

The description of the Free State

Rottum

I

The Discovery of the North



to the latest reports from

Ibn Battuta

chronicled by

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I

The Discovery of the North

Including:

...the history of northwestern Europe after the Great Disruption;

...information about the political, social and economic situations, as well as the peculiar local times.

Illustrated with 18 plates, 7 maps and 60 drawings in the text



*"Go on a journey, for God's earth is wide and broad;
In length and breadth, to the east and to the west."*

The Traveller

" Stand still, you mortal,
Roam in a chair,
Searching for that feeling,
Deep in the memory;

In the middle of such a reverie
You'll find strange distances, sultry,
Fiery flames, then cool,
Only there you'll be a stranger."

(a song by Ayshe, sung aboard the Spinoza II).

Message to the reader

By Abu 'Inan,

Head of the Kinsmen's Council of the Tangier Freeport..



" Bism Allah al-Rahman al Rahim,"

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful, have mercy on this book, dear reader, for it gives you a new and unexpected insight into the development of civilisation.

You know, mankind ruled the earth up to the last day of the 'Old Era'. Until that horror swept over the planet, the hours of which we did not count in the persistent darkness. When it became light again, man stood destitute and defenceless in a wilderness. The few survivors had to survive in a supreme and above all hostile nature.

It is generally believed that the cause of the disaster was a fatal computer malfunction, which is why we have been talking about the 'Great Crash' ever since. Now that the Great Crash has subsided, mankind is striving for the return of the era when we communicated globally, moved at will, surrounded ourselves with all kinds of conveniences.

That aspiration is general, but progress varies from region to region. Thanks to Allah's mercy, civilisation has returned to the countries around the Mediterranean. But that mercy has been extremely limited and large parts of the globe have not benefited. There are even areas - where the Great Crash was most intense - that have never recovered.

That is why nobody from our region ever wanted to visit the north of Europe. For all we know, that is 'Crashed Area.'

This situation continued until the famous explorer Ibn Battuta decided to take a closer look. This famous resident of the Tangier Freeport had previously opened up immeasurable areas of Asia and Africa to us. And recently, this professional explorer turned his inquisitive eye to the dark North. Without hesitation and with determination, he decided on the most daring of all his journeys. You will understand that his initiative found a willing ear: his home town not only provided him with unbridled resources, but also with a first-rate diplomatic status, so that when he discovered any human life there, he would be received with respect and esteem.

Thus armed, he sailed across the perilous waves of the Atlantic to those distant, savage lands, where - as we all assumed - nothing but savage, brutal creatures lived. Murderous mutants called Hyper B's, or, more horribly, the dazed Gryps, the voracious Arimasps, and - worst of all - the shapeless Cumerians.

But luck travelled with him. He ended up on a coast where he found undisturbed human life and where he discovered a culture that was unknown to us, but reasonably well-developed. At first glance, it even looks a little like our own sophisticated civilisation, but, I can tell you, that is just an illusion. Its nuclei are completely different.

From Ibn Battuta's account, it is clear that this northern culture is merciless. Everything there revolves around electronic money; the boundaries between security and robbery are vague and undefined; hospitality is unknown; family ties do not count; neighbourly help is only paid for; old age is soured by loss of status and reward; and sports enthusiasts do not shun violence.

No wonder Ibn Battuta gets into big trouble on the spot. The writer complains a bit broadly about alleged injustice, but he can be generously forgiven for that. Not everyone can see all the patterns in the political fabric.

Fortunately, he sees other things more clearly. For instance, he clearly explains the purpose and necessity of the insurance business. How he becomes acquainted with dark sects and criminal organisations. How he becomes the plaything of legal procedures and of conflicts of interest. How he becomes embroiled in non-transparent intrigues and in confusing business situations. In addition - and this is much more interesting than all the personal discomfort - he describes, in detail, the strange world he encountered over there.

In this book Ibn Battuta tells how gindish society has risen from the ashes, rubble and charnel fields, which the Great Crash left behind. How, with difficulty, a new culture arose, partly based on memories of the previous one, but partly following its own path. In the process, he provides us with numerous geographical, social and political details that clarify the current situation in the northern regions.

And that's not all. Our curious traveller makes a very strange - if not disconcerting - discovery in these countries. For what does his story reveal? The majority of the population there consists of inveterate Unbelievers, who have no interest in the Laws and Works of the Almighty. On the contrary, these heathens are, as an alternative, engrossed in their own ego. And in this already reprehensible activity they use something as absurd as works of art as tools. Images, books, music and paintings, even plays, are in that strange world the subject of awe, of veneration, yes, of idolatrous worship!

It is for this reason that Ibn Battuta, in his later volumes, gives a detailed account of the state of the arts in those parts. In the next volume, for instance, he outlines the different schools of architecture. Later, he presents a variety of forms of entertainment: theatre, circus, music, film and a variety of virtual techniques. He depicts currents in the visual arts and finally, he writes about local literature. This artistically inspired paganism is widespread and deeply rooted in the northern countries.

But, Allah be praised and believed, the author also meets there, to his joy and enlightenment, True Believers, who stand by him, who help him in his difficulties. And that is why I can still warmly recommend this report to you.

So I recommend you, dear reader, dare to read this book. And join me in admiring the courage of the author, who on his journey has defied sea monsters and poison clouds, businessmen and pirates, even officials.