesa. The western palace (building 3) is adjacent to the main gate and the location of the Roman siege ramp. The northern palace (buildings 10–16) is the most dramatic of Herod's projects, with three terraces stepping down the northern tip of the mesa. From Netzer (1991: ill. 945). Courtesy of the Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem.

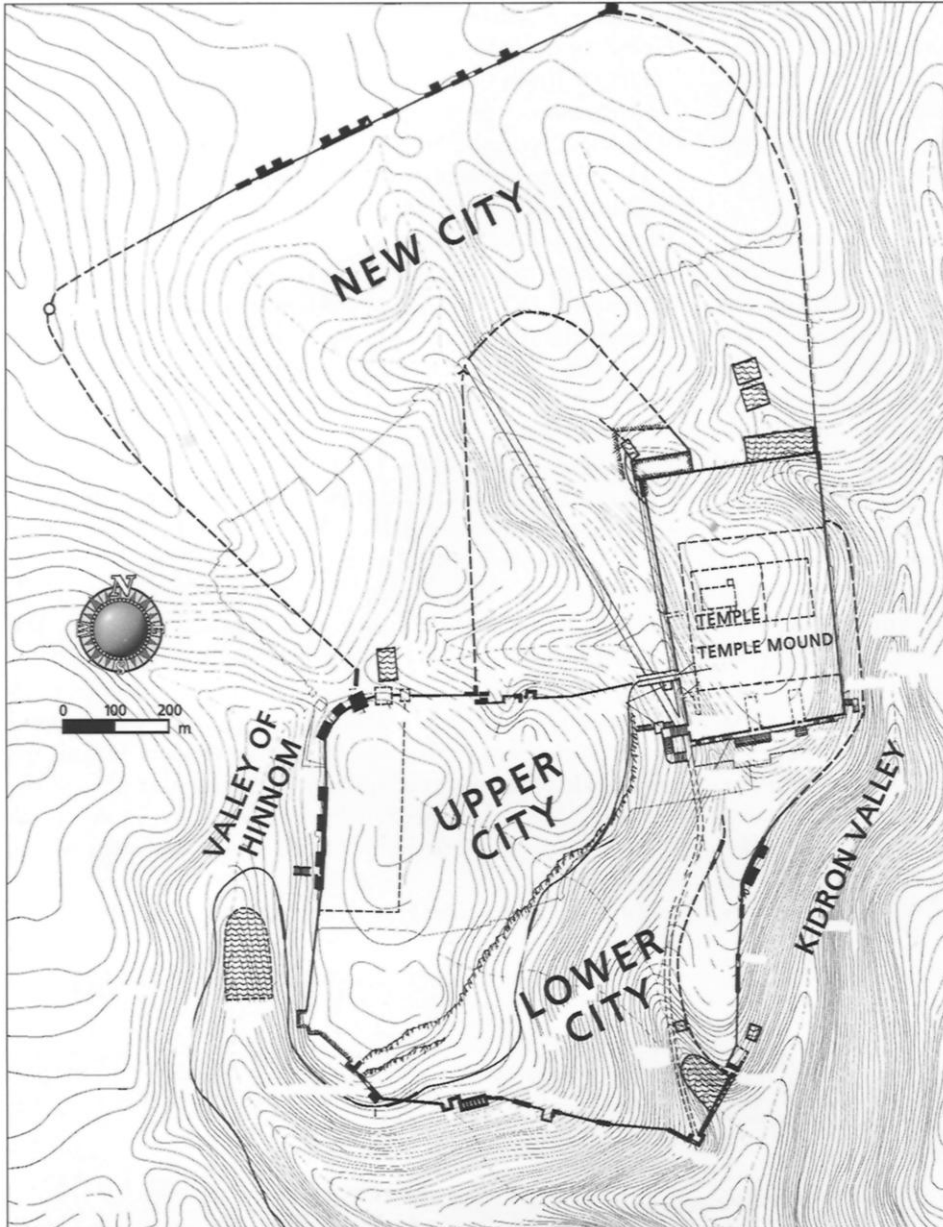
DATING

The Roman era of Palestine is typically divided into three periods, the Early Roman, Middle Roman, and Late Roman periods. The exact dates of the transitions between these three periods are debated, but the following chronological parameters are often utilized as general guidelines. The Early Roman period began with Pompey's entrance into the country ca. 63 BCE and ended with the conclusion of the Bar Kokhba

Revolt in 135 CE. The Middle Roman period lasted from 135 CE until ca. 250 CE. The Late Roman period extended from the mid-third century CE until the first half of the fourth century CE. Though some archaeologists would argue that this latter period ended with the earthquake that shook the region ca. 363 CE, we consider the end of the Roman period 324 CE, when Constantine became Roman Emperor, inaugurating changes throughout the empire.



When Herod died, his will bequeathed his kingdom in three parts to his sons. This map shows the regional divisions: Judea and Samaria went to Archelaus, the regions north and east of the Sea of Galilee were given to Philip, and Galilee and Perea were given to Antipas. The locations of Herod's many building projects in Palestine are indicated on the map by a triangle. They are clustered around Jerusalem, Idumaea, and Samaria; there are relatively few in Galilee or Transjordan. *Redrawn based on Aharoni and Avi-Yonah (2002: 165, fig. 223).*



Herod changed the face of Jerusalem by substantially enlarging the Temple Mount. He also built an enormous palace in the western hill of the upper city, attached to the sizeable towers adjacent to the modern Jaffa Gate. The upper city was home to Jerusalem's elite. Here in the modern Jewish quarter, much archaeological material derives from the late Second Temple period. *From Geva and Avigad (1993, 2: 718). Courtesy of the Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem.*

Herod's Building Projects

Herod devoted the first years of his kingship to consolidating his control. He struggled to overcome the popularity of the Hasmoneans by killing the remaining members of the family, marrying the Hasmonean princess Mariamme, and eliminating their supporters in Jerusalem (*Ant* 15.6).

Initial Projects

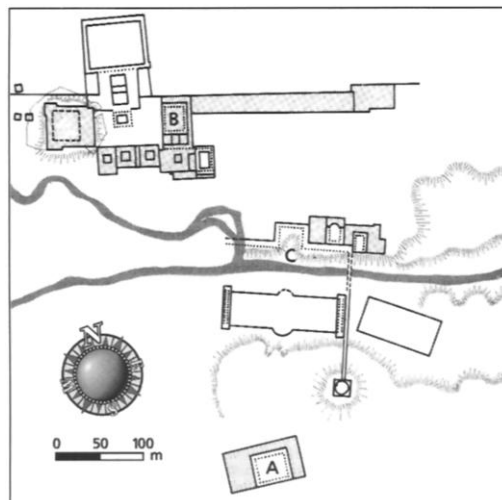
Part of Herod's program to supplant the Hasmoneans may have included an intentional obscuring of Hasmonean architectural remains (Stern 1982). Herod's first construction project refortified the Hasmonean fortresses in the Jordan valley, including Alexandreion, Hyrcania, Cypros, and Masada; he also constructed the Antonia fortress, at the northwest corner of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Two of these strongholds have been excavated: Cypros and Masada.

A fortified palace above Jericho, Cypros' present remains cover an area of approximately 30 by 35 m;

Herod's building was probably larger (40 by 45 m), but has been eroded away. Remains at the site include an elaborate bathhouse, which included a stepped immersion pool. Remnants of wooden beams suggest that the palace was roofed (Netzer 1993a).

In contrast to the eroded condition of Cypros, Masada boasts some of the most extensive and best preserved Herodian remains. There probably were three stages in Herod's building program at Masada (Netzer 1991). During the first stage, Herod built the core of the Western Palace, the royal apartments and the storerooms. The apartments surrounded an open courtyard. Bedrooms and dining rooms

Herod built three palaces at Jericho. The first (A) was fairly simple, but the second (B), which reused parts of older Hasmonean structures, is more complex. The most impressive palace complex was the third (C), which incorporated structures on both sides of Wadi Qelt. *From Netzer (1993d, 2: 682). Courtesy of the Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem.*



were located west of the court and to its south was the throne room. The walls of the apartments were decorated with white plaster. One of the halls adjoining the throne room had a large and richly colored mosaic floor decorated with interlocking circles and a border of geometric and floral designs. Archaeologists located the storerooms west of the apartments.

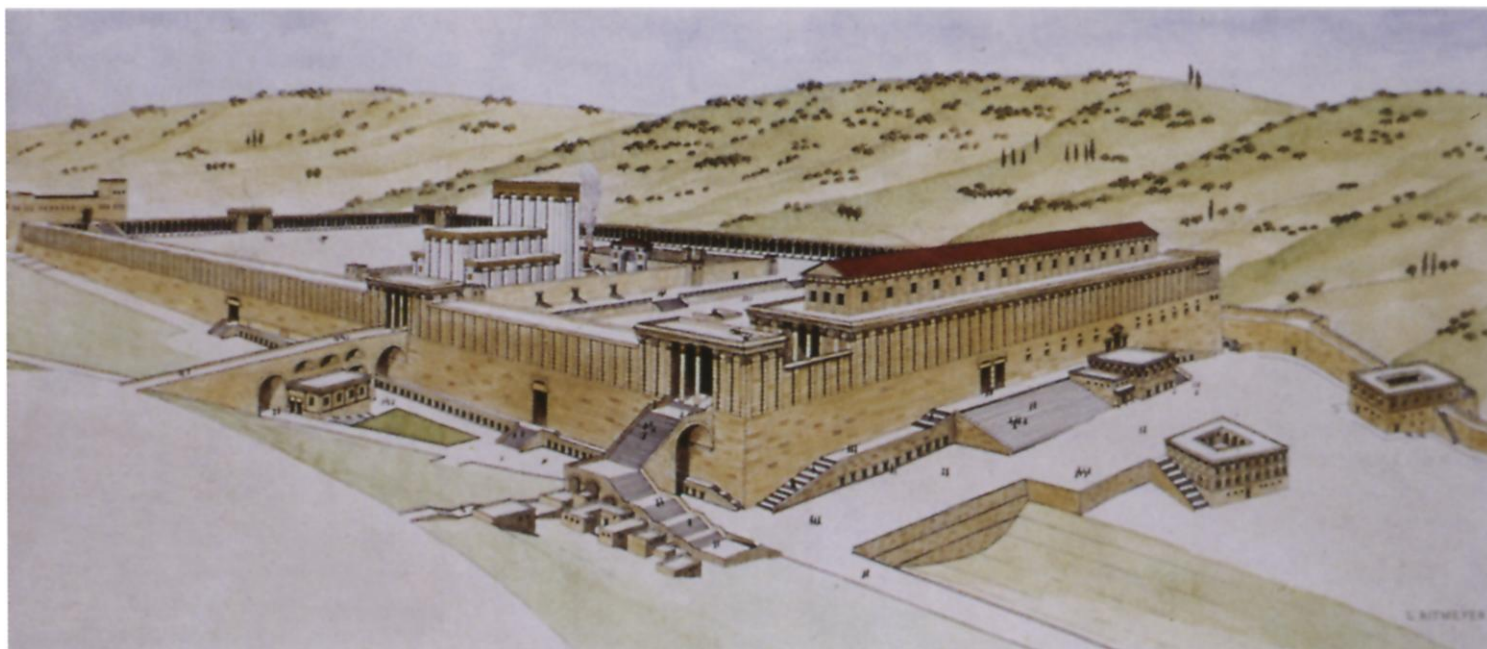
Herod built three smaller palaces on Masada, located south and east of the western palace. Their design was similar to that of the western palace: open courtyards surrounded by assorted rooms. At least three columbaria may also be dated to this early phase of building, as can the swimming pool at the south end of the plateau and the so-called “barracks” building. The early Herodian buildings at Masada have no apparent unifying plan. Architecturally, they resemble the Hasmonean palaces at Jericho, and Herod may have continued to employ Hasmonean architects (Netzer 1993b).

In addition to refortifying older strongholds, Herod substantially renovated Hasmonean palaces at Jericho and in Jerusalem. Only foundations for the gigantic podium of Herod’s palace in Jerusalem have survived. Measuring an estimated 330 by 130 m (over 4 ha), the new building surface rose 4 to 5 m higher than surrounding areas. At about the same time, builders erected three large towers—named Phasael, Mariamme, and Hippicus—north of the palace. The lower part of one of these (traditionally known as David’s Tower) is extant to a height of 19 m. Rectangular in shape (22.6 by 18.3 m at the base), this tower sits on bedrock and displays the characteristic Herodian masonry

style of large ashlars, with dressed edges and roughly finished faces. All three towers were incorporated into the city wall; “David’s Tower” has survived because it continued to play an important strategic role in later fortifications of Jerusalem (Geva and Avigad 1993).

Herod’s first palace at Jericho was a large, rectangular building (84 by 45 m), located south of Wadi Qelt. Pritchard excavated the structure in 1951 and misidentified it as a gymnasium. It had an open peristyle courtyard in the center, surrounded by rooms and a bathhouse. More recent analysis suggests that the design, which resembles “an introverted city house,” may reflect Herod’s political insecurities during the early part of his reign (Netzer 1992).

Herod built his second palace at Jericho shortly after his Hasmonean mother-in-law lost her major supporter, Cleopatra. Built north of Wadi Qelt, this palace incorporated elements of the older Hasmonean palace. Herod combined the “twin-pools” to create a single large pool (18 by 32 m; 2 m deep), surrounded by a large garden. East of this pool, he built the so called “East wing” of the palace. This wing had two levels. The northern, upper level added a second large courtyard (28 by 34 m) to the palace, this one with a garden in it, surrounded by colonnades on three sides. The southern, lower level incorporated parts of the older Hasmonean palace, including a pool, which Herod turned into a garden surrounded by stoas. He also built a Roman-style bathhouse south of the lower garden-pool. One interpreter regards the architecture of this palace as unimpressive, suggesting that Herod’s architects were constrained by the older Hasmonean structures (Netzer 1993d).



This reconstruction of the Temple Mount shows its impressive scale. Along the southern edge of the temple platform was the Royal Stoa. The double and triple gates led beneath the Royal Stoa to the court of the gentiles. Along the western wall, Robinson’s arch lead from the Royal Stoa to a staircase down to the street; Wilson’s arch led to a bridge to the upper city, and Warren’s gate led from the street into the Temple court. At the northern end of the Temple enclosure stands the Antonia fortress. *Reconstruction by Dr. Leen Ritmeyer.*

In addition to obliterating the memory of the Hasmoneans, Herod bolstered his credentials with his Jewish subjects by rebuilding the significant religious sites of Mamre and Hebron in his homeland of Idumaea. Perhaps more significantly for Herod during the early part of his reign, these “hometown” building projects probably enriched his fellow Idumaeans and guaranteed their support for his reign. At Mamre, an important site for the biblical patriarchs and matriarchs (e.g., Genesis 13:18, 23:17, 25:9, and 49:30), Herod erected a large, unroofed, rectangular enclosure (49 by 65 m). Similarly, at Hebron, he erected a structure around the tomb of the patriarchs and matriarchs (Vincent and Mackay 1923). Both these structures employed Herod’s distinctive ashlar construction, with dressed edges and roughly finished faces.

The Second Phase

In the second decade of his rule, where Herod was firmly in control of his kingdom, he undertook an enormous number of building projects. These included major endeavors, such as

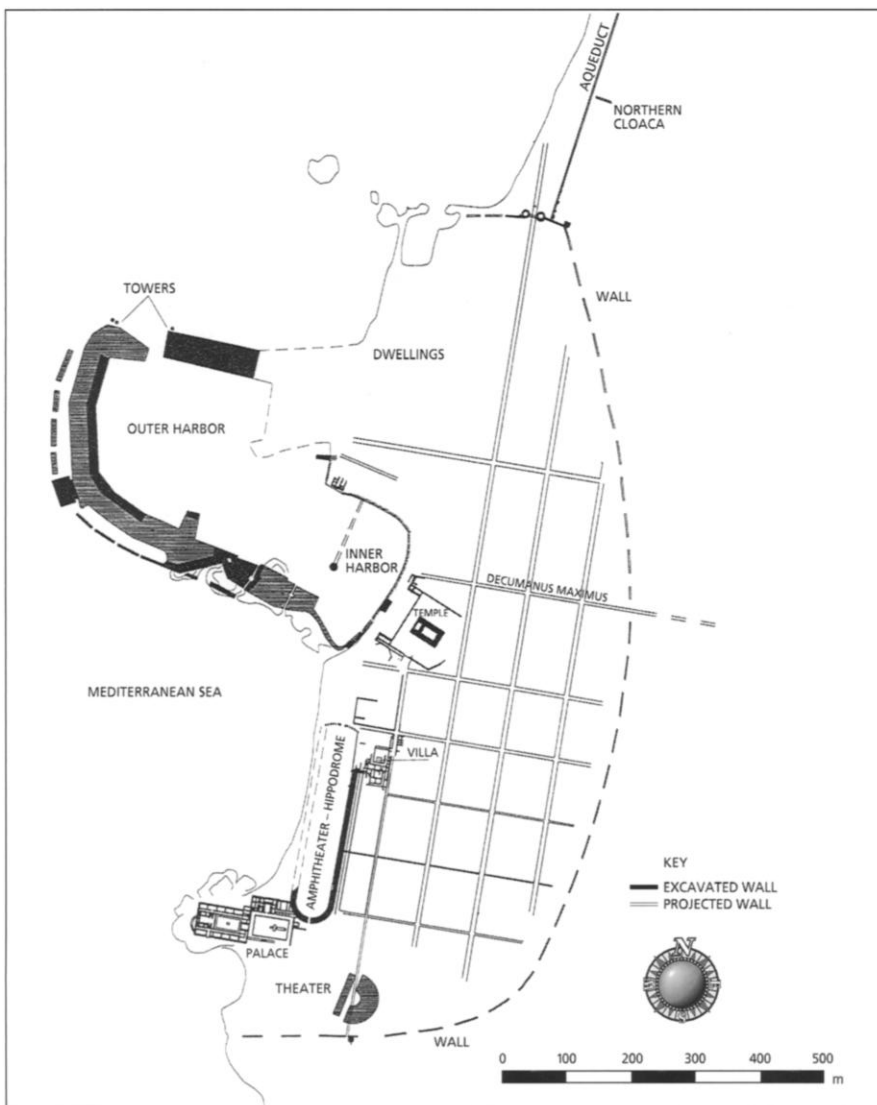
building the cities of Sebaste (started in 27 BCE) and Caesarea Maritima (22 BCE), rebuilding the Jerusalem Temple (23 BCE), and constructing an enormous palace in Jerusalem. Simultaneously, Herod started building the two fortress-palaces of Herodium and Machaerus and made significant additions to his palaces at Jericho and Masada.

Herod’s plans for the Temple were ambitious and were not completed until 64 CE, over a half-century after his death in 4 BCE. Herod expanded the size of the Temple Mount, creating an enormous platform, much of which survives to this day. Interestingly, its walls do not form a proper rectangle (the east wall measures 470 m, the north 315 m, the west 485 m, and the south 280). Yet they are genuinely massive—4.6 m thick—and, at their highest point, rise some 50 m above bedrock. They are dressed in the same Herodian style as found at Hebron, Mamre, and David’s Tower in Jerusalem.

Josephus describes the structures Herod built on this platform (*War* 5.184–227). They included porticos on the north, east, and west sides and the Royal Stoa along its

southern wall with a balustrade separating the court of the Gentiles from the more sacred areas, the walls of the inner Temple, the altar, and the sanctuary itself. Of these, virtually nothing remains, since the Romans destroyed the Temple in 70 CE. Evidence of this destruction emerged from along the base of the south wall during Mazar’s 1967–1978 excavations: stone debris, capitals, and friezes, probably from the Royal Stoa (Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer 1998; Geva and Avigad 1993).

Also found along the southern wall was a long, gradual staircase: This led to a platform, from which a second staircase descends, and from which two entrances—the Double Gate and the Triple Gate—provided access to the Temple precincts through tunnels 14 m long. The Double Gate possessed further elaboration, four stone domes, resting on columns. The domes were decorated with geometric patterns and floral motifs.



