

ROYAL TREASURES.  
MASTERPIECES FROM  
THE TERRA SANCTA  
MUSEUM



XUNTA  
DE GALICIA

The Terra Sancta Museum houses an extraordinary and little-known artistic treasure amassed largely thanks to donations made by European Catholic monarchs to various churches in that land over the course of five hundred years. Among these temples, the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, in Jerusalem, is the most prominent. According to Christian tradition, this is the place of death, burial and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Given this spiritual focal point, the sending of offerings to this and other temples in Palestine represented, for these royals, a significant projection of their devotion and power.

As well as sending material and financial resources to sustain churches and local communities –gold coins, wax, olive oil, perfumes, sugar and even spices!– the generosity of these monarchs also extended to masterpieces of European art, including gold and silver works, textiles and furniture for worship and to decorate religious spaces.

Preserved since then by the Custody of the Holy Land –the Franciscan Catholic institution responsible for looking after the Christian sites of the Holy Land–, these and other artworks not only bring to light the Treasures from Kings but also take us on a journey through the ancient history and spiritual symbolism of the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre: a journey shared by Calouste Gulbenkian through his emotional link to the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

## I

### **JERUSALEM, "CENTER OF THE WORLD"**

Jerusalem is regarded as one of the fundamental cities of the three great monotheist religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. According to Christian tradition, Jerusalem, along with Bethlehem and Nazareth, represents the "City of Redemption" where, in this Palestinian territory, the diverse stages in the life of Jesus took place, becoming central themes in European artistic production for centuries afterwards. The place of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, Jerusalem thus has a particular importance which explains its title of "Centre of the World". Some maps produced in Europe attest to this theological mindset by placing the Holy City at the heart of the planisphere.

1.

This work arrived in Jerusalem in 1739. It remains unclear whether it was sent to replace the star installed in the Grotto of the Basilica of the Nativity, in Bethlehem, in 1717. It must have been intended for that location, given the inscription it bears: "Here Jesus Christ was born to the Virgin and became a man". These stars were placed at the very site identified by Christian tradition as Jesus' birthplace, on which Emperor Constantine ordered the building of the Basilica of the Nativity in the 4th century. The red porphyry in the centre alludes to the "royalty" of Christ.

2.

Since the beginning of the 17th century, a silver star has marked the place of Jesus' birth in the Grotto of the Nativity in Bethlehem. Placed on the floor of the grotto's apse chapel, under the altar, the fourteen-

point star has the form of the sun to evoke the star the Magi followed. However, tradition goes even further back. Indeed, the pilgrims Nicole Le Huen, around 1550, and previously Jacques de Verone in 1335, mention a star-shaped marble rose window.

3.

This relief was delivered to Jerusalem on 13 August 1737 by Friar Diego di Foggia, most likely with the intention of it being placed in the Aedicule of the Holy Sepulchre, over Jesus' tomb. Emerging from a large cloud obscuring the entrance to His tomb and showing the banner

of the Resurrection, Jesus Christ rises towards clouds of cherubs, while at His feet Pilate's soldiers slumber on. This exceptional work was, without doubt, inspired by the works of Neapolitan painters of the time, such as Francesco Solimena (1657-1747) and Paolo de Matteis (1662-1728).

4.

This illumination shows the themes of the Resurrection of Christ and the Apparition of the Angel to the Holy Women. Interestingly, the master illuminator depicted these two episodes within a vaulted interior architecture, with a circular plan, which could be an allusion to the rotunda of the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, in Jerusalem. While it is somewhat unusual to represent these two themes together, it is also uncommon for them to be depicted inside a building, being generally shown in an outdoor space, as described in the Gospels.

5.

This altar frontal, with its markedly architectural, sculptural and theatrical characteristics, typical of the baroque art of Naples, depicts in the centre the Pentecost, that is to say, the descent of the Holy Spirit on Christ's Apostles. Represented at the sides are the Franciscan saints Louis of Anjou and Bonaventure. While the Birth, Death and Resurrection of Jesus are fundamental mysteries for Christianity, the Pentecost is also highly relevant, celebrated fifty days after Easter Sunday and traditionally regarded as the moment of the birth of the Church itself.

6.

The period between the mid-14th century and the 16th century was highly productive for the English alabaster workshops, which produced religious scenes of devotional content, generally for altarpieces made up of various plaques with polychrome reliefs mounted on wooden structures. The most outstanding workshops in the 15th century were those found in Nottingham, and Galician heritage still preserves today some remarkable examples produced in them. The presence of such works resulted from the importing of works through English ports, from the world of the pilgrimages to Compostela.

## **JERUSALEM IN TIME OF JESUS**

The Studium Biblicum Franciscanum of Jerusalem, founded in 1924, is a scientific institution dedicated to the research and academic teaching of biblical archaeology. The studies carried out by the Franciscans and the pieces found have significantly increased the knowledge about the Holy

Land. The large collection of archaeological materials that make up the holdings of the Terra Santa Museum in Santiago were discovered during the numerous excavations conducted by this institution. The pieces included in this introduction, mainly from the Roman period and dating from the first century A.D., reflect the ways of doing and the ways of daily life in the area during the time of Jesus.

7.

The purpose of these lamps was to provide light, and in that sense they can be compared to modern-day candles or oil-lamps. They were already in use in ancient times, and indeed the Museo de Terra Santa in Santiago boasts lamps used in the Bronze and Iron Ages as well as in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, together with Byzantine and Arab models. In Roman times, they were used as lights in domestic and commercial settings, and also as votive offerings.

This small Herodian lamp is representative of the model most widely used in Jesus' day; lamps like this were often placed on stands of varying height, in order to make fuller use of the light.

8. 9. 10.

The Museo de Terra Santa's numismatic collection includes coins used in everyday life in Palestine in the 1st century AD. Similar specimens were handled by Jesus and his apostles, among them St James.

