Anna Mambelli / Valentina Marchetto (eds.)

Naming the Sacred

Religious Toponymy in History, Theology and Politics

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Theology and Politics

Foreword by Alon Goshen-Gottstein

With 2 figures

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Cover image: Fabio Nardelli, pulpit of Cappella del Santo Sepolcro, Basilica di Santo Stefano,
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Foreword

Alon Goshen-Gottstein

Context and Key Messages

Scholarship may perhaps never be completely neutral, divorced from contemporary needs and realities. Some projects, however, are born of the need to address very specific public concerns. Such is the present volume. Without understanding how it came to be, we will fail to understand the choice of topics covered herein, as well as the message that the volume seeks to deliver.

Both Alberto Melloni and I are UNESCO chairs (Chair on Religious Pluralism and Peace at the University of Bologna and Chair in Interfaith Studies at the Elijah Interfaith Institute of Jerusalem, respectively) and we both belong to a network of UNESCO chairs focussing on interreligious and intercultural studies. Due to our UNESCO affiliation, questions related to how UNESCO operates when it comes to religion, and in particular to issues of interreligious debate and tension, are important to us, as well as to other members of the UNITWIN network (its technical name). Over the years, UNESCO issued a series of statements that touched upon Jerusalem and its sacred sites. The statements were deemed one-sided by Israeli authorities, the outcomes of political manipulation within the organisation, that is to say, organised by member states, and therefore easily subject to political manipulation. Within our UNITWIN network similar concerns were raised. Several of us felt that our expertise as scholars in the field of religion and relations between religions was undermined by UNESCO bodies, and many of us think that if the UNITWIN network had been consulted, despite our association with the organisation, we could have contributed to resolutions that would have been more balanced and potentially more helpful to the situation on the ground in the Holy Land. A letter to the Director-General, Irina Bokova, was sent in June 2016, signed by several UNESCO chairholders, in which the following principles were suggested:

a. Any representation of a situation of conflict, especially one with deep historical roots, must be faithful to the multiple narratives of all sides. No side must feel that its historical memory is being erased or sacrificed in favor of another;

b. For any dialogue work to succeed, it must be based on all sides feeling they have been heard and for processes of understanding and healing to emerge out of fair-minded, historically balanced, presentations of all sides to a conflict.[1]

After a while, Alberto Melloni suggested to me that we should hold a conference as a contribution and as a response to UNESCO processes in the city that is being addressed by these statements – Jerusalem; as UNESCO chairholder, based in Jerusalem, I offered to coordinate the logistics for a programme that was for the most part prearranged by the Fondazione per le scienze religiose Giovanni XXIII, Bologna. The topic suggested is now the title of the present volume, *Naming the Sacred. Religious Toponymy in History, Theology and Politics.* We were both grateful for the support of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, which partnered with us in this project, recognising the timeliness of the discussion and its potential for long-term contributions.[2]

The conference was thus a clear case of academia seeking to make a sound statement based on historical and legal scholarship within a political context, in relation to a major international body. Indeed, the conference was followed by a press conference that sought to disseminate its message, and its proceedings were shared by Bokova's successor, the present Director-General, Audrey Azoulay.[3]

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1 A. Goshen-Gottstein, "UNESCO on Jerusalem – A Response from Within", *The Times of Israel*, June 19, 2016, available at https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/unesco-on-jerusalem-a-response-from-within/ (accessed January 18, 2019).

2 "Naming the Sacred. A Research Conference on Religious Toponymy in History, Theology and Politics", Tantur, Jerusalem, October 17–18, 2017.

