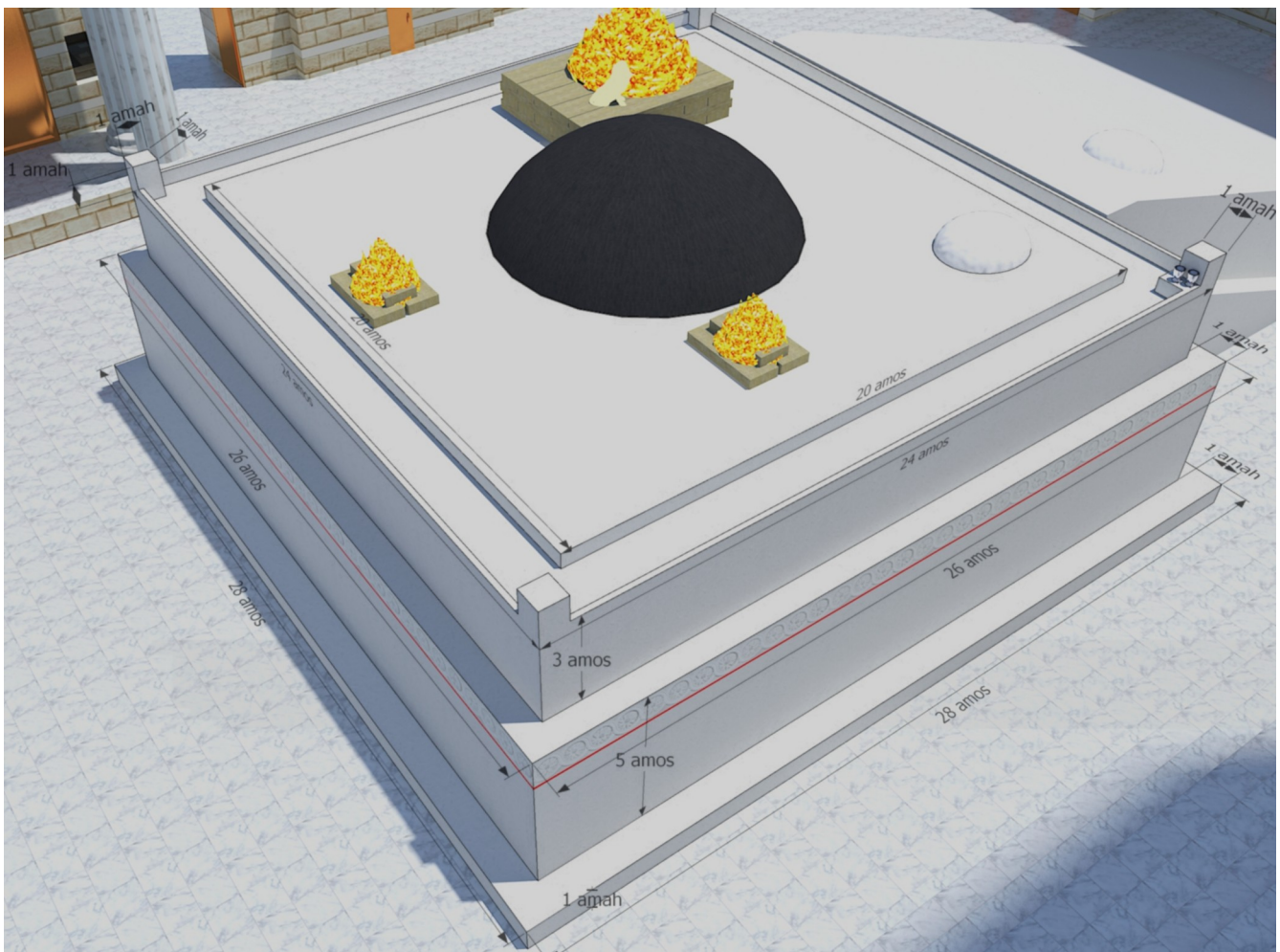


Chapter 5: The Mizbeach

The most prominent object in the Azarah was the Mizbeach, where the Korbanos were offered on. The blood of the Korbanos would be sprinkled on the sides of the Mizbeach, and the meat would be burnt on top.

The Mizbeach was twenty-eight amos by twenty-eight amos, and ten amos tall. It was made of a few levels. The first level was called the yesod, foundation. It was twenty-eight amos by twenty-eight amos, and one amah tall. The Mizbeach then went in one amah on each side, so the Mizbeach was twenty-six amos by twenty-six amos. The Mizbeach rose another five amos, and then receded another amah on each side. This terrace was called the Sovev, the encompassing part. (It was called this since, as opposed to the yesod, which only was on two sides of the Mizbeach, this encompassed it from all four sides¹.) The Mizbeach, which was now twenty-four



1 Rambam on Middos 3:2

amos by twenty-four amos, then rose another three amos, until the roof of the Mizbeach, which was nine amos higher than the bottom.

In the four corners of the Mizbeach were four square boxes, one amah wide and long, and one amah high. These boxes were called keranos, horns. Within this, there was another one amah wide strip on the Mizbeach, for the Kohanim to walk on. They could not walk on the outer amah strip, where the keranos were, because the keranos block it by the corners². Taking away these strips, the actual place for the fires was twenty amos by twenty amos³. When the Passuk⁴ says that the Mizbeach was twenty amos by twenty amos, it is talking about the place for the fires⁵.

[In a few places⁶, Rashi says that the Mizbeach in the first Beis Hamikdash was thirty-two amos square, like in the second and third. It seems that Rashi holds that when Rabbi Yossi's statement that in the first Beis Hamikdash, the Mizbeach was smaller, is not unanimous, and Rashi is writing based on the other opinions. In fact, the Meiri⁷ writes this clearly. It is not clear, however, how they would explain the Passuk in Divrey Hayamim. Possibly the space for the kohanim to walk on was bigger, or the fires were never made in the outer two amos of its place⁸.]

All the amos used in the Beis Hamikdash were regular (large) amos, consisting of six tefachim each. However, a few of the amos used for the Mizbeach were with the smaller amah, consisting of five tefachim. They are: the amah height of the Yesod, the amah width of the sovev (i.e., the amah the Mizbeach receded there), and the amah height (and maybe width) of the keranos⁹.

2 Zevachim 62a

3 Middos 3:1

4 Divrey Hayamim II 4:1

5 Rashi Zevachim 60a

6 Rashi Shabbos 55a. In Melachim I 8:64 he writes that the place for the fires was 24 by 24 amos, however the Birkas Hazevach (Zevachim 59b) explains that Rashi is there referring to the whole top, including the place for the Kohanim to walk and the Keranos. (And in fact, Rashi there is quoting Rabbi Yossi, who is the one that says in the first beis Hamikdash the Mizbeach was 28 by 28, so you have to answer like this.)

7 to Middos 3:1

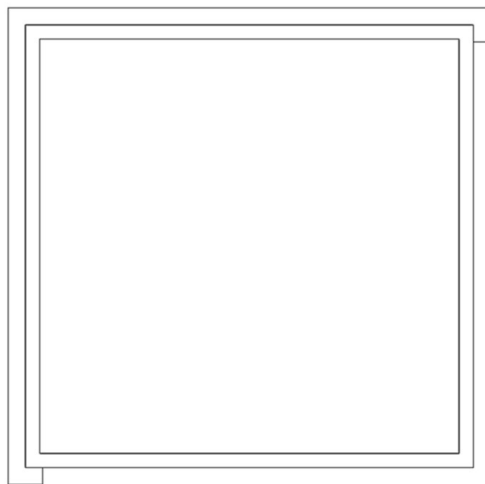
8 Although the Mishnah in Tamid (2:5) says that the second pyre on the Mizbeach was four amos from the edge of the Mizbeach, which is referring to the four amos of the yesod, sovev, keranos, and place for the Kohanim to walk; the Gemara Zevachim 58b (for other reasons) explains that this is Rabbi Yossi, who anyway says that in the first Beis Hamikdash the Mizbeach was smaller. In fact, the Gemara brings another explanation for the Mishnah there, where the Mishnah is like Rabbi Yehudah, and in this case the four amos are not including the Yesod and sovev, in which case the second pyre was located exactly two amos inwards from the edge of its place.

9 Keilim 17:10, Menachos 97b with Rashi. In Yechezkel (43:13) Rashi writes that the keranos were also five tefachim wide, and Rabeinu Gershom (to Menachos) in fact explains the Gemara to mean this. Rashi on the Gemara, however, says that it means that the keranos could have been either five or six tefachim, with no reason to say it was definitely either way.

