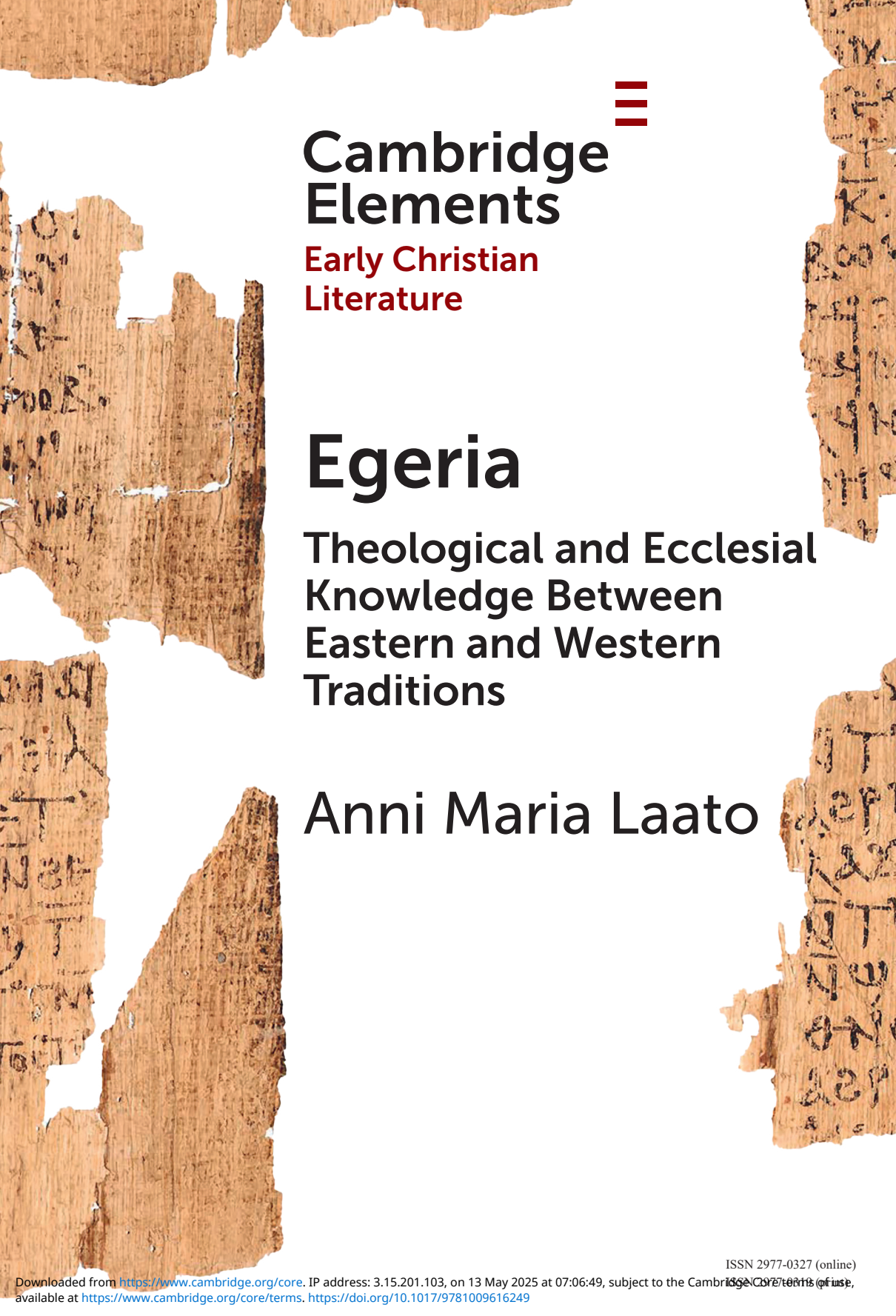

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Theological and Ecclesial Knowledge Between Eastern and Western Traditions

Anni Maria Laato

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Abstract: Egeria's *Itinerarium* is a unique document. It is one of the few surviving works from antiquity written by a woman and is one of the first Christian travelogues depicting a pilgrimage to and in the Holy Land. In her *Itinerarium*, Egeria describes not only her travels but also the practices of pilgrimage and the liturgical life in Jerusalem at a time when both of these were developing rapidly. As Egeria's explicit goal is to communicate her observations and thoughts to her friends, a community of women in the west, this Element focuses on Egeria's role as a communicator. Both the contents of her text, namely *what* she wanted to communicate, and the techniques she used to mediate her experiences and learning to her friends, that is, *how* she chose to communicate, are scrutinized. Special attention is given to how Egeria describes lived religion in antiquity.

Keywords: Egeria, pilgrimage, early Christian women, lived religion in antiquity, travel writing in antiquity

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1 Introduction

1.1 About This Element

Egeria's *Itinerarium* is a unique document from the time of the early church.[1] It is one of the few surviving works from antiquity written by a woman and is one of the first Christian travelogues depicting a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. In her *Itinerarium*, Egeria describes – in a fascinating way – not only her travels but also the practices of pilgrimage and the liturgical life in Jerusalem at a time when both of these were developing rapidly. As a pilgrim, Egeria came to the east from "the far western coast of the ocean," as the seventh-century monk Valerius of Bierzo put it, and Egeria explained for her western readers what she had observed and experienced during her travels. Egeria's *Itinerarium* has been studied extensively but, to date, her role as a communicator between the eastern and western traditions has received less attention. Therefore, this Element focuses on that particular topic.

Christian pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the Holy Land had increased rapidly after the journey made by Emperor Constantine's mother, Helena, to Jerusalem in 326, and by the end of the fourth century the number of pilgrims from all over the empire and even outside its borders was already significant.[2] In Jerusalem, and at pilgrimage sites in the Holy Land, innovative liturgical and devotional practices emerged.[3] At the same time, even the topography of the Holy Land was changing: The emperor Constantine had begun great building projects in Jerusalem and Bethlehem; elsewhere in the Holy Land new churches, monasteries and even an infrastructure for the growing number of pilgrims were being built and pilgrimage sites and routes developed.[4] The new edifices and the altered layout of the city and the landscape, together with the new practices, such as public processions accompanied by singing and the carrying of candles, made Christians visible and audible in the Holy Land in a completely new way. The character of Jerusalem was, thus, being changed into a Christian city.[5] Nonetheless, during this century, in many areas in the Holy Land, the Jews still formed a majority of the population and even pagans were well represented, especially in the cities.[6]

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[1] *Itinerarium* is henceforward abbreviated "It." Edition: Maraval, *Itinerarium*. The English translation used in this volume is McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*. All the English quotations come from this translation.

[2] For an overview of the development of the Christian pilgrimage to the Holy Land, see Hunt, *Holy Land*; Bitton-Ashkelony, *Encountering*.

[3] For an overview of the development of the liturgy in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, see McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 68–101.

[4] For the changes in the Holy Land during the fourth century, see Stemberger, *Jews and Christians*; Tabbernee, *Early Christianity.*

[5] See Laato, "Egeria's Itinerarium," 184.

[6] For the population in the Holy Land during the fourth century, see Stemberger, *Jews and Christians*, 17–21.

Egeria made her pilgrimage to the biblical sites in 381–384 CE, and during her pilgrimage she wrote detailed notes on what she observed, experienced and learned.[7] These notes are written in the form of a travel diary, addressed to her friends at home, that is, some kind of community of Christian women. Egeria enthusiastically described her route, the places she visited, the people she met and her impressions of the nature and landscape, but, above all, she focused on the practices of the local Christians and the pilgrims. Egeria's explicit goal in her travel narrative was to communicate her observations and thoughts to her friends who were expected to be interested in these things in particular, and she "was sure" that her readers wanted to know about the things she was going to write about (It. 24.1). She compared the practices in Jerusalem with those at home and explained to her readers how things were done differently "here" (*hic*) in Jerusalem than "among us" (*apud nos*) in the west (It. 27.1). Although Egeria primarily focused on practical matters, and doctrinal theology is not the mainstay of her text, she did transmit information about the contents of faith, too.

Egeria, and other early Christian travel writers, operated in a world where there were some linguistic and cultural differences between the eastern and the western parts of the Roman Empire.[8] Cultural influences had mostly spread from the east to the west, which even the Romans had admitted earlier,[9] and this same trend continued even in Egeria's time: Information concerning the liturgical innovations of the church in Jerusalem, the practices of pilgrimage and the different forms of asceticism spread to the west with the pilgrims as they returned home or in their sending of letters. The western pilgrims brought impulses with them to the east, too, but very few traces of these remain in the sources available to us today. Egeria, in spite of enthusiastically reporting on the pilgrimage practices and liturgical innovations in the east, never suggests to her readers that they should imitate the eastern practices, even if we know from other texts that this did indeed happen.[10]

As traveling from the west to the biblical places required time, money and effort, not everybody could embark on such a journey. By means of letters and

[7] For the date, see Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 237–239 and Section 2.2.3 in this Element.

[8] See Boatwright, *Peoples*, 66–77.

[9] Boatwright, *Peoples*, 84–96. The most famous example of the Romans admitting the Greek influence is given by Horace, who famously wrote: *Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit*, "Conquered Greece defeated its savage conqueror" (Hor. Ep. 2.1.156) meaning that even if the uncivilized Romans managed to conquer Greece, the Greek civilization later conquered Rome.

[10] Augustine in his letter to Januarius (ep. 54) gives advice on how to answer people who have seen new practices abroad and want to adopt them in their home churches. Ambrose's famous quote "when in Rome" is found in this letter (ep. 54.3).

travel diaries, however, even those who remained at home not only could obtain information about the biblical places and ecclesial practices in the Holy Land but also had the opportunity to participate in the spiritual journey the writer was experiencing. Egeria's travelogue is one of the earliest examples of communication between a Christian pilgrim to the Holy Land and her community back at home in the west.[11] It is so lively and thorough that the readers did not need to make a similar journey themselves.

Egeria's travel journal reveals that she acted as a communicator not only through her travelogue but also orally between Christians she met on her journey. She describes her encounters and the exchange of information with both local Christians who stayed at a particular site, such as the ascetics living on Mount Sinai, and other pilgrims who, like her, traveled to the different holy sites (It. 13.1; 20.5; 23.2–4). This network of pilgrims communicated information about the practices of local Christians and pilgrims as well as theology.

When reading Egeria's text, one gets the impression that she feels at home everywhere and that she always seeks out the company of local Christians. Wherever she goes, she participates in the liturgy and the Eucharist and prays together with local Christians and other pilgrims. This notwithstanding, she describes events, groups and people also from an outsider's perspective, as a reporter, and for example while she writes in detail about the singing, she does not mention whether she herself sung or not. Thus, she belongs to three distinct communities: the community back home, the local Christians in the Holy Land and the group of pilgrims who, like her, were traveling to the biblical sites. Through her texts and through her discussions with others she acts as a communicator.

1.2 Previous Studies

As Egeria's *Itinerarium* is a rich text, dealing with many topics, it is no wonder that it has been studied extensively and from various angles.[12] There are several editions,[13] and the text has been translated into at least twenty-five languages and to many of these several times.[14] It is an important source for the study of

[11] The most important Christian pilgrimage descriptions before Egeria are Eusebius' text about the journey of Helena in 326 (Eus. *Vita Constantini* 3.42–47) and The Pilgrim of Bordeaux in 333 (*Itinerarium Burdigalense*). From about Egeria's own time there are Jerome's letter 108 and Paula and Eustochium's letter, which is preserved as Jerome's letter 46, and Melania the Elder (d. before 410) whose travel is depicted in Palladius' *Historia Lausiaca* 46.

[12] Excellent bibliographies on the editions and studies on Egeria's *Itinerarium* are found in Janeras, "Bibliografia," 353–361, and "Edizioni," 175–186; McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 209–213.

[13] Janeras, "Edizioni," 175–186; McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 209.

[14] Janeras, "Edizioni," 175–186.

the practices and theology of the early Christian pilgrimage in the Holy Land;[15] Christian topography and geography;[16] the development of the liturgy and ecclesial life in Jerusalem;[17] early ascetic and monastic life;[18] the Christian views on sacred spaces and edifices;[19] the roles and the possibilities of Christian women in antiquity;[20] the use of the Scriptures in Jerusalem and the pilgrimage sites;[21] and the development of the Latin language in late antiquity.[22] In this Element, the views of the scholars are presented and discussed in connection to each of the particular topics.

1.3 The Goal and the Structure of This Element

This Element focuses on a topic which, to a large extent, has not yet been studied in spite of it being central to understanding Egeria's *Itinerarium*: Egeria as a communicator between eastern and western traditions. Egeria came from the Latin-speaking west and for three years participated in the liturgical life in the Holy Land, where Greek and Syriac were the main languages. In her travel diary, she shared information about the practices and theology in the east with her western readers. In this Element, both the contents of her text, namely *what* she wanted to communicate, and the techniques she used to mediate her experiences and learning to her friends at home, that is, *how* she chose to communicate, are scrutinized.

Throughout the Element, I focus on the methods Egeria uses to communicate to her western readers what she experienced and learned in the east and the reasons for the choices she made. She did not report everything she saw and heard but made choices on what she told her readers and how she did this. According to her own words, her choices were based on her personal interests and what she thought were the wishes of her readers. Her personal competences and abilities impacted what she observed and wrote. Additionally, she certainly carried ideas pertaining to what was expected of a pilgrimage story. At the time of her writing, the art of writing Christian travel narratives was only just emerging; in antiquity, however, there had been other forms of travel writing and most probably Egeria was aware of these to some degree. In her travel journal, she writes about discussions with other pilgrims and local Christians

[15] Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*; Palmer, "Egeria the Voyager," 39–53; Dietz, *Wandering Monks*; Laato, "What Makes," 169–199.
[16] Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*; Laato, "What Makes."
[17] Galadza, *Liturgy*; Day, "Ritualizing Time," 554–586.
[18] Frank, *The Memory*; Dietz, *Wandering Monks*; McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 6–9.
[19] Yasin, *Saints*; Laato, "Egeria's Itinerarium."
[20] Dietz, *Wandering Monks*; Laato, "What Makes." [21] Tafi, "Egeria e la Bibbia."
[22] Väänänen, *Le journal-epitre d'Egerie*; Ledgeway, "Late Latin."

who were used to meeting pilgrims and these oral traditions influenced her, too. Another important source of inspiration for her was the biblical texts.

In Section 2, Egeria and her travelogue are presented and placed within their context. While there is a scholarly consensus on many matters concerning Egeria's work, there are differing opinions on some things influencing her opportunities and ability to observe and communicate information to her readers: Egeria's status in the church and the society, the character of the group of her addressees and the level of her learning and her linguistic skills. There is discussion concerning whether she and her addressees were ascetic or not,[23] as well as different ideas of what can be said about her social class.[24] More importantly, while her familiarity with the Scriptures and her deep interest in liturgical practices have generally been acknowledged,[25] some scholars have suggested that she did not understand Greek or that she had only a superficial comprehension of theology and interpretation of the Bible; these deficits would explain her focusing on the practices she observed rather than the contents of the homilies and teaching to which she was exposed.[26] As both knowledge of Greek and Christian theology were necessary requirements for conducting proper observations about what was done in the liturgical and ecclesial life in the Holy Land, and for them to be reported correctly to others, it is important to study what Egeria's *Itinerarium* reveals of those matters.

In Section 3, Egeria's routes, the places she visited and people she encountered are examined. It becomes evident that she belonged to three communities: the group of her sisters at home, the community of Christian pilgrims and the Eucharistic community in Jerusalem and in the Holy Land.

Section 4 focuses on Egeria's expressions on the senses, emotions and experiences. It is typical for Egeria to comment on things she saw, heard, smelled, tasted and touched and how it felt to move around, for example to climb a steep mountain. Unlike some other contemporary pilgrims, Egeria does not write about the spiritual senses, such as seeing with the eyes of faith, but prefers to report on the contents of her perceptions.

In Section 5, I discuss Egeria as a mediator of theological and biblical traditions. Egeria is famous for her description of the liturgical life of Jerusalem and her familiarity with the Scriptures has generally been acknowledged. Egeria's account of the liturgy in Jerusalem is the most thoroughly studied topic in her diary; in this Element, it is examined from the viewpoint of the communication: What did she choose to describe in her travel journal and why? Her appreciation of the Scriptures is evident throughout her text. Which

[23] Sivan, "Who Was Egeria?"
[24] Palmer, "Egeria the Voyager," 43–45; McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 12.
[25] McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 13. [26] Leyerle, "The Voices," 571.

biblical books she uses, how she uses them and what she writes on the use of the Scriptures in the catechetical instruction and the liturgical life in Jerusalem, and during the travels to the holy sites, are scrutinized. Her frequent use of the Scriptures and explicit comments pertaining to their use in the life of the church, and her detailed descriptions of liturgical feasts, show the centrality of this topic in her thinking.

The final part of Section 5 – "Egeria as a Theologian" – is more tentative than those which precede it, as Egeria does not explicitly express her doctrinal thoughts. I discuss some theological ideas that Egeria's text witnesses more or less explicitly: the unity of the church, the connection between the earthly Jerusalem and the heavenly Jerusalem, baptism and water and Christology and the Trinity. I suggest that Egeria wanted to mediate to her readers the theological idea of unity and participation, both between Christians in different parts of the Roman Empire (and even outside it) and between Christians in the earthly and heavenly Jerusalem.

The concluding section summarizes the results. Egeria did not merely travel for fun or write a travel diary solely for herself but she did both these things with other people in mind. Her goal was to share with her friends those things she held most important. When writing to her dear sisters in the west, Egeria used several methods to translate what she had learned and experienced in the east into a language her readers in the west were able to understand. She was interested in very many things, ranging from the beautiful fish in Edessa to how catechetical instruction in Jerusalem was organized. Her attention was, however, not drawn to mysticism or doctrinal discussions, as is the case with some other pilgrims from the same time, but rather to how ordinary people participated in the liturgical life in Jerusalem and what the pilgrims experienced during a pilgrimage.

1.4 The Method of This Element

The method of this Element is close reading.[27] I also consider viewpoints brought to the fore by the study of lived religion in antiquity,[28] in particular

[27] For close reading, see Brummett, *Techniques*.

[28] For the concept of "study of lived religion," see Ammerman, *Studying Lived Religion*, and McGuire, *Lived Religion*; for the study of lived religion in antiquity, see Gasparini et al., *Lived Religion*, 1–6; Frank, *Unfinished Christians*, 4–8. According to Gasparini et al., the study of lived religion in antiquity differs from that of today mainly as there is no possibility to gain a direct access to the object of the study, but it can be approached only through ancient literary or material sources. Common to these is the intent to reach not only, or instead of, institutional elite but also other religious agents. In addition of the doctrinal contents of the faith (such as creeds or liturgical texts) even experiences, movements and gestures, as well as the social contexts, such as belonging to different groups and communication within and between communities, are focused on. An important aspect to consider is the change in these matters.

the focus on the ways ordinary Christians lived their lives, the agency of actors other than the institutional elite and the leaders, the communication within and between communities, the expressions of emotions and the idea that sense perception, gestures and movements are an important part of a pilgrim's experience.[29]

I do not limit myself to this vantage point only, however, because Egeria presents material which falls outside of the focus of the study of ancient lived religion, in particular her notions on the clergy and the contents of theology. The study of lived religion, also lived ancient religion, is often defined as not being interested in theologies and dogma but in "what people actually do, the everyday experience, practices, and interactions that relate to and constitute the religion."[30] When it comes to the study of early Christianity, I agree with Georgia Frank, who opines that lived religion should not be separated from lived theology. She refers, further, to Averil Cameron who warns that when cultural history separates lived religion from theology it misses crucial dimensions of late antique Christianity.[31] Even if the focus of certain texts – including Egeria's *Itinerarium* – is on the everyday life and practices of ancient Christians, I think it is natural that the same people would be aware of, and interested in, theology. Attention to ritual, material objects, experiences and sense perception does not exclude an interest in dogmatical matters, and, in fact, by describing them, an author can very well be expressing theological views, too. Reading Egeria's text from the perspective of lived religion helps us to see the ordinary, the bodily and the sensory features in her text.

Further, as the study of lived religion in antiquity focuses on the lives of ordinary believers rather than that of the religious or institutional elite, it is important to note that late antique pilgrims and ascetics – those who play a central role in Egeria's work – were not really quite ordinary Christians.[32] Some of the pilgrims and ascetics also belonged to the clergy and, in one sense, even lay pilgrims and other kinds of ascetics can be counted as the elite because of their special status and expertise. Egeria herself wrote from the perspective of a pilgrim and might well have been an ascetic herself. However, when describing participation in the life of the church in Jerusalem, she rarely draws a difference between the local ordinary Christians and those pilgrims who had traveled there. She focuses on the viewpoint of the faithful, not the clergy, and thus she provides material for the study of ancient lived religion.

[29] For the study of sense perception in antiquity, see Smith, *Sensing*; Harrison, *The Art of Listening*; Day, *Hearing*.
[30] Frank, *Unfinished Christians*, 5.
[31] Frank, *Unfinished Christians*, 7; Cameron, "Patristics," 283–302.
[32] Frank, *Unfinished Christians*, 8–14.

Section 4 focuses on what Egeria writes about in terms of the senses and emotions. However, when studying texts about sense perception in antiquity, one must be aware of some limitations. Because sense perception and its depiction are, to a certain degree, dependent on context, such as education, culture and language, we cannot be certain that Egeria experienced and interpreted everything precisely in the same way we do today. On the other hand, there is no reason to overemphasize the differences between antiquity and our own time. Based on our own experiences, we can grasp something of how it might have sounded when many people from different countries sang psalms together in the great Constantinian basilica, Martyrium.

Finally, even if Egeria addressed her travel diary to her friends and nothing suggests that she originally had a wider readership in mind, it is nonetheless good to remember that when writing and making choices she was influenced by the customs of travel writing and pilgrimage narratives. By means of her travelogue, she created an image of herself as a pilgrim and, moreover, of what a pilgrim, according to her, should do and what a successful pilgrimage consists of.[33]

2 Egeria the Travel Writer in Context

2.1 Egeria's *Itinerarium* as a Book

The Pilgrimage of Egeria (*Itinerarium Egeriae*) is preserved in only one manuscript, which was found by Francesco Gamurrini in a monastery library in Arezzo in 1884, and even that is incomplete.[34] This manuscript, *Codex Aretinus* 405, was written in Monte Cassino around the year 1000, and today, the beginning and the end as well as some pages from the middle of Egeria's texts are missing. Since then, two fragments and eleven quotations have been found.[35] A Galician monk, Valerius of Bierzo, wrote about Egeria's travels in his letter in the seventh century, and Peter the Deacon used her text in the twelfth century when compiling his book *Liber de locis sanctis*; both texts contain some information about events described in the missing pages.[36]

[33] For the rhetorical self-fashioning in antiquity, see Dugan, *Making a New Man*; Pollman, "*Alium sub meo nomine*."

[34] For the editions, see Maraval, *Itinerarium*, Accademia Petrarca di lettere arti e scienze; McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 2; 209; Janeras, "Bibliografia"; Janeras, "Edizioni."

[35] For the history of the manuscript, see McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 16–17.

[36] See Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 86–106, 201; McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 16–19. According to McGowan and Bradshaw, these texts can with some caution be used as sources for the study of *Itinerarium*.

Itinerarium Egeriae is clearly divided into two parts. There are some thematic, stylistic and linguistic differences between the two parts, which is understandable as the texts were written in different times and contexts. The first part, chapters 1–23, contains Egeria's annotations on her journeys in Palestine, Syria, Egypt, Mesopotamia and Asia Minor, while the second, chapters 24–49, focuses on Jerusalem and the liturgical life there. In the first part, Egeria describes her route, writes in detail about the biblical sites she and her companions visit, recalls her discussions with local guides and the holy men, describes what the pilgrims did when visiting the holy sites and comments on the beauty of nature. When doing this, she often uses the first person singular and even quotes herself. In the second part, she describes in detail the daily and weekly services in Jerusalem, the great feasts and the pre- and postbaptismal teaching given by the bishop of Jerusalem. The character of this part of *Itinerarium* is more of general description concerning how things were usually carried out in Jerusalem rather than depicting one pilgrim's own experiences. This part does, however, contain her personal comments, too.

Egeria's style can be compared to posts in social media today. Even if both parts of her work progress in chronological order, her text is not fully coherent but rather gives the impression of letters written over a longer period of time. She often repeats herself and, for example, on numerous occasions expresses her happiness over how well the readings, hymns and prayers are chosen to suit precisely the place and time in question. Her descriptions of events or places are often short, and instead of summarizing the homilies and teaching, she paints flashy pictures of milieus and encounters with different people. Her Latin is reminiscent of spoken language.

2.2 Pilgrimages and Other Journeys from the West to the East

2.2.1 Visiting Holy Places and Holy People

Pilgrimages to holy places had been made a long time before the rise of Christianity, within Judaism as well as within the Greek and Roman religions.[37] Traveling for other reasons was also popular in late antiquity; there are texts about journeys for administration and business, study, health, visiting friends, tourism and military expeditions.[38] There were of course Christian communities in Jerusalem and the Holy Land from the time of Jesus onward, and other Christians could come to the Holy Land to visit them, to study and teach, as Origen (ca. 185–253) did, or to check manuscripts, as Melito the bishop of Sardes (ca. 170) did. These journeys were few and were not

[37] For Jewish and pagan pilgrimages, see Elsner and Rutherford, *Pilgrimage*; Trotter, *Pilgrimage*.
[38] Fletcher, *The Roads*, 25–26.

pilgrimages in the sense that they would have been done mainly *gratia orationis*, that is, in order to pray in a specific holy place.[39] During the first centuries, the focus of the Christians was directed more toward the heavenly Jerusalem than the earthly,[40] and pilgrimages took place locally, such as assembling by the graves of the martyrs.

However, when Christianity became tolerated with the Edict of Milan in 313, and especially when Helena, the emperor's mother, visited Jerusalem and the Holy Land in 326 and supervised Constantine's church-building projects in Jerusalem and Bethlehem, the practice of pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the Holy Land began to grow rapidly. As early as 315, Eusebius reports of pilgrims coming to Jerusalem from all corners of the world,[41] and the first itinerary, *Itinerarium Burdigalense*, is from the year 333. Melania the Elder (ca. 341–410) came to Jerusalem from Rome via Egypt; her granddaughter Melania the Younger (ca. 385–439) fled from Rome when the Visigoths threatened Rome in 408 and came to Jerusalem via Africa. Jerome's friends, Paula (347–404) and her daughter Eustochium (370–418), came from Rome. In addition to these famous pilgrims, many sojourners from different parts of the Christian world came to visit the Holy Land, or even to stay there.[42]

Most of the famous pilgrims traveling to the Holy Land during the fourth century were women.[43] Other Christian women traveled, too, for example Egeria's contemporary, Augustine's mother, Monica, crossed the Mediterranean during a storm to visit her son in Milan.[44]

At the time of Egeria, Christian pilgrimage to the Holy Land was already an established practice, and popular pilgrimage sites, certain routes, as well as several churches, chapels, monasteries and guesthouses existed.[45] There were conventional practices too and, for example, Egeria witnesses monks and guides who could tell pilgrims what they were expected to do at specific places (e.g. It. 1.2).

Egeria, like many pilgrims, rode on a donkey (It. 3.2; 11.4). Sometimes the hillside they climbed was so steep that they could not ride but had to walk instead (It. 3.2). Egeria mentions that they sometimes stayed overnight in ordinary guesthouses (It. 6.1; 7.2; 8.1), at other times by the pilgrimage sites

[39] See Fletcher, *The Roads*, 47; Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 10–13; Laato, "Egeria's Itinerarium," 176. Only Alexander is said to have gone to Jerusalem before 213 CE "for the purpose of prayer and investigation of holy places," see Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 10–11.

[40] See Wilken, *The Land*, 70–72; Laato, "The Heavenly," 107–121.

[41] Eus. Dem. Evang. 6.18.23.

[42] See Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 13–14. The word "sojourner" is a broader concept than "a pilgrim," denoting any traveler, but is in this Element used as a synonym for it.

[43] See Dietz, *Wandering Monks*, 197–153. [44] Aug. Conf. 6.1.

[45] See Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 36–53; Stemberger, *Jews and Christians*, 86–88.

and in the cells of the monastics (It. 4.8). Traveling in the coastal areas around the Mediterranean was safe enough, especially on the main roads. Only some areas of Egypt were such that Egeria and her companions had Roman soldiers protecting them, but even here Egeria reports that, immediately after they returned to the main road, they sent the soldiers away (It. 9.3).

During the fourth century, the theology of pilgrimage was developing, too.[46] Before the time of Constantine, many Christians emphasized, in opposition to the Jews, that God is equally present and can be worshipped everywhere "in spirit and truth" (John 4:21–23) and, in opposition to the Gentiles, that God does not dwell in temples and particular places.[47] As the practice of pilgrimage began on a large scale, discussion concerning theological motivations arose. Nonetheless, at the time of Egeria, different opinions concerning the usefulness of and theological motivations for a pilgrimage to the Holy Land existed; most notably Gregory of Nyssa argued against the pilgrimages,[48] Paula for them,[49] Jerome both for and against,[50] while many others, such as Augustine, showed no particular interest in the topic.[51] Egeria did not directly participate in the debate, but through her enthusiastic narrative she communicated her positive experiences and thus inspired her readers.

Georgia Frank divides the primary goals for early Christian pilgrimages into two categories: pilgrimages to the holy places and pilgrimages to the living, that is, visiting holy people.[52] These two categories overlap to a certain degree because of the connection between holy places and holy people, but it is important to note that there are clear differences between these two motifs. The former chose their travel destinations because of the biblical past, the latter because of the holy people living at specific sites.[53] Hardly any pilgrim can be classified as purely belonging to one category. Even those pilgrims who were focused on visiting biblical places and praying there were at the same time happy to meet local holy people and needed guidance, food, lodging and other kinds of assistance from them; conversely, those who journeyed to the desert primarily to meet holy people noticed the holy places, too, and prayed there. The monastics they wanted to meet had often, but not always, chosen the sites for their cells and monasteries because

[46] See Dietz, *Wandering Monks*; Laato, "What Makes."
[47] McCormack, "Loca sancta," 10–13; Stemberger, *Jews and Christians*, 39–40; Laato, "What Makes."
[48] Gregory of Nyssa ep. 2. See Laato, "What Makes," 170–171.
[49] Jer. ep. 46. Some scholars think the author of this letter is Jerome, but for my arguments for Paula as the author of this letter, see Laato, "What Makes," 174–178.
[50] Jer. ep. 54.2–4; 54.13. See Stemberger, *Jews and Christians*, 120.
[51] See Dietz, *Wandering Monks*, 3–4. [52] Frank, *The Memory*, 6–12.
[53] Frank, *The Memory*, 8–9.

of biblical events. Routes to biblical sites developed earlier and were thus more clearly defined, and consequently visiting biblical sites often seems to have formed the structure of the journey even for those who were more directed toward visiting holy people.[54]

Egeria's focus and interests in choosing travel destinations are discussed in depth in the following section, but it can already be noted that she writes to her friends about both topics, visiting holy places and visiting holy people. She does, however, emphasize visiting biblical places: She planned her travel destinations and routes based on the Scripture, and when describing what was done at a holy place, she explicitly told her readers that appropriate biblical readings were read, often additionally reminding her readers of the contents of these passages. At the same time, she also often mentions encounters with holy people at the holy sites.

2.2.2 Egeria as a Travel Writer

Egeria's travel diary is one of the first preserved Christian texts describing a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.[55] At that time, the art of writing Christian pilgrimage stories was only just emerging, but the Christian writers did not start from nothing. In pre-Christian antiquity, there were many kinds of other texts describing travel: letters to friends, descriptions of journeys for business, administration, military expeditions, study, visiting friends and tourism, but also Jewish and Pagan pilgrimage;[56] even the travel diary proper, *Itinerarium*, was already an established genre, consisting of works focusing on travel routes, distances and places.[57] The Christian writers were influenced by the conventions of these earlier texts.[58] Even if Egeria had not had an extensive formal education, she had probably read travel writings or heard the oral stories, as her texts show common features with them.

The first preserved Christian *Itinerarium*, describing the journey of a pilgrim from Bordeaux, is from the year 333. Its beginning and end consist mostly of a list of places and distances with some biblical references, but the description of Jerusalem contains some more information on edifices and material objects.[59] Compared to Egeria's *Itinerarium*, it is short and mostly limited to practical information such as distances; it probably was intended as a guide for

[54] Frank, *The Memory*, 10.
[55] For the early Christian pilgrimages and travel writing, see Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 13–14; Frank, *The Memory*, 30–32; 80–81.
[56] For travel and travel writing in antiquity, see von Martens, *Travel*, xii–xviii. For the influence of pre-Christian travel writing on Christian writers, see Frank, *The Memory*, 16–34.
[57] See McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 197.
[58] See Frank, *The Memory*, 80.
[59] For an introduction, see McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 197–204.

subsequent pilgrims. Both of these two *Itineraria* give the impression of focusing on real-life travel.

A very different form of Christian travel writing is the two works which describe pilgrims journeying to see monastic holy men: *Lausiac History* (ca. 420) by Palladius and *The History of the Monks in Egypt* (end of the fourth century).[60] Georgia Frank characterizes these two works as a "combination of travelers' tales and biography that bled monastic anecdotes and miracle accounts"[61] and thinks that they should be read as literary creations rather than historical chronicles.[62] Egeria shares some interests with the pilgrims described in these works, such as visiting holy men, but her style is different: Instead of focusing on miracles and wise sayings, she reports on ordinary experiences and ecclesial customs.

Paula and Jerome's letters reveal yet another approach to early travel writing. Among Jerome's letters, Paula and Eustochium's letter to Marcella is preserved, in which the three women continue their discussion on the usefulness of traveling to the Holy Land.[63] Paula's argumentation for the pilgrimage is based on Scripture, but even more on the experiences of the pilgrims. Jerome's letter, written after the death of Paula, and in which he writes about her pilgrimage in the Holy Land,[64] paints a picture of a pilgrim with a deep knowledge of the Scriptures and an ability to imagine how the biblical events took place; with her eyes of faith (*oculi fidei*) she could see baby Jesus wailing in a crib and shepherds coming to visit.[65] Georgia Frank has called Paula's approach "re-experienced Bible" or "biblical realism," meaning that she felt as though she were an eyewitness to biblical events.[66] Meditation on the Scriptures connected with physically seeing and touching a sacred place could lead to a mystical experience of the Divine. Egeria shares some features with Paula and Jerome: a deep interest in biblical sites and geography and a focus on prayer at the holy sites. The differences are clear as well. While Paula focused on spiritual seeing and personal devotion, Egeria described places, liturgy and common worship.[67] In contrast to Paula, Egeria's approach could be called an "illustrated Bible," as for her, seeing the holy places and praying there merely enhanced her understanding and recalling of the Scriptural events.[68]

A travel diary is always a literary work with which the author intends to achieve certain goals, even when it consists of notes to dear friends, as is the

[60] See Frank, *The Memory*, 5–6. [61] Frank, *The Memory*, 5. [62] Frank, *The Memory*, 29.
[63] Laato, "What Makes." For Marcella, see Letsch-Brunner, *Marcella*. [64] Jer. Ep. 108.
[65] Laato, "What Makes," 183–194.
[66] See Smith, *Sensing*, 155–157; Frank, *The Memory*. See more in Section 4.3 in this Element.
[67] See Laato, "What Makes," 193–194.
[68] See Limor, "Reading," 11; McCormack, "Loca sancta," 22; Frank, *The Memory*, 106; Laato, "What Makes," 193–194.

case with Egeria's *Itinerarium*. Therefore, Egeria more or less intentionally aimed to inform, entertain and persuade her readers, as according to the theory of rhetoric one should do.[69] She reported what she observed in an interesting and vivid way with the desire of giving new impulses to her readers. Egeria did not report everything she observed during her pilgrimage but made choices based on what she herself thought was important and what she thought her recipients were interested in (It. 24.1). Her choices were also influenced by what she thought was expected of texts pertaining to a journey to the Holy Land, views that were formed by her discussions with other pilgrims and local Christians, whom she reports as having conversed with and observed (It. 13.1; 20.5; 23.2–4), but probably also by earlier pilgrimage or travel writings she had read or heard about.[70] A major source of influence for her was also the Scriptures. Most of the pilgrimage sites she visited were biblical and it was customary that biblical texts were recited and sung there.

As an author, Egeria also created an image of herself as a pilgrim and a travel writer. She stylized herself as competent to describe and evaluate practices in pilgrimage and liturgy, as well as the differences between east and west. In the first part of her travelogue, she writes about herself as an active agent who knows what she wants and who decides what to do next: "It was next my wish, God willing, to travel as far as Arabia" (It. 10.1)[71] and "After some time I wished also to go to the region of Ausitis" (It. 13.1). Other times, she says similar things about what "we" did: "we arrived" (It. 1.1), "we prayed" (It. 1.4), "having seen everything we decided" (It. 2.3). In the second part, however, she wrote less about herself and chose to describe the liturgical life in Jerusalem in a more impersonal way. The reason for these changes may simply be that her view on writing developed during the years from being personal letters to friends into a more general description suitable for a larger audience.

At the time of Egeria, the Christians were Christianizing the genre of travel writing. They continued some of its conventions and developed it in new directions. Egeria stresses that she traveled "in the name of Christ, our Lord" or "in the name of God" (It. 9.7; 12.11; 17.1; 18.1,2,3; 19.2; 21.5; 23.5,6,10; 46.6), which might seem like a phrase but, nonetheless, reveals how she wanted to characterize her journey.

[69] *Docere, delectare, flectere* were the three goals of a good rhetor, summarized by Cicero, and formulated for example in Aug. Doctr. Chr. 12. Even if Egeria did not have a high formal education and was not necessarily aware of the theory of rhetoric, these aims characterize well her work, too.

[70] Cf. Frank, *The Memory*, 80–81.

[71] At the time of Egeria, Arabia denoted both a town and a province situated south of Palestine down to the Red Sea.

2.2.3 Who Was Egeria, and Who Were the Recipients of Her Travel Diary?

Little can be said with certainty about Egeria as a person. Neither her name nor her country of origin are mentioned in the preserved pages of the manuscript, and while Egeria is, today, regarded as her most probable name, other names have also been suggested.[72] The view most scholars adhere to is that she came from northwestern Spain, more specifically Galicia.[73] This is based on the fact that she once compares the Euphrates to the Rhône as an eyewitness would (It. 18.2), that the bishop of Edessa mentions that she has made a long journey "from the other side of the world" (It. 19.5) and that Valerius of Bierzo wrote that she came from "the far western coast of the ocean."[74] The date of Egeria's journey has also been discussed eagerly, and today the common view is that the pilgrimage took place in 381–384.[75] As the external information about Egeria, her travel journal itself and its recipients is very scarce, most of what can be said about these must be determined from her work.

In scholarly literature, Egeria is sometimes called an abbess or a nun, but there are no certain arguments for either title. In favor of her having been an abbess is a notion in an abbey library catalogue from the twelfth century where the title of her book is *Itinerarium Egerie abbatisse*; this notion is, however, late and has no support elsewhere.[76] That she would have been a nun is based, firstly, on the fact that Valerius of Bierzo in the seventh century refers to her as *beatissima sanctimonialis* (an ascetic woman who has given promises) and *virgo* (a virgin). There are also hints of her being an ascetic in her own text,

[72] Such as Etheria, Echeria, Eiheria, Aetheria, Silvia and Silvania. See Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 235–236; McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 4–6.

[73] For the discussion, see McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 20–22.

[74] Maraval, *Itinerarium*, 321–349. Sivan ("Who Was Egeria?" 59–72, in particular pages 60–62) does not find these arguments convincing and leaves the question of her origin open.

[75] For the discussion, see Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 237–239; McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 22–27. The text itself reveals that Egeria's journey took four years, three of which she stayed in Jerusalem (It. 17.1). Her travel must be dated after 363 when the Persians took Nisibis (It. 20.12) and before 540 when the Persians destroyed Antioch (It. 22.1). For an early date speaks the fact that Egeria met bishops who were "confessors" and of whom some are known from other sources; the term is usually used for individuals who survived the persecution (It. 19;1; 19.5; 20.2). For the years 381–384, scholars have arrived at the date of Easter in different years. Egeria writes that she left Jerusalem after three years and came to Carrhae 23.4 (It. 17.1). Between Jerusalem and Edessa there are twenty-five stops, and Egeria usually traveled one stop a day (It. 17.2). During her journey she stayed for one day in Hierapolis (It. 18.1) and for three days in Edessa (It. 19.3). Counting backwards from 23.4, it can be estimated that Egeria left Jerusalem circa March 15. Between the years 382 and 386, Easter was celebrated 17.4 (382), 9.4 (383), 24.3 (384), 13.4 (385) and 5.4 (386). Of these years, 384 fits excellently as the year Egeria left Jerusalem. Thus 381–384 is preferred. Other arguments concern the development of church architecture and liturgy or possible links to other sources; these, however, are uncertain.

[76] Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 186.

too: During her travels, Egeria always sought the company of ascetics; she told her readers about their lives, their different names, what kind of tasks they had and what they had said to her. Her dearest friend and the only person she calls by a proper name, the deaconess Marthana, led an ascetic community (It. 23.3). Moreover, she addressed her readers as sisters (*sorores*) (It. 3.8; 13.1; 18.2; 24.1; 46.1; 46.4). However, as Hagith Sivan has noted, at the time it was not only ascetics but any Christian women who could call each other sisters; the title alone, therefore, does not necessarily refer to members of an organized ascetic group.[77]

In Egeria's time, ascetic groups were formed in different ways and did not necessarily have strict rules or orders,[78] which the word "nun" denotes. It is even possible that she and her recipients were not ascetics at all but rather a group of laywomen; for instance, Egeria never states that she herself had participated in the specific ascetic practices on which she reports, such as excessive fasts. However, she is extremely interested in liturgical life and ecclesial customs, and she clearly expected her readers to be interested in them as well as being learned enough to understand her biblical references, liturgical finesses and, for example, how pre-baptismal catechetical instruction was organized in Jerusalem (It. 24.1),[79] and therefore belonging to some kind of group of ascetic women does seem probable. These sisters were dear to Egeria; she also calls them "ladies, my light" (It. 23.10), "dear friends" (It. 23.10), "ladies, my souls" (It. 19.19) and "your affection" (It. 24.1).

That she did not explicitly state that she participated in specific ascetic practices does not mean that she did not. This becomes clear when compared to another exercise that Egeria writes about a lot but does not explicitly say she did herself, namely singing. Singing is such a central feature in her journey that Jeffrey Wickes aptly characterizes her pilgrimage thus: "By the fourth century, the Spanish pilgrim Egeria was singing her way across the eastern Mediterranean Christian landscape."[80] On the other hand, she does say that she and her companions prayed (It. 4.2) and participated in the Eucharist (It. 3.7).

In her *Itinerarium*, Egeria gives her readers the impression of being an energetic, competent and enthusiastic sojourner and author. She paints an image of herself as always being eager to visit new places and learn more. She writes, for example, "As I am very curious, I began to ask . . ." (It. 16.3) and

[77] Sivan, "Who Was Egeria?" 63.

[78] Sivan, "Who Was Egeria?" 63. However, when Egeria in It. 47.4 writes that in Jerusalem "brothers and sisters who know both Greek and Latin" translate liturgical texts into Latin, the word *soror* seems to denote an organized form of asceticism.

[79] E.g. It. 24.1: "So that your affection may know what is the regular ritual each day in the holy places, I must make you aware, knowing that you would eagerly wish to know this."

[80] Wickes, "Poetry and Hymnody," 225.

"having spent some time there, I again started to wish to travel . . ." (It. 10.1). As an observer, she commented on a variety of things such as the geography, church buildings and the decorations of the churches, the actions of clergy, ascetics and laity, singing children and the beauty of the nature.

In her text, Egeria never complains about anything. This feature might derive from the genre: Perhaps a pilgrim was not supposed to lament but rather to focus on the positive sides of pilgrimage. In her text the people she met were always friendly and helpful, and the views and the churches beautiful and charming. Her very few critical comments deal with the incredible stories of some guides and are so politely formulated that they can be read as positive expressions, too. She demonstrates that she was not completely convinced by the guides who showed her the location of a pillar with an inscription from Lot's wife; the pillar was not visible and she wrote "we did not see the pillar, I cannot deceive you on this matter" (It. 12.7).

Egeria must have had an economically secure status to have been able to travel for several years – either she had money of her own or her journey was financed by an individual or a community. Even if her language and mode of travel reveal that she did not come from the highest aristocracy, as Paula and Melania did, she must have enjoyed a good social status. Wherever she went, she always sought the company of bishops, presbyters and ascetics. In Egypt, Roman soldiers were ordered to protect her and her company (It.7.4).

2.2.4 Egeria and the Languages

Linguistic skills were central to Egeria being able to understand what she observed during her journey and to be able to communicate this successfully to her readers. Egeria came from the Latin-speaking west and wrote in Latin for people who knew that language, but she observed and described the early Byzantine liturgy and life of a church where Greek was the main language although some of the faithful knew only Syriac. During her travels in the eastern parts of the empire, she must have had some competence in Greek or used an interpreter, because in these particular areas, the ability to speak Latin was not common among ordinary people.[81]

In her travelogue, Egeria shows an awareness of and interest in different languages and translation from one language into another. Most importantly, she reports about services in Anastasis in Jerusalem. She writes to her readers that the biblical texts are always recited in Greek, and the bishop preaches in that language, too. Moreover, for the sake of understanding, everything is simultaneously interpreted into Syriac. Those attendants, who know only

[81] Egeria, It. 47.3; Mullen, "Latin," 535; Rochette, "Language Policies," 553–555.

Latin, are helped by brothers and sisters (she does not state whether these are merely the faithful or for instance ascetics) who can understand both Greek and Latin. The reason Egeria gives for all these interpretations is that it is important that everyone should understand both the biblical readings and their explanations.

> And because in that province some of the people know both Greek and Syriac, others Greek alone, and others only Syriac, and because the bishop, though he may know Syriac, however always speaks Greek and never Syriac, therefore a presbyter always stands by, who, when the bishop is speaking in Greek, translates into Syriac so that everyone may hear what is being explained. The readings also that are read in church, because they must be read in Greek, someone always stands there to translate into Syriac for the sake of people, so that they may always learn. Indeed, those who are Latin here, that is, who know neither Syriac nor Greek, lest they be disheartened, also have things explained for them, because there are other brothers and sisters who are bilingual (*grecolatini*) who explain to them in Latin. (It. 47.3–4)

Before discussing Egeria's skills in Greek, some words are needed about her Latin. It was fluent, the vulgar Latin of her time; Gillian Clark characterizes it as a "modestly classical style."[82] The syntax is rather simple, and her text does contain some misspellings and errors in grammar and syntax. Hagith Sivan has summarized the common view when saying that the deficits in her Latin skills and her knowledge of literature show that she had not received an education typical for aristocratic women and so she probably belonged to the middle classes.[83] However, as Egeria's writings were addressed to a group of close friends, and most probably were not intended to be published at all, she did not have to strive for a high standard of writing. Her style is conversational, often simple and repetitive, and sometimes stereotypical. In no way did this hinder her communication with her friends; on the contrary, it is very likely they used the same kind of language. Egeria's Latin shows that she is well versed in ecclesial terminology in Latin, which hints at a long and active participation in the life of the church.

Most scholars do not comment on Egeria's skills in Greek at all but seem to assume that she knew enough Greek to be able to understand what she heard and to converse with people she met. At this time, it was not uncommon for

[82] Clark, *Monica*, 85. For Egeria's Latin, see Väänänen, *Le journal-epitre d'Egerie*; McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 13–14. For a bibliography on specific questions concerning her Latin, see Janeras, "Bibliografia," 362–363.

[83] Sivan, "Who Was Egeria?" 66–67. See even McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 13–15.

people from the west to know at least some Greek.[84] However, in a recent study, Blake Leyerle suggests that Egeria did not know Greek at all but needed an interpreter. According to her, this would explain the fact that Egeria focuses on what she saw rather than the contents of the sermons. Her additional arguments are that Egeria does not spell Greek correctly, she explained to her friends not only new terminology but also words with which she ought to have been familiar and she wrote about Latin speakers needing interpretation in liturgy. Finally, Leyerle interprets Egeria's habit of presenting some Greek words in her text as "invit[ing] her readers to share her sense of estrangement."[85]

In my view, all these topics can be understood in a completely different way.[86] There is no reason to think that Egeria's motivation to present and to explain Greek words is evidence of any feeling of estrangement. On the contrary, she seems to be at home everywhere she goes. She comments on differences in language and customs because she finds the similarities and differences interesting. Her reasons for dropping Greek words into the Latin text are that the local words brought contextual color to the narrative as well as being typical in the Christian tradition: In the New Testament, some Aramaic or Hebrew words were used within Greek text, and later, Greek expressions, such as *Kyrie eleison*, found their way into Latin liturgical language, too. The purpose of this custom was to express the common roots and the unity of the church.

In particular in the second part of her book, Egeria presents and explains local Greek terminology to her Latin-speaking readers.[87] Most often, the Greek terminology deals with monastic titles, liturgical feasts, pre-baptismal teaching and liturgy, that is, themes where the Jerusalemite practices differed from those Egeria's readers were used to. She makes the differences between west and east clear by repeatedly using expressions such as "they call here," "they say here," "they call – we say," and "as we say."[88] Often the spelling of these Greek words differs from the normal practices of her time; Egeria spelled the words as she heard them.[89] However, mistakes in spelling do not indicate that she would not have understood the Greek or was not able to converse in this language, because literary and oral skills are two different things. Explaining common words tells us nothing about Egeria's skills in

[84] Boatwright, *Peoples*, 70–72, 96, 185–186; Mullen, "Latin," 535; Rochette, "Language Policies," 561.
[85] Leyerle, "The Voices," 557–577.
[86] I have discussed this topic more thoroughly at the Oxford Patristic Conference 2024.
[87] See Bermejo Cabrera, *La proclamacion*; Janeras, "L'expressió"; Leyerle, "The Voices," 567.
[88] It.10.9; 24.1; 24.4; 24.5; 27.1; 27.9; 28.3; 30.1; 46.2.
[89] See Janeras, "L'expressió," 163–164.

Greek but rather reveals what she thought her readers needed to have explained to them. Further, Egeria never mentions having needed an interpreter herself; in her only mention of an interpreter, she writes about "them" needing one. That she mentions an interpreter at all can be better understood as her way of emphasizing the multilingual soundscape formed by the voices of the pilgrims and the local Christians – this can be compared to her contemporary pilgrim, Paula, who was fascinated by the many nationalities and languages of the pilgrims in Jerusalem.[90] It seems to me that, like Paula, Egeria was impressed by how Christians from all over the world gathered in Jerusalem and belonged to the same church. Instead of estrangement, their comments speak of unity.

Egeria's travelogue gives one the impression that during her journey around the Mediterranean, she was able to chat with everyone she met without having an interpreter by her side.[91] Her frequent comments on how delightful it was that the songs and readings were appropriate to just that time and place, and her quotations and renderings of the words of people she met, would be strange if she had not understood them. During her four years' stay in the east, she must have learned Greek even better than she had known it earlier.

Finally, from the viewpoint of the study of lived religion, it seems strange that Egeria's choice to focus on things other than the contents of the homilies would prove a lack of linguistic skills. Liturgy was what really interested her and what she wanted her readers to know about, too. The fact that Egeria focused on bodily things, such as movements, stational liturgy, candles, incense, processions and nonverbal sounds, such as crying, discloses nothing about her linguistic skills but rather informs us about her interests and her ways of expressing her ideas. Faith can be expressed and the theological views can be explained in ways other than referring to the sermons.[92] It must also be remembered that in other early pilgrimage narratives, homilies are not generally referred to either.

In my view, Egeria had sufficient skills in Greek language to be able to discuss with those she met and to follow the sermons and liturgy both in Jerusalem and during her visits to other places. She saw different languages as something interesting and worth reporting to her sisters in the west. Through her text, her readers could experience closeness to Christians in the eastern part of the Roman Empire.

[90] Jer. ep. 46.
[91] Without any proof, Leyerle claims that she did have an interpreter. Leyerle, "The Voices," 567, 571.
[92] See Laato, "The Heavenly"; Gasparini et al., *Lived Religion*, 2–3.

3 Egeria's Routes, Places She Visited and People She Encountered

3.1 A Pilgrim in a Nutshell

Egeria was keen to pray at authentic biblical locations. Many times she expressed her intention to visit and to see sites mentioned in the Old and New Testaments.[93] Nonetheless, it would be more precise to say that she was more interested in understanding the biblical texts connected to specific sites rather than locating the biblical events historically. The memorial sites were not always located precisely, geographically speaking, but rather chosen so that they could be visited more conveniently; on a few occasions Egeria shows that she is aware that the shown locations are uncertain or incorrect, but that is not a problem for her.[94] While Melania and many other pilgrims wanted primarily to visit the monastics, the holy men, Egeria was more interested in the geography and biblical history. She described routes, buildings, ruins and nature. For her, holy men were guides who helped others understand the Scriptures better, but it was also important for her to pray with them. Egeria described for her readers the geography, topography and the people she encountered in order to take them along on her journey.

The Christians in Jerusalem had the unique possibility to celebrate Jesus' life events at the actual sites at which they had taken place. In and near Jerusalem, the Christians participated in what can be called a moving liturgy or stational services. Egeria describes, in detail, how, along with their bishop, the Christians assembled in churches and at biblical sites, and walked together from place to place singing antiphons, hymns and psalms.[95] This practice involved all Christians, not only the clergy and ascetics; everybody walked together. The walking in common, the singing and the listening to the Scriptural readings helped the participants to understand and remember the biblical events. It was also a way of making the Christians more visible and audible to one another and also to others; moving together singing in a public place strengthened the idea that Jerusalem was now a Christian city.[96]

Egeria carefully described the church buildings in and near Jerusalem and how they were decorated during the festivals. The architecture and building materials used, the spaces and the streets between them and even the decorations affected how the pilgrims experienced the liturgy.[97]

[93] Many of these sites are mentioned already in *Itinerarium Burdigalense* or in the stories about Paula and Eustochium. See Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*.
[94] See It. 3–5. Laato, "Egeria's Itinerarium," 180.
[95] McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 70; Galadza, *Liturgy*, 33–38, 87–88.
[96] Laato, "Egeria's Itinerarium," 182. [97] See Day, *Hearing*, 6.

3.2 Jerusalem at the Time of Egeria

In Egeria's time, there was not much left of the Jerusalem of the time of Jesus.[98] The Romans had destroyed it twice, first in 70 CE when the Temple was destroyed, and subsequently in connection with the Bar Kochba War (132–135). The emperor Publius Aelius Hadrianus had rebuilt the city as a Roman city with temples and a military camp.[99] New main roads, *cardo* and *decumanus* structured the new layout. The emperor had renamed Jerusalem after himself as *Colonia Aelia Capitolina*, a name Egeria knows, too, and which she explains to her readers as meaning Jerusalem (It. 9.7).

A new era began with the emperor Constantine's and his mother Helena's building projects; Egeria mentioned both of them by name. Constantine started the transformation of Jerusalem into a Christian city by initiating the building of three great basilicas: the Holy Sepulchre, Eleona on the Mount of Olives and the Church of Nativity in Bethlehem. During the fourth century, more churches and monasteries were built, including the infrastructure the pilgrims needed. Egeria does not directly comment on the earlier changes but instead describes the edifices as she saw them.

The Christians had not built anything on the Temple Mount.[100] They used to celebrate many of Jesus' life events at their real places – Pentecost in a church on Mount Sion, Maundy Thursday in Gethsemane – but according to Egeria's text, the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple was not celebrated at the location where the Temple had stood but instead in the Church of the Resurrection, the Anastasis (It. 26).[101] This change signals that the location of the crucifixion and the resurrection of Jesus had taken over the role that the Temple had once had.[102]

Egeria wrote about two church buildings on Mount Sion (It. 43.2–3).[103] The Christians walked there in procession together and celebrated the liturgy (It. 25.6,11; 27.5–6; 29.1; 37.1; 39.2,4–5; 40.2; 41.1). There was a pillar where Jesus was scourged, and Egeria writes that on Good Friday, all Christians

[98] For Jerusalem at the time of Jesus, see Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 36; Stemberger, *Jews and Christians.*

[99] There is very little archaeological evidence for the sites of the pagan temples. The main source is Eus. *Vita Constantini* 3.27–32. Stemberger, *Jews and Christians*, 53–55.

[100] The reasons for this were several: Eusebius thought that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre had replaced the old Temple as the center of the holiness (Eus. *Vita Constantini* 3.33). For many, Jesus' words in Luke 21:6 about the destruction of the Temple were central. See Laato, "Egeria's Itinerarium," 179; Stemberger, *Jews and Christians*, 45–47, 63; Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 38.

[101] In the Armenian lectionary, this feast is located in the Constantinian basilica Martyrium.

[102] Laato, "The Heavenly," 138.

[103] The Pilgrim of Bordeaux mentioned seven churches on Sion of which only one existed at the time of his or her visit.

eagerly went there to pray (It. 37.1).[104] Peter the Deacon transmits information, possibly coming from Egeria, that the bishop's chair of James the brother of Jesus was in that particular church. Pentecost was celebrated in the second church which at that time was brand new (It. 42.3).

At the time of Egeria the church of the Holy Sepulchre was not one church but rather a building complex consisting of the Constantinian basilica, Martyrium, the Church of Resurrection, Anastasis, and courtyards between these,[105] and most of what Egeria wrote about the liturgical life in Jerusalem took place there. To understand Egeria's text, it is necessary to know something about the topography and the history of that site. The different parts of the building complex were not under one roof as they are today but were connected via courtyards. Unfortunately, Egeria was not completely consistent in her way of naming the different parts.

The emperor Constantine and his mother Helena initiated the building of the great basilica, Martyrium, in 326, at a location shown by the local Christians.[106] According to tradition, Helena found the Cross of Jesus during the excavations, and in Egeria's time, this relic, together with the title, was shown to the Christians (It. 37.1–2). Martyrium, which Egeria often calls "the great church" was located so that the main entrance was on the side of the Roman *cardo* which Egeria refers to as *Quintana*, a great market street, and the altar faced toward the west. Egeria described the magnificence of the building and its decorations as follows: "For what shall I say about the decoration of the buildings themselves, which Constantine, with his mother's presence and as far as the resources of his empire extended, adorned with gold, mosaic, and precious marble, both the major church and the Anastasis, at the Cross, and the other holy places in Jerusalem?" (It. 25.9). At the time of Egeria's visit, the Anastasis, mentioned in the quotation, was a new edifice. It was a round building, and Egeria mentions its doors several times (It. 24.1.9; 25.2; 47.2). The burial cave of Jesus was located inside the Anastasis. There was an enclosure at the mouth of the cave: a waist-high balustrade. The bishop went into the cave each morning, and every evening in connection with the *lucernare* service a fire was brought from a lamp burning inside the cave (It. 24.4). Between the churches was Golgotha, which, at first, was under the open sky but was subsequently covered with

[104] Jerome confirmed the information about the place of the pillar (ep. 108.9), but the Pilgrim of Bordeaux locates it as the courtyard of Caiaphas.

