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## Jerusalem – Aelia Capitolina

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# Jerusalem II: Jerusalem in Roman-Byzantine Times

edited by

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# Jerusalem – Aelia Capitolina: Imperial Intervention, Patronage and Munificence

*Jan Willem Drijvers*<sup>1</sup>

There are few cities in the Roman Empire which over the centuries attracted as much attention from Roman emperors and imperial authorities as Jerusalem. For both political and religious reasons (although the two are not easily separable) Roman emperors showed or were forced to show an interest in Jerusalem and Judaea in general. Their interference with Jerusalem considerably altered the religious character, the urban layout, the demography and even the name of the city. Nevertheless, apart from Hadrian, Heraclius and possibly Septimius Severus no Roman emperor ever visited Jerusalem in the period under discussion. However, Roman empresses, in particular Helena and Eudocia, did visit Jerusalem and like their male counterparts, both imperial women left their marks on the city.

This chapter examines Roman emperors and empresses between Hadrian (117–138) and Heraclius (610–641) and their dealings with and influence on the city of Jerusalem. Religion – Judaism, Christianity and the traditional cults – plays of course an important role in discussing the history of Jerusalem. The city changed its religious identity several times over the centuries under deliberation and the interference of Roman emperors was decisive for Jerusalem's religious identity. That started of course already with the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, which took the heart out of Jewish religious life, and was the beginning of the demise of Jerusalem as a Jewish city. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> century Jerusalem developed into a pagan city and in the 4<sup>th</sup> century a start was made with a process of Christianizing the city. For some three centuries Jerusalem would be Christian until it was captured by the Moslem Arabs in 638 and started to develop into a city defined by Islam.

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<sup>1</sup> I like to thank Oded Irshai and Steve Mason for their valuable comments.



## 1. Pagan Jerusalem

Some forty-five years after the suppression of the Jewish Revolt (66–70), the emperor Trajan (98–117) was confronted with another rising by the Jews. Although it has been suggested that Trajan went back to the anti-Jewish policy of the Flavians,<sup>2</sup> this is unlikely; in general Trajan seems to have left the Jews alone. That changed with the revolt of diaspora Jews in Cyrenaica, Egypt and Cyprus (116–117).<sup>3</sup> This revolt should probably be seen within the context of Trajan's war against the Parthians, in particular the events in the year 116 when conquered peoples including the Jews in Mesopotamia revolted against Roman authority.

The sources give little insight into the motives and the development of the revolt, but it must have been a serious threat to Roman rule since Trajan brutally put it down and had most of the Jews killed in the three subversive regions. Although the source material is thin, probably also Judaea was affected by the revolt. Trajan sent his general Lusius Quietus to the province to prevent the revolt from spreading to Judaea and to nip a possible rising of Judaeans in the bud.<sup>4</sup> As a result, there seem to have been only small pockets of resistance against Rome in Judaea.<sup>5</sup>

### 1.1. *Aelia Capitolina*

When Hadrian (117–138) became emperor he made an end to the conflict with Parthia started by his predecessor and gave up Mesopotamia. Hadrian's guiding principles towards the Jews and Judaea before 130 are hard to establish. In view of his building policy in Judaea and the coin images, scholars like to present Hadrian as hostile to the Jews and their customs such as circumcision. However, late antique rabbinic sources reflect somewhat mixed sentiments; on the one hand, they picture him as an emperor who was friendly toward the Jews and they even mention that he had the (unlikely) intention to restore Jerusalem to the Jews and rebuild the Temple, while on the other hand they reflect less positive sentiments.<sup>6</sup> The Jews may have had a positive view on Hadrian's policy concerning Judaea and harboured expectations for rebuilding Jerusalem. However, those expectations went up into thin air when Hadrian re-founded Jerusalem as a Roman colony in 130.

<sup>2</sup> GOODMAN 2007, 473 f.; cf. WEIKERT 2016, 178–180.

<sup>3</sup> Cass. Dio., 68 32,1–2 (420–423 Cary); Eus. Caes., HE IV 2,1–5 (300,7–302,11 Schwartz). On the revolt e.g. SMALLWOOD 1981, 389–27; GOODMAN 2007, 476–482; HORBURY 2014, 164–277; WEIKERT 2016, 190–201.

<sup>4</sup> SMALLWOOD 1981, 421–427; WEIKERT 2016, 201, 207–212.

<sup>5</sup> On the question of Judaea's involvement in the upheavals see PUCCI BEN ZEEV 2005, 219–257.

<sup>6</sup> See for a discussion WEIKERT 2016, 247–251 and HASAN-ROKEM 2003, 86–337.

On his second eastern journey, which started in 128, Hadrian visited Judaea and Jerusalem.<sup>7</sup> His visit was celebrated with triumphal arches in Gerasa and at the military camp close to Scythopolis was as well as with an issue of *adventus aug. iudaeae* coins. One of his administrative measures was to transform Judaea into a consular province, which came to be named *Syria-Palaestina*.<sup>8</sup> Next to the *Legio X Fretensis* in Jerusalem, a second legion (probably the *Legio VI Ferrata*) was stationed to all likelihood at Caparcotna as soon as 117.<sup>9</sup> In 130 Hadrian re-founded Jerusalem as *Colonia Aelia Capitolina*, named after himself and Jupiter Capitolinus. Jerusalem would not be Jewish anymore but pagan; the Temple would not be rebuilt, as many Jews had hoped for, and instead the cult of Jupiter became central in the city. In the words of Xiphilinus' epitomization of Cassius Dio's *Roman History*: "At Jerusalem he founded a city in place of the one which had been razed to the ground, naming it *Aelia Capitolina*".<sup>10</sup> The new colony was a massive rupture with the Jewish past: from now on Jerusalem would be a Roman city dominated by traditional Graeco-Roman cults.

The sources are not unanimous about the date of the founding of the colony. According to Cassius Dio the foundation of the colony and the buildings of a sanctuary for Jupiter at the Temple Mount led to a new Jewish rising, namely the Bar Kokhba revolt.<sup>11</sup> Eusebius, however, argues that the military colony was founded as a punitive measure after the revolt had been suppressed in 136, which served the Eusebian theodicy concerning the rupture between the Jews and the almighty.<sup>12</sup> The *communis opinio* and preferred date is 130 when Hadrian visited Jerusalem, so before the rise of the Bar Kokhba revolt.<sup>13</sup> However, preparations

<sup>7</sup> On the date of this second journey see BAKER 2012.

<sup>8</sup> There is discussion about the date of this administrative measure in combination with the stationing of a second legion in the province. It is also dated to earlier in Hadrian's reign and even to the last months of Trajan's emperorship; for a profound discussion see ISAAC / ROLL 1998.

<sup>9</sup> WEIKERT 2016, 240–246. The stationing of a second legion in Judaea in all likelihood had nothing to do with the situation in Judaea but with the strengthening of the eastern frontier after Trajan's Parthian War.

<sup>10</sup> Cass. Dio., 69 12,1 (446–447 Cary). Cf. App., Syr. 50 (198–199 White): "The Jewish nation alone still resisted, and Pompey conquered them [...] and destroyed their greatest, and to them holiest, city, Jerusalem [...]. It was afterward rebuilt and Vespasian destroyed it again, and Hadrian did the same in our time." On the foundation of *Colonia Aelia Capitolina* e. g. SMALLWOOD 1981, 432–433; BOATWRIGHT 2000, 196–203; GOODMAN 2007, 486–488; WEIKERT 2016, 263–271. Together with *Colonia Aelia Mursa*, *Aelia Capitolina* was the last veteran colony in the history of Rome; BOATWRIGHT 2000, 172. The new colony was also unique in that it was founded at a site where already for many decades a legion was stationed; ISAAC 1998, 88.

<sup>11</sup> Cass. Dio., 69 12,1–2 (446–447 Cary); Chron. Pasch., Hadr. 3 (474,1–17 Dindorf).

<sup>12</sup> Eus. Caes., HE IV 6,1–4 (306,11–307,5 Schwartz).

<sup>13</sup> E. g. HALFMANN 1986, 207; HORBURY 2014, 308. On the chronology of the foundation of *Aelia*, and discussion of the relevant literary, numismatic and archaeological source material, see WEIKERT 2016, 263–271 and WEKSLER-BDOLAH 2020, 51–60.

for the urban layout of the new city must have started already in the 120s as archaeological evidence suggests,<sup>14</sup> so several years before its official foundation and inauguration by the emperor in 130. It must have taken several decades to build the new city and it was only completed after the Bar Kokhba revolt. Hadrian's intentions for re-founding Jerusalem are not entirely clear. Should the founding of *Aelia* be considered as the final act in the continuous Roman conflicts with the Jews since 66 CE or should it be seen as an exploit on itself? Several disputed and contradictory motives have been put forward, such as: to foster Hadrian's general policy of Romanization through the establishing of Roman cities, of which *Aelia* was one; to respond to the Jewish restlessness by the foundation of a military colony; to please the Jews by restoring their devastated city; to suppress Jewish nationalism by replacing Jewish Jerusalem by a secular city.<sup>15</sup> Presumably, the foundation of *Aelia* should not be seen as an event on itself but as part of Hadrian's general policy in Judaea as well as in the context of his general policy of urbanization.<sup>16</sup> The new colony was well-connected through a new network of roads in Judaea as developed in Hadrian's reign.<sup>17</sup>

*Colonia Aelia Capitolina* was a distinctly Roman city containing an orthographical grid with two colonnaded *cardines maximi* (modern El Wad/Hagai street and Suq Khan es Zeit/Beit Habad street), running from north to south, and a *cardo decumanus* (modern David and Chain Streets) going from west to east. The centre of the city shifted from the Temple Mount to a newly constructed forum with a sanctuary for the Capitoline triad Jupiter, Juno and Minerva, and a temple for Aphrodite. According to Cassius Dio a sanctuary for Jupiter was built on the Temple Mount, but this is doubtful. More likely the Temple Mount (some 20% of the city's area) remained unmolested and continued to be a predominantly desolate area apart from a statue of Hadrian.<sup>18</sup> *Aelia* was not enclosed by walls until the 5<sup>th</sup> century, but it did have city gates (of which only the Neapolis gate has survived) marking the regional roads and the city's thoroughfares.<sup>19</sup> Arches such as the *Ecce Homo* arch and the Propylaeum arch on the city's forum adorned the city's colonnaded streets and seem to have been part of the original design of the colony. Administratively, *Aelia* seems to have been organ-

<sup>14</sup> WEKSLER-BDOLAH/ONN 2017, Streets.

