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THE IMAGE OF AL-QIYĀMAH IN CHRISTIANS CONCEPTION. THE REPRESENTATION OF HOLY SEPULCHRE CHURCH IN MELKITE ICON-MAP AS A CASE STUDY

di
Rand Abou Ackl

Abstract

During the Ottoman period, the citizens were easily moving; cosmopolitan, multinational, and multi-confessional, the ottoman empire brings together Turks, Greeks, Arabs, Bulgars, Serbs, and Armenians.¹ The Christian pilgrims continued to visit the Holy Land following the traditional roles since the first centuries of Christians. The Christians from Antioch patriarchate had connections with the city of Jerusalem and the Holy Land; historically, many patriarchs and pilgrims from Damascus and Aleppo had visited the Holy Land. The most meaningful object of commemoration of their pilgrimage was a topographic representation of the Holy Land and the Holy Sepulchre church so-called proskynetaria.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre called al-Qiyāmah church by Arab Christians, which means the Church of the Resurrection.

In this article, the primary attention will be about the representations of this building in the Melkite icons. Consequently, in this article², I will be talking about a view of the compound's layout and its internal spaces. Finally, many kinds of events and buildings are inside in the image of the church; therefore, I will be asking questions about relationships between the pilgrimage itself and the representation of al-Qiyāmah church.

Introduction

The religious and cultural connections between Melkites³ of Antioch church with Jerusalem and Holy Land have been continuing. Metropolitan of Aleppo, Meletios Karmeh, made a pilgrimage to the Holy Places with his friend Barlaam⁴ and became a monk in a monastery in Jerusalem where he remained two years after.⁵ Likewise, under the episcopate of his successor, Meletios Zai'm (r. 1647-1672), when he made a pilgrimage to the Holy Places of Jerusalem with 60 persons from Aleppo.⁶ In Jerusalem, Patriarch Theophanes hastened to receive them with "all attention and all honor."

Furthermore, the metropolitan of Aleppo met the Catholicos Maximos of Georgia, who accompanied him to Damascus and Aleppo, in May 1642, Zai'm was on good terms with his patriarch that ordered him to celebrate the Divine Liturgy pontifically and to preach in his place in the Cathedral of Damascus.⁷ Pilgrims are driven to Jerusalem only by personal initiative and see it as a purely

¹ Mahmoud Zibawi, *The icon: Its meaning and history* / Mahmoud Zibawi ; preface by Oliver Clément (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1993), p. 109

² The main part of this article was presented as a paper in "seminario della scuola di dottorato in archeologia 2018", Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Antichità, Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia, La Sapienza - Università di Roma, Roma, 2018.

³ Term "Melkite" derives from the Semitic meaning "king", or, in this specific case, "emperor" This name debuted to those who adhere to Jerusalem and Alexandria the Council of Chalcedon of the Council was officially recognized by the Byzantine emperors those who were favored to have been the imperial party represented the minority in the Alexandrian Patriarchate, while it was stronger in the Antiochian and in that of Jerusalem. John A. McGuckin, *The encyclopedia of Eastern Orthodox Christianity* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 19 and 157.

⁴This Barlaam became a monk of St. Sabas in Jerusalem and then later went from St. Sabas to Jassy, which Macarios of Aleppo visited on January 25, 1653, cf. *Radu*, p. 4, p. 160 ff. See Raheb, Abdallah, conception of the union in the orthodox patriarchate of Antioch (1622 - 1672), historical part, Beirut, 1981, p.36.

⁵*Kilzi* = L. Kilzi, *Life of the Patriarch of Antioch Euthymios Karmeh the Hawawite* written by his disciple Patriarch Macarios of Aleppo (in Arabic: according to Manuscript No. 24 of Deir esh-Shir, Lebanon) in *Al-Maḡarrat* 1913, pp. 41-47; 81-89; 137-144. See Raheb, Abdallah conception of the union in the orthodox patriarchate of Antioch (1622 - 1672), historical part, Beirut, 1981, p.36.

