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FROM ROME TO JERUSALEM:
AN ICELANDIC ITINERARY OF THE MID-TWELFTH CENTURY

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In 1940 and 1944 F. P. Magoun published two articles that commented in detail on part of the pilgrim itinerary of a mid twelfth-century Icelander who is identified in the text as “Abbot Nikulás.” The first of Magoun’s articles deals with Nikulás’ stay in Rome;¹ the second with his journey from Iceland to Rome,² and for both parts of the itinerary Magoun provided, for the first time, a translation into English. Nikulás went on from Rome to Jerusalem before returning to Iceland, where he dictated the account of his travels, which survives in a fourteenth-century manuscript.

The journey to Jerusalem mentions many details that are of value for historians of pilgrimage, commerce and the Holy Land in the time of the Crusades, yet it does not seem to be generally known. Scholars frequently mention Scandinavian travelers to the Holy Land, but the information mostly concerns the kings and is derived either from the sagas directly or from Riant’s mid nineteenth-century study of Scandinavian expeditions and pilgrimages to the Holy Land,³ where again the focus is on the saga material and where Nikulás’ itinerary is summarized in a way that eliminates almost all its interesting and valuable detail. Yet in its sobriety and in its careful attention to the matter in hand, it is in many ways more reliable and more informative than the sagas of the kings. In this article I therefore complete Magoun’s study of the itinerary by providing a translation of and a commentary on that part of the text that describes Nikulás’ travels through southern Italy,

¹F. P. Magoun, “The Rome of Two Northern Pilgrims: Archbishop Sigeric of Canterbury and Abbot Nikulás of Munkathverá,” *HTR* 33 (1940) 267–89.

²F. P. Magoun, “The Pilgrim Diary of Nikulás of Munkathverá,” *MS* 6 (1944) 314–54.

³P. Riant, *Expéditions et pèlerinages des scandinaves en Terre Sainte au temps des Croisades* (Paris: Lainé et Harvard, 1865).

the eastern Mediterranean and the Holy Land, his visit to Jerusalem and his return to Iceland.

The exact date of Nikulás' journey is not known, but internal evidence shows that he was in the Holy Land before the capture of Ascalon in 1153, since he names the important coastal towns south of Acre and for Ascalon alone pointedly states that it was in the land of the Saracens and was still heathen. Other internal evidence for dating is less secure, but it seems clear from his description of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre that he saw the Sepulchre and Calvary within one building. Since this became possible only with the building of the Crusader church, Nikulás probably visited it after its dedication in July 1149. His whole pilgrimage probably took two or three years. Much of his traveling could be done only in summer and we know that he lingered, for an unspecified length of time, in Rome, the Holy Land, probably Monte Cassino, and almost certainly a number of lesser places en route. At the end of the itinerary we learn that it took fifteen weeks to reach north Denmark from the Jordan, the eastern limit of his pilgrimage. To this we must add time for the crossing to Norway and a week, as on the outward trip, for the crossing thence to Iceland, making between four and five months in all. But this remarkably swift return does not allow for delays, whether from choice, as on the journey out, nor because of adverse circumstances, nor does it allow for traveling time within Iceland itself. Although the suggested dates vary slightly, there is general agreement among scholars that Nikulás was abroad in the early 1150s⁴ and this is borne out by the evidence of the text, limited though it is.

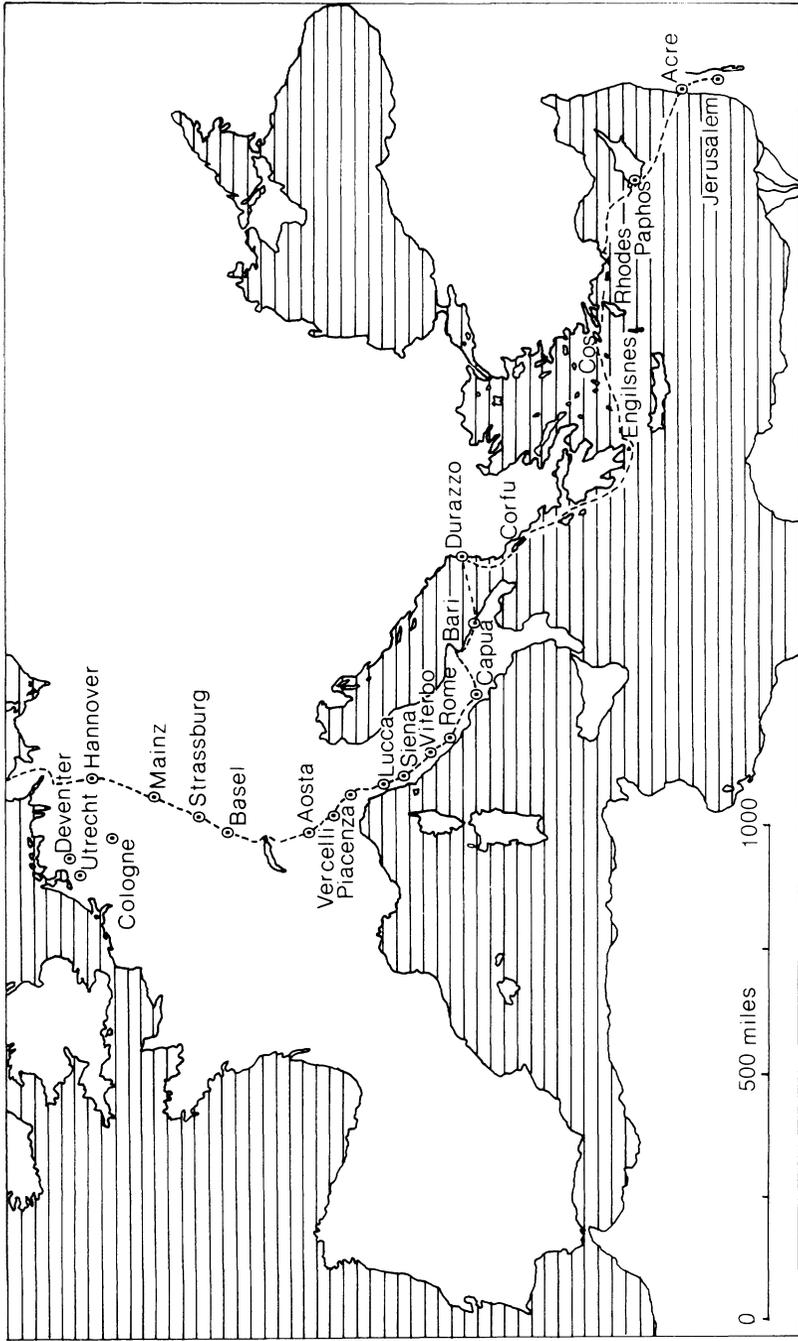
This dating is supported by external evidence. The concluding sentence of the itinerary refers to Nikulás as abbot. In the mid-twelfth century there were two monasteries in Iceland, both in the northern diocese of Hólar, and both Benedictine.⁵ That at Þingeyrar was founded in 1121 and in the 1150s had an abbot called Nikulás Sæmundarson, who died in 1158. For Þverá, or Munkaþverá, founded in 1155, records mention Høskuldr as the first abbot,⁶ but he is otherwise unknown, and he can have ruled only for a few months because, still in

⁴Riant suggested ca. 1151–54 (*ibid.*, 81); Kålund, both in his Icelandic edition (p. xix) and in his Danish translation and commentary (p. 84) suggested ca. 1150 (for details of these editions, see nn. 10 and 11, below); Magoun ("Two Northern Pilgrims," 278) gives 1154, claiming to be following Kålund, but this is the date by which Kålund believes that Nikulás was back in Iceland (p. xix of Kålund's Icelandic edition).

⁵For a survey of the monastic institutions in medieval Iceland, to which this paragraph is heavily indebted, see Eiríkr Magnússon, "Bénédictins en Islande," *RBén* 15 (1898) 145–58, 193–99.

⁶This is according to Magnússon, "Bénédictins en Islande," 194. But Kålund, on p. xix of his Icelandic edition, states that Nikulás was Þverá's first abbot.





1155, we find his successor, Nikulás Bergsson, assisting the two Icelandic bishops at the consecration of the new cathedral at Skálholt. This abbot Nikulás died in 1159 or 1160. Early scholars⁷ believed that the writer of the itinerary was Nikulás Sæmundarson but the evidence of the dating makes it more likely to have been Nikulás Bergsson, which is now generally accepted.⁸ Surviving fragments of poems show him to have been a man of letters, and the date of his election as abbot (1155) would have allowed ample time for his return from the Holy Land, which he left before August 1153, and his resumption of monastic life in Iceland. The prestige and reputation for sanctity which accrued to those who made the pilgrimage from Scandinavian lands probably influenced his selection. We know little else about him, but presumably his education and early monastic life were in the monastery at Þingeyrar. From the itinerary it is clear that, apart from his obvious pious interests, he had an enthusiasm for heroic legend⁹ and Scandinavian history and a penchant for scientific exactness which led him to be careful about directions, distances, and even the elevation of the pole star when seen from the banks of the Jordan.

The account of Nikulás' pilgrimage is embedded in an encyclopedic miscellany which survives in an octavo MS of 1387 from western Iceland (AM 194). A single folio from another copy of the itinerary, made ca. 1400, also survives (AM 736 II). The text of the whole of AM 194 was printed by Kålund in 1908,¹⁰ but the itinerary remained without a commentary until his Danish edition of 1913.¹¹ Much of that can now be supplemented in the light of our increased knowledge, in particular of the Crusades and of medieval Jerusalem. The two earlier editions, by Werlauff in 1821¹² and by Rafn in 1852,¹³ are of little account: both are less reliable than Kålund's and Rafn's is incomplete.

⁷Riant, *Scandinaves en Terre Sainte*, 80–81 and C. C. Rafn on p. 395 of his partial edition (see n. 13, below).

⁸By Kålund, Magoun, and by G. Turville-Petre, *Origins of Icelandic Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1953) 160.

⁹There are no references to heroic legend in the part of the itinerary dealt with in this paper, but between Iceland and Rome he "identifies" sites connected with Sigurðr, Ragnar Lodbrók, Gunnarr and Þidrikr.

