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Imagining Place and Moralizing Space: Jerusalem at Medieval Westminster, Laura Slater
Abstract

Monuments and landscape ensembles across medieval Europe recreated the Christian holy places of Jerusalem for local devotees. Contemporary legends surrounding the death of King Henry IV in 1413, who died in the Jerusalem Chamber in the abbot’s house at Westminster Abbey, place the room firmly within this cultural tradition. In the sixteenth century, a neighbouring Jericho Parlour was built. This paper highlights the political significances of such “recreated Jerusalem” sites: in contrast to the religious and demographic diversity found in the earthly city, and in connection with European crusading and imperial ambitions. Exploring the “death in Jerusalem” topos in detail, it argues that the Jerusalem Chamber should not be understood as a recreated holy place. Instead, the links to the Holy Land found in the abbot’s house form part of an imaginative reinvention of space within medieval Westminster, deliberately intended to provoke moral admonition and self-scrutiny in its users.

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Death, Kings, and Jerusalem: A Medieval Topos

In one of the first accounts of a scene later immortalized by Shakespeare, written almost contemporaneously in 1413–14, Adam Usk recorded that on 20 March 1413, “after fourteen years of powerful rule . . . the infection which for five years had cruelly tormented Henry IV with festering of the flesh, dehydration of the eyes, and rupture of the internal organs, caused him to end his days, dying in the sanctuary of the abbot’s chamber at Westminster, whereby he fulfilled his horoscope that he would die in the Holy Land”. The author of the Brut, writing about 1430, expanded the scene further. Henry had ordered the construction of galleys of war in which to sail to Jerusalem and end his life in the Holy Land. Struck by illness, the king:

was yn Bedde at Westmynstre yn a faire Chaumbre; and as he lay abedde, he axed his Chaumbirleyn what he callyd that Chaumbyr þ[th]at he lay-ynne; he answarde and sayde “Ierusalem”. [Th]þanne he sayde, his prophecie sayde “he schulde make an ende and deye yn Ierusalem.” And þ[th]an he made hym redy unto God, & disposed alle his wille, and sone aftir he deyed . . .

As Anthony Bale has noted, to die in Jerusalem was to die well, with crusading or eschatological return to Jerusalem forming part of the famous medieval “good death”. The twisted fulfilment of prophecies of death in Jerusalem subverted this idea. The tale forms a commentary on princely ambition, stressing the transience and limits of worldly power and glory. It was a medieval topos concerned with the fall of the mighty: Pope Sylvester II had his death in Jerusalem foretold by a devil and died at Santa Croce in Gerusalemme in Rome. Anna Comnena’s Alexiad, written about 1148, describes how Robert Guiscard’s death in Cephalonia was hastened by learning of a nearby town named Jerusalem: “many years before some soothsayers had prophesied to him the kind of thing flatterers are wont to tell princes, ‘As far as Ather you shall bring all countries under your sway, but from there you shall depart for Jerusalem and pay your debt to nature.’” According to John Barbour’s 1370s Bruce, a wicked spirit led Edward I to expect his death “in the burgh” of Jerusalem before the king died at Burgh-by-Sands near Carlisle in 1307. We can imagine the satisfaction for both authors in narrating such bathetic and frustrated ends to the lives of their foes.
By spring 1414, when Adam Usk may have written the section of his chronicle on Henry IV’s death, he was not an unqualified supporter of the king. The schadenfreude with which he adapted the trope can only be guessed at, but restaging the anecdote reiterates its conventional themes, implying Henry’s limitless ambition and, in his leprous illness, the just judgement of God on the king for usurping and murdering his cousin, Richard II. Usk’s reference to Henry IV “dying in the sanctuary of the abbot’s chamber at Westminster” is factual: the abbot’s house at Westminster lay well within the boundaries of the monastic precinct, and the ancient legal right of sanctuary that residence within it entailed. But its mention may also obliquely comment on the sins of the king, who might well want to seek sanctuary at Westminster if involved in Richard’s murder. On the same theme, John Hardyng’s chronicle of about 1440 particularly stresses the king’s repentance for his sins on his deathbed.

Usk’s version of the tale may equally reflect the greater legitimacy that Henry enjoyed after over a decade of rule. By the fifteenth century, there was an especially strong link between the death of kings and Jerusalem. Louis IX of France was believed to have murmured “We will go unto Jerusalem” the night before his death. A contemporary elegy on the death of Edward I had the king bequeath his heart to the Holy Land, to accompany fourscore battle-hardened knights fighting against the heathen and winning the Cross, deeds that “myself ycholde gef that y myhte.” At his death in 1329, Edward’s enemy Robert the Bruce desired his heart to be buried at the Holy Sepulchre, and the ancient Saxon king Offa was believed to have died on his return from Jerusalem. The Anglo-Saxon holy king, Edward the Confessor, was also given notice of his forthcoming death from two English pilgrims. Lost in “Syria” on their way to the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, they were rescued by St John the Evangelist, who guided them safely back to England to inform the king of his demise and salvation. Aelred of Rievaulx’s twelfth-century narrative has the pilgrims magically transported to Jerusalem, while Matthew Paris in the thirteenth century only implies the success of their journey. Westminster is the true goal of the pilgrims’ journey in both accounts, but the link between Jerusalem and a royal deathbed remains.

This article begins by exploring the Jerusalem Chamber at Westminster and the royal deathbed legend surrounding it in the context of the enduring European tradition of recreating the Christian holy places in monumental form. Such sites were first and foremost places of devotion, designed to provoke the same complex nexus of memoria and affectio that characterized all Christian pilgrimages. I argue that European recreations of Jerusalem were also politically symbolic, embodying European aspirations to
sovereignty over the Holy Land and closely related to medieval concepts of *imperium*. Yet the Jerusalem Chamber does not entirely conform to this tradition. Rather than being a site of “virtual pilgrimage”, I argue that the room was linked to Jerusalem by an imaginative reinvention of space within medieval Westminster, deliberately intended to provoke moral admonition and self-scrutiny in its visitors.

**The Political Meanings of Recreated Jerusalems**

As a biblical relic, future site of the events of Revelation, and symbol of the heavenly city, Jerusalem defied all medieval distinctions of space, place, and time. Yet the “death in Jerusalem” topos plays on its uniquely translatable nature in quite a different way. The trap of the deceitful prophecies supposedly accepted by Robert Guiscard, Edward I, and Henry IV all relied on the frequency with which Jerusalem was multiplied through European place names, church dedications to the Holy Sepulchre or Holy Cross, and more ambitious monumental and topographical reproductions of its holy sites. Exemplified in England by famous surviving recreations of the Anastasis Rotunda, such as in the Cambridge Round Church (fig. 1), and in Scotland by the ruined circular-naved church of St Nicholas Orphir, on the Orkney island of Mainland, recreated Jerusalems have been understood primarily as sites of virtual or imagined pilgrimage. Local translations of the Holy Land provided a way of re-experiencing Christ’s Passion in a safe and familiar environment.
I argue that these sites were laden with political meaning. Medieval visitors to the earthly Jerusalem arrived at a religiously, ethnically, and culturally diverse “global city” housing Christian, Islamic, and Jewish populations. In pilgrimage accounts, observation on the *varietas* of the city is a rhetorical commonplace. Around 1170, John of Würzburg noted the “great many chapels and churches . . . which hold people of every race and tongue”, that were too numerous for inclusion in his detailed description of the city. The pilgrim Theodoric, travelling c.1169–74, discussed the different Christian liturgies performed in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre by “the Latins, the Syrians, the Armenians, the Greeks, the Jacobins and the Nubians”. Thietmar, travelling c.1217–18, “began my journey with certain Syrians and Saracens through the land of Zebulun and Naphtali [Galilee]”. Burchard of Mount Sion recorded himself about 1274 “diligently questioning” the
“Syrians, Saracens and other inhabitants of the land” to find out as much accurate information as possible. 28 Syncretic religious sites encompassed all three Abrahamic faiths: twelfth-century Jewish pilgrimage accounts record Christian and Muslim visits to holy tombs, miracle stories involving Gentiles, and a possible visit to the Holy Sepulchre by the pilgrim Jacob b. Nathanel. 29 At the tomb of the Prophet Jonah at Kfar Kana, R. Petahyah of Regensburg, writing c.1174–87, was welcomed and offered fruit by its Gentile guardian. 30

