

The Spiritual Connections and the Cult of Jerusalem in the Works of Two Monks from the Rača Monastery

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Pilgrimage culture developed in the Middle Ages,² when travel was also seen as a way of bringing oneself closer to God. The medieval man is essentially a pilgrim: a walking man, i.e. a traveller – *homo viator*. Christians believe that life is a walk into eternity: the transition to a different, better world, whereas the individual, i.e. personal life, is a transient one.³ Every “departure” on a pilgrimage, as Carlo Mazza believes, also implies a return, but, for the soul of a pilgrim, a true “return” is a return to the heavenly homeland.⁴ The central place of pilgrimage to the Holy Land is a tour of Jerusalem, a city of great significance in the life of Christ, in

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² Pilgrimages to the Holy Land began in the old age. Empress Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great, the Roman emperor who gave freedom of religion to Christians in 313, embarked on her pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 326. She witnessed the finding of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem, which contributed to the increase in pilgrimages. *The Oxford history of the classical world: The Roman world* states that one of the first pilgrimages to the Holy Land took place in 333 AD: “a Christian pilgrim headed from his hometown of Bordeaux to the Holy Land. Measuring the sections of his trip in leagues, a measure used at that time in some parts of western Gaul, he traveled by land across the Alps and through northern Italy, crossed the Balkans and reached Constantinople, from where he set off to Anatolia and Syria and, eventually, after 170 days and 3,300 Roman miles (over 4,000 kilometers) arrived in Jerusalem” (1999, 370). The pilgrim from Bordeaux recorded the details of his trip in a document entitled *Itinerarium Burdigalense* or *Itinerarium Hierosolymitanum*, the oldest written report of a pilgrimage (Catholic Encyclopedia, 1913).

³ Gavril Stefanović Venclović, in his poetic record *The Road*, points to the conception of life as a way into eternity: “There are plenty of those / Who take a wide road in their journey across life / But a narrow door and a narrow path / Introduces people to life, / And there are few who take it.” (Г. С. ВЕНЦЛОВИЋ, *Црна биво у срцу* [*The Black Buffalo in the Heart*]. Београд: Просвета, 1966, 166.

⁴ K. Maca, *Poklonička putovanja: verski turizam – istorijsko-kulturološki pristup* [Pilgrimage. Religious tourism-historical-culturological review] (Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2009), 34.

which he spent part of his earthly life, in which his tomb is located, and in which he ascended to heaven. The Christianization of the Holy Land began with Emperor Constantine, who announced his plan for the discovery of holy places, primarily in Jerusalem, at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD. It was with a particular desire to attend the great Easter holiday in Jerusalem that numerous pilgrims set out on a journey. Some of the pilgrims who came to the Holy City, not only from Europe, left written testimonies of a long journey that was primarily meant to “signify one’s cleansing of sins.”⁵ Jacques Le Goff states that two notions were prevalent in the Middle Ages (the notion of the traveller human and the notion of the penitent human), both derived from Christian anthropology. The development of these concepts contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of the essence of human personality.⁶ Both notions came to life and also crossed over into literature. The first printed travel books on pilgrimage to the Holy Land and Jerusalem started to appear in the last decade of the fifteenth century and have been growing in popularity ever since.

Pilgrimage literature also developed in the Orthodox community, especially in the form of a *proskinitarian* (*προσκωνητάριον*),⁷ a pocket-sized guide to the Holy Land, containing standard contents and illustrations. Medieval literature was based on the principle of genres, so, naturally, the *proskinitarian* also had its own established structure, with meaningful conventions, largely “based on the idea of spiritual pilgrimage. Its association with travel notes also rested on the fact that for the pilgrims to the Holy Land there was no difference between physical and spiritual pilgrimage. They were inherently interconnected,

⁵ T. Jovanović, *Sveta zemlja u srpskoj književnosti od XIII do kraja XVIII veka* [Holy Land in Serbian literature from the 13th to the end of the 18th century] (Beograd: Čigoja štampa, 2007), 7.

⁶ See: J. Le Goff, “Čovek srednjeg veka” [Medieval man, L’uomo medievale], *Čovek srednjeg veka* (Beograd: Clio, 2007), 11-13.

⁷ *Proskinitaria* in Greek are not older than the sixth century, whereas they were known in southern Slavic literatures before the fourteenth century. Tomislav Jovanović states that the first confirmed *Proskinitaria* in the Church-Slavonic language is found in the abbreviated version in the *Bdin Collection* from 1359/1360 [Bdinski Zbornik, 1972: 234a-241b; Scharpé, Vyncke 1973, 235-242], T. Ž. Jovanović, “Proskinitarioni i srpska putopisna proza posvećena Svetoj zemlji” [Proskinitaria and Serbian Travel Prose Dedicated to the Holy Land], *Srpska slavistika*, tom 2 [Serbian Slavistic, volume 2] ed. B. Suvajdžić, P. Bunjak, D. Ivanić (Beograd: Savez slavističkih društava Srbije, 2018), 161.

with prayers in holy locations as their final outcome.”⁸ The travelogue⁹ as a literary genre was preceded by the travelogue as a cultural genre: what developed from the tradition of the proskinitarian was the first Serbian travelogue *The Journey of Jerotej Hieromonk of Rača Monastery to the city of Jerusalem*, written by Jerotej Račanin,¹⁰ a monk from Mount Fruška Gora (the second half of the 18th century – after 1727), representing the most extensive and complete manuscript of its kind in older Serbian literature.¹¹

The spiritual connections and the cult of Jerusalem have existed in Serbian literature for eight centuries: from Saint Sava, who twice undertook the pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the thirteenth century.¹² The description of the Holy City and the pilgrimages influenced the creation of a special tendency in Serbian literature: the emergence of new motifs and topics.¹³ Many books have been published about Jerusalem worldwide on various topics: most of them were religious and historical, with numerous travel books, and especially guides to holy places. They do not, as a rule, mention “the Serbs in Jerusalem, or, when they do, it is seemingly done only casually, and, at times, not with good intentions.”¹⁴ It is overlooked that after the “Crusades, no European dynasty in the

⁸ M. Timotijević, “Duhovno hodočašće i Opisanije Jerusalima Hristofora Džefarovića” [The Spiritual Pilgrimage and Description of Jerusalem by Hristofor Džefarović], *Zbornik Narodnog muzeja* [The National Museum Collection] 19:2 (2010): 215.

⁹ Milorad Pavić believes that the *Serbian Baroque travelogue* is among the most significant prose types of Serbian literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, emphasizing that there are at least four types of travelogues: proskinitaria, then travelogues that include a description of the journey to Jerusalem and back, official travel reports, for example, the reports of visits by certain dioceses, and, of course, diplomatic reports, which sometimes turn into travel prose. See: M. Pavić. *Istorija srpske književnosti baroknog doba* [The History of Serbian Literature of the Baroque Age] (Beograd: Nolit, 1970), 305-311.

¹⁰ Račanin – of/from the Rača Monastery (translator’s note/TN).

¹¹ M. Pavić. *Istorija srpske književnosti baroknog doba*, 305-311.

¹² Hieromonk Domentian, the most gifted disciple of Saint Sava, accompanied his teacher on one of his trips to the Holy Land, with the first trip most probably taking place in 1229 and the second in 1234/35. In the chronicle of Saint Sava’s life, he emphasized that Sava wished to go to Jerusalem: “I will not allow sleep to my eyes or rest to my knees until I bow to the places where the pure feet of my Savior stood” (P. Popović, “Sveti Sava: život” [Saint Sava: life], *Iz književnosti* (Novi Sad – Beograd: Matica srpska – Srpska književna zadruga, 1972, 74-112), 106. The above statement confirms the importance of the devotional journey in the life of a religious man.

¹³ T. Jovanović, *Sveta zemlja u srpskoj književnosti od XIII do kraja XVIII veka*, 9.

¹⁴ D. Davidov. *Srbi i Jerusalim* [The Serbs and Jerusalem] (Beograd: Politika A. D., 2007) 12.

Middle Ages had as strong a connection with Jerusalem as the Nemanjić ruling house. Even later, in the time of the Turkish rule, Serbian monks and secular people came to Jerusalem en masse...”¹⁵ Grand Prince Stefan Nemanja, the father of Saint Sava and founder of the Serbian medieval state, sent gifts to Jerusalem churches and temples, followed by his successors, who also built their endowments and monasteries.¹⁶

After the Great Migration of Serbs in 1690, during the last years of the seventeenth century, Jerotej Račanin first lived in Dunaföldvár, a town on the right bank of the Danube in central Hungary, after which he moved to Srem, at the beginning of the eighteenth century. After 1727 all mention of him is lost. He began his literary activity by copying other works.¹⁷ He set out on a pilgrimage trip to the Holy Land on 7 July 1704, arriving in Jerusalem on 8 January 1705, and left it on 17 April 1705.¹⁸ He returned to Belgrade on 23 July 1705.¹⁹ Jerotej Račanin also prepared for this journey by reading the texts of other pilgrims. This is evidenced by Jerotej’s transcript of a travelogue from 1698 written by Lavrentije, the abbot of the Hilandar monastery, who travelled to Jerusalem from Mount Athos most likely in the third decade of the seventeenth century.²⁰

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Within the walls of Jerusalem, near the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and the Greek Patriarchate, King Milutin erected in 1312/13 the monastery of the Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel, whereas Stefan Dečanski decorated and fortified the temple, and presented it with numerous gifts. Archimandrite Porphyrius Uspensky, the head of the Russian mission to Jerusalem in mid-19th century, who stayed at the Holy Archangels Monastery, stated that it was “the most beautiful monastery of the Holy City”, decorated by numerous icons, of course of Serbian origin, that the monastery had 40 cells and that could accommodate about 200 devotees. The monastery had a dining room, hospital, treasury and a “wonderful library” containing Greek, Latin and Slavic manuscripts and printed books. Unfortunately, it was all destroyed.

¹⁷ In *Minj za mart* [Menologion for March], he accompanied the services and lives of saints, with sermons and a novel *Skazanija o indijskom carstvu* [Narratives about the Indian Empire]. There are three existing versions of this novel (about a mysterious priest John and his miracles in India) among Serbs and Bulgarians. He also incorporated his own work when copying *Čudesna Bogorodice* [Miracles of the Virgin].

¹⁸ All the mentioned dates are listed according to the Julian calendar, and it is necessary to add 11 days to synchronize them with the Gregorian calendar.

¹⁹ Accompanying him on this journey were also hieromonks Visarion and Gregory, who was the most educated and knew the Greek language, together with a married couple from Irig, Jovan and Neda Paranosić, as well as certain Salaćij, Stanoje and Pavle.

