The Beginnings of Christianity

a collection of articles

edited by

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A New/Old Reading of the "Lithos Epi Lithon" Prophecy and the Role of the Temple Mount in the Jesus Movement

YARON Z. ELIAV

INTRODUCTION

Jerusalem and its sanctuary rank high in the writings that were eventually (some time in the second–third centuries) compiled as the New Testament. In fact, they play a conspicuous part in its narrative that is unmatched by any other city or holy place. Salient milestones in Jesus' life came about at the Temple. It was there that Simon prophesied the newborn Jesus' eventual anointment, when the family came to fulfill the required birth sacrifices and redemption of the first-born ceremony. And it was there that the young Jesus rose to prominence among the Torah students. Some traditions similarly place his experience with Satan on the pinnacle of the Temple.\(^1\) Most significantly of all, Jesus' last journey, the chain of events that culminated his life — the last supper, trial, crucifixion, and resurrection — transpired entirely in Jerusalem.

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The literature not included in the Christian canon follows similar tendencies, retaining the paramount standing of Jerusalem and the Temple in the stories of the New Testament. A clear example of this trend may be found in a widely read second-century text that is now known as the Protoevangelium of James, which relates the story of Mary's childhood against the backdrop of the Temple in Jerusalem. According to this composition, Mary, the mother of Jesus, was brought to the Temple as a child of three and grew up among the priests. Other works from the same time also locate important events in Jesus' life in Jerusalem, thus confirming the city's eminence in the eyes of early Christian readers. For example, the landscape of an incident detailed by the Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 840, in which Jesus disputes with a high priest, features the Temple and the halakhic issues associated with it as the core of the argument. Similarly, the Acts of Thomas, an apocryphal Syriac book of the early third century whose Greek translation provides the most ancient extant version, echoes a more elaborate tradition than the one found in Luke about the experiences of the child Jesus in the Temple, maintaining that the Savior participated in offering sacrifices.

2 Prot. Jas. 1–10 (É. de Strycker, La forme la plus ancienne du Protévangile de Jacques [Subsidia hagiographica, 33], Brussels 1961, pp. 64–86). For the Jewish characteristics in this work, alongside its ignorance of Palestine's geography, see H.R. Smid, Proteuangelium Jacobi: A Commentary, Assen 1965, pp. 20–22. Later works also preserve the motif of Mary's life in the Temple; see, e.g., Quaestiones Bartholomaei 2:15 (A. Wilmart and E. Tisserant, "Fragments grecs et latins de l'Évangile de Barthélemy," RB, 10 [1910], p. 324).


4 Acts Thom. 79 (M. Bonnet, Acta Apostolarum Apocrypha, II, 2, Hildesheim 1959, p. 194 lines 9–10). Both the Greek version, using the familiar combination with the verb προσφέρω (to offer) and the object δῶρον (gift/offering to deities), and the Syriac, ʾazal leheikhalah veqarav qorbanah (went to the sanctuary and offered a sacrifice; W. Wright, Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles [Syriac version], I, London 1871, p. 248), are quite clear as to the nature of this deed. The parallels from the New Testament that Drijvers suggests for this passage should therefore be rejected, since both lack the essence of the act — Jesus offering sacrifice; see H.J.W. Drijvers, "The Acts of Thomas," W. Schneemelcher (and E. Hennecke) (eds.), New
Affinity for the Temple among the early followers of Jesus should be seen as the immediate context for his priestly image in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Despite its criticism of the existing Temple system and its consequent emphasis on the heavenly Jerusalem, it depicts Jesus as the high priest who enters the Holy of Holies, atones for the people, and defies the traditional priesthood.5 In the same vein, the Letter of Abgar, a Syriac work apparently from the third century — fragments of which were preserved by Eusebius — describes Jesus as a savior who “has appeared in the region of Jerusalem.”6 Dating from approximately the same time, the Gnostic Apocalypse of Peter uses the Temple as the appropriate backdrop for the visions it depicts, even though this text generally ignores the geographical landscape of Palestine, as do most works of that sort.7

When we take into account their prestige in Second Temple Jewish civilization — of which the disciples of Jesus and even Paul were certainly an integral part — it seems only natural that the city and Temple would also assume a significant share in the theology that pervades the writings of the Jesus movement. Attitudes toward sacrifice, approaches to spirituality, and the question of what should be the focus of religious life — whether on a national or a wider basis — were all frequently linked to Jerusalem and the gamut of images associated with it.8 It should come as no surprise, then, that various portions of the traditions that were gathered in the New Testament

8 It was Sanders who stressed the need to investigate the New Testament’s attitude to the Temple in light of the Jewish attitudes of that time; see E.P. Sanders, Jesus and Judaism, Philadelphia 1985, pp. 61–90. However, he emphasizes mainly the unfavorable aspect of these notions; see also C.A. Evans, “Opposition to the Temple: Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” J.A. Charlesworth (ed.), Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls, New York 1992, pp. 235–353; Walker, Jesus and the Holy City, pp. 269–326.
draw upon images of the Temple and Jerusalem, whether to articulate the notion of "Heavenly Jerusalem" or, on occasion, as a label for the actual community of the Jesus movement. Corresponding approaches can be found in the conceptual frameworks of various other branches of Second Temple Judaism: in Qumran, the Hellenistic Diaspora such as the writings of Philo, and others.

