



Memory and Identity in the Middle Ages:

The Construction of a Cultural Memory of the Holy Land (4th-16th centuries)

Call For Papers

An interdisciplinary conference, 26 & 27 May 2016
University of Amsterdam

The Holy Land has played an important role in the definition of the identities of the three major Abrahamic religions. Constitutive narratives about the past of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam were largely bound to this shared and contested space. As put forward both by Maurice Halbwachs and Jan Assmann, memory adheres to what is 'solid', stored away in outward symbols. The Holy Land is a focal point around which the shared memories of these different groups formed, and has been crucial for defining their identities. Accordingly, the definition of this shared memory can be traced as a process of elaborating a cultural memory: an 'artificial' construction of developed traditions, transmissions and transferences. This process of construction was pursued through different media that cast the past into symbols. The period between the age of Constantine and the late Renaissance was formative for constructing this memory. It saw the valorization of Christian holy places under Constantine, the birth of Islam, the construction of an important Jewish scholarly community in the Holy Land, the Crusades, the massive growth of late medieval pilgrimage involving Jewish, Christian and Islamic groups, as well as other crucial events.

The conference aims to bring together scholars who study the memories of the holy places within these religious galaxies from various disciplinary perspectives, in order to achieve a constructive exchange of ideas. Scholars of all so-called Abrahamic religions are invited to submit proposals, including scholars of Western and Eastern Christianity, Judaism and Islam. The call is open for historians, art historians, literary scholars, theologians, philosophers working on topics ranging from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance.

This conference is organized by the team of the research project *Cultural Memory and Identity in the Late Middle Ages: the Franciscans of Mount Zion in Jerusalem and the Representation of the Holy Land (1333-1516)*: Michele Campopiano, Valentina Covaci, Guy Geltner and Marianne Ritsema van Eck. The project is funded by the Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (NWO).

Papers should be 30 minutes long, and will be followed by 15 minutes of discussion. Participants are asked to send an abstract of 300 words to memory.and.identity.conference@gmail.com before 1 December 2015, together with information concerning their academic affiliation. Travel costs and two nights of accommodation will be financed by the project. Please do not hesitate to contact us for additional information.