

*A Reconsideration of Maximalist and Minimalist Views*

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*Introduction: Problems and Views*

This article is concerned with the size of ancient Jerusalem. The city is mentioned in Egyptian texts as early as the 19th century B.C., then in cuneiform records from Palestine, the Amarna Letters of the 14th century. Later its name appears in Assyrian and Babylonian documents, but nowhere do these records contain any information about its topography, size, or the course of its walls. In these respects Biblical statements are our only sources, and even they are often either too general to give us specific information or too ambiguous for a clear understanding.

To fill this gap in our knowledge of the size of ancient Jerusalem archaeological information has become available through excavations carried out there during the last hundred years. Among the major archaeological expeditions may be mentioned the following: C. Wilson and C. Warren, 1864-65, M. Parker, 1909-11, R. Weill, 1913-14, R. A. S. Macalister, 1923-25, and J. W. Crowfoot and G. M. Fitzgerald, 1927. However, the identification of archaeological material found in the past has often been inexact. Although remains of walls and gates were discovered, some of them were not easy to assign to definite historical periods. Consequently, to determine the exact boundaries of the city during the pre-Christian periods of its history was difficult.

During the first decades of this century Albrecht Alt voiced the view that the oldest pre-Israelite Jerusalem had a maximum expansion of only 320 meters in length and 60 to

80 meters in width.<sup>1</sup> Similar views were held by Weill and G. Dalman.<sup>2</sup> Alt also suggested that before the Amarna age, the city had grown by 25 meters toward the north, as indicated by a trench filled with sherds and fill from the MB period.<sup>3</sup>

In the story of the conquest of Jebus (*i.e.*, Jerusalem) by David, who established it as the capital of Israel, mention is made of the צְנוּר, a shaft as part of an underground tunneling system which provided the city with water from the Gihon spring. This point will be discussed later. During the reign of Solomon the area of Jerusalem was enlarged but no details or data are given as to the extent of its boundaries.<sup>4</sup> From the time of King Jehoash we learn that 400 cubits of the city's wall were destroyed between 790 and 780. This destruction was followed by periods of repair and by the building of new walls and towers under the following kings: Uzziah (790-739), Jotham (750-731), Hezekiah (729-686), and Manasseh (696-642). These activities also will be discussed below. However, it must be said that the new city limits which were thus eventually created have not been established.<sup>5</sup>

Nehemiah's memoirs provide numerous details concerning the walls of post-exilic Jerusalem in Neh 3, his "restoration-text," and in Neh 12, the "procession-text," but scholars have been able only to assume the approximate location of the towers and gates mentioned in his records. Several details of Josephus' extensive topographical data about the city during different stages of its history and at the time of its conquest by the Romans in A.D. 70 are also uncertain.<sup>6</sup> If to all this are added the inadequate dating of archaeological material during the early excavations, the obliteration of excavated areas since they were opened up, and the incomplete recording of

<sup>1</sup> Albrecht Alt, *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, III (München, 1953), 249.

<sup>2</sup> J. Simons, *Jerusalem in the Old Testament* (Leiden, 1953), p. 50.

<sup>3</sup> Alt, *op. cit.*, p. 251.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Ki 9 : 15, 19, 24.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Ki 14 : 13; 2 Chr 26 : 9; 32 : 5; 33 : 14.

<sup>6</sup> Josephus, *The Jewish War*, v. 1-3; iv. 1-3 (§§ 136-171).

what was found, it is evident that both the archaeologist and the Biblical scholar are faced with extraordinary problems. J. Simons in discussing the reports of the various archaeological expeditions and their manifold interpretations, calls the extent of Biblical Jerusalem in the pre-exilic period "the most refractory problem of ancient Jerusalem and at the same time the most urgently in need of a final solution."<sup>7</sup> That dictum may equally well be applied to the post-exilic period.

The specific purpose of this investigation is to establish the extent of ancient Jerusalem or the area covered during the days of Nehemiah on the basis of the available Biblical data and archaeological findings. Recent excavations on the slopes of the South Hill in the Kidron Valley, and elsewhere, by Kathleen Kenyon of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem seem to justify a re-appraisal of former views. How justified such a reorientation is can be illustrated by the discovery that the tower found some 40 years ago and attributed to David was actually built during the Maccabean period *ca.* 800 years after David's reign.

With regard to Nehemiah's building activity the consensus among Biblical scholars seems to have been that the restoration of Jerusalem's walls was a simple rebuilding of the pre-exilic city walls which Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed in 586 B.C. This view is expressed by Simons: "With regard to the restoration text of Nehemiah as a whole it must always be kept in mind, that it describes the course of the pre-exilic city walls."<sup>8</sup> Such was also Alt's opinion<sup>9</sup> and that of Avi-Yonah, who strongly champions the "minimalist" position.<sup>10</sup> However, Nehemiah pictures Jerusalem as long as 100 years after the return of the *gōlāh* to be a place with but few inhabitants and even fewer houses.<sup>11</sup>

We hope to show that the recent excavations and the plain

<sup>7</sup> Simons, *op. cit.*, pp. 33, 34.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 231, note 2.

<sup>9</sup> Alt, *op. cit.*, pp. 322, 338.

<sup>10</sup> M. Avi-Yonah, "The Walls of Nehemiah," *IEJ*, IV (1954), 241.

<sup>11</sup> Neh 4 : 7; 11 : 1, 2.

meaning of the Hebrew text of Neh 3:8 will solve to a large extent the problems of the course of the walls in Nehemiah's time.

