Géza Kulcsár

TOWARDS A THEORY OF HEAVENLY URBANISM: THE TOPOTHEOLOGY OF THE TWO JERUSALEMS

MA Thesis in Late Antique, Medieval and Early Modern Studies

Central European University Private University

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by

Géza Kulcsár

(Hungary)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,
Central European University Private University, Vienna, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements of the Master of Arts degree in Late Antique, Medieval and Early Modern
Studies.

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

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Author's declaration

I, the undersigned, **Géza Kulcsár**, candidate for the MA degree in Late Antique, Medieval and Early Modern Studies, declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Vienna, 17 May 2023

KULCSÁR GÉZA

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Abstract

The study of cities often deals with urbanism as an exclusively earthly, historical phenomenon. However, from the beginning of culture, there have been images and conceptions of heavenly cities in many cultures throughout the world. For Western culture and imagination, an arguably central example is the Christian notion of a Heavenly Jerusalem descending to earth at the Apocalypse. This thesis proposes the program of heavenly urbanism and undertakes a first topotheological study of the Heavenly Jerusalem. Topotheology is proposed as a transmedial methodology for investigating theological approaches to (urban) space. Here, reimagining the well-known conceptual urban triad of Henri Lefebvre, the Heavenly Jerusalem is analyzed as conceived space through exegetical texts on the Apocalypse and on the Old Testament prefigurations of the place of God on earth, from Gregory the Great to the Victorine school; as perceived space through the Apocalypse illumination tradition emerging in the Carolingian period and continued until the late Middle Ages; and as lived space through the appearance of Jerusalem on medieval maps, a cultural phenomenon reaching back to Classical sources, but representing a unique, synthetic understanding of the cosmos. Besides general conclusions on the allegorical, ecclesiological and even architectural function of the topographical and social features of the Heavenly Jerusalem, historically, a parallel trend of exegetical, illustrational and cartographical realism emerges from the multimedial study of the topotheology of the Heavenly Jerusalem put forth in present work.

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Introduction

Let us close our eyes and imagine a city. What do we see?

Probably, for our imagination, we select some of the endless aspects of a concept and phenomenon that, without exaggeration, functions as an embodiment and receptacle of almost everything that characterizes human presence on earth. Do we see a well-planned set of buildings, walls, streets and squares? Or the masses moving through and between them, in a seemingly endless flow known as urban life? Or the spatio-social and economic processes and divisions emerging from the structure of the city?

The program of heavenly urbanism and the scope of topotheology

We tend to think about urbanism in very pragmatic, worldly terms: as a multidisciplinary field that deals with how we should shape and live our cities.[1] However, there are also cities in heaven.

In the Revelation of John, we receive an architectural account of "the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God." (Rev 21:2) Thus, we also learn that Christian tradition sees the spatial structure of the end of times (those times which have sprung forth from a Garden, another basic topological paradigm) embodied in a final city, with a surprisingly elaborate description of its architecture, topography and even sociology.

Notice that such an urban image, in turn, does not necessarily consist exclusively of spatial features. On the contrary, many references in the text of the Revelation as well as in exegesis, seemingly topographical or spatial on the surface, convey profound spiritual, allegorical and

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[1] For a fairly recent, comprehensive overview on cities in history, cf. Peter Clark, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Cities in World History*, Reprint edition (Oxford New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

theological meaning. In the following, the central notion of the thesis, *topotheology,* will be understood as this complex: the conceptual space of theological insights and symbols, being topographically relevant, yet not necessarily spatially or physically conceived.

Topotheology, as understood in the thesis, is my own terminology. One of the more general future perspectives of the present work is to present a first experiment in what might become a new methodological perspective in research on the history of religion, to test its potentials, merits, and limitations. Note that there is at least one use of the term before in religious studies (spelled as topo-theology), appearing in the context of studying (re)locations of divine places within urban political theory.[2] Here, onto-topo-theology appears in the context of politology, and is concerned with the relation of place, religiosity, and secularity. In contrast, the topotheology introduced by me is rooted in exegetical practice, i.e., theological tradition *per se,* and refers to an analysis of its approach to (urban) space.

Selection of sources: a conceptual triad and its limitations

Accordingly, while present work focuses solely on the heavenly urbanism of the New Jerusalem, a conceptual foundation for topotheological studies might also emerge. A commonplace of theoretical urban studies, but a useful and convincing commonplace indeed, the urban triad of Henri Lefebvre (1901-1991) proved to be an appropriate starting point for numerous philosophical, sociological and architectural investigations of the city. [3] Conceptualizing the city along the triad of *conceived, perceived* and *lived* space turns out to be a relevant framework for topotheology, if each of the aspects is ordered to a fitting mode of

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[2] "Introduction," in Hent de Vries, ed., *Religion: Beyond a Concept* (Fordham University Press, 2008), 18.
[3] Henri Lefebvre, *La production de l'espace*. 4th ed. Paris: Anthropos, 2000. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith as *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991). For later approaches, cf. Kanishka Goonewardena et al., eds., *Space, Difference, Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre*, 1st edition (New York: Routledge, 2008).

exegesis – in the context of the exceptional and unique urban theologeme known as the Heavenly Jerusalem.

My proposal, i.e., the organizing principle of the thesis is to render conceived space as theological urban theory (in this concrete case, as textual exegesis on the Heavenly Jerusalem), perceived space as visualizations thereof (concretely, Apocalypse illuminations showing the Heavenly Jerusalem), and lived space as the appearance of those theological motifs in depictions of the *saeculum,* the inhabited world (here, allegorizing medieval maps of the world).

I limit myself to an analysis of the Western (Latin) theological canon. Arguably, the preoccupation with the Apocalypse is more a genuinely Western phenomenon than a pan-Christian one. Looking at potential sources, one finds that both commentaries and illustrations are rather scarce in the Eastern Church, and appear, in both cases, much later and much more hesitantly than their Western counterparts. While the Revelation of John has been (at least *de facto*) canonical, even if not unanimously accepted for church reading, from the third or fourth century in the West, the Greek Church only accepted it as part of the canon at the Third Council of Constantinople (680). The first Eastern Apocalypse commentary by Oecumenius in the late sixth century comes centuries later than the first Latin one. Also, the first Eastern illustrations, to be found in Armenian Bibles (and not in illuminated Apocalypses as in the West), date to the 1260s, while the rich tradition of Western Apocalypse illumination started already in the early ninth century.[4]

The definitely non-exhaustive choice of sources, authors and images emerges from secondary literature, in an attempt to recapitulate those written and visual works that consensually play a

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[4] Richard K. Emmerson, *Apocalypse Illuminated: The Visual Exegesis of Revelation in Medieval Illustrated Manuscripts*, 1st edition (University Park, Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 2018), 7.

central role in our scholarly understanding of relevant Biblical commentary and visual exegesis. I hope that the elaboration of the concrete material will provide enough clues for the motivation of including certain sources. Of course, there is much more omitted than considered, an admitted inherent limitation of the methodological litmus test I perceive this thesis to be.

From patristic theology to theological cartography: the structure of heavenly urbanism

As mentioned before, the topotheological investigation of the two Jerusalems rests on three pillars: an analysis of written exegesis, with particular focus on major commentaries of the Apocalypse and of Ezekiel (Chapter I); of visual exegesis, especially the representation of the Heavenly Jerusalem in Apocalypse illuminations (Chapter II); and of "geographical exegesis" on medieval *mappaemundi* and other maps of the Holy Land (Chapter III).

Throughout my elaboration, I follow a predominantly thematic organization of the source material, as opposed to a chronological survey. It is, anyway, not among the ambitions of the present thesis to serve as a comprehensive survey on any of the studied traditions, on each of which a vast number of excellent scholarly works have been written.[5] Instead, as laid out in the

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[5] On Jerusalem in general and on the relation of the real and the ideal Jerusalem in particular, cf. e.g., Suleiman A. Mourad, Naomi Koltun-Fromm, and Bedross Der Matossian, eds., *Routledge Handbook on Jerusalem* (London: Routledge, 2018); Bianca Kühnel, *The Real and Ideal Jerusalem in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Art: Studies in Honor of Bezalel Narkiss on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday* (Jerusalem, 1998); Nitza Rosovsky, *City of the Great King: Jerusalem from David to the Present*, First Edition (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1996). On medieval notions of the apocalypse as such, cf., e.g., Eric Knibbs, Jessica A. Boon, and Erica Gelser, eds., *The End of the World in Medieval Thought and Spirituality*, 1st ed. 2019 edition (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019); Richard K. Emmerson and Bernard McGinn, eds., *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, 1st edition (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1993). For a comprehensive elaboration on Apocalypse illuminations and the Beatus canon, one can consult Emmerson, *Apocalypse Illuminated*; Wilhelm Neuss, *Die Apokalypse des Hl. Johannes in der altspanischen und altchristlichen Bibel-Illustration: (das Problem der Beatus-Handschriften)*, Spanische Forschungen der Görresgesellschaft zur Pflege der Wissenschaft im Katholischen Deutschland : Reihe 2 ; 2/3 (Münster in Westfalen: Aschendorff, 1931); John Williams, *The Illustrated Beatus: A Corpus of Illustrations on the Commentary on the Apocalypse, Volume I: Introduction*, Illustrated edition (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 1994). For the history of medieval maps of the world and the Holy Land, see J. B. Harley and David Woodward, eds., *The History of Cartography: Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean, Vol. 1*, First edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); P. D. A. Harvey, *The History of Topographical Maps: Symbols, Pictures and Surveys*, First Edition (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980); P. D. A. Harvey, *Medieval Maps of the Holy Land*, First Edition

title of the work and in the methodological remarks above, I seek to take the first steps towards establishing an interdisciplinary and transmedial methodology for an urbanism that is not tied to empiricism, sociology and topography. In turn, the present work is probably best read as a case study experiment for heavenly urbanism, on the central example of the duality of the earthly and the heavenly Jerusalem.

Each of the three chapters is naturally subdivided into three further main parts. Chapter I deals with textual exegesis; in particular, after an introductory recapitulation of the topotheologically relevant parts of the originating text of Heavenly Jerusalem imagination, Revelation 21-22, it first revisits major commentaries on the tabernacle and on Ezekiel's vision of a perfect city, arguably the central Old Testament images influencing the notion of a Heavenly Jerusalem. Thereafter, often citing the same exegetes, I survey the topotheological aspects of commentaries on Heavenly Jerusalem. Finally, based on theological insights into heavenly topography and geometry, I address a central issue of representing Jerusalem in writing, or even in images (cf. Chapter II and III): that of the circle-square duality as a basic concern for sacred geometry and topography.

Chapter II shows a somewhat similar pattern: after looking at the emergence of the Apocalypse illumination tradition, in the main part of the Chapter, I analyze the Beatus image cycle, arguably a central example for visual Apocalypse exegesis and of topotheology in general. Thereupon, I look at if and how the perception and visual representation of the Heavenly Jerusalem has changed in the late Middle Ages.

Chapter III, in a similar manner, starts out with delineating an early *mappamundi* tradition that also links sacred cartography with the rest of the thesis: the world maps found in the Beatus

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(London: British Library, 2012); Dan Terkla and Nick Millea, eds., *A Critical Companion to the English Medieval Mappae Mundi of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (Oxford: Boydell & Brewer, 2019).

pictorial canon, also referring to their roots in Late Antique and early medieval cartography. Then, we turn to the rich Anglo-French tradition of *mappaemundi,* and of Palestine and Jerusalem maps of a smaller scope, concluding with an investigation of three important medieval world maps with Jerusalem (in one exceptional case, in its heavenly form) explicitly residing in the center of the world. The circle of time, and with it, the thesis, thus closes.

A note on linear history and metanarratives

If we look at the approaches towards the Heavenly Jerusalem from the Apocalypse commentaries of the Fathers to the maps of the High and Late Middle Ages, a pattern emerges: a pattern that moves from words to images, from a praise of God's work through theological knowledge to the domination of scientific and everyday usefulness; from knowing Him to living (in) His world (with the Crusades as a historical and the work of Hugh and Richard of Saint Victor as an exegetical turning point). It often seems dubious to discern everywhere metahistorical patterns of a permanent shift into higher and higher degrees of some grand narrative; but often, one just cannot unsee a movement that emerges in front of them, even if it appears, indeed, as a gradual move towards the scientism and immanentism of that metanarrative which came to be called modernism.

Chapter I: Space Conceived – Founding the Eternal City

"...God's dwelling place is now among the people..."

(Rev 21,3)

In this chapter, I set out for the work of structurally analyzing the text of the Revelation of John, along with its potential Old Testament influences and patristic reception. Chapter 21 of the Revelation initiates an abundantly rich and centuries-long tradition of representing the heavenly city, the New or Heavenly Jerusalem — in order to receive some structural clues on the topography of heavenly urbanism.

John's exposition of the Heavenly Jerusalem, as it descends to Earth at the Apocalypse, runs from Revelation 21:1 to 22:5. The account of how the angel reveals to John the descension of the New Jerusalem, followed by a quite detailed and physically as well as materially elaborate description of the city's dimensions, the precious stones it is built of, etc., comes right after the Last Judgment in John's narrative. Thus, the heavenly city, in its very real (even if overly idealistic and unrealistically sized) urban form, appears on the stage of the apocalypse as a cosmic seal of the end of times - where Heaven will indeed be a place on Earth.

What on earth is a Heavenly City?

While the city as a spatio-social construct seems to be a universal cultural constant, the notions attached to it, and the (spiritual and practical) functions it serves may vary largely in different epochs, at different places. [6] As one would expect, there have been a number of proposals for general urban typologies in the literature of urbanism, with various scales and scopes. It

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[6] On conceptions of holy cities, cf. Werner Müller, *Die heilige Stadt: Roma quadrata, himmlisches Jerusalem und die Mythe vom Weltnabel* (W. Kohlhammer, 1961).

suffices to recall now the appealingly coarse and, maybe due to this, influential (but, of course, dated and not unproblematic) classification of Max Weber, dividing historical cities into Oriental and Occidental ones, respectively, according to their structure and functions, correlating with the historical context in which they originate.[7]

Assuming that the New Jerusalem was, at least in its overall complexity, "founded" in that very moment when the author of Revelation has chosen to describe it (traditionally dated around 95 AD[8]) as it appeared in his vision, we find that it does not only resolve the Oriental-Occidental dichotomy, but it unwillingly absorbs into its conceptual and actual form many different city types and notions. There is, of course, the earthly city of Jerusalem in Palestine, the holy city of Biblical history. Around the time of writing the Apocalypse, Jerusalem had become a Roman city, both politically and urbanistically (however, it only got renamed to Aelia Capitolina somewhat later than the supposed writing date of the Revelation, during Hadrian around 130 AD[9]). This is also the period from which we have a detailed understanding of the spatial and social structures of cities in a heavily Hellenized Palestine.[10] But what was the genuine Jewish city like before the Romans came? There is scarce archeological evidence, and Biblical and Talmudic references to the notion of a city are almost exclusively of spiritual and religious character. A typical city of Hebrews might have already been something fusing Oriental and Occidental features of the Weberian typology.[11]

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[7] Max Weber, *The City*, ed. Don Martindale, trans. Gertrud Neuwirth, 2nd edition (Free Press, 1966). For a more recent critical reflection, cf. Hinnerk Bruhns, ed., *Max Weber Und Die Stadt Im Kulturvergleich* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000).

[8] Pheme Perkins, *Reading the New Testament: An Introduction*, Revised, Enlarged, Subsequent edition (New York, N.Y: Paulist Pr, 1988), 19.

[9] David Golan, "Hadrian's Decision to Supplant 'Jerusalem' by 'Aelia Capitolina,'" *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 35, no. 2 (1986): 226–39.

