

The *Visitatio Sepulchri* in the Latin Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem

IRIS SHAGRIR

ABSTRACT *The presentation of the Visitatio Sepulchri scene by the Augustinian canons of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre brought it, for the first time, to its original locus. The popular ritual re-enacts the dialogue between the women and the angel/s at the empty tomb, and the annunciation of the resurrection of Christ. The Jerusalem ritual was modelled upon the Western European dramatic ritual, but its presentation in Anastasis in Jerusalem, on Easter morning, was not a straightforward act of relocating Western liturgy into the recently recovered Catholic centre in the east. Based on a study of a liturgical manuscript from the Holy Sepulchre, the paper examines the ways this and other rituals employ the space of the newly built Crusader church, and the ways in which the Frankish liturgy interacts with the composite audience of 12th-century Jerusalem.*

Keywords: *Quem Quaeritis*; Crusades; Liturgy; Dramatic liturgy; *Visitatio Sepulchri*; Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem; Church of the Holy Sepulchre

Holy Week commemorates the last days of Christ's earthly presence, from his entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday to his crucifixion and resurrection. The ritual ceremonies celebrated during this week form a central sequence in the Christian liturgy. In Jerusalem, these ceremonies are celebrated not only at the same time of the year, but also in the very places where the events of Christ's passion originally took place. The exciting conjunction of time and place has been extolled by pilgrims to Jerusalem ever since Egeria's travelogue of the fourth century, and was aptly summarised by Jonathan Z. Smith: "In Jerusalem story, ritual and place could be one".¹

This article will examine the resurrection ceremony as it was celebrated in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem after the city was established as the capital of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, following the conquest by the crusaders on 15 July 1099 – the triumphal culmination of the First Crusade. Once the city was in Christian hands again, the church became the seat of the Catholic patriarchate, and the site of a community whose canons celebrated the Catholic

Correspondence: Iris Shagrir, Department of History, Philosophy and Judaic Studies, The Open University of Israel, 1 University Road, POB 808, Ra'anana 43107, Israel. E-mail: irissh@openu.ac.il

¹ Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 86.

services for the residents of Jerusalem in the twelfth century. This population included the Frankish royal dynasty,² citizens, crusaders, pilgrims and various visitors to the city. The church, the regular community and the patriarchal seat formed the religious heart of both the city and the kingdom. This article will focus especially on the *Visitatio Sepulchri* scene, as it was performed in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre during the twelfth century, and will analyse the various aspects of the ceremony: liturgy, sequence, celebrants, space and audience.

This study is based on an examination of the liturgical manuscript known as the Breviary of Barletta, or the Ritual of the Holy Sepulchre, which describes the rites celebrated in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the twelfth century by its conventual community.

The manuscript: the Breviary of the Holy Sepulchre and its importance

The Breviary of Barletta is a manuscript of great significance. It was produced for the use of the canons of the Holy Sepulchre in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and contains mainly the daily and yearly ritual cycles of the church.

The manuscript has been kept since the thirteenth century in the cathedral of Santo Sepolcro di Barletta, Apulia, in southern Italy.³ It is a single manuscript, a *unicum* with no copies, bound within a seventeenth-century binding. The codex is relatively large, of over 250 folios, with its Latin text appearing either in a single column or in two columns; many folios contain musical notation.⁴ Most of the folios are legible, but a few are damaged beyond legibility.

The codex does not have a title; Charles Kohler, when he edited a large part of it in 1901, titled it a ritual or a breviary, because most folios contain rubrics and texts detailing in an abbreviated or full-length form the canonical hours and festive and other special ceremonies of the church.⁵ It also contains parts of different works, liturgical and non-liturgical, but most of it consists of two distinct breviaries of the

²When referring to king Baldwin I's presence in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on Easter 1103, just before launching his campaign on Acre, Fulcher of Chartres wrote: "*Anno 1103 tempore veris, cum Pascha ex more in Jerusalem celebrassemus*". Fulcher of Chartres, *Historia Hierosolymitana*, ed. H. Hagenmeyer (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Verlag, 1913), book 2, ch. 22.1, p. 456.

³The Breviary was probably brought to Barletta via Cyprus after 1291. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre of Barletta was established in the first half of the twelfth century; see C. Enlart, "L'église des chanoines di Saint-Sépulcher à Barletta en Pouille", *Revue de l'Orient Latin* 1 (1893): 556–566. After its arrival in Barletta, a few additions to the manuscript were made, like the addition to the calendar of the obituary of Raoul of Granville, titular patriarch of Jerusalem, who died in 1304, and a Bull of Pope Honorius III.

⁴In a single column: folios 1–34; 152–254. In two 36-line columns: folios 35–151. Musical notation appears especially between folios 150–203.

⁵Ch. Kohler, "Un rituel et un bréviare du Saint-Sépulchre de Jérusalem (XIII–XIII siècle)", *Revue de l'Orient Latin* 8 (1900–1901): 383–469 = Ch. Kohler, "Un rituel et un bréviare du Saint-Sépulchre de Jérusalem (12e–13e siècle)", *Mélanges pour servir à l'histoire de l'Orient Latin et des Croisades* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1906), pp. 286–403. Kohler was perhaps not sure what was the most appropriate title for the book, and in addition to "ritual" and "breviary" he also suggested a "directorium". Dondi contends that the text should be more precisely described as an ordinal; C. Dondi, *The Liturgy of the Canons Regular of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem: A Study and a Catalogue of the Manuscript Sources* [Bibliotheca Victorina, volume XVI] (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), p. 75. It has also been entitled a "rubrical manual". As mentioned above, the codex contains parts of liturgical and non-liturgical works and lacks an original title, but its main part begins with the words "*Incipit breviarium adabbreviatum*" (fol. 25r col.a).

Holy Sepulchre. The sentence “*Incipit breviarium adabbreviatum*” appears twice, on folios 25a and 33a. Thus, the larger part of the manuscript presents the liturgical order of festivities celebrated by the Augustinian canons of the Holy Sepulchre, including the various services and duties of the Latin patriarch of Jerusalem and his *familia* vis-à-vis the Christian community of Crusader Jerusalem.

The codex has been partially published three times: first in Naples in 1828 by Giuseppe-Maria Giovene, then by Charles Kohler in 1901 and 1906, and a dependent publication was produced in the journal of the Order of the Carmelites by Gabriel Wessels, who considers its liturgy a descendant of the liturgy of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.⁶

The Breviary undoubtedly reflects the practices of the twelfth-century Church of the Holy Sepulchre. This is evident from the references in the text to people such as Patriarchs Arnulf (1112–1118), William I of Malines (1130–1145), Fulcher (1146–1157)⁷ and to known priors of other Latin houses in Jerusalem. Also mentioned is the relic of the True Cross that the Franks lost in the Battle of Hattin in 1187. The Breviary may have also been in use in 1229–1244, when the Latins regained control of Jerusalem by agreement between the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II Hohenstaufen, and the Egyptian Sultan al-Kāmil.

The time of its compilation has been debated. The codex contains a chronicle of crusader events, written in the old annals form, which ends in 1202, and later additions.⁸ Charles Kohler has argued that it is a copy of one or several twelfth-century manuscripts, put together between 1230 and 1244. Cristina Dondi compiled a catalogue of the Jerusalem liturgical manuscripts, and dated it between 1202 and 1228.⁹ It seems safe to assume that it is a thirteenth-century copy of twelfth-century manuscripts, and that it reflects the rituals and ceremonies of the twelfth-century up to 1187 and perhaps of the years 1229 to 1244.

The Breviary has not been studied in detail so far. It provides significant and unique information about the liturgical cycle of the church, the celebration of

⁶ Giuseppe-Maria Giovene, *Kalendaria vetera mss. aliaque monumenta ecclesiarum Apuliae et Iapygiae* (Naples: Ex Typographia vid. Realiset Filior, 1828), pp. 7–68. Giovene (1753–1837) was an archpriest (*arciprete*) in the cathedral of Molfetta and a member of the Accademia Nazionale delle Scienze. He published excerpts from several liturgical calendars from Apulia of the eleventh to the sixteenth centuries, as well as agronomic studies. His analysis of the text is contained in the footnotes. Kohler (“Un rituel et un bréviare”) redacted a scholarly apparatus concerning the history and significance of the manuscript, which he edited based on reviewing the manuscript in Barletta and on Giovene’s edition. Both these editions contain errors and many lacunae. G. Wessels, “Excerpta historiae ordinis. Ritus ordinis B.V. Mariae de Monte Carmelo: Antiquus ritus de Monte Carmelo”, *Analecta Ordinis Carmelitarum*, 1 (1901): 95–381. Excerpts were also printed, with an Italian translation by Sabino de Sandoli, *Itinera Hierosolymitana Crucesignatorum*, volume IV, *Tempore Regni Latini Extremo: 1245–1291* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1984).