3 The press release summarises much that is relevant for understanding the present volume: "At a time of great turmoil for UNESCO, following the announcement of the US withdrawal and of Israel's plans to follow suit, and following the new Director-General elect, Audrey Azoulay, who has called for reforms at UNESCO, a group of 15 UNESCO affiliated scholars convened in Jerusalem to analyze what exactly was wrong with UNESCO's decision on Jerusalem. The group, organized by Prof. Alberto Melloni of the Fondazione per le scienze religiose Giovanni XXIII (Fscire), Bologna, and Dr Alon Goshen-Gottstein of the Elijah Interfaith Institute, Jerusalem, convened in Jerusalem, October 17–18, 2017, for a conference entitled 'Naming the Sacred'. The 15 UNESCO academic chairs, spanning the entire globe, from New Zealand to Oregon, studied how the history of sites has been preserved and respected through changes in empire and ruling parties, as contrasted with instances in which memory has been obliterated. Based on the study of ancient Roman habits, the tradition of Turkish and British rulers and a broad historical survey, they concluded that UNESCO's recent Jerusalem decisions resemble most closely Stalinist policies by wiping away Christian holy sites and seeking to replace them with soviet-affiliated content. Such a procedure can be understood when practised by a political power, stated Melloni, but is totally inacceptable when it comes to an international body entrusted with the preservation of historical memory and culture, associated with religious sites: 'Applying the power of political pressure to holy sites undermines UNESCO's credibility'. Participating scholars noted that what characterizes Jerusalem is the complexity of its history. 'To apply a simplistic and one-sided view to a complex historical situation will never allow us to move forward. It will only perpetuate the present stalemate. Only a complex and multi-faceted approach has the chance of making a meaningful contribution to the preservation of holy sites

For the record, we did receive a response from Azoulay acknowledging the message and pledging to improve procedures within the organisation. However, the urgency of affecting UNESCO's procedures has become less acute in the intervening time, due to changes on two fronts. On the one hand, UNESCO discussion became less vocal, and, on the other, the Trump administration's decision to move the US embassy ended up shifting much public attention from the UNESCO discussion to a new political front.

When scholars seek to contribute to contemporary reality, they also make a statement of value and teaching that has a longer shelf-life than messages and statements that are closely associated with political processes of the day. The publication of the present volume makes this point: its papers are as relevant now as they were when they were first delivered, and one suspects their relevance will endure for the foreseeable future.

The focus of the present volume is not exclusively on issues of what religious and other sites are called in the changes of history and regimes. An overview of the contributions of the present collection suggests three interrelated focuses.

The first is the focus on *naming*. As the summary of the press release suggests, throughout history traditions in reality maintained earlier names. This group includes the contributions by Rita Lizzi Testa ("Christian Empire and Pagan Temples in the Fourth Century CE"), who illustrates how several places consecrated to paganism (and their ancient names) continued to exist in some regions of the Roman Empire in the time of Constantine and for much longer than previously believed, and by Roberto Regoli ("Rome and the *Questione Romana*"), who shows how certain modern and contemporary political processes have led to changing the names of both sacred and secular places in Rome. The attempt at full erasure finds its clearest expression in Stalinist Russia although the paper by Yuri Stoyanov ("The Soviet Policy of the Holy Places in Russia"), which describes the changes in the naming of Sergiyev Posad, is unfortunately not included in the present collection.

A second focal point of the essays concerns *destroying the sacred*, a much more blatant form of erasing the memory of the past by destroying objects that would bear its memory. Silvia Ronchey's essay ("Destroying the Past. Monotheism, Iconoclasm and the Sacred") covers a scope ranging from the Christian destruction of pagan sites to ISIL's destruction of older cultures and the Talibans'

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and to advancing what UNESCO calls a Culture of Peace', stated Goshen-Gottstein. The UNESCO scholars accordingly issued a call to UNESCO in which they suggested a new methodology for how decisions should be made in situations of religious conflict and disputed memories. UNESCO has the resources, through its scholars, to offer a fair-minded historical description that takes into account the multiple narratives of communities in conflict. Scholarly positions must provide the foundations for UNESCO deliberations if it seeks to rebuild its lost credibility".

destruction of the Bamyian statues of Buddha; Ronchey demonstrates that the issues are not theological, but rather military and political. A similar conclusion emerges from W. Cole Durham, Jr.'s discussion of the status of Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia ("Non-Traditional Sacred Sites. The Need for Protection").

