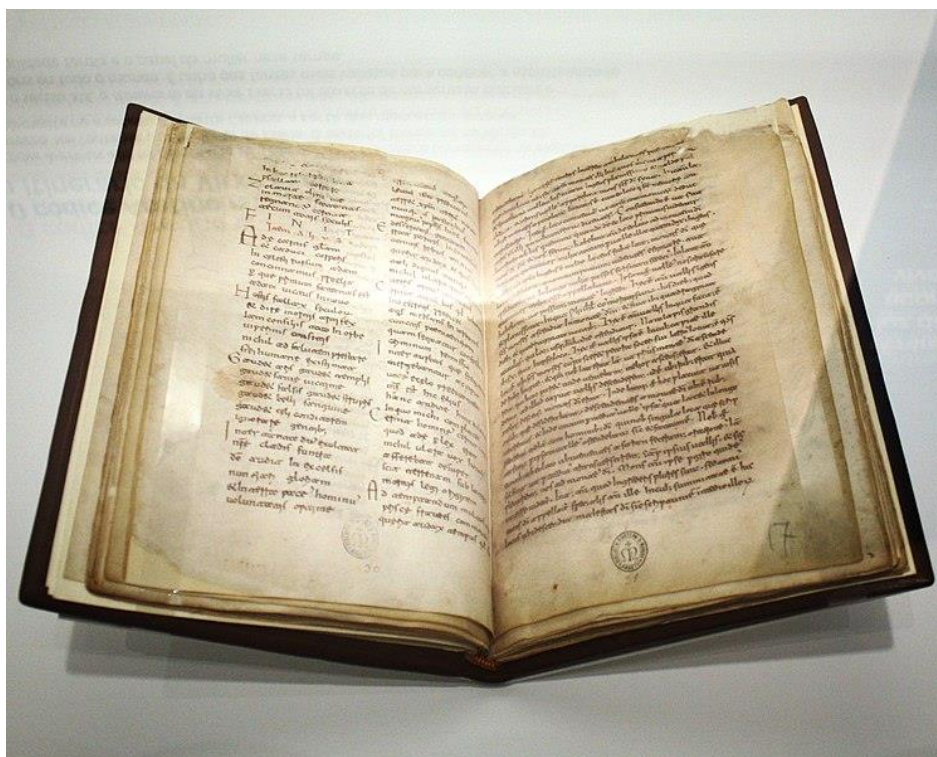


## Itinerarium ad Loca Sancta



Manuscript of the Voyage of Egeria (11th century), preserved in the Municipal Library of Arezzo (Italy)  
<[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/a/a8/Galicia%2C\\_un\\_relato\\_no\\_mundo%2C\\_01-24b%2C\\_Viaxe\\_de\\_Exeria.jpg/749px-Galicia%2C\\_un\\_relato\\_no\\_mundo%2C\\_01-24b%2C\\_Viaxe\\_de\\_Exeria.jpg?20200216222826](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/a/a8/Galicia%2C_un_relato_no_mundo%2C_01-24b%2C_Viaxe_de_Exeria.jpg/749px-Galicia%2C_un_relato_no_mundo%2C_01-24b%2C_Viaxe_de_Exeria.jpg?20200216222826)>

- 📖 Selection and commentary of excerpts: Lourdes Muñoz Montagud (3, 6-8; 12, 5-7; 16, 1-3; 23, 1-3; 23, 8-10 y 37, 1-3).
- 📖 Text in Latin: *Silviae vel potius Aetheriae peregrinatio* (1908). W. Heraeus (ed.). Bibliotheca Augustana, (16-02-2022), <[http://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/Chronologia/Lspost04/Egeria/ege\\_it00.html](http://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/Chronologia/Lspost04/Egeria/ege_it00.html)>
- 📖 Text in English: *The pilgrimage of Etheria* (1919), M.L. McClure and C. L. Feltoe (ed. and trans.). London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, (27-02-2022), <<https://dn790001.ca.archive.org/0/items/pilgrimageofethe00mccliala/pilgrimageofethe00mccliala.pdf>>

Women's Legacy Project

Materia: Cultura Clásica y Latín

### Capitulum III

6.- Lecto ergo ipso loco omni[a] de libro Moysi et facta oblatione ordine suo, hac sic communicantibus nobis, iam ut exiremus de aecclesia, dederunt nobis presbyteri loci ipsius eulogias, id est de pomis, quae in ipso monte nascuntur. Nam cum ipse mons sanctus Syna totus petrinus sit, ita ut nec fruticem habeat, tamen deorsum prope radicem montium ipsorum, id est seu circa illius qui medianus est seu circa illorum qui per giro sunt modica terrola est; statim sancti monachi pro diligentia sua arbusculas ponunt et pomariola instituunt uel arationes, et iuxta sibi monasteria, quasi ex ipsius montis terra aliquos fructus capiant, quos tamen manibus suis elaborasse uideantur.

