

ITALIAN PILGRIM LITERATURE IN THE LATE MIDDLE AGES

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To describe the expanding frontier of Italian literacy from the lift-off of the prose vernacular in the last decades of the thirteenth century up to the emergence of early humanism in the first decades of the fifteenth is to map a mental landscape of some complexity. The tracks and staging posts established by investigators primarily interested in the traditional disciplines of political, economic, or literary history will not necessarily serve our purposes and their signposts may be misleading. In these circumstances, it would seem best to conduct a preliminary foray into the land ahead, indicating tentatively the main zones to be explored and taking bearings on some of the prominent features which will appear again later from other angles. The exercise will prove nothing of itself, but it is hoped that the provisional conclusions offered will be made firm in the chapters which follow.

A preliminary reconnaissance of this kind must range deep but can be mounted on the narrow front provided by a single class or type of evidence. The one chosen here is the pilgrim literature relating to the holy sites of the Levant and Egypt that was written by Italians, whether in Latin or the vernacular. Pilgrim literature may be defined as writings ostensibly directed towards intending pilgrims, though the reading of them could be a substitute for actual travel; it should be distinguished from histories of the East or assessments of the political or religious situation there which were drawn up with an eye to conversion or conquest. The writer of a pilgrim book intended to move his reader by telling him something about the East, and as he rarely made explicit observations about his own country, it might seem perverse at first sight to pursue an inquiry into Italian patterns of thought and expression through this kind of literature. But a moment's reflection shows that a traveller's tale, whatever its qualities as an objective description, cannot help but reveal something about the teller's and his audience's perceptions and preconceptions; indeed, the less it meets our criteria as

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a factual description, the more it is likely to tell us about its milieu – to serve as a mirror rather than a window. The travel literature of the middle ages often fails to give the modern reader what he expects, and a collection of medieval texts describing Italy and the Italians, beside having to be culled from many different fields of literature, would require so much critical winnowing to produce so little of the pure grain of ‘objective’ description as to be hardly worth the effort.¹ But, as nothing concentrated the medieval mind so wonderfully as a holy shrine, so it was inevitable that the Holy Land, where shrines were the most hallowed and concentrated, should have called forth a descriptive tradition which originated soon after St Helena’s discoveries in the fourth century and continued in unbroken evolution well beyond the Renaissance and the Reformation.² The popularity of the Jerusalem pilgrimage tended to make the subject attractive to non-professional writers who take us close to the frontiers of literacy which are the focus of our interest. For the same reason, pilgrim books are particularly sensitive indicators of changes in the western outlook; compared with the mental shifts in Europe, the objective changes in the East, at least in so far as they affected the things that pilgrims were interested in, were relatively slight. From the end of the crusader states in 1291, the condition of the holy sites was unchanged for centuries, and against this stable background the moving figures of the Italian writers stand out all the more clearly.

The intensive study of European Palestine literature is well over a century old so that the main lines of its development are well known, though its potential as a barometer of changes in western culture has not yet been exploited. From the start, pilgrim books were woven of a mixture of personal experience and impersonal exposition, the latter often taken over from earlier written sources. The only essential element was some account of the holy places of Jerusalem and its district, so a stereotyped list of shrines and a more or less standard itinerary was soon established, which relieved the individual writers of any obligation to express their own observations. The degree to which the actual journey was described varied greatly. The geographical element in the earliest pilgrim book, the *Itinerarium a Burdigala Hierusalem usque* of 333, was based directly on secular Roman itineraries, and most accounts gave at least an idea of the regional groupings of the main sites and the order in which they could be visited. But it seems highly unlikely that anyone in the earlier middle

¹ For an impression of the very selective view of Italy transmitted by northern visitors in the Middle Ages: G.B. Parks, *The English Traveller to Italy* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1954), i, *passim*, esp. 234–43 (on Rome), 617; cf. *Reise des kaiserlichen Kanzler Konrad im Jahre 1196*, trans. L. von Borch (Dresden: R. von Grumbkow, 1880), 9–12.

² As a general introduction: C.R. Beazley, *The Dawn of Modern Geography* (i and ii: London, J. Murray, 1897, 1901; iii: Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906) and the translated accounts published (London, 1885–97) by the Palestine Pilgrims’ Text Society (hereafter PPTS). The chronological list in R. Röhrich, *Bibliotheca Geographica Palaestinae* (Berlin: H. Reuther, 1890) is still the best.

ages actually used a pilgrim book to find his way to or around the Holy Land. One use of the written account may have been to serve as a check-list that the local guides had missed nothing out, but the main purpose was undoubtedly to arouse the zeal and devotion of the readers, and the personal element in the pilgrim books was intended to serve that end. The quite extensive descriptions of journeys and hardships contained in some early medieval accounts, such as those of the Englishman Willibald (c. 721) or the Italian Bernard the Wise (868–69), should be seen in that light, as intended to impress the audience with the magnitude of the enterprise involved in the pilgrimage to the East.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, during the lifetime of the crusader states, there was naturally a great demand for pilgrim books. In the many texts belonging to this period, it is the impersonal treatises which predominate while personal accounts are pushed into the background. The narrative of Saewulf, the merchant of Worcester, relating to the early twelfth century, may be regarded as the last example of the old style before the market was swamped by a flood of short and baldly factual handbooks with no literary pretensions whatever. In the last century, Titus Tobler identified nine distinct Latin treatises of this kind, which he christened *Innominatus* I–IX. Much as they differ among themselves in content, the *Innominati* share an anonymity which is intrinsic rather than accidental; only the opening paragraph of *Innominatus* V.1, which begins ‘From Accon I went to Caifa . . .’, stands out to raise false hopes that something more personal is to follow. The bulk of these compilations was most likely the work of Frenchmen and the earliest vernacular version, the *Citez de Jherusalem* of about 1220, was predictably in the *langue d’œil*; apart from a superficial chattiness the vernacular brought little change of substance to the genre, and ‘it is a fair place’ is about the limit of the author’s interest in visual descriptions. In fact, the only significant exceptions to the prevailing fashion were the work of Germans. In the twelfth century, John of Wurzburg and his compatriot Theoderich at least add some personal comments to the usual commonplaces of the guidebooks, while Wilbrand of Oldenburg and Thietmar, in the early thirteenth century, have left quite individualized accounts; Wilbrand in particular shows a strong interest in military matters and a desire to bring out any German connections he can find in the predominantly Frankish world of Outremer.³ Mention should also be made of Burchard of Mount Zion’s remarkable *Descriptio Terre Sancte*, a systematic historical geography of the whole of Palestine which was put out in at least one version with an accompanying map. One of the outstanding achievements of the scientific outlook of the thirteenth

³ The *Citez de Jherusalem*, Willibald’s *Hodoeporicon*, and Bernard the Wise’s ‘Itinerary’ were published by PPTS, vi, xviii, xxiii. Thietmar and Wilbrand of Oldenburg were edited by J.C.M. Laurent (Hamburg: Nolte and Kohler, 1857 and T.G. Meissner, 1859).

