Osman Yüksel Özdemir

DECODİNG A SOURCE BASED DİLEMMA: THE OCCUPATİON OF JERUSALEM BY SASANİDS İN 614 C.E

MA Thesis in Comparative History, with a specialization
in Late Antique, Medieval, and Renaissance Studies.

Central European University Private University

Vienna

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Decoding a Source Based Dilemma: The Occupation of Jerusalem by the Sasanids in 614 C.E

by

Osman Yüksel Özdemir

(Turkey)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,

Central European University Private University, Vienna, in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Arts degree in Comparative History, with a specialization in Late Antique, Medieval, and Renaissance Studies.

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

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Examiner

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External Reader

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Author's declaration

I, the undersigned, **Osman Yüksel Özdemir**, candidate for the MA degree in Comparative History, with a specialization in Late Antique, Medieval, and Renaissance Studies, with a specialization in Interdisciplinary Medieval Studies declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the dichotomy between the literary depictions of the occupation of Jerusalem by the Sasanid Empire between 614-628 C.E and the available archeological data that targets the same event. While the narrative sources generally describe a massive loss of lives together with significant destruction that would change the landscape of Jerusalem's public and religious spaces, the extensive archeological literature argues that although the peripheries of the city including the city walls were subjected to destruction, other public spaces mentioned in several narrative sources remained unharmed. Jerusalem and its environs were subjected to centuries of political and religious discourse. Thus, a possible answer to understand the reason for such dramatic depictions with regard to the public and religious spaces of Jerusalem might be hidden in the notion of space itself. Therefore, this thesis will explore the perception of the seventh-century authors towards the public and religious spaces of Jerusalem and the surrounding Holy Land.

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I would like to thank my supervisors Istvan Perczel and Volker Menze for their continued support and patience. I also want to give my thanks to Gideon Avni whom I never met while I write this acknowledgement, if it were not for his archeological insights, I would not have the inspiration for this thesis. Lastly, I would like to thank to my parents for their continued moral support.

Table of contents

Abstract i

Acknowledgements ii

Table of contents iii

List of Figures, Tables, or Illustrations v

List of Abbreviations x

Introduction 1

Context: The Byzantine-Sasanid War 1

Sources 2

Previous Literature 4

Theory, Methodology and Terminology 12

Chapter 1: The Making of a Sacred Landscape 18

1.1: The Transformation of the Urban Space: From *Aelia Capitolina* to the Holy City 19

1.1.1: The Transformation under Constantine I 19

1.1.2: Notable Transformations Until the Sixth Century 22

1.2: The Identification of the Religious Buildings with the Urban Space 24

1.3: The Identification of the Religious Buildings with the Urban Space in Seventh Century Narrative Sources 26

Chaper 2: Re-making the Past: Stories of conception for the religious spaces of Jerusalem .30

2.1: The Sacralization of the Holy Places and Eusebius of Caesarea 31

2.2: Promotion of the Sacred Spaces and Cyril of Jerusalem 39

2.3: A Voice of Contention: Gregory Nyssa 44

2.4: The Attempt of Rebuilding the Temple Mount Complex 47

2.5: Seventh-Century Written Sources on the Occupation and the Jewish Participation 53

Conclusion 63

Bibliography 68

Illustrations

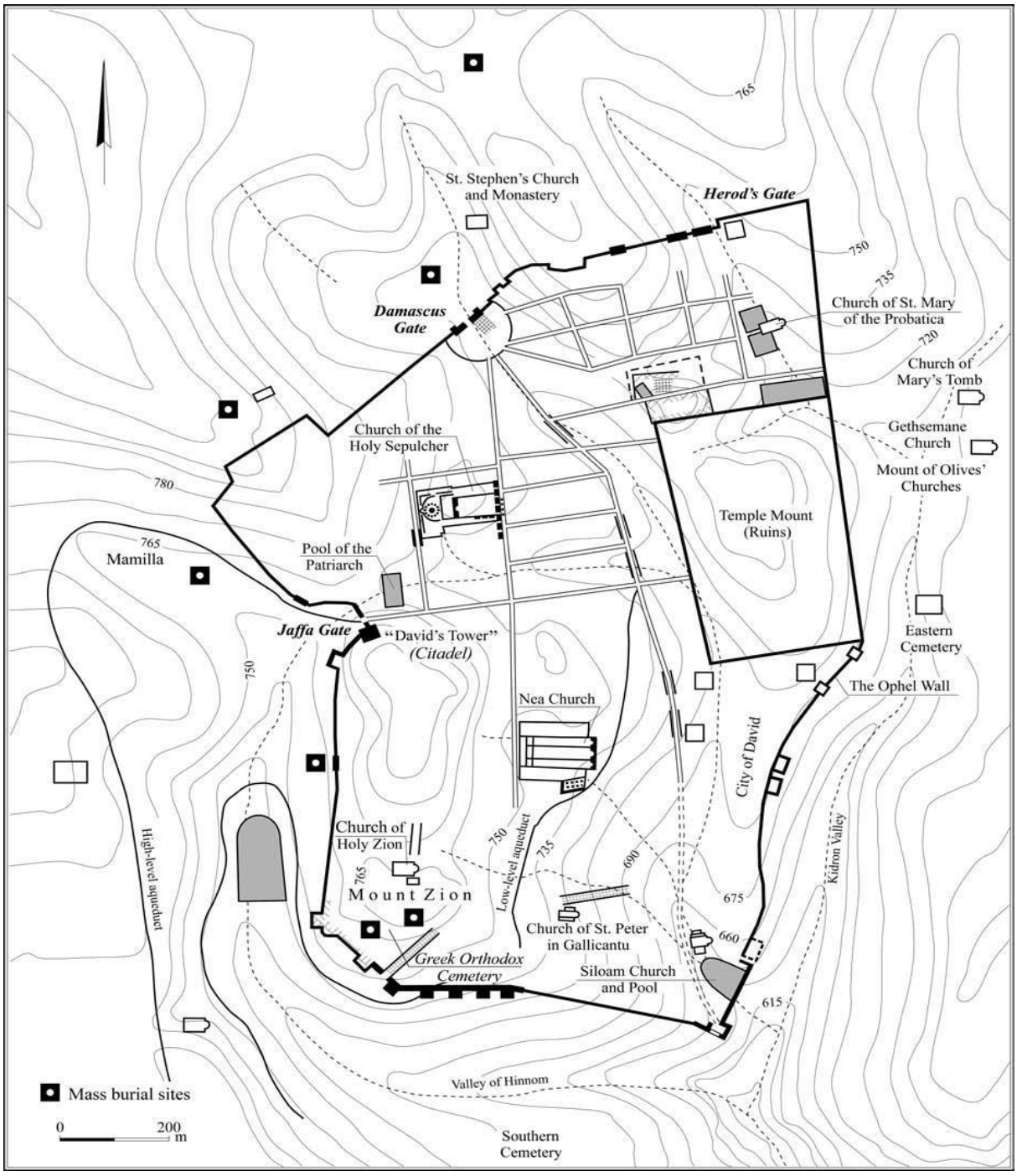

Image 1: Jerusalem in the early seventh century with indication of the mass burial grave sites.

Reference: Gideon Avni, "The Persian Conquest of Jerusalem (614 C.E.) - An Archeological Assessment," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research 357* (2010), 38.

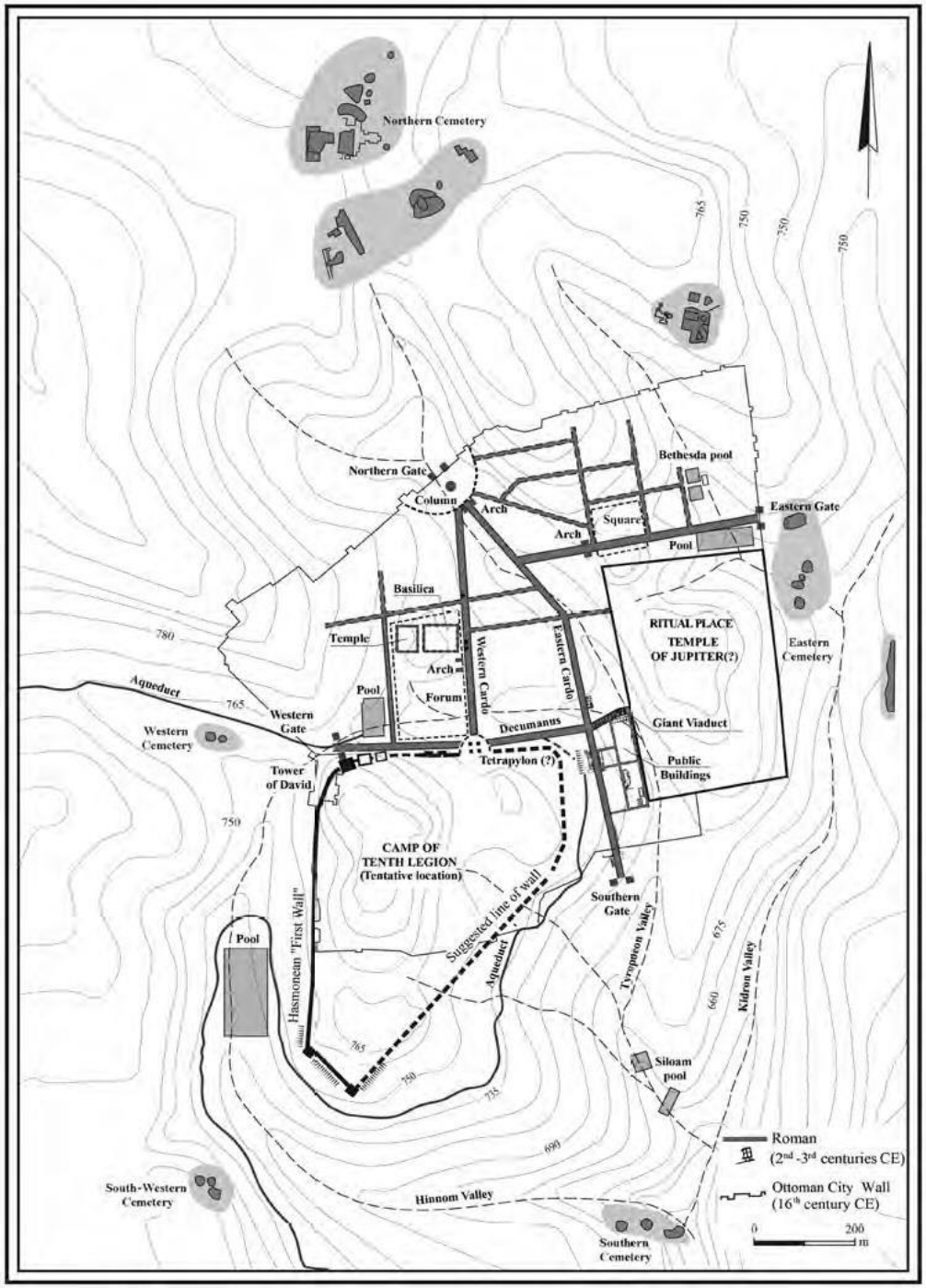

Image 2: Aelia Capitolina and the Tenth Legion's camp, second-third century C.E.

Reference: Shlomit Weksler-Bdolah, "Aelia Capitolina" in *Routledge handbook on Jerusalem* edited by Sulaymā n Murad, ʿAlī Naomi Koltun-Fromm, and Bedross Der Matossian (New York: Routledge, 2019), 48.

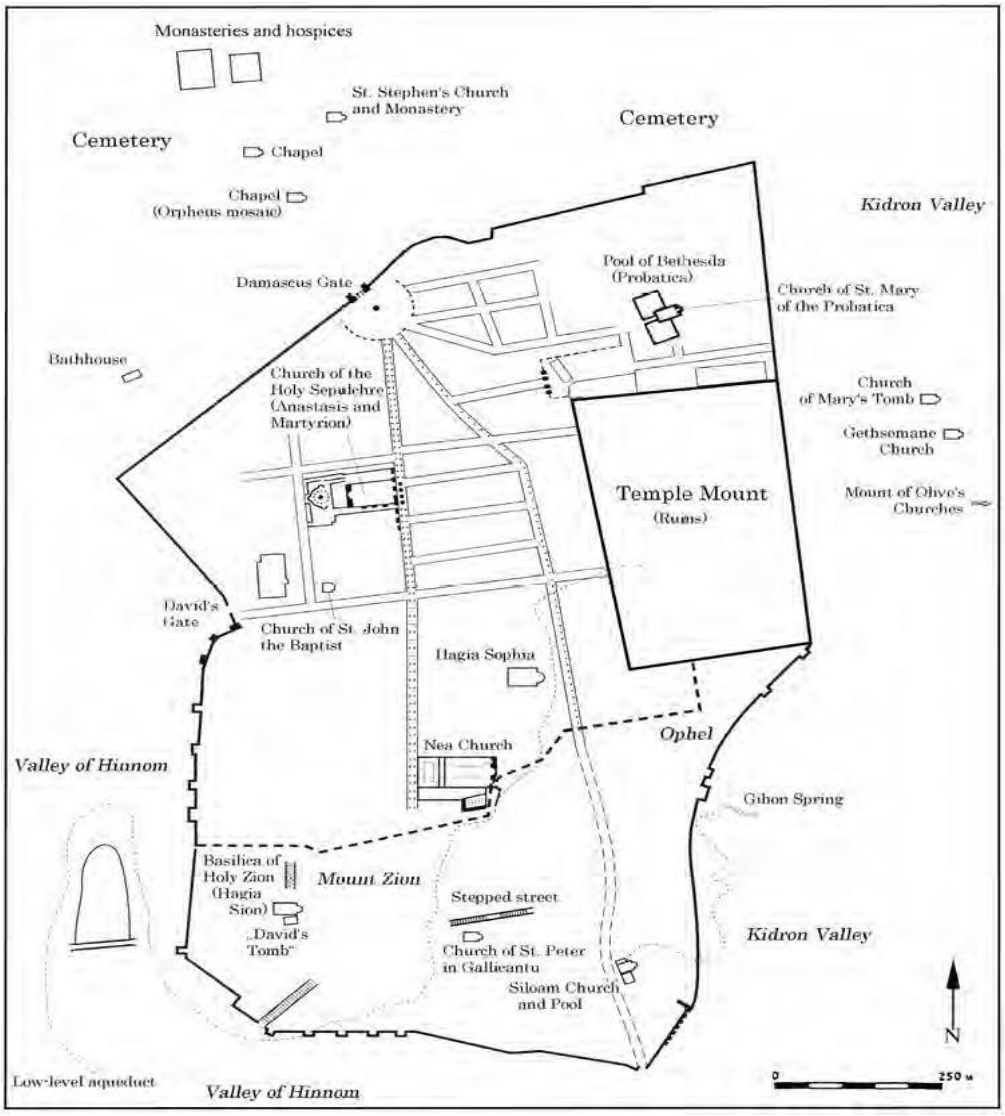

Image 3: Map of Jerusalem in the Byzantine Period.

Reference: Ute Verstegen, "Byzantine Jerusalem", in *Routledge handbook on Jerusalem*, edited by Sulaymā n Murad, ʿAlī Naomi Koltun-Fromm, and Bedross Der Matossian (New York: Routledge, 2019), 66.

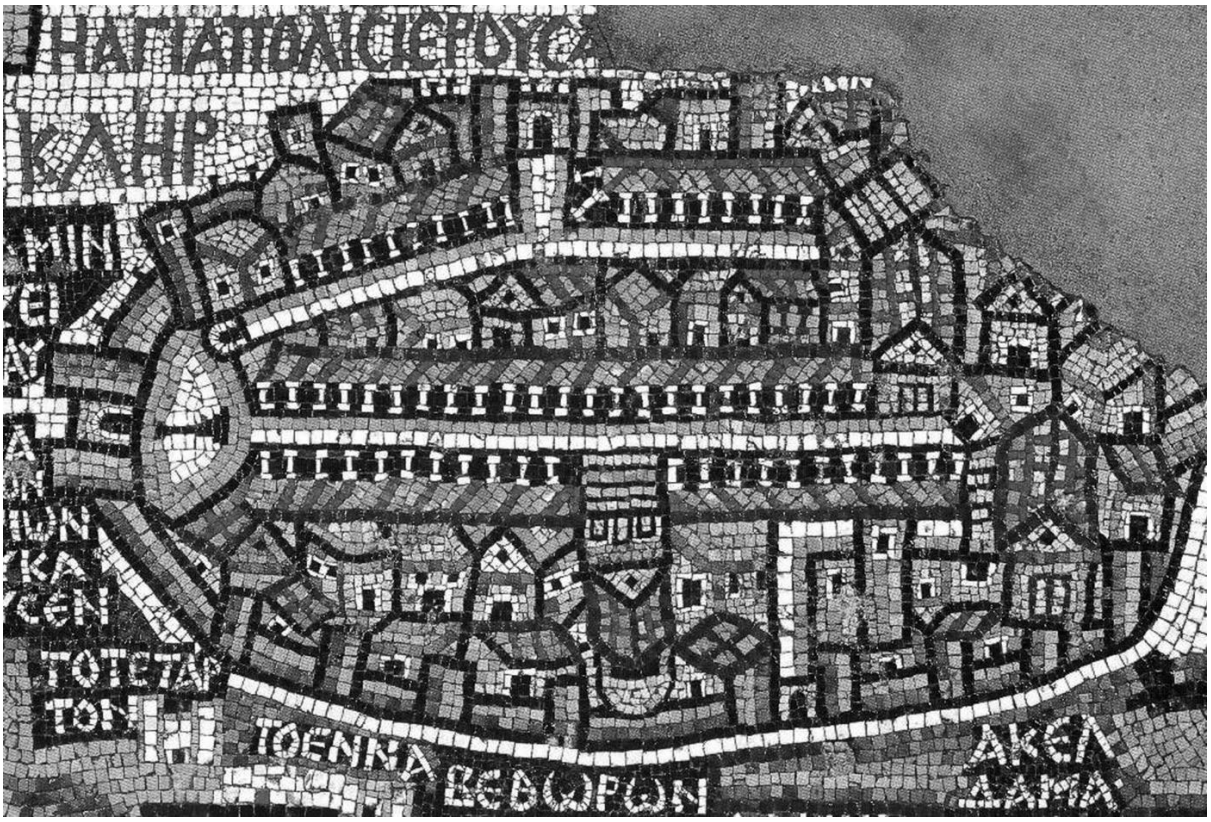

Image 4: Detail of Jerusalem from the Madaba Map.

Reference: Andrew W. Madden, "A New Form of Evidence to Date the Madaba Map Mosaic", Liber Annuus 62, (2012): 497.

Image 5: The apse mosaic of the St. Pudenziana church in Rome, dating from the end of the 4th century, with extensive restoration in the 16th century.

Reference: Andrew Simsky, "The Image Paradigm of Jerusalem in Christian Hierotopy", *Journal of Visual Semiotics* 186, (2018), 107.

List of Abbreviations

BA: The Biblical Archaeologist.

BAR: Biblical Archaeology Review.

CCSL: *Corpus Christianorum series Latina*.

CSCO: *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*.

JRA: Journal of Roman Archaeology.

JRAS: Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.

PEFA: Annual of the Palestine Exploration Fund.

POC: *PROCHE-ORIENT CHRÉTIEN*.