These encounters had little effect on the inter-faith tolerance of Western visitors. For example, the composite chronicle of Ernoul-Bernard, written about 1231 but using earlier, pre-1187 texts, refuses to discuss the Christians and Christian churches not in obedience to Rome. 31 And while pilgrim accounts noted restricted access to the holy places after 1187, Willbrand of Oldenburg is exceptional in recording the conversion of the Church of the Ascension into a mosque in his 1211–12 account. 32 Yet the range and variety of cross-cultural encounters in Palestine clearly constituted one of the most striking and memorable features of the pilgrimage experience, rippling through successive accounts of visits to Jerusalem. 33 However partially and reluctantly, textual representations of the Holy Land acknowledged the shared nature of Jerusalem loca sancta. The Latin settlers in the crusader kingdoms, the so-called pullani, were forced into a degree of practical co-existence with other faiths. 34 Of necessity, even for a brief period, Latin visitors had to do the same.

In texts, people may have acknowledged the shared and syncretic nature of Jerusalem and its holy places, but in images and monuments they did not. Architectural reproductions of the holy places in Europe did not recognize, much less incorporate, commemorate, or seek to recreate this devotional and religious diversity. As a result of medieval English demographics and of active ecclesiastical prohibitions against non-Christian visitors, no English churches of any type welcomed Islamic visitors, and after the Fourth Lateran Council, few, if any, Jews. As early as 1179 in England, the bishop of Worcester forbade Jews from storing goods in churches. 35 The Oxford church synod of 1222, presided over by Stephen Langton, banned Jews from entering churches altogether. 36 Visited overwhelmingly by Latin Christians, and celebrating only the Latin Christian mass, Jerusalem recreations guaranteed entry to an environment of doctrinal orthodoxy and liturgical familiarity. Performing no syncretic functions, they were places of religious uniformity and could act as affirmations of Christian unity, centred on obedience to papal Rome. Visiting Jerusalem at a local reinvention of the holy places thus involved deliberately marginalizing non-European and non-Christian worlds.
After the fall of Jerusalem in 1187, and the loss of the final crusader kingdom of Acre in 1291, entry into European Jerusalem sites also allowed one to imaginatively return to political primacy in the Holy Land. Felix Fabri’s *Sionpilger* of about 1491–92, a day-by-day mental pilgrimage to Jerusalem, Rome, and Compostela composed for the sisters of the nunnery of Medingen and Medlingen in Ulm, Germany, put it thus:

> the Syon [imaginative] pilgrim has much more freedom than the knightly [physical] pilgrim. The knightly pilgrim visits Jerusalem as in a heathen city, but the Syon pilgrim visits Jerusalem as a Christian city, as though Christians possess the Holy Sepulchre. And thus all churches are open, without hindrance of the heathen . . . [the Syon pilgrim] goes in the Holy Land where he will, without care, and remains as long as he likes in the Holy Sepulchre, in Bethlehem, in Nazareth and wherever he wishes in the Holy Land.  

The European visitor to a local monumental recreation of Jerusalem could recall a now lost era of Latin Christian sovereignty over the holy places, and in much greater cultural and religious completeness than had ever actually existed. Recreations of Jerusalem in Europe were selective translations. They can be partly understood as sites of exclusionary political fantasy that established a devotional monopoly over the holy city.

**Recreated Jerusalems and Concepts of Empire**

When returning crusader and newly established Norman landowner Simon de Senlis built the Holy Sepulchre Church at Northampton (*fig. 2*) at the *caput* of his new estates in the early twelfth century, with its circular nave modelled on the Anastasis Rotunda, he did more than proclaim his piety and commemorate his recent defence of the Holy Land. He was also publicly following in the footsteps of the Emperor Constantine: the exemplary Christian ruler, generous Christian patron, and original builder of the Holy Sepulchre complex. Simon would have been well aware of the precedent: mosaic depictions of Constantine and Helena decorated the eleventh-century Anastasis, facing each other on the north and south sides of the rotunda amidst the twelve apostles and twelve prophets respectively.  

Simon de Senlis’s Holy Sepulchre offers a small-scale, even provincial, example of the co-option of Jerusalem and its holy places into medieval notions of the *translatio imperii*, or the successive transfer of imperial power from East to West.  

As a means of communicating Simon’s power and Christian virtue to the locality, the Northampton Holy Sepulchre formed a powerful vehicle of local political propaganda.
By the twelfth century, the use of Jerusalem to support claims to political authority was an established European and Byzantine tradition. One of the ways in which Charlemagne asserted the status of the Carolingians as the new Israelites, the spiritual nature of Carolingian *imperium*, and his own religious authority as emperor, was by presenting himself as a *renovatio* of the Emperor Constantine.  

Michael McCormick has explored Charlemagne’s benefactions to holy sites in Jerusalem, as well as the comprehensive survey made by two Carolingian envoys between 808 and 810 of the people, buildings, and finances of Christian churches in the Holy Land.

Imperial or universal rulers by definition enjoyed sovereignty over Jerusalem and the power to relocate its holy places elsewhere through the transfer of relics. In Constantinople, the Church of the Virgin of the Pharos within the imperial palace served from 864 until 1204 as a storehouse for the most
precious imperial Passion relics. 42 Alexei Lidov suggests that many of the relics found in the Pharos chapel were originally housed in the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and relocated to Constantinople in the late ninth century, a time of renewed Byzantine sensitivities regarding the *translatio imperii*. 43 Accounts of Charlemagne’s imperial coronation in 800 narrated “global” recognition of his authority over the holy places in Jerusalem, supposedly acknowledged by both the Byzantine emperor and the Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid. 44 Scholars have explored the connections between Charlemagne’s palace chapel at Aachen and Jerusalem in detail, with potential *spolia* from the Holy Sepulchre even reused in the chapel’s furnishings and decoration. 45 Later medieval perceptions of Charlemagne as liberator of the Holy Land and generous donor of Passion relics made him an exemplary model for the crusading kingship of Louis IX of France. 46 Louis’s construction of the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris to house the Passion relics acquired from Emperor Baldwin II in Constantinople formed another notable instance of *translatio imperii*.

