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Bowman, G.W. (2001) *A Textual Landscape: the Mapping of a Holy Land in the Fourth-Century Itinerarium of the Bordeaux Pilgrim*. In: Starkey, P. and Starkey, J., eds. *Unfolding the Orient: Travellers in Egypt and the Near East*. Durham Middle East Monographs S. Garnet Publishing Ltd, Reading, pp. 7-40. ISBN 9780863722578.

In a recent article Robert Markus queries - with reference to the fourth century C.E. emergence of a Christian network of holy sites - "why, how was it possible that any place should become holy?"<sup>1</sup>. He proceeds to analyse a sacralising transformation of places in popular perceptions and practices as the reflection of a shift in Christian devotion "from the eschatological meaning of the historical narratives to their topographical associations" (Markus 267). This shift prepared the ground for the Constantinian church building programme effecting not only Palestine but as well the entirety of the Roman Empire. It came about, according to Markus, because early fourth century Christians felt it necessary to elaborate cult practices around tombs and relics of martyrs in order to assert continuity between their church - increasingly enjoying the support of the Roman state - and the church of early Christians, who discerned the signs of their divine election in the wounds of martyrdom that same state had inflicted on them. Markus writes that "the veneration of martyrs...served to assure the Christians of a local church of its continuity with its own heroic, persecuted, past, and the universal Church of its continuity with the age of the martyrs" (Markus 270). Martyrs and their relics came to be seen as resting 'in place', and the place of the cult became a site for encounter between the sanctifying individuals and events of an increasingly distant past and contemporary Christians who wished to participate in that sanctity. "Places became sacred as the past became localised in the present" (271)<sup>2</sup>, and the logic of the cult practices that brought fourth-century Christians into contact with their martyred forebears was easily extended from places explicitly connected with martyrdom to sites associated with other elements of Christian and pre-Christian history.

### **Scripture into Site: Text and Monument in the Fourth Century Holy Land**

In the Holy Land the sites sanctified were less commonly those associated with martyrdoms (notwithstanding the powerful exception of Golgotha) than those linked through biblical narratives with Jesus's prefiguration, his incarnation and the dissemination of his message through his disciples' activities. Constantine, as is well known, initiated a massive programme of

<sup>1</sup> Robert Markus. "How on Earth Could Places Become Holy? Origins of the Christian Idea of Holy Places." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* II: 3 (1994): 268.

<sup>2</sup> cf. his *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990): 92 as well as Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987) for a theological inquiry into ritual and place in early Christianity.

church building in Jerusalem in 325 C.E. with the construction of a shrine complex composed of a basilica known as the 'Martyrium', a rotunda-shrine over Jesus' tomb named the 'Anastasis', and a chapel at Calvary. This was quickly followed by the erection of three other memorial compounds: one near Hebron at Mamre - where Abraham was said to have been visited by God and two mysterious companions (Gen. 18:1-22); another at Bethlehem - where Jesus was reputed to have been born; and a third, the Öl»ona, on the Mount of Olives from whence, according to Acts 1:6-12, Jesus ascended into the heavens. These and other sites provided local and pilgrim Christians with settings wherein they could engage - in liturgy and the imagination - with signal events drawn from a sanctified past.

We see, for instance, in the enthusiastic narrative of a late fourth century pilgrim who has come to be known as Egeria<sup>3</sup>, a compulsive siting of biblical referents on the landscape:

"All along the valley [below Mount Sinai] they [local monastics serving as guides] showed us how each Israelite had a house, and they were round stone houses, as you can still see from the foundations. They showed us where holy Moses ordered the children of Israel to run 'from gate to gate' (Exod. 32, 27) when he had come back from the Mount. They also showed us where holy Moses ordered them to burn the calf which Aaron had made for them; and the bed of the stream from which, as you read in Exodus, holy Moses made the children of Israel drink (Exod. 32, 20). And they pointed out the place where a portion of Moses' spirit was given to the seventy men (Num. 11.25), and where the children of Israel had their craving for food (Num. 11.4). They showed us also the place called 'The Fire' (Num. 11:3), a part of the camp which was burning, where the fire stopped when holy Moses prayed. And they showed us where the manna and the quails descended on the people (Num. 11.6,31). So we were shown everything which the Books of Moses tell us took place in that valley beneath holy Sinai, the Mount of God" (Egeria 5:5-8 in Wilkinson 107)<sup>4</sup>.

When Egeria returns from the Sinai to Jerusalem to participate in its extended Holy Week liturgy she witnesses, on Palm Sunday, how the Christian liturgy - enacted in the Holy City in the same places he events it celebrates were alleged to have been carried out originally - re-presents and thus reenacts the past:

"the bishop and all the people rise from their places, and start off on foot down from the

<sup>3</sup> Egeria. "Itinerarium." In: *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* 175 (Turnhout: 1965). 27-90. I will use John Wilkinson's translation from *Egeria's Travels* (London: S.P.C.K., 1971), 91-147.

<sup>4</sup> Leo Spitzer points out that "the eye of the pilgrim wanders incessantly from the Biblical locus (i.e. passage) to the locus (locality) in Palestine" (Leo Spitzer. "The Epic Style of the Pilgrim Aetheria." *Comparative Literature* I: 3. 1949: 239).

summit of the Mount of Olives. All the people go before him with psalms and antiphons, all the time repeating 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord'....Everyone is carrying branches, either palm or olive, and they accompany the bishop in the very way the people did when once they went down with the Lord....what I found most impressive about all this [the patterns of worship of the Jerusalem community] was that the psalms and antiphons they use are always appropriate, whether at night, in the early morning, at the day prayers at midday or three o'clock, or at Lucernare. Everything is suitable, appropriate and relevant to what is being done" (Egeria 31:2-3 and 25:5 in Wilkinson 133 and 126).

In Egeria's lauding of the verismilitudinousness of holy land sites and practices we see yet another instance of the evolving phenomenon of site sanctification traced by Peter Walker through Eusebius of Caesarea's and Cyril of Jerusalem's discourses on the holy places<sup>5</sup>. Egeria *sees* played out before her the forms of scripture, whether these be read in the details of landscape or reenacted in celebrants' movements across the field of the literal sites. Cyril, addressing catechumens *ca* 350 C.E., calls upon them to *read* from the site surrounding them the truth others can only hear: "one should never grow weary of hearing about our crowned Lord, especially on this holy Golgotha. For others merely hear, but we see and touch"<sup>6</sup>.

Emerging from these two texts one can discern the threat Gregory of Nyssa (331-395 C.E.) saw in the growing cult of holy sites - the danger that such sites would come to be seen as inherently sacred and that worship of the sites would come to supplant reverence for the divine events from whence their original significance was metonymically drawn<sup>7</sup>. Cyril, in the lecture cited above, suggests that contact with holy sites adds to the devotion Christians feel when hearing scripture read; seeing and touching the sites which provide a *mis en scène* for the scriptural events relays a better spiritual charge than does merely hearing of the events through a scriptural reading. In Egeria scripture begins to dissolve into site; of the holy place which would become St. Catherine's, she writes "nearby you are also shown the place where holy Moses was standing when God said to him (Exod. 3.5), 'Undo the fastening of thy shoes', *and so on*" (Egeria, 4:8 in Wilkinson 96; my emphasis). More significantly the sacramental charge put into sites by the past activities of sacred figures begins, in Egeria's rendering of the holy places, to leak out of the places and effect surrounding objects in ways that have little if anything to do with the dissemination of the divine truths the scriptures relay. When Egeria visits Edessa she sees wonderful fish in the pools of the

<sup>5</sup> Peter Walker. *Holy City, Holy Places? Christian Attitudes to Jerusalem and the Holy Land in the Fourth Century*. Oxford Early Christian Studies, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1990).

<sup>6</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem. "Catecheses XIII:22." In: *The Works of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem*, ed. Leo McCauley. Vol. II. (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1968). 19.

