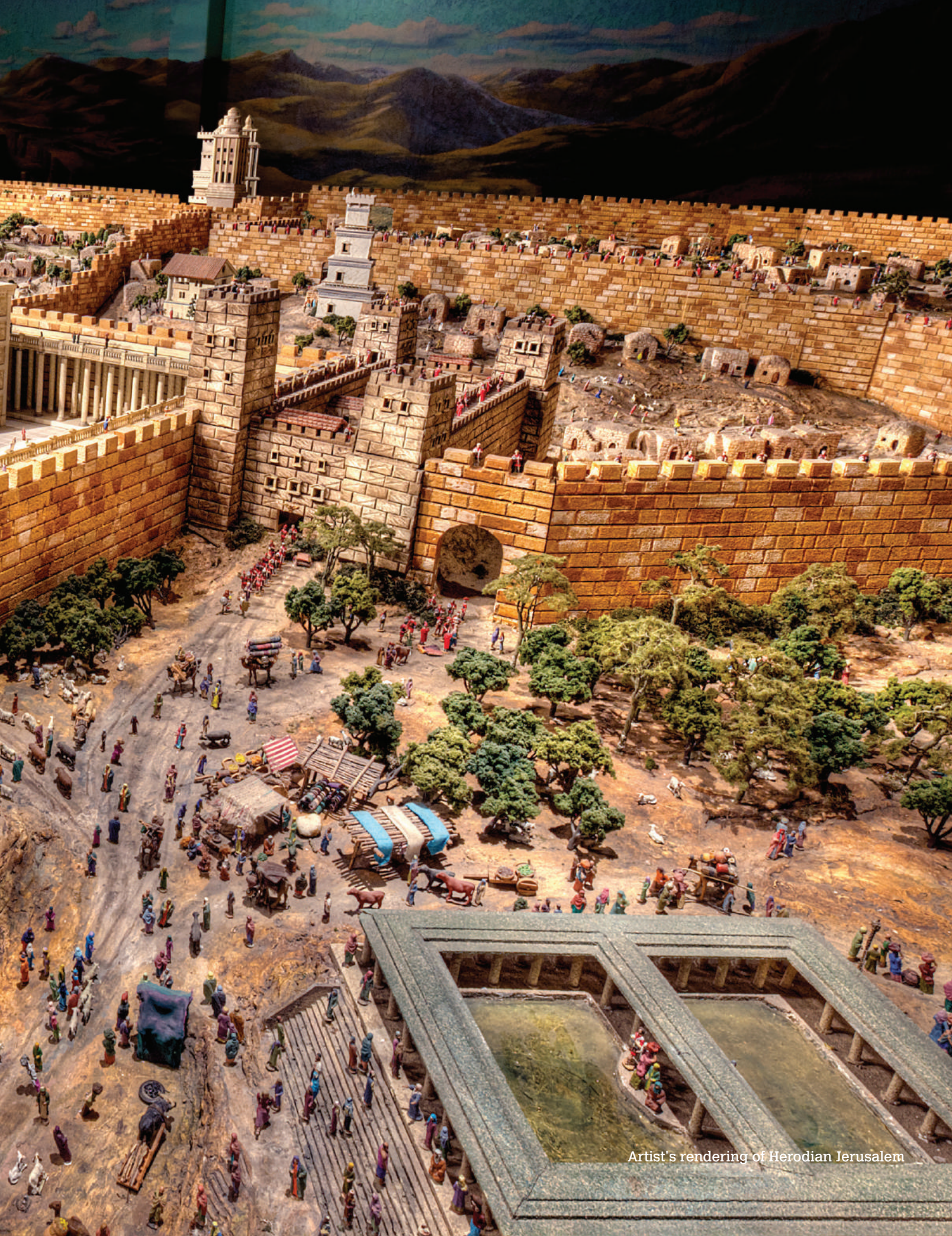


JERUSALEM

By Lawrence H. Schiffman

after the

MACCABEAN REVOLT



Artist's rendering of Herodian Jerusalem



T

he period following the Maccabean Revolt ushered in tremendous expansion in the city of Yerushalayim and even on the *Har Habayis* (Temple Mount). Yerushalayim expanded westward to include the area known as the Upper City and a combination of enlargement and refurbishing of the enclosure of the *Har Habayis* resulted as well. As a result, Yerushalayim in this period once again became a prosperous and beautiful city. But to understand these important developments, it is necessary first to know what happened in the aftermath of the re-conquest of the city and *Beis Hamikdash* under Yehudah the Maccabee in the revolt of 168-164 BCE.

CHASHMONAIM—THE HASMONEAN DYNASTY

Contrary to what many think, the miraculous conquest and purification of the *Beis Hamikdash* on the 25th of Kislev in 164 BCE was not the end of the Chanukah story. The enemy of the Jews, the *Yevanim* (“Greeks”), were the Hellenistic rulers of Syria known as the Seleucids. (This dynasty was named for Seleucus, one of the generals of Alexander the Great.) Through clever diplomacy and playing on the inner politics of the Jewish people, which still included some pro-Hellenistic elements that supported Greek culture, the Seleucids managed to dislodge Yehudah and his supporters from the *Beis Hamikdash*. Then they installed Yaqim (Alcimus), a Hellenist as *kohen gadol*. Yehudah and his men were left again to fight a war of resistance from

fortresses in the Judean Hills. After Yehudah’s death on the battlefield, he was succeeded by his brother Yonasan who was the commander of about 10,000 troops. When an internal conflict developed in Syria over who would rule (some things never change!), Yonasan wisely sided with the successful of the two pretenders to the throne and in return was granted official recognition as the ruler of Judea. He was then accepted by the people as ruler and *kohen gadol*. It is he who effectively established the dynasty of the *Chashmonaim* (Hasmoneans) that lasted from 152 BCE through the Roman conquest of Eretz Yisrael in 63 BCE. After his death, his brother Shimon ruled (142-135 BCE) and successfully took a major step towards independence when he expelled the troops occupying the Akra, the Seleucid fortress recently discovered and excavated south of the Temple Mount. From a legal point of view, this meant that the Hasmonean state was now fully independent.

