

Paweł Wróblewski

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Could Worship make the Place Holy? Landscape, Architecture and Liturgy in the Early Church

Paweł Wróblewski, Cracow

In the first three centuries of Christianity it was obvious that it was not the place of Christian assembly that was important, but the worshippers' inner attitude and the purpose of their assembly. As opposed to Judaism, connected previously with Temple worship, or contrary to the different cults of Greek and Roman gods, which took place in particular temples, in early Christianity the community was important, not the place. That situation was a result of Christ's words, uttered to a Samaritan woman whom he had met near the Jacob's well: "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when you shall neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, worship the Father¹ [...] God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Christ promised that he would be present wherever two or three are gathered together in his name. Therefore Paul of Tarsus could write to the Church in Corinth "Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you"². Similar points of view were expressed by Clemens of Alexandria at the turn of the third century, Origen also in the third century, and even Eusebius of Caesarea at the beginning of the fourth century. Then as Deichmann noted, worship did not make the place holy: "Die Tatsache, daß dem Kult keine Sakralarchitektur entsprach, ist innerhalb der Hochkulturen einzigartig: dieser Zustand bedeute höchste Vergeistigung des Kultes, Höhepunkt einer Entwicklung, die im Judentum begann, aber im Christentum erst wirklich, in der Urkirche schließlich befestigt wurde."³

¹ John 4, 21.

² 1 Cor 6, 13.

³ F. W. Deichmann, *Einführung in die christliche Archäologie*, Darmstadt 1983, pp. 69–70.

It was as late as the fourth century then the situation started changing. The problem of the holiness of places, the question of celebrating the cult in the current space and the problems of the connection between sacred architecture and liturgy arose in the ancient Church at that time. On one hand, after “the age of anxiety”⁴, we can observe that Christians (but not exclusively) are more sensitive to various supernatural occurrences and miracles, and on the other hand, in that time the need arose to make religion more tangible and tactile. Jesus’ words to the Samaritan woman were not as significant as before. There was a tendency to look and to touch. Of course this mental change was a long process, and writers such as Eusebius of Caesarea⁵, Gregory of Nyssa⁶ or Athanasius of Alexandria⁷ opposed such thinking. However these objections disappeared as the years went by. In about 320 Eusebius wrote that Christ taught “men not to look for God in a corner of the earth, nor in the mountains, nor in the temples made by hands, but that each should worship and adore him at home”⁸. But thirty years later Cyril of Jerusalem, referring to chapter 20 of the gospel according to John, and commenting on Thomas’ behavior, who thrust his hand into Christ side, and his fingers into the wounds from the nails, noted: “it was for our sakes that he so carefully handled Him; and what you, who were not there present, wouldest have sought, he being present, by God’s Providence, did seek.”⁹ Cyril twisted the sense of Jesus’s words and suggested that those are blessed, who saw and touched. Together with such change in the treatment of Christ’s words, there came an idea of Christian pilgrimage (first of all to Palestine – the Holy Land). Christians went on pilgrimage¹⁰ to precisely specified places, which in that time became “holy places”. In this situation, when we consider the problem of holiness, the question is not only who worshippers were but also where they were.

We are examining the development of the idea of the holy place (especially on the example of holy places in Palestine from the fourth to the seventh century) in its three aspects:

1) the problem of the current sacred space and holy landscape, marked in a special way by God’s presence, on account of the special selection of this place by God.

⁴ This phrase was used by E. R. Dodds in the title of his book *Pagans and Christians in the age of anxiety*, Cambridge 1965.

⁵ P. W. L Walker, *Holy City, Holy places? Christian Attitudes to Jerusalem and the Holy Land in the Fourth Century*, Oxford 1990, pp. 41–282 (especially 51–130).

⁶ B. Kötting, ‘Gregor von Nyssa’s Wallfahrtskritik’, *Studia Patristica. Papers presented on the Third International Conference on Patristic Studies held at Christ Church Oxford*, ed. F.L. Cross, Berlin 1962, v. 5, pp. 360–367; J. Ulrich, ‘Wallfahrt und Wallfahrtskritik bei Gregor von Nyssa’, *Zeitschrift für Antike Christentum*, 3 (1999), pp. 87–96.

⁷ D. Brakke, “‘Outside the Places, within the Truth’: Athanasius of Alexandria and the localization of the Holy”, in: *Pilgrimage and holy space in the late antique Egypt*, ed. D. Frankfurter, Leiden – Boston – Köln 1998, pp. 445–481 (with english translation of coptic version of Athanasius’ letters).

⁸ Eusebius, *Demonstratio Evangelicae*, ed. I. A. Heikel, Leipzig 1913, I, 6, 65.

⁹ Cyril of Jerusalem, *Lectures*, trans. E. H Gifford, Oxford 1894, *Lecture XIII*, 39.