**Death and Burial in Recreated Jerusalems**

The “death in Jerusalem” topos provides a further key to interpreting buildings that recreated the holy places, as it both challenges and reaffirms the interchangeability of Jerusalems in Europe with the original across the Mediterranean Sea. Henry IV and Robert Guiscard assume they will die in Palestine, with Henry even preparing galleys of war to sail there. Presented as privileging the Jerusalem of the Holy Land over its multiple but evidently forgotten presences in Europe, the trope implies that not all Europeans could accept that a local copy of the Holy Sepulchre carried the same spiritual charge as the exact location of Christ’s Passion and Resurrection. The prestige and glamour attached to the First Crusaders, as chivalric Christian heroes, would naturally make a ruler wishing to prove his divine right and military worth contemplate a glorious crusading death in Palestine. 47

Yet the topos characterizes this distinction between original and copy as a mistake motivated by vain worldly ambition. Demons and soothsayers speak in “dowbill-undirstanding”: all Jerusalems are the same to these tricksters. 48 Henry IV’s realization that he will die in the Jerusalem Chamber at Westminster is a moment of moral revelation. Led by his pride into misinterpreting the prophecy as a promise of martial glory, emphasis returns to the king’s personal failings. The story implies that, as both a physical place and a universal spiritual destination, permanently accessible to all Christians, Jerusalem really is—and always was—nearby. So too is death:
expected “in Jerusalem”, but in fact an ever-present possibility to be constantly prepared for. Although the topos appears to tacitly accept the veracity of horoscopes, prophetic signs, and demonic foreknowledge, all that these soothsayers and astrologers ever truly “promised” to Henry IV and his literary peers was that death would one day arrive. As Henry IV belatedly recognizes, the virtuous Christian should celebrate his continuous spiritual proximity to Jerusalem, and be aware that death can come at any moment. He must humbly accept that entry into the holy city may never involve physical arrival in the East. It may instead come only with entry into the heavenly Jerusalem of Revelation 21 at the end of time. Death in the Jerusalem Chamber at Westminster offers Henry a flimsy, this-worldly foretaste of what is to come at the Last Judgement. And yet by doing so, the tale returns us to the hierarchical division between true and false Jerusalems; between the primary spiritual place and the secondary European replica, which the legend initially seems to undercut.

In practice, European Jerusalem sites regularly incorporated relics from the Holy Land, creating a substitutional relationship between the original site and its European satellites. Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, supposedly the site of Pope Sylvester II’s death, contained several relics believed to have been brought to Rome by the Empress Helena, for example, including earth from Golgotha soaked in Christ’s blood. The polysemous quality of relic-stocked Jerusalem recreations also made them particularly attractive as burial places. The practice was widespread on the continent from an early date. At Konstanz Cathedral, Bishop Conrad built a model of the Holy Sepulchre, the Mauritius Rotunda, in the east end of the cathedral cemetery in the tenth century. A veteran traveller to Jerusalem, the bishop was buried in the western outer wall of his model, probably alongside the white stones thought to be relics of Christ’s tomb discovered later in the Rotunda, itself reconstructed in the thirteenth century. The Domburg built at Paderborn by Bishop Meinwerk about 1009–36 included an imitation of the Anastasis Rotunda and tomb aedicule to the east, planned according to measurements taken in Jerusalem in 1033 by Abbot Wino of Helmarshausen. Completion of the chapel was rushed in order to dedicate it before the bishop’s death. Jerusalem replicas and their relics were understood as crucial aids to the salvation of those buried nearby. As the Resurrection and Last Judgement were due to begin on the Mount of Olives, dying “in Jerusalem” helped ensure one’s rapid passage to the heavenly city.

Yet there is limited evidence for such sites in England acting as burial places, particularly for their known founders. Early Templar churches seem to have held to a strict prohibition on internal burials (both for members of the Order and for the laity) until the late twelfth century. There were burials in the new Temple Church in London (fig. 3), beginning with the possible reburial of
its founder-figure, Geoffrey de Mandeville (d.1144) in its elaborate porch. This was followed by the famous series of eight thirteenth-century military effigies now in the nave, one of which commemorates the renowned knight and crusader, William Marshal, Earl of Pembroke (d.1219), but these are exceptional. After departing for Jerusalem a second time, Simon de Senlis died in France and was buried at his ancestral foundation of La Charité-sur-Loire. His son was buried at the new family foundation of St Andrew’s Priory, Northampton. Neither monastery sought to recreate the holy places.

Figure 3.

The “death in Jerusalem” topos thus exploited the existence of a multifaceted European tradition of reinvented holy places, in order to emphasize the importance of constant preparation for the hereafter. Death can strike at any time, and the good Christian should be constantly ready to meet it. Reinforcing the strong association between death and Jerusalem first
established by Revelation 20–21 and expressed most clearly in relation to the imagined deaths of monarchs, the widespread medieval desire for burial within or nearby Jerusalem, via relics and/or replicas of the Holy Land, would have given the topos further contemporary meaning and power. Yet while the legends surrounding Henry IV’s death link the Jerusalem Chamber firmly with an enduring tradition of monumental reproduction, how far the room actually conforms to this type can be questioned. Despite the political possibilities of these sites, amplified in a location as resonant for Plantagenet power as Westminster, presumed connections with recreations of Jerusalem such as Northampton may in fact obscure the original intended significances of the room and its decorations.

The Jerusalem Chamber at Westminster

The conventual buildings at Westminster were located on the south side of the church, connected to the south aisle of the nave by two doors on the east and west sides of the cloister. As was standard for Benedictine monasteries, the abbot’s lodgings were located further to the west of the cloister. The abbot stood at the head of a large and mainly lay household, institutionally separate from the convent and their domestic staff. His house was not an enclosed monastic space, but a secular arena furnished with every necessity for aristocratic domestic life and the hosting of lay visitors. The Monk of Westminster’s Chronicle records the celebration of the feast of the Translation of St Edward the Confessor at the abbey by Richard II on 13 October 1392. At the conclusion of High Mass, celebrated in the presence of the king, “he [Richard II] passed into the abbot’s hall, where, with utmost magnificence, the lords and ladies then at court, as well as the whole convent, or the greater part of it, were brilliantly and elegantly entertained.” After collapsing from illness at the shrine of the Confessor, it would have been insulting for Henry IV to be taken anywhere else than the abbot’s lodgings.
Comprehensively rebuilt by Abbot Nicholas Litlyngton from 1362, the abbot’s house centred on a courtyard with what is now the Deanery located to its east, a room belonging to the Cellarer’s buildings on its south side and on the west, the abbot’s hall.  

The Jerusalem Chamber was a large room located to the north, opening on one side into the hall and on the other into the abbot’s yard or garden (fig. 4). With the dais of the hall located at its north end and the kitchens hidden behind a screen at the south end of the hall, the Jerusalem Chamber formed a useful private apartment for the abbot and his favoured guests from which to proceed to high table, or to withdraw into after meals. Due to the convenience of having a chamber adjoining the north of the hall, the Jerusalem Chamber may have been a straightforward replacement of an earlier building, constructed on broadly the same site and for the same purpose. Litlyngton’s construction work
was well underway by 1371–72, when canvas for the windows of “my lord’s new chamber” was purchased. After 1379, payments for “the new work” cease. Between 1383 and 1384, foundations were laid for the construction of a gallery allowing the abbot to reach the Jerusalem Chamber without entering the hall: this ran along the southern side of the courtyard, to the east end of the base of the new nave tower. To the north of the central courtyard of the abbot’s house, partly swallowing elements of the gallery or “little cloister”, is the Jericho Parlour. This room was built between 1500 and 1532 by Abbot John Islip, the last abbot of Westminster before the Reformation. The Jericho Parlour formed a vestibule or antechamber to the Jerusalem Chamber, making both rooms very much part of the abbot’s domestic quarters. The furnishings of both Jerusalem and Jericho as recorded in Dissolution inventories of 1541 confirm their secular and domestic use.

