

ITINERARY FROM BORDEAUX TO JERUSALEM (in 333)
INTRODUCTION.

The name of the author of the 'Itinerary from Bordeaux to Jerusalem' is unknown; he was possibly a native of Guienne, perhaps of Bordeaux itself; and he was in all probability a Christian, for, until the Holy Land is reached, the 'Itinerary' differs little from the bare official tables of the 'Antonine Itinerary'. The journey was made in **333** A.D., when Flavius Valerius Dalmatius (brother of the Emperor Constantine) and Marcus Aurelius Zenophilus were joint Consuls. The 'Itinerary' is the earliest record of a pilgrimage extant, and that part of it which relates to the Holy Places is highly interesting and instructive from the marked absence of those minor traditions that collected round every sacred site during the fifth and sixth centuries. We hear nothing, for instance, of the cross and its adoration; of the lance; of the crown of thorns; or of other relics. With the single exception of the Column of the Flagellation, places made memorable by some event in sacred history are alone mentioned; and the legendary sites noticed, such as the crypt in which Solomon tortured the devils, and the chamber in which he wrote the Book of Wisdom, are connected with Jewish, not Christian history, and cluster round the Temple of the Jews, rather than round the Tomb of Christ. The Pilgrim seems to have gone to the Holy Land like Origen, 'to search after the footsteps of Jesus, and His disciples, and the prophets'; or, perhaps, in the spirit of Constantine's mother, 'to seek knowledge of a land so worthy of veneration', and to 'render thanksgivings with prayers' on ground hallowed by the Saviour's feet, in accordance with the words of the Psalmist, 'Let us worship at the place whereon His feet have stood'. Such, at any rate, appear to have been the guiding motives of the earliest pilgrims, who were as much earnest seekers after knowledge as devotees. Alexander, the first pilgrim of whom there is any record, is stated to have gone to Palestine 'for the sake of prayer, and of obtaining knowledge of the (holy) places by inquiry'; and even as late as **386** A.D. we find the same view expressed more fully by Jerome, in the Epistle of Paula and Eustochium to Marcella. 'It would be tedious now to run through every age from the ascension of the Lord to the present day, and enumerate the bishops, the martyrs, the men eloquent in ecclesiastical learning, who have come to Jerusalem because they thought that they had less religion, less knowledge, and had not, as the phrase is, received the finishing stroke of their virtues, unless they had adored Christ in those places whence the Gospel had first shone forth from the Cross'. The feeling which prompted these early pilgrims to visit the Holy Land, and especially Jerusalem, has been happily caught by Keble, and faithfully expressed in the beautiful words:

'There is a spot within this sacred dale
That felt Thee kneeling — touch'd Thy prostrate brow:
One angel knows it. O might prayer avail
To win that knowledge! sure such holy vow
Less quickly from th' unstable soul would fade,
Offer'd where CHRIST in agony was laid.'

Towards the close of the fourth century a change took place; pilgrimages became the fashion; and the men and women who, following the example of Paula, flocked to Jerusalem, appear, in the spirit of St. Thomas, to have required some visible and tangible evidence of our Lord's Passion to confirm their faith. For such persons the necessary aids to faith were provided in gradually increasing numbers, until, in the sixth century, we find not only the true cross, but the crown of thorns, the reed, the sponge, the lance, the cup used at the Last Supper, the stone that was rolled away from the sepulchre, and other relics of minor importance, such as the 'charger' in which John the Baptist's head was carried.