[10] Cf. Daniel Sperber and Joshua Schwartz, *The City in Roman Palestine*, 1st edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[11] In essence, Weber's argument for a division between Eastern and Western cities relies on the emergence of an autonomous, unified urban citizenry in the West – a sort of secular *ecclesia*, one might say.

But, of course, it is not only Jerusalem and early Palestinian cities which play a role for the foundation of the Heavenly Jerusalem. Its idea was born in an intellectual context heavily influenced by Greek philosophy and especially Plato, who has dealt with the city in depth from (at least) two perspectives: cosmologically and metaphysically in *Timaeus* and *Critias*, and, broadly speaking, socially in *Republic*. The former approach, then, proliferated an abundant tradition of discussing metaphysics through an urban lens, i.e., through the myth of Atlantis and the intellectual reality of Plato's Athens. The latter, in turn, also made a huge career in intellectual history, becoming a foundation stone not only for political theory, but also for our understanding of urban communities in general.

The characteristically Christian community notion of *ecclesia* (the word for a citizen's assembly in ancient Greece), probably partly due to Hellenistic influences, also becomes a central feature of the Heavenly Jerusalem and especially its later theological reception, as elaborated throughout the thesis.

However, the goal of the present work is not to write a cultural history of the city as such, but to lay a methodological foundation for a topotheology through the study of the Heavenly Jerusalem and its earthly reflections. In the following, as a kind of guidance for later elaborations in the thesis, let us distill from the text of Rev 21:1-22:5 the main urban features we are interested in a topotheological investigation of Heavenly Jerusalem.

- The topic of an eternal city *descending* like a *bride* coming to the *Lamb* features in Rev 21:2 and 21:9-10:

  "I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. […] [The angel said:] "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." And he carried

me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God."[12]

This part draws attention to the actual heavenly provenance of the New Jerusalem, along with an *ecclesiological* metaphor: the bride of the Lamb is nothing else than the Church itself, the ideal community of believers. The city is, indeed, not only an architectural and topographical complex, but also a community – here, a perfect community of those unified in Christ. (Cf. also Rev 21:22-27 below.)

- Rev 21:3: "And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God." It is of utmost significance that the Greek word for 'dwelling' (σκηνὴ - dwelling, σκηνώσει – will dwell) here is the same as used for the tabernacle in the Septuagint. The throne, an important symbol of Jewish mysticism, also appears here (and in Rev 21:5) to signify the *presence of God* (i.e., the *Parousia* in the original sense of the word). Creation is undone: the firmament dividing God's heavenly urban dwelling from that of man is no more. The Revelation underlines how consequent metaphysically it is to postulate an eternal Heavenly City: if man was created in God's likeness and they dwell in cities, then God must also dwell in a city – a perfect, heavenly one. (Interestingly, I could find no theological source establishing this convenient syllogism.) Based on this text, the issue of the dwelling place of God can be summarized as follows. God always had an earthly dwelling for His divine presence: the tabernacle, then, the royal sanctuary. His heavenly dwelling, which is not just a city but also the temple-palace of Hekhalot msysticism, descends to earth at the end of times to unify the dwellings of man and God and, thus, abolish all distance between them.

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[12] This and all subsequent Biblical citations are from the New International Version, 2011.

- Actual *architectural* features of the heavenly city are found in Rev 21:12-14 and 21:19:

  "It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. […] The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone."

  Notice that while many of the features of the New Jerusalem can be traced back to Old Testament prophets, this particular architectural form seems to be original, driven by the analogical symbolism of the number twelve: the number itself already plays a significant role in the Old Testament, as also attested by the mention of the twelve tribes of Israel here.

- Connected to the previous point, but of a slightly different semantics is the issue of the very shape of the city. The Heavenly Jerusalem is emphatically cubic, cf. Rev 21:15-17:

  "The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long. The angel measured the wall using human measurement, and it was 144 cubits thick."

  The very act of measurement (both for the city dimensions and the wall) further emphasizes the direct connection of the scene with earthly urban architecture. Through the measured dimensions, this part also continues to rely on the symbolism of the number twelve. The number 144 (twelve times twelve) in particular emphasizes how squaring can be simultaneously understood as a planning principle of the cosmos, and as a metamathematical operation. Here, it signifies the dissolving of the division between Jews (twelve tribes) and Gentiles (twelve apostles).

- The ecclesiological character of the New Jerusalem epiphany is combined with an architectural observation (the absence of a temple) in Rev 21:22-24, 26-27:

"I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life."

The notion of Jerusalem as the center of nations hearkens back to Ezekiel 5:5: "[…] This is Jerusalem, which I have set in the center of the nations, with countries all around her." (Cf. also Chapter III on Jerusalem as the center of the world.) Here, at the end of times, only the good, the glory, honor and purity enters the cosmopolis that is the New Jerusalem, the perfect apocalyptic community.

- Finally, there is a set of repeated Christological, ecclesiological and doxological motifs in Rev 22:1-3, with some further topographical details added (interestingly, rarely featured in visualizations):

"Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him."

The accentuated presence of a great street might be a sign of the prevalence of Roman urban planning principles in the intellectual context around the birth of the text of Revelation. The river of the water of life, one of the rare images of the Apocalypse which have a direct predecessor in the Gospels, underlines the topography of a Christian metahistory: mankind's soteriological journey from the Garden divided by four rivers to the City with the final source of life – the return of Paradise in urban form.

Preparing the ground for a New Jerusalem: Old Testament prefigurations

The Christian theological canon has and always had a very clear tendency to deal with the figurative and spiritual features of Old Testament narratives as prefigurations of a world of Christ, i.e., the era after the salvation and before the Last Judgment, after "the Word became flesh" and Christ was born, crucified and risen from the dead.[13] The visions of the prophets, the deeds of the kings of Israel, etc. become signs and symbols of what is to come.

At first sight, the notion of a Heavenly City, a perfect dwelling that descends at the end of times, seems to be very Christian – in turn, it appears to be an invention of the author of the Revelation, at least concerning the ecclesiological and topotheological features outlined above.

Note that some interpreters, such as Oliver Larry Yarbrough,[14] argue for a distinctly Judaism-inspired image of the Heavenly City. Certainly, there are many exalted mentions of Jerusalem in the Prophets where we clearly should not think of an earthly place, how ever holy, but a city of God which is beyond any human dwelling in perfection and majesty. Old Testament places most frequently quoted along these lines are Isaiah 52:1 (on the garments of Jerusalem) and the whole of chapter 60 (on the glory of Zion), Ezekiel 5:5 (on Jerusalem as the "center of nations"), and, most importantly, chapters 40-48 (40 in particular) with a direct prefiguration of the Revelation scene where the Heavenly Jerusalem is shown to John by an angel. Here, we might also mention the temple-palace imagery of later Hekhalot mysticism.

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[13] Cf. e.g., Steve Moyise, *The Old Testament in the New: Second Edition: Revised and Expanded*, 2nd edition (London: T&T Clark, 2015). Specifically in the context of Revelation: Gregory K. Beale, *John's Use of the Old Testament in Revelation* (London: T&T Clark, 2015).

[14] Oliver Larry Yarbrough, "The Heavenly Jerusalem and the Earthly Jerusalem," in Mourad, Koltun-Fromm, and Matossian, *Routledge Handbook on Jerusalem*, 285.

Indeed, substantial parts of the New Jerusalem account come from these Old Testament places: notably, the heavenly light and glory from Isaiah, and the measuring (founding) act of the angel, as well as the cubical geometrical (architectural) emphasis from Ezekiel. Still, with John's foundation of a Heavenly Jerusalem, a radically new spiritual and topotheological figure is born. In the Old Testament, the idealized city basically *is* a temple (at least metaphorically, concerning the allegorical emphasis on the temple in the Old Testament); the Heavenly Jerusalem emphatically contains *no sanctuary*, "because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple." (Rev 21:22) And it does much more than just shining in the glory of God: it fulfills Christ's church as "the bride, the wife of the Lamb." (Rev 21:9)

Thus, if we consider the Heavenly Jerusalem primarily as based on a set of theological motifs, we find that it is very much like the majority of New Testament imagery: it openly relies on Old Testament accounts and images, with a carefully added and accentuated layer of Christology. The idea of a Heavenly City, thus, is indeed exclusively and profoundly Christian-Apocalyptic; what lies underneath and what lends some of its spiritual and spatial features is the Perfect City, a glorious urban vision superior to any city built by man – however, it still remains a construction, an architectural feat, something born within time and history, unlike the Heavenly City which has existed eternally, revealing itself after the Last Judgment to fulfill time.

The Heavenly City is a dwelling of God, as it existed before the creation of Man (and will be offered for mankind to live eternally with God at the Apocalypse). In the Old Testament, the idea of the *place of God* is crystallized in two notions: of the tabernacle on the one hand, and the prophetic visions (primarily in Isaiah 60 and Ezekiel 40-48) of the Perfect City on the other hand. Here, we are mainly concerned with how the meaning of these sacred spatial constructs

has been received in patristic theology and, thus, how it relates to commentaries and depictions of the later and, in many aspects, originally Christian notion of the Heavenly City of Jerusalem.

Allegorical directions: Saint Gregory the Great on the city of Ezekiel

From many perspectives, the homilies of Saint Gregory the Great (c. 540-604, pontificate: 590-604) on Ezekiel represent a turning point in a distinctively Christian reception of Old Testament visions. In general, the work of Gregory is often mentioned as the beginning of a genuinely medieval theology.[15] In particular, in Book II of the Homilies as compiled together by Gregory some years after orally delivering the sermons, he chooses to focus exclusively on Ezekiel 40, the primary reference in the Old Testament for a pre-Christian conception of a perfect city of God. This choice might, indeed, be even less arbitrary, if we consider that he "was convinced that the Parousia and judgment were not far off".[16] Saint Gregory might have very well lived with imminent apocalyptic expectations.

And, thus, with a sense of topotheological space, in particular, the notion of inside and outside as a moral and ecclesiological metaphor. It is no surprise that the images of gates and directions dominate his exegesis of Ezekiel. "Whoever stands in the gate is partly inside and partly outside […]", observing that in the Gospels, Christ describes himself as the gate (John 10:3).[17] Entering the city means to enter the Church and the love of God: "He enters the building of the heavenly city who meditates by imitating the ways of the good in Holy Church."[18] Sometimes implicitly, sometimes explicitly, but Gregory's exposition of Ezekiel's city actually transposes that perfect city of God to the Heavens, to the transcendent, eschatological Heavenly Jerusalem. Christ,

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[15] Carole Straw, *Gregory the Great: Perfection in Imperfection* (University of California Press, 1991), 4.
[16] Brian E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 211.
[17] Gregory the Great, *The Homilies of Saint Gregory the Great on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel*, trans. Theodosia Gray, 2nd edition (Etna, Calif: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 1990), 167.
[18] Gregory the Great, 162.

who through the gate mystically "Himself enters into Himself through Himself", is specifically identified as the gate "that looked toward the Eastern Way". On the analogy of the Eastern direction and the beginning of the end of time, cf. Chapter III on medieval cartography, where both Eden and the head of the cosmic Christ is customarily located in the East, the direction where the light (of Christ) comes from.

Later on, the metaphor is further expanded by understanding as a gate everything opening us up to the *ecclesia*, including the Writings: "The knowledge of Holy Writ too can be fittingly understood as a gate, which, when it opens our minds, opens the door of the Heavenly Kingdom."[19] Historical time is transcended by passing the gate of the Heavenly City through reading the Scripture, as "if […] we accept the gate as Holy Writ it too has two thresholds, an outer and an inner, because it is divided into the history and the allegory."[20]

In the space of allegory, another main motif of the Homilies unfolds: the Christological and ecclesiological reading of the measurement and placement of the city and its parts, which makes out a major part of the text of Ezekiel 40. Comprehending, and finally even seeing the topotheology of the Heavenly City, as during an allegorical pilgrimage, is essential to realize our entrance into the Kingdom of God spatialized by it:

> "For one who journeys to an unknown city and hears much about it along the way, indeed comprehends some reports through reason but does not grasp others because he does not yet see it. But the citizens themselves who are in it see the things which are not uttered about it and understand those which are said about it."[21]

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[19] Gregory the Great, 180.
[20] Gregory the Great, 188.
[21] Gregory the Great, 206.

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For an example for combining architectural measurement, arithmology and allegorical topography, let us revisit Gregory's explanation of the distance of fifty cubits between the outer and the inner gate:

> "Surely eternal rest is signified by the number fifty. Then the number seven has its perfection because the number of days was complete on that day. And through the Law the Sabbath is given for rest. But seven squared is led to forty-nine, to which if one is added, fifty is attained because our every perfection will be in the contemplation of that One in the vision of Whom there will be for us no lack of salvation and joy."

We see Gregory sequentially employing two main techniques of allegorical interpretation: that of squaring, which we have already seen as an operation based on a cosmological paradigm, and adding to any number based on the Law the mystical One, viz. Christ, fulfilling and perfecting everything.

Bede on the tabernacle

About a century after Gregory, the Venerable Bede (672/3-735) emerged as a key figure in the exegetical tradition, continuing the allegorizing tradition of commenting the Bible. While his Apocalypse commentary (to be mentioned in detail later) also became a reference point for later exegesis, his work *On the Tabernacle* "for four centuries […] had stood uncontested as the definitive treatment."[22]

Bede, among others uses the architecture of the tabernacle to provide a foundation to the allegorical approach to exegesis as a general methodology (which we have already seen at Gregory). In particular, following up on the well-known Augustinian tradition of interpretation, he says on Exod 25:26 that "the table of the tabernacle has four feet because the words of the celestial oracle are customarily taken in either a historical, or an allegorical, or a tropological

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[22] Arthur G. Holder, trans., *Bede: On the Tabernacle*, 1st edition (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1994), xxiv.

(that is, moral), or even an anagogical sense."[23] However, the translator Arthur G. Holder notes in his introduction that "[e]lsewhere in the same commentary, however, Bede expounded a threefold formula of biblical interpretation. And in practice, it seems that he actually distinguished only two senses, one literal or historical and another that he named variously as 'spiritual', 'typic', 'sacramental', 'mystical', 'figurative', or 'allegorical'."[24] This combination of topological fourfoldness and spiritual duality is congruent with Gregory's understanding of the inner pilgrimage in general and, thus, with the entrance into the Heavenly Jerusalem in particular. Indeed, as Bede goes on with his exposition of the table, he ends up with a direct reference to the Heavenly City of the Revelation as an example of the highest (mystical) meaning of the Writings:

> "Anagogy (that is, speech leading to higher things) is that which discusses, in words either mystical or plain, future rewards and what the future life in heaven consists of; in plain [words], such as 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God' [Mt 5:8], and in mystical [words], such as 'Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have a right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by its gates, […]' [Rev 22:14]"[25]

Thus, even if the tabernacle as an object does not bear the dimensions of a city, but it still shares with it the same ecclesiological and allegorical significance, as signified by its shape and its separation of inside and outside. On this point, it is instructive to quote Bede's introduction to the second book of his work:

> "The tabernacle that Moses made for the Lord in the wilderness, like the temple that Solomon made in Jerusalem, designates the state of the Holy Church universal, part of which already reigns with the Lord in heaven, while part is still journeying in this present life away from the Lord, until its members die and follow after one another. The principal difference between the figures in the construction of the two houses is that the tabernacle designates the building of thc present Church, which is daily employed in its labours, while the temple designates the repose of the future Church, which is daily being perfected as it receives souls departing from this [world] after their labours. […] It is also possible to distinguish the figures of the two sanctuaries generally in this way:

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[23] Holder, 25.
[24] Holder, xviii.
[25] Holder, 26. Words in brackets added by the translator.

