

*Vestiti ala morescha:  
Pilgrims in disguise in late Medieval Accounts\**

1.

Nearly nothing is known about the pilgrim Thietmar, other than his German origins, the year of his pilgrimage and the fact that he was a clergyman. He arrived in Acre in 1217, before the beginning of the fifth Crusade («dum... terra adhuc inter Sarracenos et Christianos in pace treugis interpositis aliquantulum respiraret»<sup>1</sup>). Despite the sense of alarm that permeates his text, the author observes the multicultural scene of the Holy Land with great interest. Indeed, he declares to have arrived in Acre «cum quibusdam Surianis et Sarracenis»<sup>2</sup>. When he begins his pilgrimage he visits Cana, where he has *quidam sarracenus* as his guide, then Mount Tabor, occupied by Saracens, and passes near Hattin... in short, every place that he sees reminds him of the erosion of the Crusader Kingdom<sup>3</sup>.

After having visited Edom (in the Negev region), he has to turn toward the coast, and heads toward Damascus. In the city, under the rule of the recently formed Ayyubid Dynasty, Thietmar attempted to approach Christian prisoners, detained «in fovea soldani», but the act was too dangerous and he limited himself to communicating with his brethren through letters<sup>4</sup>. His writings go beyond simple outlines; if we read through the lines we see tension and suffering for the fate of the Christian soldiers (a feeling sharpe-

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1 LAURENT (1857, 1).

2 *Ibid.* 3.

3 *Ibid.* 4: «A Chana Galilee perveni ad montem Thabor [...]. Quem modo Sarraceni habent occupatum»; *Ibidem*: «Hinc transivi per campum, ubi exercitus Christianorum victus fuit et crux sancta ad inimicis crucis capta [Hattin]»; *Ibid.* 5: «Veni ad mare Galilee [...] ubi post resurrectionem Dominus discipulis apparuit et piscem assatum cum eis corporaliter comedit [...]. Super quem locum capella edificata fuit, sed a Sarracenis destructa»; *Ibid.* 6: «veni Tyberiadem [...] que a Sarracenis destructa adhuc a paucis tam Sarracenis quam Christianis inhabitatur».

4 *Ibid.* 13: «Cum fuisset in palatio Soldani [...] volui videre Christianos captivos in fovea Soldani, quod est carcer, sed ductori meo visum est non esse consultum. Cum tamen non auderem, accepi litteras eorum et ipsi meas per internuncios».

ned by the constant fear of ending up sharing in their lot). Nonetheless Thietmar reports that «in Damasco et apud Damascum quelibet natio libere legem suam colit. In ea eciam plures sunt ecclesie Christianorum»<sup>5</sup>.

Once back in Acre he decided to leave for Sinai to visit the body of Saint Catherine, even though he was well aware of the dangers that this journey entailed.

At this point, hoping to avoid the fate of ending up «in fovea soldani», Thietmar disguised himself as a Georgian monk, making sure to flaunt an adequately long beard, and travelled along the Palestinian coast until Jaffa, where he then turned inland<sup>6</sup>. Nevertheless, his itinerary took on winding detours to flee from the “Saracen” patrols: for example, he first travelled to Sichem and then back down to Emmaus<sup>7</sup>. These precautions, however, did not save him from capture<sup>8</sup>. The cell where he was detained, in a strange coincidence, was the church constructed where Saint Stephen was martyred, which had been converted for more mundane purposes<sup>9</sup>. Thietmar was freed thanks to the mediation of the fellow countrymen of his travelling companion, a Hungarian noble: Hungarian Muslims who came to Jerusalem *obtentu studii*<sup>10</sup>. Still, having been set free did not guarantee greater safety. Proof of this can be seen in that, despite the fact that he was in the Holy City, which he had decided to avoid before being captured, he thought it unwise to visit Jerusalem for fear of ending up back in prison.

Certainly Thietmar undertook his pilgrimage in a particularly hostile moment<sup>11</sup>. We know that the treaty of Jaffa (1229) did not resolve the area’s problems of instability, which in any case did not depend solely on the Franks and Ayyubids: except for the narrow coastline in the North inhabited by the subjects of the Crusader Kingdom, the invasion of the Khwarazmians and subsequent rise of the Mamluks made the Holy Land a dangerous place for decades, basically until the fall of Acre.