<sup>15</sup> SMALLWOOD 1976, 433–438; cf. ZÄHRNT 1991, 477–480; WEIKERT 2016, 302 sees the refounding of Jerusalem as part of Hadrian's policy of Romanization through the founding of cities.

<sup>16</sup> SCHÄFER 1990. According to GOODMAN 2007, 483–484, the foundation of *Aelia* should be seen in the light of the imperial policy turning Jerusalem and Judaea into a part of the pagan world.

<sup>17</sup> WEKSLER-BDOLAH 2020, 169–202.

<sup>18</sup> Cass. Dio., 69 12,1 (446–447 Cary). Apart from a statue of Hadrian, an idol of Jupiter was possibly also displayed on the Temple Mount; Hier., Comm. Is. I/2,9 (33,12–14 Adriaen). The Bordeaux pilgrim mentions two statues of Hadrian; Itin. Burd. 591,4 (16 Geyer/Cuntz).

<sup>19</sup> MAZOR 2017. For the Temple Mount in *Aelia*'s urban plan, see ELIAV 2003.

ised as any other Roman colony, with a municipal council, duumvirs, aediles and decurions, although it is impossible to establish how the authority between the legionary command and the city administration was divided.<sup>20</sup> *Aelia*'s magistrates were subordinate to the provincial administration of Syria-Palaestina in Caesarea, the provincial capital.

*Aelia Capitolina* was dominated by the presence of the *Legio X Fretensis*.<sup>21</sup> Although archaeological and other evidence is scarce, common opinion has it that the site of the military camp was located on the city's southwestern hill.<sup>22</sup> Much of the construction work for the new colony was carried out by the legionaries as can be concluded from epigraphical evidence.<sup>23</sup> After their term of service, many soldiers and officers probably stayed in *Aelia*; together with the *canabae* they formed the nucleus of the new colony. Veterans from Syria and elsewhere as well as others somehow associated with the military came to live in the new colony. This made *Aelia* very much a town characterized by its connections to the *Legio X Fretensis* and the military in general. Jews seem to have been excluded from living in the city after Bar Kokhba revolt.<sup>24</sup>

In size, the newly founded colony was only some 2/5 of the former Jewish city. *Aelia* was therefore a modest colony in terms of residential area as well as in numbers of inhabitants. Guesses suggest that it had no more than 10000–12000 residents, and possibly less. The transformation in burial customs and the grave goods indicate that demographically Roman Jerusalem was composed of a predominantly pagan populace of non-local origin. Moreover, the main burial grounds to the north of the town were small in area and display little diversity, indicating that the population had declined considerably in comparison to 1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish Jerusalem and that it was rather uniform in terms of social composition.<sup>25</sup> It has recently been argued that because of the lack of archaeological evidence for urban dwellings, the poor epigraphic tradition, the underdevelopment of the city's hinterland and the simple characteristics of burial practices that do not match a prosperous Roman urban center but rather a village of rural character, the civilian city of Roman Jerusalem of the second and 3<sup>rd</sup> century was largely a fiction. Despite its splendid colonnaded streets, its monumental arches and city gates, the city was largely devoid of people and its population in the second and the 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE was not larger than that of a sizable village.<sup>26</sup> The

<sup>20</sup> LIFSHITZ 1977, 484; MILLAR 1990, *Coloniae*, 30; ISAAC 1998, 90.

<sup>21</sup> For an outline of the history of this legion see DABROWA 1993, 11–21.

<sup>22</sup> See WEKSLER-BDOLAH 2020, 19–25.

<sup>23</sup> CIIP I/2, 722–727 all refer to buildings constructed by the *Legio X Fretensis*.

<sup>24</sup> Eus. Caes., HE IV 6,4 (308,7–13 Schwartz); Cass. Dio., 69 12 (446–449 Cary); AVI-YONAH 1976, 15–16; SMALLWOOD 1981, 460. Cf. IRSHAI 1995, 128–135 who argues that the exclusion of Jews from living in or passing through Jerusalem is not beyond doubt.

<sup>25</sup> AVNI 2017; KLONER/KLEIN/ZISSU 2017.

<sup>26</sup> SELIGMAN 2017.

city was dominated by the legion and veterans, and seems not to have attracted many new civilian settlers.

Along with the change of the city's ethnic identity and demography went a religious transformation. The new gentile population brought in by Hadrian, provided with them their own cults. Furthermore, the soldiers of the *Legio X Fretensis* venerated their own divinities. A pagan infrastructure was created with temples and sanctuaries. Jupiter, Aphrodite, Serapis, Dionysus, Mars, Tychè and other deities were venerated in *Aelia*.<sup>27</sup> Their temples and shrines were set up on *Aelia*'s forum and other central places in the city; and sometimes even on sacred Jewish sites, as a consequence of which the city completely lost its Jewish character. Besides the pagan majority *Aelia* had a small Christian community which gradually grew in number in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries, as well as possibly still a small number of Jewish inhabitants.<sup>28</sup>

### 1.2. *The Bar Kokhba Revolt and Beyond*

Hadrian's policy regarding Judaea and Jerusalem provoked vehement reactions from the Jews, according to Cassius Dio. The Jews considered it unacceptable that other peoples were settled in their city bringing their own foreign religious rites.<sup>29</sup> This resulted in the Bar Kokhba revolt, which started in the spring of 132, at a time when Hadrian had already left the region and was far away.<sup>30</sup> This revolt was the last attempt of the Jews to free themselves from Roman rule and to establish an independent Jewish state. Initially the Romans seem to have underestimated the revolt, but when not only Judaea was affected, but Jews everywhere showed signs of disturbance and hostility toward the Roman authorities, Hadrian sent some of his best generals, first among them Julius Severus, former governor of Britain, against the Jews.<sup>31</sup> The victory was hard-won: the suppression of the revolt seems to have required a very large Roman force –

<sup>27</sup> BELAYCHE 2001, 108–70 and her chapter in this volume.

<sup>28</sup> Talmudic references indicate Jewish residents from the Severan period onwards; SMALLWOOD, 1981, 499–500. The Bordeaux Pilgrim, who visited the city in 333, mentions that there once were seven synagogues one of which was still standing in his time; Itin. Burd. 592.6 (16 Geyer/Cuntz). Epiphani., *De mens.* 14 (261 Migne) has similar information. See TSAFRIR 1999, Jerusalem, 139; DRIJVERS 2004, 9–10.

<sup>29</sup> Cass. Dio., 69 12–14 (446–451 Cary) is our main source for the Bar Kokhba revolt. SCHÄFER 1981 has a compilation of all sources about and related to the revolt. A profound discussion of the Bar Kokhba revolt and its sources is provided by HORBURY 2014, 278–409. The *Historia Augusta* (H. A., Hadr. 14,2 [42–45 Magic]) ascribes the cause of the revolt to Hadrian's ban on circumcision; see for this supposed ban the elaborate discussion by WEIKERT 2016, 286–302 and HORBURY 2014, 311–317.

<sup>30</sup> Opinions differ as to whether the foundation of *Aelia* Capitolina was a consequence of the Bar Kokhba war, as Cassius Dio., says or the result as e. g. Eus. Caes., HE IV 6,4 (308.7–308.13 Schwartz) mentions.

<sup>31</sup> Cass. Dio., 69 13,1–2 (448–449 Cary).

soldiers seem to have been especially recruited to crush the rebellion – and took many lives on both sides.<sup>32</sup> Hadrian himself seems to have been in command, at least for a while. The Bar Kokhba rising ended with the capture of the last Jewish stronghold Bethar at the end of 135. Hadrian was acclaimed *imperator* by his troops for the second time and soldiers and generals received military decorations. However, there seems to be no numismatic reflection of the repression of the revolt; nor was the victory publicly glorified by way of a *triumphus* and architectural ornamentation.<sup>33</sup>

There is some discussion whether the Jews captured Jerusalem. Based in particular on Appian and Justin some scholars have argued that the Jews recovered Jerusalem, ejected the Roman legionaries, held the city for a couple of years and may have made a start with the rebuilding of the Temple.<sup>34</sup> However, most scholars consider the information provided by the literary sources unconvincing since there is no direct reference to a Jewish recovery of Jerusalem. Bar Kokhba coins bearing the name Jerusalem need not refer to the city but may be seen as a *pars pro toto*, nor is it evidence that the coins were struck in Jerusalem. In addition, there is also no archaeological evidence to sustain a Jewish capture of Jerusalem after the re-foundation of the city by Hadrian.<sup>35</sup> So, Jerusalem remained in Roman hands during the duration of the revolt.