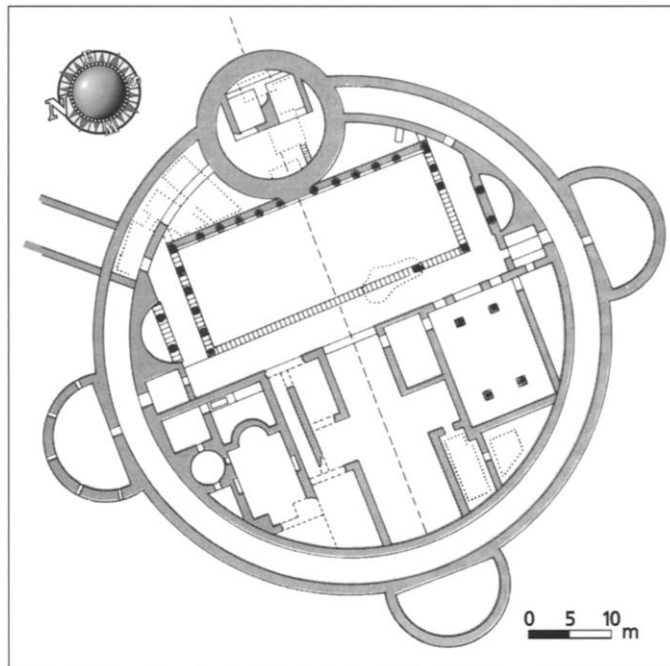
Herod the Great founded Caesarea Maritima on the site of the former Strato’s Tower. He laid out his new city on a rectangular grid system, like typical Roman cities. The city included other typically Roman features, such as a theater, amphitheater, aqueduct, and a temple of Roma and Augustus. The harbor, named “Sebastos” in honor of the emperor, was a technological marvel for its day, requiring extensive underwater construction. *Courtesy of Kenneth G. Holm.*

Other entrances to the Temple precincts included a staircase at the western end of the Royal Stoa. Preserved only as risers in the platform wall and known as Robinson's arch, the support once extended 13 m across a street, where it connected to a large pier. The pier was 15 m long and 3.6 m wide and originally stood 17.5 m above the street. The pier supported a monumental staircase, which led from the Tyropoeon Valley street to the Royal Stoa. The Tyropoeon street was 10 m wide and paved with large (2 to 4 m²) stone slabs. Beneath the street was a large drain up to 4 m deep. When excavated, the street was covered with the rubble from the ashlar torn from the walls of the Temple Mount by the Roman destruction.

Herod built an enormous palace south of the three towers adjacent to Jaffa Gate. Its platform measured 330 by 130 m. Little if anything remains of this palace apart from some patches of painted plaster. However archaeologists have uncovered remnants of several private homes in the modern Jewish Quarter. According to Josephus, this area, on the hill southwest of the Temple Mount, was home to Jerusalem's elite, and the material unearthed there by archaeologists demonstrates this. The so-called Herodian House occupied an impressive area of 200 m². It consisted of a courtyard surrounded by rooms, a large stepped plastered pool used as a ritual bath (or *miqveh*), and a basin, perhaps for foot washing. Artifacts discovered in the house, such as eastern *terra sigillata* wares and Italian wine-storage jars, add to the supposition that the house belonged to a wealthy family (Avigad and Geva 1993).

In the "Herodian Quarter" several residences survived only as basements. The "Palatial Mansion" was a large (600 m²) building, with a courtyard surrounded by rooms. Several *miqvaot* turned up in the basement. The "Burnt House" had a small courtyard, four rooms, a kitchen, and a *miqveh* with an *ʔoṣar* (for storing water for the *miqveh*). The "Burnt House" produced a large number of stone vessels, stone tables, and cooking pots. All the houses had plastered walls, decorated with frescoes employing floral or geometric patterns. Mosaics often covered the floors. They boasted geometric or floral patterns as decorations, but no animal or human figures. The excavators have suggested that this part of the city may have been home to many priestly families, who worked in the adjacent Temple, and comprised the city's wealthy elite. While the exact date of the construction of these structures is unclear, they were all destroyed when the Romans conquered Jerusalem in 70 CE (Avigad and Geva 1993).

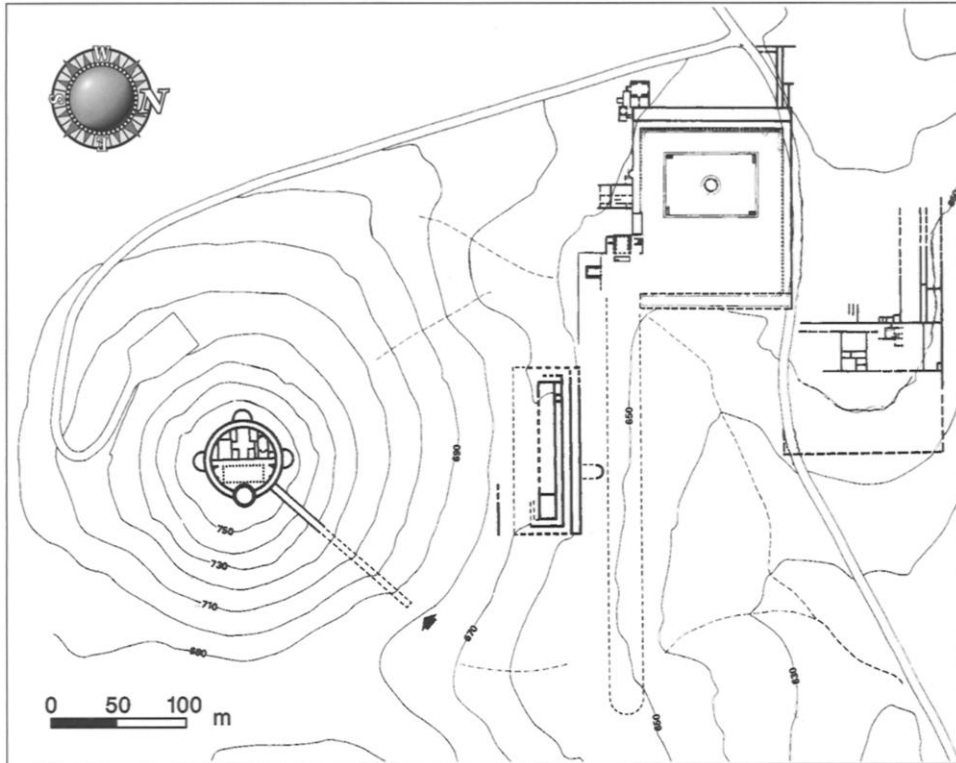
Herod's building activities reached beyond the borders of Judea. He founded two cities, Caesarea Maritima, on the coast; and Sebaste, in Samaria. He named both of these cities in honor of the emperor Augustus ("Sebaste" being the Greek equivalent to the Latin "Augustus"), and in each he built a temple to Augustus and the goddess Roma. He built a third temple to the emperor at Pnias, at the foot of Mt. Hermon in the Golan. The location of these temples was probably not random. Herod placed all three in predominantly non-Jewish areas, perhaps an implicit acknowledgement of the sensibilities of his Jewish subjects.



Herod's fortress palace at Herodium was architecturally sophisticated, providing both security and comfort. From Netzer (1993c: 619). Courtesy of the Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem.

Herod built Caesarea Maritima on the site of an earlier port, Strato's Tower. Josephus's lengthy description of Herod's efforts notes the presence of the temple of the imperial cult, a theater, sewer system, an amphitheater, palaces, and other public buildings, as well as an expanded harbor (*Ant* 15.331–341; 16.136–141). Archaeological excavations have proven that Josephus was not exaggerating. The theater has been excavated and restored, at least one palace has been uncovered, the imprint of the amphitheater remains, and the temple platform has been discovered. Underwater excavations continue to shed light on the sophisticated engineering techniques used to construct breakwaters and support platforms for the harbor, a technological marvel of the day. As in other Roman cities, the streets were laid out in a grid system. Initial construction lasted for over a decade, from ca. 22–10 BCE (Holum and Raban 1993b; Holum 1993; Negev, Frovo, and Avi-Yonah 1993; Raban 1993).

Herod founded Sebaste at the site of the ancient city of Samaria after Augustus ceded it to him ca. 30 BCE (*Ant* 15.217, 292–298; *War* 1.403). Herod settled veterans there, and pagans dwelt side by side with Jews and Samaritans. Archaeologists have uncovered remnants of the temple to Augustus and Roma, including a platform, monumental staircases, an altar, and a fragment of a huge statue (probably of the emperor himself). Other Herodian features, including walls and two towers, have also been found, and the earliest phase of the stadium belonged to this period. Excavators also uncovered the foundations of a temple associated with Kore, who was venerated in the city for



Below the fortress, Herod laid out a giant entertainment complex, which included a giant pool and elaborate gardens. Southeast of the gardens, Herod built a monumental building, perhaps a mausoleum, and a processional way to its east. From Netzer (1993c: 52). Courtesy of the Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem.

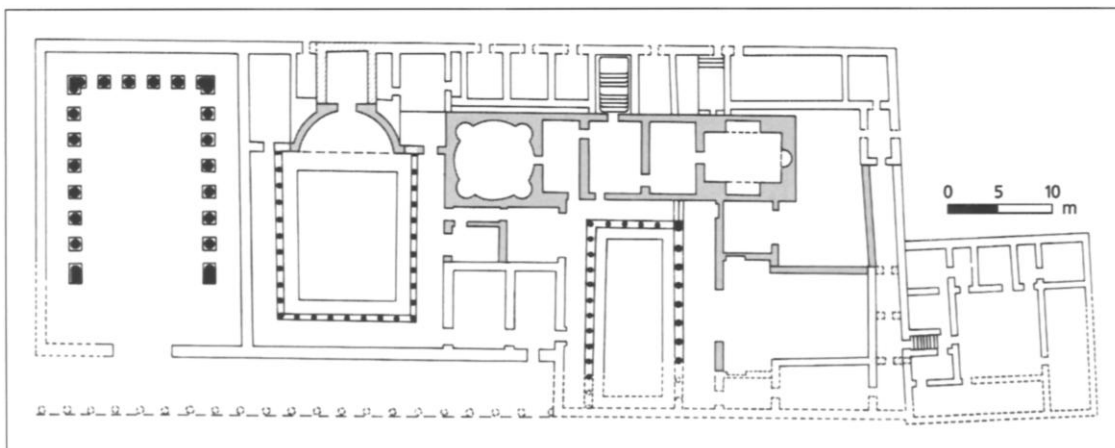
centuries, as four inscriptions, a statue, and her recurring image and symbols on city coins have made plain (Crowfoot et al. 1957; Crowfoot et al. 1942; Reisner, Fisher, and Lyon 1924; Purvis 1992; Avigad 1993).

Herod's other construction projects included the fortress-palaces of Machaerus and Herodium. Machaerus is located some 30 km southwest of Madaba, situated atop a hill with steeply-sloping sides, except for a saddle, connecting the perch with the ridge to the northeast.

The Hasmoneans fortified the site, but Gabinius destroyed it. The

fortress-palace that Herod built at the site measured ca. 110 m east-west and 60 m north-south. It was divided into two parts: The eastern part contained elements of a bathhouse, paved with mosaics; the western part had a peristyle court (Piccirillo 1997). The site commanded an expansive view of the Dead Sea region.

Herodium, located 12 km south of Jerusalem, was the site of Herod's victory in 40, when he escaped from Jews who supported the Parthians (Ant 14.359-360). To commemorate the victory, Herod built a large palace-fortress. It was round, with the



The remains of Herod's third palace at Jericho. The foundations of the pillars are clearly visible, as are the impressions of the paving stones from the Great Hall. Plan redrawn from Netzer (1993d: 688). Courtesy of the Israel Exploration Society, Israel. Photo courtesy of Zev Radovan.

The Northern Palace complex, with its three terraces descending the northern tip of Masada. The palace was amply decorated inside, and afforded spectacular views of the Dead Sea. Photo courtesy of Garo Nalbandian.

diameter of the outer wall measuring 62 m. Three semi-circular towers extended out from the outer wall; a fourth tower (on the east) was completely round (measuring 18 m in diameter). The inside of the circular palace is divided in half. The eastern half of the palace, adjacent to the round tower, possessed a garden (12.5 by 33 m), surrounded by columns on the north, south, and west. Semicircular exedrae were situated north and south of the garden. The western half of the circular palace contained dwelling and service rooms, as well as a bathhouse and triclinium. All the walls were probably plastered and painted with geometric patterns. Although the palace was built on a hill, Herod piled up an additional 12 m of earth to create a large, artificial rampart (Foerster 1993).

Northwest of the fortress-palace, Herod built a massive pleasure garden. The pool complex centered on a large artificial pool (46 by 70 m and 3 m deep), with a circular island in the middle (13 m in diameter). The pool was surrounded by ornamental gardens (110 by 145 m). Porticos surrounded the gardens on the east, north, and west sides, and stairways in each corner (2.3 m wide) led into it. The southwest corner of the pool complex boasted Herod's largest bathhouse.

It is noteworthy that Josephus describes Herodium as Herod's final resting place. Excavators have discovered an artificial avenue

(350 m long and 30 m wide). At the western end of the course stood an elaborate building (14 by 15 m). The thickness of the walls of the building (3 m) suggest that they supported a vaulted ceiling and perhaps a pyramidal roof. This hall resembles a triclinium from a tomb at Petra. It is possible that Herod's tomb is nearby though it has so far eluded discovery (Netzer 1993c).





All of Herod's palaces were lavishly decorated. This photo shows the painted plaster from the lowest terrace at the Northern Palace. The artists painted the plaster to appear to be marble.
Photo courtesy of D. Hopkins.

A colonnade ran along most of the southern side of the palace. Parallel to this colonnade, but on the southern side of Wadi Qelt, was the sunken garden. Although this garden has not been excavated, it appears to have been some 2 m below the surface of the surrounding land. It had colonnades on its eastern and western ends. Additionally, east of the sunken garden, an enormous pool was dug (42 by 90 m).

The palace was constructed mostly of mud-brick, on top of stone foundations. Sections of the palace are mainly Roman concrete. All its walls were covered with lime plaster and decorated with geometric panels and designs. The high quality construction of the palace points to the possibility that Herod had a team of Roman architects and engineers assisting his local experts.

This was one of Herod's most dramatic palaces, where visitors could enjoy views of Wadi Qelt and the Jordan Valley, especially in the winter time, when the climate was more temperate than at his other palaces.

At Masada, Herod built the breathtaking northern palace. Built on three levels on the northern spur of the Masada plateau, its upper terrace had a large semicircular balcony, overlooking the lower two levels. South of the balcony was a hall, surrounded by living quarters. On the middle terrace, some 20 m below the upper terrace, two concentric walls were built. The outer wall was 15.3 m in diameter and the inner wall 10 m. Remains of columns have been found between the two walls, suggesting that the walls were foundations, supporting two rings

of columns, which were originally roofed, a kind of *tholos* structure. South of this structure was the staircase to the upper terrace and an entertainment hall, decorated with faux marble. The lowest terrace is about 15 m below the middle terrace. Herod built supporting walls to create a square platform (17.6 by 17.6 m) and built a porticoed hall on it. The walls were painted with geometric patterns.

Finally, Herod took advantage of his firm control of his kingdom to add to his palaces at Jericho and Masada. At Jericho, he built a third palace, consisting of a unified architectural schema, with structures on both sides of Wadi Qelt, connected by a bridge. The palace on the northern side of the wadi had two large halls and two peristyle courts. The largest hall (19 by 29 m) was at the western end of the palace. Its floor was paved with stone slabs and its walls decorated with frescoes. Adjoining this hall was a square peristyle courtyard (19 by 19 m) with a garden in its center. East of this courtyard was a second courtyard (14 by 20 m), which also had a garden in its center. To its east was a T-shaped reception hall (8 by 13.5 m) and to its north was the entrance to a six-room bathhouse.

The Northern Palace complex became the largest structure on Masada and undoubtedly the most impressive, with dramatic views of the Dead Sea and the country north of Masada. However, it was largely a ceremonial structure, used for entertaining. It almost completely lacked service rooms or kitchens, and thus the Western Palace remained important.



This richly colored mosaic, with its interlocking circles and bordered with geometric and floral designs, decorated the floor of one of the halls adjoining the throne room of Herod's northern palace at Masada. Photo courtesy of D. Hopkins.

Herod substantially enlarged the Western Palace during this period by adding a service wing on its northeast and an administrative wing on its northwest.

Infrastructure

Josephus and other contemporary sources rarely mention Herod's infrastructure projects, but they were probably numerous.

Archaeologists have not found evidence of a Herodian road system, although he must have built roads connecting his major cities. In contrast, archaeology voluminously documents Herod's attention to supplying water to his various construction

projects. Herod built a half dozen reservoirs in Jerusalem, including two in the Temple precinct—the Pool of Israel and the Sheep Pool (both north of the Temple precinct)—the Struthion Pool (at the Antonia Fortress), the Mamillah Pool and Hezekiah's Pool (both near the Jaffa Gate), and the Birkat es-Sultan (southwest of the city, near the Jaffa gate). He also built Solomon's Pools, which collected water near Bethlehem, and a 24 km long aqueduct to bring the water to Jerusalem (Richardson 1996:190). Archaeologists have found ample evidence of Herod's efforts to provide water at his various fortresses and palaces, many of which have large gardens, pools, and bathhouses (see above).

Ancillary Issues

How did Herod afford this construction? Some of his projects, such as the new port of Caesarea, doubtless raised enormous amounts of tax revenue. But Herod also sought to maximize revenue from his personal holdings. Support for this comes from the sites of 'En Gedi, 'En Boqeq, and Jericho. At all three locations, evidence has been found of industrial installations, designed to process dates, bitumen, and balsam from the Dead Sea region. Especially well preserved, the manufactory at 'En Boqeq processed raw materials by crushing, pressing, cooking, and grinding. Its installations were not large: the small amounts of materials they processed were probably expensive perfumes, ointments, and pharmaceuticals. Since this area was crown land under the Hasmoneans, Herod inherited it, and the revenue from its products enriched him (Gichon 1997).

Archaeological data also shed light on Herod's relationship to Judaism. Was he a "half-Jew" (Ant 14.403)? After all, Herod built temples to Augustus at Sebaste, Caesarea Maritima, and Pnias (later renamed Caesarea Philippi). The numismatic evidence (see sidebar) shows that Herod first minted coins at Samaria, then later at Jerusalem (Meshorer 1982:11–30, 235–38). The coins from Samaria are dated from 40–37 BCE, when Herod was conquering his kingdom; his Hasmonean rival, Antigonus, controlled Jerusalem and minted his own coins there. Once Herod captured Jerusalem, he began to mint undated coins there. All Herod's coins are bronze and generally poorly preserved; they are inscribed with "Herod King" (*herodou basileos*) or abbreviations of the phrase. Apart from one issue, which was decorated with an eagle, the coins only employ inanimate images (such as vines, wreaths, ships, and anchors). Did Herod issue coins without portraiture because he was personally observant of Jewish Law? Or did he do so because he feared causing unrest among his Jewish subjects? The decoration Herod employed in his private residences suggests the former. For all Herod's Romanizing tendencies, his private residences—palaces at Masada, Jericho, and Herodium—resemble those of the upper city in Jerusalem in decoration. The frescoes and mosaics in all these residences are decorated exclusively with plant motifs and geometric figures. Nowhere did Herod decorate his private residences with figural art. Herod's observance of Jewish law was probably not merely a public convenience, but rather a matter of personal conviction.

Forts

In addition to his major building program, Herod probably erected a series of forts along his borders. Several sites in southern Judea—Arad, Aroer, Beersheba, Tel Ira, and perhaps Tel Judeideh—have remains of fortresses on them, which the excavators date to the Herodian period (Biran 1993, Herzog 1993). The fortresses varied in size and design. Arad's was 25 by 50 m and had a courtyard surrounded on three sides by rooms (Aharoni 1993). The remains of Tel Judeideh clearly show its military nature. The oblong natural hill (235 m by 110 m) was encircled by a 3.35 m thick wall, pierced with gates in the center of the north, east, south and west sides. A *cardo* and a *decumanus* divided the area within the walls into four quarters, with two headquarters buildings located at the juncture of the two main streets (Broshi 1993).

