Chronos- Revue d’Histoire de l’Université de Balamand, is a bi-annual Journal published in three languages (Arabic, English and French). It deals particularly with the History of the ethnic and religious groups of the Arab world.

Journal Name: Chronos

ISSN: 1608-7526

Title: Kharetat al mousafer, an 18th-century proskynetarion of Jerusalem and The Holy Land from Saydnaia

Author(s): Rand Abou Ackl

To cite this document:


Permanent link to this document: https://doi.org/10.31377/chr.v40i.640

Chronos uses the Creative Commons license CC BY-NC-SA that lets you remix, transform, and build upon the material for non-commercial purposes. However, any derivative work must be licensed under the same license as the original.
Abstract

In this article, I discuss a proskynetarion icon of the Holy Land and Jerusalem, called the Kharetat al mousafar, located in Saydnaia Monastery in Syria. The relationship between pilgrimages and proskynetaria, which served as a tool of Christian propaganda, will be discussed with a focus on the Saydnaia proskynetarion as a case study, showing the way of the Melkite painter, Issa al-Qudsi depicted the Holy Land topography. In this icon, the Holy Sepulchre (Church of Resurrection) was also represented, opening a discussion around proskynetaria in Syria during the eighteenth century.

Introduction

The Monastery of Saydnaia² is situated about 30 kilometers to the north of Damascus. It is famous for the icon of the Holy Mother and Child (known as the Shaghurah), which is attributed to Luke the Evangelist. It also has many manuscripts written in Arabic, Greek, and Syriac, as well as liturgical and ritual objects and icons. This article will discuss one of Saydnaia’s icons, which called proskynetarion (plural Προσκυνητάρια, proskynetaria). This icon is well known by Saydnaia’s nuns and visitors as the Kharetat al mou...
mousafer\textsuperscript{3} or “the traveler’s map,” the traveler being a pilgrim or \textit{hajji} of the Holy Land. Both icons and maps are often described as “windows”: icons being a “window of heaven”, and the maps a “window on the theatre of the world” (Della Dora 2012: 85). The “\textit{Kharetat al mousafer}” icon belongs to these two categories.

\textit{Proskynetaria} are icons painted on wood or canvas. They were also a type of certificate. This certificate is a sort of documentary proof that their holders had been in the Holy Land and therefore earned the right to be called \textit{hajjis}; it was also a visible sign of the collective blessing they brought back from their pilgrimages. In order to provide those Orthodox pilgrims with meaningful objects commemorating their pilgrimage, icon workshops in Jerusalem produced topographic representations of the Holy Land, called \textit{proskynetaria}, which portrayed the Holy City and the major Orthodox pilgrimage sites, as well as the Orthodox traditions which were intimately connected to this part of the world. \textit{Proskynetaria} were painted on linen that could be rolled up or folded inside metal containers to facilitate their transport (Immerzeel 2005: 23).

As far as we know, the oldest known example is dated A.D.1704 and is preserved in the museum of Saumur in France. Furthermore, \textit{proskynetaria} in Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, and Persia bear inscriptions in both Arabic and Greek, although there are examples written only in Greek.\textsuperscript{4} The earliest painted \textit{proskynetaria} were products of the post-Byzantine period, initiated in some Greek \textit{scriptorium} (Skalova 2005: 100), arguably close to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, thus belonging to the so-called Melkite cultural environment.

**The Saydnaya Proskynetarion as a pilgrimage object**

The Saydnaya \textit{Proskynetarion} is an illustrated colour map of the holy sites and representing the topography of Palestine. To understand how this icon ended up in this monastery, one must understand the pilgrimage to

\textsuperscript{3} The author gratefully acknowledges the Monastery of Saydnaia and the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch for their permission to photograph this icon.

