Fig. 17.1: Flowers from Bethany, from *Wild Flowers of the Holy Land*, pressed flower album, late nineteenth century. Created by Ferdinand Ludwig Vester, Jerusalem; printed by Joseph Schor. Ami Zehavi Collection of Pressed Flowers of the Holy Land, Tel-Aviv. On permanent loan at the American Colony Archive, Jerusalem.

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Chapter 17

The Green Line of the Jerusalem Code: Trees, Flowers, Science, and Politics

This chapter traces what I call the Green Line of the Jerusalem code by focusing on how references to plants, flowers, and trees informed Scandinavian perceptions of the Holy Land from the mid-eighteenth to the late nineteenth century, with repercussions well into the twentieth. This chapter explores how scientific studies in botany and the natural sciences were entangled with literary expressions in novels and travelogues, as well as with political discourses. It also demonstrates a shift in the scientific approach to Palestine: from Linnaean botany to biblical archeology.

To me Israel more and more takes shape as the symbol of life. The symbol of life where one would not think that life could be sustained . . . Early in spring we can often, back home, experience a wonderful sight. In the middle of the deep snow and ice stands a white birch with beautiful, green leaves. Sunlight made the leaves shoot too early. And you say: That tree will die. But it does not die. Miraculously it continues to live and grow. To me Israel resembles these green birch trees, surrounded by cold, icy snow. A great idea as warm as sunshine in the spring brought it forth, after a long, long winter. Some say: That tree will not be able to live. We know better: In its shadows children will play for generations forward, and women and men will rest there after a hard day's work. You have gone through hard times. Hard times are before you. But Israel will live.¹

With these words, the General Secretary of the Norwegian Labour Party, Haakon Lie (1905–2009), addressed the Israeli Workers Organisation, *Histadrut*, at their congress in 1956 in Tel Aviv, held approximately one month after Israel emerged victorious from the Six Days' war in October against its Arab neighbours. The green metaphor – the birch tree, an image of the newly created state of Israel –

1 “For meg tar Israel mer og mer form av symbolet på liv. Symbolet på liv der man ikke skulle tro at liv kunne opprettholdes . . . Tidlig på våren kan vi ofte, der hjemme, oppleve et fantastisk syn. Midt i den dype snøen og isen står en hvit bjørk med flotte, grønne blader. Solskinn fikk bladene til å sprette ut for tidlig. Og du sier: Det treet vil dø. Men det dør ikke. Mirakuløst fortsetter det å leve og vokse. For meg synes Israel som disse grønne bjørketrærne, omgitt av kald iset snø. En stor ide så varm som solskinn om våren brakte det frem, etter en lang, lang vinter. Noen sier: Det treet vil ikke være i stand til å leve. Vi vet bedre: I skyggene vil barna leke i generasjoner fremover, og kvinner og menn vil hvile der etter en hard dags arbeid. Dere har gått gjennom harde tider. Harde tider ligger foran dere. Men Israel vil leve.” Vebjørn Selbekk, *Korset og Davidsstjernen: Norge, jødene og Israel – fra 1814 til i dag* (Kjeller: Genesis, 2013), 2; Odd Karsten Tveit, *Alt for Israel* (Oslo: Cappelen, 1996), 254.

stands out as viable, tenaciously rooted, and with the potential of growing strong, despite the threatening icy surroundings. The image of the tree may play back on the campaign “Let Israel Live,”² which was launched in 1956 by Norwegian friends of Israel, headed by the Labour Party and General Secretary Lie in collaboration with partners in Israel.³ The campaign aimed at showing solidarity with Israel.⁴ In several Norwegian cities and towns, on May 1, 1956, supporters were marching in the streets with banners and posters depicting a young tree menaced by a blood-dripping axe. The tree symbolized the young state of Israel, the axe its threatening Arab neighbours.⁵

In Lie’s speech, the tree is specified as a birch; a rhetorically interesting feature as the birch is not common in the Eastern Mediterranean, but rather recalls Nordic forests and landscapes. As such, it evokes recent memories in the Scandinavian imagination: the image of the birch, which shielded the Norwegian King and Crown Prince outside of Oslo, during their flight from the Nazi occupants in April 1940; a scene made immortal by an iconic photograph familiar to every Norwegian school-child.⁶ Hence, the image of the birch in Lie’s speech contributes to establishing a close link between the two states: While a birch tree shielded Norway, symbolized by the King, from Nazi Germany’s bombers in 1940, the tree has in 1956 become the Israeli nation itself; it will protect its children and let future generations live.

In his speech, Lie dichotomises the living tree and the deep ice and snow. It is a familiar dichotomy: life opposes death, fertility trumps barrenness. Still, in the context of the Levant, the familiarity acquires a specific meaning. Lie builds, perhaps unconsciously, on recurrent imagery in European depictions of Palestine. In the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Scandinavian sources, which inform the current chapter, Palestine is described as fertile, rich, and densely populated in biblical times; contemporary Palestine, on the other hand, is portrayed as barren, dry, and sparsely

2 “La Israel leve.”

3 Hilde Henriksen Waage, “How Norway became one of Israel’s Best Friends,” *Journal of Peace Research* 37, no. 2 (2000): 204. Waage argues that the campaign was the result of “an extremely close relationship [that] had grown up between the Norwegian and the Israeli Labour parties and, importantly, between the Norwegian Labour Party office and the Israeli embassy in Oslo.”

4 The idea of an information campaign, aimed at raising popular support for Israel in Norway got the approval of the leadership of the Norwegian Labour party in February 1956. Shortly after, a delegation of fourteen journalists, editors, and trade union officials travelled to Israel. They visited industrial and agricultural sites and saw examples of how the kibbutz system gave Jewish refugees a new future. The Norwegians also met influential members of the Israeli political elite and trade union movement. Once returned to Norway, the press close to the Labour party edited several articles from the trip, in addition to the initial declaration “Let Israel Live” published on March 17, 1956, in *Arbeiderbladet* [*The Labourer’s Journal*] and signed by all the delegates. Selbekk, *Korset og Davidsstjernen*, 2.

5 Selbekk, *Korset og Davidsstjernen*, 2.

6 King Haakon VII and Crown Prince Olav were photographed by Per Bratland at Glomstua in Molde, Norway, in April, 1940. The birch is now known as *Kongebjørka* [*The King’s Birch*]. See “Kongebjørka,” in *Store norske leksikon*, <https://snl.no/Kongebjørka>, accessed August 26, 2019.

inhabited.⁷ The barrenness is often – as in the “Let Israel Live”-banner – attributed to the wrongdoings of somebody else, be they Turks, Arabs, or Jews. Nevertheless, despite their thorough insistence on the infertility of the land, Scandinavian as well as other European or American nineteenth-century travellers also observed beautiful green valleys, rich cereal fields, and exotic trees as they rode through the landscapes of Samaria, Galilea, and Judea. In addition, they brought home *naturalia* – dried flowers, plants and seeds, preserved fishes or living turtles; and, later, the idea that the sterile land could again be cultivated and blossom as during the reign of King Solomon gained momentum.

In the present chapter, I trace what I call the green line⁸ of the Jerusalem code through exploring how plants, trees, and landscapes establish symbolic or material connections between Palestine and Scandinavia. I will highlight the interconnectedness of three main points: First, I examine the importance of greenness and fertility in the Scandinavian imaginary involving the Holy Land⁹ as described in literature and

7 The topos of the desolated land was common in most nineteenth-century European and American approaches to Palestine. See for example C. W. Wilson, “Recent Surveys in Sinai and Palestine,” *The Journal of the Royal Geographic Society of London* 43 (1873): 208, 211. See also Glenda Abramson, “Two Nineteenth-Century Travelers to the Holy Land,” *Israel Affairs* 8, no. 3 (2000): 72–3, which analyses the English author Herman Melville’s harsh representation of the land. While Abramson keeps a critical distance to the nineteenth-century sources, Hanna Margalit, in a publication from the early 1960s, takes the representation of nineteenth-century travelers at face value, reiterating the dichotomy of former abundance in contrast to the waste and neglect that occurred in the Middle Ages and under Ottoman rule: “The purpose of this paper is to attempt a reconstruction of the cultural landscape of Palestine at a critical turning point of its history, namely on the threshold of this period of amelioration, at the stage of utmost decline after the desolation of the Middle Ages and 300 years of Ottoman rule.” Hanna Margalit, “Some Aspects of the Cultural Landscape of Palestine during the First Half of the Nineteenth Century,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 13, no. 3 (1963): quote on p. 208, see also pp. 212–17, 220, 223.

8 At first a coincidence, it proved indirectly significant for my argument that the armistice border of 1949 between Israel and its Arab neighbours is called “The Green Line.”

9 The term “The Holy Land” needs some specification. Through a comparison of English nineteenth-century historical geographies using the term, Yehoshua Ben-Arieh finds that it referred to the following territories, ranged in order of holiness: the heartland was composed of Judea, Samaria, Galilea, and the Land of the Philistines. Of second importance was “the land in eastern Palestine and the Negev,” whereas the Sinai Peninsula, Damascus, and the southern part of Lebanon was of “third rate importance.” Other territories were mentioned in the Bible, but did not qualify as the Holy Land, such as Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Anatolia. Sometimes these territories were referred to as “Bible Lands.” Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, “Nineteenth-Century Historical Geographies of the Holy Land,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 15, no. 1 (1989): 71. For a critical examination of the term “Holy Land,” see Charlotte Whiting, “Geographical Imaginations of the ‘Holy Land’: Biblical Topography and Archaeological Practice,” *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 29, no. 2–3 (2007): 237–50. Maggy Hary also explores the construction of the “Holy Land,” arguing for a connection between nineteenth-century millenarianism and early Zionism. Maggy Hary, “The Holy Land in British Eyes: Sacred Geography and the ‘Rediscovery’ of Palestine, 1839–1917,” in *Encountering Otherness: Diversities and Transcultural Experiences in Early Modern European Culture*, ed. Guido Abbattista (Trieste: Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2011), 339–49.

travelogues. Second, I analyse the connection between greenness and fertility, on the one hand, and the evangelical ideas of reviving the land of the Bible and restoring the Jews to Palestine, on the other; and third, I demonstrate how a focus on plants and landscapes reveals a shift in scientific descriptions of Palestine between the mid-eighteenth and the mid-nineteenth centuries. I argue that the idea of the *terra sancta* as a life-giving element binds these three points together. Holy earth gives life to physical flowers and trees that stimulate the literary imagination and constitute objects of scientific inquiry, but also have symbolic value in theological doctrine and political projects.