The victory resulted in another measure by Hadrian: by law Jews were no longer allowed to live in Jerusalem and its municipal territory.<sup>36</sup> Presumably, when Hadrian issued this measure hardly any Jews were living in the city anymore; they must have left it during the Bar Kokhba revolt. Only once a year they were allowed to visit the Temple Mount on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av and to mourn the loss of their Temple.<sup>37</sup> Another repressive measure issued after the suppression of the revolt may have been a ban on circumcision.<sup>38</sup>

Hadrian's policy towards the Jews was continued by his successors in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE. The only exception may have been Septimius Severus. The Severan dynasty was possibly more sympathetic towards Judaism and it seems

<sup>32</sup> Amongst other soldiers from the *Classis Misenensis* were transferred to Judaea; ECK / PANGERL 2006. So many Romans perished that Hadrian when reporting to the Senate omitted the usual beginning "I and the legions are well"; Cass. Dio., 69 14,3 (450–451 Cary). See for the Bar Kokhba rising e. g. ECK 1999; SCHÄFER 2003; MOR 2016; SMALLWOOD 1981, 428–466.

<sup>33</sup> ECK 1999, 87f. argues that the triumphal arch in Tell Shalem can be associated with the Bar Kokhba revolt. However, it is more likely to connect the erection of the arch with Hadrian's visit to Judaea in 130; MOR 2016, 173–191; WEIKERT 2016, 338 f.

<sup>34</sup> App., Syr. 50 (143–155 White); Iust., Dial 108.3 (255 Marcovich). In particular SMALLWOOD 1981, 443–445 favours this view.

<sup>35</sup> E. g. SCHÄFER 1981, 78–101; WEIKERT 2016, 308–310.

<sup>36</sup> Eus. Caes., HE IV 6,3 (306.19–308.9 Schwartz); Hier., Chron. 218 (201,10–14 Helm). Cf. IRSHAI 1995, 128–135.

<sup>37</sup> Itin. Burd. 591 (16 Geyer/Cuntz); STEMBERGER 2000, 4–43.

<sup>38</sup> H. A., Hadr. 14,2 (42–45 Magic); OPPENHEIMER 2003.

that Jews could visit *Aelia* openly and freely for festivals.<sup>39</sup> Septimius Severus may have been one of the very few emperors who ever visited Jerusalem. An indication for this may be a commemorative medallion bearing the heads of the emperor of Septimius Severus and his wife Julia Domna on one side and the figures of their sons, Geta and Caracalla on the other, and struck in *Aelia Capitolina* in ca. 201 CE.<sup>40</sup> Around the same time, an arch was erected in *Aelia* in honour of Septimius Severus as the building inscription testifies.<sup>41</sup>

As a city, *Colonia Aelia Capitolina* was not a big success. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries it was a backwater with a tiny pagan population consisting predominantly of people probably in some way associated with the military. The *Legio X Fretensis*, the presence of which must have influenced life in *Aelia* socially, religiously and economically to a large extent, remained until the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century when it was relocated, perhaps by Diocletian, to *Aila* (modern Eilat) on the Red Sea.<sup>42</sup> The transfer of the legion must have been a serious drain for *Aelia* in terms of population and economic wealth; it must have made the city even more of a backwater than it already was. Only in the 4<sup>th</sup> century did *Aelia* began to develop because of rapid Christianization, which attracted people from all over the Roman Empire and beyond for a variety of reasons.

## 2. Christian Jerusalem

The Jerusalem Church may be rightly called the mother of all churches.<sup>43</sup> Information about the history of the Jerusalem Christian community in the first three centuries CE is scarce, primarily drawn from the New Testament *Acts* and Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica*.<sup>44</sup> We should not be misled by Eusebius' exclusive focus on Christians and Christianity when discussing the Jerusalem community. Christians were a minority in the predominantly pagan *Aelia*. Eusebius enumerates Jerusalem's bishops starting with James the Righteous, the brother of Jesus. Until the Bar Kokhba revolt the members of the Jerusalem Church were reportedly of Jewish descent; thereafter they were of gentile origin.<sup>45</sup> In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, the Jerusalem congregation appears to have become

<sup>39</sup> SMALLWOOD 1981, 499–500; GOODMAN 2007, 505.

<sup>40</sup> KADMAN 1956, no. 87; GOODMAN 2007, 498.

<sup>41</sup> CIIP 1/2, 719.

<sup>42</sup> SMALLWOOD 1981, 534; ISAAC 1992, 280. The city was not completely devoid of military presence; probably in the 4<sup>th</sup> century a cavalry unit – the *Mauri Illyriciani* – was stationed in *Aelia*; Not. Dign., Or. 34.21 (73,21 Seec): *Equites Mauri Illyriciani, Aeliae*.

<sup>43</sup> Theodoret., HE V 9,17 (294.3–4 Parmentier/Hansen).

<sup>44</sup> For an overview of Christianity in Jerusalem in the time before Constantine, see MURPHY-O'CONNOR 1995; DRIJVERS 2004, 1–30; HOLBURY 2006; IRSHAI 2006.

<sup>45</sup> Eus. Caes., HE V 12 (954,3–454,14 Schwartz).



stronger both in numbers and in terms of organisation, and a hierarchical ecclesiastical organization developed.<sup>46</sup> An increased self-assuredness of their apostolic credentials may be surmised among *Aelia*'s Christians in this period. An indication for this growing self-confidence is the composition of a bishops' list around the year 300 CE.<sup>47</sup> The purpose of this episcopal catalogue was to demonstrate and to enhance the continuity of the Jerusalem Christian tradition since its earliest times, as well as to shape the image of the Jerusalem church as an apostolic church. Another intention of the catalogue was to rival the great churches of Rome, Antioch and Alexandria, which also possessed these lists of bishops. In addition to a growing self-confidence, there developed among Jerusalem Christians a growing awareness of the many sites, which represented Jerusalem's biblical past. The Jerusalem Christians seem to have escaped Diocletian's 'Great Persecution'.<sup>48</sup>

### 2.1. Constantine the Great

Imperial intervention had resulted in the decline and fall of Jewish Jerusalem and the transformation of the city into a Roman colony of predominantly pagan identity. Constantine the Great (306–337) was behind the fundamental change that transformed *Aelia* into a city of Christian character. This transformation was sudden and unexpected, but of course welcomed by the Jerusalem Christians and their leaders.

In September 335, a large gathering of bishops and imperial dignitaries attended the dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. On this occasion Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea and metropolitan of Palestine, delivered an inaugural speech, now commonly known as the *De Sepulchro Christi*.<sup>49</sup> In this address the emperor Constantine, who was not present for the occasion, was lavishly praised by Eusebius, for his enhancing of this place of remembrance with a sanctuary.

In his *Vita Constantini* Eusebius gives another elaborate account of Constantine's involvement in the erection of the church. Constantine had ordered the site of the Saviour's resurrection to be honoured by the construction of a church. No trouble or expense was to be spared "to make the building out of the ordinary, huge, and rich"<sup>50</sup>. The emperor wrote to the bishop of Jerusalem that the dis-

<sup>46</sup> This seems to be in line with the general increase of the number of Christians in the Roman Empire; e. g. HOPKINS 1998.

<sup>47</sup> TURNER 1900; MANNS 1993.

<sup>48</sup> Only the deacon Valens was martyred; Eus. Caes., Mart. Pal. 11,4 (935,17–23 Schwartz).

<sup>49</sup> I.e. the chapters 11–18 of Eusebius' *Laus Constantini* (223,23–259,32 Heikel); transl. in DRAKE 1976, 103–127. On Constantine and Jerusalem e. g. HUNT 1997; HEIL 2017.

<sup>50</sup> Eus. Caes., v. Const. III 29,2 (97,5–10 Winkelmann); transl. in CAMERON/HALL 1999, 134.



covery of the world's most miraculous place should be worthily embellished with marble columns and a gilded ceiling.<sup>51</sup> Eusebius presents a detailed description of the Church, which comprised a basilica, courtyards and a rotunda where Christ's burial cave, and hence the site of his Resurrection, was located.<sup>52</sup> Apart from the burial cave, the new basilica was connected with the site of the crucifixion. Thus, the new complex was meant to commemorate Christ's death, burial and resurrection. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre was constructed at the forum of *Aelia* at the site of the temple of Aphrodite, so right in the centre of the city. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, one of the most magnificent churches of its day, became the focus of Christian Jerusalem and served as its cathedral. Its visibility on the Hadrianic forum and its main entrance at the *cardo maximus*, the city's main artery, attested to the newly prominent presence of Christianity in the city and the imperial support Christianity enjoyed.

Some historians presume that, on the part of the Jerusalem Christian community, there was a local tradition of acquaintance and identification with this site, as that of Christ's execution and burial. According to this presumption, bishop Macarius of Jerusalem informed Constantine, possibly at the Council of Nicaea in 325, about the existence of this site. Subsequently, the emperor would have ordered a church to be built there to give due honour to the site.<sup>53</sup> It cannot be ruled out that the Jerusalem Christian community had preserved the memory of these sites and that there existed a tradition of honouring the places of Jesus' crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. However, the sources do not allow us to be confident about the existence of such a tradition, or, if we suppose that one such existed, how far back in time it went.<sup>54</sup> Possibly not long before Constantine had decided to build a church on the site, the place had attracted the attention of the Jerusalem Christians, conceivably because of their becoming newly conscious of their city's rich New Testament past and the subsequent promotion of that past not only for religious but also for political reasons by the bishops of Jerusalem, *inter alia* in competition with the metropolitan see of Caesarea.<sup>55</sup>

The Constantinian church complex at the site of Golgotha and Christ's tomb symbolized the New Jerusalem, which was earthly and tangible as opposed to the heavenly Jerusalem. Moreover, New Jerusalem was meant to confront and

<sup>51</sup> Eus. Caes., v. Const. III 30–32 (97,11–99,11 Winkelmann).

