

*In the name of God, The Merciful, the Compassionate;  
bless and preserve our Lord Muhammad, His Kindred,  
and his Companions*

*An Account of the Events that Befell upon  
Certain Journeys*

The writing of this chronicle was begun on Friday  
the 30th of the month of Shawwal, 578 (A.H.)<sup>1</sup>  
[25th of February, 1183] at sea, opposite Jabal Shulayr  
[Sierra Nevada]

may God with His favour grant us safety

[8th of Shawwal to the end of the month of Dhu  
l-Qa'dah 578 = 4th of February to the 27th of March,  
1183.]

AHMAD IBN HASSAN and Muhammad ibn Jubayr left  
Granada – may God preserve it – on their pilgrimage to  
the blessed Hejaz – may God give easement and help and reveal  
His beneficent works – at the first hour of Thursday<sup>2</sup> the 8th  
of Shawwal 578 (A.H.), which fell, according to the foreigners  
[i.e. non-Arabs] on the 3rd of February (1183).

We passed through Jayran [Jaen] that we might despatch  
some business, and left it at the first hour of Monday the 19th  
of the month of Shawwal, being the 14th of February. Our  
first stage from there was to the fortress of al-Qabdhag<sup>3</sup> [Alcau-  
det]. Thence we moved to the fortress of Qabrah [Cabra],  
to the city of Istijah [Ecija], to the fortress of Ushunah [Osuna],  
to Shallabar [Jeliver], to the fortress of Arkush [Arcos], to the  
burgh known as the Burgh of Qashmah<sup>4</sup> [Casma] which is  
a burgh belonging to Madinat Ibn al-Salim [Medina Sidonia],  
and then to the island of Tarif [Tarifa] which we reached on

an easy crossing of the sea to Qasr Masmudah [Alcazar]. Praise be to God.

On the morning of Wednesday the 28th of the month, we removed to Sabtah [Ceuta] where we found a Rumi's Genoese ship about to sail to al-Iskandariyah [Alexandria] by the power of Great and Glorious God, and with His help we embarked; and at midday on Thursday the 29th of the month, or the 24th of February, we set sail with the power and help of God Most High. There is no God but He.

Our course lay along the Andalusian coast, but this we left on Thursday the 6th of Dhu 'l-Qa'dah [3rd of March] when we were opposite Daniyah [Denia]. The morning of Friday the 7th of the month we were off the island of Yabisah [Iviza], on Saturday the island of Majorca, and on Sunday we were off Minorca. From Ceuta to Minorca is eight *majari*; a *majra* being one hundred miles.<sup>6</sup> We left the coast of this island, and early on the night of Tuesday the 11th of the month, being the 8th of March, the coast of the island of Sardinia all at once appeared before us about a mile or less away. Between the islands of Sardinia and Minorca lie about four hundred miles. It had been a crossing remarkable for its speed.

That night there fell upon us from shoreward a mighty storm with a wind which God Most High released at the time we met the land, but from which He preserved and delivered us. Praise be to Him for that. On the morning of Tuesday a tempest rose and the sea raged, so that we remained hovering off the coast of Sardinia until Wednesday. As we lay in this perilous plight, with all directions locked by the storm and being unable to distinguish the east from the west, God revealed to us a Rumi ship approaching. When it was beside us, we asked whither it was going and were told that it was bound for the island of Sicily and had come from Cartagena in the province of Murcia. Without our knowledge, we had been sailing before this ship on its course; and thereupon we took to following in its wake. God is the Disposer of all things; there is no God but He.

There then rose before us a promontory of Sardinia, but we drew away and approached afresh so that we arrived at another promontory off that coast, called Qusmarkah<sup>7</sup> [Cape St. Mark at the north of the Gulf of Oristano], an anchorage well-known to mariners. There, at noon on Wednesday, we anchored, together with the other ship. In this place there are the remains of an ancient building which was described to us as once having been a Jewish habitation. We sailed thence at midday on Sunday the 16th of the month. During our stay in the harbour, we had renewed our supplies of water, wood, and victuals. A Muslim who knew the Rumi tongue had gone down with a party of Rum to the nearest inhabited parts, and we learnt that he had seen a group of Muslim prisoners, about eighty between men and women, being sold in the market. The enemy – may God destroy them – had just returned with them from the sea-coasts of Muslim countries. May God's mercy overtake them. On Friday, the third day after we had anchored there, the lord of the island came to the harbour with a group of cavaliers. The leading Rum in the ship went down and met him, staying long with him before they left and he departed to his dwelling.

We left the other ship at its moorings, some of her people being absent in the town, when a favourable wind arose on the night of Tuesday the 18th of Dhu 'l-Qa'dah, the 15th of March; and in the last quarter of the night, we parted from the coast of Sardinia. It has a long coast, and we had sailed beside it for about two hundred miles. The complete circuit of the island, as we were told, is more than five hundred miles. God smoothed our way and delivered us from its seas; for they are the most perilous of the journey and at most times cannot be traversed. For this may God be praised.

Early on the night of Wednesday the wind blew with violence upon us, throwing the sea into turmoil and bringing rain and driving it with such force that it was like a shower of arrows. The affair became serious and our distress increased. Waves like mountains came upon us from every side. Thus

we passed the night, filled with despair, but hoping yet for relief in the morning to lighten something of what had fallen on us. But day came, it was Wednesday the 19th of Dhu 'l-Qa'dah, with increasing dread and anguish. The sea raged more, the horizon blackened, and the wind and rain rose to a tumult so that the sails of the ship could not withstand it and recourse was had to the small sails. The wind caught one of these and tore it, and broke the spar to which the sails are fixed and which they call the *qariyah* [from the Gr. *Xepota*, 'a mast']. Despair then overcame our spirits and the hands of the Muslims were raised in supplication to Great and Glorious God. We remained in this state all that day, and only when night had fallen did there come some abatement, so that we moved throughout it with great speed under bare masts, and came that day opposite the island of Sicily.

We spent that night, the night of Thursday, wavering between hope and despair, but with the break of day, God spread His mercy so that the clouds dispersed, the wind abated, the sun shone and the sea was calmed. Men rejoiced, conviviality returned, and despair departed. Praise be to God who showed us the greatness of His power and restored us with His gracious mercy and bounteous compassion. Praise in requital for His grace and favour.

On that morning of Thursday the coast of Sicily appeared to us. We had already passed the greater part of it, and but little remained. Rumi sea-captains who were present, and Muslims who had gone through journeys and storms at sea, all agreed that they had never in their lives seen such a tempest. The description of it diminishes the reality.

Between the coasts of Sardinia and Sicily lie about four hundred miles. We moved along the coast of Sicily for more than two hundred miles, and then went back and forth beside it, for the wind had fallen. On the afternoon of Friday the 21st of the month, we sailed from the place where we had anchored, and early that night we parted from the land. By Saturday

morning we were far distant from it. There then appeared to us the mountain which has the volcano. It is a huge mountain, rising into the skies and clothed in snow. We were told that in fine weather it can be seen across the sea for more than a hundred miles.

We now took to the main sea. The nearest land we hoped to meet was the island of Agritish [Crete]. It is a Rumi island, owing allegiance to the ruler of Constantinople, and between it and Sicily lie seven hundred miles. God by His grace is the Guarantor of help and easement. The length of this island of Crete is about three hundred miles. On the night of Tuesday the 25th of the month (of Dhu 'l-Qa'dah), the 22nd of March, according to reckoning we were moving along its coast, but we could not see it. In the morning we parted from it, aiming for our destination. Between this island and Alexandria lie six hundred miles or thereabouts. And on the morning of Wednesday the 26th there appeared the mainland connected with Alexandria, and which is known as Barr al-Gharb [Land of the West]. We sailed along it to a place called, we were told, Jaza'ir al-Hamam [The Islands of the Doves].<sup>9</sup> We were also told that between this place and Alexandria lie about four hundred miles. We sailed on with this coast to our right.

On the morning of Saturday the 29th of the month, God gave us the good news of our safety with the appearance of the lighthouse of Alexandria some twenty miles away. Praise be to God for that; praise due for the abundance of His favour and generous works. At the end of the fifth hour of that day we anchored in the harbour of the town, and then went down to the shore. To God we shall call for help, by His grace, in what remains (of our journey). Thirty days we had been at sea, and we had gone ashore on the 31st, for we had embarked on Thursday the 29th of Shawwal and disembarked on Saturday the 29th of Dhu 'l-Qa'dah, the 26th of March. Praise be to God for the help and easement He bestowed. And Him, exalted is He, we petition to complete His benefactions in

bringing us to our longed-for aim, and speedily restoring us, happily and in health, to our native land. He indeed is the Benefactor. There is no God but He.

For lodging we stayed at an inn<sup>10</sup> known as the Inn of the Coppermiths near to the soap-works.

while hands were thrust into their waistbands in search of what

## *The Month of Dhu 'l-Hijjah of the Same Year*

[28th of March-25th of April, 1183]

THE first day of the month was a Sunday and the day after our arrival in Alexandria. The day of our landing, one of the first things we saw was the coming on board of the agents of the Sultan to record all that had been brought in the ship. All the Muslims in it were brought forward one by one, and their names and descriptions, together with the names of their countries, recorded. Each was questioned as to what merchandise or money he had, that he might pay *zakat*,<sup>11</sup> without any enquiry as to what portion of it had been in their possession for a complete year and what had not. Most of them were on their way to discharge a religious duty and had nothing but the (bare) provisions for the journey. But they were compelled to pay the *zakat* without being questioned as to what had been possessed by them for the complete year and what had not.

Ahmad ibn Hasan of our number was called down to be questioned as to the news of the west [i.e. from Spain and North Africa] and as to the ship's cargo. Under watch he was in turn conducted first to the Sultan, then to the Qadi, then to the officials of the Customs, and then to a group of the Sultan's suite, and after being questioned concerning everything, and his statements recorded, he was released.

The Muslims were then ordered to take their belongings, and what remained of their provisions, to the shore, where there were attendants responsible for them and for carrying to the Customs all that they had brought ashore. There they were called one by one, and the possessions of each were produced. The Customs was packed to choking. All their goods, great and small, were searched and confusedly thrown together, while hands were thrust into their waistbands in search of what

might be within. The owners were then put to oath whether they had aught else not discovered. During all this, because of the confusion of hands and the excessive throng, many possessions disappeared. After this scene of abasement and shame, for which we pray God to recompense us amply, they [the pilgrims] were allowed to go.

There is no doubt that this is one of the matters concealed from the great Sultan known as Salah al-Din [Saladin]. If he heard of it, from what is related of his justice and leanings to pity, he would end it. But God is sufficient to the Faithful in this unhappy case, and (in the life to come) they will pay the *zakat* with the happiest heart. In the lands of this man [Saladin], we found nothing bad that merits mention save this affair, which was provoked by the officials of the Customs.

*A note on some of the features and antiquities of Alexandria*

First there is the fine situation of the city, and the spaciousness of its buildings. We have never seen a town with broader streets, or higher structures, or one more ancient and beautiful. Its markets also are magnificent. A remarkable thing about the construction of the city is that the buildings below the ground are like those above it and are even finer and stronger, because the waters of the Nile wind underground beneath the houses and alleyways. The wells are connected, and flow into each other. We observed many marble columns and slabs of height, amplitude, and splendour such as cannot be imagined. You will find in some of its avenues columns that climb up to and choke the skies, and whose purpose and the reason for whose erection none can tell. It was related to us that in ancient times they supported a building reserved for philosophers and the chief men of the day. God knows best, but they seem to be for the purpose of astronomical observations.

One of the greatest wonders that we saw in this city was the lighthouse which Great and Glorious God had erected by the

hands of those who were forced to such labour as 'a sign to those who take warning from examining the fate of others' [Koran XV, 75] and as a guide to voyagers, for without it they could not find the true course to Alexandria. It can be seen for more than seventy miles, and is of great antiquity. It is most strongly built in all directions and competes with the skies in height. Description of it falls short, the eyes fail to comprehend it, and words are inadequate, so vast is the spectacle.

We measured one of its four sides and found it to be more than fifty arms' lengths. It is said that in height it is more than one hundred and fifty *qamah* [one *qamah* = a man's height]. Its interior is an awe-inspiring sight in its amplitude, with stairways and entrances and numerous apartments, so that he who penetrates and wanders through its passages may be lost. In short, words fail to give a conception of it. May God not let it cease to be an affirmation of Islam and (for that creed) preserve it. At its summit is a mosque having the qualities of blessedness, for men are blessed by praying therein. On Thursday the 5th of Dhu 'l-Hijjah, we went up to this blessed mosque and prayed in it. We saw such marvels of construction as cannot faithfully be described.

Amongst the glories of this city, and owing in truth to the Sultan, are the colleges<sup>12</sup> and hostels erected there for students and pious men from other lands. There each may find lodging where he might retreat, and a tutor to teach him the branch of learning he desires, and an allowance to cover all his needs. The care of the Sultan for these strangers from afar extends to the assigning of baths in which they may cleanse themselves when they need, to the setting up of a hospital for the treatment of those of them who are sick, and to the appointment of doctors to attend to them. At their disposal are servants charged with ministering to them in the manner prescribed both as regards treatment and sustenance. Persons have also been appointed to it who may visit those of the strangers who are too modest to come to the hospital, and who can thus

describe their condition to the doctors, who would then be answerable for their cure.

One of the Sultan's most generous acts was the allotting of two loaves daily for each of the Moorish *imna' al-sabil* [sons of the road],<sup>12</sup> whatever their number; and for the daily distribution he appointed a person he trusted. Every day two thousand loaves or more, according to the lesser or greater number (of beneficiaries), were regularly distributed. (To meet this) there was his own personal *awqaf* [charitable endowments], apart from what he allotted for the purpose from the *zakat al-'ain* [zakat on gold and silver]. He was insistent with those in charge of this that when the fixed sums were inadequate, they should draw upon his private purse.

As for his people in this city, they live in the height of ease and comfort. No tax is exacted from them and no revenues accrue to the Sultan himself in this city save the *awqaf*, which are tied and devoted by his order to these purposes, and the tribute of the Jews and Christians. Of the revenues of the *zakat al-'ain* in particular, he receives but three eighths, the other five eighths being for the object described. The Sultan who established these praiseworthy laws and prescribed these generous – although not wholly applied – decrees is Salah al-Din [Saladin] Abu 'l-Muzaffar Yusuf ibn Ayyub. May God bless him with His peace and succour.

One of the strangest things that befell the strangers was that some persons who sought to draw near to the Sultan with advice had declared that the greater number of them received a ration of bread which they did not need as means of sustenance, since they would not have come save with provisions enough. This counsel almost had its effect. But one day, when the Sultan had gone out from the city to make an inspection, he met a group of men who had been cast up from the desert adjoining Tripoli and who were disfigured by hunger and thirst. He asked them about their journey, and enquired what they had with them, and they answered that they were on their way to the Sacred House of God [The Ka'abah in Mecca].

They had come overland (they said) and had suffered the tribulations of the desert. Saladin replied, 'Even if these men, after enduring the pathless desert and sustaining the hardships they encountered, had arrived bringing each his own weight in gold and silver, they should still partake of and not be denied the usage we have adopted for them. I marvel at those who traduce such as these, and who seek to gain our favour by trying to prevent what, in faithfulness to Great and Glorious God, we feel to be our duty.' The memorable acts of the Sultan, his efforts for justice, and his stands in defence of Islamic lands are too numerous to count.

Another of the remarkable features of this city is that people are as active in their affairs at night as they are by day. It has more mosques than any other city if Islam, so much so that men's estimates of their number vary. Some count more, some less, the former reckoning up to twelve thousand, the latter a smaller figure without being precise, although some say eight thousand. There are others who give different figures, but in short they are most numerous, there being four or five in one place and sometimes they even adjoin each other. Each has its own imam with a stipend from the Sultan, and some of them receive monthly five Egyptian dinars which is ten mu'mini;<sup>14</sup> others receive more and some less. This is but one of the great merits of the Sultan amongst others it would take too long to describe, and one of the benefactions too many to count.

We left Alexandria by the grace and help of God Most High on the morning of Sunday the 8th of Dhu 'l-Hijjah, the 3rd of April. Our first stage was to a place called Damanhur, a walled town in a large plain which extends from Alexandria to Misr. This plain [the delta] is wholly cultivated, and is covered by the Nile when in flood. Right and left are innumerable villages. The next day, Monday, we crossed the Nile at a place called Sa in a ferry boat, and came to a place called Birmanh. It is a large village, with a market and all

conveniences. Early on the morning of Tuesday, which was the Festival of the Sacrifice<sup>16</sup> of the year 578, we shared in the prayers in a place called Tandatah, a large and populous village, where we observed a vast concourse being addressed by the preacher in an eloquent and comprehensive discourse. Our way then took us to a place named Subk, where we passed the night. That day we had passed a pleasant place called Malij. All along the road were continuous cultivations and orderly villages.

Early on Wednesday morning we removed, and came to the best village we had yet passed through. It is called Qalyub, and is six miles from Cairo, with fine bazaars and a large congregational mosque, superbly built. After that came Munyah, also a fine place, and from there we moved to Cairo, the Sultan's magnificent and extensive city. From there we passed to Misr [old Cairo] the protected of God, and entered it, following the afternoon prayers, on Wednesday the 11th of Dhu 'l-Hijjah, the 6th of April. May God accord us good fortune in this city, and complete on our behalf His beneficent works by bringing us to our longed-for end, and in His power and strength, depriving us not of help and easement. Verily whatever He wishes He can accomplish.

At daybreak on Wednesday we crossed the other branch of the Nile, also by ferry boat, at a place called Dajwah. At Misr, we lodged at the inn of Abu 'l-Thana' in the Lane of the Lamps beside the mosque of 'Amr ibn al-'As, God's blessings upon him. Our room was a large one at the door of the inn.

*A note on Misr<sup>16</sup> and Cairo and some of their wonderful monuments*

We shall begin by mentioning the monuments and blessed shrines, which for their beneficence are preserved by Great and Glorious God. Of such is the great tomb in Cairo in which is kept the head of Husayn, the son of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib,<sup>17</sup> may God hold them in favour. It is in a silver casket and over it has been built a mausoleum so superb as to be beyond

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description and beyond the powers of the mind to comprehend. It is covered with various kinds of brocades, and surrounded by white candles that are like large columns; smaller ones are placed, for the most part, in candlesticks of pure silver and of gilt. Silver lamps are hung from it and its whole upper part is encircled with golden spheres like apples, skilfully executed to resemble a garden and holding our eyes in spell by its beauty. There too are various kinds of marble tessellated with coloured mosaics of rare and exquisite workmanship such as one cannot imagine nor come near to describing. The entrance to this garden [mausoleum] is by a mosque like to it in grace and elegance, with walls that are all marble in the style we have just described. To the right and left of the mausoleum are two chambers of exactly the same style and both leading into it. A brocade covering of exquisite workmanship is hung over all.

A strange thing we noticed as we entered this blessed mosque was a stone set in the wall which faces him who enters. It is very black and shining, reflecting the image of a man like a new-polished Indian mirror.

We observed men kissing the blessed tomb, surrounding it, throwing themselves upon it, smoothing with their hands the Kiswah [covering] that was over it, moving round it in a surging throng, calling out in vocations, weeping and entreating Glorious God to bless the hallowed dust, and offering up humble supplications such as would melt the heart and split the hardest flint. A solemn thing it was, and an awe-inspiring sight; God granted that we should share in the blessings of that venerable shrine. This is but a flash, a fragment of its description, only indicating what lies beyond; for it does not behave the wise man to apply himself to its description, since he must find himself incapable and incompetent. To be short, I do not believe that in all existence there is a more superb work or more exquisite and wonderful building. May God in His grace and favour sanctify the noble bones that are within it. The night of that day we passed in the cemetery known as

al-Qarafah. This also is one of the wonders of the world for the tombs it contains of prophets – God's benedictions upon them – of the kindred of Muhammad – May God hold them in His favour – of his Companions, of the followers<sup>18</sup> of the Companions, of learned men and ascetics, and of saintly men renowned for their miracles and of wonderful report. We shall describe only those we saw ourselves.