century, the *Descriptio* shows that its author had a true geographer's perception, as when he discusses the site of Jerusalem, and, though not a pilgrim's book in the strict sense, it had a considerable influence on the content of later examples of the genre.⁴

The most remarkable thing about the Italian contribution to the pilgrim literature of the central middle ages is its total insignificance. Between Bernard the Wise in 868–69 and the early fourteenth century, not a single Italian author of a pilgrim book has been identified. When the author of *Innominatus V* writes in glowing terms of the usefulness of the Genoese, Pisans and Venetians to Outremer, this may be because he is Italian but it could equally be because he is not; few Italians of the period would have had the detachment to praise so even-handedly the three rival maritime cities. The absence of Italian writings in a period which saw, for example, contributions from a Russian and a Dane, is too striking not to be significant; it can only mean that the throng of Italian crusaders, pilgrims, and merchants who frequented the Levant in these centuries found their curiosity satisfied by the standard guidebooks of the time. This conjecture would seem to be confirmed by the fact that the first piece of pilgrim literature in an Italian vernacular appears to be a loose translation of parts of the French *Les Pelerinages por aler en Jerusalem* into the dialect of the district of Lucca. Since the translation assumes that part of the Levant coast is still in Christian hands, it would seem to date from before the fall of Acre in 1291, which places it quite early in the corpus of Italian prose. The translator's blunders (for example, 'l'image de Notre Dame' becomes 'la magione di Nostra Donna') suggest that he had no personal knowledge of the subject; possibly his only contribution was to bring in a story about a wicked tyrant of Caesarea who tried to get his virtuous brother eaten by captive crocodiles but ended by falling into their jaws himself. This novella element is taken up later in the manuscript, which continues with versions of stories from the *Novellino* and the *Libro di Sidrach* – a valuable reminder that some pilgrim literature appealed to the same simple tastes as the early vernacular story books.⁵

The *Itinerarius* of Ricoldo da Montecroce, the first Italian pilgrim book for more than four centuries, was pitched at a considerably higher intellectual level.⁶ Ricoldo was a well trained Dominican of Santa Maria Novella in Florence, with a special interest in eastern religions which later led him to write a refutation of the Koran. His outlook was

⁴ Burchard of Mount Sion, *Descriptio Terre Sancte* (PPTS, xxx, 1896).

⁵ The edition of the Anonimo Panciatichiano by M. Dardano, 'Itinerario ai luoghi santi', *Studi Medievali*, vii (1966), 154–96 supersedes that in A. Gregorini, 'Le Relazioni in lingua volgare dei viaggi italiani in Palestina nel secolo xiv', *Annali della R. Scuola Normale di Pisa*, xviii (1906), 69–80.

⁶ Ed. J.C.M. Laurent, *Peregrinatores Medii Aevi Quatuor* (Leipzig, 1864), 105–41, and discussed by U. Monneret de Villard, *Il Libro della peregrinazione nelle parti d'oriente di frate Ricoldo da Montecroce* (Rome: S. Sabina, Istituto Storico Domenicano, 1948).

unmistakably moulded by the current mood in certain quarters of the western Church in the second half of the thirteenth century, where a new intellectual self-confidence combined with the hopes raised by the intervention of the Tartars to create an atmosphere where it was believed that spectacular gains might be made by Catholicism in the East, in which rational argument as well as armed force would have a vital role to play. Ricoldo's was therefore more than a pilgrim's book, ranging beyond Palestine to discuss Armenia, Turkey, and Persia; his speculations on the history of the Tartars were original and influential. Even more original was the innovation made by the *Itinerarius* in the pilgrim-book tradition, which was no less than the infusion of personal emotion into a genre from which it had been excluded from explicit expression for centuries. The new note is struck in the opening words of the preface, placing in the foreground not generalized platitudes but a desire to share the experience of Christ's travels, as in his flight into Egypt, and to put into practice the work of poverty which had been endangered by long stability and idleness. Becoming more personal still, Ricoldo adds that he feels that his pilgrimage was morally required to balance the extensive travels he had undertaken in his days as a secular in order to learn the liberal arts. There can be no doubt, then, that the account of Palestine arose from the experience of a particular pilgrimage. But this does not mean that Ricoldo dispenses with the commonplaces of the guidebooks; his method is rather to use them as a backdrop so that he can draw attention to himself upstage with remarks such as 'there we sang and preached' and 'there we celebrated Mass and preached, groaning and weeping and terrified of being killed by the Saracens'.⁷ If some passages are reminiscent of a picture postcard with an inked arrow captioned 'I was there', there can be no doubt about the genuine religious emotion found in the *Itinerarius*, which is straining the meagre literary powers of the writer almost to breaking point. Ricoldo and his party were not content to experience passively the places which Christ had sanctified by his bodily presence; they set out to re-enact the events of the New Testament, placing the child of a poor Christian in the crib at Bethlehem, entering Jerusalem with branches of olive, and processing to the Holy Sepulchre asking 'Who will roll away the stone?'⁸ Other pilgrims must have done these things and experienced similar emotions, but the expression of such feelings was new in this pilgrim book from the end of the thirteenth century.

As in some other Italian writings of the same period, the emotional content of Ricoldo da Montecroce's *Itinerarius* is so arresting that it is easy to overlook what it does not contain. For example, it is in no sense a travelogue, since Ricoldo gives no indication of how he got to the Holy Land or back again, and his itinerary in the East is never made

⁷ *Peregrinatores*, 108.

⁸ *ibid.*, 110, 112.

explicit by means of distances, directions, and dates. Again, the Holy Land presented by Ricoldo is essentially a network of religious and historical associations where places figure because of what once happened there and the present appearance of things is dismissed as irrelevant. When he describes Jerusalem as 'the holy city which also can truly be called the city of ruin and destruction' it remains typically uncertain how far this is to be understood in the physical or moral sense. Peoples registered with Ricoldo primarily as the bearers of history and beliefs; it is this approach which makes his description of the Tartars (to be discussed below) so fascinating. In his attitude to the Moslems, Ricoldo's starting point was his belief that the superiority of the Christian faith could be demonstrated by reason; his study of the Koran had convinced him that the religion of the Saracens was lax, confused, riddled with moral contradictions, and contrary to philosophy. From the security of this position, the Dominican was able to recognize that many Moslems exhibited admirable human qualities and he noted their piety, almsgiving, kindness to animals and birds, *gravitas* of deportment, and hospitality which were so disconcerting to Christians.⁹ He avoids the usual crude misrepresentations and calumnies so common in pilgrim literature and, in context, this looks like a kind of tolerance.

Between 1320 and about 1335, three Italian friars of the main orders – Dominican, Franciscan, and Augustinian – produced pure pilgrim books in Latin for the edification of their colleagues and clients. They all have certain things in common with Ricoldo, not at the level of words, so that it cannot be proved that any of them had actually read the *Itinerarius*, but rather in their idea of what a pilgrim book should contain and express. They also move beyond Ricoldo in certain directions which are highly significant for the development of the genre and suggest a gradual movement in Italian taste and sensibility.