¹⁰ On Early Christian pilgrimages see: E. Wipszycka, ‘Les pèlerinages chrétiens dans l’antiquité tardive: Problèmes de définition et de repères temporels’, *Byzantinoslavica*, 56 (1995), pp. 429–438.

2) Architecture. What kind of relationships between architectural sacred objects and sacred space could be observed in the Early Church? Was architecture a carrier or a complement to the holiness of a place?

3) Cult. Was a cult that sets out to make its worshippers holy, able to change the character of the place in which it was celebrated, causing it to become holy?

The first problem is analyzed on the basis of six descriptions of journeys to the Palestine, from the fourth to the seventh century. This is a small number of people, but the sources concerning pilgrimages in the mentioned period are not voluminous and unfortunately the conclusions based on these skimpy sources must necessarily be generalised.

We begin our analysis by considering the journey of Helena, mother of Constantine the Great. Many scholars still claim that she was the first pilgrim to travel to the Holy land. Helena's journey probably took place in the year 327. Today, thanks to Holum and Drijvers¹¹ investigations, we know that this journey was an official visit of the emperor's emissary, who controlled the eastern provinces. However, we cannot reject the testimony of Eusebius of Caesarea, who wrote that Helena's journey was also religious in character¹². It was not the main aim of her trip, but for the purpose of our analysis this goal is important. Constantine's mother –according to Eusebius - wanted to visit places where Christ's "feet have stood"¹³, so she went to Bethlehem and the Mount of Olives. There were caves in both places, which from the moment of Helena's journey have properly commemorated Christ's Nativity and his teaching. Adonis had previously been worshipped in Bethlehem, and Gnostic rituals had taken place in the cave on the Mount of Olives¹⁴. Helena Christianized these places, by initiating the construction of churches in both places (basilicas: Eleona on the Mount of Olives and Nativity in the Bethlehem)¹⁵. Similarly, in 325, the second-century Aphrodite temple was Christianized in the same way and the Church of Holy Sepulchre was built in this place, at Constantine's order¹⁶. Soon after Helena's journey, a similar situation took place in Mamre, where near Abraham's oaks the basilica was built, in order to Christianize the place where pagans and Jews had celebrated their cults¹⁷. For us the most important

¹¹ K. G. Holum, 'Hadrian and St. Helena: Imperial Travel and the Origins of Christian Holy Land Pilgrimage' in: *Blessings of Pilgrimage*, ed. R. Ousterhout, Urbana – Chicago 1990, pp. 67–81; J. W. Drijvers *Helena Augusta. The Mother of Constantine the Great and the Legend of Her Finding of the True Cross*, Leiden- New York – Köln 1992, pp. 55–72.

¹² Eusebius, *Über das Leben des Konstantin*, ed. F. Winkelmann, Berlin 1975, III, 41.

¹³ Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, trans. A. Cameron and S. G. Hall, Oxford 1999, III, 41.

¹⁴ J. E. Taylor, *Christians nad the Holy Places. The Myth of Jewish-Christian Origins*, Oxford 1993, chapters: Bethlehem, Golghota, Mount of Olives.

¹⁵ On building the churches in Palestine in the fourth century see for example: A. Ovadia, *Corpus of the Byzantine Churches in the Holy Land*, Bonn 1970; G. Stemberger, *Jews and Chrsitians in the Holy Land*, Edinburgh 2000, pp. 48–85.

¹⁶ Eusebius, *Über das Leben des Konstantin*, III, 25–40.

¹⁷ Eusebius, *Über das Leben des Konstantin*, III, 51–53.

fact is that the churches were built in places where the Christians had not previously celebrated their cult.

The next itinerary is *Itinerarium Burdigalense*¹⁸. A few years after Helena's journey (ca. 333), Palestine was visited by someone who today is known as Bordeaux Pilgrim – because we know almost nothing about him or her¹⁹ except that this pilgrim came from Bordeaux. His itinerary presents the pilgrim's route and places visited. The pilgrim went to places mentioned in the Bible. In the itinerary one can find quotations from the Bible, concerning several places visited by that person. The pilgrim also wanted to go to the places where Christ's feet stood, to places where particular occurrences described in the Bible had taken place. Among the forty places visited by the pilgrim there were four Constantinian churches (Holy Sepulchre, Eleona, Bethlehem and Mamre), places with special landmarks, like a spring, mount, stone, cave, tombs of patriarchs, but he did not go to, for example, either Caparnaum or Nazareth²⁰. He also did not visit the Sea of Galilee and its shores, why? Because landscape as area was not worthy of note. Only specific places, or landmarks, which could be precisely located, were important. The pilgrim from Bordeaux visited twenty-three places connected with the Old Testament and only seventeen connected with the New Testament²¹. On the basis of this account some scholars thought that he (or she) could be a converted Jew, but there is probably a different explanation. The pilgrim may have visited these places, because there was a tradition connected with them which located a particular event described in the Bible in the particular place (under this tree, on that stone). Due to the slow Christianization of Palestine (especially rural Palestine²²) its traditions were especially Jewish, not Christian and this fact caused the disproportion between places connected with the Old and New Testaments, which were described in the itinerary.

