

# Scriptural Geography

Portraying the Holy Land

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# 1 Introduction: Inscribing Terra Sancta

*It is easy to find Palestine ... But how to find the Holy Land – ah, that is another question.<sup>1</sup>*

## PREAMBLE

This book sets out to find the Holy Land: to find it as it was understood and written about; not just as a Cartesian space, but as an intellectual, moral and discordant space; a space charged with the heat of religious debates, a space mapped by the exclusivist ideologies of religious apologetics, filled with the clamour of the engagements of those trying to understand the worst crises of Victorian society; a target for generations of pilgrims and also a space of inspiration and reflection. I intend to explore a topology of meaning – the management of a celestial landscape and the production of its geography. By doing so I hope to aid our understanding of the importance of the Holy Land in the long nineteenth century's story of social and religious upheaval and transformation, to demonstrate the significance of the geography of that space in Western thought and argument. My aim is to trace the genealogy of a particular representational practice of spatial knowledge: Scriptural Geography. For this purpose we will consider Scriptural Geographies to be non-fictional literary works dealing with the places in which the story, or narrative, of the Bible takes place.

In the midst of writing the history of an idea like the geography of the Holy Land, perspective must be borne in mind: the story must be told with an eye to the context of events, and a sensitivity to their

chronology and the geography of their nascence and diffusion, rather more than the more mundane 'facts' involved in their occurrence. To obtain moment on the raw data of the texts our investigations must situate each author. Holy Land geography is a genre of literature which lends itself particularly well to such contextual analysis, comprising a lively combination of travel, science, archaeology, religion and literary studies, and this chapter will show how the faces of science and writing juxtapose, interact and react.

### SCRIPTURAL GEOGRAPHY

By the nineteenth century books dealing with the Holy Land were widely distributed, enormously popular works; our studies will reveal enormous circulation figures for geographies of the Holy Land, reviews in the popular press, and evidence of the use of these works in school curricula. These works were, and are, important in the popularization of geographical knowledge. Apparently scientific, archaeological, topological and geological works became the regular reading matter of the large section of the Victorian population interested in matters as seemingly remote from the fieldwork of geography as preaching, philology, prophecy and social morality. To tell the story of the writing of the geography of the Holy Land we will attempt to trace the genealogy of this enormously popular literary (sometimes travel) genre.

Throughout this work the story of the huge project that was the production of Holy Land geographies will be constantly negotiated within the context of intellectual, social and religious currents, paying particular attention to the spatial and historical influences of the dissonance among religion, theology and science, which was a key factor in how the genre developed, and to which some forms of Holy Land geography owe their existence. Our history will focus on the nineteenth century, but before our detailed studies we will initially look at some of the ancestors of the Victorian works.

Writing geographies of the Holy Land is an activity that has a history stretching to antiquity. Butlin states that 'the origins of sacred geography date back ... to the Biblical toponymy ... compiled by

Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea early in the fourth century AD'.<sup>2</sup> He suggests that 'the use of historical and geographical skills to locate and characterize important Biblical places and events, continued through the Middle Ages to the early modern period (indeed continues in some countries to the present day.)'<sup>3</sup> Butlin further argues that this geographical project has been a key determinant in the development of Western geography more generally: 'In Europe, the concept and practice of historical geography in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was closely associated with the scriptural or biblical geographies of the Old and New Testaments. This theme ... continued to figure in historical geography throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries'.<sup>4</sup> The first Holy Land geographies of the early modern period were often simply assimilations of the notes of travellers and scholars of the classical period, reworked and set against the background of new maps of Palestine, as an aid to Biblical understanding. Their authors had rarely themselves ventured anywhere so dangerous as Palestine (as late as 1808 parties of explorers turned back at Malta, fearing the worst),<sup>5</sup> and they seem to have had little care for the empiricism and quasi-scientific method that dominated the outlook of their successors. These works were not scientific in any conventional sense: their observations are not generally based on direct experience or as the result of any methodologically controlled investigations. They could also draw on a theology which supported their project and did not present serious threats to the truth of the narratives they were trying to illustrate. At this juncture the investigation of the geography of the Holy Land was not an urgent pursuit or one of great apologetic moment. Natural theology, an enterprise devoted to explaining God's creation by scientific means, and to discerning evidence of design in the world, could happily produce lists of Holy Land flora and fauna and other natural phenomena: scientists had yet to begin to ask the awkward questions as to how these species arrived at their present state and location, and what this might mean for humans. This particular field of research evolved, as noted by Butlin, and 'European sacred geographies from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, though similar in purpose, were produced from within different traditions'.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore Butlin argues for what he calls an 'Added energy' after the Reformation placed new emphasis on Biblical authority,

