

The Reconquered Jerusalem Represented Tradition and Renewal on Pilgrimage Ampullae from the Crusader Period

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Several pewter pilgrimage ampullae whose iconography refers to Jerusalem have been preserved from the second half of the twelfth century. These ampullae enabled crusaders, pilgrims and other visitors of the Holy City to take an ‘image of Jerusalem’ to other places. These images included depictions of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre as the Crusaders had rebuilt it in the middle of the twelfth century, but also of events that had taken place in Jerusalem. The custom of decorating objects with images referring to a site of pilgrimage and offering them to pilgrims, who then spread the souvenirs to other regions, was not a new one. Even in the Early Christian period, pilgrims’ ampullae and other souvenirs bearing references to the Holy Sepulchre, or events that had taken place in the Holy Land, were already available there. However, the ampullae from the Crusader period are decidedly different from the earlier ones originating from the Holy City. Tradition alternates with renewal. After a general discussion of the custom of taking souvenirs from Jerusalem from the time of the first pilgrimages, the focus will be on pilgrimage ampullae from the Crusader period. What influence did the presence of the Crusaders in Jerusalem have on the iconography of the ampullae and their distribution to the West?

Relics and Eulogiae

From the time of Constantine the Great onwards, pilgrimage to the Holy Land developed rapidly. Worshippers visited the places where events from the Old and New Testament had taken place. They also wanted to be able to see, worship and even touch the many relics that had been found over the centuries. In Jerusalem, worship was concentrated in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where believers could visit the relic of the True Cross and Christ’s Holy Sepulchre. As more pilgrims came to Jerusalem during the fourth century, the holy places and relics had to be better protected, because fragments of revered objects were popular souvenirs. In some places it was even necessary to place

guards to prevent the theft of relics. Splinters of the wood of the Cross and pieces of rock from Christ's Tomb were particularly in demand. Egeria records in her late fourth-century pilgrim's account that the Cross in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was protected by guards after a pilgrim had bitten a piece of it off when kissing it.¹ At the beginning of the fifth century, almost every region of the Roman Empire possessed fragments of the Cross relic.²

Tangible memories of the holy places could also be obtained by collecting eulogiae or tertiary relics.³ The eulogiae include *naturalia*, 'natural signs', such as a pebble picked up near the Holy Sepulchre, a piece of wood found on the Mount of Olives, water from the river Jordan or natural materials like the rose of Jericho, palm branches or thorns that were picked from the hedges on the Mount of Olives. The eulogiae also include other materials found close to sacred places, like dust that had covered Christ's Tomb, wax from the candles in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre or oil from lamps that burned near Christ's Tomb.⁴ Augustine (354–430) reported that a friend of the former official Hesperus, from the vicinity of Hippo, had taken some sand from the Holy Land for his comrade. Hesperus, who had hung the container with the sand in his bedroom, used it to ward off misfortune.⁵ Antoninus of Piacenza records in his late sixth-century pilgrimage account that visitors to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre could collect two kinds of eulogiae: soil from the Holy Sepulchre and oil from the lamp that burned permanently near the Tomb.⁶ A good example of a collection of eulogiae is the wooden relic box from the treasure chamber of the Capella Sancta Sanctorum of the Lateran, which was painted with five scenes from the Life of Christ in the late sixth century or early seventh century.⁷ The

1 Passage 37, 2. Wilkinson 1981, p. 137.

2 Hunt mentions Syria, Asia Minor, Italy, Gaul and Africa. Hunt 1982, p. 129 and note 6 with acknowledgment of sources.

3 Eulogia (derived from the Greek word "εὐλογία") is used in the sense of 'blessed souvenir' here. The concept of 'eulogia' has more meanings (in a different context). See: Stuiber 1966 for a detailed description. A eulogia's value was based on the belief that the sanctity and sacred power of places, people and objects could be transferred by touch. See e.g.: Vikan 1984. In a more general sense, eulogiae also served as amulets, attracting prosperity and warding off misfortune. The word "εὐλογία" appears on Early Christian pilgrimage ampullae from Jerusalem as well as in written sources.

4 For a detailed study of the eulogiae pilgrims took from the Holy Land, see Bagatti 1949.

5 Hunt 1982, p. 130 and note 9, with a reference to Augustine, *De Civitate dei*, 22, 8.

6 Passage 18, 2–3. See: Milani 1977, p. 142. Antoninus of Piacenza uses the word 'benedictio' in the sense of a souvenir that was taken by a pilgrim as a relic here. See: Vermeer 1965, p. 79.

7 Now in the Museo Sacro in Vatican City, inv. no. 1883 A-B.