Let's analyze the second itinerary (third journey), written by Egeria. At the end of the fourth century²³ Egeria also visited places connected especially with the Old Testament

¹⁸ On this text see: J. Elsner, 'The Itinerarium Burdigalense: Politics and Salvation in the Geography of Constantine's Empire', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 90 (2000), pp. 181–195.

¹⁹ L. Douglass, 'A New Look at the Itinerarium Burdigalense', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 4 (1996), pp. 328–330; S. Weingarten, 'Was the Pilgrim from Bordeaux a Woman? A Replay to Laurie Douglass', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 7 (1999), pp. 291–297.

²⁰ 'Itinerarium Burdigalense', ed. by P. Geyer et O. Cutz, in: *Itineraria et alia Geographica*, ed. P. Geyer et O. Cutz Brepols 1965, pp. 12–21.

²¹ J. Wilkinson, 'Jewish Holy Places and the Origins of Christian Pilgrimage', in: *Blessings of Pilgrimage*, ed. R. Ousterhout, Urbana – Chicago 1990, p. 44.

²² D. Bar 'The Christianization of Rural Palestine during Late Antiquity', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 54 (2003), pp. 401–421 (especially 419–421); see also: *Idem*, 'Rural Monasticism as a Key Element in the Christianization of Byzantine Palestine', *The Harvard Theological Review*, 98 (2005), pp. 49–65.

²³ E. D. Hunt, 'The Date of the Itinerarium Egeriae', *Studia Patristica. Papers presented at the Thirteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford 1999*, ed. by M. F. Wiles and E. J. Yarnold; with the assistance of P. M. Parvis, Leuven 2001, v. 38, pp. 410–416.

and places where particular landmarks were located, churches already stood or monks had their settlements or hermitages²⁴. Possibilities of celebration of some kind of liturgy were very important to Egeria, so she visited churches, places with altars (for example mounts: Tabor, Hermon) or places like Enon, where liturgy of baptism was celebrated.

If we compare Egeria's itinerary and *Itinerarium Burdigalense* we will notice that neither pilgrim was interested in the landscape. The best example is the case of the Sea of Galilee, with which many events described in the gospel are connected, and which did not attract pilgrims' attention. Let's consider another case: the Mount of Olives. The Pilgrim of Bordeaux did not go to the top of the Mount of Olives, he (or she) only went to Eleona Church and into the cave on the mountain slope, because in the first half of the fourth century only that cave was connected with the life of Christ. But in the following years the tradition connected with the top of the mountain developed, where, as people believed, the Ascension took place. In the second half of the fourth century Poimonia built a church there²⁵ and Egeria, who came to Palestine in the eighties or nineties, visited both the Eleona and Ascension churches²⁶.

Next case: Capernaum and Nazareth. We know that Egeria visited Nazareth and Capernaum and that churches stood in both towns at this time. Churches were built in Nazareth and Capernaum by Joseph of Tiberias in ca. 375²⁷, after a pilgrimage of the pilgrim from Bordeaux, but before that of Egeria. As we noticed, Egeria visited Capernaum, but she did not go to Tabgha, the place where Christ multiplied the loaves and fishes. Tabgha is only a few kilometers from Capernaum. On the ground of Jerome of Stridon's letters we know that there was a tradition that identified the miracle of multiplication with this place at that time²⁸. Soon after Egeria's pilgrimage the church was built in Tabgha²⁹. Is it possible that Egeria did not visit Tabgha because of the lack of the church in this place? In the next itinerary, *De situ terrae sanctae* written by Theodosius, who visited Palestine in the second half of the sixth century, Tabgha (not mentioned by name, but as place where the miracle of multiplication occurred) is mentioned³⁰.

²⁴ Egeria, *Itinerarium – Resiebericht mit auszügen aus Peter Diaconus De locis sanctis – Die Heiligenstätten*, Freiburg 1995.

²⁵ Ovadia, *Corpus of the Byzantine Churches...*, p. 86.

²⁶ *Itinerarium – Resiebericht mit auszügen aus Peter Diaconus De locis sanctis – Die Heiligenstätten*, 31.1.

²⁷ T. C. G. Thornton, 'The Stories of Joseph of Tiberias', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 44 (1990), pp. 54–63.

²⁸ Sanctus Hieronymus, *Epistulae*, ed. by I. Hilberg, Vienna 1910-1912, 46,13; 108,13

²⁹ A. Ovadia, *Corpus of the Byzantine Churches...*, p. s. 56; A. Ovadia C. Gomez de Silva, 'Supplementum to the Corpus of the Byzantine Churches in the Holy Land. Part II', *Levant*, 14 (1982), p. 131. Although some scholars suppose that the church was built by Joseph of Tiberias, so before Egeria's Travel, see for example B. Pixner, 'The Miracle Church in Tabgha on the Sea of Galilee', *Biblical Archaeologist*, 48 (1985), pp. 197–199.

