Visual Constructs of Jerusalem
CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS IN
LATE ANTIQUITY AND THE MIDDLE AGES

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VISUAL CONSTRUCTS OF JERUSALEM

Edited by

Bianca Kühnel, Galit Noga-Banai, and Hanna Vorholt
CONTENTS

List of Illustrations ............................................................ ix

Colour Plates ................................................................. xxiii

Acknowledgements ......................................................... xxxi

Introduction ................................................................. xxxiii

Loca sancta: Formation and Accumulation of Traditions

‘Remembering Sion’: Early Medieval Latin Recollections of the Basilica
on Mount Sion and the Interplay of Relics, Tradition, and Images
THOMAS O’LOUGHLIN .................................................. 1

Mary in Jerusalem: An Imaginary Map
ORA LIMOR ................................................................... 11

Lavit et venit videns: The Healing of the Blind Man at the Pool of Siloam
BARBARA BAERT ...................................................... 23

Patronage Contested: Archaeology and the Early Modern Struggle
for Possession at the Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem
JORDAN PICKETT ...................................................... 35

From Biblical to Non-Biblical Holy Places:
The Shrine of Subiaco as a Construct of Jerusalem
ALESSANDRO SCAFI .................................................. 45

Monumental Translations

How Mtskheta Turned into the Georgians’ New Jerusalem
TAMILA MGAOLISHVILI ............................................. 59

Locative Memory and the Pilgrim’s Experience of Jerusalem
in the Late Middle Ages
MICHELE BACCI ........................................................ 67

New Research on the Holy Sepulchre at the ‘Jerusalem’ of San Vivaldo, Italy
RICCARDO PACCIANI ................................................ 77

Pilgrimage Experience: Bridging Size and Medium
TSAFRA SIEW .............................................................. 83

The Baptistry of Pisa and the Rotunda of the Holy Sepulchre:
A Reconsideration
NETA BODNER ........................................................ 95
### Strategies of Translation

**From Sanctified Topos to Iconic and Symbolic Model:**
Two Early Representations of the Holy Sepulchre in Croatia

MARINA VICELJA-MATIJAŠIĆ ........................................ 109

**Defending Jerusalem: Visualizations of a Christian Identity in Medieval Scandinavia**

KRISTIN B. AAVITSLAND ........................................ 121

**Jerusalem in Medieval Georgian Art**

GEORGE GAGOSHIDZE ............................................ 133

**A (Hi)story of Jerusalem: Memories and Images in the Austro-Hungarian Empire**

LILY ARAD ........................................................ 139


MILLY HEYD .......................................................... 153

### Evocations of the Temple

**Reconstructing Jerusalem in the Jewish Liturgical Realm:**
The Worms Synagogue and its Legacy

SARIT SHALEV-EYNI ............................................. 161

**Beyond the Veil: Roman Constructs of the New Temple in the Twelfth Century**

EIVOR ANDERSEN OFTESTAD ........................................ 171

**Heavenly Jerusalem in Baroque Architectural Theory**

VICTOR PLAHTESCHUDI ........................................... 179

**King Solomon’s Temple and Throne as Models in Islamic Visual Culture**

RACHEL MILSTEIN ................................................... 187

### Relics, Reliquaries, and Ritual

**Holy Places and Their Relics**

BRUNO REUDENBACH .............................................. 197

**The True Cross of Jerusalem in the Latin West:**
Mediterranean Connections and Institutional Agency

NIKOLAS JASPERT .................................................. 207

**‘Living Stones’ of Jerusalem: The Triumphal Arch Mosaic of Santa Prassede in Rome**

EKIR THUNØ .......................................................... 223

**Strategies of Constructing Jerusalem in Medieval Serbia**

JELENA ERDELJAN .................................................... 231

**The Holy Fire and Visual Constructs of Jerusalem, East and West**

ALEXEI LIDOV .......................................................... 241
Maps of Jerusalem

From Eusebius to the Crusader Maps: The Origin of the Holy Land Maps
MILKA LEVY-RUBIN .......................................................... 253

Heavenly and Earthly Jerusalem:
The View From Twelfth-Century Flanders
JAY RUBENSTEIN .................................................................. 265

Quaresmius’s *Novae Ierosolymae et Locorum Circumiacentium Accuratæ Imago* (1639): An Image of the Holy City and its Message
REHAV RUBIN ...................................................................... 277

An American Missionary’s Maps of Jerusalem: Past, Present, and Future
EVELYN EDSON .................................................................... 285