7. Hac sic ergo posteaquam communicaueramus et dederant nobis eulogias sancti illi et egressi sumus foras hostium ecclesiae, tunc cepi eos rogare, ut ostenderent nobis singula loca. Tunc statim illi sancti dignati sunt singula ostendere. Nam ostenderunt nobis speluncam illam, ubi fuit sanctus Moyses, cum iterato ascendisset in montem Dei (cf. Exod. 34), ut acciperet denuo tabulas, posteaquam priores illas fregerat peccante populo (cf. Exod. 32, 19), et cetera loca, quaecumque desiderabamus uel quae ipsi melius nouerant, dignati sunt ostendere nobis.

8. Illud autem uos uolo scire, dominae uenerabiles sorores, qui<a> de eo loco ubi stabamus, id est in giro parietes ecclesiae, id est de summitate montis ipsius mediani, ita infra nos uidebantur esse illi montes, quos primitus uix ascenderamus, iuxta istum medianum, in quo stabamus, ac si essent illi colliculi, cum tamen ita infiniti essent, ut non me putarem aliquando altiores uidisse, nisi quod hic medianus eos nimium praecedebat. Egyptum autem et Palestinam et mare rubrum et mare illud Parthenicum, quod mittit Alexandriam, nec non et fines Saracenorum infinitos ita subter nos inde uidebamus, ut credi uix possit; quae tamen singula nobis illi sancti demonstrabant.

### Chapter III

#### The ascent of Sinai

6.- When the whole passage from the book of Moses had been read in that place, and when the oblation had been duly made, at which we communicated,

and as we were coming out of the church, the priests of the place gave us *eulogiae* that is, of fruits which grow on the mountain. For although the holy mountain Sinai is rocky throughout, so that it has not even a shrub on it, yet down below, near the foot of the mountains, around either the central height or those which encircle it, there is a little plot of ground where the holy monks diligently plant little trees and orchards, and set up oratories with cells near to them, so that they may gather fruits which they have evidently cultivated with their own hands from the soil of the very mountain itself.

7.- So, after we had communicated, and the holy men had given us *eulogiae*, and we had come out of the door of the church, I began to ask them to show us the several sites. Thereupon the holy men immediately deigned to show us the various places. They showed us the cave where holy Moses was when he had gone up again into the mount of God, that he might receive the second tables after he had broken the former ones when the people sinned ; they also deigned to show us the other sites which we desired to see, and those which they themselves well knew.

8.- But I would have you to know, ladies, reverend sisters, that from the place where we were standing, round outside the walls of the church, that is from the summit of the central mountain, those mountains, which we could scarcely climb at first, seemed to be so much below us when compared with the central one on which we were standing, that they appeared to be little hills, although they were so very great that I thought that I had never seen higher, except that this central one excelled them by far. From thence we saw Egypt and Palestine, and the Red Sea and the Parthenian Sea, which leads to Alexandria and the boundless territories of the Saracens, all so much below us as to be scarcely credible, but the holy men pointed out each one of them to us.



Egeria's third expedition during her three-year stay in Jerusalem began at Mount Sinai.

When she arrived at any of the holy places, Egeria would take her Bible and have the passage about the place she had visited read, of which had previously

been well informed: 'Read all about the passage from the book of Moses'. He was undoubtedly impressed by the beauty of these regions and used to describe the mountains, the rivers and even the characteristic crops and plants: 'around the slopes of those mountains [...], they plant saplings or make orchards or fields'.

Pilgrims like Egeria received eulogies or gifts from the bishops or monks at the time of their departure as a souvenir of the place: 'to have given us those saints', which consisted of local fruits, sweets, ampoules of oil from the sacred lamp, etc. It was a widespread practice, motivated by the dictates of hospitality. Egeria speaks of eulogies on other occasions: at the place where Moses caused water to flow (11, 1), at the place where John baptised (15, 6) and when he visited Jacob's well (21, 3).

From the summit of Sinai, after the Eucharistic celebration in the church, the monks showed him the various places, as good connoisseurs of the area: 'those saints deigned to show us everything'. She expressed satisfaction whenever she came to a place and thought that the biblical stories had unfolded in the settings she was contemplating: 'the cave where the holy Moses was'. This vision served to give absolute veracity to these stories and, at the same time, to reinforce his religious faith.

Her text was addressed to her friends who remained in the homeland: 'ladies, venerable sisters', whom she wished to inform of her pilgrimage: 'I want you to know'. She felt sent by them, to them she collected and dedicated the results of her research and with them she shared not only life and faith, but also knowledge.

She felt admiration for the height of Sinai and the surrounding mountains: 'we saw below us in an incredible way'. Also, on her escape to Mesopotamia on the way back, she was impressed by the width and rushing current of the Euphrates River, which she compared to the Rhone (18, 2).



## Capitulum XII

5.- Maxima etiam pars Palestinae, quae est terra repromissionis, inde uidebatur, nec non et omnis terra Iordanis, in quantum tamen poterat oculis conspici. In sinistra autem parte uidimus terras Sodomitarum omnes nec non et Segor, quae tamen Segor sola de illis quinque in hodie constat (cf. Gen. 19, 22 et deut. 34, 3).

6.- Nam et memoriale ibi est, de ceteris autem illis ciuitatibus nichil aliud apparet nisi subuersio ruinarum, quemadmodum in cinerem conuerse sunt. Locus etiam, ubi fuit titulus uxoris Loth, ostensus est nobis, qui locus etiam in scripturis legitur (cf. Gen. 19, 26).

7.- Sed mihi credite, domine uenerabiles, quia columna ipsa iam non paret, locus autem ipse tantum ostenditur: columna autem ipsa dicitur mari mortuo fuisse quoopta. Certe locum <cum> uideremus, columnam nullam uidimus, et ideo fallere uos super hanc rem non possum. Nam episcopus loci ipsius, id est de Segor, dixit nobis, quoniam iam aliquot anni essent, a quo non pareret columna illa. Nam de Segor forsitan sexto miliario ipse locus <est>, ubi stetit columna illa, quod nunc totum cooperit aqua.

## Chapter XII

### Mount Nebo

5.- The greatest part of Palestine, the land of promise, was in sight, together with the whole land of Jordan, as far as it could be seen with our eyes. On the left side we saw all the lands of the Sodomites and Segor which is the only one of the five cities that exists to-day.

6.- There is a memorial of it, but nothing appears of those other cities but a heap of ruins, just as they were turned into ashes. The place where was the inscription concerning Lot's wife was shown to us, which place is read of in the Scriptures.

7.- But believe me, reverend ladies, the pillar itself cannot be seen, only the place is shown, the pillar is said to have been covered by the Dead Sea. Certainly when we saw the place we saw no pillar, I cannot therefore deceive

you in this. The bishop of the place that is of Segor, told us that it is now some years since the pillar could be seen. The spot where the pillar stood is about six miles from Segor, and the water now covers the whole of this space.



On the fourth expedition from Jerusalem, he crossed the Jordan River and, via the gorges of Ayin Musa (Moses' springs), reached the top of Mount Nebo where he visited several biblical sites. On this mountain Moses was said to have sighted the Promised Land. There he paused to describe the magnificent panorama that could be seen from the heights: 'one could see from there the greater part of Palestine [...], the whole Jordan Valley'.

Before leaving, Egeria would read the Bible attentively, a text that accompanied her throughout her travels in the East. This work became her bedside book, which she read on each visit to corroborate the biblical facts: 'This is also referred to in the scriptures'.

Egeria was a critical, even ironic woman, who took her travels as an apprenticeship in life. An example of her critical nature is shown when the Bishop of Segor shows her the place where Lot's wife was supposedly turned into a pillar of salt, as the Bible relates. Although she is a person eager to see and learn, open to everything, she does not believe anything she is told and, in a somewhat complicit way with her friends, denies the belief: 'we don't get to see any pillars, because I can't fool you about anything'.