³⁰ Antonino Placentini, 'Itinerarium', in: *Itineraria et alia geographica*, 2.

And the last case: Kafr Kanna (in other words: Kana of Galilee)³¹ – place of the miracle of transmutating water into wine worked by Christ. This place was visited only in the sixth century. An anonymous pilgrim from Piacenza noted that he was in the tavern where the wedding described in the Gospel occurred and he wrote his name on the table³². In Kana archaeologists discovered the remains of a Byzantine church, which they could not date precisely, but they reject the possibility that it was built in the fourth century. It could account for the absence of Bordeaux Pilgrim and Egeria in this place. So it is possible, that the church already stood there when the pilgrim from Piacenza came to Kana. We cannot prove it, but in the light of the above considerations it is probable. Anyway, in the period between Egeria's pilgrimage and that of the Anonymous pilgrim of Piacenza one building in Capernaum was identified as the tavern described in the Gospel and in that way there was a landmark in Caparnum that attract the pilgrims.

Let's get back to the Sea of Galilee, which the Pilgrim of Piacenza mentioned in his itinerary. The pilgrim came to Tyberiad (at the Sea-shore) and then went to Capernaum. The first known pilgrim, whose "litore circumvenitur" was Arckulfus, who visited Palestine in ca. 680. He is the first person who was probably interested in the landscape, not only in landmarks and churches. But firstly, it is also possible that the "litore circumvenitur"³³ means that Arculfus visited all churches located on different shores of the Sea of Galilee. Secondly, such information found in the itinerary as for example data on the salinity of the Dead Sea could reflect pilgrim's tourist interests and that may be why his attention was attracted by Sea of Galilee.

Summing up this analysis concerning the first aspect of holy places, we can conclude that the landscape did not attract the pilgrims' attention even if important events described in the Bible occurred within it.

Places of worship, especially churches, attracted Pilgrims. This conclusion leads us to the next question: architecture in the holy places. As an introduction to this question I will use the words of Gerardus van der Leeuw, who wrote in his *Phenomenology of religion*: "The place is not holy, because the temple was built there, but the holiness of the place is a reason for building the temple."³⁴

So according to these words, the architecture is only the complement to the sacred space. The building is an answer to the holiness of the place, which makes the celebration of the cult easier or simply enables it. Architectural objects emphasize the holiness of the place and complement it with symbolic significance. An example of this is the architecture

³¹ Some scholars claim that Khiberet Qana is a better candidate for the "Cana of Galilee", E. M. Meyers, J. F. Strange, D. E. Groh, "The Meiron Excavation Project: Archaeological Survey in Galilee and Golan 1976", *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, 230 (1978), p. 5.

³² Antonino Placentini, 'Itinerarium', 4.

³³ Adamnanus, 'De locis sanctis', in: *Itineraria et alia geographica*, II, XX, 3.

³⁴ G. Van der Leeuw, *Fenomenologia Religii*, trans. J. Prokopiuk, Warszawa 1997, p. 349.

