the corporeal fire which exists outside the soul is the remote cause" [ignis ergo apprehensis est proximum affligens, sed ignis corporeus extra animam existens est affligens remotum] (3 [suppl.], qu. 70 art. 3).

10. For *purgatorium* in real world places see Le Goff, chap. 6, "Purgatory between Sicily and Ireland."

11. In his note to *Purg.* 1.14–15, "nel sereno aspetto / del mezza," Singleton says: "Some commentators take 'mezzo' to mean 'center' or 'zenith.' More probably it means the 'air,' or 'atmosphere,' which is said to be serene and pure." He quotes Dante's use of the word with this meaning of "medium" from the *Convito*: "Pero puote parere cosi per lo mezzo che continuamente si transmuta. Transmutasi questo mezzo di molta luce in poca luce, si come a la presenza del sole e a la sua assenza" (3.9.12). Note "sereno" in the line from Canto I: Dante's peculiar spelling of his word for Siren, "serena," may function as a multiple pun. The words "sereno" and "mezzo" appear together a third time at the end of the poem: "luna per sereno / di mezza notte nel suo mezzo mese" (29.53–54). "Mezza" is used in something like this sense in relation to another episode of bodily transformation in a female figure: "O folle Aragne, si vedea io te / gia mezza ragna" (12.43–44).

12. The reader will think of Dido here, and her prophetic prayer that Aeneas die "ante diem mediaque" (*Aeneid* 4.620).

13. For ecclesiastical dislike of pilgrimage, see Sumption; for folk resistances to dichotomy and idealism, see Gurevich; and, of course, Bakhtin.

14. For another account of the sensational and particular in the *Purgatorio*, see Bleeth, who focuses on "the dramatic function of [the] blend of symbolic and realistic description in the Earthly Paradise cantos" (32). In this reading, the transfer from naturalistic description to allegorical pageantry in those cantos "anticipates a life beyond nature" (47) and thus mimics formally the spiritual trajectory of the poem's protagonist.

2

Defining the Earth's Center in a Medieval "Multi-Text"

Jerusalem in *The Book of John Mandeville*

IAIN MACLEOD HIGGINS

. . . that famous Traveller Sir John Mandevile,
whose Geographie Ortelius commendeth, howsoever
he acknowledgeth his Worke stuffed with Fables.
—Samuel Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrimes* (1625)

The "Foremost Peculiarity" of Medieval Geography

A little more than a hundred years ago, in 1867, a young American journalist and aspiring writer calling himself Mark Twain sailed from New York on an "Excursion to the Holy Land, Egypt, the Crimea, Greece, and Intermediate Points of Interest." During this updated and upscale version of the medieval mass pilgrimage, Twain sent back to several U.S. newspapers a series of letters describing his journey. These Quaker City Letters, as they were called (after the cruise ship), proved to be popular enough that he soon republished them in book form as *The Innocents Abroad, or the New Pilgrims' Progress* (1869). Like any good reporter, innocent or not, Twain followed his fellow travelers wherever they went, including Jerusalem, whose sites he described in almost as much detail as one finds in typical medieval pilgrims' guides.

At the center of his account of the sacred city stands a description of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Christian shrine to which "one naturally goes first" (293). Surveying the memorial sites located within this famous church, Twain paid particular attention to the Greek chapel, "the most roomy, the richest, and the showiest" of any. Yet it was not its appearance as such that he chose to single out for notice. Rather, it was the presence there of a

physical sign recalling a long-lived belief characteristic of what may be called imaginative—or more specifically, theological—geography: that is, a way of thinking about the earth whose unfamiliar distinctiveness Twain attempted to capture with a pair of anecdotes that ultimately derive from topographical proofs discussed by several medieval writers.

> The feature of the place is a short column that rises from the middle of the marble pavement of the chapel, and marks the exact *centre of the earth*. The most reliable tradition tells us that this was known to be the earth's centre ages ago, and that when Christ was upon earth he set all doubts upon the subject at rest for ever, by stating with his own lips that the tradition was correct. . . .
>
> To satisfy himself that this spot was really the centre of the earth, a sceptic once paid well for the privilege of ascending to the dome of the church to see if the sun gave him a shadow at noon. He came down perfectly convinced. The day was very cloudy and the sun threw no shadows at all; but the man was satisfied that if the sun had come out and made shadows it could not have made any for him. Proofs like these are not to be set aside by the idle tongues of cavillers. To such as are not bigoted, and are willing to be convinced, they carry a conviction that nothing can ever shake. (295–96, original emphasis)

Twain is of course writing here as a satirist of popular belief, and not as an anthropologist or historian attempting to understand alien or archaic modes of thought. For that we have to turn to a couple of his English contemporaries, the Reverend W. L. Bevan and the Reverend H. W. Phillott, who in 1873 published a booklet entitled *Mediaeval Geography: An Essay in Illustration of the Hereford Mappa Mundi*. Like Twain, they drew explicit attention to "the opinion that Jerusalem occupied the central point of the habitable world," remarking that such a view had to be placed "foremost among the peculiarities of mediaeval geography" (xiii). Unlike the American satirist, though, the two English churchmen attempted to render this curious element of Christian topography less rather than more peculiar by pointing out that a similar conception of a sacred or mythical center could be found in many cultures, and they thus arrived at a simple conclusion: "It was not unnatural that the Jews, and still more the Christians, should attribute the same property to Jerusalem, which for centuries had been the focus of their aspirations, their anxieties, and their most devoted exertions" (xiii).

Yet different as these apologetic observations are in tone and attitude from Twain's comments, the two sets of remarks reveal their authors to be making a similar assumption about the belief they are referring to. Specifically, the three writers assume that, throughout the millennium of the Middle Ages, Christian pilgrims and geographers must always have given credence and significance to the idea of a literally central Jerusalem. Satirist and scholar alike presuppose that belief in this traditional idea was never subject to variation—or even to being ignored altogether—as a consequence of any number of contextual factors (such as the historical moment and the particular aims of the text in which mention of it is or is not made). In short, these authors assume that the medieval conception of Jerusalem's earthly location lacks a history of its own.

So far as I know, that history remains to be written. Although it is not my aim to attempt its writing here, I intend to contribute toward its reconstruction by examining what is in my view the single most interesting and elaborate—as well as the most widely circulated—medieval account of Jerusalem as the earthly center, and to do so in the context of other references to the belief made in related writings from the fourth century through to the fifteenth. I proceed therefore by briefly tracing those other references, which, despite the comments of Twain and Bevan and Phillott, I show to be both unexpectedly few and surprisingly brief, even insignificant, in most instances. I then turn to discuss the account in question in order not only to show the different kinds of evidence that its author brings to bear on the subject of Jerusalem's place in the world, but also to suggest why he takes the idea far more seriously than do most medieval writers working in the same basic genres. Those genres are the guides and memoirs produced either by or for Latin Christian pilgrims, and the particular account I have in mind occurs in *The Book of John Mandeville*, a virtually unique fusion of the pilgrims' report with a description of the Eastern world beyond the Holy Land. As an eminent historian of medieval geography long ago observed, this work "has unquestionable value as illustrating the fourteenth-century layman's idea of the world" (Kimble, 95)[1]—rather than just that of the Near East, especially since its "layman's idea" largely coincides with both the learned geographer's and the pious theologian's. Indeed, as I suggest in closing, *The Book of John Mandeville*, more than any other medieval travel book, can be thought of as a verbal analogue to those encyclopedic medieval world maps that represent the earth not merely geographically as a physical arrangement of lands and waters but theologically as the site of salvation history.