The strongest common feature of these three writers is the kind of spirituality we have already discovered in Ricoldo, characterized by an overwhelming desire to recover the biblical world and especially to relive the culminating events of sacred history recorded in the New Testament. This was expressed in the simplest form in the short treatise of the Bolognese Dominican, Francesco Pepino, which relates to a pilgrimage undertaken in 1320. His account is punctuated with the phrases 'fui item', 'vidi et tetigi' and 'item perambulavi', and it ends with a list of 'holy places where by the grace of Christ I celebrated mass.'¹⁰ Antonio Reboldi, a Franciscan of Cremona but apparently based in Cyprus, left a short description of a pilgrimage to Syria and Palestine in 1327, and of his return there by way of Egypt and Mount

⁹ *ibid.*, 131–5.

¹⁰ 'Tractatus de locis terre sancte' ed. T. Tobler, *Dritte Wanderung nach Palästina im Jahre 1857* (Gotha: J. Perthes, 1859), 400–12.

Sinai in 1330.¹¹ For him, as for nearly all pilgrims, the Holy Sepulchre was the emotional highspot of his journey. He remarks that his second visit there was a much more satisfying spiritual experience than his first, partly because on the second occasion he was able to bribe the Saracen guards to withdraw and leave him alone in the church. One wonders how common was this desire for solitude among the pilgrims of this period; none of the others seems to have recorded it. Jacopo da Verona was more effusive in expressing the emotions generated by his visit to the sepulchre some five years later;¹² though cloaked by the simple Latin which was all that they could command, there is no mistaking the religious fervour of these writers as of the same kind as that sublimely portrayed in a Giotto crucifixion or deposition. Jacopo's urge to experience the Holy Land as fully as possible led him to touch as well as look; he washed his hands in the Dead Sea but still repeats the fable that everything sinks in it. This attitude made him a fervent relic- or souvenir-hunter and he shamelessly recounts how he got his friends to distract the Greek monks while he extracted a piece of the stone from the socket where the cross had stood. He was less successful with the pillar of the Flagellation, whose hardness was too great for his best efforts, and the same thing happened with the column of the Annunciation at Nazareth. The breathtaking innocence of Jacopo's approach may be a little forced since by the fifteenth century the guardians of the sepulchre were threatening relic-hunters with excommunication.

In the friars' writings of the early fourteenth century, the travelogue form can be seen gradually reasserting itself in pilgrim books after an eclipse of more than two centuries. That it had to overcome intellectual objections is shown by Pepino's explicit rejection of an ordering of his treatise round the course of his itinerary in favour of a separate treatment of Old and New Testament sites. He keeps to this plan well enough in Palestine, but in Syria the Dispensations get mixed together and the account of Egypt, though short, contains the elements of a rudimentary narrative. Pepino was a friar of some consequence, who produced the most successful Latin translation of Marco Polo's *Milione*; the more obscure Reboldi had apparently no reservations about following the order of his pilgrimage, and in both accounts he provides a thin web of dates from which the chronology of his travels can be reconstructed. But it is in the more lengthy and ambitious work of Jacopo da Verona that the travelogue emerges as a major feature of interest. The Augustinian begins his narrative with his departure from Verona on 7 May 1335 and outlines his voyage from

¹¹ Ed. R. Röhricht, *Zeitschrift des deutschen Palaestina-Vereins*, xiii (1890), 153–74, and G. Golubovich, *Biblioteca bio-bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell'oriente francescano* (Florence: Collegio di S. Bonaventura, 1906–27), iii. 331–42.

¹² Ed. R. Röhricht, *Revue de l'Orient Latin*, iii (1895), 155–302 and U. Monneret de Villard, *Liber Peregrinationis* (Rome: S. Sabina, Istituto Storico Domenicano, 1950).

Venice, first to Otranto, where he preached to the Jews, and thence to Cyprus and eventually to Jaffa, which he reached on 30 July. The chronology of his visits to the central sites of Palestine tends to be smothered by the mass of detail and there is no itinerary for Galilee and Syria, apparently because he did not go there but compiled this section from earlier accounts, drawing particularly on Burchard of Mount Zion.¹³ But the desert journey to Mount Sinai and Cairo is clearly recounted from personal experience. Some of this information could have been useful to an intending pilgrim but when, for example, Jacopo dwells on his sufferings in an Aegean storm he clearly expects the reader to be interested in his adventures for their own sake.

With the revival of the narrative came the beginnings of visual descriptions. In this respect as in others, Pepino marks no real advance on Ricoldo, and it is Reboldi who takes the first faltering step forward. The church of the Nativity at Bethlehem moved him to attempt to describe its 'wonderful and multiple order of marble columns, the variety, order and singularity of the pictures and the pavement inlaid (*tabulatam*) with wonderful stone.' Then, as if ashamed of this outburst which had strained his vocabulary and syntax almost to breaking point, the friar goes on: 'But we must leave temporal things and speak only of the spiritual things which are in that most holy church.' Reboldi tries to help his readers visualize the East by drawing comparisons with familiar sights near home. Thus Tiberias stands by the lake in the same way as Ferrara on the Po, Damascus is two and a half times the size of Bologna and – a curious inversion – the church of the Holy Sepulchre resembles S. Stefano in Bologna. By the time he came to write up his visit to Egypt, Reboldi had so far forgotten his reservations about descriptions of secular things that he allowed himself to list the exotic animals in the sultan's menagerie at Cairo, and ventured a brief description of the giraffe – the first of many found in pilgrim books.¹⁴ When Jacopo da Verona reached Cairo it was the elephant which attracted his attention. Despite his greater prolixity, Jacopo clearly lacked Reboldi's aesthetic sense and his more prosaic mind fastened on statistics and expressed its perceptions through the medium of maps and diagrams. The plan of the Holy Sepulchre and the map showing the relative positions of Gaza, Mount Sinai, and Cairo, which once illustrated Jacopo's treatise, have been lost, but a version of his sketch-map of St Catherine's monastery and Mount Sinai is extant. And where his interest was aroused Jacopo could be an acute observer. He was particularly impressed with the military and economic strength of Mameluke Egypt and notes fortifications and castles with great care. He remarks on the tall houses and magnificent cemeteries and mosques of Cairo and examined the sultan's militia with a critical eye,

¹³ *Liber Peregrinationis*, ed. Monneret de Villard.

¹⁴ Golubovich, *Biblioteca*, iii. 336.

concluding that they looked well enough but that their horses were small in comparison with western chargers.¹⁵

The innovations in the Italian pilgrim books of the first half of the fourteenth century reached their culmination in the *Libro d'Oltramare*, which appeared soon after 1350.¹⁶ As in the case of the earlier treatises, our information about the author is almost entirely derived from the book itself. Niccolò da Poggibonsi was an obscure Tuscan Franciscan, but a careful reading of the *Libro d'Oltramare* suggests that he was a different kind of writer from his predecessors. With them one feels that in every sense the pilgrimage came first and the book second, and in so far as they envisage a readership it seems to have been restricted to colleagues and friends. Niccolò tells his readers that he spent more than four years in the East during which he travelled extensively not only in Palestine but also in Egypt, Syria, and Sinai; he even claims to have visited Baghdad. While earlier writers, on the rare occasions when they give dimensions, use their own paces or estimated bowshots, Niccolò explains that he carried a yardstick and a pair of writing tablets. His innovation in writing a pilgrim book in the vernacular does not appear to have been accidental; he seems to have been deliberately aiming at the same expanding Tuscan readership which attracted Boccaccio at precisely this time. The *Decameron* and the *Libro d'Oltramare* were contemporaries.

