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VI

Nenad Makuljević

Pilgrimage and Memory
The Picture of the Holy Land in Early Modern Visual Culture
of the Balkans

The creation, memory and veneration of holy places play an important role in the shaping of religious life. The Holy Land is the oldest and the most developed sacred space in the Christian world. This territory, which represented and represents sacred space for Jewish and Islamic cultures alike, is endowed with a global character and with significance as a point of encounters, integration and of conflicts between different religious, political and national concepts. The Christian sacred topography of the Holy Land has been shaped for centuries, with complex symbolic meaning, and the most important places in Christian Palestine determined by the historical activities of Jesus Christ, the Mother of God and the apostles, as well as by the activities of various Christian ecclesiastical organizations. As a result, visual representations of the Holy Land may bear different characteristics, determined by the confessional and historical contexts of their origin.

Visualizations of the topography of the Holy Land appear in very early periods and are found in Jewish, Islamic and Christian art.[1] In the corpus of visual representations, artworks closely connected to the culture of pilgrimage have an important place. Such works include those produced for Orthodox Christians in the Balkans in the early modern period. As of the late 15th century, Orthodox Christians in the Balkans lived within the Ottoman Empire, thus creating a unique historical and cultural context. As the very same empire encompassed the territory of the Holy Land, pilgrimages to this area were quite frequent, giving roots to vast literary and visual production intended for the needs of the Balkan culture of pilgrimage.[2]

The visual objects that conveyed the image of the Holy Land to Orthodox Christians in the Balkans included numerous and divergent works of art, comprising graphical represen-

Ill. 1: Icon «Jerusalem», Serbian Orthodox Church Busovača, 1786, in: Svetlana Rakić, Ikone Bosne i Hercegovine (16. – 19. vijek), Beograd: Republički zavod za zaštitu spomenika kulture 1998, p. 296

tations of churches, monasteries and holy biblical places, icons labelled «Jerusalem», as well as manuscripts and printed and illustrated pilgrim books describing Jerusalem and the Holy Land. Being part of the culture of pilgrimage, these works of visual production were acquired on pilgrimages along with other sacred memorabilia.[3]

The «Jerusalem» icons and the illustrated books depict the most complex rendering of the Holy Land. They represent complex pictorial compositions with Christian topography of the Holy City at their center.[4] Due to their primary structure, these icons represent an Orthodox-Christian version of the topography of Jerusalem and follow the tradition of the «Holy City of Jerusalem» from the «Madaba map» (6th century).[5] The Jewish and Islamic «Jerusalem» was depicted in a similar topographic manner: the central field of the city's topography is dedicated to the most important religious constructions. In the icons of «Jerusalem» this is the image of the Holy Sepulchre with the scene of the Resurrection of Christ, surrounded by other significant sacral topographic points. Continual transformation and development of the iconography of Jerusalem lasted until the 19th century, whereby simple topographic solutions are characteristic of the older «Jerusalem» icons,[6] and 19th century compositions are quite complex, even monumental, including a greater number of iconic images. (ill. 1, 2, 3)

The illustrated pilgrim book *Description of Jerusalem* (in Serbian/Slavic *Opisanije Jerusalima*, in Greek *Προσκυνηταρίων των Αγίων Τόπων*) is part of basic pilgrim literature and was based on the tradition of the medieval literary descriptions of the Holy Land.[7] The texts, with slightly varying content, contain a literary and visual review of the Holy Land, and fol-

1 *The real and ideal Jerusalem in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic art*, Studies in honor of Bezalel Narkiss on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, edited by Bianca Kühnel, Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem 1998.