Maps of the Holy Land

Experiencing the Holy Land and Crusade in Matthew Paris’s Maps of Palestine
LAURA J. WHATLEY ............................................................ 295

‘As If You Were There’: The Cultural Impact of Two Pilgrims’ Maps of the Holy Land
PNINA ARAD ........................................................................ 307

Mapping the History of Salvation for the ‘Mind’s Eyes’: Context and Function of the Map of the Holy Land in the *Rudimentum Novitiorum* of 1475
ANDREA WORM .................................................................. 317

Ottheinrich and Sandtner: Sixteenth-Century Pilgrimage Maps and an Imaginary Model of Jerusalem
HAIM GOREN ....................................................................... 331

Mappae Mundi

The City of the Great King: Jerusalem in Hugh of Saint Victor’s *Mystic Ark*
CONRAD RUDOLPH .......................................................... 343

The Jerusalem Effect: Rethinking the Centre in Medieval World Maps
MARCIA KUPFER ............................................................... 353

Manuscripts and Panel Painting

*Ducitur et reductur*: Passion Devotion and Mental Motion in an Illuminated *Meditationes Vitae Christi* Manuscript (Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 410)
RENANA BARTAL .................................................................. 369

Virtual Pilgrimage through the Jerusalem Cityscape
KATHRYN M. RUDY ............................................................ 381
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pilgrimage Literature and Travelogues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representations and Descriptions of Jerusalem in the Printed Travelogues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of the Early Modern Period</td>
<td>MILAN PELC. ........................................................................ 397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Jerusalem of the Mind’s Eye: Imagined Pilgrimage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the Late Fifteenth Century</td>
<td>KATHRYNE BEEBE .................................................................. 409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory and Representations of Jerusalem in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medieval and Early Modern Pilgrimage Reports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARIA E. DORNINGER ........................................................................ 421</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Pococke, or the Invention of Jerusalem for Tourists</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OLGA MEDVEDKOVA ........................................................................... 429</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Byzantine Approaches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visualizing the Tomb of Christ: Images, Settings, and Ways of Seeing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROBERT OUSTERHOUT .......................................................................... 439</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Remembering Zion’ and Simulacra: Jerusalem in the Byzantine Psalter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATI MEYER .................................................................................... 451</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Souvenirs of the Holy Land: The Production of Proskynetaria in Jerusalem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAT IMMERZEEL .................................................................................. 463</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proskynetaria as Devotional Objects and Preservers of Ethnic Identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARTA NAGY ..................................................................................... 471</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>........................................................................................................ 479</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The True Cross of Jerusalem in the Latin West: Mediterranean Connections and Institutional Agency

Nikolas Jaspert
Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg

A
ter much debate, modern medievalists have rehabilitated Jerusalem as the prime goal of the first crusaders.1 For some years, a largely academic controversy over a wider or narrower understanding of the term ‘crusade’ had relegated the holy places to a second plane, because crusading was defined as any war held on behalf of the pope against declared enemies of the church.2 But lately, the pendulum appears to have swung back, as many crusade historians once again concede an overriding importance to Jerusalem. Quite rightly so, for there can be little doubt that the holy places in Palestine held a particular appeal to contemporaries, not only to pilgrims but also to crusaders, as many sources show. But despite this recently achieved wider consensus, historians seldom ask precisely which places or objects within the Holy Land exerted this attraction. This paper will focus on one such object, the True Cross, in order to determine its role in enhancing mobility across the Mediterranean and in transferring sacred place from one side of that sea to the other. Special attention will be paid to both individual and institutional agency, given that institutions were particularly suitable for creating trans-Mediterranean networks.

One way of determining which places or objects stood out in contemporary piety and devotional practice is by surveying testaments, and especially those last wills that pilgrims or crusaders drew up before their departure to the Holy Land. By paying particular attention to the exact terms with which the trip’s goal was described, one might identify spiritual ‘centres of gravity’ to which Latin Christians of the High Middle Ages felt particularly drawn.3 Whilst there are a number of references