Other Major Forces: The Nabateans

Herod had reason to fortify the southern border of his kingdom as the territory of the Nabateans lay across the border. The Nabateans were an Arab tribe who had established a trade network stretching from Gaza across the Negev desert and into modern Saudi Arabia. They carried expensive luxury items, such as spices and perfume, originating in India and China, to be sold in Rome. Herod's relations with the Nabateans were not always peaceful. Early on in Herod's reign, Malchus, the king of the Nabateans, supported the Parthians and refused to aid Herod's flight to Rome (Ant 14.370–74;

COINS

A variety of types of coinage circulated in Roman Palestine. Older Hasmonean bronze coins, particularly those of Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE), were used and saved for centuries, with a few specimens appearing in coin hoards from as late as the fourth century CE. Herod the Great and his sons, like their Hasmonean predecessors, also minted coins, and one can see in the images depicted on their coins the ongoing interplay between Jewish and Hellenistic values in the first century CE. Herod, Antipas, and Archelaus honored the Jewish prohibition of graven images by not depicting either their own or the Roman emperors' images on their coins. Philip, Agrippa I, and Agrippa II, however, followed the pattern more typical of client kings and included busts on their coins. Many Herodian coins depict symbols acceptable to Jews and gentiles alike, such as palm trees and cornucopias, while others, such as those of Philip, whose territory consisted of the primarily non-Jewish Golan, depict pagan symbols.

During both revolts against Rome, Jewish rebels issued their own bronze and silver coins. The coins of the first revolt were original issues, while those of the Bar Kokhba revolt were Roman coins which had been overstruck with new images. In contrast to Herodian coinage, the revolt coins bear Hebrew, rather than Greek, inscriptions, and many of their images appear to have specifically religious significance. For example, the Jews' initial victory over the Romans in the first revolt coincided with the Jewish Feast of the Tabernacles, and a series of coins was minted depicting images associated with that feast, a lulav, myrtle, ethrog, and willow. Most of the coins of the first revolt were issued in the south, though Gamala, in the Golan, also minted a bronze



Bar Kokhba coin. From Meshorer (1985: #162). Courtesy of Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

coin with inscriptions honoring Jerusalem and hoping for "redemption." Coins of the Bar Kokhba Revolt bear similar motifs, and some identify the leader of the Jewish forces as Shimon.

Bronze coins issued by individual cities are common finds throughout Palestine and the Transjordan. The obverses of most civic coins bear the image of the emperor who had granted the city minting rights. The reverses typically depict images of local significance. A mid-first-century CE coin of Ptolemais, for example, depicts Nero plowing with oxen, presumably ceremonially establishing the boundaries of the Roman colony there. Images of deities and temples are common. Coins of Neapolis, for example, depict the temple to Zeus on nearby Mt. Gerizim, while those of Pnias often depict the city's namesake, Pan.

People also used Roman-issued coinage. Procurators and prefects issued coins in Judea for a brief period in the first century, and imperial coinage has turned up in contexts from all centuries of Roman rule. By the end of the third century, the Romans' silver coinage had been so debased in value, it approached the worth of civic bronze coinage. At this point, the empire ceased allowing cities to mint their own coins and thus became the only minting authority (Meshorer 1985, 1992).

War 1.274–76). Later, when the Battle of Actium was fought (31 BCE), Herod was fortunate to be at war with Malchus, rather than opposing Octavian. He fought Malchus in the Hauran, east of the Sea of Galilee, and lost (Ant 15.108120), but on another occasion led additional forces against the Nabateans near Philadelphia and emerged victorious (Ant 16.147; War 1.380–85). Herod had a dispute with Obodas, Malchus' successor, regarding territory in the Hauran (Ant

15.353) around 21 BCE. Bandits opposing Herod in Trachonitis (in the eastern Hauran) rose up around 10 BCE and were given shelter by the Nabateans (Ant 16.271–73). Although none of these conflicts took place along the southern boundary of Herod's kingdom, they may have prompted him to build the forts found by archaeologists.

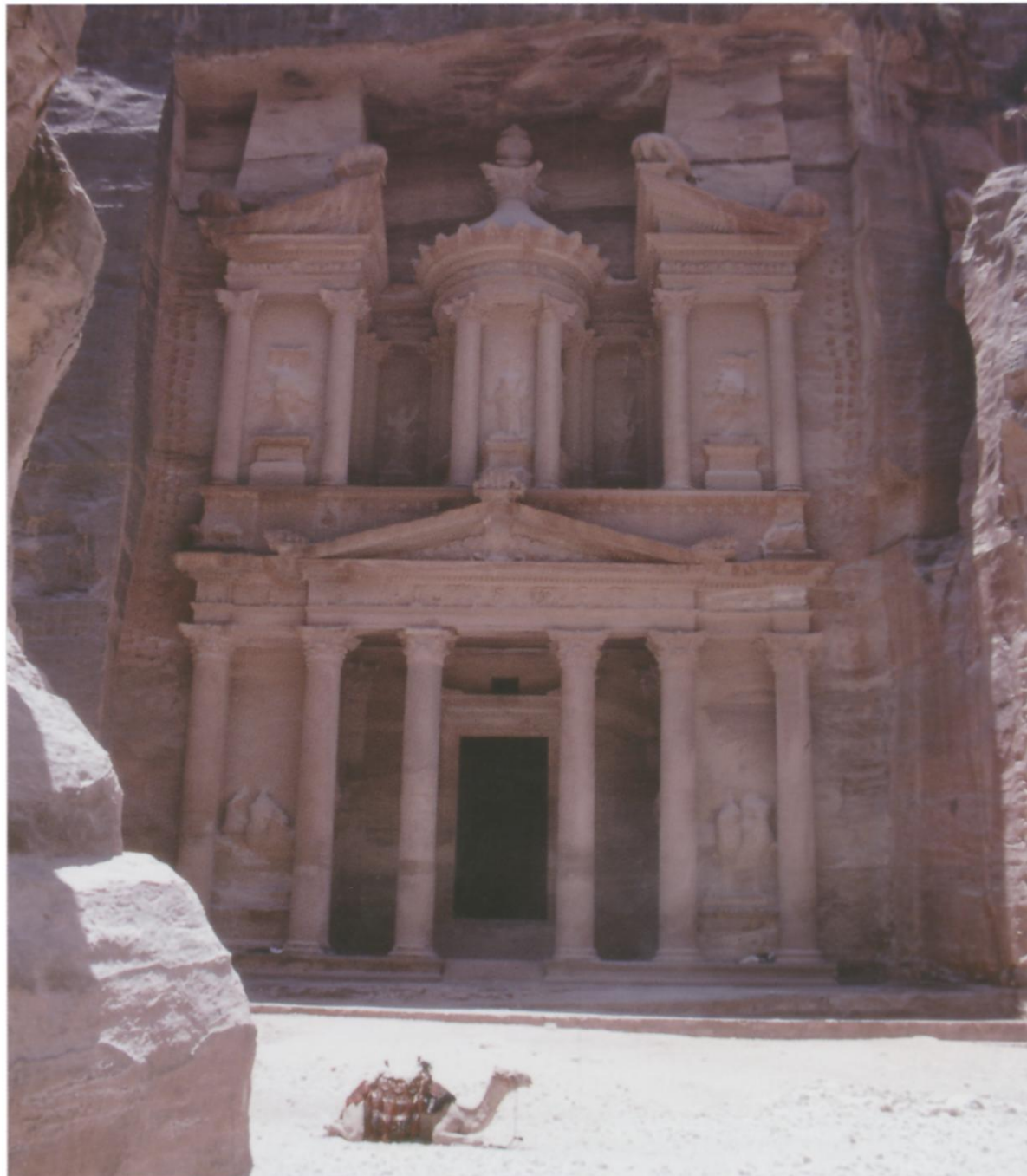
Several Nabatean sites have been identified in the Negev. Hellenistic pottery and coins from Hyrcanus (135–104 BCE)

and/or Jannaeus (103–74 BCE) have been found at Elusa, Nessana, and Oboda (Negev 1977), placing the Nabatean occupation of the site before the Roman period. While these sites produced no building remains that can be dated firmly to this time, the earliest moments of the Roman period witnessed the development of the most familiar Nabatean site, Petra.

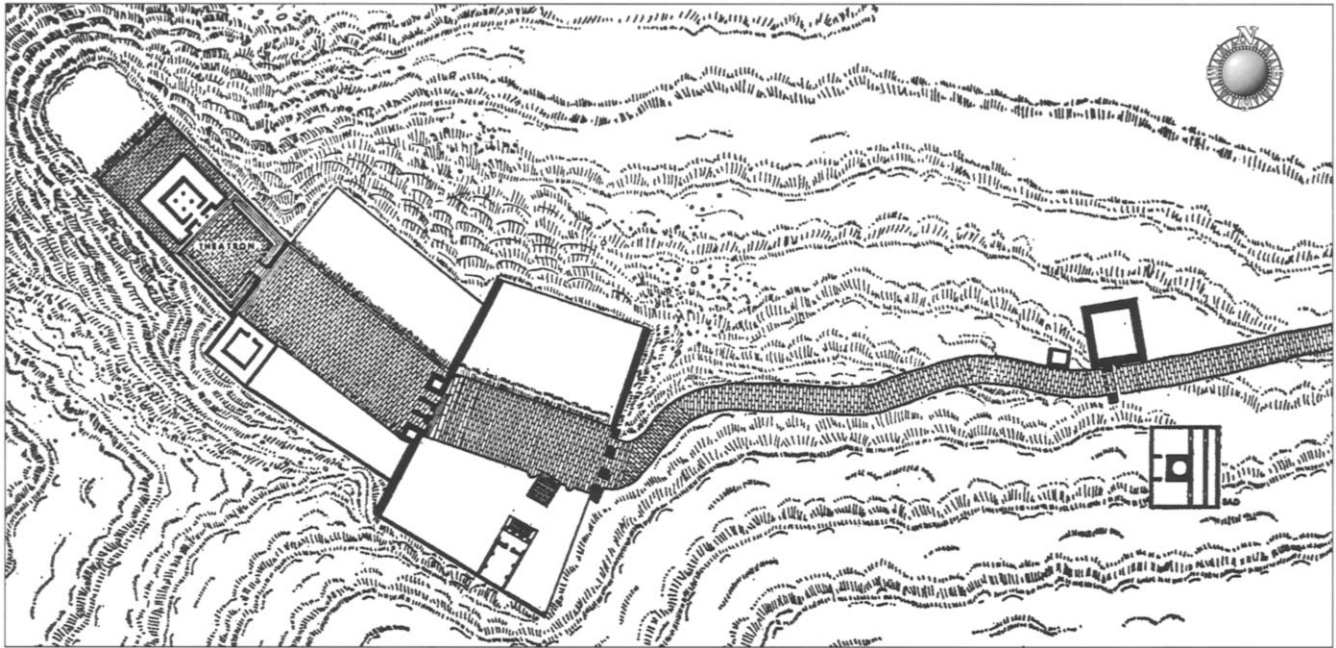
Petra, located 80 km south of the Dead Sea, was the main Nabatean city in the period before 100 CE. Its period of greatest growth may have been from around 25 BCE to around 50 CE (Negev 1993), but the city flourished later as well. Petra was the site of an enormous necropolis, with over five hundred elaborately cut tombs and funerary monuments. Early researchers (Brünnow and von Domaszewski 1904, 1905, 1909) identified seven main types of tombs and thought they could trace the artistic development from one type of tomb to another. However, if modern researchers have correctly dated the majority of the tombs to a seventy-five year period, it is unlikely that the tombs' development could have adopted a typical pattern (i.e., from simple tombs to those employing more complex forms). The differences in the tombs may have derived from the socio-economic status of their occupants (Negev 1993).

Since few of the Petra tombs have inscriptions, this is a difficult argument to make. But at another Nabatean site, the town of Egra (modern Madain

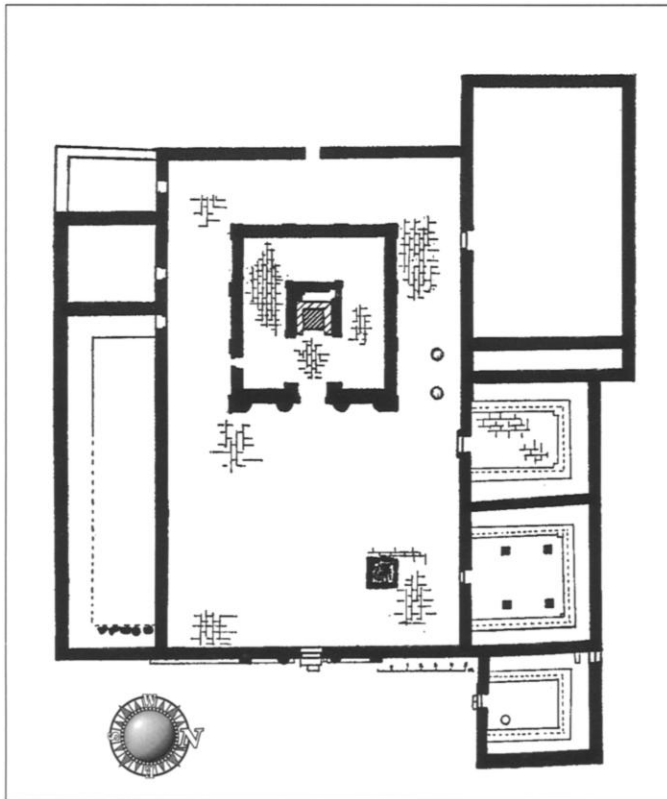
Saleh), located some 145 km southeast of Petra, roughly half the tombs do have inscriptions. The scholars who studied Egra (Jaussen and Savignac 1909, 1914) identified three main types of tomb façades, each of which had two or three subtypes. Of the seventy-nine tombs they studied, thirty had dated inscriptions; there was no correlation between the different types of tombs and the date of internment. But there was a correlation between the elaborateness of the tomb and the rank of the person interred. The most elaborate tombs contained the bodies of high civic or military men (*strategoi* or *hipparchoi*), while the less elaborate tombs held the remains of



This tomb, the Khaznet Fara'un, prominently featured in "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade," is one of the most elaborate in Petra's necropolis. It was probably designed and carved by artisans from Alexandria, rather than local craftsmen, and may have been the tomb for King Aretas IV. Photo courtesy of D. Hopkins.



Seeia is located in the northern part of Nabatean territory, in the southern part of modern Syria. It is the largest Nabatean cultic site yet discovered, with a long *via sacra*, three terraces, and several temple structures. *From Negev (1977: 615, fig. 15).*



Khirbet Tannur is remote from any settlements, atop a mountain, south-east of the Dead Sea. It was the site of a Nabatean temple, notable for its size and the large quantity of sculpture at the site. *From Negev (1977: 606, fig. 13).*

the less important men or wives and daughters of the elite. The least elaborate tombs sheltered women or partnerships of men and women (Negev 1977). If a similar pattern can be postulated for Petra, the most elaborate tombs—the Khazneh, ed-Deir, and the Corinthian Tomb—may have been those of the Nabatean royalty, while the less elaborate tombs belonged to less important individuals.

In addition to the large necropolis, Petra boasts impressive remains of a civic quarter. Built in the valley of Wadi Musa, the city grew up on either side of a colonnaded street. The dates of the various monuments in the city are uncertain, but further excavations may rectify this problem. For example, the excavations at the Great Temple have revealed three phases of construction. The earliest phase dates from the last quarter of the first century BCE. A second phase includes the Temple's complete rebuilding in the second half of the first century CE. The final phase saw renovations in the period after 106 CE, when the Nabatean kingdom was absorbed into the Roman Empire.

One interesting feature at Petra is the absence of a domestic quarter. There is little evidence that Petra had a significant resident population. Perhaps the Nabateans, for much of their history, eschewed houses and lived in tents (Negev 1977). Thus, they used Petra primarily for sacred rites, but did not have a large permanent population. Support for this theory may be found at Khirbet Tannur, a site southeast of the Dead Sea. Located on an isolated hill and distant from any settlement, the Nabateans built a large (36 by 47 m) temple complex, probably during the first century CE. It had a courtyard, a temple enclosure, and an inner shrine. Unusually large quantities of bas relief statuary found at the site included

Tyche surrounded with symbols of the zodiac. The lack of local settlement suggests a Nabatean cultural practice of constructing special-occasion sites—in this case an isolated temple, and in the case of Petra, the city's construction of caves as funerary structures (Negev 1977).

The Nabateans not only controlled Herod's southern border, but also the region to his east. They settled in the ancient territory of Moab and controlled the area east and north of the Decapolis (for discussion of the Decapolis, see below). Glueck found much evidence of Nabatean occupation of Moab when he surveyed eastern Palestine in the 1930s (Glueck 1946 and citations there). Unfortunately, few sites have been excavated. There is also evidence that the Nabateans settled in the Hauran, northeast of Herod's kingdom

The largest Nabatean cultic site arose at Seeia, southeast of Kanawat (ancient Kanatha), again distant from settlements. It had a processional way 300 m long leading to the sacred precinct, which boasted three terraces, each encased in walls forming courtyards. The lowest of these was 200 by 30 m, with a small temple (13 by 8 m) towards its southeast corner. The middle terrace was smaller (20 by 20 m) and had a correspondingly small temple (8 by 8 m) in its northwest corner. The highest terrace (25 by 50 m) supported a peristyle court and temple (19 by 20 m). The inscriptional evidence suggests that the Nabateans began the temple in 33 BCE and finished it in 2 BCE.

Roman Rule after Herod

When Herod died in 4 BCE, his kingdom was divided and slowly absorbed into the Roman Empire. Augustus placed three of Herod's sons over parts of his kingdom. Archaelus ruled Judea and Samaria; Antipas received Galilee and Perea (the Jewish region east of the Jordan River); and Philip governed the area east of the Sea of Galilee. But in 6 CE, Archaelus was deposed, and Rome took over Judea and Samaria, the most important part of Herod's kingdom. Herodian scions ruled Galilee and Perea until 44 CE, when Rome assumed control of these regions. The regions east of the Sea of Galilee continued to have a Jewish ruler until the death of Agrippa II, in the 90s CE.

Evidence of Roman presence was most visible at the coastal cities of Caesarea Maritima and Ptolemais. Caesarea Maritima served as Judea's administrative center after its annexation as a Roman province in 6 CE, and soldiers and veterans were a constant presence. A Latin inscription records the dedication of a temple to Tiberius by the prefect Pontius Pilate (Frova 1993: 274), the official who ordered the crucifixion of Jesus. By the mid first century CE, a Roman colony was established at Ptolemais. One city coin depicted Nero plowing with an ox, presumably ceremonially establishing the colony's boundaries. Roman legionary standards formed the backdrop of this image, probably reflecting the presence there of veterans (Meshorer 1985). Unfortunately, few remains at Ptolemais have survived from the Roman period. If the Romans did not pursue building projects as vigorously as the Herodians, they did continue

construction (or allowed the Jews to) on the Temple in Jerusalem, which was not complete until ca. 60 CE. And other regions flourished, including Samaria, and the territories controlled by Herod's sons: Galilee, Perea, and Trachonitis.