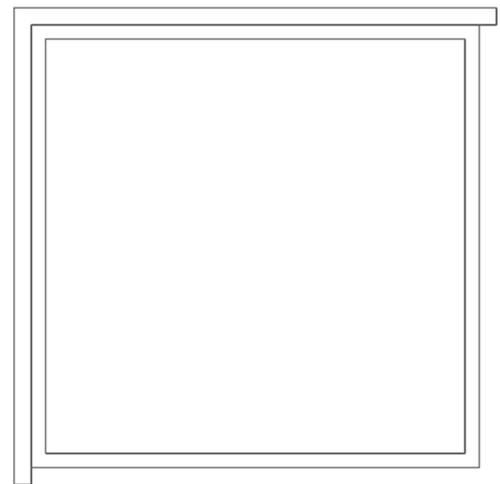
The yesod was not on all four sides of the Mizbeach, rather it was on the western and northern sides, and was on the eastern and southern sides for one amah, by the southwest and northeast corners¹⁰. [According to Rashi¹¹ and the Rosh¹² this is not referring to the corner amah of the yesod, which went past the end of the northern and western wall to the east or south, but to another amah which it turned and went along the eastern or southern walls. The Rambam¹³, however, explains it that it is only referring to the corner amah, and it did not turn at all. The Zohar¹⁴ writes the yesod went on the eastern and southern sides for half an amah; this seems to argue with the Mishnah. However, the Zohar actually holds that the amah that the yesod extended

was the corner amah, in which case you cannot associate the whole corner with the eastern (or southern) side, it is also the corner of the

Rashi and Rosh



Zohar and Rambam



northern (or western) side; therefore you associate half of it with each side, which is why the Zohar says that the east and south only had half an amah of yesod¹⁵.]

The Gemara¹⁶ explains the reason for this as follows: The whole Mizbeach has to be built in Shevet Binyamin's portion of Eretz Yisrael. However, the eastern part of the Azarah was in Yehudah's portion, and a strip extended from his portion into the place where the southern and eastern yesod should be, leaving only one amah by the corners in Binyamin's portion. Therefore, no Yesod was built on these sides, besides for near the corners. According to this, it would come out that the Mishnah is only talking about the second Beis Hamikdash, where the Mizbeach was thirty amos, with four amos being added to the south and west. However in the First Beis

¹⁰ Middos 3:1

¹¹ Zevachim 53b

¹² Middos 3:1

¹³ Drawing in Peirush Hamishnayos to Middos

¹⁴ Zohar vol. 1 page 47a

¹⁵ Likkutey Levi Yitzchak (from the Lubavitcher Rebbe's father) לזהר השמטות לבראשית pp 266-7.

¹⁶ Zevachim 53b

Hamikdash, where the Mizbeach was twenty-eight amos, there could have been a yesod along the whole southern side, since this was a part of Shevet Binyamin's territory, as seen from the fact that in the Second Beis Hamikdash, the actual Mizbeach was built on that space¹⁷.



Yehudah and Binyamin's portions of the Azarah (Yehudah's is the red, everything else is Binyamin's)

However, Tosafos asks¹⁸ that this explanation is fine according to the opinion that yerushalayim was included in the division of Eretz Yisrael to the Shevatim, however according to the opinion that it wasn't, why couldn't there be a yesod? They answer that according to this opinion, this is one of the many details given over of how the Mizbeach and Beis Hamikdash must be. According to this, there is no reason to say that the yesod was any different in the First Beis Hamikdash¹⁹.

However, the Gemara²⁰ asks a question. The Korban Olah, when it was a bird, would be killed by the southeast corner of the Mizbeach, and the Kohen would then press its neck to the Mizbeach, and make its blood flow out, onto the wall of the Mizbeach. However, if there is no yesod, this blood just flows onto the floor, to waste? (Although the avodah of the bird olah has to be done by the upper half of the

¹⁷ Tosafos Zevachim 61b, Rosh to Middos 3:1

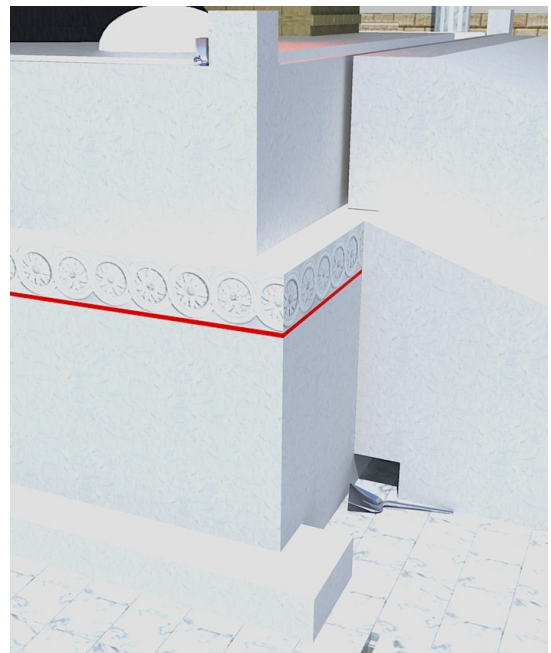
¹⁸ Yoma 12a

¹⁹ Har Hamoriyah to Rambam Hilchos Beis Habechirah 2:10

²⁰ Zevachim 54a, as explained by Rashi

Mizbeach, and therefor most times the blood would drain unto the sovev, and there won't be a problem; since the amah under the yesod is also part of the upper half the bird can also be offered there, and then we do have a problem.²¹⁾ The Gemara answers that there was a little piece jutting out of the Mizbeach in this corner, to catch the blood. Since this piece was not on the ground, but higheer, in the air, it is not considered built in Yehudah's territory.

After the Kohen would sprinkle the blood of a korban unto the Mizbeach, he would pour the rest of the blood onto the yesod by the southwest corner of the Mizbeach. If the blood was from a korban that was sprinkled inside the Heichal (such as the ox and goat chatas brought on Yom Kippur) it was spilled unto the western part²², and if it was from a Korban which's blood was sprinkled on the Mizbeach, (such as a regular chatas, or olah), it was poured onto the southern part²³. In the Second Beis Hamikdash, there were two holes in the yesod where the blood would drain into, and go to the floor of the Azarah. It would then flow on the floor to the the water channel in the Azarah, and go out of the Beis Hamikdash, to the Kidron valley²⁴. However, in the first Beis Hamikdash, the Chachamim held that there cannot be any holes or hollow spaces in the Mizbeach²⁵. Therefore, it would seem that there was no holes in the yesod, rather the blood would flow from the top of the yesod down its side straight onto the floor.



In the exact middle of the height of the Mizbeach, [since the mizbeach was ten amos tall, this is at a height of five amos, one amah below the sovev] there was a red line painted²⁶ on the Mizbeach. This was done since some korbanos (like a chatas, or a bird olah²⁷) had their blood sprinkled on the upper half of the Mizbeach, and