<sup>7</sup> See "On Pilgrimage" in *Selected Writings and Letters of Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa*, ed. William Moore and Henry Wilson. Vol. V. Oxford: 1892. 382-383.

palace which she discovers are excellent to eat: "I have never seen fish like them, they were so big, so brightly coloured, and tasted so good" (19:7 in Wilkinson 116). This is not, however, a mere intrusion of secular matter into a text marked by its devotion to reading biblical inscriptions off the landscape. The palace visited was that of King Abgar, a monarch who featured in an early Christian legend as having believed in Jesus before seeing him, having written a letter to him attesting to that belief, and having been rewarded by Jesus with a miraculous letter which protected Abgar and his city during an extended Persian siege. During that siege the people of Edessa had been rescued from death by thirst by a miraculous eruption of sweet water out of dry ground which had occurred after Jesus's letter had been processed around the city. Subsequently pools were built to hold the waters of the miraculous spring and the fish Egeria enjoyed were raised in the sanctified waters of those pools (19:6-19 in Wilkinson 115-117). Here the sacred power inherent in Jesus's words is transferred into a text which serves as a miracle-working object and gives rise to a body of water within which fish are raised which are not only big and beautiful but are also delicious to eat. The word is here in the process of becoming world, and the contagion by which sites in the world borrow sanctity from scripture only to subsequently appear as in themselves holy does not take long to develop. We read in the *Itinerarium* (ca 570 CE) of the Piacenza Pilgrim that

"We travelled on to the city of Nazareth, where many miracles take place. In the synagogue there is kept the book in which the Lord wrote his ABC, and in this synagogue there is the bench on which he sat with the other children. Christians can lift the bench and move it about, but the Jews are completely unable to move it, and cannot drag it outside. The house of Saint Mary is now a basilica, and her clothes are the cause of frequent miracles....The region is a paradise, with fruit and corn like Egypt. The region is small, but in its wine, oil, and apples it is superior to Egypt. The millet is abnormally tall..."<sup>8</sup>.

Here not only has the terrain been transformed by contiguity to biblical events associated with it so that it itself has become miracle working, but elements of the place themselves give rise to 'biblical' stories which were not related in the Bible. Place has truly become holy..

Behind this sanctification of site is a shift from the priority of hearing to that of seeing and touching. In some ways this reflects the 'coming out' of the church in the period of tolerance which followed the close of the fierce and final persecution Diocletian had launched in 303 C.E.. Once it became safe to engage publically in ritual and in commemoration of Christian ideology, the media

<sup>8</sup> Antoninus of Piacenza. "Itinerarium". *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* 175, ed. P. Geyer. (Turnhout: 1965): 79–89, translated by John Wilkinson. *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades*. (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1977): 79 and 81.

of proselytisation no longer needed to be the spoken word based on the concealable text but could become the visual and haptic demonstratives of monument and public liturgy<sup>9</sup>. The 'holy land' - like other monumental celebrations of the word made flesh throughout the empire - became, in this sense, a translation of spoken discourse into a discourse of visual and tactile display. The world was in the process of being transformed by the word and it is not, therefore, surprising to see that some domains of the world (the insides of churches, the surroundings of martyrs' shrines, and the land where the word had walked as a man) could be seen - and read - as the incarnated word<sup>10</sup>.

### Locating the Text of the Bordeaux Pilgrim .

The *Itinerarium Burdigalense*<sup>11</sup>, which appears to be an account of a pilgrimage from Bordeaux to the Holy Land and back in 333 C.E., is positioned at this transformation's cusp. Despite the significance of its location, modern reception of the text has been dismissive. Robert Wilken characterises the *Itinerarium Burdigalense* as

“a brief, almost stenographic account, noting where he went, what he saw, where he changed his horses, and distances from one place to another...The book exhibits almost no theological interest. It moves indiscriminately from one place to another...[and] has no hierarchy of place”<sup>12</sup>.

In the work of most commentators, the Bordeaux Pilgrim's narrative is overshadowed by the 'modern' first-person narration of Egeria which appears to offer a more immediately rewarding access to religiosity of the period. Thus E. D. Hunt's unfavourably compares its “stark narrative” with that of Egeria which “furnishes a more penetrating glimpse into the devotion of the Christian

<sup>9</sup> The term 'haptic' is drawn from Annabel Wharton's stimulating study of transformations of space and sensoria with the 'victory' of Christianity in *Refiguring the Post-Classical City: Dura Europos, Jerash, Jerusalem and Ravenna*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

<sup>10</sup> Gregory Dix's theories of the transformations effected in Christian liturgy by the correspondent move from private to public worship suggests interestingly that as monuments and ceremonials proliferated so the access of the lay public to scripture grew increasingly more attenuated (see his *The Shape of the Liturgy*. Westminster: Dacre Press, 1945: 303-396).

<sup>11</sup> I will provide my own translation drawn from the text in *Corpus Christianorum*, Series Latina 175, ed. P. Geyer and O. Cuntz. (Turnhout: 1965), 1-26 and will follow its editors (and Wilkinson) in citing P. Wesseling's pagination from his *Verera Romanorum Itinera* (Amsterdam 1735). A complete English language translation is available in Volume I of the Library of the Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society (Itinerary from Bordeaux to Jerusalem: 'The Bordeaux Pilgrim' [333 A.D.]. Trans. Aubrey Stewart., Vol. I, London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1896, pp. 1-35). Wilkinson includes a substantial and well-annotated selection in his *Egeria's Travels*, pp. 153-163. The itinerary is dated by the pilgrim's reference by name to the consuls who were in power as he passed through Constantinople and by his references to the days of the months during which he passed through that city (Wesseling 571).

<sup>12</sup> Robert Wilken, *The Land Called Holy: Palestine in Christian History and Thought*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 109 and 110.

traveller"<sup>13</sup>. Hunt's dismissal resonates with Mary Campbell's description of the *Itinerarium Burdigalense* and its source, the 'Antonine Itinerary', as "barely more than lists of cities, *mansiones*, places of interest, and the approximate distances (given in *milia*) between them. These works are in effect verbal charts, designed for the convenience of subsequent travelers, not for the reader's spiritual exaltation"<sup>14</sup>. I will, however, argue in the following pages that the half century which separates the texts of Egeria and the Bordeaux Pilgrim effected massive transformations in Christians' senses of their world and the place of their religion in it, and these changes deeply effect the narrative economies of the texts. I will contend that the *Itinerarium Burdigalense* is not a mere 'verbal chart' for the guidance of travellers but is instead a carefully structured and deeply theological transposition onto topography of an eschatological history. The text, rather than seeking to direct pilgrims to the holy places of the Roman Empire, works to lead catechumens to gateways which open on a kingdom not of this world. .

Egeria's ecstatic response to the conjunction of place, text and pilgrim was symptomatic of new attitudes towards holy sites developing in the decades following Constantine's conversion. Her narrative celebrates a world in the process of being transformed into a Christian domain, and the tone of her text is redolent with the same holy confidence which inspired Eusebius (*circa* 337-339 C.E.) to suggest that the building of the *Anastasis* was the beginning of an inwardly fulfillment of *Revelation's* prophecy of a new heaven and new earth:

"on the very spot which witnessed the Saviour's sufferings, a new Jerusalem was constructed, over against the one so celebrated of old which, since the foul stain of guilt brought upon it by the murder of the Lord, had experienced the last extremity of desolation, the effect of divine judgement upon its impious people. It was opposite this city that the emperor now began to rear a monument to the Saviour's victory over death, with rich and lavish magnificence. And it may be that this was that second and new Jerusalem spoken of in the predictions of the prophets"<sup>15</sup>.

For Egeria the newly Christianized empire is part of the project of world sanctification she and her contemporaries saw prefigured in the texts of Bible; the Christian world, and herself as a Christian in it, are valorized by that continuity, and that engagement renders both self and site worthy.

Egeria's narrative is densely charged by enthusiastic first person narration; "we had been looking

<sup>13</sup> E. D. Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage in the Later Roman Empire A.D. 312-460*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982): 86.

<sup>14</sup> Mary Campbell. *The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing, 400-1600*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988): 27.

<sup>15</sup> Eusebius. "The Life of Constantine" In *Eusebius: Church History, Life of Constantine the Great, Oration in Praise of Constantine*, ed. Ernest Cushing Richardson. (Oxford: 1890). 529.

forward to all this so much that we had been eager to make the climb” (Egeria 4.1, Wilkinson 95). It is marked by a confidence in the continuity of biblical past and sanctified present to the extent that Egeria is able to use her contemporary experiences to illuminate and elaborate biblical narrative;

“I kept asking to see the different places mentioned in the Bible, and they were all pointed out to me...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. So, as far as I can see, loving sisters, you must take it that the children of Israel zigzagged their way to the Red Sea, first right, then back left again, now forwards, and now back” (Egeria 7:2-3, Wilkinson 101).

