

# BIBLICAL JERUSALEM

by KATHLEEN M. KENYON

## Preface

No one will question the statement that the center of Biblical archaeology is Jerusalem. Nearly a hundred years ago, this was given practical expression when the Palestine Exploration Fund, founded in 1865, made the investigation of Jerusalem its first objective. It is of incidental interest that this society, known to all practitioners in Western Asiatic archaeology as the P.E.F., was the first organization for overseas archaeology by any country. Such is the attraction of Biblical archaeology and of Jerusalem.

Off and on for a hundred years, archaeologists have been seeking in the soil the answers to the problems of the history of Jerusalem. It will come as a surprise to many that there are still very many critical problems in this history yet unsolved; one might almost say that a solution to all the major problems has yet to be found. This is in no way intended as a criticism of earlier excavators, some of whose achievements, on exiguous resources, compel one's admiration. But Jerusalem is a terribly difficult site, with its hilly situation and rocky subsoil, built upon through the millennia and destroyed and almost obliterated many times, while part of the ancient city lies beneath the buildings of the present Old City with its mediaeval and Roman origins. Our most advanced techniques can as yet do nothing about problems lying in areas at present built up. It is outside these areas that modern archaeological methods can produce results that were impossible in the days of the pioneers. Warren in the 1860's, Bliss and Dickie in the 1890's, even Macalister in the 1920's, had not the advantage of modern stratigraphical methods, and of reasonably exact knowledge of pottery chronology, which excavators now have.

When the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem (of which one of the parent bodies was the P.E.F.) completed, in 1958, its excavations at Jericho, it had the not very easy task of deciding what should be the next site it would tackle; Jericho had been such a success that there was a risk that work at any other place would be bathos. Jerusalem seemed to be the only other site that in importance could compete with Jericho. The importance would



*Jerusalem, looking west, from the Mount of Olives. The location of Miss Kenyon's trench is indicated by the arrow near the middle of the first section.*

be very different. Jericho had produced evidence of the origins of civilization with which it was very unlikely that Jerusalem could compete. But the history of Jerusalem in the formative stages of classical Near Eastern civilization, and of the growth of the Jewish and Christian religions, could claim a comparable place in the history of mankind, and it had contributions to make in the study of the later Roman, Byzantine, and Arab worlds. Since we felt that modern archaeological technique could make a very great contribution to the study of all these problems, we decided that this was the excavation that we ought to attempt.

The initiative in the proposal was that of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem. But we felt that as so many nations had contributed to the previous investigations and that the status of Jerusalem was inter- or super-national, it should be an international undertaking. The French school in Jerusalem, the Dominican Ecole Biblique et Archéologique de St. Etienne, had contributed very much, through its resident scholars of international reputation, such as Père L. H. Vincent, to the study of Jerusalem, and the British School welcomed warmly the agreement that the Ecole Biblique should from the first be co-sponsors of the excavations, with Père R. de Vaux as joint director with the present author. American interest was assured from the first by a contribution from the American Schools of Oriental Research and the participation of students of the American School in Jerusalem, and other U.S. students, in the excavations. In 1962 a welcome accession of American interest was a contribution from the University Museum, Philadelphia, and an exceedingly generous research grant from the National Geographic Society. A further international element was added in 1962, when the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada, became the third co-sponsor of the excavations. All this foreign archaeological contribution was of course based on the willing permission given by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to carry out the work.



To understand the problems of the history of ancient Jerusalem, one must understand the physical features of the site. The attractiveness of the situation lies in two features, the very steep spurs of the hill, suitable for defence, and the existence of a copious perennial water supply. Neither of these features strikes one in connection with the Old City of Jerusalem today. Certainly, on the east the slope outside the walls is steep, but to the north and south the slope is gentle, and it is not very abrupt to the west. And for water supply, the city relies on the rain-water cisterns associated with all old houses and on a rather inadequate piped supply. The reason is that the present Old City is comparatively modern in the history of Jerusalem. Its fine mediaeval walls follow approximately the line of those of the Roman Aelia Capitolina, built by the Emperor Hadrian in A.D. 135 with the deliberate intention of obliterating the Jewish Jerusalem that for a hundred years or more had been giving the Romans so much trouble. Within the walls, the accumulation of millennia has very considerably levelled up the natural angularities of the site.

It has been one of the successful achievements of our excavations to confirm the thesis of earlier archaeologists and historians that the greater part of ancient Jerusalem lies to the south of the Old City, though its lines have proved to be very different from what had been expected. Here, the natural configuration of the site begins to emerge. The Kidron Valley forms the eastern boundary of a very steep slope. Into the Kidron runs the Valley of Hinnom that, from the point of junction curving round from the southeast to the northwest, provides an equally impressive limit on the south and west. Just above the junction of the Kidron and the Hinnom, another valley enters the Kidron, now much filled up, but originally equally impressive, dividing an eastern from a western ridge. The Jewish historian Josephus, writing in the first century A.D.,

places Mount Zion, the City of David, and therefore presumably the Jebusite town that David conquered, on the western ridge. But archaeological opinion has for many years been inclined to regard this as a mistake. The main reason for this was that only adjacent to the eastern ridge was available that second desideratum already referred to, a copious perennial water supply, the spring Gihon, known in mediaeval times as the Virgin's Fountain, in the Kidron Valley. The expectation that we should find the earliest settlement on the eastern ridge has been very clearly confirmed by our excavations.