After leaving Bordeaux, the Pilgrim followed a road, which lay to the south of the Garonne to Toulouse; and it is interesting to notice that in this section of the journey the distances are given in leagues, from which it may perhaps be inferred that the Gallic league was still in common use in those parts of Gaul which lay beyond the limits of the old Roman province. At Narbonne he reached the great line of communication between Spain and Italy, and followed it thence to the first station out of Aries, where he turned aside, up the valley of the Rhone, to Valence, on the road from Vienne, over the Cottian Alps, to Milan. From Milan to Constantinople the 'Itinerary' agrees, except for a short distance, with the route laid down in the Antonine Itinerary (pp. 127-138 Wesseling). This route passed through Padua, Laybach, Pettau, Esseg, Belgrad, Nisch, Sophia, Philippopoli, Adrianople, and Eregli. The difference alluded to is in the section between Burdista (Mustafa Pasha Keupri) and Virgoli (Lule Bergas); the Pilgrim omits Adrianople, and appears to have made an excursion northwards, from Burdista, to visit some unknown point of interest, but the text is in any case defective. (Note 2, p. 10.) The route through Asia Minor, on which Professor Ramsay has kindly contributed a valuable memoir (App. I.), coincides generally 'with the military road, which was commonly used by the Byzantine armies in marching from Constantinople to Syria'. It passed through Ismid, Angora, Kiz Hissar, and the famed Cilician Gates to Tarsus, where 'the Apostle Paul was born'; and was thence continued through Adana, Alexandretta, and over the Beilan Pass to Antioch. From Antioch the 'Itinerary' crosses the mountains to Latakieh, and thence follows the regular coast road through Tartús, Tripoli, Beirút, Tyre, and Acre, to Caesarea Palaestina. (Comp. 'Ant. Itin.', pp. 147-150, Wess.) At the last-named place the Pilgrim notices 'the bath of Cornelius', which was, perhaps, a public building given to the city by Cornelius, who appears to have been a wealthy man; that such gifts were occasionally made may be inferred from the case of the synagogue which was built by the centurion at Capernaum. Instead of following the direct road from Caesarea Palaestina to Jerusalem, the Pilgrim proceeded to Jezreel, and thence by Scythopolis (Bethshean) to Neapolis (Shechem). The object of this divergence is not explained, but it was, possibly, to complete the tour of places connected with the history of Elijah, whose remarkable character and whose reappearance with Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration seem to have made such a deep impression on the minds of the early Christians. In making this *détour* the Pilgrim passed within a day's journey of Nazareth and the Sea of Galilee, and it is very remarkable to find that a man who had made the long journey from Bordeaux should omit all notice of, and apparently not care to visit, places so intimately connected with our Lord's early life and ministry. Perhaps the explanation must be sought in the fact that men, at that time, cared more about the resurrection and all that it implied, than they did about the localities in which Christ had passed His life on earth; and that general interest in places like Nazareth and Capernaum was not aroused until Constantine had attracted attention to the Manger and the Tomb by erecting magnificent churches at Bethlehem and Jerusalem.

At Neapolis the Pilgrim visited Joseph's Tomb and Jacob's Well, which appear to have occupied then the positions now assigned to them; and, like Eusebius, he makes a distinction between Neapolis, Sichem, and Sichar. From Neapolis he travelled along the well-known road by Bethel, where he dwells on the incidents connected with Jacob's vision, and the fate of the prophet who was beguiled by the false prophet, to Jerusalem.

The description of Jerusalem, though wanting in fulness, is of great interest. The writer commences with the northern end of the eastern hill, and then, in the most methodical manner, proceeds southwards; crosses the valley, above Siloam, to the western hill; returns northwards; and finally passes out of the city by the east gate to visit the Mount of Olives and Bethany. The narrative is clear and connected; and it is hardly possible, for anyone who knows the ground, to read it without feeling that the Pilgrim from Bordeaux actually saw Constantine's buildings standing on the site now occupied by the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. This is not the place to discuss the theory respecting Constantine's churches, which was for many years so ably advocated by the late Mr. James Fergusson; but it is quite impossible, as pointed out in Appendix V., to maintain the forced construction which he placed on the passage relating to them. Jerusalem in 333 A.D. could not have differed greatly from the Aelia of Hadrian; and it is not unlikely that in several essential particulars, such as the direction of the main streets and the course of a large section of the city wall, modern Jerusalem represents the lines upon which Aelia was founded on the ruins of the old city destroyed by Titus. The two streets, running respectively south from the Damascus Gate, and east from the Jaffa Gate, which divide Jerusalem into four parts, evidently follow the lines of ancient streets; and the same may be said of the street *El Wad*, and of the street leading from it to St. Stephen's Gate. If we suppose that the Pilgrim, on leaving Sion, passed along the street east of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre towards the Damascus Gate, his narrative becomes quite clear.

The reasons for supposing that the Pool of Bethesda was situated near the north-west angle of the Haram area, and that it is now represented by the 'souterrains' connected with the Convent of the Sisters of Sion, are given in Appendix III; and some notes on the site assigned to Sion in the fourth century will be found in Appendix IV. The absence of any allusion in the narrative to what may be called the accessories of the Passion, excepting the Column of the Flagellation, has already been noticed (p. iii.); and attention may further be drawn to the small number of holy places connected with New Testament history which are mentioned. The list includes Bethesda; the pinnacle of the Temple with its 'great corner-stone', rejected of the builders; Siloam; the house of Caiaphas with the Column of the Flagellation; the Praetorium of Pilate; the place of the Crucifixion; and the Tomb; and it omits places such as the Coenaculum; the scene of St. Stephen's martyrdom; and the birthplace of the Virgin, which afterwards became widely celebrated. Beyond the limits of the city, to the east, the Pilgrim mentions the place of the betrayal (Gethsemane); the palm-tree from which branches were taken to spread in the way of Jesus (Matt. xxi. 8); the Mount of Olives on which Christ taught His disciples; the scene of the Transfiguration; and the Tomb of Lazarus at Bethany; but he makes no allusion to the Tomb of the Virgin, or to the connection of the Mount of Olives with the Ascension.

