
Chapter 4

FORT ANTONIA WAS A ROMAN CITY

IT IS TIME TO LOOK at eyewitness accounts of the shape and dimensions of Fort Antonia. The principal report comes from Josephus who was very familiar with the fortress. He gives excellent information that can be understood when we adopt some simple rules of interpretation that were recognized in the first century. Fort Antonia was called the *Praetorium*, a term that denotes the fortress was large and much like a Roman city — as most permanent Roman camps were. It could be said without controversy that Fort Antonia was a Roman city within the environs of the Jewish City of Jerusalem.

Notice some significant details. Outside Fort Antonia the region was a Jewish city where Jewish customs prevailed, while inside the fortress a very different social system operated. The two areas of Jerusalem were quite opposite from one another. For example, Pilate at the beginning of his government tried to introduce images of the emperor into the Jewish sections of Jerusalem. The Jews

resisted. Reluctantly, Pilate had those images removed to Caesarea. Later, to show deference to the Jews, who often presented themselves before him at the governor's palace, Pilate desisted from displaying some Roman shields even when they had no images on them.⁸³

While Pilate took care not to introduce Roman images into the areas of Jerusalem controlled by the Jewish authorities, these restrictions did not hold within the main camp at Fort Antonia. Roman troops did not have to obey Jewish religious scruples within their own domiciles. Roman soldiers at their camp in Jerusalem continued to serve their own Roman imperial deities and other divinities, and performed all their civil and military duties as normal Roman legionaries. These soldiers retained Roman customs without the slightest heed given to the Law of Moses. Antonia was a Roman fort/city, not reckoned as part of the Jewish municipality of Jerusalem. It was a Roman city alongside the City of Jerusalem, but not a part of the municipality.⁸⁴ This is further illustrated by the description of Fort Antonia by Josephus. Fort Antonia was much larger than the Temple environs. It was like a city (even bigger than some cities in size). It dominated the Temple both in size as well as military strength.

“Now as to the tower of Antonia, it was situated [its entrance was] at the corner of two cloisters [colonnades] of the court of the Temple; of that on the west, and that on the north. It was erected upon a rock of fifty cubits in height, and was on a great precipice. It was the work of King Herod, wherein he demonstrated his natural magnanimity [genius]. In the first place, the rock itself was covered over with smooth pieces of stone, from its foundation, both for ornament, and that any one who would either try to get up or to go down it might not be able to hold his feet upon it. Next to this, and before you come to the edifice of the tower itself, there was a wall three cubits high; but within that wall all the space of the tower of Antonia itself was built upon, to the height of forty cubits. The inward parts had the largeness and form of a palace, it being parted into all kinds of rooms and other conveniences, such as

⁸³ Philo, *Embassy to Gaius* XXXVIII.299–305.

⁸⁴ Josephus said that when the Romans built a fortification to house their Legions, they were actually constructing “a city” (*War* V.2.3 ¶73).

courts, and places for bathing, and broad spaces for camps [military training areas]; insomuch that, by having all conveniences that cities wanted, it might seem to be composed of several cities. By its magnificence it seemed a palace. And as the entire structure resembled that of a tower, it contained also four other distinct towers at its four corners; whereof the others were but fifty cubits high; whereas that which lay upon the southeast corner was seventy cubits high, that from thence the whole Temple might be viewed; but on the corner where it joined to the two cloisters [colonnades] of the Temple, it had passages down to them both [to both roadways], through which the guard (for there always lay in this tower a Roman legion) went several ways among the cloisters, with their arms [weapons], on the Jewish festivals, in order to watch the people, that they might not there attempt to make any innovations; for the Temple was a fortress that guarded the city, as was the tower of Antonia a guard to the Temple; and in that tower were the guards of those three [Fort Antonia guarded the City, the Temple and Fort Antonia itself]. There was also a peculiar fortress belonging to the upper city [called Herod's *Praetorium*], which was Herod's palace, but for the hill Bezetha, it was divided from the tower Antonia, as we have already told you, and as that hill on which the tower of Antonia stood was the highest of these three, so did it adjoin to the new city, and was the only place that hindered the sight of the Temple on the north" (words in brackets and those italicized are my emphases).⁸⁵