After the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, early Christian authors took pains to work this traumatic event into their developing Christology. Modern scholars devoted lengthy studies to clarify the ideas that clustered around the city and Temple in these texts and to trace their origin. Some attempt to represent early Christian attitudes as clear-cut, but this could hardly be the case. On the one hand, members of the Jesus movement refer


to Jerusalem as the "Holy City" and portray the Temple as the house of Jesus' father. According to their narrative, even Jesus' most drastic actions in the sanctuary — chasing away the moneychangers and overturning their tables — were not directed against the Temple itself but were rather done on its behalf. Jesus, as the verse from Isaiah (56:7) found in this passage attests, aspired to restore the Temple to its original purpose as a house of worship.

On the other hand, a widespread convention stages Jesus as demolisher of the Temple, and the sources also voice his explicit demand that his followers leave the city and abandon all that it represents. Other segments in what came to be the New Testament that are usually associated with the stance of Paul and Luke articulate similar tendencies, but only to a certain degree. Although many scholars view their approaches — intended for Gentiles — as a product of anti-Temple sentiment, they are actually not as clear-cut as they might seem. Scholars like Davies, followed by Townsend in a detailed article, have claimed that Paul's own attitude toward the Temple before the destruction was rather positive. In their view, negative tones first appear in post-destruction texts attributed to Paul. A similarly mixed picture, if with different emphases, is found in the position of the

12 Matt. 4:5, 27:53. The expression is absent from the other synoptics. The importance of this phrase is demonstrated by Eusebius' efforts to avoid it; see P.W.L. Walker, Holy City Holy Places? Oxford 1990, pp. 364–365; Rev. 11:2; 21:2, 10; 22:19; John 2:16.

13 Mark 11:15–17, and its parallels Matt. 21:12–13; Luke 19:45–46; it also appears in John 2:14–16, although in a different phase in the sequence of events and lacking the verse from Isaiah.


early so-called Judeo-Christians toward the Temple, as seen in Luke and in the Book of Acts. Slowly but surely, scholars cast serious doubts on the estimation of the Tübingen School, which argued that Christianity had been ideologically opposed to the Temple even in its nascent stages. Today, even texts that were considered undeniably antagonistic toward this institution are no longer taken as unambiguous.

The haziness surrounding Jerusalem and its Temple has bewildered modern scholars, just as it did Christian writers in antiquity. While some scholars have attempted to reconcile the contradictory undertones in the New Testament attitudes toward Jerusalem, others have felt compelled to admit that these texts do not communicate a uniform approach to the city and the Temple. Some of the latter have explained this multifariousness as due to historical circumstances that led to diverse perceptions on this matter among early Christian groups, while others have emphasized the shifting religious challenges (especially the delay in the *parousia*, the "second coming" of Jesus) and the need to adapt ideology to reality; a third set of scholarly views has reduced the problem to literary considerations that confronted the editors of the texts. Nibley’s programmatic essay reflected


18 Highlighting the differences in approach toward Jerusalem and the Temple among the various groups within early Christianity are O. Cullmann, *Der johanneische Kreis: Sein Platz im Späjudentum in der Jüngerschaft Jesu und im Urchristentum*, Tübingen 1975, pp. 43ff.; and M. Hengel, *Zur urchristlichen Geschichtsschreibung*, Stuttgart 1984, pp. 63–70. Hans Conzelmann expressed the view that the early Christians’ disappointment at the delay in the *parousia* caused their
the scholarly ambivalence when it labeled the early Christians’ attitude to
the Temple as “envy,” a designation embracing both love and hatred.19

And what of the Temple Mount? Can this feature be detected in traditions
that emanated from the early followers of Jesus, either as a physical
component or a conceptual entity? At first glance the answer seems
negative. New Testament texts never allude to the word combination
“Temple” and “Mount.” The term “Mount Zion,” absent from the works of
Josephus, appears only rarely in the New Testament as well; the Gospels do
not mention it even once. The fact that mountains do turn up in these texts,
some of them quite intrusively — Mount Sinai, Mount Gerizim, and the
anonymous mountain that is the site of the Sermon on the Mount —
underscores the absence of the Temple Mount even further.20 Apparently,
when it comes to Jerusalem, the city and the Temple monopolize the entire
literary spectrum of early Christian writers, and even if they mention
mountains from time to time they relegate them to the margins.

The dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman in the Gospel of
John illustrates this conclusion.21 In order to contrast the Samaritans’ venue
of worship with that of the Jews, the passage situates “this mountain” of the
Samaritans on the one end against Jewish Jerusalem on the other as two
competing figures. Such a literary arrangement almost requires contrasting
one topographical elevation with another — mountain against mountain. But
the actual formulation of this pericope corresponds to Jewish consciousness,
as perceived by the writer. Indeed such an equation, which considers

ideological posture toward the city/Temple; see H. Conzelmann, Die Mitte der Zeit:
Studien zur Theologie des Lukas (BHT, 17), Tübingen 1964, pp. 66–71. Finally, for
a literary approach to this question, see G. Schneider, Die Apostelgeschichte, I
(HTKNI, 5), Freiburg 1980, pp. 452ff.

20 On mountains in the New Testament see the summary in H. Balz and G. Schneider
533–534.
21 John 4:7–42; see also Ps.-Clem. Recognitiones 1,57:1 (B. Rehm, Die
Pseudoklementinen, II: Rekognitionen in Rufins Übersetzung [GCS, 51] Berlin
1965, p. 40).
Jerusalem to be the place (topos) in which God is worshiped, fits well with
the notions found in Josephus and other Second Temple Jewish writers.
Jerusalem in this context functions as the exclusive location of God’s
worship. The Temple by all means retains the city’s essence, but the
mountain on which it stands lacks a task or a status within this framework.

A similar conclusion can be drawn when examining the Temple Mount
not as a topographic feature — that is, a mountain — but as an architectonic
unit that encompasses the huge enclosed precinct around the Temple (fig.
1:D). The question is whether this space on its own holds any particular value
in the traditions of the Jesus movement. Discussing the Greek term hieron,
the preferred locution used by the authors of these writings to refer to the
Temple surroundings, may shed light on this issue. Vincent correctly points
out that, in contrast to Josephus, the authors of the Gospels and the Book of
Acts did not feel obliged to describe the Temple structure systematically. His
subsequent assertion, however, that naos (ναός) in the books encompassed in the New Testament means the Temple (fig. 1:A) and hieron (ἱερόν) stands for the whole complex, including the courts and the outer platform (fig. 1:C+D) as well as the surrounding porticoes, fails to notice the gist of this designation. As noted in the various lexicons, the connotation of hieron in the New Testament is equivocal. Since most of the activities of Jesus and his disciples occurred on the open-air platform of the Herodian complex surrounding the Temple, hieron often denotes these areas. This definition, however, extends the original purport of the term.

In its basic meaning, still apparent in some New Testament passages, hieron signified only the structure of the Temple building and its immediate inner courts (A–C in fig. 1). For example, in the famous scene in which Jesus overturns the moneychangers’ counters, he applies the biblical verse “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations” (Isa. 56:7) to the hieron. Likewise, the author details the scene in which Jesus’ parents present him as a first-born son and offer a sacrifice as having taken place in the hieron. Similarly, Paul propels the Nazirites to fulfill their vows and offer their sacrifice in the hieron. And, finally, the Epistle to the Corinthians depicts the priestly vocation as taking place in the hieron.

All these sources place the New Testament hieron within the semantic field of other Second Temple Jewish writings. In the vocabulary of that era, the word simply referred to the Temple, which at the time included the central building (known as the heikhal or naos; fig. 1:A) and its inner courts (the Hebrew ‘azarot; fig. 1:B–C). The Hebrew equivalent of this term was the miqdash. Extending this basic meaning, since people of that time considered the compound around the Temple (fig. 1:D) to be part of the sanctuary, they applied the term hieron to those areas as well. It is thus clear that the architectonic structures that encircled the Temple, like the topographic elevation on which the sanctuary stood, had no particular

value in and of themselves in the New Testament; they were simply regarded as part of the Temple.

But only at first glance does this appear to be the situation. In the following, I propose to demonstrate that various traditions incorporated into the New Testament contain the seeds of the “Temple Mount” image as an independent spatial entity, even if there is no explicit use of this collocation. I also intend to show that this space, the surrounding precinct of the Temple (fig. 1:D) occupied a place in the consciousness of the early followers of Jesus before the destruction of the Temple and in the few generations thereafter, not merely as an adjunct, subordinate constituent of the Temple but as an independent entity. In dealing with the following passages, one must remember that in their current form they are dated to the generations following the Temple’s destruction, when these texts took on their final literary shape, but much of the material included in them originally belonged to the collection of traditions composed by the school of Jesus’ disciples and followers during the decades that preceded the destruction. For our purposes, it does not matter whether a particular idea came from Jesus himself or was developed by those who followed him.

SOME PROPHECIES OF DESTRUCTION AND THEIR SPATIAL ORGANIZATION

The synoptic Gospels transmit the famous saying attributed to Jesus about “stone upon a stone” in three similar versions. In Mark, who, as suggested below (n. 29), presents the earliest available adaptation, it reads as follows:

1  a — And as he came out of the Temple (hieron)
    b — one of his disciples said to him “Look, teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!”

