

and the peasants there knew of it for a long time, but considering them as idols kept them buried."

The other one seems to be of much more interest, and is also much larger. As the camera was so very small—the plates only  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide and 7 long—it could not be taken in one time, but had to be made in two pieces, Nos. 3 and 4. The stone is about 10 feet long, a little more than 2 feet broad, and about (without the figures) 10 inches thick; on its bottom, where it forms a pedestal in two sets much thicker, as it will be seen on No. 3. On the pedestal no inscription was found. The kneeling figure Atlas cannot be in full human size—although the Jew told me so—but he said also, his eyes and whole face in an expression at his load (on the shoulder) to be very heavy—the mouth open so that he could put in his four fingers, the left arm injured. His load is a ball or globe, but behind not round but one with the slab on it stands an angel (or genius in full human size, arms and countenance greatly injured—all which is mentioned one and the same stone. So it seems these stones formed once a kind of pilaster in a temple, etc.

The Jew told me, when the figures are taken out he will go down again with a larger camera, and then he hopes to give better photographs. As the matter now stands nothing can be done, and it seems the Pasha is waiting for orders from Constantinople.

No. 5 was tried to take a view from a little of the side, and in one piece it helps only to a little better understanding of the other view (Nos. 3 and 4).

The site on which these figures were found and now lying underground is, according to the description of the young man, inside the ancient town of Askalon, about the middle. As I had no plan at hand when I conversed with him I could not fix the place, but will try to see the place in the Memoirs, and then speak again with the young man about the site—of which I will report in my next.

C. SCHICK.

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## PALESTINE ACCORDING TO THE ARAB GEOGRAPHERS AND TRAVELLERS.

DURING the course of the present year, it is hoped to bring out a work containing all the information to be found in the books of the Arab Geographers and Travellers who have written about Palestine and Syria. My original intention was to have limited the translations to Palestine proper, but the boundary line was not easy to fix. Palestine is but a province of Syria in the Muslim administration, and further remembering that the description left us by the Arab geographers of the various cities in the northern province of Syria is of great interest for the Crusading period, of which some of them were contemporaries, I have deemed it advisable to include in my work everything that had to do with Syria (As Shâm), in its widest sense, from Tarsus and Malatia on the north to

Rafh and the Tih Desert on the south. The eastern and western limits are fixed naturally by the Mediterranean and the great sand-sea of the Arabian desert.

As is well known, the Muslims did not begin to write books till fully two centuries had elapsed after the Era of the Flight; and our earliest geographer (who is, by the way, of Persian nationality) composed his book in the year 250 A.H., or about the middle of the ninth century A.D. From this period, however, down to the end of the fifteenth century of our reckoning, the names of authors follow each other at very short intervals, and we have over a score of writers, all Muslim, and nearly all writing in Arabic, who have undertaken to describe for us the various provinces of Syria and Palestine.

The accompanying list will give an idea of the mass of material that is available. It must, however, be premised, that in every case we have not to do with the result of personal observation and original information. The Arab writers plagiarised each from his predecessor to a very remarkable degree. Each tried to make his work as complete as possible by incorporating therein all he could gather from previous reading, as well as from personal observation when he had himself visited the places described; and this constant plagiarism, though it decreases the amount of fresh information, is very valuable for purposes of comparison, and for rectifying mistakes of copyists and filling in lacunæ.

## LIST OF GEOGRAPHERS AND TRAVELLERS.

	A.D.
1. Ibn Khurdâdbih, wrote about....	864
2. Belâdhuri....	869
3. Kudamah....	880
4. Ya'kûbi ....	891
5. Ibn al Fakh ....	903
6. Ibn 'Abd Rabbih....	<i>circa</i> 913
7. Mas'ûdi ....	943
8. Istakhri ....	951
9. Ibn Haukal ....	978
10. Mukaddasi ....	985
11. Nâsiri Khusrau ....	1052
12. Idrisi ....	1154
13. 'Ali of Herat ....	1173
14. Ibn Jubair ....	1185
15. Yakût ....	1225
16. Dimashki ....	<i>circa</i> 1300
17. Abu 'l Fidâ ....	1321
18. Ibn Batûtah ....	1355
19. The author of the "Muthir" ....	1351
20. Shams ad Dîn Suyûti ..	1470
21. Mujir ad Dîn ....	1496

It may perhaps be interesting to give a cursory note on each of the above mentioned writers, that our readers may have some idea of what manner of men they were, and of the nature of the work each performed.