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3 The following thoughts are expounded in more detail in Nikolas Jaspert, ‘Das Heilige Grab, das Heilige Kreuz, Jerusalem und das Heilige Land: Wirkung, Wandel und Vermittler
to Jerusalem pilgrims of the eleventh century in several European countries, no region can claim as many contemporary and extant charters referring to such trips as Catalonia in north-eastern Spain. As part of a larger project on Mediterranean mobility and spirituality at the time of the Crusades, I have compiled a collection of over one hundred such wills written in the medieval county of Barcelona and the other Pyrenean regions. An analysis of these documents of the eleventh and early twelfth century shows that two centres of attraction—one might call them ‘attractors’—stand out in particular: the Holy Sepulchre and the town of Jerusalem. Interestingly, one can also follow diachronic changes as far as these attractors’ popularity is concerned. While in this respect the Holy Sepulchre was undoubtedly in the forefront of Latin Christian collective imagination ever since the re-erection of the church in the 1030s, and it remained an extremely important attractor into the twelfth century, a certain shift in spirituality can be discerned already prior to the First Crusade. From about 1080 onward, personal penitence and the remission of sins are referred to more and more explicitly in the documents, and after the establishment of the crusader kingdom of Jerusalem, the holy city itself is named increasingly as the pilgrim’s or crusader’s goal. In other words, political changes and the existence of Christian lordships in the Levant clearly played an important role in the visual construction of Jerusalem and in the construction of sacred places, albeit iconic or narrative. These findings from medieval Catalonia both corroborate and differentiate the thoughts laid out some years ago by the late Sylvia Schein in her Gateway to the Heavenly City: Crusader Jerusalem and the Catholic West.

Such a differentiation of Latin Christians’ goals leads to the object of the paper. What do Latin wills say concerning the so-called Vera Crucis, the ‘True Cross’ on which Jesus Christ is said to have died? What was its role as an attractor? And further, which objects and institutions might have enhanced the popularity of certain attractors and, more specifically, of the True Cross in the course of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries?

Devotion to the True Cross

The Catalonian survey conveys the impression that the cross was notably absent in contemporary thought during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, because it is very seldom referred to as a pilgrimage goal. One could argue that this is not surprising for two reasons: first, the famous Jerusalem fragment of the cross only came to light in the aftermath of the First Crusade, as it was—allegedly miraculously—found there in July 1099; and it remained an extremely important attractor into the twelfth century, a certain shift in spirituality can be discerned already prior to the First Crusade. From about 1080 onward, personal penitence and the remission of sins are referred to more and more explicitly in the documents, and after the establishment of the crusader kingdom of Jerusalem, the holy city itself is named increasingly as the pilgrim’s or crusader’s goal. In other words, political changes and the existence of Christian lordships in the Levant clearly played an important role in the visual construction of Jerusalem and in the construction of sacred places, albeit iconic or narrative. These findings from medieval Catalonia both corroborate and differentiate the thoughts laid out some years ago by the late Sylvia Schein in her Gateway to the Heavenly City: Crusader Jerusalem and the Catholic West.

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and second, Byzantium, or rather Constantinople, was known to hold the prime fragment of the True Cross. In the pre-crusade period, the main relic of the cross was therefore believed to be at the city on the Bosporus. Then again, the True Cross was also associated with Jerusalem from early Christianity onward, and even during the First Crusade, combatants are known to have travelled to the East with relics of the Lignum crucis.

Indeed, since its supposed discovery by St Helena, Emperor Constantine’s mother, in the fourth century and up to the Islamic conquest of the seventh century, the Vera Crux had been a central element of liturgy and spirituality in Jerusalem. The close relation between the cross and Golgotha, with all the eschatological and theological implications it entailed, by far transcended the topographical limits of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. Devotion to the True Cross in the early Middle Ages was therefore a widely spread phenomenon, as works by Cyril of Jerusalem or Hrabanus Maurus show and liturgical feasts like the Inventio crucis or the Exaltatio crucis (3 May and 14 September, respectively) corroboration. At the beginning of the High Middle Ages, the cult of the cross changed from that of victory to one of redemption, proclaiming the humanity of Christ and at times also picking up eschatological notions.


devotional phase was also linked to pilgrimage, as even before the Crusades, pilgrims returned from Jerusalem with relics of the True Cross which in turn influenced Holy Land devotion in the eleventh century. And of course, spirituality at the time of the Crusades was strongly marked by the cross, which became the movement’s hallmark and, from the end of the twelfth century onward, its eponym. One can therefore safely postulate that devotion to the True Cross did mark crusading spirituality from its very beginnings. But the fact remains that during the first decades after the establishment of the crusader states, the attraction exerted by the Vera Cruix of Jerusalem could not compare to that of the Holy Sepulchre and the town itself.