¹⁰Kr. Kålund, ed., *Alfræði Íslenzk; Íslandsk encyklopædisk litteratur*, I (Samfund til Udgivelse af Gammel Nordisk Litteratur 37; Copenhagen: Møllers, 1908). Nikulás' itinerary begins on p. 12, line 26 and ends on p. 23, line 21.

¹¹Kr. Kålund, "En islandsk Vejviser for Pilgrimme fra 12. Århundrede," *Aarbøger for nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie* 3/3 (1913) 51–105.

¹²E. C. Werlauff, ed., *Symbolas ad Geographiam Medii Ævi ex Monumentis Islandicis* (Copenhagen: Schultzianis, 1821) 14–32.

¹³C. C. Rafn, ed., *Antiquités Russes d'après les monuments historiques des Islandais et des anciens Scandinaves* (Copenhagen: Berling, 1852) 2. 394–415.

The translation that follows, in common with Magoun's translations of the earlier part of the itinerary, is from Kǫlund's Icelandic text. Personal names (of saints, for the most part) are given in their usual English form, but the Icelandic form is kept for place-names in almost all cases, since it is often of historical or linguistic interest. The towns and sites to be identified and commented upon in the notes that follow are marked in the translation by an asterisk.

From there [Rome] there are ten miles to *Ti[...]am.
 Then it is a day's journey to *Florenciusborg, another's to
 *Separan. The *river Garileam flows there; it divides the
 kingdom of Rome and Sicily, and there Campania or *Púll
 5 lies to the southeast, but Italia to the north. Then *[...]naborg
 is twelve miles from Separan, then it is six miles to the
 mountain *Montakassin, where there is a great monastery and
 a surrounding fortified wall enclosing ten churches. Fore-
 most among them is Benedict's church, which women may not enter;
 10 there also is Martin's church, which Benedict had built and
 and in which are the finger of the apostle Matthew and the arm
 of Bishop Martin; the church of Andrew is there and so are
 those of Mary, Stephen and Nicholas. Then it is a two
 days' journey to *Kápa. *Germanus borg is next to
 15 Montakassin. Then it is a two days' journey to *Benevent,
 which is the largest city in Púll. Southwest from there is
 *Salerniborg, where there are the best physicians. *Sepont
 stands at the foot of *Michialsfiáll which is three miles in
 breadth but ten in length, and it is part way up the mountain;
 20 there is Michael's cave and the silken cloth that he gave to
 the place. Then it is a day's journey to *Barl, then six miles
 to *Traon, then four to *Bissenoborg, four to *Malfetaborg,
 four to *Ivent, then six to Nicholas in *Bár, where he lies.

This is another more westerly route to Kápa: from
 25 Rómaborg to *Albanusborg, from where one journeys along
 *Flaian's [*recte* Traian's] causeway which, from one end to
 to the other, is a three-week journey through fens and forests;
 it is the most outstanding human construction. For a whole
 day's journey one travels through forests and each foot('s pace)
 30 is impassable, except by Flaian's causeway. Then comes
 *Terentiana; the Romans destroyed it and it is now small.
 Then comes *Fundiana. Then comes *Gaida. Then it is a
 two days' journey to Kápa. Then one travels to Benevent. On
 from there is *Manupl, then *Brandeis. In that gulf are
 35 *Feneyiar, where there is the patriarchal throne and where
 there are the holy relics of Mark and Luke.

A short distance from *Duracur is *Mariohofn. Then comes *Visgardzhofn. Then comes *Engilsnes. Then it is a short distance to the island *Paciencia or *Sikiley, where
 40 there is volcanic fire and boiling water as in Iceland. Then comes the town that is called *‘‘of Martin,’’ which is in *Bolgaraland. Then one has to sail to the island that is called *Ku, where the routes from Púll and *Mikligardr meet, it being northwest to Púll, but on by sea to *Krit. On from Ku
 45 is the island that is called *Roda. Then one has to sail across to *Grikland and to *Raudakastali. Then comes *Patera. Bishop Nicholas was born there and his school still stands there. Then comes *Mirea-borg where he was a bishop. Then it is a short distance to *Jalandanes in Tyrkland. Then
 50 it is two days by sea to *Kípr. There lies a gulf that Norsemen call *Atalsfiord, but the Greeks call Gullus [*recte* Gulfus] Satalie. On Kípr is the town that is called *Baffa, where there is the garrison of the Varangians, and where Eiríkr king of the Danes died, the son of Sveinn and brother of Knútr
 55 the holy. He donated money in Lúka so that every Danish-speaking man would drink free wine in sufficient quantity, and he had a hospital built eight miles from Plazinzoborg where everyone is given food. Pope Paschalis allowed him to transfer the archiepiscopal see from Saxland to Danmqrk.
 60 From Kípr it is two days by sea to *Acrsborg which is in *Jórsalaland. Then comes *Chafarnaum, which in ancient times was called þolomaida. Then *Cesarea. Then comes *Jaffa, which Baldwin, king of Jerusalem, made christian, along with the king of Norway, king Sigurðr Magnússon. Then
 65 comes *Askalon, which stands in *Serkland and is still heathen. But east from Acrsborg is *Syr, then *Seth, then *Tripulis, then *Lic. A gulf, which we call *Anþekio-fiord, extends inland there. There, in the gulf, is *Antiochia where the apostle Peter established his patriarchal see. All these
 70 towns are in *Sýrland. The district of *Galilea is inland from Akrsborg. There there is a large mountain which is called *Tabor, where Moses and Elijah appeared to the apostles. Then comes *Nazaret, where the angel Gabriel came to meet with Mary, and where Christ was nurtured
 75 for twenty-three years. Then comes the village that is called *Gilin. Then comes *Iohannis-kastali, which was formerly called Samaria, where the holy relic of John the Baptist was found, and where there is *Jacob’s Well, from which Christ asked the woman to give him whereof to drink.

80 Then comes *Napl, a large town. Then comes the town that is called *Casal. Then comes *Maka Maria.

Then it is up to *Jórsalaborg; it is the most splendid of all the cities of the world and is celebrated in song everywhere throughout all Christendom because wondrous signs of Christ's
 85 passion are still seen there. There there is the church in which there is the Lord's sepulchre and the place where the Lord's cross stood, where one can clearly see Christ's blood on the stone as if it were newly bled, and so it will always be until Doomsday. Men receive light down from heaven there
 90 on Easter Eve. It is called *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre and it is open above over the sepulchre. The *center of the earth is there, where the sun shines directly down from the sky on the feast of John. There there is the *hospital of John the Baptist, which is the most magnificent in the whole
 95 world. Then there is the *Tower of David. In Hierusalem is the *Temple of the Lord and *Solomon's Temple.

Southwest from Jórsalaborg is the mountain that is called *Synai [*recte* Sion] where the Holy Ghost came upon the apostles and where Christ ate on the evening of Maundy Thursday, and
 100 the table at which he ate still stands there. Four miles further south is *Bethleem, a small and beautiful town, where Christ was born. From there it is a short distance to *Bethania kastali where Christ raised Lazarus from the dead. Southeast of Jórsalaborg is the lake that is called the Dead Sea, where God
 105 sank *two cities, Sodoma on the far side and Gomorra on this side. the *Jordan flows through there and does not mix with the waters of the lake because it is very holy water. East of the city is the mountain that is called *Mons Oliveti, where Christ ascended into heaven. Between the mountain Oliveti
 110 and Jórsalaborg is the valley that is called *Josaphat where there is the tomb of queen Mary. Then it is a long way to the mountain *Querencium, where God fasted and where the devil tempted him. There is *Abrahams kastali. There stood *Hiericho. There are *Abrahams-veller. Then it is a short
 115 distance to the Jordan, where Christ was baptized; it flows from the northeast to the southwest. There beyond the river is *Rábitaland but Jórsalaland, which they call Sýrland, on this side. On the bank of the river stands a certain small *chapel where Christ took off his clothes and so the chapel
 120 remains in after times as a witness to the spot. Out by the Jordan, if a man lies on his back on level ground and lifts up his knee with his clenched fist on top and raises his thumb from his fist, then the pole-star is to be seen above it there,

that high but no higher.

- 125 Homewards from the Jordan it is five days' traveling to Akrsborg, a further fourteen days by sea from there to Púll, which is 1800 miles, a further fourteen days on foot from Bár to Rómaborg, a short six weeks' traveling from the south to *Mundia, and a further three north to *Heidabær. But the
 130 more easterly [*recte* westerly] *Ilians-vegr is nine weeks' traveling. Seven days' traveling from Heidabær to *Vebiorg. Then the Scq̄duborg river is mid-way between them. From Vebiorg it is two days' traveling to *Álaborg.

- This guide and list of cities and all this information is
 135 written at the dictation of Abbot Nicholas, who was both wise and famous, blessed with a good memory, learned in many things, sage and truthful, and there ends this narration.

(The numbers in the left margin below refer to line numbers.)

- 1 *Til...Jam*: The letters in the MS are illegible. Werlauff (p. 25) and Kålund in his Icelandic edition (p. 19) both suggest Tusculum. In his Danish edition (p. 79) Kålund erroneously equates Tusculum with Frascati.
- 2 *Florenciusborg*: Ferentino. On this occasion Nikulás covered 50 kms. in one day, although a more common rate is 25–30 kms.
- 3 *Separan*: Ceprano.
- 3 *River Garileam*: The river Garigliano, here marking the northern limit of the Norman conquest of southern Italy. In modern times the river is called the Garigliano only in its lower reaches, after the confluence of the Liri (on which Ceprano stands) and a number of smaller rivers.
- 4 *Púll*: Apulia (modern Puglia).
- 5 [...]*naborg*: Some of the letters are illegible in the MS. Following Werlauff and Kålund, we may take it to be Aquinaborg, classical Aquinum, on the Via Latina (modern Aquino). Like Ceprano it lies north of that part of the river now called the Garigliano.
- 7 *Montakassin*: Monte Cassino, the monastery founded by Benedict in 529. It must have had a particular attraction for the Benedictine Nikulás. Of the six churches named by him, St. Benedict's own church and those of St. Martin and St. Andrew had been included in the rebuilding program of Abbot Desiderius (1058–87).¹⁴ The

¹⁴See W. Wattenbach, ed., "Chronica Monasterii Casinensis," *MGH, Scriptores* 7 (1846) 716ff. for details of Desiderius' rebuilding program. St. Benedict's was consecrated in 1071; St. Martin's in 1090, St. Andrew's in 1094. The churches of Saints Bartholomew, Peter and the Archangel Michael were consecrated in 1075.

four that Nikulás does not name are probably the churches of St. John the Baptist, originally founded by Benedict along with that of St. Martin;¹⁵ and of St. Bartholomew, St. Peter and the Archangel Michael, all included in the rebuilding program. The relics singled out by Nikulás are not given special mention in the *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, but a relic of St. Matthew is included in a list of relics brought from the Lateran by Abbot Theobald in 1023 (*Chronica*, p. 720) and relics of St. Matthew and Bishop Martin are later (*Chronica*, p. 763) mentioned in a list of those in the altar of St. Martin's church. The size and nature of the relics are not specified.

- 14 *Kápa*: Capua, near the convergence of the Via Latina and the Via Appia.
- 14 *Germanus borg*: The town at the foot of Monte Cassino, known since 1871 as Cassino. Before that it was called S. Germano (in the *Chronica*, *Civitas Sancti Germani*).
- 15 *Benevent*: Benevento, on the Via Appia. The Christian sites that Nikulás would have seen include the eighth-century church of Santa Sofia and the then new cathedral, with its bronze doors showing bas-reliefs of New Testament subjects and said to have been made at Constantinople in 1150.
- 17 *Salerniborg*: Salerno. Not visited by Nikulás, but mentioned by him, as a decade or so later by Benjamin of Tudela,¹⁶ because of its famous medical school.
- 17 *Seþont*: Ancient Sipontum, which Kålund, in his Danish translation (p. 59), incorrectly identified with modern Manfredonia, which was in fact not founded until the thirteenth century. Despite the grammar of the text, in which *hon* (fem.), "it," must refer to *Seþont* (fem., as in the earlier phrase, "Seþont hon stendr") and not to *hellir* (masc.), "cave," it is in fact St. Michael's cave that is part way up the mountain and not the town. I have nevertheless translated the sentence as it has been transmitted by successive scribes.
- 18 *Michialsfjall* (Michael's Mountain): Monte Gargano, above Sipontum. Nikulás' name for the mountain derives from the pious legend of the appearance of the Archangel Michael on the mountainside, which led to the site being developed as one of the more important pilgrim sites of Italy.¹⁷ The alternative name, Monte

¹⁵Gregory the Great *Dialogi* 2.8 (PL 66. 152).

¹⁶M. N. Adler, ed. and trans., *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela* (London: Frowde, 1907) 7. Benjamin was a Spanish Jew who traveled to the Holy Land and around the eastern Mediterranean between 1166 and 1170.

¹⁷According to Ælfric (see n. 18, below), "People from every nation visit the place."

Gargano, known in England in the tenth century,¹⁸ likewise derives from the legend, in which Michael prevented Garganus from killing his stray bull. Having declared himself to be a protector of the site and of the people of Sipontum and Beneventum in their war against the Neapolitans, Michael miraculously “constructed” a church in the cave into which the bull had strayed and in it left a footprint impressed in marble and a crimson altar cloth.¹⁹

- 21 *Barl*: Barletta.
 22 *Traon*: Trani. A new cathedral had been built there ca. 1100.
 22 *Bissenoborg*: Bisceglie.
 22 *Malfetaborg*: Molfetta.
 23 *Ivent*: Giovinazzo.
 23 *Bár*: Bari. It had important trading contacts with the eastern Mediterranean²⁰ and was thus a useful port in which to look for passage. *Sæwulf* mentions it, along with Sipontum, Barletta and Trani, as a possible point of departure for the Holy Land.²¹ The town was renowned for possessing the relics of St. Nicholas, rescued from Myra, newly captured by the Saracens, by traders returning to Bari from Antioch in 1086.
 25 *Albanusborg*: Albano Laziale.
 26 *Flaian's* [recte *Traian's*] *causeway*: “Causeway” translates Icelandic *brú*, which usually, though obviously not here, means “bridge.”

See further: John Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1977) 141 for the account of a visit by Bernard the Monk, ca. 870; Guillaume de Pouille, *La Geste de Robert Guiscard* (Marguerite Mathieu, ed. and trans.; Palermo: Istituto Siciliano di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici: Testi 4, 1961) 98, lines 11–13; and Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1951; reprint ed., Harmondsworth: Peregrine, 1965) 1. 44, 46, 56, for the site's popularity with Normans and others en route for the Crusades.

¹⁸B. Thorpe, ed., *The Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church* (London: Ælfric Society, 1844) 1. 502; R. Morris, ed., *The Blickling Homilies* (EETS, O.S. 58, 63, 73; London: Oxford University, 1874–80; reprinted as one vol., 1967) 197. Both homilists were following an account of the legend that was circulating in popular Latin homiliaries. The best printed Latin text is G. Waitz, ed., “Liber de Apparitione Sancti Michaelis in Monte Gargano,” *MGH, Scriptores Rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum Saec. vi–ix* (Hannover, 1878) 541–43.

¹⁹So records the Latin text and the homilies that follow it. Nikulás also refers to a silken cloth. Inexplicably, in his summary of the miraculous events that led to the establishment of Monte Gargano as a pilgrim site, John Julius Norwich states that Michael left behind a great iron spur (J. J. Norwich, *The Normans in the South, 1016–1130* [London: Longman, 1967] 4).

²⁰W. Heyd, *Histoire du commerce du Levant au Moyen-Age* (Furcy Raynaud, trans.; Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1959) 1. 96–97.

²¹The Rev. Canon Brownlow, trans., *Sæwulf* (Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society 21; London, 1892) 1. *Sæwulf* made his journey in 1102–3. It will hereafter be cited by editor and page number.

The cognate Old English *brycg* has “causeway” as a well attested meaning and I have therefore treated *brú* as if it has a similar semantic range, as it does in modern Icelandic.²² Nikulás is clearly referring to the whole length of the road from Rome to Brindisi and not just to that part that crosses the Pontine Marshes, for which the narrower sense of *brú* might be appropriate. The original Via Appia, begun by Appius Claudius Caecus in 312 B.C., ran to the port of Brindisium via Beneventum, Aeclanum, Venusia and Tarentum. Trajan (98–117) built an alternative route from Beneventum to Brindisium via Canusium, on lower and easier ground, northeast of the Via Appia proper, and it was this that was known as the Via Traiana.²³ From the fact that he names the coastal town of Monopoli as en route to Brindisi, we infer that Nikulás had in mind Trajan’s alternative route which, being on easier terrain, might well have remained the more heavily used route in the Middle Ages. Nikulás uses Trajan’s name for the whole route from Rome to Brindisi, though there is no evidence that this was customary in classical times, despite Trajan’s repairs to the original Via Appia. At an average daily speed of 25–30 kms., within Nikulás’ normal range, the 560 or so kms. from Rome to Brindisi would indeed have taken about three weeks to cover.²⁴

- 31 *Terentiana*: Terracina. As a town of the Volsci, it was destroyed by the Romans in 404 B.C. as related by Livy 4.59.
- 32 *Fundiana*: Fondi.
- 32 *Gaida*: Gaeta.
- 34 *Manupl*: Monopoli.

²²R. Cleasby and G. Vigfusson, *An Icelandic-English Dictionary* (2d ed., with supplement, by Sir William Craigie; Oxford: Clarendon, 1957) 83 gives “bridge” as the only meaning. For the Old English cognate, see E. V. Gordon, ed., *The Battle of Maldon* (London: Methuen, 1937) lines 74 and 78 of the poem and pp. 3–4 of the introduction. Sigfus Blöndal (*Islensk-Dönsk Orðabók* [Reykjavik: Þorláksson, 1920–24] 113) gives “a raised path through a marsh” and “a man-made road” as meanings of *brú* in modern Icelandic.

²³R. Chevallier, *Roman Roads* (N. H. Field, trans.; London: Batsford, 1976) 132–33. For this and other references to Roman roads in Italy, see the map on pp. 30–31 of H.-E. Stier et al., eds., *Westermanns grosser Atlas zur Weltgeschichte* (Braunschweig: Westermann, 1956). I am indebted to Professor O. A. W. Dilke, of the University of Leeds, for his helpful advice on the matter of Roman roads.

²⁴Lionel Casson (*Travel in the Ancient World* [London: Allen & Unwin, 1974] 196) points out that Horace, with all the advantages of a good road for most of the way, and with money, and a barge for the Pontine Marshes, took two weeks in 38 or 37 B.C.. The exceptional speed of seven days that could be achieved by the *cursus publicus* is discussed on p. 188.

- 34 *Brandeis*: Brindisi (classical Brindisium), a major port for travel east.²⁵
- 35 *Feneyiar* (the islands of Venice): Since 1081 the Venetians had had control over the Adriatic (the “gulf” referred to by Nikulás) and extensive trading rights throughout the Byzantine empire and it could easily have been their coastal traffic that provided Nikulás with some of his transport.²⁶ The relics of St. Mark, the tutelary saint of Venice, are said to have been brought from Alexandria in 828, but I can find no explanation for Nikulás’ reference to St. Luke.
- 37 *Duracur*: Durazzo (Durrës, Albania), classical Dyrrhachium: the shortest crossing from Bari, from which, for reasons given on p. 200, below, Nikulás may be presumed to have sailed.
- 37 *Mariohqfn*: Santa Maria del Kassiopi, Corfu. The island had been captured by Roger of Sicily in 1149.
- 38 *Visgardzhqfn*: Porto Guiscardo (Phiskardo), Cephalonia: the traditional site of the death in 1085 of the Norman Robert Guiscard, Duke of Apulia.²⁷
- 38 *Engilsnes*: Literally “Angel’s-ness,” i.e., Cap San’Angelo (Akra Maléa), the southern tip of the easternmost promontory of the Peloponnese. It is also called Englisnes in the saga of Sigurðr Jórsalafari (Jerusalem-traveler).²⁸
- 39 *Paciencia*: Sapientza, a small island off the west coast of the Peloponnese, south of Cephalonia. Nikulás had already sailed past it by the time he reached Englisnes.
- 39 *Sikiley*: The MS reads as if this is an alternative name for Paciencia, but there is no evidence for this elsewhere and other identifications of Sikiley are possible. If we follow Kålund in his Danish translation (p. 59) and insert a second *til*, “to,” the confusion is lessened: Þá er skamt til eyiar Paciencia eda [til] Sikileyiar, “Then it is a short distance to the island Paciencia or [to] Sikiley.”