The first point that we need to review from Josephus' description is that Fort Antonia was walled on all four sides. It was a square-like fort that resembled a city in size, and functioned as a separate urban area, not as a part of the municipality of Jerusalem. Indeed, it resembled just not one city in size, but this particular fort was "composed of several cities." In ordinary Gentile areas containing permanent Roman fortresses, there were usually external towns surrounding the forts that provided logistical support facilities. In Jerusalem, it was different. This was the central holy city of the Jews with explicit laws of purification and religious requirements associated with it. The Jewish authorities did not permit normal Gentile support towns to be located around (or external to) Fort Antonia.

⁸⁵ *War* V.5,8.

That permanent camp in Jerusalem known as Fort Antonia had to provide its own support facilities inside its walls. And Fort Antonia came replete with all the features of a permanent Roman encampment. There were religious Temples for the troops, sporting areas (that doubled as training regions for the army), a hospital, areas for entertainment, a major caravansary quartering troops and government dignitaries for communication purposes with Rome and Antioch in Syria (like modern Hilton Hotels which serve the same purpose).

As a matter of convenience, it was normal to have an appropriate sized red-light district for soldiery and other clients. Normally such districts were attached externally to the fortress areas but Jewish prudence and ritualistic laws did not permit such things to be outwardly visible in the holy city of Jerusalem under ordinary circumstances. So, Fort Antonia had to provide a great deal of space for these ordinary Roman conveniences and religious Temples that were denied them in Jerusalem and vicinity.

Fort Antonia In Size Was Like a City (or Cities)

Fort Antonia was so large in size that Josephus reckoned it like several cities, located in a rectangular walled area. This is in accord with what Josephus informs us about other Roman military camps. Josephus said they too were indeed like cities:

“They divide the camp into streets, very conveniently, and place the tents of the commanders in the middle, in the nature of a Temple, insomuch that it appears to be a city built on a sudden, with its marketplace, and place for handicraft trades.”⁸⁶

Note the comments of Professor John E. Stambaugh on the city-like nature of Roman camps.

“An army legion pitching a permanent or semi-permanent camp needed an orderly layout of streets, barracks, chapels, parade grounds, officers quarters, and a sturdy defensive wall. A standardized plan permitted soldiers to feel securely oriented within camps built at very different locations. Indeed, Polybius wrote that

⁸⁶ *War* III.5.2.

the legionary camps he knew in the second century B.C.E. were similar to cities.”⁸⁷

Such Roman Camps (*Praetoriums*) were designed so that at their center was the conspicuous Temple — a religious edifice devoted to Rome and to Caesar — to which all streets led. Permanent camps were similar to towns for size and in function. Professor Le Bohec tells us:

“With almost 5000 men, a legionary camp was the equivalent of a town. Consequently everything that was essential for the daily life of such a community — hospital, stores, workshops, baths, as well as public lavatories — was to be found.”⁸⁸

And this is what Fort Antonia was, a military city located within the boundaries of Jerusalem, the Mother City of the Jews.

The native city (Jerusalem) was very different from the environment of the Roman fort. Since in most peoples’ eyes Herod was more Roman and Greek than he was “Jewish” (though he outwardly gave strict attention to Jewish scruples), he would have designed the military fort guarding his palace in the Upper City, the Temple in the Lower City, and the whole City of Jerusalem in the best Roman style available at the time. After all, Herod’s chief desire was to please Augustus Caesar in all his architectural and political endeavors. If one wants to know how Roman fortresses for their legions were then being built, all one has to do is to read the description given by Polybius. Little had changed when Herod rebuilt Fort Antonia.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ John E. Stambaugh, *The Ancient Roman City*, p.250.

⁸⁸ Le Bohec Yann, *The Imperial Roman Army*, p.160, emphasis mine.