1. Ibn Khurdádbih the first name on the list, was, as before noted, a Persian by birth ; as in fact his father's name shows, for *Khurdád-bih* signifies in old Persian "Good gift of the Sun," or as the Greeks would have said, "Heliodorus." Ibn Khurdádbih was born about the commencement of the third century of the Hejrah (corresponding to the ninth of our era) and flourished at the court of the Abbaside Caliph Al Mu'tamid at Bagdad. Under his government Ibn Khurdádbih held the office of Chief of the Post in the province of Jibál, the ancient Media, and with a view, doubtless, of instructing his subordinatés, compiled the Handbook of Routes and Countries which has come down to us as one of the earliest of Muslim geographical treatises.

2. The work of Beládhurí is of an entirely different order, and only in a very secondary sense geographical. His is the earliest historical account we possess of the "Conquests" of the Muslims. He was born at Bagdad, and receiving his education there during the days of the great Al Mamún, lived to enjoy the favour of the Caliphs Al Mutawakkil and Al Musta'in. He wrote his great "Book of the Conquest" about the year 869 A.D., and died in 892. His work is unfortunately almost barren of geographical description, the names of the places only being given and nothing more ; all detail is confined to the ordering of the battles and the accounts of those who took part in the action.

3. Kudámah, who wrote a small book on the Revenues of the Muslim Empire about the year 880 A.D., was of Christian origin, but like most of his compeers found it to his advantage to embrace Islam. He occupied the post of accountant in the Revenue Department at Bagdad, and we know nothing further of him but that he died in 948. His work on the revenue contains some interesting geographical notes.

4. Ya'kúbi (also called Ibn Wádhíh) was both historian and geographer. In his history, which was written as early as the year 871 A.D., he clearly states that the Dome of the Rock was the work of the Caliph 'Abd al Málik, and gives the reason that prompted him to construct it.<sup>1</sup> His geography was written some twenty years later than his first work, or about the year 891. It unfortunately has not reached us in a perfect state, but the section relating to Syria is in tolerably good preservation. The work is curious, for it gives notes on the settlements made by the various Arab tribes who had migrated into Syria, otherwise it is little more than a bare list of provinces with their chief cities, and only interesting for the information of what were great towns in those days.

Of Ya'kúbi's biography but little is known. It would appear that he was born in Egypt, passed the earlier part of his life in Khurasán and

<sup>1</sup> A translation of this passage and of some others giving early notices of Jerusalem will be found in my paper in the *Quarterly Statement* for April, 1887.

the further east, and came back to spend his latter years on the banks of the Nile in the land of his birth.

5. Ibn al Fakih, the author of a very curious geographical miscellany, was a native of Hamadân, in western Persia, and flourished during the Caliphate of Al Mo'tadhid at Bagdad. He wrote his work about the year 903 A.D., but unfortunately we only possess it in the form of a somewhat arbitrary abridgment made by a certain 'Ali Shaizari, of whom little more is known than his name. Ibn al Fakih gives us a careful description of the Haram Area at Jerusalem, and is also, so far as I know, the first Arab author who notices the great stones at Baalbek, of which he notes the measurements.

