

# THE PIACENZA PILGRIM TRAVELS FROM PIACENZA

Itinerary of the Piacenza Pilgrim.

Translated in Wilkinson, Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades,  
pp. 79-89.

- v159 1. Blessed Antoninus<sup>1</sup> the Martyr was ahead of me<sup>2</sup> from the time that I set out from Piacenza in all the places where I travelled, I mean, the holy places.
- Leaving Constantinople we came to the island of Cyprus and the city of Constantia, the resting-place of Saint Epiphanius. It is a beautiful and pleasant city with lovely date-palms. We came to the land of Syria at the island of Antaradus,<sup>3</sup> and came from there to Tripoli in Syria, the resting-place of Saint Leontius.<sup>4</sup> This and the other cities were destroyed in the reign of the Emperor Justinian by an earthquake.<sup>5</sup> We travelled from there to Byblus, another of the cities destroyed with its population, and then to Triaris<sup>6</sup> also destroyed in the same way. Then we arrived at the most renowned city of Berytus, in which, until recently, there had been a School of Letters, but it too was destroyed. According to the bishop of the city, they could identify the names of, at the very least,<sup>7</sup> thirty thousand of the local people who died there, not counting visitors. This city is situated beneath the mountains of Lebanon.
- v160 2. From Berytus we travelled to Sidon, which is partly in ruins, and this too is next to Lebanon. Its people are very bad. Into it runs the River Asclepius, and from the spring where it rises is . . . From Sidon we came to Sarepta, a small city full of Christians. The chamber which was made for Elijah is there, and in it is the very bed on which he lay, and the marble vessel which was filled by the widow woman. Many offerings are made there, and many miracles take place.
- Leaving Sarepta we came to the city of Tyre, and altogether it is seven miles between Sidon, Tyre, and Sarepta. The people of Tyre are violent, and live lives of a luxury too disgraceful to describe, for they have public brothels hung with pure silk and every kind of material. We travelled from there to Ptolemais, a beautiful city with good monasteries.
3. It is half a mile<sup>8</sup> straight across the sea from Ptolemais to the Jewish city of Sycamina, but six along the coast. The Camp of the Samaritans is one mile from Sycamina below Mount Carmel, and half a mile above this Camp is the monastery of Saint Elisha, where the woman met him and he healed her son. On Mount Carmel people find a small round rock which rattles when you shake it, though it is solid. It has the virtue that any woman or animal to whom it is attached will never miscarry. Six or seven miles away is the city of Porphyriana.
- v161 4. At Ptolemais we left the coast and travelled into the Galilee region to a city called Diocaesarea, in which we venerated what they said was the flagon and the bread-basket of Saint Mary. The chair also was there on which she was sitting when the angel came to her. Three miles further on we came to Cana,<sup>9</sup> where the Lord attended the wedding, and we actually reclined on the couch. On it (undeserving though I am) I wrote the names of my parents . . . Of the water-pots two are still there, and I filled one of them up with wine and lifted it up full onto my shoulders. I offered it at the altar, and we washed in the spring to gain a blessing.
5. We travelled on to the city of Nazareth, where many miracles take place. In the synagogue there is kept the book in which the Lord wrote his ABC,<sup>10</sup> and in this synagogue there is the bench on which he sat with the other children. Christians can lift the bench and move it about, but the Jews are completely unable to move it, and cannot drag it outside. The house of Saint Mary is now a basilica, and her clothes are the cause of frequent miracles.

v162 The Jewesses of that city are better-looking than any other Jewesses in the whole country. They

1. Antoninus the Martyr is not mentioned in any source before this: later accounts of him (such as those which appear in Molinier-Köhler II.1, pp. 33 ff) seem to be based on this one, though new details are introduced in the fifteenth century A.D.: *B.H.L.*, 581.
2. "was ahead of me" (*praecedente*) is to be taken in a spiritual sense, as proposed by H. Grisar, *Z.K.T.* 1902, p. 760/2. The reading *praecedente* ("setting out") gave rise to the idea that Antoninus both went on the pilgrimage and indeed wrote this account of it.
3. Antaradus was in fact the city opposite the island, which was called Aradus.
4. Saint Leontius, with Hypatius, Theodulus and others, was martyred in Phoenicia under Vespasian: *BHG* 986 ff.
5. This is likely to be the earthquake of 554 A.D. in which we know that Beirut suffered damage: Agathias, *Hist.* 2.15.2 - (Keydell) 59.23 and compare G. Cedrenus, *Hist. Comp. P.G.* 121.733. There were also earthquakes in this period in 551, 580, and 583 A.D.
6. Trieris (Herl) beside the bay east of Ras Shakka should surely have been mentioned before Byblus (Jebail) which is a day's journey further south.
7. Accepting Gildemeister's emendation.
8. Section 3, like some of the other parts of this work states geographical facts rather than describing a journey. Did the traveller here depend on the remarks of a guide or companion, or was he using a guide-book?
9. A stone, "from Cana of Galilee" according to its seventh-century inscription, was discovered at Elatea. The name of Antoninus and the mention of his mother (but not her name) also appear on it in a different style of lettering. Speculations linking this discovery with the present text have long been abandoned: see *DACL*, 2. 1817.
10. The late second-century *Infancy Story of Thomas* (sec. 14. *NTA* I, 397) is the first example of a story being told about the Lord learning his alphabet (another is to be found in *op. cit.*, p. 500).

declare that this is Saint Mary's gift to them, for they also say that she was a relation of theirs. Though there is no love lost between Jews and Christians these women are full of kindness. The region is a paradise with corn and fruit like Egypt. The region is small, but in its wine, oil, and apples it is superior to Egypt. The millet is abnormally tall, and the stalks are bigger than the height of a man.