\textsuperscript{4} As well as the churches of Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary. (Deluga, 2008: 70)
Palestine before and during the Ottoman period. The pilgrims themselves were surprisingly mobile, with pilgrimages following traditional routes since time immemorial\(^5\). The pilgrims called themselves *hajjis* but insisted on their Eastern Orthodox identity. The pilgrims from the East and the West visited the Holy Land in Palestine paying the Mamluk poll-tax; they were left free to practice their religious rites, though the laws directing the behaviour of pilgrims were still in force (Meinardus 2005a : 79). The first mentions of Christian *hajjis*, who were mostly clerics and monks, are dated from the sixteenth century (Izmirlieva 2014: 323). In the Antiochian church, Meletios Karmeh, the Metropolitan of Aleppo, made a pilgrimage to the Holy Places as an adult with his friend Barlaam\(^6\) and became a monk in a monastery in Jerusalem; he remained there for two years\(^7\). Under the episcopate of his successor Meletios Zaim, a large number of his faithful made a pilgrimage to the Holy Places of Jerusalem, with 60 persons from Aleppo (Elias 2007: 61). There, Patriarch Theophanes hastened to receive them with “all attention and all honours”. In Jerusalem, the metropolitan of Aleppo met the Catholicos, Maximos of Georgia, who accompanied him to Damascus and Aleppo. In May 1642, Zai‘m was on such good terms with his patriarch that he invited him to celebrate the Divine Liturgy pontifically and to preach in his place in the Cathedral of Damascus (Raheb 1981: 80). One can argue that these Christians from Syria brought many of souvenirs back to their homeland, in particular, *proskynetaria*; for the very least, they saw this kind of icon in Jerusalem or Bethlehem. Likewise, Paul of Aleppo (the son of al Zai‘m) visited the Trinity Lavra of St Sergio near Moscow in 1655. He noticed in the Trinity Cathedral of the monastery “large icons striking the mind with the art of execution: all of Jerusalem with all the churches, monasteries, and holy places inside and outside of it, the representation of the entire Mount of Zion and Mount Athos” (Piatnitsky

---

\(^5\) Traditionally, Christian culture — both in the East and West—offers no social rewards to pilgrims to the Holy Land. The chief reason is that, unlike Judaism and Islam, Christianity makes no demand for such a pilgrimage. Pilgrims were driven to Jerusalem only by personal initiative and saw it as a purely spiritual pursuit of piety, penance, and salvation. (Izmirlieva 2014: 325)


\(^7\) See Kilzi 1913; Raheb 1981: 36.
During the centuries of the Ottoman administration of the Holy Land, the rights and privileges of the various Christian churches in Jerusalem and especially in the church of the Resurrection were often disputed, especially between the Greek, the Armenian and the Latin (Franciscan) clergies (Meinardus 2005b: 35). The Sublime Porte confirmed these rights in Constantinople through the Arrangements of the status quo of 1517 and by Treaty of Paris in 1856. In our icon, Issa Al Qudsi depicts the Orthodox Patriarch holding a candle for receiving and giving the Holy Fire. Consequently, the *proskynetaria* also served as pictorial records of property rights and privileges. Lastly, *proskynetaria* served as pious mementoes of pilgrimages to the Holy Places.

### The Saydnaya Proskynetarion

The Saydnaya icon, (Pl. 1) is well preserved, protected by glass, although there are many cracks and much loss of paint. It is signed, in Arabic, Issa Al Qudsi and endowed in Greek by a pilgrim named Magdalena, (Pl. 3) (Immerzeel 2005: 24) and dated from the 18th century,

---

8 According to the testimony of pilgrims, in the seventeenth century, Greeks, Copts, Ethiopians, Armenians, Georgians and Nestorians still received the Holy Fire from the Greek Orthodox patriarch, who distributed it to the other Christians. From the thirteenth century onwards, the Latins abstained from this ceremony (Meinardus 2005: 80).
1738-39 (Immerzeel 2005: 24). If this date is correct, this icon survived the earthquake of 1759 during which the church was damaged before being restored three years later (Immerzeel 2007: 19). We know little about Issa Al-Qudsi and of his icons: he had been working in the Aleppo School as an independent iconographer who developed his style. There is an icon of St. Basil the Great in Our Lady of the Entry in Hama and signed by him, and dated from the 18th century (Zayat 1987: Pl. 25) as well as “the Lady of Spring” icon in the church of Our Lady of Lattakia, dated 1743.

The Saydnaya proskynetarion composition represents a warm, colourful representation of the Holy Land, showing scenes from the christological cycle integrated into their geographical settings together with historic towns, pilgrimage sites, churches, and monasteries. Most of the sites are named thanks to Arabic and Greek inscriptions, although some of them are illegible. In a diagonal bird’s-eye view of the walled city of Jerusalem, the Church of the Resurrection, the most important Christian pilgrimage
monument in the city, occupies most of the area between the walls. It is rendered to reveal the interior with depictions of Old and New Testament scenes, such as the sacrifice of Abraham, the crucifixion, the deposition, and the patriarch is receiving the Holy light. Within the city limits, the Great Church is surrounded by monasteries, churches, and shrines, all of which are depicted as relatively small structures. Outside the city stretches the timeless holy landscape, its horizon marked by the river Jordan or by the Mediterranean Sea. The landscape of the Holy Land is studded with more religious scenes, locating Old and New Testament sites and smaller apocryphal or hagiographical scenes, many of them labelled in Arabic; some are close Jerusalem, while others are further away. While the iconography on the right side of the composition attaches to the Virgin—in the middle the tree of Jesse—, the left side is related to Christ. This hagiographic-topographic proskynetarion type of icon dominated the production, but in the course of time, probably during the eighteenth century, hagiographic representations prevailed (Immerzeel 2005: 23).

