

## I. THE PILGRIMAGE OF ETHERIA

*From early Christian times onward, European believers looked to the Holy Land, or Palestine, as their spiritual home. Much of the action of the Bible had taken place there, and Christianity had originated there. Many western Christians made special journeys, called pilgrimages, to the holy places that held for them a sacred meaning. In the second half of the fourth century, a Christian abbess named Etheria spent several years on such a pilgrimage from her home in Spain to the holy sites of the Middle East. She wrote about her travels in a letter to her nuns, which survives only in part and from which the following extracts are taken. The practice of pilgrimage to the Holy Land remained an ideal for devout medieval Christians into the period of the Crusades and beyond.*

Source: trans. M.L. McClure and C.L. Feltoe, *The Pilgrimage of Etheria* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1919), pp. 32-33, 41-44, 95-96; revised.

**Edessa**

. . . Departing [from Bathnae], we arrived at Edessa in the name of Christ our God, and, on our arrival, we straightway repaired to the church and memorial of St. Thomas. There, according to custom, prayers were made and the other things that were customary in the holy places were done; we read also some things concerning St. Thomas himself. The church there is very great, very beautiful and of new construction, well worthy to be the house of God, and as there was much that I desired to see, it was necessary for me to make a three days' stay there. Thus I saw in that city many memorials, together with holy monks, some dwelling at the memorials, while others had their cells in more secluded spots farther from the city.

Moreover, the holy bishop of the city, a truly devout man, both monk and confessor, received me willingly and said: "As I see, daughter, that for the sake of devotion you have undertaken so great a labor in coming to these places from far-distant lands, if you are willing, we will show you all the places that are pleasant to the sight of Christians." Then, first thanking God, I eagerly asked the bishop that he would deign to do as he said. He thereupon led me first to the palace of King Abgar, where he showed me a great marble statue of him—very much like him, as they said—having a sheen as if made of pearl. From the face of Abgar it seemed that he was a very wise and honorable man. Then the holy bishop said to me: "Behold King Abgar, who before he saw the Lord believed that he was in truth the Son of God." . . . Then we entered the inner part of the palace, and there were fountains full of fish such as I never saw before, of so great size, so bright and of so good a flavor were they. The

city has no water at all other than the Euphrates, which is like a great silver river. . . .

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When I had got back to Antioch that were necessary for our journey to Antioch and journeying through Cilicia, which has Tarsus for its way to Jerusalem, but as the market at Tarsus, in Hisauria, it was very so very near at hand.

**Visit to St. Thecla's Church**

So, setting out from Tarsus, I came to a city which is called Pompeiopolis. I stayed in a city called Coricus, which is called Seleucia in Hisauria; a certain man, formerly a monk, and in that distance from there to [the church] city on a low hill, was about fifty miles in order to make the stay that I intended at that place except numberless cells of my dear friend of mine, to whose house a holy deaconess named Martha had come for the sake of prayer [and holy women] and virgins. At the extent of her joy or of mine, there were very many cells on the hill and the church containing the very best of the church because of the Hisaurians who commit acts of robbery, to prevent robbery which is established there was made at the memorial, and I read, I gave endless thanks to Christ in all things, unworthy and undisciplined.

Then, after a stay of two days with those who were there, both men and women in communion, I returned to Tarsus after three days, I set out on my

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city has no water at all other than that which comes out of the palace, which is like a great silver river. . . .

**Antioch to Tarsus**

When I had got back to Antioch, I stayed there for a week, while the things that were necessary for our journey were being prepared. Then, starting from Antioch and journeying through several stations, I came to the province called Cilicia, which has Tarsus for its metropolis. I had already been at Tarsus on my way to Jerusalem, but as the memorial of St. Thecla is at the third station from Tarsus, in Hisauria, it was very pleasant for me to go there, especially as it was so very near at hand.

**Visit to St. Thecla's Church and Return to Constantinople**

So, setting out from Tarsus, I came to a certain city on the sea, still in Cilicia, which is called Pompeiopolis. Thence I entered the borders of Hisauria and stayed in a city called Coricus, and on the third day I arrived at a city which is called Seleucia in Hisauria; on my arrival I went to the bishop, a truly holy man, formerly a monk, and in that city I saw a very beautiful church. And as the distance from there to [the church of] St. Thecla, which is situated outside the city on a low hill, was about fifteen hundred paces, I chose rather to go there in order to make the stay that I intended. There is nothing at the holy church in that place except numberless cells of men and of women. I found there a very dear friend of mine, to whose manner of life all in the East bore testimony, a holy deaconess named Marthana, whom I had known at Jerusalem, where she had come for the sake of prayer; she was ruling over the cells of *apotactitae* [that is, holy women] and virgins. And when she had seen me, how can I describe the extent of her joy or of mine? But to return to the matter in hand: there are very many cells on the hill and in the midst of it a great wall which encloses the church containing the very beautiful memorial. The wall was built to guard the church because of the Hisauri, who are very malicious and who frequently commit acts of robbery, to prevent them from making an attempt on the monastery which is established there. When I had arrived in the name of God, prayer was made at the memorial, and the whole of the acts of St. Thecla having been read, I gave endless thanks to Christ our God, who deigned to fulfill my desires in all things, unworthy and undeserving as I am.

Then, after a stay of two days, when I had seen the holy monks and *apotactitae* who were there, both men and women, and when I had prayed and made my communion, I returned to Tarsus and to my journey. From Tarsus, after a halt of three days, I set out on my journey in the name of God, and arriving on

the same day at a station called Mansocrenae, which is under Mount Taurus, I stayed there. On the next day, going along the foot of Mount Taurus, and traveling by the route that was already known to me, through each province that I had traversed on my way out, to wit, Cappadocia, Galatia, and Bithynia, I arrived at Chalcedon, where I stayed for the sake of the very famous martyr memorial of St. Euphemia, which was already known to me from a former time.

On the next day, crossing the sea, I arrived at Constantinople, giving thanks to Christ our God who deigned to give me such grace, unworthy and undeserving as I am, for he had deigned to give me not only the will to go, but also the power of walking through the places that I desired, and of returning at last to Constantinople. When I had arrived there, I went through all the churches—that of the apostles and all the martyr-memorials, of which there are very many—and I ceased not to give thanks to Jesus our God, who had thus deigned to bestow his mercy upon me. From which place, ladies, light of my eyes, while I send these [letters] to your affection, I have already decided, in the name of Christ our God, to go to Ephesus in Asia, for the sake of prayer, because of the memorial of the holy and blessed apostle John. And if after this I am yet in the body, and am able to see any other places, I will either tell it to your affection in person, if God deigns to permit me this, or, if I have another project in mind, I will send you news of it in a letter. But do you, ladies, light of my eyes, deign to remember me, whether I am in the body or out of the body.

### Jerusalem

... [The anniversaries of the] days when the holy church in Golgotha, which they call the martyrrium, was consecrated to God are called “the days of dedication”; the holy church also which is at the Anastasis, that is, in the place where the Lord rose after his Passion [that is, his suffering and death], was consecrated to God on that day. The dedication of these holy churches is therefore celebrated with the highest honor, because the cross of the Lord was found on this same day. And it was so ordained that, when the holy churches above mentioned were first consecrated, that should be the day when the cross of the Lord had been found, in order that the whole celebration should be made together, with all rejoicing, on the self-same day. Moreover, it appears from the Holy Scriptures that this is also the day of dedication, when holy Solomon, having finished the house of God which he had built, stood before the altar of God and prayed, as it is written in the books of the Chronicles [2 Chron. 6, 7:8–10].