²⁰ It was not uncommon for printed books to be transcribed in the 18th century as well, see: Z. Bojović, “Prepisi štampanih knjiga u srpskoj srednjovekovnoj tradiciji” [Transcripts of Printed Books in the Serbian Medieval Tradition], in *Srednji vek u srpskoj*

It is impossible to form an overall impression of Lavrentije's work, as only excerpts from the transcript are preserved, but it is evident that it had been written according to the model of a proskinitarian. It was only in 1727, in the tranquillity of the monastery of Velika Remeta, that Jerotej Račanin put in written form of a travelogue his impressions of the year-long journey on the basis of travel notes he kept at the time of the trip.²¹ As Joseph Brodsky asserts, a writer is a lonely traveller, and no one is his helper.²² The first pages of Jerotej Račanin's travelogue represent a testimony of traveling in his time: it was a very slow endeavour, especially given today's standards. He measured distances along the route by counting the days, the way that most people in the Middle Ages did: they expressed distances by the number of days needed to travel across a stretch of space, both with respect to land and sea.²³ In the last sentence of his travelogue, Jerotej states the distance in hours: "From Niš to Belgrade, 44 hours by foot, and from Niš to Jagodina 20 hours by foot."²⁴ He devoted a third of the travelogue to describing the journey to Jerusalem, while only briefly describing his return from the Holy City, devoting only seven percent of the travelogue to this description. For the most part, almost two-thirds of the travelogue was dedicated to the descriptions of the holy sites of the Holy City, with the expected reminiscences regarding the renowned Biblical personalities and events.²⁵ Dinko Davidov notes Jerotej's great, even extraordinary religiosity,

nanci, istoriji, književnosti i umetnosti [The Middle Ages in Serbian Science, History, Literature and Art], ed. Gordana Jovanović, (Despotovac–Beograd: Narodna biblioteka "Resavska škola"—Institut za srpski jezik SANU, 2017), 9-17.

²¹ Dinko Davidov believes that the travelogue should be dated 1704-1705, because in 1727 Jerotej only copied the notes from the journey and perhaps "only partially modified them. (D. Davidov, *Srbi i Jerusalim*, 179).

²² See: J. Brodski, "Pisac je usamljeni putnik..." [A Writer is a Lonely Traveler ...], in *Vodeni žig* [Watermark] (Beograd: Russika, 2010), 69.

²³ According to the standards of the Middle Ages, a journey was long if it exceeded 500 km and if it lasted more than ten days or two weeks. M. McCormick, "Byzantium on the move: imagining a communications history" in *Travel in the Byzantine World* ed. Ruth Macrides (Aldershot: Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies, 2002), 4.

²⁴ J. Račanin, "Putovanje ka gradu Jerusalimu" [A Journey to the city of Jerusalem], in *Sveta zemlja u srpskoj književnosti od XIII do kraja XVIII veka* [Holy Land in Serbian Literature from the 13th to the End of the 18th] ed. Tomislav Jovanović (Beograd: Čigoja štampa, 2007), 199.

²⁵ Đ. Trifunović, *Azbučnik srpskih srednjovekovnih književnih pojmova* [An Alphabet of Serbian Medieval Literary Terms], drugo dopunjeno izdanje [second supplemented edition] (Beograd: Nolit, 1990), 297.

which can be felt from every page of the book and which is “sincere and human [...], plain, without any mysticism; and his experience of Jerusalem is venerable.”²⁶

Jerotej Račanin lived among the Serbs north of the Sava and Danube Rivers, at a time when the memory of the Serbian medieval state had almost disappeared, so efforts were made to bring the era of the Nemanjić dynasty back to memory. The state of the Serbian people in Hungary, especially those living outside the cities, was, to put it mildly, worrying: the people had been forced to live in temporary shelters and on battlefields for decades. For the Serbs in the Metropolitanate of Karlovac, religion and church organization were particularly important: they played an important role not only in everyday life as guardians and support of their national identity. Jovan Skerlić believes that “there are few examples of such a great influence of a religious factor in the life of a nation as in the history and literature of the Hungarian Serbs in the eighteenth century.”²⁷ The great influence of religion was a reflection of the position of the Serbian Orthodox Church, which was the only legitimate Serbian institution in the Habsburg Monarchy. The representatives of the clergy, or rather, of monasticism, were both spiritual, cultural, intellectual, and political elites of the Serbs, with some of the most educated Serbian people at that time being priests.

The priesthood, along with teachers, intellectuals, writers, scholars, and others, were the bearers of cultural memory,²⁸ the object of which are “the memories that constitute a community.” Jan Assmann believes that cultural memory is a form of collective memory that is shared between certain groups of people and contributes to its establishment into a homogeneous community. It represents a well-defined functional

²⁶ D. Davidov, “*Jerusalim i srpska kultura.*” *Opisanije Jerusailma* [“Jerusalem and Serbian Culture” Description of Jerusalem] (Novi Sad: Galerija Matice srpske, 1973), 20.

²⁷ J. Skerlić, *Srpska književnost u XVIII veku* [Serbian Literature in the 18th century] (Beograd: Izdavačka knjižarnica „Napredak“, 1923) 26.]

²⁸ The term cultural memory has its cultural, historiographical, political and sociological dimension. Cultural memory, as the most complex form of memory (encompasses mimetic memory, object memory and communicative memory) has been upgraded as a tradition of meaning. “When mimetic routines take on the status of a ‘ritual’, i.e. when they encompass meaning in addition to their purpose, we transcend the field of mimetic memory of an action. Rituals fall within the field of cultural memory as they are a narrative and a representation of cultural meaning.” J. Asman, *Kultura pamćenja* [The Cultural Memory] (Belgrade: Education, 2011), 16 -17.

framework for the creation of tradition, for the creation of relationships towards the past, and for the creation of political identity.²⁹ Due to the preservation and nurturing of memory and recollections, a cultural identity is also established.

