

Introduction

Identity, Space, Place, and Territory

I frequently find myself on the summit of the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem's Old City and modern West Jerusalem. A visit to the mountain affords breathtaking views to the west. Spectators peer out over the Kidron Valley toward the site known to the English-speaking world as the Temple Mount. But different sightseers have different terms for what they see.¹ Jewish and Christian visitors view the "Temple Mount," focusing on the Temple that occupied this space until 70 C.E. This name disregards—or at least verbally suppresses—the early Islamic structures on the mountain, which are prominently visible when looking from the east. Muslim visitors, including the Arab merchants who ply their goods to the tourists, refer to this space as "Haram al-Sharif," the Noble Sanctuary, or "Al Aksa," meaning the farthest.² Most, if asked, would not recognize the past existence of a Jewish Temple on the Haram. This is a

1. I also encountered this phenomenon during my visits to the Mount while studying the history of the religious and eschatological meaning of the Mount of Olives in the Abrahamic traditions. See Eyal Ben-Eliyahu, "‘On That Day His Feet Will Stand on the Mount of Olives’: The Mount of Olives and Its Hero between Jews, Christians, and Muslims," *Jewish History* 30, no. 2 (2016): 138–57.

2. Jews and Christians use the term Al Aksa to refer to the mosque on the southern end of Herod the Great's artificial plateau. Muslims use this name to refer both to the mosque specifically and to the entire space generally.

prime example of how religions and identities organize the perception of space.³

In recent years, various disciplines in the humanities and social sciences have undergone a revolution: history and identity are now viewed through the prism of space. This is the foreground and theoretical framework for the analyses in this book and for my discussion of the meaning of territory for Jewish identity in the ancient world.⁴

Identity and Territory: Jewish Perceptions of Space in Antiquity examines the role of territory in postbiblical Jewish identity from the Second Temple period through the first centuries of the Common Era. The discussion revolves around two interrelated axes: the influence of territory on shaping Jewish identity throughout the period, and the way forms of this identity influenced the concept of territory in Jewish consciousness. This study explores the different Jewish approaches to the land's shifting boundaries and to the sites that were considered holy by diverse groups.

The issue of identity and territory will be engaged from two perspectives. The first addresses territory and its role in Jewish identity during the Second Temple period and, later, in the rabbinic period. The second considers the character and status of the "map of holy places." Here, we discuss the holy sites from a rabbinic perspective, against the backdrop of popular or nonrabbinic Jewish culture; the rabbinic perception of space is also compared to the map of Christian holy sites.

Territory and holy places are central to how Jews of that time apprehended space. The hierarchy of spaces understood as holy and the boundaries of the territory belonging to an ethnos are, generally speaking, essential to the perception of a space. Therefore, the relationship to territory engages both external borders, more generally, and the sites of memory in this space, in particular. In fully appreciating the attitude of

3. Teaching at the University of Haifa, where Jewish, Christian, and Muslim citizens of Israel study together, provides a similar experience. A course dealing with holy sites that I teach reveals a clear difference in how the students designate the sites. For example, the site identified in popular Jewish tradition as the tomb of Rabban Gamaliel in Yavneh is identified in popular Arab tradition as the tomb of Ali Abu Hurairah. See Doron Bar, *Sanctifying a land: The Jewish holy places in the State of Israel 1948–1967* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Ben Gurion University Press and Yad Itzhak Ben-Zvi, 2007), 46–47.

4. Regarding the spatial turn in historical inquiry, see Philip J. Ethington, "Placing the Past: 'Groundwork' for a Spatial Theory of History," *The Journal of Theory and Practice* 11, no. 4 (2007): 465–93; Edward W. Soja, "History: Geography: Modernity," in *Post-modern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London: Verso, 1989), 10–42; Stephen Russell, *Space, Land, Territory, and the Study of the Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 2017). On the spatial turn in Jewish studies see Julia Brauch, Anna Lipphardt, and Alexandra Nocke, eds., *Jewish Topographies: Visions of Space, Traditions of Place*

the Jewish community and the rabbis to both of these dimensions, we can come to a deeper understanding of the varied Jews' identity and connection to the land and holy sites during the Second Temple era and in the early centuries of the Common Era.

INTERRELATED CONCEPTS: MEMORY, IDENTITY, PLACE, SPACE, AND TERRITORY

Memory and Identity

Various groups possess divergent concepts of space, often treating the same places in a different way, in part because the meaning they attach to the space is based on their specific collective memories. Maurice Halbwachs, distinguishing between memory and historiography, links memory to place and time, and explains how memory connects with place or space to become part of the way these concepts are understood. Memories are partial by definition and maintaining them requires context. Every collective memory uses the frameworks of space and time, and the memories of the individual are maintained and preserved within that collective context.

Halbwachs, who studied the Holy Land in medieval Christian memory, describes an imaginary map on which various groups had placed scenes from the life of Jesus.⁵ In Halbwach's view, collective memory, unlike physical observation—which requires presence and visual confirmation—develops in inverse proportion to the event's proximity in time and space. The place becomes a collective symbol.

(Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2008) and the review by Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert, "The New Spatial Turn in Jewish Studies," *AJS Review* 33, no. 1 (2009): 155–64. The main expression of the spatial dimension in Jewish studies has involved the issue of an *eruv*, the Sabbath boundary; see Gil P. Klein, "Squaring the City: Between Roman and Rabbinic Urban Geometry," in *Phenomenologies of the City: Studies in the History and Philosophy of Architecture*, ed. Henriette Steiner and Maximilian Sternberg (Farnham, UK and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015), 34–48. Recently, Kelley Coblenz Bautch published a valuable survey of the use of spatial theory in the apocalyptic literature, mainly Enoch and Daniel. See Kelley Coblenz Bautch, "Spatiality and Apocalyptic Literature," *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel* 3, no. 5 (2016): 273–88. However, discussion of and engagement with the spatial turn in the field of Jewish studies has focused primarily, until now, on the individual and urban spaces, as seen in the works of Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert and Gil P. Klein. See also Daniel Lord Smail, *Imaginary Cartographies: Possession and Identity in Late Medieval Marseilles* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000). While most research has focused on personal, home, and urban space, in this book I seek to address the Jewish ethnic space of the land of Israel and its holy places, and its bearing on Jewish identity in the ancient period.

5. Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

But while Halbwachs saw collective memory as a homogeneous unit, others pointed to the necessity of distinguishing between communities, periods, and religious groups, rather than relating to a common national collective memory. These critics suggested the terms “communicative memory” and “cultural memory” in place of “collective memory.”⁶

In this volume, “collective memory” and “cultural memory” refer to the diverse and dynamic notion of national territory, the perceptions of the land’s borders, and the understanding of holy sites in the land during the Second Temple period and the first century C.E. The transformation in the concept of the land, its borders, and its holy places in various epochs, and the differences between contemporaneous groups, is an expression of cultural memory as a central component—together with other political and sociological elements—in shaping the perception of territory and place. I assume in this book that identity shapes territory and vice versa.

Immanuel Kant established that reality in itself can only be apprehended through the prisms of space and time.⁷ Ernst Cassirer argues that different symbolic frameworks—including language, mythography, and science—organize the perception of space and time differently, emphasizing the determining sovereignty of cognition over reality.⁸ He highlights the differences between the mythographic and the scientific frameworks, but posits that in spite of them, the mythographic framework has the power to shape space and reality.

6. Jan Assmann and John Czaplicka, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity,” *New German Critique* 65 (Spring/Summer 1995): 125–33; Aleida Assman, “Memory, Individual and Collective,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis*, ed. Robert E. Goodwin and Charles Tilly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 210–26. On the need to expand the term “collective memory” and communicate with other components, see Wolf Kansteiner, “Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies,” *History and Theory* 41, no. 2 (2002): 179–97.

7. Immanuel Kant, “The Transcendental Aesthetic,” in *Critique of Pure Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1998), 157, 162. Just as history is a description of time and not time itself, so geography is a description of space and not space itself, with the description reflecting the perspective of the writer. As Richard Hartshorne asserts, “Geography is to be defined essentially as point of view”; Richard Hartshorne, *The Nature of Geography* (Lancaster, PA: Association of American Geographers, 1939), 432.

8. Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944), 62–78.

Place, Space, and the Factors That Define Them

In the 1970s, Yi-Fu Tuan, one of the originators of the field of humanistic geography, laid the groundwork for the idea that one's daily experience is central to how one experiences space.⁹ In recent years, a subfield of cultural geography has developed within humanistic geography and deals with the reciprocal relationships between culture and society, on the one hand, and space, on the other.¹⁰ History and collective memory of particular sites occupy a central position in these relationships, to which we could add the religious significance or status of a site or space.¹¹ Accordingly, the concept of "place" is a function of human consciousness as it is determined by the values, beliefs, opinions, and experiences of a society and its members.

The heterogeneity of space thus depends on the different modes of its apprehension. Beyond material topography, additional perspectival and symbolic factors represent important threads in the manifold factors that contribute to "place."¹² The way in which space is understood differs among people or communities according to their mythologies and value systems. "Place" is the meaning assigned to a particular space at a particular time.¹³

To return to our opening scenario, a Jew and a Muslim standing on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem from the east, will look

9. Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974); idem, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977).

10. David Atkinson et al., *Cultural Geography: A Critical Dictionary of Key Concepts* (London: Tauris, 2005).

11. See Shmuel Berkovits, "How dreadful is this place!": *Holiness, politics, and justice in the Holy Places in Israel* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Carta, 2007); Issachar Rosen-Zvi, *Taking Space Seriously: Law, Place, and Society in Contemporary Israel* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2004).

12. Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969).

13. In Tannaitic literature, the term "place" (*makom*) is often used to refer to God. However, in Amoraic literature, using place to refer to God is less prevalent, and the phrase "The Holy One, Blessed Be He" is used more often to refer to God. The midrash Genesis Rabbah asks why "The Holy One, Blessed Be He" is referred to as "the place" in Genesis 28:11, where it is written "and he reached the place" to describe Jacob's arrival at Bethel. The interpretation offered in Genesis Rabbah is that He is the place of the world, and the world is not His place (58:9). Ephraim E. Urbach in *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press, 1987), 66–79, argues that in rabbinic literature, the term "place" actually expresses closeness to God; he therefore sees the use of this term as an internal development within rabbinic language intended to express intimacy between God and the world.

west upon the same space but see two different *places*.¹⁴ The Jew calls the place “Temple Mount,” referring to its function during the first millennium B.C.E., the era in which the Temple occupied this space; the Muslim refers to this place as “Haram a-Sharif” and connects it to its function over the past 1,400 years.¹⁵

Since space is also the product of social structuring and processes, society shapes landscape.¹⁶ We must thus study space through the intersection of social history and the various ideological frameworks that constitute different social layers and movements. Accordingly, a complex reality comprises the symbols, history, and cultural memory that attend a site or space.¹⁷ Experience, sensibility, and physical¹⁸ and mental events, together with the political regime or occasionally the religious significance related to that space, transform “space” or physical emptiness into “place.” The intersection of identity and space, and the characterization of identity with regard to space, is central to how space

14. In fact, this is an experiment I conduct every year. At the University of Haifa, where I teach and where Jews and Arabs study together, I show slides of pictures taken from the Mount of Olives at the beginning of a course on space and holy places. When I ask the students what they see, the Arab students reply “Al Aksa” and the Jewish students answer “the Temple Mount.”

15. As Michel Foucault has noted, one space may include different “times.” The clearest illustration of this is the space of a museum, where one room contains artifacts from different eras. See Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage, 1980).

16. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson Smith (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1991). It was Edward Soja who expounded on the influence of the social dimension on the perception of place. Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996).

17. According to Émile Durkheim, an individual’s feelings are also a function of the social context in which he or she lives. On space in its social contexts and as social production, see Lefebvre, *Production of Space*. Accordingly, different societies produce different places even in the same space. See also David Harvey, *Justice, Nature, and Geography of Difference* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996), 224, and Rosen-Zvi, *Taking Place Seriously*, 126–27. Maurice Halbwachs began addressing this issue in *On Collective Memory*. When Halbwachs developed the concept of collective memory and laid the foundation for studying it as a distinct field, he connected collective memory with place and time. He contended that memories were partial and thus required different contexts in order to be preserved. As a result, the context of place and space is an integral part of collective memory. Collective memory is created by the individual and personal memories that are integrated into the general context of collective memory.

18. Michel De Certeau posits that an individual’s cognitive map of the city is created out of that individual’s daily life, and that the paths he or she traverses create the space relevant to that individual, in contrast to a general map of the city or an inclusive city panorama. See Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven F. Randel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

is conceived. As I demonstrate in the book's first chapter, space forms and influences identity.¹⁹

Territory: The Greco-Roman Background

Territory is associated with ethnicity and is dependent upon demographics. This working assumption is based on Stuart Elden, who devotes a study to the concept of "territory" in the Greco-Roman world.²⁰ Following Edward Soja, he insists on distinguishing between land, terrain, and territory. Land is a concept associated with property; terrain refers to land that has already been delineated through relations of power. Here we can hear the influence of Michel Foucault, who argues that discourse distinguishes between "what is ours" and "what is not ours." Soja sees territory as a method of spatial or social organization.²¹ In other words, territory is the product of three essential factors: the power—usually sovereign—that organizes people in said space, the way its borders are delineated, and its history.²²

The paradigm according to which the human is joined with the spatial in the manifold components that constitute the concept of territory is demonstrated in a study of the Greek polis and the Roman Empire. The ancient Greek polis comprised the place and the people occupying it.²³ In the speech that ends Sophocles's *Antigone*, the polis, the city, and the state in ancient Greece are both social and physical; the line "O my polis

19. One expression of how social realities and processes shape the apprehension of space can be found in an experiment carried out by Yuval Portugali. Portugali asked Jews and Arabs living within fifteen kilometers of one another in the Netanya area and the region known as the "Triangle," an area that includes Jewish communities in the west and Arab communities in the east, to draw the space in which they lived. Portugali found that Jews primarily drew the Jewish communities, with little or no reference to the Arab ones. Furthermore, Jews included Jewish settlements over the Green Line, even though these were more distant than the Arab communities they omitted. The Arabs drew Arab towns while omitting nearby Jewish communities. See Yuval Portugali, *Implicate Relation: Society and Space in the Israeli Palestinian Conflict* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1993).

20. Stuart Elden, *The Birth of Territory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

21. Elden, *Birth of Territory*, 18. Michel Foucault argues that the transformation of "land" to "territory" was the basis for the transformation of people into populations. This indicates that territory is a political category of delineation and control. See also Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977–1978*, ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2009).

22. Stuart Elden, "Land, Terrain, Territory," *Progress in Human Geography* 34 (2010): 816–17.

23. Elden, *Birth of Territory*, 26–52.

all your fine rich sons” refers to “land of Thebes, city of all my Fathers.”²⁴ Plato, and after him Aristotle, emphasizes the political dimension of the city-state. Aristotle, in his *Politics*, argues that “a legislator should look to just two things in establishing his laws: the Land (*khora*) and the people (*anthropoi*).”²⁵ Aristotle emphasizes the importance of the human component over the locations.²⁶

However, the concept of territory in the Greek world referred primarily to the Greek polis, which was an urban unit. Greek ethnic identity did not function with regard to the delineation of borders; prior to the Persian wars, Greek ethnic identity was “group ethnicity.”²⁷ Therefore, Greek culture spread easily to the settlements that emigrants from the Greek city-states established around the Mediterranean. Greek cities occasionally made treaties with one another for the sake of mutual defense, but the primary political nucleus was always the polis rather than the state.

Rome began as a city and was characterized as a republic. However, over time, from the first century B.C.E. to the second century C.E., it expanded greatly beyond the Italian peninsula and reached enormous dimensions. The territorial perspective was of an empire ruled by a city and not necessarily an empire enclosed within borders. Borders and their delineation were primarily set between Roman provinces, and their main purpose was to organize the collection of taxes. The republic was actually a public conglomerate intended to aid in the protection of private property and the lands of its members. Caesar and Octavian/Augustus, his nephew and adopted son, transformed the republic into a monarchy.²⁸ Although the concept is republican, Augustus was the first

24. Sophocles, *Antigone*, 842–843, 936.

25. “The Greek polis was a politically autonomous community of people living in a defined territory comprising a civic center with surrounding arable countryside” (Aristotle, *Politics* 1276a). See also Thucydides, who preceded Aristotle: “Man makes the *polis*, not walls or a fleet of crewless ships” (*History of the Peloponnesian War* 7.77).

26. Philip B. Manville, *The Origins of Citizenship in Ancient Athens* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 53.

27. Jonathan Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Irad Malkin, *The Returns of Odysseus: Colonization and Ethnicity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 59–60. On the other hand, Malkin argues that the map of sites where Greek myths, such as *The Odyssey*, were said to have occurred included peripheral locations that served to connect local populations to Greek culture. See Philip Kaplan, “Ethnicity and Geography,” in *A Companion to Ethnicity in the Ancient Mediterranean*, ed. Jeremy McInerney (Cambridge, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 298–311.

28. John Richardson, *The Language of Empire: Rome and the Idea of Empire from the Third Century BC to the Second Century AD* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

to characterize his personal rule of the city of Rome and the empire in its entirety as a spatially and temporally unlimited imperium.²⁹

The question of the delineation of the empire occupied Romans sporadically, and it is difficult to find precise descriptions of its borders.³⁰ The *limes* functioned more as a line of defense than as a border, as Romans operated on both sides. In contrast, provincial borders, significant for tax purposes, existed throughout the Roman world.³¹ Romans chose to mark only these internal borders with stones. The expanse of the empire was understood more according to the totality of the ethnic groups over which the Romans ruled rather than to any geographic line.

This notion of the affinity between population and space is the cornerstone for the perception of territory presented in this book. On the foundation of the biblical story that shaped collective memory about the land of Israel, the demographic dimension vis-à-vis Jewish territory played a central role.

RESEARCH ON THE CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE LAND IN ANTIQUITY

This volume deals with the conceptualization of the land and its place as a component of Jewish identity,³² a field that has developed primarily in

29. Elden, *Birth of Territory*, 75–82; Richardson, *The Language of Empire*.

30. Benjamin Isaac argues that the Romans had extremely general ideas about the exact borders of the empire. See Benjamin Isaac, *Limits of Empire: The Roman Army in the East* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 372–418. On the perceptions of space in the Roman Empire, see Claude Nicolet, *Space, Geography, and Politics in the Early Roman Empire* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991); Richard Talbert and Kai Brodersen, eds., *Space in the Roman World: Its Perception and Presentation* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2004). On the perceptions of space in early Christianity, see Laura Salah Nasrallah, *Christian Responses to Roman Art and Architecture: The Second Century Church Amid the Spaces of the Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 51–86.

31. Thus, the references to the borders of the land in rabbinic literature and the borders of the Roman world as viewed by the Romans correspond to the provincial borders, as opposed to the borders of the empire.

32. The foundations of my research on the conceptualization of the land rely in large part on the link between place and time. Geographical-historical research on the ancient land of Israel is diverse and abundant. Highlights in research on the topic begin with Eusebius's *Onomasticon*, a reference book for the study of the scriptures and evangelical literature that identifies the places mentioned. An additional milestone in research on the land of Israel took place some one thousand years later with Ishtori Haparchi's composition of *Sefer kaftor ve-ferah* (Book of button and flower) in the fourteenth century. His volume of Jewish religious law included historical-geographical discussions about the land's borders and the descriptions of the land found in scripture. The renewed discovery of the land of Israel in the nineteenth century on the part of European and American

recent decades. Sara Japhet, in her seminal work on the book of Chronicles, discusses the special place accorded to the land in that text.³³ Doron Mendels has examined the issue of the land as a political concept as expressed in several Jewish compositions dating to the second century C.E.³⁴ The works of Kelley Coblentz Bautch on the book of

society generated momentum in the field. See Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, *The Rediscovery of the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press; Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1979). The pioneering book *Tevu'ot ha'arets* (Crops of the land), written by Rabbi Joseph Schwarz, was published in 1845. Emil Schürer studied the administrative division of the land in place and space as well as demographics; see the revised edition, Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (London: T & T Clark, 2014). Another prominent German scholar was Gustaf H. Dalman (*Sacred Sites and Ways: Studies in the Topography of the Gospels* [London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1935]). With the establishment of the Hebrew University, Samuel Klein also became an important voice. Upon immigration to Palestine in 1929, Klein developed the research he had begun in Europe and became the dominant figure in the field. In terms of research on the classical periods, Michael Avi-Yonah laid the foundations for historical-geographical subjects (Michael Avi-Yonah, *The Holy Land: From the Persian to the Arab Conquests, 536 BC–640 AD: A Historical Geography* [Jerusalem: Carta, 2002]), and Abraham Schalit focused on questions of administration (Abraham Schalit, *The Roman administration in Palestine* [in Hebrew] [Jerusalem: Ariel, 2001]). Menahem Stern, Benjamin Isaac, Joshua Schwartz, and Ze'ev Safrai all conducted research on the administrative division; Doron Bar studied demographics (Doron Bar, "Fill the earth": *Settlement in Palestine during the late Roman and Byzantine periods 135–640 C.E.* [in Hebrew] [Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi and The Schechter Institute, 2008]).

The foundations laid by Avi-Yonah in the land of Israel's historical geography in classical periods were developed by his student Yoram Tsafrir who, along with Leah Di Segni, worked on the *Tabula Imperii Romani* and the *Onomasticon of Judea*. For more on the subject, see Yoram Tsafrir, "The Provinces in the Land of Israel: Nomenclature, Boundaries, and Borders," in *The Land of Israel from the Destruction of the Second Temple to the Muslim Conquest*, ed. Z. Baras et al. (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1982); Yoram Tsafrir, Leah Di Segni, and Judith Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani: Maps and Gazetteer* (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Humanity and Sciences, 1994); Leah Di Segni and Yoram Tsafrir with Judith Green, *The Onomasticon of Iudaea: Palaestina and Arabia in the Greek and Latin Sources* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Humanity and Sciences, 2015). Lee I. Levine's as yet unpublished Talmudic Onomasticon project will also be instructive.

On the Middle Eastern space and the land of Israel, see Maurice Sartre, *The Middle East under Rome* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), and Fergus Millar, *The Roman Near East: 31 BC–AD 337* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); on Arabia, see Glen W. Bowersock, *Roman Arabia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

33. Sara Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1989), 322–54. On the myth of the "Empty Land," see below, chapter 2.

34. Doron Mendels, *The Land of Israel as a Political Concept in Hasmonean Literature* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1987). The dating of the compositions is not widely agreed upon—for example, his dating of the book of Jubilees or Judith.

Enoch,³⁵ Liv Lied on 2 Baruch,³⁶ and, recently, John Vonder Bruegge on Josephus, Luke, and John,³⁷ use modern theories of geography to examine the early writings.

The Jewish identity of those in the diaspora—primarily those living in Alexandria and those who had left Jerusalem for the desert—constitutes one branch of the wide-ranging research of Daniel Schwartz. In the Jews of the diaspora and the Jews living in the Judean Desert, Schwartz sees the roots of the Paulian approach, that of a Judaism devoid of a link to land.

Aryeh Kasher and others have examined the way in which Philo and Josephus depict the presence of Jews in the diaspora, with their patterns of Greek or Roman settlement in the Mediterranean Basin colonies. The use of the Hellenistic terms of colony, they contend, lent legitimacy to the presence of Jews in the diaspora. Isaiah Gafni³⁸ and Daniel Boyarin are occupied primarily with the place of the land among the sages living during the Babylonian exile. These sages viewed the exile as a punishment but also one with a blessing and even a universal mission. Boyarin goes one step further;³⁹ in his book *A Traveling Homeland: Babylonian Talmud as Diaspora*,⁴⁰ he examines the view that the Talmud serves as a “substitute” for a homeland.⁴¹ The halakhic status of the land is dis-

35. Kelley Coblenz Bautch, *A Study of the Geography of 1 Enoch 17–19*: “No One Has Seen What I Have Seen” (Leiden: Brill, 2003). See, more recently, Coblenz Bautch, “Spatiality,” 273–88. Coblenz Bautch examines the mental map of Enoch 17–19’s author, following the theory of Peter Gould and Rodney White as well as R. D. Sack.

36. Liv Ingeborg Lied, *The Other Lands of Israel: Imaginations of the Land in 2 Baruch* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 13–16. Lied uses critical spatial theory, following Henri Lefebvre and Edward W. Soja, as well as Michel Foucault, Jonathan Z. Smith, David W. Harvey, and Doreen Messey.

37. John M. Vonder Bruegge, *Mapping Galilee in Josephus, Luke, and John: Critical Geography and the Construction of an Ancient Space*, *Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* 93 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), based mainly on the theory of Edward Soja about “thirdspace.”

38. See Isaiah M. Gafni, *Land, Center, and Diaspora: Jewish Constructs in Late Antiquity* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

39. A far-reaching step, to my mind, that does not necessarily look at the complexity of the Babylonian sages’ approach; the sages folded Tannaitic and Amoraic statements about the need to settle the land of Israel into the discussion justifying their settlement in Babylonia.

40. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015.

41. This is the path traversed, as well, by Jacob Neusner (“Map Without Territory,” *History of Religions* 19, no. 2 [Nov. 1979]: 103–12), who claims that the Mishnah sketched an unrealistic map; the sages, then, were separated from the realistic land following the destruction of the Temple and the Bar Kokhba Revolt. In my opinion, this approach ignores a large corpus of references relating to the realistic regions and borders of the land, some of which I will discuss in the fourth chapter.

cussed by Shmuel Safrai, a discussion that has been expanded of late by Ze'ev Safrai in his commentary on the Mishnah, in which he relates to halakhic dimensions and issues in reality.

The comprehensive research by William D. Davies on the place of the land of Israel in pre-Paulian Christianity includes an impressive preface on the place of the land of Israel in the scriptures and Second Temple literature.⁴² In a follow-up work, Davies highlights two factions—the land of Israel “territorial” and the exilic “wanderer”—that he identifies with Jewish culture since the biblical age.⁴³ In his extensive *The Land Called Holy*,⁴⁴ Robert Wilken discusses the shifts that took place in the various Christian perceptions about the land and Jerusalem from the inception of Christianity until the early Muslim period in the eighth century. The study of the theological status of holy places focuses primarily on the theology and history of early Christianity, and usually involves early and evolving Christian immigration.

Imperial Administrative Structures and the Jewish Perception of Space

In effect, for the majority of the period discussed in this volume—from the beginning of the Second Temple period until the Muslim conquest—the land was part of imperial space. This was true from the early Persian period, as well as the time of Ptolemy and the Seleucids. The only exception was the Hasmonean Kingdom, with its sovereign Jewish rule—first

42. In the preface to his *The Territorial Dimension of Judaism* (Berkeley: California University Press, 1982), Davies explains his interest in this issue as resulting from a letter received from E.E. Urbach, who asks for support for the Israeli cause on the eve of the Six Day War in 1967. The book was published again in 1992, following the Gulf War. This edition was published with a symposium of additional scholars. In the preface, he notes that from the period he was working on *The Gospel and the Land* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), “this issue continued to burn in my bones like a fire.”

43. The final sentence of his book is: “Then Judaism is not a territorial religion: The Land is not the essence.” Yehuda Elitzur, in contrast, identifies in the Hebrew Bible itself the interdependence of Jewish existence as a nation and its presence in the land. The fact that the nation was not born in the land means, in his opinion, that it can exist without one; living in the land is contingent on moral behavior. See Yehuda Elitzur, “The land of Israel in biblical thought,” in *Land of inheritance*, ed. Yehuda Shaviv [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Mizrahi, 1977).

44. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.

over Judah and later, in Alexander Jannaeus's prime, extending to the coast, the north, and the eastern banks of the Jordan. The extension of the Hasmonean Kingdom to what was perceived to be the biblical regions of the land of Israel is highlighted throughout the first section of 1 Maccabees. With the fall of the Hasmonean Kingdom and the Roman conquest, the land of Israel became the Roman province of Judea.

This process began after the expulsion of Herod's son Archelaus in the year 6 C.E. His territory included Judea and Samaria, a region which had a Jewish majority.⁴⁵ Provincia Judaea was subject to the Roman ruler in Syria and evidently became an independent province only after the Great Revolt of 70 C.E.

The primary demographic changes occurred as a result of the suppression of the Bar Kokhba revolt (132–135 C.E.). Hadrian changed the name of the province to Syria Palestina;⁴⁶ the new city that he founded on the ruins of Jerusalem was called Aelia Capitolina.⁴⁷ The Bar Kokhba revolt resulted in the emptying of Judea of its Jewish population, and the center of Jewish population and leadership moved from Judea to the Galilee. Between the foundation of the province Syria Palestina in 135 C.E. and the seventh century C.E., changes took place in the subdivision of the province, primarily in the south.

Our examination of the Jewish link to territory, then, is contingent on the complex scriptural memory of the land's boundaries, maintained during the years of imperial rule, and the demographic reality—the space in which Jews lived together within the empirical subdivisions of the land. The division of the imperial space into subdivisions took demographics into account and simultaneously shaped the demographic reality. It is even possible that it was one of the factors that shaped the national territory in the Jewish consciousness.⁴⁸ One example is the

45. Tsafir, Di Segni, and Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani*, 14.

46. See below, chapter 4.

47. See Eyal Ben-Eliyahu, “‘Cities Surrounded by a Wall from the Time of Joshua bin Nun’ as a Rabbinic Response to the Roman Pomerium,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 106, no. 1 (2016): 17–19.

48. So, for example, in the Persian period, with the Jewish return to the land, the Babylonian returnees settled in Judea in a Persian administrative district called Yehud, which was part of *Eber nāri*, the fifth satrapy (province) of the Persian Empire, from the Euphrates to Egypt. Throughout the Persian period this entity was characterized by a Jewish settlement that primarily comprised the returnees from Babylonia. The rest of the land was divided into provinces under the regime of the *Eber nāri* satrap. In this reality, the space of the land of Israel was blurred; it became part of the Persian Empire, while the space in Judea maintained its unique nature.

bounding of the “border of the Egyptian immigrants” and the space thought of as “Syria” in the rabbinic literature as extending from “Amana” in the northwest to “the river” in the northeast.⁴⁹ The northern border of this space is the same as that given as Syrian territory by Strabo in the first century C.E.⁵⁰ and Ptolemy⁵¹ in the second century C.E., with the Euphrates as the northeastern boundary and the Amanus Mountain range as the northwestern boundary of Syria.

The shifts in demographics and rulership over the land of Israel naturally influenced the Jewish population. In this volume, we examine the ways in which the territorial dimension formed and influenced the diverse Jewish identity, as well as how national and theological perceptions shaped the understanding of space.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

Historically, Jews—especially in ancient times—viewed their world through the lens of the scriptures. The first two chapters of the present volume—based on chapters that first appeared in my book *Between Borders*, which was published in Hebrew—examine the interplay between identity, territory, and boundaries in the literature of the time: the Hebrew Bible and Judea’s Second Temple Jewish literature.

The Hebrew Bible uses territorial boundaries to distinguish between the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah. In the book’s first chapter, I discuss the territorial element of Israelite versus Judean identities. The “Judean” identity that characterized the early Second Temple period shifted to a “Pan-Israelite” consciousness. I argue that this shift came with the expansion of the Hasmonean Kingdom to the approximate borders of historical Israel. This identity, reflected in coinage from the later Second

An additional example comes from the province of Arabia. The central change after the first Jewish revolt against the Romans was the founding of a new province east of the Jordan, *Provincia Arabia* (Arabia Petraea), in 106 C.E. as a result of Trajan’s conquest of the Nabatean Kingdom. The western border of the province was not the Jordan—a natural boundary—but rather the concentration of the Jewish population east of the Jordan, in Perea. This boundary between the provinces reflects the demographical dimension in the Roman imperial decision with regard to the division into provinces. This space was included in the borders of the Babylonian immigrants. The division into provinces may have had an effect on the Jewish demographics in its inclusion in the Babylonian immigrant boundaries; see below, chapter 4.

49. See chapter 4.

50. Strabo, *Geography* 16.2.1.

51. Ptolemy, *Geography* 5.15.1; 5.15.7

Temple period, was convenient for the rabbis, who lived and were active outside historical Judea.

In chapter 2, I discuss concepts of Jewish ethnic territory in Second Temple Jewish literature composed in Judea. The plethora of concepts reflects the multivocality of the Hebrew scripture on this subject. The different voices result not only from diverging methods of biblical interpretation; they are also connected to the context of each work, the identity of the author(s), and the tensions between different agents vying for control over the conceptual map of the Holy Land's borders. In the chapter, I discuss the connections between authors and ideological movements, and the ways in which they represent Jewish territory in their work.

Chapter 3 moves from territorialist Judean composers to authors and movements that possessed a weaker concept of territory. This process is coeval with the slow parting of the ways between Jews and the nascent Christian communities, a development that reached its apex in patristic literature between the third and fifth centuries C.E. Over the course of this extensive process, a religious identity formed that was completely disconnected from territory. In the fourth century, however, the tide shifted: holy places again became central to the Christian community, and this continued until an entire map of holy places could be drawn in Byzantine Palestine.

Chapter 4, which builds upon the previous two chapters, discusses the rabbinic movement. Rabbis flourished in Judea/Palestina and, from the third century C.E., in Babylonia as well. Their deliberations on territory have, for the most part, been used in scholarship on the history of rabbinic law. But this is a body of literature that can be mined for sociological and historical content, as well, and, in our case, for an understanding of how space was perceived. This corpus, while ideologically multivocal, holds the land and its borders in high regard. The rabbis note several border schemes for their Holy Land. The smallest, the border of the returnees from Babylon, is elastic and dependent both on demographic trends and collective memory of biblical and Hasmonean pasts.

Chapter 5 deals with identity, territory, and holy places in rabbinic literature. The rabbis, I posit, often chose not to directly confront religious phenomena to which they were averse. In this case, they espoused a map with Jerusalem at the center of a land of Israel with flexible borders, ignoring other holy places inside and outside that land. A careful reading of the rabbinic corpus reveals that the rabbis dedicated significant resources to a polemic conducted with other approaches, some internal and some external. The Jewish community, it would appear,

contained nonrabbinic Jewish groups that sanctified certain sites; the nascent Christians created a map of holy sites that were pilgrimage destinations. Rather than directly confronting these approaches, rabbinic literature employed a strategy of indirect polemic.

TERRITORY AND JEWISH IDENTITY IN LATE ANTIQUITY

This book examines the Jewish perception of territory during the Second Temple and Roman-Byzantine periods. Over the course of this long era, diverse groups and streams held differing beliefs and values concerning the territory. The common denominator for the Jewish community was the commitment to Jewish scriptures as authoritative texts. This commitment, along with demographic, geopolitical, and economic considerations, created different worldviews about the land of Israel.

The combination of these factors, along with identity, shaped the way in which Jews in late antiquity perceived their space—a perception of territory that was directly related to the image and the scope of their land, as well as to the hierarchy of holy space it embodied. We begin at the foundation: the names of the land and its people, and how these reflected their evolving identity and territory.