

Triclinium Trialectics: The *Triclinium* as Contested Space in Early Roman Palestine*

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■ Abstract

This study draws on critical spatial theory to analyze the earliest archaeological and literary evidence of the *triclinium*, or Roman dining room, in Early Roman Palestine. It begins by examining the archaeological evidence of *triclinia* and similar banqueting spaces in Palestine, addressing their dating, their differing settings, and how their appearance and diffusion reflects socioeconomic and cultural changes under Roman influence. Next, it examines literary constructions of banqueting spaces in the Parables of Enoch, Testament of Moses, and “Q Sayings Gospel.” It demonstrates that these sources all seem to envision a *triclinium* setting in which elites eat, drink, and engage in all sorts of revelry while reclining on couches. The final section is devoted to critical spatial analysis of both the archaeological and literary data. It argues that these sources all evince, in varying ways, the interpenetration of local and global spaces rather than the unilateral “Romanization” of provincial space.

■ Keywords

Triclinium, banquet, Romanization, spatial theory, apocalyptic literature

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■ Introduction

Should the host of a dinner party arrange the seating of their guests or leave it to the guests themselves? Ironically, this question about how to enhance social intercourse provoked a dispute between two dinner guests at a drinking party in Roman Greece around the turn of the second century CE. According to Plutarch's *Sympotic Questions* (*Quaestiones conviviales*), the philosopher's brother, Timon, and father disagreed over how to seat guests on the couches in a dining room, or *triclinium* (1.2–3). Timon believed that seating should be democratic, but his father supported a hierarchical arrangement that would recognize distinctions of wealth, rank, age, and family. The cultural contingency of these spatial conceptions becomes apparent when an arriviste appears at the entrance of the *triclinium* only to retreat upon finding that an honorable seat had not been reserved for him. The insulted latecomer, like Plutarch's father, expected a Roman seating arrangement that acknowledged his wealth and status rather than a Greek arrangement. Plutarch, we soon learn, opts for a compromise: he prefers the Greek democratic mode for young guests, citizens, and friends but favors status distinctions for foreigners, elders, and rulers. He also insinuates that the proper distinction in seating should valorize someone who acquired virtue through Greek learning (παιδεία) instead of wealth and status by chance (τύχη).¹

Jewish literary texts from Early Roman Palestine contain very similar negotiations of Roman architectural forms and spatial practices. The Roman *triclinium*, or dining room comprising three couches for reclining, receives frequent mention in New Testament scholarship.² But it usually surfaces in discussions of meals and social status in the Pauline assemblies in Greece and Asia Minor or the development of the *domus ecclesia*.³ Meanwhile, archaeologists of Palestine have

¹ David Driscoll, "Sympotic Space, Hierarchy and Homeric Quotation in *Table Talk* 1.2," in *Space, Time and Language in Plutarch* (ed. Aristoula Georgiadou and Katerina Oikonomopoulou; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2017) 271–78. See, further, Jason König, *Saints and Symposiasts: The Literature of Food and the Symposium in Greco-Roman and Early Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) 60–89.

² E.g., Carolyn Osiek and David L. Balch, *Families in the New Testament World: Households and House Churches* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997); L. Michael White, "Regulating Fellowship in the Communal Meal: Early Jewish and Christian Evidence," *Meals in a Social Context: Aspects of the Communal Meal in the Hellenistic and Roman World* (ed. Inge Nielsen and Hanne Sigismund Nielsen; Aarhus Studies in Mediterranean Antiquity 1; Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1998) 177–205; David L. Balch, *Roman Domestic Art and Early House Churches* (WUNT 228; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008); idem, *Contested Ethnicities and Images: Studies in Acts and Arts* (WUNT 345; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015). Peter Oakes, "Nine Types of Church in Nine Types of Space in the Insula of the Menander," in *Early Christianity in Pompeian Light* (ed. Bruce Longenecker; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016) 23–58.

³ An important exception that discusses the historical Jesus and the early Synoptic traditions is Dennis E. Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003). However, Smith does not treat these traditions as products of changing material conditions in Early Roman Palestine, but rather against the broad background of Greco-Roman culture.

focused on *triclinia* of the second and third centuries, and scholars of Judaism on the rabbinic *symposia*.⁴ There has been very little sustained investigation into the emergence of *triclinia* in Early Roman Palestine (63 BCE–70 CE) and the Jewish literary responses to this new type of social space.⁵

This study begins to fill this gap in scholarship on local reactions to the early stages of provincial transformation in the Levant. It thus serves as a contribution to debates over the vexed concept of “Romanization,” whose problematic binaries of acculturation and resistance, Roman and native, imposition and acceptance, and aristocracy and peasantry persist in scholarship on ancient Judaism and the New Testament despite their persuasive dismantling by a number of classical historians.⁶ Instead of viewing the *triclinium* as a Roman spatial imposition, and Jewish literary representations of it as expressions of anti-Romanization, I demonstrate that both sets of data constitute distinctive provincial negotiations of cultural and socioeconomic shifts in the early empire.

After examining the archaeological and literary evidence of *triclinia* in Early Roman Palestine in two respective sections, I draw on critical spatial theory in order to synthesize and explain what this evidence indicates about changing

⁴ Seth Schwartz, “No Dialogue at the *Symposium*? Conviviality in Ben Sira and the Palestinian Talmud,” in *The End of Dialogue in Antiquity* (ed. Simon Goldhill; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 193–216; Gil Klein, “Torah in *Triclinia*: The Rabbinic Banquet and the Significance of Architecture,” *JQR* 102 (2012) 325–70; Eyal Baruch, “Adapted Roman Rituals in Second Century CE Jewish Houses,” in *Jews and Christians in the First and Second Centuries: The Interbellum 70–132 CE* (ed. Joshua Schwartz and Peter J. Tomson; Leiden: Brill, 2018) 50–74. Much of the discussion has focused on the famous *triclinia* in the early 3rd cent. CE peristyle mansions in Sepphoris (the Houses of Dionysos and Orpheus): Zeev Weiss, “The House of Orpheus: Another Villa from the Late Roman Period in Sepphoris,” *Qad* 36 (2003) 94–101 (Hebrew); Rina Talgam and Zeev Weiss, *The Mosaics of the House of Dionysos at Sepphoris*, Qedem 44 (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2004).

⁵ Although I follow scholarly convention by setting the beginning of the “Early Roman period” in Palestine with Pompey’s conquest in 63 BCE, in this paper I also examine the influence of Roman culture in the Levant prior to Pompey (e.g., see below on Tel Anafa and Jericho).

⁶ Among others: David L. Kennedy, “Greek, Roman and Native Cultures in the Roman Near East,” in *The Roman and Byzantine Near East: Some Recent Archaeological Research* (ed. John H. Humphrey; JRASup 14; Portsmouth: JRA, 1999) 2:76–106; Greg Woolf, *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); idem, “Becoming Roman, Staying Greek: Culture, Identity and the Civilizing Process in the Roman East,” *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 40 (1994) 116–43; idem, “Romanization 2.0 and Its Alternatives,” *Archaeological Dialogues* 21 (2014) 45–50; Leonard A. Curchin, *The Romanization of Central Spain: Complexity, Diversity and Change in a Provincial Hinterland* (London: Routledge, 2004); Louise Revell, *Roman Imperialism and Local Identities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). For overviews of “Romanization” in the study of Judaism and Christianity, see Mark A. Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus* (SNTSMS 134; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); J. Albert Harrill, “Paul and Empire: Studying Roman Identity after the Cultural Turn,” *Early Christianity* 2 (2011) 281–311; Reuben Yat Tin Lee, *Romanization in Palestine: A Study of Urban Development from Herod the Great to AD 70* (BAR International Series 1180; Oxford: BAR, 2003); Ishay Rosen-Zvi, “Rabbis and Romanization: A Review Essay,” in *Jewish Cultural Encounters in the Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern World* (ed. Mladen Popović, Miles Schoonover, and Marijn Vandenbergh; JSJSup 178; Leiden: Brill, 2017) 218–45.

understandings of space as Palestine gradually became a province of the Roman Empire. I focus, in particular, on spatial trialectics, or the different ways in which Jewish elites formed new social spaces through the combination of Greco-Roman and local constructions of space. This theoretical model, I contend, proves more fruitful than unilateral models of architectural, cultural, and socioeconomic change, for it recognizes social agents' diverse and dynamic contributions to the production of provincial spaces.

■ The Archaeology of *Triclinia* in Early Roman Palestine

Archaeological evidence is our most important source for the origins of the *triclinium* in Early Roman Palestine. Architectural remains supply only a portion of the information required to understand the social relations implied by such spaces, however. Other forms of material culture, ranging from wall decorations to tableware, provide important additional clues as to how ancient persons construed and constructed these spaces, and consequently what these spaces represent about cultural, social, and economic change. In this section, I identify shifting conceptions of the spatial organization of social relations in the material record of *triclinia* from Early Roman Palestine. I note, in particular, that Jewish kings and elites increasingly produced dining spaces that implied social hierarchy, displayed lavish imported goods and styles, and boasted the host's control over their social environment.

Before turning to the evidence from Early Roman Palestine, a brief overview of the development of the *triclinium* is in order. The *triclinium* is an Italian novelty based on Greek and Hellenistic precedents. While Plutarch's observation about the dissimilarity between the Greek and Roman modes of dining finds support in the archaeological evidence of banqueting rooms, the history of this type of room, including its particular social dynamics, is more complex. As Katharine Dunbabin explains, with respect to the development of the Roman dining room: "The Roman aristocracy adopted the fashions set by Hellenistic royalty, and in turn were copied, less grandly and on a smaller scale, by the wealthy of a town like Pompeii, and doubtless elsewhere in Italy. In time, these fashions came back to the Greek world, to the circles of men like Plutarch."⁷ Cultural contact between Rome and the East in the late Republic induced this gradual and syncopated process, which Dunbabin has described as "mutual acculturation."⁸

In terms of the architecture of dining spaces, the transition in Greek contexts under Roman influence was from the *andrōn* to the *triclinium*. To be clear, titles such as *andrōn* and *triclinium* were used by ancient authors but not always with

⁷ Katherine Dunbabin, "Ut Graeco More Biberetur: Greeks and Romans on the Dining Couch," in *Meals in a Social Context* (ed. Nielsen and Nielsen) 97. See also Inge Nielsen, "Royal Banquets: The Development of Royal Banquets and Banqueting Halls from Alexander to the Tetrarchs," in *ibid.*, 102–33; Katherine Dunbabin, *The Roman Banquet: Images of Conviviality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); eadem, "Triclinium and Stibadium," in *Dining in a Classical Context* (ed. William J. Slater; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991) 121–48.

