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## Chapter 3

# ***Translatio Templi: A Conceptual Condition for Jerusalem References in Medieval Scandinavia***

The present volume traces Jerusalem references in medieval Scandinavia. An important condition for these references is the idea of Christians' continuity with the biblical Jerusalem and the Children of Israel. Accordingly, as part of an introduction to the topic, an explanation of this idea is useful and is given in the following.

According to the Bible, God revealed himself to the Jews and ordered a house to be built for his dwelling among his people.<sup>1</sup> The high priest was the only one allowed to enter His presence in the innermost of the Temple – the Holy of Holies was the exclusive meeting place between God and man. This was where the Ark of the Covenant was preserved, and it was the place for the offering at the Atonement day. The Old Testament temple cult is of fundamental significance for the legitimation of the Christian Church. Although this legitimation has always depended on the idea of continuity between Jewish worship and Christian worship, the continuity has been described variously throughout history. To the medieval Church, a transfer of both divine presence and sacerdotal authority from the Old to the New Covenant was crucial. At the beginning of the twelfth century, which was both in the wake of the first crusade and the period when the Gregorian papacy approved the new Scandinavian Church province, a certain material argument of continuity occurred in Rome that can be described according to a model of *translatio templi*.<sup>2</sup>

The notion of *translatio* can be used to characterize a wide range of phenomena and has been one of several related approaches to establish continuity over time in western history.<sup>3</sup> The “translation of the empire,” *translatio imperii*, was defined by

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1 1 Kgs 6:8.

2 The term *translatio templi* was not an established term in medieval exegetical literature; it does not occur explicitly in the sources, but is a construction which enables the comprehension of a certain phenomenon over time, cf. Eivor Andersen Oftestad, *The Lateran Church in Rome and the Ark of the Covenant: Housing the Holy Relics of Jerusalem with an edition and translation of the Descriptio Lateranensis Ecclesiae (BAV Reg. Lat. 712)* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2019), 11.

3 Aleida Assmann, *Zeit und Tradition: Kulturelle Strategien der Dauer* (Cologne – Weimar – Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1999), 111. Cf. also Herbert Grundmann, “Sacerdotium – Regnum – Studium. Zur Wertung

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medieval historiographers as the continuum of a single imperial authority throughout history, transferred from the East to the West. The “translation of knowledge,” *translatio studii*, was a parallel concept that referred to the transfer of culture.

The aim of *translatio* was to maintain continuity through discontinuity. According to Aleida Assmann, *translatio imperii* was a strategy to continue an imperial time-construction by means of an epoch-making transfer.<sup>4</sup> As described by medieval historians, it guaranteed that imperial authority would continue despite shifting historical reigns. In the imperial myth, the idea of *translatio* thus covered the history of the rise of one empire and the corresponding fall of another, of the conquerors and the vanquished in wars. It also guaranteed the installation of a new, legitimate empire. As the aim was to legitimize the one and only imperial authority, another characteristic of the concept of *translatio* was exclusivity: exclusive centers of authority followed one another. A simultaneous blossoming of several cultures was unthinkable.<sup>5</sup> Applied on the sacerdotal authority, *translatio* meant that as there could be only one God and one chosen people, so there could be only one temple. The notion of *translatio* also determined the Church’s reciprocal but asymmetrical relationship to the Jews.<sup>6</sup>

A *translatio* of the Temple as a general idea is found in the very earliest Christian texts. St Paul and Christ himself connected the temple to the body of Christ and, by allegorical interpretation, to the Christians and the Church.<sup>7</sup> The Church Fathers and the medieval exegetes continued this allegorical interpretation. The Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70 likewise shaped the understanding of a *translatio* from the Jewish temple to the Christian Church.<sup>8</sup> The Temple in Jerusalem was not rebuilt after its destruction in AD 70, and the physical site of the Temple Mount lost its importance to the tradition of the church. The destruction was regarded as the fulfilment of the prophecy of Jesus: “As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not

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der Wissenschaft im 13. Jahrhundert,” *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 34 (1952): 5–21; Werner Goetz, *Translatio imperii. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Geschichtsdenkens und der politischen Theorien im Mittelalter und in der früheren Neuzeit* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1958); Frans J. Worstbrock, “*Translatio artium*. Über die Herkunft und Entwicklung einer kulturhistorischen Theorie,” *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 47 (1965): 1–22; Marie-Dominique Chenu, *Nature, Man, and Society in the Twelfth Century: Essays on New Theological Perspectives in the Latin West*, trans. J. Taylor and L.K. Little (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 162–210.