There was the tomb of the son of the prophet Salih; that of Rubil ibn Ya'qub ibn Ishaq ibn Ibrahim [Abraham], Khalil al-Rahman [the Friend of God]<sup>19</sup> – the blessings of God upon them all; that of Asiyah, wife of Far'aun – may God hold her in His favour; the tombs of the kindred of Muhammad – may God hold them in His favour – being fourteen men and five women. Over each of these is a splendid edifice, all being exquisite monuments of wondrous construction. For their care, persons have been appointed who live in them and receive a monthly stipend. It is indeed a sight to marvel at.

*A note on the tombs of the kindred of Muhammad*

*May God hold them in His favour*

The tomb of 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ibn 'Ali – may God hold him in His favour; that of the two sons of Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq – may God hold them in His favour; that of al-Qasim ibn Muhammad ibn Ja'far al-Sadiq ibn Muhammad ibn 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin aforementioned – may God hold them in His favour; the tombs of his sons al-Hasan and al-Husayn – may God hold them in His favour; the tomb of his son 'Abdullah ibn al-Qasim – may God hold him in His favour; that of his son Yahya ibn al-Qasim and that of 'Ali ibn 'Abdullah ibn al-Qasim – may God hold them in His favour; that of his brother 'Isa ibn 'Abdullah – may God hold him in His favour; that of Yahya ibn al-Hasan ibn Zayd ibn al-Hasan – may God hold them in His favour; that of Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah ibn Muhammad al-Baqir ibn 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin ibn al-Husayn ibn 'Ali – may God hold them in His favour; that of

Ja'far ibn Muhammad of the stem of 'Ali ibn al-Husayn – may God hold them in His favour. We were told that he was the stepson of al-Malik – may God hold him in His favour.

*The tombs of the Sharifat<sup>20</sup> [noble ladies] of the House of 'Ali*

*May God hold them in His favour*

The tomb of the noble lady Umm Kulthum, daughter of al-Qasim ibn Muhammad ibn Ja'far – may God hold them in His favour; that of the noble lady Zaynab, daughter of Yahya ibn Zayd ibn 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ibn 'Ali – may God hold them in His favour; that of Umm Kulthum, daughter of Muhammad ibn Ja'far al-Sadiq – may God hold them in His favour; that of the noble lady Umm 'Abdullah ibn al-Qasim ibn Muhammad – may God hold them in His favour. This describes only the tombs of those noble 'Aluwiyah [descendants of 'Ali] that our eyes fell upon, but there are more. It was told to us that among them is the honoured tomb of Miriam, daughter of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib – may God hold him in His favour – and although this is famous, we did not see it.

The names of the occupants of these venerable tombs we discovered from the records engraved over them and the unbroken oral traditions which confirm them, but God best knows. Over each of these is a splendid edifice, all being most exquisite monuments of wondrous construction. For their care, persons have been appointed who live in them and receive a monthly stipend. It is indeed a sight to marvel on.

*A note on the tombs of some of the Companions of the Prophet – may God bless and preserve them – in al-Qarafah and the tombs of the followers of the Companions, imams, learned men, ascetics and saintly men illustrious for their miracles – may God hold them all in His favour*

The writer must be absolved from judging the truth of all this, for he did but copy the names he found inscribed upon

the epitaphs, but, in short, their credibility prevails – if it pleases Great and Glorious God.

The Tomb of Mu'adh ibn Jabal – may God hold him in His favour; that of 'Uqbah ibn 'Amir al-Juhani the standard bearer of the Prophet – may God bless and preserve him; that of the possessor of the mantle of the Prophet – may God bless and preserve him; that of Abu 'l-Hasan, the jeweller of the Prophet of God – may God bless and preserve him; that of Sariyat al-Jabal – may God hold him in His favour; that of Muhammad son of Abu Bakr the Faithful – may God hold them both in His favour; the tomb of his sons – may God hold them in His favour; that of Ahmad son of Abu Bakr the Faithful – may God hold him in His favour; that of Asma' daughter of Abu Bakr the Faithful – may God hold them both in His favour; that of the son of Zubayr ibn al-'Awwam; that of 'Abdullah son of Hudhafah al-Sahmi, Companion of the Prophet – may God bless and preserve them; that of ibn Halimah the foster-brother of the Prophet of God – may God bless and preserve them.