In order to unfold my argument, I trace the green line of the Jerusalem code from Lie's speech (1956) to the Swedish botanist, Fredrik Hasselquist's (1722–1752) herbarium (1752); collected according to the path-breaking methods of the prominent Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus (1707–1778).¹⁰ The tracing thus spans two centuries and involves different genres – novels, travelogues, and scientific works. I start out with the role played by fertility and greenness in the Swedish novelist Selma Lagerlöf's (1858–1940) *Jerusalem* (1901–1902),¹¹ before I turn to Fredrika Bremer's (1801–1865) *Travels in the Holy Land* from 1862,¹² in which she blends personal impressions with insights from scientific treatises on Palestine. One particular section in Bremer's travelogue about her visit to the valley of Artas opens up a discussion about science, more specifically about Scandinavian contributions to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century scientific discourses on Palestine. With regards to the eighteenth century, I dwell on the works of Hasselquist and Carsten Niebuhr (1733–1815), whom were both influenced by the new Linnaean methods in natural history. The nineteenth century is represented by the works of Volrath Vogt (1817–1889), Principle of the Cathedral School in Oslo and expert in Bible history. Vogt, in turn, was inspired by the American bible scholar, Edward Robinson (1794–1863).

The sources I have studied testify to a shift in the scientific approach to Palestine between the mid-eighteenth and the mid-nineteenth centuries. I follow J. M. I. Klaver's claim that Linnaean taxonomy stood out as a premise for the scientific programs of several large European scientific expeditions to the Middle East in the eighteenth century.¹³ With regard to the nineteenth-century sources, I build on

¹⁰ I use the Latin form Linnaeus which was the name in use when Hasselquist undertook his journey. Linnaeus was ennobled in 1761 and took the name Carl von Linné.

¹¹ Selma Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem I. I Dalarne* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers förlag, 1901). Selma Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem II. I det heliga landet* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers förlag, 1902).

¹² Fredrika Bremer, *Travels in the Holy Land I–II* [*Livet i gamla världen – Palestina*], trans. Mary Howitt (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1862).

¹³ J. M. I. Klaver, *Scientific Expeditions to the Arab World (1761–1881)* (London, Oxford: Arcadian Library in association with Oxford University Press, 2009).

research¹⁴ that examines the new engagement with Palestine, which occurred in Protestant circles in Britain and the United States in the nineteenth century. In so doing, my chapter also connects to Rana Issa's analysis of the concept of *bibleland*: new findings in philology made it incumbent on Bible scholars to ground the truth of the biblical text in the landscape of Palestine.¹⁵ While Issa focuses on philology, I explore similar issues in works of eighteenth-century natural history as well as nineteenth-century historical geography. I argue that where the Enlightenment travellers collected *naturalia* and other empirical evidence to elucidate the biblical text – often with their focus laying elsewhere – the nineteenth-century Bible scholars who visited Palestine used the Bible to shed light on the empirical evidence they encountered. This aspect profoundly characterizes what we may call the nineteenth-century “science of bibleland” in contrast to eighteenth-century scientific approaches to the Levant. In order to interpret the shift in the scientific approach to Palestine, I borrow two concepts from the historians of science, Lorrain Daston and Peter Galison, namely *truth to nature* and *mechanical objectivity*.¹⁶

Throughout the chapter, I explore the complex nexus in which scientific ideas blend with literary metaphors, theological issues, and political agendas. I demonstrate how ideas about fertility, growth, and cultivation of the land were entangled with ideas of colonization, mission, and the restoration of the Jews to Palestine, suggesting that these entanglements remained fertile in the Scandinavian imaginary well into the twentieth century. First, however, let me situate the Scandinavian sources in a broader international context.

Scandinavian Sources

Most English-speaking readers interested in the nineteenth-century Middle East will be familiar with Elie Smith and Edward Robinson's *Biblical Researchers in Palestine*,¹⁷ perceived as a milestone in nineteenth-century American scholarship on the Holy Land, and as a foundational text in the discipline of biblical archaeology.¹⁸ They will also

¹⁴ See footnote 9 for references.

¹⁵ See Chapter 16 (Rana Issa), 309–27.

¹⁶ Lorrain Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2007).

¹⁷ Edward Robinson and Elie Smith, *Biblical Researchers in Palestine. Mount Sinai and Arabia Petræa: A Journal of Travels in the Year 1838*, I–III (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, London: John Murray, 1841).

¹⁸ Robinson is characterized as a leading biblical scholar of his day and the founder of the discipline of biblical archaeology. He was extraordinary Professor of Sacred Literature in the Andover Theological Seminary (1830–33) and from 1837, Professor in Biblical Literature in the Union Theological Seminary. James Grant Wilson and John Fiske, eds., “Edward Robinson,” in *Appleton's Cyclopædia of American Biography* V (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1888). Andover was

know that the scientific interest in Palestine was flourishing in the nineteenth century, particularly in the second half of the century. Robinson's work inspired a plethora of publications about the Holy Land, which dealt with topographic measurements and archaeological digs, and these were financed by newly established exploration funds.¹⁹

In the appendix to volume three of *Biblical Researchers in Palestine*, Robinson and Smith present an extensive list cataloguing works about Palestine produced from Antiquity up until their own time. The list includes the travelogues of Carsten Niebuhr, famous explorer of Arabia Felix financed by the Danish King Fredric V; of Fredrik Hasselquist, pupil of Linnaeus; and of the less known eighteenth century Swedish traveller Jacob Berggren (1790–1886). Another interesting connection, which sheds light on the Scandinavian material, is the close connection that existed between Robinson and the reputed German geographer, Carl Ritter (1779–1859), founder of the discipline of scientific geography and author of *The Comparative Geography of Palestine and the Sinaitic Peninsula*.²⁰ While Robinson was working on the notes from his first trip to Palestine (1838) in preparation of *Biblical Researchers*, he had access to Ritter's private collections in Berlin and enjoyed his friendship.²¹ Ritter was widely read, also in Scandinavia, and his work inspired other travellers to Palestine, such as Fredrika Bremer. Her travelogue reflects his theory of history, and she cites him as her main source when she gives an outline of the religious traditions in Asia.²²

Scandinavian authors and scientists were thus entrenched in academic traditions and networks that expanded on Robinson's and Ritter's work. Vogt, for example, explicitly states that he was inspired by the work of Robinson before his

the institution in the US that sent the largest number of missionaries to the Middle East in the early nineteenth century. Ussama Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 2008), 58.

19 Ben-Arieh characterises "the amount of publications on Palestine by nineteenth-century Western writers as enormous," estimated to 5000 volumes or more. These include travelogues, letters, and reports by missionaries, consuls and physicians, in addition to more scientific oriented works "pertaining to the historical geography of the Holy Land." In addition to Robinson and Ritter, Ben-Arieh focuses on the Palestine Exploration Fund Survey and on the works of A. P. Stanley, E. Huntington, and G. A. Smith. Ben-Arieh, "Nineteenth-Century Historical Geographies," quotes on p. 70. See also C. W. Wilson, "Recent Surveys," as well as E. C. Mitchell, "The Bibliography of Exploration: A List of American Writers upon Biblical Archaeology and the Work of Exploration in Bible Lands, with Subjects They have Discussed, including Review and Magazine Articles as Well as Separate Books," *The Old Testament Student* 6, no. 10 (1887): 303–15. The last publication lists more than 175 American authors; many with several publications each.

20 Carl Ritter, *The Comparative Geography of Palestine and the Sinaitic Peninsula, Translated and adapted to the Use of Biblical Students* by William L. Gage (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, George Street, 1866), 4 vols. [English translation and abbreviation by William L. Gage of Ritter's *Erkunde von Asien*, part of *Die Erdkunde im Verhältnis zur Natur und Geschichte des Menschen* (1822–59)].

21 For Ritter's influence on Robinson, see for example, Wilson and Fiske, "Edward Robinson," 375; Ben-Arieh, "Nineteenth-Century Historical Geographies," 75.

22 For Ritter's influence on Bremer, see Chapter 18 (Anna Bohlin), 360–89.

travel to Palestine in 1863.²³ He draws extensively on Robinson and Smith's work in *Reise i det Hellige Land og Syrien*²⁴ [*Travel in the Holy Land and Syria*] as well as in his systematic exposition of Palestine in *Det Hellige Land*²⁵ [*The Holy Land*]. Vogt's overall authorship had an important impact on Norwegian audiences.²⁶ Together, his texts constitute a Scandinavian example of the burgeoning nineteenth-century academic interest in the land of the Bible. Scientific treatises and travelogues share the *topos* of fertility versus barrenness, alimentering through different channels the same imaginary about the Holy Land. This *topos* also had repercussions in literary fiction. It may even be that fiction crystallizes the *topos*, making it more poignant.

Selma Lagerlöf: Flower Cards from Jerusalem – “The only things the poor Holy Land is rich in”?

The works of the famous Swedish author, Selma Lagerlöf, enjoyed a large international public, and in 1909, the novel *Jerusalem* (1901–1902) earned her the Nobel Prize in literature.

In this novel, she plays on the opposition between fertility and barrenness, as in the following passage:

As in other countries one goes berrying, so in Palestine one goes flower gathering. From all the convents and mission-stations they go out to pick flowers. Poor members of the Jewish colony, European tourists and Syrian laborers can be seen every day down in the wild rocky dells carrying flower baskets. At evening these gatherers return to the city laden with anemones and hyacinths, with violets and tulips, with narcissi and orchids. . . .

When the little meadow pinks, anemones and hyacinths are well flattened and dried, they are made up into smaller and larger bouquets – some prettily arranged, some not – and pasted on cards and in small albums with covers of olive wood, upon which have been burnt: “Flowers from Palestine.”