6. The next name on the list is that of a Spanish Arab, Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, born at Cordova in 860, and died in the same city in 940. He composed an extremely interesting historical work, extending to three volumes in the Cairo printed edition, giving us details that are found nowhere else of the life and manners and customs of the pre-Islamic Arabs and others. The book is named "The Collar of Unique Pearls," and in it there is a chapter describing in great detail the appearance of the Haram Area at Jerusalem. Whether or not the author ever visited the Holy City I have been unable to discover; but if his description is not from his own observations he must at least have borrowed it from someone who was capable of making good use of his eyes.<sup>1</sup>

7. Mas'ûdi is the author of the most entertaining historical work to be found in the whole range of Muslim literature. His "Meadows of Gold" begin with the Creation, and tell us all the Arabs knew of universal history down to the year 943, when the work was written. Mas'ûdi was born in Bagdad towards the end of the eighth century of our era. In his youth he travelled widely, visiting Multân and India, and passing through Persia a second time on his way to India and Ceylon, whence he returned to Bagdad *via* Madagascar. He travelled through Palestine in 926, and spent some time at Antioch; then went and settled in Egypt about the year 955, where he died a year later, at Fostat, now called Old Cairo. Spread up and down his numerous volumes of historic lore are many geographical notes, which are of considerable value, especially when it is remembered the early period at which the author wrote, his powers of observation, and his great learning.

8, 9. The names of Istakhrî (wrote 951) and Ibn Haukal (wrote 978) must be taken together, for the latter, who is by far the better known of the two, only brought out an emended and somewhat enlarged edition of the work of the former, giving it his own name. We have here to deal with the first systematic geography of the Arabs. It is not a mere road book, such as was Ibn Kurdâbih's, or a revenue list, as Kudamah's, but a sober description of each province in turn of the Muslim Empire, with its chief cities and notable places. Istakhrî, a native of Persepolis, as his name implies, wrote his book to explain the maps that had been drawn

<sup>1</sup> See the translation in *Quarterly Statement* for April, 1887.

up by a certain Balkhi, about the year 921, which maps are unfortunately not extant. Of Istakhrî and Ibn Haukal all that we know is that they were both by trade merchants, and that they travelled far and wide in the pursuit of commerce. All further biographical details are wanting.

10. Of Mukaddasi I need say little here, having already given details of his life and work in the preface to my translation of his account of Syria and Palestine, recently published by the Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society. He wrote in 985, and his description of the Holy Land and its cities is the more valuable from his being himself a native of Jerusalem, as indicated by his name, Al Mukaddasi, the Hierosolymnite.

11. Rather more than half a century later than Mukaddasi, and about half a century before the first Crusade, the Persian traveller, Nâsir-i-Khusrau, passed through Palestine on his way to Mecca. He was in Jerusalem in 1052, and his description of the Holy City and the Haram Area is most minute, and extremely valuable, as being the last we have of the holy places before the coming of the Crusaders. Further details I need not give here, since before long I hope to bring out a translation from the Persian original of the Palestine section of his diary, to be included in the same series that has published Mukaddasi. The British Museum possesses a minute but very beautiful MS. of his work, and by its aid I have been able, I think, to emend many of the obscure passages in the edition of the French *savant*, M. C. Schefer.

12. The geographer, Idrisi, is perhaps better known in the west than any other Arab writer on this subject. As long ago as 1592 the text was printed in Rome. His geography was written in 1154, at the request of the Norman king, Roger II, of Sicily, at whose court he resided. Idrisi was born at Ceuta, but of Spanish Arab parents. He travelled much, for he relates that he has seen the English and French coasts, and has lived at Lisbon. His description of Palestine is excellent, and that of Jerusalem in particular is interesting, for he wrote of it as it was during the occupation of the Crusaders. It would not, however, appear that he himself visited the Holy Land, and his information, therefore, must have been derived from the accounts that he obtained at the Court of Roger from books, and from those who had travelled in that country.

13. Another Muslim who has left us a description of sites in Palestine during Crusading times is 'Ali of Herat, who wrote in 1173 a small work on "The Places of Pilgrimage." Its most interesting section is that describing Hebron, wherein he gives an account of a visit to the Cave of Machpelah.<sup>1</sup> 'Ali of Herat, though of Persian origin, wrote in Arabic. The text of his work has not, as far as I know, ever been printed; but the Bodleian possesses a good MS. copy. 'Ali died at Aleppo in 1215.