⁶عصره حياته: البطريرك مكاريوس الزعيم، كحالة، جوزيف الياس مؤلفاته (المكتبة السريانية: حلب) 2007, p. 61

⁷ Raheb, Abdallah conception of the union in the orthodox patriarchate of Antioch (1622 - 1672), historical part, Beirut, 1981, p.80

spiritual pursuit of piety, penance, and salvation.⁸ Those pilgrims called themselves *hajjis* with their Eastern Orthodox identity. In order to memorize *hajjis* their pilgrimage, they hold with them proskynetaria,⁹ which used to facilitate transport, therefore, painted on linen to be able to be rolled up or folded.¹⁰

Sometimes, painted on wood. These icon-maps were also a type of certificate.¹¹ Therefore, icon workshops in Jerusalem and its vicinity produced a topographic representation of the Holy Land. Consequently, the image of Sepulchre Church was in the imagination of the Christians who visit Jerusalem and the Holy Land.

The representations of architecture in the context of the Holy Land objects from small pilgrimage souvenirs to excellent pictorial portrayals of the Holy Lands as a whole.¹² Historically, the pilgrims' souvenirs provide ample visual testimony of the representation of the Holy Sepulchre. An ivory plate depicted the tomb of the Christ, dated about 420, known by the Munich ivory may represent a very early picture of the Tomb, for the standard lantern shown there.¹³ The late-sixth-century ampules or pilgrims' flasks from the Holy Sepulchre were frequently adorned with images anachronistically depicting the Resurrection of Christ at the decorated aedicula under the dome of the Anastasis Rotunda—that is.¹⁴ Also, there is a representation of the Holy Sepulchre on a small red box filled with bits of earth, wood, and cloth in the Museo Sacro of the Vatican.

This representation is a complex architectural ensemble modeled on the Tomb aedicula.¹⁵ To understand how the Melkite painted and imagined the Holy Sepulchre in Melkite icon-maps, the brief history of this church during the Ottoman period will be discussed.

Brief History of the Sepulcher church during Ottoman era.

When we are speaking about the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, we are meaning not only the Tomb of Christ but of a whole group of building enclosing the traditional sites of the Crucifixion and the Sepulchre of Jesus. Historically, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and Its names to the Greeks, over long centuries, the whole complex has been called the church of the Anastasis or Resurrection, and Arab Christians gave it the equivalent name, *Qiyyaama*. The Church consists of two sections, one laid out on a longitudinal or basilica plan and marking the site of Jesus' crucifixion, the other laid out on a central plan and crowned by a dome, marking the site of Jesus' burial and resurrection. So, the church is one of the most famous buildings, marking the traditional sites of Christ's crucifixion, entombment, and resurrection. The entrance into the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was from the south side. Immediately behind it was the marble slab Stone of Anointing, decorated with oil lamps and multi-meter-long candlesticks.

⁸ Valentina Izmirlieva, "Christian Hajjis—the Other Orthodox Pilgrims to Jerusalem," *Slavic Review* 73, no. 2 (2014): 325.

⁹ The earliest painted proskynetaria were products of the post-Byzantine period, initiated in some Greek scriptorium Zuzana SKALOVA, "A Holy Map to Christian Tradition," *Eastern Christian Art* 2, no. 0 (2005): 100.

¹⁰ Mat Immerzeel, "Proskynetaria from Jerusalem. Souvenirs of a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land: Series Byzantina, 3," 3 (2005): 23.

¹¹ Documentary proof that their holders had been in the Holy Land and therefore earned the right to be called *hajjis*, these "icon certificates" served as visible proof of the *hajjis'* new status and as signs of the collective blessing they brought back from their pilgrimages. Valentina Izmirlieva, "Christian Hajjis—the Other

Orthodox Pilgrims to Jerusalem," *Slavic Review* 73, no. 2 (2014): 339.

¹² Slobodan Ćurčić et al., *Architecture as icon: Perception and representation of architecture in Byzantine art / Slobodan Ćurčić and Evangelia Hadjistryphonos ; with contributions by Kathleen E. McVey and Helen G. Saradi* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Art Museum, 2010), p. 309

¹³ Kenneth J. Conant, "The Original Buildings at the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem," *Speculum* 31, no. 1 (1956): 4.

¹⁴ Robert Ousterhout, "Architecture as Relic and the Construction of Sanctity: The Stones of the Holy Sepulchre," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 62, no. 1 (2003): 4.

