Towards Jerusalem: The Architecture of Pilgrimage

Thesis

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This dissertation would not have been possible without the continuous and unconditional support and care of my supervisors, Pier Vittorio Aureli and Maria Shéhérazade Ciudici. I would like to thank my peers, Brendon Carlin and Enrica Manneli, for their companionship and constant feedback regarding my work, and to the talented Michal Sahar and Tamar Shafir whose careful edits and design gave form to this final work. To Daniel Tchetchik and Andrew Meredith for their contribution of photographic tools and knowledge and to Beatriz Flora from the AA library who laboured to get a hold of every book I needed for this research. To my fellow-pilgrim, Diana Ibáñez López, who had joined me (both physically and virtually) on many of these journeys, and was a constant source of new sites, books, and ideas. Finally, I would like to acknowledge Zvi Efrat, whose consistent mentorship had shaped my ideas and practice.

This dissertation is dedicated to the quintessential traveller, my mother, Ora Merin.
INTRODUCTION

Suspended between heaven and earth, Jerusalem is not just a site—but an orientation. Occupying a place in the geographic subconscious of Western culture, its name is evoked in poetry and dedications of cities, its soil covers the floors of chapels, rocks collected from its ground are used as foundation stones for towns, and relics of those who lived and died there are enshrined in the world’s most visited sites. Despite this undeniable influence, this thesis strays away from such symbolic toponymy or literal displacement of fragments, and opts instead to focus on the spatial translation of Jerusalem in order to appropriate its sanctity. It considers issues of ritual, representation, topography, and memory in order to explore how the idea of Jerusalem has articulated the human relationship with the sacred. Specifically, it focuses on a particular praxis that has mobilized the aura of the Holy City for millennia—pilgrimage. Studying this phenomenon reveals that, despite its temporal character, pilgrimage is a powerful vector that often destabilizes the civic, economic, and political conditions of the places that cross its path. This means that while pilgrims move with a clear sense of religious orientation, their mentality is often hijacked by institutions of power that wish to exploit their subjectivity for their own gain. The manipulation of spiritual will into spatial form results in the production of structures, landscapes, and representations that I refer to as the Architecture of Pilgrimage.

Before exploring the themes and case studies of this thesis, it is important to state the obvious: pilgrimage did not begin in Jerusalem; it is a phenomenon that maintains continuity from antiquity until today. Anthropologist Simon Coleman argues that any attempt to define pilgrimage is futile, as the conditions that influence its character—namely systems of movement and modes of spirituality—are perpetually in a state of flux. As such, pilgrimage spans fields of scholarship in which the discussion is often not about pilgrimage but rather about the lens through which it is understood: themes such as ritual and faith, subjectivity and identity, historical geography and archaeology, and, in this thesis, the architecture and landscape. Amongst the various attempts by theorists to define pilgrimage, there are several similarities and contradictions that are relevant for this discussion. The Oxford Dictionary provides a rather loose definition: pilgrimage is “a journey to a place of particular interest or significance,” while another source claims, with somewhat more precision, that “pilgrimage implies a journey by a devotee in pursuance of a primarily religious objective.” Anthropologist Matthew Dillon suggests that the pilgrim’s goal is not to visit a place of interest nor to satisfy a religious objective; rather, what is at stake in pilgrimage is the very first act of detachment, of “paying a visit to a sacred site outside the boundaries of one’s own physical environment.” Indeed, as in any ritual, a crucial aspect of the pilgrim’s journey is the disturbance caused to daily life: a break from ties of kinship and domestic labour. By disengaging from these structures (and replacing one ritual for another), the pilgrim enters a state of anti-structure, becoming a subject driven by a crystallized sense of purpose, intention, and orientation. This places the pilgrim as a stranger in his or her travels, true to the etymological origin of pilgrimage from the Latin progrinus, or foreigner.

During this phase—defined by Victor and Edith Turner as liminal—the pilgrim develops a heightened mode of perception, as he or she becomes susceptible to new concepts and becomes acutely aware of the sensory details of their surroundings. Due to this receptive intensity during the pilgrim’s liminal stage, the thesis places particular emphasis on the envelopes written by pilgrims on their journeys. A neologism of travel and monologue, a travelogue is a form of writing that is between a survey and a diary; it implies being physically on the journey while also claiming a particular agency of personal interpretation and representation. This travelogue is written within a particular timeframe in a pilgrim’s life, what Turner defines as being out of time—beyond or outside the time which measures secular process and routine.” In From Ritual to Theatre (1982), Turner cites Arnold van Gennep’s Rites of Passage (1908) in defining the three phases of separation, transition and incorporation. At the initial stage of separation, the pilgrim is detached from daily life while entering into “a new state or condition.” In the next stage, the transition, the pilgrim enters an ambiguous stage of liminal nature where new social rules and rituals can be assumed. It is during this phase, I argue, that pilgrims document their
within this anthropological framework. Pilgrimage—which is the focus of this thesis—is understood as travelling to the places mentioned in a religious text. This category includes the three Aegean sacred areas of the book: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Pilgrimage in Judaism was initiated by King Solomon, son of David, upon the erection of the temple in 957 BC. They did not hold an annual visit to Jerusalem, each marking both a historical event of the Jewish faith and a new agricultural season. Celebrations took place in a special place, on Mount Moriah, which was constructed as a sequence of vestibules and chambers that created a processional hierarchy of profane and sacred enclosures. Due to its sacred nature, the Jewish temple, a royal dynasty and as a global shrine for the entire Israelite nation, it was attended by ordained priests (Cohen or Levi) who performed prayers and animal sacrifice. These massive gatherings may have involved millions of people, reflected a pagan background, but nonetheless embodied a monotheistic rationale. According to the Hebrew Bible, these gatherings were mandatory: “Offer a sacrifice this three times in a year upon the altar before the Lord our God.” (Exodus 23:14). A Jewish pilgrim participating in these festivals became part of a large group of travellers, acting as a passive participant in public worship while fulfilling a religious obligation.

Pilgrimage in Islam is similar in that respect. The five pillars of a Muslim’s faith, namely to the Cuban and Egyptian antiquity, where healing pilgrimage was common amongst individuals seeking to improve their physical condition. One of the most renowned therapeutic centers was the Asklepieion of Pergamon, which was not a singular structure but a series of shrines, altars, rooms, and incubation chambers encased within a single building. From within this courtyard, pilgrims would perform a healing ritual, moving according to a prescribed routine in order to summon the god and achieve spiritual, hence physical, renewal. In that sense, Christian pilgrims join a lineage of travellers who opt out of daily life in order to reach a self-determined goal that is not mandated by their religion.

The evolution from pagan to monothestic pilgrimages is significant for this thesis in terms of the change in the type of destination. Pagan shrines such as Asklepeion were contained within a sacred area in a particular context and were often circumambulated. Meanwhile, the topography of monothestic pilgrimages is radically different: in Rome, Mecca, Jerusalem, and other sites, the pilgrim crosses with territorial conflicts, socio-spatial hierarchies, and contradicting histories. Focusing on scriptural pilgrimage in Christianity thus provides the opportunity to examine how the mentality of individual travelers shaped the architecture of the city as their own subjective readings were constructed.

The Christian canon (from Greek word: kánon—criterion) is a scriptural collection that was edited and redacted by a group of editors and collectors who brought the ancient scriptural texts into a form that is interpreted allegorically through rituals, deeds, and moral behaviour. Beyond this exegetical practice, the Bible is also read literally as the spiritual guidance of the church. The oldest books such as Pentateuch, Prophets, and the Four Gospels construct a pool of events, people, and places that form the collective memory of the community. This memory is shared by a group of individuals (a family, religious community, or nation) who perceive their shared past as the basis for their identity in the here and now. However, collective memories, collective memories are not experienced by members of the group, but are rather constructed by institutions through a careful process of selection and omis -sion. Today, the collective memory of Christians, Halbwachs argues, that in power constantly reshape collective memories in order to solidify the identity of their subordinates. In that sense, however, collective memories are not preserved, but recast into a memory that is “nourished and renewed, fortified and enriched, without losing any of its fidelity as long as the social networks supports it develops a continuous existence.”

Writing about Christianity, Halbwachs argues that the New Testament itself is a compo -nent of the collective memory, since “the concepts reproduce only a portion of the memories that the disciples must have preserved concerning the life of Jesus and the circumstances of his death.” The scriptures—both a religious text and a historical narrative—are thus the collection of memories from which Christians recollect their shared past. Recollection, another critical term for Halbwachs, is the ability of each indi -vidual to recall the shared memories of the group as their own. This recollection can occur through institutionalised rituals: the Eucharist, for example, or the devotional pilgrimage. The Easter Sunday commemorates the resurrection of Jesus. This cyclical recollection unites the group periodically through repetitive rituals that have been woven into a calendar, providing a system of recollection of memories that can solidify the religion under a shared narrative.
through tangible recollection. Collective memory and monuments thus go hand in hand: they are used by those in power in a continuous process of invention and localisation of historical time. This tension will result in the group’s unity and continuity. Their visibility and affectivity provide proof that the past is not just a series of events occurring in nondescript places, but is meaningful: in order to facilitate the transfer of Jerusalem’s typological, structural, and topographical attributes beyond its physical boundaries and onto other Jerusalems in Europe.

Fig 1: Water from the Holy Land in Santa Maria Church in Bologna, known as the local Jerusalem.

INTRODUCTION—TOWARDS JERUSALEM

However powerful these rituals are in fostering the recollection of memory, Halbwachs argues that in order to assure continuous recollection, Halbwachs argues that to assure unity, “[a] society, first of all, needs to bind itself together. The possibility of Halbwachs’s landmarks brings us to the realm of the monument. It is here that this thesis wishes to explore the notion of collective memory not only through interpretation and visualisation of its spatial, architectural and topographical performances. From the Latin monumentum (or monument, to warn, to recall), a monument acts on the faculty of memory by inscribing into the immediate present, attaching memory to a person, event, or place on the terrain. Choay writes:

For those who erect it, as for those who receive its message, the monuments are a defense against the traumas of existence, a security measure. It is the guarantor of origins, their subjugation to the cult of heritage, where historic monuments are valorised of sacred topography is composed of biblical cities that commemorate or collective memories. As a constellation of sacred sites, these mnemonic markers demarcate a territory that has come to be known as the Holy Land. This sacred topography is composed of biblical cities like Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Capernaum, and natural sites such as the Jordan River, Mount Tabor, or the Valley of Elah. The land was thus made holy as an accumulation of sites invested with scriptural affiliations. This is crucial for this thesis, since shrines such as those found in Rome or Compostella, despite their religious significance for Christian memory, are products of cults of relics and memory from after centuries after the canonisation of the Bible, and are therefore excluded (in the context of this research) as sites of scriptural pilgrimage. Thus, this thesis’s focus on Christian pilgrimage but also to understand this phenomenon through a modern lens: that is, their subjugation to the cult of heritage, where the past is being continuously exploited for economic and political gain.

IMAGE AND PILGRIMAGE

While script plays a crucial role in the history of Jerusalem pilgrimage, it nevertheless remains subject to the regime of visual perception. Unlike the Jewish or Islamic religions, Christianity (particularly the Roman Latin Church) instrumentalised religious art as the bridge between the visible and the invisible. Catholicism’s reliance on the agency of visual representations has been both its strength and its weakness: it allowed the Church to expand its power amongst the literate crowds of pre-Reform Europe, while after 1517 it led to recurring attacks and finally to the purge of those images as icons of idolatry. This thesis studies the use of visual representation in theological art and acknowledges its centrality to the phenomenon of pilgrimage, as it oscillates between the symbolic element that is contingent on interpretation and religious experience and an aesthetic sensibility that relates to invention and localisation of historical time. This tension will return throughout the thesis by exploring not only the iconographic and stylistic variation of images and sculptures but also the ways in which the visual was ritualised in order to facilitate the transfer of Jerusalem’s typological, structural, and topographical attributes beyond its physical boundaries and onto other Jerusalems in Europe.

The chapters that follow seek to warn, to recall, to allay anxieties inspired by the uncertainties of our existence, a security measure. It is the guarantor of origins, its distinct features: a basilica and a rotunda. This is, their subjugation to the cult of heritage, where historic monuments are valorised of sacred topography is composed of biblical cities that commemorate or collective memories. As a constellation of sacred sites, these mnemonic markers demarcate a territory that has come to be known as the Holy Land. This sacred topography is composed of biblical cities like Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Capernaum, and natural sites such as the Jordan River, Mount Tabor, or the Valley of Elah. The land was thus made holy as an accumulation of sites invested with scriptural affiliations. This is crucial for this thesis, since shrines such as those found in Rome or Compostella, despite their religious significance for Christian memory, are products of cults of relics and memory from after centuries after the canonisation of the Bible, and are therefore excluded (in the context of this research) as sites of scriptural pilgrimage. Thus, this thesis’s focus on Christian pilgrimage but also to understand this phenomenon through a modern lens: that is, their subjugation to the cult of heritage, where the past is being continuously exploited for economic and political gain.

While the second chapter explores how particular structures facilitated flexible practices of recollection, Chapter Three focuses on a single ritual: the Stations of the Cross. Based on the Passion, the Via Crucis is an episodic progression of Christ’s path from trial to crucifixion and final resurrection. Since the beginning of the Christian era, the Via Crucis is a progression of Christ’s sacrifice and crucifixion, and the city’s identity as centre of pilgrimage is derived from it. This thesis concludes with a critique of collective memory.

As a counter-project to the valorisation of Jerusalem as an idealised topography and pilgrimage in order to formulate a critique of collective memory.
in sites of Jerusalem pilgrimage, it imagines a different landscape of pilgrimage, a topography that embodies the notion of being both god-made and man-altered, and depicts the urban landscape of the holy city.

In the context of the New Topographics exhibition, Lewis Baltz presented a series of black-and-white images that captured the essence of the suburban development of the 1960s and 70s. The exhibition included the works of ten photographers who were part of the New Topographics movement, which aimed to depict the post-war suburban landscape in a new visual attitude that was purposefully unsentimental. Among the photographers featured were Lewis Baltz, Stephen Shore, Robert Adams, Bernd and Hilla Becher, Joe Deal, Lewis Baltz, Bernd and Hilla Becher, Joe Deal, Peter Carsten, and Stephen Shore. These photographers encapsulated both the physical and the mental landscapes of their surroundings, juxtaposing the monuments of pilgrimage with the banality of suburban development.

Photography is a powerful tool for documenting the enduring topography of pilgrimage, and the photographs presented in this dissertation show the monuments of pilgrimage—from analogical structures to humble surroundings—to the camera, as held by an architect, to define the pilgrim’s path. The photographs express the topographic approach. They give agency to the camera, as wielded by an architect, to define the pilgrimage as that which is defined not only by monuments, but also by the experience of movement and perception of those who cross it; their projections, imaginations, and representations construct its surface and define its contours. As such, the photographic reading of pilgrimage can be understood as the methodological approach of this dissertation: the construction and reconstruction of topography through surveys of places of worship. This topographical understanding was not only used as the primary material of this dissertation—as can be seen in chapters one and four which rely on travelogues and imaginary elements construct the sacred topos, but also as the method of inquiry itself.

By adopting the ‘indifferent’ attitude of Baltz, Adams, and Shore, the photographers are my attempt to downplay the monumentality of Jerusalem and to break through its spiritual envelope. As a result of four years of fieldwork, these images illustrate the written chapters and comprise the design project of this dissertation. Adopting the temporality and liminality of the on-the-road photographers, these photographs encapsulate both the physical terrain and a mental state, where real and imaginary elements construct the sacred topography of my own pilgrimage.

The notion of sacred topography is further discussed in Medieval Modem: Art out of Time (2012), where Alexander Nagel argues that the representation of Jerusalem’s relics (both defined objects and formless earth taken from the city) to Rome generated a fluid territory, where one inhabits a space that is “both ground and not grounded in real earthly territory.” This geographical detachment of Jerusalem pilgrimage and Rome creates the possibility of being neither here nor there, an effect he calls “topographic destabilization.” The possibility of bringing Jerusalem to Rome reveals the true character of both cities, and confirms “the deeper philosophical conviction that earthly places are themselves only registrations within the spatial dimension, a dimension, like that of country that maintains an almost mythical belief in the sacredness of the land and the ultimate good of human profit. That both the holy city and the photographer are parts of this documentation of the monuments of pilgrimage could not be understood merely as the transformative journey to Jerusalem: documenting the enduring topography that embodies the notion of being in sites of Jerusalem pilgrimage, it imagines a

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TOPOGRAPHY AND TOPOGRAPHIES

As a practice of actual movement through space, pilgrimage could not be understood merely as the topographical journey that stretched from sea to land. Rather, it is a physical and mental journey that is defined not only by monuments, but also by the experience of movement and perception of those who cross it; their projections, imaginations, and representations construct the sacred topos, and imaginaries elements construct the sacred topos, but also as the method of inquiry itself.

The photographers were Robert Adams, Lewis Baltz, Stephen Shore, and Hilla Becher. They were all involved in the topographic survey as a creative act, and the photographers were part of the New Topographics movement, which aimed to depict the post-war suburban landscape in a new visual attitude that was purposefully unsentimental. Among the photographers featured were Lewis Baltz, Stephen Shore, and Robert Adams. The exhibition included the works of ten photographers who were part of the New Topographics movement, which aimed to depict the post-war suburban landscape in a new visual attitude that was purposefully unsentimental. Among the photographers featured were Lewis Baltz, Stephen Shore, and Robert Adams. The photographers were Robert Adams, Lewis Baltz, Stephen Shore, and Hilla Becher. They were all involved in the topographic survey as a creative act, and the photographers were part of the New Topographics movement, which aimed to depict the post-war suburban landscape in a new visual attitude that was purposefully unsentimental. Among the photographers featured were Lewis Baltz, Stephen Shore, and Robert Adams.
time, that is no more than a fluttering veil from a metaphysical perspective.” 15 Nagel’s conviction regarding the flexibility of geographical affiliations in Jerusalem highlights the project’s intent to might actually bring forth a truer version of the original, one distilled from the excess profanities of reality.

Despite Nagel, three scholars are notable for discussing the translation of Jerusalem in the West: Blanca Kühnel, Robert Ousterhout, and Anabel Wharton. A historian of medieval art, Kühnel pioneered the investigation into Jerusalem’s translations in the West. She edited the essay ontologies in the West: Bianca Kühnel, Robert Ousterhout, and Anabel Wharton. A historian of medieval art, Kühnel pioneered the investigation into Jerusalem’s translations in the West. She edited the essay Topographics and visual representations around the Constructs of Jerusalem.

This mentality is influenced by Jack Remington’s renowned book The Road to Jerusalem (1997) and the French-Venezuelan think tank of the City of the Holy Sepulchre of Cambridge. The Real and Ideal Jerusalem in the West. Entitled Jonas, Tourism, Religion and Relics, Replicas, and a phenomenon better understood through the reading of The Struggle for Gaza (2012) by John Urry and Jonas Larsson. In his work of Reverend John Donald Wilkin- son (1929–2018) provided much of the primary research material for this thesis with his transla- tions of texts written by Jerusalem pilgrims before the eleventh century. In particular, his translations and analyses of the itinerary of the pilgrim from Bordeaux and the letters of the Spanish nun Egeria (published in 1971 as Egeria’s Travels to the Holy Land) were an invaluable source for the first chapter. As a priest working for thirty years on ancient Jerusalem, Kobi Cohen-Hattab and Noam Shoval’s The Struggle for Jerusalem’s Holy Places (2013) and John Urry and Jonas Larsson’s tour of Jerusalem in recent decades. Eyal Weizman’s Hollow Land: Josep’s Architecture of Occupation (2007) chronicles the drive to realign the political economy of Israeli and the British project in Jerusalem, exploring the agency of building materials (such as the use of the so-called Jerusalem stone) and the structural and material infra- structure towards Palestinians’ Daniels’s The Holy Land: A Geologist’s Inquiry: The Immediacy of Architecture and the Palestinian Conflict (2002) traces the relationship between historical monuments and political conflicts from the time of the British Mandate of Palestine, and argues that architecture serves to naturalise territorial disputes.42 Weizman and Monks, alongside notable architects such as Zvi Efrat, Rafi Segal, and Malkit Shoshan, have created frameworks through which students of the Middle Eastern conflict can understand the traces of the past. This political reading of the past—a selective history that is then inserted back into the city’s monuments, where it makes tangible a single, often exclusion- ary narrative.

Rossi’s seminal book had an incredible influence on the profession in the following decades: until today, we witness architects who romanticise the possibility of evoking collective memories through their designs, without realising the conflictual formation of such sentiments. The thesis thus problematises the notion of ‘collective memory’ as a concept that is con- trolled by not only political forces but also eco- nomic ones, as historic monuments have been valorised to maximise their profitability. As the architect Christos Avgoustinos writes, “The Historic Monument by acknowledging that the valorisation of historic monuments is a process of not only increasing visibility and legibility but has been the focus of spatial battles since its very foundation in the second millennium BC. Within this context, the current condition is both another re-interpretation of the function of political power over the sacred spaces cherished by people of faith. Thus, in Jerusalem, we find the tension between the genuine beliefs of religious subjects and the pragmatic utilisation of historic monu- ments. In other words, this thesis places today’s condition in the larger context by showing that the current conflict in Jerusalem is yet another manifestation of the way in which power— who control the infrastructure of rituals and faith—could manipulate people’s spirituality into political gain. On this major theme in this thesis is collective memory. It follows the theory put forth by Halbwachs, while attempting to bring forth a critical reading of the ways in which memory was spatialised. Studying the memorialisation of Jerusalem’s urban space reveals that the heritage project is fraught with artificial constructions, national aspirations, and a selective reading of history that writes-out the existence of those who are excluded from it. This...
also generating surplus value. Rossi’s book, written before the rise of UNESCO and the heritage industry, could not have predicted the ultimate commodification of what he described as “certain artefacts [that] become part of [the city’s] memory [...] in this entirely positive sense great ideas flow through the history of the city and give shape to it.” Indeed, these memories within the city have been enclosed, enhanced, and as this thesis will show - have turned into an asset under the cult of heritage which has seen exponential growth in the last three decades. This commodification distorts the phenomenon of spiritual travel and blurs the distinction between a pilgrim and a tourist; this economic aspect of collective memory will be scrutinised in this thesis for exploiting cultural and religious values for the creation and circulation of capital.

Once this legacy of corruption is confronted, the thesis will attempt to reclaim the enchantment initially found in pilgrimage by proposing alternative methods of devotion that could be enacted in flexible topographies through the combination of text, image, memory, and imagination. Using photography as a design tool to create an alternative travelogue, a new type of pilgrimage can emerge where the effect of ‘destabilising topography’ described above could be balanced by the stabilising quality of rituals, and where memory could be reclaimed in a personal, rather than collective, sense. Arguably, the effect of ‘destabilising topography’ described above can only be balanced by the stabilising quality of rituals. In the words of Antoine Saint-Exupéry, rituals are “temporal techniques of making oneself at home in the world.”

Like things in space, rituals offer structure, sameness, and repetition; they allow one to create distance or even estrangement from themselves. Be they physical or mental, still or peripatetic, speaking or silent, this thesis will thus try to untangle the rituals of pilgrimage from its ties to power in order to reclaim it as an act of liberty, of movement through space and time, progressing towards a destination that may never fully arrive, but nevertheless declares an orientation to life itself.

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Ibid, 52.

Quoted in Han, Byung-Chul, The Disappearance of Ritual (2009).
THE INVENTION OF THE HOLY LAND

PILGRIMAGE AND THE CHRISTIAN APPROPRIATION OF JERUSALEM

The earliest traces of human settlements in Jerusalem date to 5000 BC. A Canaanite village perched on the Judean Mountains above the Gihon spring, far from any strategic trade-route, it was populated mostly by graves. By the nineteenth century BC, Jerusalem was a substantial city-state, its name first recorded as “Urusalim”, perhaps after Salam or Shalom (“peace” in Arabic or Hebrew). Over the next centuries, Jerusalem experienced recurring attacks from the New Kingdom of Egypt to the south and Assyria to the north, which encouraged Jewish settlers to build their city as a citadel of steep fortification, terraced housing, and intricate tunnels. However, it was not until King David captured the stronghold in 1000 BC that Jerusalem was established as a capital city. This was also the beginning of the city’s spiritual significance as the centre of the Hebrews, a uniquely monotheistic tribe that had arrived centuries earlier from Mesopotamia.