6. From Nazareth we went to Mount Tabor, a mountain rising out of a plain. It is formed of good soil, and it is six miles round the foot of it, and three miles to climb. When you arrive at the top there is a level place a mile in length, with three basilicas, in the place where one of the disciples said "Let us make three tabernacles".<sup>11</sup> Around it are various biblical cities with names from the Books of Kings. From Tabor we went to the Sea of Tiberias, and<sup>12</sup> the city which was once called Samaria, but its name is now Neapolis. In it is the well where the Lord asked the Samaritan woman for water, and a basilica of Saint John has been built there. This well is in front of the altar-screen, and they have a bucket there which, it is said, is the very one from which the Lord drank. Many diseases are cured there.

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7. From that we went to<sup>13</sup> the city of Tiberias, where there are hot baths filling naturally with salt water, though the water of the sea itself is fresh. It is sixty miles round the sea.<sup>14</sup> Also we came to Capernaum, and went into the house of Blessed Peter, which is now a basilica. Going on from there through various camps, villages, and cities, we came to two streams called Ior and Dan,<sup>15</sup> which join together to form the single stream called Jordan, but this is really very small. It flows into the sea, passes right through and goes out at the far shore. On our way back we arrived the place where the Jordan leaves the sea, and that is where we crossed it. We went to a city called Gadara, which is Gibeon, and there,<sup>16</sup> three miles from the city, there are hot springs called the Baths of Elijah. Lepers are cleansed there, and have their meals from the inn there at public expense. The baths fill in the evening. In front of the basin is a large tank. When it is full, all the gates are closed, and they are sent in through a small door with lights and incense, and sit in the tank all night. They fall asleep, and the person who is going to be cured sees a vision.<sup>17</sup> When he has told it the springs do not flow for a week. In one week he is cleansed.

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John of Piacenza died there, Thecia's husband. This hot spring called Gadara flows down like a torrent into the Jordan, and increases its flow so that it becomes wider.

8. As we were going down through Galilee along the Jordan we passed through many cities mentioned in the Bible, and arrived at the capital city of Galilee. It is called Scythopolis, and stands on a hill, and it is where Saint John performs many miracles. From there we went up past a number of places<sup>18</sup> belonging to Samaria and Judaea to the city of Sebaste, the resting-place of the Prophet Elisha. There were several Samaritan cities and villages on our way down through the plains, and wherever we passed along the streets they burned away<sup>19</sup> our footprints with straw, whether we were Christians or Jews, they have such a horror of both. This is what they tell Christians, 'Don't touch what you want to buy till you have paid the money. If you do touch anything without buying it there will soon be trouble'. Outside each village there is a guard to give this warning. You must put your money into water, since they will not take it from your hand. When you arrive they curse you. Nor must you spit. If you do, you start trouble, and later they have to purify themselves with water before entering their village or city.

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9. <sup>20</sup> Then we came to the place where the Lord fed the five thousand people with the five loaves. It is a wide plain with olive and palm groves,<sup>21</sup> and from there we arrived at the place where the Lord was baptized. This is the place where the children of Israel made their crossing, and also where the sons of the prophets lost their axe-head, and where Elijah was taken up. In that place is the 'little hill of Hermon' mentioned in the psalm.<sup>22</sup> At the foot of the mountain at seven o'clock in the morning, a cloud forms over the river, and it arrives over Jerusalem at sunrise, above the basilica on Sion and the basilica at Christ's Tomb, the basilica of Saint Mary and Saint Sophia (once the Praetorium where Christ's case was heard). Above these places the dew comes down like showers, and sick people collect it. In the hospices all the dishes are cooked in it, and in the places where this dew falls many diseases are cured. For this is the dew of which the psalmist sings, 'Like as the dew of Hermon, which fell upon the hill of Sion'.<sup>23</sup> In that part of the Jordan is the spring where Saint John used to baptize, and which is two miles from the Jordan, and Elijah was in that valley when the raven brought him bread and meat. The whole valley is full of hermits.

11. Matthew 17.4.

12-13. The passage is clearly misplaced, and belongs somewhere after Scythopolis in sec. 8 below, possibly at (18), but perhaps simply replacing 20-21 at the beginning of sec. 9.

14. This seems the correct place for the passage 20-21 at the beginning of sec. 9 below.

15. The most likely explanation of the mention of Ior and Dan is that the pilgrim went to Panias, but it is surprising that he does not mention it by name.

16. (Omitting Geyer's conjectural insertion.)

17. The incubation and waiting for a dream were common practice in healing sanctuaries throughout the Greek world: see A. Duprez, *Jésus et les Dieux Guérisseurs*, Paris 1970, p. 65.

18. See sec. 6 above.

19. In a plea to Hadrian the Samaritans were said to be "accustomed to kindle a fire wherever a stranger has passed". See *Chronicon Samaritanum: Liber Josuae*, ed. T. Juynboll, London 1848, end of ch. 47.

20-21. This passage probably belongs above at (12) at the end of section 6.

22. From this point to the end of section 10 we seem to be reading guide-book material rather than an account of the pilgrim's journey.