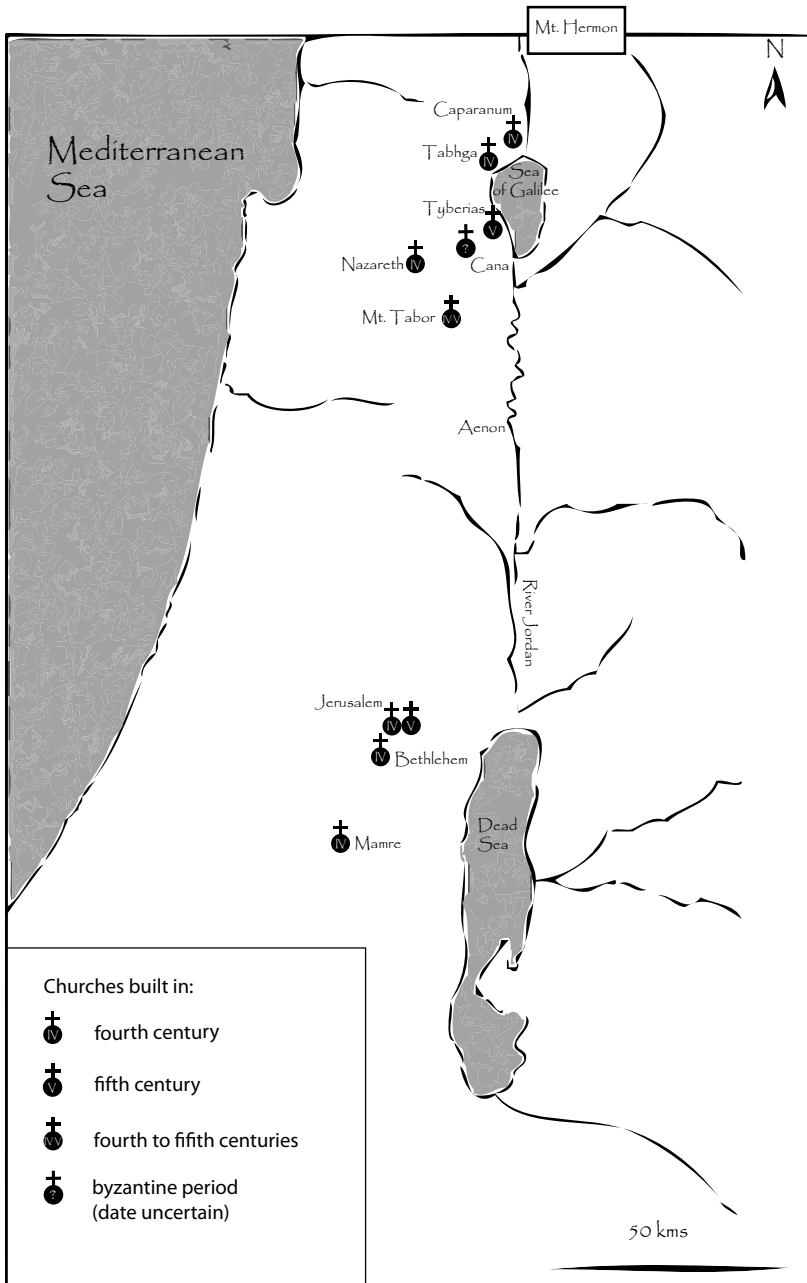


Fig. 1. Holy Land - Places described in the paper (fourth and fifth centuries). Edited by P. Wróblewski; based on the G. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land*, Edinburgh 2000, p. 66 (modified)

of the Church of Holy Sepulchre, the above-mentioned architecture of Jerusalem Temple, as noted by Wilkinson and Ousterhout³⁵: the orientation of the buildings was the same, both buildings included three main parts, and some details were similar. Both buildings were dedicated in the same day, and there were also similarities in the way of celebrating the liturgy. Such interpretation of the architecture of Holy Sepulchre Church enabled better understanding of the words of Eusebius of Caesarea, who wrote that “New Jerusalem was built at the very Testimony to the Savior, facing the famous Jerusalem of old” in his description of this building. Such interpretation can also be found in emperor Julian’s intention of rebuilding the Temple³⁶. Sozomen wrote about rebuilding the Temple that Julian wanted to grieve the Christians by favoring the Jews, who are their most inveterate enemies. Next, Cyril of Jerusalem, speaking about the baptistery of Holy Sepulchre, referred to “The Holy of Holy”, which in Jerusalem had special significance³⁷. In that way architecture enabled the investing of the place with suitable significance.

On the other hand, contrary to Gerardus van der Leeuw’s words, the place, also in the ancient Church, could be holy, because the temple was built there. In some situations architectural objects were the objects of worship and a goal of pilgrimages. For instance, the alleged tomb of the Virgin in Kidron Valley was cut and separated from the others stone graves at the cemetery, which were simply removed. Thereby only one grave could be easily identified as the tomb of the Virgin, whereas the presence of many tombs in this place could only question the dubious and late (beginning in the fifth century) tradition of Mary’s burial in Kidron Valley³⁸. The case of the Holy Sepulchre is similar. It was discovered in almost a miraculous way at the beginning of the fourth century. At this time there was no tradition that enabled the identification of the tomb of Christ and its differentiation from the other graves on the cemetery³⁹. Thus, the proper development of the spatial area was very important in the creation of a holy place.

³⁵ J. Wilkinson, ‘Jewish Influences on the Christian Rite of Jerusalem’, *Le Muséon*, 92 (1979), pp. 347–359. R. Ousterhout, ‘The Temple, the Sepulchre, and the Martyrion of the Savior’, *Gesta*, 29 (1990), pp. 44–53.

³⁶ Sozomenus, Hermias Salamanes, *Histoire ecclésiastique*, ed. J. Bidez, G.C. Hansen, Paris 2005, V, 22. About Julian’s reason of ordering rebuilding of the Temple see: L. Cansdale, ‘Julian and the Rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple’, *Abr-Nahrain*, 34 (1996–1997), pp. 18–29.

³⁷ Cyrille de Jérusalem, *Catéchèses Mystagogiques*, Paris 1988, I, 1. A. Duval, ‘The Location and Structure of Baptistery in the *Mystagogic Catecheses* of Cyril of Jerusalem’ in: *Studia Patristica. Papers presented at the Eleventh International Conference held in Oxford 1991*, ed. E.A. Livingstone, Leuven 1993, v. 26, pp. 1–13.

³⁸ G. T. Armstrong, ‘Fifth and sixth century church buildings in the Holy Land’. *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 14 (1969), pp. 19–20. About relics from Mary’s tomb see: Wortley, ‘Marian relics in Constantinople’, *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 45 (2005), pp. 181–182. There is also another tradition connecting Mary’s death with Ephesus.

