IX. Nazareth.

Fig. 21.1: Nazareth, plate 9, in Paul Peter Waldenström's *Till Österland*. Photo: Magnus Bremmer.

Magnus Bremmer

Chapter 21

“Here – right here – where we stood”: Photographic Revelations in P. P. Waldenström’s 1896 Pilgrim Travelogue *Till Österland*

The invention of photography was presented to the world in 1839. One of the first cities to be extensively documented by the new medium was Jerusalem; all due to its religious importance. Visualizing the Holy City in photographs turned out to be a complex project, where the divinity of the place collided with the brute realism of the medium. Photography, however, also opened up new possibilities for animating the divine presence of the place to a wide audience. In this chapter, we follow minister Paul Peter Waldenström on his journey to the Holy land, as described in his 800-page, photographically illustrated travelogue *Till Österland [To the East]* (1896). In Waldenström’s literary pilgrimage, the mechanical medium is used as a means of bringing readers closer to the actual sites, playing upon the alleged transparency of the medium—in the end, staging a kind of photographic revelation before the reader’s eyes.

On a Monday evening, September 10, 1894, minister Paul Peter Waldenström stepped on a train at Stockholm Central Station and travelled South. After weeks on various trains through Europe, as well as steamers, horsebacks, and stagecoaches through the East, Waldenström reached his destination: The Holy Land.

Today, Waldenström is essentially forgotten in the Swedish public mind. But in his own time he was a well-known figure; even internationally in certain religious circles.¹ He was one of the most prolific figures in the Swedish religious awakening. Also, an outspoken – and in the papers, often caricatured—Member of Parliament.

¹ Swedish theologian Rune W Dahlén justly calls him “one of the most famous people in nineteenth-century Sweden.” Rune W. Dahlén, “Paul Petter Waldenström – bibelteolog och väckelseledare,” in *Sveriges kyrkohistoria: 7. Folkväckelsens och kyrkoförnyelsens tid*, ed. Oloph Bexell (Stockholm: Verbum, 2003), 299.

Note: Many thanks to Ragnhild Johnsrud Zorgati, Line M. Bonde, and Therese Sjøvoll for sharp-sighted readings of this chapter. A special thanks to Anna Bohlin, whose readings and editorial support have had a substantial impact on this chapter.

He was, furthermore, one of the most successful authors of his day. Waldenström's allegorical novel *Brukspatron Adamsson* [*Squire Adamsson*] (1863)² – essentially, a modern adaptation of John Bunyan's *The Pilgrims progress* (1678) – became one of the most widely read books in nineteenth-century Sweden.³

Waldenström's journey to Palestine resulted in the 800-page, richly illustrated travelogue *Till Österland* [*To the East*] (1896).⁴ This genre was well-known and illustrated travel narratives from the Holy Land had been published for decades; often with a more or less outspoken missionary motive. What distinguishes Waldenström's book from previous travelogues is his extensive use of photographic illustrations. Waldenström continuously bought photographs from various places during his trip and his travel companion, Mr Rosendahl, was also equipped with a camera and took unique photographs from their travels.⁵

The Holy Land as a photographic motif is as old as the medium. Just a few months after the daguerreotype was announced to the world as the first photographic technique, in August 1839, the photographer Frédéric Goupil Fesquet travelled to Palestine with a camera.⁶ Topographic views were a suitable motif, due to the very long exposure time of the new medium; and, among potential topographies, few – if any – were as symbolically charged as the landscapes of Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

In the following decades, hundreds of photographers travelled to Jerusalem.⁷ During the 1850s, photographs of these Biblical sites spread rapidly across the world, with prints pasted into exclusive photo books by photographers such as Francis Frith and Francis Bedford.⁸ By the turn of the century, the so-called “half-tone revolution”

² Paul Peter Waldenström, *Brukspatron Adamsson – eller Hvar bor du?* (Stockholm: Svenska Missionsförbundet, 1863).