Moreover, as I show in the following introductory section, *The Book* likewise has unquestionable value as a work illustrating the remarkably dynamic transmission of texts in the medieval world and therefore the problem of reading any verbal construct characterized by what Paul Zumthor has called "mouvance," or continuous recreation in transmission (*Essai de poétique*, 507; also 43–46, 126).[2] Accordingly, it is also part of the task of the present essay to explore an especially striking instance of what I would call medieval "multitextuality."

The Book of John Mandeville as a Medieval "Multi-Text"

Exactly when, where, or under whose shaping hand *The Book of John Mandeville* was first sent into the world is uncertain.[3] All that is known for sure is that the work was originally set down in French a decade or so before 1371, possibly on the Continent, by someone calling himself John Mandeville, knight, of St. Albans, England. Purporting to be the memoirs of a traveler whose journeys *outre mer* out-Poloed Polo's, as it were, *The Book* is in fact an innovative compilation of others' writings, including several produced by genuine far travelers. Praised by some scholars as "a book of wonder and high romance" (J. W. Bennett, 16) and dismissed by others as a "mendacious romance" (Hodgen, 103), the actual composite text is much more, and more interesting, than either term would suggest.[4] In my view, *The Book* represents a new kind of travel account that attempts to entertain, divert, teach, chastise, challenge, and console its late-fourteenth-century audience by providing them with an even more comprehensive and "theologically correct" vernacular account of the East than Marco Polo had done just half a century earlier (Polo's *Description of the World*, which was also originally set down in French, is conspicuously absent from the list of *The Book*'s known sources). By way of providing this description, the *Mandeville*-author's compilation extends the territorial reach of Polo's select ethnogeography and natural history to cover northern Africa and Asia from Constantinople to the Earthly Paradise, and it combines this extended work with a guide for genuine and vicarious pilgrims to Jerusalem and the Holy Land.

Such a book could hardly have failed to be popular with medieval audiences, and it was not long before it had been translated, either directly or indirectly, into nine other languages: Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, German, Irish, Italian, Latin, and Spanish. All told, close to three hundred manuscripts have survived, the bulk of them in French, English, German, and Latin. With the advent of printing, *The Book* received a new lease on life, being issued in eight of its ten languages between about 1480 and 1515 (only the Danish and Irish Versions remained unprinted), and since the early sixteenth century it has lived on in three or four languages, above all in English and German. More than most medieval books, *The Book of John Mandeville* has been persistently successful, surviving the dismantling not only of its conceptual and geographical worlds in the sixteenth century, but also of its textual and authorial integrity in the nineteenth.

As a consequence of its remarkable medieval success, *The Book* can be regarded not as a single, invariant work, but as a multinodal network, a kind of rhizome, whose French "radical" gave rise to a discontinuous series of related

offshoots in several languages, each of which can vary quite considerably from the others while being *The Book* itself to certain readers. In transmitting this popular work, in other words, the *Mandeville*-author's medieval intermediaries handled their particular source text(s) with that remarkable combination of freedom and fidelity typical of medieval translation. In most cases, the resulting version proves to be freely faithful, distinguished by its somewhat shorter length and various small interpolations and rearrangements that confirm, qualify, or supplement individual details, anecdotes, and the like, but in several notable cases the ensuing redaction is rather less faithful and more free, distinguished by major omissions, additions, and/or rearrangements. Taken together, *The Book*'s textual isotopes, or (to use still a third metaphor) its topological transformations, present us with two major and some half-dozen minor variations on the postulated French original. Clearly, *The Book* is more than several books at once, both in its origins and generically; it is textually multiple as well, characterized by its typically medieval intertextuality, and by what might be called its *intra*textual multiplicity, or its "multi-textuality."

Since there is no space here to sketch even the outlines of *The Book*'s complicated early textual history,[5] I confine myself simply to noticing the relationship between the two versions to which, because of their radically different positions on Jerusalem's centrality, I chiefly refer in the subsequent discussion, showing how one attempts to support and the other to refute the belief. These are the so-called Vulgate Latin and Continental (French) Versions. The latter version, along with another closely related French text known as the Insular Version, may to all intents and purposes be considered to represent the *Mandeville*-author's original compilation. Between them, the two French versions account for some fifty—that is, about one-sixth—of all the extant manuscripts. The other principal text mentioned here, the Vulgate Latin Version, represents a significant condensation and free reworking of a third French text, the Interpolated Continental or Liège Version, itself a curious redaction distinguished by a number of striking changes, including a series of interpolations about the exploits of the Carolingian hero Ogier the Dane—a figure who made his first literary appearance in the *Chanson de Roland*. Unlike its idiosyncratic French source, which survives in only seven manuscripts, the Vulgate Latin Version circulated widely and has survived in some forty-one manuscripts. On the strength no doubt of its learned language, it was to this reworked Latin text that many late medieval and Renaissance geographers turned when they consulted the "English Knight's memoirs," and it was this version that Richard Hakluyt, for example, chose to print in the first edition of his *Principall Navigations* (1589).

Jerusalem as the Center of the Earth from St. Jerome to Felix Fabri

Like the origins of most such ideas, those of the medieval belief in Jerusalem's geographical centrality are obscure, but that the idea existed should come as no revelation, given that many cultures have viewed their most sacred place as an earthly *omphalos* (Eliade, chap. 1). Likewise unremarkable is the fact that this belief was found to be supported by scriptural authority, whether or not Scripture itself originally helped give rise to it, since the sacred page could be advanced in favor of all sorts of beliefs. Of the biblical texts cited in support of the idea, the most important were Psalm 73(74).12 and Ezekiel 5.5, and these were explicitly connected in an important gloss offered by Jerome in his early-fifth-century *Commentary on Ezekiel*:

Ps. 73(74).11–12. Deus autem rex noster ante saecula, / Operatus est *salutem in medio terrae* [For God our king before the ages worked *salvation in the middle of the earth*].
Ezek. 5.5. Haec dicit Dominus Deus: Ista est Hierusalem; *in medio gentium* posui eam et in circuitu eius terras [Thus says the Lord God: This is Jerusalem: I have set it *in the midst of peoples* and the lands round about it].
Jerome. Jerusalem is situated in the middle of the world [Jerusalem in medio mundi sitam]. This is affirmed by the Prophet, showing it to be the navel of the earth [umbilicum terrae], and by the psalmist expressing the birth of the lord: "Truth," he says, "rose from the earth"; and next the passion: "[God] worked," he says, "*salvation in the middle of the earth* [salutem in medio terrae]." From the eastern parts of course it is surrounded by the area that is named Asia; from the western parts, by that which is called Europe; from the south, Libya and Africa; from the north Scythia, Armenia and also Persides and by all the nations of the Black Sea. *It is therefore situated in the midst of the peoples* [In medio igitur gentium posita est]. (PL 25. cols. 52b)[6]

As one might expect, given Jerome's central place among the church fathers, this gloss was echoed by later writers. One of the most influential was Isidore of Seville, whose early-seventh-century encyclopedia, the *Etymologiae*, remained in use until the fourteenth century. In it Isidore follows biblical and patristic precedent in referring to Jerusalem as the "navel of the entire area" [umbilicus regionis totius] (*Etym.* 14.3.21; cited in Bevan and Phillott, xiv). Isidore's reference was itself echoed some two centuries later by Rabanus Maurus (12.4; cited in Bevan and Phillott, xiv), whose early-ninth-century *De rerum naturis* (or *De universo*) was a more elaborate if also a less popular encyclopedia than his predecessor's.