³⁹ J. E. Taylor, *Christians and the Holy Places. The Myth of Jewish-Christian Origins...*, pp. 139–140. See also *eadem*, ‘Golgotha: a Reconsideration of the Evidence for the Sites of Jesus’ Crucifixion and Burial’, *New Testament Studies*, 44 (1998), pp. 180–203 (especially pp. 200–201), where Taylor admitted that authenticity of the tomb is possible.

Local clergy were interested in the creation of holy space. For example bishops of Jerusalem, who wanted to become independent from metropolitans in Cesarea, used church buildings for their purposes⁴⁰. The above-mentioned Cyril behaved in this way. Next, in the time of bishop Juvenal two sacred spaces were created: the tomb of the Virgin and the place of saint Stephan lapidation⁴¹. The main aim of these two bishops' actions was to promote their See, gain priority over the metropolis See in Cesarea and consequently make Jerusalem equal to the most important bishoprics in Alexandria, Antiochia and Rome⁴².

There is another problem connected with the question of the architecture of holy places – the problem of the church-temple as a holy place. F. Deichmann, analyzing the evolution of Christian sacred buildings, found that prior to Christianity (Urchristentum) there was aniconic religion such as Judaism, and there were no such temples as in pagan cults because it was the spirit that was important, rather than the place, the temple or god's likeness⁴³. Only in the fourth century did Christianity turn toward pagan way of thinking, and became an iconic religion (Frühchristentum), with churches-temples. According to Deichmann this mental change is confirmed by Eusebius of Cesarea ("Eusebius drove the last nail into the coffin of Urchristentum" as P. Corby Finney wrote⁴⁴) in his panegyric (included into his Church History), delivered at the consecration of the Constantinian church in Tyre. In this oration Eusebius described the church as *naos*, comparing it with the Temple of Zorobabel⁴⁵. The problem is more complicated, because in this oration Eusebius emphasized that the worshippers are the temple of God, although he still described the magnificence of the building. The sacred character of the building is connected with the community of the worshippers. When we examine this question from the point of view of Eusebius's theological works, we can see that there are two sides to this problem. On the one hand there is the problem described by Deichmann: church as a temple, the place that is holy and where God is present. On the other hand there is also a problem of differentiation between the acceptance of the sanctity of the church as place

⁴⁰ About architecture and the rank of bishoprics (especially in Palestine - Jerusalem and Cesarea) see: A. J. Wharton, 'The Baptistry of Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and the Politics of Sacred Landscape', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 46 (1992), pp. 320–325.

⁴¹ E. A. Clark, 'Claims on the Bones of Saint Stephen: The Partisans of Melania and Eudocia' *Church History*, 51 (1982), pp. 141–156.

⁴² J. W. Drijvers, *Cyril of Jerusalem: Bishop and City*, Leiden – Boston 2004, pp. 153-176 (chapter VI: Promoting Jerusalem); E. Honingmann, 'Juvenal of Jerusalem', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 5 (1950), pp. 209–279.

⁴³ F. W. Deichmann, 'Von Tempel zur Kirche' in: *Mullus. Festschrift Theodor Klauser*, Münster 1964, pp. 52–59.

⁴⁴ P. Corby Finney, 'Early Christian Architecture: The Beginnings (A Review Article)', *The Harvard Theological Review*, 81 (1988), p. 322.

⁴⁵ Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiasticae*, ed. E. Schwartz, Leipzig 1909, X, 4, 3; about this oration see C. Smith, 'Christian Rhetoric in Eusebius' Panegyric at Tyre', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 43 (1989), pp. 226–247.

where God is present in the worshippers' assembly, and admission of the fact, that a place is holy because God is in a special way present in it due to the place's history or location (see above). This second question, which Eusebius accepted with difficulty, meant the separation of the holiness of the place from the community assembled therein.

What can we see in the examples of itineraries is a combination of two elements: the church as sacred space and holy place as an area, landmark (but not landscape, contrary to J. Taylor's opinion⁴⁶) that is holy due to its connection with the story of Salvation. Only both elements together make the place holy in the opinion of pilgrims, and supposedly, also in the opinion of the local clergy. The space as a landscape, or a place of Jesus' or saints' activity was not automatically holy. A holy place should have offered worshippers a possibility of contact (visible or touchable)⁴⁷ with the *sacrum* and also ought to have offered a point, of an area, a specific place, where liturgy could be celebrated. Paradoxically, the more modified particular space was, the more serious it was managed, the more often it became a holy place. A good example of such situation are objects in Jerusalem: the Holy Sepulchre, Mount of Olives, the Tomb of the Virgin. If other communities such as Jews or Samaritans lay claim to particular place, one should Christianize, and isolate it⁴⁸. None should doubt the Christian character of such a place.

