Fig. 23.1: Norwegian immigrants harvesting in Wisconsin, c.1873–1879. © State Historical Society of Wisconsin – Andrew Dahl Collection. Photo: Andreas Larsen Dahl.

Dana Caspi

Chapter 23

“Where horror abides”: Re-Reading Selma Lagerlöf’s *Jerusalem* in Jerusalem

This chapter suggests a reading of the novel *Jerusalem* which, despite the different setting, relates it to the tradition of the Scandinavian novel of emigration to America, with its emphasis on the positive physical and moral contribution of the immigrants to the receiving country. In Lagerlöf’s novel, it is not biblically fostered conceptions of a heavenly Jerusalem that help the Swedish farmers survive and thrive in the real, conflict-ridden Levantine city, but their native, earth-bound values of hard work, cleanliness, and simplicity.

Nearly 20 years ago, while I was writing my doctoral thesis in which I examined novels written by Norwegian and Swedish authors about emigration to the New World, a pattern, which I labelled the East-West Axis, emerged. Although the movement was westwards, towards the *unknown*, the emigrants – or rather those depicting them – chose to draw on a source of imagery that was (Middle) Eastern in origin, namely the Bible.¹ While the physical movement was from East to West, the spiritual movement was from the “Old” (World) to the “New”; this New, however, was actually a realisation of an ancient dream or prophecy, the longed-for place, “The Promised Land.” Since the act of emigration was depicted as an adventure on a biblical or mythical scale, the literary characters performing it had to be of a similarly heroic caliber. These characters played out their roles in what could be termed a *storyworld* of emigration, here understood as a multidimensional set of narrative parameters that denote both the boundaries within which the fictional characters are free to act, and the limits of real-life, imaginative interpretations of the given narrative imposed on it by its readers.² Understood as the former, the emigration narratives are also shaped by

¹ On rarer occasions writers used Old Norse imagery, especially inspired by *Landnámabók* [*The Book of Settlements*] and the *Vinland Sagas*, but this is beyond the scope of this article. See chapter titled “The Norse Code” in Dana Caspi “Images of a Promised Land in Norwegian and Swedish Emigrant novels” (PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 2000), 58–65.

² The term “storyworld” is of relatively recent provenance, and it has so far not achieved any stability in its use in the theoretical literature. In practical terms, it is often used in the design of computer games about the world of the characters and its limits. As a theoretical tool it is highly

Note: I am grateful to Nils Torvald Østerbø for his help with this article. All translations from Selma Lagerlöf are by Østerbø. All other translations are my own.

the primary “master narrative” available to the characters, the Christian teleological history about creation, fall and eventual redemption. As a “code” for production of meaning, Jerusalem has a central position within this narrative. In semiotics, a code can be defined as “a shared set of rules or conventions by which signs can be combined to permit a message to be communicated from one person to another.”³ In a culture where the Bible is the central source of meaning-bearing imagery, the “Jerusalem code” may therefore refer to the way in which ideas about the city help shape people’s perceptions of the world and their own place in it, both spatially and temporally. One of the most fertile aspects of the code has historically been the contrast between Jerusalem as a heavenly city and as a fallen, “Babylonian” one. The conflict between the “codified” heavenly/New Jerusalem and the “real” Jerusalem of the Levant as experienced by Selma Lagerlöf’s characters is of the greatest importance for my reading of her novel *Jerusalem*.⁴

Although my intention was to trace the East-West Axis in novels about emigration, it was difficult to overlook the novel’s role as a genre defining a national ethos, as observed by such scholars as Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities*, and Timothy Brennan, who notes in his article “The National Longing for Form” that “it was especially the novel as a composite but clearly bordered work of art that was crucial in defining the nation as an ‘imagined community.’”⁵ Hence the study of characters in the Scandinavian emigrant novel led me to the conclusion that their portrayal, too, serves to emphasise the moral and physical contribution of the Swedish or Norwegian immigrant to the receiving country. It is beyond the scope of this article to provide a detailed definition of the emigrant novel and to specify the many examples of the genre in Swedish and Norwegian literature, but a few general features will serve to demonstrate the relevance of Lagerlöf’s *Jerusalem* to this genre.⁶

ambiguous, since it as mentioned is used both about the fictional world itself and about readers’/ interpreters’ responses to it. Most recently, “storyworld” has been used as a replacement for “narrative”; “in order to reflect the new directions that the study of the multiple medial incarnations of narrative has taken.” Marie-Laure Ryan and Jan-Noël Thon, *Storyworlds across Media: Toward a Media-Conscious Narratology* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 1. See also the keyword “storyworld” in David Herman et al., *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory* (London and New York: Routledge 2010).

³ See keyword “code” in Chris Baldick, *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁴ Selma Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem 1. I Dalarna* (Stockholm: Fabel bokförlag, 1994); Selma Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem 2. I Jerusalem* (Stockholm: Fabel bokförlag, 1994).

⁵ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983); Timothy Brennan, “The National Longing for Form,” in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi K. Bhabha (London, New York: Routledge, 1990), 48.

⁶ It might be worth pointing out that while many of the main contributors to the genre of emigrant literature (Vilhelm Moberg, Sven Delblanc, etc.) published their works at a considerable temporal distance from the situations they depicted, Lagerlöf in *Jerusalem* wrote about what for her and her readership were very much contemporary events.

Although each emigrant novel has its unique features, they all take their characters away from the familiar and precious landscapes of the homeland and contrast them with the foreign and exotic. Against this background, the "national" traits of the characters become more evident, as they are no longer just individuals but also representatives of the physical and mental ideal, as defined in the national ethos. Perhaps the best-known example of the Scandinavian emigrant novel is Vilhelm Moberg's tetralogy containing the volumes *Utvandarna*, *Invandarna*, *Nybyggarna* and *Sista brevet till Sverige* [*The Emigrants*, *Unto a Good Land*, *The Settlers*, *The Last Letter Home*], (1949–1959).⁷ In his review of Moberg's *Sista brevet till Sverige* [*The Last Letter Home*], Olof Lagercrantz writes about Moberg's protagonist, Karl Oskar, and his role as the idealized prototypical character: "In all his undertakings he represents the whole of his lineage."⁸ In the following I shall demonstrate how in many ways Ingmar Ingmarsson, the main protagonist of Lagerlöf's *Jersusalem*, plays a similar role.

If a novel contributes to defining an "imagined community," a novel about emigration serves the same purpose, only in a foreign setting. In her study of Scandinavian emigrant novels, *Draumen om fridom og jord* [*The Dream of Freedom and Land*] (1989), Ingeborg R. Kongslien defines the Scandinavian emigrant novel simply as a text about emigration, mostly to North America, although she notes that "the term emigrant novel is not an established genre-concept in novel aesthetics."⁹ At the same time, she also provides a more detailed definition of the emigrant novel: "It is a story about people who leave something familiar and wander into the relatively unknown. They depart from the homeland to create a new existence for themselves in an unknown land."¹⁰ The conflict which ensues – the familiar vs. the foreign – lends the narrative the drama needed to make it a good and entertaining read, but it can often be a rather one-sided view of a complex human experience, since most emigrant novels were written by authors who were *not* themselves immigrants and who wrote primarily for those who remained in the homeland. As such these novels also served as mediators of national

7 Vilhelm Moberg, *Utvandarna* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 1949); Vilhelm Moberg, *Invandarna* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 1952); Vilhelm Moberg, *Nybyggarna* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 1956); Vilhelm Moberg, *Sista brevet till Sverige* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 1959).

8 "Han står i allt han företar sig för hela fädernestammen." Olof Lagercrantz. "Fakta och fiktion i gestaltningen av det amerikanska stoffet." In Erland Lagerroth and Ulla-Britta Lagerroth, *Perspektiv på utvandrarromanen. Dokument och studier samlade av Erland och Ulla-Britta Lagerroth* (Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren 1971), 193.

9 Ingeborg R. Kongslien, *Draumen om fridom og jord. Ein studie i skandinaviske emigranromanar* (Oslo: Det Norske Samlaget, 1989), 37. "Termen emigranroman er ikkje eit etablert genreomgrep i romanestetikken."