Among the Roman imperial coins, the silver denarius of Tiberius is the piece most often mentioned in the Gospels. Its value was considerable, hence the complaints about the cost of the perfume poured by Mary on the feet of Jesus, whose cost was estimated at 300 denarii.

The lepton of Pontius Pilate and the Jewish silver shekel have great historical significance. According to Flavius Josephus, Pilate repeatedly provoked the wrath of the Jews by his decisions, such as the issuance of coins with pagan symbols. As for the shekel, we must refer to the First Revolt (66 A.D.) after which the Jews minted their own coins.

## II

### **FROM CONSTANTINE THE GREAT TO SULEIMAN THE MAGNIFICENT**

With the Edict of Milan, in the year 313, Constantine granted Christians freedom of worship within the Roman Empire, allowing Christianity to progressively become a state religion.

The tradition that identified the sites of the Calvary and sepulchre of Christ led Helen of Constantinople —mother of Emperor Constantine— to visit the Holy Land in 326, giving rise to the construction of the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre. This and other temples built at the time became a destination for countless European pilgrims who, particularly from the fourteenth century on, were received by the friars of the Order of Saint Francis.

Since their arrival in the Holy Land, the Franciscans had lived in a largely non-Christian environment and were involved in successive

confrontations. However, they upheld their mission as guardians of the Holy Places and, consequently, the celebration of Catholic worship and support to the pilgrims and local Christian communities.

11.

A gift from a French prelate, whose arms have not yet been identified, this gold reliquary in the shape of a cross dates to the second half of the nineteenth century. This very refined work is mounted with sapphires and diamonds to give more brilliance to the Latin cross, whose arms are covered in translucent blue enamel, terminating in prominent fleurs-de-lys.

### **Discovery of the True Cross by Saint Helena**

The historical circumstances of the Discovery of the Holy Cross, in around 328, by Empress Helen of Constantinople, the mother of Constantine, have been described by various authors of the 4th century, including Eusebius of Caesarea (*ca.* 265-339/341), in his book *Life of Constantine*. This episode was embellished, over time, with mythical elements and gave rise to exceptional artistic production, as is the case with this painting from the Monastery of Santa Cruz in Coimbra. Furthermore, these accounts promoted worship of the Cross and the worldwide dissemination of fragments of this relic, later incorporated in reliquaries.

12.

In 312 Emperor Constantine signed the Edict of Milan legalising the Christian religion and his own mother, Helen, went to Jerusalem to locate the tomb of Jesus. With the help of Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, and Macarius, bishop of Jerusalem, they found three crosses near a tomb they identified as Calvary. In 324-325 Constantine ordered the destruction of the pagan temple, and after the rubble was removed, a rock-cut tomb was discovered, which Helen and Macarius identified as the burial place of Jesus Christ. After the discovery of the tomb and the rocky peak of Golgotha, a complex of buildings was designed and inaugurated on 13 September in the year 335.

This model, produced for the 1954 Holy Land exhibition in Madrid, offers a hypothetical reconstruction of the Constantinian complex, which was made up of different structures to house the most important holy places of Christianity.

13.

Created by Emperor Constantine to replace the gold *aureus*, this coinage, composed of 4.5 grammes of pure gold, was very stable until the eleventh century. Struck in Constantinople in 616-25, the coin depicts the Emperor and his young son, the future Constantine III, on the obverse. On the reverse, the True Cross is shown on Calvary.

### **THE BASILICA OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE**

Following Helen of Constantinople's pilgrimage to the Holy Land, in around 326, with the aim of identifying the places associated with the

life of Jesus, the Emperor Constantine, her son, ordered the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre to be built on what was believed to be the site of the death and burial of Christ. Over the centuries, this building has withstood various vicissitudes, including the destruction wrought by the Sasanian Empire, in 614, and, particularly, by the Fatimid Caliphate, in 1009. Having been successively rebuilt, the Basilica currently presents a Romanesque-Gothic architecture with modifications carried out in more recent times. This dynamic of architectural and decorative renovation is not unrelated to the diversity of rites –Latin (Catholic), Armenian, Greek Orthodox, Coptic, Syriac and Ethiopian– celebrated in this temple.

14. 15

*Gerusalemme liberata* [Jerusalem Delivered] is an epic poem by the Italian Torquato Tasso, published in 1581, which tells of the First Crusade. It includes elements that, in some cases, come from older texts, namely those by Homer and Virgil. The print shown here illustrates the conquest of Jerusalem by the crusades, in the year 1099, which brought about the founding of the so-called Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. Its first sovereign was Godfrey of Bouillon (ca. 1060-1100) –the protagonist of Tasso’s poem– followed by Baldwin of Boulogne (1065-1118), his brother, to whose reign and governance this seal corresponds, as an instrument and symbol of royal administration.

16.

1609 saw the publication of the *Trattato delle Piante & Immagini de sacri Edifizi di Terra Santa*, by Bernardino Amico, with detailed representations of the basilicas of the Holy Sepulchre and of the Nativity. These prints were created from drawings made by Amico himself, a Franciscan friar with training in architecture, who served the Custody of the Holy Land between 1593 and 1597. From these drawings, artisans in Bethlehem created miniature models of the basilicas, which became highly prized objects among pilgrims. They were made up of dozens of sections, which could be assembled and disassembled, making them easy to transport and allowing for a detailed analysis of the building’s architecture.

These micro-architectures are now important resources to aid our understanding of the architecture of the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in the late sixteenth century –a time when it still reflected the large-scale reconstruction carried out in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

17.

Produced in Limoges (France), this crozier head is thought to have belonged to Goffredo de Prefetti, bishop of Bethlehem, who brought it to the Holy Land following a mission he carried out in France during the papacy of Pope Innocent IV (1243-1254). Along with other liturgical and musical objects, it was part of the so-called “Treasure of Bethlehem”, found during archaeological excavations carried out in 1863 and 1906 in the surroundings of the Basilica of the Nativity. It provides a rare artistic testimony of the ancient Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem and the type of objects used at the time in the basilicas of Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

## THE FRANCISCANS IN JERUSALEM

Francis of Assisi (ca. 1182?-1226), founder of the Order of the Friars Minor, expressed a desire, during his lifetime, to establish a religious community in the Holy Land. It was only in 1333, however, that a convent was established at the biblical site of the Cenacle, a property given by Robert of Anjou, king of Naples at that time.