21 Rashi Zevachim 54a

22 Zevachim 5:1-2

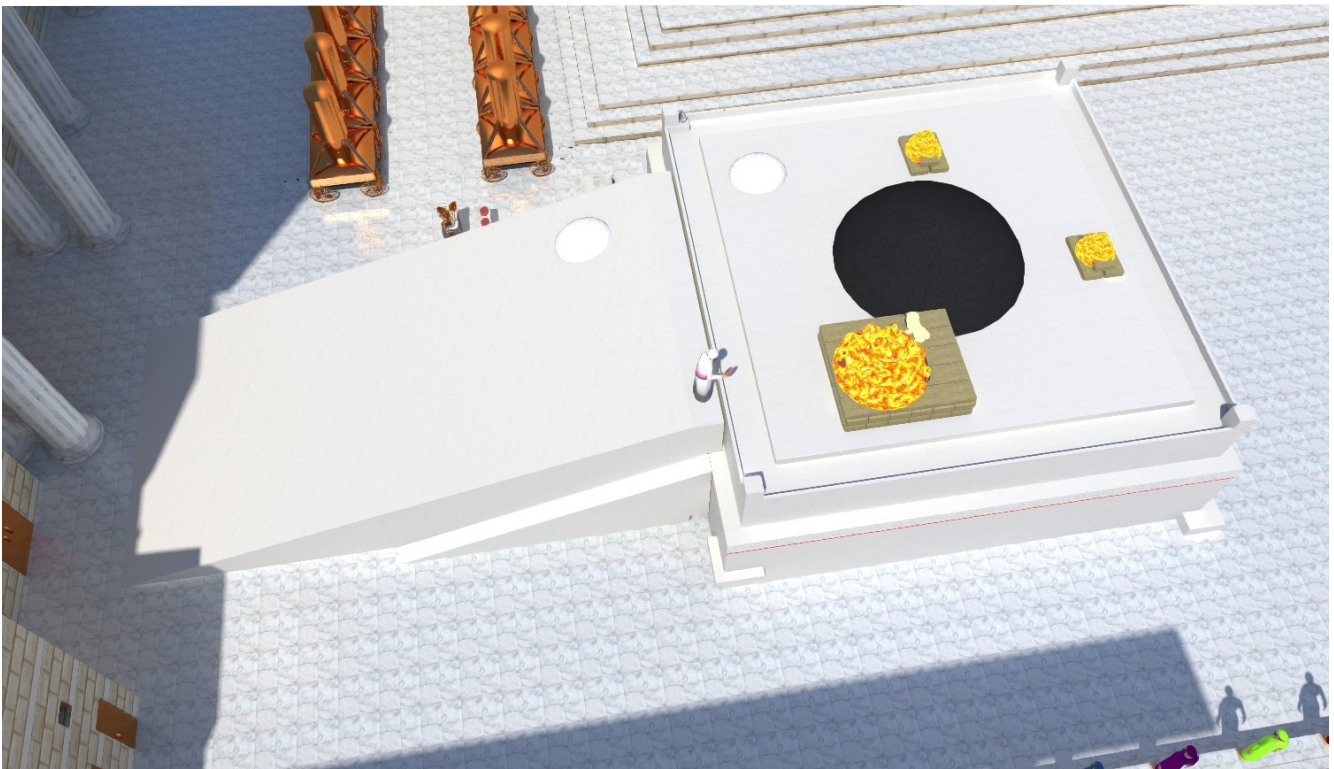
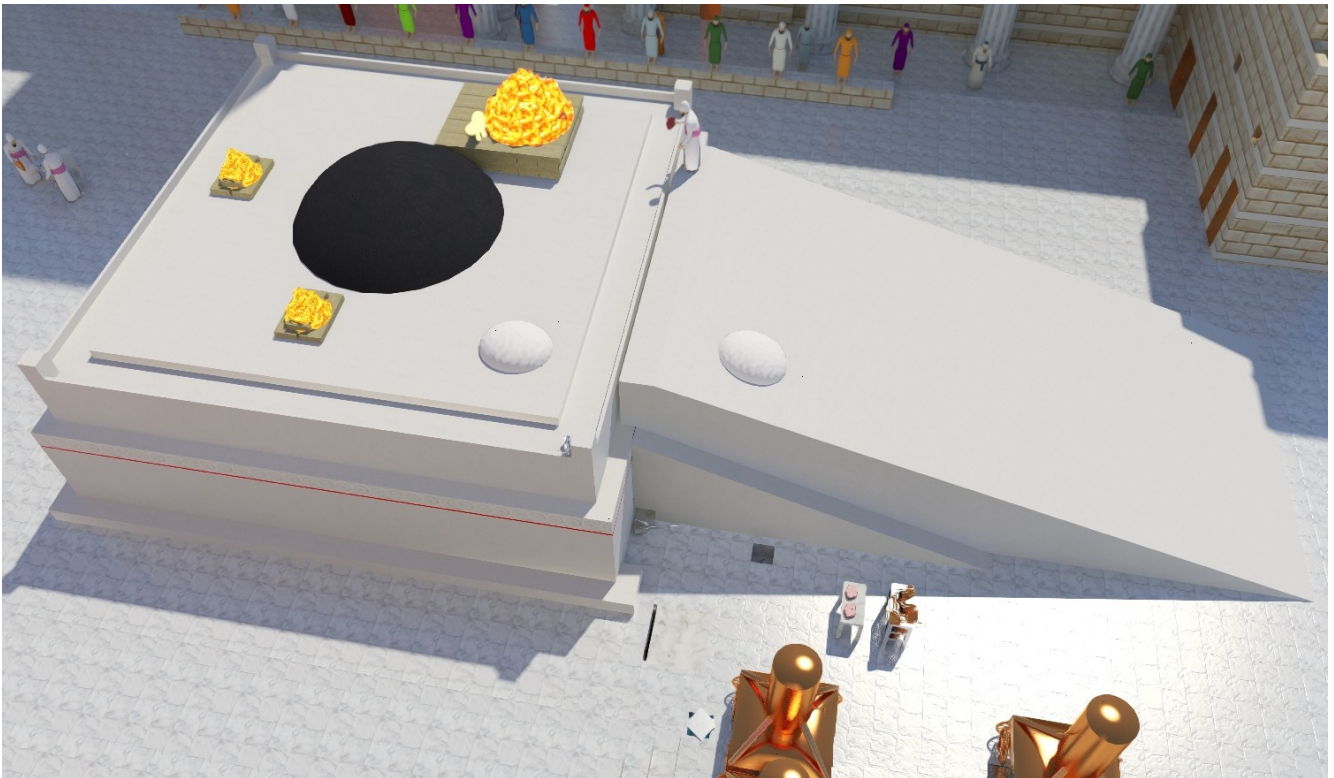
23 Zevachim 5:3, Rambam Hilchos Ma'asey Hakorbanos 5:7

24 Middos 3:2 with Rosh

25 Zevachim 61b, see below, page 8

26 Aruch Hashulchan Ha'asid 65:21

27 Kinnim 1:1

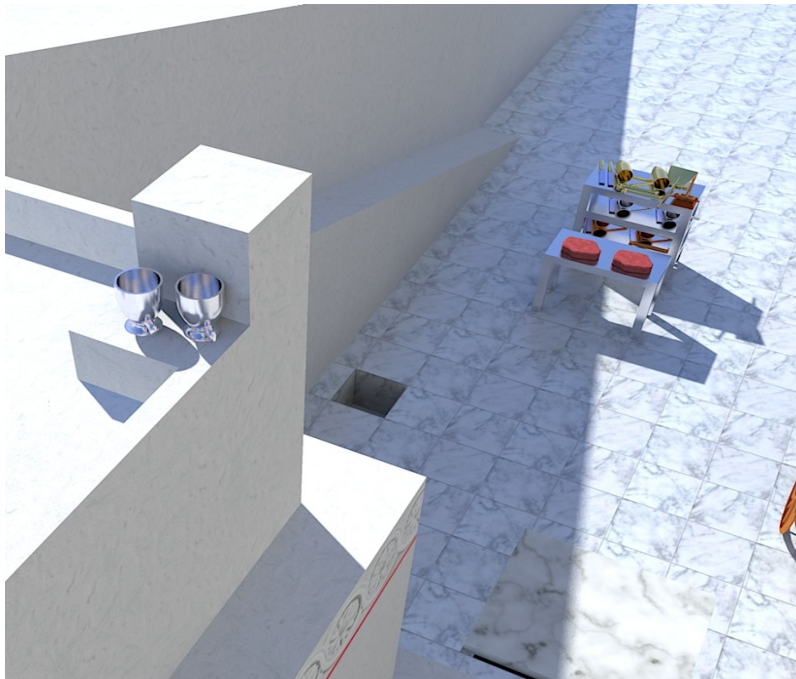


The Mizbeach

others (such as the bird chatas, animal olah²⁸, shelamim, and most korbanos) on the lower half; in order to differentiate between these two halves, this line was painted²⁹. Since it would have been impossible to measure and mark the exact midpoint, they made this line wide, to cover for any error³⁰. The one amah space between the line and the sovev had an engraved decoration of interwoven braids, flowers, and buds³¹.

On the top of the Mizbeach, the outer two amos (as mentioned earlier) were for the Kohanim to walk in, and the place of the keranos. This two amah space was slightly indented downwards, forming a lip around the walkway so that the kohanim don't slip and fall of the Mizbeach.³²

On top of the Mizbeach, on the northern side³³ of the southwest keren, there were two silver vessels. These vessels were used for the nesachin, the wine [and on sukkos, also water] poured on the Mizbeach. The vessels were arranged one to the west of the other, with the western one being used for the water on sukkos, and the eastern one being used for the wine. Each one had a spout on its side, for the liquid to drain out. The spout of the water vessel had a smaller hole, and the one of the wine vessel had a bigger hole, so that on sukkos, when they were both being used, they would drain out at the same time³⁴.



The cups for the nesachin

On the southern side of the Mizbeach, near the southwest corner, there was a pit, called the shissin, where the nesachin would drain into. There is an argument in the

28 Kinnim 1:1

29 Middos 3:1 with Bartenura

30 Bechoros 17b

31 Zevachim 62a with Rashi

32 Zevachim 62a with Rashi

33 Tiferes Yisrael Mizbeach diagram # 9

34 Sukkah 4:9 (48b) with Rashi

Gemara if the shissin went down until the underground waters of the depth, or if it was just a deep pit, tiled with marble; and every seventy years the young Kohanim would climb down and removed the congealed wine, and burn it in the Azarah³⁵.