⁷ E.g. “*Ego Willelmus dei gratia Ierusalem patriarcha, atque Petrus dominici sepulchri prior*” fol. 138r col.a; “*Secundum novam institutionem Fulcherii patriarche*”, 98r col.a.

⁸ On fol. 25r begins a fragment of the ritual written in two columns which continues up to fol. 32v, where a crusader chronicle begins. This fragment of 15 folios contains extensive excerpts from Ivo of Chartres’ canonical work *Panormia*, written in eight books in the last decade of the eleventh century or the first decade of the twelfth. The longer ritual, also in two columns, begins on fol. 33r. On fol. 140r the text appears in one column. On fol. 140r col.1, towards the bottom, and continuing on 140v ff., the hand seems to change. Other fragments and later additions are contained in the codex, such as the coronation oath of Hugh I of Jerusalem (Hugh III of Cyprus), taken at Nicosia in 1269, and a bull of Pope Honorius III (1216–1227) to the clergy of southern Italy.

⁹ Dondi, *Liturgy*, 78.

general Christian feasts and the specific Jerusalem feasts, the weekly hours, saints' days, care of the sick and dying, matrimonial ceremonies and more. Since many feasts, especially the greater feast days, were celebrated in cooperation with other churches of the city and included outdoor processions, the Breviary in fact reflects the rituals of other religious houses of Jerusalem, as well as an aspect of the public religious life of the city. Moreover, the text reflects a phase in the construction of a Latin religious tradition in the crusader era, and frames the role of the Church and its personnel within the city's religious sphere. Assuming that the liturgical text may not only shape the religious experience of the faithful, but may indirectly express it, one can look in it for what the common people saw and felt in church. The manuscript, then, is infused with church atmosphere, and impresses upon the modern reader the unique nature of the Jerusalem community.

The finding of Christ's empty tomb is the liturgical climax of the Easter ceremony. This liturgical moment contains, according to the Breviary of Barletta, the dramatisation of the scriptural scene of the women visiting the tomb of Christ at the dawn of Sunday following Christ's crucifixion. In what follows, I will ask whether and how the *Visitatio Sepulchri* scene was performed in Jerusalem. Unlike previous scholars, who have concluded that the canons of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre skipped this ceremony due to the crowdedness of the church at Easter, my first contention will be that it is likely that the ceremony was performed in Jerusalem according to the basic Western European model. Nonetheless, I believe that the way the ceremony is described in the Breviary suggests some hesitancy concerning the performance. I link this hesitancy, or deliberation, to my second contention, that the Catholic liturgical rituals in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre evolved in the twelfth century through encountering issues arising from its unique space, which had been deliberately created by the Latin settlers, and its unique audience. Thus, I believe that the manuscript reflects the adjustment of the celebration of a Western Latin rite to a space consecrated by time-honoured local tradition, and in front of a varied audience of non-Catholic and even non-Christian denominations. All this is related to a more general question concerning the construction of ritual by the Latins in their new capital and to how sensitive they were to its unique character.

The liturgy of the crusader Church of the Holy Sepulchre

The liturgy of the Latin Church of the Holy Sepulchre originated with the rites and ceremonies celebrated by the European Catholics who came to Jerusalem with the first Crusade, and with subsequent waves of Crusades and immigration in the twelfth-century. The redemption of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre from the yoke of the infidels had been the crusaders' goal since they left Europe in 1096, and its appropriation began immediately after they took the city on 15 July 1099. With the conquest, the Latins began substituting Greek Orthodox and other local rites for the Latin rite in the churches of Palestine, just as they replaced most of the ecclesiastical administration in the conquered areas.¹⁰ Their initial liturgy was Franco-Roman, owing to the fact that the first books in use were those carried to

¹⁰ For the establishment and structure of the Frankish church, see Bernard Hamilton, *The Latin Church in the Crusader States: The Secular Church* (London: Variorum, 1980).

Jerusalem by crusaders from different regions of Europe and that survived the journey; none of these early books survives today. Following the initial settlement, a process of creating a liturgy particular to the city and the church took place.¹¹

The early manuscripts from Jerusalem show that the crusader liturgy was unique and different from any single contemporary model in Europe.¹² This is not surprising, since regional diversity was typical of liturgical practice in general. The question to be asked is in what way was the Jerusalem ritual distinctive, and how may its uniqueness be reasoned within the context of the Latin presence in Jerusalem? As pointed out in studies of ritual theory, ritual and liturgical texts were constructed in relation to concepts and perceptions of reality, and reality provides meaning to these ceremonies.¹³ The text is therefore not read only for the details of the celebrations and rituals, but also for the celebrants' handling of the political or cultural circumstances, and of their specific space and audience. If liturgy is perceived as dynamic and relational, my question here is how the Breviary of the Holy Sepulchre reflects the religious mood in Frankish Jerusalem.

The Jerusalem Latin liturgy, then, was partly a new creation. It was inspired by familiar rituals from the European homelands, as well as by the need to create a liturgy that would represent the Franks' status as sovereigns in the recently recovered holy centre. This meant replacing the pre-conquest non-Catholic local liturgies with a new tradition; some of the new books were therefore probably produced at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.¹⁴ The new liturgy was not an instantaneous production, but one that evolved gradually after the settlement; a decisive moment was in 1114, when the canons of the Holy Sepulchre adopted regular life according to the Rule of St Augustine,¹⁵ but adjustments and modifications were also introduced later, in the context of changes in the architecture of the church, changes in ecclesiastical personnel and royal preferences.

During Holy Week, pilgrims from all over the Christian world have come to Jerusalem, from early Christian times throughout the Middle Ages and down to modern times. During the century of Frankish rule in Jerusalem, travelling to the holy city and staying in it was safer than before, and the attendance at ceremonies, processions and celebrations undoubtedly increased. The pilgrims often took an active part in the performance of rites, as is evident also from the Breviary of Barletta. Apart from the resident Franks and the pilgrims, the audience at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre also included non-Catholics, especially on major feast days. Evidence on ritual cooperation between Latin and non-Latin Christians in Jerusalem exists from the early days of the Latins in Jerusalem. For example, the anonymous author of the *Gesta Francorum* reports that in August 1099 Peter the Hermit organised a procession in support of the crusader armies, which included

¹¹ For a survey of the sources of Latin liturgy in Jerusalem, see Dondi, *Liturgy*.

¹² Dondi, *Liturgy*, 44–45.

¹³ The starting point is obviously C. Geertz's "Religion as a Cultural System", in *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*, ed. Michael Banton (London: Tavistock, 1966), pp. 1–46. See also Catherine Bell, "Constructing Ritual", in *Readings in Ritual Studies*, ed. Ronald L. Grimes (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1996), pp. 21–33.

¹⁴ Dondi, *Liturgy*, 45–46, Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 66–67, J. Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098–1187* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 101–105.

¹⁵ H. Mayer, "Latins, Muslims and Greeks in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem", *History*, 63 (1978): 175–192.

Greeks and Latins, both lay and ecclesiastics. Fulcher of Chartres also reports shared processions and prayers in early twelfth-century Jerusalem, with Latins, Greeks and Syrians participating.¹⁶ These processions had both a religious and a civic character, and they were often held in the open public space with the Catholics as the new leaders of the multi-Christian community. The enterprise of shared ecclesiastical and civic liturgy is unique in the contemporary Christian world. It may have resulted simply from the shortage of people in Jerusalem, but it may also represent a sense of Christian triumph and togetherness. The liturgy of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre may be seen as adhering to this model.

The *Visitatio Sepulchri* ritual

According to the Breviary of Barletta, the Easter morning celebration in the Holy Sepulchre includes, like that in most churches of Western Europe in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, a short and exciting ceremony known as the *Visitatio Sepulchri*, which commemorates the visit of the women to Christ's tomb, and the announcement of Christ's resurrection.

