

Archaeologists Unearth Evidence of Ancient Jerusalem's Destruction

The land of Israel constantly reveals hidden treasures, testifying to its rich history and the Jewish People's deep and long-lasting ties to its land. This time, evidence of the affluence of the ancient Judean kingdom's capital and its subsequent destruction by the Babylonians was found.

Israeli archaeologists excavating the City of David in Jerusalem's Old City recently exposed evidence of the destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of the Babylonians.

The excavations, conducted by the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA), concentrated on the eastern slope of the City of David, where structures dating back more than 2,600 years were unearthed after having been covered by collapsed layers of stone.

The researchers found many artifacts among the rubble, including charred wood, grape seeds, pottery, fish scales and bones and unique and rare artifacts.

These findings depict the affluence and character of Jerusalem, capital of the Judean Kingdom, and are mesmerizing proof of the city's demise at the hands of the Babylonians, the IAA stated.

Among the notable findings were dozens of storage jars that served to store both grain and liquids, a number of which had stamped handles. Several of the discovered seals depict a rosette—a petaled rose.

Ortal Chalaf and Dr. Joe Uziel, IAA excavation directors, explained that “these seals are characteristic of the end of

the First Temple Period and were used for the administrative system that developed towards the end of the Judean dynasty. Classifying objects facilitated controlling, overseeing, collecting, marketing and storing crop yields. The rosette, in essence, replaced the 'For the King' seal used in the earlier administrative system."

The wealth of the Judean kingdom's capital is also manifest in the ornamental artifacts that surfaced at the site. One distinct and rare finding is a small ivory statue of a woman. The figure is naked, and her haircut or wig is Egyptian in style. The quality of its carving is high, and it attests to the high caliber of the artifacts' artistic level and the skill par excellence of the artists during this era, the IAA said.

Chalaf and Uziel noted that "the excavation's findings show that Jerusalem had extended beyond the line of the city wall before its destruction. The row of structures exposed in the excavations is located outside beyond the city wall that would have constituted the eastern border of the city during this period."

Throughout the Iron Age, Jerusalem underwent constant growth, expressed both in the construction of numerous city walls and the fact that the city later spread beyond them.

Excavations carried out in the area of the Jewish Quarter in today's Old City have shown how the growth in population at the end of the 8th century BCE had led to the annexation of the western area of Jerusalem.

These finding were publicized during the Nine Days of Mourning, in which the Jewish nation laments the destruction of the First and Second Temples. {eoa}

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