14. In 1185, two years before Saladin reconquered Jerusalem, the northern part of Palestine was visited by the traveller Ibn Jubair, a Spanish Arab, born at Valencia in 1145. Ibn Jubair set out on his

<sup>1</sup> I have given a translation of Yakût's version of the story in my paper on Suyûtî.—J.R.A.S., vol. xix, 1887, April.

travels from Granada in 1183 ; he came first to Egypt, went up the Nile, and then across the desert to Aidhab, on the Red Sea, whence he reached Mecca, and subsequently Medina. Thence he crossed Arabia to Kufah and Bagdad (of which he has left a most interesting account), and travelling up the Tigris bank, crossed from Mosul to Aleppo, travelled down to Damascus (of which he has also given a detailed description), and thence on to Acre, where he took ship, and ultimately landed again on Spanish soil at Carthagená in 1185. Unfortunately for us he did not visit Jerusalem. He made two other journeys to the East subsequent to the one above mentioned, and on the return journey died at Alexandria, in Egypt. His description of the places he saw is lively and exact, although from the ornate style in which he wrote a literal translation of his diary would be tiresome reading.

15. For the immense extent of his labours and the great bulk of his writings Yakût has certainly the first rank among Muslim geographers. By birth a Greek and a slave, he was brought up and received a scientific education at Bagdad, in his master's house, who was a merchant. The details of his biography would take too long to recount here ; suffice it to say that at various periods of his wandering life he sojourned at Aleppo, Mosul, Arbela, and Marv, and that he fled from this latter city (in those days renowned for its numerous libraries) in 1220 on the advent of the armies of Jenghis Khân. Travelling across Persia and through Mesopotamia, he ultimately reached Syria, and settled down at Aleppo, in which city he died in 1229. His great geographical lexicon, which describes in alphabetical order every town and place of which Yakût could obtain any information throughout the many kingdoms of the Muslims, was completed in the year 1225. It is a storehouse of geographical information, the value of which it would be impossible to over-estimate, and since no translation has ever been attempted of the articles therein relating to Palestine and Syria I hope to bring to light much that is new by giving an English version of what the great geographer has to say about the cities and sites of the Holy Land.

After the days of Yakût there is indeed very little new to be learnt from the Arab geographers.

16. Dimashki, born in 1256 at Damascus (as his name implies), wrote about the year 1300 a very jejune description of his native land. He was a contemporary of Sultan Bibârs, and his work is of some value in connection with the Crusading Chronicles. He died at Safed in 1327.

17. His contemporary, Abu 'l Fidâ, some time Prince of Hamâh, and a collateral descendant of the great Saladin, is a geographer of far higher merit. His chapter on Syria and Palestine is for the most part not copied from books, for as he is describing his native country he writes from personal observation. The work was completed in 1321. Abu 'l Fidâ himself was born at Damascus in 1273. He lived under the Mamlûk Sultans Kalaun, Lajûn, and Malik en Nâsir, and was made Governor of Hamâh in 1310, in which city he died in 1331.

18. Ibn Batûtah, the Berber, may well take rank with the Venetian,

Marco Polo, for the marvellous extent of his journeyings. He was born at Tangiers about the year 1300, and at the age of twenty-five set out on his travels.

Of these he has left us a full description, written in the year 1355. His route in the barest outline is all that can be indicated in this place. Starting from Morocco he visited in succession Tunis, Tripoli, and Egypt; going up through Palestine and Syria, he accompanied the Hajj to Medina and Mecca, went thence on through Mesopotamia to Persia, and returning, spent some months, first at Bagdad, and subsequently at Mosul. From Mosul he went again to Mecca, and from there travelled through Yemen, and so back to Egypt. From Egypt he took ship for Asia Minor, and afterwards visited Constantinople, the Crimea, Astrakhan, Khârizm, Tartary, Transoniana, Afghanistan, and finally reached India, where he spent a considerable time at Delhi. From India he sailed to the Maldivé Islands and Ceylon, taking them on his way to China; and on the return journey visited Sumatra. After long voyaging he again found himself at Mecca, and from the Holy City took his way home to Fez *via* the Sudan and Timbuctoo. He subsequently visited Spain; and died at Fez, at an advanced age, in the year 1377.