Yet somewhat unexpectedly, few such echoes occur in the pilgrimage writings that survive from these five centuries—the very centuries in which the practice of Christian pilgrimage was being established. It is presumably no surprise that both the anonymous Bordeaux pilgrim, the first Latin Christian to leave a written account of the Jerusalem pilgrimage, and the nun Egeria, the first to leave more than a list of places and distances, neglect to make any reference whatsoever to the centrality of Jerusalem. After all the former traveled to Palestine in 333, before Jerome was born, while the latter made her journey probably in the 380s, before Jerome wrote his commentary.[7] But it is surprising to find only a single reference to the belief in those writings of the fifth through the ninth centuries collected in the Library of the Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society. *The Epitome on Certain Holy Places* (c. 440) attributed to Eucherius, Bishop of Lyons, *The Breviary of Jerusalem* (c. 530), Theodosius's *Topography of the Holy Land* (c. 530), the *Itinerary* of Antoninus Martyr (c. 570), the Venerable Bede's treatise *On the Holy Land* (early eighth century), the *Hodoeporicon* based on St Willibald's pilgrimage (c. 754), and the *Itinerary* of Bernard the Wise (870)—not one of these texts mentions the centrality of Jerusalem. The sole text that does is Adamnan's *On the Holy Places*, a treatise based on the account dictated to him by a pilgrim known as Arculf, who traveled to Palestine late in the seventh century.[8]

After Adamnan's treatise the next such references to a central Jerusalem do not appear for some four hundred years—until the crusading period, in other words. At that point they become commonplace, at least for a time. A recent collection of writings relating to the Jerusalem pilgrimage in the years 1099 to 1185, for instance, contains ample evidence of this. Of the fourteen texts produced by Latin Christians, slightly more than half (nine in all) note that Jerusalem is the center of the world.[9]

The same assertion is somewhat harder to find in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century writings, but it can still be found. Jacques de Vitry's early-thirteenth-century *History of Jerusalem* (*LPPTS*, 11.32), one of the many texts produced by this crusading propagandist and bishop of Acre in Palestine, makes it explicitly, although another text which presents itself as deriving from Jacques's *History*, Burchard of Mount Sion's *Description of the Holy Land* (*LPPTS*, vol. 12), omits the assertion altogether. Oddly enough, a reference to the belief turns up in Friar William of Rubruck's mid-thirteenth-century letter to Louis IX in which he recounts his extraordinary journey to the Mongol court in central Asia ("Journey," 214). The idea is also mentioned in both a mid-fourteenth-century guidebook to Palestine (*LPPTS*, 6.4) and a text produced slightly earlier in the same century, Marino Sanudo's *Secrets for True Crusaders* (*LPPTS*, 12.40–41).

So far I have been referring to Latin works, but the situation is apparently little different if we turn to vernacular writings from the same period. A collection, for instance, of fourteen French itineraries and descriptions from the

eleventh to thirteenth centuries contains only three texts that mention Jerusalem's centrality (Michelant and Raynaud, 132–33, 164, 230). One of them is a mid-thirteenth-century continuation of William of Tyre's late-twelfth-century history of deeds done beyond the sea, while the second is a late-thirteenth-century account of pilgrimages and pardons in Acre (the third text, by Matthew Paris, stands somewhat apart, and will be discussed below). In addition, Philippe de Mézières's late-fourteenth-century allegorical *Le Songe de vieil pelerin*, though belonging to a somewhat different genre—the dream voyage—likewise reminds its readers of Jerusalem's place in the world (1.233).

Knowing what we do about the recycling of received material in medieval thought, we should expect to find that most of these references to Jerusalem's centrality take roughly the same form and offer much the same information. And that is almost exactly what we do find. But we also find something perhaps more noteworthy: virtually all of the references are characterized by both their extreme brevity and their lack of significance in context (i.e., in relation to the world picture of the particular work in which it is found). From Jerome on, in other words, few writers in either Latin or the vernacular give this geographical peculiarity more than passing mention, and those mentions are often qualified with a rhetorical disclaimer like "they say." In one case, that of William of Rubruck, Jerusalem's centrality is mentioned not by the friar himself, but by an Armenian bishop during a conversation, and William neither confirms nor contradicts him. Clearly, a good many authors were content to fulfill the presumed expectations of their readers about the nature of sacred geography, leaving their own views unstated.

Theoderich's well-known and widely used *Booklet on the Holy Places* (*Libellus de locis sanctis*, c. 1172), for example, an account written expressly for those unable to make the Jerusalem pilgrimage, has much to say about the city, but little about its centrality. The sole reference comes in the detailed description of the Chapel of St. James in the *Templum Domini*, and takes some of the sting out of Twain's later satire: "As we return from it [the chapel] by the same door, on the left hand, behind the jamb of the door, there is a place five feet in length and breadth on which our Lord stood when he was asked where he was in Jerusalem, which *they assert* is situated in the middle of the world, and he answered, 'This place is called Jerusalem'" (*Guide*, 28, emphasis added; *LPPTS*, 5.28). Theoderich is obviously having it both ways here, making the assertion, yet neither endorsing nor refuting it. Less circumspect than Theoderich is Saewulf, whose concise but compelling Latin narrative of his own difficult journey in 1101–2 (or 1102–3) reveals that Jerome's gloss was still being cited eight centuries after it was first made. Saewulf's account, unlike Theoderich's, also reveals that Twain's satire was not pure fabrication,

since the medieval English pilgrim thought it helpful to bring Jesus himself in as a witness, in this case to highlight the typological reading of history implicit in the concept of Jerusalem's centrality: "Outside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre but within its surrounding walls, not far from the place of Calvary, is the place called 'Compas', where our Lord Jesus Christ with his own hand marked and measured the centre of the world, as the Psalmist bears witness: '*But the Lord our King has before the ages worked salvation in the centre of the earth*'" (Wilkinson, 103; *LPPTS*, 4.12 [English trans.], 39 [Latin]).[10]

Only one pre-fourteenth-century writer, so far as I know, goes farther than Saewulf in attempting to support his assertion that Jerusalem is the center of the earth. That writer is Adamnan, who, as mentioned above, set down Arculf's recollections in Latin late in the seventh century. Adamnan gives us Arculf's account in three books, the first of which is devoted entirely to Jerusalem and contains the sole reference to its centrality. The passage is interesting enough to quote in full, in part because it looks like the seed for Twain's second anecdote, but also because it was omitted from another text based on Adamnan's—Bede's treatise *On the Holy Land* (recall that Burchard of Mount Sion likewise omitted reference to the belief in borrowing from Jacques de Vitry):

> A summary account must be given of a very high column which stands in the centre of the city to the north of the holy places facing the passers-by. It is remarkable how this column (which is situated in the place where the dead youth came to life when the cross of the Lord was placed upon him) fails to cast a shadow at midday during the Summer solstice, when the sun reaches the centre of the heavens. When the solstice is passed, however . . . , after an interval of three days, as the day gradually grows shorter it casts a brief shadow at first, then as the days pass a longer one. And so this column, which the sunlight surrounds on all sides blazing directly down on it during the mid-day hours (when at the Summer solstice the sun stands in the centre of the heavens), proves Jerusalem to be situated at the centre of the world. Hence the psalmist, because of the holy places of the passion and resurrection, which are contained within Helia itself, prophesying sings: 'God our king before the ages hath wrought our salvation in the centre of the earth', that is Jerusalem, which is said to be in the centre of the earth and its navel.[11] (*De locis*, 57, 56 [Latin]; *LPPTS*, 3.16–17)

In this last remark we can hear one of the clearest medieval echoes of Jerome, whose various writings along with the Bible and several other texts are thought to have been among Adamnan's sources (*De locis*, 13–14 [Meehan's intro.]). More interesting than that echo, though, are the way in which it is introduced and the context in which it occurs. Like Saewulf, Adamnan saves the received scriptural evidence for last, using it to sum up the brief account by placing sacred topography firmly in relation to salvation history.

Unlike Saewulf, he offers his readers evidence not only from history and Scripture but also from nature—in the form of a marvelous physical phenomenon explicitly connected with a miracle, as though an ordinary empirical proof would be insufficient. Thus, although he does not claim that Arculf himself saw the natural evidence, Adamnan presents the belief in a central Jerusalem as grounded *in rerum natura*, in the very order of things, and therefore available to the prophesying psalmist not as a mere literary trope but as a geographical fact. Oddly, given the elaborate character of this combined natural, historical, and scriptural proof of Jerusalem's centrality, Adamnan has not previously mentioned this belief in his text.

This last point is important. Although Adamnan has rather more to say about Jerusalem's centrality than almost any other writer, he still does not go so far as to make its place in the world any more important to the aims of his own account of the holy places than other pilgrimage writers do. Like them, he mentions the belief only in passing. Even the garrulous friar Felix Fabri, who late in the fifteenth-century made two trips to the Holy Land in order to gain a clearer insight into Scripture, and who wrote at greater length than Adamnan about the earth's center, does not make the centrality of Jerusalem especially prominent in his Latin account. He does however discuss the question at greater length than previous writers, perhaps because it was during his lifetime that most European cartographers were decentering Jerusalem as they adapted their world maps to accord with the recently rediscovered and increasingly influential geographical conceptions of Ptolemy.[12]

Thus, after mentioning Jesus' supposed confirmation of the earthly center's exact location—a claim which he attributes to "the Eastern Christians"—Fabri turns his attention to the famous column that casts no shadow: "Ancient histories also tell us that before the building of this temple [of the Holy Sepulchre] a tall marble pillar was set up in this place by philosophers, which pillar at the summer equinox threw no shadow at mid-day, as the sun stood directly over it" (*LPPTS*, 7.374–75). Having mentioned the pillar, he goes on to recount a remarkable anecdotal proof that closely resembles the one Twain satirized:

> A certain knight who was a pilgrim in my company wished to prove this by experiment, and having obtained leave . . . he ascended with some of his comrades above the vaulted roof of the choir, which . . . has steps by which it can be ascended. On the topmost part of the roof is a high place cunningly built of stone, whereon a man may stand without peril and look round about him. To this place that knight ascended at mid-day, to see whether his body would cast any shadow. He declared to us that in very truth he saw no shadow proceeding from his body, for he stood directly above that place round which we stood, because *the dome is so built as to stand above that place, in order that the experiment may be made there*. (7.375, emphasis added)

More remarkable than this anecdotal proof, however, is Fabri's complex response to it. He thinks it no proof at all, and cites a number of authorities, including several of Ptolemy's maps, that describe the same phenomenon elsewhere in the world, before concluding with an anthropological reflection on the human need to think of oneself as being at the center:

> But I do not see that the fact that the sun shines at mid-day so directly above men's heads that their bodies cast no shadow is any true and certain proof that the spot where it does so is the middle of the world. . . . Ptolemy, too, in his third and fourth map of Africa brings in many regions where the noonday sun stands directly overhead: and what is more than this, in the same map many places are noted where twice in the year the sun stands overhead without casting any shadow. . . . Howbeit, the opinion of the vulgar is that any place is the middle of the world. (7.375–76)

This last reflection leads Fabri into a brief discussion of a more controversial question than that of the location of Jerusalem: whether the antipodes exist or not. The reader is thus quite surprised when the friar suddenly rounds on himself, and, shaking off the authority of science, takes a position little different from Jerome's a millennium earlier, declaring that Jerusalem is the world's center, since Scripture alone can suffice as proof:

> But the infallible truth of Holy Scripture proves by its testimonies that Jerusalem is in the middle of the world. However, many say that Jerusalem is indeed the middle of the habitable world, but is not in the middle of the entire scheme of the universe. Whichever of these opinions is true, we must believe the Holy Scripture, which declares that Jerusalem lies in the midst of the earth, and tells us that our Saviour worked out our salvation in the midst of the earth. (7.376–77)

In support of this unexpected assertion Fabri proceeds to quote not only the familiar passages from Ezekiel and the Psalms alluded to here, but also three other biblical texts and St. Hilarius. From Hilarius he takes a claim that the *Mandeville*-author also used in the previous century: that the crucifixion necessarily occurred at the center "in order that all men might have equal opportunities of obtaining knowledge of God" (7.377). The three biblical texts are Genesis 2.9, Deuteronomy 7.21, and Leviticus 26.11, not one of which says anything about the location of Jerusalem, but all of which the friar interprets allegorically as proving his geographical belief. Like Arculf and Saewulf centuries before him, then, Fabri ends his account of Jerusalem's location by quoting Scripture, but, unlike them, he offers more than just the received texts as evidence—a sign perhaps that belief in Jerusalem's centrality was collapsing in the wake of new developments in geography and cartography, and could only be shored up by the kind of faith that Twain was to mock some four hundred years later.[13]

Jerusalem in *The Book of John Mandeville*

Yet as we have seen, surprisingly few medieval pilgrim writers left any evidence of such faith; instead, the vast majority give the notion of Jerusalem's centrality only qualified credence, and none of them, apart possibly from Fabri, makes it a significant part of his work's argument about the nature of the world. The only writer known to me who does accept the idea without qualification and who gives it genuine significance in his account is the *Mandeville*-author, whose vernacular book, I have already observed, is virtually unique among medieval travel writings in expanding the pilgrims' guide with a survey of the world beyond the Holy Land. Commenting on this highly unusual combination, two critics have recently argued that the extension of *The Book*'s world into the Far East necessarily signals a break with the Jerusalem pilgrim's view of the world. Christian K. Zacher, for instance, claims that "Mandeville's book effectively subordinates pilgrimage to a form of travel motivated by love for this world" and "decentralizes Jerusalem . . . because his mental map of the world is much larger and his reasons for travel are other than spiritual" (140). Similarly, Stephen Greenblatt asserts that the move beyond Jerusalem implies "an abandonment of the dream of a sacred center upon which all routes converge and a turning instead towards diversity, difference, the bewildering variety of 'marvellous things'" (29). There is something to be said for these two views, since *The Book* does in fact promote curious travel and celebrate the world's marvelous diversity, but both are in my opinion a little too neat, since they assume, rather than demonstrate, that the pilgrim's world alone is transvalued in its new context—as though the significance of the Far Eastern world were not reciprocally affected—and they both ignore the kind of contrary textual evidence I cite below. So too does the claim made by John Block Friedman, who suggests on the basis of a single remark in *The Book*'s "original" prologue that "Mandeville tried to see the problem [of Jerusalem's centrality] as a metaphor" (*Monstrous Races*, 22, n. 23).