Let us move from the beginning of the first crusader kingdom of Jerusalem to its end, the period of the battle of Hattin and its aftermath. Here, a brief glance suffices to reveal that the situation had changed radically. In 1187, the Latin Christians not only lost dominion of the holy city but were also bereaved of its most famous relic, the Jerusalem fragment of the Cross. The cries for help sent to the West immediately after the destruction of the army at Hattin already related the loss, and it was also singled out by Pope Gregory VIII in his famous crusade bull, Audita tremendi. As the anonymous author of the


Itinerarium peregrinorum put it, ‘neither the capture of the Ark nor the captivity of the Kings of the Jews can compare with the disaster in our own time, when the King and the glorious Cross were led away captive together.’

Furthermore, a great number of contemporary sources corroborate that the recovery of the Vera Cruix became one of the major aims of the so-called Third Crusade.

In fact, this objective was of such overriding importance that one might term the Third Crusade a ‘crusade of the True Cross’—a Heiligkreuzkreuzzug. The German army led by Friedrich I Barbarossa is repeatedly termed ‘exercitus sanctae crucis’ or ‘exercitus vivificae crucis’, ‘army of the holy cross’ or ‘army of the living cross’, and English participants in the campaign, too, laid particular emphasis on the cross’s loss as a motivation for their expedition. Many preachers of this crusade and other expeditions at the turn of the thirteenth century, men such as Henry of Albano, Jacques of Vitry, Alain of Lille, or Gilbert of Tournai, brought the message home with the help of highly emotional and imaginative metaphors, as Christoph T. Maier and Christopher Matthew Phillips have convincingly shown. To cite the words of Henry of Albano:

> Who does not deplore that the saving Cross has been captured and polluted by the infidels, the Lord’s sanctuary has been profaned, alas, alas! [...] The adorable cross has been disgraced and abused, the cross that we all love so deeply, the cross that heals all wounds, that re-establishes health, sweet cross, symbol of life, and banner of knightly service to Christ.

Or to cite Jacques of Vitry: ‘Like the human being swims in the form of the cross, as the ship sails in its form, as the bird flies in the form of the cross, in the same way you cannot cross the sea of temporality and reach the higher Jerusalem without the sign of the cross.’ Sermons and treatises such as the Digressio, qua lamentatur auctor Jerusalem ab infidelibus captam by Henry of Albano compared the True Cross with the Old Testament Ark of the Covenant and attributed a variety of interpretations and meanings both to the relic and to the sign of the cross in general. The abducted cross, Henry wrote, ‘is the cure for all our sins, it is the cure of all wounds.’


24 Quellen zur Geschichte des Kreuzzuges, ed. by Chröst, pp. 38, 40, 55, 64, 78, 88–89, 93; Die Urkunden Friedrichs I., ed. by Heinrich Appelt, 5 vols, Die Urkunden der deutschen Könige und Kaiser, 10 (Hannover: Hahn, 1990), iv, 301, 303; Der Kreuzzug Friedrich Barbarosas, ed. by Bühler, pp. 95–98.


28 ‘Nam sicut homo in modum crucis natat, navi in modum crucis currit et avis in modum crucis volat, ita et vos sine crucie mare huius seculi non potestis transire nec ad supernam Ierusalem perve- nire’; Maier, Crusade Propaganda and Ideology, p. 106.

29 ‘Ecce arca foederis Domini, arca testamenti novi, crux scribe scribe Christi, gloria populi Christiani, medicina peccatorum, curatio vulnerum, restitutio sanitarum, captiva ducta est in Damascam’; Henricus Albanensis, PL, 204, cols 350–61 (col. 353); The Digressio, qua lamentatur auctor Jerusalem ab infidelibus captam is the thirteenth part of the ‘Tractatus de Peregrinante civitatis Dei’; cf. Valmar Cramer, ‘Kreuzpredigt und Kreuzzugsgedanke von Bernhard von Clairvaux bis Humbert von Romans’, Das Heilige Land, 17/20
by such words, the connection between holy cross devotion and religious strife against Muslim adversaries even transcended the geographical frame of the crusades to the Middle East, as Iberian examples show. According to the author of the *Annalium Rotomagensium continuations*, participants in the so-called Childrens’ Crusade of 1212 called out and sang to God during their expedition so that he might give them back the True Cross. But nowhere was the zeal to regain it greater than in the crusader states. In the course of the Third Crusade and for some time thereafter, not only great military but also repeated diplomatic missions were undertaken in order to recover the lost relic. The second redactor of the *Itinerarium peregrinorum* (probably Richard of Holy Trinity), writing after 1215, describes the Christians’ hopes and disappointment:

One person said: ‘The Cross is coming now’, another said: ‘It has been seen in the Saracen army’, but both of them were mistaken, for Saladin did not arrange for the Cross to be given back. For he hoped to win better terms by using the Holy Cross as a negotiating tool.32

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Even thirty years later the restoration of the relic was being negotiated,33 but after many decades of fruitless attempts the Latin Christians finally had to deal with the fact that, despite rumours that said the cross had been miraculously saved,34 the famous *Lignum crucis* of Jerusalem had in fact been lost forever.35 But until this truth was accepted, the *Vera Cruix* played a much more important role in Christian thought than at the beginning of the crusader era a century earlier.

