

*The Temple of Solomon Could not Stand
On its Water Tower
By N. Natan*

20/ History of the Temple of Jerusalem

The third Temple of Herod

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-1- We have at our disposal two major Descriptions of the Temple of Herod, several incidental descriptions, and finally some graphic representations of the frontage of this third Temple:

The two major Descriptions of the Temple of Herod are :

-A- Those which appear in the Work of Flavius Josephus, who has the advantage of having been a privileged observer, on two accounts : on the one hand, he belonged to a family of Priests, and, on the other hand, he attended as an eye-witness the destruction of the Herodian Temple by the Roman Armies of Titus, in 70 CE.

-B- Those which appear in the Rabbinical Literature, through many incidental comments, to which is added a particular Treaty, describing the Temple and detailing all its measurements: *The Middoth Tractate of the Qodashin Order of the Mishnah*.

These two major Descriptions give, rather often, measurements of a coherent order of magnitude, even if some divergences or darkness appear for data relating to certain parts of the Edifice.

In this respect, one can recall that the Sacred Dimensions are those of the very interior of the Temple, to which it is necessary to add, inter alia, the measures of the thickness of the walls and of the roofs.

In this respect, also, *Tractate Middoth* presents more precise details than Flavius Josephus.

In preliminary of our examination, one will notice that none measurements of the Squares, transmitted by these two major ways, correspond to the actual measures of the Esplanade of the Mosques (Haram Al-Sharif) of Jerusalem.

In any case, these two major Descriptions of Flavius Josephus and *Tractate Middoth*, which are concordant in their praises, testify to the stunningly success of Herod stratagem :

The Temple, which he built, was admired by his contemporaries, then, after its destruction, lamented by Jewish Posterity, while the name of the ruthless Tyrant, who had built it, rose almost to the same degree of reputation as that of King Solomon.

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-2- The Description of Flavius Josephus (37-100 CE) appears mainly in his two Works, *Jewish War* and *Jewish Antiquities*.

When Herod made build the third Temple of the Jews, Flavius Josephus had not been born. On the other hand, as he belonged to a Priestly family, and as he had played a rather significant political role in post-Herodian Judaea, Flavius Josephus had a direct knowledge of the Temple of Jerusalem.

In addition, in spite of its efforts of conciliation between the Romans and the Jews which he tried for the account of Titus to whom he had joined, Flavius Josephus was present, as an attentive and distressed visual witness, at the capture of Jerusalem, in 70 CE, by the Roman Armies, and at the destruction of the 3rd Herodian Temple.

In addition, for the drafting of his work in Rome, where he lived and wrote after the destruction of the Temple, Flavius Josephus had access to the *Memoirs (Commentaries)* of the Roman Emperors Vespasian and Titus (*Imperial Memoirs* which have disappeared).

In addition, also, Flavius Josephus could have access to Reports, established by the Roman military Engineers, who systematically undertook the detailed listings and studies of all the defensive Systems that the Roman army had met during their campaigns.

These Statements were used, at the same time, by Military Engineers, to work out new strategies of attack and defense, and by Historians, Memorialists, Secretaries and appointed Archivists, who, in addition, could be called to help the Roman Emperor (in fact, Titus) in the writing of his *Memories* or other possible Reports.

It is more than probable that the Defensive System of the Enclosure of the Temple, which had been conquered by the Romans at a very high price of fierce and ruthless fight, had been noted down, with the greatest meticulousness, by these military Engineers, before the complete destruction of the Jewish Sanctuary.

Moreover, Flavius Josephus could, in addition to his personal memory and notes brought from Judeah, make sent by contemporaries in Judeah any complementary documentation.

-3- *The Tractate Middoth (Measures) of Qodachim Order (Holy Things) of the Mishnah* presents a very detailed and meticulous narrative account of the Temple of Herod.

As much as the description of Flavius Josephus is treated like a descriptive, alive and coloured Chronicle, from an attentive observer visiting a Place which he admires and of which he wants to perpetuate the most resplendent possible image, as much the description given by *Middoth Tractate* is generally austere, and often quasi-arithmetic, in the style of statements of measurements surveyor-inspector, with, however, some brief commented dialogues and short references to Religious Data of the Biblical Scriptures.

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-4- The *Mishnah* has been, in a general way, codified and compiled, between year 200 and 220 EC approximately, that is to say 130 to 150 years after the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem.

It is difficult, even impossible, to determine with exactitude at which moment the Rabbis decided to register, in writing, the Oral Law, which, by definition, could be transmitted only by memory and recitation.

In this respect, the term *Mishnah term* means "Oral Law" as well as "the fact of learning by heart".

One can find the most contradictory references, in Rabbinical Literature, as well on the absolute prohibition to put Oral Law and Doctrines in writing, as on practising methods which, on the contrary, imply forcibly such setting of the Oral Law in Writing.

One of the most extreme formulations, concerning the absolute ban on putting Oral Law into Writing (*Halakha*), appears, for example, in *Talmud of Babylon, Order Qodachim, Tractate Temurah*. Now, this precise indication can be dated from the second generation of Amoraïm (Commentators of Oral Law) i.e., approximately 3rd century CE, that is to say, about two centuries after the destruction of the Temple :

Talmud of Babylon : Order Qodachim : Tractate Temurah : 14b :

(also, inter alia, in : *Order Nachim : Tractate Gittin : 60b :*

Did not Rabbi Abba, the son of Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba, report in the name of Rabbi Yohanan : "Those who write the *Halakhas* are like those who burn the *Torah*."

-5- In any case, it seems quite established that, until the destruction of the 3rd Temple, Rabbis and Pharisees proudly valued their mnemonic privilege, from which their ideological pressure group drew an undeniable superiority on the Priestly Class and Sadducees : Those indeed, generally, did not have access to this intensive oral memorizing, due to the fact that Priests and Sadducees had neither the desire nor the necessary intellectual abilities for such exacting activities.

Moreover, this absolute necessity to learn by heart masses of Scriptures, Texts and Traditions, involved a rigorous selection of individuals who would be able, by their intelligence quotient, to constantly memorize huge number of Data.

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This need for a mnemonic talent of exceptionally gifted ones constituted, thus, for the Pharisees and Rabbis, a guarantee of selection of recruitment, completely out of ordinary run, compared to the recruitment of the Priestly Class and Sadducees:

Indeed, for the Priests, the only criterion of selection was, on the one hand, their Genealogy, and on the other hand, their aptitude to melt skillfully and submissively into the Temple Hierarchy, and to apply to the letter, the Precepts indicated in the Scriptures, while more and more often subjecting willy-nilly, to the interpretations imposed by the Pharisees, who had proclaimed themselves as the legitimate and exclusive holders of the Oral Law.

However, it seems mostly probable that, for practical reasons, written notes or Rabbinical memoranda had been transcribed, on a purely individual basis, before the destruction of the Temple.

In the same way, particular lists had been put in writing, such as, for example, those of *Megillat Taanit*, which was a kind of Cultic Calendar, establishing the dates to celebrate happy Events in the Jewish Nation, or, those of *Megillat Yuhasin* (*Scroll of Genealogies*) which was used as Register Office of reference for all Hereditary Rules.

But after the destruction of the Temple, which had involved the disappearance of the hereditary Priestly Class in activity, and, consequently that of Sadducees, the Pharisees and the Rabbis did not have to fear any more competition from their rivals, who had been thus automatically eliminated. Also, over the successive generations, the Rabbis, without fearing any kind of critical opposition, could then seize full Theological power, and install, gradually, in Writing, the "Oral Law", parallel to the existing Written Law of the *Scriptures*.

-6- The Writers of the *Mishnah*, i.e. the Rabbis who took part, in particular, in the written formulation and ordering of *Halakhot* (*Oral Laws*) inherited from Oral Traditions dating back, according to them, to Moses, are called Tannaïm.

These Tannas (Tannaim) divided approximately into six generations, who went, by sections of about thirty-forty years, from year 10 CE until year 220 CE.

These six generations of Tannaïm are, in fact, the continuators of the activity undertaken from year 200 BCE, by the Pharisees and the Rabbis, activity which had culminated, in prestige, at the time of the installation of the two major Schools of Rabbinical Culture, under the reign of Herod and his successors : i.e. : the School of Hillel and the School of Shammaï.

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Tractate Middoth, which describes the Temple and which details its Measures, is probably one of the first written Tractates which inspired Rabbinical Literature, by using a methodology consisting of expositions followed by discussions.

Thereafter, on the basis of this same kind of expositions and discussions, comments of various generations of Rabbis will be able to overlap and question each other all over the ages : In this way; Rabbis comment, so to speak all together and all generations joined, on the same original Rabbinical declarations or comments, of which, unceasingly, they make effort to clarify and adapt their sense to the contemporary conditions of their times.

This Methodology will be progressively applied to various texts of the *Mishnah* which present, most of the time, Oral Laws.

And this Methodology of incessant opened discussions between various generations of Rabbis of the *Mishnah*, will become, systematically, the rule for the *Gemara* (Comments about the *Mishnah*) which will be amply developed in the *Talmud of Jerusalem*, and in the *Talmud of Babylon*.

-7- Concerning, more specifically, the contents of *Tractate Middoth*, it can conjectured that, even before the destruction of the Temple, precise measurements of this Temple, had been noted down and preserved, by Scribes or Priests or Architects, on account of administrative documentation, or, possibly, as basis for comparative tables with religious figures transmitted by *2 Kings and 1 Chronicles*.

Rabbi Eliezer Ben Jacob I, of the second generation of Tanna'im (80-120 EC.), is said (in *Tractate Yoma 1a*) to have been the Author of an original *Middoth Tractate*.

And it is this original text of Rabbi Eliezer Ben Jacob I which would have been, then, commented into the final *Tractate Middoth of the Mishnah*, by Tannaim of his generation (or of following generations).

Rabbi Eliezer Ben Jacob I, would have been, thus, at the same time, the probable author of the original *Middoth* and one of its commentators : and he had, probably, known personally the Temple before its destruction, even he would have been, in that case, extremely young.

Or, at the very least, Rabbi Eliezer Ben Jacob I knew people who had been contemporary of the Herodian Temple, and who would have transmitted to him very precise information on its architecture, its measures and its functioning.

One can find this kind of indication in *Tractate Middoth*, for example, when the discussion relates to Levites who were of guard in the Temple, and who were severely punished when they were surprised sleeping during their turn of duty :

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Mishnah : Tractate Middoth : 1 : 2 :

- A-. The Priest Supervisor in charge of the Temple Mount would go around to every Levite watch, and lighted torches were flaring before him.
B-. And if any Watcher did not rise (at his approach) and say to him "Peace be to you, Supervisor of the Temple Mount !",
C-. it was obvious that the Levite was asleep, and the Supervisor, then, used to belabour him with his stick.
D-. and he was also at liberty to burn his clothes.
E-. And the other Levites used to say : "What is this noise in the Azarah (Court of the Temple) ?
F-. - "It is the cry of a Levite who is being beaten and whose clothes are being burnt because he was asleep at his post."
G-. Rabbi Eliezer ben Jacob said : "Once they found my mother's brother asleep and they burnt his clothes."

In this declaration of Rabbi Eliezer Ben Jacob, it is impossible to detect if he was, himself really present, or contemporary of this event, or if it is an anecdote which would usually been narrated in his family. In the same way, in another passage, Rabbi Eliezer Ben Jacob calls upon his memory for details, which one cannot nevertheless assert that he forgot them after having been directly informed, or that he forgot them after they had been brought to his attention : And, in the same way, also, it is impossible to know if the answers that provides him Rabbi Abba Saul, result from a personal experiment, or from a knowledge acquired by documentation or conversation :

Mishnah : Tractate Middoth :

2 : 5 :

- K.- The north-eastern Office (in the Women Court) was the Office of the lepers.
L.- As for the south western Office,
M.- Rabbi Eliezer Jacob said : "I forget what it was used for."
N.- Rabbi Abba Saul says : "They used to store there wine and oil."
5 : 4 : (At the south of the Court of the Priests there were three Offices :)
A.- The Offices in the south : the Office made of wood, the Office for the Exile, the Office made of hewn stones :
B.- the Office made of wood,
C.- Rabbi Eliezer Jacob says : "I forget what it was used for." -
D.- Rabbi Abba Saul says : "It is the Office of the High Priest : it was behind the other two, and the room of the three Offices was on the same level. "

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-8- Apart from two major descriptions of the third Temple by Flavius Josephus and Rabbinical Literature (of which *Middoth Tractate*) that we will examine infra, there are several incidental descriptions of the Temple of Herod, like, for example, that of Philo of Alexandria, Jewish Philosopher who advocated syncretism between Jewish Religion and Hellenic Ideology (14 BCE - 54 CE.), or that of Tacitus, the Roman Historian (55 -120 CE).

Philo of Alexandria most probably visited the Temple of Jerusalem for a pilgrimage, and Tacitus could easily obtain detailed information from Roman Officers who had taken part in the siege and capture of Jerusalem by Titus.

Their descriptions are not complete, even if they are based on direct documentation, or on contemporary testimonies.

However their descriptions give some interesting precisions.

-9- Whereas one cannot find, today, any iconography neither of Moses' Tent of the Meeting, nor of the Temple of Solomon, nor of the second Temple of Zerubbabel, nor of the Hasmonean second Temple, on the other hand, we have at our disposal an iconography of the frontage of the third Temple of Herod.