¹⁵ Gary Vikan and Gary B. P. a. Vikan, *Early Byzantine pilgrimage art* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks; Chichester : John Wiley [distributor], 2010), p. 19

For some 1700 years, it has attracted pilgrims from all over the earth. Historians usually cite Constantine the Great's massive program of building as evidence of that emperor's great devotion to his new faith.¹⁶ Only parts of Constantine's work remain and mostly invisible today.¹⁷ In 1555 and 1719, the Franciscans had restored it much as the Crusaders had left it. Moreover, again, repaired in 1728.¹⁸ C.L. Bruyn made clear drawings in 1681.¹⁹ In 1808 a disastrous fire destroyed the Rotunda. The original timber dome of the Anastasis was likewise entirely rebuilt in 1719²⁰, only to be destroyed by the severe fire of 1808, which also severely damaged the drum beneath it, the vaults of the transept, the masonry dome of the crossing, and the external stonework above the main south entrance.²¹

The Greeks obtained a *firman* from the Porte to rebuild it. A Russian architect reconstructed the Edicule in contemporary Russian taste and enclosed the open Crusader choir as a Greek church²² with high walls. Thus, it was created a separate unit within the structure. The dome of 1808 was so poorly built that it had to be replaced in 1868. The extensive rebuilding work was carried out in the church by the Greek architect Nikolaos

Kommenos of Mytilene, following a devastating fire in 1808,²³ completed the restoration in 1810. He had transformed a Latin Crusader church into a neo-Byzantine edifice, acquired Greek space at the expense of common areas, and replaced Latin markers and decorations with Greek ones.²⁴ He rebuilt the Rotunda and the Aedicule's exterior in the current Ottoman Baroque style

Between 1625 and 1637, Sultan Murad IV issued at least 12 contradictory edicts establishing ownership of Christian shrines in Jerusalem, and in the 18th century, the ownership of the Holy Sepulchre shifted between the Latins and Greek Orthodox five different times. In 1757, Grand Vizier Rajib Pasha issued a *firman* establishing Greek control over most of the holy places in Jerusalem and elsewhere. The Church, as it stands today, is a fraction of what the original complex once was, but that has not diminished the sacredness of the site.²⁵

The Holy Sepulchre representation in the Eighteenth-Century Proskynetaria

Two proskynetaria in Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums DGAM Archives, one comes from Sydnaia monastery, and the

¹⁶ H. A. Drake, "The Return of the Holy Sepulchre," *The Catholic Historical Review* 70, no. 2 (1984).

¹⁷ G. S. P. Freeman-Grenville, "The Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem: History and Future," *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, no. 2 (1987): 187.

¹⁸ Emerson H. Swift and William Harvey, "Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem. Structural Survey, Final Report," *American Journal of Archaeology* 40, no. 2 (1936): 491.

¹⁹ In the beginning of the seventeenth century need for the repair and the improvement of the buildings, being undertaken by the Greek patriarch Sophronius carried out by his successor, Thiophanes. Yet in 1620 fear being entertained that the whole would fall; and a century later, in 1664, the name of the Greek patriarch is associated with the restoration of the churches. J. R. Macpherson, "The Church of the Resurrection, or of the Holy Sepulchre (Continued)," *The English Historical Review* 7, no. 28 (1892): 683.

²⁰ Further operations were called for in 1719, but from the time of the beginning of the present century we have no moment to record. Dissension among the sects reigned and introduced certain changes; for example, either period or at an earlier date, the possibility of passing whole edifice from end to end in the *triforium*

was to, divisional walls being built to separate the portion from that of another. See . *ibid.*, p. 683.

²¹ Emerson H. Swift and William Harvey, "Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem. Structural Survey, Final Report," *American Journal of Archaeology* 40, no. 2 (1936): 491.

²² The Greek-Orthodox Christians were classified and recognized by the Ottoman regime as one of the semi-autonomous monolithic group - millet i-rum. Itamar Katz and Ruth Kark, "The Church and Landed Property: The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem," *Middle Eastern Studies* 43, no. 3 (2007): 391–392.

²³ The Dome above the Edicule constructed in 1808-10 had to be entirely rebuilt in 1868-70. This stood well until 1949, when it caught fire. see G. S. P. Freeman-Grenville, *The Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem: History and Future*, *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, Cambridge University Press, No. 2 (1987), p.195.

