

Roman Jerusalem

Searching for Roman Jerusalem

By Hillel Geva



Zev Radovan

The meager Roman remains discovered in the Old City of Jerusalem include stamped roof tiles and bricks bearing the initials *LXF*, short for *Legio X Fretensis*, the Tenth Roman Legion, which participated in the siege against Jerusalem. The tile shown here also depicts the legion's emblems—a wild boar and a warship. Thousands of the tiles and bricks have been uncovered—only enough, however, to roof a few medium-sized buildings.



Richard Nowitz

Gazing east over the colorful architectural collage that makes up Jerusalem's Old City today, it is difficult to imagine the bleak vista—broken only by burnt houses and discarded stones—that would have confronted a visitor to the city after the Roman destruction in 70 C.E.

Scholars have long argued that after the Roman army conquered the city, it expelled the Jews and quickly established tight control, building a walled camp where David's Citadel and the Armenian Quarter lie today (inside the thick walls in the foreground). But archaeologists probing for the army's remains are finding that the Roman camp was much more spread out and probably unfortified. The Romans so devastated the Jews that they had no need to protect themselves from a counterattack.

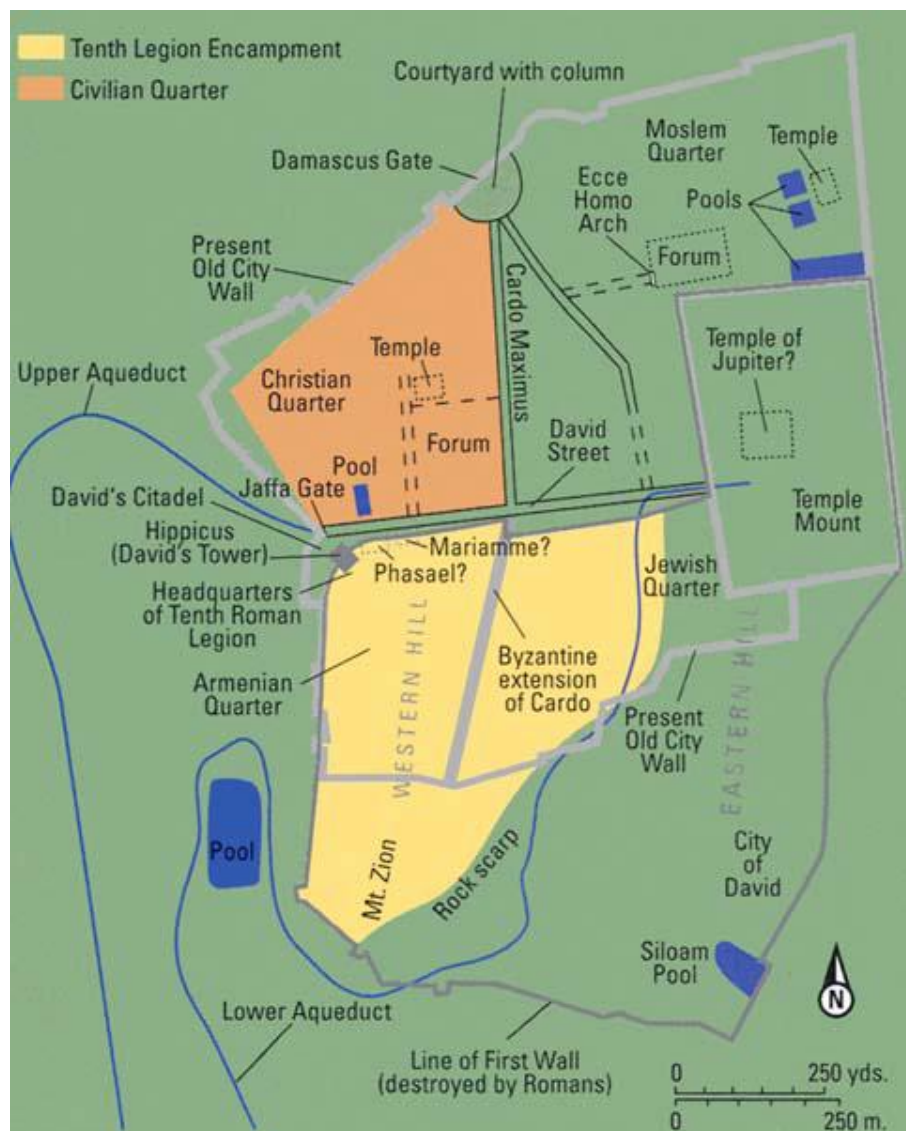
The Romans destroyed Jerusalem at the end of the summer of 70 C.E. Under the command of the Roman general Titus, they burned the city and dismantled the Temple, thus ending the First Jewish Revolt (66—70 C.E.)—the so-called Great Jewish Revolt.

The Romans were not content simply to defeat the Jews. They pursued a policy of deliberate devastation, eradicating not only Jerusalem's central religious institution but the city's fortifications, public buildings and large residential quarters. Those Jews who managed to survive the long siege were later massacred by Roman soldiers or, in some cases, led into captivity and sold as slaves.