The *Visitatio Sepulchri* ceremony apparently evolved from a trope known in the history of liturgy as the *Quem Quaeritis* trope, which takes its name from the first question addressed by the angel guarding the empty tomb to the women who come to visit the buried Christ.¹⁷ The trope and the play are a non-literal rendering of the gospel scenes telling of the finding of the empty tomb by the women bringing the spices, inaccurately known as "the three Marys":¹⁸

¹⁶ Anonymous, *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum*, ed. H. Hagenmeyer (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1890), ch. 39,9, pp. 488–489; Fulcher of Chartres, *Historia Hierosolymitana*, book 2, ch. 3.13 (year 1100); book 3, ch. 18.2 (year 1123).

¹⁷ The question "*Quem quaeritis?*" appears in the gospels twice, on both occasions asked by Christ. John 18:4–5: "Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, 'For whom are you looking?' They answered, 'Jesus of Nazareth.'"; John 18:8: "Again he asked them, 'For whom are you looking?' And they said, 'Jesus of Nazareth.'" When Mary Magdalene stands weeping at the tomb, Jesus asks her: "Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?" (John 20:15). New Testament citations in English are from the New Revised Standard Version.

¹⁸ The "three Marys" or "three women" are expressions that disguise the incompatibility of the gospel versions regarding the identity of the women who found the empty tomb. The four gospels agree that Mary Magdalene was one of them. According to Matthew (28:1), another Mary accompanied her, and Mark (16:1) adds Salome to Mary Magdalene and Mary mother of James. According to Luke (24:10), it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary mother of James, and other women, and in John (20:1), Mary Magdalene came by herself. On Catholic attempts to harmonise the versions and their influence on liturgy, see M. Bradford Bedingfield, *The Dramatic Liturgy of Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 2002), p. 160. In early Christian literature the women were ascribed greater power than they had in the New Testament books. This is especially true for the three Marys (mother of Jesus, his sister Mary from Joseph's first marriage, and Mary Magdalene, his close companion), who in the apocryphal literature exhibit a special spiritual prowess and are credited with authority equal to that of the male apostles. In this context, the special status of Mary Magdalene is underlined in the second-century apocryphal Gospel of Mary [Magdalene] found in the Nag Hammadi library, where she appears as possessing unique knowledge not possessed by the male apostles; see E. Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), esp. pp. 304–308; B. Witherington, *Women in the Ministry of Jesus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). Also note that, according to the gospels, the Virgin Mary was not one of the women at the tomb, but she nevertheless sometimes appeared in the *Visitatio Sepulchri* play. And in some apocryphal books, especially the *Life of the Virgin*, Jesus' mother was the first and only witness to his resurrection.

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him". (Mark 16:1–6)¹⁹

According to the scripture, the scene took place early on Sunday morning near the tomb of Christ. The trope usually opens with the question of the angel: "Whom do you seek?" The women reply: "Jesus of Nazareth". Then the angel/s say/s: "He is not here, he has risen". This is the very basic outline of the trope. Many versions from across medieval Western Europe are known, some of them containing additional expressions such as "come and see" or "go and spread the news".

The *Quem Quaeritis* trope is one of the most important tropes added to the Catholic liturgy in the Carolingian Renaissance. Earlier, in the relative liturgical freedom of the Merovingian period, bishops and priests could compose tropes and prayers and attach them to the standard liturgy; but a veritable outburst of liturgical creativity took place in the eighth and ninth centuries, an important aspect of Carolingian innovativeness in a formative period in the history of the Western rite. The *Quem Quaeritis* appeared in the early tenth century and won immediate popularity. It spread fast and wide. Towards the end of the tenth century the *Quem Quaeritis* trope formed part of the liturgy of numerous churches in Western Europe, and its versions vary greatly. Some are quite thin, and others more elaborate. It is possible that it was the very brevity of the trope that accorded it its exceptional potential and popularity, since in this period, when liturgy was celebrated in a language not spoken by the laity, it was an easy-to-follow musical dialogue. The trope thus was based on an existing element in the Easter liturgy, and elaborated it in both words and melody. Tropes of this type could be integrated into the liturgical sequence, with the purpose of embellishing the text and intensifying the spiritual experience of those present in church.²⁰

The earliest text of the *Quem Quaeritis* trope is found in a manuscript from the monastery of St Martial in Limoges, dated between 923 and 934. Karl Young, a

(footnote continued)

See S.J. Shoemaker, "The Virgin Mary in the ministry of Jesus and the early Church according to the earliest *Life of the Virgin*", *Harvard Theological Review*, 98 (2005): 441–467, at 451–452.

¹⁹ Latin version: "Et cum transisset sabbatum Maria Magdalene et Maria Iacobi et Salome emerunt aromata ut venientes unguerent eum; Et dicebant ad invicem quis revolvat nobis lapidem ab ostio monumenti; Et respicientes vident revolutum lapidem erat quippe magnus valde; Et introeuntes in monumento viderunt iuvenem sedentem in dextris coopertum stola candida et obstipuerunt; Qui dicit illis nolite expavescere Iesum quaeritis Nazarenum crucifixum surrexit non est hic, ecce locus ubi posuerunt eum."

²⁰ The literature about the *Quem Quaeritis* and the *Visitatio Sepulchri* is vast. See especially Karl Young, *The Drama of the Medieval Church*, volumes I–II (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967 [1933]); Walther Lipphardt, *Lateinische Osterfeiern und Osterspiele*, volumes I–VI (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1975–1981), esp. VI; Susan Rankin, "Liturgical Drama", in *The New Oxford History of Music*, ed. R. Crocker and D. Hiley, volumes I–X (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), II: 310–356.

pioneer scholar of medieval drama, has argued that, although this manuscript is chronologically the earliest, it does not represent the earliest version of the trope. Young argues that a slightly later version (also from the tenth century), from a manuscript ascribed to Tutilo, a monk and trope writer from St Gall, represents the now-lost original version.²¹ The trope was thus composed in the late Carolingian era on the basis of the scriptures and the Latin liturgy.²² In the tenth century the trope was sung in dialogue form by two parts of the choir or by the cantor and choir.

At the end of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh century, the trope began to appear in liturgical texts accompanied by rubrics, which served to guide the celebrants (i.e. the clerics) as to where to stand, when to raise their voices, what to wear and so forth. The first version, which contains a full rubric guiding the performance of a dramatic play rather than a trope, appeared in an early eleventh-century manuscript of *Regularis Concordia* composed by Saint Æthelwald, Bishop of Winchester.²³ From this stage onwards it is common to speak not of a trope but of a play, known as the *Visitatio Sepulchri*. It became one of beloved plays of the Catholic Church up to the Reformation, and, judging by the large number of versions that survived, it gave great pleasure to the faithful who crowded the churches on Easter day. The performance of the trope as a dramatic play should be seen as a meaningful change in religious mentality, as it may reflect a desire to impress upon the community an emotional experience, and to reinforce the theological idea of resurrection in an immediate and bonding manner at a climactic moment of the liturgical cycle. It is interesting to note that all the early transformations from standard liturgy to a liturgical dramatic performance occurred in the Easter cycle, when the events of the last week of Jesus' life are narrated.²⁴

The *Visitatio Sepulchri* scene appears in over 400 texts from the Middle Ages, and the rite is placed at various points along the ritual sequence. Its history may be summarised thus: before becoming a play, the trope might appear at the opening of the Easter Mass, or as part of the Matins (i.e. at an earlier hour). When it was included in Matins, it might be positioned at the beginning of the service or towards its end, just before the chant of *Tè Deum Laudamus*. In the *Regularis Concordia*, where the text first appeared with staging directions, it was performed at the end of Matins. It is probable that this position, at the end of the service, allowed the trope to grow into a performance.²⁵ This is also where it was positioned in the liturgy of

²¹ Young, *Drama*, I: 201ff.

²² Especially the antiphons of the Easter season and the offertory of Easter Monday, but these texts were not the literal basis for the trope.

²³ The text was composed by Æthelwald in 965–975, and the earliest existing manuscripts date from the early eleventh century. See Th. Symons, *Regularis Concordia*, London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1953; Young, *Drama*, I: 249. On the differences between the tenth-century manuscript and the eleventh-century copy, see M. Kobialka, "Staging Place/Space in the Eleventh-Century Monastic Practices", in *Medieval Practices of Space*, ed. Barbara A. Hanawalt and Michal Kobialka (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), pp. 128–148. The view that the Easter liturgy of the *Regularis Concordia* is the cornerstone of medieval drama has been contested by C. Symes, who argues that the *Regularis Concordia* version does not represent the beginning of a dramatic tradition but rather a reaction against a current, overly-dynamic dramatic praxis. See Carol Symes, "Toward a new history of medieval theatre: assessing the written and unwritten evidence for indigenous performance practices", paper read at Société Internationale pour l'Étude du Théâtre Médiéval XIIe Congrès, Lille, 2–7 juillet 2007, <http://sitm2007.vjf.cnrs.fr/pdf/s10-symes.pdf>, p. 6.