What had brought about this change? First of all, devotion to the cross was further developed by theolo-
gians and other clerks in the course of the twelfth century, by monastic, regular and secular clerics. These notions were directed mostly toward other adherents of the *vita religiosa* but were also transmitted to the laity via sermons and liturgy. At the time, such general devotion to the Cross was flanked by more concrete references to the cross of Jerusalem. The very tangible developments and vicissitudes of the crusader states in the course of the twelfth century had a strong bearing upon this second, more material focus on the Cross. The relic of the True Cross found shortly after the conquest of Jerusalem in 1099 was the object of this more concrete form of devotion.

In the decades following its appearance, this relic had an impressive career in two senses. First, it quickly acquired an eminent political and military dimension. In the very year of its discovery, it was led into battle against a Muslim army at Ascalon on 12 August 1099, and the ensuing Christian victory was ascribed to its powers. Consequently, the cross acquired the function of a potent battle standard and was led to war on no fewer than thirty-nine occasions in the course of the twelfth century prior to its ultimate loss in 1187.

Second, and related to the latter phenomenon, the *Vera Crucis* also became closely attached to the ruling house of the Latin kings of Jerusalem, therefore acquiring the function of a state symbol. The relic was housed in the cathedral church and remained under the control of the local patriarch, but the church itself was closely tied to the monarchy, and the patriarchs were key advisers to the kings during the twelfth century. In this way, the cross of Jerusalem in fact experienced a career as a religious symbol, changing its principal connotation from relic of the Lord to a symbol of dynastic lordship and inter-religious strife. The concrete historical context of the first crusader kingdom of Jerusalem brought this change about.

These political and military functions of the *Vera Crucis* were also visualized, for example in illustrated chronicles such as that of William of Tyre or his continuators, where the cross is repeatedly depicted as a battle standard, as Fanny Caroff has shown. However, because such manuscripts appear to have been produced only in later periods, they cannot have triggered the devotion to the True Cross so prominent in and typical of the twelfth century. Other media did. Three instruments might be named. First of all, travel descriptions and pilgrim guides operated as mental visualizations of Jerusalem and bear witness to the attraction both Christ's tomb and the cross exerted upon visitors to Jerusalem. A sec-

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36 A very good overview on monastic and canonical thought on the matter is in Phillips, 'O Magnum Crucis Misterium', pp. 1–168.


39 Caroff, ‘L'affrontement entre chrétiens et musulmans’.


ond important group of sources are liturgical texts. The Jerusalemite liturgy celebrated by the canons of the Holy Sepulchre, for example, underlines the importance that the cross had in crusader Jerusalem during processions, masses, and other forms of movement and bodily participation in the public sphere. Third, and finally, the True Cross was also visualized in a very material sense of the word, via fragments of the relic that were worked into reliquaries of the Vera Crucis, so-called staurothekai. The second part of this article is devoted to these objects, which effectively translocated sacred space—both in the stricter sense of the Holy Sepulchre and in the wider one of the holy city—from one side of the Mediterranean to the other.


‘Staurothekai’ between the Holy Land and the Latin West

Long before the Crusades, staurothekai had been fabricated and sent to the Latin West, the most famous of these stemming from Constantinople and the Levant; and long after the end of the crusader states, such objects continued to be produced and venerated. But their heyday was without a doubt the period of the crusader kingdom of Jerusalem, in which a great number of such precious containers were produced. Half a century ago, the Byzantinist Victor Frolow undertook the herculean task of attempting to identify all known relics and reliquaries of the True Cross. His studies published in 1960 and 1965 unite references to many hundreds of objects and remain ground-breaking works that enable us to grasp both the intensity and the geographic range of medieval devotion to the Vera Crucis. Based on Frolow’s work and applying notions borrowed from network theory, one can trace networks of Holy Land spirituality, networks formed by nodes and spokes—that is, by points with a particularly high density of relics, which one could term ‘nodes’, and the connections between such centres, whether by personal communication or by transferring objects of sanctity, which one could term ‘spokes’.