²⁴ Raymond Cohen, *Saving the Holy Sepulchre: How rival Christians came together to rescue their holiest shrine* / Raymond Cohen (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 7–8

²⁵ Abou Ackl, Rand, *Architecture in the Melkite icons in Syria from the middle of seventeenth until the beginnings of nineteenth centuries, these for Phd in La sapienza University, 2018* (Rome, in print).

other from Hama church. The Saydnaia proskynetarion is an excellent preserved painting with many cracks and much loss of paint, signed in Arabic by Issa Al Qudsi, endowed in Greek by the pilgrim called Magdalena.²⁶ Dated to 1738-39.²⁷ While Hama proskynetarion is missed. It was at the entry to the Lady's Church in Hama. It shows the zigzag walled city with its seven gates. This map divides the Holy City into three regional sections, the Church of the Resurrection, the Islamic buildings, and the surrounding area (churches, monasteries, Armenian, and Jew neighborhoods). This work incorporates three different parts, excluding its bottom and upper sides, the Hama icon is framed by outer panels. Each of the corners is dedicated to one of the four Evangelists. At the center of the Hama, map-icon stands Jerusalem. Like the icon of Saydnaia in our corpus, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre commands the majority of the city's space. While Saydnaia icon-map, it is shown in a diagonal bird's-eye view of the walled city of Jerusalem. In the middle of the city stands the Church of the Resurrection, the most important Christian pilgrimage moment in Jerusalem, occupies most of the area depicted between the walls.

From a graphical standpoint, the belfry constitutes an axis that divides the compound in half; though, the tower locates west of the center²⁸. On the left-wing, can be seen the truncated conical dome of the Rotunda, beneath there is Jesus' tomb²⁹, Aedicule. Moreover, we know that in 1555 the aedicule enshrining the Sepulchre was entirely rebuilt, and again repaired in 1728. The original timber dome of the Anastasis was likewise entirely rebuilt in 1719.³⁰

²⁶ Mat Immerzeel, "Proskynetaria from Jerusalem. Souvenirs of a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land: Series Byzantina, 3," 3 (2005): 24; Rand Abou Ackl, "The Construction of Architectural Background of Melkite feast icon, the Annunciation icon as an example," *Chronos* 38 (2018): 158.

²⁷ Mat Immerzeel, *Proskynetaria from Jerusalem*, p. 24

²⁸ This tower is located to the left of the façade. It is currently almost half its original size.

²⁹ In the Life of the Blessed Emperor Constantine, Eusebius states that the Tomb of Christ was covered with earth and paved with stone, upon which was constructed a temple of Venus. Eusebius, *The life of the*

All of the maps of DGAM Archives have embellished the Rotunda with an image of Christ rising from his grave. To the left of the compound is an assortment of buildings that are part of the Orthodox Patriarchate's complex, especially the chapel of Constantine and Helen, whose images are painted thereon. However, in the icon-map of Hama, 1748, there is no this chapel, although it is in icon-map of Saydnaia, 17th. The last one contains a scene of Jesus ordaining his brother James as the first bishop of Jerusalem in the front portion of the Church, next to the eponymous Chapel of James.

To the right of the bell tower can be found the Holy Sepulcher's double-arched entrance. As is the case to this day, the right (eastern) half of the portal is sealed with stones. To the right, there is a chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows – known as the Chapel of the Franks. Over the doorway is a representation of Jesus being anointed on the Stone of Unction, which is indeed located just beyond the entrance. Above this scene is the compound's main hall, the domed Catholicon – site of, *inter alia*, the omphalos that allegedly marks the center of the world. In the icon-map of Saydnaia, there are two thrones; one is Antiochian Throne and the throne of Jerusalem.³¹

Over the doorway is a representation of Jesus being anointed on the Stone of Unction known as the "red stone" (perhaps the name was also conferred for Christ's blood. Hence, the red marble, with streaks of white running through it, would have commemorated the commingling and sacred blood.³² Mentioned from probably at least the tenth century on, was where the sacred corpse was placed for these

blessed Emperor Constantine, in four books, from 306 to 337 A.D (London: S. Bagster and sons, 1845), p. 137

³⁰ Emerson H. Swift and William Harvey, "Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem. Structural Survey, Final Report," *American Journal of Archaeology* 40, no. 2 (1936): 290.

³¹ Abou Ackl, Rand, *Architecture in the Melkite icons in Syria from the middle of seventeenth until the beginnings of nineteenth centuries*, theses for PhD in La sapienza University, 2018 (Rome, in print).

