
Chapter 2

THE ROMAN FORTRESS AT JERUSALEM

THE MAIN ROMAN CAMP was allowed by Titus to continue in existence when the war was over. This Roman Camp is today the Haram esh-Sharif. Why did the Romans want the Haram with its immense Herodian and pre-Herodian walls to remain as a fort? This stratagem of retention was because of the role the Haram played in the time of Herod and Jesus.

If we pay close attention to the historical accounts of Josephus, it is easy to identify the Haram as Fort Antonia. The main evidence comes from the speech of Eleazar who commanded the remnant Jewish forces at Masada some three years after the Temple and Jerusalem were demolished by the Romans. Eleazar's statement must be reckoned as an eyewitness account and is of utmost importance to our question at hand.

This is because Eleazar admitted that the City of Jerusalem and all its Jewish fortresses were indeed demolished "to the very foundations." Nothing was left of the City or the Temple. He reinforced his statement by mentioning the "wholesale destruction" of the

city. He said God “abandoned His most holy city to be burnt and razed to the ground by our enemies.”³² A short time later Eleazar concluded his account: “I cannot but wish that we had all died before we had seen that holy city demolished by the hands of our enemies, or the foundations of our Holy Temple dug up, after so profane a manner.”³³

Yes, even the very foundation stones supporting the upper parts of the Temple complex (including its walls) were uprooted and demolished. They had been “dug up.” Not even the lower courses of the base stones were left in place. According to Eleazar, the only thing remaining in the Jerusalem area was a single Roman Camp that continued to hover triumphantly over the ruins of the City and the desolation of the Temple. He said that while Jewish Jerusalem “hath nothing left,” the only thing remaining of former Jerusalem was the “monument” (a single monumental structure) preserved by Titus. And what was that “monument”? Eleazar said it was “the camp of those that destroyed it [Jerusalem], which still dwells upon its ruins.”³⁴

Such monuments were architectural structures designed to evoke memories from later peoples who view them. In the Roman world monuments were raised up to commemorate dead rulers.³⁵

³² *War* VII.8,6, Loeb translation.

³³ *War* VII.8,7.

³⁴ *War* VII.8,7.

³⁵ Examples of such monuments were those raised up by Simon the Hasmonean to commemorate his father, mother and brothers at Modin (*Antiquities* XIII.6,6); the monument of John Hyrcanus (*War* V.6,2; 9,2; 11,4); the monument of King Alexander the Hasmonean (*War* V.7,3); the city of Antipatris erected by Herod as a monument to his father (*Antiquities* XVI.21,9); and the Holy Temple Herod built as a monument to himself (*Antiquities* XV.8,5). In the general area of Jerusalem there were even several monuments left after the war. There were the monuments of Annas the High Priest and of Herod Agrippa the First located on the outskirts of Jerusalem near the temporary wall that Titus erected at the time of the siege (*War* V.12,2). There was also the monuments (plural) of Queen Helena of Abiadene situated north of Agrippa’s wall (*War* V.1,2). We must not forget what is called Absalom’s monument and the other two monuments associated with it in the Kedron Valley — these also remained after the war. But to Eleazar, the central monument that remained was “the camp of those that

to celebrate military victories, or to honor public buildings as grand government edifices. This is why Eleazar said that a major monument (a single manmade structure) was left of the buildings comprising former Jerusalem, “the camp of those that destroyed it [Jerusalem].” When one surveys what Josephus said (and recorded from the eyewitness account of Eleazar) there can be no doubt what “camp” is meant.

It is easy to discover where the Camp of the Romans was when one reads Josephus’ accounts of the war. The main military establishment in Jerusalem before the war was Fort Antonia, north of the Temple. Before the war the Romans considered Fort Antonia to be their property, and they had no reason to destroy buildings already belonging to them. After all, Titus was leaving the Tenth Legion to guard the area and such a large number of troops needed adequate and permanent facilities for housing. Fort Antonia was ideal to retain as the encampment of the Romans since it had been a former Roman fortress since the year 6 C.E. (I will soon explain why this year was important to Rome.)