⁸ Dunbabin, "Graeco," 81.

as much precision as modern scholars have used them to distinguish these spaces.⁹ Following scholarly conventions, in the ensuing discussion, I use *andrōn* to designate the Greek-style dining room and *triclinium* for the Roman-style room, though I will also call attention to dining spaces that fall on the spectrum between these convenient scholarly types.

The *andrōn*, or men's hall, was a nearly square room with an off-center door and portable couches on three and a half sides, often marked off by the design of the pavements. There are usually seven or eleven couches, each fitting one or two male guests (approx. 1.8 x 0.8 m).¹⁰ This type of room, well known from Olynthus (fifth/fourth centuries BCE), is characterized by seclusion within the house, a considerable central space for service and entertainment, and an egalitarian seating structure. Some sources recognize special seats for the guest of honor and host, but the architecture does not entail strict hierarchical divisions.¹¹ In this space of commensality among men, the symposiasts' attention is focused on the central entertainment.

Unlike the *andrōn*, the *triclinium* was a hierarchical space whose focus was the host's wealth, status, and power. "*Triclinium*" is the latinization of the Greek word τρῖκλινοσ and refers, in the strict sense, to three broad couches (κλῖναι) arranged in the shape of the Greek letter Pi (Π) along the three walls of a room that opens up onto a peristyle (i.e., a courtyard surrounded by rows of columns forming a continuous porch around it), garden, or spectacular land- or seascape. Each couch (measuring about 2–4 x 1.5 m) fits three male or female guests who recline on their left elbows facing a central table in a narrow space serviced by slaves.¹² The arrangement around three walls rather than four supports a hierarchical seating pattern (see fig. 1). Literary sources designate the couches as *summus* (highest), *medius* (middle), and *imus* (lowest), and each position on each couch was also ranked. Typically, the third place on the middle couch was the seat of honor, or "consul's place" (*locus consularis*), while the adjacent first place on the low couch was reserved for the host.¹³ This pattern placed the guest of honor and host at the center of the conversation and gave them the best view.¹⁴ In this space, entertainment

⁹ Dirk Schnurbusch, *Convivium. Form und Bedeutung aristokratischer Geselligkeit in der römischen Antike* (Historia Einzelschriften 219; Stuttgart: Steiner, 2011) 65–81.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 83. See, further, Lisa Nevett, "Housing and Households in Ancient Greece: The Greek World," in *Classical Archaeology* (ed. Susan E. Alcock and Robin Osbourne; 2d ed.; Blackwell Studies in Global Archaeology 10; Malden: Blackwell, 2012) 209–27; Cristoph Börker, *Festbankett und griechische Architektur* (Konstanz: Universitätsverlag, 1983).

¹¹ E.g., Plato, *Symp.* 175c, 177d.

¹² On the Roman reclining posture as an expression of elite power and status, see Matthew B. Roller, *Dining Posture in Ancient Rome: Bodies, Values, and Status* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006). For a discussion of the roles of slaves in *triclinia*, see John H. D'Arms, "Slaves at Roman Convivia," in *Dining in a Classical Context* (ed. Slater) 171–84. Note that a few guests would sometimes sit on the edges of the couches if they were not allotted places for reclining.

¹³ Dunbabin, *Roman Banquet*, 39–40; August Hug, "Triclinium," *PW* 7A (1948) 92–101.

¹⁴ Lise Bek, "Quaestiones convivales: The Idea of the Triclinium and the Staging of Convivial

was decentered and served to define—along with decoration (mosaics, frescoes, furniture), fineware, fancy foods and wine, proper service, and the view from the couches—the cultural and socioeconomic preeminence of the host.¹⁵ In urban contexts, sight lines through the house to the *triclinium* made this image of the host visible to passersby.¹⁶

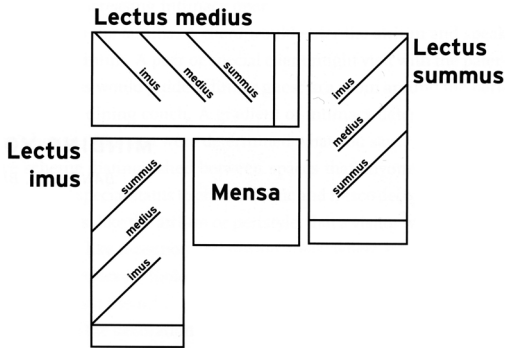


Figure 1: Diagram of a common triclinium seating pattern known from literary sources. Drawing by J. R. Clarke (reproduced with permission).¹⁷

In the Roman East, the introduction of the *triclinium* was preceded by the emergence of the broad-room. This is the scholarly term for rooms that emerged in the late Hellenistic period as a virtual blend of the

Greek *andrōn*, the audience hall of Hellenistic palaces, and the Roman *triclinium*. Vitruvius describes these large banqueting rooms as *oeci* and distinguishes different types.¹⁸ Unlike the *triclinium*, this room was broader than long, but like the *triclinium*, it was usually on the central axis of the house, had a central door, and opened onto a peristyle. At an early stage, movable couches were organized around all four walls like an *andrōn* (e.g., the palace in Vergina).¹⁹ But later versions only situated couches along three walls so as not to block doors or intercolumnar spaces. The broad-rooms of the Delos mansions (late second century BCE), for instance, likely contained couches on three walls, thereby dictating a more hierarchical order

Ceremony from Rome to Byzantium,” *Analecta romana instituti danici* 12 (1983) 82–88; John R. Clarke, *The Houses of Roman Italy, 100 B.C.–A.D. 250: Ritual, Space, and Decoration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991) 16–19.

¹⁵ Schnurbusch has shown that Roman banquets were regular sites of elite competition and political rivalry, in *Convivium*, 219–54.

¹⁶ Shelley Hales, *The Roman House and Social Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 109–22; John R. Clarke, *Art in the Lives of Ordinary Romans: Visual Representation and Non-Elite Viewers in Italy, 100 B.C.–A.D. 315* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003) 223–27, 246–68; Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Mark Grahame, “Public and Private in the Roman House: The Spatial Order of the Casa del Fauno,” in *Domestic Space in the Roman World: Pompeii and Beyond* (ed. Ray Laurence and Andrew Wallace-Hadrill; *JRASup* 22; Portsmouth: JRA, 1997) 137–64.

¹⁷ Clarke, *Art in the Lives of Ordinary Romans*, 224, ill. 129.

¹⁸ Vitruvius 6.3.7–11; 6.4.1–2.

¹⁹ Nielsen, “Banquets,” 111 fig. 10, 116, 125.

in which guests seated along the inner wall were in a privileged position.²⁰ Given the considerable presence of Italians at Delos, it is not surprising that Greek and Roman spatial templates merged in this context.²¹

The broad-room form first appeared in the Levant in the late Hellenistic period. Its earliest witness is the Late Hellenistic Stuccoed Building at Tel Anafa in the Upper Galilee (late second/early first century BCE), technically in the hinterland of Tyre. A room to the north of this building's large central courtyard seems to have been a broad-room.²² This mansion, which closely resembled the Delian houses, incorporated such accoutrements as Ionic and Corinthian capitals, carved and painted stucco, mosaics, and hypocaust-heated baths. Ceramic finds show that guests in this broad-room dined with Syro-Phoenician fineware and imported goods from Rhodes, Cos, and southern Italy.²³

In the late Hellenistic period, the Hasmoneans also designed dining rooms that resembled the broad-room.²⁴ Particularly noteworthy are those in the identical Twin Palaces, both of which were slightly broader than long (9 x 7.5 m) and opened onto non-peristylar courtyards via two columns *in antis* (i.e., the two columns are framed by two *antae*, or pillars on either side of the entrance).²⁵ The room featured red and black painted stucco. A variant of the broad-room also appears in the first century CE in the Palatial Mansion of Jerusalem.²⁶ This banqueting space (6.5 x 11 m), in one of the upper levels of this terraced house, likely boasted a view through windows across the Tyropoeon valley toward the Temple Mount. Both

²⁰ Dunbabin, "Graeco," 87.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 92. See, further, Nicholas K. Rauh, *The Sacred Bonds of Commerce: Religion, Economy, and Trade Society at Hellenistic Roman Delos, 166–87 B.C.* (Amsterdam: Gieben, 1993).

²² Andrea M. Berlin, "Identity Politics in Early Roman Galilee," in *The Jewish Revolt against Rome: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (ed. Mladen Popović; JSJSup 154; Leiden: Brill, 2011) 92. See, further, Sharon C. Herbert, "Occupational History and Stratigraphy," in *Tel Anafa I, i: Final Report on Ten Years of Excavation at a Hellenistic and Roman Settlement in Northern Israel* (ed. Sharon Herbert; JRSup 10, I, i; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994) 26–182.

²³ Andrea M. Berlin, "Between Large Forces: Palestine in the Hellenistic Period," *BA* 60 (1997) 27. For analysis of the rich material culture from this complex, see *Tel Anafa II, i: The Hellenistic and Roman Pottery* (ed. Sharon C. Herbert; JRSup 10, II, i; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997); *Tel Anafa II, iii: Decorative Wall Plaster, Objects of Personal Adornment and Glass Counters, Tools for Textile Manufacture and Miscellaneous Bone, Terracotta and Stone Figurines, Pre-Persian Pottery, Attic Pottery, and Medieval Pottery* (ed. Andrea M. Berlin and Sharon C. Herbert; JRSup 10, II, iii; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018).

²⁴ On the potential influences of Hellenistic palatial architecture in the Near East (e.g., the Qasr el-'Abd at 'Iraq el-Amir) on the Hasmonean and Herodian palaces, however, see Andreas J. M. Kropp, *Images and Monuments of Near Eastern Dynasts, 100 BC–AD 100* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) 93–109.

