Travelling to the Holy Land in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries: a Study in the History of Everyday Life

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To begin with, I will try to give a general, broad-based definition of travelling. I understand travelling as moving long distances in a geographical space to destinations (countries, settlements, locations, etc.) which are unexplored by the travellers or poorly known to them. Travelling is a phenomenon outside the everyday, it is meant to interrupt the daily life, cross cultural boundaries, go beyond the traveller's own experiences and confront the other and foreign.

Motives for travelling can be different – informative, scientific, pious, practical. One can talk about a research or military campaign, religious mission, trade travel, as well as a journey with educational or recreational purposes. The duration of travel may vary but it always necessarily implies a return. According to François Hartog, the author of a study on Odysseus' canonical journey, it is impossible to separate journey and return.[1]

In the Middle Ages, journeys were undertaken with very different purposes, including trade, military enterprises and inspection of possessions. Nevertheless, pilgrimages to Christian shrines were the most popular and venerable type of travelling. There, any movement in geographical space had moral and religious implications. Accordingly, travelling was regarded as moving around the "map" of moral and religious coordinates.[2] Therefore, in case of visiting sacred sites, travelling could lead to increasing the traveller's piety, while in case of visiting non-Christian lands it could become a morally and religiously dubious enterprise and be regarded in a way as an anti-pilgrimage.

Only in the course of time, the symbolic understanding of space disappeared and became substituted by the conception of neutralized geographical

[1] François Hartog, *Memories of Odysseus: Frontier Tales from Ancient Greece* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

[2] See, for example, Yuri M. Lotman, "O Poniatii Geograficheskogo Prostranstva v Russkih Srednevekovyh Tekstah," [On the notion of geographic space in Russian medieval texts], in *Semiosfera. Kultura i Vzryv. Vnutri mysliashih mirov. Statii. Issledovaniya. Zametki* (Saint Petersburg: Isskustvo Spb, 2000), 297-303.

space. Travelling in the late Middle Ages was not any more defined by spiritual but pragmatic values, as well as striving for world exploration and aspirations for new knowledge and experiences.[3]

I will focus on the history of the crusades, particularly on travels to the Holy Land in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In my opinion, this very epoch fully revealed the notion of *homo viator*.[4] In the age of the crusades, all the Latin West was enthralled with the idea of travelling. The stable medieval society developed a significant sense of mobility and large numbers of people extended the borders of their familiar world by exploring previously unknown space. Which challenges and obstacles lay in wait on their way? What material difficulties did they encounter in their travels? How did they perceive space and what technologies did they use to explore it? These are the questions that this paper intends to study.

For the study of these problems I will use accounts of pilgrimages to the Holy Land from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, such as the itineraries of Saewulf, Theodoricus, Turnhout and John of Würzburg, among others.[5] This type of sources is primarily centred on maritime travels to the Holy Land and mostly gives information regarding the names of Greek islands and towns of the Near East, as well as the Palestinian centres of pilgrimages such as Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth, along with the descriptions of the Christian shrines.[6] Unfortunately, there are very few published travel accounts which offer direct information on travels to the Holy Land undertaken either by single pilgrims or pilgrim groups. However, routes of mass pilgrimages to the Holy Land, and particularly itineraries of military pilgrimages are very well described in the famous chronicles of the crusades.[7] They certainly cannot be regarded as proper

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[3] See Svetlana I. Luchitskaya, "Puteshestvie," [Traveling] in *Slovar srednevekovoi kultury* [Lexicon of Medieval Culture], ed. Aron Y. Gurevich (Moscow: Rospen, 2003), 397-400.

[4] See on this idea Gerhart B. Ladner, "Homo Viator. Medieval Ideas on Alienation and Order," *Speculum* 42/2 (1969): 33-260.

[5] See *Peregrinationes Tres: Saewulf, John of Würzburg, Theodoricus*, ed. R.B.C Huygens, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Medievalis 139 (Turnhout*:* Brepols, 1994); Titus Tobler (ed.), *Descriptiones Terrae Sanctae ex Seculo VIII, IX, XII et XV* (Leipzig: JC Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1874).

[6] See, for example, "Innominatus," in *Descriptiones Terrae Sanctae*, ed. Tobler, 192-223. Scarce references to pilgrims in medieval narrative sources are collected in F. Micheau, "Les Itineraries Maritimes et Continentaux des Pèlerinages vers Jerusalem," in *Occident et Orient au Xème Siècle*, Actes du IX Congrès de la Société des Historiens Médiévistes de l'Enseignement Supériuer Public, Dijon, 2-4 Juin 1978 (Paris: Publications de l'Université de Dijon, 1979), 79-104.

[7] On pilgrimages during this time see Edmond-René Labande, "Recherches sur les Pèlerins dans l'Europe des XI-XIII ss.," *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévales* 1(Poitiers: Université de Poitiers, 1957) : 7-36 and *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévales* 3(Poitiers: Université de Poitiers, 1962) : 339-349. Aryeh Graboïs insisted on differentiating between pilgrimages and crusades and researched whether crusades impeded or contributed to the development of pilgrimages. See: Aryeh Graboïs, *Le Pèlerine Occidental en Terre Sainte au Moyen Âge* (Brussels: De Boeck, 1998). On pilgrimages to the Holy Land in the time of the crusades,

travel accounts, but have a large amount of valuable information about how medieval people transcended space on their way to the Holy Sepulcher.[8] Hervé Martin wrote that the chroniclers are more subjected to stereotypes as compared to travellers who left vivid and accurate accounts of countries they passed through.[9] However, it is the border position between two different genres – chronicles and travel accounts, which makes the chronicles of the crusades, especially the ones which were written by eyewitnesses, so special.[10]

Another type of sources valuable for the chosen subject is represented by the *directoria* or *passagia* describing the crossing of the Mediterranean Sea. In this instance, we shall turn to Pseudo-Brocardus,[11] who travelled through Asia and Africa and presented a project for a crusade to Philip the Fair in 1332, entitled *Directorium ad Passagium Faciendum*.

When reconstructing the everyday life of crusaders in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries with the help of chronicles and travel accounts we will keep in mind that these descriptions reflect certain socio-cultural perceptions. Writers saw and documented the information suggested by their culture. Therefore, I will not talk as much about realities of the travellers' everyday lives as about the perception of these realities by medieval people.[12]

Let us turn to the accounts of chroniclers and pilgrims. With their help we are able to reconstruct to a certain extent the vicissitudes of a pilgrimage, espe-

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see Reinhold Röhricht, *Die Deutschen im Heiligen Land: Chronologisches Verzeichnis derjenigen Deutschen, welche als Jerusalem Pilger und Kreuzfahrer sicher nachzuweisen oder wahrscheinlich anzusehen sind (ca. 650-1291)* (Innsbruck: Wagner'schen Universitäts-Buchhandlung, 1894). This edition presents all German pilgrimages from the seventh to the thirteenth century, with a particular attention given to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Paul Riant made a similar list of Scandinavian pilgrims in his *Expeditions et Pèlerinages des Scandinaves en Terre Sainte au Temps des Croisades* (Paris: Laine et Harvard, 1865).

[8] Michail A. Zaborov defined the genre of these chronicles as sources combining travel notes, epistolary materials and documents. See Michail A. Zaborov, *Vvedenie v Istoriografiu Krestovyh Pohodov (Latinskaya Chronografia XI-XIII vv.)* [Introduction to the Historiography of the Crusades (Latin Chronicles, XI-XIII centuries)] (Moscow: Nauka, 1966), 271.

[9] Martin Hervé*, Mentalités Médiévales*, *XIe-XVe siècle* (Paris: PUF, 1996).

[10] It seems that the authors themselves found it difficult to define the genre of their works and hesitated between *itinerarium* and *profectio*. See Peter Tudebode, *Historia de Hierosolymitano itinere*, tr. John Hugh Hill and Laurita L. Hill (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1974); Odo of Deuil, *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, tr. Virginia Gingerick Berry (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948).

[11] Pseudo-Brocardus was almost certainly William Adam. See [Pseudo-]Brocardus, "Directorium ad passagium faciendum," in *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades. Documents Arméniens* (Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1906), vol. 2, CLIV-CLVI.

[12] Dmitry E. Charitonovich chose a similar approach in his "Mundus Novus. Pervozdannaya Priroda Glazami Cheloveka Epohi Vozrogdeniya," [Mundus Novus. Primeval nature through the eyes of a Renaissance man] in *Priroda v kulture Vozrozhdeniya* (Moscow: Nauka, 1992), 107-121.

cially the Balkan part of the journey.[13] Pilgrims travelled along the Danube passing the countries of Central Europe until Constantinople and from there continued their route to Antioch and Jerusalem. They perceived a travel to the Holy Land as long, hard and dangerous. Fulcher of Chartres writes that

> from Rome, from Apulia, from Hungary or Dalmatia, some, unwilling to undergo the hardships, had returned to their homes. In many places finally thousands had been killed, and some of the sick who went on with us died. You could see many graves along the roads and in the fields where our pilgrims had been publicly buried."[14]

Raymond d'Aguilers talks about numerous difficulties along the way (*multam difficultatem itineris*), which the travellers considered in a careful way.[15] Medieval authors associated the difficulties of the road with unfavourable climatic and natural conditions. The winter of the First Crusade (1096-97) was especially cold. According to Raymond d'Aguilers, the crusaders entered Dalmatia after having overcome the difficulties along the way associated mostly with winter.[16]

During the journey, the crusaders were surrounded by an unfamiliar environment, suffered from cold and heat and experienced the influence of unusual atmospheric pressures. Many of these phenomena remained in their memory forever. Reconstructing the details of the pilgrimage across Hungary from chronicles and oral accounts, William of Tyre wrote:

> This country … abounded in rivers and streams, and was almost wholly marshland. Each day, there arose from this source so much dampness and thick mist that the air became almost stifling."[17]

Rains and mists on the road lurked around every bend and brought the travellers to panicking. During the forty-day journey through Dalmatia on the First Crusade, "the air was full of mist, and the continual shadows were so thick that they

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[13] The journey from Western Europe to Constantinople is in the focus of most chronicles. Therefore, I will concentrate on this route.