And then all these flowers from Zion, from Hebron, from the Mount of Olives, from Jericho, go out into the wide world. They are sold in shops, they are sent in letters, are given away as keepsakes or in exchange for gifts of charity. Farther than India's pearls and silks from Brussa do these little field blossoms travel; they are the only things the poor Holy Land is rich in.²⁷

²³ Volrath Vogt, *Reise i det Hellige Land og Syrien* (Kristiania: P. T. Mallings Bogtrykkeri, 1865), 16.

²⁴ Volrath Vogt, *Reise*.

²⁵ Volrath Vogt, *Det Hellige Land* (Kristiania: P. T. Mallings Boghandels Forlag, 1879).

²⁶ See Chapter 9 (Kristin Norseth), 163–87; Chapter 19 (Erling Sandmo), 390–409; and Chapter 20 (Birger Løvlie), 410–29.

²⁷ Selma Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem* II, trans. Velma Swanson Howard (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1918), 115–16. For a detailed study of flower cards from Jerusalem, see Margaretha Boockmann, “Flowers from Palestine – A Chapter from Selma Lagerlöf's Novel *Jerusalem* and a Book from the Library of Hochschule für Jüdische Studien Heidelberg,” *European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe* 41, no. 2 (2008): 18–21.

In this passage from Lagerlöf, the authorial gaze sweeps over the Palestinian countryside, recording the flower harvest carried out by several communities and groups residing in or near Jerusalem. As part of a small-scale local industry, the dried flowers would soon be distributed worldwide as tokens of the Holy Land. The protagonists of Lagerlöf's novel – the Swedish members of the American Colony in Jerusalem – also took part in this yearly enterprise.

*Jerusalem*²⁸ narrates the story of a small community of farmers – 37 families – who emigrated from Dalarna in Sweden to Jerusalem in 1896 to join the American Colony established by Anna and Horatio Spafford.²⁹ When Lagerlöf travelled through Egypt and the Levant in 1900, in the company of her friend Sophie Elkan (1853–1921), she visited the Colony, and in a letter to her mother from Jericho, she describes the kind reception she received from the Swedes living there.³⁰ She was already curious about their existence after Elkan, in 1897, had shown her a notice in the paper about their emigration to Jerusalem. In the novel, she expands upon their life stories in fictional terms, juxtaposing the traditional farming community in Sweden, governed by patriarchal forms of authority, to the newly established community in Jerusalem where family structures are dissolved and where Mrs. Gordon, modelled on the persona of Anna Spafford, rules as a matriarch. In an efficient deployment of dichotomies, Lagerlöf further opposes the rootedness of traditional Scandinavian Protestant Christianity, on the one hand, to the uprooted existence of the radical utopian movement, on the other. Most importantly for the purpose of the current chapter, the novel contrasts the fertility, water, and abundance of Dalarna to the aridity, dryness, thirst, and poverty of Jerusalem and its surroundings, where the early spring flowers represent “the only things the poor Holy Land is rich in.”

The theme of earthly barrenness is also present in Lagerlöf's letter to her mother from Jericho: “Everything is very barren,³¹ yet people could quite obviously farm and work here; but the Turks have such a miserable government here that the people are not allowed to work in peace. This is why nothing gets done.”³² In a later letter, she affirms: “Now I have seen a good part of the land of Judah, and it is a beautiful and fertile land with beautiful inhabitants. If only the government were not so bad, it would still be a promised land.”³³ Hence, Lagerlöf reproduces the

²⁸ For a more detailed reading of Selma Lagerlöf's *Jerusalem*, see Chapter 22 (Jenny Bergenmar), 448–65, and Chapter 23 (Dana Caspi), 466–91.

²⁹ Anna Spafford was originally from Stavanger in Norway. In America, she had founded a premillennialist community, the Overcomers, together with her husband. Following a series of personal crises, the couple moved from Chicago to Jerusalem in 1881 together with their flock, expecting the second coming of Christ to be immediate.

³⁰ Selma Lagerlöf, *Letters from Jerusalem* (Oslo: Forlaget Geelmuyden Kiese, 2000), 89–90.

³¹ To be fair, just before this passage, Lagerlöf has described the agricultural Plain of Sharon, next to Jaffa as “cultivated everywhere and fertile.” Lagerlöf, *Letters*, 88.

³² Lagerlöf, *Letters*, 88.

³³ Lagerlöf, *Letters*, 94.

Fig. 17.2: Anna T. Spafford in American Colony Courtyard, c.1898–1923. Hand-tinted photographic print. Hol Lars (Lewis) Larsson, the American Colony Photo-Department. The abundance of the garden presents a striking contrast to the arid landscape beyond, as described by Lagerlöf.

topos of potential but unexploited agricultural resources in her novel as well as in her personal correspondence; a theme already developed by Fredrika Bremer in her travelogue, *Travels in the Holy Land* from 1862.

Fredrika Bremer: Botanizing in Artas

The Swedish feminist, celebrated author, and experienced traveller, Fredrika Bremer (1801–1865) visited Palestine in the spring of 1859. At that time, she had already published several novels as well as a travelogue in letter form from America, or the New World, which she visited in 1849–1851. Now, she had travelled through the Old World – Europe, Sicily, and Egypt – and finally reached Palestine, the Holy Land in 1859, with Jerusalem as a somewhat ambiguous goal.³⁴ As a Protestant, she had no theological need to go there. Bremer was convinced that holiness resided in the word of God within a community of believers, and not in relics or holy sites. Significantly, she found spiritual peace in trees rather than buildings, in landscapes rather than ruins; landscapes through which she could walk in the paths of her Savior.³⁵

In her descriptions of the sceneries around Jerusalem, Bremer, like Lagerlöf, underscores the infertility-fertility nexus and links the topics of flora, agriculture, and botanizing to the themes of conversion, mission, and colonization of the land. She also juxtaposes Swedish and Palestinian sceneries:

Jerusalem, May 1st. – It is Sunday, and the first of May. On this day, in the capital of Sweden, they hold a festival in honour of the spring . . . the most beautiful attraction of the festival is furnished by nature herself. All around the verdant hills, the joyous throng, and the splendid train of carriages, shine out the clear, blue fjords, with their dancing waves and fluttering pennons, seen in all directions. And high above all, the larks pour forth a song of joy in the vernal life of the North, of which the South knows nothing.

Nevertheless, it is now spring here also, in its full splendour. Some showers during the latter days of April have brought out the more tardy foliage . . . The blossoming hawthorns on the Mount of Olives fill the air with their delicate perfume. The greensward and the flowers here are less remarkable for their luxuriance than for their delicacy and brilliancy of colour. In place of the scarlet anemones, a species of ranunculus has now made its appearance, almost of the same colour and size. The grass is brilliant with a number of small sun and star-flowers.³⁶

The date of May 1 and the flowering Palestinian countryside set in motion a recollection of the May festival at Djurgården, back home in Stockholm. The imagery of flowers and rejuvenating landscapes introduces a section in which Bremer will connect the

³⁴ Anna Bohlin, “Att kyssa olivträd: Fredrika Bremer som ambivalent pilgrim till det Heliga Landet,” in *Fiktion och verklighet: Mångvetenskapliga möten*, eds. Anna Bohlin and Lena Gemzöe (Göteborg, Stockholm: Makadam förlag, 2016).

³⁵ For more on Bremer’s view on nature, see Chapter 18 (Anna Bohlin), 360–89.

³⁶ Bremer, *Travels II*, 66–7.

revival of nature to the revival of souls.³⁷ Her visit to the “colonist Meschullam,” a German Jew converted to Christianity who had established an agricultural colony in the valley of Artas, next to Bethlehem, further epitomizes the topics of mission and conversion.

Bremer writes that Meschullam who has made “the wilderness blossom as a rose,”³⁸ has entered into a kind of partnership with Mrs. Finn, the wife of the British consul in Jerusalem. Noticing that agriculture in Palestine is in a “very deplorable situation, but might be greatly advanced through the example of good cultivators”³⁹ such as Meschullam, Bremer is convinced that he would be the perfect leader of a settler community that could revive the country, and bring forth anew the abundant countryside and flourishing gardens from the ancient times of King Solomon. At that time, according to Bremer, Palestine housed twelve million inhabitants in contrast to the present-day half a million.⁴⁰ Expressing a mixture of evangelical hope, mission to the Jews, colonization, and contempt for the Arabs, Bremer writes:

That which is wanted is hands – is settlers, who would bring several of these valleys into cultivation, which unquestionably, and without great labour, would soon become equally fertile with the valley of Meschullam. The Arabs can do nothing of this kind. You cannot depend upon their work, neither on their fidelity towards the Christian. But a tolerably strong colony of German agriculturists would assuredly find their advantage here and would easily be able, under the protection of the European consuls, to keep the surrounding robber-tribes of Arabs at a distance. To such a colony as this might be united the various Jewish families in Jerusalem, who are ready to go over to Christianity if they could only escape the bitter persecutions which they have to expect from their kindred in the faith. In the valleys of Urtàs⁴¹ they could find protection, work, and bread, if they found those Christian friends and protectors . . . How beautifully might the ancient gardens of Solomon again flourish in the now desolate, grass-overgrown, or stone-covered levels of the valleys.⁴²

Meschullam, Bremer’s ideal leader, had established a farming project that received international attention and had become an attraction for tourists on their way to Hebron. The Duke of Orleans, for example, had discussed with Meschullam the prospect of establishing a French colony in the vicinity.⁴³

³⁷ Bremer gives a detailed description of the method followed by the missionaries Pastor Hefter and Dr. Atkinson during their regular mission journeys to the Jews of Tiberias and Safed: They pitch their tent near a village or town, spreading the word that an English medical doctor is in the neighborhood. While people come to see the doctor for medical healing, the pastor also addresses the health of the soul. Some people accept a Hebrew copy of the New Testament, while others refuse. Bremer, *Travels* II, 68.

³⁸ Bremer, *Travels* II, 77.

³⁹ Bremer, *Travels* I, 189.

⁴⁰ Bremer, *Travels* II, 72.

⁴¹ Bremer prefers this spelling but also uses “Artas.”

⁴² Bremer, *Travels* II, 70–1.

⁴³ Bremer, *Travels* II, 77–8.