*The tombs of the imams, learned men, and ascetics*

May God hold them all in His favour

The tomb of the Shafi'i imam – may God hold him in His favour – a shrine superb in beauty and size. Over against it was built a school the like of which has not been made in this country, there being nothing more spacious or more finely built. He who walks around it will conceive it to be itself a separate town. Beside it is a bath and other conveniences, and building continues to this day. The measureless expenditure on it is controlled by the sheik, imam, ascetic, and man of learning called Najm al-Din al-Khabushani. The Sultan of these lands, Saladin, bounteously pays all for this purpose saying: 'Be lavish in splendour and elegance; ours it will be to provide all.' Glory to Him who made him Salah Dimihî ['the well

being of his religion] like his name. We visited this man Khabushani, to be blessed by his prayers, for we had heard of him in Andalusia. We came upon him at his mosque in Cairo in the closet in which he lives inside the mosque; and a narrow closet it is. He prayed for us and we departed. Of all the men of Egypt, we saw none like him.

There is also the tomb of al-Muzani, the friend of the Shafi'i imam – may God hold him in His favour; of Ashab the friend of Malik – may God hold him in His favour; of 'Abd al-Rahman ibn al-Qasim, the friend of Malik – may God hold them both in His favour; of Asbagh, the friend of Malik – may God hold them both in His favour; of the qadi 'Abd al-Wahhab – may God hold him in His favour; of 'Abdullah ibn 'Abd al-Hakam and Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah ibn 'Abd al-Hakam – may God hold them in His favour; of the learned jurist-prudent, preacher, and ascetic Abu 'l-Hasan al-Dinawari – may God hold him in His favour; of Bunan al-'Abid [the pious] – may God hold him in His favour; of the pious, godly, and ascetic man known as Sahib al-Ibriq [He of the Ewer], whose story is so wondrous for its miracles; of Abu Muslim al-Khawlani – may God hold him in His favour; of the pious lady known as al-'Ayna' – may God hold her in His favour; of Rudhabari – may God hold him in His favour; of Muhammad ibn Mas'ud ibn Muhammad ibn Harun al-Rashid, known as al-Sabi' [the Ceutan] – may God hold him in His favour; of the pious Muqbil, the Ethiopian – may God hold him in His favour; of Dhu 'l-Nun ibn Ibrahim, the Egyptian – may God hold him in His favour; of the qadi al-Anbari, where lies the Speaker who, when placed in his niche, was heard to say, 'O Lord cause me to alight a blessed lighting, and Thou art the best cause to alight' [Koran XXIII, 29] – may God hold him in His favour; of the bride of whom is recorded the miracle at the time of her first unveiling before her husband: nothing stranger than it has ever been heard; of the silent one who is said never to have spoken forty years; of al-'Asafiri; of 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Ahmad ibn 'Ali ibn al-Hasan al-Khawarizmi; of

the jurisprudent and excellent preacher al-Jawhari and opposite him those tombs of his companions – may God hold them in His favour. The tomb of Shuqran, sheik of Dhu 'l-Nun the Egyptian; of the pious al-Aqta' al-Maghribi; of the Koran reader Warsh, and of Shayban al-Ra'i. But the venerable shrines in the place are more than can properly be recorded and numbered, and we have but mentioned those we were able to see.

South of al-Qarafah is a plain known as the place of the martyrs' tombs. There lie those who were martyred with Satiyah – may God hold them in His favour; this plain appears to the eye to be covered with mounds like the mounds of graves that have no monuments over them.

Al-Qarafah is remarkable for being all built with mosques and inhabited shrines in which lodge strangers, learned men, the good and the poor. The subsidy for each place comes monthly from the Sultan; and likewise is it for the theological colleges [*imadris*] in Misr and Cairo. We were assured that the cost of all this exceeds two thousand Egyptian dinars, or four thousand mu'nini, a month. It was told us that the mosque of 'Amr ibn al-'As has a daily income of about thirty Egyptian dinars, which is spent on benefits connected with it and the stipends of its officials, custodians, imams, and readers.

Amongst the things we saw in Cairo, were four congregational mosques:<sup>21</sup> superbly built and of beautiful design, as well as many other mosques. In one of these congregational mosques one day the preacher delivered the *khutbah* according to the (orthodox) Sunni practice and included in it invocations for the Companions of the Prophet – may God hold them in His favour, for the followers of the Companions and others, for the 'Mothers of the Faithful'<sup>22</sup> wives of the Prophet – may God bless and preserve them, and for his two noble uncles Hamzah and al-'Abbas – may God hold them in His favour. He discoursed so sweetly and gave so moving a sermon as to humble the hardest heart and cause the tearless eye to flow.

He came to the *khutbah* dressed in black according to the 'Abbaside usage.<sup>23</sup> His costume was a black *burdah* topped by a *taylasan*<sup>24</sup> of fine black cloth which in the Maghrib we call *ihram*, and a black turban, and he was girded with a sword. When he had ascended the pulpit, at the first step, he struck it with the end of his scabbard a blow which those present heard as it were a call to silence. He did it again when halfway up, and a third time at the end of his climb. He then saluted the congregation right and left, standing between two black banners, white-checked, that were planted at the top of the pulpit. His invocations on that day were to the 'Abbaside Imam, Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad al-Nasir li din llah ibn al-imam Abu Muhammad al-Hasan al-Mustadi' billah ibn al-imam Abu 'l-Muzaffar Yusuf al-Mustanjid billah, and then to the reviver of his dynasty,<sup>25</sup> Abu 'l-Muzaffar Yusuf ibn Ayyub Salah al-Din [Saladin], and then to the Sultan's brother and heir to the throne, Abu Bakr Sayf al-Din [Safadin].