And though we read in Josephus that in the last year of the war “Titus gave orders to his soldiers that were with him to dig up the foundations of the tower of Antonia,”³⁶ this early command was short-lived. Titus gave that order when the Jewish forces were still entrenched behind its walls and in complete control of Antonia. Titus knew that his legions had to storm the wall of that military fortress and dislodge the Jewish revolutionaries, or else he would never capture the Temple. The easiest way to reach the Temple was to use two causeways that led directly from the southern wall of Fort Antonia into the northern precincts of the Temple. “Through the tower of Antonia [the Romans could subdue] the Temple itself.”³⁷

We will see that the easy access from Fort Antonia into the Temple precincts was provided by two colonnade roadways that connected the Fortress with the four Temple colonnades that sur-

destroyed it [Jerusalem]” (*War* VII.8,7). This remaining fortress was a “living monument,” while the others were in commemoration of dead kings or a queen.

³⁶ *War* VI.2,1.

³⁷ *War* V.6,2.

rounded the square-form Temple complex. Titus at first thought to demolish Antonia, and indeed part of its northern wall was finally dismantled by the Romans in their quest to rout the Jews who remained in the fortress. But fortunate circumstances in favor of the Romans ended the war earlier than expected and caused Titus to change his mind about destroying Fort Antonia.

Fort Antonia Remained a Fortress in Jerusalem

The Romans at the beginning of the war had as one of their chief objectives the overthrow of Fort Antonia, which had been taken by the Jewish rebels. When the Jewish insurgents had control of Antonia, Titus thought it best to demolish the fortress. But, as it turns out, Titus only had to dismantle the foundations of part of the northern wall in order to gain entrance into the fortress. He did not raze to the ground or flatten the whole fortress. Indeed, it would have been a monumental task to tear down all the Haram walls.

Note how Whiston translated Josephus' description of the destruction of part of Antonia's wall. He added the word "some" to his translation, and for a reason. "The Roman army had, in seven day's time, overthrown [some] of the foundations of the tower [Antonia]."³⁸ Whiston added "some" because we find later the Tower of Antonia very much in existence. As it turned out, only the northern wall of the fortress was seriously damaged and after the war this section was quickly repaired. Indeed, as the war progressed and came to its final stages, Fort Antonia became a command post for Titus and his legions. "So Titus retired into the tower of Antonia, and resolved to storm the Temple the next day, early in the morning, with his whole army, and to encamp round about the holy house."³⁹

The Romans demolished only part of the northern wall of Fort Antonia. As Josephus showed, in the latter stages of the war the fortress became an important headquarters for Titus. This is because the southern wall of Fort Antonia (especially its highest tower at its southeast corner) provided Titus with a complete view of the entire Temple edifice directly south and west of the fortress

³⁸ *War* VI.2,7.

³⁹ *War* VI.4,5.

about 600 feet (as we will later see). Josephus described this vantagepoint for viewing the battles in and around the Temple as like a prime seat in a theatre. The southeastern tower of Fort Antonia was a central observation post where Titus could witness and direct all military activities inside and around the Temple precincts.⁴⁰

With this in mind it is easy to understand that capturing Fort Antonia became a fundamental task of Titus. It was necessary in order to conquer the Jewish revolutionaries in the Temple and then the rest of Jerusalem. So, Titus commanded his legions to first subdue Fort Antonia. As mentioned before, Titus demolished much of the northern wall of Antonia for his troops to enter the fortress controlled by its Jewish defenders. It is interesting that to this day the northern wall of even the Haram area is practically non-existent. This was the area the Romans breached to gain entrance into Fort Antonia.

The breach made by the Romans did in fact demolish Antonia's effectiveness as a secure fortress for the Jews late in the war. To this day the northern wall of the Haram has very few Herodian stones in its courses that identify the exact direction of the northern wall. The northern wall was the least effective of Fort Antonia. But after the war, the ineffectiveness of Antonia did not last long. Titus quickly repaired the rupture in the northern wall and made Antonia his command post for ending the war. Fort Antonia resumed its position as a powerful citadel to control all of Jerusalem.