On the eastern ridge, we are satisfied that we have found evidence of the City of David. The problem was not easy. We started from the position that excavations from the 1860's to the 1920's had identified a line of defences on the eastern crest of the ridge as dating from the time of the Jebusite tribe of the Canaanites which opposed the invading Israelites, and which David refortified after he had captured the city at about 1000 B.C. There were two drawbacks to accepting this line as that of the defences of ancient Jerusalem. In the first place, it confined the town to the summit of the ridge, only some fifty yards across. Secondly, and more cogently, the walls on the crest were far from the spring in the valley, without which the inhabitants could not survive in time of siege, before the improvements of the first millennium B.C. provided lime-plaster to form efficient storage cisterns for a piped water supply. Earlier investigations had shown that there was a series of galleries and shafts connected with the spring in the valley. But the access to the earliest of these was still well outside the walls on the crest of the ridge.

It therefore seemed clear that either the dating of the walls on the crest of the hill, or that of the system of access to the water supply, was incorrect. Our initial point of attack on the main problem of the history of ancient Jerusalem was therefore on the slope leading down from the

tower ascribed to the work of David as an addition to the earlier Jebusite defences, in the direction of the spring in the valley below.

On this slope we therefore laid out our first main trench. In the process, we came fully to appreciate the defensive properties of the site. The slope was at an angle of nearly forty-five degrees, and the mere laying out of the trench was a major effort. And as we began the excavation, the first layers we reached consisted of a complicated series of collapses, involving us in a laborious stage of removing stone debris.

Once we had ploughed through all this debris, the results were highly satisfactory. Gradually we reached intact structures that extended down the slope for a distance of 160 feet from the walls on the crest. At the very end of our 1961 season, at the extreme limit of our original trench, we reached a massive wall that could be dated to about 1800 B.C. Our 1962 excavations confirmed that this wall formed the limit of the ancient site, and that it served this purpose from about 1800 to about 700 B.C., with a series of repairs and rebuilds. We can now say with some confidence that we have in this wall the wall of the City of David, as well as that of the Jebusites who withstood the Israelites for so long. The length of wall so far uncovered is not great, but its historical importance is first class.

This identification of the line of the walls of the early Jebusite town and of the Israelite town that succeeded it is a first step. In future seasons we must try to follow up these indications in order to trace the circuit of the walls.

In addition to the evidence concerning the line of the walls, our excavations have provided important evidence about the interior of the town. There are some very slight traces of occupation as early as the third millennium, and this is a point that we hope to follow up in future years. The first main occupation belongs to the period of the earliest wall so far found, about 1800 B.C. The deposits of this stage follow the steep slope of the hill, and the structures do not seem to have been anything very impressive. But somewhere about the time when the Jebusite inhabitants of Jerusalem enter the Biblical record as withstanding the attacks of the invading Israelites, the whole layout of the town underwent a remarkable change. To the narrow flat summit of the ridge, only fifty yards wide at this point, the Jebusites added a further sixty feet by building up a great platform, revetted by massive retaining walls, and with the fill of stones and earth stabilized by closely spaced rib-walls at right angles to the retaining walls. This addition to the

flat space available for well-designed buildings must have revolutionized the appearance of the town. It was added to and repaired by the Israelites from the tenth to the seventh century B.C., but it was the town planning operations of the Jebusites that basically created the Jerusalem of the time of the Hebrew monarchy.

The elucidation of the history and problems of this great platform occupied a good deal of our attention during the 1962 season. Its importance to the town, and also its vulnerability, was very clearly shown. At least four times there were major collapses and rebuildings. On such a steep slope, if a retaining wall was breached, by enemy action or by natural causes such as earthquake or torrential rains, the whole of the platform behind would be undermined and the buildings would collapse. Within the period of Israelite Jerusalem, destructions of the town by an enemy were very numerous, and no doubt were equally so in the preceding stage. So devastating were the results of these destructions that, though there is no doubt that the original constructions date from the fourteenth century B.C., with additions in the tenth century, the only buildings on them that survived belonged to the seventh century B.C. All the earlier houses had completely disappeared.

