ropean travelers referring to that road are quoted and discussed by Alois Musil in his standard work *The Northern Heǧâz* (American Geographical Society: *Oriental Explorations and Studies,* No. 1), New York, 1926, p. 321-26, which may be supplemented by the map facing p. 58 in Bernhard Moritz's *Arabien,* Hanover, 1923, and by the numerous Arabic "Guides to the Pilgrimage", among which I will quote but one, the *Mash'al al-maḥmal* by Mohammed aṣ-Ṣâdiq Bey, printed at Cairo in 1297/1880, p. 7-23. A close parallel to the Portuguese Pilgrim's itinerary is afforded by the short itinerary which Jean Thévenot (1633-1667) reproduced in his *Voyages* (Paris 1689), 1, 476-79 and which he had obtained from "a Tunisian Prince who made that journey while I was in Cairo". The stations mentioned there are exactly the same as those which occur in our document, with only a few additions and omissions, and the distances, given in hours, closely tally with the Pilgrim's statements.[29]

One of the most interesting passages in our Pilgrim's report is his short but accurate description of the great mosque of Mecca and of the Ka'ba, which is located in the centre of the wide courtyard of the Mosque. Even the most trifling details are exact, and provide us with the guarantee that the author is describing what he had actually seen; as, *e.g.,* when he remarks that the wooden rafters in the ceiling of the porch are in a state of decay. Now we know that between the years 1572 and 1577 (979-84 after the Hijra), a few years after the Portuguese had seen them, the rafters actually were removed

[29] Besides Thévenot, Musil p. 325 quotes the Travels of Gabrielle Brémond (*"Viaggi,* edit. by G. Corra, pp. 163 f."). This mysterious traveler is said by the author of the article in *Biographie Universelle* 5, 467 (on which depends *Nouvelle Biographie générale,* 7, 317) to have been a woman, which would be a rare and interesting fact indeed—if it were true. I am strongly suspicious, however, that all biographic information in *Biographie Universelle* is drawn from no other source than the work itself, the complete title of which is *Viaggi fatti nell'Egitto Superiore, et Inferiore, nel monte Sinay . . . . quello della Meka e del sepolcro di Moametto . . . . opera del Signor* Gabrielle Brémond *Marsigliese da lui scritta in Francese, e fatta tradurre in Italiano, data in luce da* Giuseppe Corvo [not Corra, as Musil has] *libraro,* Rome 1679 (the first edition, which I have not succeeded in seeing, was published in 1673). In spite of the French surname Brémond, no other edition than the Italian seems to have ever existed, and the given name Gabrielle represents an obsolete Italian spelling of the man's name Gabriele (Gabriel), not the French feminine name Gabrielle. Finally, the "Travels in Upper Egypt, etc." are but a plagiarism of Thévenot's book, the first edition of which appeared in 1664. My conclusion (which ought to be corroborated by a thorough inquiry, which I had no leisure to make) is that Gabriel Brémond never existed, or, if he did, his only travels were done across the pages of Thévenot. [Later.—I have recently come across a passage which proves that Gabriel Brémond actually existed. Ludovico Marracci, the author of the *Prodromus ad Refutationem Alcorani* (Padua 1698), writes (*Vita et res gestae a Mahumeto,* p. 29 *b*): "The reader will not be displeased if I report here what was written about this temple (*i.e.,* the Ka'ba) and Mohammed's tomb by Gabriel Bremond, of Marseille, an intimate friend of mine . . . ." (follows a long quotation from Brémond's book). I wonder if our pseudo-traveler should not be identified with an adventurer and novelist of the same name, who ended his life in Holland.]

by the Turkish sultans Selim II and Murad III and replaced by a set of vaulted domes of masonry.[30] The remark on the variety of the material in the columns of the same porch is also correct; of the 545 columns, 301 are of marble and 244 of a reddish stone.[31] The minarets, which our author reckons as six, are now seven, but one of them is recent in its building.[32] The only statement which fails to match the real facts is the number of the gates in the porch; they are actually twenty-five, not ninety-nine. As a matter of fact, there are many more doorways, since almost all gates are double; however, they do not reach a figure higher than forty-four.[33] Strangely enough, Vartema has made the same mistake, and affirms that the gates are "ninety or one hundred", and another description of Mecca, almost contemporary with the Portuguese, to which we shall come later, gives the same number of ninety-nine. I must acknowledge my inability to offer an explanation of this same misstatement in three independent sources.