In the Continental as in the Insular Version, Jerusalem's literal—and not metaphorical—centrality is affirmed on three separate occasions: in the prologue, in the account of the holy city itself, and in a later passage making the case for the earth's spherical shape, the possibility of circumnavigation, and the existence of an inhabited antipodes. Of the three discussions the first and the third are especially striking, since both offer memorable "proofs" of the belief. Only the second is more commonplace, if still a little more elaborate than its antecedents, and it alone derives from any of *The Book*'s known sources, although not from the principal source for the Holy Land, William of Boldensele's early-fourteenth-century *Liber de quibusdam partibus ultramarinis* [book about certain overseas regions]. In contrast, neither of the other two passages, taken in their entirety, can be traced to any previous text, and so each represents a largely independent composition by the *Mandeville*-author.[14]

It is worth noting here, incidentally, that *The Book* does not neglect to provide its audience with a conventionally geographical account of Jerusalem's location as well, a fact which implies that the *Mandeville*-author regarded physical, historical, political, and theological conceptions of geography as compatible with one another, rather than contradictory. Thus, toward the end of its trip through the Holy Land, the French text defines the precise extent and location of the territory in which Jerusalem is the principal attraction, taking care even to specify the system of measurement: "The land of promise begins there [at the source of the Jordan river] and lasts until Beersheba in length going from the north to the south; and it contains a good 9,000 leagues. . . . that is, leagues of our country or of Lombardy, which are small. These are not the leagues of Gascony, Provence, or Germany, where they are large leagues" (*MT*, 2.293; cf. *Buke*, 58).[15] Similarly, as soon as it arrives at the holy city itself, the text attempts to situate the place by way of several kinds of loosely geographical information:

> And on the way [from Bethlehem] there are many Christian churches through which one goes then to Jerusalem the holy city, [which is] well situated between two mountains; and there are no rivers or wells there, but the water comes by conduits from Hebron. . . . [Here follows an explanation of the historical origins of the sacred city's name.] Around Jerusalem is the realm of Syria; and next to it is the land of Palestine. . . . Jerusalem is in the realm of Judea. . . . And it borders in the east on the realm of Arabia, in the south on the land of Egypt, in the west on the great sea [the Mediterranean], and in the north on the realm of Syria and the sea of Cypress. (*MT*, 2.267–68; cf. *Buke*, 37)

Between these two unexceptional geographical descriptions, in the account of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the text makes its least emphatic and most typical reference to Jerusalem as *omphalos*, or sacred center. Within the church, the reader is told, there exists a white rock called Calvary, "where our Lord was placed on the cross," and that rock is cracked, the crack itself being Golgotha, the place of the skull:

> There in that crack Adam's head was found after Noel's [*sic*] flood, a sign that the sins of Adam would be pardoned or redeemed in that very place. And on that same rock Abraham made his sacrifice to our lord, and there is an altar there. And before that altar lie Godfrey of Bouillon and other Christian kings, who were kings of Jerusalem. And there by the side where our lord was crucified this is written in Greek, *Etheos et basileon ysmon proseonas erogaze sochias et mosotis gis*. That is in Latin, *Hic Deus rex nos-*

ter ante secula operatus est salutem in medio terre. Also on the rock where the cross was placed is written in the rock, *Cyos nist basys ys tou pysteos thoy chesmosy*. That is in Latin, *Quod vides est fundamentum totius fidei huius mundi* [What you see is the ground of this world's entire faith]. (*MT*, 2:269–70; cf. *Buke*, 40) [16]

Also in the middle of the body of the church there is a compass where Joseph of Arimathea laid the body of our lord, when he had removed him from the cross, and right there he washed his wounds. And *they say* [*dist on*] that this compass is right in the middle of the world. (*MT*, 2.271, emphasis added; cf. *Buke*, 40)

What is interesting about these two passages in the present context is the oblique way in which they assert the fact of Jerusalem's centrality. The first does so entirely indirectly, citing but not translating or glossing the important verses from Psalm 74, which means that the reader has to know Latin as well as the tradition deriving from Jerome's interpretation, while the latter passage qualifies the assertion by attributing it to received opinion, perhaps because the *Mandeville*-author was himself uncertain about the exact location of the earthly center's own center. Whatever the reason for his reticence, he nevertheless appears to have thought it useful to bring together here several different kinds of evidence, all of them testifying to both the symbolic and the potentially literal centrality of Jerusalem in Christian thought: not just Scripture, which is cited in both Latin and (garbled) Greek, but also the physical nature of the place itself, relics, oral tradition, and the events of history, whether recent or biblical (the latter presented according to the standard typological reading).

If this were the sum total of what the text had to say about Jerusalem's centrality, *The Book* would hardly stand apart from other pilgrimage writings, but, as I have noted already, it is not. Of the two other statements, the more elaborate comes in the text's most prominent and rhetorically effective place: the privileged space of the prologue, which serves to call text, author, and audience into being while also establishing the reader's expectations and foreshadowing the ethos of the work as a whole. By way of doing these things, *The Book*'s opening section first praises the Holy Land and the life and death of Jesus Christ, then exhorts Christians to worship and serve both their lord and their overseas territorial inheritance, and finally criticizes the ruling estate for being more concerned with fighting among themselves than with leading a new crusade—and only then gets around to explaining what the text will contain (that is, a detailed description of the ways to Jerusalem and other holy places in and around Palestine combined with an account not only of those places but of others still farther east).

By opening as it does with fulsome praise of "the land overseas, that is the holy land, the land of promise," *The Book* begins by situating this at once foreign and familiar territory in physical, historical, and theological space. Separated by the Mediterranean from Europe, the Holy Land lies far away, yet is near in significance, for it has been blessed above all other lands, the text claims, by the presence and suffering of Jesus Christ, whose domain is asserted to be the entire universe: "he who was King of the heavens and earth, of air and sea, and of all things contained in them"—including, as *The Book* eventually makes clear, all of humanity, whether Christian or not. This faraway place, moreover, is "the best, the most virtuous and the most worthy in the world; for it is *the heart and middle of all the land of the world*, and thus, as the philosopher says, *Virtus rerum in medio consistit* [the virtue/excellence of things lies in the middle]." As such, the Holy Land alone is the proper place for the central event of history, the event that links the expulsion from Paradise with the return to it (a typological reading of history returned to in the account of Golgotha quoted above):

In that very worthy land would the heavenly King . . . suffer passion and death for love of us, in order to redeem and deliver us from the pains of hell and perpetual death, which was ordained for us for the sin of our first father Adam, and for our very own sins as well. . . . And well would the King of glory in that land more than in any other suffer passion and death. For *whoever wants to make something public* [qui veult aucune chose publier], such that everyone might know it, *must have it cried and announced in the town center*, such that the thing be known in all parts. Therefore the creator of all the world would suffer death for us in *Jerusalem, which is in the middle of the world, so that the thing would be made public and known in all regions of the world*. . . . (*MT*, 2.229–30, emphasis added; cf. *Buke*, 1–2)

One might suppose that this philosophical as well as "common sense" proof, along with the empirical, historical, and scriptural testimony cited in the city itself, would suffice to substantiate the claim that Jerusalem lies at the center of the world. Yet this is not the case. The *Mandeville*-author appears to have thought a third, quite different proof necessary. In the latter part of *The Book*, as the text is surveying the world between Palestine and the Earthly Paradise, the audience is given a sketch of the false paradise of Lamory (Sumatra?), perhaps in anticipation of the Eden still to be described. One of the most striking features of Lamory—apart from the local people's habits of going naked, holding property, spouses, and children in common, and eating human flesh—is that there one loses sight of the North Star and gains sight of the South. Such heavenly symmetry proves of course that the earth is a circumnavigable sphere, and, as the text goes on to argue, both of these things prove that the earth is everywhere inhabited, including at the antipodes.

