

Chapter 1

Conversion of Space

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Like sacred time and a sacred text, sacred space is a basic component of the structure of religions, and as such is part of the process of conversion.¹ When a community is converted to a new religion, its holy places are usually converted too and imbued with new meaning. Like the conversion of communities, conversion of space is often caused by cultural interplay, by political change and by military power – following conquests and invasions. As classical understanding of religion asserts, adherents to religions believe in the inherent holiness of sacred space. Holiness is affixed to holy places regardless of historical events.² New owners of a region are confronted by these sacred spaces and must relate to them in some way. They can desacralise temples and destroy them (this was a common Christian practice in the case of pagan temples) or they can convert and sacralise them, but they cannot simply ignore them.³ In other

¹ On conversion see: A.D. Nock, *Conversion: The old and the new in religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 7. Nock defines conversion as ‘the reorientation of the soul of an individual, his deliberate turning from indifference or from an earlier form of piety to another, a turning which implies a consciousness that a great change is involved, that the old was wrong and the new is right’. According to this definition, conversion is a conscious human act. Today, however, the term is used also in a broader sense and applied also to objects, phenomena and concepts. It would seem that although used somewhat metaphorically, the term ‘conversion’, works better (than e.g. appropriation, transformation, adoption, and so on) when trying to describe a religious process that implies a deeper change and transformation of symbolic meaning and capacity. See also Peter G. Stromberg, *Language and self-transformation: A study of the Christian conversion narrative* (Cambridge University Press, 1993).

² Mircea Eliade, *The sacred and the profane: the nature of religion* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1959); *Eliade, Patterns in comparative religion* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1958), pp. 367–87; Jonathan Z. Smith, *To take place: toward theory in ritual* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1987); *Eliade, Map is not territory: Studies in the history of religion* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), esp. pp. 109–15.

³ Béatrice Caseau, ‘Sacred landscapes’, in G.W. Bowersock, Peter Brown and Oleg Grabar (eds), *Interpreting late antiquity: Essays on the post-classical world* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 21–59.

words, sacred space is a basic component of the cultural structure of a region. In order to convert the region, its former holy places must be recreated and their sacred entity reaffirmed and interpreted. Contents, symbols, myths and rituals must be imbued with fresh meaning, explaining and justifying the new religious ownership. Conquerors become owners. Nock's metaphor – 'The bottles are old but the wine is new' – can readily be applied to sacred space.⁴

Judaism, Christianity and Islam – the three religions to which the region known as the Holy Land is sacred – are religions of an exclusive nature. They are united in a belief in one and only one truth and in the conviction that there is no other truth but theirs. As the Holy Land – or at least Jerusalem with its main holy places – is understood by them to be part of this truth, it was essential for each of them not only to dominate it, but to convert it. Over the past two thousand years, the region has changed hands repeatedly, generally through major wars of conquest that brought new rulers into power. These wars also changed the official religion of the country. In the first millennium CE, the region passed from Jewish to pagan rule, then Christian and Moslem; in the second millennium, it was successively under Moslem, Christian, again Moslem, and finally Jewish rule. Thus, the Holy Land is a kind of microcosm in which the process of conversion of space and its variants can be analysed in detail and in a more nuanced way than in most other places.

The process of conversion of space is complex. When criticising Eliade's view of the intrinsic nature of pilgrimage shrines, John Eade and Michael J. Sallnow write, 'As well as perhaps being a symbolic powerhouse productive of its own religious meanings, a pilgrimage shrine is also – sometimes predominantly – an arena for the interplay of a variety of imported perceptions and understandings, in some cases finely differentiated from one another, in others radically polarized.'⁵ In other words, while holy places may have their own intrinsic holiness, its structure and texture, is a human product.⁶ The identity of a place is given by the 'biography' believers read into it, and by its image as constructed by its visitors. It is a well-known phenomenon that when holy places are shared by

⁴ Nock, *Conversion*, p. 7.

⁵ John Eade and Michael J. Sallnow, *Contesting the sacred: The anthropology of Christian pilgrimage* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 10. See also Roland Robertson, *Meaning and change: Exploration in the cultural sociology of modern societies* (New York: New York University Press, 1978), pp. 186–222.

⁶ Blake Leyerle, 'Landscape as cartography in early Christian pilgrimage narratives', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 64/1 (1996), 120 (and the literature cited there).

several religions, believers see only those components that relate to their own.⁷ Thus, one way to make a place Christian is by relating only to its Christian past – the only past that counts for Christians. As a result, Christian pilgrims, at least until the thirteenth century, provided detailed descriptions of a Christian Holy Land from which contemporary life was almost totally absent. The Holy Land that Egeria visited in the 380s was inhabited solely by priests and monks that she designated as holy. They were suitable followers of the saints who had once lived in the country and whose deeds made the territory sacred. Egeria's account, as well as other Holy Land descriptions written in the fourth century, creates the impression of social emptiness, as if normal human beings and daily life were outside the pilgrims' field of vision, or else it might distract them from the biblical past that they sought.⁸ The same applies, even today, to Jewish, Christian and Moslem pilgrims visiting the holy places who see only the markers they look for.⁹ Local authorities, tourist guides and informative leaflets, as well as rituals and ceremonies, help the pilgrim charge space with meaning. In what follows, I look closely at ways of charging space with meaning and, more broadly, at several aspects of the conversions of space – how they were brought about and what constituted them. My discussion centres on Christian attitudes to space, in the Holy Land, especially in Jerusalem, in late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages.¹⁰

⁷ Ora Limor, 'Sharing Sacred Space: Holy places in Jerusalem between Christianity, Judaism and Islam', in Iris Shagrir, Ronnie Ellenblum and Jonathan Riley-Smith (eds), *In laudem Hierosolymitani: Studies in Crusades and medieval culture in honour of Benjamin Z. Kedar* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 219–31.

⁸ Leyerle, 'Landscape as cartography', p. 126; Ora Limor, 'Reading sacred space: Egeria, Paula and the Christian Holy Land', in Yitzhak Hen (ed.), *De Sion exhibit lex et verbum domini de Hierusalem: Essays on medieval law, liturgy and literature in honour of Amnon Linder* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001), pp. 1–15.

⁹ For 'markers' see Dean MacCannell, *The tourist: A new theory of leisure class* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1999 [1976]), pp. 109–11. On contemporary Christian pilgrimage experience see: Jackie Feldman, 'Constructing a shared bible land: Jewish Israeli guiding performances for Protestant pilgrims', *American Ethnologist* 34/2 (2007), 351–74.

¹⁰ For the process of the forming of the Christian Holy Land, see Robert L. Wilken, *The land called holy: Palestine in Christian history and thought* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992).

The Old Temple and the New

The transitions from one religion to another were sometimes connected to destruction and ruin, and they always resulted in intensive building enterprises that caused change to the city's appearance. This process is salient in the Byzantine period, when Jerusalem became strictly Christian; in the first Moslem period, when it underwent a process of Islamisation; in the Crusader period, in which during less than a century Jerusalem was adorned by Christian building enterprises that are visible even today; and in the Ayubbid and Mamluk periods, when it received its final Moslem character, that dominates the city to this day. It is also visible in Israeli building enterprises as well as in archaeological projects designated to expose the ancient biblical and post-biblical (Jewish) past of the city.

All these new owners knew that identity is not acquired only by destroying and building. It needs to be validated and legitimised. 'Matters such as conversion and identity are closely related to issues of legitimation and truth' writes Roland Robertson,¹¹ and indeed, as Peter Walker writes about fourth-century Christians, 'Although only now for the first time were they in actual control of the city, they claimed to be its rightful occupants and indeed the true inheritors of the Jerusalem symbol: Jerusalem had always, in a sense, belonged to them.'¹² Thus Christians of the fourth and fifth centuries were not concerned about domination but about legitimacy. Although as part of the Roman Christian Empire, the Holy Land was now under Christian rule, the places were charged with memories, emotions and knowledge that had been there before Christianity. Domination alone could not erase or replace them with Christian contents. The need to justify Christian domination of sacred space, above all the need to charge the places with Christian symbolical weight, was met with variegated creativity.

The sacred map of Jerusalem revolves around two foci: The Temple Mount and Golgotha.¹³ There is a basic rivalry between the two: the victory of one represents the defeat of the other and implies the conversion or re-conversion of the entire

¹¹ Robertson, *Meaning and change*, p. 189.

¹² P.W.L. Walker, *Holy city, Holy places?: Christian attitudes to Jerusalem and the Holy Land in the fourth century* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), pp. 315–16.