Today, the Jerusalem Chamber (fig. 5) consists of a large and much-restored oblong, eleven metres (thirty-six feet) in length by five-and-a-half metres (eighteen feet) in width. Adjoining what is now termed College Hall, a polygonal tower protrudes from its north-west corner. The room is dominated by a grand chimney piece with an elaborate, seventeenth-century cedar overmantel supported on Doric columns. It is lined with modern panelling, and decorated with fragments of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century tapestries. The Jericho Parlour, separated from the Jerusalem Chamber by a small, windowed lobby, is lined with early sixteenth-century linenfold panelling, and has a stone fireplace set into its east wall.
By tradition, the Jerusalem Chamber gained its name from its interior decorations, either tapestry hangings or painted frescoes probably depicting a Christological sequence.  

Further visual allusions have been proposed by Anthony Bale: he suggests that the row of crenellations on the exterior of the chamber may allude to the walls of Jerusalem, while its polygonal tower refers to the Holy Sepulchre (fig. 6). The early fifteenth-century pseudo-Ingulf describes the chamber as one “which had been from ancient times called ‘Jerusalem’” (camera ab antique Jerusalem nuncupata). While suggestive of an existing building on the site, he may still be referring in this context to Litlyngton’s chamber. Combined with Usk’s 1414 reference to a Jerusalem Chamber in the abbot’s house, Ingulf’s notice indicates that Litlyngton’s chamber was known from inception as “Jerusalem”.

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**Figure 5.**
Interior view of the Jerusalem Chamber, Westminster Abbey, ca. 1362–79. Digital image courtesy of Dean and Chapter of Westminster.
Yet the Jerusalem and Jericho rooms resist interpretation as monumental reproductions of the holy places. First, there is the problem of exactly what these rooms were replicating, for they are not translating specific cult sites to Westminster. Questions can be raised about exactly which holy place or places a circular-naved building referred to: at the London Temple Church (fig. 3) the polygonal form of the crusader Templum Domini (the Dome of the Rock) may have been as important as the Holy Sepulchre for the military order formally titled the Order of the Temple of Solomon and allotted space in the Templum for their own services. The Temple Church may have simultaneously referenced multiple sites in Jerusalem, evoking an equally multiple set of impressions and associations within those who encountered it. Yet reference at the London Temple Church was still being made to distinct and easily separable holy places, whereas the Jerusalem Chamber and Jericho Parlour referred to entire cities with a continuous biblical history. Their generalized reference to the Holy Land sets them apart from the conventions of the “Holy Landscapes” tradition.

It also hinders determining how far any genuine process of reproduction was in evidence at Westminster. As Richard Krautheimer famously showed, medieval architectural imitation involved following a generalized symbolic pattern rather than exactly reproducing a model. The selective transfer of a building’s perceived primary characteristics, reassembled and reshuffled if need be, enabled a building with little formal or structural resemblance to its prototype to be recognized as a reproduction of the charismatic original. The
key features of a building could include its proportions, measurements, dedication, plan or orientation, and notable architectural elements. Although validating a vague likeness, such flexibility appears to have discouraged subtle or nuanced visual reference to Jerusalem, especially when directed at an audience unlikely to have seen the city at first hand.

In this context of conscious architectural simplification for pious commemorative ends, how far might crenellated walls and a polygonal corner tower have indicated "Jerusalem", even if the Jerusalem Chamber had been regularly accessed by a monastic audience attuned to the holy city’s omnipresence, and cognizant of its varied visual iconography? Jerusalem could be represented as a walled city with a circular or square form, the circle alluding to its position as the centre of the world (Ezekiel 5:5; Psalm 73:12) and sometimes divided into four parts. The square-walled city invoked Revelation 21:6. In both cases, the city walls were frequently shown, topped by crenellations and interspersed with gates and towers. Matthew Paris’s maps of the Holy Land combine the square walls of the apocalyptic Jerusalem with some of the landmarks included on topographic maps of the contemporary city. One can see why the crenellated city walls, a fairly stable element of an otherwise fluid iconography, might have been referenced at Westminster. Yet even to a sympathetic audience, it is unlikely that crenellations would have been understood primarily as symbols of the holy city.

Crenellations were above all symbols of lordship, the architectural expression of noble rank. When featured on churches, they invoked the triumphant ecclesia militans and its combined spiritual and seigneurial authority. The exterior crenellations of the Jerusalem Chamber appear in their current form to date from its 1867–73 restoration, but even if medieval in origin, they were not unusual or visually striking architectural features. Nor would they have provided the Jerusalem Chamber with special status within the monastic precinct: the abbey itself was crenellated since 1245, perhaps in an echo of Reims Cathedral, and between 1367 and 1368, a wall with battlements was built between the abbot’s chamber and the gatehouse-prison of Tothill. The Jerusalem Chamber fortifications further harmonize the building with the structures around it, underlining the combined spiritual and seigneurial authority of the abbey to those collected in the open space of the monastic precinct. This interpretation is further supported by the position of the chamber at the west front of the abbey church, where crowds of the London poor gathered for the regular distribution of monastic alms.

More elite visitors could be ceremonially welcomed to the abbey at its north transept entrance, but this did not put the Tothill Gate on the west side of the abbey out of use. The Monk of Westminster records Richard II making a barefoot procession with the convent of Westminster “going out at the Tothill
Gate” in October 1392. 88 Similarly, in December 1389, “the abbot and convent of Westminster, wearing their frocks, walked in process to the Tothill gate of the monastery” to meet the Duke of Lancaster and an assembly of civic dignitaries before conducting them into the church. 89

It is therefore unlikely that crenellations would have signified “Jerusalem” with the clarity and simplicity required. The quotidian oblong form of the Jerusalem Chamber resists an iconographic reading, while its five-sided corner tower can be read as another pseudo-military decorative feature, crowded out by the larger forms of the west front. Externally and internally, there appears to have been no carefully choreographed orchestration of space designed to guide the viewer towards recognizing a typological likeness to the holy city. Finally, we can consider the title of the chamber itself. The dedication of a church was one of its most significant characteristics, enacting translatio through the transfer of relics to its high altar. Yet in the Jerusalem Chamber at Westminster, its “dedication” remains a name only, contingent on the decoration of the interior and given no backing by the physical presence of relics or liturgical performance. Visual invocation and deliberate monumental replication remain quite different things, whatever inspiration they provided for Usk’s tale. It should also be emphasized that while the name “Jerusalem” probably referred or related to now-lost decorations, there is no surviving evidence for the medieval appearance of the interior. 90

It is even more unlikely that the later Jericho Parlour belongs to the genre of architectural recreations. Jerusalem was at least frequently represented in maps and manuscripts. It is much more difficult to identify, beyond further tapestry hangings depicting Mark 10:46–52 (the healing of blind Bartimaeus at Jericho), Luke 19:1–10 (the repentance of Zaccheus at Jericho), or Joshua 6:1–27 (the Battle of Jericho), what simple visual or architectural shorthands could have been formulated to unambiguously translate “Jericho” to a medieval audience. Even in the heyday of the crusader kingdoms, Jericho was described variously as a small but fertile Saracen village surrounded by trees and fruits, 91 or as a place ruined by warfare with “all traces of the holy places in it . . . completely destroyed”. 92 While we do not see in the Jerusalem Chamber or Jericho Parlour a deliberate monumental translation of the holy places of Palestine, such nomenclature is neither a unique way of referring to events and places in the Holy Land, nor an unusual means of treating domestic space. The 1541 inventories refer to other chambers in the abbot’s house named after their occupants (Mr Morres Chamber, Syr Radulphis Chamber, Tytlesys Chamber), including a “Gabriels chamber” containing a bedstead, two “course cubberdis and ij little forms”. 93 If denoting a personal name or surname, the chamber may refer to a frequent occupant, or its name may be based on the Annunciation. Lady Anne
Clifford’s diaries refer in April 1617 to “lying in Judith’s Chamber” at her house in Knole. Westminster Palace contained a “Marcolf’s chamber”, probably named after King Solomon’s irreverent rustic joker. It hosted the 1389 royal council at which Richard II dramatically declared his majority.