Finally, Bremer describes an evening sermon at Meschullam's house where Mrs. Finn reads aloud from one of Bremer's texts about the fall of man, about women's fault or lack of fault therein, and about the role of women in sacred history. Significantly, the text within the text is also about a garden, about paradise, and the loss thereof. The scene thus plays back on the overall theme of the passage: the opposition between greenness, fertility, and the conversion of souls to the true faith, on the one hand, and barrenness, desolation, neglect, and religious error, on the other. Bremer finds biblical support for her very concrete plans of involving Jews in the recultivation of Palestine. She brings forth a prophecy for Israel, referring to St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, 11:24–26:

‘The Israelites,’ I said, ‘will one day return hither out of exile, as they were delivered from captivity in Egypt, from bondage in Babylon; they will return richer in spiritual treasures, and then, in connection with the nations of the West, they will commence a new era for religious knowledge and science; for spiritual life, which cannot be attained to before the fullness of the Jews is come.’⁴⁴

The return of the Jews to Palestine in consort with the nations of the West announces a new area, a New Jerusalem. Bremer explains elsewhere that the Christians “possess what the Mohammedans are altogether deficient in, the knowledge of, and the faith in a kingdom of peace and blessedness, a ‘kingdom of heaven,’ which they must realize on earth.”⁴⁵

Bremer believes that German Protestants and converted Jews would be the best to restore the land to its former glory. Indeed, evangelical ideas about new life, in a physical or spiritual sense, underlie her description of the valley of Artas; ideas that are part of a broader current of thought which characterized Evangelical Protestant approaches to Palestine in the nineteenth century.⁴⁶ This religious current was in turn entrenched in a scientific episteme that was new in the nineteenth century. Between the mid-eighteenth and the mid-nineteenth century, a shift in focus occurred in European and American scientific discourses referring to Palestine. Eighteenth-century Enlightenment sources, inspired by Linnaeus' taxonomic system and interested in natural history relevant for biblical research, looked at Palestine as one of several unexplored parts of the world, while nineteenth-century scientific treatises emphasized the uniqueness of the place, constructing it as bibleland. Bremer's descriptions from Artas constitute a gateway into my discussion of this turn in the scientific discourse on Palestine.

⁴⁴ Bremer, *Travels* II, 85.

⁴⁵ Bremer, *Travels* I, 197.

⁴⁶ Falestin Naili underlines John Meschullam's ties to evangelical and millenarian movements in Europe and America, seeing his settlement “as a good example of the multinational alliances between millenarist Christians in Palestine and their extensive support networks in Europe and North America.” Falestin Naili, “The Millenarist Settlement in Artas and its Support Network in Britain and North America, 1845–1878,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 45 (2011): quote on p. 44. For more on Evangelical mission to the Jews, see Paul M. Blowers, “‘Living in a Land of Prophets’: James T. Barclay and an Early Disciples of Christ Mission to Jews in the Holy Land,” *Church History* 62, no. 4 (1993): 494–513.

Botanizing and the Scientific Exploration of Palestine

During her visit in Artas, Bremer goes for a walk along the path descending from the famous pools of Solomon,⁴⁷ down to the village. While walking, she botanizes – an activity that sets in motion a series of associations and recollections. In these, the Swedish eighteenth century natural scientist, Fredrik Hasselquist, one of Linnaeus’ pupils, is a central piece. Invoking the image of the flower harvest in a rejuvenating Palestinian countryside, Bremer exclaims: “His harvest of flowers alone reached Sweden. Young man, my countryman! . . . Thy memory will not die on the soil of Palestine, any more than on that of thy native land. The flora of Palestine writes it every year anew in her splendid bright-coloured flowers!”⁴⁸ For Bremer, the Palestinian flora recalls Hasselquist’s scientific endeavours by rooting his name in the terra sancta. Her own botanizing also echoes his scientific method. Moreover, the section on botanising connects Hasselquist’s research in natural history to Mechullam’s pioneering agricultural and colonizing project. In Bremer’s narrative, natural history thus blends with the idea of the revival of Solomonic gardens, demonstrating the underlying connection between scientific discourse and religious imaginary that the present chapter aims to explore.

Hasselquist: An Eighteenth-Century Scientific Approach to the Holy Land

Fredrik Hasselquist left Sweden for the Middle East in 1749, more than 110 years before Bremer did. He first travelled through Egypt and arrived in Jaffa in March 1751. He then toured Palestine during the following months and reached Cyprus in early August where he wrote down his impressions from the journey. Later, in Smyrna he contracted a lung disease and passed away on February 9, 1752.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Most travellers mentioned in this chapter visited the pools of Solomon.

⁴⁸ Bremer, *Travels* II, 77.

⁴⁹ Sverker Sörlin and Otto Fagerstedt, *Linné och hans apostlar* (Stockholm: Natur och kultur/Fakta etc., 2004), 71–4; Fredrik Hasselquist, *Iter Palæstinum Eller Resa Til Heliga Landet, förrättad ifrån År 1749 til 1752, Med Beskrifningar, Rön, Anmärkningar, Öfver de märkvärdigaste naturalier, på Hennes Kongl. Maj:ts Befallning, Utgifven af Carl Linnæus* (Stockholm: trykt på Lars Salvii kåstnad, 1757), accessed August 26, 2019, <https://litteraturbanken.se/forfattare/HasselquistF/titlar/IterPalaestinumEllerResa/sida/1/faksimil>.

Fig. 17.3: Plants collected by Fredrika Bremer. The Bremer Collection at Årsta Castle, Årstasällskapet för Fredrika Bremer-studier (The Årsta Association for Fredrika Bremer Studies). Photo: Lina Stenqvist.

In his travelogue, Hasselquist makes clear that the aim of his travel is not primarily devotional.⁵⁰ At the hostel of the Latin Monks in Jaffa, the procurator asks:

If I had come to see the holy places for the sake of devotion. I answered him without hesitation: No! What? [Why] continued the monk, who was a Spaniard, travel to see the holy places without devotion? I would end such an intimate conversation, and started another which was about money.”⁵¹

Embarrassed by the procurator’s interest in his views on religious devotion, Hasselquist swiftly turns to worldly matters. Hasselquist’s initial downplaying of the spiritual aspects of his journey is repeated several times. Often, he contrasts his scholarly interests to the spiritual ambitions of his companions, a group of pilgrims that Hasselquist joins for the convenience of travel. For example, when approaching the mountain “where CHRIST fasted and was tempted by the devil,”⁵² Hasselquist mentions *en passant* that the remoteness and inaccessibility of the place has made it perfect for Christians in search of solitary piety, but his focus lies elsewhere. He records landscape formations, species of stones, and various types of trees – “*Ceratonia*, *Myrtus*, and *Terebinthus*”⁵³ – and when the climbing of the mountain gets rough, he sends forth his servant, all in the name of science:

I went so far up this horrid mount of temptation, as prudence would allow; but did not dare proceed to the summit, where I sent my attendant, to fetch whatever there might be of naturalia, while I below gathered those plants, that were to be found, and insects, of which I later in particular found a rather excellent, and previously unseen Cimex (*) [a bloodsucking bug].⁵⁴

Hasselquist dwells more on the collection of scientific data and “the until now unseen” variety of a species than on biblical connections and religious practices.

⁵⁰ Thord Silverbark, *Doktor Hasselquists resa: Linnélärjungen i Mellersta Östern 1749–1752* (Stockholm: Alhambra, 2008), 146.

⁵¹ “om jag vore kommen at bese de heliga orterna för devotion skul? Jag svarade honom utan omsvep, nej! hvad? fortfor Munken, som var en Spanior, resa at bese de heliga orter utan devotion? Jag ville sluta et så förtroligt samtal, och begynte et annat, som angick penningar.” Hasselquist, *Resa*, 124–5. My translation. According to Linnaeus, who edited Hasselquist’s travelogue and wrote an introduction to the volume, Hasselquist had difficulties in financing his travel to the Levant. On his deathbed, he owed his creditors important debts and they seized his scientific collections from Egypt and Palestine as a guarantee. Linnaeus finally succeeded in bringing Hasselquist’s *naturalia* back to Sweden thanks to a generous private donation from the Swedish Queen Lovisa Ulrika. Sörlin and Fagerstedt, *Linné*, 73–4.

⁵² “Där CHRISTUS fastade och frestades af djefvulen.” Hasselquist, *Resa*, 135. My translation.

⁵³ Hasselquist, *Resa*, 134.

⁵⁴ “Jag gick så långt upföre detta faseliga försökelse-bårgen, som försigtigheten kunde tillåta; men vågade mig ej up til spetsen, dit jag skickade min drång, at håmta hvad där kunde finnas af Naturalier, medan jag nedanföre samlade de växter, som där funnos, och Insecter, af hvilka senare jag i synnerhet fann en ganska artig, och för detta osedd Cimex (*).” Hasselquist, *Resa*, 136. My translation.

Similarly, at a cave near Bethlehem, while his fellow travellers carry out their prayers, Hasselquist observes affairs that are more mundane in character. In the following sequence, the juxtaposition of spiritual devotion to practical, scientific work is striking:

We travelled past Bethlehem, and just on the other side we came to that space, where the Angel appeared to the Shepherds, by where there is a grotto, in which they descend, whom there want to pay their reverence. *While my companions did this, I had the opportunity, to contemplate a sort of plough*, that was usable in this country to till the soil, about which I noticed something that I have not seen in other places.⁵⁵

What Hasselquist notes is an installation on the plough – a thin water pipe that runs parallel to the main wooden axis of the tool and ends in a tract made of skin. The farmer fills water into this tract from a bag that he carries under his left arm, which enables him to water the earth; it is a “useful tool that in dry circumstances can moisten an earth that often is unfruitful due to lack of water.”⁵⁶ The recognition of such an advanced agricultural technique amongst the local peasants does not align with the topos, which was to colour later travelogues, of a land laid barren under Turkish yoke or Arab neglect. Although Hasselquist perceives fields next to the river Jordan that could blossom if correctly tilled, he still recognizes that the locals know how to arbour their land.