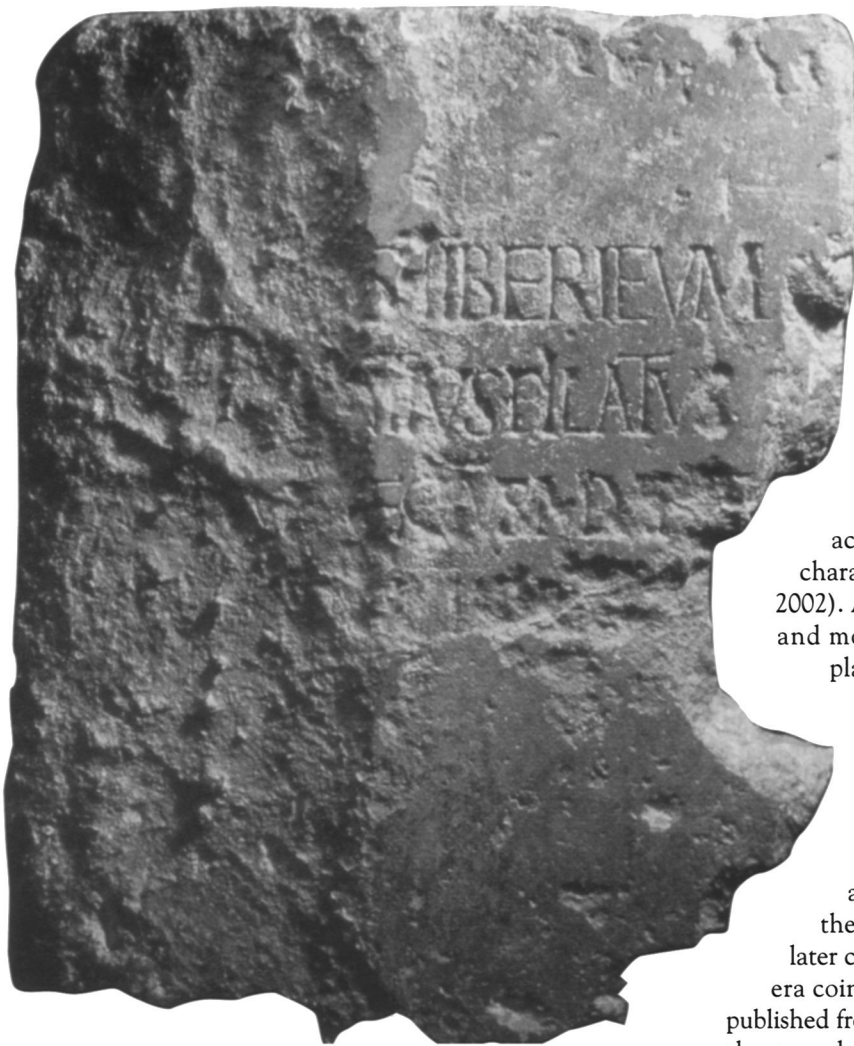
The Romans governed Samaria, and it seems to have grown under their administration. Surveys of the Samaritan countryside have revealed that the population increased throughout the Roman period, after a decline (in at least some areas) in the Hellenistic era (Dar 1986, 1992, 1993a; Zertal 1993; Finkelstein 1993). Surveyors have discovered hundreds of rural sites, although the differentiation between Roman and Byzantine phases of occupation is not always clear. Agriculture provided the livelihood of most Samaritans. As elsewhere in Palestine, olives, grapes, and cereals were the principal crops. Rock-cut oil presses were common throughout the region.

Intensive study of agricultural practices and land-use patterns has resulted in a clearer understanding of Samaritan farm life than has been achieved for farm life in other regions (Dar 1986). The typical dwelling was the courtyard house, a large yard surrounded by other residential and agricultural buildings. Field towers began appearing in great numbers in the Hellenistic period, and by the Roman era, approximately 1200 dotted the Samaritan landscape. Their exact agricultural functions are unclear, but they appear to have been associated with small land holdings. Most of these towers went out of use in the first and second centuries CE. This phenomenon, combined with the shrinking size of the typical courtyard house throughout the Roman and Byzantine period, may reflect the declining fortunes of small family farms and their gradual replacement by larger estates.

Several rural sites have been excavated. The town of Umm Rihan covered 36–40 ha and consisted of approximately a hundred houses, a road system, and a Roman bathhouse. A Latin inscription there signals the presence of a public building. At Qedumim, archaeologists have discovered several buildings and six ritual baths, some from the first century CE (Magen 1993). At Qasr el-Lejah, excavators have cleared a large, nearly intact farmhouse with walls rising 2–3 meters in some places. Several rooms may have functioned as housing for farmhands, suggesting that the owner was somewhat wealthy. Dating originally to the Hellenistic period, the farmhouse went out of use in the first century CE (Dar 1986).

The building projects of Herod's sons created major urban centers in Galilee, Golan, and Perea. Antipas continued his father's tradition of building cities. Whereas his father had neglected Galilee, however, Antipas devoted considerable attention to Sepphoris, located midway between the Sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean Sea. Moreover, he sponsored the erection of a new city, Tiberias, on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. These two cities became the dominant urban centers of Roman and Byzantine Galilee.

Of the two cities, Sepphoris is the more extensively excavated. Remains of the pre-Roman city are relatively sparse, consisting primarily of scattered architectural fragments, a Persian rhyton and inscription, ceramic fragments, and the walls of an apparent Hellenistic-era fortress (Meyers,

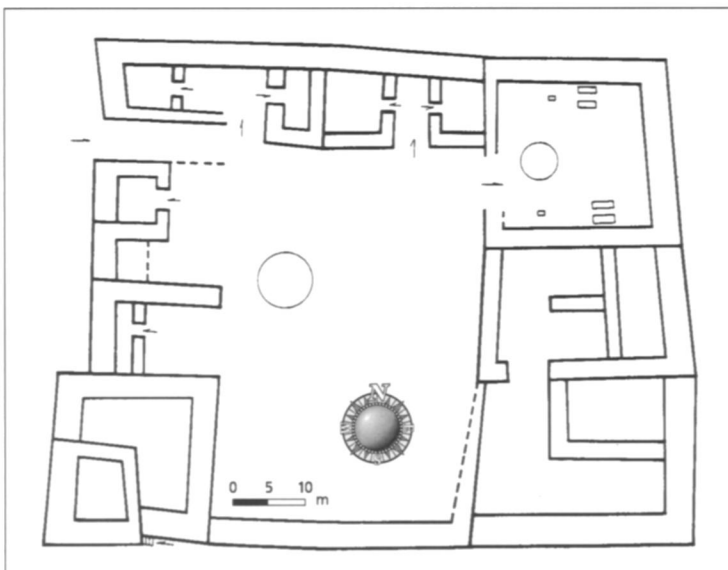


An inscription at Caesarea Maritima records the dedication of a temple to the emperor Tiberias by Pontius Pilate, who served as prefect of the province Judea from 26 to 36 CE. *Photo courtesy of Kenneth G. Holm.*

Meyers, and Hoglund, 1997). According to Josephus, Varus razed the city in the chaotic uprisings that followed the death of Herod the Great in ca. 4 BCE, though to date, archaeologists have found no evidence of a massive destruction layer from this period. Antipas rebuilt the city as the “ornament of Galilee” (*Ant* 18.27), and his construction efforts marked the beginning of a long period of expansion. Paved streets and insulae in the area of the acropolis probably date to the reign of Antipas or soon thereafter. Ritual baths and fragments of stone vessels found near the acropolis attest to the city’s predominantly Jewish character (Chancey and Meyers 2000; Chancey 2001, 2002). As the area around the city’s summit became more and more densely settled, the city expanded onto a plateau to the east. Evidence of a grid system there signals the involvement of city planners in at least some of this expansion (McCullough and Edwards 1997). The foundations of a large basilical building on the eastern plateau probably date to this period.

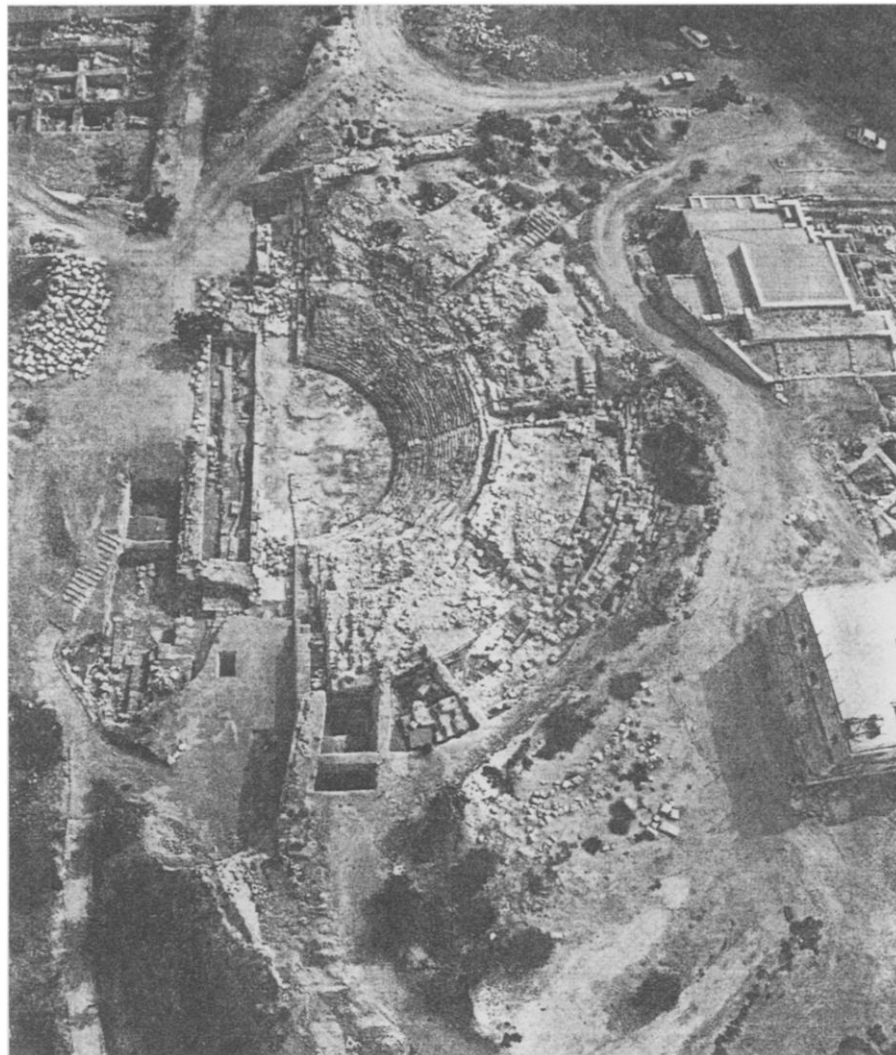
First century CE Sepphoris is sometimes cited as an example of the Greco-Roman city, but most of the pertinent data for this characterization dates to later centuries. With the exception of those on its revolt-era coins, no first century Greek inscriptions have been published from the city. While the construction of Sepphoris’s theater, which seated 4500–5000 spectators, has sometimes been attributed to Antipas (Waterman 1937; Strange 1992), this dating is hotly contested, with a majority of excavators arguing for a late first- or early second-century CE origin (Meyers and Meyers 1997; Weiss and Netzer 1996). The theater’s date of construction will remain disputed until the ceramic finds from soundings underneath it are published.

In contrast to Sepphoris, Tiberias was an entirely new foundation. Antipas built it in ca. 20 CE, named it after emperor Tiberius, and designated it as the capital of Galilee. Finding occupants for this new capital proved no easy task, as its location on top of old graves made it unattractive to the region’s Jewish majority, who regarded such areas as ritually unclean. Antipas ultimately had to resort to force to find inhabitants for the city, compelling Galileans as well as poor people from “any and all places of origin” and slaves to settle there (*Ant* 18.36–38). Most of ancient Tiberias remains underneath the modern resort city, but the site has produced a few remnants from the first-century CE city, including a gate complex, made of basalt stones and flanked by two round towers, a paved road, and evidence of



The farm at Qasr el-Lejah near Umm Rihan is the one of the largest farm estates in Samaria. The various wings of the estate, with rooms for workers and processing crops, were arranged around a central courtyard. *From Dar (1993a, 4: 1315). Courtesy of the Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem.*

The origin of the theater at Sepphoris is hotly debated. Was it constructed by Herod Antipas in his renovations of the city? Or, does it date to the late first or early second century CE, its presence perhaps attributed to increasing Roman cultural influence in the wake of the first revolt? Similarly, the type of entertainment available there remains uncertain, whether classical plays or animal shows and mimes. Some New Testament scholars, preferring the early dating of the structure, have argued that it provides an example of the extent of Hellenism in Jesus' Galilee. From Weiss (1999: fig. 15). Courtesy of Gabi Laron.



the city's drainage system (Hirschfeld 1993, 1997; Foerster 1993). Inscriptions on two first century CE lead weights identified Tiberias *agoranomoi*, or market officials, and attest to the use of Greek (Qedar 1986–1987).

Despite popular and scholarly misconceptions, Galilee in the Early Roman period was overwhelmingly Jewish. The archaeological records of several sites preserve evidence of Jewish practices, such as the use of limestone vessels and ritual baths for purity concerns and the practice of secondary burial. In contrast, evidence of pagan cultic practices is relatively rare, especially in the region's interior (Chancey 2002). Predominantly pagan areas encircled Galilee, however, and the distances between some Galilean villages and pagan cities such as Tyre, Sidon, Caesarea Maritima, and Caesarea Philippi were not great. Indeed, the pagan site of Scythopolis lay west of the Jordan River, on the southern border of geographical Galilee.

Aside from Sepphoris and Tiberias, perhaps the two best-known Galilean sites from this time period are Nazareth and Capernaum, famous for their association with the ministry of Jesus. Numerous tombs have been found at Nazareth, demarcating the boundaries of the ancient village. Excavations underneath the Church of the Annunciation and the Church of St. Joseph have revealed chambers, tunnels, cavities, pits, cisterns, oil presses, and granaries, all indicators of the village's agricultural activity (Bagatti 1969).

Capernaum, like other villages on the Sea of Galilee, was devoted primarily to fishing. Its streets were laid out on a grid system, and its houses were grouped into *insulae*. Capernaum's well-known Byzantine (fourth–fifth century CE) limestone synagogue sits atop the remains of a first-century CE basalt building, which may also have been a synagogue (Loffreda 1993, 1997; Corbo 1992). A house near this synagogue, dated to the Late Hellenistic or Early Roman period, has been associated with Jesus' disciple, Peter. The house underwent an

unusual amount of renovation—plastering of ceiling, walls, and floor—in the first century CE, perhaps suggesting its importance. The fourth century witnessed additional renovations, and these later walls bear dozens of Christian graffiti, including two which the excavators interpret as the name “Peter.” An octagonal church rose over the house in the fifth century, and Christian pilgrims report visiting the house of St. Peter.

Based on this cumulative evidence, excavators have argued that the house had belonged to Peter in the early first century CE. Whether Peter ever actually lived there is impossible to determine, of course, and later traditions may be just that—traditions, rather than actual historical recollections of where Peter lived. Even more difficult to prove is the excavators' assertion that the house had been a first century CE Jewish Christian house church (Corbo 1968, 1969), a suggestion that has been greeted with skepticism (Taylor 1989/90).

Agriculture and fishing were not wholly responsible for Galilee's economic activity. Shihin, a village within sight of Sepphoris, produced the majority of Galilee's storage jars (Strange, Groh, and Longstaff 1994). Kefar Hananyah, on the border between Upper and Lower Galilee, was the chief producer of a variety of forms of



The Jewish ritual bath, or *mikveh*, was used to remove ritual impurity. It consisted of a stepped, plastered pool cut into bedrock. To remove impurity, one descended the steps and immersed oneself in the bath's water. The presence of these baths at an archaeological site is clear evidence of Jewish habitation. A small well-preserved plastered pool with three steps was unearthed in the northeast corner of room 4 at Iotapata (Yodefat), 9 km north of Sepphoris. From Adan-Bayewitz and Aviam (1997: 151, fig. 21).

tableware throughout the Roman and Early Byzantine periods. Its market included not only Galilee, but extended into the Golan, the Decapolis, to the coast, and south into the Beth She'an Valley (Adan-Bayewitz 1993).

Just as Agrippa developed Galilee's urban centers and economy, so did his brother Philip develop the Golan. Philip received Pnias at his father's death, and Agrippa II after him. The city changed names several times in the first century CE, but in each case, the new name continued the tradition of honoring the emperor. Philip dubbed it Caesarea Philippi, thus honoring himself as well, and numismatic evidence shows that Agrippa II renamed the city Neronia. After Nero's death, the city was called Caesarea Pnias. City coins minted by Agrippa II in 85/86 and 86/87 CE bear Latin inscriptions, the first Herodian coins to do so (Meshorer 1982).

Excavations of Pnias have recently uncovered a 400 foot long palatial complex, consisting of various chambers and courtyards as well as a basilical hall, probably dating to the reign of Agrippa II (Wilson and Tzaferis), though some have suggested that it was built by Herod the Great (Ma'oz 1993). Builders strongly fortified the complex, which was located in the center of the city with towers and gates. Thick walls (more than 1 m) probably accommodated a second story.



Kefar Hananyah Ware. Kefar Hananyah was located on the border between Lower Galilee and Upper Galilee. It produced the majority of tableware for Galilee and exported its pottery into the surrounding regions as well. Courtesy of Zev Radovan.

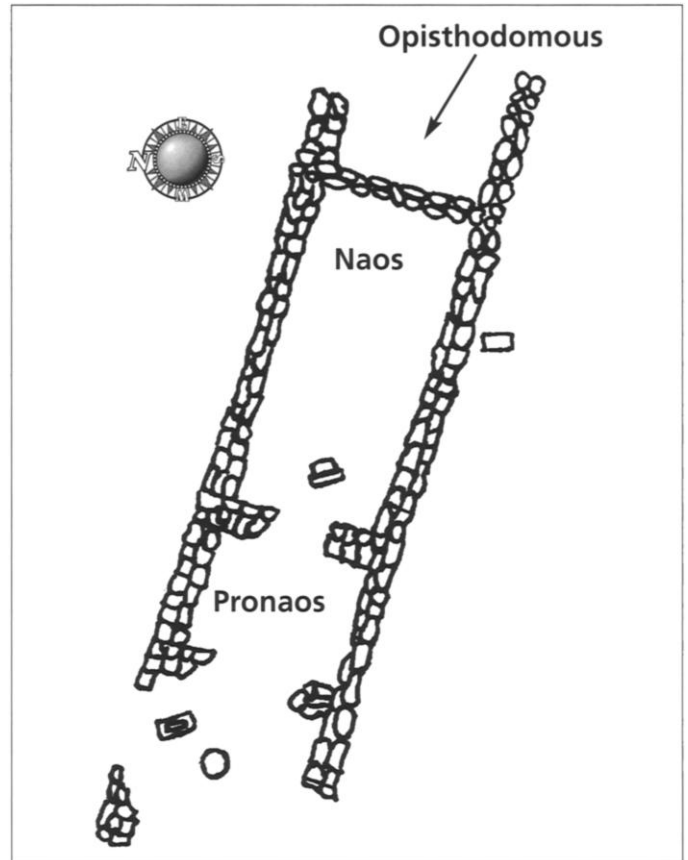
Marble facings and moldings on the walls, marble floors, and mosaics utilizing multi-colored *tesserae* adorned a lavishly decorated palace. Hypocaust bricks show that the building was later converted into a bathhouse (Wilson and Tzaferis 1998).

The Golan in the Early Roman period is less well understood than the Galilee. Several syntheses of archaeological data from the region have appeared in recent years (Urman 1979, 1985; Gregg and Urman 1996), but most of these data hail from the Byzantine and later periods, with Roman data relatively sparse. Surveys discovered Early Roman sherds at 143 sites, but only a few of these sites possessed extensive Early Roman architectural remains (Ma'oz 1993). This is not to say that the region was wholly uninhabited in the Early Roman period. The primary city was Pnias, which seems to have grown throughout the first century CE. Mt. Hermon continued to be regarded as sacred space, as shown by the numerous cultic sites found on its slopes and environs. Settlers also settled the area near the Sea of Galilee. Gamala and Bethsaida have yielded extensive Early Roman remains. The Decapolis city of Hippos was also clearly occupied at this time, though most of its ruins are Byzantine.

