



The Travels of Ibn Jubayr

A Mediaeval Spanish Muslim
visits Makkah, Madinah, Egypt,
cities of the Middle East
and Sicily.

Translated by
Roland Broadhurst

THE TRAVELS OF IBN JUBAYR

Being the chronicle of a mediaeval Spanish Moor concerning his journey to the Egypt of Saladin, the holy cities of Arabia, Baghdad the City of the Caliphs, the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, and the Norman Kingdom of Sicily.

Translated from the original Arabic

By

R. J. C. BROADHURST

With an Introduction and Notes

Goodword
B · O · O · K · S

Introduction

ONE day in the year A.D. 1182, the Moorish Governor of Granada, then the wealthiest and most splendid city of Spain, summoned his secretary to discharge some business. The incumbent of this post was Abu 'l-Husayn Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Jubayr, who, born in 1145 to a good family in Valencia,* had by his learning and character attained this office of trust. On arrival before his master, he had been offered a cup of wine, but the continent clerk, a sincere Muslim who emulated the temperance of his prophet, had pleaded that never before had his lips touched strong drink. The unregenerate prince, wishful of repairing this strange neglect, and with tones and gestures that allowed of no dispute, had thereupon cried: 'Seven cups, by Allah, shalt thou drink'; and the trembling scholar, his apprehensions of the wrath to come obscured by present terrors, had been fain to swallow the forbidden draughts. Yet no sooner had he done so than the prince was seized with sudden pity, and in remorse had seven times filled the cup with golden dinars and poured them into the bosom of his servant's gown.

The good man, who long had cherished the wish to discharge the duty of the pilgrimage to Mecca, at once determined to expiate his godless act by devoting the money to this end. So, seeking and obtaining his master's leave, he took up the pilgrim staff and, on the 3rd of February, 1183, accompanied by Abu Ja'far Ahmad ibn Hassan, a physician of Granada,

* He was descended from 'Abd al-Salam ibn Jubayr who, coming from the tribe of Kinanah near Mecca, had entered Spain with the army sent in A.D. 740 by the Caliph of Damascus under the general Balj ibn Bishr al-Qushayri to quell the Berber insurrection in his Spanish provinces. At the time of our diarist, the Berber dynasty of the Almohades had established themselves as the independent rulers of Muslim Spain, and it was one of their princes, Abu Sa'id 'Uthman ibn 'Abd al-Mu'min, who was his master and the Governor of Granada.

departed on his way. And in this chronicle, which he recorded daily, or at least frequently and while his impressions were still fresh, we may read of the strange events and places, and the notable people and customs, that he observed upon the mediæval eastern scene before, on the 25th of April, 1185, he returned to his native Spain.

Embarking on a Genoese ship, he came to Egypt where, recounting his impressions of the ancient wonders that are but now unfolding their meaning, he pondered the splendid edifices and the salutary reforms prescribed by the munificence and the piety of Saladin, the rising champion of the East. He ascended the Nile, and describes the great temples of the Pharaohs now in ruin, at which the beholder might conceive that all time spent on their adornment would be too short. From the Nile he journeyed in a camel caravan to the Red Sea, there to embark in a fragile craft for the Hejaz and, being delivered from the perils both of the waterless desert and a reef-set sea, arrive at the Holy Cities of Arabia. With precise and reverent detail he describes the Great Mosque of Mecca and its holy of holies, the Ka'bah, and then unfolds the unchanging pilgrim rites that, then and to-day, Muslims from all quarters of the earth must seek, if they have the means, at least once in a life-time to discharge.

The pilgrim then moved north to visit the tomb of the prophet Muhammad in Medina, which done, he turned eastward and, joining the long and motley caravan of pilgrims returning to Iraq and Turkestan, the sister of the caravan from Damascus described to us in the deathless pages of Doughty, he portrays its slow and ordered march across the deserts of Arabia to Baghdad, the City of the Caliphs, where lingered still the glories of Harun al-Rashid. He sees the reigning caliph, Nasir, 'the lustre of whose reign consists only in pages and negro eunuchs' and who, seeking to throw off the yoke of the fierce and illiberal Turk, once mercenaries and now masters, most foolishly invoked the aid of Jengis Khan; for the heathen hordes of Tartary, riding fleet horses and drawing strange bows,

were soon to extinguish his dynasty, massacre the citizens, and, breaking the splendid irrigatory canals our traveller admires, reduce a fruitful countryside to a horrid waste.

The armed company of some Turkish princesses gave him protection for his passage along the Euphrates and through such ancient cities as Mosul and Nineveh until, coming to northern Syria, he descended through Aleppo to Damascus. This jewel of the East he depicts as it was a hundred years before the invasion of the Mongols, and the Great or Umayyad Mosque that is still to-day one of its glories he describes as it was before the pillage of Timurlane.

Weary now for home, our pilgrim set forth for Acre in the Crusader kingdom of Jerusalem that he might there take ship to Spain. And here we come upon the strange anomaly of those days. At a time when the kingdom is at war with the Muslims and when our diarist has even witnessed, as he left Damascus, the triumphant return of the army of Saladin, laden with booty and leading many Christian prisoners, he yet can journey to this Christian stronghold in a caravan of Muslim merchants.

This Latin kingdom, founded some eighty years before by the warriors of the First Crusade, had endured only because it was united amidst the discord and dissension of the Saracens. To the north, the contending Arab princes and Seljuk dynasts, being orthodox Sunni Muslims, acknowledged as Commander of the Faithful the elected Caliph of Baghdad. But to the south, Egypt and its large provinces was ruled by the Fatimids, who as Shi'ites believed the caliphate to be a God-given office inherent in their family as descendants of 'Ali, the husband of the prophet Muhammad's daughter Fatimah, from whom they took their name.

It was the role and achievement of Saladin to unite Islam. As lieutenant of the Seljuk prince Nur al-Din ibn Zengi, who had combined the Muslim states of Syria, he had gone south and removed the heretic caliph of Egypt. On the death of Nur al-Din he had taken his suzerain's possessions; and from the Caliph of Baghdad he had condescended to ask, and the puppet

Caliph had been flattered to grant, a patent of rule for Egypt and Syria and their dependent provinces. The eastern Muslim world was now one; the Frankish kingdom was enveloped, and its death-knell had sounded.

If the opponents of the Cross were at last united, all within the Christian realm was anarchy and alarm. King Baldwin IV was a dying leper, and as with the Greek princes before Troy, there was treachery and strife among the chiefs. Into their midst the pilgrim was allowed to ride without let or hap; and from the critical viewpoint of a scholarly Muslim we may observe afresh the customs and manners of the champions of the Cross.

At Acre he embarked with fifty other Muslims on a Genoese ship sailing west with two thousand Christian pilgrims from Jerusalem, and after much tribulation and peril on the sea was shipwrecked upon the shores of Sicily. And here he must have perished but for the timely arrival of the island's ruler, King William II, fourth of a line of brilliant pirates, the famous house of Hauteville which, driven by the old Norse wanderlust from their father's petty seigneury in Normandy, had won a kingdom under a blue sky.

From the Arabs they had taken Sicily, and the author records with pride the persisting art of the Arab craftsmen and husbandmen. High officers of the court, highly favoured ladies, and privileged eunuchs discovered to him their secret cleaving and the faith of Islam; and he studied the court, cities, and customs of this fabulous kingdom, where, without laying aside their dauntless valour and virile energy, the Normans, with their quick brilliance, love of magnificence, and receptive genius for acquiring what was polished and polite of the civilisations their long lances had subdued, took all, and more than all, the Eastern refinements that they found and brought to a full fruition a glorious blend of Arab-Norman art and culture. Amongst the orange groves of Palermo the descendant of the Vikings sat upon his throne, robed in the dalmatic of the apostolic legate and the imperial costume of Byzantium, his ministers

part Greek, part English, his army composed as to half of Moors, his fleet officered by Greeks, himself a Latin Christian, but, in that balmy climate of the south, ruling in half-Byzantine, half-oriental state, with a harem and eunuchs.* At Sicily our traveller took ship for home, whither he came without further mishap, and with a heart full of gratitude for the beneficence of Almighty God.

Throughout his journey indeed, he walked with God, and his constant supplications to his Maker when in distress and danger, and his just and ready praise and thanks for His mercies and blessings, keep us ever mindful that he is a man of piety in a community that is above all a religious community. For to its faith, Islam (Arabic, 'Submission' to the will of God), it owed its beginning and existence, its laws, social system, and code of values; and to Islam it owed its common language, Arabic, the language of the Koran. In this, the sacred scripture of Islam, communicated as Muslims believe by the Creator to His prophet Muhammad, the power, unity, and goodness of God are pronounced. Five duties are laid on all believers: (i) the profession of faith, 'There is no God but God'; (ii) the performance of divine worship five times a day; (iii) the fast between sunset and sunrise throughout the month of Ramadan; (iv) the payment of legal alms; and (v) the pilgrimage to Mecca, birthplace of Muhammad and the holy city of Islam. And all these duties we watch our pilgrim discharge.

To all his story, with its abundance of detail and interest, he brings a perspicacity and soundness of judgement, a precision and vividness of descriptive power (as in his picture of medieval sea-travel and the terrors of shipwreck), that may, perhaps, be expected in a scholar and writer of his repute; but in his balanced comments on Crusader Syria and Norman Sicily, despite the perfunctory malisons that by convention he must pronounce upon the Christian enemy, I can discern a moderation most rare in that fanatic age. And his portraits of these Christian outposts, otherwise mostly known to us from strongly

* H. A. L. Fisher, *A History of Europe*, p. 190.

God bless and preserve him – who said to
tomb of the brother of Moses – may God
him.” The Kathib al-Ahmar [the Hill of
s road and near this place, between Ghaliyah
as it comes to us in the tradition; these are
ces. The state of blessedness of this mosque
it is said that the light never fades from the
s reported to be where the inscribed stone
any endowments. As for the footprints, they
he stones along the road to the mosque and
otprint on each stone. The number of foot-
t is said that they are those of Moses – upon
) peace. God best knows the truth of this.
ut He.

The Month of Jumada 'l-Ula (580)

[10th of August–8th of September, 1184]

May God let us know His favour

THE new moon rose on the night of Friday, the 10th of
August according to the foreigners.

*A collocation of notes on the conditions of the city (of
Damascus)*

May God cause it to prosper in Islam

This city has eight Gates: Bab Sharqi [East Gate] is to the east. It has a white minaret, and it is said that Jesus – upon whom be (eternal) peace – will descend there (when He comes in glory), according to the tradition which says that He will descend at the white minaret east of Damascus. Next to this Gate is Bab Tuma [(St.) Thomas' Gate] which also is to the east. Then comes Bab al-Salamah [Gate of Safety], then Bab al-Faradis [Gate of Paradise] which is to the north, then Bab al-Faraj [Gate of Consolation], then Bab al-Nasr [Gate of Victory] which is to the west, then Bab al-Jabiyah [Gate of the Water-Trough] also to the west, then Bab al-Saghir [the Little Gate] to the south-west.

The Great Mosque lies towards the northern side of the city. The city is surrounded by suburbs save on the east side, and a little of the adjacent south. The suburbs are large, but the city itself is not excessively big, and inclines to be long. Its streets are narrow and dark, and its houses are made of mud and reeds, arranged in three storeys one over the other, so that fire speedily takes hold of them. Damascus contains as many people as three cities, for it is the most populous in the world. Its beauty is all outside, not in.

Inside the city is a church held in great consideration by the

Rum. It is called Mary's Church, and after the temple in Jerusalem they have none more esteemed than this. It is an elegant structure with remarkable pictures that amaze the mind and hold the gaze, and its spectacle is wonderful indeed. It is in the hands of the Rum, who are never molested within it.

There are about twenty colleges in the city, and two hospitals, one old and the other new. The new is the finer and bigger, and receives a daily allowance of about fifteen dinars. It has a staff who maintain a register that records the names of the sick and the items they require of medicine, food, and other things. Early each morning the physicians come to the hospital to visit the sick and order the preparation of the proper medicines and food according as suits each person. The other hospital is managed in the same way, but more people use the new. The old one stands west of the venerated mosque. There is also a system of treatment for confined lunatics, and they are bound in chains. We take refuge in God from this trial and sore affliction. Some of them let fall some pleasant witticisms according to what we would hear. One of the drollest I heard was of a man who had taught the Koran. The son of a notable in the town, a youth bearing some traits of beauty called Nasr Allah [the Help of God], was in the habit of reading it to him, and the man became infatuated with this youth. His passion increased until his brain became disordered and he was taken to the hospital, and his sickness and disgrace became notorious. His father used to visit him and once said to him, 'Go, and get back to the part of the Koran you were at,' and the man, jesting with the boldness of the possessed, replied, 'What part of it have I retained? Nothing of the Koran remains in my memory save "when there comes the Help of Allah" [Koran CX, 1]. Men laughed at him and at what he said, and we beg of God that he and all Muslims might be forgiven. He remained in this state until he died; may God grant him His forbearance.

These hospitals are among the great glories of Islam, and so are the colleges. One of the finest-looking colleges in the world

is that of Nur al-Din - may God's mercy rest upon his soul - and in it is his tomb - may God illumine it. It is a sumptuous palace. Water pours into it through an aqueduct in the middle of a great canal, filling an oblong fountain and finally falling into a large cistern in the centre of the building. The eyes are enchanted by the beauty of the sight, and all who see it renew their supplications for Nur al-Din - may God's mercy rest upon his soul.

As for the convents which they call *khananiq*, they are many and are used by the Sufis. They are elaborately decorated palaces, with water flowing to all their parts forming the most agreeable sight one could see. The members of this order of Sufis are the kings of these parts, for God has sufficed them of the goods and favours of the world, and freed them from thoughts of winning their livelihood that they might apply them to His worship, lodging them in palaces that remind them of the palaces of heaven. Those happy ones of them who have received God's help, enjoy, by His grace, the favours of this world and the next. They follow a noble path, and their social conduct is admirable. The style of their ritual in worship is remarkable, and excellent is their custom of assembling to listen to impassioned (dance) music. In these ecstasied and abstracted states the world forsakes them, such is their rapture and transport. In a word, all their affairs are wonderful, and they hope for a future life of bliss and felicity.

One of their most splendid convents is a place called al-Qasr, an enormous structure rising alone into the skies. In its upper storey are apartments than which I have never seen more beautiful for their lofty site. It is half a mile distant from the city, and has an extensive garden connected with it. It had once been the pleasure-lodge of a Turkish king. The story goes that he was one night taking his ease in it when some Sufis passed by, and some of the wine which the Turks were accustomed to drink in the castle was poured out for them. They raised the matter to Nur al-Din, who immediately demanded it from its owner as a gift and then gave it in perpetual endowment

to the Suffs. Wonder lasted long at bounty like this, which remained an enduring monument to the merits of Nur al-Din - may God's mercy rest upon his soul.

