

The Temple of Jerusalem by Simon Goldhill.
Profile Books Ltd., 2004.

The Temple of Jerusalem is the latest of Profile Books' mini-studies of famous buildings, and the only volume to focus on a structure the merest vestige of whose splendour remains.

Simon Goldhill's detailed and highly entertaining study of the Temple investigates the actual Temples – of Solomon, Zerubabel and Herod the Great – that stood on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, and also the Temples of the mind, in religious and secular art and in literary images of the ancient and contemporary Near East.

Goldhill explains the cultic significance of the Temple to the Jewish people, and gives details of its cultic rites, considers the role of the Temple in Jewish history, and also describes the impact of historical invasions – by the Muslims and the Crusaders – on the Temple Mount, and the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa mosque that have occupied it since the late 7th century C.E.

There are notes to each chapter containing excellent suggestions for further reading and there are some useful tips for those planning visits to Jerusalem to see its ancient sites.

Warmly recommended.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh