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Perceptions of the “Unknown”? Medieval and Early Modern Accounts of Pilgrimage to Jerusalem

Introduction

In the medieval and early modern period, travel and adventure were closely linked to each other regardless of the nature of the journey. There existed numerous motives and several causes for travelling: for diplomatic relations, business, adventure, or for religious reasons. A significant number of medieval and early modern travel accounts describe the experience of Western Mediterranean or Oriental regions.¹ A widely practiced form of leisure travel consisted of pious travels such as pilgrimages. Motives were honoring God, repentance or the salvation of the soul, vows, or a substitute pilgrimage on behalf of a living or dead person.² Different motives were often combined. Among travelogues, accounts of pilgrimages form the largest part, and among them journeys to the Holy Land form the majority, almost amounting to a subgenre of pilgrim accounts. Thus, the large proportion of Jerusalem travels led Dietrich Huschenbett to the suggestion that one could regard them as a specific literary corpus, which he called *Palästina-Reiseberichte* (Palestine pilgrim reports). Due to the sensitive political situation in the Near East I will refer to these accounts as “Holy Land or Jerusalem pilgrim

1 In a wider sense travelogues or travel accounts comprise all literature dealing with travel. For this definition of travelogue or travel account see Gero von Wilpert, *Reiseliteratur*, in Gero von Wilpert (ed.), *Sachwörterbuch der Literatur*, 7th ed. (Stuttgart 1989), pp. 759–762, here p. 759. In a narrower sense, travelogues may be defined according to Norbert Ott as “descriptions or reports providing information about specific destinations [...] which merge the writer’s own observations with traditional formats.” Norbert Ott, *Reisebeschreibungen*, in Robert-Henri Bautier et al. (eds.), *Lexikon des Mittelalters* (9 vols., Munich 1995), vol. 7, pp. 678–679; Maria E. Dorninger, *Travelogues*, in Albrecht Classen (ed.), *Handbook of Medieval Studies* (3 vols., Berlin 2010), vol. 3, pp. 2102–2118, here p. 2103. For travelogues as testimonies of identity and self-portrayal see Winfried Schulze, *Ego-Dokumente. Annäherung an den Menschen in der Geschichte? Vorüberlegungen für die Tagung Ego-Dokumente*, in Winfried Schulze (ed.), *Ego-Dokumente. Annäherung an den Menschen in der Geschichte* (Berlin 1996), pp. 11–32, here p. 20.

2 Long distance travels or pilgrimages were also used as penalty. Norbert Ohler, *Reisen im Mittelalter*, 3rd ed. (Munich 1993), p. 243.

accounts”, which seem to be more neutral notions.³ “Jerusalem pilgrim accounts” may be considered the most appropriate term for this genre. For Jerusalem had always been the most prominent and holiest pilgrimage destination, albeit for some time travel in and around Jerusalem or to other Christian sites in the Holy Land was expanded and the pilgrims moved on to the St. Catherine Monastery at Sinai, to Cairo, and Alexandria. A travel to Eastern Mediterranean biblical sites without visiting Jerusalem was difficult or hardly imaginable at that time.

Since the fourth century CE Western Christian pilgrim accounts have been transmitted, among them the one of the noble lady Egeria (fourth century) or bishop Arculf’s account (seventh century), transmitted by Adamnanus (c. 628–704), abbot of Iona.⁴ An important period for this genre of literature was the time from 1301–1540. About 262 Jerusalem pilgrim accounts were transmitted in the mentioned period, according to Ursula Ganz-Blätter.⁵ For a distinction between pilgrim accounts and pilgrim guides as genres, Ursula Ganz-Blättler suggests stylistic criteria, particularly the performance of the author or narrator in the text. Contrary to pilgrim accounts, in pilgrim guides the narrator is present in the background. Both genres may overlap and integrate other features of different travel literatures, such as itineraries.⁶ As the large numbers of manuscripts and early prints show, the genre proves appropriate and representative for stud-

3 Dietrich Huschenbett, *Diu vart hin über mer: Die Palästina-Pilgerberichte als neue Prosa-Gattung in der deutschen Literatur des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit*, in Xenja von Ertzdorff (ed.), *Beschreibung der Welt: Zur Poetik der Reise- und Länderberichte*. Vorträge eines interdisziplinären Symposiums vom 8. bis 13. Juni 1998 an der Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen (Amsterdam, Atlanta 2000), pp. 119–151, here p. 144. Holy Land: this term may be used in a broader sense today and was coined in a Christian context. For the specific notion ‘*Terra sancta*’ see Othmar Keel, Max Küchler, and Christoph Uehlinger, *Orte und Landschaften der Bibel* (5 vols., Zürich 1984), vol. 1, pp. 285–287, and J. Cornelis de Vos, *Heiliges Land*, in *WBI-Lex*, accessed 19 May 2022, <<https://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/stichwort/24593/>>.

4 For medieval travelogues and pilgrim accounts and aspects of research history see Dorninger, *Travelogues*, pp. 2103–2117. See also Aetheria, *Egeria, Reise ins Heilige Land*, edited and translated by Kai Brodersen (Berlin et al. 2016), for Arculf see Herbert Donner (ed.), *Der Bischof Arculf und der Abt Adomnanus (um 680) (Adamnani de locis sanctis libri III)*, translation by Herbert Donner, in Herbert Donner (ed.), *Die Pilgerfahrt ins Heilige Land: Die ältesten Berichte christlicher Palästina-pilger (4.–7. Jahrhundert)*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart 2002), pp. 296–394.

5 Ursula Ganz-Blättler, *Andacht und Abenteuer: Berichte europäischer Jerusalem- und Santiago-Pilger (1320–1520)*, 3rd ed. (Tübingen 2000), p. 40. As Eliyahu Ashtor states, about 6,000 pilgrims were travelling by ship in the fifteenth century, i.e., an average of fifty to sixty pilgrims on board of every of the 110 documented ship passages in the Mediterranean Sea. Ganz-Blättler, *Andacht*, p. 6.

6 Ganz-Blättler, *Andacht*, pp. 41, 105–106.

ies of perceptions of the “unknown” or “foreign” and its relation to the concept of the “own,” by referring to paradigms of almost all travel literature. Even the meaning of the term “pilgrim account” or “pilgrim” hints at the concept of foreignness or the “unknown” as “*peregrinus*” (the Latin adjective) means “being foreign” or “not knowing” or (as a noun) “stranger” and “non-citizen”, whereas the verb “*peregrinor*” signifies “to travel” or just “wander (with or without destination).”⁷ Therefore, the medieval and early modern term “pilgrim” in particular means a “traveler to the ‘unknown’ or to the foreign” in the literal sense. In the allegorical sense “*peregrinus*”, via the concept of “*homo viator*”, refers to the Christian condition of being a stranger on earth, one who is on the way to heavenly Jerusalem, to the real home for mankind.⁸ Several representative Jerusalem pilgrim accounts are the basis for the present investigation of the perception of the “foreign” and “unknown” of travelers to the Near East, or rather Jerusalem. Among them are the ones by the citizen of Nuremberg, Hans Tucher (1428–1491, pilgrimage 1479/80), a well-known account in his time, and the *Pilgerbuch* of the Dominican monk and preacher from Ulm, Felix Fabri (1441–1502, pilgrimage 1480 and 1483/84). Pilgrim accounts such as the *Sionpilger* of Felix Fabri, that promote a virtual, spiritual journey to Jerusalem in one’s mind, will not be considered here.⁹ The subgenre of Jerusalem pilgrim accounts (as probably some other travel accounts) has specific features that may constitute challenges to research. One is the issue of authorship and, thus, of authenticity, caused by the use of different (unmentioned) oral or written accounts by earlier pilgrims as historical and literary sources. Nevertheless, perceptions of the “unknown” and the interrelation of the pilgrim’s mind and perception can be observed and will pro-

7 The term “*peregrinationes*”, is even used in the more common or original sense, as a voyage to foreign countries, by the physician Leonard Rauwolf, who left for the Orient to study plants in 1573. Leonhard Rauwolf, Aigentliche beschreibung der Raiß, so er vor dieser zeit gegen Auffgang inn die Morgenländer, fürnemlich Syriam, Iudaeam, Arabiam, Mesopotamiam, Babyloniam, Assyriam, Armenia & c. [...] alles in drey vnderschiedliche Thail [...] mit sonderem fleiß abgethailt [...], Faksimile der Ausgabe Lauingen: Reinmichel 1582 (Hannover 1977), dedication letter, fol.)(iij^r.

8 For Augustinus’ concept of a (Christian) believer as a *peregrinus* in the world see De civ. Dei XV, 5. Aurelius Augustinus, Der Gottesstaat. De civitate Dei, Lat/Ge, translated by Carl Johann Perl (2 vols. Paderborn et al. 1979), vol. 1, pp. 11–13. In Augustinus’ view the allegorical conception of human (Christian) existence or condition as a pilgrim, as a *homo viator*, did not exclude real pilgrimage. On the contrary, Augustine promoted pilgrimage even to the city of his own episcopal seat, Hippo Regius. See Martina Münkler, Erfahrung: Die Beschreibung Ostasiens in den Augenzeugenberichten des 13. und 14. Jahrhunderts (Berlin 2000), p. 130; Bernhard Kötting, Peregrinatio Religiosa (Münster 1980), p. 262.

9 Felix Fabri, Die Sionpilger, edited by Wieland Carls (Berlin 1999).

vide general information and eventually paradigms for the traveler's encounter with the "foreign" or "unknown".

1 Encounters with the "unknown": The mind of the traveler

1.1 Categories of knowledge, mental maps, and time levels

Travelers to foreign countries or to the "unknown" meet new situations, cultures, and landscapes. As Friederike Hassauer has demonstrated through the example of Santiago de Compostela pilgrims, travelers meet the "unknown" under certain conditions. They have at their disposal special categories of knowledge, which help them structure and conceptualize the new experience. Thus, Hassauer differentiates between two categories of knowledge and denotes them as: first, knowledge of topos and second, knowledge of observation or experience. Knowledge of topos represents authoritative knowledge, for example knowledge of the Bible or antiquity, and also literary knowledge.¹⁰ Particularly with regard to Jerusalem pilgrims, knowledge of topos relates to varieties of knowledge in the context of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. The second category of knowledge denotes types of knowledge that might be regarded as (experienced) every-day-knowledge. The two categories may overlap, as they are transitional categories and they are modified continuously. This concept of knowledge categories may be linked to anthropological categories and relates to the concept of the mental map (sometimes denoted as "image"), a notion coming from the field of cognitive cartography.¹¹ It is related to cultural (religious, political, social, etc.) categories such as "experience," "learning," "imagination," and also "memory", which shape the individuals' perceptions, and are influenced by their own culture (re-

10 Friederike Hassauer, *Volkssprachliche Reiseliteratur: Faszination des Reisens und räumlicher Ordo*, in Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, Ursula Link-Heer, and Peter-Michael Spangenberg (eds.), *La littérature historiographique des origines à 1500* (Heidelberg 1986), pp. 259–283, here pp. 269–273. These categories partially coincide with and refer to the categories of *Speichergedächtnis* (store memory) and *Funktionsgedächtnis* (function memory). See Aleida Assmann, *Erinnerungsräume: Formen und Wandel des kulturellen Gedächtnisses* (Munich 1999), pp. 135–142.