²⁵ Kropp identifies several parallels: the second phase of the Jericho Hasmonean palace, Herod's second Jericho palace, Herod's Western Palace at Masada, and the Nabataean villa ez-Zantur IV at Petra (*ibid.*, 113). See also Reinhard Förtsch, "The Residences of King Herod and Their Relations to Roman Villa Architecture," in *Judaea and the Greco-Roman World in the Light of Archaeological Discoveries* (ed. Klaus Fittschen and Gideon Foerster; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996) 73–120.

²⁶ Nahman Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem* (Nashville: Nelson, 1983) 95–120.

phases of its wall and ceiling decorations are similar to Pompeian styles, though oddly in reverse chronological order.²⁷ Adjacent rooms may have been additional banqueting spaces for special guests. However, few clues have survived to reveal how couches were set up in this mansion.

Herod's palaces include numerous types of banqueting spaces that should be considered *oeci* or, by a broad definition, *triclinia*.²⁸ Notably, most of Herod's dining spaces are longer than wide and thus betray a more hierarchical seating arrangement. The room (measuring 15 x 10.5 m) at Herodium that was converted into a synagogue during the Revolts was originally a Herodian *oecus*. Longer than wide, it opened onto a courtyard, was decorated with painted plaster wall panels and *opus sectile* floors (i.e., floors paved with mosaics comprising thin sections of colored stone cut into various shapes and sizes and arranged in elaborate patterns), and was surrounded by columns along its three inner walls.²⁹ Herod's Northern Palace at Masada featured, among its multiple potential dining spaces, a colorful *oecus* (10.3 x 9.0 m) on its lower terrace with a panoramic vista of the Dead Sea.³⁰ In Herod's third palace at Jericho, a Corinthian-style *oecus* (i.e., colonnaded with a barrel vaulted ceiling) is the largest and most accessible room (18 x 12.5 m) and provides a view of the Wadi Qelt through a portico.³¹ This same palace includes another T-shaped banqueting space that Herod would have reserved for more intimate parties.³² Herod also had a T-shaped dining room in his seaside Promontory Palace at Caesarea Maritima.³³ Each of these dining spaces displayed Herod's supraregional decorative and culinary tastes and his power over the natural environment.

As with the broad-rooms, these long *oeci* would have contained movable couches and tables. Considering Herod's tastes, they probably would have been imported, like the Delian bronze couches discovered in a wrecked ship delivering dining furniture for the palaces in the client-kingdom of Mauretania.³⁴ Without pavement bands or mosaics, it is unclear how many couches would have been in each room or exactly how they would have been arranged. Josephus may not have exaggerated that Herod's dining hall in his lost Jerusalem palace held 100 couches (*B.J.* 5.177;

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 102; *idem*, *The Herodian Quarter in Jerusalem: Wohl Archaeological Museum* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1989) 61–4. See also section 3 below.

²⁸ Whereas a strict definition of *triclinium* entails a dining space with three couches, a broad definition refers to a room that served as a dining space and usually had couches along three walls. See Schnurbusch, *Convivium*, 65–81, on the broad uses of *triclinium* in ancient literature. Note that this discussion does not address all potential dining spaces in the Herodian palaces but rather a representative selection.

²⁹ Virgilio Corbo, "L'Herodion di giabal fureidis," *LASBF* 17 (1967) 102–3.

³⁰ Ehud Netzer, *The Architecture of Herod, the Great Builder* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008) 31.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 63; Kropp, *Images and Monuments*, 129.

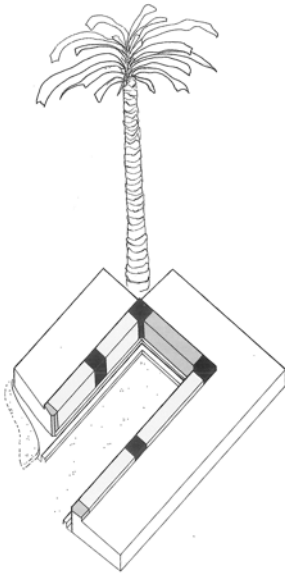
³² Kropp, *Images and Monuments*, 171.

³³ *Ibid.*, 143.

³⁴ Carmen Aranegui and Ricardo Mar, "Lixus (Morocco): From a Mauretanian Sanctuary to an Augustan Palace," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 77 (2009) 56.

A.J. 15.318). What is clear, in any case, is that Herod produced socially hierarchical and ostentatiously cosmopolitan dining spaces.

There is much less ambiguity involved in detecting the function and organization of *triclinia* with masonry benches than other types of banqueting spaces. Only three have been discovered in Palestine, and they are all relatively early.³⁵ The earliest of these is an open-air *triclinium* in the lower wing of the Hasmonean complex at Jericho (fig. 2).³⁶ It was situated in a garden between the Twin Palaces and a swimming pool.³⁷ The couches were constructed in a Pi shape and sloped slightly upward toward an inner ledge that served as an armrest. It was designed to fit around a tree so that the tree stood between the places for the host and the guest of honor.



This provided—I suggest—the most prestigious diners with the best shade. It was perhaps because of the cut-out for the tree that the masonry couch was extended in a second phase in order to fit the customary nine diners more comfortably. The inner sides of the couches were plastered and painted in colored panels, including one in Pompeian red.³⁸

*Figure 2: Drawing of the first phase of the garden triclinium from the Hasmonean Twin Palaces complex at Jericho. Courtesy of Hillel Geva, reproduced with permission of Israel Exploration Society.*³⁹

Another *triclinium* with stone benches is also from the Wadi Qelt area outside Jericho (fig. 3). Originally identified as a synagogue, the structure at this site should be considered part of a peristyle mansion from the late Hasmonean period (built 75

³⁵ In my estimation, the plastered tables and bench from the second story of the “Scriptorium” (L30) at Qumran were too narrow for reclining and likely served as a writing table and bench. See Ronny Reich, “A Note on the Function of Room 30 (‘the Scriptorium’) at Khirbet Qumran,” *JJS* 46 (1995) 157–60; Jodi Magness, *Debating Qumran: Collected Essays on Its Archaeology* (Leuven: Peeters, 2004) 106; eadem, *The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002) 90–100, esp. 96; contra, among others, Pauline Donceel-Voûte, “‘Coenaculum’—La salle a l’étage du *Locus* 30 à Khirbet Qumrân sur la Mer Morte,” *ResOr* 4 (1992) 61–84.

³⁶ On Roman garden *triclinia*, see Balch, *Contested Ethnicities and Images*, 311–43; Katharine T. von Stackelberg, *The Roman Garden: Space, Sense, and Society* (Routledge Monographs in Classical Studies; London: Routledge, 2009).

³⁷ Ehud Netzer, *Hasmonean and Herodian Palaces at Jericho: Final Reports of the 1973–1987 Excavations* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2001) 1:191–92; Kropp, *Images and Monuments*, 131. See, further, Eyal Regev, *The Hasmoneans: Ideology, Archaeology, Identity* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013) 224–65.

³⁸ Netzer, *Palaces*, 193.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 1:194, ill. 281.

BCE–50 BCE).⁴⁰ Its location suggests that it belonged to the Hasmonean family or friends. This *triclinium* was added in a late phase and opens onto a peristyle courtyard, but not along a symmetrical central axis. Its Pi-shaped couch is made of field stones coated with lime plaster and is large enough for the conventional nine diners.⁴¹

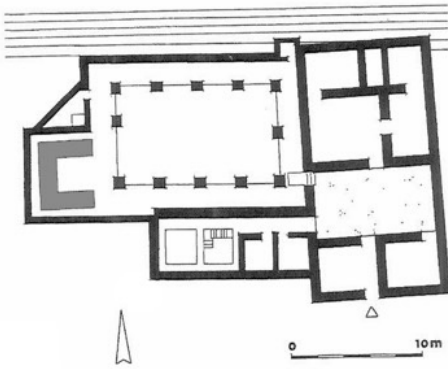


Figure 3: Plan of the late phase of the mansion at Wadi Qelt, showing the masonry triclinium in the room farthest to the west. Courtesy of Hillel Geva, reproduced with permission of Israel Exploration Society.⁴²

The third *triclinium* with stone benches was not part of a royal palace but rather a rural peristyle mansion.⁴³ An inscription from this building at Khirbet el-Muraq (in Idumaea, near modern Hebron)

suggests that it might have belonged to a Jewish elite named Hilkia.⁴⁴ At the center of the house was a peristyle courtyard incorporating an open-air masonry *triclinium* of standard dimensions. The area between the couches of the *triclinium* was paved with a mosaic, while the walls of the house were decorated with stuccoed and painted plaster.

While these are the only three *triclinia* with permanent couches presently known from Early Roman Palestine, *triclinia* and *oeci* were surely more widespread in elite domestic settings. For instance, a partially excavated first century CE peristyle mansion with *opus sectile* floors in Jerusalem's Jewish Quarter almost certainly had a *triclinium*.⁴⁵ Similarly, partially excavated domiciles at both Tiberias and

⁴⁰ Uri Zvi Maoz, "The Synagogue That Never Existed in the Hasmonean Palace at Jericho: Remarks Concerning an Article by E. Netzer, Y. Kalman and R. Loris [*Qadmoniot* 32 (117) 1999, pp. 17–24]," *Qad* 32 (1999) 120–21 (Hebrew); Holger Schwarzer and Sarah Japp, "Synagoge, Bankethaus oder Wohngebäude?" *AW* 33 (2002) 275–87.

⁴¹ Ehud Netzer, "A Synagogue from the Hasmonean Period Recently Exposed in the Western Plain of Jericho," *IEJ* 49 (1999) 213.

⁴² Ehud Netzer, *Hasmonean and Herodian Palaces at Jericho: Final Reports of the 1973–1987 Excavations* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2004) 2:185, ill. 218.

⁴³ On peristyle mansions in Palestine, see further, Jodi Magness, "Peristyle House," *OANE* 4:273; Eric M. Meyers, "Aspects of Everyday Life in Roman Palestine with Special Reference to Private Domiciles and Ritual Baths," in *Jews in the Hellenistic and Roman Cities* (ed. John R. Bartlett; London: Routledge, 2002) 193–220; Katharina Galor, "Domestic Architecture in Roman and Byzantine Galilee and Golan," *NEA* 66 (2003) 44–57.