So when these days of dedication come, they are kept for eight days. And people begin to assemble from all parts many days before; not only monks and *apotactitae* from various provinces, from Mesopotamia and Syria, from Egypt and the Thebaid (where there are very many monks), and from every different

place and province—for there on that day for such rejoicing like manner, both men and Jerusalem from every province the bishops, even when they l or fifty in Jerusalem on these But why should I say more? F so solemn a feast thinks that necessity, which keeps a mar hindered him. Now on these churches is the same as at East sion is made to the several hol first and second days it is to th On the third day it is to Eleon which the Lord ascended int the cave wherein the Lord us

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### 2. AUGUSTINE C

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which is under Mount Taurus, the foot of Mount Taurus, and to me, through each province of Cappadocia, Galatia, and Bithynia, sake of the very famous martyr known to me from a former time.

Constantinople, giving thanks for such grace, unworthy and undeserving not only the will to go, but what I desired, and of returning there, I went through all the commemorations, of which there are many. Jesus our God, who had thus visited each place, ladies, light of my eyes, on, I have already decided, in Jerusalem in Asia, for the sake of prayer, I visited the apostle John. And if after this visit to these places, I will either tell it to you or to me this, or, if I have another matter. But do you, ladies, light of my eyes, in the body or out of the body.

only church in Golgotha, which are called "the days of dedication," that is, in the place where the Lord was crucified and death], was consecrated. In these churches is therefore celebrated the anniversary of the Lord who was found on this same day. In the churches above mentioned were placed the cross of the Lord had been placed. It should be made together, with all the offerings, from the Holy Scriptures. King Solomon, having finished the temple, he placed the altar of God and prayed, as it is written in 1 Kings 8:22-30.

They are kept for eight days. And in the days before; not only monks and nuns from Palestine and Syria, from Egypt and from every different

place and province—for there is none who does not turn his steps to Jerusalem on that day for such rejoicing and for such high days—but lay people too in like manner, both men and women, with faithful minds, gather together in Jerusalem from every province on those days, for the sake of the holy day. And the bishops, even when they have been few, are present to the number of forty or fifty in Jerusalem on these days, and with them come many of their clergy. But why should I say more? For he who on these days has not been present at so solemn a feast thinks that he has committed a very great sin, unless some necessity, which keeps a man back from carrying out a good resolution, has hindered him. Now on these days of the dedication the adornment of all the churches is the same as at Easter and at Epiphany; also on each day the procession is made to the several holy places, as at Easter and at Epiphany. For on the first and second days it is to the greater church, which is called the martyrion. On the third day it is to Eleona, that is, the church which is on that mount from which the Lord ascended into heaven after his Passion, and in this church is the cave wherein the Lord used to teach his apostles on the Mount of Olives.

*Questions: What was a pilgrim's experience like? What kinds of sites did Etheria visit and describe? What activities did she engage in? What sort of Christian presence existed in the places visited by Etheria? Etheria is from Spain; what is her attitude toward the Middle Eastern Christians? Is there any recognition in her narrative of a non-Christian population? For what audience was she writing, and what was her purpose?*

## 2. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO ON THE JUST WAR

*Augustine of Hippo (d. 430) was one of the most influential early Christian theologians, helping to shape medieval thinking on a wide variety of topics. In the passages below, he discusses whether and when a Christian may rightly engage in violence. In the face of a strong pacifist strain in early Christian thought, Augustine was an important voice for the use of force. His arguments, though informed by biblical examples and a Christian approach, are based on the ancient secular concept of the just war, which must meet certain objective criteria.*

Source: trans. R. Stothert, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, Vol. 4, *Augustine: The Writings against the Manichaeans, and against the Donatists*, ed. P. Schaff (Buffalo: The Christian Literature Company, 1897), pp. 300–03; revised.

73. According to the eternal law, which requires the preservation of natural order, and forbids the transgression of it, some actions have an indifferent [that is, neutral] character, so that men are blamed for presumption if they do them