We also looked upon the building of the citadel, an impregnable fortress adjoining Cairo which the Sultan thinks to take as his residence, extending its walls until it enfolds the two cities of Misr and Cairo. The forced labourers on this construction, and those executing all the skilled services and vast preparations such as sawing the marble, cutting the huge stones, and digging the fosse that girdles the walls noted above – a fosse hollowed out with pick-axes from the rock to be a wonder amongst wonders of which trace may remain – were the foreign Rumi prisoners whose numbers were beyond computation. There was no cause for any but them to labour on this construction. The Sultan has constructions in progress in other places and on these too the foreigners are engaged so that those of the Muslims who might have been used in this public work are relieved of it all, no work of that nature falling on any of them.

Another of the things we saw, doing honour to the Sultan, was the *maristan* [hospital] in the city of Cairo. It is a palace, goodly for its beauty and spaciousness. This benefaction he

seek shelter or live in them. He is helped in this by grants from the public treasury.

Amongst the beneficent acts that proclaim his care for all the affairs of the Muslims was his ordering the building of a school which he assigned to those preachers of the Book of Great and Glorious God who teach exclusively the children of the poor and orphans. For their needs he grants an adequate allowance.

Another of the Sultan's benefactions, and a monument of enduring usefulness to Muslims, are the bridges he has begun to construct seven miles west of Misr at the end of a causeway that begins at high-Nile beside Misr. This causeway is like a mountain stretched along the ground, over which it runs for a distance of six miles until it reaches the aforesaid bridges. These have about forty arches of the biggest type used in bridges, and reach the desert which extends from them to Alexandria. It is one of the most excellent measures taken by a prudent king in readiness against any sudden onslaught by an enemy coming through the breach of Alexandria at the time of the Nile's overflow, when the countryside is in flood and the passage of soldiers thereby prevented. He prepared this as a passage-way for any time it may be needed. May God by His favour avert from the lands of the Muslims all apprehension and danger. To the Egyptians, the construction of these bridges is a warning of a coming event, for they see in it an augury that the Almohades\* will conquer it and the eastern regions. But God is the Knower of His hidden affairs. There is no God but He.

Near to these new bridges are the ancient pyramids, of miraculous construction and wonderful to look upon, four-sided, like huge pavilions rearing into the skies; two in particular choke the firmament. The length of one of them from one angle to another is three hundred and sixty-six paces. They have been built with immense hewn rocks, arranged above each other in an awesome fashion and wonderfully joined having nothing between them that (like cement) would serve to bind them. Their tips seem to the eye to be pointed, but it

made so that he might deserve a heavenly reward, and to acquire merit. He appointed as intendant a man of science with whom he placed a store of drugs and whom he empowered to use the potions and apply them in their various forms. In the rooms of this palace were placed beds, fully appointed, for lying patients. At the disposal of the intendant are servants whose duty it is, morning and evening, to examine the conditions of the sick, and to bring them the food and potions that befit them.

Facing this establishment is another specially for women, and they also have persons to attend them. A third which adjoins them, a large place, has rooms with iron windows, and it has been taken as a place of confinement for the insane. They also have persons who daily examine their condition and give them what is fitting for them. All these matters the Sultan oversees, examining and questioning, and demanding the greatest care and attention to them. In Misr there is another hospital of precisely the same model.

Between Misr and Cairo is the great mosque which takes its name from Abu 'l-'Abbas Ahmad ibn Tulun. It is one of the old congregational mosques, of elegant architecture, and of large proportions. The Sultan made it a retreat for the strangers from the Maghrib [Western part of Barbary and Spain], where they might live and receive lectures; and for their support he granted a monthly allowance. A curious thing, told us by one of their prominent men, was that the Sultan had entrusted to them their own management, and allows no other hand over them. They themselves produce their own leader, whose orders they obey and to whom they appeal in sudden contingency. They live in peace and satisfaction, devoted exclusively to the worship of their Lord, and finding, in the favour of the Sultan, the greatest help to the good on whose path they are set.

There is no congregational or ordinary mosque, no mausoleum built over a grave, nor hospital, nor theological college, where the bounty of the Sultan does not extend to all who

may be that the ascent to them is possible with danger and difficulty, and that their pointed tops may be found to be broad and level. If men sought to tear them down they must fail. There is dispute concerning them, some saying that they are the tombs of 'Ad and his sons; others have different views. To be short, none but Great and Glorious God can know their story.

One of the two large pyramids has a door, up to which one climbs a *qamāh* or more from the ground, and through which entry is made to a large chamber about fifty spans wide and about the same in length. Inside that chamber is a long hollow block of marble resembling what is commonly called *al bilāh* [the pillar], and which is said to be a tomb. God best knows the truth of this. Below the large pyramid is another which from one angle to another measures one hundred and forty paces. Below this smaller pyramid are five smaller ones, three contiguous and two nearby and connected.