QDAP: Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities of Palestine.

SC: *Source Chretienne*.

Introduction

Context and Research Questions: The Byzantine-Sasanid War

After the deposition of Emperor Maurice (582-602 C.E.), the Sasanid Emperor Khusrow II (?-628 C.E.) began his campaign against the Byzantine Empire under the pretense that the current Emperor Phocas (547-610 C.E.) had acquired the throne illegitimately and the son of Emperor Maurice, Theodosius, had asked for his help. This campaign transformed into what is now called "The Last Great War of Antiquity (602-628 C.E.)".[1] The Sasanid Empire was able to dive deep into Asia Minor in the north and conquer Egypt together with Palestine in the south. One of the highlights of the war was the fall of Jerusalem to the Sasanid Empire which had dramatic depictions in the written sources.

The contemporary written sources generally describe a massive loss of lives together with significant destruction that would change the landscape of Jerusalem's public and religious spaces.[2] Today, thanks to the archeological works in the last decades, it is understood that although the peripheries of the city including the city walls were subjected to destruction, other religious spaces which were mentioned in several narrative sources remained unharmed.[3] This contradiction between the contemporary narrative sources and the archeological data has led me to ask the following questions: Why was there such a great emphasis on the destruction of religious and public spaces in the textual depictions when describing the occupation of

[1] G. Greatrex and S. Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars: Part II AD 363–630* (London, New York: Routledge, 2002), 183.
[2] I define the sources which are written in the seventh century as contemporary. For an overview of the written sources concerning the occupation of Jerusalem see: Yuri Stoyanov, *Defenders and Enemies of the True Cross: The Sasanian Conquest of Jerusalem in 614 and Byzantine Ideology of Anti-Persian Warfare* (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Science Press, 2011), 13-14.
[3] Gideon Avni, "The Persian Conquest of Jerusalem (614 C.E.) - An Archeological Assessment." *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research 357* (2010): 35-48.

Jerusalem? What did Jerusalem and the Holy Land mean for the authors of the seventh-century written sources who described the occupation? Why did the authors feel the need for such dramatic descriptions?

My hypothetical answer to this question lies in the notion of public and religious spaces in and around of Jerusalem. The so-called "spatial turn" has provided the field of historical studies with a perspective that includes the material environment in which the events have taken place. Space no longer is just a container for events but also is an element for the creation of personal and collective identity. In the same way, I argue that the contemporary written sources which described the event does not use the topography of Jerusalem just as a container for the events taking place. In fact, especially the public and religious spaces of Jerusalem have been used as an object in the narrative which was directly affected by the actions of the various subjects. By understanding the importance of these spaces for the authors, I think we can have a better understanding of the contemporary seventh-century authors.

Sources

A number of contemporary written sources are available with regards to the occupation. Unfortunately, to the best of my knowledge there is no Sasanid sources on the event if we are to exclude the *Chronicle of Khuzistan* which might come from within the Sasanid territory but is a Christian source. The rest of the written sources are Christian sources as well. There are in particular two sources which are the closest to the event both geographically and chronologically. The first one is the so-called account of Antiochus Strategos who is a monk from the Mar Saba monastery. The account was probably in circulation during 630's right after the return of the Holy Cross to Jerusalem in 630.[4] Although the account is originally written in

[4] G. W. Bowersock, *Empires in Collision in Late Antiquity* (Waltham, Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press, 2012), 36.

Greek it is available only from the Georgian and Arabic translations.[5] Rather than being a historiographical source, Strategos' account can be considered as a lamentation. However, it still tells a lot about the perception of a local monk concerning Jerusalem. The second source coming from more or less within the same time frame belongs to monk and future patriarch of Jerusalem Sophronius. Sophronius composed 22 Greek poems written in the classical Anacreontic meter to celebrate liturgical feasts. Within this corpus there is also a lamentation on the capture of Jerusalem and two other poems on the city's holy places.[6]

The other sources are in the form of chronicles from Constantinople, Armenia, and the Sasanid heartlands. The first one is the *Chronicon Paschale* composed by an anonymous author written in the early seventh century.[7] As a Byzantine chronicle written in Greek, the aim of the work is to interpret historical events in the light of the biblical history. While the chronicle gives weight to the biblical chronology and the computation of the dates of liturgical events especially the easter, the author is sufficiently interested in the secular events as well. Although the author of the work is anonymous, the internal evidence from the work indicates that he was possibly a churchman from Constantinople close to the Constantinopolitan Patriarch Sergius.[8] The chronicle from Armenia is the *Armenian History* attributed to Sebeos which was composed in the seventh century.[9] As a chronicle the author tries to connect his work to a previous Armenian

[5] F. C. Conybeare, "Antiochus Strategos' Account of the Sack of Jerusalem in 614." *English Historical Review* 25 (1910): 504-506. See for the edited Georgian text together with Latin translation: Gérard Garitte, *La prise de Jérusalem par les Perses en 614*, CSCO, vol. 202-203 (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1960).
[6] For the text on the capture of Jerusalem see: Sophronius, Marcello Gigante, *Sophronii Anacreontica*, trans. and ed. by Marcello Gigante, *Opuscula: testi per esercitazioni accademiche*, 10-11-12. (Roma: Gismondi, 1957), 102-107. For the other two poems: Sophronius, Herbert Donner, *Die anakreontischen Gedichte Nr. 19 und Nr. 20 des Patriarchen Sophronius von Jerusalem*, Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil.-hist. Klasse, Bericht 10 (Heidelberg, 1981).
[7] Michael Whitby and Mary Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale 284-628 AD*, trans. by Michael Whitby, Mary Whitby (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1989). For the edited text see: L. Dindorf, *Chronicon Paschale, Vol. 1*, Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae (Bonnae: Impensis Ed. Weberi, 1832).
[8] Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale*, IX-XIII. Howard-Johnston even argues that the author was patriarch Sergius himself see: James Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses to a World Crisis: Historians and the Histories of the Middle-East in the Seventh Century* (Oxford: Oxford Uni. Press, 2011), 37-44.
[9] Sebeos, R. W. Thompson, *The Armenian History Attributed to Sebeos*, trans. by R. W. Thompson, ed. with historical commentary by J. H. Johnston, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999).

author *Lazar P'arpets'i*. Unlike what the work's name suggests the perspective of the chronicle was a broad one which included the Byzantine-Sasanid relationship especially with regards to Armenia.[10] Lastly, the anonymous *Chronicle of Khuzistan* which is written in Syriac comes from the Sasanid territory.[11] The internal information provided by the chronicle suggests that the author was a member of the Church of the East. His biblical approach to historical events and religious references strengthens the idea that he might be a member of the clergy. As I will mention in the coming parts of the thesis, although the author favors Christianity over other religions, his position with regards to the events is more pro-Sasanid.[12]

My choice of sources is mainly based on the fact that they were all written in the seventh century and the later sources are generally an interpretation of these sources. Apart from that although the three chronicles in particular have short passages on the occupation, the perspective they provide is important. All three chronicles come from different geographies directly related to the Byzantine-Sasanid war. Furthermore, they are all Christian sources which felt compelled to write about the fall of Jerusalem. Thus, they share a healthy degree of similarity and difference in the sense that their concern towards Jerusalem is the same but at the same time their perspective and take on this event have substantial differences.

Previous Literature

Before starting this chapter, I must make a little remark. The previous literature with regards to the occupation of Jerusalem, to the best of my knowledge, is intrinsically tied with the bigger narratives such as the Byzantine-Sasanid war and the early Islamic expansion. As a result of this, in the coming parts of this chapter I will be forced to zoom in and out of Jerusalem

[10] Sebeos. *The Armenian History*, XI.
[11] Ka'bi, Al-Nasr, *A Short Chronicle on the End of the Sasanian Empire and Early Islam 590-660 A.D.* ed. and trans.: Ka'bi, Al-Nasr (Piscataway, New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2016).
[12] Al-Nasr, *A Short Chronicle*, XI-XII.

and its environs to show the broader currents of scholarship which also shapes the attitude towards the written sources and the archeological data that targets the occupation of Jerusalem. The first historians who wrote about the Sasanid occupation of the Byzantine Near East and the occupation of Jerusalem incorporated this event in the forming of a metanarrative. According to this metanarrative, which took the descriptions of the written sources granted, the occupation of the Sasanid empire resulted in a huge devastation effectively ruining the normal rhythms of the daily life. Later, this devastation was seen as the principal cause of the rapid expansion of the early Islamic state under the Rashidun Caliphs (632-661 C.E), since the previous Sasanid occupation (614-628 C.E) has eliminated all the resources in the area to retaliate against the Muslims. Kondakov, one of the first researchers who has written on the issue states that:

> This was a disaster unheard of since the occupation of Jerusalem in the reign of Titus, but this time the calamity could not be remedied. Never again did this city have an era similar to the brilliant epoch under Constantine, and the magnificent buildings within its walls, (…) The Persian invasion immediately removed the effects of the imported artificial Graeco-Roman civilization in Palestine. It ruined agriculture, depopulated the cities, destroyed temporarily or permanently many monasteries and lauras, and stopped all trade development. This invasion freed the marauding Arabian tribes from the ties of association and the fear which had controlled them, and they began to form the unity which made possible their general attacks of a later period.[13]

This argument which ties the occupation of the Byzantine Near East and Jerusalem into the metanarrative of early Muslim expansion practically sets the tone for the rest of the historians. For example, Vasiliev goes one step further and argues that the Sasanid occupation practically ended a culturally cosmopolitan society thus enabling the Muslim culture to settle in the area effortlessly.[14] There were writers who tended to downplay the devastation of the Sasanid occupation like George Tchalenko. Nevertheless, he also agrees that the rhythms of daily life have been disrupted due to the occupation. According to his study on the North Syrian villages, the reason for this disruption was not due to the destruction caused by the occupation

[13] N. P. Kondakov, *An Archeological Journey Through Syria and Palestine* (St. Petersburg, 1904), 173.
[14] Alexander A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire, 324-1453* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press. 1952), 195-209.

but rather it was a result of the local economy being separated from their natural markets in the West.[15] As a result, the first researchers who worked on the subject readily accepted the descriptions of the written sources and concluded that the area was subjected to a very serious economic, social, and cultural erosion after the Sassanid occupation. While some scholars such as Kondakov attributed this erosion to the hostile mismanagement of the Sassanids, Tchalenko cited the break with the socio-economic hinterland as a cause, therefore concluding that there was a disruption of the administrative and economic order from the power vacuum.

These authors' works helped furthering the discussion within the field. However, the problem with these first wave of scholarly interpretations stems from the fact that they were written with hindsight. Not to cause any misunderstanding, hindsight can be a very useful tool for historians, however, sometimes the expectation of a certain result might cause historians to overlook other things. The knowledge of the rapid expansion of the early Islamic Rashidun State has led these historians to form a metanarrative through a questionable cause and effect paradigm which was criticized by later academics. These historians formed a question with pre-conceived notions asking why the Rashidun Caliphate expanded rapidly, and in their haste to answer this grand question the content of the narrative sources was a welcome addition.

Later researchers were quick to react to this group of academics. The first set of objections stemmed from the archeological literature which significantly discredited the descriptions of the written sources depicting the event. In this case, the archeological data provided a context in which the content of the historical narratives could be put to test. However, before discussing the archeological literature on the subject, it would be suitable to briefly go over what the sources say. The seventh-century written sources assert that the city suffered significant destruction after its fall to the Sasanid forces. Most of the city was

[15] G. Tchalenko, *Villages Antiques de la Syrie du Nord* (Paris, 1953), 433-435.

practically depicted to be set on fire. The depictions give the sense that the religious buildings in particular was the target of this brutal sack of the city which the Jews were complicit as well.[16] The written sources are rather vague about which buildings suffered damage in particular. Nevertheless, there are mentions of some buildings. The *Chronicle of Khuzistan* and *Chronicon Paschale* state that the Holy Sepulcher complex was set on fire.[17] Strategos' account in addition to the Holy Sepulcher complex mentions Church of Holy Zion being burned.[18] Furthermore, Strategos mentions a list of places, mostly churches or locations close to churches, where numerous Christians lost their lives.[19]

It is possible to classify the set of available data under two headings. In this line, first I intend to discuss the human casualties during the siege and the occupation. Secondly, I will discuss the alleged damage concerning the network of religious buildings which ultimately resulted in a significant change to the city's landscape at least according to the written sources (Image 1).[20] According to the archeological literature, there are numerous discoveries of large concentrations of human skeletons that could be dated to the early seventh century. These concentrations differed from usual types of burial practices and burial structures which included single shaft tombs or family burial caves.[21] Instead the bone concentrations were intentionally gathered within available spaces like caves, cisterns, or pre-existing burial structures. I would like to mention three of these mass burial sites which are fairly consistent with Strategos' narrative. A mass burial site was discovered at the Protestant cemetery on Mount Zion in 1902 (c.a 12x20 m). Selah Merril, the American consul to Jerusalem at the time documented the

[16] See: Al-Nasr, *A Short* Chronicle, 55-56. Conybeare, "Antiochus Strategos' Account," 507. Whitby and Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale*, 614, 156. Sebeos, *The Armenian History*, ch. 34, 115, 69.
[17] Ka'bi, Al-Nasr, *A Short Chronicle*, 56. Michael Whitby and Mary Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale*, 614, 156.
[18] Conybeare, "Antiochus Strategos' Account," 510.
[19] Conybeare, "Antiochus Strategos' Account," 515.
[20] At this point I should acknowledge that my review and classification of the archeological literature immensely benefitted from Gideon Avni's works on the subject. Not only these articles provided me with the necessary bibliography, but also his interpretation of the subject inspired me. Image 1: Gideon Avni, "The Persian Conquest of Jerusalem," 38.
[21] Gideon Avni, "The urban limits of Roman and Byzantine Jerusalem: a view from the necropoleis." *JRA* 18 (2005): 373-380.

discovery, giving an estimation of 300 to 500 buried people.[22] The chronology of the findings are not clear but later surveys indicate that it may be connected to the Sasanid sack of the city due to the pottery findings.[23] Another mass burial site which is relatively close to the Protestant cemetery is found under the grounds of the Greek Orthodox cemetery. Ermenette Pierotti describes an underground rock-cut cave (c.a 35x18 m) with human bones on the floor.[24] The rock-cut structure and the bones can't be dated precisely but the surrounding area was densely populated in the Byzantine period. The underground structure might be connected to the Church of the Holy Zion as a burial structure which was later used to get rid of the bodies after the siege and initial occupation of the city.[25] The most explicit mass burial that can be tied to the occupation is the rock-cut cave in Mamilla located outside of the Jaffa gate. The location is a long-time burial ground west of the city. Among the burial caves one cave was exceptional with regards to its contents. It included a long cave (c.a 12x3 m) filled with human bones. In front of the cave there was a small chapel with a Greek inscription: "for the redemption and salvation of those, God knows their name."[26] According to the ceramic and numismatic data the bones were associated with the Christian population and the burial can be dated to early seventh century.[27] An analysis of the skeletal remains points that the deceased were relatively young and men were heavily outnumbered by women.[28] This information strengthens the idea that the deceased met a sudden death.[29]

It should be noted that not all the mass burial sites can be clearly dated to be connected to the Sasanid occupation of the city. However, the first two sites yielded finds suggestive of

[22] Saleh Merril, "Notes from Jerusalem: An Immense Charnel House," *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement* 36, (1903): 153-155.
[23] Amos Ḳloner, *Survey of Jerusalem: The Northeastern Sector* (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2001), 169.
[24] Ermenette Pierotti, *Jerusalem Explored,* 2 vols. (London: Bell and Daldy, 1894), 214-216.
[25] Avni, "The Persian Conquest of Jerusalem," 39.
[26] Ronny Reich, "God Knows Their Names"—Mass Christian Grave Revealed in Jerusalem. *BAL* 22/2 (1996): 26–29.
[27] Reich, "God Knows Their Names," 31-33. Avni, "The urban limits of Roman and Byzantine Jerusalem," 381.
[28] Yossi Nagar, "Human Skeletal Remains from the Mamilla Cave, Jerusalem," *ʾAtiqot* 43, (2002): 141–48.
[29] Avni, "The Persian Conquest of Jerusalem," 36.

the sixth and seventh century whereas the evidence from the Mamilla cave clearly points out to the seventh century. A reasonable assumption that might be plausible is that these sites might be connected to the Justinianic plague of 542 C.E. However, the examination of the bones from the Mamilla cave do not have a pathological indication for diseases.[30] Furthermore it is highly unlikely that during a plague the victims would be buried close to the urban center of Jerusalem to prevent contraction from the dead bodies.[31] Lastly, the burial sites are compatible with the information provided by Strategos' account. In his account Strategos mentions 35 places of burial and massacres, some of which can be identified with the mass burials described above.[32] The most explicit one is the cave of Mamilla which is close to the reservoir of Mamel where a massacre took place. The mass burial within the Mamilla cave is between the reservoir of Mamel and the city walls thus it is within reason to assume that some of the bodies from the reservoir are buried within the cave of Mamilla.[33] Furthermore, another place of burial that is identified by Strategos is the so-called "gates of the Holy Sion" which is located on Mount Zion close to the church Holy Zion.[34] Thus, there is a strong chance that the two mass burials found on Mount Zion within the Protestant and Greek Orthodox cemeteries are connected.[35]

Concerning the archeological report on buildings it should be noted that a number of previous archeological reports suggested destruction due to the Sasanid occupation. However, this approach is mainly a result of an interpretation based on the historical sources rather than the accurate dating of the findings. This misinterpretation of the archeological data was mainly attributed to the lack of a methodological classification concerning the Byzantine pottery types which became available fairly recently.[36] An example of why the early excavation reports

[30] Nagar, "Human Skeletal Remains," 145-146.
[31] Avni, "The Persian Conquest of Jerusalem," 39.
[32] Conybeare, "Antiochus Strategos' Account," 515.
[33] Avni, "The Persian Conquest of Jerusalem," 40.
[34] J. T. Milik, "La topographie de Jérusalem vers la fin de l'époque byzantine. *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 37, (1961): 143.
[35] Avni, "The Persian Conquest of Jerusalem," 40.
[36] See for further information: Jodi Magness, *Jerusalem ceramic chronology: circa 200-800 CE* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 16-71.

should be treated with caution is the report on the excavations of the upper slope of the City of David. The excavations revealed a Byzantine Street in a residential quarter from the sixth century. According to the report, the street and the buildings were destroyed during the occupation and abandoned.[37] However, a careful pottery analysis proved that the location was in use continuously until the Medieval period.[38] Thus, the archeological literature that depends on more clear chronology based on the pottery analysis is more dependable. Other residential areas that are excavated show similar traces of continuity.[39] However, based on the evidence on ash layers one location should be mentioned. A thick ash layer was found outside of the walls between the Damascus gate and the Herod's gate during the excavations in 1930's.[40] The ash layer points out to a destruction of the wall and the possible dating of the wall is consistent with the Sasanid siege of the city (614).[41] Thus, it is reasonable to attribute this destruction with the siege.[42] In fact it might be the point where the Sasanid forces entered the city as several sources talk about a breach within the walls.[43]