²⁵Caligula’s advice to Agrippa to avoid the tedious coastal route from Brindisium to Syria in favor of direct passage from Rome to Alexandria on a grain ship (Casson, *Travel in the Ancient World*, 158) assumes that most people needing to travel east would first think of sailing from Brindisium.

²⁶Heyd, *Histoire du commerce*, 1. 118–19.

²⁷Mathieu, ed., *Geste de Robert Guiscard*, 252–54 (Latin text: Book 5, lines 284–336) 253, 334–35 (notes).

²⁸“Magnússon saga” in *Snorri Sturluson: Heimskringla* III (Bjarni Adalbjarnarson, ed.; Íslenzk Fornrit 28; Reykjavík: Hið Íslenzka Fornritfélag, 1951) 252. For an English translation, see “The Saga of the Sons of Magnús,” in Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla: History of the Kings of Norway* (L. M. Hollander, trans.; Austin: University of Texas, 1964) 697. For the reader’s convenience, subsequent references will be to the English translation.

Nikulás is thus seen to be naming two separate islands, neither of which he believes to be far from Engilsnes. Sikiley is the normal Old Icelandic name for Sicily, but Sicily is a long way from Engilsnes and one would not expect a reference to it here unless there was a confusion in the transmitted text or in Nikulás' own memory about what he had seen or been told. In his Danish commentary (pp. 81–82), Kálund proposed that Sikiley here is Nikulás' attempt to represent Sicillo in Icelandic, the Venetian name for the small island of Cerigo, which is near Engilsnes. Perhaps the similarity of name and Nikulás' confusion of them when he attempted to represent Sicillo in Icelandic led him, on his return home, to attribute the geology of Sicily (Sikiley) to the island of Sicillo (Sikiley), which he correctly remembered as being near Engilsnes. Alternatively the fault may lie with a later scribe, who mistook a bald, but correct, reference to Sikiley (Sicillo) near Engilsnes as a reference to the much more familiar Sikiley (Sicily) and himself added the details about volcanic activity. Nikulás does not claim to have visited either Paciencia or Sikiley (he refers to a number of places off his route throughout the itinerary) and he certainly did not visit or sail past Sicily in either direction.²⁹

- 41 “*Of Martin*” (borg, er Martini heitir): A town that Nikulás presumably visited after rounding Engilsnes, hence on the east coast of the promontory. The name implies that there was a church dedicated to St. Martin, but not necessarily that the town was named after the saint.³⁰ I have not been able to discover exactly which town he means.³¹ Kálund, in his Danish commentary (p. 82), refers to a late fifteenth-century incunabulum in which the name Martin Carabo is given to a good anchorage on the promontory's east coast, where ships could catch favorable winds for continuing through the Greek islands.
- 42 *Bolgaraland*: Not Bulgaria, but “land of the Slavs,” who had long been settled in the Peloponnese.³² They had been converted to Christianity following their subjugation by Michael III in the ninth century.

²⁹The mistaken assumption that Nikulás visited Sicily is made by Turville-Petre, *Origins of Icelandic Literature*, 160.

³⁰As in the case of Bolsena, earlier in the itinerary, which, in the Icelandic text (Kálund, *Alfræði Islenszk*, 17) is called “Kristinaborg” after its saint. See Magoun, “Pilgrim Diary,” 345.

³¹Riant, (*Scandinaves en Terre Sainte*, 85) called the town San Martino de Laconie, but without explanation.

³²Willibald, en route for Jerusalem in the early eighth century, likewise traveled via this easternmost promontory and called the country “Slavinia” (Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 126).

- 43 *Kú*: Cos. The statement that “the routes from Púll (Puglia, southern Italy) and Mikligarðr (Constantinople) meet” on Cos clearly indicates that the island lay on two recognized sea routes: one from southern Italy to the Holy Land; the other from Constantinople to the Holy Land. From Cos eastwards the two routes were evidently one and the same.
- 43 *Mikligarðr*: The usual Icelandic name for Constantinople, literally “the great town/enclosure.”
- 44 *Krit*: Crete. Nikulás’ route is clearly Cos-Rhodes-Kastellorizon, and the position of Crete, which he does not visit, is thus another of his attempts at precise geographical location.
- 45 *Roda*: Rhodes.
- 46 *Grikland*: Literally “Greekland,” by which Nikulás denotes that part of Asia Minor still subject to the Byzantine emperor, a usage paralleled by Sæwulf’s designation of Asia Minor as “Greece” in 1102–3 (Brownlow, *Sæwulf*, 29).
- 46 *Raudakastali*: Kastellorizon.
- 46 *Patera*: Patara.
- 48 *Mirea-borg*: Myra.
- 49 *Jalandanes in Tyrkland*: Cape Gelidonya, Asia Minor, recognized by Nikulás as being beyond the boundaries of the Byzantine Empire, since it is said to be in the land of the Turks.
- 50 *Kipr*: Cyprus. A common first or last landfall on journeys to and from the Holy Land.³³
- 51 *Átalsfiord*: A bay on the coast of Asia Minor. Nikulás sailed past it on his two-day crossing from Cape Gelidonya to Cyprus. It is still named after the town at its head, Antalya, formerly Adalia, Attalea, from which Nikulás derives the Icelandic name. The so-called Greek name, recorded here in a Latinate form, probably similarly derives from the town name, with the initial S- of Satalie arising by dittography.
- 52 *Baffa*: Beffa, formerly Paphos. The Varangian guard was an elite mercenary corps in the service of the Byzantine emperor, from the late tenth to late eleventh centuries made up mostly of Norsemen and thereafter of Englishmen and others.³⁴ Eiríkr Sveinsson, king of Denmark 1095–1103, died at Beffa near the end of a protracted journey to Jerusalem via Constantinople. Knútr the holy was an older brother who ruled from 1080–86 and was killed violently,

³³E.g., the Piacenza pilgrim, ca. 570 (Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 79); Epiphanius, possibly ca. 675 (p. 117); Williband, ca. 723/24 (p. 126); Sæwulf, ca. 1103 (Brownlow, *Sæwulf*, 5); Sigurðr Jórðsalafari 1110/11 (Hollander, *Heimskringla*, 697).

³⁴C. Fell, “The Icelandic Saga of Edward the Confessor; its version of the Anglo-Saxon emigration to Byzantium,” *Anglo-Saxon England* 3 (1974) 179–86.

along with another brother, Benedict, in a church where they had taken refuge during a farmers' revolt. Knútr's Feast Day was instituted in 1101 and his relics rest in Odense Cathedral. Eiríkr's charitable institutions, founded in 1099 at Lucca and near Piacenza, are also referred to at the appropriate point earlier in the itinerary.³⁵ According to *Knytlínga Saga*,³⁶ Eiríkr's personal petition to Pope Paschalis II (1099–1118) resulted in Lund, a bishopric since 1060, being raised to an archbishopric in 1104, thus making Denmark independent of the huge Saxon archdiocese of Hamburg-Bremen. The new archiepiscopal see was based in southern Sweden, which was then part of the Danish kingdom. For Nikulás these changes were local ecclesiastical history; the Icelandic church was in the archdiocese of Lund for most of his monastic life, and only after his return from the Holy Land and when he was abbot of Þverá did it form part of the new archdiocese of Trondheim in Norway, which had been formed following the visit to Norway in 1152 of the English Cardinal, Nicholas Brekespear (Pope Hadrian IV, 1154–59).

- 60 *Acrsborg*: Acre (S. Jean d'Acre), now Akko. The capture of Acre by Baldwin in 1104 gave the Crusader kingdom its only all-weather port, which, because of its safety, immediately became the chief port of the kingdom, despite being more than 160 kms. from Jerusalem. Benjamin of Tudela, visiting the Holy Land less than twenty years after Nikulás, commented on its "large harbour for all pilgrims who come to Jerusalem by ship" (Adler, *Itinerary*, 19).
- 61 *Jórsalaland*: Literally, "the land of Jerusalem," the usual Icelandic name for the Holy Land.
- 61 *Chafarnaum*: The coastal town of H. Konés; called Capharnaum in the Crusader period. It is not to be confused with Capernaum in Galilee, familiar from the Gospels. The detail that it was formerly called Þolomaida (i.e., Ptolemaïs) is misplaced. It was Acre that was so named in classical times and it is thus named in Acts 21:7.
- 62 *Cesarea*: Caesarea Palaestina, now H. Qesari.
- 63 *Jaffa*: Alternatively, Joppa, now adjoining Tel Aviv. It was the nearest port to Jerusalem and for this reason remained fairly busy, even after the capture of Acre, although it was neither safe from storms nor convenient for trade. Ships had to anchor in an open

³⁵Kálund, *Alfræði Íslenzk*, 15–16, where there is passing reference to "Eiríks spítali" between Piacenza and Borgo San Donnino. The foundations are also commented upon in *Knytlínga Saga*, 173 (see n. 36, below).

