

Honors Literature – World History

TASK: Read the following text carefully, making all appropriate notations. Identify SOAPStone, DIDLS, PERSIAN, and other information as evidence of your research and analysis of the piece of literature. Answer the related questions on notebook paper or on this document. You may use this information for any written essay on the piece. See the text at the very bottom of these notes.

TASK: Comprehension Questions

1. What relationships between Christians and Muslims does this passage suggest, for the post-classical period?
2. Why would a Spaniard play a special role in Willibald's Middle Eastern Experience?
3. What were Willibald's motives for travel?
4. What kind of larger results did this sort of travel have, in post-classical world history?

European Travel: A Monk Visits Jerusalem

Willibald, an English monk, journeyed to Jerusalem between 721 and 727 C.E. His account was written down by a German nun.

In Syria

Willibald's party had now grown to eight in number, and they became an object of suspicion to the Muslims, who, seeing that they were strangers, seized them and threw them into prison, because they knew not of what country they were, and supposed them to be spies. They carried them as prisoners before a certain rich old man, that he might examine them; and he inquired whence they came and the object of their mission; whereupon they related to him the true cause of their journey. The old man replied, "I have often seen men of the parts of the earth whence these come, traveling hither; they seek no harm, but desire to fulfil their law." And upon that they went to the palace, to obtain leave to proceed to Jerusalem.

While they were in prison it happened, by a manifest intervention of Devine Providence, that a merchant residing there was desirous, as an act of charity, and for the salvation of his soul, to purchase their deliverance, that they might pursue their way, but he was not allowed to carry his generous design into effect; nevertheless he sent them daily their meals, and on Wednesdays and Saturdays sent his son to them in prison, who took them out to the bath, and brought them back again. And on Sunday he took them to church through the market, that they might see the shops, and whatever they seemed to take a liking to he afterwards bought for them at his own expense. The townsmen used then to come there to look at them, because they were young and handsome, and clad in good garments.

Then, while they were still remaining in prison, a man, who was a native of Spain, came and spoke with them, and inquired earnestly who they were and from whence they came, and they told him the

object of their pilgrimage. This Spaniard had a brother in the king's palace, who was chamberlain to the king of the Muslims. . . . When [Willibald and the Spaniard] came before the king, and told him the case, he asked whence the prisoners came. And they said, "These men come from the west country, where the sun sets; and we know of no land beyond them, but water only." And the king replied, "Why ought we to punish them? they have not sinned against us: - give them leave, and let them go." And even the fine of four deniers, which the other prisoners had to pay, was remitted to them. . . .

Jerusalem and Bethlehem

On their arrival at Jerusalem, they first visited the spot where the holy cross was found, where there is now a church which is called the Place of Calvary, and which was formerly outside of Jerusalem; but when St. Helena found the cross, the place was taken into the circuit of the city. Three wooden crosses stand in this place, on the outside of the wall of the church, in memory of our Lord's cross and of those of the other persons crucified at the same time.

He next came to the place where the angel appeared to the shepherds, and thence to Bethlehem, where our Lord was born, distant seven miles from Jerusalem.

[Later, heading home they] reached Constantinople. Here repose in one altar the three saints, Andres, Timothy, and Luke the evangelist; and the sepulcher of John Chrysostome is before the altar where the priest stands when he performs mass. Willibald remained there two years, and was lodged in the church, so that he might behold daily where the saints reposed.

QUESTIONS What relationships between Christians and Muslims does this passage suggest, for the post-classical period? Why would a Spaniard play a special role in Willibald's Middle Eastern Experience? What were Willibald's motives for travel? What kind of larger results did this sort of travel have, in post-classical world history?