Excavators claim to have found a first century pagan temple at Bethsaida-Julia, a fishing village located at et-Tell, on the border of Galilee and the Golan (Strickert 1998; Arav and Freund 1995, 1999). They suggest that a large, columned rectangular building had the typical layout of a temple: a *pronaos*, *naos*, and *opisthodomous* (back room). Philip's renaming of Bethsaida as Julia—probably in honor of Augustus's wife, Livia Julia—marked the association of the city with the imperial family. Consequently, excavators believe that the structure is a temple of the imperial cult. Direct evidence of pagan worship—cultic objects, an altar, dedicatory inscriptions—is lacking, though a bronze incense shovel and a clay figurine of a woman with curled hair (Livia Julia?) have been found. Assessment of the identification will have to await fuller publication of the data, and deal as well with Josephus's failure to refer to any such a temple at Bethsaida-Julias.

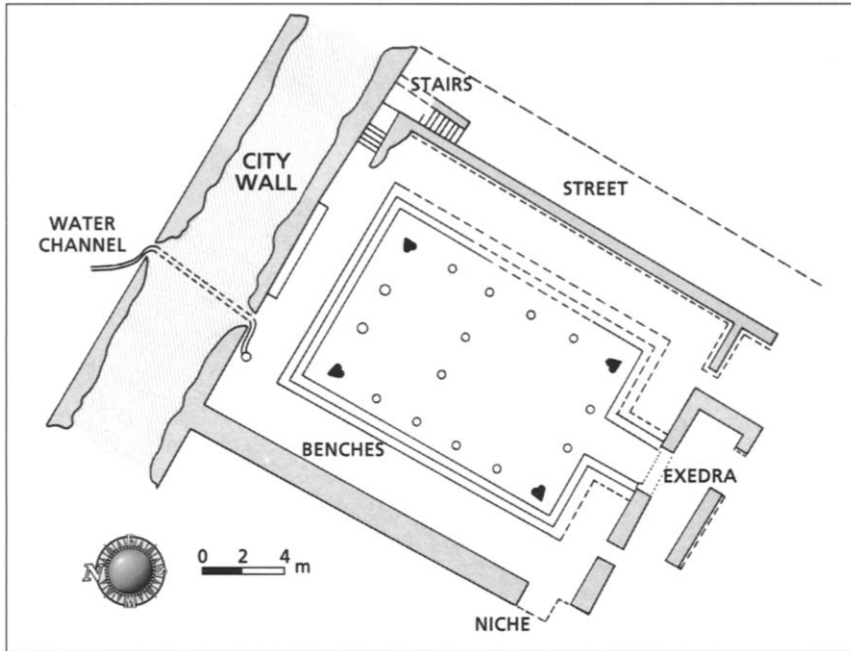
Farther south stood the Jewish settlement of Gamala (Fine 1997; Gutman 1993; Syon 1992/93). As at other sites in the vicinity of the Sea of Galilee, the primary building material for its streets, houses, city walls, and agricultural installations was basalt. While Gamala owes its fame to Josephus' account of its siege by the Romans, its synagogue is by far its most famous building. Dating to the first century BCE or the first century CE, it is one of the three earliest synagogues in Palestine. Fragments of stone vessels (the only such fragments discovered thus far in the Golan) and three *miqvaot* (one dating back to the first century BCE) demonstrate that at least some of Gamala's inhabitants concerned themselves with ritual purity.

Tel Anafa, located 10–12 km north of Lake Huleh, probably lay within the borders of Philip's kingdom. It is a distinctive, even anomalous, site for northern Palestine, and the names for its two ancient settlements are unknown. The site's Hellenistic community yielded an extraordinary assemblage of luxury items, including ornate cast glass vessels, gems, and fine wares as well as a lavishly decorated stuccoed building. This unusually

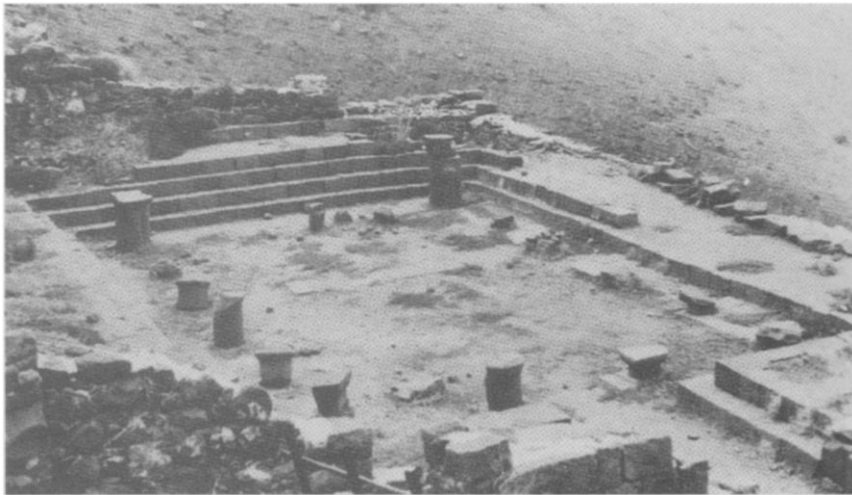


The Bethsaida "Temple." Excavators at Bethsaida, on the north-eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, claim to have found a first-century temple of the Roman imperial cult. They claim that it has a typical temple plan, with a *pronaos*, *naos*, and *opisthodomous* (back room). Whether other archaeologists will accept this identification remains to be seen. From Strickert (1998: 104).

wealthy community had begun to decline in the early first century BCE, and by 75 BCE its abandonment was complete, perhaps due to the flight of its pagan population after the incorporation of the area into the Hasmonean kingdom. Around the turn of the millennium, Tel Anafa hosted an Early Roman community that had little in common with the previous settlement. Its eleven buildings were simpler in design than the elegant Late Hellenistic structures. Whereas the previous settlement's ceramic repertoire had contained large numbers of imports and unusual forms, the Roman settlement used common ware produced at the Galilean village, Kefar Hananyah. The presence of pig bones suggests that the inhabitants' diet was not kosher, and a number of locally made Italian-style pans suggest that they may have enjoyed Roman cuisine. Indeed, the rarity of this latter ceramic form—it is typically found only at sites with Roman occupants—has led the excavators to suggest that Romans or Italians dwelt at Tel Anafa, though the origin or purpose of such a presence there is unclear. In the mid first century CE, this settlement, too, was abandoned for unknown reasons (Herbert 1994, 1997; Slane 1997; Berlin 1997).



The synagogue at Gamala is one of the three oldest in Palestine. Benches along the walls provided seating, and the columns in its corners boasted a heart-shaped design. The Romans destroyed this synagogue, along with the rest of the city, in the first revolt. *Drawing from Gutmann (1993, 2: 460). Photo courtesy of D. Hopkins.*



In contrast to the population of nearby Galilee, Golan's population in the Early Roman period consisted of a majority of pagans and a sizeable Jewish minority. The Jewish presence probably dated back to the mid second century BCE, and most likely increased after the Hasmonean conquest of the region during the reign of Alexander Jannaeus. Itureans were among the earliest settlers in this period, having also arrived in the mid second century BCE, and ceramic evidence at numerous sites demonstrates that they continued to live there in the Roman Period. Their settlements were concentrated around Mt. Hermon but extended to the southern parts of the Golan as well (Ma'oz 1993b). The Nabateans also pushed north, but the extent of their settlement in the Golan is unclear.

In addition to the Herodian constructions, there is evidence that the Nabateans continued to build. Perhaps the most important event in this period of Nabatean history was the transfer of its capital from Petra to Bosra. This move was probably prompted by a shift in Nabatean economic patterns from trade to farming and animal husbandry; the earlier settlement of the Nabateans in Moab also reflected this shift. Bosra has not been excavated, but surveyors have identified in the western parts of the city a regularly planned Roman city. While in the east, the city plan is more chaotic, suggesting to some that it may be the older Nabatean capital (Segal 1989), it is possible that the Nabateans employed an orthogonal plan when building their cities as well. The shift from trade to farming became complete when Rome annexed the Nabatean kingdom in 106 CE, as discussed below.

The Revolt against Rome

It has been said that archaeologists like natural disasters, since events that destroy cities leave more remains than do gradual transformations arising from continual occupation. But in lieu of a natural disaster, devastating war can destroy cities and leave lots of remains for the archaeologist to study. This is certainly true of the Great Revolt against Rome, which started in 66 CE and, although mainly concluded by 70, when Jerusalem fell, produced sporadic fighting until 73, when Rome captured Masada.

The initial Roman campaigns occurred in Galilee and adjacent parts of the Golan, and military activities are visible in the archaeological records of several sites. Though Gamala initially remained loyal to Agrippa II in the Jewish Revolt, it ultimately chose to rebel. Wartime coins unique to the city bear

the Hebrew inscription "for the redemption of H[oly] Jerusalem" (Syon 1992/93). The town, surrounded by steep ravines, repelled assaults by the loyalist forces of Agrippa but could not withstand the protracted siege by Roman troops that followed. Josephus described the battle in epic terms: to escape capture, "multitudes plunged headlong with their wives and children into the ravine which had been excavated to a vast depth beneath the citadel" (*War* 4.80). The Roman breach of the wall by the synagogue is still visible today, and fortress walls, remains of towers, pieces of armor, arrowheads, sling stones, ballista stones, and traces of fire attest to the ferocity of the siege. The site was abandoned after the Revolt and apparently was not reoccupied until the fourth century CE.

LAMPS

Oil lamps are common finds at excavations of Roman-era settlements. They appear in a variety of archaeological contexts, such as domestic space, shops, burials, synagogues, and as foundation deposits. The vast majority were made of clay, though glass, metal, and stone lamps have also been found.

One of the more commonly discovered lamps for the early part of the Roman period is the so-called "Herodian lamp," which appears at sites all over Palestine. The wide distribution of these lamps is probably a result of their relatively easy manufacturing process. In contrast to most Roman lamps, which were cast with molds, potters threw the Herodian lamps on wheels, and pared off the excess clay with a knife. The resulting lamp consisted of a round body and a spatulated nozzle. Decoration of these lamps, if present at all, was simple, consisting of geometric patterns, lines, or roulettes.

While the Herodian lamp is nearly ubiquitous, other lamp types are more associated with certain geographical areas. For example, certain molded lamps, similar in shape to the Herodian lamps, are found primarily in Judea and southern Palestine. This "Judean molded lamp" displays a greater range of decorative

motifs than the Herodian lamps, depicting such images as a basket or a bird-trap. Similarly, the "Samaritan lamp," with a round body and a wide nozzle, is, of course, primarily associated with Samaritan sites.

In the Middle and Late Roman periods, especially, people used a variety of types of lamps. Many of these consisted of a small nozzle attached to a round body with a central discus. These lamps stand out for the decorations found on many of their central discuses. Mythological characters, such as Pan or Helios,

animals, such as dolphins or lions, geometric and floral motifs, and erotic scenes adorn these lamps. In the Late Roman period, especially, distinctly Jewish symbols, such as the menorah or the shofar, occur on some lamps.

Oil lamps continue to shed light on a number of aspects of life in antiquity.

Manufacturing techniques aid understanding ancient technological advances. Lamp shapes and decorations illuminate artistic developments in the region. Symbols, in particular, attest to the ongoing interaction of Greco-Roman and local cultures. Distribution patterns of particular types of lamps reveal trade connections. Lamps thus provide the archaeologist with invaluable data on a variety of issues (Lapp 1997).



Left: Discus lamp with helios motif. Right: Discus lamp fragment with menorah. From Nagy et al. (1996: 221–22, nos. 115, 117). Courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority.

At Jotapata (Yodfat), the Jewish residents utilized earlier Hellenistic fortifications and supplemented them with additional earthworks and walls. The Romans besieged the town during the first revolt, and it was after his unsuccessful defense of this city that Josephus surrendered to the Romans. The town was totally destroyed by the Romans, though a new settlement sprang up afterwards on a nearby plateau. Excavations have recovered arrowheads from iron bows, ballista stones, a rolling stone, the shaft of an iron spear, and portions of a siege ramp from the battle (Adan Bayewitz and Aviam 1997).

Sepphoris, perhaps remembering its fate in the Varus revolt, chose not to join in the Jewish uprising against Rome. This choice did not safeguard it from violence, however. According to Josephus, it suffered several attacks due to intra-Jewish rivalries and urban–rural tensions (e.g., War 2.574; Life 82, 111, 373–380). To preserve its safety, the city admitted Roman garrisons (War 2.511, 3.31; Life 394, 411), and its coins advertised its pro-Roman position. Two issues, minted ca. 68 CE, bore the inscription, "Under Vespasian, Eireonopolis–Neronias–Sepphoris," an inscription that honored the general



These two coins of Sepphoris, minted around 68 CE, reflect the city's pro-Roman stance in the First Jewish Revolt. The reverse of both bear the inscription "Under Vespasian, Neronias-Sepphoris-Eirenopolis," testifying to the city's political alignment. From Nagy et al. (1996: 195, figs. 43, 44). *The Israel Museum, Jerusalem.*

Vespasian, the emperor Nero, and proclaimed the city "the city of peace" (*eironopolis*). At some point, the city's earlier fortifications were filled in and served as a plaza for subsequent construction. If this action dates to the Revolt, it may symbolically reflect the city's decision not to resist the Romans (Meyers 1999).

According to Josephus, the Samaritans also revolted against Rome, but there is little archaeological evidence of military activities in this territory, with the exception of a Roman siege system at Khirbet el-Hammam that may date to the Revolt (Zertal 1995).

Similarly, Josephus noted Roman campaigns in Perea (*War* 4.413–439), the coastal plain, and Idumea (*War* 4.444–448), but there is little archaeological evidence to corroborate his narrative. There is archaeological evidence in Jerusalem of the Roman destruction of the city and Herod's glorious temple, mainly found along the south wall of the Temple Mount (as mentioned above). After destroying Jerusalem, the Romans attacked Herodium, Machaerus, and, finally, Masada.

Textual sources suggest that rebels used Herodium during both the Great Revolt and the later Bar Kokhba revolt (132–135 CE). Archaeologists have discerned modifications to Herod's palace, including adding benches to the walls of the *triclinium* (dining hall) to create a synagogue. Rebels also added a *miqveh* and ovens, possibly for smelting iron and producing weapons. Evidence that the site was a fortress abounds. Excavators have found ballista stones, arrow heads, and other weapons. Unfortunately, it is difficult to date these items or determine when the modifications were made to the palace.

Masada was the last Jewish stronghold to fall after a lengthy siege. Evidence of the siege is readily apparent, even to casual observers. The Romans built a siege wall that completely surrounded the mesa, and constructed several camps to observe the fortress. The foundations of these walls are clearly visible, especially from on top of Masada. They also built a large siege ramp up the western approach, which remains conspicuous.

The holdouts on Masada, the Sicarii, a band of rebels who used the stronghold to raid the local villages, had little need of glorious palaces. They deconstructed Herod's buildings, using the stones to create smaller dwellings and taking up the wooden floors to use for roofing. They built new structures for religious purposes, including a synagogue, a ritual bath (*miqveh*), and possibly a study hall (*bêt midrash*). Whether the

structures were burned by the Sicarii (as suggested by Josephus) or by their attackers, clear evidence of destruction abounds at this site as the Romans turned this siege into conquest.

The end of the Great Revolt marks a turning point in history of Roman Palestine. For the first time, Rome permanently stationed significant forces in the region. Rome initially garrisoned the Legio X Fretensis in Jerusalem. The stationing of a legion in the territory meant that its governor would be a senator, with more governmental experience than the pre-Revolt procurators had had. Vespasian also rewarded Caesarea Maritima for its unwavering support throughout the Great Revolt by elevating the city to the rank of a Roman colony (Pliny 5.14.69). Like Sepphoris, the city issued coins in ca. 67/68 that honored him.

Additionally, Vespasian made changes in Samaria. Shechem had been sparsely inhabited since John Hyrcanus' destruction of the temple on nearby Mt. Gerizim in ca. 128 BCE. The Romans initiated the resettlement of the area by establishing a provincial city there in ca. 72–73 CE. This new city, according to inscriptions on the city's earliest coins (minted ca. 81 CE), was named Flavia Neapolis Samaria. The proportion of Samaritans and pagans in the city, particularly at its inception, is unclear, as is the number of actual Romans Vespasian settled there. While the obverses of the earliest coins bear busts of the emperor Domitian, the reverses depict symbols acceptable to Jews and Samaritans, such as the wreath and double cornucopiae. Pagan deities were not depicted until the city's second and third century issues (Meshorer 1985; Rosenberg 1977).

Middle and Late Roman Periods

The lack of literary sources makes it difficult to provide a detailed chronological summary of political developments for the remainder of the Roman era. The abundance of details about Hasmonean and Herodian rule, as well as the First Jewish Revolt, contrasts starkly with the meager information available for the Middle and Late Roman Periods. Occasionally, Roman historians or rabbinic anecdotes shed light on political events or particular localities, but often archaeology provides the most useful data.

Although the Romans continued to allow their loyal ally Agrippa II to rule his territories north and east of the Sea of Galilee, the Revolt gave two emperors—Vespasian and Titus—experience in the East and probably contributed to a shift in Roman policy towards the East in subsequent years (Bowersock 1973). This change manifested itself in the abandonment of the use of "client" kings. Thus, after Agrippa II's death (ca. 90 CE), the province of Syria absorbed his kingdom. With the death of the Nabatean King Rabbel II, the empire also absorbed the Nabatean kingdom, under the aegis of Provincia Arabia. The archaeological record makes it quite clear that direct Roman control of Palestine encouraged economic development. The economy of the region flourished and many cities grew tremendously. With the Flavian dynasty—Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian—Rome's attention shifted to the East.



The Roman siege wall and camps surrounding Masada are easily visible from the top of the mesa. The typical square design of a Roman military camp is prominent above as is the siege ramp below leading to the top of the mesa. *Photos courtesy of D. Hopkins.*



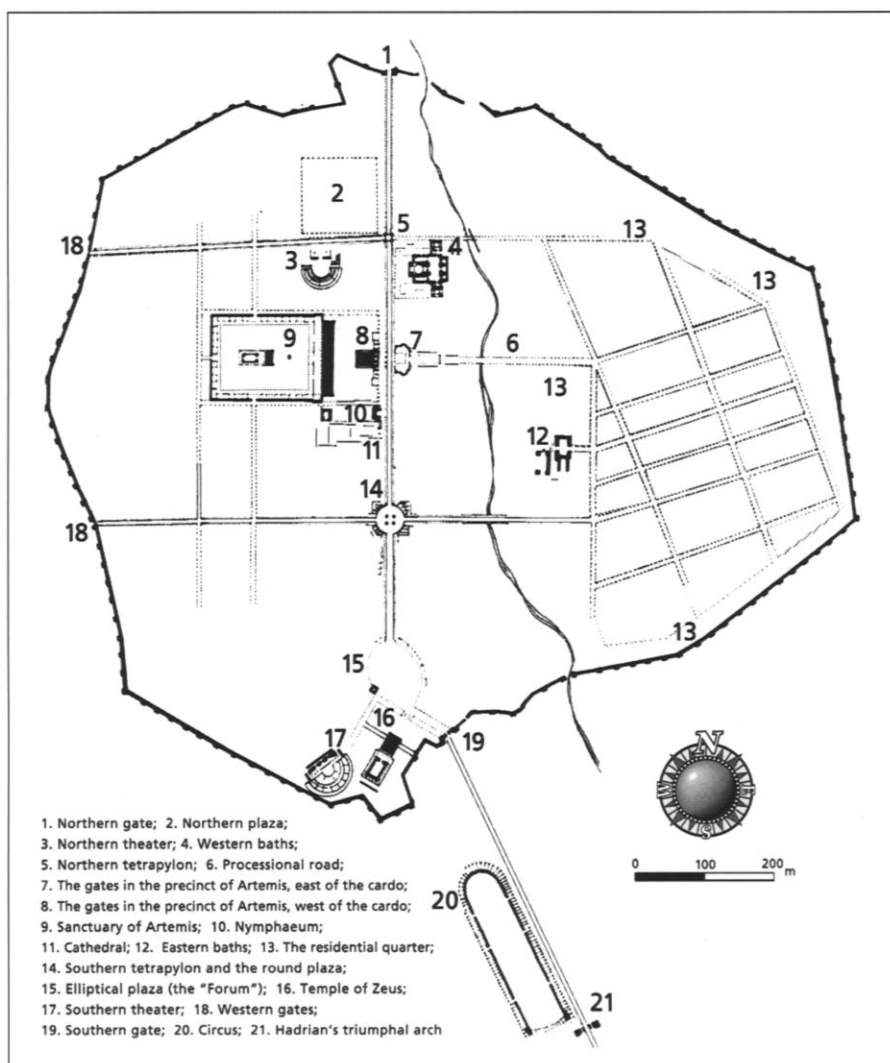
This shift in policy can be documented by examining the history of Palestine east of the Jordan River. Since 63 BCE, this region had three major components: Perea, the region extending from northeast of the Dead Sea to the Jabbok River (modern Nahr az Zarqa) and east to Wadi as Sir; the Decapolis region, extending from Philadelphia (Amman) north to the Sea of Galilee; and the Nabatean kingdom, which surrounded the Decapolis and Perea on the east. While the Decapolis cities were legally part of Syria, they were separated from it by Herod's kingdom and were thus isolated. Few archaeological remains have been found from the period prior to 70 CE, although the archaeological record suggests that development began to pick up in the last quarter of the first century and exploded in the second century, especially after Trajan annexed the Nabatean kingdom in 106 CE. After the annexation, one of Trajan's first goals was to build the Via Nova Trajana, a road that stretched from Syria to the Red Sea. This road—and its commercial traffic—ran through many of the Decapolis cities and contributed to an economic boom many of these towns experienced during the second century.

