

Were Solomon and Herod's Temples in the City of David Over the Gihon Spring?

Gordon Franz

INTRODUCTION

Robert Cornuke has written a book claiming that the temples of King Solomon and Herod the Great were never located on the historical Temple Mount, contrary to two thousand years of history. Claiming “amazing new discoveries” that he has observed, the book title states: *Temple: Amazing New Discoveries that Change Everything About the Location of Solomon's Temple* (2014). Later he reformatted the book and added an appendix by William Welty (2017: 205-236), but he did not change any of the mistakes pointed out in the original review of the book by this author/reviewer.

Mr. Cornuke is following his long-standing pattern of moving biblical sites to a different location – such as moving Moses' Mt. Sinai out of the Sinai Peninsula and into Saudi Arabia; shifting Noah's Ark out of the “Mountains of Ararat” (cf. Genesis 8: 4) into Iran; and wrecking Paul's ship in a different bay on Malta – which enables him to promote them as new “discoveries.” So far, he has produced no credible historical, geographical, archaeological, geological, or biblical evidence for any of his alleged discoveries. How will he fare with these “new” discoveries?

Robert Cornuke has now relocated the temples of Solomon and Herod off the historical Temple Mount in Jerusalem. He bases this

latest twist on the old theories of Dr. Ernest Martin in the latter's book, *The Temples that Jerusalem Forgot* (2000; cf. Cornuke 2014: 10; 2017: 4). However, Cornuke inconsistently locates his Temple enclosure/platform either about 900 feet or 1,700 feet farther south than the historical location on the Temple Mount, but he does not seem to be aware of the gross discrepancy (see pink and red squares in Figure 1). Cornuke's Temple enclosure/platform is inconsistent in size as well. He appears to be unable to decide whether it is only about 300 feet square or the approximate 860 feet square as attested in the ancient sources, and he seems utterly unaware of this problem (again see Figure 1).

Mr. Cornuke argues that it is a "legend" that the temples of King Solomon and Herod the Great were ever thought to be located on the historical Temple Mount in Jerusalem (2014: 9; 2017:3), even though the vast majority of people – Jews, Christians, and Moslems – through the ages understood that the temples were on the Temple Mount. His books instead argue that the temples were to the south of the historical Temple Mount, in the City of David, and over the Gihon Spring. It is also repeatedly stated in the books that the Antonia Fortress covered the entire Temple Mount enclosure, which was built by Herod the Great to guard his Temple.

In the appendix of the second edition of the book, William Welty takes aim at Dr. Randall Price and this author/reviewer for our critique of Bob Cornuke's views on the location of the temples. Our names were not cited in the appendix, but they appear on Welty's Internet blog from which the appendix was taken. He states that our negative criticism "consists not of the presentation of cogent and convincing arguments in rebuttal of the man's views, but rather in the presentation of sophomoric *ad hominem* attacks against the man personally." He goes on to say, "the actual scholarly content of most – if not all – of these criticisms fall far short of the rigorous academic criteria that should characterize a cogent search for truth" (2017: 206). Let the reader decide if this chapter is scholarly in nature and if *ad hominem* attacks are used on Cornuke and Welty. In actual fact, it is Mr. Welty who uses personal *ad hominem* attacks

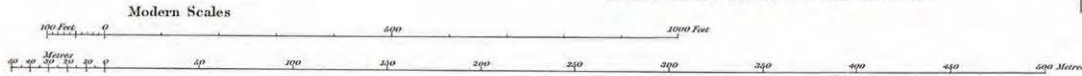


ORDNANCE SURVEY OF JERUSALEM.

BY CAPTAIN CHARLES W. WILSON R.E. UNDER THE DIRECTION OF
COLONEL SIR HENRY JAMES, R.E. F.R.S. &C.
DIRECTOR OF THE ORDNANCE SURVEY.

1864-5.

Public Domain



Note: Scales shown on this map were derived directly from the same original Ordnance Survey of Jerusalem map — they are unaltered and exactly proportional to this map image.

THE 500-CUBIT SQUARE PLATFORM

(262.5 x 262.5 meters; 861 x 861 feet)

(GREEN)



ON THE TEMPLE MOUNT

(RED)



OVER THE GIHON SPRING

(PINK)



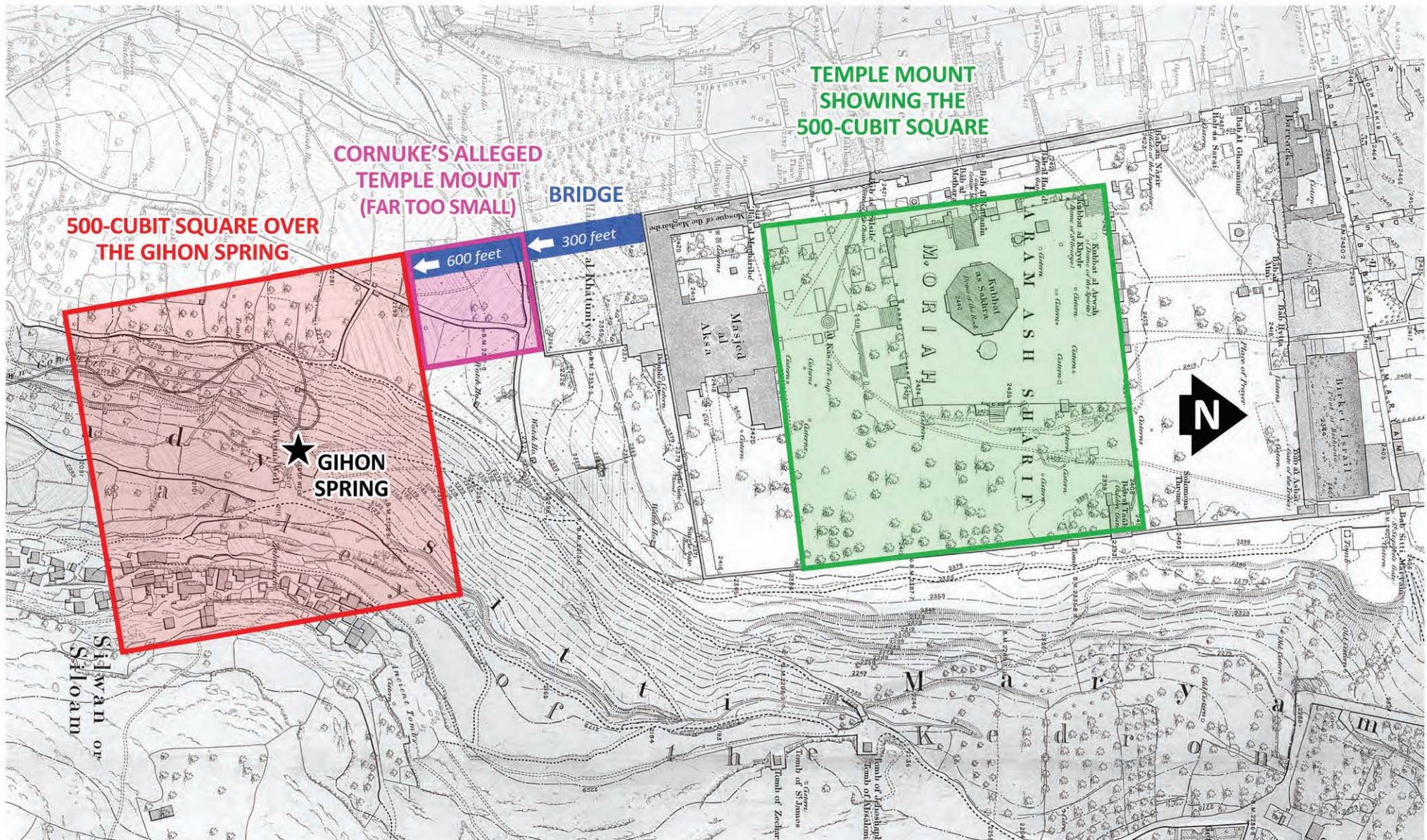
CORNUKE'S SQUARE (Circa 300x300 Ft)



CORNUKE'S BRIDGE



GIHON SPRING



on this author/reviewer when he reprinted an article by Paul M. Feinberg which contained libelous falsehoods (2017: 230-233; Fienberg 2016: 14).

