

Some Problems of Herod's Temple.

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VII. THE BEAUTIFUL GATE OF THE TEMPLE.

ONE all-important factor in any attempt to reconstruct in imagination or in a model the temple of Herod is continually forgotten, the fact, namely, that the sanctuary, as above defined, was a fortress as well, indeed one of the strongest fortresses in Palestine. No plan can be accepted as satisfactory which does not emphasize this element in the construction of the walls and gates. A comparison of the most reliable statements of our chief authorities (*J.W.* v. v. 2, 3; *M.M.* i. 4, 5) shows that access from the great court to the courts of the sanctuary was by nine gates (marked H 1-9 on the plan). Of these four were in the north, four in the south, and one in the east wall respectively. Of the two sets of four, three opened into the inner court, and one into the outer court, or Court of the Women, on either side. Josephus expressly states that there was no gate on the western side, the wall of which was entire, a fact which, taken with the actual dimensions of the platform, renders it improbable that the *khel* was continued round the west side of the temple. All or most of these nine gates were set in massive towers, 30 cubits deep and at least 20 cubits in breadth, rising above the top of the wall to a total height of over 40 feet (Josephus says 40 cubits, *l.c.* § 203). One other gate, higher and wider than the others, at the top of 15 semicircular steps, led from the outer to the upper and inner court of the sanctuary (H 10).

The way is now open for an examination of one of the most keenly debated questions connected with the topography of the temple, namely, which of the two eastward gates—that giving entrance to the Court of the Women (H 5), or that leading therefore to the inner court (H 10)—is to be identified with 'the door of the temple which is called Beautiful' (Ac 3² R.V., the Beautiful Gate of v.¹⁰)? The traditional view, which is that of most Jewish scholars, supports the latter identification, while most modern Christian scholars advocate the former.

Three points in the controversy may be taken

as settled beyond question. (1) The Beautiful Gate must be the gate named 'the Corinthian' by Josephus (*l.c.* § 204), from its having been made of Corinthian brass, and so excelling in magnificence and value all the other gates, which were merely overlaid with silver and gold (§ 201; cf. II. xvii. 3, VI. v. 3, 'the brazen' gate). (2) The history of the gate called in the Mishna 'the gate of Nicanor' shows that the latter must be identified with Josephus' Corinthian Gate. The ossuary of this 'pious donor' was found the other day at Jerusalem, bearing the inscription: 'The bones of Nicanor the Alexandrian, who made the doors' (*P.E.F.St.* 1903, 125 ff., 326 ff.; cf. 1905, 253 ff.). (3) Both our authorities agree in placing the gate in question on the eastern side of the sanctuary. But, as we have seen, there were, in Josephus' words, 'of necessity two gates in the east' (*J.W.* v. v. 2, § 198), one in a line with and 15 steps higher than the other. Which, now, of these two is entitled to the threefold name?

The principal passage of the Mishna (*M.M.* i. 4) undoubtedly makes the Gate of Nicanor the eastern gate of the inner court, the same that is elsewhere (*Succa*, v. 4) termed 'the upper gate,' from its elevated position. But other passages of the Mishna, such as *Sota* i. 5, *Negaim* xiv. 8, which speak of certain rites of purification taking place at the Gate of Nicanor, compel us to look for it at the outer entrance to the sanctuary. And this is the clear witness of Josephus, himself a priest and familiar with the disposition of the temple courts and gates. In *J.W.* v. v. 3, § 204, in particular, *the Corinthian Gate is placed at the entrance to the Court of the Women*, and is said to be in a line with the larger gate at the higher entrance to the inner court. The Beautiful Gate was, indeed, the principal entrance to the temple in virtue of its position facing the altar and the porch.