[14] Fulcher of Chartres, *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem (1095-1127),* tr. Frances R. Ryan, ed. Harold S. Fink (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1973), book I, part X, chapter 5, 81-2.

[15] Raimundus de Aguilers, "Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem," in *Recueil des Histoires des Croisades* (RHC) (Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1866), vol. 3, 35: *multam difficultatem itineris in ea regione perpessi.* William of Tyre recalled the difficulties of the journey under the conduct of the count of Toulouse many years later: Guillaume de Tyr, *Chronique*, ed. R.B.C. Huygens, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Medievalis 63 (Turnhout*:* Brepols, 1986), book XI, chapter XVII: *Comes Tolosanus et episcopus Podiensis cum suis agminibus per Dalmatiam properant, multam difficultatem itineris in ea regione perpessunt*.

[16] Raimundus de Aguilers, "Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem," 235: *Illi igitur Sclavoniam ingressi; multa dispendia itineris passi sunt, maxime propter hyemem que tunc erat.*

[17] William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, tr. Emily A. Babcock and A.C. Krey (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), book II, chapter XVII, 141.

were almost palpable."[18] An eyewitness of the campaign, Raymond d'Aguilers tells that the mists were so thick that the crusaders could touch them and shove them in front of them with their bodies.[19] We do not know to what extent these accounts corresponded to reality. However, it is clear that the crusaders perceived nature and climate of the unfamiliar countries in a subjective way and often with fear.

On the road, pilgrims were often overtaken by rains, which had tendencies to turn sometimes into serious calamities. Odo of Deuil, the author of an account about the Second Crusade, tells a remarkable story about German knights who, after having accomplished a long journey from Bulgaria to Thrace, decided to spend a night in the town of Sestos located on the shore of the Dardanelles in order to sail over to the opposite shore in the morning. Their plans were ruined by a heavy night shower: strong water currents washed down their tents and belongings, and carried a thousand people to the water.[20]

The speed of movement clearly depended on road and transport conditions, which are largely spoken about in the crusaders' chronicles. The issue of transport is one of the main problems faced by the travellers according to chronicles and pilgrims' accounts. There were just a few good roads, and even less good bridges. The crusaders lacked boats and vessels when crossing rivers. Navigation was poorly developed even at larger rivers and the knights of Christ constantly had to innovate ways to cross the water currents. Thus, during the First Crusade the army of Godfrey of Bouillon crossed the River Drava in Hungary on self-crafted rafts from willow bars.[21] In a similar way, a part of the crusaders crossed the River Sava on three wooden barges found at the shore, others again had to craft the rafts from willow branches.[22]

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[18] Ibid., 140-1.

[19] Raimundus de Aguilers, "Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem," 236: *Quadraginta etenim fere dies in Sclavonia fuimus, in quibus tantum spissitudinem nebularum passi sumus, ut palpare et per motum removere eas a nobis aliquatenus possemus. Inter haec comes assidue in postremis pugnans, semper populum defendens erat; nunquam prior, sed simper ultimus hospitabatur.*

[20] Odilo Dogilensis, "De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem," in *Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series Latina*, vol. 185, chapter III, col. 1218: *Dum igitur ibidem fixis tentoriis pernoctaret, erupit pluvia super eos quidem sicut audivimus modica, sed in montibus tanta inundatio, ut eos potius raperet quam aspergeret. Torrens enim tumidus, et rapidus tentoria sibi obvia, et quidquid continebant involvens et rapiens, in mare vicinum praecipitavit ipsoum multa millia submersit... Imperator autem et superestes multitude, non sine dolore quidem, sed tamen velut sine damno tantum malum per ferentes, consergunt, et quasi audaciores redditu pro eventu Constantinopolim veniunt ...*

[21] Albertus Aquensis, "Historia Hierosolymitana," in *RHC* 4, book II, chapter VI, 303: *Dux et populus regnum Hungariae pertransiens, Drowa fluvium pervenerunt: ubi congerie lignorum composita, et plurima viminum copulatione facta, eundem fluvium trajecerunt.*

[22] Ibid.: *Non amplius enim quam tres naves illic repertae sunt, cum quibus mille equites loricati ad praeoccupandum littus transmissi sunt. Cetera multitudo, copulatione lignorum et viminum, fluminis alveum superaverunt*.

After passing through the Balkans and Bulgaria to Greece, the crusaders faced the same difficulties while crossing the mountain rivers. They often perceived road difficulties in a symbolic way – as punishment for wrongdoings. Thus, Odo of Deuil writes that on the way from Philadelphia to Demetria the knights had to ford an impetuous mountainous stream a number of times, which even with an insignificant rain had a tendency to broaden to such an extent that "no one could have advanced or retired, but each would have had to await the end of his life, grieving for his sins where he was."[23] According to Odo the knights often encountered mountainous streams which, if filled with rain or snow, "possessed swift current which neither horse not infantry could swim through."[24]

During the Second Crusade, many bridges were built in Hungary at the initiative of the German emperor, however, even after that the crusaders often had to ford the rivers, including the River Drava.[25] While fording the river the knights did not notice that one of the banks of Drava was shallow and another one steep, and they had to pay a large price for their imprudence: most of them drowned. The more prudent crusaders from the army of Louis VII, the King of France, who followed the German knights, crossed the river on their small boats, but had great difficulties while transporting the horses across the dangerous river.[26]

The crusaders also could become victims of their own avarice. This happened with the French knights during the Second Crusade. They crossed the Danube near Regensburg with the help of a bridge and found a large number of vessels on the other side of the river. The knights used them as means of transport to reach Bulgaria and charged them with their belongings. But some knights, according to Odo of Deuil, loaded the vessels with two and four-horse carriages, hoping to compensate for the losses and fill them up with goods in Bulgaria. However, their hopes were not fulfilled and the carriages only made the travel inconvenient, blocked the route, often caused forced breaks and aggravated the existing confusion; and, as Odo finishes the story, everyone complained about the slow progress.[27]

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[23] Odo of Deuil, *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, book VI, 106-7.

[24] Ibid.,107.

[25] Ibid., book II, 33: "...although there are many rivers in Germany, he found new bridges constructed over them without any expense or exertion on his part."

[26] Odilo Dogilensis, *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, col. 1213: *In medio sui fluvium habet Droam, qui stanni more unam ripam proclivem habet, et alteram arduam, unde modica pluvial effluit, Audivimus eum multos Alemannorum, qui nos praecesserant, subito inundasse; nos autem ubi castra eorum fuerant, vix potuimus transvadere.*

[27] Odo of Deuil. *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, book II, 25: "At this city [Regensburg] all crossed the Danube on a very fine bridge and found an ample fleet, which conveyed our baggage and many of the people as far as Bulgaria. Some even placed two- and four-horse carts on shipboard in order to compensate in the wastelands of Bulgaria for the losses which they had already endured, but both previously and afterwards the carts afforded more hope than usefulness."

The chroniclers highlight the lack of provisions among other difficulties. Hunger constantly haunted the crusaders and they used all means to procure food, including looting and marauding. Chroniclers speak openly about it in their works. According to Odo of Deuil, the author of an account on the crusade of Louis VII, the king was followed by "many divisions who gained plenty for themselves, either from the market, whenever that was possible, or from plunder, because they had the power to do that."[28] Hunger and confrontation with the local population were one of the reasons for human losses in the crusaders' army. It was these two factors which Raymond d'Aguilers had in mind when he wrote: "We passed through Sclavonia without losses from starvation or open conflict largely through God's mercy, the hard work of the Count and the counsel of Adhémar."[29]

Chroniclers of the crusades did not conceal that the advance of crusaders in Central Europe and the Balkans occasionally brought calamities to the local population. In 1096, the knights of Walter Sans Avoir plundered Bulgarians which caused a conflict. As a result of this conflict, Bulgarians locked away 140 crusaders in a church and set in on fire, while others managed to escape.[30] French and German knights lead by Peter the Hermit in the Paupers' Crusade followed the army of Walter Sans Avoir, wanted to revenge the killed crusaders and massacred local Hungarians. Crusaders killed Bulgarians and Hungarians, their brothers in faith, because they perceived them as pagans and enemies. Teutonic knights who followed the army of Peter the Hermit drunkenly killed the local population and pillaged their houses just after they provided them with food provisions.[31] Chroniclers considered the conflicts with the local population as not only considerably hindering the movement of the crusaders but also as cutting off the following knights from the trodden routes. Even Guillaume de Tire who was always loyal to the crusaders had to admit:

> the shortest way was found by those who went though Hungary, and this was entirely closed because of the insolence and outrageous excesses which those pilgrims who had gone on ahead so often and undeservedly perpetrated upon the inhabitants of that region.[32]

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[28] Ibid., book III, 44.

[29] Raymond d'Aguilers, *Historia Francorum Qui Ceperunt Iherusalem*, ed. John H. Hill and Laurita L. Hill (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1968), 17.

[30] Guillaume de Tyr, *Chronique*, lib. I, cap. XVIII: *... centum quadraginta ex eis…in oratorio quodam, quo se gratia consequendae salutis contulerant, igni supposito, combussemnt, reliquis in fiigam adactis ...* The number 140 is certainly very approximated.

[31] Ibid., cap. XXVII: *... quidam sacerdos, Godescalcus nomine, natione Theutonicus ... Hungariae fines ... ingressus est ... ad inferendas enormes indigenis se contulerunt injurias ; ita ut praedas exercerent, venalia foris illata oublicis violenter diriperent, et tragem comitterent in populo, neglectis legibus hospitalitatis ...*

[32] William of Tyre. *A history of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, book I, chapter 30, 115.

It was already Godfrey of Bouillon who had learned the lesson and accepted the terms proposed by Coloman, King of Hungary, upon entering his domains and left his brother Baldwin behind for pawns.

