

The “Inn of the Good Samaritan”: Religious, Civic and Political Rhetoric of a Biblical Site

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The Inn of the Good Samaritan is a site, known to pilgrims and tourists, that localizes the parable from the Gospel of Luke (Luke 10:25–37). This paper traces the site’s spatial settings in relation to the parable and its history of interpretation. The guiding question is to how text and space become intertwined in negotiations of religious, as well as secular identities. The argument follows three stages. First, it discusses Luke’s parable in its inner-Jewish dimension and in early Christian interpretation. Secondly, it surveys the history of the physical site and its connection to the story. Finally, it traces the choreography of the present-day museum at the site in the way it relates to the history of Luke’s parable.

Two notions, a theory of textual interpretation and spatial theory, underlie the analyses of the data offered here. First, sacred texts propel trajectories of explanation that unwind potentials of meaning of the text, intended or unintended, and this history of interpretation (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) becomes part of the text itself.¹ This shift from text to interpretation even extends to the way subsequent cultures understand themselves, and in their modes of interpretation come to (re)produce Biblical texts as discursive objects or as media of cultural identification.² Moreover, these processes not only involve cognition, but also emotional regimes, stable forms of apprehension and perception as dominant in a given social and cultural reality.³ Second, spaces, beyond their

1 Hans G. Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1960) locates any individual’s self-understanding as part of a text’s history of interpretation. The hermeneutic taking into account the history of a text’s “horizon” criticizes historicistic claims of intended, original meaning as being definite. Cf. Alexander J. Jensen, *Theological Hermeneutics* (London: SCM, 2007), 139–41; Jean Grondin, *Einführung in die philosophische Hermeneutik*, 3rd ed. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2012), 152–72, esp. 161.

2 Timothy Beal, “Reception History and Beyond: Toward the Cultural History of Scriptures,” *BibInt* 19 (2011): 357–72.

3 Emotional scripts are supra-individual, culturally as well as socially produced schemata that engrain the individual’s emotions and responses to it in a social, cultural, and political realm. Ole Riis and Linda Woodhead, *A Sociology of Religious Emotion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 47: “We have argued that ‘emotion’ is a label for a range of coordinated

physical dimensions, carry meaning as imbued with social and cultural practices, including religious mapping.⁴ In modernity, this involves politically guided constructions of religious and secular regimes labelled as “choreography.”⁵ Where these “choreographies” are informed by texts, these in turn produce modes of perception of the text and signal new appropriation and performance of the text. As such, sacred spaces in their modern “choreography” become intertwined with the history of textual interpretation and production.

1 The Story: the Parable of the Good Samaritan

In Luke 10:25–37, Jesus tells a parable of a certain man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and was attacked and wounded by robbers, who left him “half dead” at the side of the road. A passing priest did not help him, neither did a passing Levite. A Samaritan, however, was touched deeply, tended his wounds with wine and oil, loaded the man onto his donkey and transported him to an Inn. There, he left him in the care of the Innkeeper, paying in advance and with the promise that he would return and pay for any further care needed. The story is an example-story, a variant of the parables. Indeed, any metaphorical operation of its motifs presupposes a well-known social or historical meaning or context for the first readers, and the exemplary behaviour is spelled out as well in the story.⁶ Part of its spatial and emotional rhetoric

psychophysical elements, in and through which we relate to other beings and symbols, and in terms of which they relate to us. By virtue of group processes, societal structures, and cultural symbols, emotions also attain intersubjective and supra-individual status, and can be analysed at a range of social scales. Far from being merely inner, private states of the individual, they are generated in interactions between self, society, and objects.”

- 4 Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991).
- 5 Elazar Barkan and Karen Barkey, “Introduction,” in *Choreographies of Shared Sacred Sites: Religion, Politics, and Conflict Resolution*, ed. Elazar Barkan and Karen Barkey (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 1–32 (1): “choreographies” connotes “the politics of the ‘choreography of sacred spaces’ within the framework of state-society relations.”
- 6 Adolf Jülicher, *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1976), 112–14 qualifies our parable as an exemplary story (*Beispielserzählung*), all four of which appear in Luke (Luke 12:16–21; 16:19–31; 18:9–14). The exemplary story in its historical realism resembles Rabbinic *ma’aseh* or Roman *exemplum*. Cf. Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 9:51–24:53* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 1021; Klyne Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 350–52. Ruben Zimmermann, *Puzzling the Parables of Jesus: Methods and Interpretation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 112–17 criticizes this classification since the story still requires metaphorical operation to disclose its full meaning. François Bovon, *Luke 2: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 9:51–19:27* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 56 points out that the parable has a “mobilizing function” beyond being illustration or proof.

is the mentioning of the Inn.⁷ Greek *pandocheion* (πανδοχεῖον, Luke 10:34) is etymologically related to Arab *khan*, and the equivalent of the Vulgate *stabula*.⁸ Scholars have assessed Luke's story of the Inn as derived from a local Palestinian tradition, and the excavations of Yitzhak Magen at the present-day Museum of the Good Samaritan have added some argumentative force to this view, even if its identification as the Inn of the parable is not buttressed by any evidence.⁹ The site features cisterns from the Second Temple Period, a large Byzantine cistern, and one constructed in the era of the Crusades. No findings predate Herodian times.¹⁰ All of this indeed points to its use as a temporary or permanent wayfarers' "inn" during the latter half of the Second Temple Period.¹¹ Luke stresses known features such as the Roman road connecting Jerusalem and Jericho, the man "going down" (Luke 10:30), and the presence of robbers.¹² However, even though the narrative reflects a known reality, the story barely needs historicity to convey its message. Moreover, Luke's story was inspired by 2 Chr 28:9–15, a passage about Samaritans taking care of Israelite captives, and

7 Lukan redaction is visible in verse 26: "how do you read?" (πῶς ἀναγινώσκεις); and verse 30: "half dead" (ἡμιθνή), a *hapax legomenon*, cf. Joachim Jeremias, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu*, 6th rev. ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), 190–93.