³ Arne Fritzson, “En Gud som är god och rättfärdig. Betydelsen av gudsbilderna och de teologiska formerna i Paul Petter Waldenströms teologi om den kristna försoningstanken,” in *Liv och rörelse. Svenska missionskyrkans historia och identitet*, ed. Hans Andreasson (Stockholm: Verbum förlag, 2007), 369; Gunnar Hallingberg, *Läsarna. 1800-talets folkväckelse och det moderna genombrottet* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2010), 354.

⁴ Paul Peter Waldenström, *Till Österland. Skildringar från en resa i Turkiet, Grekland, Syrien, Palestina, Egypten samt på Sinaihalvön hösten och vintern 1894* (Stockholm: Norman, 1896).

⁵ The photographs that are not taken by Rosendahl were most likely bought on the trip. Some were gifts from acquaintances he made during the trip, which he refers to in the text.

⁶ Hisham Kathib, *Palestine and Egypt under the Ottomans: Paintings, Books, Photographs, Maps, Manuscripts* (London and New York: Tauris Parke, 2003), 231.

⁷ Kathib, *Palestine and Egypt under the Ottomans*, 231.

⁸ For an historical overview of photography in the Holy Land, see for instance Yeshayahu Nir, *The Bible and the Image: The History of Photography in the Holy Land, 1839–1899* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985); Nissan Perez, *Focus East: Early Photography in the Near East (1839–1899)* (New York: Harry N Abrams, 1988).

made it possible to mechanically reproduce, through the halftone process, photographic illustrations alongside printed text in editions with mass circulation.⁹

Waldenström’s *Till Österland* was – in terms of scale, quality, and number of illustrations – one of the most ambitious photo-mechanically illustrated publications to have been published in Sweden. In the years that followed, more photo-illustrated travelogues from Palestine were published, such as vicar Anders Nordlander’s *Reseminnen från det heliga landet, Egypten och Turkiet* [*Travel Memories from the Holy Land, Egypt, and Turkey*] (1899). Waldenström resorted to the photographic medium neither mainly for practical reasons, nor as simply a topical use of modern technology. I argue that Waldenström’s use of photography is visually assertive. It is informed by an awareness of the authenticity and immersive potential associated with the medium. Photography was a medium that seemed to have an immediate relation with its object. In photography theory this relation is often referred to as the *indexicality* of the photographic medium; a concept I will return to later in this chapter. This visual awareness of Waldenström’s can be traced also in his writing on the photographic illustrations, which is permeated by visually suggestive words, such as “here” and “look” (which also relate to indexicality). All these qualities, Waldenström seems to have understood, could play a significant role in a narrative aiming to animate the presence of holy sites.

Animating holy sites and making them present and real, in book form, before the eyes of the beholder, was a tall order. To achieve this, Waldenström would have to conquer another, seemingly contradictory characteristic of the medium. Already in its infancy, photography was acknowledged for its rendition of minute detail. In many contexts, however, this quality seemed to become a problem. The abundance of detail in photographs often became a source for possible distractions. Especially so when photographs were exhibited or distributed to a wider audience, such as in photographically illustrated books. Various techniques—such as negative alterations or providing captions—were developed to reduce the risk of readers suffering of sensory overload, or, simply not knowing what to look at in images.

Waldenström saw in photography a medium with revelatory potential. That is, he allegedly believed that photography could bring something of the actual holiness of these sites before the eyes of the reader. In order to succeed in this, the risk of sensory overload must be averted, and the photograph’s intimate relation to its object conveyed. In *Till Österland*, therefore, the reader is actively enticed to become a fellow traveller; a pilgrim that walks in the preacher’s footsteps. To understand the transparent—rather than distractive—qualities of the photographic medium,

⁹ See, for instance, Mary Warner Marien, *Photography: A Cultural History*, 2nd ed. (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2006), 165. For a more vivid look into the “half-tone revolution,” see Michael Ayers Trotti, “Murder Made Real: The Visual Revolution of the Halftone,” *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 111, no. 4 (2003), 379–410.

the reader/beholder has to be guided. The written word guides the reader's attention to the "testimony" of the photographic image.

