



Realising a Dream

Emperor Franz Joseph I and his peoples at the Austrian Hospice in Jerusalem Lily Arad

Between the 9th and the 13th November 1869, Franz Joseph I, Emperor of Austria (reigned 1848-1916) and Apostolic King of Hungary (reigned 1867-1916), made a historic pilgrimage to Jerusalem.¹ A unique allegorical mosaic in the lunette on the north wall of the chapel of the Austrian Hospice in Jerusalem represents this event. Titled 'The Military and Peaceful Pilgrimages from Austria-Hungary to the Holy Land since Ancient Times', it portrays Franz Joseph leading representative figures from amongst his peoples – anachronistic Crusaders and contemporary peaceful pilgrims – to the longed-for Jerusalem. Perched on a hill in the far distance and glowing in the white light of the rising sun, Jerusalem is perceived as bestowing its sanctity on the Emperor. The apse mosaic skillfully connects saints and saintly-kings to both Jerusalem and the Habsburg realm, and stresses the bond between Throne and Altar. The mosaics, which were donated by the Palestine Pilgrims' Association of the Diocese of Brixen, were installed in 1907 and 1908 respectively.² Their original iconography prompts questions such as what were the Austro-Hungarian pilgrims' perceptions of Jerusalem and how were these perceptions conditioned by pre-conceptions? What was the image they constructed? What did Jerusalem mean for the Austrian Emperor and the Church, which encouraged pilgrimages by the House of Habsburg and its peoples, as well as the establishment of a national hos-

pice? Moreover, what were the aims of the patrons who donated the mosaics and were responsible for the unique iconography? How did beholders in Jerusalem, and Europeans at home who read descriptions and saw images of the Austro-Hungarian Hospice, perceive the monument? What is more, how did pilgrims who stayed in the Hospice – whom, as it were, the mosaics represented – perceive it? Last but not the least, how did form and content function in the mosaics to tell a relevant story in the Austrian national-historical, the European and the Jerusalemite contexts? As we shall see, constructs of Jerusalem reached a new peak in the 19th- and early 20th centuries. Different entities made use of the apparently inexhaustible and malleable symbolism of this unique city, constructing and reconstructing narratives in a variety of forms, media, and contexts according to their particular needs and causes. The representation of 'The Military and Peaceful Pilgrimages from Austria-Hungary to the Holy Land since Ancient Times' in the Austrian Hospice chapel, which was personally approved by Franz Joseph, evokes the perception of Jerusalem as the eternal heavenly city and also points to the existence of the earthly one; moreover, it clearly suggests that the Crown of Jerusalem has been

bestowed by God's Grace on the House of Habsburg-Lorraine, not on any of its many pretenders. Together with the apse mosaic, it proclaims the piousness of Franz Joseph and his peoples, and was expected to awaken national pride and loyalty at a time when Habsburg-dominated nations were struggling for democratic rights. Significantly, it also celebrates the devotion and the pious act of the pilgrim-donors.

Historical Context

After a coalition of European powers assisted the Ottoman sultan Abdulmecid I in the expulsion of the Egyptian Pasha Muhammad Ali from the Levant (1840) and the restoration of his rule, and more so after the Crimean War (1853-1856), Jerusalem gained new religious, historical, strategic, and political significance in the European powers' contest for hegemony and colonialist expansion. Those powers established religious and humanitarian institutions and consulates, which performed diplomatic, commercial, and judicial tasks and worked in concert with the national Church. England opened a consulate in Jerusalem in 1839, Prussia in 1842, and France and Sardinia in 1843. Austria opened a vice-consulate in Jerusalem in 1849, which due to social and political conflicts in the Empire, was only upgraded to a consulate in 1852.

Next double page: The mosaic in the Hospice chapel from 1908.



Gericht d. Palästina-
Pilgerverein Brixen

ausgeführt v. d. Tiroler
Glasmalerei Innsbruck
1907.



This mosaic was initiated by Heinrich Himmel von Agisburg, President of the Palestine Pilgrims' Association of the Diocese of Brixen.

A most dramatic and influential achievement in this context was the foundation of the Anglo-Prussian Protestant bishopric in 1841, which prompted the Greek Patriarch to move from Constantinople to Jerusalem (1845) and the Pope to reestablish the Latin Patriarchate (1847). The establishment of 'religious protectorates' further inflamed European rivalries.³ The Orthodox churches worked to preserve their status and prevent Catholic and Protestant gains; the Franciscan Custody (*Custodia Terrae Sanctae*, established in 1342) struggled against the Patriarchate's ambitions of over-all authority over Catholics, and the Habsburgs, for generations titled 'Kings of Jerusalem', contested France's hegemony.⁴ Eager to assert their presence and influence in the Ottoman-ruled city, contesting Christian denominations and European

powers built representative monuments that would also enhance their prestige in the national and European contexts. Most of these buildings are located in the Christian holy places or as close to them as possible, or in topographically privileged sites ensuring that they could be perceived from far away. Most buildings are grandiose, despite the fact that patrons often had to make do with smaller-scale buildings than they intended on account of lack of funds, or with less prominent features because of objections of the Ottoman authorities. The structures – churches, monasteries, hospices, and charitable institutions – were designed by renowned architects in eclectic historical styles that not only linked past and present, but also signalled clearly the nationality and faith of the patron: distinct neo-Gothic sty-

listic elements created an association with France or Britain, neo-Romanesque arches and towers identified Germany, late medieval and Renaissance motifs pointed to Italy, and onion domes represented Russia. Additionally, the combination in these monuments of European styles and technologies together with local materials, building traditions, and decorative motifs symbolised the strong and long-lasting bond of the European patron to the Holy Land. All these strategies conveyed multi-layered meanings, among them the patron's special rights and privileges in the Holy City.⁵ Significantly, any achievement by one power would immediately activate a response from the others, a fact that explains the extraordinary European investment in the city. The strong opposition of Archduke Ferdinand



The mosaic was executed in 1907 by the Tyrolean Stained Glass and Mosaic Workshop, Innsbruck.