8 In Philo, *pandocheion* denotes a socially dubious place of residence; see Hans Klein, *Das Lukasevangelium* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 393. This might be related to the presence of female innkeepers; see Roger David Aus, *Weihnachtsgeschichte, barmherziger Samariter, verlorener Sohn: Studien zu ihrem jüdischen Hintergrund* (Berlin: Institut Kirche und Judentum, 1988), 68–69. The inn of the parable is not related to the inn (Luke 2:7, καταλύμα) of Jesus's birth.

9 Jeremias, *Gleichnisreden*, 201–2: "Die Geschichte ... wird, zum mindesten in szenischen Rahmen, an eine tatsächliche Begebenheit anknüpfen." Yitzhak Magen, *The Samaritans and the Good Samaritan* (Jerusalem: Civil Administration for Judea and Samaria, 2008), 294.

10 Magen, *Samaritans*, 297. Yitzhak Magen, Staff Officer of Archaeology for Judea and Samaria, who conducted excavations on the site of the present-day Inn of the Good Samaritan, found dwelling caves as well as fireplaces, all dated to the Second Temple period. Object findings included a key, dating to the Herodian age, and a chalkstone cup, usually interpreted with respect to purity practices.

11 The finds of coins are quite compelling for his view that the site was functioning as a wayfarers' inn during the latter Second Temple period: a peak in the Herodian age is followed by some coins of the Great Revolt (66–70 CE), after which a steep decline follows which will only peak again in the Byzantine era; Magen, *Samaritans*, 295; Yitzhak Magen, *The Good Samaritan Museum* (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2010), 61. The identification of a wall structure as a Herodian palace, which he thinks could have been used as an inn, is conjectural.

12 Both first-century writers Josephus, *J.W.* 4.8.3 [474]; Strabo, 16.2.40–41 (c. 763), commenting on Pompey, as well as the fourth-century Eusebius and Jerome report on robbers in the area. A rabbinic example-story (m. Yebam. 16:7) tells about Levites leaving a sick person in the care of a female innkeeper between Jerusalem and "Zoar" (probably Jericho); on its connection with the parable see Aus, *Barmherziger Samariter*, 63–68.

even bringing them back to Jericho on donkeys.¹³ Biblical hermeneutics, social and spatial reality, as well as biblical intertextuality form the background of Luke's parable, and any realistic features only serve to add to its metaphoric and rhetoric force.

This rhetoric, in Luke, bears on a dialogue between Jesus and an expert in the law of Moses (νομικός τις, Luke 10:25) on how to gain eternal life (Luke 10:25), and comments on the meaning of neighbour in the biblical verse "You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD" (Lev 19:18).¹⁴ This question, as well as Jesus's reply in verse 26 "how do you read?" (πῶς ἀναγινώσκεις;) gains hermeneutical as well as historical relief in light of early Jewish discussions on the meaning of נָחַר ("your neighbour") in Lev 19:18, and despite the polemical tone in Luke's redaction, it still reflects the Jewish phase of the early Christian movement.¹⁵ The application reorients the question as one of self-reflection: one has to become a neighbour first. Being or not being a neighbour follows from looking, since the acts of the Samaritan are initiated by his way of looking, resulting in feeling moved and acting accordingly. Therefore, the parable's rhetoric is not just to convey that "anyone" is a neighbour, a broad misunderstanding of the parable, but reorients any definition of neighbour to looking at a person's actions, especially one's reaction to a person in dire need of help.¹⁶ It is no coincidence that "seeing" recurs three times, and it is the resulting action that makes all the difference (Table 14.1).

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- 13 Bock, *Lukas*, 1020; Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 358; Isaak Kalimi, "Episoden aus dem Neuen Testament und ihr Ursprung in der Hebräischen Bibel/dem Alten Testament," *SNTSU* 36 (2011): 93–110 (102–9).
- 14 The typically Lukan term νομικός, "lawyer," a scholar in the law, occurs only in Matt 22:35; Bock, *Lukas*, 1022. All Bible translations follow the NRSV, unless otherwise indicated. The story most probably circulated independent of the Lawyer's question.
- 15 A unity of the parable and dialogue is stressed in Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 349. Most scholars, however, distinguish between a traditional source underlying the parable itself and Luke's inserting it into the dialogue with the lawyer: Shemaryahu Talmon, "Good Samaritan or Good Israelite?" *Qathedra* 80 (1996): 19–30 (22) (Hebrew); Thomas Kazen, "The Good Samaritan and a Presumptive Corps," *Svens exegetisk årsbok* 71 (2006): 131–44 (133). The parable is unique in its framing of the early Jewish discussions concerning the double love commandment: Serge Ruzer, *Mapping the New Testament: Early Christian Writings as a Witness for Jewish Biblical Exegesis* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 69 concludes other synoptic traditions do not share the "universalistic" versus "particularistic" stress as offered in this parable.
- 16 Cf. Bock, *Lukas*, 1018. Grammatically, seeing combined with action is regular: Friedrich Blass, Albert Debrunner, and Friedrich Rehkopf, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch*, 18th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001), 344. Rabbinic voices explain נָחַר as a term of legal exclusion, emphasizing that particular obligations are limited

TABLE 14.1 Acts of seeing in the parable of the Good Samaritan

Priest (v. 31)	“saw him” (ἰδὼν αὐτὸν)	“he passed by on the other side” (ἀντιπαρῆλθεν)
Levite (v. 32)	“saw” (ἰδὼν)	“he passed by on the other side” (ἀντιπαρῆλθεν)
Samaritan (v. 33)	“saw” (ἰδὼν)	“he was moved with pity” (ἔσπλαγχνίσθη)