2 Stevan M. Dimitrijević, *Poklonička (hadžijska) putovanja*, Beograd 1933; *Kniga za blgarskite hadzhii*, edited by Svetla Gjurova/Nadya Danova, Sofia 1985; Nenad Makuljević, «Poklonička putovanja i privatni identitet», in: *Privatni život kod Srba u devetnaestom veku*, edited by Ana Stolić/Nenad Makuljević, Beograd: Clio 2006, pp. 807–837; Dinko Davidov, *Srbi i Jerusalim*, Beograd: Politika 2007; Tomislav Jovanović, *Sveta zemlja u srpskoj književnosti od XIII do kraja XVIII veka*, Beograd: Čigoja štampa 2008.

3 И. Н. Уханова, «Паломнические реликвии XII–XIX веков из собрания Эрмитажа», and О. Г. Костюк, «Коллекция крестов-мощевиков в собрании ювелирного искусства Эрмитажа», in: *Пилигримы, Историко-культурная роль паломничества*, Сборник научных трудов, Санкт-Петербург 2001, pp. 126–148, pp. 156–165; Nenad Makuljević, «Vizuelna kultura i privatni identitet pravoslavnih hrišćana u 18. veku», in: *Privatni život u srpskim zemljama u osvit novog doba*, edited by Aleksandar Fotić, Beograd: Clio 2005; Makuljević, Poklonička

putovanja i privatni identitet, op. cit. (note 2), p. 835 et seq.

4 See: Waldemar Deluga, «Gravures et vues de Jérusalem dans les Proskynetarions Grecs et leurs copies Serbes et Russes du XVIIIème siècle», in: Kühnel, The real and ideal Jerusalem in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic art, op. cit. (note 1), pp. 370–377; Svetlana Rakić, *Ikone Bosne i Hercegovine (16.–19. vijek)*, Beograd: Republički zavod za zaštitu spomenika kulture 1998, p. 296 et seq.; Ю. А. Пятницкий, «Паломническая евлогия "Топография Палестины"», in: *Пилигримы, Историко-культурная роль паломничества*, Сборник научных трудов: Санкт-Петербург 2001, pp. 82–113; Silvana Hadži-Djokić, «Hadžijska ikona iz Muzeja grada Beograda», in: *Godišnjak grada Beograda 49–50 (2002–2003)*, pp. 333–354; Makuljević, Vizuelna kultura i privatni identitet, op. cit. (note 3), p. 91 et seqq.

5 Michael Avi-Yonah, *The Madaba Mosaic Map*, Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society 1954.

6 See: «Jerusalem» icon from Busovača: Rakić, Ikone Bosne i Hercegovine, op. cit. (note 4), p. 296.

7 Σωτήριος Ν. Καδάς, «Η Ζωγραφική των Προσκυνηταρίων των Αγίων Τόπων», in: Μίλτος Γαρίδης, *Αφιέρωμα, Τόμος Α*, Ιωάννινα: Παναπτιστήμιο Ιωαννίνων 2003, pp. 241–261.

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low the typical earliest medieval descriptions of the holy places of Palestine. At the same time they incorporate descriptions of current affairs and of contemporary ecclesiastical and pilgrim practice. One of the most important assets for the Balkan and Orthodox Baroque culture of the 18th century was the printed copperplate book *Description of Jerusalem* by Hristifor Žefarović,[8] which includes the text of its commissioner, the archimandrite of Jerusalem Simon Simonović.[9] It was printed in Thomas Mesmer's Viennese workshop, first in Serbian in 1748 and then in Greek in 1781[10]. This book was also used by Russian pilgrims during the 18th and 19th centuries. *Description of Jerusalem* was intended for a wide population of believers – as a guide for those about to set off on a pilgrimage and for the donors to use at their holy sites.

The idea for the «Jerusalem» icons and the *Description of Jerusalem* was generated in the Holy Land and by the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem. These icons thus fit into the general, but little-known current of Orthodox and Christian culture of the Holy Land in early modern times.[11] These works were commissioned and iconographically modified by church personae from the Holy Land, as their content was intended to fulfil the need to maintain and disseminate the cult of holy places. To this aim these works represent sacral topography, by rendering visual testimonies of the Holy Land and creating a memory of this place.