-A- The first iconography presents representations on coins, which were put into circulation during the period of the fight of the Jews for the release of Jerusalem and for the restoration of the Temple destroyed by Titus, at the time of the war waged from 132 to 135 CE by Bar Kokhba against the Roman armies of Hadrian.

On these coins, the frontage of the third Temple is represented as a Greco-Roman Porch, consisting in four columns, supporting the roof directly.

This Porch on the coins does not comprise the usual triangular pediment of Pagan Temples.

At the interior of this tetrastyle Temple is represented the Ark of the Covenant.

-B- The second iconography consists of some 3rd century CE frescos of a Synagogue in Dora Europos, a Roman City-garrison which was located on the banks of Euphrates, in the North-East of Syria :

One can see there two types of representation of the frontage of the Temple with its Greco-Roman Porch supported by columns :

- A Porch without pediment as on the coins of Bar Kokhba ;
- A Porch with the usual triangular pediment of Pagan Temples.

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-C- In the same way, one can see, at the bottom of a gilded Jewish glass, of the 3rd century CE, in Rome, a representation of the frontage of the Temple, with four columns supporting a Porch with a triangular Greco-Roman pediment, but decorated with a palm, and not with the Roman Eagle. Moreover, the Artist who has made the bottom of this gilded glass, has painted the colonnades of the porticoes which surrounded the Temple of Herod.

-D- Finally, the representation of a Temple identical to the Herodian Temple of Jerusalem, which is reproduced on the coins of Herod Philip II, may perhaps, not be innocent :
Indeed, it could be that this representation of the Pagan Temple of Paneas, close to the sources of Jordan and which had been dedicated by Herod the Great to Augustus, may possibly have intended to evoke, in an allusive way, the full Judaic legitimacy of Herod Philip II. Indeed, this representation, so similar to those of the Temple of Jerusalem which will be reproduced on the coins of Bar Kokhba, may have been designed to suggest legitimate rights that Herod Philippe II could have claimed subtly on the Kingdom of Judaea: On decision of the Roman Emperor, Philip II had only inherited, from his father Herod the Great, the Tetrarchy of the north territories of the original Kingdom of Herod, which is to say, inter alia, Iturea, Gaulanitis, Batanea, Trachonitis, Auranitis.
However, of the three sons of Herod who had been able to inherit part of the territories of their father, and whom had been confirmed by Augustus as Tetrarchs of these territories, Herod Philip II was the only one to have had a Jewish mother, and, in addition, a Jewish mother from Jerusalem.

-10- In addition to his incomparable talents of military strategist, of builder, of Born-political, economic, and financial Leader, Herod the Great, as testify all the accounts of Flavius Josephus, was endowed with machiavellism, a slyest doggedness, a cynicism, and a cruelty without equal.

Herod could, thus, carry out extremely complex intrigues, by allaying suspicion during months or years, until he succeeded to the aim he had secretly set :

The successive assassinations of : -all the Hasmonean descendants, of his benefactor Hyrcan II, -of his Hasmonean wife's brother who had become a popular young High Priest, -of this same wife, Mariamne, whom he had adored, -of several of his own sons, -without counting numerous tortures and killing of all supporters of those whom he had decided to crush, -all these cruel and bloody episodes reveal a machiavelic, wily, and evil mind, whom nothing could never divert from the targets he had once fixed.

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However, Herod wanted not only absolute power but he also wanted that his name goes down in posterity.

Thus, even for his own death for example, Herod wanted to drag along with his disappearance all the Jewish notables of his Kingdom by executing them, in order to impose on all minds the same collective and national mourning.

Herod proclaimed himself Jew, only insofar as that enabled him to give a pretence of legitimacy to his Judean Crown and to avoid confrontations with the people which he governed. But Herod knew perfectly that the Jews did not recognize him like one as of theirs, and that they always considered him as Edomite (with all the anti-Jewish connotations which stick to this name in the *Bible*).

In addition, Herod also knew that the Jews would never forgive him to have made perish and disappear for ever the race of the Hasmonean High Priests issued from the Maccabees.

For all these reasons, Herod could not resign himself to this situation, and tolerate, in particular, that his presence be, essentially, rigorously excluded from the Holy Temple, the central and mythical place of the country of which he was absolute Sovereign and Tyrant.

Indeed, to nominate and destitute the High Priests as he liked did not suffice to Herod power thirst : he wanted to be equalized with the High priest of the Jews and to be put on an equal footing with the Jewish Divinity, in the same way as, everywhere in the Roman Empire, the universal worship of Divine Augustus was setting up gradually.

To achieve his religious goal, Herod came to conceive a stratagem, corresponding, at the same time, with his innate megalomania and his schemer talents.

This stratagem aimed, at the same time, to rally his subjects to his policy, to stand out by his achievements in Roman civilization, to constantly pay homage to Augustus, his protector, and finally, to satisfy his devouring passion to dominate, in all matters including religion, the people which he controlled and martyred :

For that purpose, it was absolutely necessary for Herod to satisfy his intimate pride and conviction, by establishing that, in spite of appearances, in the earth territory which he controlled, the access to no place could never be denied to Herod the Great, even the access to the most sacred Place, or more exactly, especially to its most Holy Place.

Therefore, when Herod announces to the Jewish people that he wishes to demolish the Temple in order to rebuild a new one, Herod has already conceived his ultimate plan :

In his speech, Herod with aplomb advances as a fundamental argument, an untruth, namely that the Temple rebuilt at the return of exile had been built less higher than the Temple of Solomon, and that he wishes, consequently, to restore its original majesty.

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Indeed, all the stratagem, developed at this point by Herod, precisely rests on the height of the Edifice which he will successfully manage to impose to the Jews :

Flavius Josephus : *Jewish Antiquities* : 15 : 14 :

(Herod's speech :)

You know that the Temple, which our fathers built to God after their return of captivity in Babylon, is sixty cubits (30 meters !) less high than the Temple which had been built by Solomon...

Herod wishes, consequently, to increase the height of the building to 60 meters (which will become, thereafter, 50 meters, because of a subsidence, as Flavius Josephus explains.)

However, Herod knows pertinently that the measurements of the Temple must proceed, for the Jews, from the measures prescribed by the Holy Scriptures.

That the reason why Herod, according to his usual method, faces from the start this essential problem, by skewing and by short-circuiting any possible inclination for resistance to his willpower :

- Indeed, the height of Moses' Tent of the Meeting was 5 meters.

- The real height of the Holy Place in the Temple of Solomon was 15 meters (*1 Kings*: 6: 2).

Moreover, Solomon had added a Porch to the entry of the Temple, and, implicitly according to *1 Kings*, and explicitly according to *Septuagint*, this Porch had the same height that the Temple, and was supported by two Columns.

2 Chronicles: 3: 4, however, allot to this Porch, but to this Porch only, the height, rather incoherent, of 60 meters if compared to the height of the Temple Holy Place (which is 15 meters high, according to *1 Kings*).

Indeed, surprisingly, *Chronicles* indicate only the height of the Porch, but not the height of the Temple.

Finally, one can note that the height which had been fixed by Cyrus and Darius, for the rebuilding of the Temple, at the return of exile from Babylon, was 30 meters, according to *Esdra*s 6: 3.

The 60 meters height, indicated for the rebuilding of a new Temple by Herod, corresponds thus, very opportunely, to the height of the Porch indicated by *2 Chronicles*: 3: 4.

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And Herod specifies that the height that he proposes for the new Edifice applies to the entire Temple, and not only to the Porch.

Also, this singular height of 60 meters seems to be able to be allotted to the only willpower of Herod, with the assistance of some scribes-copyists, obliging, or frightened, or terrorized, concerning the most probable interpolation which appears thus in *2 Chronicles: 3: 4*.

Flavius Josephus, to describe the events of the reign of Herod, could have at his disposal the work of Nicolaus of Damascus, the appointed memorialist and advisor of Herod.

And it is probable that Nicolaus of Damascus retranscribed with exactitude the speech of Herod, in the drafting of which, in addition, he most probably took part, would it be only as a first critical listener.

All thus occurred then as if Herod had skillfully used the pervading blur of the particular measures of the Porch curiously registered in *Chronicles*, as a peremptory argument, that his status of relentless tyrant enabled him to impose to the Jewish People without any possible dispute.

In this way, Herod had been able, in fact, to decide, supremely, the height of the new Temple, this height conditioning the success of his entire stratagem.

In return, and in order to reassure the Jews caught unawares, Herod promises not to demolish the old Temple, as long as the materials necessary to the construction of the new one will not have been gathered.

This arbitrary height of 60 meters for the new Building, which is announced preliminarily by Herod, will in fact determine the space of the Temple, and, especially, the thickness of its walls necessary to support such height.

And, within this new architectural framework, Herod will claim that he respects the Solomonian proportions, which will be, strictly exact, concerning the interior measurements in length and width of the ground floor of the very Temple, i.e. the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place, but not concerning their measurements in height.

And on these ancient horizontal foundations, thus apparently faithfully respected, all the architectural ingeniousness of Herod will be able to deploy in height :

And a sumptuous and monumental frontage, widened according to the prevailing Greco-Roman model, will make it possible to implement Herod's full adhesion to the Roman Ideology, while blurring the secret intention of the Oriental Despot.

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21/ History of the Temple of Jerusalem

The third Temple of Herod

The Platform of the Sanctuary

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-1- The Archaeologists of the 19th century (the only ones to have ever been able to explore the underground of the "Haram") worked, all, on the assumption of religious dogma and mental postulate, that the Temple of the Jews stood on the Esplanade of the Mosques, and, more precisely, on the internal Platform of the Dome of the Rock. However, precise measurements of Flavius Josephus, most probably corroborated, or checked by Roman Military Engineers, concerning the Enclosure of the Temple of the Jews, offer the first arguments impossible to circumvent of a categorical denial on this specific point.

- **The Esplanade of the Mosques** (Haram Al-Sharif) is a **Rectangle** irregular which measures, roughly, **480 meters of length** (north-south axis) by **280 meters of width** (east-west axis).

- However, Flavius Josephus affirms categorically that **the Esplanade of the Temple was a Square which could not, physically and geologically, measure more than 180 meters on each side.**

-2- Herod made, indeed, for the Enclosure of the Temple, a majestic construction which constituted, at the same time, a defensive rampart and a site privileged for the public, according to the Greco-Roman model, with broad and majestic gallery-porticoes supported by Corinthian columns, and designed, inter alia, to shelter pilgrims from sun or rain. Hereafter, the description of the Herodian Temple Enclosure by Flavius Josephus :

Flavius Josephus : *Jewish Antiquities* : XV : 11 : 3 :

Herod encompassed the entire Temple with very large Porticoes, contriving them to be in a due proportion thereto; and he laid out larger sums of money upon them than had been done before him, till it seemed that no one else had so greatly adorned the Temple as he had done. These Porticoes were supported by a rampart so large and strong that it was itself the most prodigious work that was ever heard of by man.

The hill was a rocky ascent, which declined by degrees towards the east parts of the City, till it came to an elevated level. This hill it was which Solomon, who was the first of our Kings, by Divine revelation, encompassed with a wall; which was of excellent workmanship upwards, and round the top of it. Herod built a wall below, beginning at the bottom which was encompassed by a deep valley ; Herod laid rocks together, and bound them one to another with lead :

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the rocks penetrated the hill with some of their inner parts, till they proceeded to a great height, and were able to support the largeness of all the square Esplanade the altitude of which was immense.

The vastness of these external stones was plainly visible on the outside, and their inward parts were fastened together with iron which preserved the joints immovable for all future times.

When this work reached the top of the hill, he leveled off the summit and filled in the hollow spaces near the ramparts and he wrought it all into one outward surface so that to get an homogeneous horizontal level on the external upper surface.

This square built Enclosure was so walled all round with ramparts, in compass four stades (**4 x 180 meters**), each side measuring in length a stade (**180 meters**).

Within these ramparts, and on the very top of all, there ran another wall of stone encompassing the Esplanade.

On the eastern side, a double Portico, of the same length, ran along the wall of the Esplanade ; and in the midst of it was the Temple itself. Thus, this double Portico looked to the Gates of the Temple.

This Portico had been adorned by many Kings in former times; and round about the entire Temple were fixed spoils taken from barbarous nations : all these had been dedicated to the Temple by Herod, with the addition of those he had taken from the Arabians.

After having described the eastern wall of this Enclosure, Flavius Josephus presents the Antonia Citadel which overhangs and protects the northern wall of the Temple Enclosure.

-3- Then Flavius Josephus describes the western side of the Enclosure, before finishing with its southern Rampart, which is the side description which accounts most specifically for the absolute impossibility of any adequacy of the "Haram" southern Rampart to the southern Rampart of the Enclosure of the disappeared Jewish Temple:

Flavius Josephus : *Jewish Antiquities* : XV : 11 : 5 :

The fourth side of the Temple Enclosure, which was southward, had indeed itself Gates in its middle.

Above this southern rampart stood the royal Portico with three aisles, which reached in length from the east valley (Kedron valley) unto that on the west Tyropean valley), **for it was impossible it should reach any farther.**

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And it was a structure more noteworthy than any under the sun : For while the depth of the ravine was great, and no one who bent over to look into it from above could bear to look down to the bottom, the height of the Portico standing over it was so very great that anyone looking down from its rooftop, combining the two elevations, would become dizzy and his vision would be unable to reach the end of so measureless a depth.