Jerotein Račanin's journey, in its essence primarily a pilgrimage, was both part of the Serbian tradition of pilgrimage, as it was part of the European tradition. At the same time, it had an additional dimension: the affirmation of the religious, i.e. Christian identity and, in connection with it, national identity. Serbs in the Habsburg monarchy, being non-Catholics, were perceived as schismatics and exposed to religious persecution. Pilgrimage is primarily a spiritual experience, but it is also understood as a special ritual act, whereas its third aspect must also not be overlooked: its conception as a social event. The Austrian Empire was a land of religious intolerance, ruled by the rule: one's region corresponds to one's religion (*cujus regio - illius religio*); the Serbs lived in conditions of political dependence and cultural backwardness, they were only an instrument in political interests, intrigues, power plays of those whose subjects they were. After almost a hundred years of struggle for basic civil rights and religious equality, they finally welcomed the proclamation of the Patent on Religious Tolerance (*Toleranz Patent*) in 1781.³⁰ Jerotej's travelogue, as a testimony of religious-Christian affiliation, can also be seen as contributing to the efforts of eighteenth-century Serbian writers to awaken in Europe the awareness of the condition of Christians in the Turkish empire and the need for a joint action by Christian countries to liberate enslaved peoples in the Balkans.³¹ Gavril Stefanović Venclović, his younger contemporary, further writes in his works about the

²⁹ J. Asman, *Kultura pamćenja*, 51-53.

³⁰ The newly acquired religious rights were attained gradually: it was not until 1790 that the rights of Orthodox clergy were equated with Catholic, and a ban was issued that Serbs could no longer be referred as "Ratzs" and "schismatics."

³¹ As a rule, the works of Serbian historiography from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were written as memorial acts to European rulers with proposals for liberation from Turkish occupation. Milorad Pavić notes two important features of these writings: "first, they speak not only of Serbian history, but also of the history of other Balkan peoples and the peoples of Central Europe – all those affected by the Turkish conquests, and second, they are reminiscent in their function and composition of some works of old Serbian literature that had a similar purpose." M. Pavić, *Istorija srpske književnosti baroknog doba* [The History of Serbian Literature of the Baroque Age] (Beograd: Nolit, 1970), 334.

circumstances in which he lives with his compatriots: one of his thematic circles is *A Prayer for the Serbian Country*, as referred to by Milorad Pavić.

There is almost no information about the lives of Serbs under the Turks in the travelogue, but an encounter with a hundred-and-twenty-year-old man testifies that the Serbs had peace from the Turks only when they were far from them, away from the roads – in the mountains. The severity of their lack of rights is best illustrated by Jerotej's remark: "And the Turk nearly stroke down Grigorije (hieromonk, companion; author's remark) with an axe, because he was reading from the morning service on the chardak (a typical old Balkan house of Turkish design; TN)."³² At the time of his journey, Jerusalem was likewise in Turkish hands. The travelogue also points to the memory of the former state; it is stated that south of Vranje, in the town of Koštuna, near Četrdeset Crkava, there was formerly "a great town during the time of the Serbian lordship";³³ he also mentions three hills that are referred to as the Tabernacles of Marko Kraljević, and Miloš Kobilić, and Relo Omuđević and Novak Debelić. Jerotej noted fourteen large churches in Gorobinci at Ovče Polje where: "only white stone remains. The Serbs once built, and now everything is desolate."³⁴ These sections of the travelogue confirm that he had knowledge of history, folk literature, as well as the traditions of his people.

Jerotej's route ran from Belgrade by land via the Morava and South Morava valleys through Niš, Vranje, Veles, the Vardar valley, through Tikveš, Grčište, and Avret Hisar to Thessaloniki. From Thessaloniki he travelled by sea to Platamon and south to Zagora, next to Cassandra (where he experienced storms), the islands of Lemnos, Samothraki, Tenedos, through Izmir Bay, Mytilene (Lesbos), Chios, the bays of the islands of Samos, Kos, Rhodes, following which he experienced several days of storms in the Aegean Sea, after which he sailed to the Egyptian port of Rasheed and reached Cairo by land via the Valley of the Nile, and then continued to Suez by way of Agrod, south through Ras Sudr, Wadi Gharandel and through the Sinai Desert to Saint Sinai, i.e. Mount Horeb.³⁵ He stayed at St. Catherine's Monastery, from where the road

³² Jerotej Račanin "Putovanje ka gradu Jerusalimu," 171.

³³ Ibidem, 172.

³⁴ Ibidem.

³⁵ Today, Mount Hashem El-Tarif, near Eilat, is considered to be the biblical Mount Sinai.

took him to Gaza, then along the Lod-Ramla-Emmaus route to Jerusalem. He also toured the shrines around the city, visited Bethlehem, descended to the banks of the Jordan River, as well as the Cedar Stream, to the Dead Sea and the river below Jericho, climbed Zion and the Mount of Olives. The return from Jaffa was by sea: having passed Cyprus, pirates attacked, after which he sailed along the Finika-Rhodes-Gallipoli-Constantinople route from where he travelled by land across Bulgaria along the valley of the Maritsa River in the direction of Plovdiv-Pazardzhik-Sofia to Serbia, and then along the route of Jagodina-Batočina-Smederevo-Grocka-Belgrade.³⁶ The sea route was near the coast, as there were dangers in the open sea, represented by both pirates and the weather.

