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Hellenistic Colonization in Palestine Between
332-64 BC

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Abstract:

The purpose of this research is to examine the architectural planning for Hellenistic sites in Palestine from 332-64 BC. Therefore, a group of sites was selected according to the most prominent and representative Hellenistic architecture, which provide the required information about this period in Palestine. The sites were classified into three geographical areas from north to south.

1- The coastal sites that are involved are: Akka (Akko or Ptolemais), Al-Tantora (Dor or Dora), Tell el-Mubarak, Straton’s Tower (Later Known as Caesarea), Dhaharat Makmish (Tell Michael), Asdud (Ashdod or Azotus).

2- The sites in the Central Mountains included are: Sebastia (Sebaste, Samaria), Tell Balatah (Shechem), Tell Sandahannah (Marisa), Tell el-Duweir (Lachish), Beer es-Saba’, (Beer Sheba).

3- The sites in the Western part of Jordan Valley consist of Tell Akhdar (Anafa), Beisan (Beit Shean, Scythopolis which may be located in Tell el-Mastaba), Tulul Abu el-Alayik (The Hasmonean Winter Palaces), Kharibet Qumran, Ein Gedi.

The thesis combines brief historical information about the conquest of the East by Alexander the Great. In addition to the incidents which occurred after his death and the division of the territory in the East between his two strong successors Ptolemy I and Seleucus I. Moreover, the struggle was continued between the Ptolemaic and Seleucid dynasties with all their trials to command the region. This caused at the end to the weakness of both dynasties. There is also a summary for the synchronized situations at the later part of the Hellenistic period, when the Romans began to appear as a great force in the region.

Chapter one presents the characteristics of the sites under study, such as location, importance, the elements that substantiates their existence, and the
history of archaeological expeditions at the sites. Also reveals the architectural findings from the Hellenistic period at the sites in the three studied geographical areas.

Chapter two discusses several architectural issues of the Hellenistic period, such as the problems that face scholars studying Hellenistic architecture at the archaeological sites of Palestine. Moreover, construction material utilized in the buildings, as stones, mud-bricks, plaster and paintings, and wood are discussed. Furthermore, this chapter presents the various elements of infrastructure involved in the establishment and development of the sites, e.g. water, agriculture, roads and trade. In addition, classifications of the types of plans that appeared in the sites and put in two categories. First, the organic growth of the site, which might carried some architectural Hellenistic elements or involved the traditional way of building. The second branch was Hippodamic planning which was formed in the orthogonal design of different divisions.

Chapter three is concerned with the divisions of the Hellenistic sites in Palestine like the fortification system (walls, towers and gates); public buildings (palaces, temples, shops, workshops and industrial areas, baths and pools); as well as private building such as the residential units. After that the study treats some architectural elements, like courtyards, floors, staircases, windows and doors.