10 Kongslien, *Draumen om fridom og jord*, 37: "Det er ei forteljing om mennesker som bryt opp og vandrar frå noko kjent inn i det relativt ukjende. Dei forlet heimlandet for å skape seg eit nytt tilvære i eit ukjent land."

Fig. 23.2: Siri Rustebakke with her daughters and daughter-in-law. Wisconsin, c.1873. Scandinavian domestic industriousness in the New World. © State Historical Society of Wisconsin – Andrew Dahl Collection. Photo: Andreas Larsen Dahl.

values, since they proved that even in a foreign setting, the Norwegian or Swedish farmer remained just as diligent and pious (Figs. 23.1, 23.2). Examples can be found in, for instance, Johan Bojer's *Vor egen stamme* [*Our own Tribe*] (1924), Alfred Hauge's Cleng Peerson trilogy (1961–1965), Kåre Holt's *Cleng Peerson og Nils med luggen* [*Cleng Peerson and Nils with the Fringe*] (1948, for young readers), and, of course, Moberg's tetralogy.¹¹

For me, the most fascinating aspect of the Scandinavian emigrant novel was the use of biblical imagery. My starting point was the general observation about the resemblance between Adam and Adama, the Hebrew words for man and earth, and Martin Buber's presentation of the Bible as a unique text in which the idea that man and earth share the same fate is clearly formulated.¹² I then looked into the biblical imagery used to describe the longed-for place, "The Promised Land," in specific Swedish and Norwegian literary texts. The use of biblical imagery is of course not unique to Scandinavian emigrants; most Christians (and Jews) leaving for the New World had some knowledge of the Bible, but since Scandinavian emigration came relatively early and was almost entirely to and from rural areas, the bonds between man and earth are especially tangible in the literature describing this emigration. In order to make sense of their new surroundings, the emigrants took the Bible as the dictionary that would help them translate the New World into their Old-World terms. The Garden of Eden, The Desert and the Wilderness, The Promised Land/Canaan and Jerusalem/Zion are all central images in the emigrant novel.

In the so-called Pioneer Era (up to the mid 1850s) most immigrants' first years in America meant an on-going encounter with Wilderness on a scale which they had never experienced before, evoking both the positive and the negative associations connected with it: estrangement and lawlessness, but also purification and faith in the future (based on the biblical narrative of the Israelites in the desert). The Wilderness served as "a testing ground in which to build strong moral character."¹³ The Scandinavian immigrants were considered successful in conquering the wilderness and turning it into a blossoming garden not least because they brought their "strong moral" characteristics from their homelands. In addition to Wilderness, the Promised Land constitutes a central image in the emigrant novel, since it is not only associated with freedom (as in the myth of Paradise/The Garden of Eden), but also with *liberation*. The idea of liberation

¹¹ Rølvaag's four-volume epic about Norwegian immigrants in the United States – *I de dage* (1924), *Riket grunnlegges* (1925), *Peder Seier* (1928) and *Den signede dag* (1931) [*In Those Days, Founding the Kingdom, Peder Victorious, Their Father's God*] – was discussed in my dissertation, but stands out since its author was himself an immigrant, and therefore not included in the examples here, although it shares many common features with the emigrant novel as defined here. The same is true of the novel *När prärien blommar* [*When the Prairie Blooms*] (1933), by the Swedish-American Leonard Strömberg.

¹² Martin Buber, *On Zion. The History of an Idea* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Ltd, 1985), 10–11.

¹³ Leonard Lutwack, *The Role of Place in Literature* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1984), 166.

is most relevant to the time of large-scale emigration from Scandinavia since the Scandinavian countries had not yet undergone a genuine process of democratization and thus the political and social conditions in them, not only the economic ones, made emigration necessary for large numbers of people.¹⁴ It must be said, however, that the material incentive was the most powerful one in the process of uprooting and emigration to America and in that sense Lagerlöf's portrayal in *Jerusalem* of mostly well-to-do farmers deviates significantly from the standard emigration narrative.

In the standard emigrant narrative, hope of liberation from poverty, hard work, and rigid social structures was often described with imagery of the Exodus and the arrival to the Promised Land, as in Moberg's tetralogy, where it is quite clear that the author drew on the Exodus narrative not only as the spiritual inspiration for his characters, but also as a literary prototype.¹⁵ In a similar vein, in Per Nilsson-Tannér's novel about the historical events surrounding Erik Janson and his Bishop Hill Colony (*Det nya Eden* [*The New Eden*], 1934), which ends in tragedy on the Illinois prairie, the two main images for America are *Kanaan* [Canaan] (and sometimes *det nya Kanaan* [the new Canaan]) and *det nya Eden* [the new Eden], although occasionally the term *paradis* [paradise] also appears. As in other emigrant novels, the rural ideal is a significant pull factor. On the other hand, in Sam Rönnegård's *Salemsborg* (1940), the central image is of a New Jerusalem to be established on the Kansas prairie. The Swedish immigrants have left their homeland so that they may worship God as they wish in "a new and fertile land that just waited for inhabitants."¹⁶

The image of the Promised Land is more complex than it first seems, however, as already in the Old Testament it is both a concrete place, but also an ideal to strive for. For the immigrants to the New World it thus represents both a practical solution for immediate hunger and strife, but also a utopian dream, since a "land flowing with milk and honey" (Exod 3:8) describes a potential rather than a reality, which all but the most naïve immigrants (significantly, it seems their number was greater in emigrant novels than in reality, probably because descriptions of shattered dreams added much valued drama to the narrative of emigration/immigration) were aware of. Although not impoverished, also Lagerlöf's characters uproot themselves in order realise a dream.

¹⁴ See for example Alfred Hauge's *Cleang Peerson* trilogy, published between 1961 and 1966, is a historical novel which tells the story of the first organized emigration from Norway in 1825, is an example of emigration motivated by religious persecution, since members on board the were mostly Quakers.

¹⁵ See for instance Hans-Evert Renérius, *Exodus Stillwater: en resa i Vilhelm Mobergs ord och spår och andra essayer* (Borås: Recito, 2009).

¹⁶ "ett nytt och fruktbart land, som bara väntade på inbyggare." Sam Rönnegård, *Salmesborg. Från emigrationens Sverige och Svensk-Amerikas uppkomst* (Stockholm: Evangeliska Fosterlands-Stiftelsens Bokförlag, 1940), 98.

If gardens and promised lands have positive connotations in emigrant literature, cities, both in the Old and the New World, are mostly described in a negative fashion. In an essay titled "City-Icon in a Poetic Geography: Pushkin's Odessa" Anna Makolkin writes: "Cities were born in a state of rebellion against Mother Nature and the natural cycles of life."¹⁷ In the United States, even more so than in Europe, or rather in the eyes of Europeans in the United States, the city was, as Yi-Fu Tuan observes in his book *Topophilia*, "a Babylon-den of iniquity, atheistic and un-American, impersonal and destructive."¹⁸ However, the growing physical and historical distance from the old, concrete Jerusalem, combined (and often confused) with the image of the New Jerusalem as it appears in the New Testament, did much to improve the reputation of this particular city.¹⁹ It was turned into a symbol and a frequently-used image of the longed-for place in the New World, although the urban imagery clashes with the agricultural fantasies of many immigrants. It is safe to say that even when fictional emigrants/immigrants fantasise of a New Jerusalem, they imagine a rural harmony closer to descriptions of the Promised Land than to the heavenly city. And yet the New Jerusalem is such a commonly used image in the Christian tradition that each believer can pour into it his or her own personal fantasy. The terms used by fictional emigrants were The New/heavenly Jerusalem or Zion, but the images were agrarian. To a large extent this is also true of Lagerlöf's characters in *Jerusalem*, although unlike *Jerusalem*, very few Scandinavian emigrant novels take place in cities or present them as an ideal.