Why Fort Antonia Was Strategically Important

At first Titus thought to leave for the Tenth Legion an area once part of Herod's former palace and also a portion of the western wall in the Upper City (and the three fortresses associated with it: Phasael, Hippicus and Mariamne). It is easy to see what Titus would have done had the plan been carried through. As historian G.J. Wightman rightly states in his excellent book *The Walls of Jerusalem*, it would have involved building a camp that

“had a typically square plan and enclosed an area of about 400 x 500 meters [1250 by 1600 feet]. Roman military camps were

⁴⁰ *War* VI.2.6.

normally divided into four quadrants by two main streets intersecting at right angles: the *Cardo Maximus* running N/S and the *Decumanus Maximus* running E/W.⁴¹

Building such a new encampment would involve a great deal of effort, time and expenditure of imperial funds. But the initial plan of Titus did not materialize. It is obvious what he decided to do within the four months after the war. Titus had a change of mind. It became evident to him that for the main headquarters of the Tenth Legion, it would be infinitely better strategically to recondition Fort Antonia and its colossal walls (with its 37 cisterns and aqueduct from Solomon's Pools providing abundant water in a protected environment). This plan made it unnecessary to build three more walls in the Upper City (a southern, eastern and northern rampart) to protect the camp area with the three fortresses in the west. Indeed, the Haram esh-Sharif had dimensions slightly larger than most permanent Roman forts, including the principal fort in Rome itself. And besides, Fort Antonia was built and designed as a fortress with all the needed defensive amenities. Nothing was better suited.

It must be understood that the first thing the Roman legions did as they journeyed from region to region was to set up temporary walls around their camps. But with permanent camps, the Romans went to great expenditure to establish appropriate defenses to protect their encampment for extended sieges. If Titus wished to have the camp of the Tenth Legion in the Upper City, the first thing he would have ordered would be the building of four rectangular walls of great dimensions to protect the camp from enemies. But Titus created no such walls or permanent camp in the Upper City near the three former towers. Why build three new walls and repair a fourth when he already had four prodigious walls of Fort Antonia (particularly the eastern, southern and western walls) still standing?

The Haram was much better suited to remain the Roman Camp and the Headquarters of the Tenth Legion. Let's face it, any military commander (past or present) looking over the ruins of Jerusalem would have immediately selected the site of the Haram as the

⁴¹ *The Walls of Jerusalem*, p.195.

logical place to house the Tenth Legion. Most of the western, southern and eastern walls of the Haram were still intact with over 10,000 stones in place in their lower courses. It was only logical that such a structure be chosen for the permanent Roman fortress (as for the previous hundred years and more). Only the northern wall of the Haram had been demolished and had its other three walls with their towers still available. Today one finds few Herodian stones making up the northern wall of the Haram, but the other three walls still expose their gigantic stones in their lower courses. When Herod built Fort Antonia, he constructed a fortress that was to last a long time, and it has!

But there was more than the existing walls that prompted Titus to select the Haram as the Roman Camp. The site of Antonia had those numerous cisterns within its perimeters and a working aqueduct that brought fresh spring water from south of Bethlehem directly into the camp area. The three forts in the Upper City (Phasael, Hippicus and Mariamne) did not have these military advantages. It is true Titus at first (after victory had just been granted to him and his Roman forces) thought to make those three forts and the partially standing wall on the western part of the city as the place for the Roman Camp. This did not materialize for several important reasons.

What About the Three Forts and Western Wall?