Maximilian to simplifying the architectural design of the Austrian Hospice and reducing its size in order to decrease costs is paradigmatic; it proves that the design was dictated by political rather than functional factors: 'Ich bin [...] einer der wenigen Österreicher, welche den Orient besucht haben und weiß, daß dort sichtbare Symbole allein den Maßstab für die Macht abgeben. Der Abschluß des Monuments in der befürchteten Weise [...] könnte Meines Erachtens dem Ansehen Österreichs im Heiligen Lande nur den empfindlichsten Schaden bringen. Die Gesinnungen Eurer Eminenz sind mir zu wohl bekannt, als daß ich nicht überzeugt sein dürfte, daß eine Sache, wobei ein christliches, ein katholisches Interesse und überdies die Ehre des österreichischen Namens im Spiele ist, Ihrer fortgesetzten warmen

Teilnahme sicher sein kann.'⁶ ('I am [...] one of the few Austrians who visited the Orient and clearly know that visible symbols alone convey a measure of might there. The conclusion of the monument in a way I should be worried about [...] in my opinion, may cause severe damage to the image of Austria in the Holy Land. [...] I am too much aware of the patriotism of Your Eminence, so that I am not doubtful at all that a cause, which involves a christian, a catholic and furthermore an Austrian interest, will be sure of your continuous concerns.')

The Austrian Hospice

Built between 1856 and 1863, the Austrian Hospice was the first national pilgrims' house established by a European monarchy in Jerusalem, and the most representa-

tive Habsburg monument in the city.⁷ The imperial family, represented by Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian, was involved in the choice of the site on a hillock in front of the Third Station of the Via Dolorosa, the architectural design, and the foundation of the Hospice on a cornerstone specially brought from Austria. The cornerstone, as well as the architectural style, translated the Austrian Empire symbolically into Jerusalem and tied together the two homelands of the pilgrims: the physical – the Habsburg realms, and the spiritual – Jerusalem.

Despite its reduced size and simpler design, in comparison with other European buildings, the Hospice fulfilled the expectations of its patrons for many years: it was one of the most outstanding monuments in the Old City and, until 1918, the heart of Aus-



The German Knights of St. John Hospice, one of the many Christian pilgrims' houses in Jerusalem, was founded in 1858 and has been housed in this building (above left) since 1866. Photo from 1880.



Image centre: Postcard around 1900 of the German Lutheran Church of the Redeemer which was dedicated in 1898 by the German Emperor Wilhelm II. Image right: View of the interior of the Church of the Redeemer. Photo from 1900.



trian presence in the Orient. Since the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary did not have a proper consulate or a national church, the Hospice served not only as a pilgrims' house but also hosted official receptions and celebrations. The highpoint in its history was the sojourn of Emperor Franz Joseph during his pilgrimage to the Holy City, from the 9th to the 13th November 1869, which was seen as a source of pride and inspira-

tion for his subjects. Moreover, the Hospice carefully cultivated this event as a clear message to Austro-Hungarian pilgrims to follow in the footsteps of Franz Joseph and reside there too, attaching a definite patriotic quality to the religious nature of the pilgrimage. On the national level, the Hospice was presented as a house that brought together, in a friendly atmosphere, the different peoples and nations of the Habsburg realm.