What Niccolò judged his audience to want was first and foremost more factual information. On sites of Christian significance in the East, Niccolò is intensely comprehensive, including in his brief not just the religious associations on which earlier writers had concentrated almost exclusively, but also the present condition and appearance of the place. In his detailed account of the Holy Sepulchre, Niccolò devotes a chapter to explaining exactly how the chapel is locked and guarded and another to listing the various denominations which serve at each of the twenty altars. But his most characteristic gesture is, as it were, to take his readers by the hand and show them in detail what he has seen.

Now when you enter that holy chapel and see the Holy Sepulchre of Jesus Christ, it is made in this way: it is entirely inlaid all round and above with white marble. One end of the sepulchre faces towards the east and the other towards the west; from the part towards the north and from the head and foot it is joined, that is, built in with the wall of the chapel. In front, towards the south, three or four persons can stand inside close together, there is so little space, except in front.¹⁷

Moreover, Niccolò's vision takes in pictures and mosaics, inscriptions and, most significant of all, colour. Thus: 'The column [of the

¹⁵ *Liber Peregrinationis*, ed. Monneret de Villard, 80–7

¹⁶ Niccolò da Poggibonsi, *Libro d'Oltramare*, ed. A. Bacchi della Lega (Bologna: G. Romagnoli, 1881–82, reprint 1968); revised edn. P.B. Bagatti (Jerusalem: Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, ii, 1945), with English translation (though the quotations here are translated by the author).

¹⁷ *Libro d'Oltramare*, ed. Bagatti, 18 (cap. xx).

Flagellation] has a circumference of four palms and is the colour of pink porphyry (*porfido gherofanato*); inside, where it is broken, it is a kind of dark grey, but it is so strong that rarely can anyone break it, unless with great force.¹⁸

It is worth asking the purpose of all this detail. In some cases it was a matter of knowledge for its own sake; there is a sense in which everything pertaining to the lands of the Bible was precious to the devout. Other information given by Niccolò was of a strictly practical kind. Lists of the indulgences attached to the principal shrines had been circulating for a long time, but Niccolò seems to have been the first to incorporate them into his itineraries.¹⁹ Another innovation was to give some account of expenses, as four bezants a head for the crossing from Cyprus to Jaffa, and four florins for a tour of Galilee and Samaria. Among the mass of directions found in the *Libro d'Oltramare* it is necessary to make a distinction:

There is a street when one leaves the Manus Assalonis, taking the way on the right side to the south and going 16 paces one finds an archway; don't pass it, but take the little street beside the arch on the left, up a rise of about 100 paces; there one finds some houses and inside there are fine lodgings of men who do penance. On the right, two paces beyond the said houses is the church of St James the Less . . .²⁰

When Niccolò wrote this, he clearly intended to help pilgrims find the church; indeed, he seems to have been the first writer to imagine his book in the hands of a visitor as he made his perambulation. But when we are told, for example, that the Holy Sepulchre is nine palms long by three and a half wide and stands four palms above the ground, or that the chapel of Mary Magdalene is ten paces from the Sepulchre, the aim was clearly different. The key is to be found in a group of anonymous manuscripts which give directions and distances between the shrines within the precinct of the Holy Sepulchre. One of these, in the vernacular of the fourteenth century, is headed 'These are the journeys that pilgrims ought to make . . . and that every person can do staying in his own house and thinking of each place that is written below . . .' Sketch plans apparently served the same purpose, and many of Niccolò's meticulous descriptions can be seen in the same light, as substitutes for travel and aids to mental prayer.²¹

Finally, it needs to be made plain that large tracts of the *Libro d'Oltramare* are there simply for entertainment. This applies particularly to the account of the voyage to the East, with the vivid description of a storm at sea and a pirate attack frightened off by the resolute

¹⁸ *ibid.*, 19–20 (cap. xxii).

¹⁹ On these indulgences and their obscure origins: *Libro d'Oltramare*, ed. Bagatti, xxii–xxxii, xlii–liii.

²⁰ *ibid.*, 45 (cap. lxxi).

²¹ For these see C. Gargioli, *Viaggi in Terra Santa* (Florence, 1862: see below n. 25), 441–50 and *Liber Peregrinationis*, ed. Monneret de Villard, 151.

conduct of the captain and his crew; in the sections on Damascus and Cairo there is a lot of secular information which is not, as in Ricoldo da Montecroce, directed towards an assessment of the military strength of the sultanate. Niccolò cannot be considered a great writer but his style is simple and direct and his eye very good, so that he can conjure up a scene with few words. He noted the melancholy and abstinence of camels; the Red Sea is long like a tongue, Jerusalem is shaped like a shield, the pyramids are made like diamonds, and the wooded country around Bethlehem reminded Niccolò of his native territory of Pogibonsi. There are striking descriptions of the bearded monks of St Catherine's, wild Arab cave women, and the feats of a strong man at Gaza – perhaps with echoes of Samson.²² While previous writers had avoided anticlimax by remaining silent about their return to the west, Niccolò kept up the interest to the end by recounting more storms and another pirate attack; having seen a waterspout off Greece, he took to the land and suffered various adventures, being captured by bandits from whom he escaped in a forest, spending a night tied to a branch of a tree.²³ Because the *Libro d'Oltramare* contains so many *temporalia*, the religion in it should not be assumed to be lukewarm or insincere. Although he is not as effusive as some earlier writers, it is clear that Niccolò felt strongly about the devotional aspects of his pilgrimage, since he continued the practice, found in Jacopo da Verona, of including appropriate prayers to be said at the more important shrines.²⁴ It is simply that the religious theme no longer meant the exclusion of curious or picturesque detail; serious business, both spiritual and temporal, was combined with entertainment in judicious proportions. It looks as if Niccolò got the mixture about right; while the earlier treatises are known in one or two manuscripts, at least ten copies of the *Libro d'Oltramare* are still to be found in Florentine libraries alone.

In 1384–85 a party of six Florentine gentlemen and their servants carried out an extended pilgrimage to Egypt, Sinai, and Palestine, returning by way of Syria and Beirut.²⁵ One died *en route* but three of the survivors wrote accounts which are extant. It is hard to believe that this was a coincidence, but if there was any common agreement none of the writers mentions it, and it is clear that each account is quite independent of the others, providing a unique opportunity to compare

²² *Libro d'Oltramare*, cap. i–ix (voyage), cliii (Damascus), clxxii–clxxvii (Cairo), cxcviii (camels), cci (Red Sea), xi (Jerusalem), cxci (granaries of Pharaoh, i.e. pyramids), cviii (Bethlehem), ccxvi (St Catherine's), cxxxvi (cave Arabs), ccxlii (strong man of Gaza).

