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„Aelia Capitolina – Roman Jerusalem and the military camp of the X Legion “Fretensis”.

Abstract

Aelia Capitolina was the name of a Roman settlement built upon the ruins of an ancient Jewish capitol razed by the Roman army in the year 70 A.D. The city was rebuilt nearly 60 years later in the year 132 A.D. by the Roman Emperor Hadrian and renamed Aelia Capitolina after the Emperor and the Capitoline Triad. It is still unknown what was Hadrian's motivation behind the decision and most of those ideas are presented in the dissertation. The other part of the thesis is dedicated to the military camp of the X Legion “Fretensis” that was garrisoned in Jerusalem after its fall to the Roman forces in 70 A.D.

The main goal of this Ph.D. dissertation is to focus on the idea of the Roman city and its military camp. Despite many years of research in the Old City of Jerusalem and its surroundings there are still questions unanswered concerning both the city and the camp. This work tries to present as many theories and ideas as possible in order to find the elusive answer, but lack of own archaeological research is a gigantic lack in the thesis itself.

The thesis is divided into three chapters and those are also separated into sub-chapters.

The first chapter focuses on the Roman city of Aelia Capitolina, its history, founding, influence of Christianity and the role it played as a Roman colony on the fringes of the Roman Empire. The first sub-chapter concentrates on the Roman city of Aelia Capitolina its road system, sacred places, forums and public buildings. Next sub-chapter deals with the topic of Jerusalem's wall system. In order to find and draw the line of the wall system in Aelia we look into the archaeology of the city. All four walls of Jerusalem are presented here together with additional findings located in the Christian Quarter and the Ottoman Wall.

Next we move into the complicated realm of the X legion stationed in Jerusalem and its military camp constructed there after 70 A.D. The sub-chapter deals with three most popular theories concerning the camp, as also presents archaeological evidence that support every theory.

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The Second Chapter focuses mainly on the Roman army in the east. The first sub-chapter compares the west military frontier with the east in order to draw similarities and differences between them. As we begin with the history of both military frontiers, its function and role and end at its physical form. The west is represented by the Hadrian wall and that is why the dissertation focused mostly on its construction and function. The east however possessed a different approach encompassing a gigantic portion of land spreading through couple of Roman provinces. That is why all those provinces and their legions are listed in the second chapter in order to present the strategy around this complicated frontier defense. The chapter ends with a another comparison between the Roman forts built in England and Roman forts built or occupied by the Romans on the east.

The last third chapter concentrates on the Roman military camp its archaeology and historical sources in order to provide answers for many troubling questions, for example when was the camp established, how long did it last and what was the size of the garrison. Similarities can also be found in Palmyra, Bostra and Dura Europos which were also fortress cities of the eastern frontier.

The thesis ends with a summary.

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