Silent but vivid evidence of these dramatic events in Jerusalem's history was exposed during excavations in the 1970s at numerous sites throughout the city. Although no excavations took place on the Temple Mount itself, digs just outside the southwestern corner of the Temple Mount revealed tremendous piles of gigantic ashlar (squared stones) that covered the public courtyards and streets built by Herod the Great (37–4 B.C.E.) to serve those who came to worship at the Temple. * The excavators found thousands of stones that had once composed

* See Hershel Shanks, "Excavating in the Shadow of the Temple Mount," **BAR** 12:06.

the upper part of the Temple Mount's massive retaining walls but had been deliberately toppled from their original places and thrown outside the Temple enclosure. Jewish prisoners of war had probably been forced by the Romans to undertake the long, tiring process of destroying the Temple and its surroundings. For the Jews, it was the ultimate humiliation—the destruction of their sacred Temple at their own hands.[†]



Map of Roman Jerusalem.

[†] Benjamin Mazar, "The Excavations in the Old City of Jerusalem Near the Temple Mount—Second Preliminary Report, 1969–70 Seasons," in *Eretz-Israel* (Hebrew) 10 (1971), pp. 1–33; Meir Ben-Dov, *In the Shadow of the Temple: The Discovery of Ancient Jerusalem*, trans. Ina Friedman (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), pp. 73–184. Recently Ronny Riech has been excavating along the western wall below Robinson's Arch. The Herodian street was entirely covered by massive piles of the large stones that had once formed part of the wall of the Temple Mount. The area is now open to visitors; see Hershel Shanks, "Archaeological Hot Spots," **BAR** 22:06.



Hershel Shanks

Jerusalem dismantled. Chiseled stones, called ashlar, which formed the upper reaches of the Temple Mount's retaining wall, lie in a heap where the Romans toppled them after destroying Jerusalem and its Temple in 70 C.E. Weighing 3 to 5 tons each, the massive stones dwarf a man (far left in the photo) standing on the recently excavated street that ran along the western wall of the Temple Mount, as rebuilt by King Herod (37–4 B.C.E.).

A witness to the siege, the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus described the degradation of Jerusalem under Roman hands: "No stranger who had seen the old Judea and the entrancingly beautiful suburbs of her capital, and now beheld her present desolation, could have refrained from tears or suppressed a sigh at the greatness of the change. For the war had ruined all the marks of beauty, and no one who knew it of old, coming suddenly upon it, would have recognized the place, but, though beside it, he would have looked for the city."

While excavations were taking place adjacent to the Temple Mount, other digs were proceeding in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City, the area known at the end of the Second Temple period as the Upper City, where the wealthiest and most prominent Jewish families lived. This area managed to hold out against the Romans for a month after the Temple Mount was captured. Excavations here exposed several large, elaborate mansions. * The evidence clearly demonstrates that these buildings were destroyed by intense fire following the Roman conquest of this part of the city, † exquisitely illustrating the account of the first-century C.E. Jewish historian Josephus Flavius, an eyewitness to the bitter siege and defeat. †

An examination of the vast necropolis surrounding the city at the end of the Second Temple period reveals that Jews no longer lived in the city after this complete destruction. Nearly a thousand rock-cut burial chambers have now been examined. There is almost no evidence of use after 70 C.E. No new burial chambers appear to have been hewn in the period between the two revolts, although a few existing ones continued to be used. What little evidence there is of continued use completely ceases after the Second Jewish Revolt against Rome, the Bar-Kokhba Revolt (132–135 C.E.). †

It is sometimes argued that the evidence of Jewish burials between 70 C.E. and 135 C.E.—however scant it may be—shows that at least some Jews remained in the city after the Roman destruction. I disagree. The continued use of Jewish burial chambers may be better explained another way: I believe that a few Jews who had been exiled from the city continued to bury their deceased relatives in traditional family tombs. They may have obtained permission from the Roman authorities by paying them, or may simply have chosen to risk their lives

* See the following **BAR** articles by Nahman Avigad: "How the Wealthy Lived in Herodian Jerusalem," **BAR** 02:04; "Jerusalem Flourishing—A Craft Center for Stone, Pottery and Glass," **BAR** 09:06; "Jerusalem in Flames—The Burnt House Captures a Moment in Time," **BAR** 09:06. Also see Nitza Rosovsky, "A Thousand Years of History in Jerusalem's Jewish Quarter," **BAR** 18:03.

† Nahman Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1983), pp. 95–204.

† Flavius Josephus, *The Jewish War* 6.1.6–8.

† Amos Kloner, "The Necropolis of Jerusalem in the Second Temple Period," (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University, 1980; Hebrew, with English summary, p. xix), pp. 271–272.

by making unauthorized use of these burial chambers. Certainly, it would have been impossible for normal daily life to have continued in Jerusalem after the war. Even the surrounding rural areas that had supplied the city with food had been looted and devastated. Moreover, later literary sources indicate that Jews were not allowed to live in Jerusalem.[†] Only on the ninth day of the Hebrew month of Av, the anniversary of both the Roman destruction and the earlier Babylonian destruction of the Temple, were Jews even permitted to visit the city to pray at the ruins on the Temple Mount. For this, too, they needed to pay bribes to the Roman garrison then stationed in the city.[†]

In short, both the literary and the archaeological evidence indicate that the city was totally destroyed in 70 C.E. Not a single building remained standing.

The overall destruction of the city was obviously part of an imperial plan to fundamentally change the city's destiny. Only in this way can we explain the tremendous effort and expense involved in removing all signs of the city's Jewish past. The Romans clearly wanted to suppress any future Jewish nationalist aspirations to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple.

