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Front cover:
Bronze candelabra and lamps from
a Byzantine hoard, 6th century CE

Back cover:
Bezel design of a bronze signet ring
from a Byzantine hoard, 6th century CE
(drawn from the positive)

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A Monumental Herodian Ionic Capital from the Upper City of Jerusalem

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The monumental Ionic capital discussed in this article was discovered during the late Nahman Avigad's excavations in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City, Jerusalem. The capital's fragments were found in 1973–1974 in Area Q, located in the south-eastern corner of the Hurva Square, which is in the center of the Jewish Quarter.¹

A very similar complete capital (fig. 1)² and several other architectural elements were found nearby to the west (Area H). Unfortunately, these pieces were discovered *ex situ* during construction work, without archaeological context. The Israel Museum laboratory has recently mended the fragments of Area Q capital to form a complete capital. Although not all the fragments were retrieved during the excavation, reconstruction was feasible based on the capital's resemblance to a complete capital of the same type and size that was found nearby in Area H of the Jewish Quarter excavations (see fig. 1).

The two Ionic capitals from the Jewish Quarter are of monumental size and excellent workmanship. Several of their features, as well as their carving style, point to a date in the late 1st century BCE or the 1st century CE. They are clearly two of the best examples of Herodian architecture in Jerusalem, though their original architectural context remains an enigma.

The Archaeological Context

Avigad's excavations in Area Q exposed the remains of an exceptionally large *miqweh* (ritual bath), dated to the end of the Second Temple period (1st century CE; fig. 2).³ The *miqweh*, whose remains were exposed close to the surface, had stairs coated with gray plaster ascending from all four sides. During the Byzantine period the *miqweh* was converted into a cistern; its bottom part was cut in order to reach deeper into the ground and the bedrock below. The

Fig. 1
An almost complete
Ionic capital and
matching column drum
fragment found in
Area H, in the Jewish
Quarter of the Old City
of Jerusalem



Fig. 2
Column drum and Ionic
capital fragments
found incorporated in
secondary use into the
walls of a Byzantine-
period cistern that was
built on top of a late
Second Temple period
miqweh in Area Q



1-m-wide walls of the cistern, supporting its vaulted roof (found in ruin), were built on top of the *miqweh's* remaining stairs. These walls were coated with hard, light gray plaster. High up on the eastern wall a cross was molded in plaster above a short ground-line or base. The type of plaster and the style of the molded plaster cross, as well as the stratigraphy and pottery sherds date the cistern to the Byzantine period.

The cistern's walls were built of stones of varying sizes, some of which were taken from earlier buildings. Among these stones were also many fragments of different sizes of the Ionic capital under discussion (Reg. nos. 3320–3327).⁴ It seems that the capital was deliberately broken into pieces to facilitate its incorporation into the walls. The large fragments of the capital were put at the base of the walls, mainly in the western wall, directly on top of the *miqweh's* stairs (see fig. 2), while the smaller fragments were incorporated into the higher portion of the walls. Several other small fragments of this capital were found in the debris inside of the cistern (figs. 3–4). These were apparently originally incorporated in the uppermost portions of the cistern's walls, which had collapsed and fallen inside. Fragments from several column drums were also found scattered around the *miqweh*, some incorporated in secondary use into the Byzantine-period walls. Most of the capital fragments originated from one capital, but it cannot be ruled out that several belong to another. In any case, the fragmentary state of preservation of the finds make it impossible to determine the exact number of architectural elements that were originally incorporated into the Byzantine-period cistern.

The fragments of the capital were stored for several years in the Jewish Quarter and in the late 1970s they were transferred



Fig. 3
Two fragments of the Ionic capital found in Area Q, showing the *abacus*, *echinus* and *sulcus* decoration on the neck



Fig. 4
Three fragments of the Ionic capital from Area Q, showing the decorated *pulvinus*

to the Israel Museum. As noted, although not all the fragments of the capital were found by the excavators, reconstruction was based on its resemblance to a complete capital of the same type and size that was found in Area H.⁵ Nine large fragments were used to reconstruct the capital (fig. 5). Several smaller fragments that might have originated from the capital under discussion or a similar one were not included.



Fig. 5
The Ionic capital from Area
Q after it was reconstructed
at the Israel Museum
laboratory

The Capital

The capital is made of semi-hard limestone (*melekeh*) quarried in the vicinity of Jerusalem. Most of the known quarries in the late Second Temple period were north of the city,⁶ and this capital might have originated in one of these quarries. It was carved out of one block of stone, together with the topmost part of the column shaft. The diameter of the shaft is 96 cm. The height of the capital is 86 cm, while the shaft section, below the two *annuli*, is 51 cm high. The distance between the volute's central "eyes" is 99.5 cm on one side.⁷ The length of the *pulvini* is 109 cm on one side and 111.5 cm on the other. There is a deep cut on one side of the capital (see below).

The Shaft

Marks of sharp, fine-toothed chisels used to smooth the stone surface are discernible on the shaft. Such marks are typical of the Herodian period.⁸ The marks appear as tiny dots in vertical columns or horizontal lines, and in one section of the shaft they appear in groups running in different directions.⁹

At a distance of 4.5 cm below the *echinus* is a series of small rectangular depressions, reminiscent of the *sulci* of unfinished flutings. They are an average of 15 cm high, 9 cm wide and 4.5 cm deep. Their upper part is rounded, while their flat bottoms slant slightly outward.