¹³ Heribert Busse, 'Tempel, Grabeskirche und Haram aš-šarīf, drei Heiliggrüner und ihre gegenseitigen Beziehungen in Legende und Wirklichkeit', in Heribert Busse and Georg Kretschmar (eds), *Jerusalem Heiligtumstraditionen in altkirchlicher und frühislamischer Zeit* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1987), pp. 1–27; Oleg Grabar and Benjamin Z. Kedar (eds.), *Where heaven and earth meet: Jerusalem's sacred esplanade* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi and Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009).

city. Throughout the Byzantine period (324–638) Christian authorities made great efforts to accord the city a Christian identity. New churches and chapels became road signs for events in the formative past, inviting passers-by to see and venerate. The Bordeaux Pilgrim testifies to a process in which former places venerated by Jews were given Christian significance, and new places, with an exclusive Christian meaning, were added to them, thus gradually creating a new Christian Jerusalem.¹⁴ In the words of Jonathan Z. Smith, the Christian new map was 'laid palimpsest-like over the old, and interacting with it in complex ways'.¹⁵

Recently, Oded Irshai exposed beautifully the inner structure of the Bordeaux Pilgrim description of the Temple Mount, claiming it to be a polemical anti-Jewish text, in which 'More than in any other place within the city's perimeter, an appropriationist hermeneutic manifests itself in the pilgrim's description ...'¹⁶ By putting side by side pairs of traditions described by the traveller, one biblical and the other Christian (for example, the pools of Solomon and the Bethesda pools, or the cave in which Solomon tortured the demons and the pinnacle where Jesus was tested by Satan), Irshai shows how the text relegates biblical, mainly Solomonic, traditions to a secondary status and faded importance, epitomising 'its wider theological super-sessionism, or ... superscription'. Thus, he argues, 'Christianity in fourth-century Jerusalem supplants rather than suppresses Jewish Jerusalem'.¹⁷

Among other things, the Bordeaux Pilgrim saw on the Temple Mount 'the two statues of Hadrian ... and, not far from them a pierced stone which the Jews come and anoint each year. They mourn and rend their garments, and then depart'.¹⁸ By destroying the Temple and placing the Emperor's statue on the Temple Mount, the Romans tried to desacralise the most important Jewish holy place and thus declare their victory over the Jews and their God.¹⁹ In the

¹⁴ *Itinerarium Burdigalense*, ed. P. Geyer and O. Cuntz, *CCSL* 175, (Turnhout: Brepols, 1965), pp. 1–26; English translation of the Holy Land section: John Wilkinson; *Egeria's Travels* (London: SPCK, 1971), pp. 153–63.

¹⁵ Smith, *To take place*, p. 79. See also Jàs Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubies (eds), *Voyages and visions: Towards a cultural history of travel* (London: Reaktion, 1999), p. 16: 'This was not so much a creation of a sacred landscape as a redefinition of a series of existing landscapes as sacred in a specifically Christian way.'

¹⁶ Oded Irshai, 'The Christian appropriation of the Holy Land: The case of the Bordeaux Pilgrim', *Jewish Quarterly Review* 99/4 (2009), 465–86 (citation on 476).

¹⁷ Irshai, 'The Christian appropriation of the Holy Land', p. 476.

¹⁸ *Itinerarium Burdigalense*, 591.

¹⁹ Walker writes: 'According to Eusebius, the temple was punished for the sins of the city'. Walker, *Holy city, Holy places?*, p. 389. The assumption that the Romans built a pagan shrine on the Temple Mount has been questioned lately; see Yaron Z. Eliav, 'Hadrian's

centuries that followed the Christianisation of the Roman Empire, dozens of churches were built throughout Jerusalem and in its vicinity, but not on the Temple Mount. The large platform to the east of the city remained a mound of ruins, perhaps even a dunghill. This was a physical situation with an ideological message, visible proof of the grievous error the Jews committed in not recognising Jesus as the Messiah and evidence of their terrible fate as a consequence of this error. The pitiable state of the former Jewish holy centre and of the Jews who came to mourn it was saturated with meaning for Jews and Christians alike. Still, one should pay attention to the fact that the Bordeaux Pilgrim started his tour in the Temple Mount and not in Golgotha as would later become the custom, and he points out several traditions affixed to the Mount.²⁰ Fifty years later, in the 380s, Egeria and Paula separately visited the Holy Land, and both ignored the Temple Mount completely. It would seem that the drastic Christian reaction towards the Temple Mount took shape during these fifty years, and it might be connected with Emperor Julian's attempt to rebuild the Temple (363), and the trauma caused to Christians by it.²¹ This attempt implied that the pact between the Empire and Christianity was not self-evident, and that an alliance between the Empire and Judaism was still a possibility. Julian's failure and death were taken as decisive proof for Christian claims. From now on the Temple Mount was to remain desolated, geographical evidence for a theological claim, and the fulfilment of Jesus' prophecy: 'you see these great Buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down' (Mark 13:2).²²

actions in the Jerusalem Temple Mount according to Cassius Dio and Xiphilini Manus', *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 4/2 (1997), 125–44.

²⁰ These traditions are: two pools built by king Solomon; the cave in which Solomon tortured the demons; the palace of Solomon; the room where he wrote the Book of Wisdom; the perforated stone; the house of king Hezekiah; the pinnacle where Satan tested Jesus; the blood of Zechariah.

²¹ David Levenson, 'Julian's attempts to rebuild the temple: an inventory of ancient and medieval sources', in Harold W. Attridge, John J. Collins and Thomas H. Tobin (eds), *Of scribes and scrolls: studies on the Hebrew Bible, Intertestamental Judaism, and Christian origins* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1990), pp. 261–79; Günter Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land: Palestine in the Fourth Century*, trans. Ruth Tuschling (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 2000), pp. 185–216.

²² According to Cameron and Hall, 'The thought (of the possibility that the temple could ever be rebuilt) sufficiently explains why Constantine and all later Christian emperors chose to leave the site of the ruined Temple to speak for itself rather than building Christian buildings on it'. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, translation with introduction and commentary by Averil Cameron and Stuart G. Hall (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999), p. 285.

The desacralisation of the Temple Mount was essential to making Jerusalem a Christian space.²³ It meant that Jews could not have any claim to the city, except the right to mourn their lost glorious past. And while keeping the Temple Mount in ruins became a prerequisite for the Christianisation of Jerusalem, its attributes were soon appropriated and transferred to the newly built church of the Anastasis. Christian authorities often desacralised pagan temples by destroying them and using their stones for other buildings, including churches. However, some temples came back into use as secular buildings or even as churches.²⁴ Eusebius of Caesarea describes in detail the process by which the Anastasis – the church above the site of Christ's crucifixion and sepulchre – was built on the site of a former Roman temple. First, he relates, the temple was completely demolished and its impure stones removed, until the holy cave – Christ's tomb and the site of his resurrection – appeared. The place was purified and a splendid church was built at imperial expense.²⁵ After eliminating pagan traces, the newly built Christian basilica absorbed Temple essence. Eusebius names the cave of the sepulchre 'Holy of Holies', a term exclusively connected to the Temple, and he says that the sacred place was 'hallowed from the start by God's decree', naming the Church of the Holy Sepulchre a 'new Jerusalem ... facing the famous Jerusalem of old, which after the bloody murder of the Lord had been overthrown in utter devastation.'²⁶ Eusebius thus describes a double conversion of Jerusalem – from paganism, through destruction and erasure, and from Judaism, through appropriation. As he builds a totally new temple and diverts the city's heart from the eastern platform to the Anastasis-Golgotha compound, he still relies heavily on Temple terminology and imagery, as source of authority.²⁷

Yet Christianity was a newcomer to Jerusalem and its building project still needed to be authorised. 'Whilst rejoicing in the novelty of their new-found power, there would also be the desire to make Jerusalem's great history their own ... the Christians of the fourth century ... desired to demonstrate their own long-established right to possess Jerusalem.'²⁸ Legend and myth, primarily the legend of the finding of the True Cross that appeared some time at the end of the fourth century, served this purpose. According to the most popular version, the place where the Cross had been hidden (and the nearby sites of the crucifixion

²³ See Wilken, *The land called Holy*, pp. 143–8.

²⁴ Caseau, 'Sacred landscapes'.

²⁵ Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, 3, 28–9. (*Life of Constantine*, pp. 133–4).

²⁶ Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, 3, 28, 30, 33 (*Life of Constantine*, pp. 133–5).

²⁷ On Eusebius's attitude toward the concepts of holy city (Jerusalem) and holy places in general, see Walker, *Holy city, Holy places?*; Wilken, *The land called Holy*, pp. 93–100.

²⁸ Walker, *Holy city, Holy places?*, p. 315.

and the resurrection) was identified under coercion by a knowledgeable Jew named Judas who later converted to Christianity. His evidence was strengthened by miracles.²⁹ Although Christians now ruled the land, its full conversion to Christianity depended on the authority and, in a way, even on the consent of the Jews, the former owners of the land, who best knew its secrets.³⁰ The legend of the finding of the Cross bears witness to the complex process of conversion of space associated with revealing the inner truth hidden in it.

In the course of the fourth century, the church of the Anastasis became the new centre of Jerusalem and many of the foundational myths formerly connected to the Temple Mount transferred to it.³¹ Not far away, to the east, stood the big precinct of the Temple Mount in ruins, sign and signal of the deep change Jerusalem had undergone. Formerly a Jewish sacred space, it was now converted to Christianity, physical space testifying to theological truth.