The Romans also decided to change the administrative status of the province of Judea. Although the administrative unity of Judea was preserved because it was inhabited so heavily by Jews, Judea itself became an imperial province, governed by a high-ranking Roman official. Before the First Jewish Revolt, only auxiliary units served as the Roman garrison in Judea; that is, the soldiers who served in these units came from the native, non-Jewish population of Palestine. After suppressing the uprising, however, the Tenth Roman Legion remained to deal with the security needs of Palestine. As outsiders, they could do so without becoming emotionally involved in conflicts between various ethnic groups living in the region.

The stationing of the Tenth Legion in Jerusalem marked the beginning of Roman colonization of the city. That the Tenth Legion was in fact garrisoned there is shown by a number of inscriptions uncovered in the last one hundred years.[†]



Zev Radovan

This triumphal column is dedicated to an emissary of the Tenth Legion: "To Marco Junio Maximo, legate, on behalf of the emperors, of the Tenth Legion of Fretensis Antonini, [the column was prepared by] C. Domitius Sergius Julius Honoratus—his adjutant." Discovered north of David's Citadel in 1885, the column dates to the early third century C.E.



Courtesy Hillel Geva

"IMP[ERATOR] CAESAR VESPASIANUS AUG[USTUS] ..." reads the beginning of the Latin inscription on a triumphal column dedicated to Emperor Titus (ruled 79–81 C.E.; his family name was Vespasian), who led the siege against Jerusalem nine years before acceding to the throne. The abbreviation "LEG•X•FRE" appears at the bottom, indicating the column was erected by the Tenth Roman Legion. The monument probably stood at one of the entrances to the Roman temple in Jerusalem. The column was discovered incorporated into the foundations of a Moslem palace south of the Temple Mount.

[†] Hieronymus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 4, 6.

[†] Hieronymus, In *Sophoniam*, pl. T. 25, col. 1354.

[†] A partial list: Selah Merrill, *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement* 18 (1886), pp. 72–73; Charles Warren and Claude R. Conder, *The Survey of Western Palestine* (Jerusalem and London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1884), p. 427; J.B. Hennessy, "Preliminary Report on Excavations at the Damascus Gate Jerusalem, 1964–1966," *Levant* 2 (1970), p. 26, fig. 1; G.B. Sarfatti, "A Fragmentary Roman Inscription in the Turkish Wall of Jerusalem," *Israel Exploration Journal* 25 (1975), p. 151.

To commemorate its defeat of Jerusalem, the Tenth Legion erected several triumphal columns. Two of these columns bearing fragmentary dedicatory inscriptions have been found. Engraved in Latin, they mention both the Tenth Legion and Titus, the Roman conqueror of Jerusalem who became emperor in 79 C.E. The fragments were found in secondary use south of the Temple Mount.[†] These inscriptions doubtless once stood at central, symbolic points in the ruined city, perhaps at the entrance to the Temple Mount or at one of the city gates.

The Tenth Legion—its full name was Legio•X•Fretensis (Fretensis refers to either the region where its soldiers came from or a place where it had won an important victory)—had previously served in northern Syria, where it guarded the Roman border along the Euphrates River. In 68 C.E. the Tenth Legion swept across Galilee to suppress the Jewish Revolt; during the siege of Jerusalem, led by Titus, it was stationed on the Mount of Olives. Later, in 72 and 73 C.E., under a commander named Silva, the Tenth Legion was the main Roman force in the battle of Masada.

Josephus tells us that when Titus ordered the demolition of the fortifications of Jerusalem, he decided to spare three towers on Jerusalem's western hill, in the northwestern corner of the so-called First Wall: These three towers, which Herod had named Phasael, Hippicus and Mariamme, served as headquarters and barracks for the Tenth Legion, according to Josephus.[†] On the basis of Josephus's writings, it has been suggested that the legion's camp in Jerusalem was erected on the city's western hill, adjacent to these towers. This hill has several topographical advantages. It is higher than other parts of ancient Jerusalem, so that a garrison stationed there could easily control the city; it is bordered on three sides by deep valleys; and its flat summit is convenient for military settlement.

While scholars agree that a Roman camp was established on the western hill of Jerusalem, the exact location, size and shape of the legionary camp remains a matter of dispute. One thing is clear: Roman soldiers never inhabited the Second Temple period dwellings of the Upper City; after they finished looting and destroying the city, not even one building was still standing in this formerly elegant quarter. The Roman camp was built on the destruction layer that covered the entire hill.

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 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 its rectangular plan and divided by two main intersecting streets.

This theory cannot be proven. The archaeological evidence simply does not support this hypothetical reconstruction of the Roman military camp.

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 layer of the Byzantine period (fourth to seventh centuries C.E.)—with nothing in between! In very limited areas, we excavated some earth fills containing a large number of ceramic roof-tile fragments, many bearing the insignia of the Tenth Legion. Many more of these roof tiles were found in Byzantine earth fills. We were surprised, however, to find no architectural remains that could be related to these fragmentary roof tiles. 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 sherds.

The conclusion cannot be avoided: The Roman stratum is absent in most of the excavated areas!

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 further south, on Mt. Zion.

[†] One fragment was published in Ben-Dov, *In the Shadow*, p. 190. The other has not yet been published.

[†] Josephus, *Jewish War* 7.1.1–2.

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, the excavations along the remains of the so-called First Wall (the wall that encircled the western hill of Jerusalem prior to the Roman destruction) show that it was not used by the Romans and that no new wall was built here by the Roman army.