11 Bernhard Jahn, *Raumkonzepte in der Frühen Neuzeit: Zur Konstruktion von Wirklichkeit in Pilgerberichten, Amerikareisebeschreibungen und Prosaerzählungen* (Frankfurt am Main et al. 1993), pp. 13–14.

ligion, society, and/or politics).¹² Consequently, every kind of travel to either a familiar or to a distant or unknown country and its perception is influenced or even shaped by the cultural mental mapping of the traveler, or, according to Friederike Hassauer, by his/her different categories of knowledge. Journeys to Jerusalem represent a special kind of travel to the “unknown” in a specific sense. First, as to the category of topos knowledge, there is widespread familiarity with the Holy Land provided in art, music, and authoritative (biblical) literature, by religious rituals, teaching, and in particular by the intense interwovenness of religion and medieval daily life. Second, Jerusalem pilgrims travelled to an unknown country and a city that had been changed and adjusted to Islamic culture and religion since the seventh century. Traveling there, pre-conceptions and concepts of a Christian Jerusalem as the center of the (Christian) world¹³ met with actual historical conditions. These concepts were also present in maps related to salvation history, the *mappae mundi*, such as the London psalter map of about 1260 or the *Ebsdorf map* drawn some decades later. In the medieval and early modern time, Christian pilgrims encountered Islamic political realities of the Ottoman rule that controlled access to the most important holy sites. This led to a quasi-synchronous perception of a variety of different time levels¹⁴ in the Holy Land: the time of the Old and New Testament, of Christian and Islamic history in the Holy Land.¹⁵ Confronted with the actual present time, past and present, or old and new experience, the knowledge of topoi and of observation influence perception.

This experience is obvious in the pilgrim accounts of different travelers, such as, for example, Felix Fabri, who visited the site of the tomb of David at Mount Zion during his pilgrimage in 1483. His description shows how the mind recalls and imagines the (glorious) biblical events on the location of biblical historical sites, and contrasts the present-day destruction under the Mamluks’ rule with a glorious past, thereby nearly simultaneously recalling or imagining different time levels. Thus, although destruction was real, (historical and biblical) knowledge prevailed and restored the glory of the past, allowing Felix Fabri the per-

¹² For these categories and the discussion see also Münkler, *Erfahrung*, p. 153.

¹³ See also the introduction to the Holy Land, part of the account of the armchair traveler John de Mandeville (fourteenth century). John de Mandeville, *Sir John Mandevilles Reisebeschreibung*. In der Übersetzung von Michel Velser nach der Stuttgarter Papierhandschrift Cod. HB V 86, edited by Eric John Morrall (Berlin 1974), p. 2.

¹⁴ Maria E. Dorninger, *Memory and Representations of Jerusalem in Medieval and Early Modern Pilgrimage Reports*, in Bianca Kühnel, Galit Noga-Banai, and Hanna Vorholt (eds.), *Visual Constructs of Jerusalem* (Turnhout 2014), pp. 421–429, here pp. 425–426.

¹⁵ Dorninger, *Memory*, p. 427.

ception of a still existing and powerful Jewish and Christian world amid an Islamic historical reality. At times, this view and, through this, the imagined or remembered past, or even a biblical future, seems to have opened ways for paying homage to places forbidden to Jews and Christians, such as the burial site of Jewish kings linked to Jesus Christ. The urgent wish to enter this place and finally to achieve the fulfillment of this wish restores and confirms the Christian glory as perceived and imagined by the pilgrim, but (politically) not existent in the present, as Felix Fabri's description demonstrates:

[...] there [at Mount Zion], at this place at the right hand is an iron door, there you enter the chapel, which the heathen seized a few years ago, and changed the chapel to a mosque. In this chapel is the site, where the holy King David, and Salomon, Roboam, Abia, Ezechias and other holy kings counted to the kinship of Christ are buried. Of their burial much is reported in the Book of Kings. The Jewish people would very much like to hold the chapel and promised the sultan many thousands of ducats for the chapel. But he neither wants to give it to them nor to us Christians. Up on the chapel was another chapel, where the Holy Spirit was sent to the disciples. Thus, the heathen broke this same chapel, lest we Christians would not walk with our feet on their mosque, for they do not like this. By no means, they are not allowing us to enter the mosque or church. Therefore, they make iron doors in front of it, but God arranged it, that some of us entered the mosque, where the abovementioned holy kings are buried and this happened that way: The heathen who had been charged to close the mosque disarranged the lock, thus he was not able to close it. Therefore, the door was shut but unlocked all time we stayed in Jerusalem and thus we entered in secret when the heathen were not present.¹⁶

16 "Bey dem orth zu der rechten handt ist ein eiserne thuer/ da gehet man in ein Capell/ die haben die Heiden ein=genommen in kurtzen Jaren/ vnnd haben ein Mueschke auß der Capell gemacht/ in der Capell ist die heilige Stadt an der/ der heilige Koenig Daudid/ vnd Salomon/ Roboam/ Abia/ Ezechias vnnd die andern Heilige Koenige von de=nen die sybb Christi gezelt wird/ sind begraben worden/ von der begrebnuß stehet viel in der Koenig buechern geschrieven. Die Juden hetten die Capell fast gerne/ vnnd haben dem Soldan verheissen viel tausent Ducaten vmb die Capell/ aber er will sie weder jhnen noch vns Christen lassen/ Auff der Capell ist gestanden die Capell/ do der Heilig Geist/ ward den Juengern gesendet/ darumb haben die Heyden dieselbe Capell zerbrochen/ das wir Christen nicht mit fuessen auff jrer Mueschke giengen/ wenn sie/ moe=gens nicht leiden/ Sie lassen vns auch nicht vmb kein sach in jhr Mueschken oder Kirchen gahn/ Darumb machen sie eiserne thueren darfuor/ Doch so hats Gott gefueget/ dz vn=ser etzliche in die Mueschke kamen/ da die begrebnuß der obgenanten Heiligen Koenige ist/ vnnd das gab sich also/ Der Heide dem die Mueschke befolhen was zubeschliessen/ der hatte das Schloß verwirret/ das ers nicht kondt beschlies=sen/ Also stund die thuer zugethan vnbeschlossen/ als lange wir zu Jerusalem waren/ vnd also giengen wir drein heimlich/ wenn die Heiden nicht zu wege waren." Felix Fabri, [Pilgerbuch], Eigentlich beschreibung der hin vnnd wider farth zu dem Heyligen Landt gen Jerusalem, vnd furter [...] (Frankfurt am Main 1557), fol. 39v.