The following critique will be concerned with facts and whether the facts led to a correct conclusion. Do Cornuke's books present a credible, compelling case for re-locating the temples to the south of the historical Temple Mount with only the Antonia Fortress on the present-day Temple Mount?

THE AUTHOR/REVIEWER AND HIS GOALS

This author/reviewer has lived, studied, led field trips, and worked on archaeological excavations in Jerusalem – on and off – for almost forty years. He is well familiar with the literary sources, history, archaeology, topography, geology, and geography of this city.

It is not this author/reviewer's intention to write a full-length book discussing Mr. Cornuke's (or Ernest Martin's) ideas about the location of Solomon's and Herod's temples, although a book could be written refuting these claims because there is so much erroneous information as well as faulty logic used in these two books. This author/reviewer will first deal with Cornuke's two main arguments.

First, according to the books, Solomon's Temple stood upon Zion and Zion was in the City of David; and second, that the temples stood over the Gihon Spring. Then some examples will be selected---these will by no means be exhaustive – of where Mr. Cornuke got his facts wrong and how he produced the “*greatest archaeological blunder of all times*” (cf. Cornuke 2014: 35; 2017: 31) by moving the temples of Solomon and Herod from the historical Temple Mount to the City of David. It will also be demonstrated that these books were not carefully researched. The facts are that the literary sources and archaeological records confirm the location of Solomon's and Herod's temples on the historical Temple Mount and not above the Gihon Spring in the City of David as claimed in Cornuke's books.

One resource this author/reviewer found particularly helpful concerning the topic is the excellent book by Dr. Leen Ritmeyer entitled, *The Quest. Revealing the Temple Mount in Jerusalem* (2006). Dr. Ritmeyer is probably the leading scholar on the topic of the temples on the Temple Mount. This book, drawn from his PhD dissertation at the University of Manchester in England, is carefully researched, clearly written, well documented, and profusely illustrated with detailed pictures, maps, and diagrams. It is a must-read for anyone interested in the location, history, and development of Solomon's and Herod's temples. Ritmeyer also worked in Jerusalem as the architect for Professor Benjamin Mazar, the director of the Southern Wall of the Temple Mount Excavation, south and west of the Temple Mount. It is interesting to note, the books under review do not interact with nor discuss Ritmeyer's scholarly work. In fact, it is not even mentioned in the bibliography. Mr. Cornuke should have first consulted this exhaustive resource before research was begun on his book.

All quotations from Josephus in this essay will be from the scholarly Loeb Classical Library (LCL) edition, unless otherwise noted. All Scripture quotes are from the *New King James Bible* (NKJV).

WHERE ARE ZION AND THE CITY OF DAVID?

Mr. Cornuke's book repeatedly quotes 2 Samuel 5: 7 as if it proves his case, but take careful note of the exact wording in the Bible: "Nevertheless David took the **Stronghold of Zion** (that is, the **City of David**)" (NKJV, emphasis added by this reviewer). He claims this is proof that the Temple was in **Zion** and that Zion was the **City of David** (Cornuke 2014: 65, 69, 71, 74, 76, 77, 79, 113, 115, 122, 136; 2017: 63, 68, 69, 74, 76, 77, 79, 117, 119, 127, 140; emphasis added), but the Stronghold of Zion was not the same thing as the much broader city of Zion, which did expand in size over time until it did encompass the historical Temple Mount. The Stronghold of Zion never encompassed the Temple or the historical Temple Mount. The City of David began as identical to the Stronghold of Zion, and though it did expand in size, it never grew so

far as to encompass Mount Zion where the historical Temple Mount/ Temple resided.

As one examines the use of the word “Zion,” it will be shown that the location of Zion did expand beyond the Stronghold of Zion/City of David, and eventually came to include the historical Temple Mount, hence this is no proof for Mr. Cornuke’s anti-Temple Mount assertions. The word “Zion” is used 154 times in the Hebrew Scriptures:

2 Samuel 5: 7; 1 Kings 8: 1; 2 Kings 19: 21, 31; 1 Chronicles 11: 5; 2 Chronicles 5: 2; Psalms 2: 6; 9: 11, 14; 14: 7; 20: 2; 48: 2, 11, 12; 50: 2; 51: 18; 53: 6; 65: 1; 69: 35; 74: 2; 76: 2; 78: 68; 84: 7; 87: 2, 5; 97: 8; 99: 2; 102: 13, 16, 21; 110: 2; 125: 1; 126: 1; 128: 5; 129: 5; 132: 13; 133: 3; 134: 3; 135: 21; 137: 1, 3; 146: 10; 147: 12; 149: 2; Song of Songs 3: 11; Isaiah 1: 8, 27; 2: 3; 3: 16, 17; 4: 3, 4, 5; 8: 18; 10: 12, 24, 32; 12: 6; 14: 32; 16: 1; 18: 7; 24: 23; 28: 16; 29: 8; 30: 19; 31: 4, 9; 33: 5, 14, 20; 34: 8; 35: 10; 37: 22, 32; 40: 9; 41: 27; 46: 13; 49: 14; 51: 3, 11, 16; 52: 1, 2, 7, 8; 59: 20; 60: 14; 61: 3; 62: 1, 11; 64: 10; 66: 8; Jeremiah 3: 14; 4: 6, 31; 6: 2, 23; 8: 19; 9: 19; 14: 19; 26: 18; 30: 17; 31: 6, 12; 50: 5, 28; 51: 10, 24, 35; Lamentations 1: 4, 6, 17; 2: 1, 4, 6, 8, 10, 13, 18; 4: 2, 11, 22; 5: 11, 18; Joel 2: 1, 15, 23, 32; 3: 16, 17, 21; Amos 1: 2; 6: 1; Obadiah 1: 17, 21; Micah 1: 13; 3: 10, 12; 4: 2, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13; Zephaniah 3: 14, 16; Zechariah. 1: 14, 17; 2: 7, 10; 8: 2, 3; 9: 9, 13.

Zion is used with different modifiers, such as “Mount Zion”: 1 Kings 19: 31; Psalms. 2: 6; 48: 2, 11; 74: 2; 78: 68; 125: 1; Isaiah 4: 5; 8: 18; 10: 12; 18: 7; 24: 23; 29: 8; 31: 4; 37: 32; Lamentations 5: 18; Joel 2: 32; 3: 17; Obadiah 1: 17, 21; Micah 4: 7.

Zion came to be synonymous with the city of Jerusalem and hence, again, inclusive of the Temple Mount. In Hebrew poetry, there is a literary device called “parallelism.” Professor C. Hassell Bullock of

Wheaton College described this literary device as follows: “The heart of Hebrew poetry is a device called *parallelism*. It is a literary pattern that states an idea in one line and focuses more closely on the same idea in the following line, either repeating the thought in different terms or focusing on the thought more specifically” (2001: 36, highlighted italics in original). A good example of Hebrew parallelism for the study of the location of Zion is found in the words of Isaiah the prophet when he wrote in the eighth century B.C.E.: “For out of Zion shall go forth the Law [Torah], and the Word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (2: 3). In this verse, there are two parallel thoughts: Zion and Jerusalem are literally synonymous places from which the Torah/Word of the LORD goes forth. Law and Word are another set of synonymous terms. The eighth century B.C.E. prophet Micah repeated these two parallel thoughts in his book (4: 2). The psalmists also use the Zion/Jerusalem parallels in their poetry (51: 18; 76: 2; 102: 21; 128: 5; 135: 21; 147: 12).