Even after the end of the Crusader Kingdom, Frank pilgrims often disguised themselves. In 1419 Nicolò d’Este, Marquis of Ferrara, pretended to be the brother of his galley’s

5 *Ibidem*.

6 *Ibid.* 20: «Accon igitur iter arripiens, habitu tamquam Georgianus monachus et longa barba simulavi quod non eram».

7 *Ibid.* 23-25.

8 *Ibid.* 25f.: «Cum enim sit Bethleem iuxta Iherusalem, ut civitatem sanctam vitarem et periculum, feci vie dispendium; sed frustra, quia ibi quod verebar accidit, et captus a Sarracenis ductum sum Iherusalem».

9 *Ibid.* 26: «Sic captivus detinebar [...] ubi sanctus Stephanus prothomartir lapidatus fuit. In quo loco quondam constructa est ecclesia, sed nunc a Sarracenis funditus eversa».

10 On this happy – and very rare – coincidence see also KEDAR (1986, 325f.).

11 TYERMAN (2006, 626-643).

patron; in 1440 his son Meliaduse disguised himself as a Mamluk on the voyage from Damascus to Jerusalem and from there to Cairo, though while in Jerusalem and the surrounding areas he pretended to be a merchant from the Marche region. As for the late XV century, at the port of Jaffa Bernardino Dinali pretended to be a galley rower, and, at the port of Alexandria, Arnold von Harff a merchant, and the list could go on.

In the case of Thietmar we saw that personal safety was the reason to mask his identity. But what did pilgrims risk in the 14th and 15th centuries? In the port of Alexandria and in some neighborhoods of Cairo, thanks to international trade, a European presence, particularly that of Venetian businessmen, was deeply entrenched. Nevertheless, generally speaking, under the Mamluk Empire western Christians were not kindly looked upon by the masses. Jerusalem was «outside the main-stream of Mamluk trade and politics»<sup>12</sup>, and thrived on pilgrimages (as it still does today). The city's economy was based essentially on the service sector: animal and clothing rental, the sale of food, drinks, candles, souvenirs, and the services offered by interpreters and guides. In Egypt and Syria the Christian "infidels" who passed through were tolerated by the Sultan because they were economically fundamental, but they did have to avoid contact with the population so as not to come under assault: from stones and clods of dirt thrown at them, to beatings, being spit upon, slapped, etc. Exhausted by epidemics, political instability, and cyclical famines, the masses found a tolerated outlet for their anger in harassing the Franks.

Elgi non credano che altro benne sia in terra, et da Dio creata gente degna sonnò loro [...]. Elgi ne disprezianno e dicono parollo obbrobrioxe. Et se elgi li vengono volgia, anche danno dele bote: dicendo *cangir*, zoè "porco", *gerbul*, zoè 'scarpaza', *marab*, zoè "ruffianno", *nachal*, zoè "channo", *million*, et molte altre soe biasteme; intanto che de certo l'è più tosto pericolo che non, andare per lo Cayre<sup>13</sup>.

Vedeno mal volunteri li cristiani [...]. Et dicti peregrini ne possano rendere testimonio, perché bastonate, pugni, boffeti, tirati li capelli, gitati per terra de suso li asini, spudati nel volto, iniuriati per ogni via furono, finché stetero in Syria et in quelle parte<sup>14</sup>.

Ubi in Chayra venissemus [...] ad nos venerunt tres Mauri, cives urbis [...]. Dicebant enim ita a soldano ordinatum quod quandocumque Franci sive Latini venirent in civitatem, haberent eos usque ad domum trucemanni sociare, ad hoc

12 LUFTI (1985, 1).

13 Don Messore, in SALETTI (2009, 140f.).

14 Roberto da Sanseverino, in SCUOR (2005-2006, 119).

ne contra eos injuria moliretur, sed menciabantur ribaldi, solum enim faciebant ad extorquendam pecuniam de manibus nostris<sup>15</sup>.

Andando per la terra, se avessi alcuni mazata o ceffata sputatoti addosso o sbefeggiato, bisogna havere patientia, ma non solamente a minime persone, ma a' gran maestri è fatto simili stratij<sup>16</sup>.