The question has been so fully and finally discussed by Schürer in his essay on the subject in the *Zeitsch. f. die neuest. Wissenschaft*, vii. (1906) 51-68, that there should no longer be any dubiety as to the position of the Beautiful Gate. On one

minor point, however, this eminent authority seems to have gone astray. Josephus describes his Corinthian, our Beautiful Gate, as ἡ ἐξώθεν τοῦ νεώ, 'the gate outwith the sanctuary.' To this reading Schürer long ago took exception, and in his recent article he again characterizes the reading as giving 'absolutely no sense.' The form νεώ he further rejects on the ground that Josephus in the *Bellum Judaicum* regularly uses the form ναός (*Z.N.T.W.* vii. 55), and for τοῦ νεώ Schürer would now read τῶν ἐν ἔφ. To this it is enough to reply (1) that Josephus does elsewhere in his *War* use the form νεώ, as in v. i. 2, § 7, as well as in the *Antiquities*; (2) the phrase 'outwith the sanctuary' exactly describes the situation of the Beautiful Gate, since it formed the entrance to the tower erected by Herod over 'the eastern gate' (*J.A.* xv. xi. 7), which must have projected some distance beyond the wall in order to command the curtain of the wall on either side of the gate. Indeed, the statement of Maimonides (*B.B.* vi. 1) that one ascended by twelve steps to the Court of the Women is best explained by supposing that the eastern gate-tower was built across the *khel* as represented on the plan (H 5). (3) The position here suggested for the Beautiful Gate or Gate of Nicanor, on the confines of the sanctuary and the great court, suits not only the passages in *Sota* and *Négaim* above cited, but also the reference to it in *NT* as the rendezvous of the maimed and others who would be refused admission to the temple courts.

VIII. THE POSITION OF THE TEMPLE ON THE PLATFORM.

The last of the problems which it is proposed to discuss on this occasion deals with the precise position of the temple itself within the inner court. The latter had its margin railed off on three sides by a low stone balustrade (*J.W.* v. v. 6, § 225— for the origin of this, see *J.A.* XIII. xiii. 5); this margin, called the Court of Israel, was on a slightly lower level and probably 12 cubits broad (*M.M.* gives 11, and confines it to one side), and to it certain of the laity were admitted. The rest of the inner court was chiefly occupied by the great altar of burnt-offering, the ramp leading up to it on the south, and the place for slaying and preparing the victims on the north. The altar was a square mass of unhewn white-washed stones, 32 cubits (47 feet) in length and breadth,

and 6 cubits in height to the base of the hearth. It thus covered the whole, or almost the whole, of the exposed surface of the sacred rock, the straight western face of which may be taken as representing the line of Herod's altar.¹

Due west of the altar rose the temple itself from a solid stereobate or podium 6 cubits in height (*M.M.* iv. 6), which brought the temple floor to a level with the top of the altar. To enter into a discussion of the conflicting data as to the dimensions of every part of the temple is beyond the intention of this essay. It must suffice to say that the data both of Josephus and of the Mishna require careful sifting in the light of the recognized principles of architectural proportion, as Fergusson long ago discovered. One thing is certain. The ground plan of the *naos* underwent no change from Solomon to Herod. By the latter, however, the breadth of the whole building was increased to 60 cubits (*J.W.* v. v. 4), from what I take to have been the extreme breadth of Solomon's temple, 48 cubits, while the length remained constant at 96 cubits.² The heights are less certain; probably 96 cubits was the height and the breadth of the porch, and 60 the true height of the temple proper without the lateral chambers. The accompanying ground-plan is drawn on these principles of proportion, showing a gradual increase in the widths of the component parts as follows: 20, 32,³ 48, 60, and 96 cubits, with which the data of *M.M.*, as tabulated by Witton Davies, *D.B.* iv. 715, should be compared.

The problem now before us, however, is the determination of the exact spot which the temple occupied upon the platform relative to the altar, whose position is fixed. If we could trust the Mishna, we have only to do as others have done heretofore and measure 22 cubits west from the rock, and 100 more cubits will give us the length of the temple, to which comes a space of 11 cubits behind the 'house of atonement' (*M.M.* v. 1). But to this procedure there are two serious objections. (1) The west wall of the sanctuary—a

¹ The *sakhra* with the altars that stood upon it has recently been the subject of an elaborate investigation by Professor Kittel (*Studien zur hebräischen Archäologie* [1908], with plans, see esp. pp. 17, 81).