Perhaps the best example of a city that benefitted from increased trade was Gerasa (Jerash). The city was laid out along an orthogonal grid, established by the time the city walls were erected around 75 CE. But there is little evidence of significant construction earlier in the Roman period, apart from a temple built ca. 25 CE on the site of the Zeus Sanctuary in the southwest part of the city. Somewhat later (but not clearly dated), a large, colonnaded plaza was added northeast of the Sanctuary of Zeus. West of the Sanctuary, a 3,000 seat theater was built and dedicated in 90/91 CE. As part of the preparation for Hadrian's visit to the east in 130 CE, Gerash erected a triumphal arch, some 450 m south of the old city gate. It is possible that the citizens had planned to extend the city walls to include this new gate and thus increase the size of their city enormously.

The Via Nova Trajana aided the economy of smaller towns as well. At Tel Heshbon, for example, archaeologists have found evidence of many new foundations in the period from 130–193 CE, including an inn probably built to take advantage of the increased traffic. Similarly, the economy around the south end of the Dead Sea flourished in the first third of the second century. The archives of Babatha and Salome Komaise have preserved records revealing that the region around Zohar (at the southeast corner of the Dead

Sea) produced considerable quantities of dates, presumably for export. The archives have demonstrated as well that Babatha and her compatriots, although Jewish, were very much integrated into the empire. She used its courts and laws extensively, and when she paid her taxes in Petra, she swore by the genius of the Emperor that they were correct. The archives have also shown that social and economic networks extended across the Dead Sea to En Gedi, into Perea, and possibly even to Alexandria.

This economic boom was accompanied with a more visible Roman military presence. The Legio X Fretensis, stationed in Judea, was joined ca. 120 CE by the Legio VI Ferrata in Galilee. This newly arrived legion made its headquarters at Kefar Otnay, renamed Legio, just south of the Nazareth ridge.



Gerasa City Plan. Described as the best-preserved example of a Roman provincial city, ancient Gerasa rises to the west of the modern city. This map clearly shows the regular grid of the city plan. The western portion of the city was primarily used for public structures; the largest of these was the temple of Artemis. The eastern portion of the city was the residential quarter and has not been excavated. *From Applebaum and Segal (1993, 2: 472). Courtesy of the Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem.*

The VI Ferrata's arrival at this time may reflect Roman precautions against Jewish uprisings in the wake of the revolts against Trajan by Jews in Egypt, Cyrenaica, Cyprus and Mesopotamia ca. 115–117 CE. The province of Judea was the home of these two legions until the third century CE (Safrai 1992).

The Bar Kokhba Revolt

Hadrian's reign (117–38 CE) brought economic prosperity for many communities, but catastrophe for others. A second Jewish revolt against Rome occurred in 132–35 CE and like the earlier one, resulted in disaster for the Jews. Ancient sources reported several causes for the uprising. A writer dubbed by scholars as Pseudo Spartianus reported that Hadrian's prohibition against genital mutilation led to Jewish uprisings in defense of the ancestral practice of circumcision (*Life of Hadrian* 14.2). Cassius Dio (*Roman History* 69.12) placed responsibility for the revolt on Hadrian's decision to establish a Roman colony at Jerusalem, to rename the city Aelia Capitolina, and to build a pagan temple there. A rabbinic saying (*Gen. Rab.* 64.10) blamed the war on Hadrian's retraction of an offer to the Jews to allow them to rebuild their temple. Scholars remain divided on the reliability of these reports. Because details about the revolt in the literary sources are so meager, archaeological and numismatic materials provide the bulk of our evidence for understanding it.

The leader of the Jewish forces was known by several names. The name "Shimon" appears on coins issued by the rebels, "Bar Kosibah" on papyrus documents from the Judean wilderness, "Ben" or "Bar Kozibah" in rabbinic literature, and "Ben" or "Bar Kokhba" in later Christian writings. The most plausible explanation for these variations is that his original name was Shimon Bar Kosibah ("son of Kosibah"). Those who later looked back on the disaster his revolt brought to his people called him "Bar Kozibah," "Son of the Lie." His ardent supporters, however, apparently regarded him as a messianic figure, associating him with the claim in Numbers 24:17 that "a star shall come forth out of Jacob; a man shall rise out of Israel" and renaming him Bar Kokhba, "Son of the Star." Coins and papyrus documents have shown that he was also known as the "Nasi," or "Prince" (Schäfer 1995).

The history of the Revolt, like its causes, is not well-known. Some scholars have interpreted inscriptions on the rebels' coins reading "Year One of the Redemption of Israel" and "Year Two of the Redemption of Israel" as evidence that the Jewish forces retook Jerusalem. However, Bar Kokhba coins are extremely rare finds in Jerusalem; as of 1995, only two of the fifteen thousand coins discovered in the city were from the Bar Kokhba revolt. This dearth of numismatic evidence in Jerusalem itself has led other scholars to suggest that the city remained in Roman hands for the duration of the Revolt. They regard the inscriptions on the coins as expressions of the hopes, rather than the accomplishments, of the Jewish rebels (Schäfer 1995; Meshorer 1982). The best estimate of the geographical extent of the Bar Kokhba revolt, based on numismatic and archaeological evidence, concludes that the

rebels held a region south of Jerusalem and Jericho, north of Hebron and Masada, east of the coastal plain, and west of the Dead Sea (Mildenberg 1980). It is possible that the revolt extended into Samaria, Galilee, and perhaps even Syria and Arabia (Eck 1999).

According to Diodorus Siculus (69.12.3), the rebels adopted guerilla tactics, utilizing tunnels and expanding caves to store supplies and weapons, as well as for concealment. Caves at a number of sites have been associated with the Bar Kokhba rebels. The best example of this may be Horvat Midras, 32 km south of Jerusalem. It has over twenty different complexes of tunnels and caves. One of these connected three older cisterns with 50 m of tunnels; another had six to nine rooms (over 400 m² in area) connected by 90 m of tunnels. These complexes had camouflaged entrances that could be blocked from inside and tunnels that could be barricaded (Kloner 1993). The caves above 'En Gedi contained the archives of Babatha and Salome, along with many other documents and skeletons from the revolt. Other examples of caves used in the uprising include Horvat Givit, 18 km north of Jericho, which has an elaborate underground system of tunnels and Horvat Eqed (20 km west of Jerusalem; Ilan 1993; Gichon 1993). The Bar Kokhba rebels also utilized older sites, including 'En Boqeq, 13 km south of Masada, and Herodium.



Coins of both Palestinian Jewish revolts against Rome usually depicted items associated with Jewish customs or practices. This one, issued ca. 132 CE by the Bar Kochba rebels, depicts a *lulav* (palm frond) and willow and myrtle fronds, items associated with the Jewish festival of Sukkot. Its inscription reads "Year One of the Freedom of Israel." *Courtesy of Dr. D. Jeselsohn, Switzerland.*

The ferocity of the conflict is undisputed and casualties were high on both sides. The Romans were forced to deploy the Legio II Cyrenaica, the Legio III Gallica, and auxiliary units in addition to the two legions already stationed in Palestine. Hadrian staged no triumphal parade at the war's conclusion, and when he reported the events to the Senate, he did not include his typical claim that "all is well with me and the legions." According to Cassius Dio (*Roman History* 69.14.3), Jewish casualties from combat alone exceeded half a million; famine and disease, he claimed, pushed the Jewish death count even higher. While these numbers, like many numbers reported

by ancient historians, are probably inaccurate, it is clear that the Romans did absolutely ravage parts of Judea.

After Bar Kokhba

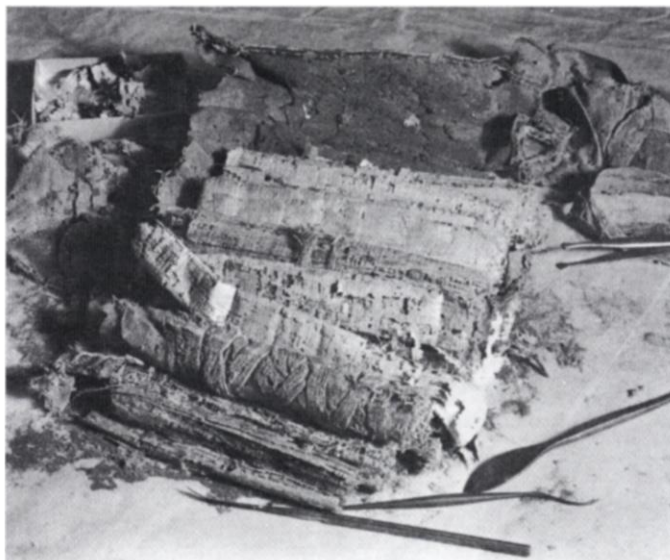
After putting down the revolt, Hadrian carried out his plan to rebuild Jerusalem as "Aelia Capitolina." The current plan of the present-day Jerusalem's Old City owes much to the lay-out of Hadrian's colony. The Roman city's plan was likely similar to the Byzantine city plan known from the famous Madaba mosaic map. The major gate in the northern wall was located at the modern Damascus gate, where excavations have revealed an arch that shares many similarities with other second and third century triumphal arches, including the better preserved one at Gerasa. Whether Hadrian rebuilt the city's walls is unclear. Excavations along the northern wall have placed the construction of the walls either at the end of the third century (when the tenth legion departed the city) or at the beginning of the fourth century (when a newly Christian empire wanted to glorify its spiritual capital; Geva and Avigad 1993).

Inside the Damascus gate was a square with a triumphal column. Two major roads ran out of this square. The *cardo* ran up towards Mt. Zion, where the tenth legionary camp was located. The *decumanus* probably followed the line of modern David Street and the Street of the Chain. The *cardo* was colonnaded and sections of its paving stones have been identified. A secondary *cardo* ran down the Tyropoeon valley, along the Herodian Western Wall of the Temple Mount.

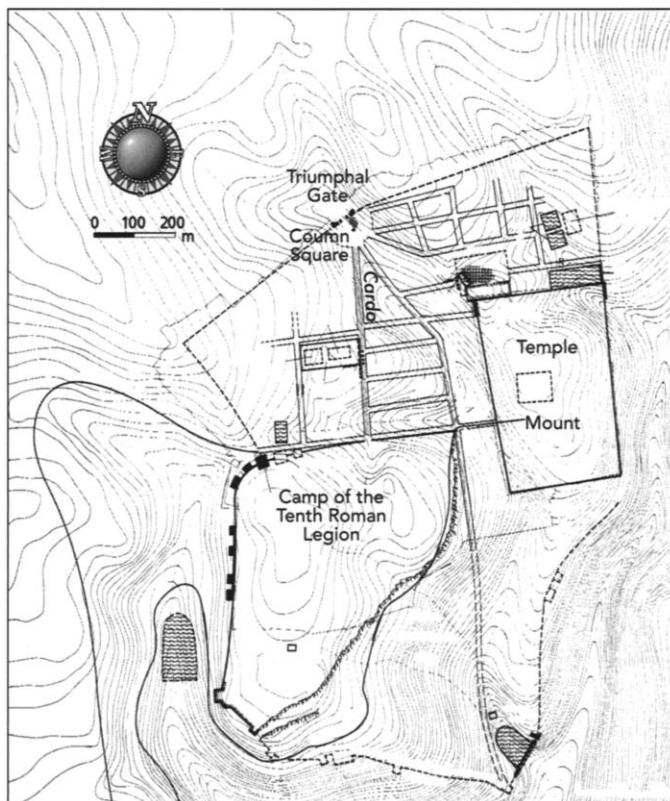
The city had two fora. One was located in the present-day Muristan and to its north, Hadrian erected a temple of Aphrodite on the site that later served as the foundations for the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the traditional burial place of Jesus. The other forum was located north of the Temple Mount. The main remains of this forum are the so-called *Ecce Homo* arch, an arch mistakenly associated with Pilate's command to the crowds to "behold the man," that is, Jesus, who was to be crucified (John 19:5). This triumphal arch rested on arches spanning the Struthion Pool. The construction of much of Hadrian's city reused Herodian materials, such as the characteristic ashlar with dressed corners and rough faces.

The regularity of the Roman city plan, found in the northern part of the city, did not extend into the legionary camp on Mt. Zion. The exact location of this camp is unclear; it has been suggested that it was located in either the Armenian or the Jewish quarters of the modern city. The evidence for the camp consists mainly of inscriptions, now all in secondary usage, and roof tiles stamped with *L.X.F. [Leg(io) X Fre(tensis)]*.

The new city built on top of Jerusalem was exclusively pagan, at least at first. Cassius Dio (*Roman History* 69.12.1) reported that a temple to Jupiter Capitolinus was built on the site of the Jewish temple. Coins issued by the city bore images of various pagan deities, such as the typical city goddess, Hygeia, and Dionysos (Meshorer 1985). Jews were forbidden for a time even to enter the city, and transgression of this law was punishable by death. Enforcement of the prohibition does



The Babatha archive was a collection of papyri documents found along the west side of the Dead Sea. The documents were collected in a bundle that the curators had to open. From Yadin (1971a: 227).



The city plan of Aelia Capitolina probably followed the basic plan of pre-Revolt Jerusalem; the modern city plan also follows the layout of Aelia. This is especially true for the northern portion of the city, where most public structures were located. The plan for the southern portion of the city, where the camp of the tenth legion was located, is less clearly defined. From Geva (1993, 2: 758). Courtesy of the Israel Exploration Society.



The Madaba mosaic map, dating to the sixth century CE, provides invaluable information about the geography of Byzantine Palestine (Avi-Yonah 1954). It also provides the earliest visual representation of Jerusalem. Although from a later date, many of the features of the map follow the basic layout for Aelia Capitolina. The left hand (north) side of the map depicts the modern Damascus (Triumphal) gate and the square with a column inside it. Running across the middle of the mosaic is the cardo and above this is the secondary cardo. Both are colonnaded. *From Piccirillo and Alliata (1999: 198, pl. 3).*

not seem to have lasted long, but the city's Jewish character faded under Roman occupation.

The archaeological record also witnesses the Roman military presence elsewhere in Palestine. Several sites in Judea and Galilee have produced inscriptions referring to Roman military units. The camp at Legio—not yet fully excavated—possesses two enclosures and a theater. Other remains from units of the VI Ferrata legion include a Roman military fortress located near Tiberias, a fortification at Mt. Hazon, and a camp at Tel Shalem, from which have come an inscription mentioning the legion and a bronze statue of Hadrian (Isaac 1992; Safrai 1992).

Caesarea Maritima continued to function as a center of Roman power. In the second century CE, a circus was added and the theater reconstructed. One inscription reflects the presence of a shrine honoring Hadrian, and others attest to additional construction projects (Lehmann and Holum 2000). Statues of pagan deities are common (Gersht 1996). The city was not exclusively pagan, however; a Jewish minority continued to dwell there and built a synagogue in the third century.

The Romans needed reliable routes to facilitate their troop movements, and a system of paved roads criss-crossed Palestine. The importance of the Via Nova Trajana, stretching from Syria to the Red Sea, has already been mentioned. The ancient route connecting Antioch and Alexandria, part of the Via Maris, was of similar significance, and it was linked with the inland by a road connecting Caesarea Maritima, Legio, and Scythopolis, which was, in turn, linked with the Via Nova Trajana. The

Romans laid down additional roads of local significance, such as those connecting Jerusalem with Gaza and Joppa; the north–south route connecting Jerusalem, Neapolis, Sebaste, and Legio; and east–west routes such as those between Tiberias and Ptolemais and between Pnias and Tyre. Latin milestones help us to date the construction and renovation of these roads, associating many with Hadrian's reign (Avi-Yonah 1966; Isaac and Roll 1982; Fischer, Isaac and Roll 1996).

Judea's population, which had grown throughout the Herodian period, very likely stabilized in the second century. A survey of the Judean hills discovered that the number of settlements there did not increase in the second century, and the total area settled declined somewhat. This decline probably reflects damage and casualties of the war as well as the migration of some Jews north to Galilee (Ofer 1993).

The fortunes of some Judean cities improved in the second and third centuries CE. Emperor Septimius Severus elevated Beth Guvrin to the status of *polis* in ca. 200 CE and renamed it "Eleutheropolis." A Roman amphitheater there may date to this time, and columns, a capital, and an inscribed and decorated lintel remain from a Late Roman inn (Kloner 1993a). Lod probably remained a predominantly Jewish city, but Septimius Severus refounded it as well, naming it Diospolis. Similarly, Emmaus was raised to the status of *polis* by Elagabalus and renamed Nicopolis–Antoninopolis. Residents enjoyed a bathhouse built on a monoaxial design, its four rooms lined up in a straight line (Gichon 1979).

The Decapolis

The cities of the Decapolis also thrived in the Middle and Late Roman periods, reflecting Rome's growing interest in the east. Gerasa and Philadelphia provide good examples of the area's development. Gerasa saw the erection of a new Sanctuary of Zeus (ca. 161–66 CE) on the site of the older temple, a Nabatean temple or cultic monument (known as Temple C), and an enormous temple dedicated to Artemis. This latter temple took thirty years to complete (150–80 CE). A sacred way began 500 m east of the sanctuary and led to the temple's grand staircase. At the top of the staircase stood the outer court (161 by 121 m). Inside this court was the smaller temple court (124 by 88 m), and inside this was the temple itself (20 by 22.6 m). The temple complex as a whole was one of the largest sanctuaries in Palestine. The construction of

EVIDENCE OF "ROMANIZATION"

Much has been said about the Hellenization of Palestine (e.g., Tcherikover 1957 and Hengel 1973), but it was not until the Roman period that the urban landscape began to include features such as theaters, hippodromes, and amphitheaters. Though these structures first appeared late in the first century BCE, most of them were built in second, third, or fourth centuries CE.

The earliest theaters in Palestine were those Herod erected at Jerusalem, Jericho, and Caesarea Maritima. Only the latter two are attested archaeologically. The Nabateans built theaters in the early part of the first century CE. Interestingly, the so-called Greek cities of the Decapolis did not possess theaters until a century after Herod. The South Theater of Gerasa was the earliest, being built from 94–103. But in the second and third centuries CE, many theaters took shape in the Transjordan, in the coastal plain, and even in the predominantly Jewish cities of Sepphoris and Tiberias.