Chronotope: Holy Land at Sacred Time

The concept for the representation of the Holy Land was based on the aspiration to create its ideal image. The ideal image of holy space is based primarily on the need to depict its full ecclesiastical significance. Therefore, it is only partially formed on the basis of actual geographic and topographic features. An ideal image of the Holy Land must comprise every important feature of this place, connecting «the golden age», the time of Christ and the apostles, with ecclesiastical history as well as with contemporary spiritual reality. It is for this reason that, in line with the concept of the «chronotope»,[12] the Holy Land was most clearly represented through the perspective of sacred time.

Ill. 2: Icon «Jerusalem», Old Orthodox Church Sarajevo, 1794, in: Svetlana Rakić, Ikone Bosne i Hercegovine (16.–19. vijek), Beograd: Republički zavod za zaštitu spomenika kulture 1998, p. 297

Ill. 3: Icon «Jerusalem»,
19th century, cf. detail, ill. 5
(Muzej grada Beograda)
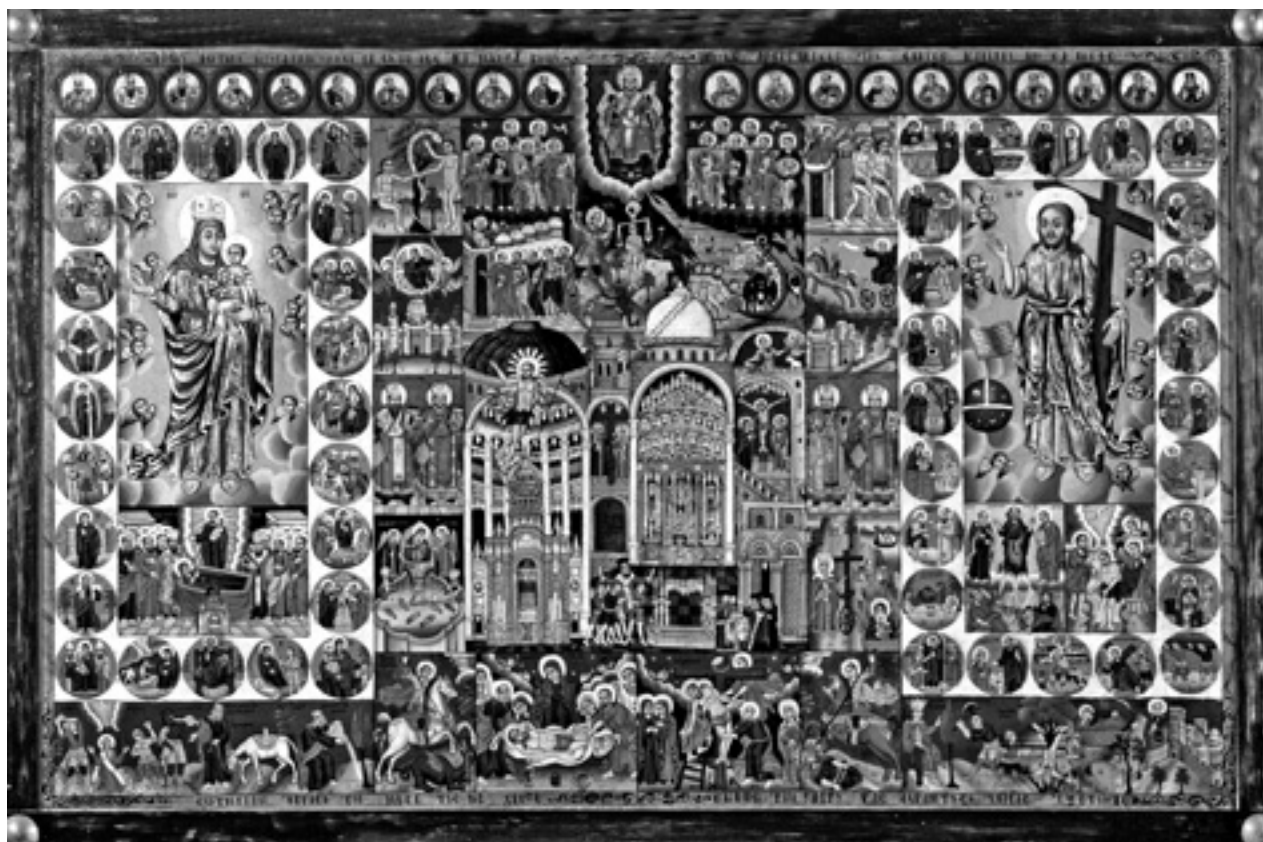
Sacred time is an important notion in religious culture.[13] In the Orthodox Christian church, sacred time is the time interval that surpasses the framework of profane time; it comprises Christian reality and connects the Divine and the earthly. The interpretation of the symbolic acts of liturgy is the best demonstration of sacred time. During liturgy, the memory of the ecclesiastical past, the present time, and the Heavenly Liturgy become united in the liturgical and eschatological perspective.[14] Pilgrimage is also understood as a journey in sacred time. Upon setting off on a pilgrimage, a believer would transgress into sacred time: the undertaking implied numerous ritual and religious activities, and the boundaries of the sa-