It is evident from the Bordeaux Pilgrim's short description that the Temple remained sacred for Jews though ruined and defiled. The destruction of the building did not eradicate the holiness of the site. Its holiness was imbedded, even if only one lonely stone or a destroyed external wall remained to suggest its former glory.³²

²⁹ Jan Willem Drijvers, *Helena Augusta. The mother of Constantine the Great and the legend of her finding of the true cross* (Leiden: Brill, 1992); Stephan Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross was found: From event to medieval legend* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1991); Han J.W. Drijvers and Jan Willem Drijvers (eds), *The finding of the true cross: The Judas Kyriakos legend in Syriac: Introduction, text, and translation*, CSCO 565, Subsidia 93 (Louvain: Peeters, 1997).

³⁰ Ora Limor, 'Christian tradition – Jewish authority', *Cathedra* 80 (1996), 31–62 (in Hebrew); Ora Limor, 'Christian sacred space and the Jew', in Jeremy Cohen (ed.), *From witness to witchcraft: Jews and Judaism in Medieval Christian thought* (Wolfenbütteler Mittelalter-Studien, 11) (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1996), pp. 55–77. See also Andrew S. Jacobs, *Remains of the Jews: The Holy Land and Christian empire in late antiquity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), p. 14: '[The Christians] staked their imperial claims on a self-conscious appropriation of Jewish space and knowledge'.

³¹ Wilken, *The land called Holy*, pp. 82–100.

³² Mary Carruthers remarks that 'buildings can powerfully cue memories, but they are not themselves Memory. Even when a building is gone, the site itself often continues to play the same role in people's memories, as a "common place" in their mental maps and a cue for their remembered images'. Mary Carruthers, *The craft of thought: Meditation, rhetoric, and the making of images 400–1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 42. On Jewish mourning of the Temple see also Hieronymus, *Commentariorum in Sophoniam*, CCSL 76A, ed. M. Adriaen, CCSL 76A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1970), p. 673.

Space as Text

'Space is never ideologically neutral', writes Robert Wilken.³³ In the fourth century, the holy places came to be seen as allegorical sites that acquire meaning through biblical interpretations imbued with Christian ideas.³⁴ Lorenzo Perrone commented that 'physical characterisation is taken as an allegory of spiritual ascent – even at the cost of forcing somehow the geographical evidence.'³⁵ The Holy Land was understood primarily as a scriptural territory. Biblical landscape and biblical text were intertwined through names, traditions and memories. Thus, one way of making the Holy Land Christian was through hermeneutical devices, a project undertaken first of all by Jerome, but also evident in other contemporary writings.

Egeria was a diligent and curious traveller. Her long journey lasted at least three years.³⁶ Apart from the Holy Land, she visited other provinces of the East and that part of her itinerary which survived opens with a detailed description of her journey to Sinai and Egypt. Christian presence in the remote areas of the Sinai desert was quite sporadic, but by using the Bible as her guide, Egeria could overlook this fact. By coming to these places and reading there the appropriate sections of the Holy Script, Egeria appropriated them and, as it were, converted them to Christianity. The small monastic communities that hosted her and acted as her guides helped in this process by telling the story of the places, thus connecting Egeria to her ancient ancestors, and by enacting suitable rituals. For example:

When we had made the offerings, we set off again, with the presbyters and monks pointing things out to us, to another place not far away. This is where Aaron and the seventy elders stood while holy Moses received from the Lord the Law for the children of Israel. There is no building there, but it is an enormous round rock with a flat place on top where the holy men are said to have stood, and a kind of altar in the middle made of stones. So there too we had a passage read from the Book of Moses and an appropriate psalm, and after a prayer we went on down.³⁷

³³ Wilken, *The land called holy*, p. 114.

³⁴ Elsner and Rubies (eds), *Voyages and visions*, p. 17.

³⁵ Lorenzo Perrone, 'The mystery of Judaea (Jerome, Ep. 46): The Holy City of Jerusalem between history and symbol in early Christian thought', in Lee I. Levine (ed.), *Jerusalem: Its sanctity and centrality to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (New York: Continuum, 1999), pp. 221–39.

³⁶ *Egeriae*, ed. A. Franceschini and R. Weber, CCSL 175, (Turnhout: Brepols, 1965), pp. 27–103; English translation, Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*.

³⁷ *Itinerarium Egeriae*, 4, 4.

For Egeria, reading, chanting psalms and praying made a place Christian. Reading the appropriate biblical stories in the places where they really happened brought history to life and turned the past into a Christian present, the emotional experience enhanced by the physical contact with the places.³⁸ Egeria wanted to see all the places by which the children of Israel had passed when coming out from Egypt.³⁹

While Egeria read history into places, Jerome read spiritual meaning into them. In spring 386, soon after Jerome and his friend and disciple Paula had settled in Bethlehem, Jerome wrote a letter to the Roman lady Marcella, a friend who had stayed behind in Rome.⁴⁰ Although the letter has been ascribed to Paula and Eustochium, most scholars agree, on the basis of the epistle's style, that it was written by Jerome himself.⁴¹ This letter is considered 'the classical expression of Jerome's positive principal attitude concerning pilgrimage and visits to the holy sites of the Holy Land'.⁴² Pilgrimage to the holy places is described as both an emotional experience and a means for a deeper understanding of the Scriptures. The land is a Christian land, and the scholarly education of the Christian is not completed until he has visited Jerusalem, 'Christian Athens'.⁴³ If someone, Marcella for example, should think that the land is accursed, as foretold in Jesus'

³⁸ 'Ipse loco' – the very place, as Egeria says time and again.

³⁹ Egeria, 7:1: '... *tamen ut perviderem omnia loca, quae filii Israel tetigerant* ...'. See also Egeria, 5:11. See Carruthers, *The craft of thought*, p. 43: 'The narrative of the Bible as a whole was conceived as a "way" among "places" – in short, as a map'.

⁴⁰ Hieronymus, Epistula 46, ed. Isidor Hilberg, CSEL 54 (Vienna and Leipzig, 1910), pp. 329–44; English translation: Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd Series, vol. 6, ed. Philip Schaff et al., (Buffalo NY: Christian Literature Publishing, 1893), pp. 60–65.

⁴¹ P. Nautine, 'La lettre de Paule et Eustochium à Marcelle (Jerôme, Ep. 46)', *Augustinianum* 24 (1984), pp. 441–9; Hillel Newman, 'Jerome and the Jews', PhD thesis, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1997 (in Hebrew), pp. 220–21; Lorenzo Perrone, 'The Mystery of Judaea'; Neil Adkin, 'The letter of Paula and Eustochium to Marcella: Some notes', *Maia* 51 (1999), 97–110; Peter Dronke, however, believes the letter was written by Paula and Eustochium: Peter Dronke, *Women writers of the Middle Ages, a critical study of texts from Perpetua (203) to Marguerite Porete (1310)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 17.

⁴² Newman, 'Jerome and the Jews', pp. 220–21; Hillel I. Newman, 'Between Jerusalem and Bethlehem: Jerome and the holy places of Palestine', in A. Houtman, M.J.H.M. Poorthuis and J. Schwartz (eds), *Sanctity of time and space in tradition and modernity* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), pp. 218–19; Perrone, 'The Mystery of Judaea'; Pierre Maraval, 'Saint Jérôme et le pèlerinage aux lieux saints de Palestine', in Y.M. Duval (ed.), *Jérôme entre l'occident et l'orient* (Paris: Étude augustiniennes, 1988).

⁴³ Ep. 46, 9; See E.D. Hunt, *Holy Land pilgrimage in the Later Roman Empire (AD 312–460)* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), pp. 83–106.

prophecies, Jerome assures her that 'it was the people who sinned and not the place ... As regards its site, lapse of time has but invested it with fresh grandeur'.⁴⁴ The sites and the churches built upon them are aids to the 'memory-work' believers should do. In the present Christian land, Jerome asserts, 'churches are set up like standards to commemorate the Lord's victories' and in Jerusalem 'there are so many places of prayer that a day would not be sufficient to go round them all'.⁴⁵ The venerated Christian places, Jerome assured Marcella, are not new places: 'Long before this sepulchre was hewn by Joseph, its glory was foretold in Isaiah's prediction, "his rest shall be glorious" (Isaiah 11, 10)'.⁴⁶ Thus, although the Christians had only lately taken possession of Jerusalem, in essence they were its true inheritors in the eyes of God.⁴⁷

For Jerome, even evoking biblical prophecies and building churches did not suffice to fully transform the land. Eighteen years after the letter to Marcella, in 404, when Paula died, Jerome wrote a eulogy in form of a letter to her daughter Eustochium. Paula's pilgrimage to the holy places of Palestine and to the hermits' dwellings in Egypt (a pilgrimage Jerome made with her) fills the major part of the letter. In it, Jerome introduces again his understanding of sacred space – landscape for him is a text to be deciphered.⁴⁸ Like the text of the Bible, sacred space needs decoding in order to grasp its inner true meaning. For Paula, each place on her holy journey held an inner Christian significance. Jerome speaks in this text in two voices, Paula's voice and his own. Thus, Paula's visit to the Mount of Olives is told in her voice, while her visit to the Jordan is told in the third person:

Now I go back towards Jerusalem, and beyond Tekoa (and Amos) I shall see the Mount of Olives from which the Saviour ascended to the Father, with its Cross sparkling on top. That is the mountain on which each year they once made to the Lord the burnt-offering of a red heifer, making atonement with its ashes for the people of Israel (Num. 19); and to which, according to Ezekiel, the Cherubim flew across from the Temple (Ezek. 11:22f.), and founded the Church of the Lord.