²⁴ On the process see Karl Young, "The origin of the Easter play", *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* (PMLA), 29 (1914): 1–58.

²⁵ Young, *Drama*, I: 231–236.

the crusader Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The performance that evolved from the trope had several versions, differing from one another in the complexity of the scenes and number of participants. The leanest version included the Marys and the angel/s. More elaborate presentations might include Peter and Paul, the resurrected Christ, and other additions and novelties. In the later Middle Ages, the Marys might be represented by nuns rather than monks.²⁶

Joseph Klapper, a historian writing in Breslau (Wroclaw) at the beginning of the twentieth century argued that the *Visitatio Sepulchri* liturgical drama originated in Jerusalem, and not, as was the common view in his time, in Western Europe. Klapper also ascribed its creation to a much earlier period. His thesis, published in 1924, was attacked by Karl Young in an article that appeared in the first issue of the journal *Speculum* in 1926. Young took issue with each of Klapper's arguments, and showed convincingly that the thesis is unfounded.²⁷ Placing the origins of the *Visitatio Sepulchri* in Jerusalem may possibly have had a particular attraction because of the distinctive dramatic nature ascribed to the traditional Jerusalem liturgy. From the early Christian centuries the yearly ritual cycle in Jerusalem was designed to re-enact the important events of Christ's earthly life, from his childhood to his crucifixion, resurrection and ascension to Heaven. The most spiritually inspiring were the rites of Holy Week, which re-enacted Christ's dramatic last days in public ceremonials with a multitude of people in the churches and in the open areas. The participants went back in time and followed in Christ's footsteps to and around the city, while praying, chanting, weeping and sobbing. The Holy Week rituals turned the city into a vast sacred space bustling with ecclesiastics and ordinary Christians who participated actively in the services and processions. The early Jerusalem tradition was described by Egeria, a Christian noblewoman who arrived from the West at the end of the fourth century and recorded the liturgy during her stay in the holy city. From Egeria we learn, for example, that on Palm Sunday at the opening of the Holy Week, Christ's entry to the city was commemorated in rites at the Golden Gate. Christ's agony after the Last Supper on Holy Thursday was remembered on the Mount of Olives, and on Good Friday the crucifixion was commemorated on Mount Golgotha/Calvary and at the Holy Sepulchre. The resurrection, on Sunday, was celebrated in prayers in the Anastasis and later in the day at Mount Zion.²⁸

²⁶ There is little agreement among scholars of medieval drama and liturgy concerning the early history of the trope and of the play, and the way they developed. The literature on the topic is immense and growing. An issue intensely debated is whether the various versions of the dramatic performance can be categorised into evolutionary stages from the simplest to the elaborate, or whether various performative options existed simultaneously. K. Young conceived the evolutionary model, in his various works cited above. It seems that, in the eleventh century, three modes of performance were in operation: a trope, a ritual dialogue within a processional dialogue, and a dramatic play. The varying positions of the dialogue (those associated with either Mass or Matins) do not reflect evolutionary stages, but regional preferences. In the south of Europe and in the St Gall area, it was sung in the opening of Mass, and across northern Europe it was sung earlier in the day, at the end of Matins. See D.A. Bjork, "On the Dissemination of the *Quem Quaeritis* and the *Visitatio Sepulchri* and the Chronology of their Early Sources", *Comparative Drama*, 14 (1980): 46–69, esp. 49, 60–61; P. Dronke, ed. and trans., *Nine Medieval Latin Plays* [Cambridge Medieval Classics, volume I] (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

²⁷ J. Klapper, "Der Ursprung der lateinischen Osterfeiern", *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, 50 (1924): 46–58. Karl Young, "The home of the Easter play", *Speculum*, 1 (1926): 71–86.

²⁸ *Itinerarium Egeriae*, ed. Aet. Franceschini and R. Weber [Corpus Christianorum, series Latina, volume CLXXV] (Turnhout: Brepols, 1965), pp. 27–103, esp. pp. 77–79.

Egeria's description of the early rituals reflects the vivacity of a triumphant and growing church, within the same century that saw Jerusalem transformed into a vital Christian centre. But the dramatic tradition she described could not survive, certainly not to a similar extent, when the city came under Muslim rule. With the crusader conquest, the ceremonies and processions were renewed, as is evidenced by the Breviary of Barletta. On Palm Sunday, Christ's entry was celebrated with a large gathering at the Golden Gate with the Latin patriarch carrying the True Cross, usually kept at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and treading the path of Jesus from Bethany to the city. The Patriarch was greeted by the community waiting at the Gate, chanting "*Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini*".²⁹ The focus of the Holy Week ceremonies, and especially of the *Triduum*, was the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the pinnacle of the crusader building and architecture in twelfth-century Jerusalem.³⁰ All this could have given appeal to the idea that the *Visitatio Sepulchri* originated in Jerusalem; however, both its Western evolution described above, and the fact that there is no indication of its presence in Jerusalem before the twelfth century, seem to point to the contrary.

In the Breviary of Barletta, the *Visitatio Sepulchri* takes place at dawn on Easter day, the eighth day following Christ's entry to Jerusalem. This is how it is described:

In die sancto pasche ad matutinas, invitatorium a quattuor canonicis antiquioribus in cappis sericis albis cantatur . . .

Lectores et cantores cappis palleis induuntur. cum gloria reiteretur.

Quod dum cantatur, sint parati tres clerici iuvenes in modum mulierum³¹ retro altare, iuxta consuetudinem antiquorum, quod non facimus modo propter astantium peregrinorum multitudinem. Interim, finito scilicet responsorio. Procedunt inde, preeuntibus candelabris et turibulis, deferentes in manibus unusquisque vas aureum vel argenteum intus habens aliquod unguentum cantando ter:

O Deus, quis revolvat?

Cumque ad portam Sepulchri gloriosi appropinquaverint, duo alii clerici ante portam,³² vel iuxta, predicti Sepulchri, tenentes cereos in manibus, habentes amictus super capita, respondentes cantabunt:

Quem queritis?

R[espondent] mulieres:

Jesum Nazarenum.

R[espondent] tunc illi duo:

Non est hic, surrexit.

²⁹ Fol. 70r col.a.

³⁰ See also Kaspar Elm, "La liturgie de l'église latine de Jérusalem au temps des croisades", in *Les croisades: l'Orient et l'Occident d'Urban II à Saint Louis 1097-1270*, ed. Monique Rey Delque (Toulouse: Electa, 1997), pp. 243-245.

³¹ The words *in modum mulierum* appear in some, but not in all the Western European versions of the dialogue. It usually means covering the head with the ritual vestment designed to cover the shoulders. Analogous expressions in European versions are, for instance, "*in specie mulierum*"; "*ad similitudinem mulierum*". A more forthright expression appears in a fifteenth-century *Visitatio Sepulchri* from Regensburg "*tres pueros indutos vestibis puellaribus*". See Young, *Drama*, I: 257, 296, 370.

³² Two men or angels are mentioned in Luke 24:4 and John 20:12. Only one in Matthew 28:2 and Mark 16:5.

*Illis canentibus, ingredientur sepulcrum mulieres, ibique facta brevi oratione
regredientur, atque in medio choro stantes. Alta voce cantando nuntiabitur:
Alleluia. Resurrexit Dominus.
Quo finito, patriarcha incipit Te Deum laudamus . . .*³³

This liturgical scene is a dramatisation of the scriptural narrative, but differs from the scripture in wording and style. The style of the play is succinct, direct and highly vivid. Despite its brevity it conveys a narrative development from its opening question towards its climactic ending. As a ritual, it corresponds quite interestingly to the outline proposed by Victor Turner for ritual ceremonies, within the field that he entitled “the anthropology of experience”.³⁴ The initial dialogue defines a crisis, when the women are astounded to find the tomb open and empty. This crisis is verbalised in their question “*O Deus quis revolvat?*” and in the following question by the angel, “*Quem quaeritis?*” The redress, or relief, is defined by the exclamation “*surrexit*”. Such rituals, Turner observes, contain a liminal phase characterised by the presence of ambiguous ideas such as ambiguous identity and gender reversals – just as here the canons are at once male and female. The liminality embedded in the ambiguous male-female figures is what may also be perceived as dangerous since it could trigger unwelcome allusions, a storehouse of possibilities, not all welcome in the eyes of members of the church. Such rituals also include symbols that represent life and death, womb and tomb, represented by caverns secluded from everyday eyes, here the tomb chapel, a locus of death and regeneration.