Approximately one hundred years later, with the Holy City now under Ottoman rule, the Lutheran physician and botanist Leonhard Rauwolf (1535/40–1596), travelled from Augsburg to the Near East to investigate new plants and drugs for the firm of his distant relative Melchior Manlich (1513–1576). While in the Orient for research and business reasons, he decided to travel to Jerusalem (1575). Contrary to Felix Fabri's description of Mount Zion, he emphasizes the present miserable condition of the site and interprets it as the inevitable result of Old-Testament prophecy. He draws a realistic image of the present state of the mountain:

Since there is nothing on earth as powerful, magnificent, and safely preserved, which is not fading, also this earthly Mount Zion, together with the solid and strong buildings (which is more a type of the right rock in Zion, of Christ our Lord, of his heavenly kingdom, and the Christian church built above) is much destroyed and dilapidated. Thus, the larger and higher part outside the city (except the Turkish mosque, some small houses, and small fields thereby) is completely deserted, mostly covered with stones, and jagged rocks. It also shows what Micah 3 earlier prophesied when he speaks thus: Zion shall be ploughed as a field because of you: and Jerusalem will become a heap of stones and the temple will be a wild mountain height. And Jeremiah 5 in his lamentations: Foxes walk upon Mount Zion, for it is that desolate.¹⁷

Only from outside Rauwolf visited the mosque there, around twenty years before and at the time of Felix Fabri still a Christian church. It was built according to Nicephorus during the time of Empress Helena (248/50–330). Rauwolf identified the place where this former church stood as the site of the last supper and of the receiving of the Holy Spirit. The quotation of the prophetic verses above does not only hint at a fulfilled prophecy of a dark future in the author's view, but also implicitly alludes to a past reality of Jewish and Christian glory in present Jerusalem. His more pessimistic historical and pious approach to the site is due to

17 "Nach dem aber nichts so gewaltig/ herrlich vnd wol=uerwaret auff disem Erdboden/ das nit zergenglich/ ist auch dieser irdische Berg Sion, sampt dem vesten vnnd starcken gebaew (der mehr des rechten Felßens inn Sion, Christi vnsers Herren/ seines Himmlischen Reichs/ vnnd Christlichen Kirchen/ darauff erbawet/ ein fürbildung ge=wesen) dermassen verwuestet vnd verhoerget worden/ das der groesser vnd hoeher thail vor der Statt (ausser der Türckischen Moscheen, etlichen heußlein vnnd aeckerlein darbey) gar oede liget/ mit stainen vnnd schroffen zimlich bedeckt. Er=uolget also was Micheas am 3 zuuor geweißsaget: da er also spricht/ Sion wirt vmb ewret willen/ wie ain feld zu=pflieget: vnnd Jerusalem zum stainhauffen/ vnd der Berg des Tempels zu einer wilden hoehe werden: vnnd Ieremias im 5 seiner Klaglieder. Der berge Sion liget so wuest/ das die Füchse darüber lauffen." Rauwolf, *Aigentliche beschreibung*, pp. 334–335. For the verses see Micah 3,12 and Lamentations 5,18, *The Holy Bible*, King James Version, large print compact edition (Nashville 2005).

experience and the historical testimonies he drew upon, such as the writing of Nicephorus, and due to historical narratives of salvation, for instance from the gospels and the Acts of the Apostles.¹⁸ This shows Rauwolf to have been a critical *scriptor doctus*, inclined to (historical) empirical scholarship and to upholding righteous Protestant piety focused on the New Testament as his interpretation of the rock in Zion demonstrates. Contrary to Felix Fabri, Rauwolf omits old Jewish history, but, like friar Fabri, the physician's descriptions of personal experience and/or different time levels rests on selections of his mental mapping, and thereby presents his own personality.

1.2 Points of reference and comparison

“Unknown” and “foreign”: in order to grasp features of perceptions of the “unknown” in our narratives it is helpful to outline the meaning of the term and its semantic field. The notions of the “unknown” and the “other” are related to the category of the “foreign.” Therefore, this study will also use this notion or “new” as synonyms for “unknown.” The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the adjective “unknown” as something “not known; that has not been learnt, ascertained, or comprehended; not identified or established as fact or truth” or “not previously encountered; unfamiliar; new, strange [...] unprecedented; unheard of; what is not familiar or known.” It is also associated with synonyms or notions within the semantic field such as “foreign,” “obscure,” “uncommon.” Therefore, “foreign” can be defined as “outside, opposite to domestic. [...] Excluded, kept away [...] Belonging to other persons or things; not one's own [...] Belonging to or coming from another district, country, society, etc. or connected to a country that is not your own” or “Something can be described as foreign to a particular person if they do not know about it or it is not within their experience.” Other synonyms for “foreign” are “unknown” and “unfamiliar.”¹⁹ The relation of the “unknown,” unexperienced by the mind of the traveler, is also addressed in Ortfried Schäffter's study of and approaches to the “foreign.” He distinguishes between different forms or *modi* of experience of the foreign, thereby connecting

18 Rauwolf, *Aigentliche beschreibung*, p. 337. Nicephorus may be identified as Patriarch Nicephorus I (c. 758–828). For different time levels from the perspective of an art historian see Robert Ousterhout, *Sweetly Refreshed in Imagination: Remembering Jerusalem in Words and Image*, in *Gesta* 48 (2009), pp. 153–168.