> the workmanship of the tabernacle is the time of the synagogue (that is, of the ancient people of God), but the workmanship of the temple signifies the Church (that is, that multitude of the elect which has come to faith after the Lord's incarnation)."[26]

The Heavenly City would, then, represent the third state of this ecclesiological journey from the tabernacle of the people of Israel to the urban Kingdom of God at the eschaton, both of which visions were delivered to its recipient (Moses and John, respectively) at a mountaintop.[27]

Richard of Saint Victor on Ezekiel's architecture

By the twelfth century, the exegetical tradition was solidified, but, at the same time, has also changed its character. Among other important institutions of carrying on this tradition, the abbey of Saint Victor near Paris emerged as a seat of learning, knowledge and wisdom. The so-called Victorine school has been thoroughly analyzed [28] as a distinct intellectual phenomenon, with its combination of (for its time) daring and open mystical inclinations, and, at the same time, the absorption of the emerging scientific-empirical worldview and cosmology, and, in turn, its reflection even in theological matters.

Among the many influential works (including a treatise on the tabernacle as well as a commentary on Revelation) of Richard of Saint Victor (died 1173), a prolific and prominent mystic theologian, the commentary on Ezekiel is particularly important for topotheology, and not only due to its elaboration on the mystical-allegorical aspects of the city of Ezekiel, but also for a novelty, even a milestone of architectural history: illustrating the text with diagrams looking as ground-plans and cross-sections, being among the earliest examples of drawings that can be properly called architectural plans.[29]

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[26] Holder, 45–46.

[27] Cf. Holder, 46–47.

[28] Cf. the 10-volume series *Victorine Texts in Translation,* Brepols, 2010-2020.

[29] Cf. Karl Kinsella, "Richard of St Victor's Solutions to Problems of Architectural Representation in the Twelfth Century," *Architectural History* 59 (2016): 3–24.

As for the text of the treatise, Richard does not depart significantly from the established tradition of prophetic and visionary exegesis:

> "[…] the architectural features painstakingly enumerated by the Prophet are in reality only disembodied props whose function is to display a higher level of significance. The citylike edifice on the mountain is thus to be understood as the Church, the elevated location pointing to the role of Ecclesia as mediatrix between Heaven and earth."[30]

But the architectural inclination, the desire for a certain degree of precision in terms of modern design, as well as the clear affinity towards the reality of building activities and of topography show that Richard approaches Ezekiel's city not only as an allegory, but as a realistic vision.

Exegetical urbanism: the topotheology of the Apocalypse commentary tradition

As we have seen, theological discussion of the figurative and architectural dimensions of the Old Testament, while clearly conscious about the radical shift of thinking brought about by Christ, is still mainly characterized and driven by a wish to meticulously explain all the practical details of Old Testament descriptions (e.g., of the tabernacle and the perfect city).

This tendency of concordance (i.e., Old Testament elements pointing to New Testament concepts) is just one side of the equally abundant tradition of Apocalypse commentaries. There is also a parallel trend of polarization: of emphasizing how a certain image or metaphor (here, the Heavenly Jerusalem) is conceptually and spiritually opposed to those earlier images with which it shares some external features. In concrete terms: the Heavenly Jerusalem is not only the perfection of the cultural institution known as the city, and not a Christianized repetition of

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[30] Walter Cahn, "Architecture and Exegesis: Richard of St.-Victor's Ezekiel Commentary and Its Illustrations," *The Art Bulletin* 76, no. 1 (1994): 56.

Ezekiel's vision but it is, at the same time, also the antithesis of any city on earth, built or visionary.

The Venerable Bede, in his influential commentary on Revelation, starts with fixing (regarding Rev 21:2) that "God made [the New Jerusalem] by heavenly grace. For there is another Jerusalem which is not adorned for her husband, but for an adulterer."[31] A little later, he adds regarding the mountain as the site of the vision and an important topotheological figure: "After the fall of Babylon, the holy city, which is the bride of the Lamb, is seen placed on a mountain." The earthly city (alternatively exemplified in the literature by Babylon, Jericho, or even the earthly Jerusalem) has to fall, to make way for the final, Heavenly City descending to the mountaintop. (Berengaudus, basically citing Gregory on Ezekiel, is even more explicit about the meaning of the mountain: "*Mons iste Christus est.*" He sees it as the mountain foretold by the prophet Isaiah (Is 2:2): "In the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and all nations will stream to it.") Mountain and city merge and emerge at the eschaton: just as Ezekiel (Ez 5:5) proclaims Jerusalem as the center of nations, now, the final state of the Church is seen to be centered around the Heavenly Jerusalem on the mountain.

The cosmological centrality of the Eastern direction, and of the Apocalyptic mystery of the twelve gates (Rev 21:13) also receives a further impulse in Bede's explanation, claiming that "by [the number twelve] either the sum of the Apostles, or the perfection of the Church, may be represented; for that the faith of the Holy Trinity was to be made known by it to the four-square world."[32] Three times four is twelve: in it, the threefold God is unified with His perfect Creation based on the four.

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[31] Venerable Beda, *The Explanation of the Apocalypse by Venerable Beda*, ed. Brother Hermenegild, trans. Edward Marshall (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013), 143.
[32] Emmerson, *Apocalypse Illuminated*, 85.

The fourfoldness of the world is a result of God's measurement of the world: the act of geometrical and architectural planning is often symbolized by rectangularity and the (geometrical and arithmetical) operation of squaring – a principle to be adopted by medieval urban planning, which practice in the Middle Ages was still very likely imbued with spiritual symbolicism.[33] "Christ […] measures the holy city. For, 'ordering all things in number and measure and weight', He distributes to each one of the faithful the gifts of spiritual graces."[34]

The body of those faithful is nothing else than the Church. Haimo of Auxerre (died c. 865), another influential figure of ninth-tenth century exegesis and an author of at least sixteen commentaries,[35] also continued the tradition of allegorical urbanism, by a series of explicit identifications of topographical features of the Heavenly City with Christological and ecclesiological concepts. On Rev 21:2: "*Haec civitas sancta Ecclesia est, quae idcirco civitas apellatur, quoniam a multis inhabitatur, et in quatuor mundi partes distenditur, habens habitatorem Deum.*"[36] Haimo's method, serving as a paradigm for many exegetes after him, could be described as a literal allegorization: he seeks to explain every notion according to its direct, figural, sometimes even etymological reading – as in the case of Rev 21:16 on the dimensions of the Heavenly Jerusalem, a perfect cube: "*Longitudo pertinent ad fidem, altitudo ad spem, latitude ad charitatem, de qua scriptum est:* 'Latum mandatum tuum nimis' *(Ps. cxviii).*"[37] And in similar vein on "the city laid out as a square": "*In quadrata figura, non aliud latus majus est, aliud minus, sed cuncta simul quatuor latera, aequali spatio tenduntur. Per haec autem quatuor latera, debemus intelligere, spem, fidem, charitatem et operationem, quae*

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[33] Cf. e.g., the case of the *bastides* and Grenade-sur-Garonne in particular: Keith D. Lilley, *City and Cosmos: The Medieval World in Urban Form* (Reaktion Books, 2009), 49–50.

[34] Beda, *The Explanation of the Apocalypse by Venerable Beda*, 147.

[35] Emmerson, *Apocalypse Illuminated*, 85.

[36] J.-P. Migne, ed., *Patrologiae cursus completus, series latina (Patrologia Latina),* 1841-1855. Vol. 117, col. 1192. "This city is the holy Church, that is called a city because it is inhabited by many, and it extends to the four parts of the world, having God as inhabitant." My translation.

[37] *Patrologia Latina,* vol. 117, col. 1203. "Length pertains to faith, height to hope, breadth to love, of which it is written: 'Your commandment is exceedingly broad' (Ps 119:96)". My translation.

aequlia sunt [...]"[38] To the Pauline trinity of faith, hope and love, a fourth cosmic component is added: operation, i.e., action as a theological virtue, at the same time a reference to man's earthly (building) activity, that completes and perfects God's Creation – and lays out the Heavenly City as a square.

As the Apocalyptic tradition from about this time gradually shifted towards visual exegesis (cf. the next Chapter), the textual commentary became more and more a repetition of theological patterns. Unfortunately, among the Apocalypse commentators of the High Middle Ages, not even the otherwise both mystically and architecturally inclined Richard of Saint Victor provides us with fresh insights on the topographical and allegorical (i.e., topotheological) semantics of the New Jerusalem. There are some interesting sporadic remarks in his other works; e.g., in *The Book of Notes*, on a part "on the signification of words and things" (i.e., in a sense, on exegetical methodology), he makes a cursory but insightful remark on the meaning of places: "Places signify, as Jericho signifies the decay of this world, the inn signifies the Church, and Jerusalem signifies eternal life."[39]

We have seen this transition, from the earthly to the heavenly city as a theological metahistory, from many angles already. While not discernible in his Apocalypse commentary, but all the more so in his approach to Ezekiel's city, Richard of Saint Victor with his architectural considerations of a city of vision can be read as one example for the advent of a pragmatic, empirical, scientific (with great caution, it could even be called proto-modernist) approach to theological matters. His contemporary, the immensely impactful and radical theologian Joachim of Fiore (1135 – 1202), has become a key figure in this "paradigm shift" of

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[38] Ibid. "In the figure of the square, no breadth is larger or smaller, but all four dimensions have the same spatial extension. We shall understand these four dimensions as faith, hope, love and operation, which are all equal." My translation.
[39] Franklin Harkins, *Interpretation of Scripture: Theory. A Selection of Works of Hugh, Andrew, Godfrey and Richard of St Victor, and Robert of Melun* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 313.

Apocalypticism. An author of numerous works, among others, as one would expect, a commentary on Revelation, his theory of the three ages or states (*status*) proved to be extremely influential for the apocalyptic thinking for centuries after him (discussed by Thomas Aquinas and Dante, among others), even inspiring at least three (heretic) spiritual movements.

However, it is a diagrammatic work which, in its form and subject, bears the most relevance for topotheology. The *Liber figurarum*, a collection of 24 diagrams compiled shortly after his death, contains, in particular, a diagram on "The Arrangement of the New People of God Pertaining to the Third State after the Model of the Heavenly Jerusalem" (Plate XII, cf. Figure 1).[40]

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[40] Translated and commented in Bernard McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 142–48.
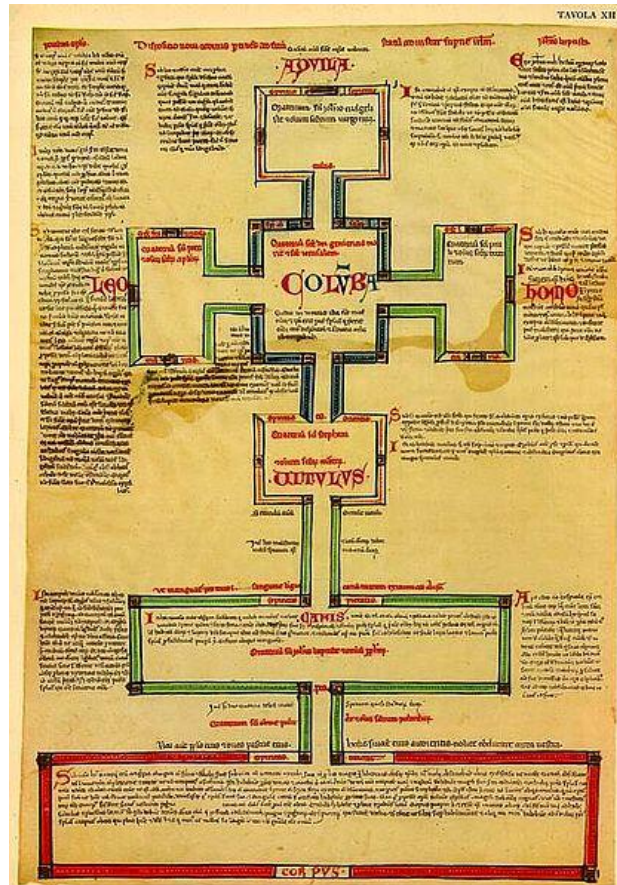
Figure 1: Plate XII from the Liber figurarum of Joachim of Fiore, "The Arrangement of the New People of God Pertaining to the Third State after the Model of the Heavenly Jerusalem"

This diagram is probably the earliest (and, in such a clean form, maybe the only) approach to capture the *social reality* of the Heavenly Jerusalem in topographical terms. The "third state" is, according to Joachim's famous theory of ages, is the final state of history, where the corrupt worldly and clerical society is replaced by an ecclesiastical utopia. (Written more than 300 years before Thomas More and utopian tradition proper.) The diagram

> "sets out a picture of the 'Heavenly New Jerusalem' of the third status in which seven oratories (the number of the perfect age) are organized in the form of an altar cross, consisting of five monastic oratories clustered around the center of the cross, and, on the lower shaft, an oratory for the clerics, and at the base one for the laity, containing 'the married with their sons and daughters living a common life.'"[41]

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[41] Bernard McGinn, "Apocalypticism and Mysticism in Joachim of Fiore's Expositio in Apocalypsim," in Knibbs, Boon, and Gelser, eds., *The End of the World in Medieval Thought and Spirituality*, 186.

Joachim stands at a turning point of heavenly urbanism, where the earthly reality of the city remains, even in final times, just as important as the appearance of the final, mystical City from Heaven. As Bernard McGinn interprets Joachim on Rev 21:22, "the Trinity will replace the temple in heaven, but on earth some temple must always remain."[42] This temple, now, becomes the Heavenly Jerusalem itself, with the *Parousia* of the Trinity: Joachim's pneumatic theology automatically adds the Holy Spirit to the image of the Lord and the Lamb. The temple *is* God's presence on earth: it is a church edifice, a sanctuary that is not needed anymore.

City-squaring the circle: shaping the New Jerusalem

Regardless of all the differences in spiritual details, the tabernacle, Ezekiel's perfect city and the Heavenly Jerusalem all share a very important and apparent feature: they are rectangular. Indeed, the very shape of an abstract city representation, regardless of the motivation for abstraction (and if it is a practical or a spiritual one), is one of the key ingredients for establishing a topotheological semantics for that city. In the case of Jerusalem, we are already directly confronted with the apparently profound, yet not obvious roles of the shape, when it comes to representing a (holy, heavenly) city: Jerusalem, *umbilicus mundi,*[43] is as often represented in *circular* as in quadrilateral form.

Indeed, those two shapes (the circle and the square, respectively) take a central place in the universal symbolic tradition of sacred geometry. Circle and square have also always been omnipresent in cosmological models and representations. The cosmos itself is typically imagined to be circular — an intuition which can be confirmed both perceptually, by looking at the circular horizon around an observer, and symbolically through the perfection encoded in

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[42] Ibid.
[43] On Jerusalem as the navel of the earth, cf. P. S. Alexander, "Jerusalem as the Omphalos of the World: On the History of a Geographical Concept," in *Jerusalem: Its Sanctity and Centrality to Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (London: Continuum, 1999).

the closedness of the circle, where each point has the same distance from a hidden center which still engenders and maintains the circle as it is. Thus, whenever there is a need to underline the analogically cosmic nature of something, a circle shape is a consequent choice for representation. The tradition of the cosmos as a circle, and also of the macrocosm-microcosm analogy is conventionally held to go back to the *Timaeus* of Plato.[44]

The *Timaeus* (and, in particular, its "follow-up" dialogue *Critias*) also contains the description of a circle-shaped primordial city: the mythical Atlantis. Starting out from the *Timaeus,* the historical geographer Keith D. Lilley has summarized the significance of the circle-shaped city, in particular, with respect to representations of Jerusalem as such:

> "[...] the circular-shaped Jerusalem not only symbolized a wider cosmos, of which it was the sacred and spiritual center, but it also provided a model on which to fix images of other cities. Jerusalem's idealized geometrical form became the basis for depicting cities all over the medieval Christian world."[45]

The prevalent spherical model of the cosmos might have simply been transferred to its ideal center for analogical purposes. As Lilley himself notes, the tradition of circularly drawn Jerusalem is clearly at odds with the quadratic shape emphatically described in Revelation, but there are a number of different traditions and considerations influencing a particular choice of shape on any Jerusalem representation.[46]

It seems that cities (such as the actual, earthly Jerusalem as we have seen above) are represented in a circular form whenever they have to appear as microcosms (or 'mesocosms', for that matter, to borrow an expression from Joseph Campbell[47]) — a symbolic representational requirement that overrides any other concerns about displaying the actual shape of the city.