²³ *Libro d'Oltramare*, ed. Bagatti, 150–7 (cap. cclx–cclxiv).

²⁴ *ibid.*, 13 (cap. xiii).

²⁵ Ed. C. Gargioli, *Viaggi in Terra Santa* (Florence, 1862) – a rare book; Frescobaldi and Sigoli are more easily found in a partial reprint: *Viaggi in Terrasanta*, ed. C. Angelini (Florence: F. Le Monnier, 1944). All three are translated by T. Bellorini and E. Hoade in *A Visit to the Holy Places of Egypt, Sinai, Palestine and Syria in 1384* (Jerusalem: Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, vi, 1948).

three individual reactions to the same experience. Since all three were laymen and equally unprofessional writers, the variations between them would seem to be related to differences in social position and personal interests and abilities.

The book of Simone Sigoli, of whom little is known except that his family came from the fringe parish of S. Niccolò d'Oltrarno, suggests a simple layman's outlook with typical merchant's interests and undisturbed prejudices. His merchant's eye noted the excellent 'grain' (dyestuff for making scarlets) found in the Greek port of Coron, and revelled in the rich markets of Alexandria, Cairo, and Damascus. Though he can discuss prices realistically, Sigoli is easily carried away into exaggerations, as when he alleges that 3,000 bezants were spent on perfumes in Cairo each day, or that 'the whole of Christendom could be supplied for a year with merchandise in Damascus.'²⁶ His descriptions are painstaking rather than inspired; he tried hard to portray the beasts in the sultan's menagerie, but his remark that the giraffe was like an ostrich without feathers cannot have helped his readers much.²⁷ It required something more lurid to fire his fantasy; when someone told him of the adornments of Moslem brides, he imagined them painted 'all over in the front parts, that is the body, the breasts, the thighs, legs and arms; and there they paint hunting-dogs and wild goats, birds, trees and leaves . . .' His view of Islam was compounded of all the old western fables plus a few of his own; the muezzin's cry tells of the immoral life of Mohammed and his wicked companions, ending with the injunction to increase and multiply; on Fridays the *cadi* (*sic*), having regaled the faithful with the lustful immoralities and other wicked acts of Mohammed, ends by threatening the congregation with a naked scimitar.²⁸ What at first sight seems to be the most original feature of Sigoli's book, the complete omission from the narrative of the usual pilgrim pieties, turns out to be largely an illusion, for at the end Simone places an extended list of shrines visited and indulgences received.²⁹

The distinctive characteristics of Lionardo Frescobaldi's account of the pilgrimage of 1384–85 would seem to be directly attributable to his social position. The Frescobaldi had been an established patrician family since the thirteenth century and the fact that Lionardo had been allowed to renounce his magnate status in 1379 reveals more about his political than his social outlook. He mentions that he had already served in seven military engagements before his pilgrimage, and he acted as *podestà* of Montepulciano and later as ambassador to the pope

²⁶ *Viaggi in Terrasanta*, ed. Angelini, 174–8, 201–13, 224–30. As authority for his statistics on Cairo, Sigoli cites his informant Simone da Candia, presumably a resident merchant.

²⁷ *Viaggi in Terrasanta*, ed. Angelini, 195–9.

²⁸ *ibid.*, 187–8, 190–3, 199–201. Sigoli admitted, however, that the dragoman in charge of the party was 'a good man, albeit a Saracen': *ibid.*, 185.

²⁹ *Viaggi in Terrasanta*, ed. Angelini. The omission may merely have been due to laziness.

after his return.³⁰ His interest in the logistics of the desert crossing reveals the eye of a seasoned campaigner. As the acknowledged leader of the party, it was he who established contact with the political authorities of the territories through which they passed, and this gives his pilgrimage something of the appearance of a diplomatic tour when, for example, he discusses the affairs of the empire and the papal schism with the emir of Alexandria. Another side of his outlook is shown by his description of the execution of a murderer in Damascus; although the workings of the criminal law in the Italian communes were very capricious, most Italians of the governing classes were in favour of severe justice being meted out to the lower orders.³¹ Like most aristocrats of all places and times, Frescobaldi tended to see the world as a network of powerful and well-connected persons. His chronology of the sea voyages is notably inaccurate, but he does not omit to mention that in Venice he stayed with his kinsmen the Portinari, and that the *podestà* of Modon was a Contarini; on his return he had lunch with the doge and dinner with Pieruccio Malipieri and fifty Venetian gentlemen.³² On the other hand, persons of low social status were almost beneath his notice, like the fellow passenger who died at Modon and whom he refers to as the priest from the Casentino; the drowning of two hundred poor pilgrims after the sinking of the worn-out galley which was the best they were able to afford caused Frescobaldi to remark that according to the Faith they had made a good bargain, since they were now at Christ's feet.³³

This raises the tricky question of Frescobaldi's religious feelings. The usual shrines and pious stories appear in his account but there seems no warmth in his response to them; perhaps he was sophisticated enough to feel that enough had been written about them already. He was certainly better at describing courts than churches; at his reception by the emir of Alexandria he was particularly struck by the rich carpets and hangings, and he remarks on the vast number of swallows in the courtyard of the governor of Gaza.³⁴ His attitude to Islam was mixed: he repeats the story of 'increase and multiply' and credits Mohammed (and the sultan) with one hundred wives; on the other hand, he was aware that the veneration of the patriarchs, Mary, John the Baptist, and St Catherine, brought the two faiths close together. His reaction to individual Moslems was determined by their social position: if they were rich and powerful he accepted them as equals. The dragoman appointed to guide the party by the authorities in Cairo belonged to a third category, being a Venetian who had been converted to Islam.

³⁰ For the Frescobaldi in the thirteenth century, see most conveniently B. Stahl, *Adel und Volk im Florentiner Dugento* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1965), 147–9.

³¹ *Viaggi in Terrasanta*, ed. Angelini, 58–60, 88, 158–9.

³² *ibid.*, 42, 51, 167.

³³ *ibid.*, 49, 52. Sigoli, on the other hand, gives the dead pilgrim's name, Ser Bartolommeo, priest of Castello Focognano.

³⁴ *ibid.*, 58–60, 120–1.