³⁶Carl af Petersens and Emil Olson, eds., "Knytlínga Saga," *Sögur Danakonunga* (Samfund til Udgivelse af Gammel Nordisk Litteratur 46; Copenhagen: Håkan Ohlssons, 1919–25) 172.

roadstead and land their cargoes by lighter.³⁷ The text's historical note is wrong. Jaffa was captured by the Crusaders in 1099 and Baldwin did not become king until 1100. The assistance from Sigurðr Magnússon (Sigurðr Jórsalafari) was in the capture of Sidon in 1110.³⁸

- 65 *Askalon*: Ascalon, modern Ashqelon. The port was finally taken by Baldwin III on 19 August 1153, after a siege that had lasted since January. Nikulás' statement that it (alone of the ports south of Acre) was in Saracen territory and still heathen is the firmest dating evidence in the itinerary.
- 65 *Serkland*: The land of the *Serkir* (Saracens). The noun *Serkir* is said to be derived from the Arabic *Sharkeyn*, "Easterlings." It was used for the Saracens and, in translations of Latin texts, for the Assyrians and Babylonians.³⁹
- 66 *Syr*: Tyre (Tyr, Lebanon), in Christian hands since 1124. The Arabic name, *Sûr*,⁴⁰ was presumably the one that Nikulás heard.
- 66 *Seth*: Sidon, now Saïda (Lebanon), where Sigurðr assisted Baldwin.
- 66 *Tripulis*: Tripoli (Tarabulus, Lebanon), captured by the Crusaders in 1109.
- 67 *Lic*: Latakia, Syria, captured by Tancred early in 1103.
- 67 *Anpekio-fiord*: The Bay of Antioch, Anþekio being the Icelandic adaptation of Antiochia.
- 68 *Antiochia*: Antioch, now Antakya, Turkey, captured by the Crusaders in 1098 and subsequently the chief town of the independent principality of Antioch. The tradition that Peter was the first bishop of Antioch was founded upon Gal 2:11, and in the early centuries of Christianity it was a patriarchate of the first rank.⁴¹
- 70 *Sýrland*: Syria. Near the end of his itinerary Nikulás again uses

³⁷S. Runciman, *A History of the Crusades* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1952; reprint ed., Harmondsworth: Peregrine, 1965) 2. 7. *Sæwulf* (Brownlow, *Sæwulf*, 6–8) graphically describes the destruction in a storm of about 23 out of 30 very large ships anchored in the roadstead.

³⁸Kålund, in his Danish translation (p. 60), inexplicably gives the name of the Norwegian king as Sigurðr Ólafsson. In the notes that follow (p. 84) he correctly names him as Sigurðr Jórsalafari (i.e., Sigurðr Magnússon) and points out that Nikulás' error possibly arose from a tradition that Sigurðr landed at Jaffa. The prose text of the saga does not mention a port but the following verse names Acre, a detail that Kålund overlooks (Hollander, *Heimskringla*, 695).

³⁹Cleasby-Vigfusson, *Icelandic-English Dictionary*, 523.

⁴⁰K. Baedeker, *Palestine and Syria: Handbook for Travellers* (3d ed.; Leipzig: Baedeker, 1898) 307.

⁴¹In one of his epistles, Gregory the Great admits that Antioch held a special position in the church since Peter himself had occupied the see for seven years; see P. Ewald and L. M. Hartmann, eds., "Gregorii I Papae. Registrum Epistolarum. Tomus I. Libri I–VII," *MGH, Epistulae i* (1891) Ep. 7.37.

Sýrland as the Moslem name for what the Christians call the kingdom of Jerusalem: "There beyond the river [Jordan] is Rábitaland but Jórsalaland, which they call Sýrland, on this side."

- 70 *Galilea*: Galilee. Nikulás calls Galilee a *hérað*, "district." That it had a recognizable historical and geographical identity is clear and remains true today. But in the Crusader period, from the time of its conquest by Tancred in 1099, it was also a principality, over which the king of Jerusalem had suzerainty.
- 72 *Tabor*: Mount Thabor, regarded since the mid-fourth century as the site of the Transfiguration (Matt 17:1–9; Mark 9:2–10; Luke 9:28–36),⁴² an event that was commemorated by three basilicas on the summit.⁴³
- 73 *Nazaret*: Nazareth. The site where the Angel Gabriel came to meet with Mary was a grotto that formed the crypt of the Church of the Annunciation. The site where Christ was nurtured for 23 years was commemorated in a second basilica, the house of Joseph.⁴⁴
- 76 *Gilin*: Jenin. The letter of Eucherius quotes Josephus' description of the boundaries of Galilee and Samaria, in which he names Helias (a misreading of Ginea, now Jenin) as the village where Samaria begins.⁴⁵ Perhaps it was still regarded as marking the traditional boundary between Galilee and Samaria in the twelfth century, which is why Nikulás mentions it in his description of his journey south.
- 76 *Iohannis-kastali* (John's Castle): Correctly identified by Nikulás with the ancient Samaria, though the town had been renamed Sebastia (modern Sabastiya) when it was rebuilt by Herod the Great. Benjamin of Tudela remarked that "it was formerly a well-fortified city" (Adler, *Itinerary*, 20), which may be why Nikulás calls it a castle. The history of the association with John the Baptist is complex.⁴⁶ Salome is supposed to have hidden John's head

⁴²According to the Bordeaux pilgrim, A.D. 333, the site of the Transfiguration was in the area of the Mt. of Olives, on the side towards Bethany. But by the mid-fourth century the commemoration was located on Mt. Thabor, where a church was built by the mid-sixth century: John Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels* (London: SPCK, 1971) 160.

⁴³Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 81, 109, 128, 138; Brownlow, *Sæwulf*, 25.

⁴⁴C. Enlart, *Les monuments des Croisés dans le royaume de Jérusalem: Texte* (Paris: Geuthner, 1928) 2. 293. See also the comments by Arculf in Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 109, and Wilkinson's notes on Nazareth, 165.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 54 (text); 159 (note). The letter is often ascribed to Eucherius, Bishop of Lyon (434–49), but it is probably from a later period.

⁴⁶Sebastia and Jerusalem were rival claimants for the major relics of John the Baptist. The surviving documentary evidence, which is often unclear or contradictory, is summarized and discussed by H. Vincent and F.-M. Abel, *Jérusalem: recherches de topographie, d'archéologie et d'histoire. Jérusalem nouvelle* (Paris: Gabalda, 1922) 2/3–4. 642–46. Also T. S. R. Boase, *Castles and Churches of the Crusading Kingdom* (London: Oxford Univer-

at Sebastia, where it was later found, an event commemorated in the wall paintings of the crypt of a small church. Over the reputed tomb itself, a basilica was erected in the sixth century, and it was the foundations and lower courses of this church that were used by the Crusaders when they build their cathedral over what they also believed to be the Baptist's tomb. Pilgrims were shown into the crypt where they saw how John was buried between Elisha and Obadiah.⁴⁷

- 78 *Jacob's Well* (Jacobs brunr [sic]): The story is told in John 4:5–26, where the well is said to be at Sychar. Willibald (A.D. 726/27) located the well near Sebastia and said that there was a church over it.⁴⁸ Sæwulf located it in or near Neapolis (Nablus) but he does not mention a church (Brownlow, *Sæwulf*, 24). Other pilgrim accounts vary slightly in their locations, but all are very close together. Wilkinson places it just outside Neapolis,⁴⁹ to the southeast, in which case Nikulás would not in fact have seen it until he had passed through Neapolis, the town that he mentions next.
- 80 *Napl*: Neapolis (modern Nablus). The Latin name, Flavia Neapolis, commemorates the city's restoration by Titus Flavius Vespasianus. Nikulás' version of the name probably derives from its French form, Naples. It was usually identified with Shechem which in fact lay slightly to the east, but some early pilgrim accounts confusingly equate Neapolis with Samaria.⁵⁰ Sæwulf believed that John the Baptist had received the sentence of beheading there (Brownlow, *Sæwulf*, 24).
- 81 *Casal*: A corruption of *casalia*, "village"? *Casale* is a common place-name element and it is impossible to be sure which village Nikulás means.
- 81 *Maka Maria*: A corruption of Magna Mahumeria (now Bira), 15 kms. north of Jerusalem. Traditionally this was where Mary and Joseph realized that the twelve-year-old Jesus was not with them on their way home from the Temple (Luke 2:44).
- 82 *Jórsalaborg*: Jerusalem.
- 90 *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre* (Pulkro kirkia): The early archaeological and documentary history of this church is complex

sity, 1967) 86, 88.

⁴⁷E.g., Peter the Deacon, ca. 1137 (Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 201); Paula, Willibald (Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 51–52, 132); Theoderic, A.D. 1172 (Boase, *Castles and Churches*, 88).

⁴⁸Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 132.

⁴⁹Ibid., 24 (Map 6) and the notes, p. 173, *sub* Sychar.

⁵⁰E.g., the Piacenza pilgrim (Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 81 and note, 165–66).

and still open to debate.⁵¹ It is clear, however, that from the time of Constantine, when the sepulchre was rediscovered, until the systematic destruction by the Moslems in 1009, the traditional sites of Golgotha and the Sepulchre were within a group of buildings, notably the Constantinian basilica, or Martyrium, which faced the street, the Rotunda farther back, which covered the tomb, and between them an open area, in the corner of which was Golgotha, perhaps roofed over. After the Moslem destruction, the Emperor Constantine Monomachus undertook the rebuilding of the Rotunda only, between 1042 and 1048. Jerusalem fell to the Crusaders on 15 July 1099 and, since the basilica had not been rebuilt, the new Crusader church simply extended from the Rotunda (which was now slightly adapted to form part of a larger church), across the courtyard (so that it enclosed Golgotha) and onto the site of the basilica. The whole was complete on 15 July 1149. Pilgrims who visited the Holy Sepulchre and Golgotha before the completion of this church clearly describe a group of sites that were closely related historically and architecturally, but which were nevertheless separate.⁵² Nikulás, equally clearly, saw the Sepulchre and Golgotha in one building, the whole of which he called *Pulkro kirkia*. The implications are that he did not visit the church until after its completion in July 1149 or, at the very least, not long before its completion.