A third focal point relates to the very ability to apply *legal tools*, such as declarations, to issues of sacred places and religious disputes. Three essays, those by W. Cole Durham, Jr., Peter Petkoff ("Developing and Implementing Innovative Preventative Mechanisms for the Protection of Religious Heritage Sites Through Soft Law Approaches"), and Mario Ricca ("Ubiquitous Sacred Places. The Planetary Interplay of Their Meaning and Legal Protection"), touch on the difficulties encountered in applying legal conventions to situations concerning conflicted sacred spaces. Peter Petkoff devotes a section of his essay to "Coexistence of communities. Mutual respect of values and constructive dialogue in a multicultural context"; his work calls for a means to find a new narrative applying a complex approach in order to determine legal tools for the protection of sacred sites. Mario Ricca's presentation is a call to develop a translation mechanism that will allow members of one religion to understand the meaning of its sacred places for another religion. The precedent of shared sacred spaces, which exist in various places, offers good reason for hope.

The observant reader will note that despite the different areas of discussion there is a common thread that runs through many of the volume's essays. This thread is in keeping with the vision of the UNESCO scholars who launched the conference and took part in it, and is maintained by many of the other scholars not associated with the UNITWIN network. This common thread is the call for upholding a genuine interdisciplinarity, enhancing critical dialogue and scientific collaboration and advancing mutual knowledge of the other, as well as of our rich common past, as an antidote to one-sided legal or political actions and as a response to the inadequacies of existing legal instruments and the ideology that informs them, which, as Mario Ricca suggests, is too frequently incapable of adequately addressing the challenges of tensions arising from religious identities.

We thus note that a significant number of our authors include recommendations of a practical nature, in the spirit of study, respect, dialogue and mutual understanding. Paul Morris's key opening contribution ("Contesting 'Sacred' Places. The Paradoxes of Supersessionism and the Possibilities of Scholarly Responsibility") makes several practical recommendations. These include developing clearer interreligious identities as scholars; studying history together across religious divides; sharing individual and collective memories; visiting one another's religious sites; establishing even limited mutual recognition of one another's association with "our own" sacred space.

The issue of sharing memory points us in the direction of Merav Mack's contribution ("Imagination, Memory and Fantasy"). Mack illustrates to what

extent early Islamic centuries marshalled shared memory and shared messaging, in contradistinction to processes of erasure of memory, as it is presently practised by Waqf authorities of the Haram al-Sharif. According to Mack, the early recipients of the messages inscribed on the Dome of the Rock were members of other faiths, not Muslims. Sharing memory has been the standard for centuries, and this comes as a refreshing reminder for us today. The issue of faithfulness to memory was the focus of one contribution that was presented at the conference in Jerusalem, but it is not included in this volume;[4] it was offered by the Pakistani scholar Muhammad Suheyl Umar, who spoke of how in Pakistan and India a process was undertaken to reclaim what he considers authentic Muslim memory, according to which Muslims are only custodians of the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif and only have that role on a temporary basis, with Jewish rights (and memory) never having been revoked; this, too, is an important counterpoint to prevailing discourse and deserves to be mentioned here. As far as sharing memory is concerned, the paper by Nikolai Lipatov-Chicherin ("The Burial of Adam as an Archetypal Case of Sacred Tradition") illustrates the special place that all three monotheistic faiths give to the tomb of Adam in their world view, on the one hand, and the fact that they locate it at the most sacred sites of their religion, leading to different traditions, on the other.

The present volume was not created in a vacuum. As described above, it was motivated by particular events and framed in a particular context. This, too, finds expression in our volume. Alberto Melloni's paper ("A Chronology of the UNESCO Dispute on Jerusalem and Its Holy Places") rebuilds from a historical perspective the last year of the UNESCO Resolution on Jerusalem. The contributions of the present volume offered by Saverio Campanini ("שאלו שלום ירושלם Gershom Scholem from Zion to Jerusalem") and Robert O. Smith ("Christian Zionism and Jerusalem Holy Places") carefully investigate the Zionist dream of Gershom Scholem and the political ideas and commitments of Christian Zionism, respectively; these discussions remind us of some of the complex dimensions that are associated with the particular political issue that led to the emergence of the present volume.