## Capitulum XVI

1.- Ac sic ergo euntes aliquandiu per uallem Iordanis super ripam fluminis ipsius, quia ibi nobis iter erat aliquandiu, ad subito uidimus ciuitatem sancti prophetae Heliae, id est Thesbe, unde ille habuit nomen Helias Thesbites (cf. III reg. 17, 1). Inibi est ergo usque in hodie spelunca, in qua sedit ipse sanctus, et ibi est memoria sancti Gethae, cuius nomen in libris Iudicum legimus (cf. Iud. 11 et 12, 7).

2.- Ac sic ergo et ibi gratias Deo agentes iuxta consuetudinem perexiimus iter nostrum. Item euntes in eo itinere uidimus uallem de sinistro nobis uenientem amenissimam, quae uallis erat ingens, mittens torrentem in Iordanem infinitum. Et ibi in ipsa ualle uidimus monasterium cuiusdam fratris nunc id est monachi.

3.- Tunc ego, ut sum satis curiosa, requirere coepi, quae esset haec uallis, ubi sanctus monachus nunc monasterium sibi fecisset; non enim putabam hoc sine causa esse. Tunc dixerunt nobis sancti, qui nobiscum iter faciebant, id est loci notores: «Haec est uallis Corra, ubi sedit sanctus Helias Thesbites temporibus Achab regis (cf. III reg. 17, 3-6), qua famis fuit, et iusso Dei coru<us e>i escam portabat, et de eo torrentem aquam bibebat. Nam hic torrens, quem uides de ipsa ualle percurrentem in Iordanem, hic est Corra.»

## Capítulo XVI

### The city of Elijah.

1.- Then going for a time through the valley of the Jordan on the bank of the river, because our route lay that way for a while, we suddenly saw the city of the holy prophet Elijah, that is Thesbe, whence he had the name of Elijah the Tishbite. There, to this day, is the cave wherein the holy man sat; there too is the tomb of holy Getha, whose name we read in the books of the Judges.

2.- There too we gave thanks to God according to custom and pursued our journey. And as we journeyed that way we saw a very pleasant valley opening towards us on the left ; it was very large and discharged a very great torrent into the Jordan, and in that valley we saw the cell of one who is now a brother, that is a monk..



3.- Then I, as I am very inquisitive, began to ask what was this valley where the holy monk had now made himself a cell, for I did not think it was without reason. Then the holy men who were journeying with us, and who knew the place, said, " This is the valley of Corra, where holy Elijah the Tishbite dwelt in the time of king Ahab, when there was a famine, and at the bidding of God the raven used to bring him food, and he drank water of the torrent. For this brook which you see running through this valley into Jordan, is Corra.



Egeria wanted to prove that the biblical passages were real, to contemplate the settings in which the events of the holy characters took place: 'whose names we find in the book of Judges'.

On all these journeys, she visited monasteries and was welcomed with great affection by monks, priests and bishops: 'we found another monastery belonging to a brother, that is, a monk. Not only did they go out to welcome her, but they accompanied her while she was in their territory and served as her guide: 'to what was explained to me by the saints who accompanied us, i.e. those who knew the surroundings'.

She knew how to pay attention to things, to be curious about them: 'as I am so curious, I started asking her [...], because I thought that', to enrich herself through the experiences and knowledge that the journey offered her and she did not shy away from writing it down. She knew how to make the most of her journey, without hiding the fact that she enjoyed it as such. Travelling through the Holy Land was, for her, her own particular journey to Ithaca.





### Capitulum XXIII

1.- Nam proficiscens de Tharso perueni ad quandam ciuitatem supra mare adhuc Ciliciae, quae appellatur Pompeiopolim. Et inde, iam ingressa fines Hisauriae mansi in ciuitate, quae appellatur Corico. Ac tertia die perueni ad ciuitatem, quae appellatur Seleucia Hisauriae. Ubi cum peruenissem, fui ad episcopum uere sanctum ex monacho, uidi etiam ibi ecclesiam ualde pulchram in eadem ciuitate.

2.- Et quoniam inde ad sanctam Teclam, qui locus est ultra ciuitatem in colle sed plano, habebat de ciuitate forsitan mille quingentos passus, malui ergo perexire illuc, ut statua, quam factura eram, ibi facerem. Ibi autem ad sanctam ecclesiam nichil aliud est nisi monasteria sine numero uirorum ac mulierum.