² It was Ezekiel, with his love for 50 and its multiples, that first gave the temple of his ideal the dimensions of 100 by 50 cubits.

³ Note that this, the *outside* width of the *naos*, is exactly that of the altar of burnt-offering.

mass of solid masonry rising at least 40 feet above the level of the great court, and $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet (5 cubits) thick—is thrust back to a line 200 feet west of the rock, at which point the hill slopes downwards so rapidly that it would have been necessary to carry the wall up from a depth of 50–60 feet below the Haram level (Watson, in *Pal. Exp. Fund Statement*, 1896, p. 561). (2) The continual recurrence of 11 and twice 11 in the Mishna figures (5 times over in *M.M. l.c.*) awakens suspicion. This number, I am convinced, is a mere inference from the 11 cubits given as the depth of the porch. But the latter was derived by the doctors of the Mishna from the already corrupt Massoretic text of Ezk 40⁴⁹!¹ The nature of the ground therefore compels us to reduce considerably the distance between the altar and the temple, while the principles of proportion suggest 12 cubits, instead of 11 and 22, as the free space on either side of the altar. On the plan, accordingly, the temple is shown 96 cubits long, with a width of 96 cubits for the porch, and of 60 cubits for the main building, standing back 12 cubits from the altar, with a free space of only 6 cubits on the west. And here emerges this result, as startling as it was unexpected! *The centre of the Holy of Holies is now 100 cubits from the centre of the altar and of the sacred rock.* This can scarcely be a pure accident, but must have been designed by those who reared the first temple on this spot.² In other words, the successive temples stood along a line 140 feet (96 cubits) long, extending from a point 41 feet (28 cubits)³ from the centre of the rock to within 14–15 feet of the western edge of the present inner platform of the Haram.

It only remains to present in tabular form the details of the measurements of temple and courts as obtained by a comparison and criticism of the only available sources, viz. the Mishna, Josephus,

¹ The real depth of Herod's as of Solomon's porch was doubtless 10 cubits in the centre, increased to 20 at the 'shoulders' (*J.W. v. v. 4, §§ 207, 209*) or wings as on the plan.

² For those who, with the writer, believe that in P's scheme of the Tabernacle the altar of burnt-offering is intended to occupy the centre of the eastern court (see diagram in Hastings' *D.B.* iv. 657), confirmation of this result is found in the fact that 50 cubits is the distance from the centre of the altar to the centre of the Holy of Holies. The measurements of the Tabernacle, it is well known, are one-half those of Solomon's Temple.

³ Made up of 12 cubits of free space plus 16 to the centre of the altar.

the actual rock levels, and the recognized principles of proportion in architecture, and as reproduced in the ground-plan which accompanies these essays.

(1) The average length of the sanctuary from west to east, corresponding practically to the width of the platform of the Dome of the Rock:—

(a) Inner court, including B and C of plan	170 cubits. ⁴
(b) Outer Court (A), average <i>circa</i>	120 ⁵ „
(c) Width of the terrace (<i>khel YY</i>)	10 „
(d) Thickness of west, middle, and east walls	15 „
Total	315 cubits.

(2) The average width of the sanctuary from south to north, 250 cubits, is made up as follows:—

(a) Width of the terrace XX	10 cubits.
(b) Thickness of wall	5 „
(c) Space between wall and colonnade ⁶	30 „
(d) Width of Court of Israel	12 $\frac{1}{2}$ ⁷ „
(e) Width of Court of the Priests as in Mishna	135 „
(f)-(i) as <i>d, c, b, a</i> , in all	57 $\frac{1}{2}$ „
Total	250 cubits.

The results set forth in the foregoing essays must be judged as a whole. They represent the first attempt, so far as the writer is aware, to deal critically with the statements of the literary authorities in the light of the evidence supplied

⁴ The following are the details; the figures within brackets are the corresponding cubits of the Mishna: Space behind the temple 6 (11), full length of temple building 96 (100), space between temple and altar 12 (22), width of altar 32 (32), space to east of altar 12 (11), Court of Israel 12 (11)—170 cubits in all as compared with 187 of the Mishna. The imperative reasons for curtailing the space west of the rock have been given above.