[105] For a more detailed description of the building complex at Egeria's time, see Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 39–46; McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 61–66.

[106] According to Eusebius, the local Christians and their bishop Makarios (as bishop ca. 312–334) were able to point out the sites of Golgotha and the tomb of Jesus.

a roof, and courtyards. Between Golgotha and Martyrium there was a small chapel or an area which Egeria calls "Behind the Cross," a place where the holy wood of the cross was venerated on Good Friday. The baptistery was probably located near Anastasi*s*. All these buildings or areas had their specific uses.

Egeria mentions other churches as well. Eleona (the name means "olive grove") was also built by Constantine and was located on the Mount of Olives (It. 25.11; 30.2–3; 31.1; 33.1; 35.1–3; 39.1–3; 40.1; 43.3–6; 49.3). Egeria described this church as being very beautiful (It. 25.11) and mentioned that there was a grotto there where Jesus had taught the apostles (It. 33.3). During the Great Week, the Christians assembled at Eleona several times (It. 33.2; 39.1; 39.3). Imbomon, the site of Jesus' ascension, was located on the summit of the Mount of Olives (It. 31.1; 35.4; 36.1; 39.3; 40.1; 43.5). In Egeria's time, it was an open area, surrounded by pillars, but soon afterward a church was built there. On the way down from the top of the Mount of Olives, in Gethsemane, there was a church that Egeria called "charming" (It. 36.1). In Bethany, a church called Lazarium was located in the place where Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead (It. 25.11; 29.3–5; 39.1). Egeria even mentions Lazarium among the churches that were decorated in a special way during Easter (It. 39.1). The beginning of Easter was announced in this church alone (It. 29.5).

Egeria mentioned the third Constantinian basilica in Bethlehem several times (It. 25.8; 12; 39.1; 42.1), but in the preserved part of her diary she does not write about her visits there. However, she does mention that there is "the cave where the Lord was born" (It. 42.1) and that during the Great Feast this church was beautifully decorated as equal to Anastasis and Martyrium (It. 25.8), and that the week after Epiphany was celebrated "with decoration and rejoicing by the presbyters and all the clergy" (It. 25.12).

3.3 Egeria's Route and the Places She Visited

It has been estimated that Egeria's whole journey took at least four years. She mentions having stayed in Jerusalem for three years during which time she made two excursions to Egypt and some shorter trips to biblical sites closer to Jerusalem (It. 17.1). Most likely she had set off from Northern Spain or Southern Gaul and it is possible that she returned there – the manuscript leaves that question open. That her journey was exceptionally long is confirmed by the words of the bishop of Edessa: "As I see, daughter, that you have taken on yourself such great labor for the sake of piety that you have come to these places from the farthest distant lands" (It. 19.5).

Because the beginning and the end of Egeria's text are missing, attempts have been made to use other sources to reconstruct the parts described in them. Egeria mentioned herself that she had visited Chalcedon, Bithynia, Galatia and Cappadocia already on her way to Jerusalem (It. 23.7), and when in Egypt, she mentioned having already been there earlier (It. 7.1; 9.5). The letter of Valerius of Bierzo confirms this information. Peter the Deacon possibly used Egeria's text in his *Liber de locis sanctis* (1137 CE), and therefore, it can be used in the reconstruction, too. However, he used other sources as well, and so a certain caution is necessary. According to these authors, Egeria came to Mount Sinai along the coast visiting Pelusium, Clysma and Paran en route.[107]

The preserved text starts with Egeria and her companions approaching Mount Sinai (chapters 1–9). Even if the true location of the mountain is debated, at the time of Egeria the Christians believed that it was the mountain nowadays called Jebel Musa, the Mountain of Moses. Her descriptions of the visits to the summits of Mount Sinai and Mount Choreb are typical for her: She vividly described the landscape and the labor of climbing, but most important for her was participating in the Eucharist in both places and hearing the Scriptural readings about the biblical events there (It. 3–4). When shown particular sites or memorials, such as the burning bush, Egeria regularly referred to the biblical passage (Ex 3:5). On their way down, the pilgrims saw the memorial stone at the place of the Golden Calf (Ex 32:4), the place where Moses broke the tablets (Ex 32:17–19) and several other places mentioned in the books of Moses. Egeria also told her readers why she reported everything in such detail: "when your affection reads the holy books of Moses, you will perceive more accurately everything that was done there" (It. 5.8).

They returned the same way they had arrived and visited Paran and Clysma. The coastal road was sometimes so close to the sea that the waves touched the feet of the donkeys (It. 6.1). Another peculiar detail was the way the people in Paran could travel safely by night: Their camels could navigate well in the dark (It. 6.2). From Clysma by the Red Sea they traveled to the land of Gosen. Egeria was shown places the Israelites had visited when fleeing from Egypt: Epauleum, Magdalum, Belsephon, Oton and Socchoth, that is Migdol (Ex 14:2), Baal-Sefon (Ex 14:2), Etam (Ex 13:20) and Sukkot (Ex 13:20); the name Epauleum comes from the Septuagint translation of Ex 14:2 where *epaulis* means a guesthouse. She mentions a visit to Heroonpolis (Numeri 45:28–29). From the town of Arabia she went to Ramses (Ex 1:11). There she saw a sycamore tree with the name of *dendros aletheias*, the tree of the truth (It. 8.4); and she transmitted a strange tradition according to which the pharaoh burned down

[107] See Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 27.

the town of Ramses. From Arabia she returned to Jerusalem through Tanis (Thebaid) and Pelusium.

Having rested a while, in January or February 384 she visited Mount Nebo on the other side of the River Jordan (It. 10–12). During this journey she visited Livias and a valley where many of the events described in Deuteronomy had taken place. She saw where Moses had written the book and recited his Canticum (It. 10.6–7). On the summit of Nebo she saw the tomb of Moses and was shown magnificent views (It. 12).

Egeria then wanted to visit the tomb of Job in Carneas in the land of Uz (It. 13; 16.5–7). On her way from there, she visited Salem/Sedima, presented as the town of Melchizedek; its church was called *opu Melchisedek* ("where Melchizedek was"). In Aenon, the pilgrims got to know the location where John the Baptist had baptized people, and to which people still came to be baptized (It. 15). Again she chose to inform her readers what the place was called in Greek. A presbyter told her that the name of that garden was *Cepos tu agiu Iohanni*, and added, "that you call in Latin *hortus sancti Iohannis*," St. John's garden. She also visited Tisbe, known as the home of the prophet Elijah (It. 16.1–2).

After having lived in Jerusalem for three years, and having visited all the places to which she had gone *gratia orationis*, to pray, Egeria decided to return home (It. 17.1). On her way to Constantinople, she decided to visit Mesopotamia, especially Edessa. She gave several reasons for the visit: firstly, she wanted to visit the holy monks who lived an "indescribably excellent life" there; secondly, to see the martyr chapel of St Thomas; and, thirdly, it was in Edessa that the correspondence between Jesus and King Abgar was to be found. She set off from Antioch, stopped in Hierapolis, crossed "the great river Euphrates" and came to Edessa.

Egeria's narrative about her visit in Edessa focused on her encounter and dialogue with the bishop and what he told her about King Abgar (It. 17.1–2).[108] The bishop guided her and showed her the palace of King Abgar and the statues of Abgar and his son Magnus. Egeria was impressed by the palace and the water pools filled with fish and clear water and also reported in detail the miracle of how the city was saved from the Persians as the water changed its direction. Egeria was most interested in the correspondence between King Abgar and Jesus.[109] Egeria reported to her friends that she received copies of the correspondence and thought that the copy was better and more complete than the one she had at home (It. 19.19).

[108] For King Abgar V Ukkama (ca. 29/30 CE) see Eus. Hist. Eccl. 1.13.

[109] There are several versions of this tradition. Eusebius wrote about him in Hist. Eccl. 1.13; and it is included in the Doctrine of Addai.

From Edessa, Egeria went on further to Carrhae. She was interested in that it was seen as the place from which Abraham left for the Holy Land (It. 20). She saw the well of Rebecca and the martyr chapel of Helpidius. Interestingly, she noted that almost everybody was pagan in that city; she met only a few clergy and monks.

On her way from Antioch to Constantinople, she stopped at Tarsos in Cilicia, Pompeiopolis, Corycos and Mopsucrene. From the province of Cilicia she came to Isauria and visited the city of Seleucia. From there, she traveled through Cappadocia, Galatia and Bithynia to Constantinople. The only place she wrote about more was Saint Thecla in Seleucia, Isauria. There she met her friend, Marthana, who was an abbess there. Visiting Chalcedon, she mentions only the martyr chapel of Euphemia, an important saint who had been killed in the persecution of Galerius in 303–304. She did not write much about her visit to Constantinople, only that she visited "all the churches, or the Apostles, as well as in all the martyria, which are very many there," and in all these she said thanks to "our God Jesus" (It. 24.8).

Egeria's subsequent destiny is not known. The section which describes her travels ends with the following words, written in Constantinople:

> From this place, ladies, my light, while I send this [letter] to your affection, I have already decided, in the name of Christ our God, to travel to Asia, that is Ephesus, for the sake of prayer at the martyrium of the holy and blessed Apostle John. And if after this I remain in the body, if I am able to visit other places besides, I will either relate them to your affection in person, if God shall be resolved in my mind, tell you in writing. You, ladies, my light, only be gracious enough to be mindful of me, whether shall be in the body or out of the body. (It. 23.10)

Egeria ended the description of her travels with an address to her home community, her dear sisters whom she here calls her light. She had described her route, the places and the people she had encountered to people who were not able to travel themselves. By means of reading her travelogue, they were able to imagine these and in that way participate in her journey.

3.4 People Egeria Encountered

3.4.1 The Clergy and the Ascetics

Egeria separates the institutional elite, the ordained clergy, from the rest: She describes the bishop, the presbyters, the deacons and the archdeacon with their specific tasks, quotes them, refers to their speeches and, especially in the first part of her book, characterizes certain bishops in admiring tones. On the other side, she also noticed the crowds of ordinary Christians. Between these groups

there are two occasionally overlapping groups, namely those of the ascetics and those of the pilgrims – some of the pilgrims were ascetics as well, and some of both the ascetics and pilgrims were members of the ordained clergy, too. In Egeria's text, ascetics and pilgrims can, in one sense, also be seen as part of the religious elite, but on the other hand, she linked them with the ordinary faithful as well.

The great number of local ascetics and clergy enabled the church in Jerusalem to organize an exceptionally rich liturgical life. Services could be celebrated every day, from early morning to late night (It. 24.1). Apart from the bishop, there were presbyters, deacons and at least one archdeacon, all with their special tasks (It. 29.3; 30.2; 35.1). In addition to them, at the time of Egeria there were a number of ascetics, both female and male, in Jerusalem and its surroundings. During the festivals in particular many people gathered in Jerusalem. Reporting about the feast of Encaenia, Egeria mentions that crowds gathered in Jerusalem from the various provinces, Mesopotamia, Syria and Egypt, monks and *apotactitae*, as well as lay people, both male and female (It. 49.1). She added that there were more than forty or fifty bishops, and many of their clergy (It. 39.2).

The words Egeria used for ascetics, and which she chose to explain to her readers, reveal that there were differences between the east and west. In the first part of her book where she wrote about her travels around the Holy Land, she used the word *monachus*, and three times this was together with the word *frater*, brother (It. 10.3; 15.3; 16.2). Egeria clearly thought that the word "ascetic" needed an explanation: "Very many truly holy monks (*monachi*), whom they call here ascetics (*quos hic ascites vocant*), live here." In the second part, however, Egeria no longer used the word *monachus* but instead explained to her sisters in the far west that people in Jerusalem used the word *monazontes* for monks and *parthenae* for virgins (It. 24.1). Even the word *apotactita*, which according to her was used of men and women, and which denoted a certain kind of ascetic, belonged to the local Jerusalemite vocabulary (It. 23.6; 28.3). A special group of ascetics were the *hebdomadarii* (It. 27.9). Brothers and sisters (*fratres et sorores*) who translated during the services were probably some kind of ascetics, too (It. 47.4).

As noted in the Introduction, some other contemporary pilgrims regarded visiting the holy men as the main goal of their journey. While Egeria encountered holy men too, and heard about them, her focus was elsewhere. Holy men, *sancti*, appear only in the first part of Egeria's *Itinerarium*. Usually for Egeria they were simply local guides (It. 1.1; 3.8; 4.2; 5.1; 12.3), guides traveling with Egeria (It. 13.2; 16.3) or monks who lived in cells or monasteries in or near the holy places and with whom the pilgrims could stay overnight (It. 1.6; 4.8; 5.11–12). Once, when visiting the monastery in Saint Thekla, she wrote of having seen "the holy

monks or *apotactitae*, both men and women." Egeria did not always define what these holy men were, but sometimes she did. They were "clerics and monks" (It. 7.2; 11.1–3), "presbyters and deacons" (It. 10.3) or "monks called ascites" (It. 10.9). At pilgrimage sites, holy places, the pilgrims prayed together with local holy men or celebrated the Eucharist together with them (It. 3.7). Holy men could give *eulogiae* (blessings, gifts) to the pilgrims (It. 1.7).

Unlike many other fourth-century pilgrims, Egeria was not especially interested in contemporary miracles.[110] The holy men she met were ordinary individuals even if they were described only with positive characteristics: They were kind (It. 5.12), old (It. 5.10), learned in Scriptures (It. 8.4; 9.1) or pious (It. 8.4). Only when writing about the monks from Mesopotamia did she combine holy men with miracles, and even then, she did not expose much about the miracles but merely mentioned them at a general level.[111] Egeria reported that certain holy monks lived solitary lives, but twice a year they did come down to the chapel, at Easter and on the Feast Day of Saint Helpidius (It. 20.6).

She emphasized to her dear readers that the monks only talked about the Scriptures or the deeds of greater monks. Accordingly, local bishops and holy men told her about,

> from the Scriptures of God or the deeds of holy men, that is, of monks, either what miracles those had already died or what those who are still in the body do daily, those who are ascetics. For I do not wish your affection to think that there were ever any other stories from the monks except either from the Scriptures of God or the deeds of the greater monks. (It. 20.13)

While the expression "holy men" (in plural) is exclusively used by Egeria to mean the monks, bishops and presbyters she met, and a few times about the ascetics she had heard about, quite a lot of individuals were holy (*sanctus, sancta*) for Egeria. There are the biblical figures, mostly from the Old Testament, such as Moses (It. 2.1), Elia (It. 4.1), Aaron (It. 4.3), Joshua (It. 10.2), Job (It. 13.1), Abraham (It. 14.2), Melchizedek (It. 14.2), John the Baptist (It. 15.1), Jephthah (It. 16.1), the Apostle Thomas (It. 17.1), Rebecca (It. 20.4), James (It. 20.10), Rachel (it. 21.1), Solomon (It. 48.1). There are three saints from the time of the early church mentioned: Helpidius (It. 20.5), Thekla (It. 21.1) and Euphemia (It. 23.7). On two occasions, Egeria writes about visits to the graves of holy people, that of Moses (It. 12.1, where the word *memoria* is used for tomb),[112] and that of Job in Uz (13.1–2; 16.5–7). She planned to go to pray in the martyr chapel of St John in Ephesus (It. 23.10).[113]

[110] Cf. Frank, *The Memory*, 44–49.
[111] The only miracle she described more was how the water changed its route in Edessa.
[112] Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 218–219.
[113] She made a mistake as John is not known to be a martyr.

There are also numerous living holy people mentioned. Apart from the monks and ascetics, there is the holy deaconess Marthana, Egeria's good friend (It. 23.3), presbyters (e.g. It. 14.1–2) and bishops (e.g. It. 8.4; 9.1; 19.5). The following example about an encounter in Arabia shows that although Egeria often uses rather stereotypical words when characterizing them, the holy men she met were real people. She had met this bishop before, and she transmits details about his life. Thebaid, where they had met, was a major center for desert monasticism.[114] Egeria gives the upbringing of the bishop in this monastery as the reason for his expertise in the Scriptures.

> The holy bishop, a holy and true man of God, well known to me already from the time I had been in the Thebaid, kept us there some two days. This holy bishop is a former monk, for he was brought up from childhood in a monastery, and so is as learned in the Scriptures as he is faultless in his whole life, as I said above. (It. 9.1–2)

Egeria thus uses the word "holy" about biblical individuals (*sanctus Moyses, sancta Rebecca*), holy people from the history of the church (*sancta Euphemia, sancta Thekla*), and many people she had met during her travels. She did sometimes choose to visit a certain place because of the dwellings of the holy men but only when they were at a certain biblical site (It. 4.5–6; 20.11). By visiting holy men from the biblical past and from her own time, she connects people who lived in different times and places. Through these encounters, but in particular through prayer and the celebration of the Eucharist at the sites, Egeria and her readers participate in this communion of saints.

3.4.2 Other Pilgrims

When the pilgrims met, they passed on information to each other about interesting sites and events. Egeria reported on her reunion with her friend, Marthana, in a monastery in Cilicia in Asia Minor as follows: "I found there someone very dear to me, and to whose way of life everyone in the east bore witness, a holy deaconess by the name of Marthana, whom I had known at Jerusalem, where she had gone up for the sake of prayer" (It. 23.2).

On certain Feast Days it was possible to meet people who otherwise lived a solitary life in the desert. About her visit in Carrhae,[115] in Mesopotamia, she recounts the following:

[114] McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 120n2.
[115] Carrhae (It. 20.1). The name is Haran in Gen 12:1–4, Charra in the Septuagint.

> It turned out very gratifyingly for us that we came there the day before the martyr's day, that is, of holy Helpidius himself, the ninth day before Kalends of May, on which day it was necessary for all the monks from everywhere and from all the borders of Mesopotamia to go down to Charra, even also those greater ones who love in solitude. (It. 20.5)

Jerusalem was a hub for pilgrims and ascetics. Visitors from distant countries met there and could give each other tips concerning interesting sites to visit. Egeria reports from where she got the idea to travel to Uz in Mesopotamia, in particular the tomb of Job:

> Then after some time I wished also to go to the region of Ausitis in order to see the grave of holy Job for the sake of prayer. For I used to see many holy monks from there coming to Jerusalem to see the holy places for the sake of prayer; when they informed me all about those places, they increased my desire to take upon me the labour of also going to those places. (It.13.1)

These quotations show that Egeria met the same ascetics several times and in different places. She writes of having learned to know Marthana and the monks from Mesopotamia in Jerusalem. Encounters in Jerusalem, and later elsewhere, created and strengthened communion between Christians from different countries. The same kind of networking is also depicted in other pilgrimage narratives from the same period: Melania the Elder (ca. 341–410) traveled from Rome via Egypt to the Holy Land, Melania the Younger (ca. 385–439) came to the same land via Africa and Egypt; both are said to have met clergy and ascetics everywhere on their journey.[116]

Egeria did have companions on her journey, but she does not reveal much about who they were. Often she writes in the first person plural, "we prayed," "we arrived," without defining who the "we" comprised. On her excursions made from Jerusalem she was joined by small groups of people. Once she mentions "holy men": a presbyter, deacons and monastics (It. 10.3); another time only "holy people" (It. 16.2). Contrary to Reuling's claims, Egeria does not indicate that her companions were only men.[117] Egeria did not separate pilgrims from the local faithful when describing participation in the liturgy and the services.

3.4.3 Ordinary Christians

Egeria marks a difference between the lay people (*laici*) and the monastics and clergy when she describes the services in Jerusalem (It. 24.1; 24.12). Immediately after addressing her sisters at the beginning of her lengthy

[116] Palladios: Historia Lausiaca 46.54–55; Gerontios; Vita Melaniae Iunioris; Aug. epp. 124–126.
[117] Reuling, "Pious Intrepidness," 246.

description of the liturgical life in Jerusalem, she says that when the early morning services starts, both male and female ascetics (*monazontes et parthenae*) come down, along with male and female lay people. They sing, pray and listen to Scriptural readings until dawn. In the evening, the lay people, men and women, are permitted to stay and pray and sing under the leading of the presbyters and deacons. Those lay people who wished to go home and sleep could do so (It. 25.12). A third time, the lay people are mentioned is when Egeria describes the week after Epiphany. "Immense crowds gather from everywhere in Jerusalem, not only *monazontes*, but also lay people," she writes (It. 25.12).

Children are mentioned twice.[118] When *lucernare* is celebrated in the Anastasis, a big choir of small children (*pisinni plurimi*) sing a response *Kyrie eleison* to the intercessions read by a deacon.[119] Egeria explained the Greek words for her community ("as we say, 'Lord have mercy'") and added that the children's voices were immense (It. 24.5). The children appear again in the Palm Sunday procession, when all the faithful walked down, singing, from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem. The Gospel reading from Matthew 21 was read, and Egeria writes that, in the reading, children with branches and palms met the Lord – a detail not mentioned in Matthew. Egeria describes further: "There are very many children in these places – including those who cannot walk on foot; because they are to be carried, their parents carry them on their shoulders – all carrying branches, some of palm, others of olive; and so the bishop is led in the same way as the Lord was led then" (It. 31.2–3).

When it comes to children being carried by candlelight in the procession and while singing, Egeria certainly describes what the Jerusalemite Christians did, but the reason for their taking the children along might have been that they wanted to reenact the events on the first Palm Sunday as faithfully as possible. According to tradition, children were there welcoming Jesus, and Egeria explained the role of the bishop in this procession as an imitation of the Lord's way into Jerusalem. In the same story, Egeria mentioned that the people walked slowly so they would not get tired (It. 31.4). She shows a similar practical regard for people's energy levels elsewhere (It. 25.12).

Ordinary people also appear in Egeria's description of the pre- and post-baptismal teaching (It. 45–47). When people enrolled to the catechetical instruction, their character was checked. The candidates (*competentes*) came with their fathers or mothers, that is, sponsors or godparents, who acted as guarantor for them. Those who were admitted to be catechumens, men and

[118] Egeria uses the word *infans* even about the newly baptized (It. 38.1; 39.3).

[119] Wilkinson (*Egeria's Travels*, 56) thinks that it was a boys' choir, but *pisninnus* means simply "a little child." Ambrose mentions children singing in Expl. Psalmi 1.9.

women, listened to the instruction for the Lent period. When describing these practices, Egeria once again directs her words to her readers, who, she is certain, are interested in hearing the details: "I must write this, lady sisters, lest you think that it is done without explanation" (It. 46.1).

"The faithful" (*fideles*) is Egeria's word for ordinary Christians; the word appears only in the second part of her book. The catechumens and the faithful join in the prayer (It. 24.6). Sometimes Egeria writes that the bishop explicitly blesses the faithful (It. 24.2), but at other times it is both the faithful and catechumens (It. 25.7; 35.2; 40.1). The catechumens are not always allowed to be present whenever the faithful are (It. 25.2). Sometimes Egeria simply writes what "all" do, for example, they go to the bishop and ask for his blessing. Egeria has also recorded the reactions of the ordinary faithful. When the Gospel reading about the resurrection was read in the Anastasis, "groaning and moaning" arose from everyone. She writes: "The bishop himself reads [the account of] the Lord's resurrection. When he has begun to read it, there is such groaning and moaning from everyone and such tears that the hardest person could be moved to tears that the Lord has undergone such things for us" (It. 24.1).

Egeria noted that ordinary Christians of all ages reacted intensively:[120] "To each of the readings and prayers there is such emotion and lamentation from all the people that it is astonishing; for there is no one, either older or younger, who on that day in those three hours does not bewail more than can be reckoned that the Lord had suffered those things for us" (It. 37.7). Clearly the reactions were surprising to her and worth reporting to her sisters. However, four mentions of similar strong reactions may indicate that these were not spontaneous but rather a customary way to emphasize the importance of these Scriptural readings.[121]

3.4.4 Egeria's Three Communities

One of the questions in the study of ancient lived religion is what kind of belonging to a group or groups the source expresses and what the communication between the groups was like.[122] Pilgrims who left their homelands and set out on a journey left their community physically and joined another. It was always a real possibility that the sojourner would never return, as Egeria mentions (It. 23.10). It was typical already for pre-Christian pilgrims to form a kind of community with those who shared common experiences, ideas, rites or texts,[123] and the Christian pilgrims certainly did the same. Egeria mentions

[120] See even It. 34; 36.3.

[121] Isidore of Seville noted that a good reader might "declaim in so heart-rending a way that they drive some people to sorrow and lamentation" (Etym. 7.12.24). See Day, *Hearing*, 80.

[122] Rutherford, "The Experience," 137. [123] Rutherford, "The Experience," 139–144.

discussions between pilgrims several times. A third community consisted of the Christians at the holy places. The Christian pilgrims were not seen as outsiders but were welcomed to participate in the Eucharistic community. When Egeria's travelogue is seen from this perspective, her recurring expressions "here" (local Christians and pilgrims in Jerusalem) and "among us" (among the sisters she wrote to) give a signal that she simultaneously belonged to several communities. She participated in the Eucharistic community in Jerusalem along with local Christians and with other pilgrims, as she had done in her community at home.

Thus, apparent in her texts are the three communities to which she belongs: first, her dear lady friends at home, with whom she is connected via correspondence, to which she still belongs (as she writes "among us") and to which she plans to return (It. 23.10); second, the community of Christian pilgrims, which consists of all the pilgrims she encounters during her journey; and third, the communities of local Christians with whom she prays and participates in the Eucharist everywhere she travels. The last community includes, as a special case, even the holy men in the desert. Egeria seems to be at home in all these communities. The Christian faith and the Eucharistic communion join these communities together. As a travel writer, Egeria communicates information and experiences from her communities in the east to those in the west.

Egeria almost never comments on anybody outside these three communities.[124] If she was aware of the great Christological and ecclesiological disputes of her time, she does not show it. It is possible she visited Constantinople in the year of the Second Ecumenical Council in 381, but there is no trace of it, at least in the preserved part of her travelogue. Instead of presenting conflict or disputes, she communicates only what she thought was true and correct. For example, when visiting Carrhae, at a time when there were many kinds of Christian groups, she ignores all the rest and describes only the bishop whom she saw as the right one. She makes no mention of the Jews of her own time. The pagans are mentioned only once: When visiting Carrhae she wrote, "In that city, apart from a few clergy and holy monks, if any live in the city, I found no Christian person at all, but they were entirely pagan" (It. 20.8).[125] Egeria's emphasis on the lived unity of the Christians may also be an indirect way of commenting on the different groups.

From the perspective of ancient lived religion it can be asked whether Egeria's silence about all other groups outside her own community is a signal that she did not notice the differences between them, or that the differences did

[124] That is, if we do not count Roman soldiers who helped her (It. 9.3).
[125] Egeria calls the non-Christians *gentes* (It. 20.8).

not matter to her,[126] or whether she focused only on what was important for her and wrote solely about that. Even if we cannot be sure, I think that the last alternative is correct; she regularly noticed only things that interested her and wrote only about those things to her friends. For example, when visiting Constantinople, a great city full of wonders, she had eyes only for the churches and martyr chapels (It. 23.8–9).

4 Communicating Sense Perception and Emotions

4.1 Senses in Egeria's Text

In her role as a communicator, Egeria used several techniques to mediate her experiences to her friends at home. When her book is read from the perspective of lived religion in antiquity, one notices that instead of referring to the contents of faith in doctrinal formulations, she focused on events, encounters, material religion, sense perception and emotions.[127] It is typical for her to describe vividly what she sees (It. 16.4), tastes (It. 15.2), hears (It. 46.4), smells (It. 24.10) and touches (It. 37.3) in the Holy Land.[128] Encountering the holy in the form of liturgy, homilies, as well as holy people and holy places, moved her.[129] As a pilgrim, she noticed both material objects related to her Christian faith and the soundscape of the Holy Land. Sometimes she also expressed her own emotions or commented on how other Christians express their feelings (It. 24.1). Egeria did not often write about the act of sensing but focused on what she sensed.

As discussed in the Introduction, for a modern reader it is difficult to grasp precisely in what ways people in late antiquity sensed things, interpreted their sense perceptions or felt emotions, with all these being dependent on one's culture and upbringing.[130] The most secure ground is when focusing on what the author explicitly writes, and even then, one cannot be sure whether we are interpreting those texts in the precise way they were originally intended.

When it comes to how well ancient people communicated what they experienced and how well they understood each other's texts, it is clear that a successful communication presupposes that the author and the readers shared sufficiently similar worldviews, experiences, level of knowledge and memory.[131] In Egeria's case, it can be taken for granted that she knew the

[126] Gasparini et al., *Lived Religion*, 5.
[127] For the study of sense perception in antiquity, see Smith, *Sensing*; Harrison, *The Art of Listening*; Day, *Hearing*.
[128] For senses and sacred spaces, see Yasin, "Sacred Spaces," esp. 947–951; Laato, "Egeria's Itinerarium," 180–184.
[129] Reuling, "Pious Intrepidness," 250.
[130] See Harrison, *The Art of Listening*, 10–11.
[131] Patzelt, "Introduction," 12–14.

recipients of her text well and thus knew what they might understand. Unlike some contemporary pilgrims, such as Paula, Egeria did not write about the spiritual senses.[132] However, sense perception and bodily experiences formed an important part of spirituality for the pilgrims and did not necessarily have to be interpreted for the readers; they were still able to understand the theological meaning.

4.2 Hearing the Holy

4.2.1 Many Voices, Many Ways to Hear

Egeria's travelogue witnesses a Holy Land that was filled with sounds.[133] Most of them were verbal: singing, praying, reciting biblical texts, preaching, giving liturgical instructions, teaching and, particularly in the first part, guiding. The sounds of the daily and weekly services and the celebration of feasts play a central role. In addition to the verbal sounds, she also mentions nonverbal human sounds, such as crying loudly, and even animal sounds. Because Egeria often described the spaces where the sounds were heard, it is easy to imagine how different the sounds of singing were outside or inside the churches or whether or not the stone walls were decorated with clothes.[134] Apart from the sounds she explicitly wrote about, her lively narratives about riding on a donkey in water, the locals of Paran riding on a camel by night or crowds of Christians processing through the streets of Jerusalem enlighten our imagination. The liturgical sounds which filled the soundscape of Jerusalem in Egeria's travelogue are presented and discussed more precisely in Section 5.3. First, in this section, Egeria's explicit ideas of hearing and listening, the question of whose voices she heard, her use of direct quotations, and the meaning of the hearing and the soundscape in her travel narrative are scrutinized.

While some other pilgrimage narratives and other Christian texts from Egeria's time focused on the art of listening or meditated on spiritual listening, Egeria was interested in what the ordinary Christians heard, that is, the soundscape of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. That said, Egeria did make some significant distinctions about the act of hearing, and therefore, we start with Egeria's use of the word *audire*, which in English means both "to hear" and "to listen."

There is a difference between the two parts of her book in how Egeria uses *audire*. In the first part, where Egeria describes her travels around the Holy

[132] Frank, *The Memory*, 15–16.
[133] For the art of listening and hearing in the early church, see Harrison, *The Art of Listening*, and Day, *Hearing*.
[134] For the impact of the acoustic properties of the churches, see Day, *Hearing*, 158–159.

Land, this word means ordinary hearing, and the one who hears is usually Egeria herself. For instance, in Sedima, she heard of the church situated in a place where Melchizedek had made offerings to God, and immediately decided that the whole group would stop there (It. 14.1). In Carrhae, she met monks she had heard about (It. 20.6). She asked the bishop to tell her about Nahor and Bethuel, quoting herself: "I asked him, saying, 'I ask you, my lord, to tell me what I desire to hear'" (It. 20.9).

In the second part of her travelogue, where Egeria wrote about the catechetical instruction before and after baptism in Jerusalem, however, she used the word hearing in another sense. In chapters 45–47, she described how the baptismal candidates were chosen, how their instruction was organized, what the contents of their instruction were and what kind of instruction they received after their baptism.[135] In this section, *audire* is used as a term for listening to the pre- and post-baptismal teaching given by the bishop of Jerusalem (It. 46.6). Egeria reported that the bishop taught the catechumens about the Scriptures for three hours a day for forty days, and they received the Creed and heard another two weeks' explanation of it. According to the bishop, at that point the baptisands had heard about the faith (*de fide audistis*), the resurrection of the flesh and the whole meaning of the Creed, as far as they were able to hear while still being catechumens (*ut potuistis adhuc cathecumini audire*), and he promised that they would hear (*audietis*) more after their baptism. I think Egeria used a direct quotation in this passage to emphasize the authority of the bishop who gave instructions pertaining to what the new Christians were allowed to hear and at what point. There was a status change signaled by the bishop.[136]

A third way to understand the word *audire* is found in the following chapter of *Itinerarium*, where Egeria reported that when the bishop speaks in Greek, a presbyter translates everything into Syriac, "so that everyone may hear" what is being explained (*ut omnes audiant*, It. 47.3). In this passage, *audire* means "to hear with understanding" which is the highest level of hearing. Egeria does not, however, develop the idea of hearing into spiritual hearing or a way of listening to God with the heart; she is content with the ordinary understandings of this word.

4.2.2 Whom and What Egeria Heard in the Holy Land?

Proceeding to the question of whose voices Egeria mentioned as having heard during her journey, it is noteworthy that all human voices were those of the

[135] For the baptismal instruction in Jerusalem, see Day, "The Catechetical Lectures"; Kinzig, *A History*, 493–495.
[136] See Day, *Hearing*, 48.

Christians, but they were not merely the voices of the clergy. Egeria wrote to her sisters about the voices of both leaders and ordinary Christians, of both individuals and groups of people.

A children's choir sang in Anastasis when *lucernare* was celebrated, responding in a loud voice *Kyrie eleison* when a deacon prayed for individuals mentioned by name (It. 24.4–5). On numerous occasions Egeria reported that all the Christians, both women and men, were involved in the singing of the hymns, psalms and antiphons (It. 24.1); their voices were heard inside and near the church buildings but also when they walked in processions through the streets of Jerusalem. The voices of the catechumens and their godparents are mentioned when Egeria describes the pre-baptismal teaching (It. 45–46). The godparents answered the bishop's questions about the candidates. Egeria also mentioned how one by one the baptisands repeated the Creed to the bishop (It. 46.5). On one occasion when listening to the catechetical teaching, Egeria had noticed that the faithful made "more noise" than when listening to other homilies (It. 46.4), and several times she expressed her astonishment over their loud reaction; they were groaning and moaning, lamenting and crying (It. 24.1; 37.7).

Egeria's own voice is explicitly heard only in the first part of the *Itinerarium.* She quoted herself and referred to her own words when recounting her visit to Edessa, and a long discussion between herself and the local bishop is recorded (It. 20.9). She also used active expressions such as "we prayed," "we said goodbye" or "I asked" several times. Her style is different in the second part of her text. She does not mention that she spoke; she does not even state whether or not she participated in the singing, even if she probably did.

During her travels around the Holy Land, Egeria often conversed with bishops and presbyters and heard information about the places she visited; and in her travel diary, she quoted or referred to her guides, bishops, presbyters and monks. They told her about the sites and the views, gave practical advice and transmitted oral traditions but, most importantly, they led the services, read the Scriptures and prayed with the pilgrims. In the second part of the text, the ascetics are mentioned as participating in the singing but are not quoted. On one occasion Egeria mentions that monks were leading the prayer together with deacons and presbyters (It. 24.1), and once, leading the bishop in a procession with hymns (It. 25.2). Understandably, as the text deals with the church in Jerusalem, the voices Egeria heard and records most about primarily belonged to the higher clergy. The bishop preaches, teaches, narrates and explains the Scriptures, prays and gives blessings (It. 36.5; 45.3–4; 46.6). The presbyters preach, the archdeacon gives practical instructions about the next gatherings (It. 29.3; 30.2; 35.1; 43.3) and the deacons give liturgical instructions and pray (e.g. It. 24.6).

In both parts of her travelogue, Egeria presented direct quotes from people she encountered. In ancient literature, quotations were often used as a literary device: They were not meant to be taken as word-for-word-recordings but rather as summaries of information or to give local color. Direct quotations were also used to give authority to the information. This is the case in Jerusalem, where Egeria quotes the bishop's words, and also when Egeria hears the guides at pilgrimage sites explaining the history of a particular site. A good example of this is Egeria's visit to Edessa, where the bishop talks about the city, Abgar and his correspondence with Jesus at length (It. 19.5–18).

Turning to what characterizes Egeria's soundscape of Jerusalem and the Holy Land the most, we come to the sound of singing. The Christians in Jerusalem sung psalms, hymns and antiphons in and beside the churches, in services and in processions, day and night. Before presenting that topic in more detail, one observation is needed: The only time Egeria uses the common Latin word for song (*cantus*) or singing (*canere*) is, somewhat surprisingly, when referring to a cockerel. She wrote of *pullorum cantus*, cockcrow, six times (It. 34.1; 36.1). This might simply be a way to express the time of day, but because Egeria writes about the crowing only when mentioning when the first prayer of the day begins, it might also be used to remind the reader that this sound similarly started the day of the suffering of Christ. In Ambrose's famous hymn, which Egeria may have known, *Aeterne rerum conditor*, a cockerel has a central role: It announces a new day, awakens those who sleep, makes Peter repent and brings hope to all. However, in Egeria's narrative, the sound of the cockerel crowing certainly describes the soundscape of Jerusalem, too.

When mentioning that people were singing, Egeria always uses the word *dicere*. The same word is used for reciting and reading aloud, and it is not always clear what kind of sound she means. McGowan and Bradshaw always translate *dicere* in connection with the psalms, antiphons and hymns as "recite" but note that this does not mean that the psalms and hymns were not sung; James McKinnon translates the same word consistently with "to sing."[137] Egeria sometimes makes a difference between *legere* and *dicere*, but sometimes she does not; for example as she writes "when they have come here, appropriate readings are read (*leguntur*), psalms and antiphons are recited (*dicuntur*)." Recitation or reading of biblical texts has a central role in Egeria's Jerusalem. Most often this was done inside the churches, but also when the Christians held a service in a biblical place where there was not yet a church building. Even in these cases, Egeria records she is extremely happy about how well chosen the readings are.

[137] McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 74.

Homilies and catechetical instruction also belonged to the soundscape of Jerusalem. Egeria mentioned homilies and preaching several times in her travelogue but wrote about their contents very sparsely. However, she did summarize the goal of all preaching when describing an ordinary Sunday service, again pointing out that it was a local way to do things and remembering the ordinary people: "It is a custom here that as many of all the presbyters seated who wish preach, and after them all, the bishop preaches. These sermons are always done on the Lord's Days, so that the people may always be instructed in the Scriptures and in the love of God" (It. 25.1).

On the established Feast Days, at least, the homilies were based on the readings of the day.[138] Egeria wrote about the celebration of the Presentation of the Lord, the fortieth day after Epiphany, and described the Gospel reading so fully that it can be identified as Luke 2:21–38, the text about Joseph and Mary visiting the Temple with the baby Jesus (It. 26). Egeria stated that all the presbyters preached on that day, followed by the bishop, all drawing on the same Gospel reading. The same was done at Pentecost when all presbyters preached on Acts 2:1–21 in the Sion church (It. 43.3).

In addition to the homilies on Sundays and Feast Days, the bishop delivered catechetical homilies to the baptismal candidates during the season of Lent, and mystagogical homilies to the newly baptized after Easter Day.[139] These homilies differed thematically from ordinary homilies and delivered accumulating information on the contents of the Christian faith. After their baptism, the newly baptized "children" (*infantes*, It. 38.1) heard explanations pertaining to what they had experienced during the baptismal rite and about the meaning of the Eucharist.

4.2.3 Communicating the Heard

In the ancient world, where many Christians could not read and only a few had access to books, listening and the hearing of recitations of biblical texts, as well as their interpretation in homilies and catechesis, were extremely important ways of learning, as was listening to the singing. With audible sounds, both spoken and sung, it is possible to communicate more than with words alone: Tones, pauses and gestures can convey what is important. To sing is much more intimate and personal than simply listening to others; and singing together is more than singing alone: It creates and strengthens a sense of belonging to

[138] For the development of the lectionary system in Jerusalem, see Galadza, *Liturgy*, 30–31 and Section 5.2 in this Element.

[139] For the practice of preaching on the Creed to the catechumens in the early church, see Kinzig, *A History*, 524.

a community. To participate in singing to God together adds yet another aspect, the common faith.

By choosing which sounds to report, Egeria created a soundscape of Jerusalem for her readers. She chose Christian sounds and ignored others, and she emphasized liturgical sounds – in fact, she created a soundscape filled with continuous prayer. Even if her picture is subjective, she nonetheless bears witness to a real change in the soundscape of this city. At the beginning of the same century, Jerusalem was still a Roman pagan city, filled with quite different sounds, and the change had been swift. Egeria's travelogue thus describes the Christianization of the soundscape of Jerusalem.

Finally, I suggest that Egeria's emphasis on music, singing, the recitation of biblical texts and other sounds is not based only on the fact that there really were Christian sounds all around her and at all times of the day, or that she had a personal interest in sung liturgy, but that her emphasis on liturgical sounds was based on the fact that these have a central role in the Scriptures. Her text witnesses a thorough knowledge and appreciation of the Scripture. Especially in the Old Testament, Jerusalem, and in particular the Temple, is often depicted as being filled with psalms, prayer and praise, and that is how she wanted to describe the Jerusalem of her own time, too.

4.3 Seeing the Holy

The preserved part of Egeria's *Itinerarium* begins with an expression that is subsequently repeated numerous times with minor variations: " . . . were shown according to the Scriptures" (. . . *ostendebatur iuxta Scripturas*).[140] This phrase summarizes well two features typical of Egeria's travelogue. First, what she was most interested in seeing were the biblical places, and second, at the pilgrimage sites there were holy people and guides who showed her and her companions what they should see and how these sites were related to the Scriptures.[141] The guides helped the pilgrims quite practically, but Egeria's references to them also gave authority to the information she was transmitting. Egeria depicted herself as an active agent who planned her route so that she could see biblical places for herself and pray there; and during her journey, she saw not only those places which were usually shown to visitors but on several occasions she also asked that some things would be shown to her (It. 3.7; 6.11).

Equally important as the idea that the places were shown to the pilgrims are the verbs *videre* "to see, to look at," and *pervidere* "to see all, to really see."[142]

[140] For seeing in pilgrimage narratives, see Frank, *The Memory*.

[141] Most often places and things were shown to "us," but sometimes to Egeria only (It. 19.6; 21.4).

[142] E.g. in It. 7.1 Egeria writes that she went further in Egypt because she wanted to see all places, *ut perviderem omnia loca*.

Seeing a biblical place was so central for Egeria that she sometimes used the word "to see" to mean "to visit" (It. 5.2). The main idea of Egeria's pilgrimage was to see the holy places. She eagerly desired to see the holy sites (It. 4.1) and labored hard to reach her goal (It. 3.1–2). It is worth noticing that all instances of her use of the verb "to see" are in the first part of her journal where she describes her journeys in the Holy Land. In the second part, she describes what she saw in Jerusalem but no longer writes about the seeing in itself.

As a travel writer, Egeria did not rely only on what the guides told her but also mentioned to her readers that her own eyes confirmed the information given by the monks. The following is an example of this in her own words: "The valley is very huge, lying under the mountain of God, and was, as far as we could estimate by looking or they said, about sixteen miles in length" (It. 2.1). Sometimes she seems to be critical of what is shown to her and informs her readers what she really saw or did not see. On the summit of Mount Sinai, when the pilgrims had received the Eucharist and *eulogiae*, Egeria asked the holy men to show various places to the pilgrims; they saw a lot but she was also somewhat cautious:

> They showed us that cave where holy Moses was when he had ascended the mountain of God a second time that he might receive the tablets again, after he had broken the earlier ones when the people sinned;[143] and they were gracious enough to show us the other places that we desired or that they themselves knew better. But I want you to know, ladies, revered sisters, that from that place where we were standing, that is, around the walls of the church, that is, from the summit of the middle mountain itself, those mountains that at first we could hardly ascend seemed so far below us next to the middle one on which we were standing, as if they were little hills, when, however, they were so immense that I thought I had not seen any higher, except that in this the middle one exceeded them by far. From there we saw Egypt and Palestine and the Red Sea and the Parthenian Sea,[144] which leads to Alexandria, as well as the immense territory of the Saracens,[145] so far below us that it could hardly be believed; but those holy ones pointed out each of them to us. (It. 3.7–8)

Not all of these areas could be seen from Mount Sinai, and Egeria's final sentence, if we read it in the context of the whole section, shows that she knew that and wanted to share that information with her sisters, too, however politely. This passage reveals three other features common in Egeria's

[143] Ex 32–34.

[144] *Mare Pathenicum* denotes the eastern part of the Mediterranean. It is not visible from Mount Sinai. See McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 108n8.

[145] By Saracens, Egeria means merchants and shepherds who live in the Sinai peninsula and in the area of Petra.

description pertaining to what she saw: first, she not only saw what the guides chose to show to her but also actively asked to view other places of which she had read or heard; second, she combined the visual experience and the specific Scriptural passages; and third, she tried to describe the landscape and the views in such a way that her readers could imagine the scene themselves and learn to understand the Scriptures better.

The passage about Egeria's visit to Mount Nebo is also revealing (It. 12.3–7). Entering the church on top of the mountain, Egeria spontaneously noticed (*vidi*) a slightly raised place and asked the holy men what it was; they then told her about a tradition about the grave of Moses. After a prayer, the presbyters and monks asked if Egeria wanted to see (*videre*) the places mentioned in the books of Moses. Egeria was pleased, and the holy men showed her all the places that were visible (*parent*) from there. Egeria reports both what they saw and what they did not see: "But believe me, revered ladies, that the pillar [of Lot's wife] itself was not visible, but only the place was shown" (It. 12.79). By means of her depiction of the conversation, Egeria fashions herself as an active and competent agent who encounters the local holy men respectfully but also critically.

Apart from biblical places and beautiful views on her journey, Egeria saw how the services were celebrated in Jerusalem and at the pilgrimage sites; she saw churches, chapels and memorial sites, as well as material objects such as candles, doors and the decoration of the churches. However, when describing Jerusalem and the events there, she did not write explicitly about seeing; nor did she write about spiritual seeing or experiences of seeing biblical events becoming alive in front of her eyes, as Paula did; she wrote solely about what she saw with her corporeal eyes.

"Illustrated Bible" is an expression which characterizes well the goal and the art of Egeria's seeing the holy places.[146] When describing a visit to a biblical site, she reported to her readers what the place, the views, the edifices, the people and the liturgical life there looked like. It was important for her to see the biblical sites with her own eyes in order to understand and memorize the Scriptural events better. Jerome describes this kind of seeing as "One who has seen Judea with his own eyes … will gaze more clearly upon the Holy Scripture."[147]

The difference between Egeria's way of seeing and that of some other pilgrims in her time becomes clear in the light of what Augustine writes about different modes of seeing: corporeal vision, vision which enables one to see things in one's mind even when the eyes are closed (from memory and mind),

[146] See Limor, "Reading," 11; McCormack, "Loca sancta," 22n5.
[147] Jer. *Praefatio in interpretationem librorum paralipomeon*; Frank, *The Memory*, 104.

spiritual vision by which one can see things from which one has read or heard about (e.g. from the Scripture) and *visio beatifica*.[148] While Paula is a good example of the third category, and her approach can be characterized as "re-experienced Bible" or as "biblical realism,"[149] Egeria represents the first and second categories. She wrote about seeing in its ordinary meaning, and when writing, used her memory.

4.4 Tasting the Holy

Egeria told surprisingly little about the celebration of the Eucharist in Jerusalem and in the Holy Land.[150] McGowan and Bradshaw explain this as Egeria's way of omitting things which were similar to home and focusing mostly on what was new or different; and they refer to her recurring expressions such as "everything is done according to the custom by which it is also done everywhere on the Lord's Day" without mentioning what the custom was.[151] In Egeria's text, the Eucharist was celebrated on Sundays and Feast Days but possibly even on other days, too. The Latin word for Eucharist, for her, is *oblatio* (offering) and its cognate verbs *oblationem facere* and *offerre* (It. 35.2). In Egeria's understanding, the whole congregation offer the Eucharist; she, for example, writes that on Choreb "we made both the oblation there and most earnest prayer" (*fecimus ergo et ibi oblationem et orationem impensissimam*, It. 4.3).[152] Participating in the Eucharist is expressed with the verb *communicare* (It. 3.6–7; 16.7; 35.2). The subject used in the first part of the book is "we," and in the second, "they." For example, on Mount Sinai, Egeria and her group met presbyters and monks and participated in the Eucharist in a little church on the summit of this Mountain (It. 3.5–7).

Another way of tasting the holy are the gifts (*eulogiae*) the pilgrims received when visiting certain monasteries or cells of monks. On Mount Sinai, at the Well of Moses, at Aenon and at the Well of Jacob, Egeria and her companions received gifts as blessings from the monks (It. 3.6–7; 11.1; 15.6; 21.3). Twice Egeria explains what these *eulogiae* were: fruits that the monks grew at the holy sites. Egeria does not say that they ate them but that can be assumed.[153]

Tasting, or seeing, fresh water is found in Egeria's text several times. When she describes the places she visited and the biblical texts that were read at those

[148] See Smith, "What Now," 142–143.
[149] Laato, "What Makes," 194; Frank, *The Memory*, 106.
[150] For a detailed discussion, see McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 79–83.
[151] McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 79.
[152] See McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 110.
[153] For *eulogiae*, see McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 108n6; Stemberger, *Jews and Christians*, 114.

places, she often chooses topics that, in one way or another, are connected to water. Egeria is keen to see biblical places connected to water but also contemporary sites with their traditions and practices which are connected to water. It is natural that pilgrims traveling in dry and arid areas notice water, but as water and fish also have so many biblical and theological connotations which Egeria's readers easily could have thought of, it is possible that the author has had theological interpretations in mind. It seems that in her text historical, geographical, biblical and theological interpretations of water are interwoven. Egeria's story culminates with a long description of baptism in Jerusalem at Easter – it is preceded by the pre-baptismal catechesis (It. 45–46) and followed by post-baptismal teaching (It. 47). The name Egeria uses for baptism is bath (It. 45.4).

In Aenon, the water was, according to Egeria, used for baptism, drinking and washing. She was shown the location where John the Baptist baptized people and where people were still being baptized (It. 15.1–5). The local presbyter called this water "pure" and "excellent" and coming from a stream and told her that holy monks used to come there to wash. On the way to Nebo, Egeria visited the Well of Moses (It. 10.8). The local presbyter guided Egeria to the place where Moses gave water to the children of Israel when they were thirsty. The pilgrims tasted the "abundant water, very beautiful and clear, with excellent taste." In Edessa, Egeria saw "springs full of fish, such as I never saw before, that is, of such size, and so bright and of such a good taste" (It. 19.7). Egeria's emphasized interest in tasting and seeing water, combined with her references to biblical narratives about water, can be understood as a way of reminding her readers that this biblical and theological topic is physically present everywhere in the Holy Land, culminating in the baptismal rite in Jerusalem.

Two further topics belong to tasting: the fasts and a story of one person misbehaving during the showing of the wood of the cross. Fasting means controlling the tasting; Egeria reports the rules and practices for fasting when it comes to the catechumens (It. 26.5), all the faithful (It. 27–37) and different groups of the ascetics (It. 27.9; 28.1–3), at different times of the week and during the developing liturgical year. Egeria's description of the Lent in chapters 27–37 is an important source for the early phases of this time.[154] Once she uses the word "taste" (*gustare*), when writing that some ascetics do not taste bread, oil or fruit during Lent, only water and a little broth (It. 28.4).

Egeria tells a peculiar story of misconduct beside the relic of the "holy wood of the cross" (It. 37.2). On one occasion on a Good Friday when this relic was being shown to all at a table in Golgotha, the people came up one by one to kiss

[154] See in particular It. 88–91.

the wood. Egeria recorded that someone had bitten off and stolen a piece of the wood. Thereafter, in Egeria's time, the relic was guarded by deacons. Egeria seems a bit hesitant when referring to this story as she frames it "because, I don't know when, someone is said to have bitten …" Perhaps she did not quite believe the story.

4.5 Touching and Smelling the Holy

The study of lived religion focuses attention onto what is said about material objects in the practice of religion. The attention of the early pilgrims to the Holy Land was directed both to sacred architecture and topography and to relics and items they could carry home when returning from their journey.[155] In this section, I deal with the touching and smelling; the sacred architecture and topography has already been discussed in Sections 3.2–3.

Egeria mentioned some objects that were shown as relics. The only passages where she explicitly wrote about touching (*tangere*) are the above-mentioned episode with the holy wood of the cross (*lignum sanctum crucis*), the inscription (*titulus*) and two other relics, Solomon's ring and the horn with which the kings were anointed (It. 36.4–37.2), objects that were shown to the faithful at Golgotha on Good Friday.[156] She explained that every year a chair was placed for the bishop and the deacons stood around him. A table covered with a linen cloth was placed before him and upon it a silver-gilt casket. The holy wood of the cross was taken from the casket and, together with the inscription, placed on the table. Both the faithful and the catechumens came forward, in good order, one by one, kissed the holy wood and touched it with their foreheads; however, they were not permitted to touch it with their hands. Two other holy objects were also venerated; Egeria wrote that the faithful "kiss the horn and venerate the ring."[157]

Already in Egeria's time, there was a custom of bringing souvenirs from holy places. The only instance where Egeria mentions anything like this, however, is when she writes that holy men could give *eulogiae* (blessings, gifts) to the pilgrims (It. 3.6–7; 11.1; 15.6; 21.3). These *eulogiae* were fruit and, therefore, there was nothing for the pilgrims to carry home.

[155] On the development of sacred spaces in the Holy Land, see Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 36–55; Yasin, "Sacred Spaces"; Laato, "Egeria's Itinerarium." For the material objects, see Frank, *Unfinished Christians*.

[156] Cyril of Jerusalem is the earliest witness of the veneration of the cross. See Myst. 5.21–22; Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 83–84. Egeria is the first witness of the inscription.

[157] Paula described the kissing of the wood of the cross in Jer. ep. 46.13. For the ring and the horn, see Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 321.

Egeria's travelogue is one of the earliest witnesses of the use of incense in the liturgy.[158] In It. 24.10, Egeria describes the morning service in Anastasis. Early in the morning, the doors were opened and the people came into a brightly lightened basilica. After a recitation of three psalms and three prayers, sensers (*thiamataria*) were brought into the cave of Anastasis and the whole basilica was filled with the smell (*odor*). The incense added an important aspect to this already impressive experience.

Touching holy objects and smelling incense, however, play only a minimal role in Egeria's text. The object she was most interested in bringing back home was the manuscript containing a copy of the correspondence between Jesus and King Abgar, and that was for the purpose of study not veneration (It. 19.19).

4.6 Emotions and Experiences

Egeria never wrote about negative emotions; on the contrary, she expressed happiness over many things. However, this kind of language can be understood as something she thought was expected of a pilgrim. She is happy and grateful for having been able to travel:

> And although I ought always to give thanks to God for all things – I am not speaking of the many such things that he has been gracious enough to bestow on me, unworthy and underserving, that I should journey through all the places that I did not deserve – yet I cannot sufficiently give thanks for all those holy ones who were gracious enough to receive my unimportance in their monastic cells with a willing mind or to lead me surely through all the places that I was always searching for according to the Scriptures. (It. 5.12)

She was equally happy to meet her dear friend Marthana again: "I gave endless thanks to Christ our God, who was gracious enough to fulfill for me, unworthy and underserving, my desires in all things" (It. 23.3–5). Repeatedly she commented that the psalms, antiphons, hymns and readings were well chosen and, for example in It. 25.5, she noted that this is quite remarkable. In It. 19.19, she states she is very pleased to have received copies of the letters of Abgar, and she informs her readers why: The copies at home are less complete than those she now has received.

Another kind of experience Egeria witnessed was in connection to liturgical services. She thought it was worth informing her friends far away about the strong reaction of the Christians in Jerusalem to readings from the Scriptures (It. 24.10; 34; 36.3; 37.7). The "groaning and moaning" and "such emotion and lamentation from all people that it is astonishing" must have been different from

[158] McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 153n10.

home. Egeria did not mention whether these kinds of strong reactions were spontaneous or something the Christians in Jerusalem had learned to do.

More frequently than directly mentioning emotions, she described events that were great experiences or exceptionally demanding for ordinary Christians, such as the Palm Sunday procession when great numbers of Christians followed their bishop down from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem, singing together by candlelight, parents carrying children on their shoulders (It. 31.2–3; 36.2). It must have been equally impressive to sit by the Anastasis before dawn, singing and praying together and, at the cockcrow, to go through the opened doors into the church where numerous lamps were lit as the room filled with incense (It. 24.8–10).[159] On the other hand, days filled with a program of liturgical services and processions, or the time of fasting, could, according to Egeria, be "great labor for the people" (It. 43.1). When reporting of her travels around the Holy Land, she sometimes told her friends how difficult and exhausting it was to climb or descend a mountain (It. 11.4). As an energetic pilgrim, however, she never stopped with the hardships but remembered to add that "however, the labor was partly not felt because I saw that the desire that I had being fulfilled by God's will" (It. 3.3). She interpreted her experiences in the light of how she understood a pilgrimage to be and how a good pilgrim reacted to the difficulties of the journey.

Compared to Egeria's descriptions on experiences, her contemporary pilgrim Paula had a different approach. In her letter to Marcella, Paula imagines what they would do when Marcella arrived in Jerusalem: entering the cave of the savior, weeping inside the grave of the Lord, kissing the wood of the cross, being exalted in prayer, seeing Lazarus emerging in his burial clothes and seeing the prophet Amos still playing his shepherd's horn.[160] For Paula, visiting holy sites meant the possibility to re-experience the Bible,[161] whereas Egeria describes Christians experiencing pilgrimage and liturgy.

4.7 Sense Perceptions and Emotions in Communication

In the ancient world, not everybody could travel to Jerusalem. Those who did were able to share their experiences by means of travel diaries and letters. What Egeria experienced in Jerusalem clearly impressed her, and her frequent mentions of sense perception was one way of taking her readers along with her on the journey. She described what she saw, heard, smelled,

[159] On the development of night vigil, see Frank, *Unfinished Christians*, 77–81; McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 75–79; Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 125.
[160] Jer. ep. 56.13. [161] Laato, "What Makes," 193.

touched and tasted in order to inform and inspire her friends at home, to enhance their understanding of the Scriptures and theology and to do what any traveler does: to describe the local milieu just for entertaining.

As Carol Harrison has noted, people in antiquity understood sense perception differently from the way people do today. It was seen as a process by which images were impressed upon the mind and stored in the memory.[162] Therefore, it was of great importance what the Christians chose to fill their minds with and, in the case of someone like Egeria writing a travelogue, her readers' minds. By focusing on liturgical experiences, she formulated her view on what a pilgrim does, namely participating in the liturgical life of the local church.

Even if Egeria was not an educated rhetoric, she did what a rhetoric should do: teach, delight and persuade. Describing sense perceptions is an effective way of achieving this. As a communicator, Egeria's goal was to take her readers along with her on her journey and to describe her experiences in such a way that pertinent information, as well as the delight and sense of participating in the events in the Holy Land, could be transmitted to her readers. A narrative is an effective way to give an example of what a pilgrim – or any Christian – should do.

Unlike many others of her time, such as Paula of Bethlehem according to Jerome's depiction, Egeria focused only on describing the physical sense perception, not on the spiritual one.[163] Jerome wrote about Paula: "She knew the Scriptures by heart and although she loved the historical facts, referring to them as the foundations of truth, she preferred to follow the spiritual meaning"; the first part would of course characterize Egeria, too, but not the second.[164]

Finally, Egeria's description of the landscape and soundscape – what she saw and heard – sheds light on the Christianization of Jerusalem and of the Holy Land.[165] The atmosphere of this city and the land was not changed only by the erection of new buildings, such as churches and monasteries, but also by who was allowed to be seen and heard on its streets and roads. Even if she chose to describe only Christian sounds and ignored the others, nonetheless she bore witness to a change that was happening during the fourth century in the Holy Land.[166]

[162] Harrison, *The Art of Listening*, 10. [163] Jer. ep. 108.10. [164] Jer. ep. 108.26.
[165] For the Christianization of Palestine in the fourth century, see Stemberger, *Jews and Christians*; Tabbernee, *Early Christianity.*
[166] Laato, "Egeria's Itinerarium,"184.

5 Egeria as a Mediator of Theological and Biblical Traditions

5.1 Different Ways to Communicate Theological Views

It has been pointed out that Egeria does not say much about dogmatic issues,[167] nor does she explain in any depth the different ways to interpret the Scripture, even if she knew that they existed.[168] There is little about the contents of the sermons or the catechetical instruction and she does not explain the theology expressed by the practices. Instead, she limits herself to mentioning that homilies, teaching and liturgy took place or writes very concisely about their contents. When thinking of the time and the geographical area in which she traveled and lived, she must have heard something of the debates on the Trinity or Christology or of the different Christian groups, but even if she did visit Edessa, notable for its various communities,[169] and visited Constantinople close to 381, the year of the Council, she did not directly comment on any of the theological disputes.

Compared with her contemporary pilgrim, Paula of Bethlehem, whose letter to Marcella contains both exegetical and dogmatical arguments, Egeria merely describes the ecclesial practices. Seen from the viewpoint of the "study of lived religion," it is possible that she was not interested in doctrinal matters or differences between theological traditions; for her, the rituals would have been more interesting. It also might be that she lacked the capacity to understand the doctrinal differences. Theological views can, however, be presented in several ways: Egeria seldom comments directly on dogmatic questions, but she does present her views through narratives. By focusing on certain practices and topics, including pre- and post-baptismal instruction, pilgrimage, meeting holy people and visiting holy places, participating in the liturgical life and using the Scriptures, she emphasizes their importance for her.

From the point of view of the "study of lived religion," it is natural that a pilgrim can focus on material and practical things and the experiences obtained; but this does not indicate that they are unaware of the theology behind the praxis. Theological ideas can be expressed very well through the narration of liturgy, experiences or even soundscapes. Egeria's theological interests can, thus, be identified by the topics she chooses to present to her readers. To a certain degree, the topics might have been defined by her expectations of the interests and learning of the addressees. Expressions such as "I want you to know, ladies, revered sisters . . ." (It. 3.8) and the recurring comparison between practices in Jerusalem and at home show that she had her readers in mind when

[167] See Leyerle ("The Voices," 571) and Reuling ("Pious Intrepidness," 250) who argues against this view.
[168] Egeria mentions two ways of biblical interpretation, literal and spiritual (It. 46.3).
[169] See Tabbernee, *Early Christianity*, 64–65.

choosing what to write about. What she omitted, or deemed unnecessary to explain, is also dependent on what she thinks of her readers' level of knowledge: It is a waste of time to explain things both she and her intended readers were already familiar with.[170]

It is not always easy to discern how well Egeria was aware of the theological thinking behind the practices she describes. In order to identify possible lines of thought, it is helpful to read her text together with other texts from the same time and place, in particular those of the bishop of Jerusalem, Cyril, and the letter of Paula and Eustochium. However, where Egeria does not explicitly explain the theological ideas, one must be careful not to read too much into the omission. Later in this section I discuss some examples of theological ideas that she probably embraced but which she does not formulate explicitly: First, I think it is possible to understand her enthusiastic and detailed description of the continuous liturgical life in Jerusalem in the light of the theology of the contemporary bishop, Cyril of Jerusalem, as a reflection on the liturgy in the heavenly Jerusalem, and second, the recurring theme in her text, fresh water, might be connected to her lengthy description of baptism in Jerusalem.

Finally, Egeria's way of arguing is to present only positive ideas. She never criticizes anyone. A good example of Egeria's way of dealing with theological disputes, which from other sources we know existed at that time, is her description of her visit to Edessa: She says nothing about the different groups there but focuses instead on those theologians of whom she approves.

5.2 Egeria and the Scriptures

For the Bible, Egeria uses the word *scripturae* or *sanctae scripturae* (It. 48.2). She shows awareness of the difference between canonical and noncanonical books (It. 20.10). She mentions, by name, several biblical books or parts of them, such as Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Psalms, Acts of the Apostles and the letters of Paul. She mentions the "Book of Moses" by which she means Exodus (It. 3.1). According to the practice in the Septuagint, she referred to the Books of Samuel and Kings as *Liber regnorum*, "The book of the Kingdoms" (It. 4.3). In several instances she writes that certain readings come from "The Gospel" (It. 27.2), while the epistle readings are called "The Apostle" (It. 37.5). Sometimes Egeria neither identifies the readings read nor gives sufficient information for others to do so. However, relatively often she reveals enough for an identification to be possible.

[170] McGowan and Bradshaw (*The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 69) have noted Egeria's habit of leaving things she expected her readers to know unmentioned.

When it comes to the Old Testament, Egeria used some version of the Old Latin translations based on the Septuagint.[171] Some of her information comes from the choices made in the Septuagint, such as her calling Laban a Syrian (It. 20.10). As noted earlier, she is well aware of the existence of different languages used in the church and states that in Jerusalem the Scriptural readings must always be read in Greek (It. 47.4).

Both the Old and New Testaments were important for her; she visited places mentioned in both, quoted texts from both and alluded to themes in both. She wrote about the relation between the two Testaments when she talks about what was done on Good Friday. She emphasized that everything concerning the Lord's passion had been foretold by the prophets, and what they had foretold had now been completely fulfilled. The Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles witness the Lord's passion; the hymns chosen to suit to the theme.

> From the sixth hour to the ninth hour readings are read and hymns recited continually, to show all the people that whatever the prophets foretold concerning the Lord's passion is shown to have been done both from the Gospels and also from the writings of the Apostles. And so during those three hours all the people are taught that nothing had been done that had not been foretold, and nothing had been told that had not been completely fulfilled. (It. 37.6)

Diligent mentioning of the Scriptures was an important strategy Egeria used in her travel journal. For her, not only was it central to emphasize *that* the Scriptures were read and heard, or *how* they were interpreted, but *where* they were read was also of importance. The last point includes both a geographical and a liturgical aspect. Visiting biblical sites and praying there was naturally the reason for the whole pilgrimage (It. 13.1). Both Christians living in the Holy Land and pilgrims traveling there had the unique possibility to read the biblical texts in the correct places, and Egeria described this custom eloquently, especially when dealing with the celebration of the Great Week (It. 30–39). In the second part of her *Itinerarium*, Egeria emphasized two fundamental sites in the use of the Scriptures: the liturgical life and the catechetical instruction.

Egeria not only described the use of the Scriptures but even commented on their importance. A few times, she formulated her appreciation of knowledge of the Scriptures directly. Once she wrote to her "lady sisters" that the local Christians knew their Bible so well because the catechetical teaching was organized in such a way to achieve this (It. 46) and sometimes she described

[171] For the history of Old Testament *Vetus Latina* texts, see Schulz-Flügel, "The Latin Old Testament," 642–662.

an ideal ascetic as a person who is "very learned in God's Scriptures"; such is the bishop of Arabia (It. 8.4).

When describing her travels in Egypt, the Holy Land and Mesopotamia and the liturgical year in Jerusalem, Egeria often quoted the Scriptures or alluded to recognizable Scriptural passages.[172] She and her companions planned their routes and knew which biblical places they wanted to see. On the road, even when they had guides, she also remembered the biblical geography herself and actively asked to see places she knew were close by.[173] She reported that when visiting a particular biblical site the pilgrims always heard passages connected to that particular place; often she additionally retold the actual biblical narratives in her own words. Both on her travels and when writing about the liturgical life in Jerusalem, she repeatedly expressed her admiration that the Scriptural readings, prayers and songs were well chosen to suit that particular place and time. It is clear that she felt it important to communicate to her readers her appreciation of the frequent use of the Scriptures.

Egeria's way of connecting pilgrimage sites to the relevant Scriptural passages is pedagogical. The pilgrims traveled toward any biblical site knowing where to go and having the Scriptural narratives in mind – *Itinerarium* starts with her mentioning that when they were heading toward Mount Sinai they had a travel plan (It. 1.1; 2.3). On the road, they were shown other places mentioned in the Scriptures (It. 1.1). Egeria not only names the places they saw when passing by but also describes the nature, the views and how it felt to travel there (It. 1.1–2.1). She and her companions often had guides who told them what to do in order to reach a certain biblical site (It. 1.2). Once at the site, the appropriate readings were read. An example of this kind of use of the Scriptures is found in Egeria's depiction of the visit to the plain where Moses sang his Canticle (Deut 32). She wrote: "For it was always our custom that whenever we were about to visit places we desired, first prayer was made there, then the reading was read from the codex, also one psalm relevant to the matter was recited and prayer was made there again" (It. 10.7).

In Jerusalem, the whole congregation gathered on certain Feast Days at precise locations or churches to celebrate together. The Great Week, in particular, consisted of processions and stational liturgy celebrated on the Mount of Olives, Gethsemane and Golgotha (It. 30–38).[174] As Egeria describes these

[172] Tafi ("Egeria e la Bibbia," 167–176) has identified approximately 100 quotations from the Old Testament and the New Testament; Bermejo Cabera (*Pellegrinare*, 28–32, 48–53) has published a list of readings identified as used in the liturgy.

[173] See, e.g., It. 7.2.

[174] For stational liturgy, see McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 70; Galadza, *Liturgy*, 33–38.

practices, it is pedagogical and emotional to walk together, sing hymns and listen to texts, all "appropriate to the place and time," as our author puts it many times.

During her travels to the biblical sites, it was not only the Scriptural readings which added to the understanding of the Scriptures and the particular location; readings were always joined by prayer and the singing of hymns that were connected to that particular site, and when possible, by the celebration of the Eucharist. Moreover, Egeria repeatedly described the views and the nature of that specific location. In this way, she invited her readers to imagine the Scriptural events better and so learn more about the contents of the Scripture.[175] However, because of her frequent personal comments on what she sees, hears and experiences, one does get the impression that not only is her goal to enhance her readers' knowledge of the geography or the Scripture but that, through her narrative, they could participate in her experiences.

When describing the liturgical life in Jerusalem, and the visits to the pilgrimage sites, Egeria constantly mentioned the Scriptural readings. There was already an early system of lectionaries, that is, prescribed texts for certain Sundays and Feast Days; and in several cases it is possible to identify the texts Egeria mentions. A good example is the passage from Acts which was read each year at Pentecost in the church on Mount Sion, and that a passage about the resurrection was read every Sunday. On Tuesday of the Great Week, Matthew 24:4 was read; today the same text is still read in the Orthodox churches on that same day.

A more complex question is Egeria's knowledge and her use of different ways to interpret the Scriptures. Anne McGowan and Paul Bradshaw point out correctly that Egeria never uses allegorical or typological interpretation of the Scriptures.[176] However, when describing the catechetical instruction given by the bishop of Jerusalem, Egeria shows that she is aware of two ways of interpretation:

> They receive the Creed; he explains to them the meaning of the Creed in a similar way to the meaning of all the Scriptures, each article first literally (*carnaliter*) and then spiritually (*spiritualiter*); so also he explains the Creed. And so it is that in these places all the faithful follow the Scriptures when they are read in the church, because they are all taught during those forty days, that is, from the first hour to the third hour, because catechesis is done for three hours. God knows, lady sisters, that the voices of the faithful . . . are very loud. (It. 46.3)

[175] See Röwekamp, *Egeria*, 108. [176] McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 13.

Angelo Tafi summarizes Egeria's understanding of the use of the Scriptures in two words mentioned in this quotation: *carnaliter* and *spiritualiter*, "literally" and "spiritually,"[177] and Catherine Sider Hamilton writes that in Egeria's text the literal history becomes a spiritual transformation. According to both, for a pilgrim, the biblical story comes alive, "inviting the reader to come in."[178] Egeria's descriptions about her visits to pilgrimage sites mentioned in the Old Testament point to an understanding of Christological interpretation of the relevant biblical texts – why else would a Christian visit those particular sites? Christian hymns and prayers certainly included typological or allegorical interpretation of the relevant Old Testament passages, and even at these sites, Egeria comments that the prayers and hymns are appropriate to that place.

An explanation for the lack of reference to specific typological or allegorical interpretations is the genre itself: A travel narrative did not necessarily contain such material. Egeria's texts were meant to be read aloud within a circle of ladies who knew the Scriptures and their interpretation well, and it was not necessary to write about things with which addressees were already familiar.

Having participated in the liturgical life of Jerusalem and listened to homilies and hymns almost daily for three years, I think Egeria must at least have been aware that allegorical and typological interpretations did exist even if she does not explicitly write about them. I also think that some themes she deals with point to typological and allegorical thinking. I present two topics suggesting this in what follows: the centrality of baptism and texts about water and the connection between the earthly and heavenly Jerusalem.

5.3 Participating in the Liturgical Life of Jerusalem

Egeria was a pilgrim, and her travel diary reflects the experiences of a pilgrim. She says that pilgrims, including herself, came to Jerusalem to pray, *gratia orationis* (It. 13.1–2; 17.1–2). In fact, her whole diary can be understood as an account of what this *oratio* included.[179] With *oratio* or the verb *orare*, which together occur ninety-six times in *Itinerarium*, she never meant silent prayer. A prayer of only one person is found only when it occurs in connection to specific biblical figures, but in her description of her own time *oratio* exclusively denotes common prayer in a holy place, a church or a site of pilgrimage. *Oratio* thus meant participating in the liturgical life in the Holy Land.

The second part of *Itinerarium*, chapters 24–49, deals with the liturgical life in Jerusalem and its neighborhood and includes a section about pre- and

[177] Tafi, "Egeria e la Bibbia," 175–176. [178] Hamilton, "Egeria," 181.
[179] For the broad understanding of the word *oratio*, see Harrison, *The Art of Listening*, 183–228, esp. 191.

post-baptismal catechesis (chapters 45–47). These topics have been studied extensively, as Egeria's text is one of the first sources on the development of the Byzantine liturgy and the baptismal instruction in Jerusalem.[180] Only an overview on the theme, therefore, is given here and it is focused on how Egeria communicates to her readers how the liturgical and catechetical practices were organized. Some interesting details are discussed, too.

Egeria's description of the liturgical week and year is detailed but not as completely and logically as a modern reader might wish. She has omitted things that were probably familiar for her readers and she does not explain everything. She sometimes uses terminology, such as hymn, antiphon and psalm, in an inconsistent way. The information presented by Egeria can, to a certain degree, be filled in, corrected and understood with the help of other materials from approximately the same time, such as the catechetical homilies of Cyril of Jerusalem and the Armenian lectionary.[181]

Egeria clearly thought that the liturgy and catechetical instruction were of interest to her readers. The second part of her work begins with her address to her dear sisters expressing her confidence in their eagerly wishing to know how regular ritual was celebrated in the holy places; it is indeed her duty to inform them about this (It. 24.1). Typical for Egeria is to compare how things are done in the east (*hic*, here) with those in the west, at home (*apud nos*, by us). She knows both traditions and helps her readers create a picture of the Jerusalemite customs by comparing them with customs at home. She never explicitly suggests that Christians in the west should adopt eastern ways of doing things, but an enthusiastic story is, of course, inspiring in itself. Three examples are presented here.[182] In the first quotation, Egeria first states that the Sunday service is similar everywhere and then adds what is specific to Jerusalem; in the second, she notes the differences during Lent; in the third, she introduces the practices of baptismal instruction in Jerusalem which differed from those in the west.

> Everything is done according to the custom by which it is also done everywhere on the Lord's Day. But it is the custom here [*hic*] that as many of all the presbyters seated who wish preach, and after them, the bishop preaches. (It. 25.1)

> For as among us [*apud nos*] forty days before Pascha are observed, so here [*hic*] eight weeks are observed before Pascha. (It. 27.1)

[180] For the study of liturgy in Jerusalem, see Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts*; Bitton-Ashkelony and Krueger, *Prayer*; Galadza, *Liturgy*; Day, "Ritualizing Time"; McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*.

[181] See Galadza, *Liturgy*, 30–31. [182] Other examples: It. 46.3; 27.1; 28.4; 44.1; 45.1.

> I must write this, lady sisters, lest you think that it is done without explanation. For the custom here is such that those who come to baptism during those forty days in which there is fasting are first exorcized by the clergy early. (It. 46.1)

In addition to how the liturgical life and catechetical instruction were organized, Egeria reported about liturgical details such as the veneration of the cross (It. 37.1–3), use of incense (It. 24.10), participation of babies carried by their parents in processions (It. 36.2) and how the churches were decorated during the high festivals (It. 25.8–9).

The character of the church in Jerusalem and in the Holy Land was unique. The Christian church had its origin there, and many biblical events could be celebrated at their original places. The Christians could, and did, embrace Jewish traditions and practices, such as organizing services at certain times each day.[183] Influences came from both the monastic service and the so-called cathedral service.[184]

The practice of stational services that Egeria described so vividly was found in Jerusalem.[185] The fourth-century bishops of Jerusalem began the custom of walking in procession from one station to the next with their congregation, having a short service and then proceeding together to the next station. The wandering Christians sung hymns, antiphons and psalms. Another thing found only in Jerusalem was the custom of the bishop reciting the reading about the resurrection of Christ every Sunday morning – at the very spot where, according to tradition, the event had taken place (It. 24.10). The great number of local and visiting clergy, ascetics and pilgrims made it possible to organize an unusually rich liturgical life. Services could be held every day, and even at night (It. 24.1).

In Egeria's time, daily and weekly services were held in the Martyrium and Anastasis according to a well-organized scheme. Unfortunately, when Egeria described this system, she took her addressees into consideration too well and omitted things that were familiar to them. Many times she wrote that something was done "according to the custom" without writing anything more about the custom; this is particularly the case with the celebration of the Eucharist.[186] There were daily prayers from Monday to Saturday at the cockcrow, morning, sixth and ninth hours as well as in the evening. During Lent there was prayer even at the third hour. On Sundays the Christians started their day already before cockcrow, followed by vigils and a Eucharistic service. *Lucernare* was

[183] By the end of the fourth century, the practice of celebrating services every morning and evening had spread in many parts of the Roman Empire.
[184] McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 71–73.
[185] McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 70.
[186] See McGowan and Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria*, 79.

celebrated every evening.[187] Egeria knew this prayer in Latin by the names *lucernare* or *lucernarium* (she uses both) but she explained to her sisters that in Jerusalem "they" call it *lykhnikon* (which she wrote *licinicon*).[188] She described the beginning of this impressive service at Anastasis as follows:

> At the tenth hour – what they call here Licinicon, for we say Lucernare – a whole crowd similarly gathers at the Anastasis; all the lamps and candles are lit, and the light is immense. The light is not brought from outside but is taken from inside the cave, that is, from inside the enclosure, where a lamp is always burning night and day. The Lucernare psalms and also antiphons are recited for some time. (It. 24.4)

The daily prayers and vigils consisted of prayers, the singing of hymns, psalms and antiphons; sometimes Egeria mentions even Scriptural readings. According to Egeria, Sundays started very early, before the first cockcrow (It. 24.8). The Eucharist was celebrated at least every Sunday (It. 25.1; 43.3), sometimes even on Fridays and Saturdays, too (It. 27.7).