This Portico had columns that stood in four rows, one over against the other all along ; the fourth row was interwoven into the wall, which also was built of stone.

The thickness of each column was such, that three men might, with their arms extended, fathom it round, and join their hands again, because its length was 27 feet (about eight meters), with a double spiral at its basis.

The number of all the columns (in that Portico) was 162 : their capitals were made with sculptures after the Corinthian order, and caused an amazement, by reason of the grandeur of the whole.

These four rows of columns included three intervals for walking in the middle of this Portico.

The two external walks were made parallel to each other, and were contrived after the same manner ; the breadth of each of them was thirty feet (9 meters), the length was a stade (180 meters), and the height fifty feet (15 meters).

But the breadth of the middle walk of the Portico was one and a half of the others (12-13 meters), and the height was double (30 meters), for it was much higher than those on each side ; the roofs were adorned with deep sculptures in wood, representing many sorts of figures.

This middle vault was thus much higher than the rest, and the ceiling was adorned with beams, resting upon columns, that were interwoven into it, and that ceiling was all of polished stone, insomuch that its amazing fineness seemed to be have been made of one single stone.

Thus was the first Enclosure of the Temple.

In the midst of which, and not far from it, was the second Enclosure, to be gone up to by a few steps :

This inner Enclosure was encompassed by a stone wall for a partition, with an inscription, which forbade any foreigner to go in under pain of death.

Now this inner enclosure had on its southern and northern quarters three gates equally distant one from another.

On the east quarter, towards the sun-rising, there was one large Gate, through which after having been purified men as well as women came in.

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But the Court Temple further inward in that Gate was not allowed to women. And still more inward was there the third Court of the Temple, where into it was not lawful for any but the Priests alone to enter.

The Temple itself was within this Court.

And before that Temple was the Altar, upon which we offer our sacrifices and burnt-offerings to God.

Into this inner Court King Herod did never enter for he was forbidden, because he was not a Priest.

He therefore let the Priests conduct the building of the Temple.

However, Herod took care of the Porticoes and of the outer Enclosures, and these he built in eight years.

-4- Apart from the Greco-Roman style, conferred by Herod to the Esplanade of the Temple, this text comprises precise information in term of measurements :

From this text, one can advance, concerning specifically the external Enclosure-Rampart of the Sanctuary which constituted its defense system, that its precise measurements have particularly interested the Roman Military Engineers whose documentation could, most probably, supplement the personal documentation of Flavius Josephus, or be confronted to him, at the Imperial Court of Rome.

And Flavius Josephus knew, also, that these Roman Military Engineers would not have deprived themselves to point out to the Emperor possible errors of the Jewish Historian, in order, for example, to discredit him, if Flavius Josephus, courtier and protected by the Emperor, had made some errors in a particular field where the qualified Engineers were fully able to check and rectify precise statements.

The text of Flavius Josephus indicates, on several occasions, that the Site included in the Enclosure of the Temple is a **Square (and not a Rectangle)** in the same way as it is stated also in *Tractate Middoth*.

For Flavius Josephus, this Square measures precisely **180 meters on each side**.

And Flavius Josephus specifies that the vertiginous overhang of the western valley (Tyropean) on the one hand, and the vertiginous overhang of the eastern valley (Kedron) on the other hand, between which the rockhill of the Temple rises, prevent the length of the southern Rampart of the Enclosure of the Temple from exceeding these **180 meters**.

However, the southern side of the Esplanade of the Mosques (Haram Al Sharif), from its south-eastern angle to its south-western angle, measures **280 meters** approximately, that is to say 100 meters more than the dimension indicated, with an extreme precision, and on several occasions, by Flavius Josephus.

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As this southern Rampart of the "Haram" is built with an antique cohesion, and therefore is not reducible, it could not have been the southern Rampart of the Enclosure of the Herodian Temple.

In addition, concerning the other side of the "Square" of the Enclosure of the Herodian Temple, the "Rectangle" of the Esplanade of the Mosques ("Haram") measures in length 480 meters, which is 300 meters more than the dimension (180 meters) indicated by Flavius Josephus.

Also, for example, if one would admit, as the Archaeologists of the 19th century did, that the southern Rampart of the "Haram" (280 meters) constituted the southern Rampart of the Enclosure of the Temple of the Jews (180 meters), the Dome of the Rock would be about outside the limits of the Enclosure of the Temple, according to the dimensions transmitted by Flavius Josephus.

-5- The Historians and the Archaeologists of the 19th century, challenged by this first, of a long series of contradictions rising from the erroneous postulate of the ancient Site of the Jewish Temple, resorted to various explanations to try to surmount this obstinate obstacle of the so precise measurements, provided by Flavius Josephus:

- These various laborious explanations start, for example, with errors of the copyists of the text of Flavius Josephus, for the measurement of the "Stade" which, in the exceptional case of Flavius Josephus, would be the equivalent of 280 meters, and not of 180 meters...
- Or even, with the fact that Flavius Josephus would have strangely overlooked and ignored additional pavilions of which the Portico would have been flanked at each of its ends, while, at the same time, Flavius Josephus specifies clearly that this Portico stretched until its ends at the ramparts ;
- Or even, that, in the Greek of Flavius Josephus, it would be necessary to understand by the word "Square", actually, the word "Rectangle" ;
- Or because of Flavius Josephus memory defects or gaps in his documentation ; etc. etc.

-6- Concerning this geometrical shape of the external Enclosure of the Temple, the authors of the *Middoth Tractate* also evoke along the same lines to a "Square" as Flavius Josephus, and this, even if their Rabbinical description refers, on this specific point of the external Enclosure of the Temple, to the visionary mysticism of Ezekiel:

Ezekiel was of a priestly family, and he belonged to the first group of Jews who were deported in captivity to Babylonia, in 598 BCE, by Nebuchadnezzar.

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It is there that Ezekiel carried out a Prophetic activity.

However, his Vision of an ideal Temple which should be rebuilt following the disappearance of the first Temple, seems, in any way, to have inspired neither the builders of the second Temple on their return from deportation, nor the embellishment-builders of the same second Hasmonean Temple, nor the builders of the third Temple of Herod, as, for this one for example, Flavius Josephus would not have failed to mention Ezekiel when his Prophecy had majestically been concretized by the Herodian Temple.

But, thereafter, and particularly after the destruction of the Temple of Herod, the prophetic vision of Ezekiel was going, gradually, to be essential as a reference of hope, semi-ideal, semi-realistic, in the circles of the Pharisees and the Rabbis.

Ezekiel : 42 : 15-20 :

When the Man (sent by the Eternal to show Ezekiel the future Temple) had finished measuring the inner Temple, he brought me out through the gateway that faces toward the east and measured all around.

He measured the east side with the measuring rod : 500 rods-cubits- (250 meters).

He measured the north side, the south side and the west side with the measuring rod : each side : 500 rods-cubits- (250 meters).

He measured thus the four sides of the Square and each side had a wall 500 cubits (250 meters) long.

These walls separated the Holy area from the common.

In *Middoth Tractate*, some references are made to this Prophetic work of Ezekiel.

In particular, the dimension given for the external Enclosure of the " Temple Mount" is that which is indicated in *Ezekiel : 42: 15-20* for the Holy space of the vision of Ezekiel:

Mishnah : Tractate Middoth : II : 1 :

A.- The Temple Mount measured 500 cubits by 500 cubits (250 meters by 250 meters).

Thus, one can find, at the same time, in the description of *Tractate Middoth*, and in the description of Flavius Josephus, the Space of the Esplanade of the Temple defined, specifically, as a Square, and not as a Rectangle.

And, in agreement with the description of Flavius Josephus, the *Middoth Tractate* specifies that this description concerns the "Temple Mount" as a whole and conceived as an integral space, and not as a part of the "Temple Mount".

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Also, even compared to the eschatological figures given by *Tractate Middoth*, concerning specifically the Space of the Temple Mount, figures which do not rise from reality but from a vision, the rectangular Esplanade of the "Haram", measuring 480 meters by 280 meters, does not still appear as suitable :

-7- Indeed, in addition and above all, we consider the figures of Flavius Josephus, concerning specifically the Enclosure of the Temple, as the only credible and reliable ones, for the following reasons :

- The measures indicated by Flavius Josephus for the defensive Enclosure of the Temple, de facto, were subjected to the rigorous control of military Roman Engineers, and, at the very least, Flavius Josephus was anxious to avoid that this kind of possible checking may tarnish his reputation at the Imperial Court of Rome.

- Flavius Josephus, as a Jewish historian and member of a family of Priests, knew, perfectly, the History of the Jewish Temple : Also, if the Architects of the Herodian Temple had referred precisely to the figures of Ezekiel's Prophetic visions, Flavius Josephus would have known it, and would have proudly let it know.

- Actually, the Book of Ezekiel began to be accepted by the Rabbis, and gradually integrated in the Jewish canon, only after the disappearance of the Temple of Herod. Therefore, it is most probable that the figures indicated by *Tractate Middoth* specifically for the Enclosure of the Temple Mount, were inspired to the Rabbis by the Vision of Ezekiel, as ideal measurements, soothing and carrying hopes for the Future, i.e. for the next very possible rebuilding of the bewailed Temple.

Because of the dimensions imposed by Herod for the Porticoes and the Temple itself, it remained, actually, only a space very restricted for the Squares, as attested by some precise architectural measurements, real these and not prophetic, which are transmitted by *Tractate Middoth*, for spaces extremely limited and narrow, as we will examine infra.

And this extreme and suprising narrowness of the Squares, such as they are described and measured by *Tractate Middoth*, could only be justified, compared to the immense needs for the Temple and the high number of the participants in the Worship, by an absolutely lack of material space effectively available.

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Besides, supporting this description of the Courts of *the Middoth Tractate*, description which implies an extreme narrowness of the surface left available on the Esplanade, Flavius Josephus indicates, also, that the first external Court (of the Women), was very close to the Portico which formed the external Enclosure of the Temple.

Also, the vast spaces offered nowadays by the Umayyadan Haram would make the exiguity extreme of the Courts of the Jewish Temple (which we will examine *infra*) completely absurd when referring to the architectural megalomania of Herod, whose antique Jewish Citadel (currently Haram) which overhung and protected the Temple, offers to us, for instance up today, a spectacular example.

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22/ History of the Temple of Jerusalem

The third Temple of Herod

The Temple Courts

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-1- The extremely precise measures, transmitted by *Tractate Middoth*, contradict radically the eschatological measurements borrowed from Ezekiel, because they confirm the extreme narrowness of the ground which was at the disposal of the builders of the Herodian Temple to arrange the Courts in the East-West Biblical axis : inside a space which was delimited, on one side in the east, by a sumptuous and broad Greco-Roman Portico, and, on the other side in the west, by the ambitious two stories Edifice that Herod had conceived for the Temple itself.

Indeed, widthwise, i.e. in the axis east-west, *Tractate Middoth* indicates with a high degree of accuracy, dimensions surprisingly modest for the widths of the Courts which succeeded one another in front of the Temple, and particularly, for the Israelites Court and for the Priests Court, which are extremely narrow and very limited in space, especially if one takes into account the figures quoted by *the Bible* and by Flavius Josephus as for the number of the participants and the number of animals sacrificed in the Temple (amounting to hundreds of thousands in certain occasions).

However, this extreme space modesty, which could have been imposed only by a lack of space available, corresponds neither to the Prophetic Vision of Ezekiel, nor to the vast areas which are offered by the immense platform of the Haram.

In *the Middoth Tractate*, contrary to the eschatological measurements of the external Enclosure of the Temple Mount, the dimensions of the Temple courts are not defined by any allegorical Vision of Ezekiel, but seem well to result from a material reality of the space on the ground impossible to circumvent and which was, indeed, available on this same "Mount of the Temple":

From east to west, the Sanctuary is measured as follows:

Mishnah : Tractate Middoth :

II : 3 :

- A.- Inside the Temple Mount was a parapet (soreg) ten hand-breadths high.
- B.- There were thirteen breaches in it
- C.- made by the Kings of Greece (Seleucids).
- D.- They were fenced up again and they enacted that thirteen prostrations should be made facing them.
- E.- Inside this there was a rampart (*hel*) which was ten cubits (**5 meters**) broad.
- F.- There were twelve steps there (leading up through the rampart to the Court of Women).

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G.- The height of each step was half a cubit (25 centimeters) and its tread was also half a cubit (25 centimeters).

H.- All the steps in the Temple were half a cubit (25 centimeters) high with a tread of half cubit (25 centimeters), except those of the Porch (which had a tread of one cubit (50 centimeters)).

II : 5 :

A.- The Court of the Women was 135 cubits (**67 meters**) long by 135 cubits (**67 meters**) broad (= a Square).

P.- The Court of the Women had originally been quite bare but consequently they surrounded it with a balcony so that the women could look on from above while the men were below and they should not mix together.

Q.- And fifteen steps led up from the Court of the Women to the Court of the Israelites (towards the Temple).

II : 6 :

D.- The Court of Israel (of the Israelites) was 135 cubits (67 meters) in length by 11 cubits (**(5,5 meters) in breadth**).

E.- Similarly the Court of the Priests was 135 cubits (67 meters) in length by 11 cubits (**(5,5 meters) in breadth**).