with 'a consequent intensification of interest in the detailed topographical and geographical environments of scripture'.<sup>7</sup> Later, in the nineteenth century, intellectual currents ushered in 'attempts to reconcile revealed knowledge and the authority of the sacred text with the empirical knowledge and authority of the new science'.<sup>8</sup> Shepherd speaks of the authors of these geographies as 'a host of ... scholars and clergymen bent on authenticating the text of the Bible' and argues that their work 'was chiefly the result of the confrontation in the West between established religious beliefs and the latest discoveries in geology and human evolution'.<sup>9</sup> Oddly she goes on to argue that 'Palestine provided no reassuring answers to their dilemma', which, as will be demonstrated below, is a sentiment manifestly unsupported by the spirit in which these authors wrote and by the content of their works.<sup>10</sup> However, it is probably not an overstatement when Shepherd asserts:

The most serious challenge to Turkish rule in the Near East since Napoleon took place at the time when the Protestant faith in the literal truth of the Scriptures was being put to the severest tests... Palestine was to be ransacked for 'evidence' of the accuracy of the Bible, not simply revered as the site of the Holy Places.<sup>11</sup>

The enthusiasm of the biblical geographers' quest at this point cannot be doubted. The controversy surrounding the progress of scientific thought was deep seated, 'the conclusions of geologists, in particular, indicating through the study of fossils that the earth was millions, not thousands, of years old, and had not been created in its final form in a week were dismaying even to many of the scientists themselves'.<sup>12</sup> And, even today, as Butlin points out, some works still appear periodically which continue to set a biblical record corroborated by Holy Land geography against scientific truth claims.<sup>13</sup>

The changing intellectual tastes of the audiences of Holy Land Geographies, varying as did the social climate, dictated a change in research methodology for the authors of the works over time. The writers of later Scriptural Geographies conducted fieldwork with enthusiasm, enduring hardship, privation, loss and immense expense in their quest for scientific accuracy and data worthy of the authority granted by the highest levels of the new found notion of scientific

reliability. Now that pilgrimages were being undertaken ‘not to worship, but to test and confirm the topographical truths of Scripture’<sup>14</sup> a different methodology was needed, and a different style had to be employed. The material needed not only to be proof against the criticisms of skeptical scientists, but also against critical theologians who would seek to deny that the cause was worthwhile at all. Careful fieldwork and conservative theological scholarship were the hallmarks of this enterprise.

Meanwhile, still later, in the latter nineteenth century, Holy Land Geographies interacted with science in an entirely different way. In these works the results of scientific investigation were integrated with the fieldwork carried out at biblical sites, as were the insights of critical theologians. This resulted in works which had little polemical charge, other than to exegete the Scriptures and the culture of the ancient Near East, but by that time acknowledging the negotiated nature of Scriptural knowledge, and that the productions of modernity could often be beneficial, rather than detrimental, to religious faith. These works contain ‘important digests of up-to-date scientific description and explanation...’<sup>15</sup> and, as Butlin has noted, these works continued the Scriptural Geography project ‘against a changing intellectual and theological climate’.<sup>16</sup>

This project’s history can be traced through many phases and contexts, the details of which are not our primary concern here. However, it is useful by way of background to look at some Holy Land geographies from the whole sweep of the enterprise’s long story. Initially an enthusiasm for pilgrimage to the Holy Land swept Christendom in the fourth century and pilgrims seemed to visit every site that could be imagined to be connected to any biblical event. At an early stage St Augustine ‘secured the place of geography in the Christian system of knowledge’<sup>17</sup> as he felt that geography worked ‘By providing information for understanding Scripture’ and that therefore ‘geographical studies eventually served biblical exegesis’.<sup>18</sup> By late medieval times however the pilgrims’ routine route had contracted to include almost entirely sites from the New Testament, rather than the Old Testament. Most of the sites visited became concentrated in and around Jerusalem in what quickly became a well-trodden path, because ‘[a]s travel became more attractive owing to better roads, more facilities for shelter, more settled political conditions, and

greater available wealth' the number of pilgrims soared.<sup>19</sup> The landscape became an actively and carefully managed and presented resource: a repository of sets of specific historical meanings, after all, as argued by Campbell, 'Like an archaeologist the Christian pilgrim is looking for the past, but it is a past made up of singular events and personalities, individual epiphanies, incarnations, and martyrdoms. Places are referred to as "witnesses" of those events and people'.<sup>20</sup> As our studies will reveal, this aspect of the 'witnessing' carried out by geographical places in the holy landscape became employed in a specific apologetic project of the nineteenth, twentieth and indeed twenty-first centuries. The nature of this enterprise required vast amounts of field data and this meant that the routes of travellers once more had to be extended to cover even the most obscure site of the most obscure biblical occurrence.

### Ancient

Geographies of the Christian Holy Land have existed almost as long as Christianity itself. The earliest texts were born in the era of the Roman Empire which provided the communications network necessary for long distance travel with reasonable ease. A number of texts has survived, despite this however, ancient works on the Holy Land, like that of Eusebius, have proven the most difficult for scholars to contextualize and understand. Eusebius's famed work the *Onomasticon*, can only be dated imprecisely, and most writers consider it to have been composed sometime between 313 and 325.<sup>21</sup> Eusebius was Bishop of Caesarea from 313 and is more famed for his church histories than his *Onomasticon*. His work lists, in alphabetical order within each biblical book, the places mentioned in the Scriptures and other, associated, geographical features, like mountains and streams. It seems to be a reference work designed to meet the needs of a biblical scholar who reads of a place name in the Bible and wants to know more about it. The text itself is rich with the fruits of research: both textual interrogation and first-hand data collection conducted in the field. It seems likely that Eusebius used a variety of texts written by travellers, including some received at third-hand from Origen,<sup>22</sup> although there is also definite evidence within the text that



Eusebius did some travelling himself as many of the locations listed are accompanied by detailed information about routes. Entries can be as interesting as that for Ainan:

*Ainan* (Gen. 38.14), which is in the passage of Thamna. Ainan is now a desert place lying beside Thamna, a very large village inhabited up to the present, lying between Ailia and Dispolis. There is a spring in the place called Ainan where there is an idol venerated by the country-folk.<sup>23</sup>

Or as dry as the entry for Souba: '*Souba* (2 Sam. 8.3), David attacked its king'.<sup>24</sup> Eusebius' work does not recommend that any particular veneration be given to any particular place, but he is often credited with resourcing the pilgrimage 'boom' of the fourth century AD.<sup>25</sup>

The first extant manuscript of a detailed pilgrim account, which can be considered travel writing per se, was written by an anonymous pilgrim who started his journey at Bordeaux, and is usually dated to AD 333.<sup>26</sup> The text consists mainly of a list of staging posts along the journey, with occasional comments, often displaying the beliefs of the age: 'There is [at Caesarea] the Bath of Cornelius the Centurion, who gave much alms. At the third milestone from there is Mount Syna, where there is a spring, and women who wash in it become pregnant'.<sup>27</sup> Despite such expressions of lore and myth the text has a real sense of the immediacy of a traveller who has been to the places that he describes. At times the tone almost reaches the conversational – 'Eighteen miles from Jerusalem is Jericho. Coming down the mountain range you reach a tomb on the right, and behind it is the sycamore tree which Zacchaeus climbed in order that he could see Christ...'<sup>28</sup> However, nothing is really known of the author's life or circumstances, and little can therefore be said about the context of the pilgrimage.

A fourth century nun, probably called Egeria, began an extensive tour of the Holy Land around the year 384. Her visit, of more than three years, to the holy sites comprised a tour of not only the principle biblical localities around Jerusalem, but it also extended as far south as Egypt. Egeria's manuscript, of which only the middle portion survives, is written in the form of a letter to the sisters of her convent who remained at home. Egeria's text was apparently written

in Constantinople after her sojourn in Bible lands and prior to going on a further journey. The style is remarkably personal and enthusiastic and everywhere Egeria was welcomed by monks, priests and bishops who delighted her by showing her their local holy places. Remarkably her keenness remained unblunted by years of difficult journeys: as Hunt has described her endeavours – ‘The driving force behind the *desiderium* of which she so frequently speaks, impelling her in pursuit of sacred places ... is the Bible: the urge to see and be shown in fullest detail every inch of a Scriptural landscape’.<sup>29</sup> With specific reference to her visit to the supposed site of Mount Sinai, Egeria neatly outlined what she wanted to achieve in her whole pilgrimage at each site:

So this was our plan. When we had seen everything we wanted and come down from the Mount of God, we would come to the place of the [Burning] Bush. Then from there we would return through the middle of the valley now ahead of us and so return to the wadi with the men of God who would show us each one of the places mentioned in the Bible. And this is what we did.<sup>30</sup>

This is indeed what she did and she supplemented simply seeing the places with devotions particular to each one: ‘And it was always our practice when we managed to reach one of the places we wanted to see to first have a prayer, then a reading from the [biblical] book, then to say an appropriate psalm and another prayer’.<sup>31</sup> Egeria showed no consternation when her guides pointed out to her places improbable in their triviality – ‘Near by you are also shown the place where holy Moses was standing when God said to him, “Undo the fastening of thy shoes”, and so on’<sup>32</sup> and she retained a keen interest in seeing every place that anyone was willing to point out to her. Egeria’s work, while intended only for a small audience of people with whom she was closely acquainted, has remained a valuable source of information on just how Holy Land pilgrimages were conducted during the fourth century.

## Medieval

Given the difficulties of travel in the medieval period it is understandable that many pilgrims wished to create written accounts for wide circulation and works of synthesis of pilgrim accounts. These allowed the medieval emphasis on the spiritual experience of pilgrimage, fostered by the period's religious enthusiasm, to benefit as many people as possible. Authority in texts was not then subject to the ideas of the privilege of actual experience and first hand knowledge, allowing many texts to be copied, edited and reworked over long periods of time. In this phase of the Holy Land geography genre Peter the Deacon wrote his book about Holy Land geography in 1137. It is mostly derived from the Venerable Bede's work on the Holy Places, and also has selections from Egeria's text and other, lost, texts. It is an important indicator of how such texts were recycled and reproduced throughout the medieval period. Peter himself apparently never travelled and created his work for readers who would never travel to the Holy Land either. Its text is densely packed with the places of Scripture and is keen to relay as much information as possible. To that end Peter's style is direct and informative, with little care for the niceties of elegant language or complexity of structure. He follows a 'route' through the landscape and notes the Bible stories connected with each place he encounters, rather than allowing the Bible to determine the order in which he deals with places. For example, his treatment of Jericho is a chronological jumble, but has a clear spatial pattern: 'It is still possible to see part of the foundations of the walls of the city of Jericho, the ones which were overthrown by Joshua son of Nun. And next to the house of Rahab is the sycamore tree into which Zacchaeus climbed'.<sup>33</sup> Peter seamlessly blends the stories of the Old and New Testaments with Rahab and Zacchaeus as near spatial neighbours, though temporally very distant. From here Peter jumps back in time again to the Prophets and Patriarchs, all without leaving the locality of Jericho: 'Not far from Jericho is the place where Elijah was caught up into heaven; and across the Jordan are some very high mountains, among them a specially lofty one called Nebo. This is the one which Moses climbed when he surveyed the Promised Land, and then died'. However, despite his privileging of space over time, no particular features of any place are noted and

no actual travelled routes are detailed, allowing us to determine the nature of Peter's research.

The *Travels of Sir John Mandeville* has long been famed as 'one of the most popular and influential books of the later European Middle Ages'.<sup>34</sup> It deals with the journey of a fourteenth century noble man across Europe to Asia and back again, over a period of 35 years. Almost all scholars now believe Sir John Mandeville to be a fictitious character, and his journey to be largely fictitious as well. However, the book contains significant Holy Land material and, as this is derived from other sources, many of them genuine travel accounts, it is an important repository of medieval geographical knowledge concerning the Middle East, the author noting as he does that the Holy Land 'is the heart and midst of all the world'.<sup>35</sup> Like many medieval accounts the *Travels* is more of a list of data than a travel narrative. The text is rich with information about locality and history, without obvious immediate experience of the places: 'about Jerusalem is the Kingdom of Syria. And there beside is the land of Palestine, and beside it is Ascalon, and beside that is the land of Maritain... About Jerusalem be these cities: Hebron, at seven mile; Jericho, at six mile; Beersheba, at eight mile...'<sup>36</sup>