In the first Beis Hamikdash, the shissin were on the southern side of the Mizbeach, and the wine would flow down from the top of the Mizbeach, along the walls, to the floor; and drain into the shissin. In the second Beis Hamikdash, however, they expanded the Mizbeach to the south and west, and made the shissin underneath the Mizbeach. They made a hole on the top of the Mizbeach, for the nesachin to go into, that led down to the shissin³⁶. The reason for this is as follows: during the time of the first Beis Hamikash, the Chachamim held, based on the Passuk³⁷ “you shall make for me a Mizbeach of earth” that the Mizbeach has to be solid, totally filled with earth, without any holes or hollow spaces. They therefore made the shissin next to the Mizbeach. When they built the second Beis Hamikdash, however, they reasoned that just like when the Mizbeach eats its food (the meat of the Korbanos) it is consumed on the top Mizbeach, so too when it drinks (the nesachin) it has to be absorbed on the roof of the Mizbeach. They therefore expanded the Mizbeach to cover the Shissin, and made a pipe going down from the top of the Mizbeach, so the nesachin was “drunk” on the top of the Mizbeach. As to the Passuk, they explained it to mean that the Mizbeach must be directly built on the ground, without any tunnels or arches under it.³⁸ (Unlike the rest of the Beis Hamikdash, which was built over arches³⁹.)

On top of the Mizbeach there were three pyres. The main one was used for burning the Korbanos, the second one was from where they would take coals to burn the ketores (on the inner Mizbeach in the Heichal), and the third was so that if the main one starts dying out, they could add to it from this one.⁴⁰

The main pyre was located in the eastern part of the Mizbeach, with the front edges of the logs in the east⁴¹. It was large, and the inner edges of the logs would touch the tapuach (the pile of ashes in middle of the Mizbeach). Any wood was able to be used for it (besides for grape vines or olive wood) however they usually used fig wood, nut wood or oil wood. Gaps were left between the logs, so that the small

35 Sukkah 49a with Rashi

36 Zevachim 61b with Rashi

37 Sh'mos 20:21

38 Zevachim 61b with Rashi

39 Rambam Hilchos Beis Habechirah 5:1, see Mishneh Lamelech on Rambam Hilchos Beis Habechirah 1:13

40 Yoma 45a with Rashi

41 Rashi Bava Basra 4a, Melachim I 7:4

branches with which they lit the fire could be placed there.⁴² Every morning and evening, when they would bring the Korban Tamid, they would place two logs, as long as the width of this main pyre, on top of it⁴³.

The second pyre was made out of good quality fig wood, and was large enough to produce five se'ah⁴⁴ of coals. It was located in the western part of the Mizbeach⁴⁵.

When Shlomo built the Beis Hamikdash, a burning coal, shaped like a lion, came down from the heaven onto the Mizbeach, and would consume the Korbanos. [This coal stayed there until the evil king Menashe removed it⁴⁶.] Five special things were said about this fire: it looked like a crouching lion, it was clear like the light of the sun, it had substance and could be felt, it could consume even wet wood, and it did not give off smoke.⁴⁷

In the middle of the Mizbeach was a round pile of ashes, called the *tapuach* (apple) after its spherical shape. Every morning, all the ashes from the pyres would be gathered into this pile before rebuilding the pyres.⁴⁸ Every so often, all the ashes would be removed and put in a place outside Yerushalayim.⁴⁹

Every Korban had to be salted before it was offered on the Mizbeach.⁵⁰ In order for the Kohanim to do this, a supply of salt was placed in two locations by the Mizbeach. One was placed on the ramp, to salt the limbs of an animal korban. Another supply of salt was located at the top of the Mizbeach, and this salt was used to salt a korban minchah or a bird olah.⁵¹

The Mizbeach was built out of whole, smooth stones, which were not touched by iron. If iron touched a stone, or if it was chipped, it cannot be used for the Mizbeach. They therefor dug deep in the ground, in the Beis Kerem valley, to get these stones⁵², or they were taken from under the sea⁵³.

42 Tamid 2:3-4

43 Yoma 26b, Rashi Yoma 22a

44 A measure of volume, equal to 8.29 liters, or 2.19 gallons.

45 Tamid 3:5

46 Zevachim 61b

47 Yoma 21b with Rashi

48 Tamid 2:2 with Mefarsh Tamid 28b

49 Vayikra 6:4 with Rashi

50 Vayikra 2:13

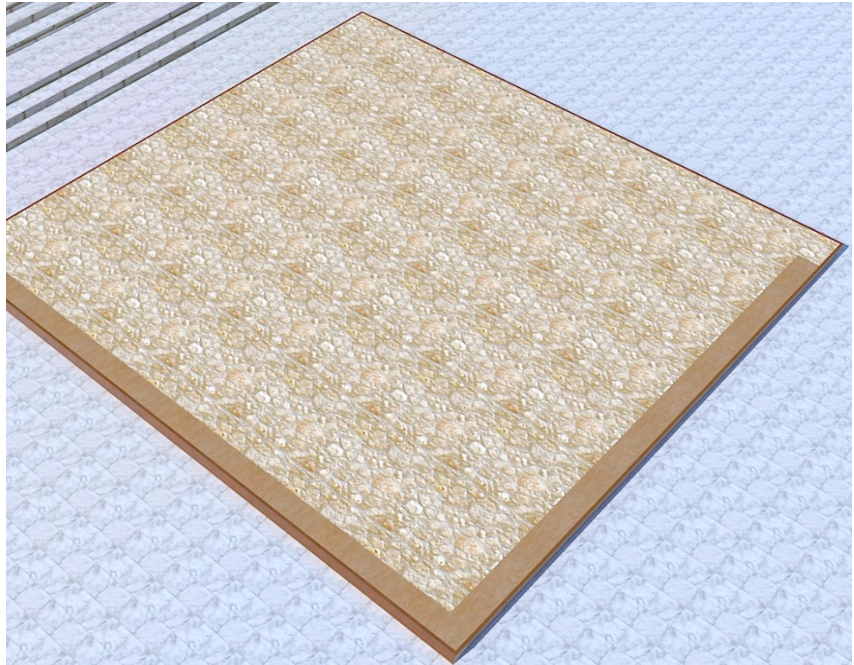
51 Menachos 21b

52 Middos 3:4

53 Rambam Hilchos Beis Habechirah 1:14

The Mizbeach was built by making square molds with wooden boards, and placing the stones in it, and then pouring a mixture of lime plaster, tar, and molten lead over it, to fill in the spaces and bind the stones together.

The first mold was twenty-eight amos by twenty-eight amos, and one amah tall, for the yesod. Wooden logs were placed in the outer amah in the eastern and southern sides, so there would not be a yesod there, and the stones and the cement mixture would be poured in. After this layer hardened⁵⁴, they removed the boards and built another mold on top of the yesod, twenty-six by twenty-six amos, and five amos tall, for the next section of the mizbeach, the sovev, and poured in the mixture. After this hardened they removed the boards and built the third layer of the mizbeach, and then the keranos, in the same way⁵⁵.



building the yesod

The entire Mizbeach was covered with a coating of white plaster. Twice a year, before pesach and before sukkos, they would put a new coating of plaster on the Mizbeach. When they did this, they used wooden tools, with no iron parts⁵⁶, so that the iron does not touch the stones of the Mizbeach and invalidate it.⁵⁷

In various pesukim⁵⁸, there is mentioned a copper mizbeach. Some mefarshim (Ralbag⁵⁹, Radak⁶⁰, Shiltey Hagibborim⁶¹) explain that in the first Beis Hamikdash, the stones of the Mizbeach was covered in wood, which then had a coating of copper on it, just like in the Mishkan, where the outer layer was wood covered in

54 Tiferes Yisrael introduction Middos chapter 3

55 Zevachim 54a-b with Rashi

56 Ezras Kohanim Middos 3:4 יגע ויפסול ד"ה שמה יגע ויפסול, based off the Sefer Hachinuch Mitzvah 40

57 Middos 3:4

58 Melachim I 8:64, Divrey Hayamim II 4:1, Yechezkel 9:2

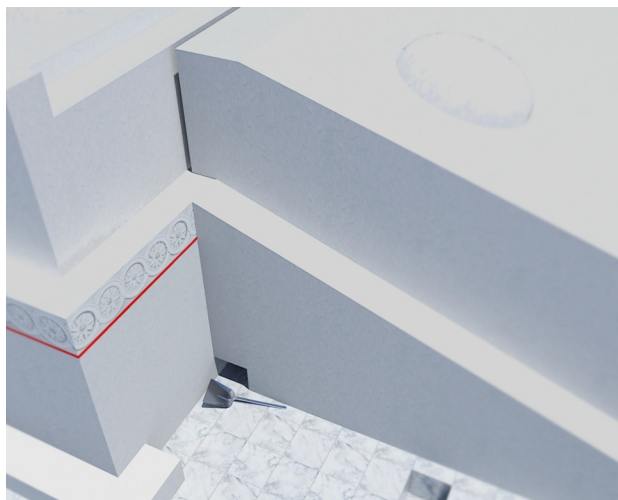
59 Melachim I 8:64

60 Melachim I 8:64

61 Chapter 26, see, however, Ezras Kohanim to Middos 3:1 (ד"ה המזבחה ג)

copper, and the inside was filled with dirt⁶². Rashi⁶³, however, based on the Gemara⁶⁴, explains that even in the First Beis Hamikdash the Mizbeach was not covered with copper, and these pessukim that call it the copper Mizbeach are calling it this since it replaced the Mizbeach of the Mishkan, which was of copper⁶⁵, or because they played copper musical instruments in front of it⁶⁶.