In the courtyard of David's Citadel, south of Jaffa Gate, a long section of the northwestern corner of the First Wall was uncovered. Several wall sections and towers found here, all dating to the Hasmonean and Herodian periods, were destroyed in 70 C.E. and never rebuilt.[†]

This picture became very clear after we examined a tower at the southern end of the courtyard of David's Citadel. Erected in the early first century C.E. on the remains of Hasmonean and Herodian towers, this new southern tower included at least three rooms. The floor of the tower was covered by a thick destruction layer, which contained building stones, ceiling plaster and charred wooden beams—indicating that the tower was destroyed in a large conflagration. The small pottery finds and the stratigraphy indicate that the fire was set by the Roman army in 70 C.E.[†] When the Roman army occupied the city, a water installation made of clay pipe was built over the remains of this southern tower. So the supposed western wall of the Roman camp could not have been located here. Only many years later was the northern side of this tower incorporated into a new tower, erected when a new wall was built around Jerusalem at the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth century C.E.



Courtesy Hillel Geva

At the southern end of the Citadel courtyard—directly in the line of the First Wall, which many scholars wrongly believed must have protected the Roman camp—excavators discovered the remains of a massive tower that did not survive the Roman siege. Charred beams in the thick destruction layer covering the tower's foundations indicate that the structure was destroyed by fire.



Courtesy Hillel Geva

Down the drain. At the southern end of the Citadel courtyard, excavators discovered the remains of a massive tower that did not survive the Roman siege (see photograph). Directly on top of this destruction layer the Romans built a water installation but no wall. The clay pipes (shown here *in situ*) of the drain bear the stamped letters *LXF* (see detail), short for *Legio•X•Fretensis*, the Tenth Roman Legion.



Courtesy Hillel Geva

The clay pipes of a Roman water installation bear the stamped letters *LXF* (see detail), short for *Legio•X•Fretensis*, the Tenth Roman Legion.

[†] C.N. Johns, "The Citadel, Jerusalem—A Summary of Work Since 1934," *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine* 14 (1950), pp. 121–190; Ruth Amiran and Avraham Eitan, "Excavations in the Courtyard of the Citadel, Jerusalem, 1968–1969," *Israel Exploration Journal* 20 (1970), pp. 9–17; Hillel Geva, "Excavations at the Citadel of Jerusalem, 1976–1980," in *Ancient Jerusalem Revealed*, ed. Geva (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1994), pp. 156–167; Renée Sivan and Giora Solar, "Excavations in the Jerusalem Citadel, 1980–1988," in *Geva Ancient Jerusalem Revealed*, pp. 168–176.

[†] Geva, "Excavations," pp. 161–163.



Courtesy Hillel Geva

Detail of Roman clay pipes bearing the stamped letters *LXF*, short for Legio•X•Fretensis, the Tenth Roman Legion.

Where the southern wall of the Roman military camp was purportedly located (that is, along the line of the southern wall of the modern Old City), no Roman wall has been found, although excavations have been conducted below the foundations and on both sides of the southern Old City wall. The eastern section of the southern Old City wall is in fact built on top of the outer wall of an Umayyad (Arab) palace, while the western section of the present-day wall, on Mt. Zion, lies on the remains of a medieval city wall, with no earlier wall below.

In sum, no wall has been found that could have enclosed the area of the assumed Roman military camp. Further excavations throughout the western hill have not exposed any structural remains identifiable with the encampment of the Tenth Legion. The only evidence was uncovered in the courtyard of David's Citadel; it includes a few fragmentary walls and sections of water installations, consisting in part of a clay-pipe drain bearing stamp impressions of the letters *LXF*, short for Legio•X•Fretensis, or the Tenth Legion.[†] The bulk of the Roman period materials excavated all over the western hill consists of numerous broken roof tiles and a few bricks impressed mainly with rectangular Tenth Legion stamps reading "Leg(io)•X•Fretensis."



David Harris

The archaeological data effectively refute the suggestions that a typical Roman legionary camp was founded in Jerusalem and that it was confined only to the area of the Armenian Quarter and David's Citadel in the Old City. There is no difference between the Roman period finds uncovered in David's Citadel and the Armenian Quarter and those retrieved from other parts of the western hill, such as the Jewish Quarter or Mt. Zion.

The archaeological evidence clearly indicates that the entire western hill was only sporadically and sparsely inhabited during the Roman period. I would propose a different scenario from that of a common military camp: After the Roman army captured Jerusalem, it departed for other campaigns, leaving only a small detachment of the Tenth Legion in the ruined city. Because the city was not located on the border of the empire, no outsiders posed a significant threat to the city. In short, Jerusalem was unimportant. The major role of the detachment was to ensure that the Jews did not return to the city.

Other small detachments of the Tenth Legion encamped in strategic locations around Jerusalem. Remains from these Tenth Legion detachments have been recorded at Ramat Rachel, Bethany, Ein Yael, Cremisan and Givat

[†] Johns, "Citadel," pp. 152–153, figs. 17, 23; Geva, "Excavations," p. 163.

Ram. † In the latter site, the remains of a Tenth Legion industrial area, including kiln works for the production of ceramic construction material, have recently been uncovered. †

The small Tenth Legion detachment that served as the Roman garrison in Jerusalem was probably commanded by a high-ranking officer, since Jerusalem served as headquarters for the Tenth Legion units stationed near the city. The bulk of the Tenth Legion, however, encamped at Caesarea, the provincial capital of Palestine during the Roman period.

The few Roman soldiers assigned to Jerusalem, as far as we can judge, encamped all over the city's western hill.

The three Herodian towers, Hippicus, Phasael and Mariamme, were part of the defended headquarters, which provided security for the legionary soldiers in emergencies. Small units of Roman soldiers were no doubt also stationed at other strategic points in the city. But there was never any organized and planned Roman military camp with a wall around it in Jerusalem.

Roman H.Q. When destroying the fortifications of Jerusalem, the Roman general Titus spared three towers built by Herod at this strategic spot (today called David's Citadel) on Jerusalem's western hill. Named Phasael (for Herod's elder brother), Hippicus (after his friend) and Mariamme (for the king's wife, whom he later murdered), the towers served as headquarters for the Tenth Roman Legion. The remains of Hippicus are today part of David's Tower (the largest tower in the photo, far left); the two other towers probably lay further to the east.



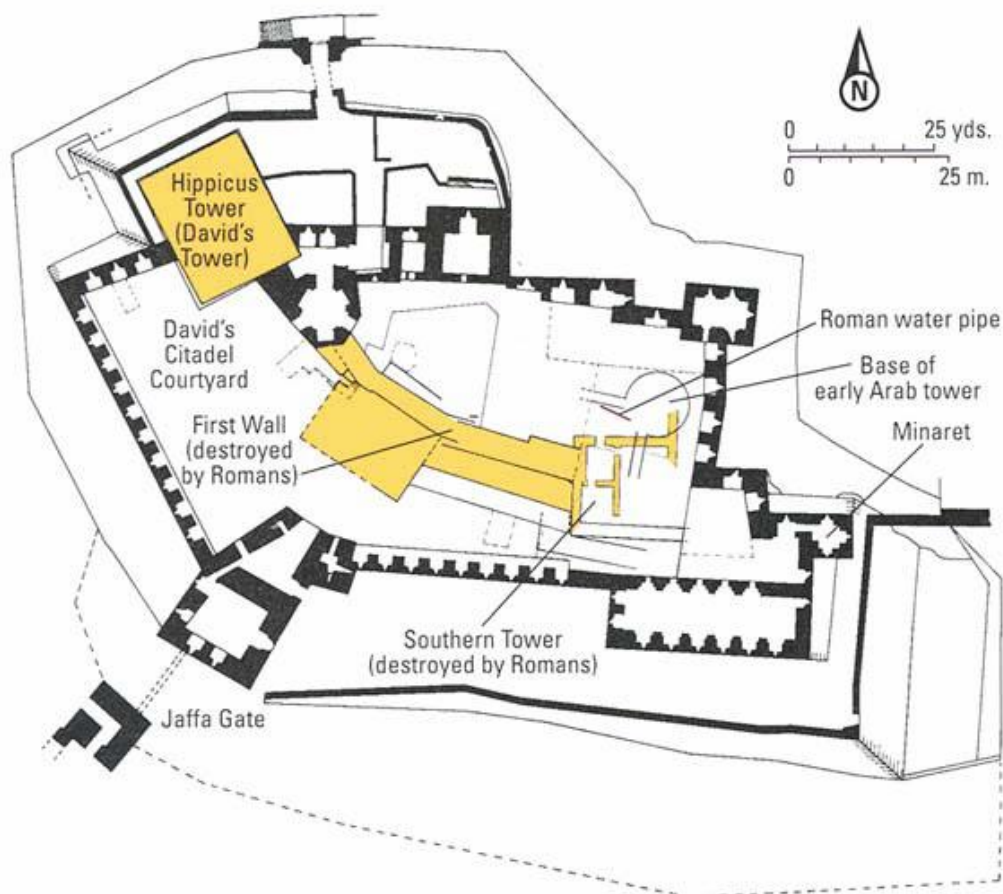
Zev Radovan

Many scholars long assumed that the Romans reused these three towers and part of a nearby wall in the fortifications of their camp. The camp wall, they argued, followed the line of a wall that protected Jerusalem in Herod's time (called the First Wall) and would have run down the center of the courtyard of David's Citadel (see plan). But excavations inside the courtyard have revealed no remains of a Roman wall.

The Roman-period roof tiles, bricks and other remains discovered inside the Citadel are similar to those found all over the southern part of Jerusalem's western hill, indicating that the small detachment of Roman soldiers in Jerusalem was probably not based here, but camped in strategic locations all over the hill.

† Yohanan Aharoni et al., *Excavations at Ramat Rahel: Seasons 1959–1960* (Rome: Università degli studi, Centro di studi semitici, 1962), pp. 4–26; M. Provera in “Una Verillatio della Legione X. Fretense a cemsan,” *La Terra Santa* (1976), pp. 363–370; Sylvester J. Saller, *Excavations at Bethany* (1949–1953), Publications of the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum 12 (Jerusalem: Franciscan Press, 1957), p. 324, pl. 130a; Gershon Edelstein, “En Ya’el—1987,” in *Excavation and Surveys in Israel*, vols. 7–8 (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 1988–1989), pp. 54–57. For more details on the Tenth Legion impression, see Dan Barag, “Brick Stamp- Impressions of the Legio X Fretensis,” *Bonner Jahrbücher* 167 (1967), pp. 244–267.

† Benny Arubas and Haim Goldfus, “The Kilnworks of the Tenth Legion Fretensis,” in *The Roman and Byzantine Near East: Some Recent Archaeological Research*, ed. J.H. Humphrey, *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, supp. ser. 14 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1995), pp. 95–107.



Plan of David's Citadel. See photograph.

Only a few buildings were constructed on the western hill at this time. Most of these were probably made of wood, with ceramic-tile roofs. The wood later disintegrated or was taken for secondary use, leaving only fragments of roof tiles behind.