The Saydnaia proskynetarion can be analyzed as follows Pl. 2 (Abou Ackl 2018: 158-159):

Jerusalem city

Jerusalem city (Pl. 4) is depicted as a medieval fortress, filled exclusively with Christian loci sancti and rendered invincible by its fortified walls. Its lower and upper sides are practically straight and horizontal, while the other sides are drawn in a zigzag fashion with sharp corners protruding toward the outside.

Plate 4: The scheme of Jerusalem, Saydnaya proskynetarion, 1738-9, Saydanaiya monastery
The city of Jerusalem is recognizable only by the opened-out interior of the Church of the Resurrection, which includes scenes from the Easter cycle, especially the Crucifixion, the Anointing and the Resurrection. Several liturgical representations were added, such as moments in the Easter procession that emphasized the relevance of this thematic as this was the time when the pilgrims gathered near and in the church: it was the main reason for their visit.

For a detailed description of the city of Jerusalem, we will follow the numbers given on Pl. 4:

The Holy Sepulchre or Church of the Resurrection, which includes:

The goal of Christian pilgrims to the holy land has always been the Holy Sepulchre. In his biography of Constantine⁹, Eusebius called the church of the Holy Sepulchre “the New Jerusalem, facing the far-famed Jerusalem of olden time”¹⁰. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre which called by Orthodox tradition; the Church of the Resurrection and by Arab Christians gave it the equivalent name, Qiyyaama¹¹.

---

⁹ Constantine Valerius Constantinus was the son of Constaninus Chrorus and Helen and was born in the 280s at Naissu, Nis. He was Baptized on his deathbed and died near Nicomedia on 22 May 337. To the pagans he became a god. The Christians venereated him as the Thirteenth Apostle and a Saint (Nicol 1991: 24-25).


¹¹ In the fourth century, Jerome had used the term, “the Lord’s Sepulchre”, which, along with “the Holy Sepulchre”, was to become the standard Latin usage. From the beginning, the great church was described as a “basilica”, in Constantine’s letter to Macarius, by Eusebius, and by the Bordeaux pilgrim. A basilica was an imperial hall and came to be used for the great hall-churches sponsored by Constantine. More surprisingly, the bishops assembled for the consecration in 335 called it the martyrium, which was the standard word for a martyr’s shrine, and would more naturally have been used to describe the tomb or the rotunda around it. The use of the term does confirm the speculation that the rotunda around that Tomb had not been built at first, so that it was natural to see the basilica as the martyrium or shrine-church. Later writers used a variety of terms, with a preference for “the church (or basilica) of Constantine”. The Bordeaux pilgrim in 333 called the church a dominicum built by order of the emperor. This was presumably a Latin version of the regular Greek word for a church, kyriakon. In the 380s, Egeria several times used phrases such as “in the great church which Constantine built behind the cross”. Surprisingly, as well as calling the rotunda the Anastasis, she called it a “basilica”, although it was not in the least like the halls from which great
- The Holy Sepulchre includes

1. The Rotunda: on the left part of the church, and represented by two arches one can see the figure of Christ rising from his grave. Behind Him there is an edicule, which fits in to a clear time-frame: in 1555 the edicule enshrining the Sepulchre was entirely rebuilt, and repaired in 1728. The original timber dome of the church was likewise entirely rebuilt in 1719 (Swift et Harvey 1936: 290). In 1808 (Ousterhout 2003), the fire had damaged the dome of the Rotunda causing it to collapse and smashing the Edicule’s exterior decoration. During 1809-1810 the Rotunda and the edicule’s exterior were rebuilt by Nikolaos Ch. Komnenos of Mytilene in the Ottoman Baroque style.

2. The Tomb.

3. The chapel of Constantine and Helen.

4. The Patriarch holding a candle, for receiving and giving the Holy Fire.

5. Jesus is ordaining his brother James next to the Chapel of James, standing in front of the Orthodox patriarchate complex.

6. The entrance and stairs, and the Chapel of the Franks: to the right of the bell tower the Holy Sepulcher’s double-arched entrance can be seen; the left door is open, while the right one is closed as is still the case to this day. To the right, the chapel is dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows, known as the Chapel of the Franks.

7. The Stone of Anointment: over the doorway is a representation of Jesus being anointed on the Stone, which is indeed located just beyond the entrance. It is also known as the “red stone”, whose name perhaps refers to Christ’s blood: the red marble, with streaks of white running through it, would have commemorated the co-mingling and sacred blood (Graeve 1958: 228).

churches were being developed. Clearly, the vocabulary was still very fluid. Just before 700 Adomnan spoke of “the basilica built with great magnificence by King Constantine”, adding “it is also called the martyrium”—so the name had stuck for a long time. It should be remembered that Anastasis is simply the Greek word for “resurrection”, and it became the standard word for pictorial depictions of it, and for icons of what in the West would be called “the descent into hell”, a very popular theme of Eastern art. See (Morris 2005: 33-34).