23. Psalm 133.3.

10. Nearby is a city called Livias, where the two half-tribes of Israel remained before crossing the Jordan, and in that place are natural hot springs which are called the Baths of Moses. In these also lepers are cleansed. A spring there has very sweet water which they drink as a cathartic, and it heals many diseases. This is not far from the Salt Sea, into which the Jordan flows, below Sodom and Gomorrha. Sulphur and pitch are collected on that shore. Lepers lie in the sea there all through the day in July, August, and the early part of September. In the evening they wash in these Baths of Moses. From time to time by the will of God one of them is cleansed, but for most of them it brings some relief. Nothing living is to be found in this sea. Not even straw and wood will float on it, and human beings cannot swim, but anything thrown into it sinks to the bottom. From the Jordan it is eight miles to the place where Moses departed from this life, and a little further on is Segor.<sup>24</sup> There are many hermits in the neighbourhood, and we saw too the tomb of Absalom.
11. I kept Epiphany at the Jordan, and on that night special miracles take place at the spot where the Lord was baptized. There is an obelisk there surrounded by a screen, and in the water, where the river turned back in its bed, stands a wooden cross. On both banks there are marble steps leading down to the water. The eve of Epiphany is a solemn vigil with an enormous congregation. They begin matins at the fourth or fifth cock-crow, and at dawn, when matins is over, the ministers come outside, and, accompanied by deacons, the priest goes down into the river. The moment he starts blessing the water the Jordan turns back on itself with a roar and the water stays still till the baptism is finished. All the ship-owners of Alexandria have men there that day with great jars of spices and balsam, and as soon as the river has been blessed, before the baptism starts, they pour them out into the water, and draw out holy water. This water they use for sprinkling their ships when they are about to set sail.<sup>25</sup> After the baptism every one goes down into the river to gain a blessing. Some wear linen, and some other materials which will serve as their shrouds for burial. And after the baptism the water returns to its place. From the point where the Jordan comes out of the Sea of Tiberias to where it ends at the Salt Sea is about 130 miles.
12. On the bank of the Jordan there is a cave in which are cells for seven virgins. They are placed there as small girls, and when one of them dies, she is buried in her cell, and another cell is hewn from the rock, so that another girl can be placed there to make up the number. They have people outside to look after them. We went in with great reverence to pray there, but we did not see the face of a single one of them. It is said that the cloth is there which the Lord wore on his face. By the Jordan, not far from where the Lord was baptized is the very large Monastery of Saint John, which has two guest-houses. On both banks of the Jordan below the mountains there are serpents from which people make antidotes against poisoning.
13. It is a six-mile journey from the Jordan to Jericho, and when you see Jericho it is a paradise. Its walls are down, but the area of the city is full of remarkable things. The House of Rahab is there, which is now a guest-house, and the bedroom where she hid the spies is a Chapel of Saint Mary. The stones which the children of Israel brought up from the Jordan are in a basilica not far from Jericho. They have been placed behind the altar, and they are huge. In front of the basilica is a plain, The Lord's Field, in which the Lord sowed with his own hand. Its yield is three pecks, and it is reaped twice in the year, but it grows naturally, and is never sown. They reap it in February, and then use the harvest for Communion at Easter. After this harvest they plough, and the next reaping is at the time of the other harvesting, after which it is ploughed and left fallow.
14. The spring which Elisha made sweet supplies the water for the whole of Jericho. Grapes grow there for the wine they give to soothe fevers,<sup>26</sup> and also dates which weigh a pound. I brought some back home with me, and gave one to our nobleman, Lord Paterius. A forty-pound citron is a native of the place, and the fruit has a stalk two feet long and two fingersbreadth thick. There is also a vine from which baskets-full of grapes are on sale at the time of our Lord's Ascension: and at Pentecost there is wine from it, of which they are selling great jars.
15. On the way from the city towards Jerusalem, not far from the city of Jericho, is the tree which Zacchaeus climbed in order to see the Lord. This tree has been surrounded by a chapel, and grew up through its roof, but it has now dried up. Leaving the gate of Jericho, going from east to west, you would enter the ashes of Sodom and Gomorrha, which are on your left. Over this region there is always a dark cloud. It smells of sulphur. People make a mistake about Lot's Wife thinking she becomes smaller through animals licking her, but that is not correct, for she stays the same as she was.<sup>27</sup>

24. We here begin once more to have the pilgrim's experiences described.

25. Only the blessing of the water has survived from the full Baptism rite here described. The Piacenza pilgrim's Western contemporary, Gregory of Tours, witnesses to a similar practice by which individuals took away water after the exorcism and infusion of chrism and before the Baptism (*Mir.* I. 24 – 725, cp. *Ord. Rom.* I. 42 – P.L. 78.956). This water was kept for sprinkling their fields and vineyards. A comparable practice is mentioned in the east near the end of the fourth century by John Chrysostom, *PG.* 49.366, and evidently continued, since in the seventh century it had to be forbidden (Jacob of Edessa, in A. Mai, *Scriptorum veterum nova collectio*, Xb, Rome 1838, p. 14.) It seems impossible to find any convincing parallels between this blessing of the Jordan and the prayers for the blessings of the Nile which were said at Thebes and Memphis, for which see *DACL* 4.2561. On the blessing of water see further Dum P. de Puniet in *DACL* 2.696/702.

26. Accepting Geyer's suggestion: see his *Kritische und sprachliche Erläuterungen zu Antonini Placentini Itinerarium*, St. Anna in Augsburg für des Schuljahr 1891/2) Augsburg 1892, p. 36.

27. The pilgrim seems here to be passing on information he had been given about the view to the left and on Lot's Wife. There is no indication that he himself had seen Lot's Wife, nor does he say where she is to be seen.