This parallelism concerning Zion appears at least 40 times in the Hebrew Scriptures. The list is in chronological order and divided by the centuries:

Date not known – Psalms. 51: 18; 76: 2; 102: 21; 128: 5;
135: 21; 147: 12

Ninth Century B.C.E. – Joel 2: 32; 3: 16, 17

Eighth Century B.C.E. – Isaiah 2: 3; 4: 3, 4; 10: 12, 32;
24: 23; 30: 19; 31: 4; 33: 20; 37: 22, 32; 40: 9; 41: 27;
52: 1, 2; 62: 1; 64: 10; Amos 1: 2; Micah 3: 10, 12; 4: 2, 8

Seventh Century B.C.E. – Jeremiah 26: 18; Zephaniah
3: 14, 16

Sixth Century B.C.E. – Lamentations 2: 10, 13

Fifth Century B.C.E. – Zechariah 1: 14, 17; 8: 3; 9: 9

Zion and Jerusalem are recognized to be synonymous and literal places in Hebrew poetry. It is then important to determine *when* to apply the specific size and location of the city of Jerusalem in the different time periods of the First Temple Period and the beginning of the Second

Temple Period. Doing so will determine how the different psalmists and prophets use the word “Zion.” It will be shown that the term is not limited to the City of David, but also included the historical Temple Mount.

The initial city, the core city, of Jerusalem was the ancient city of Jebus, that 13-acre area between the Kidron Valley and the Central Valley and slightly north of the Stepped Stone Structure (SSS). This was the early city conquered by King David.

The meaning of the name and also the location of the “City of David” (in Hebrew ‘*ir dawid*’), like Zion, change throughout the history of Jerusalem. In a recent and important article by Dr. Jurg Hutzli of the College of France in Paris entitled, “The Meaning of the Term ‘*ir dawid*’ in Samuel and Kings” (2011), he shows that the term “City of David” expands beyond the southeastern hill of Jerusalem (i.e. the 13 acres between the Kidron Valley and the Central Valley). He summarizes Othmar Keel’s views thus:

. . . whenever the term [City of David] is mentioned in Samuel and Kings [2 Samuel 5: 7, 9; 6: 10, 12, 16; 1 Kings 3: 1; 9: 24] it relates to the *pre*-Davidic stronghold [i.e. the Stronghold of Zion], which is said to have been conquered by David (2 Samuel 5: 7). He outlines his views only briefly in a few lines: After its capture the stronghold served as a residence for David and then also for the daughter of the pharaoh. The ark was placed here before its transfer to the Temple. The residence [palace] also served as a burial place for the kings. It was only later, in the Book of Chronicles, that the term began to refer to the entire southeastern hill. Keel . . . also takes into account the suggestion by some scholars. . . who tentatively identify the Stepped Stone Structure and the assumed building it retains with the biblical ‘stronghold of Zion’ (Hutzli 2011: 167-178).

Note that this author/reviewer does not share Hutzli's view that the royals' tombs were in the stronghold (cf. Nehemiah 3: 16; Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer 2005). Also note that the Palace is not the Temple. They are two different structures. The early City of David on the Stepped Stone Structure is the Palace/Stronghold of Zion area.

Professor Nadav Na'aman, a biblical historian and geographer from Tel Aviv University, concurs with Dr. Hutzli's article that the term "City of David" is limited to the area around the Stepped Stone Structure in the tenth century B.C.E. He goes on to affirm that: "the 'City of David' referred to in 2 Samuel 5: 7, 9 overlaps the area of the conquered Stronghold of Zion, and in this limited scope it appears in the cycle stories of David and Solomon and the burials of the Judahite kings prior to Hezekiah" (2012b: 96). He then goes on to demonstrate that the term "City of David" in Isaiah 22: 9-11a, dated to the end of the eighth century B.C.E., was the entire southeastern hill, and not limited to the area around the Stepped Stone Structure. Thus, the term "City of David" encompasses different areas at different times.

Dr. Eilat Mazar excavated a monumental tenth century B.C.E. building just above the Stepped Stone Structure which she called the "Large Stone Structure" and identified it as the Palace of King David (Mazar 2009: 43-65). Whether that is the Palace of King David or a building within the "stronghold of Zion" is a matter of scholarly debate, but the pottery associated with the building is clearly tenth century B.C.E. The palace complex would have been somewhere in this general area.

David bought the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, which will be shown to be above and to the north of the City of David, above the Stepped Stone Structure. David was not allowed to build the Temple because he was a man of war and bloodshed (1 Chronicles 28: 3) so his son Solomon built it in the tenth century B.C.E. on what is now known as the *Temple Mount*, or biblical *Mount Zion/Moriah*. This is separate and distinct from the Palace. In the recent on-going Temple Mount Sifting Project, archaeological remains of the tenth century B.C.E. have

been found indicating human occupation on the top of the hill (Mount Moriah) during this period (Barkay and Zweig 2007: 37-41; Barkay and Dvira 2015: 16-20). During the Bronze Age (third-second millennium B.C.E.), temples were generally located on the acropolises, situated on the highest part of cities. The Temple Mount area would be the new acropolis for Jerusalem as it was the highest part of the city during Solomon's reign.

By the eighth century B.C.E. the city of Jerusalem had expanded to the Western Hill, which included the Tyropean Valley, the area that is called "Mount Zion" today to the south of Zion Gate and the Old City walls, the Jewish Quarter, the Armenian Quarter, and also the area of Jaffa Gate (Barkay 1985). In the seventh century B.C.E. the city still included the area of the Western Hill, but it also expanded to the north of the Iron Age wall, creating extramural suburbs outside the wall of the city. These suburbs included the areas of today's Christian and Muslim quarters (cf. Jeremiah 31: 38-40; Zephaniah 1: 10-11; Barkay 1985: 45-62, XI*; Avigad 1980: 58). Thus, the location of Zion changed over the centuries. Initially Zion was located in the City of David ("Large Stone Structure"), but then included the southeastern hill, as the hill of Zion or Mount Zion. With the expansion to the west in the eighth century, the entire Western Hill is considered Zion as well. In the eighth and seventh centuries "Zion" was more than just the Stronghold of Zion or the City of David.

The latter part of Psalm 48 is twice quoted in Cornuke's book (2014: 78, 114; 2017: 78, 118-119) but the first part of the psalm is not mentioned at all. One of the sons of Korah composed this psalm at the end of the eighth century B.C.E., and in this reviewer's opinion, during the Assyrian invasion of Judah by Sennacherib: "Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the City of our God, in His holy mountain. **Beautiful in elevation**, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion on the sides of the north, the City of the Great King." (48: 1-2; emphasis added). The psalmist apparently lived in the southeastern hill of the City of David and knew from first-hand, eye-witness experience of the elevation change walking from the City of David (at this time it covered the entire south-

eastern hill; see above) up to Mount Zion, the historical Temple Mount, where the Lord resided between the cherubim that protected the Ark of the Covenant in the Temple. It is also important to notice that Mount Zion is on the north side of Jerusalem. These two geographical indicators fit well with Solomon's Temple being on the historical Temple Mount.

King Solomon had brought the Ark of the Covenant up from the City of David where King David had placed it near his palace in the area of the Stepped Stone Structure (2 Chronicles 8: 11). "Now Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel, in Jerusalem, that they might bring the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD *up from* the City of David, which is Zion" (2 Chronicles 5: 2; emphasis added). It is important to note that King Solomon brought the Ark up from the city of David, which is Zion, to a place *outside* the City of David; that place would be called Mount Zion, the area of the Temple Mount today. (Contra Cornuke 2014: 107; 2017: 111).

The point of this section is to demonstrate that the words "Zion" and "City of David" encompass different areas at different time periods. They are not limited to one specific place on the map. The historical context determines the locations of "Zion" and the "City of David" within Jerusalem.

WHERE WAS THE THRESHING FLOOR OF ARAUNAH THE JEBUSITE?

King David bought a threshing floor from Araunah (Ornan) the Jebusite (2 Samuel 24: 18-25; cf. 1 Chronicles 21: 18-30). His son, King Solomon, built the First Temple on that threshing floor. "Now Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite" (2 Chronicles 3: 1).

Where are threshing floors located? And where, specifically, was the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite? In the book, it is dogmatically stated: “So there is absolutely no doubt that David bought the threshing floor as a site to build a future temple and it was in the strict confines of the ancient outline walls of the City of David – which the Bible clearly refers to as the stronghold of Zion” (Cornuke 2014: 79; 2017: 79, see also 2014: 66; 2017: 64). Is this a factually true statement?