12 The Dome above the Edicule constructed in 1808-10 had to be entirely rebuilt in 1868-70. This withstood well until 1949, when it caught fire. see (Freeman-Grenville, 1987: 195)
8. The dome of the Catholicon: above this scene is the compound’s main hall, the domed Catholicon, the site of, *inter alia*, the omphalos that purportedly marks the centre of the world. There are two thrones: one is the Antiochian Throne, and the other the Throne of Jerusalem.

9. The bell tower: it is located between the two domes, in the middle of the Church, portrayed by five storeys. Here, the is tower depicted without the dome; we already know that the tower is anachronistically drawn to its full height, although an earthquake damaged the top of this structure in 1546, and in 1554, the bell tower of the basilica lost its steeple.\(^{13}\)

10. The chapel of Abraham.

11. The chapel of Golgotha: Jesus on the cross, flanked by two persons, identified as his mother Mary and John the Beloved.

12. The Cave of the invention of the Cross, and the Tormented Christ with a reed figure, and three crosses. This figure of Christ is known in devotional Latin graphics (Deluga, 2014 : 43), while in Melkite icons of Syria it appeared only at in the beginning of the 19\(^{th}\) century, as in the icon of “Tormented Christ” in Saydinaia monastery and which belongs to the school of Michael of Crete (La Croix et Zabbal 2003: 86n.57). It is also called *Ecce Homo* (Nagy 2006 : 42) with the inscription IC XC, a barefoot Jesus wearing a purple *kolobion*, with his hands bound in front of Him, a crown of thorns on His head.

---

13 Around 1170 was added, when the crusaders began to refurnish the church in a Romanesque style. (Hazard 1977: 37; Piccirillo 2009: 378).

14 The place of crucifixion was the 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 1958: 16).
Outside of the Holy of Sepulchre, the Al-Haram Area: Pl. 5, in Arabic: ‘الحرم’ separated by a wall, which opens into the centre of the city through two gates, probably the Bab Al-Hadid and Bab Al-Qattanin.

13. The Dome of the Rock: (Pl. 6), is topographically on the same axis as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It shares the same architectural design and nearly the same dimensions as the centrally located section of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (Grabar, 1996: 104-109).

14. Al-Aqsa: Traditionally, since the Crusaders’ era, Christians associated Mary with the site of this Mosque, as well as on the early Christian maps (Rubin 2013c: 360). Unfortunately, most of the Arabic inscriptions are unreadable; the names of the monasteries can be reconstructed based on a comparison between the Saydnaia proskynetaria and the proskynetarion in the Saints Peter and Paul church of the Red Sea Monastery of St. Anthony (Meinardus 1967: 312AI). Also, the map that is part of a large icon dated 1735 in the chapel of Saint George’s Monastery in the Old City of Jerusalem, (Rubin 2013b: 118–120) can be used in this respect.


16. Monastery of St. George, “Mar Girgis” which is nowadays situated in the Hârat al-Bashiti, near the Jewish Quarter15, between Jaffa Gate and the Haram ash-Sharif. The church was renovated. (Meinardus 1967: 328)

17. The Jewish Quarter.

19. The Church of St. John the Baptist: in this proskynetarion, beside the figure of the monastery, the Arabic inscription refers to “Dair al-Arman”, the Armenian monastery, which is situated off the Christian Quarter Street.

20. The Armenian Cathedral of St. James, the son of Zebedee. It is located to the right of, and just below, Zion Gate, which can be identified with the Armenian Quarter, by comparing it with the icon at the St. George Monastery in Jerusalem (Rubin 2013c: 365). The Armenian Cathedral of St James was built on a site identified as the burial place of the first bishop of Jerusalem, St James the Minor.

---

15 This monastery is depicted also in “Jerusalem map in the Munich manuscript” (Rubin 2013b: 111).
This was also traditionally the place where the head of St James the Major (the Apostle) was buried after his beheading by Herod Agrippa in AD 44\textsuperscript{16}.

21. The citadel and Tower of David: in Arabic (القلعة), near Jaffa Gate. The tower has served as the city’s Citadel since the Middle Ages.

22. The Church of St. Thekla, which is situated on the roof of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate.

23. Monastery of St. Pelagia.

24. The Church of St. Nicolas, "مار نقولا", which is situated next to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate.

25. The Church of St. Dimitri, "مار متري", which stands on the site of the ancient Hospice of St. Saba. The church is part of the buildings of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate.