⁴⁴ Emanuel Damati, "Palace of Hilkiah," *Qad* 15 (1983) 117–20 (Hebrew); Yizhar Hirschfeld, *The Palestinian Dwelling in the Roman-Byzantine Period* (SBFCMI 34; Jerusalem: Franciscan, 1995) 89–90.

⁴⁵ Avigad, *Jerusalem*, 146.

Sepphoris in the Galilee contained the decorative elements typical of peristyle mansions with *triclinia*—that is, columns, capitals, painted and molded stucco, and mosaics.⁴⁶ Both buildings have been attributed to Herod Antipas but could just as well have belonged to other Jewish elites.

One final set of *triclinia* deserves special attention, for it was highly visible to pilgrims in Jerusalem. An independent structure dubbed the Banqueting Hall was built just prior to 22 BCE and used through the mid-first century CE (fig. 4).⁴⁷ It is located about twenty-five meters from the western wall of the Temple Mount and adjacent to Wilson’s Arch in the vicinity of the city’s main administrative buildings. The structure comprises two identical rooms separated by a fountain. Each room is decorated with engaged pilasters (i.e., nonstructural rectangular columns that project slightly from the wall) with Corinthian capitals. These pilasters sit on an elevated podium whose height was such that moveable couches could be situated beneath its cornice. Recesses discovered in the southern ends of walls in each room were likely used to hold the end couches in place. Although the southern part of this monumental building can only be conjectured, it must have opened onto the street with doors and windows. Diners in this independent structure were almost certainly Jewish elites who resided in Jerusalem or visited the city on pilgrimage. Its proximity to the temple suggests that it functioned like the banqueting halls of temples in cities like Palmyra and Petra.⁴⁸ If so, the space may have been controlled by the city’s priestly elites in particular.

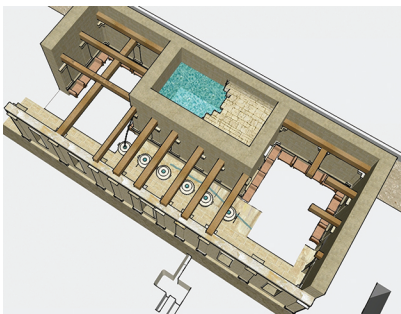


Figure 4: Isometric reconstruction of the Jerusalem Banqueting Hall, created by Yaakov Shmidov. Courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority, reproduced with the permission of Zvi Greenhut, Joseph Patrich, and Shlomit Weksler-Bdolah.⁴⁹

Although patchy, the archaeological evidence of banqueting spaces in Early Roman Palestine allows some provisional

⁴⁶ Morten Høring Jensen, *Herod Antipas in Galilee* (WUNT 215; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006) 142–3; Anna Iamim, “The Missing Building(s) at Sepphoris,” *IEJ* 66 (2016) 96–113.

⁴⁷ Joseph Patrich and Shlomit Weksler-Bdolah, “The ‘Free Masons Hall’: A Composite Herodian *Triclinium* and Fountain to the West of the Temple Mount,” *New Studies in the Archaeology of Jerusalem and Its Region* 10 (2016) 15–38; “Old, New Banquet Hall by the Temple Mount,” *BAR* 43 (2017) 50–54.

⁴⁸ Kropp, *Images and Monuments*, 305; Ted Kaizer, “Man and God at Palmyra: Sacrifice, Lectisternia and Banquets,” in *The Variety of Local Religious Life in the Near East: In the Hellenistic and Roman Periods* (ed. Ted Kaizer; RGRW 164; Leiden: Brill, 2008) 179–92; Inge Nielsen, *Housing the Chosen: The Architectural Context of Mystery Groups and Religious Associations in the Ancient World* (Contextualizing the Sacred 2; Turnhout: Brepols, 2014) 252–53.

⁴⁹ Patrich and Weksler-Bdolah, “The ‘Free Masons Hall,’” 24, ill. 14.

conclusions. First, all known *oeci* and *triclinia* were found in elite contexts, whether palatial, domestic, or civic. This differs from other cities of the Roman Empire, where *triclinia* also pervaded more public contexts, such as taverns, inns, tombs, and association buildings.⁵⁰ In general, it may be assumed that non-elite Jews often sat upright while dining.⁵¹ Second, only a few Palestinian *triclinia* with stone benches resemble the nine-person Roman style, and these are all relatively early. Rather than copying this Roman style, Jewish elites more typically produced banqueting spaces that combined the Roman hierarchical organization of space with Greek and local spatial practices. Third, *triclinia* have usually been found in buildings whose decorative schemas and material culture betray cultural and economic interaction with other parts of the Roman world, whether Pompeii, Delos, Ephesos, or Tyre.⁵² At the same time, however, Jewish elites tended studiously to avoid the iconographic mosaics, frescoes, fineware, lamps, and furniture that were integral to the dining experience in other parts of the empire. This particularity did not, however, prevent some Jews from associating *triclinia* with the greed and idolatry of gentiles.

■ *Triclinia* as Contested Spaces in Jewish Apocalyptic Texts

No surviving literary text from Early Roman Palestine uses the word *triclinium*.⁵³ However, several imply the sociospatial politics of *triclinia*, whether in the broad

⁵⁰ Dunbabin, *Roman Banquet*, 72–140; Balch, *Contested Ethnicities and Images*, 311–43; idem, *Roman Domestic Art*, 195–238. Jewish tombs from the Early Roman period sometimes have courtyards (e.g., Tomb of the Sanhedrin) or exterior rock-hewn benches (e.g., Tomb of Annas). However, I am unaware of any that have *bi-* or *triclinium* courtyards for funerary banquets as was common in Nabatea (Stephan Schmid, “Nabataean Funerary Complexes: Their Relation with the Luxury Architecture of the Hellenistic and Roman Mediterranean,” *SHAJ* 9 [2007] 205–19). One potential exception, however, is a tomb on Mt. Scopus (Jerusalem) with what appears to be a masonry *triclinium* within its central vaulted chamber (Shlomit Weksler-Bdolah, “Burial Caves and Installations of the Second Temple Period at the Har Hazofim Observatory [Mt. Scopus, Jerusalem],” *Atiqot* 35 [1998] 23–54, 161–3; Amos Kloner and Boaz Zissu, *The Necropolis of Jerusalem in the Second Temple Period* [ISACR 8; Leuven: Peeters, 2007] 171–72, no. 1-42, Burial Cave A). The tomb contained ossuaries inscribed with names in Hebrew and paleo-Hebrew. Although the chamber with the *triclinium* could have originated prior to 70 CE, Kathleen Warner Slane suggests that a date after 130 CE is perhaps more likely (*Corinth: Results of Excavations Conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*, vol. 21, *Tombs, Burials, and Commemoration in Corinth’s Northern Cemetery* [Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 2017] 189–90, pl. 44a). In either case, this symmetrical tomb was exceptional among the rock-cut tombs of Judea.

⁵¹ Jodi Magness, *Stone and Dung, Oil and Spit: Jewish Daily Life in the Time of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011) 81–82; eadem, *Archaeology of Qumran*, 126; Lawrence Schiffman, “Communal Meals at Qumran,” *RevQ* 10 (1980) 45–56.

⁵² Renate Rosenthal-Heginbottom, “Imported Hellenistic and Early Roman Pottery: An Overview of the Finds from the Jewish Quarter Excavations,” in *Jewish Quarter Excavations in the Old City of Jerusalem Conducted by Nahman Avigad, 1969–1982*, vol. 6, *Areas J, N, and Other Studies* (ed. Hillel Geva; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2014) 377–413; Magness, *Stone*, 54–58.

⁵³ It is unclear what words Jewish elites used for this room. Josephus refers to Herod’s banqueting halls as *andrōnes megistoi* (*B.J.* 5.177). Palmyrene inscriptions use a word derived from *andrōn*, ‘*drwn*’, as well as *smk*’, which also appeared in Nabatean (Kropp, *Images and Monuments*, 305).

or narrow sense of the term. They do so through the language and imagery of diners reclining on couches, meretricious décor and luxury items, and/or a hierarchical seating order. In this section, I examine *triclinium* scenes in texts produced by Jewish elites or sub-elites in Early Roman Palestine.⁵⁴

The earliest Palestinian text that addresses the *triclinium* is arguably the Parables of Enoch (1 Enoch 37–71).⁵⁵ This text only survives in a Ge'ez translation of a lost Greek version, but most scholars posit an Aramaic original.⁵⁶ While an Aramaic *Vorlage* of parts or all of the text cannot be excluded, there can be little doubt that the Parables was circulating in Greek soon after the turn of the eras.⁵⁷ Most scholars agree that this apocalyptic text was written by elite or sub-elite scribes sometime between the beginning of Herod's reign and Jesus's ministry. An allusion to the Parthian invasion of 40 BCE provides a *terminus post quem*. Another allusion to Herod's visit to the hot springs of Callirhoe just before his death (4 BCE) appears in an interpolated section and thus supplies a *terminus ante quem* for most of the rest of the work.⁵⁸

The Parables of Enoch expands a prophetic critique of monarchy into an apocalyptic condemnation of the ruling class of Early Roman Palestine. Drawing on intertexts like Psalm 2 and parts of Isaiah, the text narrates Enoch's visions of the Lord of Spirits and his messianic vice-regent, the Son of Man, securing redemption for the righteous in an impending age. This eschatological reversal

The rabbis employed the loanword (טריקלין (טרקלין), but in a broad fashion (Baruch, "Adapted," 58–63; but compare Klein, "Torah," 342).

⁵⁴ On the authors of the apocalyptic texts from Early Roman Palestine as elite or sub-elite scribes, see G. Anthony Keddie, *Revelations of Ideology: Apocalyptic Class Politics in Early Roman Palestine* (JSJSup 189; Leiden: Brill, 2018).

⁵⁵ Although not a focus of this study, some earlier Jewish texts reflect Persian or Hellenistic dining cultures. Esther depicts reclining at the banquet of the Persian king and some Greek diaspora literature portrays royal *symposia* in the palaces of Greek kings (Let. Aris. 182–300, 319–320; 3 Macc. 5:15–17). Ben Sira's sympotic discourse (e.g., 32:2–5) underscores the international pursuits of the sage, who travels to the courts of foreign kings (39:4). Tobit (early Hellenistic period) is arguably the earliest Jewish Palestinian text to depict Jews reclining at banquets without reference to the culture of foreign kings (2:1; 7:9; 9:6). Interestingly, both the Aramaic and Greek versions represent dining as nonhierarchical.