16. Not far from Jerusalem, on the way up the hill-country that leads there, we arrived at Bahurim, and from there we went left to the towns on the Mount of Olives, and at Bethany to Lazarus' Tomb. From what we could see in the valleys, and from our visits to many of the monasteries (places full of remarkable things), we observed a vast number of men and women in cloisters. On the summit of the mountain we saw many remarkable things, including the cell where Saint Pelagia<sup>28</sup> lived the enclosed life, and lies buried. Many saints lie buried on this mountain, including James, Zebedee, and Cleophas.
17. Coming down the Mount of Olives we arrived at the valley of Gethsemane and the place where the Lord was betrayed. In it are three couches on which he reclined and where we also reclined to gain their blessing. There is also a basilica of Saint Mary in the valley, which people say was her house, and the place at which she was taken up from this life. This valley of Gethsemane is also at this place called Jehoshaphat. We climbed by many steps up from Gethsemane to the gate of Jerusalem. There is an olive-grove on the right of the gate: in it is the fig-tree from which Judas hanged himself. Its trunk still stands there, protected by stones. This gate of the city is next to the Gate Beautiful which was part of the Temple, and its threshold and entablature are still in position there.
18. After we had prostrated ourselves and kissed the ground, we entered the Holy City and venerated the Lord's Tomb. The Tomb is hewn out of living rock, or rather<sup>29</sup> in the rock itself . . . and in the place where the Lord's body was laid, at the head, has been placed a bronze lamp. It burns there day and night, and we took a blessing from it, and then put it back. Earth is brought to the tomb and put inside, and those who go in take some as a blessing. The stone which closed the Tomb is in front of the tomb door, and is made of the same coloured rock as the rock hewn from Golgotha. This stone is decorated with gold and precious stones, but the rock of the tomb is like a millstone. There are ornaments in vast numbers, which hang from iron rods: armlets, bracelets, necklaces, rings, tiaras, plaited girdles, belts, emperors' crowns of gold and precious stones,<sup>30</sup> and the insignia of an empress. The Tomb is roofed with a cone which is silver, with added beams of gold. In front of the Tomb stands an altar.
19. From the Tomb it is eighty paces to Golgotha; you go up on one side of it by the very steps up which our Lord went to be crucified. You can see the place where he was crucified, and on the actual rock there is a bloodstain. Beside this is the altar of Abraham, which is where he intended to offer Isaac, and where Melchizedech offered sacrifice. Next to the altar is a crack, and if you put your ear to it you hear streams of water. If you throw an apple into it, or anything else that will float, and then go to Siloam, you can pick it up there. I suppose it is a mile between Siloam and Golgotha. In fact Jerusalem has no water of its own except the spring at Siloam.
20. From Golgotha it is fifty paces to the place where the Cross was discovered, which is in the Basilica of Constantine, which adjoins the Tomb and Golgotha. In the courtyard of the basilica is a small room where they keep the Wood of the Cross. We venerated it with a kiss. The title is also there which they placed over the Lord's head, on which they wrote 'This is the King of the Jews'. This I have seen, and had it in my hand and kissed it. The Wood of the Cross comes from the nut-tree.<sup>31</sup> At the moment when the Cross is brought out of this small room for veneration, and arrives in the court to be venerated, a star appears in the sky, and comes over the place where they lay the Cross. It stays overhead whilst they are venerating the Cross, and they offer oil to be blessed in little flasks. When the mouth of one of the little flasks touches the Wood of the Cross, the oil instantly bubbles over, and unless it is closed very quickly it all spills out. When the Cross is taken back into its place, the star also vanishes, and appears no more once the Cross has been put away. In that place are also the sponge and reed mentioned in the Gospel (from this sponge we drank water) and also the onyx cup which he blessed at the Supper, and many other marvelous things beside: a portrait of Blessed Mary on a raised place,<sup>32</sup> her girdle, and the band which she used to have on her head. In that place there are also seven marble seats for the elders.
21. We climbed the Tower of David, the place where he recited the Psalms, and it is enormous. It has cells in each of the banquet-rooms, and the tower itself is a hollow square building without a roof. Christians climb this tower to spend the night in prayer. If they rise at about midnight, they hear a sound of murmuring down in the valley of Jehoshaphat in the direction of the Jordan, Sodom, and Gomorrah. The usual name for this valley is "The Valley of Jehoshaphat", but it is also Gethsemane.
22. From there we went to the basilica of Holy Sion, which contains many remarkable things, including the corner stone which the Bible tells us was 'rejected by the builders'. The Lord Jesus entered this church,

28. Saint Pelagia was a woman who lived a hermit's life, disguised as a man in "a tiny cell enclosed on all sides with a very small window" *Lives of the Fathers (Pelagia)* 14 - 670.

29. Here conjecturing *uel potius* to replace the *et potius* in the text.

30. In about 550 A.D. Elishuan, King of Ethiopia sent a delegation to Jerusalem bringing a crown to be hung "in front of the door of the life-giving tomb", according to the account in *AA.SS.* 24th October (X) 758, written before 597 A.D. This gesture of offering crowns may be connected with Rev. 4.10 and is still practised at the Jewish Tomb of David on Mount Sion.

31. Kopp, p. 386, n. 56 connects this statement with Cyril, *Cat.* 14.5 - 829, who applies Cant. 6.10, "I went down into the garden of nuts" to the garden in which Christ appeared risen. Certainly the Cross is unlikely to have been made of a nut-tree, since the nearest available are near the north of Syria.

32. This icon was the instrument of the conversion of St. Mary the Egyptian, on whom see *PL* 73,682. It was eventually taken away by Leo VI (Emperor 886 - 911 A.D.) to Constantinople.

which used to be the House of Saint James, and found this ugly stone lying about somewhere, so he took it and placed it in the corner. You can hold it in your hands and lift it. Then put your ear in the corner, and the sound is like the murmuring of a crowd. In this church is the column at which the Lord was scourged, and it has on it a miraculous mark. When he clasped it, his chest clove to the stone, and you can see the marks of both his hands, his fingers, and his palms. They are so clear that you can use them to take 'measures'<sup>33</sup> for any kind of disease, and people can wear them round their neck and be cured. On this column is the horn from which kings were anointed (including David), and the church also contains the crown of thorns with which they crowned the Lord, and the lance with which they struck him in the side. There are also many of the stones with which they stoned Stephen, and the small column in which they set the cross on which Blessed Peter was crucified at Rome. The Cup of the Apostles is there, with which they celebrated mass after the Lord had risen again, and many other remarkable things which I cannot remember. A monastery for women is there. I saw a human head enclosed in a reliquary of gold adorned with gems, which they say is that of Saint Theodota<sup>34</sup> the martyr. Many drink out of it to gain a blessing, and so did I.