Although each biblical image can be analysed separately, it seems that most literary characters do not apply these images consistently. The jumble of biblical phraseology might suggest that the individual image is of relatively little importance. The important thing is that America inspired its future citizens to think and speak in biblical terms, since the familiar, yet abstract images represented what they hoped to find in the New World. Typical of the literary description of emigration from Scandinavia is that once America (*i.e.* the longed-for place) becomes a reality, hardship and homesickness changes the focus, turning the *original homeland* into the longed-for place, a lost paradise that is synonymous with spiritual longing. In the story *Langs landeveien [On the Back Road]* written by the Norwegian author Einar Berg, for example, his protagonist, Ole Sætre, leaves Norway in order to escape a stifling pietistic environment and finds himself alone on the Canada prairie.

¹⁷ Anna Makolkin, "City-Icon in a Poetic Geography: Pushkin's Odessa," in *Writing the City: Eden, Babylon and the New Jerusalem*, eds. Peter Preston and Paul Simpson-Housley (London: Routledge, 1994), 104.

¹⁸ Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes and Values* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 193.

¹⁹ In the New Testament, the New Jerusalem projects an image of communal harmony and bliss, as opposed to the individual euphoria of life in The Garden of Eden (as a couple, Adam and Eve function as one unit; once Eve acts independently, the two are expelled from the Garden).

As he leafs through a copy of the Bible which his mother put in his trunk before he left, he senses that:

the whole of Norway, concentrated and compact, lay inside the book: sparkling sun above distant blue mountains. Psalms of David and the tender whispers of spring. Obscure millennial prophecies mixed with the wistful calls of the nightingale. Happy melodies about atonement and victory, birdsong in sun-drenched forests, flowering clover meadows, brooks rushing to the sea.²⁰

Another Norwegian author, Aksel Sandemose, goes even further and notes: "The United States is a cold land with dead roads and dead houses, dead cities . . . Norway is a living land."²¹ Also in Lagerlöf's *Jerusalem*, as I will demonstrate later, the Holy City soon becomes "the city of death." The East-West axis becomes a West-East axis. Furthermore, the national landscape – not only geographical but also mental – comes to represent the source of the characters' moral and physical strength. Moberg's Karl Oskar is perhaps the most notable example, but Ingmar's character in *Jerusalem* is just as powerful in that sense.

Many features of the Scandinavian emigrant novel are echoed in Lagerlöf's *Jerusalem*.²² With Lagerlöf, however, not only is the East-West axis a West-East axis to begin with and gradually becoming an East-West axis, but the chronology also changes – from "Old" (Europe) to Ancient (Middle East). The "Old" (European) therefore becomes "New" in more than one sense, whereas the imagined, or "New" Jerusalem, the longed-for place of those emigrating to the New World, corresponds in Lagerlöf's novel to the concrete, "Old" Jerusalem. And while the emigrant novel often depicts a conflict between the Old and the New Worlds, in *Jerusalem* the tension is between the ancient and traditional, and the even-more ancient and traditional. This changes the perspective on Europe (or the Old World): whereas contemporary literature portrayed the post-Industrial Revolution Continent as drained and fatigued while the New World offered "a new moral and spiritual vista with the decadence and depravity of Europe left far behind,"²³ in Lagerlöf's novel Europe, and specifically Sweden, suddenly emerges as fresh and relevant.

20 "der inne i boken lå hele Norge konsentrert og kompakt: Tindrende sol over blåner og fjell. Davidssalmer og linn sus av vår. Dunkle forutsigelser om tusenårsriket blandet sammen med vemodig fløit av nattergal. Glade toner om soning og seier, fuglelåt i solmettet skog, blomstrende kløvereng, fjellbekker som hastet mot havet." Einar Berg, *Langs landeveien* (Oslo: Lutherstiftelsens Forlag 1938), 40.

21 "De forente statene er et kaldt land med døde veier og døde hus, døde byer. . . . Norge er et levende land." Aksel Sandemose, *Det svundne er en drøm* (Oslo: Den norske Bokklubben, Aschehoug & Co, 1983).

22 For a detailed analysis of the Scandinavian emigrant novel see Caspi, "Images of a Promised Land in Norwegian and Swedish Emigrant novels" (PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 2000).

23 Otto F. Kraushaar, "Introduction," in *Utopias: The American Experience*, eds. Gairdner B. Moment and Otto F. Kraushaar (Metuchen, N.J. & London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1980), 4.

It is almost impossible to read Lagerlöf today without cringing at the “orientalist,” non-politically correct portrayal of Jerusalem and its inhabitants. In the novel, most chapters in the second volume serve as illustrations of the contrast between the dangerous, filthy, lethal city and the pure immigrants who represent a pure Sweden. A paradox emerges: Jerusalem is bad for them, but they are the only ones who can bring goodness (cleanliness, honesty, diligence) to it. Numerous contemporary accounts depict Jerusalem as a backward and dangerous place, but in Lagerlöf’s narrative, the city serves to highlight the virtues of the Swedes who refuse to adapt to its ways. Reluctance to assimilate is another typical feature of the Scandinavian emigrant novel.

In the second volume of *Jerusalem*, the Holy City, which at the outset was an imagined, longed-for place, develops into a nightmarish yet concrete place; towards the end, however, the city again becomes almost insignificant as a concrete place. As I put the book aside after having read it for the sixth or seventh time, I am more convinced than ever that the novel is not at all about Jerusalem – although the city plays a great catalytic and symbolic role in it – but about Sweden. The West-East movement of the Dalarna farmers turned into an East-West movement after all.

The following analysis will combine my earlier and current readings of the novel in an attempt to unearth the changing role of the “real” and the “imagined” Jerusalem in Lagerlöf’s novel. It is based entirely on the novel’s second and revised edition (1909) and all quotes are taken from it.

From Religious Awakening to Religious Strife: The Fantasised Jerusalem vs. the Real Jerusalem

When I first read *Jerusalem* while studying at the University of Edinburgh, I was submerged in Scandinavian literature about religious awakenings, and physically distant from the concrete Jerusalem; the city in which I grew up. For me, Jerusalem increasingly became a concept rather than a place, and it was quite easy to identify with the sentiment of “longing” expressed by the protagonists of Lagerlöf’s novel. I was attracted to the utopic descriptions of the Holy Land and specifically of Jerusalem, and together with many of the literary characters, I day-dreamed about a “heavenly” or “new” Jerusalem, being well familiar with the sweaty and conflict-ridden “real” city. The encounter with Lagerlöf’s novel opened up for a potential merge – not a New Jerusalem in the New World, but a New Jerusalem instead of the Old Jerusalem. It seemed to me that a utopic vision was only possible from afar, and not while residing in the place itself. Based on my acquaintance with the city, I also identified with *Jerusalem*’s narrator, who presents the journey to the concrete city as a form of lunacy, an act that in fact contradicts the spirituality of the Holy City. Now that I have come back to live in it, Jerusalem is again a concrete and mundane place in which

daily routines empty it of spirituality. While working on my thesis, I was struck by the frequent use of Jerusalem as an image for longing and spiritual peace. Upon re-reading Lagerlöf's novel in Jerusalem, however, I noticed the amount of tension and conflict accompanying the image, even in the first volume, in which the city is still a mostly fuzzy concept for the country folk of Dalarna. And in fact, the answer to the question whether the heavenly Jerusalem can be found or built in the physical Jerusalem appears early on in the novel's first volume: Gertrud builds a model of the village, pulls it apart and builds the New Jerusalem: "and now I have destroyed the parish to build a Jerusalem."²⁴ This is the prophecy to be fulfilled at the end of the novel: first the illusion of Jerusalem will shake up the village and threaten to destroy it, but then the real Jerusalem will somehow emerge from the ruins, since it is being built with the same materials with which Gertrud modelled the Dalarna village.

