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A Brief History of Jerusalem

From the Earliest Settlement
to the Destruction of the City in 70 AD

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Preface

Archaeologically, Jerusalem is one of the most intensively researched cities in the world. Nevertheless, the architectural history of the city resembles a puzzle of which only a fraction of the pieces are known, which, in addition, belong to different historical levels.

Since 1838, numerous archaeological investigations have taken place. The most important breakthrough discoveries were made by the excavations of Kathleen Kenyon (1961–1967), Benjamin Mazar (1968–1978), Nahman Avigad (1969–1982) and Yigal Shiloh (1978–1985). Although all four only published preliminary, roughly sketched initial reports, on the basis of their results an overall picture of the pre-Hellenistic history of the city was developed in the 1970s that has been the determining influence on all research since then and also formed the basis for my compendium of the architectural history of Jerusalem, which I published in 1994 together with Hanswulf Bloedhorn.

Some final excavation reports have only been published in recent years – still incomplete – and show findings which do not fit into the established overall picture. Added to this, there have been new excavations, especially by Ronny Reich, Eli Shukron, Doron Ben-Ami, and Yana Tchekhanovets, which are likely to call the current overall picture into question even further.

In 1962, Thomas S. Kuhn explicated in his masterful study “The Structure of Scientific Revolutions” how paradigms come about and govern research for a time until they are increasingly called into question and replaced by new paradigms.

Such a paradigm shift is taking place now in the field of the building history of Jerusalem, not only because of archaeological surveys investigating the settlement history of the western Jordanian hill country and the re-adjustment of pottery chronology, but also and especially because these new findings in Jerusalem itself make a revision of the conventional overall picture necessary. Ernst Axel Knauf, David Ussishkin, Israel Finkelstein, Ido Koch,

Oded Lipschits, Doron Ben-Ami and Yana Tchekhanovets have made various attempts at a new paradigm in recent years. This “Brief History of Jerusalem”, while critically discussing these attempts, creates a synthesis of the findings in order to present a new paradigm for discussion.

I am indebted to and wish to thank many for their manifold forms of help, first of all my team at my chair of Alttestamentliche Wissenschaften at the Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg, in particular Pia Bauenschmidt, Tina Betz, Gabriele Friedrich, Alexander Schmitt and Ute Zeilmann, Richard Szydlak for the new city maps, Julia Müller for further drawings, Rolf Schäfer for including the new city maps in the revision of the Lutheran Bible 2017, Klaus Koenen and Erasmus Gaß for their further notes on my contribution for the lemma “Jerusalem” in the “Wissenschaftliche Bibellexikon”¹, which forms the basis of this book, Alexander Debney for the translation of the manuscript, Cory D. Crawford and Norbert Rabe for proofreading, Henrike Michelau for the professional design of the printing template and Alexander Schmitt for the typesetting, as well as Herbert Niehr and Hermann Michael Niemann for including the manuscript in the “Abhandlungen des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins”, but first and foremost my wife Sabine, with whom I have probably turned over every stone of Jerusalem more than once in thoughts and words.

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¹ Permalink: www.bibelwissenschaft.de/stichwort/22380/ (June 2016).