<sup>52</sup> On Christ's tomb: BIDDLE 1999. On the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, see e.g. COÛSSON 1974; CORBO 1981/1982; WALKER 1990, 235–281; TAYLOR 1993, 113–142; GIBSON/TAYLOR 1994.

<sup>53</sup> E.g. HUNT 1982, 7; WILKEN 1992, 88; HUNT 1997, 411–412; BIDDLE 1999, 65; DRAKE 2000, 274–275. According to the *Vita Constantini* III 30,4 (98,5–10 Winkelmann) an order from God had induced Constantine to relieve the site of its pagan sanctuary.

<sup>54</sup> For the view that there was no long tradition of veneration of the holy sites, see in particular TAYLOR 1993; cf. HUNT 1999.

<sup>55</sup> RUBIN 1999.

compete with polytheistic Jerusalem, and even probably more so with Old – Jewish – Jerusalem.<sup>56</sup> Illustrative in this respect is, for instance, the taking over of Temple traditions by the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, such as the annual commemoration of the dedication ceremony. The latter was similar to and bore the same name as the consecration ceremony of the Temple in the time of Solomon: the *Encaenia*.<sup>57</sup> Meanwhile the Temple Mount remained a desolate area, serving to emphasize the defeat of Judaism.

4<sup>th</sup> century Jerusalem witnessed sacralisation of space by way of a growing number of *loca sancta* in the city itself and its surrounding area.<sup>58</sup> These sites functioned as points of contact with the supernatural world. In contrast to the notion that God could be venerated anywhere, now the notion of privileged holy space and of local sanctity developed as well as the idea that there contact with God was more intense. And Jerusalem was full of these sacred spaces. The report of the Bordeaux pilgrim who visited Jerusalem in 333 already presents a fair number of Christian holy sites (and objects) within and around the city – for example, the rock where Judas betrayed Christ, the sites where Christ taught and prayed on the Mount of Olives, the palm tree from which the children broke branches to strew on Christ's path when he entered Jerusalem, the column on which Christ was scourged.<sup>59</sup> Fifty years later, when Egeria stayed at Jerusalem for several years, the number of sites had increased considerably.

The presence of these sites offered the faithful the experience of proximity to Christ and attracted an increasing number of pilgrims from all over the Mediterranean world and beyond. As a result, Jerusalem became a city of pilgrimage.<sup>60</sup> Many religious travellers only visited, whereas others stayed and became part of the Christian community in Jerusalem or entered monastic life. The building of churches, the establishment of monasteries and hospices thanks to imperial munificence and the liberality of private persons stimulated Jerusalem's economy considerably. Employment increased and artisans, craftsmen, and labourers from elsewhere came to Jerusalem. The pilgrims who stayed in Jerusalem spent money on food, shelter, and guides, and hence were another source for economic prosperity. The growing business of relics and other

<sup>56</sup> Eus. Caes., v. Const. III 33,1–2 (99,12–99,19 Winkelmann).

<sup>57</sup> Itin. Eger., 48,1–49,3 (316–318 Maraval); BUSSE/KRETSCHMAR 1987, 99–100; WILKEN 1992, 97; SIVAN 2008, 196–197. On the 'Auseinandersetzung' of the Jerusalem Christians with Jewish tradition, see IRSHAI 1999. Illustrative also is the recent interpretation of the account of the Bordeaux Pilgrim as an *adversus Judaeos* text with a supersessionist view on the Temple Mount; IRSHAI 2009.

<sup>58</sup> On the origin of holy sites e.g. TAYLOR 1993; MARKUS 1994; SOTINEL 2010.

<sup>59</sup> Itin. Burd. 589,4–596,2 (14–18 Geyer/Cuntz) for holy sites and objects in Jerusalem at the time the Bordeaux pilgrim visited the city (333).

<sup>60</sup> On pilgrimage, pilgrimage sites in and around Jerusalem and pilgrims' accounts see e.g. HUNT 1982; MARAVAL 1985, 251–271; STEMBERGER 2002, 86–120; WILKINSON 2002.

souvenirs from the Holy City was also a source of income. This economic prosperity undoubtedly invited a considerable number of people of various occupations who desired to have a share in that affluence.

In the 4<sup>th</sup> century, Christianity took ownership of the *loca sancta* and incorporated them into a network of mobile or stational liturgy in which biblical story, ritual and place become one. The pilgrim Egeria, who stayed in Jerusalem in the years 381–384, and the *Armenian Lectionary* provide unique information into the cycle of feasts, commemorations and Lent, including the places where any given day's liturgical celebration took place and the biblical readings that were assigned to each instance.<sup>61</sup> Apart from the Constantinian churches – the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Eleona church on the Mount of Olives and the Nativity Church in Bethlehem – Egeria mentions four other sites: Zion, the Imbomon on the site of Ascension, the Lazarium, and the Field of the Pastors. Jerusalem's mobile liturgy was an interaction between the city and the church: it was public ritual and a civic mode of worship of parade and procession. Processions going through the streets of Jerusalem and moving from one sacred site to another were an essential part of the visibility of Christianity.<sup>62</sup> Jerusalem's urban space became ritualized by these processions, and the new faith quickly transformed into one of Jerusalem's important social dynamics.

As leader of a growing Christian community, Jerusalem's bishop became an increasingly important figure in city life, possibly more important than the secular administrators were. He took over duties traditionally belonging to the urban officials such as judicial proceedings and taking care of food shortages. Within the ecclesiastical organisation of the Mediterranean world, the status of Jerusalem and its bishop expanded rapidly. At the Council of Chalcedon (451), the apostolic status of Jerusalem was acknowledged and its bishop officially recognized as one of the patriarchs, together with the bishops of Rome, Alexandria, Antioch and Constantinople.<sup>63</sup>

Constantine's imperial patronage and munificence started a development which transformed Jerusalem from a backwater into one of the most important cities in the world of Christendom. The emperor's intervention resulted not only in the construction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre but also in the Eleona church on the Mount of Olives – on the site where Jesus was alleged to have taught his disciples, and the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem – on the site where Jesus was supposed to have been born.<sup>64</sup> Another church was built at the oak of Mamre, near Hebron, where God had appeared to Abraham (Gen

<sup>61</sup> Itin. Eger., 24,1–49,3 (235–318 Maraval). The standard edition of the Armenian Jerusalem Lectionary is by A. Renoux.

<sup>62</sup> On Jerusalem's (mobile) liturgy: BALDOVIN 1987; VERHELST 2006.

<sup>63</sup> HONIGMANN 1950, 271–275.

<sup>64</sup> Eus. Caes., v. Const. III 41–43,4 (101,7–102,12 Winkelmann).

18:1–33).<sup>65</sup> Bethlehem and Mamre belonged to the episcopal see of bishopric Jerusalem, which makes the Jerusalem bishopric very much the focus of Constantine's Holy Land policy.

Jerusalem and its surrounding area christianized quickly in the 4<sup>th</sup> century: Christianity became clearly visible, architecturally and socially, in the urban landscape. The Christian community increased in numbers through conversion and immigration. However, the Christianization of the city was a long process, which was possibly only finished in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. In the 4<sup>th</sup> century Jerusalem was still characterized by a multi-religious ambience consisting of traditional Graeco-Roman cults and rival strains of Christianity.<sup>66</sup> Only in the 5<sup>th</sup> century did Jerusalem gain an exclusive Christian identity.<sup>67</sup>

## 2.2. Helena and the Cross

Although Constantine never visited Jerusalem, his mother Helena did, in all likelihood during the years 326–328. The foremost source for her visit to Jerusalem and Palestine is Eusebius' *Vita Constantini*;<sup>68</sup> it is, however, to be noted that Helena also visited other eastern provinces. With regard to her stay in Jerusalem, in his *Life of Constantine* Eusebius associates her with founding two churches: the Nativity Church in Bethlehem and the Eleona Church on the Mount of Olives, and remarkably not with the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.<sup>69</sup> Despite the fact that Eusebius presents Helena's visit to Palestine as a pilgrimage,<sup>70</sup> her journey should rather be seen as an *iter principis* than a *peregrinatio religiosa*, undertaken for state purposes and carefully orchestrated in advance by the court. One of the purposes of her trip may have been to carry out the plans associated with Constantine's conception of a Christian empire in which Jerusalem was to have a central place.<sup>71</sup> Helena is the first representative of female imperial presence in Palestine and Jerusalem, enacting the imperial politics defined at Constantine's court. At the same time Eutropia, the emperor's mother-in-law, visited Palestine; she is connected with the foundation of the church in Mamre.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Eus. Caes., v. Const. III 51–53 (105,10–107,23 Winkelmann).

<sup>66</sup> DRIJVERS 2015, 294–296.

<sup>67</sup> The 6<sup>th</sup> century Madaba map (fig. 1) reflects a cartographic image of a Jerusalem of sole Christian character. Pagan sanctuaries and the Temple Mount have been eliminated from the topographical image; TSAFRIR 1999, Jerusalem, 143–144.

<sup>68</sup> Eus. Caes., v. Const. III 41,2–46 (101,11–103,17 Winkelmann).