The virtues of this pious man were great, and he was indeed among the ascetic kings. He died in the month of Shawwal in the year 569 [15th of May, 1174]. After him came Saladin to power, and the virtues of his way are known. His state among kings is great, and a lasting monument to his honour is his raising of the customs tax on the Hejaz road, giving a grant in compensation to its ruler. For long times this accursed tax had lasted before God annulled it at the hand of this just Sultan - may God prosper him. Amongst the merits of Nur al-Din - may God's mercy rest upon his soul - was his assigning to the strangers from the Maghrib who were employed in the Malakite zawiyah of the blessed cathedral mosque many pious endowments including two mills, seven gardens, arable lands, a bath, and two shops in the perfumers' market. I was told by one of the Maghrabis who supervised this, one Abu 'l-Hasan 'Ali ibn Sardal al-Jayyami [from Jaen in Spain], known as al-Aswad [the Black], that if properly controlled these endowments yield five hundred dinars a year. Nur al-Din - may God's mercy rest upon his soul - showed much favour towards these people. May God reward him for the good he did. For the readers of the Book of Great and Glorious God he prepared an endowed house in which they might live.

The conveniences for strangers in this city are beyond computation, more especially for those who commit to memory the Book of Great and Glorious God and those devoted to study, to whom the attitude of this town is most extraordinary. All these eastern cities are of this fashion, but this city is more populous and wealthy. Whoever of the young men of the Maghrib seeks prosperity, let him move to these lands and leave his country in the pursuit of knowledge and he will find many forms of help. The first of these is the release of the mind from the consideration of livelihood, and this is the greatest and most important. For when zeal is present the

student will find the way clear to exert his utmost endeavour, and there will be no excuse for lagging behind, save in the case of those addicted to idleness and procrastination, and to them this exhortation is not addressed. We speak only to the zealous, who in their own land find that the search for the means of living comes between them and their aim of seeking knowledge. Well then the door of this East is open, so enter it in peace industrious youth and seize the chance of undistracted (study) and seclusion before a wife and children cling to you and you gnash your teeth in regret at the time you have lost. God is the Helper and the Guide. There is no God but He. I have given counsel to those I found listening, and called to those I heard answering. He who is directed by God is on the right path. Glorious is His power. Exalted is His majesty.

If in all these eastern lands there were nothing but the readiness of its people to show bounty to strangers and generosity to the poor, especially in the case of the inhabitants of the countryside (it would be enough). For you will find admirable their eagerness to show kindness to guests, which is enough to bring them honour. It sometimes comes to pass that one of them offers his piece (of bread) to a poor man, upon whom refusing he will cry and say, 'Had God seen in me any good, this needy man would have eaten my food.' In this they reveal a noble heart. One of their admirable traits is their respect for the pilgrim, despite the shortness of the distance to Mecca and the ease and facility with which they could make the journey. When the pilgrims return, they stroke them with their hands and press upon them to secure their benedictions.

One of the strangest things told us about this is that when the pilgrims from Damascus, together with those from the Maghrib who had joined them, returned to the city in this year of 580, a vast concourse of people, men and women, went forth to meet them, shaking the hands of the pilgrims and touching them, giving dinars to the poor amongst them that they met, and offering them food. One who witnessed

it told me that many women met pilgrims and gave them bread which if they bit the women would snatch from their hands and hasten to eat it in order that they might be blessed in the pilgrims' having tasted it. In place of it they gave them dirhams, and did other remarkable things, the opposite of what we were accustomed to in the Maghrib. At the time of the reception of the pilgrims at Baghdad the same thing was done to us, or something near to it. But if we sought to relate this matter exhaustively we should depart from the purpose of our narrative, so we have given a glimpse that offers some indication, and that shall content us in the place of diffuseness.

Any stranger in these parts whom God has rendered fit for solitude may, if he wishes, attach himself to a farm and live there the pleasantest life with the most contented mind. Bread in plenty will be given to him by the people of the farm, and he may engage himself in the duties of an imam or in teaching, or what he will, and when he is wearied of the place, he may remove to another farm, or climb Mount Lebanon or Mount Judi and there find the saintly hermits who nothing seek but to please Great and Glorious God, and remain with them so long as he wishes, and then go where he wills. It is strange how the Christians round Mount Lebanon, when they see any Muslim hermits, bring them food and treat them kindly, saying that these men are dedicated to Great and Glorious God and that they should therefore share with them. This mountain is one of the most fertile in the world, having all kinds of fruits, running waters, and ample shade, and rarely is it without a hermit or an ascetic. And if the Christians treat the opponents of their religion in this fashion, what think you of the treatment that the Muslims give each other?

One of the astonishing things that is talked of is that though the fires of discord burn between the two parties, Muslim and Christian, two armies of them may meet and dispose themselves in battle array, and yet Muslim and Christian travellers will come and go between them without interference. In this connection we saw at this time, that is the month of Jumada

'I-Ula, the departure of Saladin with all the Muslims troops to lay siege to the fortress of Kerak, one of the greatest of the Christian strongholds lying astride the Hejaz road and hindering the overland passage of the Muslims. Between it and Jerusalem lies a day's journey or a little more. It occupies the choicest part of the land in Palestine, and has a very wide dominion with continuous settlements, it being said that the number of villages reaches four hundred. This Sultan invested it, and put it to sore straits, and long the siege lasted, but still the caravans passed successively from Egypt to Damascus, going through the lands of the Franks without impediment from them. In the same way the Muslims continuously journeyed from Damascus to Acre (through Frankish territory), and likewise not one of the Christian merchants was stopped or hindered (in Muslim territories).

The Christians impose a tax on the Muslims in their land which gives them full security; and likewise the Christian merchants pay a tax upon their goods in Muslim lands. Agreement exists between them, and there is equal treatment in all cases. The soldiers engage themselves in their war, while the people are at peace and the world goes to him who conquers. Such is the usage in war of the people of these lands; and in the dispute existing between the Muslim Emirs and their kings it is the same, the subjects and the merchants interfering not. Security never leaves them in any circumstance, neither in peace nor in war. The state of these countries in this regard is truly more astonishing than our story can fully convey. May God by His favour exalt the word of Islam.

Damascus has a castle where the Sultan lives. It stands apart, to the west of the city opposite the Bab al-Faraj [Gate of Consolation], one of the city's gates. The Sultan's cathedral mosque is there, and the Friday service is held in it. East by it and outside the city are two horse-courses, so green as to seem to be rolls of silk-brocade. They are enclosed by a wall, with the river running between them, and bordering them is a large wood of poplars forming a very pleasant sight. The Sultan goes

out to them to play sawalajan [a kind of polo],¹²⁶ and to race his horses. There is no place like them for the eye to wander in. Every evening the Sultan's sons visit them to practise archery, race horses, and play sawalajan.

In this city and its suburbs there are about a hundred baths, and it has around forty ablution houses in all of which flows water. For the stranger, there is no better city in all these lands than this, for its conveniences are manifold. What we have mentioned of them is enough. May God by His favour keep it Muslim territory.