44 ‘The crusaders’ take-over led to a meaningful re-evaluation of Jerusalem at the source of the relic. Jerusalem was now regarded as the chief supplier of the relic of the True Cross, thus replacing Constantinople’: Schein, Gateway to the Heavenly City, p. 84.

45 Frolow, La relique de la Vraie Croix; Frolow, Les Reliques de la Vraie Croix.

Within such a network of Holy Land devotion, relics of the True Cross played a role worthy of note. They formed nodal points that connected different regions across the Mediterranean because they not only transferred sacred material but also translocated sacred place; they effectively brought Jerusalem to other lands. They also served as a means for Christians to ‘dwell’ upon distant places they yearned for. Such objects enhanced ties across large distances and therefore need to be taken into account by those interested in trans-maritime medieval connections. If one does not want to reduce Mediterranean connectivity to the exchange of commodities, then relics and reliquaries also merit our attention.

An enamel casket-reliquary from southern France lavishly produced at the very end of the twelfth century graphically shows how a relic of the True Cross was acquired from a monastery in Jerusalem and how it reached its final destination, the church of St Sernin in Toulouse. The abbot of the monastery of St Mary of the Metz Chapter of Toulouse was acquisitively brought Jerusalem to other lands. They also served indeed typically medieval means of connecting the shores of the Mediterranean (and other regions farther afield) to the Holy Land.

Not surprisingly, such forms of Holy Land devotion as veneration of the True Cross were marked not only by political events but also by social and economic developments. Here again, historical contexts led to shifts in religious practice. The creation of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem and the discovery of the Jerusalemite relic, for example, opened up vast new potential in this respect. The establishment of the crusader states suddenly increased the contact areas between the Middle East and Latin Europe. Now it was not only pilgrims who travelled: settlers moved to the conquered territories, traders established bases there and regularly crossed the Mediterranean Sea, the newly established territories attracted warriors and nobles, and clergymen also made careers for themselves there. All this had an impact on devotion to the True Cross of Jerusalem. As mentioned previously, this treasure was put in the charge of the patriarch of Jerusalem and his chapter, that is to say, the canons of the Holy Sepulchre. These canons donated fragments of the cross to high-ranking visitors or to pilgrims who were particularly close to the chapter for one reason or another, either due to personal contacts or to


individual events.\textsuperscript{50} We even know that expert craftsmen, silver- and goldsmiths, worked in close proximity to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre under the auspices—and by order—of the patriarchs.\textsuperscript{51} In rare cases, the outcome of their labours has come down to us.

Over twenty-five years ago, Heribert Meurer published a seminal article in Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte in which he identified three groups of \textit{staurothekai} that he convincingly proved to have been fabricated in the patriarchs' workshops in Jerusalem during the twelfth century.\textsuperscript{52} Contrary to many earlier reliquaries of the True Cross, these objects were meant to be seen.\textsuperscript{53} One such group consists of golden crosses with an opening to hold a large piece of the True Cross; it comprises such examples as those housed at Denkendorf, Scheyern, and Barletta. Another group is characterized by two openings for the particles of the cross and a depiction of an arch at the foot of the \textit{staurotheke}’s obverse side, probably hinting at the Holy Sepulchre.\textsuperscript{54} The reliquaries of Conques and Kaisheim form this group. Less spectacular than these two clusters of golden cross-reliquaries, but equally important from this paper’s perspective, is a third group identified by Meurer that comprises the \textit{staurothekai} of Paris, Carboeiro in Spanish Galicia, and Agrigento in Sicily (Figs 21.1, 21.2, and 21.3).\textsuperscript{55} These simply wrought, not overly large pieces (about 16 $\times$ 9 cm) worked from silver plates with the help of punching tools bear a very close resemblance to one another and form a distinct group. Characteristic elements are the two openings at the intersections of the arms, the round symbols of the evangelists in the arms of the reliquary on the obverse, sometimes a praying figure and—particularly important—the depiction of the sepulchre at the foot of the cross. The latter is marked by a crossed arch, a hanging lamp, and the representation of the grave showing openings, or \textit{oculi}, just as contemporary texts describe it. The images of the Holy Sepulchre are the ultimate sign that the Jerusalemite \textit{staurothekai} truly functioned as visual constructs of Jerusalem, effectively enhancing the ‘repeatability’\textsuperscript{56} of the holy city in the Latin West. The reliquaries translocated two attractors, Jerusalem and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, simultaneously: via the physical transfer of sacred material (the wood) and via iconographic citation.