Not even senior European officials were able to avoid this treatment: in April 1503, in Cairo, along the route that led the Venetian ambassador Benedetto Sanudo to a solemn hearing in the Sultan's presence, only the prudence of the so-called "head of security", who prevented a group of slaves from throwing rocks at Sanudo by having them beaten, allowed the Venetian to avert such an aggression:

Perché l'era zorno ordinario de audentia, che tutti coreno al castello, sopra la piazza avanti di esso castello era forsi milia cavali con li schiavi soi, che aspectavano loro patroni. Li quali schiavi sono soliti, quando vedeno christiani a cavalo, maledirli o trarli le prede driedo, non vardando né oratori né altro. E il castellan dubitando di questo, perché fu fato a missier Piero Diedo orator nostro, mandò, avanti che esso nostro orator usisse di castello, 10 soi mamaluchi a piedi con bastoni grossissimi in mano; quali comenzò talmente a bater quelli schiavi, che stavano preparati a salutar nostri al modo suo, rompendoli teste e brazi in tal modo che questi 10 messeno in fuga li 1000 cavali e li schiavi che erano con quelli, e da colpi di bastonate feceli tutti redur uniti in capo di la piazza, che non osavano parlar [...]. E fato questo, l'orator montoe a cavalo senza strepito alcuno<sup>17</sup>.

But let's allow the pilgrims to speak for themselves. The ferocity with which between Jaffa and Rama the Muslims assaulted harmless individuals is shocking:

Ruscirono quella chanaglia addosso ai pellegrini [...] e chominciamoci a bastonare et tirare a terra degli asini et tirarci i panni di dosso, perché non usavamo ferirgli per lo nostro troppo grande pericolo, sendo in casa loro, ci tractavano male<sup>18</sup>.

Nous guestoient les villains du pays sur le chemin a cheval et a pié, enbastonnés et de arcz en grant nombre et n'eust esté le grant nombre de ceulx de Rame qui nous conduissoient ilz nous eussent fait desplaisir, maiz encore aulcuns eurent des horions et passames par le plus terrible pays que l'en feroit pensoir<sup>19</sup>.

15 HEERS – DE GROERS (1978, 206-208).

16 Michele da Figline, in MONTESANO (2010, 63).

17 *Diarii* di Marino Sanudo, in STEFANI (1881, 50).

18 Alessandro Rinuccini O.P., in CALAMAI (1993, 64).

19 Pierre Barbatre, in TUCCO-CHALA – PINZUTI (1972-1973, 131).

De Japha associavit se nobis dominus ipse de Rama nobiscum equitando propria in persona cum multis mammalucis [...] ut salvos nos conducerent et custodirent a paganis et eorum filiis, qui in villis et locis illis se conglomerantes lapidibus solent impetere peregrinos et adeo ferociter quandoque invadere quam vix etiam adiuti a concomitatibus illesi possint peregrini preterire quin et aliquando aliquos interimunt lapidibus obruendo sicut uni ex nostris pene accidisset. Unde periculosum valde est illud conficere iter de Japha usque Rama ob huiusmodi insidias et insultus paganorum<sup>20</sup>.

Occurrerunt mulieres proicientes lapides contra, anathematizantes nos et estimantes nos indignos esse ambulandum super terram<sup>21</sup>.

[...] Aucuns d'iceulx Arrabes nous sievirent jusques là ou couchâmes, et illec robèrent à aucuns pellerins leurs chapeaux, bonnetz et aultres baghes<sup>22</sup>.

Les femmes et enfans a force de pierres firent fouyr les pelerins devant eulx et en frapperent et gecterent a terre aucuns<sup>23</sup>.

Chascun les escarnissoit et leur jettoint la pouldre sur le visage<sup>24</sup>.

As an anonymous French writer attests, even women and children played an active role in these aggressions. But their exaggerated use of robbery is also striking, though this can largely be explained, apart from their disdain, by their miserable living conditions. Despite the ideological filters that assuredly hindered the Franks from empathizing with the Muslims, the difficulty of the lives of the Sultan's subjects could not have escaped them.