The keystone of these two elements was the third one – the worship, which often was so closely connected with the sacred architecture that sometimes it is difficult to say if the construction of the church was a result of celebrating the cult in the particular place, or the worship was a result of construction of the church. Worship accompanied the creation of holy places from the beginning of the idea of those places. Pilgrims visited the places where a cult was celebrated most eagerly. Markus thought that relics meant that it was not only the community assembled in the building that was holy but also the building which housed it⁴⁹. The church was holy due to the presence of relics in it. From the end of the fourth century churches were consecrated by saints' relics. Sometimes relics were indispensable to initiate or develop worship. An example of relics confirming the holiness of a place comes from the reign of Basil I (876–886) when the Menas' relics, whose sanctuary in Abu Mena (Egypt) was destroyed, were discovered in Constantinople in miraculous way (rather re-discovered, because originally the relics were located in Egypt). The mere fact that there had been a church in Constantinople dedicated to Saint Menas since the sixth century was insufficient to worshippers⁵⁰.

⁴⁶ J. E. Taylor, *Christians and the Holy Places. The Myth of Jewish-Christian Origins*, p. 331.

⁴⁷ And the possibility of bringing home a "part" of holiness – pilgrims ampulae, eulogiae. About term "eulogia" in Early Church see: D. Caner, 'Towards a Miraculous Economy: Christians Gifts and Material "Blessings" in Late Antiquity', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 14 (2006), pp. 329–377.

⁴⁸ G. T. Armstrong, 'Fifth and sixth century church buildings in the Holy Land...', pp. 21–23.

⁴⁹ R. A. Markus, 'How on the Earth Could Places Become Holy? Origins of the Christian Idea of Holy Places', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 2 (1994), pp. 268–271.

⁵⁰ C. Walter, 'The Origins of the Cult of St. George', *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 53 (1995), pp. 306.

As soon apparently, as relics spread, the holiness of the place from which they came also spread; for instance thanks to the cult of the relics of the True Cross, people from different parts of the world could in some way participate in the Jerusalem worship. In that way relics became a carrier of the holiness of the place, and this element increased in importance as time went by. But location and architecture was still harnessed in the process of creating holy places, although to a lesser extent. Firstly, although in this time the architecture (the form of the building, not its function) was not a carrier of holiness (the first copies of Holy Sepulchre Church were built only in the ninth⁵¹ or tenth⁵² century, rather than in the fifth century as some scholars previously thought⁵³), in those places where no relics were found architecture was of great importance⁵⁴. Thanks to architectural forms (even if they were small architecture objects), like *thalamus* in which Thekla was present⁵⁵ or *cyborium* in Thessaloniki, where Demetrius lived, almost tangible contact with these saints was possible, despite the lack of their relics⁵⁶. Secondly, the holiness of some places was still connected with their location, for example John Chryzostom wrote that after the relics of Babylas were transferred from Antioch to Daphne, people in Antioch could still experience the saint's *dynamis* at the place where the body of Babylas had previously been located⁵⁷. On the other hand Augustine wrote about healing power of the soil brought from Palestine – the Holy Land, demonstrates that the location and the relics as carriers of holiness blended together, and their limits became blurred⁵⁸.

Slowly it turned out that the modification of the concept of “the holy place” was influenced not only by the transformation of forms of piety, but also geopolitical changes. As a result of these changes the particular location became less important than the element which decided about sacral character of the place. It was noticeable already in the

⁵¹ R. Ousterhout, ‘The Architectural Response to Pilgrimage’, in: *Blessings of Pilgrimage*, ed. R. Ousterhout, Urbana – Chicago 1990, p. 110.

⁵² C. Morris, *The Sepulchre of Christ and Medieval West. From the Beginning to 1600*, Oxford 2005, p. 126.

⁵³ R. Krautheimer, ‘Introduction to an “Iconography of Mediaeval Architecture”’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 5 (1942), pp. 4–6.

⁵⁴ The situation later changed. For example in the thirteenth century king Lalibela built in Golghota Church Ethiopia, because Christians from this country could not come to Jerusalem due to geopolitical situation. For this church see for example: M. Grevers, ‘The Rehabilitation of the Zagvè Kings and building of the Däbrä Sina – Golghota Sellasia Complex in Lalibëla’, *African Bulletin*, 51 (2003), pp. 23–49.

⁵⁵ B. Walter, ‘The Origins of the Cult of St. George’..., p. 304; S. J. Davies, ‘Pilgrimage and the cult of Saint Thecla in Late Antique Egypt’, in: *Pilgrimage and holy space in the late antique Egypt*, ed. by D. Frankfurter, Leiden – Boston – Köln 1998, pp. 303–339.

⁵⁶ J. C. Skedros, *Saint Demetrios of Thessaloniki: Civic Patron and Divine Protector 4th-7th Centuries CE*, Harrisburg 1999, pp. 56–60 and 85–94. See contrary opinion of C. Bakirtizis, ‘Pilgrimage to Thessalonike: The Tomb of St. Demetrios’, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 56 (2002), pp. 177–178.

