THE ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY OF ANCIENT JUDAISM

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INTRODUCTION

Jewish Art and Archaeology have become a topic of some note, particularly in the course of the twentieth century. The figure that dominated discussions of Jewish art was Michael Avi-Yonah of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. His *Oriental Art in Roman Palestine*, which first appeared in English in 1961, was the standard work. Many others worked diligently in the field, but it was Erwin Goodenough at Yale University who gained notoriety by publishing *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* in thirteen volumes from 1953-1968. Recently Jacob Neusner has re-issued a one-volume abridgement of Goodenough with a foreword (Goodenough 1988). Other general studies in Jewish art and archaeology that the student will find useful include Joseph Gutman (1964, 1971), Geoffrey Wigoder (1972), C.C. Vermeule (1981), R. Wischnitzer (1990), and Jacob Neusner (1991). The most comprehensive and useful is still that of Rachel Hachlili (1988).

I JEWISH CITIES AND CITY PLANNING

There is very little analysis of Jewish cities in the Persian and Hellenistic periods, for the simple reason that little is known. A model for a hellenistic, Jewish city might be ancient Marisa, biblical Mareshah, some twenty-six kilometers southwest of Jerusalem. Whether this was a fully Jewish city remains to be seen, but we know from Josephus (*Ant* 14.364; *JW* 1.269) that the city was captured with all of Idumea by John Hyrcanus I (134-104 BCE). Greek and Aramaic inscriptions from Marisa give us many Jewish proper names, so there was a substantial Jewish population.

The wall of the small city is laid out in straight lines as a simple four-sided irregular polygon with square towers. There is no attempt at symmetry (there are five external towers on the west and two on the east). The city street system is not laid out in a hippodamian grid like the hellenistic cities of Asia Minor, or even like Dura Europos in Syria. Rather we see an organic pattern of three north-south streets and two east-west streets. None of the
streets proceed in straight lines nor with the same width across the city from wall to wall. The streets are only roughly at right angles to one another, and some zigzagging occurs at all intersections. On the other hand we do see organization, even imposed geometry, though it is an organic, functional geometry which apparently takes into consideration the topography.

A lower city extends 400 to 500 m from the walled city, but nothing is known of its plan.

With the arrival of the Romans, traditionally dated from Pompey's march into Jerusalem in 63 BCE, city planning in ancient Palestine takes on a decidedly Roman appearance. There is much less regard for topography, and a rigid Hippodamian grid supplants the old, organic grid. The architectural markers of traditional Roman culture are also to be found everywhere: colonnaded streets, extensive waterworks such as aqueducts and pools, porticoes, hippodromes, amphitheatres, theaters, gymnasia, baths, and so forth.

**A Jerusalem**

In the case of Jerusalem we can discern little of Hasmonean city planning. We know from Josephus and the intertestamental literature that the Hasmoneans placed the seat of their government in the Upper City west of the Temple Mount. They joined the two quarters of the city with a monumental bridge, one arch of which survives today (Wilson's Arch). On the other hand we can detect Herodian city-planning in the form of three patterns: (1) The first is a hippodamian grid made up of blocks of houses about 300 by 300 Greek feet (90 by 90 meters) around the temple mount and oriented with the western wall of the Temple Mount. (2) A second hippodamian grid is to be found around Herod's palace on the western hill and oriented on Herod's palace. It is formed on blocks of houses about 250 by 300 Greek feet (75 by 90 meters). (3) A third pattern is formed of mainly straight, stepped streets defined more by the steep terrain south and west of the Temple Mount than by geometry or grid. These streets lead down from the second grid into the Tyropoeon Valley and the Hinnom Valley. (Wilson 1978: 62) These three grids appear to function more or less as originally constructed until the Arab conquest early in the seventh century. As time unfolds the streets became progressively narrower as buildings encroached on either side of broad, Roman period streets. Jerusalem changed its plan over time. A large quarter was added to Jerusalem in the north-west before the late fifth century. It is clear from the Madaba mosaic map of the sixth century CE that two