27. The Church of St. Theodore near the Casa Nova.


31. Monastery of St. Archangel Michael, “Mar Mikha’il”.

32. Monastery of St. Panagia (Saydnaia) situated west of the Church of the Resurrection, Arabic inscription: Deir al-Saideh (Our Lady Monastery).

33. The Praetorium: or the fortress of Antonia. For the Christians it is the prison of Jesus.

34. Mary’s birthplace: Arabic inscription near the figure “Bait Youakem w Youhanneh” “the House of Joachim and Anna”.

35. Deir el-Adas: Significant Christian building activity occurred in the vicinity of the Via Dolorosa. It is a small Greek convent, which is located in the Muslim Quarter north of the Al-Haram area (Ben-Arieh 1975: 259).

\textsuperscript{16} See Acts 12:2.
The Gates of Jerusalem, no. 36

- Stephen’s Gate\(^{17}\) (Bab Sitt Mariam) (Meinardus 1967: 327) leads to Gethsemane and the Tomb of the Holy Virgin, and used by the pilgrims on their way to the Via Dolorosa.

- The Golden Gate (Bab al-Rahmah): This remarkable Byzantine monument is still standing (Jeffery 1919: 137). According to tradition, Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem through this gate. In 629 A.D., Emperor Heraclius entered the City through this gate, returning the Holy Cross; the Ottomans sealed it in 1530. It is represented on the icon as a door with two leaves, in conformity to what we know for the Crusader period: two wooden doors in both the inner and outer portals, covered, as were the other city gates, with iron plates (J. Boas 2001: 63–64). Near to this door, Issa Al Qudsi depicted the suicide of Judah, Youdas "يوضس".

- The Dung Gate, Bab al-Magharbeh, “the Gate of the Moors”, because Muslim immigrants from North Africa settled in that part of the city in the 16th century. It leads to the Valley of Siloam and the road to Bethlehem.

- The Gate of Zion, Bab Nabi Daud, “the Gate of the Prophet David”, because his tomb is located, according to legend, on Mount Zion. In the eastern side, opens into one of the towers of the city-wall, built by Suleiman the Magnificent, which was built over another medieval tower (J. Boas 2001: 56). Historically, Suleiman the Magnificent opened six gates in his wall, and it is clear that all were planned by the same hand; a straight or slightly curved lintel, above which is an Arabic inscription, is set slightly inside a higher broken arch. Only Herod’s Gate, Damascus Gate, Jaffa Gate, and Zion Gate retain their original L-shaped entry (Murphy-O’Connor 2008: 13).

- Jaffa Gate, Pl. 7 (Bab al-Khalil) in the south side of the map. It is the only one on the west side of the city, while in the proskynetaria, it is unusually on the southern side.

- Herod’s Gate or Bab ez-Zahr, ‘the Flowered Gate’, only opened once a year, on the left side.

\(^{17}\) Suleiman called the east gate of the city Bab el-Ghor, ‘the Jordan Valley Gate’, but this name never took root. An earlier gate on roughly the same spot was called St Stephen’s Gate, and this was the name that remained among the Christian communities (Murphy-O’Connor 2008: 21)
- Damascus Gate, (Bab al-Amud) or the Gate of the Column, the basic centre of communications for the city.

The exterior of Jerusalem

The Saydnaia icon depicts the Holy Places beyond the City Wall, from the river Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea. To the east, along the map’s upper reaches, are the (from left to right): the Hula Lake, the Sea of Galilee (Sea of Tiberias), the Jordan River, and the Dead Sea.

37. The site of the Baptism and the scene of the Baptism, (Pl. 8). This site was a significant location location for pilgrims to visit during the Ottoman period. Only those who had bathed in the Jordan River received a certificate from the Patriarchate, bought a proskynetarion, and saw the Holy Fire (Izmirlieva 2014: 332) were considered real hajjis.