2  a — And Jesus said to him “Do you see these great buildings?
    b — there will not be left here a stone upon a stone that will not be thrown down.”

24 Mark 13:1–2 — 1a — καὶ ἐκπορευομένου αὐτοῦ ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ; 1b — λέγει αὐτῷ εἰς τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ διδάσκαλε ἵδε ποταποί λίθοι καὶ ποταποὶ σιχόδομοι; 2a —
Adopting a prophetic tone, all three Gospels configure this anecdotal pericope as a harsh prediction of the future. Chronologically they locate it during Jesus’ last journey to Jerusalem, after his austere denigration of the “scribes and Pharisees” and before the apocalyptic foretelling (known as the “Little Apocalypse”) on the Mount of Olives. Scholars agree, however, that originally it was not an integral part of this literary texture. They see this two-verse pericope as a homogeneous, independent segment, similar in style and shape to the stand-alone sayings and short tales in the Gospel according to Thomas or to the literary fragments customarily known as Q (even though this particular portion belongs to none of these collections), which the authors of the Gospels integrated only later into their sequence.25

What, then, is the essence of this literary unit? What is the issue it endeavours to communicate? Nineteenth-century scholars decoded the stones and buildings encountered by Jesus and his entourage against the background of Josephus’ depiction of the marvellous gigantic stones of the Herodian Temple (Ant. 15.392). The conventional view since then, espoused in every commentary and study I have found, recognizes the topic at hand as the destruction of the Temple.26 Whether actually spoken by the historical

καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἔτεψεν αὐτῷ βλέπεις ταύτας τὰς μεγάλας οἰκοδομάς; 2b — οὐ μὴ ἀφεθῇ ὁ δὲ λίθος ἐπὶ λίθον ὡς οὐ μὴ καταλύθη and the synoptic parallels in Matt. 24:1–2; Luke 21:5–6. Translations here and throughout this chapter are based, with slight changes, on the second edition of the Revised Standard Version (RSV).

25 For bibliography and summary of this question, already discussed in many studies, see Gaston, No Stone (n. 10 above), pp. 10–11. Differences in form, structure, and content also dissociate the stone-upon-stone passage from the adjoining little apocalypse passage — the place, characters, and subjects in the two passages are all different. In addition, in the Apocryphal parallel to this chapter, the Apoc. Pet., preserved in Ethiopic, the story of the Mount of Olives appears in and of itself, and the stone-upon-stone prophecy is missing. See D.D. Buchholz, Your Eyes Will Be Opened: A Study of the Greek (Ethiopic) Apocalypse of Peter (SBL, DS, 97), Atlanta 1988, p. 162.

Jesus \textit{(ipsissima verba)} or not, scholars understand this passage to represent an approach (some say ideology) resistant in one way or another to the Temple, either anticipating its destruction or looking back in subsequent years to rationalize it.

But is this really the case? The late-third- and fourth-century Palestinian church father Eusebius, who interprets the stone-upon-stone according to the "official" view of his time as relating to the Temple and its destruction, nevertheless knows of "persons who interpret the passage differently."\footnote{Eusebius, \textit{Theoph.}, 4, end of chap. 18 (Lee edition, no page numbers); trans. S. Lee, \textit{Eusebius Bishop of Caesarea on the Theophania}, London 1843, p. 248.} What was this different interpretation?

The three synoptic versions agree that Jesus uttered this "prophecy" when he departed from the Temple. All three accounts render the content, both diction and prose, in virtually identical wording. Yet careful analysis of the literary structure, language, and linguistic nuances of this piece, which allows for a more precise understanding of its content, reveals some fundamental differences among the various versions, especially concerning its actual subject matter.

The passage clearly divides into two parts. The first (v. 1) conveys the disciple's remark, while the second (v. 2) offers Jesus' response. The first part breaks down further into two sections: 1a sets the stage for the episode by establishing its exact location — when the group was leaving the Temple, that is, at or near one of the gates; 1b quotes the disciple's exclamation, which arose from his encounter with the physical surroundings — the spectacular stones and buildings. The correlation between these two sections (1a and 1b) registers clearly, and they are meant to provide both the course and rhythm on which the scene evolves. As they were leaving the Temple, Jesus and his disciples came across some architectural structures that drew

\footnote{C.A. Evans, "Predictions of the Destruction of the Herodian Temple in the Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Scrolls, and Related Texts," \textit{JSP}, 10 (1992), pp. 89–91. Cf. the scholars brought together in G.R. Beasley-Murray, \textit{A Commentary on Mark Thirteen}, London 1957, p. 23, who deny the authenticity of these verses but nevertheless agree that it was produced in regard to the Temple. This understanding cuts across the board in New Testament scholarship; I encountered no one who denies it.}
their attention and evoked the disciple’s astonishment, and this in turn instigated Jesus’ reaction. His reply is also divided into two sections: 2a repeats the disciple’s remark, this time from the mouth of the master Jesus, in order to focus and highlight the topic; 2b delivers the punch-line of the anecdote in the form of a prediction or prophecy.