*Jerusalem's Walls—and the City as Nehemiah Found it*

According to the well-balanced judgment of Alt, Jerusalem during the time of the monarchy occupied an area only slightly larger than the nineteen acres of Samaria,<sup>12</sup> although he assumed that during the later period of the monarchy some additional areas were incorporated into the city proper.<sup>13</sup>

David, the first king of the United Kingdom, obviously limited his building activities to providing quarters for himself, his court, the palace guard, and his court officials. This activity is described in the somewhat ambiguous Biblical statement that he "built the city round about from the Millo inward."<sup>14</sup> After him Solomon added to Jerusalem the Temple area north of the City of David and probably surrounded the new quarter by a wall.<sup>15</sup> Jehoash of Israel took Jerusalem by conquest between ca. 790 and 780 B.C. and broke down 400 cubits of the wall, namely from the Ephraim Gate to the Corner Gate.<sup>16</sup> This constitutes possibly, but not necessarily, the distance between the two gates.

Not many years later Uzziah (790-739) apparently repaired at least part of that wall and fortified exposed sectors by building "towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate and at the Valley Gate (שַׁעַר-הַגִּי'א) and at the Angle, and fortified them."<sup>17</sup> Simons maintains that the *gay*' or valley must be identified with the Hinnom Valley in contrast to the *nahal* or the Kidron Valley.<sup>18</sup> This limited identification of *gay*' with the Hinnom Valley is difficult to defend, as it presupposes

<sup>12</sup> Alt, *op. cit.*, pp. 323-324, note 1.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 323.

<sup>14</sup> 2 Sa 5 : 9.

<sup>15</sup> 1 Ki 9 : 15.

<sup>16</sup> 2 Ki 14 : 13.

<sup>17</sup> 2 Chr 26 : 9.

<sup>18</sup> Simons, *op. cit.*, p. 11, note 1.

that the Southwestern and/or Western Hill was part of the walled-in city of Jerusalem during the monarchy, a theory which until now has had very scant—if any—archaeological support. The position of Alt, Robertson Smith, and other scholars who associate the *gay*' of 2 Chr 26:9 with the Central Valley between the Southeastern Hill and the Promontory of the Southwestern Hill, avoids this and other difficulties resulting from Simons' theory.<sup>19</sup> There can hardly be any doubt that this *gay*'—the Central Valley, identical with the Tyropoeon Valley of Josephus, and with Alt's *Stadttal*—was the result of erosion and in the early period was probably as steep as the slopes on the Kidron side.<sup>20</sup> The Valley Gate, therefore, should not be sought in the Hinnom Valley, on the far-west side of the Western Hill, but in the Central Valley. It is probably identical with the Gate which Crowfoot discovered in 1927.

Jotham (750-731), Uzziah's son, "did much building on the wall of the Ophel," a fortified area on the east side of the South Hill, which later, in the days of Nehemiah, was assigned to the Temple servants as living quarters.<sup>21</sup> When Hezekiah (729-686) became king of Judah, "he set to work resolutely and built up the wall that was broken down, and raised towers upon it, and outside it he built another wall; and he strengthened the Millo in the city of David."<sup>22</sup> His son Manasseh (696-642) completed what seems to have been an extensive building program, for "he built an outer wall to the city of David west of Gihon, in the valley [גִּיחֹן meaning the Kidron Valley], to the entrance by the Fishgate, and carried it round Ophel; and raised it to a very great height."<sup>23</sup>

The last two reports seem to complement each other. Hezekiah rebuilt "the wall that was broken down," which

<sup>19</sup> W. Robertson Smith, "Jerusalem," in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (9th ed.; 1875-1889), XIII, 640.

<sup>20</sup> Simons, *op. cit.*, p. 20; Alt, *op. cit.*, p. 328.

<sup>21</sup> 2 Chr 27 : 3; Neh 3 : 26, 27.

<sup>22</sup> 2 Chr 32 : 5.

<sup>23</sup> 2 Chr 33 : 14.

refers doubtless to the one destroyed by Jehoash. The Chronicler is specific about the location of that wall, by saying that it lay "between the Ephraim Gate and the Corner Gate." Accordingly, Hezekiah fortified the defenses in the northwestern part of the city, where those two gates were situated.<sup>24</sup> One purpose of the new or "other wall," then, must have been the incorporation of the populated area outside or west of the older wall in that section of the city which according to all evidence was the Mishneh, or "Second City." Thus the text furnishes important details concerning the continuation of Hezekiah's large-scale building program by Manasseh. The information is specific. Manasseh built an outer (*i.e.*, a *new*) wall (1) to the city of David, (2) *west* of Gihon, (3) to the entrance of the Fishgate, and (4) carried it around *Ophel*. This explicit statement establishes that the new wall began with the city of David, or at the southern end of the Southeast Hill. It also says that it reached to or ended at the Fishgate, in the northeast of the city. Since the wall was built *west* of the Gihon Spring it is evident that it followed the Kidron Valley. Finally, it included Ophel, also on the Kidron side. The narrative establishes that Manasseh's building activities comprised the eastern and northeastern part of the city wall, while his father Hezekiah had expanded and fortified the northwestern and western part of Jerusalem. These, then, were the walls which Nebuchadnezzar destroyed in 586. They obviously enclosed a larger area than the older walls, but it is also clear that this expansion was limited to the immediate zone or belt around the South Hill in the Kidron Valley while in the northwest sector of the city it probably included a more extensive tract.