I would like to give two examples concerning the religious landscape of Jerusalem that are also mentioned in the sources to give a brief overview about the destructive extent of the occupation. As I mentioned earlier, the contemporary written sources mention the church of Holy Zion as one of the places which was destroyed. The mass burials found in the Protestant and Orthodox churches strengthen the idea that the site of the church has suffered some damages. However, there are no definitive signs of destruction.[44] Either the church received minor damage and was immediately restored, or it did not receive damage at all. Furthermore,

[37] J. W. Crowfoot, G. M. Fitzgerald, *Excavations in the Tyropoeon Valley, Jerusalem, 1927*. PEFA 5 (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1929), 52-55.
[38] Magness, *Jerusalem ceramic chronology*, 63-64.
[39] Avni, "The Persian Conquest of Jerusalem," 41.
[40] R. W. Hamilton, Excavations against the North Wall of Jerusalem, 1937-8. *QDAP* 10 (1944): 1–21.
[41] Jodi Magness, "The Walls of Jerusalem in the Early Islamic Period." *BA* 54, no. 4 (1991): 209-212
[42] Avni, "The Persian Conquest of Jerusalem," 41.
[43] Ka'bi, Al-Nasr, *A Short* Chronicle, 50. Conybeare, "Antiochus Strategos' Account," 506. Sebeos, *The Armenian History*, ch. 34, 115, 69.
[44] Avni, "The Persian Conquest of Jerusalem," 42.

there is evidence pointing out that the church was still in use in the Early Islamic period.[45] The second example would be the Holy Sepulcher complex which, as indicated above, was also mentioned in the written sources. However, the archeological exploration of the religious building revealed no traces of destruction dating back to early seventh century.[46] Furthermore, Di Segni's study on monograms which are inscribed on the capitals of the church dates it to Emperor Maurice's reign which is just a decade before the Sasanid occupation.[47] The survival of these capitals is also a testament to the continuity of the church.[48]

As a result of the archeological literature mentioned above, it can be surmised that the siege of the city and the resultant initial damage together with the loss of lives can be confirmed. However, the archeological record does not reveal any large-scale destruction. In fact, there is clear evidence suggesting continuity throughout the seventh century in many sites. The emergent picture now fits in nicely with Clive Foss' article which focuses on the Sasanid occupation of the Byzantine Near East as a whole. Foss demonstrates by using both archeological and written evidence that the Sasanid Empire was adept at incorporating new populations into its system while leaving the local administrative structures intact in Armenia, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. As a result he points out to a remarkable degree of continuity in the socio-economical life in the Byzantine Near East well in to the administration of the early Islamic State.[49] According to G. W. Bowersock, "This revisionist account of the Persian invasion in the seventh century has encouraged a new consensus about the Near East on the eve

[45] R. Schick, *The Christian Communities of Palestine from Byzantine to Islamic Rule: A Historical and Archaeological Study*. Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam 2 (New Jersey, Princeton: Darwin Press, 1995), 335.
[46] Avni, "The Persian Conquest of Jerusalem," 42. G. Avni, J. Seligman, "New Excavations at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Compound," in *One Land, Many Cultures: Archaeological Studies in Honour of Stanislao Loffreda OFM*, eds. G. C. Bottini, L. Di Segni, and L. D. Chrupcala. Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, Collectio Major 41 (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 2003), 238-246. Schick, *The Christian Communities*, 36-37.
[47] Leah Di Segni, "Epigraphic Finds Reveal New Chapters in the History of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the Sixth-Century," in *Unearthing Jerusalem. 150 Years of Archaeological Research in the Holy City*, Eds. K. Galor and G. Avni (Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 2011).
[48] Avni, "The Persian Conquest of Jerusalem," 43.
[49] Clive Foss, "The Persians in the Roman Near East," *JRAS*, Series 3, 13. 2 (2003), 149–70.

of the Islamic conquests."[50] Thus, the current scholarly literature makes a powerful case against the previous historiographical attitudes which argue that the Sasanid occupation left the Byzantine Near East and Jerusalem devastated either socio-economically or population wise. As a result, the attitude towards the written sources underwent a change. Although the sources were continued to be used for different purposes such as topographical details, the dramatical depictions concerning the destruction of different spaces within and around Jerusalem were largely neglected.

To the best of my knowledge, the current literature is mainly concerned with the authenticity of the descriptions within the narrative sources and the effect of these events on the socio-economic life in Jerusalem together with the Byzantine Near East.[51] A question regarding the underlying socio-cultural notions that led the authors to compose such depictions of the occupation is yet to be asked. At this point, it is necessary to state that some scholars point to the ideological and religious reflexes of the authors as the reason for such descriptions.[52] However, this answer, not only oversimplifies a complex situation, but also does not explain why the authors specifically chose to depict the "hostility" of the Sasanids by emphasizing the destruction of religious and public spaces to a degree that altered the landscape of the city. At this point, I believe a possible explanation for such depictions can be made through the notion of space and its significance to the authors of the sources.

Theory, Methodology, and Terminology

Henry Lefebvre in his book "The Production of Space"[53] introduces a triadic dialectic model. According to this model there are three processes in which spaces are constructed. The

[50] Bowersock, *Empires in Collision in Late Antiquity*, 47.
[51] Bowersock, *Empires in Collision in Late Antiquity*, 26. Avni, "The Persian Conquest of Jerusalem," 35-48, Foss, "The Persians in the Roman Near East," 149-170.
[52] Bowersock, *Empires in Collision in Late Antiquity*, 31-32.
[53] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford, England: Blackwell, 1991).

space subjected to everyday practice was the space of so-called classical perspective, the geometrical understanding of space[54] "which can be perceived."[55] The second process is the social space which embodies how a space was developed through socio-cultural norms and aims[56] "which can be conceived."[57] The third process is the living space which dwells between the physical and conceived space and includes the everyday perception and re-presentation of the space in question.[58] At this point I find it useful to turn towards an analogy that two geographers, Stuart Elden and Zhonyuan Zhang, has come up with to have a more concrete understanding of these definitions:

> On the one hand, we have an abstract space of pure mathematical figures and verbal messages – manifested in the design of offices, organisational rules and symbols, and so on; and, on the other, an all-too-material, and therefore indifferent space, consisting of the flows of labor, money, information and every physical movement of employees: their opening doors, sipping coffee etc. In between these two poles, there is the lived space, a space of pure subjectivity, of human experiences, of people's sense-making, imagination, and feeling – that is, their local knowledge – of the space as they encounter it.[59]

The important thing here is to remember that these spaces are not entirely distinct from each other. One process does not end where the other process starts. They are not juxtaposed but rather intertwined as fluid concepts. The seventh-century authors who depicted the Sasanid occupation of Jerusalem reflects all three processes in their narratives with differing degrees. My aim is to explore the first and second process, the so-called physical space and conceived space to understand the perception of the seventh-century authors regarding the urban space of Jerusalem and the surrounding Holy Land. Jerusalem as an urban space was "a city of prayer" as Lorenzo Perrone puts it.[60] The urban space of Jerusalem and Holy Land around was

[54] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 26.
[55] M. Veikou, "Space in Texts and Space as Text – A new approach to Byzantine spatial notions." *Scandinavian Journal of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 2 (1996), 148.
[56] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 26.
[57] Veikou, "Space in Texts and Space as Text," 148.
[58] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 362.
[59] Quote from: Veikou, "Space in Texts and Space as Text," 149. Original literature: Z. Zhang, "What is Lived Space? Review of S. Elden (2004) *Understanding Lefebvre: Theory and the Possible*. London: Continuum", *Ephemera reviews. Theory & Politics in Organization* 6:2 (2006), 221.
[60] Lorenzo Perrone, "Jerusalem, a City of Prayer in the Byzantine Era." *POC* 64, (2014): 5-30.

practically a sacred topography which was in the service of prayer, religious processions, and pilgrimage for centuries. The holy sites in and around Jerusalem themselves helped the travelers and inhabitants remember the story of salvation which gives even natural topographies such as Mount of Olives a sacral nature.[61] Therefore, creating a vibrant living space with dynamic values. According to Veronica Della Dora who wrote about the perception of sacred topographies and natural landscapes in Byzantium the conception of spaces is largely dependent upon the constructed memory.[62] This memory, especially in the case of Jerusalem and the Holy Land, was largely shaped by religious memory and expectations that are provoked by the Second Coming. Thus, for the authors of the seventh century, space was tied with stories of a sacred memory. These stories started from Adam and Eve, continued with Jesus Christ, and would end with the Second Coming.[63]

I would categorize the memory of Jerusalem and the Holy Land as twofold: First is the constructed memory of Jerusalem and its environs through sacralization which corresponds to both the physical space and the conceived space. Starting from the imperial building projects triggered by Emperor Constantine I (272-337, C.E) and his mother Helena (246/250-330, C.E) with an emphasis on the church of the Holy Sepulcher until the construction project under Justinian I (482-565 C.E) which focused on the Nea Church, the urban space of Jerusalem was transformed into a city of religious buildings.[64] The gradual domination of the urban space by the religious buildings would form nodes of sacrality which in turn resulted in the identification of the urban space of Jerusalem with its religious buildings. I plan to discuss this first process of physical transformation within the first chapter which coincides with Henri Lefebvre's first

[61] Perrone, "Jerusalem, a City of Prayer in the Byzantine Era," 20.
[62] Veronica Della Dora, *Landscape, Nature and the Sacred in Byzantium*, (Cambridge: Cambridge Uni. Press, 2016), 3.
[63] Della Dora, *Landscape, Nature and the Sacred*, 6.
[64] See: Juliette Day, "Seeing Christ in Holy Places," in *Space in Late Antiquity*, eds. Juliette Day, Raimo Hakola, Maijastina Kahlos, Ulla Tervahauta (New York: Routledge, 2016), 69-89. Beatrice Caseau, "Sacred Landscapes," in *Interpreting Late Antiquity*, ed. G. W. Bowersock, Peter Brown, Oleg Grabar (England London: Harvard Uni. Press, 2001), 21-60. Thomas E. Levy, *The archaeology of society in the Holy Land* (London: Leicester University Press, 1998), 477-478.

spatial process. Naturally, the memory making process was not restricted to commemorative buildings. There is also the creation of narratives that targets the religious buildings and the physical spaces which they commemorated. The creation of these narratives by personalities like Eusebius of Caesarea and Cyril of Jerusalem lent further meaning to these spaces which circulated widely. The literary genre of these narratives is variable but the emphasis on the religious spaces and their mnemonic value regarding the biblical history stayed the same. In the second chapter of the thesis, I plan to discuss the connection between these narratives and the religious spaces of Jerusalem showing that how these spatial notions were conceived by the use of narratives and how they were in circulation. At the end of each chapter, I will demonstrate how these spatial notions dependent upon the physical transformation of Jerusalem and the conceived space through the narratives had shaped the narrative preferences and presentation of the seventh-century authors who depicted the occupation of Jerusalem.

The second is the memory of the future, entailing the stories of eschatological writings and the expectations of the Second Coming. The Byzantine-Sasanid war in the seventh century coupled with the taking of Jerusalem and the Holy Land had intensified the apocalyptic expectations which uses Jerusalem and the Holy Land as a narrative space where the events prior to the Second Coming takes place.[65] This is not to say the eschatological expectations were only triggered because of the occupation of Jerusalem. Late Antique Byzantine sources had a long tradition of using moments of crisis as omens for eschatological events and eventual salvation. In this tradition, the military defeats and various setbacks were interpreted as God's punishment and the unfolding of the providential plan of God which guides the humankind to

[65] See: Gerrit J. Reinink, "Heraclius the New Alexander: Apocalyptic Prophecies During the Reign of Heraclius" In *The Reign of Heraclius (610-641): Crisis and Confrontation*, eds. Reinink, G. J. & Stolte (Leuven, Paris: Peeters Publishers, 2002). Paul Magdalino, "The History of the Future and Its Uses: Prophecy, Policy and Propaganda" In *The Making of Byzantine History. Studies Dedicated to Donald M. Nicol*, eds. R. Beaton and C. Roueshe (Aldershot: Variorum 1993). Yuri Stoyanov, "Apocalypticizing Warfare: From Political Theology to Imperial Eschatology in Seventh- to Early Eighth-Century Byzantium." In *The Armenian Apocalyptic Tradition: A Comparative Perspective*, Eds. Kevork Bardakjian and Sergio La Porta, Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha (2014).

the end times at the same time.[66] The contemporary seventh-century authors who depicted the occupation of Jerusalem were no strangers to such literary themes. And they made use of it by giving centrality to Jerusalem and its environs.[67] Within the second chapter I will further discuss the origins of these eschatological notions regarding Jerusalem and how they affected the narratives of the seventh-century authors.

I would be remiss to not address why I am not choosing Hierotopy as a methodological approach. Hierotopy is a methodological approach proposed by Alexei Lidov and has been gaining momentum since the start of 2000's.[68] The term is composed of two Greek words: *hieros* (sacred) and *topos* (place, space, notion).[69] Lidov himself formulates Hierotopy as follows: "Hierotopy is creation of sacred spaces regarded as a special form of creativity, and a field of historical research which reveals and analyses the particular examples of that creativity."[70] The scope of the Hierotopic approach covers a variety of interdisciplinary areas including architectural forms, liturgical clothes and vessels, sensory elements such as lighting and fragrance, and lastly performative elements such as ritual gestures and movement.[71] Thus, it is an all-encompassing approach which delves into how a sacred space functions. While Jerusalem's religious spaces have their fair share of Hierotopical elements I believe it is not the right choice for the purpose of my thesis. As I mentioned above, Hierotopy mainly deals with how a space functions. While this is related to my topic it is not my main question. My aim is to understand the perception of Jerusalem by the authors who depicted the occupation. Thus,

[66] Stoyanov, *Defenders and Enemies of the True* Cross, 62
[67] Stoyanov, *Defenders and Enemies of the True Cross*, 64-65.
[68] The term was first proposed by Alexei Lidov in 2001. It was comprehensively discussed in 2004 in the international symposium of Moscow and has been gaining traction since. For further information see: Alexei Lidov, "Hierotopy. The Creation of Sacred Spaces as a Form of Creativity and Subject of Cultural History," in *Hierotopy. Creation of Sacred Spaces in Byzantium and Medieval Russia.* Ed. by A. Lidov (Moscow: Indrik, 2006), 9-31. Alexei Lidov, "Creating the Sacred Space. Hierotopy as a new field of cultural history," in *Spazi e percorsi sacri*, eds. Chiara Cremonesi and Laura Carnevale (Padua: Libreriauniversitaria.it edizioni, 2015), 61–90.
[69] Lidov, "Creating the Sacred Space," 62.
[70] Lidov, "Hierotopy. The Creation of Sacred Spaces," 32.
[71] Lidov, "Hierotopy. The Creation of Sacred Spaces," 32.

my questions are more related to how Jerusalem was subjected to spatial discursive notions and how those notions showed themselves within the narratives of the seventh-century authors.

I have to admit terminology is always a problem concerning spaces that have a religious dimension. As I have mentioned before, for analytical purposes spaces can be categorized but in actuality they are fluid concepts thus creating the problem of terminology. While there are philosophical and literary discussions with regards to the categorization of space, I would argue that those discussions do not necessarily transition well to the practical applications. Therefore, I would like to establish the boundaries of my terminology as simple and as fluid as possible. I define the terms urban space and public space as the space which surround everyday life and will use it interchangeably, it can include religious spaces within its boundaries as well. Religious space, on the other hand, is the space which triggers the awareness of a visitor in a religious sense. It is not restricted to the interiors of religious buildings and has the possibility to extend and take over the urban space in certain contexts. I define the term sacralization as any sort of attribution of religious significance to a given physical space. However, given that the physical spaces in Jerusalem already had a sacral dimension to begin with, it would be appropriate to distinguish between these. At this point, the term Hierophany is helpful for this distinction. Hierophany is formed after an attribution of a divine quality to a given space after an interaction with the divine. In this case, the said physical space acquires a detached quality "from the surrounding cosmic milieu (…) making it qualitatively different."[72] Thus, a physical space which acquired a sacred nature in its purest form acquires Hierophanic qualities. On the other hand, I define sacralization as further ascription of sacral qualities of the place in a discursive form. In this sense, the cave of Nativity in Bethlehem by itself would have Hierophanic qualities whereas the construction of a commemorative church at the spot would be an act of sacralization.

[72] Mircea Eliad, Willard R. Trask, *Sacred and Profane: The Nature of Religion* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1959), 26.

Chapter 1: The Making of a Sacred Landscape

In this chapter, my aim is to present the development of religious spaces both in the urban space of Jerusalem and the surrounding natural topography and locate the notions of this development within the seventh century written sources that describe the occupation of Jerusalem by the Sasanids in 614 C.E. In my opinion this bundle of religious spaces constituted nodes of sacrality which, when considered together, formed a lively sacred landscape where the urban space of Jerusalem was dominated by the existence of religious buildings, religious processions, pilgrims, and resident Christians in the form of mainly monastic circles. It goes without saying that not all the population was Christian. However, my focus will be on Christians of various regions and their overall perception of Jerusalem and its environs.

I will give a brief account of the transformation of the urban space of Jerusalem and the surrounding natural topography from the so-called Roman army camp *Aelia Capitolina* to the Holy Land in terms of religious buildings.[73] I will discuss some particular architectural and natural topographic elements of certain religious buildings that were constructed during the reign of Constantine I and continue with other later religious buildings of note that contributed to this transformation. I will also discuss the identification of the said buildings with the urban landscape of Jerusalem displayed on the so-called Madaba mosaic map[74] and apse mosaic of *Santa Pudenziana* in Rome.[75] Lastly, I will explain how the identification of religious buildings re-defined and dominated the urban space in question.

[73] "Around 130 C.E, the Roman emperor Hadrian founded a new city in place of Herodian Jerusalem, next to the military camp. He honored the city with the status of a colony and named it Aelia Capitolina." Shlomit Weksler-Bdolah, "Aelia Capitolina" in *Routledge handbook on Jerusalem* eds. Sulaymān Murad, ʻAlī Naomi Koltun-Fromm, and Bedross Der Matossian (New York: Routledge, 2019), 47.
[74] Victor Roland Gold, "The Mosaic Map of Madeba." *BAL* 21, no. 3 (1958): 50–71.
[75] Gregory T. Armstrong, "Imperial Church Building in the Holy Land in the Fourth Century." *BAL* 30, no. 3 (1967): 90–102.