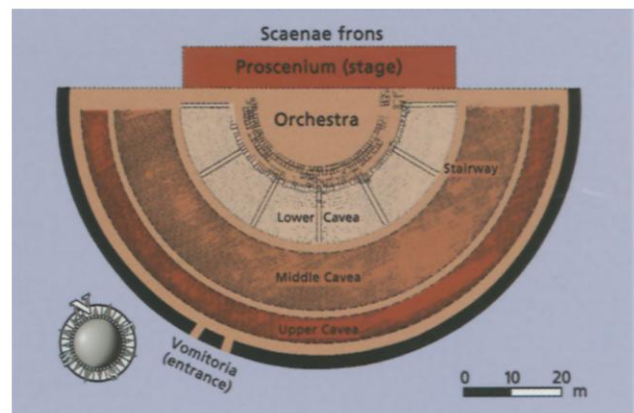
Architecturally, the theaters did not follow Greek prototypes, but Roman, as described by Vitruvius. Thus, their orchestras were uniformly semicircular, rather than round. But beyond this, none of the theaters were identical in design. This is to be expected, as they were constructed using locally available materials, and great efforts were made to integrate them into the city plan. Moreover, the entertainment offered in these theaters was not Greek tragedies and classical drama. Rather, much lighter entertainment, especially mime and pantomime shows, predominated (Segal 1995).

Just as Palestine's theaters reflected Roman designs and mores, so did its other entertainment facilities. Herod and his sons built the first hippodromes, but it was not until the second and third centuries CE that additional hippodromes appeared in the Decapolis cities. These structures were used for athletic contests and chariot races. Josephus claimed that Herod also built amphitheaters, but the archaeological finds, such as those at Jericho, suggest that his amphitheaters did not follow the typical Roman design. Characteristically Roman amphitheaters were first built in Palestine in the second and third centuries CE; they were the venue for gladiatorial games and animal baiting (Weiss 1999).

Thus, although dominated for three centuries by Greek rulers, the cities of Palestine did not include typically



The distribution of archaeologically attested theaters ●, amphitheaters ○, and hippodromes ▩ in Roman Palestine. Though a few of these entertainment structures appeared as early as the late first century BCE, the vast majority belong to the second through fourth centuries CE. After Weiss (1998: 24, fig. 1).



Plan of the theater at Shechem. From Magen (1993c: 1356). Courtesy of the Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem.

Hellenic features until the Roman period. The first examples of all of these "typically-Greek" structures were all built by Jewish or Nabatean kings, and it was not until the second century that they appeared in other cities in the region, such as those in Transjordan.

duplicate civic structures, such as the second theater built in the northern part of the city (ca. 162), reveals the measure of Gerasa's economic strength in the latter part of the second century (Applebaum and Segal 1993).

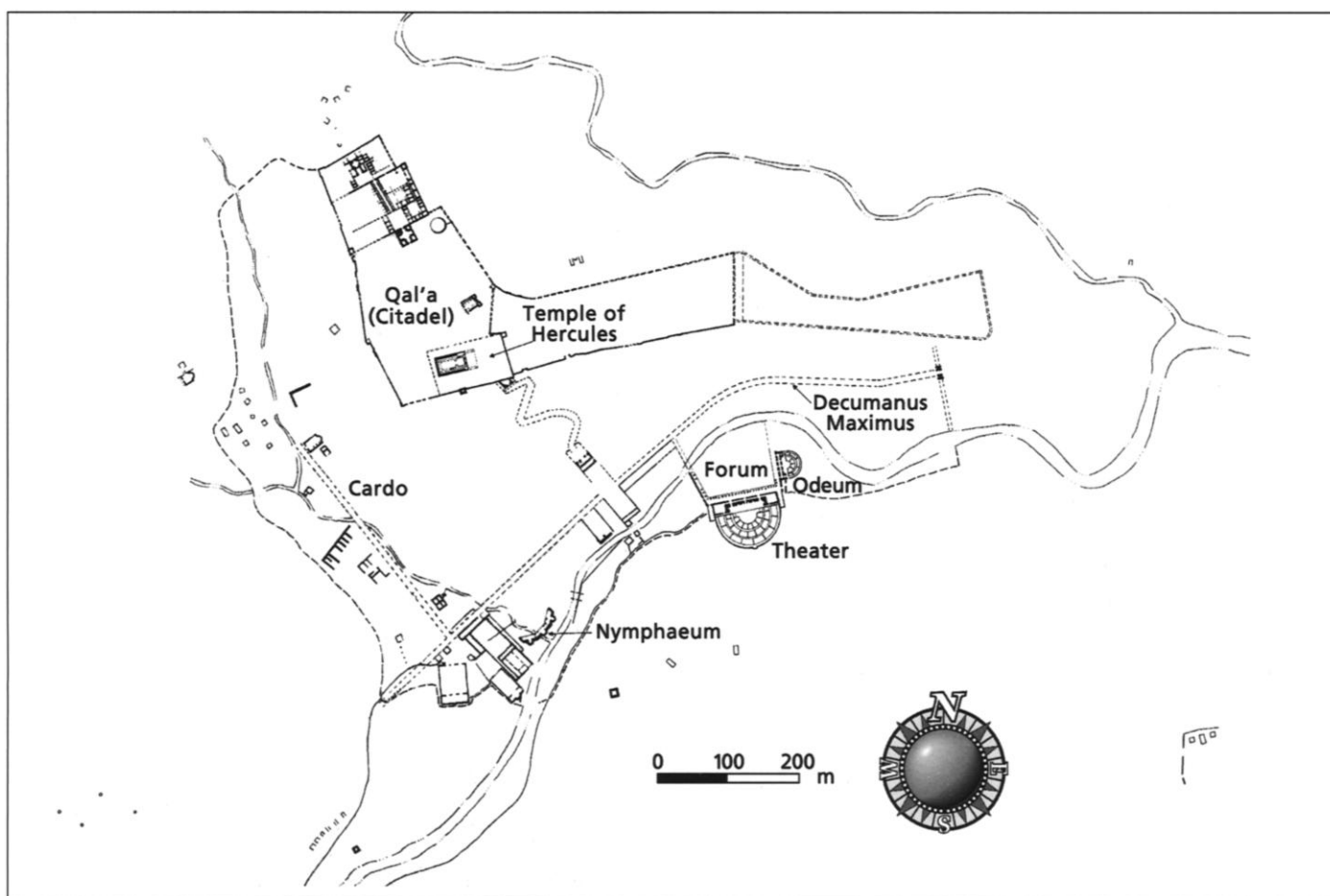
South of Gerasa, the traditional capital of the region, two large colonnaded streets gave structure to Philadelphia's city center. Topography dictated the city plan and did not allow the regular rectilinear design common in many Roman cities. The main street, the ten meter wide *decumanus maximus*, ran roughly east-west and connected to the Via Nova Trajana. The *cardo* ran north-south and intersected the *decumanus* approximately 200 meters west of the city forum. Builders completed work on a *nymphaeum*, resembling that of Gerasa, in ca. 191 near the intersection of these two major roads.

Samaria

The cities of the region of Samaria also exhibited the growth typical of the era. Early second century CE building projects at Neapolis had given the city many typical Roman features, especially after a series of building projects in the early second century: a hippodrome, paved streets, and one of the largest

theaters in western Palestine (Magen 1984). Shortly after the end of the Second Revolt, an impressive temple arose on Mt. Gerizim's northernmost peak, Tell er-Ras. A massive stairway, consisting of perhaps as many as 1500 steps, connected this temple to the city below. City coins of the second and third century bear accurate representation of this spectacular stairway. The temple—tetrastyle structure—sat on a podium surrounded by a plaza and boasted a *pronaos*, a *naos*, marble floors, and Corinthian capitals. A hexagonal altar also joins the list of temple remains, and two inscriptions show that the temple was dedicated to Zeus Olympius.

The city's fortunes appeared to have suffered somewhat in the next century after it supported Niger in his unsuccessful power struggle against Septimius Severus. Civic coinage disappeared at that time, not appearing again until the time of Philip the Arab (244 CE). Philip did well by the city, raising its status to colony with the new name of Iulia Sergia Neapolis. The appearance of a military standard, eagle, and boar, all symbols of the Legio X Fretensis, on a coin minted under Trebonianus Gallus (251–53 CE) suggest the presence of a military contingent (Meshorer 1985). Mid third-century



The seven hills of the Decapolis city, Philadelphia (modern Amman) made it impossible to create a strict grid plan for the city. However, it had a Decumanus Maximus and Cardo that met at a right-angle and provided an orientation for the city. The city also had a forum, theater, and other accoutrements of a Hellenistic-Roman city. *Drawing from Northedge (1992: fig. 14).*

Neapolis probably witnessed the construction of an amphitheater inside the hippodrome, a water system, and mausolea, as well as renovations to the temple of Zeus. During the same era artists created a colored mosaic depicting human, mythological, and animal figures and scenes from the Iliad (Dauphin 1979). Excavations of a large building, 33 m wide, north of the temple unearthed an oblong hall, a *bema*, and an apse, remains which may have come from another pagan temple or an early Samaritan synagogue (Magen 1993c).

Sebaste, in contrast to Neapolis, supported Septimius Severus against Niger and received its reward for loyalty in ca. 201 CE with the elevation of its status to colony. Second and third century constructions included an aqueduct, colonnades, forum, basilica, bathhouse, renovations to the temple of Kore, additional shrines, and a sixty-five meter diameter theater. Statues of Dionysos, Apollo, and Hercules, as well as fragments from other figures, expressed the city's predominantly pagan ethos.

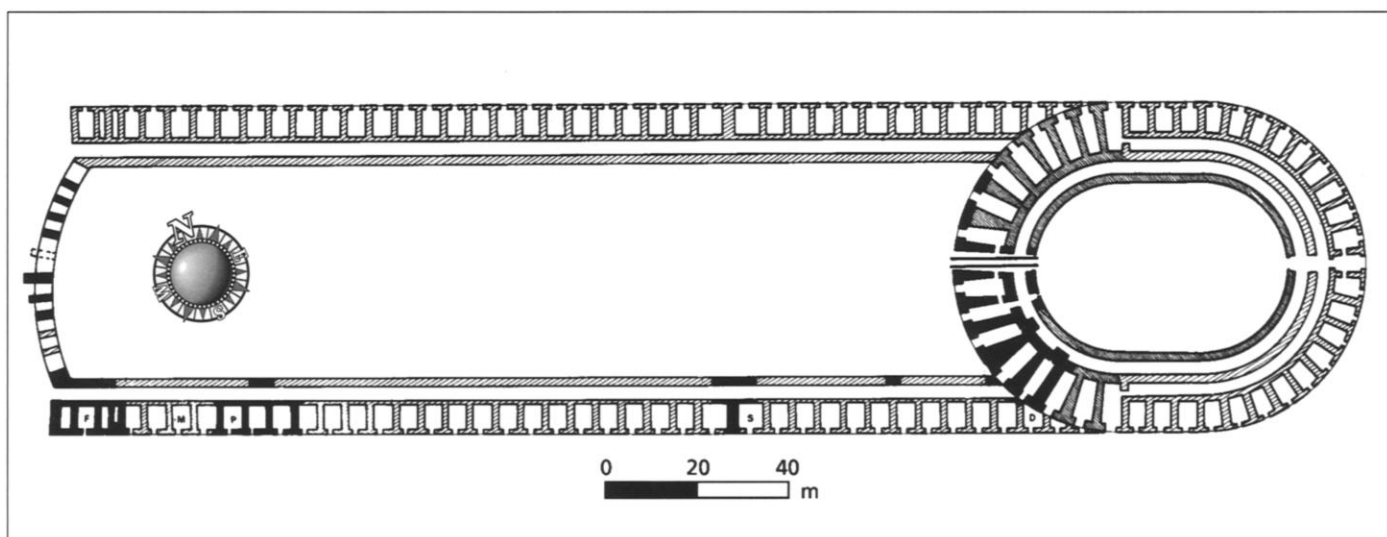
Despite the growth of the region's two principal cities, most Samaritans remained in the countryside, and the number of settlements probably continued to rise throughout the Roman period. The use of the tower system, which had declined throughout the first century CE, probably ended after the Bar Kokhba Revolt. This phenomenon, combined with the shrinking size of the typical courtyard house, may reflect the replacement of small family farms with larger estates. An extensive rural road network connected individual farms, agricultural holdings, and tower areas with the villages, towns, and cities, and highways connected Sebaste and Neapolis with the coastal cities. Samaria's road system may be representative of the types of transportation networks that functioned elsewhere in Roman Palestine but are no longer visible (Dar 1986; Roll and Ayalon 1986).

Galilee

With the rebuilding of Jerusalem as Aelia Capitolina, the spiritual center of Judaism shifted to Galilee. Many Judeans migrated north in the wake of the Bar Kokhba revolt, and the region's population grew extensively in the Middle and Late Roman periods. This influx of Jewish settlers included the rabbis, legal experts who slowly emerged as Judaism's new spiritual leaders. They established rabbinic schools devoted to scripture first at Usha, then at Shefar'am and Beth She'arim, and eventually at Sepphoris and Tiberias. Their successors eventually collected many of their traditions into the Mishnah ca. 200 CE, probably at Sepphoris. The Mishnah served as the foundational document for the later collections of rabbinic materials, the Babylonian Talmud (which ultimately became authoritative for Judaism) and the Palestinian Talmud.

As in the first century CE, Galilee's population was predominantly Jewish, with evidence for pagans clearest on its fringes. At Scythopolis, to the southeast, temples, inscriptions, statuary, and coins amply attest to the worship of Olympian deities. At the inland Tyrian village of Kedesh, on the border of Upper Galilee, stand the remains of an impressive temple, the only one from the Roman period excavated in geographical Galilee. Epigraphic evidence shows that the temple was in use as early as 117/118 CE and that it was dedicated to the "Holy God of Heaven" (Ovadiah, Fischer, and Roll 1993). Northwest of Kedesh, a dedicatory inscription to Diana and Apollo, perhaps from the second century CE, has turned up, and unexcavated ruins at Jebel Balat may derive from an Early Roman temple (Aviam 1993).

The whole region felt the effects of the Roman military presence, as seen for example at the fortress of Tiberias. Rabbinic materials contain hundreds of reports of contact between Roman soldiers and Galileans (Isaac 1992). Troops



The Neapolis Hippodrome, numbered among several key construction projects of the second century, displays the growth typical of many of Palestine's urban areas during the Middle and Late Roman periods. *From Magen (1993c: 1357).*

were especially visible at Jewish festivals. According to one report (*b. Sabb.* 145B), no festival occurred at Sepphoris without the appearance of a Roman patrol. Given this new Roman presence, it is no surprise that the symbols of Greco-Roman culture—e.g., bathhouses, theaters—become more common in Galilee.

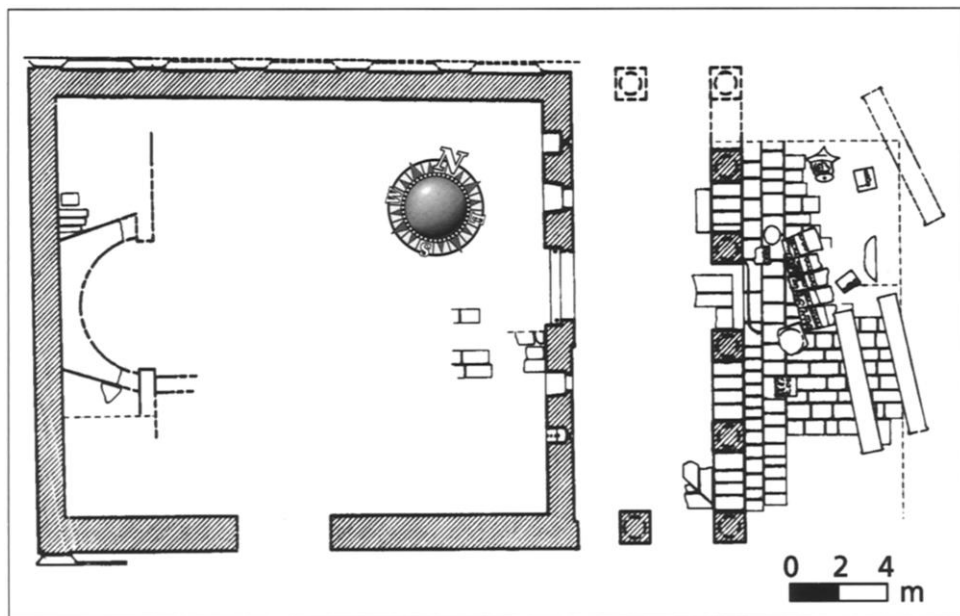
As elsewhere in Palestine, Greco-Roman cultural influence in the Middle and Late Roman periods is evident in the architectural developments of the larger settlements of Galilee. At Tiberias, a *cardo* was built in the second century CE, a theater at the foot of nearby Mt. Berenice in the second or third century CE, and a Roman-style bathhouse in the fourth century CE (Hirschfeld 1993, 1997). At Capernaum, a bathhouse was erected in the second or third century CE (Laughlin 1993). Hellenistic imagery, including a medusa or Helios figure, decorates the basalt synagogue at Chorazin, built in the third or fourth century CE. More detailed consideration of two sites, Sepphoris and Beth She‘arim, further illustrates the interplay of Judaism and Hellenism in Middle and Late Roman Galilee.

Sepphoris

Sepphoris continued the expansion it had begun in the first century, particularly on the eastern plateau. Its theater, as discussed above, may date to the early second century CE, and ultimately the city added two bathhouses, additional paved and colonnaded streets, and the massive aqueduct system visible today. At some point early in the second century CE, the city’s official name became “Diocaesarea,”

as indicated on numismatic inscriptions and a nearby milestone. The growth of Hellenistic influence is indisputable. A second century market weight bears a Greek inscription identifying the city’s *agoranomoi* (market inspectors; Meshorer 1986), and a Roman villa on the acropolis dating to approximately 200 CE contains a triclinium mosaic depicting a drinking context between Dionysos and Heracles, with Greek labels to explain each panel (C. Meyers et al. 1996). Many typical architectural features of the Greco-Roman city, however, such as a hippodrome, a nymphaeum, and a gymnasium (a central institution of the polis), have not turned up.

Like the rest of the region, the city remained predominantly Jewish (Chancey and Meyers 2000; Chancey 2001, 2002). Rabbinic writings mention it frequently (Miller), and as already mentioned, it may have been where Judah ha-Nasi led efforts to compile the Mishnah. Ritual baths dot the western slope of the acropolis, reflecting ongoing Jewish concerns with purity. In contrast, evidence for pagan cultic practices (as opposed to the abundant evidence of Hellenistic culture) is surprisingly limited (Chancey and Meyers 2000; Chancey 2002). Two bronze figures of Prometheus and, perhaps, Pan (2nd–3rd centuries CE; C. Meyers and E. Meyers 1997) and a small bronze bowl, bronze incense altar, and bronze bull, items probably associated with Serapis worship (fourth century CE; Strange 1992), offer the most noteworthy examples of explicitly pagan artifacts. While second and third century CE city coins depict pagan temples, no such temples have been found, despite extensive excavations.



The temple at Kedasa, on Galilee’s northernmost fringe, is the only excavated Roman-era temple in the region. It was sizable, with a temenos measuring 55 by 80 m and an inner building approximately 17.6 m by 20 m. Greek inscriptions found at the site show that the temple was in use by 117/118 CE and was dedicated to the “Holy God of Heaven,” a deity which may be associated with the local god Baal-Shamin. *From Ovadiah, Fischer, and Roll (1993: 857).*

Beth She‘arim

The necropolis at Beth She‘arim, in southwestern Galilee, is perhaps the best known Galilean example of the thorough-going influence Hellenism had on Judaism in this period. First and second century CE remains of the village consist only of walls, numismatic finds, and isolated burials. The third century CE, however, saw the emergence of public buildings, including a synagogue, and the expansion of the necropolis. From the mid third through the early fourth century CE, the catacombs of Beth She‘arim served as a burial center for Jews not only from the immediate vicinity but, in some cases, as far away as Palmyra and Babylonia. The styles of the burial places are typical for Roman Palestine, and included both *kokhim* (burial shafts cut trough-like into the wall) and *arcosolia* (shelves with arches cut above them).