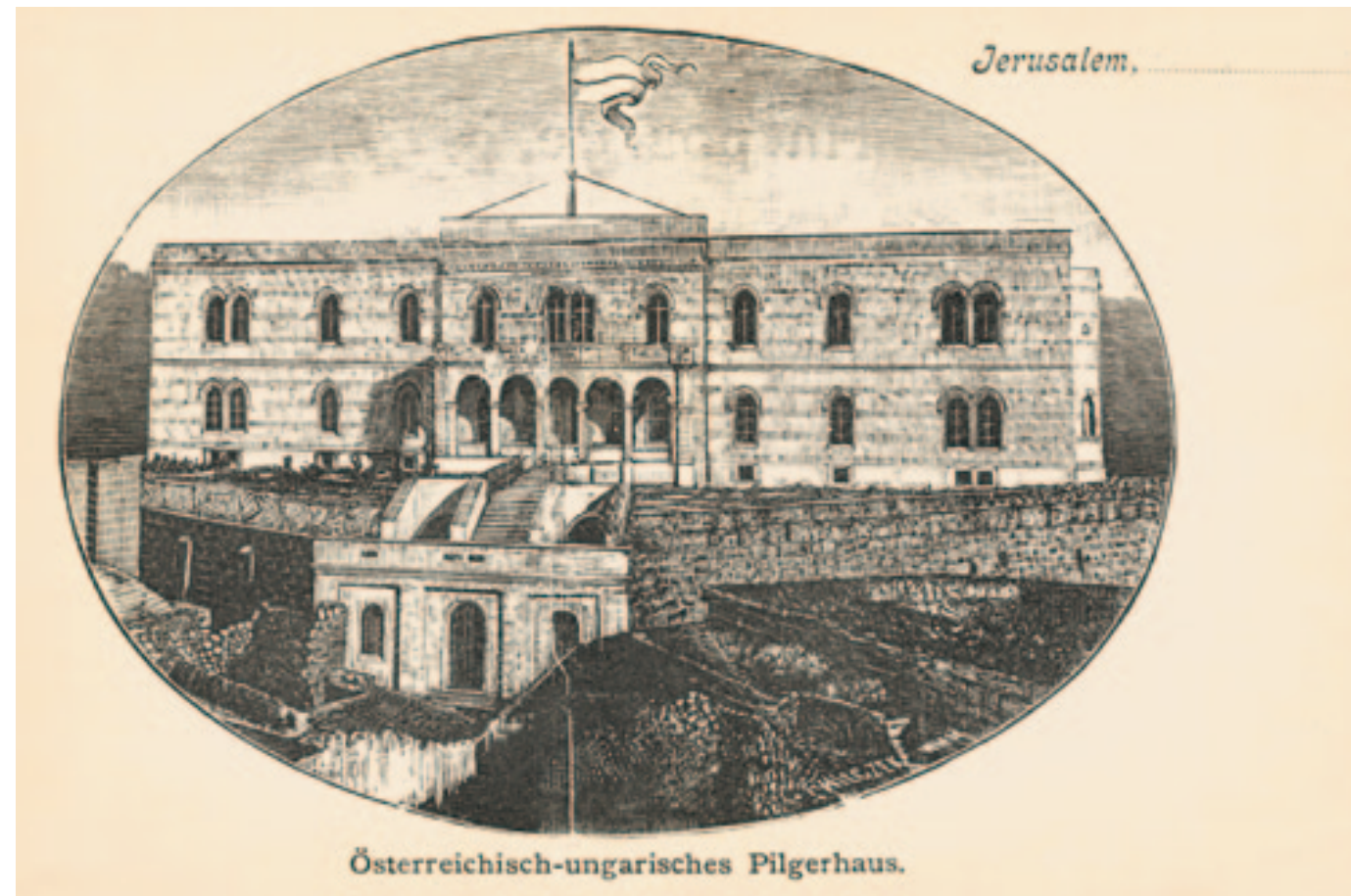
The Chapel Mosaics

The 1907 mosaic entitled 'The Military and Peaceful Pilgrimages of Austria-Hungary to the Holy Land since Ancient Times', in a lunette on the north wall of the Hospice chapel, was presented to Franz Joseph as a first homage on his coming 60th jubilee and on the 40th anniversary of his pilgrimage to Jerusalem. It also functioned as a memorial to the donors, the pilgrims from the Diocese

of Brixen, who in 1898 followed in the footsteps of their monarch, in the first Austrian mass-pilgrimage to Jerusalem.⁸ Franz Joseph stands majestically at the centre of the symmetrical composition, at the gates, as it were, of the longed-for Jerusalem that reveals itself on a high hill in the distance. Bathed in the white light of the rising sun, the city casts its aura of sanctity on the monarch, who shows the way

to two special groups of pilgrims: at Franz Joseph's right one can see military pilgrims, an anachronistic group of medieval Crusader kings and knights; at his left, peaceful pilgrims from the lands that would become Austria-Hungary. These pilgrims symbolised the long-lasting Austrian bond to the Holy Land and also helped create a national historic perspective. The identity of the two Crusader monarchs in the mosaic is paradig-

matic: Austrian Duke Leopold V, who took part in the Third Crusade and who, according to Austrian tradition, is the father of the Austrian national red-white-red flag, which symbolises faith, bravery, and dynastic pride, and King Andrew II of Hungary, whose epithet, 'the Jerosolimitan', signifies the importance accorded to his participation in the Fifth Crusade. Indeed, the invention of a Crusader ancestor had become a political



Early postcard of the Hospice, 1890. Postcard writing came into fashion at the end of the 19th century.



Postcard showing the Hospice with newly-built second floor and the 3rd Station of the Cross on the Via Dolorosa in the foreground right.



View of the Austrian Hospice from the roof of the building opposite.



Jerusalem as place of yearning for Austro-Hungarian pilgrims in the footsteps of Emperor Franz Joseph I. Detail from the mosaic completed in 1907 on the northern wall of the Hospice chapel. The rising sun envelops the city in an aura of sanctity.

asset for European royals; Crusader referents combined the romantic appeal of the exotic Orient with chivalry and heroism, awakening national pride and loyalty, and advancing claims of later monarchs to rights and privileges in the Holy City as 'the' heirs to these medieval heroes.⁹ Aware that his pilgrimage and a Crusader connection would enhance Franz Joseph's political prestige both in his troubled realm and in the European arena, Beda Dudik, the Monarch's chaplain and historian, who accompanied him on the journey, repeatedly recalled that Franz Joseph was the first occidental emperor to visit the Redeemer's Tomb since the Crusades; moreover, the commemorative medal designed by Josef Tautenheyn in 1869 stated that fact for all to see: *'sacrum redemptoris sepulcrum post cruciatas expeditiones omnium imperatorum occidentalium primus invisit.'*¹⁰

The need to achieve loyalty and harmony between his peoples also dictated the choice and looks of the second group of representative pilgrims in the mosaic:¹¹ the 'peaceful pilgrims', to Franz Joseph's left, are dressed in the national garments of the Austro-Hungarian peoples; Heinrich von Himmel, the architect of the 1898 Brixen pilgrimage to the Holy Land, that became the model for Austrian mass pilgrimages, was honoured with a depiction of himself as the carrier of the pilgrims' cross.

The ceremonial composition of the mosaic highlights the figure of Franz Joseph and clearly suggests that the representative pilgrims kneel not only at the sight of Jerusalem but also in honour of and gratitude

to their emperor. Franz Joseph is depicted entering the Holy City humbly on foot and bare-headed, following the medieval tradition that 'no crowns should be worn where our Savior wore a crown of thorns'.¹² Ancient rituals such as kneeling, kissing the ground, or washing the feet upon setting foot in the Holy Land often mark the liminal passage from the secular to the holy. Guided by faith, pilgrims feel transported from mundane daily life to a sacred realm. Jerusalem was sanctified as the place of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, and therefore a pilgrimage to the city was a metaphor for a journey to redemption and to heavenly Jerusalem. The first sight of Jerusalem was the fulfilment of a dream or prophecy. In this context, the mosaic presents the emperor as both object and medium of the divine blessings emanating from the Holy City, and as the link between a celebrated past, the present, and an attainable ideal future. No unseemly element disrupts the emotive stillness of the moment, and the timeless image successfully blurs the boundaries between allegorical and real and between myth and history.