⁴⁴ Ep. 46, 5.

⁴⁵ Ep. 46, 13, 10. Mary Carruthers writes: 'What is authentic and *real* about the sites is the *memory-work*, the thinking to which they gave clues'. Carruthers, *The craft of thought*, p. 42.

⁴⁶ Ep. 46, 5.

⁴⁷ See Walker, *Holy city, Holy places?*, pp. 315–17: 'It was a return home, a repossession'.

⁴⁸ On the likening of landscape to a text and its interpretation to reading, see Stephen Daniels and Denis Cosgrove (eds), 'Introduction: Iconography and landscape', in *The iconography of landscape: Essays on the symbolic representation, design and use of past environments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 1.

She looked at the camp at Gilgal, and the heap of foreskins, mystery of the second circumcision (Josh. 5:2–9) and at the twelve stones carried there from the bed of the River Jordan (Josh. 4:1–9) to strengthen the foundation of the twelve Apostles.

Night was hardly over when, with burning devotion, she reached the Jordan. As she stood on the river-bank she saw the sun rise, and remembered the Sun of Righteousness (Mal. 4:2) and how the priests went dry-shod across the river-bed (Josh. 3:16). And how the waters made way, and stood to right and left at the command of Elijah and Elisha (II Kings 2:8). And how by his baptism, the Lord cleansed the waters which had been fouled by the flood, and stained by the extermination of the human race.⁴⁹

Jerome converted the Holy Land to Christianity through hermeneutical devices. First he studied Hebrew, in order to extract the true, pristine meaning from the biblical text. He used Jewish Palestinians for that matter, discussing with them the Hebrew sense of the words and the Jewish interpretations of the verses.⁵⁰ By extracting from them arcane local knowledge about Locations, these Palestinian Jews became tools for converting the holy sites. Their knowledge, in Jerome's possession, established legitimacy for Christian interpretation and Christian domination.⁵¹ Jerome used this knowledge to read (and write) Christian

⁴⁹ Jerome, Epistula 108: 11–12, ed. I Hilberg, *CSEL* 55 (Vienna: Tempsky, 1912; English translation of the Holy Land pilgrimage, J. Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the crusades* (Warminster: Aris and Phillips Jerusalem, 1977), pp. 85–7. See also Susan Weingarten, *The saint's saints: Hagiography and geography in Jerome* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2005), pp. 193–265.

⁵⁰ Much was written on Jerome's Hebrew knowledge. See Adam Kamesar, *Jerome, Greek scholarship, and the Hebrew Bible: a study of the Quaestiones Hebraicae in Genesim* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993); Newman, 'Jerome and the Jews'; Andrew Cain, *The letters of Jerome: Asceticism, biblical exegesis, and the construction of Christian authority in late antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Hillel I. Newman, 'How should we measure Jerome's Hebrew competence?', in Andrew Cain and Josef Lössl (eds), *Jerome of Stridon: His life, writings and legacy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 131–40.

⁵¹ Andrew Jacobs aptly termed Jerome's study of Hebrew and Jewish interpretations 'academic imperialism', a term based on Edward Said's notion of 'cultural imperialism'. Jacobs, *Remains of the Jews*, pp. 69–71. Jacobs writes that Jerome's Jewish informants "translate" biblical sites into contemporary loca sancta by verifying and authenticating their original meaning for Jerome (*ibid.*, p. 74).

interpretation into space. In all these places, geography and history became tools for imbuing places with Christian spiritual meaning.⁵²

Of all the events connected to the Mount of Olives, the most important is the Ascension. Other biblical events are secondary, albeit connected to it. The angels – Cherubim – who flew there from the Temple reminded the pilgrim of the destruction of the Jewish Temple, and of the Church that was constructed in its stead. Every historical event described in the Old Testament had its New Testament counterpart, which clarified its deep spiritual meaning, and surmounted it like a transparency that is placed on top of another, so that together they give the complete picture and convey its full meaning. Baptism – Christian baptism – is the true explanation for the cleaning of the water by Elisha,⁵³ and the twelve apostles are the realisation and meaning of the twelve stones that were taken out of the Jordan. By saying that the twelve stones of Gilgal ‘strengthen the foundation of the twelve Apostles’, Jerome asserts that the biblical story is a prefiguration of the New Testament account and thus inferior to it.⁵⁴

In Jerome’s elaborate style the events of the Old Testament are interwoven with those of the New Testament and are seen by the viewer – Paula – as elements integrated into the texture of the Christian landscape she visits. Only through her eyes – the eyes of a knowledgeable Christian believer – does the scenery receive its true and full meaning: ‘With burning devotion, she reached the Jordan. As she stood on the river-bank she saw the sun rise, and remembered the Sun of Righteousness ...’ First Paula reached the place, then she stood there, saw the sun and finally, she remembered the meaning of what she had seen. Understanding is an elaborate process, a complex one, and its achievement needs supporting, crutches so to say, provided by going, seeing and remembering. For Paula and Jerome, places were above all tools for remembering and understanding, devices for preserving memories and holding them ‘in place’, as framed by Edward Casey, ‘Place is a *mise en scène* for remembered events precisely to the extent that it guards

⁵² This appropriation of the Holy Land, writes Bowman, must have been acutely felt in relation to Jewish sites, where an ‘interpretational imperialism lent itself easily to both a textual and a literal usurpation of the Jews’ history and holy sites’. Glenn Bowman, ‘Pilgrim narratives of Jerusalem and the Holy Land: A study in ideological distortion’, in Alan Morinis (ed.), *Sacred journeys: The anthropology of pilgrimage* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1992), p. 156.

⁵³ See also Ep. 46, 13: ‘We shall look upon the waters of Jordan purified for the washing of the Lord’.

⁵⁴ As Oded Irshai showed, the strategy of double traditions in which the later, Christian tradition reduces the importance of the former, Jewish one, is apparent already in the Bordeaux Pilgrim description. Irshai, ‘The Christian appropriation of the Holy Land’.

and keeps these events within its self-delimiting perimeters ... place holds in by giving to memories an authentically local habitation: by being their place-holder.⁵⁵

Most telling is Jerome's treatment of Kiriath-Sepher. Like many writers in Late Antiquity, Jerome was fond of etymologies. Etymology had always raised considerable interest in Christian circles, and it was believed that names 'were not haphazard, but contained mysteries and theological truth.'⁵⁶ For Jerome, biblical names were a key for understanding, a hermeneutical tool, and he collected them in an etymological dictionary, his *Book of Hebrew Names*, that included among others, names of places.⁵⁷ Kiriath-Sepher is not included in that dictionary. Nevertheless, while describing Paula's journey through the holy places, Jerome writes: 'She had no desire to go to Kiriath-Sepher ("Village of the Letters"), for despising the letter that kills, she had found the Spirit that gives life.'⁵⁸ Kiriath-Sepher (literally Town of the Book) appears in Joshua 15:15 and again in Judges 1:11 and is translated in both as 'civitas Litterarum' – 'city of Letters', a translation based on the Septuagint version. This translation allowed Jerome to put forward a clear and compact formulation of the Christian perception regarding the inferiority of the literal, 'carnal' (Jewish) reading versus the spiritual (Christian) one. It is interesting to note, that in his book of interpretations of Hebrew names, Jerome writes: 'Sefar narratio sive liber' (Book, account or book) without mentioning the *littera* option.⁵⁹ Yet, in the epitaph to Paula (as well as

⁵⁵ Edward S. Casey, *Remembering: A phenomenological study* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. 189. Casey writes (ibid.): 'On the one hand, *place is selective for memories*: that is to say, a given place will invite certain memories while discouraging others ... On the other hand, *memories are selective for places*: they seek out particular places as their natural habitats ...' See also Carruthers, *The craft of thought*, p. 43.

⁵⁶ Kamesar, *Jerome*, p. 103.

⁵⁷ Hieronymus, *Liber interpretationis hebraicorum nominum*, ed. Paulus de Lagarde, CCSL 72 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1959); the book is a Latin translation of a lost Greek work, attributed by Jerome to Philo. See Newman, 'Jerome and the Jews', pp. 81–5. Even before that, Jerome translated into Latin Eusebius's book of place-names, the *Onomasticon*, adding information appropriate to his own time (Eusebius, *Das Onomasticon der biblischen Ortsnamen*, ed. E. Klostermann, GCS 11, (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1904). A third book that belongs to the same group is the *Hebraicae Quaestiones in Genesios*, ed. Paulus de Lagarde, CCSL 72 and see note 50 above.

⁵⁸ Epistula 108, 11: 'Noluit pergere ad Cariath-sepher, id est vinculum litterarum, quia contemnens occidentem litteram, reppererat spiritum vivificantem'. Nevertheless, 'vinculum' should be read 'viculum'. See: Paul Devos, 'Une fausse lecture dans la lettre 108 de S. Jérôme (Epitaph Sae Paula)', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 87 (1969), 213. See also Matthias Thiel, *Grundlagen und Gestalt der Hebräischkenntnisse des frühen Mittelalters* (Biblioteca degli 'Studi Medievali, IV) (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di studi sull'alto Medioevo, 1973).