Sir Richard Guylforde went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1506 and his chaplain wrote an account of the trip. The unfortunate knight died at a fairly early stage on the outward journey, getting no further than Sion, but the rest of the party continued with unabated courage and left us a full and lively account. While the text contains much which bears obvious evidence of the writing of an eyewitness, there is also a certain amount of mythical material, such as the exit of the River Jordan from the Dead Sea. The author was keen to express the pilgrims' devotional exercises: '...as soon as we hadde syght of the Holy Lande we sange Te Deum, and thanked joyously Almyghty God, y<sup>t</sup> had yeuen us suche grace to have ones y<sup>e</sup> sight of y<sup>t</sup> most holy lande'.<sup>37</sup> Such notes permeate the text and are balanced by more geographical and biblical allusions which started as soon as the party landed –

At this Jaffe begynneth the Holy Lande; and to euery pylgryme at the first fote he setteth in londe there is granted plenary remyssion, de pena, and a culpa; and at this hauen Jonas y<sup>e</sup> prophet

toke the see whan he fledde from the syght of our Lorde in Tharsis.  
And in the same Jaffe seynt Peter reysed from dethe Thabytam...<sup>38</sup>

The text also contains references to many extra-biblical traditions, such as the life of Mary after the death of Jesus Christ, which indicate for us the nature of the pilgrimage: Sir Richard's party was interested not only in seeing the scenes of Scripture, but also in seeing the scenes of Christian tradition. The author of the book was evidently keen to see a more contemporary Holy Land as well as the biblical one.

### Early Modern

The vast developments in the state of geographical knowledge, and the equally enormous consequences for the authority of classical writers, ushered in by the Age of Reconnaissance had their effects on the enterprise of writing Holy Land geographies too. As new methods of questioning and observing the world and new conceptions of authority began to alter the traditional trust placed in authors like Strabo, Pliny and Ptolemy, new approaches were taken to thinking about the geography of the Holy Land as well. While purely religious pilgrim accounts continued to appear it is noteworthy that by the late sixteenth century some travellers were beginning to employ some of the concerns of natural philosophy both to inspire their journeys and to help structure their travel accounts. Leonhart Rauwolff was a German botanist and physician who toured the Near East from 1575–8 with the motive of collecting botanical specimens which he outlined early in his work:

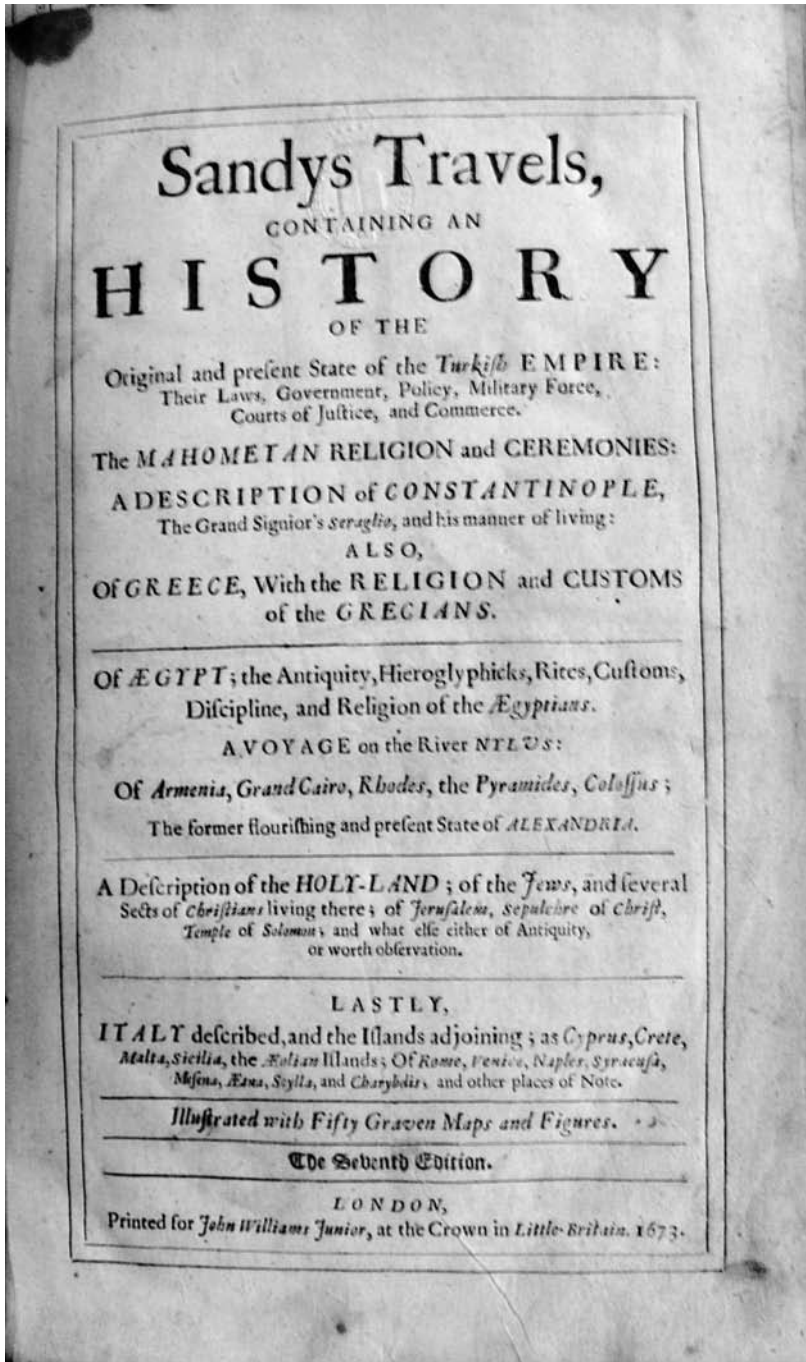
I found also those fruitful Places of the Eastern Countries described, which several Authors, and above all the Holy Scriptures have mentioned; and from thence I was enflamed with a vehement desire to search out, and view such plants growing spontaneously in their Native Places, and propounded also to myself to observe the Life, Conversation, Customs, Manners, and Religion of the inhabitants of these Countries.<sup>39</sup>

Rauwolff kept a pocket journal on his travels, and much of the book was written by aid of those notes. However, the anonymous editor of the work did need to make apologies for the tales of Prester John and the unicorn, pointing out that they were merely reports of other travellers' tales. Rauwolff was primarily on a mission to collect what could be thought of as scientific field data, about plants and herbal remedies, but he was also keenly aware of the religious associations of the landscapes he traversed and he noted his attitude of expectation as he approached the Holy Land –

I found in me a great Desire to see these and other the like Holy Places; Not that I thought... to find their [sic] Christ our Lord ... but to exercise my outward Senses in the Contemplation thereof, that I might the more fervently consider with my inward ones ... Christ our Lord himself.<sup>40</sup>

Rauwolff's travels were a source for many later writers, and as Staphorst noted, 'this may very truly be said of Rauwolff, that whatever he writes upon his own Observations of Knowledge, is most faithful and sincere'.<sup>41</sup> These concerns for accuracy and reliability being important for scholars of the early modern period, many of them consciously contributing to 'the Republic of Learning' and 'Empire of Knowledge' which were the expressed reasons for Rauwolff's work being presented to the public.<sup>42</sup>

George Sandys was a traveller of a different variety than Rauwolff. His writings were of a more scholarly and less practical nature. Sandys travelled in 1610 around the Holy Land and as well as noting the events of his journey included much material from earlier authors, filling many pages with rich historical detail. Sandys was a skilled and elegant writer, and, this combined with his scholarly research has given a very poetically written book. The initial description of the Holy Land glows with the fruits of scholarship, though perhaps shows slightly less travel experience: 'A land that floweth with milk and honey: in the midst as it were, of the habitable world, and under a temperate Clime: adorned with beautiful Mountains and luxurious Vallies, the Rocks producing excellent waters, and no part empty of delight or profit'.<sup>43</sup> Sandys however did not believe all that previous writers had said of the Holy Land, and noted his reservations about



1: The title page of George Sandys's *Travels* (1673)

some assertions: '*Josephus* (and he that Country-man) reports that about [the Dead Sea] are fruits; and flowers, most delectable to the eye, which touched, fall into ashes. A Historian perhaps not always to be credited'.<sup>44</sup> Sandys did plenty of his own travelling, and provided accounts with a lot of colour, even if they are sparse in detail. He noted that 'Upon Easter-Monday we hired certain Asses to ride to Emaus [*sic*], accompanied by a Guard, and certain of the Fryars'. But the only further details of this trip that are given are that the party stopped for devotions on the way and that 'Emaus stands seven miles off and West of Jerusalem. The way thither mountainous; and in many places as if paved with a continual Rock; yet where there is earth, sufficiently fruitful'.<sup>45</sup> Much of Sandys' field observation seems to have been to confirm what he has read in other authors before setting out for the Holy Land.