The markets of Damascus are the finest in the world and the best arranged, and the most handsomely constructed. Especially is this so with the gaysariyahs which are tall as caravanserais and furnished with iron gates like those of a castle. Each gaysariyah is distinguished by its shape and iron gates. The city has another market called Al-Suq al-Kabir [the Great Market], which extends from Bab al-Jabiyah to Bab Sharqi [along the street called Straight]. In it is a very small chamber used as an oratory. To the south is a stone on which it is said that Abraham – may God bless and preserve him – broke the idols which his father had brought to sell.¹²⁷

The tradition concerning the house named after (the Caliph) 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz, which is to-day a Sufi convent and stands in the vestibule of the Bab al-Natifiyyin and which we have mentioned before, is a very curious one. It is that the man who bought and furnished the house and gave it large endowments, and who instructed that he should be buried in it and that every Friday all the Koran should be read over his tomb, assigning to those who attended every Friday a *riḥl*¹²⁸ of white bread, the equivalent of three Maghribi riths, was a foreigner called al-Sumaysati [the Samosatian],¹²⁹ Sumaysat [Samosat] being a foreign city (on the Euphrates). This man was distinguished for his piety and asceticism. The origin of his prosperity and wealth, as was told to us, (was as follows).

One day, in the vestibule and beside the house of which we are talking, he came upon a black man, sick and abandoned,

uncared for and neglected; and to merit a heavenly reward and win recompense from Great and Glorious God, he undertook the nursing, serving, and attention of this unfortunate. When his death drew nigh, the sick man called his nurse the Samosatian and said unto him, 'You were kind to me, acted as a servant to me, treated me gently in my sickness, and pitied my condition and my being a stranger in a strange land. I wish therefore to reward you in addition to the reward that Great and Glorious God, if He wills, will grant you on my behalf in the life to come. I was one of the pages of the Caliph al-Mu'tadid the 'Abbaside, and was known as Zimmam al-Dar [The Intendant – a eunuch – in charge of the Palace] and possessed esteem and standing. But the Caliph became endangered with me over some affair and I was driven forth and came to this city where, by God's will, I was smitten with this affliction. Then God in His mercy caused you to come to my help. So now I appoint you my trustee and by virtue of that charge you, when I am dead and you have washed me, to go, with the blessings of God Most High, to Baghdad and there enquire with circumspection after the house of the Sahib al-Zimmam, the Caliph's page. When you have been directed to it, then use all artifice to rent it, and in this I pray God to give you help. When you are in residence, go to – and he named a place, giving him indications to it – and there dig a certain depth. Then pull away a board that you will find lying crossways under the earth and take what you will find buried beneath. Use this in your own interest, and in the good and charitable works that God may direct you to, and so, if He wills, bring blessings upon yourself.' The testator – God's mercy on his soul – then died and the trustee, with his testament, left for Baghdad. God helped him in the hiring of the house and he came to the place described where he removed a priceless treasure of vast quantity and enormous value. He hid it among bundles of merchandise that he had brought and (with it) left Baghdad for Damascus. There he bought this house named after 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz – may God hold him in His favour – and converted it into a

convent for the Sufis, embellishing it and buying farms and houses as endowments for it, placing it all to the benefit of the Sufis. He enjoined that he should be buried in it, and that the whole of the Koran should be read over his tomb every Friday, assigning to all those who attended it that which we have described. In this strangers and the poor find much benefit, and the convent is crammed with readers every Friday. When the reading of the Koran is over, they pray for him and then depart, each one being given a rīd of bread as described. To the deceased there remains a fine memorial and the good (that he has done). May God's mercy and approbation rest upon him.

The Kawthar, which we have mentioned, is also read in the cathedral mosque every day following the afternoon prayers, and is especially for those who have not yet learnt the Koran by heart. Its origin is also due to a rich man's dying and enjoining in his will that his tomb should be in the venerated cathedral mosque, and giving endowments that yielded one hundred and fifty dinars a year for the benefit of those who had not memorised the Koran. They read from the surah of the Kawthar to the end of the Koran, and every three months forty dinars is divided among them.¹⁸⁰

It is related that a king of former times died and also left injunctions that his tomb be in the cathedral mosque, in the qiblah and in a place where it would not be seen. He assigned huge endowments that yielded annually a thousand and four hundred dinars, or even more, for the benefit of the daily readers of a seventh part of the Koran. The place of assembly for the readers of this blessed seventh portion, which happens after the morning prayers each day, is in the eastern part of the Magsurah of the Companions – may God be pleased with them – and it is declared that in this place is the tomb of the king. The reading of the seventh portion must not be done beyond that area which is contiguous with the south wall towards the east wall. Great and Glorious God will not fail to reward those who do good.

All these noble bequests have remained unchanged with the

passing of days. May God profit the benefactors. Let these requests suffice (to illustrate) a land where men are guided to such acts to gain the approbation of Great and Glorious God. For the poor who are accustomed to sit on the east side of the venerated cathedral mosque, and who have no place of retreat, there is an endowment founded by some of those who seek a heavenly reward and have been guided by God in their bequests. But it would take long to recount the charitable and benevolent acts by which God has protected the stranger in these parts.

It is a custom of the people of Damascus, and of these other virtuous lands, a custom which we hope for them is acceptable to Great and Glorious God, to make it their purpose every year on the day of 'Arafah to stand in their cathedral mosque following the afternoon prayers, their imam with them and their heads uncovered, praying to their Lord and seeking the blessings of the hour in which the deputation to Great and Glorious God and the pilgrims to His Sacred House stand upon (Mount) 'Arafat. They stand praying and beseeching increasingly to Great and Glorious God, entreating His favour for the sake of the pilgrims to His Sacred House, and so continue until the set of the sun's disc. They compute the hour of the return of the pilgrims from 'Arafat, and then themselves disjoin, weeping at their being kept from that sublime standing ground on 'Arafat, and beseeching Great and Glorious God to bring them to it, and not to let them lack the blessings of His acceptance of their (intended) act.

One of the grandest and most remarkable sights in the world, among its imposing edifices of miraculous art and perfection, and admitted to be beyond description even in the most eloquent of tongues, is (achieved by) climbing to the top of the Lead Dome that we have already mentioned in this narrative as rising up in the centre of the venerated cathedral mosque, and entering into its interior, and then turning a reflective gaze on its superb structure, with the cupola poised within it like a hollow sphere inside another larger than itself. We climbed

forbids. In this direction they have many vain customs. What odd people! If they treat each other in this way, reaching such an extravagance of epithets in their common intercourse, how do they address their Sultans and comport themselves with such? The tail is equal to the head with them, and they do not distinguish between the governor and the governed. Glory to God who created men of all kinds. He has no partner. There is no God but He.

A singular habit in all these lands is their walking, great and small, with their hands behind their backs, one hand holding the other. They make their deep inclinations of greeting in this fashion, which has an air of obedience, in token of humbleness and modesty, as if they had been treated with violence, and had had their hands bound behind their backs. They deem this posture to set them apart as persons of distinction and honour, as well as giving liveliness to their limbs and relief from fatigue. The venerable among them is he who draws his train a span along the ground, or puts his hands behind his back the one over the other. They have adopted this manner of walking as obligatory, and every one of them has embellished himself with this bad practice and seen it to be good. I beg the pardon of God for them.

But in the etiquette of shaking hands they have usages which renew their security (with God) and invite God's pardon (for their other faults), according to the preaching of the tradition transmitted from the Prophet of God - may God bless and preserve him - on the matter of hand-shaking. They employ them after the prayers, more especially after the morning and afternoon prayers. When the imam salutes (the congregation) and has ended the prayers, the people go to him and shake his hand and then advance on each other, shaking hands with those to right and left of them. They then leave this pardon-bringing service with the grace of Great and Glorious God. We have already mentioned in this narrative how they employ this habit of shaking each other's hands when they observe the new moon, and how they pray for each other the blessings and happiness

of the new month, and that they might be acc felicity and well-being during that month and follow. That also is a beneficial practice, for w advantage them because of the prayers for e renewal of affection, and the shaking of each o the Faithful. (All this is from) the mercy and Most High.