The only explanation to such a constraining and amazing exiguity of the two widths (**5,5 meters** only !) of each one of these two Holy Courts, which are at the very heart of the Jewish Worship in the Temple, exiguity which does not tally absolutely with the very vast spaces available on the Esplanade of the Mosques, fits perfectly, on the other hand, with the precise figures provided by Flavius Josephus, who indicates that the maximum width of space available from east to west, on the Temple Mount stretching between the two ravines (Kedron and Tyropean), was only **180 meters** :

-2- Thus, from east to west, and delimited by the external Enclosure built by Herod, one finds, according to the descriptions and combined measurements of Flavius Josephus and of *Middoth Tractate*, in this very restricted east-west width of the Sanctuary (**180 meters**), successively, the following measurements :

A- The external Enclosure of the Temple Mount, consisting, according to Flavius Josephus, in a Portico **13 meters wide** approximately.

B- A rather narrow external Space, of which we do not know the dimensions, and the access of which is authorized to the non-Jews.

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- C- A wall, surrounding the interior Courts of the Temple, that the not-Jews do not have the right to cross and which measures: **5 meters wide** approximately
D- The Court of the Women : **67 meters wide** approximately
E- The Court of the Israelites : **5,5 meters wide** approximately
F- The Court of the Priests : **5,5 meters wide** approximately
G- The Altar of Sacrifices : **14 meters wide** approximately
H- The Temple : **45 meters long** approximately
I- The Square behind the Temple : **6 meters wide** approximately ?

That made a total of :

$5 + 13 + 67 + 5,5 + 5,5 + 14 + 45 + 6 = 161$ meters approximately.

To these **161 meters**, one can add an approximation of about **10 meters** for the thicknesses of all the walls, parapets and balustrades of the Courts, as well as of the Gates and staircases leading to these Courts, since, when coming from west, one went up regularly and by successive degrees, up to the platform of the Temple itself.

Which altogether makes a total of approximate rounding down, **170 meters** in width.

That is to say that, in the width, restricted for lack of space available, it remained, on the total of **180 meters**, a dimension of approximately **ten meters** for the space authorized to the non-Jews, space which was located between the external Enclosure, delimited by the eastern Portico, and the wall of the first Court, that of the Women.

And this figure of a space about 10 meters wide, to which is added the interior width of the Portico for the place where the non-Jews were allowed to circulate, corresponds, in a rather realistic way, to the various visual descriptions transmitted by Flavius Josephus and by the *Gospels*.

-3- In any event, the statement quantified according to these perspectives, makes it possible to explain in a coherent way, the astonishing real modesty of the restricted width of the Courts, such as they are registered in the *Middoth Tractate*.

And it is quite obvious that if that had been possible for the staging of these Courts, the Haram Al-Sharif would have, with its vast spaces (**280 meters wide**) allowed to exploit all the possibilities offered, for example, by later references to descriptions of Ezekiel, and to let, in any case, display widely the architectural megalomania of Herod.

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And, within the framework of the vast space of the Haram, one could, then, have assigned to the various Courts of the Jewish Sanctuary, a space much more significant for the Officiants and Pilgrims that the quasi ridiculously narrowness of **5,5 meters**, to which the two Courts essential to the Judaic Worship were compelled, and the constraining topographic reality of which was measured with precision, and was preserved with such meticulousness, by the Rabbis measurements surveyors-inspectors, Authors or Transmitters, of *the Middoth Tractate*.

-4- Thus, the descriptions by Flavius Josephus of the external Enclosure of the Temple, reinforced by the figures given for the Courts by *Middoth Tractate*, exclude, geometrically and arithmetically, that the Temple Mount could have been the Esplanade of the Mosques.

This analysis, carried out starting with the measurements of the external Enclosure of the Temple, then of its Courts, means that the Platform which supported the Temple of the Jews, was smaller, more constraining, and narrower than the Platform of Haram Al Sharif, and that it was square and not rectangular.

This means that the Temple of the Jews stood on another Platform.

That does not constitute a sufficient Historical-Archaeological proof.

But that shows that it can appear rather difficult to apprehend ancient texts with fidelity and authenticity, when one uses, as absolute precondition, a visual Postulate, resting in fact only on one a priori and dogmatic prospect.

Fortunately the archeological vestiges of the Haram underground allow, thanks to the Hydraulic System which has been preserved in its inalterable rock, to reconstitute the authentic topographic reality of the Platform on which the Temple of Jews stood really, and which had been razed to the rock by the care of Divine Emperor Hadrian, as we will examine infra, in order to make completely disappear the Temple Site from Mankind Memory, with a certain success so far...

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23/ History of the Temple of Jerusalem

The third Temple of Herod

The Laver for Purifications and the Altar of Sacrifices

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-1- The Basin for Purifications, is positioned, as for the Sanctuary of Solomon, in the south-east of the Temple of Herod.

We will carry out its detailed examination, infra, in Volume E.

-2- The Altar of Sacrifices is the occasion for the Authors of *Tractate Middoth* of a prolix and quite convoluted discussion.

- Indeed, Moses' Altar of Sacrifices, very simple, was made out of acacia wood covered with bronze, and it was square : it measured 1,5 meter high (3 cubits) and each side measured 2,5 meters (5 cubits) - (*Exodus : 27: 1*).

- The Altar of Sacrifices of Solomon Temple, according to *2 Chronicles: 4: 1*, was in bronze. It was also of square form, and it measured 10 meters by 10, and 5 meters in height.

On the other hand, the Altar of Sacrifices described in the vision of Ezekiel, is complex, with successive stages set back of varied dimensions, that the Authors of *the Middoth Tractate* evoke, while making an effort, rather laboriously, to make the final result tally with the simple dimensions indicated in *2 Chronicles : 4 : 1*.

Flavius Josephus describes a square Altar which, not only, is of a form as simple as that described by *Exodus : 27: 1* and by *2 Chronicles : 4: 1*, but which, in addition and according to the Priestly methodology respecting **the Biblical proportions**, multiplies by 10, the figures of the sides of Moses Altar of Sacrifices, and by 5, the figure of its height:

Flavius Josephus : *Jewish War : 5 : 225 :*

In front of the Temple, stood the Altar of Sacrifices, of 15 cubits high (7,5 meters) and forming a square of 50 cubits (25 meters) by side.

One reached it on the southern side by a soft inclined slope.

There is a point of Architecture, of Priestly significance, where the principle of the Altar of Sacrifices of Herod Temple diverges from the visionary principle of the Altar described by Ezekiel, and which probably results from a reality of the first destroyed Temple.

Indeed, Ezekiel indicates that, to the east of the Altar of Sacrifices, and consequently vis-à-vis the Temple, steps went up towards the Altar.

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This description provided by a Prophet, born of a Priestly family, seems rather coherent on a mystical level, since the sacrifices were offered to God, when facing the Temple, and not offered to the men. The Priest thus advanced towards God to make him his offering.

Also, this layout of the slope or steps, leading to the Altar of Sacrifices starting from the east, i.e. vis-à-vis the Temple, corresponds, maybe, to the original layout of the Altar of Sacrifices in the preceding Temples.

On the other hand, in the description of the Herodian Temple in *Middoth Tractate*, as in that of Flavius Josephus, the Priests reached the Altar of Sacrifices by a slope parallel with the frontage of the Temple, and coming from the south.

Mishnah : Tractate Middoth : III : 3 :

C.- There was an ascent (ramp) on the south side of the Altar, 32 cubits (**16 meters**) long by 16 cubits (8 meters) broad.

I.e. that the Priests, who went up to the Altar of Sacrifices, were seen of profile and not of back by the participants being in the Courts.

One can give various interpretations of this possible change of axis, such as, for example, the search for a greater decency which is evoked in the Rabbinical Literature, or even, the desire to make so that the participants can better observe the ceremonial of the ascent of the Priests as well as the course of the Sacrifices, and to admire the ordinance of it.

But one can, also, think that, just like the space available for the two Courts of the Priests and Israelites, the space available in width (**5,5 meters** instead of the **16 meters** necessary for the length of this ramp to the Altar) missed irremediably to install this long approach ramp, which should have been, logically, installed in the Mystical axis of the Temple.

That would explain, then, perhaps, why the builders had to compromise with a possible principle of Worship, and to install this long approach ramp to the Altar of Sacrifices in parallel to the frontage of the Temple, and not ascending towards the Temple with Priests facing The Eternal who waited there.

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24/ History of the Temple of Jerusalem

The third Temple of Herod

The Porch of the Temple

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-1- The Porch of the Temple poses a vast problem of exegesis of the sources, which requires a detailed examination, from which no certainty can be guaranteed.

Indeed, a priori, the descriptions of the Temple Porch by Flavius Josephus and by *Middoth Tractate* do not correspond to the various reproductions which are at our disposal:

In these reproductions, the frontage of the Herodian Temple is illustrated by four columns which support the Porch of Greco-Roman style, similar to that any Pagan Temple. And through these columns of the Porch, one can see the Ark of the Covenant which has found again its site, fixed by the Eternal, inside the Jewish Temple. In addition, sometimes, on certain reproductions, the pediment which crowns the Porch is triangular, according to the most current Greco-Roman architectural aestheticism.

-2- However, the descriptions provided by Flavius Josephus and *Middoth Tractate* present a Porch of a structure, a priori, different: Indeed, it is an immense Porch, consisting of a full Frontage, comprising a large opening in the middle.

Figures of Flavius Josephus and *Middoth Tractate* vary in detail, but as, for the Porch in particular, the description of Flavius Josephus is more detailed, we present initially the figures of the Jewish Historian :

- On its outside, this Porch, measures: 50 meters length, on 50 meters height, and, probably, 15 meters of depth.

- Inside this same Porch, measurements are as follows :
25 meters long, 45 meters high, with 10 meters of depth.

These figures could, therefore, seem to indicate that half of the overall length of the Porch, distributed between the two ends, was made up of a full structure, aiming at making it stable.

Indeed, concerning the problem of the stability of this vertical construction, *Middoth Tractate* specifies that at the top of this Porch, beams fastened, so to speak, this monumental Frontage to the walls of the Temple itself.

This Frontage comprised, in its medium, a 35 meters high opening (20 meters according to *Middoth Tractate*) on 13 meters of width (10 meters according to *Middoth Tractate*).

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-3- The description of Flavius Josephus, corroborated by that of *the Middoth Tractate*, prompts to examine the graphic reproductions which reached us trying to understand how a full Frontage, comprising a large central opening, could be transformed into a tetrastyle Portico with Greco-Roman columns, such as it is reproduced on these charts.

We have, indeed, at our disposal several charts of the Frontage of the Herodian Temple, and, therefore, particularly of its Porch:

-A- / The first chart of the Porch of the Temple of Herod is that which is reproduced on many coins, which were struck during the insurrection of Bar Kokhba, between 132 and 135 CE. Bar Kokhba waged a war of liberation against the Roman armies of Emperor Hadrian, and the war of this resistant fighter aimed at the expulsion of the Roman occupant, and, especially, at the reconstruction of the Temple of Jerusalem, which had been destroyed by the troops of Titus, in 70 CE

This fight of Bar Kokhba was supported, and inspired, by Rabbi Akiba, of the second Tanna generation, and one of the principal initiators and architects of the *Mishnah*.

It is in a perspective of the necessary rebuilding of the destroyed Temple and of the restoration of its worship in its original grandeur, that were struck the Jewish coins, which were legal tender in Judaea, during the three years of this war of resistance and liberation.

These coins of Bar Kokhba represent the Porch of the Temple of Jerusalem, supported by four columns, according to the Greco-Roman type.

At the interior of this Temple, the Ark of the Covenant is often depicted.

About sixty years separated this war waged by Bar Kokhba and the destruction of the Herodian Temple in 70 CE : Therefore there were still alive eyewitnesses, or, at least, people who had been able to collect a very precise description of it.

In addition, Rabbi Akiba and Bar Kokhba entourage were very attached to the orthodoxy of the Sacred Texts and traditions, and they, most probably, would not have tolerated, on a Jewish coin, intended to encourage the Jews to fight for the rebuilding of their Sanctuary, a representation of the Temple which would not have been in conformity with the disappeared reality.

-B- / Two other representations which appear, on the one hand, in the Synagogue of Dura Europos, and, on the other hand, on a bottom of a Jewish gilded glass of the 3rd century CE in Rome, also represents this same Greco-Roman Porch supported by four columns, identical to that engraved on the Jewish coins of Bar Kokhba.

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Dura-Europos was a Roman garrison town, located on the bank of the Euphrates, and which was intended to guard the Eastern borders of the Empire.

This city was destroyed about the year 258 CE and was abandoned.

Time made its work and the city was buried. Excavations updated buildings, remained miraculously intact, among which a Synagogue, probably dating from the 2nd century CE. Now, this Synagogue has walls painted with various Biblical scenes, as well as representations of the Temple of Jerusalem.

A representation is identical to that of the Jewish currencies of Bar Kokhba.

Another representation also depicts the same Porch with four columns, but crowned by a triangular pediment.

And this last representation is identical to that of the bottom of Glass gilded Jewish glass, dating about from the same time, and found in the catacombs of Rome : These Jewish, gilded and painted cups, were used for meals celebrations during Religious Festivals.

-4- One of the possible explanations, to give an account of this apparent contradiction between, on the one hand, the texts of Flavius Josephus and *Middoth Tractate*, and on the other hand, the various Charts of the Temple of Herod which reached us, could be due to the necessary reinforcement of the structure of the full frontage, 50 meters high, which would have been made up with four columns, according to architectural standards of Antiquity for the supporting of Porches, this structural reinforcement having, in addition, been made absolutely necessary by the relative narrowness of a Porch of a considerable height.