³² Mary A. Graeve, "The Stone of Unction in Caravaggio's Painting for the Chiesa Nuova," *The Art Bulletin* 40, no. 3 (1958): 228.

preparations.³³ It locates inside the entrance (Stone of Anointing), which the tradition believes to be the spot where Joseph of Arimathea prepared Jesus' body for burial, this tradition was mentioned by the Italian Dominican pilgrim "Riccoldo da Monte di Croce" in 1288, and the present stone was added in the 1810 reconstruction.³⁴ The Stone of Unction is depicted at icon-topography of the Holy land, at Saydnaia, dating to 17th, under two arches. We can find this depiction in icon-topography of the Holy land, 1748, Hama. While, at the icon-topography of the Holy land, 1827, at St Tekla Monastery-Ma'lula, in the center of the church is the catholicon up to the dome, inside it is iconostasis, beneath are three arches and a representation of Jesus being anointed on the Stone of Unction. In the two icon of 17-18th centuries, over the doorway is a representation of Jesus being anointed on the Stone of Unction, which is indeed located just beyond the entrance and above this scene is the compound's main hall, the domed Catholicon, while in Ma'lula icon, the scene of the Stone is over the Holy Sepulchre's double-arched entrance and the scene of patriarch going out from the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre, holding the candles which has miraculously been lit from Christ's Tomb. The second half of the 19th century, there is no representation of the Stone of Unction.

Further to the right, one can see the Chapel of Golgotha³⁵ and the chapel of

crucifixion³⁶, as Hama map, or just one chapel-like Saydnaia map. The other works feature Jesus on the cross flanked by two persons, who are to be identified as the Mari and John the Beloved. Atop the Golgotha is the Chapel of Abraham the Patriarch, which marks the place of the Binding of Isaac. Beneath the crucifixion scene is a building that is reached from the Church's central plaza by an ascending, Crusader-era staircase. Also, to the right is a thick cluster of buildings. In the maps from Sydnaia Monastery and Hama church, a staircase at the bottom of this area leads down to the cave where Helena is said to have discovered the cross, the Cave of invention of the Cross.

It could conclude that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre during the 18th century's icon-maps is depicted in great detail and occupies most of the area inside the wall. It is shown in cross-section, exposing the church's interior from a southern viewpoint. A bell tower, in the center of the church's image, divides it into two significant parts.

1. The Rotunda: The west part of the Church contains Jesus's burial site.
2. The Tomb.
3. The chapel of Constantine and Helen inside: The Chapel belongs to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, whose monks still pray there today.³⁷
4. The stone of the Tomb, the patriarch of Jerusalem, receives the Holy fire.³⁸

³³the earliest detailed accounts of it are found in two Greek sources: the history of Nicolas Choniata (ruled, 1143-1180), written during the stone came to Constantinople, the other Greek author, Cinnamus, gives details of Stone's early history. *ibid.*, p. 228.

³⁴ Murphy-O'Connor, Jerome, *the Holy Land*. Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 56-9.

³⁵ ³⁵ The place of crucifixion was Calvary or Golgotha, the Τόπος του κρανίου (Place of the Skull) mentioned without further specification by all the Evangelists as if it were a well-known locality. Kenneth John, Conant, *The Holy Sites at Jerusalem in the First and Fourth Centuries A. D.*, *Proceedings of the American philosophical Society*, American Philosophical Society, Vol. 102, No. 1 (Feb. 17, 1958), p.16.

³⁶ Eusebius does not mention the Calvary or the Cross, but Cyril of Jerusalem, in his letter of 351 to the Emperor, says that the discovery of the Holy Cross was due to the piety of Constantine (t887), though the Emperor's mother Helena was perhaps in Jerusalem,

visiting the site, at the time. Possibly the supposed Holy Cross ("a piece of a poor tree, less valuable than most trees are," (according to Gregory of Nyssa) was found in a cistern, where the water would have preserved it. The present Chapel of the Invention of the Holy Cross is beyond the quarry mentioned above, which seems rather distant (about 40 meters or 130 feet) from the Calvary, especially since there is a cistern just east of Calvary itself. The find and the mode of identification are not satisfactorily reported. Kenneth J. Conant, "The Original Buildings at the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem," *Speculum* 31, no. 1 (1956): 2.

³⁷ Rehav Rubin, "Iconography as Cartography: Two Cartographic Icons of the Holy City and its Environs," *Τετράδια Εργασίας* 8, no. 22 (2013): 362.

³⁸ Henry Maundrell, the chaplain to the English Levant Company's trading post in Aleppo who came to Jerusalem in 1696, witnessed the miracle first-hand on April 3 of that year and considered the spectacle insane.