It seems natural to assume that the *gólāh*, the 42,360 Jews who returned after 538 from Babylon, were too few in number to repopulate the entire province of Judah with its hamlets, villages and large capital.<sup>25</sup> Several years prior to Nehemiah's

<sup>24</sup> Wilhelm Rudolph, *Chronikbücher* (Tübingen, 1955), p. 285.

<sup>25</sup> *Ezr* 2 : 64.

governorship and shortly after the arrival of Ezra's group, the *gōlāh* had started rebuilding the city's wall, evidently without authorization by Artaxerxes I. This caused a protest by the Samaritans through the Persian commander to the king. By royal decree the Jews were then forced to desist from fortifying their capital city.<sup>26</sup> There is no record as to the amount of work the Jews had been able to complete until that moment, and it seems that the interference by Rehum and the Samaritans meant no destruction of what had been repaired. However, from Nehemiah's memoirs it is evident that already before his arrival the Jews were constantly harrassed by their hostile neighbors, Samaritans, Arabs, Ashdodites, and possibly others.<sup>27</sup> In fact, the raids upon the province and Jerusalem became so serious that many Jews had been killed or taken into captivity, while the wall of the city had been broken down and its gates destroyed by fire. These developments caused Nehemiah to ask permission from the king to rebuild the city and its walls.<sup>28</sup> The Liḥyanite Arabs who in the middle of the 5th century B.C. displaced the Edomites and took possession of the southern part of Judah, may have greatly contributed to the plight of the people. These events also explain why in 457 B.C. Jerusalem obviously had a larger population than it had thirteen years later in 444 when Nehemiah tried to gather the remnants in order to rebuild the city of his fathers. Even after the first objective—the rebuilding of the wall—was achieved, the record states, "The city was wide and large, but the people within it were few and no houses had been built."<sup>29</sup> In order to remedy this situation Nehemiah ordered the people to cast lots "to bring one out of ten to live in Jerusalem, the holy city, while nine tenths remained in the other towns."<sup>30</sup> Even this one tenth of the entire population of the province including the leaders of the people was ob-

<sup>26</sup> Ezr 4 : 11-23.

<sup>27</sup> Neh 4 : 7.

<sup>28</sup> Neh 1 : 1-3; 2 : 2-8.

<sup>29</sup> Neh 7 : 4.

<sup>30</sup> Neh 11 : 1.

viously not enough to repopulate the city, and there was no logical reason for rebuilding the walls of the large pre-exilic city. This was evidently Nehemiah's justification for limiting his reconstruction program to the smallest possible walled-in area, a fact which, we believe, can now be demonstrated.

### *Archaeology Charts a New Course*

As has been stated in the introduction, the interpretation of both literary sources and archaeological material has resulted in a wide variety of opinions. The majority of scholars, some possibly under the influence of the poetic beauty of the Psalms, their descriptions of the grandeur of the Holy City and the religious significance of the Temple, have envisioned Jerusalem as a city impressive in size, splendor, and the number of its inhabitants. But archaeology has demonstrated that the ancient cities of Palestine were disappointingly small. Theories which include the Southwestern and/or the Western Hill during subsequent periods presuppose Jerusalem to have been an ancient Near Eastern megalopolis of up to 85 or even 218 acres, as compared with Samaria's 19, Lachish's 21, and Megiddo's 13 acres.<sup>31</sup>

In the opinion of some scholars Jebusite Jerusalem was limited to the ridge of the Southeast Hill, an area estimated by Weill and Dalman at 3 or 2.17 hectares (approx. 5.5 to 7.5 acres) respectively.<sup>32</sup> Those scholars assume that the Western Hill was not included in the walled area of the city till the Hellenistic period.<sup>33</sup>

As a result of the recent excavations by Kenyon the conclusions of former excavators of Jerusalem and scholars who have dealt with its size in ancient times have been radically

<sup>31</sup> Simons, *op. cit.*, pp. 50, 51; *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, III (Washington, D.C., 1954), 407.

<sup>32</sup> R. Weill, *La Cité de David, Compte rendu des fouilles exécutées à Jérusalem sur le site de la ville primitive, Campagne de 1913-14* (Paris, 1947) p. 17; G. Dalman, "Zion, die Burg Jerusalems," *PJB*, XI (1915), 65.

<sup>33</sup> Avi-Yonah, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

revised. The situation is best explained by one of Kenyon's references to former expeditions. Speaking about the work done by Warren, Bliss and Dickie, she says: "At that stage stratigraphical methods and pottery chronology had not been developed to assist in dating strata, so ascriptions of structures to periods could only be theories, and these theories have since been proved to be wrong."<sup>34</sup>

This statement applies to all, to the Jebusite, pre-Israelite, and pre-exilic periods during which Alt and others believed that the city occupied exclusively the ridge of the Southeast Hill.<sup>35</sup> But, according to Kenyon, present excavations show that possibly in the 13th century B.C. "a complicated system of terraces was built outside of the Jebusite town wall, evidence of a major town planning development."<sup>36</sup> She also concludes that "the town wall of the Jebusite period and the time of the Israelite monarchy is thus well outside of the line hitherto accepted." This discovery also illuminates the incident in the days of David when Joab entered the city through the צִנּוֹר, a shaft by means of which the local population drew water that was channeled from the Gihon Spring into a cave lying at the bottom of the shaft.<sup>37</sup> Since the spring was about 110 yards outside of the eastern wall—as located until recently—and 95 yards below it, and the shaft itself still some eight feet outside that wall on the crest, it follows that the area below at that time had to be protected by fortifications. Kenyon found beneath the tower ruins of houses as well as part of a massive, nine-foot-wide MB wall, some 49 meters from the face of the tower, the deposits showing that it had been in use from the 18th century B.C. down to its

<sup>34</sup> Kathleen M. Kenyon, *Archaeology in the Holy Land* (2d rev. ed.; London, 1965), p. 316. (Since there are discrepancies between the 2d revised edition printed in London, 1965, and the 3d printing published in New York, 1964, quotations from this work are from the 1965 London edition.)