Frescobaldi brought him letters from Venice which contained the news of his father's death; later the Florentine persuaded the guide to promise that if he were sent to Alexandria he would contrive to escape to the west. Frescobaldi also made great efforts to meet the Venetian's wife, who was a Florentine, but in vain; no doubt the thought of a Florentine gentlewoman mothering a family of Saracens was offensive to his social, patriotic, and religious sensibilities alike.³⁵

It is curious that Giorgio Gucci's account of the pilgrimage of 1384–85 should be the least known of the three, since it shows critical and interpretative powers far in advance of the other pilgrim books under consideration. As a narrator Gucci is competent rather than inspired; his most far-reaching practical innovation was to develop the list of expenses into a comprehensive guide for future travellers.³⁶ The inclusion of a sum for 'tips, that is robberies' sets him in the guidebook tradition that leads to Karl Baedeker, Fodor, and beyond. Gucci's visual descriptions are nothing out of the ordinary and there are no brilliant touches to compare with Frescobaldi's likening of an elephant's ears to a bat's wings. Like the other writers he draws much on parallels with familiar places near home; Mary's meeting with Christ on the Via Dolorosa was as if he had been going by the Via S. Felice in Piazza while Our Lady was going down by the well of the Toscanelli in the Florentine Oltrarno. What sets Gucci apart from other observers is his ability to see the connections which others missed. Frescobaldi describes the Nile flood accurately and mentions the defeat of St Louis at Damietta, but Gucci sees them linked as cause and effect.³⁷ All writers were impressed by the power of the sultan but Gucci points up both the strength and weakness of the Mameluke regime when he remarks, 'The sultans are obeyed in both temporal and spiritual matters without opposition, unless the opposition arises from their court.' It was commonplace to praise the excellent water-supply of Damascus, but only Gucci noticed that the waste effluents were put to good use for irrigation and the driving of mills.³⁸

Alone, it seems, of all the pilgrims, Giorgio Gucci did not believe everything he was told, but checked whether it was reasonable and borne out by observation. Informed that Gaza was as big as Alexandria, he commented that it appeared countrified (*contadinesca*) and not city-like (*cittadinesca*). Throughout the middle ages the pyramids were thought to have been the granaries which Joseph built for Pharaoh; Sigoli paced out the length of a side and exclaimed at the quantity of grain they could have held. But Gucci was not convinced and made the brilliant guess, 'They seem rather to be things made for a perpetual memorial than for granaries . . . for if the world lasts more than it has

³⁵ *ibid.*, 62–4, 82–4, 71–2, 89–90.

³⁶ *Viaggi in Terra Santa*, ed. Gargioli, 421–38.

³⁷ *ibid.*

³⁸ *ibid.*

already lasted, that work will not be moved by anything.'³⁹ This scepticism extended even to the non-scriptural miracle stories which had grown up in extravagant profusion along the pilgrim routes. Gucci weighs each one and, if not convinced, qualifies his account with an 'as it is said' or 'as we were told'. His attitude to other religions and sects was remarkably free from prejudice. Of the eastern Christians he remarked, 'although our Church does not approve them as real and true Christians, however, according to what we heard and appeared to the eye, they are devout men of great abstinence and observance.'⁴⁰ Although he shows no understanding of the faith, and makes the common error of thinking that Mohammed was worshipped as a god, Gucci describes the practice of Islam objectively and accurately. When the pilgrims were set upon by a stone-throwing mob in Damascus, the Florentine pointed out that 'we received these oppressions from servants and suchlike scum, and not from members of the establishment.' The Moslem veneration of a Christian church in Damascus moved Gucci to observe, 'And in past times because of the oppressions that the Christians have inflicted on the Saracens, sometimes in one way and sometimes in another, the Saracens there have oppressed the Christians and even the religious, but they have always held this place in the greatest reverence.'⁴¹ This remark reaches out beyond tolerance towards a tragic view of the conflict which divided the faiths in spite of what they had in common.

Who, then, was Giorgio Gucci? The information is tantalizingly inconclusive, stopping short at a handful of external facts which suggest, but do not prove, the character of the man. The family belonged to the *gente nuova*, wool merchants who supported what may be called the radical wing in Florentine politics in the later part of the fourteenth century. The brothers Francesco and Alessandro were banned by the conservative Parte Guelfa but had their *ammonizioni* withdrawn at the petition of the *popolo minuto* during the short-lived revolutionary Ciompi regime in July 1378. Giorgio's father Guccio had first entered the priorate in 1362, and reached the peak of his career when he was elected one of the Eight 'Saints' who prosecuted the war against the papacy in 1376-78.⁴² The Florentine establishment at that time took particular pains to stress their religious orthodoxy and personal piety so as to demonstrate that their quarrel with the papacy was purely political. Giorgio, who served a term as prior in 1379, seems to have been one of a group of prominent laymen who looked for spiritual advice to the devout Augustinian Giovanni delle Celle. Unfortunately, the only known letter from Fra Giovanni to Giorgio

³⁹ *ibid.*, 350, 301.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, 292.

⁴¹ *ibid.*, 405, 398.

⁴² G. A. Brucker, *Florentine Politics and Society, 1343-1378* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), 42, 205, 299.

does not make clear how close the relationship was; in it the friar thanks Giorgio for the offer of some cloth for a cloak and goes on to preach a little sermon on the importance of regarding the whole of life as a pilgrimage.⁴³ All this suggests, although it does not prove, that Gucci's scepticism was born not of an indifference to his faith, but of a piety deeper than that of those who needed crude prejudice and superstition to buttress them against an alien world.

Nicolò Martoni's book of his pilgrimage of 1394–95 provides a useful reassurance that the development we are studying is not simply an aspect of the growth of the vernacular and restricted to central Italy.⁴⁴ Nicolò was a notary of Carinola, a small town near the northern border of the kingdom of Naples, and these two circumstances made it practically inevitable that he should write in Latin. In every respect his book belongs unmistakably to the same genre as the Florentine works just described; although it contains much information of general interest, it is, like them, an essentially personal account of a particular journey. Martoni's notarial profession gave him a subtly different outlook from that of the clergy and merchants; as an administrator he particularly notes the hearth assessments of the Christian territories through which he passed. Somewhat less sophisticated than the wealthy Florentines, Nicolò, whether intentionally or not, reveals far more about himself than they do. The role in which he cast himself was that of the suffering pilgrim, terrified of storms and pirates, worried about money and delays, overwhelmed by misery and homesickness on a Greek beach, and experiencing the final heartbreak, among the celebrations on his return, of discovering that his wife had died just before his homecoming. Nicolò does not conceal his weaknesses, admitting to shortsightedness and incompetence in driving the ox cart which he hired in Cyprus; after a narrow escape from drowning in Beirut harbour his beard turned white.

A new feature which strikes the reader of Martoni's *Liber Peregrinationis* is his interest in classical antiquity. Earlier writers of pilgrim books had been more or less oblivious of anything which did not have some religious or contemporary significance. Niccolò da Poggibonsi's observation that the amphitheatre of Pola resembled the Colosseum and that there were many ancient tombs there was hardly remarkable, seeing that he was stuck in the port for ten days while the storm damage to his ship was made good.⁴⁵ It is true that at an unknown date Francesco Petrarca had written his so-called *Itinerarium Syriacum* for a Milanese friend who had invited the poet to join him on a

⁴³ *ibid.*, 303; A.M. Biscione, *Lettere di Santi e Beati Fiorentini* (Florence: F. Mouëcke, 1736), n. xxiii.

⁴⁴ Ed. L. Legrand, 'Relation du pèlerinage à Jérusalem de Nicolas de Martoni', *Revue de l'Orient Latin*, iii (1895), 566–669.