We have also spoken, in another place in this journal, of the righteous path of the Sultan of these lands, Salah al-Din [Saladin] Abu 'l-Muzaffar Yusuf ibn Ayyub, of his memorable deeds in affairs of the world and of religion, and of his zeal in waging holy war against the enemies of God. Because north of this land there is none belonging to Islam, most of Syria being in the hands of the Franks, God in His mercy gave to the Muslims here this Sultan, who never retires to a place of rest, nor long abides at ease, nor ceases to make his saddle his council-chamber. We have been staying in this city for two months, yet when we alighted at it he had already gone forth to the siege of the fortress of Kerak, of which also we have made mention, and he still invests it - may God Most High assist him to conquer it.

We listened to one of the jurists and leading men of Damascus, who acknowledged the righteousness of this Sultan and who attended his audiences. He spoke of him in the presence of a gathering of learned men and jurists, describing three acts of virtue in three stories, and we have seen fit to record them here. One concerns the magnanimity of his disposition. He had just forgiven the crime of someone who had offended against him and said, 'For my part, I would rather miss the mark in being merciful than strike home in (deserved) punishment.' Here is the forbearance that was the aim of Ahnaf. Again at a symposium of poetry held in his presence, where the bounty and excellencies of ancient kings were talked of, he declared: 'By Allah, did I give the world to him who came to me in hope, I would not deem it too much; and if I emptied to him all that is in my treasury, it would not console him for the hot blush on his cheek as he asked of me.' Here indeed

was the way of al-Rashid or of Ja'far in generosity. In another instance, a favourite and much-liked slave appealed to him against a camel, or had restored to him a camel with an unsoundness that had not been there before. The Sultran answered, 'What can I do for you? The Muslims have a qadi who decides between them; over both the chief men and the people the justice of our laws extends, and its injunctions and its interdicts we must alike obey. I am but the servant of the law and its Shihnah', which is the word for chief of police, 'and justice will decide for you or against you.' In this settlement we see the manner that was 'Umar's. These stories are enough to shed glory on the Sultan. May God, by His favour, grant that Islam and the Muslims may long enjoy his preservation to them.

The Month of Jumada '1-Akhirah (580)

[6th of September-7th of October, 1184]

May God grant us His blessings

THE new moon rose on the night of Sunday the 9th of September according to the foreigners, while we were in Damascus - may God protect it - on the point of departure to Acre - may God restore it to us - to seek a passage by sea with some Christian merchants in the ships they had got ready for the autumn sailing which they called 'al-salbiyah',¹³² May God let us know His avouched grace, giving us of His care and protection, in His power and strength. Glory be to God, the All-Merciful, the Benefactor, the Giver of wealth and benefits. There is no God but He.

We left Damascus on the evening of Thursday the 5th of the said month, which was the 13th of September, in a large caravan of merchants travelling with their merchandise to Acre. One of the strangest things in the world is that Muslim caravans go forth to Frankish lands, while Frankish captives enter Muslim lands. In this regard, as we were leaving, we observed a singular event. When Saladin was laying siege to the fortress of Kerak, already mentioned in this diary [p. 311], the Franks, having been summoned from all sides, had marched upon him in great strength and sought to arrive before he did at the place of water, and also to intercept his supplies from Muslim country. But the Sultan, leaving the fortress, led his whole force against them and arrived before them at the watering place. The Franks shunned his path, and, following a rough road on which most of their animals perished, directed themselves towards the fortress of Kerak. The Sultan had closed to them all other roads leading to their own country, and there was left to them no other but the road by the fortress through the desert. Thus, because of the circuitous route that

must be followed, their supplies were distant from them. Seizing the opportunity, and taking advantage of the opening that fell to him, Saladin schemed an incursion on their country. Unexpectedly he arrived at the city of Nablus and attacked it with his soldiers and took it. He took prisoner all within it, and seized with it fortified places and villages. The hands of the Muslims were filled with prisoners beyond number, both Franks and a sect of the Jews known as al-Samarah [Samaritans] descended from al-Samiri [Koran XX, 87]. Large numbers were put to a speedy death, and the Muslims acquired plunder it is not possible to estimate, with all the goods, provisions, baggage, furniture, cattle and horses, and such-like. The victorious Sultan allowed the Muslims to take what they could, and conceded it to them. Each hand held what it gained, and became rich and prosperous. The army erased all traces of the Frankish lands through which it passed, returning victorious, with booty and in safety. Many Muslim prisoners they had also freed. It was a raid the like of which had not been heard of in the land.¹³⁵

We left Damascus when the foremost Muslims had already come, each bearing the booty he had laid his hands on. The prisoners tallied thousands, and their number we could not ascertain. The Sultan reached Damascus the first Saturday after our departure, and we learnt that he will rest his soldiers a little and then return to the fortress of Kerak. May God assist him, and in His power and glory, cause it to fall to him. We ourselves went forth to Frankish lands at a time when Frankish prisoners were entering Muslim lands. Let this be evidence enough to you of the temperateness of the policy of Saladin.

We passed the night of Friday in Darayah, a village belonging to Damascus, and a parasang and a half from it. We removed from there at daybreak on Friday to a village called Bait Jann, which lies amongst the hills. Thence we left, on the morning of Saturday, for the city of Banyas. Halfway on the road, we came upon an oak-tree of great proportions and with wide-spreading branches. We learnt that it is called 'The Tree of Measure', and when we enquired concerning it, we were told

that it was the boundary on this road between security and danger, by reason of some Frankish brigands who prowl and rob thereon. He whom they seize on the Muslim side, be it by the length of the arms or a span, they capture; but he whom they seize on the Frankish side at a like distance, they release. This is a pact they faithfully observe and is one of the most pleasing and singular conventions of the Franks.

A note on the city of Banyas [Belinas]

God Most High defend it

This city is on the frontier of the Muslim territories. It is small, but has a fortress below the walls of which winds a river that flows out from one of the gates of the city. A canal leading from it turns the mills. The city had been in the hands of the Franks, but Nur al-Din - may God's mercy rest upon his soul - recovered it [in 1165]. It has a wide tillage in a contiguous vale. It is commanded by a fortress of the Franks called Hunin* three parasangs distant from Banyas. The cultivation of the vale is divided between the Franks and the Muslims, and in it there is a boundary known as 'The Boundary of Dividing'. They apportion the crops equally, and their animals are mingled together, yet no wrong takes place between them because of it.