What happened to the former towers in the Upper City? Josephus said in summing up the topics he intended to cover in his book of the War (his Introduction) that between the time that the Romans crushed the last resistance of the war at Jerusalem in late summer of 70 C.E., and the time Titus returned to Jerusalem from visiting Antioch and other northern cities (about four months later), all “the local fortresses” had by then been demolished. We will see that the “local fortresses” were the three citadels in the Upper City. Note what Josephus said:

“The Romans crushed the last remnants of the wall and [then] demolished the local fortresses [not the international fortress, as we

will see]; [and then] how Titus paraded the whole country and restored order; and lastly his return to Italy and triumph.”⁴²

Though Titus immediately after the war thought to make the three forts in the Upper City the area of the Roman Camp, the truth is, that site never became the encampment of the Romans. The area proved to be inappropriate. As a result, those “local fortresses” were demolished as the above text states. There was no need to have two major Roman Camps in the environs of Jerusalem — one at the Haram and the other in the Upper City. We now know this for a fact. Up-to-date archaeological surveys show that there never was a Roman camp in the Upper City, not even an auxiliary camp. The archaeologist Hillel Geva and Hanan Eschel explain in a well-researched article in the November/December, 1997 issue of *Biblical Archaeology Review*, that the Roman Tenth Legion never encamped in the area of the Upper City in the west where most scholars have imagined the camp to have been. He writes:

“It has often been suggested that the Tenth Legion’s camp in Jerusalem was confined to the southwestern part of what is now known as the Old City, that is, to the modern Armenian Quarter and to the area of David’s Citadel, just south of the Jaffa Gate. This is really quite a small area — about 1,300 feet by 800 feet. The assumption has been that a typical Roman military camp was founded here, protected by a wall enclosing the rectangular plan and divided by two main intersecting streets. This theory cannot be proved. The archaeological evidence simply does not support this hypothetical reconstruction of the Roman military camp.”⁴³

The Camp of the Tenth Legion was never located anywhere on the western hill in what was known as the Upper City, as the archaeological evidence now proves. Indeed, because no one has suggested any other area among the ruins of Jerusalem for the place of the Roman Camp, and because the whole western area is so lacking in material remains of a Roman Camp, modern archaeologists wonder if the Tenth Legion even had a camp in Jerusalem. Of course, there are meager remains to show the Tenth Legion was

⁴² *War*, Introduction I.11 ¶29, Loeb translation.

⁴³ Hillel Geva and Hanan Eschel, *Biblical Archaeology Review*, Nov./Dec., 1997, p.38.

certainly in Jerusalem (and the historical sources from later times abundantly prove it), but Hillel Geva is so confident that the western area archaeologists thought the Camp to be is so sterile of material evidence that Geva himself suggests the main body of the Tenth Legion probably had its camp at Caesarea.⁴⁴ Simply put, there never was a Camp of the Romans in the Upper City.

To reinforce this fact, there is a further survey of the problem in the *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly* for January–June, 1998 by Doron Bar that fully agrees there is no evidence that a Camp of the Romans was ever located in or near the Upper City. And while Doron states that “we cannot doubt the existence of the camp [of the Tenth Legion] somewhere inside the [Jerusalem] city boundaries, the question of the actual location of the camp is still intriguing and unresolved.”⁴⁵

The problem of locating the Camp of the Tenth Legion exists because archaeologists are looking in the wrong place. Whereas all mainline archaeologists (until the writing of the two reports just cited) showed the tenuous state of the claim that the southwest hill was the area for the Roman Camp, they still maintained their dogmatic stance that it was located in the Upper City. This is in spite of the fact there is no archaeological evidence to give one the slightest confidence of the theory’s reliability. Doron Bar states: “Despite the virtual unanimity among scholars about the camp’s location, the archaeological finds inside the suggested boundaries of the camp and along its walls *do not verify these claims*.”⁴⁶

Indeed, Doron Bar goes on to say:

“Because of the absence of archaeological evidence, it seems to us that not only was the Tenth Legion’s camp not located on the southwestern hill of Jerusalem, as most scholars argue, but this hill was very sparsely populated during the late Roman period and perhaps was no part of Aelia Capitolina at all at that time [the city built by Hadrian in place of Jerusalem].”⁴⁷

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.40.