Also, thereafter, Artists, charged, for example, to engrave the coins of the Jewish Revolt, would have considered, probably, that it would be easier to evoke the Porch of the Temple using the reinforcement of its Columns, rather than to engrave a full frontage in two dimensions, which would have offered only a very restricted possibility of pictorial prospect to evoke the Temple in background.

And one could think, possibly, in this case, that Flavius Josephus and the Authors of *Tractate Middoth* would have preferred to overlook this reinforcement of the four columns integrated in the full Frontage, in order to better emphasize all the original architecture character of the Jewish Sanctuary, and erase the too obvious Herod's Greco-Roman tendencies.

Various following remarks could, possibly, be used to support the direction of this interpretation :

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-A-/*The Middoth Tractate* provides relatively little information on the structure of this Porch, whereas, for the Temple-itself, on the contrary, the least architectural element is thoroughly detailed, described and measured.

On the other hand, *the Middoth Tractate* quotes some anecdotes, in connection with the gold chains which were suspended with crowns at the top of this Porch and to which the young Priests climbed, and, also, anecdotes in connection with the gold Vine which was suspended at the top of the Door of the Sanctuary.

And, in the same way, to compensate and recover religiously the lack of orthodoxy of the widened shape of the Porch, which contradicted the structure of the Porch of the Temple of Solomon, and whose enlarged structure had been decided, arbitrarily, by Herod, *Tractate Middoth* evokes, according to usual processes of assimilation of the Rabbinical Literature, about the new structure of the whole Building the metaphor of a Biblical Lion of David's Jerusalem "broad in front and narrow behind".

Mishnah : Tractate Middoth :

III : 8 :

A.- Crossbars of cedar were set between the wall of the Sanctuary (Hekal) and the wall of the Porch

B.- so that the Porch not budge.

C.- And golden chains were fixed to the roof beams of the Porch

D.- on which novice-Priests used to climb up and check the crowns (of gold and silver which were fixed in the upper parts of the Porch)

E.- Since it is written : "*And the crowns shall be to Helen and Tobiyah and to Jedaiah and to Hen the son of Zephaniah for a memorial in the Temple of The Eternal.*" (*Zechariah : 6 : 9-15*)

F.- A golden vine stood at the Entrance of the Sanctuary (Hekal), trained on poles.

G - And whoever wanted to offer a leaf or a grape or a bunch (in gold) used to bring it and hang it thereon.

H.- Rabbi Eliezer, son of Rabbi Zadok, said : "There was an incident (due to an excessive weight of the gold offerings) and 300 Priests were commissioned to clear it."

IV : 7 :

E.- The Porch projected (in width of the Sanctuary) 15 cubits (7,50 meters) to the north, and 15 cubits (7,50 meters) to the south (Flavius Josephus indicates 10 meters).

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G.- Thus the Sanctuary was narrow behind and wide in front, as a Lion,
H.- since it is said (*Isaiah : 29 : 1*) : "Ho ! Ariel, Ariel, the City where David
encamped."

I.- Just as a lion is narrow behind and broad in front, so the Sanctuary is narrow
behind and broad in front.

-B-/ As for Flavius Josephus, the Jewish historian insists much on the immense glare of the
gold, which spouted out of all the walls, and on the inexpressible beauty of the Veil which
hung, under the Porch, in front of the Door of the Temple:

And, through his sincere admiration, the Jewish Historian transmits, in his way, the
imposing effect which had, precisely, sought Herod, in order to make accept by the Jewish
People, his radical transformation of the structure of the Porch with a Greco-Roman
widening, and, especially, the significant increase of the height of the Temple, ultimate
objective of the Tyrant's stratagem:

Flavius Josephus : Jewish War : V : 5-4 :

As to the Holy House itself, which was placed in the midst (of the inmost
Priests Court), that most sacred part of the Sanctuary was ascended to by
twelve steps.

The height and the breadth of the Porch were equal, each hundred cubits (50
meters broad and 50 meters high).

The Temple, behind the Porch was forty cubits (20 meters) narrower in breadth.
(The breadth of the Temple itself was 30 meters, including the structure of the Annex.)

The Porch at the front appeared thus as what may be styled shoulders on each
side of the Temple that passed twenty cubits further (10 meters on each side).

The opening in the middle of the frontage of the Porch was seventy cubits high
(35 meters) and twenty five cubits broad (12 meters).

This great opening had no doors for it represented the universal visibility of
Heaven, that cannot be excluded from any place is without limit

The frontage was covered with gold all over.

Through the opening of this Frontage one could see some internal parts of the
Porch which was immense, as well as the Door of the Temple itself and surfaces
framing this Door, all shining with gold.

The Temple had two storeys, whereas the Porch rose all in one piece at a height
(inside) of 90 cubits (45 meters), with a breadth (inside) of 50 cubits (25 meters)
and a depth (between the external wall of the Porch and the wall of the Temple
of twenty cubits (10 meters).

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The Door of the Temple was, as we have already observed, all over covered with gold, as was its whole wall about it.

It had also golden vines above it, from which clusters of grapes hung as tall as a man's height

As the Temple was divided in two storeys, the Door of the Temple itself (opening to the ground floor) was lower than the Opening in the Frontage of the Porch.

The golden Door (of the Holy Place) were 50 cubits high (25 meters) and 16 cubits in breadth (8 meters). (The Holy Place measures 30 meters high and 10 meters wide : *cf. infra*)

Before this Temple Door hung a veil of equal largeness with the Door.

It was a Babylonian curtain, embroidered with blue, and fine linen, and scarlet, and purple, and of a contexture that was truly wonderful. Nor was this mixture of colors without its mystical interpretation, but was a kind of image of the universe; for by the scarlet there seemed to be enigmatically signified fire, by the fine flax the earth, by the blue the air, and by the purple the sea; two of them having their colors the foundation of this resemblance; but the fine flax and the purple have their own origin for that foundation, the earth producing the one, and the sea the other. This curtain had also embroidered upon it all that was mystical in the heavens, excepting that of the twelve signs, representing living creatures.

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25/ History of the Temple of Jerusalem

The third Temple of Herod

The Temple

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-1- That Flavius Josephus and the authors of the *Middoth Tractate* had considered the Herodian transformation of the Porch of the Temple of Solomon, as a purely aesthetic modification not Religious but, is enough surprising, even if a gloss of the *Middoth Tractate* connects the description of this Porch to a vague Biblical reference through the metaphor of a David's lion of Jerusalem.

But, as Solomon, himself, had added a Porch to the plan of the strictly rectilinear Sanctuary prescribes by the Eternal to Moses, the widening of this same Porch, off the rigorous rectangular prospect imposed on the Tent of the Meeting, could, possibly, pass for an accommodation to aesthetic fashions of the Herodian times, strongly impregnated of Greco-Romanity : and this decorative and symbolic adaptation was , a priori, challenging neither the prescribed mystical proportions of the internal structure of the Temple, nor its Sacred Essence.

In any case, the fact that the Jews had also accepted, or rather undergone, the fact that the Roman Eagle had been hung up at the pediment of the third Temple speaks volumes the terror which Herod inflicted to his subjected Jews. The more so as this Roman Eagle was at the same time the Symbol of the Divinities of the Roman Armies and the Symbol of the Divinity of the Roman Emperor.

And the fact also that the Rabbinical Literature took care to never mention this significant episode of the Roman Eagle on the Temple of Herod, Temple praised and revered by all the Rabbis, gives an indication on the faculty of lapse of memory tried out by the pious Jews who, until the death of Herod, had to contemplate this Pagan Eagle on the widened pediment of the Temple, towards which they addressed their prayers to the Unique Eternal.

-2- The Porch of the 3rd Temple, in addition to its aesthetic ambition, had actually been designed by Herod, in order to make accept, architecturally, by the Jews, the considerable heightening of the Temple, compared to the Temple of Solomon.

Indeed, the entire stratagem, conceived by Herod, rested exclusively on this heightening:

(- Again, we take into account interior measurements for the following presentation of the dimensions of the Temple built by Herod -)

- the Temple of Solomon was an Edifice (Holy Place) of **15 meters high**, this height having been given by multiplying by 3 the Height of Moses' Tent of the Meeting (**5 meters high**). The Solomon Temple Most Holy Place measuring **10 meters high** : (10m x 10m x 10m). The Most Holy Place of Moses' Tent of the Meeting measuring : **5m x 5m x 5m**).

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- Herod brought up these **15 meters to 50 meters** for the height of the Temple.
This considerable height of **50 meters** was distributed on two storeys, in the following way:

- **30 meters high for the "Ground floor"**, where the Holy Place and the Very Holy Place were, according to Flavius Josephus (but 20 meters high according to *the Middoth Tractate*);
- **20 meters high for "the Upper Storey"**, which was atop of the Holy Place and atop of the Most Holy Place (according to Flavius Josephus and *Middoth Tractate*).

On the other hand, in order to express an alleged fidelity to the original sacred measures of the Temple, the **interior dimensions, on the ground**, of the Holy Place and Very Holy Place were, scrupulously, respected by Herod, compared to the dimensions of the first Temple of Solomon, with the following measurements :

- Holy Place: **Width 10 meters ; Length: 20 meters ;**
- Most Holy Place : **Width 10 meters ; Length: 10 meters ;**

Which means that Herod transformed the thousand-year-old perfect Cube, designed by Moses (5 x 5 x 5), and respected by Solomon (10 x 10 x 10), into a kind of a rectangular well, 10 meters long and 10 meters wide, with a height of 30 meters (10 x 10 x 30) according to Josephus, - { height of 20 meters (10 x 10 x 20) according to *Middoth Tractate* }-.

But fidelity to the ground foundations of the Temple, promised by Herod to the Jewish population, was allegedly safe.

And in a certain way, this absolute respect of the dimensions on the ground, expressed, with such ostentation by Herod, concerning specifically the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place, confirms, with enough force, that the second Temple (of Zerubbabel and of the Hasmoneans) as well as the third Temple (of Herod) were actually drawn up, very exactly, at the precise spot of the earlier foundations of the first Temple of Solomon, as regards the interior surfaces on the ground of the Holy Place and of the Most Holy Place.

-3- As for the Temple of Solomon, an Annexe building was joined by Herod to the Temple itself. the ground floor

This additional building, 20 meters high, which was surrounding the ground floor of the Temple, was made up of three storeys of rooms which communicated between them.

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The width of this Annexe building which framed, thus, the Temple, on its sides and at its back like an U, was roughly 12,5 meters, when counting also walls, corridor, and interior water channel, according to *Middoth Tractate*.

Therefore, the north-south width of the entire Unit, formed by the Temple itself and by the annex circumscribing its sides, was : $12,5 + 10 + 12,5 = 35$ meters.

-4- As much *Tractate Middoth* had taken refuge in anecdotic or metaphorical considerations to avoid, to some extent, facing the severe reality of the distortions operated by Herod in the structure of the Porch of the Temple, as much this same *Tractate Middoth* presents a statement of measurements of the Herodian Temple, of such a precise and detailed meticulousness that this lay out statement, was obviously intended to effectively allow any Architect to rebuild the Temple of Herod absolutely identical to the original.

Therefore, it is rather amazing to notice that the complete disappearance of the Mystical Perfect Cube, original and thousand-year-old of Moses' **Most Holy Place**, could be operated by Herod, without, never provoking the least Jewish murmur, protest or uprising.

And, even more surprising, without never, thereafter, in the chains of centuries of Rabbis generations, the vast ocean of Rabbinical Literature being the least interested in this essential deconstruction and destruction, whereas this same Rabbinical Literature can, sometimes, devote whole chapters or books to discussions of rather anachronistic or obscure interest.

But, in addition, this capital deconstruction, which destroyed the Mystical Essence of the Supernatural Site of the Jews, was accompanied by a violent desacralization, or more exactly by a deliberate profanation, which smashed into pieces the entire Architectural Mystic, prescribed by The Eternal to Moses for the terrestrial Place of His Meeting with the Jewish Nation.

Before proceeding to report this profanation inflicted by Herod to the essential Mystical Structure of the Temple, and whose cynical character is almost less astonishing, that the strange silence with which centuries have accompanied this desacralization, it appears appropriate to present the texts of Flavius Josephus and of *Middoth Tractate*, which plotted the precise Measures of the Temple of Herod.

In this respect, the description of *Middoth Tractate* is more meticulous, and probably more accurate in architectural details than the description of Flavius Josephus.

But in both cases, these descriptions, even while diverging on certain points of details, restore, with absolute clearness, the hypocritical campaign of desacralization of the Temple of the Jews operated by Herod, which, thanks to his architectural stratagem, did appease his ambition to be equalized to his protector Divine Augustus, and even to amply exceed it.

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Also, one could, in the field of collective Mysticism and placing oneself within the framework of a Rabbinical speculation, declare, that it had become fatal, later, that this fundamental denaturation of the Temple caused, a few decades later, its destruction by the Romans.

In any case, and in the collective unconscious, this disappearance of the Temple in 70 appeared indeed retrospectively, as inescapable, if one envisions the eschatological dimensions of the Literatures of those aftermath tormented times, who sought, vainly and hopelessly, an explanation to this incommensurable disintegration of the Sacred and Mystical Architecture, similar to a Cosmic Deflagration.