19 “Foreign” and “unknown”, in OED. Oxford English Dictionary online, accessed 19 May 2022, <https://www.oed.com/search?searchType=dictionary&q=foreign&_searchBtn=Search>, <<https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/214945?redirectedFrom=unknown#eid>>.

to concepts used by Friederike Hassauer. The “foreign” or “unknown” is not as much characterized through opposition to the familiar, but more through distance and difference and is linked to the notion of the “other.”²⁰ In this context “foreign” and “own” may be regarded as: first, existing on a common basis; second, as mutually incompatible, which strengthens the “own” identity; third, a learning curve leading to additional information; and fourth, as polyvalent notions, a kind of ‘mutual foreignness,’ allowing for mutual differences. Descriptions do not dissolve or overcome the foreign but lift it to a higher level of explicit knowledge. Therefore, the “unknown” is always perceived in relation to one’s own living environment and culture and is thus linked to familiar conceptions. Distance to the foreign is to be understood in terms of time, place, society, or culture. Therefore, as Jürgen Osterhammel has argued, images of the “foreign” develop “not in direct confrontation of an individual observer and the pure object of observation, but are culturally produced.”²¹ However, the “foreign” or the “unknown” need methods for structuring and perceiving and require a point of reference, as Ortfried Schäffter explains.²² In the literary tradition, these points of reference are expressed through established rhetoric devices such as metaphor, comparison, or analogy.

2 Comparison as a means of conceiving and perceiving the “foreign”

In travel accounts, as Arnold Esch has shown, comparisons are widely used to grasp unknown or new experience, as well as to describe and transmit this experience to others.²³ Through comparison, familiar or earlier mentioned details structure and explain new impressions. Thus, Felix Fabri used comparison to illustrate measures and sizes. Near the Dead Sea the pilgrims observed a lot of holes in the earth. They were told that snakes as long as arms and as wide as pig skewers would be living there.²⁴ Cities are compared to other cities to get

²⁰ The “foreign” shows a structural closeness to the “other,” but is not identical with the “other,” because not everything “foreign” is “other” or “different”, and all “other” is not necessary “foreign.” Münkler, *Erfahrung*, p. 150.

²¹ For Osterhammel’s quotation see Münkler, *Erfahrung*, p. 150.

²² Münkler, *Erfahrung*, pp. 150, 153.

²³ Arnold Esch, *Anschauung und Begriff: Die Bewältigung fremder Wirklichkeit durch den Vergleich in Reiseberichten des späten Mittelalters*, in *Historische Zeitschrift* 253 (1991), pp. 281–312. Esch also discusses different categories of comparison of size or beings.

²⁴ Fabri, *Pilgerbuch*, fol. 103v.

an idea of the size and hence an impression of their strategic or economic importance. Thus, Alexandria is described as being as large as Cologne or Gaza and twice as big as Jerusalem.²⁵

A special challenge is the description of animals. The young nobleman Arnold von Harff (1471–1505) started his journey in 1496 in Cologne. While on the isle of Rhodes, he saw a strange animal, previously unknown to him, an ostrich with two chicks, which he observed in the tree garden of the grandmaster of the Order of St. John. To grasp the shape of this animal and communicate this to non-travelers he compares the birds to better known species:

These [the ostriches] are very strange birds. They may be as big as donkeys and have odd feathers. They also have two big wings, which they cannot lift to fly. They have long legs with split hooves like deer. They also lay very big eggs, in size as large as children's heads. When this bird has laid eggs in hot sand, he breeds the young ones only by using his sharp eyesight. I also was told, they would digest steel and iron, but I myself did not observe this.²⁶

However, the description of Arnold von Harff is fairly skeptical of the reported abilities of this newly observed bird.²⁷

In the Near East, the exotic fauna also fascinated Bernhard of Breydenbach, dean of Mainz (1440–1497, pilgrimage 1483/84). On his journey, he was accompanied by Erhard Reuwich (1445–before 1505), who illustrated the later successful printed pilgrim account, which had been translated into several European

²⁵ Fabri, *Pilgerbuch*, fol. 121r., 193r.

²⁶ “[...] dit sijnt gar wonderlijche foegell. Sij sijnt wael so hoich as esell ind hauen gar wonderlijche feederen. Ouch hauen sij tzweyn grosse vloegel, der sij neyt off geheuen en können zo fliegen. Ouch hauen sij lange beyn mit einem ghespalden voisie wie ein hyrtz. Item sij legen ouch gar groisse eyer die so dick sijnt as junge kynth houffder. Wan dese vogel die eyer gelaicht hait in den heyssen sandt alleyn mit sijnen scharpen gesicht bruet hee die jungen her vss. Ouch waert mir gesaicht sij verdeuweden stayll ind ijser, des ich aber neit gesiene en hain ind sijnt gestalt in deser formen.” Arnold von Harff, *Die Pilgerfahrt des Ritters Arnold von Harff von Cöln durch Italien, Syrien, Aegypten, Arabien, Aethiopien, Nubien, Palästina, die Türkei, Frankreich und Spanien, wie er sie in den Jahren 1496 bis 1499 vollendet, beschrieben und durch Zeichnungen erläutert hat*. Nach den ältesten Handschriften, edited by Eberhard von Groote (Hildesheim et al. 2008), p. 71.

²⁷ There could also be another interpretation of this last sentence of the quotation: The presumed ability of the ostrich to digest steel and iron might allude to diverse medieval historical methods of steel processing, like the one mentioned in the context of the Nibelungen myths. *Mimung*, the sword by Wieland the smith, was produced with metal from chicken manure, that means from the manure of fowl that had been fed with ground steel and iron. By this method, called nitriding, stronger steel was produced. Nevertheless, Arnold von Harff's remark hints at the desire for empirical experience.

languages.²⁸ The famous woodcuts include one plate showing exotic animals such as a giraffe and a crocodile, and among them a unicorn.²⁹ This mythic animal was also observed by the pilgrims on their way to the Sinai and St. Catherine's Monastery, as Bernhard von Breydenbach tells: "Item, there we watched a big animal, which was much bigger than a camel and our guide told us, this would verily be a unicorn."³⁰ It is not sure which animal the pilgrims saw from afar, maybe some kind of antelope such as the East African oryx. The probability expressed by "would [...] be" in the quoted passage hints at the doubt and the skepticism on the pilgrims' side. On the way to Sinai it is imaginable that the clever local guide knew the expectations of the pilgrims and showed them exactly what they wished to see, thereby feeding their imagination. By watching the alleged unicorn, the observed reality was also perceived, compared to, and formed by authoritative knowledge. However, whatever animal the pilgrims may have seen, the woodcut in Breydenbach's account presents the traditional sketch of a unicorn, showing its physical size without the horn as tall as a camel. Furthermore, to mention a unicorn in a pilgrim account and to offer its illustration, may have also met the expectations of the readers, just like the Muslim guide to Sinai had also responded to the pilgrims' expectations.