The fear of distractions, even visual, is a central issue in Western Christianity after Luther. David Morgan has touched upon the issue of regulating attention in Protestant culture.¹⁰ He traces its roots to the iconoclasm of the Reformation and the whitewashing of church walls. The reformatory movement, especially with reformers such as Calvin and Zwingli, gradually cleared the churches from images and decoration in its attempt to disassociate itself from Catholicism.¹¹ This process was carried out in various ways, but the purpose was the same: to put the Word at the centre of religious practice. Morgan makes this a question of transparency—the preacher's words, which were putatively immaterial, were to be communicated transparently to the congregation. As an example, Morgan used Lukas Cranach the Elder's iconic altarpiece in Wittenberg Stadtkirche, in which the crucified Christ takes centre stage in a church purged of decorations, with the congregation on one side, and Martin Luther on the other; Luther's one hand pointing towards the cross, the other resting on an open Bible.¹² But it is also a question of directing the faithful's attention towards the Word. The reformation of the interior of churches also functioned to direct all eyes and ears forward – towards the preacher and the cross.

In Sweden, the purging of church walls was not common until the eighteenth century, and this Swedish iconoclasm was heavily influenced by the Enlightenment.¹³ This new visual culture was further reinforced in the religious revival of the nineteenth century and then in other ways reflected in the architecture of the meeting halls. When the first revival halls were built in Sweden, directing attention towards the preacher's role as an intermediary of the Word was a guiding architectural principle; arguably more so than in any preceding architectural ideal in the history of Scandinavian Christianity.¹⁴

One might argue that Waldenström – who was well acquainted with these environments – constructs the visual narrative of *Till Österland* in very much the same way: as a pulpit in a whitewashed church with a captivating (photographic) altar piece in the chancel. *Till Österland* is without exaggerated embellishments, in terms

¹⁰ See David Morgan, *The Embodied Eye: Religious Visual Culture and the Social Life of Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), especially 168–70.

¹¹ See for instance Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c.1400–c.1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), especially 377–593. Or, Joseph Leo Keorner, *The Reformation of the Image* (London: Reaktion Books, 2004).

¹² Morgan, *The Embodied Eye*, 168–70.

¹³ Joel Halldorf, "Bortom orden. Om bilder, symboler och framtidens frikyrklighet," i *Läsarna i distrikternas tid*, ed. Joel Halldorf (Bromma: Teologiska högskolan i Stockholm, 2014), 168–9.

¹⁴ Göran Lindahl, *Högkyrkligt, lågkyrkligt, frikyrkligt i svensk arkitektur 1800–1950* (Stockholm: Diakonistyrelsens bokförlag, 1955), 38. Inger-Britt Holmblad, *Hören Herrens röst! Svenska Missionsförbundets kyrkobyggnade fram till 1915, med tonvikt på Gävle-Daladistriktet* (Stockholm: Byggförlaget, 2002), 59.

of design and image layout. Even though Waldenström’s book is copiously illustrated, Waldenström has taken care to not overload the pages with visual content. At the beginning of the book, Waldenström motivates his even distribution of illustrations throughout the book, which explains why numerous images will not be reproduced on the exact spread where they are referenced in the text.

In other words, the image material in Waldenström’s book is as visually striking as it is strictly regulated. This dialectic forms the path where the preacher-narrator leads the reader through the landscapes of the East. The direction of the reader’s attention is very much in the hand of the reverend himself. The purpose is arguably to create a place for reverence and devotion. But it is also a very suitable place to advocate and stage photography’s capacity to represent the holy places “just as they look in real life,” as Waldenström explained in reference to his choice of medium.¹⁵