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[44] Cf. Lilley, *City and Cosmos*, 8.

[45] Lilley, 15.

[46] For an elaborate and comprehensive study on the geometry of Jerusalem representations, cf. Bianca Kühnel, "Geography and Geometry of Jerusalem," in Nitza Rosovsky, *City of the Great King: Jerusalem from David to the Present*, First Edition (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1996), 288-332.

[47] Joseph Campbell, *Flight of the Wild Gander: Explorations in the Mythological Dimension - Selected Essays, 1944-1968*, (Novato, Calif: New World Library, 2002).

However, the principle of pictorial realism, of *Naturwirklichkeit* did appear on the scene of aesthetical theories only after the Middle Ages were long gone.

Nevertheless, the source of the square as a representative city shape, especially in a theological context, should also be read mainly symbolically and not that much realistically — even if cities, not only Judeo-Christian ones, have been often built orthogonally and quadratically from the very beginning of civilization, as attested by the famous model of Hippodamos, sometimes claimed to be the first example of urban-scale architectural planning as we understand this concept today.[48]

But if quadratic city representations would, in turn, be the result of realism and earthliness, then why would the Heavenly Jerusalem be so emphatically quadratic — even cubic? Indeed, the relevant verse of the Revelation of John reads as follows: "The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long." (Rev 21,16)

Berengaudus of Ferriéres (840-892), a Benedictine monk whose Apocalypse commentary did not really play a significant role for eschatological developments and whose identity is disputed in the literature, [49] but whose text has served as a basis of one of the richest Apocalypse illumination traditions (cf. Chapter II)*,* is rather explicit about the shape of the Heavenly

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[48] On the cultural history of Hippodamos and grid-planning, cf. Graham Shipley and Tobias Fischer-Hansen, "Little Boxes on the Hillside: Greek Town Planning, Hippodamos, and Polis Ideology," in *The Imaginary Polis: Symposium, January 7-10, 2004* (ed. M. H. Hansen). Acts of the Copenhagen Polis Centre 7; Historisk-filosofiske Meddelelser 91. Copenhagen: Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters, 2005, 335-403.

[49] For the two sides taken in the dispute, cf. Emmerson, *Apocalypse Illuminated*, 112; Derk Visser, *Apocalypse as Utopian Expectation (800-1500): The Apocalypse Commentary of Berengaudus of Ferrières and the Relationship Between Exegesis, Liturgy, and Iconography* (Leiden: Brill, 1996). Visser claims the traditional identification of the author with the ninth century monk of Ferriéres abbey to be valid. According to Emmerson, the author of the *Expositio* was most likely a late-eleventh century monk from Flanders.

Jerusalem, i.e., why it has to be square-shaped: "*Per quadraturam civitatis perfectio sanctorum designatur*" (with *sanctorum* omitted in some manuscripts).[50]

It turns out that the square is just as heavily laden with cosmological and theological symbolism as the circle does. As a matter of fact, a large number of medieval cosmographies show circle and square (or cross, for that matter, which in its quaternity, becomes a spiritual relative of the square) unified — such as the illustrations shown in Figure 2. In particular, the famous diagram from Bede's *De rerum natura* on the left contains not only references to the basic cosmological shapes of circle and square, but also to the traditional division of *mappaemundi,* medieval world maps – a topic that will be expanded upon in Chapter III. As David Woodward, a historian of maps summarizes it: "this diagram indicates the relationships perceived in the Middle Ages to have existed between the four cardinal directions (and the three continents), the four seasons, the four elements, and the four material properties (hot, cold, wet, dry)."[51] Hugh of St Victor, a theologian with interest in geometry and architecture, further explains that "the entire world sphere surrounds earth, set as a point in its centre . . . [and that] if we draw straight lines from its middle into the four quarters out to its circumference, we divide the horizon into four parts."[52] This can be read as a synthetic approach to sacred cosmo-geometry: the cosmos emerges as a circle, due to its original all-embracing nature, but its final solifity and perfection is gained by establishing its fourfoldness through various forms of squaring, a collaborative work of God and man.

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[50] *Patrologia Latina,* vol. 17., col. 1038. "The square shape of the city designates the perfection (of holiness)." My translation.
[51] Harley and Woodward, *The History of Cartography*, 335.
[52] F. A. Homann, trans., Practical Geometry [Practica Geometriae], Attributed to Hugh of St Victor (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1991); cited by Lilley, 95.
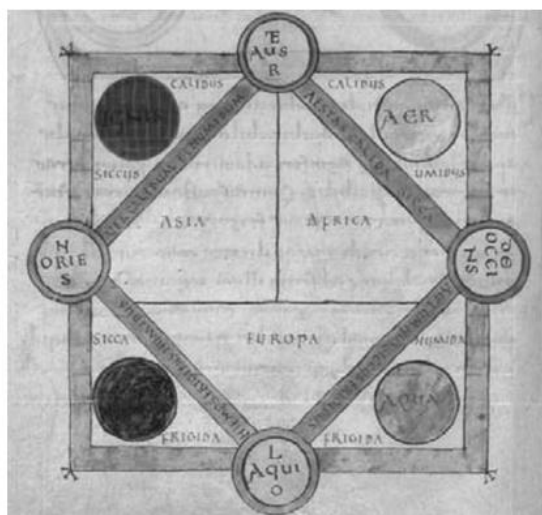
Figure 2: Circles, squares and crosses as cosmic patterns: the world in a 9th century manuscript of Bede's De rerum natura (left); a cross of directions inscribed in the spherical world in the Corpus agrimensorum romanorum, a Late Antique compilation on land surveying (right)

We shall note that despite this frequent colocation or synthesis of circle and square, there is a distinct and profound theological and typological meaning attached to each, those meanings being not only inequivalent, but even diametral in a conceptual sense. In the particular case of city representation, in accordance with the microcosmos allegory it is imbued with, the circle emphasizes the partaking of the city in Creation; in its foundedness, it becomes an 'image and likeness' of the world founded by God.

The square, on the contrary, bears solidity, stability (often associated with cosmic universals such as the four directions or the four elements) and a connection to the final state of the cosmos — sometimes even the eschaton, as it is indeed the case with the shape of the New Jerusalem. The Venerable Bede, a contemporary of Berengaudus of Ferriéres and a key commentator of the Apocalypse, says on Rev 21:16:

> "The city is therefore said to be set in a square, and to be placed of an equal dimension on every side, in that it is not suffered to be marked by any inequality. For 'to be perfect', as the Apostle says [2Cor 13:11], that is, 'to be wise, to have peace,' is truly to subsist in the solidity of a square."[53]

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[53] Beda, *The Explanation of the Apocalypse by Venerable Beda*, 147.

Thus, while circle and square might appear along very different intentions, in different contexts and invoking different connotations, they both clearly demonstrate two different interpretations (roughly, a cosmological and an eschatological one, respectively) of the single quality of 'perfection' — a notion most clearly attached to the conceptual image of the Heavenly Jerusalem.

Chapter II: Space Perceived – Seeing the Invisible City

By the ninth century, as we have seen, there has already been an established theological tradition of commenting on the Revelation. Looking at the text itself, this should not surprise us: a clearly canonic text, which is so much different from the rest of the New Testament, as is so laden with esoteric and enigmatic imagery, indeed deserves special attention from the Fathers, in their endeavor to integrate it into a solidifying Christian worldview, with its Christology, soteriology and eschatology.

But Revelation is, after all, a vision. Therefore, it sounds straightforward that the Apocalypse should be primarily interpreted in the form of images. But we might just as well ask the opposite question: if the Revelation in its purely textual form was popular among Christians right from its writing, then why do we see, centuries later, the sudden emergence of a new tradition, a form of visual exegesis not seen before: the illuminated Apocalypse?

As one would expect, such a phenomenon is probably induced by a combination of several factors, political and theological alike. As for the latter, Maius (or Magius), the creator of the famous Morgan Beatus (see below), gives an explicit reason in the colophon for adding images to the words of John: "I have painted a series of pictures for the wonderful words of its stories so that the wise may fear the coming of the future judgement of the world's end."[54] The images, an actual creator of them confirms, are much more than an artistic exercise or an exegetical media experiment: they serve the role of preparing for doomsday for everyone looking at them.

It is interesting to consider the possibility that Apocalypse illustrations were, in turn, conceived as *accurate* illustrations of the final days to come; by carefully contemplating them, the reader might be able to *imagine*, i.e., to forge a visual expectation of the scenes to play in front of our

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[54] Emmerson, *Apocalypse Illuminated*, 74.

eyes at the end of times. Looking at the Beatus pictorial tradition started by Maius, we can easily see that accurateness in the sense of pictorial realism (as understood in modernity) was definitely not the goal: especially the Beatus cycle turns out to be overly abstract, condensed and driven by a theological program. Instead, aiding eschatological preparations of believers through images might rather be motivated by a desired accordance with the nature of John's vision: through images, the reader-viewer would not only be reported on what has been revealed to John, but relive and get immersed in his eschatological experience.

Image over Word: the earliest illustrated Apocalypses

It has been often argued that the origins of the Apocalypse illustration tradition lie in the Carolingian spiritual and political climate, which was "thoroughly apocalyptic".[55] Two of the earliest surviving Revelation manuscripts, the Trier and the Valenciennes Apocalypse both come from the first quarter of the ninth century. They both demonstrate a perceivable turn regarding the relation, even the hierarchy of Image and Word: while earlier theology, mostly based on Augustinian principles, is thought to have a clear favor towards textual exegesis on a logocentric basis,[56] here, the emergence of a visual exegesis tradition, and, thus, a new meta-aesthetic paradigm unfolds in front of our eyes.[57]

The Heavenly Jerusalem in the Trier Apocalypse (cf. Figure 3), thus, can be considered as one of the first visualizations of the Heavenly City – a milestone for the cultural history of topotheology. As one would expect, we face a rather literal visual interpretation and an adherence to the text of Revelation. John and the angel stand on the mountaintop, looking at a

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[55] Emmerson, 26. Cf. also Carol Heitz, "Retentissement de l'Apocalypse Dans l'art de l'époque Carolingienne," in *L'apocalypse de Jean. Traditions Exégétiques et Iconographiques IIIe-XIIIe Siècles*, 1979, 217–43.

[56] On Carolingian logocentrism, cf. the statements of Theodulf of Orléans, as mentioned in Emmerson, *Apocalypse Illuminated*, 27. See also Celia Martin Chazelle, "Matter, Spirit and Image in the 'Libri Carolini,'" *Recherches Augustiniennes* 21 (1986): 163–84.

[57] Cf. Peter Klein, "The Apocalypse in Medieval Art," in *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, 1992, 159–99.

city whose vista is characterized by the twelve gates. However, the gates carry no visual traces of the Old and New Testament allegories John attaches to them: the main purpose of the representation is to underline the general urban character of the scene (fortified by some inner architectural details not specified in the text).

Importantly, the perspective on the Heavenly Jerusalem offered by the Trier Apocalypse does depart from Revelation at a very important point: the viewer does not perceive the city to be rectangular. On the contrary, the arc at the upper edge rather suggests a circular urban layout. Even in its heavenly form, Jerusalem still seems to remain the microcosm that is the "center of nations".

Figure 3: The Heavenly Jerusalem in the Trier Apocalypse, early ninth century, Stadtbibliothek Trier, Hs 31, f. 69a

The Heavenly Jerusalem of the Valenciennes Apocalypse (cf. Figure 4) is even more abstract – and even more decidedly circular. In an image that clearly appears to us as a unique artistic

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vision,[58] we see the Lamb in the middle, in an abstract, non-urban, maybe even rural setting. He is surrounded by twelve concentric circles, the foundations, which here completely lose their architectural role and serve only to emphasize the perfect circularity of the Heavenly Jerusalem – contrary to the text of Revelation. The groups of three gates, one in each direction, also could not be interpreted as such without text. In fact, what we see is not even a city – no viewer could arrive at the idea that what they see is the Heavenly Jerusalem without context. The image itself is a geometrical Christological diagram, whose decryption code can be found in Revelation 21.

Does the existence of such illustrations contradict the introductory remark on accurateness as a criterion for Apocalypse illustrations, serving as preparation material for the experience of the final days? It rather just manifests a different kind of "tutorial", not an empirical or perceptual (anyway, expecting such an accurateness sounds anachronistic for the ninth century), but an allegorical-spiritual one. This is not how the Heavenly City will *look like*, this is how it should be *lived*: by comprehending the symbolical, allegorical and spiritual meanings attached to it, we are allowed to enter the gates of the Heavenly Jerusalem.

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[58] Cf. Bianca Kühnel, *The End of Time in the Order of Things: Science and Eschatology in Early Medieval Art*, Annotated edition (Regensburg: Verlag Schnell & Steiner, 2003), 206.

Figure 4: The Heavenly Jerusalem in the Valenciennes Apocalypse, early ninth century, Bibliothèque municipal de Valenciennes, Ms. 99, f. 38r

Though technically not anymore a Carolingian but an Ottonian Apocalypse,[59] the Heavenly Jerusalem in the Bamberg Apocalypse (cf. Figure 5), while clearly more architectural and citylike, essentially continues the same tradition of signification as seen in the case of the Valenciennes Heavenly Jerusalem: in a metaphysically empty, non-urban space, the Lamb stands alone, and all that is represented from the city are the four times three gates (though not carrying any further symbolism here). And, strangely but not atypically for Heavenly Jerusalem illustrations, the city is a circle, regardless of what John saw in the vision. It seems that, analogously to the textual exegesis in the Apocalypse commentary tradition, the corresponding

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[59] On Otto III's apocalypticism, cf. Levi Roach, "Emperor Otto III and the End of Time," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 23 (2013): 75–102. On the corresponding illumination tradition, see Henry Mayr-Harting, *Ottonian Book Illumination: An Historical Study*, Annotated edition (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 1991).

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corpus of visual exegesis also falls apart into a literal and a mystical-allegorical interpretation practice.

But even if we leave space for allegorical and mystical visuality, what could be the purpose of departing so strongly and obviously from the text of Revelation (which is, in most cases, located very close to the image, therefore, the difference will be easily spotted by any reader-viewer), by painting an emphatically quadratic city circular? While there can be no firm and definitive answers to such questions of speculative topotheology, the reason might probably be searched for in the nature of the practice of allegorizing: the message of the Lamb as the center of the cosmos, the final Kingdom of God, along a visual intuition, is probably felt better communicated in the middle of a circle (a Jerusalem as the "center of nations") than in a square. Of course, this is not an exclusive option: while the Heavenly Jerusalem can never be captured visually in its physical and spiritual totality, there can be almost endless ways to single out and represent some of its features and meanings.

Figure 5: The Heavenly Jerusalem in the Bamberg Apocalypse, early eleventh century, Staatsbibliothek Bamberg, Msc. Bibl. 140, f. 55r

A medieval multimedia paradigm: heavenly topography in the Beatus illuminations

By the ninth century, not only the tradition of textual exegesis of the Apocalypse was more or less solidified, but also the first (Carolingian) examples of extant Apocalypse illuminations were already born.

