

ABSTRACT

“A Holy Land for the Catholic Monarchy: Spanish Reconstructions of Palestine, 1469–1598”

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When describing the Palestinian landscape, Spanish Holy Land pilgrims of the sixteenth century often reported being struck by the fact that—in the formulation of Antonio de Aranda, OFM—“neither Italy, nor France, nor Flanders, nor Upper nor Lower Germany is so similar to the Promised Land . . . as is our Spain.”¹ This perceived kinship was only partially the result of climatic or topographical accident. It was also the fruit of an extensive campaign, sustained by all sectors of Spanish society, to assimilate their homeland to the Holy Land. It entailed the exchange of people (apostles, pilgrims) and relics, the repeated reproduction of Jerusalem on Spanish terrain (the erection of Stations of the Cross and replicas of the Holy Sepulcher), the christening of holy sites after those of Jerusalem, the rewriting of Spanish antiquities, and the promotion of crusade. My paper is a systematic examination of several examples of Spaniards’ attempts to remake their *patria* as a literal New Jerusalem in the context of the development of state, society, and religion in Spain between 1469 and 1598. Particular attention will be paid to the concrete connections of Spain and the Custodia Terrae Sanctae, the Franciscan presence in Jerusalem.

¹ Fray Antonio de Aranda, OFM, *Verdadera informacion de la tierra sancta, segun la dispusicion que en el año de mil y quinientos y treynta el auctor la vio y passeio* (Toledo: Juan Ferrer, 1550), ff. 10v–11v.