In the following, I would like to show in more detail how all this is carried out in *Till Österland*. Roughly, it happens in three stages. The first step is to doctor the photographic image by making the alleged unfamiliarity of the East legible. That is, to adjust the image of Jerusalem to fit a Western, Christian audience. The second step is to enhance the photograph’s closeness to its object, to illustrate how the image in fact has a causal relation – by way of the light-sensitive plate – to the places it represents. The third step is where the preacher-narrator urges his followers to immerse in the image, and to evoke the experience that the photograph, in a particular and authentic way, makes us see. Waldenström, in this manner, insists that looking at a photograph actually can be a form of revelation. In the end, all this relates to the cult of authenticity and presence, which around this time is starting to grow in the contemporary, photographic visual culture in the new, photo-mechanically illustrated newspapers and magazines of the day.

Pilgrimage and the Authentic Image

In many ways, Waldenström the pilgrim is a sceptic when it comes to talk of authentic religious places. After being shown Jonah’s authentic grave in three different places by different persons, he exclaimed: “Long live competition!”¹⁶ Waldenström is equally sceptical the first time he enters The Church of the Holy Sepulchre. All the while, he is not categorical in this scepticism. And photography is given an interesting symbolical role in reinforcing the authenticity of the place.

The vast number of photographers that came to Jerusalem in the mid-nineteenth century were often led by Christian beliefs. To modern eyes this may seem contradictory. We might think that photography was the handmaid of science in the nineteenth

¹⁵ Waldenström, *Till Österland*, unpaginated leaf.

¹⁶ Waldenström, *Till Österland*, 338.

century, and that the medium was not appropriate for religious purposes. But the relation between science and religion wasn't always as clear-cut. It is the days of bible criticism, where a notable bible critic such as Benjamin Jowett could speak of the importance of "historical sympathy"—that is, the importance for all Christians to find a personal relationship to faith. This relationship could include travels to the holy places as well as scientific study of them,¹⁷ all in order to "transfer [one]self to another age; to imagine that he is a disciple of Christ or Paul."¹⁸

As Douglas Nickel has shown, a work such as Francis Frith's monumental photographic book *Egypt and Palestine* is related to Jowett and other Bible critics. Frith, himself a Quaker, often highlighted the "scientific character" of his religious orientation, which Nickel points out—Nickel even calls him a "Christian positivist."¹⁹ To Frith, photography was a way of bringing the testimony of the Bible to life, by giving direct access to its landscapes (Fig. 21.2). The photographs from *The Holy Land* made the biblical message "intelligible to the understanding," Frith asserted, since they situated it on a particular, minutely reproduced place.²⁰

Waldenström is a somewhat ambivalent figure in this history. When it came to Bible criticism, Waldenström was alien to liberal exegetics and the most rationalist perspectives on biblical truth.²¹ That is not to say that he opposed challenging, even critical readings of holy texts. Another testament to his liberal views was his belief in photography as a relevant way to represent the Holy Land. The photographs in Waldenström's book are even used as part of his submission of evidence for the authenticity and accuracy of holy sites. It is also noticeable that the more exclusive reproductions are used to represent the most important and symbolically charged religious sites: Nazareth (Fig. 21.1), Bethlehem, Gethsemane – all are represented with an autotype or a very detailed xylography after a photograph. Obviously, Waldenström thought that greater accuracy was particularly important in the rendition of the most holy sites.

The practice of accommodating images of the unfamiliar East to Western ideals and Western conceptions of the East is clearly present in the contemporary visual culture from the Holy land and the "Orient." Francis Frith is known for his artful way of placing human staffage in his photographic landscapes, in order to create proportion, but also to invest certain values in the image.²² David Morgan discusses the stereoscopic images made by William Rau and Edward Wilson during their trip to Palestine in 1881–1882. He

¹⁷ See Chapter 16 (Rana Issa), 309–27; Chapter 17 (Ragnhild Johnsrud Zorgati), 328–59.

¹⁸ Benjamin Jowett, "On the Interpretation of Scripture," in *Essays and Reviews* (London: J. W. Parker and Sons, 1860), 408.