1.1: The Transformation of the Urban Space from *Aelia Capitolina* to the Holy City

1.1.1: The Transformation Under Constantine I

Understanding how imperially sanctioned religious buildings dominated the landscape and the perception of this urban space requires what the said imperial building programs dominated. Thus, I must give a brief account of the establishment of the colony *Aelia Capitolina*. After the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans (70 C.E), the Herodian Jewish city was destroyed, its inhabitants were scattered, and the tenth legion established its military camp on the site. Eventually emperor Hadrian formed a new city replacing the Herodian Jerusalem centered on the military camp.[76] The new city assumed its position as a colony named *Aelia Capitolina*. *Aelius* was the family name of emperor Hadrian, whereas *Capitolina* indicated that the new settlement was dedicated to the Capitoline Triad which was composed of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva. The landscape of the new city was smaller than and different in shape from the Herodian city (Image 2).[77] Romans removed almost anything that was characteristic of the Herodian Jerusalem. What remained were a part of the western city wall, which was incorporated into the Roman army camp, and the Temple Mount complex which apparently required too much work to be destroyed. Nevertheless, although the Temple Mount complex wasn't destroyed, it was transformed as a civic and a religious center. The Greek historian Cassius Dio (?-229 C.E), indicates that a new temple dedicated to Jupiter was raised in the Temple Mount complex.[78] The new city was founded upon a plan that included straight lined streets which ran parallel to each other both on a north-south and east-west axis which

[76] For more information about the Herodian Jerusalem see: Orit Pelet-Barkat, "Herodian Jerusalem" in *Routledge handbook on Jerusalem*, eds. Sulaymān Murad, 'Alī Naomi Koltun-Fromm, and Bedross Der Matossian (New York: Routledge, 2019), 34-47.
[77] Image 2: The map of *Aelia Capitolina.* Shlomit Weksler-Bdolah, "Aelia Capitolina", 48.
[78] Cassius Dio Cocceianus, Earnest Cary, and Herbert Baldwin Foster, *Dio's Roman history*, trans. Earnest Cary, and Herbert Baldwin Foster (London: W. Heinemann, 1914), 69.12.

resulted in frequent intersections, a plan that was also used by the later Byzantines. The city now with its colonnaded streets, public buildings, baths, and temples was a Roman city severing its ties with its Jewish past.[79] The destruction of the city's Jewish character gave to the Constantinian imperial authorities a sort of blank canvas where they could reinvent the city's Christian character according to their aims.

The new Christian outlook of the city was developed between the fourth and sixth centuries with varying degrees of intensity. It is important to note that the Temple Mount complex was desolate throughout these centuries. The significance of this phenomenon will be discussed in the second chapter. The surge of changes in the landscape of Jerusalem started with Constantine I's reign. Even before the building program itself, Jerusalem's unique position was acknowledged by the imperial office. During the council of *Nicaea* the bishopric of Jerusalem was granted a status of honor, although hierarchically it was still under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of *Caeserea Maritima*.[80] Constantine's victory over his co-emperor Licinius (250-325 C.E) enabled him to extend his authority to the Eastern parts of the empire including Palestine. After consolidating the imperial power, he turned his attention towards Jerusalem by way of building programs. His particular focus was on the urban space of Jerusalem and Bethlehem. The focus on these places is hardly surprising as these places are intricately interwoven with the New Testament narrative. The church of Nativity was placed upon a cave on Bethlehem commemorating the incarnation of God where Christ was born. The places of crucifixion, burial, and resurrection of Jesus were commemorated by the erection of the Martyrion church and the Anastasis (the rotunda over the tomb of Jesus) which formed the

[79] Robert Louis Wilken, *The land called holy: Palestine in Christian history and thought* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 53.

[80] "Since custom and ancient tradition have prevailed that the Bishop of Aelia [Capitolina = Jerusalem] should be honored, let him (saving the due dignity to the Metropolis [Caesarea Maritima]) have the next place of honor." (Council of *Nicaea*, Canon 7) for full list of Canons: Philip Schaff, Henry Wace ed. *A Select library of Nicene and post-Nicene fathers of the Christian church: Second series*, Volume XII: THE SEVEN ECUMENICAL COUNCILS (London: T&T Clark, 1899), 2-42.

Holy Sepulcher complex. The Eleona church was erected upon the place where the final meeting of the disciples and Christ took place on the Mount. of Olives.[81] As we understand from Constantine's letter to Macarius the bishop of Jerusalem, the buildings were constructed in a way that would reflect the imperial splendor.[82] The letter also indicates the degree of the emperor's personal involvement in the matter. The personal involvement of the imperial office could also be inferred from the fact that Constantine's mother Helena went on a pilgrimage at the same time frame, possibly for overseeing the church building process.[83]

From an architectural standpoint the buildings had some novelties as well. All three buildings had large atria in front of the main church building. These atria constituted a closed space which directed the visitor's attention either inside the church or outside constituting a preparatory space for pre/post experience of the visit.[84] Furthermore, both the Holy Sepulcher compound and the church of Nativity had five aisled congregation spaces for various church ceremonies that were separate from the memorial site which had shrine architectures. Thus, the church which housed prayer and the memorial space were physically separated. The space dedicated to the memorials was surrounded by an ambulatory that continued around the revered sites which would direct the stream of visitors first inwards and then outwards.[85] All these architectural details indicate that the buildings were constructed to be first, active churches that would hold congregations, and second, as spaces that would invoke memory and thus were meant to be visited.

[81] Armstrong, "Imperial Church Building", 91.
[82] Averil Cameron, Stuart Hall, Eusebius, *Eusebius, Life of Constantine* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), III. 31-32.
[83] Jan Willem Drijvers, *Helena Augusta: the mother of Constantine the Great and the legend of her finding of the true cross* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), 63.
[84]Verstegen, "Byzantine Jerusalem", 68.
[85] Armstrong, "Imperial Church Building and Church-State Relations", 94.

1.1.2: Notable Transformations until the Sixth Century

After Constantine I's reign, through the second half of the fourth century, there were also personal endeavors which aimed to sacralize the holy places via buildings, in the same way Constantine had done. Of course, especially endeavors of local bishops in this line were encouraged by the imperial authority in the form of subsidies. The most potent example of this was the Church of the Apostles of St. Sion located on Mt. Zion which correlated to the south-west corner of the city. The new church was not a new construction entirely but rather an enlarged version of a church that already stood there. The church was termed as the "mother of all churches" as it was built on the spot believed to be the place where the apostles had gathered during Pentecost.[86] Other churches that require a brief mention here are the Gethsemane church on the Mount of Olives, where Christ had prayed on the night of his arrest and the Imbomon (on the hill) church which was consecrated on the spot believed to be the place of Christ's Ascension.[87] It is possible to see that the erection of religious buildings was closely connected to Christ's life, death, and passion. Towards the fifth and sixth centuries there are two churches that were significant additions to the religious network of buildings, which were not directly connected with the story of Christ. First, the church of St. Stephen, which was financed by empress Aelia Eudokia (401-460 C.E) (wife of emperor Theodosius II) during her stay in Jerusalem. The church was located to the north of the city just outside of the Damascus gate and held the bones of the deacon and first martyr St. Stephen. It was the first church that was erected for a saint and not for the commemoration of a place that is related to Christ.[88] The second is the Nea Church built by Justinian I (482-565 C.E). The church was dedicated to the *Theotokos* (mother of God) reflecting the debates regarding the theological place of Mary. The church had larger dimensions when compared to the previous churches in the area. The scale

[86] Armstrong, "Imperial Church Building and Church-State Relations", 99-100.
[87] Armstrong, "Imperial Church Building and Church-State Relations", 100.
[88] Verstegen, "Byzantine Jerusalem", 70-71

of the church was designed to accommodate the high number of pilgrims and monks that visited the city on feast days. Besides the personal choice of the benefactors and imperially oriented theological aims, I think the reason for the divergence from commemorating the places related with the story of Christ is due to the inflation of such commemorations. In fact, some instances of commemoration had more than one place associated with it. For example, there were three places that were associated with the last supper, the Eleona church, the church of St. Sion, and a cave at the foot of Mount of Olives.[89]

The sheer quantity of religious buildings did not only physically dominate the urban space of Jerusalem, but it also altered the way of how the borders of the urban space were perceived. The church of St. Sion was included to the old city which was now centered around the church of the Holy Sepulcher after the Byzantine city walls incorporated Mt. Zion into the city, thus expanding the urban space southwards. The Nea Church which was located to the east of Mt. Zion also strengthened this southward expansion. Furthermore, although they were physically outside of the urban borders, the bundle of commemorative buildings on the Mount of Olives and the church of St. Stephen established two nodes of sacrality to the east and north of the city, which were attached to the urban space, thus incorporating the hinterlands of the city to the urban space as well (Image 3).[90]

1.2: The Identification of Religious Buildings with the Urban Space

The physical domination of the urban landscape (which now also includes the hinterlands) by the commemorative establishments, brought together with it the identification of the urban landscape with the religious buildings which can be seen in two works of art. The

[89] Verstegen, "Byzantine Jerusalem", 72.
[90] Image 3: Map of Jerusalem in Byzantine Period. Verstegen, "Byzantine Jerusalem", 66.

first work is the so-called Madaba Map, found in the settlement of Madaba which was located to the south-west of Amman in Jordan. It was discovered in 1896 and, although controversial, it is dated to the mid-sixth century.[91] The map itself shows the most important pilgrimage sites between the south of the Jordan river all the way to the Nile delta at the same time expanding to Kerak in the east.[92] The representation of Jerusalem which was on a cartouche placed in the center of the map depicts a circular shaped fortified cityscape with the writing "Η ΑΓΙΑ POLICIEPOYCA[ΛΗΜ]" (The Holy City of Jerusalem) (Image 4).[93] In accordance with the original layout of *Aelia Capitolina,* five streets ran across the depiction. The main colonnaded street ran throughout the city from the Damascus gate to the Zion gate on a north-south axis (in the depiction it is the central street that cuts the city into two, left to right). The colonnades of the main street are interrupted by the church of the Holy Sepulcher in the middle. The church of St. Sion and the Nea Church are at the end of the street placed next to each other on an east-west axis (in the depiction down to top). In particular, the church of the Holy Sepulcher is depicted in detail. Four steps lead to the entrance of the church indicated by three doors. The doors depict an entrance to the long atrium, which then gives way to the church indicated by the red tiled roof. On the opposite end of the church building was another open space surrounded on three sides where the rock of calvary is located.[94] The particular details depicted to mark the building make it unmistakable that this building is in fact the church of the Holy Sepulcher. Identifying other buildings and an overall orientation of the cityscape was made possible in reference to first the church of the Holy Sepulcher and second the churches of St. Sion and the Nea Church. Forming a triad of reference points to identify the urban space of Jerusalem.

[91] Victor Roland Gold, "The Mosaic Map of Madeba." *BA* 21, no. 3 (1958): 50.
[92] Andrew W. Madden, "A New Form of Evidence to Date the Madaba Map Mosaic," *Liber Annuus* 62, (2012): 496.
[93] Image 4: Details of Jerusalem from the Madaba Mosaic Map. Madden, "A New Form of Evidence to Date the Madaba Map Mosaic," 497.
[94] Gold, "The Mosaic Map of Madeba." *The Biblical Archaeologist* 21, no. 3 (1958): 68.

The second is the apse mosaic of *Santa Pudenziana* church in Rome. The apse mosaic depicts Jerusalem, placing the church of the Holy Sepulcher on the left by showing the viewer the rotunda of the Anastasis, and placing the church of the Nativity on the right, while Christ himself is positioned in the middle in front of the Golgotha and the Cross (Image 5).[95] In accordance with the church building process, the relationship between the story of Christ in terms of his life, death, and resurrection with the places where the events had happened is apparent. From right to the left the apse tells us a story, the story which the religious buildings commemorated in and around Jerusalem. Starting from the right with one look the story of Christ's birth (church of Nativity), passion (rock of Golgotha), resurrection (rotunda of Anastasis), and lastly the commemoration (the Holy Sepulcher complex) is apparent. Furthermore, this story is identified with the religious buildings that physically dominated the landscape. The apse mosaic is dated to the late fourth century. If we consider the fact that the identified religious buildings in the mosaic were built in the mid-fourth century, it is evident that the physical domination of religious buildings and their connection to the story of Christ affected the perception of the urban space of Jerusalem rather quickly. The apse mosaic has been the object of a much art historical controversy, yet even though these controversies are loosely related, they are beyond the scope of this paper.[96]

With regards to both these works of art it would be unfair to not consider their context. Both works were situated within religious buildings of their own. In this case the presentation of the urban space of Jerusalem through the religious buildings might be seen as a natural consequence of a religious pretext. However, the particular use and placement of buildings in the apse mosaic of Santa Pudenziana seems significantly creative and conscious. The artist

[95] Image 5: The apse mosaic of the St. Pudenziana church in Rome. Andrew Simsky, "The Image Paradigm of Jerusalem in Christian Hierotopy," *Journal of Visual Semiotics* 186, (2018): 107.
[96] For art-historical perspective see: Thomas F. Mathews, *The clash of gods: a reinterpretation of early Christian art*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 92-114. Simsky, "The Image Paradigm of Jerusalem in Christian Hierotopy."

consciously chooses to relate the story of Christ through the commemorative buildings. From a contrafactual standpoint it is not hard to imagine there would be numerous ways to relate the story of Christ for the artist. The Madaba Map, on the other hand, is a mosaic map that pinpoints the pilgrimage sights. In this sense it is harder prove whether the depiction of Jerusalem through the religious buildings is due to the ongoing process of religious building programs or it is a natural consequence of depicting pilgrimage sights. However, it does not change the fact that the imperial building programs and overall elite interest towards the city has physically dominated the urban space with religious buildings. Therefore, leaving little choice to the artist who made the Madaba Map to depict Jerusalem with reference to the religious buildings which would also strengthen the identification of the urban space with the religious space.

1.3: The Identification of the Religious Buildings with the Urban Space in Seventh-Century Written Sources:

The question here is how the physical domination of religious buildings and their effect on the perception of the urban space of Jerusalem affected the subject matter of this thesis; the seventh-century written sources that narrate the occupation of Jerusalem by the Sasanids. The sheer quantity of religious sites and the buildings related to them is a good point to start. An example of this can be found in Antiochus Strategos' account. After finishing the description of the occupation and the lamentation towards the saddening events during the occupation, Strategos goes on to list the number of the dead together with the places where they were found. According to Strategos, a certain Thomas and his wife who was unnamed were "on the spot when Persians came; and they knew in detail everything which was done by them" thus they were aware where the concentrations of bodies were.[97] A survey of the narrative that has been associated with the dead bodies gives us the conclusion that most of the places mentioned were

[97] Conybeare, "Antiochus Strategos' Account," 514.

at holy sites.[98] The churches mentioned include St. Sion, Anastasis and Golgotha within the Holy Sepulcher compound, and the Nea Church, which were important religious buildings that would dominate the landscape.[99] Another interesting aspect of the list is that even the description of urban spaces was done with reference to the religious buildings within the urban space. Expressions such as, "in front of the gates of Holy Sion", "on the western side of Holy Sion", "in front of the Samaritan Temple" and "in the lane of St. Kyriakos" were prevalent during this part of the narrative.[100] The description of the urban locations with reference to the religious buildings indicates an understanding of the urban space through the religious landscape just like in the Madaba Map. Lastly, the narrative of Strategos offers us a vivid event, when some of the city's inhabitants, including Patriarch Zachariah, were taken captive to be taken to the Sasanid lands. After leaving the city, Zachariah and his fellow captives stop on the Mount of Olives to look back to Jerusalem one more time and what they see is explained by Strategos:

> Once more they raised up their eyes and gazed upon Jerusalem and the holy churches. A flame, as out of a furnace, reached up to the clouds, and it was burning. Then they fell to sobbing and lamenting all at once and loudly. (…) when they beheld the Holy Anastasis afire, Sion in smoke and flames, and Jerusalem devastated.[101]

The image that has been depicted here is a striking one in accordance with the lamenting tone of the source. However, it also presents an opportunity for the writer. Regardless of the reality of this event, by narratively placing the exiles on Mount of Olives, Strategos gives his audience a glimpse of the urban landscape. Within all those flames, smoke, and chaos caused by the sack of Jerusalem what the observer sees or chooses to see is not just the urban space of Jerusalem but in fact it's holy churches. The author chooses to relate the catastrophe through the churches, thus giving an example of how he makes sense of the urban space through the

[98] Avni, "The Persian Conquest of Jerusalem," 38.
[99] Oliver Larry Yarbrough, "Early Christian Jerusalem: The City of the Cross," in *Jerusalem: Idea and Reality*, Ed. by Tamer Mayar (London: Routledge, 2008), 68.
[100] Conybeare, "Antiochus Strategos' Account," 515.
[101] Conybeare, "Antiochus Strategos' Account," 509-510.

religious buildings. Of course, Strategos' narrative is affected by what the religious buildings stands for, how they amplify the space through remembrance, and how the spectators interact with those spaces. However, in addition to the meaning of these buildings, I argue that the sheer physical dominance of the religious buildings within the urban space gives little choice to the author in terms of their perception as well.

The second example on the physical aspect of the religious buildings is not about how these buildings dominate the urban space per se, but rather it is based on the need to physically being present in the religious buildings. At this point, the *Anacreontic* styled poems of the future patriarch of Jerusalem, Sophronios, present us with good examples. The 20th poem in particular is full of longing for the Anastasis, emphasizing the importance of being present within the physical boundaries of the holy space.

> Let me walk your pavements
> And go inside the Anastasis
> (…)
> And as I venerate that worthy tomb,
> Surrounded by its conches,
> And columns surmounted by golden lilies.[102]

Sophronios here takes the reader through a journey as if going on a pilgrimage.[103] The reader enters the urban space and the first thing to do is entering the physical space of Anastasis where he/she encounters holy but very physical things, such as the empty tomb of Christ, the conches and the columns, marveling at the architectural splendor of the religious space. This passage reminds the reader of the agency of the religious buildings mentioned. These physical

[102] Quoted from: Wilken, *The land called hol,* 230. For the rest of Sophronios' poems see: Sophronios, Marcello Gigante, *Sophronii Anacreontica* (Roma: Gismondi, 1957).
[103] Wilken, *The land called holy,* 231.

spaces were meant to be visited; being physically present in that physical religious space was a critical component of the city's experience. This physical experience inevitably helps the visitor or reader (through the *ekphrasis* in the narrative) to perceive the urban space with its religious components sprinkled through the city as their perception is shaped by the physical experience of the religious buildings.

Chapter 2: Re-Making the Past: Stories of Conception for the Religious Spaces of Jerusalem

In this second chapter, my aim is to discuss the narratives of conception targeting the religious spaces of Jerusalem and its environs. The religious spaces in and around Jerusalem had an apparent sacral dimension because of their connection to the biblical narrative. In fact, even before the imperial building program that kick-started the interest in the Holy Land in the fourth century, personalities like Melito of Sardis (?-180 C.E.) and Origen (184-253 C.E.) went to Jerusalem to inspect the place with their own eyes for the sake of deepening their knowledge of scripture.[104] Granted, it would be anachronistic to call them pilgrims, but it is obvious that they were attracted to the pull of the connection between the physical spaces of Jerusalem and the biblical narrative.[105] This connection was made even more apparent by the erection of churches to commemorate the physical spaces related to especially the New Testament narrative.[106] However, the questions of what to do with this connection and how this connection fits in to the economy of Byzantine Christianity could not go unanswered as Jerusalem's importance grew. Thus, the religious conception of these spaces is highly relevant to understand the process of sacralization which corresponds to the second process of Henri Lefebvre's Triadic Dialectic Model, namely the conceived space. In this line, personalities like Eusebius of Caesarea (260/265-339 C.E.) and Cyril of Jerusalem (313-386 C.E.) became authoritative voices by inserting their narratives into the story of the sacred spaces of Jerusalem. They played a significant role in the development of these spatial notions. However, these notions were not uncontested as they carried significant theological implications. In this line, I will also discuss

[104] Lorenzo Perrone, "The Mystery of Judaea (Jerome, *Ep,* 46) The Holy City of Jerusalem between History and Symbol in Early Christian Thought," in *Jerusalem: Its Sanctity and Centrality to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, ed. by Lee L. Levine (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1999), 234. Egeria, John Wilkinson, *Egeria's travels,* ed. and trans. by John Wilkinson, (Warminster: Aris & Phillips: 2006), 12.
[105] For a list of pilgrimage destinations prior to 320 C.E see: H. Leclerq, "Pèlerinages aux lieux Saints," *Dictionnaire d'Archèologie Chr*ètienne *et Liturgie* 14.1, (1939), cols 68-70.
[106] Armstrong, "Imperial Church Building," 90–102.