Although the discovery of thousands of roof tiles on the western hill may seem to suggest considerable building activity, that is not the case. The average intact roof tile is little more than 21 inches (54 cm) long and about 18 inches wide (47 cm on one side and 46 cm on the other side). Thus, it takes about five or six tiles to cover a square meter (taking into account the required overlap). A roof of 100 square meters would take, conservatively, 700 flat tiles and the same number of partially curved tiles to cover the joins. Every second or third tile was stamped with the Tenth Legion seal. In the excavation in the Jewish Quarter, we found more than 500 stamped tiles, so the total number must have been no more than 1,500. Our conclusion is that this was enough to roof only a few structures of medium size (built over a period of more than 200 years).[†]

In 130 C.E. the emperor Hadrian decided to establish a Roman colony, named Aelia Capitolina, on the site of what had once been Jewish Jerusalem.^{*} This led to the Second Jewish Revolt (132–135 C.E.). The rebellious Jews, centered in Judea, south of Jerusalem, wanted to liberate Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple, thus reestablishing Jewish national independence.

Scholars are still debating whether the rebels captured Jerusalem at one point in the revolt. The most common view is that they not only captured the city briefly but even conducted Jewish rituals on the site of the destroyed

[†] For more details, see Geva, "The Camp of the Tenth Legion in Jerusalem: An Archaeological Reconsideration," *Israel Exploration Journal* 34 (1984), pp. 239–254.

^{*} See "Aelia Capitolina: Jerusalem No More" in this issue.

Temple. That the Roman defenses were thin makes this scenario possible. Yet, we do not have any direct or certain historical sources proving that the Jews seized Jerusalem during this revolt. Nor is there any record that the Roman army needed to recapture the city; the written sources are generally silent. One piece of evidence supporting the view that the rebels did capture the city comes from coins minted by the rebels: They show the Temple facade, as if boasting of the rebels' success (See coin in "Aelia Capitolina: Jerusalem No More"). Those who support this view will quote certain Jewish sources that can be interpreted to mean that Jerusalem was controlled by the Jews, and that even hint at the renewal of religious activity in the Temple area.

My own view is that the rebels probably never captured Jerusalem.[†] Despite years of intensive excavations in the area of ancient Jerusalem, no remains of any kind have been found from the Second Jewish Revolt against Rome. There is no evidence of the construction of a wall or even the rebuilding of old walls, and there is no evidence that any houses were built at this time. But if Jews had returned to the city, they surely would have needed houses to live in and walls to protect themselves against Roman counter-assault.



David Amit

The Upper Aqueduct, constructed by the Tenth Roman Legion, channeled water from a reservoir called (incorrectly) Solomon's Pools, 6 miles south of Jerusalem, to their headquarters inside Jaffa Gate. The names of legion commanders were found incised into stone pipe sections.

About a mile of the aqueduct (including this section near Bethlehem) was composed of pipe formed from carved interlocking stones (see photograph). The Roman water system connected with a sophisticated aqueduct designed earlier by Hasmonean engineers to replenish Solomon's Pools with water from springs south of Bethlehem; under the Hasmonians, water traveled from Solomon's Pools into Jerusalem along the Lower Aqueduct, which ended at the Temple Mount.



Courtesy Hillel Geva

These carved interlocking stones formed part of the pipe of the Upper Aqueduct, constructed by the Tenth Roman Legion.

[†] This represents some change of position on my part. Cf. Geva, "Tenth Legion," p. 248.

The evidence from the necropolis just outside Jerusalem is also negative. Further, we know of only a few coins from the Second Jewish Revolt that were found in Jerusalem,[†] compared with the large number of such coins found in the Judean mountains, where the rebel forces were concentrated.[†]

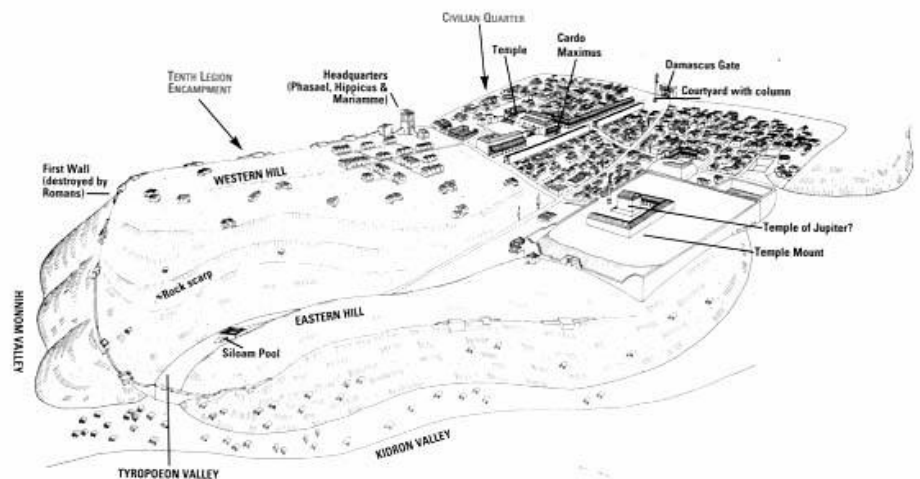
Even if the rebels did capture Jerusalem, they did not hold it long. If they had, the Romans, after retaking the city, surely would have protected their encampment with a wall. But no such wall has been found. The archaeological evidence reflects no change after the revolt was suppressed in 135 C.E.