In the story, both the priest and the Levite “saw” the man lying on the ground but “passed by the other side.” The Samaritan, however, “saw” the man and this was followed by an emotional response, as well as by actions (v. 34) that depict the reversal of what the robbers did to the man.¹⁷ The response “he was moved with pity” (ἔσπλαγχνίσθη, Luke 10:33), literally signifying being moved in one’s bowels, employs a verb used rarely in Luke, but significantly to indicate the reaction of Jesus when looking (ἰδὼν, Luke 7:13) at a suffering widow.¹⁸ The act of looking receives a rhetorical ring given the geographical setting of the narrative, evoking the dreadful dangers lurking in desert surroundings, and teeming with robbers. Moreover, passing priests and Levites may be historically plausible in light of the road mentioned, which ran between Jericho, a well-known residence of priests in late Second Temple times, and the Temple in Jerusalem.¹⁹ However, its rhetorical force is more important, since “priest and Levite” arouses the expectation of a common Israelite to be the third party.²⁰ The unexpected appearance of a Samaritan causes the surprise ele-

to specific categories within Israel. “Looking” at actions underlies a Rabbinic discussion of the verse as well. Alluding to Isa 43:7, one voice comments as follows “Has it not been said: ‘and you shall love your neighbor as yourself?’ So what then is the reason (of this verse)? I created him and if he performs the works of your people he is your friend, and if not, he cannot be your friend” (כי אני בראתינו ואם עושה מעשה עמך אתה אוהבו ואם לאו אי אתה) (אבוהבו; Abot R. Nat. a, 16).

- 17 Brad Young, *The Parables: Jewish Tradition and Christian Interpretation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 107. Oil and wine are medicinal: Klein, *Lukasevangelium*, 389 (n. 48). It may be that Luke knew about Lev 19:34. The notion of performing acts of benevolence is traditional as well: “but act mercifully towards your neighbor as to yourself (וְתִרְחַמְתָּ אֶת־רֵעִי כְּרֵעִי), I am the Lord” (Tg. J. Lev 19:18).
- 18 Henry G. Liddell and Robert Scott, *Greek—English Lexicon*, new ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 1628. Luke uses σπλαγχνεῖω in the reaction of the father in the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:20).
- 19 Priests lived in the surroundings of Jericho: Bock, *Lukas*, 1030; Bovon, *Luke*, 57.
- 20 E.g., Ezra 2:70; Neh 10:37–40; m. Pe’ah 8:6; m. Ta’an. 4:2. Other Biblical patterns of “three” occur as well, see Talmon, “Good Samaritan or Good Israelite?” 25. The rhetorical

ment of the parable, especially given the Samaritans' tense relations with Jews.²¹ It is, in this light, the Samaritan's way of looking and his resulting actions that yet define him as a neighbour for the man on the ground, and, concomitantly, for the reader of the parable.²² Finally, seeing what others do not see is a motif in the passage preceding the parable, when Jesus teaches his disciples how to deal with refusal: "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, but did not see it (ἰδεῖν ἃ ὑμεῖς βλέπετε καὶ οὐκ εἶδαν), and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it" (Luke 10:23–24). Adducing the verb ὁράω, the parable connects this saying to a narrative inculcating a mode of looking at a person's actions, thus transcending social and religious barriers.²³

2 The Parable and Christian Theology

Departing from Luke's spatial and hermeneutical rhetoric, with the Samaritan as the unexpected "practical" teacher of the law, Christian interpretation, from the second century CE onwards, reads the parable as an allegorical story of salvation through Christ.²⁴ This transition is smooth in its metaphoric reading, but has a crucial difference. Luke's parable alluded, in its narratology, to the Samaritan as carrying out a similar emotional regime as Jesus, in taking pity on

importance of the Samaritan in the story, as a "close" example given them being object to early Christian mission, is correctly stated by Talmon, "Good Samaritan or Good Israelite?" 20, but his theory (26) that Luke, or a later copyist, was unaware of this tripartite division but knew of the self-designation of Samaritans as "benei Israel" is unconvincing as it overlooks Luke's knowledge of Scripture as well as the element of surprise of parables.

- 21 Bock, *Lukas*, 1031; Bovon, *Luke*, 59. Talmon, "Good Samaritan or Good Israelite?" 27 correctly doubts the connection of Samaritans with the site, or with the historical Jesus. The story (23) reflects Luke's literary style and theological rhetorics.
- 22 The status of Samaritans in rabbinic sources oscillates between outright hostility and having legal status in between Jew and gentile (e.g., m. Ber. 7:1); cf. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 345–47. Crucial is factual behaviour, e.g., m. Ber. 8:8. Politically, relations could be tense, especially after John Hyrcanus destroyed the Temple at Mount Gerizim in 111–110 BCE; Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 345–47.
- 23 Notice how the disciples ask Jesus whether they should pray for fire to destroy a Samaritan village that refused to accept them (Luke 9:54–55; cf. 2 Kgs 1:10), but how Acts 8:14, by the same author as Luke's Gospel, tells about Samaritans being the first non-Jews to convert to the Jesus movement.
- 24 Riemer Roukema, "The Good Samaritan in Ancient Christianity," *VC* 58 (2004): 56–74 shows how elements of this interpretation appear in the second-century gnostic Gospel of Philip, in Clement of Alexandria as well as in the anti-gnostic interpretation of Irenaeus of Lyon.

people in need. In allegorical interpretations, the parable itself does not teach the tenets of the law, but Christian theology and, therewith, Christian identity. The Caesarea-based, third-century theologian Origen offers a classic explanation of the parable story, which will be followed by later church fathers. Origen ascribes it to an unknown presbyter:

The man who was going down is Adam, Jerusalem is paradise, Jericho the world, the robbers are the hostile powers, the priest is the law, the Levite represents the prophets, the Samaritan is Christ, the wounds represent disobedience, the beast the Lord's body, the inn should be interpreted as the church, since it accepts all that wish to come in. Furthermore, the two denarii are to be understood as the Father and the Son, the innkeeper as the chairman of the church, who is in charge of its supervision. The Samaritan's promise to return points to the second coming of the Saviour.²⁵