Gregory of Nyssa's contentions against the theology of the physical spaces developed by Eusebius and Cyril. This might seem like a digression from the topic but showing the broader currents of attitudes towards Jerusalem will be revealing. After discussing Gregory, I will explore Emperor Julian's (361-363 C.E) attempt at rebuilding the Temple in the fourth century which is a unique case where the notions developed by Eusebius and Cyril was used as standard reactions by various Christian authors. I believe discussing such an event will show how the said notions took root in the Christian subconscious. It will also provide a preparatory context for the seventh-century authors' reactions regarding the occupation of Jerusalem. Lastly, I intend to demonstrate the echoes of the spatial notions, which are discussed in the previous sub-chapters, in the written sources that describe the occupation of Jerusalem by the Sasanids.

2.1: Sacralization of the Holy Places and Eusebius of Caesarea:

To the best of my knowledge, the earliest example regarding how these religious notions affected the conception of the sacred spaces in Jerusalem is Eusebius' *Life of Constantine*. As I have mentioned in the previous chapter, Jerusalem was subjected to an imperial building program in Constantine I's reign. The rebuilding program focused on the physical spaces that were connected to the biblical history and in particular to places that are related to Christ's life. Eusebius devotes a considerable part of his third book to this imperial building endeavor.[107] The crowning jewel of this imperial building project was of course the Holy Sepulcher complex which commemorated the crucifixion, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. In my opinion, Eusebius shapes the narrative and perception of these buildings by inserting his own version of their origination. In this line, his narrative on the discovery of the tomb of Jesus, he presents an

[107] Eusebius, Averil Cameron, Stuart Hall, *Eusebius, Life of Constantine*, trans. and edit. by Averil Cameron, Stuart Hall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 273. See also: E. D. Hunt, "Constantine and Jerusalem." *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 48, no. 3 (1997): 406.

elaborate story. According to Eusebius, the tomb of Jesus was covered with a layer of dirt, and on top of it a temple dedicated to Venus was constructed. In this temple people built "a gloomy shrine of lifeless idols to the impure spirit whom they call Venus and offered detestable oblations therein on profane and accursed altars."[108] The excavation efforts directed by Constantine to recover the tomb are described in the following manner:

> As soon, then, as his commands were issued, these engines of deceit were cast down from their proud eminence to the very ground, and the dwelling-places of error, with the statues and the evil spirits which they represented, were overthrown and utterly destroyed. Nor did the emperor's zeal stop here; but he gave further orders that the materials of what was thus destroyed, both stone and timber, should be removed and thrown as far from the spot as possible; and this command also was speedily executed. The emperor, however, was not satisfied with having proceeded thus far: once more, fired with holy ardor, he directed that the ground itself should be dug up to a considerable depth, and the soil which had been polluted by the foul impurities of demon worship transported to a far distant place. This also was accomplished without delay. But as soon as the original surface of the ground, beneath the covering of earth, appeared, immediately, and contrary to all expectation, the venerable and hollowed monument of our Saviour's resurrection was discovered. Then indeed did this most holy cave present a faithful similitude of his return to life, in that, after lying buried in darkness, it again emerged to light, and afforded to all who came to witness the sight, a clear and visible proof of the wonders of which that spot had once been the scene, a testimony to the resurrection of the Saviour clearer than any voice could give.[109]

The narrative of discovery inevitably contains expressions regarding the hierophanic qualities of the space. In addition, Eusebius' account of the events also includes elements of sacralization and purification. In particular Eusebius introduces two instances of purification into his narrative. First, the tomb of Jesus was hidden by a layer of dirt and that layer of dirt was polluted by pagan sacrifices dedicated to Venus. Second, in the same way, Constantine ordered the removal of the dirt and rubble not only to uncover the tomb of Jesus, but also to purify this holy site from the polluted pagan elements in order to conceive a Christian space both physically and conceptionally. Why did this physical space need such elaborate processes

[108] Eusebius, "Life of Constantine," in *Eusebius, Church History, Life of Constantine the Great, and Oration in Praise of Constantine*, ed. by Schaff, P. and H. Wace, *Nicene and post-Nicene Fathers. Second series*, vol. I (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 3.26, 1315. For the edited text see: Eusebius Caesariensis, *De Vita Constantini: Über dans Leben Konstantins*. Ed. by Bruno Bleckmann, Horst Philipp Schneider (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007).
[109] Eusebius, "Life of Constantine," 3.26-3.28, 1315-1317.

of sacralization and purification according to Eusebius? I would argue that there are two reasons: First, the physical spaces that were connected to the biblical narrative themselves became divine by providing testimony to the veracity of biblical events and being in contact with divinity. Thus, these spaces needed proper processes of sacralization in accordance with their holy status. Second, these spaces were made exclusive to Christians by these elaborate processes of sacralization. On the upcoming parts of the chapter, I will also present how these notions were in circulation in both Cyril of Jerusalem's writings and the seventh-century authors who depicted the occupation.

In the previous chapter, I have argued that several physical spaces were adorned with religious buildings to commemorate the relevant scenes from the biblical narrative; in this case, the Holy Sepulcher complex was built in order to commemorate the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ.[110] At this point, Eusebius' account intensifies the perception and the allocated significance of this space by stating that the connection between the physical space and the biblical narrative is not only important for mnemonic purposes, but it is also relevant theologically. The tomb of Jesus provides evidence regarding the truthfulness of the miracles that happened at the very physical spot.[111] In Eusebius' words, the existence of the physical space was "a clear and visible proof" of the miracles.[112] These words are charged with biblical meaning as for example in the Gospel of John words such as proof, token, and sign were used to refer to Jesus' miracles.[113] For example, the miracle of turning water into wine at Cana was "the first of Jesus' signs."[114] Through these proofs/miracles, Jesus further strengthened the faith of his followers while others who did not follow him were encouraged to believe.[115] The "sign"

[110] See Chapter I, 19-22.
[111] Wilken, *The land called holy*, 90.
[112] "ἐναργῆ παρεῖχεν ὁρᾶν τῶν αὐτόθι πεπραγμένων θαυμάτων τὴν ἱστορίαν" Eusebius, "Life of Constantine," 3.28, 1317.
[113] Wilken, *The land called holy*, 90.
[114] "ἀρχὴν τῶν σημείων ὁ Ἰησοῦς," John 2:11.
[115] John 20:30.

becomes the evidence of divinity. In this way Eusebius denotes the connection between these physical spaces and the divine which in turn makes those places themselves holy.

The connection between the divine encounters and the physical space was further strengthened by the narrative emphasis on some aspects of the natural topography. All three physical spaces that were commemorated by the imperial building program of Constantine were built upon caves. Eusebius is quite consistent in identifying the tomb of Jesus as a cave throughout his description of the tomb's discovery and the building of the Holy Sepulcher complex although there is no mention of caves in the four canonical gospels.[116] This discrepancy between Eusebius' narrative and the gospels is expected as although the nativity church already was a cave naturally, the caves that surrounded the tomb of Christ and the site of Ascension were results of painstaking stone cutting efforts. In Bethlehem, the natural cave was visibly accessible from above, in the Eleona church the cave was entrenched half-way and its limits were framed architecturally forming a room and, finally, the cave that housed the empty tomb of Christ was transformed into a temple by the rotunda above it.[117] Furthermore, in his oration for Constantine, Eusebius mentions how Constantine enhanced three mystical caves with structures.[118] Eusebius' insistence on describing these sites as caves is significant. In the Eastern Mediterranean world caves were used as physical spaces which, through their darkness and obscurity, were suitable places to encounter or host the divine.[119] For example, the Sybil who led Aeneas (later to become the hero of Virgil's *Aeneid)* to enable Aeneas to consult with his deceased father, lived in a cavern in the cliff of Cumae.[120] Moreover, Porphyry

[116] Veronica Della Dora, *Landscape, Nature and the Sacred in Byzantium*, (Cambridge: Cambridge Uni. Press, 2016), 180.
[117] Verstegen, "Byzantine Jerusalem," 68.
[118] Eusebius, "The Oration of Constantine," in *Eusebius, Church History, Life of Constantine the Great, and Oration in Praise of Constantine*, ed. by Schaff, P. and H. Wace, *Nicene and post-Nicene Fathers. Second series*, vol. I (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), Chapter IX, 1446.
[119] Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), 24.
[120] The story mentioned here predates Aeneid. H. W. Parke, *Sibyls and Sibylline Prophecy in Late Antiquity* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 78.

(234-305 C.E.), who lived just before Eusebius, in his commentary on cave of the nymphs in the *Odyssey*, envisions caves as symbols of ambiguity where it is suitable for the divine to appear.[121] This already existing perception of caves was incorporated into Eusebius' account to strengthen the connection between the divine and the related physical spaces.[122] Thus, the sacral nature of these spaces was emphasized as liminal spaces.

The second reason for the description of such elaborate sacralization and purification processes is to emphasize the exclusivity of these spaces to Christians. Jerusalem during the fourth century was not yet a Christian space per se. The imperial building project together with the narrative of Eusebius can be considered as an attempt to claim the urban space of Jerusalem as an exclusive Christian space. The narrative emphasis on sacralization and purification processes is important at this point. These processes by implication introduce the notion of the difference between religions by defining what is sacred or not, which required a set of acceptable and unacceptable actions. In other words, what was considered impure or unacceptable for one religion was not so for another. Thus, notions of sacralization and purification constituted points of conflict and competition between religions which would especially manifest itself with regards to the physical spaces.[123] The tension between different religious groups contesting the public spaces within the urban centers was well discussed within the scholarly literature, especially regarding the fourth and fifth centuries.[124] This tension was mainly due to the rise of Christianity and the policies of the imperial center. The removal of the

[121] Porphyry, Concerning the Cave of the Nymphs, trans. by Thomas Taylor (London: Phanes Press, 1991), 9-10, 42-43.
[122] Wilken, *The land called holy*, 89. For more information about Eastern Christian perception of caves see: Veronica Della Dora, "Anti-Landscapes: Caves and Apophasis in the Christian East." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 29, no. 5 (October 2011): 761–79.
[123] Beatrice Caseau, "Sacred Landscapes," in *Late Antiquity: A guide to the post-classical world*, eds. G. W. Bowersock, Peter Brown, Oleg Grabar (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 22.
[124] See: Thomas S. Burns, John W. Eadie, eds. *Urban Centers and Rural Contexts in Late Antiquity* (Michigan State University Press, 2001). Michele Renee Salzman, Marianne Sághy, and Rita Lizzi Testa, eds. *Pagans and Christians in Late Antique Rome: Conflict, Competition, and Coexistence in the Fourth Century*, The Wiles Lectures. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015). Peter Brown. *The rise of Western Christendom: triumph and diversity, A.D. 200-1000*. (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013).

Victory Altar from Rome (382 C.E)[125] or the destruction of the *Serapaeum* (391 C.E)[126] could be cited as examples.[127] As it has been explained in the preceding paragraphs, space in particular could be transformed, or in Eusebius' case, revealed as a point of contact with the divine. If we return to Eusebius' chapter on the excavation of the tomb of Jesus, the pagans took part in an unacceptable behavior by offering sacrifices to Venus in the very space of the empty tomb. He considers the blood of the regular sacrifices which mixes with the dirt as impure. Because of this, the physical space had to be purified by removing the polluted dirt before it could be revered in a Christian way.[128] Therefore, by describing such an episode within his narrative Eusebius emphasized the competition between different religious groups to claim the urban space of Jerusalem by public sacralization processes which resulted in religious veneration. Furthermore, although in this particular episode Eusebius' focus is on pagans, later on Eusebius introduced the main antagonist and rival of Christians concerning the religious spaces in and around of Jerusalem, in other words, the Jews. For example, after describing the discovery of the tomb of Jesus and the construction of the Holy Sepulcher complex, Eusebius announces the establishment of a new "Christian" Jerusalem:

> A new Jerusalem was constructed, over against the one so celebrated of old, which, since the foul stain of guilt brought on it by the murder of the Lord, had experienced the last extremity of desolation, the effect of Divine judgment on its impious people. It was opposite this city that the emperor now began to rear a monument to the Saviour's victory over death, with rich and lavish magnificence. And it may be that this was that second and new Jerusalem spoken of in the predictions of the prophets, concerning which such abundant testimony is given in the divinely inspired records.[129]

The center of the city shifts to the west of the Temple Mount after the construction of the Holy Sepulcher complex. Eusebius is naturally aware of the fact that the Temple Mount

[125] James J. Sheridan, "The Altar of Victory – Paganism's Last Battle," *L'Antiquité Classique 35, no. 1* (1966): 186-206. See also: Michele Renee Salzman, *The Making of a Christian Aristocracy: Social and Religious Change in the Western Roman Empire* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2002), 74-83.
[126] Brown, *The rise of Western Christendom*, 73-74.
[127] Gilbert E. A. Grindle, *The destruction of paganism in the Roman Empire: from Constantine to Justinian*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1892), 29-30.
[128] Eusebius, "Life of Constantine," 3.26-3.28, 1315-1317.
[129] Eusebius, "Life of Constantine," 3.33, 1322.

used to be the center of the Jewish Jerusalem which then was in ruins. As a result, Eusebius, by both emphasizing the shift in topography and the current physical conditions of the two temple complexes draws an analogy that is dependent on an eschatological drama. Hence, he argues that the claim of the Jews on Jerusalem is no more. It is important to note that Eusebius' analogy was not only dependent on the construction of the Holy Sepulcher complex that created a Christian space, but also on the fact that the Temple Mount was in ruins. The analogy simultaneously showed God's favor towards Christians and abandonment of the Jews. It is not clear whether Eusebius was the first one to come up with this analogy as there are other instances where this analogy was utilized within the same decades. The anonymous author of the account *Pilgrim of Bordeaux* observes the contrast between the Temple Mount which lay in ruins and the magnificent Holy Sepulcher complex by describing the lamentation of the Jews and magnificence of the Holy Sepulcher in successive descriptions even though the church is on the process of erection (331).[130] A similar observation has also been made by Jerome (342-420 C.E). Jerome mentions a contemporary Jewish practice where a crowd of Jews prays at the site of the destroyed Temple.[131] Jerome describes the Jews as an impoverished mob who lamentingly looked at their ruined Temple whereas the place of Christ's birth and resurrection were in a flourishing state.[132] It is clear that there was a circulation of Christian sentiments with regards to their claim on Jerusalem expressed through spatial notions. However, the anonymous author of *Pilgrim of Bordeaux* and Jerome only hinted the spatial claim of Christians on Jerusalem, whereas Eusebius formulated this claim by elaborating on the importance and theology of the sacralized physical spaces and their connection to God's favor. In Wilken's

[130] Egeria, John Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels to the Holy Land*, trans. by John Wilkinson (Jerusalem: Ariel Publishing House, 1981), 157-158. For the edited text see: P. Geyer, *Itineraria et alia geographica*, ed. by P. Geyer, *CCSL* Volume 175 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1965).
[131] Hagith Sivan, *Palestine in late antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 198.
[132] Hieronymus, M. Adriaen, *In Sophoniam* 1, ed. by M. Adriaen, *Corpus Christianum Series Latina* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1970), 1.15-16, 673-74. For the translation of the relevant part see: F. E. Peters, *Jerusalem: The holy city in the eyes of chroniclers, visitors, pilgrims, and prophets, from the days of Abraham to the beginnings of modern times* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), 144.

words Eusebius was "the first to discern the profound shift in devotion that was taking place in his day and to lay the foundations for a Christian idea of the holy land."[133] It is important to note that Eusebius' position with regards to the idea of the holy land was unique when compared to other authors. Due to Jerusalem's unique heritage, Eusebius had to defend the exclusivity of these sacralized physical spaces both at the expense of the pagans and the Jews. Thus, Eusebius' discourses concerning the Holy Sepulcher complex were both anti-pagan and anti-Jewish.[134] By the passing of time, the pagan threat alleviated due to the rise of Christianity. However, as I will discuss in the coming parts of the thesis the Jewish threat continued.

Eusebius' *Life of Constantine* is considered as a written source that has elements of biography, but at the same time the narrative is dominated by panegyrical elements. It is indisputable that Eusebius' narrative centered around the person of Constantine and the work is apologetic.[135] The episodes mentioned above has the aim of showing God's approval and favor towards Constantine. As Eusebius was present in the dedication of the Holy Sepulcher in 335 and a speech delivered by him during the dedication survives, it is apparent that he did not want to miss a chance to praise Constantine while depicting such episodes.[136] However, I argue that the particular episodes I have discussed within Eusebius' narrative are different in tone and has other ambitions as well. The descriptions itself are overlaid with Eusebius' concern with the network of commemorative buildings which is intrinsically linked to the biblical history. Eusebius chooses to relate these events through spatial notions. He highlights the connection between the physical spaces and the biblical history by emphasizing the sacrality and the correct treatment of the said space. Furthermore, while Constantine gets his due credit, as before him Jerusalem and the holy places did not receive much attention, Eusebius' focus also shifts to the

[133] Wilken, *The land called holy*, 89.
[134] Oded Irshai, "The Jerusalem Bishopric and the Jews in the Fourth Century: History and Eschatology" in *Jerusalem: Its Sanctity and Centrality to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, ed. by Lee L. Levine (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1999), 209.
[135] Eusebius, *Eusebius, Life of Constantine*, 1.
[136] Eusebius, *Eusebius, Life of Constantine*, 274.

eschatological aspects of Constantine's building program. The depictions of these events are overlaid with Eusebius' concern with the prophesized New Jerusalem based on the Scriptures.[137]

2.2: The Promotion of Sacred Spaces and Cyril of Jerusalem:

Eusebius was first to recognize the theological significance of these spaces by arguing that they were witnesses and proof to the biblical narrative. He also furthered this argument by emphasizing the exclusive nature of these spaces to Christians. Cyril, the bishop of Jerusalem further shapes the notions developed by Eusebius. Presiding over Jerusalem in the decades just after the completion of the imperial building program in the reign of Constantine I, Cyril had the opportunity to hold liturgy in these spatial settings. In the catechetical lectures that he preached within sight of the places of Christ's death and resurrection, Cyril took significant rhetorical advantage of this opportunity.[138] Different from Eusebius, Cyril makes use of sensory vocabulary to emphasize the proximity of the physical spaces. While mentioning the Calvary, which he terms the "most holy Golgotha," he emphasizes the immediacy of the space and proclaims, "For others hear, but we both see and handle."[139] Cyril focuses on the concrete physical spaces of Jerusalem to prove his point.[140] He constantly appeals to the sacralized physical spaces as the witnesses of the biblical past in an effort to instill a special piety to his congregants that is dependent on Jerusalem:

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[137] Revelation 3.12, 21.2.
[138] Wilken, *The land called holy*, 119.
[139] Cyril of Jerusalem, "The Catechetical Lectures of Cyril of Jerusalem" in *A Select library of Nicene and post-Nicene fathers of the Christian church: Second series*, ed. and trans. by Philip Schaff, Vol. 7 (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2016), 13.22, 264. See for the original text: Cyril of Jerusalem, *Cyrilli Hierosolymorum archiepiscopi opera quae supersunt omnia*, ed. by W.C. Reischl and J. Rupp, 2 vols. (Munich: Lentner, 1848), (repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1967).
[140] Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony, "The Attitudes of Church Fathers toward Pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries" in *Jerusalem: Its Sanctity and Centrality to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, ed. by Lee L. Levine (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1999),199.

