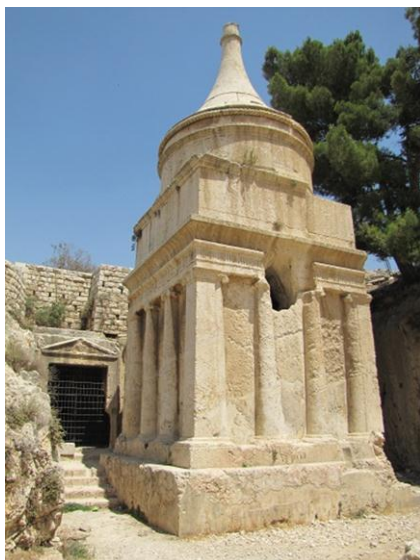


“Absolom’s” Pillar

This tomb is in the Kidron Valley. It was constructed during Jesus’ lifetime. Today it is traditionally called the Pillar of Absalom or Absalom’s Monument. The Bordeaux Pilgrim referred to it as the Tomb of Hezekiah in 333 AD. It was first associated with Absalom by Benjamin of Tudela in 1170 because of 2 Samuel 18:18. The actual person or family for whom this tomb was cut is unknown.



The architectural style includes both Egyptian and Greek influences, which would have come from the two kingdoms that dominated Judea between 300-100 BC. The Egyptian influence came from the Ptolemys of Egypt, and the Hellenistic style from the Seleucids, who were Greeks ruling in Syria. The lower square is cut from the bedrock. It is topped with a finely-cut circular stone with a conical top that was cut from one single stone. Directly to the left of this tomb is an eight-chambered catacomb with well-preserved carved stone. The catacomb is called the Cave of Jehoshaphat. The Pillar of Absalom may have been a monument for the burial chambers in the Cave of Jehoshaphat, cut into the cliff behind it. There are two inscriptions in this monument. A two-line inscription above the door is from around 400 AD that says: “This is the tomb of Zachary, martyr, most holy priest, father of John the Baptist.” A later inscription can be seen to the right of the door but only the word “simon” can be made out. Neither inscription is historically valuable or accurate.



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