The mosaic of the chapel's apse completes the symbolism of the north-wall image. It shows the apocalyptic *Agnus Dei* and, below it, a row of saints and saintly monarchs who christianised their people and have become their intercessors in heaven, or took the cross or the sword to the Holy Land. Like the military pilgrims in the north-wall mosaic, they are anachronistically identified as Austro-Hungarian.¹³ Moreover, the

choice of figures and their relative position are a function of their political relevancy to Throne and Altar. I propose that although Heinrich von Himmel described the row of saints in the apse wall from left to right,¹⁴ the iconographers expected the beholders to read the group portrait from the centre outwards. The figure of St. Hieronymus, in the same axis with the *Agnus Dei* and the Cross of Jerusalem, is the focus of the composition as the 'first Austro-Hungarian pilgrim' to the Holy Land, who furthermore settled there; to his right, the most honoured place, stands St. Leopold III of Austria and to his left St. Stephen of Hungary, representing the Dual Monarchy. In second place to the right and left of Hieronymus respectively, stand St. Wenceslas of Bohemia and St. Florian as the patron of Poland and Upper Austria. Lastly, at the far right and left ends, respectively, appear St. Stanislaus, patron of Galicia, and St. Thimo, archbishop of Salzburg. Our reading is supported by von Himmel himself: in 1909, celebrating the decoration of the apse, he explained that 'Österreich-Ungarn huldigt an der Stätte der Erlösung dem Heilande durch eine Reihe von Heiligen, die unseren Völkern besonders wert und teuer sind.'¹⁵ ('Austria-Hungary venerates the Savior at the site of Redemption through saints that our peoples especially revere.'). He continues: 'Die edelsten Repräsentanten unseres Vaterlandes, einige seiner berühmtesten Heiligen sollen an der Stätte unserer Erlösung dem Heiland ihre Huldigung darbringen und alle Nationen der Monarchie sollen ihre populärsten und bekanntesten





Details of the mosaic on the side-wall of the Hospice chapel: Military pilgrimage from Austria-Hungary to the Holy Land: Duke Leopold V, King Andreas II, surrounded by representatives of several spiritual orders.



The 'peaceful' pilgrimage to the Holy Land: contemporaneous pilgrims from the Austro-Hungarian Empire in original costume: the bearer of the pilgrims' cross in Tyrolean garb reveals the facial features of Heinrich von Himmel.

Heiligen auf ihren Pilgerfahrten hier wiederfinden und durch den Frieden des Bildes zur Eintracht im Leben und zum nationalen Frieden angeregt werden.¹⁶ ('The noblest representatives of our homeland, some of its most famous saints shall venerate the Savior at the very place of our redemption and all nations of the Monarchy shall encounter in this place their most popular and well-known saints during their pilgrimages and the serenity reigning in the image will bring forth unity and harmony in their lives as well as peace in our nation.') The inscription from Jesus Sirach 44, on the triumphal arch, calls on believers to participate in a song of praise and enhances the donors' religious and patriotic wish.

The selected figures in both mosaics clearly convey the enduring devotion and commitment of the House of Habsburg and peoples to Jerusalem. Moreover, the narrative points to the pilgrims' sense of national identity and constructs an ideal image of supranational bond and common purpose, centred on the Habsburg emperor and king. The chapel mosaics promoted loyalty at a time when Franz Joseph was struggling to keep his empire from disintegrating; furthermore, they enhanced his image on the national and European stages at a time when Jerusalem was the object of contest between European powers.

The image of Jerusalem in the chapel mosaic – its scheme, location and weight in the symmetrical composition formatted in a lunette – holds the narrative by circumventing the wide gap between expectations and reality confronted by Christian visitors. It avoids any reminders of the painful loss of the cradle of Christianity to the Muslims, the general neglect and misery, and the shameful enmity between Christian denominations. Moreover, it arouses the imagination and makes possible mental constructions, while still being vague enough to allow the image to remain indefinite and consistent with the desired reading. A close parallel is the cover of Melchior Lechner's memorial book of the Tyrolean pilgrimages that took place in September and October 1901.¹⁷ The iconic image of Jerusalem appears on a hilltop in the distant horizon like the jewel in a crown, set within the orb of a huge rising sun as if in a radiant halo of sanctity. Two different kinds of pilgrims appear in heraldic position at the sides of the front plane. On the left, a pair of peaceful pilgrims: the man holds the Jerusa-



View of the mosaic above the high altar in the chapel of the Austrian Hospice.



View of the city of Jerusalem coming from Bethlehem; on the left hand side of the picture you can see the Jerusalem railway station building. For travelers approaching by train, this was the first view of the Holy City. Picture postcard from 1900.

lem pilgrims' cross and the woman kneels in prayer. Opposite them, on the right, stands a medieval 'pilgrim in arms', who points to the Holy City while holding a shield decorated with a large crusader cross; its horizontal arm is inscribed '1099', the year the Crusaders conquered the city and founded the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. As in the Austro-Hungarian Hospice mosaic, the landscape leads our eyes to the Oriental City, inviting us to join the pilgrims while pointing to the continuity of the bond of Austria to the Holy Land. Another representation of Jerusalem as a schematic oriental walled-city spread on a mountain appears in the *Illustrierte Zeitung* of Leipzig on December 18th 1869. The image depicts the first homage to Franz Joseph upon his arrival in Jerusalem, with Turkish, Bedouin and Druse riders playing war-games in his honour while also protecting him on his way.