The right part of the church contains the following buildings:

The compound's main hall, the domed Catholicon – site of, *inter alia*, the *omphalos* that allegedly marks the center of the world

5. The main entrance to the church.
6. The Chapel of Our Lady of Sorrows, and the chapel of the Franks: A two-story structure is consisting of three vaulted chapels. The Chapel of Crucifixion has its eastern side laid upon the natural rock, which, according to Christian tradition, is the exact spot where the Cross was placed and considered the most venerated part. Adjoining this chapel from the south is another one memorializing the scene of Christ's Nailing to the Cross. Both chapels are built on the upper level of Golgotha. While a third chapel, built on the lower level right beneath the Chapel of Crucifixion, is dedicated to the memory of Adam, the skull of whom is purported by Christian tradition to be buried under the Rock of Crucifixion. As Peri says: ³⁹ “No canonizing tradition has been associated with the vault beneath the Chapel of Nailing to the Cross, which is therefore used as mere sacristy.”
7. The stone of anointment: it locates just beyond the entrance.
8. Jesus Christ
9. The Chapel of Golgotha: it is identified by the figure of Jesus on the Cross, flanked by Mary and John.
10. The chapel of Abraham: above the Golgotha chapel, dedicated to the Sacrifice of Isaac. This chapel is a part of the neighboring Monastery of Abraham, which abuts the Holy Sepulchre to the east.⁴⁰

“The Latin take a great deal of pains to expose this ceremony as a most shameful imposture and a scandal to the Christian religion,” he remarked, “but the Greeks and Armenians pin their faith upon it and make their pilgrimages chiefly upon this motive. Valentina Izmirlieva, “Christian Hajjis—the Other Orthodox Pilgrims to Jerusalem,” *Slavic Review* 73, no. 2 (2014): 334.

The Holy Sepulchre representation in the Nineteenth-Century Proskynetaria

In the nineteenth century, Jerusalem continued to be the pilgrim's primary destination for visitors to the holy places in Palestine. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the topographic elements almost entirely disappeared.⁴¹ Specimens from this period typified by a sort of patchwork of different icons, which have a central section focusing on the Church of the Resurrection in common, flanked by scenes related to the Virgin at one side, and Christ at the opposite side.

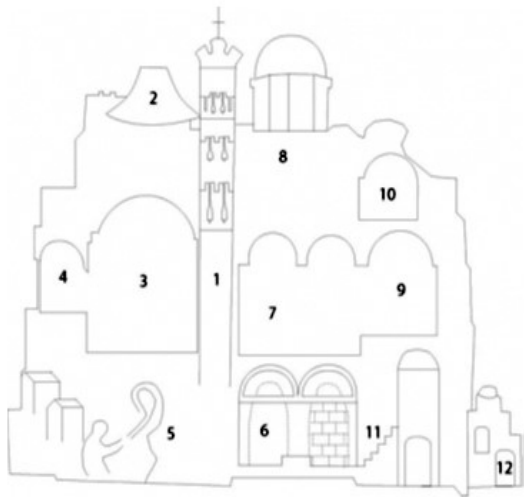
Ma'lula has two proskynetarion dated to the nineteenth century, one of them dated to 1827 is a great picture that shows Jerusalem with the church of the Sepulcher, surrounded by topographic images, biblical scenes, apocryphal episodes, and martyrdoms of saints. The proskynetarion's measurements are 80x120, and its compositions are schematic. For identification, it is based on the similar scenes mentioned in the literature and on the inscriptions, which are in Greek. The composition of the Ma'lula icon is exceptionally developed. Structurally the item can be divided into two separated units: the central section represents the city of Jerusalem, and the lower and upper sections represent the Holy Land and scenes of the Old and New Testaments.

As mentioned before, the element common to all *proskynetaria* is the Church of the Sepulchre (Anastasis), surrounded by various scenes. The center of the icon is a square shape that contains the Holy Sepulchre, which is represented in the private area, while Jerusalem, figure.14, is depicted in the right upper corner to represent the Islamic Quarter, in which there are figures of the Dome of the Rock, a fountain, and Al-Aqsa. In other words, the central part of this painted *proskynetaria*, within the perimeter of square, which

³⁹ 'Oded Peri, *Christianity under Islam in Jerusalem: The question of the holy sites in early Ottoman times / Oded Peri* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2001), p. 3

⁴⁰ Rehav Rubin, “Iconography as Cartography: .: Two Cartographic Icons of the Holy City and its Environs,” *Τετράδια Εργασίας* 8, no. 22 (2013): 363.