On the south side of the Mizbeach was a ramp⁶⁷ to ascend to the top of the Mizbeach. Steps are not allowed, as the Passuk⁶⁸ says “you shall not ascend with steps to my Mizbeach”.⁶⁹ The ramp was fourteen amos wide,⁷⁰ and thirty-two amos long (from north to south)⁷¹. Thirty amos of this length were on the floor of the Azarah, and the last two amos hovered over the place of the yesod and the sovev of the Mizbeach⁷². (Even though there was not actually a yesod in the south of the Mizbeach, the ramp went over the place *the ramp going over the place of the yesod and where the yesod would have been*⁷³.) This *the sovev* ramp was also made of complete, smooth stones, taken from the Beis Kerem valley, just like the Mizbeach.⁷⁴



Most ramps in the Beis Hamikdash had a slope of 1:3, where for it to rise one amah the length of the slope would be three amos (and the area this covered on the ground was 2.8 amos). The ramp of the Mizbeach, however, had a shallower slope, where when it rose one amah the length of the slope was three-and-a-half amos and one-and-a-half etzba'os. In total, for the ramp to rise nine amos (minus a tefach,

62 See Sh'mos 27:1-8

63 Shabbos 55a, Melachim I 8:64, Yechezkel 9:2

64 Shabbos 55a, Zevachim 60a; see, however, R' Yerucham Fishel Perla on Sefer Hamitzvos of Rasag, vol. 3 page 404, (communal Mitzvos number 55-56) for a reconciliation of the Gemara with the opinion of the Ralbag, Radak, and Shiltey Hagibborim.

65 Zevachim 60a, explaining Melachim I 8:64 this is the explanation quoted by Rashi in his commentary on Tanach

66 Shabbos 55a, explaining Yechezkel 9:2, Tosfos there also bring this explanation to explain the passuk in Divrey Hayamim (II 4:1)

67 Middos 3:3

68 Sh'mos 20:23

69 Rambam Hilchos Beis Habechirah 1:17

70 Ezras Kohanim Middos 3:1 כ"ה על כ"ה

71 Middos 3:3

72 Zevachim 62b

73 Zevachim 54a

74 Middos 3:4

as the yesod was only five tefachim high⁷⁵) the length of the slope was approximately 32 amos (to be exact, 31 amos, two tefachim, one etzba, and seven ninths of an etzba), and the area this took up on the floor was around 30 amos (to be exact, 30 amos and three and one third of an etzba). The remaining length of the ramp (which was the two amos that it went over the yesod and sovev) was flat, to provide a level surface for the Kohanim to stand on while throwing the Korbanos into the fire.⁷⁶ The reason the ramp had a shallower slope was since the kohanim would carry heavy parts of an animal up, an easier ascent was needed.⁷⁷

The ramp did not touch the Mizbeach, but rather there was a small but noticeable gap between the edge of the ramp and the Mizbeach. The reason for this is because there is a passuk⁷⁸ that compares the sprinkling of the blood of the Korbanos with the offering of the meat on the Mizbeach. From this Passuk we learn that just like the blood was thrown at the Mizbeach, over the floor space of the Azarah, so too the meat or fats of the Korbanos have to be thrown over a recognizable space.⁷⁹

Jutting out from either side of the main ramp were two smaller ramps. The eastern one led up to the sovev, and the western one led down from the sovev⁸⁰. Since the sovev was six amos (minus a tefach) higher than the ground, and all the ramps in the Beis Hamikdash (besides for the main ramp of the Mizbeach) had a slope of 3:1 (as mentioned earlier), the length of the slope of these ramps was seventeen and-a-half amos, and the area this took up on the ground was sixteen and-a-half amos. These ramps would not have been more than a small amah of 5 tefachim wide, as they were used to go on the sovev, which is only five tefachim wide⁸¹. Even though these ramps were not used for offering meat and fats onto the Mizbeach, there still had to be a small gap, as wide as a hairbreadth, between these ramps and the Mizbeach, as otherwise the Mizbeach wouldn't be square.⁸²

As mentioned previously, most korbanos had their blood sprinkled on the lower half of the Mizbeach, and therefor the Kohen did not have to ascend to the sovev. However, the bird olah or animal chatas had to have their sprinkled on the upper

75 See above, page 2

76 Zevachim 63a with Rashi, as explained in Panim Me'iros (the exact measurements are from Kuntres Klei Hamikdash, Tadfis Misefer Tzuros Habayis from Yosef Meiyers).

77 Rashi Zevachim 63a

78 Devarim 12:7; "you shall offer your burnt-offerings, the flesh and the blood, on the Mizbeach of Hashem".

79 Zevachim 62b with Tosafos

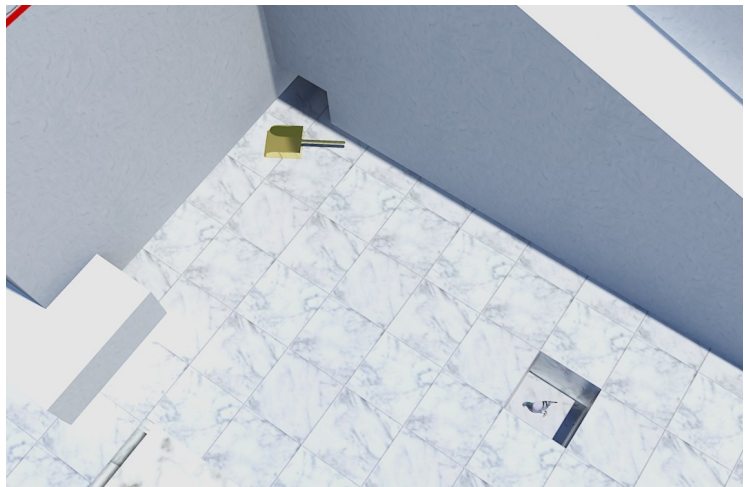
80 Zevachim 62b with Rashi, as explained by Elchanan Eibshetz in Habayis Hasheini B'tifarto chapter 16 pp 290-298, and Yosef Meiyers in Tzuros Habayis (see above, note 76)

81 Habayis Hasheini B'tifarto chapter 16, Yosef Meiyers in Tzuros Habayis (see above, note 76)

82 Zevachim 62b

half⁸³, so that is when these ramps were used. The Kohen would go up on the eastern one, and then if it was a bird olah, kill it there and press its neck to the Mizbeach, making the blood flow onto the Mizbeach wall⁸⁴, and when he was finished, he would walk around the Mizbeach, and descend on the western ramp⁸⁵. If it was an animal chatas, he would dip his finger into the vessel of blood, and apply its blood to the corners of the Mizbeach⁸⁶. He would start from the southeast corner, and go around the Mizbeach, finishing in the southwest corner. He would then go down the western ramp, and spill out the rest of the blood on the southern yesod⁸⁷.

On the floor on the western side of the ramp, near the Mizbeach, there was a pit, one amah by one amah,⁸⁸ called the revuva. In this pit they would put unfit bird Chataos to be left overnight, which would then be burned in the morning. This pit was located by the southwest corner of the Mizbeach, since that is where the sacrificial service of the bird chatas was done.⁸⁹



the revuva

(When a korban became unfit, it would be burned. However, if the problem was not something done with the animal itself, but something to do with the owners, who should not have brought it then, it would not be burned right away, as that would be disrespectful for the korban; rather it would be left overnight, which anyways disqualifies a korban, and then be burned in the morning.⁹⁰ Similarly, if there was a doubt rather it was disqualified, in which case you cannot burn it right away, as it might still be fine; it would be left overnight, which would make it definitely unfit, and you can then burn it.⁹¹)

83 Kinnim 1:1

84 Zevachim 6:5

85 Zevachim 6:3 says that anyone going on the Mizbeach would ascend from the right side (the east, as when one is standing by the foot of the ramp and faces the Mizbeach, that is his right side), and then circle the Mizbeach and descend from the left side (the west.)