<sup>4</sup> Assmann, *Zeit und Tradition*, 111.

<sup>5</sup> Assmann, *Zeit und Tradition*, 112.

<sup>6</sup> Jews differed from the Gentiles because they had been the chosen people but were now “blinded” and “deprived” of God’s grace.

<sup>7</sup> John 2:19–21 and 1 Cor 3:16–17.

<sup>8</sup> For example, Augustine’s tractates on the Gospel of John, nos. 10.11; 12.7,8; 15.25, in Augustine of Hippo, *In Iohannis Evangelium Tractatus CXXIV*, ed. R. Willems, CCSL 36, Turnhout: Brepols, 1954.

be thrown down.”<sup>9</sup> The Temple Mount thus signified the ruins of Judaism. Peter Damian’s (1007–1072) explanation is representative for this medieval mindset:

For Jerusalem was the royal city where a most renowned temple had been constructed for God; but after that [city] came that which was the true temple of God, and the heavenly Jerusalem began to reveal the mysteries, the earthly one was destroyed where the heavenly one appeared.<sup>10</sup>

Although the earthly temple was in ruins and the Temple Mount had been laid waste, the old Temple, described in the sacred texts, was still allegorically interpreted as a figure of the Church and the heavenly truth – on which it was modelled. Through the means of language, rituals, and signs derived from Jewish worship, every church became a sign of the true and uncorrupted Jerusalem which was above. This was expressed not least in the dedication rite. The church building was to represent the *Urbs beata Hierusalem*: “Blessed city of Jerusalem, called the vision of peace, which is constructed in heaven from living stones . . . newly come from heaven.”<sup>11</sup>

Before the first crusade the heavenly Jerusalem was conceived of quite independently of the earthly city. Most of the descriptions of Jerusalem before 1099 do not express any relationship between the earthly and the heavenly city. The first crusade, however, caused a shift from allegorical to literal interpretation of Jerusalem. When the crusaders climbed the walls of Jerusalem in 1099 and expelled those whom they viewed as infidels, what had earlier been said about the heavenly Church could now be applied to the earthly Jerusalem. The Al-Aqsa mosque was turned into the temple of Solomon, *Templum Salomonis*, and a royal palace, while the Dome of the Rock was integrated into the liturgical life of the newly established Latin Church of Jerusalem and became known as *Templum Domini*.<sup>12</sup> The physical site of the supposed temple of Jerusalem was thus changed in Christian topography from non-existence to importance – and its status in some respects could compete with that of the Holy Sepulchre.<sup>13</sup> The new situation suggested an identification of

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<sup>9</sup> Luke 21:6. Cf. Matt 24:2 and Mark 13:2.

<sup>10</sup> “Erat namque Hierusalem urbs illa magna regalis, ubi templum famosissimum Deo fuerat constructum; postea vero quam venit illa, qui erat verum Templum Dei, et caelestis Hierusalem caepit aperire mysteria, deleta est illa terrena, ubi caelestis apparuit,” quoted after Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture II*, trans. M. Sebanc (Edinburg: Eerdmans, 1998), 184 (Latin original in n.59).

<sup>11</sup> Louis I. Hamilton, *A Sacred City: Consecrating Churches and Reforming Society in Eleventh-Century Italy* (Manchester – New York: Manchester University Press, 2010), 5.

<sup>12</sup> The name seems to have been established during the very first year of the conquest according to the earliest descriptions.

<sup>13</sup> Not in the eyes of the pilgrims, but according to hierarchical relation. The chapter of *Templum Domini* was established shortly after the conquest in 1099–1100. Denys Pringle, *The City of Jerusalem. The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: A Corpus*, vol. III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 401. Rudolf Hiestand reports that in the middle of the century the prior and abbot of *Templum Domini* was second after the patriarch, and ranked before the prior

the Dome of the Rock/*Templum Domini* with Solomon's Temple. In Jerusalem, during the first years after the conquest, several arguments were put forth.<sup>14</sup> Did the shrine still hide the Holy of Holies? Was the Ark of the Covenant hidden below the surface? At the same time, another position in the discussion occurred in Rome. A description of the Lateran basilica (*Descriptio*), probably written shortly after the first crusade, presents a physical *translatio templi* from Jerusalem to Rome:

[. . .] and the principal <altar> of that same church is the Ark of the Lord's Covenant; or rather, as they say, the Ark is on the inside, and on the outside it is hidden by an altar, which measures the same as the Ark in length and width [. . .] Inside the altar, indeed, which is small and made from wood covered in silver, is a holy object of the following kind, a seven-branched candelabra which had been in the earlier tabernacle, of which Paul says: "the first tabernacle was made, etc." In that place there is also the rod of Aaron, which had put forth leaves, and the tablets of the testament, and the rod of Moses, with which he struck the granite twice, and the waters flowed.<sup>15</sup>

The *Descriptio* explains that the Roman emperors Titus and Vespasian brought the Temple objects to Rome after the destruction of the Temple (Fig. 3.1).<sup>16</sup> The insistence on the physical presence of the Ark and the other Temple objects was a new phenomenon strikingly different from the previous exegetical tradition, also in Rome. This literalization can be explained as a response to the new interpretation of Jerusalem and especially of the newly established *Templum Domini*. In the new situation after the first crusade, it did not suffice to claim the allegorical significance of the Old

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of the Holy Sepulchre within the charters. Cf. Rudolf Hiestand, "Gaufridus abbas Templi Domini: An Underestimated Figure in the Early History of the Kingdom of Jerusalem," in *The Experience of Crusading, 2: Defining the Crusader Kingdom*, ed. Peter Edbury and Jonathan Phillips (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 51.

**14** These arguments, in early pilgrims' guides and crusader chronicles, are presented in Oftestad, *The Lateran Church in Rome*, 84–120.

**15** "[. . .] et eiusdem ecclesie principalis est archa federis domini, vel ut aiunt archa est interius (et altare ad mensuram longitudinis latitudines et altitudinis arche conditum est exterius), [. . .] In altari vero quod parvum est et ligneum de argento coopertum, est tale sanctuarium, septem candelabra, que fuerunt in priori tabernaculo, unde paulus dicit, Tabernaculum primum factum, et cetera. Est ibi etiam virga aaron que fronde[du]erat, et tabule testamenti et virga moysi, qua percussit bis silicem et fluxerunt aque." *Descriptio Lateranensis Ecclesiae*, according to Reg.la 712, cf. *Descriptio Lateranensis Ecclesia*, ed. and trans. Eivor Andersen Oftestad, *The Lateran Church in Rome and the Ark of the Covenant*, Appendix III, (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2019), 220.

**16** "This very Ark, with the Menorah and other temple objects, Titus and Vespasian carried off from Jerusalem, or rather, they caused them to be carried away by the Jews themselves, just as it still can be seen until this day on the triumphal arch celebrating the victory, their monument, built by the senate and the Roman people," *Descriptio*, LII. ("Hanc autem archam cum candelabro et ceteris utensilibus templi tytus et vespasianus asportaverunt immo ab ipsis iudeis asportari fecerunt de iherosolimitanis partibus sicut in triumphali fornice ob victoriam et monumentum eorum a senatu et populo romano constructum usque hodie cernitur."). Cf. *Descriptio* 2019. What is here interpreted as a reproduction of the Ark on the Arch of Titus is probably a table with utensils from the temple. Cf. Diana E.E. Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 187.



**Fig. 3.1:** Roman soldiers carrying the *menorah* from the Temple of Jerusalem. Relief from the Arch of Titus, Rome, 81–85 CE.

Covenant. A new attitude to earthly Jerusalem demanded a new visualization of the Church as the legitimate successor of the Old Covenant and the Jewish temple. To secure its status as the legitimate successor, the papal cathedral of Rome claimed the physical heritage of the Temple. The discussion in Jerusalem soon adapted the same conclusion as in Rome.<sup>17</sup>

What was also new in mid-twelfth-century Rome was the explicit interpretation of the papal liturgy of Maundy Thursday as a realized imitation of the high priest's entrance to the Holy of Holies of the Temple, and likewise the explicit interpretation of the papal chapel, *Sancta Sanctorum* as the Holy of Holies.<sup>18</sup> All these expressions can be understood according to what can be characterized with the construct *translatio templi*, which meant that the place of God's grace was relocated from Jerusalem to Rome.

What can be characterized as *translatio templi* at the Lateran, was more than a local strategy of promoting holiness. The legitimization of papal authority in twelfth-

<sup>17</sup> Oftestad, *The Lateran Church in Rome*, 109–12.