## 2.

The Marquis Nicolò, as we mentioned, forced his escorts to address him as if he were the Patron's brother<sup>25</sup>. Had he not travelled incognito he probably would have paid much more for everything: there are numerous cases of pilgrims being extorted by Muslim

20 BREYDENBACH (1490, c. eiv).

21 Paulus Whalterius O.F.M., in SOLLWECK (1892, 103).

22 Georges Lengherand, in MÉNILGLAISE (1861, 116f).

23 Anonyme (1486), in DANSETTE (1979, 333f).

24 Philippe de Voisins, in TAMIZEY DE LARROQUE (1883, 28).

25 Luchino dal Campo, in BRANDOLI (2011, 152): «non lo dimandassero 'Signore' ma Nicolò Contarino, fratello del padrone de la galea».

authorities, who expected more money than had been agreed on and, as they were in positions of power (at times even jailing pilgrims as a demonstration), they usually obtained it. For these reasons Mariano da Siena wisely advised all pilgrims to hide their true social status<sup>26</sup>. The noble *condottiero* Roberto da Sanseverino went even further, when he affirmed that all pilgrims do this: that they dressed up in the most improbable ways before getting off the galley in Jaffa<sup>27</sup>. Let us now examine some particular cases: Meliaduse d'Este, Roberto da Sanseverino himself, and other pilgrims as well.

Meliaduse d'Este was an especially atypical pilgrim. Accompanied by, among others, a Venetian knight who was an expert in the local language and customs, Folco Contarini, it seems that Meliaduse experienced his pilgrimage in complete autonomy: he decided where to go and what to visit. As he did not have economic problems, he spent nearly a month between Rhodes and Cyprus, and then, having landed in Beirut, he stayed in Damascus for about two months. When he finally left the city to go to Jerusalem he did so in an absolutely unique way: on horseback, dressed as a Mamluk, armed with a scimitar and a bow:

E charichate nostre bisogno et alogati li nostri panni, et vestiti do panni al'arabescha, e cinti da samitare e archo, *favente Deo*, montiassimo a chavallo e via inanci, Jusep nostra guida. Et ad \_\_\_\_\_ hora de dixinare desmontassimo ala campagna, e ligati li nostri chavalgi, et da poi destexi i *machadi* e tapedi in terra, e sopra de epsi cominziamo a manziare di quello nui havevamo tolto con nui<sup>28</sup>.

There is no need to say that during the reign of the Mamluks the Franks were banned from riding horses. Furthermore, Muslims often did not even appreciate seeing Franks ride mules, and push them off.

As we can read in the above passage, the disguise was not limited to their clothes, but also included their behavior: these men ate in the Oriental fashion. With this strategy Meliaduse was surely extremely free in his movements. To decide his route, he hired a Muslim guide and travelled at his pleasure; people were afraid to approach him, and he didn't even pay the numerous toll charges: «Et al far del'alba fussimo al *cam* de \*\*\*. E lì sì se paga gaffarazo, ma non pagiamme nulla, il perché fussimo tenuti Mori»<sup>29</sup>. *Gaffarazo* (a loan word from the Arabic *khafārah*) stood for the State's "protection" of merchants, tra-

26 Mariano da Siena, in PIRILLO (1991, 81): «guardasi ogni persona di non far segno di sé nessuno perché porterebbe grande pericolo; quanto è maggiore, tanto più mostri esser vile».

27 Roberto da Sanseverino, in SCUOR (2005-2006, 47): «tuti se vestitero con più stranee vestimente poterno, per non essere cognosciuti».

28 SALETTI (2009, 60).

29 *Ibid.* 63; the three asterisks mark a lacuna.

velers, and pilgrims who crossed the land; but the “toll” was to be paid, at least in certain places, only by non-Muslims.

What was this costume like, physically? We can reasonably assume that it was not very different from the description that the Flemish pilgrim Adorno gave of Mamluk attire:

Habitus autem mamalucorum gravis, honestus, talaris atque superbus est, ab habitu Maurorum principue in capite differentes. Majores enim sicut soldanus ipse et magnus ejus admiraldus magnusque ejus trucemmanus (quatuor enim habet) in capite portant mappas albas crispas et subtiles ligatas per caput in V, VI aut VII cornibus, ac si mappa per quinque digitos manus recte stantes ligaretur. Soldanus vero solus septem cornua defert, alii autem aut sex aut quinque, secundum suas dignitates. Alii vero portant birreta [...], alii mappas non in cornibus sed alio modo in altum eleganter multum ligatas et ita communiter omnes incedunt, sed quandoque pillea rubea pilosa alta ferunt<sup>30</sup>.