⁸⁹ Professor Stambaugh states:

“Polybius (6.27–32) describes the normal practice in his day. The *Praetorium* (commander’s quarters) was laid out first, flanked by the *quaestorium* (quartermaster’s office) on one side and a market on the other, in back was a street 100 feet wide and, beyond it, space for auxiliary troops to camp. In front of the *quaestorium praetorium* line was the main street of the camp, the *via principalis*, 100 feet wide, in front of it tents of the legionary and allied troops were arranged along five streets 50 feet wide, was called the *via quintana* because it lay just beyond the fifth rank of tents counting from the *via principalis*, to which it was parallel; between the tents and the defen-

Simply put, in rebuilding and enlarging the Baris (first built by John Hyrcanus) into Fort Antonia, Herod would have followed the traditional guidelines of Augustus in his construction of any permanent fortress in the Jerusalem area. And how would Herod have built his fortress (or redesigned it to fit the purposes at the start of the imperial period)? Let us notice the comments of Professor Stambaugh.

“Surveyors’ manuals from the principate [the time of Augustus] and archaeological discoveries of a large number of military camps throughout the empire reveal a reciprocal relationship between the design of camps and the design of cities. The earliest plan of Ostia, dating from the fourth century B.C.E, is an example of a colony imitating the simple rectangular shape of a military camp.”⁹⁰

These fortresses scattered throughout the empire customarily followed the general design of the central fortress in Rome, the capital of the empire. In the northeastern part of Rome was located the Praetorian Camp. It was a perfect square of two *stadia* on each side (1200 feet by 1200 feet). It is interesting that the dimensions of the Haram esh-Sharif (though not a perfect square itself — it is a trapezium) are very similar in size, with the Haram being about 15 per cent larger than this main (and permanent) military camp at Rome. It makes perfectly good sense that Herod would want his central fort at his capital city to be about the same size as that which graced the capital of the empire.

Indeed, it was recognized that Herod in his construction projects was noted for exceeding the grandest expectations associated with other buildings and artifacts within the empire. As an example, Josephus said Herod’s palace in Jerusalem in certain features excelled the Temple in grandeur.⁹¹ Even his smaller palace at Masada was larger than any other palace found within the Roman Empire.⁹² Nothing was held back in expensively equipping Anto-

sive rampart at the perimeter of the camp lay an empty interval of 200 feet wide for drills” (Stambaugh, *The Ancient Roman City*, p.372, n.15).

⁹⁰ Stambaugh, *The Ancient Roman City*, p.250, emphasis mine.

⁹¹ “The king’s palace, baffling all description: indeed, in extravagance and equipment no building surpassed it” (*War* V.4,4 ¶¶177–83).

⁹² “The Herodian villa at Wadi Qelt, outside Jericho, matches Cogidubnus’

nia. It was built as a huge military fortress that could contain a legion of troops plus normal auxiliaries (about 10,000 people). It was a city within a city. And recall that Josephus said Antonia's largeness was more like "cities" in its extent. It dominated the Temple and was far larger in size than the Temple and its courts.⁹³ It is this clear visual analysis by Josephus that ought to govern our

palace at Fishbourne (Sussex) in scale and richness of decoration, but no palace in the Roman Empire can match Herod's palace at Masada." Alexander McKay, *Houses, Villas, and Palaces in the Roman World* (John Hopkins, 1998), p.219.

⁹³ Recall that one could place four Coliseums like that built in Rome by Vespasian and Titus snugly into the area of the Haram esh-Sharif. The Coliseum could seat 50,000 people (or four of them would seat 200,000). Also, one could place a Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California (with about 35% extra free space available) into the area of the Haram.