Finally, we should like to thank Steven Shankman of the UNESCO Network on Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, who opened the "Naming the Sacred" conference with us. Several other scholars enriched our discussions although their papers are not included in the present collection. These include Raymond Cohen, who spoke of the holy sites under the British Mandate, and Doron Bar, who talked about Nebi Da'ud, David's proposed tomb and the Cenacle as test cases of historical memory.

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4 The essay appears in A. Goshen-Gottstein (ed.), *Memory and Hope: Forgiveness, Healing, and Interfaith Relations* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2018) 107–34.

The lessons included in the present volume are but some of the enduring lessons in our project that will continue to resound as political circumstances shift and as one crisis follows another in Jerusalem and the Middle East. The lessons themselves are broader and apply globally. We hope to have made thereby a lasting contribution to future considerations of religion and contested sacred spaces. At the end of the day, as many of our authors suggest, there is no alternative to mutual knowledge and understanding.

Preface

Paul Morris

Contesting "Sacred" Places. The Paradoxes of Supersessionism and the Possibilities of Scholarly Responsibility

> Allegories are, in the realm of thoughts,
> what ruins are in the realm of things.
> Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*[1]

This opening essay attempts to contextualise the rationale for the conference "Naming the Sacred"[2] – the UNESCO decisions and deliberations on the "sacred" places in Jerusalem –, from which the present volume takes inspiration, within the broader frameworks of the history of religions and the histories of Yerushaláyim/Jerusalem/al-Quds. Dealing with contemporary issues as an historian is always fraught with difficulties since things change: and from starting to write, then following the conference to revision, matters have greatly changed with the new UNESCO leadership in Paris and further politicisation by member states in response to UNESCO pronouncements on sacred sites. There are currently, however, genuine reasons to hope for a more informed and nuanced appreciation on the part of UNESCO and other international organisations of the overlapping religious sacral claims even as the challenges on the ground, as it were, appear to be intensifying.[3]

This essay begins and ends with UNESCO. I first prepared this before the report that Israel announced that it intends to follow the US and withdraw from UNESCO, completing the process that began in 2011 when the US and Israel ceased to make their full contributions to the UN organisation. The US has had a sort of yoyo relationship since withdrawing under Reagan in 1984, re-joining under George W. Bush in 2002 and now planning to withdraw again on 31

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1 W. Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. J. Osborne, intro. G. Steiner (London/New York: Verso, 1998 [German original 1963]), 178.
2 "Naming the Sacred. A Research Conference on Religious Toponymy in History, Theology and Politics", co-organised by the Fondazione per le scienze religiose Giovanni XXIII (Fscire), Elijah Interfaith Institute and Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS): Tantur, Jerusalem, October 17–18, 2017.
3 The Trump administration's decision to relocate the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem to coincide with the seventieth anniversary of the State of Israel has served to heighten tensions over competing "national", religious and communal claims concerning the sacred sites of Jerusalem; see the press release at https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2018/02/278825.htm (accessed January 18, 2019).

December 2018, albeit remaining a full member until then. The situation continues to be fraught, transitional and as yet unresolved. These decisions by the US and Israel change nothing in relation to my analysis but perhaps everything in terms of future policy, process and politics.[4]

I intend to concentrate on a number of conceptual and analytical concerns that arise from the challenging of another's sacred space and having our own sacred places challenged. My title is meant to convey two discrete transgressions. The first refers to the challenging and delegitimising of the sacred space of the other; the second, the challenging of the ideologies that underpin the sacrality of these places. Such contestations are integral to all religious histories, even if there is evidence of a contemporary increase in such incidents. The historical responses to such challenges are instructive, and while most have been brutal destruction or commandeering, they sometimes offer helpful precedents for the present. What is the nature of the perceived offence? What roles do sacred sites play in past and present religious identities? Why are sites contested and by whom? There are a number of discrete academic dimensions to these concerns, including: the typologies of sacred places; the legal protections for sacred sites; adherent access to sacred sites; the management of diverse religious sites in a modern, religiously diverse nation-state; international and transnational recognition of sacred places; and, the mobilising power of sacred places.