We may surmise that during the three-year revolt the Roman forces in Jerusalem were strengthened and that this kept the rebels away. After all, the Roman authorities knew Jerusalem's symbolic value to the Jews. If the rebels had captured the city, that would have changed the course of the war by inspiring the imagination of the Jews and encouraging more of them to join the rebels, thus spreading the revolt all over the country. That it did not is a further indication that the rebels never conquered Jerusalem.

Little construction was carried out in the new Roman colony of Aelia Capitolina (the name Hadrian gave Jerusalem) before the revolt was suppressed in 135 C.E. The civilian sector of Aelia Capitolina was built north of the western hill and the military settlement. The construction strictly adhered to the usual Roman plan, with public buildings arrayed along an orderly geometric network of streets. Even today a map of the Old City reveals a clear difference in the street plan between the northern and the southern sectors. In the northern sector (today's Christian and Moslem quarters), the alignment of streets at right angles reflects the organized Roman colony of Aelia Capitolina. In marked contrast, the southern part of the Old City (the Jewish and Armenian quarters) is a jumble of streets coming together at odd angles. This area was quickly but indiscriminately settled, without any central plan, after the Tenth Legion was transferred from Jerusalem to Aila (modern Aqaba) at the end of the third century C.E.

Leen Ritmeyer

Aelia Capitolina. In 130 C.E., Emperor Hadrian celebrated the transformation of Jerusalem into a Roman colony by plowing a traditional furrow, called a pomerium, around the city to mark its new boundaries. Jews were barred, on penalty of death, from entering the city. The name Aelia memorialized the family of the emperor, whose full name was Publius Aelius Hadrianus; Capitolina recalled the Capitoline Hill in Rome, the location of a temple of Jupiter. As a new colony, Aelia Capitolina was given the right to erect a similar monument dedicated to the most powerful Roman deity.



As shown in this reconstruction, Aelia Capitolina was laid out as a typical Roman colony—rectangular in shape and divided into four quadrants with the major street, the Cardo Maximus, extending from the Damascus Gate in the north to the southern edge of the civilian quarter. Three towers, Phasaël, Hippicus and Mariamme marked the Tenth Roman Legion's headquarters on the western hill of Jerusalem. The small detachment of soldiers camped all over the southern part of the hill. A Roman temple or statue, dedicated to Jupiter, may have stood on the site of the destroyed Jewish Temple.

Throughout the city, signs of the Roman destruction were apparent, including the scattered stones of the First Wall, which had protected Jewish Jerusalem, and the charred remains of houses in the once elegant Upper City.

[†] Donald T. Ariel, "A Survey of Coin Finds in Jerusalem Until the End of the Byzantine Period," *Liber Annuus Studii Biblici Franciscani* 32 (1981), pp. 292–293.

[†] Barag, "A Note on the Geographical Distribution of Bar-Kokhba Coins," *Israel Numismatic Journal* 4 (1980), pp. 30–33.

To grace Aelia Capitolina, the Romans built two temples, one where the Church of the Holy Sepulchre stands today and the other on the site of the destroyed Jewish Temple.*

Lined with columns, the *Cardo Maximus*, the major north-south street of the Roman city, extended from the Damascus Gate in the north through the civilian sector of Aelia Capitolina as far south as the northern border of the legionary campsite (David Street today). Further south, no remains of the Roman-era *Cardo* were found.

The famous Madaba mosaic map of Jerusalem from the sixth century C.E., however, shows the *Cardo* extending much further, from the Damascus Gate (in the northern wall of the Old City today) all the way to the Dung Gate (in the southern wall of the Old City). Nahman Avigad, who excavated the *Cardo*, was therefore surprised when he was unable to find any Roman remains of this thoroughfare in his excavations south of David Street in the Jewish Quarter.* All the evidence dated the southern part of the *Cardo* to the late Byzantine period, when the city was Christian.†



Richard Nowitz

The *Cardo Maximus*. When excavators first uncovered this portion of the Jerusalem *Cardo*, now beautifully restored in the Old City's Jewish Quarter, they thought they had found a typical Roman *cardo*, or main street. But when they lifted the pavement, they found beneath it Byzantine pottery—indicating that it could not have been built during the Roman period. They realized they had discovered instead a Byzantine extension of the Roman *Cardo*, which ran only from the Damascus Gate in the north to modern David Street—stopping at the edge of the Roman civilian quarter. As the Christian city expanded south in the Byzantine period, the *Cardo* was extended to connect the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the north with the Nea Church in the south, a monumental basilica built by Emperor Justinian (527–565 C.E.), which has been excavated in the Jewish Quarter, along the southern Old City wall.

The reason is now clear. In the mid-sixth century, the Byzantine emperor Justinian built the Nea Church, a huge structure with accompanying buildings dedicated to Mary, the mother of Jesus. The impressive remains of the Nea Church have now been recovered, just where it is shown on the Madaba map, at the southern side of the western hill. Justinian obviously extended the *Cardo* south to reach this church. Thus, the northern section of the *Cardo* was part of Roman Aelia Capitolina; Justinian's extension (built in typical Byzantine style, easily recognized by experts) ran to the magnificent Nea Church. That is why the Byzantine period Madaba map shows the *Cardo* extending all the way to the southern gate of the city.

During the Roman period, then, the city was divided into two distinct areas—the civilian sector in the north and the Roman encampment in the south. The *Cardo* traversed only the civilian area.

* For a different view of where these temples stood, see Jerome Murphy-O'Connor's forthcoming article in *Bible Review* ("Where Was the Capitol in Roman Jerusalem?" *Bible Review*, December 1997).