It is also this time where the *Beatus model* of Apocalypse illustrations emerges, broadly around the region where Beatus of Liébana (c. 730-800), the author (rather compiler) of an eight-century Apocalypse commentary flourished. It is unanimously accepted that the first, or one of the earliest editions of the Commentary has already been illustrated and, thus, served as a prototype for all the illustrated editions of the text for centuries to come.[60] Thus, the Beatus

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[60] Williams, *The Illustrated Beatus*, 31.

model[61] was born: even if it left considerable space for artistic imagination and individuality regarding the details, the subject and placement of the 108 images in the text has been basically fixed through the mentioned prototype (even in cases when the accompanying text is a different edition). Not only a singular outburst of artistic expression, or a vehicle to bring Revelation closer to the illiterate: a multimedial canon came about.

Of course, the Beatus also must have had its predecessors, like the already mentioned Trier Apocalypse, and many other, mostly conjectured, illustration cycles.[62] It is not our intention to delve into such (otherwise highly interesting) scholarly disputes here. What is important for this thesis is to recognize that such a well-preserved tradition fusing together words, images – and even a map! – on the Revelation is not only a highlight of the history of art and theology: it is also an abundant fund for topotheological examination. Here, we will thus focus on the image of the Heavenly Jerusalem as visualized in the Beatus, bringing it into connection with other elements related to topography and geometry in the illustration cycle.

Topotheologically, the Beatus is also of special importance, since the pictorial canon includes an explicit depiction of the Heavenly Jerusalem, faithful to the text of Revelation 21. Even for the rather homogeneous Beatus visual corpus, as for its content and layout, the image of the Heavenly Jerusalem shows little variety between the different editions – the probably only exception being the Girona Beatus.[63] (Of course, the design and style of single figural elements shows great artistic diversity.)

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[61] Cf. Kenneth B. Steinhauser, "Narrative and Illumination in the Beatus Apocalypse," *The Catholic Historical Review* 81, no. 2 (1995): 185–210.

[62] Like the lost commentary of Tyconius; cf. Williams, *The Illustrated Beatus*, 32. On the origins of the Beatus imagery, see the comprehensive work of Neuss: Neuss, *Die Apokalypse des Hl. Johannes in der altspanischen und altchristlichen Bibel-Illustration*.

[63] John Williams, *The Illustrated Beatus: A Corpus of Illustrations on the Commentary on the Apocalypse, Volume II: The Ninth and Tenth Centuries*, Illustrated edition (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 1994), 51–64.

Figure 6: Heavenly Jerusalem from the Morgan Beatus, c. 940-945, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, MS M. 644

Figure 6 shows the Heavenly Jerusalem from the earliest intact and (almost) full copy of Beatus, which, thus, received a great deal of scholarly interest.[64] As most of the Heavenly Jerusalem depictions in other Beatus editions have the exact same content, it is safe to use this image for an intermedial analysis of the text and the image accompanying it.

Here, what is not visible on the image is at least as important as that what is visible. Revelation 21 contains a vast number of details, all of which cannot be compressed into a single image. Somewhat similarly to the internal logic of orthodoxy, spatiality and temporality are partly overridden by the will for the image to convey an inherent theological meaning. This can be seen both as a hiatus - and a chance for topotheological reading.

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[64] Williams, 21–33.

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It can safely be observed that, in correspondence with Revelation 21:12, we see twelve gates, three in each direction. There is a standing figure in each gate – however, these appear not to be the angels of Rev 21:12, but the twelve apostles whose names were written on the twelve "foundations" (θεμέλιος) of the wall (Rev 21:14). (That these are indeed the apostles might not be obvious on the Morgan Heavenly Jerusalem, but other editions feature decisive elements, like the apostles with their traditional symbols.) Above the heads of the apostles, there is an abstract depiction of the precious stones with which "[t]he foundations of the city walls were decorated" (Rev 21:19). The word 'foundation' here can indeed refer to a physical building block, i.e., a foundation stone. Such a stone would, in turn, not be visible from the perspective taken by the illustration (most likely being buried under the wall), a potential reason for conflating Rev 21:12 and 14 and representing the gates with the apostles instead of angels. Thus, here, we see an example of symbolism overriding topology: instead of aiming at an architecturally and spatially correct (even if abstract) representation, many figurative elements are abandoned in order to underline the symbolic meaning of the number twelve, and the mystic analogy it creates between gates, angels, foundations, apostles and precious stones.

The depiction of the wall and the floor of the city in general also departs from the text: the artist prefers his own inventions, designs and colors to John's words, where it is, e.g., said that "[t]he wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass." (Rev 21:18) In contrast, the Morgan Heavenly Jerusalem shows a colorful wall and a red-gold checker-motif floor within the city.

In that floored area which should be the city area *per se*, we see three figures: the angel with the measuring rod, John, and the Lamb. Again, the theological narrative is more important than topography: in the text of the Revelation, John and angel look at the city from the outside, from the top of a mountain (as it is indeed depicted in many other illustrated Apocalypses). Placing

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the Lamb within can be underpinned by the text, however, it is not clear if the statement that "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple" (Rev 21:22) should be read metaphorically or as an indication of the presence of Christ in the city (which would be somewhat peculiar in a scene happening after the Last Judgement).

All in all, it can be said succinctly that while drawing on and illustrating a text which is clearly about a city (even if heavenly and, thus, superior to any of its earthly counterparts), what is shown on the Beatus Heavenly Jerusalem is *not a city*. Instead, it is an imaginary scene, recombining certain elements of the Heavenly Jerusalem account into a distinct iconographical message. The essence of this message is that only feature of the image which remains faithful to Revelation, but which should also be read metaphysically rather than geometrically: the square shape – not the real square of actual urban planning, but the ideal square denoting perfection (cf. Chapter I).

If we discard the tower tops, whose function is probably to still convey the impression of a city, both the external perimeter (the walls) and the internal (city) area are painted to be perfect squares in most of the Beatus editions. This becomes even more clear if we compare the shape and features of the Beatus Heavenly Jerusalem with other cities in the Beatus picture canon, most notably, Babylon and (the earthly) Jerusalem under siege (cf. Figure 7).
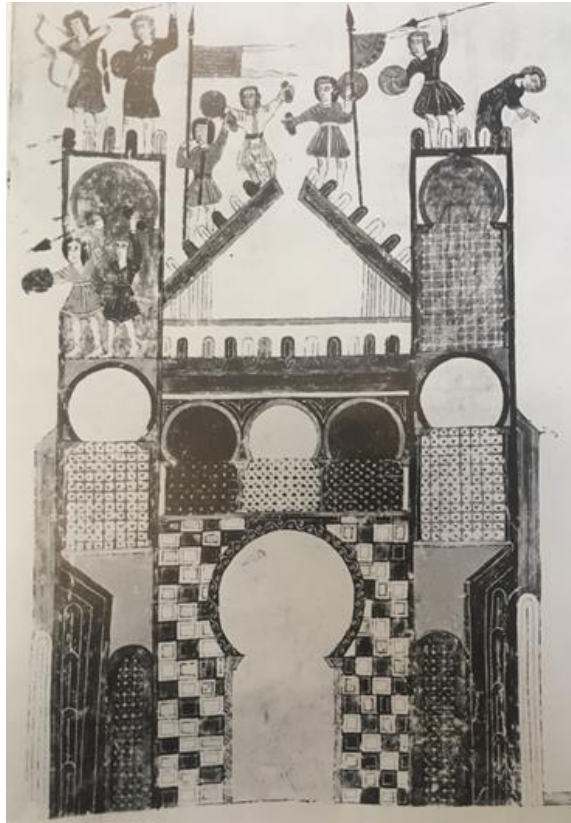
Figure 7: Siege of Jerusalem in the Girona Beatus, 975, Museu de la Catedral de Girona, Num. Inv. 7 (11), f. 242

These earthly cities are consequently shown from an earthly perspective: the spectator stands in front of a gate, looking at walls, towers and windows. As a preliminary conclusion to the topotheological interpretation of the Beatus Heavenly Jerusalem, it can be said that the intention of the picture is exactly to distinguish the use and meaning of a heavenly city from anything earthly associated with it.

The closest topographical, geometrical relative of the Heavenly Jerusalem in the Beatus picture cycle should be, as one would expect now, looked for in heaven. Indeed, that image in the canon which shows a "place" that is a square, is the illustration for the "silence in Heaven" (Rev 8:1). (Cf. Figure 8 for the corresponding image in the Escorial Beatus.[65]) Depicting something which is so void of anything sensorial as a silence in Heaven is a striking artistic

[65] John Williams, *The Illustrated Beatus: A Corpus of Illustrations on the Commentary on the Apocalypse, Volume III: The Tenth and Eleventh Centuries*, Illustrated edition (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 1998), 29–33.

and theological choice. Probably, the exact purpose of including such an abstract illustration is to associate the square shape with heaven as a *topos*! (This is further underlined by the presence of twelve abstract symbols in the Escorial Beatus version, also to be found, e.g., in the Morgan Beatus.[66])

Figure 8: Silence in Heaven in the Escorial Beatus, c. 1000, Escorial, Biblioteca del Monasterio, Cod. &.II.5, f. 91v

So far, the analysis referred to the Beatus picture tradition as a monolithic, homogeneous visual program without any internal historical evolution – which is, of course, an abstraction. But can we indeed observe some tendencies, trends and shifts in the imagery we have referred to so far, as we travel in time from the earliest, tenth-century examples to the latest, thirteenth-century ones we know?

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[66] Williams, *The Illustrated Beatus*, *Vol. I.*, 9.

Considering that a lot of information is missing with respect to the artistic provenance and the theological intentions of the Beatus tradition, no serious attempt can be made to give a definitive answer to such a question. However, we can point out some interesting novelties appearing on Heavenly Jerusalems in later Beatus editions.

Figure 9 shows a much later Beatus Heavenly Jerusalem: that in the Navarre Beatus from the late twelfth century. We can observe a number of significant changes compared to the Morgan version (and, thus, to almost any other Beatus, especially the earlier ones). The city has almost completely disappeared: only a few disjoint architectural elements (towers and windows) hint at an urban setting. The position of John and the angel has been corrected: they now stand outside, on the mountaintop, as told in the Revelation. The center of the image is still occupied by the main message: the presence of Christ on earth. However, He is not the Lamb anymore, but the Pantocrator. This is congruent with the original Greek text of the Revelation: Rev 21:22 explicitly says 'κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ' (Lord God the Pantocrator). Of course, the difference is not a linguistic but an iconographical one: the English reads as 'Lord God *Almighty'* here, which is a widely accepted translation. But the illustrator has chosen to represent Christ (who is clearly the single Person behind both the Pantocrator and the Lamb figure) *as* the Pantocrator instead of the Lamb.

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Figure 9: Heavenly Jerusalem in the Navarre Beatus, late twelfth century, BnF, MS nouv. acq. Lat. 1366, ff. 148v-149

However significant these changes appear theologically, one cannot speak of a paradigm shift of any kind. First, topotheologically speaking, as observed already, even the earliest and most typical Beatus Heavenly Jerusalems are much more icons than city images. This just becomes more evident in an image like that in the Navarre Beatus. Second, unfortunately for the metanarratologically inclined historian, even if it would be very tempting to reconstruct some kind of theological or iconographical tendency from the early to the late Beatos, such a claim would be problematic to justify after looking at the last extant Beatus Heavenly Jerusalem in the Las Huelgas Beatus (cf. Figure 10). The depiction seen here is as typical for a Beatus as it can get: we see the colorful towers and walls, the twelve gates with apostles and their precious stones, and, in the city itself, we find John and the measuring angel, the latter pointing at the Lamb with the rod.

Figure 10: Heavenly Jerusalem from the Las Huelgas Beatus, 1220, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, MS M. 429, f. 140v

"The Epitome of Apocalypse Illustration": Jerusalem imagination in later Anglo-French illuminations

This exalted qualification comes from the corresponding chapter title of the already often quoted book of Emmerson: from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century, the richest extant tradition of Apocalyptic imagery emerged in England and later in France.[67] We are after the time of the Beatos and, needles to say, in a different socio-historical context.[68] Does this leave a mark on the imagination of the Heavenly Jerusalem?

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[67] Emmerson, *Apocalypse Illuminated*, 111.
[68] A thorough, interpretative study of the origins of the new illumination tradition can be found in Suzanne Lewis, *Reading Images: Narrative Discourse and Reception in the Thirteenth-Century Illuminated Apocalypse* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

What did not change is that the Anglo-French Apocalypses also accompany exegetical texts. While typically not recognized as an original or important piece of apocalyptic exegesis, the *Expositio super septem visions libry Apocalypsis* by Berengaudus (who, as mentioned before, may or may not be the ninth-century monk of Ferriéres), which continues the tradition of Bede, Haimo and Richard of Saint Victor in dividing the Revelation into seven visions, became the by far most popular "carrier" text of the new image cycles.

But how new are they actually? How far do they depart from earlier patterns and solutions? The Trinity Apocalypse, a unique specimen from many perspectives long held to be the first Anglo-French Apocalypse, [69] for example, shows a Heavenly Jerusalem that, as for its exegetical program, basically repeats the Beatus Heavenly Jerusalem, with some minor additions adhering to the Revelation – of course, in a largely different and, in a sense, more refined style (cf. Figure 11). The differences to Beatus can be seen as the consequences of an increased pictorial precision: the angel is shown twice, as the revealing and as the measuring one, each where it topotheologically belongs: the angel showing the city stands with John on the mountain, while the measuring one is within the city proper (just as in the Beatus except for the Navarre edition – there is always only one angel depicted in any Beatus). Christ is also in the city, but now, He is both the Lamb and the Pantocrator on the throne – an exegetically convenient choice, as He is mentioned by both names in Revelation 21. The final new element also comes from the text, but is rarely depicted otherwise on a Heavenly Jerusalem illumination: the river of the water of life and the tree of life growing from it (Rev 22:1-2). The golden background might also be a choice motivated by faithfulness to the text (but it could also be a generic choice of iconographical tradition).

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[69] George Henderson, *Studies in English Bible Illustration, Volume II* (London: Pindar Press, 1985), 117–27. On the Anglo-French archetype, cf. Peter Klein, *Endzeiterwartung und Ritterideologie. Die englischen Bilderapokalypsen der Frühgotik und Ms Douce 180* (Graz, Austria: Akademische, 1983), 159–60.
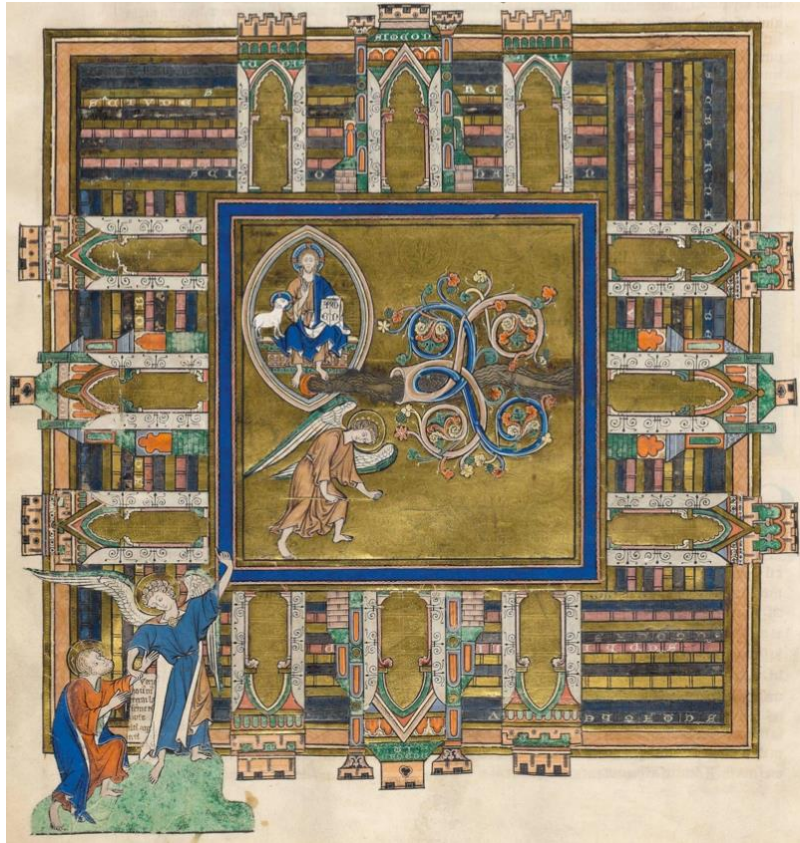
Figure 11: The Heavenly Jerusalem in the Trinity Apocalypse, Trinity College, Cambridge, R.16.2, f. 25v

Among a surprisingly high number of further manuscripts, the Morgan Apocalypse (c. 1255-1260) and the Douce Apocalypse (c. 1265-1270) are further central examples of (different subbranches of) early Anglo-French Apocalypses based on the text of Berengaudus (either in Latin or in Anglo-Norman).[70] However, while this obviously puts them in the same exegetical strand, the approach to the visual exegesis of the Heavenly Jerusalem shows a gradual shift from this time on.

