CHAPTER 6

Translations of the Jerusalem Pilgrimage Route at the Holy Mountains of Varallo and San Vivaldo

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Research shows that, beginning in the early Middle Ages, the monuments and sites in Europe that replicate Jerusalem were created for a variety of reasons that include serving as burial sites, commemorating pilgrimages to the Holy Land, housing relics brought from there, or providing settings to re-create its liturgy.\(^1\) As travel to the Holy Land became increasingly difficult, the traditional pilgrimage to Jerusalem was also translated to Europe. In this way, worshippers who wanted to share the pilgrimage experience but were not ready or able to undertake the arduous journey were afforded the option of a substitute pilgrimage to a site in Europe.

An ersatz pilgrimage experience consisted primarily of devotional practices in which the devout were guided to imagine themselves in Jerusalem, walking its streets and taking part in the events of sacred history. The experience could be constructed using different sources, including such guidebooks for virtual pilgrimage as the *Trattato di Terra Santa e dell'Oriente* (**Treatise of the Holy Land and the Orient**) authored by Francesco Suriano, head of the Custodia Terrae Sanctae from 1493 to 1496 and again from 1512 to 1515;\(^2\) meditation manuals, such as the *Libro devuto e fruttuoso a ciascun fedel Christiano, chiamato Giardino de orationi*, better known as the *Giardino de orationi* or *Zardino de oration* (**Garden of Prayer**), of 1454;\(^3\) sermons by preachers who had first-hand knowl-

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\(^1\) For different purposes and uses of such replicas of Jerusalem, see *Visual Constructs of Jerusalem*, ed. by Bianca Kühnel, Galit Noga-Banai, and Hanna Vorholt (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014).


\(^3\) *Libro devuto e fruttuoso a ciascun fedel christiano chiamato Giardino de orationi*, attributed to Niccolò da Osimo. A printed copy from 1543 exists in the Biblioteca nazionale centrale di Firenze, rari.Guicc.6.11.24. This manual’s instructions about how to imagine Jerusalem are
edge of the topography of the Holy Land, writing of the events of the Passion
and referring to specific sites;⁴ and monumental reconstructions of the Jerusa-
lem pilgrimage route in urban and natural environments, such as the Stations
of the Cross in Nuremberg, the Way of the Cross in Görlitz, and the holy moun-
tain of Varallo Sesia in Piedmont,⁵ all three dating to the fifteenth century or
the beginning of the sixteenth.

In fifteenth-century Jerusalem the pilgrimage was conducted in two sepa-
rate stages. The first part was in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the
second consisted of a walk from there toward the House of Pilate and then to
sites outside the city. This order of stations, did not follow the chronology of
the historical events. Nonetheless, most of the European representations of
the Jerusalem pilgrimage followed a ‘chronological order’, the sequence in
which the events occurred as described in the Gospels.

This chapter focuses on the different ways the Jerusalem pilgrimage route
could be reconstructed in Europe in the fifteenth century, by comparing three
translations: the two monumental reconstructions of the Italian holy moun-
tains of Varallo and San Vivaldo and Suriano’s Treatise of the Holy Land. My
hypothesis is that at San Vivaldo the order of stations was what Kathryn Rudy
terms a ‘topographical order’⁶—the sequence in which one would visit the

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⁴ Guido Gentile, ‘Evocazione topografica, composizione di luogo e tipologia dei Sacri Monti’, in
Sacro monte: Devzione, arte e cultura della controriforma, ed. by Luciano Vaccaro and Francesca
Ricardi (Milan: Jaca Book, 1992), pp. 89–110 (p. 93); and Roberto Rusconi, ‘Gerusalemme nella
predicazione popolare quattrocentesca tra millennio, ricordo di viaggio e luogo sacro’, in
293–96.

⁵ Susanne Wegmann, ‘Der Kreuzweg des Adam Kraft im Spiegel spätmittelalterlicher Frömmigkeit’, in
Adam Kraft, Die Beiträge des Kolloquiums im Germanischen Nationalmuseum, ed.
by Frank Matthias Kammler (Nuremberg: Germanisches Nationalmuseum, 2002), pp. 295–
305; Till Meinert, Die Heilig-Grab-Anlage in Görlitz: Architektur und Geschichte eines spätmit-
telalterlichen Bauensembles (Esens: Rust, 2004), pp. 309–19; Jan Pieper, ‘The Garden of the
del Sacro Monte di Varallo: La proposta religiosa di Bernardino Caimi’, Novarien, 14 (1984),
pp. 19–98.

⁶ The term was first introduced in Kathryn M. Rudy, ‘A Pilgrim’s Memories of Jerusalem: Lon-
pp. 311–25.