86 Zevachim 53a

87 Zevachim 5:3

88 Tosefta Temurah 4:4

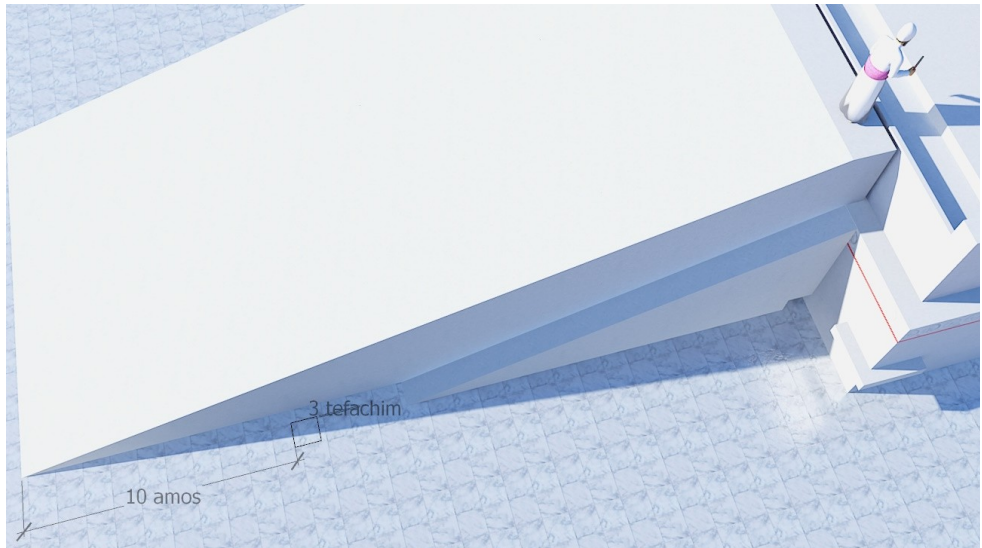
89 Middos 3:3, Pesachim 34a with Rashi

90 Pesachim 34a-b with Rashi

91 Rambam Hilchos Pesulei Hamukdashin 19:2, from the above Gemara

Every morning, the first service in the Beis Hamikdash was the Terumas Hadeshen, lifting some of the ashes from the Mizbeach and placing them next to the Mizbeach. The machtah (shovel) that was used for the Terumas Hadeshen was kept in the corner between the ramp and the Mizbeach, on the western side of the ramp.⁹²

After taking the ashes of the Mizbeach, they would be placed next to the ramp, at a location called the Beis Hadeshen, place of the ashes. This place was located ten amos to the north of the foot of the ramp, and



The Beis Hadeshen three tefachim to the east of the ramp. Over here would also be placed the ashes of the inner Mizbeach and the Menorah, as well as the crop of a bird olah, which would be removed before offering it.⁹³ All these things would miraculously get absorbed into the ground.⁹⁴

There was another place in the Azarah also called the Beis Hadeshen, located to the east of the Mizbeach.⁹⁵ Over here they would burn Korbanos which got disqualified for various reasons, like being left overnight or becoming tamei.⁹⁶

Near the southwest corner of the Mizbeach there was a water channel running from that area to the southern wall of the Azarah.⁹⁷ This channel was called the amah, since it was one amah wide and deep.⁹⁸ The water from this channel, like that of the Mikveh on Sha'ar Hamayim and Lishkas Haparvah, came from ein eitam.⁹⁹

92 Tamid 1:4

93 Tamid 1:4

94 Yoma 21a, there is an argument if the ashes from the outer Mizbeach also got absorbed into the ground or not, see Tosfos Yoma 21a

95 Sifra (Toras Kohanim) Dibbura D'nidava section 7 chapter 9

96 Zevachim 104b, Rambam Hilchos Ma'asei Hakorbanos 7:3

97 See Ezras Kohanim Middos 3:2 ד"ה באמה ויוצאין וכו' א

98 Ezras Kohanim Middos 3:2 ד"ה באמה ויוצאין וכו' ב

99 Ezras Kohanim Middos 3:2 ד"ה באמה ויוצאין וכו' א, Tavnis Heichal 2:94

This channel was coated with lead on all sides, and covered on the top;¹⁰⁰ although there were holes to access it and to let the blood drain in, as well as to let the water flow out to clean the Azarah, these holes were not readily visible, so only the Kohanim knew where they were.¹⁰¹

The remainder of the blood of the Korbanos, which was poured on the southwestern corner of the yesod, would flow down into this channel.¹⁰² The



The water channel (it is covered with metal tiles to show its location, however, it was actually under the floor, with the floor on top of it consisting of regular marble tiles like the rest of the floor of the Azarah) channel exited the Azarah, and then went down (through underground pipes¹⁰³) to the Kidron valley.¹⁰⁴ This blood-enriched water would be sold to the gardeners there, to be used as fertilizer.¹⁰⁵

100 Ezras Kohanim Middos 3:2 ד"ה באמה ויוצאין וכו' ב, from Letter of Aristeas (90), as brought in Seder Hadoros , in other versions of the letter the lead coating was only on the sides and the bottom, while the top was coated with a thick layer of plaster.

101 Letter of Aristeas 90

102 Middos 3:2

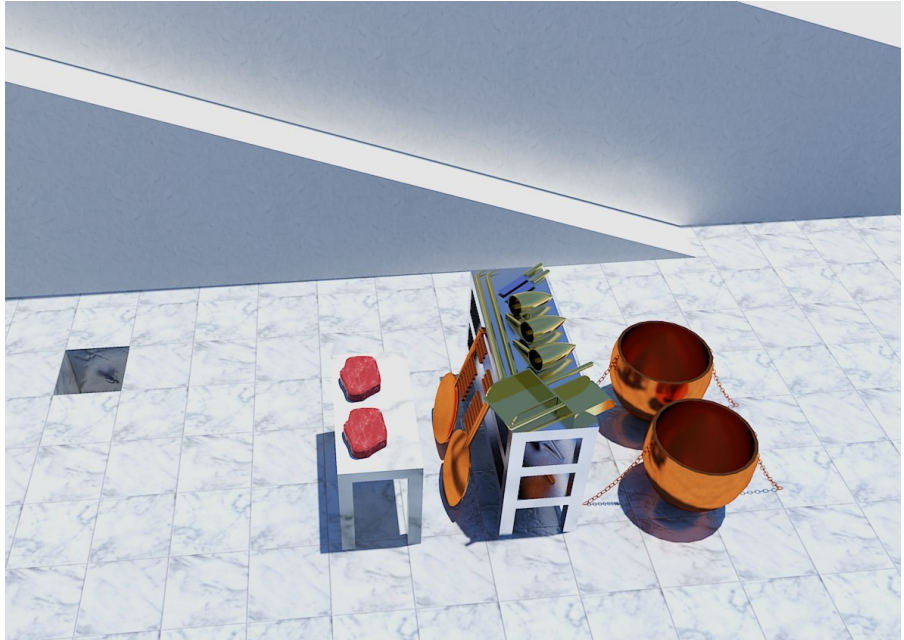
103 Tavis Heichal 2:94

104 The word used here is nachal, Rashi (Pesachim 22a) explains it (in this context) to mean valley. However, from the Zohar (Mishpatim 107b) it comes out that it means a stream. The Ezras Kohanim (Middos 3:2 ד"ה לנהל קדרון) explains that there was a valley, with a stream running in it. (In Eretz Yisreal and the surrounding area there are many such valleys, with water flowing in them during the rainy seasons, these are called wadis.

