

Natural Materials of the Holy Land and the Visual Translation of Place, 500–1500. Edited by Renana Bartal, Neta Bodner, and Bianca Kühnel. Abingdon: Routledge, 2017. xxxiii + 258 pp. \$155.00 hardcover.

The recent “material turn” and the application of “thing theory” have provided fruitful, new approaches in art historical studies. Nowhere is such an emphasis on materiality more enlightening than in the studies of the *loca sancta*—the venerated sites of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. The volume under consideration here brings together fourteen studies authored by both younger and well-established scholars addressing the multifarious meanings associated with objects from the Holy Land and their translation. The studies are preceded by an illuminating foreword by Caroline Walker Bynum and an introduction by the editors.

Previous generations of scholars have examined locus sanctus art from a visual perspective in which images, often combined with inscriptions, can transmit the sacred associations of one place to another, usually far removed. A strong example of this would be the well-known ampullae from Jerusalem, now in the collections of Monza, Bobbio, and elsewhere, decorated with depictions of holy events and sacred texts. The present collection of studies is more concerned in “what they carried”—that is, the contents and not the containers.

The first chapter, by Ora Limor, lays out which sorts of materials were collected by pilgrims—earth, stone, water, and oil. The late fourth-century pilgrim Egeria refers to these as “blessings,” evocative souvenirs associated with evocative places, but these “blessings” also could include something as ephemeral as a piece of fruit offered by a hermit. Additional chapters in the book deal with collections and collecting, the agents of translation, how these objects function in their new contexts, and, finally, contemporary reenactments in the works of Susan Hiller and Joseph Beuys.

In all, this is a fascinating collection of essays that should challenge scholars to consider types of evidence often overlooked in theories of place. The flexible geography and transportable topography of the Holy Land clearly played a significant role in Western European attitudes toward the sacred.

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The Bible in Byzantium: Appropriation, Adaptation, Interpretation. Edited by Claudia Rapp and Andreas Külzer. *Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplements* 25, *Reading Scripture in Judaism and Christianity* 6. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2019. 160 pp. €64.99 cloth.

This selection of proceedings from the twenty-seventh International Congress of Byzantine Studies (Belgrade, 2017) offers a variety of approaches to the study of the Bible in Byzantium, written in German and English. The Bible, Claudia Rapp writes,