⁴⁵ *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly*, January–June, 1998, p.7.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.8.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, also on p.8.

The scholars need to look at the 36 acres located within the walls of the Haram esh-Sharif.⁴⁸ Of course, it is presently forbidden by religious authorities in Jerusalem to dig in the area of the Haram, but if that could be done, the archaeologists would find a great deal of evidence to show that is where the Tenth Legion had their Camp after the Roman/Jewish War was over. It certainly was not located in the western part of the city where most assume it was. Note more on this matter by Hillel Geva in his excellent research and by his wise appraisals.

“In the 1970s, I excavated in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City with the late Professor Nahman Avigad. In site after site, the same stratigraphical picture appeared. Over the destruction layer marking the Roman conquest of the Upper City in 70 C.E., we consistently identified a construction of the Byzantine period (fourth to seventh centuries C.E.) — with nothing in between.... Even more surprising, we did not uncover any other significant artifacts typical of Roman military camps (such as sculptures or Latin inscriptions) — only a few coins and a few baskets of shards. The conclusion cannot be avoided: The Roman stratum is absent in most of the excavated areas!”⁴⁹

The archaeological sterility of adequate military remains is so evident, no wonder scholars are surprised. Josephus stated this was where Titus first wished the Roman Camp to be placed. If the Camp of the Tenth Legion had been built in that place, there should be an abundance of artifacts. The truth is, there is nothing to give confidence that there ever was a Roman Camp in the area.

As a matter of fact, the western wall and the three fortresses that were once in the area were described by Josephus as being some of the most fortified sections of pre-war Jerusalem. Even Titus was amazed when he first viewed those almost impregnable fortifications. It was surprising to the Romans that the Jewish insurgents surrendered those three fortresses in the Upper City to Titus' legions without any encounters with the Romans. Their capitulation and abandonment of those three fortresses occurred because of

⁴⁸ Dr. David Jacobson in *Biblical Archaeology Review*, July/August 1999, p.44 says the area is about 36 acres.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.38.

some inexplicable reason that even Titus could not understand, except to say God ordained it on behalf of the Romans. Had those three fortresses not submitted with the Jews surrendering, Titus felt that not even the Romans would have been able to subdue those fortifications.⁵⁰

It was because of the impregnability of these three strong citadels in the Upper City, that Titus at first felt the fortresses could be used for the camp for the Tenth Legion. Had that been the case, most of those fortifications would surely have remained intact until the time of Eusebius in the fourth century (because the Tenth Legion remained in Jerusalem until 289 C.E.). But there is no hint of archaeological or historical evidence that Titus allowed those three fortresses to remain very long after 70 C.E. These were called by Josephus the “local fortresses.” He also said they were demolished soon after 70 C.E.⁵¹ Within three years, Josephus shows that the “local fortresses” were in total ruins and devastation.

Josephus stated that Eleazar in 73 C.E. said Jerusalem “which was fortified by so many walls round about, which had so many fortresses and large towers to defend it” [such as Phasael, Hippicus and Mariamne] was in his time totally in ruins and devastation. One of the reasons these three fortresses were known as “local” is that they were dedicated or named after “local” people⁵² in contra-

⁵⁰ *War* VI.9,1.

⁵¹ *War*, Introduction Book I.11 ¶29, Loeb translation.

⁵² These three magnificent fortresses in the Upper City were named in honor of “local” people rather than the customary “international” or “imperial” names that Herod used for most of his grand structures (*War* Introduction I.11 ¶29). These were specifically named, Josephus records, for Herod’s “brother, friend and wife” (*War* V.4,3 ¶162). All were “local” people, while Fort Antonia was named after Mark Anthony and the two major buildings of Herod’s own palace were named Caesareum and Agrippaeum in honor of “imperial” or “international” personalities (see *War* I.21,1). Recall that the two major cities built in his kingdom were named after Caesar (Caesarea and Sabaste). Or, as Josephus relates:

“In short, one can mention no suitable site within his kingdom, which he left without some mark of indebtedness to Caesar. And after filling his own realm with temples, he let the memorials of his devotedness overflow into the province and erected monuments to Caesar in numerous cities”

(*War* I.21,4). Herod “established athletic contests every fifth year in honor of

distinction to Herod's normal practice of calling his majestic buildings after imperial (or international) personalities. These three citadels were also termed "the royal towers, known as Hippicus, Phasael and Mariamne."⁵³

From Eleazar's viewpoint, by 73 C.E. even those "local" fortifications had been torn down. They were not retained by Titus as the Camp of the Romans for the Tenth Legion, though he first thought to keep them because of their former impregnability. But soon Titus leveled them to the ground. From later eyewitness accounts of Jerusalem (for the next three hundred years), there is not a single mention of the existence of the three citadels or the slightest remark about any western wall scholars have supposed survived the war. The three fortresses and the remnant of the western wall were also destroyed soon after 70 C.E. This fact is confirmed in the fourth century. Note what Gregory of Nyssa said:

"Where then are those palaces? where is the Temple? where are the walls? where are the defenses of the towers [such as the towers of Phasael, Hippicus or Mariamne]? where is the power of the Israelites? were not they scattered in different quarters over almost the whole world? and in their overthrow the palaces also were brought to ruin."⁵⁴

Caesar, and he constructed a theatre in Jerusalem.... All around the theatre were inscriptions concerning Caesar and trophies of the nations that he had conquered in war" (*Antiquities* XV.8,1). Herod's intent was to place "imperial" names wherever he could, but on some occasions he resorted to "local" names of persons he was fond of. Besides naming many places after himself, another notable "local" honor was the new city of Antipatris that Herod named after his father (*War* I.21,9). The fact of three fortresses at Herod's Palace named after "local" people was so exceptional that the designation "local" helps to identify them.

⁵³ *War* II.17,8. The designation "royal towers" meant that they were three fortresses that were "the king's citadels" (the "king" in this case being Herod the Great who had the three forts constructed to protect his royal Palace and the Upper City where the aristocratic residences for the most part were located). This is another reason why later people after the time of Herod the Great designated the three forts as "local fortresses" because they were built to particularly protect the "local" sovereign (King Herod) in distinction from Fort Antonia which became the "imperial" or "international" fortress that legally safeguarded the interests of Caesar and the Roman Empire.

⁵⁴ *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, s.2, vol. 5 (29), p.804.

That portion of the western wall and the three “local” towers were torn down by the Legion (with the aid of Jewish captives) in search of gold and other precious things soon after the war ended. This was also the situation regarding Herod’s Palace (along with the adjacent citadels) because Josephus said the Jews collected and deposited great quantities of money and precious things in these stronghold areas of the Upper City in the early years of the war. The Jews put the money in this area thinking that a deal might be worked out with the Romans.⁵⁵ Herod’s Palace and the three “local fortresses” were also uprooted to discover this gold and other money.

As a matter of interest, when the City of Aelia was built on the western side of Jerusalem from 130 C.E. onward (in the northern part of the Upper City), it is well known that no walls were associated with that city until late in the third century. We have the account of Epiphanius (writing in 392 C.E. and citing early second century documents) that when Emperor Hadrian first set eyes on the ruins of Jerusalem in 130 C.E. (65 years after its destruction), there was nothing left of Jewish Jerusalem to see, except a few houses and a Christian church. All Jewish walls and Jewish towers (citadels) were utterly gone. By 73 C.E., nothing was left of *Jewish* Jerusalem and this condition lasted until the time of Hadrian.

“It was the second year of his reign when he [Hadrian] went up to Jerusalem, the famous and much-praised city which had been destroyed by Titus the son of Vespasian. He found it utterly destroyed and God’s Holy Temple a ruin, there being nothing where the city had stood but a few dwellings and one small church.... [Then] Hadrian decided to restore the city, but not the Temple.”⁵⁶

Note particularly there was no evidence in Hadrian’s time that the three “local fortresses” and western wall in the former Upper City were then in existence. No Roman Camp is described as being in the region. Only “a few dwellings and one small church” were then occupying the region where Jewish Jerusalem once existed.