We departed from Banyas on the evening of the same Saturday for a village called al-Masiyah, near to the Frankish fort we have mentioned. We passed the night in it, and removed on Sunday at daybreak. Between Hunin and Tibnin we passed a valley thick with trees, most of which were bay. The valley was of great depth, like a deep ravine whose sides come together and whose heights reach to the skies. It is known as al-Asfil. Should soldiers penetrate it, they would be lost, there being no refuge or escape for them from the hand of those that lay in wait for them. Its descent and ascent, on both sides, is toilsome. Marvelling at the place, we passed it, travelling close beside, and came to one of the biggest fortresses of the Franks,

* Chastian Neuf.

called Tibnin. At this place customs dues are levied on the caravans. It belongs to the sow known as Queen¹³⁴ who is the mother of the pig who is the Lord of Acre – may God destroy it

We camped at the foot of this fortress. The fullest tax was not exacted from us, the payment being a Tyrian dinar and a qirat [one-twentieth part] of a dinar [about eleven shillings] for each head. No toll was laid upon the merchants, since they were bound for the place of the accursed King [Acre], where the tithes is gathered.¹³⁵ The tax there is a qirat in every dinar (worth of merchandise), the dinar having twenty-four qirat.¹³⁶ The greater part of those taxed were Maghribis, those from all other Muslim lands being unmolested. This was because some earlier Maghribis had annoyed the Franks. A gallant company of them had attacked one of their strongholds with Nur al-Din – may God have mercy upon him – and by its taking they had become manifestly rich and famous. The Franks punished them by this tax, and their chiefs enforced it. Every Maghribi therefore paid this dinar for his hostility to their country. The Franks declared: 'These Maghribis came and went in our country and we treated them well and took nothing from them. But when they interfered in the war, joining with their brother Muslims against us, we were compelled to place this tax upon them.' In the payment of this tax, the Maghribis are pleasingly reminded of their vexing of the enemy, and thus the payment of it is lightened and its harshness made tolerable.

We moved from Tibnin – may God destroy it – at daybreak on Monday. Our way lay through continuous farms and ordered settlements, whose inhabitants were all Muslims, living comfortably with the Franks. God protect us from such temptation. They surrender half their crops to the Franks at harvest time, and pay as well a poll-tax of one dinar and five qirat for each person. Other than that, they are not interfered with, save for a light tax on the fruits of trees. Their houses and all their effects are left to their full possession. All the coastal cities occupied by the Franks are managed in this fashion, their rural districts, the villages and farms, belonging to the Muslims. But

their hearts have been seduced, for they observe how unlike them in ease and comfort are their brethren in the Muslim regions under their (Muslim) governors. This is one of the misfortunes afflicting the Muslims. The Muslim community bewails the injustice of a landlord of its own faith, and applauds the conduct of its opponent and enemy, the Frankish landlord, and is accustomed to justice from him.¹³⁷ He who laments this state must turn to God. There is comfort and consolation enough for us in the exalted Book: 'It is nothing but a trial; Thou makest to err with it whom Thou pleasest, and guidest whom Thou pleasest' [Koran VII, 155].

On the same Monday, we alighted at a farmstead a parasang distant from Acre. Its headman is a Muslim, appointed by the Franks to oversee the Muslim workers in it. He gave generous hospitality to all members of the caravan, assembling them, great and small, in a large room in his house, and giving them a variety of foods and treating all with liberality. We were amongst those who attended this party, and passed the night there. On the morning of Tuesday the 10th of the month, which was the 18th of September, we came to the city of Acre – may God destroy it. We were taken to the custom-house, which is a khan prepared to accommodate the caravan. Before the door are stone benches, spread with carpets, where are the Christian clerks of the Customs with their ebony ink-stands ornamented with gold. They write Arabic, which they also speak. Their chief is the Sahib al-Diwan [Chief of the Customs], who holds the contract to farm the customs. He is known as al-Sahib [the Director or Master], a title bestowed on him by reason of his office, and which they apply to all respected persons, save the soldiery, who hold office with them. All the dues collected go to the contractor for the customs, who pays a vast sum (to the Government). The merchants deposited their baggage there and lodged in the upper storey. The baggage of any who had no merchandise was also examined in case it contained concealed (and dutiable) merchandise, after which the owner was permitted to go his way and seek lodging where

he would. All this was done with civility and respect, and without harshness and unfairness. We lodged beside the sea in a house which we rented from a Christian woman, and prayed God Most High to save us from all dangers and help us to security.

A note on the city of Acre

May God exterminate (the Christians in) it and restore it (to the Muslims)

Acre is the capital of the Frankish cities in Syria, the unloading place of ships reared aloft in the seas like mountains' [Koran LV, 24], and a port of call for all ships. In its greatness it resembles Constantinople. It is the focus of ships and caravans, and the meeting-place of Muslim and Christian merchants from all regions. Its roads and streets are choked by the press of men, so that it is hard to put foot to ground. Unbelief and impiety are there burn fiercely, and pigs [Christians] and crosses abound. It stinks and is filthy, being full of refuse and excrement. The Franks ravished it from Muslim hands in the first [last] decade of the sixth [fifth] century,¹³⁸ and the eyes of Islam were swollen with weeping for it; it was one of its griefs. Mosques became churches and minarets bell-towers, but God kept undefiled one part of the principal mosque, which remained in the hands of the Muslims as a small mosque where strangers could congregate to offer the obligatory prayers. Near its mihrab is the tomb of the prophet Salih—God bless and preserve him and all the prophets. God protected this part (of the mosque) from desecration by the unbelievers for the benign influence of this holy tomb.

To the east of the town is the spring called 'Ayn al-Baqar [the Spring of the Cattle], from which God brought forth the cattle for Adam¹³⁹—may God bless and preserve him. The descent to this spring is by a deep stairway. Over it is a mosque of which there remains in its former state only the mihrab, to the east of which the Franks have built their own mihrab; and Muslim and infidel assemble there, the one turning to his

place of worship, the other to his. In the hands of the Christians its venerableness is maintained, and God has preserved in it a place of prayer for the Muslims.

Two days we tarried at this place, and then, on Thursday the 12th of Jumada, corresponding with the 20th of September, we set forth across country to Sur [Tyre]. On our way we passed by a great fortress called al-Zab [al-Zib or Casal Imbert] which dominates the continuous villages and farms, and by a walled town called Iskandarunah [Scandelion]. We sought a ship which we had learnt was bound for Bijayah [Bougie] and on which we wished to embark. And so we alighted at this town on the evening of that same Thursday, for the distance between the two cities (of Acre and Tyre) is thirty miles. We lodged in a khan in the town prepared for the reception of pilgrims.

A note on the city of Sur [Tyre]

May God Most High destroy it

This city has come proverbial for its impregnability, and he who seeks to conquer it will meet with no surrender or humility. The Franks prepared it as a refuge in case of unforeseen emergency, making it a strong point for their safety. Its roads and streets are cleaner than those of Acre. Its people are by disposition less stubborn in their unbelief, and by nature and habit they are kinder to the Muslim stranger. Their manners, in other words, are gentler. Their dwellings are larger and more spacious. The state of the Muslims in this city is easier and more peaceful. Acre is a town at once bigger, more impious, and more unbelieving. But the strength and impregnability of Tyre is more marvellous than is told of. It has only two gates, one landwards, and the other on the sea, which encompasses the city save on one side. The landward gate is reached only after passing through three or four posterns in the strongly-fortified outer walls that enclose it. The seaward gate is flanked by two strong towers and leads into a harbour whose remarkable

situation is unique among maritime cities. The walls of the city enclose it on three sides, and the fourth is confined by a mole bound with cement. Ships enter below the walls and there anchor. Between the two towers stretches a great chain which, when raised, prevents any coming in or going forth, and no ships may pass save when it is lowered. At the gate stand guards and trusted watchers, and none can enter or go forth save under their eyes. The beauty of the site of this port is truly wonderful. Acre resembles it in situation and description, but cannot take the large ships, which must anchor outside, small ships only being able to enter. The port of Tyre is more complete, more beautiful, and more animated. Eleven days we tarried in the city, entering it on Thursday, and leaving it on Sunday the 22nd of Jumada, which was the last day of September; this was because the ship in which we had hoped to sail we found to be too small, so that we were unwilling to set forth in it.