Almost every chronicle is full of stories about crusaders overcoming difficulties in search for provisions. These descriptions follow a fixed pattern which did not change in course of time and had almost the same style and content. Thus, those descriptions which fall out of the traditional genre, may offer the travellers' personal opinions about the events. One of such examples is the account of Albert of Aachen on an accident in Bithynia. According to the chronicler, the crusaders set a camp not far from Heraclea with splendid scenery. Godfrey of Bouillon and his companions equipped with bows, quivers and swords went to hunt to a forest abundant with wild animals.[33] In the forest, the duke saw a huge bear attacking a pilgrim who happened to be there by accident. The chronicler figuratively describes the scene: Godfrey approached on horse in order to extract the victim from the bear's claws.[34] He buffeted the bear with his sword, but the enraged wounded animal flung the knight down from his horse. Godfrey immediately stood up and accidentally wounded his leg with the sword, still fighting.[35] A knight rushed to the duke to help him and ran with his sword through the bear, while Godfrey of Bouillon fell to the ground. Knights carefully carried him to the camp, where the best doctors treated his wounds and divided the bear's skin between themselves.[36]

Descriptions of the landscape surrounding the crusaders are marked by stereotypes: forests, mountains, deserts and rivers are mentioned most often among the difficulties faced by the travellers. One can even speak about a certain rhetoric used by the chroniclers in their accounts. On the way, they constantly meet abandoned places (*loca deserta*), dense forests (*sylvae condensae*) and steep mountains (*montes abrupta*). The notion of a desert is a very important topos. It was associated with an uninhabited space, unmarked by civilization; the desert had both geographic and symbolic meaning. As it is known, also forests and mountains could be treated as deserts in the Middle Ages.[37] All chroniclers stress the desertedness and desolation of the crusaders'

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[33] Albertus Aquensis, *Historia Hierosolymitana*, lib. II, cap. 4, 341: *...aptam et voluptuosam regionem considerantes et venationibus fecundissimam, quam nobilitas delectari et exercari gaudet. ...sumpto arcu et pharetra, gladiis accincti, saltus montanis contiguos ingrediuntur, si forte obveniret quod configere et persequi catulorum sagacitate valerent ...*

[34] Ibid.: *Dux vero... educto raptim gladio... misello homini advolat, eripere a dentibus et imguibus lanionis amxiatum festinate...*

[35] Ibid.: *Dux... in momento resurgit in pedibus, gladiumque... propriis cruribus implicitum celeriter in ejusdem ferae jugulum rapines et capulo retinens, suras et nervos proprii cruris gravi incisione truncavit...*

[36] Ibid.: *Dux primum, vulneris dolore... coepit corde deficere... Quem principles... ad castra... detulerunt, medicos pertitssimos ad sanandum et adhibientes... feram verointer se dividentes ...*

[37] Jacques Le Goff, "Le désert-forêt dans l'Occident Médiéval" in *L'Imaginaire Médiéval* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), 59-76.

route through the Balkans. Fulcher of Chartres writes: "We proceeded over the land of the Bulgars, over *mountain precipices* [the italics are mine – S.L.] and rather *deserted places*."[38] Raymond d'Aguilers notes in his account on the march across Dalmatia: "Truly Sclavonia is a forsaken land, both inaccessible and mountainous, where for three weeks we saw neither wild beasts nor birds."[39] When describing the march of the German knight Gottschalk through Hungary, William of Tyre stresses the desertedness, inaccessibility and remoteness of this region from any society and civilization and emphasizes the following landscape characteristics:

> … the kingdom of Hungary is difficult to access, for it is swampy in many places and is also encircled by big rivers. Thus, except in certain places – and those extremely narrow, it affords travellers neither access to, nor exit from, the realm.[40]

All these descriptions are meant to show the contrast between nature and culture.

Mountains are another important topos of the Holy Land pilgrimage accounts. It is used for describing the expeditions in the Balkans as well as in Asia Minor. It is difficult to separate culturally and naturally dictated elements in such descriptions. Peter Tudebode and an Anonymous left vivid accounts of the crusaders' march across the Anti-Taurus mountains. After passing Cocson, the knights approached the "devil's mountain", which was so high and narrow that it was impossible to follow a narrow path along it. According to the chroniclers, the horses rolled head over heels and the baggage animals slithered one after another.[41] Upon observing these difficulties, the crusaders fell into despair and became very sad, according to the observations of Peter Tudebode. The knights had to bargain away their coats of mail, helmets and bucklers in order to discharge themselves from additional burden.[42] According to the chroniclers, the

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[38] Edward Peters, *The First Crusade*, book I, chapter VIII, part 6, 61.

[39] Raymond d'Aguilers, *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem*, 16.

[40] William of Tyre. *A history of Deeds Done beyond the Sea*, book I, chapter 18, 97.

[41] Petrus Tudebode, *Historia de Hierosolymitano itinere*, ed. John Hugh Hill and Laurita L. Hill (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1977), 62-3: *Ipse vero statim apprehendi Rusam civitatem et plurima castra. Los autem qui remansimus exeuntes intravimus in diabolicam montaneam, quae tam nimis erat alta atque angusta, quod nullus nostrorum audebat per tramitem ejus aut per semitam quae in monte patebat ante alium praeire. Illic praecipitabant sese equi, et unus saumerius praecipitabat alium. Milites ergo stabant undique tristes.* See also: *The Deeds of the Franks and the Other Pilgrims to Jerusalem*, ed. and tr. Rosalind Hill (London: Nelson, 1962), 27.

[42] Petrus Tudebode, *Historia de Hierosolymitano itinere*, 62: *Plaudebant minibus prae nimia tristitia atque dolore, dubitantes quod facere debuissent de semetipsis: de suis armis, vendentes suos clypeos et loricas nimis optimas, et galeas solummodo per tres aut quinque denarios sive per id quod plus potuerunt habere.*

crusaders felt relieved only when they exited the cursed mountain and approached the town of Maras.[43]

A subjective perception of nature is common among the crusaders. Thus, Odo of Deuil informs that on an expedition through South Bavaria he felt that the area was heavy, stern and exceptionally mountainous. Once they entered Dacia, he thought that Bavaria was a plain in comparison with Dacia.[44] In reality, the Romanian Carpathians are not steeper than the Bavarian Alps, but the focus of the crusaders' perception significantly shifted. Sometimes, the mountains represented the difficulties of the road. Fulcher of Chartres writes that the pilgrims had to realize the difficulties of the road once they saw peaks covered with clouds which they yet had to cross.[45]

Mountains are *terra incognita* for the crusaders, an unknown land evoking fear. Accounts of Odo of Deuil reveal this perception. During a march across Greece on the way to Demetria, the crusaders had to cross mountains covered with cliffs which were so impenetrable and steep that, when trying to do so, they alternately came close to the "stars and hell".[46] Odo of Deuil writes about the passage across the mountainous chains not far from the town of Laodicea in Asia Minor:

> The mountain was steep and rocky, and we had to climb along the ridge so lofty that its summit seemed to touch heaven and the stream in the hollow valley below to descend into hell.[47]

He draws a picture of people and baggage animals falling in the depth of a steep:

> Dislodged rocks also caused destruction. Thus, when the men had scattered far and wide in order to seek out paths, all feared that they would misstep or that others [in falling] would strike them violently.[48]

Descriptions of mountains, deserts, forests and rivers in the crusaders' chronicles are full of alterations between geographic reality and its symbolic meaning, between real and imagined. The crusaders perceived even a simple act of river crossing as a miracle, because they saw the world as a manifestation of dangerous external forces. In a similar fashion, Odo of Deuil writes about a march across Thrace on the way to Pergamon, when the crusaders crossed three rivers in a row, which was immediately followed by a strong rain causing floods and

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[43] Ibid.: *Exeuntes igitur de execrata montanea pervenimus ad quamdam civitatem quae vocatur Marasim.*

[44] Odilo Dogilensis, *De profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, lib. II, col. 1213: *...rivis tamen abundant, et fontibus et pratis. Cum transierem regionem istam, aspera mihi montibus videbatur, nunc autem planam judico respecti Romaniae.*

[45] *Fulcheri Carnotensis historia Hierosolymitana*, ed. Heinrich Hagenmeyer (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1913), lib. I, cap. VIII, 173: *Viderunt cacuminal lontium perque transitura errant nubibus fere inserta.*

[46] Odilo Dogilensis, *De profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, lib.VI, col. 1235: *Deviavit enim in quaedam concava, offendensque montium scopulos, dum eos circuit vel ascendit, non accedit quo volebat, sed alternis vicibus inferno et sideribus propinquabat ...*

[47] Odo of Deuil, *De profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*. book VII, 117.

[48] Ibid., 116.

making the crossing almost impossible: "Therefore it was considered miraculous that, contrary to the ordinary course of events, the rains and the winter had spared us."[49]

During the march across Bulgaria the crusaders had to cross the stormy River Vardar, which the locals called "Daemon's River", according to the chroniclers. The crusaders' accounts testify that this river evoked great fear.[50] The infantry soldiers attempted to wade the river, but already the first ones were swept away by a strong current and drowned. If the knights had not helped with providing their horses, this fate would have also come to the rest of the crusaders. There was no end of "pious tears" after this incident, the chronicler tells,[51] and the travellers plunged in devout reflections. Travelling to the Holy Land, the pilgrims overcame the fearful unknown space and conceptualized the route in the framework of their system of values.

With the gradual exploration of new territories the travellers began to perceive space as physically given and to measure it, for the first time already during the First Crusade. As it was common in the Middle Ages, the crusaders measured space in time categories. Thus, Raymond d'Aguilers and William of Tyre established that it takes forty days to cross Dalmatia and reach the Albanian town of Durrazo via Shkodër.[52] Fulcher of Chartres wrote in his chronicle that it took four days to reach Philippopolis from Thessaloniki.[53] Sometimes, the chroniclers tried to measure the territories of the Balkan states. William of Tyre, for instance, informed his readers that Bulgaria occupied a huge territory from Constantinople to the Adriatic, which is thirty days of travel long and a little more than ten days wide.[54] Odo of Deuil talked about the territories' dimensions

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[49] Ibid., book VI, 106.