<sup>69</sup> Eus. Caes., v. Const. III 43 (101,23–102,22 Winkelmann). There is no hard evidence that Helena is responsible for the foundation of these churches; DIRSCHLMAYER 2015, 39–40.

<sup>70</sup> Eus. Caes., v. Const. III 42,2 (101,18–101,21 Winkelmann) with a reference to Ps 132,7 (“Let us adore in the place where his feet have stood”).

<sup>71</sup> HOLUM 1990; DRIJVERS 2011, 140–142.

<sup>72</sup> Eus. Caes., v. Const. III 52,1 (105,23–106,7 Winkelmann). Not only imperial women but

Apart from a commemorative monument of Christ's crucifixion, burial and resurrection, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was also the shrine of the Cross. At least by the late 340s, relics of this symbol of Christian victory were venerated in Jerusalem and fulfilled a role in Jerusalem's liturgy, as we know from the baptismal instructions of Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem (348/9–386), and the pilgrim's account of Egeria.<sup>73</sup> The Cross was apparently found during the reign of Constantine,<sup>74</sup> but how it came to light remains a mystery. Although the *inventio crucis* has been ascribed to Helena, that association is late; it only starts to occur in narratives from the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>75</sup>

The story of Helena's discovery of the Cross, a narrative which in all likelihood has its origin in Jerusalem in the time of Cyril's episcopacy, is, apart from being an explanation of how the cross came to light, also a medium wherewith to promote Jerusalem's position in the world of Christendom and to negotiate an alliance between Jerusalem, its episcopal see, and imperial power.<sup>76</sup> The early narratives of the discovery acknowledge that the Cross was found by Helena with the assistance of Macarius, and that a part of the Cross was appropriated by Helena for the empire and sent to Constantinople while another part was left in Jerusalem. The legend of *inventio crucis* gives expression to Jerusalem's wish for this three-cornered relationship among the imperial house, represented by Helena, Jerusalem and its episcopal see, represented by Macarius, and the Cross, as the symbol which was meant to cement this relationship.

### 2.3. Constantius II

Unlike their father, Constantine's sons and successors never seem to have had an interest in Jerusalem.<sup>77</sup> Not even the rather religious Constantius II (337–361) showed any curiosity about the holy sites and sacred objects, which were already abundantly present in Jerusalem. The efforts of Cyril, Jerusalem's newly appointed bishop, could not move the emperor to devote his attention to the

also many women from the elites in the empire visited the Holy Land as pilgrims, donated churches, founded monasteries and hospices, and some of them even settled permanently at the holy sites; see e. g. DIETZ 2005, 107–153.

<sup>73</sup> Cyr. Hier., Catechesis, 4,10; 10,19; 13,4 (vol. 1, 100; 287–288; vol. 2, 54–56 Reischl/Rupp); Itin. Eger., 37,1–37,3 (284–286 Maraval).

<sup>74</sup> Cyr. Hier., Ad Const. imp. 3 (287–288 Bihain).

<sup>75</sup> DRIJVERS 1992, Ammianus, 79–180; DRIJVERS 2011, 147–174.

<sup>76</sup> DRIJVERS 1999; BITTON-ASHKELONY 2005, Encountering, 57–62; SIVAN 2008, 200–204.

<sup>77</sup> A few sources refer to a Jewish revolt under Gallus, *Caesar* under Constantius II in 351–354 and residing in Antioch. However, although there are discussions about the reasons behind the revolt and the scale of it, modern scholarship agrees that if indeed such a revolt took place it was limited in scope and only affected the Jewish settlements from the Galilee up to Lydda. Jerusalem was not touched by the revolt. See for a discussion AVI-YONAH 1984, 176–181; STEMBERGER 2000, 161–184.

biblical city. In 351, Cyril wrote a letter to the emperor on the occasion of the appearance of a celestial cross above Golgotha that extended to the Mount of Olives.<sup>78</sup> The letter serves various purposes. It expresses Cyril's loyalty to and praise for the emperor. The cross in the sky articulates, according to Cyril, the divine support for the emperor against his enemies and against the enemies of the church, in particular the pagans and the Jews. Moreover, the letter expresses the announcement of the Second Coming, which will take place in Jerusalem. Above all, the letter voices the wish for a close association between Jerusalem and the imperial house while at the same time conveying the centrality of Jerusalem in eschatology. Of great importance is the presentation of the Cross as symbol of power and victory over Christianity's adversaries. By the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century the Cross, which the letter alleges was found in the times of Constantine, had developed into Jerusalem's most sacred object.

Cyril was instrumental in formatting Christian Jerusalem in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. In his *Catechetical Lectures* he emphasized time and again not only Jerusalem as the seat of apostolic authority but he also calls attention to the city's holiness because of the presence of many places associated with the Gospel. These sites were the material witnesses to the truth of the Gospel narratives like the discovered Cross was the tangible evidence for Christ's suffering and sacrifice for humanity. Cyril promoted the materiality of Jerusalem's holy space and objects, thereby not only turning Jerusalem into the holiest city of Christendom but also developing it into the main centre of pilgrimage in Late Antiquity.<sup>79</sup>

#### 2.4. Julian and the Rebuilding of the Temple

Julian was the only late Roman non-Christian emperor. Although he was far from being a philo-Semite,<sup>80</sup> Julian considered the Jews as allies in his struggle against Christianity, and his reviving of the traditional cults and the ritual of sacrifice. In order to provide the Jews with the opportunity to sacrifice again he decided to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. The project was a complete failure and had to be abandoned in its very first stage in May 363, most probably because of an earthquake which affected not only Jerusalem but most of the region.<sup>81</sup> The restoration project elicited ferocious reactions within a year of Julian's death (26/27 June 363), from the Christian authors Ephrem Syrus and Gregory of Nazianzus. Their accounts are full of hatred for Julian and his favour

<sup>78</sup> BIHAIN 1973; IRSHAI 1996; DRIJVERS 2009.

<sup>79</sup> On Cyril's promotion of Jerusalem see DRIJVERS 1999 and 2004, 133–176.

<sup>80</sup> His opinion about Jews and Judaism, as it can be derived from his writings, balances between admiration and disdain; e. g. STEMBERGER 2000, 198–201.

<sup>81</sup> A severe earthquake in Jerusalem and the surrounding area has been attested for 363; RUSSELL 1980; AMIRAN / ARIEH / TURCOTTE 1994; AMIRAN 1996. On the chronology of the restoration attempt see BOWERSOCK 1978, 120–122.

toward the Jews, and they set the trend for the other late antique descriptions of the restoration project that can be found in a variety of Christian writings.<sup>82</sup>

The Christian sources display a hypersensitivity regarding the site of the Temple Mount and especially the attempted rebuilding of the Temple. Although extreme, the concern of the Christians is understandable. The empty space of the Temple Mount represented a tangible expression of the defeat and ruination of Judaism as prophesied by Christ, and hence the triumph of Christianity. Had Julian's project succeeded, Christ's prediction that not one stone of the Temple would be left upon another (Mt 24:2) and the prediction in the Book of Daniel (9:26–7) that the site of the Temple would remain desolate forever would have been proven wrong and the credibility of Christian claims severely damaged. The attempt of the pagan emperor to return to a pre-Hadrianic Jerusalem by restoring the Temple is evidence that the city was still a contested space and the stage of competing religions: Christianity, Judaism and polytheism.

We should not be deluded by the partiality of our sources, which present an image of Christian triumph in Jerusalem. Presumably, the Christianization of Jerusalem in the 4<sup>th</sup> century was a process of contestation among various religious groups – Christians *versus* non-Christians, and also among opposing Christianities. Apart from the construction of Christian architecture, we hear, for instance, nothing about the destruction of pagan temples in *Aelia*, except for the devastation of the Aphrodite temple, which was demolished for the construction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at its site.<sup>83</sup> These sanctuaries and the cults they represented possibly remained, alongside the Christian architecture, as significant markers of *Aelia*'s landscape.

While Julian's restoration project received ample attention in Christian sources immediately after the emperor's death, there are remarkably enough no contemporary sources on the event from Jerusalem or Palestine itself, unless a letter attributed to Cyril of Jerusalem is considered as such. This letter, entitled "On how many miracles took place when the Jews received the order to rebuild the Temple, and the signs which occurred in the region of Asia," was discovered

<sup>82</sup> For a survey of the sources see LEVENSON 2004. Apart from the pagan 4<sup>th</sup> century historian Ammianus Marcellinus 23,1,2–3 (294.7–295.3 Seyfarth) all sources on Julian's restoration project are Christian. Even though the Christian sources refer to great enthusiasm for Julian's restoration of their Temple, the Jewish writings of the time are silent about the project. The first reliable reference to the event in a Jewish text dates only from the 16<sup>th</sup> century and is based on Christian writings; ADLER 1893, 642–647; cf. AVI-YONAH 1976, 197–98; STEMBERGER 2000, 207–208. On Julian and Jerusalem e.g. AVI-YONAH 1984, 191–207; DRIJVERS 1992, Ammianus; ROSEN 2006, 328–331; SIVAN 2008, 204–210.

<sup>83</sup> Eusebius' reports of demolitions of temples is too general to draw conclusions about *Aelia*, cf. Eus. Caes., v. Const. III 54–58 (107,24–111,23 Winkelmann). Moreover, considering Constantine's policy of religious toleration it is highly questionable whether the emperor had temples despoiled and demolished on a systematic scale.



in the 1970s in a Syriac manuscript.<sup>84</sup> It is presented as an eyewitness account written immediately after the failure of the rebuilding project, but was probably composed in the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Even though Cyril was almost certainly not its author, the letter may have its origin in Jerusalem because it reflects detailed knowledge of the topography of the city and presents unique information about the actions of the Jerusalem Christian community. It is also the only text that provides dates (Sunday 18 and Monday 19 Iyyar = 18 and 19 May) for the disaster, namely the earthquakes and accompanying fires, which ended the project. Moreover, it has the unique information that not only Jews, but also a great many Christians died because of the disaster.<sup>85</sup> Although the letter is not genuine, it likely goes back to a Greek original composed in Jerusalem shortly after the abandonment of the attempted rebuilding of the Temple.