David’s son, King Solomon, built the First (Jewish) Temple on top of Mount Moriah—believed to be the biblical site where the Hebrew patriarch Abraham nearly sacrificed his only son, Isaac—thus commemorating the site as one of unconditional devotion. Built over seven years, the shrine at the centre of Temple Mount housed “The Holy of the Holies”—the wooden Ark of the Covenant. According to the Book of Exodus of the Hebrew Bible, pilgrimage to the Temple was mandatory for all Jews three times a year, corresponding to the agricultural calendar. This ritual came to a halt in 587 BC when the city was besieged by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, who executed King Zedekiah, burned down Solomon’s Temple, and exiled the Hebrews. In Babylon, the Israelites formed the Biblical scripts, solidified the religion, and awaited their redemptive day of return—and indeed, in 516 BC, the Second Temple was inaugurated on the ruins of Solomon’s first. This temple, which was modest in scale and decoration, was entirely remodelled in the first century BC by the half-Jewish, half-Arab Roman King Herod, who executed a megalomaniacal construction project that continues to dominate the topography of the Old City of Jerusalem until today. Over the next century, hundreds of thousands of Jews arrived in Jerusalem to visit the new altar built upon the exposed bedrock of Mount Moriah, in the heart of Herod’s vast man-made plateau.

This fortified city, with its monumental temple, was not only the bastion of Jewish tradition—it was also the city of Christ. Born in Bethlehem, a small village on the outskirts of Jerusalem, and raised in Nazareth, Jesus attended the Passover festivities in Jerusalem every year. After 30 AD, Jesus triumphantly returned to Jerusalem for what were to be his final days; the city’s streets and the Jewish Temple formed the backdrop for the Passion—Christ’s trial, crucifixion, entombment, and resurrection—and thus became inseparable from any Christian ritual of recollection. This heavenly city of both the Jewish Temple and Christ presented a unity between the ideal and the real for close to a century. In 70 AD, after years of siege, the Roman Emperor Titus captured the city and destroyed the temple, demolished houses, and burned most of the city’s trees. In that decisive moment, Holy Jerusalem was dispatched from its earthly corollary, which now lay in ruins and chaos.

For the next six decades, Jerusalem was reduced to a camp of the tenth Roman Legion (legio X Fretensis), and Jews and Nazarenes (a minor Palestinian sect that gradually separated from Judaism) were forbidden to live on its site, under the penalty of death. This urban vacuum gave rise to paganism. In 135 AD, following the defeat of yet another Jewish revolt, Emperor Hadrian changed the city’s name to Aelia Capitolina, after his own last name of Aelius and the Roman god Jupiter Capitolinus. Hadrian’s city was smaller than the one built by the Arab-Jewish King Herod only a century earlier, and held little religious or political significance within the Roman empire. As a pagan emperor, Hadrian obliterated the remains of monotheism in the city by transforming the ruins of the Jewish Temple into the Capitolum by covering the supposed burial place of Christ. While the primary goal of the Jews was to return and rebuild the physical city below, the nascent Christian religion ascribed increasing religious and symbolic significance to the Jerusalem above as the city of an idea.
Contrary to the hopes of Christ’s persecutors, the crucification of the charismatic leader from Nazareth did not put an end to his messianic fervour. As auvant within a politically troubled region endured among his followers (not to mention his proof of divinity through the many accounts of the resurrected Christ). By the time of the Crucifixion, news of the Resurrection was already circulating from Jerusalem through the Galilee and beyond the coastal regions of Asia Minor. The early Christians adhered to a new faith and solidified the importance of Palestine and Syria in the spread of Christianity.

As such, in Christianity, we witness a shift from the terrestrial finite to celestial eternity, a movement that we know as the collective fate to individual faith. From collective fate to individual faith, the journey of the early Christian community constitutes a shift from the Jewish ritual to a form of worship based on the faith in the risen Christ. The early Christians, like their Jewish predecessors, gathered for the reading of scripture. However, these gatherings, which included a meal and a symposium, were held in private homes rather than the Sacred Space of Jerusalem. In contrast, the earthly Jerusalem—associated with the Jewish enslavement to material forces—was required for the expansion of the religion. To better understand this phenomenon, it is crucial to trace the development of the religion from a small group of followers to a global movement.

While the Church has a long history of religious and political power, it is crucial to understand the development of Christianity from the time of the New Testament. The early Christians were a small group of followers who gathered together to one another, often at the house of a believer. These gatherings were the foundation of the religion, thus forming the pool of collective memories of the Christian faith. Names of people, places, and events were allocated in the process of the faith’s development and the faithful and reconciled within an intangible realm, accessible from one’s own mind. Thus, collective memories were strategically utilized and disseminated away from the earthly Jerusalem, which was now used as a symbol in sermons and prayers to facilitate reconciliation and give a clear orientation.

Indeed, early Christianity did not grow from the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem. Read in succession week after week, the life of the Church spiritual pilgrimage could now be practiced by retreating Christ’s own salvation, moving between the places where he walked, preached, and suffered, as the journey develops. To understand this phenomenon, text, indeed, is crucial here. It was the raison d’être of early Christian pilgrims, who were guided by scripture and later recorded their personal experiences in writing for the benefit of future pilgrims. Unlike their Jewish and pagan predecessors, these pilgrims were distinguished by their inherent subjectivity and outlook on the journey. To better understand this phenomenon, two travel writings of fourth-century Christian pilgrims will be explored below: the Itinerary of the Pilgrim from Bordeaux (333 AD) and the letters written from Jerusalem.

The Bordeaux Pilgrim was able to refer to the names of locations from the Sacred Scriptures, such as the hometown of Paul the Apostle or Mount Carmel, where “Elijah did his sacrifice.” This list-format of locations, which included distances, topographical markers, and other geographical and authoritative literary techniques, the pilgrim is able to superimpose a scriptural topographical matter-of-factly upon the landscape. The Bordeaux Pilgrim was able to refer to indigenous site names thanks to the Onomasticon (“On the Place-Names in the Holy Scripture”) by Eusebius, the bishop of Caesarea, from the early fourth century. This directory consisted of an alphabetized alphabetical list of site names translated from the original Aramaic into Greek. Eusebius managed to locate a contemporary location for about a third of these places of worship in Jerusalem, but also rebuild the story of the city as it changed from a pagan colony to a Christian capital.

ATTACH A STONE’S THROW AWAY: To the Holy Land of Pilgrimage. Chapter 1: GEOGRAPHY OF THE PILGRIM FROM BORDEAUX. The earliest record of Christian pilgrimage to the Holy Land of pilgrimage was built as a database of people and resources, and thus had to take an around an enclosed courtyard, similar to a caravanserai. As he approaches the Holy Land, the text begins to include names of locations from the Old Testament. He used a detailed map of the landscape, such as the hometown of Paul the Apostle or Mount Carmel, where “Elijah did his sacrifice.” This list-format of locations, which included distances, topographical markers, and other geographical and authoritative literary techniques, the pilgrim is able to superimpose a scriptural topographical matter-of-factly upon the landscape. The Bordeaux Pilgrim was able to refer to indigenous site names thanks to the Onomasticon (“On the Place-Names in the Holy Scripture”) by Eusebius, the bishop of Caesarea, from the early fourth century. 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The Itinerarium Egeriae is a very specific guidebook that provides idiomatic knowledge about the Holy Land and Christian pilgrimage and places of memory. It chronicles no more nor less than the places where scripture and place coincide, from notable sites to seemingly mundane natural elements that are infused with theological meaning. The plane trees he saw were planted by Jacob; a rock described in a vineyard marks the site of Judas’s betrayal of Jesus; a palm tree is the same one “from which children took branches and strewn them in Christ’s path.” Places relating to Christ’s life as a man, however, had yet to be infused with a redemptive narrative, and were therefore omitted from the journey—or from its representation. Capernaum and Nazareth, located only a day’s trip from his route, were ignored. The Itinerarium projected a system of belief that was developed outside the Holy Land and thus was concerned only with the particular events recollected in Western services.

In the Holy City, the Bordeaux Pilgrim bore witness to the invention of Christian Jerusalem. This transformation was achieved through a large-scale construction project launched in the aftermath of the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, when Constantine summoned the Empire’s bishops (a recorded total of 318 attendees) to discuss the unification of the Christian doctrine and the celebration of Easter. As an emerging institution, Christianity was in need of newly-erected monuments where its members’ recollections could be staged. Following a recommendation from Macarius, the bishop of Jerusalem, Constantine ordered the construction of a series of churches in Palestine to commemorate the events of the Passion, death, and resurrection.

Less than a decade after the Council, these recently established monuments would appear in the Bordeaux Pilgrim’s increasingly elaborate descriptions. He enters Jerusalem from the East Gate and proceeds west along a walled street towards the Temple Mount, thus tracing the path of Jewish pilgrims before 70 AD. He describes the enormous labour that went into its construction, the architectural remnants of the great vaults “where Solomon used to torture demons”, and the subterranean chambers of Solomon’s former palace “where he was when he wrote of Wisdom.” When he reaches the epicentre of the Temple Mount plateau, where the shrine used to stand, he describes the residues of both Pagan and Jewish presence:

And in the sanctuary itself, where the Temple stood which Solomon built there is marble in front of the altar which has on it the blood of Zacharias—you would think it had only been shed today [...] two statues of Hadrian stand there. And, not far from them, a pierced stone which the Jews come and anoint each year. They mourn and rend their garments and then depart.

While archaeologically inaccurate, the text nevertheless paints a picture of Jerusalem as a city undergoing ideological and theological transformation. For the first time since 70 AD, Jews were allowed back into the city thanks to Constantine’s decision from 324 AD. For him, Jewish Jerusalem was no longer a threat; much like the pagan Aelia, it was now part of the past. Indeed, Jerusalem was about to be transformed by a series of monuments that would shift the centre of gravity away from the palimpsest of the old Jerusalem on Temple Mount and towards an entire territory of sacred sites.

The Bordeaux Pilgrim visits several of these sites, including a basilica on Mount Olives “where the Lord went up to pray” and the tomb “in which laid Lazarus, whom the Lord Raised”; an “exceptionally beautiful basilica” in Abraham’s city, Terebinthas, and the Basilica in Bethlehem, where Christ was born. Many of these sites were built by Constantine’s mother, Empress Helena, who is also believed to have discovered Christ’s True Cross. Constantine’s biographer wrote that Helena’s journey to Palestine was one “to the ground which the Saviour’s feet had trodden”,...
Christianity by the Empire, as well as the empowerment of foreign visitors to dramatically alter the conditions of prayer in Jerusalem. In the following decades, additional sites were erected in and around the Holy City to commemorate a growing number of sites: the Basilica of the Apostles on Mount Zion, the Chapel of St. James (352 AD), the Martyrium of St. John the Baptist on the Mount of Olives (363 AD), an octagonal church on the site of the Ascension, and a church in memory of the Agony (358 AD). But the episcopate of this wide construction project was undoubtedly the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the most spatially complex and theologically charged site of them all, was created to commemorate Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection, the dogmatic events of the Christian religion. Although these events had an inherently spatial dimension in religious recollection, they were not readily visible as material traces or artifacts in fourth-century Jerusalem; therefore, a site for their localisation had to be found by no other than Constantine himself. This is elaborated on in Eusebius’ Vita Constantini, a glorifying biography of Constantine written in the immediate aftermath of his death in 337 AD. Eusebius writes that Constantine:

judged it incumbent on him to render the blessed locality of our Saviour’s resurrection an object of attraction and veneration to all. He issued immediate injunctions, therefore, for the erection in that spot of a house of prayer: and this he did, not on the mere natural impulse of his own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healing for her own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healing for her own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healing for her own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healing for her own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healing for her own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healing for her own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healing for her own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healing for her own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healing for her own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healing for her own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healing for her own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healing for her own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healing for her own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healing for her own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healing for her own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healing for her own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healing for her own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healing for her own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healing for her own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healing for her own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healing for her own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healing for her own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healing for her own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healing for her own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healing for her own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healing for her own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healing for her own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healing for her own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healing for her own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healing for her own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healing for her own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healing for her own soul [and] she gave... [she] sought healin...
received particular knowledge through oral tradition. As Egeria explains, “I asked about it [a holy site] and the holy men replied, ‘Holy Moses was buried here’ [...] our predecessors pointed this place to us, and now we point it to you. They told us that this tradition came from their predecessors.” With the help of her guides and a Bible in hand, Egeria meanders across Sinai in the following biblical localities:

All the way I kept asking to see the different places mentioned in the Bible, and they were all pointed out to me by the Holy Men [...] some of the places were to the right and others to the left of our route, some a long way off and others close by.

Throughout the text, Egeria’s tone remains somewhat conversational and highly descriptive, often echoing lines from scripture. Like the pilgrim from Bordeaux, Egeria’s gaze hardly ever wanders beyond the biblical realm, and her representation omits any topographical details that could not be directly ascribed to scripture. This resulted in a compendium of desert locations that lacked an institutional system of commemoration, a little more than a cluster of generic features in a barren desert. However, they were made memorable by the words of her guides, who could affiliate the landscape with historical events. As we were coming out of the church the presbyters of the place gave us ‘blessings’, some fruit which grows on the mountain itself [...] thus the holy men were kind enough to show us everything, and there too we made the offering and prayed very earnestly, and the passages were read from the Book of the Holy Land. Indeed, whenever we arrived anywhere, I myself always wanted the Bible passages read to me.

Egeria’s remark exemplifies her affinity for reading a site’s scriptural affiliation while remaining within the familiar framework of recollection—her “usual way.” Indeed, anthropologist Glenn Bowman argues that Egeria did not invent a Holy Land, but rather inherited one from the memories of her guides and the itineraries of her predecessors. Her mode of worship, much like the sacred topography of Sinai, was imported from the tradition of a religion in exile that maintained its continuity through textual recollection of memories. However, unlike the existing practice in the West of reading a text in successive installments in a single church, Egeria—as an observer to the “Holy Men”—introduced a new logic of dividing the Old Testament into its component verses and reading each one at the place where its narrative events transpired, thus creating a ritual path across the Sinai based on geographical progression rather than scriptural chronology. The seriality and fragmentation of the ritual in the desert, following the Exodus of the Israelites, foreshadowed what Egeria would experience in Jerusalem: the systematic stational character of its narrative events transpired, thus creating a ritual path across the city’s unique rituals.

Egeria arrived in Jerusalem in 381 AD. At that time, the unusually large liturgy was headed by Cyril of Jerusalem, who was ordained by Macarius (the bishop during Constantine’s conversion) and had occupied the seat of the bishop since the inauguration of the Anastasis Rotunda in 348 AD. Throughout the fourth century, Cyril was the only bishop who included pilgrims in his services, and he was most likely responsible for the formation of the city’s unique rituals. Egeria described Jerusalem’s liturgical structure in detail: the bishop was the father of the church; the presbyters read from the scriptures and preached to the crowd, prayed, and recited psalms; the deacons took part in the prayers but did not preach; and the clerics assisted with baptism. During the services, as each figure carried out their specific role while Egeria sat but a silent observer; her pilgrimage through the desert did not elevate her status in the church hierarchy, and she remained a passive participant in clerical routines, like the majority of Christian laity within the religion’s hierarchical structure.

Egeria’s letters are so exhaustively detailed that they preserve—“like a fly in amber,” according to historian Jonathan Smith—a process of transformation that was then underway. Egeria begins her letters from Jerusalem: “Loving sisters, I am sure it will interest you to know about the daily service they have in the holy places, and I must tell you about them.” She reports, in the third person, every movement, conversation, service, and location of a holy site, giving equal emphasis to important information (such as scriptural quotes or prayers) as to mundane details such as a building’s smell, making the experience ever more vivid for her audience. With great attention, she lists the elements of the services: poems, sung by the boys’ choir; prayers spoken by the bishop or a presbyter; lessons and preaching, where the Bible was read and taught; and the elaborate dismissal, or mass, when the bishop blessed all participants and sealed the service. Of special interest was the intricate daily service in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre:

Our path lay through the middle of the valley which stretched out in front of us, the valley in which, as I have told you, the children of Israel had their camp while Moses went up into the Mount of God and came down again. And all the way through the valley the holy men were showing us the different places. Right at the end of the valley, where we had spent the night and seen the Burning Bush out of which God spoke to Holy Moses, we saw also the place where Moses was standing before the Bush when God said to him “Unde the fastening of thy shoes: for the place where thou standest shall stand holy ground.” [Exodus 3:5, Acts 7:31] They showed us where the calf had been made, where a large stone was set in the ground and still stands [...] they showed us where Holy Moses ordered the children of Israel to run ‘from gate to gate’ [Exodus 32:27] when he had come back from the Mount.

This lengthy (and somewhat tedious) account goes on to include, alongside the “Burning Bush” and “large stone”, additional places from the Book of Moses, such as the site of the miracle of the manna or the stream from which Moses drew water for the Israelites to drink [Exodus 32:20]. Finally, Egeria concludes:

I know it has been rather a long business writing down all these places one after the other, and it makes far too much to remember. But it may help you, living sisters, the better to picture what happened in those places when you read the Books of Holy Moses.

This passage reveals Egeria’s candid motivation to write her letters not as a guidebook for future travelers, nor a self-interested memoir, but a spiritually-focused, scriptural recollections in Christian communities far from the holy places. In this passage, Egeria explains that the combination of land and text are crucial for the Christian faith because neither is legible on its own. Egeria’s pilgrimage exemplifies how text and place come together to foster an in situ recollection of Christian memories, similar to what took place in services in her home church. We learn of this ritual from Egeria’s description of her visit to Mount Sinai, where she met with the local presbyter (“a healthy old man [...] in fact just the man for the place”), and wrote:

...when the whole passage had been read to us from the Book of Moses (on the very spot!) we made the offering in the usual way and received communion. As we were coming out of the church the presbyters of the place gave us ‘blessings’, some fruit which grows on the mountain itself [...] thus the holy men were kind enough to show us everything, and there too we made the offering and prayed very earnestly, and the passages were read from the Book of the Holy Land. Indeed, whenever we arrived anywhere, I myself always wanted the Bible passages read to us.

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The systematic in situ reading of the gospels by the liturgy and the embodiment of Christ by the local bishop extended beyond the Anastasis-Golgotha axis to include other commemorative spaces throughout the city. Like the reading of Christ’s resurrection in his tomb, the Anastasis cycle is represented by a sequence of narrative events, and place for a number of narrative events, which were spread across the year, forming the annual Christian calendar. And as some holy sites were also actualising Jewish observances, so did the Christian year recontextualise some older Jewish observances, namely agricultural festivals Passover began Easter; the Tabernacle, consecrated on the Mount of Olives, was considered the Feast of Dedication (or the Dedication), in which the consecration of the churches in Jerusalem was similarly celebrated by Christians across the provinces. Egeria describes the Anastasis on the Hill of Golgotha. On Pentecost, the ritual would visit up to eight different locations.

As Egeria shows, each of these festivities intersected with at least two of the ten holy sites in Jerusalem and its environs. Its annual cycle of rituals was spread across the city, creating a Christian territory of monuments and churches linked together and consecrated numbers of Christ, but from every place and province. From them flow to make for Jerusalem to share the celebrations of this honourable festival," Egeria describes the Anastasis: "The day when the Church of the Anastasis-Golgotha was consecrated, the Lord rose after the passion, and in the same day the holy church of the Anastasis was also consecrated, the place where the Lord rose after his passion, so they arranged that this day should be observed with all possible solemnity: [saying] that the day of this annunciation was when the Lord was consecrated, and holy taken up in prayer before God’s face, as we read in the Book of Chronicles [7:9-10] and John 10:24-25: Egeria 48.1

The process groups the Immomon, "the place from which the Lord ascended into heaven", where, at five o’clock, "the procession begins from the Church of the Ascension, the people who met the Lord with palm branches, saying ‘Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.’ [Matt 21:9]" In this event, unlike previous occasions, the entire community answers Christ’s scripted call (as read to them by the bishop) to participate in the Passion. As they ascend the mountain, Jerusalem becomes a stage: the Lord’s resurrection. It was Pentecost, the feast of the coming of the Holy Spirit.

The description of the first day of the Holy Week reveals the city-wide magnitude of these celebrations, encompassing all ages of the population and passing “all through the city.” On other days of the Holy Week, the liturgy parades were conducted with well-defined offenses and positions in the community in a processional movement between the church on Mount Sion, the Nativitv in Bethlem, the Basilica at Gethsemanie, and the Anastasis on the Hill of Golgotha. On Pentecost, the ritual would visit up to eight different locations.

Many massive flow of people across the city, with its chants, costumes, and props, reflects the transformation of Christianity from a private mode of worship to a public display of a powerful religion. Devotion was a civic activity—It was participation in urban life itself. The procession of a great crowd from station to station defines the territory of Christian Jerusalem and subtle antagonism to the place and practice of the first Christian maundy. She also extended the city walls to include suburban Christian sites, such as Mount Zion beyond the Haddadnic enclosure, and built fora and temples on the sites of the churches of the Lord’s Ascension. Wilkinson, Egeria’s Jerusalem, 76-77.

The Invention of the Holy Land

The Urban Character of Christian Jerusalem, 129-130.

This movement between the stations seems to hold as much significance as the stations themselves. Throughout the various daily, weekly, and yearly celebrations, the citizens and pilgrims of Jerusalem would follow the bishop between the stations, chanting, conversing in small groups, and participating in the Holy Land, forums, and basilicas while remaining within the walled perimeter of protection. By appropriating increasing urban territory for Christianity, the built two-storied churches and powerhouses were a pivotal development in the material and symbolic reinscription of the city: it influenced the local economy, shifted the city’s structures of power, expanded non-Christian access, paved the streets with landmarks, and ritualised the urban fabric. This new incarnation of Jerusalem was the inevitable outcome of a process sparked by Constantine, whose patronage oriented the medieval geography of the Christian world to a topographical reality, and sustained by his successors, who invested in the construction and maintenance of institutions of pilgrimage and ten different churches.

The Urban Character of Christian Jerusalem, 52-53.

The Invention of the Holy Land

The Urban Character of Christian Jerusalem, 129-130.
We understand these dramatic transformations through the personal writings of two travellers who both exemplify a new subject—the Traveller as Pilgrim. Leaving for extended periods of time—the Bordeaux Pilgrim travelled for over a year, mostly on the road to and from Jerusalem, and Egeria spent three years in Jerusalem—these pilgrims moved as innate foreigners within familiar biblical lands. They were conscious of their intentions, eager to record their journeys, and motivated by spiritual goals. Their travelogues thus reveal not only the changing status of Jerusalem during the Christian version of the Roman Empire, but also the power of travellers to project a reality upon the landscape and alter both the real and imagined city.

While this chapter links these two pilgrims through their roles in shaping Christian devotion in the Roman Empire, it must be acknowledged that they had contradictory motivations and wrote for different audiences. The Bordeaux traveller from Bordeaux constructed his text as a spatial path that could be retraced by future pilgrims heading towards Jerusalem. As a Christian traveller, he utilised a familiar literary technique to convince fellow Christians (often addressing his readers in the second-person present tense) that the Bible land was within their reach. Arguably, his text rearranged the imperial hierarchy by documenting the Holy Land as a tangible territory: by localising Christian memories within a real terrain, he eventually reversed the allegorical process of dematerialisation of the Old and New Testament that Christianity had adopted in exile. Crucially, the Itinerarium Burdigalense legitimised and facilitated physical travel to sacred locations for the purpose of recollecting Christian memories. As Hallowachs observes, the physical examination of symbolic sites reveals the essence of religious phenomena—“those stones erected and preserved by crowds and by successive generations of people whose traces one can follow in these very stones. These are not traces of a human or supernatural individual but rather of groups animated by a collective faith.” The Bordeaux traveller thus encourages participation in cyclical commemorative works re-enacted on sites and shared with a growing crowd.

Egeria had the opposite aim. By capturing a prescriptive account of Jerusalem’s liturgy to send back to the West, her detailed letters could serve as a guidebook to re-enact Jerusalem’s rituals anywhere, using the chronological system standardised across the empire. By reading the text according to the dates of the year, Egeria’s readers could re-enact her movements in the Holy Land, basing their confidence in her comprehensive personal account confirmed by geographic alignments with scripture. Egeria’s letters facilitated a withdrawal from the geographic specificity of Jerusalem and a focus on vivid imagination of spiritual places. She emphasised time over space, commending the liturgy for fixing texts as temporal events in a daily, monthly, and yearly chronology: “What I admire and value most is that all the hymns and antiphons and readings they have, and all the prayers the bishop says, are always relevant to the day which is being observed and to the place in which they are used.”