Jerotej Račanin's narrative gift is especially noticeable in his description of the storm in the Aegean Sea: "... neither did we see the sun, nor the moon, nor the sky, nor the earth, nor the birds flying, except for the storm and the clouds. And the waves varied: they were white, and green, and black, and blue, some stirred as stews, others were as lightning [...] And, then, at sunset the bow of the ship dived, and the mightiest of waves rose, tall as mountains, with mighty, teeming clouds and lightning. And we all fell down as if dead, there was nothing we could have done. We just looked at each other with sad eyes ..."³⁷ Another striking description is his account of the pirate attack on the ship with the pilgrims: "And on Friday, at the small hours of the night, on 11 May, we saw the enemy boat. And we turned in the opposite direction. And we saw before us a Maltese ship, which filled us with fear, and so we all cried out to God [...] And they stripped us to the bone, taking even the shirts of our backs, and cast us, naked, on the shore."³⁸ Jerotej was the first to

³⁶ In his travelogue, Jerotej gives the names of the localities that were in his time part of the Ottoman Empire as they were renamed by the Turks; in the same manner he referred to most of the Greek islands: Bocca (Bozcaada/Tenedos), Sakiz is Chios, the bay of the island of Samos/Sisam is referred to as the Bay of Susam, the name Histanodos is derived from the Ottoman name İstanöy, which is the island of Kos. He wrote them down the way he heard their names being said, so the port of Raashid is referred to as Reshit, Wadi Gharandel as Karandul, Revanj (Remlja) as the city of Ramla, and the Bulgarian city of Plovdiv as Filipe, the former Greek name being Philippoupolis, and Turkish Filibe. He refers to the Dead Sea as the Sodom Sea, after the former city of Sodom that was located on the site of today's Dead Sea.

³⁷ J. Račanin, "Putovanje ka gradu Jerusalimu," 176.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, 198.

introduce the topic of the sea in Serbian literature. In his writing, on the one hand, he is close to medieval tradition and, on the other, to contemporaries, because he writes in a language that is familiar to the people.



Jerotej Račanin's route³⁹

The central part of the travelogue is dedicated to visiting and describing Jerusalem and its shrines: Jerotej establishes connections

³⁹ The author of the map is Miroslav Šilić, associate professor at the Academy of Arts in Novi Sad.

between unique places, the fateful events that took place at that particular location, with his experience and the rituals in which he participated. A visit would not be entirely meaningful for him had he not prayed and read suitable texts in authentic places. Many pilgrims were convinced that prayers in the temples of Jerusalem or the Holy Land were more fruitful than prayers in other holy places. Jerotej's experience of Jerusalem confirms that he is a *homo religiosus* – a man of faith: a man whose religious identity stands out as primary in his life orientation, a man who has developed a sincere relationship with God in his own pursuit of the divine.⁴⁰ On almost every page of the travelogue, it is possible to observe his sincere religiosity. Jerotej was not a writer, nor did he have literary aspirations, and, even though he was a monk, he wrote down his impressions of his pilgrimage in the language of the people, in order to share them not only with his brothers, the other monks, but also with his contemporaries. Thus, he more clearly affirmed that pilgrimage contributes to the connection of the religious man with history and the community.

He was warmly received in Jerusalem. He immediately gave the parishioner of the monastery a *parousia*, i.e. the money from commissioned prayers. He was housed in Saint Sava Monastery, he prayed daily in the temple of Saint Archangel, as well as in other churches, and twice-daily he walked to the Golden Gate, through which Christ had entered Jerusalem. It was not before 3 February that he visited the central sacral topos of Jerusalem, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. He spent the night in the temple and thanked God for hearing their prayers to “see what we desired.” With great care he described the intricate sacral topography of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which contains the holiest site in Christianity – the tomb of Christ. As a monk, it was very important for him, in addition to the appearance of the Temple of the Resurrection of Christ, to present as closely and beautifully as possible the rituals organized for the celebration of Easter, as well as the appearance of the Holy fire. Worship services in the Holy City during the Holy Week, in fact, lasted around the clock. A tour of Jerusalem also implied that the ritual – *ordo peregrinationis* – was to be followed, which was standardized after 1342 when the Catholic Church declared the Franciscan Order as the official guardians of the tomb of

⁴⁰ See: K. Maca, *Pokloniška putovanja*, 83.

Christ.⁴¹ In the foreground was a tour of the New Testament sites of Jerusalem, and this type of Franciscan pilgrimage was also observed by other churches. The established order required that the pilgrims necessarily pass along *Via captivatis* (Path of Captivity: Christ's Arrest and Trial), *Via Crucis* (Path of the Cross leading from Pretoria to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre) and visit the Church of the Holy Sepulchre: the pilgrim took the path of Christ's suffering – *Via dolorosa*. Of course, Jerotej visited these unavoidable pilgrimage sites, but he had his own schedule.

He presented the journey to and from Jerusalem in chronological order. The same, however, was not true of his stay in the city. After his visit to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Patriarchate and the depiction of the service on Orthodox Sunday, he described the observance of Easter, followed by the events and tours of the city and its environs, which began on 20 January, with a larger group of pilgrims. With this deviation from chronological order, he also confirmed what was most important to him – both the Easter celebration in Jerusalem, which, that year, took place on 8 April,⁴² and a tour of the Holy Sepulchre Church.