Dr. Oded Borowski, an Israeli archaeologist, wrote his doctoral dissertation on agriculture in Iron Age Israel. In this important work, he described the location of the threshing floor (*goren* in Hebrew) thus:

The *goren* [threshing floor] was *located outside the city* where the prevalent west wind could be used for winnowing (Hos. 13: 3). The exact location of the threshing floor was determined by the local topography. Sometimes it was close to the city gate (Jer. 15: 7), and at times it was situated in an area somewhat lower than the city itself (Ruth 3: 3). There is no direct statement in the Old Testament concerning the ownership of the threshing floor, but the story of Ruth (chap. 3) implies the existence of private threshing floors. Because it was a large open space, the threshing floors were publically owned. The use of threshing floors was most likely directed by the village authorities.

Being outside the city, the site of the threshing floor could not be defended in case of attack, and thus we find Gideon threshing wheat in the *gat*, ‘winepress’ (Judges 6:11), inside the city, as a precaution against the Midianites. The same problem is illustrated by the attack of the Philistines on the threshing floor of Qe’ila (1 Samuel 23: 1; Borowski 1987: 62-63; emphasis added).

It will be observed that after Ruth spent the night at the threshing floor with Boaz, she went into the city (Ruth 3:15). The Bible placed the

threshing floor of Boaz *outside* the city of Bethlehem. It will also be noted that Ruth went down to the threshing floor from Bethlehem because the city is set on top of a hill (Ruth 3: 3, 6). Boaz went up to Bethlehem from the threshing floor (Ruth 4: 1).

While the threshing floors were always outside the city, they were not necessarily on the tops of hills. They are placed where they can get the gentle westerly breeze in the evening hours. One of the exceptions, Bethlehem, has already been noted from the biblical text. Another one, el-Jib, sits at the base of ancient Gideon on the western side of the city to catch the westerly breeze across the Central Benjamin Plateau.

The threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite would have been *outside* the City of David. In the book, the mistake that the threshing floor was *inside* the walls of the City of David was repeatedly made (Cornuke 2014: 66, 75, 77, 79, 80, 113; 2017: 64, 75, 77, 79, 80, 117). The Bible gives clues as to where the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite was, but it was not inside the city, but rather, outside the city, atop the open hill of Moriah.

There are two accounts of David numbering the people with the Lord sending a plague against Israel (2 Samuel 24; 1 Chronicles 21). During the plague, the Lord instructed the prophet Gad to inform David to “**Go up**, erect an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite” (2 Samuel 24: 18; cf. 1 Chronicles 21: 18). Presumably David is in his palace in the City of David above the Stepped Stone Structure when he receives these instructions and he is to **go up the hill** to the threshing floor. When Solomon brought the Ark of the Covenant to the threshing floor from the City of David we read: “Now Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel, in Jerusalem, that they might bring the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD **up** from the City of David, which is Zion” (2 Chronicles 5: 2; emphasis added).

The writer of the Book of Kings essentially says the same thing:

“Now Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel, to King Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring **up** the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the City of David, which is Zion” (1 Kings 8: 1; Welty repeatedly and incorrectly said “2 Kings 8: 1” Cornuke 2017:228-230). Hutzli correctly observed on this verse that “it seems appropriate to assume that the term ‘*ir dawid*’ refers to a building or a complex of buildings: since the destination of the ark is a concrete place (the Temple), one expects a similarly concrete indication for the former location of the holy object” (2011: 170). The topographical points should be noted that the Ark was taken **uphill** from out of the City of David, just above the Stepped Stone Structure. The threshing floor could only be on the historical Temple Mount!

Dr. Leen Ritmeyer has suggested a more precise location on the Temple Mount. He wrote: “Araunah’s threshing floor was located 21.6 feet (6.6 m) east of the Dome of the Chain. This was the place where David built an altar. The Angel who appeared to David probably stood on the Rock (Sakhra), where the Ark of the Covenant was later placed” (1992: 24-45, 64-65; 2006: 315; see also 2006: 7, 244, 312-314).

Another clue as to the location of the threshing floor is found in 2 Chronicles 3: 1. It stated that the House of the LORD (Temple) was built on Mount Moriah where the threshing floor was located. In the book, Mr. Cornuke never identified where Mount Moriah was located, (since it would upset his theory) nor does he even mention Mount Moriah in the book, which is astonishing.

The only passage where Mount Moriah is mentioned in the Bible is 2 Chronicles 3: 1. (*The mountains in the land of Moriah* are what are mentioned in Genesis 22: 2). Interestingly, Cornuke quotes 2 Chronicles 3: 1 three times in the book (2014: 66, 75, 113; 2017: 64, 75, 117), and cites the passage four times (2014: 70, 77, 80, 113; 2017: 68, 77, 80, 117), but he still insisted that the Temple was located near the Gihon Spring (2014: 66, 113; 2017: 64, 117). Yet every time he quoted the verse he had an ellipsis (three dots “...”) in the middle of the passage. The ellipsis

means that a word or words are omitted from the passage. What are the words that he deleted from this verse, 2 Chronicles 3: 1? Each time the Scripture verse is quoted, the words: “*on Mount Moriah, where the LORD has appeared to his father David*” is left out. Four of the quotes or citations of this passage are found in the chapter of the book entitled, “What Does the Bible Say?” The author should have let the “Bible Say” what it says and not left out any of the highly relevant words here. Quoting the whole Bible passage would have clearly identified where the Temple was located. “Now Solomon began to build the House of the LORD at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.” The biblical text is clear: The Temple and the threshing floor were **up** on Mount Moriah and not down in the area of the Gihon Spring in the Kidron Valley.

At the end of his section on threshing floors, Dr. Welty says: “Consider, if you would please, the photograph we’ve listed of a modern-day threshing, above. It depicts a threshing floor in the foreground, the agricultural fields leading off into the background. Both the fields and the threshing floor are distinctively *not* on the apex of a hill. Furthermore, the threshing floor depicted is located near Bethlehem, Israel, not more than a kilometer or two from the old City of David! If a modern threshing floor located in Bethlehem in the modern world can be used effectively in the 21st century, there’s no reason why the threshing floor belonging to Araunah could not have been located within the City of David” (2017: 221-222).

On the previous page, there is a picture of a threshing floor near Bethlehem. This author/reviewer did a little experiment by Googling “Bethlehem” and “threshing floor” and then clicked on Google Image and *voila*, the very picture that Dr. Welty had in his article appeared. One can be certain that is how Dr. Welty found that picture as well.

That picture brought back pleasant memories. This reviewer knows exactly where that threshing floor is because while a student at

the Institute for Holy Land Studies in Jerusalem, we visited it on the way to the Herodian. As a field-trip instructor at the Jerusalem Center for Biblical Studies, the Institute for Holy Land Studies (now Jerusalem University College), and the IBEX program for the Master's College, this reviewer would always stop at that threshing floor and discuss the story of Ruth and Boaz and the shepherds in the birth narratives of the Lord Jesus on the way to the Herodian.

The concluding section of Dr. Welty's article is entitled, "My Background and Standing to Comment on this Subject." In it he gives his academic pedigree and emphasizes his language skills of the Bible. He says: "I possess the academic qualifications to speak on the subject matter of the Hebrew and Greek grammar, syntax, and historical context of the biblical text" (2017: 236). In the final footnote, he addresses, without mentioning our names, Dr. Price and my lack of language skills. "At any rate, the *content* of their polemics against Dr. Cornuke display absolutely *no acquaintance* with biblical languages (at least I've never come across a single biblical quotation made by them from the original Hebrew, Greek, or Aramaic!)" (2017: 236, footnote 22).

Dr. Welty should be reminded that biblical languages are not the issue for the discussion of the location of the temples. The important disciplines for this study are the history, archaeology, and geography of Jerusalem, the Temple Mount, and the City of David which, by the way, are this author/reviewer's areas of expertise.