Thanks to the letters of Egeria, a ritual born in Jerusalem could be replicated in the West with near-identical precision of time and speech. In this process, place was suppressed, giving rise to imagination, meditation, and visualisation as alternatives modes of recollection. This also allowed for new collective memory to form with more flexibility of localisation and commemoration. As the physical city of Jerusalem grew less amenable to Western visitors in the centuries to come, this relocation of the faith proved valuable. As the next chapter will explore, other Jerusalems proliferated across Medieval Europe, offering pilgrims alternate destinations to the Holy Land—yet these places were still oriented towards Jerusalem, similar literary technique between Egeria and the Bordeaux traveller, combining movement, text and memory.
THE BASILICA AND THE ROTUNDA

THE CONCEPT OF ANALOGY AND THE RISE OF URBAN PILGRIMAGE IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE

The public form of Christian worship in Jerusalem would come to an end in the seventh century. The brief invasion by the Persians in 614 AD and the Islamic conquest of 638 AD destroyed the city's shrines and left the Christian capital in ruins. As a result, the collective memories that were localised by Constantine and his successors were gradually lost; the rituals that maintained the possibility of recollection were suppressed. It was during those interim centuries between the fall of the city to Islam in the seventh century and its recapture by the Crusades in 1099 AD that Jerusalem's physical unavailability was negated through the erection of alternatives in Europe. As such, the spiritual vector towards Jerusalem was inverted away from the city itself and toward the bastions of Christianity in the West, taking the shape of physical traces (such as relics, pieces of earth, and containers of specimens) and place-naming European shrines after sites in the Holy Land, which allowed recollection to occur away from the historical markers in the ancient city.

Another form in which Jerusalem was transferred outside its boundaries was through the spatial replication of architectural elements that held a mnemonic association with the Holy City. More specifically, this chapter will focus on the transfer of a spatial logic that was abstracted from Christianity's most revered sites and transplanted into new locations. This translation will be explored through the concept of analogy in order to understand how an archetype that was born in Jerusalem was appropriated in the West for political, spiritual, and economic gain. These alternative Jerusalems—altars, churches, and landscapes—differed in scale and program, and yet they were all united by their commitment to a certain abstraction of the Holy City that can be understood through analogical thinking, an intelligence that is fundamental for both this chapter and the thesis at large, as it questions notions of territorial specificity in favour of a spatial temporality and flexible geography.

THE CASE AGAINST JERUSALEM PILGRIMAGE

While the idea of pilgrimage to an alternative Jerusalem became prominent in the Middle Ages, it should be understood within the political and theological framework of the fourth century. As the first chapter showed, the public worship that emerged in the urban condition of Jerusalem made Christianity visible and powerful. However, it also distanced the faith from the founding principles of its cult, established two centuries earlier. As described in the previous chapter of this dissertation, Christianity was developed as boundless, universal, and anti-world; the symbolic ownership of Jerusalem's topography through the processional liturgy seems to contradict these notions, especially those put forth by St Paul. In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul argues that “your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you.” His radical idea that God is found within one's body was as strategic as it was spiritual: it allowed Christians under persecution and in exile to practice religion in solitude through contemplative prayer. It also separated Christianity from the Graeco-Roman traditions of celebratory public rituals, and thus from the sanctity of physical objects or geographical places. Within this theological framework, the journey to a divine site, with the associated physical and mental hardships, could be seen as superfluous to the faith. In the fourth century AD, as Christianity's memories were being materialised in the Holy Land, some religious leaders voiced their opinion against the rise of Jerusalem pilgrimage. Two prominent figures were St Jerome and Gregory of Nyssa, who wrote letters to refute the rising phenomenon of spiritual travel to the Holy City. While their arguments were essentially theological, their reasoning was no doubt underpinned by political motivations, which are deeply embedded in the powerful vector that is pilgrimage.

St Jerome arrived in Jerusalem in 385 AD. He left Rome, where he was the secretary of Bishop Damasus I, with an entourage of noblewomen who intended to spend the remainder of their days in Palestine.
From his monastic cell in Bethlehem, Jerome dedicated himself to writing letters and translating the Old and New Testament to Latin. In his Letter 94 from his cell to his friend Paulinus of Nola from making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He claims that spiritual gain and pious behaviour are bound not by a specific territory but by personal commitment. The Second Coming, he tells Paulinus that “the true worshippers worship the Father neither at Jerusalem nor on mount Gerizim,” and that access to the courts of heaven is as easy from Britain as from Jerusalem, for “the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21). Material things may pass, and when that happens, he warns, so will the places made hollow by Christ’s history; only those who embody the cross shall remain.

But Jerome’s letters would not be so influential if they merely reiterated the zeitgeist of the learned Church. As his letter unfolds, it reveals an attitude that derived from the experience of the fourth-century city, where prostitution, crime, and evil are more prevalent than the spiritual aura emanating from the scenography of the Passion. He writes:

Female cities and their crowds. Live on a small patch of ground, seek Christ in solitude, pray on the mountain alone with Jesus, keep to holy places: keep out of cities, I say, and you will never lose your vocation.

Jerome suggests that the archetype of salvation is the body itself, where it is protected from various forms of exploitation that can occur in liturgical worship. This attitude dominated the monastic movement which was emerging at the time amongst those who rejected the urban life. Aligning his words with those of St Paul, he claims that physical proximity to the holy sites is not necessary. Thus, he does not completely renounce the idea of sacred space, but he reminds Paulinus that spiritual ascendency is not granted by sheer presence, and that being worthy of these places is conditional on moral behaviour.

By sheer presence, and that being worthy of these places is conditional on moral behaviour. Paulinus that spiritual ascendency is not granted by sheer presence, and that being worthy of these places is conditional on moral behaviour.

Gregory’s last sentence is striking: unlike Jerome, he was not rejecting pilgrimage as such, nor was he preaching against physical journeys to sacred shrines. Claiming that Jerome has no advantage over other regions of the world, Gregory infers that our own places of worship can grant an equal, if not higher, spiritual gain. Gregory does not shun the inculturation process, but integrates it into an environment with divine presence; he simply suggests that it could be found in other locations on earth. Considering Gregory’s role as the bishop of Caesarea, he was clear about the saintly sites in his region: “Really, if it is possible to infer God’s presence from the things that appear, one might more justice consider that he dwelt in the nation of the Capadocians than in places elsewhere!”

Hence, if one remains inclined toward physical objects and sites, it should be in a manner that does not pose a moral risk. He concludes: “Praise him in the places where you have confidence and the confidence of his people.” For Gregory, the presence of the church with the marks and saints, and ecclesiastical power converge.

But there is also an inherent contradiction between Jerome and Gregory. While one advocates worship through internal prayer and contemplation, the other promotes active participation in public services. This tension between the static and the chorographic is emblematic of the inherent dilemma of pilgrimage—an interior experience that is ever-present and an exterior performance that is spatially bound. That is, between the movement itself—which is exterior, intensive, and subject to interaction with the world—and the moment of arrival, where the pilgrim halts for meditation that is entirely internal. These two vectors, the horizontal and the vertical, are combined in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where the conflict between the opinions of Jerome and Gregory remains spatially embedded.

AN ARCHETYPE

Hierarchies

The Basilica and the Rotunda

CHAPTER TWO—

Universalism and Hierarchy: The Holy Sepulchre as an Archetype

Suspended between public services and private meditations, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre emerged in the fourth century as a Christian archetype through the convergence of liturgical spaces: the basilica and the rotunda. This spatial configuration forms the basis for the Jerusalem analogy. As Gregory of Nyssa articulates in his Letter 58, “let our counsel be all analogical.” An analogy can be defined as an abstraction shared between two structures or compositions that are not otherwise alike, or it can be used as a tool to show how two things that are essentially dissimilar can carry an analogical similarity.

Giorgio Agamben elaborates on this notion in The Signature of All Things (2009), paraphrasing a theory put forth by Italian philosopher and jurist Pio Gambari. According to Agamben, “Melandri argues that analogy is opposed to the dichotomous principle dominating Western logic,” by suggesting an alternative that is neither A nor B “an analogical third that is attested here above all through the disidentification and neutralization of the first two.”

In the context of the ideas drawn from Gregory of Nyssa and Jerome, Gambari’s conception of analogy can be instrumentalised to understand the alternative pilgrimage sites developed in medieval Europe. It is neither Paul’s heavenly Jerusalem of the Second Coming, nor Constantinople’s earthly proof of the Gospels, but a third incarnation, constructed through the analogical transfer of a spatial logic through which the ritual of Jerusalem pilgrimage can be performed. According to Agamben, this is done by replicating the composition of spaces in Jerusalem in other places, thus allowing society to perform its services in a similar manner. As we have seen, Egeria prescribed the way...
in which the liturgy facilitates recollection of collective memories for the congregation using specific text and time; if these can be practiced in a certain theological subject at the church of Christ’s death and resurrection may take place with great affectivity even outside the city of Jerusalem itself.

The built terminology for analogical thinking includes naming a source and applying its logic to an analogous target. The source in this context of this paper is Jerusalem’s most venerable site, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre whose construction, consecration, and elaboration was discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation, specifically its distinct architectural combination of the basilica and rotunda. In that follow-up, I argue that the coupling of these two spaces—a centrally planned, double-shelled structure and a strictly longitudinal basilica—created a composition that could be distilled and applied as an analogical target. It is an abstraction taken from Jerusalem, towards Jerusalem.

In order to understand how these two types work together, it is important to trace their typological origins as separate basiliacs. In that follow-up, I argue that the combination of these two spaces—a centrally planned, double-shelled structure and a strictly longitudinal basilica—created a composition that could be distilled and applied as an analogical target. It is an abstraction taken from Jerusalem, towards Jerusalem.

The basilica, which was the sanctuary, for example, the bishop conducted the worship in the presbytery, alternating the bread. In another context, the assembly is discussed by the bishop, the presbytery, and the deacons stand. Thus, the apse of the bishop, collected from the city’s poor. In 251 AD, the church in Rome supported a bishop, seven deacons, 52 exerciti and readers, and over 1,500 widows and orphans.

Given these organizational transitions, the house-church needed to grow from a mere dining room to accommodate the increasing needs of congregations. A large assembly room with a division between the laity; a raised platform for the bishop and his presbytery; a sacrificial altar—a room for baptism; or an antechamber where the catechumens (baptismal candidates) could hear the last part of the service, with the communion, without participating in it. These spaces, in addition to dining halls, dwelling spaces, classrooms, libraries, and storage spaces, demanded a workable circulation design to ensure a smooth flow during the mobile service. Thus, long before the memories of Christianity were localized across the sacred topography of Jerusalem, the house-church provided the structure for station worship and hierarchical community. This structure, which functions as religious practice in these adapted homes was anachronistic described. The space of Christian worship at the basilica, which is widely accepted by the public nature of Christian worship, was thetabla of its services, and the formality of the basilica.

To be saved, each building had to be incorporated into a site accessible from a narrow path. A typical courtyard dwelling, if covered in 1844 excavation at the Forum Romanus, a Roman border-fortress on the Ippycrates, the church, located at 248 AD, was located by the very entrance of the basilica, as a house with a small family. A double-shell, free-standing structure measured 33.7 metres in diameter. Inside, a circular ring of alternating piers and columns supported an arcade that surrounded Christ’s empty tomb. Missionalizing the basilica to 2.5 metres, it was widely accepted by archaeologists that the Constantinian basilica, sometime between 339 and 348 AD.

Fig. 3: Constantinian basilica on olivegrove, reconstruction by Richard Krautheimer. The basilica, which was the sanctuary, for example, the bishop conducted the worship in the presbytery, alternating the bread. The assembly is discussed by the bishop, the presbytery, and the deacons stand. Thus, the apse of the bishop, collected from the city’s poor. In 251 AD, the church in Rome supported a bishop, seven deacons, 52 exerciti and readers, and over 1,500 widows and orphans.

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Before the erection of the rotunda, and according to the description of the pilgrim from Bordeaux, Christ’s tomb aedicule stood in the centre of a semi-circular porticoed courtyard, open to the sky. This setting is reminiscent of the Christian Heroe, erected as early as the second century AD to honour sites of martyrdom. In the third century, these open spaces were replaced by monumental martyria, which accommodated both the grave of a martyr and space for memorial services. In Jerusalem, the Anastasis was erected as the grave of the martyr and a place to commemorate and recall the greatest martyrdom of all.

Spatially, the rotunda could accommodate a community of listeners around the tomb, while the barrel-vaulted ambulatory provided for circulation. This layout was common in Roman sepulchral architecture of the Third and Fourth centuries, meaning that Christian martyria were often indistinguishable from imperial mausoleums, and thus inspired by the monumental pagan temples. This similarity, according to Krautheimer, became acceptable due to the anagogical nature of the buildings, which were generally void of religious overtones due to their nature as private memorials. It is possible, then, that the centrally-planned Anastasis was a mausoleum, a martyrion, and a home for Christ—a place to commemorate a man, God, and King.

The combination of a longitudinal basilica and a centrifugal rotunda, with two distinct spaces for public and private modes of worship, and could accommodate a service that was mobile and hierarchical. Egeria, who stayed in Jerusalem from 381 to 384 AD, reveals in her letters the use of a mobile and hierarchical. Egeria, who stayed in Jerusalem and could accommodate a service that was mobile and a centrifugal rotunda provided two distinct spaces within the complex: it is the focal point of spatial and sequence during the daily mobile service. She describes a procession that moves from a service in the Martyrium Basilica to the completion in the Rotunda. It is therefore clear that the Anastasis is placed on the highest of spiritual hierarchy of spaces within the complex: it is the focal point of the composition, standing at the far end from the entry, with the culmination of a symbolic and literal passage of rites.

While the basilica is placed below the Rotunda on the sacred scale, it nevertheless allows a variety of liturgies. During the period before Easter, Egeria writes that “the bishop’s chair is placed in the middle of the Great Church, the Martyrium (basilica), the presbyters sit in chairs on either side of him, and all the clergy stand. Then one by one the ones who are seeking baptism are brought up, men and women, sitting round him and their mothers.” This description shows how the bishop interrogates the candidates that walk up and down the central axis in order to assess their maturity and compatibility with their faith. This staged rotundal basilica allows him to be seated in the center of the church, being surrounded by his seated or standing congregation, as he becomes the dispenser of the divine act. This staged activity surely produces connotative association with juridical basilical halls and with political power, showcasing how its aisles, columns, and raised platforms constitute a presence that is institutionalized in space, separating the bishop and his clergy from the candidates.

The basilica is also used for preaching and teaching, during which “the bishop sits and preaches, while the faithful utter exclamations” which are often loud, creating a clear space presence between the bishop and the audience. The most detailed teachings occur during Lent, when the candidates go through a complete biblical induction. Here Egeria describes a different spatial distribution:

“The bishop’s chair is placed in the great church, the Martyrium, and all those to be baptised the men and the women, sit around him in a circle [...] his subject is god’s law; during the forty days he goes through the whole Bible, beginning with Genesis, and first relating the literal meaning of each passage, then interpreting its spiritual meaning.”

This unique circular configuration eliminates the usual hierarchical distribution, and it is then that students can, in turn, respond with questions on the scriptures, thus engaging in a dialogue with the bishop. According to these in-depth teaching sessions occur in the basilica for three hours each morning during the seven weeks of Lent, until Easter which takes place on the eighth week. It is then that the bishop assumes an elevated position in the basilica, when “his chair is placed at the back of the apse, behind the altar.”

What is clear from these examples is that within the course of several weeks, each of these two spaces is used to serve a different liturgical function, the basilica being the most versatile: it is there that the bishop is moved within the space and in relation to his study, from the middle to the apse, in front of a lined audience or within a circle of listeners, and either leading an longitudinal procession or orchestrating an axial movement for the candidates. While in the Rotunda, the contemplative mysteries are set around the Tomb of the Lord, and are generally composed as more exclusive services, with a higher degree of affluence and immersiveness in the memory. The combination of these two spaces creates a situation in which the body of the worshippers takes part in an orchestrated service that is deployed spatially in a choreographed ritual. The novelty found in Jerusalem’s Christian architecture is then not a typology but a relational composition of specific pre-existing types that set the stage for a textually-bound ritual.

It is this composition that forms the analogical source of other Jerusalems. It could then be abstracted and implanted within a different condition as a target. This analysis of other Jerusalems stems from the seminal essay by Richard Krautheimer, Introduction to ‘Iconography of Medieval Architecture’ (1942), where he argues that in the Early Middle Ages churches were invested with meaning by “imitating a highly venerated prototype”—the Church of the holy Sepulchre. While Krautheimer doesn’t use the word analogy or the terminology of source and target (he refers to them as the original and an architectural copy), his analysis is similar to analogical thinking. That is, he does not wish to discuss a mimetic representation of the Holy Sepulchre elsewhere but an inexact reproduction that is based on selective replication of symbolic architectural elements.

Some examples include St. Michael at Fulda (820-822 AD) and the Holy Sepulchre of Cambrai (first quarter of the 11th century), where a centralised plan structure with a surrounding vaulted ambulatory provided the connotations of the Anastasis Rotunda. In this case, the alignment and geometrical composition and architectural elements, the sanctity of Jerusalem’s holy sites was transported into a local vessel of worship, imbuing it with the appropriate aura of the Holy Land. In analogical terms, this type of association can be regarded as a superficial similarity, where there is a resemblance between the properties of the source and target. Structural similarity, however, refers to “the resemblance in the underlying system of relations between the elements of the sources and the elements of the target. Structural similarity exists if the relations between the objects in the source are similar to the relations between the objects in the target, independently of the similarity between the objects themselves.” That is, structural similarity can be found in the underlying analogy, even if a superficial similarity is not readily apparent. Considering this interpretation, it can be argued that the examples provided by Krautheimer, while distanced in design and layout of round churches, give only partial attention to the analogical source by focusing on the element that is the highlight of the complex. Instead, a spatial system of motion must be implemented: a basilica and a rotunda.

In order to explain this particular kind of analogical thinking, and how it has facilitated the diffusion of Jerusalem, two case studies will be explored below. While essentially different from one another, these structures exemplify both the process of constructing an analogy and the intelligence of its use. Both of the cases are set in the 12th century, a time when the increased physical connection to the Holy Land was established by the Crusades and the urbanisation of Europe. The ability to import spatial ideas from Jerusalem—be it the earthly, the heavenly, or a blurred representation of the two—played a crucial role in this process.
BRANDING BOLOGNA: JERUSALEM AS THE FOUNDATION STONE OF CIVIC CONSCIOUSNESS

The most elaborate structure that maintains its analogical coherence is found in the complex of Santo Stefano in Bologna. While the dating of the complex is disputed on a traditional (fifth century) and learned archaeologists (twelfth century), it seems that the earliest reference to the church as a local Jerusalem dates to 887 AD. Located on the road leading east from Bologna’s old city centre, the complex has both Pagano and Paleo-Christian foundations: a shrine to the Egyptian goddess Isis in use until the fourth century, when it was converted into a basilica. The adjacent structure was consecrated as the Vitale and Agnello Cathedral, where the remains of the two Bolognese martyrs (that were discovered in 393 AD) were preserved.

The complex as we know it today was reconstructed sometimes between 1164 and 1180 AD. Its main feature is the centrally-planned ‘Holy Sepulchre’, an irregular-octagonal structure that is covered by a dome. It is dominated by a tomb, with the number of supports around the tomb, for example, corresponds both to the number of the columns in Jerusalem and to the number of the apostles, being both a literal and symbolic choice. The octagon, which was inter-changeable in the Medieval mind with a circle, evokes the figure of eight—hence of resurrection and salvation—and alluding to the form of the Anastasis Rotunda.

But Santo Stefano is not just an amalgamation of mnemonic referents: it also creates a structural analogy in its compositional logic. As such, the relationship between the courtyard and the octagonal structure replicates the one between the atrium and the Anastasis in Jerusalem; it even follows the slight offset of the tomb in Jerusalem, which allows a perception of the entrance of the centrefugal structure. The replication of an architectural logic that considers a round structure’s interior and exterior spaces, a central object of veneration, and an ambulatory for circulation, set the space for a liturgical practice that originated in Jerusalem. This means that the analogical structures allow a pilgrimage in Bologna the ritual he or she would perform in Jerusalem; the abstraction of a spatial logic and its implementation with local materials (such as brick masonry and evangelic iconography) enables Jerusalem worshiping a morally-risking journey. Furthermore, the addition of sacred sites within the church itself set the stage for a peripatetic worship that is at once mobile and yet bound by speech.

Like the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, Santo Stefano played a role in both the local cult and as a centre for pilgrimage. During Easter Week, the stone tomb in the centre of the octagon was the focal point of the service. On Good Friday, as the Cross of the Enclosed was encircled by a ring of twelve supports round structure’s interior and exterior spaces, a round structure’s interior and exterior spaces, and visit the Cross. On Easter Morning, the tomb was ceremonially opened following a procession of monks carrying candles and singing Ausonius’ Visitation. The Jerusalem service of the Adventus Christi was its parallel in Bologna, this time in the series of Chapels at the east end of the complex. Much like in Jerusalem, the Bolognese Calvary was where worshippers could kiss the precious cross of the Thursday of Holy Week, in a small chapel that was adjacent to the open-air courtyard.

The services in Bologna’s analogous Jerusalem, much like the source, extended beyond the confines of a single complex and well into the urban domain. A monastery built on a nearby hill was called St. Giovanni in Monte Olivi, and the valley separating these two churches was described as Joseph, following the topographical drop between the Old City and the Mountain of Olives in Jerusalem. An unknown pond supposedly represented the nautptia Sile (the Sliam Pool), and the Church of St. Tecla (which no longer exists) bears references to the Field of Haelakomaa. These elaborate markers are significant as they set the stage for a theatrical celebration, similar to the one described by Egeria: On Palm Sunday, following the service conducted on St. Giovanni in Monte, palm branches were distributed to the participants who then followed a public procession to Santo Stefano.

And yet there is a seminal difference between Bologna and Jerusalem which highlights the way the aura of the latter was appropriated. In Bologna, the processions and masses can be dated to the Ninth Century, meaning that, according to historian Colin Morris, the mobile form of devotion preceded the sites, and it is the liturgical needs for formalizing that initiated their localisation in the city. In other words, it was the demand for topographical recollection of scriptural events that structured the analogy: a visit to the tomb on Easter Morning required a Sepulchre, and a public procession demanded stations. The chronological discrepancy between the stations and their ritualisation in the urban realm can be explained as part of an elaborate invention of an urban tradition that occurred in twelfth century Bologna. A manuscript from 1180 that chronicles the life of St. Petronius, Bishop of Bologna between 432 and 450 AD, traces the origin of Santo Stefano:

“With much labour he symbolically created a work, marvelously constructed, like the Sepulchre of the Lord in the form which he had seen, and carefully measured with a rod, where he was at Jerusalem.”

This document remains the only source on the establishment of Santo Stefano as a surrogate Jerusalem. Scholars such as Krautheimer, Morris, and Ousterhout render the manuscript’s claim for a fifth-century structure unreliable, and sug-
gest that the story is but a reactive invention by the author. Further, Ousterhout argues that Santo Stefano’s combination of a central church, a large circular courtyard and a series of reliquary chapels, constructs a composition that is strikingly similar to the destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the eleventh century. The latter’s destruction occurred in 1007 and prior to the reconstruction by the Crusaders in 1149. In the eleventh century, Santo Stefano’s complex was substantially transformed. First, the church was modified in the eleventh century, following the example of the Basilica of San Miniato al Monte in Pisa. Second, during the period of the Crusades, the church was transformed in order to accommodate the relics brought from Jerusalem. Moreover, the church served as a landmark for the city of Bologna. It is a ritual that is at once engagement and appropriation: it is not only about the acquired measurements, but the act of measuring and thus making it one’s own.

In the eleventh century, Santo Stefano’s relics were transformed into the foundation of the city through the construction of an analogy was crucial; the invention of the relics of Santo Stefano, the rediscovery of St. Peter’s tomb and the introduction of his cult helped shape Bologna’s identity. As historian J.K. Hyde claims, during those years civic pride was expressed through a loyalty to local Church, especially through the celebrations of legend that solidified the group around them. Indeed, in the twelfth century, the presence of Santo Stefano’s relics not only made the church a place for devotion but also served as a marker for the city.

In the following years, Bologna would be economically revived, the myth of Jerusalem as the foundation of the city would be crucial. The creation of a new identity for the city was a product of a new identity for the Church. In a society ruled by the Church, an identity was prescribed in the Quran, when Muhammad is described his ritual: “as I then measured the tomb in length and breadth and height, for when people are present it is quite impossible to measure a man.” 10 In the Life and Journey of Daniel, 150-170, in Hadar, Bar, “Christian Pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem” in Projecto Dauno Middle Ages Finland Institute for the History of Science, 2000, 4.