These buildings of the seventh century gave us conclusive evidence as to the date of the defences on the crest, long described to visitors as the walls of Jebusite Jerusalem with additions by David and Solomon. The most impressive part of these defences is a rectangular tower projecting forward from the crest of the hill, which was uncovered in excavations in the 1920's. It was then considered to be the work of David, with a rebuilding by Solomon. But when we began clearance at its foot, we found that it was built on tumbled debris that was only covered by layers dating to the second century B.C. The tower, therefore, could be no earlier than that date, and was therefore Maccabean. Clearance further north showed that the so-called Jebusite bastion or ramp was built on the same debris, which here developed into the ruins of houses occupied in the seventh century B.C. The structure was therefore certainly not Jebusite; its date is post-Exilic, but its purpose is still obscure.

The ruined seventh century houses are the dramatic evidence of the destruction wrought by the Babylonians, when Jerusalem was captured in 587 B.C. and the inhabitants carried away into captivity. This was the end of the Jerusalem as created by the Jebusites some eight hundred years earlier. The artificial platform collapsed down the slope, and nowhere below the crest did

we find any structure later than the seventh century. When Nehemiah was allowed by the Persians to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, he found the tumble of ruins on the slope too daunting to tackle. Moreover, the returned exiles formed a far smaller population than that of earlier Jerusalem. We have identified Nehemiah's wall on the crest of the ridge, and it was to it that the tower and other structures were added. We now know that post-Exilic Jerusalem was a poor fraction of its predecessors.

We have not yet succeeded in locating the western wall of the earliest Jerusalem, but we shall return to the problem in future years. Our search for the northern wall is not yet complete. At the end of the 1962 excavations, we had located a very massive wall crossing the eastern ridge just north of our main excavations. Some elements in this wall are certainly early, and may well be Jebusite and very early Israelite, but the very limited area available for excavation made it difficult to obtain satisfactory dating evidence, and more work is necessary.

The 1961 excavations did however make it clear that it was only at a late date that the greater part of the western ridge was included within the walls. This was a great surprise, for a wall traced in excavations in the 1890's, running along the western side of the western ridge, and curving round to join the tip of the eastern ridge, has for long been considered to be the wall of Jerusalem in the period of the Jewish monarchy. We found, however, that this wall dated only from the time of Herod Agrippa, about A.D. 40-44, and its late date was confirmed by the absence of any occupation earlier than the first century A.D. on the southern end of the western ridge. It is certain that the northern end must have been included earlier, for here Herod the Great in the first century B.C. had his palace and fortress; we hope that further excavations will show when the town spread here, and what were its limits.

The town of Herod Agrippa thus represents the maximum extension of Jerusalem to the south, just as we know from Josephus that his northern wall enclosed the furthest extension in that direction, making the Third North Wall that Titus had to attack when the Romans overwhelmed Jerusalem in A.D. 70. But the wall that interests students of the Bible most is the Second (inner) North Wall, for Herod Agrippa's wall was built after the Crucifixion. The site of Calvary and of the Holy Sepulchre must have lain outside the city wall of the time. Today, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre lies well within the Old City, for, as has already been said, the

present walls follow the lines not of ancient Jerusalem but of the Roman Aelia Capitolina that obliterated it in A.D. 135. Our evidence for the line of the town walls existing at the time of the Crucifixion is Josephus's description. The wall took its origin from the First North Wall which ran from the place fortified by Herod's citadel on the western ridge to the wall of the Temple enclosure on the eastern ridge. The point of junction of the Second with the First North Wall was the Gate Gennath, of which the position is uncertain. Thence it follows an unidentifiable course to the only certain point on its length, its junction with the older defences at the Antonia, the fortress at the northwest corner of the Temple enclosure. Many theories have been produced as to the line of the wall, some of them claiming to prove a course that would leave the present Church of the Holy Sepulchre outside the line, others that would include it, and therefore prove that the site is not authentic. There are very few areas adjacent to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in which excavation is possible. In one very limited area, we have been excavating for the past two years, but our work is not yet complete. The reason is that the deposits here are very deep. Beneath interesting Arab and Byzantine layers, we came to a deep tipped fill, which is still going on down. The material in this fill is mainly seventh century B.C. and first century A.D., with a little that may go down a bit later. We are therefore in a hollow that was filled in not earlier than the first century A.D., and it is reasonably certain that it was in fact done when Aelia Capitolina was laid out in A.D. 135, since incorporated in the fill was a well-built drain, a typical part of Roman town planning. The hollow thus filled in is in the right position to be a part of the ditch of one of the suggested lines of the Second North Wall. If when our excavations are complete we can say with certainty our clearance is in a ditch of a town wall, we shall have established a line of the Second North Wall which would leave the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre outside it. It is however far more likely that the restricted area available for excavation will make it impossible to come to a decisive conclusion.

Our excavations, therefore, have so far been concerned mainly with questions of the lines and chronology of the city walls. This should provide us with an outline history. Excavation of the important area within the walls is just beginning, and this we hope to develop in future seasons. There is no doubt that we have a heavy commitment in our plan to investigate the history of Jerusalem as fully as present conditions allow.