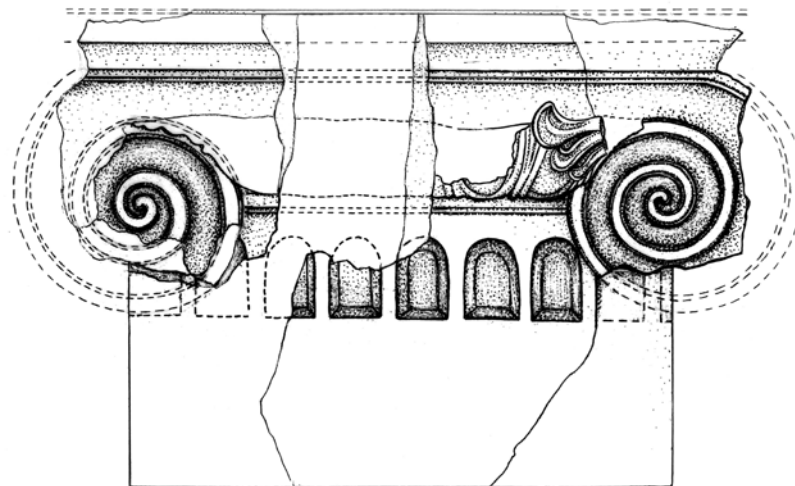
Similar decoration appears on the necks of the capitals on the facade of the Tomb of Zechariah in the Kidron Valley,¹⁰ as well as on three capitals found to the south and southwest of the Temple Mount,¹¹ and is unique to the Herodian architecture of Jerusalem. Recent conservation work conducted by the Israel Antiquities Authority in the archaeological park south of the Temple Mount have brought to light another fragment of an Ionic capital carved

with such depressions on its neck, incorporated in secondary use in the lower courses of the Zawiyya Khanthaniyya, the medieval tower attached to the Southern Wall of the Temple Mount blocking the western entrance of the Double Gate (yet unpublished). Another specimen of this group, albeit in a very poor state of preservation, is exhibited today in the Franciscan Museum in the Old City of Jerusalem.¹²

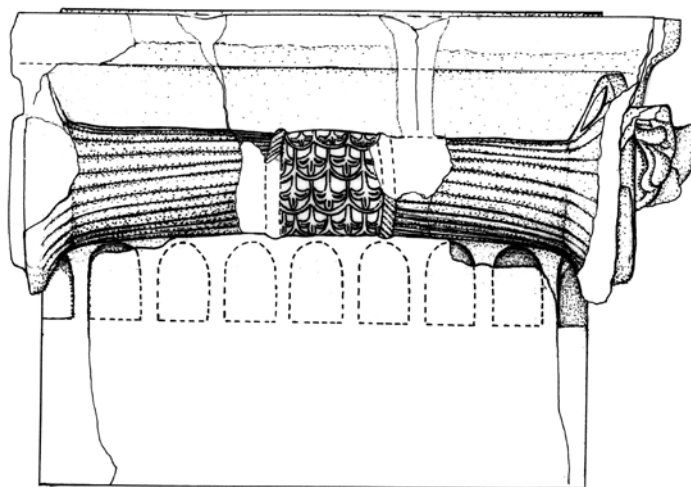
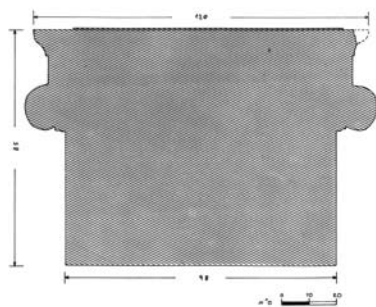
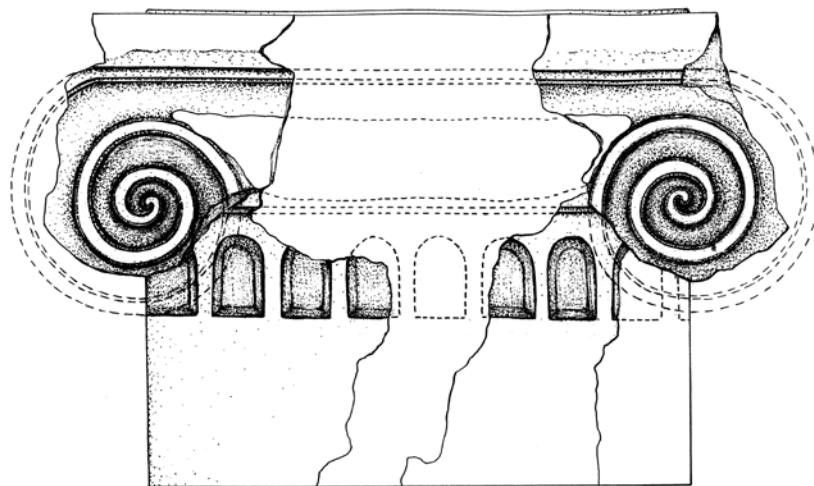
It seems that the inspiration for this decoration came from the practice of carving the flutes on the upper edge of a column, normally carved in one block together with its capital, prior to hoisting it up to its final location. Only when an entire column stood in place was scaffolding erected and fluting completed along the column's entire height, in accordance with the *sulci* carved below the capital.¹³ Several examples of standing columns with unfinished column flutes are found in Hellenistic Asia Minor, for example at the Temple of Artemis in Sardis and the Temple of Apollo at Didyma,¹⁴ as well as in the palace at Pella, capital of ancient Macedonia.¹⁵

The reason for the popularity of this type of unfinished fluting on Ionic columns in Herodian Jerusalem is unclear. However, because the carving of the Tomb of Zachariah (fig. 7) seems complete (other than the flutings), as well as the fact that such fluting appears exclusively below Ionic capitals, and carved flutings do not appear at all in Herodian Judaea (rather, stucco flutings were applied), we may conclude that the unfinished fluting motif does not signify unfinished work in the case of the Jerusalem capitals. A more likely explanation is that the Jerusalemite artists misunderstood the unfinished flutings seen on columns in Asia Minor and elsewhere as a sort of decorative motif that was integral to the Ionic capital and imitated it as such.