Origen interprets the motifs of the parable as spiritual metaphors of a metaphysical plot, and now the parable is about a new spiritual phase in humanity, and about Christianity as surpassing the spiritual phase of Judaism.²⁶ It tells about Adam, understood as mankind, going down from Paradise before the Fall to the world after the Fall and becoming trapped in sin, which explains the motif of "robbers" on the way. The priest and the Levite symbolize Judaism, embodied in the law and the prophets respectively, and both unable to rescue man from his sinful state. The Samaritan is Christ, as representative for Christianity, who has come to cure the man's wounds. Origen probably depended here on a play on the Hebrew שומרון, *shomron*, meaning "Samaritan," associated with the participle שומר, *shomer*, "guardian," in the Hebrew text of Ps 121:4: "See, the guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps."²⁷ This word-play illustrates both the proximity to rabbinic midrash and the way he employs it to buttress his own exegesis. The inn is the church, and the innkeeper is the keeper of the church, either bishop or priest. Given the aforementioned dubious nature of the Greek and Latin words for inn, the association with church comes unexpectedly easily: are we to associate the church as a safe, intermediate, lodging for the night, awaiting a new day?²⁸ Origen ends with the notion of

25 Origen, *Hom. Luc.* 34.3. Translation by Roukema, "Good Samaritan," 62.

26 Origen applies his typological reading of spiritual phases both to the Old Testament and the New Testament; see Grondin, *Einführung*, 48–49.

27 JPS. See Roukema, "Good Samaritan," 64.

28 Note the associations with the story of Moses in Exod 4:23–26; thanks to Leon Mock for this notion.

a second coming of the Samaritan, i.e., Christ. This reading reflects a religious identity centred around the figure of Christ, and the parable as buttressing a Christian religious identity rooted in faith, ritual practice, and contemplation. Equally important is the motif of substitution: the priest and the Levite representing the failing law and prophets, and the inn as the salvific church, convey notions of religious supremacy, since Judaism, embodied in law and prophets, is being superseded by Christianity.²⁹ In this reading, the visual rhetoric of the parable remains but shifts from an ethical (interpretation of the Law) to one of a history of redemption: the Samaritan seeing the victimised traveller becomes divine regard for humanity, and for the reader “looking” at the act of the Samaritan the story becomes a reminder of his newly acquired religious identity. Nevertheless, the ethical meaning of the story also remained valid in patristic interpretations of the parable. Augustine for example (*Doctr. chr.* 1.30.31), elaborates Origen’s reading but also emphasises that, like the Samaritan, we should help those who are in need, and, like Christ, we should consider anyone a neighbour who shows compassion towards us.³⁰ Both the ethical and the doctrinal-ecclesiastical dimensions of the story appear during the Byzantine and Medieval period.³¹

3 The Byzantine Inn

The visual rhetoric of the parable gains a new ring when Luke’s parable becomes associated with the area during the Byzantine era. It is Jerome who in his edition of Eusebius’s *Onomasticon* (24:10; 25:9–16) identifies the name Adumim as a “lieu de memoire”:

this blood defiled place was mentioned by the Lord in his parable concerning the man who descended from Jerusalem to Jericho,

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- 29 Note the following in Augustine’s *Quaest. ev.* 2.19: “But the priest and the Levite who saw him and passed him by signify the priesthood and the ministry of the Old Testament which could not be of benefit toward salvation.” Quoted in David B. Gowler, *The Parables After Jesus: Their Imaginative Receptions across Two Millennia* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 43. Roukema, “Good Samaritan” stresses, however, the anti-Marcionite context and continuing ethical tendencies of patristic readings.
- 30 Roukema, “Good Samaritan,” 70; Gowler, *Parables after Jesus*, 34–35 (Origen), and 42 (Augustine) comments on the ethical purport of the parable as *imitatio Christi*.
- 31 Note, e.g., Gowler, *Parables after Jesus*, 97, on Bonaventura.

and, in a further gloss, he notices how the name derived from the blood that was spilled there.³² Additionally, in his account of his travels with Paula to the Holy Land in 385–386 CE, Jerome adds an interesting remark:

She went directly down the hill to Jericho as she thought about the wounded man in the Gospel, who was passed by the Priest and the Levite, with a cruel mind (*mentis feritate*). The merciful Samaritan, which means "guardian," took him, near death, on his mule to the Inn of the Church (*ad stabulum ecclesie deportavit*). And she went through the place called Adumim, which is translated "blood," because so much blood was spilled there on account of robbers, and the tree of Zachaeus, which means the repentance of good works.³³

Travelling and seeing the landscape becomes a way of memorising, "reading" the text. But what text, and what landscape?³⁴ Jerome's *Epitaphium Sanctae Paulae* is a rhetorically styled spiritual journey through a sacred, Christianized, landscape, staging Paula as an idealized pilgrim. In Jerome's account, biblical references are fused with allegorical interpretations, and so the landscape becomes a reminder of Christian truth.³⁵ This is also the case for Jerome's gloss on Paula's journey: her memories are not aroused through seeing an inn, or a church, but by traversing a biblical landscape. The mention of Adumim as blood-stained is not related to the parable, but to the biblical strife between Juda and Benjamin.³⁶ And the meaning of Samaritan as "guardian" (*clementiam Samarite, id est, custodis*) reflects patristic identification of the Samaritan as Christ. Moreover, the designation *stabulum ecclesie* is ambiguous. Magen

32 Susan Weingarten, *The Saint's Saints: Hagiography and Geography in Jerome* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 252 (n. 216); Andrew Caine, *Jerome's Epitaph on Paula: A Commentary on the Epitaphium Sanctae Paulae* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 259.

