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The Holy Sepulcher

In the years immediately following the destruction Jews were free to reoccupy the city. One synagogue is recorded as surviving, though there had been seven before the war.¹ Although the Temple was leveled, Temple Mount remained sacred, and on High Holy Days sacrifices were made among the ruins. Many of the Jewish towns around Jerusalem suffered little from the defeat by Rome; indeed some had even opposed the war. In them religious traditions remained intact and confident and new prayers, the *Tefillah*, were composed to sustain the memory of the Temple:

Be merciful O Lord our God, in thy great mercy toward Israel Thy people and toward Jerusalem Thy city, and toward Sion, the abiding place of Thy glory, and toward Thy Temple and Thy Habitation, and toward the Kingdom of the house of David, Thy righteous anointed one. Blessed are Thou, O Lord God of David, the builder of Jerusalem.²

. . . prayers that sustained the belief that it would be rebuilt.

Hadrian and Aelia Capitolina

In 130 CE, during the reign of Emperor Hadrian,³ Judea again revolted against Rome using the tactics of guerrilla warfare and operating away from Jerusalem. In his book *Romaika*, Dio Cassius, the Emperor's favorite historian, recorded the Roman view of the events. The reason for the war, he wrote, was Jewish anger at Hadrian's intention to raze Jerusalem to the

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ground and build a new city; to be named *Aelia Capitolina*; Aelia's Capitol (after Hadrian's given name):

and on the site of the temple of the god (Temple Mount) he raised a new temple to Jupiter.⁴ This brought on a war of no slight importance nor of brief duration, for the Jews deemed it intolerable that foreign races should be settled in their city and foreign religious rites planted there.⁵

Erasing Jerusalem and building a pagan structure in the place of the Temple of Solomon would seem compelling reasons for war, yet Dio Cassius was alone in claiming that this was the cause. Much more incendiary were Hadrian's decrees against Jewish traditions, which banned circumcision and public instruction from the Torah. Rabbinical literature is quite clear in the belief that the cause for war was Hadrian's intention to destroy Judaism in this way.

The *Romaika* portrays how carefully the Jews prepared for the conflict. Their strategy was to avoid open battle in the field, choosing instead to creating extensive networks of tunnels strategically placed: "places of refuge whenever they should be hard pressed, and might meet together unobserved underground; and they pierced these subterranean passages from above at intervals to let in air and light." They were led by one Simeon, hailed by many as the Messiah⁶ and given the name *Bar Kokhba*⁷ – "Son of the Star," others named him *Bar Koziba*, a pun on the Hebrew word for liar. The Christian bishop and historian, Eusebius,⁸ writing an *Ecclesiastical History* two centuries later, played on these names: "The leader of the Jews at this time was a man by the name of *Barcocheba*, who possessed the character of a robber and a murderer, but nevertheless, . . . he pretended that he was a star that had come down to them out of heaven to bring them light in the midst of their misfortunes."⁹

Within a year of the declaration of war, Jewish forces under Bar Kokhba, captured Aelia/Jerusalem, driving out the Romans' XXII Egyptian Legion. On taking possession he ordered coins struck with the legend "Year 1 of the liberty of Jerusalem."¹⁰ The coin appears to carry the image of a temple and the name of the high priest, Eleazer, suggesting that, in the brief months of occupation, Bar Kokhba laid plans to rebuild the Temple.

Hadrian was slow to react and the rebellion spread. "Jews everywhere were showing signs of disturbance, were gathering together, and giving evidence of great hostility to the Romans." Finally, in 134 he recalled his most able general, Julius Severus, from Britain, to manage the conflict.

Severus saw no choice but to match the guerilla tactics of the Jews: “intercepting small groups . . . depriving them of food and shutting them up, and in time he was able, to crush, exhaust and exterminate the enemy.” The resulting Roman victory was far more destructive to Judea than the war that destroyed the Temple. Cassius reports that 985 villages were razed to the ground, and 580,000 men were “slain in the various raids and battles . . . the number of those that perished by famine, disease and fire was past finding out. Very few in fact survived.” Judea was desolate,¹¹ and the people were banned from ever returning to Judea—or even seeing it from a distance.

Jerusalem ruined and abandoned was then “colonized by a different race, and the Roman city which subsequently arose changed its name and was called Aelia, in honor of the emperor Aelius.” Aelia, once Jerusalem, was a minor city, its name a constant reminder of Rome’s crushing of the Jews. In giving it his family name, Hadrian may have been reminding the Jews of their sin of having once refused to pay homage to an earlier divine Casear. Yet this transformation of Jewish Jerusalem to Roman Aelia was simply another part of Hadrian’s Hellenization of his empire; a continual process that evolved as he traveled.

Aelia was repopulated from the surrounding Roman administrations; mainly Greek-speaking Syrians; some would have been Christian, including Jewish Christians. And slowly a well-planned Roman city took shape; one that assumed all the instruments of earthly desire that Herod had first brought: a circus for the races, baths for stimulus and relaxation, and the amphitheatre in which to entertain the populace with the illusion of Rome all-powerful. Contained within its grid of streets were two forums, one north of the Temple Mount and one to the west, where Hadrian constructed a majestic temple dedicated to Venus. Subsequently, Christians would claim that it had been built over the place where Christ was crucified.

According to Dio Cassius, over the foundations of Solomon’s Temple on Temple Mount, Hadrian erected a massive structure dedicated to the god Jupiter,¹² chief among the gods. It was Jupiter who was entrusted with keeping the Emperor on the path of duty toward the State. Jupiter expected to dwell on high, so Temple Mount provided the ideal setting. The able architects and engineers working to give form to Hadrian’s dreams must have seen in the fractured remains of the walls surrounding Temple Mount a resemblance to the Athenian Acropolis. They would have been tempted to shape Jupiter’s temple to resemble the Parthenon when seen from city below, placing its long elevation parallel to the west edge of Herod’s vast

wall, its main facade facing south, where public rituals would have been performed under the gaze of two commanding bronze figures of Hadrian, striding over the memory of Solomon's Temple (Figure 4.1).¹³

Though Jerusalem and Jewish culture had been supplanted by this Roman Hellene city, politically moderate Jewish communities in Galilee and other surrounding lands continued to flourish. In the years just before the first war the Romans had given permission for Johanan ben Zakkai, the most respected Talmudic scholar, to set up an academy in the town of Jamnia, near the Judean coast, close to the present Tel Aviv. Here he evolved rabbinic practice that was not dependent on the Temple or the priesthood. Most significant among his teachings was the belief that acts of loving-kindness atone no less effectively than sacrifice at the Temple, and were indeed at the core of the universe since its creation. He cited the prophet Hosea: "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings."¹⁴ Further, he believed that the study of the Torah, not sacrifice, was the central purpose of man, the most complete act of service to God. At the end of the first Christian century the academy in Jamnia had replaced Jerusalem as the center of Jewish religious thought. With the Temple in ruins, Zakkai ordained that certain privileges particular to Jerusalem and the sanctuary should be transferred to Jamnia and it was there, at this same time, that rabbinical scholars gave the Torah its definitive form.

By the second century CE, rituals once confined to the Temple were widely practiced to serve as memorials of the Sanctuary; study of the divine laws and acts of piety – rituals capable of fulfillment anywhere – replaced pilgrimage and sacrifice; scholar-rabbis replaced the aristocracy of the priesthood: all this led to the reformation of Jewish faith and community life.¹⁵ The Temple, however, was not forgotten. Gradually the ban on Jews entering Aelia was relaxed and they began to return at the times of what had been the three great festivals, Passover, Shavuot and Sukkoth, gathering on Temple Mount at the place where they believed the altar for sacrifice had once stood. It would have been in the shadow of Hadrian's temple to Jupiter, which would dominate Aelia until the fourth century.