An alluring worldly spectacle deserving of record was a nuptial procession which we witnessed one day near the port in Tyre. All the Christians, men and women, had assembled, and were formed in two lines at the bride's door. Trumpets, flutes, and all the musical instruments,¹⁴⁰ were played until she proudly emerged between two men who held her right and left as though they were her kindred. She was most elegantly garbed in a beautiful dress from which trailed, according to their traditional style, a long train of golden silk. On her head she wore a golden diadem covered by a net of woven gold, and on her breast was a like arrangement. Proud she was in her ornaments and dress, walking with little steps of half a span, like a dove, or in the manner of a wisp of cloud. God protect us from the seduction of the sight. Before her went Christian notables in their finest and most splendid clothing, their trains falling behind them. Behind her were her peers and equals of the Christian women, parading in their richest apparel and proud of bearing in their superb ornaments. Leading them all were the musical instruments. The Muslims and other Christian

onlookers formed two ranks along the route, and gazed on them without reproof. So they passed along until they brought her to the house of the groom; and all that day they feasted. We thus were given the chance of seeing this alluring sight, from the seducement of which God preserve us.

We then returned by sea to Acre and landed there on the morning of Monday the 23rd of Jumada, being the first day in October. We hired passages on a large ship, about to sail to Messina on the island of Sicily. My God Most High, in His power and strength, assure the easing and lightening (of our way).

During our stay in Tyre we rested in one of the mosques that remained in Muslim hands. One of the Muslim elders of Tyre told us that it had been wrested from them in the year 518 [27th of June, 1124], and that Acre had been taken twelve [actually twenty] years earlier [24th of March, 1104], after a long siege and after hunger had overcome them. We were told that it had brought them to such a pass - we take refuge in God from it - that shame had driven them to propose a course from which God had preserved them. They had determined to gather their wives and children into the Great Mosque and there put them to the sword, rather than that the Christians should possess them. They themselves would then sally forth determinedly, and in a violent assault on the enemy, die together. But God made His irreversible decree, and their jurists and some of their godly men prevented them. They thereupon decided to abandon the town, and to make good their escape. So it happened, and they dispersed among the Muslim lands. But there were some whose love of native land impelled them to return and, under the conditions of a safeguard which was written for them, to live amongst the infidels, 'God is the master of His affair' [Koran XII, 21]. Glorious is God, and great is His power. His will overcomes all impediments.

There can be no excuse in the eyes of God for a Muslim to stay in any infidel country, save when passing through it, while

the way lies clear in Muslim lands. They will face pains and terrors such as the abasement and destitution of the captiation and more especially, amongst their base and lower orders, the hearing of what will distress the heart in the reviling of him [Muhammad] whose memory God has sanctified, and whose rank He has exalted; there is also the absence of cleanliness, the mixing with the pigs, and all the other prohibited matters too numerous to be related or enumerated. Beware, beware of entering their lands. May God Most High grant His beneficent indulgence for this sin into which (our) feet have slipped, but His forgiveness is not given save after accepting our penitence. Glory to God, the Master. There is no Lord but He.

Among the misfortunes that one who visits their land will see are the Muslim prisoners walking in shackles and put to painful labour like slaves. In like condition are the Muslim women prisoners, their legs in iron rings. Hearts are rent for them, but compassion avails them nothing.

One of the beneficent works of God Most High towards the Maghrib prisoners in these lands of Frankish Syria is that every Muslim of these parts of Syria or elsewhere who makes a will in respect of his property devotes it to the liberation of the Maghribis in particular because of their remoteness from their native land and because, after Great and Glorious God, they have no other to deliver them. They are strangers, cut off from their native land, and the Muslim kings of these parts, the royal ladies, and the persons of ease and wealth, spend their money only in this cause. Nur al-Din - God have mercy on him - during an illness which had struck him, swore to distribute twelve thousand dinars for the ransoming of Maghribi prisoners. When he was cured of his sickness, he sent their ransom, but with them were despatched a group who were not Maghribis, but who were from Hamah, one of his provinces. He ordered their return and the release of Maghribis in their place, saying, 'These men can be ransomed by their kindred and their neighbours; but the Maghribis are strangers and have no kindred (here).'

Consider now the beneficent work of God Most High towards these Maghrib people. He decreed that they should have in Damascus two of the most considerable and wealthy merchants, who were deep in riches. One was named Nasr ibn Qawam and the other Abu 'l-Durr Yaqut, lord of al-'Atrafi. Their business is all along this Frankish coast, and there is mention of no one else but them. They have agents who take a share in the profits. Their caravans come and go with their merchandise and stores, bringing great riches; and their influence over the Muslim and Frankish princes is great. Great and Glorious God assigned to them the part of ransoming the Maghribi prisoners with their wealth and that of the bequeathments; for these are made in their name on account of the fame of their probity and integrity and the vast sums of their own wealth that they have spent in this cause. No Maghribi can secure release from captivity save at their hands, and for a long time they have been prodigal of their wealth and efforts in releasing God's servants the Muslims from the hands of His enemies the infidels. May God Most High not fail to reward those who perform these righteous deeds.

By an unhappy chance, from the evils of which we take refuge in God, we were accompanied on our road to Acre from Damascus by a Maghribi from Buna in the district of Bougie who had been a prisoner and had been released by the agency of Abu 'l-Durr and become one of his young men. In one of his patron's caravans he had come to Acre, where he had mixed with the Christians, and taken on much of their character. The devil increasingly seduced and incited him until he renounced the faith of Islam, turned unbeliever, and became a Christian in the time of our stay in Tyre. We left to Acre, but received news of him. He had been baptised and become unclean, and had put on the girdle of a monk, thereby hastening for himself the flames of hell, verifying the threats of torture, and exposing himself to a grievous account and a long-distant return (from hell). We beg Great and Glorious God to confirm us in the true word in this world and the next,

allowing us not to deviate from the pure faith and letting us, in His grace and mercy, die Muslims.

This pig, the lord of Acre whom they call king, lives secluded and is not seen, for God has afflicted him with leprosy.¹⁴¹ God was not slow to vengeance, for the affliction seized him in his youth, depriving him of the joys of his world. He is wretched here, 'but the chastisement of the hereafter is severer and more lasting' [Koran XX, 127]. His chamberlain and regent is his maternal uncle, the Count, the controller of the Treasury to whom the revenues are paid, and who supervises all with firmness and authority. The most considerable amongst the accursed Franks is the accursed Count, the lord of Tripoli and Tiberias.¹⁴² He has authority and position among them. He is qualified to be king, and indeed is a candidate for the office. He is described as being shrewd and crafty. He was a prisoner of Nur al-Din's for twelve years or more, and then ransomed himself by the payment of a great sum in the time of the first governorship of Saladin, to whom he admits his vassalage and emancipation.

The caravans from Damascus branch away through the territory of Tiberias because its road is smooth, but mule caravans go through Tibnin, which road although rough is direct. The lake of Tiberias is sweet. Its breadth is four or five parasangs, and although statements about its length vary, the nearest to the truth is that it is about six parasangs, albeit we did not see it. There is a dispute as well about the width. In Tiberias there are the tombs of many prophets – God's blessings upon them – such as those of Shu'ayb, Sulayman, Yahuda, Rubil, Shu'ayb's daughter the wife of Moses the Interlocutor, and others – God's blessings upon them all. Nearby is Jabal al-Tur [Tabor]. Between Acre and Bait al-Magdis [Jerusalem] lies three days' journey, and between Damascus and Jerusalem eight. Jerusalem is to the south-west¹⁴³ of Acre in the direction of Alexandria. May God restore it to the Muslims, and cleanse it, by His strength and power, from the hands of the polytheists [the believers in the Trinity].