Throughout the first volume, however, the spiritual role of Jerusalem is still ambiguous. Two contradictory descriptions of Jerusalem follow one another towards the end of this volume. The first is the idealised, religious description: "They told us of the glory of the City of God, as it lies glowing on its white mountain . . ." ²⁵ followed immediately by the negative/realistic description: "for God's Holy City is full of division and strife, of want and illness, of evil and poverty."²⁶ This conflicting image will become central in the second volume. And although the role of Jerusalem in the lives of the protagonists is yet to be discovered, the outcome of their journey to the city is also prophesised already in the first volume, when the furious Eva Gunnarsdotter, who did not hear the call and is therefore not allowed to join those travelling to Jerusalem, shouts after them: "You are madmen, chasing false prophets. It shall be upon you that fire and brimstone rain. It shall be you who perish. But we, who remain at home, we shall live!"²⁷ She is, of course, right; some of the emigrants perish soon after their arrival in Jerusalem, and as for the rest – Lagerlöf loses interest in them the minute she brings Ingmar, Gertrud, and Gabriel home.

Naturally, the second volume is more significant in the analysis of Jerusalem's changing role, since it is mostly based on the tension between the imagined Jerusalem and the "real" Jerusalem, as presented bleakly by a sober Lagerlöf. Only towards the end of the novel does she find a solution to this conflict, as I hope to demonstrate.

²⁴ "og nu har jag förstört socknen för att bygga ett Jerusalem." Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem 1. I Dalarna*, 68.

²⁵ "De berättade för oss om Guds stads härlighet, där den ligger skinande på sitt vita berg . . ." Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem 1. I Dalarna*, 234.

²⁶ "ty Guds heliga stad är full av split och strid, av nöd och sjukdom, av ondska och fattigdom." Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem 1. I Dalarna*, 235.

²⁷ "Ni är vettvillingar, som löper efter falska profeter. Det skall bli över er, som det skall regna eld och svavel. Det skall bli ni, som skall förgås. Men vi, som stanna hemma, vi skal leva!" Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem 1. I Dalarna*, 241.

Already in the introductory chapter of the second volume, aptly titled "Walls of Gold and Gates of Fused Glass,"²⁸ the conflict is presented in clear terms. However, the narrator's Jerusalem is from the outset the "real Jerusalem" – dangerous, filthy, poisonous, hellish: "grimy, grey house walls . . . mutilated beggars . . . the scrawny, dirty dogs that lay sleeping four and five together on the big dustheaps . . . such a strange, intense stench . . . and such a suffocating heat . . . the paving stones were encrusted with a layer of dirt . . . this impoverished, wretched place."²⁹ Similarly, in Moberg's *Invandrarna* the Swedes arrive in New York during an outbreak of cholera, combined with an unbearable heatwave. The City is impressive and rich – the abundance of food on display convinces the newly-arrived immigrants that they, too, will not suffer hunger as they did in Sweden, but New York is also the place where there are "20 000 officially recognized prostitutes, in addition to all the secret ones, that God alone had counted. There are 2 000 brothels that are open day and night . . . There are 10 000 inns and each innkeeper employed a body bearer with a cart, who dragged the bodies of those who drank themselves to death in his inn."³⁰ Much like Lagerlöf's Swedes in Jerusalem, Moberg's characters too, in this case Robert, Karl Oskar's brother, and his friend Arvid, suddenly find themselves in "this dangerous city . . . surrounded by thieves and rogues,"³¹ where their innocence is challenged, and not for the last time.

Lagerlöf's presentation of Jerusalem as a dangerous, deadly city is consistent throughout the second volume and appears in many versions, for instance: "The Holy City makes them melancholic or insane; in fact, it even kills them."³² It is thus significant that she depicts the first glimpse of the city through the eyes of the sick and hallucinating Birger, who was also one of the most zealous followers of Hellgum. Hellgum's spiritual power over his Dalarna flock allows him to influence and even control their perceptions and sensations of a Promised Land that at first glance does not look very promising at all: "There was nothing striking or remarkable about the land . . . I had thought it would be something quite different. It

28 "Murar av guld och portar av bränt glas" Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem 2. I Jerusalem*, 7.

29 "fula, grå husmurar . . . lemlästade tiggare . . . de magra, smutsiga hundarna, som lågo och sovo fyra och fem tillsammans på de stora avskrädeshögarna . . . en så besynnerlig, från stank . . . och en sådan kvav hetta . . . gatstenarna . . . voro täckta med ett intorkat lager av smuts . . . det här fattiga och eländiga stället." Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem 2. I Jerusalem*, 20–1.

30 "20 000 öppna och erkända luder, förutom alla de hemliga, som endast Gud hade räknat. Det fanns 2 000 horhus som var öppna dygnet rundt . . . Det fanns 10 000 krogar och varje krögare hade i sin tjänst döddragare med kärra, som släpade bort liken av dem som drack ihjäl sig på hans krog." Moberg, *Invandrarna*, 56.

31 "denna farliga stad . . . omgiven av rövare och skälmar." Moberg, *Invandrarna*, 67.

32 "Den heliga staden gör dem mjältsjuka eller vansinniga, ja, den till och med dödar dem." Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem 2. I Jerusalem*, 72.

seems to me that I have seen this land many times before.”³³ However, when Hellgum utters the names of the places they are looking at – an act resembling the naming of settlements and towns in America after biblical places in order to imbue them with spiritual meaning – they suddenly appear in a different light, literally: “As soon as he pronounced these names, the Swedes sensed something that had eluded them before. They saw that the sun spread a richer light across the sky here than in their country, and that the plain and the mountains and the city had a shimmer of pink and pale blue and silvery white over them, which they never had noticed elsewhere.”³⁴

Still, the first chapter closes with the Swedes discovering the hardships of the real Jerusalem. Is it as if “the true Jerusalem” of their imagination moves further and further away, in much the same way as the “Promised Land” the immigrants sought to find in America, moved further and further west. In his article about Norwegian emigrant novels, Kjetil A. Flatin notes the timelessness and placelessness of the emigration motif, and links it with the universal myth of the hero’s journey: “The fact that the journey is never completed because the hero never returns home is precisely the element of tragedy which gives the emigrant novel its special character.”³⁵ This is of course not true of the main characters in *Jerusalem* who finally return home to Dalarna, but if one looks at the group of Swedes in Jerusalem as depicted in Lagerlöf’s novel, there is certainly something tragic about their fate.

Another typical feature of many emigrant novels is the pendulum movement between the Old World and the New, for example in Sven Delblanc’s four-volume epic: *Samuels bok* (1981), *Samuels döttrar* (1982), *Kanaans land* (1984) and *Maria ensam* (1985) [*The Book of Samuel, The Daughters of Samuel, The Land of Canaan, Maria Alone*].³⁶ This movement is felt strongly also in *Jerusalem*, but it is not entirely the same kind of movement: as opposed to the confined and limited area of Jerusalem in Lagerlöf’s novel, America’s vast expanses allowed for renewed hope each time one met with disappointment. Until 1890, when Homestead land was no longer available and the Frontier was

33 “Det var ingenting påfallande eller märkvärdigt ved detta land . . . Jag hade trott, att det skulle vara något helt annorlunda. Det här landet tycker jag att jag har sett många gånger förut.” Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem 2. I Jerusalem*, 8.

34 “I detsamma som han uttalade dessa namn, märkte svenskarna något, som förut hade undgått dem. De sågo, att solen spred ett rikare sken över himlen här än i deras land, och att slätten och bergen og staden hade ett skimmer över sig av skärt och ljusblått och silvervitt, som de inte hade förmärkt annorstädes.” Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem 2. I Jerusalem*, 8.

35 “At reisen aldri blir fullført fordi helten aldri vender hjem er nettopp det element av tragedie som gir emigrantromanen dens spesielle karakter.” Kjetil A. Flatin, “Historisk roman – emigrantroman. Genrespørsmål i tre norske verk om utvandring til Amerika.” *Edda* 3 (1977): 159.

36 Sven Delblanc, *Samuels bok* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1981); Sven Delblanc, *Samuels döttrar* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1982); Sven Delblanc, *Kanaans land* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1984); and Sven Delblanc, *Maria ensam* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1985).

declared closed, one simply pushed one's dreams further west.³⁷ Not surprisingly, most authors who wrote about Scandinavian emigration to America chose to set their novels in its early phases, the Pioneer Era, since these years were characterized by the greatest mobility.