⁵⁶ *1 Enoch 2: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch Chapters 37–82* (ed. George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012) 30–34; Loren T. Stuckenbruck, "The Parables of Enoch according to George Nickelsburg and Michael Knibb," in *Enoch and the Messiah Son of Man: Revisiting the Book of Parables* (ed. Gabriele Boccaccini; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007) 65–71.

⁵⁷ The Greek text was likely (though not definitively) known to the authors of Q, Matthew, and Revelation: Simon J. Joseph, *The Nonviolent Messiah: Jesus, Q, and the Enochic Tradition* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014); Leslie W. Walck, *The Son of Man in the Parables of Enoch and in Matthew* (London: T&T Clark, 2011); Darrel D. Hannah, "The Throne of His Glory: The Divine Throne and Heavenly Mediators in Revelation and the *Similitudes of Enoch*," *ZNW* 94 (2003) 68–96.

⁵⁸ Other interpolations, especially chap. 71, may have been added later (*1 Enoch 2* [ed. Nickelsburg and VanderKam], 18–19, 312–14). See, further, Darrel D. Hannah, "The Book of Noah, the Death of Herod the Great, and the Date of the Parables of Enoch," in *Enoch and the Messiah Son of Man* (ed. Boccaccini) 469–77.

of fortunes for the righteous entails the punishment and destruction of the ruling class—"the kings, the mighty, the landowners, and the exalted."⁵⁹ When portraying the wickedness of this class, the text represents the *triclinium* space as a symbol of cultural abomination and economic exploitation:⁶⁰

And this Son of Man whom you have seen—he will raise the kings and the mighty from their couches, and the strong from their thrones. . . . Darkness will be their dwelling, and worms will be their couch. And they will have no hope to rise from their couches, because they do not exalt the name of the Lord of Spirits. . . . Their faith is in the gods they have made with their hands, and they deny the name of the Lord of Spirits. (46:4–7)

These verses constitute an interpretation of the oracle against the Babylonian king in Isaiah 14, where the Lord raises kings from their thrones (14:9). There is no word for "couch," however, in the MT and LXX versions of Isaiah 14. Where Isaiah remarks that "worms spread out beneath you, and worms are your covering" (14:11),⁶¹ implying the image of a bed and blanket, the Parables introduces "couches."⁶² The Ge'ez term for "couch" here, *meskāb*, likely translated κλίνη.⁶³

As a representation of a banqueting space, this imagery of couches has several implications. First, the text uses couches to connect the kings and the mighty as a socioeconomic and political class: couches are part of a distinctive culture shared by royal and nonroyal elites. Second, this culture of banqueting on couches is connected to the economic exploitation of the "righteous": the "ill-gotten wealth" (63:10: Eth. *newāya 'ammaḏā*, perhaps from μᾶμ(μ)ωνᾶς/ממונא)⁶⁴ of the kings and mighty was derived by exploiting the labor of the righteous (53:2). Third, the couches of the kings and mighty represent a culture of excess that is portrayed as foreign and idolatrous.⁶⁵ Not only do the kings and mighty not exalt the name of the Lord of Spirits while on their couches, but this denial is linked to the worship

⁵⁹ Pierluigi Piovanelli, "A Testimony for the Kings and the Mighty Who Possess the Earth': The Thirst for Justice and Peace in the Parables of Enoch," in *Enoch and the Messiah Son of Man* (ed. Boccaccini) 372; *1 Enoch 2* (ed. Nickelsburg and VanderKam) 103.

⁶⁰ My adaptation of Nickelsburg's translation (*1 Enoch 2*).

⁶¹ Isa 14:11 MT: יצע רמה ומכסך תולעה; LXX: ὑποκάτω σου στρώσουσιν σῆψιν καὶ τὸ κατακάλυμά σου σκώληξ.

⁶² 4Q184 I, 6 might also add "couches" to Isaianic judgment imagery when portraying evil: "Her beds (ערישה) are couches (יצועי) of the pit." It is unclear whether יצועי refers to a dining couch or a bed mattress here, though. Nevertheless, the Parables has the couches turn to worms instead of imagining them in the pit of Sheol.

⁶³ *Meskāb* could also mean "bed" (see 1 En. 85:3), but here there are no indications of sleep, and *meskāb* seems to function as a symbol of the lifestyle of the kings and mighty. Axumite scribes translated Greek κλίνη and κοίτη with the synonyms *meskāb* and *'arāt* indiscriminately (August Dillmann, *Lexicon linguae Aethiopiae* [New York: Ungar, 1955] 381, 964).

⁶⁴ George W. E. Nickelsburg, "Response (to Kloppenborg)," in *George W. E. Nickelsburg in Perspective: An Ongoing Dialogue of Learning* (ed. Jacob Neusner and Alan J. Avery-Peck; JSJSup 80; Leiden: Brill, 2003) 587.

⁶⁵ The earlier Epistle of Enoch also links the dining habits of the wealthy to the exploitation of the poor (96:5; 102:9).

of foreign gods. These gods are deemed illegitimate because they were made by hand—presumably made from the gold and silver these elites accumulated by exploiting the righteous (52:7–9).⁶⁶ In the eschaton, the wealth of this ruling class will support the authority of the Son of Man (52:1–6), but the space of *triclinia* will transform into a death trap.⁶⁷ *Triclinia* will turn to worms.

Sometime between 6 and 30 CE, the elite or sub-elite author of the Testament of Moses advanced a comparable critique of the *triclinium* space.⁶⁸ This apocalyptic testament survives in a single late antique Latin manuscript based on a lost Greek version. A Semitic original is possible, but Johannes Tromp has demonstrated that a Greek original is just as likely.⁶⁹ The testament contains a periodization of Israel's history that focuses on both the violent intrusions of foreign rulers and the corruption of national leaders.⁷⁰ According to this periodization, the eschatological age will begin to dawn in the author's present time, when a ruling class will seek to replace the distinguished leaders the "petulant king"—that is, Herod—eliminated (6:2–6).

Chapter 7 of the testament castigates the Jewish priestly elites Rome empowered as the "ruling class of Judea" when it annexed the region to Syria in 6 CE.⁷¹ Like the Parables of Enoch, it focuses on the *triclinium* space in its polemic:⁷²

And pestilent and impious men will rule over them [i.e., the people]. . . . They will be deceitful men, self-complacent, hypocrites in all their dealings, and who love to have banquets each hour of the day, devourers, gluttons, who eat the possessions of the (poor), saying they do this out of compassion . . . from sunrise to sunset saying: "Let us have luxurious seats at the table, let us eat and drink. And let us act as if we are distinguished leaders." And their hands and minds will deal with impurities, and their mouths will speak enormities, saying in addition to this: "Keep off, do not touch me, lest you pollute me. . . ." (7:3–10)

This passage employs terms that clearly invoke *triclinia*: "banquets" (*convivia*) and "luxurious seats" (a hendiadys: *discubitiones et luxuriam*).⁷³ Notably, the Vulgate uses the same terms to render *πρωτοκλισίαν ἐν τοῖς δεῖπνοις* ("first place

⁶⁶ See Book of the Watchers 8:1 (rebel angels revealed how to fashion gold and silver for personal ornamentation); Epistle of Enoch 99:7 (gold and silver used for casting graven images).

⁶⁷ The Parables envisions a reversal in which "the righteous and the chosen" will eat with the Son of Man at an eschatological banquet (62:14). However, no couches or other details of architecture or posture are mentioned. It is possible that one of the interpolations in the Parables relates the tradition that the righteous will dine on Leviathan and Behemoth at the eschatological banquet (60:7–10 + 24a; see also 4 Ezra 6:49–52; 2 Bar 29:4). See *1 Enoch 2* (ed. Nickelsburg and VanderKam) 239–42.

⁶⁸ On dating: John Priest, "Testament of Moses," *OTP* 1:920–1; Johannes Tromp, *The Assumption of Moses: A Critical Edition with Commentary* (SVTP 10; Leiden: Brill, 1993) 116–17.

⁶⁹ Tromp, *Assumption of Moses*, 85.

⁷⁰ G. Anthony Keddie, "Judaean Apocalypticism and the Unmasking of Ideology: Foreign and National Rulers in the *Testament of Moses*," *JSJ* 44 (2013) 301–38.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² My adaptation of Tromp's translation (*Assumption of Moses*). Ellipses are mine, but the legible text is also lacunose.

⁷³ Tromp, *Assumption of Moses*, 213.

at banquets”) in Luke 20:46 as *primos discubitus in conviviis*. Both texts refer to the spatial politics of seats of honor for distinguished guests in *triclinia*.

The testament portrays the space of *triclinia* in some of the same ways as the Parables of Enoch. First, it uses a luxurious banqueting culture to characterize the ruling class as culturally distinctive. Second, it ties the wealthy and luxurious lifestyle of elites to economic exploitation: the goods they eat (*bonorum comestores*) in their *triclinia* are the possessions of the poor.⁷⁴ The elite culture of eating is thus inseparable from economic processes of consumption. Third, the text presents the actions of these priestly elites as selfish and deceptive but also as causing them to become impure. The idea that their hands and minds will deal with impurities suggests that their participation in the culture associated with banquets is defiling. This implies foreignness and may allude to the use of imported vessels and foods. Given the testament’s aversion to idolatrous figural images (2:8–9), it may also assume pictorial representations in the space of *triclinia*.

The testament’s representation of *triclinium* space differs from the Parables of Enoch in noteworthy ways. For instance, the testament portrays elite dining without any mention of kings. These elites are portrayed as political and religious authorities. The testament’s conception of the *triclinium* thus imagines a setting like a peristyle mansion or the Banqueting Hall in Jerusalem, but not a palace. Additionally, the testament focuses on the cultural contest for prestige involved in seating in *triclinia* and is thus the earliest definitive literary evidence of hierarchical seating at banquets in Palestine. Finally, whereas the Parables envisions the eschatological abolition of *triclinia*, the testament is unclear about what will happen to *triclinia* when God’s kingdom emerges (10:1). Will the just leaders the text envisions as the counterpart to the priestly elites recline at luxurious banquets? Will all of “God’s people” recline in the kingdom, or will no one? The text provides no resolutions.