The “Antioch” chambers painted at Westminster Palace, Clarendon Palace, and Winchester Castle, with a further cycle planned for the Tower of London, have been well known to art historians since Tancred Borenius published on them in 1943. In 1250, the master of the Templars in England, Roger de Sandford, was ordered to pass his French book containing “gesta Antiochie et regum etc. aliorum” for use in the painting of the queen’s low room at Westminster, a room later referred to as the Antioch Chamber. In 1251, the king ordered the depiction of “historium Antioch” in the room of the king’s chaplains in the Tower of London, although this commission was later cancelled. In June 1251, the king ordered that Rosamund’s Chamber in Winchester Castle, named after the mistress of Henry II, be painted with the “story [historium] of Antioch”. In July 1251, Henry commanded the sheriff of Wiltshire to have the king’s chamber under the chapel at Clarendon Palace painted with “the story [historium] of Antioch and the duel of king Richard”. Tancred Borenius suggested the painting of historia, at least at Clarendon, would mean exactly that: a history of the Third Crusade, evidently including depiction of Nur-al-Din’s attack on Antioch, and the resulting massacre of Christians and the capture of Bohemond III. Paul Binski suggests Henry’s image cycles may also have drawn from the mid-twelfth-century epic Chanson d’Antioche, a history of the First Crusade.

Laura J. Whatley places these rooms “in the tradition of mental pilgrimage or devotional crusading”, arguing that Henry’s monumental painted cycles “had the potential to foster imagined travel—virtual crusades—to the Holy Land”. This is certainly possible, but I would urge caution as to how far an internal and perhaps luxuriously furnished and staffed domestic space encouraged the viewer to transport themselves in their imagination, whether in the form of idle crusading fantasies or the sustained religious meditation that virtual pilgrimage required. Arthur Stanley refers to the existence of a Galilee Chamber at Westminster Palace, apparently located in between its Great and Little Halls. Such a busy thoroughfare between, in the case of a Great Hall, a space lined with interior shops and hosting the three royal law courts, was unlikely to foster quiet opportunities for imaginative travel to the East.
Moralizing about Jerusalem

Instead of seeking to place rooms named after Jerusalem or Antioch within the tradition of mental pilgrimage, it may be helpful to consider the pedagogic significance of secular spaces featuring extended biblical narratives and Holy Land settings in their decorative imagery. Under Edward I, the Painted Chamber at Westminster Palace was redecorated with a large frieze of Old Testament narratives depicting scenes from 1 and 2 Maccabees, separated by a cycle derived from 2 Kings. The presentation of Judas Maccabees as a heroic warrior and model for rulership contrasted with scenes depicting the deaths of archetypical biblical tyrants such as Sennacherib, Antiochus, or Abimelech. Binski has explored how one of the overriding themes of the Painted Chamber imagery was the just downfall of evil rulers, its walls depicting a litany of royal misdeeds followed by divine punishment. He connects this with an enduring theme of English political writing, “a pattern of politically reflective thought about kingship in the Bible”, later translated into polemical commentary and part of a “longstanding practice of moral engagement through narrative”. The Painted Chamber was very much a public space: from 1259, parliaments opened in the Painted Chamber, having first been proclaimed in the Great Hall at Westminster, and the Commons regularly assembled here. In addition, the chamber was a regular venue for royal almsgiving. Its explicitly “proclamatory and hortatory” biblical imagery addressed a public far wider than the royal or court circle. Two Irish friars visiting the chamber in 1322 referred to it as “illa vulgata camera”, that well-known room.

The narratives of the Painted Chamber can be closely analysed to reveal their emphasis on the fall of tyrants, while more precise details of the decoration of the Jerusalem Chamber and Jericho Parlour are lost to us. However, I wish to stress here the moral and pedagogic intentio that informed such image-making at Westminster, and not only in the secular arena of Westminster Palace. Around 1400, broadly the same period of Litlyngton’s construction of the Jerusalem Chamber, a ninety-six-scene Apocalypse cycle was painted in the arcades of Westminster Abbey’s octagonal chapter house. Positioned below windowsill level, it was at least in part financed by a monk of the house, John of Northampton. On the eastern bay wall, behind the prior or president’s seat where errant monks would kneel to publicly acknowledge faults and receive correction, is an image of a semi-naked Christ as the Son of Man, presented as the eternal and merciful Judge. At Christ’s left in the adjoining bay is a seraph or cherub, its wings marked with inscriptions taken from a twelfth-century treatise on penance attributed to Alan of Lille, “On the Six Wings of the
Cherub”, a commentary on Isaiah 6. The image forms a didactic chart on the subject of the confessional, drawing the painted cycle into the monastic disciplinary and pedagogic processes carried out in the chapter house. Westminster Abbey’s chapter house was also regularly used for royal councils and parliaments, during which the king would address his subjects from the president’s seat. As parliament was the highest court in the land, the monastic imagery remained fitting whenever the chapterhouse was used as a place of secular deliberation and judgement.

I suggest that the overtly didactic and moralizing tone of the painted image cycles found in Westminster Palace and Abbey is an interpretation that can be extended to the organization and conceptualization of space within the abbot’s house. I noted above that Litlyngton’s initial construction of the Jerusalem Chamber in the later fourteenth century was followed by Islip’s sixteenth-century building of the Jericho Parlour. This eventually allowed one to move within the space of the abbot’s lodgings from “Jerusalem” to neighbouring “Jericho” (and of course vice versa). Moving from Jerusalem to Jericho retraces the road taken by the man attacked by robbers in Luke 10:30, the parable of the Good Samaritan. Jacqueline Jung highlights a thirteenth-century sermon by the Cistercian monk Caesarius of Heisterbach, preached immediately after the murder of the notably worldly archbishop of Cologne, Engelbert, in 1225. Taking Luke 10:30 as his text, Caesarius lamented the archbishop’s journey in life from Jerusalem to Jericho, stating that: “Through Jerusalem, in which the temple was and therefore true religion, are indicated things spiritual; through Jericho, things worldly and secular.”