Fig. 6
The Ionic capital from
Area Q after reconstruction,
showing front views, side
view and section



0 10 20
N° 0



The Volutes

All four volutes are preserved, though the outer edge was chopped off on all four of them. All the volutes have a similar plastic design; the spiral is made of a wide strap with a convex surface and concave spaces between the coils. The volutes are of similar size, with a diameter of ca. 40 cm. The “eye” is an undecorated circle, ca. 1.5 cm in diameter. The design and measurements recall volute fragments found south of the Temple Mount.¹⁶

Echinus

The bottom of the echinus is carved with two fillets, instead of the usual fillet and astragal. The complete Ionic capital that was found in Area H near the capital under discussion here is carved at the bottom of its echinus with a smooth, plain astragal above a fillet.¹⁷ However, for some reason the upper molding of our capital was left in its angular, quarried state; its final carving, meant to create a round profile, was never executed.

Instead of the regular egg-and-dart or egg-and-tongue pattern that normally decorates echini of Ionic capitals, the echinus of this capital is decorated with a local variant of the above motifs – the egg-and-bud pattern; each dart ends with two arched leaves creating the shape of a floral bud or lily rather than the more usual arrowhead shape. A similar design of the darts can be seen on fragments of Ionic capitals found in other areas of the Jewish Quarter,¹⁸ as well as south of the Temple Mount.¹⁹ The eggs (originally five on each side of the capital) are elongated (14 cm high and 6.5 cm wide) and are separated from their casing (2 cm wide) by a narrow, deep groove.

The palmettes that decorate the transition between volute and echinus are preserved on both façades of the capital.

The echinus itself, however, suffered more than any other parts of the capital from intentional damage. One side was obliterated almost entirely, leaving only one bud. A vertical cut was deliberately made through the echinus on the other side, which left one and a half of the original five eggs and three buds between them.

One side of the cut is quite straight and almost vertical, while the other side is irregular. The cut is 22–26 cm wide and 12 cm deep. Its deepest point reaches the same level as the column shaft below the echinus. On the column shaft, just below the cut, chiseling marks can be seen that differ in style from those on the rest of the shaft.

It is impossible to assert whether this cut occurred when breaking the capital into pieces for the construction of the Byzantine-period cistern, or whether it was part of the deliberate obliteration of the decoration on the echini, meant to make the capital more regular in shape. Another possibility is that the cut was executed for some secondary use, such as turning the capital into a support for a wooden beam that was inserted in the slot created by the cut. In any case, the precise reason and date of the cut and obliteration remain unknown.

Pulvini

The *pulvini* are the best-preserved part of the capital. Both *pulvini* are decorated with scales on the *balteus* and flutes (probably elongated leaves whose edges were damaged) on both sides. Although at first sight the *pulvini* seem identical, they slightly differ from one another; one is made of a series of sharp-edged flutes, while the other features a bulging, rounded, long band after every two flutes. As noted, the edges of the volutes were trimmed all around and the pointed ends of the leaves did not survive. However, their appearance can be reconstructed based

Fig. 7
The Ionic capital of the engaged columns on the western façade of the Tomb of Zechariah in the Kidron Valley, Jerusalem (Photo: O. Peleg-Barkat)



on comparison to the complete example of this type found in the Jewish Quarter. The leaves also recall the stucco decoration of the Ionic capital found in Room 521 in the Western Palace of Masada.²⁰ Similar leaves appear on Hellenistic Ionic capitals from Macedonia and Asia Minor. This kind of decoration, defined by Orhan Bingöl as type VIII of *pulvini* decoration, was popular mostly during the 1st century BCE, although earlier and somewhat later examples also exist.²¹ In Asia Minor, the combination of long, pointed leaves and *baltei* decorated with scales does not appear after the 1st century BCE.²²

Interestingly, the leaves on the complete capital of this type from the Jewish Quarter differ from our capital in one feature of their design; they do not extend to touch the frame of the *balteus*, which represents a sort of band tying the leaves together, but rather, end in a curvature next to the

balteus. This special design reflects a local interpretation of the Hellenistic motif and attests to the independence and originality of the Jerusalemite artists.²³

The broad *balteus* at the center of each *pulvinus* is decorated with horizontal rows of three scales, bordered on each side by bands carved with a cable pattern. Scales often decorate the *baltei* of Hellenistic and Early Roman Ionic capitals from Asia Minor.²⁴ In many cases the framing bands of the *baltei* remained undecorated. However, a cable pattern often appears on the Ionic capitals from Asia Minor.²⁵ It also appears on fragments of Ionic capitals found elsewhere in the Jewish Quarter²⁶ and south of the Temple Mount.²⁷ Interestingly, the *balteus* of the complete capital of the same type found near the Byzantine cistern has a bud or a simple lily pattern instead of a midrib at the center of each scale (fig. 8).²⁸

The Abacus

The abacus is 12 cm high. It has a cyma recta profile and was left undecorated.