Even Leonhard Rauwolf in the sixteenth century still suggested that unicorns existed. Maybe he misunderstood or was seduced by scholarly argument and deduction as he met an educated Persian in Baghdad. The latter told him of unicorns being kept by the king of Persia. The Persian's scholarly knowledge of plants that Rauwolf could verify through his knowledge of appraised authors such as Theophrastus (c. 371–c. 287 BCE) or Pliny the Elder (23/24–79), impressed the traveler. This knowledge guaranteed Rauwolf the truth of his infor-

28 Bernhard von Breydenbach, *Die Reise ins Heilige Land*, Erste deutsche Ausgabe von Breydenbachs *Peregrinatio in terram Sanctam*, Mainz 1486, Faksimile. Mit einem Beitrag von Andreas Klußmann (Saarbrücken 2008); Frederike Timm, *Der Palästina-Pilgerbericht des Bernhard von Breidenbach und die Holzschnitte Erhard Reuwichs*. Die 'Peregrinatio in terram sanctam' (1486) als Propagandainstrument im Mantel der gelehrten Pilgerschrift (Stuttgart 2006), pp. 80–95.

29 Breydenbach, *Reise*, fol. 188v–189v. The woodcuts are outstanding book illustrations at Middle Rhine-area in the fifteenth century. See Reimar Fuchs, *Breidenbach, Bernhard von*, in *Neue Deutsche Biographie* 2 (1955), p. 571, online version, accessed 19 May 2022, <<https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118660047.html#ndbcontent>>. For the the illustrations see also Michael Herkenhof, *Die Darstellung außereuropäischer Welten in Drucken deutscher Offizinen des 15. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin 1996), pp. 182–183.

30 "Item da selbst sahen wir eyn grosz thyer was vil grosser dan eyn kem=melthyer. Vnnd saget vns vnser gleytzman daz esz warlich were eyn eynhornn." Breydenbach, *Reise*, fol. 118v.

mation and convinced him of the existence of unicorns.³¹ However, the Persian perceived Rauwolf as an exponent of Western culture via his own mental mapping and his own knowledge paradigms. He met, bowed to, and played with Western expectations by telling of this mythical animal, whereas Rauwolf, influenced by European cultural traditions, visited the Orient prepared to investigate, but also to confirm Western imagination. Apart from the scholarly conclusion drawn by Rauwolf, the discussion between him and the Persian illustrates how perceptions of new encounters between exponents of different cultures are influenced by cultural (transmitted) knowledge or knowledge topoi.

3 Hans Tucher: Comparison as a device for representations of the “new” or “unknown”

Hans Tucher, member of a prominent patrician merchant family in Nuremberg, shows another feature of the perception of the “unknown” by using extended comparison in his pilgrim account. He had travelled to Jerusalem in 1479–1480. His pilgrim account was a success, widely circulated, and frequently printed already in the year of its first publication, 1482.³² Produced in a format that easy to handle, Tucher’s account was used by many prominent travelers, apart from Breydenbach, for information and/or as source for their own writings. Among them were Felix Fabri and the Swiss traveler Ludwig Tschudi (1495–1530, pilgrimage 1519).³³ Tucher does not only give short analogies to explain

31 Rauwolf, *Aigentliche beschreibung*, pp. 231–232.

32 The account was published in 1482 in Augsburg and Nuremberg. Ninety-two incunabulae are known. Tucher’s account and transmission are accessible through the thorough investigations and documentation of Randall Herz. See Randall Herz, *Die “Reise ins gelobte Land” Hans Tuchers des Älteren (1479–1480). Untersuchungen zur Überlieferung und kritische Edition eines spätmittelalterlichen Reiseberichts* (Wiesbaden 2002), study, pp. 1–323, edition, pp. 325/337–639, here: pp. 229–250 (hereafter quoted as Tucher, *Reise*); Randall Herz, *Studien zur Drucküberlieferung der “Reise ins gelobte Land” Hans Tuchers des Älteren. Bestandsaufnahme und historische Auswertung der Inkunabeln unter Berücksichtigung der späten Drucküberlieferung* (Nuremberg 2005).

33 For Breydenbach see Herkenhoff, *Darstellung*, pp. 186–190. During his pilgrimage, Tucher sent letters home. These letters (e.g., the one dated 8 August 1479) add to the understanding of the process of writing his account, see Tucher, *Reise*, pp. 649–654. For this issue, see the forthcoming article by M[aria] E. Dorninger, *A Singular Experience of Jerusalem*, in Bianca Kühnel, Renana Bartal, and Neta Bodner (eds.) [*Jerusalem Translations*, pp. 165–189]. Tucher also mentions some of his sources, such as a Chronicle of the Franciscan Monastery at Mount Zion in Jerusalem (Tucher, *Reise*, p. 472), but omits others such as the accounts of his fellow pilgrim Se-

his impressions of the “unknown” to himself and to the ones at home. He also uses a particular extended one, comparing the most important church of Christianity, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, its sites, and their distances, to the ones of St. Sebald Church in Nuremberg, as his foremost point of reference.³⁴ Although the dimensions were not the same in detail, the churches had a similar structure.³⁵ The ten main sites, their location, and the distances between them are compared and described, giving a complete description of the pilgrims’ procession in the church in Jerusalem and allowing a “step by step imitation” at home.³⁶ Thus, Arnold Esch remarks: “Salvation history [becomes] walkable.”³⁷ Although Tucher announces the St. Sebald Church as point of reference, twice he goes beyond and integrates other points of reference, for example the Twelve Brothers Church in Nuremberg.³⁸ Particularly interesting is Tucher’s presentation of the Holy Tomb. Tucher describes the Holy Tomb or aedicule in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher three times in his account.³⁹ Twice, in two descriptions, he draws comparisons and applies the two same points of reference.

bald Rieter the Younger (1426–1488) and of Rieter’s ancestors. See Reinhold Röhrich and Heinrich Meisner (eds.), *Das Reisebuch der Familie Rieter* (Tübingen 1884). For Ludwig Tschudi see Melchior Tschudi (ed.), *Reyss vnd Bilgerfahrt zum Heyligen Grab. Dess Edlen vnd Gestrengen Herren Ludwigen Tschudis von Glarus Herren zu Greplong* [et]c. Ritters (Rorschach 1606).