In Hasselquist’s narrative, stories from the Bible are present as a matter of course. Where later scholars, such as the American Robinson or the Norwegian Vogt will discuss the biblical authenticity of a given place, Hasselquist simply affirms that “half an hour away from Tiberias is the place where CHRIST fed 4000 men,” “further ahead was the mount where CHRIST held his Sermon on the Mount,” or “the church over the room where Christ transformed water into wine.”⁵⁷ In Jerusalem, he records rather hastily his visit to the different stations of the standard pilgrimage route.⁵⁸ The link between the biblical passage and the landscape or monuments is taken for granted, although Hasselquist is generally sceptical towards the many explanations he is hearing among local Christians, especially monks, who give everything in their surroundings a

55 “Vi foro förbi Bethlehem, och litet på andra sidan kommo vi til det rum, där Angelen för Herdarna uppenbarades, hvarvid är en Grotta, i hvilken de stiga ned, som där vilja begå sin andakt. *Medan mine följeslagare gjorde detta, hade jag tillfälle, at betrakta en slags plog*, som var brukelig i detta landet til Jordens upkörande, vid hvilken jag märkte något, som jag ej sett på andra ställen.” Hasselquist, *Resa*, 153. My translation and emphasis.

56 “behändigt medel at i torr väderlek fukta en jord, som ofta i brist af vatten är ofruktbar.” Hasselquist, *Resa*, 153. My translation.

57 “en half timmas våg från Tiberiad, vistes stället, där CHRISTUS spisat 4000 män”; “Längre fram hade vi bärgen, där CHRISTUS hållit sin bärge predikan”; “kyrkan öfver rummet där Christus förvandlade vatten i vin.” Hasselquist, *Resa*, 165. My translation.

58 See Introduction, Chapter 1 (Anna Bohlin and Ragnhild Johnsrud Zorgati), 12–50; Chapter 18 (Anna Bohlin), 360–89.

biblical significance – olives are from the Mount of Olives, the Franciscan guesthouse is located at the same spot as Peter's house, etc. Hasselquist doubted such unfounded correspondences and was critical to religious zeal in general.⁵⁹ Still, as he travels through the landscape, his descriptions also establish intertextual echoes with the Bible. For example, he mentions that one night he slept with his herbarium as a pillow⁶⁰ while the rest of the company had to dwell directly on the earth,⁶¹ which echoes Jacob's dream: While Jacob reposes his head on a stone and imagines a ladder to heaven, Hasselquist rests on the toolbox of his scientific project.

Indeed, scientific interest imbues Hasselquist's account of the Holy Land. Scholars have often characterized his approach as one of rational deism; the view that God is found in the laws of nature. Biblical narratives and traditional Protestant knowledge, however, are also present in his text. Hasselquist's outlook on the world can be placed at the intersection of Enlightenment rationalism and Protestant orthodoxy, which would explain for example his critique of pilgrimages, uncritical devotion of holy places, or miracles.⁶² By pointing to Hasselquist's Protestant heritage, Måns Ahlstedt Åberg concludes: "Hasselquist was not a one-dimensional personality, rather, he seems to have been able to reconcile what appears to be irreconcilable positions in one and the same worldview. He was, even as odd as it might sound, an enlightened Lutheran, a Caroline [era] orthodox natural scientist – a Linnaean."⁶³

Hasselquist's teacher and later publisher, Linnaeus, emphasizes that scientific eagerness motivated his student to explore Palestine.⁶⁴ According to Linnaeus, theologians and philologists had ignored the natural history of the Holy Land and had not explored its *realia in situ*, and had thus missed knowledge that could shed light on the biblical text.⁶⁵ This was to change with Hasselquist's journey, which would demonstrate that natural history could complement philology. Indeed, a mapping

⁵⁹ Silverbark, *Doktor Hasselquists resa*, 146.

⁶⁰ *örmagätt*.

⁶¹ Hasselquist, *Resa*, 135.

⁶² Måns Ahlstedt Åberg, "En obegripelig Religions-ifver – Värderingar rörande religion i svenska reseskildringar om osmanska riket 1657–1780" (Master's thesis, Lund University, 2017).

⁶³ "Hasselquist var ingen endimensionell personlighet, utan tycks ha kunnat förena dess till synes oförenliga ståndpunkter i en och samma världsbild. Han var, hur märkligt det än kan låta, en upplyst Lutheran, en karolinskt ortodox naturvetare – en linnean." Åberg, *En obegripelig Religions-ifver*, 61–2. My translation.

⁶⁴ Sörlin and Fagerstedt, *Linné*, 66–7.

⁶⁵ One of Linnaeus' lectures addressed the puzzle that Palestine remained one of the less scientifically explored parts of the world despite the fact that numerous pilgrims and theologians had visited the place for generations. In Uppsala, as elsewhere in Europe, theologians and philologists had worked to identify the natural objects, *naturalia*, described in the Bible. Linnaeus thought that there was much more to be done in this field. The information about biblical plants gathered by his colleagues in Uppsala, Olof Rudbeck and Olof Celsius, was for example only based on textual evidence or their scant knowledge of the flora and fauna of their home district. Silverbark, *Doktor Hasselquists resa*, 30–1.

of the Holy Land according to the principles of natural history and in line with the Linnaean system, would demonstrate that empirical natural research could settle philological questions and attest to the usefulness of the Linnaean methodology.⁶⁶

Carsten Niebuhr's Expedition and Michaelis' View on Bible Studies

Only ten years after Hasselquist passed away in Smyrna, Carsten Niebuhr's expedition to Arabia Felix [the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula] and the Levant ensured the continuation of Scandinavian scientific and political interests in the region. The expedition was financed by the Danish Crown and inspired by Linnaeus' methodology, and it included Scandinavian scientists, such as the Swedish botanist, Pehr Forsskål (1732–1763), another of Linnaeus' disciples. Palestine was not the focus of this excursion, which aimed at exploring Egypt and parts of the Arabian Peninsula, but Niebuhr made a short visit to the Holy Land on his way back to Europe as the only surviving member of the expedition.

The expedition was initiated by an expert in biblical philology, the German scholar, Johann David Michaelis (1717–1791).⁶⁷ Michaelis had received instruction in oriental languages by his father, a professor of Syriac at the University of Halle. He later moved to the newly established August University of Gottingen where he first became private docent in 1745 and later professor ordinaries in 1750.⁶⁸ Here, his modern views on historical scholarship and his general scholarly standpoint, described as a “form of deistic empiricism” found acceptance.⁶⁹ Michaelis' view was that scripture “could, and should, be subjected to the independent historical and linguistic exercise of judgement (‘criticism’).”⁷⁰ Textual criticism could be supported by insights from other disciplines. For example, Michaelis was interested in how the tides of the Red Sea could explain the miraculous Exodus of the Jews from Egypt.⁷¹ He also wanted to know whether empirical evidence could substantiate the

⁶⁶ Silverbark, *Doktor Hasselquists resa*, 31; Sörlin and Fagerstedt, *Linné*, 66. For a review of some of the naturalia collected by Hasselquist, see F. S. Bodenheimer, “Frederic Hasselquist in Palestine, 1751,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 2, no. 1 (1952): 6–14.

⁶⁷ J. M. I. Klaver, *Scientific Expeditions to the Arab World (1761–1881)* (London, Oxford: Arcadian Library in association with Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁶⁸ For more about the development of modern educational institutions in Protestant Scandinavia, see Chapter 1 (Eivor Andersen Oftestad), vol. 2, 12–48.

⁶⁹ Klaver, *Scientific Expeditions*, 45.

⁷⁰ Klaver, *Scientific Expeditions*, 45.

⁷¹ Klaver, *Scientific Expeditions*, 47–8.

passage from Leviticus 14:33–57 about the leprosy of house and garments, or whether it was to be understood as a metaphor.⁷²

In arguing that biblical scholarship should “be cast as a new comprehensive science that includes anthropology, archaeology, ethnology, and natural science,”⁷³ Michaelis’ approach recalls Linnaeus’ argument that natural history could shed light on biblical philology. However, Linnaeus’ focus was on natural history, Michaelis’ on the biblical text. Scholars agree that Michaelis’ interest in other disciplines was situated within the framework of biblical philology and that the expeditions’ initial goal was to shed light on the biblical text.⁷⁴ In hindsight, however, the Linnaean scientific project came to dominate the mission. Lawrence J. Baack argues that the stringent methods within the empirically based disciplines of astronomy, geography, cartography, and natural history soon outshone the methodologically weaker biblical philology of Michaelis.⁷⁵ Forsskål, for example, knew the Linnaean taxonomic system from having worked together with Linnaeus in his botanical garden in Uppsala, while Niebuhr had learned the latest astronomical method by the reputed German scientist, Tobias Mayer (1723–1762).⁷⁶ They were both proficient in empirical sciences in which careful observation of the world was paramount.⁷⁷ Baack

72 These questions constitute two of Michaelis’ so called *Fragen* to the expedition. The *Fragen* englobed a variety of issues related to topography, astronomy, natural history, and social custom. The idea of putting questions to travellers represented a century old custom, which aimed “to regulate travel and maximize its impact on knowledge.” In Michaelis’ case, the questions were meant to guide the participants’ attention and contribute to the collection of new data. Michaelis included the European scientific community in his endeavour to establish the research questions. He circulated his questions in letters and publications, asking for corrections, amendments, and additions. Daniel Carey, “Arts and Sciences of Travel, 1574–1762: The Arabian Journey and Michaelis’s *Fragen* in Context,” in *Early Expeditions and Local Encounters: New Perspectives on Carsten Niebuhr and ‘The Arabian Journey,’ Proceedings of a Symposium on the Occasion of the Royal Danish Expedition to Arabia Felix*, eds. Ib Friis, Michael Harbsmeier and Jørgen Bæk Simonsen (Copenhagen: The Royal Danish Academy of Science and Letters, Scientia Danica, 2013), 46.

73 Klaver, *Scientific Expeditions*, 46.

74 An expedition to Arabia (the Yemen) “would reveal unknown aspects of nature, while its ancient history would shed new light on many passages of the Old Testament.” Klaver, *Scientific Expeditions*, 47. Alternatively, as Carey frames it: “Of course the overwhelming interest that drove Michaelis was to illuminate Biblical history – not that this excluded attention to natural history.” Carey, “Arts,” 46.