But the Temple area (including the Court of the Gentiles) was quite a bit smaller. Though Josephus recorded that 18,000 people worked on repairing the Temple (*Antiquities* XX.9,7), the highest number he records in the courts of the Temple were 10,000 (*War* VI.5,1, killed inside the Temple precincts at the close of the war). After that event, 6000 were forced into the Temple platform area and later killed (*War* VI.5,2). When the Idumeans entered Jerusalem at the start of the war, they slew 8000 in the outer court (*War* IV.5,1). Though in the time of Cumanus (a Roman soldier on top of the colonnades overlooking the Temple courts let down his breeches and displayed a demeaning posture to the worshippers below), an outraged crowd in the Temple got agitated, rushed out of the Temple to fight and 20,000 were crushed in the streets of Jerusalem (*Antiquities* XIX.5,1). But this large number of people (Josephus in *War* II.12,1 said was 30,000) also included the inhabitants of Jerusalem who got caught up in the rush within the narrow streets of the city.

While it was common for 6,000 soldiers to be on top of the squared colonnades at festivals (as shown in *War* IV.3,12), the normal number of worshippers at the time of the Passover (those few able to take Passover lambs into the Temple for sacrificing) was 3000 (though it was not necessary to kill Passover lambs in the Temple itself). This is the precise number (3000) killed at the Passover following Herod's death (*War* II.1,3; II.6,2). There is New Testament evidence that at the festival of Pentecost, Peter and the other apostles in speaking to Jews in the Temple found 3000 of them accepting their teachings (Acts 2:41).

Documentary evidence does not support the usual belief that 80,000 to 100,000 people could easily stand within the courts of the Temple. True, such a number could occupy the precincts of the Haram esh-Sharif, but NOT the courts of the Temple. It was a much smaller enclosure measuring only 600 by 600 feet on all its four sides. Scholars have selected the wrong building for the Temple. The maximum number of people the inner and outer courts of the Temple could hold was about 20,000, and that number would be shoulder to shoulder. Recall, besides the Temple structure, there were other buildings on the platform.

understanding of this grand specimen of a Roman Camp that existed right on the northeastern doorstep of Jerusalem. Though it was very near to Jerusalem, it still was not a part of Jewish Jerusalem. Let us see.

Fort Antonia Was Not A Part of Jerusalem

Let us be clear about this. Once a person stepped inside the walls of Fort Antonia, the person no longer found himself in the Jewish municipality of Jerusalem.⁹⁴ Upon entering Fort Antonia, a person was then in a Roman “city” situated within the region of Jewish metropolis. Antonia was surrounded by four walls, as were all permanent military camps of the Romans. And remember, the Haram esh-Sharif today has four rectangular walls around it like all Roman fortresses. Even the internal area of Fort Antonia (about 36 acres) was almost equal or even larger than most Roman forts in principal cities or frontier regions.⁹⁵ These fortresses were off

⁹⁴ There are modern examples that explain why Fort Antonia was not considered part of the city of Jerusalem. These examples are well remembered by me. I volunteered to enter the United States Air Force in 1950, the year the Korean War erupted, because meteorologists were needed at the time and I had college credits within that profession. I was sent to Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas for basic training. At that time San Antonio was called “a military city” because it was strategically located and had several Air Bases and other military establishments in and around its city limits. But any local authority over a person within the municipality of San Antonio ceased once a person stepped within the line designating the limit of the military establishments. A different set of rules and regulations governed everyone who came into the camp regions of those federally controlled military facilities. And though the bases were located at San Antonio in a geographic sense, none was ever part of the city in a governmental sense. Those bases were as separate from San Antonio as if they were located in Europe or in Japan. And so it was with Fort Antonia at Jerusalem. That fortress was a permanent Roman imperial military outpost governed directly from Rome through the provincial capital in Syria and its subsidiary authority at Caesarea. The Jewish authorities in Jerusalem had not the slightest control over Fort Antonia or the other auxiliary military post at Herod’s former palace.