The soul of Jerotej was imbued with the joy of learning about the Holy City and its surroundings, which he left nine days after Easter: “with joy and plentiful fear, praising God, who honours us with so much honour and glory of which we are unworthy.”⁴³ This was followed by a remark, as if it was a side note, saying that “to Jaffa, during our two-day journey, there were plenty of bloody heads,”⁴⁴ which illustrates that his journey was not only difficult and uncertain, but also dangerous. The journey through the desert on the way to St. Catherine's Monastery was not at all easy, for he almost cried out, “O brethren, of the difficult and painful path, and of a miserable life in that land!”⁴⁵ There were many dangers on his tour of the sites surrounding Jerusalem. At the site where

⁴¹ See: N. Chareyron, *Pilgrims to Jerusalem in the Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 84.

⁴² We have the date from a special table made by Gabriel Tolwiński, printed in Warsaw in 1903 in *O kalendarzu jego znaczeniu oraz reformach, dokonywanych różnemi czasy* [About the Calendar and its Importance and Reforms Carried out at Different Times], Warszawa: Nakładem i drukiem M. Arcta, 1903.

⁴³ J. Račanin, “Putovanje ka gradu Jerusalimu,” 197.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, 179.

John the Forerunner was born, he noted that on two occasions the Arabs wanted to “stone them to death, before they were appeased with money.”⁴⁶ However, in his travelogue, he never complained that he was tired, because fatigue, as something shallow, corporeal was to be neglected on ones’ way of asceticism, so that he often slept on the ground, ate bland food, fasted for long periods of time, all the while experiencing exhausting climatic conditions that were very different from those he was used to back home.⁴⁷

He did not devote more space in his travelogue to his impressions of people’s lives and areas; this approach confirmed that the meaning of his journey was a pilgrimage. However, such observations are inevitable, as those about Egypt where people “neither wear pants, nor breeches, nor trousers, [...] And there are those who walk around as naked as the day they were born. [...] And they all smoke and drink coffee – both men and women, the young and the old. And we saw the flowers of a date tree grow in order to sustain the yield. And we saw a tree that yielded cotton. And four types of fig trees. One fig tree, which Adam was deceived into eating, provides three lessons. And its sweetness cannot be grasped by the human mind. It leads to many delights. The seven of us bought one and we ate for three days. Finally, we left them behind, for they were so sweet we could not eat them.”⁴⁸ Furthermore, the passage through the desert left a striking impression: “We saw no humans, no trees, no grass, no birds, no water, except for rock and stone.”⁴⁹ Just how taxing the journey through the desert on foot was, is best illustrated by the repetition of an almost identical line: “We saw no humans, no trees, no grass, except rocks, which stretched out to the horizon.”⁵⁰ The appearance of snow, during their visit to the monastery of Saint Euthymius, was somewhat unexpected in the Mediterranean climate, despite it being 20 January: “it snowed heavily. For seven days and seven nights it did not stop once.”⁵¹ Despite his much more detailed descriptions of temples and church rituals, Jerotej’s immediacy, his genuine sensitivity and penchant for detail brought to readers not only a

⁴⁶ Ibidem, 194.

⁴⁷ See: D. Davidov. *Srbi i Jerusalim*, 187.

⁴⁸ J. Račanin, “Putovanje ka gradu Jerusalmu,” 177.

⁴⁹ Ibidem, 178.

⁵⁰ Ibidem, 179.

⁵¹ Ibidem, 189.

clear but a striking picture of an exciting journey through various, distant regions. Jerotej also cited legends regarding some of the sites, but sometimes did not provide factual information. In his time, the study of history in our country was still not based on scientific facts. During his stay in the Kassandra Peninsula, he mistakenly noted that Saint Theodore Tyron was tortured in the nearby town of Tyron.⁵²

In the Eastern tradition of the Christian church, which sought to maintain a strong liturgical heritage, pilgrimage themes were also symbolically maintained through the liturgical service.⁵³ The greatest orator of the eighteenth-century Serbian literature, Gavriilo Stefanović Venclović (end of the seventeenth century – after 1746),⁵⁴ a pupil of Kiprijan Račanin, appears not to have visited Jerusalem, not to have travelled to the Holy City in the flesh, but by heart, and was present spiritually in this ancient city.⁵⁵ For a time, Venclović lived in Szentendre, around 1736 he was a chaplain in Győr, and in 1739 in Kormorán. In the Kormorán chronicle there is a brief entry stating: “It was in the summer of 1739 that hieromonk Gavriilo Stefanović, the famous preacher from

⁵² Tyron is derived from the Latin word *tiro* meaning recruit. Saint Theodore, also known as Saint Theodore of Amasea, was a soldier in the Roman Legion. He was killed in the town of Amasya in present-day Turkey. There is no town of Tyron in the Kassandra Peninsula. It is possible that Jerotej did not understand the local legend well because he did not speak Greek.

⁵³ See: N. Polovina, *Topos putovanja u srpskim biografijama XIII* [Topos of Travel in Serbian Biographies of 13th century] (Novi Sad: Akademska knjiga, 2010), 138.

⁵⁴ About thirteen longer and shorter Venclović's manuscripts have been preserved, most of which are not original in content, but are mostly monastic entries and translations of the 17th century Russian theological thought. He laid the foundation for the early Serbian Enlightenment by fighting illiteracy, primitivism, exaggerated fasting, shaming the body and unhealthy church customs. Without him, it would be harder to observe the emergence of Serbian Enlightenment and other later literary movements in the eighteenth century, including authors such as Jovan Muškatirović, Dositej Obradović, or Sava Mrkalj.