### 2.5. Theodosius I and II

Besides Constantius II, also the Valentinian dynasty (374–378) did not show an interest in Jerusalem. Imperial engagement with Christian Jerusalem was only renewed under the Theodosian dynasty. At the Council of Constantinople of 381, convened by Theodosius I (379–395), the already mentioned Cyril held a prominent position; he had considerable influence on the formulation of the so-called Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed.<sup>86</sup> We may perhaps detect here a renewed collaboration between imperial and episcopal authorities, as we have observed earlier in the century among Constantine, Eusebius and Macarius. However, only in the reign of Theodosius II (406–450) are serious imperial engagement with Jerusalem and a growing connection between Constantinople and Jerusalem once again in evidence.

Around the year 420, Theodosius II sent money to the bishop of Jerusalem for distribution among the needy as well as a golden cross studded with precious stones to be erected on Golgotha.<sup>87</sup> In exchange for this imperial munificence, the bishop of Jerusalem sent relics of the right arm of the protomartyr Stephen, whose remains had been discovered five years before at Caphar-Gamala outside Jerusalem.<sup>88</sup> In an *adventus* ceremony Stephen's relics were received in Con-

<sup>84</sup> BROCK 1977. The literature on Julian's rebuilding of the Temple is vast; see STEMBERGER 2000, 201–216; SIVAN 2008, 204–210.

<sup>85</sup> The basic information on the earthquake and its date is vindicated by three funerary inscriptions found at Zoara, a town south of the Dead Sea; MEIMARIS/KRITIKAKOU-NIKOLAROPOULOU 2005, 22–24.

<sup>86</sup> E. g. Socr. Const., HE V 8 (279,14–281,13 Hansen); Soz., HE VII 7 (308,14–310,8 Bidez); DRIJVERS 2004, 46–47.

<sup>87</sup> TAYLOR 1993, 122–124 expresses doubts as to whether Theodosius actually had a cross placed on Golgotha; see also DIRSCHLMAYER 2015, 139–140.

<sup>88</sup> HUNT 1982, 212–215.



stantinople and deposited in a chapel in the palace founded by the emperor's sister Pulcheria.<sup>89</sup> Just as the relic of the Cross established a connection between Jerusalem and the imperial capital, so also these relics of Stephen brought about an association between Jerusalem and Constantinople – and this time the association would endure and was personified by the protracted stay in the Holy Land by Theodosius' wife Eudocia.<sup>90</sup>

## 2.6. Eudocia

Aelia Eudocia visited Jerusalem and the Holy Land twice.<sup>91</sup> Her first stay is associated with the visit of Melania the Younger to Constantinople, who visited the eastern capital in the winter of 436/437 on an official mission in connection with the marriage of Eudoxia, the daughter of Theodosius and Eudocia, with the western emperor Valentinian III.<sup>92</sup> Melania was leader of the monastery on the Mount of Olives. She seems to have convinced the emperor to send his wife Eudocia on a mission to the Holy Land.<sup>93</sup> The empress, who became well acquainted with Melania and came to consider her as her 'spiritual mother', had made a public expression of thanksgiving for the marriage of her daughter to visit the holy sites in Palestine. Eudocia departed Constantinople for the holy places possibly early in 438. Her pilgrimage calls to mind Helena's journey more than a hundred years earlier. Like that of Helena, Eudocia's itinerary was a combination of public performance and personal enthusiasm; it was an official venture sanctioned by the court as well as a personal religious mission.<sup>94</sup> Her journey put Jerusalem into the focus of attention with the Christian imperial court in Constantinople.<sup>95</sup>

In Jerusalem Eudocia was probably accompanied by Cyril, bishop of Alexandria<sup>96</sup>, because Jerusalem's bishop Juvenal (422–458) was not a favourite of Eudocia.<sup>97</sup> Yet Juvenal managed to profit from the presence of the empress and secured the empress's patronage for a new shrine for St. Stephen outside of the

<sup>89</sup> HOLUM 1982, 103–104, 107–109.

<sup>90</sup> Since the imperial connections of the wealthy Poemenia, who visited Jerusalem at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, are uncertain she will not be discussed in the chapter. She founded the Church of the Ascension on the Mount of Olives. See e.g. HUNT 1982, 161–163.

<sup>91</sup> On Eudocia (and Jerusalem) see e.g. HOLUM 1982, 112–146; HUNT 1982, 221–248; SIVAN 2008, 210–219; BUSCH 2015, 136–165; DIRSCHLMAYER 2015, 147–149.

<sup>92</sup> Geront., V. Mel. 53–56 (230–239 Gorce).

<sup>93</sup> Geront., V. Mel. 56 (238–239 Gorce); Socr. Const., HE VII 47,2 (394,14–15 Hansen); John of Nikiu, Chron. 87,18–19 (348–354 Zotenberg). On her first stay in Jerusalem: HUNT 1982, 229–233; HOLUM 1982, 184–188; BUSCH 2015, 151–157.

<sup>94</sup> Geront., Vit. Mel. 58–59 (240–247 Gorce).

<sup>95</sup> Ties between the court and the Holy Land seem also to be strengthened by Peter the Iberian and the *praepositus* Urbicius; HUNT 1982, 226–227.

<sup>96</sup> HUNT 1982, 230–231.

<sup>97</sup> On Juvenal HONIGMANN 1950.

north gate of the city, allegedly at the spot where the protomartyr was stoned to death by the Jews.<sup>98</sup> During this first visit she may have had a meeting with the wandering monk Barsauma, who, according to the latter's *vita*, taught how to aim at salvation through almsgivings and mercy for the weak.<sup>99</sup>

Eudocia probably returned to Constantinople in the summer of 439, carrying with her relics of St. Stephen, presumably given to her by the bishop of Jerusalem, to deposit them in the church of St. Lawrence in the eastern capital. Her stay in the imperial city would only last a few years. The sources are vague about her return to Jerusalem, but court politics, shifting balances of power, alleged adultery and controversies between herself and her sister-in-law Pulcheria are often mentioned as reasons for Eudocia's final retreat from Constantinople and her permanent settling in Palestine probably late in 441 or early in 442.<sup>100</sup> Eudocia seems not have been divested of her imperial status and she retained possession of her wealth.

During her second stay in Jerusalem the empress developed into a veritable benefactress of Jerusalem, by contributing considerably to the Christianizing of the city's landscape and reshaping its space.<sup>101</sup> Her building activities in Jerusalem were the first imperially sponsored constructions on a large scale since Constantine.<sup>102</sup> She is said to have contributed to the building of churches, monasteries, hostels for pilgrims and the sick, a residence for Jerusalem's bishop, and a hospital; she donated funds for the lighting of the *Anastasis*, which contained Christ's tomb, and presented the monks of that shrine with an annual revenue. In particular, the fortification of the city and, as well as the construction of a new and magnificent ecclesiastical complex in honour of St. Stephen – probably a replacement of the sanctuary consecrated in 438 – outside the city walls on the road northwards to Damascus are mentioned in the sources.<sup>103</sup> The expansion of the city under Eudocia implied a re-shaping of the urban space: the area of Mount Sion with its Christian buildings, the house of Caiaphas and the Church of Siloam, came now to be located within the city limits.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Acts 8:57–58.

<sup>99</sup> NAU 1914, 115–116; HOLUM 1982, 186–187; BUSCH 2015, 153–154.

<sup>100</sup> On her second stay in Jerusalem: HUNT 1982, 234–236; HOLUM 1982, 189–194; BUSCH 2015, 162–165. Her retreat is often considered as an exile but LENSKI 2004, 118 sees her retreat to the Holy Land as an opportunity for dealing with the crisis of imperial estrangement and restoring her position within the network of imperial power.

<sup>101</sup> According to Nicephorus Callistus, HE 14,50 (1240 Migne) she spent 20.840 lb. of gold for her building activities.

<sup>102</sup> KLEIN 2011/2012 and 2012.

<sup>103</sup> Cyr. Scyth., V. Euthym. 35 (53,5–54,10 Schwartz); Io. Mal., Chron. 14,8 (357,20–358,1 Dindorf); John of Nikiu, Chron. 87,21–22 (348–354 Zotenberg); HUNT 1982, 239–243.

<sup>104</sup> Eudocia was a poet and composed Homeroicentones. She seems to have composed a poem for the baths at Hammat Gader, not far from the Sea of Galilee; SEG 32, 1502; GREEN / TSAFRIR 1982.