Movement in the metaphorical sense is also essential in *Jerusalem*, as "going" (verb) and "way" are central to understanding the motivation of the characters. There is the concrete movement to Jerusalem in order to go the same paths as Jesus did, and there are the moral paths, which define the Ingmar Ingmarsson of each generation. Much of the tension in the novel stems from the fact that "God's ways," as they are understood by the rooted and sensible Ingmar, are quite the opposite of the paths his fellow countrymen follow when they leave for Jerusalem, a motif which is interwoven with blindness, one of the most significant motifs throughout the novel. Curiously, although blindness is often synonymous with darkness, in Jerusalem, the strong light is not synonymous with clarity or knowledge, but with suffering and death. Along with blindness, or perhaps as a result of it, the city seems to arouse aggression in its inhabitants, whether they are indigenous or newcomers. It is as if members of various Christian congregations can live in harmony with each other elsewhere, but upon arrival in Jerusalem they immediately become hostile to one another, as though the city itself induces conflict and hate. For Lagerlöf, Jerusalem is a city torn between various Christian sects fighting for dominance; as Eliahu says to Mrs. Gordon: "Nowhere on Earth is there such hatred between the Christians as here in Jerusalem."³⁸ And again later, when Lagerlöf bitterly concludes: "Here is the Jerusalem of hunting for souls, here is the Jerusalem of evil tongues, here is the Jerusalem of lies, slander and insults. Here one persecutes without relent, here one murders without weapons. This is the Jerusalem that kills people."³⁹

³⁷ Lars Ljungmark, *Swedish Exodus* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1980), 52.

³⁸ "Ingenstans i världen råder ett sådant hat mellan de kristna som här i Jerusalem." Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem 2. I Jerusalem*, 50.

³⁹ "Här är själajaktens Jerusalem, här är de onda tungornas Jerusalem, här är lögnens, förtalets och smädelsens Jerusalem. Här förföljer man utan vila, här mördar man utan vapen. Detta är det Jerusalem, som dödar människor." Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem 2. I Jerusalem*, 76. Cf. Gustave Flaubert's impressions from his visit to the city in 1850: "Jerusalem strikes me as a fortified charnel-house" . . . "The Armenians curse the Greeks who detest the Catholics who excommunicate the Copts." Geoffrey Wall, *Flaubert: A Life* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002), 181. In 1857 "[Herman] Melville spent hours outside the basilica . . . visiting with the Turkish guards whose job it was to prevent members of different Christian sects from stabbing one another"; Amos Elon, *Jerusalem: City of Mirrors* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1989), 142. Two generations later the Turkish soldiers (or their descendants) were still there, "so that the Christians won't kill one another" ["för att de kristna ej skola slå ihjäl hvarandra"], as Sophie Elkan wrote to her friend Betty Warburg from Jerusalem during her and Lagerlöf's visit; Eva H. Ulvros, *Sophie Elkan: Hennes liv och vänskapen med Selma Lagerlöf* (Lund: Historiska Media, 2001), 180, italics in original. Although Elkan was Jewish (as was Warburg), and Jews were nominally barred from entering Christian and Muslim holy

Even if Lagerlöf did not necessarily witness any of this herself during her brief visit to Jerusalem, she could have become predisposed to understanding the city in this way through reading just a few of the numerous literary travellers' accounts from throughout the preceding century, starting with François-René Chateaubriand's exhaustive descriptions of "this heap of rubbish, denominated a city" from 1806, and including narratives by William Thackeray (1844), Gustave Flaubert (1850), Herman Melville (1857), and Mark Twain (1867), to mention just the most famous ones.⁴⁰ Either way, the strangeness of this image of Jerusalem would undoubtedly have struck her, since Jerusalem so often stood as a symbol of peace and longing, as she herself presented it in the first volume of the novel. It can, however, be claimed that in the novel even the

places in Jerusalem, as a Western tourist she would have been treated like any other European (*i.e.* Christian) visitor to the city, thus being able to explore its sites freely. Furthermore, assimilated and acculturated nineteenth century Western Jews tended to share the values, cultural preferences, and prejudices of their respective Christian majority populations; there is thus little reason to assume that Elkan's Jewish background would have influenced her perceptions of Christian religious strife in Jerusalem any more or any differently than Flaubert's Catholicism, Thackeray's Anglicanism, Melville's Dutch Reformism or indeed Lagerlöf's Lutheranism would have influenced theirs: On Jewish cultural assimilation, see Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 110–6. On the murderous city, see also Chapter 20 (Birger Løvlie), 410–29.

40 Quotation taken from François-René de Chateaubriand, *Travels in Greece, Palestine, Egypt, and Barbary, During the Years 1806 and 1807*, trans. F. Shoberl (New York: Van Winkle and Wiley, 1814), 330. The relative weakening of the Ottoman Empire during the first half of the nineteenth century, together with increasing, partly religiously inspired imperialist ambitions on the part of its Christian opponents, made Jerusalem a locus of Great Power rivalries. See Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Jerusalem: The Biography* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2011), 330–6. Aided by greatly improved steamship communications between Europe and the Near East, a nascent tourist industry started catering to the influx of well-to-do travellers visiting the city – one of the major destinations of their grand tours of the Eastern Mediterranean, Egypt, and the Levant – many of whom recorded their impressions of Jerusalem for later publication. On the beginnings of modern tourism in Jerusalem, see for instance Shimon Gibson et al., *Tourists, Travellers and Hotels in 19th-Century Jerusalem: On Mark Twain and Charles Warren at the Mediterranean Hotel* (Leeds: Maney, 2013). Flaubert is fairly typical of the many Westerners whose bible-nourished expectations of a spiritual climax were dashed through encounters with Jerusalem's filth ("a charnel house surrounded by ramparts"), decay ("dead dogs in the streets"), violence ("if the Holy Sepulcher were given over to the Christians they would massacre each other without fail"), and impiety ("[h]ypocrisy, greed, falsification, impudence – there is plenty of those, but of holiness no trace"): as quoted in Michel Winock, *Flaubert* (Cambridge and London: The Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press, 2016), 125–6. However, the part that ethnic prejudice (acknowledged or implicit) may have played in shaping the experiences of these European sojourners in Jerusalem should not be underestimated, especially since the bloneness of their brands of Christian iconography would not have prepared them for the reality of the city's mostly Arab congregations. In his *Notes on a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo*, for instance, William Thackeray's juxtaposition of saccharine, Anglican pieties and crude, anti-Jewish stereotypes is a vivid exemplar of the mixture of religious zeal and racial supremacism that would both fuel and characterise the European empire-building scramble of the later nineteenth century. See M. A. Titmarsh, *Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1846), 203–7.

bitter feuds between the various Christian denominations are also simply background "noise" intended to highlight the heroic and pure nature of the Colony members. In a similar vein, it is also important to make a distinction between the marginalising of Muslims and Jews in Lagerlöf's account, due to the fact that they had little to contribute to her plot (and perhaps she was not there long enough to be acquainted with them), and the historical American Colony, whose members did become involved in the lives of local, non-Christian inhabitants. In the words of Anna Grace Lind, the daughter of Bertha Spafford Vester: "[the Colony members] never attempted any missionary work but, through their friendship with all sections of the strange and wonderful people of Jerusalem's varied community, became involved in teaching and philanthropic work."⁴¹

Lagerlöf might be stressing the disastrous state of Jerusalem in order to signal out the colony members, and especially the Swedes among them, as potential saviours. Jerusalem and the Holy Land might be in ruins, *i.e.* its glory lies in the past, but those who come from Europe often see it in terms of its potential, *i.e.* the future. In *Jerusalem*, this view is first represented by Eliahu, who although a native, has adopted the Western mindset: "Very probably, most of the natives never considered how backward their land was, but Eliahu, who all the time heard travellers from Europe and America talk about the great progress being made in their countries, couldn't avoid noticing the decline."⁴² And later in the same chapter: "His heart ached when he imagined how this field . . . could be a whole billowing sea of wheat and maize."⁴³

By attributing these thoughts of Western superiority to the Jerusalemite Eliahu, Lagerlöf gives her belief in progress a colonialist slant in the spirit of the time, when westerners believed that it was their duty to bring and promote progress to less "civilized" places. The lands they come to were fertile and rich in natural resources, but the "natives" were unable to cultivate them. Eliahu's vision is later taken up by Ingmar, although in a modified way, since Ingmar also represents tradition, as he contemplates the future of the Holy Land, which will soon be liberated from its "oppressors."⁴⁴ For this to happen, God gathers "such as could teach and

⁴¹ From Lind's introduction to the 1989 edition of Vester's *Our Jerusalem*, as quoted in Helen Murrevan den Berg, "'Our Jerusalem': Bertha Spafford Vester and Christianity in Palestine during the British Mandate," in *Britain, Palestine and Empire: The Mandate Years*, ed. Rory Miller (London and New York: Routledge, 2016). See also the Library of Congress online collection "American Colony in Jerusalem, 1870 to 2006," <https://www.loc.gov/collections/american-colony-in-jerusalem/>.