3.- Nam inueni ibi aliquam amicissimam michi, et cui omnes in oriente testimonium ferebant uitae ipsius, sancta diaconissa nomine Marthana, quam ego aput Ierusalimam noueram, ubi illa gratia orationis ascenderat; haec autem monasteria aputactitum seu uirginum regebat. Quae me cum uidisset, quod gaudium illius uel meum esse potuerit, nunquid uel scribere possum?

### Capítulo XXIII

#### Visit to s. Thecla's church

1.- So, setting out from Tarsus, I came to a certain city on the sea, still in Cilicia, which is called Pompeiopolis. Thence I entered the borders of Hisauria and stayed in a city called Coricus, and on the third day I arrived at a city which is called Seleucia in Hisauria ; on my arrival I went to the bishop, a truly holy man, formerly a monk, and in that city I saw a very beautiful church.

2.- And as the distance thence to saint Thecla, which is situated outside the city on a low eminence, was about fifteen hundred paces, I chose rather to go there in order to make the stay that I intended. There is nothing at the holy church in that place except numberless cells of men and of women.

3.- I found there a very dear friend of mine, to whose manner of life all in the East bore testimony, a holy deaconess named Marthana, whom I had known at Jerusalem, whither she had come for the sake of prayer ; she was ruling over

the cells of afotactitae and virgins. And when she had seen me, how can I describe the extent of her joy or of mine?



After spending the Passover of 384 in Jerusalem, after a three-year stay, including his four expeditions, she returned to Constantinople by the same route she had taken on her way out. At some points she took a detour to visit the tombs of venerated martyrs, such as that of St. Thecla in Isauria, where she was delighted to meet her friend Marthana, "a very good friend of mine", whom she had met in Jerusalem, when she was collecting information from liturgical celebrations and catechesis.

It is the only case in the entire *Itinerarium* in which Egeria names a person; she never gives the names of her companions or of the bishops and monks who receive them.

Marthana is the friend in whom Egeria rests, in whom she recognises herself beyond cultural and social differences 'with how much joy from both of us that I could not express it! She is the friend who introduces her friends, closing between them a circle of friendship beyond time and space. We would not have known this deaconess and superior of several women's monasteries in Seleucia, 'whom everyone in the East holds up as a model of life', had it not been for the brief text dedicated to her by her friend Egeria. Marthana is a clear example of so many women with authority, but lost in the history of the Church.



### Capitulum XXIII

8.- Ac sic ergo alia die transiens mare perueni Constantinopolim, agens Christo Deo nostro gratias, quod michi indignae et non merenti praestare dignatus est tantam gratiam, id est ut non solum uoluntatem eundi, sed et facultatem perambulandi quae desiderabam dignatus fuerat praestare et reuertendi denuo Constantinopolim.

9.- Ubi cum uenissem, per singulas ecclesias uel apostolos nec non et per singula martyria, quae ibi plurima sunt, non cessabam Deo nostro Iesu gratias agere, qui ita super me misericordiam suam praestare dignatus fuerat.

10.- De quo loco, domnae, lumen meum, cum haec ad uestram affectionem darem, iam propositi erat in nomine Christi Dei nostri ad Asiam accedendi, id est Efesum, propter martyrium sancti et beati apostoli Iohannis gratia orationis. Si autem et post hoc in corpore fuero, si qua praeterea loca cognoscere potuero, aut ipsa praesens, si Deus fuerit praestare dignatus, uestrae affectioni referam aut certe, si aliud animo sederit, scriptis nuntiabo. Vos tantum, dominae, lumen meum, memores mei esse dignamini, siue in corpore siue iam extra corpus fuero (cf. II Cor. 12, 3).

### Chapter XXIII

#### Return to Constantinople

8.- On the next day, crossing the sea, I arrived at Constantinople, giving thanks to Christ our God who deigned to give me such grace, unworthy and undeserving as I am, for He had deigned to give me not only the will to go, but also the power of walking through the places that I desired, and of returning at last to Constantinople.

9.- When I had arrived there, I went through all the churches that of the Apostles and all the martyr-memorials, of which there are very many and I ceased not to give thanks to Jesus our God, Who had thus deigned to bestow His mercy upon me.