As Judaism was adjusting to the loss of the Temple, Christianity was also evolving and developing characteristics that diverged from its Jewish roots – the veneration of martyrs, the active promotion of the religion among all peoples, the withdrawal from the world by some, and an increasing aura of mysticism. Its evolution was taking place far from Jerusalem, in Rome and in the inner circles of the imperial court.

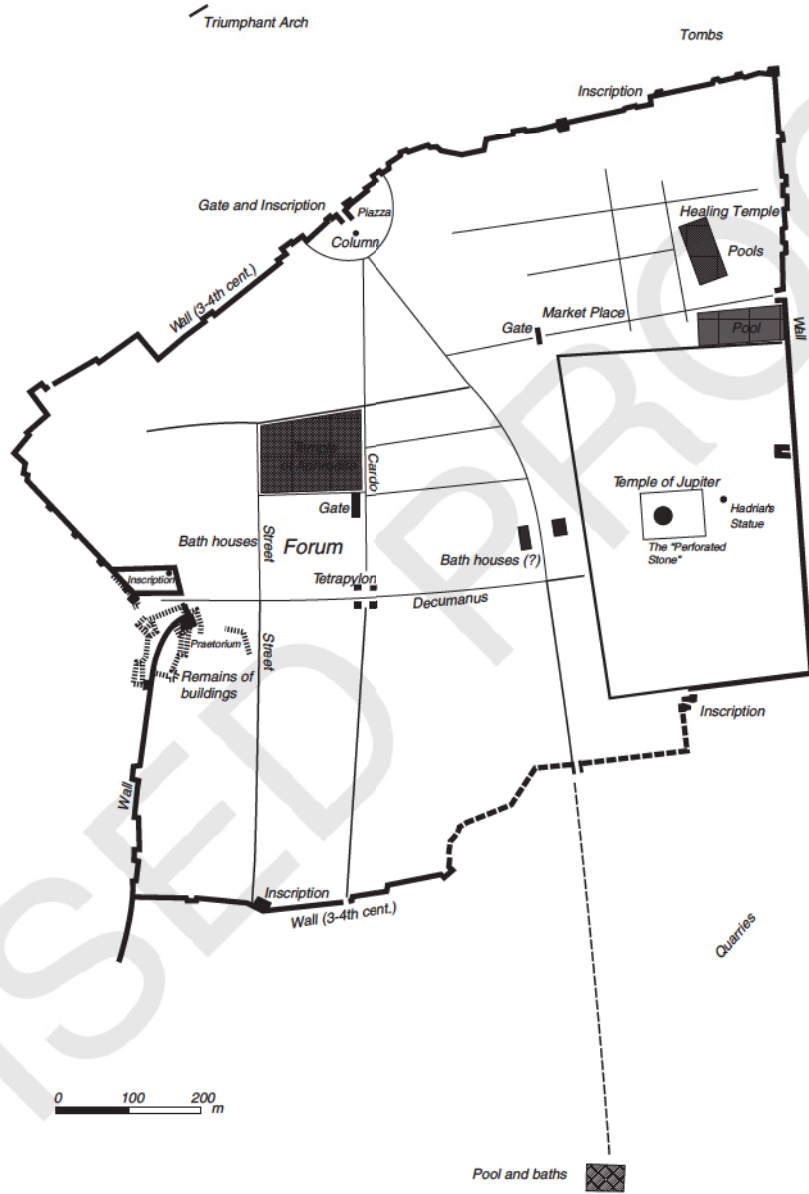


Figure 4.1 *Aelia Capitolina*. Maps © Carta Jerusalem, redrawn by permission.

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Constantine

Into the third century a clear sense of the exact place of Christ's death and resurrection had survived in the collective memory of the small Christian community in the city. Regardless of the fact that all traces had been removed in the building of Aelia, Christians insisted that Christ had died and been resurrected beneath Hadrian's temple to Venus, the city temple. Eusebius wrote of deliberate actions of Hadrian's builders to conceal "this sacred cave:"

Certain impious and godless persons had thought to remove entirely from the eyes of men, supposing in their folly that thus they should be able effectually to obscure the truth. Accordingly they brought a quantity of earth from a distance with much labor, and covered the entire spot; then, having raised this to a moderate height, they paved it with stone, concealing the holy cave beneath this massive mound.

And on this foundation these godless persons at the behest of the Emperor had built:

a truly dreadful sepulcher of souls . . . a gloomy shrine of lifeless idols to the impure spirit whom they call Venus, [daughter of Jupiter] and offering detestable oblations therein on profane and accursed altars For they supposed that their object could not otherwise be fully attained, than by thus burying the sacred cave beneath these foul pollutions.¹⁶

Hadrian's great temple to Venus in the Forum in Rome was favored by the city's prostitutes, which suggests the character of such "detestable oblations."

Constantine the Great,¹⁷ who reigned from 280 to 337, was the first Roman emperor to profess Christianity: he laid the basis for a Roman Christian state, from which would emerge the Byzantine Empire, and subsequently Western medieval culture. As well as the *Ecclesiastical History*, Eusebius wrote the *Life of Constantine*. Here he recorded in detail the Emperor's decision to build "a Church at Jerusalem in the Holy Place of Our Savior's Resurrection."

Given the fundamental significance of Christ's death and resurrection to early Christians, the places where they had occurred would have immediately become hallowed ground, marked perhaps by a simple structure where the faithful could gather in private. If this were the case, building

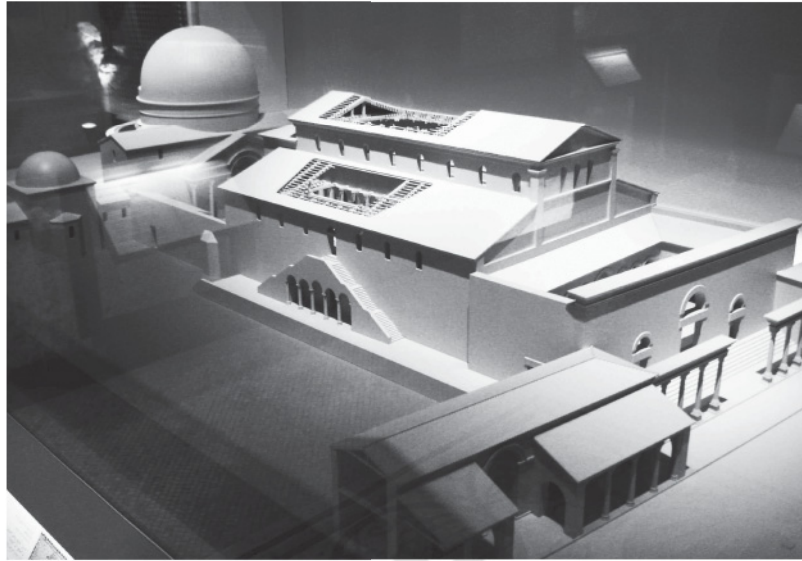


Figure 4.2 Model of Constantine's Basilica. The dome of Anastasis covers the tomb of Christ on the left. The site of the crucifixion is placed in the adjoining court. From the diorama in the Tower of David Museum, Jerusalem. Photograph: Alan Balfour.

the Temple to Venus over it would have followed the ancient practice of displacing one shrine with another; a practice Constantine certainly followed in the creation of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher (Figure 4.2).

Constantine ordered that the temple to Venus be pulled down and the land:

be thoroughly purified [and as soon 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.

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And all the earth was removed until the bedrock was revealed and there:

contrary to all expectation, the venerable and hollowed [sic] monument of our Savior'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 Savior clearer than any voice could give.¹⁸

Constantine immediately committed himself to building in Jerusalem a church that "should surpass all the Churches in the World in the Beauty of its Walls, its Columns, and Marbles." It would be named the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

Eusebius wrote that it was consciously created to be in opposition to the memory to the Temple of the Jews; the people who caused the Christ's sacrifice:

on the very spot which witnessed the Savior's sufferings, 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 [Temple Mount] that the emperor now began to rear a monument to the Savior's victory over death, with rich and lavish magnificence.¹⁹

The year was 335.

Whereas the Temple of Solomon had sat above the city on Temple Mount, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher was embedded in the heart of a city once again named Jerusalem, and for all his omnipotence Constantine was not able to create a perfect site for this massive work. The irregular geometry of the plan clearly shows respect for the surrounding property owners. Eusebius wrote that its eastern gates sat "in the midst of the open market-place . . . afforded to passers-by on the outside a view of the interior which could not fail to inspire astonishment." And all were welcome and entered through these gates into the cloistered forecourt and the narthex, the long, narrow, enclosed porch, crossing the entire width of a church at its entrance.

Visitors would have been struck by its resemblance to Constantine's basilica in Rome, built just five years earlier on the site of the martyrdom of St. Peter. This would have increased as they moved through the narthex

and into the nave flanked, as in Rome, with double aisles, “. . . the church a noble work rising to a vast height, and of great extent both in length and breadth . . . being overlaid throughout with the purest gold, caused the entire building to glitter as it were with rays of light.” And behind the altar “the hemisphere, the crowning part of the whole which rose to the very summit of the church encircled by twelve columns according to the number of the apostles, their capitals embellished with silver bowls of great size.” Then through the rear wall of the church into a court “open to the pure air of heaven” . . . to the *Martyrion*, the cave tomb of Christ, held within a cylinder of stone beneath a massive dome, and “beautified with rare columns profusely enriched.” This was “the chief part of the whole work, and the hallowed monument at which the angel, radiant with light had once declared to all that regeneration which was first manifested in the Savior’s person.”²⁰

At the same time as Constantine was investing the imperial purse in magnifying the sacred performances of the Christians he was systematically destroying the temples and the likenesses of the ancient gods: “he used every means to rebuke the superstitious errors of the heathen. Hence the entrances of their temples in the several cities were left exposed to the weather, being stripped of their doors at his command; the tiling of others was removed, and their roofs destroyed.” Then he sent “a few of his own friends . . . to visit each several province. Accordingly, sustained by confidence in the emperor’s pious intentions and their own personal devotion to God, they passed through the midst of numberless tribes and nations, abolishing this ancient error in every city and country.”²¹

It would have been Constantine who restored to the city the ancient name Jerusalem, so central to the life of and death of Christ, and it is probable that it was Constantine who ordered the destruction of Hadrian’s Temple to Jupiter on Temple Mount. Imagine the sumptuous image of Jupiter being hauled carelessly through the temple doors “stripped . . . of their precious materials . . . dragged from their places with ropes and as it were carried away captive, whom the dotage of mythology had esteemed as gods.”²²

Only one document survives to give an eyewitness account of Jerusalem late in the reign of Constantine. It is the journal of the Pilgrim of Bordeaux, who journeyed to the Holy Land in 333. The text has an eager immediacy. Approaching the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the pilgrim writes:

On the left hand is the little hill of Golgotha where the Lord was crucified. About a stone’s throw from thence is a vault wherein His body was laid, and rose again on the third day. There, at present, by the command of the

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Emperor Constantine, has been built a basilica, that is to say, a church of wondrous beauty, having at the side reservoirs from which water is raised, and a bath behind in which infants are washed.

Later he approached Temple Mount:

There is . . . a crypt, in which Solomon used to torture demons. There . . . the corner of a most high tower, [the Pinnacle of the Temple] where the Lord ascended, and he spoke to him who was tempting him, and the Lord stated to him: Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God, but him only shalt thou serve. And under the pinnacle of the tower itself are very many chambers, where Solomon had the palace.

These were Herod's vaults built to support the Stoa.

After barely 200 years myth has replaced any memory of the reality of the place, and all is seen only in connection to Christ. The Pilgrim appears to be in no doubt about where the Solomon's Temple once stood:

And on the temple mount itself, where the temple was which Solomon built, the blood of Zacharias²³ on the marble pavement before the altar, is poured there, you would say, even today. There are also visible the marks of the shoe nails of the soldiers who slew him, throughout the whole area, so that you would think they were made in wax. [He then adds, almost as an afterthought] There are here two statues of Hadrian, and not far from the statues there is a bored-through stone, to which the Jews come every year and anoint it, and lament themselves with moans and tear their clothes, and thus depart.²⁴

The statues must have been part of the forecourt of the temple to Jupiter, and, while Constantine felt justified in destroying the temple, devotion to his imperial ancestors would have preserved the figures of Hadrian. But what was this "bored-through stone"? Despite continued restrictions by the Roman authorities, and the reformation of Jewish religious practice, fourth-century Jews continued to make pilgrimage to Temple Mount on the High Holy Days. Yet nowhere in the exhaustive descriptions of the succession of temples that had centered the worship of the Jews for a thousand years had there been any mention of a pierced stone. Certainly not within the ordered courts and sacred halls of Herod's Temple. Was it a fragment of the Jupiter's temple that had resisted demolition? "Bored through" suggest that human hands had worked on it. The Romans, who would have been thorough in destroying the temple of the Jews, may

have been less aggressive in the demolition of Jupiter's temple, for many continued to trust only the old gods.

Toward the end of the fourth century, the learned St. Jerome saw similar scenes, though he made no mention of a pierced stone:

Right to the present those faithless people who killed the servant of God and even, most terribly, the Son of God himself, are banned from the entering Jerusalem except for weeping to let them attempt to buy back, at the price of their tears, the city they once sold for the blood of Christ and not even their tears be free. You can see with your own eyes on the [anniversary of the] day Jerusalem was captured and destroyed by the Romans, a pious crowd that comes together, weebegone women and old men weighed down by with rage and years. That mob of wretched congregates and while the manger of Lord sparkles, the Church of his resurrection glows, and the banner of his cross shines fourth from the Mount of Olives, those miserable people groan over the ruins of their Temple. They groan over the ashes of the sanctuary, the destroyed altar, over the high pinnacles of the Temple where they once threw down James the brother of the Lord.²⁵

The ashes were a mere figure of speech, but the pinnacle was real, and the destroyed altar could have been the "bored-through stone" seen by the Bordeaux pilgrim.

Despite Constantine's campaign to discredit and ridicule the ancient gods, the aristocracy continued to trust and find deep satisfaction in the old beliefs; so much more varied and satisfying than the naiveté of the teachings of the so-called Messiah. In 361, 25 years after the death of Constantine, his nephew Julian the Apostate²⁶ was proclaimed emperor by his troops. That same year this scholarly Emperor publicly declared his conversion to paganism. Julian had been baptized and raised Christian, yet it was Christians who had murdered his father and other members of his family. In his *Historia Ecclesiastica* Socrates Scholasticus,²⁷ offered evidence of Julian's many pronged assaults on the Christians.

The emperor in another attempt to molest the Christians exposed his superstition. Being fond of sacrificing, he not only himself delighted in the blood of victims, but considered it an indignity offered to him, if others did not do likewise. And as he found but few persons of this stamp, he sent for the Jews and enquired of them why they abstained from sacrificing, since the law of Moses enjoined it? On their replying that it was not permitted them to do this in any other place than Jerusalem, he immediately ordered them to rebuild Solomon's temple.

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And some time in the summer of 362 CE:

The Jews, who had been long desirous of obtaining a favorable opportunity for rearing their temple afresh in order that they might therein offer sacrifice, applied themselves very vigorously to the work. Moreover, they conducted themselves with great insolence toward the Christians, and threatened to do them as much mischief, as they had themselves suffered from the Romans. The emperor having ordered that the expenses of this structure should be defrayed out of the public treasury, all things were soon provided, such as timber and stone, burnt brick, clay, lime, and all other materials necessary for building.²⁸

The same events are told with a broader perspective by a Christian lawyer, Salaminius Hermias Sozomen, whose church history rivaled, with more style, that of the elder Scholasticus. He offered more detail on the extent and urgency of the plans to rebuild the Temple helped by the pagans who sought “to falsify the prophecies of Christ”:

The Jews entered upon the undertaking, without reflecting that, according to the prediction of the holy prophets, it could not be accomplished . . . They sought for the most skillful artisans, collected materials, cleared the ground, and entered so earnestly upon the task, that even the women carried heaps of earth, and brought their necklaces and other female ornaments towards defraying the expense. The emperor, the other pagans, and all the Jews, regarded every other undertaking as secondary in importance to this. Although the pagans were not well disposed towards the Jews . . . they assisted them in this enterprise, because they reckoned upon its ultimate success, and hoped by this means to falsify the prophecies of Christ.

As the Jews began to build, in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher Cyril, the Bishop of Jerusalem, preached to his congregation Christ’s prophecy that the Temple of Solomon would be destroyed. The following day, according to Scholasticus, “a mighty earthquake tore up the stones of the old foundations of the temple and dispersed them altogether with the adjacent edifices.” Word spread through Jewish communities across the region, and “a vast multitude” flocked to Jerusalem only to be confronted by a second disaster:

Fire came down from heaven and consumed all the builders’ tools: so that the flames were seen preying upon mallets, irons to smooth and polish stones, saws, hatchets, adzes, in short all the various implements which the workmen had procured as necessary for the undertaking; and the fire continued burning among these for a whole day.

At that moment, he wrote, many Jews pretended to acknowledge Christ as their savior, yet underneath they still clung to Judaism. He added "Even a third miracle . . . failed to lead them to a belief of the truth:" For, the next night, luminous impressions of a cross appeared imprinted on garments [of the Jews] which at daybreak they in vain attempted to rub or wash out. . . . and thus was the temple, instead of being rebuilt, at that time wholly overthrown. The first event could have been natural; the second a deliberate attack, the third moved into the realm of myth.

Sozomen describes the same sequence of events. Yet the tone of his conclusion suggests that even he was not convinced:

If any one does not feel disposed to believe my narrative, let him go and be convinced by those who heard the facts I have related from the eyewitnesses of them, for they are still alive. Let him inquire, also, of the Jews and pagans who left the work in an incomplete state, or who, to speak more accurately, were able to commence it.²⁹

The Christians of Jerusalem were fortunate not to suffer Julian's retribution for what appears to have been violent interference concealed behind tales of divine intervention in blocking the attempt to rebuild the Temple. In nearby Damascus and Beirut he ordered churches burned, and, elsewhere, bishops were banished and Christian congregations forced to worship other gods, Bacchus is mentioned. Julian would presumably have persisted in his plan to rebuild the Temple of the Jews had not a more earthly conflict interfered. The following year he initiated, unprovoked, war with the Persians and was killed in the action, a death which must have seemed to the Christians as miraculous as the marks of the cross on the clothes of the Jews. His successor, Valentinian, a moderate Christian, quickly reestablished support for the Church.

Beyond the myths and the capricious behavior of the Emperor Julian, these events show the urgency with which the Church acted to block any attempt at rebuilding the Temple, to preserve the evidence of the divine nature of Christ's prediction. His answer to the disciples "Not . . . one stone upon another" had become a fundamental validation of the faith. Though it must have been clear to many that there could be no divine connection between Christ's wishful thinking and the tactical decisions of the Roman army and the engineers who destroyed the Temple: it was such a fateful coincidence.

Early in the fifth century, a more tolerant attitude toward Jews briefly emerged. In 439 Empress Eudocia, wife of Theodosius II,³⁰ Emperor of

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the eastern half of a divided Roman Empire, and generous benefactor to Jerusalem, granted a request allowing Jews to return to the city.³¹ Word was immediately sent to communities across the Empire and into Persia saying “the Romans have ordered our city returned to us.” The Christian reaction was swift and brutal, led by a fanatical monk Barsauma (of whom it was said, he neither lay down nor sat). As Jews gathered in the city and moved toward Temple Mount they were stoned from all sides. Many died, yet survivors were able to seize Barsauma. They demanded justice from the Roman authorities and even attempted to enlist the support of the Empress, who was in the city. She wavered and after much consideration the authorities concluded that the stones had come from heaven and all the deaths had been from natural causes. The monk was released; the city again forbidden to Jews.

A letter written by Eucherius, Bishop of Lyon, to one Presbyter Faustus describes a visit to the city in the fifth century. The memory of Solomon’s Temple persisted:

As you enter the city from the northern side, the first of the holy places . . . is called the Martyrium, which was by Constantine with great reverence not long ago built up. Next, to the west one visits the connecting places Golgotha and the Anastasis; indeed the Anastasis is in the place of the resurrection, and Golgotha is in the middle between the Anastasis and the Martyrium, the place of the Lord’s passion, in which still appears that rock which once endured the very cross on which the Lord was crucified . . . The Temple in truth, located in the lower part of the east and built up magnificently, was once a wonderful thing, out of which a certain pinnacle of one wall in ruins is left, the rest to the foundations thoroughly destroyed.³²

Into the sixth century the city began to draw pilgrims from across the Christian world; with them came the creation of guidebooks, and with each repetition came the polishing of myths. Such holy places were not merely mementos, but were experienced as earthly replicas of the divine.³³ The anonymous author of the guide quaintly named for a creature in Greek myth *Breiaris*, wrote that the great court behind Constantine’s Holy Sepulcher was “where the Lord was crucified” then added it was also where “Adam was formed out of clay; there Abraham offered his own son to Isaac. And in front of the tomb of Christ the altar where Holy Zacharias was killed and where his dried blood may still be seen”³⁴ . . . The same Zacharias whose dried blood in the previous century could be seen on Temple Mount. Past events fundamental to both faiths, both in reality

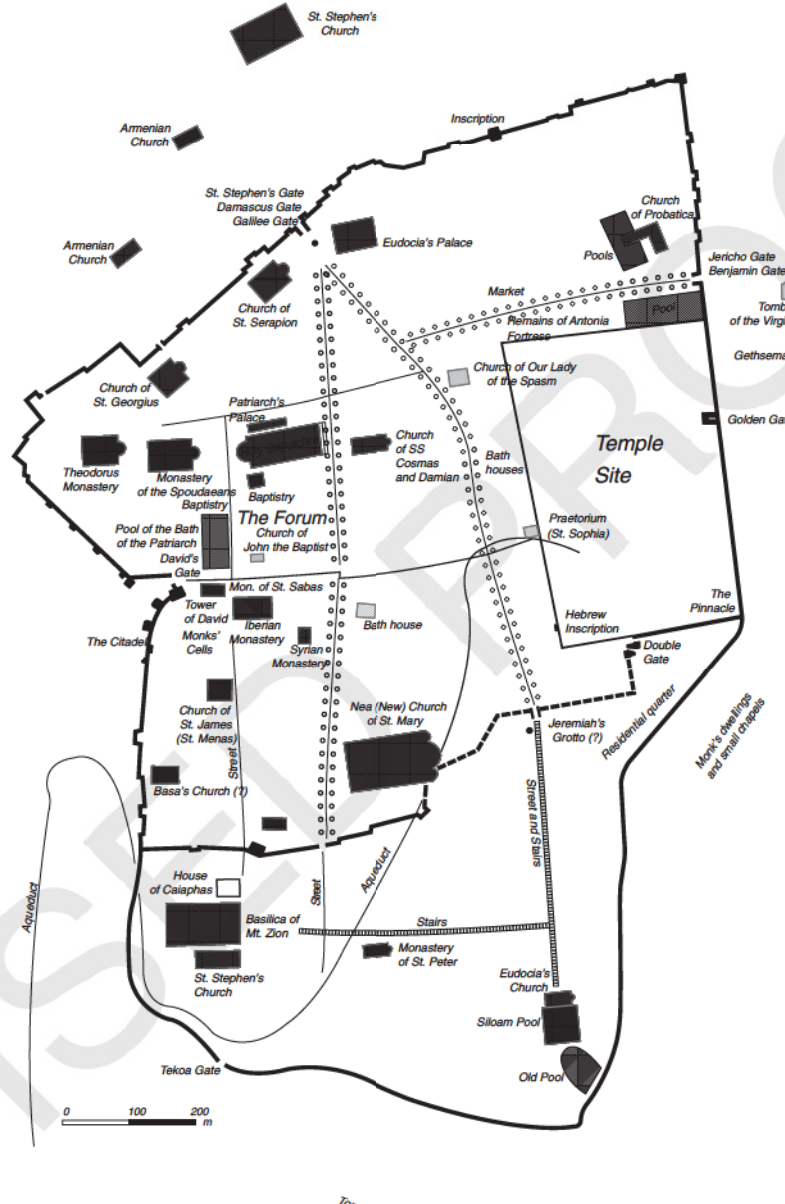


Figure 4.3 Christian Jerusalem. Maps © Carta Jerusalem, redrawn by permission.

and myth, were moving from Temple Mount to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.³⁵ Before drawing attention “to the pinnacle on which Satan set the Lord” (ever a favorite), the guide offered a suggestive note “From here you come to the temple built by Solomon but there is nothing left apart from a single cave,” – the bored-through stone?

Jerusalem had become, in the Christian imagination, the earthly mirror of the spiritual world. It was the source of life, fertility, salvation, and enlightenment. The faithful were drawn to it. They had to experience the desolation on Temple Mount as Christ prophesied, and although they had to suppress the reality of their own flesh to know God, in an existence that was merely a prelude of temptation before the reality in heaven, they felt a compelling need to experience the flesh and bones of others of Christ, the apostles, and all the martyrs. And in response to the sheer numbers, the fabric of the churches and shrines were expanded and reshaped, not only to manage the crowds, but to let the faithful feel as close to the presence of the relics as possible – even touching them when necessary, so there would be no doubt in their efficacy as food for the soul. Faith was not enough – there had to be evidence: in pilgrimage they were imitating Christ, seeking to become as one with him and share in the plan for divine salvation in the creation and the continuous structuring of the cosmos³⁶ (Figure 4.3).

Also in the sixth century, three very different events transformed the landscapes of desire and ambition across the entire ancient world – plague, the fall of Rome, and the building of the great church of *Hagia Sophia*, Holy Wisdom, in Constantinople. All of which in intersecting ways would create the context that gave rise to Islam and would subsequently make Jerusalem the symbolic heart of a new religion.

The Plague

Beginning in the sixth century a most virulent form of bubonic plague began to spread through the Western world. It lingered for two centuries killing millions, destroying economies, transforming religions, and undermining the structure of many societies. First recorded in East Africa, it traveled with trade routes to Yemen then with devastating effect through Alexandria into the Mediterranean then in all directions. As it moved through Palestine, Antioch suffered, yet Jerusalem appeared to have been spared, and there is no evidence of its impact on the trade routes through the lands south of Judea – the Arabian Peninsula. In 542 it struck Constantinople, capital of the Eastern Roman Empire and devastated the city.



It was in the reign of the greatest of the Byzantine emperors, Justinian.³⁷ Procopius, his official historian, offered a clinical description of the disease in its more virulent pneumonic form, wherein the bacilli settle in the lungs of the victims. He wrote of:

a bubonic swelling developed; and this took place not only in the particular part of the body which is called boubon, that is, "below the abdomen," but also inside the armpit, and in some cases also beside the ears, and at different points on the thighs.

Every burial ground in the city became full, and trenches could not be dug fast enough to keep up with the pace of death:

but later on those who were making these trenches, no longer able to keep up with the number of the dying, mounted the towers of the fortifications . . . and tearing off the roofs threw the bodies there in complete disorder; and they piled them up just as each one happened to fall, and filled practically all the towers with corpses, and then covered them again with their roofs. As a result of this an evil stench pervaded the city and distressed the inhabitants still more, and especially whenever the wind blew fresh from that quarter.³⁸

In three or four months it was over, but the effect was catastrophic: "at first the deaths were a little more than the normal, then the mortality rose still higher, and afterwards the tale of dead reached five thousand each day, and again it even came to ten thousand and still more than that." In all the affected cities and the surrounding countryside populations were halved. Labor of all kinds became scarce or nonexistent, crops were left in the fields, ships unmanned; workers demanded higher and higher wages, which imperial edict attempted to control.³⁹ Escalating wages made slaves so wealthy they bought their freedom, essentially ending the slave-based economies of the ancient world. And its aftermath, Christians increasingly found comfort in the presence of the Virgin Mary.⁴⁰ In the same year as the plague struck Constantinople, Justinian commissioned the building of a massive church in Jerusalem dedicated to the Virgin (destroyed by an earthquake in the seventh century).

From Constantinople, the plague moved into Persia and lingered in Europe well into the seventh century before disappearing.⁴¹ Some historians see a direct link between the spread of the plague and Justinian's desire to reunite the two halves of the Roman Empire and bring the city of Rome back into his control. They view the increased trade he encouraged as aiding

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the spread of the disease.⁴² For the next century, the outcome of conflicts across the western world, from North Africa to Italy to Persia, would be directly related to the degree to which the disease had crippled economies, reduced populations and weakened military strength.

The Fall of Rome

The decline of the western Roman Empire was painfully slow and confused, but the death of what had been Imperial Rome was fast and total. In *City of God*, St. Augustine, the most influential Christian scholar after St. Paul wrote of Rome as the city of the flesh, and demanded that all Christians remove it from their consciousness – from the very idea of its existence – if they were to find the “City of God.” For many, the fall of Rome would have a divine symmetry with the destruction of Herod’s Temple: it was a victory of Christian faith over paganism. Yet, as Rome faded in power, it rose to rival Jerusalem as a place of pilgrimage. Its decay became as meaningful a symbol of divine justice to Christians as the desolation on Temple Mount.

From the third century, northern Europe had come increasingly under the control of the Germanic tribes, the Goths, and by the late fifth, the Ostrogoths (eastern Goths) under Theodoric took possession of Italy. In seeking to recreate a united Roman empire, Justinian charged his general Belisarius to retake Italy and Rome, and this was only achieved after a costly and devastating operation. Yet the city could not be held because the plague in Constantinople prevented Justinian sending reinforcements.

The Goths regained possession in 546, after a siege lasting three months: a siege that marked the death of the imperial city. Totila, the Gothic general, at first treated the population with respect, then declared that if they refused to surrender he would demolish the city; reduce it to the level of a cow pasture. He immediately began demolishing the city walls. His Byzantine adversary Belisarius, sent a letter pleading that the city be spared: “Rome’s monuments” he wrote

belong to posterity, and an outrage committed upon them will rightly be regarded as a great injustice to all future generations as well as to the memory of those who created them. Therefore consider well. Should you be victorious in this war, Rome destroyed will be your own loss, preserved it will be your fairest possession. Should it be your fortune to be defeated, the conqueror will owe you gratitude if you spare Rome, whereas if you demolish it, there will be no reason for clemency.⁴³

Totila heeded his plea and stopped the demolition, choosing instead to drive the whole population out of the city, removing its lifeblood. District by district, block by block, his disciplined troops cleared every building driving every man, woman, and child from every tenement, villa, palace, and monastery, out of the city and into the devastation of the countryside to fend for themselves. For forty days Rome was completely abandoned save for wandering cattle and packs of stray dogs. Ancient Rome, that monstrous engine driven by a million people, protected by the mightiest of the gods, the controlling center of a once vast empire, was empty – silent, save for the sound of birds, barking dogs, and the rushing of the Tiber.

In *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Edward Gibbon⁴⁴ imagined that Totila felt pity and reverence for the empty city as he wandered through the Forum and looked up at what had been the palace of the emperor. Entering the Forum he would have passed by the pagan temples; some dismantled, some still containing the power and mystery of the ancient gods yet empty and locked for more than a century. Then by the long-abandoned basilicas, filled with the smells of neglect. The Ostrogoths were Arian Christians, whose heresy was their belief that Christ was not truly divine, but they were Christian nonetheless, and Totila could have offered thanks for his victory in the nearest church to the Forum, Saint Maria. He would have entered a nave that has changed little to this day. Now called Maria Maggiore, it was founded around 440 and the only interruption in daily service since then was these weeks when all were driven from the city.

When Totila and his army left to fend off an attack from the south, the Byzantines retook the city and rebuilt the walls. It is estimated that no more than 30,000 souls returned after the great emptying – wandering back into the desolation. While the buildings remained standing, the unrelenting stress of loss and recapture demoralized the survivors and ravaged the surrounding countryside: aqueducts were demolished, all farming and trading ceased, the economy was ruined. At the end of the sixth century Rome fell, unopposed, to the German Lombards.

Gregory the Great⁴⁵ was elected pope in 590. His biographer recorded that it was a time when:

The Longobards were looting and moving all through the countryside. The city flooded by the Tiber: the granaries on its banks destroyed together with the old Temples, [the river] sweeping along carrying rattlesnakes and dead cattle [Gibbon translated as dragons]. People by the hundreds are starving and dying from epidemics. The inhabitants in flight, the population decimated, the economy in shambles, only one private banker left in the city.⁴⁶

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In the fourteen years he served, he transformed Rome from a place of despair and desolation into the spiritual heart of the western world. For Gregory, the destruction of the old city was God's punishment for its sins. The new Rome gained a strange and tragic power from nestling in the ruins of the old. All the worldly pleasures that the city had so spectacularly magnified were now denied: the urges of the flesh purged, the excitement of the chariot races, the bleeding gladiators, the obscene plays, the warm baths, all acts of pleasures past now gone, yet the stages on which they were performed, though abandoned, were all too visible.

Throughout the city new churches were built, simple structures; instruments of the spirit, offering a glimpses of heaven, and miracles, guaranteed by the bones and hair of the saints and martyrs they enshrined. Pilgrimage to Rome was actively promoted as an alternate to Jerusalem, as a path to unquestionable forgiveness of sins and to salvation.

More than the ruination of the buildings, the demise of ancient Rome marked the death of the ancient gods that had guided and comforted the known world for thousands of years.⁴⁷ More than the destruction of Rome, this was the end of an ancient understanding of the nature and significance of existence. It marked the triumph of Christianity over the old gods, a triumph which would impose its morality on all aspects of life, impose a doctrine that viewed the reality of human existence merely a prelude to life fulfilled in the "City of God." Reality moved from an existence ruled by the flesh to one ruled by the spirit, and this would transform all. The flesh of body was seen as sinful; it gave rise to feelings that had to be controlled and internalized, and all actions had to be done in the awareness of an all-seeing God. Such an existence, dominated by total obligation to the moral code of such a God, greatly diminished the richness of earthly, lived experience. In attempting to reveal the nature of the divine all the arts withdrew from any sense of the actual. To conform, the body could only be illustrated when in an ecstasy of the spirit; individual perspective disappeared in the omnipresence of God. Christ's family, his servants, and the reality of the afterlife would henceforth consume the Christian imagination.

Hagia Sophia

As Rome was dying, Constantinople was celebrating the building of the greatest church in Christendom, Hagia Sophia. It is as if all the ambition and energy that had for a thousand years driven the vast and complex

machinery of the old Roman Empire imploded and was transformed into a profoundly dense vessel, a spiritual black dwarf formed from the collapse of myriad ancient pantheons. All the churches of early Christianity now seem earthbound when compared with the transcendent power of Hagia Sophia. Here, for the first time, was soaring sensual intimation of a heavenly realm.

Hagia Sophia, the Church of the Holy Wisdom, was commissioned and shaped in the imagination of Emperor Justinian I, and built over the site of a basilica founded by Constantine some 200 years earlier.⁴⁸ Designed by mathematician Anthemius of Tralles and architect Isidore of Miletus, it was, and remains, a brilliant demonstration of the most advanced technology of its time. The almost square plan effortlessly carries a dome 100 feet in diameter, 200 feet above the floor.⁴⁹

Procopius, Justinian's official historian, was present at consecration: he wrote of what he called the Great Church:

Whoever enters there to worship perceives at once that it is not by any human strength or skill, but by the favor of God, that this work has been perfected; the mind rises sublime to commune with God, feeling that He cannot be far off, but must especially love to dwell in the place which He has chosen.⁵⁰

Its form is wholly concerned with containing a vast sphere of space, beneath a dome which, in the words of Procopius, "from the lightness of the building . . . does not appear to rest upon a solid foundation, but to cover the place beneath as though it were suspended from heaven by the fabled golden chain," and able at any moment to rise to heaven.

At a rededication in 563,⁵¹ Paul the Silentiary, a priestly official in the court of Justinian, prepared an explication of the wonders of the restored church:

And when the first gleam of light, rosy-armed driving away the dark shadows, leapt from arch to arch, then all the princes and people with one voice hymned their songs of prayer and praise; and as they came to the sacred courts, it seemed to them as if the mighty arches were set in heaven.

Unlike the Pantheon, which seemed to pull the sun to earth, this great church "rises into the immeasurable air the great helmet [of the dome], which, bending over, like the radiant heavens, embraces the church." Though its massive bulk dominated the center of Constantinople, Hagia Sophia had no grand public face. All its energy was held within, though all could feel the visceral strength in the massive walls that still rise to support

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and resist the pressure of the dome. And God was ever-present within, not in trivial icons and relics, but in the marble panels that dressed the walls. These not only revealed the hand of God, but the extent and diversity of his empire. The Silentary knew where every slab of stone had been quarried and read into each the image it evoked in his imagination; landscapes of utter strangeness gathered on the walls and spreading pavements of the great church. He calls them marble pastures:

From the Lydian creek came the bright stone mingled with streaks of red. Stone too there is that the Lybian [sic] sun, warming with his golden light, has nurtured in the deep-bosomed clefts of the hills of the Moors, of crocus color glittering like gold; and the product of the Celtic crags, a wealth of crystals, like milk poured here and there on a flesh of glittering black. There is the precious onyx, as if gold were shining through it; and the marble that the land of Atrax yields, not from some upland glen, but from the level plains; in parts fresh green as the sea or emerald stone, or again like blue cornflowers in grass, with here and there a drift of fallen snow, — a sweet mingled contrast on the dark shining surface.⁵²

Hagia Sophia claimed the center of the Christian world and the Christian imagination. It offered the most complete experience of the heavenly realm, the Silentary continued:

Thus through the spaces of the great church come rays of light, expelling clouds of care, and filling the mind with joy. The sacred light cheers all . . . not only does it guide the merchant at night, like the rays from the Pharos on the coast of Africa, but it also shows the way to the living God.

And in the evening, beneath the dome, points of light from the numerous of candelabra hanging just above their heads, led the worshipers to feel they were walking among the stars: “Verily you might say that you gazed on the bright constellation of the Heavenly Crown by the Great Bear, and the neighboring Dragon. . . the whole heaven, scattered with glittering stars, opens before them, while the night seems to smile on their way.” “I have outdone you, Solomon” Justinian is said to have cried out when he first stood beneath the dome.

The presence of Hagia Sophia overshadowed the shrines of the new Rome and the new Jerusalem. It seemed to possess the heavens and would compel Christian desire for centuries to come. In the seventh century it would also compel the imagination of the Prophet Muhammad and his followers.

Madaba

Just as text of the Silentary allows entry deep into the imagination of Byzantium there is another document that survives, recording the reality of Jerusalem in last decade of sixth century. It is a mosaic map covering all of Palestine from the Sea of Galilee to the Mediterranean. Many towns, Gaza, Bethlehem, Jericho, are represented by symbols, but dominating the center is Jerusalem, shown in a detailed though abstracted aerial view. It takes little effort to adjust to the stylized conventions of the mosaic and enter fully into the reality these lands at the end of the sixth century.

The mosaic was made around 590 CE in the town of Madaba, east of Jerusalem, where the church fathers had formed a school of the mosaic arts. Its delineation is so clear that the details can be read into the streets of old Jerusalem today. The walled city in the mosaic is entered on the left through the grandest of ancient gates, now the Damascus Gate. Once through the gate there is a small plaza marked by a Roman votive column, its place now lost among the huddle of moneychangers and vegetable stalls that occupy the space (Plate 15).

Drawn strongly across the middle is a powerful colonnaded street, the columns and the red roofs they support are quite clear; it is the *Cardo*, the central lateral street of all Roman towns and, though the colonnade is gone and the street now but a narrow lane, yet still the commercial heart of old Jerusalem. Halfway along the *Cardo* are the great monuments from the Christian world of the sixth century. Reading from the bottom: the tomb of Christ—the “Martyrium,” with its golden dome; above it is a dark rectangle that marks the site of the crucifixion, leading the eye to the expansive red roof of the Holy Sepulcher. The mosaic image of the Church is basic, yet it still conveys key details of the structure; not only the three entrance doors and a suggestion of the court facing on to the *Cardo*, but also the awkward asymmetry of the whole.

Out of the Damascus Gate another colonnaded street curves east, as it does to this day, and arrives both at the path to the present St. Stephen's Gate and to Temple Mount. There are five structures close to Temple Mount. At the top, immediately to the left of the gate, is a roof structure that has been identified as the Antonia, Herod's fortress. This sits alongside the mysterious Beautiful Gate, so clearly described that it must have been an active gate into the city at that time and would have led those entering by it across the wasteland that was Temple Mount. A restored fragment of

Herod's wall can be seen at the southwest corner of the Temple platform, forming the tower, the "pinnacle of the rock"; the stage for Christ's imagined conflict with the Devil. It is attached to a Church, identified, appropriately, as the Church of the Pinnacle of the Temple. At the right end, the east end of the *Cardo*, is Justinian's New Church of the Mother of God.⁵³

The pleasure in reading and rereading these descriptive traces is not just in their clarity; it is in the way they allow the imagination to enter into the reality of Jerusalem before the city fell once again in the wars with Persia. There is also a strange reassurance in discovering that despite all the dreadful events that have marked its history the actual physical city has remained remarkably unchanged.

The Persian War

In 610, Persian armies led by King Khosrow II⁵⁴ invaded the eastern lands of Byzantium. As the Persians advanced, the Byzantine emperor, Phocas, without reason, decreed that all Jews under his rule convert to Christianity. The Jewish population in the cities in the path of the invasion immediately joined forces with the Persians and the Byzantine army was forced into retreat. Emperor Phocas was deposed by his troops and killed.

After capturing Antioch and Damascus, the Persian forces⁵⁵ laid siege to and then took Jerusalem in 614. Though there was fierce resistance by a group of young Christians, who believed their city would be saved by divine intervention, the Christian patriarch accepted the terms of the Persian occupation, including the presence of Persian troops. Within a month, a Christian force drove out the Persians, reclaimed the city and massacred the Jewish population. Upon learning of this, a Persian force returned in violence. In reestablishing control they smashed major shrines, set fire to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and killed a large part of the Christian population. A contemporary account records the Persians raging into the city "like infuriated beasts and irritated serpents." The people tried to hide, seeking sanctuary in the churches, clutching at the altars, but they were caught and the Persians "like mad dogs tore with their teeth the flesh of the faithful and respected none – neither child nor baby – neither priest nor monk – virgin nor widow . . ." ⁵⁶

Those Christians who managed to flee looked back and "fell to sobbing and lamenting . . . ashes on their heads, other rubbed their face in the

dust . . . tore their hair when they beheld the holy Anastasis afire.” Those who were captured were given into the custody of Jews from surrounding towns. In the Christian retelling of the events Jewish guards demanded that they covert to Judaism or die, with the decree of the Byzantine Emperor still fresh in their memory. “[T]he Christians chose death rejoicing because they were being slain for Christ’s sake.”⁵⁷ The city was left in the control of a Jewish administration that lasted from 614 to 617, during which “the Jewish leaders of the city made sacrifices, given the unconstrained access [to Temple Mount] for the first time in four hundred years.”⁵⁸ Though there was mention of booths being erected during Sukkoth, there is no evidence that plans were made to rebuild the temple. After 617 the Persians concluded that it was politically more constructive to deal with the Christians, the majority population in the region, and the Jews were dispossessed.

The Byzantine court and its new Emperor Heraclius viewed the fall of Jerusalem as divine punishment for the sins of its people. Sergius, patriarch of Constantinople, called for a holy war against the Persians and supplied the funds to support it. The integrity of the faith demanded that Jerusalem and the True Cross be recovered. War was declared against the Persians in 622, a war that can be viewed as the first crusade. What began in religious passion ended six years later in the exhaustion of the imperial wills of both Persia and Byzantium.⁵⁹ In the closing months a field of battle was prepared near Nineveh, but as the Byzantine army approached, the Persian king, exhausted and sick from the war, fled. His army condemned him to death⁶⁰ leaving his eldest son to sign a peace treaty with Heraclius.

In capturing Jerusalem the Persians had taken as gifts for their Queen Myriam, a Nestorian Christian, the most precious relics of the crucifixion, the “True Cross,” the spear that had pierced Christ’s side, the sponge that carried vinegar to his mouth, and the onyx cup from the last supper. The peace treaty allowed for their return. In March 629, the “True Cross” was carried in splendid procession into Jerusalem by the Emperor Heraclius. Carried high above the crowds, the procession moved solemnly and grandly into the city to a ruined Holy Sepulcher.⁶¹ Though the events were fourteen years in the past, the Christians had neither forgotten nor forgiven the Jewish role in the Persian massacre. With the resumption of a Christian administration, many Jews fled the city. The patriarch of Jerusalem executed those who were known to have taken part in the killings. Others were pardoned but all were forbidden the full practice of their religion. Five years later, in 634, he decreed that all Jews must have a Christian baptism.

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In 638 Jerusalem fell to a new and unknown force – the armies of Islam. Even though they shared the same fundamental history, Christianity had found no commonality with the constant laws of Judaism. In the following century both would have a profound influence on a wholly new concept of God in Islam.

Notes

1. Recorded in the writing of Eiphanius and the Bordeaux Pilgrim.
2. From *The Mishna*, translated by Herbert H. Danby. Oxford University Press, 1933. In F. E. Peters (1985), *Jerusalem: The Holy City in the Eyes of Chroniclers, Visitors, Pilgrims, and Prophets from the days of Abraham to the beginnings of Modern Times*, p. 121. This and all subsequent quotations from this work are © 1985 Princeton University Press. Reprinted by permission of Princeton University Press.
3. Publius Aelius Hadrianus. Reigned from 117 CE to 138.
4. His greatest artistic achievement was his villa outside Rome, which was formed from a collaged re-creation of his favorite places.
5. From Dio Cassius, *Romaika* LXIX 12, translated by Earnest Cary. Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1914–1927. In Peters, *Jerusalem*, p. 127.
6. In the writings of a leading rabbi, Akiva ben Yosef.
7. Also spelled Koseba, Kosiba, or Kochba, and also called Bar Koziba.
8. Also called Eusebius Pamphili.
9. Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* IV: 6, 2, translated by Earnest Cary. Cambridge MA: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1914–1927. (www.newadvent.org/fathers/250104.htm, accessed April 2, 2012).
10. The evidence for this is circumstantial, but for three years the revolutionaries issued coins bearing the name Jerusalem.
11. The Romans also suffered great loss. When Hadrian reported in writing to the Senate he omitted the phrase which customarily would open such a letter “If you and our children are in health, it is well; I and the legions are in health.”
12. Latin Juppiter, Iovis, or Diespiter.
13. In the absence of physical or eyewitness evidence, F. E. Peters argues that no temple was built on the Temple Mount: he believes that Hadrian’s temple to Jupiter was built where the Holy Sepulcher now stands.
14. Hosea 6: 6.
15. This based on material from the *Internet Medieval Source Book*, Paul Halsall, June 1997: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook.asp> (accessed March 10, 2012).

16. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, Book III, XXVI. Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd Series, ed. P. Schaff and H. Wace. New York: Christian Literature Publishing Co. 1890 (www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf201.txt, accessed March 10, 2012).
17. Flavius Valerius Constantinus.
18. Eusebius *Life of Constantine*, Book III, 26–28.
19. Eusebius *Life of Constantine*, Book III, 33.
20. Eusebius *Life of Constantine*, Book III, 34–39.
21. Eusebius *Life of Constantine*, Book III, 54.
22. Eusebius *Life of Constantine*, Book III, 54.
23. Zechariah, a minor old testament prophet whose eschatological themes and provide many images of a messianic figure that were borrowed by New Testament writers and applied to the figure of Jesus.
24. The *Anonymous Pilgrim of Bordeaux*, *Early Christian Pilgrimage* (www.christusrex.org <http://orion.it.luc.edu/~avande1/jerusalem/sources/bordeaux/Jerus.htm>, accessed March 10, 2012).
25. *Jerome on Zophaniah I*, 15–16, in Peters, *Jerusalem*, p. 145.
26. Latin Julianus Apostata, born 331/332 CE in Constantinople; original name Flavius Claudius, by name Julian the Apostate.
27. Socrates Scholasticus (380 CE–450 CE). Church historian whose *Ecclesiastical Histories* is the authoritative documentary source for Christian history of the fourth and fifth centuries.
28. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series II, Vol. II Book III, C 20. Christian Classics Ethereal Library: Wheaton College: www.reformedreader.org/history/ecfcollection.htm (accessed March 10, 2012).
29. Salaminus Hermias Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical Histories*, Book 5. In Jacob Marcus (1990), *The Jew in the Medieval World: A Sourcebook, 315–1791*. New York: Hebrew Union College Press.
30. Born April 10, 401, Constantinople, died July 28, 450.
31. An imperial edict was issued in 423 explicitly forbidding an action that would destroy a synagogue.
32. Letter to the Presbyter Faustus by Eucherius, Bishop of Lyons: Translated by Arnold vander Nat, 2003 homepages.luc.edu/~avande1/jerusalem/sources/eucherius.htm (accessed March 10, 2012).
33. Theodore the Studite writes “Every artificial image exhibits in itself, by way of imitation, the form of its model; the model is the image the one in the other.”
34. Peters, *Jerusalem*, p. 145.
35. Holy Sepulcher began to collect the most precious relics including the horn that held the oil in anointing the heads of David and Solomon.
36. Karen Armstrong (1996), *Jerusalem One City Three Faiths*, p. 293. New York: Ballantine Books.
37. Ruled 483–565.

38. Procopius, *History of the Wars*, II: 22–33. Translated by H. B. Dewing. Cambridge, MA: Loeb Library of the Greek and Roman Classics, Harvard University Press.
39. A death toll of a million and higher. Although the historical record lacks any evidence of the death toll, there is circumstantial evidence, such as inscriptions on buildings suddenly ending in the mid-sixth century in some parts of Syria.
40. Alain J. Stoclet (2006), “*Consilia humana, ops divina, superstitio*: Seeking succor and solace in times of plague, with particular reference to Gaul in the early Middle Ages,” in Lester K. Little (ed.) *Plague and the End of Antiquity: The Pandemic of 541–750*. Cambridge University Press.
41. Moving overland to Italy, France, and Spain, and touching Britain and Ireland.
42. Marjolein Schat, “Justinian’s foreign policy and the Plague” <http://entomology.montana.edu/historybug/YersiniaEssays/Schat.htm> (accessed March 10, 2012).
43. J. B. Bury (1923) *History of the Late Roman Empire*. London: Macmillan.
44. David Womersley, ed. (2005), Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, V II, C XLV. New York: Penguin Books.
45. Gregory the Great, reigned 590–604, theologian and administrative, social, liturgical, and moral reformer, laid down the idea of a Christian society that would define medieval culture.
46. Richard Krautheimer (2000), *Rome: Profile of a City, 312–1308*, p. 62, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press. (Also in Gibbon *Decline and Fall* V II, C XLV.)
47. In the east, the great cultures such as India and China, though not free from internal conflict, never suffered a disjuncture as total as this.
48. Burnt to the ground during the Nika Revolt against Justinian in 532.
49. In 558 an earthquake collapsed part of the dome, and there was further collapse during repairs. Reconstruction was entrusted to Isidorus the Younger, and he created a steeper dome in lighter materials. The church was rededicated in 563.
50. *De Aedificiis Procopius*, extract from W. R. Lethaby and Harold Swainson (1894), *The Church of Sancta Sophia, Constantinople: A Study of Byzantine Building*. London: Macmillan. www.archive.org/details/churchsanctasop01swaigoog (accessed March 10, 2012).
51. See note 50 above.
52. Paul the Silentiary extract from Lethaby and Swainson, *The Church of Sancta Sophia, Constantinople*.
53. This disappeared in the seventh century, possibly destroyed by earthquake.
54. Son of the warrior king Khosrow who greatly enlarged the Persian Empire.
55. Under the General Shur Baraga.
56. F. Conybeare (1910), “Antiochus Strategos, Account of the Sack of Jerusalem 614,” *English Historical Review*, 1910. In Peters, *Jerusalem*, p. 171.
57. The principal source for this account was Theophanes, a monk writing 200 years after the events described and far from objective. As the events had come down to him they recorded that over 90,000 Christians had died in the assault, more

than the population of Rome at the time. It is recorded there was negotiation with the Persians to allow the slaughter of their Christian prisoners who had been held outside the city.

58. Peters, *Jerusalem*, p. 173.
59. The exhaustion came not only from war but from bubonic plague (see above notes 39 and 40).
60. His youngest son and heir, Mardnshh, was murdered before his eyes.
61. There is a mystery related to the arrangements of this procession. Did Heraclites have a gate specially built the eastern wall of Temple Mount to glorify the arrival of the True Cross; the gate today known as the Golden Gate? The architectural evidence suggests that this great double entrance was constructed at around this time, and such a splendid entrance must have been a prelude to an equally splendid destination. If so what would justify a Christian Emperor constructing a grand entry on to Temple Mount; a place that Christ prophesied would be forever abandoned? One possibility is that during the three years of Jewish administration there was construction, and this gate alone survived the return to Christian rule.