⁵⁷ Jean Chrysostome, *Dicsours sur Babylas*, ed. M. A. Schatkin, C. Blanc, B Grillet, Paris 1990 (Sources Chretiennes 362), pp. 68n.

⁵⁸ Sancti Aurelii Augustini, *De civitate Dei*, Turnhout 1955, XII, 8,7.

5th century, when Daniel the Stylite, who lived in Syria, „planned to go to the holy city of Jerusalem” – as one can read in the account of his life. „He heard that in this time the road to Palestine was dangerous”, because of a Samaritan’s revolt against Christians. However he decided to go to Jerusalem, but during his journey he met an old man resembling Symeon Stylite, who told him „Do not go in this direction, rather go to Byzantium. There you will see the Second Jerusalem namely Constantinople. There you will be able to benefit from the tomb of the martyrs and the places that inspire honor.”⁵⁹

Indeed, being in possession of relics connected with the life of Christ, such as swaddling clothes of infant Jesus, or the Savior’s towel which he used during the Last Supper⁶⁰, and above all, relics connected with the Passion⁶¹, Constantinople became in some way the New Jerusalem, just like previously it had become the New Rome (in the administrative and political sense), especially when Persians, and later, Arabs conquered the Holy land and destroyed many of the Christian holy places. Architecture was also used in the process of establishing Constantinople as a holy place . For example, Hagia Sophia was in some way a new kind of Jerusalem Temple, as Procopius wrote: “whenever one enters the Great Church to pray, he understands at once that it is not by human power or skill, but by influence of God that this work has been finely tuned. And so his mind is lifted up toward God and exalted, feeling that [the Divinity] cannot be far away. But must especially love to dwell in this place, which he has chosen”⁶² – the lack of primary relics in this church could indicate this kind of succession and similarity - as noted by J. Wortley: ”For in the Hebrew faith, the human corpse was unclean thing, a defiling thing which had to be decently disposed of as soon as possible, preferably before the next sunrise, a thing least of all to be allowed into the presence of divinity.”⁶³ However as the rebuilding of the Holy Sepulchre Church during the reign of Constantine IX Monomachus (1042-1055)⁶⁴ and the Crusaders’ efforts during next centuries of recovering the Holy Land showed, that holiness was also connected with the location of the place, with a particular area.

⁵⁹ ‘Life of Daniel the Stylite’ in: *Three Byzantine Saints: Contemporary Biographies of St. Daniel the Stylite, St. Theodore of Sykeon and St. John the Almsgiver*, trans. E. Dawes, intr. N.H. Baynes, London 1948, 10.

⁶⁰ On these and other relics in Constantinople see G. Majeska, *Russian travellers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, Washington 1984, p. 1; also *Eadem*, ‘Russian Pilgrims in Constantinople’, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 56 (2002), p. 98.

⁶¹ Especially the True Cross brought to the Constantinople by Heraclius in the seventh century – about this event see for example: J. W. Drijvers, ‘Heraclius and the *Restitutio Crucis*. Notes on Symbolism and Ideology, in: *The reign of Heraclius (610–641): crisis and confrontation*, ed. G. J. Rejnink, B. H. Stolte, Leuven 2002, pp. 175–190.

⁶² Procopius, *Buildings*, trans. H.B. Dewing, collaboration G. Downey, Cambridge MA – London 1971, 1.1.61–62.

⁶³ J. Wortley, ‘Relics and the Great Church’, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 99 (2006), pp. 646–647.

⁶⁴ R. Ousterhout, ‘Rebuilding the Temple: Constantine Monomachus and the Holy Sepulchre’, *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 48 (1989), pp. 70–71.

In Constantinople, in spite of the attempts to create substitutes, there was a lack of this important element: sacred space, chosen by God, in which He is active in a special way, more than in other places. As history has shown, since the relics were stolen and the churches destroyed, Constantinople stopped being the New Jerusalem.

To sum up the above considerations, we can say that in order to make a place holy, three elements jointly appeared (although we know a few exceptions to this rule):

A particular space located in a way that cause God to be more present and active in this place than other places⁶⁵.

Sacred architecture, proper management of landscape, development of the area, which could on one hand dispel some doubts about the sanctity of the area, on the other hand enable worship; using architecture, bishops could create something, which – I think – we can call - "a place-relic", like the tomb of the Virgin or of saint Stephen in Jerusalem.

Worship, which enabled contact with Divinity, and at the same time brought both the above elements together. One special form of the cult is worth noting: the cult of relics was the presence of something visible, tangible or tactile, which the worshipper could see or touch only in this place, and thus could see and touch the *sacrum*. It was the cult of relics that, among the three elements, was indispensable in the process of the creation of a holy place, but the worship became the most important. And in this context, and in the context of the above considerations, the answer to the title question is positive.

⁶⁵ Some places attracted pilgrim the others did not, also some people attracted pilgrims (during their life time – ascetics, the others only after their death) so we can say not only about 'genius loci' but also about 'genius personae' connected with the holy places.