It is quite strange to read that, when already prepared to leave for Jerusalem, Meliaduse first dressed up like a Mamluk, and then listened to mass<sup>31</sup>. In any case, travelling while disguised in this way does have a disadvantage: to avoid being found out, when in the presence of Muslims you must not speak<sup>32</sup>. We must now ask ourselves a question: prior to changing from his Mamluk clothes back into European garb while hiding in an abandoned farmhouse before entering Cairo, how is it that Meliaduse crossed the border between Syria and Egypt, in bir Qatyā, since due to security and customs, inspections in this town were extremely thorough?<sup>33</sup> We read, then, that Folco Contarini, speaking in Arabic, presented a pass from the *nā'ib* of Jerusalem. The document certifies that the group is composed of merchants, and it is accepted without problems. How are we to interpret this affirmation? We must first see how Meliaduse acquired the pass. When he had visited

30 HEERS – DE GROERS (1978, 200).

31 SALETTI (2009, 112): «Zobia a dì 30 de settembrio per matino a monte Syon nui fossimo chiamati e levati e vestiti ala morescha, e l'altare grande fo messo in ordine per dire la sancta messa; et odito noi quela sancta messa e ordine posto ale nostre some montiamo a cavallo, e via incominciamo el nostro camino verso del Cayre».

32 *Ibid.* 114: «Et qui de intorno [sc. Hebron] tuti sonno giardini e vigno che fanno zibibo, e noi intramo in uno giardino e lì, soto frutari asai, aloziamo cum li nostri cavalli e noi al sereno et ala morescha. Et non osavimo a parlar francho perhoché per tuto quelgi zardini eranno li Mori a far li zibibi»; *Ibid.* 123: «[at Šāliḥiya] tuta quela nocte non potessimo mai parlare insieme in lingua franca peroché a lato a noi eranno Mori alogiati con noi contigui al sereno».

33 *Ibid.* 121: «[At Bir Qatya] sta Signore per lo Soldano et anche se gli paga gaffaragio [*khafar*]. Unde fo de bisogno scharichare le nostre sonme, perhoché gli volsero vedere tuto zò che per lo camino passa. Ma noi havivimo litera del signore de Jerusalem a quello signor de Chachia, la quale gli fo per missere Folcho aprezentada; e lecta che li havenno quela, non curareno de vedere altro».

Jericho, Meliaduse met the *nā'ib* of Jerusalem. It is truly a very strange testimony: the *nā'ib* recognizes Franciscan friars beyond the shadow of a doubt, and thus he imagines, rightly, that Meliaduse was a pilgrim. But Folco Contarini explains to him that they are merchants, some from Venice and others from the Marche region, driven away from Damascus by a person who I have not been able to identify, but who was likely either the governor of the city, a *nā'ib*, or an official in charge of commercial transactions, thus a «*nāzīr al-muhimmāt ashsharifa*» (defined by Popper as a «controller of the Sultan's business affairs»), or a «*nāzīr al-khāṣṣ*» (or a «controller of the Sultan's privy funds»). Note the diversification: merchants from Venice and from the Marche region. It seems to me that the lie was planned with care, to avoid being discovered. In fact, the Venetian dialect, which was quite distinctive, was well known to the officers of the province of Jerusalem, thanks to the monopoly on galley service from Venice to Jaffa. The patrons, Venetians, often held relationships with local authorities, even though it was not always first hand, but rather through interpreters. Meliaduse d'Este was not Venetian, and despite the fact that also the dialect of Ferrara is a northern variety and has some features in common with Venetian, the lie would not have been credible. This is why they chose the Marche, a region from further south, whose dialect is different but not very commonly heard (much like that from Ferrara) in the Syrian panorama. The questions regarding the details on their expulsion are given satisfactory answers: this means that Meliaduse's group had truly witnessed the event or had got reliable reports; otherwise they never would have been able to trick a provincial governor about internal policy. These merchants who were forced to leave the city, in Contarini's version, were headed toward Cairo for their personal affairs, and as they were forced to pass by these sacred places, they were visiting them by chance, nothing more. And thus they took the opportunity to ask for a pass into Cairo. But how is it, in any case, that Meliaduse was able to dress up as a Mamluk? This strategy was possible thanks to the commercial treaties between Venice and the Sultan, which were aimed at increasing the safety of merchants<sup>34</sup>.