38. The Sea of Galilee, (Tabariyya, Lake Tiberias) and Jisr Banât Yaʿqūb.

39. Symbol of an Evangelist (perhaps Luke). Occasionally, the symbols of the four Evangelists are present in the proskynetaria. Deluga notes that “this refers to the tradition of putting such elements in antimensia, which in the modern times very often assume a graphic form. In the 17th and 18th centuries, antimensia, which until then had had only liturgical functions, started to be used also as memorabilia of a church consecration. They were not only placed on altars, but also put into frames and hung in Orthodox churches” (Deluga 2014: 44).
40. Jesus’s Prayer in the Gethsemane, with the Arabic inscription “ابانا الذي في السموات”, “Our Father who is in heaven”.
41. Symbol of Matthew (the Angel).
42. The Dead Sea.
43. The Church of the Ascension on the Mount of Olives. The Church is portrayed with a central dome flanked by two towers. In 1178, the Church of the Ascension was transformed into a mosque, and the Greeks celebrated the Divine Liturgy in its courtyard on the day of the Feast of the Ascension.
44. Jesus enters Jerusalem.
45. Three fathers of Church (The Three Hierarchs).
46. Jesus and Martha, when she meets Him outside the village.
47. al Azariah, “عازرية”, Bethany, and The Church of the Sepulchre of Lazarus, (Pl. 9). The Arabic name el-Azariyeh preserves the Greek Lazarion, “the place of Lazarus”. By the end of the fourteenth century the original entrance to the tomb of Lazarus had been turned into a mosque. The Muslims also venerated the raising of Lazarus and at first permitted Christians to continue their liturgical visits. When this became progressively more difficult, the Franciscans cut the present entrance to the tomb between 1566 and 1575, (Murphy-O’Connor 2008 : 152) and later erected the new church.
50. Monastery of St. Saba in Wadi an-Nar. Among the buildings, we can identify the Church of the Annunciation. On the left side of the monastery, the Tower of Eudoxia, also known as the Tower of St. Simeon Stylite. A monk on the roof of the tower holds a rope. Perhaps he is ringing the bells announcing the arrival of food at the lavra\textsuperscript{18}.

51. Bethlehem.

52. Siloam, سلوان and the blind man whom Jesus, according to the New Testament, healed at this location. The waters of Gihon still flow from the Virgin’s Fountain (Baert 2014 23) to the Pool of Siloam. The memory of the miracle of Siloam caused the waters of the pool\textsuperscript{19} to be considered sacred to Christians. Siloam is still found today in that part of Jerusalem known as the City of David, outside the city walls. This pool survives to the present day, surrounded by a high stone wall with an arched entrance to Hezekiah’s tunnel\textsuperscript{20} which was discovered in the 19th century. The pool is depicted with an arched entrance, like in the Hama proskynetaria\textsuperscript{21} while in the Zakynthos Map-Icon, the Siloam Pool is depicted as a cave with the stairs and the outflow of water (Rubin 2013a: 115).

53. “ناصرا”, “Nassera”, the city of Nazareth, depicted as complex of buildings representing the Church of the Annunciation (Pl. 10).

54. The Dormition of the Theotokos icon, “نياحة السيدت” Pl.10.

55. Jesus on the throne.

56. St. Mary the Egyptian receiving the Eucharist from St. Zosimas in the desert east of the Jordan.

57. “الجسثمانية”, Gethsemane. St. Mary’s Tomb is first mentioned historically by John Damascene. (Jeffery 1919: 180); since 1757 is shared by the Greeks and the Armenians. The church was built by

\textsuperscript{18} See A I, AII, AHI. (Meinardus 1967: 320)

\textsuperscript{19} The pool of Siloam is mentioned already in Isaiah, also in the New Testament, 8. 6: “Because this people have refused the waters of Shiloah that flow gently”.

\textsuperscript{20} Ronny Reich and Eli Shukron claim that the tunnel dated before Hezekiah. “An unavoidable historical conclusion of this study is that the hewing of the Siloam Tunnel cannot be attributed to Hezekiah. This project was carried out under one of the Judahite kings who predated him, probably during a period as early as the days of Jehoash. When Hezekiah was facing the threat of an Assyrian siege, the Siloam Tunnel had already been functional for several decades. See Reich et Shukron, 2011 154. And before them John Rogerson and Philip R. Davies also argued similarly. See Rogerson and Davies 1996.

\textsuperscript{21} Moreover in A I, AII, AIII (Meinardus 1967: 320).
the Crusaders around the year 1130. The *proskynetarion* portrays the staircase leading to the underground tomb. Under it there Baruch and saint Mary of Egypt, are sleeping (Pl. 10).

58. Heavenly Jerusalem, “الجنة”, Paradise, represented by a walled city. There are Ibrahim and the good thief. Four rivers lead out from the city, Pl. 11.

59. Jesus the true Vine.

60. St. George, مار جرجس.

61. St John the Baptist beheaded.

62. Jaffa: (Pl. 12) Although the inscription of Jaffa’s name is unreadable, it can be identified through a comparison with the *proskynetarion* of the Church of St. Shenute in Old Cairo, 1767 (Meinardus 1967: 314A III). Babraj supposes that pilgrims arrived at the port of Jaffa (Nagy 2006: 42), the most important harbour in late and early post-Byzantine Palestine (Külzer 2002: 157) and also at the beginning of 15th century (Grouian and 2013: 39).

63. Jacob’s well, Jesus and the woman of Samaria²²: Sychar village. In the fourth century, Eusebius and the Bordeaux Pilgrim, both mention a Sychar, distant from Shechem (Smith 1901: 369). Also, the abbot Daniel (1106-1107) speaks of “the hamlet of Jacob called Sychar. Jacob’s well is there, near this place, at half a vest away, is the town of Samaria (Smith 1901: 370).