10.- From which place, ladies, light of my eyes, while I send these (letters) to your affection, I have already purposed, in the Name of Christ our God, to go to

Ephesus in Asia, for the sake of prayer, because of the memorial of the holy and blessed Apostle John. And if after this I am yet in the body, and am able to see any other places, I will either tell it to your affection in person, if God deigns to permit me this, or in anywise, if I have another project in mind, I will send you news of it in a letter. But do you, ladies, light of my eyes, deign to remember me, whether I am in the body or out of the body.



The feeling of thanksgiving fills Egeria's heart for all that God grants her, for the fact that she is able to visit the holy places: 'because I had fulfilled my desire to go and the possibility to travel as much as I wished', and this is what she expresses on her arrival in Constantinople.

At the end of the first part of the *Itinerarium*, we find the words with which Egeria sends the letter to her correspondents with a farewell full of affection, in which the affectionate terms 'my ladies, light of my eyes' reappear.

Not even at the end of her story does her curiosity subside: when she says goodbye to her friends in letters and announces her return, she is still planning, as one who decides on the spur of the moment, to make a few trips to Asia Minor: 'I intended to go to Asia' to venerate some *martyria* or tombs of apostles and saints.

She promises to keep sending news and asks her friends not to forget her. Perhaps her strength was already failing because of her last words that she apostilled, 'whether I am alive or dead'. We don't know when or how she returned home, or even if she came back

On the same page of the codex where the travels and excursions end (I-23), the second part of Egeria's account begins: a detailed description of the Jerusalem liturgy (24-49)



## Capitulum XXXVII

1.- Post hoc ergo missa facta de Cruce, id est antequam sol procedat, statim unusquisque animosi uadent in Syon orare ad columnam illam, ad quem flagellatus est Dominus. Inde reuersi sedent modice in domibus suis et statim toti parati sunt. Et sic ponitur cathedra episcopo in Golgotha post Crucem, quae stat nunc; residet episcopus in cathedra; ponitur ante eum mensa sublinteata; stant in giro mensa diacones et affertur locus argenteus deauratus, in quo est lignum sanctum crucis, aperitur et profertur, ponitur in mensa tam lignum crucis quam titulus.

2.- Cum ergo positum fuerit in mensa, episcopus sedens de manibus suis summitates de ligno sancto premet, diacones autem, qui in giro stant, custodent. Hoc autem propterea sic custoditur, quia consuetudo est, ut unus et unus omnis populus ueniens, tam fideles quam cathecumini, acclinant<es> se ad mensam osculentur sanctum lignum et pertranseant. Et quoniam nescio quando dicitur quidam fixisse morsum et furasse de sancto ligno, ideo nunc a diaconibus, qui in giro stant, sic custoditur, ne qui ueniens audeat denuo sic facere.

3.- Ac sic ergo omnis populus transit unus et unus toti acclinantes se, primum de fronte, sic de oculis tangentes crucem et titulum, et sic osculantes crucem pertranseunt, manum autem nemo mittit ad tangendum. At ubi autem osculati fuerint crucem, pertransierint, stat diaconus, tenet anulum Salomonis et cornu illud, de quo reges unguebantur. Osculantur et cornu, attendunt et anulum [lac. XII litt.] minus secunda [lac. VII litt.] usque ad horam sextam omnis populus transit, per unum ostium intrans, per alterum [per alterum] perexiens, quoniam hoc in eo loco fit, in quo pridie, id est quinta feria, oblatio facta est.

## Capítulo XXXVII

### Good Friday. Veneration of the Cross

1.- After this, when the dismissal at the Cross has been made, that is, before the sun rises, they all go at once with fervour to Sion, to pray at the column at which the Lord was scourged. And returning thence they sit for a while in their houses, and presently all are ready. Then a chair is placed for the bishop in

Golgotha behind the Cross, which is now standing ; the bishop duly takes his seat in the chair, and a table covered with a linen cloth is placed before him ; the deacons stand round the table, and a silver-gilt casket is brought in which is the holy wood of the Cross. The casket is opened and (the wood) is taken out, and both the wood of the Cross and the title are placed upon the table.

2.- Now, when it has been put upon the table, the bishop, as he sits, holds the extremities of the sacred wood firmly in his hands, while the deacons who stand around guard it. It is guarded thus because the custom is that the people, both faithful and catechumens, come one by one and, bowing down at the table, kiss the sacred wood and pass through. And because, I know not when, some one is said to have bitten off and stolen a portion of the sacred wood, it is thus guarded by the deacons who stand around, lest any one approaching should venture to do so again.