v175 23. From Sion we went to the basilica of Saint Mary, with its great congregation of monks, and its guest houses for men and women. In catering for travellers they have a vast number of tables, and more than three thousand beds for the sick. We also prayed in the Praetorium, where the Lord's case was heard: what is there now is the basilica of Saint Sophia, which is in front of the Temple of Solomon, below the street which runs down to the spring of Siloam outside Solomon's porch. In this basilica is the seat where Pilate sat to hear the Lord's case, and there is also the oblong stone which used to be in the centre of the Praetorium. The accused person whose case was being heard was made to mount this stone so that every one could hear and see him. The Lord mounted it when he was heard by Pilate, and his footprints are still on it. He had a well-shaped foot, small and delicate, but he was of an ordinary height, with a handsome face, curly hair, and a beautiful hand with long fingers, as you can see from a picture which is there in the Praetorium, and was painted while he was alive. From this stone where he stood come many blessings. People take 'measures' from the footprints, and wear them for their various diseases, and they are cured. The stone itself is decorated with gold and silver.

v176 24. We went on from there to an arch on the site of an ancient city gate. The stagnant waters are there into which they put Jeremia. From that arch you descend by many steps to Siloam, and above Siloam is a hanging basilica beneath which the water of Siloam rises. Siloam has two basins constructed of marble, which are separated from each other by a screen. Men wash in one and women in the other, to gain a blessing. In these waters many miracles take place, and lepers are cleansed. In front of the court is a large man-made pool and people are continually washing there; for at regular intervals the spring sends a great deal of water into the basins, which goes on down the valley of Gethsemane (which they also call Jehoshaphat) as far as the River Jordan, it enters the Jordan at the place where the Jordan drains into the Salt Sea below Sodom and Gomorrha.

v177 25. Nowadays Siloam is included within the city, since the Empress Eudoxia herself added walls to the city. She also built the basilica and tomb of Saint Stephen, and her own tomb is next to Saint Stephen's, with twenty paces between the two. Saint Stephen's resting-place is outside the gate, and a bowshot from the road which leads westwards down to Joppa, Caesarea Palaestinae, and Diospolis (which in ancient times was called Azotus), the resting-place of Saint George the martyr. On this highway, not very far from the city, stands a marble column in the middle of the road. In former times the Lord was being taken towards it to be scourged, it was lifted up by a cloud and escaped, and was set down in this place. You can see this is true, since it has no base to stand on, but rests directly in the earth, and can be moved to and fro. On top of it stands a cross made of iron. You can climb it by steps, and people take lights and incense up it. People possessed by demons are cured there, for in that district Blessed George displays many miracles.<sup>35</sup>

26. Leaving Siloam we came to the field which was bought with the price paid for the Lord, and is called Aceldama, 'the field of blood in which they bury strangers'. Among the tombs are the cells of servants of God,<sup>36</sup> many of them workers of miracles. The whole area covered by the tombs is full of apple-trees and vines.

27. Returning inside the city we came to a pool which has five porticoes, and to one of them is attached the basilica of Saint Mary, in which many miracles take place. The pool itself has become muddy, and all the city's laundry is done there. In a dark corner of that place we saw an iron chain with which the unhappy Judas hanged himself. Then, going out to the great gate, we arrived at St. Hesychi. <sup>37</sup> where his body lies buried, and where Helena provided for the distribution of bread to people who are poor or strangers.

33. Gregory of Tours, writing in 585 A.D. (1.7 – 712) says that many people "go to the column (of scourging), make ribbons of cloth and put them round it . . . They take them away as 'blessings' to help them in sicknesses".

34. This Theodota is more likely to be the one who was martyred at the age of thirteen in Alexandria under Diocletian (Sophronius, *Mir. Cyr. J.* 18, P.G. 87(3), 3400) than the one martyred in Ancyra (HMG 1780).

35. Despite the suggestion made (e.g. in R.B. 1902, p. 320) that this was the column which stood inside the present Damascus Gate, this final sentence shows that we should rather seek it in the district of the city of Diospolis.

36. That is, of monks.

37. This Saint is not identified.

- v178 28. On the way to Bethlehem, at the third milestone from Jerusalem, lies the body of Rachel, on the edge of the area called Ramah. There I saw standing water which came from a rock, of which you can take as much as you like up to seven pints. Every one has his fill, and the water does not become less or more. It is indescribably sweet to drink, and people say that Saint Mary became thirsty on the flight into Egypt, and that when she stopped here this water immediately flowed.<sup>38</sup> Nowadays there is also a church building there.
29. From there it is three miles to Bethlehem, which is a most renowned place. There are many servants of God there, there is the cave where the Lord was born, and, inside it, there is the manger decorated with gold and silver, at which lights are burning day and night. As you go in, the mouth of the cave is very narrow. The presbyter Jerome hewed out the rock at the very mouth of the cave, and made himself a tomb, where indeed he was buried. Half a mile from Bethlehem, in the suburb, David's body lies buried with that of his son Solomon, and they have separate tombs. The basilica is called At Saint David. The children slaughtered by Herod also have their tomb there, and they all lie buried together. When their tomb is opened you can look at their bones. Before you reach Bethlehem there is a monastery enclosed by a wall, and it contains a large number of monks.
- v179 30. From Bethlehem it is twenty-four miles to the Oak of Mamre, the resting-place of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Sarah and also of Joseph's bones. The basilica has four porticoes and no roof over the central court. Down the middle runs a screen. Christians come in on one side and Jews on the other, and they use much incense. On the day following Christ's Birthday<sup>39</sup> the people of this area celebrate the Deposition of Jacob and David with much devotion, and Jews from all over the country congregate for this, too great a crowd to count. They offer much incense and lights, and give presents to those who minister there.
31. After returning to Jerusalem we went down by the road that leads to Gaza and Ascalon, and when we had travelled straight down for twenty miles we came to Mount Gilboa, where David killed Goliath. There also Saul died and Jonathan. Goliath's resting-place is there in the middle of the road, and there is a pile of wood at his head. There is also a heap of stones — such a mountain of them that there is not a pebble left for a distance of 20 miles, since anyone going that way makes a gesture of contempt by taking three stones and throwing them at his grave. In those hills it never rains,<sup>40</sup> and a miracle happens in the night. People see unclean spirits moving about, and to judge by what they have seen, they are like fleeces of wool, or, rather, like the waves of the sea.
- v180 32. From there we struck off on a side road and came to the city called Eleutheropolis, which is where Samson killed a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass, from which a spring came forth which to this day provides water for the whole area, for we also visited the place where it rises. We also went to the place where Zachariah was killed and lies buried. There is a lovely basilica there, very well decorated, and many servants of God. Then we came to the place where Isaiah was sawn asunder, and the saw has been put at Saint Zachariah's as a memorial. From there we went to the place where Habakkuk took food to the harvesters, and the spring rises there at which Philip baptized the eunuch. This is the area where the wells were dug by Abraham and Jacob, the Well of the Oath and the Well of Calumny.
33. Entering Ascalon we came, on the main cross-street, to the Well of Peace. It is built like a theatre, in which one goes down by steps to the water. It is the resting-place of the three brothers who were Egyptian martyrs. Each of them had a name of his own, but they are usually called 'The Egyptians'.<sup>41</sup> A mile away is the city of Sarafra, and nearby is the city of Maiuma in the neighbourhood of Ascalon. From it we went to the city of Maiuma of Gaza, the resting-place of the martyr Saint Victor.<sup>42</sup> Gaza is a lovely and renowned city, with noble people distinguished by every kind of liberal accomplishment. They are welcoming to strangers. Two miles from Gaza is the resting-place of our holy father Hilarion.<sup>43</sup>
- v181 34. From there we went to the city of Elusa, which is the beginning of the desert which stretches to Sinai. In that city, according to what the bishop told us, was a noble girl called Mary, and when she was married, her husband died on the very night of the wedding. She bore it with courage, and within a week she had set all his slaves free, and given away all his property to the poor and to monasteries. Till she had observed the seventh day she stayed at home, but that night her husband's coat was gone, and she was nowhere to be found. It is said that she is in the desert across the Jordan, and moves about in the region of Segor by the Salt Sea among the reedy places and the palm groves.
- We discovered a monastery of women in those parts, more than sixteen or seventeen of them who were in a desert place, and given food by the Christians. They had one small ass to do their heavy work