The climax of the performance is dramatic, musical and above all, spiritual. It evokes a feeling of compassion and collective elation, set off by viewing the performers and listening to the musical dialogue, as well as by the sensory elements such as the smoke and smell of the incense, the ritual gestures, the shining silver and gold vessels containing the ointments carried by the women, the contrast of light and shadow of early morning in the interior of the church, and finally the church’s architecture. The object of the spectacle is not only to narrate the event but to emphasise the ideas of the resurrection and redemption. Thus the announcement of the resurrection of Christ takes place both in the past and in the present, and it is appropriately followed by giving praise to God, a sequence that builds toward a universal exultation.

³³ fols. 77v col.b–78r col.a. “On Easter morning during matins the invitatory is sung by four older canons dressed in white silk albs. [liturgy]. The lectors and cantors are dressed in pale robes. When [the liturgy] is sung three young clerics should be getting prepared behind the altar, in the manner of women, according to the old custom, which we do not do only because of the multitude of pilgrims present in the church. In the meantime, after the responsory, they proceed from there with the candlesticks and censers ahead, and each of them carries a vase made of gold or of silver, with some ointment inside it, and they sing three times “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?”. After they have approached the entrance to the Holy Sepulchre, two other clerics, standing in front or near the entrance to the sepulchre, holding candles in their hands and with their heads covered with hood, sing in reply: “Whom do you seek?”. The women answer: “Jesus of Nazareth”, then the two reply: “He is not here, He has risen”. While they sing, the women enter the tomb, and after conducting a brief prayer, they come back to the centre of the choir and proclaim in a loud voice: “Alleluia, the Lord has risen!” (it is possible that the whole choir proclaims this). After this ends, the patriarch begins singing *Te Deum*.”

³⁴ Victor Turner, “Are There Universals of Performance in Myth, Ritual and Drama?”, in *By Means of Performance: Intercultural Studies of Theatre and Ritual*, ed. Richard Schechner and Willa Appel (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 7–18.

The *Visitatio Sepulchri*, as shown above, may not be full fledged theatre but it is a communicative and dramatic representation. It has characters with clear and defined roles, mimicry, impersonation, gesture and movement, ritual vessels, singing aloud, and an audience. This is not the place to discuss the relationship between dramatic liturgy and the history of theatre, let alone the definition of drama. The literature on this issue is vast and the question still debated.³⁵ We may note briefly that a distinctly dramatic element forms part of Christian liturgy from its early days; the best known reference is the Eucharist ceremony which re-enacts dramatically the Last Supper.³⁶

The text in the Breviary of the Holy Sepulchre is quite basic and simple – it is one of the simplest versions known to us. In addition to the text of the dialogue, the Breviary communicates a number of performing instructions, such as *while* they sing, three *young* clerics, in a *manner* of women, the women hold vases *in their hands*, how they proceed through space, where they stand, when they respond. The ceremony contains ample movement: from behind the altar (*retro altare*), where the “women” make their preparations, they march through the choir towards the tomb, then enter the chapel, and walk back to the centre of the crusader basilica. All this moving around is accompanied by the chanting of the canons, with the congregation watching in silence.

Yet the scene in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem conveys a vivid picture of what the ordinary faithful experienced during the celebration of liturgy, and that not only due to these dramatic qualities. Its efficacy is embedded in its spiritual promise, which is pertinent to the personal commitment and the personal salvation of each one of the faithful present in the church. The scene does not simply narrate, but unifies the community in a regenerative moment of redemption, which ties in strongly with the penitential aspect of crusading and pilgrimage. Thus the performance is a vehicle of meaning insofar as it conveys both the Christian narrative and the fundamental spiritual concept of the redeeming sacrifice.

Time, space and ambience

In the Breviary of Barletta, the celebration of the resurrection begins two or three hours after midnight between Saturday and Sunday, following the night vigil. The *Visitatio Sepulchri* is a part of the Matins liturgy, performed between the third responsory and the *Te Deum*. It should be noted that, originally, in Western Europe, the *Quem Quaeritis* dialogue was placed at different points within the Easter morning liturgy, often later, after Terce and before Mass. But at some point the

³⁵ At the starting point is Karl Young who argues that even if ritual contains some dramatic nucleus, it cannot be defined as a theatrical representation if it lacks impersonation, and that liturgy is not drama although it contains a dramatic nucleus; Young, *Drama*, I: ch. 3: “The Dramatic Element in Liturgy”. See more recent arguments and a review of the debate, in N. Kroll, “Power and conflict in medieval ritual and plays: the re-invention of drama”, *Studies in Philology*, 102 (2005): 452–483, and numerous references there.

³⁶ The analogy between Mass ritual and classical theatre is often mentioned in studies that link the evolution of medieval drama with Roman liturgy. The link was recognised and discussed in the Middle Ages too. Specially well-known is the chapter “De tragoediis” in Honorius of Autun’s *Gemma Animae* (1100), where he examines liturgical action allegorically. See: D. Dox, “The eyes of the body and the veil of faith”, *Theatre Journal*, 56 (2004): 29–45; *idem*, “De tragoediis and the redemption of classical theater”, *Viator*, 33 (2002): 43–53.

dialogue moved to early morning, a time more coordinate with the scriptural time, and, as noted above, some considered the new location a sort of leverage for the ensuing development of the presentation into a more elaborate scene.³⁷ Thus the omnitemporality of the scene has a strong effect: the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is the site and Sunday at dawn is the time when Christ rose from the dead. Now, with his ecclesia congregated in the Anastasis, the idea of the resurrection in body and soul is ushered in a striking way.³⁸ Again in the words of J.Z. Smith, “an essentially ahistorical system of salvation was fused with a historical system of commemoration”.³⁹

The use of space in the *Visitatio Sepulchri* ceremony in the Barletta manuscript is well adapted to the specific floor plan of the Jerusalem church. In fact, since this space had been deliberately created by the Latins, it is not improbable that they had in mind, among other things, the *Visitatio Sepulchri* and the desire to meet the pilgrims’ expectations, when they designed it.⁴⁰ The textual instructions concerning position and movement acknowledge the two focal points of the structure’s east-west axis, from the high altar and the seat of the patriarch in the new crusader apse in the east, to the tomb chapel in the west, with a centre that corresponds to the location of the Compass (*Omphalos*). The length of this axis is about 35 metres. We can date the performance of the ceremony to a time after the construction of the new crusader basilica to the east of the rotunda (serious construction work in the church began in the 1140s, though it had probably started earlier).⁴¹ The ceremony embraces the newly constructed basilica in its entirety. It commences behind the high altar in the east, from there the young clerics pace towards the tomb (*ad portam Sepulchri gloriosi appropinquaverint*), and after performing the dialogue and praying inside the tomb chapel, they return half-way to the middle of the choir (*medio choro*). When the patriarch, sitting near the high altar begins chanting *Te Deum*, an imaginary circle closes right at the ceremony’s starting point. The holistic nature of this imagined circle may seem even more palpable if we consider the possibility that, on the one hand, the eastern crusader apse featured the scene, no longer in existence, of the Anastasis, an early eleventh-century Byzantine mosaic supposed to have originally been placed on the eastern apse of the rotunda which the crusaders took down, and on the other, a mosaic depicting the three Marys in the aedicule.⁴²

³⁷ Young, *Drama*, I: 231–236.

³⁸ In his discussion of the Easter liturgy, Honorius of Autun writes: “In ultima resurrectione corpora et animae in gaudio conjunguntur”: *Gemma Animae*, PL 172, col.680, cap.135.

³⁹ Smith, *To Take Place*, 92–93.

⁴⁰ I thank Jonathan Riley-Smith for this suggestion. See J.R.S. Riley-Smith, “The death and burial of Latin Christian pilgrims to Jerusalem and Acre, 1099–1291”, *Crusades*, 7 (2008): 165–179.