¹⁹ Douglas R. Nickel, *Francis Frith in Egypt and Palestine* (Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), 112.

²⁰ Francis Frith, *Egypt and Palestine*. Quoted in: Nickel, *Francis Frith in Egypt and Palestine*, 126.

²¹ Robert Murray, *Till Jorsala. Svenska pilgrimsresor och andra färder till det Heliga landet under tusen år* (Stockholm: Proprius, 1984), 118.

²² Nickel, *Francis Frith in Egypt and Palestine*, 116.

Fig. 21.2: *Jerusalem, From the Mount of Olives, Looking Over the Valley of Jehoshaphat*, ca. 1865, by Francis Frith. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

notices the appearance of living staffage figures, but also the apparent and striking absence of crowds in the views from Jerusalem and other cities. The phenomenon was common. The “authentic” image of the Holy land was synonymous with “sites purged of the living nuance of inhabitants,” Morgan writes; the only figures allowed were those who could be filtered through a Western, picturesque image ideal.²³

Even in Waldenström’s *Till Österland*, many of the photographic plates from the most holy sites are free from crowds, even from individuals. In the images the reader/ beholder was supposed to find an undisturbed, supposedly authentic place. In other types of images in Waldenström’s book, the purpose is more often to confirm biased

²³ David Morgan, *The Lure of Images: A History of Religion and Visual Media in America* (London, New York: Routledge, 2007), 156.

XIII. Hinoms dal, söder om Jerusalem.

Fig. 21.3: *The Valley of Hinnom*, plate 13, in Paul Peter Waldenström's *Till Österland*. Photo: Magnus Bremmer.

conceptions of “the Other” by exotic stereotypes. Even though Waldenström in many cases is relatively liberal and tolerant in his discussions of other faiths, and demonstrates a clear ambition to get to know the unknown (at least in part)—a whole chapter is, for instance, taken up by an account of the religion of Islam—his book does not lack exotising descriptions. Neither does it lack disparaging, sometimes racist claims of believers from other faiths, formulated from the supposedly elevated, rational position of the Christian.

The purpose of Waldenström's direct references to his images is to guide the viewer and reader, and to point out the most important details of each image. As a result, the reader encounters a visual narrative liberated from irrelevant detail, and this visual narrative is accompanied by a relevant, verbal framework. In several cases, this is accomplished by pointing to something familiar in an otherwise unfamiliar landscape. So, for instance, in Waldenström's description of Plate 13, a view of the “Valley of Hinnom, South of Jerusalem,” Waldenström leads the viewer quite thoroughly through the details of the image (Fig. 21.3).

Waldenström writes:

If the Reader looks up Plate XIII, he will see how the road travels through the valley. The house on the far left is an English eye-hospital. The road passing to the left, *i.e.* south, is the road to Bethlehem. Around the centre of the image, in the upper parts of the valley, one can see a long, white building. This is a foundation by the English Jew Moses Montefiore, who

built this house for poor, Jewish families, whom could stay there free of charges. On the hill to the right of the house, near the weather mill, is seen a great building with a flat roof. This is the English bishop Gobat’s richly blessed missionary school.²⁴

The fact that the Valley of Hinnom frequently appears in travel narratives from the Holy Land has several explanations. One is of course its historical significance, another probably that the landscape is representative for the hilly terrain of Jerusalem and the Valley of Hinnom was a site passed on the way to the Holy City. But the main reason is possibly that the valley was home to several Western colonies, which is often remarked upon. Waldenström’s choice of image and the manner in which he points out noticeable buildings does very much the same thing: extracts the British institutions and colonies from the image. With the British presence, the familiar, Western—and most importantly, the “richly blessed” Christian—presence is pointed out in the otherwise unfamiliar, barren landscape.