Ionic Columns in Late Second Temple Period Jerusalem

No doubt that the two monumental Ionic capitals from the Jewish Quarter in Jerusalem represent one of the best preserved and elaborate examples of Herodian monumental architecture. A considerable number of fragments, as well as complete specimens of various decorative architectural elements from the late Second Temple period were discovered in the Jewish Quarter during Avigad's excavations.²⁹ These fragments include column bases, column drums, various types of Doric, Ionic and Corinthian capitals, as well as entablature pieces.

In a previous study by Ronny Reich³⁰ two architectural groups of the Ionic order were defined, which differ in size, details of workmanship and date – a larger series and a smaller series. The larger series includes a large Attic column base uncovered in Area C³¹ and several fragments of volutes from Ionic capitals.³² They seem to have come from the same architectural unit that originally had columns ca. 1.3 m in diameter. Based on

their well-established stratigraphic contexts these items should be dated prior to Herod's reign. The smaller series is comprised of several column drums, ca. 1 m in diameter, several Attic column bases of the same size, as well as one complete example and several fragments of an Ionic capital on the same scale.³³ The latter items were found *ex situ* and their original architectural context is unknown. They were dated by Avigad³⁴ to the Herodian building activities in the Jewish Quarter of the late 1st century BCE. The capital under discussion seems to belong to this group of finds.

Complete and fragmentary decorative architectural elements were found throughout Jerusalem originating from public buildings, dwellings and tombs.³⁵ The largest assemblage of such elements was exposed during the excavations led by Benjamin Mazar south and southwest of the Temple Mount, as well as in further digs in this area led by Ronny Reich, Ya'akov Billig and Yuval Baruch.³⁶ The elements from these excavations constitute one of the most important and richest assemblages discovered to date in Second Temple-period Judaea. They give us a glimpse of the grandeur of architectural decoration on the Temple Mount and its



Fig. 8
A side view of the almost complete Ionic capital of similar design and dimensions, found in Area H. Note the peculiar *balteus* decoration

Fig. 9
The Ionic capital from
Area Q during
reconstruction at the
Israel Museum laboratory

vicinity during the time of Herod and in the 1st century CE, and displays the work of the finest artisans in Jerusalem at that time.

The fragments, which include a wide variety of shapes and wealth of designs, originated in several structures that stood on the Temple Mount and to its south and southwest. Among the finds are Ionic capitals of two diameters (1 m and 45 cm).³⁷ Both groups of Ionic capitals share several distinctive features with the capital from the Jewish Quarter, such as the *sulcus* decoration on the neck (see above). Nevertheless, the capitals are simpler in design and most of the *pulvini* were left undecorated. Therefore, it seems quite clear that although the capitals may represent the work of the same local workshop, there is no indication whatsoever that they originated in the same structure.³⁸

Summary

Because the fragments of the capital under discussion, as well as the other architectural pieces that relate to the same series, were discovered out of their original architectural context, the structure that they originally decorated cannot be securely identified. An examination of column dimensions common in Judaea during the late Second Temple period shows that, apart from the columns of the temples of Roma and Augustus at Caesarea and Sebaste (whose diameter ranges between 1.2 m and 1.76 m), all other columns range in diameter from 30 cm to 70 cm, except the shaft of the capital under discussion and similar fragments found in the Jewish Quarter and at the foot of the Temple Mount. Therefore, the capital and the adjoining pieces could not have come from a mere wealthy dwelling. Rather, they must have originated in either a royal or a public building.

It may be suggested that at least some of the items came from Herod's palace in the southwestern part of the city described in detail by Flavius Josephus.³⁹ Several excavations have been conducted at David's Citadel and the Armenian Garden, uncovering remains only of the palace substructure. These remains have so far yielded very few architectural fragments that can be connected with the decoration of Herod's palace in that area. A monumental Attic column base found by Renée Sivan and Giora Soler might be connected with the palace.⁴⁰ But Herod's palace was not the only monumental structure to be built in the Upper City. From Josephus we know of the Hasmonean palace or palaces that were built in this area, as well as the palace of Agrippas and Bernice facing the Temple Mount and the Upper Agora.⁴¹ Further research on the architectural fragments from the Jewish Quarter Excavations and its architectural context might shed more light on this question.