Egeria's use of the words *psalmus*, *antiphona* and *hymnus* is somewhat inconsistent. The word *psalmus* occurs eight times in the first part of *Itinerarium*, and in the latter part eighteen times. *Psalmus* often refers to the biblical psalms, which could be sung without hymns and antiphons. They were sung both during the night and day and there were already psalms for certain times of the day, *lucernare* and morning. The word *antiphona* occurs only once in the first part of Egeria's text but thirty-one times when she describes the liturgical life of Jerusalem. Antiphons were always sung in connection to the psalms or hymns. The word *hymnus* occurs only in the second part of *Itinerarium* and is found very often, seventy-two times. For Egeria, the hymns belonged to Jerusalem and they were often sung in processions when the bishop was led from one place to another *cum hymnis*, with the singing of hymns. Egeria often comments that these psalms, hymns and antiphons are well chosen to suit that specific place and time. Her comments stress the contents of the songs, but liturgical song had other functions, too; it provided temporal and acoustic space for prayer and devotion. Even if she does not point out this aspect, the mere fact that she writes so enthusiastically about liturgical song throughout her text speaks for itself.

Egeria lived in Jerusalem for three years and participated in the yearly liturgical feasts. She described how the great feasts, in particular Easter, were celebrated in Jerusalem. The greatest feasts were Epiphany (It. 25.6–12), Easter

[187] *Lucernare* was, at this time, known both in the east and in the west. Its celebration in Rome is mentioned in the Apostolic Traditions around 200 CE. The biblical background for this prayer are Ex 27:20–21; Lev 24:1–9; and Ps 36.

[188] It. 40–41.

and Eastertide (It. 30–41), Pentecost (It. 43) and Encaenia (It. 48–49),[189] but as Egeria described it, even the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple was celebrated with great joy (It. 26). On her travels, Egeria also participated in annual memorials of the martyrs (It. 20.5; 23.7). Participating in these yearly celebrations brought a time dimension to Egeria's place-oriented pilgrimage: During a liturgical year the church commemorated Jesus' life events and different times in salvation history.

It can be debated as to why Egeria chose to report in such detail on how the liturgical life in Jerusalem was organized. She claims that her readers were interested in it, but it could also be that she became so impressed by it that she wanted to share her enthusiasm and perhaps give ideas to the west. However, as I claim in the following section, it may also be that she had listened to the homilies of Cyril of Jerusalem, who taught that the continuous prayer in the earthly Jerusalem reflected the continuous liturgy in the heavenly Jerusalem.

5.4 Egeria as a Theologian

5.4.1 Theology in a Travelogue

In this section, Egeria's theological learning and her familiarity with doctrinal matters is discussed, along with how she communicated these to her readers. Before looking at specific topics, it must be remembered that her travelogue is just that: a travelogue. In this genre, it was usual to focus on events and impressions and not to linger on philosophical or theological debates.[190] Additionally, when writing to an audience one knows well, as Egeria did, one does not have to say everything, but one can choose to focus on what is new. That said, compared to earlier Christian itineraries to the Holy Land, the Pilgrimage of Bordeaux and texts about Helena, Egeria's *Itinerarium* contains much more information on what the Christians thought and believed than is found in those earlier texts. At the same time, it is true that, for example, in her letter to Marcella, Egeria's contemporary pilgrim, Paula, does discuss theological topics at a much deeper level than Egeria does.[191]

One of the main goals of Egeria's travelogue is to add comprehension and knowledge among her readers. It is characteristic for her to combine the geographical sites with the words of the Scriptures. She presents herself as

[189] *Encaenia*, the feast of the dedication of the temple on September 13. The name comes from Septuagint (2 Chr 7:8). Egeria writes in It. 48.1–2 that the dedication of Martyrium (in 335) and Anastasis (close to Egeria's time) as well as the discovery of the cross by Helena were connected to the same day.

[190] See Rutherford, "The Experience," 137. [191] See Laato, "What Makes."

a person who is well aware of traditions both in the east and in the west and who is able to and interested in comparing them with each other.

Egeria explicitly shows her appreciation for teaching and learning the Christian faith in several ways. When describing the pre-baptismal teaching, she emphasized the duration, the profundity and the strategy of the teaching. She reported that the bishop first teaches the catechumens the Scriptures, interpreting them literally and spiritually, and after five weeks, he does the same thing with the Creed (It. 46.1–4).[192] Egeria commented, with admiration, on this practice; she thought that because of this effective teaching, "in these places all the faithful" are able to follow the Scriptures when they are read in the church (It. 46.3). Having told her readers about the catechetical instruction, Egeria presented a longer quotation from the bishop of Jerusalem about how the mysteries of God are taught to the catechumens and the faithful: Before baptism they learned about the contents of the Scriptures and the Creed, but after their baptism they heard the more secret mysteries of God (It. 46.6).[193]

Another kind of window to Egeria's attitudes toward learning is opened in her description of her visit to Edessa. Egeria visited the bishop there who recited texts from the correspondence between Jesus and King Abgar.[194] According to her own words, Egeria became extremely happy when the bishop gave her copies of these letters, and she expected her friends at home to be delighted, too. She writes,

> It was also very gratifying to me that I should receive for myself from that holy one the letters themselves whether of Abgar to the Lord or of the Lord to Abgar, which the holy bishop had read to us there. And although I had copies of them at home, yet it seemed more gratifying to me that I should also receive them there from him, lest perhaps something less had reached us at home; for what I received here is indeed fuller. If our God Jesus shall will it and I shall come home from here, you will read them, ladies, my souls. (It. 19.18–19)

Egeria's readers in the west already had copies of these letters, but Egeria promised to bring, on her return, new, more complete ones. This indicates that she knew the correspondence so well that she understood the difference between the copies, and that she expected her readers to appreciate the more complete copies, too.

Further, Egeria praises some holy men as being experts in the Scriptures. Such is the bishop of Arabia, who was "very learned in God's Scriptures" (It.

[192] For the catechetical instruction, see Section 4.2 in this Element.
[193] For Egeria's description of catechetical teaching in a wider context in the early church, see Kinzig, *A History*, 485–502; esp. 494.
[194] On the correspondence between Jesus and Abgar, see Eus. Hist. Eccl. 1.13.

8.4) and a bishop who knows the Scriptures well because he was educated in a monastery (It. 9.2).

As already mentioned in the Introduction, Egeria gives her readers hints that she had a critical mind and did not quite believe everything she was told by the guides. When shown the statue of Lot's wife, she comments to her sisters that she saw nothing there (It. 12.6), and when the monks told her how far one could see from the summit of Mount Sinai – to Egypt, Palestine, Red Sea the Land of the Saracens – she writes: "But I want you to know ladies, revered sisters, that from that place where we were standing" they saw places "so far below us that it could hardly be believed; but those holy ones pointed out each of them to us" (It. 3.8).

Finally, from the point of view of the "study of lived religion," it is natural that a pilgrim can focus on bodily things such as how liturgical life is organized, rituals, processions and candlelight, or nonverbal sounds, such as lamenting or crying. Describing these kinds of things is another way of expressing theology.

5.4.2 Some Central Theological Topics

As already noted, Egeria did not comment on the current debates concerning Christology and the Trinity; her views on these topics can be seen in short notions and in the terminology she uses but above all in her actions: She participated in the liturgical life of the church in Jerusalem and elsewhere in the Holy Land, too, and appreciated the clergy, the ascetics and their teaching.

The terminology Egeria uses about the triune God does not differ from that present, for example, in the teaching of Cyril of Jerusalem. The word "God" (*deus*) is omnipresent in Egeria's text, both in her biblical narratives and in her comments. Several times *deus* and *dominus* are used as synonyms; Egeria can write about the "Mountain of God" and "Mountain of the Lord" meaning the same place (It. 2.2; 2.4) or "glory of God" and "glory of the Lord" denoting the same thing (It. 2.6–7).

The divinity of Christ is expressed clearly. Egeria wrote that she was making her journey "by the will of Christ our God" (It. 3.2) and that by means of her pilgrimage she was fulfilling "the will of God" (It. 3.2–4). Similarly, she arrives in Edessa "in the name of Christ our God" and travels "by the will of God" (It. 19.2; 19.13).[195] In the monastery of Thecla, she thanks "Christ, our God" twice (It. 23.5; 23.8). In her text, the word "Christ" is never used without the word "God." On the other hand, the name Jesus is used when Egeria writes about the correspondence between "Jesus our God" and Abgar (It. 17), when she refers to the words of the Gospel about Jesus' visit to Bethany (John 12:1),[196] and when

[195] See also It. 9.7; 18.1; 23.10. [196] It. 29.5.

she mentions that the Church of Eleona is in a place where Jesus taught his disciples (It. 39.3). The name Jesus is thus used explicitly when Egeria refers to Jesus as a historical human being. The word she commonly uses for Jesus Christ is *dominus*, the Lord. It is this title she uses when she writes about the suffering of Jesus on the cross and the resurrection; and how people reacted when listening to the Gospel reading about it (It. 24.10; 30.1). However, as shown, the title *dominus* is not restricted to Jesus but can also denote God the Father, too. In the first part of her travelogue, she writes that *dominus* spoke to Moses in the burning bush (It. 4.7).

The Holy Spirit is mentioned only when Egeria describes to her readers how Pentecost was celebrated in Jerusalem. She wrote that on that day the whole congregation walks in procession to the church in Sion, the place where the biblical events of that day had originally taken place (It. 43). In the church, the passage of the descent of the Spirit was read from the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:1–21). The word "spirit" occurs in her text when she is writing about events in the Old Testament; Egeria writes about "spirit of Moses" (It. 5.7) and "spirit of knowledge" (It. 10.5). Additionally, she writes that at the cross the Lord "gave up his spirit" (It. 37.7) and that the Scriptures can be read spiritually (It. 42.2–3).

Egeria does not describe the act of baptism, nor present the text of the Creed, but she mentions to her readers that the catechumens received instruction about the Scriptures and the Creed both before their baptism and after it (It. 45–47). According to her, the bishop says that the new Christians have been baptized "in the name of God" (It. 46.6). Egeria's use of the names of the three persons in the Trinity (a term she does not use) is consistent. The belief in the divinity of Christ is expressed in formulaic expressions and the name Jesus is used only of the historical human being.

A second theological idea probably underlying Egeria's presentation is that her focus on the liturgical life of Jerusalem, with its continuous prayer day and night, reflects the idea of a connection between the earthly Jerusalem and the heavenly Jerusalem (Gal 4:26–27; Hebr 12:22; Rev 4:1–11).[197] Her contemporary bishop of Jerusalem, Cyril, whose homilies she heard, taught that the liturgy of the church on earth has its counterpart in the liturgy in the heavenly Jerusalem.[198] Egeria did not spell out this idea further; therefore it must have been familiar enough for her readers back home to be understood from her description on the topography and the liturgy of Jerusalem. Cyril's teaching, in which the liturgy-celebrating church in the earthly Jerusalem is connected with the liturgy-celebrating church in the heavenly Jerusalem, forms, in my view, the

[197] For a more comprehensive argumentation, see Laato, "The Heavenly."
[198] Cyril Cat. 18.26.

background for the practices Egeria describes. The connection is visible already in martyr-texts,[199] and in the oldest surviving Christian apse mosaic, the early fifth-century church Santa Pudenziana in Rome.[200] The shift from the Temple to the Holy Sepulchre is visible in Egeria's text.

The third interesting topic is Egeria's strong emphasis on baptism and water. She does not describe the event of baptism – it was to be kept a secret – but she writes in detail about the pre-baptismal and post-baptismal teaching (It. 47–47). This section can be seen as the pinnacle of her depiction of the liturgical year in Jerusalem. Baptism is also the focus of Egeria's visit to Aenon, where John the Baptist had been baptizing, and where even in Egeria's time, people gathered to be baptized (It. 15.1–5). At the place, a presbyter told Egeria that there was "abundant pure water" coming from a spring, and when arriving there, Egeria noticed the "spring of excellent pure water" and a pool with water. The presbyter told her that monks used to come to wash in the pool and that every year at Easter people gathered there to be baptized. Egeria mentions baptismal candles and the recitation of psalms and antiphons during the baptismal rite and writes that the pilgrims received *eulogiae*.

Similarly, on her way to Mount Nebo, Egeria eagerly wanted to see the water Moses gave to the children of Israel when they were thirsty (Exodus 17:6; Numeri 20:8). The pilgrims tasted the "abundant water, very beautiful and clear, with excellent taste" that was flowing from a rock between the church and the cells of the monks and asked what it was. They answered, "This is the water that holy Moses gave to the children of Israel in this desert" (It. 9.8). Even here, the pilgrims received *eulogiae* (It. 11.2–3). The pillar of Lot's wife was covered with water (It. 12.7). On the way to Job's tomb, Egeria saw a delightful garden and "plenty of excellent water" (It. 13.2). There was a stream flowing with water in the place where the prophet Elijah lived and drank (It. 16.3). Particularly long is Egeria's description of the water system in Edessa (It. 19.11–19). The water there was clear and tasted good. Even the wells of Jacob and Rebecca are presented (20.2; 21.1–2). Seeing the "great River Euphrates that flows having a force like the River Rhone has" left Egeria without words (It. 18.2).

It is natural that a pilgrim traveling in the arid desert notices water and appreciates it. Egeria's repetitive expressions of admiration of fresh and clear water give the impression of real experiences. It is also a fact that in the Holy Land many cities and villages are located by water. Nonetheless, as baptism is such a central theme in Egeria's text – the bishop calls baptism "a bath" (It. 45.4) – and Egeria chooses to write surprisingly often on water and admire its excellent character, this does give the impression that the cleaning and

[199] See Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis 12. [200] See Bergmeier, "Representing," 263–266.

refreshing water means much more for her than simply bodily refreshment. Even if Egeria does not identify the biblical texts read in these places with water, it is probable that they were connected with baptism. I suggest that, for Egeria, the ordinary, natural aspects of water are joined with the idea of the excellent, pure water of baptism. It is worth noticing that in two of the sites with water the holy men gave *eulogiae* (blessings) to the pilgrims, in the form of fruit, which testifies both to the spiritual importance of the site but also to the fact that there was enough water to grow fruit.

Finally, Egeria did not formulate an explicit ecclesiology, but through her narrative, she does express the idea of unity of the whole church despite its different languages and practices. In her pilgrimage narrative, she presented herself as an example of the unity of the church. She never criticized the differences between the east and west but merely described them as something interesting. According to her text, everywhere she went she met Christians with whom she prayed, and as a Latin-speaking pilgrim from the west, she wholeheartedly participated in the liturgical life of the east. Her three communities, as already discussed in Section 3, all belonged together to the same church. Again, it is possible that she simply did not see the problems or difficulties at hand, but what she described to her sisters back home was one, holy, Eucharist-celebrating church uniting the Christians in the east and the west.

6 Conclusions: Egeria, a Travel Writer with an Eye for the Ordinary

As Mary Boatwright summarized in her *Peoples of the Roman World*, there were always some linguistic, cultural and historical differences between the western and eastern parts of the Roman Empire; this eventually led to the separation between them. These differences had their impact on Christian life and theology as well, even if the church according to its self-understanding is one – something that, for example, the bishop of Jerusalem at the time of Egeria's visit, Cyril, emphasized. Different liturgical, monastic and ecclesial practices developed in various geographical areas. Traveling Christians, among them the pilgrims, spread information about the similarities and differences around the Christian world.

Egeria's *Itinerarium* can be studied as an example of how the idea of unity and the practical differences were dealt with. She wrote in Latin to her home community in the west but described the eastern liturgical and ecclesial life conducted in Greek (and to some degree, in Syriac). She used several methods to translate what she learned and experienced in the east into a language her

readers in the west were able to understand. She repeatedly compared Christian practices in Jerusalem with those back at home – always in positive tones.

Egeria dealt with these questions mainly in the form of a narrative. She described her travels, routes, the people she encountered and discussions with them, liturgy, church practices, catechetical instruction as well as her feelings and experiences; and while describing them, she even communicated theological ideas. She followed many conventions of earlier pilgrimage narratives, but she did so creatively. She addressed her text to a specific group, the women in her own community in the west, and intended to communicate to them information pertaining to eastern liturgy, ecclesial customs and monasticism as well as the practices of pilgrimage. Narrative is an effective way to transmit ideas. Theological ideas can be expressed through the narrating of liturgy, soundscape or encounters with other Christians very well. Egeria repeated things she valued and thought would be good for her readers to know, such as the use of the Scriptures and liturgical practices. Because of her knowledge of Latin and (at least some) Greek, as well as western and eastern ecclesial practices, she was capable of rendering detailed observations and communicating them to her friends. It appears from her text, too, that she shared information with other pilgrims and local Christians as well.

When narrating about events, places and the people she met Egeria's typical strategy was to write about the senses. She told her readers what she saw, heard, smelled, tasted and experienced. For her readers, it was easier to imagine and memorize what she described when these were presented in a lively manner combined with descriptions of sense perception. When narrating her visits to the biblical sites, Egeria used different literary devices to enhance her readers' knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures – these include, for example, combining a certain Scriptural passage with a vivid description of how the original spot looked and what is done there today. No one who has read her description of the procession of Christians on Palm Sunday coming down from the Mount of Olives by candlelight, singing together, can forget either it or the biblical texts Egeria mentions.

Egeria belonged simultaneously to three communities, the sisters in her home country, the pilgrims she met during her travels and the Eucharistic community she worshipped with in the Holy Land. Her travelogue gives the impression that she wholeheartedly participated in all these; she was not a tourist, an outsider observing others, but it was natural and important for her to pray together with others and to participate in the Eucharist. This attitude is reflected in her work. She seems endlessly interested in church practices and terminology used in Jerusalem and the Holy Land. She constantly compares these with those at home but never criticizes either, nor suggests that her readers should adopt

eastern practices. She was not blind to the differences but did not regard them as separating her communities from each other.

The task of a Christian travel writer was not only to communicate knowledge but also to communicate communion between those at home and those at the holy sites. The unity of the church becomes visible when the pilgrims participated in the Eucharist in the Holy Land. Egeria did not report how it was controlled whether the sojourners were baptized or not, but when she writes about the people from abroad who wished to be baptized in Jerusalem, she describes how their character was investigated (It. 45.1).

Compared to her contemporary pilgrims, Paula, Eustochium and both the Melanias, Egeria clearly came from a more ordinary background. She did not belong to the high aristocracy, nor did she have the best education available to women. She did not have famous friends like the women in Jerome's circle; at least she does not mention them. Her actions were also different: She did not found monasteries as Paula and the Melanias did, nor did she donate great amounts of money to the ascetics, as Melania the Elder did; she simply traveled and wrote a diary. Her approach to the holy places and the holy people was also different from, for example, Paula, for whom a physical vision of a biblical site could lead to a mystical glance at the Divine, or the both the Melanias who visited holy men in the desert to learn spiritual things from them. Egeria, on the contrary, was more like a reporter, who wanted to see the biblical places with her own eyes in order to understand the Scriptures better. Whereas Paula focused on individual devotion, Egeria described how the Christian community celebrated together.

Egeria also noticed and reported on ordinary people and ordinary things. Even when her main task was to describe the liturgy in Jerusalem or what was done at the pilgrimage sites, she added wonderful details about what the children did, or how the people reacted to a Gospel reading with moaning and groaning, or how churches were decorated for festivals. When describing the rite of kissing the holy wood of the cross, she added a less elevating story of someone biting a piece out of that relic. In her narrative, the holy men were usually simply guides – she was not especially interested in miracles.

Finally, Egeria styled herself as an active agent. Even if established routes and practices for pilgrimages did already exist, Egeria repeatedly let her readers understand that she planned her travels herself; she chose where to go and with whom. Because not everybody could travel, it was important that those who could shared their experiences in writing and when meeting others. Liturgical and ecclesial ideas and practices spread from Jerusalem to the west with these pilgrims. Egeria was conscious of her task as a communicator: Her text was written for others.

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