33 *Epit. Paulae* 12.3. The journey actually took place; Weingarten, *Saint's Saints*, 236. Paula (347–404 CE) was an aristocratic Roman woman who met Jerome in 382 CE and accompanied him to the Holy Land to establish a monastery herself; Caine, *Epitaph*, 3–6. My translation, based on Arnold A.R. Bastiaensen, Jan W. Smit, and Christine Mohrmann, *Vita di Martino: Vita di Ilarione: In memoria di Paola* (Rome: Fondazione Lorenzo Valla, 1975), 174, is close to Caine, *Epitaph*, 59 and differs from Magen, *Samaritans*, 288.

34 Magen, *Samaritans*, 288: "Hieronymus was the first to identify the site with the inn mentioned in the parable. Most likely, he did not invent this identification, and was presenting a Christian tradition that had its basis in the Second Temple period." There is no proof for either parts of this statement.

35 Weingarten, *Saint's Saints*, 194–95, 218.

36 Magen, *Samaritans*, 288. Jerome recounts subsequent spiritual moments of her travel to Jericho, separated by "and" (*et*), such as the tree of Zachaeus, which follows immediately.

reads it as the twofold function of the Byzantine site, but Jerome refers to the allegorical interpretation of Luke's inn as church, as we noticed with Origen.³⁷ Nonetheless, a church and inn were built here, but at the beginning of the fifth century CE, not long after Paula's pilgrimage. Its remains form a square complex measuring 26.6 × 24.4 meters. The combination of a Church and a pilgrims' inn is, however, no coincidence in the region. Besides the increase in monasteries all over the Judean desert, pilgrimage became a practice from the fourth century CE onwards, as testified by the anonymous Pilgrim of Bordeaux (333/334 CE), and by Egeria's travels in 381 and 384 CE.³⁸

4 The Museum of the Good Samaritan's Inn

The present-day Museum of the Good Samaritan is located halfway between Jerusalem and Jericho, along the 26 km long Route 1 winding down from the Mount of Olives (826 metres above sea level) to Wadi Qelt (258 metres below sea level). In close proximity to Jerusalem, and situated between the Jewish settlements of Kfar Adumim and Ma'aleh Adumim, its location makes it a politically contested area. The region is related to the biblical Ma'aleh Adumim, "the Ascent of Reds," a topographical marker (Josh 15:7; 18:17) referring to the redness of the rocks.³⁹ The name continues in the Latin *Turris Rubea* and the Arabic *Tala'at et Dam* and in the 4 kilometers west of the Inn situated Palestinian village of Khan al Ahmar, the Red Khan, built close to the remains of the fifth-century CE monastery of St. Euthymius, which also functioned as an inn.⁴⁰ The present-day Inn of the Good Samaritan is situated along the ancient track of the Roman road connecting Jerusalem to Jericho.

After the disruption of the Persian conquest in 614 CE, the site came into use again during the era of the Crusades, when a fortress was added to the east of the site, guarding the winding road before it heads downwards to Jericho. Probably during the reign of the 19th-century CE Egyptian ruler Ibrahim

37 Cain, *Epitaph*, 274 on the allegorical instead of the ethical meaning.

38 Caine, *Epitaph*, 16: the Land became a "tourists' draw" after Constantine and Helena.

39 Pekka Pitkänen, *Joshua* (Nottingham: Apollos, 2010), 288. The red colour is due to iron-oxide in the limestone formations. It should be noted that more sites in this area are referred to with this name.

40 Jerome Murphy O'Connor, *Oxford Archaeological Guides: The Holy Land*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 294–96 identifies the name as this Byzantine monastery, but Magen limits it to the present-day Ottoman structure built over the remains of the Crusader and Byzantine caravanserai and Byzantine church. Magen, *Samaritans*, 281; Magen, *Good Samaritan*, 15, 52.

Pasha, a rectangular Ottoman inn was built over the southern part of the former Byzantine and Crusader structure, and the present-day main building (built in 1903) was used as a police station during the period of the British mandate.⁴¹ The church gradually disappeared, its mosaic floors being discovered only in 1934, after which pilgrims started to take out mosaics as a souvenir or a relic. The present-day museum was initiated by Magen and his team and erected under the umbrella of the Civil Administration of Judea and Samaria. It was funded by the Israel Government Tourist Corporation and the Israel Antiquities Authority. The aim was to attract tourists and pilgrims.⁴² A decision was made to use the space for the exhibition of mosaics of Jewish and Samaritan synagogues and of church mosaics, all found in Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank.⁴³ The Ottoman inn, however, has been beautifully restored and is furnished as a museum dedicated to the parable. So are a Second-Temple cave and the remains of the fifth-century Byzantine church. In the cave, visitors are able to watch a video scene showing a fragment of a 1925 silent movie, re-enacting the parable in the very same surroundings (see below). The few remains of the mosaic floor of the church led to a second, interesting, decision. Using old photographs, a project was carried out to reconstruct the floor by means of manually fabricating 1.7 million tesserae, employing old, Roman techniques or cutting and fixing the stones in old-recipe cement. A permanent wooden structure provides roofing and demarcates the church's original space (approximately 20 × 10 meters). Seating arrangements, a sober pulpit, and the roofing facilitate both touristic and religious practices. Through these, the construction exudes the semi-sacral atmosphere of the former Church.

5 Textual Interpretation and Emotional Regime

In discussing the parable, we have dealt with the rhetorical notion of how to look at and respond to people's needs. Thus, the parable inculcates an emotional regime of positively responding to ethnic or religious outsiders.⁴⁴ By

41 Magen, *Good Samaritan*, 79; Katja Cytryn-Silverman, "The Road Inns (Khāns) in Eretz Israel during the Mamluk Period," *Qadmoniot* 7 (2006): 66–77 (74–75) (Hebrew).

42 Magen, *Good Samaritan*, 19 explicitly mentions the touristic aim, but both the layout of the Church and the dominance of the parable in the museum suggest an intention to include Christian pilgrims.