⁴⁵ *Libro d'Oltramare*, ed. Bagatti, 3 (cap. iii). These tombs are also mentioned by Dante, *Inferno*, ix. 113–15.

Jerusalem pilgrimage. In the only form in which it has been preserved, over half of this little work is concerned with the classical associations of places on the Italian coast from Genoa to Brindisi; there follows half a page on Greece, a page on Palestine, and a few lines on Cairo and Alexandria. The Christian element is entirely lacking in this unique treatise; a little-known work by an eccentric genius, it can hardly have influenced the pilgrim-book tradition.⁴⁶ Martoni's approach to antiquity was quite different from Petrarch's – through stories and legends rather than classical texts. On his outward voyage, Martoni relates that it was in a temple on Kithera that Paris first saw Helen, and he mentions in passing the labyrinth of Crete. On his return, Nicolò went island-hopping in small ships from Rhodes to mainland Greece, and on Cos was shown the house of Hippocrates, the wise philosopher and physician. In Athens he deliberately set out in search of antiquities (*aliqua antiqua*) and found the *studium* of Aristotle and the site of the idol which had destroyed hostile ships approaching the coast. The Parthenon impressed him not only because it contained a painting of the Virgin by St Luke but because of its workmanship; he found it impossible to imagine how it had been built. The Propylaea he compared with Frederick II's gateway at Capua.⁴⁷

How Nicolò Martoni acquired his rudimentary taste for antiquity is a mystery, but it hardly makes him a figure of the Renaissance. For the impact of the fifteenth-century revival on pilgrim literature, we have to wait for the account of the journey of Nicolò d'Este of 1413 as written up by his chancellor Luchino dal Campo.⁴⁸ By now it would seem that travellers were told that it was from Kithera that Paris had abducted Helen. The party's search for antiquities at Pola and their pleasure at finding 'many beautiful stone arches in the countryside' was something new, explicable in terms of Nicolò's humanist education and patronage of humanists in his court.⁴⁹ But much more significant than the scant references to antiquity is the new sense of the picturesque which fills pages of Luchino's book. Earlier writers had occasionally remarked on the beauty of the countryside, especially when it was fruitful and reminded them of home;⁵⁰ the Ferrarese party showed a positive passion for gardens and orchards. Their way of showing their appreciation was to eat in them; as depicted by Luchino, Nicolò's pilgrimage was literally a picnic, or rather a series of picnics, with

⁴⁶ Francesco Petrarca, *Opera Omnia* (Basel: Sebastian Henricpatri, 1581), 557–64, or, better and fuller, ed. G. Lumbroso, *Memorie italiane del buon tempo antico* (Turin: E. Loescher, 1889).

⁴⁷ 'Relation du pèlerinage', 650. This aspect of Martoni is discussed by J. Morton Paton, *Chapters on Medieval and Renaissance Visitors to Greek Lands* (Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1951), 30–6, 173–4.

⁴⁸ Ed. G. Ghinassi, 'Viaggio a Gerusalemme di Nicolò da Este' in *Misc. di Opusc. ined. o rare*, i (Turin: R. Comm. per i Testi di Lingua, i, 1861), 99–160.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, 113, 107. On Nicolò's culture and education: W.L. Gundersheimer, *Ferrara: The Style of a Renaissance Despotism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 66–91.

⁵⁰ e.g. *Libro d'Oltramare*, ed. Bagatti, 64 (cap. cviii); *Viaggi in Terrasanta*, ed. Angelini, 219, 221.

lunches and dinners enjoyed under the trees on the fresh grass. All manner of sights and sounds could serve to enhance the pleasure of the basic scene. At Pola it was the ancient tombs in the background; at a supper in Corfu, orange blossoms fell upon the table as an old man sang to a viola, while at Rhodes the backdrop provided by the windmills was so entrancing that the prince insisted on taking both lunch and supper in the garden, no doubt to the annoyance of his hosts. Luchino never fails to respond to a garden, but other things too excited his admiration, like the strange fish caught by a fisherman of Cherso, or the festival of dancing and singing put on by Venetian and Greek women at Corfu on the return journey.⁵¹ The account of the visit to the Lusignan court in Cyprus has a particularly modern ring. The king granted an audience and then defeated some of the gentlemen in a contest of putting the weight. The highspot of the entertainment was a display by a Turkish juggler and sword-dancer whose performance drew an elaborate four-page description from Luchino. Later the king showed off his lavish sports equipment and the visitors enjoyed a luxurious bath, followed by breakfast, lunch, and a game of *palla*.⁵²

We have reached the opposite pole from the stark accounts of a penitential journey; alone of all the pilgrim books considered here, it is hard to take seriously the religious element in the *Viaggio a Gerusalemme*. Luchino devotes fourteen pages to the journey to the Holy Land and nineteen to the journey back, but only ten pages to the fourteen days which the party spent in Palestine. The enumeration of the shrines is highly conventional, and indeed dal Campo shows a credulous streak when he reports that the cleft in the rock below the site of the crucifixion goes down to the abyss, which puts him on a par with the most superstitious of the medieval writers. Indulgences are marked in the now usual way with a cross, and he seems surprised that no indulgence is attached to the tree where Judas hanged himself. The visit to the Holy Sepulchre took place at night in the normal way, but Niccolò spent part of the time dubbing various members of his circle knights of the Holy Sepulchre. Apart from paying their dues and a nasty encounter with Turkish soldiers outside Jaffa, Luchino hardly mentions the Moslems at all, and other religions attracted his attention even less; the chanting of the Greek monks merely added a romantic excitement to the visit to Corfu. In general, Nicolò d'Este enjoyed the reputation of a godly prince and his pilgrimage no doubt served to enhance this view; but as recounted by Luchino dal Campo, there is nothing to suggest that the religious feeling involved was any more than of the most conventional kind.

It would be misleading to end this survey of pilgrim literature with Luchino's unusual book, in which the fashionable courtly attitudes of the early fifteenth century find such exaggerated expression. Later

⁵¹ 'Viaggio a Gerusalemme di Nicolò da Este', 107, 110–11, 115, 146.

⁵² *ibid.*, 131–41.

pilgrim books prove that the secular outlook of the Este pilgrimage was not typical. For example, in the account of his third pilgrimage written by Mariano da Siena soon after 1431, the religious aspect finds full expression once more; the first Italian priest to write on the Jerusalem journey since Niccolò da Poggibonsi, he included numerous prayers as well as the usual lists of indulgences.⁵³ At the same time, Mariano gave a comprehensive list of expenses and described his voyage and the lands through which he passed in fair detail; genuine piety and an interest in the world were not felt to be mutually exclusive. The Milanese priest Santo Brasca, writing after 1480, shows much the same balance of temporal and spiritual concerns.⁵⁴ The two Italian accounts of the spring voyage of 1458, in which the Englishmen John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, and William Wey of Eton College also participated, show that expressions of piety were not the sole prerogative of priests.⁵⁵ The narratives of Gabriele Capodilista, a canon lawyer of Padua, and Roberto da Sanseverino, a soldier of fortune and nephew of Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan, are not independent, but, as it happens, many of their devotional passages are characteristic and distinct. Capodilista records liturgies appropriate for different stages of the journey, while Sanseverino, from the moment he left his home in Milan, seems never to have missed the chance of visiting a church and hearing mass whenever he could. To judge from what they wrote – and how else can we judge them? – these two men of the world took the spiritual side of their pilgrimage very seriously indeed.