<sup>18</sup> Described in a sermon by Nicolaus Maniacutius in a twelfth/thirteenth-century manuscript now preserved in Vatican City, BAV, MS Fondo S. Maria Maggiore 2, fols 237v–244r., ed. Maniacutius 1709. Parts of the sermon are published in Gerhard Wolf, *Salus populi Romani. Die Geschichte römischer Kultbilder im Mittelalter* (Weinheim: VCH, Acta Humaniora, 1990), 321–25.

century Rome was at the centre of a wider structure reaching as far as the new Church province in Scandinavia. The entire priesthood of western Christianity was understood in accordance with, but also as superior to, the figures of the Jewish priesthood. In the tradition, all the early regular canons were described according to the model of the Old Testament Levites and their service at the sanctuary.<sup>19</sup> What legitimated the authority of the pope was his cultic function according to the high priest. It has been argued that this cultic self-awareness determined the wide-ranging reform of the canons in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, a reform that was also introduced in Scandinavia with the founding of the archsee at Lund in 1104 and later at Nidaros (Trondheim) in 1152.<sup>20</sup>

While the particular argumentation concerning the Lateran Ark of the Covenant related to a certain discussion in Jerusalem after the first crusade, it was also conditioned by the general importance of physical *translatio*. Towards the Renaissance and the Reformation other understandings of continuity defined the strategy of legitimation. This becomes clear in the legitimation of the new St Peter's in Rome in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It was promoted as a rebuilding of the temple and a fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies.<sup>21</sup> What is particularly striking, compared to the previous traditions from the Lateran, is that it is no longer the Ark of the Covenant that is important as a guarantee of the *translatio templi*, but the seven-branched candlestick, the *menorah*. Moreover, the candlestick was promoted as a physical *sign* rediscovered in ancient sources – not as a present holy object.<sup>22</sup> This underlines the difference between the two concepts of the *translatio templi* in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. While the Lateran basilica was conceived of in terms of a physical succession, which was a feature of the contemporary religious culture in the twelfth century, the new St Peter's of sixteenth century can be described as an ideal reconstruction of the temple.<sup>23</sup> The humanist Lilio Tifernate (1417/8–1486), who described the history of the candlestick, also described his rediscovery of the candlestick at the relief on the Arch of Titus (Fig. 3.1) in accordance with his rediscovery of ancient texts. His description thus seems to fit the characteristics of the period's idea of *rebirth*, just as St Peter's was conceived of as a *reconstruction*. The concept of *translatio templi* in these sources differs, therefore,

<sup>19</sup> Isidore of Seville, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, ed. C.M. Lawson, CSEL 113, Turnhout: Brepols, 1989; Amalar of Metz, *Institutio canonicorum. De regula canonicorum*, ed. A. Werminghoff, MGH Concilia, 2, I, Hanover–Leipzig: MGH, 1906.

<sup>20</sup> Johannes Laudage, *Priesterbild und Reformpapsttum* (Cologne–Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1985), 300. Laudage refers to Alfons Becker, “Urban II und die deutsche Kirche,” in *Investiturstreit und Reichsverfassung*, ed. J. Fleckenstein (Sigmaringen: 1973), 241–75.

<sup>21</sup> Charles L. Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 201–26. On the rebuilding of the temple cf. e.g. Giles of Viterbo (1507), Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome*, 220.

<sup>22</sup> Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome*, 224–5; Oftestad, *The Lateran Church in Rome*, 190.

<sup>23</sup> Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome*, 222–6.

from the concept of a physical *translatio* in the medieval period. The common feature, however, is the legitimizing argument for the summit of sacerdotal authority. In both strategies, this is linked exclusively to the papal basilicas, St John the Lateran or St Peter's, by means of the localization of God's grace according to the model of the Jewish temple. This concept of *translatio templi* was a stumbling block to the Protestant reformers, like Martin Luther. According to him, it was not sacerdotal continuity that secured the legitimated presence in front of God, but rather a spiritual *translatio*. While it was still the true worship that was transferred, true worship was defined by the true distinction of Law and Gospel – from the *protogospel* in the Garden of Eden, through the promises to the Jewish people, to the Church. A new understanding of the establishment of continuity had severe consequences for the interpretation of Jerusalem in Scandinavia after the Protestant Reformation, as will be commented on in the second volume of this series.



**Fig. 4.0:** Mail-clad knights fighting sword in hand below a scene from the life of St Nicholas. Murals in the nave of Aal Church, Jutland, c. 1200–1225.