In this context, and via a papal bull, the Franciscans of the Holy Land received the mission of preserving the Holy Places, welcoming pilgrims, celebrating Catholic liturgy and carrying out activities to sustain the local Christian communities. Even today, this commitment is upheld by the Custody of the Holy Land, the Franciscan institution created for that purpose.

18.

During the years 1907-1909, Father Viaud directed a campaign of excavations in the city of Nazareth, especially on the ancient site of the Basilica of the Annunciation. Among the numerous architectural remains, a set of five Romanesque capitals in an admirable state of preservation were located in 1908, near the north door of the crossed Basilica.

In this piece, dedicated to Santiago el Mayor, scenes from the life of the apostle are depicted, the most well-known of which are those showing the martyrdom of St. James.

19.

The composition of this work is entirely occupied by the figure of St. Francis. He appears standing, dressed in a poor brown habit full of patches and a rough touch, leaning on a rock with a hard and sharp profile, holding his hands together in a prayerful attitude. The background, turned into a gloomy and disturbing landscape, acts as a monochrome backdrop against which the figure of St. Francis stands out.

This canvas stands out for the silence and immobility transmitted by the Saint, absorbed in the contemplation of the Crucified Christ.

22. 23.

It was Francis of Assisi (1182?-1226) who first wanted to establish the Franciscans in the Holy Land. However, this only occurred in 1333, thanks to the decisive support of the king of Naples, Robert of Anjou (ca. 1277-1343), who is represented on this coin. This sovereign acquired the Cenacle building, in Jerusalem, and gave it to the Franciscans to allow them to found a convent there, also charging them with the mission of welcoming pilgrims and ensuring Latin (catholic) liturgical celebrations in all the Holy Places.

According to Christian tradition, the Cenacle is where the biblical episodes of the Last Supper and the Pentecost took place, both themes represented on the seal of the Custody of the Holy Land.

24. 25.

This medieval missal and chalice are among the few remaining vestiges of the liturgical heritage of the ancient Convent of the Cenacle, the first Franciscan establishment in Jerusalem.



The name "Missal of Mount Zion" relates to the district of Jerusalem where the convent was located (Mount Zion). As for the chalice, it is the oldest silversmith work in the possession of the Custody of the Holy Land. The inscription on this piece raises the possibility of it being a gift from Didacus of Alcalá (a Spanish Franciscan saint) to the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, hence this object being called the "Chalice of Saint Didacus of Alcalá".

26. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34.

Among the most prominent artistic activities developed by Christian communities in Palestine were metal arts such as filigree and, in particular, the mother of pearl industry. The latter was strongly promoted by the Franciscans in the late-sixteenth century, allowing Bethlehem to become a major centre of production of wood and mother of pearl items. Mother of pearl is a material extracted from inside certain molluscs, plentiful in parts of the Red Sea. Objects in a range of sizes and typologies could thus be easily acquired by pilgrims or sent directly to European churches and convents, as is the case of these pieces from the Convent of San Francisco in Santiago de Compostela.

27.

St Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) has always been one of the most popular saints, and the wide dissemination of his cult contributed to the creation of an abundant and varied iconography. After the Counter-Reformation, the depictions of a cheerful, nature-loving monk, symbolising the freedom provided by poverty.

Actually this piece is a small reliquary with an oval lipsanoteca inlaid in the torso, where a fragment of the saint's cord was kept and displayed.

## **PILGRIMAGES TO THE HOLY LAND**

Pilgrimage to places considered sacred is a practice that transcends all religions and is aimed at leading pilgrims through geography towards a spiritual experience. With the construction of the Constantinian basilicas of the Holy Sepulcher, the Ascension and the Nativity, many Christian pilgrims converged on this territory. Various testimonies tell the itineraries of these journeys and describe the different temples and celebrations that took place there, such as that of the Galician nun Egeria in the 4th century.

### **The three great cristian pilgrimages: Jerusalem, Rome and Santiago**

Jerusalem, holy place for the three great monotheistic religions, is for Christians the major center of pilgrimage. Rome, with the tombs of Peter and Paul, the profusion of sanctuaries, the richness of relics and the fact that it is the Papal seat, attracts many "pilgrims". Santiago de Compostela became a center of pilgrimage after the discovery of the body of St. James the Greater in the 9th century. The importance of the relic will spread throughout Europe and pilgrims will come in large numbers since then.

35.

The portolan charts are graphic representations of the Mediterranean coast used between the 13th and 16th centuries to determine



sailing routes by showing names of ports, rhumb lines and wind roses indicating their direction. Although this example was part of a maritime atlas created as a luxury object and, therefore, highly decorated, representations of places of worship and pilgrimage are lost among the rest of the toponyms, as they lack the religious character of medieval maps.

41.

Participation in religious celebrations was very important for any pilgrim. This book is fundamental for knowledge of the liturgical tradition of the Custody of the Holy Land. It describes the celebrations presided over by the Custos of the Holy Land, namely the welcoming of pilgrims and the investiture of knights of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre. It also describes the particularities of some celebrations carried out in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, such as the Good Friday funeral procession or the celebration of the Discovery or Invention of the Holy Cross held in the place where Christian tradition indicates it was found.

42. 43.

This basin was a Portuguese offering and arrived in Jerusalem in 1675. It was intended for use on Maundy Thursday, at the feet-washing ceremony, in which the Custos of the Holy Land washes the feet of twelve pilgrims, symbolising Christ washing the feet of the twelve Apostles. This celebration synthesised one of the central missions of the Custody of the Holy Land: that of welcoming pilgrims. Interestingly, this object, or a very similar one, is represented in a print illustrating the account that Jean de Thévenot wrote of his journey to Jerusalem.