From Jerusalem the Pilgrim made two excursions; one to Jericho, the Dead Sea, and the spot where the Lord was baptized in Jordan; the other to Bethlehem, where Constantine's basilica had already been erected, and Hebron. He then proceeded by Nicopolis, Lydda, and Antipatris, to Caesarea Palaestina. At Caesarea there is a break in the 'Itinerary', which is taken up again at Heraclea (*Eregli*) and we are left in doubt whether the Pilgrim retraced his steps through Asia Minor, or went by sea to Constantinople. The home journey from Heraclea calls for no remark; it was made through the provinces of Rhodope, Macedonia, and Epirus to Aulon (*Avlona*) on the Adriatic; thence by water to Otranto, and afterwards through Brindisi, Bari, Capua, Rome, Trevi, Rimini, Bologna, Parma, and Piacenza, to Milan. At Milan, where the homeward route joins that which had been described on the outward journey, the 'Itinerary' ends.

The known MSS. of the 'Itinerary' are: one of the eighth century in the library at Verona, distinguished as V.; one of the ninth century in the library at St. Gallen; and one of the tenth century in the National Library at Paris, distinguished as P. The earliest printed edition was published in 1589, and there have been eleven subsequent editions; the best critical edition of the tejt is that published, with notes in German, by Dr. Tobler in 'Palaestine Descriptiones, ex saec. iv., v., et vi'. It has not been considered advisable to add critical notes, in the English edition, to those portions of the 'Itinerary' which refer to countries beyond the limits of the Holy Land; but the names of the 'stations' are often corrupt, and the forms generally used by classical writers have therefore been given with, in some cases, the modern names. The variations in the readings of the MSS. have been noted on each page.

[...] = The perforated stone (lapis pertusus) is only mentioned by the Bordeaux Pilgrim; it has been suggested that this stone may have been the 'stone of foundation', aven sheteyah, and identical with the sakhrâh in the Dome of the Rock; but there is no clue to its position except that it was near the statues of adrian, and probably, therefore, within the limits of the Jewish Temple. After th suppression of the revolt, during the reign of Hadrian, the Jews were forbidden all approach to Jerusalem, and this prohibition remained in force until the reign of Constantine; for Eusebius states (Theoph.) that they were not allowed to set foot in the city, or view it even from a distance. The law must have been revoked soon after Constantine's accession as sole Emperor in 324 A.D., for the Pilgrim (333 A.D.) mentions the visit of the Jews as an annual custom. The Jews now wail every Friday at the well-known Jews' wailing-place, outside the Temple enclosure. [...]

About a stone's throw from thence is avault (crypta) wherein His body was laid, and rose again on the third day. There, at present, by the command of the Emperor Constantine, has been built a basilica, that is to say, a church of wondrous beauty, having at the side reservoirs (exceptoria) from which water is raised, and a bath behind in which infants are washed (baptized). Also as one goes from Jesusalem to the gate which is to the eastward, in order to ascend the Mount of Olives, is the valley called that of Josaphat. Towards the left, where are vineyards, is a stone at the place where Judas Iscariot betrayed Christ; on the right is a palm-tree, branches of which the children carried off and strewed in the way when Christ came. Not far from thence, about a stone's-throw, are two notable (monubiles) tombs of wondrous beauty; in the one, which is a true monolith, lies Isaiâh the prophet, and in the other Hezekiah, King of the Jews. From thence you ascend to the Mount of Olives, where before the Passion, the Lord taught His disciples. There by the orders of Constantine a basilica of wondrous beauty has been built. Not far from thence is the little hill which the Lord ascended to pray, when he took Peter and John with Him, and Moses and Elias were beheld. A mile and a half to the eastward is the village (villa) called Bethany. There is a vault (crypta) in which Lazarus, whom the Lord raised, was laid.

APPENDIX V.
POSITION OF GOLGOTHA AND THE HOLY SEPULCHRE ACCORDING TO THE BORDEAUX PILGRIM.