⁴¹ Mat Immerzeel, “Proskynetaria from Jerusalem. Souvenirs of a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land: Series Byzantina, 3,” 3 (2005): 23.



represents the walls of Jerusalem, is constituted by the interior of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; this is not a real city image, nor does it look like the one in an icon kept in Saydnaia, because it is more schematic. A similar view may be seen in the same monastery in Ma'lula, and in the nineteenth century *proskynetaria* of a private collection in Damascus,⁴² in which Jerusalem city is flanked by themes related to building, to the Easter



liturgy, biblical events, and martyrdoms, crucial matters of the Christian doctrine and other sites of interest to pilgrims.

A: The church of Holy Sepulchre

1. The Rotunda
2. The Tomb
3. The Stone of Anointment

⁴² Waldemar Deluga, *Panagiotafitika: Greckie ikony i grafiki cerkiewne* (Kraków: Collegium Columbinum, 2008), p. 199N. B42

⁴³ Rand Abou Ackl, *The Art of Aleppian icon* (Damascus: Ministry of Culture- Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums, in print).

4. Giving the Holy Fire, and a miracle?
5. The Entrance
6. The Cave of invention of the Cross and stairs
7. The chapel of Abraham
8. The icon of Crucifixion
9. The chapel of Golgotha
10. The chapel of Constantine and Helen
11. The dome of the Catholicon⁴³

We can conclude that there are two general formats for drawing the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; the first one with bell tower is dated to the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries, while the second one without bell tower and it abbreviated from the first one. These cartographic icons can be read as the results of processes of hybridization between Orthodox and Western visual traditions.

Melkite icons represent Christ, Virgin, and saints. Also, they could represent an equally pre-established set of biblical scenes, such as stations in the life of Christ (the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Baptism, the Transfiguration, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection.). This latter category of narrative icons served as *loci memoriae* ⁴⁴meant to “bring back the memory of a past moment of sacred history, and to catch a glimpse of what promised to come.”

1. It is presented from a southern vantage point.
2. It uses a quasi-architectural cross-section. This approach offers a view of the compound’s layout and even some of its internal spaces.

By demonstrating these three icons, we can conclude that These images range compositionally around a large panel depicting the interior of the Holy Sepulchre – Anastasia church – where a representation of the central pilgrimage event – the Descent of the Holy Fire – constitutes both the visual and the semantic center. Several liturgical representations were added as well; moments

⁴⁴ Clemena Antonova, *Space, time, and presence in the icon: Seeing the world with the eyes of God / Clemena Antonova ; with a preface by Martin Kemp* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 86.

in the Easter procession emphasize the relevance of this subject as this was the time when the pilgrims gathered near and in the church - it was the main reason for their visit. Thus, the iconographic program of the proskynetarion echoes the ritual program of the pilgrimage itself.

The city of Jerusalem is only recognizable by the opened-out interior of the Church of the Resurrection, including scenes from the Easter cycle, mainly the Crucifixion, the Anointing, and the Resurrection.

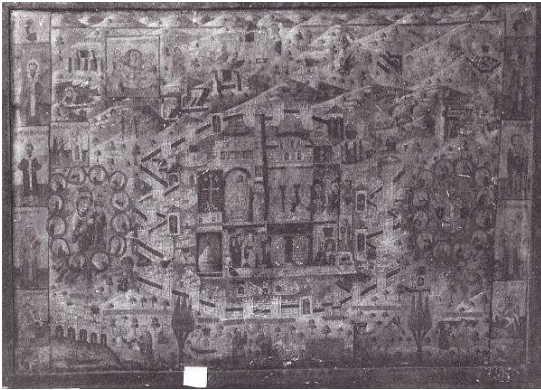


Figure 3: proskynetarion, the icon with the topography of the Holy land, 1738-39, in situ in the Saydnaia Monastery, Saydnaia, tempera on canvas, 90x125 cm, the iconographer; Issa Al Qodsi. After Abou ackl, 2018



Figura 5 proskynetarion, the icon with the topography of the Holy land, 1827, St Thekla Monastery-Ma'lula, tempera on canvas, 80x120 cm, the iconographer: Jerusalem school. After Abou ackl, 2018



Figure 4: proskynetarion, the icon with the topography of the Holy land, 1748, was in the Lady of entry church, Hama, tempera on canvas, 80x123cm, the iconographer: unknown. After Abou ackl, 2018

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