This basin is currently still employed in the same ceremony but used to wash the feet of six young Franciscans and six seminarians of the Latin Patriarchate.

44.

Santiago, Rome and Jerusalem appear as the main cities of the world. On every region of the map is placed the apostle who had been assigned to evangelize and each one of them is represented with head in three quarters, like a bust, and on rectangles of varied decoration. The only deviations from this scheme are St. Peter and St. James the Apostle, who are framed within their respective sanctuaries.

### **Jerusalem Paronama**

The view of the Holy City is taken from east to west. In the foreground, the Greek-Catholic major seminarians of St. Anne of the White Fathers. The date of the photograph can be deduced from the state of construction of the Dominican convent of St. Stephen, or École Biblique, on the far right of the photograph, in the grove of its garden.

Another clue is the unfinished state of the great Assumptionist convent of Notre-Dame de France (the statue of the Virgin Mary has not yet been installed). The brand new Lutheran bell tower, next to the Holy Sepulchre, marks the passage of the German emperor, Wilhelm II, who has just inaugurated it, in November 1898. The skyline shows, from left to right, the large building of St. Peter's in Regensburg, the Franciscan

bell tower (St. Savior), the Russian Orthodox settlement, known as "moskobiye", with the cathedral and the large hospices, then the dome of the Ethiopian cathedral, and finally the large Protestant settlement known as Schneller. The skyline ends with the Jewish quarter of Méa-Shearim, above the École Biblique.

Negative on glass plate, 18 x 24 cm, preserved by the White Fathers of St. Anne of Jerusalem.

46.

This model was made under the technical direction of Friar Bartolomé de las Heras, head of the carpentry workshops of the Convent of St. Savior of Jerusalem and member of the Franciscan Province of Santiago. He invested five years in its realization and used wood from cypress trees cultivated next to the millenary olive trees in the garden of Gethsemane.

It faithfully reproduces both the exterior and the interior of the Hierosolimitan Basilica and the surrounding buildings: Franciscan, Armenian, Greek, Syrian, Coptic and Muslim convents.

In the interior all the constructive elements are accurately reflected, highlighting the chapels and different areas of the six Christian confessions that are present in the basilica. Special care was given to the decoration, and it was copied in miniature from the paintings to the pavements.

48.

These crosses —of which other examples are conserved in different places— at the time served as gifts from the Patriarch of Jerusalem and, given the special relationship at the time in the triangle formed by Rome, Jerusalem and Compostela, there is the possibility that it was a gift for the church of Santiago at a time when Gelmirez had strengthened relations with the Holy Land with the aim of consolidating the Compostela headquarters.

49.

Engraving composed by 18 plates. General view of the city of Rome from the Gianicolo.

This print by Vasi became a kind of urban and monumental inventory of the city, indeed, the caption at the bottom lists 390 buildings and monuments of Rome in what could almost have been a guide for visitors to the city. Giuseppe Vasi dedicated his engraving to King Charles III of Spain, King of Naples, whose coat of arms appears at the bottom of the engraving.

50.

Young pilgrim with the attributes of the pilgrimage to Rome, crossed keys with the tiara, and the shell, identifying the Way of St. James.

Having made the two great pilgrimages of the Christian West gave a special status to the pilgrim and in this case the clothing singularizes him as an outstanding character to the point of being the subject of a portrait of great quality.

51.

Representation of St. James as a pilgrim, although with elements characteristic of his condition as an apostle, which is not exceptional in occidental art. Thus, the bordon, the hat and the scarcela (it crosses his chest and is decorated with a scallop) would refer to his dimension as a pilgrim, while the tunic, the mantle, the book and the bare feet refer to his dimension as an apostle.

This union responds to a didactic reason: with his example, Santiago teaches the faithful to follow the Camino in all its senses or, in other words, the saint adopts the habit of his devotees.

52.

There is a strong tradition around the supposed pilgrimages by St Francis and St Dominic to Santiago, after which both religious orders became established in the city. Orders that, from the moment they were respectively founded, played an important role in attending and receiving pilgrims with a new spirituality that was introduced precisely at that time.

The iconography chosen for this relief would fit perfectly with the work of promoting pilgrimages to Santiago and the establishment of the Compostela Holy Year.

53.

This canvas depicts the pilgrimage of Francis of Assisi to Compostela, a tradition strongly established in the Jacobean context and based on what was recorded in the 14th century in *The Little Flowers* of St. Francis. Here Francis is portrayed kneeling before the altar of the Cathedral at the moment when the Apostle would inspire him to expand the Order. This revelation encouraged St. Francis to found convents. Thus the one in Santiago would have been the seat of the first Franciscan community.

54.

The Virgin Mary, St. Joseph and the baby Jesus dressed as pilgrims to Compostela.

This silver sculpture was probably made in the silver workshops of Puebla de los Ángeles (Tlaxcala, Mexico), where in the 18th century silver work flourished, achieving its own identity and a level of quality that distinguished it from the rest of the production in Nueva España. In this case, the family is personified as a Jacobean pilgrim family, since all three are dressed in the characteristic clothing of this pilgrimage —slave, wide-brimmed hat, etc.— and carry the attributes of the pilgrims to Santiago: staffs, gourds and shells.

## UNDER DE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

After nearly 300 years of administration by the Mamluk sultanate, Jerusalem was taken by the Ottoman Empire in 1516. In relation to this context —and the circumstances that preceded and followed it— the Custody of the Holy Land holds a fascinating collection of firmans, *hoggets*, *fatwa*, ordinances, title deeds, proclamations and legal documents issued by the Mamluk and Ottoman authorities

relating to the presence of the Franciscans in the Holy City. In addition to administrative and legal matters, these documents also describe the social environment in a Jerusalem inhabited by Muslims, Jews and Christians. These sometimes conflicting relationships led to the expulsion of the friars of the Order of Saint Francis from their Convent of the Cenacle in the 1550s, after the convent church was turned into a mosque.