This opens up a new perspective on the significance of these rooms. To move between Jerusalem and Jericho was to move between two states of Christian mind and action: particularly apt for an abbot’s house located within a monastic precinct, but explicitly designed for secular purposes. What today we would consider a liminal complex of buildings could have been understood on an allegorical level as a space moving between Jerusalem and Jericho. A tradition surrounding the nickname of the priory of St Laurence at Blackmore in Essex suggests the contemporary currency of this idea when Abbot Islip built the Jericho Parlour. Henry VIII’s mistress Elizabeth Blount was sent to Blackmore, a quiet Augustinian house close to London, for her confinement before the 1519 birth of Henry Fitzroy. In the words of a 1770 account of the “manor-house of Blackmore, otherwise called Jericho . . . Tradition says, this was one of the houses of pleasure to which King Henry the Eighth used to retire: so that when this lascivious [sic] prince chose to retreat from public business, and indulge himself in the embraces of his courtezans, the cant phrase among the courtiers was, He was gone to Jericho.” While the gossip amongst Henry VIII’s courtiers may be
historically irrecoverable, the nickname of Blackmore Priory seems to have stuck. A 1529 lease of the manor, lordship, and rectory of Blackmore refers to a tenement “called Jericho”. The house built on the remains of the priory site by John Smyth, granted the estate in 1540, is referred to as Jericho Priory or Jericho Priory House. A house of about 1600 on Church Street, originally intended as a vicarage adjoining the converted priory church of St Laurence, is known as “Little Jericho” or “Jericho Cottage”.

Sandy Heslop highlights the typological resonance of the two locations once paired in this way at Westminster, with Joshua’s victory at Jericho prefiguring the triumph of the First Crusaders in Jerusalem in 1099. As both cities fell to the armies of God’s people, biblical history established a sequential logic in moving from one space to the other at Westminster. Such typology may well have found a receptive pre-modern audience: the epitaph on the tomb of Baldwin I of Jerusalem in the Holy Sepulchre compared him to Joshua, and reference is made to Joshua’s deeds in the final sections of Fulcher of Chartres’s account of the 1099 capture of the holy city. Fulcher also records the custom of pilgrims returning to Europe cutting or collecting palm branches from Jericho (classed as the “city of palm trees” in Deuteronomy 34:3 and Judges 1:16), before beginning their journey home. In the abbot’s house at Westminster, one could also depart “from Jerusalem” via Jericho, perhaps in a post-prandial parody of the pilgrim’s journey.

While such a specific reading of space could only be made in the sixteenth century, when Islip built the Jericho Parlour, the transition between Jerusalem and Jericho at Westminster may have been a more enduring monastic concern. John Flete’s fifteenth-century history records how Lucius, the first Christian king of Britain and founder of the abbey, was crowned, buried, and stored his regalia at Westminster, before its conversion into a temple of Apollo. Assumed since ancient times to have been a location for royal ceremonial, the abbey’s position in the grounds of a royal palace also led to its frequent use as a place for government business. Since the twelfth century, the abbey chapter house, refectory, infirmary chapel, and St Catherine’s chapel were routine locations for meetings of the royal council and later for parliament. By 1300, the lower storey of the abbey’s chapter house had been appropriated as a royal treasury, royal archive, and regalia store. All such uses of Westminster’s buildings would have been highly disruptive to the monastic life, with secular visitors and royal clerks passing daily through the cloister, and taking short cuts through monastic buildings such as the infirmary. Concern about the monastery’s metaphorical position on the road between Jerusalem and Jericho might have been a permanent background worry for its monastic residents, consistently inviting allegorical and typological musings on the theme. And when the Jerusalem
Chamber stood alone, we can also appreciate the paradox and joke involved in arriving “at Jerusalem” at Westminster when entering the secular space of the abbot’s lodgings, perhaps after enjoying a great feast in the hall. The abbey church, after all, housed an extensive collection of relics from Jerusalem and the Holy Land, objects that would provide more enduring spiritual “nourishment” for any visitor.  

Ultimately, entry to the Jerusalem Chamber would have forced medieval visitors to recognize the Jerusalems they had not reached: demonstrably, they had not entered the Jerusalem of Palestine or the heavenly Jerusalem of Revelation 21. The room poses an admonitory question to its inhabitants, and encourages a moral stocktaking of one’s life and conscience. The later construction of Jericho extended such moral and conceptual problems, or perhaps made longstanding monastic concerns more spatially explicit. If not in these Jerusalems, then where are you? Where do you currently stand on the road between Jerusalem and Jericho, between sacred and secular things? Death is an unspoken spectre at this intellectual feast of moral reasoning. Jerusalem is both presence and absence in the chamber: a destination physically arrived at, and a city still spiritually and morally far away, as images of the life of Christ might well underlie. As in the downfall of rulers depicted in the Painted Chamber, the “death in Jerusalem” topos articulates a universal lesson and challenge in relation to a specific mighty individual. We may all become Henry IV. Or we may recognize, before it is too late, how close and yet how far we are from Jerusalem.

Footnotes

1. The Works of Shakespeare: The Second Part of the History of Henry IV, ed. John Dover Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 4.5, 95: King. Doth any name particular belong Unto the lodging where I first did swoon? Warwick: ‘Tis called Jerusalem, my noble lord. King. Laud be to God! even there my life must end. It hath been prophesied to me many years, I should not die but in Jerusalem; Which vanity I supposed the Holy Land: But bear me to that chamber, there I’ll lie, In that Jerusalem shall Henry die.


3. Antonia Gransden, Historical Writing in England, Vol. 2: c.1307 to the Early Sixteenth Century (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), 222–23, 245, 276. Henry’s death at Westminster was noted by chroniclers such as Thomas Walsingham, but the Jerusalem Chamber legend is not included in the Chronica Majora, Historia Anglica, or Ypoldiga Neustriae. A fifteenth-century continuation of the Polychronicon printed in Charles Lethbridge Kingsford, English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 284, notes only his death at Westminster, as does a fifteenth-century Latin Brut, 315, and John Hardying’s c.1440 chronicle: John Hardying and Richard Grafton, The chronicle of Ihon Hardying: from the firste begynnyng of Engelande, vnto the reigne of kyng Edward the fourthe wher he made an end of his chronicle. And from that tymre is added a continuacion of the storie in prose to this our tymre, now first imprinted, gathered out of durese and sondery autours y thauue write of the affaires of Engelande (London, 1543), fol. cc.vii. The story was repeated in Fabyan’s Chronicle, which ends in 1485: Robert Fabyan, The new chronicles of England and France . . . named by himselfe the Concordance of histories, repr. from Pynson’s ed. of 1516 . . . , ed. Henry Ellis (London: Longman, 1811), 756–57: “whyle he was makynge his prayers at Seynt Edwardes shrine [. . .] he became so syke [. . .] they, fore his comforte, bare hym into the abbottes place, & lodged hym in a chamber [. . .] named Iherusalem. Than sayd the kynge, ‘Ouye be to the Fader of heuen, for nowe I knowe I shall dye in this chambre, according to y prophecye of me beforesayd, that I shulde dye in Jerusalem.”
The late fourteenth- or early fifteenth-century pseudo-Ingulph’s account of Henry’s death casts him as “putting faith in a deceitful prophecy, [he was] determined to set out for the holy city of Jerusalem. But . . . he died at Westminster in a certain chamber which had been from ancient times called ‘Jerusalem’, thus fulfilling the above idle prophecy.” Henry T. Riley, trans. Ingulph’s Chronicle of the Abbey of Croyland (London: George Bell & Sons, 1908), 364.