⁵⁵ Miroslav Timotijević states that the idea of spiritual pilgrimage was shaped in medieval Christian culture, and that it was based on the understanding that a bodily journey to the Holy Land could be replaced by a spiritual journey – *peregrinatio in stabilitate*. Spiritual pilgrimage was widespread in monastic circles, both in the East and in the West, because the tendency to *peregrinatio in stabilitate* was in accordance with the rules of the monastic way of life, while bodily pilgrimage was also understood as something that opposed it. That is why, in the late Middle Ages, special manuals appeared for Catholics “for the mental mapping of the sacred space of the Holy Land during pilgrimage” (M. Timotijević, *Dubovno hodočašće*, 213).

Szentendre, arrived.”⁵⁶ His sermons, written with an aspiration to be penned in an accessible language “for the common people,” are an example of the picturesque and eloquent Serbian Baroque church preaching. Venclović wrote, preached, translated and painted for about thirty years, between 1716 and 1747, during the years where the beginnings of contemporary Serbian art are already visible. Serbian culture owes him a debt of gratitude because he understood the importance of the vernacular, because he introduced those elements into the church vocabulary which were more appropriate to the new, baroque feeling that was born in parallel with the old medieval tradition.

Depending on the nature of the journey to the Holy Land, whether it was bodily or spiritual, a certain duality can be observed: a domination either of a personal aspect, which is, of course, variable or, of a more general, constant expression. Spiritual pilgrimage could also have been a form of preparation for the bodily journey, as it could also have been understood as a symbolic attachment to the idea of life as a pilgrimage journey to heavenly Jerusalem. Venclović mentions Jerusalem in several Bible-inspired texts; the most striking is the story entitled *The Jerusalem Healing Bath*, of course because the name of the city is present in the title. He did not just write about the public bath and the miracles of healing in it, but also explained the emergence of the idiom “camel through the eye of a needle,” which referred to the “very tight and narrow” door of the Jerusalem bath. God later made that door so tight that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.⁵⁷ The story, among other things, points to the Holy City as a unique space in which miracles are possible. Jerusalem is also mentioned in the legend of the *Confession of Mary of Egypt*,⁵⁸ as well as in the stories *The Dead City*, *The Cemetery of Judas*, *The Army of Heaven* and *The Sowing of Salt*. Mary of Egypt was a harlot who followed the pilgrims; at the doorstep of the Church of Holy Sepulchre she realized her sins, repented, and for decades, in tears, she atoned for her sins. In the story

⁵⁶ G. Vitković, *Prošlost, ustanova i spomenici ugarskih kraljevih šajkaša od 1000. do 1872* [History, Institution and Monuments of the Hungarian Royal Šajkaši from 1000 to 1872] (Beograd: Štamparija Kraljevine Srbije, 1887), 271.

⁵⁷ Jesus said to the disciples, “Truly I tell you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God” (Matthew, 19: 16-24).

⁵⁸ The chapel dedicated to Mary of Egypt is located in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

of *The Dead City*, Venclović points to the fate of Jerusalem in Roman times and its oppression, as well as its inevitable fate: to be restored and to last despite everything. The destruction of Jerusalem is also described in the story *The Sowing of Salt*. He also refers to it in *The Drawing of Ezekiel*: God told Ezekiel to draw Jerusalem, as it was on the outside and on the inside, in order to preserve its memory, because the attack of the Babylonians was imminent. *The Cemetery of Judas* is the story of Judas who “betrayed the pure blood,” and of his repentance before the Jewish priests, his hanging; as well as of the purchase of a piece of land from Judas’ money for a cemetery intended for foreigners, i.e. the pilgrims who passed away in Jerusalem. *The Army of Heaven* reminds of the apparition of a mighty army in the sky above Jerusalem that soon came to reality: another in a series of invaders, the Persian Emperor Antioch who ravaged Jerusalem. Accurate indication of the distance from Mount Olivet, i.e. the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem: “two thousand four hundred steps,” as well as knowledge of customs, illustrate Venclović’s remarkable knowledge of biblical culture. After reading *The Saturday Walk*, one is left with the impression as though Venclović truly was in the Holy City, even though he undertook a spiritual journey only, to mentally map and confirm the significance of Jerusalem to his flock. At the same time, he made his own contribution to nurturing and preserving the cult of the Holy City among the Serbs. The aforementioned writings testify not only to the history of the city, but also to the author’s concern for its fate due to frequent destruction and conquests. Venclović further expressed his concern in the poem *Zion*: he fears that Zion will be razed to the ground, whereas Jerusalem will be “desolate as an orchard that was picked bare.”

Venclović also wrote a biographical piece on Saint Sava, and was aware of his work and his pilgrimage trips to the Holy City. He was also aware of Saint Sava’s epistle to Spiridon, abbot of the Studenica Monastery, in which he communicated “succinctly and partly in a poetic way [...] impressions of his stay in the Holy Land.”⁵⁹ In writing his stories, Venclović used not only biblical sources, but also Serbian, as well as other Slavic literary texts. Biblical motifs are common in literature, with many authors finding inspiration in the *Bible*, paraphrasing motifs about Biblical heroes and stories. The *Bible*’s influence in literature begins with

⁵⁹ T. Ž. Jovanović, *Prkoskinitarioni*, 166.

the emergence of the first translations into Latin and then into the vernacular.⁶⁰

Venclović is not alone in his spiritual journey. The famous Petrarca, who also never travelled to the Holy Land, wrote in late March 1358, over a span of three days, a special guide-letter titled *Itinerarium ad sepulchrum domini nostri Ihesu Christi* to his friend Giovannolo Guido da Mandello, a member of the famous Milanese Visconti family. The work contains detailed and useful information about Petrarca's journey from Genoa to Jerusalem that never took place and was supposed to be useful to Mandello during her pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Petrarca's spiritual journey, his extraordinary knowledge of biblical culture, an accurate source of historical and geographical information, contributed to the text's popularity both in Latin and in its translation into the vernacular.