38. Compare *Holy Qur'an* s. 19: "A voice from heaven cried out to Mary, 'Do not despair! Your Lord has provided a brook that runs at your feet.'" See also *Genesis* 21.19.

39. This feast had, two centuries before, been on 25 December: see *AL* 71 — 275 and note.

40. The second version of the present work added the useful clarification that it never rained "after David cursed" the hills: see 2 Sam. 1.21.

41. Eusebius, *Mart. Pal.* 10.1, *L.-O.* pp. 376f. speaks of a number of Egyptians who were arrested and killed in Ascalon in A.D. 309. (Of these he names only three: Ares, Promus and Elijah.

42. St. Victor's church is marked on the Madaba Map (117), which indicates its importance. This Victor may have been one who was martyred with Corona under Antoninus in Egypt (*BHL* 8559), or Victor, son of Romanus, who was martyred in Antioch under Diocletian (*BHO* 1242).

43. St. Hilarion, the first monastic founder in Palestine, was buried in the monastery at Maiuma: Jerome, *Life of Hilarion* 46 — 52.

for them, and they used to give food to a lion, tame from the time it was a cub, but huge and terrifying to look at. Indeed when we drew near the cells its roared, and all our animals pissed, while some of them even fell to the ground. They also told us that the lion went with the little ass to pasture. I made this visit with a real Christian whom I helped in making the nuns an offer of a hundred shillings for the two animals, but they would not accept. He sent to Jerusalem, and brought them thirty cassocks, vegetables for their stores and oil for their lamps, and they spoke of the miracles of Mary who was travelling in the desert. The man with me kept visiting them with his request for two days, but he would never tell us whether or not he was successful. He took them coats, dates, and baskets of roast chickpeas which he carried there, and lupine, and never brought any of them back. We were quite unable to soothe his disappointment and grief. All he could say was, 'Devil take it, what's the use of being a Christian!'

35. Leaving the city of Elusa we entered the desert. Twenty miles on is a fort, the guest-house of Saint George which provides something of a refuge for passers-by and gives food for hermits. Leaving that we went into the heart of the desert to the place of which the Bible says '*A land transformed into a salty waste because of the wickedness of its inhabitants*'.<sup>44</sup> We saw there a few men on camels (indeed we also saw some of them in Jerusalem) but they fled from us. They came from Ethiopia, and had their nostrils split, their ears cut, boots on their feet, and rings on their toes. We asked them why, and they said 'This is our mark. It was granted us by the Emperor Trajan'.<sup>45</sup>

- v183 36. For five or six days we travelled on through the desert. Our camels carried our water, and each person was given a pint in the morning and a pint in the evening. When the water in the skins had turned bitter like gall we put sand in it, and this made it sweet. Some of the servants and wives of the Saracens came from the desert and sat weeping by the road. They spread a mantle out in front of them and asked the passers-by for bread, and their husbands came too. They brought skins of cool water from the remotest parts of the desert and gave us some. They accepted bread, and gave us garlic and radishes, whose sweet taste was better than the finest spices, and would take nothing for them. They were prevented from doing so since they were celebrating a season of festival. The people which travelled through that utter desert numbered twelve thousand six hundred.