In the 450s the empress was involved in the theological controversies between miaphysite monks and the Chalcedonian dyophysites; in this conflict she supported the miaphysites, but in her final years she returned to Chalcedonian orthodoxy.<sup>105</sup> The *Vita Barsaumae* pays elaborate attention to Eudocia's favouring the Jews and giving them access again to Jerusalem and the Temple Mount.<sup>106</sup> Through the interference of Barsauma himself and his companions, the Jews were expelled again. However, the historical veracity of this information is extremely doubtful<sup>107</sup> and the narrative is likely to have been constructed to enhance the picture of Barsauma as a man fighting for a Christian cause considered just. Again, though, it emphasises the Christian sensitivity towards the Temple Mount.<sup>108</sup>

The church for St. Stephen was inaugurated in 460 and is said to have rivalled Constantine's Church of the Holy Sepulchre.<sup>109</sup> Eudocia died in Jerusalem on 20 October 460, allegedly as an orthodox Christian after having been a supporter of miaphysitism most of her life.<sup>110</sup> She was buried in St. Stephen's church.<sup>111</sup>

Eudocia's munificence should probably be seen as an extension of Constantinopolitan imperial policy towards Jerusalem. In particular, the fortification of the city and its expansion to the south, as well as the construction of a new and magnificent ecclesiastical complex in honour of St. Stephen at the city's northern gate, are unlikely to have been the exclusively private enterprises of Eudocia herself.

## 2.7. Justinian

In the course of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries Jerusalem increased in numbers of inhabitants and surface area. The city expanded with living quarters as well as *xenodochia* and *hospitia* for pilgrims;<sup>112</sup> the main thoroughfares were extended to the south. On the Mount of Olives and in the city's hinterland, monasteries arose; also the population in Jerusalem's territorium probably increased. With the ex-

<sup>105</sup> Cyr. Scyth. V. Euthym. 30 (47,5–49,6 Schwartz). HOLUM 1982, 222–225.

<sup>106</sup> NAU 1927; PETERS 1985, 158–161.

<sup>107</sup> Contra WILKEN 1992, 140: "Eudocia is reported to have looked with favour on Jews residing in Jerusalem and on Jews praying at the ruins of the Temple"; SIVAN 2008, 215: "Eudocia's presence in Jerusalem [...] placed her in the centre of Jewish-Christian polemic over the Temple Mount". Although the *Vita Barsaumae* demonstrates some awareness of contemporary history and geography, the text is for the most part fictitious; STEMBERGER 2000, 312.

<sup>108</sup> DRIJVERS 2020.

<sup>109</sup> CIIP I/2, 816 mentions the deposition of martyrs' relics on the occasion of the dedication of St. Stephen's.

<sup>110</sup> HOLUM 1982, 224.

<sup>111</sup> Cyr. Scyth., V. Euthym. 35 (54,1–54,10 Schwartz).

<sup>112</sup> VOLTAGGIO 2011, Xenodochia.

tion of the Theodosian dynasty in the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century, the sources are silent about imperial intervention except for a fragmentarily preserved inscription of a constitution by the emperor Anastasius I (491–518).<sup>113</sup> No evidence for imperial presence or interference with the city's affairs and landscape are available until the reign of Justinian (527–565).

Procopius elaborately describes the building of Justinian's *Nea* Church in honour of Mary Theotokos.<sup>114</sup> Neither effort nor expense was spared for the construction of the church, of vast size and splendour, of which remains were discovered in the 1970s. The *Nea* was not built on a *locus biblicus* as most other Jerusalem churches, but on a high hill in the southern part of the city, which was extended in order to create a large artificial platform. This calls to mind the platform of Temple Mount, and Procopius' description has other features that recall the Jewish Temple.<sup>115</sup> The church, the largest of all in Jerusalem (115 meters long and 57 meters wide), was located and inaugurated in 543. In 1977 the foundation inscription was discovered in a cistern that was part of the church.<sup>116</sup> Its construction in this particular part of the city is not only an expression of imperial prestige, competing with Solomon's Temple, but should probably also be seen as a response to Jerusalem's growing population and the large numbers of pilgrims visiting the city.<sup>117</sup> The church complex included a hostel for pilgrims, a hospital, and a monastery. It may have been demolished either when the Persians captured Jerusalem in 614 or in the earthquake of 746. It was never rebuilt.

### 3. The Loss of Jerusalem for Christianity: Heraclius

After a siege of twenty days, the Sassanid general Shahrbaraz captured Jerusalem in May 614.<sup>118</sup> Hostilities between the Byzantine and Sassanid empire since the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century intensified when Khusro II (590–628) came to the Persian throne. Khusro was able to conquer the eastern provinces of

<sup>113</sup> CIIP I/2, 784.

<sup>114</sup> Proc., *De aedif.* 5.6 (162,5–165,14 Wirth). TSAFRIR 2000; SIVAN 2008, 219–221. Proc., *De aedif.* 5.9,1–13 (169,9–170,16 Wirth) also presents a list of ten monasteries, two churches and a wall in the territory of Jerusalem restored under Justinian.

<sup>115</sup> AMITZUR 1996. The rumour was also spread that the vessels from the Temple in Jerusalem that were housed in Rome but stolen by the Vandals were recovered by Justinian; BOUSTAN 2008, 356–362. Justinian's *Nea* Church also seems to have been built in competition with Constantine's Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Embedded in the walls of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre fragments of a Justinianic inscription of an imperial rescript have been found; CIIP I/2, 785.

<sup>116</sup> CIIP I/2, 800.

<sup>117</sup> BINNS 1994, 92.

<sup>118</sup> For a succinct overview of the siege and sack of Jerusalem with references to all relevant sources SCHICK 1995, 33–39; KÆGI 2003, 78–80.

the Byzantine Empire because of imperial strife in Constantinople. The Persian capture of Jerusalem was accompanied by the killing of many Christians and the destruction of churches. The Christians, headed by their patriarch Zachariah, were deported to Persia and Jerusalem was temporarily taken over by the Jews who supported the Persians.<sup>119</sup> They may have tried to restore the Temple services. However, the severest blow of the capture of Jerusalem may have been the Persian capture of the Cross. The Cross, the ultimate Christian symbol, stood for life, salvation, victory and power, and its presence in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre had been a major factor in the development of Jerusalem as a city of special status and as a unique city in the world of Christendom. The removal of the Cross to the heartland of Persia was therefore an act laden with symbolism. In 617 the city was given back to Christians by the Persians, and the patriarch Modestus started restoring the churches and gradually the life of the Christian community went back to normal.

After a successful military campaign against Khusro in the years 622–628, the Byzantine emperor Heraclius (610–641) restored the relics of the True Cross in a grand ceremony in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on 21 March of the year 630.<sup>120</sup> There is a relative abundance of sources concerning Heraclius' restitution of the Cross, in both contemporary or near-contemporary writings and later Byzantine sources. The event is also mentioned in Syriac and Arabic chronicles.<sup>121</sup>

By the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, Jerusalem was a Christian city *par excellence*, the emblematic capital of Christianity and the symbolical centre of the world. Over the centuries, the Christian ideology of the later Roman Empire and of its emperors had become closely connected with the city of Jerusalem and with the most important symbol the city had given to the world of Christendom: the Cross. While the capture of Jerusalem and the Cross must have felt as a tremendous shock and defeat, the return of the Cross relics to their city of origin sixteen years later was celebrated by Heraclius, the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the whole Christian world as a great victory. Despite the great symbolic importance of Jerusalem in the Christian world and the imperial attention it received from Constantinople, it is a remarkable fact that Heraclius was the only Christian Roman emperor who ever visited the city. The *Restitutio Crucis* may be

<sup>119</sup> AVI-YONAH 1976, 261–265; AVI-YONAH 1984, 259–270; DAGRON 1991, 22–26; FLUSIN 1992, Commentaire, 129–172; SCHICK 1995, 26–27; SIVAN 2008, 225–229.

<sup>120</sup> DRIJVERS 2002; KAEGI 2003, 205–207; ZUCKERMAN 2013.

<sup>121</sup> Main sources for the *Restitutio Crucis*: Antiochus Strategos, *The Capture of Jerusalem* 24 (516 Conybeare); Sophronius, *Anacreontica* xviii (114–117 Gigante); George of Pisidia, *In Restitutionem S. Crucis* (Pertusi); Anastasius, *BHG* 8.1 (98–99 Flusin); Theophanes, *AM* 6120 (458–459 Mango/Scott). See also SPECK 1988, 157–160 and 328–341; FLUSIN 1992, Commentaire, 294–327; DRIJVERS 2002, 177–179; KAEGI 2003, 205–206; HOWARD-JOHNSTON, 2010.

seen as the apogee of Heraclius' reign. Apart from restoring Jerusalem to its former glory, it presented Heraclius with the opportunity to evoke the reign of Constantine, under whom the *Inventio Crucis* took place and Jerusalem's rise as a Christian city began. Although the Jews must have realized that there was not much hope for them when the Persians allowed Christians to take over Jerusalem again in 617, their final defeat was symbolized by the restoration of the Cross on 21 May 630.

After having returned the Cross, which officially restored Jerusalem as the unique city of Christendom, Heraclius took radical measures against the Jews.<sup>122</sup> Probably already in 630 he re-established the Hadrianic measures and expelled all Jews from the city. A new age for Jerusalem started. By the return of the Cross this new age was ideologically associated with the religious and imperial past of the city and envisioned an age of religious homogeneity and Christian unification. However, Heraclius' new age never materialised. The 630s saw the invasions of the Muslim Arabs who captured Jerusalem in 638. A new phase in the history of Jerusalem began with new leaders who put their stamp on the city's religious identity.