Spie, J.K., Society and Politics in Medieval Italy (Pfalzgrafen Maximilian, 1979), 19

Bad, 63, 74

The account of the invention and list of relics given in the forms of, of Lomazzo, J., Petrich, Jakob, it lies with the beginning of relics of the fourteen images of Christ, the four angles of the Flagellation, the wood of the True Cross, the key with which he was confirmed, and his tiara

Although similar traditions occurred in other medieval Italian rising civic centres to Milan, Mòdena, and Verona, saints from early Christianity were integrated into other religious narratives of the city and were brought as town’s patron - Holy, Society and Politics in Medieval Italy, 40.

Ousterhout, John, Holy Topography and Franciscan Geogra phy, 190.

Bad, 63, 74

Ousterhout, John, Holy Topography in Imagination, 143-144

John Ousterhout, Age of Pilgrimage: The Medieval Journey to Holy Land (Princeton, 2008), 158

Ousterhout, John, Holy Topography in Imagination, 143-144

Geography, 223.


Ousterhout and Vincent Selin, eds Nitza, Jerusalem, the Biography, 2009), 6

Ousterhout, John, “Jerusalem, the Biography,” in Selling Jerusalem: Islamic Worship: Holy Land, the Biography, 2006), 56

Ousterhout, John, “Jerusalem, the Biography,” in Selling Jerusalem: Islamic Worship: Holy Land, the Biography, 2006), 56

As the dominant religious centre, “You see all of Jerusalem, you see all of the Temple of Solomon, you say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will be seen but this stone down.” Matthew 24:2

Ousterhout and Vincent Selin, eds Nitza, Jerusalem, the Biography, 2009), 3

Ousterhout, John, “Jerusalem, the Biography,” in Selling Jerusalem: Islamic Worship: Holy Land, the Biography, 2006), 56

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The Basilica and the Rotunda

CHAPTER TWO—

The Basilica and the Rotunda
conditions have changed in the Eleventh Century. On the one hand, the destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre by the manic Caliph Hakim in 910, the prosecution of Christians, and the banning of Easter had stirred the Western accep-
tance of foreign rule of Jerusalem; at the same time, the strengthening of religious sentiment and the burden of sin have brought pilgrimage to earthly Jerusalem (and the quest for indulgences back to popularity.
Encouraged by the speech made by Pope Urban II in 1095 — who showed no reserver in advocating actual possession of the city — the first Crusade was born. Leaving the Pauline image of heavenly Jerusalem behind, the Crusaders headed for the Holy Land with faith and force. When the Crusaders entered Jerusalem, they had to relocate Christianity’s memories in the city by constructing holy places. When possible, they relied on existing markers that could be turned back to Christianity’s first monastic-military order was established: the Templars. Officially called “the Poor Knights of Christ and the Temple of Solomon,” the Templars took an oath of charity and poverty that was based on the Rule of St. Benedict. As the Crusades, they saw their war against Islam as analogous to the Israelites’ liberation from Egypt. The Bishop of Jerusalem at the time of the First Crusade, for example, preached to the camp from the Old Testament: “it is our duty to pray, and it is your duty to fight the Amalekites. With Moses [...] you, intrepid fighters, thrust your sword into Amaalek. Their evocation of Solomon’s Temple could connect Christ to David (Solomon’s father who was not just a religious leader, but a king of the province of Judea). In this sense, Jerusalem, as the new capital of the Crusaders’ Latin Kingdom, was at once a spiritual centre, a subject of monar-
chical power, and a military headquarters.

It is within this newly-appropriated space, known to the Crusades as the Temple, that Christianity’s first monastic-military order was estab-
lished: the Templars. Officially called “the Poor Knights of Christ and the Temple of Solomon,” the Templars took an oath of charity and pov-
erity that was based on the Rule of St. Benedict. While monastic in character, the Order’s main duty was military: to police and protect pilgrims en route to the Holy Land, who were perpetually harassed by robbers. The order received Papal approval in 1126 from Honorius II, and thus became an official body of warrior-monks, living by faith and force. In the Temple Mount, the Knights converted the mosque into a basilica, an armory, and lodging; in the Dome of the Rock they built St James’ chapel and a sanctuary for Mary; beneath the Temple Mount, an existing e
The Templars arrived in London, one of the West's most powerful secular centres, in 1128. By 1144 they were given a site in Holborn, on a former Roman Circus, where they built their first church. In 1161, the expansion of the Order had led the Templars to move to a new location given by King Henri II (1154-1189) on the banks of the Thames, on a site just off the River between Ludgate and Westminster.

On the Thames, the Templars had both access to transportation and the prestige of the river exposure. This relocation to a non-hierarchical space, almost a field condition; and, with a width-to-length ratio of 1:2, it was a building built by Nikolaus Pevsner as “one of the most perfect and proportioned buildings of thirteenth century England, airy yet sturdy, generous in its spatial treatment and disciplined, and very sharply put together.” It was a modest structure, with an overall lack of decoration that resonated with the order’s initial monastic character.

The mnemonic association between the Round and the Anastasis Rotunda was clear. As argued by Krautheimer, the construction of a round church could easily be accepted in mass, the conducting of business, the royal treasury, and a source of revenue from pilgrims.

Following the idea of analogy, I argue that the Temple Church became a target of a source that had changed and became structurally similar to the relationship between the basilica and rotunda in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, but also the composition of the two shrines on the Temple Mount, the former basilica and the domed-rectangular structure, with the ritualisation of these spaces will be explored below as a new analogous type. It was a modest structure, with an overall lack of decoration that resonated with the order’s initial monastic character.

Like in Jerusalem, the Temple Church is composed of two distinct components: A rotunda, also called the “Round”, and a rectangular choir. In the Round, an inner ring of six marble pillars, each consisting of a cluster of four columns, is encircled by a lower vaulted ambulatory. Above the central space, eight arched windows punctuated the thick mass of the drum, which is supported by exterior buttresses. The Round was consecrated in 1185, and only half a century later, with the presence of King Henry III in 1240, a rectangular choir was added to its east.

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the fluidity of memory when it comes to the collection of Jerusalem after the Crusades. Indeed, from its very moment of foundation on the non-existing Temple of Solomon, it seems that though the Anastasis Rotunda and the Dome of the Rock were interchangeable, both in appearance, symbolic value, and historical tradition. The Temple’s seal, depicting a decorated dome atop an archer drum, was cited by historians as both the Holy Sepulchre and the Temple Mount; while an attempt to prove either can prove the original intentions, it seems irrelevant. Modern authors are not dissimilar: in his Architectural Illustrations and Account of the Temple Church (1838) the Nineteenth Century British architect Robert W. Billings writes of the Temple’s origin:

“The Temple Church, Built and instituted by the Templars in London, was a copy (and doubts it in many of its details) from the Temple at Jerusalem, of which the purpose of their Institution as a military order gave them the possession and guardianship. Of that Temple at Jerusalem, the preceding Temple of Solomon supplied beyond question the archetypal, not material model.”

The fact that the actual Temple of Solomon was gone for over fifteen-hundred years when the Crusades captured its site and the lack of physical traces to supply both “archetypal [and] material models” did not matter to Billings or to the Templars. Connecting the Templars to Solomon and thus to the dynasty of Hebrew Monarch was crucial for the narrative of Christian victory, which finally united the earthly and heavenly Jerusalem. Before the final assault on Jerusalem in 1099, the Duke of Normandy told his soldiers: “Here you see the cause of all our labours. This Jerusalem is the reflection of the heavenly Jerusalem. This city has the form of the city to which we aspire […] this Jerusalem you see, which you face, prefigures and represents the heavenly city.”

This patronial and physical possession of united Jerusalem was readily translated into the urban realm of London, where the Templars embodied their metaphor of power in London’s urban fabric, reminding locals and visitors of their privileged position both in the East, as rulers of the Holy City, and in the West, as tightly connected to the monarchy. The analog was constructed by utilizing a stylistic framework that resonates with the Southern-England royal and noble patronage of the government, while incorporating a spatial logic that was imported from Jerusalem’s mobile and hierarchical liturgy. This transfer was not restricted to a singular monument, a sacred icon or a symbolic element, but as a complex of scriptural and contemporary references that were distinctively urban.

The ITINELIANCE OF ANALOGY

If we return to the definition of analogy by Aquinas, we will learn that his reading of Aristotle defines analogy not as an induction nor a deduction, but a transfer of intelligibility from one singular to another singular. Within this framework, understanding Bologna and London as analogous Jerusalem can be seen through the transference of the specific intelligibility of Jerusalem—from its hierarchical spatial compositions within the church across the services to a city-wide distribution of monuments—into the Western urban realm, where the analogy played a crucial role in the local development of religious power, civic identity, and economy.
The spatial logic discussed in this chapter is not only analogous to specific monuments in urban Europe, but is also embodied in the life of a Christian pilgrim and the tension in the Christian religion at large. The perpetual movement between the centrifugal and the axial is embedded in every stage of the pilgrim’s journey—a directional horizontal movement versus defined points of rest, or a passive participation in a mass congregation versus an inward focus on personal meditation. This configuration also embodies the contradiction in the founding principles of the church—the university of St Paul and his followers, embodied in the egalitarian rotunda, versus the hierarchical structure of power, developed since the second century, expressed in the linear composition of the basilica. In the Renaissance, architects attempted to solve this tension by designing churches that were both centralised and axial, such as the Santissima Annunziata in Florence by Leon Battista Alberti and San Bernardino in Urbino by Francesco di Giorgio. The latter exemplifies the ultimate abstraction of the basilica and rotunda, combining a wide transept with a centralised plan, the dome supported only by four monumental columns. The plan of San Bernardino shows how, with imagination and abstraction, archetypal concepts can be resolved in an innovative design, where universality and hierarchy are not in conflict but coincide in a spatial arrangement that derives meaning from their tension.

Indeed, the intelligence of analogical thinking is not confined to the transfer of spatial relations, but of a sociospatial system of rituals. As such, when this system was abstracted from its origin in Jerusalem into the metropolitan centers of urbanising Europe, it replicated not only a structural composition but a hierarchical system of Christian recollection. This geographical re-distribution of collective memories to analogous Jerusalems provided pilgrims with an easier path to recollection, while subjecting its faculty to multiple bodies of power that exploited its spiritual charisma for political and economic gain. In other words, the intelligence of analogical thinking has been utilised as a form of control over those who seek to locate their memories, who saw this spiritual desire as an opportunity for the transfer (and division) of power from one epicenter to its analogies.

While analogical thinking is not innocent, it should nevertheless be noted for its embedded potential in the field of sacred space. Behind the idea of the analogy we find an incredible imaginative capability that sees the notion of “real” as flexible and adaptable. Considering the violent wars that wage over sacred space, the value of alternative sanctuaries could not be overstated. Rather than searching for a singular site of objective authenticity, analogies allow for a proliferation of subjective truths that relieve the need for territorial specificity. Memories that were initially located in Jerusalem could then travel and multiply, creating temporalities for those seeking affective recollection, so long as the orientation of structures, landscape and rituals remains towards Jerusalem.
STATION TO STATION

THEATRALITY AND DISCIPLINE

OF THE VIA CRUCIS IN THE SACRED

MOUNTAIN OF VARALLO

The Stations of the Cross, also called the Via Crucis (Way of the Cross), is one of the most common rituals in the Catholic church. It consists of a sequence of numbered stations that commemorate Christ’s Passion, encompassing the sentencing, crucifixion, and entombment of Jesus. Today, the Stations of the Cross have been standardised and conceptualised both in their appearance and in their ritual protocol. Typically, there are fourteen stations: each one is numbered, marked with a wooden cross, and arranged along a circuit at intervals of a distance relative to the scale of the site. Usually located along the aisles of Catholic churches, in monastic cloisters, or across an urban quarter, the stations must be followed as a single devotional sequence. The movement between stations is a crucial element in the ritualised re-enactment of the Passion: it heightens the recollection of events that occurred in the Holy Land by embodying their spatial dispersion across a broad sacred topography.

The underlying mechanism of the Via Crucis derives from the paradoxic nature of the station as a sign that marks a stop in order to perpetuate movement. These periodic stoppages are instrumental in unravelling the Christological narrative and dividing it into fragments that are easier to grasp as episodes. The re-enactment of the Passion, a violent event full of tragedy and drama, maintains a degree of control by choreographing the narrative as a serial progression of emotions, formulating a mode of spirituality that is inherently theatrical. Theatrical, indeed, as each station must be staged, like a scene, through time, space, and text; theatrical, as the compositional relationship on the plane of interaction (the frame of a picture, the boundaries of a stage, the edge of a bas-relief or the viewing hole of a tableau) is directed towards a captive audience, and it harbours emotional excess that is known from theater.

This theological strategy was mobilised by the Franciscan Order in the late Middle Ages, but by the sixteenth century its legitimacy was being undermined by figures of the Reformation, who saw its embedded theatricality as a risk. This gave rise to a debate around the use of images in religious representation. To explore this dispute around the employment and restriction of theatricality, this chapter will study one of the most radical renditions of the Stations of the Cross—the Sacri Monti (sacred mountains), erected as strongholds of Catholic piety in the Italian Alps during the crucial decades of Protestant reform. Specifically, it will explore the inception, destruction, and reconstruction of the first example of such religious complexes: the Sacro Monte di Varallo (1491), which became a laboratory of artistic experimentation aimed at disciplining religious representations and taming excessive affectivity. Indeed, by the end of the turbulent sixteenth century, Varallo had undergone a radical disciplinary process: its artistic program was recreated under a new visual regime that encapsulated the moral and theological reform of the Catholic church. Devout, decent, and direct, Varallo’s art modelled an abundance of restraint not only in the use of images, but also in its tolerance for imagination, physical movement, and Christian behaviour. Varallo thus became a blueprint for stational devotion: the critical purge of theatricality brought to prominence a counter-belief in legibility, which ultimately shaped the coherent Catholic ritual we know today.

ORIGIN OF THE STATIONS

OF THE CROSS

While the stations embody collective memories anchored in Jerusalem’s sacred topography, they belong to a ritual of recollection infused with a medieval sense of piety rooted in monastic orders and processional liturgies in the West. In
Jerusalem, the Stations of the Cross are known today as the Via Dolorosa (Way of Suffering), leading from the Arch of Ezechiel (where Christ was tried) to Calvary. The first documented pilgrimage through this route took place at the end of the thirteenth century, though a definite route was established only in the twelfth century. The precedent for this route, wrote a pilgrim in 1384, was the Virgin Mary’s own pilgrimage between “the sites of her son’s last days in Jerusalem.” Somewhat perplexingly, this Franciscan route did not follow the topographical locations of Christ’s real journey in Jerusalem, but oscillated between places of veneration that were enabled by Jerusalem’s conditions. The itinerary of the Via Crucis was neither geographically nor scripturally accurate, but derived from a geopolitical reality in Mamluk Jerusalem. Indeed, since the fall of Acre, the last Crusader’s stronghold in the Holy Land, in 1291, Christian territoriality had been suppressed in Palestine by the local regime, and the movement of Christian visitors was limited.

Yet even under Islamic rule in Palestine, Christian presence in the Holy Land was not completely eradicated, maintaining its continuity through the work of the Third Order of the Franciscans. The Order’s Founder, St. Francis of Assisi, siezed the bases of the 1218 Crusade, a mission that was spiritual as well as political, aiming to create diplomatic ties by meeting with the local Sultan. A century later, in 1324, the Franciscan and the Crusaders’ military expeditions and became the official custodians of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Over the next two centuries, the monastic order would gradually obtain control over additional sites in and around the Holy City from the rulers of neighbouring provinces.

By establishing an earthly foothold with monasteries and convents, the Franciscans increased the popularity of the Stations by illustrating their limited space in imaginative ways. Using a pictorial method of emotional devotion that originated in the monastic West, the Franciscans also repeatedly visited the sites of Jerusalem with vivid verbal descriptions that conjured up the backdrop of Christ’s first-century Jerusalem to refame the contemporary locations. The Dominican friar Felix Fabri, who travelled to the Holy Land in 1480, described being led in a group by a Franciscan guide through the route where “Christ was led out of the city along that path burdened with the heavy cross.”

Along this journey, they stopped at places where Jesus “fell beneath the load of the cross, or was assailed by some special outrage, [or] where he was scourged and crowned.” In 1506, Sir Richard Gylford likewise wrote that he “visited all the long way by which our Saviour Christ was led from the house of Pilate to the place of the Crucifixion,” visiting locations where Christ “had suffered many injuries,” took a bit from the bishop’s servants, “was scour’d, his face covered and blood’d,” and “most egregiously beaten.” These dramatic descriptions transformed empty topographic locations into a theatrical sequence of encounters, a spectacle projected onto the city through affective imagination. Emotionally and physically exhausting, these organized tours were incredibly different for many pilgrims. Gylford, for example, died from exhaustion six days after arriving in Jerusalem.

This ritualisation of urban movement through stops and regular intervals of movement formed the core of the canonical fourteen Stations of the Cross. Though the route had varied significantly over time in terms of arrangement, number of stations, and distances, the Via Crucis, gradually separated into a distinct geographical and spiritual entity in every pilgrim’s visit to Jerusalem. In fact, the word station (in a sense of a halting-place in a procession) first appeared in the narrative of the English pilgrim William Wey in 1462 as a spiritual exercise that was complete in itself.

However tiring their journeys, the pilgrims who wrote these detailed manuscripts of Christ’s suffering in Jerusalem made no pious displays of compassion. Faithful passion-devotion in Jerusalem reveals little sign of emotion: the main contents include a list of places visited, distances between stations, costs of travel, and even observations on the behaviour of locals, but no affection or personal reactions felt by the pilgrim. This uniform authoritative voice reflects local prohibitions on displaying such emotions along the journey. Calvary, according to a sixteenth-century pilgrim: “we had no more compassion than just to see them as we passed on our way, so it is not permitted to make any halt nor to pay veneration to them with uncovered head, nor to make any other demonstration, nor to look at them fixedly, nor to write or take any notes in public.”

Indeed, in Jerusalem itself, any form of outward compassion was forbidden, as can be seen in the pilgrimage of Margery Kempe, the only known woman in the early modern period to write such an account. In 1411, after buying her freedom from her husband and their fourteen children, Kempe embarked on a Franciscan-led journey of extreme piety. In Calvary, she cried “in a loud voice, and showed a most grievous break; in Bethlehem, she showed such excessive devotion that travellers would not let her eat in their company.”

14 TOWARDS JERUSALEM

CHAPTER THREE—

TOWARDS JERUSALEM

Fig 3: A series of distinct locations, connected with a path and annotated with meditations.

Fig 4: A page from The Itineraries of William Wey (c.1458-1463 AD) showing the fourteen stations of the Cross, Luke Emma in Witnesses of Jerusalem: a sequence from the 19th to the Holy Place of Jerusalem.

Fig 5: The Stations of the Cross by Giovanni Zuallardo (1306-1406)

Fig 6: A page from Le Pèlerinage de sainte Germaine de Pibrac (1587), 381

Fig 7: The Statue of the Cross in [two parts] according to Giovanni Zuallardo

Fig 8: The Procession That Never Was, 36 (inset illustration)

Fig 9: The Stations of the Cross, 40-45

Fig 10: Taking measures was a part of the growing topographic itinerary of the Franciscans. Measuring the path of fear, and was often measured from Pilate’s house through the Via Dolorosa to Calvary. The first pilgrim knowing his measurements was Martín Valera in 1363. Various through these may route, there was never a standard in the distance, which varied from about 4,000 to 130,000 in recorded written between 1432-1441. (16) The Stations of the Cross on account of their History and Devotional Purposes (1901) 34; (17) Remonstrance of the Franciscan Order against the Advocates of Caravaggio, 1551; (18) The Stations of the Cross and Passion Devotions, in The Roman Rites, Liturgical Devotion in Late-Medieval Culture, ed. MacDermot, Kühnert, Schäffernick (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 76.
Kempe’s outward reaction to her imaginative visualisation was not only unusual in Jerusalem, but also inappropriate; it reflected a pious activity that ran contrary to the repartee of truly compassionate devotion that was unthinkable in Jerusalem itself. Indeed, an immersive recollection of Christ’s route to salvation could only arise from the political and geographical constraints of earthly Jerusalem, making it the least plausible place to practise the Stations of the Cross.

The Franciscans to accommodate pilgrimage in Jerusalem mirrored the Order’s laborious activities and ideological tendencies in the West. The projection of the Passion onto the urban space of Jerusalem by the Franciscan guidelines was based on the order’s central aim to bring religion into everyday reality, to stage the events of Christ’s life and death within a familiar setting, a tendency that can be described as realist. In order to humanise Christ, devotional attention was focused on his pain and suffering, in parallel with a representational shift—from a stolid god who had triumphed death, to a vulnerable and aching human being. Cistercian historiographer Gaston Boissier writes that in early Christianity, painters refrained from representing the scenes of the Passion, avoiding any depiction of pain or weakness of his mighty Son. On the contrary, Francis himself made the outward display of pain an integral part of devotion, through his own stigmata in 1228 and the “love of the poor and crucified Christ.”

This radical shift from icon to realism was portrayed in Passion-related imagery, now focused on scenes of betrayal, flagellation, mocking, flagellation, crucifixion, and entombment—all the events that were later commemorated in Jerusalem itself. Indeed, an immersive tourist brochure. Whether through guided movement in Mamluk Jerusalem, a staged scene with animals and hay, or a noble Milanese family, Caimi joined the order in 1291 after a reference in this thesis.

The humanist-realist representation of the Passion had a didactic purpose to be a popular vehicle for the imitation of Christ by the laity in their own surroundings. This style was widely disseminated after the death of St Francis in 1228, when the order embarked on a large-scale project to erect permanent buildings decorated with images of the humanised Christ. In highly dramatic and brutally detailed sequential compositions, these frame-by-frame representations of the Passion fragmented an event whose violence and cruelty would otherwise be too harsh to grasp. These artworks not only addressed the desire for a realistic depiction of the Passion, but also created an episcopate progression not dissimilar from the stational devotion in Jerusalem itself, making use of the theatricality introduced by Francis. These artworks not only stirred the pious beholder to emotional reaction, but encouraged an identification with the moral code of Christ: a life of submission, patience, and obedience. The agency of the visual was promoted by the Franciscan religious thoughts of the thirteenth century. Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274) repeated that images shall be used as text for those who cannot read; St. Bonaventure (d. 1274) confirmed this by claiming that images are necessary in order to transform the “sensible things which they see” into “the intelligible which they cannot see.” By Kenneth Clark, this realist representation itself, mental visualisation, and contemplative meditation were never the primary goal of Passion meditation—the visualisation of the Passion was just the means to another end. Whether through guided movement in Mamluk Jerusalem, a staged scene with animals and hay, or a frame-by-frame narrative painting, or an internal viewer’s experience, the embodiment of the Passion was but a stepping-stone towards spiritual ascension. In the words of Gregory the Great (599 AD): “When you see an image, it is the same in your soul with love for Him whose picture you wish to see. We do no harm in trying to show the invisible by means of the visible.”

This thesis is an attempt to bring the ideal into the living. The medium of painting was used to disseminate Christ’s messages. The visualisation of memories could expand the Franciscan mentality that culminated, one century later, with Ciotto’s Italian painting —the first great painting of the Passion in the Renaissance.

The Franciscans’ participation in the visual representation of the Passion in Jerusalem, a staged scene with animals and hay, in an attempt to bring the ideal into the living. Whether through guided movement in Mamluk Jerusalem, a staged scene with animals and hay, or a noble Milanese family, Caimi joined the order in 1291 after a reference in this thesis.

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This thesis is an attempt to bring the ideal into the living. The medium of painting was used to disseminate Christ’s messages. The visualisation of memories could expand the Franciscan mentality that culminated, one century later, with Ciotto’s Italian painting —the first great painting of the Passion in the Renaissance.
loomed at the end of the fifteenth century was the growing power of Eastern Orthodox Christians—fostered by the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453—that was increasingly pushing the Franciscans out of their shrines and putting into question their papally-awarded Custodia Terra Sanctae.

When Caimi returned to Italy, he embarked on a project to provide a local alternative to Jerusalem pilgrimage. Obtaining financial aid and papal permission, Caimi began the construction of a spiritual complex atop an uninhabited hillside by the Sesia river, whose topography resembled that of Jerusalem—at least in his eyes. Within this imaginary landscape, he erected three chapels and renamed some elements of the terrain: the Holy Sepulchre on the hill of “Mount Calvary,” Nazareth by “Mount Tabor,” and Bethlehem below “Mount Zion.” Caimi declared that was not only identical, but possibly even superior to the real one. He concludes:

"I never saw anything more pious or devout; I have never seen anything that could pierce the heart more, which could compel one to neglect everything else and follow Christ alone. [...] Let cease henceforth those so-called Roman stations; let and even the Jerusalem pilgrimage [...] the igneous site surpasses all antiquity.