Ibn Batûtah's account of what he saw in Palestine is extremely curious, and his description of Jerusalem goes into considerable detail. Possibly it might be worth while to translate his Palestine route *in extenso*, and give it in the form of one of the "Pilgrims."

19, 20, and 21. The last three names on the list are those of the Jerusalem Topographers. The earliest of them, the author of the much quoted "Muthîr al Ghirâm"—which only exists in MS.—wrote in the year 1351.

His work forms the foundation of the description of Jerusalem, written in 1470 by Shanus ad Dîn Suyûtî,<sup>1</sup> and lastly, Suyûtî *plus* the "Muthîr" has been incorporated by Mujîr ad Dîn, chief judge of the Holy City, in the detailed description he has given us of Jerusalem, written a quarter of a century later than Suyûtî, in the year 1496. From a topographical point of view these three taken together correct one another, and the last of them describes the sites of Jerusalem very much as they stand at the present day.

A few words must now be added in conclusion to indicate the method it is proposed to follow in the work I hope, before very long, to lay before the subscribers to the Palestine Exploration Fund. A first chapter therein will be devoted to a general account—as found in the various Arab geographers—of Palestine and Syria; giving the political divisions of the country at various epochs, its products and peculiarities, its commerce, and, in short, all details that are of a general order. Next in place, as being by far the most voluminous, I propose to give the article on Jerusalem. It will contain a careful translation, with the needful notes,

<sup>1</sup> See J. R. As. Soc., April, 1887, for a full account and translation of the more important parts of his work.

of all that the Arab geographers have reported of the Holy City and its buildings. The descriptions of such travellers as Nâsir-i-Khusrau and Ibn Batûtah, as found in their diaries, will be here translated *verbatim*.

Special attention will, of course, be paid to the due arrangement in chronological order of the descriptions that have come down to us, of the buildings of the Dome of the Rock, and Aksa Mosque, and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, in order that the history of these buildings, *during the last thousand years*, may, by the testimony of contemporary writers, once and for all, be set at rest.

Following the chapter on Jerusalem will come one that will give the various accounts of Damascus. After these two, I propose to arrange under the place names in alphabetical order everything that I have been able to gather from the above enumerated authors, concerning each of the several towns and sites in Palestine and Syria. Some of the articles will naturally be confined to a few lines; others, such as those dealing with Hebron, Tiberias, the Dead Sea, the Sea of Galilee, &c., will contain a considerable amount of translation.

Lastly, I propose to add a classified "road book" of the distances between the various towns, as given by the geographers (citing the authority for each), since by this means we are often enabled to identify sites of places now gone to ruin, and further, we gain an idea of the extent of traffic along these high roads during all the centuries of the middle ages. A full index will, as a matter of course, be added, and as an introduction, a chronological table, for reference, of the various dynasties that have held sway in Palestine, from the first Arab conquest down to its last conquest by the Turkish Sultan, Selim I, in 1518.

Maps and plans of the various edifices described will also be inserted, as required, to elucidate the text.

Of the translations from the Arabic, I should say that in every case they will have been made by myself from the original texts, printed or MS. Among the score of authors enumerated above, some few have been already translated (in part or in whole) into Latin, French, or German. Of previous translations I shall of course make my use, and take profit at the same time by the notes the editor, or translator, may have added to his text. A full bibliographical list of the texts used will be given, and in this it will doubtless be a matter of surprise for some, to note that of these score of Arab geographers, only one has been edited (untranslated, in the Arabic text) by an Englishman, and only one has been translated into English, and that, unfortunately, after a fashion that renders it utterly unreliable for any purposes whatsoever.

GUY LE STRANGE.

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