43 Magen, *Good Samaritan*, 19.

44 The relative efficacy of its rhetoric has been traced in psychological research where people actually helping others were more keen in legitimizing their response with an appeal to the parable story than people who did not do so: John M. Darly and C. Daniel Batson,

employing media such as objects and movies, the museum stages a spatial performance of the story that also evokes and channels the visitor into a specific emotional regime, one departing from a Christian allegorical interpretation.⁴⁵

The museum's performance of the parable is most clearly visible in the former Ottoman khan. It is rectangular and consists of six chambers. The east side of the building has been extended with a modern construction of steel and glass, adding an extra room. The use of steel and glass distinguishes and accentuates the original structure. The building houses an entrance and three sections of two rooms, each dedicated to a monotheistic religion associated with the history of the site: Judaism, Christianity, and the Samaritans. This last choice echoes the parable's rhetoric, since there are no historical reasons to link Samaritans with this place, especially in its capacity as linking Jericho with the Temple in Jerusalem.⁴⁶ Each section exhibits religious heritage, including the remains of nearby Byzantine monasteries, and other cultural sites.

6 Movies

The museum's media performance of the parable is found in two short movies shown in the museum complex. The first is a scene from a silent movie on the historical Jesus, shot in 1925, also shown in the aforementioned Second-Temple-period cave. It is an uncut scene as part of a planned movie on the life of Jesus, titled *The Man Nobody Knows* (figs. 14.1 and 14.2).⁴⁷ This was a "non-theatrical movie picture," staged until the end of the thirties. The reels were distributed for 30 dollars, which shows a large audience was expected.⁴⁸

"From Jerusalem to Jericho': A Study of Situational and Dispositional Variables in Helping Behavior," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 27 (1973): 100–8.

45 Riis and Woodhead, *Sociology of Religious Emotion*, 33: "Obedience to emotional scripts allays guilt, deflects disapproval, and sustains a positive self-image."

46 Cf. Bock, *Lukas*, 1032. The choice may also be motivated by Magen's interest in Samaritan archaeology and history, as visible in Magen, *Samaritans*.

47 The scene is accessible on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZglOW-iRWo>. The director mentioned is Errett Leroy Kenepf, an American filmmaker who prepared documentaries for Sunday schools: Alessandro Falchetta, *The Daily Discoveries of a Bible Scholar and Manuscript Hunter: A Biography of James Rendel Harris (1852–1941)* (London: T&T Clark, 2018), 411. It is remarkable that his name is not mentioned on the movie posters; see https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0016074/?ref_=nv_sr_3.

48 The movie was completed and shown for some years, for a relatively high entrance price, in several places in the USA, which suggests success. I thank Prof. Frank Kessler for this information (email d.d. June 2018).



FIGURE 14.1 Still of the 1925 Good Samaritan scene, featuring Samaritan High Priest Yitzhaq ben 'Amram



FIGURE 14.2 Still of the 1925 Good Samaritan scene: two "Jews" in Yemenite (right) and Chassidic (left) attire, and Yitzhaq ben 'Amram

The scene lasting approximately 11 minutes features a re-enactment of the parable, shot on location: the walls of old Jerusalem and the inn itself are visible. The actors were probably recruited from Jerusalem, but the prime hero, the Samaritan, is a historical figure, the Samaritan High Priest Yitzhaq ben 'Amram

(1855–1932). It bears some irony, in view of the vilified priest and Levite in the parable, that the key character in the movie is staged by a High Priest, albeit of Samaritan descent (fig. 14.1).

He is the hero, and his proud looks seem to underline his awareness of this. The scene also features robbers dressed like Bedouins, and a priest and a Levite dressed in garments of Chassidic and Yemenite Jews (fig. 14.2), visually inscribing religious stereotyping through Christian interpretations of the parable.

The scene and the movie were based on the best-selling book *The Man Nobody Knows*, written by Bruce Fairchild Barton. Barton (1886–1967) was a pioneer in advertising; he came up with the names of General Motors and General Electric.⁴⁹ Barton was also active in politics: in 1937 and 1939 he ran for the vacant seat of senator for the City of New York, as representative for the Republican Party, a seat he lost in 1940. The book is very well-written, in a vital, naturalistic and clear style, and with some knowledge of historical critical exegesis. It was a huge success.⁵⁰ Barton presents Jesus as a vital and strong person and as a teacher of values underlying modern-day capitalism as well: having psychological wisdom; being very healthy, equipped with a strong will, and authentic; and using excellent means of communication. Jesus established a “business” that would last for thousands of years and conquer all the world. The introduction leaves no doubt about the book’s aim: “‘Someday,’ said he, ‘someone will write a book about Jesus. Every businessman will read it and send it to his partners and his salesmen. For it will tell the story of the founder of modern business.’”⁵¹ Jesus exudes vitality and a certain lust for life, not inhibited by weakness or effeminate behaviour.⁵² When Pilate presents the tortured Jesus, known as the “*ecce homo*” scene in the Gospel of John, Barton has him exclaim: “Behold, the man!”⁵³

49 Unfortunately, Richard M. Fried, *The Man Everybody Knew: Bruce Barton and the Making of Modern America* (Chicago: Ivan H. Dee, 2005), quoted in the Wikipedia lemma (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bruce_Fairchild_Barton), was not available in libraries covered by Worldcat.

50 By 1956 the book had sold more than a million copies. See Edrene S. Montgomery, “Bruce Barton’s *The Man Nobody Knows*: A Popular Advertising Illusion,” *The Journal of Popular Culture* 19 (1985): 21–34 (26).