As already mentioned, all three versions of this passage share many aspects. They draw on the same vocabulary — nouns, verbs, prepositions, and negations — and function within a similar broader literary context. The internal structure, in which a disciple voices a rhetorical fascination with the objects in front of him and Jesus responds, is unvaried as well.

But significant differences separate the versions as well. One major change involves the identification of the structures that serve as the target of oracular wrath. At what stones and buildings was the prophecy directed? While they are not explicitly identified in Mark’s rendering, either in the disciple’s avowal (1b) or in either section of Jesus’ reply (2a–b), in the other two synoptic accounts additional wording clearly pinpoints these elements. In Matthew the disciple’s observations do not include any reference to stones, but the buildings are labelled “of the Temple (tou hierou).” The author of Luke also offers supplementary clarification, which, unlike Matthew, does mention the stones in the disciples’ statement (21:5) but introduces them as those “adorning” the Temple.

The discrepancy in the portrayal of the structures among the three versions suggests that, according to Mark, Jesus’ prediction of destruction may not have been intended for the Temple. If the stones and buildings really belonged to the Temple, this fact would be the central point of the prophecy. However, unlike Matthew and Luke, whose authors clearly saw a need to tie the buildings and stones to the Temple, the absence of such articulation in Mark is striking.

Additional confirmation for such an understanding of Mark derives from the realistic setting embodied in this segment. The passage commences with the seemingly unimportant detail that the dialogue between Jesus and his disciples that led to the prophecy occurred as they were leaving the hieron.

28 So claims R. Bultmann, Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition, Göttingen 1957³, p. 36.
In such a short, scrupulously recounted anecdote, the meticulous form of which is evident from its tight structure, I take this detail as a pointer toward the scenery that unfolded before the group. When people depart from a place, they are facing the outside. In such a context, hieron, the place of departure, would befit its basic, primary meaning, namely, the structure of the Temple and its inner courts (fig. 1:A–C). Otherwise, if, for example, it were to refer to the whole compound (fig. 1:D), the appearance of huge stones and magnificent buildings as the group retired from the site would make no sense; what beautiful buildings and huge stones would the group encounter when departing from the Herodian temenos? But if the group exited the Temple (probably through 1:C), they were struck by the magnificent landscape of the Herodian compound (1:D), which indeed included monumental buildings and huge stones. If they had wished to face the Temple, they would have had to turn around and look back at it. A maneuver of that sort would render the pericope detailing their departure from the Temple superfluous.

I therefore propose that in this literary design the exclamation, “what wonderful stones and buildings!” targets not the sanctuary itself but rather the structures outside the Temple, as does Jesus’ prophecy. This setting defines the topic of the passage in Mark, which is arguably the earliest adaptation of this tradition,29 as the surroundings of the Temple. The area

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29 Determining the chronological order among synoptic passages of the Gospels has been a complicated task. Although Mark is generally considered to have preceded the other two, this is not definitive for individual passages, especially where quotations attributed to Jesus are involved. For a bibliography on this issue, see F. Neirynck et al. (eds.), *The Gospel of Mark: A Cumulative Bibliography 1950–1990*, Leuven 1992, pp. 643–644. Regarding the current segments, some linguistic features may shed light on their development. The mood of the verbs in the prophecy (2b) differs among the gospels. In Mark both verbs (καταλῦω; ἀφίημι) are in the subjunctive (coniunctivus); in Matthew the first verb remains in that mood, but the second is in the future indicative, while in Luke both are in the future indicative. It seems that this difference can help us understand the internal development of the three versions. The similarity between the subjunctive and the future indicative (morphology, content, and more) caused them to be frequently confused in Hellenistic Greek; see F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. and revised by
that later came to be known as the Temple Mount (fig 1:D), not the Temple itself (1:A), serves as the subject of Jesus’ anger and prophetic forecast of destruction. Only the authors of Matthew and Luke (or the creators of the passages that were preserved in these compositions), at a later stage in the evolution of the text, shifted the focus of Jesus’ judgment to the Temple; originally it had been directed at the area outside the Temple.