The Index of Photography

Waldenström’s photographic narrative is infused by an ideal of lucidity, a belief that there is a causal link to the actual places. A popular argument in theories of photography is that the medium produces not only exact renditions of its object, but that it also has a purely physical link to it. Like a fingerprint or a bullet hole, photography as a sign is a direct trace of its referent.²⁵ This type of sign is commonly

24 Waldenström, *Till Österland*, 511. “Om läsaren slår upp planschen XIII kan han se, huru vägen upp genom dalen går. Det hus, som synes längst till venster, är ett engelskt ögon sjukhus. Den väg, som passerar der förbi åt venster, d. v. s. söder ut, är vägen till Betlehem. Ungefär midt på planschen i öfre delen af dalen synes en lång hvit byggnad. Det är en stiftelse af den engelske juden Moses Montefiore, som bygt detta hus för fattiga, judiska familjer, som der få bo fritt. På höjden till höger derom, nära väderkvarnen, synes ett stort hus med platt tak. Det är den engelske biskopen Gobats rikt välsignade missionsskola.”

25 The idea that the photographic image as a trace of its object, its indexicality, is discussed in a vast proportion of photographic literature, from the advent of the medium in the mid-nineteenth century. The two most influential thinkers on this problem, though, is probably Susan Sontag and Roland Barthes. In Roland Barthes seminal book on photography, *Camera Lucida* (1980), this problem and characteristic of the medium recurs throughout the book. Susan Sontag touches upon it several times in her equally seminal – and to Barthes highly influential – book *On Photography* (1977). “First of all a photograph is not only an image (as painting is an image), an interpretation of the real,” Sontag writes; “it is also a trace, something directly stenciled off the real, like a footprint or a death mask.” Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1981); Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (London: Penguin, 2008).

XVI. Jesu födelses kyrka i Betlehem.

Fig. 21.4: *The Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem*, plate 16, in Paul Peter Waldenström's *Till Österland*. Xylographic reproduction by Wilhelm Meyer. Photo: Magnus Bremmer.

called *indexical*, as they are not primarily characterized by likeness to their object (*iconical* signs), but are a direct trace of them. In law, indexical signs are the holy grail, the binding evidence. In visual culture, they are equivalent to relics in religious culture. Not surprisingly, the indexical image has played an important historical role in religious visual culture long before the invention of photography. Since 1357, in the cathedral Duomo di San Giovanni Battista in Turin, a remarkable example of this image culture has been preserved. Often referred to as "the Shroud of Turin," it is a shroud that has been claimed to be the cerements of the corps of Christ. Hence, the shroud—which through scientific analysis has been deemed a fake—draws its seductive power from the theory that Christ's face has made an imprint on it. That is to say: the relic is also an image; the trace is a portrait. An automatic portrait, too, freed of any involvement of artists. Through the imprint of his body fluids, the dead Jesus Christ has depicted himself. In a sense, it is a photograph of God's son.²⁶

A major part of the attraction in the photographic culture of the Holy Land lies in the almost tautological trace cult that permeates it – holy places and relics mediated through a medium that lets them imprint themselves, as traces on a light sensitive plate.²⁷ The photograph and the relic share a core of emotive power: they are the presence of an absence. Something that has been in a certain place and disappeared, but is partly restored to the viewer by way of its trace. It is an equally reassuring and unforgiving aspect of the nature of the trace. The power of suggestion that is generated in the relation between absence and presence in the trace also becomes a rhetorical motor in Waldenström's photo-illustrated accounts from the Holy land.

Waldenström also uses a rhetorical device very much associated with the photographic literature, that evolved during the nineteenth century; the use of indexical words to address the image. "Here" the viewer sees, "there" an authentic site. It is a type of rhetoric constructed for the purpose of letting the reader feel as if he or

²⁶ Georges Didi-Huberman has discussed the shroud of Turin in these terms of indexicality, with photographic analogies. See Georges Didi-Huberman, "The index of the Absent Wound (Monograph on a Stain)," trans. Thomas Repensek, in *October* 29 (Summer 1984): 63–81. For a wider, historical discussion on the relations between image, index, and relic, see Christopher S. Wood, *Forgery, Replica, Fiction. Temporalities of German Renaissance Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

²⁷ An interesting aspect of Sontag's and Barthes's discussions on the photographic index is that they both make religious points. In fact, both of them makes the analogy of having a relic from Christ himself. "Having a photograph of Shakespeare," Sontag writes, "would be like having a nail from the True Cross." Sontag, *On Photography*, 154. And Barthes writes: "Photography has something to do with resurrection: might we not say of it what the Byzantines said of the image of Christ which impregnated St. Veronica's napkin: that it was not made by the hand of man, *acheiropoietos*?" Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, 82.