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[70] Cf. the introduction to Nigel J. Morgan, *Illuminating the End of Time: The Getty Apocalypse Manuscript*, 1st edition (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2012).

Figure 12: The Heavenly Jerusalem in two images in the Morgan Anglo-French Apocalypse, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M.524, f. 20v

One of the novelties of the Morgan Anglo-French Apocalypse is that the Heavenly Jerusalem is not depicted as a timeless *topos,* but as a narrative (in two chronologically consecutive images, cf. Figure 12). What is even more important is the radical change in the very perspective of representation: the city is (here and in many subsequent Apocalypses) not anymore an eschatological diagram with some visual references to Revelation 21-22, but a real city, looked at from ground perspective or a semi-bird-eye view (a technique only used for depicting Babylon and the earthly Jerusalem in earlier illuminated Apocalypses).

The upper image of the Morgan Apocalypse, with the city in descension, does not contain any visual marks through which the depicted construct could be identified as the Heavenly

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Jerusalem. The bottom image, with the city probably already standing on the ground, represents at least the most remarkable identifier of the twelve gates, but (probably due to a textual focus and the resulting layout) no attention is paid to the topographical ordering of them.

As for the shape and representation of the New Jerusalem, a similar observation can be made on the Douce Apocalypse (cf. Figure 13). The distinctively city-like, though physically unrealistic, layered cityscape is not occupied by Christ in any of His appearances. This time, He remains outside and the city is filled with the "nations", as it is actually described by John. As for the tradition of "cosmologically" shaping the Heavenly Jerusalem, such depictions as in the Morgan Anglo-French, the Douce and many later Apocalypses make an undecided impression: while generally reducing the level of abstraction compared to earlier mainstream representations, they work as an experiment of visually unifying the circular and the rectangular representation traditions through incorporating both distinct curves and straight lines.

Figure 13: The Heavenly Jerusalem in the Douce Apocalypse (c. 1265-1270), Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ms. Douce 180, f. 57v

This new tendency of the geometrically and topographically more complex Heavenly Jerusalems is taken up and continued by later Anglo-French Apocalypses, such as the famous Cloisters Apocalypse (cf. Figure 14). [71] Similarly to the Morgan Apocalypse, here, the appearance of the Heavenly Jerusalem is told in a two-image narrative. As for the textual adherence, besides the presence of John and the angel, only the sun and the moon, as well as the first somewhat surprising black version of the city on the verso page ("The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp." – Rev 21:23) point indirectly to the Revelation, not even the Lamb being visually present. While the Douce Heavenly Jerusalem does not have any gates, here, only three are shown, that at least correlates with the image of the Heavenly Jerusalem if looked at from a

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[71] William F. Pons, and Florens Deuchler, *The Cloisters Apocalypse: A Fourteenth-Century Manuscript in Facsimile*, First Edition (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1971).

certain direction – but the level of symbolical signification is, thus, clearly lower than in earlier exegesis.

Figure 14: The Heavenly Jerusalem in the Cloisters Apocalypse (ca. 1330), Metropolitan Museum, 68.174, f. 36r-v

This not universal, yet significant and clearly discernible "realistic turn", coinciding in time with the "waning of the Middle Ages" has, then, continued into the fifteenth century, and not only in illumination: for example, the famous Angers tapestry cycle (cf. Figure 15) or the Savoy Apocalypse (cf. Figure 16) also display a relatively complex architectural cityscape, with few to none symbolical identification features, through which the viewer would immediately know that this is no other city than God's dwelling, the Heavenly Jerusalem. (Notice, however, that the Savoy Heavenly Jerusalem can be seen as a visual experiment to not simplify the shape of the Heavenly Jerusalem to a two-dimensional square for the sake of symbolic geometrical clarity, but to faithfully reproduce its cubicness.) The significance of this observation does not only pertain to stylistic and executional matters: the approach to the Heavenly Jerusalem initiated by the Anglo-French illumination tradition also illustrates an ideological shift regarding the purpose of representation itself, from spiritual allegorizations towards mere illustrativeness through perceptual and phenomenological realism.

Figure 15: The Heavenly Jerusalem on the Angers tapestry cycle, 1377-82, Musée de la Tapisserie, Château d'Angers, Angers

Figure 16: The Heavenly Jerusalem in the 'Apocalypse figurée des ducs de Savoie', El Escorial, E Vit.5, f. 49v

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Chapter III: Space Lived – Mapping the City that is Everywhere and Nowhere

In the previous chapters, we have seen how the Heavenly City, the New Jerusalem that will appear at the end of time, the perfection, eradication and *telos* of any earthly city has been conceived (founded) and represented in John's Revelation and in medieval exegesis. Still, despite all these efforts, the Heavenly Jerusalem still feels remaining remote, at a transcendental distance. Visual exegesis might bring it closer – but, then again, it is just yet another medium for ecclesiological allegory. Can we take a step forward in *locating* it on earth?

Of course, the city itself will not be there until the Apocalypse, and it cannot be otherwise. Until then, we have the earthly Jerusalem, the holiest of cities, but a city nevertheless, with all its imperfections, conflicts and changes inflicted by history itself. It is a tautology, but it has to be said: the earthly Jerusalem is clearly not the heavenly one. But we might use the former as a receptacle in our endeavor of *mapping* the latter.[72]

The cultural artifact known as a map has been around from the beginnings of civilization, but it has always shown an immense variety in its approach, execution and purpose. As a particularly important genre for the present thesis, "from about the fifth to the fifteenth century after Christ, there developed a genre of world maps or map-paintings originating in the classical tradition but adopted by the Christian church. The primary purpose of these *mappaemundi*, as they are called, was to instruct the faithful about the significant events in Christian history rather than to record their precise locations."[73]

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[72] For a comprehensive study of representing Jerusalem in medieval cartography, cf. Ingrid Baumgärtner, "Die Wahrnehmung Jerusalems Auf Mittelalterlichen Weltkarten," in *Jerusalem Im Hoch- Und Spätmittelalter*, 2001, 271–334.

[73] Harley and Woodward, *The History of Cartography*, 286.

Thus, world maps, while they demonstrate some attention to actual geographical details, do not serve for orientation, not even for distributing accurate information on how the world looks like. A large part of the maps in this genre, from the seventh century onwards, goes back to a model attributed to Isidore of Seville, known as the Isidorian or T-O map.[74]

The world at the Apocalypse: *mappaemundi* in the Beatus canon

The *mappaemundi* included in the Beatus visual canon also stem from this cartographical tradition, with further map types also considered as influences, like that of Orosius (itself a slight variation of the Isidorian map).[75] The *Commentary on the Apocalypse* includes, beyond the Revelation commentary itself along with the famous illustrations, a rather arbitrary selection of prefatory material, of which the *mappamundi* is one element.

Philologically, the link between Isidore's *Etymologies*, in copies of which the first T-O maps appeared, the topics of the Beatus commentary and the presence of the Beatus world map can be established by a passage of Isidore copied into the preface by Beatus. After a short excerpt on the Apostles from *Etymologies*, Beatus inserts the following from *De orbu et obitu patrum* attributed to Isidore:

> "These are the twelve disciples of Christ, preachers of the faith, mentors of the people. Although all carry out the same work, each one of them received a specific region to preach in: Peter Rome, Andrew Acaia, Thomas India, James Spain, John Asia, Matthew Macedonia, Philip Gaul, Bartholomew Licaonia, Simon Zelotes Egypt, James the brother of the Lord Jerusalem […]."[76]

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[74] On the sources of medieval *mappaemundi,* cf. Evelyn Edson, "The Oldest World Maps: Classical Sources of Three Eighth-Century Mappaemundi," *The Ancient World* 24 (1993): 169–84.
[75] Cf. John Williams, "Isidore, Orosius and the Beatus Map," *Imago Mundi* 49 (1997): 7–32.
[76] Williams, 8.

As Beatus concludes, thus, providing an explanation for including the map, called a *formula* here: "And this is shown to greater effect - these grains of seed scattered in the field of the world which the prophets prepared - by the pictorial formula attached."[77]

Indeed, the word *mappa* did not came into customary use to denote maps until the High Middle Ages. In classical Latin and in a late Roman context (of which tradition the Beatus maps is also a descendant), terms like *forma* and *figura* were used.[78] It is instructive to note that the designation of any abstract representation, like the architectural or allegorical diagrams shown in previous parts, also rather followed this terminology. Thus, in contemporaneous imagination, world maps might not have been conceptually that much different from other kinds of illustrations and representations as we would think of it today.

The earliest Beatus map that came down to us can be found in the Morgan Beatus (cf. Figure 17), a manuscript whose Heavenly Jerusalem we have already studied in Chapter II.

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[77] Richard Uhden, "Zur Herkunft und Systematik der mittelalterlichen Weltkarten," *Geographische Zeitschrift* 37, no. 6 (1931): 322.

[78] Harley and Woodward, *The History of Cartography*, 287.

Figure 17: The map of the world in the Morgan Beatus, c. 940-945, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, MS M. 644

As for its layout, the Morgan Beatus Mappamundi follows the canonical Isidorian layout, even if the map is not inscribed in an O. The map, as all such maps, is oriented towards the East, whose symbolic significance have been thoroughly discussed before, with Asia occupying the part above the T and its vertical line dividing Europe and Africa.

As a recurring, non-geographical feature of many medieval world maps, the Garden of Eden (a *square* with Adam, Eve and the snake) and, thus, the beginning of time is located at the easternmost point. Jerusalem, the urban counterpoint, and a symbol of the fulfillment of time, occupies a rather central position, not without any symbolic significance – however, it is not forced into the very middle of the world. (Later on, we revisit some maps where Jerusalem is very clearly and intentionally drawn as the center of the world.) What is interesting, however, is that the cartographic symbol of Jerusalem is the only urban feature of the map – not even Rome is depicted as a city, its location indicated only by its name between two mountain ranges.

The representative of the other of the two Beatus *mappamundi* archetypes[79] is found in the Osma Beatus, a much later manuscript (cf. Figure 18). Not surprisingly, but also not necessarily, we find this archetype to be much more detailed, with a direct reflection of the Isidore reference above: the Apostles shown at their designated place of preaching.

Figure 18: The map of the world in the Osma Beatus, 1083, Burgo de Osma, Archivo de la Catedral, Cod. 1, f. 34v-35

Jerusalem is, again, rather central, but not fully. Its visual signification does not allocate any special role to it. There is some diversity in the otherwise abstract set of urban symbols, but there is no clear allegorical pattern behind. As a topo-allegorical element, again, the Paradise appears at the eastern edge of the world – as a square with its four rivers inside. There are many

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[79] Cf. Williams, "Isidore, Orosius and the Beatus Map," 9.

further Beatus world maps in the numerous editions of the text with its pictorial canon – but as far it concerns the topotheology of Jerusalem on *mappaemundi,* they all represent the same pattern: they show the earthly Jerusalem, i.e., one of the important cities of the world, but a city among others, nevertheless. In particular, no signs of Revelation imagery appear on any of the Beatine maps - even if they, in general, do not completely lack allegorical elements, as best exemplified by the Garden of Eden.

Pragmatic allegories: Jerusalem and allegorization in the cartographical canon of the twelfth-thirteenth century

Studying Beatine maps, even if not very instructive in general for investigating cartographical imagination of the Heavenly Jerusalem, provide us with a set of perspectives for a topotheological reading of *mappaemundi.*

Just as we have seen in the case of exegetical reflections and illumination practice, the twelfth century seems to represent a turning point in the *mappamundi* tradition, probably also influenced by the Crusades and the sudden possibility for many to get in touch with the real Jerusalem. Indeed, most of the major extant world maps studied in literature come from the twelfth-thirteenth century.

Around that time, the probably most influential Victorine theologian and the teacher of Richard of Saint Victor, Hugh of Saint Victor was, among many other subjects, particularly occupied by maps, and he might himself have been the creator of a large *mappamundi* at the abbey of Saint Victor.[80] Around 1126, he thus summarized the medieval view on the content and purpose of world maps: "We must collect a brief summary of all things ... which the mind may grasp and the memory retain with ease. The mind chiefly esteems events by three things: the

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[80] Nathalie Bouloux, "The Munich Map (c. 1130): Description, Meanings and Uses," in Terkla and Millea, *A Critical Companion to the English Medieval Mappae Mundi of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, 93.

persons by whom deeds were done, the places in which they were done, and the times when they were done."[81]

The theological and cartographical work of Hugh of Saint Victor directly influenced the so-called Munich Map (c. 1130), held to be a small-scale version of Hugh's own *mappamundi* at the abbey.[82] Gautier Dalché puts it into the same family as the Sawley, Psalter, Hereford and Ebstorf maps (see later), which we could call the Anglo-French world map tradition (preceding, but overlapping with the Anglo-French Apocalypse illumination tradition).[83]

The Munich map demonstrates a rather canonical approach to the Isidorian T-O model, which is no surprise, given that it is used as an illustration to a collection of works of Isidore. As on Beatus maps, Jerusalem is somewhat highlighted and easily located, but no additional effort is taken to distort geographical reality in order to make Jerusalem the center of the world. It is represented as a church building (the only edifice with a cross on top among all the urban vignettes on the map), consistently with the function of the earthly Jerusalem, but bearing no further ecclesiological or eschatological significance. The Garden of Eden is missing, and Rome (as on other maps of this group) is also just a city among others, represented with a castle- or tower-like building and a river running through. Generally, the Munich map makes a rather pragmatic impression, with scarce allegorical elements (like the typical *mappamundi* beasts in the south) and an overall urban character in interpreting space. This is consistent with the teachings and spiritual approach of Hugh and the Victorine school, leading the faithful viewer to *spiritualia* through a contemplation of *realia*, the real (urban) world.[84]

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[81] Hugh of Saint Victor, *De tribus maximis circumstantiis gestorum*. Cited in Harley and Woodward, *The History of Cartography*, 290.
[82] Nathalie Bouloux, "The Munich Map (c. 1130): Description, Meanings and Uses," in Terkla and Millea, *A Critical Companion to the English Medieval Mappae Mundi of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, 93.
[83] Cf. Patrick Gautier Dalché, "Maps in Words: The Descriptive Logic of Medieval Geography, from the Eighth to the Twelfth Century," in *The Hereford World Map. Medieval World Maps and Their Context*, 2006, 223–42.
[84] Nathalie Bouloux, "The Munich Map (c. 1130): Description, Meanings and Uses," in Terkla and Millea, *A Critical Companion to the English Medieval Mappae Mundi of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, 110–11.