37. Going on through the desert we arrived on the eighth day at the place where Moses brought water out of the rock. A day's journey from there we came to Horeb, the mount of God, and as we were moving on in order to climb Sinai, we were suddenly met by a crowd of monks and hermits, singing and carrying a cross. They greeted us with great respect, falling on their faces to the ground, and we did the same, and wept. Then they took us with them into the valley between Horeb and Sinai. At the foot of this mountain is the spring where Moses saw the miracle of the burning bush and at which he was watering the sheep.  
v184 This spring is within the monastery walls, and the walls round the monastery are strong. It has three abbots ~~who are learned in languages—Latin, Greek, Syriac, Egyptian, and Bessan—and there are many in that~~ place who can translate from one foreign language. In that place are the monks' graves. Climbing straight up the mountain for three miles we came to a place with a cave in which Elijah hid himself when he was fleeing before Jezebel. In front of the cave rises a spring which provides water for the mountain. And from there we went another three miles to the topmost peak of the mountain. Up there there is a small chapel, about six foot wide and six foot long. No one presumes to spend the night there, but the monks go up to perform God's service as soon as day breaks. At that place it is a pious act for every one to cut his hair and beard and throw it on the ground, and I too laid hands on my beard there.

38. Mount Sinai is rocky, with very little soil, and all around are cells for the servants of God, as on Horeb. But they say Horeb is good soil. On this mountain there is a place where the Saracens have set up an idol for themselves which is of marble, as white as snow. Their priest also lives there, and he wears a dalmatic and linen cloak. When the new moon comes, and it is time for their festival<sup>46</sup> this marble begins to change colour, before the moon rises on the feast day. As soon as the moon appears and their worship begins, the marble turns black as pitch. And when the time of the festival is over, it changes back to its original colour. This seemed very marvellous to us.

- v185 39. Between Sinai and Horeb is a valley where from time to time there comes from the sky the dew which they call manna. It solidifies, and becomes like a lump of gum, and they pick it up, and have casks full of it in the monastery. From these they fill little flasks which they give as "blessings", and they gave us five pints. They also drink this as a liqueur, and gave us some, which we drank. Lions, leopards, wild asses, gazelles (which are a kind of goat), and mules have to find their food in these mountains. But they all feed together, and none of them is harmed by the lion, because the desert is so barren.

But now a herald went forth, since the time of the Saracen festival was over, and because we could not bear the thought of returning through the desert by which we had come, some decided to return to the Holy City through Egypt, and others by way of Arabia.

44. Psalm 107.34.

45. Trajan's officials may well have negotiated with members of this tribe when they were making the new frontier in the Negeb in A.D. 106.

46. In his notes on A. Stewart's translation, *PPTS* 1887, p. 30, n. 2, Sir Charles Wilson said "The Beduin still sacrifice sheep on Jebel Moneijah between Jebel ed Deir and Jebel Musa; and the great annual festival at the tomb of Nchl Salifi is probably the modern representative of the festival mentioned here".



40. From Mount Sinai it is eight staging-posts to Arabia, and the city called Aila. <sup>47</sup> Shipping from India comes into port at Aila, bringing a variety of spices. But we preferred to return through Egypt, and went to the city of Paran, where Moses did battle with Amalek. In that place is a chapel with its altar built over the stones with which they supported Moses while he prayed. A city is there, fortified on all sides with walls, but the place is completely barren, apart from some water and palm trees. There is a bishop in the city. The women with their children came to meet us, carrying palms in their hands, and flasks of radish oil, and they fell at our feet, anointed our soles and our heads, and sang this anthem in the Egyptian language, 'Blessed be ye of the Lord, and blessed be your coming. Hosanna in the highest'. That is the land of Midian, and this city's inhabitants are said to be the descendants of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses.

There are eight hundred guards in state service there, who have wives with them, and get their supplies and uniform from the treasury of Egypt. They cannot work on the land, since there is nowhere suitable, and everything is just sand. But each day they go out on patrol with their Saracen horses, which are sent straw for stabling and barley from the treasury, in order to guard the monasteries and hermits against Saracen raids. But they <sup>48</sup> are not specially worried or afraid about them. Whenever they leave the city they lock the doors from the outside and take the keys with them. The people inside do the same, in case the Saracens attack, since there is nowhere for them to take refuge, apart from the sand and sky.

v187 41. From there we came <sup>49</sup> to Succoth and thence to Migdol, and also <sup>50</sup> to the place with seventy-two palm trees and twelve springs, and camped there for two days. After all our efforts and the barrenness of the desert it was a comfortable place. At that spot is the small hamlet called Surandela, but there is nothing there apart from the church with its priest and two inns for travellers. I saw there a pepper-tree and picked some fruit from it. From there we went on to the place where the children of Israel pitched camp after crossing the sea, and there too is a hamlet containing an inn. Leaving that, we went on to the point on the shore where the children of Israel made their crossing. At the place where they came out of the sea is the Chapel of Elijah, and, travelling on, we came to the place where they entered the sea, and the Chapel of Moses. A small city is there called Clysma, and to this too come the ships from India. From the part of the sea where they crossed a gulf leads out of the sea proper. It is tidal, and stretches many miles inland. As the sea goes out you can see the shape of Pharaoh's armour and the tracks of his chariot-wheels, but all the armour has turned to marble. There we were given bright green nuts which come from India, and people think they are from paradise. These are specially good, because you have only to taste them to feel satisfied.

v188 42. Eleven miles out to sea is an island of natural rock, and on it hang soft fingers, like human fingers or dates. They drip with an oil, called rock oil, you can take away as a special blessing. But if you decide ~~to fill a vessel with the oil, and then to take it back for more, the vessel will no longer take the oil or hold it.~~ Every single sick person who manages to reach this place is cured, and specially those possessed by demons. We took some as a blessing, but we were not allowed to take it beyond Clysma as it was, for they mixed it with oil. Indeed I suppose that if it had not been diluted the miracle would always have been performed. The liquid from that oil stretches out two miles over the surface of the sea. It smells of sulphur. And whatever storm may affect the sea, the part under that liquid stays as calm as a millpond. Inside the city of Clysma we saw in the basilica more than eighteen coffins of wood, which were those of our holy fathers the hermits.