The only pilgrim account that directly supports Nikulás' claim to have seen bloodstains on the rock of Golgotha, as far as I have been able to discover, is that of the Piacenza pilgrim, ca. 570, although, unlike Nikulás, he does not claim that the bloodstains were perpetually fresh.⁵³ It is easy, however, to see the origins of the pious belief: the stone itself had natural reddish patches and the blood shed onto the stone at the Crucifixion became significant in the early centuries of Christianity, with the belief that it mingled with the dust of Adam, buried beneath.⁵⁴

⁵¹Vincent and Abel, *Jérusalem Nouvelle* (1914) 2/1–2. 89–300; idem, 2, *Planches* (1926) Pl. 33, for clear plans of the Constantinian group of buildings; Enlart, *Monuments des Croisés: Texte*, 2. 136–80; A. Parrot, *Golgotha and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre* (E. Hudson, trans.; London: SCM, 1957); C. Couasnon, *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem* (J.-P. B. and Claude Ross, trans.; London: Oxford University, 1974); Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 196–97 and Pls. 5 and 6 (Arculf's plans), 174–78.

⁵²E.g., the Piacenza pilgrim, Arculf, Epiphanius, Bernard (Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 83, 95–97, 117, 142); J. H. Bernard, trans., *How the City of Jerusalem is Situated* (London, 1893; reprinted, with original pagination, as part of *The Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society* [London, 1897]) 3. 12–13. This last, anonymous text is usually assigned to a period just before the Crusades, ca. 1090.

⁵³Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 83.

⁵⁴Vincent and Abel, *Jérusalem Nouvelle*, 2/1–2. 186–88.

The sentence “Men receive light down from heaven there on Easter Eve” is a reference to the ceremony of the Sacred Fire, described by Bernard the Wise, ca. 870: “In the morning the office begins in this church. Then, when it is over they go on singing *Kyrie eleison* till an angel comes and kindles light in the lamps which hang above the sepulchre. The patriarch passes some of this light to the bishops and the rest of the people, and thus each one has light where he is standing.”⁵⁵ The celestial fire was probably produced by using oil of balsam to grease the chain of the lamp hanging over the tomb and, in the darkness, applying a light to the upper end of the chain so that it burnt down and lit the wick of the lamp. The ceremony was observed under the Crusaders but was banned by Pope Gregory IX in 1238. The MS containing Nikulás’ itinerary has further notes on holy sites in Jerusalem, among which is another reference to the ceremony of the Sacred Fire: “It is open over the church above the shrine where, if Christian men hold the city, light comes down from above onto the candles that stand there before it.”⁵⁶

- 91 *The Center of the Earth* (midr heimr): Wilkinson points out that the tradition of Jerusalem being the center of the world is Jewish in origin and that in the fourth century, Cyril of Jerusalem expressed the view that Golgotha was the center of the earth, citing Ps 74:12 in support.⁵⁷ Adamnan’s account of Arculf’s voyage (late seventh century) records that the spot was marked by a column and that, at the summer solstice, the sun was directly above the column, which thus produced no shadow and so “proved” that Jerusalem was the center of the earth.⁵⁸ Nikulás, by his reference to the Feast of John, which must be John the Baptist, fixes the date as 24 June. Bernard the Monk, ca. 870, found the mid-point in the open area at the center of the cluster of buildings.⁵⁹ But accounts relating to the period between 1009 (the destruction) and 1149 (the dedication of the new Crusader church) site it outside the Rotunda, necessarily without reference to other buildings but evidently indicating the old courtyard area.⁶⁰ When the new Crusader church

⁵⁵ Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 142–43.

⁵⁶ Kálund, *Alfræði Íslenzk*, 1. 28, lines 7–10. The translation is my own.

⁵⁷ *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 28, nn. 80, 81; *Egeria’s Travels*, 181, n. 4.

⁵⁸ Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 99.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 144.

⁶⁰ Bernard, *How the City of Jerusalem is Situated*, 12; Brownlow, *Sæwulf*, 12; Wilkinson, *Egeria’s Travels*, 181 (Peter the Deacon). For a plan of the Rotunda as reconstructed in 1048, see *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 176. For the Crusaders’ observance of what must have been a continuous tradition, see Enlart, *Monuments des Croisés: Texte*, 2. 144; Vincent and Abel, *Jérusalem Nouvelle*, 2/1–2. 255. The latter, *ibid.*, describe the *Compas* as “une

enclosed all the holy sites, the symbol that marked the mid-point of the world (the *Compas*) was inlaid in the floor paving, approximately in the middle of the building. Nikulás was thus unable to test the traditional astronomical proof.

- 93 *Hospital of John the Baptist* (*spítali Iohannis baptista*): Situated near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It had been founded, perhaps by Almafitan merchants, in the eleventh century, although its precise origins are obscure.⁶¹ Obscure also is its original dedication. Nikulás is confident that the dedicatee was John the Baptist, but there is some evidence that until perhaps just after the First Crusade it was dedicated to John the Almsgiver, a seventh-century Patriarch of Alexandria, possibly because the foundation incorporated an older oratory dedicated to him, which may have been used as the first conventual church. However, since the fourth century, when relics of John the Baptist were brought from Sebastia to Jerusalem, the site had been associated with the Baptist and this, along with his greater fame, may have encouraged the change of patron saint.⁶² The Hospitalers, who had been under the sole authority of the Pope since soon after the First Crusade, were immensely privileged and rich and their Hospital was admired by Western and Arab visitors alike; it seems to have been 230 ft. long and 120 ft. high, with arches 8 ft. high. When Benjamin of Tudela visited the city, the conventual buildings were said to house 400 knights (Adler, *Itinerary*, 22).
- 95 *Tower of David* (*Dauids tiorn [recte turn]*): Situated on the east side of the city by what is best known as the Jaffa Gate, called David's Gate by Sæwulf (Brownlow, *Sæwulf*, 9). The tower was built by Herod and was the largest of seven towers around an irregular enceinte. After the kings of Jerusalem vacated the El-Aksa mosque for the Templars, they used the Tower of David as the royal palace.
- 96 *The Temple of the Lord* (*Templum Domini*): The name customarily used by the Crusaders for the Dome of the Rock, a circular mosque built in the seventh century on the traditional site of Mt. Moriah, the scene of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac, and the

sorte de ciborium où l'on voyait le Christ reproduit en mosaïque avec cette légende: La plante de mon pied sert de mesure pour le ciel et pour la terre."

⁶¹J. Riley-Smith, *The Knights of St. John in Jerusalem and Cyprus, c. 1050–1310* (London: Macmillan; New York: St. Martins, 1967), to which the whole of this section is indebted. The origins of the Order are discussed on pp. 32–37. See also H. Mayer, *The Crusades* (J. Gillingham, trans.; London: Oxford University, 1972) 83, 167; Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, 2. 156–57, 312–14.

⁶²Vincent and Abel, *Jérusalem Nouvelle*, 2/3–4. 642–46. Sæwulf, ca. 1102/3, believed the dedication to be to John the Baptist (Brownlow, *Sæwulf*, 14).

- traditional site also of Solomon's Temple. After the capture of Jerusalem, Godfrey gave the building to the Augustinian canons, who added claustral buildings and modified the interior for use as a church. It became the titular church of the Order of Templars.
- 96 *Solomon's Temple* (Salomons musteri): Pilgrim accounts of the Crusader period agree in siting this Temple in the old Jewish Temple area, but south of the Templum Domini.⁶³ It was evidently the common name for the El-Aksa mosque. At first it was used as the royal palace, but in 1119 Baldwin II granted rooms in the mosque to a small group of knights, led by Hugh de Payens, who founded the Order of the Knights Templar, legally recognized in 1128. By the time of Benjamin of Tudela's visit to Jerusalem, the Temple of Solomon housed 300 knights (Adler, *Itinerary*, 22). Stabling for their horses was in the subterranean vaults beneath the Temple platform, structures which predate the mosque but which have no historical connection with Solomon.
- 98 *Synai [recte Sion]*: Fourth-century tradition associates Mt. Sion primarily with Pentecost; in the fifth century the Last Supper was added, owing to an identification, made in Jerusalem, between the upper rooms of both events. In the twelfth century both Sæwulf and Peter the Deacon⁶⁴ refer, as does Nikulás, to the Last Supper and Pentecost and Sæwulf notes, again in common with Nikulás, that the table of the Last Supper was still to be seen (Brownlow, *Sæwulf*, 20). Interestingly, Nikulás does not mention the Dormition of the Virgin, also associated with Sion.⁶⁵
- 101 *Bethleem*: Bethlehem. Constantine's basilica was dedicated in 339 but was destroyed in Justinian's enlargement of the Church of the Nativity in the sixth century.⁶⁶ Extensive work was done in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries but probably little before Nikulás' visit.⁶⁷ Nikulás comments on the town's beauty; Sæwulf, some fifty years earlier, had found a town left uninhabitable by the Saracens (Brownlow, *Sæwulf*, 22).

⁶³E.g., Sæwulf (Brownlow, *Sæwulf*, 17); Peter the Deacon (Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 182). Interestingly, the short treatise, *How the City of Jerusalem is Situated* also refers to the mosque as the Temple of Solomon (p. 13), although it is usually dated before the First Crusade. For the history of the mosque, particularly under the Crusaders, see Enlart, *Monuments des Croisés: Texte*, 2. 214–22.

⁶⁴Brownlow, *Sæwulf*, 19–20 (Sæwulf); Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 191 (Peter).

⁶⁵As in the accounts of Bernard, ca. 870 (Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 144) and Peter the Deacon, ca. 1137 (Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 191).

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 48; Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 151–52.

⁶⁷Enlart, *Monuments des Croisés: Texte*, 2. 64–68.