[50] Radulfus Cadomensis, "Gesta Tancredi in Expeditione Hiyerosolymitana" in *RHC*, vol. 3 (Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1866), cap. IV, 607: *Ad flumen quod Bardai dicitur perducitur ... obsistebat eorum transitu fluvius rapax ... plurimos terrebat.*

[51] Guillaume de Tyr, *Chronique*, lib. II, cap. XIII: *Daemonis ad fluvium rapidum tune venimus omnes, qui ab incolis loci si vocatur et merito. Vidimus enim in illo quamplures de plebem cum vadare pedetentium sperabant, torrentis impetus, quod nullus cernentium juvare poterat, mersu repentino perere; quia de re multas ibi lachrymas pietate dimisimus; et, nisi equites cum equis dexterariis opem peditibus ferrent, multitude maxima simili modo ibi vitam finivisset.* " See also *Fulcheri Carnotensis Historia Hierosolymitana*, lib. I, cap. VIII, 172.

[52] Raimundus de Aguilers, *Historia Francorum*, 236: *Ob illam reor causam voluit Deus exercitum suum transire per Sclavoniam ... apud Scodram venimus; cum eo comes fraternitatem confirmavit, et multa ei tribuit, ut exercitus secure emere et quarere necessaria posset ... Venimus Dirachium ...*

[53] *Fulcheri Carnotensis Historia Hierosolymitana*, lib. I, cap. VIII, 172. It is interesting that the Russian traveler Hegumen Daniil measured the distance between towns and islands. See *Puteshestvie igumena Daniila po Svyatoi zemle v nachale XII v. (1113-1115)* [The travel of Hegumen Daniil to the Holy Land in the beginning of the twelfth century (1113-1115)] (Saint Petersburg: A. S. Norov, 1861), 5.

[54] Guillaume de Tyr, *Chronique*, lib. II, cap. IV: *Inter quas Bulgarorum gens inculta, a tractu Septentrionali egressa, a Danubio usque ad Urbem regiam, et itemm ad eodem flumine ad*

and distances, most often compared to other chroniclers. In his account he stressed that the German towns of Metz, Worms and Würzburg were only three days of travel away from each other, that it took five days to reach Neuburg at the Danube from Passau, and one more day from Passau to Hungary.[55] In his description of the march across Greece he notes that Phillipopolis and Adrianopolis were only four days of travel away from each other and that it took five days to reach Constantinople from Adrianopolis.[56] Odo of Deuil recognizes the importance of this information and its significance for future pilgrims:

> In this account, - m- tells the chronicler his readers, - the description of virtuous deeds furnishes the reader a good example, the names of towns indicate the route of the journey, the nature of the localities depicted suggests the caution which should be observed in provisioning. For never will there fail to be pilgrims to the Holy Sepulcher; and they will, I hope, be the more cautious because of our experiences.[57]

It is possible that the chroniclers paid attention to geographic details for the sake of future travellers. In the accounts one finds descriptions of cities and countries,[58] notes on climate, landscape and weather, which sometimes had a very utilitarian purpose. The travellers were often indifferent to those aspects which lay beyond their immediate interests and everyday problems. Thus, Peter

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mare Adriaticum, universas occupaverat regions, ita ut confuses provinciamm nominibus et terminis... totus iste tractus qui in longitudine habere dicitur iter dierum triginta in latitudine vero decem amplius.

[55] Odilo Dogilensis, *De profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, lib. II, col. 1212: *Igitur Metis, Vormatia, Wirzeburgis, Ratispona, Patavia cvitates opulentissimae tribus dietis a se nvicem distant. A postremo nominata quinque dietae sunt usque ad Novam urbem; ad hac, una usque ad portas Hungariae.*

[56] Ibid.: *Haec ad quintam dietam, primam sed modicum, ex hoc parte Graeciae civitatem Nit ostendit. Nit. Histenit, Philippopolis, Andrianopolis civitates sunt, quatuor dietis ab invicem dessidentes, et ab ultima usque Constantinopolim sunt quinque*. Based on materials available in the chronicles we can calculate that it took almost five months for Godfrey of Bouillon to reach Constantinople from the Moselle (from August – December, 1096) and for Louis VII from Metz (from June – October, 1147), and that Frederick Barbarossa spent almost ten months from May 1189 until March 1190 travelling from Regensburg to the Dardanelles.

[57] Odo of Deuil. *De profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, book II, 29, 31.

[58] Thus, when telling about the journey across the Balkans, Peter Tudebode did not forget to mention Adrianople, an important transit point on the crusaders' route to Byzantium, as well as other towns in Thrace and Macedonia such as Kastoria and Pelagonia, where crusaders usually made stops: *Petri Tudebode historia de Hierosolymitano itinere*, 16: *Deinde vero descenderunt in vallem de Adrianopolim, illicqie applicuerunt expectantes gentem suam, donec omnes aequaliter transfretatu fuissent. Tunc exeuntes, inde venerunt ... de villa in villam, de castelo in castellum, et de civitate in civitatem, quoadusque pervenerunt in Castoriam ... egressique de Castoria, intraverunt in Pelagoniam in qua erat quoddam haereticorum castrum.* The Anonymous also mentions these towns. See *Gesta Francorum*, 8. Fulcher of Chartres mentions such towns of Thrace and Macedonia, as Bitola, Christoupolis (modern Kavala), Thessaloniki, Iraklia, etc. See *Fulcheri Carnotensis historia Hierosolymitana*, lib. I, cap. VIII, 174-5.

Tudebode started his account of an expedition across Bulgaria by mentioning that the crusaders found there provisions for the army, a large amount of grain and wine.[59] Odo of Deuil and other chroniclers also had paid attention to these details.[60] At the same time, chroniclers mentioned names of towns and settlements, described their locations and drew vivid pictures of changing sceneries: lakes of Hungary, hills of Bulgaria, cliffs and mountains of Asia Minor, and at the same time shared their impressions of what they had seen. The authors of the chronicles of the First Crusade left only schematic descriptions of cities and countries. For example, William of Tyre described Hungary as a country, "swampy in many places" and "encircled by great rivers."[61] Concerning Dacia, he noted that it is divided in two parts – coastal and Mediterranean, with the capital in Stralitsa.[62] Raymond d'Aguilers and William of Tyre left detailed descriptions of Dalmatia, and the latter stated that its vast territory stretched between Hungary and the Adriatic Sea.[63]

Undoubtedly, the chronicles contain generally very fragmentary and monotonous information on the peoples of the Balkans. However, the chroniclers dramatically changed their tone when they talked about Byzantium. For example, Fulcher of Chartres devoted a eulogy to the Byzantine capital in his work:

> Oh what a noble and beautiful city is Constantinople! How many monasteries and palaces it contains, constructed with wonderful skill! ... It would be tedious to enumerate the wealth that is there of every kind, of gold, of silver, or robes of many kinds, and of holy relics."[64]

Beyond all doubts, it is Odo of Deuil who was most prone to geography among all the chroniclers. His account starts with the description of Germany with its rich towns on the River Rhine[65] and Bavaria full of rivers, streams and meadows,[66] than he passes on to Hungary with its full-flowing River Danube.[67] For Odo, Hungary was the country of lakes and streams. According to him, the Drava divided it in two parts, with one of its parts bordering Bulgaria and a clear river and with its other part surrounded by polluted waters.[68] In his works one

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[59] *Petri Tudebode historia de Hierosolymitano itinere*, 16: *Omnes igitur transfretaverunt et applicuerunt n Bulgariae partibus. Illicque invenerunt nimiam abundaniam frumenti et vini et alimenti corporis ... .*

[60] See Odilo Dogilensis, *De profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, lib. III, col. 1215.

[61] William of Tyre. *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, book I, chapter 18, 97.

[62] Ibid.; Raimundus de Aguilers, *Historia Francorum*, 235.

[63] Gillaume de Tyr, *Chronique*, lib. I, cap. XVII: *Est autem Dalmatia longe patens region inter Hungariam et Adriaticum mare sita.*

[64] Fulcher of Chartres, *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem*, book I, part IX, chapter 1, 79.

[65] Odilo Odolgensis, *De profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, lib. II, col. 1211.

[66] Ibid., col. 1213: *... rivis tamen abundant, et fontibus et pratis.*

[67] Ibid.: *... Caetera omnis aqua terrae hujus, lacus sunt te paludes te fontes ... excepto Danubio qui ... multarum regionum ... navigio invehit.*

[68] Ibid.: *Hungaria ex hac parte aque lutosa cingitur, ex alia vero a Bogaria amne lucido separator. In medio sui fluvium habet Droam ...*

finds no less vivid descriptions of Bulgaria with its forests and pastures, plains covered with hills and irrigated by many clean streams. Odo of Deuil stressed that the soil in Bulgaria was extremely productive and suitable for cultivating grains and grapes, as well as other farming cultures.[69] At the same time, he left a number of realistic details about the territory which lies between Western Bulgaria and Greece. In his words, it is a *dives et fecunda planities*, *omnibus bonis rebundantia* which lies in a valley surrounded by mountains.[70] On the whole, in the words of Odo of Deuil, this land is an "exceedingly beautiful and rich territory which stretches without interruption all the way to Constantinople."[71] Just like the chroniclers of the First Crusade Odo of Deuil admired Constantinople with its churches, the palace of Vlacherna, the Hagia Sofia and the relics and called the city "the pride of the Greeks."[72] It is worth noting that the chroniclers managed to combine such an exalted attitude towards the Greek capital with an openly hostile attitude towards the Greeks.[73]

Geography was not the only matter in the center of the chroniclers' attention which focused on the climate, landscape and nature of different lands, as well as cities and their sights. They also paid great attention to ethnography: the crusaders' chronicles are probably the first sources in Western medieval historiography to give accounts of the living and customs of the Central European local population. What mechanisms did the chroniclers use in order to construct the image of the Other in their descriptions of the Balkan peoples? The accounts reveal a usually pragmatic attitude of the crusaders towards other peoples and are based on the contraposition of two notions – "civilization" and "barbarism". The culture of the crusaders is presented as the only possible one, being confronted by the "non-culture" of the Balkan peoples with their brutish customs, barbarous language and unfamiliarity with achievements of civilization. However, the Franks as well as the chroniclers who described their crusades completely ignored the fact that the local population of Bulgaria, Hungary and Dalmatia had been converted to Christianity before the First Crusade. For instance,

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[69] Ibid.: *Bolgaria ... pratum est nemorosum, vel nemus pabulosum. Bonis abundat quae sonte nascuntur. Non plana jacet, nec montibus asperatur, sed inter colles vineis et segetibus habiles, rivis et fontibus lucidissimus irrigatur ...*

[70] Ibid.: *Nit, Histernit, Philippopolis, Adrianopolis civitates sunt ... Quae interjacent plana sunt, villis et castellis, omnibusque bonis rebundantia. Dextra laevaque montes sunt, tam prope ut viedantur, et tam longa ut lata, dives et jucunda planities includatur ...*

[71] Odo of Deuil, *De profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, book III, 41.