The cities of Acre and Tyre have no gardens around them, and stand in a wide plain that reaches to the shores of the sea. Fruits are brought to them from the orchards that are in the neighbourhood. They possess broad lands and the nearby mountains are furnished with farmsteads from which fruits are brought to them. They are very rich cities. At the eastern extremity of Acre is a torrent course, along the banks of which extending to the sea is a sandy plain, than which I have seen no more beautiful sight. As a course for horses there is none to compare with it. Every morning and evening the Lord of the town rides over it, and there the soldiers parade – destroy them, God. Beside Tyre's landward gate is a fresh spring down to which a stairway leads. The wells and cisterns of the town are many, and there is no house without one. May God Most High, in His grace and favour, restore to it and to its sister (cities) the word of Islam.

On Saturday the 28th of Jumada, being the 6th of October, with the favour of God towards the Muslims, we embarked on a large ship, taking water and provisions. The Muslims secured places apart from the Franks. Some Christians called 'bilghiriyin' [from the Italian *pellegrini* = pilgrims] came aboard. They had been on the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and were too numerous to count, but were more than two thousand. May God in His grace and favour soon relieve us of their company and bring us to safety with His hoped-for assistance and beneficent works; none but He should be worshipped. So, under the will of Great and Glorious God, we awaited a favouring wind and the completion of the ship's stowing.

The Month of Rajab the Unique (580)

[8th of October-6th of November, 1184]

May God let us know His grace and favour

THE new moon rose on the night of Tuesday, corresponding with the 9th of October, while we were aboard the ship in the port of Acre, awaiting the completion of the stowing and our sailing in the name of God Most High with His favour and beneficent indulgence and by His generous will. Our stay there was prolonged twelve days, through the failure of the wind to rise. The blowing of the winds in these parts has a singular secret. It is that the east wind does not blow except in spring and autumn, and, save at those seasons, no voyages can be made and merchants will not bring their goods to Acre. The spring voyages begin in the middle of April, when the east wind blows until the end of May. It may last longer or less according to what God Most High decrees. The autumn voyages are from the middle of October, when the east wind (again) sets in motion. It lasts a shorter time than in the spring, and is for them a fleeting opportunity, for it blows for (only) fifteen days, more or less. There is no other suitable time, for the winds then vary, that from the west prevailing. Voyagers to the Maghrib, to Sicily, or to the lands of the Rum, await this east wind in these two seasons as they would await (the fulfilment of) an honest pledge. Glory to God, creating in His wisdom, and miraculous in His power. There is no God but He.

During all this time that we were on the ship, we passed the nights ashore and sometimes had to search for our vessel. When therefore at daybreak of Thursday the 10th of Rajab, the 18th of October, the ship set sail, we, according to our habit, were ashore passing the night. The day was not fair for the Rum to prepare for the sea, and we had lost our prudence

and forgotten the proverb concerning the preparation of water and provisions, 'A man should not leave his saddle'. So when we came to morning we could not see the ship, nor was there any trace of it. At once we hired a large boat with four oars and put off to follow the ship. It was most perilous, but God preserved us, and we overtook the ship at eventide, praising Great and Glorious God for His benefits. The beginning of that day was the distressful part of this long voyage, but its end, God be praised, brought comfort. In all circumstances, let us praise and render gratitude to God. Steadily we sailed on, under a propitious wind of varying force, for five days. Then the west wind came out of ambush and blew into the ship's bows. The captain and ruler of the ship, a Genoese Rumi, who was perspicacious in his art and skilled in the duties of a sea-captain, made shift to elude this wind by tacking right and left, and sought to return not on his tracks. The sea was calm and gentle. At midnight, or near to it, on the night of Saturday the 19th of Rajab, being the 27th of October, the west wind fell on us and broke a spar of the mast known as the 'ardimun' [Italian, *artimone*],¹⁴⁴ throwing half of it, with the attaching sails, into the sea. God saved us from its falling on the ship, for in size and bulk it resembled a mast. The mariners hastened forward and lowered the sail on the main-mast, stopping the ship's progress. The sailors needed for the long-boat tied to the ship were called, and they pulled to the half-spar and its sails that had fallen into the sea and brought them out. We were delivered from a state which only God Most High can know of. They began to raise the main-sail, and on the artimone set a sail called the 'dallun' [Gr., *δολιων*].¹⁴⁵ We spent a grey night until the dawn gleamed. Great and Glorious God had granted us security. The mariners began to fashion another spar from some wood which they had ready. But the west wind was at the beginning of its perversity, and we wavered between hope and despair; yet there triumphed our faith in the beneficent offices of God Most High and in His hidden favour and known grace. Glory to Him for He is

worthy of it; great is His power and exalted is His majesty. There is no God but He.

On Wednesday the 23rd of the month the east wind blew gently, languidly, and mildly; and our spirits rejoiced, for we hoped it would increase and grow stronger; but it was a dying breath. A thin mist then veiled the sea, whose waves were calmed so that it became like a 'palace made smooth with glass' [Koran XXVII, 44]. In all four quarters there scarce was air to breathe. So we remained, playing on the surface of the water, which seemed to the eye to be a sheet of molten silver; or we might be wandering between two skies. This is the wind the sailors call the 'ghalini' [Gr., *γῶλην* = calmness].

The night of Thursday the 24th of Rajab, the 1st of November according to the non-Arabs, was a festival for the Christians, and they celebrated it with lighted candles. Hardly one of them, big or little, male or female, but carried a candle in his hand. Their priests led them in prayers on the ship, then one by one rose to preach a sermon and recall the articles of their faith. The whole ship, from top to bottom, was luminous with kindled lamps. In this manner we passed most of that night, and when we came to the morn, the same still wind was with us, and remained until the night of Sunday the 27th of the month. A north wind then rose, the ship resumed its course, and our spirits were cheered. Praise be to God.

The Month of Sha'ban the Honoured (580)

[7th of November-5th of December, 1184]

May God let us know His benignity

THE new moon was obscured to us, and we reckoned that the days of Rajab were completed on the night of Thursday the 8th of November. From the time of our sailing from Acre, we had been twenty-two days on the sea, and therefore were wanting in felicity and felt only wretchedness and despair. But we hoped for the benign offices of Great and Glorious God, and for His unrevealed bounty, which by His grace and favour, is vouched unto us. The provisions of the travellers were becoming scarce, but by the charity of God in this ship they were as if in a city filled with all commodities. All they might wish to buy could be found: bread, water, and all kinds of fruit and victuals, such as pomegranate, quince, water-melon, pear, chestnut, walnut, chick-pea, broad-bean raw and cooked, onion, garlic, fig, cheese, fish and many other things it would be too long to describe. All this we saw being sold. Throughout all these days we had seen no land - may God soon dispel our cares - and two Muslims died - God have mercy on them. They were thrown into the sea. Of the (Christian) pilgrims two died also, and then were followed by many. One of them fell alive into the sea, and the waves carried him off more quickly than a flash of lightning. The captain of the ship inherited the effects of the departed Muslims and Christian pilgrims, for such is their usage for all who die at sea. There is no way for the (true) heir of the dead to gain his inheritance, and at this we were much astonished.

At daybreak on Tuesday the 6th of the month, the 13th of November, mountains appeared to us out of the sea. The west wind had mounted and blew fiercely and without intermission; then the wind blew changingly from east and west, and drove