Posteriority - the belatedness of visiting the holy places four centuries after Jesus’s death - is not a condition of loss and distance as the world has assimilated the biblical past and built upon it a contemporary structure of Christian community and authority. There is no rupture between the biblical past and the imperial present but only the signs of a community developing its structures and traditions on that past and into its future. For Egeria, the Holy Land is able not only to manifest monuments referring to the founding moments of her faith but also to show evidence of that faith’s development of local Christian communities and of the institutions it needs to grow and spread throughout Palestine and the rest of the known world:

“We were also shown the place where Lot’s wife had her memorial, as you read in the Bible. But what we saw, reverend ladies, was not the actual pillar, but only the place where it had once been. The pillar itself, they say, has been submerged in the Dead Sea - at any rate we did not see it and I cannot pretend we did. In fact it was the bishop there, the Bishop of Zoar, who told us that it was now a good many years since the pillar had been visible” (Egeria 12:6-7, Wilkinson 107).

It is not surprising that Egeria - having witnessed the monuments to the biblical past and seen the continuity between that past and her present in Jerusalem’s fervent transformation into a ritual centre manifesting the word made flesh - announces her intention of following her pilgrimage through the holy places with a visit to places beyond the borders of the Holy Land which have been caught up in and render evidence of the expansion of that incarnated and empowered revelation (Egeria 23: 10, Wilkinson 122)..

Although the Constantinian basilicas were being erected as the *Itinerarium Burdigalense* was being composed, the tone of its discourse differs radically from Egeria’s. In it a detached impersonality prevails which tends to efface the subject positions of both narrator and ‘reader’: “from here to Bethasora 14 miles, where the spring is in which Philip baptized the eunuch. From



there it is nine miles to Terebinthus where Abraham lived and dug a well under the terebith tree and spoke and ate with the angels" (Wesseling 591: 3-5)<sup>16</sup> In striking contrast to the passage from Egeria cited above - where the wanderings of the children of Israel are experienced in terms of a network of sites on a landscape which itself comes to serve as the grounds for biblical exegesis - in the Bordeaux Pilgrim's description of Bethel the narrator and time of narration at times disappear. In one case the reader is introduced by the text into a landscape which is not coterminous with the contemporary site from whence the narrative is launched but is present only in the discourse of I Kings 13:1-32:

"From here it is a mile to the place where Jacob, on his way to Mesopotamia, fell asleep, and there is the almond tree, and here he saw a vision and the angel wrestled with him. Here was also King Jeroboam, to whom was sent a prophet so that he might be converted to the Most High God; and the prophet was commanded not to eat with the false prophet whom the king had about him, and because he was led astray by the false prophet and ate with him on his way back, a lion met the prophet on the way and killed him" (Wesseling 588:9-589:3 in Cunst, 95)<sup>17</sup>.

In the Bordeaux Pilgrim's narrative the order of events is not organised with reference to the moment of observation but in terms either of a spatial contiguity which collapses temporality<sup>18</sup> or - as I will demonstrate below - in terms of an eschatological periodicity which renders the narrator's rŷle extraneous. The Bordeaux Pilgrim's text, rather than portraying the centre of an expanding new world order, seems to manifest to its audience a space contiguous to but not continuous with the secular world. The pilgrim, who moves out of his or her native land and into that holy space, seems simultaneously to 'lose' himself or herself and to 'find' a way out of this life and into a world which takes its being from the events and prophecies of the Bible. The *Itinerarium* thus appears to

<sup>16</sup> Wilkinson renders the text as though the pilgrim addresses the reader directly in the second person ('you') while the Aubrey Stewart translation retains the coolness of the original Latin in its occasional use of the pronoun 'one' (*Itinerary from Bordeaux to Jerusalem: 'The Bordeaux Pilgrim' [333 A.D.]*, ed. Aubrey Stewart. London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1896). See also John Elsner, "Pausanias: A Greek Pilgrim in the Roman World." *Past and Present* 135 (1992): 3-29.

<sup>17</sup> An interesting analogy to the Bordeaux Pilgrim's use of the site of the village of Bethel as a means of entering the narrative space of the Bible is the way in which Greek Orthodox pilgrims ignore the specificities of events commemorated at holy places and use the places as 'doors' providing access to a generalized communion with the saints in the 'paradise' manifest to believers in the icon-dense interiors of all Orthodox churches (see Glenn Bowman, "Contemporary Christian Pilgrimage to the Holy Land" in *The Christian Heritage in the Holy Land*, ed. Anthony O'Mahony. London: Scorpion Cavendish, 1995. 298-299).

<sup>18</sup> "A mile from here is the place called Sechar, from which the Samaritan woman went down to the same place where Jacob had dug a well, to fill her jug with water from it, and our Lord Jesus Christ spoke with her; and where there are plane trees, which Jacob planted, and baths which get their water from this well" (Wesseling 588: 2-6).

map a passage between two distinct domains - the contemporary and fallen world of the Roman Empire and another world where time is eschatological and leads towards the eternity of a promised redemption. The presence on that map of the four Constantinian basilicas would seem, however, to provide a conundrum in as much as they would seem to be very much of the time and order of Empire. It will be necessary to move through the holy land represented in the *Itinerarium Burdigalense* to understand why, in a text which takes its bearings from a biblical past, the author should emphasize the fact that

“lately, by the order of the emperor Constantine, was built a basilica, that is a house of the lord, with ponds of remarkable beauty beside it, from which water is taken up, and at the back a font, where children are baptized” (Wesseling 594: 2-4).

### **Traversing the *Itinerarium***

The Bordeaux Pilgrim’s text poses an aspiring critical reader an immediate set of methodological questions. Is the text - for which we have no history of usage - to be read purely in terms of its internal logic? In so far as the text is, even with its descriptive addenda, in large part a listing of names it seems clear that its author expects its audience, in seeking to understand the text, to draw upon extra-textual information pertaining to the sites and events it names. Can we then use the contemporary Holy Land and its topographic peripheries as sources for the information we need to make sense of the Bordeaux Pilgrim’s text? Two things seem to militate against that mode of referencing. The first is that the *Itinerarium* appears to be an unreliable guidebook to a practical trip through Palestine. As Wilken points out, “his route is puzzling; he sometimes turns back to visit places he could have seen when he was in the vicinity, and he makes few observations on the things he has seen” (Wilken , 110). The text’s erraticness, as well as its striking omissions<sup>19</sup> , suggest that it functions not so much as a guide to a literal place than as a discourse using that space as a pretext for another exploration. The second argument against using fourth century Palestine as a hermeneutic device is that, in the text itself, real places seem to serve as doorways into a scriptural domain as in the passage cited above where the reader is carried into I Kings 13 rather than directed along real fourth century roads. One is led to ask, then, whether the text is organised in terms of a logic existing outside of itself, not in the order of sites along fourth century pilgrim routes, but in the biblical texts which early Christians would themselves have used as devices for interpreting events in their own contemporary world? In this case the

<sup>19</sup> The pilgrim, for instance, makes no mention of Nazareth or the Sea of Galilee, despite apparently passing within a day’s journey of those salient sites in the life of Christ (see C. W. Wilson, "Introduction," *Itinerary from Bordeaux to Jerusalem*, London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1896. viii-ix).

literal Holy Land would be presented as a gloss on biblical materials instead of, as it does in Egeria's text, serving itself as a primary text which the Bible serves to explicate. Interpretation would thus have to be based not primarily on the sites visited but - at least in the first instance - on the biblical references to which those sites offer access. In traversing the text of the pilgrim in the following pages I will reverse the agenda Spitzer discerned in Egeria's gaze (see note four above) and will direct my eye from "the locus (locality) in Palestine" to "the Biblical locus (i.e. passage)" with which contemporary Christian knowledge would have associated it. In doing so I hope not so much to show the land as it would have been perceived before place came to be seen as holy, as to provide an insight into what the Bordeaux Pilgrim was presenting if it was not a Holy Land..

The presentation of biblical material in the *Itinerarium Burdigalense* is framed, both at the beginning and the close of the narrative, with hundreds of brief entries of which the following, tracing the route between Antioch and Baniyas, are typical:

"City of Antiochia	16 [miles]
From Tarsus in Cilicia to Antiochia	141 miles, 10 changes, 7halts
To the palace of Daphne	5
Change at Hysdata	11
Halt at Platanus	8
Change at Bacchai	7
Halt at Catel	16
City of Ladica	16
City of Gabala	14
City of Balaneas	13

The border of C'le Syria and Ph'nicia" (Wesseling 581.11-582.8).