To be sure, this suggested reading of Mark does not completely refute other possible interpretations of the passage. For example, the fact that the text commences with the group’s leaving the Temple does not necessarily imply that the objects of Jesus’ words stood outside this structure. One might argue, as scholars traditionally have, that he was denouncing the place they had just left. But the above proposal appears preferable for three reasons. First, it takes into account the subtle changes in wording among the three synoptic versions, while the accepted interpretation does not ascribe any significance to the fact that the earliest version, that of Mark, does not identify the stones and buildings as belonging to the Temple. Second, the proposed reading accounts for the exposition, the opening half-verse that places the episode at the point when the group was leaving the Temple. Finally, it anchors the passage in the physical layout of the site at the time it was formulated — that is, the landscape of the Herodian Temple complex. It seems to me that previous scholarship misinterpreted this passage due to

R.W. Funk, Chicago 1961, pp. 166–167, 183. Here, however, the verbs are in the aorist passive and in the future indicative; thus the morphological similarity, resulting from the suffix sigma (which is missing from the aorist passive), is not as strong (I owe this last point to M. Himmelfarb). It is nevertheless hard to imagine that Mark, with his rough, simple language, would have taken a simple sentence in the future indicative, as found in Luke and Matthew, and changed it into the more complicated subjunctive construction. Moreover, the degenerate morphology of the verb aphethhi in Mark, in which the iota is left out — which is also preserved in Matthew — indicates that the direction of development was from the more complicated version in Mark to the simpler one in Matthew and Luke. On this aspect of the Iotacism, see J.H. Moulton and W.F. Howard, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, II, Edinburgh 1929, p. 65. These details support the conclusion that the versions in Matthew and Luke belong to a second stage in the development of the text.
insufficient attention (or perhaps lack of any attention at all) to the physical setting of the text. 30

Explicit support that such an understanding of the stone-upon-stone tradition indeed prevailed in early Christian circles comes from the above-mentioned writings of Eusebius. In his fourth-century composition *Theophany* (Divine Manifestation) Eusebius vigorously confutes opposing views regarding the fulfillment of the previsions of Jesus. His deliberations are often the only surviving record of these “non-authoritative” positions. Chapter 19 in the fourth book of the *Theophany* centers on the destruction of the Temple. As expected, in his reading of the stone-upon-stone passage Eusebius endorses understanding it as foretelling the destruction of the Temple. What is interesting is the opposing view he contests. The writer takes issue with “persons who interpret the passage differently.” In his words, they claim “that this was not said on all the buildings, except only on that place which the disciples, when expressing their wonder about it, pointed out to him.” Previously in the same chapter, Eusebius makes clear that “Walking by the side of the Temple...the disciples (were) wondering at the building (structure) which surrounded it.” 31 Here is a fourth-century source telling us

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30 Three examples, spanning a century and a half of research, further substantiate this claim: (1) Meyer, *Kritisch exegetischer Kommentar* (n. 26 above), p. 173, who relates the stones in Mark to those of the Temple described in Josephus, did not take into account that in Josephus’ case the subject is the inner sanctuary (*naos*), while in Mark the subject is what they saw when exiting the *heiron*; (2) D.H. Juel, “The Messiah and the Temple: A Study of Jesus’ Trial before the Sanhedrin in the Gospel of Mark,” Ph.D. diss., Yale University, New Haven, 1973 (microfilm, Ann Arbor 1984). Even though Juel notices that the text deals with many buildings and finds this peculiar (p. 192), he does not draw the appropriate conclusion and keeps identifying the prophecy as dealing with the Temple (p. 203; cf. to the “Temple complex” on p. 210); (3) Twenty years later, Sweet argued the same point; see J.P.M. Sweet, “A House Not Made with Hands,” in Horbury (ed.), *Templum Amicitiae* (n. 11 above), p. 374 n. 11. His argument, that writers in late antiquity did not discern the different terms, refutes itself. If, as he claims, Mark said “buildings (structures)” but actually meant “temple,” then why did Matthew and Luke feel it necessary to add a specific identification?

that some people in his community viewed the stone-upon-stone segment as referring to the structures surrounding the Temple and not the Temple itself.

Modern scholars as well as the revisers of the passage in Matthew and Luke were not alone in deconstructing the "original" meaning of the text. Even Mark shows signs of a later editor's intervention, particularly in the weaving of the passage within the broader arrangement of the book. In the portion preceding the prophecy anecdote (12.41–44), Jesus observes people who make monetary contributions to the Temple. Contrasting the large amounts given by the rich with the poor widow's mite, he expresses a clear preference for the lesser donation.\(^{32}\) The editor of Mark concatenates the two passages, especially by referring to Jesus in the opening of the stone-upon-stone pericope through the use of the personal pronoun "he" which redirects the reader to the previous passage.\(^{33}\) This textual configuration induces readers to understand the stone-upon-stone prophecy in the context of the event described just before it, the widow's mite. Within such a framework the disciple's remark, which seems rhetorical and unclear, challenges Jesus' preference in the previous passage, as if he were saying, "Such small contributions will not enable the construction of such spectacular buildings." The narrative then climaxes with the Saviour's riposte: "These spectacular buildings will not remain standing." This sequence in Mark, therefore, focuses not so much on the destruction of the various structures as on the immanent clash between the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak. Jesus' declaration addresses the strong, asserting that "Might does not last forever."\(^{34}\) In addition, patching the two pieces

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33 Opening the stone-upon-stone passage with the linguistic model known as *genetivus absolutus* is meant to serve the same purpose; see Moulton and Howard, *Grammar* (n. 29 above), I, p. 74. These points become even more salient when comparing the passage in Mark with the parallel in Matthew 13. In Matthew the story about the widow's mite does not appear before the prophecy, so there is obviously no need to link the two. And, indeed, in Matthew the two syntactic elements just noted do not appear; the passage begins as a new story, calling Jesus by his full name.