8 On Hr. Žefarović see: Miroslav Timotijević, *Srpsko barokno slikarstvo*, Novi Sad: Matica srpska 1996, p. 72 et seqq.

9 *Opisanije Jerusalima*, izrezao u bakru Hristifor Žefarović 1748, priredio Dinko Davidov, facsimile Novi Sad: Galerija Matice srpske 1973.

10 Id., p. 47 et seq.

11 On Christian art in the Arabian world and the Holy Land see: *Der Glanz des christlichen Orients*, Ausst.-Kat., Frankfurt am Main: Ikonen-Museum 2002; *«… von der Hand Deines Dieners …»: christliche Ikonen der arabischen Welt*, hrsg. von Alexandra Neu-
bauer, Ausst.-Kat., Frankfurt, Ikonen-Museum, Stiftung Dr. Schmidt-Voigt, Tübingen: Legat Verlag 2004.

12 On «chronotope» see: Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press 1981, pp. 84–258.

13 Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane. The Nature of Religion*, New York: Harcourt/Brace 1959, pp. 68–113.

14 Karl Christian Felmy, *Die Deutung der göttlichen Liturgie in der russischen Theologie*, Berlin/New York: Walter De Gruyter 1984, pp. 284–290.

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cred time of pilgrimage were set by prayers at church.[15] At the very heart of the culture of pilgrimage was contact with the sacred and the divine.

The actual pilgrimage route taken followed the ideal representation of the pilgrimage site. Pilgrims were guided and directed to the holy sites by local ecclesiastical organizations. Once they had reached the Holy Land, pilgrims were welcomed by the representatives of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, who organized their visits to the holy sites.[16] In this manner, pilgrims saw major places of homage, which were also a major factor in the formation of the ideal image of the Holy Land. For this reason, the representation of the Holy Land in sacred time was in concurrence with the overriding culture of pilgrimage.

The visual contents of Holy Land images show how the idea behind the representation of a holy place in sacred time was realized. Contents referring to historical, contemporary, and future time appear consistently and in various combinations in the «Jerusalem» icons and in the descriptions of Jerusalem.

Contemporary spiritual pilgrims' experience was emphasized in many ways. The *Description of Jerusalem* contained basic information on the contemporary difficult living conditions under the non-Christian rulers of the time, as well as descriptions and information about the visual appearance of the extant monasteries in the Holy Land.[17] Visual depictions of monasteries were intended to communicate the idea of a monastery as an ideal, heavenly city. While the representations of Jerusalem had an idealistic character without rendering a realistic image of this place, a few elements pointing to the Ottoman and Islamic masters of the