<sup>35</sup> Alt, *op. cit.*, p. 249.

<sup>36</sup> Kenyon, "Excavations in Jerusalem 1961-1963," *BA*, XXVII (1964), 43.

<sup>37</sup> 2 Sa 5 : 6-9.

destruction by Nebuchadnezzar in 586, which ended the occupation of the eastern slope.<sup>38</sup>

From these facts it must be concluded that Jerusalem, even if limited to the East Hill during the monarchy and the entire pre-exilic period, was somewhat larger than the minimalist view assumed. This has been stated by Weill and is now confirmed by Kenyon.<sup>39</sup> According to Simons, these terraces were part of the defensive system of the city.<sup>40</sup>

A second and even more important point derives from the fact that these outside walls were not rebuilt after the conflagration of 586. Kenyon observes: "The walls, however, were not rebuilt until the governorship of Nehemiah, probably 445-433 B.C."<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, Nehemiah's restoration did not include the outer walls, *i.e.*, those in the Kidron and Tyropoeon Valleys: "In his rebuilding, the lower slopes of the eastern ridge were abandoned, and the wall followed the crest."<sup>42</sup> This had already been stated by Kenyon in earlier reports: "The boundary of Jerusalem in post-exilic Judah receded to the crest of the ridge."<sup>43</sup> The restoration on the west side of the southern hill appears to have followed the same principle: "The position of the west wall at this period, just below the western crest of the eastern ridge, is indicated by the gate found in 1927."<sup>44</sup> These statements show that post-exilic Jerusalem did not cover the whole area occupied prior to 586 B.C., since it covered only a narrow strip on the summit of the eastern ridge.<sup>45</sup> Post-exilic Jerusalem under Nehemiah had become a smaller city.

Thus Kenyon's excavations have led her to a number of conclusions which contradict former views held by many

<sup>38</sup> Kenyon, *BA*, XXVII (1964), 38, 39, 45.

<sup>39</sup> Kenyon, *Archaeology in the Holy Land*, p. 318.

<sup>40</sup> Weill, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-118; Simons, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

<sup>41</sup> Kenyon, *Archaeology in the Holy Land*, p. 318.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Kenyon, "Excavations in Jerusalem, 1962," *PEQ*, XCV (1963), 16.

<sup>44</sup> Kenyon, *Archaeology in the Holy Land*, p. 318.

<sup>45</sup> Kenyon, *BA*, XXVII, (1964), 46.

scholars. One concerns the expansion of the pre-exilic city. "As far as present evidence goes, the city was limited to the eastern ridge throughout the period of the Monarchy."<sup>46</sup> However, it is also certain that it included the slopes of the hills. Another deals with the question whether the West Hill was at any period part of the pre-exilic city. Referring to excavations between 1934 and 1948 Kenyon mentions certain facts that have been reported by the Department of Antiquities of Palestine. "Mr. C. N. Johns was able to date stratigraphically the older lines of wall there (at the north-west corner of the early city) and to show that the earliest line of wall crossing the Tyropoeon Valley and connecting the points of the western and eastern ridges was not earlier than the Hellenistic period."<sup>47</sup> Only a few years ago Simons, against all probability, defended the maximalist position, pitting hope against facts:

We have stated at the beginning of this chapter that the contribution of archaeology to the problem of the S.W. Hill is a limited one. It would not have been an exaggeration to have used a stronger expression and to have said that archaeology has here created an awkward *impasse*. Indeed, while the preceding arguments and considerations make, as we believe, a very early incorporation of the S.W. Hill into the walled city-area and a real unity of the settlement on this hill with that on the S.E. Hill even in pre-Israelite age highly probable, all underground researches so far undertaken on the S.W. Hill have failed to confirm this conclusion and in some cases rather point in the opposite direction.<sup>48</sup>

This indication has proved to be correct. While the earliest line in the northwest corner, crossing the Tyropoeon Valley, was not earlier than the Hellenistic period, the ones in the south are even more recent, as stated by Kenyon: "Evidence was provided that the southern end of the Tyropoeon Valley dividing Ophel from the western ridge was not occupied until that [*i.e.*, Maccabean] period."<sup>49</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Kenyon, *Archaeology in the Holy Land*, p. 318.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 317.

<sup>48</sup> Simons, *op. cit.*, pp. 251, 252.

<sup>49</sup> Kenyon, *Archaeology in the Holy Land*, p. 317.

Our present archaeological knowledge, therefore, seems definitely to establish that pre-exilic Jerusalem was limited to the East Hill only. Although we have not yet discussed the problem of the Mishneh, or Second City, excavations seem to eliminate the maximalist view that envisioned the city as including the Western Hill.<sup>50</sup>

### *Philological Considerations*

Before the recent excavations by Kenyon the extent of Nehemiah's Jerusalem was—in absence of clear archaeological evidence—largely an academic question, subject to interpretation by individual scholars. The situation has changed since it now seems to be certain that Nehemiah did not include the total area of the pre-exilic city in his program of restoration.

However, the excavations have also brought into focus a textual problem, a Biblical passage which until now was limited to philological considerations. Actually, the meaning of Neh 3:8 which has been translated, "and they restored Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall" (RSV) has seldom been the subject of discussion. It appears that to most Bible scholars and translators "to restore," "to complete," or a similar term seemed to express the thought required by the context and thus to give the only reasonable meaning of the text.