⁵⁵ *War* VI.7,1–2.

⁵⁶ Epiphanius, *On Weights and Measures*, Dindorf ed., vol IV, pp.17–18.

Let us continue with the professional observations of Hillel Geva and Hanan Eschel:

“So where are the remains of the Roman military camp? Perhaps elsewhere on the western hill? The evidence is similar wherever excavations have been conducted on the western hill, whether in the Armenian Quarter or farther south on Mt. Zion. What about the wall that is assumed to have enclosed the Roman military camp? Excavations have failed to uncover any sign of such a wall from the Roman period. On the contrary, excavations along the remains of the so-called First Wall ... show that it was not used by the Romans and that no new wall was built here by the Roman army.”⁵⁷

These remarks by Geva and Eschel reveal there is no evidence there ever was a wall around any region of the Upper City in the Roman period (let alone evidence that the three fortresses were allowed to continue in their pristine state).⁵⁸ But in the case of normal Roman Camps, Doron Bar makes the point that literary sources always have them surrounded by strong and adequate walls for the protection of the legionary troops. Bar spoke of “late Roman literary sources, which clearly testify that it was not customary for Roman legions to spend even one single night outside a fortified camp.”⁵⁹ But there is not the slightest evidence there was any wall or fortresses left in the western region by Titus. True, one can see evidence of the Roman Tenth Legion being in the Jerusa-

⁵⁷ Geva and Eschel, *Biblical Archaeology Review*, Nov./Dec., 1997, p.38.

⁵⁸ The so-called “Tower of David” near the Jaffe Gate is considered a small part of the foundation of either the Phaesel or Hippicus towers because Josephus said the “Old Wall” of the city ran from the western portico of the Temple up the hill to the top of the ridge where it encountered the three citadels. But, as we will see, the Temple was located at least a third of a mile south of the Dome of the Rock region in the Haram esh-Sharif. This means the actual “Old Wall” was about a third of a mile south from where scholars place it today. Thus, the three citadels of which we are speaking had to be farther south on the upper ridge. The term “David’s Tower” (erroneously given in the sixth century to the remains near the Jaffe Gate) cannot refer to any of the citadels Josephus called Phasael, Hippicus or Mariamme. It is more probable that this Herodian base of the “Tower” represents that of the Psephinus Tower.

⁵⁹ Polybius, *Histories*, VI.26.10–32; Keppic 1984, 191–92; Isaac 1990, 427–28; cited in Hillel and Eschel., *Biblical Archaeology Review*, Nov./Dec., 1997, p.9.

lem area. (For example, kilns of the Tenth Legion have been recently found that were later built west of Aelia, but these kilns were not in the city itself).⁶⁰

There is no proof whatever that the Tenth Legion had its camp in the Upper City or anywhere in the west part of Jerusalem. As Bar again stipulates: "The view that the location of the Tenth Legion's camp was on the southwestern hill *cannot be verified*."⁶¹ What is certain is that all other evidences of Roman camps (literary and archaeological, including those of General Silva that surrounded Masada in the last year of the clean-up operation of the Roman/Jewish War in 73 C.E.) show that the Legions always had walls surrounding their encampment areas. And significantly: *The only WALLED part of Jerusalem that remained AFTER the War was the Haram esh-Sharif.*

Indeed, just looking at the remains of the walls of the Haram from the Mount of Olives would make any ordinary person see that such a compound surrounded by thick and impressive walls on all sides would have made a wonderful Roman Camp for the Tenth Legion. This is precisely what Titus and his general staff thought. That structure with its ramparts has lasted unto our day and this

⁶⁰ In 1998 about 8 kilns were found near the bus depot in the Jewish part of western Jerusalem. These were determined to have been built by the Tenth Legion. And true enough, the Legion certainly had need for kilns, and this helps show the Tenth Legion was definitely in Jerusalem. But kilns were almost always located away from residential and business areas. Indeed, kilns were prohibited in Jerusalem in Jewish times. Simple blacksmithing was allowed, but not the oppressive heat, noise and smells of kilns. Note *The Book of Legends*, Sect. 116.