Works of compilation were also important in the seventeenth-century knowledge of the Holy Land's geography. Heinrich Bünting's 1682 book on the travels described in the Bible is an important example of a work of synthesis. Like many before him Bünting set out to aid biblical scholars:

It hath always been held a matter worth note (gentle Reader) even to the best Divines, to have the Typographical description of the Towns and Places, as they are mentioned in the Scriptures; and so much the rather, because by comparing the Actions of Men with the beginnings and endings of cities, they might the better understand the Prophets, and perceive the wonderful Providence of God.<sup>46</sup>

Bünting provided such material for his readers in two ways: first, Bünting gave his readers tables listing the journeys, as recorded in the Bible, of an amazing array of characters, with each journey's length in miles and a helpful computation of the total number of miles travelled by each individual, some of which figures seem improbably large, though this is not our concern. Second, he listed places mentioned in the Bible and provides as much geographical information as he can glean from classical writers about each one. Many places have, of necessity, decidedly short entries. Bünting anticipated the dif-

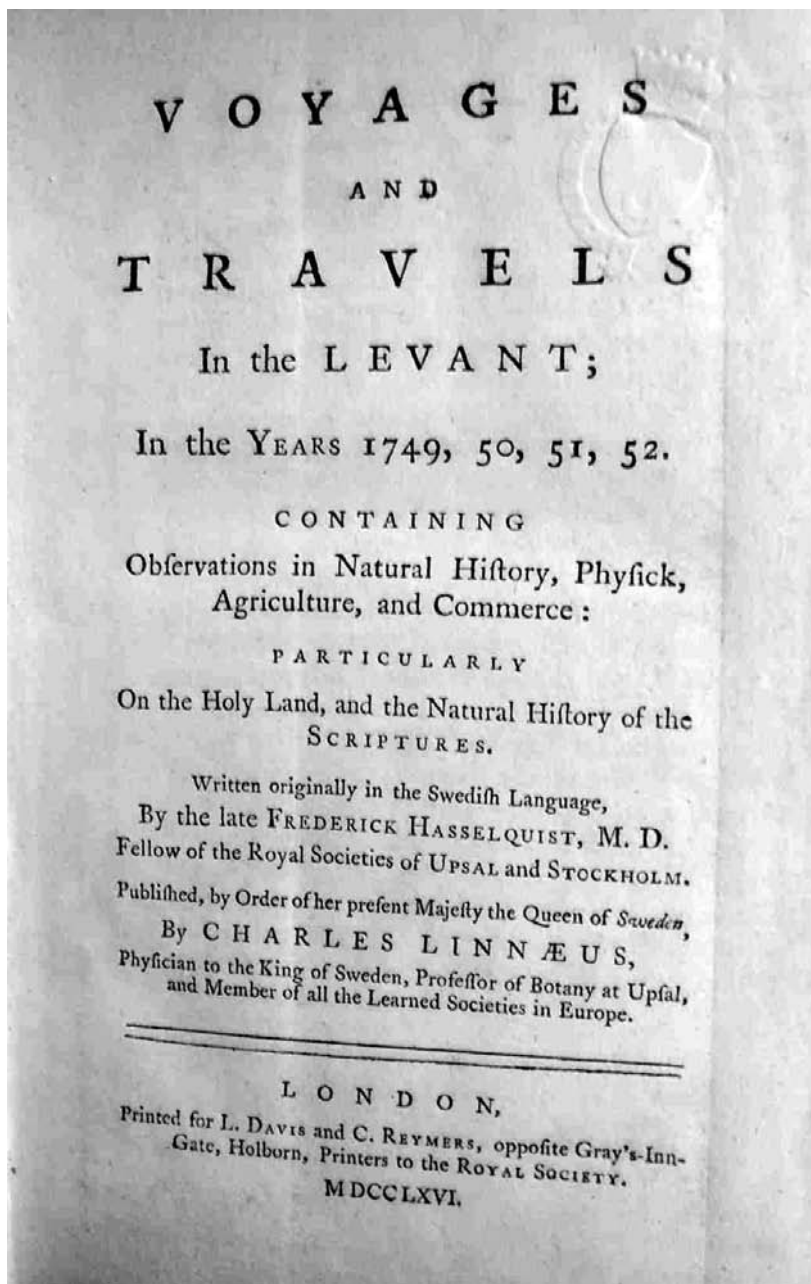


ficulty that his readers may have attributing much authority to his work, and fended off critics at an early stage –

But if you question with me, How is it possible that I should come to the knowledge of those things, considering that Bablyon, Niniveh [*sic*], Jerusalem, and most of the Cities of the *Holy-Land*, are long since wasted and decayed? To this I answer; therein consists the greatness of Travel, because I have been constrained to use the help of many Authors.<sup>47</sup>

Bünting listed among his sources ‘*Strabo, Jerom, de Locis Hebraicis, Plinie, Livie, Plutarch...*’ and many others.<sup>48</sup> He refers directly to no authors contemporary with himself, but does have some up to date information about the state of a few of the places in the Holy Land.

Frederick Hasselquist’s journeys through the Levant were published in translation in London in 1766.<sup>49</sup> Hasselquist travelled in the East from 1749 until his death at Smyrna in 1752. He was a practically-minded and observant traveller, whose writings are peppered with the minutiae of all that he was exposed to and could analyse. His journeys were primarily to collect this information, rather than any sort of pilgrimage. Indeed he referred to the practice of pilgrimage as a ‘kind of superstition’.