55.

Born in Saint-Pourçain-sur-Sioule, Blaise de Vigenère was a complex character, a diplomat, astrologer, cryptographer and kabbalist. As embassy secretary, he travelled all over Europe before retiring to devote himself to writing several successful scholarly works. He undertook the translation of *Ἀποδείξεις ἱστοριῶν* (Proofs of the Histories) by Nikolaos (anagram of Laonicos?) Chalcokondyles, describing the fall of the Eastern Roman Empire and the rise of the Ottoman Empire, the first edition of which dates from 1577. Nikolaos' work ends with the reign of Mehmed II (1481), followed by the *Continuation de l'Histoire des Turcs*, written by Artus Thomas (ca. 1550-1614), divided into eight books, the fourth of which is dedicated to Suleiman the Magnificent. The 1632 edition opens with a large anonymous vignette engraved to the glory of the Great Sultan, followed by portraits of the sultans, including a rather unique one of Suleiman, depicted at an advanced age.

56. 57. 58.

A firman is a royal edict or decree by or in the name of a sovereign of a Muslim state. These three firmans are embellished with exquisite calligraphy with the *tughra* (official insignia of the sultan) of Suleiman I, the Magnificent, having been written a few years after the Ottoman Empire took Jerusalem from the Mamluks, in 1516. These documents offer a concise view of the constraints experienced by the Franciscans – particularly in the Convent of the Cenacle – and of the inefficacy of the measures implemented by the Ottoman authorities to guarantee their safety in a frequently hostile environment.

"Upon the arrival of this high and august Imperial Monogram, let it be known that: on the part of the religious community [the Franciscans] and of the other class of infidels residing at present in the holy city of Jerusalem, it was thus exposed to My Sublime Porte: "That some individuals, by preventing them from worshipping in their traditional manner, subjugate and vex them too much". Therefore, I order that when My Illustrious Order shall come, you shall devote yourselves to the case, investigate it in the right way and follow it up so that you will not in any way let any of our people, commoners or others, interfere or disturb –contrary to law, code and current practice– the said community of Religious and other infidels residing therein".

Extract from the Firman of Suleiman I, the Magnificent, 1521 (work n.º 56) In *Firmans ottomans 1521-1902* (Joseph Hussein, Félix Sciad, Noel Gosselin, 1934).

59.

Capitulations were treaties agreed between the Ottoman Empire and some European nations, particularly France. This manuscript, with its

magnificently decorated tughra (official insignia of the sultan), outlines a series of guarantees that the French ambassador was able to obtain for the French: freedom to "visit the church called the Holy Sepulchre"; agreements relating to the merchant navies of the two countries; the safe harbouring of the king's ships in the corsair ports of the Regency of Algiers; right of precedence over the ambassadors of Spain; and the welcome of nations friendly to France (Portugal, Sicily, Catalonia, Messina, Ancona) in Ottoman territory.

### III

## ***THEATRUM MUNDI*. ROYAL DONATIONS TO THE HOLY PLACES**

The symbolic importance of the Holy Land gave rise to numerous donations by Catholic European monarchs to various temples in this territory. Philip II of Spain, Louis XIV of France, John V of Portugal, Charles VII of Naples and Maria Theresa of Austria were some of the sovereigns who sent material and financial resources to sustain the churches and local communities, including gold coins, wax, olive oil and, in the case of the Portuguese kings, balsams, perfumes, spices and tea. In addition to ephemeral resources like these, the generosity of the monarchs also extended to masterpieces of European art, including gold and silver works, textiles and furniture for worship and to decorate religious spaces. Jerusalem thus became a 'stage' where these royals exhibited their offerings as a projection of their devotion and power, giving the Holy Land the title of "Theatre of the World".

60.

The *Condotte* are manuscript books that kept a record, from 1615, of the "alms" sent to Jerusalem by various European Catholic nations. These "alms" consisted of a wide variety of goods intended to support the Holy Places, the Franciscans and the local Christian communities. They included coins, food, wax, olive oil, spices, perfumes and objects for worship and the decoration of religious spaces, namely paintings, sculptures, furniture, gold and silver work and textiles.

These books are fundamental to help identify and date the goods offered by monarchs and other benefactors.

### **KINGDOM OF SPAIN**

Among the collection of works sent from Europe to the Holy Land, the objects given by the Spanish royals are perhaps the most significant group. They include some of the oldest pieces, such as the chalice donated in 1587 by Philip II (1527-1598), a sovereign who also held the title "king of Jerusalem". This chalice is part of a tradition that lasted until the twentieth century, according to which the Spanish monarchs would have three chalices consecrated at the Epiphany mass and send them as alms to several churches, in an allusion to the gifts of the Three Wise Men. The simplicity of this object contrasts with the sumptuous group comprising baldachin, candlesticks and altar bouquets commissioned by Philip IV (1605-1665) and Charles II (1661-1700), which reached Jerusalem in 1666 and 1673.

61.

The book *Patrimonio Seraphico en Tierra Santa...*, by the Franciscan Francisco Jesus M.<sup>a</sup> "de San Juan del Puerto" was written by order of the General of the Franciscan Order, José García y Castro, and is a compilation of news and documents that testify to the Franciscans' presence and work in the Holy Land.

It contains a frontispiece engraved by Juan Bernabé Palomino, which represents an allegorical vision of the Holy Land and where the arms of the Spanish Crown are visible.

62.

It can be said that the relationship between the Holy Places and Philip II began during his reign. In fact, in 1556, when he was crowned, the great dome of the Holy Sepulchre, which had been begun years earlier by Charles I, was completed. He also confirmed the donation of a thousand escudos of gold, which the Catholic Monarchs had once designated and in 1589 he made "a perpetual donation of forty carts of wheat for each year to the Holy Places"; this sum was commuted to the sum of a thousand ducats a year in 1596.

63. 64.