Anthony Bale, Feeling Persecuted: Christians, Jews and Images of Violence in the Middle Ages (London: Reaktion Books, 2010), 120. Bale discusses the Jerusalem Chamber (118–120) but suggests the legend of Henry IV’s death originated with the French chronicler Enguerrand de Monstrelet (d.1453), 119.


Chronicle of Adam Usk, ed. Given-Wilson, xlvii. Between 1406 and 1411, Usk was in exile on the continent and in contact with Henry IV’s enemies. Although pardoned, on his return to Britain he never regained the positions he enjoyed c.1395–1402 as a trusted administrative servant of the crown (xxvii–xxxiv).


London, British Library MS Harley 2253, fol. 73r, printed in Thomas Wright’s Political Songs of England: From the Reign of John to that of Edward II, ed. Peter Coss, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 247: “Ich biquethe myn herte aryht,/ That hit be write at mi devys,/ Over the see that hue be diht,/ With fourscore knyhtes al of prys/ In were that buen war ant wys/ Ageyn the hethene for te fyhte,/ T o wynne the croiz that lowe lys; Myself ycholde gef that y myhte”; Michael Prestwich, Edward I (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 557.

Bale, Feeling Persecuted, 120.

Henry Richards Luard, ed., Lives of Edward the Confessor, Rolls Series Vol. 3 (London: Longman, 1858), 123, 277; Matthew Paris, The History of Saint Edward the King, trans. Thelma S. Fenster and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2008), 98–100; Paul Binski, Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets: Kingship and the Representation of Power, 1200–1400 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 54–55. Medieval pilgrims used the terms Syria and Palestine routinely in travel accounts, probably derived from Pliny the Elder, see his Natural History, Volume II: Books 3–7, trans. Harris Rackham, Loeb Classical Library 352 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942), 270–3, 280–1, Book 5. For example, see Burchard of Mount Sion: “After Fourth Syria, that is to say Phoenician Syria, there follows Palestine, which is properly called the land of the Philistines, because there are three Palestines, as will be seen, but they are all part of Greater Syria. First Palestine, whose capital is Jerusalem, extends with all its mountains as far as the Dead Sea, the desert and Kadesh-barnea. The Second, whose capital is Caesarea of Palestine, or Caesarea Maritima, with the whole land of the Philistines, begins at the above-mentioned Petra incita or Pilgrims’ Castle and extends as far east as Bashen (Basan). The Third, whose capital is Beth-shean (Bethsan) is sited below Mount Gilboa beside the Jordan. This was formerly called Sycopolis. That Palestine is properly called Galilee or the great plain of Esdraelon” in Denys Pringle, Pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the Holy Land, 1187–1291 (Ashgate: Farnham, 2012), 244; see also 109, 133, 261, 277, 307, 319, 326, 349, 351; for pilgrimage accounts using the term, in John Wilkinson, Joyce Hill, and W. F. Ryan, Jerusalem Pilgrimage, 1099–1185 (Hakluyt Society: London, 1988), 14, 112, 165, 177, 190, 267, 307, 309, 313–15, 319; Syria (Sulie) was a standard vernacular term for the Holy Land, with Palestine understood as a province within it, again following Roman usage: Matthew Paris, The Life of Saint Alban, trans. Thelma S. Fenster and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2010), 13, n.44.


For the political as well as emotional logic of “memory work”, see Neil Gregor, Haunted City: Nuremberg and the Nazi Past (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 9–10.


For a particularly ambitious site, replicating the Holy Sepulchre, the Mount of Olives, the Church of the Ascension, the Valley of Josephat, the Pool of Siloam and the Field of Aceldama, see Robert G. Ousterhout, “The Church of Santo Stefano: A ‘Jerusalem’ in Bologna”, Gesta 20, no. 2 (1981): 311–21.

23 Bale, Feeling Persecuted, 121.


26 Wilkinson, Hill, and Ryan, Jerusalem Pilgrimage, 282.

27 Prawer, Pilgrimage, 96. The reference is to Matthew 4:13. See also 102, 114, 130-32 for his interactions with and further descriptions of non-European Christians including the Bedouin, who “lead the kind of life that the routiers are accustomed to follow in France” (132).


30 Prawer, History of the Jews, 206, 211.

31 Prawer, Pilgrimage,163.

32 Prawer, Pilgrimage, 92: “In it at the present time a certain infidel Saracen has laid out his place of prayer in honour of Muhammad.” Willbrand of Oldenburg was a keen observer of the demographic variety of Jerusalem, stating that the city “contains many very rich inhabitants: Franks and Latins, Greeks and Syrians. Jews and Jacobites [. . . ] And it should be known that this name ‘Franks’ is widely applied in Outremer to all those who observe Roman law. Those are called ‘Syrians’ who are born in Syria and use Saracen [Arabic] for everyday speech and Greek for Latin”: Prawer, Pilgrimage, 62-63. Thietmar also notes that the “Saracens have converted the Temple of the Lord [the Dome of the Rock] [. . .] into their mosque, so that no Christian ever presumes to enter it”: Prawer, Pilgrimage, 112.

33 Inter-faith encounters also took place in secular contexts. Theodoric confesses how when on a road outside Jerusalem: “we saw a crowd of Saracens, who were all beginning to plough with their oxen and ass a very well-kept field. And they uttered a horrid cry, which is not unusual for them when they start any work, but they filled us with great terror”: Wilkinson, Hill, and Ryan, Jerusalem Pilgrimage, 310-11.


37 Kathryne Beebe, “Reading Mental Pilgrimage in Context: The Imaginary Pilgrims and Real Travels of Felix Fabri’s ‘Die Sionpliger’, Essays in Medieval Studies 25 (2008): 39–40, 52, quotation on 44. When guiding his readers to Rome, Fabri goes even further in reshaping earthly boundaries. As he conducts his female audience to the tomb of St John Lateran, he remarks: “In the church is also St John’s chapel, into which no woman may enter. However, the pope has given a dispensation for the Syon pilgrims [to enter]” (51).


41 Michael McCormick, ed. and trans., Charlemagne’s Survey of the Holy Land (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2011), 77-91, 185, 187-91, 193 also interprets a columnar building on Charlemagne’s “portrait” or “temple” silver penny as a schematic representation of the Holy Sepulchre, and notes eighth-century copying of an eschatological treatise prophesying how the last Roman emperor would travel to Jerusalem, regain control of Golgotha, place his crown on the True Cross, and commit his kingdom to God before his death marked the beginning of the Apocalypse. As the end of the world was due to start on the Mount of Olives, Carolingian interest in this text adds a new dimension to Charlemagne’s foundation of a monastery on the Mount of Olives dedicated to the archetypal Roman saints, Peter and Paul.


The marble paving, plinths, and four steps of the stairway to the royal throne at Aachen may have been spolia from Jerusalem, while a round oil lamp representing the walls and towers of Jerusalem hung from the decorated ceiling. See Gustav Kühnel, “Aachen, Byzanz und die frühislamische Architektur im Heiligen Land”, in Studien zur byzantinischen Kunstgeschichte: Festschrift für Horst Hallensleben, ed. Birgitt Borkopp et al. (Amsterdam: Hakket, 1995), 40, 44, 49; McCormick, ed. and trans., Charlemagne’s Survey, 192, n.28; Sven Schütte, “Der Aachener Thron”, in Krönungen Könige in Aachen-Geschichte und Mythos: Katalog der Ausstellung in zwei Bändern, ed. Mario Kamp (Mainz: P. von Zabern, 2000), 218; Bianca Kühnel, “Jerusalem Between Narrative and Iconic”, in Jerusalem as Narrative Space, ed. Hoffmann and Wolf, 115.