[72] Odilo Odolgensis, *De profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, lib. V, col. 1221: *Constantinopolus Graecorum gloria, fama dive et rebus itior, ad formam vel navalis i trigonum ducitur. In interiori angulo Sanctam Sophiam habet, et palatium Constantini, in quo capella est quae sacrosanctis reliquiis honoratur ... Ibi palatium, quod dicitur Blachern fundatur quidemin humili ... Exterior pulchritudo fere incomparabilis est, interior vero quidem in illa dixero superabit.*

[73] See Alexander A. Vasilyev, *Vizantiya i Krestonostsy: Epoha Komninov (1081-1185) i Angelov (1185-1204)* [Byzantium and the crusaders: the epoch of Komnenos (1081-1185) and Angelos (1185-1204)] (Petrograd: Academia, 1923).

Raymond d'Aguilers talked about the "robbers' customs" of the Dalmatians by which he meant their unwillingness to trade with the crusaders and provide them with supplies, as well as their general hostile attitude towards the crusaders: "The barbarous and ignorant natives would neither trade with us nor provide guides, but fled from their villages and strongholds and, as though they had been badly injured by our infirm strugglers, slew these poor souls – the debilitated, the old women and men, the poor and the sick – as if they were slaughtering cattle."[74] According to Raymond d'Aguilers, the knights found it difficult to chase unarmed bandits (*latrones inermes*) who knew the landscape well and found hide in high mountains and dense forests (*per abrupta montium et condensa sylvarum*). Nevertheless, the pious Raymond of Toulouse managed to catch six "barbarians" and acted in a fashion in which a true "civilized" man ought to interact with "barbarians": some lost their eyes and some their arms and legs.[75]

William of Tyre perceives the Dalmatians as uniquely barbarous. According to him, this land is inhabited by a ferocious people who procure livelihood by means of puffing and killing. Special environmental conditions with abundance of mountains, forests, rivers and pastures prevent the local population from farming which contributes to their barbarous mode of living.[76] As a matter of fact, they speak a barbarous language, namely a Slavic dialect. At the same time, the population of Dalmatia ranges on the scale of barbarity: thus, those who inhabit the sea shore differ from the others in language and customs as they speak Latin.[77] For William of Tyre the knowledge of Latin is a certain criterion which allows distinguishing "barbarians" from more "civilized" peoples.

While describing the Balkan peoples as crude barbarians, William of Tyre makes an exception for Coloman, the king of Hungary, because he benevolently received the crusaders. The chronicler explains the human attitude of the Hungarian king towards the crusaders by his high moral qualities and refers to Coloman as to *vir christianissimus*.[78]

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[74] Raymond d'Aguilers, *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem*, 16.

[75] Raimundus d'Aguilers, *Historia Francorum*, 235: *... ex eis usque ad sex capuit. Quumque propter hoc Sclavi vehementius imminerunt, et comes sequi exercitum compelletur, erui oculoss aliorum, et aliorum pedes abscidi jussit, et nasum et manus aliorum praecepit ...*

[76] Guillaume de Tyr, *Chronique*, lib. II, cap. XIV: *Dalmatia ... montibus et sylvis, magnis quoque fluminibus pasuis etiam longe lateque diffusas occupata penitus ...*

[77] Ibid.: *Dalmatia ... populo ferocissimo, rapinis et caedibus assueto inhabitata; nontibus et sylvis, magnis quoque fluminibus, pascuis etiam longe lateque diffusas occupata penitus, ita ut raram habeat agrorum culturam; exceptis paucis, qui in oris maritimis habitant, qui, ab aliis et moribus et lingua dissimiles, latinum habent idioma; reliquis sclavonico sermone utentibus et habitu barbarorum.*

[78] Ibid., lib. I, cap. XVII: … *vir christianissimus, rex Calemannus qui, cognito praedicti Galteri adventu, et de ejus edoctus proposito, piam illius commendans intentionem, cum benigne admisit, et, transito suis expeditionibus per Hungariam ioncesso, publicorum commerciorum gratiam non negavit.*

If the descriptions of the Balkan peoples are based on the contraposition of the notions of "barbarism" and "civilization", the narratives about the Greeks, a highly civilized people in the crusaders' eyes, are hardly different from the accounts about the "barbarians".[79] The chroniclers' attitude towards the local population of Greece is also first of all utilitarian. Odo of Deuil blames the Greeks for their reluctance to trade with the knights and to procure them with provisions as well as their tendency to raise prices on products. In his opinion, the Greeks robbed crusaders who were impoverished by such a long journey (*pauperes in tam longe itinere*) by taking all their gold, silver, armours and garments.[80] Odo of Deuil was even more shocked by the fact that some Greek cities did not let the crusaders in and preferred to send baskets with provisions down the city walls.[81] Odo characterizes the behaviour of the Greeks and their attitude towards the crusaders as guileful (Graecorum fraudes)[82] and considers it important to recount the misfortunes of the crusaders (*nostra infortunia*) so that the future generations would know about the cunning dodges of the Greeks (*Grecorum dolorosa facinore*).[83]

The main criteria for the distinction between the Greeks and Latins are the language and customs (*lingua et mores*) – the same factors as used in descriptions of the "barbarians", the local population of Dalmatia and Bulgaria. Odo of Deuil recounts a dramatic experience of German knights in Greece. Once drinking at a tavern in the outskirts of Phillipopolis, they were approached by a buffoon (*joculator*) who did not speak their language (*qui licet eorum linguam ingnoraret*). After a number of drinks (*post longam ingurgitationem*), he took a trained snake from his bosom, put it on a glass and began to show tricks in front of the knights, whose language and customs he did not know (*inter eos quorum mores et linguam nesciebat*).[84] The intercultural "dialogue" ended tragically: the Germans, taking the tricks for witchcraft, attacked the Greek and tore

[79] This is true for the attitude of the crusaders to the Greeks in general and not to the Byzantine emperor. The Anonymous and Raoul of Caen are famous for their negative characteristics of the Byzantine emperor. See Radulfus Cadomensis, *Gesta Tancredi in expeditione Hierosolymitana*, 609-613; *Gesta Francorum*, 30-40.

[80] Odilo Dogilensis, *De profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, lib. VI, col. 1234: *... de navibus escas ad suum libitum charas vendebant, et pauperes in tam longo itinere auro et argento, armis et vesibus spoliabant ...*

[81] Ibid., lib. III, col. 1215: *Graeci autem suas civitates et castellan observabant, et per murum funibus venalia submittebant, sed nostrae multitudini non sufficiebat victus tali mora ministramus.*

[82] Ibid., lib. VI, col. 1234.

[83] Ibid., col. 1232: *... et ut sciant posteri Graecorum dolosa facinora, nostra infortunia prosequemur.*

[84] Ibid., lib. III, col. 1216: *Ubi cum tabernis insedissent Alemanni, malo auspicio adfuit joculator, qui licet eorum linguam ignoraret, tamen sedit, symbolum dedit, bibit, et post longam ingurgitationem, serpentem quem praecantatum in sinu habebat extrahit, et scypho terrae imposito superponit, et sic inter eos quorum mores et linguam nesciebant, caeteris lusibus, joculatoriis sese frangit.*

him into pieces. Blaming the rest for the deeds of one, they announced that the Byzantines had attempted to poison them.[85] A growing unrest spread from the suburbs to the city and the governor of Philipopolis hurried to the scene in order to solve the conflict, unarmed and accompanied only by his retinue. Flushed with wine and rage, the Germans attacked them with anger, thinking that they wanted to revenge the murder of a member of their community. The Greeks hastily retreated and later came back armed with bowls and cleared the outskirts of the drunken knights.[86]

In one way or another, the crusaders inevitably came in contact with the local population and had encounters with different peoples, representatives of other cultures and beliefs which remained in their memory, as the crusaders' chronicles show. In general, we can say that the crusades expanded the intellectual horizon of medieval people with constant migrations and movements in space which changed the system of medieval ideas. Undoubtedly, the stable medieval world received even greater mobility with the discovery of a sea route to the Holy Land.