75 Lawrence J. Baack, “From Biblical Philology to Scientific Achievement and Cultural Understanding: Carsten Niebuhr, Peter Forsskål and Frederik von Haven and the Transformation of the Danish Expedition to Arabia 1761–1767,” in *Early Expeditions and Local Encounters: New Perspectives on Carsten Niebuhr and ‘The Arabian Journey,’ Proceedings of a Symposium on the Occasion of the Royal Danish Expedition to Arabia Felix*, eds. Ib Friis, Michael Harbsmeier and Jørgen Bæk Simonsen (Copenhagen: The Royal Danish Academy of Science and Letters, 2013), 74–5.

76 Roger H. Guichard, *Niebuhr in Egypt: European Science in a Biblical World* (Cambridge, UK: The Lutterworth Press, 2018), 38–9. Baack, “From biblical philology,” 69.

77 Baack, “From biblical philology,” 68–78.

concludes that their empirical methodologies “superseded the biblical philological objective of Michaelis which the former were originally intended to serve.”⁷⁸ Baack builds on a verdict given by Carsten Niebuhr’s son, Barthold Georg Niebuhr (1776–1831), in the biography he wrote about his father. Here, Niebuhr Jr. claims that the initial aim of the expedition became “an infinitesimally trivial matter of secondary importance.”⁷⁹ This remark corresponds to Thord Silverbark’s argument that one of the reasons why Linnaeus wanted to send Hasselquist to Palestine was not only to demonstrate the utility of natural history to biblical philology, but, more importantly, to prove that his systematic approach to nature was valuable on its own terms.

Hasselquist’s account from his travel in Palestine aligns with Linnaeus’ vision. On the one hand, his travelogue is characterized by frequent biblical references and his negative evaluation of pilgrimages and the veneration of saints is in line with Lutheran orthodoxy. On the other hand, his almost indifferent attitude to religiously charged places and religious practices are in sharp contrast to the eagerness he displays while collecting naturalia or scientific data from Palestine. It is clear that his primary motivation is scientific, not devotional. For him as for his teacher, Palestine stands out as one corner of a vast world – like the Americas or the Indies to which Linnaeus also sent his disciples – in need of exploration. In a similar manner, the expedition instigated by Michaelis, which took its point of departure in biblical philology, did not target Palestine but rather Arabia Felix as the most valuable place to shed light on the Hebrew Bible. Eventually, Michaelis used the data collected by the expedition in his work on the Hebrew Bible, but he acknowledged that with regard to the expedition, the role of “biblical philology had become marginal.”⁸⁰ In the eighteenth century, therefore, it appears that Palestine was not the centre of attention in the natural sciences or in biblical philology.

This changed in the nineteenth century. Hasselquist’s emphasis on natural history in Palestine was soon replaced by a scientific program in which the Holy Land took centre stage and the Bible acted as the ultimate scientific reference; the yardstick against which other scientific evidence must be measured. For nineteenth-century Bible scholars such as Robinson or Vogt, the scientific exploration of Palestine must necessarily be framed by the biblical text and the exploration in itself represents an act of devotion.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Baack, “From biblical philology,” 74–5.

⁷⁹ Quoted in Baack, “From biblical philology,” 74, note 76. Robinson translated this biography from German to English, see below.

⁸⁰ Baack, “From biblical philology,” 74.

⁸¹ A precise definition of the Bible as ultimate yardstick is given in one of the objectives of The American Holy Land Exploration Society, namely: “To furnish information through skilled and pious lecturers upon all subjects wherein the lands of Holy Scripture sustain the accuracy of the Bible.” A. L. Rawson, “Palestine,” *Journal of the American Geographical Society of New York* 7 (1875): quote on p. 106. See also p. 103 where Rawson underlines Robinson’s achievements: “but none [until Robinson] had ‘spied out the land’ to show its accordance with the Word of God.”

Recuperation of Eighteenth-Century Natural History Within the Program of Biblical Archaeology

In a publication from 1836, entitled *The Students Cabinet Library of Useful Tracts, Vol. III, Biographical series*, Robinson gives an indirect argument for why it is important to know the biography of Carsten Niebuhr, the great explorer:

No event in the literary world has had more direct and important bearing upon the study of the Bible, and the branches of learning connected with it, than the scientific expedition sent out by the King of Denmark to Arabia and the adjacent countries, in 1760. Viewing the subject in this light, I have thought that an account of the origin and progress of that expedition, would . . . afford much useful and interesting information to the student of biblical literature, and to readers in general.⁸²

Robinson translated Barthold Niebuhr's biography about his father from German to English for the benefit of students of biblical literature. At the outset, contrary to the biographer who claimed that the initial religious impetus behind his father's expedition had waned, Robinson characterizes it as a major event within the field of biblical studies. He has to admit, however, that the son's account leaves

His [Niebuhr's] religious character . . . entirely out of sight; except in one short paragraph near the close, where his firm belief in the special interpositions of Providence is mentioned. We have no means of supplying this deficiency, except so far as his faith in miracles is attested, in his remarks on the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea; where he regards the circumstances as the 'work of Providence, as a miracle.'⁸³

Robinson employs the word "deficiency" in order to characterize the downplaying of religion in the portrait of Carsten Niebuhr. This may reveal Robinson's bias and his critical attitude to Enlightenment science in general.⁸⁴ Moreover, one may argue that in emphasising Niebuhr's faith in miracles and in presenting knowledge about the expedition as particularly beneficial to the student of biblical literature, he tries to recuperate the work of Carsten Niebuhr into the fold of biblical research.

Robinson's recuperation of Niebuhr has echoes in Bremer's characterization of Hasselquist and his work in natural history. She indirectly places his endeavour within a biblical and Christian framework as she gives Linnaeus' naming and systematizing of

⁸² Barthold Georg Niebuhr, "Carsten Niebuhr: The Oriental Traveler, with an Appendix by J. D. Michaelis," in *The Student's Cabinet Library of Useful Tracts III*, trans. Prof. Robinson, ed. Thomas Clarke (Edinburgh: James Burnet, printer, 1836), 3.

⁸³ Niebuhr, *The Oriental Traveler*, 8.

⁸⁴ Whiting underlines Robinson's critical attitude to "the increasing influence of biblical criticism" which was imported to American theological seminars from Germany. Robinson was part of those American theologians who formed a new conservative school at Andover seminary as a "conservative defense against the 'heretical' liberal attack" coming from the more progressive milieus at Harvard. Whiting, "Geographical Imaginations," 245.

plants an aura of God's creative powers. As Adam according to God's scheme gave animals and plants their name, Linnaeus does the same in Bremer's narrative: "When the flower-king at Upsala sent out pupils to all parts of the world to collect their plants and flowers, and bring them to him to be classified and to receive their names, Hasselqvist proposed himself to undertake the flora of Palestine."⁸⁵ Both Robinson and Bremer illustrate the new tendency in nineteenth-century approaches to Palestine, namely the emphasis on the religious dimension and biblical framing of scientific works.⁸⁶

Volrath Vogt: Nineteenth-Century Science about the Holy Land

The biblical framework was also decisive for the Norwegian bible historian, Volrath Vogt. Vogt had already written his well-known and widely read Bible history for Norwegian schoolchildren when he travelled to Palestine in 1863.⁸⁷ While this book reflected his thorough knowledge of biblical history, impressions from his journey to the Holy Land in addition to the inspiration he found in Robinson influenced his later works.

In Vogt's *magnus opus* *Det Hellige Land* [*The Holy Land*], the only inscription on page two reads as follows: "On this book I have spent 15 years of work. Christiania in December 1879. Volrath Vogt,"⁸⁸ as if the sentence, in its simplicity on an otherwise empty page, announces the grandeur of what follows. The table of contents already alludes to this grandeur. It completes the five following pages of Vogt's book and stands as a token for the encyclopaedic nature of his approach. The volume is divided into 24 sections [referred to as paragraphs by Vogt], which again are divided into chapters and sub-chapters. The first seven sections analyse different names given to the Holy Land: its borders and size, population groups, languages, religious groups, geographical divisions (for example into Judea, Samaria, and Galilea at the time of Jesus), and population size throughout history. The next sections (8–23) explore geographical aspects of Palestine: plains, mountains and valleys; rivers and streams; lakes; sources and springs; wells and cisterns; dams; water pipes; the climate⁸⁹; rocks; caves; deserts;

⁸⁵ Bremer, *Travels* II, 76–7.

⁸⁶ To denote this blend of science and religion, Whiting employs the term "Geo-Piety," borrowed from Vogel: "Vogel has used the term 'geo-piety' to explain this interplay between imagery, reality, geography, and sacred space." Whiting, "Geographical Imaginations," 243. The reference is to L. I. Vogel, *To See the Promised Land: Americans and the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century* (University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1993), 7.

⁸⁷ See Chapter 19 (Erling Sandmo), 390–409, and Chapter 20 (Birger Løvlie), 410–29.

⁸⁸ "Paa denne Bog har jeg arbeidet i femten Aar. Kristiania i December 1879. Volrath Vogt." Vogt, *Det Hellige Land*.

⁸⁹ *veirlag*.

forests, groves,⁹⁰ and peculiar trees; fruit trees; gardens; animals; and roads. The final section, number 24, constitutes an overview of “cities, landscapes, monuments etc., in Alphabetic order” – the list starts with “Abel, Abel Bet-Ma’aka”⁹¹ – the name of a village, and ends with “Ænon, in Greek Ainon, from the Hebrew Ain: Spring, only mentioned in John 3, 23: ‘John baptised in Ænon, close to Salim.’”⁹² Section 24 covers the largest bulk of Vogt’s work, approximately 550 pages. It is easily accessible to the reader thanks to an alphabetic overview over place names, inserted at the end of the volume. The overview includes approximately 1,620 names, listed in three columns on eleven pages and a half. If the reader seeks information about a given biblical place, she can go to the alphabetic list, where she most probably will find the place she searches for. Vogt’s book also includes 99 illustrations distributed throughout the volume and 6 maps placed at the end. Again, an alphabetic list, this time presented at the beginning of the work, guides the reader to each illustration.