Yerushalayim was now the capital of the Hasmonean state, which quickly began to conquer surrounding territories, a process that continued under the later rulers, Yochanan Kohen Gadol (John Hyrcanus, 134-104 BCE) and Yannai Hamelech (Alexander Janneus, 103-76 BCE). By the time of Yannai, the *Chashmonai* rulers were called kings, as can be seen on their coins. Along with this process of geographic expansion came the extirpation of idolatry and tremendous economic prosperity of the country. We should add that the coins of this period avoid human images and are decorated with various Jewish traditional symbols.

EXPANSION OF YERUSHALAYIM

Soon after the accession of Yonasan, the city of Yerushalayim began to grow. Over the course of the Hasmonean period it went from not much more than 5,000 residents to over 30,000. This increase may have begun somewhat earlier. Already before the Maccabean Revolt, the population had begun to expand westward from the area of Ir David (City of David), which had constituted the entire city during the time of Ezra and Nechemiah. Tremendous impetus was given to this process by the *Chashmonaim* when they began to rebuild the city walls that had surrounded the city in the time of the first *Beis Hamikdash*. In the last years before the *Churban*, the Upper City on the Western Hill had been fully occupied. Much of the line of the walls from the period of *Bayis Rishon* (before the Babylonian conquest and destruction of the Temple) could still be seen above ground. As the wall was being rebuilt, it constituted the effective boundary within which the city would grow in Hasmonean times. (Later it would expand further toward the north.) This wall, studded with defensive towers, is the one termed by Josephus as the Old (or First) Wall, one of three that the Romans would have to penetrate to take the *Har Habayis* in 70 CE. That this wall was rebuilt by the *Chashmonaim* is supported both by archaeological evidence and also by the apocryphal book of *1 Maccabees* (10:10-11, 13:10). There we learn that the project was begun by Yonasan and concluded by Shimon. Because the wall was rebuilt over time, the architectural style is not uniform. Apparently, sections were built in accord with defensive needs, leaving areas defended by natural features for last.