Therefore, let us turn to the accounts of the sea journeys. An approximate sea route was known already to the first pilgrims to Palestine. Before 1000, pilgrims usually used to embark on a journey to the Holy Land from South Italian sea ports (Salerno, Taranto, Amalfi and Bari). In 1100-1200, pilgrims left for Palestine from the ports of Messina, Marseille, Brindisi and Barletta and crossed the Dardanelles on Byzantine vessels. Another route led through the channel of Otranto which connects the Ionic and Adriatic seas. The crusaders crossed the channel on vessels hired from Norman Sicilians and preceded to Egypt and Syria afterwards.[87] In 1241, King Louis IX built the port of Aigues-Mort which became the main transit point for the sea voyages to the Holy Land. From the port of Aigues-Mort the crusaders crossed the Mediterranean Sea. In the fourteenth century, Pseudo-Brocardus tried to summarize the experience of medieval travellers and wrote that pilgrims most often embarked on the sea journeys from the ports of Aigues-Mort, Nice and Marseille. With time, the sea route to Palestine prevailed due to the crusades. It is no coincidence that me-

[85] Ibid.: *Scelusque unius omnibus imputant, dicentes quod eos occidere Graeci veneno volebant ...*

[86] Ibid.: *Turbatur urbs tumultu suburbii, et dux cum turba suorum ut sedaret turbam foris inermis sed festinus egreditur. Turbatus autem a vino et furore oculus Alemannorum non arma videt, sed cursum. Unde causa pacis accurrentibus occurrunt irati, putantes a se homicidii vindictam exigi. Illi autem fugientes in urbem recepti sunt ...*

[87] See Michel Balard, "Les Transports des Occidentaux vers les Colonies du Levant au Moyen âge," in *Maritime Aspects of Navigation*, ed. Klaus Friedland, Quellen und Darstellungen zur Hansischen Geschichte, Neue Folge XXXIV (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1991), 4-5; Jean Richard, "Le Transport d'Outremer des Croisés et des Pèlerins (XII-XV siècles)," in *Orient et Occident au Moyen Âge: Contacts et Relations (XII-XV siècles)* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1976), 27-30.

dieval sources referred to the crusades as to *passagium ultramarinum* or *passagium magnum*, and underlined the maritime character of these journeys.

Only a few were brave enough to overcome the fears of unexpected storms, the unreliability of transportation means and other dangers awaiting the pilgrims. In fact, sea travels were mated with exceptional risks. Moreover, the sea expeditions were extremely long and their duration depended on many different factors such as climate, necessary stops in major ports, and seasons (particularly in regard to winter breaks). William of Rubruck wrote to Saint Louis (1226-1270), "There is no need to subject yourself to dangers of the sea and rely on the mercy of sailors,"[88] The perception of the marine elements was symbolical, which divided them into good and bad elements. This perception was common not only among the sailors and coastal population who encountered the sea on a regular basis, but also among those who did not have any experience in dealing with the sea. Thus, a maritime historian, Michel Mollat du Jourdain, writes that for medieval people the sea was the source of life as well as the vale of death.[89] Sea travels were associated with a number of superstitious fears. These journeys seemed to be so dangerous that they were sometimes perceived as penitential pilgrimages (*causa poenitentiae*), as they were often waged by people burdened by sins. Before setting their foot on board, the pilgrims spent long hours praying, confessed their sins and gave religious oaths. Jean de Joinville, the biographer of Saint Louis, who took part in the Seventh Crusade, wrote that only the bravest ones could subject themselves to the dangers of the sea if not only for deadly sins, because you never knew whether you would find yourself on the bottom of the sea the next morning.[90]

Pseudo-Brocardus told his readers that the French and Germans had the biggest difficulties during sea journeys and enumerated in detail all the difficulties posed by maritime expeditions: sea waves and storms which made people feel more dead than alive; rapid weather changes; stench of the sea; tasteless and coarse food, sometimes even smelly and spoiled; congestion and other inconveniences which provoked various diseases. The presence of horses, who also suffered from the sea stench and weather changes, aggravated the bad smell on ships.[91] Yet the main trouble, according to Pseudo-Brocardus, were incredible

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[88] Michel Mollat du Jourdain, "Problèmes navals de l'histoire de croisade," *Cahiers de Civilisation Mediévale* 10/3-4 (1967): 360.

[89] Idem, *Europa und das Meer* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1993), 240.

[90] Jean de Sire de Joinville, *Histoire de Saint Louis*, ed. Nancy De Wailly (Paris: Didot, 1874), 127: "...cil est bien fol hardis, qui se ose mettre en tel peril atout autrui chedel ou en pechée mortel; car l'on se dort le soir là où on ne sait se l'on se traouvera ou font de la mer au matin ..." In the Middle Ages the fear to die in the sea was aggravated by a widespread belief that the drowned will not be able to come to the Last Judgment, as their bodies cannot be found in the depths of the sea. See Mollat du Jourdain, *Europa und das Meer*, 244.

[91] [Pseudo-]Brocardus, *Directorium ad passagium faciendum*, vol. 2, 411-412: *Habet enim difficultatem quantum ad (omnes) homines et specialiter quantum ad Gallicos et Teotonicos, qui in mari non fuerint assueti; ad motum enim maris et agitaciones varias et*

and unpredictable storms which caused body weaknesses and made pilgrims either prolong their journeys or return home halfway.[92] All the sea travellers dreamt only about a safe journey and if they managed to reach their destination in good health, they perceived it as a miracle. Thus, the Anglo-Saxon pilgrim Saewulf, who did not have to experience a shipwreck during the journey, wrote: "I beg you my dearest friends to applaud with your hands high up; exclaim with me your joy to God because he had mercy on me during my journey. Blessed be his name, now and forever!"[93] Jacques de Vitry, another famous pilgrim of the thirteenth century, participant of the Fifth Crusade, also reached the Holy Land by ship. Before setting his foot on ship he wrote to his friends: "Alive and safe, I have set my foot on ship together with my companions and luggage. As to you, constantly pray for me and my friends so that God brings us to the port of Acre."[94]

What was the everyday life of pilgrims on sea journeys like, which preparations had they to complete before leaving? The future passenger had to reserve a place on a ship in advance, sign an agreement with a ship-owner in Marseille, Bari or other transit points[95] and then provide himself with the provision necessary for the journey.[96] Places on the ship differed in comfort depending on the status and wealth of journeymen. A so-called "paradise" and two topsides, so called "castelli", located usually at the stern and bow of a ship, were the most prestigious types of cabins available. The rest of the cabins, between the stern and mast, were reserved for less demanding passengers. The luggage was stored in the underwater part of a ship (*cumbae pereginorum*). Usually, pilgrims took all necessary food on board starting with flour and finishing with malmsey, but they also sometimes used galley services.[97]

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procellas nimium affliguntur et efficiuntur sepius sine sensu, ita quod frequenter judicaro possunt mortui plusquam vivi. Preter hoc subita mutacio aeris, fetor maris, cibaria insipid atque grossa, aque fetide et corrupte, pressura hominum, stricture loci, suricies leci et cetera (talia multa nimis) ...

[92] Ibid., 412: *Sunt eciam aliquando tempestates incredibiles, insperate, ex quibus sequitur debilitas corporum, defeccio virium, depericio virtutum, fractio animorum, propter que ab impedimento tam sancta vie proposito plurimi retardantur vel a jam incepto foristam revocantur.*

[93] *Peregrinationes Tres: Saewulf, John of Würzburg, Theodoricus*, ed. R.B.C Huygens, 61-62: *Modo vos obsecro, omnes amici mei dilectissimi, expansis in altum manibus plaudite, iubilate Deo una mecum in voce exultationis, quia fecit mecum in omni itinere meo misericordiam qui potens est : sit nomen eius benedictum ex hoc nunc et usque in saecula ...*

[94] *Lettres de Jacques de Vitry*, ed. R.B.C. Huygens (Leiden: Brill, 1960), 78: *Navem autem sanus et incolumis cum sociis meis et rebus meis salvis ingressus sum ; vos autem instanter orate pro me et pro meis, ut deus perducat nos ad portum Acconensis civitatis.*

[95] Details of interactions between passengers and boat owners in Marseille can be found in Louis Blancard, *Documents inédits sur le commerce de Marseille au Moyen âge* (Paris: Barlatier-Feissat, Père et fils, 1884).

[96] Balard, "Les Transports des Occidentaux ;" Richard, "Le Transport d'Outremer."

[97] Richard, "Le Transport d'Outremer."

In order to understand how pilgrims traveled across the sea one has to address witness accounts. Fortunately for historians, we have at our disposal the letters of Bishop Jacques de Vitry sharing his experience as a journeyman. In 1217, he arrived in the port of Genoa, famous for its well-built ships of high quality. These vessels were able to sustain even winter and allowed passengers to proceed in their travels without seasonal breaks and make use of conservation qualities of the winter months in regard to their provisions. Jacques de Vitry rented a ship in Genoa for four thousand livres. With this money the bishop purchased five places for himself and his companions:

> 1/4 of the topside (*castellum*) where I will eat, study my books and retreat in the afternoon, in case of no storm; one more room, where I will sleep at night together with my companions, another room where I will store my clothes and weekly food supplies, and one more room for servants, who will cook for me. I have also rented another space where I will place my horses. In the lower part of the ship I will keep wine, meat and other kinds of food, which will be enough for me for three months.[98]

It is interesting, that apart from cabins for himself and his travel companions and a room for provisions and belongings, Jacques de Vitry also rented a room for his horses. As a general rule, medieval ships provided rooms for horses, as the travellers usually took them on the journeys hoping to use them as means of transportation later. The most common type of sea transport, the "huissier", had a special room with an opening door where the horses were placed. Jean de Joinville recounted the procedure of placing horses on a ship in his memoirs. The first day on board, all the horses were placed inside the "hussier" under closed doors.[99] After the horses were loaded, the ship could start the journey. This moment was also captured in the works of Joinville:

> …our master mariner called to his sailors, who were in the prow of the ship, and said: 'Is your work made ready?' And they answered: 'Aye, Sir; let the clerks and the priests come forward.' As they had come, he cried to them, 'Sing, in the name of God!' And they sang with one voice *Veni Creator Spiritus*. And he cried to his mariners, 'Set sail, in the name of God!' And so they did. And in a little while the wind took the sail, and carried us away from sight of land, so that we saw naught but sky and

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[98] *Lettres de Jacques de Vitry*, 77-78: *Quinque loca michi et meis comparavi, scilicet quartam partem castelli superioris, in qua manducarem et in libris meis studerem et de die, nisi cum tempestas esset in mari, manarem; conduxi unam cameram, in qua cum sociis meis de nocte dormirem, conduxi aliam cameram, in qua vestimenta mea reponerem et victualia michi per septimanam necessaria collocarem, conduxi aliam cameram, in qua servi mei iacerent et cibum michi prepararent, conduxi locum alium, in quo equi mei, quod trasire feci, reponerentur. In vero navis vinum meum et biscoctum et carnes et alia fere ad tres menses victui meo sufficientia collocari feci ...*