The "House of Abraham" is of course the Ka'ba. The worship of that ancient heathen shrine had been so deeply rooted in the hearts of the inhabitants of Mecca that Mohammed did not dare to wipe it out completely, and embodied some of its features in his new religion, pretending that the Ka'ba had been built originally by Abraham and consecrated to the worship of the true God. The rectangular block of masonry, of which it consists, actually is forty feet long and thirty-three feet wide; the estimate of the Pilgrim, ten paces, is practically correct. Such, too, is his estimate of the Black Stone, the meteorite immured in the eastern wall of the Ka'ba, which is an object of deep veneration to the Moslems. The statement concerning the "thirty-one columns of metal" around the Ka'ba is no longer correct for the present time; but in the past there were there thirty-one metal poles,[34] which our author improperly calls columns.

[30] See Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka*, 1, 16, and compare Rutter, *The Holy Cities of Arabia*, 1, 241.
[31] See, among others, Ibrāhīm Rif'at Pāshā, *Mir'āt al-ḥaramain*, Cairo 1344/1925, 1, 228; Rutter, 1, 227-29.
[32] Rif'at Pāshā, 1, 235; Snouck Hurgronje, 1, 13. Comp. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, p. 131.
[33] Rif'at Pāshā, 1, 229-34; Rutter, 1, 225 (p. 253 the total number is given as twenty-four, which is hardly correct).
[34] See below, note 44.

The authenticity of this singular document in the Vatican manuscript is above any suspicion of forgery. Its author must actually have traveled over the road which he describes and have witnessed the pilgrimage in the Moslem year 972. In spite of its extreme conciseness, his record is one of the most correct of those which were written previous to the 19th century on the mosque of Mecca and the way to it. It is, furthermore, the oldest of all of them so far as the itinerary is concerned. Vartema's description is full of details on everyday life, and is personal and humorous in its style, but its statements are too often vague or inaccurate. The Italian adventurer had little or no interest in geography and failed to report carefully on the stations on his road, which, incidentally, was entirely different from the road followed by the Portuguese Pilgrim, since Vartema came from Damascus and followed the so-called Syrian Pilgrimage Route.

Who then was the Pilgrim? and how did he, a Western European and undoubtedly a Christian by birth, happen to mix in the great Moslem festival, strictly forbidden to unbelievers? Since I am unable to answer these questions in full, I can offer my readers nothing better than a cautious hypothesis.

Since the end of the fifteenth century, when the Portuguese discovered the sea route of the Cape of Good Hope and were striving for the conquest of India, they were continually under threat of being cut off from that route by the navy of the Mamluk sultans, who ruled Egypt, Syria and Arabia and controlled the Red Sea. After the Mamluk dynasty was destroyed by the Ottoman sultan Selim I in 1517, the Turks inherited its foreign policy in the Indian Ocean, and war between them and the Portuguese was practically uninterrupted all along the coasts of that ocean. One might suppose that the unknown Pilgrim was a disguised agent of the king of Portugal, attempting to gain information about the enemy's country. Attractive as it may appear, this hypothesis does not seem to me to be very probable. On the one hand, the road from Cairo to Mecca was of no strategic value to the Portuguese; on the other hand, it is hard to believe that an

achievement such as that of penetrating into the very heart of Arabia would have remained unknown, if it had been accomplished by royal command.

Another hypothesis seems to me to deserve more credit. During the continual fights between Turks and Portuguese, prisoners were taken on both sides; moreover, the Turkish corsairs and Barbary pirates in the Mediterranean were attacking the Christian ships as often as they could reach them, and the captives regularly were sold as slaves all over the Moslem world. Cairo was one of the most important emporia of that infamous trade. We possess actual evidence of Portuguese slaves living in Cairo.[35] We shall probably not be mistaken, therefore, in supposing that the Pilgrim was a prisoner who had become a slave. As many did before and after him, he had become a convert to Islam, or had pretended to become one, and in such quality accompanied his master in a journey to Mecca.