Since Meurer’s time, art historical research on the crusader states has greatly advanced; one need mention only Jaroslav Folda and Bianca Kühnel.\textsuperscript{57} We know a lot of such group consists of golden crosses with an opening to hold a large piece of the True Cross; it comprises such examples as those housed at Denkendorf, Scheyern, and Barletta. Another group is characterized by two openings for the particles of the cross and a depiction of an arch at the foot of the \textit{staurotheke}’s obverse side, probably hinting at the Holy Sepulchre.\textsuperscript{54} The reliquaries of Conques and Kaisheim form this group. Less spectacular than these two clusters of golden cross-reliquaries, but equally important from this paper’s perspective, is a third group identified by Meurer that comprises the \textit{staurothekai} of Paris, Carboeiro in Spanish Galicia, and Agrigento in Sicily (Figs 21.1, 21.2, and 21.3).\textsuperscript{55} These simply wrought, not overly large pieces (about 16 $\times$ 9 cm) worked from silver plates with the help of punching tools bear a very close resemblance to one another and form a distinct group. Characteristic elements are the two openings at the intersections of the arms, the round symbols of the evangelists in the arms of the reliquary on the obverse, sometimes a praying figure and—particularly important—the depiction of the sepulchre at the foot of the cross. The latter is marked by a crossed arch, a hanging lamp, and the representation of the grave showing openings, or \textit{oculi}, just as contemporary texts describe it. The images of the Holy Sepulchre are the ultimate sign that the Jerusalemite \textit{staurothekai} truly functioned as visual constructs of Jerusalem, effectively enhancing the ‘repeatability’\textsuperscript{56} of the holy city in the Latin West. The reliquaries translocated two attractors, Jerusalem and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, simultaneously: via the physical transfer of sacred material (the wood) and via iconographic citation.

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more about the patriarchs’ craftsmen, about the artistic production of the crusader states, and about the elements that were either adapted there or were exported from the Holy Land to the Latin West. At the end of his contribution, Meurer expressed his conviction that more of these easily fabricated staurothekai might crop up over time, and, true enough, some years ago a hitherto unknown piece that had gone unnoticed in the parish church of Anglesola in rural Catalonia was presented and analysed (Fig. 21.4).58 It also shows the traits just mentioned: the Agnus Dei and floral decorations, the symbols of the evangelists, the praying figure, and the sepulchre. Lately, two further staurothekai fabricated in the patriarchal workshops have been identified, although these findings have not yet attracted the attention of most art historians of the Latin East. One is to be found in the sanctuary of Santa Maria ad Rupes in Castel Sant’Elia close to Nepi (Viterbo), the other in Troia (Foggia) in southern Italy (Figs 21.5 and 21.6).59 Both undoubtedly can be added


to the ther, better-known pieces, as we recognize the characteristic traits already pointed out: the arched replica of the Holy Sepulchre, the two openings, the simple stamped decoration, and so on. The group identified by Meurer has thus effectively doubled in size.

Important as identifying pieces from the patriarchs’ workshop may be, it remains to be clarified who brought the relics and reliquaries to France, Spain, and Italy. Who were the agents of this form of Mediterranean translocational mobility? The fact that they are now kept in museums like the Louvre, in cathedral treasuries, or in parish churches might divert our attention from the fact that initially these pieces were often preserved in regular monastic institutions. Closer scrutiny reveals that in many cases the transmitters of these staurothekai were definitely or at least very probably the canons of the Holy Sepulchre. The cathedral chapter of Jerusalem that was restructured in 1114 as a community of canons regular acquired a number of subsidiary houses—commanderies, priories, and chapels—in many regions of Latin Europe.60 The communities of these overseas branches

that corroborate such consignments from Jerusalem across the Mediterranean;64 in others, we can safely trace the staurothekai back to the order’s priories.

For example, the Galician staurothekai now kept at the cathedral archive of Santiago de Compostela came from Carboeiro, where the canons held a subsidiary,62 and not far from Agrigento, in Piazza Armerina, lay the order’s main Sicilian house.63 The cross of Anglesola, too, although now preserved at a parish church, very probably originated from a chapel that the canons of the Holy Sepulchre maintained in this Catalan location until the middle of the thirteenth century.64 Finally, even the newly identified staurothekai of Troia fits perfectly into the pattern: a priory of the order can be identified in this same town from the first half of the twelfth century onward, and it remained an important centre of those maintained close ties to their mother house until the end of the crusader states in 1291. One way of maintaining these ties was via material visual constructs of Jerusalem in the form of reliquaries. In some cases, as in that of Paris, Denkendorf, or Scheyern, we have written texts


canons right up to the later Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{65} In all probability, the simply fabricated reliquaries were regularly sent by the patriarch and canons from Jerusalem across the Mediterranean to their ‘overseas branches’.