- ¹ Avigad 1983, 161, fig. 8; Geva 2000, 23, fig. 1.3.
- ² Avigad 1983, 161–165.
- ³ Reich 2013, 92–95; Geva 2015. A detailed description of the remains exposed in Areas Q and H will be included in the forthcoming volume 7 of the “Jewish Quarter Excavations in the Old City of Jerusalem” series.
- ⁴ Peleg-Barkat *forthcoming A*.
- ⁵ Avigad 1983, 161–165.
- ⁶ Avnimelech 1966; Safrai and Sasson 2001; Zilberbod 2012.
- ⁷ On its other side the distance is shorter (93 cm). It is unclear whether the gap between the measurements of the two sides is due to inaccurate carving of the original piece or to the reconstruction.
- ⁸ Reich and Shukron 2006, 62.
- ⁹ On the various tools used by stonecutters in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, see Nylander 1970, 23–28; Adam 1994, 29–40. On tools used by the local stone carvers, including various types of drills and lathes, see Shadmon 1972, 50–53; Amit et al. 2001, 105–110; Magen 2002, 116–131; Gibson 2003, 287–308. In later (or earlier) periods, the stonemasons normally used wide-toothed chisels or chiseled the stones in a typical diagonal direction.
- ¹⁰ Avigad 1954, fig. 47.
- ¹¹ Peleg-Barkat 2007, nos. 1031–1033; Peleg-Barkat *forthcoming B*, fig. II.23.
- ¹² Bagatti 1979, pl. XIV:2.4.
- ¹³ Avigad 1983, 161; Turnheim 1998, 148–149.
- ¹⁴ Durm 1910, fig. 280; Wiegand 1941, pl. 143; Akurgal 1987, pls. 146–147, 150–151.
- ¹⁵ Ginouvés 1992, 89, pl. 76.
- ¹⁶ Peleg-Barkat *forthcoming B*, figs. II.29–33.
- ¹⁷ Avigad 1983, figs. 179, 181.
- ¹⁸ e.g., Peleg-Barkat 2007, 197, fig. 388.
- ¹⁹ Peleg-Barkat 2007, no. 1036. It seems that this Jerusalemite type of *echinus* decoration was later imitated in Neapolis; a complete Ionic capital dated to the 2nd century CE and bearing a similar design was found near a mausoleum in the necropolis of the city (Peleg-Barkat 2007, 180, fig. 387).
- ²⁰ Foerster 1995, 46–50, figs. 60–68.
- ²¹ Bingöl 1980, 82, fig. 35.
- ²² Bingöl 1980, 84–86, pls. 25–26, nos. 125, 127–129, 270.
- ²³ Turnheim 1998, 149.
- ²⁴ Bingöl 1980, 54, e.g., nos. 24, 29, 32–34, 36, 37.
- ²⁵ E.g., Bingöl 1980, nos. 13, 57, 65, 76, 104, 160, 161, 164, 202, 216.
- ²⁶ Reich 2003, pl. 7.8:8.
- ²⁷ Peleg-Barkat 2007, nos. 1054–1056.
- ²⁸ Avigad 1983, fig. 171. It seems that this addition is an invention of the local Jerusalemite artisans, as the scale-and-bud pattern also appears on other Ionic capital fragments and other architectural elements found at the foot of the Temple Mount (Peleg-Barkat 2007, nos. 1055, 1472), as well as on Ionic capital fragments and a decorated soffit from a cornice or ceiling found in the Jewish Quarter (Reich 2003, 271, no. 8; Avigad 1983, fig. 184).
- ²⁹ Avigad 1983, 150–152, 161–165; Reich 2003, 271–274; Geva 2014, pl. 10.5: 4 (found in a Late Roman fill).
- ³⁰ Reich 2003, 273.
- ³¹ Avigad 1983, 151–152, figs. 158, 199.
- ³² Avigad 1983, 161, fig. 177; Reich 2003, 271–172.
- ³³ Avigad 1983, 161–165, figs. 178–181.
- ³⁴ Avigad 1983, 162–165.
- ³⁵ Ionic pilasters decorate the Tomb of Zachariah and the Tomb of Absalom in the Kidron Valley, while free standing columns in *distylos in antis* facades bearing Ionic capitals apparently existed in Umm al-Amad Cave and at the Tomb of Helene Queen of Adiabene.
- ³⁶ Reich and Billig 1999; Baruch and Reich 1999: 128–140; Baruch and Reich 2001: 88–92.
- ³⁷ Peleg-Barkat 2007, 275–323; Peleg-Barkat *forthcoming B*. Other assemblages of Herodian architectural decoration elements were found in the Lower City, e.g. in the excavations in the Tyropoeon Valley headed by Doron Ben-Ami (Peleg-Barkat 2013, 205–212), as well as on the eastern slopes of Mount Zion in an excavation along the remains of the city wall in this area headed by Yehiel Zelinger (unpublished).
- ³⁸ It should be stated that although Josephus explicitly mentions the use of Corinthian capitals in the edifice (*Ant.* 5, 414), Reich suggests that the capital under discussion originated from the Royal Portico built by King Herod on the Temple Mount. See Appendix to this article.
- ³⁹ *War* 5, 176–182.
- ⁴⁰ Sivan and Solar 2000, 175.
- ⁴¹ *War* 2, 305, 344, 426.

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Addendum 1: Where was the Capital Incorporated?

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The authors of the main article in this volume on the monumental Ionic capital discovered in the Jewish Quarter excavations differ as to the location of the building from which the capital under discussion came. Although I am a co-author of the main article, I still have some doubts about the location of the building from which the capital came. I hold that this capital and other elements of the same size (capitals, bases, column drums) and of the same type of stone were part of the Royal Portico (Stoa Basileios) erected by Herod along the southern end of the enlarged Temple Mount.

The authors differ because the archaeological findings do not always accord with the detailed descriptions of the building and its vicinity provided by Josephus (*War* 5, 190; *Ant.* 15, 411–416). In these descriptions Josephus states that the columns of the Temple Mount stoas, including the Stoa Basileios, are monolithic (each made of a single block of stone); they are made of marble; the columns are crowned with capitals of the Corinthian order; they are 27 feet (c. 9 m) high; and it requires three persons holding hands to circumscribe them.

However, these descriptions require a careful, critical reading. Examining the various column parts discovered in the excavations along the southern and southwestern sides of the Temple Mount, it is obvious that the columns were not monolithic but assembled of stone drums. Therefore there is no doubt that this piece of information given by Josephus is wrong. Additionally,

his statement that three persons holding hands were required to circumscribe a column shaft should be seen as a figurative statement describing a large column, not as an actual means of measurement.

In contrast, the figure given for the column's height seems to accurately conform to the fragments discovered, as these have an average diameter of 1 m, and according to the Classical proportions of the time this is compatible with a column 9–10 m high.