Yet before the text gets to the latter and, for medieval thinkers, troubling

question, the *Mandeville*-author follows the abrupt shift from cannibalism to circumnavigation by having the English Knight make one of his infrequent but striking appearances as an actor on the stage of "his own memoirs" (*The Book*'s "I," as Donald Howard has noted, is mainly "an impersonal Everyman" retailing information [2]). In case anyone should doubt the text's claims about the earth's shape—which are borrowed chiefly from John of Holywood's textbook *De Sphera*—Sir John provides the measurements that he himself made with his astrolabe, and in case anyone should doubt the measurements, he tells the story of a young man who without knowing it almost circled the globe, only to stop short; not until he returned the long way round did the fellow realize what he had done. In between the measurements and the memorable anecdote, immediately following the first of two assertions that the antipodes are inhabited, comes *The Book*'s third and final proof of Jerusalem's centrality:

> And know that, according to what I can perceive and understand, the land of Prester John, emperor of India, is beneath us. For *in going from Scotland and England towards Jerusalem one is continually climbing*. For our land is in the low regions of the earth towards the west, and the land of Prester John is in the low region towards the east. And they have day there when we have night, and also conversely they have night when we have day. For the earth and the sea are of round form, as I told you before, and as you climb to one spot you descend to the other. *Now you have heard it said before that Jerusalem is in the middle of the world; and that is shown by a spear fixed in the earth at the hour of noon, which casts no shadow in any direction, and that it be in the middle of the earth David testifies, where he says, Et operatus est salutem in medio terre etc.* (*MT*, 2.332–33, emphasis added; cf. *Buke*, 91)

Arculf's seventh-century proof is now advanced in an entirely different context: one that links the internally divided Latin Christendom of the fourteenth century with the ideal Christian empire of Prester John's land, which in *The Book* is depicted as a realm characterized by a sort of apostolic simplicity and an easy harmony between the spiritual and temporal realms. And the link is made by way of an umbilical Jerusalem, which, however, is no longer in Christian hands, a consequence, according to the text, of the egregious sins of Latin Christians. In its new context, then, the traditional proof of Jerusalem's geographical centrality becomes part of an implicit demonstration that the entire symmetrical earth is potentially Christian both near and far.

Recognizing this, we can now see why the *Mandeville*-author takes the idea of Jerusalem's centrality so much more seriously than his predecessors did. He does so because it accords with one of the larger concerns of his multi-faceted compilation. Writing some seventy years after the fall of Acre, the last Latin Christian foothold in Palestine, in the wake of intermittent and mainly failed attempts by the papacy to establish not only effective bishoprics within the extensive Mongol empire, but also a military alliance with the Mongols against Islam, and during a protracted crisis within Latin Christendom (not only had the papacy been displaced to Avignon, but England and France were at war, the European economy was in a bad way, and the plague had recently swept across the entire region, devastating the population and leaving behind social disarray and labour unrest)—writing in such troubled circumstances, the *Mandeville*-author appears to have set himself the task of renewing belief in the possibility of a universal Christendom and using it as an enticement to Latin Christians to reform themselves (Higgins, "Imagining Christendom"). If so, then *The Book*'s emphasis on Jerusalem's centrality can be read as both a consolation offered to a much shrunken Christendom and a challenge laid down to those Christians who, as the Prologue puts it, have the wherewithal to undertake a holy voyage overseas.

Whether *The Book*'s medieval intermediaries read the text as I have done is hard to know for sure, but one thing is clear: of those versions translated directly from the Continental or the Insular Version, the majority keep the three "original" discussions of Jerusalem's centrality, leaving them virtually unchanged even as they otherwise transform the text in transmission. These include several of the most widely circulated or historically important redactions: that is, Michel Velser's German and the English Cotton, Defective, and Egerton Versions, respectively. In this context, I would draw attention to a striking interpolation found at the close of the three interrelated English redactions, all of them made early in the fifteenth century, as well as in one Insular Latin manuscript copied later in the same century. Not only does this interpolation reveal the freedom with which medieval redactors intervened in their source texts, it also illustrates the way in which some of them read *The Book* as both a geographically and a theologically orthodox account of the world—or perhaps alternatively, it shows the way in which they were anxious to ensure that the text be read as such.

The precise wording as well as the exact placement of the interpolation varies somewhat in all four instances, but its specific point does not. In each version, as the English Knight is taking leave of his audience by way of some closing reflections on the content and aims of his "memoirs," the added passage has him assert that since not everyone will credit things they have not seen for themselves, he has visited Rome on his return to Christendom in order to submit his book for papal approval. Although the papacy was located in Avignon at the time of Sir John's ostensible return (the mid-1350s—such matters of historical fact seem to have been of no concern to *The Book*'s Insular intermediaries here), the pope nevertheless confirmed the submitted "recollections" against another larger book. According to the three English redac-

tions, it was from this larger book that the (Hereford?) *mappa mundi* was made, while in the Latin manuscript the authorizing book is said to have provided the information depicted on a kind of globe shown to Sir John himself: "a certain spherical instrument, painstakingly and curiously made, containing in itself in the form of figures or pictures [per sculpciones vel depicturas] virtually all realms and races of people—a wonderful device which he [the pope] called the *Sphere of the World*."[17] Clearly, some of *The Book*'s fifteenth-century readers were prepared to endorse the truth claims of a text that undertook a much more literal and elaborate defense of the "foremost peculiarity" of medieval geography than most earlier pilgrim writers had been willing to offer.

Yet there was at least one roughly contemporary reader who was not prepared to do so: the Vulgate Latin redactor, who made his version of *The Book* sometime between 1396 and 1415 (*Liber Ioannis Mandevil* [*LIM*]). In addition to dispensing entirely with the first and the third of the three assertions of Jerusalem's centrality (i.e., the striking ones in the prologue and in the passage on the earth's sphericity), this unknown intermediary reworked the second, or indirect assertion, so that the English Knight explicitly refutes the traditional belief. The Latin redactor's decided independence here stands in even clearer relief if we compare him with Otto von Diemeringen, who claims to have made use of the Vulgate Latin text along with the Interpolated Continental Version for his German rendering. Unlike his learned source, von Diemeringen omits only the proof in the prologue, leaving the remaining two largely as they appear in the Continental Version, a double change which suggests that the German translator himself sided with the theologically orthodox geographical view. Oddly enough, given that he does retain the latter two proofs, von Diemeringen's revised prologue has nothing at all to say about Jerusalem, discussing instead the value of foreign travel and his own decision to translate this widely respected work "from Latin and French . . . in praise of the well-known knight, who made the book for his eternal good fame after his death."[18]

There is no question but that the Vulgate Latin redactor considered Jerusalem as significant a site as did the *Mandeville*-author, since his reworked prologue accords with the "original" exordium in its affirmation that no earthly place is worthier than "terra Hierosolimitana, terra promissionis filiorum Dei" [the Jerusalem territory, the promised land of God's sons], "especially because God the maker of heaven and earth deigned to value it so much that there he revealed his own son, Christ the saviour of the world, to humankind" (*LIM*, 25). It is simply that he refused to follow the "original" in conflating the sacred city's originary and symbolic centrality with its geographical. Yet if the Latin translator appears to be historically "in advance" of the *Mandeville*-author on this count, he looks reluctant to follow him on the potentially unorthodox matters of the earth's circumnavigibility and inhabited antipodes. Thus, while he keeps the brief reference to the two pole stars that emerges from the account of Lamory, and even repeats practically verbatim the measurements that Sir John made with the astrolabe (though displacing them to a slightly later section), he omits everything else.