Strax jag var kommen in i hospiset, ville jag telegrafera hem till min hustru för att få svar till kvällen. Jag yttrade min afsigst derom till husfadern. Han skrattade och sade: »Gör er ingen bridska; det

Ingångens till den hellige grafvænns kyrka (se sid. 393)

är just detsamma, hvilken tid ni lennar in telegrammet i dag. Det går ändå icke af förrän i morgon, det kan ni vara säker på; och får ni svar tre dagar härefter, så måste ni vara bollen.» — »Hvad säger ni?» frågade jag förtvånad. — »Ja», sade han, »ni måste komma ihåg,

att ni befinner er i Turkiet nu och icke i Europa». Han hade rätt. Först på tredje dygnet fick jag svar.

Det första, vi hade att göra, sedan vi kommit oss i ordning i vårt rum, var att taga förval af vår dragoman och hans tjäna. Vi kunde icke underlåta att uttala vårt missnöje med det sätt, hvarpå dragomannen uppfyllt sina förbindelser mot oss under färden. Han såg

Golgata (se sid. 493).

mycket mislynt ut, ty sannolikt hade han tänkt, att vi skulle skriva honom ett vackert betyg. Deremot lät vi tjänares första vår synnerliga förmöjelse öfver hans sätt att sköta sig, hvilket vi och bevisade dermed, att vi gäfv honom 20 francs i drickspenningar. Han blef derved mycket röd, kysste våra händer och beredde sig för öfrigt så, att vi hade svårt att återhålla våra tårar.

Vi hade icke länge varit i hospiset, förrän en dragoman från Jerusalem inställde sig och bad att få taga oss under sina vingar

Fig. 21.5: The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, in Paul Peter Waldenström's *Till Österland*, page 392–3. Photo: Magnus Bremmer.

she is standing in front of the actual place, rather than a depiction of it. Or, in a way, it connects the image with the landscape. When Waldenström in front of a photograph exclaims that “here” is the place where Christ walked, the word refers both to the landscape the preacher is witnessing on his travels, and the photographic landscape beheld by the reader. This linguistic tie between landscape and image is suggested in many of Waldenström’s descriptions. In the description of the Valley of Hinnom, one can notice how Waldenström’s orientation in the image also orients the viewer geographically on the actual site. Montefiore’s foundation, for instance, is not only at the “centre of the [photographic] plate,” it is addressed as being placed “in the upper parts of the valley.” Here, a causal link between image and landscape is activated.

Waldenström’s visits to the holiest sites are all about urging the viewer into a certain type of look; a contemplative gaze. To stop in front of the image, to immerse oneself in it, and pay reverence to the site. I call it a contemplation before the image, in which the beholder is urged to meditate upon the image. When Waldenström is leading his reader into the sanctuary of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem (Fig. 21.4), he urges the viewer to an emotionally immersive attention before the highly detailed xylographic reproduction of a photograph:

I’m now asking the reader to behold the [photographic] plate. To the left of the high altar, one sees a door in a small niche. There we shall now walk down. As we walk through the door, we descend several steps and soon find ourselves in the cave, where according to the tradition our Saviour was born.²⁸