- 102 *Bethania kastali* (Bethania Castle): Bethany. As an outlying village it was provided with its own stone defenses,⁶⁸ which is perhaps why Nikulás calls it Bethania Castle. The object of pilgrimage was the church containing the reputed sepulchre of Lazarus (see John 11:1–46).
- 105 *Sodoma and Gomorra*: The story of the destruction of these cities because of their wickedness can be pieced together from Gen 13:13; 18:20; 19:23–26.
- 106 *Jordan*: Arculf⁶⁹ and Sæwulf (Brownlow, *Sæwulf*, 26) both note that the milk-white water of the Jordan does not mingle with that of the Dead Sea, though they do not offer Nikulás' pious explanation.
- 108 *Mons Oliveti*: The Mount of Olives,⁷⁰ notable chiefly for the Church of the Ascension (a rotunda with a central opening in the roof) and later for the church commemorating the teaching of the Pater Noster, first built in 1102–6. In it were buried two Danish pilgrims, Eskill Sveinsson and his brother Sveinn, Bishop of Viborg, who died in 1152, about the time when Nikulás was in the Holy Land.
- 110 *Josaphat*: The valley of Jehoshaphat, now usually called the Kidron Valley. Since the fifth century it had been accepted as the site of the Virgin's tomb ("the tomb of queen Mary"). The tomb was a crypt-like construction and Enlart believes that it never had an upper structure.⁷¹ Nikulás is thus correct in his reference to a grave rather than a church.
- 112 *Querencium*: Quarantana (modern Deir el Quruntul). As Nikulás implies in the next but one sentence, the mountain is near Jericho. Sæwulf also mentions a mountain near Jericho that is the traditional site of Christ's Fast and Temptations, but he does not name it (Brownlow, *Sæwulf*, 23).
- 113 *Abrahams kastali* (Abraham's Castle): Kålund, in his Danish commentary, passes this over without comment, although, with the clear implication that it is near Jericho, there are problems of identification. In fact throughout the Crusader period the "[Castle of] St. Abraham" was the name given to the Frankish fortress and garrison that dominated the Negeb at Hebron, 36 kms. south of

⁶⁸Boase, *Castles and Churches*, 21.

⁶⁹Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 107.

⁷⁰Enlart, *Monuments des Croisés: Texte*, 2. 226–30; Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 166–67. The most extensive study is Vincent and Abel, *Jerusalem Nouvelle*, 2/1–2. 328–419, who refer, on p. 400, to the burial of the two Danish pilgrims.

⁷¹*Monuments des Croisés: Texte*, 2. 230–33.

Jerusalem.⁷² As well as the new fortress, there were extensive remains of a massive Herodian structure, which Sæwulf calls a castle (“castello”) (Brownlow, *Sæwulf*, 24). Hebron attracted pilgrims because it had the tombs of Abraham, Isaac, Sarah, Rebecca, and Leah.⁷³ There is no doubt that Abraham’s Castle has been misplaced in Nikulás’ account, either in the course of MS transmission or by Nikulás’ faulty recollection of what he had seen where. In either case it could have been attracted to its present position by association with the following, and accurate, reference to the Plains of Abraham.

114 *Hiericho*: Jericho. Here, as with Mons Oliveti, Templum Domini and Hierusalem (alongside Jórsalaborg), Nikulás, or a subsequent scribe, uses the Latin form of the place-name.

114 *Abrahams-veller* (Plains of Abraham): There is frequent reference in pilgrim accounts to the fertile plain around Jericho, but no evidence for the association with Abraham before the Crusades; Theodosius and the Piacenza pilgrim in the sixth century call it The Lord’s Field.⁷⁴ But in 1103 Sæwulf claimed that Abraham came from Jericho (Brownlow, *Sæwulf*, 23) and the Danish Mandeville calls the region “ortus [i.e., hortus] Abrahæ.”⁷⁵

117 *Rábitaland*: Arabia. Compare Sæwulf’s statement: “On the other side of the Jordan is Arabia, a country most hostile to Christians and unfriendly to all who worship God” (Brownlow, *Sæwulf*, 23).

119 *Chapel where Christ took off his clothes*: Situated 9 kms. east of Jericho, north of the Dead Sea, near where the Roman road from

⁷²As is recognized by modern historians of the Crusades: Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, 1. 304; 2. 4; Mayer, *Crusades*, 64.

⁷³It is thus included in the itineraries of non-Christians, e.g., the Arab, Mukaddasi, ca. 985: G. le Strange, trans., *Description of Syria including Palestine* (Palestine Pilgrims’ Text Society 3; London, 1897) 50; Benjamin of Tudela: Adler, *Itinerary*, 25. Christian pilgrims to the tombs of the patriarchs include the Bordeaux pilgrim (Wilkinson, *Egeria’s Travels*, 163); Arculf (Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 105); Sæwulf (Brownlow, *Sæwulf*, 24). For the pre-Christian history of the site, see Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 159. For the rediscovery of the bodies of the patriarchs in 1119, during the course of building operations, see Enlart, *Monuments des Croisés: Texte*, 2. 124–33 and Boase, *Castles and Churches*, 86, both of whom refer to the massive Herodian enceinte.

⁷⁴Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 69 (Theodosius); 82 (Piacenza Pilgrim). Comments on the general fertility of the region are made by Mukaddasi, *Description of Syria*, 56; Bede, *De locis sanctis* (J. R. Macpherson, trans. [Palestine Pilgrims’ Text Society 3; London, 1897] 78) (in a passage independent of Adomnan’s account of Arculf’s voyages, which Bede uses extensively).

⁷⁵M. Lorenzen, ed., *Mandevilles Rejse* (Samfund til Udgivelse af Gammel Nordisk Litteratur 5; Copenhagen: Møllers, 1882) 52, line 24. This usage is noted by Kålund in his Danish edition of Nikulás’ itinerary, 87. Riant (*Scandinaves en Terre Sainte*, 46) agrees in placing the Garden of Abraham near Jericho.

Jerusalem to Livias crossed the river.⁷⁶ Theodosius saw a commemorative marble column and the church of St. John the Baptist, which stood on great vaults in order to accommodate the river when in flood.⁷⁷ Arculf later assumed that, since a small wooden cross seemed to be marking the place of baptism, the chapel had been built to commemorate the place where Christ's clothes were laid.⁷⁸ As far as I can discover, he is the only pilgrim before Nikulás to make this assumption. The explanation may be that the river was changing course, leaving the chapel too much on dry land for it to be seen as commemorating the actual place of the baptism; early in the eighth century Willibald noted that water no longer flowed beneath it.⁷⁹

129 *Mundia*: The Alps, literally "The Mounts."

129 *Heidabær*: Hedeby, Jutland. It was a major trading town from about A.D. 800, although it was destroyed by fire just before 1050. Its successor was nearby Schleswig. Yet it is clear that Nikulás meant Hedeby itself, in which there had presumably been some resettlement, since his description of the journey out distinguishes between Hedeby and Schleswig.⁸⁰

130 *Ilians-vegr* (Ilians-way): The route via Saint-Gilles-du-Gard, southern France, detailed by Kålund on pp. 89–91 of his Danish edition. In the account of his journey east, Nikulás had identified Piacenza as the town where "those who travel the route via Saint-Gilles [Ilians-vegr]" met with the route that he was following (Kålund, "En islandsk Vejviser," 15, lines 24–25).⁸¹ At this time

⁷⁶Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, Map 9 (p. 29).

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, 69.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 107.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 129. Willibald nevertheless believed that the place of baptism was directly beneath the church, even though it was dry by this time. He makes a distinction between this, the original site, and "the place where they now baptize," which was marked by a wooden cross. See also Wilkinson's notes, *ibid.*, 162–63.

⁸⁰Kålund, *Alfæði Íslenzk*, 13, lines 6–7: "Then it is a week's journey to Heidabæ, then it is a short distance to Slesvik" (my translation). See also F. P. Magoun, "The Haddeby and Schleswig of Nikulás of Munkaþverá," *Scandinavian Studies* 17 (1943) 167–73.

⁸¹The interpretation of *Ilians-vegr* as a reference to the pilgrim route via Saint-Gilles-du-Gard requires emendation of MS *eýstra* to *veystra*, but the emendation is not a drastic one, given the late date of the existing text. The Old Norse name of Saint-Gilles elsewhere is *Iliansborg* and of the saint, *Iljan*, *Elyan*, etc. Other interpretations have been proposed: that it refers to a route via Ilanz on the Swiss Rhône, and that *Ilian* may reflect the Rhaeto-Romanic name of the Julier Pass. For phonetic and philological reasons the latter is unlikely, and it is much more probable that Nikulás was identifying a route internationally known as a pilgrim route, via Saint-Gilles, than a way via the small and unimportant town of Ilanz. *Ilians-vegr* is discussed by Magoun in connection with the reference to it earlier in the itinerary, "The Pilgrim Diary," 336–37.

the reputation of Saint-Gilles was at its height.⁸²

131 *Vebiorg*: Vjborg, Jutland.

133 *Álaborg*: Álborg, north Jutland. On his journey out Nikulás sailed from Norway (Bergen?) to Álborg and followed the same route through Jutland as he did on his return, although he details a less popular alternative that took the traveler from Norway to Deventer or Utrecht (Kålund, “En islandsk Vejviser,” 13–14).

It is in keeping with Nikulás’ concern for precise detail that he provides frequent indications of direction as well as of distance. In common with other Old Icelandic texts, he uses two different directional systems: the cardinal directions (nordr, suðr, austr, vestr) and relative directions (for example, *út*, “out,” “abroad,” “out to sea”).⁸³ The cardinal directions, when used alone, are accurate with the accuracy of a pilgrim traveling without maps or instruments. Bethlehem, for example, is correctly south of Jerusalem, the Mount of Olives correctly east, and although Tyre, Sidon and Tripoli in fact lie more north of Acre than east, as Nikulás describes it, they are slightly to the east, and we must in any case remember that Nikulás is here recording information that he has heard, not a journey that he has made himself. The only exception is the scribal error of *eystra*, “more easterly” for *veystra*, “more westerly” in relation to the possible homeward route via Iliansvegr. Simple indications of relative direction likewise cause no difficulties of interpretation. In an attempt to reflect their less precise nature, I have translated phrases such as *út frá* as “on from,” *út í haf* as “on by sea,” *út vid* as “out by,” and so on.

Problems of interpretation arise, however, when the cardinal directions are combined with the relative terms *út* and *land* to produce compounds such as *útsuðr* and *landnordr*. The common assumption of scholars in interpreting such compounds, frequently found in Old Icelandic texts, is that the *út*-element denotes the direction “west” and the *land*-element the direction “east,” so that these compounds are understood as the intermediate compass directions NE (*landnordr*), SE (*landsuðr*),

⁸²W. S. Stoddard (*The Façade of Saint-Gilles-du-Gard: Its Influences on French Sculpture* [Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University, 1973] 130, 158) lists a visit from Louis VII on his return from the Second Crusade, and the granting of an indulgence of forty days by Pope Hadrian IV, shortly after Nikulás’ journey, in recognition of its growing popularity.