Barbour, Bruce, l. 236, 84–85.

Nagel and Wood, Anachronic Renaissance, 194.


Bale, Feeling Persecuted, 120.


In addition to David Park’s full enumeration of the medieval burials in the Temple Church, see also Philip J. Lankester, “The Thirteenth-Century Military Effigies in the Temple Church”, in The Temple Church in London, ed. Griffith-Jones and Park, 93–134.


John George Noppen, Westminster Abbey and its Ancient Art (London: Country Life, 1926), 36–37. Although parts of the cloister were finished as early as 1249–50 in Henry III’s rebuilding of the abbey, the whole was not completed until c.1345 by Abbot Simon Byrcheston, and it was rebuilt again by 1365.


Stanley, Historical Memorials, 402.
Noppen, Westminster Abbey, 39; RCHM, 86; Alfred John Kempe, “Some Account of the Jerusalem Chamber in the Abbey of Westminster and of the Painted Glass Remaining Therein”, Archaeologia 26 (1836): 432–40, suggests possible use as an oratory, as a niche in its entrance passage contains a receptacle for holy water, but this seems unlikely: Litlyngton’s building accounts record a “camera” rather than a “capella” and later recorded furnishings of the room certainly suggest a secular use. Thomas Hugo, “The Jerusalem Chamber”, in George Gilbert Scott, Gleanings from Westminster Abbey (Oxford and London: John Henry and James Parker, 1863), 216, suggests it was either “the withdrawing room to the abbot’s hall . . . [or] a Gueston Hall for the constant influx of strangers who enjoyed the abbot’s hospitality”, and considered it to be in the wrong position to be an abbot’s chapel.

RCHM, 76: “There are probable remains of 12th-century work to the W. of the cloister and in the Abbot’s lodging”: see also 86–88; see too Robinson, Abbot’s House, 7,12.

Robinson, Abbot’s House, 11.
Robinson, Abbot’s House, 16.
Robinson, Abbot’s House, 11.
Robinson, Abbot’s House, 37–38.
Kempe, “Jerusalem Chamber”, 432; Hugo, “Jerusalem Chamber”, 216.
E. D. Morris, “The Jerusalem Chamber”, Presbyterian and Reformed Review 7 (1896): 595–610, suggests (597) that the tower formerly provided entry to the chamber, although access was closed at the time of writing. There is a 1745 order in Westminster Abbey Muniment 34517, fol. 35 for the battlements at the north end of the Jerusalem Chamber to be renewed, a wall built, and the door under the north window to be filled up with stone. However, I have not come across this suggestion elsewhere and the RCHM ground plan does not indicate any doorway in the tower.

RCHM, 87.
RCHM, 87.
RCHM, 88.
Bale, Feeling Persecuted, 118.
Bale, Feeling Persecuted, 118.

Harvey, Living and Dying, 27.
Hector and Harvey, ed. and trans., Westminster Chronicle, 508–9: “exeundo per protam de Toothull”.
Hector and Harvey, ed. and trans., Westminster Chronicle, 408–9: “Abbav vero et conventus Westmon’ in suis froccis usque ad portam monasterii versus Toothull’ processionaliter exierunt et in ecclesiam”.
Bale, Feeling Persecuted, 118: “The room seems to have been named after now-lost decorations, either wall-hangings or frescoes, depicting scenes of Jerusalem and inscribed with Biblical verses about Jerusalem.”
Saewulf, travelling c.1101–1103, refers to it as: “a country very rich in trees, all kinds of palms, and all fruit-trees”; Daniel the Abbot, travelling c.1106–1108, describes “a Saracen village . . . [containing] the house of Zacchaeus and . . . the stump of that tree on which he climbed to see Jesus”; and Theodoric, c.1169–1174, notes “a small village [. . .] where every fruit is first to ripen. It is a place full of roses”– Wilkinson, Hill, and Ryan, Jerusalem Pilgrimage, 109, 138, 305.
The quotation is from Burchard of Mount Sion, c.1274–1285: “Once famous, it now has scarcely eight houses. There are the remains of a squalid township and all traces of the holy places in it have been completely destroyed.” Other thirteenth-century pilgrims tell a similar story. For Wilbrand of Oldenburg, travelling c.1211–12, Jericho is “a small castle, its walls destroyed, inhabited by Saracens”; Philip of Savona, writing in c.1280–1289, stated it to be “formerly a very large city”; and for Riccoldo of Monte Croce, c.1288–1289, it was “more or less deserted”: Pringle, Pilgrimage, 282, 293, 347, 368.

Paul Binski and Helen Howard, “Wall Paintings in the Chapter House”, in Binski, “Fall of Tyrants”, 153 and translation.

Goodall, “Medieval Palace”, 56.

beyond compare’

120 A new and complete history of Essex: from a late survey; Compared with the most celebrated Historians; containing a natural and pleasing description of the several divisions of the County, with their Products, and Curiosities of every Kind both ancient and modern. And a review of the most remarkable events and revolutions therein, from the earliest aera down to 1770. Illustrated with copper-plates. By a Gentleman. 6 vols (Chelmsford: Lionel Hassall, 176972), 1: 265–66; Philip Morant, The history and antiquities of the county of Essex. Compiled from the best and most ancient historians; From Domesday-Book, Inquisitions post mortem, and other the most valuable Records and MSS. &c. The whole digested, improved, perfected, and brought down to the present Time, by Philip Morant, M. A. Rector of St. Mary’s Colchester, and of Aldham near the same; and Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, 2 vols (London: T. Osborne, 1768), 2: 57; Thomas Wright and W. Bartlett, The History and topography of the County of Essex, comprising its ancient and modern history: A general view of its physical character, productions, agricultural condition, statistics &c &c (London: G. Virtue, 1836), 160; Alfred UCLA, Memorials of the Antiquities and Architecture, Family History and Heraldry of the County of Essex (London: John Weale, 1845), 27; Anne Dowden, “The Return of Lady Blount”, Transactions of the Monumental Brass Society 14, no. 5 (1990): 359; Edward Hall, Hall’s Chronicle; containing The History of England during the Reign of Henry the Fourth and the Succeeding Monarchs, to the End of the Reign of Henry the Eighth, in which are particularly described the manners and customs of those periods, carefully collated with the editions of 1548 and 1550 (London: J. Johnson, 1809), 703.


122 English Heritage Legacy ID 373314 (Jericho Priory). For John Smyth’s will, see TNA PROB 11/30/394.

123 English Heritage Legacy ID 373317 (Little Jericho)

124 Personal communication to author.


126 Chartres, Expedition to Jerusalem, 128, 133 (Book I).


128 Carpenter, “King Henry III”, 34.


130 Harvey, Living and Dying, 88: the infirmary buildings formed a useful short cut from Westminster Palace at the east to the cloister area on the south side of the church.

131 Recorded by Flete in Robinson, ed., History, 68–73. The collection included relics ranging from the straw in the stable of Christ to items from the Passion and fragments of his tomb. It also featured relics of earth or stones from the Mount of Olives, Mount Calvary, Golgotha, Mount Tabor, and Mount Sinai. See also Nicholas Vincent, The Holy Blood: King Henry III and the Westminster Blood Relic (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

**Bibliography**

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