The massive distances covered between Bourdeaux and the borders of the Holy Land (by the text's own calculation the distance between Bourdeaux and Sarepta is 3190 miles) are, in large part, rendered as empty spaces by the text. The narrative marks borders (both natural and political) and makes occasional mention of curiosities dealing with water (the ebb and flow of the river Garonne at Bourdeaux and "a city in the sea two miles from the shore" [Wesseling 582.11]), but in large part restricts itself to the names of places where the traveller rested or changed horses. Outside of the Holy Land the text proffers little more than the homogenized mapping which characterises the military itineraries of the period. The only deviations from such models are a number of emendations; on the way out -

Viminatium "where Diocletian killed [Marcus Aurelius] Carinus" (Wesseling 564: 9);  
Libyassa where "lies [the body of] King Annibalianus (Hannibal), who was once king of  
the Africans" (Wesseling 572: 4-5);  
Andavilis where is "the villa of Pampatus, from which came the curule horses" (Wesseling  
577: 6);  
Tyana where "was born Apollonius the Magician" (Wesseling 578:1); and  
Tarsus where "the Apostle Paul was born" (Wesseling 579:4);

- and on the return -

Philippi where the apostles "Paul and Silas were imprisoned" (Wesseling 604: 1);  
Euripides where "is buried the poet Euripides" (Wesseling 604: 7); and  
Pellas from "whence came Alexander the Great of Macedonia" (Wesseling 606: 1).

It is with the text's advent upon territories which have parts to play in the biblical narratives<sup>20</sup> that the tenor of the *Itinerarium Burdigalense* changes radically. At Sarepta (biblical Zarephath) the narrative begins to sprout novel shoots of discourse: "this is where Elijah went up to the widow and asked for food" (Wesseling 583.12: see also *1 Kings* 17: 10-16 and *Luke* 4: 25-26). A few lines later another biblical referent emerges from the stem of the itinerary - "this is where Mt. Carmel is; there Elijah made sacrifice" (Wesseling 585.1: see *1 Kings* 18: 19-21) - followed soon after by a third - "There [C sarea Pal stina] is the bath of Cornelius the Centurion, who gave many alms" (Wesseling 585: 7-8: see *Acts* 10: 19-48). A few lines later the city of Isradela (biblical Jezreel) is described as "where Ahab reigned and Elijah prophesised; there is the field in which David killed Goliath" (Wesseling 586: 4-6). That is followed by the mention of Aser which - inexplicably according to Wilkinson (Wilkinson n.5, 154) - the pilgrim claims was the site of Job's house. The text then presents Neopolis (present day Nablus) as:

"the site of Mount Agazaren (Gerizim); the Samaritans say that there Abraham offered sacrifice, and five hundred steps go up to the top of the mountain. From there, at the foot of the mountain, is that place called Sechar. There is the tomb in which Joseph is laid in the villa which is father Jacob gave him. From there Dinah, Jacob's daughter, was abducted by the sons of the Amorites. A mile from here is the place called Sechar..." (Wesseling 587: 3 - 588: 3 [see quotation above - note 18 - for the continuation of this passage]).

From that point on, until the confines of the Holy Land are left behind, the form of the itinerary

<sup>20</sup> Tarsus and Phillipi are, of course, biblical sites insofar as they are mentioned in Acts and Phillipians with reference to the events the pilgrim cites. As I will demonstrate below, they can – according to the logic of the text – be mapped as being within the 'Holy Land'.

nearly disappears beneath a profusion of commentary binding places to an apparently unstructured glossing of biblical associations and throwing out the occasional contemporary observation.

Despite this appearance of unstructured proliferation, which led the above-quoted commentators to characterize the *Itinerarium* as a “verbal chart” which “moves indiscriminately from one place to another...[and] has no hierarchy of place” (Wilken 110), a thematic emerges in the opening sections of the pilgrim’s presentation of the Holy Land which sets the parameters of the rest of the text, determining what will be included and what excluded in the text’s presentation of the territory. .

The reader, emerging from a long traverse of the spiritual desert which surrounds the Holy Land, first encounters biblical *manna* at Sarepta where the text’s itinerary intersects with that of Elijah who, directed by God, left his desert refuge by the brook Cherith and travelled to Sarepta to dwell in the house of the widow. The next excursus, eight entries later, refers to the site on Mt. Carmel where Elijah offered sacrifice. Both incidents are part of a larger narrative (*I Kings* 16: 29 - 18: 46) which refers to the apostasy of Ahab and of the larger part of Israel and to Elijah’s rôle in returning Israel from Ba’al worship to its dedication to Yahweh. Central to the story is a fierce drought which Elijah called down upon the land as a consequence of Ahab’s following of the Ba’als. While the consequent famine wracked the land Elijah hid from the wrath of Ahab by the brook Cherith, east of the Jordan, where he was fed by ravens until the brook itself dried up in the drought. He then went to Sarepta where he not only fed the widow and her household with a jar of meal and cruse of oil which miraculously refilled themselves as long as he took sojourn there but also resurrected the son of the widow who had fallen sick and died during his stay (*I Kings* 18: 17-24). .

Elijah’s establishment of a small community sustained by divine power in the midst of a world dominated by famine and disease is followed, in the biblical narrative, by his challenge to the hegemony of the apostate king and the the priesthood of Ba’al which propped up Ahab’s power. Elijah’s sacrifice on Mt. Carmel is, of course, the bloody showdown between Elijah and the four hundred and fifty prophets of Ba’al recounted in *I Kings* 18: 20-40. Elijah, setting up the confrontation, challenges the king, the prophets and all Israel gathered on Carmel: “How long will you go limping with two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Ba’al, then follow him” (*I Kings* 18: 21). The failure of the Ba’al’s prophets to bring fire down upon their sacrificial offering is countered by Elijah’s spectacular success in calling a voracious flame down upon his drenched bull. This is followed by the slaughter of the priesthood of the Ba’al and by the torrential closure of the drought which had blasted Israel. Elijah on Carmel not only “repaired the

altar of the Lord that had been thrown down” (*1 Kings* 18: 30) but also provided a convincing retort to those who, limping with two different opinions, could not decide which god - Yahweh or the deity of the rulers of the state - was the true god. .

The richness of detail of these episodes is only alluded to in the text of the *Itinerarium Burdigalense* through the citing of ‘Sarepta’ and ‘Mount Carmel’. The text uses sites as mnemonics to bring strategically signal moments in the history and pre-history of Christianity to the consciousness of a fourth century audience already knowledgeable about biblical matters. To such an audience the stories of Elijah would be pertinent on several levels. Elijah’s challenge to Israel and his spectacular proof of the power of the only true god would have posed a salient exemplum to early fourth century neophytes who were poised to commit themselves - or had only just committed themselves - to the worship of monotheistic Christianity and the abandonment of allegiance to the sanctioned divinities of the Roman state. Furthermore, Elijah’s experiences at Sarepta would, for them, function typologically; the *Itinerarium’s* reference to Sarepta would - for early Christians to whom “typology, the exposition of the foreshadowings of Christ in the history of Israel, was...a subject of elementary catechesis”<sup>21</sup> - have evoked Jesus’s feeding of the multitude with loaves and fishes at the Mount of Beatitudes as well as his resurrection of Lazarus at Bethany (Elijah at Sarepta is the first of several Old Testament figures of Jesus which occur in the *Itinerarium Burdigalense*). The progress of Elijah’s triumph - his movement from hiding as an isolate bearer of truth in the wilderness through being the mainspring of a small community resident in the world but not subject to its life-destroying regime to becoming the victorious scourge of his enemies and bringer of life-giving rains to Israel - might itself stand as a prefiguration of the Christian community’s own sense of past, present and future. This suggestion is supported by the fact that, throughout the text, an historical motif recurs wherein a dominant old order is mapped, then challenged by a divinely-endowed truth, and then shown to be overcome by that new power. An example - in typical topographical concentration - is shown a few lines later: “City of Istradela [Jezreel]: there Ahab reigned and Elijah prophesized; there is the field where David killed Goliath” (Wesseling 586: 4-6)..

The commentator on the Oxford annotated edition of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible notes, with reference to the opening of the Elijah sequence discussed above, that

§ “The Canaanite (or Phoenician) god Baal (16.31-32) was held by his worshipers to be the one who controlled the *rain*. Elijah intended to show that his God, *the Lord the God of Israel*, was the one who really controlled the *rain*”.