The expansion of the city at this time took place on the Western Hill, more or less today's Jewish Quarter in the Old City. This area had been settled during the time of the first *Beis Hamikdash*, but for the most part remained abandoned since the destruction of the *Bayis Rishon*. The new construction was very much in the style of Hellenistic architecture, as can be learned both by archaeological excavations and from the historian Josephus. A few tombs from this era also display Hellenistic design. The upper city included the City Council building, a gymnasium, and the Hasmonean palace. This building has not been unearthed, but a sense of what must have been its grandeur can be gained from study of the magnificent Hasmonean palaces excavated at Yericho. Unfortunately, details of the city in this period were obliterated by the extensive building activity that took place under the rule of Hordos (Herod, 38-4 BCE).



Now that the year is drawing to a close, it is important to act quickly and grab whatever charitable deductions are available, before December 31st. The OJC Certificate Program simplifies this task and makes it possible to squeeze more deductions into that rapidly shrinking window of opportunity.

- *Save time, money and energy*
- *Simplify audit preparation*
- *One receipt for all donations*
- *Conform to all tax regulations*
- *Keep your funds and information secure*
- *Eliminate paperwork*



Charitable Giving - Simple and Convenient!
Order Certificates in any denomination

DON'T DELAY! Open an OJC account today!
www.ojcfund.org

The
OJC
FUND
Your charitable tax deductions simplified!

1303 53rd St. #303,
Brooklyn, NY 11219
718-599-1400
Fax: 718-599-1444
admin@ojcfund.org



Artist's view of Jerusalem, 1729

HAR HABAYIS AND THE BEIS HAMIKDASH

Although we always speak of two Temples, *Bayis Rishon*, built by Shlomo Hamelech, and *Bayis Sheini*, built after Koresh (Cyrus the Great) allowed Jews from the Babylonian exile to return to Eretz Yisrael, *Bayis Sheini* went through various stages. When the Temple was rebuilt in the time of Chaggai, Zechariah and Malachi, the last of the *Nevi'im*, it was a small structure, and those who remembered the First Temple cried when they saw its foundations being laid (Ezra 3:12, cf. Chaggai 2:3). Much later, starting in 18 BCE, Hordos, the “half Jewish” (on his father’s side) Roman client King of Judea, built a magnificent structure that became one of the wonders of the ancient world. This Temple is described in great detail by Josephus in the context of his narration of the destruction of Yerushalayim by the Romans.

But actually, we now know that a much larger structure than that erected by the returnees from *Galus Bavel* existed way before Hordos began his massive building project. Archaeological evidence for this earlier, Hasmonean “Second Temple” architecture has no doubt been seen by many of our readers. However, depending on the knowledge of their tourist guides, they may or may not have realized it. Many have taken the tour of the tunnels that run from the Kotel northward, along the outer wall of the *Har Habayis* as it was expanded by Hordos. When walking northward through the tunnels, one comes to a point when the Herodian period pavement ends and we are walking on a plastic gangway with water flowing below.