This essay will focus on the nature of sacred sites from the position of an historian of religions and on the ways in which the entanglements of memory and history create what might be referred to as a "sacral politics of sacred sites". The contribution ends with a number of recommendations that arise from this analysis. The overarching argument, as reflected in the essay's subtitle, is that there is an urgent need to create a space, even if initially consciously tentative and heuristic, between the sacral politics of sacred sites and the humanities and social sciences – particularly history and religious studies, and including enlightened academic theologians – that allows for "empirical" agreements between aca-

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4 See G. Harris/S. Erlanger, "US Will Withdraw from UNESCO, Citing Its 'Anti-Israel Bias'", *New York Times*, October 12, 2017, available at https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/12/us/politics/trump-unesco-withdrawal.html; B. Samuels, "Six Key Moments in Israel's Tumultuous Relationship with UNESCO", *Haaretz*, October 12, 2017, available at https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/six-key-moments-in-israel-s-tumultuous-relationship-with-unesco-1.5457338; C. Lynch, "US to Pull Out of UNESCO, Again", *Foreign Policy*, October 11, 2017, available at https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/10/11/u-s-to-pull-out-of-unesco-again; and more recently R. Ahren, "Citing 'new spirit' at UNESCO, Israeli envoy wants to rethink withdrawal", *The Times of Israel*, June 26, 2018, available at https://www.timesofisrael.com/citing-new-spirit-israeli-envoy-wants-to-rethink-unesco-withdrawal (accessed January 18, 2019). On the background to UNESCO and Jerusalem, see the informative but partisan M. Dumper/C. Larkin, "The Politics of Heritage and the Limitations of International Agency in Contested Cities. A Study of the Role of UNESCO in Jerusalem's Old City", *RIS* 38/1 (2012) 25–52; and the selective D. Keane/V. Azarov, "UNESCO, Palestine and Archaeology in Conflict", *DJILP* 41/2 (2013) 309–43.

demics and others that can potentially frame discrete but overlapping narratives, based on the transparent interpretation of sources and evidence about sacred places, providing new frameworks for robust, productive, shared under-standings, policy and other developments.

1.   The Nature of the Sacred

Historians of religion often subscribe to one of two dominant models of sacred places, with radically different accounts of what makes a place "sacred" in terms of the origins, nature and significance of that sacrality. The first arose out of a movement that came to be known as the phenomenology of religion. Drawing on the Hegelian distinction and dependent relationship between manifestations and essence, scholars like Gerardus van der Leeuw (1890–1950) developed religious categories out of their researches into diverse historical manifestations.[5] For example, in relation to place (home, temple, settlement, meeting place and pil-grimage site and their uses as altar, sanctuary or shrine), he sought to go beneath these examples, re-envisaging Edmund Husserl's (1859–1938) notion of in-tention, to discern a typology of "sacred space", of spatial locations of the ex-perience of the underlying "essence" of divine "power". For van der Leeuw, a politician, Protestant theologian and historian of religion, this underlying power and the foundation of sacred space was god. This phenomenological under-standing prioritised "sacred space" at the forefront of comparative studies in religion.

In the contemporary academy and beyond, the most familiar phenomenology of sacred space and its "inherent sacrality" is that of the Romanian scholar of religions Mircea Eliade (1907–86). Eliade's analysis of religion – the sacred and profane – proceeds largely via his understandings of sacred space. He contends that space is just real estate to the non-religious but for *homo religiosus*, the religious person, space is differentiated between sacred and profane. He contends that sacred places are places of hierophanies, of sacred spiritual encounters and meetings. Such sacred locations imbued with the "real" are often designated as *axis mundi*, the axis or centre of the world. These places are long recognised as where the barriers between the physical and spiritual worlds are especially thin and particularly permeable.[6] Eliade had a fondness for mountains – they play a significant role in many traditions – and examples of such sacred places would include Delphi. Those who have been there, perhaps have an indication of what

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5 G. van der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986 [German original 1933]).