<sup>21</sup> Jean Danielou, *A History of Early Christian Doctrine Before the Council of Nicea*. Vol. I. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1964, 406.

Elijah's demonstration - graphically rendered in *1 Kings* 18: 41-46 when the rains pour torrentially over the burnt bull and the hecatomb of the slain Ba'alists prophets - meshes with a less spectacular, similarly pedagogic yet more ambitious exposition pertaining to water which runs through the whole of the *Itinerarium Burdigalense*. Soon after the pilgrim's sighting of Elijah's sacrifice are two excursions directly associated with water:

"There is the bath of Cornelius the Centurion, who gave many alms. At the third milestone from there is Mt. Syna, where there is a spring; if a woman washes herself in it, she will become pregnant" (Wesseling 585: 7- 586: 2).

Then, a few lines later, the pilgrim speaks of

"Sechar, from which the Samaritan woman went down to the same place where Jacob had dug a well, to fill her jug with water from it, and our Lord Jesus Christ spoke with her; and where there are plane trees, which Jacob planted, and a bath, which gets its water from this well" (Wesseling 588: 3-6).

If - as the constant mention of water-related sites throughout the text would suggest - water is a significant element in the pilgrim's presentation of the land, then the reader should examine this early set of water associations for evidence of the narrator's motivation in including them. .

The mention of the spring at Syna develops the theme of the life-giving powers of water earlier raised by the invocation of Elijah at Carmel where he brought the rains and ended the killing drought. That the spring - even though extra-biblical and contemporary - does not simply maintain already existent life but miraculously engenders pregnancy suggests that water in the Holy Land has a nature-defying power to replace barrenness with life. This link is demonstrated more forcibly later in the text where the narrator locates, outside of Jericho,

"the spring of Elisha; before if a woman drank from that water she would not bear children. A vessel was brought to Elisha and he put salt in it and came and put it over the spring and said 'thus says the Lord: I have healed these waters'. Now if a woman drinks from it she will have children" (Wesseling 596: 7-10)<sup>22</sup>.

With the citing of the bath of Cornelius the Centaurion the text again invokes life-giving water and, in so doing, effects not only a movement from the Old to the New Testament but as well the first appearance of another recurrent motif of the *Itinerarium* - the overcoming of the old dispensation by the new. Cornelius, whose story is relayed in *Acts* 10, was one of the two first

<sup>22</sup> See *2 Kings* 2: 19-22 of which this is a close rendering. Elisha's making the water sweet and wholesome by salting it parallels Elijah's counterinductive preparation of the sacrificial bull for immolation by pouring over it twelve jars of water (*1 Kings* 18: 33-35). In each case what is treated is not simply water but water which, brought into association with divinity, operates supra-naturally.

Gentile converts<sup>23</sup>, whose conversion follows on the narrative of Peter being instructed in a vision to reject the dietary restrictions of *Leviticus* (*Acts* 10: 10-16). The divine instruction to overturn the Old Testament discriminations between the clean and the unclean is, in the rest of the chapter, extended to the laws separating Jews from Gentiles and as a result Cornelius, a Gentile believer in the word of Christ, is baptized. Peter, at Cornelius's house, says

“Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation any one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him’...While Peter was still saying this, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. And the believers from among the circumcised who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them [Cornelius and his kinsmen and close friends] speaking with tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared ‘Can any one forbid water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?’. And he commanded them to be baptized in the name Jesus Christ” (*Acts* 10: 44-48).

The bath of Cornelius commemorates the fact that “to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance unto life” (*Acts* 11: 18) and thus marks the historical moment at which the promise of divine election, previously restricted to the Jews, becomes universal. It is interesting that the site of this Gentile conversion, encountered as the pilgrim's text enters the Holy Land, is balanced, later in the text as the narrative prepares to depart from the Holy Land, by the citing of another water - “the spring...in which Philip baptised the eunuch” (Wesseling 599: 1-2; see *Acts* 8: 26-40) - where the other originary Gentile baptism occurred. The text transposes onto the spatial boundaries of the Holy Land the temporal borders of the new and old dispensations. The limits of the Old Testament Promised Land are marked as simultaneously the beginnings of the domain opened to redemption by the universal promise of the New Testament. This historical progressus seems to be further marked geographically by the pilgrim's noting of Tarsus - where “the Apostle Paul was born” - and Philippi - where the apostles “Paul and Silas were imprisoned” - beyond the boundaries of the biblical Holy Land at the front beyond which pagan holy men and mythographers such as Apollonius of Tyana<sup>24</sup> and Euripides still prevail. .

<sup>23</sup> The Oxford annotations refer to Cornelius as the first Gentile convert (May and Metzger, 1332-1333, note on *Acts* 10: 1-48), but *Acts* 8: 26-39 describes Philip's baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch who W.H.C. Frend calls “the first non-Jewish convert recorded” (*The Rise of Christianity*, London: Dartman, Longman and Todd, 1984, 89). That the *Itinerarium Burdigalense* treats both conversions indicates that it is concerned to mark the breaking out of the salvatory work from the confines of the Jewish people.

<sup>24</sup> Apollonius of Tyana was an itinerant Neopythagorean teacher born early in the Christian era who was alleged to have had magical powers and to have travelled widely, including to India. Flavius Philostratus (ca 170 C.E.) wrote a *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* in which the philosopher was attributed with a miraculous birth and the ability to work miracles. More significant, however, was the virulent anti-Christian polemic Sossius Hierocles presented



The relation of the Old and New Testament dispensations is further developed in the excursus around the site of Sechim (Wesseling 587: 5 - 588: 6) where the setting of Jacob's well allows the narrator not only to invoke the coming of the Israelites into their inheritance of the land (*Genesis* 33: 18-20 and *Joshua* 24: 32)<sup>25</sup> but also - through the tale of Jesus and the Samaritan woman - to suggest that that literal inheritance is superseded by the spiritual bequest brought by Jesus to Jews and non-Jews alike. In an analogous gesture to Elijah's at Sarepta, Jesus at the well at Sychar asks a woman for water:

"The Samaritan woman said to him, 'How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?' For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water'. The woman said to him, 'Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, and his sons, and his cattle?' Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life' (*John* 4: 9-14).

The woman, acknowledging Jesus as a prophet, queries whether God is to be worshipped - as the Samaritans do - on Mt. Gerizim or - as the Jews do - in Jerusalem. Jesus replies:

"Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father...the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth" (*John* 4: 21 and 23).

This desanctification of place, seemingly an example of that early Christian tendency so well described by W. D. Davies in his *The Gospel and the Land*<sup>26</sup>, seems to sit oddly in a text which overtly sacralises a Christian holy land. It is, however, important to recognise that the Bordeaux Pilgrim uses topographical description precisely as a means of transcending the Judaic conception of a

as a biography in 302 C.E.. Hierocles here contended that Apollonius was an excellent philosopher and exorcist and was in all ways far superior to Christ (see Frend, *The Rise of Christianity*: 497-498). John Elsner has examined the rôle of Apollonius of Tyana in pagan hagiography in a forthcoming paper ("Hagiographic Geography: Travel and Allegory in the *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*", *Journal of Hellenic Studies* CXVII. 1997).

<sup>25</sup> Interestingly, in the following section on Bethel the pilgrim claims that Jacob wrestled with the angel at Bethel whereas *Genesis* 32: 24-30 sites this struggle at Peniel. Wilkinson, in *Egeria's Travels* (155, n. 6), sees this confusion arising from the fact that Peniel may have been commemorated at Bethel in the fourth century, but it is also salient that at both sites Jacob was recognised as 'Israel' (*Genesis* 32: 28 and 35: 10).

<sup>26</sup> W. D. Davies, *The Gospel and the Land: Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974

physical inheritance and stressing the spiritual, and thus universal, character of the Christian 'homeland'. This shift is evidenced in the juxtapositioning of Joseph's bones, which lie in a tomb "in the parcel of the ground which his father gave him" (Wesseling 588: 1; see *Joshua* 24: 32), and Jesus's promise of 'a spring of water welling up to eternal life' which rests not on a site of land but in the souls of all those who believe. From this point on in the text the 'worldly kingdom' of the Old Testament is increasingly devalued while the despatialized domain of spiritual salvation is celebrated as the ultimate 'holy land'.