43. From there we travelled <sup>51</sup> through the desert to the cave of Paul, called Qubba <sup>52</sup> in Syriac, and to this day there is a stream there giving water. We travelled on again through the desert, and came to the cataracts of the Nile. The water rises against an indicator, an invention with twelve degrees. Next to the cataracts on either side of the Nile are two cities, which are said to have been built by the daughters of Lot: one is called Babylonia. Travelling through the plains of Tanis, we came to the city of Memphis and Antinou, in which Pharaoh had his residence, and from which the children of Israel set out. In that part are the twelve granaries of Joseph, and they are still full.

v189 44. In Memphis was the temple (now a church) which had a door which shut in the Lord's face when he visited it with Blessed Mary, and until this day it cannot be opened. We saw there a piece of linen on which is a portrait of the Saviour. People say he once wiped his face with it, and that the outline remained. It is venerated at various times and we also venerated it, but it was too bright for us to concentrate on it since, as you went on concentrating, it changed before your eyes.

45. Going down through Egypt we reached the city of Athlef, and went on as far as Saint Menas, <sup>53</sup> who

47. Reading Aila for the Abila of the text.

48. The word "Saracens" seems to be pointless. It was probably a gloss to an original text which was making the point that the monasteries and hermits did not fear the Saracen raids.

49-50. Since Egeria seems to have been shown Succoth and Migdol north of Clysma (see Tr. 7.4/5 - 101) it is possible that these words are misplaced and should be transferred to (51), at the beginning of sec. 43. But it seems more likely that they were biblical names with no very obvious location, and that different guides pointed them out in different places.

51. See the beginning of sec. 41.

52. Accepting Geyer's emendation.

53. St. Menas' biography is confused (see H. Leclercq, *DACL*, XI.1, 326, but the size of his basilica at Abou Menn and of the surrounding healing sanctuary testify to his importance: on these discoveries see the preliminary reports in



performs many miracles there. At that point we transferred to boats, and crossed the lake to Alexandria. We saw a vast number of crocodiles in the lake. Alexandria is a renowned city, but its people are worthless, though they welcome travellers. It is full of sects. Saint Athanasius lies buried there, and also Saint Faustus, Saint Epimachus, Saint Antoninus, Saint Mark, and many other saints.<sup>54</sup>

v190 46. When we returned to Jerusalem I had to stay behind there a long time because I was ill. But with my own eyes I clearly saw a vision of Blessed Euphemia and Blessed Antony,<sup>55</sup> and when they came to me they cured me. Leaving Jerusalem I went down to Joppa, the resting-place of Saint Tabitha who was also called Dorcas. From there I travelled to Caesarea Philippi, which also has the names Strato's Tower, and Caesarea Palaestinae, the resting-place of Saint Pamphilus, Saint Procopius, and Saint Cornelius,<sup>56</sup> from whose tomb we took a blessing. We travelled on through Galilee and came to Damascus. Two miles from there is a monastery at the place where Saint Paul was converted, and the Street which is called Straight, where many miracles take place. From there we went to Heliopolis, and then on to Emesa, where they have the head of Saint John Baptist, which has been put in a glass vase. We looked at it through the glass with our own eyes, and venerated it. From there we travelled through the cities of Larissa, Aristosa and Epiphania, and came to the most renowned city of Apamea, where all the nobility of Syria resides.

v191 Leaving Apamea we came to Antioch the Great, the resting-place of Saint Babylas, the Three Children, Saint Justina, Saint Julian and the Maccabean martyrs, nine tombs in all, over each of which hangs the instrument of his martyrdom.<sup>57</sup> From there we went on into Mesopotamia, to the city of Chalcis, and thence to Haran, where Abraham was born. Going on from there we arrived at the city of Barbalissus, the resting-place of Saint Bacchus, the brother of Saint Sergius. From there we went to the city of Suras. Through the middle of it runs the River Euphrates, which is crossed at this point by a bridge. In this city St. Sergius and St. Bacchus suffered martyrdom. Twelve miles further on in the desert, in Saracen country, is the resting-place of Saint Sergius in the city of Tetrapyrgion.<sup>58</sup>

*Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Abteilung Kairo* 19 (1964) pp. 114ff, 20 (1965) 122 ff, 126 ff, 21 (1966) 171 ff, 22 (1967) 206 ff (and general plan p. 207), 26 (1971) pp. 53 ff, and *Archäologische Anzeiger* 1967, pp. 457 ff.

54. St. Athanasius and St. Mark call for no comment here, and St. Epimachus appears to be the Epimachus martyred in Alexandria, PG 115, 1320/5. A church of St. Faustus near the Pharos, is mentioned by John Muschus c. 615:106-2965, but this Faustus and Antoninus are otherwise unknown.
55. The pilgrim may well have visited the church of Euphemia in Jerusalem (see Jerusalem 3.c.iv). There was also the famous shrine of St. Euphemia at Chalcedon (where she was martyred under Diocletian) when he passed through Constantinople: see BHG 619 ff. and compare *Ex. Tr.* 23:7-122. Though he does not say he visited St. Antony in Egypt he must surely have been told about him by the guides there.
56. St. Pamphilus, "muster" of Eusebius of Caesarea, was martyred at Caesarea in 310 A.D. (Eusebius, *Mart. Pal.* 11.14, L.-O. p. 387) St. Procopius, who suffered under Diocletian in 303/4 A.D. was the first of the martyrs of Palestine (Eusebius, *op. cit.* 1.1/2 - 331/3). Cornelius is the centurion of Acts 10 and 11.
57. St. Babylas was the bishop of Antioch martyred under Numerian (BHG 205 ff); on the Three Children see John Chrysostom, PG 55, 619/30 and 56, 593/600. Saint Justina with Cyprian, a magician of Antioch, were martyred under Diocletian (BHG 452), as was Julian of Anazarbus (BHG 965 ff). The Maccabean Martyrs are the Eleazar and the seven brothers and their mother who were put to death under Antiochus Epiphanes (2 Macc. 6.18/7.42 and Jeremias, *ff.* pp. 18/23).
58. Suras is due north of Kusafa (Tetrapyrgion), which sounds in this passage as if it was not easily accessible.