Josephus' statement that the columns were made of marble is also erroneous, since all the architectural fragments discovered were made of the local semi-hard *melekeh* limestone. Real marble had not yet been imported to this country for construction, and indeed, no marble was found in any of the many Herodian monuments that have been excavated (Masada, Herodium, Jericho, Cypros, Machaeros, Caesarea Maritima, Samaria, Paneas). Recently, Daniel R. Schwartz suggested an interpretation by which an ancient editor had improved Josephus' text, substituting "white [or polished] stones" in an earlier text with "marble" in a later text. While this explanation might be acceptable with some trouble regarding the type of stone, it is more difficult to explain the contradiction between the archaeological findings (column drums) and monoliths (Josephus). In my opinion for both statements, about the marble and about the monoliths, we should avail ourselves of Occam's Razor – a simple explanation is preferable to a sophisticated one. Thus, we would regard Josephus' statements as simple mistakes due to a lack of technical knowledge.

Finally, I come to the style of the capitals in the Royal Stoa. I believe they were of the Ionic order, contrary to Josephus' description of them as Corinthian. Currently we possess two almost complete

Ionic capitals (including the present one), and fragments of others. Mazar's excavations next to the Temple Mount walls have yielded 26 Ionic fragments and about 60 Corinthian fragments and none that are almost complete. In general, Corinthian capitals have many more small, pointed elements from which small parts could be broken off than the capital under discussion (especially from the 16 acanthus leaves, eight in each of the two rows that encircle each capital). And indeed, most of the Corinthian fragments from Mazar's excavations are small points of acanthus leaves. In addition, it is almost impossible to reconstruct the size of a capital (its base diameter) from fragments the size of the ones Mazar found, hence we cannot know the size of the original capitals from which all these fragments came. Thus, because we know that most of the columns of the Royal Stoa were huge, the apparently small size of the Corinthian fragments would rule them out as coming from the Royal Stoa.

Significantly other monuments in Herodian Jerusalem were of the Ionic order (Absalom's Tomb; Zachariah's Tomb), and the complete Corinthian capitals discovered in Jerusalem are of the type without serrated acanthus leaves (Jewish Quarter; Tomb of the Kings; Alexander Nevsky Church) which seems to be the type typical to Jerusalem.

In light of the other mistakes and inconsistencies in Josephus' descriptions on matters of architecture, replacing Ionic with Corinthian seems very possible. In those days most of the monuments in Rome were adorned with Corinthian capitals, which may have led him to call the capitals of the Royal Stoa Corinthian. In light of these considerations I believe that the Ionic capital under discussion here was one of many incorporated in the Herodian Stoa Basileios in Jerusalem.

Addendum 2: A Monumental Herodian Ionic Capital from the Royal Stoa? – a Reply to Ronny Reich

Orit Peleg-Barkat and Hillel Geva

In the article concerning the monumental Herodian Ionic capital from the Upper City of Jerusalem we stated that since the fragments of the capital under discussion, as well as the other architectural pieces that relate to the same series, were found out of their original architectural context it is impossible to identify with certainty the structure they originally decorated. They may have originated in Herod's famous palace at the northwestern corner of the Upper City (the Western Hill, the location of today's David's Citadel and the Armenian Quarter), where large column drums and other architectural pieces were found. Josephus' description of the palace¹ describes the official palace of the king as a monumental building which includes a variety of decorated halls and courtyards. It is also possible that the capital originally decorated another monumental public or royal structure in the Upper City that did not survive but is known to us from the literary description of Josephus, such as the Hasmonean palaces, which were built in this area and continued in use into the 1st century CE, and faced the Temple Mount as well as the Upper Agora. As much as we would like to know the original architectural context of the capital, the data that is currently available to us does not allow us to give a definite answer.

In contrast to this general assertion, accepted by both authors of this addendum, Reich has suggested that the capital came from the Royal Portico that Josephus says

was erected by Herod along the southern flank of the Temple Mount. In his addendum Reich does not present arguments that base this assertion or explain the circumstances in which these large and heavy pieces of stone were rolled up from the Temple Mount or from the debris at its foot to be incorporated in a Byzantine cistern situated on the upper slope of the Western Hill of Jerusalem.

Reich's addendum focuses on explaining why the reader should not trust Josephus' claim that the columns of the Royal Portico bore Corinthian capitals. It seems to us unreasonable that someone undertook the exhausting task of carrying the heavy columns of the Royal Portico up the Western Hill just to incorporate them in a Byzantine-period cistern. Rather, it is much more reasonable to ascribe the columns to a building much closer to the vicinity where the capitals were found. Still, in the following short discussion we will address Reich's claim that the Royal Portico had Ionic columns, even though, to our minds, this debate has nothing to do with the capital under discussion.

Scholars consider the Royal Portico (Stoa Basileios), built along the southern flank of the Temple Mount, to be one of Herod's most ambitious projects. The tremendous effort invested in extending the Hasmonean enclosure toward the south, despite the difficult topographic conditions, was mainly in order to create sufficient space for the construction of this edifice.² The project involved the expansion of the Temple Mount beyond the natural topographical boundaries of Mount Moriah, toward the Tyropoeon Valley on the west and Kidron Valley on the east. The writings of the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus (37–ca. 100 CE) preserve the sole contemporary description of this monumental edifice,³ without which we could have only vaguely

guessed that such a building once stood at that location. Josephus presents an elaborate description of the location, dimensions, inner plan, columns, bases, capitals, entablature and decorated ceiling of the Royal Portico. Without his account of the Royal Portico, written in the genre of *ekphrasis* (graphic, often dramatic, description of a visual work of art or building⁴), it would have been impossible to interpret the collapsed columns and decorated stones that were found among the destruction debris at the foot of the southern enclosure wall of the Temple Mount. Yet, these stones, which were studied by Orit Peleg-Barkat in an earlier research, can shed light on the appearance of the Royal Portico (fig. 1) and can clarify details in Josephus' text.