<sup>50</sup> Predominantly Hasselquist was interested in botany, with a secondary interest in geology. These interests left him little time to consider what other writers think of as the sacredness of the landscape he observed; while he did visit the holy sites, it was in a cynical manner, and he tended to treat the Holy Land simply as a field site. His scorn came to the fore as the appointed monks showed him the sites of biblical stories: ‘It would make me smile to be shewn a place where an affair happened, which perhaps never did happen; for [the monks] say this was the place where the man fell in amongst robbers, and was passed by the Priest, but taken up by the Samaritan...’<sup>51</sup> He devoted much more time to his botanical studies, but was often disappointed with the results: ‘I botanized on the dry and poor Sion, and found some common plants there...’<sup>52</sup> He was also constantly engaged in making geological notes and reconstructed the holy landscape to a laboratory specimen with precision – ‘[The hills] nearer the Dead Sea, consist of a more loose limestone, sometimes white and sometimes greyish; between which



2: The title page of Frederick Hasselquist's *Voyages and Travels in the Levant* (1766)

are layers of a reddish micaceous stone, or *Saxum purum micaceum*'. The effect of the nature of the geology on the plant life is also carefully noted – 'Near Jerusalem grow different sorts of plants on these hills, especially *Ceratonia*, Carob-tree; *Myrtus*, Myrtle; and *Terebinthus*, Turpentine tree; but farther towards Jericho, they are bare and barren'.<sup>53</sup>

### Changing Modes

The ongoing project of textually portraying the geography of the Holy Land has been through many phases, each one producing works which demonstrate something of the broader intellectual, social and religious contexts of the time and place of their writing. Writers in the ancient world produced Holy Land works as aids to biblical understanding, as reference works, as repositories of mythology and as pilgrimage accounts. These works tended to use all of the holy sites, both Old and New Testament. Medieval writings were much more devotionally based, located around a much more centralized set of holy sites, and around a very clearly established pilgrimage tradition, built solidly into the Christian church's framework of belief. With the dawn of the Age of Reconnaissance, developments in geographical knowledge, authority and rationality served to undermine the influence of the Greek schoolmen's geographies and methods and to usher in new concerns, including the importance of first-hand experience, the collection of data for projects in natural philosophy and physick and the systematic recording of travel. Still later Holy Land books became entangled in concerns over the relationship between the Scriptural and scientific uses of the Holy Landscape. Our studies however will focus on these more recent expressions of the project, largely during the nineteenth century, and a more detailed and contextualized history of that era's Holy Land geographies now demands our attention.