⁴¹ The liturgy of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the forms of public worship developed while the church was under construction. Up to the middle of the twelfth century, especially in the 1140s and most likely later, different parts of the church, including the present-day Catholicon (crusader choir) and the eastern apse with its ambulatory, were under way, along with the demolition of the older Byzantine apse of the rotunda and the construction of the great arch that now separates the rotunda from the choir. During the construction, regular offices, visits, and processions, as well as major ceremonies took place: two royal coronations, in 1131 and 1143, three royal burials in 1100, 1118, 1131, and several patriarchal coronations.

⁴² The crusaders supposedly took this mosaic down and transferred it to their eastern apse of the new basilica; see J. Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098–1187* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 230–232; D. Pringle, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: A Corpus*, volume III, *The City of Jerusalem* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 14, 21, 25.

The axis would then stretch between two symbolic representations of the portal to Heaven.

The indication that the clerics returning from the tomb stand in middle of the choir (*in medio choro stantes*) means, first, that the choir already existed. Second, the middle of the choir is not merely a geometrical point, but one loaded with historical and spiritual significance. John of Würzburg wrote in 1165:

*In medio choro dominorum [=canonicorum], non longe a loco Calvariae, est quidam locus elevatione tabularum de marmore et reticularum ferreorum concatenatione in modum altaris designatus, infra quas tabulas in pavimento orbiculis quibusdam factis meditullium terrae dicitur designatum, iuxta illud: operatus est salutem in medio terrae.*⁴³

The sepulchre itself is described in the text as “glorious” (*gloriosus*), an adjective strongly linked with the tomb of Christ. The unique feature of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem is that it has both an altar and a *sepulchrum*: an actual sepulchre, rather than a model or a representation, which was common in Europe, and obviously did not have a door (*porta*). By comparison, in European churches the play was often performed in front of the high altar or around it, with the altar itself representing the tomb, or using a movable piece of furniture, as was done in most churches, or, if the church had an Easter sepulchre, a permanent structure near the altar.⁴⁴ Thus it seems that the European ceremony used a much smaller space for the performance. Finally, whereas the use of space is different from the European practice, it is quite similar to the way Easter prayers were conducted in the early Jerusalem church.

Studies on the experience of the faithful in churches argue that the vagueness of the sense of time and space was created by a deliberate and controlled combination of elements, including the manipulation of natural and artificial light, melodies and lyrics, movements and gestures of the celebrants, garments, and odours (incense). All these ingredients invoke illusion and render impossible the normal perception of time and space, and create an internal reality in the church.⁴⁵ From the Breviary one can also discern a particular use of light. Candles, censers and pale garments,

⁴³ “In the center of the choir of the canons, not far from the place of Calvary, is a certain place with raised marble slabs and iron lattice grills fitted together arranged in a sort of an altar. Underneath the slabs there are small circles in the pavement said to mark the center of the world, according to the words: *operatus est salutem in medio terrae* (Vulgate, Psalm 73:12)”, John of Würzburg, *Description of the Holy Land*, tr. A. Stewart, Palestine Pilgrims Text Society (London, 1896), V: 34; John of Würzburg, “*Descriptio Locorum Terrae Sanctae*”, in *Peregrinationes tres: Saewulf, John of Würzburg, Theodericus*, ed. R.B.C. Huygens and John H. Pryor [Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis, volume CXXXIX] (Turnout: Brepols, 1994), pp. 119–120. The marble slab was the stone of anointing, which is now near the south entrance to the church; see Theoderich, in *idem*, 151–152. On the centre of the world, see J. Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades* (Warminster, UK: Aris & Phillips, 2002), pp. 363, 365; for the Jewish concept, see Ph. S. Alexander, “Jerusalem as the *omphalos* of the world: on the history of a geographical concept”, *Judaism*, 46 (1997): 147–158. On a later Christian tradition reporting that Christ pointed with his finger to the place as the navel of the earth, see Peter W. Edbury, ed., *Le Livre des Assises of John of Ibelin* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), p. 619.

⁴⁴ Young, *Drama*, II: appendix A, “The Easter Sepulchre”, pp. 507ff; E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c. 1400–1580* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 31–35.

⁴⁵ S.E.J. Gerstel, “The Lay Person in Church”, in *Byzantine Christianity*, ed. D. Krueger (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), pp. 106–123.

which probably glowed in the darkness of the church at the crack of dawn, created an actual – and symbolic – contrast between light and darkness, day and night. The praise of God, given in the *Tē Deum* chant, is the precise liturgical point that marks daybreak.⁴⁶

Was the *Visitatio Sepulchri* actually performed?

Having argued that the text of Barletta consciously acknowledges the specific space of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, we now come to the question of the actual performance: did the canons of the Holy Sepulchre perform the *Visitatio Sepulchri* drama?

A problematic sentence that appears in the Breviary raises a question as to whether the play was actually performed by the canons.

Quod dum cantatur, sint parati tres clerici iuvenes in modum mulierum retro altare, iuxta consuetudinem antiquorum, quod non facimus modo propter astantium peregrinorum multitudinem.

When [the liturgy] is sung three young clerics should be getting prepared behind the altar, in the manner of women, according to the old custom, which we do not do only because of the multitude of pilgrims present in the church.

This sentence has been interpreted by Young and Prawer following him,⁴⁷ to mean that the play, though included in the Breviary, was copied for descriptive purposes only, but was not performed in Jerusalem. I suggest the opposite, for a number of reasons.

The sentence: “... according to the old custom, which we do not do only because of the multitude of pilgrims present in the church”, is a remarkable one. It introduces a pause in the supposedly routinised sequence of liturgical action. It exemplifies, first, a point introduced in the beginning of this article about liturgical texts containing more than the routine of rites. Second, it infuses the text with added meaning, and with more than one way of interpretation. The sentence stresses the importance of ancestral tradition and provides a reason why it could not be maintained, connoting that the *Visitatio* had actually been performed in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre up to some point. This is clearly stated.⁴⁸ Moreover, it would make no sense to detail the ceremony if it did not form a part of the liturgy. It should have sufficed merely to mention it and move on, but it is detailed and includes

⁴⁶ For the notion that the *Tē Deum* marks liturgically the moment of Christ’s rising, see Honorius of Autun, *Gemma Animae, Patrologia Latina (PL)* 172, col. 677, cap. 127: “*Per Tē Deum laudamus exprimitur hora qua resurrexit Dominus*”.

⁴⁷ Young, *Drama*, I: 262–263, 591; J. Prawer, *The Crusaders’ Kingdom: European Colonialism in the Middle Ages* (New York: Praeger, 1972), pp. 180–181. This claim is repeated in S. Schein, *Gateway to the Heavenly City: Crusader Jerusalem and the Catholic West (1099–1187)* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 72–73, n. 44.

⁴⁸ A less likely, but not altogether impossible reading of the sentence is: “we follow venerable tradition but not only because there are many pilgrims present”, which would suggest the opposite, that the ceremony was not abandoned.

contextual directions to the participants. Furthermore, it was not replaced by another ceremonial element and the liturgical sequence flows without interruption throughout the service. Following the ceremony is an ordered procession of senior churchmen who encircle the sepulchre, go round the ambulatory, and then exit from the church through the main portal in the south. This procession encircles ritually the entire stage of Christ's sacrifice and redemption.

Before the procession, it should be remembered, the ceremony ends with the patriarch beginning to chant *Te Deum*. This indicates that the text refers specifically to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, since in European churches of the time there were no patriarchs.⁴⁹ Thus, the text clearly refers not only to the specific space but also to the specific personnel of the Holy Sepulchre. The Breviary conveys not a formula from an earlier European description of the ceremony, but one specifically adapted to the Jerusalem church and performed in it.