105 Yoma 5:6

When the Kohanim needed to wash the Azarah, they would close up the exit hole of the channel. The water would then, since it had no other exit, rise up and flood the Azarah, rinsing the marble floor. They would then open the hole, and the water would drain out, taking all the blood and filth with it, leaving the Azarah clean.¹⁰⁶

On the west side of the ramp there were two tables, one of marble and one of silver.¹⁰⁷ These tables, like the other keilim in the Beis Hamikdash, were set up with their length going from east to west, along the length of the Azarah.¹⁰⁸ On the marble table the Kohanim would put down the fats and



meat of the animals from *the two tables next to the ramp*

korbanos of individuals, if

he had to wait and could not offer them right away on the Mizbeach. This would happen, for example, if only one Kohen was offering it, and he could only bring part of it to the top of the ramp at one time, or if there was no space in the main pyre, and he had to wait until some of the meat already there got consumed.¹⁰⁹ This table was made of marble, since if it was made of silver it would heat up and cause the meat to spoil faster. Although there was a miracle in the Beis Hamikdash that none of the meats of the korbanos spoiled, we do not rely on miracles.¹¹⁰

On this table two Kohanim would also stand when they would bring the nesachin (wine) that accompanied the Korban Tamid. They would blow silver trumpets to signal to any Levi that was not there to come and sing, as the Levi'im would sing when the Kohanim brought the nesachin.¹¹¹

106 Tosefta Pesachim 4:10, Rashi to Pesachim 64a, Seder Korban Pesach in the Siddur, first printed in sefer seder hayom

107 Shekalim 6:4

108 Menachos 11:6

109 Shekalim 6:4 with Melech Shlomo, quoting Rosh and Ra'avad

110 Yerushalmi Shekalim 6:3, as explained by Rivevan (on the Mishnah) and Pnei Moshe

111 Tamid 7:3

On the silver table, the Kohanim would put the keilim (vessels) necessary for offering the korbanos.¹¹² Every morning, the Kohanim would go to the Lishkas Hakeilim and take out these keilim, and put them on this table.¹¹³

In the pessukim in Tanach that talk about the construction and destruction of the First Beis Hamikdash, many different Keilim are mentioned, together with what material they were made out of. These are as following:

- Out of high quality copper, there was:

- Siros (pots)¹¹⁴, used for removing the ashes from the Mizbeach.¹¹⁵ In the Mishnah (and Targum¹¹⁶) this vessel is called p'sachter. This was a large vessel, that had a capacity of a lesech (15 se'ah¹¹⁷). This vessel had two chains, one on each side. When the Kohanim would take it



sira/p'sachter (ash pot)

up with ashes from the tapuach, one Kohen would hold the front chain and drag it down, and another one would hold the back chain so that it won't tip over,¹¹⁸ since it was mostly rounded¹¹⁹ on the bottom and was being brought down a sloped ramp.¹²⁰

112 Shekalim 6:4

113 Tamid 3:4, the Mishnah says that they brought out 93 keilim, the Rambam (in Peirush Hamishnayos) brings two reasons for this number, one is that was the amount of keilim necessary (see Ezras Kohanim to Middos 5:3 ד"ה שש, לשכות היו בעזרה ג, for a list of these 93 keilim) and the other one, from the Yerushalmi (Chagigah 3:8) is that this amount corresponds to the amount of times Hashem's name is mentioned in Chagai and Malachi. According to the first reason, this amount would also have been brought out during the First Beis Hamikdash, according to the second reason, however, this was only in the second Beis Hamikdash, as Chagai and Malachi lived at the beginning of the second Beis Hamikdash.

114 Melachim I 7:45

115 Ralbag to Melachim I 7:40, from Sh'mos 27:3

116 Sh'mos 27:3

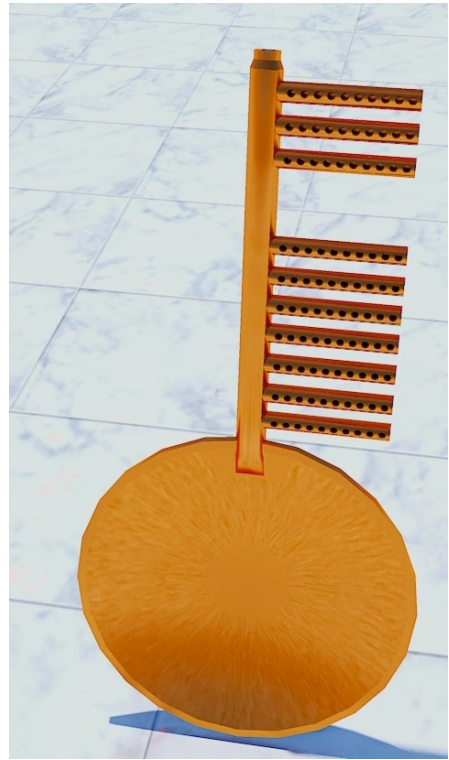
117 120.960 liters, or 31.95 gallons

118 Tamid 5:5

119 Rosh to Tamid 33a, Shitah L'Rashbi to Tamid 33a writes that it had a small flat bottom, but most of it was rounded, it is possible that the Rosh also holds like this (see Melechtes Hamishkan Vakeilav, Mizbeach HaNechoshes, note 113).

120 Bartenura to Tamid 5:5

- Ya'im (shovels),¹²¹ this is called magreifa by the Mishnah¹²² (and Targum¹²³). They were used to shovel up the ashes,¹²⁴ both into the tapuach;¹²⁵ and when needed, from the tapuach to the psachter to take it out.¹²⁶ The magreifa looked like a round pot cover, with thin walls,¹²⁷ with a handle. The magreifa was also a flute-like musical instrument, with the handle being hollow, and ten smaller pipes coming out of it, with ten holes in each, so that it played a total of one hundred sounds. (There is another opinion that each pipe had one hundred holes, so that the magreifa produced a total of one thousand sounds!)¹²⁸ The shovel part of the magreifa was one amah by one amah.¹²⁹



ya'ah/magreifa (shovel)

- Mizrakos (blood vessels)¹³⁰ These were vessels used to receive the blood from the animal and sprinkle it on the Mizbeach.¹³¹ These vessels did not have flat bottoms, but pointed ones, so that they were not able to be put down, this was done so that they would not be left on the floor and be allowed to congeal, which would make it not able to be sprinkled.¹³²
- Mazleigos (hooked skewers)¹³³, this is called tzinorios in Chazal¹³⁴ (and Targum¹³⁵). These were like bent hooks, and they would be used to stick

121 Melachim I 7:40, Divrei Hayamim II 4:16

122 Tamid 2:1

123 Targum Onkelos Sh'mos 27:3, Targum Yonasan to Melachim I 7:40

124 Rashi Sh'mos 27:3

125 Tamid 2:2 with Mefarshim

126 R' Avraham Ben Harambam and Rabag to Sh'mos 27:3

127 Rashi Sh'mos 27:3

128 Erchin 10b-11a with Rashi and Rabeinu Gershom; Tosafos however argues and says there was two Magreifos, one was a shovel and one was a musical instrument,

129 According to another version of the Gemara, (Shita Mekubetzes 11a #1) the shovel part was one amah, and its handle was one amah long.

130 Melachim I 7:40, Divrei Hayamim II 4:16

131 Rashi and Rashbam to Sh'mos 27:3

132 Pesachim 5:5, quoted by Midrash Hagadol to Sh'mos 27:3. Although that Mishnah is talking about the Korban Pesach, the Midrash Hagadol understands that there was no differences between the Korban Pesach and other Korbanos (for more of a discussion of this point, see Melech Hamishkan Vakeilav, Mizbeach HaNechoshes, note 123).

133 Divrei Hayamim II 4:16

134 Tamid 2:1, Yoma 12a

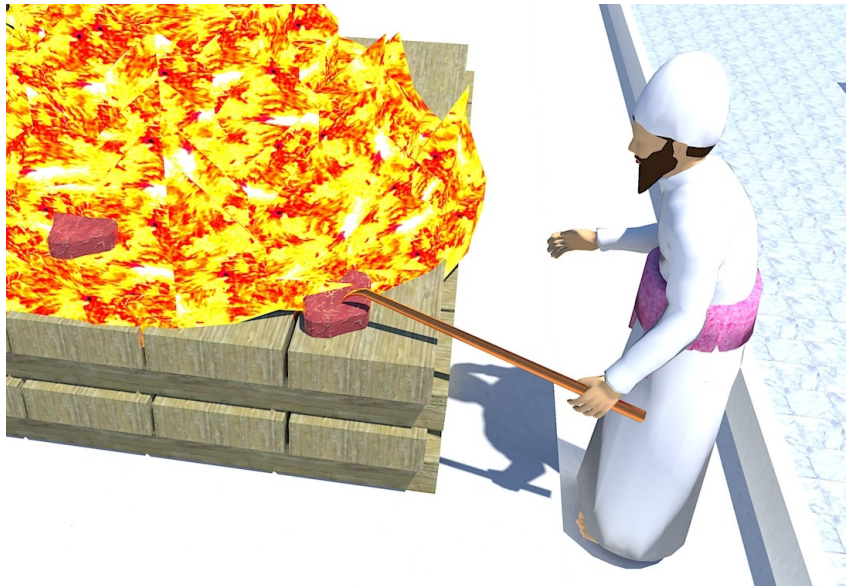
135 Targum Onkelos Sh'mos 27:3

into the meats in the pyre on the Mizbeach and turn them over, so they burn faster and better.¹³⁶

- Out of high quality gold, there was:

- Mizrakos (blood vessels)¹³⁷

- Kforim (blood vessels)¹³⁸, these are a type of mizrak,¹³⁹ they are called kforim since the Kohen would wipe his finger on its rim



A Kohen using a mazleig/ tzinor (hooked skewer)

after placing the

blood of a Korban Chatas on the Mizbeach, to clean off the blood (the word kefor can mean to wipe off). The blood had to be wiped off the finger after every time the Kohen put the blood on one of the Keranos, as the remainder on the finger after one application to the Keranos cannot be used for the next application, rather he wipes off his finger and then dips it into the blood another time¹⁴⁰.