34 Cf. other suggestions that attempt to link the stone-upon-stone segment to different parts of the literary context, e.g., M. Lauverjet, "L'autre regard Marc 12:37b–13:2,"
together blurs the exact location of the buildings. The widow’s mite narrative uses the term hieron in its broad sense, as signifying the entire compound surrounding the Temple (fig 1:D; see my discussion above). Thus, when Jesus leaves “the Temple compound” at the beginning of the following segment, it is not clear which large buildings he sees, unless he turns around; and if he does, why did he have to leave at all? This difficulty would not have existed in the original version of the stone-upon-stone anecdote, where this literary unit stood on its own. In such a case the hieron would refer to the Temple and the prophecy to the area surrounding it.

A third phase in the evolution of this anecdote occurs in Luke 19:44, in which the author directs the same prophecy at the entire city of Jerusalem. This segment conveys Jesus’ lamentation upon his first sight of the city as he approached it from the east (apparently from the peak of the Mount of Olives, according to the later versions). The two other synoptic Gospels and John also preserve this account, but only the version in Luke includes the verse, “And they will not leave a stone upon a stone in you,” this time in reference to the entire city of Jerusalem.\footnote{Matt. 21:1–11; Mark 11:1–11; John 12:12–19. Note that the verb here is identical to the one in the other stone-upon-stone segment (aphihmi), and its future tense here matches what is first found in Luke’s version of that segment.} Without delving into the debate about the relation between this passage and the other stone-upon-stone segments, it is fair to say that it endows the prophecy with completely new meaning.\footnote{Cf. Gaston, No Stone, p. 12; J. Dupont, “Il n’en sera pas laissé pierre sur pierre (Marc13,2; Luc 19,44),” Biblica, 52 (1971), pp. 301–320. I find it hard to accept Gaston’s assertion that Luke’s pericope about Jerusalem represents the earliest version; he himself does not provide any evidence to support this claim, and even more importantly he does not recognize the linguistic and content nuances I have specified above (n. 29) that suggest the opposite. Dupont’s view that the version in}

ETR, 55 (1980), pp. 416–419, or, alternatively, studies that claim that this segment carries no specific context of its own but rather functions merely as a connecting limb; see S.H. Smith, “The Literary Structure of Mark 11:1–12:40,” NT, 31 (1989), p. 111. It is hard to determine whether the background for the passage as interpreted here is eschatological or rather a social statement. I leave the door open for both sides in the current debate.
Luke and to a certain extent even Mark (although his is the closest to the original version), are eliminated, what remains is a passage about the complex surrounding the Temple and the magnificent buildings made of huge stones that populated that space. Jesus and his disciples left the Temple structure (fig. 1:A–C) and were confronted by the mighty structures of the Herodian compound (fig. 1:D). The disciples were greatly impressed, but their master condemned the area to destruction. Jesus was not directing his remarks toward the Temple, as interpreted by the revised version preserved in Matthew and Luke, but toward its surroundings. If so, this is one of the earliest references to the entity that eventually constituted the Temple Mount. Such a conclusion has far-reaching implications for research on the New Testament, since the interpretation of the stone-upon-stone segment as relating to the destruction of the Temple has served as a cornerstone for the chronology of Mark as well as the study of the Jesus movement’s attitude toward Temple issues. But what is important for the present study is that the passage demonstrates the presence of the space that came to be the Temple Mount in the mental framework of the author of Mark.

An effort to contextualize the consciousness revealed here brings to mind two surprising parallels, from Josephus and the Book of Revelation. As I have shown in length elsewhere, the famous prophecy of destruction in Josephus’ fourth volume of Jewish War (4.388) abandons the customary model of the Jewish Temple, in which all components of the complex are subordinated to the sanctuary at the center and labelled as such. In that passage Josephus refers to the area between the city and the Temple with the rare formulation, “the temenos (compound/precinct) of God,” which replaces the more common designation “temenos of the temple.” Such a

Luke is an independent tradition stems from the fact that he assumed, like his predecessors, that the prophecy in Mark was about the destruction of the Temple, on which basis he constructed his thesis that there were two versions of the prophecy — the destruction of the Temple and the destruction of Jerusalem. But if this assumption is refuted, his thesis has no leg to stand on.

unique expression sheds some light on the formation of this area’s spatial image. It is difficult to know, however, whether people of the Second Temple period employed such vocabulary or whether it belongs to the period immediately after its destruction, when Josephus wrote his *Jewish War*. Be that as it may, both the author of the pericope in Mark and Josephus present prophetic discourse of destruction directed at the area surrounding the Temple rather than the Temple itself.