With respect to merchants, we must now touch upon a key feature of the conditions of pilgrims in the Holy Land. The entire 15<sup>th</sup> century sees a sequence of expulsions, sequestrations and sudden imprisonment of Frank merchants by the Sultan, which took place

34 «Several clauses in the treaty [of 1442] testify to the great upswing of Venetian trade in Syria. These are the clauses referring to the customs to be paid in some towns of Syria and especially to the right of the Venetians to travel dressed as moslems, over the countryside; since the Venetians often visited the estates where cotton was planted, this was indeed an important concession»: ASHTOR (1983, 305). Despite the fact that refers to a concession found in the treaty of 1442, it is evident that the practice of wearing eastern clothing must have already been popular for at least a few years, otherwise the pilgrims would have had a great deal of difficult at the customs office in bir Qatiya.

to put pressure on their governments and thus receive commercial advantages. On numerous occasions even pilgrims were imprisoned. In 1422 for example, in retaliation for piracy against Muslim ships in the Mediterranean, Sultan Barsbāy arrested pilgrims, the consuls from Genoa and Venice in Jerusalem, and all of the resident friars in Zion, while the church of the Holy Sepulcher was forced to close<sup>35</sup>. Nevertheless, even when they ended up in the same jails, the pilgrims were more vulnerable than the merchants, as they were not organized in corporations and among their ranks were also people of modest economic backgrounds.

### 3.

Let us move on now to Roberto da Sanseverino. We already cited his observation about the generalized disguising of pilgrims. We read here that, in his opinion, an intelligent person would have recognized a lord even if he were dressed in rags, but the Saracens have no such shrewdness. He therefore explains that the reason for dressing up is the terrible treatment that is reserved for lords and gentlemen, as Muslims try to extort money in every possible way:

La cagione dela mutatione del'abito sono li mali tractamenti, li quali fano li saraceni ali signori cristiani et gientilhomini quando gli conoscono peroché, oltra gli fano molti rencrescimenti, cerchano et investigano ogni mala via a loro possibile per retardarli et ricevere qualche trabuto<sup>36</sup>.

In order not to make the difference in his social status so obvious, Sanseverino pretended to be a companion of his servant as they disembarked<sup>37</sup>. However, this precluded him being able to find comfortable accommodation in Jerusalem: it was common practice for “celebrities”, both lay and clergy, to be put up in the Franciscan monastery of Mount Zion rather than having to stay in the dilapidated hospital of Saint John. And thus we see a second deception: a Franciscan friar pretended, during the entire voyage at sea, that he was Sanseverino’s brother, and he takes him to Zion<sup>38</sup>. Sanseverino could be much better

35 LITTLE (1995, 213).

36 SCUOR (2005-2006, 47).

37 Roberto da Sanseverino, in *ibidem*: «se parti l'uno dal'altro et caduno con li famigli soy, come con compagni e fratelli, aciò li saracini, li quali in quella hora expectavano, non potessaro cognoscere il mazore dal minore».

38 *Ibid.* 52: «Vene un frate di monte Syon [...] che fin in galea finxe et feze voce et dimonstratione ch'el dicto signore Ruberto era suo fratello, per più secureza de esso signore et achiò ch'el si gli avesse più rispetto, lo quale condusse essi signore Ruberto et compagni a monte Syon». *Ibid.* 83: «... cum Boniforto da Piasenza mio familio quale chiamava mio nipote [...] per non fare tropo demonstratione».

off but, he remarked, he had to pay a fixed price for the stay in any case<sup>39</sup>. Money, as we mentioned above, is one of the pilgrim's biggest worries.