-5- Here the two texts which present, objectively, clearly and in their least details, the deliberate Profanation of Herod :

Flavius Josephus : *Jewish War* : V : 5 : 5 :

Passing within the Temple, one found oneself in the ground floor of the Sanctuary.

This first part of the Temple was in height sixty cubits (**30 meters**), and its length the same (**30 meters**) ; whereas its breadth was but twenty cubits (**10 meters**). But still those sixty cubits (**30 meters**) in length (inside) was divided again in two parts :

The first part of it (the Holy Place) was forty cubits (**20 meters**) long :

The Holy Place had in it three things that were very wonderful and famous among all mankind : the seven lamps Candlestick, the Offering Table (of bread), and the Altar of incense. Now the seven lamps, such being the number of the branches of the Lampstand, signified the seven planets ; the loaves on the Offering Table, twelve in number, the circle of the Zodiac and the year ; while the Altar of incense, by the thirteen fragrant spices from sea and from land both desert and inhabited with which it was replenished, signified that all things are of God and that they are all to be dedicated to His Use.

The innermost part (Most Holy Place) measured 20 cubits long (**10 meters**) --- (**10 meters wide, and 30 meters in height**).

This inner part was separated from the outer part by a Veil. In this part there was nothing at all. It was unapproachable, inviolable, and invisible to all : and it was called the Holy of Holies.

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Now, attached to the sides and the back of the lower part of the Temple, there were little chambers, with passages out of one into another :

There were a great many of them, and there were disposed on three storeys.

There were also entrances on each side into them from the Temple Gate (allowing to enter the Temple from the Porch).

But the upper part of the Temple had no such little chambers any further : therefore the Temple Edifice was there narrower

This upper storey was forty cubits ((**20 meters**) high

and of smaller body than the lower parts of the ground floor (which included on each side the joined chambers of the Annex of about 25 meters breadth altogether).

Thus we collect that the whole Height of the Temple, including the sixty cubits height from the floor, amounted to a hundred cubits :

(Ground Floor **30 meters** + Upper Storey **20 meters** = **50 meters**)..

Mishnah : Tractate Middoth :

4 : 6 :

A.- And the Temple (including the Porch and the Annex) was a hundred cubits **long (50 meters)** by one hundred cubits **wide (50 meters)** and one hundred cubits **(50 meters) high.**

B.- (UPRIGHT, Measures of the Ground Floor : from bottom to top :)

- the Substructure (Foundations) measured 6 cubits (**3 meters) high :**
- the wall which was built on it measured 40 cubits (**20 meters) high ;**
- the wall frieze 1 cubit (**50 centimeters) high ;**
- the ceiling structure: 2 cubits (**1 meter) high ;**
- the space between the ceiling and the upper floor : 1 cubit (**50 centimeters) high;**

- the plaster : 1 cubit (**50 centimeters) high.**

(Altogether that comes to 51 cubits = **25 meters high for the le Ground Floor**).

C.- (UPRIGHT, Measures of the Upper Floor : from bottom to top :)

- **And the height of the Upper Floor was 40 cubits (20 meters) ;**
- the wall frieze 1 cubit (**50 centimeters) high ;**
- the space for the guttering : 2 cubits (**1 meter) ;**
- the roof structure : 1 cubit (**50 centimeters).**

D.- the parapet of the roof was 3 cubits (**1, 50 meter) high.**

E.- the scarecrow spikes (against birds) measured 1 cubit (**50 centimeters).**

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F.- Rabbi Judah says : the spikes were not included in the measurement : rather the parapet was 4 cubits (2 meters) high.
(Altogether that comes to about 49 cubits = **25 meters high for the Upper Floor and the Roof**).

4 : 7 :

A.- (Measures of the Temple in length in the main axis :)

From East to West, was 100 cubits (**50 meters**).

B.- The wall of the Porch was 5 cubits (**2,50 meters**) thick ;

- and the Porch (depth) 11 cubits (**5 meters 50**) ;

- the wall of the Temple measured 6 cubits (**3 meters**) thick ;

- and the interior of the **Holy Place** was 40 cubits (**20 meters**) long ;

- the partition with Veils between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place was 1 cubit (**50 centimeters**) deep ;

- and **the Most Holy Place** was 20 cubits (**10 meters**) long ;

- then the western Wall of the Most Holy Place Temple was 6 cubits (**3 meters**) thick ;

- then the Cell (of the Annex structure joined to the back of the Temple) was 6 cubits (**3 meters**) deep ;

- and, finally, the external wall of this Cell (and of the Temple) was 5 cubits (**2,50 meters**) thick.

C.- (Measures of the Temple in width, excluding the Porch) :

From north to south the Temple was 70 cubits (**35 meters**) wide.

D.- The (external) wall (of the Sanctuary and) of the passageway (in the Annex structure) was 5 cubits (**2,50 meters**) broad ;

- the (circular) passageway was 3 cubits (**1,50 meter**) wide ;

- the wall between the passageway and the cell (attached to the Temple) was 5 cubits (**2,50 mètres**) wide ;

- the cell measured 6 cubits (**3 meters**) wide ;

- the wall of the Temple (strictly speaking) was 6 cubits (**3 meters**) thick ;

- **the interior of the Temple itself** measured 20 cubits (**10 meters**) wide ;

- again, the wall of the Temple (strictly speaking) was 6 cubits (**3 meters**) thick ;

- the cell (attached to the Temple) : 6 cubits (**3 meters**) wide ;

- the external wall of the cell : 5 cubits (**2 meters 50**) thick ;

- then, the **Water Channel** was 3 cubits (**1, 50 meter**) wide ;

- and, finally, the external wall of the Temple was 5 cubits (**2 meters 50**) thick.

E.- The Porch (still breadthwise) projected 15 cubits (7,50 meters) at the north and 15 cubits (7,50 meters) at the south (on each side of the Temple)..

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G.- Thus the Sanctuary was narrow behind and wide in front *like a Lion*
H.- Since it is said : *Ariel, Ariel, the City where David encamped (Isaiah : 29 : 1)*.
I.- Just as the Lion is narrow behind and broad in front, so the Temple is narrow
behind and broad in front.

-6- It thus emerges, clearly, from these two Texts of Flavius Josephus and *Middoth Tractate*, that Herod had made build a Room, located on top of the Holy Place and on top of the Most Holy Place, Upper Room which measured **20 meters high**.

This Upper Storey, invented by Herod and built on the top of the Holy Place and of the Most Holy Place, existed, neither in Moses' Tent of the Meeting, nor in the first Temple of Solomon, nor in the second Temple rebuilt by Zurubabel and Jeshua at the return of exile of Babylon, nor in this same second Temple, renovated by the Hasmoneans.

There indeed, according to the Rules prescribed by The Eternal to Moses, G*d wished "to descend from Heavens" down to His Sanctuary, which had been built and devoted according to His Will, in order to express and renew His solicitude towards His chosen people, and to testify the Permanence of His Moral Pact Moral with Mankind, above the Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant preserved in the Most Holy Place.

And it had obviously not been envisaged in this "Zenithal Descent" that the Eternal would use possibly passageway or underpass, or even stride across intermediate rooms, before coming vertically to express, in His Residence, and particularly, in the Most Holy Place, the "Divine Cloud", described in *the Torah*, and in the form of which the Eternal showed His Solicitude towards His People of Priests.

One of the Talmudic variations of this "Divine Cloud" will be, thereafter, the "Shekhinah" (Presence of G*d).

In other words, at the Absolute Vertical of the Most Holy Place, conceived by the Eternal for the Meeting with Humanity, there could, obviously, be above or under, "neither cellar, nor attic, nor possible maintenance rooms".

Because, it is necessary to repeat that, according to *the Torah*, the Eternal descends directly from on High, to appear on Earth in His Residence, and particularly in the Most Holy Place of the Temple, at the precise Site of the Ark of the Covenant :

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I.e. one finds oneself there in the very heart of the Foundation of the Jewish Religion, in the intense Focusing and Irradiation, by which can happen the Meeting of The Divine with the Intercessor of Humanity :

Exodus : 25 : 17-23 :

You shall make an atonement cover of pure gold. Two and a half cubits (1,25 meter) shall be its length and a cubit and a half (75 centimeters) shall be its width. And you shall make two Cherubim of hammered gold at the two ends of the cover. Make one Cherub at one end and the other Cherub at the other ; you shall make the two Cherubim of one piece with the atonement cover. And the Cherubim shall stretch out their wings above covering the atonement cover with their wings, and they shall face one another. The faces of the Cherubim shall look toward the atonement cover. You shall put the atonement cover on top of the Ark and in the Ark you shall put the Covenant that I will give you.

There, above the atonement cover between the two Cherubim which are over the Ark of the Covenant, I will meet you (Moses), and give you everything in commandment to the Children of Israel.

Exodus : 40 : 34-38 :

(At the end of the installation of the Tent of the Meeting (Tabernacle) by Moses, according to the Rules prescribed by The Eternal:)

Then the Cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of The Eternal filled the Tabernacle. Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled upon it, and the glory of The Eternal filled the Tabernacle.

In all the travels of the Israelites, whenever the Cloud lifted from above the Tabernacle, they would set out ; but if the Cloud did not lift, they did not set out—until the day it lifted. So the Cloud of The Eternal was over the Tabernacle by day, and fire was in the Cloud by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel during all their travels.

Leviticus : 16 : 2 :

The Eternal said to Moses :

"Tell your brother Aaron (first High Priest) not to come whenever he chooses into the Most Holy Place behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the Ark, or else he will die, because **I appear in the Cloud over the atonement cover.**"

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Numbers : 9 : 15 :

Now on the day the Tabernacle, the Tent of the Meeting, was set up, the Cloud covered it. From evening till morning the Cloud above the tabernacle looked like fire.

1 Kings : 8 : 6-13 :

(At the end of the construction of the Temple by Solomon :)

The Priests then brought the Ark of The Eternals' Covenant to its place in the inner sanctuary of the Temple, the Most Holy Place, and put it beneath the wings of the Cherubim.

The Cherubim spread their wings over the place of the Ark and overshadowed the Ark and its carrying poles.

These poles were so long (more than 10 meters !?) that their ends could be seen from the Holy Place in front of the inner sanctuary, but not from outside the Holy Place; and they are still there today.

There was nothing in the Ark except the two stone tablets that Moses had placed in it at Horeb, where The Eternal made a Covenant with the Israelites after they came out of Egypt.

When the Priests withdrew from the Holy Place, the Cloud descended on the Temple of The Eternal.

And the Priests could not perform their service because of the Cloud, for the glory of The Eternal filled His Temple.

Then Solomon said :

"The Lord has said that He would dwell in a dark Cloud :

I have indeed built a magnificent Temple for You,

a place for You to dwell forever."

-7- The Priests, the Levites, Sadducees, Scribes, the Pharisees, Rabbis, and all the Jews thus agreed to see, or resigned themselves to see, in Herod's architectural will the sole desire to carry out an aesthetic work which could establish itself as a major Greco-Roman achievement of his time.

Talmud of Babylon : Order Neziqin : Tractate Baba Bathra : 4/a :

Talmud of Babylon : Order Moed : Tractate Sukha : 5/1/b :(Etc.)

Who did not see the Temple of Herod never saw anything beautiful.

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By doing this, the Jews could not, or did not want, to consider that, already deprived of its living Heart, i.e. of its Ark of the Covenant, the Temple lost, thus, furthermore and without any possible recourse, its sacred significance, when destroying, thus, the very mystical Principles which had governed its Creation.

The Jews could, possibly, have attributed to an aesthetically megalomania the will of Herod to heighten the Temple, in order to confer a more monumental form to it ; and, finally, the Jews could have let themselves converted to this pagan will of embellishment, even at the expense of the loss of the original identity of the Sanctuary, which, in that way, was in fact stripped of its entire Mystical scope and Moral significance..

But, actually, the profanation objectives of Herod with the construction of a new Jewish Temple went well beyond the simple megalomaniac ambitions of an avid search of aesthetic fame based on architectural prowesses.

Indeed, *the Middoth Tractate*, in its meticulous statement, exposes not only the interior measurements of the Temple, but, also, the structure, the thicknesses of the walls and of the roofs, the layout of the cell structures attached to the Temple, as well as the description of an **ascending corridor** which went round the Sanctuary, to lead up to this Herodian invented Upper Floor of the Temple, which had been built on the top of the Holy Place and on the top of the Most Holy Place.

Through all its detailed descriptions, which give a report on complex circuits which made it possible for the Priests to reach various sites of the interior of the Temple without passing inevitably by the Holy Place, *the Middoth Tractate* reveals, rather clearly, but without realizing it, the stratagem which had been conceived by Herod to be able to interpose himself, secretly but proudly, between the Eternal and his subjects, each time would wish so this Idumean Tyrant, Herod, who had been nominated "King of the Jews " by the Roman Senate :

Mishnah : Tractate Middoth :

4 : 2 :

E.- (The Priest in charge of opening the Door of the Temple) took the key and opened the (northern) wicket and went into the cell and from the cell he went into the Holy Place.

(Mishnah : Tractate Tamid : 3 :7)

F.- Rabbi Judah says : He used to walk along the thickness of the wall until he came to the space between the two Gates (of the double Gateway).

G.- Thus he could open the outer Doors from within (the Temple) and the inner Doors from outside (the Holy Place).