[99] Jean de Sire de Joinville, *Histoire de Saint Louis*, 71: *Le jour que nous entrâmes dans nos vaisseaux, l'on fit ouvrir la porte de vaisseau, et l'on mit dedans tous nos chevaux que nous devions mener outre-mer, et puis l'on reforma la porte et on la lucha bien ...*

water; and each day the wind carried us farther away from the country where we had been born.[100]

Historians wanting to know details of the everyday life of sea travellers will find themselves limited by scarce source information. The sources contain only little material about their sea travels, hardships which awaited them and what they had to overcome on the journeys. Albert of Aachen mentions in his work a sea expedition organized by the brother of Magnus, king of Norway, who left his country with an army of ten thousand men on 40 ships and spent two years furrowing the sea.[101] But we do not know any details of this two-year wandering across the sea and the difficulties they had to face during the journey. The chronicler gives only one particular piece of information. According to him, Magnus made a stop at Ascalon expecting the local population to enter with him in a battle. When they exhibited no desire to fight the Scandinavian ruler, the bellicose Magnus was forced to proceed to Jaffa and from there to Jerusalem.[102]

Despite the general lack of information, sometimes it is possible to reconstruct certain critical moments of dangerous sea journeys on the basis of the pilgrims' notes. Let us turn again to the letters of Jacques de Vitry. As mentioned before, in 1217 he boarded a ship in Genoa and left for Syria. Very soon the travellers had to confront a very serious, terrifying danger[103]: two ships collided and the vessel of Jacques de Vitry and his companions nearly crashed on the cliffs. The travellers experienced a terrible shock: **"**A great cry arose," the bishop wrote in one of his letters, "and in both ships people were heard weeping with tears and confessing their sins."[104] Pilgrims took off their clothes, attached all valuable possessions, gold and silver, to their bodies and set off to swim in the direction of a vessel which they considered stronger.[105] Fortunately, all went well, and the ship of the bishop and his fellow travellers in collision with another vessel strongly lurched leftward and managed to pass around the rock on the right. The second ship which seemed to be threatened with an imminent risk of crashing on neighbouring cliffs escaped unharmed "through God's grace".[106]

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[100] Jean de Joinville, *The History of St. Louis*, tr. and ed. Natalis de Willy (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), bok II, chapter XXVIII, 38.

[101] Albertus Aquensis, *Historia Hierosolymitana*, 675: *Interea frater Regis de Norwegiae, Magnus nomine, in plurimo apparatus, in multa armature, in manu robusta, in buzis sexaginta, in decem milibus virorum pugnatorum, per biennium in circuitu spaciosi maris a regno suo enavigans.*

[102] Ibid.

[103] *Lettres de Jacques de Vitry*, 80: *... magnum et valde metuendum periculum.*

[104] Ibid., 81: *Tunc clamor magnus factus est omnium, et lacrime plorantium et pecata sua confitentium in utraque navi audiebantur.*

[105] Ibid.: *Ex una autem navi mutuo persiliebant in aliam, secundum quod unus nave, alteram credeat fortiorem et alius aliam; alii vestimenta sua depontebat et quod habebant in auro et argento, si forte natando evadere possent, sibi alligabant.*

[106] Ibid., 80: *Ex violentia autem collisionis navis nostra, ad sinistram partem aliquantulum obliquata, ad exteram partem saxum reliquit, navis vero reliqua cum iam vicine scopulo*

Encounters with danger left medieval travellers in strong commotion of spirits: they repented their sins and prayed to God to save them. Having endured the calamities, the ship of Jacques de Vitry made a necessary stop at one of the Greek islands. All pilgrims lacking provisions were disembarked; the pious bishop offered a prayer for their well-being and for escaping mortal danger, and the ship set off.[107] However, the adventures of Jacques de Vitry did not end there; another ordeal was to take place. God sent them the strongest storm:[108] in the bishop's words, the waves were so strong that the fore part of the ship "was one moment lifted up towards the stars, another sinking into the depths."[109] The storm continued for two days and two nights and many could not withstand the windflaws, while others could not drink or eat out of fear;[110] no one dared to kindle lights on the ship.[111] Pilgrims began considering means of procuring drinking water if the situation was not likely to change. In order to save the water supplies, the travellers spread canvases under the rain, which saturated them with water and used them to quench thirst.[112] The situation made a painful impression on the travellers; many of those who "mired in sins", according to Jacques de Vitry, came to him for confession in tears.[113] Merchants and nobles came to the bishop to take the cross from his hands and cried out to God to send them fair weather and wind.[114] Indeed, several days later the sea calmed down, the travellers reached Sicily, then sailed to Crete and finally arrived at Acre.

The ships often suffered a wreck in the Mediterranean because of frequent weather changes. Some storms etched in the memory of travelers. Storm accounts can be found in the travel notes of Saewulf. His pilgrimage followed the route from the town of Monopoli near Bari to Jaffa and then to Jerusalem and is described in details in his account. Saewulf wrote that after the ship had left the port of Monopoli on July 13, 1102, the disaster time (*hora aegyptiaca*)

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confringenda et submergenda foret, submissis veilis et projectis anchoris substitit et quasi miraculose per gratiam Dei evasit illesa.

[107] Ibid., 81: *Dominus autem navis nostre volebat omnes paupers de navi nostril eicere et in insula reliquere eo, quod victualium sufficientiam non habebat, ego vero valde supplicabam et quod adhuc misericordiam dei expectaret et paupers mortis periculo non exponeret.*

[108] Ibid.: *dominus immisit nobis subto tempestatem validam.*

[109] Ibid.: *Prora autem navis nostre nunc attollebatur ad sidera, nunc in abissum mergebatur.*

[110] Ibid., 82: *Hec autem tempestas per duos dies et duas noctes continue duravit ita, quod quidam ex nostris, dum ventorum impetum vix possent sustinere, quidam autem per timore mortis non manducabant nec bibebant.*

[111] Ibid.: *... nullus enim in navi nostra audebatur ignem accendere.*

[112] Ibid.: *Quoniam vero timebamus ne aqua nobis deficeret, linteamina nostra ad pluviam extendebamus ita, quod duplex commodum reportabamus: dum linteamina lostra ablueremus et aquam ablutionis biberemus.*

[113] Ibid.: *... multi enim cum lacrimis ad confessionem venerunt, ui per multis annos in peccatis permanserant.*

[114] Ibid.: *Meractores autem et potentes signum cruces de manu mea receperunt, quibus ad Dominum clamantibus immisit nobis dominus aeris serenitatem et venti commodum ...*

began. No sooner than they had left the coast, the ship suffered a wreck on the third mile and was drifted to the coast of Brindisi.[115] After embarking from Brindisi, the travellers soon again had to live out a day of misfortunes (*dies aegyptiaca*), when a storm suddenly attacked the ship and only thanks to the help of divine providence they reached one of the Greek islands.[116] They visited a number of Greek islands, including Patmos and Rhodes, and arrived at Cyprus. When they were leaving the port of Cyprus, a strong storm began and for a week they could not leave the harbour; the contrary wind carried their ship back to Cyprus and for seven days and nights they were in such danger that they almost lost all hope.[117] The whole week the pilgrims prayed and called upon God's mercy, and naturally only because of that they survived in the end. Early in the morning, they experienced immense happiness when seeing the port of Jaffa after all despair they had to come through.[118] When the ship of Saewulf was already close to the shore, he received a sign from heaven. A voice instructed him to come out to the shore that night so that a storm would not take place.[119] Giving heed to the voice of God, Saewulf rented a small boat and hurried to step ashore. When the travellers were stepping ashore, waves spread on the sea surface, grew higher and turned in a strong storm.[120] Luckily by that time they already had managed to reach the shore safely. They spent the night in the town and recuperated. When they woke up, they heard sounds coming from the sea and people's outcries. The travelers went to look at the sea and saw waves "higher than mountains" and a lamentable picture of numerous bodies of drowned men and women, lying on the shore, while the surface of the sea was covered with ship wreckages.[121] Saewulf writes that "one could not hear anything except for the sea roaring and ships cracking. These sounds shouted down even the outcries of the people and clamors of the crowd."[122] Bigger vessels managed to stand out with the help of anchors and ropes, but they were con-

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[115] *Peregrinationes Tres*, 59: *III Idus Iulii, hora egyptiaca sicut nobis postmodum evenit: nisi divina nos defenderet clementia, omnes summersi essemus.*

[116] Ibid., 59: *Postea vero invimus Brandic ibique iterum die aegyptiaca.*

[117] Ibid., 61: *... sed septem noctes tanta tempestate et periculo fuimus devicti, quod fere omni spe evadendi private essemus.*

[118] Ibid.: *Mane quoque surgente sole apparuit etiam litus de potu Ioppen coram oculis nostris, et quia tanta turbatio periculi nos in desolatione contristavit, gaudium improvisum et desperatum laetitiam in nobis centuplicavit.*

[119] Ibid., 62: *Nam eadem die qua appulimus quidam dixit michi, ut credo defice: 'Domine, hodie litus ascende, ne forte, hac nocte vel diluculo tempestate supervenientes, cras ascendere non possis.*

[120] Ibid.: *Me autem ascendente mare turbabur, crevit commotion et facta est tempestatas valida.*

[121] Ibid., 61: *Dum enim illuc pervenimus, vidimus tempestatem altitudinem superexcellere montium, corpora quidem innumerabilia hominum utriusque sexus summersorum in litore miserrime iacentia aspeximus.*

[122] Ibid.: *Sed qui preter rugitum maris et fragorem navium quicquam audire potuit? Clamorem etenim populi sonitumque omnium turbare excessit.*

stantly jolted by waves. But before too long, anchors broke, ropes ruptured and the ships were lifted by the power of the waves, drifted ashore or on the rocks, where hitting one another they flew into pieces and their remains were carried away by the storm.[123] Saewulf watched people stricken by fear drowning in the sea and people trying to grasp ship masts and being killed by their blows. It was the day, when thirty ships sunk and thousand people died: "No one has ever seen a larger disaster in one day. Who would be so cruel and have a heart of flint as not to cry seeing all this?"[124]