> The Archangel Gabriel bears witness, bringing good tidings to Mary: the Virgin Mother of God bears witness: the blessed place of the manger bears witness. (…) John the Baptist bears witness, the greatest among the Prophets, and leader of the New Covenant, who in a manner united both Covenants in Himself, the Old and the New. Jordan is His witness among rivers. (…) Gethsemane bears witness, still to the thoughtful almost shewing Judas. Golgotha, the holy hill standing above us here, bears witness to our sight: the Holy Sepulchre bears witness, and the stone which lies there to this day.[141]

The exposition of the above catechetical lecture is quite deliberate. As Cyril one by one mentions the biblical event and the corresponding physical space, he weaves the spatial and narrative aspects of the lecture into one.[142] The physical space itself becomes the thread which connects the liturgical present to the biblical past. Thus, theologically, the sacralized physical spaces become indispensable as they provide the necessary means to connect with the biblical narrative. It is important to note that, although the genres and settings are different, the logic of Cyril's exposition compels one to recall Eusebius' arguments. For Eusebius, the physical spaces were sacral because they provided proof of the veracity of biblical instances. For Cyril too, the physical spaces should be sacralized because they provide the connecting thread to the biblical past by bearing witness to the biblical narrative. In the same vein, Cyril shares Eusebius' second argument regarding the religious spaces of Jerusalem as well, namely the exclusiveness of such spaces for Christians. The established connection between the biblical past and the physical spaces already exudes a sentiment of exclusivity as these spaces become religiously charged. Cyril furthers this sentiment when he speaks about the Pentecost which has happened "in this city of Jerusalem, (for this honor also belongs to us; and we speak not of the good things which have happened among others, but of those which have been vouchsafed among ourselves,) on the day of the Pentecost." The language of us and others here posits a certain degree of exclusivity. The biblical past was a blessing and an honor to Christians only and the corresponding physical spaces which connect the congregants with the biblical past were exclusive only to Christians. Similar to Eusebius, Cyril also mentions Jews as the contenders

[141] Cyril of Jerusalem, "The Catechetical Lectures," 10.19, 214.
[142] Bitton-Ashkelony, "The Attitudes of Church Fathers," 199.

of Jerusalem in an eschatological scheme. In his 15th catechetical lecture, Cyril describes a scene in which the Jews flock to the Antichrist in an effort to rebuild "the Temple of the Jews which has been destroyed."[143] The association between the end-times and the rebuilding of the Temple Mount by the Jews is an important theme which I will discuss in more detail in my sub-chapter about the attempt at rebuilding the Temple Mount in Julian the Apostate's reign.

At this point, I would be remiss to not discuss Cyril's ambitions regarding the church politics of his bishopric as it provides important context which relativizes Cyril's catechetical lectures. The fourth-century Jerusalem presented a dichotomy with regards to its position within the ecclesiastical hierarchy. In an age where Christianity entrusted its collective memory and identity to Jerusalem thanks to the connection between the New Testament and the physical spaces of Jerusalem the ecclesiastical status of the city was not enhanced. The seventh canon of the council of Nicea (325) indeed recognized the special status of the city but still the city's ecclesiastical status itself was subjected to the metropolitan see of Caesarea.[144] To change this situation and improve his and his city's status, Cyril launched a campaign. Drawing on the city's special connection with the biblical past he even declared his city as an apostolic see instead of Caesarea.[145] The fact that the empire was ruled by Constantius II who had Arian inclinations which made him favor Acacius (?-366 C.E) the Arian metropolitan of Caesarea did not help and Cyril had to employ other less-political means in his promotion.[146] In this line, the catechetical lectures were a wonderful opportunity for Cyril to promote his bishopric further. Thus, the content of the catechetical lectures came to be dominated by the religious landscape where they took place. Drawing on the physical space around them and its connection with the biblical narrative these spaces themselves became a "fifth gospel" in Lorenzo Perrone's

[143] Cyril of Jerusalem, "The Catechetical Lectures," 15.15, 304.
[144] See chapter I, 20.
[145] Sozomène, *Histoire ecclésiastique*, eds. and trans. A. J. Festugière, Bernard Grillet, Guy Sabbah, *SC* 418, II (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf,1996), 4.25, 314.
[146] Jan Willem Drijvers, *Cyril of Jerusalem: Bishop and City* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 157.

words.[147] Cyril's method of promotion did not include profound theological arguments, but he relied on the abundant concrete surroundings around him.

Another aspect of the sacralization of the physical spaces largely formulated by Eusebius and Cyril was the resultant pilgrimages. The theology of the sacralized physical spaces in Jerusalem had made the metaphysical substance of the divine tangible.[148] To see the places where Jesus had once walked, to touch and interact with the spaces that purports the sacred memory of the bible and to feel the majesty of that memory through both liturgy and the commemorative buildings must have been an overwhelming experience. As early as the end of the fourth century, pilgrimage had already become a widespread phenomenon.[149] The survival of several written sources on the nature of pilgrimage and the pilgrimage accounts can attest to that.[150] Such interest towards Jerusalem and its environs would also result in a lively urban life. There are even inventive business ventures undertaken by the local inhabitants in the form of souvenirs for the visitors to take home.[151] The interest towards Jerusalem on the one hand would also help Cyril with his political ambitions as the importance of his bishopric grew, on the other hand, such circulation of people and goods would also ensure the circulation of the developing spatial sensibilities.

It is important to remember that although Cyril had his alter-motives in his promotional campaign, he decided to do it through the notion of space. In this line, another more explicit example in which Cyril's political ambitions are demonstrated through his spatial propaganda

[147] L. Perrone, "'Four Gospels, Four Councils'— One Lord Jesus Christ: The Patristic Developments of Christology within the Church of Palestine," *Liber Annuus* 49 (1999): 372–77.
[148] Bruria Bitton-Ashkelony, *Encountering the sacred: the debate on Christian pilgrimage in late antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 6.
[149] Wilken, *The land called holy*, 101.
[150] For an overview of intellectual attitude towards pilgrimage and the pilgrimage accounts from the fourth century see: Wilken, *The land called holy*, 101-125. Bitton-Ashkelony, *Encountering the sacred*, 30-105. John Wilkinson, *Jerusalem pilgrims before the crusades* (Oxford: Aris & Phillips, 2011). John Wilkinson, "Christian Pilgrims in Jerusalem during the Byzantine Period," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 108 (1976): 75–101.
[151] Perrone, "A City of Prayer," 29.

of Jerusalem would be his *Letter to Constantius*.[152] The reason for the letter was the appearance of a luminous cross centering around Golgotha and extending to the Mount of Olives on May 351. The letter was sent to Constantius at a crucial time in his reign. Constans (320-350 C.E), Constantius' brother and co-emperor was usurped and murdered by Magnentius (303-353 C.E) in 350. By the time the letter arrived to Constantius, he was getting ready to confront Magnentius whom he defeated later in the year at the battle of Mursa on 28 September 351. Thus, the apparition of the cross seemed to come at a convenient time, and it was interpreted as a favorable omen.[153] The beginning of the letter indicates that this was the first official contact between Cyril.[154] The content is almost panegyrical which is hardly surprising as the letter is also an attempt to gain favor from the emperor for promoting Jerusalem.[155] Cyril interprets the apparition as a sign of Constantius' piety. Constantine's piety was rewarded with the discovery of the saving wood of the Cross whereas Constantius' piety was rewarded with this apparition which is even greater.[156] The other central theme of the letter was of course Jerusalem itself where the apparition materialized. Cyril mentions Jerusalem seven times in the letter.[157] The explicit narrative placement of the luminous cross is significant as the center of the cross coincides with Golgotha and stretches to the Mount of Olives. The places on which the cross has appeared coincides with the most explicit instances of the biblical narrative and they are also physical spaces commemorated by Constantinian churches.[158] Thus, Cyril narratively devises the letter in a way that would connect God's favor to the sacralized physical spaces of Jerusalem. This conscious narrative presentation would also urge Constantius to be benevolent

[152] Cyril of Jerusalem, *Epistula ad Constantium*, in "Epitre de Cyrille de jerusalem a Constance sur la Vision de la Croix (BHG3 413)," ed. by E. Bihain, *Byzantion* 43 (1973), 264-296. For the translation see: Edward Yarnold, *Cyril of Jerusalem* (London, New York: Routledge, 2000), 68-70.
[153] Drijvers, *Cyril of Jerusalem*, 159-160.
[154] Cyril of Jerusalem, *Epistula ad Constantium*, 1.1, 286.
[155] Mattias Gassman, "Eschatology and Politics in Cyril of Jerusalem's Epistle to Constantius," *Vigiliae Christianae* 70, no. 2 (2016), 122.
[156] Cyril of Jerusalem, *Epistula ad Constantium*, 3.12-15, 287.
[157] Drijvers, *Cyril of Jerusalem*, 161.
[158] Gassman, "Eschatology and Politics in Cyril of Jerusalem," 122.

towards Jerusalem (and indirectly Cyril) as the place where God's favor towards him manifested. As a result, it is possible to see in this letter Cyril's conscious spatial promotion of Jerusalem in a way that would further his political agenda.

2.3: A Voice of Contention: Gregory of Nyssa

It is important to mention that not all agreed with Eusebius' and Cyril's notions with regards to Jerusalem's sacralized physical spaces. The problematic nature of the sacralization of religious spaces in Jerusalem and the idea of pilgrimage lay in the fact that it was not commanded in the scripture; as a result, it was not considered a Christian duty per se.[159] The promotion of Jerusalem's religious spaces in a way that would shape the theology of those spaces was contested. Gregory of Nyssa (335-395 C.E.) voiced serious theological reservations concerning the developing sacral view of Jerusalem's physical spaces. He mentions his perceptions of Jerusalem in *Letters* 2 and 3 and his hagiographical account of his sister *Life of Macrina*.[160] In *Letter* 2, Gregory explains his arguments against pilgrimage in an apologetic manner. On the other hand, in *Letter* 3 and *Life of Macrina* it is possible to detect a more positive tone.[161] The contents of these writings provide an intriguing debate as they, to a degree, contradict each other.[162] However, a more elaborate discussion lies outside the scope of this thesis, and I argue that the contradicting views on pilgrimage and the holy places do not invalidate the relevance of his theological views in *Letter* 2. Thus, I will focus on Gregory's writings in *Letter* 2. In *Letter* 2, Gregory raises his doubts about whether seeing physical manifestations of the Lord's signs would count as piety. Basing his views on the fact that

[159] Egeria, *Egeria's travels*, 21.
[160] For letters see: Gregory of Nyssa, Anna M. Silvas, *Gregory of Nyssa: The Letters*, trans. by Anna M. Silvas (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2006), 115-132. Edited text: Gregory of Nyssa, *Lettres*, ed. and trans. by P. Maraval, *SC* 363, II (1990), 106-23. For life of Macrina: Gregory of Nyssa, *The life of Saint Macrina*, trans. by Kevin Corrigan (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Peregrina, 1987).
[161] Bitton-Ashkelony, "The Attitudes of Church Fathers," 194-196.
[162] For more information: P. Maraval, "Une querelle sur les pelerinages autour d'un texte patristique (Gregoire de Nysse, Lettre 2)," *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses 66* (1986), 131-46.

pilgrimage is not a religious obligation, he states that: "When the Lord invites the blessed to their inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, journeying to Jerusalem is not listed among their good deeds."[163] Furthermore, with regards to God's nature, Gregory summarily argues that God as an entity is no more present in one place than elsewhere. His degree of presence does not change whether it is the altars of Cappadocia where Gregory is based or Jerusalem.[164] As a result, Gregory tries to diminish the spatial importance of Jerusalem and its environs by putting the religious significance of the holy spaces of Jerusalem on par with other places such as Cappadocia where he resided.[165] In this way, he relativizes the importance of Jerusalem.

It might seem like Gregory voices fundamental theological concerns which as a result problematizes the processes of sacralization in Jerusalem. However, when the context of the letter and the aim of Gregory is considered, the validity of the theological claims diminish. Furthermore, ironically, it also provides additional information about the phenomenon of sacralizing certain physical spaces in other geographies. The first point that should be made here is that although Gregory voices concern towards the religious benefit of pilgrimage to Jerusalem he is also an enthusiastic advocate of the local cult of saints in Cappadocia. In a style that would call into mind the statements of Eusebius and Cyril, Gregory constantly calls the cult sites in Cappadocia as "holy places."[166] The letters and sermons of Basil of Caesarea (330-379 C.E.) and Gregory attest that Cappadocia was abound with tombs of martyrs and pilgrimage sites in the second half of the fourth century.[167] Gregory's letters in particular, contains information about his regular undertakings of organizing pilgrimages to the tombs of the martyrs in Cappadocia and even Armenia.[168] Gregory tells about miracles of healing through

[163] Gregory of Nyssa, *Gregory of Nyssa*, letter II: 2-3, 118.
[164] Gregory of Nyssa, *Gregory of Nyssa*, letter II: 8-9, 119.
[165] Bitton-Ashkelony, "The Attitudes of Church Fathers," 198.
[166] "ἱερός τόπος", Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony "Basil of Caesarea's and Gregory of Nyssa's Attitudes toward Pilgrimage." In *Encountering the Sacred: The Debate on Christian Pilgrimage in Late Antiquity*, ed. by (University of California Press, 2005), 40.
[167] Hippolyte Delehaye, *Les origines du culte des martyrs* (Bruxelles : Bureaux de la Societe des Bollandistes, 1912), 198-207.
[168] Gregory of Nyssa, Maraval, *Lettres*, 15-17.

the visitation of the spaces of relics of Forty Martyrs and continues on to state that these miracles "offer clear proof of the efficacy of the martyrs' intercession."[169] Gregory's statement is reminiscent of Eusebius. Eusebius shows the physical spaces as proof of the biblical miracles whereas Gregory turns this statement on his head and argues that the miracles are a proof of the veracity of the space and the relics within that space. Furthermore, Gregory's personal involvement to the sites of cults were further deepened as his parents and sister were buried in a church in Ibura where the cult of the Forty Martyrs was stationed.[170] Burial near the cult sites were fairly common among the aristocratic families in Cappadocia as Gregory of Nazianzus' (329-390 C.E.) family tomb was also built next to the martyrs.[171] It is clear that Gregory was not opposed to the holy places or pilgrimages per se. In this light, if we are to consider Gregory's previous theological argument where he states that the Holy Spirit is as present in Cappadocia as it is in Jerusalem the statement acquires a new meaning. Gregory was not so much trying to diminish the sanctity of the physical spaces of Jerusalem on theological grounds, but rather he was trying to defend the value and validity of the same phenomenon of sacralization in Cappadocia in comparison to Jerusalem. This is expected to a degree as the cult of saints were overseen by the local church leaders. The local church leaders in turn encouraged their congregants and congregants from neighboring areas to participate in those cults via pilgrimages. This effort eventually increased the influence and reputation of the said church leaders.[172] As it is stated above Cyril of Jerusalem's emphasis towards the sanctity and exclusiveness of Jerusalem's holy spaces is partly due to his intentions towards furthering the position of Jerusalem as a bishopric. In this sense, Gregory must have seen Jerusalem as a rival

[169] "παρρησία" Bitton-Ashkelony "Basil of Caesarea's and Gregory of Nyssa's Attitudes," 41.
[170] See for parents' burial: Gregory of Nyssa, *Vie de sainte Macrine*, ed. and trans. by P. Maraval, *Source Chretienne* 178, II (1971), 13.18-19, 186. See for Macrina's burial: Gregory of Nyssa, *Vie de sainte Macrine*, 34.15-22, 252.
[171] Yvette Duval, *Auprès des saints corps et âme: l'inhumation "ad sanctos" dans la chrétienté d'Orient et d'Occident du IIIe au VIIe siècle* (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1988), 89-92.
[172] Bitton-Ashkelony "Basil of Caesarea's and Gregory of Nyssa's Attitudes," 43.

center of religious attention due to Cyril's active propaganda.[173] If we are to consider the possible encounters between Cyril and Gregory, the above hypothesis becomes even more probable. Cyril probably made his political and religious ambitions regarding Jerusalem known to Gregory in two separate occasions. In 381 during the Council of Constantinople both bishops were present, and they probably encountered each other.[174] Gregory presumably encountered Cyril a second time during his visit to Jerusalem as part of a diplomatic mission to mediate between the church members. He mentions this visit in *Letter* 2 and it is also dated to 381.[175] During these two encounters it is possible that Gregory saw the spatial program and ambitions of Cyril as detrimental to his program as they revolved around the same phenomenon. Gregory's *Letter* 2 was an apologetic writing which was aimed specifically at Jerusalem and the religious program of Cyril rather than pilgrimage and the holy places per se. As I stated above, ironically, this letter also provides us with the information that the same process of sacralization was going on in different geographies which puts the spatial process in Jerusalem into perspective.

2.4: The Attempt of Rebuilding the Temple Mount Complex:

The failed attempt of rebuilding the Temple Mount complex in the reign of Julian -the Apostate- was an event that warranted reaction from various Christian authors; therefore, it is also an interesting case study for historians to see how the spatial/theological notions developed by Eusebius and Cyril affected the perception of Jerusalem as the rebuilding of the Temple Mount threatened the notion of New Jerusalem which was dependent on the sanctified and exclusive physical spaces that had a connection with the biblical narrative. I believe the reactions of the Christian authors in the fourth century would help to contextualize the reactions

[173] Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony asserts that Gregory's claims in *Letter* 2 is largely to undermine Cyril. Bitton-Ashkelony "Basil of Caesarea's and Gregory of Nyssa's Attitudes," 62.
[174] Bitton-Ashkelony "Basil of Caesarea's and Gregory of Nyssa's Attitudes," 57.
[175] Bitton-Ashkelony "Basil of Caesarea's and Gregory of Nyssa's Attitudes," 49.

of the seventh century author's who wrote about the occupation of Jerusalem. In both events the consciousness of the Christian authors was plagued with the prospect of the dominance of Jews in a way that would negate their spatial claim on Jerusalem. It is important to note that the mere existence of Jews within Jerusalem is not the problem as although officially the Jews were banished from the city the real situation on the ground might have been different. Rather the problem was the existence of Jews in a way that would negate the idea of the New Jerusalem.[176] Such a negation would discredit the Scriptures and thus would also have eschatological implications. My aim in this sub-chapter is to provide a brief sketch of the reactions of the various Christian authors and then discuss a letter, discovered in the Harvard Syriac 99 manuscript, which was tentatively attributed to none other than Cyril of Jerusalem as its spatial connotations provide unique insight.[177]

From the early parts of his brief reign (361-363 C.E), Julian decreed for the reintroduction of the public pagan sacrifices and ordered the reopening of the pagan temples.[178] At this point, it was apparent that Julian wanted a return towards pagan culture in terms of civic life and administration. However, in Jerusalem, due to the city's unique background Julian did not revitalize the pagan cults but rather his focus was on the Temple Mount, which carried significant symbolism for both Jews and Christians. Thus, he allowed the Jews to rebuild the Temple in an effort to strike a blow to the newly forming Christian space that is the New Jerusalem. Furthermore, Julian had a knowledge of the Scriptures. In this line, the attempt at rebuilding the Temple was not only to take over the New Jerusalem but also to prove the

[176] For a review of legal and written sources on Jewish expulsion see: Rendel Harris, "Hadrian's Decree of Expulsion of the Jews from Jerusalem," *Harvard Theological Review* 19, No. 2, (1926): 199-206. Also see for the exceptions to the expulsion: Irshai, "The Jerusalem Bishopric," 209.