Let us return to the picture Dr. Welty has in his article. This threshing floor is situated just below the Arab village of Za'tarah. The village is located on the top of a hill and situated two kilometers to the northeast of the Herodian. Off in the upper left hand side of the picture, one can just barely see the three towers on the Mount of Olives about 11-12 kilometers away. Dr. Welty states of the picture: "It depicts a threshing floor in the foreground, the agricultural fields leading off into the background. Both the fields and the threshing floor are distinctively *not* on the apex of a hill." What is not noticed is between the threshing

floor and the fields, off in the distance, is the Nahal Darga (or Wadi Darga). The bottom of the wadi (a dry river bed) is about 80 meters below the threshing floor. While the threshing floor is not at the “apex” of the hill, it is in an elevated position to get the gentle evening breeze needed to thresh the wheat from the chaff, unlike an alleged threshing floor in the Jerusalem City of David near the Gihon Spring which does not get a gentle westerly breeze in the evening.

Dr. Welty also asserts: “The threshing floor depicted is located near Bethlehem, Israel, not more than a kilometer or two from the old City of David!” One can assume that when he says “old City of David,” he is referring to Bethlehem, the original City of David. This threshing floor is actually six kilometers, as the dove flies, from the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem which is built over the ancient mound of Bethlehem.

While ancient languages are important for Biblical studies; a working knowledge of the history, archaeology, geography, and agriculture of the Bible is also important. Firsthand knowledge of the Land of the Bible is also crucial. If Dr. Welty had known the Land, he would not have made his concluding paragraph where he said: “If a modern threshing floor located in Bethlehem in the modern world can be used effectively in the 21st century, there’s no reason why the threshing floor belonging to Araunah could not have been located within the City of David.” This reviewer can speak from first-hand knowledge that this threshing floor is not “in Bethlehem” as Dr. Welty claimed, but six kilometers outside of town. It can also be said that the threshing floor went out of use in the 1990s with the introduction of mechanical threshers. A threshing floor near the Gihon Spring would not have gotten the gentle westerly breeze in the evening. If it did (but it doesn’t) the chaff from the threshing would be blown into the only water source for the City of David, the Gihon Spring. That is not good for the drinking water.

Was the Tabernacle at the Gihon Spring When Solomon Was Anointed King (1 Kings 1: 39)?

Cornuke believes, based on 1 Kings 1: 39, that the Ark of the Covenant was in the Tabernacle at the Gihon Spring in the City of David (2014: 75-76, 107; 2017: 75-76, 111). “So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the Cherethites, and the Pelethites went down and had Solomon ride on David’s mule, and took him to Gihon. Then Zadok the priest took a horn from the tabernacle and anointed Solomon. And they blew the horn, and all the people said, ‘Long live King Solomon!’” (1 Kings 1: 38-39).

Reviewer’s Recollection: I was explaining Cornuke’s position to Dr. Gabriel Barkay, a strong advocate of the Temples of Solomon and Herod being on the historical Temple Mount and the co-director of the Temple Mount Sifting Project. We read the passage in the New King James Version of the Bible where the word “tabernacle” is used in verse 39. Goby looked puzzled by the word “tabernacle” until he said, “Let’s look at this word in the Hebrew text.” I had the passage in Hebrew so he read it. When he got to verse 39 he excitedly exclaimed, “That’s it! The text does not say ‘Tabernacle,’ nor refer to the Tabernacle, but only to a tent!” Now I looked puzzled. Goby went on to explain, “When the Hebrew Bible speaks of the Tabernacle it uses the words ‘*Oh-hel mo-ed*’ (Wigram 1978: 27-29), usually translated “Tent of Meetings,” where God met with His people. In this passage, only the word ‘*oh-hel*’, tent, is used. The words “Tents of Meeting” are not used in this passage.” So an ordinary tent covered the place where Solomon was anointed. Another word that is used for the Tabernacle is *Mish-kahn* (Wigram 1978: 770-771).

That made sense now. During the summer of 1979 I worked for a few weeks in Area G of the City of David excavation, just above the Gihon Spring. By mid-morning the glaring sun was brutally hot and the temperature was excruciating. The text in 1 Kings 1 does not say what time of day or what time of year Solomon was anointed. But the tent at the Gihon Spring was a reception tent to shade the participants from the

sun or to protect them from the rain during the anointing ceremony. The Tabernacle was not located at or next to the Gihon Spring when Solomon was crowned king. It was situated above the spring on the summit of the ridge of the City of David.

“Not One Stone Left upon Another”

Cornuke’s book quoted Matthew 24: 1-2 and comments: “Christ’s words clearly state that the entire temple, each and every stone, will be dug up, dislodged, and tossed away. It is interesting to note that there are massive stone blocks by the thousands in the wall supporting the Temple Mount platform. Was Jesus wrong in His prophesying that not one stone would remain standing?” (2014: 44; 2017: 41).

The Lord Jesus was not wrong in His prophecy. What did Jesus actually say? “Then Jesus went out and departed from the Temple [*ierou*], and His disciples came to Him to show Him the buildings of the Temple [*ierou*]. And Jesus said to them, ‘Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down’” (Matthew 24: 1-2). “Then as He went out of the Temple [*ierou*], one of His disciples said to Him, ‘Teacher, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!’ And Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down’” (Mark 13: 1-2). “Then, as some spoke of the Temple [*ierou*], how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations, He said, ‘As for these things which you see, the days will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down’” (Luke 21: 5-6). When each of the accounts are read in the three Synoptic gospels, it is observed that only the Temple and the buildings on the Temple Mount will be destroyed. The Lord Jesus said nothing about the Temple platform enlarged and constructed by Herod the Great because it is not a building.

What buildings were the disciples pointing to when Jesus said they would be destroyed? On the north side of the Temple, going west to

east, there is the Chamber of the Hearth, the Gate of Jeconiah, a rinsing chamber, the Gate of the Offering for Women, a salt chamber, the Gate of the Flame, the Chamber of the Lepers, the Northern Gate, and the Chamber of the Woodshed. On the south side of the Temple, going west to east, there is the Kindling Gate, a wood chamber, the Gate of the Firstling, the Golah chamber, the Water Gate, the Chamber of Hewn Stone, the Chamber of the House of Oil, the Southern Gate, and the Chamber of the Nazarites. For a map, the reader can see Ritmeyer 2006: 345; for pictures of models, see 2006: 141, 218, 349, 372, 373; see also Netzer 2008: 141. There was also the Royal Stoa at the southern end of the Temple Mount (Josephus, *Antiquities* 15. 411-415; LCL 8: 199-201; Ritmeyer 2006: 90-94; Netzer 2008: 164-171).

In 70 C.E., the Temple and the surrounding buildings were destroyed, but the retaining walls were not the subject of the disciples' observations, thus the prophecy of the Lord Jesus did not include the platform on which the Temple was built. The Lord Jesus said nothing about the enclosure wall of the Temple Mount, although a significant portion of its perimeter structures were included in the Roman destruction. His prediction of the Temple and the surrounding buildings being destroyed was fulfilled – 100 percent to the letter, yet Jesus predicted nothing about the retaining wall built by Herod the Great.

A Perfect Fit?

Cornuke tried to argue that the Temple of Herod was a “perfect fit,” situated on a large square platform, 500 cubits by 500 cubits, over the Gihon Spring and part of the City of David. The book stated: “Josephus also confirms (in *Wars* V.5.2) that the temple was square-shaped. The historical Temple Mount/Dome of the Rock platform, however, is not square at all, but a trapezium that measures 1,041 feet on its north wall, 1,596 feet on its west wall, 929 feet on its south wall, and 1,556 feet on its east wall” (2014: 109; 2017: 113).

There are several factual errors in this quote. First of all, the cita-

tion from *Wars* 5 says nothing about the Temple being square; the correct quote is actually found in *Antiquities* 15. Second, the square mentioned by Josephus was actually the measurement of the platform that Solomon's Temple was originally built upon and not Herod's Temple (Ritmeyer 1992: 27; 2006: 140). Josephus is quite clear on this point. He wrote: "The hill [where Herod's Temple was built] was a rocky ascent that sloped gently up toward the eastern part of the city to the topmost peak" (*Antiquities* 15.397; LCL 8: 193). Two geographical points are to be noticed. First, Herod's Temple was on the topmost peak, a reference to the top of the Temple Mount, not down the slopes over or near the Gihon Spring. Second, Jerusalem of the Second Temple Period included the area of the Western Hill and today's Christian Quarter. From these areas, the Temple Mount is the eastern part of the city.