In verse 414 Josephus writes: "The number of all the columns was a hundred and sixty-two, and their capitals were ornamented in the Corinthian style of carving, which caused amazement by the magnificence of its whole effect."⁵ It should be noted that pointing out the type of capitals used in the edifice is rather uncommon. Column capitals are mentioned only twice more in Josephus' writings,⁶ while the word *κορινθίω*, which Josephus uses to describe the column capitals of the Royal Portico, appears four more times. In three of these

cases it refers to Corinthian bronze and once⁷ to an architectural component in Solomon's Temple. Earlier in the description Josephus mentions a base with a double wreath or double moldings. This alludes to Attic column bases carved with two *tori*, fragments of which were indeed found in the debris at the foot of the Southern Wall. Josephus also mentions the architrave above the columns.⁸ The detailed description of the architectural decoration of the Royal Portico and the mention of several architectural components by their Classical names is not typical of Josephus' writings and stands as support for the supposition that Josephus is using another source and one with greater familiarity with and a better understanding of Classical architecture. This supposition is supported by a few other arguments that are based on the peculiar features of the text, but are beyond the scope of our discussion.

Despite the fact that the description seems to be based on a source that shows good familiarity with classical architecture, Reich is correct in pointing out that it requires a critical reading and that some of the details that are mentioned seem to be inaccurate, not to say exaggerated. Thus, for example, Josephus states that the central aisle was double the height of the side aisles.⁹ As Josephus writes that the aisles were more

Fig. 1
Reconstruction of the
Royal Portico, view from
the north (Graphics:
S. Vinograd, Virtual 3D)



than 50 feet (about 15 m) high, the height of the nave, therefore, would be more than 100 feet (about 30 m). Several researchers have accepted this assertion, but many others take it with a grain of salt and suggest that the nave was much lower. For example, Ehud Netzer suggested that the nave was 27 m (about 90 feet) high because if it were taller it would not have been structurally stable or appropriately proportioned.¹⁰

As examples for the inaccuracy of Josephus' text, Reich presents two features of the columns allegedly mentioned by Josephus – the fact that they were monolithic and the fact that they were made of marble. Indeed, these two details must be incorrect, as the archaeological evidence clearly shows that, during the Hellenistic and Early Roman periods, columns in Judaea were constructed in drums, out of local stone (in this case hard limestone). Unfortunately for Reich's argument, these two features are not mentioned in Josephus' text pertaining the Royal Portico. They appear in another book of Josephus, where he describes the porticoes that surrounded the Temple Mount on all of its sides: "Nor was the superstructure unworthy of such foundations. The porticoes, all in double rows, were supported by columns five and twenty cubits high – each a single block of the purest white marble – and ceiled with panels of cedar. The natural magnificence of these columns, their excellent polish and fine adjustment presented a striking spectacle, without any adventitious embellishment of painting or sculpture. The porticoes were thirty cubits broad, and the complete circuit of them, embracing the tower of Antonia, measured six furlongs."¹¹

Clearly this description refers to the porticoes surrounding the Temple Mount compound on all of its sides and not specifically to the Royal Portico on the south. The

measurements are different and so is the type of decoration – simple elegance, without any "adventitious [i.e. well executed but plain, without any figurative carvings that may conflict with Jewish tradition] embellishment of painting or sculpture"¹² – perhaps of the Doric order. The incorrect mention of monolithic columns or use of marble in Herod's constructions is not restricted to this description in Josephus' *War*, but appears elsewhere (e.g., Josephus mentions monolithic columns in Herod's palace at Masada, and a staircase built of marble at Herodium). Moshe Fischer and Alla Stein¹³ have suggested that Josephus' faulty attribution of the use of marble to Herod's construction projects should be understood as the outcome of the historian's assistants in Rome, who helped him (according to his own testimony) to edit *War*. As these assistants were accustomed to the use of marble in monumental imperial constructions in Rome, they might have inferred that a similar situation existed in Herod's building projects in Jerusalem.

We may therefore similarly suggest that the mention in *War* of monolithic columns (which were also common in monumental Flavian constructions in Rome) adorning Herod's Temple Mount should also be seen as the influence of Josephus' assistants. In *Antiquities*, written more than a decade later, Josephus relies much less on assistants, and indeed, marble in that work is usually replaced by "white stone" and monolithic columns are no longer mentioned.

To conclude, there is no real reason, based on Josephus' description of the Royal Stoa, which should lead us to doubt his testimony that the Corinthian style was used for the columns of this edifice.

Reich's last argument in favor of the use of Ionic rather than Corinthian columns in the Royal Portico concerns the

popularity of the Ionic order in Jerusalem of the time and the fact that most of the Corinthian capitals in the city in that period are blocked-out (one might ask how that is relevant). Although Reich is correct in asserting that quite a few of the tombs in the Jerusalem necropolis were decorated in the Ionic order, the Corinthian was also popular and examples were found both in the necropolis (Tomb of Helene Queen of Adiabene, Tomb of the house of Herod at Nikophoria) and in the city itself (Western Wall Tunnel, Alexander Nevsky, Upper City). And while many of the capitals have smooth leaves instead of the usual acanthus-shaped leaves, there are quite a few examples of the usual type, carved with acanthus-shaped leaves, the most relevant of which are the 70 fragments of Corinthian columns that were found at the foot of the southern enclosure wall of the Temple Mount and might have originated from the Royal Stoa.¹⁴

The questions dealt with in this addendum are not matters of belief, but of common sense based on the available data. At this point in research we cannot be one hundred percent sure that the Royal Portico was adorned with Corinthian columns and not with Ionic ones, or for that matter that the Royal Portico ever existed. What we have is Josephus' description of such a structure, and the fragments of Corinthian capitals found (broken and not in sufficient numbers to draw conclusions) at the foot of what was once the place where the building ostensibly stood. We therefore see no plausible reason to doubt this specific detail in Josephus' description and we see no logic in the proposal that the monumental Ionic capital(s) found in the Jewish Quarter were brought from the Royal Portico to be used in the walls of a Byzantine-period cistern.