---

²² Next to the Samaritan woman and close to the wall, the idea that the salvation of God may be readily symbolized by the refreshing power of water receives artistic expression in pictures of the Baptism of Christ or Moses striking the rock (Milburn 1988: 66).
64. Two angels, probably Michael and Gabriel.

65 and 68. The Story of the Tree of Life and the Cross of Christ (Meinardus 1967: 321-322). The idea of the relationship of these two woods goes back to the second century. A version of the story speaks of a twig of the Tree of Life, which was given to Seth and which he planted at the head of Adam’s grave, where Lot watered it. The devil appeared in a variety of forms and drank the life-giving water for the tree. Solomon ordered the tree to be cut down and be used for his palace, but the tree could not be felled. According to another version, the tree was cut down by Hiram for the building of the Temple but it was rejected and became part of the bridge across the Cedron, where it was recognized by the Queen of Sheba. The queen, who had a vision seeing the Redeemer hanging from that tree, refused to cross the bridge; she had seen the tree in the courtyard of Solomon’s Palace and prophesied that someone would hang and his death would bring to the end of the kingdom of the Jews. Solomon ordered the tree to be hidden in the deepest part of the earth, at which place the pool of Bethesda originated. Here, not only the Angel of the Lord troubled the water, but the therapeutic quality of the water was also attributed to the power of the tree. When the Passion of Christ approached, the wood came to the surface of the water, and the Jews used it for the Cross. This story, of which there are several versions, appears in the various forms on many proskynetaria. In one version, Lot is in front of an “Ibrahim” when he confessed, followed by the scene of the watering of the tree by Lot (Pl. 13). Lot appears as an old man with a long grey beard, wearing a green garment: he waters the tree with three branches from a jar. “And the devil is drinking water from Lot” (the Arabic inscription says: Lot is watering [...] the Devil). To his left is a white horse, holding a jar and to his right appears a devil. The story continues when Solomon came (inscription: the king) and

Plate 13: The watering of the tree by Lot
cut the tree. To his left he is pointing at the bough of the three-branched tree that a man is just cutting off to use it for the building of the king’s church. Further away, three servants are carrying a branch resembling an elongated wooden board on their shoulders.

66. Symbol of an Evangelist.

67. “المصلبة” Monastery of the Holy Cross: In front of Jerusalem stands the Monastery of the Cross, which is located west of Jerusalem (Pl. 3).

69. Symbol of an Evangelist.

70. The flight into Egypt and “الملوك الثلاثة” here, “the three kings” refer to the three Magi.

71. Perhaps St. George’s Monastery.

72. St Dimitri, “مار متري” in the Arabic inscription.

73. Prophet Elijah, “مار الياس”.

74. Elijah’s Monastery: despite the absence of an inscription indicating the name of the complex of buildings and a walled square, it can be identified as the Monastery of Elias, since the painter Issa depicted it near Bethlehem on the map. There is an icon of the Prophet Elias (in Arabic: Mar Elias) next to the convent. This monastery is located on the Jerusalem-Bethlehem road, and it commemorates the site where, according to tradition, Elijah rested during his flight from the vengeance of Jezebel (1 Kings 19) (Arad, 2009: 1 note. 4).

75. The Church of the Nativity: The large basilica on the adjacent mountainside is the Church of the Nativity, and behind it buildings represent Bethlehem. This depiction gives the impression that Bethlehem is graphically located in the eastern section of the city. The painter borrowed some Latin themes: Joseph is depicted kneeling in front of the stable as Mary does.

76. The Tree of Jesse, “العدرا مريم” the Virgin Mary.

Thoughts about 18th-century proskynetaria in Syria and its sepulchre

Immerzeel (Immerzeel, Deluga, and Lapata 2005: 28) states the presence of five proskynetaria icons in Syria, while the archives of the Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums, (1973, church of Our Lady of the Entry, Hama) mentions forty; however in the archives of 2006, there are no mentions. The following have been identified:
- Saydnaya: Monastery of Our Lady church; 1838 [1833?]; signed by Issa al-Qudsi (Immerzeel 1999: no. 33); Immerzeel has dated this icon to 1738-39 (Immerzeel 2005: 24), we also know that Issa al-Qudsi painted the icon of St Basil, in Hama, no. 63, dated to the eighteenth century by Elias Al-Zayat. (Zayat 1987: no. 25)
- Damascus: private collection; 1881 (Immerzeel 1998a: 67-68, 70-72, Fig.6; Immerzeel 1999: no. 35).