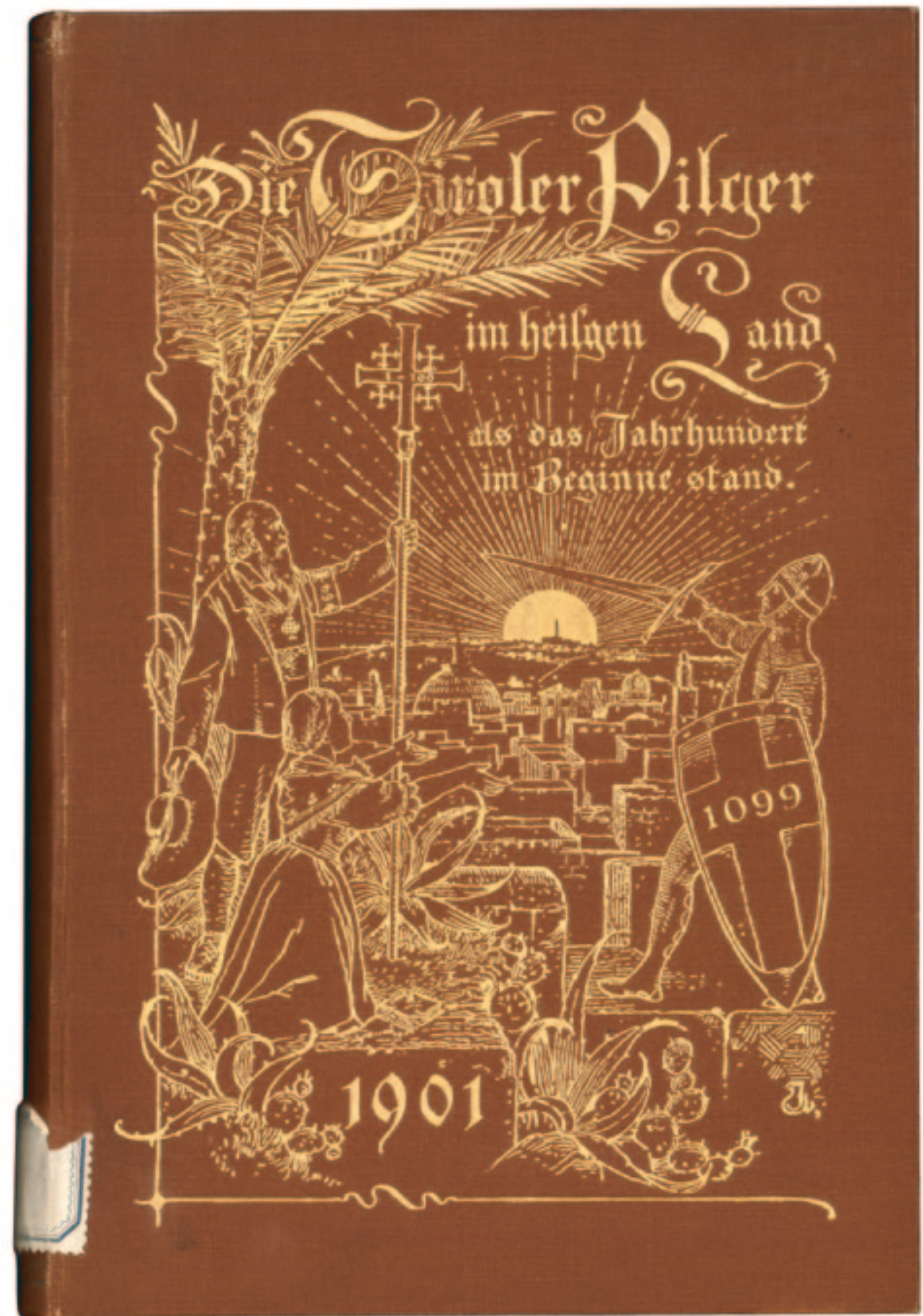
Iconographic elements common to visual images of the Holy City are a quiet and neat atmosphere, and the presence of oriental signifiers perceived as mirrors of biblical times. Also common is the absence of elements that aroused the passions of Orientalists' minds: no harem, *almeh*, or cruel or hedonistic sheikhs are present; unpleasant features of the landscape and the locals' living conditions fell cleanly away from view or arranged themselves as part of an exotic sight.

The ideal image of the Holy City was used widely at the time in different contexts by diverse cultural, religious, and social institutions,¹⁸ and the particular symbolism they endowed it with attests to its malleability or, rather, its manipulability. In the Austrian Hospice mosaic, Jerusalem is a timeless, changeless space whose sanctity is transferred to Franz Joseph and, through him, also to his peoples. God's will, and not only historical right, is the source of his legitimacy, invulnerability, and absolute power, precisely at a time when the principles of monarchical rule were being questioned.¹⁹

Pilgrims' perceptions of Jerusalem

The contrast between the real city and the ideal one was a permanent and irreconcilable feature of the pilgrimage experience. 'Es waren eigene Gefühle der Andacht und der Rührung, die mich mehr und mehr ergriffen in der Erwartung des Anblicks und des Glücks, das mir bevorstand'²⁰ ('It was a mixture of piety and emotion... in the expectation of the sights and blessedness which awaited me'), wrote Emperor Franz Joseph to his spouse on the day of his arrival, and later added: 'Es frappierte uns Alle, wie Alles, besonders der Öhlberg und das Thal Josaphat, so ganz so sind, wie man es sich seit der Kindheit und dem Unterrichte in der heiligen Schrift, vorstellt.'²¹ ('It struck

us all how everything, especially the Mount of Olives and the Valley Josaphat, seemed to be just like one imagined it from one's childhood and the lessons about the Bible.') Furthermore: 'Wir ritten über die Ebene Rephaim, beim Brunnen der heil. 3 Könige, [...], dem Grab Rahels vorbei, [...] und gleich darauf lag Betlehem vor uns, an einer sanften, mit Ölbaumen bewachsenen Anhöhe, die steinernen Häuser amphitheatralisch über einander gebaut.'²² ('We went on horseback through the Valley of Rephaim, next to the well of the Three Magi [...], passed the Tomb of Rachel [...], and immediately Betlehem lay in front of us, on a smooth hill, grown over with Olive trees, the stone houses one above the other as in an amphitheatre.') In a process that began around 1851, pseudo-biblical referents created European fantastic sceneries, as is evident from the recollections of the landscape and people of Bethlehem by Johann Hilber and Joseph Taferner, who returned from their pilgrimage to the Holy Land and created the first 'oriental' crib in South Tyrol.²³ Oriental cribs included crenelated walls and ruined structures with arched openings, palm trees, the grotto and manger, a replica of the star in the Grotto of the Nativity in Bethlehem, and figures in pseudo-oriental garments. Franz Joseph perceived and described the exotic oriental views as the paradisiacal Holy Land of biblical times:



Cover illustration of Melchior Lechner's *Commemoration Book for Tyrolean Pilgrimage 1901*. The city of Jerusalem can be seen below the rising sun.

