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### Temple as Cosmos

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DOI:  
[10.33612/diss.136230249](https://doi.org/10.33612/diss.136230249)

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*Document Version*  
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

*Publication date:*  
2020

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*  
Xavier Pena, J. (2020). *Temple as Cosmos: The Jerusalem Temple Imagery in Josephus' Writings*. University of Groningen. <https://doi.org/10.33612/diss.136230249>

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Temple as Cosmos  
The Jerusalem Temple Imagery in Josephus' Writings

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By Joabson Xavier Pena

1. Modern scholars tend to overlook the historical context of Josephus' cosmological interpretation of the Jerusalem Temple, and its predecessor the Tent. The historical context in which Josephus worked can help us understand what motivates the author to read the cult site cosmologically.
2. Josephus' cosmological interpretation of the Jerusalem Temple is comprehensible when read in light of a widespread tendency in Graeco-Roman cultures; he follows other contemporary thinkers who attempt to place their deities or rulers in a universal context.
3. Considering that the Jerusalem Temple, and its predecessor the Tent, was the place where God chose to dwell and from which he controlled human affairs, the cult site, its implements, and priests' attire embodied the universe as created and sustained by God.
4. Josephus' appealing to audiences in Rome is all the more impressive when we consider that several Roman buildings in the Imperial Age were read or constructed as mirroring the cosmos.
5. Numerous specialists have made extensive use of Josephus' *War* for their "accurate" reconstruction of the Herodian Temple. However, it is worth stressing that Josephus paints an incomplete and sometimes distorted picture of the cult site.
6. Given the power of the high priest, and his role as the only representative of God on earth, Josephus gives special attention to the portrayal of the high priestly apparel in his account of the Tent in *Antiquities*. For him, the high priest is a microcosm, whose clothes reflect the image of the universe.
7. *Iōsēpos*, the Hellenized Hebrew name for Josephus, contains seven letters. In Graeco-Roman tradition, the number seven is associated with the cosmos.