Indeed, Caimi’s isolated complex was created from the dangers posed by a politically and economically charged urban entity. As a local Jerusalem, it could be both Herodian (i.e., first century AD) and Mamluk, yet typologically entirely vernacular. It fulfilled Caimi’s desire to create a local stage for devotion in a place that was once remote and accessible. However, the site relied on the capability of the devout to generate a mental image; in that sense, it was not much different from Jerusalem itself, requiring much imaginative labour from the believer. Considering the site’s audience—the semi-literate lay people and the unattended clergy of vernacular origins—Caimi’s analogical Holy Land was not enough. Hence, to reach a popular audience, the order’s verbal sermons had to be translated into tangible representations using hyper-real art. This resulted in a project that would become what Rudolf Wittkower called “one of the most extraordinary enterprises in the history of Catholic devotion and religious art.”

The site’s artistic program owes its form to the Valencian artist Gaudenzio Ferrari. Born in 1475, he arrived in Varallo in 1513 as an accomplished artisan, a painter, philosopher and mathematician. Ferrari’s project in Varallo sought to expand Caimi’s miniature Holy Land into a staging of Christ’s life and death by transforming each of the existing chapels (plus some twenty more) into a biblical tableau vivant using architecture, sculpture, relief, and paintings. With life-size terra-cotta figures, perspectival illusionism, natural light, and the site's topographic conditions, Ferrari created mini-theatres that made Christ’s Passion an immediate reality. By 1514, close to thirty chapels were built in this manner, transforming the religious complex from a toponymic constellation of markers to an elaborate facsimile of the life of Christ.

In order to address the site’s audience, Ferrari’s polychrome figures were dressed in clothes made from real fabric, their heads covered with wigs, beards made from horsehair, and their eyes made of glass pebbles. Other artifacts and accessories, such as chairs, ropes, buckets, and beds, were incorporated with the painted and sculpted. Finally, sand, soil, and earth covered the chapel’s floor, merging the site’s landscape with scenic murals, and the Holy Land with Varallo. The use of vernacular imagery—regional clothes, landscapes, and even facial features—mediated the distant and foreign through the familiar and homely. The use of utilitarian objects in religious art merged the sacred with the everyday, giving a realist form to the unseen, eyes made of glass pebbles. Other accessories, such as chairs, ropes, buckets, and beds, were incorporated with the painted and sculpted.

Fig 6: Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre (1491) by Gaundenzio Ferrari, with a photo showcasing the original tomb in Jerusalem. Photo by the author, 2019

Fig 7: Sacro Monte di Varallo, ca. 1500. Drawing by the author after Sabatini Alberi.
Indeed, since the stigmatisation of St Francis himself, readers and beholders were encouraged to become not just spectators but actual actors through identification. Empathy was crucial: the power of the observer to project herself into the object of contemplation in order to fully understand it...

In the chapel of the nativity, for example, a pilgrim could take part in the events that happened in Bethlehem. Located down the hill from Varallo’s Calvary, the complex of nativity chapels was completed in 1528 by Caudenzo Ferrari. Upon entry, the pilgrim encounters the Procession of the Magi to Christ’s birth: a densely populated space filled with life-sized sculptures, surrounded by floor-to-ceiling scenographic murals, scriptural characters, and their accompanying crowd. The first magus holds a golden box in his hand, dressed in a gold tunic with blue boots; his terra-cotta face, framed by long hair, is painted black to represent his African origin, following literally the tradition of the Magi being from the continents of the world. Behind him another ‘black’ figure looks upwards towards a sculpted horse emerging from the wall in relief, adding a sense of movement frozen in time. The second magus holds a gift for Christ the child, wearing a blue tunic and a red cape. He looks towards the ‘sky’, where a carefully placed skylight sheds a ray down onto the chapel, presumably representing the star that directs their way, in this case into the next room, where Mary and Joseph cradle their newborn...

At night, guided only by the Franciscans and candles, Varallo’s pilgrims would join the procession. Passing between the characters and paintings, they would pass through a small doorway, they were witnesses to the moment of Christ’s birth, caught between the Magi, Mary, and Joseph. Ferrari’s greatest creation was the chapel of Calvary, completed in 1520 on the site of the original chapel built by Caimi. Located at the top of the complex, it is a single monumental room, built as a continuous surface from wall to ceiling, painted with an immersive scenography of panoptic murals. In the centre, three wooden crosses (today the only wooden sculptures in the site) emerge from an artificial elevated bedrock, surrounding the motionless bleeding Christ who bows his head, around him, ninety figures (some sculpted, some painted) contrast his static gesture with a hyperactive display of dynamic movement and intense emotions of excitement, devastation, and pain. His mother collapses into the arms of her companions, her arms outstretched with despair; Roman soldiers play a game over Christ’s garments; a grotesque tormentor reaches out to


Fig 10: Christ on the Cross, Calvary Chapel (detail above) by Gaudenzio Ferrari (1510, 1519-1520)

Fig 9: The Procession of the Magi, the Sacro Monte Chapel (1513) by Gaudenzio Ferrari

Photo by the author, 2016
THEATRICALLY, DISCIPLINED

The participatory theatricality in the chapels of the Nativity and Calvary demonstrate an absolute reliance on the spectator in order to complete the artwork. This condition was criticized, half a millennium later, by Michael Fried in his seminal essay “Art and Objecthood” (1967). Fried rejected the tenets of minimalist art, where the condition of theatricality mandates participation from the beholder. He criticized the condition in which the space that surrounds an artwork becomes integral to the piece itself—when objects, light, and bodies become equal components—meaning that an artwork can only be complete when a spectator is present. Instead, he claimed that the distinction between art and life should be reinstated, and an artwork should be complete in itself. For him, a condition of “stage presence,” where there was no distinction between art and life, was aggressive and obtrusive, requiring “special complicity that the work extorts from the beholder”; in fact, he claims that “art degenerates as it approaches the condition of theatre.”

Michael Fried’s discussion of theatricality had no intentional connection to Varallo’s chapels, yet his critique of minimalist art sheds light on Ferrari’s project. Pilgrims, as spectator-actors, animated each scene through their participation. Whether as a member of the Magi procession or a witness in Christ’s crucifixion, each pilgrim played an active role in a drama, acting out emotions of puzelement, grief, and anger alongside members of Christ’s family and his followers, thus completing the theological function of the chapels. Hence, it was the bodies of spectators, the plastic arts, the natural landscape, and the site’s ephemeral conditions, such as weather and light, that created the possibility of complete immersion. Fried criticized exactly this co-dependency between forms, words, objects, and places themselves. At Varallo offered pilgrims complete engagement and uninterrupted meditation.

Varallo’s artistic versimilitude joins a devotional literature considered external vision to be simply a key to internal vision; the Augustinian seeing in order to see the unseen. However, Ferrari’s creation was so intensely sensory that it threatened but an end in itself, a representation for its own performative sake. Aesthetic pleasure would divert the pilgrim from the representation’s function as a stepping stone to spiritual awakening; it would lead to the veneration of the representation rather than what it represented. By the middle of the sixteenth century, there was a clear appreciation of the risk in Varallo’s theatricality and the unquestioned Catholic obedience it would foster. As Ferrari was completing his masterpieces in Varallo—the chapels of Bethlehem and Calvary in 1521—the first waves of iconoclasm were arriving from the north. The fear of superstitious, interior, and life-like religious art penetrated the isolated mountains. To flee for its power to transform pious reverence into an outburst of uncontrollable veneration, Ferrari’s paintings came to a standstill, and in 1528, Ferrari and his workshop were relocated from Varallo, which fell into temporary oblivion. It was only under the spirit of the Counter-Reformation (which would be initiated again as a pilgrimage site) that the Church claimed to possess on the eve of the millennium later, by Michael Fried in his seminal essay “Art and Objecthood” (1967). Fried rejected the tenets of minimalist art, where the condition of theatricality mandates participation from the beholder. He criticized the condition in which the space that surrounds an artwork becomes integral to the piece itself—when objects, light, and bodies become equal components—meaning that an artwork can only be complete when a spectator is present. Instead, he claimed that the distinction between art and life should be reinstated, and an artwork should be complete in itself. For him, a condition of “stage presence,” where there was no distinction between art and life, was aggressive and obtrusive, requiring “special complicity that the work extorts from the beholder”; in fact, he claims that “art degenerates as it approaches the condition of theatre.”

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In their quest to de-link the signified from the signifier, the decree made it clear that these images were mere representations, not sacred themselves. These were ‘prototypes’ of the divine, visual aids to imagine that which we cannot see, giving the devout observer a ‘great profit’ [...] because the miracles which God had performed by means of the saints [...] are set before the eyes of the faithful. In order to distinguish the sacred images, the Council gave orders to the clergy that ‘great care and diligence be used therein by bishops, as that there be nothing seen that is disorderly, but that the images, when depicting an individual of divine stature, are easy to imagine how Ferrari’s Varallo would be targeted for such reforms. Its numerous figures, emotional exaggeration, and plethora of subplot and unknown background characters constituted only the content of the chapel, which were themselves confusingly arranged and attended in a disorderly fashion. This not only caused confusion amongst pilgrims, but also distracted their minds from the solitary contemplative life, indulging instead.”

REFORMING VARALLO: SHIELDS AND FIXED ITINERARIES

Vulnerable to a Protestant invasion from the north and largely affiliated with Catholic Milan, Varallo stood at the forefront of the Counter-Reformation. Borromeo, immensely popular and widely influential in the proceedings of the Council of Trent and the implementation of the new reforms. A passionate believer in the power of pilgrimage, Borromeo was said by his biographer to have viewed the phenomenon of spiritual travel as “a valuable element in the grand design of Counter-Reformation.” However, he strongly opposed any form of theatricality in the believer’s life, and therefore sought to discipline any rituals with a substantial potential for error, confusion, and temptation. Speaking in 1576 at the Provincial Council on Religious Pilgrimage, he stressed the importance of restricting the affluence of pilgrimage to and restraining their use of images, in order to control body and mind. Borromeo would go on to implement these ideas in Varallo from his first visit to the site in 1578 to his last in 1584, shortly before his death, the site was transformed into a systematic vehicle for pious devotion.1

In the mid-16th century, when Giovanni Battista da’Adda, a wealthy Milanese related to Varallo by marriage, became the administrator of the Sacro Monte. His appointment followed a period of turmoil; in the town was engaged in the town between the Franciscans (affiliated with the founder of the site) and the local fabrici, a civic elite who controlled the alms given by pilgrims to the site. Some feared that the fabrici would instigate the local fabrici, a civic elite who controlled the alms given by pilgrims to the site. Therefore, the fabrici wanted to retain control over the site’s content and layout. As the site’s administrator, da’Adda commissioned the work and has written that “he desired in every part of the building that the images would instruct the laity to ‘order their own lives and manners in imitation of the saints.”

Alongside the clarification of the role of the Catholic Church in Trent between 1545 and 1563, held in response to the Protestant Reform, the Council also issued a decree about the use of images, now limited to the representation of the Virgin and the Saints—while anything else was considered “false doctrine” and banned as a “dangerous error to the uneducated.” This cautious attitude towards sin, justification, and salvation, and the role of the Church’s liturgy, the celebration of mass, and its practices, was considered “dangerous error to the uneducated.” This cautious attitude towards sin, justification, and salvation, and the role of the Church’s liturgy, the celebration of mass, and its practices, was considered “dangerous error to the uneducated.” This cautious attitude towards sin, justification, and salvation, and the role of the Church’s liturgy, the celebration of mass, and its practices, was considered “dangerous error to the uneducated.” This cautious attitude towards sin, justification, and salvation, and the role of the Church’s liturgy, the celebration of mass, and its practices, was considered “dangerous error to the uneducated.”
This ‘veiling’ of the tableaux could heighten the symbolic power of what was partially hidden, directing the pilgrim’s attention to the unseen and ungraspable. In the Chapel of the Transfiguration of Christ, for example, the climax of the mystery is deliberately shielded from view. Built on top of a natural hill in Varallo, this circular chapel replaced the Caimi-era Chapel of the Ascension, which made the natural hill analogous for the Mount of Olives. Alessi’s design, beginning in 1572 and completed only in 1665, included the addition of a stepped Mount “Tabor,” thus expanding the geographical and scriptural scope of the site’s initial commemoration beyond the events of the Passion and Jerusalem alone. Inside, a turbulent supernatural sky surrounds a group of elements of the elaborate scene. Through careful placement, the viewing holes literally framed hand gestures, extreme facial expressions, and personal encounters that were familiar to the viewer from sermons. This not only made the lesson entirely legible to the viewer, but it portrayed nothing more nor less than the ‘prototypes’ prescribed in Trent. It is important to remember that while Varallo’s stational ritual was constructed as a sequence of lessons and Christian rites to be followed physically, the route to personal salvation was contingent on an interior journey. After Trent, remission of sins and justification through action was crucial, and Alessi’s Vetriate should be viewed in the context of this religious climate. Like prayer itself, the confession of sin was spatially ordered in Milan in the 1560s through the church confessional, a device with two separate compartments for the kneeling confessor and the seated Father. Between them, a small window was fitted with a perforated metal grille, enabling the exchange of words but not glances, preventing seduction by eliminating visual and physical contact. Not dissimilar from Alessi’s Vetriate, the confessional was widely introduced in order to regulate sensorial interactions; it fixed a spatial composition as a precondition for pious activity.

An examination of a detail from Alessi’s Libro shows a pilgrim kneeling before a tableau, grasping his hands, lifting his gaze, and praying in stillness. According to scholars, it is far from the truth that Alessi chose to demonstrate this device in the Chapel of the Temptation of Christ, alluding to the curiosities posed by images. Thus, Alessi’s penitential viewing device not only tamed but also channelled the viewer’s devotion. By likening the still tableau to a flesh-and-blood bishop, Alessi bestowed the terra-cotta figures with the authority of remission. This was not far from the truth: in 1587, Pope Sixtus V declared the Sacro Monte di Varallo a “religious [monument] of extraordinary antiquity” (religios antiquitatis monumenta insignis), and promised that a visit to each chapel within this complex would award the pilgrim with an indulgence of 100 days, an amount matched only by Jerusalem itself.

The second major revision proposed by Alessi was to give a sense of order to the physical movement of the pilgrimage through the site. At a time when the church was trying to impose order and restriction on religious spaces by standardising the reception of images and their behavioural consequences, Varallo could not afford a lack of clarity. While each chapel represented a scriptural episode and an affective response, it was essentially a singular station that was part of a larger constellation in the devotional process. This process, given the site’s topographical conditions, had to be staged as a clear roadmap to salvation.

When Alessi arrived at Varallo, the neglected Franciscan complex was in disorder, suspended between its own geographical and Jerusalem’s sacred topography; its spiritual narrative was only legible with the help of a local guide who was familiar with both Varallo’s mysteries and its prototype in the Holy Land. But Varallo was not Jerusalem, nor an urban entity at all; it was an isolated religious complex unaffected by the political, social, and economic constraints of a real city. Alessi, who was employed by the librarians rather than the Franciscan Order, could alter the site’s original layout in accordance with Trinitarian concerns. Like the Vetriate, this new system had a twofold reasoning: to prescribe a fixed itinerary for the body (hence, of the mind), and to stage sufficient clarity to enable a solitary, unguided ritual.

As described earlier in this chapter, Caimi’s Varallo was constructed as a series of detached chapels, whose location supposedly corresponded to a hallowed site in the Holy Land. Visitors to Varallo who had never visited Jerusalem, and had
only encountered such events in the scriptures, must have been confused, wrote Alessi. In the prologue of the Libro, he noted:

Because of rash the first founders placed the chapels with little order so that what often happens is that visitors to the mysteries find first that which they should find later, which seems to me to be a huge defect of great importance.

This ‘huge defect’ in the order of the mysteries would harm the affective progression expected from the site’s visitors. Varallo’s winding paths, haphazard placement of chapels, and overgrown greenery had to be completely rethought. Unlike his surgical intervention in the chapels themselves, here Alessi proposed to destroy the existing paths and create a clearly marked route across the site. This path would follow Christ’s life, disregarding the impossibility of any proximity between these places and the real Holy Land. For example, he proposed that the Annunciation (in Nazareth) and the Nativity (in Bethlehem) should be juxtaposed, thus following a narrative structure as opposed to a geographic one (as the cities are distant from each other in reality). As a result, pathways were removed or remodelled, hills were flattened and trees planted; the original topographic pilgrimage became a stage for a chronological route that spatialised a textual journey through the Scriptures.

To add narrative legibility, Alessi proposed to subdivide the site into three distinct areas: first, the uneven terrain and dense green areas of Nazareth and Bethlehem, which constituted the prelude to Christ’s days as Saviour. From there, an arched path led to the ‘urbanised’ Jerusalem space, with its geometrically organised monumental buildings, connected by arcades, colonnades, and stairs, leading to an additional level. The third compound, placed below the hill’s summit, was to include the afterlife. To assure clarity and negate even further the pilgrim’s need for a local guide, Alessi numbered the chapels with a clear order, and used greenery, terraces, and paved paths to connect the entrance of each chapel both visually and physically to the next. Nearby chapels that were out of order were obstructed from view through the clever placement of hedges, stairs, terraces, arches, and walkways.

The complete sequencing of Varallo’s stations served the site’s role as an elaborate lesson on the importance of sin and justification. Though never completed, the pilgrim’s route was to end in the complex of stations representing the afterlife, with the chapels of Universal Judgment, Limbo, Purgatory, and Hell. The mirror image to the site’s conclusion in hell is its beginning in Heaven, or the Garden of Eden, where Adam and Eve are caught in their sinful temptation. Placed by the site’s portico principal in the new Varallo, the chapel framed the entire journey of the pilgrim through the site in the shadow of original sin. Kneeling in...
front of the Vetrate’s opening, the pilgrim’s gaze was directed (albeit with a peripheral upheaval of exotic and domesticated wildlife) towards the fatal moment of humanity’s lustful appetite, a reminder of the need for personal redemption. From there, a path to salvation was activated not only for the pilgrim but for all mankind. Hence, a ‘correct’ passage through Varallo’s devotional stations would award the visitor with not only a ‘correct’ passage through Varallo’s devotional stations would award the visitor with not only a correct passage through Varallo’s devotional stations would award the visitor with not only a ‘correct’ passage through Varallo’s devotional stations would award the visitor with not only a ‘correct’ passage through Varallo’s devotional stations would award the visitor the remission of his own sins, but the spiritual rebirth of humanity: from the flesh to the mind and back, and from the first Adam to the second, Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{113}

The reorganisation of Varallo reflected a desire to control the body and mind of the pilgrim by desisting what their eyes could apprehend, and simultaneously to isolate them from the greater mass of spiritual movement, away from the experience of collective devotion. Notwithstanding the stylistic continuity of the tableaux, the transformation from Ferrari to Alessi pointed to a shift, as described by Annabel Wharton, “from experiential to dogmatic space.”\textsuperscript{114} In the process of systematisation, Varallo became a blueprint for stational devotion to Christ’s Passion—from an analogous Franciscan site, meant to emulate a distant experience, to a hyper-localised device of devotional piety; from a communal activity to a solitary one; from an interactive, dramatic, and theatrical performance of the body to a disciplined, contained, and stationary meditation of the mind; from the proliferation of meanings and memories to a clear, unconfusing recollection; from an imitation of a pilgrim’s journey through urban complexity to a legible, prescribed, self-guided itinerary; from monastic spirituality to Catholic theology; from open-ended imagination to worship of archetypes; from spontaneous uncontrolled emotion to a steady progression of psychological affection. Thus, through Alessi’s removal of the spectacle from the represented, meditation was unburdened of all distractions and distilled the ritual itself from representation. This stripping of excess distractions initiated a process of systematisation that concluded with the stational ritual being reduced to mere units and the Via Crucis becoming impoverished of its initial intensity.\textsuperscript{115}

**STATION AS UNIT, RITUAL AS ALGORITHM: THE RISE OF TECHNIC**

As shown in the case of Varallo, the angst fomented by the Protestant Reformation impelled the Catholic Church to revise its position on artistic representations. The Sacred Mountains offered a comprehensive prototype—a controlled, affective environment embedded in a natural landscape—that could be replicated (with local variations) in a series of nine Sacri Monti, which acted as Catholic bastions in the Italian Alps. Addressing at once the risk from home and away, it kept the theatrical excesses of pilgrimage in check, while neutralising the threat of Protestant infiltration with Catholic compassion.\textsuperscript{116}

The network of Sacred Mountains built over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries lay sprawling, like a line of defence, along the Swiss border. Each was composed as a sequence of chapels (whose typology varied from site to site) that featured, behind a viewing partition, episodes from the lives of the saints, represented with polychrome terra-cotta figures and scenographic frescoes. The first Sacro Monte to succeed Varallo was built in Orta in 1591. It consisted of twenty chapels laid out by a member of the Franciscan order on the hilly landscape above Lago di Orta. Inside the chapels, local artists and craftsmen created figural scenes from the life of St Francis; compared to the tableaux at Varallo, their works were less coherent, at times pairing sculptures with unrelated painted backdrops. Sacro Monte de Crea, where construction began in 1589, included twenty-three chapels illustrating the mysteries of the Rosary. Refurbished in the nineteenth century, its terra-cotta figures were replaced with plaster sculptures, also set against scenographic murals.

Among the Sacri Monti, the culmination of the developing stational order can be found in Varese. This design was initiated by Federico Borromeo, Carlo Borromeo’s nephew and successor as archbishop of Milan, and a similarly committed supporter of the Sacri Monti. Works began in 1604 by the local architect Giuseppe Bernasconi, who designed fourteen monumental chapels, each a variation on the typology of a porticoed temple.\textsuperscript{117} By 1633, the chapels were complete, featuring scenes from the Mysteries of the Rosary with hyper-realist figures and elaborate paintings, created by over a dozen painters and sculptors, which could be viewed through grille partitions on the chapel’s exterior. The placement in the site no longer reflects any desire for spatial similarity to Jerusalem or topographic mnemonics; the chapels were placed at regular intervals along a two-kilometre path that ascended the mountain to the cathedral at the top. Attention was given to the path’s width, for the easy passage of processions; the occasional chapel is turned ninety-degrees, almost as a side-note to movement itself. To add rhythm, triumphal arches subdivided the ascension further into three groups: joy, grief, and glory.
ultimately created a system that was not con-72 73
sidering the architecture of Jerusalem itself through
would expand into the urban, eventually shap-
 ranged by the realm of theological complexes, but
 54x45
fication, serialisation, and optimisation of the
 Via 54x220
stations, the city and its inhabitants disappear, leaving
arrows the design approach of a 2021 tourist map:
that sense, Giovanni Cales’s 1616 illustration pre-
ning of the Stations was imported
tinct representation, displaying only a Roman
Monti, these stations are bereft of any dis-
route, Jerusalem’s numerous pilgrims undertake
numeral on the wall for those confirming the
rationalisation of the stations as the first signs of
From the fourteenth to
rhythm for an ordered, codified, and regimented
modernity can be ascribed to the rise of a con-
The canonisation of the stations at the dawn of
recordings of the Stations of the Cross. Placed in an urban
void, it relies solely on its internal mechanism: a
steady progression of intensifying emotions, each
ignited only in relation to that which follows and
precedes.