The pilgrim's presentation of Jerusalem interweaves the several themes discussed above to provide a tapestry densely illustrated with evocations of the collapse of the worldly kingdom of the Jews and its supersession by the spiritual empire of their Christian inheritors. The description of the pools of Bethsaida, which marks the pilgrim's entry into Jerusalem, is drawn from the chapter in *John* which directly follows the story of Jesus's encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well below Gerizim. Like that story, the narrative of Jesus's Sabbath healing without the use of water of the paralytic (*John* 5: 2-15) who had lain uncured next to the wonder-working pools for thirty-eight years serves simultaneously to abrogate Old Testament law and to demonstrate that the 'living water' of Jesus's word is more powerful than the life-giving water of the land. The remainder of *John* 5 distinguishes between the Jews, who sought to kill Jesus for breaking the sabbath and proclaiming himself equal with God (*John* 5: 16-18), and those who will, in believing the word of Jesus, pass "from death to life" (*John* 5: 24).

The narrative moves from the pools to the Temple Mount itself where it celebrates the wisdom and power of Solomon - the great kingdom builder of the Israelites - in noting the remains of his palace, his temple, and the great underground pools and cisterns he had constructed. At the same time, however, the text - by merging elements of the second and third temptations of Jesus relayed in *Matthew* 4: 5-10 - shows Jesus rejecting the promise of earthly power to which Solomon succumbed<sup>27</sup>. This is followed by the pilgrim's noting of "a great corner-stone, of which it was said, 'the stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner'" (Wesseling 590: 3-4; see *Psalms* 118: 22-23 and *Matthew* 22: 42). *Matthew* sets that psalmic phrase in a chapter in which Jesus demonstrates by a number of parables that the work of God is being taken from those originally assigned it and passed to a new people. In that chapter mention of the corner stone is followed by Jesus's statement - to the chief priests and the elders at the Temple - that "the kingdom

<sup>27</sup> The second temptation - in which the devil calls upon Jesus to throw himself from the pinnacle of the Temple so that the angels will prove his divinity by bearing him up - takes place where the *Itinerarium Burdigalense* sites the story, but the pilgrim adds to Christ's refusal a phrase - "and him only shall you serve" (*Matthew* 4: 10) - which associates the pilgrim's rendering of Jesus's temptation with Satan's offer - from the peak of a very high mountain - to give Jesus power over all the kingdoms of the world.

of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruits of it" (*Matthew* 22: 43). The *Itinerarium* then demonstrates that Solomon's Temple is ineradicably bloodstained "in front of the altar...[by] the blood of Zacharias" (Wesseling 591: 1-4). The reference invokes Jesus's condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees for killing those God sends to inform them of his will:

"I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar" (*Matthew* 24: 34-35; see also *Luke* 11: 49-52).

This passage, which the Oxford annotators note refers to "the sweep of time from the first to the last victim of murder mentioned in the Old Testament" (May and Metzger, 1203. n. 35), is followed in the New Testament text by Jesus's retraction of the divine dispensation from Israel: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you. How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! Behold, your house is forsaken and desolate" (*Matthew* 23: 37-38).

The *Itinerarium* then provides the demonstration offered by the Jesus quote in displaying the statues of the Temple's destroyers built over its ruins and the site of the scattered peoples' lamentations over the loss of their kingdom and their temple: "there are two statues of Hadrian, and not far from the statues a pierced stone to which the Jews come every year to anoint and lament over with sighs, tearing their clothes and then going away again" (Wesseling 591: 4-6). The contrast displayed by the pilgrim is not only that between the glory of the past and the desolation of the present - a contrast reiterated by the text's mention of Hezekiah who, in *Kings* 21: 16- 19, is told by Isaiah that the peace and security of his own days will be traded off against the absolute desolation of his house and his nation in the future - but also between the ruins of the Jewish Temple and the glory of the new Christian temple rising on a facing hill. This demonstration, overt but understated in the *Itinerarium Burdigalense*, is made more triumphantly and anti-semitically by St. Jerome, later in the century, in On Zephania I, 15-16:

"You can see with your own eyes on the day that Jerusalem was captured and destroyed by the Romans, a piteous crowd that comes together, webegone women and old men weighed down with rags and years, all of them showing forth in their clothes and their bodies the wrath of god. That mob of wretches congregates, and while the manger of the Lord sparkles, the Church of His Resurrection glows, and the banner of His Cross shines

forth from the Mount of Olives, those miserable people groan over the ruins of their Temple....<sup>28</sup>.

From the Temple Mount the pilgrim's text moves first to Sion and then across the city to Golgotha. Along this course it catalogues a number of monuments of the Old Dispensation, including Siloam - a pool of water which observes Judaic law by keeping the Sabbath, the remains of David's palace, and the "ploughed and sown" (*Isaiah* 1: 8) sites of six of the seven synagogues which had been built around that palace. It also locates the places at which a number of salient moments in the trial and execution of Jesus occurred - the ruins of the house of Caiphas and the Praetorium of Pilate, the column where Jesus was scourged, Golgotha, and the "vault, where they laid his body, and he rose again on the third day" (Wesseling 594: 1-2). .

This listing of ruined buildings and dead officials is followed by the siting of a death which became a new life. The site of Jesus's resurrection is as well the site of the 'resurrected' Temple which Eusebius, quoted above, referred to as the "new Jerusalem constructed over against the one so celebrated of old which... had experienced the last extremity of desolation, the effect of divine judgement upon its impious people". In effect the Bordeaux Pilgrim, having displayed the detritus of Israelite sacred and secular ambitions, celebrates the fact that God, through the offices of a 'new Solomon' - Constantine - has had himself built a new 'house of the Lord' in which he, having abandoned his former 'chosen people', will take up residence amongst those to whom his blessing has passed. Here are waters, not only "cisterns of remarkable beauty" paralleling those under Solomon's palace but as well "a bath where children are baptised" (Wesseling 594: 4)<sup>29</sup>..

Prior to this attention to the trial, execution and resurrection of Jesus, the sections of the text treating the Holy Land had predominantly focussed on Old Testament episodes concerning Israel's establishment and activities. From this point on the emphasis shifts to the coming of Jesus, the preaching of his message, and the dissemination of his word. Although, as in the earlier sections, there are interjections of material drawn from the other testament, in the latter part of the text (excluding the excursus on Jericho which will be discussed below) Old Testament figures are usually mentioned only to point to the tombs in which they were buried. Thus after leaving Jerusalem towards the east the pilgrim notes Gethsemene, the palm from which the branches were torn to welcome Jesus on Palm Sunday, the teaching on Öl»ona (and the basilica Constantine has built there), the transfiguration, and the raising of Lazarus as well as "two monuments, build with

<sup>28</sup> Quoted by F. E. Peters in *Jerusalem: the Holy City in the Eyes of Chroniclers, Visitors, Pilgrims and Prophets from the Days of Abraham to the Beginnings of Modern Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 144.

<sup>29</sup> See, on the Constantinian baptistry, Shimon Gibson and Joan Taylor, *Beneath the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Jerusalem: The Archaeology and Early History of Traditional Golgotha* (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1994), 77-78.

remarkable beauty by way of a memorial. In one is placed the prophet Isaiah - this one is in fact made from one stone - and in the other Hezekiah, king of the Jews” (Wesseling 595: 2-4).

Similarly, when the itinerary later moves south from Jerusalem through Behlehem to Hebron, it notes the site of Jesus’s birth and the aforementioned spring where Philip baptized the eunuch and lists the tombs of Rachel, Ezekiel, Asaph, Job, Jesse, David, Solomon, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca and Leah. The only mention of a living Old Testament figure in this final excursus is that of Abraham at Terebinth (Mamre) who “lived and dug a well under the terebinth tree and spoke and ate with the angels” (Wesseling 599: 3-5; see *Genesis* 18: 1-19). This episode marks the original choice by God of Abraham as the father of

“a great and mighty nation [by which] all the nations of the world shall bless themselves....I have chosen him, that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice; so that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he has promised him” (*Genesis* 18: 18-19).

It is followed in the *Itinerarium* by only two more notes before the text departs the Holy Land. The first is that, over the site where the original covenant was forged, the Christian emperor Constantine - reiterating the claim to the Israelite inheritance already noted in Jerusalem - has built “a basilica of remarkable beauty” (Wesseling 599: 5-6). The second, following immediately on that, is that in Hebron is “a remarkably beautiful tomb” (Wesseling 599: 7-9) containing the bodies of Abraham, his son, his grandson and the wives of all three.