The inevitable question is: did Venclović have knowledge of Jerotej's travelogue? It is unlikely that he had the opportunity to read it and thus become acquainted with Jerotej's spiritual experience of the Holy City, but it is not impossible that he heard about his brother's feat, as well as about his literary travelogue. Insights into Venclović's work suggest that the themes of the journey, the road, the traveller were more inspiring to him, as it seems, in a metaphysical sense and as a spiritual act. It is unknown how many copies of Jerotej's manuscript about his journey to Jerusalem were made; only one was brought to light from the darkness of the centuries. Unfortunately, the autograph, once located in Sremski

⁶⁰ In his essay *Odysseus' Scar*, Erich Auerbach compared the text of Homer's *Odyssey* and the text of the *Old Testament*, concluding that the *Bible* can also be understood as literature, but that it is necessary to keep in mind the dominant historical function of the biblical text. According to him, the Bible is a literary story that must be believed in entirely (E. Auerbach, *Mimesis* (Beograd: Nolit, 1968, 7-29)) [Odysseus' Scar]. In his book on the relationship between *the Bible* and literature, Northrop Frye emphasizes that no book could have such a particular literary influence without possessing literary qualities; he views *the Bible* as a work that is "more than" literature because of its philosophical, anthropological, historical and ethical aspects, and which, as such, escapes all literary standards. Although it uses poetic language, although it contains an abundance of poetic figures, it is not just literature. The literary aspect of the text is not primary to *the Bible* – what is primary is its indication as to the presence of God. Frye points to the great influence of *the Bible* on many literatures and writers. For Frye, the Bible is a rounded, unique entity that has a unique typological structure. See: N. Frye, *V eliki kod(ek)s: Biblija i književnost* [The Great Code: The Bible and Literature] (Beograd: Prosveta, 1985).

Karlovcı, disappeared in the great flood in mid-nineteenth century.⁶¹ The travelogue was published in 1861 by Osip Bođanski in Moscow, its copy was made before the flood, while some parts were also published by Stojan Novaković in 1871 in Belgrade.

European culture is based on the foundations of two cultural patterns: ancient and Christian, which are permeating many aspects of life. Christianity began to take shape and then spread within the church, which represents a community of believers and promotes a rounded and unique view of the world and life values. This, in turn, contributed to the constitution of the European cultural and civilizational circle. The impact of *the Bible* is evident in many segments of human life. Pilgrimage is a type of journey; it is a journey with *the Bible*, a book at the centre of Christian cultural heritage, the contents of which are a unique guide for pilgrims. From the time of its creation, it was a journey where the travellers were able to know a great deal in advance about the places they were visiting in the Holy Land and Jerusalem, which was an exception, especially in an era when there was no expedited and all-accessible flow of information. However, *the Scripture* was not only a source of information; it was, and is, a source of inspiration and motivation. The pilgrim was always grateful to God, for even when he travelled by himself, he was never alone: he was accompanied by an all-seeing eye. Unlike other journeys in ancient times, the emphasis on traveling to Jerusalem was not so much about discovering the new, as it was about confronting authentic religious places, absorbing their particularly inspiring atmosphere, learning about the origins, the roots of Christian culture. Two Serbian monks and writers contributed to the establishment of the Jerusalem cult as a unique city that has endured for centuries in Serbian culture: Jerotej Račanin did so by presenting his immediate impressions of the Holy City in a travelogue, whereas Venclović did this by means of several writings and legends in the form of a spiritual journey, established in Christianity and *the Bible*.

⁶¹ During his stay in Sremski Karlovcı in 1840, Osip Bođanski noticed in a collection of texts Jerotej's travelogue; he then asked Miloš Popović, who was at the time a student of theology and Đuro Daničić's brother, to transcribe the text for him; Bođanski published it in its entirety twenty years later, at the end of 1861. See: B. Marinković, "Odlomci traganja za Račanima i tradicija o Jeroteju Račaninu" [The Fragments of the Search for Monks of the Rača Monastery and Tradition regarding Jerotej Račanin], *Godišnjak Filozofskog fakulteta u Novom Sadu* [Yearbook of the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad] 12:1 (1969): 263-300.

Pilgrimage travelogues, significant and interesting works of literature, are not only part of biblical culture, but also of travel culture. Most succinctly, the travel culture (culture of travel / *reisekultur* / *la culture du voyage*) refers to various processes in the culture associated with travel,⁶² including texts typical of a particular social environment and its own social relations. The emphasis is, therefore, placed on the experience of the new environment, on its discovery and exploration: the intention of the traveller is to know, present and be part of that new culture. Travel culture encompasses different disciplines such as cultural history, history, geography, ethnology, anthropology, sociology and, of course, literature. Interdisciplinary relationships are present in travelogues, which, in addition to presenting impressions of travel and describing a certain area, are rich in observations about people, customs, cultural and artistic values, as well as other peculiarities of space and time that the travel writer writes about. The permeation and integration of knowledge from diverse fields contributes to the complexity of the concept of travel in a more comprehensive way.

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⁶² The phrase *travel culture* began to be more widely used in the early 1990s in German texts in the humanities; Gary Langer is considered to be the author of the phrase (*Travel to Learn*, 1977).

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