Although lists and facts mark Vogt’s approach, he arrives at drawing an impressive tableau of the Holy Land. It is as if he takes the bird’s-eye perspective, gradually zooming in on the country: first, he supplies general information about its name; then he draws the contour of the Holy Land, before he starts to fill in and colour the surface of his textual map. He recounts the stories of those who have populated the territory and draws a detailed image of the land itself, starting in the North with the land bordering Lebanon and descending towards the South following the valley of the Jordan River. On the way through the Holy Land, his gaze records valleys, mountains, and plains; water systems, natural and artificial, as well as roads and paths. He sees deserts and forests; trees, plants, and animals; villages and cities. He analyses the air and the climate, but also reaches underneath the surface of the ground, seeking for grotts and caves and examining different species of stone. Vogt’s magnum opus thus reveals itself as a work of art. From dry facts, systematized lists, and numbers, a colourful image of the Holy Land emerges; an image depicting the core of the Christian storyworld as interpreted by a Scandinavian scholar in the second part of the nineteenth century.

The systematic presentation of the material in Vogt’s book may indicate that he saw it as a work of reference or encyclopaedia to the Land of the Bible. By choosing an encyclopaedic format, Vogt breaks with his forerunners Robinson and Smith, who – building on a long tradition – used the travelogue as scientific genre.⁹³ They

⁹⁰ *lunder*.

⁹¹ Vogt, *Det Hellig Land*, 204.

⁹² “Ænon, paa Græsk Ainon, af det hebraiske Ain: Kilde, omtales bare Joh. 3, 23: ‘Johannes døbte i Ænon i Nærheden af Salim.’” Vogt, *Det Hellige Land*, 767.

⁹³ For more on the travelogue as scientific genre, see Carey, “Arts,” 27–32.

deliberately made this choice to make the observations from the land of the Bible more vivid in the mind of the reader:

I have therefore everywhere interwoven the personal narrative; and have endeavored so to do it, as to exhibit the manner in which the Promised Land unfolded itself to our eyes, and the processes by which we were led to the conclusions and opinions advanced in this work.⁹⁴

Later, in the posthumously published *Physical Geography of the Holy Land*,⁹⁵ Robinson chose a systematized approach, not so unlike the one found in Vogt's *The Holy Land*.

The scientific character of Vogt's enterprise is also evident in his mode of argument. Vogt follows the academic criteria of clarity, reliability, and verifiability. He cites all his sources, critically juxtaposing them while discussing a given topic. In addition, he draws on a varied material, including reference to recent archaeological digs in Jerusalem, earlier travel descriptions of Palestine, as well as historical and religious treatises. He regularly cites Josephus, Eusebius, Hieronymus, the Pilgrim from Bordeaux, the English travellers John Mandeville (fourteenth-century) and Henry Maundrell (seventeenth-century),⁹⁶ the already mentioned Edward Robinson, as well as James Ferguson who wrote *The Ancient Topography of Jerusalem*,⁹⁷ but also occasionally the Greek author Dio Cassius (d. 229 CE) and the Iberian Benjamin of Tudela who travelled to visit his brethren in Palestine in 1160–1173.⁹⁸ To Vogt some of these accounts only transmit legends, but he underscores that many questions remain open and that if skilled archaeologists would get access to important places, such as David's tomb, they could corroborate or reject earlier narratives. Ottoman authorities, however, often hinder such efforts. David's tomb, for instance, has not been researched because it is a holy site in Islam.⁹⁹

Vogt is concerned with what he calls the genuineness¹⁰⁰ of place names. In order to discuss the authenticity of a given site, he often recurs to the following pattern: He juxtaposes different kinds of sources, including the biblical text. If the sources concur, then fine. If not, he chooses the explanation that agrees with Scripture. Hence, the Bible frames Vogt's scientific enterprise. He may question outcomes of the Christian tradition such as the authenticity of the placement of the Holy Sepulchre,¹⁰¹ but not the holy text itself. The text is present as part of his scientific reasoning. As

⁹⁴ Robinson and Smith, *Biblical Researchers in Palestine*, I, v.

⁹⁵ Edward Robinson, *Physical Geography of the Holy Land* (London: John Murray, 1865).

⁹⁶ Vogt, *Reise*, 33.

⁹⁷ Vogt, *Reise*, 52.

⁹⁸ Vogt, *Reise*, 38.

⁹⁹ Vogt, *Reise*, 40.

¹⁰⁰ *ektehet*.

¹⁰¹ To question the authenticity of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre became a favorite topic among Protestant travelers to the Holy Land. In addition to question the correctness of its location, most of them also criticized the religious rituals that were practiced by Catholic and Orthodox Christians.

such, his method is in line with that of Robinson and Smith. In following the academic rules of citation, it acquires an apparent “objectivity.”

According to Rana Issa, Robinson’s phonological method – which consisted of locating the places referred to in the Bible through deriving biblical place names from the current pronunciation of local Arabs – “deploys a science that is associated with accepted modern disciplines.”¹⁰² Still, she argues that it constitutes an example of circular reasoning: “the problem with Robinson’s deployment of this method is that it is predicated on the assumption that the Bible comes from bibleland. What Robinson’s phonology sets out to do is therefore tautological. The bible came from bibleland is both the assumption and the conclusion of his travelogue.”¹⁰³ The thinking of Vogt and Robinson is similar: If evidence from archaeology or historical treatises contradicts the letter of the Bible (and especially the New Testament), the text of the Bible prevails. This approach to the Bible is in contrast to Hasselquist’s occasional references to the holy text, where he referred to the Bible as part of his religious heritage, but not as an argument in his scientific reasoning.

“Truth-to-Nature” and “Objectivity” – Codes of Epistemic Virtue

In their book, *Objectivity*, Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison trace the development of objectivity within the history of science. *Objectivity* focuses on what the authors define as codes of epistemic virtue, arguing that “epistemic virtues permeate scientific practice as well as precepts.”¹⁰⁴ They define three different codes of epistemic virtue, corresponding to different periods in the history of science: “truth-to-nature, mechanical objectivity, and trained judgment.”¹⁰⁵ Put shortly these codes produce different kinds of science. The first two are relevant for the discussion in the current chapter.

102 Rana Issa, “The Bible as Commodity: Modern Patterns of Arabic Language Standardization and Bible Commoditization in the Levant” (PhD diss., University of Oslo, 2014), 215.

103 Issa, “The Bible as Commodity,” 215. Whiting makes a similar point in her article discussing the concept of the “Holy Land”: “Robinson’s topography thus represented a landscape comprised of the biblical narratives mapped out in contemporary Palestine to the exclusion of all else. Here, for the first time, we see the biblical map of the ‘Holy Land’ that existed in the western mind mapped out in concrete geographical terms.” Whiting, “Geographical Imaginations,” 246. Whiting further argues that Robinson’s “biblical identifications” have influenced archaeological excavations up until today, “determining the interpretation of the excavated material culture.” Whiting, “Geographical Imaginations,” 246–8, quote on p. 246.

104 Daston and Galison. *Objectivity*, 19.

105 Daston and Galison, *Objectivity*, 18.

Daston and Galison take the Linnaean method and taxonomy as paradigmatic for the epistemic virtue they refer to as truth-to-nature. This virtue is thus relevant for Hasselquist's exploration of Palestine, as well as for Niebuhr's expedition to Arabia Felix. Truth-to-nature is characterized by a search for the ideal type that comes to the fore in each specimen:

'typical phenomena' were those that hearkened back to some underlying Typus or 'archetype,' and from which individual phenomena could be derived, at least conceptually. The typical is rarely, if ever, embodied in a single individual; nonetheless, the astute observer can intuit it from cumulative experience.¹⁰⁶

In order to record the reality truthfully, the scientist thus needed experience in collecting and comparing data. Only the trained eye would know how to distinguish the essential from the accidental, the typical from the deviation, and "the genuine species from mere varieties."¹⁰⁷ In truth-to-nature, the intervention of the trained scientist was indeed deemed necessary in order to obtain valuable results: "[Linnaeus] would have dismissed as irresponsible the suggestion that scientific facts should be conveyed without the mediation of the scientist and ridiculed as absurd the notion that the kind of scientific knowledge most worth seeking was that which depended least on the personal traits of the seeker."¹⁰⁸

Linnaeus' position stands in sharp contrast to the epistemic virtue that gradually was to replace truth-to-nature, namely mechanical objectivity, which aimed at reducing the human element in scientific research to a minimum: "To be objective is to aspire to knowledge that bears no trace of the knower – knowledge unmarked by prejudice or skill, fantasy or judgment, wishing or striving. Objectivity is blind sight, seeing without inference, interpretation, or intelligence."¹⁰⁹

Mechanical objectivity arose in the first decades of the nineteenth century, reaching its heyday in the second half of the century. Disregarding the ideal type, it paid attention to the particular occurrence in a series. It was no longer the inner nature of the object, the archetype, that was sought, but the most objective description of the specimen. Generalizations were reached by juxtaposing series of individual items, not by searching for an archetype underneath the surface. In aiming for "the removal of individual judgement,"¹¹⁰ mechanical objectivity favoured mechanization.¹¹¹ It took the machine and the repetitive series produced by the machine as a guarantee for objectivity. Photography thus came to constitute the preferred

¹⁰⁶ Daston and Galison, *Objectivity*, 69.

¹⁰⁷ Daston and Galison, *Objectivity*, 59.

¹⁰⁸ Daston and Galison, *Objectivity*, 59.

¹⁰⁹ Daston and Galison, *Objectivity*, 17.

¹¹⁰ Daston and Galison, *Objectivity*, 172.