The canonisation of the stations at the dawn of
modernity can be ascribed to the rise of a con-
dition known as Technic. Technic is “the spirit of
absolute instrumentality, according to which
everything is merely a means to an end”, writes
Federico Campagna in Technic and Magic (2018) 118
While a complete outline of Campagna’s argu-
ment is beyond the scope of this thesis, some of
its notions can be applied to highlight what is
at stake in this chapter and, to some extent, in
the next. According to Campagna, the world, and
our existential experience within it, derive from a
system (or “reality-system”) of Technic, which is
contrasted to that of Magic. The internal struc-
ture of Technic, which constitutes the anatom-
ical components of our world, includes absolute
language, measure, and unit. Campagna cites French
philosopher Gilbert Simondon, who distilled his
analysis of technology into an original theory of
individualisation, when “a thing […] is in a con-
tinuous process of actualisation of its original,
overflowing potential. As the process of individu-
atuation unfolds, we witness the procession of a
long series of ‘individuals’, each defined by the
specific limits of its interaction with what consti-
tutes its surroundings at that particular stage.”
Considering this interpretation, we can read the
rationalisation of the stations as the first signs of
Technic: a new order in which the station is but
a component in an algorithm condition that sees
the Via Crucis as a syntactic composition. In this
new order, the mystery and miracles of the medi-
evial church—its claims to magical powers—were
eradicated through an empirical understanding
of religious agency. Christ’s Passion had been
abstracted into units, formalised as stations. In
this process, it lost its autonomy, moving from
a theatrical representation of emotions—trau-
ma, arrogance, grief, pain, sympathy, anger,
hate, and love—to a reduced chapter in Trent’s
archetypal narratives and fixed affective cues. The
algorithm of this plot is dictated by the Catholic
pedagogy and its synthesis of the Passion as the
logical outcome of all past events. Confusion and
curiosity, once harbingers of imaginative labour,
were eradicated to prioritize a confessional con-
templative introspection, replacing theatricality
with control and discipline, heralding a new era
of intellectual inquiry where Technic triumphs.
CHAPTER THREE—

TOWARDS JERUSALEM
VALORISING MONUMENTS, COMMODIFYING PILGRIMAGE

Jerusalem has always benefited from its image. Located at a distance from transportation routes (both over land and sea) and with little natural resources to extract, the city had to capitalise on its symbolic value for economic survival. However, this condition arrived at a point of excess in the nineteenth century, when the influx of visitors had completely destabilised the city in terms of its civic space. This long century, from Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt in 1798 to the British occupation of Jerusalem in 1917, was the period when Christian travel to Jerusalem reached its peak. Several factors—the decline of the Ottoman Empire, a series of local and foreign reforms, and technological advancements—allowed the West to reconquer the Holy Land through different means: tourism. During this era Jerusalem was transformed by the arrival of new types of pilgrims: surveyors and tourists.

The former appropriated the subjectivity of a spiritual wanderer into that of a mission-driven military man. Steeped in religious curiosity and equipped with modern tools, the surveyors did not perform religious rituals per se, but they were occupied with authenticating the Scriptures by studying the sacred topography of the Holy Land. Thanks to the Ottoman Land Code of 1858, the possibility of ownership allowed explorers to shift their investigation from the surface of the terrain to its depth, where evidence of Christian heritage could be recovered.

The exponential growth of archaeological sites changed the landscape of Jerusalem. Under the guise of spirituality, a Christian narrative was memorialised in a series of historic monuments that were ritualised, naturalised, and commodified by a mass movement of tourists—privileged travellers hoping to locate (and, to a certain extent, to project) a particular memory in and on the land. The ritualisation of Jerusalem’s city space by tourists perpetuated the process of valorisation (enhancement or expansion), defined as increasing the value of a certain resource in order to generate surplus. The heritage project in Jerusalem proved instrumental in the valorisation of its monuments: over the twentieth century, the British mandate would entirely reshape the city by simplifying its past for the sake of familiarity, legibility, and profitability.

JERUSALEM IN TRANSFORMATION

In the years leading to the 1830s, Jerusalem was home to a population of about 9,000 residents, mainly shopkeepers and craftsmen who lived within a walled enclosed city. At the time, Jerusalem was a spiritual home to the three Abrahamic religions, and pilgrimage was just another of the city’s industries. Things began to change in 1831 when the Egyptian ruler Muhammad Ali revolted against Constantinople and occupied the region of Syria, which included Palestine. This event began a process of loosening the region’s physical and intangible borders by showcasing religious tolerance towards non-Muslims and even non-Ottoman subjects: pilgrim tolls were abolished, shrines of all denominations could be erected, and a freedom of religious practice meant that Christians and Jews were now equal, if not privileged, citizens.

In an attempt to gain support from the West, Ali permitted diplomatic institutions to be founded in Jerusalem: the first was the British consulate in 1838, followed by the consulates of Prussia (1842), France (1843), Sardinia (1843), America (1844), and Austria-Hungary (1849). Religious organisations were likewise welcome: the Latin Patriarchate was revived in 1843 for the first time since the Crusades, the Anglo-Episcopal See was established in 1841, and the Protestant Church inaugurated its first ‘cathedral’ in 1849, thus Declaring itself an equal to the prominent Orthodox and Catholic communities in Jerusalem. Despite his efforts to win the endorsement of the West, Ali was ultimately disarmed by the peasant revolts that erupted in Palestine, which resulted in raids, destruction, and famine. He retreated from the region in 1840, but his encouragement of ‘soft’ Western imperialism could not be reversed. European powers now had a territorial footprint in the Holy Land (a territory whose boundaries were much clearer to Westerners than to the local population) in the form of diplomatic relations and official religious institutions, allowing them to mobilise their power for its official survey. Holy Land exploration was not a new phenomenon: in 333 AD, the pilgrim from Bordeaux recorded his encounter with Biblical Palestine in great detail, and the Dominican Felix Fabri wrote a descriptive travelogue in 1483 that...
unique within the sphere of pilgrim diaries is the introduction of basic civil liberties like free movement in Europe in the nineteenth century. It included geopolitical conditions. The 1839 Ottoman was about Christ’s land be met with such favourable reactions of Islamic law tenure while introducing a new land code that was designed to centralise the Empire and security, a reform of the banking system, and institutionalisation of labour through guilds, and a new Ottoman flag and anthem. Most importantly for Palestine, the Tanzimat which bolstered by allowing tenured farmers on land to assume private ownership (giving the cultivator a full right of possession and inheritable rights), in contrast to the collective Musha system. Peasant ownership of land through title deeds had two benefits for the empire: it forced cultivators to increase production. The former was increased by awarding land-by-subscription to those cultivating ‘dead’ land; the latter was bolstered by allowing tenured farmers on arable land to assume private ownership (giving the cultivator a full right of possession and inheritable rights), in contrast to the collective Musha system. Peasant ownership of land through title deeds had two benefits for the empire: it forced cultivators to increase production. The latter plan to increase the value of soil. This commodification of land into an immovable asset was the manifestation of the state’s attempt to spatialise its power under the Tanzimat reforms by ordering, regulating, and classifying economic and social activities. Though it was not successful on all fronts, the reform effectively liberalised the land market in Palestine. The abstraction of territory through mapping and registration reshaped the land according to a regime of enclosure and exclusion. Under the new legal conditions, land could be freely alienated and sold without discrimination—even to foreigners. Though the Christian Church had held ecclesiastical properties in Palestine since Byzantine times, only after the reform was it allowed to expand, develop, and enclose its own missionary institutions, educational facilities, hospices and hospitals. These included the German deaconess Hospital, the Anglican hospital, the Notre Dame Hospice and the Italian hospital, as well as St. Joseph nursing school. On a larger scale, the monumental Russian compound was built on a hill across from the Old City under the name “Nova Jerusalem”, with an investment of about 250,000 pounds sterling from the Russian government. These ventures were to all production was taxed by collectors (who were themselves pressured by the Empire), this system meant that the risks posed by the uncertainty of agricultural life would be pooled, thus preventing the impoverishment of individual farmers. However, in terms of surplus, it also meant that there was little incentive for individual farmers to improve the land by fertilising the soil or plant trees.

Since the Land Code sought to dramatically improve the Empire’s revenue, the reform targeted two factors: the amount of land that was being cultivated and the incentive of each cultivator to increase production. The former was increased by awarding land-by-subscription to those cultivating ‘dead’ land; the latter was bolstered by allowing tenured farmers on arable land to assume private ownership (giving the cultivator a full right of possession and inheritable rights), in contrast to the collective Musha system. Peasant ownership of land through title deeds had two benefits for the empire: it forced cultivators to register their land and thus to subject it to regular taxation, and it allowed individual accumulation by encouraging improvement of a territory that was no longer shared. This shift from use-rights to private ownership re-ordered the land by employing the rhetoric of progress, improvement, and modernisation; in the
provide pilgrims with a home in the holy city, as well as subsidies in the form of food, lodging, and medical aid, while allowing foreign powers to expand their control on the ground. As the accommodation of pilgrims, the mechanisms by which land was privatized, alienated and sold led to its radical transformation in the decades to come by allowing Western exploration on the surface of the land—and into its depths.

ACT I: THE EXPLORER-SURVEYOR

The quintessential pilgrim-explorer of Biblical Palestine was Edward Robinson. Born in 1794 in Connecticut, Robinson studied law, mathematics, and Greek, spending his early career translating the New Testament into English and publishing Hebrew-English lexicons of the Old Testament. In 1838, a year after being appointed as the first professor of biblical literature in the Theological Seminary in New York, Robinson travelled to Jerusalem, which was then Muhammad-al-occupied Palestine. Thanks to the easing of travel restrictions, his profound knowledge of the Scriptures, and his interpreter Eli Smith, Robinson could see what he described as ‘the promised land’ unforded before his eyes. Similar to those before him, he saw the Scriptures as a guidebook of topographic details, names of towns and villages, and locations of natural elements, as well as an atlas of fauna, flora, and climate. However, unlike his predecessors, who followed well-trodden paths, recapitulated previously-written accounts, and relied on information provided by local monastic institutions, Robinson decided to question the ecclesiastical traditions of nineteenth-century Palestine by using his own methods: a measuring tape, minute observations, and a detailed system of orthography.

Thanks to his rigour, Robinson discovered hundreds of previously unknown or unrecognized sites, amongst them the remains of an arch that led to the Temple Mount (known today as Robinson’s Arch) and the Siloam tunnel that runs beneath the city into the Siloam fountain. Jerusalem’s first water source. Robinson’s three-volume publication, Biblical Researches in Palestine (1841), was widely accepted in the West; it won him a gold medal from the Royal Geographical society in London in 1842. SIn the preface to the first volume, Robinson explained his intentions:

We wish it to be regarded merely as a beginning, a first attempt to lay open the treasures of Biblical Geography and History still remaining in the Holy Land; treasures which have lain for ages unexplored, and had become covered with the dust and rubbish of many centuries [...] May He, who has thus far sustained me, make it useful for the elucidation of His truth!

Indeed, Robinson came to be known as the ‘father of Biblical Geography’. The certainty introduced by his scientific (and pseudo-scientific) methodology inspired generations of religious-oriented explorers to seek the paradoxical ‘religious truth’ that could be differentiated from what Robinson referred to as legendary traditions. His noble intentions notwithstanding, his statements were nonetheless revealing of the paternalistic approach to the territory and the ease with which he discarded centuries of histories, a sentiment of Western superiority that would be repeated by future travellers-cum-colonisers.

While Robinson expanded the field of vision by questioning existing traditions, he was still confined to the idiom of land-and-book research, where one was to be read in light of the other. That is to say, his mission was to identify and authenticate sites mentioned in the Scripture, not to conduct a general topographic or archaeologi cal study of a given area. When encountering an ancient Greek inscription along one of his routes, for example, he did not bother to interpret the text as the site was not on his biblical checklist; when he passed by what would later be recognized as the remains of the ancient walls of Jericho, Robinson dismissed the site as a mount of “rubish” due to its distance from known sites. This mode of specific inquiry changed in the 1860s when European powers began to send a different kind of explorer—not the learned scholars of the Bible, but surveying military men. In that sense, it is perhaps unsurprising that the first survey was framed not by religious intentions but by a prototypical colonial motivation: improvement.

Jerusalem’s recurring outbreaks of cholera and dysentery were to be solved by a donation from an English noblewoman who was eager to rebuild the city’s water system. In 1864, she pro vided £500 to the Royal Engineers to conduct an accurate study of the city. Led by Captain Charles Wilson, this was the first Western mission to be sent by a government body rather than merely inspired by personal curiosity and interests. This time, skilled surveyors utilised modern equipment to map the city at a 1:2,500 scale, including the city walls and gates, layout of streets, and locations of important buildings and public facilities. The resulting “Ordnance Survey of Jerusalem” was the first accurate map of the city, and proved invaluable to the Empire in its eventual expansion to Palestine.

While the improvement plan for Jerusalem’s water supply was never realised, Wilson’s survey precipitated the foundation of the largest enter prise of Western biblical inquiry: the Palestine Exploration Fund. The PEF was launched in 1865 before a group of clergymen, scientists, and public officials—the Arch of York introduced the Fund:

The object is strictly an inducive inquiry. We are not to be a religious society; we are not about to launch into any controversy; we are about to apply the rules of science, which are so well understood by us in other branches, to an investigation into the facts concerning the Holy Land.

Faced with controversies amongst Christian denominations (notably between Anglo-Catholics and Evangelicals), the Fund was able to unite men in and outside the Church by hailing the Bible not only as a religious guide but as a historical document whose merit was yet to be fully understood. They claimed that the Holy Land was “crying out for accurate investigation”.

Fig 4: Left: Robinson’s Arch (arch of the Solomonian bridge that linked Nebuchadnezzar’s city to the Temple Mount) and, still called by the same name, projecting from the retaining walls of Temple Mount. Fig 5: Right: Restoration of Robinson’s Arch by Ernest Forrest 1860–1865.
Fig 6: Plan of the Temple Mount by Ermete Pierotti for the Palestine Exploration Fund, showing subterranean water channels and cisterns (1862).

The PEF thus encapsulated the spirit of the time: on the one hand, it employed scientific tools to produce knowledge about distant lands, a quintessential Victorian trope (in fact, Queen Victoria was one of its first patrons); on the other hand, it was religiously motivated, responding to the industrialisation and secularisation endemic to England’s academic circles and to some extent European society at large. These two parallel sentiments were imbued with a sense of patrimony that was explicit in the PEF’s opening statement: “This country of Palestine belongs to you and me, it is essentially ours [...] We mean to walk through Palestine in the breadth of it because that land has been given onto us.” In the following decades, similar organisations joined England’s colonial-religious mission, including the American Palestine Exploration Society (1870), the German Palestine Society for the Exploration of Palestine (1878) and the American School of Oriental Research (1900), although the PEF remained the wealthiest and most prolific of these institutions.

In 1878 the PEF published the ambitious “Survey of Western Palestine” (SWP) based on triangulation across the length of the territory of the so-called Holy Land. Funded by the War Office, the SWP had a clear strategic objective of achieving knowledge over the region in order to secure the Suez Canal (opened in 1869) and protect India in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877. However, the survey had an additional layer of sentimental character (as the Chief of the War Office described it) and thus includes biblical, early Christian, and Crusaders sites. These maps, which took seven years to complete, provided the locations of every Palm, ruin, and contemporary village in the land, more than 10,000 place-names in total (compared with Robinson’s 1,712), many of whom previously unknown. Amongst the sheets were two special editions dedicated to illustrating the Old and New Testaments by mapping the Scriptures onto the terrain, including the boundaries of Israel’s twelve tribes, the borders of the ancient kingdoms of Israel and Judah, the locations of Canaanite cities and the divisions of King Solomon’s governments; the map of the New Testament also included cross-referenced biblical, Talmudic and modern names. The SWP presents a moment in which the certainty of modernity was met with something imaginary, mythical, and spiritual. No longer disputed or misidentified, Robinson’s studies and the PEF’s maps were actively appropriating the land and demarcating their territory by highlighting the specificity of the Christian narrative, excluding existing traditions, and eliminating the complexity that had been shared for centuries. In Enlilsm, Gary Fields argues that cartography is a technological way of owning the land by mapping arguments over a represented territory. As an instrument of force, he argues that maps not only shape consciousness about the land, but they “become models for and maps of what they represent.” This reanimation of geological strata landscaped the PEF’s vision onto the ground, transforming it into what Edward Said refers to as ‘imagined geographies’—where groups project their own reading of a patrimonial territory before they act upon it with physical force. This particular vision was based on memories that had been constructed in the West for generations: it would soon spatialise itself in Jerusalem, both symbolically and literally, in a series of historic monuments.

Before addressing the concept of the historic monument, we should understand what constitutes a monument in Jerusalem. As this thesis shows, from as early as the fourth century AD, monuments have been erected in Jerusalem over places where biblical events took place in order to assure their emotional affectivity on the members of the group and their ability to recall memory.
condemned Jesus to his death did not, originally, have a mnemonic intention; its significance in the present, however, is that it serves as the point of recollection of the saviour’s trial. The occasions on which Christ fell under the weight of the Cross or encountered various characters (Mary, Symon of Cyrene, Veronica, or the Women of Jerusalem) have been localised in pieces of pavement, a corner of a street, or fragment of buildings in Jerusalem that have since assumed a religious meaning within the systematised recollection of Stations of the Cross.

The foundation of a historic monument is not based on sentiment or scripture, but on an acquired, ‘objective’ data. This idiosyncratic recollection emerged as a discipline in the second half of the nineteenth century in the form of biblical exploration. Through excavation, a non-descript site could become a holy space. In this

These monuments, such as the Churches of the Holy Sepulchre or the Nativity that were discussed in chapter one, were erected with a prior commemorative purpose. They were conceived and erected as instruments of recollection, denoting sanctity, continuity, and power. In time, additional memories proliferated as localities the place where Christ was stripped of his garments, where the apostles met after resurrection, the column offlagellation, where the crown of thorns was found, and many more. However, these symbolic memories were not monumentalised with structure ex-while; their mnemonic associations were infused into existing places that often carried no previous significance. This process of turning a non-descript site into one that commemorates historical events is what Choay defines as creating a historic monument. In many respects, the historic monument is antithetical to the monument: it is “constituted a posteriori by the converging gazes of the historian and the amateur who choose it from a mass of existing edifices.” In other words, structures that did not initially have a memorial purpose can be converted into a historic monument on the basis of a particular knowledge that is based on the Christian Bible and the traditions that have since evolved around it.

The Via Crucis, for example, was staged as a sequence of dramatic events designed to cyclically re-collect the Passion of Christ. In chapter two we witness the construction of the Stations of the Cross with the sole purpose of staging this theatrical ritual. The room in which Pontius Pilate...
the Old City, “the Jerusalem of Christ will soon be reconstituted” 29 showcasing the belief that all Western scholars had to do was find the “Bible under the cobblestones” of modern Jerusalem. In other words, it is there that memory can be literally excavated and brought into the surface where it will be readily available for recollection. One of the recovered sites was the Sisters of Zion Convent, built on land purchased by Father Marie-Alphonce de Ratisbonne in the 1860s. Until excavations under the convent began, the convent carried no mnemonic function as it was merely in the vicinity of holy sites, such as the ruined section of a Roman arch that came to be known as the Ecce Homo Arch was sufficient to establish the conclusions given above, and thus forbids us to accept the traditional site of the Sepulchre as genuine. 22 The dispute surrounding the existing sites investigations that were far beyond historical curiosity, and resulted in the invention of an alternative holy site: the Garden Tomb. The British Major-General Charles Gordon arrived in Palestine in 1881. Following a quest to find the exact location of the Garden of Eden in Shechelis, it was the general sentiment for many holy sites, whose authenticity was questioned but nevertheless accepted. What initially emerged as Peter’s prison has remained as such, even though other researchers have discredited the initial findings. This tendency encapsulates what Vincent Lermine calls a patrimonial inertia, a condition in which a historic monument’s status, once designated, is rarely reversed. 23

While the notion of a patrimonial inertia is true for most of Jerusalem’s sites, it was not the case with the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, whose authenticity remained contested amongst explorers and archaeologists. While pre-modern pilgrims accepted the uncertainty of the site, in the nineteenth century this ambiguity was no longer tolerable. 24 The first volume of the PEF’s Recovery of Jerusalem (1871) reads: “There are differences of opinions [...], whether the present church of the Holy Sepulchre does or does not cover the true Sepulchre of our Saviour, if not, whether the true site can yet be recovered.” 25 Likewise, Lieutenant Claude Reignier Conder of the Royal Engineers writes in 1878 that “the study of the rock [the existing Calvary] drives us irresistibly to consider these facts to be mere coincidence; they are rather strong confirmation of the theory applied to some of the Stations of the Cross: he emphasized its proximity to the place of St Stephen’s Martyrdom and to a Sepulchric Jewish cemetery, as well as its location outside of the Old City walls, as written in the New Testament.” 26 Conder was convinced that the existing Calvary “lowers the Christian faith in the eyes of the Moslem” because of its desecrating falsehood. After laying out his detailed observation and investigation into his Calvary, he concludes, “we cannot, I would argue, consider these facts to be mere coincidence; they are rather strong confirmation of the accuracy of the more generally accepted views regarding the topography and monuments of ancient Jerusalem.” 27

It took a decade to secure the purchase of the site that came to be known as “Gordon’s Calvary.” Initially bought by a Swiss investor, it was collectively purchased by the Garden Tomb Association, a private organisation composed of noblemen and women who showed an “earnest

Fig 12: Excavations on hilltop, showing rock-hewn steps (left) and foundations of a tower in Hulamin (right), ca. 1900

followed by Christ [...]. The sister who accompanied me in these vaults, throning over the age-old walls the light of her lantern, has succeeded in imparting to me for the first time her own ardent convictions. I, too, in the presence of these debris, am much moved as she herself 22 Recollection thus occurs based on affectivity; this ancient room gained a mnemonic function thanks to a pseudo-scientific fragment, a local figure of religious authority, and proximity to other holy sites. Following the monastery’s discovery, other holy sites proliferated nearby based on their perceived authenticity. Soon around Gabbatha were erected the Monastery of the Flagellation, where Christ was Rogued by the Romans, and the Church of the Condemnation, where Christ picked up his cross. In addition to events related to Christ and the Via Crucis, other minute details from the Scriptures were localised. The patrimonial inflation included not only religious bodies but also national institutions. As Hanna Harris writes, the English hospital excavated under its premises to discover: a very ancient and massive prison [...] with several cells enclosed, and it is thought that very possibly it was in one of these that the Apostle Peter was imprisoned from which he was so miraculously delivered, as described in the Acts of the Apostles. [...] even if it be not the actual prison, it must be of equal antiquity, and serves to illustrate the Scripture incident most vividly. 23 Harris admits that even if it is not exactly a prison, nor Peter’s cell, she can still understand the Scriptures better due to its authentic character. 24 This was the most venerated site in all of Jerusalem, the Western church of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre: he emphasised its proximity to the place of the Sanhedrin house, as written in the New Testament. 25 Even though the 1860s and 70s new excavations showed that both the Ecce Homo arch, the substructures room and the collocalion jars date to the second century AD, the monumentalisation of the events of the Passion— they nevertheless remain a Catholic pilgrimage site, protected by the French consulate and frequented by Jerusalem tourists. — Lermine, Jerusalem, 1900, 54

"[The] hill is left unmarked except for its name, north, and south sides forming the back and sides of the basin; at center, the shallow-forested, or bare, on the north side in formation by the deep perpendicular cutting and removal of the ledge. To the observer, at a distance, the hill is left shapeless, an object that would be suggested as one of the parking barns, hewn within

Fig 14: Jerusalem’s Calvary (left enclosure) and Skull Hill (center), with the Muslim Cemetery pushed above.

Fig 13: Map of the area around Skull Hill and the Garden Tomb property in the 1880s

Gordon visited Jerusalem with the aim of locating another sign of the divinity in the natural world: Golgotha, the hill where Christ was crucified, also known as the place of the skull, or Calvary. Gordon traced contour lines onto Jerusalem’s PEF Surveys in search of patterns that would suggest the position of Calvary, only to finally confirm its location on a site that had been speculatively identified as the Tomb of Christ due to a supposed connection between the name of the place and the skull-shaped rock above. One of the strongest advocates of this site was Claude Reignier Conder, who had written an account that disregarded the existing Calvary and assumed this ancient rock tomb as the true site of Christ’s burial. In his Test Work in Palestine (1878), Conder explains his findings using a process of identification similar to that applied to some of the Stations of the Cross: he emphasized its proximity to the place of St Stephen’s Martyrdom and to a Sepulchric Jewish cemetery, as well as its location outside of the Old City walls, as written in the New Testament. Conder was convinced that the existing Calvary “lowers the Christian faith in the eyes of the Moslem” because of its desecrating falsehood. After laying out his detailed observation and investigation into his Calvary, he concludes, “we cannot, I would argue, consider these facts to be mere coincidence; they are rather strong confirmation of the accuracy of the more generally accepted views regarding the topography and monuments of ancient Jerusalem.” It took a decade to secure the purchase of the site that came to be known as “Gordon’s Calvary.” Initially bought by a Swiss investor, it was collectively purchased by the Garden Tomb Association, a private organisation composed of noblemen and women who showed an “earnest

Fig 15: Easter morning at the Garden Tomb (1898)
desire […] that the garden and its tomb should be secured from desecration on the one hand or superintended by a guardian on the other.” The Association purchased the land and adjoining plots (measuring 6440 sqm) that bordered the property of Muslims and Christians and was then handed over to a Muslim cemetery, perched on the so-called “Skull Hill” above. Though the land was initially considered as Mulk (freehold), in 1905 the association managed to change its designation to Waqf in order to prevent it from reverting back to the state when its heirless owners would pass away. Over the next decades, the Association refrained from erecting structures within the grounds, investing instead in a lush garden around the tomb, where Protestants could find secluded space for contemplation. This pious environment was radically different from the congested and constricted atmosphere in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, located just a few hundred meters to the south inside the Old City walls. Despite the lack of a monument per se, the bony rock of the tomb and its surrounding gardens was invested with a memorial function; it became a historic monument of another typology—the garden—which became a place for the recollection for English and American Protestant communities.