34 In the time prior to Tucher or approximately the same time, similar features of and approaches to an extended comparison may be discovered in the Jerusalem accounts of Gabriele Capodilista of Padua (d. 1477, pilgrimage 1458) and Santo Brasca of Milan (1444/45–1522, pilgrimage 1480), which allow readers to imitate or trace parts of the path of the pilgrims in their church at home. See Dorninger, *Singular Experience*, p. 186; Esch, *Anschauung*, pp. 306–307. Both accounts are very likely not to have influenced Hans Tucher.

35 In Tucher’s view the St. Sebald Church was a little longer and wider. See Tucher, *Reise*, p. 391.

36 Tucher, *Reise*, pp. 390–405. This analogy is anticipated in a letter of Hans Tucher (6 August 1479, Jerusalem) to his brother Endres, a Carthusian monk. The letter was published by Randall Herz, Tucher, *Reise*, pp. 649–655; the entire analogy is rendered in English in Maria E. Dorninger, *St. Sebald Church and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre: Retracing the Path of Jerusalem’s Holy Places in Nuremberg*, in Bianca Kühnel and Pnina Arad (eds.), *Jerusalem Elsewhere: The German Recensions* (Jerusalem 2014), pp. 83–90.

37 “Heilsgeschichte [wird] abschreitbar.” Esch, *Anschauung*, p. 294. For a comparative table of sites see Dorninger, *Singular Experience*, p. 189.

38 The dimensions of the Chapel of Apparition in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher were compared to this Nuremberg Church. The Twelve Brothers Church, no longer extant, was founded at the end of the fourteenth century as a charitable establishment and served retired craftsmen. See the commentary by Randall Herz, in Tucher, *Reise*, p. 393.

39 Tucher, *Reise*, pp. 393, 402–403, 617–618. The Holy Tomb, without direct comparison, is also mentioned in Tucher’s letter (dated 6 August 1479) to his brother Endres. See Tucher, *Reise*, p. 651.

The first is the West Choir (Choir of St. Catherine) in the Church of St. Sebald with regard to location. Then, Tucher compares the size and shape of the Rotunda (the Chapel around the Holy Tomb) and the aedicule to the Holy Cross Church in Eichstätt, including a copy of the Holy Tomb situated in its center. This famous Eichstätt copy was built in the twelfth century.⁴⁰ The most fascinating reference to Eichstätt is the very first one, which is part of the description of holy sites the pilgrims passed after they entered the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and walked to the Chapel of Apparition, the starting point for the procession. Tucher describes the location of the Holy Tomb in relation to the St. Sebald Church. This is also the only time when Tucher explicitly compares the Rotunda and the aedicule to the sites in Eichstätt: “Item, then, if you would go from the same place [in the St. Sebald Church, near the Calvary canvas] to St. Catherine’s Choir, at the back of the church, at the same place in the Temple [= in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher] there is a wide, rotund church, identical in size and width to the church at Eichstätt in front of the city, which is called [Church] of the Holy Cross. A bishop of Eichstätt built [in Eichstätt] this [church] like that [in Jerusalem]. In the midst of the same rotund church or chapel itself is situated the Holy Sepulcher [in Jerusalem], which is then very much alike the one at Eichstätt.”⁴¹

Tucher’s use of the subjunctive and indicative is typical for the analogy of the pilgrims’ procession. The subjunctive stresses and signals the point of reference, whereas the indicative mode traces the pilgrims’ way in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. In his use of the analogy and comparison to the size of the Rotunda Tucher is very aware of the copy in Eichstätt. There is no doubt about the point of reference and the relation of original and copy. However, when he continues to compare the Holy Tomb to the copy in Eichstätt, the positions of original and copy seem to switch. The reader would expect a verbalization that explicitly and unmistakably hints at Jerusalem as original architecture, such as “The holy Sepulcher [in Jerusalem] to which the one in Eichstätt is very much alike.” Instead, the syntax confuses and Tucher writes: “The Holy Sepulcher

⁴⁰ Today, the Holy Tomb is located in the Church of the Capuchin Friars in Eichstätt. For the Holy Tomb copy in Eichstätt see Thomas Rüdiger, *Nachbauten des Heiligen Grabes in Jerusalem in der Zeit von Gegenreformation und Barock: Ein Beitrag zur Kultgeschichte architektonischer Devotionalkopien* (Regensburg 2003), p. 86. The study focusses on copies of the Holy Tomb in Germany and Austria.

⁴¹ “Item darnach so man von derselben stat gyng zu Sant Katherina kor hyntten jn die kirchen, an derselben stat jm temple, do stet ein weite, runde kirchen gleich jn der größ vnd weyt als die kirch zu Eystet vor der stat, die zu dem Heiligen Creucz genant ist, die ein bischoff von Eystett nach dieser hat pawen lassen. Mitten jn derselben runden kirchen, oder cappellen, do stet das Heilig Grab, das dann auch dem zu Eystet seer geleichet.” Tucher, *Reise*, pp. 392–393.