Near to these pyramids at about a bow-shot's distance, is a strange figure of stone [the Sphinx] rising up like a minaret in the form of a man of fearsome aspect. Its face is to the pyramids and it has its back to the qiblah where the Nile falls and (is called) Abu 'l-Ahwal [the Father of Dread].\*

In the city of Misr is a congregational mosque named after 'Amr ibn al-'As – may God hold him in His favour – who has also another mosque in Alexandria which is the Friday place of worship for the Malikites [a sect of the orthodox Sunni Muslims]. In Misr too are the remains of the destruction caused by the fire that occurred during the revolution at the time of the break-up of the 'Ubaydin [Fatimid] dynasty in the year 564 [1169]. Most of the city has been restored, and buildings now adjoin each other without intermission. It is a large city, and the ancient relics to be seen in and about it attest the size of its former boundaries.

\* Ibn Jubayr is uncharacteristically careless in his description of the pyramids. For example there are six not five smaller pyramids, and the Sphinx faces the Nile not the pyramids.

On the west bank of the Nile, which runs between the two (cities), is a large and important burgh with fine buildings called al-Jizah [Gizah]. Every Sunday it holds a large market where many congregate. Between it and Misr is an island [Roda] with fine houses and commanding belvederes, which is a resort for entertainment and diversion. Between this island and Misr is a canal from the Nile [the Grand Canal of Cairo, now a street], which lies along its length about a mile and has no outlet. On this island is a congregational mosque in which the *khutbah* is delivered.

Beside this mosque is the Nilometer, which measures the Nile's increase at the time of its yearly flooding. The beginning is expected in the month of June, the maximum in August, and the ending in the beginning of October. This measuring instrument is a white octagonal column of marble set in a place which confines the water as it flows into it. It is divided into twenty-two cubits [a cubit = a little over 20 inches], subdivided into twenty-four parts called 'fingers'. If the flood with them reaches the point where the water submerges it nineteen cubits, that, according to their thinking, would be the limit for giving a good year, but the submersion is often deep throughout the flood. The medium they consider to be seventeen cubits, which they deem to be better than the excess described above.

The Sultan is entitled to a land-tax in Egypt when the overflow is sixteen cubits and above. On this, he who daily watches for the increase gives the good news. The increase on the graduations of cubits, as described, is notified daily until the full level is reached. If it should be less than sixteen cubits, the Sultan will that year receive no tribute and no land-tax.<sup>27</sup>

We were told that in Gizah is the tomb of Ka'b al-Ahbar – may God hold him in His favour. On the highest point of Gizah are marble stones from which crocodiles have been shaped, and it is said that because of them no crocodiles appear on the banks of the Nile three miles above or below them. God best knows the truth of this.

Another of the generous deeds of this Sultan close to God

Most High, and of the memorials he has left in happy remembrance of him both in religion and in the world, was his annulling of the customs duty imposed as a tax on pilgrims during the 'Ubaydin [Fatimid] dynasty. The pilgrims had suffered distress from its harsh exaction and were much wasted by it, and felt wronged by this humbling and crushing device. At times there came some who had with them no more than the bare cost of the journey, or had not even this provision, but they were compelled to pay the fixed tax, which was seven and a half Egyptian dinars, or fifteen mu'ini dinars, a head. Those who could not suffered the most painful punishment at 'Aydhah, which city is like its name without the 'y'. [Dropping the 'y' in 'Aydhah gives *'adhab*, meaning 'punishment'.] Among the various inflictions devised was hanging by the testicles, or such foul acts. May God protect us from the abuse of His decrees.

At Jiddah there were similar tortures and worse for him who had not paid the dues at 'Aydhah, and whose name had arrived without bearing a mark as having paid. But this Sultan abolished the accursed impost, and to fill its place, provided foods and other things, allotting to this purpose the tribute of a certain place and making certain that it all arrived in the Hejaz, since the dues in question had been taken in the name of provisions for Mecca and Medina – may God render them prosperous. Thus did he make a most happy reform, lightening the way of the pilgrim, who had been abandoned, with no one to whom he could turn. God, at the hands of this just Sultan, was sufficient to deliver the Muslims from grievous case and a most painful state. Thanks should follow to him from all who believe that the pilgrimage to the sacred mosque (in Mecca) is one of the five fundamental pillars of Islam; until (his name) shall be spread throughout all lands; and in all countries and all regions prayers should be offered up for him. God who rewards all who do good, and whose power is great, will not fail to reward one who wrought so worthily.

Such was the impost in the lands of Egypt, besides the other

taxes on everything bought and sold, great or small, to the point of paying tax for drinking the Nile water, and other things besides. This infamous exaction the Sultan abolished, and spread justice and enlarged security. Indeed, such is his justice, and the safety he has brought to his high-roads that men in his lands can go about their affairs by night and from its darkness apprehend no awe that should deter them. Such were the affairs of men that we saw in Misr and Alexandria as described above.