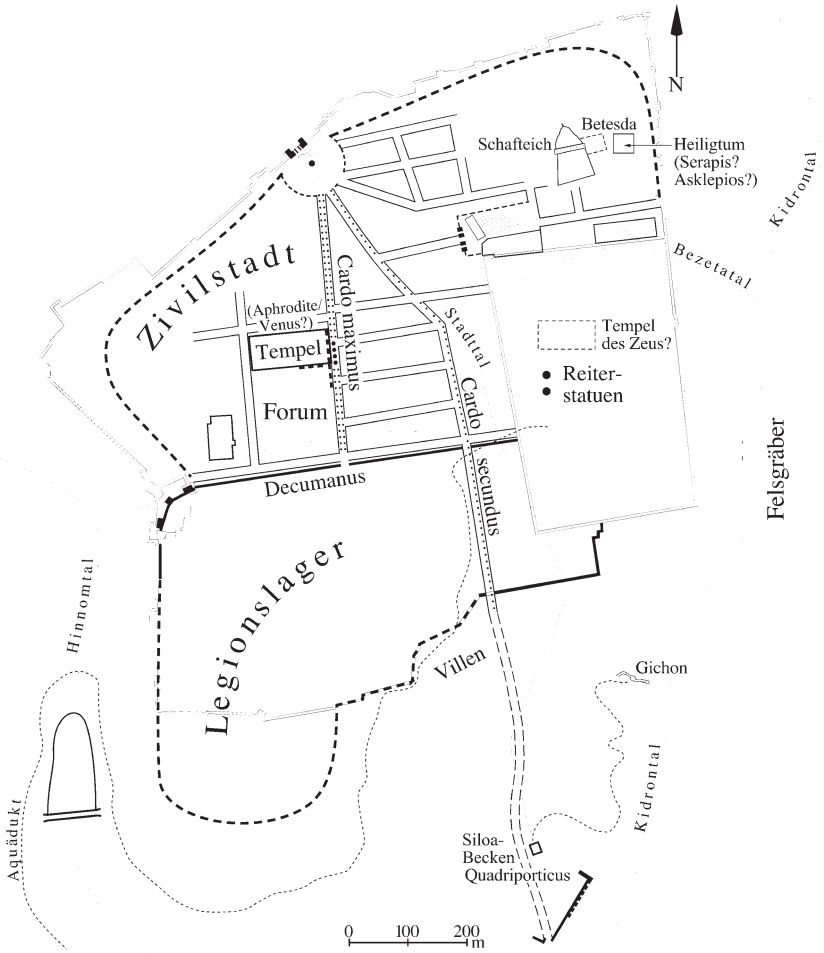
#### 4. Concluding Remarks

There are many gaps in our knowledge about Jerusalem between Hadrian and Heraclius due to the limitations of our literary, epigraphical and material sources. However, it is without doubt that imperial involvement brought about fundamental changes in Jerusalem. After the change of the urban layout and paganization of the city under Hadrian, imperial patronage at the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century started a successful process of Christianization of Jerusalem. By the 6<sup>th</sup> century, Jerusalem had become the acknowledged spiritual centre of the Christian empire. As a result, of imperial politics and patronage, but also through private enterprise and the ventures of Jerusalem's bishops, the insignificant and pagan *Aelia Capitolina* had developed into the emblematic capital of Christianity. The loss of the city to the Sassanians in 614 severely shocked the Byzantine world, just as much as the recapture of the city and the return of the True Cross by Heraclius in 630 elated that world. Heraclius envisaged a new age of Christian homogeneity in the Byzantine Empire with Jerusalem as its spiritual capital. History, however, would take another turn.

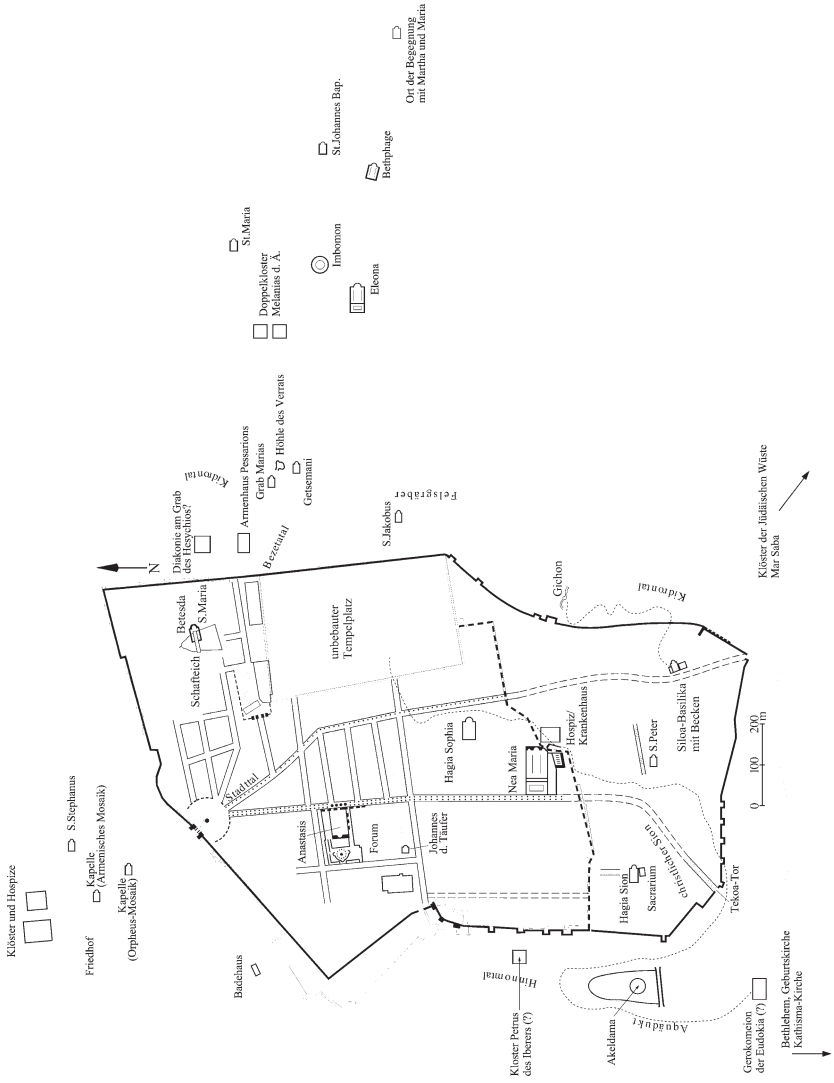
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<sup>122</sup> LINDER 1976, 1040–1042. According to Eutychius, *Annales* 2,5–6 (1089–1090 Migne), Heraclius was persuaded by the Christian community in Jerusalem to punish the Jews for their crimes against the Christians when Jerusalem was captured by the Persians.

# Maps

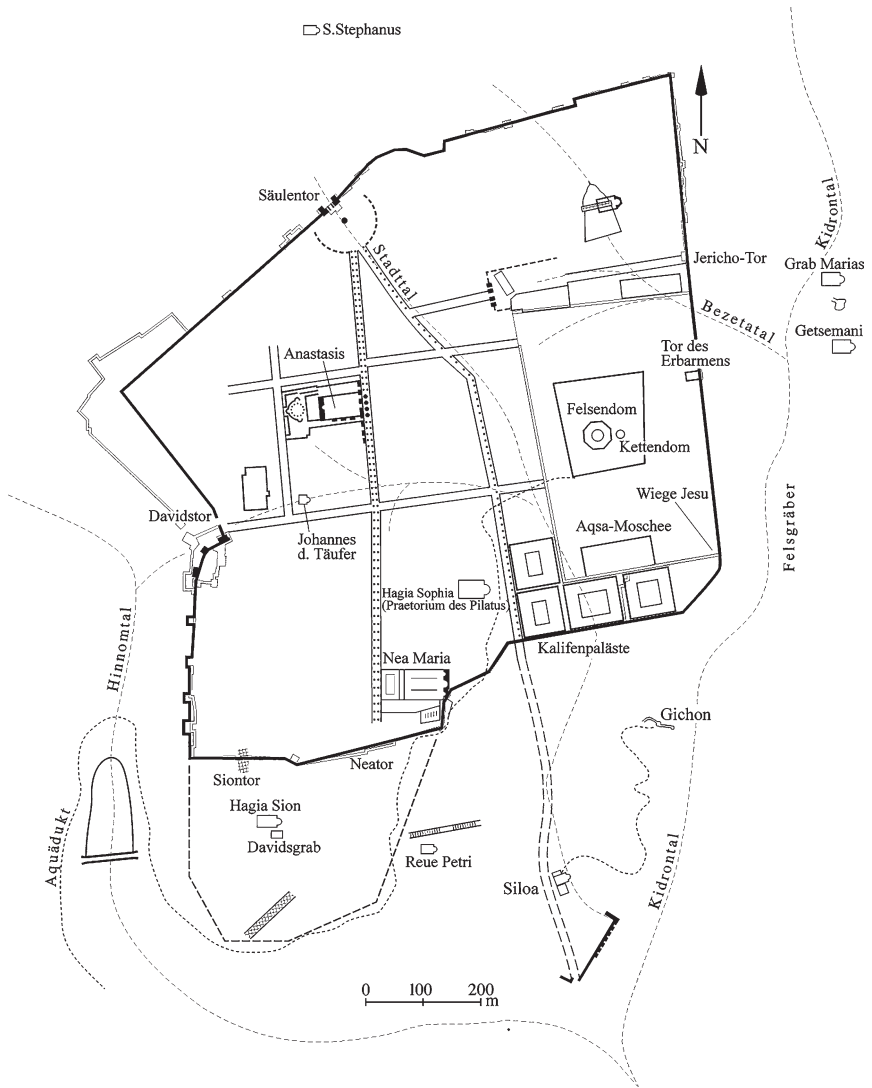


map 1: Roman Aelia Capitolina (2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century)



map 2: Byzantine Hierosolyma (4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> century)





map 3: Umayyad al-Quds (7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> century)