But the Hebrew **נָחַץ** does not mean at all "to restore," "to complete," or "to gird around." The unmistakable meaning of the verb, including its derived and composite forms, is "to leave," "to forsake," "to leave behind," etc.<sup>51</sup> In spite of this, the temptation to interject a different meaning into the text of Neh 3:8 has prevailed with most translators and com-

<sup>50</sup> Simons, *op. cit.*, p. 443, map.

<sup>51</sup> F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon* (corrected impression; Oxford, 1952), pp. 736-738. M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Jerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (New York, 1950), II, 1060, 1061.

mentators. Carl Siegfried read אָזַר from אָזַר, "to gird," thus following Ehrlich who likewise had suggested אֶזְזַר\* (a hypothetical verb suggested by the noun עֲזָרָה which seems to mean "enclosure"; hence the verb would be "to enclose"). Siegfried had characterized the translations of Bunsen, Schultz, Ewald and Ryssel as "adventurous."<sup>52</sup> As late as 1949 Wilhelm Rudolph remarked concerning Neh 3: 8, "verlassen hier ist sinnlos."<sup>53</sup> Since the discovery of the Ras Shamra tablets, it has been suggested that the Ugaritic *'db*, "to make," "to prepare," "to set," would support the translation of *'āzab* as "to complete," because the Ugaritic *d* can be exchanged with the Hebrew *z*.<sup>54</sup> But even this possibility must be ruled out, since Biblical and Talmudic Hebrew indicates that the meaning of *'zḅ* has not changed since its occurrence in oldest Biblical sources.

What is more, the Akkadian *ezēbu*, found in a wide variety of texts in the Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute, is invariably translated in terms denoting "to leave," "to abandon," "to leave behind," "to leave out," "to disregard," "to divorce," etc.<sup>55</sup>

The MT indicates no variants, text-restorations, or different readings due to marginal notes or copyist's errors. Although there have been occasional misgivings and doubts, the writer of the Cambridge Bible, in 1907, among others made the following suggestion: "It is possible that the builders at that point 'left' some portion of Jerusalem *outside* their wall. The circumference of the old city was larger than was now needed. In the course of the restoration of the wall, the builders abandoned at some point the outer wall and the uninhabited portion of Jerusalem which it included."<sup>56</sup> This was followed by L. W.

<sup>52</sup> Carl Siegfried, *Esra, Nehemiah, und Esther* in "Handbuch zum Alten Testament" (Göttingen, 1901), pp. 80, 81.

<sup>53</sup> Rudolph, *Esra und Nehemia* (Tübingen, 1949), p. 116.

<sup>54</sup> Cyrus H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Handbook* (Rome, 1947), III, No. 1456.

<sup>55</sup> *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, IV (Chicago, 1958), 415-426.

<sup>56</sup> H. E. Ryle, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah* in "The Cambridge Bible" (Cambridge, 1907), XVI-XVII, 178.

Batten in the ICC: "It may be, however, that the reference is to some part of the old city, that was not included in the new, and 'abandoned' would then be right."<sup>57</sup> Apparently, this interpretation came in both cases as an afterthought, since to these as to most other scholars it could hardly present the meaning of the text. Thus translators were in strange agreement when they consistently but incorrectly rendered the Hebrew: על-ידו התוּיֵק הַתּוּיָה בֶן-הַרְקָחִים יַעֲזֹבוּ יְרוּשָׁלַם עַד הַחוֹמָה הַרְחֹבָה as "Next to him Hananiah, one of the perfumers, repaired; and they restored [or completed, girded around] Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall" (RSV). This passage, however, on the basis of the verb *'āzab*, should be translated: "And they *abandoned* Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall." Some newer versions such as the RSV indicate this meaning of the Hebrew verb in marginal notes.

Most translations in modern languages reveal the same reluctance as our English versions for they, too, do not express the true meaning of the Hebrew verb.

How, then did the translators of the Greek, Latin, and Syriac Bible understand the word *'āzab*?

The LXX reads as follows: καὶ ἐπὶ χεῖρα αὐτῶν ἐκράτησεν Ἀνανίας υἱὸς τοῦ Ρωκεῖμ, καὶ κατέλιπον Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἕως τοῦ τείχους τοῦ πλατέος, thus agreeing with the Hebrew original. The only significant divergence is that instead of an expected μυρέψοι, "perfumers," it reads Ρωκεῖμ, a simple transliteration of the Hebrew רַקְחִים, understood by the Greek translator as a personal name.<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, κατέλιπον, "they left behind," correctly translates the meaning of the Hebrew *'āzab*, even though Siegfried observes: "יַעֲזֹבוּ LXX κατέλιπον ist unverständlich."<sup>59</sup> Thomson, in his English translation of *The Septuagint Bible* comes close to a correct rendering: "And next to them Ananias, a chief of the

<sup>57</sup> Loring W. Batten, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah* in "The International Critical Commentary" (New York, 1913), p. 211.

<sup>58</sup> Alfred Rahlfs, *Septuaginta* (Stuttgart, 1950), I, 926.

<sup>59</sup> Carl Siegfried, *op. cit.*, pp. 80, 81.

apothecaries, fortified; and *they left Jerusalem* behind them, to the Broad Wall." <sup>60</sup> Thus the Greek text as well as those who follow it consistently expresses the exact understanding of the term, according to which the builders "abandoned" (part of) Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall.