Bernardino Dinali also discusses this topic quite clearly. Given that after having arrived in Jaffa the galley he was travelling on was blocked just off shore for bureaucratic reasons, after six days the pilgrims on board were in extreme difficulty as they had neither food nor water. What's more, it was well known that without a pass it was absolutely forbidden to disembark, as the applicable laws allowed Muslims to capture people either to collect a ransom or to make slaves of them. Dinali writes, «woe to the first pilgrim who steps off the galley». Indeed, in order to procure food Dinali disguised himself as a galley rower. He did not specify the way in which he changed his aspect, but he does explain that he had to pretend extremely well, because as soon as he left the galley he was surrounded, and before being able to collect some fruit he thought it prudent to refurnish the ship with water<sup>40</sup>. Two days later the pilgrims received their documents, were allowed to disembark, and they were led to a cave on the beach where each person had to give both his name and profession. In this situation, all of the pilgrims supplied a fake identity: many pretended to be merchants, some to be archers, others artillerymen and still others oarsmen. Note that pilgrims had to pay the highest prices, twelve ducats, while galley workers and merchants paid between three and five.

There is still another explanation for why so many pilgrims pretended to be merchants. The trick was well known, but some witnesses point out that it was mainly in the interests of the Patron to pretend that as many pilgrims as possible declare themselves as crew members, since the contract that the pilgrims signed onto with Patron provided that payment be made before leaving Venice: they had all already paid the standard twelve ducat fare, required at Jaffa by the Sultan's officers, and the remaining seven, eight, or nine ducat difference for each pilgrim "passed off" as a crew member went directly to the Patron<sup>41</sup>.

39 *Ibid.* 53f.: «Bisogno fu, però, che e loro e li altri peregrini, quantuncha non alogiassero nel dicto locho [...] pagassene la sua rata per ciaschuno».

40 Bernardino Dinali, in SABBATINI (2009, 69f.): «essendo io desideroso di discendere in terra [...] con essi galeoti mi vesti' e faceva in terra l'offitio de galeoto, perché guai al primo peregrino che solo dismantasi in terra avanti che tuti insieme dismantino [...]. In terra fui circondato da una turba de mori, li quali sono generation sospetosissima, alhora io non fui lento a far l'offitio di sollicito galeoto per rimuovere da loro ogni suspicione che già di me havevano conceputa: posemi de le barile de aqua in spala e beneché con gran sinestro le incomincia' a portare in barcha. E così havendoli cavati di suspecto, mi andai a fornire di fructi et di altre cose».

41 Bernardino Dinali, in *ibid.* 71: «tuti furono scritti da marcatanti, alcuni da balestrieri, alcuni da bombardier et alcuni da galeoti, et in questo modo assai danari si sparmiarono al patron».

In the case that the anonymous French writer described, it doesn't seem that the pilgrim's ran a great risk by pretending to be rowers, because in the worst case they would not be believed and would have to pay the higher fare:

Et print le patron quinze pellerins et les presenta en disant que c'estoyent des serviteurs de la gallée, l'ung cannonier, l'aultre arbalestrier, les aultres galiotz, afin qu'il ne payast pour eulx que demy tribut combien qu'il avoit reçu de chascun LV ducatz. Et aulcuns desdictz pellerins passerent pour serviteurs, les aultres furent reffusez et payerent plain tribut et n'y vallut riens la cautelle dudict patron combien qu'il gaigna beaucoup sur ceulx qui passerent<sup>42</sup>.

Sometimes, however, a disguise that was uncovered could have very serious consequences. During an embargo of Catalan goods, called for by the Sultan in 1423 in reaction to piracy, Catalan pilgrims were imprisoned<sup>43</sup>. The interesting detail here is that these Catalan had disguised themselves as Georgians, because they were aware of the risk they were taken, travelling during a period of crisis between their king (Alfonso of Aragon) and the Sultan. But they were recognized just the same.

To conclude, the act of pilgrimage was subject to numerous unforeseen circumstances. A pilgrim does not randomly disguise himself as a Georgian, Mamluk, or merchant from the Marche region. On the contrary, he weighs thoroughly the political opportunities and the risks involved in taking on a false identity. Even wearing a mask could be a serious business.

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imperò che li peregrini pagano tuti ducati xii per uno, li altri pagano chi cinque e chi quatro e chi tre ducati».

42 Anonyme (1480), in SCHEFER (1882, 66).

43 ASHTOR (1983, 287): «the sultan proclaimed an embargo on Catalan merchandise, insisting that other European traders should not sell them. Another measure of retaliation for the Catalan attacks was the imprisonment of pilgrims from Catalonia who came to Jerusalem in 1423, disguising themselves as Georgians».

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