The Dionysos mosaic at Sepphoris included panels depicting scenes of a drinking contest between the god Dionysos and the demigod Herakles. This panel, perhaps the best preserved, depicts the outcome of the contest: Herakles, unable to hold his own, reclines sick, and the accompanying inscription reads "Drunkenness." The mosaic illustrates the influence of Greco-Roman culture in Middle Roman Galilee. From Nagy et al. (1996: 113, fig. 49). Photo by Gabi Laron. Courtesy of the Joint Sepphoris Project.

Investigators have located approximately 280 inscriptions, many identifying the names, occupations and places of origins for the interred, carved on the walls and sarcophagi of the tomb complex. The vast majority of these (nearly eighty percent) are in Greek, with about sixteen percent in Hebrew and a few in Aramaic or Palmyrene. The epigraphic corpus of Beth She'arim thus provides one of our most important examples of the growing use of Greek in Galilee.

Decorations in the catacombs also reflect the growing acceptability of representative art to Palestinian Jews. Carvings, reliefs, and reliefs depict human and animal figures in addition to traditional Jewish cultic objects such as Torah shrines, shofars, incense shovels, and menorahs. Sarcophagi display the same range of decorative motifs, some employing Hellenistic imagery; winged Nike are depicted on one, Leda and the Swan on another (Mazar 1973; Schwabe and Lifshitz 1974; Avigad 1976; Levine 1997).

The Synagogues of Upper Galilee

The Middle Roman period in Galilee also marks the beginning of the proliferation of architecturally distinct synagogues. The earliest of these is Nabratein, built shortly after the Bar Kokhba war (Meyers 1993). Jews built other synagogues in the third century in Upper Galilee at Khirbet Shema (Meyers, Kraabel and Strange 1976), Gush Halav (Meyers, Meyers and Strange 1990), and Meiron (Meyers, Strange, and Meyers 1981). These synagogues mark the first of dozens that would be constructed throughout Galilee within a few centuries.

Only a few figurines depicting pagan deities or mythological figures have been found thus far in Galilee. This Pan statuette, found in a cistern at Sepphoris, dates to the second or third century CE and depicts either the god Pan or a satyr. From Nagy et al. (1996: 171, fig. 17). Courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority



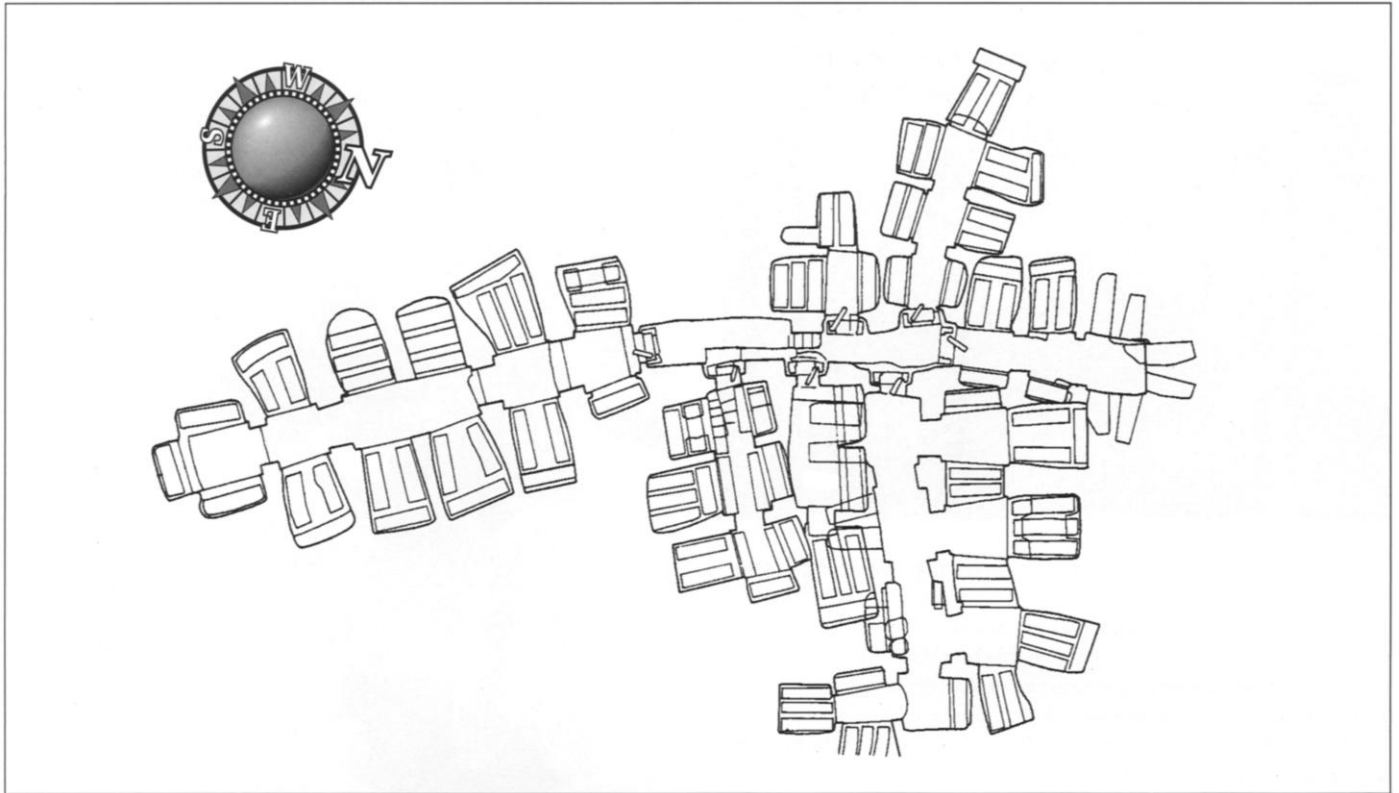
The third century CE construction date of these early Galilean synagogues is notable. This period is often regarded as one of decline and instability throughout the Roman Empire, including Palestine. Excessive taxation, rampant inflation, and tensions between urban

and rural populations are thought to have resulted in an economic and social crisis. Rabbinic anecdotes refer to social banditry, famine, and disease. Conditions are not thought to have begun to stabilize until the accession of Diocletian to the throne in ca. 284 CE (Schäfer 1995). Yet, the erection of synagogues at precisely this time of "decline" demonstrates that some Galilean communities thrived and had sufficient resources to undertake major building projects.

These synagogues and the buildings and tomb complexes near them currently provide the bulk of our archaeological data for Upper Galilee in the Roman period. The region apparently was slower than Lower Galilee to adopt Hellenistic culture as its own. Fewer Greek inscriptions have been discovered in this more rugged and isolated region, and the inhabitants seem to have had aniconic tendencies. The vivid imagery found in mosaics of Lower Galilee, for example, is less common in the Roman era synagogues of Upper Galilee, as is the lavish decoration of tombs and sarcophagi such as that found at Beth She'arim (Meyers 1976, 1997).

The Golan

The density of settlement in the Golan in the Middle and Late Roman periods is disputed. Surveys have recovered little ceramic evidence from these years, and excavations at Gamala, Horvat Kanaf, En Nashut, Qasrin, and Dabiyye suggest an occupational gap from the first through the fourth centuries CE. On this basis, some argue that the region was largely uninhabited following the first Jewish Revolt (Ma'oz



The catacombs used for burials at Beth She'arim were extensive and sizable. Catcomb 13 consisted of twelve halls distributed among four stories. *From Avigad and Mazar (1993, 2: 245). Courtesy of the Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem.*

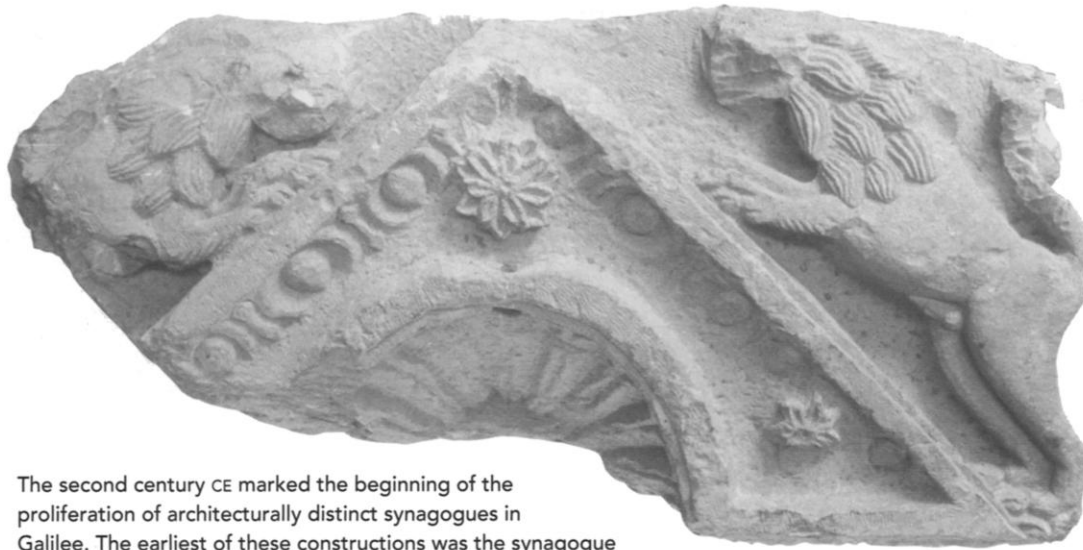
Leda and the Swan. Motifs and images from Greco-Roman art and mythology were carved on sarcophagi and the walls of the catacombs at Beth She'arim. This fragment of a sarcophagus depicts Leda and the swan. Beth She'arim's necropolis was used extensively in the third and early fourth centuries by Jews not only from Palestine, but from as far away as Mesopotamia. The range of artistic motifs found in the catacombs shows that the traditional Jewish abhorrence of images was giving way to a more accepting attitude towards representational art. *From Avigad and Mazar (1993, 1: 247). Courtesy of the Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem.*



1993b). Others contest this assessment on the basis of epigraphic data that they date to the second and third centuries (Greggs and Urman 1996).

Though Middle and Late Roman architectural remains are scarce at Panias, Greek and Latin inscriptions attest to the city's continued growth. In contrast to the archaeological record of sites in the predominantly Jewish Galilee, the record of Panias preserves ample evidence of pagan practices. Large numbers of lamps, probably offerings given by individual worshippers, have been found in the area around the shrine to Pan, suggesting that it was heavily visited (Berlin 1999). Builders renovated the sanctuary itself and constructed new shrines, including one to Nemesis. Epigraphic evidence attests to veneration of Nemesis, Hermes, Dio-pan, and the Nymphs (Tzaferis 1992). The

coins of Panias depict Pan, Tyche, and Zeus (Meshorer 1985). An unusually large corpus of statuary, dating to the late first through the late fourth or early fifth century CE, contains 245 marble sculpture fragments from 28 different



The second century CE marked the beginning of the proliferation of architecturally distinct synagogues in Galilee. The earliest of these constructions was the synagogue at Nabratein, probably built shortly after the Bar Kokhba Revolt. Excavations there discovered this limestone gable from a Torah shrine or ark, which housed the Torah scroll. The two lions may recall the "Lion of Judah" joining them are the stylized gable and decorative rosettes, all depicted within later synagogue mosaics as well. The carved arch within the gable contains a hole from which apparently hung a lamp on a chain. This Torah shrine is the oldest known exemplar of a feature that is still present in modern synagogues. *Courtesy of Eric Meyers, Meiron Excavation Project.*

sculptures depicting Greek and Roman deities and other mythological figures (Friedland 1999).

The continuing use of Mount Hermon as a locus for pagan cults is also clear. At least twenty pagan temples were eventually built there, and altars, stelae, statues, figurines, and inscriptions have been recovered (Dar 1993). The principal deity worshipped at each cultic site is not always determinable. At Mt. Sen'aim, statues of eagles suggest the veneration of Baal-Shamin, while an altar bears an image of Helios (Dar 1988). Elsewhere on the mountain, an inscription (exact date uncertain) attests to veneration of the "Greatest and Holiest God;" the deity intended is unclear (Arav 1992). At Dan, located at the southern foot of Mount Hermon, the Roman period witnessed the building of a new temenos at the site of an earlier Hellenistic temple (Biran 1993).

The Golan's population retained its ethnically mixed character throughout the Roman period. Most inhabitants were pagans, though some were Jews. The most obvious evidence of Jewish inhabitants in the Golan—synagogue remains—have usually been dated to the Byzantine period, though some scholars have recently suggested that some of these structures originated in the Roman period (Greggs and Urman 1996).

Epigraphic data reflect the penetration of Hellenism into the Golan. Greek was the primary language used for inscriptions, especially in later centuries. Of 254 Roman and Byzantine inscriptions from forty-four sites, 241 were Greek, twelve either Hebrew or Aramaic, and one Latin. The vast majority of these were grave inscriptions, with the typical injunction to "take

courage" found on Jewish, pagan, and (in the Byzantine period) Christian gravestones alike. Others, however, were dedicatory inscriptions, such as the second or third century CE dedication by a Roman veteran to Zeus Bel found at Khisfin (Greggs and Urman 1996).

The End of the Roman Period

A series of events in the fourth century CE brought drastic changes to the social situations and material culture of ancient Palestine. In 351, Gallus, nephew of Constantius, was appointed Caesar of the East, and an uprising broke out in Palestine,

starting at Sepphoris. The exact causes of this conflict are unknown, but, like earlier revolts, it had drastic consequences for some Palestinian communities. According to Jerome, Tiberias, Sepphoris, and Diospolis were razed; evidence of destruction at Sepphoris may also correspond to this event. Other Galilean communities suffered, as well, such as Beth She'arim, where use of the necropolis seems to have ceased.

Conflict was not the only cause for changes in Roman Palestine. Earthquakes struck in 306 CE and 363 CE, bringing with them the end of settlement at some sites and the beginning of new phases of occupation at others. After the latter earthquake, residents abandoned Meiron. At Sepphoris, the same natural disaster destroyed the villa containing the Dionysos mosaic, as well as other parts of the city.

The development that was to have the most dramatic impact on Palestine's material culture, however, was political: the accession of Constantine, a Christian, as emperor in 312.



City coins throughout the Roman empire often bore images of deities, temples, buildings, and other objects of local significance. This coin, issued ca. 168/169 CE by Caesarea Panias, depicts the god Pan playing his characteristic flute. *Photograph from Meshorer (1985: #186). Courtesy of A. Sofaer.*

THE SYNAGOGUE

The synagogue, which served as both a communal and a religious center for local Jewish populations, first became archaeologically distinct in the Roman period. Josephus, Philo, and the Gospels noted the presence of synagogues throughout first-century CE Palestine, but only the structures at Masada, Herodium, and Gamala can be dated to this period, along with, perhaps, an unexcavated basalt building underlying Capernaum's fourth-century limestone synagogue. A Greek inscription from pre-70 CE Jerusalem honored a certain Theodotus as the leader of a synagogue and noted that his father and grandfather were also synagogue leaders, but no other remains from this structure have been found.



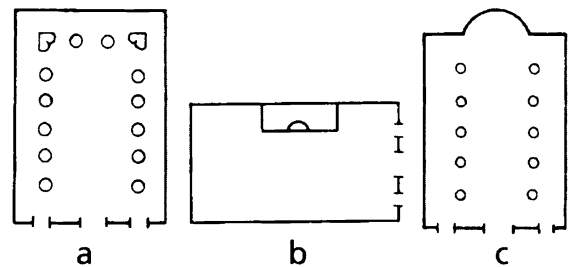
Photo courtesy of Zev Radovan.

The synagogue at Nabratein, in Upper Galilee, offers the sole second century CE data for the existence of synagogues. It probably dates to soon after the Bar Kokhba Revolt. The third century CE, however, saw the construction of numerous synagogues, mostly in Galilee (Khirbet Shema^c, Meiron, Gush Halav, Chorazin, Hammath Tiberias, Beth She^carim), but also on the coast (Caesarea) and in Judea (En-Gedi). Additional Galilean synagogues were constructed in the fourth century, and in the Byzantine era new synagogues were erected in the Golan and Samaria. To date, archaeologists

have identified over a hundred synagogues in Israel.

These synagogues were built of local materials. For most Roman-era synagogues, this meant limestone though some, like the synagogue at Chorazin, employed basalt. Most, though not all, synagogues were oriented toward Jerusalem. They were typically built according to one of three basic rectangular designs: the Galilean-type (a), the broadhouse (b), and the longhouse basilica (c). The Galilean-type synagogues featured monumental facades facing Jerusalem, with three entrances and three rows of columns. The broadhouse synagogues were arranged so that the focal point of worship was along one of their broader walls. The longhouse basilical synagogues had three entrances on the wall opposite Jerusalem, two side aisles, a nave, and an apse. At one time scholars associated these different architectural types with various periods of construction, so that Galilean-type synagogues were considered the earliest style and longhouse basilicas the latest. Recent excavations have shown, however, that synagogues of all three styles were constructed at various times in the Roman and Byzantine periods.

These synagogues provided a focal point for Jewish communal and spiritual needs after the destruction of the Second Temple. The numerous instances of synagogues point to the prosperity of Jews under Roman rule. The continuation of synagogue construction into the Byzantine period has produced an abundance of inscriptions and mosaics, which shed light on Jewish communities in late antique Palestine (Hachlili 1988; Fine 1996; Levine 1993, 2000; Fine and Meyers 1997).



A Christian presence in Palestine prior to this event is known from literary sources, such as the *Onomasticon* of Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea from 315–339 CE, and, perhaps, references to *minim* (heretics) in rabbinic literature, but archaeological evidence has been minimal. Identifying pre-Constantinian Christian remains is difficult, and efforts to trace the development of Jewish-Christianity in such places as Nazareth

and Capernaum (Bagatti 1971) have been met with skepticism (Taylor 1993). Constantine, however, established four churches in Palestine: the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, the church of Abraham's Oak at Mamre, the Eleona Church at the Mount of Olives, and the church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem. Christian pilgrims and settlers began to arrive in Palestine in greater numbers to visit these state-sponsored holy sites.

The story of Palestine in the following centuries, the Byzantine period, is the story of the interplay of local culture and the Byzantine culture, of the interaction between fading paganism, thriving Judaism, and emerging Christianity.

Abbreviations

AASOR *Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
 ABD *Anchor Bible Dictionary*
 ANRW *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*
 ASOR *American Schools of Oriental Research*
 BA *Biblical Archaeologist*
 BAR *British Archaeological Reports*
 BARIS *BAR International Series*
 BASOR *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
 IEJ *Israel Exploration Journal*
 IES *Israel Exploration Society*
 INJ *Israel Numismatic Journal*
 JPS *Jewish Publication Society*
 JRA *Journal of Roman Archaeology*
 JRS *Journal of Roman Studies*
 JSOT *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
 LA *Liber Annuus*
 NEA *Near Eastern Archaeology*
 NEAEHL *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*
 OEANE *Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*
 OUP *Oxford University Press*
 PEQ *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
 TA *Tel Aviv*

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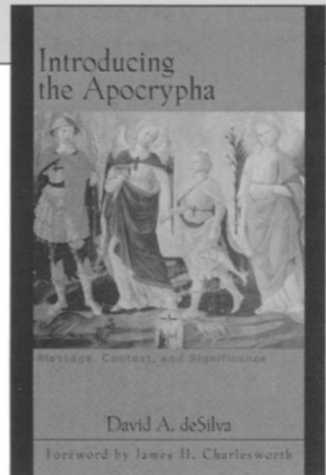
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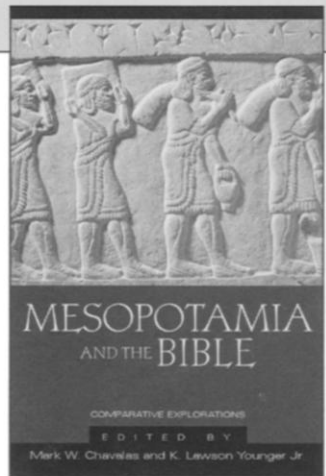
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