The different versions of the Syriac, too, follow the Hebrew text: "And they אָבַדוּ "abandoned" Jerusalem, until the Broad Wall." <sup>61</sup>

The Vulgate gives the same rendering: "Et juxta eum aedificavit Ananias filius pigmentarii: et dimiserunt Jerusalem usque ad murum plateae latioris." Since *dimitto* means "to give up," "to leave," "to abandon," the Latin version likewise agrees with the Hebrew. <sup>62</sup> The Douay-Rheims version reads: "And they left Jerusalem until the wall of the broad street." <sup>63</sup>

A review of the evidence from the MT and the ancient versions leads to the following conclusions:

1. The Hebrew verb *'āzab* establishes the correct meaning of Neh 3: 8, according to which the Jews "abandoned" part of Jerusalem when Nehemiah rebuilt the city in 444.
2. The translators of the LXX employed the Greek word *κατέλιπον*, which agrees with the meaning of the Hebrew verb.
3. Jerome's *Vulgate* uses the Latin verb *dimitto*, which is equivalent to the Hebrew and Greek terms.
4. The Syriac version also agrees with the Hebrew text by using אָבַד expressing the same meaning, "to leave," "to abandon," etc.

In view of these facts the only philological problem seems to be the question of why so many translators and commentators preferred to render this passage contrary to its

<sup>60</sup> Charles Thomson, *The Septuagint Bible* (Indian Hills, Col., 1954).

<sup>61</sup> Ceriani, *Translatio Syra-Pescitto Veteris Testamenti* (Mediolani, 1883), Tomus II (Nehemiah), p. 582; Payne Smith, *Syriac-English Dictionary* (Oxford, 1903), pp. 556, 557.

<sup>62</sup> *Cassell's Latin Dictionary* (New York, 1953), p. 172.

<sup>63</sup> *The Holy Bible*, Standard Catholic Version, Douay-Rheims Edition, (New York, 1914).

obvious philological and lexical meaning. The apparent explanation is evidently that to them "abandon" made no sense in a context where everything was geared to demonstrate the progress and completion of the building project, the restoration of the city wall. This obstacle, we hope, has now been removed by the supporting evidence of the recent excavations in Jerusalem.

*The Inspection, Restoration, and Procession Texts*

Inasmuch as present excavations support the basic principle expressed in Neh 3:8, according to which part of the pre-exilic city was "abandoned," the question remains whether the specific sector referred to in this text can be located with any degree of certainty.

The following observations are based on Nehemiah's restoration and procession texts, as well as on the short account of his inspection tour. Simons' extremely critical views on these passages are more rhetorical than realistic; in fact, they are not justified. In view of the most recent archaeological data, his statement that "all three wall descriptions of Nehemiah are of an emotional nature," can be refuted without subjecting Nehemiah to a psychoanalytical judgment.<sup>64</sup> Even if Nehemiah's restoration and procession texts should be incomplete, as Rudolph points out, and the identification of gates and towers uncertain, they are still adequate enough to establish the general boundary-line of his city.<sup>65</sup>

Concerning the inspection-trip little can be added to that which has already been stated by other scholars. The position of Alt, which has also been accepted by Rudolph, is sound.<sup>66</sup> Nehemiah did not ride around the whole city, but he "returned" at a certain point, which is twice expressed by the use of

<sup>64</sup> Simons, *op. cit.*, pp. 438, 439, 442.

<sup>65</sup> Rudolph, *Esra und Nehemia*, pp. 113, 114.

<sup>66</sup> Alt, *op. cit.*, III, 340-344; Rudolph, *Esra und Nehemia*, pp. 111,

שׁוֹב in Neh 2: 15, and what verses 12-15 describe is doubtless the southern tip of the East Hill.

One point, however, merits our attention by way of illustration. If, as Simons proposes, the Valley Gate is to be sought in the Hinnom and not in the Central Valley, it created a strange situation for Nehemiah's nocturnal inspection trip. He would have had to cross the Central Valley, ascend the West Hill, and descend again to an imaginary "Valley Gate" in the Hinnom Valley. He then would have followed the Hinnom to the southern tip of the East Hill, by passing the same Central Valley which he supposedly had just transversed only a few hundred feet farther up, proceeding on foot over the ruins of the Kidron. Since he returned by the same way, he again would have by-passed the Central Valley, entering through a "Valley Gate" and a wall for whose existence there is neither contemporary, Biblical, nor archaeological evidence.

The restoration text in Neh 3 follows a counter-clockwise sequence of assignments given to each labor gang, beginning with the Sheep Gate in the northern wall. Avi-Yonah identifies this gate—as W. R. Smith and G. Dalman did before him—with the Gate of Benjamin.<sup>67</sup> The first section was assigned to the high priest and the priests and extended from the Sheep Gate to the Tower of the Hundred and the Tower of Hananel, with two more labor gangs following them. Another group built the Fish Gate, also identified as the Ephraim Gate. According to Alt, Avi-Yonah and other scholars this gate was situated in the Tyropoeon or Central Valley, from where the builders apparently turned south.<sup>68</sup>

As has already been stated, the identification of some of the gates is a comparatively difficult problem, especially since some were known by different names, or their names were changed during the centuries. The Ephraim Gate and the

<sup>67</sup> Avi-Yonah, *op. cit.*, p. 241; W. R. Smith, "Jerusalem" in *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, T. K. Cheyne and J. S. Black, ed. (London, 1901), cols. 2423, 2424.

<sup>68</sup> Avi-Yonah, *op. cit.*, p. 242.