"Ten things are said about Jerusalem: It is not impossible to buy back one's house there; no heifer is brought to have its neck broken [when someone slain is found lying in the open in the vicinity of Jerusalem and the identity of the slayer is unknown]; it may not be declared a condemned city; it is not subject to uncleanness from house plagues; attachments to windows or balconies may not protrude over its thoroughfares; dungheaps may not be located within it; *artisans' kilns may not be built there*; other than rose gardens that existed from the days of the early prophets, gardens and orchards may not be cultivated in it; chickens are not to be raised within it; and a corpse may not be kept overnight there. (*B.BK 82b*)."

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

proves how strong and lasting those four walls really were (and are). It is absurd to think of any other building that survived the War, other than the Haram, that could adequately protect the Tenth Legion. Indeed, the Haram had been built to be a military fort.

Titus saw that the Haram area was ideal to house his Tenth Legion. In fact, Antonia was the fortress that protected Roman interests in Jerusalem before the War. When the Haram *was* the Roman Camp. This is the case because even Eleazar, three years after the war, said that the Camp of the Romans still existed within the ruins of Jerusalem, even though the walls and forts that surrounded *Jewish* Jerusalem were all demolished. Eleazar spoke of Jerusalem's "many walls round about, which had so many fortresses and large towers to defend it" as then being in utter ruin and desolation. This includes the part of the western wall (and the three "local fortresses" of Phasael, Hippicus and Mariamne) that Titus first thought might provide a camp for the Tenth Legion. This means the three fortresses were the "local fortresses" demolished shortly after the war, according to Josephus.⁶² In the view of Eleazar, the Camp of the Romans then still in existence was not in the western part of the city. Only the Haram esh-Sharif remained with its walls, and it was the remaining Roman Camp to Eleazar.

We will see that Antonia was reckoned to be a separate Roman city (as were all permanent military camps of the Romans) and not looked on as part of the municipality of Jewish Jerusalem. All of Jewish Jerusalem, on the other hand, was demolished, but the Roman portion (Fort Antonia) was left standing to continue as the Camp of the Romans.

The Reasonable Action of Titus

The measures taken by Titus in leaving a secure fortress such as Fort Antonia for his Tenth Legion make perfectly good sense. There was not the slightest reason for Titus to demolish the splendid Camp of the Romans that guarded Jerusalem before the war. This Roman Camp became a monument of Rome's victory over

⁶² *War*, Introduction I.11 ¶29, Loeb translation.

the Jews,⁶³ as the remains of Fort Antonia continue to this day as a witness to the greatness of Rome. And, that central monument is now called the Haram esh-Sharif!

This is why people can still see those Herodian and pre-Herodian courses of stones in the walls around this enclosure. Titus left standing those structures in the Jerusalem area that belonged to Rome in the first place. They continued to protect the Tenth Legion until 289 C.E. However, as Josephus stated, every bit of Jewish Jerusalem including the Temple was leveled to the ground without one stone remaining on another.

When visitors today ascend the Mount of Olives and look westward toward ancient Jerusalem, they observe directly in front of them the remains of Fort Antonia, the Haram esh-Sharif with the Muslim Dome of the Rock. Those walls do NOT represent the walls of the Temple of Herod or the other Temples of Solomon or Zerubbabel or even the Herodian Jewish city of Jerusalem.

All the Temples were located over the Gihon Spring about a third of a mile south of the present Dome of the Rock. This means the prophecies of Jesus were true. Not a single stone can be found in place of the former Temple of Herod or of the stones that made up the walls that surrounded the Temple. The next chapter will detail these matters even more.

⁶³ *War* VI.9,1.