6 M. Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane. The Nature of Religion* (San Diego: Harvest, 1957), 26.

he suggests. These places are enshrined in myth and refracted in rituals linking generations by revivifying and recovering the hierophanies of the past in the present. Many sites have layer upon layer of religious sites, one atop the other linking the Neolithic era to the present.[7]

Eliade, whilst acknowledging that religious experiences of sacred space are culturally and chronologically different, insists that beneath this diversity there is an underlying commonality that reveals itself to the scholar in the examination of the contrast between these religious experiences and those of the non-religious non-experience of sacred space. Eliade's phenomenology of sacred space still has academic subscribers, particularly among those with theological dispositions who can readily subscribe to his underlying sacred as god, or who adhere to some form of new-age religious perennialism. Phenomenology dominated the religious studies scene from the 1960s only to be challenged in the 1980s by more evidence-driven social scientific perspectives. The historian of religion Jonathan Z. Smith considered that Eliade's focus on the centre neglected the import of the peripheries as he deconstructed Eliade's sacred space into "place" and utopian ("no place"). He asks, "What if space were not the recipient but rather the creation of the human project? What if place were an active product of intellection rather than its passive receptacle?".[8] Smith argues that the sacrality of place is not a response to some externality by humanity but rather that it is creatively constructed by humankind through ritual.[9] A place is not already sacred and subsequently recognised as such but a space made sacred by purposive human ritual action.[10]

The new focus on constructed and contested spatial realities in the history of religions as exemplified by Jonathan Z. Smith can be seen retrospectively as part of a broader "spatial turn" reflected in the theoretical deliberations of scholars such as Michel Foucault (1926–84), Henri Lefebvre (1901–91) and Fredric Jameson.[11] While Smith understood sacral space to be formed by ritual, Foucault,

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7   Ibid.: "Every sacred space implies a hierophany, and irruption of the sacred that results in detaching a territory from the surrounding cosmic milieu and making it qualitatively different … a point of passage from one mode of being to another"; see also, M. Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (New York: New American Library, 1958), 1–37, 367–87.

8   J.Z. Smith, *To Take Place. Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 26. See also his "The Wobbling Pivot", in Id., *Map Is Not Territory. Studies in the History of Religions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978) 88–103; for a constructive critique of Smith's theory, see R. Grimes, "Jonathan Z. Smith's Theory of Ritual Space", *Religion* 29 (1999) 261–73.

9   Smith, *Map Is Not Territory*, 28.

10 Ibid., 105. On the spatial location of the sacred in an increasing "secular" context, see K. Knott, *The Location of Religion. A Spatial Analysis* (London: Equinox, 2005), and Id., "Spatial Theory and Method for the Study of Religion", *Temenos* 41/2 (2005) 153–84.

11 H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991); M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage, 1995); Id., *Birth of the Clinic* (London:

for example, discerned such "space" to be constructed by specific "discursive practices". While religious ritual is clearly a discursive practice, these newer theoretical frames highlighting the contestations of power have both the advantage of the stark politicisation of spatial contestations and the disadvantage of often marginalising the theological and religious dimensions of the constructions of that very sacrality. Contestations of sacral space are of course necessarily contestations of power, but their differential sacral constructions can operate with diverse models of sacral power. These different theological resonances undermine the claims for simple political mobilisation, manipulation or use of "religion".

This alternative, the social scientific or "constructivist model", insists on accounting for sacrality by portraying the often intense and long-lived debates between contesting groups as places that are fought over, and victories marked by sacral designations and supersessions. Examples of this constructionist model would include studies such as that of Jerusalem by Roger Friedland and Richard Hecht.[12] Here historical and geographical variety is not subsumed into a mono-causal phenomenological account but differences are analysed as the making and contesting of the "sacred".