⁵⁹ Hieronymus, *Liber interpretationis hebraicorum nominum*, 10, 21.

in his Bible translations) he preferred a reading that served his exegetical aims. He achieved this through ‘creative philology’,⁶⁰ by ‘critically sifting this material, selecting that which is “appropriate to Holy Scripture” and rejecting that which is not, and, secondly, by interpreting and modifying his sources where necessary.’⁶¹ According to the books of Joshua and of Judges, Kiriath-Sepher was the old name of Devir, and not in use any more. But to achieve his aim Jerome needed the name of the place, not the place itself. He used it metaphorically, in order to keep Paula away from the Jewish, literal meaning. Kiriath-Sepher as village of letters had no place in the converted Christian sacred map.

‘Carnal readings are much the same. Spiritual readings are all different’, wrote Frank Kermode.⁶² In order to assert the superiority of the spiritual Christian understanding of text and space and of space as text, Jerome allows himself some freedom. He uses his power as the all knowing Christian interpreter to shape Christian memory and meaning, and erase, with a stroke of his pen, the Jewish ones. His pen kills and gives life. While preventing Paula from going to Kiriath-Sepher because of the letters that kills, he achieves the killing of the Jewish past.⁶³

For Jerome, space is a map constructed of names – names of mountains, rivers, towns and villages, all imbued with Christian meaning. In some the meaning is overt – historical. These are ‘places where’ a formative Christian episode took place, like the baptism in the Jordan or the Ascension in the Mount of Olives.⁶⁴ In others, it is hidden, as in Kiriath-Sepher or Gilgal. By deciphering names and explaining meaning, Jerome exposes the hidden Christian essence of space, thus declaring its true identity as a Christian Holy Land.

⁶⁰ Heinemann’s definition of the philology of the rabbis: Isaac Heinemann, *The Methodology of the Aggadab* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1950), *passim* (in Hebrew); Newman, ‘How should we measure?’, p. 137

⁶¹ Kamesar, *Jerome*, p. 179.

⁶² Frank Kermode, *The genesis of secrecy: On the interpretation of narrative* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 9.

⁶³ See Jacobs, *Remains of the Jews*, p. 7: ‘Power does not only mean the brute exercise of force; it also signals the ways in which language and practices can constrain and conform, the ways in which a universe of meanings and habits shapes and constructs reality’.

⁶⁴ On ‘places where’ see Smith, *To take place*, pp. 88–95; Mary B. Campbell, *The witness and the other world: Exotic European travel writing, 400–1600* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988); Casey, *Remembering*, pp. 186–7.

Space and Ritual

During her three years of pilgrimage to the holy places, Egeria took part in ritualised performances of guided pilgrimages. These performances had a ‘transformative potential’, and they deeply moved her, as they moved and transformed pilgrims in the generations to come.⁶⁵ While the pilgrim was transformed, the landscape was also remodelled. Egeria’s detailed description shows how, by walking, reading, telling, praying and performing, the pilgrim made the holy places his own.

One of the most striking sections in Egeria’s pilgrimage description is her journey to Mount Nebo.⁶⁶ She set out on her tour with an entourage of a presbyter and deacons from Jerusalem and several monks. They arrived at the summit of the mountain after visiting en route several biblical spots, such as the place where the Israelites crossed the river Jordan (Josh. 3–5), the place where they mourned Moses (Deut. 34), the place where Moses wrote and blessed the children of Israel (Deut. 32, 33), and the waters that he took out of the rock (Exod. 17; Num. 20; Num. 21). Egeria visited the Holy Land when pilgrimage customs and rituals crystallised. They were new to her. After describing them in detail, she summarised their essence:

And it was always our practice when we managed to reach one of the places we wanted to see to have first a prayer, then a reading from the book, then to say an appropriate psalm and another prayer. By God’s grace we always followed this practice whenever we were able to reach the place we wanted to see.⁶⁷

For Egeria, a holy site was a ritual space, a place for reading texts and performing symbolic acts. Pilgrims believed that prayer in holy places had a special quality and that it was more effective there than elsewhere. Egeria described her pilgrimage as a journey ‘for the sake of prayer’ (*gratia orationis*), a journey for liturgical purposes.⁶⁸ In many places, she also took part in the Eucharist, performed by a presbyter who accompanied her. Thus, for example, when she reached Horeb ‘to which the holy prophet Elijah fled from the presence of King Ahab’, and was excited to see that ‘the cave where Elijah hid can be seen there to

⁶⁵ Feldman, ‘Constructing a shared bible land’, p. 354.

⁶⁶ Egeria, 10–12.

⁶⁷ Egeria, 10:7.

⁶⁸ Egeria, 13:1; 17:1. It seems that this unique experience is what attracts pilgrims to Jerusalem even to the present day. See Feldman, ‘Constructing a shared bible land’.

this day, the 'holy men,' that is, the hermits living there, showed her around, and 'there too we made the Offering and prayed very earnestly and a passage was read from the Book of Kingdoms'.⁶⁹

Climbing the steep slope on foot, Egeria and her company reached the summit of Mount Nebo. This was also the summit of her experience, worthy of the arduous walking and climbing. For the 'saints' living there showed her Moses' tomb, providing a novel, local explanation to the biblical verse: 'no human being knoweth his burial' (Deut. 34:6). Then they took her out of the church, to look down from the summit itself and see 'most of Palestine, the Promised Land'. Coming straight out, the delighted pilgrims could look down and see 'the places which are described in the Books of Moses' while their local guides told them which places they were seeing. After viewing many cities mentioned in the Bible, including the traces of the camp of Moses and the children of Israel, they departed and went back by the same road by which they had come, to Jerusalem.

When standing on the summit of Mount Nebo and looking down at the Promised Land Egeria did not follow just her local guides, but Moses himself who 'climbed Mount Nebo from the plains of Moab to the top of Pisgah, across from Jericho' (Deut. 34:1). She looked down on the land from the very same point, reading from the very same book, in what can be described as an act of *Immitatio Moysi*.⁷⁰ But while Moses saw the land from above but did not enter it, Egeria saw it and then went back to it – to the Christian Jerusalem familiar to her through seeing, walking and performing rituals.

In the second part of her letter, Egeria describes in detail the liturgy performed by the Jerusalem Church during the entire year.⁷¹ This dramatic liturgy was shaped during the crucial years of Cyril's bishopric (circa 351–86), the years in which Jerusalem was transformed from a marginal provincial town to a Christian capital. Cyril, an articulate bishop, put much emphasis on the physical, geographical entity of the holy city as a place where Christian experience and understanding is deeper and closer to its origins. He reminded the catechumens whom he educated that 'others merely hear but we see and touch';⁷² that is, while Christians all over the world could learn about the biblical

⁶⁹ Egeria, 4:2–3.

⁷⁰ See Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony, "Imitatio Moysi and Pilgrimage in the Life of Peter the Iberian", *Le Muséon* 118 (2005), 45–65.

⁷¹ Egeria, 29–49.

⁷² Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* 13, 22 (Catechetical Lectures, 13, 22), in W. C. Reischl and J. Rupp (eds), *Cyriilli Hierosolymitarum archiepiscopi opera quae supersunt omnia*, vol. 2 (Munich, 1860), 80.

events through hearing and reading, in Jerusalem they could see and touch the places where these events took place.⁷³

The main novelty of the Jerusalem liturgy as described by Egeria is its processional character. During the important festivals the entire city served as a ritual space, in which the congregation was moved from one place to another, singing hymns and reciting psalms to commemorate the New Testament events in their original localities.⁷⁴ The participants in this stationary liturgy, citizens and pilgrims alike, while moving between 'the same places' in 'the same time' of the biblical events,⁷⁵ could feel as if they were present in the original events themselves. Past becomes present, and landscape becomes a Christian map. The processions were routes among textual sites, the physical activity of walking mirroring and deepening the mental activity of remembering. In Byzantine Jerusalem, 'story, ritual, and place, could be one.'⁷⁶

Baptism

This situation was bound to change. In the seventh century, after taking over Jerusalem, the Moslems chose the Temple Mount as their religious centre. They did so probably because this was the only vacant space in Jerusalem not dotted with Christian religious buildings, but also because of the ancient aura connected to the Mountain.⁷⁷ The Moslems rulers also allowed the Jews to come back and settle in the city. Christian exclusivity was no more, and Jerusalem became once again what Mary Louise Pratt termed a 'contact zone', that is a 'social space where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other.'⁷⁸

Some thirty years after the Muslim conquest of Palestine, Arculf, a Gallic bishop, made an intensive pilgrimage to the holy places. On his return, his ship

⁷³ On Cyril and the holy places see Walker, *Holy city, Holy places?*

⁷⁴ John Baldwin, *The urban character of Christian worship: the origins, development, and meaning of stationary liturgy* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1987); see also, Stéphan Verhelst, 'La liturgie de Jérusalem à l'époque Byzantine: Genèse et structure de l'année liturgique', PhD thesis, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 2000; available to download at <http://www.mendeley.com/profiles/stephane-verhelst/>.

⁷⁵ Egeria uses time and again the phrase 'apta diei et loco' – according to time and place (32:1; 35:3; 35:4; 39:5; 40:1; 42; 43:5; 47:5).