The excavators have laid bare the ancient water tunnel that provided water for the *Beis Hamikdash* in the Hasmonean period. This water system originated south of Beit Lechem and ran for a great distance, using the sloping hills to move the water by gravity. It met the *Beis Hamikdash* at its northwest corner. However, when Herod expanded the *Har Habayis* on the north and south,

this water source was cut and covered with pavement similar to the others. This is the point where the *Har Habayis* ended in Hasmonean times. North of it was a fortress called the Baris (Hebrew Birah) with which the Maccabean kings protected the Temple. It may also have served as a royal residence. All of this area was included by Hordos in his northern expansion of the *Har Habayis*. While it is not too safe to visit there today on foot, on the eastern side of the *Har Habayis*, towards the south, not far from the southeast corner, one can see a clear seam separating the Hasmonean-period stonework from the area in which Herodian builders extended the Temple Mount to the south. Much of this addition is the area known as Solomon’s Stables, where the Arabs have built a massive underground mosque. The Mishnah (*Middos* 2:3) records that the “kings of Greece,” clearly the Seleucids, made 13 openings in the *soreg*, a fence surrounding the Temple enclosure on the *Har Habayis*. *1 Maccabees* (9:54) assigns responsibility to Alcimus, and scholars have explained that he sought to destroy the boundary on which were posted the signs indicating that from here on in non-Jews were not allowed to go further. The repairs mentioned in the Mishnah were certainly done by the *Chashmonaim*, who must have been responsible for the expanded *Har Habayis* described in the Mishnah.

The reason that this is so significant is because this second, Hasmonean *Beis Hamikdash* that existed before Hordos’ massive expansion and reconstruction is the one that matches the description of the *Beis Hamikdash* in *Maseches Middos*. This is the well-known description of the *Har Habayis* of 500x500 *amos* (cubits, each approximately 1.5 ft.). Innumerable scholars have tried to reconcile this Mishnaic description with that provided by Josephus for the Herodian Temple. This is all mistaken. Both descriptions are correct, but they describe different stages in the architecture of the *Beis Hamikdash*. So one who wants to

ALEM.



know what the Temple looked like in the time of the Hasmonean Empire needs only to look at the descriptions of the Mishnah. The beautiful model of Jerusalem that is now displayed at the Shrine of the Book, the Israel Museum building dedicated to the Dead Sea Scrolls, represents the city and Temple as described by Josephus, as it stood in the time of Hordos and later.

The period of the *Chashmonai* rulers was central to Jewish history. Sadly, the decline of this dynasty paved the way for the Roman takeover of Eretz Yisrael in 63 BCE and, in turn, to *Churban Bayis Sheini* in 70 CE. But we need to remember that these were the years of the *zugos*, the pairs of *Tannaim* listed in *Pirkei Avos*. These sages gathered and transmitted our *mesorah* and passed it on to the great teachers Hillel and Shammai and their students. This is also the period in which we learn so much from *Chazal*, Josephus

and the Dead Sea Scrolls about the competing sectarian groups. Hasmonean Yerushalayim served as the backdrop for the famous disputes between the *Perushim* and *Tzedukim*, and it was the city from which the Dead Sea sectarians removed themselves, unable to live in the “real world” of Judea’s capital. These are the years for which we have tried here, despite the meager evidence, to get a picture of Yerushalayim and the *Beis Hamikdash* and, in so doing, to fill in another link in the chain of our everlasting relationship to Yerushalayim and Eretz Yisrael. ●

Lawrence H. Schiffman is the Judge Abraham Lieberman Professor of Hebrew and Judaic Studies and Director of the Global Network for Advanced Research in Jewish Studies at New York University.



“A dream trip to India, memories for a lifetime”

Jewish Heritage and the Golden Triangle

A fascinating journey into the land of the palaces and its rich Jewish history

Group tours

Nov 13 – Nov 29, 2016
Sold out

Jan 15 – Jan 31, 2017
Sold out

Feb 19 – March 07, 2017
limited seats available

**Professional Tour leaders,
Dr. Rona and Dr. Aaron
Michelson**

- 5* hotels (where available)
- Exotic sites
- Rich itinerary
- Glatt kosher



You just dream it
**We will
make
it happen**



indiakoshertravel.com
Israel: 972-3-6708285 USA: 1 347 321 9983
moshe@indiakoshertravel.com