[177] An assessment and the translation of the letter can be found here: Sebastian P. Brock, Cyril. "A Letter Attributed to Cyril of Jerusalem on the Rebuilding of the Temple." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 40, no. 2 (1977): 267–86.

[178] Ammianus Marcellinus. *History, Volume II: Books 20-26.* Translated by J. C. Rolfe. Loeb Classical Library 315 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1940), 22.5.2, 203. For an overview of his anti-Christian policies see: Rowland Smith, *Julian's Gods: Religion and Philosophy in the Thought and Action of Julian the Apostate* (London, New York: Routledge, 1995), 207-218.

prophecies in Daniel 9:26-27 and Mathew 24:1-2 wrong. The negation of these verses would fundamentally discredit the claim of the Christians as the chosen people of God over the Jews.[179] It is hard to pinpoint when Julian decided to allow the rebuilding of the Temple, but it can tentatively be dated to 362 as Ammianus Marcellinus states that a certain Alypius was sent to Jerusalem to oversee the rebuilding on behalf of the emperor at the beginning of 363.[180]

Such undertaking received serious reactions from the Christians. The first ones to mention the event were Ephrem the Syrian (306-373 C.E) and Gregory of Nazianzus. Ephrem, who had to relocate from Nisibis to Edessa because of Julian's failed Persian campaign, wrote four hymns against Julian. The fourth hymn has a passage on the rebuilding of the Temple. Ephrem describes how Jews, by the support of Julian, started to rebuild the temple in order to make sacrifices again. However, the attempt failed by God's intervention that brought about subsequent natural disasters like earthquakes.[181] At about the same time, Gregory wrote an invective about Julian in Orations four and five. The fifth oration in particular relates that Jews were given permission by Julian in order to restore the Temple and re-establish their customs including the sacrifices. Apparently, the permission of rebuilding roused considerable excitement among the Jews as even the women helped by donating their jewelry and taking part in the actual rebuilding. In the same way the work was cut short by various natural disasters.[182] The way in which both authors felt threatened and responded is significant as they present some notions developed by Eusebius and Cyril. Both Ephrem and Gregory place particular emphasis on the purpose of the rebuilding which is to make sacrifices. This particular point is significant as not only the New Jerusalem was under threat by the rebuilding project, but it also calls to

[179] Drijvers, *Cyril of Jerusalem*, 133.
[180] Drijvers, *Cyril of Jerusalem*, 134.
[181] Mamertinus Claudius, John Chrysostom, Ephraem, and Samuel N. C. Lieu, *The Emperor Julian: panegyric and polemic*, trans. by Samuel N. C. Lieu (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1986), 4.18-26, 125-128. For the original text of Ephrem see: Ephrem Syrus, *Hymi Contra Julianum*, ed. by E. Beck, CSCO 175-176 (Louvain, 1957).
[182] Gregoire de Nazienze, *Discours 4-5: Contre Julien*, ed. and trans. by Jean Bernardi, *SC* 309, (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1983), 5.4, 299-303.

mind Eusebius' emphasis on the desacralization of the tomb of Jesus by the removal of the dirt on top of the tomb. The dirt itself was polluted by the blood of the pagan sacrifices, now in the same way the Jews would take part in a ritual action which the Christians could not condone as it would steal their exclusive right to the space of Jerusalem. Another significant point in this line is Ephrem's continuous references to Jewish "sins" which took place in the city. In the beginning verses of his account of the rebuilding, Ephrem states:

> The accursed and the crucifiers who presumptuously threatened and even entered
> in order to rebuild the desolation which they had caused by their sins.[183]

In these verses Ephrem appeals to the sinful Jewish past in two instances: First he calls the Jews crucifiers which calls to mind not only the biblical history and events surrounding crucifixion but also the places of Christ's death, resurrection, and the tomb itself which culminated in the Holy Sepulcher complex. Second, he explicitly mentions that the desolation of the Temple was caused by the sins of the Jews which resulted in the shift of God's favor towards Christians and the establishment of the New Jerusalem. Thus, it is evident that Ephrem was threatened as a Christian by this potential spatial change and responded with notions which centered around the peculiar theology that is dependent on Jerusalem's holy spaces.

It is apparent that the attempt at rebuilding the Temple had immense implications for Christians. In such a situation one would expect a reaction from Cyril who is the bishop at the time. Unfortunately, the Cyrilline corpus was devoid of such an addition. However, in 1970's a letter attributed to Cyril was discovered in a Syriac manuscript, namely Harvard Syriac 99. The letter's title was "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." Although the manuscript itself was dated to 1899, the text of the letter was dated to as early as the sixth

[183] Ephraem, *The Emperor Julian*, 4.19, 125.

century.[184] The letter was discovered by Sebastian Brock who published it with an introduction, translation, and commentary. Brock concludes that the letter itself is a forgery which dates back to fifth century.[185] However, he also considers the letter loosely related to either Jerusalem or Cyril.[186] Drijvers also convincingly argues that although the letter might not be written by Cyril it is of Jerusalemite origin as the topographical and narrative details of the letter suggests it. Furthermore, he suggests that the notions within the letter closely reflect some writings of Cyril. I will not discuss the authorship of the letter any further as the topic is beyond the scope of this thesis.[187] At this point, it is sufficient to say that I agree with Drijvers and in the coming parts I will also present the narrative relation between the letter and Cyril's writings.

The letter is addressed to "brethren, bishops, priests, and deacons of the Church of Christ in every district."[188] According to the letter, during a Sunday, a day in which the Jews planned to lay the foundations of the Temple, the attempt was delayed because of strong winds. On the night of the same day a great earthquake occurred which prompted Cyril and his congregation to take refuge on the Mount of Olives. The Jews that were in the city in the same way decided to take refuge in their synagogue, but they found the doors closed. However, the doors were opened suddenly, and a fire came forth from the synagogue and burned many of them. Subsequently, when the door of the synagogue closed and the fire ceased, most non-Christian inhabitants of the city, whether they are Jews or pagans received baptism and the rebuilding of the Temple stopped.[189]

[184] For further information on the dating of the letter and the manuscript see: Drijvers, *Cyril of Jerusalem*, 137.
[185] Brock, "A Letter Attributed to Cyril," 268.
[186] Brock, "A Letter Attributed to Cyril," 282.
[187] As opposed to Brock Philip Wainwright believes that the letter is a genuine addition to the Cyrilline corpus see: Philip Wainwright, "The Authenticity of the Recently Discovered Letter Attributed to Cyril of Jerusalem," *VC* 40, 286-293. For Drijver's view on the subject: Drijvers, *Cyril of Jerusalem*, 137-150.
[188] Brock, "A Letter Attributed to Cyril," 2, 274.
[189] Brock, "A Letter Attributed to Cyril," 6-10, 275-276.

There are some expressions throughout the letter which I consider relevant. First of all, just like Ephrem's account, the letter also appeals to the Jewish sins which led their Temple to be ruined: "At the digging of the foundations of Jerusalem, which had been ruined because of the killing of its Lord, the land shook considerably, and there were great tremors in the towns round about."[190] The appeal towards the sins of Jews and its implications are spelled out more explicitly than Ephrem. The connection is made not by implication by calling the Jews "crucifiers" but rather the killing of the Lord is openly stated. Nevertheless, just in Ephrem's case the Jews are branded as sinners, thus showing that the position of the author is similar to Ephrem's, as he too tries to remind the reader how and why the Christians were the chosen people and why Jerusalem was theirs. It might be the case that since the letter is dated later then Ephrem's account, the letter might have made use of Ephrem's fourth hymn.[191] However, if the letter is of Jerusalemite origin as Brock and Drijvers argued, it would be logical to assume that both Ephrem's hymn and the letter used the same source as they convey their message through the same spatial notions which originally belongs to Eusebius and Cyril. Secondly, the attribution of Cyril as the author of the letter itself reinforces the idea that the letter makes use of Cyril's notions. Brock argues that the motive for the false attribution is due to a desire to include Cyril into a narrative where the rebuilding of the Temple failed. This is understandable as in his 15th catechetical lecture, which predates the rebuilding attempt, Cyril links the Antichrist to the Jews within the context of rebuilding the Temple in his eschatological scheme:[192]

> For if he comes to the Jews as Christ, and desires to be worshipped by the Jews, he will make great account of the Temple, that he may more completely beguile them; making it supposed that he is the man of the race of David, who shall build up the Temple which was erected by Solomon. And Antichrist will come at the time when there shall not be

[190] Brock, "A Letter Attributed to Cyril," 3, 274.
[191] Drijvers, *Cyril of Jerusalem*, 139.
[192] The lectures are dated to either 348 or 350 C.E. For more information see: Alexis Doval, "THE DATE OF CYRIL OF JERUSALEM'S CATECHESES." *The Journal of Theological Studies* 48, no. 1 (1997): 129–32.

> left one stone upon another in the Temple of the Jews, according to the doom pronounced by our Saviour.[193]

As discussed above, Cyril's aim for composing such a passage was mainly to raise the awareness of especially newly initiated Christians to the exclusive nature of Jerusalem as a space and the danger of their religious competitors, the Jews. Nevertheless, it is not hard to imagine the temptation of using Cyril as the contexts for the rebuilding of the Temple is similar. The fact that the fifth-century church historians Rufinus and Socrates also refers to Cyril's lecture during their expositions of this event strengthens this idea.[194]

2.5: Seventh-Century Written Sources on the Occupation and the Jewish Participation:

Until this point in the chapter, I have discussed the theology and nature of the spatial notions regarding the physical spaces of Jerusalem that has a connection with the biblical narrative. The spatial notions developed by Eusebius and Cyril focused on two themes: First is the notion that the said spaces needed to be sacralized properly as they provided an intimate connection and proof to the biblical history. The second notion is the exclusivity of the said spaces for Christians and its partly dependent on the first notion as the sacralization of a given space imposes a degree of exclusivity. Thanks to Eusebius' claims on the New Jerusalem which is based on the scriptures, and Cyril's eschatological schema within his 15th Catechetical lecture, the notion of exclusivity also became dependent on the fact that the Temple Mount was in ruins thus affirming God's favor towards the Christians. Such spatial sensibilities got even

[193] Cyril of Jerusalem, "The Catechetical Lectures," 15.15, 304.
[194] Rufinus, Philip R. Amidon, and Eusebius of Ceaserea, *The church history of Rufinus of Aquileia, books 10 and 11*, trans. by Philip R. Amidon, Fathers of the Church Series 133 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2016), 10.38, 429-430. Socrates Scholasticus, Sozomen, Philip Schaff, *Socrates and Sozomenus Ecclesiastical Histories*, ed. by Philip Schaff, Select library of Nicene and post-Nicene fathers of the Christian church, 2nd series, Vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1957), 3.20, 227-228.

more reinforced by the attempt at rebuilding the Temple in Julian's reign. The failed attempt reminded the Christian authors that the spatial competition for Jerusalem was indeed a very real phenomenon and the potential realization of such an event would threaten their identity as Christians on a fundamental level. In this line, it does not come as a surprise that the seventh-century authors would mention the auxiliary Jewish forces who helped the Sasanid army during the siege and occupation in a way that would substantially shape their narrative.

Strategos' account first describes the approach of the Sasanid army, the attempt of patriarch Zachariah, and the attitude of the inhabitants of the city while they parleyed with the Sasanid forces.[195] Nevertheless, the attempts at parleying failed and the Sasanids laid siege to Jerusalem. On the 20th day the Sasanid forces broke through the city's defenses and "thereupon the evil foemen entered the city in great fury, like infuriated wild beasts and irritated serpents."[196] Afterwards, the sack of the city took place with great destruction and killing:

> Holy churches were burned with fire, others were demolished, majestic altars fell prone, sacred crosses were trampled underfoot, life-giving icons were spat upon by the unclean. Then their wrath fell upon priests and deacons: they slew them in their churches like dumb animals.[197]

After depicting the sacking of the city, which took three days according to Strategos, the inhabitants of the city who hid were given assurance by the commander of the Sasanid forces.[198] The skilled individuals were rounded together with patriarch Zachariah to be sent to the Sasanid heartlands while the other inhabitants were isolated within the reservoir of Mamel. From this point on the focus of the narrative shifts to the auxiliary Jewish forces and Strategos narrates the atrocities they committed towards Christians in detail.[199]

[195] Conybeare, "Antiochus Strategos' Account," 504-506.
[196] Conybeare, "Antiochus Strategos' Account," 506.
[197] Conybeare, "Antiochus Strategos' Account," 507.
[198] Conybeare, "Antiochus Strategos' Account," 507.
[199] Conybeare, "Antiochus Strategos' Account," 508.

The *Armenian History* which is attributed to Sebeos states that after the Sasanid forces defeated the Byzantine forces in Antioch they were free to advance and thus "all land of Palestine willingly submitted to subjection to the Persian king."[200] Then Sebeos goes onto detail regarding the role of Jews during the Sasanid advance. According to Sebeos, the Jews rebelling against Christians and "embracing ancestral rancor,"[201] went to the Sasanid forces and offered help. At that point the approaching Sasanid forces parleyed with Jerusalem. Thus, the inhabitants of Jerusalem submitted and offered the Sasanid commanders gifts while letting the Sasanid forces install trusted officers to the city.[202] However, after several months, the youths of the city rebelled and killed the Sasanid officers and the city descended into chaos:

> Then there was warfare between the inhabitants of the city of Jerusalem, Jewish and Christian. The larger number of Christians had the upper hand and slew many of the Jews. The surviving Jews jumped from the walls and went to the Persian army. Then Khoream, that is Erazmiozan, gathered his troops, went and camped around Jerusalem, and besieged it. He attacked it for 19 days. Having mined the foundations of the city from below, they brought down the wall.[203]

Afterwards, Sebeos states that the Sasanid forces slew the city's inhabitants for three days and burned the city. Then, they took some of the city's inhabitants together with the riches of the city back to Sasanid heartlands. However, according to Sebeos, at the end of the sack of the city the Sasanid Shah ordered to restore the city and the Jews were expelled.[204] Sebeos attributes the rebellion of Jews due to their "ancestral rancour" which points out to their exclusion from Jerusalem for centuries and their willingness to get the city back. Furthermore, from a narrative standpoint, his inclusion of Jewish people who escaped from the in-fighting that is happening in the city just before the sack is significant. This succession of events is deliberate as it implies the Jewish role in the subsequent Sasanid destruction.

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[200] Sebeos. *The Armenian History*, ch. 34 (115), 68.
[201] Sebeos. *The Armenian History*, ch. 34 (115), 68.
[202] Sebeos. *The Armenian History*, ch. 34 (115), 68-69.
[203] Sebeos. *The Armenian History*, ch. 34 (116), 69.
[204] Sebeos. *The Armenian History*, ch. 34 (116), 70.

The *Chronicle of Khuzistan* which is presumably written by an anonymous member of the clergy of the Church of the East furthers Sebeos' elaborate treatment of Jews and the Sasanid's.[205] According to the chronicle, the Sasanid commander Shahvaraz directed his forces to Jerusalem and tried to parley with the city. When the negotiations failed, he lay siege to the city and captured it. At this point, the author does not give any further detail about what happened to the city when the Sasanid forces entered. He just makes a remark that this was all a result of providence as God was punishing the Byzantines on account of their sins.[206] Thus further exonerating the Sasanids from potential blame. Afterwards, the author introduces the Jews into the narrative stating that "after Jerusalem was captured, the Jews, our enemies, put on fire all the churches in it."[207] The plain style of expression here might be due to get the message across to the reader as simple as possible. It was the Jews, the enemies of Christians, who burned the city not the Sasanid forces. The chronicle continues with Jewish atrocities which includes the digging of the tomb of Jesus within the Holy Sepulcher complex.[208]

It is not hard to imagine that the Sasanid advance would be a cause of excitement for the resident Jews within Palestine. Their excitement was not only based on the possible collapse of the rigid hegemony of the Byzantine empire on the Jewish community regarding their entrance to Jerusalem but also the Sasanid aid towards the Jews was a continuous phenomenon in the preceding century. The Sasanid backing of the Jewish Himyarite Arabs in Yemen after the massacre of the Christians within Najran (523) was still fresh in their memory.[209] In fact, the prosecution prompted the second Axumite invasion of the Himyarite Arabs and the Himyarite king who provoked the massacre of the Christians of Najran had been killed as a

[205] Al-Nasr, *A Short Chronicle*, xii.
[206] Al-Nasr, *A Short Chronicle*, 52.
[207] Al-Nasr, *A Short Chronicle*, 54.
[208] Al-Nasr, *A Short Chronicle*, 56.
[209] Norbert Nebes, "The Martyrs of Najran and the End of the Himyar: On the Political History of South Arabia in the Early Sixth Century," in *The Qur'ān in Context*, eds. by Neuwirth, Angelika, Nicolai Sinai, and Michael Marx (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2009), 46-49.

result. What followed was the reign of a semi-client kingdom of the Ethiopians by the dynasty of Abraha. However, at this point the Sasanids intervened once more and liberated the Himyarites from their overlords in 575.[210] Without a doubt, the Sasanid commercial interests towards the Red Sea played a huge part in Sasanid backing of the Himyarite Arabs. However, it does not change the fact that the Sasanids and the Himyarite Jews found themselves as allies. Furthermore, it is possible to detect an excitement for the restoration of the Jewish Jerusalem from two contemporary Jewish sources. The apocalypse of *Sefer Zerubabbel* is known from several different versions.[211] I. Levi was able convincingly demonstrate that the work was written in the context of the Sasanid occupation of Jerusalem.[212] According to the apocalypse, from the house of Joseph *Nehemiah ben Hushiel* will come as a warrior messiah and will bring all Israel to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices to the Lord. The apocalypse goes on to describe how *Nehemiah ben Hushiel* is going to be killed by the Persians and Armilus will extend his rule over the world before the Jews defeat them.[213] Nevertheless, the mention of this intermittent phase of observance of Jewish practices in Jerusalem is significant. Another contemporary Jewish source comes from a *piyyut* found among the texts of Genizah, published and interpreted by E. Fleischer. Fleischer dates the work between 629-634 C.E from the internal evidence provided by the *piyyut*.[214] The poet of the *piyyut*, Eleazar ha-Qallir, depicts how people of Assur (Sasanids) allowed them to restore their Temple and they were able to construct a holy altar to offer sacrifices on it. However, the Jews were not able to construct the Temple because the

[210] Mohsen Zakeri, *Sāsānid soldiers in early muslim society: the origins of 'Ayyārān and Futuwwa* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz. 1995), 62.
[211] The apocalypse is attributed to Zerubabbel who was one of the Jewish leaders at the return from the Babylonian exile. See: Günter Stemberger, "Jerusalem in the Early Seventh Century: Hopes and Aspirations of Christians and Jews," in *Jerusalem: Its Sanctity and Centrality to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, ed. by Lee L. Levine (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1999), 266. Y. Even-Shmuel, *Midreshei Ge'ulah* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1954), 71-88. Shlomo Aharon Wertheimer, Abrahae Joseph Wertheimer, *Batei Midrashot: twenty five Midrashim published for the first time from manuscripts discovered in the Genizoth of Jeruslaem and Egypt* (Jerusalem: Ktab Wasepher, 1968), 497-505.
[212] I. Levi, *Le Ravissement du Messie à sa naissance et autres essais*, ed. E. Patlagean (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 1994), 175-88 (reprint from *Revue des études juives* 68 [1918]).
[213] Stemberger, "Jerusalem in the Early Seventh Century," 267.
[214] A *piyyut* is a Jewish liturgical poem, usually designated to be chanted. E. Fleischer, "Solving the Qilliri Riddle," *Tarbiz* (1984-85), 383-442.

messiah had not yet come.[215] This is the most explicit testimony that states the Jews were able to observe their rituals within Jerusalem after the Sasanid occupation. It is not clear whether the Jews were able observe their rituals within Jerusalem or these depictions were mere aspirations.[216] The discussion of the possible reality of this phenomenon is beyond the scope of this paper. However, there is an undeniable excitement and expectation connected to the Sasanid occupation. In this line, it is possible to argue for a political reality where Jews were indeed helping the Sasanids and the Christian mention of Jews was not only a *topos* but had a grain of truth. However, an important point that shows the complicated nature of the situation is that both Sebeos' chronicle and the *Chronicle of Khuzistan* depict a reversal of policy by the Sasanids. After an initial collaboration between the Jews and the Sasanid forces, it seems the Sasanids have exiled the Jews on account of their destruction and implemented a policy of restoration.[217] This reversal of policies seems plausible, the Sasanids intended to rule the territories they have conquered.[218] Jerusalem was predominantly Christian at the start of the seventh century. Thus, it was easier to control Jerusalem and its environs by supporting Christians.