As we mentioned above, another proskynetarion is dated to the 18th in situ at the entry to the Lady’s Church in Hama, dated in 1748. This icon, Hama proskynetarion was painted with oil on canvas. The scheme, Pl. 14, 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). At the center stands the city of Jerusalem. Like our icon, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher commands the majority of the city’s space. These proskynetarion can be classified as hagiographic-topographic proskynetaria which dominated the production during the eighteenth century as Immerzeel says, but over time, probably during the nineteenth century, hagiographic representations prevailed (Immerzeel 2005: 23).

By comparing with these two schemes; one of Saydnaya’s proskynetarion and with Hama’s proskynetarion, It could to conclude that the Church of the Holy Sepulcher during 18th century’s proskynetaria is depicted contains as follows:

1. The Rotunda.
2. The Tomb.
3. The chapel of Constantine and Helen inside.
4. The stone of the Tomb, the patriarch of Jerusalem receives the Holy
The right part of the church contains the following edifices:
The compound’s main hall, the domed Catholicon – site of, inter alia, the omphalos that allegedly marks the center of the world.
The main entrance, built as a double gate during the Crusader era, is accurately drawn, with its right (eastern) half blocked by a solid wall. It was closed by Saladin, as is the case to this day. The other door has been entrusted to the custody of two Muslim families (Meinardus 2005: 48).

5. The Chapel of Our Lady of Sorrows, the chapel of the Franks. The stairs to the right on the outer facade lead to a chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows — known as the Chapel of the Franks — which was used to give access directly to the Calvary. Directly beneath it, there is an oratory dedicated to St. Mary of Egypt. Moreover, a staircase at the bottom of this area leads down to the cave, the Chapel of the Finding of the Holy Cross, where Helen has discovered the Cross.

A two-story structure consisting of three vaulted chapels. The most venerated part, the Chapel of Crucifixion, has its eastern side laid upon the natural rock, which, according to Christian tradition, is the actual spot where The Cross was placed. 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. 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.

6. The stone of anointment: it can be seen above the entrance, which in reality is located just beyond the entrance.

7. Jesus Christ.
8. The Chapel of Golgotha.
9. The chapel of Abraham.

_23_ 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 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 (Izmirlieva 2014: 334).
Conclusion

In conclusion, the Holy Land has always played an essential role in the thoughts of the oriental Christian and the sacred places and the territories surrounding them held ideological significance. In the end, our proskynetarion is not seen as a survey of topographical reality and visualization of landscapes and places, but as a multipurpose religious souvenir from the Holy Land. No doubt, the pilgrim named Magdalena used the Kharetat al mousafer as an object both for positioning herself in geographic space and a souvenir. She came to Saydnaia monastery, the second most important pilgrimage place after the Church of the Sepulchre and endowed it to the convent. The 18th century Saydnaia proskynetarion covers a wide part of the Holy Land, from the shores of the Mediterranean Sea in the West to the Sea of Tabariyya, the Jordan River, and the Dead Sea to the East. This icon has the zigzag-patterned wall of Jerusalem. It might be inferred that it depicts Jerusalem and the Holy Land in numerous visual elements of Old and New Testament narratives, related with the life and activity of Christ in Palestine, and related to apocryphal stories. These images range compositionally around a large panel depicting the interior of the Holy Sepulchre, where a representation of the central pilgrimage event, the Descent of the Holy Fire by the Orthodox patriarch, constitutes both the visual and the semantic centre. Thus, the iconographic program of the proskynetarion echoes the ritual program of the pilgrimage itself. These proskynetaria as narrative icons served as loci memoriae meant to “bring back the memory of a past moment of sacred history, and to catch a glimpse of what promised to come (Antonova 2010: 86.). In addition, the Saydnaia proskynetarion can be interpreted as a statement to affirm the authority of the Orthodox Church on the Holy Land. it could be concluded that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is depicted in high details 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.

Finally, the conclusion shows that at the beginning of the eighteenth century, hagiographic-topographic proskynetaria dominate. By the end of eighteenth century, hagiographic representations became dominant.

May 2019
BIBLIOGRAPHY

ABOU ACKL R., 2018, “The Construction of Architectural Background of Melkite feast icon, the Annunciation icon as an example”, Chronos, vol. 38, pp. 147-170, DOI: 10.31377/chr.v38i0.346.

ANTONOVA C., 2010, 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, Ashgate studies in theology, imagination and the arts.


Kharetat al mousafer, an 18th century proskynetarion of Jerusalem


RAHEB A., 1981, Conception of the Union in the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch (1622-1672): Historical Art, Beirut, [s.n].


RUBIN R., 2013a, “e-Perimeton: Greek-Orthodox maps of Jerusalem from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries”, vol. 8, no. 3.

RUBIN R., 2013b, “Greek-Orthodox maps of Jerusalem from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries”, e-Perimeton, vol. 8, no. 3.