‘[...] enge Gassen [...], diese schneeweißen originellen Häuser mit steinernen Kuppeln und flachen, von Frauen besetzten Dächern, [...] lauter Bäume, die es bei uns nicht gibt; Dattelpalmen voll Früchten, Bananen und diese orangen Gärten, alle mit über mannshohen Ficus Hecken umzäunt. [...] Die Bewohner, Bauern, sind sehr dunkelbraun von Hautfarbe, die Männer haben Turban und weite, weiß und braun gestreifte Mäntel, die Frauen lange blaue Kleider und eben solchen Wund um den Kopf, keine Schleier. [...] die Weiber stießen merkwürdige, unartikulierte Töne aus, die mit einem langen, mit der Zunge erzeugten Triller endigen und hier im ganzen Lande als Freudensdemonstration üblich sind.’²⁴ (‘Narrow alleys [...], these snow-white ancient houses with stone domes and flat roofs hold by women, [...] everywhere species of trees which we do not have: date palms filled with fruit, bananas and these orange groves, all enclosed with ficus hedges the height of a man! [...] Very dark-skinned men in turbans and wide, white and brown striped coats. The women wear long blue-coloured dresses and the same wound about their heads, with no veil [... they] brought forth strange, inarticulate sounds which ended in a long trill made with the tongue [...] all recognise this sound as a shout of joy.’)

Nevertheless, the Emperor also noted sights that would not have been portrayed in Orientalist images or the romantic literature exalting the beauty and pleasures of the exotic Orient and the idealised Holy Land: the incredible poverty, misery and backwardness. Characteristically, these were also perceived and interpreted through Orientalist attitudes: ‘Als einzelne, herrlich grüne Oasen in dieser öden Gegend, erschienen die Dörfer, die immer mitten zwischen Palmen und Feigen Bäumen gelegen und mit Ficus Hecken umgeben sind. Einzelne Häuser sind von Stein, die meisten aber nur elende Lehmhütten, die in einem großen Haufen zusammengedrängt, mehr einer Maulwurfs-

Colour photo-postcard from 1934: ‘Christian peasant-girl from a village in the vicinity of Jerusalem.’



The Pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem, artistic postcard from around 1900.



Group of Bedouin from the Jerusalem environs, colour photo-postcard from 1934.



Shepherds in front of Mount Tabor in the Jezreel Valley, colour photo-postcard from 1934.



Children in Jerusalem, colour photo-postcard from 1934. These early colour photo-postcards reflect the European tendency to see life in the Orient in a romanticised light.

kolonie, als menschlichen Wohnungen ähnlich sehen. Die Bewohner, Bauern, sind sehr dunkelbraun von Hautfarbe, [...]. Alle sind sehr schmutzig.²⁵ ('Scattered villages that appeared to us like distant wonderful green oases amidst this desolate region; they lay in the middle of palm and fig trees surrounded by cactus hedges. Some houses are made of

stone. Most, however, are only miserable loam huts in a large heap, more like a mole colony than human dwellings. The inhabitants, farmers, are very dark brown-skinned [...] All are very dirty.') However, despite the misery, desolation, dirt, fanaticism, and gloomy atmosphere that many perceived as a divine curse,

almost unanimously remarking that nothing remained of its glorious past – the city ultimately awakened the cherished mental images of 'the real Jerusalem' encoded in memory. Pilgrims saw the Holy Land not with their eyes but with their hearts and minds, according to the Scriptures, sermons, stories, and songs they had heard since early childhood. The associations with the sacred were achieved through a selective perception of reality, especially when it conflicted with strongly held values. Thus, Crown Prince Rudolf of Austria-Hungary wrote of his visit to Bethlehem in 1881: 'Die Menschen, die man auf den flachen Dächern ihrer Häuser, in den Gassen und an den Fenstern sieht, sind alte biblische Juden, wie die Phantasie dieselben nicht anders ausmalen kann: große Turbane, faltenreiche Gewänder, bunte Oberkleider; die Reichen in der Tracht der Pharisäer, die Armen so wie jenes Volk, das zuerst aus dem Munde des Erlösers auf den Plätzen und Straßen die segensbringenden Sätze seiner Lehre erhielt. Der Gesichtstypus ist auch ein echt hebräischer: lange, gebogene Nasen, blasse Gesichtsfarbe, schwarze oder rothe Bärte, geringelt oder in zwei Spitzen verlaufend, wie man es auf den Bildern Christi und seiner Apostel sieht. Die Frauen sind besonders auffallend: in weite, faltenreiche, farbige Gewänder gehüllt, das weiße, äußerst malerisch drapirte Tuch am Kopfe; blasse Hautfarbe, die schönsten Augen, Gesichtszüge und Haare, die man sich nur denken kann. Ich habe noch niemals so schöne Frauen als in Betlehem gesehen, [...] eine Schönheit folgt der anderen; die edelsten Muttergottes-Typen, und wie man sich die herrlichsten Frauengestalten des neuen Testaments nur ausmalen kann, wandeln da in Fleisch und Blut umher.'²⁶ ('The people whom you can see on the roofs of their houses, in the small streets and at the windows, are old Biblical Jews; fantasy could not imagine them more real: big turbans, cloaks with many fold, colourful tops, the rich ones in the clothes of the Pharisees, the poor just as that people who listened to the message of the Savior on the streets and squares. The facial type is also Hebrew: long, crooked nose, pale tan, black or red beards, curly and ending in two tips. Just as one knows it from the pictures of Jesus Christ and the Apostles [...] The women are especially remarkable: clothed in wide, colourful garments with many fold, white veils draped to the heads [...] pale skin, the most



Arab women drawing water with mechanical assistance, colour photo-postcard from 1934.