⁹⁵ The classic modern work on Roman fortresses is that of Anne Johnson called *Roman Forts of the 1st and 2nd Centuries* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1983). It has numerous pictures and diagrams of Roman forts in the western part of the empire. Other than the normal rounded corners of their rectangular walls, they appear (in most cases) very much like the walls of the

limits to most civilians unless there was a military or political requirement for people to enter. This is why there were military guards at all entrances to Fort Antonia as there would be to any normal military encampment. No person could enter that military zone without permission from the Roman legionary authorities.

Just as American military bases in foreign countries today tend to resemble cities in America (with amenities and conveniences with which the troops would be familiar), so it was with Roman military establishments located in distant areas from Rome and Italy. Fort Antonia was such a Roman “city” at Jerusalem. As for the Jews at the time (and certainly for those living in Jerusalem), they would have had little reason to enter such Roman military establishments that resembled ordinary Roman towns.

As a matter of fact, we are told by Doron Bar in his excellent article in *The Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly* that it was common for Roman forts to be built alongside civilian cities (and sometimes within their city limits, as in the case of Rome itself). Doron Bar gives examples:

“The Third Legion, Cyrenaica, was based in the northern part of the city of Bostra, the capital of the province of Arabia. It was stationed in a well fortified camp which formed *an integral part of the city*. Here many relevant remains from the legion’s presence in the area were found. In the city of Palmyra, in the eastern part of modern Syria, the military quarter in the northwest of the city likewise formed *an integral part of the city*, and was divided from it only by a wall. Strikingly similar discoveries were made in the excavations at the city of Dura Europos on the banks of the Euphrates. All this seems to indicate quite clearly that these *Roman military camps were all interwoven in the urban fabric of the cities*, divided from them only by a wall.”⁹⁶

Doron Bar goes on to relate that the Camp of the Tenth Legion must have been located right alongside or within the city limits of Jewish Jerusalem. Although Doron Bar did not mention the Haram as a candidate for the Roman Camp (because all authorities con-

Haram esh-Sharif today. One is struck by the similarity. Indeed, most permanent forts were about the size of the Haram.

⁹⁶ *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly*, January–June 1998, p. 11.

sider the Haram to be the remains of the Temple), I am sure he would be impressed that the Haram fits the ideal dimensions and location in every way for a Roman Camp in Jerusalem, since the many examples he gives are guides to such military establishments.

Though Fort Antonia was in the heart of the Jewish metropolis, Jewish authorities tried to avoid any association with Gentiles. At that period, it was common custom for Jews to shun Gentiles and to stay away from their homes and their sections of cities.⁹⁷ Jews would avoid with utmost vigilance going into Fort Antonia unless necessary business required them to be there.

This was particularly the case during the festival seasons. We are told in the New Testament in the time of Jesus that Jews did not want to enter the *Praetorium* (Fort Antonia) during the period of Passover because to enter those precincts meant they would be considered ritualistically unclean and unable to partake of the Passover. We read in the Gospel of John: "Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas into the judgment hall [*Praetorium*]: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall [*Praetorium*] lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the Passover."⁹⁸

This defilement by entering the area of Fort Antonia is also shown by the reference in Josephus that speaks about the High Priest's robes being held by the Romans in a building within the boundaries of Antonia. Josephus states:

"The Romans, when they entered on the government [in 6 C.E.], took possession of these vestments of the high priest, and had them repositied in a stonechamber, under the seal of the priests, and of the keepers of the Temple, the captain of the guard lighting a lamp there every day; and seven days before a festival they were delivered to them by the captain of the guard, when the high priest having purified them, and made use of them, laid them up again in

⁹⁷ An example of such attitudes of separation, recall that the apostle Peter retreated from eating and fellowshiping with Gentiles in Antioch when he heard that some Jewish leaders from James in Jerusalem were arriving to meet them. Galatians 2:12-14.

⁹⁸ John 18:28.

the same chamber where they had been laid up before, and this the very next day after the feast was over.”⁹⁹

This procedure shows that Jews considered anything being located within Fort Antonia as having been (to a certain extent) defiled and ritualistically polluted. People and garments needed seven days’ purification before a festival if the person or garment was to be used in the Temple services. This restriction pertained even to the pontifical vestments of the High Priest.