The degree of the Jewish participation, however, is a topic that is open to debate. Although the Christian primary sources draw vivid scenes, the extent of the participation is unclear within the scholarly literature. The topic becomes even more complicated as the attitudes of the scholars has undergone a fundamental change after the Holocaust and the Jewish

[215] Fleischer, "Solving the Qilliri Riddle," 401.
[216] The reality of the observance of Jewish rituals after the Sasanid occupation is a topic of debate. While Avi-Yonah takes these descriptions at face value Cameron, Wilken, and Stemberger find it possible but unlikely. See: Michael Avi-Yonah, *The Jews under Roman and Byzantine rule: a political history of Palestine from the Bar Kokhba War to the Arab conquest* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1984), 266. Averil Cameron, "The Jews in Seventh-Century Palestine," *Scripta Classica Israelice* 13, (1994), 80. Wilken, *The Land Called Holy*, 213. Stemberger, "Jerusalem in the Early Seventh Century," 268.
[217] Al-Nasr, *A Short Chronicle*, 56. Sebeos. *The Armenian History*, ch. 34 (116), 70.
[218] For Sasanid treatment of conquered Byzantine lands see: Foss, "The Persians in the Roman Near East," 149–70. Cameron, "The Jews in Seventh-Century Palestine," 80.

participation during the occupation of Jerusalem has been downplayed.[219] I will not explore the extent of the Jewish participation during the occupation as it is outside the scope of this thesis. It is apparent that all three Christian sources devote a considerable amount of their narratives to the Jews and their role within the siege and occupation of Jerusalem. This is understandable as the Christian identity itself was threatened within the context of the occupation. The spatial notions developed by Eusebius and Cyril were deeply rooted within the consciousness of Christians by the seventh century and Julian's attempt at rebuilding the Temple Mount was still fresh pointing out to the potential danger that Christians faced if it ever came to be.

In my opinion, there are two examples developed by Strategos and the anonymous author of the *Chronicle of Khuzistan* that points out to these spatial notions explicitly. The first one would be Strategos' narrative regarding the interment of Christians during the sack of Jerusalem. As I have mentioned before, after the skilled inhabitants of the city were separated to be taken to the Sasanid heartlands together with patriarch Zachariah the rest of the Christians were isolated within the reservoir of Mamel. At this point, Strategos' narrative shifts to the hardships of Christians within the reservoir and the attitudes of the auxiliary Jewish forces who found themselves within a powerful position:

> Thereupon the vile Jews, enemies of the truth and haters of Christ, when they perceived that the Christians were given over into the hands of the enemy, rejoiced exceedingly, because they detested the Christians; and they conceived an evil plan in keeping with their vileness about the people. For in the eyes of the Persians their importance was great, because they were the betrayers of the Christians. And in this season then the Jews approached the edge of the reservoir and called out to the children of God, while they were shut up therein, and said to them: 'If ye would escape from death, become Jews and deny Christ; and then ye shall step up from your place and join us. We will ransom you with our money, and ye shall be benefited by us.' But their plot and desire were not fulfilled, their labours proved to be in vain; because the children of Holy Church chose death for Christ's sake rather than to live in godlessness: and they reckoned it better for their flesh to be punished, rather than their souls ruined, so that their portion were not with the Jews. And when the unclean Jews saw the steadfast uprightness of the Christians and their 'immovable faith, then they were agitated with lively ire, like evil

[219] For an overview of the scholarly attitudes for the Jewish participation during the siege and occupation of Jerusalem see: Elliott Horowitz, "'The Vengeance of the Jews Was Stronger than Their Avarice': Modern Historians and the Persian Conquest of Jerusalem in 614." *Jewish Social Studies* 4, no. 2 (1998): 1–39.

> beasts, and thereupon imagined another plot. As of old they bought the Lord from the Jews with silver, so they purchased Christians out of the reservoir; for they gave the Persians silver, and they bought a Christian and slew him like a sheep. The Christians however rejoiced because they were being slain for Christ's sake and shed their blood for His blood, and took on themselves death in return for His death.[220]

I have already discussed the potential reality of the event during the introduction of the thesis.[221] However, regardless of the potential Jewish participation within the massacre, I would argue that the event depicted by Strategos is a highly conscious one. Firstly, Strategos explicitly depicts Christians as a defeated community in which the winners are able to deal with them however they please. The helplessness of the Christians is further accentuated by their situation of isolation being confined to the reservoir of Mamel. This spatial restriction is significant. Just as exclusion of the Jews from Jerusalem could be a show of God's favor, the internment within a space could be an example of an opposite situation. Strategos, by emphasizing the helplessness of Christians within an isolated space, shows that God's favor towards Christians that made the New Jerusalem a possibility is no more. The author's choice of showing God's abandonment of Christians through spatial notions is significant. He further strengthens this notion by putting the Jews in a power position where they are able to assert their will towards the Christians. In this context, not only does the Christians are confined, but also their potential liberation from the said space lies with the Jews. There is a discernible shift between the antagonists in the narrative which is a highly conscious one. Until the sequence which features the reservoir, Strategos mentions the Sasanids as the perpetrator behind the siege and the subsequent sack of the city. However, at this part the focus of the narrative suddenly shifts to the Jews putting the Jews and the spatial restriction of the Christians into the same scene. Furthermore, such an exposition which presupposes that God's favor is not with the Christians anymore, is consistent with the accounts overall providential tone. Firstly, Strategos perceives

[220] Conybeare, "Antiochus Strategos' Account," 508.
[221] Intro page x.

the Sasanids in his introduction as a "rod of chastisement and medicine of rebuke."[222] After his introduction, he asserts that the city was fallen due to the unruly behavior of the circus factions as their behavior plunged the inhabitants of the city into sin.[223] Such a providential formulation of the events was probably not foreign to Strategos. The attribution of military defeat to the sins of the Byzantines was a common theme within different Byzantine literary genres.[224] As stated above, it is possible to locate the same attribution within Sebeos and *Chronicle of Khuzistan* as well albeit for different purposes. The portrayal of Jews in such a position within the confines of Jerusalem has the potential to prove wrong the spatial formulations that has been developed by Eusebius and Cyril.

The second example from the *Chronicle of Khuzistan* is even more explicit in terms of its spatial notions. According to the chronicle, after Sasanids occupied the city, the Jews came to the Sasanid commander in charge and stated to him the treasures of the city was underneath the tomb of Jesus:

> Also, the sons of the crucifiers came to the Persian commander and said to him: "Behold! All the treasures of gold and silver of Jemsalem are underneath the tomb of Jesus." They schemed so as destroy the site of the tomb. He gave them permission and they dug three cubits around it, and found a coffin on which it was inscribed "This is the coffin of Joseph the senator who gave his tomb for the body of Jesus." When the commander heard of the scheme of the Jews, he brutally expelled them. And when Yazdin heard of it, he informed the king, and concerning the Jews, he ordered that their possession be confiscated, and that they be crucified.[225]

The term the author uses to refer to Jews is reminiscent of the language of Ephrem the Syrian and the letter attributed to Cyril. The author, being a clergyman from the Church of the East, must be familiar with Ephrem's writings and probably expects the reader to remember the perception of Jews as the people who were fallen out of favor which is supported by the idea of

[222] Conybeare, "Antiochus Strategos' Account," 503.
[223] Conybeare, "Antiochus Strategos' Account," 504-505.
[224] Stoyanov, *Defenders and Enemies of the True Cross*, 55.
[225] Al-Nasr, *A Short Chronicle*, 56.

the New Jerusalem. As I mentioned before, this is also consistent with the overall tone of the account as the Byzantine defeat was attributed to their sins as well. Nevertheless, the most significant part of the narrative is the attempted desacralization of the tomb of Jesus by the Jews. The author turns the spatial formulation of Eusebius which is dependent on the desolate condition of the Temple Mount and the existence of the Holy Sepulcher complex on his head. Thus, in his narrative, he puts the Jews in a position which would compromise the most important part of the Holy Sepulcher complex. As per Eusebius' formulation the existence of the sacred spaces was the foremost sign of the veracity of the biblical events. The empty tomb reminded and affirmed to the Christians the resurrection of Christ. The mere presence of Jews in a power position was enough to compromise the sanctity of the said space. However, the author develops the narrative one step further and claims that the Jews dug around the tomb. The act of digging functions as a mnemonic tool as the tomb itself was discovered after the Christians dug the soil which the temple of Venus stood. In Eusebius' narrative the act of digging serves as an act of purification. In the same way, the author of the *Chronicle of Khuzistan* uses the same act to give the sense that one of the most crucial spaces, the tomb of Jesus, was nearly compromised by the Jews. As the Byzantine Christians were powerless to stop this act, the author gives the honor of protecting Christians and punishing the Jews to the Sasanids. This aspect of the narrative is consistent with the author's identity as well. Firstly, the Sasanids were already in a position that protected the Church of the East. Thus, it must have made sense for the author to position them as the protector of the Holy Sepulcher complex as well. Secondly, although the author gives states that the events in Jerusalem happened because of the sins of the Byzantine Christians, he nevertheless is aware of the fact that the act of digging up the tomb of Jesus is an act of sacrilege against God as well. Thus, he positions the Sasanids as the punishers of the Jews in the name of God.

Conclusion

The occupation of Jerusalem in 614 offers historians a unique case study as the depictions of the written sources can be put to test with the help of the extensive archeological literature. The striking depictions of the written sources which insinuates significant loss of lives and destruction of the landscape has been largely discredited due to the archeological reports on the topic. To the best of my knowledge, the current scholarly literature is interested in the authenticity of the depictions of the written sources. At this point, this thesis tries to go one step further and discusses a possible reason for such a dichotomy between the written sources and the archeological reports. The occupation of Jerusalem is a complex situation with a lot of dimensions including the ongoing Byzantine-Sasanid war and ranging interests of the authors who depicted the occupation. Thus, it would be an overstatement to argue that the spatial sensibilities of the seventh-century authors were the only reason for such dramatic depictions. However, it is possible to argue that these spatial sensibilities played a fundamental role in their perception of Jerusalem. Thus, it is only natural that the authors' narratives are significantly affected by their spatial sensibilities. The story of the development of the spaces in Jerusalem has several layers, to make the narrative intelligible I decided to approach the subject by using Henri Lefebre's Triadic Dialectic model particularly utilizing the so-called physical space and conceived space.

The establishment of the Roman colony *Aelia Capitolina* gave the later imperial authorities starting from Constantine I the blank slate to shape the urban space of Jerusalem as they see fit. Between the fourth and sixth centuries Jerusalem has been adorned with religious buildings of commemorative significance. Although these commemorations were mainly related to the story of Christ, eventually, there were other buildings dedicated to other religious personae such as Mary and St. Stephen. The sheer physical domination of the urban space and

surrounding natural landscape by the religious buildings brought with it changes in the perception of the city. The most significant change in this perception was the identification of the urban space by its religious landmarks which resulted in a shift of meaning. The urban space of Jerusalem was no longer a regular public space but rather a public space with religious intonations. It is possible to see this shift in the Madaba Map and within the apse mosaic of the church of Santa Pudenziana in Rome. Through the Madaba Map it is possible to get a glimpse of the city's urban space with reference to the religious buildings. In the apse mosaic there is an instance of storytelling regarding the story of Christ through the religious buildings. With regards to the seventh-century authors who depicted the occupation of Jerusalem it is possible to see the same phenomena that is evident in these works of art. Just like the Madaba Map, Strategos in his account maps the city with reference to the religious buildings while listing the concentration of the dead bodies. In the instance where patriarch Zachariah looks down to the sacked city and sees the churches of Jerusalem burning, it is also possible to see the author's identification of the urban space with the religious buildings. On the other hand, in Sophronios' poem the need to be physically present within the Holy Sepulcher complex and specifically Anastasis to reminiscence the story of Christ is in a sense identical with the workings of the apse mosaic of the Santa Pudenziana as the apse mosaic too recounts the story of Christ through commemorative buildings. In both instances the story of Christ is reminded to the audience through the use of particular physical aspects of the religious buildings.

The perception of Jerusalem's spaces was not only limited to the physical aspect, in other words, the religious buildings that dominated the landscape. Narratives that are tied to the physical spaces constitute an important part of the perception of the said spaces as well. In this line, Eusebius and Cyril were fundamental voices that shaped the attitude. Eusebius attributes importance to the relevant physical spaces of Jerusalem because those spaces shared hierophanic qualities. In this line, he argued that the relevant physical spaces of Jerusalem were

sacralized and in fact purified before sacralization. The notions of sacralization and purification also ascribed an exclusive quality to these spaces which formed the New Jerusalem. Cyril further promoted these ideas by the use of liturgy. The catechetical lectures of Cyril functioned as a bridge between the biblical history and the sacralized physical spaces. The promotion of these spaces also prompted pilgrimages to Jerusalem which ensured the circulation of the spatial notions. Granted both Eusebius and Cyril had their respective alter motives in the promotion of these spatial ideas. Eusebius used these ideas for panegyrical purposes to elevate Constantine I and Cyril used it to further his own political aspirations. However, the manner in which they did it in the form of spatial notions is fundamental.

The spatial promotion of Jerusalem had theological implications which were contested by Gregory of Nyssa. Although Gregory's contentions were theologically valid when his aims are taken into consideration these contentions reveal an ironic picture. Gregory's work was mainly apologetic as he too was promoting the cult of martyrs in his bishopric and was very much immersed in the same spatial notions that are promoted by Eusebius and Cyril. This also proves that a similar spatial development was going on in other bishoprics as well. I believe Jerusalem's case is more unique due to the city's extensive heritage and the subsequent events.

The attempted rebuilding of the Temple Mount is one such subsequent event where Christians were reminded that the developed spatial theology on which the Christian identity resided was indeed in a precarious position. The idea of New Jerusalem was firmly rooted in the Christian consciousness by this time. Thus, the reactions of the Christian authors such as Ephrem the Syrian and Gregory of Nazianzus were targeting ritual actions that had an effect on space such as the veneration of the Temple and the sacrifices. Ephrem constantly felt the need to remind why the Jews were devoid of God's favor and why the Christians were chosen instead of Jews to further affirm the idea of New Jerusalem. Moreover, the letter attributed to Cyril also used expressions in the same line to present a contrast with regards to God's favor towards

Christians and Jews. The attribution of the letter to Cyril is also significant as Cyril too also points out the danger posited by Jews to the idea of New Jerusalem in his 15th catechetical lecture even before the attempted rebuilding of the Temple Mount. Thus, at this point in time it is clear that the theology of the sacralized physical spaces of Jerusalem was a matter of consideration for Christian authors.

The reactions of the seventh-century authors who depicted the occupation of Jerusalem emits the same concerns. It is my belief that the spatial notions that are largely shaped into a theology by Eusebius and Cyril were constantly re-affirmed throughout the centuries. The constant pilgrimages, religious processions, the existence of a lively monastic culture each and every time reinforced the idea of New Jerusalem. Furthermore, the attempted rebuilding of the Temple Mount in the fourth century just when the spatial notions that formed the idea of New Jerusalem were being developed also reminded the Christians of their precarious position with regards to their identity. Thus, the occupation of Jerusalem must have been quite a shock as it had the potential to negate all these spatial notions. In this line, the mention of Jews in a way that would fundamentally shape the narratives of the contemporary written sources acquires a new importance. Granted, the Jewish element in these written sources were not complete *topoi* as the Jews had sufficient reason to expect collaboration from the Sasanids and it is more than likely this collaboration happened. However, the fact that the Jews were attributed with the most striking atrocities of the city's sack is significant. Thus, Strategos' and *Chronicle of Khuzistan*'s examples are significant. Strategos' depiction of a helpless, spatially restricted Christian community in the reservoir of Mamel was a highly conscious one. First of all, the account suddenly shifts subjects. While the previous events connected to the sack is attributed to the Sasanid forces the massacre in Mamel is attributed to the Jews. The message is clear, Christians excluded Jews from Jerusalem and now they are doing the same thing in the form of spatial restriction. The accounts' overall eschatological tone heightens the impact of the event.

Chronicle of Khuzistan, on the other hand, depicts the victory of Jews and negation of the New Jerusalem by placing Jews into the tomb of Jesus which is one of the most important sacralized physical spaces. While even the victorious existence of the Jews within the Anastasis would be enough to compromise the space, the author even goes one step further and describes an instance of purification in the form of digging. Thus, it is apparent that both depictions of the occupations are highly conscious about the significance of the Jewish collaboration in the occupation of Jerusalem.

In conclusion, the seventh-century written sources of the occupation display a significant awareness of the spatial notions that has been developed starting from the fourth century. I believe it is no longer sufficient to attribute the dichotomy between the written sources and the archeological data to the initial shock and religious reflexes of the authors. While this explanation is not wrong per se, such an approach to the issue is merely simplifying a very complex event. In the future it is my hope that some other dimensions of this spatial approach can be explored. My thesis was mainly about the intellectual development of these spatial notions. However, the topic itself can benefit from other spatial approaches particularly from the socio-economic aspect in the form of monastic populations and pilgrimages.

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