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4 : 3 :

A. There were 38 cells (surrounding the Ground Floor of the Temple) 15 on the north and 15 on the south (along the side walls of the Sanctuary) and 8 on the west (at the back of the Sanctuary).

B.- The (15) cells at the north and (15) at the south (along the sides of the Temple) were five on top of five, with five on top of them (three storeys).

And the (8) cells at the west (at the back of the Temple) were three on top of three with two more on top of them (three storeys).

C.- Each cell had three openings : one to the cell on the right, one to the cell on the left and one to the cell above.

D.- And in (the cell at) the north eastern corner (wherefrom was organized the opening of the Doors of the Temple) there were five openings, one into the cell at the right, one into the cell on top of it, one into the passageway (ascending corridor which went round the Sanctuary cf. infra), one into the little door (inside the wall between the two Doors of the Gateway of the Temple) and one (directly) into the Holy Place.

4 : 5 :

A.- An a (long) passageway went up from the north-east corner to the north-west corner

B.- through which they used to mount to the roofs of the cells.

C.- One would go up the passageway facing westward, and walked across the entire northern side until he reached the west (at the back of the Sanctuary).

D.- (When) he reached the west, he turned southward and walked up across the entire western (back of the Sanctuary) until he reached the south.

E.- (When) he reached the south he turned eastward and walked up across the southern side until he reached the entrance of the upper Chamber of the Temple.

F.- Since the door of the upper Chamber opened to the south.

G.- And in the entrance of the upper Chamber there were two cedar ladders

H.- by which they could go up to the roof of the Upper Room.

I.- and in the Upper Chamber the tops of flagstones marked (on the floor the division (atop the dividing partition of the curtain in the Ground Floor) between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies).

J.- And in this Upper Room of the Sanctuary there were trap openings down into the Holy of Holies through which they would lower down craftsmen in cages,

K.- so that they could not feed their gaze on the Holy of Holies.

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-8- The vast ocean of Rabbinical Literature allows sometimes discoveries of treasures of thought and reflexion, seldom equaled.

But, in same time, in particular in its Aggadic aspects (stories rather legendary), one can discover also in this Rabbinical literature disconcerting accounts of naive and incongruous acrobatic thoughts.

It is appropriate moreover to recall that, in the *Mishnah*, the *Middoth Tractate* is the only *Tractate* (with the *Qinim Tractate*) to which was never added any comment or discussion of any kind, either in the *Talmud of Jerusalem*, or in the *Talmud of Babylon*, or even in the *Tosefta* (which is a complement to the Talmudic comments of the *Mishnah*).

This absence of any comment ("*Gemara*" for the Talmuds) can be the sign of an absolute and final respect.

It could be also the sign of a certain embarrassment, if one considers the wide scope of endless discussions and exegeses, caused in Rabbinical Literature by some least significant writings in various *Tractates of the Mishnah*.

It should be said that some glosses of the *Middoth Tractate*, whose finality was to preserve with the meticulous description of the disappeared Temple the very Essence of the Source of Judaism, appear as rather stupefying and aberrant :

Indeed, in this respect, the Authors of the *Middoth Tractate* indicate, with a very sincere and quasi-unconscious meticulousness, how anybody can walk above the Holy Place and above the Most Holy Place, and how any fellow can even penetrate down, by using small "elevators", into the Holy of Holies, which, in addition, has lost its Mystical perfect cubic form, and has been transformed into a rectangular well 30 meters high according to Flavius Josephus, or 20 meters high according to *Tractate Middoth*.

Now, in this Most Holy Place, which, anybody can desacralize at will thanks to the device of Herod, only, the High Priest had the right to penetrate, once a year, for a very short moment of a few minutes, and this, after one week of intense preparation, made of rigorous and ceaseless Purifications in living source Waters inside the Sanctuary.

And The Eternal had specified on several occasions to Moses that any man who, apart from the High Priest, would penetrate in the Most Holy Place, would die immediately.

And if, once a year, at the time of Kippur, the High Priest, who entered briefly the Most Holy Place to burn incense, remained there a time too long, People of Israel trembled of terror at the idea that, by doing this and because of his imprudence, all Israel could incur the anger of The Eternal, and spell on the Nation the worst calamities.

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Therefore, one will wonder, very vainly, what kind of work the craftsmen could have had to carry out in a Sacred Place, where there was strictly nothing, since the Ark of the Covenant had disappeared, where nobody never penetrated, and where reigned the most complete darkness.

But especially, in the field of total absurdity thus evoked, how many holes would have been necessary, actually, to drill in the ceiling of the Most Holy Place, so that these craftsmen of such eminently virtual work, locked up in a cage probably measuring 2 meters by 2 meters, would have been able to achieve such completely imaginary tasks, in a space of 10 meters by 10 meters out of reach from the cages, and without never being allowed to have a glance at the interior of the Holy of Holies.

Herod is the exclusive inventor of this device of "lifts", as he is the sole inventor of a Most Holy Place which does not have any more the perfect shape of a mystical cube, and as he is the inventor of an Upper Floor, installed, for the first time in the Jewish Religion, on the top of the Holy of Holies. Indeed, and of course the device of cages going down through openings arranged in the ceiling of the Most Holy Place, appears neither in the Sanctuary prescribed by the Eternal to Moses, nor in the first Temple built by Solomon, nor in the second Temple of Zurubabel and Hasmoneans.

Herod, sly and bloodthirsty tyrant of genius, could not care less about Prescriptions which had been transmitted to Moses by The Eternal.

As for the clerical Hierarchy officially in charge with the building of the Temple, all the Priests and Rabbis were totally subjected, by terror, to the megalomania of Herod, who, in addition, named or revoked, as he pleased, the High Priest as well as all the principal Officers of the Hierarchy of the Temple and Sanhedrin.

Now, Herod was interested only by his own absolute authority, which could not be defied by whoever or by whatever principle within the Nation which he controlled, and the Tyrant was motivated by the only preoccupation of his own Glory and Power, which, in his eyes, and like that of his Protector, Divine Augustus, came from Attributes conferred exclusively by Cosmogonic Divinities.

-9- It is from this intimate conviction of his own Divine Nature, conviction which all Sovereigns and Potentates of Antiquity shared inevitably, that proceeded the entire cunning Architectural Invention of Herod :

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In this respect, Flavius Josephus reports a significant episode of Herod's capture of power, during which he reduced, with his mercenaries, "brigands" who had taken refuge in the mountain. And there are good grounds to think that these "brigands" (according to the terminology of Nicolas of Damascus, adopted by Flavius Josephus) were, in fact, either resistant Pharisees, or Sadducees partisans of the Hasmonean Dynasty, who rightly saw in Herod, a non Jew foreign Tyrant and sacrilegious usurper :

Flavius Josephus : *Jewish Antiquities* : 15 : 5 :

Herod went in haste against the brigands that were in the caves....

These caves were in mountains that were exceeding abrupt, and in their middle were no other than precipices, with certain entrances into the caves, and those caves were encompassed with sharp rocks, and in these did the brigands lie concealed, with all their families about them; but the King caused certain cages to be made, in order to destroy them, and to be hung down, bound about with iron chains, by an engine, from the top of the mountain, as it was not possible to get up to them, by reason of the sharp ascent of the mountains, nor to creep down to them from above. Now these cages were filled with armed men, who had long hooks in their hands, by which they might pull out such as resisted them, and then tumble them down, and kill them by so doing; but the letting the cages down proved to be a matter of great danger, because of the vast depth they were to be let down, although they had their provisions in the cages themselves. But when the cages were let down, and not one of those in the mouths of the caves durst come near them, but lay still out of fear, some of the armed men girt on their armor, and by both their hands took hold of the chain by which the cages were let down, and went into the mouths of the caves, because they fretted that such delay was made by the brigands not daring to come out of the caves. And when they were at any of those mouths, they first killed many of those that were in the mouths with their darts, and afterwards pulled those to them that resisted them with their hooks, and tumbled them down the precipices, and afterwards went into the caves, and killed many more, and then went into their cages again, and lay still there. But, upon this, terror seized the rest, when they heard the lamentations that were made, and they despaired of escaping. However, when the night came on, that put an end to the whole work; and as the King proclaimed pardon by a herald to such as delivered themselves up to him, many accepted this offer.

The same method of assault was made use of the next day; and they went further, and got out in cages to fight them, and fought them at their doors, and

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sent fire among them, and set their caves on fire, for there was a great deal of combustible matter within them. Now there was one old man who was caught within one of these caves, with seven children and a wife; these prayed him to give them leave to go out, and yield themselves up to the enemy; but he stood at the cave's mouth, and always slew that child of his who went out, till he had destroyed them every one, and after that he slew his wife, and cast their dead bodies down the precipice, and himself after them, and so underwent death rather than slavery: but before he did this, he greatly reproached Herod with the meanness of his family, although he was then King. Herod also saw what he was doing, and stretched out his hand, and offered him all manner of security for his life... By these means all these caves were at length subdued entirely.

In fact, if Herod made build an Upper Floor on the top of the Most Holy Place, and made it equipped with cages making it possible to go down inside the very and secret heart of the Sanctuary, it is that the Despot had conceived to go, himself, in the Holy of Holies, any time he would wish, and so without having to pass by the staff waiting rooms, occupied by the Priests who controlled the complex ritual access to the inner Sanctuary.

Flavius Josephus seemingly delivers several important keys, altogether complementary and contradictory, on the personality of Herod, concerning his attitude and his intimate thought concerning the Temple of the Jews.

First, Flavius Josephus reports what Herod let the Jewish People think, in order to comply with their beliefs and avoid to cause riots :

Flavius Josephus : *Jewish Antiquities* : 15 : 14 : (Reminder) :

Thus was the first Enclosure of the Temple. In the midst of which, and not far from it, was the second Enclosure, to be gone up to by a few steps : This inner Enclosure was encompassed by a stone wall for a partition, with an inscription, which forbade any foreigner to go in under pain of death...

And still more inward was there the third Court of the Temple, where into it was not lawful for any but the Priests alone to enter. The Temple itself was within this Court. And before that Temple was the Altar, upon which we offer our sacrifices and burnt-offerings to God. Into this inner Court, **King Herod did never enter for he was forbidden, because he was not a Priest.**

He therefore let the Priests conduct the building of the Temple.

However, Herod took care of the Porticoes and of the outer Enclosures, and these he built in eight years.

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Herod makes thus pretence to conform to the Rule which prohibits him to penetrate in the inner Sacred Court, because he is neither of Jewish stock, nor, obviously, of Priestly family. Nevertheless, Herod betrays his pride and his superiority feelings about the Hasmoneans (Jews of Hugh Priest family) whom he made entirely disappear by assassinations : As those Hasmoneans had enjoyed all the privileges reserved exclusively to the High Priests, whereas these same privileges were structurally refused to Herod, the very powerful King of the Jews who had made rebuild the sumptuous Temple of Jerusalem : One bitter speech, which Flavius Josephus reports on this topic, is delivered by Herod at the end of his life to the Sanhedrin, after bold Pharisees had dared to tear off the Imperial Roman Eagle that Herod had made affix on the Pediment of the Temple, notwithstanding the official absurd version according which he would not have been at all involved in the building of the Temple. Actually, Herod regarded the construction of the Temple as one of his major and intimate works ; and exceeding even all his other architectural achievements in his Kingdom or abroad, which all fed his pride, and which were intended to perpetuate his fame through centuries. Therefore the Inauguration of the Temple was one of the main marking events of the reign of Herod, and this event, a priori exclusively religious, did completely participate, in fact, to Herod's own Glorification :

Flavius Josephus : *Jewish Antiquities* : 15 : 11 : 6 :

The Temple itself was built by the Priests in a year and six months; upon which all the people were full of joy; and presently they returned thanks, in the first place, to God; and in the next place, for the alacrity the King had showed.

They feasted and celebrated this rebuilding of the Temple: and for the King, he sacrificed three hundred oxen to God, as did the rest every one according to his ability; the number of which sacrifices is not possible to set down, for it cannot be that we should truly relate it.

For at the same time with this Celebration for the work about the Temple fell also the day of the King's Inauguration, which he kept of an old custom as a Festival, and it now coincided with the other, which coincidence of them both made the Festival most illustrious.

-10- The Upper Storey of the Temple, and the lift-cages making it possible to reach, through its ceiling, the Most Holy Place, have as explanation the desire of Herod to carry out a monumental construction by its height, notwithstanding all original Religious Prescriptions, but, also, and more specifically, the will of Herod to be able to penetrate, whenever he wishes, the Most Holy Place in which nobody can ever penetrate.

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The sophisticated device of two (or perhaps several) annex entrances, with subsidiary posterns, with cells adjacent to the Temple and communicating all between them, as well as an ascending corridor going up around the Temple and which allowed access to the Upper Storey without having to go through the Holy Place of the Temple, all these complex installations put in place by the Tyrant, were intended for the free and hidden circulation of Herod who, accompanied by his personal guard made up of foreign or Idumean mercenaries as well as of beautiful eunuchs, could avoid the Staff rooms of the Priests.

Thus Herod could reach, secretly, the top of the Holy of Holies, inside which he could conveniently be let down by means of a cage, in order to enjoy fully, a face to face with the God of the Jews, of whom he was the absolute King.