[in Jerusalem], which is then very much alike the one at Eichstätt.” Tucher compares the original to the copy, and not as habitually the copy to the original. Thus, in this one moment the original monument and the copy seem to have changed position in Tucher’s version. The familiar architecture prevails over the perception of the newly encountered original, which gains similar status to Eichstätt, i. e., the status of a copy. The knowledge, recollection, and imagination of the familiar building surpasses the authenticity of the encountered original and changes the hierarchy of original and copy. Thus, Tucher’s verbalization allows a special insight into his perception of the yet “unknown” and into the extent to which his mental map is formed by his own cultural imprint, literary knowledge, and experience. It also shows how much, using the terms of Friederike Hassauer, these bodies of knowledge influence and form the perception of the new. Although Tucher encounters a quasi-familiar monument, the originality is new and a comparison necessary. At the same time, Tucher’s description tells of the struggle between the intellect and emotion at this moment and its role in the encounter of the “new” or “unknown.”⁴² Whereas the intellect experiences the Holy Tomb in Jerusalem as the original, the emotion ties to the familiar object in Eichstätt, which therefore gains almost a primary and quasi-original status. Thus, it is through emotion that the experience of the Holy Tomb seems to be primarily perceived or at least influenced. In Tucher’s phrasing only the added “dann” (then) corrects the emotion and explicitly hints at the real relation of original and copy. At the same time, the original in Jerusalem assures the “originality” of the copy in Eichstätt among existing Holy Tomb models of different shapes in the German-speaking area. Even in Nuremberg another model of the Holy Tomb existed at the Heilig-Geist-Spital, which was donated by the pilgrim Jörg Ketzel (1423–1488) who had travelled to Jerusalem in 1453. However, Tucher does not mention this copy, modeled after the one in Aquileia, in his account. The commonly accepted authentic and prominent copy of the Holy Tomb within Bavaria seems to have been the one in Eichstätt in his time.⁴³

⁴² Dorninger, *Singular Experience*, p. 182.

⁴³ For Jörg Ketzel’s copy see Rüdiger, *Nachbauten*, p. 13. For Ketzel see Randall Herz, Hans Tuchers d. Ä. “Reise ins Gelobte Land”, in Klaus Arnold (ed.), *Wallfahrten in Nürnberg um 1500. Akten des interdisziplinären Symposions vom 29.–30. September 2000 im Caritas Pirckheimer-Haus in Nürnberg* (Wiesbaden 2002), pp. 79–104, 82, notes 9–10. The omission of Ketzel’s Holy Tomb copy in Tucher’s account may be explained by different reasons. One of them certainly had been the prominence and the fame of the Eichstätt copy. Moreover, some kind of rivalry between Tucher and Ketzel may not be excluded, as Tucher was of higher social rank, yet the other man had founded and donated a copy of the Holy Tomb.

Conclusions

The mental map or mental imprint as described in different theoretical approaches influence the perception of the “unknown”. As for the categories applied by Friederike Hassauer, such as the topoi of knowledge and observation, that may also be linked to other theories and categorizations, the “unknown” is filtered, structured, grasped, perceived, or explained by these topoi. This is demonstrated through comparison in travelogues, more specifically in pilgrim accounts. There perceptions of the “unknown” are to be integrated in and added to already acquired knowledge, as shown by the example of Hans Tucher among many others. Simultaneously, this procedure reveals the author’s own cultural imprint.

Furthermore, there is another category to consider with regard to the accounts, i.e., *gedechtnuß*, memory, that is present in every travelogue and to which Hans Tucher and Leonhard Rauwolf explicitly refer. Hans Tucher applies the term to explain his extended analogy of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and St. Sebald. He wrote, so he states, the analogy to better recall or memorize the (visited) sites,⁴⁴ thus referring to the art of memory and to rhetorical means for memorization that Roman rhetoricians highly recommended.⁴⁵ At the same time, the notion of *gedechtnuß* relates to *memoria*, meaning remembrance and practices of commemoration, which alludes to fame and glory.

Tucher wishes to write what he has observed and seen, experienced and investigated in person: what he “clearly and truly perceived, experienced, and explored.”⁴⁶ While travelling he took notes, as he alludes to his brother Endres in a letter.⁴⁷ Similarly, Leonhard Rauwolf tells in his preface that he recorded his experience, what he saw and experienced, in a small travelogue that becomes a document of memory, a “memorial.” Both authors revised their notes, chose

⁴⁴ “[D]arumb, das die heiligen stet jm tempel einem desterpaß ingedenck sein zu mercken, so hab jch dise gelichnuß fur mich genomen.” Tucher, *Reise*, p. 391. For the relation of memory and rhetoric see Dorninger, *Singular Experience*, pp. 182–183, note 48. Aleida Assmann distinguishes between “*ars*” (mnemotechnics) and “*vis*” (different forms and functions of memory). See Assmann, *Erinnerungsräume*, pp. 27–32. On recollection and identity see Assmann, *Erinnerungsräume*, pp. 95–100.

⁴⁵ For the medieval art of memory see Mary J. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge 1994).

⁴⁶ “sichtiglich vnd eigentlich gesehen, erfahren vnd erkundigt.” Tucher, *Reise*, p. 340.

⁴⁷ Tucher, *Reise*, p. 653.

what they remembered, and published their accounts.⁴⁸ Thus, the writers' notes are closer to their "first" impression of the encounter with the "unknown." Glimpses of this first encounter may still show through the text, as, for example, in Tucher's changing of copy and original in the comparison of the Holy Tomb to the copy in Eichstätt. Consequently, one may question whether the printed or official accounts really represent the experience of the way into the "unknown" in a stricter sense. It may be argued that these new experiences had already been structured and ordered via the individual traveler's mental map and added to his knowledge. Thus, in a strict sense, it ceased to be the "unknown" for the writer, but definitely not so for the reader as he or she starts reading the account for the first time.

48 Dedication letter of September 1581, Rauwolf, *Aigentliche beschreibung*, fol.)((). For the notion of "memorial," see Rauwolf, *Aigentliche beschreibung*, fol.)(iij^v. For the author's selection see also Ousterhout, *Sweetly Refreshed*, pp. 153–168. For memory and identity see Assman, *Erinnerungsräume*, pp. 95–100.