The scene that Waldenström sets here, and his emphasis on the visual imagery, is quite striking. His exhortation to the reader to behold the image, as well as his use of the image as a direct visual guide. In a rhetorically skilful move, Waldenström here also frees himself of all doubts about the authenticity of the site—which has been present, if subtle, in the narrative—and here, in the passage where he describes the site to his readers, he surrenders to the sacredness of the place. The same narration of gradual conviction is evident in Waldenström’s visits to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (Fig. 21.5). Waldenström visits the church on several occasions during his stay in Jerusalem. At first, he is mainly descriptive, but also quite sceptical and largely disappointed of what he sees. But the faith grows stronger. One of the last visits is not even planned. Waldenström and his companion Rosendahl pass the church on an excursion, stating that they already have been there—“we were drawn, drawn to it.”²⁹ Soon, the two men are kneeling by the

²⁸ Waldenström, *Till Österland*, 539. “Jag ber nu läsaren skåda planschen. Till venster om högaltaret ser man en dörr, som ligger i en fördjupning. Dit stiga vi ned. Komna genom dörren gå vi åtskilliga trappsteg djupare och befinna oss då i den grotta, der enligt traditionen vår frälsare skall hafva blivitt född.”

²⁹ Waldenström, *Till Österland*, 502.

grave niche. Waldenström asks himself it is possible that he is in fact lying bent over the actual grave. His answer comes impulsively: “Yes, I believe so.” Later, he succumbs to the divine presence: “Yes, it is true!”

In this passage, Waldenström also directly refers to an image of the grave niche. To stop before the image, as Waldenström does, is a way of reinforcing its “here-and-now”-quality. My point here is not that this makes Waldenström’s travel narrative particularly original. Rather, it is precisely in this visual narrative that we in *Till Österland* can see something of the image journalism, emerging precisely at the end of the nineteenth century. It is a presentiment of the immediate relation between photography and text that is developed in the photo-mechanically illustrated image-magazines of the time. The allure of revelation can also be traced in a contemporary craze for photographic transparency. Above all, Waldenström shows how photography’s transparency is not a question of neutrality or objectivity, but instead is deeply embedded in practices of evocation; by enticing the reader to believe that the photographic image actually lets us see something genuine.

This is an important point in *Till Österland*: that the image, if viewed correctly, lets the reader see. This insight is put into words in Waldenström’s rhetoric of gradually letting something appear, and manifest itself. “There, under the altar that the reader has seen reproduced on page 393” (Fig. 21.5): Waldenström explains that Catholic pilgrims fall on their knees to pray, and then admits that he and Rosendahl did the same thing. The demonstrative pronoun “there” once again refers the reader to the image, and then—in the animation of the scene—strengthens the link between place and image. It is not just any place. It is the place where Waldenström, “like a Catholic,” falls on his knees before the miracle—and the reader is there to witness it all. Waldenström’s kneeling therefore stages, in a definitive gesture, the unification of the relation between the indexical words—such as “here,” “there,” which like indexical signs have a causal (read contextual) relation to what they signify—aimed at the photograph; the photographs indexical relation to its object; as well as Waldenström’s submission before the holiness of the site – a process that has continued through the whole pilgrimage and reaches its climax here. Through the raptured pointing to the place – “there,” “here” – in lieu with Waldenström’s submission, photography and place are assimilated before the readers eyes. Here, the Christian tradition of relics and pilgrimage to places, as physical traces of the divine, converges with photography’s alleged quality as a trace on reality. When Waldenström kneels and exclaims “yes, yes, it is true!” and points “there” on the photograph, as if it was the actual place, he emphasizes photography’s participation in the miraculous revelation. By way of photo-textual practices of attention the divine place is visually revealed before the readers eyes. Language is reduced to attention and the staging of the photograph’s transparency is completed. The photograph appears as pure revelation, as an image that lets the site represent

itself. That is also how the alleged transparency of photography has established itself in the visual culture at the turn of the nineteenth century – as an image whose transparency in the end most of all reveals the language that has invented it. “Here – right here – were we stood.”

Fig. 22.0: Gerhard Munthe: *Sigurd and Baldwin*, 1899. Tempera, 143 x 103 cm. © Trondheim kunstmuseum. Photo: Ute Freia Beer.