The earliest retrievable document from Jesus-following Jews in Palestine,⁷⁵ the Q source, builds on this apocalyptic tradition of denouncing elites by invoking the *triclinium*. This Greek “Sayings Gospel” has been reconstructed by scholars on the basis of the common material in Matthew and Luke, but not in Mark. Q was produced (perhaps in stages) by sub-elite scribes between the 30s and early 60s CE.⁷⁶ It almost certainly originated in the Galilee,⁷⁷ although a provenance in

⁷⁴ Ibid., 212 (on the lacuna ending in *-rum* as *pauperum*, “of the poor”).

⁷⁵ I avoid “Christ-followers” because *χριστός* may not have appeared in Q.

⁷⁶ Among others: John S. Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q: The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000); William E. Arnal, *Jesus and the Village Scribes: Galilean Conflicts and the Setting of Q* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001); Giovanni Bazzana, *Kingdom of Bureaucracy: The Political Theology of Village Scribes in the Sayings Gospel Q* (BETL 274; Leuven: Peeters, 2015).

⁷⁷ Milton C. Moreland, “Provenience Studies and the Question of Q in Galilee,” in *Q in Context II: Social Setting and Archeological Background of the Sayings Source* (ed. Markus Tiwald; BBB 173; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015) 43–60.

Judea cannot be excluded.⁷⁸ The text presents Jesus's ministry as the inception of the kingdom of God, whose culmination will come with Jesus's return as the Son of Man on an imminent day of judgment (3:7; 12:51; 13:18–19).⁷⁹ Much as the Parables of Enoch and Testament of Moses denounce politically powerful Jewish elites as evil exploiters of the righteous, Q portrays the Pharisees as the leaders of “this generation,” whose blood will be poured out at judgment (3:7; 11:50–51; 12:51; 13:28). It is these Pharisees who are responsible for exploiting and attempting to lead astray the “children of Wisdom” who have accepted Jesus's proclamation of the kingdom. According to Q, Jesus's teachings (as formulated in Q) contain the hidden things revealed to Jesus by God, unlike the teachings of the Pharisees, which have been transmitted by humans.⁸⁰ Through their self-legitimizing teachings, the Pharisees have allegedly blocked access to the kingdom of God (11:52).

Q undergirds its claim that the Pharisees have prevented people from entering the kingdom by identifying other ways that they control space for their own benefit: “Woe to you, Pharisees, for you love the first place at the banquets, and the first seat in the synagogues, and greetings in the marketplaces” (11:43). This indictment utilizes the language of “banquets” (ἐν τοῖς δεῖπνοις) and “the first place” (πρωτοκλισίαν), or seat of honor, like the Testament of Moses to represent the space of *triclinia*. By associating *triclinia* with synagogues and marketplaces, Q indicates that the Pharisees' pursuit of power and privilege was not limited to the relatively private space of banquets. Instead, this ambition materialized in synagogues and marketplaces, perhaps implying that these Pharisees were benefactors or leaders (e.g., ἀρχισυνάγωγοι) in the former and authorities (e.g., ἀγορανόμοι) in the latter. The mention of marketplaces (ἐν ταῖς ἀγοραῖς) is noteworthy because it situates the Pharisees in an urban economic space that Q associates with the condemnation of “this generation”: “To whom am I to compare this generation? And to whom are they like? They are like children seated in the marketplaces, who, addressing the others, say, ‘We played the flute for you and you did not dance; we mourned for you and you did not strike yourselves.’” (7:31–32)

Wendy Cotter has shown that the words “seated” (καθημένοις) and “addressing” (προσφωνοῦντα) here imply administrative officials in marketplaces.⁸¹ As such,

⁷⁸ Simon J. Joseph, *Jesus, Q, and the Dead Sea Scrolls: A Judaic Approach to Q* (WUNT 333; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012).

⁷⁹ Following convention, the versification of Q is according to Luke. Translations of Q are my own, based largely on the reconstructions in Harry T. Fleddermann, *Q: A Reconstruction and Commentary* (BTS 1; Leuven: Peeters, 2005), with reference to *The Critical Edition of Q: A Synopsis Including the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, Mark and Thomas with English, German and French Translations of Q* (ed. James M. Robinson et al.; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000).

⁸⁰ The use of the term *παρεδόθη* in 10:22 for the transmission of revelation from God to Jesus likely implies a critique of the Pharisaic transmission of traditions (*παράδοσις*) of the elders. On the latter, see Albert I. Baumgarten, “The Pharisaic *Paradosis*,” *HTR* 80 (1987) 63–77.

⁸¹ “The Parable of the Children in the Market-Place, Q (Lk) 7:31–35: An Examination of the Parable's Image and Significance,” *NovT* 29 (1987) 289–304.

the language of marketplaces supports the text's negative view of cities (10:12–16) and especially their gentile cultural and economic trappings (7:25; 12:29–31).⁸²

Q's polemic against the Pharisees is thus a feature of its skepticism about aspects of Greco-Roman culture and urbanism, which threaten to make people "slaves to mammon" rather than "slaves to God" (16:13). Another woe illuminates these aspects of Pharisaic banqueting: "Woe to you, Pharisees, for you clean the outside of the cup and side-dish, but inside they are full of plunder and self-indulgence. Hypocrite, clean first the inside of the cup, and its outside will also be clean" (11:39–41).

On one level, this woe accuses the Pharisees of transgressing the ritual purity laws they professed.⁸³ On another, it describes the Pharisees as concerned with the appearance of their tableware. The term that I have translated as "side-dish" (παροψίς) is revealing, for it refers to a small plate for delicacies that accompany the main course (ὄψον)—in other words, for food eaten for gratification rather than sustenance.⁸⁴ Both the dish itself and the food served on it were probably imagined as foreign (e.g., kosher Spanish *garum* starters served on flashy red-slipped Eastern Terra Sigillata fineware).⁸⁵ Q declares that the use of these foreign luxuries conceals acts of robbery (ἀρπαγή) and self-indulgence (ἀκρασία), intimating that the Pharisees financed their culture of excess by exploiting the people.⁸⁶ Q's final woe about the Pharisees weighing people down with burdens (11:46) points to labor exploitation in particular. Like the Parables of Enoch and Testament of Moses, then, Q conflates the *triclinium* space with economic exploitation, cultural difference, and religious transgression.

Unlike the previous texts, however, Q also uses dining space to define the kingdom of God as a banquet accessible to all. The Son of Man is said to have been accused of being a glutton and drunkard for "eating and drinking" with tax collectors and sinners (7:34). While not referring to a *triclinium* space per se, this saying portrays Jesus's banquet as one in which those who are social outcasts are welcome.⁸⁷ The Parable of the Invited Dinner Guests (14:16–21, 23) elaborates on this theme by having a householder send his slave to invite dinner guests to his banquet, a cipher for the kingdom of God. Because they prioritized the pursuit of

⁸² John S. Kloppenborg, "Q, Bethsaida, Khorazin and Capernaum," in *Q in Context II*, 61–92; Armal, *Village Scribes*; Jonathan L. Reed, *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus* (Harrisburg: Trinity, 2000).

⁸³ E.g., Reed, *Archaeology*, 44.

⁸⁴ *LSJ*, 1344.

⁸⁵ On imported *garum* and *allec* at Herodian Masada, see Hannah Cotton et al., "Fish Sauces from Herodian Masada," *JRA* 9 (1996) 223–38; Piotr Berdowski, "Garum of Herod the Great (Latin-Greek Inscription on the Amphora from Masada)," *QC* 16 (2008) 107–22.

⁸⁶ Katherine A. Shaner has recently demonstrated on the basis of 1st cent. CE visual rhetoric in imperial iconography that the language of ἀρπαγμός (and, similarly, ἀρπαγή) should be understood as referring to rape and robbery, as it often conveys imperial violence against subjugated peoples: "Seeing Rape and Robbery: ἀρπαγμός and the Philippians Christ Hymn (Phil. 2:5–11)," *BibInt* 25 (2017) 342–63.

⁸⁷ Smith, *Symposium to Eucharist*, 230–35.

mammon, the invited guests all declined, provoking the host to open the invitation to anyone who would come. Another saying details the dining posture of those granted access to the kingdom: people coming from East and West “will recline (ἀνακλιθήσονται) with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God, but you will be thrown out into the outer darkness, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth” (13:28). Spatially, Q thus casts the kingdom’s insiders as a global community of diners reclining at an egalitarian banquet and outsiders as those people of “this generation” destined for eschatological punishment because of their obsession with wealth and status.⁸⁸

The Jewish texts from Early Roman Palestine examined in this section display a spectrum of perspectives on the *triclinium*. None of these sources approves of ranking at banquets, although they differ in the intensity of their reactions. Whereas the Parables of Enoch (late first century BCE) imagines the eschatological obliteration of *triclinia*, the Testament of Moses (early first century CE) does not comment on banqueting in the kingdom of God, and the Q source (mid-first century CE) envisions *triclinia* as spaces of commensality in the kingdom of God. Altogether, these trends might seem to suggest that the *triclinium* space was gradually appropriated by Jews, including the first generations of Jesus-followers, in Early Roman Palestine. But this unilinear model of acculturation obscures the struggles over the meaning of space evident when the archaeological and literary data are together subjected to critical analysis.

■ *Triclinium* Trialectics

Critical spatial theory offers a useful framework for analyzing the collective evidence for the social production of the *triclinium* in Early Roman Palestine.⁸⁹ The idea of spatial trialectics, in particular, proves valuable for complicating simplistic models of “Romanization” as acculturation. As Ray Laurence and Francesco Trifilò have recently remarked, this theory has “obvious applications” for understanding the relationship between the local and the global in the Roman provinces.⁹⁰

Trialectic is a term that was coined by the postmodern geographer Edward Soja to clarify the Marxist sociologist Henri Lefebvre’s theory of space.⁹¹ According to Soja,

⁸⁸ See, further, Daniel A. Smith, “‘But You Will Be Thrown Out’ (Q 13:28): The Spatial Dimensions of Q’s Apocalyptic Rhetoric,” in *Q in Context I: The Separation between the Just and the Unjust in Early Judaism and in the Sayings Source* (ed. Markus Tiwald; BBB 172; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015) 145–68; Arne Bork, *Die Raumsemantik und Figurensemantik der Logienquelle* (WUNT 404; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015) 277–81.