One may also wonder whether the multitude of pilgrims may provide an adequate reason for renouncing a popular ceremony. The *Visitatio Sepulchri* lasted several minutes and could only draw a crowd comparable to that which assembled in the church during most of the Easter season and Holy Week. On the day before, Holy Saturday, the celebration of the miracle of the Holy Fire typically drew a massive audience (as it does today), and there is no question of abandoning it due to overcrowding. Moreover, the description of the Holy Fire ceremony in the Breviary also expresses the welcoming reception of pilgrims: the text relates that the patriarch selects from among the pilgrims the most decent among them, to take part in the ritual.⁵⁰

Clearly the makers of the liturgy in the Holy Sepulchre were aware of the overcrowding of the church and attempted to adjust to it. Several comments in the text make this evident – for example, the indication that the procession that follows the *Visitatio Sepulchri* should pass around the ambulatory in as orderly a manner as possible, given the number of spectators.⁵¹

In attempting to explain why the performance of the *Visitatio Sepulchri* was discontinued in Jerusalem, Prawer speculates that it was on account of the pilgrims from Europe, who found the performance “frivolous or inappropriate” in the holiest of shrines. Apart from the fact that this claim is inconsistent with his earlier assertion that the performance originated in early Christian Jerusalem⁵² (which would have underscored the venerable status of the ritual), one may wonder why pilgrims or crusaders would reject a beloved ritual on account of the supposed impersonation. The clerics participating in the performance wore their normal monastic habit, not women's dress. All they did to disguise themselves was to cover their heads with an amice (*amictus*). Those who knew the ritual from their European homelands knew well that the “women” were monks, “like angels” (Luke 20:36), and “eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 19:12). In this performance, the monks represented the entire community proceeding to Heaven. In the Church of the Holy Sepulchre

⁴⁹ Although the Vatican eliminated it only in 2006, the Pope's title as “Patriarch of the West”, adopted in 642, appeared in the Middle Ages only occasionally and following a series of more meaningful titles, e.g. “bishop of Rome” and “Vicar of Jesus Christ”. The Patriarchate of Venice, on the other hand, was established only in 1457.

⁵⁰ Fol. 76v, col.a.

⁵¹ Fol. 78v, col.a.

⁵² Prawer, *Crusaders' Kingdom*, 181.

in Jerusalem, it had a special resonance: the presence of the crusaders in Jerusalem was a triumph over death and evil, a genuine victory of Christianity, in which the Latins had proved their readiness to die for Christ, where he died for them.⁵³

Enduring coexistence: sharing space and ceremony in the Holy Sepulchre

This text reflects, in my view, the challenge of committing to ancestral tradition while encountering new circumstances. The claim made in the Breviary about adhering to a liturgical tradition is significant, as it contains an appeal for legitimacy and, being made in the crusader church of the Holy Sepulchre, it entails a deeper meaning. The liturgy brought by the crusaders to Palestine was meant to replace local ceremonial, a time-honoured tradition established in the cradle of Christianity. By converting the style of public worship following their conquest of the city, the newcomers must have aspired to introduce ceremonials of a comparable time-honoured standard, while necessarily avoiding straightforward provocation. This seems to have been their rationale for religious practice in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the future course of Latin–Orthodox relations there.

The Franks could approach the issue of liturgy in a number of ways. They could adopt a Byzantine ritual and adapt it to their taste with some changes and additions, as was done in the Palm Sunday procession⁵⁴ (this had the benefit of using a familiar and popular local rite, but in a modified manner); they could create an original local ceremony, as was done for the annual celebration of the crusader conquest and the consecration of the church;⁵⁵ or they could import Western European rituals, a part of their own inheritance. The *Visitatio Sepulchri* was a Western ritual, adapted to its new religious setting. The adaptation was perhaps not merely topographical. The *Visitatio Sepulchri* performance accords a special significance to the role of the women in the drama of the resurrection, as the first witnesses and bearers of the message. Their special role is alluded to in other instances in the Breviary, preceding the *Visitatio Sepulchri*. In the Mass of the Easter vigil, it is explained that incense carried by the deacon and ministers commemorates by imitation the women carrying spices: “scilicet propter mulierum imitationem aromata portantium”.⁵⁶ Several lines down the women are noted once more when the Breviary says:

reducendo ad memoriam silentium et sacrificium mulierum, iccirco cantores et ceteri silent in tempore sacrificii quia tunc earum sacrificium tale erat, quod deferebant odoriferum unguentum ad corpus domini perungendum.

⁵³ On the perception of the crusaders as martyrs see J. Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (London: Leicester University Press, 2003), pp. 151–152.

⁵⁴ M. Lindner, “Topography and Iconography in Twelfth-Century Jerusalem”, in *Horns of Hattin*, ed. B.Z. Kedar (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1992), pp. 81–98 at p. 90.

⁵⁵ A. Linder, *Raising Arms: Liturgy in the Struggle to Liberate Jerusalem in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003).

⁵⁶ Fol. 77v col.b. Cf. Mark 16:1, Luke 24:1.

The cantors and the others are silent because they recollect the silence and the sacrifice of the women, whose sacrifice was such that they brought an aromatic ointment to treat the body of Christ.

Why does the Breviary include these unique (and extra-liturgical) clarifications on the role of the women? Perhaps the comments are meant to emphasise the women's role and prefigure their centrality in the *Visitatio Sepulchri*. The women were the courageous guardians of the tomb, those who risked their life to watch over it while the others left the area in fear. Perhaps the Jerusalem liturgists meant to allude to the crusaders, who, like the women, were the defenders of the Holy Sepulchre?⁵⁷ Indeed, the emphasis on the sacrifice of the women adds a special human dimension to the resurrection drama.

The awareness and responsiveness to the unique audience of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is made apparent in several places in the Breviary of Barletta. I shall present a few examples. During the Holy Fire ceremony on Holy Saturday, the text mentions twice the diversity of the crowd and describes how the multitude of people from many different nations congregated there cry out loudly and beg for the descent of the Holy Fire: "*multitudo autem plebis ibi ex diversis nationibus coadunata*", and a little further on: "*plebs autem universa ibi diversarum nationum congregata*".⁵⁸

Further on, in the liturgy of the Easter vigil, between Saturday and Sunday, the diversity of the Jerusalem public is alluded to, in reference to catechumens:

*Item sabbato sancto vigilia pasche, lectiones sine titulo leguntur et orationes sine salutatione dicuntur, que cathecuminos ad baptismum instruunt et propter eos sine titulo leguntur. Cives enim Ierusalem nondum cognoscentes divinum misterium auctores ideo scripturarum eis pronunciantur.*⁵⁹

The presence of Greek Orthodox Christians in the ceremonies in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre may be particularly noticed and the impact of their presence felt, even though the Breviary does not refer to them directly. On Holy Saturday, just before the description of the Holy Fire ceremony, it is stated that many readings

⁵⁷ Regarding the omission of the sentence "*reducendo ad memoriam silentium et sacrificium mulierum, in tempore sacrificii silent cantores*" from Western European liturgy, see: Kenneth Levy, "The Italian neophytes' chants", *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 23 (1970): 181–227. On the perception and self-perception of the Franks as guardians of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem and Christianity, see A.V. Murray, "The title of Godfrey of Bouillon as ruler of Jerusalem", *Collegium Medievale*, 3 (1990): 163–178.

⁵⁸ Fol. 77r, col.a.

⁵⁹ "And so, on Holy Saturday, in the Paschal vigil, chapters are read without titles and prayers without benediction. The chapters and the prayers prepare the catechumens for baptism and on their account these chapters are read without a title. Because the citizens of Jerusalem do not know divine mystery yet, therefore the names of the authors are read to them" (Fol. 77v col.a). These sentences communicate, in fact, opposing statements. First that it is pointless to read before the catechumens the names of the evangelists, because they still do not know them, and then that they are read to them. Maybe the word "*non*" is missing before "*pronunciantur*". The practice mentioned here probably refers to the instruction of Honorius of Autun: "*Catecumeni vero quia nondum cognoverunt cives Jerusalem, frustra eis profertur auctor inognitus*" in *Sacramentarium, Rituum divini in Ecclesia Offici*, cap 12, "De Sabbato Sancto", *PL*, 172, col. 748, and in *Gemma Animae*: "*Tituli ideo in lectionibus recitantur, ut auctores coelestis doctrinae, et cives supernae Hierusalem cognoscantur. Sed quia neophyti illius civitatis cives adhuc ignorant, ideo lectores titulum minime pronunciant*", *PL* 172, col. 669.

are read in both Greek and Latin, with the Greek, interestingly, listed first.⁶⁰ Further it said that, after the Gospel is read, the *Credo* is recited, and there are certain people who skip it (*Lecto vero Evangelio, Credo in unum Deum dicitur a quibus pretermititur*).⁶¹ This may (but not necessarily) be a reference to the presence of Greeks in the crowd, and to the Latin–Greek polemic regarding the *filioque*, or the double procession of the Holy Spirit, meaning, possibly, that the Greeks did not recite the *Credo* with the Latins.