Why Fort Antonia Was Not A Purified Area

Fort Antonia was the main Roman Camp in the area, a Roman city alongside the municipality of Jerusalem, governed by Roman laws (both civil and religious) and not by the Laws of Moses that the Jews tried to observe. The two areas were utter contrasts to one another in all aspects of civilization, secular or religious. This made the region of Fort Antonia off limits to Jews on most occasions, and particularly at the times of Jewish festivals.

In the first century it is well known that most Jews were keen on keeping themselves separate from Gentiles in matters dealing with secular and religious customs. Alfred Edersheim in his *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* gives the best survey of Jewish attitude towards the Gentiles in this period. Note his appraisal of the antipathy held between Jews and the Gentiles in the first century. It will be profitable to quote him verbatim. It is painful to read, but what Edersheim said was true. Here is his quote.

“To begin with, every Gentile child, so soon as born, was to be regarded as unclean. Those who actually worshipped mountains, hills, bushes, etc. — in short, gross idolaters — should be cut down with the sword. But as it was impossible to exterminate heathenism, Rabbinic legislation kept certain definite objects in view, which may be thus summarized: To prevent Jews from being inadvertently led into idolatry; to avoid all participation in idolatry; not to do anything which might aid the heathen in their worship; and, beyond all this, not to give pleasure, nor even help, to heathens. The latter involved a most dangerous principle, capable of almost indefinite application by fanaticism. Even the Mishnah goes

⁹⁹ *Antiquities* XVIII.4,3 emphasis mine.

so far as to forbid aid to a mother in the hour of her need, or nourishment to her babe, in order not to bring up a child for idolatry! But this is not all. Heathens were, indeed, not to be precipitated into danger, but yet not to be delivered from it. Indeed, an isolated teacher ventures even upon this statement: 'The best among the Gentiles kill; the best among serpents, crush its head.' Still more terrible was the fanaticism which directed that heretics, traitors, and those who had left the Jewish faith should be thrown into actual danger, and, if they were in it, all means for their escape removed. No intercourse of any kind was to be had with such — not even to invoke their medical aid in case of danger to life, since it was deemed that he who had to do with heretics was in imminent peril of becoming one himself, and that, if a heretic returned to the true faith, he should die at once — partly, probably, to expiate his guilt, and partly from fear of relapse....

"In truth, the bitter hatred, which the Jew bore to the Gentile, can only be explained from the estimate entertained of his character. The most vile, and even unnatural, crimes were imputed to them. It was not safe to leave cattle in their charge, to allow their women to nurse infants, or their physicians to attend the sick, nor to walk in their company, without taking precautions against sudden and unprovoked attacks. They should, so far as possible, be altogether avoided, except in cases of necessity or for the sake of business. They and theirs were defiled; their houses unclean, as containing idols or things dedicated to them; their feasts, their joyous occasions, their very contact, was polluted by idolatry; and there was no security, if a heathen were left alone in a room, that he might not, in wantonness or by carelessness, defile the wine or meat on the table, or the oil and wheat in the store. Under such circumstances, therefore, everything must be regarded as having been rendered unclean. Three days before a heathen festival (according to some, also three days after) every business transaction with them was prohibited, for fear of giving either help or pleasure. Jews were to avoid passing through a city where there was an idolatrous feast — nay, they were not even to sit down in the shadow of a tree dedicated to idol worship. Its wood was polluted; if used in baking, the bread was unclean; if a shuttle had been made of it, not only was all cloth woven on it forbidden, but if such had been inadvertently mixed with other pieces of cloth, or a garment made from it placed with other garments, the whole became unclean. Jewish workmen were not to assist in building basilicas, nor stadia, nor places where the heathen pronounced judicial sentences. Of course, it was not lawful to let houses or fields, or to sell cattle to

them. Milk drawn by a heathen, if a Jew had not been present to watch it, bread and oil prepared by them, were unlawful. Their wine was wholly interdicted — the mere touch of a heathen polluted a whole cask; nay, even to put one's nose to heathen wine was strictly prohibited. Painful as these details are, they might be multiplied."¹⁰⁰

With these strict prohibitions in force, especially in the capital of the nation where the Holy Temple was situated, one can easily understand why most normal Jews would keep themselves from entering a Roman military encampment such as Fort Antonia. Only under duress and in the utmost necessity would any Jew enter such places that they deemed polluted and defiled by the very ground on which they were built.