Ill. 4: Hristifor Žefarović, Opisanije Jerusalima (Description of Jerusalem), Vienna 1748, p. 35 (facsimile Novi Sad: Galerija Matice srpske 1973)

area were also featured. In Žefarović's *Description of Jerusalem* there is an image of David's palace where an Ottoman Agha Janissary, who provided official protection to the Christians, had his seat.[18]

The historical grounds for the representation of the Holy Land were based on highlighting those locations where important events of biblical and Christian history took place. These places were portrayed by representing the historical scenes at the sites where they had originally occurred, including both the places of homage pilgrims visited and the areas with some authentic memorabilia. The historical perspective of the Holy Land also included reverence for the geographic and topographic particularities of the holy places. All of these descriptions highlighted the importance of the mountains and hills upon which pivotal events in Christian history took place. Events, such as the Temptation of Christ or the Transfiguration of Christ took place in the mountains, which were also pilgrimage destinations. Therefore, this geographic and topographic reality was a valuable component in the pictorial images of the Holy Land.[19]

Visual content referring to future time also played an important role in constructing the image of the Holy Land. In Christian religious culture, the future basically represents eschatological reality. The eschatological perspective of the Holy Land is extremely complex; it is seen as the place of Christ's Second Coming and of his Last Judgement. The content emphasizing these scenes was therefore developed in the pictorial images of the Holy Land.

In the *Description of Jerusalem* by Hristifor Žefarović an image of the «River of Fire» from the Apocalypse can be found. The text following the image maintains that the river of fire shall spring in Gethsemane, dragging the sinful ones into the fire.[20] (ill. 4) This element is developed further in the «Jerusalem» icons, especially those dating from the 19th century. Moreover, the Last Judgement appears as an image of the event that is linked to the location at which it is bound to take place, Jerusalem and the Holy Land.[21] The visualization of the Holy Land in sacred time implied uniting historical, contemporary and eschatological perspectives. In this manner, historical and political reality played a more minor role, and the focus shifted to encompass the essence of the Christian perception of the Holy Land.

Space and Memory

Representations of space have powerful symbolic functions. Natural areas or artificial landscapes may be one of the most important places of memory in religious and political culture.[22] Therefore, the construction and visualization of sacred space carry suitable mnemonic content.

15 Nenad Makuljević, Poklonička putovanja i privatni identitet, op. cit. (note 2), p. 819.
16 Id., p. 823 et seq.
17 Opisanije Jerusalima, op.cit. (note 9), p. 27 et seqq.
18 Id., p. 8.
19 Id., p. 38, 41.
20 Id., p. 35.

21 See «Jerusalem icon» from the Belgrade City Museum: Hadži-Djokić, Hadžijska ikona iz Muzeja grada Beograda, op. cit (note 4), pp. 333–354.
22 Aleida Assmann, *Erinnerungsräume. Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses*, München: C. H. Beck 2003, pp. 303–308.

The mnemonic concept of visual representations of the Holy Land was based on the idea of ecclesiastic memory. Christian-Orthodox culture nurtured the memory of the past and constantly reminded itself of foretold, future events through ritual, didactic and holiday practice. Ecclesiastic space memory comprised holy places, those sites consecrated by Christ and the saints. In paying reverence to the holy sites, the Church nourished the historical memory of the events from its history and etched them in the memory of both the collective and individual consciousness of the believer. Accordingly, the representation of holy places presupposed the creation of mnemonic content and strategic action on the part of the clerical representatives who had a major influence on the choice of content to be memorized. Thus, these memory concepts were volatile and depended on the contemporary theological culture.

Ill. 5: The Holy Sepulchre and Last Judgment, Icon «Jerusalem», 19th century, detail, cf. ill. 3 (Muzej grada Beograda)

The *Description of Jerusalem* by Hristifor Žefarović and the «Jerusalem» icons are representative of the organization of memory of the Holy Land. Their mnemonic structure was extremely developed, and they depicted the topography of the Holy Land without responding to the need for geographical representations. Therefore, Hristifor Žefarović's *Description of Jerusalem* and «Jerusalem» icons represent a unique mnemonic map, in which the most important locations of Christian topography of the Holy Land were drawn.