⁴² "De flesta av de infödda tänkte troligen aldrig på hur efterblivet landet var, men Eliahu, som ständigt hörde resande från Europa och Amerika tala om hur stora framsteg man hade gjort i deras hemland, kunde inte undgå att lägga märke till förfallet." Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem 2. I Jerusalem*, 42.

⁴³ "Det sved i hans hjärta, då han föreställde sig, at denna mark . . . skulle kunna stå som ett enda böljande hav av vete och mais." Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem 2. I Jerusalem*, 43–4.

⁴⁴ It is not clear from the context who the "oppressors" are.

educate the others.”⁴⁵ Thus, in the closing chapter, Ingmar solves one of the novel’s central conflicts in his earth-bound yet philosophical way:

I thought that if this and everything else men have created on our earth, had been allowed to stand, the world would be filled entirely with magnificent things . . . But then I thought that if all of this had survived, then we, who lived now, would have nothing to do, since our work wouldn’t be needed anymore. And it is man’s greatest joy to be able to build what he needs himself and show what he is good for, and that is why the old must go.⁴⁶

From Religious Strife to National Values: Sweden vs. the Real Jerusalem

As we have seen, *Jerusalem*’s second volume is made up of several anecdotes that all serve to emphasise the contrast between the imagined or spiritual Jerusalem, and the concrete one. Since Lagerlöf’s visit to Jerusalem with Sophie Elkan was quite short, only a few days in March 1900, it is likely that she heard at least some of the anecdotes from her hosts. Another probable source could have been the dragoman, the tour-guide that stood at their disposal and showed them around the town, as Western tourists were advised not to go out on their own. He was hired from the Thomas Cook travel agency and spoke all the local languages.⁴⁷ The anecdotes are perhaps intended to lend credibility to her descriptions of the city, but the result is often quite the opposite: When reading the story of Baram Paschas’s visit to the Colony or the most dramatic and critical anecdote for the plot – that about the old Jewish woman who died in a Christian hospital and was denied Jewish burial by her coreligionists in the chapter “Ingmar’s Struggle” [*Ingmars strid*] – a real contrast emerges between these second or third-hand Jerusalem anecdotes and the more authentic descriptions of country life in Sweden. Scenes from both locations are magical thanks to Lagerlöf’s unique narrative skill, but there is a difference between the descriptions of Sweden and those of Jerusalem. One can of course claim that both are inauthentic – peasant life in Dalarna is idealised while Jerusalem is demonised – but

⁴⁵ “sådana, som kunna lära och uppfostra de andra.” Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem 2. I Jerusalem*, 261.

⁴⁶ “Jag tänkte att om detta och allt annat, som människor hade upprättat på denna jorden, hade fått finnas kvar, så skulle den vara alldeles uppfylld av härlighet . . . Men så kom jag att tänka på att om allt detta hade funnits kvar, så hade vi, som nu levde, ingenting att ta oss till, för då behövdes inte vårt arbete. Och det är en människas största lycka att få bygga upp vad hon själv behöver och visa vad hon duger till, och därför måste det gamla bort.” Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem 2. I Jerusalem*, 357.

⁴⁷ Ulvros, *Sophie Elkan*, 178; see also Kobi Cohen-Hattab and Noam Shoval, *Tourism, Religion, and Pilgrimage in Jerusalem* (London: Routledge, 2015), 28.

that only strengthens the assumption that her depictions of Jerusalem were probably not based on deep observation.

As in the typical Scandinavian emigrant novel, the only way to reconcile the immigrant's difficulty to adapt to a new and hostile land with his or her fantasies of an improved life and a better society is to import European, in this case Swedish, values and structures. This solution comes to the fore as early as the opening chapter of the second volume, in the portrayal of the German Colony in Jaffa: "Their colony consisted of many well-built houses with large gardens and fields. As you approach their area, you might think that you had inadvertently come across a little beautiful Swedish village."⁴⁸ In fact, this idea is foreshadowed in the first volume with the description of a painting of Jerusalem hanging in Ingmarsgården,⁴⁹ made by a local artist, *i.e.*, someone who has never been to the Holy Land:

a town surrounded by high walls, and above the walls one sees the gables and rooftops of several houses. Some were red farm cottages with green thatched roofs, others had white-washed walls with slate roofs reminiscent of manorial buildings, and still others had heavy, copper-clad towers like St Christina Church in Falun. Outside the town strolled gentlemen dressed in breeches and shoes, supporting themselves on canes, and out of the town gate drove a coach in which sat ladies with powdered hair and straw hats. Beneath the walls grew trees with dense, dark green foliage, and across the field ran small, sparkling brooks through the tall, billowing grass.⁵⁰

No wonder, then, that when Birger Larsson first sees the real Jerusalem he feels deceived. Not only has he been taken to the wrong place, it is also populated by *the wrong people*: "These people did not look like the peaceable bearers of palm branches that were supposed to proceed through the streets of the true Jerusalem."⁵¹ The physical repulsiveness of the place is reflected in the cruelty of its inhabitants, for instance in the anecdote, already mentioned, about the Jewish woman who is removed from her final resting place. Incidentally, also in many emigrant novels depicting America, the natives are often presented as dangerous savages whose initial reaction to the immigrants is that of caution or aggression, although both Hauge and Moberg are

⁴⁸ "Deras koloni bestod av många välbyggda hus med stora trädgårdar och åkrar. Då man kom in på deras område, kunde man tro, att man helt hastigt hade råkat på en liten vacker svensk småstad." Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem 2. I Jerusalem*, 14.

⁴⁹ See Chapter 22 (Jenny Bergenmar), 448–65.

⁵⁰ "en stad, innesluten av höga murar, och över murarna såg man gavlarna och takåsarna av flera hus. Somliga voro röda bondstugor med gröna torvtak, andra hade vita väggar med skiffertak liksom herrgårdsbyggnader, och andra åter hade tunga, kopparklädda torn liksom Kristine kyrka i Falun. Utanför staden promenerade herrar, som voro klädda i knäbyxor och skor och stödde sig på spanska rör, och ut ur stadsporten körde en kare, vari sutto damer med pudrat hår och schäferhattar. Nedom muren växte träd med tätt, mörkgrönt lövverk, och över marken flöto gnistrande små bäckar genom högt, böljande gräs." Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem 1. I Dalarna*, 228–9.

⁵¹ "Inte var det här folket likt de fridsamma palmbärare, som skulle skrida fram på gatorna i det rätta Jerusalem" Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem 2. I Jerusalem*, 24.

rather more sympathetic in their descriptions of America's native inhabitants. Yet Hauge's characters still fear them, while Moberg's refer to them as *vildarna*, the savages, who must make way for the white settlers, since they fail to cultivate the land: "The Indians themselves were too lazy to use the soil . . . Those who cultivate the soil should have the right to it before anyone else."⁵² And of his protagonist he writes: "Karl Oskar despised the Indians for their idleness and called them useless creatures."⁵³ This view of Native Americans is reminiscent of Ingmar's role in relation to the natives of Jerusalem, as formulated first by Eliahu, and later by Ingmar himself, as we have seen earlier, who reasons that the sordid state of the Holy Land will only be remedied when outsiders will come and redeem it.