These are, of course, only models based on selective affinities, while actual religious sites, while still primarily explained in terms of one or other dominant model, often exhibit features of the other. Our Lady of Medjugorje suggests both an inherent sacred site even if the recent appearance of the Virgin Mary took place in a predominantly Muslim area in Bosnia. Case studies illustrate the two models with an emphasis of the nature of the challenges in contested sites. So many sites, as we noted above, witness the building on top of past sites or the transition of churches into mosques on sites that were once Buddhist or animist shrines. These are examples of what I call "spiritual spatial supersessionism". Supersessionism literally means to sit atop of or to sit on. The histories of religious traditions are histories of spiritual spatial supersessionism: so often sacred space was formerly someone else's – shrines into temples, churches into mosques, meeting places into gurdwaras. Spiritual spatial supersessionism also

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Routledge, 2003); F. Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994).

12 R. Friedland/R. Hecht, "The Politics of Sacred Space. Jerusalem's Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif", in J. Scott/P. Simpson-Housley (ed.), *Sacred Places and Profane Spaces. Essays in the Geographies of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991) 21–62; Id., *To Rule Jerusalem* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Id., "The Bodies of Nations. A Comparative Study of Religious Violence in Jerusalem and Ayodhya", *HR* 38/2 (1998) 101–49; Id., "The Symbol and the Stone. Jerusalem and the Millennium", *AAAPSS* 558 (1998) 144–62; Id., "Jerusalem's Sacrality, Urban Sociology and the History of Religions", in M. Adelman/M.F. Elman (ed.), *Jerusalem. Conflict and Cooperation in a Contested City* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2014) 82–113.

includes the deliberate military destruction, for example, of hundreds of mosques in Bosnia, or Buddhist temples in Afghanistan, or archaeological ruins in Iraq and Syria. It is these rich and contested histories that create the very strata that evidence the history of military and religious triumphs of the past and which in turn create violent conflict and contestation in the present and are most likely to do so in the future.

2.   Between History and Memory

While mindful of the quip attributed to the historian Edward Hallett Carr that "all we can change is the past", it is important to distinguish between material evidence and its interpretation and the myths that lay so near and interpenetrate the adherents' "sacred histories". While we can indeed, at least in principle, test the claims that there was a Ram temple on top of which the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya was erected, we cannot investigate in the same way the claim that this is the birthplace of the Hindu god Ram. Different traditions have different historical methodologies that both overlap and can be distinguished from the historical sciences and the academic study of religion. As Joan E. Taylor has shown with regard to Christian sites in this wonderful city, they have a particular, creative and complex history that undergirds their continuing sanctity.[13] Scholars and academics have a singular and significant role to play across traditions in establishing shared or heuristically shared, or rejected, historical benchmarks. These in turn generate a critical distance between history and myth that allows for shared and overlapping and intersecting chronologies that highlight past historical interactions among different and diverse religious traditions. This can be illustrated with reference to Jerusalem and al-Quds and the current debates about the al-Aqsa Mosque compound and the Temple Wall.[14]

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13 J.E. Taylor, *Christians and the Holy Places. The Myth of Jewish-Christian Origins* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

14 For overview histories of contested Jerusalem, see K. Armstrong, *Jerusalem. One City, Three Faiths* (New York: Ballantine, 1996); J. Carroll, *Jerusalem, Jerusalem. How the Ancient City Ignited Our Modern World* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011); S. Goldhill, *Jerusalem. City of Longing* (Cambridge, MA/London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008); M. Benevisti, *City of Stone. The Hidden History of Jerusalem* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996); S.S. Montefiore, *Jerusalem. The Biography* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2011); B. Wasserstein, *Divided Jerusalem. The Struggle for the Holy City* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002); S. Ricca, *Reinventing Jerusalem. Israel's Reconstruction of the Jewish Quarter after 1967* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007); F.E. Peters, *Jerusalem. The Holy City in the Eyes of Chroniclers, Visitors, Pilgrims, and Prophets from the Days of Abraham to the Beginnings of Modern Times* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985); M. Dumper, *The Politics of Sacred Space. The Old City of Jerusalem in the Middle East Conflict* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002).