Let's face it, Roman soldiers in their own fortresses were able to practice their personal religious observances which involved ceremonies Jewish authorities considered idolatrous and defiled. Even the foods Romans would eat were considered detestable and to be utterly avoided. Many hygienic customs which Romans considered proper and medically permissible were accounted unclean and polluting to Jews. A mere touch of the hand by a Gentile man or woman rendered the Jewish person as ritualistically corrupt and even physically tainted. This is why the Jewish authorities at Jerusalem tried with arduous vigor and utmost scrutiny to avoid contact with Gentiles.

Jewish religious and social customs were not the only problem in the relationship between those ruled and those doing the ruling. The Romans also desired separation from the peoples they governed, in order to retain a position of superiority. Permanent Roman military camps were separate cities from the areas they guarded and ruled. Usually there was a Roman town associated with permanent military camps called a *canabea*.¹⁰¹ This town was normally made up of Romans or close allies. It was a support municipality of civilians.¹⁰² They were there to look after the

¹⁰⁰ Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol.I, pp.90–92.

¹⁰¹ Bahat, *Illustrated Atlas of Jerusalem*, p.60.

¹⁰² "The name *canabea* seems to be derived from a Gallic word meaning

logistical and societal needs of troops stationed in any Roman Fort. In Jerusalem before its 70 C.E. destruction, any normal *canabea* had to be located inside Fort Antonia because that was allowed (and even denominated) to be Roman imperial property and not subject to the strict religious laws of the Jewish community.

Fort Antonia was easily large enough to contain a modified *canabea* within its ramparts. Remember, Josephus tells us that Fort Antonia was so large that it garrisoned a full legion of troops, which with auxiliaries numbered about 10,000 people. The original fortress must have been designed by Herod to resemble a normal permanent camp of the Romans because, as stated before, it was the same size as most camps built by Romans in other strategic areas of the Empire, even at Rome itself. Recall that Herod was a friend of Caesar and the Roman people. He was prone to copy imperial Roman customs and governmental procedures with admiration and approval. Even today most military bases in the world (and no matter what race or nation) have their fortresses and military establishments quite similar to one another. This was also how it was in the time of Herod and his successors.

Fort Antonia Was the Imperial Praetorium

Fort Antonia was the Roman *Praetorium*, and was reckoned to be Roman government property before the war. This was the chief reason Titus allowed the area to remain after the war, and why we still observe the majestic walls surrounding the Haram. As late as the time of Constantine, those walls were identified as being those of the *Praetorium*. Indeed, in 333 C.E. an anonymous Christian pilgrim from Bordeaux described the only structure of significance located east of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (then being constructed). I will soon quote the Bordeaux Pilgrim at length and let him speak for himself on what he saw in Jerusalem. There can be no doubt. The Pilgrim described a building with its foundational walls situated in the bottom of the Tyropoeon Valley. And what

‘wineshop’” (Stambaugh, *Ancient Roman City*, p.251). By implication, *canabea* meant the place where soldiers could find relaxation and entertainment outside their ordinary quarters within the fortress.

did this Pilgrim call it? He said it was the *Praetorium* where Pilate was living at the time of Jesus' trial.¹⁰³ Those walls the Pilgrim saw were the western and southern walls of the Haram esh-Sharif, and to him they represented the remains of Fort Antonia (the *Praetorium*), NOT the remnants of the Temple.

¹⁰³ John Wilkinson on the Pilgrim in his book *Egeria's Travels*, pp.155–8.