⁷⁶ Smith, *To take place*, p. 86. According to Smith, ritual activity transforms space into place. *To take place*, chap. 5; Carruthers, *The craft of thought*, p. 44.

⁷⁷ Busse, 'Tempel, Grabeskirche und Haram aš-šarif'.

⁷⁸ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial eyes: travel writing and transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 4; See also Jacobs, *Remains of the Jews*, Introduction, pp. 1–17.

was wrecked in a storm and he finally arrived – it is not quite clear how – at the isle of Iona, off the coast of Scotland. Adomnán, the local learned abbot, heard Arculf's account of his pilgrimage and put it into writing. The long, detailed account opens with a description of Jerusalem. After listing the city's gates, the author relates:

This item too which the holy Arculf related to us concerning the special honour in Christ of this city ought not, it seems, to be passed over. On the twelfth day of the month of September, he says, there is an annual custom whereby a huge concourse of people from various nations everywhere is wont to come together in Jerusalem to do business by mutual buying and selling. Consequently it happens inevitably that crowds of different peoples are lodged in this hospitable city for some days. Owing to the very great number of their camels, horses, asses, and oxen, all carriers of divers merchandise, filth from their discharges spreads everywhere throughout the city streets, the stench proving no little annoyance to the citizens, and walking being impeded. Wonderful to relate, on the night of the day on which the said bands depart with their various beasts of burden, there is released from the clouds an immense downpour of rain, which descends on the city, and renders it clean of dirt by purging away all the abominable filth from the streets. For the site itself of Jerusalem is so arranged by God, its founder, on a gentle incline, falling away from the northern summit of Mount Sion to the low-lying regions at the northern and eastern walls, that this great flood of rain cannot by any means lie stagnant on the streets, but flows like torrents from the higher regions to the low-lying. The flow of heavenly waters, then, pouring through the eastern gates, and bearing all the filth and nuisance with it, enters the valley of Josaphat, swells the torrent of Cedron, and after such a baptism of Jerusalem straightway the copious flood ceases. Thus one should carefully note the magnitude and character of the honour which this chosen and famous city has in the sight of the eternal father, who does not suffer it to remain soiled for long, but quickly cleanses it out of reverence for his only begotten son, who has the honoured places of his holy cross and resurrection within the compass of its walls.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ *Adamnan's De Locis Sanctis*, I, 1, ed. Denis Meehan, *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 3 (Dublin, 1958), pp. 40–43 (the text included in Meehan's edition was edited by Ludwig Bieler). : I am dealing extensively with this story in my forthcoming article: "Wondrous Nature: Landscape and Weather in Early Pilgrimage Narratives". Arculf related another miracle of water – he saw a rock outside Bethlehem, over which was poured the water of Jesus' first washing, and since then the channel there is always filled with water. (*De locis sanctis*, II, 3). A water miracle is related also in Adomnán's *Life of Saint Columba*, II,10,

Immediately following the elaborated description of the washing of Jerusalem Adomnán adds the following paragraph:

However, in that celebrated place where once the temple (situated towards the east near the wall) arose in its magnificence, the Saracens now have a quadrangular prayer house. They built roughly by erecting upright boards and great beams on some ruined remains. The building, it is said, can accommodate three thousand people at once.⁸⁰

As said above, the cited chapter opens Adomnán's book, and it gives meaning to the work in its entirety. Unlike the following chapters, each one of them dealing with a specific site, this one describes Jerusalem as a whole and plays, it would seem, a key interpretative role in the text. Jerusalem, the 'chosen city' (*electa civitas*), Adomnán tells us, had been founded by God. He built it so that it would remain clean at all times. The very shape of the city – its gentle slope from Mount Zion to the east and the descending gradient of the streets toward the Kidron Valley – are all expressions of divine grace. This in itself is a miracle. Yet, God continues to show his providence time and again, annually bringing down torrential rain in order to cleanse his chosen city of its filth.⁸¹ Adomnán refers to the purifying rainwater as 'heavenly waters'⁸² and to its action as 'baptism'. Like baptism, the rain confers divine grace upon God's city, and like baptism it determines and asserts its Christian identity, converting it anew. Adomnán's

ed. and trans. Alan Orr Anderson and Marjorie Oglivie Anderson (revised edition, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

⁸⁰ *Adamnan's De Locis Sanctis*, p. 43.

⁸¹ On 'continuing miracles' in Adomnán's *De locis sanctis* see lately Thomas O'Loughlin, *Adomnán and the holy places* (London: T and T Clark, 2007), pp. 116–24. On the cleansing of Jerusalem, see *ibid.*, pp. 116–18. On conversion as a cleansing process, 'one which through purification provides a shield against danger', see Mircea Eliade, *Rites and symbols of initiation*, trans. W.R. Task (New York: Harper And Brothers, 1958), p. 124; Eliade, *Patterns in comparative religion*, pp. 188–215.

⁸² Jerome too, in his letter to Marcella (Ep. 46, 2), refers to the rain of heaven that waters the holy land: 'All this Abraham undergoes that he may dwell in a land of promise watered from above, and not like Egypt, from below ... a land that looks for the early and the latter rain from heaven.' A parallel Jewish tradition is found in the Babylonian Talmud: 'Our Rabbis have taught: Palestine is watered first and then the rest of the world. Palestine is watered by rain and the rest of the world by the residue (of the rain)'. BT, Tractate Ta'anit, 10a, trans. Henry Malter, *The Treatise Ta'anit* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1967), pp. 134–7. On 'living water' which came to be seen as existing somewhere in the sky, see Eliade, *Patterns in comparative religion*, p. 193.

description is thus a ‘conversion narrative’, which uses canonical language to shape reality and describe it.⁸³ To support his reading of the text as meaning a real baptism, Thomas O’Loughlin writes: “Moreover, we think of baptism as what happens to individuals, but until long after Adomnán’s time there was the notion of the baptism of peoples (*gentes*) as well as of individuals; and if nations could be baptised so too could cities since a “city” – above all this city of Jerusalem – was, by metonymy, the Church ...”⁸⁴

Adomnán notes that this constant divine intervention in Jerusalem’s geography and weather expresses the Father’s special regard for His Son, who was crucified and resurrected in Jerusalem. He does not mention – perhaps because the point was obvious to his readers – that the day on which Jerusalem is ‘baptised’ each year is the festival of the dedication of the Anastasis church, the *encaenia*, which takes place on the very day that, according to tradition, the True Cross was discovered – a miraculous event that essentially initiated the history of Christian Jerusalem.⁸⁵ The many peddlers who came to the city presumably attended the fair that was held around the festive day, when great numbers of pilgrims would assemble from all directions. As early as the 380s, Egeria relates that multitudes came to Jerusalem for the great festival, including dozens of distinguished bishops. She writes that, ‘not one of them fails to make for Jerusalem to share the celebration of this solemn feast ... People regard it as a grave sin to miss taking part in this solemn feast unless anyone had been prevented from coming by an emergency.’⁸⁶ According to Egeria, the *encaenia* ranks equally with Easter and Epiphany.⁸⁷

Adomnán’s account indicates that the renowned miracle of the finding of the cross was re-confirmed each year by the miraculous baptism of the place where the original miracle had taken place. Just as the ‘Invention’ of the True Cross in Jerusalem expressed and symbolised, once and for all time, the termination of the

⁸³ According to Stromberg, *Language and self-transformation*, pp. 2–3, canonical language is ‘a set of symbols concerned with something enduring and beyond everyday reality’.

⁸⁴ O’Loughlin, *Adomnán and the holy places*, p. 118

⁸⁵ The festival of the *encaenia* took part on 14 September; On the finding of the true cross, see above, note 29. On the festival, see Athanase Renoux, *Le codex arménien Jérusalem* 121, 67 (PO 35,1, Turnhout: Brepols, 1969, pp. 222–5); Anton Baumstark, *Liturgie comparée* (Paris: Editions de Chevetogne, 1953), p. 203; Wilkinson, *Egeria’s travels*, pp. 79–80.

⁸⁶ Egeria, 49, 1–2.

⁸⁷ Ibid. The combination of a fair and a great festival was quite common, another example from the same period can be found in the festival of Mamre: see Aryeh Kofsky, ‘Mamre: A case of a regional cult?’, in Aryeh Kofsky and Guy G. Stroumsa (eds), *Sharing the sacred: Religious contacts and conflicts in the Holy Land* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 1998), pp. 24–5.

Jewish era in the city and the start of the Christian era, so the annual baptism of the city demonstrated once more that the city had been converted to Christianity and justified Christian rule therein. The link between the Christian dedication festival and the living water poured on the city from heaven implies that God's power is conferred specifically upon Christian Jerusalem, the place of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, the most important Christian shrine on earth.