The full text of the passage relating to Golgotha and the Holy Sepulchre is as follows: - 'Inde ut eas foras murum de Sion, eunti ad *portam Neapolitanam* ad partem dextram, deorsum in valle sunt parietes, ubi domus fuit sive *pretorium* Pontii Pilati. Ibi Dominus auditus est, antequam pateretur. A sinistra autem parte est monticulus *Golgotha*, ubi Dominus crucifixus est. Inde quasi ad lapidis missum est crypta, ubi corpus ejus positum fuit, et tertio die surrexit. Ibidem modo jussu *Constantini* imperatoris *basilica* facta est, id est, dominicum mire pulchritudinis, habens ad latus exceptoria, unde aqua levatur, et balneum a tergo, ubi infantes lavantur.'

Some twenty years ago the correct interpretation of this passage, and the exact force of the words '*foras murum*', were the subject of heated controversy. On the one hand, it was maintained that *foras murum* simply expresses the act of going outside the wall; that the 'Porta Neapolitana' was so named from its being the gate by which the road to Neapolis left Jerusalem, and that it occupied the position of the present Damascus Gate; and that the buildings in course of erection by Constantine occupied the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. On the other hand, the late Mr. Fergusson contended that the Pilgrim meant 'that, passing *outwards* from the Sion Gate, a person going to the Neapolitan Gate, *outside the wall*, "foris murum", has the house of Pilate down in the valley on the right...'; and he identified the 'Porta Neapolitana' with the gate (Golden Gate) of the New Jerusalem of Eusebius; and Constantine's church with the Dome of the Rock. In his latest work, however, Mr. Fergusson, whilst maintaining his identification of Constantine's church, did not insist on the forced meaning of *foras murum*; and identified the 'Porta Neapolitana' with the 'Porta Speciosa' of the Middle Ages in the west wall of the Haram Area.

There can be no doubt that *foras murum* has not the meaning attributed to it by Mr. Fergusson, and the interpretation of Porta Neapolitana as Gate of the New City seems also somewhat strained. It must be remembered that the Holy Sepulchre was discovered in 325 A.D., that the buildings of Constantine were commenced in 326 and dedicated in 335 A.D., and that the Pilgrim visited Jerusalem in 333 A.D., two years before the buildings were finished. It is unlikely that a town large enough to be called Neapolis had sprung up round Constantine's unfinished churches at the time of the Pilgrim's visit; and it may be remarked that though the group of buildings at the Sepulchre is often called New Jerusalem in early Christian writings, in contradistinction to the old centre of worship on Mount Moriah, it is never once called Neapolis or the New City. It seems more natural to suppose that, according to a very prevalent custom in all countries, the gate derived its name from the first important town on the road which passed out through it from the city. In this case the town would be Neapolis, whence the Pilgrim had just arrived; and I believe the text can only be explained by supposing the Porta Neapolitana to have been a gate in the north wall of the city occupying a position at, or not far from, the modern Damascus Gate. It follows from this identification that the buildings of Constantine, mentioned by the Pilgrim, occupied the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; and it may be remarked that the principal points of interest in Jerusalem are described in the most methodical manner. The Pilgrim commences with the two large pools, and the Pool of Bethesda at the northern end of the Temple hill; he then proceeds southwards, and, after making a complete tour through the city, passes out by the Eastern Gate to the Valley of Jehoshaphat and the Mount of Olives. All the places are mentioned in their proper order, first from north to south, and then from south to north; the sites connected with the Temple, Siloam, the house of Caiaphas, David's palace, Golgotha and the Tomb, and the gate in the north wall (see map, p. 58). Some difficulty exists in identifying the ruins which the Pilgrim believed to be those of the Praetorium, from the fact that he places them in the valley. Several writers have supposed that he referred to the ruins of the tower Antonia at the north-west angle of the Haram Area, where modern tradition places the Praetorium. This place, however, lies so high that any ruins near it could not possibly be described as lying in a valley; and the narrative seems to demand a site not far from the western entrance of the old Cotton Bazaar (*Suk el Kattanin*.) For the different sites assigned to the Praetorium see Tobler (*Topog. von Jerusalem*, 220-229); and the English edition of Antoninus's *Itinerary* (note to p. 19). The view held by some recent writers is that the Praetorium, at the date of the Crucifixion, was the palace of Herod, near the Jaffa Gate, which was certainly occupied by Gessius Florus, and probably also by Pontius Pilate. <https://archive.org/details/cu31924028534158/page/n11/mode/2up>