One may even suggest very plausibly that Herod, in the same way as for example Pagan elites who were very fond of privileged initiations to Eleusinian Mysteries (Pagan secret Religious Ceremonies) was able, in this way, offer the same kind "of secret Initiations", to outstanding Officials of the Imperial Roman World, to whom the King of the Jews wanted to offer an uncommonly reception, and allow them to be "initiated" to the exotic "Judaic Mystery".

This presumption is based on the fact that Herod made install not one cage but two cages "lifting down" into the Most Holy Place, which would imply that he intended to invite, to these secret Initiations to the "Judaic Mysteries", some of his most significant Protectors of the Roman Empire.

In this respect, one can evoke in particular Agrippa, the son-in-law of Augustus, and second Official of the Roman Empire acting as a vice-Emperor.

Indeed, several accounts present Agrippa, at the same time, as a very close friend of Herod who showered him with sumptuous presents, and who was very open and curious, inter alia, of Judaic Rites.

Moreover, Agrippa, who has been the most famous Hydraulic Systems Expert and Developer in Antiquity -(in Rome only : 4 Aqueducts, 130 Water Towers, 500 Fountains, 700 Public basins, Thermae, etc ; and in the Empire, among others : the world famous Aqueduct "Pont du Gard" and the invention of the concave dam with the "the Dam of Glanum")- shared with Herod the same passion for innovative Hydraulic technology (Cf. our detailed Hydraulic Study infra) :

Flavius Josephus : *Jewish Antiquities* : 16 : 2 :

(Herod brings a financial support to Agrippa who goes to a campaign in the Roman Orient) :
Agrippa thought he had received the greatest marks of the King's kindness and humanity towards him possible, since the King had come so long a voyage, and at a very proper season, for his assistance, and had left the government of his

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own dominions, and thought it more worth his while to come to him. Accordingly, Herod was all in all to Agrippa, in the management of the war, and a great assistant in civil affairs, and in giving him counsel as to particular matters. He was also a pleasant companion for him when he relaxed himself, and a joint partaker with him in all things; ill troubles because of his kindness, and in prosperity because of the respect Agrippa had for him.

Philo of Alexandria : Legatio ad Caium (Embassy to Caligula) : XXXVII :294-298 :
Letter of King Agrippa to Caius Caligula :

(In this letter, the grandson of Herod, King Agrippa, thus named in testimony of the friendship of Herod and Marcus Agrippa, recalls to the Emperor Caligula, grandson of this same Marcus Agrippa, the regard that this one had had for the Temple of Jerusalem :)

Marcus Agrippa, your own grandfather on the mother's side, the moment that he arrived in Judaea, when Herod, my grandfather, was King of the country, thought fit to go up from the sea-coast to the metropolis, which was inland. And when he had beheld the Temple of Jerusalem, and the decorations of the Priests, and the piety and holiness of the people of the country, he marvelled, looking upon the whole matter as one of great solemnity and entitled to great respect, and thinking that he had beheld what was too magnificent to be described. And he could talk of nothing else to his companions but the magnificence of the Temple and every thing connected with it. Therefore, every day that he remained in the City, by reason of his friendship for Herod, he went to that sacred place, being delighted with the spectacle of the building, and of the sacrifices, and all the ceremonies connected with the worship of God, and the regularity which was observed, and the dignity and honour paid to the High Priest, and his grandeur when arrayed in his sacred vestments and when about to begin the sacrifices. And after he had adorned the Temple with all the offerings in his power to contribute, and had conferred many benefits on the inhabitants, doing them many important services, and having said to Herod many friendly things, and having been replied to in corresponding terms, he was conducted back again to the sea coast, and to the harbour, and that not by one city only but by the whole country, having branches strewed in his road, and being greatly admired and respected for his piety.

In addition, the passionate friendship that Herod had for Agrippa, had encouraged him, in addition to the Roman Eagle affixed to the Pediment of the Temple, to make, also, engrave the name of the Pagan, "Agrippa", on the Door of the Temple:

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Flavius Josephus : *Jewish War* : I : 21 : 8 :

Herod also rebuilt Anthedon, a city that lay on the coast, and had been demolished in the wars, and named it Agripppeum. Moreover, he had so very great a kindness for his friend Agrippa, that he had his name engraved upon that Gate which he had himself erected in the Temple.

-11- Finally, one will point out that, in Antiquity, to stick to this only period of the History, intoxication or vertigo of Absolute Power, as that which was exerted, for example, by Pharaohs, Oriental Potentates, Emperors of China, or by Roman Emperors, like Caligula, Domitian or Hadrian, led, irresistibly, certain Sovereigns to want, openly or secretly, to place on the same level as a Divinity.

And in this giddiness of Absolute Power, where the borders between Public Life and Private Life could, sometimes, be completely abolished, certain Sovereigns deliberately chose to make of their whole life an uninterrupted Public Ceremony.

But other Sovereigns, for various reasons, preferred, probably, to keep secret, certain episodes of their actions, of their initiations or of their intoxications.

And it is probable that many secrecies of State of this kind have completely escaped from the known History of Peoples.

In fact, this familiarity, desired as intimate as possible with the Gods and the Divinities, constituted, often, at the same time, one of the essential conditions, and one of the intrinsic qualifications of Absolute Power in Antiquity.

Now, in this respect, inter alia, the "King of the Jews", Herod was carnally an Oriental Potentate, with for example, a harem of nine women, various concubines, and a company the beautiful eunuchs.

In complement of this desire of enjoying a quasi-Divine oriental power, Herod had as absolute and revered model, his protector, Master of the World, Creator of the Roman Empire, Augustus, son of God Cesar, and to whom were dedicated Pagan Temples which were built, unceasingly, in all the Possessions of the Empire, so that his Imperial Worship may be settled there, and perpetuated forever.

In this respect, Flavius Josephe reports an anecdote which betrays, somehow, this secret Greco-Roman ambition of Herod :

Flavius Josephus : *Jewish War* : I : 21 : 12 :

(Herod lavishes generousities all over the Roman Empire to forge a reputation there.)

It is true, a man may say, these were favors peculiar to those particular places on which he bestowed his benefits.

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But then what favors he bestowed on the Eleans (Greeks of Rome who organized there Olympic Games) was a donation not only in common to all Greece, but to all the habitable earth, as far as the glory of the Olympic games reached. For when he perceived that they were come to nothing, for want of money, and that the only remains of ancient Greece were in a manner gone, he not only became one of the combatants in that return of the fifth-year games, which in his sailing to Rome he happened to be present at, but he settled upon them revenues of money for perpetuity, insomuch that his own memorial as a combatant there can never fail.

If one can see in this action of Herod a skilful operation of "communication", identical to that which, for example, had made him offer Pagan Sacrifices to the Capitol in company of Augustus and Mark-Anthony, to celebrate his nomination by the Roman Senate as "King of the Jews", one cannot exclude, in this kind of Olympic Games Ceremonies, a certain religious exaltation in such eagerness of Herod to want that his name belongs for ever to the Cultural Memory of Rome, Capital of the World.

-12- To conclude on the installations of the Temple of Jerusalem by Herod on purpose to allow him to descend, at his pleasure, by profaning lift cages, into the Most Holy Place, one should examine the following detail, reported by Flavius Josephus, detail which, not only, contradicts another testimony of the Jewish Historian, but comprises a zone of shade, rather unexplainable, in the field of Archaeology : "

Flavius Josephus : *Jewish Antiquities* : 15 : 11 : 7 :

There was also an occult passage built for the King : it led from Citadel Antonia (overlooking the Temple) to the inner Court of the Temple, at its eastern gate; over which he also erected for himself a tower, that he might have the opportunity of a subterraneous ascent to the Temple, in order to guard against any sedition which might be made by the people against their Kings.

A secret underpass made thus possible for Herod to go directly to the Court of Priests, right in front of the Temple, whereas Flavius Josephus has also declared clearly that the presence of Herod, considered as not-Jew, was absolutely prohibited on this Sacred Court.

In addition, if a popular sedition would burst in the Sanctuary, a fallback tower of refuge for the careful Tyrant had been envisaged, but its precise localization seems, for the moment an archaeological enigma :

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However we can consider, in respect of this refuge tower strangely linked to the Court of Priests, that a quite foreseeable popular sedition which would have burst in the Sacred Spaces, and which would have obliged Herod to take refuge on the spot, could well have been imagined by the cunning Tyrant as a dangerous possibility, if, for example, the Jewish population had discovered that the arrogant King of the Jews had profaned the Temple, and, clandestinely, had introduced himself through sacrilegious ceiling holes and lift cages, into the inviolable Most Holy Place of the Eternal : thence, the security utility for Herod of such astonishing secret underpass.

-13- That Jews, contemporaries of Herod, or all the Rabbis of the continuation of times, endorsed such a desacralization and profanation of the Temple, without never daring to face reality, is terribly obvious :

Middoth Tractate, describes and measures, thoroughly and with a total exegetic deafness, the transformation of the Perfect Cube of Moses into a strange rectangular well, as well as the installation, at the top of this well, of holes in the ceiling with elevators descending from a high Upper Space, whereas this new overall structure contravened radically the Prescriptions of the Eternal, concerning the Most Holy Place, where "descends" directly the Divine Cloud (Shekinah) to meet there the Intercessor of Mankind.

But, also, one can find in the vast Rabbinical Literature, some very rare discussions in search of a satisfactory exegetic explanation, in which one feels, nevertheless, on this extremely significant subject, pierce a fugitive point of concern, which, actually, masks comfortably a deep faintness or a deep despair of the Collective Jewish Unconscious.

And in this Rabbinical Literature having thus accepted and endorsed the accomplished fact of the irremediable Herodian profanation and desacralization, this fugitive faintness is quickly swept away by overstatements of a blinding and idealizing Beatitude, briefly expressed or rather dodged, as for example, in *the Peahen Tractate of the Babylonian* :

Babylonian Talmud : Order Mode : Tractate Peahen : 86a :

Abba Saul said: The Upper Chamber of the Holy of Holies was more stringent than the Holy of Holies : For the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies once a year (for a few minutes), whereas the Upper Chamber of the Holy of Holies was entered only once a se-tenant — others say, twice a se-tenant — others say, once in a Jubilee (50 years)— to see what it required ?

Said Rabbi Joseph (who seems to have been the sole Rabbi ever to have been upset by this sacrilegious and desacralizing Upper Floor) :

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“Shall any man stand up and raise any objection on this question (of the Upper Floor) of the Most Holy Place ?”

(He was answered :)

- For the Most Holy Place it is implicit because it is written (1 Chronicles 28 : 11) :
“Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the Porch (of the Temple), and of the Edifices thereof, and of the treasuries chambers, and of the upper rooms, and of the inner chambers, and of the place of the Ark-cover.”

And it is also written (1 Chronicles: 28 : 19) :

“All this (do I give you) in writing, as The Eternal has made me understand all the works of these plans in writing by His Hand upon me.”

No Rabbi, of any generation, who all are, usually, extremely fastidious and keen on the least discussed details, ever "stood up to raise an objection on this question ", as Rabbi Joseph shyly asked it, even though the Tyrant Herod had died and had been well buried.

And, for example, the French Talmudist, Rachi (1040-1105), among others, will make, on this subject which had concerned and tormented Rabbi Joseph, the following explanatory Answer-Comment :

Rachi : Talmud Commentaries :

The Rooms of the Upper Floor of the (Temple) had thus been marked as a Dedication by the "Hand of God".

Therefore it was a Divine Decision for this particular case, and, consequently, it is not necessary for any one "to stand up and dispute".

However, the Upper Floors of the Temple of Solomon were, only, those of the Adjoining Building which was around the circumference of the Temple, and BELOW its ROOF.

But there has, never, been an Upper Floor on the top of the Most Holy Place, as prescribed by the Eternal to Moses, then drawn by the joined Hands of the Eternal and David, and which was built by Solomon.

Dazzling confirmation of this **sacrilegious desacralization** of the Pagan Architecture of the Herodian Temple, was given by the representation of the Temple which was made on the coins, struck at the time of the last Jewish Revolt, led by Bar Kockba and Rabbi Akiba, -the main Architect of the *Mishnah*- -(cf. detailed Study infra) –

This Revolt against the Romans aimed, in 135, at rebuilding the Temple of Jerusalem which had been destroyed by Emperor Titus in 70 : Obviously, Bar Kockba and Rabbi Akiba, who knew perfectly the Structure of the third Herodian Temple, made a point of fully restoring the Moses-Solomon Sacred Architecture with all its original Mystical Significance :

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Fully testifying to that, inter alias, the many Coins of Bar Kockba where the Ark of the Covenant appears in the interior of the Temple (cf. Maps Gallery).

Now, **all these Coins of Bar Kockba**, do not display obviously the height of the Pagan Upper Floors which had been installed on the top of the Temple by Herod.

Moreover, the verticality so characteristic of the 3rd Herodian Temple is replaced by a deliberately horizontal vision, with, only as a vestige of the Herodian concept, the tetrastyle Porch (probably because its visual memory was still too present 70 years after its destruction, and, anyhow, did not affect the Mystical Jewish Power of the Temple).

And then on this Temple, thus restored by Rabbi Akiba and Bar Kockba, **the Shekinah could have, again, descended on the top of this authentic 4th Temple, at the absolute zenith of the Holy of Holies, to deposit on the Ark of the Covenant its Divine Protection, in order to perpetuate gloriously the solemn and imprescriptible Rite of Celebration of the Moral Pact granted to Israel by YHWH.**

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