⁸³For a discussion of directional terms in Icelandic, see Stefán Einarsson, “Terms of Direction in Old Icelandic,” *JEGP* 43 (1944) 265–85; Stefán Einarsson, “Terms of Direction in Modern Icelandic,” in H. Larson and C. A. Williams., eds., *Scandinavian Studies Presented to George T. Flom* (Illinois Studies in Language and Literature 21/1; Urbana: University of Illinois, 1942) 37–48; Einar Haugen, “The Semantics of Icelandic Orientation,” *Word* 13 (1957) 447–59.

SW (útsuðr), and NW (útnorðr).⁸⁴ The justification for this interpretation lies in the fact that the Icelandic settlers, many of whom came from the west coast of Norway, preserved the Norwegian usage of *land* and *út* in directional phrases. As Einarsson has pointed out: "On the Norwegian coast these terms fit perfectly: *útnorðr* and *útsuðr* being the north and south *out* in the direction of the ocean, *landnorðr* and *landsuðr* being the north and south in towards the *land*."⁸⁵ It is this contextual interpretation that is most familiar to readers of the sagas and which is enshrined in the dictionary definitions of these compounds.

However, alongside these fossilized terms, which take the west coast of Norway as their point of orientation, Old Icelandic texts also use *út* in the more literal sense of "out," that is, abroad, to refer to distant destinations such as Rome or Jerusalem, which lie to the east. In Nikulás' itinerary the Jordan is *út* (he is *út vid*, "out by" the Jordan when he measures the elevation of the Pole Star) and when he sets off to return home, he travels *útan*, literally "from out," "from abroad." Thus *út* in geographical terms is "east" and *útan* is "west," the reverse of the contextual meaning most frequent in the sagas, where *út* indicates the direction Norway-Iceland (west) and *útan* the direction Iceland-Norway (east).

It is perhaps not surprising then that Nikulás' use of these compounds with *land-* and *út-* is inconsistent. He employs them on five occasions: Salerno lies *útsuðr* from Benevento (geographically due south); Apulia lies *til land-norðs* of Cos (geographically northwest); Mount Sion lies *útsuðr* from Jerusalem (geographically southwest); the Jordan flows *ór landnordri i útsuðr* (geographically due south). The first and last of these defy interpretation since, whatever meaning one gives *land-* and *út-*, their inclusion suggests some deviation from the cardinal points of the compass, when in fact the cardinal terms, if allowed to stand alone, are correct. For Mount Sion and the Dead Sea, Nikulás uses *land-* and *út-* as most commonly in the sagas, with their respective meanings of "east" and "west." For the direction from Cos to Apulia he is consistent with his usual orientation in the itinerary, so that *land-*, as the opposite of *út-*, indicates the general direction west, that is, homewards. Thus Apulia lies north toward Nikulás' homeland and is therefore properly said to be northwest of Cos. Kålund, in his Danish edition (pp. 59, 83), failed to take account of the fact that Nikulás' customary orientation in his itinerary is the reverse of that in the sagas and

⁸⁴Cleasby-Vigfusson's *Icelandic-English Dictionary* and, for modern Icelandic, Blöndal's *Íslensk-Dönsk Orðabók*. See also E. V. Gordon, ed., *An Introduction to Old Norse* (rev. A. R. Taylor; 2d ed.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1957) 211, the articles listed in n. 83, above, and *passim* in commentaries on and glossaries to the sagas.

⁸⁵"Terms of Direction in Modern Icelandic," 39.

so took *land-nordr* to mean “northeast,” with the result that he was obliged, unnecessarily, to propose a scribal error and an emendation.

Yet, for all his attention to practical detail, it is nevertheless a striking characteristic of Nikulás’ itinerary, and one of its limitations, that it is sometimes little more than a list of sites and towns visited. But if Nikulás does not always specify what it was that he saw at a particular site, it is not difficult for the modern scholar to work it out for himself and we find, when we do so, that he was constantly seeing newly built Crusader churches, or churches in the process of being built.⁸⁶ On Mt. Tabor a fortified Benedictine house had been built since the First Crusade; at Jacob’s Well a Crusader church was completed in 1154; at Sebastia (John’s Castle) the Latin cathedral erected over the traditional site of the Baptist’s tomb was finished in 1155; in Bethany Queen Melisende had built the most richly endowed convent in the kingdom. In Jerusalem the Church of the Holy Sepulchre had been completed in 1149; the Hospital of St. John was extensively rebuilt in the early 1150s; the Temple of the Lord (the Dome of the Rock) had had its Christian altar dedicated in 1136 and there were new claustral buildings around it; the tomb of Mary in the valley of Jehoshaphat had been restored by the Benedictines of Cluny; on Mt. Sion the fourth-century basilica commemorating the Last Supper (a two-storeyed chapel) had been restored in 1142; on the Mt. of Olives Nikulás could see the Church of the Pater Noster, built in 1102–6 and rebuilt soon after, as well as the Augustinian rebuilding, started ca. 1150, of the Church of the Ascension on the summit.

Nikulás undertook his pilgrimage just after the Second Crusade at a time when conditions were as favorable as they ever were in the twelfth century. His itinerary, unlike that of Sæwulf, who traveled in the much more volatile circumstances of the early years of the century, says nothing of danger from pirates in the eastern Mediterranean, or of Saracen ambushes in the Holy Land. It was a period when Greek and Italian merchants sailed relatively freely between Italy, the Empire and the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem which, when Nikulás visited it, was at its greatest extent and relatively peaceful within its own borders.⁸⁷

⁸⁶For further details about the buildings referred to in this paragraph, see Enlart, *Monuments des Croisés: Texte*, vol. 2; Vincent and Abel, *Jérusalem Nouvelle*, and the gazetteer in Wilkinson’s *Jerusalem Pilgrims*.

⁸⁷For a summary of the political situation in the Latin kingdoms at the time of Nikulás’ visit, see M. Baldwin, “The Latin States under Baldwin III and Amalric I, 1143–1174,” in K. Setton, ed., *A History of the Crusades*, vol. 1: *The First Hundred Years*, ed. M. W. Baldwin (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1955) 528–62. Map 2 in

His choice of routes was determined by a number of factors. From the amount of detail provided, it is clear that he traveled south from Rome along the Via Latina to Monte Cassino. Just before Capua the Via Latina united with the Via Appia, which took him to Benevento, and from there he continued across the country to Monte Gargano and then followed the coast to Bari. In classical times there had been a road from Beneventum to Sipontum (Monte Gargano) and a coastal road that continued down into the heel of Italy, and it is possible that this was still some advantage to medieval travelers. He does not say that he embarked at Bari, but since he obviously made the crossing to Durazzo, Bari is the most likely point of departure and it was the port that he used on his return. The alternative port that he mentions is Brindisi, from which pilgrims were likely to cross direct to Corfu. Further, the description of "another more westerly route" from Rome to Brindisi, again along the line of a Roman road, is given with less detail than the description of the one along which he evidently traveled and is to be seen as additional, parenthetical information, although its inclusion is in keeping with Nikulás' customary precise and fairly comprehensive approach.

Once at sea, Nikulás took advantage of coastal traffic, as did most pilgrims before the middle of the century. Although he landed at Durazzo, where the Via Egnatia began, he did not take the overland route which, though cheap, was slow and most suited to large companies.⁸⁸ Nikulás makes no reference to companions, but although it is unlikely that he traveled alone, it is equally likely that his party was a modest one and had the advantage of protection in numbers only when it met up with others traveling in the same direction. His daily overland speed was often that of a pack mule (24–32 kms.),⁸⁹ which may indicate that he sometimes fell in with mule trains or that he carried some of his own possessions in this way.

He landed in the Holy Land at Acre and although he gives information about towns off his route, as he does elsewhere, it is clear that he went inland to Galilee, where his descriptions of holy sites begin, and from there south to Jerusalem, which seems to have been his base for excursions to Bethlehem, Bethany, Jericho, the Jordan and the

Mayer's *The Crusades* conveniently indicates the varying extent of the Latin kingdom at different dates.

⁸⁸Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, 1. 48. Heyd (*Histoire du commerce*, 1. 181–82) comments on the use of coastal traffic.

⁸⁹The figure is given by A. S. Atiya, *Crusades, Commerce and Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University; London: Oxford University, 1962) 174. The distances between the places named by Nikulás are given by Kålund in his Danish edition (pp. 96–99) and it is clear from these figures that a common daily rate was 25–30 kms.

Dead Sea. Once again, most of his traveling followed the line of old Roman roads,⁹⁰ and it is probable that many of them were still in use.

Nevertheless, despite the favorable conditions, Nikulás' journey was one of great risk and extraordinary enterprise. He was no doubt famous in Iceland and his amanuensis was just in further describing him as wise, blessed with a good memory, learned in many things and truthful. One may with equal justice describe him as a modest man, whose sober and precise account of his extensive travels makes him deserving of the attention of modern scholars and a worthy successor to his near contemporary, the first Icelandic historian, Ari Þorgilsson.⁹¹

⁹⁰Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, Maps 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9.

⁹¹I should like to acknowledge the generous help of the many colleagues to whom I turned for expert advice on the varied topics touched upon in this paper. In addition to Professor Dilke, whom I have thanked in an earlier note, I should particularly like to mention Mr. Rory McTurk, Supervisor of Icelandic Studies in the School of English, and Dr. Wendy R. Childs of the School of History.

It has unfortunately not been possible to take note of the following article, which was published late in 1982, when the present paper was at press: Benjamin Z. Kedar and Chr. Westergård-Nielsen, "Icelanders in the crusader kingdom of Jerusalem: a twelfth century account," *Mediaeval Scandinavia* 11 (1978–79) 193–211. This study is complementary to the present paper in examining Nikulás' description alongside the anonymous description printed by Kálund, *Alfræði Íslenzk* 1. 26–31 (see above p. 193 and n. 56) and that included in *Kirialax saga*.