

ROMAN JERUSALEM

The Institute has a long-standing interest in Palestine as the home of Biblical religion and literature and as the meeting place of the cultures of the neighboring countries. But, regrettably, it has been unable to work there since the excavations at Megiddo were terminated and the clearances at Khirbat al-Karak were brought to an end. During the past winter we had an opportunity to devote a brief period to the study of one phase of the history of ancient Jerusalem.

Some ancient cities can be excavated systematically. Like Alexandria in Egypt, Rome, Athens, and Constantinople, Jerusalem cannot. Spot excavations have been made there since 1864 and are continuing sporadically, but they are severely limited by the houses, bazaars, and the religious edifices and institutions of different faiths, sects, and ages that occupy the site. Moreover, at Jerusalem inside the walls most remains earlier than the Islamic period are buried under an accumulation of rubble and refuse from 10 to 75 feet deep. To reconstruct the picture of the city in any of its older periods, one has properly to associate the literary evidence with scattered remains of ancient buildings that are visible or have once been seen there, typically deep down under present structures.

Jerusalem in the period between its destruction by Titus in A.D. 71 and the building of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre by Constantine became something quite different from what it had been before. It lost its name and ceased to be the religious and political center of the country, becoming instead the Roman colony of *Aelia Capitolina*. As such it had its own "township" and a Roman type of civic administration. A Roman legion was assigned to regular quarters there. It had a Roman "forum" with a temple to the Capitoline Triad, colonnaded streets, two public baths, a theater, a Nymphaeum, and

Crown of Roman arch along a street in old Jerusalem



a modernized water-supply system. Eventually, it was refortified and had a Triumphal Arch outside the walls. To locate, describe, and assign to their proper chronological sequence these several features is an interesting enterprise and adds a new element to the larger picture of the Romanization of the Orient.

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