The section of the *Itinerarium Burdigalense* pertaining to Jericho and its environs (Wesseling 596: 4 - 598: 3) contains a substantial number of Old Testament references - to Elisha’s spring (see above), to the house of the prostitute Rahab (Wesseling 597: 1; see *Joshua* 2: 1-21), to the site of the Jericho destroyed by the Israelites (Wesseling 597: 2-3; see *Joshua* 6), to the twelve stones marking the resting place of the Ark of the Covenant (Wesseling 597: 4-5; see *Joshua* 4), to the place where Joshua circumcised the children of Israel (Wesseling 597: 5-6; see *Joshua* 5: 2-9), and to the hillock from whence Elijah ascended into heaven (Wesseling 598: 3; see *2 Kings* 2) - of which all but one are enclosed within a framing pair of New Testament sitings - the first of the sycamore Zacchaeus, the tax collector, climbed to see Jesus (Wesseling 596: 5-6; see *Luke* 19: 1-10) and the latter of the river where John baptized Jesus (Wesseling 598: 1-2; see *Matthew* 3: 13-17). Also caught within the New Testament frame is a naturalistic description of the Dead Sea: “the waters of this sea are by far the bitterest of any. In them is no fish of any kind nor any ship, and if any man goes in to swim the water turns him upside down” (Wesseling 597: 7-10).

This juxtaposing of incidents drawn from the Israelites’ triumphal entry into the

promised land and from Jesus's procession towards the fulfillment of his mission in Jerusalem produces more than a simple parallelism when the reader links up the Old Testament figure of Rahab, the New Testament figure of Zacchaeus, and Jesus's admonition to the chief priests and elders at the Temple in *Matthew* 21 - "the tax collectors and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you" (*Matthew* 21: 31). Rahab the harlot was - alone of all the inhabitants of Canaanite Jericho - saved from death because, having recognised that the spies who approached her were doing God's will, she protected them from her own people. Analogously Zacchaeus, who had lived a life of sin, was offered salvation by Jesus solely because he recognised Jesus and answered to his call.

This emphasis on seeing and believing is further developed in *John* where Jesus, at the time of the Passover, re-enacts not only the feeding of the multitudes (see *John* 6: 5-13 and *Exodus* 16: 2-19) but as well the miraculous crossing of the waters (*John* 6: 16-21). Jesus, seeking to escape the crowds who - having participated in the miracle of loaves and fishes - had taken him for a worldly messiah and "were about to come and take him by force to make him king" (*John* 6: 15), walks across the Sea of Galilee and husbands his disciples over. On the following day he tells those who, having heard of the feast, sought him out:

"You seek me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not labour for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life....you have seen me and yet do not believe" (*John* 6: 26-27 and 36).

Jesus continues, later in the same chapter, to develop the distinction between that which sustains life in this world and that spiritual food which gives life unto eternity:

"I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat of eat and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever" (*John* 6: 49 and 51).

In imbricating the markers of the Israelites' crossing of the Jordan so as to effect their triumphal entry into the land with references alluding to Jesus's passage through the waters towards his fulfillment in Jerusalem, the *Itinerarium Burdigalense* poses the former as a sign or prefiguration of the latter. The Israelites, who ate manna in the wilderness, crossed over into the Promised Land and died, as the proliferation of their tombs in the following section demonstrates. Jesus passed over the waters of both the Galilee and death to be resurrected and to open a pathway for his disciples to follow into an eternal Promised Land.

The exegetical movement from the former to the latter is mirrored in the text's movement

from the site where Joshua initiated those Israelites born while the tribes wandered in the desert into the Mosaic Dispensation through the Dead Sea to the site on the Jordan River where Jesus was baptised. The Israelites lived, built a nation, and they and that nation died. The terminus of that process - marked by the tombs in the desert and a water in which nothing can live and which turns those who enter into it 'upside down' - is countered by a movement developing out of it and transcending it which is demonstrated by Jesus's baptism in the Jordan:

“when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased’” (*Matthew* 3: 16-17).

This vertical passage between heaven and earth, which subsumes and sublimates the earlier lateral passage between desert and promised land, is succeeded by the mention of the site “from whence Elijah was caught up into heaven” (Wesseling 598: 3 and see *2 Kings* 2: 4-15). The mention of this site - outside the above cited New Testament 'brackets' - reminds us that Elijah, alone amongst all of the 'dead Jews' mentioned in the *Itinerarium*, was taken up live into heaven from whence he later joins Moses to discuss with Jesus, immediately after the feeding of the five thousand, “his departure, which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem” (*Luke* 9: 30-31). The site also invokes the mantle which Elijah used there to part the waters and which Elisha, after his master's ascension, takes up and uses in the same manner to demonstrate that he has “inherited a double share of [Elisha's] spirit” (*2 Kings* 2: 9). Both invocations - of Mose's and Elijah's participation in Jesus's death and resurrection and of the mantle which bequeaths its owner's power to its inheritor - imply a relay wherein the work of redemption is passed on, after one labourer has completed his designated part, to another who 'takes up the mantle' of the divine mission. Elijah, whose efforts to return Israel to the worship of the divinity who had chosen its people to manifest his will on earth opens the text to the land on which that will was initially manifested, makes his departure from the land and the book by passing that mission on to a new prophet who carries that mission to a new Israel whose domain is no longer limned by the Dan and Beersheba but stretches horizontally to the limits of the world and temporally to eternity.

## **Conclusion.**

In attempting to recuperate the text of the Bordeaux Pilgrim, I have undoubtedly read much into it that is not overtly there. That, however, the biblical materials associated with the site references made by the *Itinerarium* cohere to make up a systematic and complex discourse on the

typological and historical relationships of the Old and New Testaments implies that the text itself might originally have functioned in a setting in which such scriptural supplementation would have been part of its audience's relation to its reading<sup>30</sup>. The text's stress on the life-giving qualities of water would suggest that this setting was likely to have been that in which catechumens were prepared for baptism into the Christian church.

Christianity, before it came to hegemonize religious expression in the Roman Empire, was shaped around its adherents' assertions that they had separated themselves from the profane world and joined with a new community ruled over by Christ rather than by the world's demonic powers. The literal movement of the Jews of the Babylonian exile out of the territory of their displacement and into the Promised Land was reiterated in place by early Christians through rituals which, reenacting the death and resurrection of Jesus, effected for those participating in them a death to this world and a resurrection into a new society (that of the sect) located within a new reality (heaven). Since there was a delay in the translocation insofar as the community of the saved was forced to reside until the Parousia in bodily form amidst the detritus of the fallen world, Christians until as late as the sixth century of the Christian Era clearly mapped for themselves the radical divide which separated them from the unredeemed amongst who they were forced to reside.

Baptism appears to have developed out of the *ℓbilab*, the standard Jewish purification ritual, which served amongst Jewish congregations to cleanse individuals of impurity so that they could engage in the religious rituals asserting their solidarity with the larger community of Jews<sup>31</sup>. The rise of the Pharisees in the second century BCE led to the redefinition of the *ℓbilab* as a ritual which marked the borders between a community which perpetually observes the commands of the *Torah* and an 'outside' caught up in the defilement of political compromise and Hellenistic syncretisms<sup>32</sup>. Although ritual immersion here served to purify those who wished to maintain communion with an elect whose ritual purity was essential, purity was always tenuous and ritual

<sup>30</sup> E. C. Ratcliffe notes about a reference to pre-baptismal anointing in the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, a mid third century manual of pastoral guidance, that "the Didascaliast...expect[s] his readers to recall those passages of the Old Testament in which the spiritual effect of the anointing is described" (E. C. Ratcliff. "The Old Syrian Baptismal Tradition and its Resettlement under the Influence of Jerusalem in the Fourth Century" in *Studies in Church History: Papers read at the second Winter and Summer meetings of the Ecclesiastical History Society*. second edition. ed. G. J. Cuming [London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd. 1965], 26). Although this does not explicitly confirm a general biblical literacy amongst early Christians catechumens it does suggest that initiands in training for baptism would have had at hand a panoply of biblical materials pertinent to the process.

<sup>31</sup> See *Leviticus* 14–15 and *Numbers* 19.