The chalice sent by Philip II to Jerusalem is one of the oldest objects associated with a monarch still existing in the Holy Land. This gift was part of a curious tradition. From the sixteenth century, Spanish sovereigns –who had and still have the honorific title of kings of Jerusalem– would consecrate three chalices at the Epiphany mass, in memory of the gifts of the Three Wise Men, and give them to diverse churches.

Philip II's coat of arms can also be found on this humeral veil, worn to cover the priest's hands when holding certain sacred objects. On one side, this piece presents a white lining from the eighteenth century and, on the other, a sixteenth-century red mudéjar fabric. This embroidered coat of arms is thought to have originally belonged to a garment that has since perished.

"And there arrived in the Holy City of Jerusalem [in 1588] four religious of St. Francis, who had come from Cairo, two Italians and two Spaniards, the principal of the Italians was called Fr. Mateus Salerno, a noble man of the Kingdom of Naples, and very virtuous, who came to be commissary of Jerusalem; and the principal of the Spaniards was Fr. Father Salerno from Sevilla, who brought a lot of money and many jewels for the service of the Holy Sepulchre. Many linen and corporal vestments and other goods for the altar and the celebration of the masses, which were offered by many ladies from Spain and Italy. A rich chalice, commanded by the King of Spain".

Extract relating to the chalice offered by Philip II of Spain (work n.º 63) In *Itinerario da viagem, que fez a Jerusalem o M.R.P. Francisco Guerreiro [...]* (Francisco Guerreiro, ed. 1734).

65.

This church lamp is an excellent demonstration of the influence of late-baroque Roman silverwork models in Spain, resulting from the circulation of drawings and engravings, as well as of objects and



silversmiths. Although this work bears the mark of the silversmith Agustín García, a craftsman from Madrid of little prestige, its execution has now been attributed to Fabio Vendetti, a Roman silversmith based in Spain to whom the former is thought to have loaned his maker's mark.

The figures of the four evangelists, seated in volutes, are the most important visual elements in this large silver lamp.

66. 67. 68.

This impressive set comprising baldachin, candlesticks and altar bouquets forms the most extraordinary donation sent by the Spanish royals to the Holy Land, in this case as kings of Sicily.

The baldachin –which is used to place a monstrance with the consecrated host– was executed in Messina, in Sicily, in September 1665, the last month of King Philip IV's life. It was delivered to Jerusalem in April of the following year, now during the reign of his son, Charles II.

The candlesticks and altar bouquets reached Jerusalem in 1673, possibly as a complement to the baldachin. After the death of Charles II, his successor Philip V placed his own coat of arms over that of his predecessor on the candlesticks and bouquets.

69. 70. 71.

These vestments are part of a large group of 20 pieces donated by Ferdinand VI. Dating from 1758, they reached Jerusalem in 1760, a year after the monarch's death.

The set's present appearance reflects a restoration carried out in 1885, as part of which the embroidery was transferred to a new support of white satin. The original fabric was black, a symbol of mourning and used in masses for the deceased, thus conforming to the themes of the Passion of Christ (Calvary, Christ Dead in the Tomb) which can be observed on most of the vestments. Its commission may be explained by the death, in 1758, of the queen of Spain, Maria Bárbara of Braganza (1711-1758), wife of Ferdinand VI and daughter of John V of Portugal, as the chasuble bears the coats of arms of both Spain and Portugal.

## **KINGDOM OF PORTUGAL**

"Alms from the king and his subjects' is a phrase that appears frequently in the records of donations from the Kingdom of Portugal to the Holy Land. These offerings included different kinds of items, particularly liturgical objects, which started to flow more regularly to Jerusalem from 1670, two years after the Peace Treaty that brought an end to the Restoration War between Portugal and Spain. The artistic works given by Portuguese sovereigns, which are conserved in Jerusalem, date from between the regency and the reigns of Peter II (1648-1706) and John VI (1767-1826). However, the most significant donations were sent by John V (1689-1750) and included luxurious Genoese fabrics and objects made of Brazilian gold, showing the wealth and intensive patronage activity of the "Magnanimous king".



73.

In 1693, a series of offerings sent by Peter II arrived in Jerusalem, referred to as “alms from his majesty King Peter, may God keep him, and his subjects” and which included a silver lamp. However, in 1696, another Portuguese lamp reached Jerusalem, making it unclear which of the two corresponds to the piece now on display.

The presence of the inscription “PETRUS II REX PORTUGALIAE” and an armillary sphere, one of the symbols of the kings of Portugal since Emmanuel I (1469-1521), underline the fact that it was a royal gift.

72. 74.

During John V’s lengthy reign (from 1706 to 1750) frequent royal offerings were sent to the Holy Land. In terms of liturgical objects, records show donations of gold and silver works (lamps, candlesticks, thuribles, incense boats, flower vases) and of diverse textiles. However, most of these items have not survived to the present day.

This *Condotta* book –which records the offerings that arrived in Jerusalem– tells us of many of these donations, including the most significant gifts from the Portuguese monarch: a set of red vestments executed in fabric from Genoa, and a church lamp, both destined for the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre.

75. 76. 77.

These three pieces are part of a set of red vestments sent by King John V to the Holy Sepulchre.

Manufactured in Lisbon, the luxurious red ciselé velvet is thought to have been made in Genoa, a major textile production centre habitually used by the Portuguese court. This can be seen in commissions for the royal chapel, elevated to the status of patriarchal basilica in 1716, and for the royal basilica of Mafra, consecrated in 1730. The designation *della palma*, used to describe these vestments, refers to the palm tree branch that appears as the main motif of the pattern. One of the most interesting elements is the inclusion of the Portuguese coat of arms, woven, as we can see on the back of the cope, above the hood.

78.

On 2 September 1752, a consignment of goods from Portugal arrived in Jerusalem, including several kilos of cinnamon, pepper and clove. Also delivered was a “gold lamp for the Most Holy Sepulchre”. Donated in the name of the king of Portugal and his subjects, it was the most sumptuous offering from a Portuguese monarch to the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre.