Josephus then described the hill on which Solomon's Temple was built in these terms: "This hill our first king, Solomon, with God-given wisdom surrounded with great works above at the top. And below, beginning at the foot, where a deep ravine runs around it, he surrounded it with enormous stones bound together with lead. He cut off more and more of the area within as (the wall) became greater in depth, so that the size and height of the structure, *which was a square*, were immense, and the great size of the stones was seen along the front surface, while iron clamps on the inside assured that the joints would remain permanently united. When this work reached the top of the hill, he leveled off the summit, and filled in the hollow spaces near the walls, and made the upper surface smooth and even throughout. **Such was the whole enclosure, having a circumference of four stades, each side taking up the length of a stade**" (*Antiquities* 15. 398-400; LCL 8:193; Ritmeyer 2006: 138-145, 165-205; emphasis added). It is important to note again the geographical terms "at the top" and "the top of the hill," not down the slopes in the City of David as Cornuke's book contends. The square platform was built by Solomon or one of the later Judean kings, but not by Herod the Great as the book stated (Ritmeyer 2006: 141).

The book cited "Shanks, p. 69" as the source for the 500 by 500

cubits square platform information (Cornuke 2014: 203, footnote 6; 2017: 113). It was actually found in another Shanks' book (2007: 69, 192, footnote 15) where Shanks footnoted Dr. Leen Ritmeyer's excellent article on the location of the original Solomonic Temple (1992: 24-45, 65-66), but apparently not consulted or at least not interacted with by Mr. Cornuke for his book. The measurement of 500 cubits also comes from tractate *Middoth* ("measurements") of the *Mishnah*. "The Temple Mount measured five hundred cubits by five hundred cubits. Its largest [open] space was to the south, the next largest to the east, the third largest to the north, and its smallest [open space] was to the west" (2.1; Danby 1985: 591; brackets in original). Cornuke is correct to state that Tractate Middot is the oldest portions of the Mishnah (2014: 109; 2017: 113; contra Welty's statements 2017:216-217). What he does not mention is that parts of the tractate contain statements by rabbis and sages living in the first century C.E. and were eye-witnesses to the Temple of Herod. In all probability, the 500 cubit is a reliable statement based on firsthand knowledge of the Temple.

The cubit used by Solomon was the long (royal) Egyptian cubit that measured 52.5 centimeters or 20.67 inches long (Barkay 1986: 37; Ritmeyer 1992: 33). Thus, the First Temple square platform was 262.5 meters (861 feet, almost three football fields in length) on each side. (In the Second Temple Period, ca. 400 B.C.E. to 70 C.E., the cubit was about 50 cm.)

Personal Recollection: I did a very revealing exercise by taking the "Ordnance Survey of Jerusalem" topographical map (1864-65) by Captain Charles Wilson of the British army and cut a square out of a piece of paper that was 861 feet on the English foot scale. I placed the square 600 feet south of the Temple Mount, according to the scale, and had the square parallel to the Temple Mount. Cornuke's alleged twin-bridge that was 600 feet between the Antonia's Fortress and the Temple Mount was connected from the southwest corner of the present-day Temple Mount to the northwest corner of the Temple complex as shown in the drawing in the book (2014: 142; cf. 2014: 62; 2017: 145; cf. 2017: 61; blue line on

diagram of Figure 1). What the imagined square in the book (red square on diagram) covered was very revealing. Besides part of the City of David, it also covered the entire Kidron Valley and part of the Silwan Village on the western slopes of the Mount of Olives. As will be shown below, the illustrations in the book did not even follow its own written calculations!

Geographically, this square platform over the Gihon Spring (red square on diagram of Figure 1) makes no sense for the location of Solomon's or Herod's Temple and it is impossible for the location of the Temple platform for three reasons. First, the First Temple platform would have covered the Iron Age houses in the residential area on the eastern slopes of the City of David, also known as Shiloh's Areas G and E, and Kenyon's Area A, that were built after the time of Solomon (Shiloh 1984: 17-20). Were these houses dug into the basement of the platform after the construction of the First Temple by Solomon? Second, part of the Silwan Village, which was an Iron Age necropolis for Jerusalemite administrators, would have also been covered (Ussishkin 1993). It would be impossible to hew Iron Age burial caves in the Silwan escarpment after the Solomonic platform was built. Third, it would dam up the Kidron Valley and create a lake to the north of the Temple complex. Unless of course, Solomon or Herod the Great engaged in a monumental construction project by putting huge sewer pipes under the Temple platform to allow the water from the Kidron Valley to flow through or underneath the Temple complex and down the Kidron Valley to the Dead Sea. But there are no records in the Bible, in Josephus' works, the rabbinic sources, or archaeological evidence of any such sewer system or man-made lake.

In reality, Herod expanded the Temple platform so it was considerably larger than the 500-cubit First Temple platform and this is consistent with the literary sources. During the Seleucid, Hasmonean, and Herodian periods the Temple Mount platform was enlarged, thus making the Temple Mount in the days of Herod the Great much larger than the square platform of King Solomon (Ritmeyer 1992: 30-31; Patrich and Edelcopp 2011: 17-37). This is the trapezoid-shaped Temple Mount platform, cited in the first paragraph of this section, which is seen today.

The “perfect fit” of a square of 500 cubits on each side does, however, fit very well on the historical Temple Mount, called by scholars the “Ritmeyer Square” (see green square on diagram; for an excellent summary of this square on the Temple Mount, see Ritmeyer 1992: 27; 2006: 139-145, 238-239). Mr. Cornuke’s (as well as Ernest Martin’s) idea that the temples were over the Gihon Spring collapses on this one point alone and it was not the Romans who dismantled this imagined square platform – it was the facts on the ground and on the maps that dismantled this theory!

Ancient Garbology and the Location of the Temple

Ancient garbology is the study of ancient trash. Israeli archaeologists have spent much time, energy, and resources, excavating the ancient garbage dump of Jerusalem on the eastern slope of the City of David. Much can be learned about what the people ate, how they viewed ritual purity, sacrifices on the Temple, and the waste management operation of the Romans.

The book’s imagined 500 by 500-cubit Herodian square (red on diagram) would have covered the eastern slope of the City of David that was an active city garbage dump during the Second Temple Period. In an important and fascinating article by Professor Ronny Reich and Dr. Eli Shukron, the recent excavators of the City of David, they have described the city-dump on this slope in these terms: “In almost every excavated area, an extremely thick layer of loose debris just under surface [was encountered]. This layer is made of earth, loose rubble, small stones and a large amount of broken artifacts (mainly pottery shards with fragments of stone and glass vessels, coins, etc.), as well as broken animal bones. It seems to be ordinary household garbage, which was dumped down the slope, as is characterized by the slanting bedding lines of the debris. These bedding lines have a constant gradient of approximately 32 degrees, and they show occasional sorting of the components according to mass and size” (2003: 12).

Reich and Shukron summarized the size and date of this dump by saying: "The mantle of debris covers the entire eastern slope of the southwestern hill (the City of David). This area of debris is at least 400 meters long on the North-South axis (i.e., the length of the hill), and 50-70 meters wide on the West-East axis (i.e., the length of the slope). A modest estimate will show that we deal here with a huge deposit which measures, at least, $400 \times 50 \times 10 \text{ m} = 200,000$ cubic meters. According to a preliminary reading of the artifacts retrieved from the debris, the greater part of this amount was accumulated during a period of time that extends approximately from the middle of the 1st century B.C.E. to the year 70 C.E., i.e., over approximately 100-120 years" (2003:14; see also Bouchnik, Bar-Oz, and Reich 2004: 71-80, 50*; Reich and Bar-Oz 2006: 83-98, 14*-15*; Bar-Oz 2007: 1-12; Reich 2011: 219-221; Spiciarich, Gadot, and Sipir-Hen 2017: 98-117; Gadot 2018: 36-45, 70).

In reality, an active city garbage dump that was in continuous use during at least the last 100 years of the Second Temple Period covered the area where the book claimed the 500 x 500 cubit Temple platform was standing. Herod the Great would not have built a temple over an active garbage dump that continued to be in use the whole time his temple existed. The Temple must have been located elsewhere.

A "Superiority" Complex?