In 1100–1200, medieval people extensively mastered their sea travel skills and learned how to avoid obstacles and disasters. The sea route to the Holy Land became popular not only with powerful European sovereigns, including Richard the Lionheart, Sigurd, and Frederick Barbarossa, who were in possession of personal fleets, but also with less important pilgrims who required services of local ports. The Templars played an important role in the sea communication: *hospitia* owned by the order awaited pilgrims in Bari, Brindisi, Marseille and other towns to accommodate the travelers before embarking on a *passagium*.[125] From these towns the Templars took pilgrim and military groups as well as single travellers to the shores of Syria and Egypt. In the thirteenth century, pilgrims still preferred the sea route to the Holy Land: Burchard, William of Tripoli, Wilbrand of Oldenburg and other pilgrims who left accounts of their journeys, reached the shores of Palestine on ships.[126] Eventually attained good orientation in the ocean allowed shortening the duration of the journey and by the end of the eleventh century it took only from 15 up to 25 days to sail from Marseille or Brindisi to Acre.[127] On April 10, 1189, Richard the Lionheart left Messina and only on June 8 arrived at Acre. In 1248 it took 23 days for King Louis IX to reach Limassol from Aigues-Mort.[128] Sea travels became more and more popular with time and the chroniclers had the full right to call the Mediterranean Sea *Mare nostrum*.[129] Evidently the acquired empirical experience helped

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[123] Ibid., 63: *Non diu illud aspeximus antequam violentis undarum vel fluctuum anchorae lapserunt, funes vero rumpebantur, naves autem, severitate undarum laxatae, omni spe evadendi erepta nunc in altum elevatae, nunc in ima detrusae paulatim de profunditate tandem in arenam vel in scopulos proiciebantur; ibi vero de latere in latus miserrime collidebantur, ibi minutatim a tempestate dilacerabantur.*

[124] Ibid.: *...qualis oculus intuentium tam durus atque lapideus a fletu se posset retinere?*

[125] Balard, "Les Transports des Occidentaux," 27-39.

[126] *Peregrinatores medii aevi quatuor: Burchardus de Monte Sion, Ricoldus de Monte Crucis, Odiricus de Foei Julii, Wildebrandus de Oldenburg*, ed. Johann Christian Moritz Laurent (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1864). These accounts have almost no information about the journey, but instead contain detailed descriptions of shrines.

[127] Charles-Emmanuel Dufourcq, "L'impossible voyage en Terre Sainte" in *Les Croisades* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1988), 23.

[128] Mollat du Jourdain, *Europa und das Meer*, 351.

[129] *Fulcheri Carnotensis Historia Hierosolymitana*, lib. III, cap. LIX, 812.

people to overcome their superstitious fears connected with the sea.[130] And yet …

Let us turn to the work of Abbot Rothelin who described the history of the Holy Land from 1229 until 1261.[131] The chapter "On Dangers and Storms at Sea" tells in detail about the dangers of sea travel. It tells that the most dangerous menace awaiting sea travellers are the sirens. These chimerical creatures lull the sailors to sleep, attack the ships, tear them to pieces and drag them down under water. The work of Abbot Rothelin instructs sea travellers to stop up their ears, arm themselves and shoot at them with handbows and crossbows while they are still far away. When they come nearer and climb aboard the ship, the sailors should strike them with knives and axes, with swords and other weapons.[132] Abbot Rothelin warns sea travellers about another peril of the sea, that is, Charybdis:

> No boat or any other earthly thing can go near it without being instantly pulled to it, swallowed up and overwhelmed, sucked down into the abyss with the waters of the night.[133]

But these are not all the dangers of the sea awaiting sailors. There is another danger: the great high rocks which appear above the water and in some places there are many which do not appear at all. When strong winds drive a ship towards them, it is in great danger of being shattered and sunk. Sometimes it happens that the prow of the leading ship dashes against a hidden rock and the others hold back and sail across the sea. That is how ships are sometimes lost.[134]

However this is still not the entire list of sea hazards. There are great mountains and adamant rocks in the sea; some of them can be seen and some of them lie deep underneath the water. They magnetize ships by holding to the bolts and iron nails in the vessels and make the ships immovable. Rothelin repeats his refrain, "Ships are lost this way."[135] The author admonishes sailors to be wise and cautious in contact with these dangers. As one sees, the everyday experience of sea travel did not manage to disperse numerous myths and superstitions associated with the sea.

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The everyday life of travellers is truly an inexhaustible subject. In this essay, I have presented only a selection of details regarding material difficulties

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[130] See on fears and superstitions related to the sea: Mollat du Jourdain, *Europa und das Meer*, 240-50.

[131] Janet Shirley, *Crusaders' Syria in Thirteenth Century. The Rothelin Continuation of the Historia of William of Tyre with part of the Eccles or Acre text* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Company, 1999).

[132] Ibid., 70.

[133] Ibid.

[134] Ibid.

[135] Ibid., 70-1.

mated with travels to the Holy Land. I attempted to study methods which medieval travellers used in exploring the space, the state of off-shore communications, and the means of transportation. The research leads to the conclusion that the space was perceived by pilgrims and crusaders not only as a given geographical one, but also as a spiritual matter. Medieval people received their encounters with unknown space with fear and flurry: mountains, forests, strong currents and especially the sea, the most unpredictable matter among them, were perceived by travlelers with superstitious fears.

Nevertheless, expeditions to the Holy Land in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries gave impetus to the exploration of space and facilitated the accumulation of knowledge of big distances, which undoubtedly were of great value to new generations of travellers. Sea and overland expeditions to Christian shrines had largely extended the geographic horizons of medieval society and their knowledge about the world. The Fifth Crusade was to become a new impetus to the development of travelling. Europeans launched expeditions to Central Asia and Far East in search of the kingdom of John the Presbyter and encountered yet new countries and peoples.[136] These new contacts significantly broadened the borders of the insular medieval world. These were not anymore pious or practical pursuits which defined these travels. Travellers began to be motivated by the strife for knowledge, that is, *curiositas*, as it was known among medieval people. Apparently this shift signalized the birth of a true phenomenon of travelling. Jacques de Vitry reflected on this change in his *Historia Hierosolymitana*, when he wrote that some people travelled to the Holy Land not out of piety or devotion, but entirely out of mere curiosity and love for novelty, wanting nothing more than to see unknown lands and learn more about all the "absurd and fulsome stories they had heard about the East."[137] To conclude, it seems that without the everyday experience of travelling acquired by pilgrims in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the medieval world would have come to the understanding of travelling and its objectives much later.

[136] See Leonardo Olschki, *Marco Polo's Asia; An Introduction To His 'Description of the World' Called 'Il Milione'* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960); Jean Richard, "L'Extrême Orient Légendaire au Moyen âge: Roi David et Prêtre Jean," *Annales d'Ethiophie* 2 (1957): 225-244.

[137] Jacques de Vitry, "Historia Hierosolymitana," in *Gesta Dei per Francos*, ed. J. Bongars (Hannover, 1611), cap. LXXXII, 1097.

MEDIEVAL TRAVEL IN RUSSIAN RESEARCH

MEDIUM AEVUM QUOTIDIANUM

SONDERBAND XXVII

MEDIEVAL TRAVEL IN RUSSIAN RESEARCH

Edited by

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Translated from Russian by

Irina Savinetskaya

Krems 2011

GEDRUCKT MIT UNTERSTÜTZUNG

DER ABTEILUNG KULTUR UND WISSENSCHAFT DES AMTES DER

NIEDERÖSTERREICHISCHEN LANDESREGIERUNG

niederösterreich kultur

– ISBN 978-3-901094-29-6
– ISSN 1029-0737

Herausgeber: Medium Aevum Quotidianum. Gesellschaft zur Erforschung der materiellen Kultur des Mittelalters, Körnermarkt 13, A–3500 Krems, Österreich. Für den Inhalt verantwortlich zeichnen die Autoren, ohne deren ausdrückliche Zustimmung jeglicher Nachdruck, auch in Auszügen, nicht gestattet ist.
Druck: KOPITU Ges. m. b. H., Wiedner Hauptstraße 8-10, A–1050 Wien.

Table of Contents

Preface

The present special volume of *Medium Aevum Quotidianum* is another result of the cooperation with the editors of the Russian journal *Одиссей: человек в истории*. It is the third time that we got the chance to offer translations of contributions published in *Одиссей* which deal with aspects of daily life and material culture of the Middle Ages.[1] We are happy to make again some results of Russian research available to a broader, international audience this way.

This time, we publish three studies selected from the 2009 volume of the Russian journal that concentrated on the main topic 'Travel as a Cultural and Historical Phenomenon' ('Путешествие как историко-культурный феномен').[2] The contributions deal with travelling in different parts of the Middle Ages. Fedor D. Prokofiev analyses reality and allegory in the eighth-/ninth-century *Navigatio Sancti Brendani.* Svetlana I. Luchitskaya studies the daily life of crusaders and pilgrims travelling to the Holy Land, mainly in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Olga I. Togoeva deals with the role that travel plays in the sources about the life of Joan of Arc. The articles offer new results in a field of medieval studies that has found particular interest in Medieval Studies during recent years.

Gerhard Jaritz

[1] See Gerhard Jaritz, Svetlana I. Luchitskaya and Judith Rasson, eds., *Images in Medieval and Early Modern Culture (Approaches in Russian Historical Research)*, Medium Aevum Quotidianum, Sonderband XIII (Krems, 2003); Grigorii V. Bondarenko, Some Specific Features of the Perception of Early Medieval Irish Feasts , *Medium Aevum Quotidianum* 54 (2006), 7-19; Vladimir Ia. Petrukhin, The "Feast" in Medieval Russia, *ibidem*, 20-28.

[2] Moscow: Nauka, 2010.