On the lamp, we find three prominent heraldic elements: the coats of arms of Portugal and of the Franciscans, and the Jerusalem Cross. The existence of baroque decorative motifs of Italian influence and of sophisticated rococo adornments of French and German origin allow us to date the production of this object to the 1740s, at the end of the reign of John V, although it would only arrive in Jerusalem under his son, Joseph I (1714-1777).

79. 80.

These two pieces form part of a group sent from Lisbon in August 1791 and delivered to Jerusalem in March 1792. As we can see in the record of their arrival, they correspond to an offering from "Her most Loyal Majesty Maria the first and her loyal vassals", intended exclusively for ceremonies at the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre. That same year, 1792, Maria I of Portugal, "the Pious", ceased to actively govern the kingdom due to a mental illness, and this was one of the last contributions of her devotion.

The vine leaves and bunches of grapes on the chasuble –eucharistic symbols– refer to the object's function in the context of mass or the procession of the Blessed Sacrament.

81. 82.

This chasuble and dalmatic are part of a set of vestments executed in Portugal in 1819, probably donated by King John VI. Described as *per i Re* (for the kings), and being black in colour, they were intended for funeral ceremonies for the monarchs.

Luigi Valiani, a Florentine abbot, tells us, in his book, that on 5 December 1826 a ceremony was held in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre to solemnise the funeral of King John VI, who had died on 10 March that year. He writes that the priests wore black garments embroidered in gold "at which everyone marvelled" and that "nowhere in Italy or further afield, and more precisely in Rome, did I ever see a set of vestments so complete, rich and magnificent".

83.

Portable altars are pieces of furniture in the shape of a chest that, when open, allow for the celebration of mass outside the church. They usually contain essential liturgical items for the ceremony. In the Holy Land, where many places had no temple, they were fundamental for the spiritual and liturgical guidance of Christian communities.

This portable altar shows the coat of arms of the United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil and the Algarves, a monarchy and institutional phenomenon that started in 1815 with Brazil's elevation to the status of kingdom and culminated in 1822 with the independence of that same nation.

84.

Pectoral crosses and pastoral rings are insignias associated with a specific ecclesiastical status (a pope, cardinal or bishop). Although there is no record of the arrival of these jewels in Jerusalem, the cross bears the inscription 'portugal 1825,' allowing us to conclude that this was the date of the offering. This cross is a characteristic piece of Portuguese jewellery, both for the bow motif at the top and for the simultaneous use of amethysts (purple stone) and chrysoberyls (a greenish stone), undoubtedly from Brazil.

The ring is associated with the cross not so much because of their stylistic characteristics –which are quite different– but for the use of purple gemstones, a predominant colour in the insignias of bishops from the nineteenth century on.

86.

In addition to royal offerings, donations were also frequently made by other benefactors, both known and anonymous.

This church lamp, which is very simple in formal and decorative terms, is part of a set of three lamps given by Luís Gomes da Matta, Postmaster of the Kingdom of Portugal between 1641 and 1674. His personal coat of arms appears on the object along with that of Portugal. The Portuguese coat of arms also appears on the ciborium that Father Manuel da Consciência, a priest from the congregation of Saint Philip Neri, gave to the Holy House of Nazareth in 1737. Another simple design, this item, intended to hold and distribute the consecrated host, is likely to have been used in everyday celebrations rather than more formal rites.

## **KINGDOM OF FRANCE**

The relationship between the French monarchy and the Holy Places was a long-standing one. It became particularly complex, however, when Francis I (1494-1547) established an alliance in 1536 with Suleiman I (1494-1566), sultan of the Ottoman Empire – “rulers of Jerusalem” – with the intention of strengthening France’s commercial interests.

It was also through diplomatic relations with local authorities and the Custody of the Holy Land that kings Louis XIII (1601-1643) and Louis XIV (1638-1715) sent significant sets of liturgical vestments and silver vessels to Palestine. The fleur-de-lys, the French heraldic symbol covering most of these objects, represented an unequivocal sign of the generosity and diplomacy of the kings of France.

87. 88.

After the establishment of the Republic in Portugal in 1910, Emmanuel II, king at the time, went into exile in England, where he died in 1932. Because he had no direct heirs, Duarte Nuno of Braganza became one of the claimants to the throne of Portugal in the event of a return of the monarchy. Having also spent some of his life in exile, Duarte Nuno gave this missal binding, with the corresponding liturgical book inside, to the Milk Grotto in Bethlehem, in 1934. On one side, it bears the royal Portuguese coat of arms and, on the other, a representation of the Virgin of the Milk.

90. 91. 92.

The author of the book *Le théâtre d’honneur et de chevalerie*, from 1620, tells us that, the previous year, he saw a set of vestments being manufactured in the workshop of Alexandre Paynet, embroiderer of the queen of France and of the brother of the king. These textiles correspond to the set donated by King Louis XIII, which reached Jerusalem in 1621, and which currently comprises 14 pieces. The red background is not original, as the embroidered elements, namely the fleur-de-lis and the heraldry, were once applied to a white fabric. The transposition of the embroidery to its current red support had the effect of changing the general appearance of this set which, as some have attested, amazed onlookers during the Corpus Christi processions.

93. 94. 95. 96.

Royal donations to the Holy Land were often associated with diplomatic interests. It was in this context that, in 1624, Louis XIII sent a group of silver liturgical pieces that included these basins and candlesticks. These objects coincided with the arrival in Jerusalem of a permanent French consul charged with promoting France's commercial interests, the authority of its king and greater control over the Franciscans. Arrested for espionage, the diplomat was eventually repatriated to France.

Covered in fleur-de-lis motifs, this is one of the most extraordinary groups of seventeenth-century French silverwork.

King Louis XIV continued his predecessor's policy and, seeking to forge a rapport with the Custos of the Holy Land, sent him this stunning pastoral crozier. On it are depicted King Saint Louis and Saint Louis of Anjou, ancestors of the French monarchs.