51 Bruce Barton, *The Man Nobody Knows: A Discovery of the Real Jesus*, 6th ed. (New York: Pocket Books, 1944), 9.

52 Montgomery, “Advertising Illusion” shows how Barton’s “outdoor man” (21) portrayal of Jesus sparked controversy but responded to spiritual and social needs among the economically thriving, middle class readership of his generation (28). Barton, who developed political campaigning, can be qualified as a “conservative modernist”; so Douglas Carl Abrams, review of Richard M. Fried, *The Man Everybody Knew: Bruce Barton and the Making of Modern America*, *The American Historical Review* 112 (2007): 216–17 (216).

53 Barton, *The Man Nobody Knows*, 45.

Barton wanted to deal with his puritan pietistic upbringing, where Jesus is a meek and humble person, not outgoing but inward and sensitive, and negating worldly matters. The parables are the best examples of effective advertising for the business Jesus founded, with "crisp, graphic language, and a message so clear that even the dullest cannot escape it."⁵⁴ Barton lists four qualities, derived from the Jesus parables, that advertising should adhere to: condensed stories, simple language and without qualifying words, sincere, and with the force of repetition. Both in the book and in the movie-scene performed in the museum, the Good Samaritan is tantamount to public ethics in any society or social environment, be it secular or religious. In the words of Barton: "It (i.e., the parable, EO) condenses the philosophy of Christianity into a half dozen unforgettable paragraphs. The parable of the Good Samaritan is the greatest advertisement in the world."⁵⁵ The book's message recurs in the last shot, the parable being a lesson on "universal brotherhood" "regardless of creed, colour or race." It is this message that is shown to the public, and remains, like an advertisement statement, as the parable's core meaning.

A second performance, immediately following the 1925 movie, reinforces this idea of the parable as inducing civic ethos. It is a video display of a short, comic scene from the television show *Seinfeld* (1998), ironically addressing the "bystander effect." In it, Seinfeld and his friends watch the robbery of a fat man. All four talk about what they are going to do next, even filming the scene. However, in turn all four are arrested by a policeman.⁵⁶ To the astonished exclamations that they were not guilty of robbery, the policeman retorts that the town Latham keeps a law called the Law of the Good Samaritan. This law compels any bystander not to remain passive but to act on behalf of victimised others. It is especially the first part of the parable, the "watching" but inactive priest and Levite, who are transformed into Seinfeld and his friends being passive commentators, and the parable becomes a satirical form of self-criticism on modern consumerism and neutrality.⁵⁷

54 Barton, *The Man Nobody Knows*, 95.

55 Barton, *The Man Nobody Knows*, 95.

56 *Seinfeld*, season 9, episode 23/24.

57 Albeit as a protective law for people trying to help others, Good Samaritan laws are operative in 50 states of the USA: "Good Samaritan laws offer legal protection to people who give reasonable assistance to those who are, or whom they believe to be, injured, ill, in peril, or otherwise incapacitated" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Good_Samaritan_Law).

7 Choreography

Two aspects of the museum's choreography deserve discussion: its religious heritage and the museum's staging of religious and civic ethos in its political context. Culture is the first aim of the museum's outfit. Its spatial division creates a dialogue between three religious heritages, centred around the parable. Thus, a "Christian" tradition is used to shed light on Jewish and Samaritan heritage, and Jewish tradition serves to highlight the parable's background. This choreography departs from Byzantine interpretation and its tenets of Christianity as substituting Judaism: the museum reclaims the parable as part of Jewish culture. In this dialogical staging, the museum approaches religious traditions as part of local cultural heritage. Samaritan religious heritage as well as the Samaritan High Priest in the movie serve as the "outsider," breaking cultural and ideological boundaries as well as the binary opposition of Christianity and Judaism, and extending the parable's negotiation of who is "inside" or "outside" in modern-day cultural and religious reality. The 1925 movie stages him as the religious hero, teaching the proper fulfilment of Mosaic law.⁵⁸ In this choreography of the parable, the museum extends the parable's rhetoric as transcending borders of social and religious belonging and as emphasizing



FIGURE 14.3 Former Byzantine church with modern roofing. Background: the Crusader Fortress

⁵⁸ Of course, Samaritans share the canonical Mosaic law of Lev 19:18.

the notion of "seeing" correctly. However, the museum's relative neglect of the Muslim stage of the site's history and the concomitant omission of a dialogue with Islamic heritage and religion raises questions. Is the Muslim history not considered part of its cultural display and civic ethos politics? Moreover, the only Muslims visible are the actors staged as robbers in the 1925 silent movie, scenes that reflect prejudices current in those days.

Noticeable as well is the way the reconstructed Byzantine church space facilitates Christian pilgrim practice (fig. 14.3). Its demarcation of the mosaic floor, the newly constructed wooden roof and seating arrangements mark this as a potential sacred space, to be inhabited and defined by ritual. Its space remains part of the museum's secular outline, nonetheless, and the site is not purely dedicated to pilgrimage. Telling is the absence of a cross or any other Christian symbol, like a fish. Moreover, the boundary markers of the Byzantine church's mosaic floor do not hamper visitors in moving around freely, and no religious or symbolic division is present. The exhibited mosaics remind pious pilgrims of Jewish and Samaritan contexts, and looking at all these cultures suggests religion not to be a dividing but rather an inspiring and binding force in society, and teaching values of pity and practical care.⁵⁹

Nevertheless, while facilitating religious practices in a museum is not unique, here it acquires a political meaning as well, given the contested nature of the site as part of the Oslo II defined C areas and still awaiting a final status.⁶⁰ This political dimension gains weight given the nearby presence (4 kilometers west of the Inn) of the Palestinian village Khan Al Ahmar, occupied since 1952 by Bedouins of the Jahalin tribe.⁶¹ Since May 2018, the village faces threat of demolition through a decision by the Israeli High Court of Justice. This site has become one of political struggle, starting with an Israeli High Court decision in 2014 to defer an order for demolishment of the village from military jurisprudence to the political realm. International organizations

59 Cf. Riis and Woodhead, *Sociology of Religious Emotion*, 46: "Fear, shame, pity, and so on are culturally contingent words with which we try, with varying degrees of inadequacy, to capture aspects of shifting social and material relationships and associated image-schema that always exceed the capacity of our words."