3.- And as all the people pass by one by one, all bowing themselves, they touch the Cross and the title, first with their foreheads and then with their eyes ; then they kiss the Cross and pass through, but none lays his hand upon it to touch it. When they have kissed the Cross and have passed through, a deacon stands holding the ring of Solomon and the horn from which the kings were anointed; they kiss the horn also and gaze at the' ring... all the people are passing through up to the sixth hour, entering by one door and going out by another; for this is done in the same place where, on the preceding day, that is, on the fifth weekday, the oblation was offered..



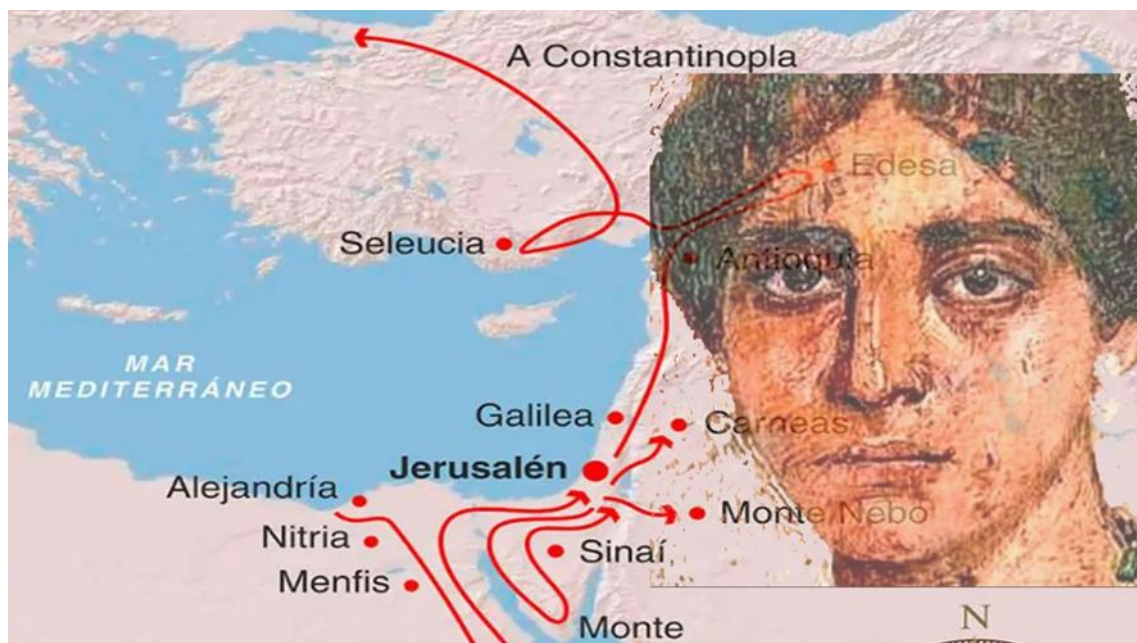
The second part of the itinerary, devoted to the liturgy of the Holy City, is written in the third person. It moves from a travel diary, written in the first person, to a detailed account of the weekly offices and celebrations, and of the cycles and feasts of the liturgical year.

In the description of Holy Week, the moment of greatest spiritual emotion of the Good Friday festivity is the adoration of the cross, an act that fills almost the entire day. After briefly alluding to the custom of praying before the pillar of

flagellation in Zion, where “everyone heads off with spirit”, Egeria describes the adoration of the holy wood.

This ritual is done without a proper liturgical celebration, that is to say, without readings, songs or prayers, but the people come one after the other to venerate the shaft of the Cross, placed on a table in the small chapel of Golgotha. The bishop, seated, holds the points and the deacons watch it with great attention while believers touch him with their foreheads and kiss him.

This account is informative and almost didactic in character and, even so, Egeria's observant and critical spirit suddenly appears, and in the midst of the detailed description of the ceremony of adoration of the *Lignum Crucis*, an anecdote emerges, an occasional fact she has heard that explains the tension of the moment: ‘one of those who were passing by took a bite out of the Cross and stole a piece of the holy wood’.



<https://www.infobierzo.com/uploads/s1/77/67/98/egeria-semana-santa-espana.jpeg>