



Invention of the First-Century Synagogue

Lidia D. Matassa

Jason M. Silverman and J. Murray Watson, editors

Crucial insights into the difficult issues related to early synagogue identification

This work critically reevaluates the scholarship surrounding the identification of first-century synagogues at five key sites: Delos, Jericho, Herodium, Masada, and Gamla. These sites are consistently used in modern scholarship as comparators for all other early synagogues. Matassa reviews the scholarly discourse concerning each site, inspects each site, and examines the excavation reports in conjunction with a thorough analysis of the literary and epigraphic evidence. She uncovers misunderstandings of the site remains by previous scholars and concludes that excavators incorrectly identified synagogues at Delos, Jericho, Masada, and Herodium. In the case of Gamla, however, the identification may be correct.

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- A detailed and in-depth study of key archaeological sites that confirms and corrects the current understanding of their remains
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- More than forty maps, images, and illustrations

Lidia D. Matassa was an independent scholar and founding president of the Irish Association for the Study of the Ancient Near East. She participated in a number of excavations in Israel and helped organize multiple interdisciplinary conferences in Dublin. She coedited *Text, Theology, and Trowel: Recent Research into the Hebrew Bible* (2011). Matassa passed away suddenly in January 2016.

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