Some of that omitted material turns up elsewhere in his text, in a place where one might least expect to encounter it—just as one hardly expects to come across an "empirical" proof of Jerusalem's centrality in a discussion of polar stars, the earth's shape, circumnavigation, and the antipodes. Perhaps taking his cue here from *The Book*'s unknown author, but reversing the emphasis, the Latin translator worked a discussion of the earth's shape into his rendering of the account of the church of "the reverend and most holy sepulchre of our Lord Jesus Christ" (*LIM*, 35). The account as a whole contains much of the information originally gathered together by the *Mandeville*-author, though newly arranged according to the redactor's sense of appropriate disposition. The description of Golgotha, for instance, comes slightly later in the account, omitting only the mention of Adam's skull, while keeping both of the Greek quotations used to signal Jerusalem's centrality; and this passage is immediately followed by a slightly fuller description of the "compass" ("a place wonderfully and beautifully covered with tiles in the true shape of a circle," *LIM*, 36) which ignores the *Mandeville*-author's qualified reference to its geographical location—a juxtaposition that required the redactor to omit intervening legendary matter about, among other things, St. Helen's "invention" of the cross. At the end of this reworked account, where the Continental Version simply moves on to another church, leaving the reader to accept or reject the implied typological proof of Jerusalem's centrality, the Vulgate Latin Version raises the question explicitly, setting itself against an overtly theological conception of geographical space and eventually going so far as to call Sir John himself as witness against the very claim the Knight makes in most other versions of *The Book*:

> . . . that which certain people make known or at least suppose—that Judea or even Jerusalem, or this Church stands at the center of the whole world, according to the aforesaid scripture [in medio terrae]—cannot be understood spatially [localiter] according to the measure of the earth's body. (*LIM*, 36)

In support of this counterclaim, the Vulgate Latin text proceeds to offer a strictly geographical explanation which shows that its redactor has nevertheless accepted as true a related theological element of the received Christian topography of the period:

for if we consider the earth's breadth, which they estimate between the two poles, it is certain that Judea cannot be in the middle, because then it would be at the circle of the Equator, and it would always be equinox there, and both poles would stand horizontal to it. Which in any case is not so, because to those in Judea the north star is raised very high. Conversely, if we consider the earth's length, which can be estimated from *the earthly Paradise*—that is, from *the worthier and more elevated place on earth*—towards its Nadir—that is, towards the place on the earth's Sphere opposite it—then Judea is at the Antipodes of Paradise, which it appears cannot be so, because then *for a traveler from Judea towards Paradise the distance of the route would be the same either to the East or to the West. But this is neither apparent nor true, as the experience of many attests.* (*LIM*, 36, emphasis added)

"The experience of many" includes Sir John's, of course, and this the Vulgate redactor now reinvents to confirm a loose geographical—rather than a literal and theological—interpretation of the famous verses from the Psalter, simply by shifting the focus from Jerusalem to the larger surrounding territory, since that land in fact did lie roughly in the middle of the "habitable region" then known to Latin Christendom:

To me moreover it seems that the Prophet's writing mentioned before can be explained: "in medio terrae," that is, around [circa] the middle of our habitable region, namely as Judea is around the midpoint between Paradise and the Antipodes of Paradise, being distant only 96 degrees from Paradise in the east, *as I myself have tested by the eastern route*: although from this it does not appear that complete certainty is to be easily had, since no stars remain immobile in the length of the sky as the pole stars always do in the breadth. (*LIM*, 36–37, emphasis added)

Finally, the Latin redactor turns from this simple (and fabricated) experiential proof to perfectly comprehensible "common sense," on the one hand, and unfathomable divine mystery, on the other, giving the latter pride of place in the entire revisionary account, as if he were Milton's Raphael instructing an audience of Adams to "be lowly wise" instead of inquiring too much into the secrets of the universe:

Or it can be explained thus, that David, who was King of Judea, said "in medio terrae," that is, in the principal city of his land, Jerusalem, which was the royal or priestly city of the land of Judea: or perhaps the holy spirit, which was given voice through the prophet's mouth in this phrase, wanted to be understood neither bodily nor spatially, but entirely spiritually, about which view nothing should be written at present. (*LIM*, 37, emphasis added)

What more shall I say? as Polo's amanuensis Rustichello might ask. With this passage the Vulgate Latin redactor illustrates just how far some of *The Book*'s medieval intermediaries could go both in adapting their source and in concealing their changes—as far as the *Mandeville*-author himself, in other words. Perhaps more importantly, though, the passage points up how differently two roughly contemporary medieval authors (and presumably their readers as well) could understand the same geographical concept and therefore how distinctive the *Mandeville*-author's defense of a literally central Jerusalem is in its historical context.

By Way of Conclusion: *The Book* and the Maps

This distinctiveness, I suggested at the outset, connects the *Mandeville-author*'s "original" compilation—and those of its textual isotopes that preserve the emphasis on Jerusalem's literal centrality—with a particular kind of medieval map: the Jerusalem-centered encyclopedic *mappae mundi*, or circular world maps, which are a Christianized version of a cartographic form deriving ultimately from Greco-Roman geography. It is often thought that such maps were the only kind of world map produced in the medieval period, just as it is commonly asserted that belief in Jerusalem's centrality was universal (Seymour, ed., *Mandeville's Travels*, 231 n. to 1/20). But just as the textual evidence of the pilgrims' guides fails to support the latter assertion, so the cartographic evidence reveals a fair degree of historical and contextual variety. According to David Woodward, Jerusalem began to be placed at the center of the earth on world maps only after the beginning of the Crusades, and although the practice continued even into the fifteenth century, it was not universally followed (341–42). A telling example of this variation in the *mappae mundi*, as also in local plans of Palestine, can be found in a pair of maps made by Matthew Paris to accompany his thirteenth-century *Chronica majora*. Not only does his map of Palestine place Jerusalem off center, giving pride of place to Acre, so does his circular world map, which represents the city by name only (there is no picture). This double displacement is all the more striking as Paris's pictorial representation of Jerusalem in the former map actually contains a Latin text announcing its centrality, and this text is itself placed next to a French text that does the same (the French text is the third of the three vernacular texts mentioned above).[19]

Yet in the present context there is an even more relevant negative example than that of Paris's maps: the sort of *mappae mundi* that resulted when some of the so-called Catalan-style portolans (that is, Mediterranean sea charts made for coastal navigation) expanded in "speculative" fashion into Asia, heading eastward and inland beyond the Mediterranean coastline. The most famous of the "speculative" portolans is the encyclopedic *Catalan Atlas* of 1375, a map whose correspondence with *The Book* had already been noticed in the nine-

teenth century, although not in the way that I suggest here. In my view, *The Book* can be be considered a verbal analogue to this famous portolan in that it extends the textual equivalent of a coastal chart—the pilgrims' guide—in the same eastward and "speculative" direction by splicing onto it a description of the world beyond the *oikoumene*.[20] Where such an analogy breaks down, however, is in relation to the fundamental "take" that each work has on the earth's territory. In contrast to the radically expanded portolan, which gives Jerusalem visual prominence but not literal centrality and so refuses to place its world under the aegis of theology even as it incorporates the circular *mappa mundi* into its cartographic form, the *Mandeville*-author's radically extended pilgrims' guide retains the "foremost peculiarity" of medieval geography even as it makes its own "speculative" expansion eastward.[21]

A better visual analogue, then, can be found in two of the most famous medieval *mappae mundi*—the Ebstorf and Hereford maps—both of which were probably made in the thirteenth century, well before *The Book*, and which clearly place Jerusalem at the center of the *orbis terrarum*.[22] In contrast to the partly related *Catalan Atlas*, these two maps explicitly depict the earth as the space of Christian history, showing this history unfolding from Paradise at the top, or east, through Jerusalem in the center, to Europe at the bottom, or west, and yet each also fills this theologically defined space with non-Christian material, such as natural marvels. They thus represent the world as *The Book* does: as God's country, so to speak, in which everything ultimately falls under his sway, whether or not it falls within the political boundaries of Latin Christendom. In this sense, *The Book* and the maps alike can be understood as theologically and historically motivated "inventories" of creation designed to offer medieval Christians a comforting vision of their earthly centrality, despite their geographical marginality.[23] This ideological analogy, I would argue, makes *The Book* in some important respects a "reactionary" document: that is, one which looks back toward an earlier synthesis of theology and geography as much as it looks ahead toward the expanded and revised physical geography that eventually undermined medieval conceptions of the earth as an uncircumnavigible sphere inhabited only above the torrid zone.[24]