It is important to recall that, by the time this account was written, Jerusalem had already been in Muslim hands for some thirty years. Former Christian exclusivity gave way to a kind of religious pluralism, which intensified tensions but also enforced all parts to maintain some degree of dialogue. From now on, Jerusalem had two centres of gravitation, one in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the other on the Temple Mount where the Moslems built their shrines. Moreover, Christians and Moslems were now joined by Jews, who were permitted to return to the city. Although not referring directly to the political and demographic situation in Jerusalem, the first chapter of Adomnán's work and its position at the head of the book have a clear polemical meaning. As Jerusalem is now dominated by strangers, the Christian writer needs to prove that in the eyes of God it is still a Christian city. The miracle that happens each year on the days of the Christian festival is a strong proof of that. The historical claims of the Jews and the political power of the Moslems cannot change the Christian essence of the city in the eyes of God. The following disdainful description of the Moslem shrine, which is in marked contrast to the detailed survey of the magnificent Christian churches to follow, marginalises the Moslems and belittles their power over the city. The proximity of the description of the filth that spreads in the city before its baptism to the description of the Moslem shrine is telling in itself. In Christianity, Judaism and Islam alike are always connected with filth and pollution, impurity and sin.⁸⁸ All can be washed away by the power of the pure waters of baptism, a ritual that takes place in Jerusalem every year at the same time – a liturgical act performed by God himself.

Important as these ideological aims might be, Adomnán's description of Jerusalem as a Christian space seems to reflect it quite faithfully. In the seventh and the eighth centuries, Jerusalem still retained its distinct Christian character, and the glamour of the Christian buildings had not yet faded away.⁸⁹ This

⁸⁸ Alexandra Cuffel, *Gendering disgust in medieval religious polemic* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), p.13: 'both Muslims and Christians focused on the other as polluting violators of sacred space whose entry into the Holy Land, especially Jerusalem, was akin to rape...'

⁸⁹ F.E. Peters, *The distant shrine: The Islamic centuries in Jerusalem* (New York: AMS Press, 1993), pp. 68–90.

complex situation – a mainly Christian city, ruled by Moslems and inhabited by Christians, Moslems and Jews, is reflected in a short episode related by the Christian historian Theophanes, an episode that also bears upon the question of the conversion of space:

In this year Qumaros started to build the temple at Jerusalem, but the structure would not stand and kept falling down. When he enquired after the cause of this, the Jews said: 'If you do not remove the cross that is above the church on the Mount of Olives, the structure will not stand'. On this account the cross was removed from there, and thus their building was compacted. For this reason Christ's enemies took down many crosses.⁹⁰

Theophanes wrote his chronicle at the beginning of the ninth century. The episode quoted above supposedly took place in the year 643–44, when Omar began to build the mosque on the Temple Mount. Behind Theophanes' words one can feel the tension between the three religious groups that inhabited Jerusalem after the Moslem conquest. Now under Moslem rule, the majority of the city's population was Christian and its overall character was Christian as well. The city was dotted with splendid Christian buildings – churches, monasteries and chapels. It would take the Moslems several hundred years to gradually change the character of the city and leave their mark on its landscape. In those early years, the Jews, having been granted permission to return to Jerusalem, came to the aid of the Moslems in their attempt to make the city their home. They were recruited by the Moslems specifically because of their 'knowledge' of the place, an inherited knowledge that remained valid in spite of the Jews' absence from the city for hundreds of years. In Theophanes' story, the authority of the Jews with regard to the secrets of space is acknowledged by Moslems and Christians alike.

Theophanes favoured the use of images and probably intended his story to demonstrate the power of the cross which prevented the Moslem temple from being built and Jerusalem from being converted to Islam. But in doing so, he also acknowledged the special nature of the Jews, who had access to the deepest secrets of the landscape. Without them and their knowledge, the land could not be converted. New rulers of the city had to act through them in order to make it

⁹⁰ Theophanis, *Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor, Vol. 1, (Leipzig, 1883; repr. Hildesheim and New York, 1980), English translation, *The chronicle of Theophanes confessor: Byzantine and near eastern history AD 284–813*, translated with introduction and commentary by Cyril Mango and Roger Scott, with the assistance of Geoffrey Greatrex (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 476

their own. Three hundred years earlier the place of Golgotha was found with the help of the Jews. Now they did the same for the new Moslem rulers. Although the Jews refused to convert, the conversion of their old homeland still depended on them.⁹¹ Thus, the entrance of a third party – the Moslems – to the Jerusalem scene did not dim, but intensified the sharp Christian–Jewish dichotomy.

Not long after Arculf's visit to Jerusalem, however, the rough, unattractive building he had seen was replaced by the Dome of the Rock (691–92), and the Al-Aqsa mosque was soon added (715). Both buildings were erected during the Umaid rule (661–750) and became the clear, visible sign of the historical change that had taken place in the city.⁹² The two magnificent Moslem edifices also forced the Christians to change their attitude toward the Temple Mount. The map of Crusader Jerusalem thus looked quite different from the Byzantine map. The Dome of the Rock, renamed *Templum Domini*, and the Al-Aqsa Mosque, which now became *Templum Salomonis*, were distinguished components of Crusader Jerusalem, second in ritual significance only to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre itself.⁹³ Thus, while in Byzantine Jerusalem religious tendencies caused changes in the landscape and the Mount remained a mound of ruins, in the Crusader period changes in the landscape caused alterations in liturgy and concepts. For almost one hundred years, the Mount was converted to Christianity and served as a prominent Christian symbol, until Saladin took over Jerusalem and reconverted it to Islam.

Blood on Temple Mount

The moment in July 1099 when the Temple was converted to Christianity was described in detail by the Norman historian Ralph of Caen in his book *Gesta Tancredi*.⁹⁴ While the historical accuracy of the text has been questioned, it is

⁹¹ Ora Limor, 'Christian sacred space and the Jew', pp. 72–4; and see Jacobs, *Remains of the Jews*, pp. 69–71, on 'academic imperialism' (note 51 above).

⁹² For a short summary on the sanctification of Jerusalem in Islam during this period, see Ofer Livne-Kafri, 'On Muslim Jerusalem in the period of its formation', *Liber Annuus* 55 (2005), 203–16

⁹³ On the Temple Mount and its Christian traditions, see Denys Pringle, *The churches of the crusaders kingdom of Jerusalem: A Corpus*, Vol. 3, *The City of Jerusalem* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), chap. 5; John Wilkinson, *Jerusalem pilgrimage 1099–1185* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1988), pp. 38–45

⁹⁴ Raoul de Caen, *Gesta Tancredi*, RHC Occ., 3, pp. 695–9; English translation: Bernard S. Bachrach and David S. Bachrach (trans.), *The Gesta Tancredi of Ralph of Caen: A history of the*

not the historical facts that interest us here but the way the moment of transition was perceived by a medieval writer.⁹⁵

According to Ralph's text, Tancred, the renowned Norman hero of the First Crusade, arrived with his soldiers at the gates of the Temple Mount, broke them open, and entered the Mount, killing with his sword the Moslem fighters defending it. He entered the Moslem shrine, 'the doors opened up to his banner held high'. Inside the shrine, we are astonished to hear, the Franks saw 'a cast image, made of silver, sat on the highest throne. It is so heavy that six men with strong arms could barely lift it, and ten barely sufficed to carry it'. Tancred and his Christian knights came soon to understand this to be an image of Mohamet, who is defined as 'the first antichrist, the depraved and pernicious Mohamet'. Unable to bear the presence of 'Pluto's slave' in the 'edifice of Solomon's God', they tore down the image and broke it. Taking off sheets of silver from the walls of the shrine, Tancred distributed the booty among his soldiers, an act that caused the rage of the other leaders.⁹⁶ Then, after uncovering the gems of the temple hidden below silver and gold covering, Tancred and his men slaughtered the Moslems defending the mountain, a merciless slaughter described in forceful imagery:

The sword passed no one in peace. The sword tore up ribs, and necks, and cut through groins, backs and stomachs. The sanctuary was covered with vast quantities of blood. The glory of all of the craftsmen from throughout the world was submerged in a lake at whose waves even its creator shuddered. How great, how great was the amazement at the interior of the temple. The doors, walls, seats, tables, columns, all were bloody. There was nothing without blood. The floor was

Normans on the First Crusade (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 144–54.

⁹⁵ See for example Jean-Charles Payen, 'Une légende épique en gestation: Les "Gesta Tancredi" de Raoul de Caen', in *La chanson de geste et le mythe Carolingien: mélanges René Louis* (Vézelay: Musée archéologique régional, 1982), pp. 1051–62.

⁹⁶ *Gesta Tancredi*, chaps. 128–30 (trans. Bachrach and Bachrach, pp. 144–5). The story of the idol on the Temple Mount reflects the Christian image of Islam as a pagan religion, an image based on ignorance, fear and prejudices. See: Michael Camille, *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-Making in Medieval Art*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 135–151; Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100–1450*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2009), pp. 235–247; Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The making of an image* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009 [1993]); R.W. Southern, *Western views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978); John Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the medieval European imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); R.G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as others saw it: A survey and evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian writings on early Islam* (Princeton NJ: Darwin Press, 1997).

completely covered by the slaughter. The walls were submerged knee high [in blood]. The gore was so great that waves stained the *penates*.⁹⁷

Exaggerated as it may sound, the blood motif is prominent in other descriptions of the conquest. 'Since blood was believed to have the power both to consecrate and to desecrate, writes Suzanne Conklin Akbari, it is unsurprising that medieval Christians thought that 'Jerusalem could be made pure again only through the spilling of blood.'⁹⁸ The idea is apparent in the words of the chronicler Raymond d'Aguilers: 'In the Temple and Porch of Solomon, men rode in blood up to their knees and bridle reins. Indeed, it was a just and splendid judgment of God that this place should be filled with blood of the unbelievers, since it had suffered so long from their blasphemies ...' As the city was taken, Raymond continues right away, the pilgrims 'rejoiced and exalted and sang a new song to the Lord ... A new day, new joy, new perpetual gladness'.⁹⁹

Reading these descriptions makes it clear that the narrators did not feel even slight unease at this extreme bloodshed. No moral justification is needed, as the blood is that of heathens, and fighting the heathens is one of the obligations of the Christian perfect knight. Tancred is depicted here as the representative *par excellence* of the Christian knight whose duty is to bring about the destruction of idols and pagans.¹⁰⁰ It is also quite clear that, for both narrators, the bloodbath of the Temple is what changed its identity, turning it from Moslem Christian.