⁵ The Mishna gives 135 cubits by 135 as the dimensions of this court. But it has been shown above that the irregular form is due to the necessity for carrying the massive eastern wall along the line of rock. Nevertheless, it will be found that measured along the inner colonnade on the north side the width is actually 135 cubits, and the same is true of the free space between the colonnades from north to south.

⁶ This item, with the two preceding and the one following, is omitted in the Mishna; but Josephus gives the depth of the gatehouses as 30 cubits, here followed.

⁷ The extra half-cubit is for the stone balustrade which separated the two inner courts (*J.W. v. v. 6, § 225*).

by the survey of the Haram and by the existing remains of the Herodian period. It cannot, therefore, be claimed for them that they are 'compatible with every statement in the authorities,' even had such a claim not been banned by

our greatest living authority, who has recently assured us that 'this is a claim which students of the ancient documents upon Jerusalem will hardly regard as a recommendation to any theory' (G. A. Smith, *Jerusalem*, ii. 450).

Recent Foreign Theology.

Helbing's Septuagint Grammar.

WITH the increasing interest that is being taken in the study of the Septuaginta, and the recognition of its bearing upon many problems, not only of the Old Testament, but of the New, an adequate Septuagint Grammar has become an essential for students. A valuable beginning in this direction was made by the important chapter in Dr. Swete's *Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek*, and the grammatical details that have been collected and prefixed to Conybeare and Stock's *Selections from the Septuagint* are exceedingly useful. It is gratifying, moreover, to learn that what promises to be a standard work on the subject, by Mr. H. St. J. Thackeray, the translator of Blass, is far advanced towards publication. But meanwhile, for the most systematic discussion of the various questions involved, we have to turn, as so often, to Germany. Unfortunately, so far, Dr. Helbing's *Grammatik*¹ deals only with the question of Accidence, but this is treated with a fulness that leaves little or nothing to be desired. Setting out with the primary object of providing materials for the restoration, as far as possible, of the original Septuagint text, the writer appeals with an extraordinary wealth of illustrative detail to all such late Greek writings as seem likely to throw any light on the orthography of the sacred books. The papyri and inscriptions, in particular, are constantly cited with a knowledge resulting not only from a careful study of the original texts, as published in the large collections, but from a wide acquaintance with the rapidly increasing literature that is growing up around them. And the general result is the complete establishment of the fact that the phonetics and accidence of the Septuagint

'do not go their own way,' but share the general characteristics of their time. It is understood that Dr. Helbing proposes to deal with the more generally attractive question of Syntax in a separate volume.

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The New 'Herzog.'

IN the preface to the first volume of the third edition of the *Realencyklopädie*² the hope was expressed that it would be completed in eighteen volumes. In issuing the twentieth volume the editor, Dr. Hauck, takes the opportunity of explaining why it has been found needful to exceed the limits originally marked out. His intention was to secure space for necessary extensions by shortening some of the biographical and other articles. But, as the work has proceeded, it has become evident that room must be found for new articles, some being necessitated by the development of theological science, and others by the growth of the Christian Church. To the former class belong the new contributions on 'The Constitution of the Early Church,' 'German Idealism,' 'The English Moralists,' etc. To the latter class belong subjects treated either for the first time, or more fully than in the second edition, as, e.g., 'Christian Missions,' 'History of the Evangelical Church in the United States,' 'Dutch Theology,' etc.

Dr. Hauck's decision to enlarge this edition by three volumes will give general satisfaction. Had he not done this, some of the most valuable articles would either have been omitted or have been unduly compressed. Vol. xxi. is to complete this invaluable work of reference. In view of the

¹ *Grammatik der Septuaginta—Laut—und Wortlehre.* Von Dr. Robert Helbing. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1907; Glasgow: F. Bauermeister.

² *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche.* IIIte Auflage. Zwanzigster Band. Toorenbergen—Wamwas. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs.