Part Two: 
Urban Topographies Connected
In the year 420, the emperors Theodosius II and Honorius sent a letter to the *praefectus praetorio* Monaxius. In most provinces of the Empire, the letter decreed, individuals were now permitted to defend their own estates and places with circuit walls. This law reacted to the changing security needs in the wake of robberies and hostile incursions, and it was issued in spite of the evident danger for the state posed by private fortifications.¹ On a small scale, the imperial letter reflected one of the main characteristics of urbanism in the reign of the Theodosian dynasty: the urban centers of the Empire, particularly in the East, were fortified. In most cases existing fortifications were repaired and enlarged, and sometimes new walls were built to adorn and protect a city. It is not always possible to identify the exact circle of commissioners, but in the case of the most massive re-fortification measures of the great late Roman cities, the building projects were favored, encouraged, and supported by the imperial court. Throughout the late Roman world, city walls most visibly symbolized imperial power and security in a period facing the onset of Barbarian incursions into the Empire.²

Both Constantinople and Jerusalem were encircled with impressive fortifications early in the fifth century: the walls of Constantinople were commissioned by Arcadius prior to his death, and built over the years 404/405–413 in the reign of Theodosius II. In Jerusalem, the exact period of construction, and the builder, are less clear. Apart from shared characteristics and a common historical context, the walls of Constantinople and Jerusalem exhibit individual traits, idiosyncratic features, and unique structural specifics. The aim of this contribution is to approach Constantinople and Jerusalem through the material culture, archaeology, and symbolism of their most extensive monuments: their late-antique walls. The first part, on the walls of Constantinople, was written by Neslihan Asutay-Effenberger,³ the second part, deal-
ing with the walls of Jerusalem, by Shlomit Weksler-Bdolah. The paper includes new archaeological evidence, and the comparison offers new perspectives on the City of Caesar and the City of God in late antiquity.

The City Walls of Constantinople

For in reality there are two seas embracing it [i.e. the city of Byzantium], the Aegean on the one side and the sea called the Euxine on the other; these unite with each other to the east of the city, and rushing together as they mingle their waves, and pushing back the solid land by this invasion, they beautify the city as they surround it. [...] Thus the sea forms a garland about the city; the remainder of the city’s boundary is formed by the land which lies between the two arms of the sea, and is of sufficient size to bind together there the crown of waters.

With these words, Procopius described the geographical situation of the almost trapezoidal shape of the late-antique capital Constantinople, and its relation to the sea in the sixth century. At the same time, he implicitly indicated its congenial strategic position (Fig. 1).

The city in which Procopius lived was significantly larger than pre-Constantinian Byzantium or the city of Constantine I, which had been inaugurated on 11 May AD 330, when it covered roughly six square kilometers. In scholarly literature, it has often been assumed that the first fortification of Roman Byzantium was built adjacent to today’s Topkapı Sarayı (Fig. 1). In a punitive action against Byzantium, Septimius Severus is said to have razed this old defense work in AD 196. According to more recent research, a wall reaching from the Golden Horn to the Sea of Marmara existed on the east side of what would later be the Forum of Constantine. Severus had this complex destroyed, and it was not reconstructed for some time. The only remains of the Roman wall today are still in the vicinity of the Manganese, the former armory, at the seashore of Marmara. The new land walls, erected on Constantine’s behalf, stretched from the Rhabdos at the Sea of Marmara (nowadays in the borough

7 Demangel/Mamboury 1939, 49–56 with plate 9.
Fig. 1: Map of Istanbul, Theodosian Land Walls and the Gates, N. Asutay-Effenberger and G. Petras, adapted from Krischen 1938, p. 4, fig. 1 and Marcell Restle 1976.
of Cerrahpaşa) to the Church of St Anthony at the Golden Horn, near today’s Cibali. This complex has not left any traces in the modern cityscape of Istanbul, so we do not know its architectonic features. The only evidence derives from the vicinity of a Byzantine church in Cerrahpaşa (the İsa Kapısı Mescidi), where remains of the Constantinian Golden Gate still stood until AD 1509, when it was thrown down by a huge earthquake which Ottoman sources called Kıyâмет-i Suğra (Small Apocalypse).

It is not clear whether at the time of Constantine the shoreline was protected by a defense system. According to the written sources, the walls were only erected in 439 during the reign of Theodosius II. Moreover, the coastlines followed a different course in the fourth century and formed two large bays at modern Yenikapi and Unkapani, so that the eastern part of the peninsula was only connected to the Thracian hinterland via a small isthmus (ca. 900 m wide). Both bays were later backfilled. While the sea walls are only partly preserved, the Theodosian land walls continue to impress visitors to the west of the city up to the present day (Fig. 2): they were the largest and most complete urban defense work of late antiquity and the Byzantine Middle Ages.

History and Architecture

The land walls were constructed in the reign of Theodosius II under the supervision of the praefectus praetorio per Orientem, Anthemius. According to an inscription which was discovered in the 1990s close to Belgradkapı, the building activities took nine years, which means that the groundbreaking must have taken place in AD 404/405, still in the reign of Arcadius, who also might have had a share in the construction of the walls of Jerusalem. Theodosius was four years old when the work started, and thirteen when it was completed – Arcadius and Anthemius consequently played the crucial part. A law issued in AD 413 granted the prior owners of premises adjacent to the walls continuity of use, a fact which indirectly secures the date of completion. According to this text, the lower stories of the towers as well as the cemeteries and the vegetable gardens in the area were accessible to the previous owners of the grounds during times of peace.

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12 For the most recent evaluation of the land walls, cf. Asutay-Effenberger 2007.
14 Cod. Theod. 15,1,51 (4 April 413). At some sections of the inner ward, graves are still visible.
Beyond their fortifying functions, the Theodosian walls also had a highly symbolic meaning. It was only with the Theodosian dynasty that Constantinople became a major Christian city, and its new walls were a visible indication of imperial power. Part of the stereotypical praise for cities (laudes urbiarum) mentioned the unscalability of the walls in with the same breath as churches, palaces, grand buildings, and the riches of the city “beloved by Christ.”¹⁵ During the siege by the Avars in 626, the Khan is said to have caught sight of a woman in magnificent dress striding over the wall – undoubtedly the Virgin Mary, as the inhabitants of Constantinople were certain.¹⁶ Until late into the sixth century, two of the most significant Marian shrines were still located outside the Theodosian land walls: the Church of the Theotokos tes Peges¹⁷ and the Blachernai,¹⁸ “in order that both of them may serve as invincible defenses to the circuit-wall of the city,” as Procopius explicitly stated.¹⁹ This was long after Constantinople had become ‘Theotokoupolis,’ the city of the Theotokos,²⁰ and was also considered a ‘New Jerusalem’. During its over thousand-year history, the imposing structure of the walls impressed besiegers and countless foreign visitors alike. The disappointment over the failure of the city walls was painfully felt after the conquest by the crusaders in 1204, which prompted Niketas Choniates’ bitter outcry: “If those things for whose protection you were erected no longer exist, being utterly destroyed by fire and war, for what purpose do you still stand?”²¹

With the completing of the Theodosian land walls, the limit of the city was expanded ca. 1.5 km to the west and its territory increased to fourteen square kilometers. The preserved land walls cover a length of 5650 m. They start at the shore of the Sea of Marmara in the south and end at the so-called Tekfur Sarayı, a late Byzantine palace complex. Behind this palace, the twelfth century portion of the Blachernai wall starts, which was constructed in the reign of the emperor Manuel II Komnenos (AD 1143–1180).²² According to previous scholarship, the Theodosian walls coincided with even older ones and ran across the borough of Mumhane in the direction of the Golden Horn. In the light of the most recent research, however, this position cannot be upheld: the Theodosian land walls presumably ran in a diagonal course from the area of Tekfur Sarayı to the Church of St Demetrius at the Golden Horn.²³ Of this section of the walls, however, no part is preserved.

¹⁵ Cf. the evidence presented in Fenster 1968.
²⁰ Mango 2000a, 17–25.
²² Most recently Asutay-Effenberger 2013, 253–276; cf. also Asutay-Effenberger 2007, 118–146.
²³ A long-standing theory accepted Blachernai as the XIV Region of the city and dated some wall remains (the so-called Mumhane Walls) to the Roman period. The written sources, the masonry,
While the sea walls of the city only exhibit a single defense line (curtain walls and towers),²⁴ the Theodosian land walls consist of three parallel rows (Figs. 2 and 3): the main wall (τὸ μέγας τείχος), the outer wall (προτείχισμα/ἐξω τείχος), and the moat (τάφρος/σοῦδα). In front of both the main and the outer walls lay wards (hereafter inner and outer ward). The curtain walls of the main wall are 12 m high and 4.80 m thick, with its thickness varying at several positions. At an interval of 50 to 70 m, rectangular and polygonal towers were installed. The polygonal towers are usually located at bends. According to the theory of Philon of Byzantium (ca. 200 BC), the 20 m high towers are only slightly connected to the curtain walls, so that in case of an earthquake the collapse of the whole area could be averted (Fig. 2).²⁵ Not all towers are preserved, and no contemporary source informs us about their exact number.²⁶ That said, the walls underwent several changes within the last millennium. Not only were existing towers repaired, but new towers were added. In their rhythm and shape, they differ from the Theodosian concept. Their architectural features and workmanship demonstrate dissimilar characteristics as well. This is clearly visible in the area of the so-called ‘Sigma’ and especially on the north side of the Lycos creek in the area of Edirnekapi (see below) (Fig. 1). In the first construction period, the land wall must have had a minimum of 94 and a maximum of 95 defense towers between the Sea of Marmara and Tekfur Sarayı. The question of how many towers there were on the lost line between Tekfur Sarayı and the Church of St Demetrius cannot be answered.

The u-shaped lower chambers of the towers, which do not have their own rear walls, are accessible from the curtain wall through a high arched niche (Fig. 4). They are covered by different types of vaults or wooden ceilings. In several rectangular towers, a lateral entrance is situated at the flank that opens to the inner ward. The upper stories, which rise above the level of the curtain walls and possess their own rear walls, can be reached via crenellated parapet-walks accessed by a double-flight staircase behind the gates (Fig. 4). Stairs were located at several other sections of the curtain wall walkway. One could reach the uppermost platform of the towers, where the war machines were mounted, through stairs, which were installed on the rear wall of the upper stories of the towers. Only the vaulted upper chambers were used for defensive purposes, and solely here can embrasures be found. The preserved

²⁶ Cristoforo Buondelmonti, Liber insularum archipelagi 50 mentioned ninety-six towers: turres in muro altiori [sc. in the higher walls] nonagina sex. Cf. Gerola 1931, 271. Many travelers speak of fantastical numbers such as ‘a thousand’.
Fig. 2: Theodosian Land Walls, Main Wall, Outer Wall, Outer Ward and the Moat, Photo: N. Asutay-Effenberger.

Fig. 3: Cross-Section Reconstruction of the Theodosian Land Walls, N. Asutay-Effenberger and G. Petras, adapted from Krischen 1938, fig. 4.
original Theodosian towers usually had two loopholes at the front and three on each flank. At certain intervals, the wall was pierced by the main gates between two gateway-towers (see below), which connect with the major streets or important arterial roads. Yet more small arched posterns are visible on some curtain walls, which correspond with the wards: the archways of the main gates were narrowed in the Middle Byzantine period, usually reusing pieces of the original furnishings.

The outer wall runs 15 m in front of the main wall (Figs. 2 and 3). The 8 m high curtain walls are 3.80 m thick. This line of the fortification includes rectangular or horseshoe shaped towers, which were always arranged between two main towers, through which the effectiveness of the entire wall as a fortification was strengthened. The outer towers could be accessed through an arched opening from the inner ward. Some of them had side gates and communicated with the outer ward. The curtain walls were reinforced through casemates (covered round paths) (Fig. 5). Above the casemates are crenellated parapet-walks. On the same alignment as the main gates, smaller gates were mounted at the outer wall. These were blocked by portcullises (see below).

The date of the construction of the outer wall has preoccupied researchers for a long time. Because of a Greek inscription on the lintel of the Mevlevihane kapı (Fig. 6), which mentions the year 447 and speaks of a building time of sixty days, it was occa-

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27 The first stories, which were used as depots or as guard chambers possess only light/air slits.
sionally assumed that the outer line of the fortification was only erected in 447. As Bruno Meyer-Plath and Alfons Maria Schneider have argued, the main wall is not strategically effective without the outer wall, thus both lines had to be planned at the same time. Additionally, an examination of the written sources by the author revealed that the date 447 and the 60-day construction period correspond to a heavy earthquake that would have necessitated thorough repairs. As mentioned above, the main wall was renovated several times throughout its history.

An 18 m wide moat runs along the outer wall, separated from it by 15 m (Fig. 2 and 3). Its depth probably varies depending on the terrain. Its long sides were supported with buttresses. At nineteen points the moat is intersected by transverse walls, which divide it into smaller units. The eastern wall of the moat wall was enhanced with merlons; it gained the look and the function of a third defense line. It is assumed that some fosses were only in the area of the gates in the fifth century.

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28 For detailed discussion, cf. Asutay-Effenberger 2007, 35–53. For a Latin inscription with a comparable legend, which situated on northern console of the outer gateway, see Meyer-Plath/Schneider 1943,133, no 35.
30 Cf. note 28 above.
31 There are some deviations in measurements.
and the final shape was only achieved around the year AD 1000.³² Late Byzantine sources mention that the moat was filled with water. Furthermore, Meyer-Plath and Schneider discovered water pipes close to Topkapı in the area of the tower No. 63.³³ Originally, wooden bridges spanned the moat in front of the gates. They could be torn down in case of an attack. The stone bridges visible today are Ottoman constructions (Fig. 7). Below tower No. 75 (north of the modern Adnan Menderes Bulvarı), the Lycus creek entered the city and originally disembogued in the Sea of Marmara at the port of Theodosius (Fig. 1).³⁴ North of Silivrikapı (see below), between towers No. 40 and No. 42, the wall forms a trapezoidal recess, which is called “sigma” in the literature and did probably not belong to the Theodosian conception.

Arched posterns are located in the curtain walls between towers Nos 1–2, 11–12 (only the traces are visible today), 30–31, and 42–43.³⁵ The first main gate coming from the south is the Golden Gate (Porta Aurea/Altın Kapı) between two marble pylons (towers No. 9 and No. 10). Through this entrance, which was once decorated

³⁴ This is the modern location of the Marmaray main station Yenikapı.
Fig. 7: Bridge at the Belgradkapı, Photo: N. Asutay-Effenberger.

Fig. 8: Theodosian Land Walls, Tower No. 18, Photo: N. Asutay-Effenberger.
with sculptures, the Via Egnatia (*strata nova*) led into the city (Figs. 1 and 9). The gate owed its name to its gilded doors, and it served as a gate for imperial triumphs and processions throughout Byzantine history, at least into the thirteenth century. The Golden Gate, with its monumental size (66 m wide, 19.40 m high) and its gatehouse with three arched passageways, differs from all other entrances of the fortification. A higher central arch is flanked by two lateral archways. An inscription in golden letters was once mounted on the extrados of both the field and city side of the central entrance arch. The only traces left of the inscription today are some drill holes. Nevertheless, it was possible to decipher the text on this basis. The inscription on the city side read *haec loca Theudosius decorat post fata tyranni* (“Theodosius decorated this place after the demise of the tyrant”) and on the field side *aurea saeclag erit qui portam construit auro* (“Golden Ages dawned when the gate was constructed”).

Fig. 9: Golden Gate and Küçük Altın Kapı [old postcard], Private collection.

The inscription has sometimes been connected to the victory of Theodosius I (379–395 AD) over Magnus Maximus, which would suggest that the triumphal gate (or rather, triumphal arch) existed even before the construction of the walls. However,

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37 Meyer-Plath/Schneider 1943, 125 no. 8.
the unfinished sculpture and the junction with the curtain walls on the south make it clear that the gate was only constructed after the completion of the walls, erected rapidly to replace an earlier gate. A new interpretation of some underground remnants discovered in 1927 and in the 1930s confirms this assumption. The emperor mentioned in the inscription therefore has to be identified with Theodosius II, the triumph over an unnamed tyrant refers to the defeat of the usurper John in AD 425. The gate has been modified several times. The u-shaped outer wall with Küçük Altın Kapı (Small Golden Gate) in front of the terrace is a 9th century addition.

The first gate in the curtain wall to the north, Yedikulekapısı, between towers No. 11 and 12, is an Ottoman construction. Northwards, between the rectangular gateway-towers No. 22 and No. 23, is the so-called Belgradkapı gate complex (Figs. 1 and 7). It is usually identified as the Byzantine Xylokerkos gate. It lies at the end of the route, altered by Constantine, of the Via Egnatia (strata vetus), the main street that led to the former Golden Gate of the Constantinian Walls. The third milestone of the city was also located here. All these factors lead to the assumption that Belgradkapı was the most important gateway of the wall until the construction of the Theodosian Golden Gate. Silivrikapı, between two polygonal gateway-towers (Nos 35 and 36), and the Kalagros Gate between the unequal rectangular gateway-towers (Nos 39 and 40) are the next entrances to the north (Fig. 10). Meleviğanekapı, which is protected by the rectangular gateway-towers No. 50 and No. 51, is the best-preserved entrance (Figs. 1 and 6). Here the narrowing of the middle arch in the main gate as well as the holes of the portcullis on the outer gate are clearly visible, offering the best opportunity for studying a gate complex. The above-mentioned inscription on the lintel of the outer gate that refers to the year AD 447 was given the caption εἰς τὴν πόρταν (sic!) τοῦ Ῥησίου (Rhesion gate in the Anthologia Graeca, which establishes its original name during the Byzantine era. However, according to the sources, the gate was also called Polyanandron/Myriandron (‘many men/a thousand men’) in colloquial speech because of the cemeteries that were situated there.

The Gate of St Romanos (Figs. 1 and 11) lies in a short distance further north, at the south side of the modern main artery (Turgut Özal Bulvar), between the rectangular gateway towers No. 59 and No. 60. This entrance does not have a Turkish

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45 Meyer-Plath/Schneider 1943, 66–67.
47 Asutay-Effenberger 2007, 110.
name. Until the discovery of an inscription on the preserved marble lintel of the main gateway in 2003, it was believed to be a ‘military’ gate.49

49 Asutay-Effenberger 2003, 1–4, and Asutay-Effenberger 2004, 18–20. Philippides/Hanak 2011, 335 with note 167 argue that there were no gateway-towers, no inscriptions and no evidence for the street having been connected to the gate. Additionally, the term ‘πόρτα’ is only attested after the year 1204. They furthermore believe that this lintel might have been relocated to this gate by the workers during
The inscription reads πόρτα μέση εἰσφέρουσα ἐπὶ τὸν Ἄγιον Ῥωμανόν (“The middle gate, leading to Saint Romanos”), which does not leave any doubts that this is in fact the Gate of St Romanos (Fig. 12 a–b). It was one of the most important entrances into the city until the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453. Behind this gate ran the extension of the Mese, the ‘middle street’ of Constantinople. The gate was the center of the wall section called Mesoteichion.⁵⁰

The construction of the former Millet Street (today’s Turgut Özal Bulvarı) in the 1950s. The inscription on the lintel is without doubt from the Theodosian era, as Feissel 2006, 63 no. 196 has demonstrated, and the word πόρτα was used long before 1204 (cf. Asutay-Effenberger 2007, 87–98). The term could also be read in the inscription of the Golden Gate. Moreover, an eighteenth-century map of the city of Istanbul should be mentioned here, where remains of an old street outside St Romanos Gate are recorded (Kauffer/Lechevalier/Choiseul-Gouffier 1822, plate 68). But even more importantly, an organic relation between the lintel and all other architectural elements of the entrance could clearly be observed before its removal from its place in recent years (the broken lintel today lies upside-down on the ground in front of the gate). For further discussion, cf. the review of Philippides/Hanak 2011 by Michael Angold, www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/1101 (last accessed August 8, 2022). See also Effenberger 2017, 191–225, esp. 200–210. The term “military gate” was never used in the Byzantine sources and is a 19th century invention!

Topkapı is the last gate south of the Lycus creek. It stands between the rectangular gateway-towers No. 65 and No. 66 (Fig. 1). The entrance was mistakenly identified as the Gate of St Romanos, until the discovery of the above-mentioned inscription in 2003. There is a high probability that the Topkapı was the Byzantine Gate of Pempton.⁵¹ The first main entrance north of the Lycus is Sulukulekapı (north of today’s Adnan Menderes Bulvar), which is flanked by rectangular towers No. 77 and No. 78 (Figs. 1, 4 and 13). The complex used to be incorrectly identified as the Gate of Pempton due to the erroneous equation of Topkapı with the Gate of St Romanos, but also based on mistaken interpretations of the sources and ignorance of the Ottoman literature. It is in fact the Byzantine Gate of Charisios.⁵²

Fig. 13: Sulukulekapı [Field Side], Photo: N. Asutay-Effenberger.

The last main entrance north of the Sulukulekapı is Edirnekapı between the polygonal gateway towers No. 86 and No. 87 (Fig. 1).⁵³ Earlier research associated the complex with the Gate of Charisios.⁵⁴ Despite this, the Gate of St John mentioned in written and visual sources was never taken into consideration. The Gate of St John stood

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54 Meyer-Plath/Schneider 1943, 70.
in this location and got its name from the nearby Church of St John. Only a few steps further along, the wall is today interrupted by Fevzi Paşa Street. The wall continues on the other side of the street with further towers until the Tekfur Sarayı. Behind the Tekfur Sarayı, the Blachernai Wall starts in the direction of the Golden Horn. Although inscriptions are observable at many segments of the wall, apart from some gates (Golden Gate, Belgradkapı and Mevlevihanekapı), Theodosius was nowhere mentioned by name.

**Masonry and Spolia**

The Theodosian Land Wall is the earliest monumental structure featuring double-shell layered masonry with alternating ashlar and brick courses (Figs. 2 and 3). The brick courses reinforced the construction and give the monument its polychromatic effect. The five-layered bricks are usually $37 \times 37 \times 4.5–5$ cm. The layer of reddish mortar containing brick fragments is almost as thick as the bricks. The sharp-edged and accurately fitted limestone ashlars differ from tower to tower in their number of layers and only feature small joints. These characteristics of the Theodosian original construction are especially noticeable at towers Nos 14, 16, 17, 71 as well as occasionally at their neighboring curtain walls (Fig. 8). The outer wall contains uneven ashlars and wider joints and was large parts of it were thoroughly renovated in Middle Byzantine times. The walls were damaged several times by natural disasters such as earthquakes, or by enemy attacks, and constantly repaired. Until the tenth/eleventh centuries, the repair works usually copied the Theodosian workmanship, however, re-used bricks and ashlars were often irregular, and the mortar layers were thicker. The masonry from the time of the emperor Michael II (AD 820–829) and his son Theophilos (AD 829–842) forms a contrast to this pattern, particularly in the segments of Edirnekapı, where big ashlars dominate the lower portions of the wall, with bricks used in the upper portion. The wall sections of the eleventh and twelfth centuries demonstrate the recessed brick technique. In late Byzantine times, the masonry often featured one to three rows of bricks between the ashlars. There are also vertically mounted bricks between the ashlars. Epigraphically dated to the fifteenth century, these parts are usually listed without bricks. The polychrome arching at several sections, for example at the back of the gate at the Sigma, should be mentioned as another characteristic of the late Byzantine period.

Besides the *spolia* which once decorated the Golden Gate of the Theodosian walls, as mentioned in the written sources, there are hardly any other *spolia* to be

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56 For the inscriptions in Belgradkapı and Mevlevihanekapı, see Asutay-Effenberger 2007, 35–38.
found in the original late-antique parts of the walls. Obviously, the Constantinopolitan walls of Theodosius II were conceived as a prestigious new building project for which the re-use of older building materials was not considered appropriate. The most frequent use of *spolia* derive from the collapsed sections of the fortification such as ashlar and brick. Other architectural sculptures from some unknown monuments, fragments of the fallen inscriptions, tombstones were also used as building material, decorative, or apotropaic elements. All these instances of the use of *spolia* predominantly appear in parts of the walls which were renovated or added in the tenth century as well as in late Byzantine time, for example in the area between Sulukulekapi and Edirnekapi or near Mevlevihane kapi. The tenth century relief wall (among others with Herakles depictions) of the u-shaped construction in front of the Golden Gate can be mentioned here as the most imposing use of *spolia*.⁶⁰

### The Late-Antique Walls of Jerusalem

The Roman colony of Aelia Capitolina was founded in the second century over the remains of the Second Temple period Jewish city of Jerusalem.⁶¹ The Roman city mostly ignored the remains of the Jewish city and made no use of the ruined fortifications, known as the First Wall, the Second Wall, and the Third Wall of the Second Temple Period.⁶² The only exception was a segment of the western wall of the First Wall, where the Roman Tenth Legion was stationed.⁶³ It is widely accepted that the newly-founded colony of Aelia Capitolina was unwalled and its limits were marked by monumental, free-standing city gates.⁶⁴

The accepted view associates the construction of Jerusalem’s Late Roman fortifications with the departure of the *legio X Fretensis* during the reign of Diocletian, and suggests that around the year AD 300, a city wall following more or less the course of the present-day Ottoman city wall was built around the Roman colony.⁶⁵ The wall was expanded to incorporate Zion in the mid-fifth century, probably by the empress Eudocia who then resided in Jerusalem. Another opinion proposes that Aelia Capitolina remained unwalled throughout its existence and that only at a later date was Jerusalem surrounded with a wide circuit wall, which enclosed the present-day old city

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⁶² Ios. Bell. Iud. 5,136 and 142–149.
of Jerusalem, Mount Zion, the City of David, and the Ophel. According to this proposal, the construction of the wall was probably related to the Christianization of the city and took place at some time during the fourth or fifth centuries (late-antique times).

The earliest cartographic representation of Jerusalem appears on the Madaba Map, where it is depicted as an oval-shaped city surrounded with walls (Fig. 14). These walls included the present-day Old City, Mount Zion, the City of David, and the Ophel hill. Seventeen square towers were integrated into the course of the walls, and another five or six towers may be reconstructed in the ruined part of the mosaic.

Three main arched city gates were incorporated into the walls in the north, east, and west. The Madaba representation of the mid-sixth century sets a *terminus ante quem* for the construction of the walls. Many segments of the late-antique city wall are known around the circuit of the Old City of Jerusalem (Fig. 15). They were exposed

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67 Geva 1993, 771–772. The chronology of the Roman and Byzantine periods used below reflects common scholarly modes of periodization. In Israeli research, especially on the history and archaeology of the Levant and the city of Jerusalem, a different periodization is common: 63 BC–70/135 AD (Early Roman), 70/135–324 AD (Roman/Late Roman), 324–636 AD (Byzantine).

68 Avi Yonah 1954.

69 Tsafir 1999b, 345.
below the courses of the present-day Ottoman walls in the north and the west, around Mount Zion in the south and along the City of David and the Ophel hill in the east. Remains were exposed under the Ottoman walls on both sides of Damascus Gate (Fig. 16), under the courses of the western Ottoman walls near David’s Tower in the citadel, further north, under the road which enters Jaffa Gate today, and under the building of the Imperial Hotel, documented in the late nineteenth century.

South of Jaffa Gate, the walls were documented in the Armenian Garden as well as on the slopes of Mount Zion. A southeastern corner of a gate-tower in the southeast corner of the walls, which was documented in the late nineteenth century by Frederick Bliss and Archibald Dickie and re-excavated by Kathleen Kenyon, was recently re-discovered in our excavations on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority (Figs. 17 and 18). On the Ophel hill, segments of the walls have been investigated in the past (Fig. 19).

**The Mode of Construction and Perimeter of Jerusalem’s Walls**

The walls’ mode of construction is similar around their entire circuit. The wall is built of ashlar, limestone blocks, arranged in levelled courses. Some of the blocks were originally prepared for the wall, as indicated by their smooth faces and medium size (height ca. 0.50–0.70 m, length ca. 0.7–1.40 m). Others were re-used Hasmonean blocks or re-cut Herodian blocks. The Hasmonean blocks were slightly smaller, and they were characterized by faces with margins along four sides and a central protruding boss. The re-cut Herodian blocks were the largest (height ca. 1 m and length ca. 1.7–2 m). Their faces had margins along two or three sides, and the central boss was flattened. Based upon their monumental size and shape, these blocks presumably originated from the ruins of King Herod’s monumental buildings and were cut and reduced to fit their new setting, therefore having margins only along two or three instead of all four sides. In rare cases double-bossed blocks were used as well. The lower courses of the walls were laid in a stepped manner so that every course was

72 Sion/Puni 2011.
73 Merrill 1886, 20, Schick 1887 and Vincent/Steve 1954.
74 Tushingham 1985.
75 Bliss/Dickie 1894, Chen/Margalit/Pixner 1994 and the recent excavation of Zelinger 2010.
76 Bliss/Dickie 1898, 94–96 with plate XI.
77 Kenyon 1974, 269 with plate 6.
78 Weksler-Bdolah/Lavi 2013.
set back in relation to the course which it overlaid, whereas the upper courses of the walls were laid vertically one above the other.

The similarity and the contemporary dating of all wall segments supports their interpretation as parts of a single wide circuit wall which was constructed some time before the mid-fifth century – a date supported by results of the recent excavations.
Fig. 16: The Early Byzantine wall near Damascus Gate, after Hamilton 1944, Pl. 1.1.

Fig. 17: Late Roman wall cut by the corner of SE tower of Byzantine Wall. Looking north, after Weksler-Bdolah/Lavi 2012.
tions. Inside Jaffa Gate, the excavators suggested a late-fourth century date for the construction of the wall. On Mount Zion, the excavator dated a segment of a plaster floor that possibly abutted the inner face of the wall, but was damaged when the upper courses of the wall were robbed, as “not prior to 409 AD,” and concluded the wall was built by the empress Eudocia in the mid-fifth century. However, an earlier possible date for the wall’s construction in the late-fourth or early-fifth century should be considered, since the wall already existed once the floor was laid. In another excavation, the foundation trench of the wall’s southeastern tower cut a late Roman wall (second to fourth centuries), clearly postdating it. The fact that no remains of the late-antique walls are known below the southern line of the Ottoman walls (which has been suggested in the past as the southern line of Aelia Capitolina’s walls built in ca. AD 300), makes it less viable that Jerusalem’s late-antique walls were built in two phases.

The perimeter of the walls enclosed the areas of the present-day Old City of Jerusalem, Mount Zion, the City of David, and the Ophel hill. The course was probably dictated by the size of the settled area of the city at this time, and by the natural topo-

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80 Sion/Puni 2011.
81 Zelinger 2010.
82 Weksler-Bdolah 2011.
83 Weksler-Bdolah/Lavi 2013.
ography. During their construction, remains of the Second Temple Period fortifications were integrated into the course of the walls, and also partly dictated its route. In the north, between Damascus Gate and Herod’s Gate, the late-antique

Fig. 19: The Early Byzantine wall in the Ophel excavations. Looking north, after Mazar 2007, 191, Fig. 17.14: Courtesy of E. Mazar.
walls overlapped the route suggested as the line of the Second Wall.⁸⁴ In the west (north of David’s Tower) the walls followed a segment of a wall documented at the end of the nineteenth century which has been suggested as the route of the Second or Third Wall.⁸⁵ South of David’s Tower and around Mount Zion, the City of David, and the Ophel, the walls overlapped the route of the First Wall. Some of the old fortifications were incorporated into the late-antique walls, such as David’s Tower and the eastern wall of the Temple Mount. The integration and usage of older fortifications within new lines of fortifications is a well-known fact. In Jerusalem, for example, the Hasmonean First Wall from the Second Temple period followed the course of Hezekiah’s Wall of the First Temple period, integrating parts of older fortifications within its route.⁸⁶ Many sections along the Ottoman City walls of Jerusalem were built directly above or somewhat to the side of the remains of wall segments and towers from various periods, ranging in date from the Second Temple Period, to late-antique and medieval times.⁸⁷ A similar phenomenon has been documented in Italy, where fortifications in many towns were reconstructed in the third century incorporating gates and segments of previous walls.⁸⁸

The walls’ circuit was influenced by the size of the city at the time of its construction. The wide perimeter united the area of Aelia Capitolina with two hills which were part of the core of Biblical Jerusalem, but which were outside the city’s boundaries in Roman times: the southeastern hill (the area of the Ophel and the City of David) and the south-western hill, which later became known as Christian Zion, which corresponds with areas of the modern Jewish and the Armenian Quarters within the Ottoman wall, as well as Mount Zion outside the wall. Since it appears that the south-western hill was the campsite of the legio X Fretensis, it was not considered part of the city’s boundaries in Roman times. Moreover, following the departure of the legion which was transferred to Aila in the late third century AD, the site of the camp remained uninhabited for some decades, perhaps due to its military ownership. It was finally released to civic use not before the second half of the fourth century.⁸⁹ In all likelihood, the construction of the city walls post-dated the expansion of the city into the empty areas of the southern hills, a process which now can be more accurately dated thanks to new archaeological material: the building of private residences on the southeastern hill started in the first half of the fourth century,⁹⁰ while the southwestern hill was released to civic use and predominantly became the home to several Christian monasteries, hermitages, and churches from the second half of the

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⁸⁴ Avi-Yonah 1968, 124 fig. 6.
⁸⁶ Cf., for example, areas W and X-2, in Geva 2000, 134 and 206.
⁸⁷ Weksler-Bdolah 2011.
⁸⁹ Weksler-Bdolah 2014 and Weksler-Bdolah 2020, 134–137.
⁹⁰ Gordon 2007 and Ben-Ami/Tchekhanovets 2013.
fourth century onwards. A recent excavation dated the external wall of the so-called King David’s Tomb building to the late fourth century.⁹¹ This building is traditionally identified as part of the late-antique Church of Zion. The construction of the city walls unified the area of the Roman city, the abandoned campsite of the *legio X Fretensis*, and the southeastern hill into one big entity: the holy city of Jerusalem as depicted in the Madaba mosaic.

**The Use of Spolia**

The Jerusalemite builders made extensive use of Hasmonean and Herodian ashlars in secondary use which were placed in the facing parts of the walls, so that a late-antique visitor to the city would necessarily see them. In addition to this, some re-used architectural fragments of distinctly classical carving were discovered in the core of the wall on Mount Zion.⁹² The walls’ construction was precisely executed all around its circuit with great care. The stone courses were leveled and arranged according to the size and texture of the stones, thus creating a unified homogenous appearance. It is obvious that the wall was built of carefully selected stones, medium-sized ashlars that were purposely hewn for this matter, Hasmonean stones, and Herodian blocks were used for the facing of the wall, whereas other carved masonry was used for the core. Just as in Constantinople, where all parts of the late-antique walls were newly built, the facing side of the Jerusalemite walls was designed in a manner that must have impressed the visitors to the city. The monumental appearance of the wall was created not only by its beauty, but also by the fact that the space immediately around the wall, both inside and out, was left vacant of buildings. Nowhere along the wall have remains of abutting structures been discovered, thus verifying the legal status of city walls and gates as *res sanctae* – holy things, which could not become the object of private ownership.⁹³

The extensive use of *spolia* characterized the late-antique walls of Jerusalem, like buildings in many other cities of the Empire. The re-use of classical building materials as a symbol of the victory of Christianity over its predecessors while maintaining the connection to the classical heritage has been noted by many scholars.⁹⁴ In Jerusalem, Christianity rivaled the memory of Judaism more than it competed with paganism. The construction of the late-antique walls, which largely depended on the usage of stones from the ruined Temple Mount, or from other Second Temple Period Jewish buildings, can therefore be interpreted as a representation in stone of the vic-

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⁹¹ Reem 2013, 239.
⁹² Chen/Margalit/Pixner 1994, 80.
tory of Christianity over Judaism.\textsuperscript{95} Moreover, the integration of monumental Herodian stones in the walls attest to the lesser importance of the Herodian monuments at the time of the walls’ construction, and probably also to an explicit imperial permission to re-use them, as otherwise this would have been prohibited by law.\textsuperscript{96} However, the walls were built about 300 years after the destruction of the Jewish city, and it might be argued that the builders of the wall used the abundant stones without recognizing them as Jewish. Yet, the selective choice of \textit{spolia} only of Jewish origin does suggest that this was done on purpose, reflecting the builders’ involvement and struggle with the Jewish history of Jerusalem.

However, the use of \textit{spolia} in late-antique buildings and in particular in city walls can also be explained as a practical solution, making it possible to quickly remove ruined buildings, for example after an earthquake. This might be true for Jerusalem as well, which suffered a severe earthquake in AD 363, which was described in several historical documents, including a letter attributed to the city’s bishop, Cyril of Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{97} The damage caused by the earthquake is also attested in the archaeological evidence elsewhere in the city. Recently, a peristyle house of the fourth century whose destruction can be dated to the year AD 363, has been excavated south of the Temple Mount.\textsuperscript{98} The lack of any archaeological evidence relating to the earthquake in any segment of the late-antique city walls does suggest that they were built later than AD 363. However, the meticulous construction of the late-antique walls as well as their overall shape shows that they were not built in haste or in war times, but were rather planned in advance and aimed at reflecting the prosperity, the high status, and wealth of the city at the time of construction. In addition to defending the holy city, they also demonstrated aesthetic beauty, which impressed the observers and mirrored the important status of Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{99}

**Who Built the Walls of Jerusalem?**

The walls’ construction can be seen as part of a period abounding in building activity in Jerusalem in the fourth and fifth centuries, which was affiliated with the city’s rise

\textsuperscript{95} Euseb. \textit{d.e.} 3,140–141 describes Roman public buildings, which used the Jewish Temple’s stones; cf. Tsafir 1975, 95–96. It is possible that the builders of the late antique walls would have been able to also find Herodian stones in the ruins of more recent, pagan buildings.

\textsuperscript{96} Cassiod. \textit{Var.} 3,49 (ed. Fridh/Halpron – Lund 1973, CCSL 96) mentions an example from Catania, where the emperor’s permission was requested in order to use the ruined amphitheatre’s building materials for the reconstruction of the city walls. This indicated that the use of \textit{spolia} was not spontaneous in late antiquity. Ruins had a legal status and a specific imperial decree was required in order to use them. Permission was granted or denied according to their state of preservation, their location, their symbolic significance or their aesthetic value; cf. Ward-Perkins 1984, 206–218.

\textsuperscript{97} Brock 1976, 103, and Brock 1977.

\textsuperscript{98} Ben-Ami/Tchekhanovets 2013.

\textsuperscript{99} Gregory 1982, 56–57.
in status and the advancement of Christianity. The reason for Jerusalem’s importance in late antiquity was primarily religious and derived from its uniqueness as the physical center of Christianity and its status as a holy city. Even though no imperial building inscriptions from late-antique Jerusalem are (yet) known, the involvement of imperial and provincial authorities in the construction of the walls has often been suggested, prompted by the involvement of a late-antique empress alleged by the sources. This leads to the question of who funded the resources for the walls and what implications such a case of imperial involvement would have for Jerusalem. Around the year AD 400, city walls were constructed in several important cities of Palestine, such as the provincial capitals of Palaestina Prima and Palaestina Secunda – Caesarea Maritima and Scythopolis – as well as in the important city of Aila at the Red Sea in Palaestina Tertia.³⁰⁰ Perhaps, Jerusalem, which began to flourish and underwent urban development due to the impact of Christianity, followed suit. This may be connected with the administrative reorganization of the area around this time, but perhaps also with security problems and the fear of barbarian invasions that shook the west of the Empire.

The evidence from the written sources confirms the dating of the walls’ construction between the late fourth and the mid-fifth century.¹ In his account of the life of Peter the Iberian, the Vita Petri Hiberi,¹²⁰ John Rufus states that Jerusalem was unwalled at the time of Constantine: “When it was rebuilt by the Christian Emperor Constantine, the Holy City, Jerusalem, at first was still sparsely populated and had no [city] wall, since the first [city] wall had been destroyed by the Romans. There were few houses and [few] inhabitants.”¹³ Many pilgrims, for example the Pilgrim of Bordeaux, Egeria, as well as Paula and Jerome, visited Jerusalem during the course

¹⁰¹ Sh. Weksler-Bdolah would like express her gratitude to Dr Leah di Segni for her help in translating and discussing the various sources mentioned below.
¹⁰² The account was written in the late fifth century probably by John Rufus and is preserved in a Syriac and a Georgian translation. The Syriac version was edited and translated into German by Raabe 1895 and translated into English by Horn/Phenix 2008. The Georgian version was translated into English by Lang 1976, 57–80. Some passages of the text exist in Hebrew translations by A. Horvitz, cf. Tsafir 1975, 37–38, Tsafir 1999, 303, and Bitton–Ashkelony 1989, 108.
¹⁰³ Ioh. Ruf. Vit. Petr. Hib. 64 (ed. Horn/Phenix = Raabe 1895, 44), cf. Tsafir 1975, 37–38 as well as Tsafir 1999b, 274–275 and 303. Yoram Tsafir doubted the credibility of John Rufus’ testimony, however, given that the information provided in this passage is in accordance with other fourth- and fifth-century accounts, it seems that one should accept it. Moreover, the emphasis on the fact that the city was unwalled in the times of Constantine, whereas Peter the Iberian, who arrived in 437/438 entered through ‘holy walls’ (see below), adds to the historicity of the description. The Georgian version gives the following passage: “At this time, the holy city of Jerusalem was still lacking in inhabitants, as well as being deprived of walls, since the former walls had been destroyed by the Romans,” cf. Lang 1976, 65–66, which implies that Jerusalem was deprived of walls when Peter the Iberian visited the city.
of the fourth century. Their reports reflect the emergence of Jerusalem’s sacred topography, the construction of churches in holy places, and the development of a specific local liturgy. The pilgrims’ acquaintance with the limits of the city is obvious. The pilgrim of Bordeaux left Jerusalem to climb Zion, Paula “entered Jerusalem”, and “passing on, she climbed Zion.” According to Egeria, Jerusalem was entered and exited through a city gate. It appears that the city domain was well defined and marked by city gates, or some other boundary markers. A circuit wall was not mentioned in any of these accounts, most likely, it seems, because no such wall existed at that time. Indeed, it is possible to argue that the circuit wall was not important, and therefore not described by the pilgrims, but such a claim ignores the considerable significance of city walls in late antiquity. Furthermore, the reference of the writers to segments of older walls and ruined gates encountered in Zion and near the pool of Siloam indicates that they in fact paid attention to fortifications, considered them important, and wrote about them even when they lay in ruins. It is reasonable to assume that if a circuit wall had existed when they visited Jerusalem in the fourth century, they would not have failed to mention it. Moreover, the description and reference to the city walls in the fifth-century accounts (once the walls were already built), supports the assumption that the late-antique city walls were not ignored.

The walls of Jerusalem are first mentioned by Eucherius, in his letter to Faustinus, written in the first half of the fifth century: “The site of the city is almost forced into a circular shape, and is enclosed by a lengthy wall, which now embraces Mount Zion, though this was once just outside.” The description fits with Jerusalem as


106 Itin. Burdig. 592: Item exeuntibus Hierusalem, ut ascendas Sion (“Moreover, as you leave Jerusalem to climb Zion”).

107 Hier. Ep. 108,9: ingressa est Hierosolymam. Paula passed on her left the tomb of Queen Helena of Adiabene and then entered Jerusalem.

108 Itin. Eg. 36,3 and 43,7.

109 For the wall near the pool of Siloam, cf. Itin. Burdig. 592,1: in ualle iuxta murum est piscine (“in the valley beside the wall is the pool”), for the wall of Zion, cf. Itin. Burdig. 592,5: intus autem intra murum Sion (“inside the wall of Sion”). Ruined gates are mentioned in Hier. ep. 108,9: non eas portas, quas Hodie cernimus in fauillam et cinerem dissolubas (“not meaning the gates we see now, which have been reduced to dust and ashes”).

110 Eucherius 6,25,3 (Freypon 1965, 237–243). The account was translated and interpreted by Tsafrir 1975, 132–134 (Hebrew); Limor 1999, 159–160 (Hebrew) and Wilkinson 2002, 94–98 (English). It is widely accepted to relate the account to bishop Eucherius of Lyons, who died between 449–455 AD. However, the formula ut fertur in the title of Freypont’s edition, implies that at least in the editor’s eyes, the account may not be authentic.
portrayed in the Madaba Map and provides a *terminus ante quem* for the construction of the circuit wall before Eucherius’ death. Yet, the arrival of Peter the Iberian in Jerusalem, ca. AD 437–438, may set an earlier *terminus ante quem* for the construction of the circuit wall, relying on the narrative provided by John Rufus:

> When they had reached the outskirts of the holy city of Jerusalem which they loved, they saw from a high place five stades away the lofty roof of the holy church of the Resurrection, shining like the morning sun, and cried aloud, ‘See, that is Sion the city of our deliverance!’ They fell down upon their faces, and from there onwards they crept upon their knees, frequently kissing the soil with their lips and eyes, until they were within the holy walls (Syriac: ‘shureq qaddishe’) and had embraced the site of the sacred cross on Golgotha.¹¹¹

As the sense of *(shura)* in Syriac is usually ‘city walls,’ the description seems to attest to the existence of fortifications in Jerusalem when Peter entered the city in AD 437–438,¹¹² while it cannot be ruled out that reference is being made to ruined fortifications such as the ‘Zion wall’ which was mentioned by the Pilgrim of Bordeaux in the west, or the Temple Mount’s wall in the east.¹¹³

A number of accounts from the sixth century (Malalas, Cassiodorus, the Piacenza Pilgrim, and the Chronicon Paschale)¹¹⁴ attest to the involvement of the empress Eudocia in rebuilding of the walls in Jerusalem, influenced by Psalm 51:18: ‘Let it be thy pleasure (eũðoka) to do good to Sion, to build anew the walls of Jerusalem’.¹¹⁵ The accounts vary, stating that Eudocia enlarged the city and surrounded its circumference with better walls, improved their condition, or renewed the whole circuit of the Jerusalem walls. Modern scholars suggest interpreting these statements as reflect-

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¹¹¹ John Rufus *Vita Petri Hiberi* 38 (= Raabe 26–27), trans. Lang 1976, 54. The Georgian version is slightly shorter, but very close to the Syriac version, cf. Bitton-Ashkeloni 1999, 107–108. Coming from Constantinople by foot, Peter and his companions could have reached Jerusalem from the west, north or east, depending on the route they used. Their first sight of Jerusalem, while standing on a high place, may allow to specify on this this: The view of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, opposite of it the Church of Ascension on the top of the Mount of Olives, as provided in the Syriac version of the *Vita*. This description suggests that their viewpoint was a high place northwest of the present day Old City of Jerusalem (maybe near the so-called Russian Compound), and their entrance took place, accordingly, through one of the western or northern gates.

¹¹² Cf. Payne Smith, s.v. *(shura)* p. 568, given ‘city walls’ and ‘bulwark’ as the most common translation. However, we cannot exclude the possibility that John Rufus, by using this expression, meant the precinct walls of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher or the Second Temple Period walls of the Temple Mount visible to travelers who were coming to Jerusalem from the Jericho road – or even the remains of the Second Temple Period ‘Zion wall’ mentioned by the Pilgrim of Bordeaux (see above). Shlomit Weksler-Bdolah would like to express her gratitude to Sebastian Brock and Brouria Bitton-Ashkeloni for discussion on the Syriac terminology.

¹¹³ Shlomit Weksler-Bdolah would like to thank Leah Di Segni for her helpful remarks relating this account.


¹¹⁵ Cf. also Hunt 1982, 221–248.
ing Eudocia’s renewal of the ancient wall around Zion (the Second Temple Period’s ‘First Wall’), therefore naming it ‘Eudocia’s wall’, whereas the ancient accounts clearly attribute the enclosing of the whole city and the renewal of the whole circuit of walls to Eudocia. Attributing the whole line of fortifications to Eudocia suggests its probable dating between AD 437/438, the time of her first pilgrimage to Jerusalem, or to between AD 444, when she returned to Jerusalem for good, and Eucherius’s death sometime between AD 449–455. This, however, contradicts John Rufus’s testimony, if with his references to ‘holy walls’ he is describing the city walls of Jerusalem. The archaeological record, too, seems to favor an earlier date for the construction of the walls in the late fourth century or early fifth century at the latest.

If we accept such a dating (i.e. late fourth/early fifth centuries AD), the attribution of the wall to Eudocia in the historical sources may be explained either in the sense that she restored an existing wall, or simply by a confusion in the tradition. As the first account which associated Eudocia with the wall’s reconstruction was written about a century after her death, there may have been some uncertainty and confusion with regard to her life and deeds. The existence of three successive Byzantine empresses with almost similar names in the course of the fifth century – Eudoxia, Arcadius’s wife, Eudocia, Theodosius II wife, and Eudoxia, Theodosius II’s daughter – undoubtedly caused confusion, as seen in coins and legends. Oddly, Cassiodorus and the Piacenza Pilgrim, in telling the story, give the name of the em-

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116 Conrad Schick was the first who identified the Zion wall, which were unearthed by Frederick Bliss and Archibald Dickie, with the wall built ca. 440 by the empress Eudocia (Bliss 1894, 254). His suggestion was commonly accepted, cf. Dalton 1895, 28, Avi-Yonah 1976b, 621–622, Tsafrir 1975, 21 and 132–135, as well as Tsafrir 1999, 287–295. Bliss suggested two phases in the development of the late-antique walls on Mount Zion: First, around the beginning of the fifth century (a wall which was built to protect the Church of Zion and which did not include the Pool of Siloam within its precinct). Then, around 450, Eudocia rebuilt the wall (named by Bliss ‘upper wall’) around Zion and the pool, cf. Bliss/Dickie 1898, 307–309 and 321–323.

117 The suggestion of attributing Eudocia’s initiative to her first pilgrimage (around 438), was made by Leah Di Segni, who suggested comparing it with the enlargement of Antioch’s walls due to Eudocia’s endeavors (Ioh. Mal. 14 (346–357, Dind.), Evagr. HE 1,20, cf. also Holm 1982, 117–118).

118 Dalton 1895, 28 dated the rebuilding of the walls by Eudocia to between 438–454.

119 The pottery assemblage characterizing the surface of the wall builders, consisted mostly of local ware, dated from the late third to the fifth century, thus enabling to relate the wall with Eudocia. Yet, the lack of imported ware, that is usually more abundant in assemblages from the fifth century AD, suggested the wall was build prior to the fifth century, when imported ware had become more abundant. Shlomit Weksler-Bdolah would like to thank Jodi Magness for this comment.

120 John Malalas, for example, not always distinguished between authentic history and popular memories (such as folk tales) of events, cf. Holm 1982, 114.

121 Boyce 1954.

press as Eudoxia, although they identify her as Theodosius II’s wife. Might the wall have been initiated by Eudoxia, and falsely attributed to Eudocia?¹²³

**Conclusion**

The walls of Constantinople and Jerusalem were not constructed simultaneously, but close together in time. The frequent references in the ancient sources to imperial involvement in the holy city supports the assumption that not only in Constantinople did the city walls constitute a highly visible imperial monument, but that the imperial family was involved in building the walls of Jerusalem as well: Aelia Eudoxia, wife of Arcadius and mother of Theodosius II, or Eudocia, wife of Theodosius II, may have played a decisive role. But even if both the walls of Constantinople and the walls of Jerusalem were in one sense or another imperial building projects, they significantly differed in their design, function, and symbolism.

The Theodosian walls of Constantinople, constructed between 404/405 and 413 AD, were the largest urban defense work of late antiquity. They were completed in the reign of Theodosius II, who, however, was only four years old when construction works started and thirteen when the walls were finished. The original planning and initiative should thus be attributed to his father, Arcadius, and to the praefectus praetorio per Orientem Anthemius. In Jerusalem, the overall similarity of the excavated wall segments suggests that the whole circuit of the walls was built in one single phase within a rather short period of time. Jerusalem’s late-antique wall unified within its course the Roman colonia Aelia Capitolina, the Christian hill of Zion (in the area of the abandoned campsite of the lexio X Fretensis) as well as the southeastern hill (with the area of the Ophel and the city of David). The archaeological evidence suggests a time frame for the construction between the late fourth and the mid-fifth century.

The walls of Constantinople were the first monumental structure built in layered masonry. The parts which were later changed and added differ from the Theodosian workmanship; the parts which were constructed in late Byzantine times are noticeably different. Hardly any spolia were used in the initial construction: the Constantinopolitan walls were a prestigious and completely new building project for which the re-use of older building materials was not considered appropriate. As in Constantinople with its ostentatiously new walls, the Jerusalem walls were likewise built in a manner that must have impressed visitors to the city. However, the con-

¹²³ Aelia Eudoxia married Arcadius at 395 AD, she was proclaimed Augusta at 400 AD and died in 404 AD. Eudoxia was involved in the Holy Land, and was portrayed as a devoted supporter of Christianity in the Imperial Court (Holum 1982). An inscription incised on the pedestal of a statue which was unearthed in the city of Scythopolis reads: ‘Artemidorus set up a golden (statue of) Eudoxia, the queen of all earth, visible from every place in the country’ (Tsafrir 1998, 217), indicating her appreciation in the capital of Palaestina Secunda.
scious selection and integration of *spolia* of Jewish origin suggests a distinct symbolic message, reflecting the builders’ involvement and struggle with the Jewish history of Jerusalem.

In both cities, the walls considerably expanded the cities’ limits, reflecting a period of expansion and growth in the early fifth century. While in Constantinople the wall enlarged the walled territory towards the west, in Jerusalem the perimeter of the walls united the area of the Roman city, the abandoned campsite of the Roman legion, and the hill which once formed the core of the Biblical city into one entity: the holy city of Jerusalem. The Theodosian walls of Constantinople were a highly visible display of imperial power, and they were obviously also meant to fortify the capital of the Roman Empire: the construction of the walls answered the need for monarchic representation and security for the inhabitants of the City of Caesar. The walls of Jerusalem, the City of God, on the other hand, were built as a vigorous symbol of Christian victory over Judaism. They reflect the desire of the builders to preserve the urban heritage, and more precisely – to preserve Jewish “symbols” of the Second Temple period – such as the Herodian stones, which were traditionally associated with the Herodian Temple Mount, and at the same time change their meaning.

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