

Jerusalem in Brindisi. Von Formentreue, Selbstreferenzialität und inszenierter Nähe

Abstract

Jerusalem in Brindisi. On Fidelity to Form, Self-Referentiality and Staged Proximity

The paper focuses on the special role of San Giovanni al Sepolcro in Brindisi as a replica of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. As the study shows, the Romanesque rotunda of Brindisi can be identified with the “ecclesia Sancti Sepulchri” first attested in 1128, which was in possession of the Canons of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Significantly inspired by the pro-Norman patriarch of Jerusalem, Arnulf of Chocques, these canons may have commissioned the building between 1114 and 1128. Since the local canons were institutionally unified with those in Jerusalem, a specific form of self-referentiality or ‘self-quotation’ is seen here. An analysis of the architectural findings shows that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Brindisi was built in three phases according to a consistent project. Only the northern portal (*protiro*) was a latter addition, probably dating to the late 12th century.

The second part of the article discusses the mimetic features of San Giovanni al Sepolcro in comparison with other European replicas of the Holy Sepulchre. Given the above-average mimetic reception in some of its architectural details the church stands out among other versions of the famous building in Jerusalem. This more precise reception was influenced by the relatively close geographical position of Brindisi to the Levante, by the role of the city as a pilgrimage harbour and by the Canons of the Holy Sepulchre as the building’s patrons.

In its institutional interweaving with Jerusalem and the clearly legible forms of visualization, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Brindisi is almost paradigmatic for the extraordinarily close transcultural exchange processes in the eastern Mediterranean.