The invention of the Garden Tomb was as strategic as it was spiritual. Unlike other ‘rediscovered’ holy sites in Jerusalem, the protestant Golgotha not only added an additional site to the pilgrim’s route, but also attempted to discredit another. This was a deliberate decision on the part of the Protestants—who were not recognised by the Ottomans as an autonomous confessional community, and thus did not share a piece of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre like other denominations. In fact, the Status Quo agreement from 1863 dictated: “The actual status quo will be maintained and the Jerusalem shrines, whether owned in common or exclusively by the Greek, Latin, and Armenian communities, will all remain forever in their present state.” This meant that nine sites in and around Jerusalem and Bethlehem, with their intricate and fragmented sacred spaces, would remain in the custody of the Roman Catholics, Greek Orthodox, Armenians, Syriac Orthodox, Coptics Christians, and Ethiopians in perpetuity. Forever excluded from owning the holy places, the leaders of the Protestant community were compelled to invent their own historic monuments in order to assure the group’s faculty of recollection.

This was the birth of Jerusalem’s patrimonial project, designed to attract Western pilgrims to the city. The proliferation of historic monuments countered the spiritual drainage embittered by industrial Europe, by providing a place of spiritual worship and affective recollection. Thanks to scientific practices, existing elements such as a rock cave or a fragment of an arch could turn into proof of one’s own history. However, the scrutiny under which the materiality of the city was studied and designated also dissolved “lost” holy sites. In contrast, M-C-M is an inscrutable process that begins and ends with money: it concludes a movement “only to begin it again”. Marx defines the distinction between the two modes as “a palpable difference between the circulation of money as capital, and its circulation as mere money.” In M-C-M, when the purchased commodity is once again abstracted into money, the incremental growth of the original amount is defined as surplus. This process of expansion (or enhancement) of value is referred to as valorisation. Therefore, to valorise in Marxist terms means to increase the surplus-value extracted from a commodity: valorisation is what converts money into capital.

In that sense, both Choay and Marx’s definition of valorisation are at play in late nineteen-centuries Jerusalem. As explained below, at the same time that its monuments were adapted to appear increasingly legible and comprehensible to visiting tourists, their potential for problematic spirituality of commodified pilgrimage. With fixed itineraries, a chain of hotels, and well-trained tour guides, the tourist industry was able to capitalise on Jerusalem’s symbolic importance and valorise each of its sites as a productive asset. Practices of recovery, reconstruction, and restoration, as applied to the newly invented sites in the Holy Land, were established as fundamental mechanisms achieving both forms of valorisation. On one hand, they designate existing artefacts with a form of meaning that can be consumed by the religious industry; on the other hand, they embody the M-C-M model by investing in an archaeological site to legitimise its inclusion in the patrimonial circuit as a historic monument, thereby generating surplus value and turning it into a marketable tourist attraction. Both forms of valorisation will be explored in further detail below.

The architect of Jerusalem’s tourism project was Thomas Cook, one of the Englishmen. Cook was a Baptist missionary who was both a faithful Christian and a business man. Starting from a small endeavour to
host Temperance Tours (helping men abstain from alcohol and nicotine) in 1841, Cook’s office expanded in 1850 to arrange tours to Paris, Italy, and the Alps; in 1852, he transported 165,000 people to the Great Exhibition in London’s Crystal Palace, providing transportation and accommodation. Conducting the tours in person, buying wholesale tickets, and targeting the expanding middle class—whose vacations were an integral part of ‘healthy work’—Cook positioned himself at the forefront of the business of leisure-making. The arrival of the steamship, improvement of railways, and the paving of roads encouraged his entrepreneurial spirit to expand his ‘educational’ services beyond Europe. Reflecting both the era’s expansionist sensibilities and his own missionary sentiments, Cook was oriented to the East. It was there that he could combine the curiosity of the ancient world with the comfort and security of modernism; above all, it is where he could merge business with piety.

When Cook arrived in Palestine in 1864, he wanted to revolutionise the existing model of pilgrimage. Until then, visitors were responsible for planning their own routes, hiring guides, preparing food, and booking transfers and accommodations for themselves. They travelled in large caravans that were crucial for economic and security reasons, often in the company of officers of the Ottoman army. Cook offered something completely different: a packaged deal that would provide all of his client’s needs on the ground. He visited Palestine twice to make connections and study the field so that he could promise his clients:

- by the Damascas and Jaffa Gates.
- By the 1870s, he purchased land and built a storage facility for his gear by the Old City; in the following years, he bought additional plots in order to accommodate his expanding agency. His first office in Jerusalem was opened in 1881; by 1903, he already had three in the city, in addition to outposts in Jaffa, Cairo, Constantiopolis, Algiers, Tunis, and Khartoum.
- By 1883, less than fifteen years after he had set up, Cook was responsible for the escort of over two-thirds of all Holy Land travellers arriving from the West. One of the keys to his success, aside from catering to his clients’ needs for comfort and security, was the introduction of hotel coupons and circular notes. The former were pre-purchased accommodation vouchers that eliminated the need for currency exchange and price haggling, and the latter were the forerunners of traveler’s cheques, replacing heavy gold coins with notes that could be exchanged in Cook’s agencies. This vast economic network created a near-monopoly over the tourist industry in the Holy Land, positioning Cook and his clients as privileged amongst Jerusalem’s visitors; in one recorded anecdote, he threatened to withdraw his business from a local hotelier if he “does not treat our travellers and ourselves as they and we ought to be treated.”

This sense of paternalism is not surprising considering Cook’s ties to local diplomatic powers: in 1869, when one of Cook’s camps was robbed, the British consul in Beirut and the Turkish governor of Jerusalem conducted a month-long investigation to retrieve their belongings and bring them to the British Foreign Office in London. By the end of the nineteenth century, Cook’s representative in Palestine also served as the American vice-consul. Indeed, much of the power and fame of Cook’s Tours came from the support of the Empire; in return, Cook served the colonial powers with great loyalty. In 1882, Cook escorted a campaign to Egypt that resulted in the British occupation of the country; after the Battle of Tel el-Kebir, Cook evacuated wounded British soldiers; and in 1884, the British government employed Cook to transport supplies to their soldiers in Sudan. Cook was also in charge of the Royal Tours of the Prince of Wales (1862), Prince George (1882) and the renowned visit of Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany (1898).

However, the social and political elites were not his target audience; these trips were merely tools to disseminate his message and advance his desire to democratise travel, as well as cater to the middle-class desire for self-improvement through leisure. He even encouraged women to travel, arguing that with “their energy, bravery, and endurance of toil […] they are fully equal to those of the opposite sex […] they push their way through all difficulties and acquire the perfection of tourist characters.” These lines were written in Cook’s newsletter, The Excursionist (1851–1902) (later The Traveller’s Gazette, 1902–1935), which promoted Cook’s Tours by showcasing its development and published articles on new destinations, transportation fares, and testimonials from returning travellers and Cook’s employees. In addition to the newsletter, Cook created another publication: a handbook that published periodically and was to accompany Western travellers on their trip to Palestine.

Cook’s Handbook included practical information for travellers—preferred season, currency exchange rates, dress codes, diet, camp life, and so on—as well as detailed itineraries, maps in various scales, and descriptions of the land’s natural features, various religions and sects, and local history, as well as addresses of post office, physicians, foreign consulates, and bankers. The vision of the guidebook, Cook explains, is that it could be read “without difficulty, either on horseback or in the dim light of the tent [...] that in any moment any information may be ascertained.” Addressing a group that was literate and well versed in Evangelical theology, Cook included not only practical information but also Scriptural references for all the sites on his itinerary. By combining the guidebook with the
Bible, Cook assumes authority over all the didactic content (both spiritual and practical) of the traveller’s visit—and removes everything else as excess. As Cook himself writes in the introduction, the volume is intended as a handbook for tourists; it does not, therefore, attempt to give exhaustive information on the multiplicity of threads of controversy woven around nearly every sacred site [...]. It points out all that is to be seen, and endeavors to provide concise information upon all subjects in which the tourist [sic] may find interest.

Cook openly admits to reducing the complexity of the land for the benefit of the tourist. Controlling both the timing and the spatial parameters, Cook projected a single narrative and frames a view over the land as the only truth. When faced with ambiguous sites or sites, the tourist could concur with the authority of the European guidebook (of which Cook’s was only the first), where they could be reassured with familiar facts and figures.

The guidebook also included detailed itineraries that are worth exploring. Day 1 of Cook’s “Ten Days Tour in Judea” is described as such: “Jerusalem to Mar Saba, Riding to Rachel’s Tomb, Solomon’s Pools, over the hills of the Wilderness [sic] of Judea [...], to the Dead Sea, giving some time to bathe, and then ride across the plain to the Solomons’ Pools, over the hills on either side covered with fighting men, Philistines on one side and Israel on the other [...].” We are now in the hills on either side covered with fighting men, Philistines on one side and Israel on the other [...].”

The Valley of Elah is also mentioned in an unpublished travelogue written by mother and daughter Sophie and Emmeline Barnsley, who undertook Cook’s Eastern tour from England in 1888. Rather than read from the written guide, the women cite the spoken descriptions offered to them by their guides, Mr. Howard and Mr. Bernard:

“We halted for lunch at the break from which David selected the pebbles which he used to kill the Philistine giant. Then as we looked down the narrow valley it was easy to imagine the hills on either side covered with fighting men, Philistines on one side and Israel on the other [...].”

Indeed, for Sophie and Emmeline, “Every bit of this wonderful land is full of sacred and historic interest,” as every item seen from the saddle, and every contemporary landmark is mediated and enhanced for their familiar knowledge. Thus it becomes “easy to imagine,” or, to put it in terms of collective memory, support recollection, by allowing the tourist to literally view it at its place of origin. This travelogue reveals the depth and breadth of Cook’s pedagogy, which extended to every aspect of the journey. The intensity of sites can be seen from a diary entry written ten days after the visit to the Valley of Elah:

“We came to a large square building which contains a rock on which it is said that Jesus and His disciples ate before and after the Resurrection. Then we visited a very old church in which it is said that our Lord preached His first sermon. Then Joseph’s workshop and Mary’s well, and as it is the only water supply in the town it is quite possible that she drew water from it.”

There is no clearer way of valorising the Holy Land and its historic monuments than Cook’s idiosyncratic itineraries, which naturalised cultural elements and archaeological sites as the backdrops of the tourists’ shared past. Since every bit of the land is communicated through narrative commentary, one can argue that Cook’s guides practice Choay’s valorisation by “cultivating the public’s passivity, discouraging it from looking or deciphering with its own eyes, allowing meaning to escape through a sieve of hollow words.” Cook’s itineraries are thus a careful construction of a national route of historic monuments that project ‘Western-centric’ envelope over the entirety of Palestine in order to frame the view of the traveler and market his attraction as “a tour back in time to Biblical Lands.” By preventing them from engaging in a free-flowing interaction with the land or encountering a monument in an unmediated way, Cook is able to conceal its reality and thus expand his profits.

It is true that in the eyes of tourists Jerusalem was reduced to an archipelago of valorised monuments. However, for the locals, these islands of heritage were consumable products floating within a real city, where streams of a modernised metropolis were gaining strength. Cook and his counterparts worked hard to hide this, by engulfling the tour with Orientalist hypes whenever biblical sites were not readily available for consumption. Cook’s tours often ended with a journey back to the city of Jaffa, where travelers could stay, according to Cook’s handbook, “at its place of origin. This travelogue reveals the depth and breadth of Cook’s pedagogy, which extended to every aspect of the journey. The intensity of sites can be seen from a diary entry written ten days after the visit to the Valley of Elah:

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Indeed, for Sophie and Emmeline, “Every bit of
suit, relocating from within the Old City to Jaffa Street. In the following years, senior residents’ homes, orphanages, banks, schools, post offices, and entertainment facilities formed a secular cluster outside the Old City gates.

This civic character was further developed by the levying of taxes, the instauration of a police force, the layout of parks and water fountains, and the supervision of urban planning and building regulations. A population register of the city’s residents was undertaken, depicting a multicultural mix whose urban identity was gaining visibility and legitimacy. In 1907, an Ottoman clock tower was erected on top of the Jaffa Gate—now the heart of the city—displaying universal scientific time shared by the “fellow citizens” of Jerusalem.

This was an era of relative equilibrium within the city; as Vincent Lemire writes, there was “a measure of harmony among its inhabitants, a sort of ubiquity that linked the different segments of the population.” Despite multiple factors—the determination of the PEF, the ‘soft colonialism’ of the religious and diplomatic bodies, and the arrival of mass-tourism—a relative ambiguity remained across the city’s urban space, where the municipality’s main concerns still revolved around epidemics, railways, and beggars—not the city’s heritage.

But this modern city was not what tourists expected. As Cook writes himself in the handbook, “Most travellers have a feeling of disappointment on first seeing Jerusalem.” Indeed, the visitors to Jerusalem at the end of the nineteenth century were tourists, a term worth elaborating on in order to understand the reaction of Western travelers to the city. In his book, Guy Urry and Jonas Larsen describe the particular way in which tourists observe the world. Tourists, they explain, are subjects who consume a pleasurable experience that differs from their daily life. They often behold the world through a lens that is socially framed by class, gender, education, culture, and religion; their vision is filtered through memories and ideologies in a way that does not reflect an actual reality. Urry and Larsen argue that the tourist gaze is not individually determined, but is constructed and directed through a cognitive work of comparison, classification, and connection; it is heavily based on visual and textual representation, which foster great anticipation from the tourist’s destination.

The gaze and the gaze are in a relationship of constant tension that is negotiated by travel guides, heritage experts, and local religious authorities. This is all the more true in the case of Jerusalem, where the city is inevitably compared to its representations in biblical literature and religious imagery spanning millennia and disseminated through Sunday school and church sermons, museum frescoes and postcards.

In other words, Jerusalem could not live up to its image in the West. Constructed of signs, this image is a collage of collective memories that find their material form in the city’s various signifiers: its ancient walls, Oriental elements (such as indigenous characters, camels, or palm trees), or the dome of the Holy Sepulchre. These signifiers are refined by tourism professionals who produce, valorise, and disseminate them within society through posters, guidebooks, and travelogues for mass consumption.

Since Jerusalem’s tourist industry generates surplus by producing valorised heritage rather than goods, its value is very much dependent on the faculty of sight. The possibility of seeing ancient Jerusalem became the prime objective of Thomas Cook & Sons; it is what every pilgrim-tourist desired. But “we do not literally ‘see’ things”, Urry and Larsen remind us: as tourists, we only see objects as signifiers of something else.

In other words, it is the legibility of the signifier that dictates the satisfaction of the touristic gaze. This is problematic, of course, because when tourists see the city, they automatically complete an image according to the patterns of life necessary for their own recollection, while “various kinds of social experiences are in effect ignored or trivialised, such as the relations of war, exploitation, hunger, disease, the law and so on, which cannot be seen as such”, write Urry and Larsen. Indeed, the complexity of the city cannot be understood by the touristic gaze: as we shall see, when something interposes the image, the semiotic structure collapses.

“In a word, we can barely recognise Jerusalem”, wrote Constantin François Volney in 1795. He saw an Oriental city which was far from the Jerusalem he expected, one of ancient beauty and history. While tourism had yet to be institutionalised when he wrote these lines at the end of the eighteenth century, this sentiment is emblematic of the touristic gaze of him and his fellow travellers who felt it their duty to report on the shortcomings of Palestine. The travelogues cited below, as well as dozens of others, are far from impartial representations of the East, and should be understood within the discourse on Orientalism. Travel writings from nineteenth-century Palestine should thus be studied for their agency in shaping Jerusalem. They directly contributed to its appropriation and exclusion by being complicit in colonialist discourse. As such, travelogues reveal the connection between travel, collective memory, imperialism, valorisation, and capitalism.

The first phase of travellers’ response includes a feeling of disappointment in reaction to the natural scenery. “Those who describe Palestine as beautiful”, wrote one traveller in 1875, “must have either a very inaccurate notion
of what constitutes beauty of scenery, or must have viewed the country through a highly coloured medium."

Indeed, the gaze of these travellers over Palestine was framed by their own cultural and aesthetic expectations—beauty was predicated on a romanticized understanding of the terrain. As such, the landscape was filtered through predetermined memories and shared ideologies. This bias notwithstanding, Twain's travelogue sold over 67,000 copies in its first year and became the most widely-read travel book by an American author, propelling other travellers to share similar reactions. Contrast his imagination with reality, Elliot Warburton writes:

"So long the object of eager hope and busy imagination, it stood before me at length in actual reality. [...] a brilliant and chequered sunshine has something mournful in it, when all that it shines upon is utterly desolate and dreary."

The sense of desolation was shared by many travellers, who addressed the land's natural features, in particular its state of productivity—or lack thereof. It was described as a "barren desert, once a well-watered plain [now reduced to] destitution," as nothing "but a barren, hard, despondent wasteland." Henric Mobille described it as a land "full of old cheese [and] bones of rocks [...] a land of ruins, paralysed and forsaken [...] lying in dust and ashes," its "many hills and valleys, stony, rugged, neglected, silent, and lifeless, succeed one another, as though the anger of God rested on this land, once flowing with milk and honey." To put it more succinctly, it was "aaked, degenerated hell."  

The general agreement about Palestine's degraded physical condition was gradually transformed as the turn of the twentieth century drew near. As mass tourism shaped local infrastructure, complaints of "the filthy and uncomfortable nature of the accommodation, the want of pure water, the disagreeable smells constantly to be encountered" were heard less and less. Many of the tourists did not see what was in front of their eyes, but a "horrrible new suburb with its smoking factory chimneys" that was hiding "the real Jerusalem, the holy city that we have seen of old in pictures and prints." It is doubtful that there were any smoking chimneys around the Old City; rather, what they saw was probably more reminiscent of the Europe that they knew from religious art. As the Irish Minister Josias Leslie Penrhyn Porter wrote, "the City of the Great King, the Holy City of the Crusaders, the picturesque City of the Saracens, the delightful City of the Quresh, and the coming and going of all nations almost in a pool of filth and filth..." The Jerusalem that we have seen of old in pictures and prints... is that a great sacrilege has been committed in the very heart of the Holy Land?"  

In the same year, a reporter in the popular American magazine Scriblerus wrote that architecture "is a great sacrilege that has been committed in the very heart of the Holy Land."  

THE COLONISER

"The privilege of 'cleaning up' Jerusalem's streets was awarded to Sir Ronald Storrs, the first British governor of Jerusalem. Storrs was struck by the beauty of the city and its geography, which he described as "unparalleled
in the world, with an appeal to the imagination that not Rome, even Athens, could rival. Its sentiments for the city were not dissimilar to those of Palestine’s late-nineteenth-century tourists, and he admitted little experience for the task at hand. One of his first actions as military governor was to put an end to all construction in Jerusalem: within four months of his appointment, he released a statement announcing that “no person shall demolish, erect, alter or repair” any structure within 2,500 metres of the Damascus Gate of the Old City, without his written permission. Cars were to be left out of Judea, and when asked about the possibility of a tram to run between Bethelhem and the Mount of Olives, he wrote that “the first rail section would be laid under the dead body of the military governor.”

As much as Storrs wanted to restore Jerusalem to its biblical past, he was advised that “there are many problems in economics, hygiene, town planning, social reconstruction, to which the sermon on the Mount and the teaching of Jesus give us but a little clue.” He therefore entrusted the project to an independent committee, the Pro-Jerusalem Society, composed of the city’s mayor and leaders of the Muslim, Jewish, Christian, and Armenian communities. This uncommon union of civic and religious concerns was bound together “by their common love for the Holy City.”

Storrs appointed the Arts and Crafts advocate and William Morris follower C. R. Ashbee as director. Like Storrs, Ashbee believed that the urgency of their mission was a matter of not only archaeology or preservation but of beauty: “Everything that we associate with our sense of beauty is at issue in danger: Landscape, the utilities of streets and sites, the embodied vision of the men that set the great whole together […] all these things have to be considered practically.”

When Ashbee arrived in Jerusalem, it was in a desperate state: “It is difficult to imagine a stronger contrast than between the Jerusalem of man’s imagination […] and the actual Jerusalem left us by the Turk.” He lamented his responsibility in shaping this “city of the mind,” evoking with despair its great builders of the past, and contemplating his abundance of freedom to do well with the city—and prevent others from doing ill. This was the interlocking of these three elements that Jerusalem was supposedly made into a place designed and sustained for the touristic gaze.

The first element of landscape design was that it is an ideology, a Western construct, and that power is structured on imagined relationships with the natural world. For clarity, I have grouped these plans according to three mechanisms of landscape design: the imposition of a strong sense of the natural, the use of stone as a unifying building material, and the construction of Jerusalem into a familiar image by removing all visual obstructions. It is through the interlocking of these three elements that Jerusalem was irreversibly made into a place designed and sustained for the touristic gaze.

Fig 27: A Palestine Notebook.
“ornamental plantations” but would instead attempt to recover the past: Jewish and ancient Creco-Roman rock-tombs would be preserved as “features” of the park, while the rest would be discarded in order to return Jerusalem into its natural, pre-Ottoman state. As Geddes wrote:

It would be an easy matter to remove this earth and rabish further downhill […] in this way may be laid out and kept permanently open the early Biblical Jerusalem, of which the present old city is but a later development. As Geddes himself wrote, “on the eco-

of industry from its perimeter and the creation complexity of the city itself, but to those seeing residents, those who live and work within the plans were intended to appeal not to the city’s be further from Jerusalem, which was dominated and kept permanently open the early Biblical Jerusalem, of which the present old city is but a later development.

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an object which the present old city is but a later development. As Geddes wrote:

to be carried out in the local “Jerusalem Stone”. In his memoirs, Storrs explains his decision:

his decision: Storrs explains his decision:

view onto Jerusalem. This was not undertaken in one plan or legislation, but as a series of surgical interventions, recreational projects, and sketches contained in the personal notebooks of Ashbee and in the 1919 publication by the Pro-Jerusalem Society. The latter begins by boasting of “cleaning the Citadel and clearing out of the city foise”, which included the removal of “great masses of stone debris” and, of course, a mass of Ottoman refugees. In their camps, “there was much sickness, the misery and squallor were pitiful, and it took a long time before the relief officers were able to cope with the difficulty.” The society found a creative way to deal with both the material and human remains of the war:

The Society then worked out a method by which the clearing and cleaning should be done by refugee labour, and such of the refugees were able-bodied were utilised in, so to speak, tidying up their own house. Many hundreds of men, women, and children, organised in different working gangs, were thus used.

The violence embedded in this efficient method could not be overstated. The remainder of the publications maintain similar notions of clearing and beautifying Jerusalem’s signifiers, of which the Citadel was only one. The Ramparts Walk, for example, was a fortified walking path on the ancient walls, originally used for security. Under the new plan, it was to become a promenade: “the spinal cord on which is to be built the whole series of parks, gardens, and open spaces of which the new city will be composed.” For this project, the Society opened disused guardhouses, removed several feet of landfill, built steps, installed iron handrails, and removed around thirty ‘encroach -

ments’ that were built by the city’s residents in order to disarm their domestic property. The Ramparts Walk is a classic example of valorisation: it enhances the Old City’s appeal by creating a quasi-historical attraction that engages with the materiality of the ancient. While it is based on the Ottoman walls, it was hailed by Ashbee as “the largest, and perhaps the most perfect, Medieval encoine in existence.” Rising above the “wild
The idea of creating Jerusalem as a landscape is evident not only from the projects and texts undertaken by the Society, but also from the medium used to devise these plans. The design of the Jaffa Gate is presented as a juxtaposition in the terms of history, beauty, and a greater sense of posing the external viewer in a paternalistic relationship with the local-insider. The latter is flattened along with all the rest of the elements within the frame—greenery, houses, natural elements, ruins, and monuments—into a picturesque composition. At the same time, the outsider is at liberty to enjoy the affectivity of the scene—and then turn their back on it. Ashbee’s designs for Jerusalem elevates the sub-proximité; it encapsulates the sensibilities of a landscape painter employed by the Pro-Jerusalem Society. Indeed, the particular gaze that is associated with landscape painting is that of possession and authority; it is a form of control that positions the external viewer in a paternalistic relationship with the local-insider. The latter is flattened along with all the rest of the elements within the frame—greenery, houses, natural elements, ruins, and monuments—into a picturesque composition. At the same time, the outsider is at liberty to enjoy the affectivity of the scene—and then turn their back on it.