¹¹¹ Daston and Galison, *Objectivity*, 172.

medium of mechanical objectivity, as photography, at least in the beginning, was believed to offer a “defense against figments of imagination.”¹¹²

I argue that nineteenth-century sources on Palestine reflect aspects of “mechanical objectivity.” For one, Robinson and Vogt are extremely interested in correct measurements. While Hasselquist estimated the distance between two spots in terms of the length of a pistol-shot,¹¹³ and the early nineteenth-century Swedish traveller Berggren calculated the circumference of the Pools of Solomon by means of his own foot, Robinson required sophisticated tools in order to map the landscape. For example, from the top of Mount Tabor he contemplates the great plains of Esdraelon, complaining that “there yet exists no correct nor intelligible account of the eastern portions of this plain.”¹¹⁴ The scholar sees the landscape as a panorama from above, and thus may give an approximate account of its features. In order to find, however, the precise positions of different locations that may later figure in maps, he is in need of triangulation and other precise methods of land measurement that require sophisticated and specialized tools. Robinson himself did not possess such advanced instruments. Still, his efforts were held in high esteem by later surveyors: “Provided only with a large compass, his numerous and careful bearings, and his strikingly accurate measurements and topographical descriptions, afforded such voluminous data that Professor Kiepert, of Berlin, was enabled to construct a new map, which almost entirely superseded that of Berghaus.”¹¹⁵ When C. W. Wilson wrote these lines in 1873, going through the different surveys of Palestine that had been undertaken since Robertson’s time, he uses several paragraphs to describe the instruments employed by the surveyors; such as a 7-inch compass with two levels, a cross-threaded plunging telescope, a 7-inch sextant, a box chronometer, and a theodolite.¹¹⁶ Like Robinson, Wilson also favoured the viewpoint from above, noticing for example how he was “struck by the character of the country as affecting its survey; the clearness of the atmosphere and extensive views from many points offer great facilities to the surveyor.”¹¹⁷ This emphasis on vistas favouring over-

¹¹² Daston and Galison, *Objectivity*, 161.

¹¹³ Bodenmeier, “Frederic Hasselquist,” 10.

¹¹⁴ Robinson and Smith, *Biblical Researchers in Palestine* vol. 3, 227.

¹¹⁵ Wilson, “Recent Surveys,” 212–13. To underline my point that Robinson’s name may be linked to mechanical objectivity, I refer to Haim Goran who emphasizes that Robinson “mark[s] the beginning of the modern period of scientific research and survey in Palestine.” Haim Goren, “Sacred, but not Surveyed: Nineteenth-Century Surveys of Palestine,” *Imago Mundi* 54 (2002): quote on p. 92. For more on Robinson’s method, see Albrecht Alt, “Edward Robinson and the Historical Geography of Palestine,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 58, no. 4 (1939): 373–7, 374.

¹¹⁶ Wilson, “Recent Surveys,” 214, 215, 219.

¹¹⁷ Wilson, “Recent Surveys,” see also 209, 217.

view is in line with the epistemic virtue of objectivity.¹¹⁸ One may imagine that it is easier to approach the ideal of blind, disinterested sight when the onlooker is situated at a distance from what he observes. Outlines and panoramas from the top of mountains, or from a bird's-eye view as in Vogt's scriptural map of the Holy Land, give an illusion of disinterested sight; at least it is in contrast to Hasselquist's bending his eyes towards the ground in search for "until now unseen" naturalia.

Reflecting the enormous interest in the Holy Land, which characterised the nineteenth century, the scientific canvases that both Robinson and Vogt unfold in their systematic works on Palestine also embody the epistemic virtue of objectivity. We may therefore ask whether the shift towards the ideal of an accurate depiction of the specimen (and not of the underlying archetype) contribute to explaining why the precise geography of Palestine became so important in the nineteenth century. Scholars have explained the renewed interest for Palestine in terms of the discipline of historical geography, developed by Ritter.¹¹⁹ Ben-Arieh suggests, for instance that the reason "for nineteenth-century writers' preoccupation with detail in their physical-geographical descriptions of the land must have been their conviction that the history of the Holy Land was tied closely with its geography; hence, in order to understand its unique history one must first become acquainted with the layout of the land and its physical-geographical structure."¹²⁰ This is in line with Ritter's theory of the interdependence of history and geography,¹²¹ and his idea that the evolution of history was laid down in the earth crust:

It would certainly be impossible to conceive of the development of such a history as that of Israel taking place anywhere else than in Palestine. Nowhere else on the earth could that series of events and the peculiar training which the people of God had to pass through have found a theatre so conspicuous to the eyes of the world as the narrow land of Palestine.¹²²

Still, I think Ritter's theory must be combined with the developing epistemic virtue of objectivity in order to fully describe the keen interest for detail and exactness that characterized nineteenth-century approaches to Palestine.

118 For a discussion of the nineteenth-century preference for tableau and display, see Chapter 1 (Anna Bohlin and Ragnhild Johnsrud Zorgati), 12–50.

119 For an account of Ritter's theory of history and geography, see Chapter 1 (Anna Bohlin and Ragnhild Johnsrud Zorgati), 12–50, and Chapter 18 (Anna Bohlin), 360–89.

120 Ben-Arieh, "Nineteenth-Century Historical Geographies," 75.

121 See Chapter 1 (Anna Bohlin and Ragnhild Johnsrud Zorgati), 12–50, and Chapter 18 (Anna Bohlin), 360–89.

122 Ben-Arieh, "Nineteenth-Century historical geographies," 75, quoting Ritter in William L. Gage's edition. See note 20 for full reference to Gage's edition. Quote is from vol. 2, chapter 1: "A General Comparative View of Syria," 5.

The construction of “bibleland” or the “Holy Land” was closely connected to the epistemic virtue of mechanical objectivity. In truth-to-nature, Palestine stands out as a location from which specimens of nature (flowers, stones, and animals) may be collected as tokens of archetypes to be inserted into a scheme; a universal system intended to map nature as such. Linnaeus sent Hasselquist to collect plants from Palestine not, primarily, because they were plants from the Holy Land that could shed light on biblical passages, but because they could contribute to complete his universal system. It was the system, not the specimen, which reflected the creative powers of God. Within this system, there was no particular need for the surface of the Holy Land as such, for exactly that place, exactly that stone or that mountain. God resided in the universal, underlying *typos*, in the regularities or laws of nature, and not in one particular geographical location. By contrast, for Robinson, Smith, and Vogt, inspired by Ritter,¹²³ the particular geography of the Holy Land was more important than the geography of other places; it was on this specific surface of the globe that the Savior had wandered; here, not elsewhere. Therefore, nineteenth-century scholars had to scrutinize the particular location of Palestine with the best scientific methods available to them; they had to see the land through the lenses of mechanical objectivity. Still, ambiguously, the Bible framed their project of objective seeing. Hence, in the nineteenth century, Palestine and Jerusalem constitutes anew and in an ambivalent manner the pivotal point of the Christian storyworld.

Conclusion

Eighteenth-century scientific travels to the Orient, including Palestine, were primarily interested in exploring and collecting new information about the empirical world. They were truly Enlightenment projects. Later, nineteenth-century scholars focusing on Palestine built on this knowledge, but their focus was narrower and they were willing to interpret the findings of their forerunners within their own scientific-religious worldview. The Bible that was relegated to the periphery in Hasselquist’s examination of Palestine or in Niebuhr and Forsskål’s exploration of Egypt, the Sinai, and Yemen, regained centre stage in Robinson and Smith’s scientific mapping of Palestine in the 1830s as well as in Vogt’s approach to the Holy Land in the 1860s. It appears that science about the Holy Land took a textual (biblical) turn in the nineteenth century,

¹²³ For an account of Ritter’s theory of history and geography, see Chapter 18 (Anna Bohlin), 360–89.

which, interestingly and perhaps counterintuitively, was combined with the epistemic virtue of objectivity. Scholars aimed at a disinterested view using new and sophisticated tools to measure the land, and through adhering to the scientific criteria of veracity and juxtaposition of sources. Nevertheless, this aiming for the epistemic virtue of objectivity took place within the limit of the biblical horizon; for the nineteenth-century explorers of bibleland, the Bible constituted primary scientific evidence. For their forebears who practiced the epistemic virtue of truth-to-nature, and lived in a world in which the Bible was not yet challenged by historical criticism and new findings in philology or geology,¹²⁴ narratives from the Bible were simply taken as a matter of course.

The nineteenth-century scientific discourses on Palestine had echoes in literary texts. The descriptions of flowers and agriculture in Bremer and Lagerlöf are also about growth, new life, mission, and conversion. Bremer's travelogue connects directly to an evangelical scientific program for Palestine: Measure the land, map its topography and cities, dig out its archaeological treasures, recover the fertility of its soil, and recuperate its souls.¹²⁵ The program works on the surface of the ground, under the ground, and aspires to heaven. It constitutes a combination of science and faith. To better read the Bible and understand the divine message, theologians and laypersons must know bibleland in a scientific manner, which includes a scientific approach to its flora. Hence, the description of flowers conducts us from the romantic image of flowering hills in springtime to the strategic use of power to discipline the landscape and its inhabitants. The green line of the Jerusalem code is not only about ranunculi, anemones, and other Mayflowers, but also about reverting bibleland to its former fecundity, which in turn implies colonization of the land, connected to European imperial expansion.

The narrative sequences of flowers, plants, and agriculture also establish a clear bond between roots (in Sweden) and routes (in Palestine) in both Bremer and Lagerlöf. While Lagerlöf juxtaposes the fertile, moist ground of Dalarna to the barren landscape outside of Jerusalem, Bremer compares the flowers of Palestine to those of the first of May festival in Djurgården, Stockholm. In Lagerlöf's *Jerusalem*, Dalarna finally stands out as the Promised Land, while in Bremer's texts Palestine

¹²⁴ See Chapter 1 (Anna Bohlin and Ragnhild Johnsrud Zorgati), 12–50.

¹²⁵ Wilson notes that the objective of the Palestine Exploration Fund, founded in 1865 under the patronage of Queen Victoria, was “a systematic examination of the whole country” divided into “the examination of the archæology, the manners and customs, the topography, the geology, as well as the botany, zoology, meteorology, etc., of the Holy Land.” Wilson, “Recent Surveys,” 220–1. The Palestine Exploration Fund Survey may stand out as the epitome of mechanical objectivity in Palestine.

remains promised as she foresees its rejuvenation through new farming and colonization projects; foretold, Bremer believes in the Bible. The green line of the Jerusalem code, including the image of verdant bibleland, contributed to shaping the Scandinavian imaginary and to establishing connections between Scandinavia and the Holy Land to the point that in 1956 there was no contradiction involved in letting a Norwegian birch symbolize Israel.