The town of Jericho north of the Dead Sea, artistic postcard around 1900.

beautiful eyes, facial features and hair which can only be imagined. I have never seen so many beautiful women as in Bethlehem [...] one beauty follows the other, the most lovely Mother-of-God types, just as you might imagine the most impressive women of the New Testament [...] these women walk here in flesh and blood.)

The biblical past and the present merged. Well aware of this phenomenon, the local market, dragomans, souvenir and relics peddlers, and photographers endeavoured to fulfil the pilgrims' fantasies. In picturesque photographs, harvest scenes would become 'The Field of Boaz', and the peasants – 'Ruth and Boaz',²⁷ and tour guides eagerly showed their clients to the 'houses' of the Bible's protagonists complete with their sanctified belongings and related objects.²⁸ Crown Prince Rudolf echoed a common opinion when he wrote in a derisive and patronising tone: 'Palästina ist [...] ein echtes Touristenland, [...] hier [werden] der Glaube und die Andacht ausgebeutet und zu Geld gemacht.'²⁹ ('Palestine is [...] a true tourist country, [...] faith and devotion are exploited and made money here.')

Orientalist attitudes in the perception of the locals did not exclude local Christian denom-

inations. Father Stummer, who led the Brixen people's pilgrimage in 1899, wrote about the pilgrims' emotive singing at the Holy Sepulchre: 'Wenn es nicht unehrerbietig wäre, möchte ich einem Pilger sagen, unser Herr habe an dem heiligen Ort, wo er so lang mit Türkenmusik und Griechengesang oder besser Geheul geplagt worden ist, auch einmal durch einen echt deutschen Herzensgesang erquickt werden wollen.'³⁰ ('If it would not be disregardful, I would say, our Lord will thus be able to refresh himself listening to genuine German chant bursting forth from the heart, after a long time suffering the music of the Turks and the songs, or rather howls, of the Greeks.')

In this complex religious, cultural and political scenery, how did Austro-Hungarian pilgrims who stayed in their national hospice perceive it, and how did the mosaics – that, as it were, represented them – tell a relevant story in the national-historical, the European and the Jerusalemite contexts? Evidence of the familiar atmosphere at the Hospice can be found in entries in memoirs by pilgrims. For example, the Upper-Austrian Father Norbert Klinger wrote in 1871 that 'Wir waren ungefähr 1000 Stunden von der Heimat entfernt, aber wir fühlten uns nicht fremd, wir

waren ja in Jerusalem im österreichischen Pilgerhause.'³¹ ('we [pilgrims] were in Jerusalem, approximately one thousand hours away from the homeland, but did not feel like strangers: we were staying at the Austrian Pilgrims' House'). Yet, aware that Franz Joseph's peoples were often at odds with each other, in 1903, Hermann Zschokke, the chairman of the Trust Committee and executor of the Hospice, said, when appealing to the Hungarian side of the Dual Monarchy to contribute to the financing of the institution: 'So ist denn, um zum Schlusse zu eilen, unser Pilgerhaus am Fuße von Golgotha der heimatliche Herd, in welchem, wie die Pilgerlisten zeigen, alle Nationen unseres Kaiserstaates, Deutsche und Czechen, Ungarn und Kroaten, Italiener und Slovenen friedlich unter einem Dache wohnen und in Liebe und Eintracht sich die brüderliche Hand reichen, ein Wegweiser und ein Mahnruf, das unter dem Schatten und Zeichen des heiligen Kreuzes auch die verschiedenen Nationen im Heimatlande in gegenseitiger Liebe sich vereinigen sollen.'³² ('Our Pilgrims' House, to come to a hasty conclusion, at the foot of the Golgotha is a national hearth in which, as the list of guests proves, pilgrims from all nations of our Emperor's realm, Germans



Representation of Crown-Prince Rudolf's Palestine trip: riding at the Dead Sea. The landscape in that area is singularly barren. Woodcut book illustration.



Johann Victor Krämer was presumably commissioned to paint this picture of Crown-Prince Rudolf which was based on a photograph. Oil painting in the possession of the Austrian Hospice.



Jaffa Gate in an early photo around 1880. At this point the area around the gate was still built-up.



Jaffa Gate in the 1940s. Note the British telephone box at the entrance.



View from Jaffa Gate into the Old City. Note the impressive tower of the Redeemer Church on the left. Photo from around 1910.