In this section of the book, several factual errors were made, and one mistake was copied and repeated from a secondary source (2014: 37-39; 2017: 33-36). The section began by calling the Dome of the Rock "the Mosque of Omar" (see also 2014: 8, 19; 2017: 2, 15). The Dome of the Rock is not a mosque and Omar did not build it. This shrine was built by the Umayyad Caliph 'Abd al-Malik (685-705 C.E.). Its octagonal shape, patterned after two known Christian churches in the area, indicated that it was a commemorative building, and not a mosque (Grabar 1959: 37).

Professor Moshe Sharon of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and an expert on Arabic and Islamic history observed that: "The Dome of

the Rock was not a mosque, it was a shrine, and it no doubt was built to honor and commemorate the rock over which the dome itself was raised.” He goes on to suggest that: “The most important memory involved the Jewish Temple built by Solomon; the Muslims believed the rock of the Dome of the Rock was a vestige of Solomon’s Temple” (2006: 42).

Sharon documented the fact that the earliest Muslims in Jerusalem believed the Dome of the Rock was the location of Solomon’s Temple, and they learned of the location of this Temple from the local Jewish population. Sharon stated: “[The] Dome of the Rock was built by the early Muslims to symbolize the renewal of the Temple. The new holy structure thus served as a physical refutation of the Christian belief that the site should remain in desolation. Similarly, early Jewish midrash, though composed some 60 years after the building of the Dome of the Rock, hails the Muslims as the initiators of Israel’s redemption and praises one Muslim ruler as the builder of the ‘House of the Lord’” (2006: 44; also see his earlier article, 1992: 56-67).

This goes contrary to the statement in the book that the Muslims did not build the Dome of the Rock because of any former Jewish Temple (Cornuke 2014: 39). In actual fact, that’s **exactly** why the Muslims built the Dome of the Rock, because it was the place of the former Temple of Solomon.

Mr. Cornuke’s book goes on to quote Dr. Myriam Rosen-Ayalon as saying: “the buildings [plural] on the Temple Mount were, ‘Conceived in a manner and setting meant entirely to overwhelm and overshadow the Christian shrine, (which is the Church of the Holy Sepulcher).” (2014: 39; 2017: 35). The book then cited the footnote on page 7 of her *Qedem* 28 volume describing the early Islamic monuments on the Haram al-Sharif (“Noble Sanctuary”), the Arabic name for the Temple Mount. The quote in the book actually came from page 11 of Hershel Shanks’ book, *Jerusalem’s Temple Mount*. Cornuke’s book even copied the mistake that Shanks made citing Rosen-Ayalon’s book. Shanks said that the buildings (plural), referred to the buildings on the Temple Mount, when

in fact, Rosen-Ayalon wrote an “Islamic monument” (singular) and was referring specifically to the al-Aqsa Mosque, not the Dome of the Rock or any other buildings on the Temple Mount (1989: 4-7). Did the author of the book, *Temple*, actually consult Dr. Rosen-Ayalon’s important work on the architecture of the Haram?

Cornuke’s book also claimed that the Mosque of Omar [sic] “is thought by Muslims to be the third most holy place in Islam” (2014: 19; 2017: 15). This is also factually incorrect. The Al-Aqsa Mosque is the third holiest shrine in Islam, not the Dome of the Rock. The reader will remember that when Anwar Sadat, the president of Egypt, went to Jerusalem to make peace with Menachem Begin, the prime minister of Israel, he went to Al-Aqsa Mosque to pray and not the Dome of the Rock.

The tenth century C.E. Muslim historian, Muqaddasi, was also quoted, but a footnote for this source is not given in the book for this quote (2014: 38; 2017: 34-35). This reviewer observed that the quote also came from page 11 of Shanks’ book, but Cornuke’s book only quoted Shanks book, a secondary source, and not the original sources footnoted by Shanks (Grabar 1976: 55; Goitein 1982: 177). These two articles should have been consulted as well.

The author of the book did not verify what Shanks wrote in his book, but just copied his inaccurate statement. He should have looked up Rosen-Ayalon’s book and caught Shanks’ mistake himself, rather than repeat the inaccurate statement.

The Nuba Inscription

In the fall of 2016 a new discovery was announced that added another nail to the coffin of the historical Temple Mount deniers. It was a 1,000+ year old Arabic inscription that was discovered by Assaf Avraham and Peretz Reuven on a wall of the Mosque of Nuba, a village near Hebron.

The translation of the text is as follows:

In the name of Allah, the merciful god. This territory, Nuba, and all its boundaries and its entire area, is an endowment to the Rock of 'Bayt al-Maqdis' and the al-Aqsa Mosque as it was dedicated by the commander of the faithful, Umar iben al-Khattab, for the sake of Allah the almighty.

There are at least three things to notice about this inscription. First, the Arabic words *Bayt al-Maqdis* is equivalent to the Hebrew words *Beit Ha-Mikdash* and is translated "Holy Temple" or "House of the Sanctuary." The Muslims equated the Dome of the Rock with the locations of the temples on the historical Temple Mount. Second, there is a reference to the two buildings, the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque, found on the Haram al-Sharief of the historical Temple Mount. Finally, the inscription was dedicated by the commander, Umar iben al-Khattab, the Islamic leader who conquered Jerusalem from the Byzantine Christians in 638 C.E.

There are contemporary Islamic references to the Bayt al-Maqdis. Several of them are as follows:

"I would regularly pray with Ibn-Dahar in Bayt- al Maqdis, when he entered, he used to remove his shoes."

"Anyone who comes to Bayt al-Maqdis only for the sake of praying inside it – is cleansed of all his sins."

"I entered Bayt- al Maqdis and saw a man taking longer than usual for his bows."

"The rock that is in Bayt al-Maqdis is the center of the entire universe." This reference is based on a Jewish understanding that the Stone in the Dome of the Rock was the center of the universe.

Even as recent as 1925 the guide book for the Haram esh-Sharif acknowledged the Dome of the Rock was built over the location of Solomon's Temple. It says, "Its identity with the site of Solomon's Temple is beyond

dispute. This, too, is the spot, according to universal belief, on which 'David built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings' (2 Samuel 24:25)" (Anonymous 1925: 4).

What Was the Origin of the Octagonal Shape of the Dome of the Rock?

In the appendix of the book, Welty challenges this reviewer's assertion that the Dome of the Rock was a commemorative building. He contends that:

Its octagonal shape indicates that it is modeled after the Temple of Baal-bek in Lebanon. It was definitely not a commemorative building. Instead, it was a part of larger worship center dedicated to pagan deities. That's why the Umayyad Caliph built the structure as a mosque. An astute reader will note the parallels between the site layout at Baal-bek and the Temple Mount ruins. The Muslim Dome of the Rock occupies the same relative position as did the octagonal structure at Baal-bek. The modern Al-Aqsa Mosque occupies the same relative position on the Temple Mount as did the Temple to Bacchus at Baal-bek. The Caliph's building program was intentional in this regard (Cornuke 2017: 227).

Whether there are parallels between the site layout of the Dome of the Rock and the octagonal structure at Baal-bek can be debated. The question is, "Why do you have to go 200 plus miles to the north of Jerusalem to find a parallel when you can go three and six miles to the south of the Dome of the Rock and find two octagonal structures, which in all probability the Dome of the Rock was patterned after?"

Two Islamic scholars, writing in the *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, correctly dismiss two octagonal churches as possible parallels in Jerusalem, i.e. the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Church of the

Ascension on the Mount of Olives. They concluded their article by saying:

Yet, there is no record of any other important building built with an octagonal shape anywhere in the Islamic world during this period of a thousand years. This confirms the view presented in this paper that the Dome of the Rock needed to be octagonal to reflect the unique religious scenario that was believed to be happening only in the location where it was being built and will not be repeated anywhere else (Islam and al-Hamad 2007: 126; cf. Rosen-Ayalon 1989: 12).