Equally telling is the reference in the text to the church as the “Church of the Glorious Resurrection”, a translation of the Greek “Anastasis”, rather than the common Latin designation “Holy Sepulchre”.⁶²

It seems clear from the Breviary that the Frankish clergy performed their rituals in the presence of a varied audience that included many non-Catholics. Moreover, this evidence indicates continuity with earlier, pre-crusade times.

There are several well-known indications that Easter was celebrated at the Holy Sepulchre church by Greeks and Latins together, both before and after the crusader conquest of Jerusalem; these indications have been discussed elsewhere and I shall only mention them briefly. Hugh of Flavigny, who wrote the story of the journey of Richard of Saint-Vanne (in Verdun) to the Holy Land in 1026, relates that the descent of the Holy Fire “strikes the Muslims with fear and admiration”.⁶³ We also know from Muslim writers that at least up to the crusader conquest of Jerusalem in 1099, Christians and Muslims prayed together for the descent of the Holy Fire.⁶⁴ Later, in 1102, the third year of the crusader conquest, Fulcher of Chartres tells that Catholic and Eastern local Christians cooperated in the Holy Saturday ceremonies, with Frankish and Greek canons chanting and reading together in both Latin and Greek.⁶⁵ The Western pilgrims, John of Würzburg and Theoderich, who visited Jerusalem in the 1160s, mention multiple religious sects who worshiped regularly in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.⁶⁶ It has also been shown, by H.E. Mayer, that the Byzantine influence in Jerusalem grew stronger after the middle of the twelfth century, especially during the reigns of King Amalric of Jerusalem and Emperor Manuel I Comnenos of Constantinople (whose niece, Theodora, married

⁶⁰ “*Ista et omnes alie sine titulo legantur et greca et latina lingua pronuntiantur*”, fol. 76v, col.a. This seems to be a unique practice in the crusader church. It should be noted that the scriptures were probably read in Greek and Latin in Rome on special occasions, including Easter, but the practice disappeared by the end of the sixth century. See C. Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy: An Introduction to the Sources*, rev. and trans. by William G. Storey and Niels Krogh Rasmussen (Washington: Pastoral Press, 1986), p. 297.

⁶¹ Fol. 77v, col.a.

⁶² “*In nativitate vero sancti Iohannis baptiste et in dedicatione ecclesie gloriose resurrectionis*”, fol. 27v. On the use of “*Anastasis*” on Latin patriarchal seals, see Mayer, “*Latins, Muslims and Greeks*”, 190–192.

⁶³ “*metum et admirationem paganis incussit*”; *Hugonis chronicon*, ed. G.H. Pertz [Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores, volume VIII] (Hannover, 1848), p. 396

⁶⁴ M. Canard, “*La destruction de l’église de la Résurrection par le calife Hakim et l’histoire de la descente du feu sacré*”, *Byzantion*, 35 (1965): 35–38. (On the descent of the Holy Fire: in churches throughout Christendom the New Fire blessed on Holy Saturday was produced by striking a flint, but in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre the fire was and still is believed to descend from Heaven right to the centre of Christ’s tomb.)

⁶⁵ Fulcher of Chartres, *Historia Hierosolymitana*, 831–836.

⁶⁶ *Peregrinationes tres: Saewulf, John of Würzburg, Theodericus*, ed. R.B.C. Huygens and John H. Pryor, *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis*, volume CXXXIX (Turnhout: Brepols, 1994), pp. 137–138, 152.

King Baldwin III in 1158), which led to the readmission of the Greek clergy into the church of the Holy Sepulchre in 1173.⁶⁷

On the basis of this evidence it has been argued that a considerable religious and cultural reciprocity between Latins and non-Catholic Christians existed in the twelfth century.⁶⁸ The Barletta manuscript, not a narrative, but an official liturgical book, provides additional evidence of such inclusive practices in Frankish-ruled Jerusalem.

The Franks, as rulers, aspired to convert the civic and liturgical space of their new capital, a process they carried out while being a minority in Jerusalem.⁶⁹ During this process they were constantly exposed to competition and perhaps criticism. The way in which they shaped their rituals expresses their desire to adhere to their Western traditions and to maintain continuity with them. But local traditions could not be dismissed, nor could the local populace be ignored. This made the church, the audience and the relationship between them utterly unique. The Latin ceremonies, especially those of Holy Week, competed with prominent local ceremonies: the Latin resurrection ceremony took place on the morrow of the Holy Fire ceremony, and the proximity itself generated competition: a Greek Orthodox ceremony versus a Catholic one, a local legendary ceremony versus a new one from overseas, a ceremony of the rulers against that of the ruled.

I have tried to establish the probability of the performance of the *Visitatio Sepulchri* in the Latin Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, and argued, on the basis of an analysis of the liturgical text, that the Breviary of the Holy Sepulchre shows that the importation of cultural and religious content could not have been a simple transplant. It is true that a liturgical work does not allow direct access to the mentality of its creators, yet it does express the disposition of the officiating community, its habits and preferences. Such a reading entails a special attention to elements of atmosphere, ambience, and occasional explanatory comments in the text. The textual analysis, I believe, shows that the liturgy was formed with conscious attention to the Jerusalem circumstances.

Several recent studies of the Franks in the Levant have pointed towards fields of cultural reciprocity that existed to a greater extent than has been recognised before. My own research on personal names shows that the Franks were not mentally or

⁶⁷ Mayer, "Latins, Muslims and Greeks", *History*, 63 (1978): 175–192.

⁶⁸ B.Z. Kedar, "Latins and Oriental Christians", in *Sharing the Sacred: Religious Contacts and Conflicts in the Holy Land: First-Fifteenth Centuries CE*, ed. A. Kofsky and G. Stroumsa (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1998), pp. 209–222; J. Pahlitzsch and D. Baraz, "Christian Communities in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem (1099–1187)", in *Christians and Christianity in the Holy Land from the Origins to the Latin Kingdoms*, ed. O. Limor and G. Stroumsa (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), pp. 205–235.

⁶⁹ The population of Jerusalem in 1160 is estimated at approximately 30,000 at most, of whom three-quarters were non-Franks; see M. Benvenisti, *The Crusaders in the Holy Land*, trans. Pamela Fitton (Jerusalem: Israel Universities Press, 1970), pp. 27, 40; See also Kedar, "Latins and Oriental Christians". The number of Greek Orthodox monastic churches in crusader Jerusalem is estimated as 20 out of the 60 in Palestine. See D. Pringle, "Churches and Settlement in Crusader Palestine", in *The Experience of Crusading*, volume II, *Defining the Crusader Kingdom*, ed. P. Edbury and J. Phillips (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 161–178, at p. 172; and Pahlitzsch and Baraz, "Christian Communities in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem (1099–1187)". We are also familiar with the attempts of the first two kings, Baldwin I (1100–1118) and Baldwin II (1118–1131) to lure oriental Christians from Trans-Jordan to settle in the city; see J. Prawer, *Crusader Institutions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998 [1980]), pp. 85–101.

culturally sealed against indigenous influence.⁷⁰ Other studies on settlement, learning and sharing sacred spaces show that the reality of Frankish life in the Levant was more diversified and vivacious than previously assumed. Liturgy, too, can increase our understanding of cultural encounter between different groups.⁷¹

We may end with one more fine example from the Breviary of Barletta, also from Holy Saturday: two similar ceremonies are juxtaposed. The first, the Purification of the Virgin (*Purificatio Sancte Marie*), in which, as in the West, candles are distributed to the faithful, and “in the same way” the text declares, candles are distributed on Holy Saturday, according to the local custom, and thus it is partly an old, partly a new practice.⁷²

⁷⁰ Iris Shagrir, *Naming Patterns in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Oxford: Unit for Prosopographical Research, Linacre College, 2003).

⁷¹ “Liturgy is a unique and indispensable tool for the study of any Christian society in its historical, cultural and spiritual context. It gives us a rare glimpse of the actual rite people performed, but it also provides a great deal of information about the perceptions, ideas and preoccupations of the society in question” (Y. Hen, *The Royal Patronage of Liturgy in Frankish Gaul to the Death of Charles the Bald* (London: Boydell, 2001), p. 10).

⁷² “In sabbato sancto a thesaurario similiter omnibus distribuuntur ac totius familie domus, quod ex parte antiquo more servatur et ex parte noviter aufertur”, fol.135r col.b.