¹ *War* 5, 176–182.

² Netzer 2006, 165.

³ *Ant.* 15, 411–416.

⁴ Elsner 2002, 1–3.

⁵ *Ant.* 15.414.

⁶ See Rengstorff 1973–1978, vol. 2, 503

⁷ *Ant.* 8, 133.

⁸ The word architrave (επιστολιον) is a unicum in Josephus' writings (see *Ant.* 15.416: επιστολιους), and it is not commonly used by other writers as well. For example, it appears only once in the writings of Pausanias (2nd century CE), which includes descriptions of several dozen Classical buildings (*Description of Greece* 10.19.4).

⁹ *Ant.* 15, 415.

¹⁰ Netzer 2006, 169, fig. 38.

¹¹ *War* 5, 190–192.

¹² *War* 5, 192.

¹³ Fischer and Stein 1994, 79–85.

¹⁴ Peleg-Barkat 2007, cat. nos. 1057–1127.

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Notes should be prepared as endnotes according to the system shown here:

- ¹ Welles 1938, 484, no. 326.
- ² Rahmani 1999, 43–44, figs. 123, 137; cf. Rahmani 1988, pl. II:3.
- ³ For a somewhat similar depiction of an arched *ciborium* over a cross, with a surrounding Greek inscription reading: “Blessing of the Lord on us,” see Galavaris 1970, 119, fig. 64 (from the Byzantine Museum, Athens). The provenance of the stamp, dated to ca. 600 CE, is unknown.

Abbreviations

<i>AASOR</i>	<i>The Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i> . Cambridge, Massachusetts	<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i> . Oxford
<i>ADAJ</i>	<i>Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan</i> . Amman	<i>JMA</i>	<i>Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology</i> . Sheffield
<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i> . Archaeological Institute of America. Boston	<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i> . Chicago
<i>‘Atiqot</i>	<i>‘Atiqot</i> . Israel Antiquities Authority. Jerusalem	<i>JPOS</i>	<i>The Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society</i> . I–XXI. Jerusalem, 1920–1948
<i>BAR</i>	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i> . Biblical Archaeology Society. Washington, DC	<i>JRA</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Archaeology</i> . Portsmouth, Rhode Island
<i>BASOR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i> . Boston	<i>JSOR</i>	<i>Journal of the Society of Oriental Research</i> . Chicago
<i>BCH</i>	<i>Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique</i>	<i>Levant</i>	<i>Levant</i> . The Council for British Research in the Levant. London
<i>CdE</i>	<i>Chronique d’Égypte</i> . Turnhout	<i>LA</i>	<i>Liber Annuus</i> . Studium Biblicum Franciscanum. Jerusalem
<i>EI</i>	<i>Eretz-Israel. Archaeological, Historical and Geographical Studies</i> . Israel Exploration Society, in cooperation with the Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University. Jerusalem	<i>LIMC</i>	<i>Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae</i> . I–VIII. Zurich-Munich, 1981–1997
<i>ESI</i>	<i>Excavations and Surveys in Israel</i> . Israel Antiquities Authority. Jerusalem	<i>MAAR</i>	<i>Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome</i> . Rome
<i>HA</i>	<i>Hadashot Arkheologiyot. Excavations and Surveys in Israel</i> . Israel Antiquities Authority. Jerusalem (Hebrew)	<i>New Enc.</i>	<i>The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land</i> . Israel Exploration Society. Jerusalem
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i> . Israel Exploration Society and the Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University. Jerusalem	<i>PalJb</i>	<i>Palästinajabrbuch des Deutschen evangelischen Instituts für Altertumswissenschaften des Heiligen Landes zu Jerusalem</i> . Berlin. 1905–1941
<i>IMJ</i>	<i>The Israel Museum Journal</i> . Jerusalem	<i>PBSR</i>	<i>Papers of the British School at Rome</i> . London
<i>IMSA</i>	<i>Israel Museum Studies in Archaeology</i> . The Israel Museum, Jerusalem	<i>PEQ</i>	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i> . Palestine Exploration Fund. London
<i>JdI</i>	<i>Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts</i> . Berlin	<i>Qadmoniot</i>	<i>Qadmoniot. A Journal for the Antiquities of Eretz-Israel and Bible Lands</i> . Israel Exploration Society and the Israel Antiquities Authority. Jerusalem (Hebrew)
<i>JGS</i>	<i>Journal of Glass Studies</i> . The Corning Museum of Glass. Corning, New York	<i>QDAP</i>	<i>The Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine</i> . I–XIV. London, 1932–1950
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i> . Cambridge	<i>Qedem</i>	<i>Qedem. Monographs of the Institute of Archaeology</i> . The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Jerusalem
		<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue Biblique</i> . L’École Biblique et Archéologique Française. Jerusalem
		<i>RM</i>	<i>Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts (Römische Abteilung)</i> . Mainz am Rhein
		<i>SHAJ</i>	<i>Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan</i> . Amman
		<i>ZDPV</i>	<i>Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i> . Leipzig
		<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i> . Bonn