A three-way division similar to the one used by Josephus — city, Temple, and a third independent space between them — also occurs in a second parallel, in the Book of Revelation, chapter 11. One segment in this apocalyptic sequence (11:1–2) deals with the Jerusalem Temple and its court. The author designed a scene in which an angel commands Jesus to measure the inner sanctuary — the Greek *naos*, equivalent of the Hebrew *heikhal* and usually standing for the actual building of the Temple (fig. 1:A) — the altar, and the worshipers of God in attendance. In contrast, he also instructs him not to measure the court, stating that it is doomed to be destroyed by the Gentiles, along with the Holy City.

To mark the Temple court, the passage uses the Greek *αὐλή*, which usually matches the Hebrew *hašer*. Drawn from the biblical lexicon, a popular source of terms and images for Second Temple writers, this pair — *hašer/aulē* — served as a common designation for the Temple compound. Naming it in the Revelation segment “the outside court” — or, in some other versions, “the inner court” — ties it even further to pre-70 Temple vocabulary. It corresponds word for word with the Hebrew “inner court” and “outer court” in Ezekiel’s depiction of the Temple; Josephus often applies the same formulation in his accounts of the open platforms surrounding the

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39 Ezek. 40ff. The fact that the author of the revelation segment uses adverbs to determine the placement of the inner and outer courts, while the Septuagint uses regular inclination of the adjectives, has no special meaning; it is merely a matter of style; see Blass and Debrunner, *Greek Grammar*, p. 56, sec. 104(2).
Temple. Such terminology indicates that the authors fall short of assigning any independent status to the open area outside the Temple. They simply conceive it as dependent on the Temple, "its court" and nothing more. Naturally, these writers drew on vocabulary inherited from biblical texts and configured the spatial organization of Jerusalem's sanctuary according to the widespread old paradigm: the Temple has always had a court, and it still has one. From this standpoint nothing seems new here: the Temple Mount appears to be missing from this portrayal.

But a closer look at the function of the court and the Temple in this literary piece, and especially at their mutual relations, reveals a new, largely unprecedented model. Unlike other Second Temple writers who fuse the Temple and its court into one inseparable unit, the apocalyptic setting of Revelation completely removes the two from each other. Fate separates them, with the angel foreseeing destruction for one and safety for the other.

Scholars have offered many interpretations for the detachment of these two usually merged elements. Wellhausen was the first to suggest that this development might be connected with a concrete event during the Jewish revolt of 70 CE. He proposed reading this passage in relation to the internal clashes between Jewish parties, during which the group known as the Zealots entrenched themselves within the Temple structure and exchanged blows with other rebel factions, as described by Josephus (BJ 4.196ff.). According to this theory, the passage is a fragment of a prophecy (oracle) from the rebel camps, like many other predictions of redemption and devastation that were prevalent in Jerusalem at that time. This particular pericope foretold salvation for those who were sheltered in the Temple and destruction for everyone else.

Wellhausen's conjecture cannot be supported by evidence. As to content, the prophecy contains no hint of groups fortifying themselves in the Temple


or any sort of conflict between those inside and those outside. In fact it never mentions anyone outside the naos. Rather, the segment confronts one distinct category — the followers of God who are worshipping inside the sanctuary — with another — the Gentiles, destroyers of the city and the Temple court. Furthermore, recent conclusions about the time and place of the writing of Revelation (in Asia Minor just before the destruction of the Temple) make Wellhausen’s suggestion highly unlikely.\(^{42}\)

Nevertheless, his analysis provides important insights into how the author of this portion perceived the Temple landscape. In particular, the text does not offer the customary picture of the Second Temple period, in which the entire area is considered one entity and the outside space an integral part of the Temple. Instead, the author distinguishes the court from the Temple and receives a new life with a different future predicted for it. Without confining this phenomenon to a particular historical moment, as in Wellhausen’s interpretation, this passage reveals a new stage in the evolution of consciousness associated with the Temple area. Moreover, it offers an important correlation to the two other prophecies discussed above, Jesus’ “no stone upon a stone” and Josephus’s prophecy about “God’s temenos.” All three prophecies correspond in two significant ways. First, they are all directed at the area outside the Temple, which would later be called “the Temple Mount,” even though this term does not appear in any of them. Second, they have a similar attitude toward this area, as all three predict that it will be destroyed.

These are the very beginnings of the consolidation of an independent identity for the area outside the Temple. In their current state, however, they are left as textual presentations lacking a particular context, be it historical, social, or religious. One may wonder how the Temple compound became such an autonomous structure that people in the Jesus movement would

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42 For a recent survey and discussion of the various dates offered by scholars, which concludes in this way, see J.W. Marshall, *Parables of War: Reading John’s Jewish Apocalypse* (Études sur le christianisme et le judaïsme, 10), Waterloo, Ont. 2001, pp. 88–97.
wish for its destruction and what circumstances contributed to this development. These question, however deserve a study of their own.43