Now, the Passuk in Divrey Hayamim mentions both mizrakos and kforim, implying that they are two different vessels. It would seem that the difference was in the handle, that a regular mizrak, used for most korbanos, had a long rod handle, and the kfor had a loop handle, and was used for the Korban Chatas. This is based off the following: the Mishnah¹⁴¹ calls the mizrakos used by the Korban Pesach spoons, implying that they had a long handle, similar to a spoon. However, by the mizrakos used by the Korban Chatas, Tosafos¹⁴² based off the Gemara¹⁴³ says that there was a

136 Rashi to Sh'mos 27:3 and Bamidbar 4:14

137 Melachim I 7:50, Divrei Hayamim I 28:17, II 4:22

138 Divrei Hayamim I 28:17, these are also mentioned in Ezra 1:10 as being among the Keilim that Nevuchadnezzar took from the First Beis Hamikdash and Koresh returned when the Yidden went up to build the second Beis Hamikdash.

139 Metzudas Tzion to Divrei Hayamim I 28:17

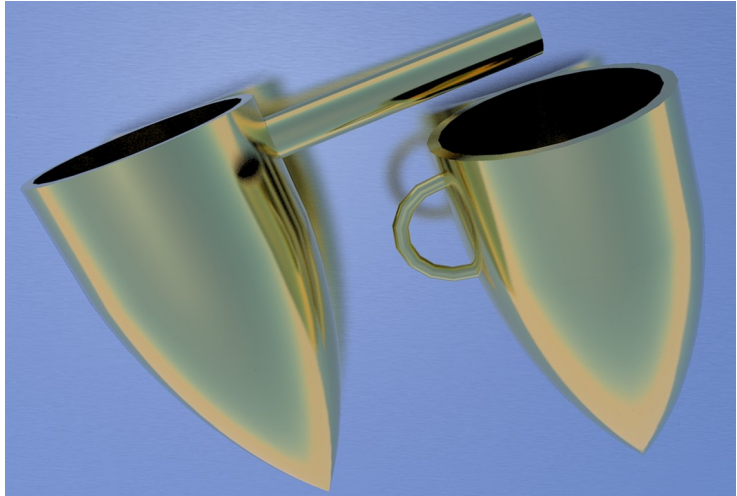
140 Zevachim 93b, Menachos 7b

141 Pesachim 5:5

142 Zevachim 47b

143 Zevachim 24a

loop handle, and the Kohein would hold the Mizrak when catching the blood from the animal's neck with his finger stuck in this handle, since the Passuk¹⁴⁴ says "he shall take from the blood of the Chatas with his finger." Since we know that kforim were used by the Korban Chatas (as that is the only one which he would dip his finger into the blood, instead of sprinkling it straight from the mizrak), it seems that this is the difference, that a kfor is the one used by the Korban Chatas, and had a loop handle, and a mizrak was used for the other Korbanos, and had a rod handle. (However, it should be noted that in many places we don't differentiate between the two, and call both of them Mizrakos.)¹⁴⁵



mizrak (right) and kfor (left)

- **Machtos** (fire-pan)¹⁴⁶, These were shovel-like tools, used for scooping up and transferring coals.¹⁴⁷ The actual scoop part had a flat bottom¹⁴⁸ and had three walls, while the fourth side was open, so they could scoop up coals from there.¹⁴⁹ The machtah was used for two main purposes: to bring in coals from the big Mizbeach to the small Mizbeach in the Heichal, in order to offer the ketores; and to do the Terumas Hadeshen.¹⁵⁰ On Yom Kippur, when the Kohen Gadol would go into the Kodesh Hakodoshim and offer Ketores there, he would also take in the coals in a machtah; this machtah, however, had thinner walls, and a longer handle, to make it easier for the kohen Gadol, who was fasting, to carry it.¹⁵¹

144 Vayikra 4:30

145 As to why only by the Korban Pesach the mizrakos are called spoons, it can be that by most korbanos there is no difference which mizrak you use, however by the Korban Pesach since the mizrakos would be passed down a line from one kohein to the next (Pesachim 5:), they would specifically use the spoon mizrakos, as they are easier to pass down a line.

146 Melachim I 7:50, Divrei Hayamim II 4:22

147 Rashi and Rashbam to Sh'mos 27:3

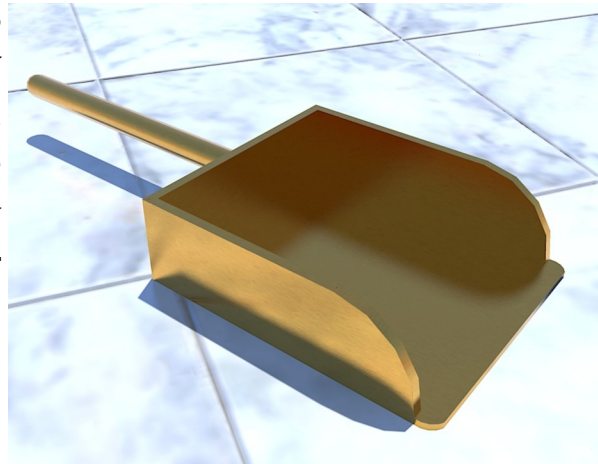
148 Rashi to Bamidbar 4:9, this is talking about the machtos of the Menorah, however probably the machtos of the Mizbeach were similar.

149 Rashi to Bamidbar 4:14

150 Rashi to Melachim I 7:50

151 Yoma 4:4 with Peirush Hamishnayos L'Harambam?

This is what Rashi¹⁵² says. However, the Mishnah¹⁵³ (Tamid 1:4) actually says that the Terumas Hadeshen was done with a silver shovel, so the question arises why does Rashi say they used a gold one. The answer seems to be that since there is no mention of a silver machtah by the beginning of the first Beis Hamikdash, only at the end, by the account of the vessels taken by



machtah (fire-pan)

Nevuchadnezzar's army¹⁵⁴, Rashi learns out that in the beginning there was no silver ones, only gold. The reason for this change can be explained as follows: the reason that they used a silver machtah in the second Beis Hamikdash was because a gold one would get abraded from the coals, and the Torah cares about the Yidden's money, and doesn't want to needlessly waste it.¹⁵⁵ However, during the time of Shlomo Hamelech, when gold and silver were plentiful, with silver being as valueless as stone,¹⁵⁶ there was no concern about wasting the money, and therefore all the machtos were made of gold.¹⁵⁷ This is similar to the area behind the doors of the Heichal, that in the second Beis Hamikdash was not plated with gold, as it was not visible, and it would be a waste of money,¹⁵⁸ however in the First Beis Hamikdash, when they were richer, even this area was covered in gold.¹⁵⁹ Later on, however, the Yidden became poorer, and therefore they switched to doing Terumas Hadeshen with a silver Machtah, which is why when Nevuchadnezzar's army came, silver machtos appear on the list of vessels they took.¹⁶⁰

152 On Melachim I 7:50

153 Tamid 1:4

154 Melachim II 25:15, Yirmiyahu 52:19

155 Yoma 44b

156 Divrei Hayamid II 1:15

157 For a similar point, see also Shiurei Chumash from R' Simchah Maimon pp 291.

158 Middos 4:1 with Tiferes Yisrael Yachin #5

159 Midrash Bamidbar Rabba 12:4

160 The Mishnah (Yoma 4:4, Tamid 5:5) also mentions that when bringing in the coals for the ketores on the inner Mizbeach, the Kohen would scoop up with a silver machtah and then transfer it to a golden machtah, as the coals would abrade the gold. However, it can be that also here this was only later on, and in the beginning of the First Beis Hamikdash they only used one golden machtah, which is why no silver machtah is mentioned here. (see similarly Maskil L'David on Sh'mos 27:3, who says that since only copper machtos are mentioned by the Mishkan, Rashi holds that only copper machtos were used, with the same machtah being used to scoop up the coals and to bring it in.)

- Mazleigos (hooked skewers)¹⁶¹
- Out of silver, there was
 - Mizrakos (blood vessels)¹⁶²
 - Kforim (blood vessels)¹⁶³
 - Machtos (fire-pans)¹⁶⁴

161 Divrei Hayamim I 28:17

162 Melachim II 25:15

163 Divrei Hayamim I 28:17, see also Ezra 1:10

164 Melachim II 25:15