One feature which all the fifteenth-century pilgrim books have in common is a new precision about space and time. In the fourteenth century one is lucky if the main lines of a journey can be established to the nearest day; for example, much of the chronology of Niccolò da Poggibonsi's voyages is a matter of conjecture. Beginning with Luchino dal Campo, a mass of detail concerning ports and headlands, islands and reefs, as well as wind and weather, are reported, indicating that writers were no longer dependent on their own inexperienced observations, but were consulting portolan maps and portolans and drawing information from the ship's officers as well. The highpoint of this trend is in Sanseverino's narrative of his outward voyage, where he gives details of the wind direction and method of propulsion (sails and oars), distance achieved during different parts of the day, and even some estimates of speed in miles per hour.⁵⁶ It is hard to see how a landsman like

⁵³ Mariano da Siena, *Viaggio in Terra Santa*, ed. D. Moreni (Florence: Stamperia Magheri, 1822).

⁵⁴ Santo Brasca, *Viaggio in Terra Santa*, ed. A.L. Momigliano-Lepschy (Milan, 1966).

⁵⁵ Gabriele Capodilista, 'Itinerario' in *ibid.*, 161–241; Roberto da Sanseverino, *Viaggio in Terra Santa*, ed. G. Maruffi (Bologna: Romagnoli dell'Acqua, 1888; reprint 1969); William Wey, *Itineraries* (London: Roxburghe Club, 1857), 56–152. For a popular account of this pilgrimage: R.J. Mitchell, *The Spring Voyage* (London, Murray, 1964). The relationship between the two Italian accounts is not satisfactorily resolved.

⁵⁶ J.K. Hyde, 'Navigation of the Eastern Mediterranean in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries according to Pilgrim Books', *Papers in Italian Archaeology, 1: The Lancaster Seminar* (British Archaeological Reports, supp. ser. 41, 1978), 521–40.

Sanseverino could have learnt all this unless it was from some kind of ship's log kept on the large pilgrim galleys; the frontiers of literacy seem to have been expanding at sea as well as on land. Timekeeping had a new importance, especially at sea, and all the fifteenth-century writers use a twenty-four hour system, counting in the Italian manner from sunset to sunset. In this respect, as in others, Martoni is the transitional figure, his occasional references to times of the day being generally in terms of the canonical hours of vespers and tierce; Mariano da Siena also falls back on this method of reckoning from time to time. But the prevailing impression in the fifteenth century is of exact knowledge and precision. Sea travel was still intensely uncomfortable, unpredictable, and dangerous, yet the pilgrim books suggest that the Italians had learned to live with the sea with a sense of hope – not confidence – which is appropriate to the dawn of the age of discovery.

Our survey of Italian pilgrim literature has now run through and beyond the period with which this book is concerned. From its narrow viewpoint it suggests three broad stages in the use of literacy up to the mid-fifteenth century. In the first phase, writers tended to accept a stereotype created by earlier tradition and sought to insert their own experience into this pre-existing scheme. Towards the middle of the fourteenth century, the impersonal framework was gradually dissolved into fully personal accounts, of which Niccolò da Poggibonsi's *Libro d'Oltramare* is the normative example. The acceptance that the pilgrim book could not stand outside the stream of time, and that it should therefore be concerned to record the impressions of the passing moment, released a flood of personal observations. The writers of the later fourteenth century were able to express what they saw, thought and felt with much greater freedom than in the past, and in so doing, with varying degrees of self-consciousness, they also project a picture of themselves. The concern with the antique and the appreciation of the picturesque which make their appearance around the turn of the century add new colours but do not alter the underlying shape of the tradition, which extends in two directions. On the one hand there is the application of the mind to specific problems through the assessment of situations like the politico-religious position in the East, and through planning, as in sailing ships or budgeting expenses for journeys. On the other hand, there is the expression of immediate reactions to events through visual description and feeling, reflecting at least an unconscious belief in the value of the here-and-now.

APPENDIX

A NOTE ON SOME MORE RECENT LITERATURE

A number of works relevant to his subject have appeared since Kenneth Hyde wrote this essay. *Toscana e Terrasanta nel Medioevo*, edited by F. Cardini (Florence: Alinea, 1982), contains several articles bearing on the topic. Of these, R. Delfiol, 'Su alcuni problemi codicologico-testuali concernenti le relazioni dei pellegrinaggio fiorentino del

1384' (139–76) relates to the three accounts discussed at some length in Professor Hyde's chapter. Delfiol investigates the very involved manuscript tradition of these accounts. He suggests that one version is probably a compendium which was the joint work of Frescobaldi and Gucci. He also discusses the published texts, considering that of Gargioli the least satisfactory, while F. Poggi's edition (*Viaggio al Monte Sinai di S. Sigoli*, Florence: Tipografia all'insegna di Dante, 1829) is the best for Sigoli's relation. He mentions a number of other editions (for which see also pp. 27–8 of the Jerusalem translation into English, cited above in footnote 25). Other contributions to the volume edited by Cardini include L. Gui, 'La "Dimostrazione dell'Andata del Santo Sepolcro" di Marco de Bartolommeo Rustici fiorentino (1441–2)' (189–233) and G. Pinto, 'I Costi del pellegrinaggio in Terrasanta nei sec. xiv e xv (dai resoconti dei viaggiatori italiani)' (257–84). The last of these has now been supplemented by F. Cardini, 'I Costi del viaggio in Terrasanta di ser Mariano di Nanni, prete senese' in *Studi di storia economica toscana nel medioevo e nel rinascimento in memoria di F. Melis* (Pisa: Pacini, 1987), 87–102. Cardini has also published in English 'Three Florentine Travellers to the Holy Land in 1384–1385' in *Intellectuals and Writers in Fourteenth-century Europe*, edited by P. Boitani (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1986), 191–204.

Toscana e Terrasanta nel Medioevo was reviewed by Eliyahu Ashtor in *Rivista Storica Italiana*, xcvi (1984), 214–18. Ashtor expressed the belief that the usual length of stay for a pilgrim in Palestine was two weeks rather than the four suggested by Pinto. Ashtor died in 1984, but an article by him on 'Venezia e il pellegrinaggio in Terrasanta nel basso medioevo' appeared posthumously in *Archivio Storico Italiano*, cxliiii (1985), 197–223. In a reference to Kenneth Hyde's paper of 1978, Ashtor suggested (215 n) that one ship rarely carried more than one hundred passengers, though he believed that the number of sailors must always have been over a hundred and was sometimes as high as 420. In his opinion the profits made by shipowners from these voyages were not considerable.