⁸⁹ Eric C. Stewart supplies a helpful introduction and survey of scholarship: “New Testament Space/Spatiality,” *BTB* 42 (2012) 139–50.

⁹⁰ Ray Laurence and Francesco Trifilò, “The Global and the Local in the Roman Empire: Connectivity and Mobility from an Urban Perspective,” in *Globalisation and the Roman World: Archaeological and Theoretical Perspectives* (ed. Martin Pitts and Miguel John Versluys; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015) 119 n. 9.

⁹¹ Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies* (London: Verso, 1989); idem, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1996).

every space consists of three interconnected aspects: Firstspace (physical space), Secondspace (perceived space), and Thirdspace (space as lived and experienced). As Christopher Meredith has noted, biblical scholars have found in Soja's notion of Thirdspace a very convenient lens for interpreting the spaces in biblical texts, and the texts themselves, as spaces of social emancipation.⁹² However, Soja's Thirdspace is notoriously "slippery" since it "is claimed to encompass everything there is to say about anything."⁹³ Moreover, as Meredith avers, Soja's postmodern interpretation sanitizes the economic underpinnings of Lefebvre's theory.

For Lefebvre, space is actively produced by society, just like commodities. Just as Marx theorized that social relationships become concealed and misrecognized in the production of commodities, Lefebvre asserts that social relationships (including class relationships) are latent in spaces.⁹⁴ Critical analysis of space, therefore, should resist reifying space as space "in itself" and instead focus on the dynamic social and economic modes and motivations of spatial production. Social space is not a singular and static thing, but an "unlimited multiplicity" of social spaces that become superimposed or interpenetrated. Therefore, "No space disappears in the course of growth and development: the *worldwide does not abolish the local*."⁹⁵ Shifting modes of economic production entail the generation of new spaces rather than the dis- or replacement of spaces.⁹⁶

In order to analyze the ways that human actions produce spaces that reproduce and transform social relationships, Lefebvre proposed the "triple dialectic" that Soja conveniently called a trialectic. These human-made spaces are the "perceived space" of popular practices and perceptions that produce and reproduce space, the "conceptualized space" that is conceived and naturalized by official or dominant parties in society, and the "lived space" by which the dominated imagination "seeks to change and appropriate."⁹⁷ Whereas Soja tends to portray Thirdspace as a space of radical inclusivity and revolutionary agency, Lefebvre's trialectic theorizes "lived space" as much more of a negotiation between, or reconfiguration of, perceived and conceptualized spaces. It is through this "lived space" that embodied subjects bring about change in socioeconomic relationships.

A Lefebvrian investigation of the *triclinium* spaces in Palestine complicates models of Romanization versus indigenous anti-Romanization.⁹⁸ Whereas a Sojan analysis would view the archaeological evidence of *triclinia* as Firstspace, the

⁹² Christopher Meredith, "Taking Issue with Thirdspace: Reading Soja, Lefebvre and the Bible," in *Constructions of Space III: Biblical Spatiality and the Sacred* (ed. Jorunn Økland et al.; London: Bloomsbury, 2016) 75–106.

⁹³ *Key Thinkers on Space and Place* (ed. Phil Hubbard et al.; London: Sage, 2004) 272–73.

⁹⁴ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith; Oxford: Blackwell, 1991) 90.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 86 (original italics).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁹⁸ E.g., Andrea M. Berlin, "Romanization and Anti-Romanization in Pre-Revolt Galilee," in *The First Jewish Revolt: Archaeology, History, and Ideology* (ed. Andrea M. Berlin and J. Andrew

Roman literary representations as Secondspace, and the Jewish texts as Thirdspace, thereby equating First- and Secondspaces with Romanization and Thirdspace with resistance, Lefebvrian analysis is more attuned to the hypercomplexity of changing conceptions of space as interpenetrations of the local and imperial. As Claudia Camp remarked about Soja's Thirdspace, "oppressors also have lived spaces."⁹⁹ Taking this critique seriously, analysis of spatial trialectics should also identify the "lived spaces" of elites.

The archaeological remains of *triclinia* in Early Roman Palestine evince some of the ways in which Jewish elites produced "lived spaces" that combined "perceived spaces" and "conceptualized spaces." As we have seen, the Roman "conceptualized space" of the dining room as hierarchical started to influence the spatial production of Jewish kings and other elites in the first century BCE. When part of a palace or mansion, the Roman *triclinium* was the most intimate or private space in which a Roman host would entertain friends and guests. The dominant Roman conceptualization of the *triclinium* situates it on (or at least in sight of) the central longitudinal axis that ties together the public entrance (*fauces* and/or *vestibulum*), *atrium*, and peristyle courtyard. Whereas the clients of a *paterfamilias* would regularly penetrate this space as far as the *atrium* or *tablinum* (i.e., the room between the *atrium* and the peristyle that opened onto the peristyle), spaces of economic and political affairs, only family and friends would penetrate the house to the *triclinium*. From the entrance or *atrium*, the view of a guest or client would culminate in the nine-place *triclinium*, where the owners broadcast their distinguished relationships and advertised their wealth. Within this space, men and women were ordered according to rank, with the guest of honor and host occupying the privileged center of the conversation and enjoying the optimal point of view. This spatial organization expresses the Roman economic modes of friendship and patronage.¹⁰⁰

The "lived space" of Jewish elites did not match this Roman "conceptualized space." Notably, the only three known *triclinia* definitively designed for nine people are those with masonry benches. Of these, one stood alone in a garden, one was added in a late phase to a peristyle mansion, but askew of the central axis and sightline from the entrance, and one was at the center of the peristyle courtyard and faced walls and another dining space. None of these were in urban contexts. The Roman conceptualization of space is more typically evident in the positioning of couches along three walls rather than four. As noted, even this

Overman; London: Routledge, 2002) 57–73; Richard A. Horsley, *Revolt of the Scribes: Resistance and Apocalyptic Origins* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010).

⁹⁹ Claudia V. Camp, "Storied Space, or Ben Sira 'Tells,'" in *"Imagining" Biblical Worlds: Studies in Spatial, Social, and Historical Contexts in Honor of James W. Flanagan* (ed. David M. Gunn and Paula M. McNutt; JSOTSup 359; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002) 68–69.

¹⁰⁰ John H. D'Arms, "The Roman *Convivium* and the Idea of Equality," in *Symptica: A Symposium on the Symposium* (ed. Oswyn Murray; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990) 308–20.

conceptualization of space is better understood as a superimposition of Roman and Greek conceptualizations than as strictly Roman.

It is in decoration and material culture, though, that we glimpse Jewish elites intercalating Jewish spatial practices with Greco-Roman conceptualizations. Palestine's *triclinia* were elaborately decorated with mosaics, carved stucco, and frescoes, like Greek and Roman *triclinia*. However, the Jewish decorative schemas eschewed figural images, in keeping with Jewish law (Exod 20:4), and instead displayed geometric and floral designs.¹⁰¹ Some *triclinia* also made use of Hellenistic masonry-style wall decoration instead of the more colorful Pompeian styles. This style's wall panels represented the ashlar with drafted margins so common in Herodian buildings and the Temple Mount in particular. In this light, this decoration style may be seen as a manifestation of local civic pride.¹⁰²

The material culture of elite dining also divulges Jewish elites negotiating spaces. Jewish elites used imported luxury items, foods, and wines while dining, and their demand for these items supported supraregional trade and thus economic integration.¹⁰³ However, they also used high-quality local items imbued with ethnoreligious significance. For instance, they used locally made stone vessels that some Jews would come to believe prevented ritual impurity.¹⁰⁴ They also used wheel-made ("Herodian") oil lamps made from Jerusalem clay that were aniconic and may have been symbolically tied to the temple.¹⁰⁵ In these ways, Jewish elites produced *triclinium* spaces that were very much local and conveyed popular spatial perceptions.

¹⁰¹ Sarah Japp, "Public and Private Decorative Art in the Time of Herod the Great," in *The World of the Herods* (ed. Nikos Kokkinos; Stuttgart: Steiner, 2007) 1:227–46.

¹⁰² On this style of wall decoration, see Silvia Rozenberg, "On the Lasting Presence of the Hellenistic Masonry Style in the Land of Israel and Neighboring Countries," in *Atti del X congresso internazionale dell'AIPMA* (Naples: University of Naples Press, 2010) 365–73. David Jacobson identifies the symbolic connection between Herodian construction styles and the antiquity of the temple: "Decorative Drafted Margin Masonry in Jerusalem and Hebron and Its Relations," *Levant* 32 (2000) 135–54.

¹⁰³ Tom Brughmans and Jeroen Poblome, "Roman Bazaar or Market Economy? Explaining Tableware Distributions through Computational Modelling," *Antiquity* 90 (2016) 393–408; Philip Bes, *Once upon a Time in the East: The Chronological and Geographical Distribution of Terra Sigillata and Red Slip Ware in the Roman East* (Roman and Late Antique Mediterranean Pottery 6; Oxford: Archaeopress, 2015).

¹⁰⁴ Shimon Gibson, "Stone Vessels of the Early Roman Period from Jerusalem and Palestine: A Reassessment," in *One Land—Many Cultures: Archaeological Studies in Honour of Stanislaw Loffreda* (ed. Claudio Bottini, Leah De Segni, and L. Daniel Chrupcala; SBFCMa 41; Jerusalem: Franciscan, 2003) 287–308; Magness, *Stone*, 70–74. See also Stuart S. Miller's important reservations about assuming that Jews were motivated to use these vessels by purity concerns as opposed to utilitarian factors and increased availability due to the Herodian construction projects: *At the Intersection of Texts and Material Finds: Stepped Pools, Stone Vessels, and Ritual Purity among the Jews of Roman Galilee* (JAJSup 16; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015) 153–83.

¹⁰⁵ David Adan-Bayewitz et al., "Preferential Distribution of Lamps from the Jerusalem Area in the Late Second Temple Period (Late First Century B.C.E.–70 C.E.)," *BASOR* 350 (2008) 37–85.