The construction and formation of the content intended for remembrance by Orthodox pilgrims to the Holy Land implied harmony with pilgrims' practice, holy places and the rituals in which believers took part. The personal experience of making contact with the most important sanctities and attending the most important festivities was not spontaneous. Pilgrimages were organized in such a manner that monks from Jerusalem guided pilgrims, and the most important holidays, usually Easter or Christmas, determined the timing of these journeys, enabling the pilgrims to attend liturgy at the holy sites. Being in the Holy Land at these holidays formed a specific sense of a pilgrim's personal and collective identity of joining the «festive crowd», as confirmed by pilgrims' journals.[23] Therefore, the visual representations of the Holy Land highlight the sites that were part of pilgrimages and that could easily evoke the memory of a stay there, as is most clearly shown in the «Jerusalem» icons.

In the framework of Orthodox theology and ecclesiastic life, the Resurrection of Christ is the most important feast. Having occurred at a clearly marked location, this feast was celebrated on the territory of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. For this reason, a pilgrim's visit to Jerusalem was set to take place at Easter. The central celebration of the feast was held in the Holy Sepulchre, where, in the Chapel of Christ's Tomb, «Kuvuklia», the unique ritual of invoking the Holy Fire was held.[24] This characteristic ceremony of the Orthodox Church used to be revered as a contemporary miracle and a confirmation of the righteousness of the Orthodox faith. During this ritual held on the eve of Easter, a bundle of candles held by the Jerusalem patriarch would be lit by the Holy Fire. Pilgrims attended this ceremony, and the candles lit by the Holy Fire were among the most reverenced memorabilia; the Holy Fire was also maintained in the icon lamps above Christ's tomb. Therefore, the picture of the Holy Fire ritual became part of the «Jerusalem» icons, in which the patriarch holding lit candles appears at the center. (ill. 5)

The mnemonic function of the «Jerusalem» icons and the *Description of Jerusalem* implied a suitable rhetorical structure based on the classical art of memory.[25] Events of biblical history invariably appeared above various historic topographic points, thus creating a strong connection between biblical places and religious images (loci and imagines). (ill. 6, 7, 8, 9) Early Baroque argumentative structures also supply the mechanism for presenting events linked with space.[26] A general characteristic of all the scenes is a disproportion between the

23 See: Jovan Hadži Vasiljević, «Putopis Hadži Ante Kalimanca», in: *Vranjski glasnik* 31–32 (1998–1999), pp. 239–247.

24 Bishop Auxentios of Photiki, *The Pachal Fire in Jerusalem: A Study of the Rite of the Holy Fire in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre*, Berkley, California: Saint John Chrysostom Press 1999.

25 On the classical art of memory see: Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory*, London/New York: Routledge 1999, pp. 1–4.

26 Frank Büttner, «'Argumentatio' in Bildern der Reformationszeit. Ein Beitrag zur Bestimmung argumentativer Strukturen in der Bildkunst», in: *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 57 (1994), pp. 23–42.

biblical scene and space: the scene dominates the space as a consequence of the compositional tendency to emphasize the argumentative and mnemonic content. This argumentative structure is used to stress the importance of the holy places, whereas connecting events and space is one of the oldest methods of shaping memory.

Ill. 6: Hristifor Žefarović, *Opisanije Jerusalima* (Description of Jerusalem), Vienna 1748, p. 9 (facsimile Novi Sad: Galerija Matice srpske 1973)

Prayer in Front of the Picture of the Holy Land

In the religious culture of Orthodox Christians in the Balkans, «Jerusalem» icons were highly revered, as determined by their purpose for prayer. They occupied an important place in private space, and they were often placed in special rooms. Called pilgrims' icons, candles or shirts bought in the Holy Land and intended for a pilgrim's burial were kept next to the «Jerusalem» icons.[27] They also found a prominent place in churches, where they were placed by donors. Regarding prayer, the purpose of «Jerusalem» icons was also pinpointed in their visual structure. As they were evidently meant for prayer, iconic images of Christ and the Mother of God were an integral part.