## **HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE**

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, donations sent to the Holy Land from the Holy Roman Empire increased in quantity and quality. The various religious conflicts and the Thirty Years War—which ended in 1648—explain the almost total lack of objects donated during the first half of the seventeenth century, a tendency that was entirely reversed under Emperor Leopold I (1640-1705), whose policy on offerings quickly positioned the Holy Empire as one of the most important benefactors of the Custody of the Holy Land. However, these donations reached a peak with Charles VI (1685-1740), who regularly sent liturgical objects and ostentatious works in gold and silver for religious services in the churches of Palestine.

97.

Produced in the studio of Martin van Meytens, who painted several portraits of the Empress Maria Theresa (1717-1780) and her husband Francis of Lorraine (1708-1765), the artist took care to depict each of the sitters with their respective crowns: for Maria Theresa the closed crown, the crown of Hungary, different from the sacred crown known as "St Stephen's"; for Francis of Lorraine, the crown of the Holy Roman Empire.

98. 99. 100.

The reign of Emperor Charles VI, which started in 1711, marks a peak in terms of donations made by the Holy Empire to the Holy Land. The pieces of gold and silver work given are characterised by two distinct styles. The first is richly ornamented, with the inclusion of colourful gemstones, sometimes also showing enamelled plaques or small gold reliefs, as can be seen on the cruets with tray. The second is characterised by a rather more sober style, with the imperial coat of arms delicately engraved in the centre. In the latter case, and as seen on this ewer and basin, we find that secular models were also used for liturgical purposes. It was not uncommon, at the time, to see large groups of salvers exhibited on credence tables at high mass, for ostentatious reasons.

Gifts of Charles VI (1685-1740), Holy Roman Emperor, received in 1730 (work n.º 98), 1735 (work n.º 99) and 1743 (work n.º 100).

101.

This gold church lamp is the most extraordinary piece sent by the emperors to the Holy Land. However, it has an eventful history. Donated by Charles VI (1685-1740), it reached Jerusalem in 1730. On the eve of Palm Sunday in 1757, members of the Greek Orthodox Church destroyed the altars and decorations that the Franciscans had arranged in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre for this ceremony, because of old disputes about the administration of some of the chapels in the temple. This lamp was hanging over the aedicule.

Found, badly damaged, among the debris, the Franciscans sent it back to Vienna. An inscription on the piece notes that Empress Maria Theresa ordered its restoration out of devotion. Incorporating elements of the earlier lamp, the new piece returned to Jerusalem in 1759.

"Offering of the Archduke of Austria in 1730 for the protection of his House, his Kingdom and the Provinces [...]. Francis and [Maria] Therese, august monarchs of Jerusalem, restored and embellished for the glory of faith, this offering made in 1730 by the glorious Emperor Charles and saved from destruction on the calends of April 1757".

Extract from the inscription on the votive lamp given by Empress Maria Theresa of Habsburg (work n.º 101).

## **KINGDOMS OF NAPLES AND THE TWO SICILIES**

The Franciscans became established in Jerusalem thanks to the action of Robert of Anjou (ca. 1277-1343), king of Naples, when he gave them the property of the Cenacle in which to set up the first convent.

This relationship with the Custody of the Holy Land continued over the centuries through diverse donations, in particular those made in the eighteenth century by Charles of Bourbon (1716-1788). Proclaimed king of Naples in 1734, king of the Two Sicilies and holder of the title "king of Jerusalem" in 1735, the monarch soon established diplomatic relationships with the Ottoman Empire, which governed Jerusalem at the time. These negotiations, which aimed to develop trade and guarantee the security of maritime transport, culminated, in 1741, with the Ottoman sultan sending a distinguished embassy to Naples. This occurrence led, in the years that followed, to Charles of Bourbon and his vassals sending offerings of exquisite liturgical gold items to the Holy Land.

102. 103.

Following the victory in the Battle of Bitonto, which had set the Spanish troops against the Austrians, Charles of Bourbon was crowned king of Naples in 1734, king of the Two Sicilies and titular king of Jerusalem in 1735. With the creation of this new and prestigious kingdom, the arts were promoted during his reign: artists and artisans from all over Europe flocked to Naples; the Capodimonte porcelain factory was founded; the Teatro di San Carlo was built; and the Farnese Collection was transferred to Naples. These events made the city a centre of the European enlightenment. After taking the Spanish throne in 1759, Charles handed the Neapolitan and Sicilian crown to his son Ferdinand (1751-1825).

104.

In this group portrait, we see some members of the great embassy that the Ottoman sultan Mahmud I (1696-1754) sent to Naples in 1741, notably Haji Hussein Effendi, the principal envoy. This event offers the most significant evidence of diplomatic relationships established between Charles of Bourbon (1716-1788) and the Ottomans. He sought to promote trade, the safety of sea transport and access of vassals and goods belonging to the Neapolitan monarch to Jerusalem, where he was titular king while the city remained under Ottoman administration. Resulting from these relationships, but paid "by weight of gold", an imposing Asian elephant arrived in Naples in 1742. It caused such a stir that it was portrayed in several paintings and sculptures and was also included in the famous Neapolitan cribs as part of the retinue of the Three Wise Men, dressed in Turkish fashion.

105. 106. 107. 108.

The improvement in diplomatic relationships between the kingdoms of Naples and the Two Sicilies and the Ottoman Empire allowed Charles of Bourbon to strengthen, in the eyes of the Church and the Catholic monarchs, his honorific title of "king of Jerusalem". In this context, he sent to the Holy City, which was under Ottoman administration, a remarkable group of liturgical items created by Neapolitan master craftsmen. In the name of the monarch and the vassals of his kingdoms, who also financed the commission, the following items were sent to Jerusalem: in 1747, a monstrance to exhibit the consecrated host; in 1755, an impressive baldachin in which to place the monstrance; and, in 1757, a crozier and a crucifix.

Executed in gold and including high quality gemstones, these works constitute the most significant group of metalwork pieces ever sent to the Holy Land.