Homesickness is also a typical feature, which establishes a link between emigrant literature and Lagerlöf's novel. In *Jerusalem*, Gabriel, for example, expresses longing for the homeland's familiar landscapes: "I don't think about such holy and unfamiliar waters as you and the others do . . . but from morning till evening I think about a river running fresh and clear with bright, sparkling water . . . I think about a river . . . so clear that you can see all the glittering pebbles lying on the bottom. And that river isn't dried out like the brook Kidron or just a dream like Ezekiel's stream or impossible to find like Hezekiah's, but rushes and flows to this day. I'm thinking about the Dal River."⁵⁴ Here the river in his home country acquires the qualities of a sanctified place, at least in the national-romantic sense: it is life giving and inexhaustible.

Incidentally, in most emigrant novels, the fertile land of the New World makes up for the hardships suffered on the way to attaining and taming it. In Moberg's tetralogy, Karl Oskar's wife acknowledges the blessing of the copious soil of Minnesota, but at the same time, she feels that the new land enslaves Karl Oskar instead of liberating him. Kristina, a thoroughly tragic character who is plagued by homesickness and never really finds peace in America, is comforted by thoughts of the afterlife (which she associates with Sweden), but also in the knowledge that the new land will provide for her children and future generations. Another way of looking at this feature of the emigrant novel is by juxtaposing the individual and the collective: while the individual immigrants suffer unbearable hardship during the crossing of the Atlantic and the first years in America – the image of the collective stands out as a positive one. The

52 "Själva var indianerna för lata att bruka jorden. . . . De som odlade upp jorden skulle ha rätten till den före någon annan." Moberg, *Invandrarna*, 311.

53 "Karl Oskar föraktade indianerna för deras lättja och kallade dem oduglige varelser" Moberg, *Invandrarna*, 364.

54 "Jag tänker inte på så heliga och märkvärdiga vatten som ni andre . . . men från morgon till kväll tänker jag på en älv, som rinner frisk och klar med ljust, blankt vatten . . . Jag tänker på en älv, som . . . är så klar, att man ser alla de kiselstenar, som ligga och glittra på botten. Och den älven är inte uttorkad som Kidron eller blott en dröm som Hezekiels flod eller omöjligt att finna som Hiskias, utan den forsar och strömmar ännu i denna dag. Jag tänker på Dalälven." Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem 2. I Jerusalem*, 131.

situation depicted in *Jerusalem* is different, however, at least to begin with. The water crisis and the diseases that come with it lead to a crisis of faith, and Hellgum, who was the most ardent speaker in favour of the journey, is struck by guilt and is now determined to send the Swedes back to Dalarna.

Because of their purity of body and soul, the Swedes suffer more than others in the murderous city. However, salvation will not come to Jerusalem without their sacrifice, and without the virtues they bring with them. The first sign of this is the cross bearer, who already in the second chapter of the second volume leaves his cross at the Colony's doorstep: "Not to die and not to live, but solely to carry the cross of Christ had they come here."⁵⁵ Interestingly, in a flashback to the early days of the Colony, before the arrival of the Swedes, the tone is more optimistic: "And now they understood that they too were among those whom God had called to His land for the sake of its restoration. They too were given hope and confidence. They began to believe that not just suffering awaited them, but also joyful work in God's vineyard."⁵⁶ However, since the "work" referred to here is not work in the conventional, practical sense, the dilemma of suffering and salvation will only be solved when Ingmar brings his Swedish work ethic to the Colony, and only then will it show signs of real abundance and not just imagined glory. Symbolically, the minute Ingmar steps into the assembly room where the Colony members sing their hymns, his countrymen begin singing in Swedish.⁵⁷

When Ingmar takes Gertrud to see the dervish, "exposing" her for what the dervish really is, Ingmar is in a way undoing the damage caused by the illusions Hellgum planted in her. However, whereas Hellgum's motivation is not entirely clear (he simply appears one day and takes the villagers by storm), Ingmar, guided by the moral compass he inherited from his forefathers, is doing "the right thing." His level-headed and practical idea of what "the right thing" is brings the Swedes in Jerusalem much closer to salvation than Hellgum's vision could ever do. While Ingmar represents an inherited tradition, a link in a genealogical line, one of the most striking features of the Colony's ideology, and therefore its futility, is the ban on marriage, since no matter how much goodness the Colony brings to the city, without continuity it is destined to vanish. Another of its flaws, which Ingmar works to remedy, is its reliance on own capital and charitable patrons. Making a living "in the sweat of thy face" is the only respectable solution. Again, it takes a representative of the Old World (as opposed to the Ancient World that stands for ruin) to re-introduce the cycle of ploughing and harvesting, birth and death.

55 "Det var inte för att dö och inte för att leva, utan endast och allenast att bära Kristi kors, som de voro hitkomna." Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem 2. I Jerusalem*, 40.

56 "Och de förstodo nu, att också de hörde med bland dessa, som Gud hade kallat till sitt land för dess upprättelses skull. Det kom hopp och förtröstan också till dem. De började tro, att det inte bara var lidande, som väntade dem, utan också ett glädjefullt arbete i Guds vingård." Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem 2. I Jerusalem*, 71.

57 Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem 2. I Jerusalem*, 169.

From National Sentiments to Salvation: Swedish Values Exported to the Holy City

Lagerlöf's 1902 letter to the Danish critic Georg Brandes describes her newly finished novel, first published two years after her journey to the Middle East, as a tale of an unpleasant city, full of fanatics and religious lunacy.⁵⁸ Her letters from the trip itself, however, were much more nuanced. She enjoyed herself, saw the beauty of Jerusalem as well as its poverty, squalor, and strife.⁵⁹ It appears therefore that her narrative – and her ideology – demanded a one-sided presentation of a situation, which she herself perceived as complex. Jerusalem *had* to be presented as the total opposite of the Dalarna ideal.

For many Scandinavian immigrants in the New World, the Bible was the “dictionary” they used in order to understand their new surroundings and experiences. What happens, then, to those who travel to Jerusalem and use the Bible as a source of imagery, but are faced with the reality of the biblical setting? And just as interesting: literary depictions in emigrant novels rarely show that Scandinavian immigrants in America absorb values upon immigration, but rather that they bring these with them, hoping to preserve them in their pure or original form. This was perhaps possible in the “New” world that was (wrongly) seen as virginal, but what happens in a city as laden with history as Jerusalem?

Typical of the Scandinavian emigrant novel is the insinuation, and on occasion even outright assertion, that immigrants from the Old World pour meaning into a newly-discovered, *empty* land, as Moberg, for instance, writes in the opening

58 “And then Jerusalem, where the air is so hot with religion, where all men have experienced miracles, where the calmest of men become fanatic, lose their senses in the struggle between all the different sects. Agreeable the city is not, but it is remarkable, though, to encounter a whole society of fanatics.” [“Och så Jerusalem, där luften är så het af religion, där alla människor hafva upplefvat underverk, där de lugnaste människor bli fanatiska, från sina sinnen under striden mellan alla de olika sekterna. Det är ingen behaglig stad, men det är dock märkligt att råka på ett helt samhälle af fanatiker.”] Letter to Brandes 15 June 1902, in Selma Lagerlöf, *Brev i urval 1, 1871–1902*. Ed. Ying Toijer-Nilsson (Lund: Gleerup, 1967), 269–70.