Whatever their relation as analogues, though, these verbal and pictorial representations of a Jerusalem-centered earth differ in the effect that they potentially have on readers and viewers. Unlike a circular world map, a text is necessarily linear, and its readers or hearers eventually have to leave Jerusalem behind for other places. This may well explain not only why the *Mandeville*-author needs to remind his readers more than once of Jerusalem's location, but also why modern readers have generally overlooked *The Book*'s insistence on the city's centrality, often regarding its briefer account of Paradise as more important simply because it comes later in the text (Zacher, 151; Mary B. Campbell, *Witness*, 160).[25] In contrast, the viewer of a circular map can never quite lose sight of a well-marked center, since the very shape of the map keeps one's gaze circling around it. What a text must offer in compensation, therefore, is a fuller experience of the center, which *The Book* does both through its lengthy account of the city and through repetition (Jerusalem, though not its centrality, is often mentioned in the text, and, through a lengthy meditation on the Passion relics, is evoked in the opening account of Constantinople). That fuller experience was presumably part of what the *Mandeville*-author wanted to offer his readers, in order to remind them of how much they had lost with the failure of the Crusades. No other medieval text reminds its readers in quite this way of Jerusalem's significance, and to recognize this is to begin to learn to read *The Book* and its textual isotopes with the subtlety they deserve.

Notes

Earlier versions of this essay were delivered at the annual meeting of the Medieval Academy of America, Columbus, March 1992, and at the Thirtieth International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, May 1995.

1. Johannes Witte de Hese's *Itinerarius* provides a partial exception to my statement about *The Book*'s uniqueness; see Scott Westrem, "A Critical Edition of Johannes Witte de Hese's *Itinerarius*, the Middle Dutch Text, an English Translation, and Commentary, together with an Introduction to European Accounts of Travel to the East (1240–1400)" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1985).

2. See also Zumthor, "Intertextualité et mouvance," and Speer, esp. 317–19.

3. For a fuller treatment of the matters discussed here, see my *Writing East*, 6–14.

4. On the authorship question, see Lejeune.

5. See my *Writing East*, 20–24. See also J. W. Bennett, app. 1 and 2; de Poerck; Seymour, "The Scribal Tradition of Mandeville's *Travels*: The Insular Version," and "The Scribal Tradition of Mandeville's Travels in England"; and Bremer.

6. The passage from Jerome is found in *Patrologia Latina* (hereafter cited as PL followed by volume and column numbers); all three passages are quoted from Arentzen, 218; my translation, emphasis added.

7. For the Bordeaux pilgrim, see *Itineraria et alia geographica*, xvii–26 (Latin), and the translated *Egeria's Travels* (153–63); for Egeria, see both *Egeria's Travels* and *Itineraria*, 27–90.

8. *Library of the Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society*, vols. 2 (*Epitome*; *Breviary*; Theodosius, *Topography*; Antoninus, *Itinerary*) and 3 (Bede, *Holy Land*; *Hodoeporicon*; Bernard, *Itinerary*; Adamnan, *Holy Places*), respectively. Texts from this collection will be cited hereafter as *LPPTS*, with volume number. For the Latin texts of the *Epitome*, the *Breviary*, Theodosius, Antoninus, and Bede, see *Itineraria et alia geographica*; for Arculf, see Adamnan's *De locis sanctis*.

9. Wilkinson, 87, 90, 92, 103, 198, 212, 233, 260 (the relevant passage from Theoderich is not included in the editor's selection; see *LPPTS*, vol. 5). The reference to Jerusalem's centrality can also be found in an Icelandic and a Russian text in this collection.

10. Saewulf here follows the received view; Theoderich's location is unusual. On the tradition of the location in the *Templum Domini*, see French 56.

11. French refers to a Jewish tradition of this anecdotal proof (52).

12. Note that although most mapmakers decentered Jerusalem, not all did; see Woodward, 317 and n. 147.

13. Arculf's proof was also used, positively, by Gervais of Tilbury in his *Otia imperialia* (see Wright, 260) and by the Icelandic pilgrim Nikulás of Þverá (see the excerpt in Wilkinson, 217). On Fabri's account, see French, 70–75.

14. For the most recent study of *The Book*'s sources, see Deluz, 39–72 (analysis), 428–91 (a running "tableau des sources").

15. All translations from *The Book*, regardless of version, are mine; all references to Letts's edition will be given as *MT*, and to Warner's edition as *Buke*.

16. The Greek in this quotation is (mis-)taken from Peter Comestor; see *Buke*, 178–79, n. to 39/4.

17. For the Latin interpolation, see *The Bodley Version*, 175 (n. to 146/7). Scholars continue to treat this interpolation as authorial: for example, Phillips, 206.

18. I quote here from "Otto von Diemeringen: A German Version of Sir John Mandeville's 'Travels,'" ed. Edward W. Crosby (Ph.D. diss., University of Kansas, 1965), 31. A critical edition is now being prepared by Klaus Ridder. On von Diemeringen's source, see Ridder, *Jean de Mandeville*, 187. For further discussion of von Diemeringen's handling of the account of the earth's sphericity and Jerusalem's centrality, see Ridder, 249–53.

19. On Paris's maps, see Lewis, 373, fig. 222 (world map), 350–51, figs. 214–15 (Palestine), 355 (Latin text on Jerusalem). References to Jerusalem's centrality attributed to Paris can also be found in Michelant and Raynaud, 132–33. Further evidence for the variety of conceptions underpinning medieval mapmaking in this respect comes from the cartographic representations of the holy city itself; see Arentzen, 133.

20. For the idea that Catalan-style portolans expanded east in a "speculative" fashion, see Tony Campbell, "Portolan Charts," 394. Notes on the correspondences and differences in detail (but not in conception) between the *Atlas* and *The Book*, can be found in, e.g., *Buke*, 170 (n. to 22/15), 204 (103/11), 211 (126/6), 213 (130/chap. 29), 216 (137/6), and 219 (148/15).

21. In shedding the explicitly theological world picture of the thirteenth-century *mappae mundi*, incidentally, the *Catalan Atlas* also updates their picture of the Far East; thus, whereas it contains information on Cathay (China), most of it got from Marco Polo's book, the other maps do not even mention the country. Examining twenty-one *mappae mundi* made between the fourth and the fifteenth centuries, von den Brincken found Cathay depicted on one map only ("Mappa mundi und Chronographia," 165 [Tafel 5, Asien 1]).

22. On dating the Ebstorf map, see Lindemann, 45–49; and Wolf, 51–68.

23. On the Christian topography and symbolism of the maps, see Arentzen; Woodward; von den Brincken, "Mappa mundi," and "Ut describeretur." I borrow the term "inventory" from von den Brincken, "Ut describeretur," 277–78, who uses it to gloss the medieval cartographer's "descriptio."

24. The best analogue of *The Book* as this latter kind of "mappemonde prophétique" (Deluz, 189) is Martin Behaim's 1492 globe, the earliest surviving globe, and one that explicitly cites "the worthy doctor and knight John of Mandavilla" as an authority. Deluz argues against linking *The Book* and the Hereford *mappa mundi*, simply because they do not correspond very well in geographical detail. On the globe and *The Book*, see Moseley, 89–91.

25. Cf. Greenblatt, chap. 2, who reads *The Book* as refusing all territorial possession.