If those spaces that conveyed the “Roman” or “Greco-Roman” were interpenetrated by particular, Jewish space, this turns the tables on typical understandings of Jewish (and proto-Christian) texts as reactions to Roman imperialism. The literary texts were not as concerned with anti-Romanization or counterimperial protest as they were with the particular production of space by local elites. This explains why local elites (kings and landowners, priests, and Pharisees) are the target of these literary polemics rather than the empire and imperial authorities. Each Palestinian text examined claims that the spatial practices of elites in *triclinia* were financed by economic exploitation. But these literary representations of elite dining spaces were produced by other elites or sub-elites in competition with their opponents.¹⁰⁶

Each literary text imagined the space of an eschatological kingdom of God that would reconfigure social relationships with different implications for the *triclinium*. Only the Parables of Enoch envisions the dissipation of *triclinia* at judgment. While Q expresses a similar dissatisfaction about the spatial practices of Jewish elites in *triclinia*, its vision of the emergent kingdom of God incorporates aspects of Greco-Roman conceptions of *triclinia*, such as invitations and reclining. Q’s understanding of the *triclinium* as “lived space” is not entirely inclusive, for it excludes slaves to mammon. It does, however, discredit the hierarchical conceptualization by inviting all types of people to the banquet.

Lefebvrian analysis detects the dynamic interplay of Jewish spatial practices and imaginaries with Roman (and Greco-Roman) conceptualizations.¹⁰⁷ This interpenetration of spaces had implications for the incremental incorporation of Palestine into the Roman Empire and its increasingly integrated economy. The incorporation of Greek and Roman conceptualizations of space was a cause and effect of Palestine’s integration into trade networks that traversed the Roman East—networks driven by elite demand for the types of luxury goods enjoyed in *triclinia*. At the same time, the Jewish practices that produced “lived spaces” enabled the emergence, spread, and habituation of Roman spatial conceptions through distinctive combinations with local perceptions of space. It was only through interpenetration with local, provincial spaces that Roman spaces and their concomitant social relationships materialized.

¹⁰⁶ In a recent study, Boris Chrubasik has similarly emphasized that cultural change was instigated by elite competition rather than foreign imposition: “From Pre-Makkabaeen Judaea to Hekatomnid Karia and Back Again: The Question of Hellenization,” in *Hellenism and the Local Communities of the Eastern Mediterranean: 400 BCE–250 CE* (ed. Boris Chrubasik and Daniel King; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) 83–110.

¹⁰⁷ This type of analysis, I suggest, focuses on the spatial aspects of what some scholars have profitably theorized as “glocalization”—that is, “the variety of ways in which local communities and cultures adopt and adapt the local global *koine*” (Kostas Vlassopoulos, *Greeks and Barbarians* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013] 21; see also Michael Sommer, “Glocalising an Empire: Rome in the 3rd Century AD,” in *Regionalism and Globalism in Antiquity: Exploring Their Limits* [ed. Franco De Angelis; Leuven: Peeters, 2013] 341–52).

■ Conclusion

The Jewish spatial practices examined in this study reproduced elements of Roman social space but also asserted distinctive local identities. Much as Plutarch produced a *triclinium* space that imbricated Roman social codes with Greek significance, some Jewish elites produced aniconic *triclinia* in which diners reclined with imported and local vessels and others produced imaginary spaces in which the privileges of *triclinium* dining are accessible to many. The apocalyptic literary tradition that invoked the *triclinium* as a space of exploitation did not blame Rome for imposing this architectural form but rather harangued those Jewish elites responsible for producing these lived spaces.

Over time, the shock of the *triclinium* appears to have faded among Jews in Roman Palestine, but spatial negotiations did not cease. The archaeological evidence from the second and third centuries CE indicates that the *triclinium* remained a relatively uncommon architectural form enjoyed primarily by elites.¹⁰⁸ Instead of critiquing the social and economic implications of *triclinium* dining, however, the Tannaitic literature often affirms the hierarchical ordering of this space and imbues it with Jewish social and religious significance. For instance, *Tosefta Berakhot* (compiled in Palestine in the early to mid-third century CE) prescribes the Roman seating order as Jewish law:¹⁰⁹

What is the order of reclining (ההסטיבה)? . . . When there are three couches (מטות), the greatest reclines at the head of the middle [couch] (בראש של), the one second to him reclines above him (למעלה הימנו) and the third reclines below him (למטה הימנו), and they continue to order [the reclining] in this manner. (*t. Ber.* 5.5)

This fascinating halakhic endorsement of the Roman hierarchical order serves as support for the rabbinic power structure and consequently shaped rabbis' hierarchical performance of Torah debate and exposition, as Gil Klein has argued.¹¹⁰ This rabbinic text constructs the *triclinium* as a Jewish lived space devoted to academic discussions of halakhah among Palestine's intellectual elite.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Baruch, "Adapted Roman Rituals," 68–71; Klein, "Torah in *Triclinia*," 343–47.

¹⁰⁹ Compare the parallel in *y. Ta'an.* 4.2, 68a, and see also the similar language of ranking in *y. Šeqal.* 5.5, 49b. For further discussion, see Schwartz, "No Dialogue," 207–16; Klein, "Torah in *Triclinia*," 335. Another important example of Jewish negotiations of dining spaces is the tradition that on the night of Passover, "Even the poorest person in Israel must not eat until he reclines (עד שיטב)" (*m. Pesah.* 10.1), which explicitly symbolizes freedom from Egyptian slavery in other sources (e.g., *y. Pesah.* 68b). While these sources do not explicitly refer to the architecture and furniture of a *triclinium*, the bodily posture of reclining (using forms of הסבה) may have been understood as implying this setting.

¹¹⁰ Klein, "Torah in *Triclinia*," 340–41.

¹¹¹ Gregg E. Gardner has argued that the Tannaim, an intellectual and social elite, were often quite wealthy as well, although some rabbis were of middling wealth: "Who Is Rich? The Poor in Early Rabbinic Judaism," *JQR* 104 (2014) 515–36.

Much like the rabbinic texts, the proto-Christian authors who reworked the Palestinian Jesus traditions in new contexts across the Roman East also espoused, yet adapted, the Roman hierarchical ordering that was met with disdain and ambivalence by Jewish authors in Early Roman Palestine.¹¹² Luke's Gospel, for instance, embraces ranking at banquets.¹¹³ Like Plutarch, Luke entertains the question of precedence in seating by reflecting on a late-arriving guest:¹¹⁴

When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not recline at the place of honor (πρωτοκλισίαν), in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, "Give this person your place," and then in disgrace you would start to take the last place (ἔσχατον τόπον). But when you are invited, go and recline at the last place (ἔσχατον τόπον), so that when your host comes, he may say to you, "Friend, move up higher" (προσανάβηθι ἀνώτερον); then you will be honored in the presence of all who recline with you. For all who exalt themselves will be humbled and those who humble themselves will be exalted. (14:8–11)

While the Lukan Jesus encourages taking the "last" seat, nothing in this parable or the rest of the Gospel seeks the abolition of ranking in *triclinia*.¹¹⁵ On the contrary, Luke legitimates social stratification as a means of exemplifying distinction in discipleship and humility (see 22:24–28), much as *Tosefta Berakhot* does as a means of exemplifying distinction in the interpretation of Torah and Plutarch does as a means of exemplifying distinction in παιδεία.

Both in Middle Roman Palestine and in the early Christian movement influenced by Jewish traditions, then, our literary sources communicate that the *triclinium* was no longer viewed as an architecture of elite exploitation. Instead, its concomitant hierarchical organization of social space was appropriated. Critical spatial theory reminds us that this embrace of the Roman hierarchical ordering of space should not be viewed as the replacement of local space with global space but rather as the trialectical production of new space through the combination of spaces.

¹¹² On banquetting spaces in the gospels, see Smith, *Symposium to Eucharist*, 219–78 (and the literature cited there).

¹¹³ For instance, Luke omits Q's indictment of the Pharisees for taking the first seats at banquets. Instead, he uses ranking in *triclinia* as an opportunity to seat Jesus in the place of honor: Luke reworks the woes as a sympotic discourse Jesus delivered as the guest of honor at a banquet hosted by a Pharisee (11:37–54). Luke does, however, preserve Mark's warning (12:38–39) that scribes seek out the seats of honor at banquets in 20:46. At issue for Luke is not the ranking itself but the unrestrained pursuit of social recognition. See, further, E. Springs Steele, "Luke 11:37–54: A Modified Hellenistic *Symposium*?" *JBL* 103 (1984) 379–94; Stuart L. Love, "Women and Men at Hellenistic *Symposia* Meals in Luke," in *Modelling Early Christianity: Social-Scientific Studies of the New Testament in Its Context* (ed. Philip F. Esler; London: Routledge, 1995) 198–212.

¹¹⁴ Smith, *Symposium to Eucharist*, 255; König, *Saints*, 133.

¹¹⁵ Even more than Q and the other Gospels, however, Luke presents hierarchical banquetting spaces as inclusive of the marginalized: "But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous" (14:13–14).

The social spaces described and prescribed by the rabbis and Gospel authors expressed local religious ideologies at the same time that they naturalized imperial conceptualizations of space.

When the full spectrum of ancient evidence is taken into account, it is clear that Jews in Early Roman Palestine negotiated space in similar ways. The archaeological remains, including material culture, betray Jewish elites imbuing the space of *triclinia* with local cultural and religious significance. While apocalyptic sources evince contestation over the cultural and economic implications of these elite spaces, they also divulge the production of imagined eschatological dining spaces where comfort and luxury are reserved for the righteous. The Q source is a striking example of the crossroads between apocalyptic condemnations of the dining practices of certain Jewish elites and the positive reconfigurations of such spaces in rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity. It condemns certain elites for their alleged labor exploitation, greed, and honor-lust but also envisions believers reclining at an eschatological banquet.

Importantly, the eschatological banqueting space illustrated in Q was not merely a vision but would have inflected the spatial imagination of its audiences. As R. Akiva put it: “This world is like a vestibule before the world to come. Prepare yourself in the vestibule, so you can enter the *triclinium* (טרקלין)” (*m. Avot* 4.16). The spaces envisioned in literary sources, whether this-worldly or otherworldly, informed and regulated the lived spaces of ancient Jews, if only in limited and indirect ways. Analyzing these literary sources together with archaeological data illuminates how the varied and dynamic negotiations and struggles of ancient Jewish elites contributed to provincial transformation.