His case is far from being unique. Some other Christian slaves were induced by their ill fate to become unfaithful to their religion, and, through a feigned conversion, were given the opportunity of seeing what very few Europeans have ever seen, the two holy cities of Islam and the Moslem pilgrimage. In the first decade of the seventeenth century, a young German from Nuremberg, Hans Wild by name, having enlisted as a soldier, was taken by the Turks in Hungary and finally got into the Cairo market; later on, he made the same journey as the Portuguese Pilgrim and wrote an interesting account of it, after he had been rescued and had come back to Germany in 1611.[36] Some years later, we hear about a Venetian boy (his name seems to have been Marco de Lombardo) who was captured while crossing the Mediterranean with his uncle, a sea captain. When he was twenty-three, his Moslem master sent him to Mecca from Cairo as an escort to his own son whom he wanted to perform the pilgrimage. He

[35] During the years 1561 and 1562 the Jesuit mission at Cairo was attempting to rescue some of them (see A. Rabbath, *Documents inédits pour servir à l'histoire du Christianisme en Orient*, 1, 229, 238, 247-48, 255, 267-68, 270, 276, 295).

[36] Wild's personal narrative of his adventures has been printed several times. I have only seen the Latin translation published as an appendix (pp. 130-154) to an edition of the travels of Benjamin of Tudela (Beniamini Tudelensis *Itinera ex versione* Benedicti Ariae Montani. *Subiectae sunt descriptiones Mechae et Medinae-alnabi ex itinerariis* Ludovici Vartomanni [*i.e.*, Vartema] *et* Iohannis Wildii, Leipzig 1764).

left no record of his journey, and all we know about it is told by the French missionary Eugene Roger, who in 1646 published a description of the Holy Land, where he had met the young Marco, then a grown man.[37] The foolish story which the Venetian told the good father about Mohammed's flying tomb at Mecca arouses a strong suspicion that he was only an impostor. Finally, in 1678, more than a century after the Portuguese, an Englishman whose name was Joseph Pitts was captured by an Algerian pirate when he was only fifteen or sixteen, and after several years of captivity was taken by his master on a pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, via Egypt. His account of that journey, which has been printed several times, has been praised as "accurate" by such an authority as Sir Richard Burton.

In 1552, about sixty officers and soldiers were taken prisoners by the Turks when these conquered the Portuguese-held port of Masqat, on the Western coast of the Gulf of Oman. They were taken to Cairo, where some twenty of them soon died; some others were rescued in 1564, and others seem to have remained in Egypt in slavery. Among them may have been our Pilgrim. Unfortunately, we do not know the names of all the Masqat prisoners, but only of eight among them, the most prominent and the best born. The Pilgrim appears to have been a man of keen intelligence and good education; his interest in geography is shown by the accurate record which he kept of all stations on his way. We would not be surprised to find such qualities in someone who had been on duty in the remote regions of Asia and had gone through various experiences traveling in little-known countries. Of course the suggestion which I am making here has only a moderate claim to likelihood. I may mention that it was proposed to me by Father G. Schurhammer, the Jesuit scholar who is the outstanding authority on the history of Portuguese colonization in Asia during the sixteenth century.[38]

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[37] *La Terre Saincte ou description topographique tres-particulière des Saincts Lieux, et de la Terre de Promission . . . . par* F. Eugene Roger Recollet, Missionaire de Barbarie, Paris 1646, p. 236-37.

[38] Father Schurhammer quoted as his sources: an unpublished letter of the Jesuit Miguel da Nobrega to St. Ignace, dated from Cairo, August 2, 1553 (in the Archives of the Jesuits at Rome, Epistolae Selectae, 60); Diogo do Couto, *Da Asia*, X 1-2 (p. 408-415 in the 1781 edition); *Itinerarios da India a Portugal por terra, revistos por* Baião, Coimbra 1923, p. 136.