There the \textit{staurothekei} and their contents were put to several uses. The canons needed them in order to raise money and perhaps also to recruit men for their order. It is no coincidence that some of the preserved crosses rest on hollow feet that enabled the canons to attach them to poles and carry them in processions or other performances, such as public sermons, thus effectively restructuring sacred space.\textsuperscript{66} A series of recent studies has effectively shown the functional dimension of relics’ visibility in the Middle Ages, and the \textit{staurothekei} are a case in point.\textsuperscript{67} We know from written sources that these relics were employed during such public acts, substantially elevating the solemnity of the occasion and greatly enhancing the canons’ visual repertoire.\textsuperscript{68} By visualizing both the True Cross and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the reliquaries underlined the two sacred objects that the canons, the \textit{custodes sanctissimi Sepulcri}, guarded. Furthermore, the crosses not only played an important part in liturgy within the town of Jerusalem but also in the filiations that the Jerusalemite chapter maintained in every kingdom of Latin Christendom. In this way, the display of relics in the Latin West, whether in public spaces outside the monastic compound during processions or within the church building during the liturgy, regularly visualized Jerusalem far from the Holy Land. The Jerusalemite liturgy, in which relics of the True Cross played an important role, helped bring Jerusalem back to the minds of the devout on a recurring basis. Such formalized, sequenced, and repeated rituals moved in a circular time-frame of their own that transcended the present by repeatedly recalling the past while looking ahead to the future.\textsuperscript{69}


\textsuperscript{69} Michael Meyer-Blanck, ‘Liturgie als Erinnerungsform’, \textit{Jahrbuch für Biblische Theologie}, 22 (2007), 359–78 (pp. 364–67); Jörg Sonntag, \textit{Klosterleben im Spiegel der Zeichenhaftigkeit: symbolisches Denken und Handeln hochmittelalterlicher Mönche zwischen Dauer...
A similar use of visual constructs of Jerusalem can be observed in the case of the order's seals, which also functioned as conveyors of meaning, as Bedeutungsträger. The twelfth-century seals of the patriarch and the chapter of Jerusalem repeated elements found on the staurolithai, specifically depictions of the sepulchre and the double-barred cross. The seal of a letter accompanying the dispatch of a staurolithos to the West between 1155 and 1157 is a well-known case. A hitherto unpublished piece newly discovered at the cathedral archive of Vic in Catalonia can now be added to the list of known seals (Fig. 21.7). Issued by Patriarch Amalric (r. 1157/58–80), it too shows the patriarchal cross and a clear reference to Christ's tomb.

Mobile artefacts such as seals and the staurolithai created by ecclesiastic institutions of the crusader states heightened Mediterranean connectivity and devotion to the Holy Land; they were agents of mobility that drew attention to Jerusalem and to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre through their mere presence and their liturgical use. The popularity of certain attractors could be enhanced by such translocations of sacred place, which helps explain variations in devotional practice observable in the eleventh through thirteenth centuries. Visual constructions of Jerusalem were not only created in the architectural, cartographic, pictorial, and textual fields, and these were not the only ones to evoke the sepulchre and the topography of the holy city. Reliquaries of the Vera Crux also transferred sanctity and sacred place from the Levant to the Latin West; they too functioned as mnemonic devices and played a part in regularly calling Jerusalem to mind within Christian society. And all this was due to the institutional networks established in their day by largely forgotten religious agents—the canonical orders of the crusader states.


71 Vic, Arxiu Capitular de Vic, caixa 37, no. 5/19. On the recto, the seal bears the circumscription 'Sigillum canoniconorum' with the inscription 'Ihesus Christus Nika' on the cross; on the verso one can read 'Sanctissimi Sepulcri'. It is practically identical to the seal on the donation charter of Henry the Lion for the Holy Sepulchre from 1172 (Wolfenbüttel, Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv ST AWO 1, Urkunde 4): <http://kulturerbe.niedersachsen.de/viewer/fullscreen/isi_DE-1811-HA_STAWO_1_Urk_Nr_4/2/> [accessed 25 June 2013]; Kühnel, Crusader Art of the Twelfth Century, p. 144.