60 The C area is partly ruled by Israel's Defense Ministry (infrastructure, safety), through the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories, and partly (education, medical and social care) by the Palestinian National Authority in Ramallah. The site is, however, part of the disputed plans on the so called E1 area, the Jewish settlements east of Jerusalem, and of heated legal processes underlying these politics: Alice M. Panepinto, "Jurisdiction as Sovereignty Over Occupied Palestine: The Case of Khan-Al-Ahmar," *Social and Legal Studies* 26 (2017): 311–32.

61 The Inn's site is identical with Arab Khan al Hatruri. However, the name Khan al Ahmar is sometimes used as well for the Inn on internet, which causes confusion.

like the United Nations, the International Criminal Court, the European Parliament and Amnesty International have criticized this decision, and the Israeli Government seeks to negotiate a deal.⁶² Given its location between the Jewish settlements of Ma'aleh Adumim and Kfar Adumim, and its proximity to the site of the museum, it is noteworthy that no attention is given to the history of this homonymous site. Thus, the museum's performance of the parable connects it both to its historical context and to a secular ethos. However, its displays of religious and cultural heritage gain political rhetoric as it becomes mingled willy-nilly among claims from local historical and religious memory. Given this entanglement of archaeology, religious memory, civic ethos and politics, the museum still is a contested site, despite its careful ways of displaying religious heritage. Indeed, the *Seinfeld* comedy suggests the parable to offer a "law" valid for any society, breaching the boundaries of religious ethics and secular ethos, and transcending ethnic affiliations. Moreover, the attention dedicated to Samaritans gives weight to a neglected ethnicity in the present-day tourism industry. Nonetheless, whenever religion comes into view it is limited to Christianity, Judaism, and the Samaritans, the last of whom have no historical links to the site apart from the fictive parable in Luke. Only the walls of the Ottoman khan, fitted with wall-irons used for stabling horses, as well as the building itself are reminders of the Islamic period. Clearly, the site, not initiated as a shrine or cultic place, became entangled in a negotiation between the religious and the secular through the parable. However, referring to former functions and religious practices is not worked out for the Ottoman khan, nor for its Mamluk predecessor, nor for their history of facilitating travel and Muslim pilgrimage to Jerusalem.⁶³

8 Conclusions

The parable of the good Samaritan is a story that transcends ethnic and religious boundaries to teach about the fulfilment of the law. The Samaritan, the

62 The Israeli Government decided to postpone the demolition until, as the Israeli High Court preferred in its decision of May 2018, a negotiated decision would be reached (Tovah Lazaroff, "Israel Delays Demolition of West Bank Bedouin Village Khan Al-Ahmar," *Jerusalem Post*, 20 October 2018, <https://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Israel-delays-demolition-of-West-Bank-Bedouin-village-Khan-al-Ahmar-569861>). Panepinto, "Jurisdiction" argues how the case shows a juridical shift in Israeli ruling of the C area and its political ramifications.

63 Cytrin-Silverman, "Road Inns," 74–75 discusses the inn as part of the Mamluk infrastructure in the land.

supposed "other" party in early Judaism, becomes the hero through his way of looking and acting, but in later Christian interpretation, the priest and the Levite become the "other," as a negative foil for Judaism, and as opposed to Christ embodied in the Samaritan. In the museum's staging of the parable, these processes of "othering," either of the Samaritans or the Jews, are debunked. Samaritan, Christian, and Jewish culture is visibly presented in such ways as to create a multi-religious context buttressing the parable's message of how to become a neighbour. Moreover, the performance of the parable in the museum reclaims it as local culture and as part of early Jewish heritage, abandoning notions of theological supremacy. The site also continues the parable's negotiation of the secular and the sacred, and its historical choreography is probably unique in the history of Jewish and Christian sacred landscapes: first, a travellers' station in the desert of Judea became wound up with a parable addressing an intra-Jewish debate on the law. After the parable turned into a canonical text, it imbued the location with an aura of sanctity through the text's interpretation in Christianity. In moving from Christian to Muslim regional dominance, it regained its former, "secular," status, but in its final phase, under the current Israeli government, the museum has embraced aspects of both secular and sacred functions. The museum in a way produces its version of the parable, within the context of Israeli society. In Luke, the space staged a story of looking at the victimised traveller which arouses fulfilment of the law, in Byzantine Christianity looking at the landscape arouses the memory of the parable as a guide for a pilgrim's spiritual quest to salvation. The museum stages an impressive choreography of plurality of cultures and religions, inculcating civic ethos with an alleged local story.

The museum even facilitates Christian worship connected with the parable's landscape, but in dialogue with other religious cultures and with secular society, with the movies performing the parable as a "billboard" for civic ethos. Tellingly, the Muslim dimensions of the site's history have become somewhat obfuscated in all dimensions of this choreography (fig. 14.4).⁶⁴ Since the museum, by its location on the West Bank, is entangled in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, as well as in current Israeli society's identity politics, its choreography cannot escape new contestations, halfway between Jerusalem and Jericho.⁶⁵

64 The museum may not be an isolated case: Yitzhak Reiter, "Tolerance versus Holiness: The Jerusalem Museum of Tolerance and the Mamilla Muslim Cemetery," in Barkan and Barkey, *Choreographies*, 299–355.

65 Thanks to Rob Nelisse for pictures taken during a field trip (summer 2017) with Lieve Teugels and Marcel Poorthuis. Thanks as well to Boaz Zissu for discussing archaeological aspects, Pooyan Tamimi Arab for discussing choreography, and to Marcel Poorthuis and the editors for their helpful and critical comments.



FIGURE 14.4 Postcard picture of the Ottoman inn, 1906

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