59 Holger Wolandt, *Selma Lagerlöf: Värmland und die Welt. Eine Biografie* (Stuttgart: Urachhaus, 2015), 137–40. Sophie Elkan was more ambivalent to the city and its inhabitants, as conveyed in letters to Betty Warburg: “Every language is spoken, only one word is never uttered, and that is *tolerance*,” and later, “It is indeed a frightful city and unlike any other I’ve seen. A city of fanaticism and intolerance and beautiful childhood memories and legends. . . . What a city and what a land!” [“Alla språk talas, blott ett ord yttras aldrig, och det är *tolerans*. . . . Jo, sannerligen det är en förfärlig stad och lik ingen annan jag skådat. Fanatismens och intoleransens och de vackra barndomsminnenas och legendernas stad. . . . Hvilken stad och hvilket land!”] Ulvros, *Sophie Elkan*, 178–81.

Fig. 23.3: *Harvest, American Colony, 1904.* American Colony Photo Department. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.

chapter of *Utvandrama*: "The new land had soil without farmers and called upon farmers without soil."⁶⁰ Not only the writers but also the immigrants themselves were often unable to see the native inhabitants of the continent, for whom the landscape was anything but empty. In that sense *Jerusalem*, although using a very different setting, follows a rather similar pattern, in which the existing place, its peoples and landscapes, are ancillary to the Europeans, and specifically the Swedes, who come to inhabit it and fulfill its potential.

⁶⁰ "Det nya landet hade jord utan brukare och kallade på jordbrukare utan jord." Moberg, *Invandrama*, 6.

Fig. 23.4: *The Weaving Room in the American Colony, Jerusalem, 1904.* American Colony Photo Department. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington D. C.

The notion of a “sleeping land” appears in several novels about Scandinavian immigrants in the United States, whose fertile soil is just waiting for them to wake it up and realise its potential. Towards the end of *Jerusalem*, “this dangerous land”⁶¹ becomes “the sleeping land”⁶² that the Swedes have to till, although, with all its layers of historical and religious significance, the land is re-awakened rather than awakened. Nonetheless, the act performed by the immigrants is similar to the acts performed by the protagonists in emigrant novels: they sow their Scandinavian values and traditions so that the land can blossom. For them hard work is the

⁶¹ “detta farliga landet” Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem 2. I Jerusalem*, 306.

⁶² “det sovande landet” Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem 2. I Jerusalem*, 358.

highest value, followed by cleanliness and simplicity (Figs. 23.3, 23.4). These virtues define the Colony members and make them stand out in the lethargic Levant, in the filthy city. So much so that their landlord in the eponymous chapter "Baram Pascha," who is initially sceptical, even suspicious, towards the members of the Colony and is determined to remove them from his property, is so impressed with their diligence and dignity that he leaves them his white ass, which the reader cannot but understand as a symbol of their role as saviours. The prophecy is fulfilled when the members of the Colony, and particularly the Swedes, reach a turning point and, thanks to Ingmar, move from being victims to being pioneers. Now they resemble their brethren in the vast expanses of the American West: "They . . . spoke of nothing but all the arable valleys lying fallow in this land . . ."⁶³

In the closing chapters of *Jerusalem*, the novel's protagonists leave the ancient city as it is being transformed into a new or renewed place buzzing with pioneer activity. This particular feature of the novel reveals striking similarities to the Zionist vision, which began taking root in the 1880s, in parallel with the agricultural developments and trades introduced by the German Templers and the members of the American Colony. The Zionist program of Jewish national revival in Palestine, which developed as a reaction to and in emulation of contemporary European nationalisms, focused on building a New Hebrew, independent, proud, and strong, in contrast to the stereotype of the passive, weak, and submissive diaspora Jew. This transformation would take place both through hard physical toil in agriculture and construction and through the building of Hebrew institutions and a national infrastructure.⁶⁴ Lagerlöf did not support the Zionist movement,⁶⁵ but the ideology of the Jewish settlers corresponds in many ways to her colonialist approach: "west of Jerusalem, right outside the city wall, a whole new neighbourhood had grown up. Now there were European shops, banks, a telegraph office and large

⁶³ "De . . . tala om ingenting annat än alla de odlingsbara dalarna, som ligga öde i detta land . . ." Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem 2. I Jerusalem*, 285.

⁶⁴ The history of Zionism is mildly put contentious. For a good overview of the historiographical trends, see Michael Brenner, *Prophets of the Past: Interpreters of Jewish History* (Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010), ch. 5–6. Zionism's roots in European nationalism are summarised in Amos Elon, *Israelis: Founders and Sons* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), 60–2. The importance of institution-building is explored in Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State* (New York: Basic Books, 2017), ch. 9; the idea of redemption through labour in Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism*, ch. 14. The image of the New Hebrew is delineated in Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 25–30.

⁶⁵ "Jag tror inte på Sionismen, men inte skulle det vara omöjligt att i Palestina införa en klok, ärlig styrelse under europeiskt protektorat" ["I do not believe in Zionism, but it should not be impossible in Palestine to establish a wise, honest government under a European protectorate"] – a striking foreshadowing of the actual post-WWI British Mandate of Palestine: from the 1902 letter to Georg Brandes cited above, footnote 58.

hotels in Jerusalem, and those made it easier to live there.”⁶⁶ Like her Swedish farmers, diasporic Jews too had been drawn to the Holy Land for religious and spiritual reasons rooted in the past; most of these Jews relied on charitable organisations to survive. The Zionists, on the other hand, who came to their old-new homeland “to build [it] and be rebuilt [in it],” soon realised they could not live there unless they adopt a productive lifestyle and a vision for the future.⁶⁷ In a similar manner, no deaths occur among the Colony members once they start working in the mill: “Neither has anyone grieved himself insane over the evil of Jerusalem.”⁶⁸ Likewise, central to the Zionist ethos is the belief that physical work is the key to bodily and mental health. Thus, the first Hebrew edition of *Jerusalem*, published in 1921, revised in 1957 and since printed in several editions, was a popular read among Zionist immigrants and Jews reading Hebrew worldwide.⁶⁹

As mentioned above, in several emigrant novels the incentive for uprooting is religious as well as (or in the case of *Jerusalem*, instead of) economic. The implication is that conditions in their homelands made it difficult for the emigrants to enjoy full freedom of religion. Ironically, upon immigration, those who deviated from religious conventions – and thereby social ones as well – in their homelands become true representatives of the national ideal: “And when he saw [a little flock of schoolchildren], he found their appearance different from all the other children gambolling about on the streets of Jerusalem, for these were scrubbed clean, their clothes were whole and their footwear solid, and they had fair, neatly combed hair.”⁷⁰ Also the women stand out amidst the squalor of the natives: “They walked very quietly and properly, their clothes were simple, in their hands they carried heavy, well-filled baskets.”⁷¹

And so the circle is completed. The religious vision has taken the features of the national vision; the farmers from Dalarna no longer represent themselves and

66 “I väster om Jerusalem strax utanför stadsmuren hade en hel ny stadsdel växt upp. Det fanns nu europeiska butiker, banker, telegraf och stora hotell i Jerusalem, och detta gjorde det lättare att leva där.” Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem 2. I Jerusalem*, 64.

67 Quotation taken from Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots*, 29.

68 “Ingen har heller gått och sört sig vansinnig över Jerusalems ondska.” Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem 2. I Jerusalem*, 286.

69 Hadar Ben-Yahuda, “The Wondrous Journey of Selma Lagerlöf and her Lover in Jerusalem,” Blog Post, National Library of Israel, accessed June 14, 2017. <https://blog.nli.org.il/en/selma/>.

70 “Och då han såg [en liten skara skolbarn], fann han deras utseende olik alla andra barns, som tumla om på Jerusalems gator, ty dessa voro rentvättade, de hade hela kläder och starka skodon, och deras hår var ljust och slätkammat.” Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem 2. I Jerusalem*, 110.

71 “De gingo mycket stilla och sedesamt, deras kläder voro tarvliga, i händerna buro de tunga, välfyllda korgar.” Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem 2. I Jerusalem*, 111.

their unique Christian belief, but their entire nation, as Ingmar says to his fellow Swedes upon leaving the Colony in Jerusalem: “I just think that all of you here bring great honour to us back home.”⁷² Or in other words – they brought Sweden to Jerusalem.

⁷² “Jag tänker allt, att ni härute gör oss därhemma stor heder.” Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem 2. I Jerusalem*, 323.