<sup>32</sup> See Jacob Neusner, *A History of the Mishnaic Law of Purities* [Leiden: Brill 1977] and *The Idea of Purity in Ancient Judaism* [Leiden: Brill 1973].



purification had continually to be enacted:

“Among the Pharisees there is implied...no permanent transition from the impure world into the pure community. The line between is constantly in flux; purity must be continually reestablished in response to voluntary or involuntary actions of the member of the sect, or to accidents that befall him. Thus the boundary between the sect and the world is wavering and porous, and the Pharisee does not, accordingly, represent his sect as the only ‘real’ Israel, nor does the immersion in the *mikveh* (immersion pool) become an initiation”<sup>33</sup>.

In Christianity, on the other hand, baptism effected a permanent divide between distinct communities, even realities, and the rite itself was thus an irreversible initiation:

“the fact that [for early Christians] a water bath serves not just as a preparatory rite, as in most contemporary initiation, but as the central act of the whole ceremony vividly portrays life prior to the event - and outside the sect - as unclean....[T]he whole ritual represents a dying and rising with Christ. It entails dying with respect to the structures and powers of the world (see *Colossians* 2:20), ‘taking off’ the ‘old human’ with his vices and his divisions and entanglements, and putting on a new life in Christ, the ‘new human’, distinguished by the unity of a new family of brothers and sisters, children of God. Clearly, then, baptism is a boundary establishing ritual”<sup>34</sup>.

Christians occupied a different world than those they lived amongst, and even though they were forced - like the Jews of the Babylonian exile - to reside in that other world their expectations and their identities focussed on the community they engaged in their rituals and through their meditations on the revelations and the *Parousia*.

This mapping is evident in the text of the Bordeaux Pilgrim not only in the way the wasteland of illusion and deception stretching beyond the borders of the project of Christian missionisation is distinguished from the spiritual fertility of a terrain constituted out of the biblical word but also in the way that, within that textual terrain, the life of the Christian ‘new world’ is

<sup>33</sup> Wayne Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: the Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press. 1983), 153.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 102. E. C. Whitaker argues convincingly that in Syrian Christianity up through the fourth century there was no confirmation and that the pre-baptismal anointing with oil noted in descriptions of baptism such as that of the *Didache* “was an exorcism” serving only to formalize the completion of a process of separation from worldly powers which had already reached its end (E. C. Whitaker, 1981. *The Baptismal Liturgy*. [London: S.P.C.K., 1981], xx). Post-baptismal confirmation accompanied by an anointing with oil was an innovation of the Western provinces of the Empire and of centres of imperial innovation such as Jerusalem and it would only later (and partially) be integrated into Syrian practices as “an adventitious and optional addition” (*Ibid.*, xxi). For the Syrian church “the water is sufficient both for the anointing, and for the seal, and for the confession of him that is dead, or indeed is dying together with [Christ]” (the *Apostolic Constitutions*, ca. 375, quoted in *Ibid.*, 32) and the new members of the community proceeded directly from baptism to taking the Eucharist.

separated from the dead 'old world' of the Jews. St. Ambrose, describing baptism in the late fourth century in his *De Sacramentis*, would thus inquire:

“What was of greater importance than the crossing of the sea by the Jewish people? Yet the Jews who crossed over are all dead in the desert. But, on the contrary, he who passes through this fountain, that is to say, from earthly things to heavenly - which is indeed the *transitus*, that is to say, the Passover, the passing over from sin to life - he who passes through this fountain will not die, but rise again”<sup>35</sup>.

That the rituals of baptism and the text of the *Itinerarium* are both organised around reiteration of the radical divide between the worldly and the other worldly leads me to posit that the former provides a context for the latter and that, in that context, the alleged pilgrim's text was used as an *aide-memoire* during the preparation of catechumens for baptism. The text refers, in the mnemonic form of a journey, to those portions of the Old and New Testaments which describe - literally or allegorically - the coming of the chosen of God into the promised land. In the text, however, the 'promised land' is only synonymous with the territory of biblical Israel for the Jews, and their final inheritance is clearly shown to be no more than a series of tombs in the desert. For the Christians, who are presented by the text as inheriting - by relay - the sobriquet 'chosen people', the promised land is elsewhere; the *Itinerarium's* message, reiterated throughout, is that the kingdom of the Christians is a spiritual kingdom to which they owe allegiance even while living expatriate lives in this world. This argument is made explicitly by Jesus in his well-side discourse with the Samaritan woman and is, I would contend, recognisable in the pilgrim's reduction of the central Constantinian basilica to little more than the setting for a baptismal font which is, in effect, a doorway to Paradise. That font - like the baptism sites of Cornelius, the Ethiopian eunuch, and Jesus referred to in the text - draws together and fulfills the references to life-giving waters proliferating throughout the text<sup>36</sup>.

<sup>35</sup> St. Ambrose, *De Sacramentis* I.12, quoted in Jean Danielou, *The Bible and the Liturgy* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press. 1956).

<sup>36</sup> Tertullian, prior to his conversion to Montanism ca. 195 CE, carried out an extended examination of the sacred and profane uses of water in his *De Baptismo* (chapters three through five). Here he rhetorically queries “What of the fact that waters were in some way the regulating powers by which the disposition of the world thenceforward was constituted by God? For the suspension of the celestial firmament in the midst He caused by 'dividing the waters'; the suspension of 'the dry land' He accomplished by 'separating the waters'. After the world had been hereupon set in order through its elements, when inhabitants were given it, 'the waters' were the first to receive the precept 'to bring forth living creatures'. Water was the first to produce that which had life, that it might be no wonder in baptism if waters know how to give life....It makes no difference whether a man be washed in a sea or a pool, a stream or a fount, a lake or a trough; nor is there any distinction between those whom John baptized in the Jordan and those whom Peter baptized in the Tiber, unless withal the eunuch whom Philip baptized in the midst of his journeys with chance water, derived (therefrom) more or less of salvation than others. All

The series of interwoven references to the opposition of the worldly to the heavenly and of the real Chosen People to predecessors who inherited a barren desert because they mistook the world for the heavens appears, once its pattern is discerned, to provide the actual warp and weft of the *Itinerarium*. Discerning that structure and the principles informing it would not have been as difficult for catechumens during the month and a half of rigorous, all day catechetical instruction they went through during preparations for baptism<sup>37</sup> as it is for contemporary readers who neither read the text under instruction nor live in a thought world like that of the early Christians. Baptism was the same transit as that mapped by the *Itinerarium* and the neophytes may well have been familiarized with the terrain of the spiritual voyage they were about to make by a textual journey which carried them through a sequence of references rather than through a series of sites. It is not accidental that what would later become the Holy Land provided the frame for the terrain they would travel; the land encompassed within its borders all of the *loci* around which the biblical narratives unwound themselves. As with a biblical onomasticon, however, the container was insignificant; it was the biblical texts, and their exegeses and interconnections, which provided the grounds upon which the narrative found its footing and through which its audience wandered as spiritual pilgrims.

-- Canterbury, 21 April 1997

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waters, therefore, in virtue of the pristine privilege of their origin, do, after invocation of God, attain the sacramental power of sanctification; for the Spirit immediately supervenes from the heavens, and rests over the waters, sanctifying them from Himself; and being thus sanctified, they imbibe at the same time the power of sanctifying" (Tertullian, *De Baptismo*, chapter 4 quoted in *Tertullian's Homily on Baptism*, ed. Ernest Evans [London: SPCK, 1964]).

<sup>37</sup> "Through Lent, candidates were disciplined with daily exorcisms and fasting. Concurrently they were catechized, that is, schooled in the behaviours and thoughts appropriate to Christians. The arduous mental and physical disciplining of the initiates was not usually an individual or private affair....Social patterns were disrupted – old habits were displaced by the new regimen, old acquaintances supplanted by new ones. Social intercourse was removed from the conventional sites of civic life – the bath, the forum, the theater [–] and recentered on the church" (Annabel Wharton, *Refiguring the Post-Classical City: Dura Europos, Jerash, Jerusalem and Ravenna*. [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1995], 80. Wharton assumes that – at least by the fourth century – the period of pre-baptismal instruction was contemporaneous with Lent. However, in Hippolytus's *Apostolic Tradition* (ca. 215 C.E.), the author writes "let a catechumen be instructed for three years" (Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition* XVII.1, quoted in Whitaker, *op. cit.*, 3). Philip's instruction of the Ethiopian eunuch, which can be seen as a prototypical catechesis, appears nonetheless to have taken place in the course of a single afternoon's conversation ( *Acts* 8: 30–35).

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