In 1992 the Jerusalem municipality was widening the Jerusalem-Hebron Road when ancient remains were discovered north of the Mar Elias Monastery. It was excavated by the Israel Antiquities Authority under the directorship of Rina Avner (Avner, Lavas, and Rosidis 2001:89*-92*, 133-137; 2003: 173-186; see also Avner 2010 and 2011). The site was identified as the Kathisma Church and Monastery dedicated to the place that Mary, the Theotokos, rested on her way to Bethlehem to give birth to the Lord Jesus. This event is recorded in the apocryphal *Protoevangelion of James* 17: 2-3.

The octagonal Kathisma Church was built in 456 C.E. and patterned after the octagonal Constantine the Great Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem that was built in 333 C.E. The octagonal church was replaced during the reign of Emperor Justinian (525-565 C.E.). When the Dome of the Rock was built in 691-692 C.E., only the Kathisma Church was standing (Avner 2010: 37). Avner, the excavator of the Kathisma Church, observed that: "The architectural similarities between the Church of the Kathisma and the Dome of the Rock appear in the following features: both are octagonal in their exteriors, their plans each consist of a central space with a hallowed rock, and both have two octagonal concentric belts around that central space" (2010: 38). It is not surprising to see the parallel between these two buildings because the supervisors of the building of the Dome of the Rock resided in Jeru-

saalem and would have been familiar with the Kathisma Church (Avner 2010: 43). There is also an octagonal church built on the top of Mount Gerizim in 484 C.E. and is also dedicated to Mary “the Mother of God” (Theotokos) (Magen 1990: 333-342).

The excavator, Avner, suggested that the Umayyad caliph, abd al-Malik, wanted to “construct a monument [the Dome of the Rock] that transmitted an anti-Christian statement. For the Dome of the Rock was designed to surpass in beauty the shrines from which both its plan and architecture derives. Furthermore, it was meant to express the emergence of a new faith that rejects a basic tenet of Christian belief – the divinity of Christ – as well as the veneration of his mother, Mary, as ‘God Bearer’” (2010: 44).

Throughout History the Jewish People Knew Where the Temple Was Located

Cornuke’s assertion that in the fourth century C.E. people did not know where the temples had been located (Cornuke 2014: 9, 35; 2017: 3, 31). The Jewish people **knew** exactly where the temples were because they had unbroken knowledge from 70 C.E. as to where the temples had stood on the historical Temple Mount.

Professor F. M. Loewenberg, professor emeritus of Bar Ilan University, in an important article entitled, “Did Jews Abandon the Temple Mount?”, documents the history of the Jewish people and their attachment to the historical Temple Mount. He points out that: “The destruction of the Second Temple in the year 70 C.E. did not spell the end of Jewish activities on the Temple Mount. For many centuries, Jews continued their attachment to the site by maintaining a physical presence on the mountain. And when they were prevented from doing so, they prayed three times a day for the speedy renewal of the sacrificial services in a restored temple.” He goes on to say: Despite the conventional wisdom that the Jewish people were banished from this holy site, the evidence suggests that Jews continued to maintain a strong connection to and

frequently even a presence on the Temple Mount for the next two thousand years. Even when they were physically prevented from ascending the site, their attachment to Har Habayit remained strong and vibrant.” He then proceeded to document the Jewish presence on the historical Temple Mount throughout the Roman rule (70-300); the Byzantine period (300-618); the Early Muslim rule (638-1099); the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem (1099-1187); the Ottoman empire (1516-1856); and up until modern times. He concluded: “Even after the Roman armies destroyed the temple in 70 C.E., the Jews never abandoned the site. No matter what obstacles or decrees others placed in their way, Jews continued to ascend and pray at or near the area where the temple once stood.” (Loewenberg 2013).

***Miqva’ot* Around the Historic Temple Mount**

Cornuke described the discovery of the alleged coin from 20 C.E., but he does not indicate it was discovered in a *mikvah* (ritual bath) and the implications of the location of this and other ritual baths around and possibly on the historic Temple Mount (Reich 1989; 1990; 1999; Regev 2005: 194-204; Adler 2006: 209-215; Mazar 2002: 46-49, 61). Part of the Jewish ritual before one entered the Temple was to immerse oneself in a ritual bath. “None may enter the Temple Court for [an act of the Temple] Service, even though he is clean, until he has immersed himself” (Mishnah *Yoma* 3:3; Danby 1985: 164; Aviam 2014: 124-126).

Why are there so many *mikvaot* [Hebrew plural] or Jewish ritual baths on or in close proximity to the Temple Mount (Zweig 2008: 295-296, 49*, Plate 1A-1B) if the site was only the Antonia Fortress controlled by the Gentile Romans? Most Jewish people would not be visiting the Fortress so there would be no need to immerse themselves in these *mikvaot*. These *mikvaot*, however, would make perfect sense where they are if Jewish people wanted to immerse themselves in the ritual baths just before entering Herod’s Temple on the historical Temple Mount.

CONCLUSIONS

It was not this author/reviewer's intention to write a book-length review. There are numerous other topics that were misunderstood in Cornuke's books that have not been discussed. For example, the meaning of the Greek word *tagma* (2014: 48; 2017: 45); the "Flawed Theory" (2014: 49-51; 2017: 46-48); the "Mount is the Fort" (2014: 51-52; 2017: 48-50); Benjamin of Tudela, Eusebius, and Hecateus of Abdera (2014: 71-72; 2017: 69-71); Aristeeas (2014: 83-84; 2017: 85-86); Tacitus (2014: 84-85; 2017: 86-87); the Temple Scroll (2014: 85-86; 2017: 87-88); the cleansing stream for the high priest's ritual cleansing (2014: 87-88; 2017: 89-91); the number of soldiers taking the Apostle Paul to Caesarea (2014: 90-95; 2017: 93-98), the simple answer to this problem is, however, that the 470 Roman soldiers were part of a reinforcement unit that came up to Jerusalem for the Feast of *Shavuot* (Pentecost) and were returning to Caesarea after the feast was over; King Herod Agrippa II's view into the Temple area (2014: 108; 2017: 112-113); and Nehemiah's Walls (2014: 121-123; 2017: 125-127; but see Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer 2005 for an excellent scholarly discussion of these walls).

The subtitle of the books say: "*Amazing New Discoveries that Change Everything About the Location of Solomon's Temple.*" As was shown in this chapter, the so-called "amazing new discoveries" do not change anything about the location of Solomon's Temple. It was still originally located up on the Temple Mount. Because of his lack of archaeological training and his lack of understanding of the archaeological, geographical, historical, and biblical information of Jerusalem and the historical Temple Mount, Cornuke's books do not change anything about the location of Solomon's or Herod's temples. They were still originally located on the historical Temple Mount.

These are not "highly-researched" books as the back covers of the books claim, nor are they carefully researched and written. As was shown above, there was a serious lack of any scholarship and the author did not grasp the archaeology, topography, geography, and literary sources of the

ancient city of Jerusalem. Only a handful of secondary sources were used, but they were not critically read or followed-up on to check to see if those authors had gotten their facts correct.

The book cover also asks the provocative question: “Could history be so stunningly wrong?” The simple answer is “No.” History is correct on the original location of the temples on the historical Temple Mount in Jerusalem. The facts are: Solomon’s and Herod’s temples were on the historical Temple Mount in Jerusalem. It is those individuals who try to move the temples to the City of David above the Gihon Spring who are so stunningly wrong. The facts are: The probability of the temples being above the Gihon Spring in the City of David is ZERO. Mr. Cornuke has produced no credible historical, archaeological, geographical, geological, or biblical evidence for his claims. This is the greatest archaeological blunder of all time. Case closed!

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For the:

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**Geography of the Holy Land: Jerusalem, Regional Cities, Small Towns,
and Rural Places**

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For information and address of authors, write:

**William A. Dando, Earth and Environmental Systems,
Indiana State University, Terre Haute, IN 47809.**

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Brief snapshots of regional cities, small towns, and rural places of special interest during the early period in the spread of the Christian message are located at the conclusion of the chapter, “A Cartographic Analysis and Brief Description of ‘Preacher Point’ and ‘Miracle Site’ Cities, Towns, Villages, and Rural Places Cited in the Four Gospels” in Part One.

Geography of the Holy Land

Jerusalem, Regional Cities, Small Towns, and Rural Places



William A. Dando Caroline Z. Dando Jonathan J. Lu