Corner Gate from the days of Jehoshaphat (2 Ki 14: 13) are mentioned again during the reign of Uzziah (2 Chr 26: 9). But the Corner Gate is found neither in the restoration nor in the procession text, while the Gate of Ephraim in Neh 12: 39 is obviously a gloss, being in the wrong place between the "Broad Wall" and the "Old" or Mishneh Gate. The latter is the next gate mentioned in Neh 3: 6 as the "Old Gate," a grammatically inadmissible translation of שַׁעַר הַיְשָׁנָה.<sup>69</sup> Since Jeshanah appears also in 2 Chr 13: 19 as the name of a village 15 miles north of Jerusalem—the LXX transliterated it as Isana—also mentioned by Josephus, the suggestion has been made that the gate derived its name from that village.<sup>70</sup> Many scholars, however, seem to prefer a correction of the text itself. The generally accepted emendation of שַׁעַר הַיְשָׁנָה to שַׁעַר הַמִּשְׁנָה eliminates the unintelligible translation of "Old Gate" and replaces it with Mishneh Gate, which Avi-Yonah identifies with the Corner Gate, placing it on the western slope of the East Hill.<sup>71</sup> Others, including Simons, likewise locate the Mishneh Gate in the southern portion of the Mishneh Wall on the west side; however, this would involve inclusion of at least part of the West Hill into the city. This raises the question of the location of the "Broad Wall" or the "Broad Square."<sup>72</sup>

Under "Mishneh" or "Second City" we understand the outlying area west of "Solomon's City," which had been incorporated into Jerusalem through the building of a second wall by Hezekiah (729-686).<sup>73</sup> Zep 1: 10 does not allow an exact topographical definition, but 2 Ki 22: 14 is explicit

<sup>69</sup> Rudolph, *Esra und Nehemia*, p. 116; R. A. Bowman, *The Interpreter's Bible*, III (New York, 1954), 685; Avi-Yonah, *op. cit.*, pp. 242, 243; Simons, *op. cit.*, pp. 305, 306.

<sup>70</sup> Josephus, *Ant.*, xiv. 15. 12; cf. Ralph Marcus, *Josephus* (Cambridge, Mass., 1957), VII, 685, n. g; Rudolph, *Esra und Nehemia*, p. 116.

<sup>71</sup> Avi-Yonah, *op. cit.*, map on p. 240, p. 243.

<sup>72</sup> Simons, *op. cit.*, pp. 232, 306.

<sup>73</sup> 2 Chr 32 : 5; Simons, *op. cit.*, pp. 291, 332-333.

inasmuch as it indicates that at the time of Hulda the prophetess (622 B.C.) the Mishneh was a part of the city proper. The text says that she "dwelt *in* the Second Quarter *in* Jerusalem" (בְּמִשְׁנֵה בִּירוּשָׁלַם). Since the Mishneh Gate is placed at the west side of the city, and the sequence of the restoration program locates the sector which had been "abandoned" or "left out" in the northwest corner, we conclude that it was the Mishneh or Second City to which Neh 3: 8 refers. The area according to our passage was west of the old city wall, between the gate on the northwestern corner and the point where evidently the older and the second wall of Hezekiah met, the "Broad Wall" or the "Wall of the Square." Hence the phrase, "and they abandoned Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall" (RSV). The text is actually an explicative note indicating two facts, firstly, that a certain sector of the city had been excluded from the rebuilding program, and secondly, where that sector was situated.

Following the "Wall of the Square" the text mentions the "Tower of the Furnaces" (v. 11), then the Valley Gate, which most archaeologists believe to be the one excavated by Crowfoot in 1927.<sup>74</sup> The distance between the Valley Gate and the Dung Gate amounted to a thousand cubits, approximately 1,700 feet or 500 meters (v. 13). It has been emphasized that the Valley Gate is to be placed at the lower half of the western wall of the East Hill.<sup>75</sup> The assignment of such a large section to one group is not necessarily an indication of error in Nehemiah's record.<sup>76</sup> Whether the wall in that section had not been seriously damaged, or had been partly restored when the Jews attempted to fortify the city before Nehemiah's arrival in 444, cannot be decided. It is possible that one large labor gang was sufficient to repair the whole section. Furthermore, the fact that Nehemiah chose the Valley Gate as the point to

<sup>74</sup> Alt, *op. cit.*, II, 327-338; Avi-Yonah, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

<sup>75</sup> Rudolph, *Esra und Nehemia*, pp. 110-118; Rudolph, *Chronikbücher*, p. 285.

<sup>76</sup> Simons, *op. cit.*, p. 161, note 3, p. 162.

begin and end his inspection trip is an additional support for this conclusion. While he could ride his beast in part of the Central Valley which evidently was comparatively free of rubble, he had to dismount when he reached the Kidron Valley.<sup>77</sup>

For the purpose of this study there is no further need to discuss the restoration of the wall on the eastern slope of the South Hill, since it has been demonstrated archaeologically that also here, in the Kidron Valley, Nehemiah "left out" the area between the outer and inner walls, which had been part of the pre-exilic city. These details indicate that it was part of Nehemiah's premeditated plan to limit the area of Jerusalem to the needs of a greatly reduced population.

The labor assignments following those on the east side or Kidron Valley are not exclusively marked by gates or fortifications, but increasingly by references to public or private buildings. We learn that some repaired a section near "the house of Eliashib the high priest" (Neh 3: 20, 21), while others worked "opposite their own houses" (v. 23). After mention of the house of Azariah there follow references to an area opposite "the Angle," and "the tower projecting from the upper house of the king and the court of the guard" (vs. 24, 25). The frequently repeated word "opposite" not only pin-points wall-sections in relationship to well-known houses or other buildings, but also seems to be indicative of the fact that outlying fortifications had become unimportant. Then again follow sections where each priest "repaired opposite his own house" (vs. 28, 29). Meshullam the son of Berechiah repaired "opposite his chamber" (v. 30).