The Sawley map (end of twelfth century, cf. Figure 19) demonstrates a similar cartographical approach from many perspectives, however, it is much more detailed and Christianized. Just as the Munich map, it forms a companion to a geographical work, the *Imago mundi* of Honorius (c. 1080-1157).[85] Regarding the topotheology of Jerusalem and Christian spatio-temporality, it follows the same pattern as the Munich map: its base layer is human geography, i.e., cities and regions, drawing heavily on the Roman interpretation of the world. Jerusalem is, again, represented by a *basilica*. However, the conceptual framing adheres much more to Christian spirituality, as marked by the atypical and emphatic presence of important places like the monastery of Saint Anthony and Sabaria (modern Szombathely, Hungary), the supposed birthplace of Martin of Tours.[86] The decorated frame with the four angels has been shown to have a direct relation with the events told in Revelation.[87] The beginning of time is marked by the presence of Paradise. Thus, even if somewhat subtly, the Sawley map adds a layer of Christian allegorical temporality on top of the still prevalent depiction of geographic reality.

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[85] Alfred Hiatt, "The Sawley Map (c. 1190)," in Terkla and Millea, 114.

[86] Alfred Hiatt, "The Sawley Map (c. 1190)," in Terkla and Millea, 119. The author, falsely, talks about a Benedictine monastery at Savaria. He probably confuses the city with Pannonhalma (Mons Pannoniae), another suggested birthplace of Martin of Tours, where there is, indeed, a Benedictine archabbey.

[87] Alessandro Scafi, *Mapping Paradise: A History of Heaven on Earth*, New edition (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2006), 141–44.

Figure 19: The Sawley Map, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS. 66, p. 2

This trend of geographical focus with subtle Christian allegorization can be further exemplified

by a number of maps of Palestine, the Holy Land emerging also in the twelfth century, after

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the beginning of the Crusades.[88] The late twelfth century Ashburnham Libri map is particularly interesting for its urban vignettes: the golden, rectangular symbol for cities, with its internal divisions resembling a grid street system, might be indicative of the ongoing change in understanding and perceiving the urban.[89]

Matthew Paris (1200-1259), a key chronicler and geographer from the monastery of Saint Albans has drawn, among many other maps and illustrations, four maps of Palestine, three (versions of the same map) known as the Acre map and accompanying the volumes of his *Chronica majora*, and the different Oxford map, which was most likely originally preserved as a separate drawing.[90] The Acre maps, forming the final section of an itinerary map from London to the Holy Land, got their name from the overproportionate and elaborate representation of the city of Acre, most likely motivated by the ongoing Crusades and of connected pilgrimage practice. However, Jerusalem is also among the more accentuated cities on the map: it is a rectangular walled structure with a few, but significant topographical details inside: the two temples and the sepulchre (cf. Figure 20). The city also has gates, but the whole representation, while clearly Christian, serves as an abstraction of the real Jerusalem and bears no allegorical meaning or reference to Revelation. The rectangle shape, here, should rather be read as a convenient geometrization of the actual shape of the city.

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[88] A comprehensive study of these maps can be found in Harvey, *Medieval Maps of the Holy Land*.
[89] Harvey, 35.
[90] For the Oxford map, see Harvey, 62–73; for the Acre maps, Harvey, 74–93.
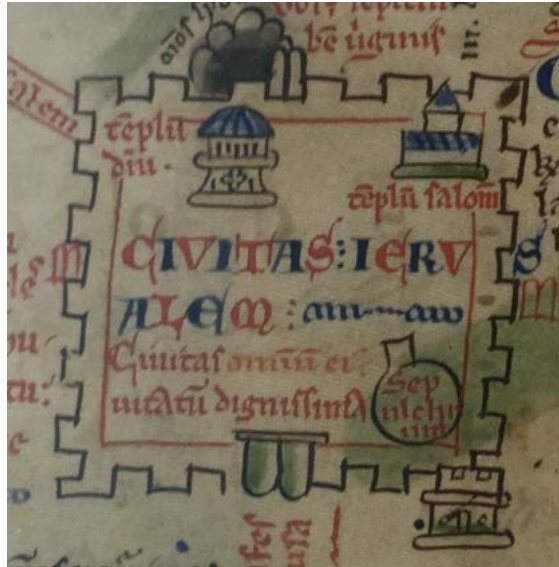
Figure 20: Jerusalem on the Acre map 'B' of Matthew Paris, British Library, Royal MS 14 C.vii, f. 5r

The so-called Tournai maps have been accompanying a work of Saint Jerome, *De situ et nominibus locorum Hebraeorum*. The *pictura* is described by Jerome himself, but the first extant copy is from 1150.[91] On the best-preserved third Tournai map of Palestine (late twelfth century, cf. Figure 21), Jerusalem is clearly signified as the most important city, drawn as a large double circle (the only urban vignette on the map). As an architectural distinguishing feature, the tower of David is shown, even if not at a topographically accurate location. Again, there are four main gates, thus, reflecting the earthly urban reality of the time and not the allegorical gates of Revelation. However, even if the map could hardly be said to carry an allegorical or symbolical surplus, the circle shape itself might still place this Jerusalem representation into the cosmologically inclined *umbilicus mundi* tradition.

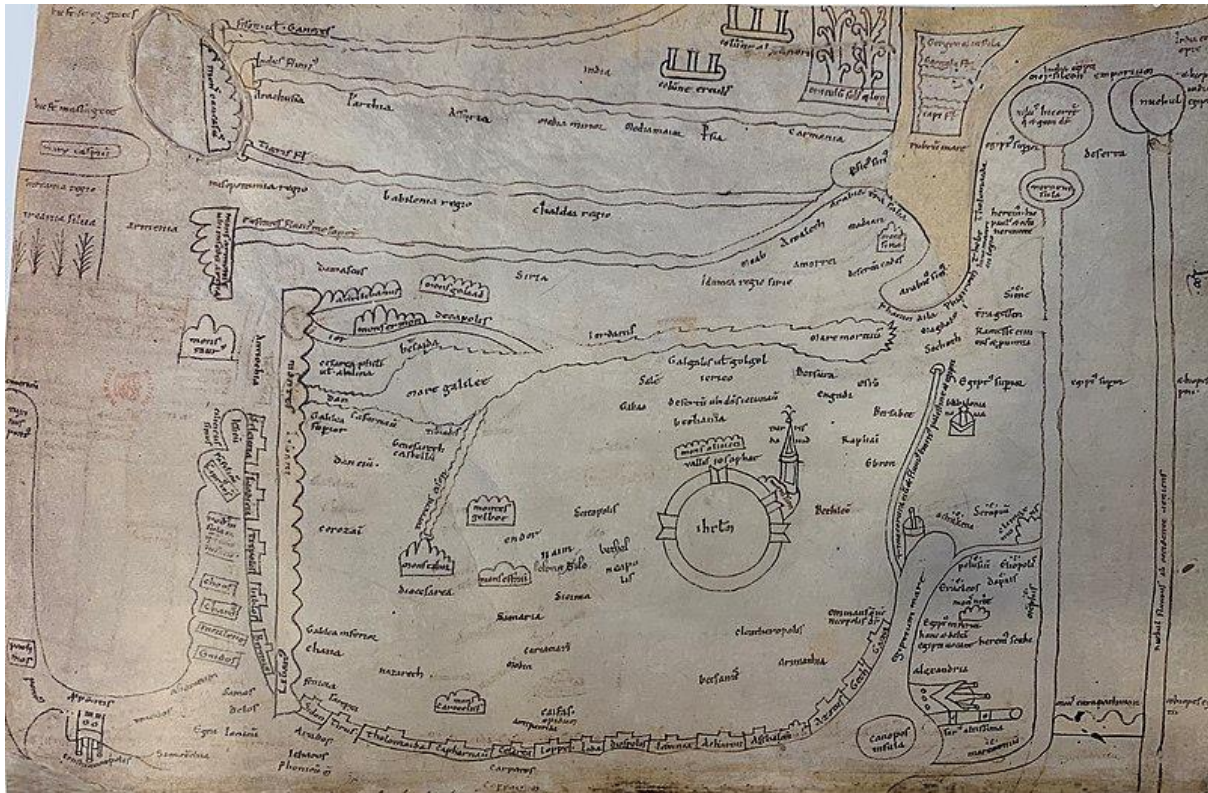[91] Harvey, *Medieval Maps of the Holy Land*, 40.

Figure 21: The third Tournai map of Palestine, late twelfth century, British Library, Add. MS 10049, f. 64v

There are also maps from this era focusing exclusively on Jerusalem. A pattern of shaping Jerusalem emerges, but a pragmatic and not really a topotheological one: while no map, especially not a medieval map should be seen as serving a dedicated single purpose (even a topographical map could have been used for meditative purposes in a monastic context, as seen in Victorine practice), those Jerusalem and Palestine representations which are thought to belong to itineraries or other "practical" use-cases seem to favor the quadrilateral (more realistic and "city-like") shape, while maps rather serving as illustrations or companion pieces to certain texts (like chronicles of the crusades) attach themselves to the notion of Jerusalem as the center of the world, of which the circle is the geometrical symbol. Figure 22 shows an example of the former, the Cambrai map of Jerusalem, the first known map to show the city in quadrilateral form.[92] The many topographical details, including the mains streets, point to a

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[92] Harvey, 23.

practical intention. Contrasting in shape, but most likely not in purpose, the maps of Jerusalem

and its surroundings in Figure 23 make a practical impression with their detailed routes and

streets,[93] however, they stick with the circular representation of Jerusalem – a conventional

symbolism retained even in an itinerary context.

Figure 22: Plan of Jerusalem, mid-twelfth century, Cambrai, Centre culturel, MS 437, f. 1r

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[93] Harvey, 24.

Figure 23: Plans of Jerusalem and surrounds; left: early thirteenth century, British Library, Harley MS 658, f. 39v; right: late twelfth century, Biblothéque royale de Belgique, Brussels, MS 9823-9824, f. 157r

Jerusalem, center and end of the world: the Psalter, Hereford and Ebstorf world maps

As we have seen, both a circular and a rectangular shape for drawing Jerusalem on maps (and illuminations) appears frequently in pictorial tradition, and both can be justified by cosmology and exegesis. While we cannot identify a clear, evidential reference point for representing Jerusalem as a circle neither in written nor in visual sources (unlike the square, which Revelation 21 is very explicit about), the circle – intuitively, geometrically and cosmologically – appears to be an appropriate symbol for representing that quality of Jerusalem which is omnipresent in tradition: it being the center of the world.

A world map is arguably the most appropriate medium for visually expressing this global centrality in a very plastic way. After all, here, the whole world (itself almost always a circle) is depicted, with nothing remaining outside. Therefore, whatever is in the middle is, indeed,

the middle of the cosmos. Herein, we find another potential source of the circular image of Jerusalem: if the world is circular (as it customarily is), and Jerusalem is its center in its microcosmic quality, then it should be a circle as well to visualize the analogy between the Creation and the City.

Nevertheless, as shown before, many *mappaemundi* do not take extra efforts to actualize this centrality of Jerusalem. The layout of the T-O paradigm is organized by the waters dividing the continents and, thus, it is the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea emerging as a natural center of the *mappa* itself. Jerusalem is always *somewhat* centered or remains close to the center of the map, partly as a consequence of its geographical location.

However, there are three famous and important exceptions in the universe of *mappaemundi* that indeed demonstrate a clear intention to show Jerusalem as the middle of the world.

The Psalter Map (c. 1262, cf. Figure 24) received its name from once being the opening page of a psalter (being the only such *mappa*). While being just about 3.5 inches in diameter, it is asserted to be a copy of a much larger *mappamundi* once decorating the Painted Chamber of Henry III at Westminster.[94]

Here, the influence of Hugh of Saint Victor is not only reflected in mixing geographical *realia* with Biblical exegesis, but also in representing in a visually succinct manner the course of history from the Garden of Eden to the Last Judgment. The whole world is a circle embraced by Christ, as on the Ebstorf map. The course of the metahistory of salvation is displayed by the (atypically) circular Paradise symbol with Adam and Eve in the East, and the malign-looking west wind at the westernmost point – where the wyverns underneath indicate that this might be

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[94] Chet van Duzer, "The Psalter Map (c. 1262)," in Terkla and Millea, *A Critical Companion to the English Medieval Mappae Mundi of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, 179–80.

the location of hell.[95] The line between the three points (Eden, Jerusalem, westernmost point) with the repetition of the circle motif evokes the mental image of an *axis mundi*. In the middle of all this, thus, in the middle of both space and time, there is Jerusalem. The Psalter Map work makes an impression as if the main guiding principle, even the principal message of the *mappa* would be to claim Jerusalem as the center of all.

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[95] On the east-west historical symbolism, cf. Stephen McKenzie, "The Westward Progression of History on Medieval Mappaemundi: An Investigation of the Evidence," in *The Hereford World Map. Medieval World Maps and Their Context*, 2006, 335–44; Scafi, *Mapping Paradise*. Two wyverns indicate hell also elsewhere, e.g., in a manuscript of Thomasin von Zirclaere's *Der welsche Gast*, 1256, Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg, Cod. Pal. Germ. 389, f. 86r.

Figure 24: The Psalter Map, British Library, Add. MS 28681, f. 9r

The Hereford map, due to many material factors (survival in good shape, large format,

permanent accessibility, excellent online resources) has by now become the definitive example

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of medieval *mappaemundi.*[96] Most importantly for a topotheology of Jerusalem, the city is not only a circle in the very middle of a circular world, with a distinct and emphatic representation of the Crucifixion, it is also graphically very much unlike all the other cities in an otherwise predominantly urban global landscape.

Figure 25: Jerusalem on the Hereford World Map, with a 3D scan of its execution, Hereford Cathedral, Hereford Mappa Mundi Trust

The representation of Jerusalem (cf. Figure 25), even if symbolically loaded, is still very earthly – not only due to the circle shape, but also the abstract urban details, a fortified wall, four gates (coherently with other realistic Jerusalem drawings of the time) and four towers. While the four gates might signify the center's openness towards all directions, the towers are probably included not for topographical faithfulness, but for the sake of symmetry and an urban emphasis. A recent 3D scan of the map revealed that particular attention has been given to the centeredness and geometric circularity of the map, as indicated by the hole in the very center of the Jerusalem circle (and, thus, of the whole map), probably left by a compass. While the Hereford Map, despite all the symbolic details, focuses on earthly places and events of Christianity, the Heavenly Jerusalem is also not completely absent: the events of the final times,

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[96] Cf. Marcia Kupfer, "The Hereford Map (c. 1300)," in Terkla and Millea, *A Critical Companion to the English Medieval Mappae Mundi of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries,* 300ff.

including the Last Judgment, are hinted at at the very top of the artifact, outside of the world proper. The apocalypse is a reality, but it takes place outside of space and time as we know it.

Notably, the only other circularly signified place on the map is Paradise at the eastern edge of the world. As on the Psalter Map, the combination of the two circles add a metahistorical layer to the reading of the Hereford Map. Unlike many other *mappaemundi*, here, Rome also takes an accentuated position, represented by a castle, very large compared to the vignettes of other cities. The text beneath it reads: "Rome, *head* of the world, holds the bridle of the *spherical* world." (Emphases added.) Calling it a *caput mundi* strengthens the presence of a cosmic body metaphorology, further fortifying the role of the circular Jerusalem as *umbilicus mundi.* Furthermore, the text underlines the importance of imagining the world as a sphere.[97]

The world is indeed a circle (embraced by Christ as on the Psalter Map, but now, residing *within* the world[98]) on another central example of allegorizing medieval *mappaemundi*, the famous Ebstorf Map (c. 1234-1240).[99] However, here, the rest of the places related to a Christian view on history display a quadratic symbolism – thus, the Ebstorf Map can be seen as the epitome of visual exegesis regarding the topotheology of Jerusalem.