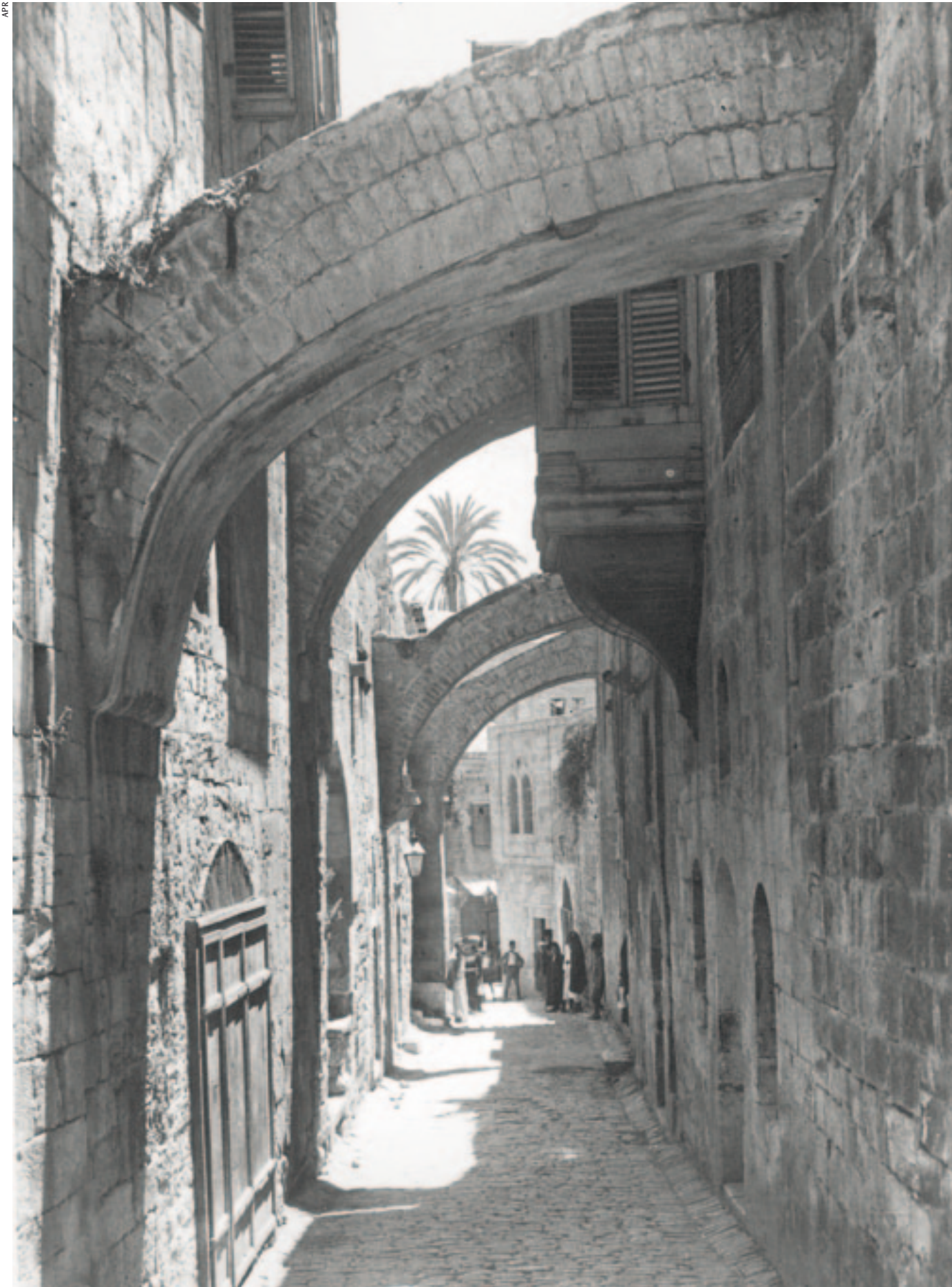
The Via Dolorosa passes through 14 Stations of the Cross from Lion's Gate to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Artistic postcard around 1900, image right: colour photo-postcard from 1934.

and Czechs, Hungarians and Croats, Italians and Slovenes, peacefully reside under one roof in friendly relations and unity, and fraternally extend their hand to each other; [it] is a reminding call to the different nations in the Homeland to live under the sign of the cross and unified in mutual love.) Such praise and heartfelt wishes were echoed by pilgrims' representatives over the years. The positive attitude encouraged by the Hospice is evident from the writings of Karl Domanig, who referred in his memoir of the Tyrolean peoples' pilgrimage of 1906 to a tradition of raising a toast to the Emperor and to the Hospice on the last evening of the pilgrims' stay, and noted a pilgrim's blessing: "[...] daß wir uns hier in seinem Hause, das auch österreichischer Boden sei, so wohl und heimisch fühlen möchten wie daheim im Vaterland. Der Redner meinte: wir alle,

Deutsche und Ungarn, Böhmen und Italiener würden, nach Hause zurückgekehrt, uns wohl oft erinnern an unser schönes Zusammenleben im Österreichischen Hospiz und würden gewiß nur wünschen, das sich die Volker daheim allesamt so gut verträgen, sich so wohl und heimisch fühlten, wie wir uns in Jerusalem gefühlt."³³ (Just like we all feel so much at home here in this house, which is Austrian soil – we may all feel [similarly] in our Fatherland that once back in our homes, all of us, Germans and Hungarians, Bohemians and Italians, will probably often remember our wonderful experience of community life during our stay in the Austrian Hospice, and wish that the different peoples [of the Empire] get along together as well as we did in Jerusalem.)

His words could very well be a description of "The Military and Peaceful Pilgrim-

ages of Austria-Hungary to the Holy Land since Ancient Times' mosaic that would be installed in the Hospice chapel the following year. This notion is manifested further in the words of Karl Schnabl, who as rector of the Austro-Hungarian Hospice had extended his hospitality to pilgrims from the Dual Monarchy. Attesting to the historic perspective constructed by the mosaic, he writes in 1911: 'An Stelle der bewaffneten Krieger treten die christlichen Pilger aus allen Ländern Europas.'³⁴ (The Christian pilgrims from all European countries are replacing the armed warriors.) Thus the Hospice, set at the heart of Jerusalem, realised Franz Joseph's greatest dream: the merger of the biblical past and the present, that legitimised the perception of his person as the Christ-like monarch who would lead them in and through his realm to the Heavenly Jerusalem.



According to tradition, the 14 Stations on the Via Dolorosa start at the official residence of the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate and end at the place of execution, Golgotha. Photo from the 1930s.



*View of the Via Dolorosa
from the roof of the building
opposite the Hospice.*