The expression, "the house of the temple servants and of the merchants" probably refers to the service quarters of the former (v. 31). Since these buildings could not have been located on the steep slope of the Kidron Valley, they must have been part of the inner city, *i.e.*, they must have been enclosed by the inner wall built by Solomon and his successors. This,

<sup>77</sup> Neh 2 : 12-15.

too, lends additional support to the now established fact that Nehemiah rebuilt only the old wall on the crest of the East Hill.

The Biblical statement that "the work on the wall was finished in 52 days" (Neh 6: 15) merits more credit than Josephus' two years and four months.<sup>78</sup> It is evident that the people could not have left their fields or occupations for a period of above two years, be it for voluntary service or *corvée*. This provides a further evidence for our position that Nehemiah's Jerusalem was a "minimal" city. Even if all the Jews of the whole province could have been mobilized, they could not have repaired the circumvallation of a city comprising an area of 85 (much less 218) acres in 52 days.

The total number of men employed in the rebuilding of the wall is nowhere recorded. The priests, who were able to furnish a large contingent of men, worked on the north side where the wall had been heavily damaged. This is evident from the use of *בָּנָה*, "to build," instead of the otherwise employed *תָּקַן*, "to repair."

A comparison between the small number of labor gangs employed and the length of the wall-sections assigned to them on the west side of the East Hill, and the numerous groups with short sections on the Kidron side, reveals realistic organization and intelligent leadership. According to Neh 3 there were 18 labor gangs working on the north and west side of the city wall and an additional two on the south between the Dung Gate and the Fountain Gate. The length of the whole city wall in minimalist terms was approximately 3,000 meters, the north and west wall with *ca.* 1,650 meters covered by 20 labor gangs as against 1,350 meters on the east with 22 groups. The maximalist theory would require more than 2,500 to 2,800 meters for the western section alone, to be divided among only 20 groups of laborers. This seems to be another strong argument against the archaeologically unsupported

<sup>78</sup> Josephus, *Ant.*, xi. 179. (v. 8).

inclusion of the western hills into post-exilic Jerusalem. This unequal distribution of sections also may explain why Batten and Simons question the reliability of Nehemiah's report.

The procession text follows the topographical order of the restoration text. Even though there are the same elements of uncertainty regarding the exact location of gates or fortifications, of names, or of some wells and pools, it has become increasingly evident that Nehemiah's descriptions have to be applied to a Jerusalem limited to the East Hill only. This conclusion becomes more certain with the lack of archaeological remains on the western hills. Inasmuch as the two companies of the procession have been sufficiently discussed and their courses analyzed, it may suffice to state that in our opinion and according to recent excavations the procession text describes the city as restricted to the East Hill.

#### *Summary and Conclusions*

Our investigation based on (1) the Biblical records dealing with Jerusalem's walls, (2) a philological study of 'zb, and (3) the recent excavations in Jerusalem leads to the following conclusions:

1. Earlier excavations have shown that Jebusite- or pre-Israelite Jerusalem was limited to the Southeastern Hill. A narrow, inhabited zone or belt on the slopes with a system of terraces, and protected by walls and fortifications, also belonged to the city, thus increasing its size.

2. Scriptural records indicate that Solomon expanded the city toward the north, where the Temple, the royal palace and other official buildings were erected. However, this expansion was restricted to the East Hill.

3. Toward the end of the 8th century Hezekiah built an outer wall on the northwest side, evidently with the purpose of incorporating a populated area into the city proper. This addition is generally identified with the Mishneh, *i.e.*, the "Second City" or "Second Quarter." The size of that area has not been determined.

4. Recent excavations demonstrate that, contrary to general belief, post-exilic Jerusalem was not a simple rebuilding of the whole pre-exilic city. Nehemiah did not restore the outer wall on the eastern slope of the Southeast Hill, but abandoned the formerly populated belt between the two walls, diminishing the size of the city correspondingly. Of this important historical detail no reference is made in Biblical records.

5. The fact that Nehemiah intentionally and purposefully reduced the area of Jerusalem from its pre-exilic size to the requirements of a much smaller population is also substantiated strongly by philological evidence. According to Neh 3: 8 that sector lying between the northwest corner of the city and a point south of it, where an obviously former wall joined a newer one at the "Wall of the Square" or the Broad Wall, was also "abandoned" or "left out" of the restoration program. The area west of this wall, therefore, seems to be identical with the Mishneh, or Second City. It appears to be a safe conclusion that Neh 3: 8 refers to that sector of the city which formerly had been an integral part of Jerusalem and was now "abandoned" or "left out" of the restoration in 444. The city was thus again limited to the East Hill.

6. Archaeology apparently has established two additional facts: firstly, that the earliest line of wall connecting the points of the western and eastern ridges was not earlier than the Hellenistic period, and secondly, that the southern end of the Tyropoeon Valley dividing Ophel from the western ridge was not occupied until the Maccabean period. This seems to indicate that the maximalist theory which includes the Western Hill as an integral part of Jerusalem during the Jebusite or Israelite periods is no longer tenable.

7. The inspection, restoration, and procession texts, therefore, are not any longer to be interpreted according to theoretical concepts, but according to archaeological realities. These texts must be considered as describing Nehemiah's Jerusalem as limited to the East Hill.