* See Suzanne Singer, "The Ancient *Cardo* Is Discovered in Jerusalem," **BAR** 02:04 "Is the Jerusalem *Cardo* Roman After All?" **BAR** 03:04; and "Dating the *Cardo Maximus* in Jerusalem," **BAR** 08:04.

† Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem*, pp. 211–230.

Hadrian erected a triumphal gateway to serve as the northern entrance to Aelia Capitolina, opening onto the Cardo. Its remains have been exposed under the foundations of the Damascus Gate. * Defended by two towers, this impressive gateway had three entrances, of which the central one was widest and highest. It is the most complete Roman structure exposed in Jerusalem.



Marcello Bertinetti/Edizioni White Star

The Damascus Gate, constructed by Suleiman the Magnificent in the 16th century, is the most elaborate entrance to Jerusalem's Old City today. Directly beneath the gate, archaeologists discovered the remains of the northern entrance to Aelia Capitolina, consisting of three arched gateways flanked by two massive towers (see drawing). The smaller, left-hand (eastern) archway has survived intact and is fully visible in this bird's-eye view, one story beneath the Damascus Gate.

The Arabic name for the entranceway, Bab el-Amud, or the Gate of the Column, preserves the memory of a column, bearing a larger-than-life statue of Hadrian, that stood in the center of a courtyard inside the gateway (see drawing). The route of the Roman Cardo is retained in the line of the modern road that veers to the right (west) in this photo.



Leen Ritmeyer

Reconstruction drawing of northern entrance to Aelia Capitolina, consisting of three arched gateways flanked by two massive towers. Today, the Damascus Gate stands on this site. However, the smaller, left-hand (eastern) archway has survived intact and is fully visible in the bird's-eye view of the Damascus Gate (see photograph).

The Arabic name for the entranceway, Bab el-Amud, or the Gate of the Column, preserves the memory of a column, bearing a larger-than-life statue of Hadrian, that stood in the center of a courtyard inside the gateway.



Richard Nowitz

This archway was once part of the northern entrance to Aelia Capitolina (see drawing), and now stands one story below the Damascus Gate (see photograph). The archway, once blocked, has been cleared so that visitors can once again enter the Old City through the Hadrianic gateway.

* See Menahem Magen, "Recovering Roman Jerusalem—The Entryway Beneath Damascus Gate," **BAR** 14:03.

The most famous structure from Aelia Capitolina, however, is the Ecce Homo arch north of the Temple Mount, so named because of the tradition that under this arch Pontius Pilate displayed the scourged Jesus to the crowd, proclaiming, “Behold, the man” (John 19:5). In fact, the arch did not exist in Jesus’ time. The Ecce Homo arch was not an entrance to Pilate’s praetorium but the central arch of a three-arched triumphal gateway, also built by Hadrian, opening onto a plaza. The beautiful pavement of this forum, exposed at the end of the last century in the basement of the Sisters of Zion Convent, was once revered as the Lithostrotos, where Jesus was thought to have been judged by Pontius Pilate. But this pavement, like the monumental triumphal arch resting on it, dates not to the time of Jesus but to that of Aelia Capitolina, about 100 years later.

Although it may seem strange, Aelia Capitolina was not protected by a wall at first, despite general opinion to the contrary. While the triumphal gateway under Damascus Gate served as the northern entrance to the city, there is no evidence that this gateway was attached to a wall. If it had been, we would expect to find remains of this wall under the foundations of the present northern wall of the Old City. But no such remains have been found, either here or elsewhere in the many excavations carried out along the Old City walls.

Many scholars have long believed that the wall surrounding Jerusalem’s Old City today preserves in outline the plan of Aelia Capitolina. Hadrian’s city, they assumed, was built as a typical Roman colony—that is, square in plan with streets intersecting at right angles. But excavations have shown that this is not the case. The earliest wall built along the northern side of the Old City is Byzantine; the earliest wall built along the southern side dates no earlier than the medieval period.

When you think about it, there was no need for a city wall in the Roman period after 70 C.E. The Jewish population was no longer a threat, as Jews were forbidden to cross the boundaries of Jerusalem.[†] Further, unlike such highly fortified sites as Dura-Europos[†] and Palmyra (Tadmor),[†] which protected the eastern edge of the empire, Jerusalem held no strategic value.

At the end of the third century C.E., Roman Jerusalem began to change. The Tenth Legion was transferred to Aila (Aqaba) to ward off an Arab invasion, leaving Jerusalem unprotected. At the beginning of the fourth century, after Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the empire, the city became an important religious center. Only then was the decision made to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

[†] R. Harris, “Hadrian’s Decree of Expulsion of the Jews from Jerusalem,” *Harvard Theological Review* 19 (1926), pp. 199–206.

[†] The Roman camp at Dura-Europos was founded in the early third century C.E. and housed detachments of several legions. The excavations did not identify the camp’s assumed separate wall. Large quantities of inscriptions and other material remains were found, mainly in the praetorium; C. Hopkins and H.T. Rowell, “The Praetorium,” in M. Rostovzeff et al., *The Excavations at Dura-Europos* 5 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1934), pp. 201–234.

[†] The Roman camp at Palmyra was founded by Diocletian in the late third century C.E. The camp was located in the populated western part of the city and surrounded by a defense wall. A large variety of material finds was revealed in excavations at the site; Kazimierz Michalowski, *Fouilles Polonaises*, vols. 1–4 (Warsaw: Panstwowe Wydawn. Naukowe, 1960–1966).