Similarly, the *Description of Jerusalem* also fulfilled a devotional function. The afterword informs believers that reading or listening to the text from this book would bring them closer to the works of God and that their souls would benefit from it.[28] In this manner, the *Description of Jerusalem* was also an Orthodox model for «mental pilgrimage».

The prayer function of the «Jerusalem» icons and *Description of Jerusalem* were closely connected to the process of memorizing. Like other artefacts brought back from pilgrimages, these «pictures» would serve as a constant reminder of their place of origin, while their structure and use in prayers stimulated visual memory.[29] The rules of prayer in Orthodox Christianity were intertwined with the works of sacral visual culture. The instructions, such as those in Cyprian Rachanin's «Bukvar» (1717), stress that believers take a long and close look at the images of saints and remember their deeds in the process.[30] This method clearly

Ill. 7: Hristifor Žefarović, Opisanije Jerusalima (Description of Jerusalem), Vienna 1748, p. 13 (facsimile Novi Sad: Galerija Matice srpske 1973)

27 Petar Kostić, *Crkveni život u Prizrenu i njegovoj oko-lini u XIX veku*, Prizren 1928, p. 45.
28 Opisanije Jerusalima, op. cit. (note 9), p. 52 et seq.

29 *Visual Memory*, edited by Steven J. Luck/Andrew Hollingworth, Oxford University Press 2008.
30 Arhiv SANU, rukopisna zbirka, knj. 141., I, Bukvar I Stari zavet Kiprijana Račanina iz 1717.

shows that praying in front of the «Jerusalem» icons was at the same time a way of reviving and construction of memory of the Holy Land. The believers would remember the places of pilgrimage and the areas in which Christ had acted, which were triggered by the visual representations of the Holy Land; this was further highlighted through the inscriptions above the painted scenes. In this manner, the text itself, a mandatory part of the Orthodox icon, would cement the meaning of pilgrims' icons, thus contributing towards reviving the memory of the Holy Land.

Constructing and maintaining the memory of the Holy Land was of utmost importance. At the same time, it was part of practicing Orthodox culture and an integral part of the representation policy of the Jerusalem patriarchate. By praying in front of a depiction of the Holy Land, pilgrims would renew their memory of that pilgrimage which had transformed their personality and made them important members of their community. The icons and memorabilia brought back from pilgrimages occupied a position in the private devotion of pilgrims and their families. In the middle of this process there was a mechanism of the visual mnemonic speech emphasizing the importance of the sacral topology of the Holy Land and the iconic character of the holy space.

Ill. 8: Hristifor Žefarović, Opisanije Jerusalima (Description of Jerusalem), Vienna 1748, p. 18 (facsimile Novi Sad: Galerija Matice srpske 1973)

The image of the Holy Land in the visual culture of the Balkans demonstrates the complex construction and function of visual representations of holy places. In the *Description of Jerusalem* and in «Jerusalem» icons, the Holy Land is depicted in a highly refined and integrative manner. The ideal image is based on the picture of the Holy Land in holy time, and mnemonic needs conditioned the structure of visual representations. This clearly shows that representations of sacral space have a number of symbolic meanings which were directed to the formation of identity of the believers. As ideal visual representations of the Holy Land attained iconic character, these images were increasingly used for prayer, which renewed and affirmed the memory of pilgrimages and of the sacred space of Christian Palestine.

Ill. 9: Hristifor Žefarović, Opisanije Jerusalima (Description of Jerusalem), Vienna 1748, p. 38 (facsimile Novi Sad: Galerija Matice srpske 1973)

SCHWEIZERISCHER NATIONALFONDS
ZUR FÖRDERUNG DER WISSENSCHAFTLICHEN FORSCHUNG

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