The graphic descriptions of the bloodshed on the Temple Mount are testimonies for the fascination of medieval people with blood.¹⁰¹ Blood was considered to have healing powers, as in the famous Sylvester legend, in which

⁹⁷ *Gesta Tancredi*, chap. 134.

⁹⁸ Conklin Akbari, *Idols in the East*, p. 237.

⁹⁹ Raimundus de Aguilers, *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Hierusalem*, RHC, Hist. OCC., 3, p. 300; English translation, John Hugh Hill and Laurita L. Hill (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1968), pp. 127–8. . For more references see Akbari, *Idols in the East*, pp. 237–239.

¹⁰⁰ Bachrach and Bachrach write in their introduction: 'Despite these clear indications that Ralph intended his work to be understood as history ... the fact cannot be avoided that significant portions of the *Gesta* demonstrate qualities that are more reminiscent of contemporary entertainment literature, the *chansons de geste*, which did not carry with them the same generic demands for describing real events in the past' (*Gesta Tancredi*, p. 8).

¹⁰¹ Bettina Bildhauer, *Medieval blood* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009); Caroline Walker Bynum's extensive study of the 'blood obsession' of late medieval Europe: Caroline Walker Bynum, *Wonderful blood: Theology and practice in late medieval Northern Germany and beyond* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

Constantine's doctors advise him to bathe in children's blood in order to be healed from leprosy.¹⁰² Jesus' blood flowing down on Adam's skull is a famous metaphor, depicted endlessly in Christian art, for the power of Jesus' sacrifice to atone for Adam's original sin and for the sins of all humanity.¹⁰³ The redemptive power of Jesus' blood (and flesh) is a fundamental component in Christian belief and liturgy, framed in condensed, sharp fashion in the doctrine of the Eucharist.¹⁰⁴

The bloodbath scene on the Temple Mount can be understood as a blood-feud act of the Christian knights against the Moslems: blood generates blood, bloodshed generates bloodshed. 'The idea of blood feud is an example of how ... blood itself just "cries out" for vengeance', writes Bettina Bildhauer.¹⁰⁵ If the image the crusaders saw in the Temple was 'the first Antichrist', then Tancred and his knights were fighting the last battle, the battle of the Day of Judgment, fulfilling their noble duty as Christian knights to defend Christ and the Christian faith. The bloodshed on the Temple Mount can also be described as an act of sacrifice, in the very place where blood sacrifices once were offered to God. The blood was shed there so that the place will be purified and made suitable for Christian ritual. And it can also be described as a washing of the holy place by blood, hence, as baptism by blood. In all cases it brings about as well as symbolises the turning of the place as Christian. The bloodbath, the pouring of blood, is what enabled a launch of Jerusalem's new era – 'A new day, new joy, new perpetual gladness'.

The connection of the Temple Mount to sacrificial blood is as old as the Temple itself. In our context it is worthwhile to note an early tradition, first mentioned by the Bordeaux Pilgrim in 333:

And on the Temple Mount itself where the Temple was which Solomon built, the blood of Zacharias on the marble pavement before the altar (in marmore ante aram) is poured there, you would say ... today. There are also visible the marks of

¹⁰² Although in the legend, refraining from shedding blood and then converting to Christianity is what brought about Constantine's healing.

¹⁰³ Bildhauer, *Medieval blood*, pp. 133–42. Gertrud Schiller cites the Syrian *Cave of treasures* as saying: 'When the Messiah gained victory by the lance, blood and water flowed from his side, ran down into Adam's mouth and was his baptism and thus he was baptized'. Gertrud Schiller, *Iconography of Christian art*, trans. Janet Seligman (London: Lund Humphries, 1972), Vol. 2, pp. 12–14.

¹⁰⁴ Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in late medieval culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

¹⁰⁵ Bildhauer, *Medieval blood*, p. 75. According to Bildhauer, 'Of all biological facts ..., those about blood held a particularly high status as proof in the Middle Ages ... In Eucharistic miracle tales and elsewhere in medieval writing, references to blood were often used to make a truth claim forceful enough to count as absolute, incontrovertible proof' (pp. 20–21).

the shoe nails of the soldiers who slew him ... so that you think they were made in wax.¹⁰⁶

While there is some ambiguity regarding the precise identification of Zacharias in the Christian tradition, there is no confusion, as Irshai writes, as to the Gospel episode referred to here, the slaying of the biblical Zachariah, (Matt. 23:35). Zacharias in this chapter is understood as a type of Christ, prophesying his own martyrdom, and as an early Christian martyr. Jesus' words read:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that killest the prophets, and stone them which are sent to you; how often would I have gathered your children together even as a hen gathers her chicken under her wing, and you would not. Behold your house is left unto you desolate. (Matt. 23:37–38)

The tradition of Zachariah's blood clung fast to the Temple Mount. It is mentioned by the Russian abbot Daniel, who came to Jerusalem with his companions probably in 1107, a mere eight years after the conquest, and stayed for sixteen months: 'Beneath the roof there is a cave cut into the rock, in which the prophet Zachariah was killed; formerly his tomb and his blood were here but not now'.¹⁰⁷ Thus, soon after the conquest of Jerusalem, Zacharias' legend returned to its former place. Although the traces of the blood could no longer be seen, their memory still existed, preserving the link between Jesus' sacrificial blood and the Temple. It is also significant that Daniel terms the Temple 'the church of holy of holies'. The definition 'holy of holies' that Eusebius transferred to the church of the Holy Sepulchre now came back to its original place, where the Temple stood. And indeed, the Temple was accorded a place of priority in Christian liturgy, second in importance only to the Anastasis Church itself. Its prominence can also be gleaned from Crusader heraldry and maps.¹⁰⁸ According to the detailed description of John of Würzburg, a German priest who visited Jerusalem around 1170, the Temple Mount was a magnificent Christian shrine, preserving a group of Old Testament and New Testament traditions that were

¹⁰⁶ *Itinerarium Burdigalense*, 591; see Irshai's discussion in his 'The Christian appropriation of the Holy Land', pp. 482–3, esp. note 48 and the bibliography collected there.

¹⁰⁷ 'The life and journey of Daniel, Abbot of the Russian land', trans. William F. Ryan, in Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrimage*, p. 132.

¹⁰⁸ Joshua Prawer, 'Crusader epigraphy in Jerusalem', in Joshua Prawer and Haggai Ben-Shammai (eds), *The history of Jerusalem: Crusaders and Ayyubids (1099–1250)* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 1991), pp. 384–5 (in Hebrew); Bianca Kühnel, 'The influence of the Crusades on visual depictions of Jerusalem', in *The history of Jerusalem*, pp. 404–6 (Hebrew).

explicitly explained in Latin inscriptions, accompanied by biblical verses. On top of the Temple the Christians affixed a golden cross. Thus writes John:

On the narrower part (of the *Templum Domini*) there is set a high round dome, painted inside and covered outside with lead. The sign of the Holy Cross has fixed to the top by Christians, which is annoying to the Saracens. They would be very glad to see it taken down, and offered much of their own money. For even though they do not hold the faith in the passion of Christ they still revere this Temple, and wish to worship their creator there. But this is to be taken as idolatry according to Augustine, who asserts that anything is idolatry which is done against the faith of Christ.¹⁰⁹

John could not know, of course, how temporary this situation was. Less than twenty-seven years after his visit, Saladin defeated the crusaders at Hattin and reconquered Jerusalem for Islam. The cross that crowned the Temple was dragged down, together with other Christian symbols and signs. The Mount was again accorded a manifest Moslem character, reconverted, so to say, to Islam.

Our tour of converted spaces started with the Temple Mount and terminated there. As we have seen, space is a human product and different people can read it in different ways. Besides its political, institutional and demographic characteristics, space has a symbolic identity, constructed from memories, beliefs, traditions and rituals.¹¹⁰ While Christians left to history their ties to the Mount, many Jews still view it as a Jewish holy place, the site of the destroyed Jewish Temple. This part of the story, however, is beyond the scope of this chapter.

¹⁰⁹ John of Würzburg, in R.B.C. Huygens (ed.), *Peregrinationes tres*, CCCM 139 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1994), pp. 93–5; English translation by Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrimage*, p. 249.

¹¹⁰ Maurice Halbwachs, *On collective memory*, ed. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 119.

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