Another substantial undertaking was the ‘clearing-up’ of the old city gates. First, the Society removed locals (such as a bath contractor or dung-cake bakers) that appropriated St Stephen’s Gate, repaired the guard-house at Herod’s Gate, and designed a new monumental scheme for Damascus Gate. Jaffa Gate was to be completely remodelled: the Ottoman Clock Tower—described by Ashbee as ‘hideous’ and by the Pro-Jerusalem Society as ‘unsightly’—was dismantled. A large open space replaced the existing make-shift market stalls, which would be cleared away, along with the shops that had been erected around the gate for decades. In addition, parts of the wall that had been breached over the years would be rebuilt “again exactly as it was”, and a new flower garden would be planted around the citadel.

roofs. The entire scene is framed by generous pine trees and luscious greenery; it is a projected vision of a productive, well-ordered world where old and new live together in harmony, encapsulating a Western vision of the beauty, the ancient, and the holy. Below Ashbee’s rendering, the subtitle reads: “The same [the view onto Jaffa Gate] as suggested when the unsightly obstructions that hide the wall line are cleared away.” Indeed, Ashbee’s picturesque scene sees actions of displacement and demolition as nothing but the clearing of obstructions. As a case-study for Jerusalem at large, the redesign of the Jaffa Gate reveals the primacy of the distant view over the discomforts of proximity; it encapsulates the sensibilities of a landscape painter employed by the Pro-Jerusalem Society. Indeed, the particular gaze that is associated with landscape painting is that of possession and authority; it is a form of control that positions the external viewer in a paternalistic relationship with the local-insider. The latter is flattened along with all the rest of the elements within the frame—greenery, houses, natural elements, ruins, and monuments—into a picturesque composition. At the same time, the outsider is at liberty to enjoy the affectivity of the scene—and then turn their back on it.

The idea of creating Jerusalem as a landscape is evident not only from the projects and texts undertaken by the Society, but also from the medium used to devise these plans. The design of the Jaffa Gate is presented as a juxtaposition in the ‘before-and-after’ style: above, we see a panoramic photograph taken beneath the Jaffa Gate, showing the situation at present. A cluster of houses of various materials and roof covers are stacked on the slopes that descend from the gate, where only the edge of the wall is visible beneath the yet-to-be demolished Ottoman Clocktower. The monumental tower of the citadel is not shown; it must have been cropped out due to the photographer’s format. Below, we see a hand-drawn rendering of Ashbee’s proposal: the medieval walls are clearly visible and intact, with the monumental tower of the citadel rising on the right. On the far left sprawls an Oriental-looking new city with domed
The medium of landscape to transform the city. In its use of landscape, the project was operating not only along religious sentiments but also under the rules of capitalism: indeed, the project was conceived on the principles of property, displacement, and exclusion, and it valorised Jerusalem as a consumable urban attraction, an enhanced historic monument. Its success was thus determined by the real estate market, subjecting Jerusalem to a pattern common to ancient cities across the globe, in which they are both made banal and subordinated to their symbolic value. In recent decades, the state of Israel and the renewed municipality of post-’67 Jerusalem have deployed mechanisms of enhancement that exemplify both Choua’s and Marx’s interpretations of valorisation. Viewing promenades, pedestrian streets, artist colonies, and outdoor festivals aligning the Holy City with tropes of leisure and increase the visibility of its historic monuments. By applying a Marxist analysis of valorisation, we can view the commodification of pilgrimage as the cause for the eliminations of other industries from the Old City and its environs in the hopes of increasing its surplus value from tourism, thus resulting in a condition where the city’s economic survival may even depend on the tourist industry’s sustained success.

In the process, Jerusalem became increasingly similar to any other historic city. Choua argues that “the valorisation of the ancient centres tends, paradoxically, to become the instrument of a secondary form of trivialisation, as cities’ begin to resemble each other so closely that tourists and multinational companies feel identically at home in every one of them.” 222 Heritage thus becomes a cult that consumes the city, symbolically and literally. It is a condition in which capitalism exploits not only the city but also its travelers. The desire for distraction merges with the consumption of heritage, as historical knowledge becomes a form of entertainment. 223 From pilgrims to surveyors, archaeologists, tourists and colonizers—Jerusalem’s visitor has morphed from a subject who undertakes a personal journey to a passive participant in the mass movement that generates capital. Along the way, the notion of

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Fig. 37: Demolition of the shops around Jaffa Gate to clear the wall (1944)
memory has been lost: what once carried analogical power through textual and visual interpretation, has now been fixed in space and time, only to be finally abstracted and reduced to a cyclical recollection of drained values.

The design chapter of this thesis thus proposes a counter-project to the valorisation of Jerusalem. In order to untangle the tie between pilgrimage and heritage, the project proposes a journey, bound neither by geography nor by narrativity, but sequenced according to association and analogy. Its stations have not been scrutinised for authenticity, valorised for visibility, or commodified for profitability; they cannot be ritualised into one sequence, for their devotional typology is as varied as pilgrimage itself. Instead, the stations are composed as a multiple-choice garden of forking paths that traverses the history of the Holy City in order to carve an analogical path towards Jerusalem.  

215 Ibid  
216 Ibid, 156  
217 Ibid, 156  
218 In his “Garden of the Forking Paths” (1941) Jorge Luis Borges writes; “I leave to the various futures (not to all) my garden of forking paths (...) In all fictional works, each time a man is confronted with several alternatives, he chooses one and eliminates the others; in the fiction of Ts’ui Pén, he chooses—simultaneously—all of them. He creates, in this way, diverse futures, diverse times which themselves also proliferate and fork.”
In January of 1417, Sister Truyde of the St Mary and St Agnes Convent in Diepenveen asked her fellow nun, Sister Ghertruut Huginges, to join her on a pilgrimage to Rome. If they had left the convent on time, Truyde said, they could make it to Rome by January 27—the day of the virgin martyr Agnes. But on the day of their departure, January 7, Ghertruut fell ill and stayed behind; Truyde said goodbye to her fellow sisters and departed on her own.

While she did arrive in Rome on time to join the celebrations of St Agnes’s Day, Truyde had never actually left the convent; in fact, neither she nor her fellow nun Ghertruut had ever been to the real city of Rome, and it is unlikely that they had been outside the convent at all in decades. The pilgrimage Truyde undertook in 1417 (and Ghertruut several years before her) was not a physical journey, but a mental one, conducted through a choreography of prayers, meditations and physical actions.

This unique form of female spirituality was common in the Middle Ages among enclosed women who could not afford (financially or spiritually) a physical pilgrimage. It provided them with a different way to ‘travel’ to the holy sites, gain indulgences and reach spiritual ascension—all without leaving their monastic cell. A key component of this ritual was the devotional manuscript, that was based on travelogues written by real pilgrims to the Holy Land and could thus aid one’s personal imitation of Christ through compassion (from the Latin com + patior, “to suffer with”). Evolving in time and space, these manuscripts led the reader through the Christological narrative from page to page and from station to station in the actual geography of the land and within the imaginary topography of the mind. Illustrations, descriptive text, and prescriptive prayers directed the virtual pilgrim through the sights of the journey, as it unfolded experientially in the imagination of the reader and spatially within the monastic cell.

The visual representations varied greatly in iconography and style, but maintained a consistent aim: to allow an enclosed woman to enact Christ’s last moments and thus embody his pain. The instructive manuscripts thus consisted of both figurative and symbolic motifs, from realist images of Christ’s bleeding body to measurements taken in the Holy Land such as the length of his tomb or number of steps between holy sites. These details provided the reader with the tools to reenact the exact ritual a pilgrim would undertake physically in Jerusalem, while her mind could meditate on Christ’s pain and suffering. She could, for example, climb 28 steps on her bleeding knees in the convent and walk the 232 “ells”
recollection, and even ecstatic immersion. For intensity of this ritual in both body and mind led space during the years of Jerusalem’s non-Christian rule over Jerusalem. He used Christian scriptural rule over Jerusalem. He used Christian scriptural

in the minds of his readers. This appropriation and authorial agency created the opportunity to trespass political, religious, and economic constraints. Distilling elements of veneration from the complexity of the real Jerusalem, virtual travel, or mental pilgrimage, offers a far less violent appropriation of Jerusalem than the ones studied in the final chapter of this dissertation. Fabri’s symbolic appropriation of Jerusalem could proliferate in the minds of his readers and lead them through a pilgrimage from their own room. In other words, by disentangling collective memories from their physical markers (to refer back to Halbwachs’ ‘landmarks’), they could be recalled within a flexible toposophy through mnemonic association, sensorial interaction, and imaginative labour.

JOURNEY ROUND MY ROOM

Books and manuscripts regained their relevance as tools for sedentary pilgrimage in the nineteenth century with the invention of photography. Travelogues adorning photographs were treated as more than an assembly of postcards—they could transmit the spatial experience of pilgrimage for those unable to undertake the physical journey, just like in a Medieval convent. In 1894, an extensive reportage was published under the suggestive title *Earthly Footsteps of the Man of Galilee*, showcasing over 400 photographs by the relatively unknown R.E.M. Bain and a text by the Bishop John H. Vincent. The book provides visual and textual descriptions of Christ’s life on earth using “notebook and camera” for armchair readers who could enjoy “a delightful tour of Palestine [...] without leaving home.” While Bain’s oversize photographs were the dominating element (*Earthly Footsteps* was over two feet wide), they were carefully mediated by scriptural verses and informative captions, such as “The Spot Where Christ Prayed” and “The Flock near the Pit into which Joseph was Thrown by his Brethren.” As in the Medieval guides for virtual travel, the text was an instrumental part of the remote pilgrimage—by fostering a mnemonic affiliation between what is pictured and the collective memories that are embedded in the Scriptures. Thus, the bishop’s captions were infusing the landscape with transcendent meaning, thereby transforming Palestine’s nondescript sites into landmarks in the eyes of the book’s reader. Framed by the syntactic composition of the photo book, this appropriation of the landscape added legibility and credibility to the sights without valorising the land itself or creating permanent transformations. Similar to the medieval manuscripts, these devotional travelogues instrumentalised image and text to root the journey in a sacred topography, while shielding its surface from various forms of political and economic exploitation.

Following this lineage of devotional travelogues extending from the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries, the photographic project presented below is conceptualised as a travelogue for virtual pilgrimage to Jerusalem. This project, however, is not only the physical place in
The Stations of The Cross, the project learns from the theoretical frameworks proposed by theorist and photographer Allan Sekula, but is set within the theoretical context of not only the culture of cheaply-built systems, but also issues of representation, visual semiotics, and the role of the artist within society. The Stations of The Cross embraces this critique, and follows Sekula’s assertion that the photographer bears the responsibility to supplement the visual content with textual context.


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of suburbanized Los Angeles with a mix of attraction and repulsion, compelling his audience to perceive the spatial experience of the city with a detached estrangement. 

Despite their different approaches to text, seriality, and image sequences, these photographers were all meandering across America’s roads and cities with a camera, performing what can be described as a secular pilgrimage. The photograph, like the station, was thus an index of the ritual subject matter and more the action itself. Their work (the photobook or the magazine spread) spatialized this journey as a sequence of images, introducing a spatial temporality and economy of textual descriptions from pilgrim travelogues that share superficial and structural analogies, without a clear geographical path, a historical lineage, or even a typological logic, but rather through nuances and analogies.

Ruscha had a key influence on the New Topographics exhibition, whose influence on this thesis is elaborated on in the introduction. For Baltz, discovering his books was finding “photography degree zero”—in fact, he said that “Ruscha was the presiding spirit over the whole show, because we all knew those books, and we all admired them.” The legacy of Ruscha’s photographic theory outlined above inspired the New Topographics in its aestheticization of modesty and anonymity, while the exclusive reliance on a “photographic way of seeing in those iconic works was critiqued and creatively dismantled in the works of Sekula, Martha Rosler and Victor Burgin. Although there were two major paradigms in the 60s and 70s, the same fundamental aesthetic condition can be traced to earlier works that had a different perspective, particularly Walker Evans, one of the most influential photographers of the twentieth century. From the end of the 1920s, Evans travelled across America to document the economic times in a manner that he called “documentary” style. Comprising 87 photographs of ordinary landscapes that sprawled in and around small suburban towns during the Great Depression, Intrigued by decay and austerity, he “perceived the spatial experience of the city with a self-assignment, out looking for stations along the journey are equally worthy of meditation, thus removing the sacro-geographic hierarchy introduced by institutions. Evans’s radical photobook thus becomes the model for The Stations of the Cross, where every photograph carries the same amount of visual information: there is no progression of emotion or topographic escalation, but a steady journey towards a destination. The composition of the frames in the Stations echoes this assertion, as each monument is approached laterally, incorporating the path and landscape as equally valuable in the spatial envelope of the station, thus blurring topographic figure and ground. Images are organized in pairs that share superficial and structural analogies, and are complemented with a parallel stream of textual descriptions from pilgrim travelogues that open a field of associations and interpretations.

As an alternative to the Via Crucis, this travelogue unfolds across a non-linear journey, without a clear geographical path, a historical lineage, or even a typological logic, but rather through nuanced associations. This mode of traveling requires no means. It costs nothing; there are no alms distributed or indulgences collected, and no concessions to political or economic exploitation. The Stations of the Cross, like the manuscripts of the medieval nuns or the photographic travelogues of the nineteenth century, have the power to reclaim not only of travel, but...
also travel writing, as a genre tainted with cultural bias and bound with colonial violence. The Stations does not attempt to demarcate a foreign territory, cast subjective judgment, or ‘write-out’ a disenchanted encounter.

One might argue that the possibilities provided by digital platforms make such projects redundant. Religious services are available on-demand, virtual experiences dissolve geographical boundaries, and the infinite stream of visual content relieves any need for mental imagination. As such, the labour that was invested in such rituals is no longer relevant. Pilgrimage ceases to disrupt one’s daily life: something which once signalled a complete break from routine disintegrates from an anti-structure back to structure. If Christ is indeed found within oneself, perhaps a retreat from the public realm and the removal of ritualistic interruption will mark not the end, but the beginning of an old-new mode of devotion that is practised with one’s own confines. However, as things stand today, this seems far from possible: the sedentary journeys of the Middle Ages were exhausting undertakings, requiring intense physical, emotional, and mental labour. The nuns who created life-size dioramas within their monastic cells performed rituals that stabilised their lives in times of uncertainty and confinement. By repeating a set of prayers and actions, they could find a fleeting detachment from themselves in favour of a greater system of order.

Today, virtual experiences that offer remote travel are mere simulations: they create visual shortcuts to cathartic endings, which fail to move us to the emotional depths once experienced in sedentary pilgrimage. While technology does offer comfort and security—negating the disturbance caused by rituals—it nonetheless erodes whatever is left of our ability to imagine. As Byung-Chul Han argues in The Disappearance of Ritual (2009), “perception is never at rest; it has lost the capacity to linger. The cultural technique of deep attention emerged precisely out of ritual and religious practices [...] Every religious practice is an exercise in attention.” When rituals no longer require investment, distraction takes command, and they lose their stabilising power. The Stations propose an exercise of attention, setting off from within one’s room and meandering between images and text of Travellers’ past, and thus constructing a topography that merges movement, sentiment, and space into a mode of analogical travel—one that does not fix the course of movement, but simply provides an orientation: towards Jerusalem. As Xavier de Maistre wrote in Journey Around My Room:

Read if I have undertaken and performed a forty-two days’ journey round my room [...] The pleasure to be found in traveling round one’s room is sheltered from the restless jealousy of men, and is independent of fortune. [...] Every man of sense will, I am sure, adopt my system, whatever may be his peculiar character or temperament. Be he miserly or prodigal, rich or poor, young or old, born beneath the torrid zone or near the poles, he may travel with me. Among the immense family of men who throng the earth, there is not one, no, not one (I mean of those who inhabit rooms), who, after reading this book, can refuse his approbation of the new mode of travelling I introduce into the world.

31 Han, The Disappearance of Ritual, 7-8
32 Maistre, Xavier de, A Journey round my room, trans. H.A. Green, Reader and Dover, 1871, 1-9

Fig 8: Edward Ruscha, Twentysix Gasoline Stations (1963)

Fig 9: Walker Evans, Houses, Atlanta, Georgia (1936)
The men I met coming from Jerusalem reported all sorts of contradictory impressions; and yet my own impression contradicted them all. Their impressions were doubtless as true as mine; but I describe my own because it is true, and because I think it points to a neglected truth about the real Jerusalem. I need not say I did not expect the real Jerusalem to be the New Jerusalem; a city of charity and peace, any more than a city of chrysolite and pearl.

I might more reasonably have expected an austere and ascetic place, oppressed with the weight of its destiny, with no inns except monasteries, and these sealed with the terrible silence of the Trappists; an awful city where men speak by signs in the street.

I did not need the numberless jokes about Jerusalem to-day, to warn me against expecting this; anyhow I did not expect it, and certainly I did not find it. But neither did I find what I was much more inclined to expect; something at the other extreme. There may be more of this in the place than pleases those who would idealise it. But I fancy there is much less of it than is commonly supposed in the reaction from such an ideal.
Here you see the cause of all our labours. This Jerusalem is the reflection of the heavenly Jerusalem. This city has the form of the city to which we aspire. This Jerusalem you see, which you face, prefigures and represents the heavenly city.
Then indeed I knew that what I saw was Jerusalem of the Crusaders; or at least Jerusalem of the Crusades. It was a medieval town, with walls and gates and a citadel, and built upon a hill to be defended by bowmen. The wall and gates which now stand, whatever stood before them and whatever comes after them, carry a memory of those men from the West who came here upon that wild adventure, who climbed this rock and clung to it so perilously from the victory of Godfrey to the victory of Saladin; and that is why this momentary Eastern exile reminded me so strangely of home.

When we had finished our prayer we remounted our asses, having our eyes full of tears and our cheeks wet with joy. This joy did not arise from passion, but from reason; not from the presence of an object of desire, but of a thing deserving of love because it was precious: it was not gladness which leads to licentiousness, but rather to seriousness, which moves one not to laughter, but rather to sobs; which does not shake the body, but bends the limbs; does not lead to speech, but to silence.
My impression remained primarily a thing of walls and gates; a thing which the modern world does not perhaps understand so well as the medieval world. There is involved in it all that idea of definition which those who do not like it are fond of describing as dogma. A wall is like rule; and the gates are like the exceptions that prove the rule. The man making it has to decide where his rule will run and where his exception shall stand. He cannot have a city that is all gates any more than a house that is all windows; nor is it possible to have a law that consists entirely of liberties. The ancient races and religions that contended for this city agreed with each other in this, when they differed about everything else. It was true of practically all of them that when they built a city they built a citadel. That is, whatever strange thing they may have made, they regarded it as something to be defined and to be defended.
I had thought of that moment for years, in waking and in sleeping dreams. I stood in the road, my hand on my horse’s neck, and with my dim eyes sought to trace the outlines of the holy places which I had long before fixed in my mind. The more I gazed, the more I could not see.
As I have said, I had expected many things of Jerusalem, but I had not expected this. I had expected to be disappointed with it as a place utterly profaned (sic) and fallen below its mission. I had expected to be awed by it; indeed I had expected to be frightened of it, as a place dedicated and even doomed by its mission. But I had never fancied that it would be possible to be fond of it: as one might be fond of a little walled town among the orchards of Normandy or the hop-fields of Kent.

So far as I can recall them, my impressions, though aesthetically and architecturally better founded, resume what we felt seven years ago: firstly, that the faking of the sites and indignity with which even when authentic they are now misrepresented, is an irritation, an imposition, and an affront to the intelligence; secondly, that the pathos, grandeur and nobility of the ancient City of the Heart easily counteracts these very real annoyances.
I can understand a man who had only seen in the distance Jerusalem sitting on the hill going no further and keeping that vision for ever. It would, of course, be said that it was absurd to come at all, and to see so little. To which I answer that in that sense it is absurd to come at all. It is no more fantastic to turn back for such a fancy than it was to come for a similar fancy. A man cannot eat the Pyramids; he cannot buy or sell the Holy City; there can be no practical aspect either of his coming or going. If he has not come for a poetic mood he has come for nothing; if he has come for such a mood, he is not a fool to obey that mood. The way to be really a fool is to try to be practical about unpractical things. It is to try to collect clouds or preserve moonshine like money. [...] It may be argued that it is just as illogical to hope to fix beforehand the elusive effects of the works of man as of the works of nature. It may be called a contradiction in terms to expect the unexpected. It may be counted mere madness to anticipate astonishment, or go in search of a surprise. To all of which there is only one answer; that such anticipation is absurd, and such realisation will be disappointing, that images will seem to be idols and idols will seem to be dolls, unless there be some rudiment of such a habit of mind as I have tried to suggest in this chapter. No great works will seem great, and no wonders of the world will seem wonderful, unless the angle from which they are seen is that of historical humility.
Forsake cities and their crowds. Live on a small patch of ground, seek Christ in solitude, pray on the mount alone with Jesus, keep near to holy places: keep out of cities, I say, and you will never lose your vocation.

All this historic or pre-historic interest may be touched on in its turn; but I am not dealing here with the historic secrets unearthed by the study of the place, but with the historic associations aroused by the sight of it. The traveller is in the position of that famous fantastic who tied his horse to a wayside cross in the snow, and afterward saw it dangling from the church-spire of what had been a buried city.

I do not forget, of course, that all these visible walls and towers are but the battlements and pinnacles of a buried city, or of many buried cities. I do not forget that such buildings have foundations that are to us almost like fossils; the gigantic fossils of some other geological epoch. Something may be said later of those lost empires whose very masterpieces are to us like petrified monsters.
All the religious rubbish of the different nations, says a recent traveller, live at Jerusalem separated from each other, hostile and jealous, a nomad population [...] Jerusalem is but a place where everyone arrives to pitch his tent and where nobody remains.
A city that is set upon a hill cannot be hid; but it is more strange when the hill cannot anywhere be hid, even from the citizen in the city.
Palestine is a striped country; that is the first effect of landscape on the eye. It runs in great parallel lines wavering into vast hills and valleys, but preserving the parallel pattern; as if drawn boldly but accurately with gigantic chalks of green and grey and red and yellow. The natural explanation is (to speak less foolishly) the natural process of this is simple enough. The stripes are the strata of the rock, only they are stripped by the great rains, so that everything has to grow on ledges, repeating yet again that terraced character to be seen in the vineyards and the staircase streets of the town.

And all these coloured strata rise so high and roll so far that they might be skies rather than slopes. It is as if we looked up at a frozen sunset; or a daybreak fixed forever with its fleeting bars of cloud. And indeed the fancy is not without a symbolic suggestiveness. This is the land of eternal things; but we tend too much to forget that recurrent things are eternal things. We tend to forget that subtle tones and delicate hues, whether in the hills or the heavens, were to the primitive poets and sages as visible as they are to us. The sorrow of all Palestine is that its divisions in culture, politics and theology are like its divisions in geology. The dividing line is horizontal instead of vertical. The frontier does not run between states but between stratified layers. The Jew did not appear beside the Canaanite but on top of the Canaanite; the Greek not beside the Jew but on top of the Jew; the Moslem not beside the Christian but on top of the Christian. It is not merely a house divided against itself, but one divided across itself.
---X---
Left: Church of the Holy Sepulchre (ca. 12th Century), Basilica of Santo Stefano, Bologna, Italy
Right: Station IV, Sacro Monte di Crea (1589) Piemonte, Italy
Text: St Jerome letter 53 to Paulinus CA 395 AD

---XI---
Left: Station XIV, Sacro Monte di Orta (1583) Piemonte, Italy
Right: Temple Church of the Knights Templars (1185 AD) Inn of Court, City of London, United Kingdom

---XII---
Left: Tomb of Abshalom, son of King Solomon (1st Century AD) Valley of Kidron, Jerusalem
Right: The Holy Sepulchre (Round Church) of Cambridge (1284) Cambridge, England
Text: Marx, Karl, New York Tribune (New York), April, 15, 1854

---XIII---
Left: Mark of the Via Francigena, St. Bernard’s Pass, Aosta Valley, Italy/Switzerland
Right: Station II, Via Dolorosa, Jerusalem

---XIV---
Left: Station V, Adam Kraft’s Stations of the Cross (1490) Nuremberg, Germany
Right: Station I, Via Crucis of Tre Cunei, (date unknown) Piemonte, Italy