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[97] Cf. S. D. Westrem, *The Hereford Map: A Transcription and Translation of the Legends with Commentary*, 1st edition (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2001), 270–71.

[98] On the theological significance of a dispersed cosmic Christ, cf. Marcia Ann Kupfer, "Reflections in the Ebstorf Map: Cartography, Theology and 'Dilectio Speculationis,'" in *Mapping Medieval Geographies. Geographical Encounters in the Latin West and Beyond*, 2013, 110-1.

[99] For a summary of the Ebstorf Maps' content, cf. G. Pischke, "The Ebstorf Map: Tradition and Contents of a Medieval Picture of the World," *History of Geo- and Space Sciences* 5, no. 2 (July 11, 2014): 155–61.
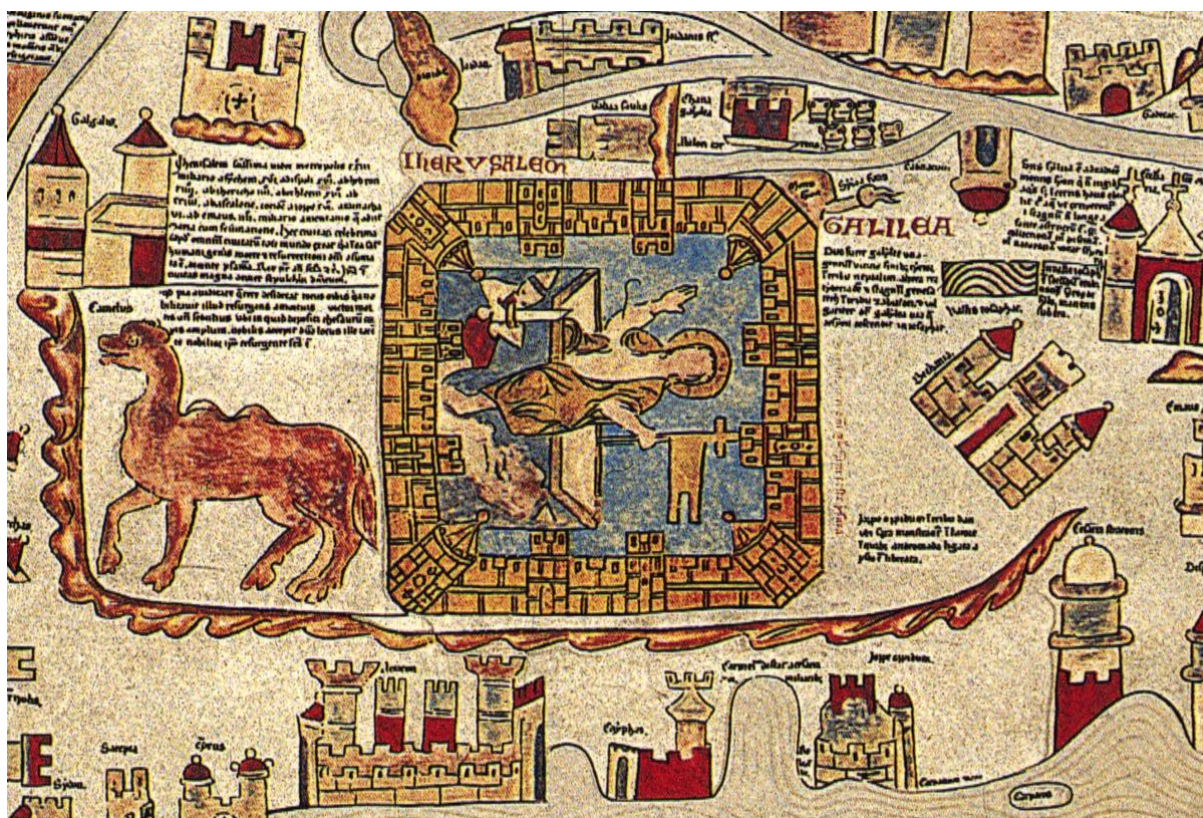
Figure 26: Jerusalem on the Ebstorf Map

Where the Hereford Map adds a scene of the Crucifixion, the death of the earthly Christ to the representation of Jerusalem, the Ebstorf Map shows the Resurrection of Christ from the tomb (cf. Figure 26). Furthermore, the positioning of the scene might also refer to the Last Judgment, with the place of the righteous lying in the East (at the head of the cosmic Christ on the map) and that of the damned in the West.

What is even more important is that the details of Jerusalem make a *direct* reference to the Heavenly Jerusalem: this is the only *mappamundi* where Jerusalem has twelve gates and Christ being present in the city, as described by John. Additionally, as we could observe a repetition of the circle motif on the Psalter and Hereford Maps to forge a depiction of Christian temporality, here, rectangles are used to create a geometrical allegory.
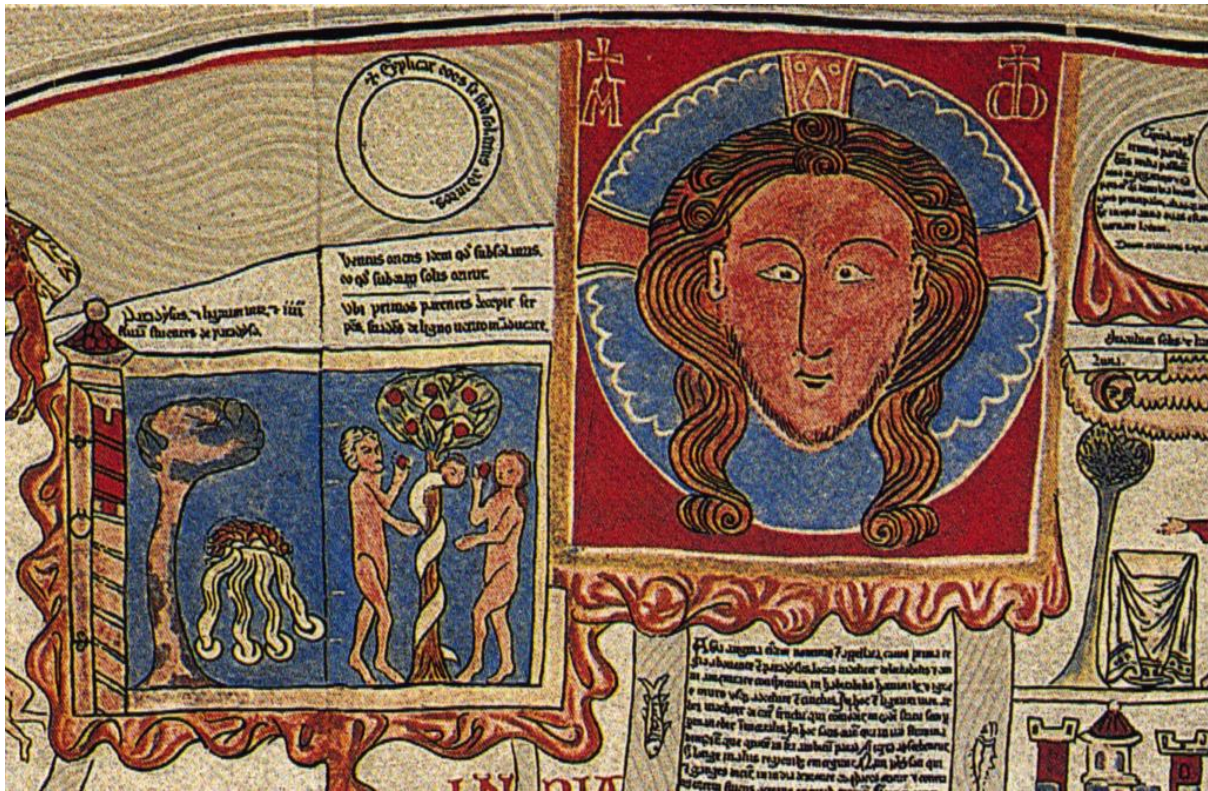
Figure 27: Christ's head and Paradise in the east on the Ebstorf Map

The traditional place of the Paradise is occupied by the head of the cosmic Christ in a square, with a rectangular Garden of Eden nearby, also filled with a narrative scenery instead of a sheer topographical reference (cf. Figure 27). Together with the heavenly Jerusalem, finally to be found on earth, these rectangles represent the supracreational nature of Christ, as well as the beginning of time with the fall of man, and their salvation through the Resurrection and Parousia of Christ at the end of time. "God's dwelling place is now among the people."

Conclusion

Laying the foundation for something new, be it an earthly or a heavenly city, or a new, cross-cutting perspective for studying the history of religion, always requires careful consideration of the principles, and a preparation of the ground. This thesis represents a modest experiment for the latter: it proposes topotheology as a transmedial methodology for the study of theological conceptions of space and place. The present work is a first venture into this conceptual field: through the case of the two Jerusalems, topotheological investigation might take us a step closer to a theory of heavenly urbanism.

Considering the ambition behind topotheology to be a generally useful method of study, I chose to organize the work according to a widely accepted model for conceptualizing urban space: the Lefebvrian triad of conceived, perceived and lived space. I have attached a mode of exegesis to each of the three modalities of space, resulting in a typologically and medially clean organization of the work encompassing each relevant aspect of the medieval reception of the Heavenly Jerusalem: written exegesis on the dwellings of God and their shapes, its visualizations in the Apocalypse illumination tradition, as well as the approaches of embedding a symbolically loaded image of Jerusalem into real geography on medieval maps of the world and the Holy Land.

Patterns of urban exegesis

Concluding on the certainly non-exhaustive exposition of the three conceptual pillars of Heavenly Jerusalem, I shall look beyond the single sources and cases to see if some theoretical, theological or historical patterns emerge from the topotheological investigation.

I find no clear answer to this question: while the source material does not show absolute homogeneity from any of the perspectives applied, there are some key elements that can be

fixed. As an important example, the notion of *perfection* comes forth very prevalently from exegetical interpretation, as an attribute attached to the Heavenly Jerusalem (and its Old Testament prefigurations, the dwellings of God). A basic quality of the heavenly city, i.e., its shape is very clearly and emphatically presented in the Revelation – however, visual representations still remain to oscillate between the circle (notably, in the early illumination tradition) and the square (with the Beatus cycle as primary example) as base forms of sacred geometry. Circle and square, in turn, represent two sides of the notion of perfection: circularity underlines the microcosmicity and, thus, an analogy with the perfect creation of God, while rectangularity is attached to an ideal form of the fourfold world, recreated again and again in the building activity of man and to be fulfilled in the cubic perfection of the New Jerusalem at the end of time. Simultaneously, the Heavenly City also remains as antithesis of earthly human dwellings – another possible explanation for retaining the circle as an equally valid shape of representation.

The Beatus canon contains a distinguishable, although not unique, bird-eye square representation of the Heavenly Jerusalem, which has been reproduced and reimagined from the ninth to the thirteenth century. At the same time, other famous Apocalypse illuminations tend to favor the circle, but, again, this does not mean exclusivity.

While the method of topotheology is distinctly non-chronological, one cannot fail to notice a certain paradigm shift in the twelfth century, again, best exemplified in new representation modes emerging in visual culture, but also influenced by new theoretical approaches in the theological tradition – most notably, at the abbey of Saint Victor, primarily in the work of Hugh and Richard. Looking at their methods and interests, there is a clearly discernible intention of leading the imagination and intellect of the faithful to the contemplation of heavenly order through a careful and realistic study of the world, especially in architecture and cartography.

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The same century also saw the emergence of the teaching of Joachim of Fiore, the first mystic to propose a third, pneumatic age of history, that of a perfect community united in the Holy Spirit – a contemplative utopia of an existing Heavenly Jerusalem. Again, the real world is not abandoned for the desire of a heavenly abode, but it is rather transformed into an earthly Kingdom of God.

It is also in the twelfth century that the Occidental (to use a Weberian typology) mode of urbanization emerges, with new forms of city foundation and planning throughout Europe. In a seminal paper, Martina Stercken explicitly touched on the topic of the possible correlations between the imagery of the New Jerusalem and the medieval city as a socio-architectural construct.[100] In particular, events and trends like the growing importance of the earthly city of Jerusalem for the West catalyzed by the Crusades, or the quadratic urban planning principles of emerging city forms in the twelfth-thirteenth centuries (notably, the *Gründungsstadt* in Germany and the *bastides* in France) have been mentioned as potential influencing factors. Stercken also subscribes to what she perceived as an already existing fundamental doubt in the literature, if there ever was such a thing at all as "city planning after a heavenly example".[101]

Regarding new impulses of heavenly urbanism in the twelfth century, another often-mentioned example is the famous Barbarossa Chandelier (c. 1165-1170) in the Aachen Cathedral, commissioned by the Emperor and his wife. The metaphor works perfectly: a chandelier descends into church space (that is an analogy for Creation itself) just as the Heavenly Jerusalem descends into the cosmos to fulfill time. Nevertheless, even if the Revelation is very

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[100] Martina Stercken, "Gebaute Ordnung: Stadtvorstellungen und Planung im Mittelalter," in Bruno Fritzsche, Hans-Jörg Gilomen, Martina Stercken, eds*., Städteplanung - Planungsstädte.* (Zürich: Chronos, 2006), 15-37.
[101] Ibid., 20-21.

explicit about the square (cube) shape of the Heavenly Jerusalem, the chandelier is clearly something else: a polygon (or the approximation of a circle, one might say).[102]

This is also the time when new, more complex and more realistic representations of the Heavenly Jerusalem emerge. Late medieval Apocalypse illumination that came to be summarized as the Anglo-French tradition in literature,[103] displays new vantage points and more and more elaborate views of the Heavenly City – but this comes at the expense of apocalyptic symbolism, the vision of John becoming a tale on how the world ends rather than a symbolic theology of the eschaton.

Last, but not least, the twelfth century also saw the appearance of a new approach to *mappaemundi,* to theologically inspired and allegorizing, often more encyclopedic than geographic maps of the world. According to the Isidorian T-O model of the world, which is oriented towards the east (the source of light, i.e., allegorically, also the light of God) and where the Eastern Mediterranean and, thus, also Jerusalem is very naturally in the center. But in most cases, Jerusalem is not *exactly* in the middle: even if the maps contain a high number of Biblical references and Christological motifs, it is only in a few cases that we see Jerusalem drawn deliberately as the "center of nations", and it is only on the Ebstorf Map that it is painted as the Heavenly Jerusalem, with twelve gates, golden walls and a resurrected Christ inside. We are already in an era where symbolism is not everything: the representation of the world should be just as real as allegoric.

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[102] Cf. Vedran Sulovsky, *The Barbarossaleuchter. Imperial Monument and Pious Donation*, in Paweł Figurski, Johanna Dale, and Pieter Byttebier, eds., *Political Liturgies in the High Middle Ages: Beyond the Legacy of Ernst H. Kantorowicz*, vol. 4, Medieval and Early Modern Political Theology (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2021), 211ff.

[103] Cf. Emmerson, *Apocalypse Illuminated*.

A real imagination

Let us open our eyes. What do we see now?

On earth, in front of us, we still have the city as we know it, our human dwelling, with all its hustle, conflicts, planned and emerging structures, encounters and marvels. But now, we have seen that the final, Heavenly City does not necessarily have to remain at an unbridgeable, transcendental distance, but it can become part of our everyday life, even if not in its revealed reality, but as an allegory, a moral guidance, a reminder of the end – and an earthly approximation of the topography of the Kingdom of God.

There is a taste of heaven in the city.

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