

Ibn Battuta essay sample



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BUSTER**

Ibn Battuta was a Muslim Moroccan explorer, known for his extensive travels. Over a period of thirty years, he visited most of the known Islamic world as well as many non-Muslim lands; his journeys included trips to North Africa, the Horn of Africa, West Africa, Southern Europe and Eastern Europe in the West, and to the Middle East, South Asia, Central Asia, Southeast Asia and China in the East. He is considered one of the greatest travellers of all time. He journeyed more than 75, 000 miles (121, 000 km). His name was Abu Abdal-Lāh Muhammad ibn Abdal-Lah I-Lawati attangi ibn Battutah. He was born in February 25, 1304 and died in 1369 at the age of 65. As a young man he had studied at a Sunni Maliki madh'hab, (Islamic jurisprudence school), the dominant form of education in North Africa at that time. In June 1325, at the age of twenty-one, Ibn Battuta set off from his hometown on a hajj to Mecca, a journey that would take sixteen months. He would not see Morocco again for twenty-four years. He said: " I set out alone, finding no companion to cheer the way with friendly intercourse, and no party of travellers with whom to associate myself. Swayed by an overmastering impulse within me, and a long-cherished desire to visit those glorious sanctuaries, I resolved to quit all my friends and tear myself away from my home.

As my parents were still alive, it weighed grievously upon me to part from them, and both they and I were afflicted with sorrow." He travelled to Mecca overland, following the North African coast across the sultanates of Abd al-Wadid and Hafsid. The route took him through Tlemcen, Béjaïa, and then Tunis, where he stayed for two months. For safety, he usually joined a caravan to reduce the risk of an attack by wandering Arab Bedouin. Ibn Battuta then arrived at the port of Alexandria, then part of the Bahri Mamluk

empire. He spent several weeks visiting sites in the area then headed inland to Cairo. Of the three usual routes to Mecca, Ibn Battuta chose the least-travelled, which involved a journey up the Nile valley, then east to the Red Sea port of Aydhab, Upon approaching the town however, a local rebellion forced him to turn back. Ibn Battuta returned to Cairo and took a second side trip, this time to Mamluk-controlled Damascus. During his first trip he had encountered a holy man, Shaykh Abul Hasan al Shadili, who prophesied that he would only reach Mecca by travelling through Syria.

The diversion held an added advantage; due to the holy places that lay along the way, including Hebron, Jerusalem, and Bethlehem, the Mamluk authorities spared no efforts in keeping the route safe for pilgrims. Without this help many travelers would be robbed and murdered. After spending the Muslim month of Ramadan in Damascus, he joined a caravan travelling the 1, 500 km south to Medina, tomb of the Islamic prophet Muhammad (S. A. W). After four days in the town, he journeyed on to Mecca where completing his pilgrimage he took the honorific status of El-Hajji. Rather than return home, Ibn Battuta instead decided to continue on, choosing as his next destination the Ilkhanate, a Mongol Khanate, to the northeast. He then travelled to Madinah and visited Abu Talib (R. A) the fourth Caliph of Prophet Muhammad (S. A. W). he then went to Persia and headed to the town Esfahan across the Zagros Mountains. He then headed south to Shiraz, a large, flourishing city spared the destruction wrought by Mongol invaders on many more northerly towns. Finally, he returned across the mountains to Baghdad, arriving there in June 1327. In Baghdad he found Abu Sa'id, the

last Mongol ruler of the unified Ilkhanate, leaving the city and heading north with a large retinue.

Ibn Battuta joined the royal caravan for a while, then turned north on the Silk Road to Tabriz. He left again for Baghdad, probably in July, but first took an excursion northwards along the river Tigris, visiting Mosul, Cizre and Mardin, in modern day Iraq and Turkey. Once back in Mosul, he joined a “ feeder” caravan of pilgrims heading south to Baghdad where they would meet up with the main caravan that crossed the Arabian Desert to Mecca. He arrived in the city weak and exhausted for his second hajj. After the hajj, he made his way to the port of Jeddah on the Red Sea coast. Once in Yemen he visited Zabid and later the highland town of Ta’izz. Ibn Battuta also mentions visiting Sana’a. He went then to the important trading port of Aden. He then went to Somalia. From Somalia to Swahili Coast. After a journey along the coast, Ibn Battuta next arrived in the island town of Kilwa in present day Tanzania. He sailed back to Arabia, first to Oman and the Strait of Hormuz then on to Mecca, and from Mecca to India followed by Syria.

From the Syrian port of Latakia, a Genoese ship took him to Alanya on the southern coast of modern-day Turkey. He then travelled overland to Konya and afterwards to Sinope on the Black Sea coast. From Sinope he took a sea route to the Crimean Peninsula, arriving so in the Golden Horde realm. He went to port town of Azov, then to the large and rich city of Majar. From there he made a journey to Bolghar, which became the northernmost point he reached, and noted its unusually (for a subtropics dweller) short nights in summer. Then he returned to Khan’s court and with it moved to Astrakhan. When they reached Astrakhan, Uzbeg Khan had just given permission for one

of his pregnant wives, Princess Bayalun, a daughter of Greek Emperor Andronikos III Palaiologos, to return to her home city of Constantinople to give birth. Ibn Battuta talked his way into this expedition, which would be his first beyond the boundaries of the Islamic world. Arriving in Constantinople. After a month in the city, Ibn Battuta returned to Astrakhan. He journeyed south to Afghanistan, then crossed into India. From the Rajput Kingdom of Sarsatti, he visited Hansi in India. His plan to leave on the pretext of taking another hajj was stymied by the Sultan, who asked him instead to become his ambassador to Yuan Dynasty China.

Given the opportunity to get away from the Sultan and visit new lands, he readily accepted. En route to the coast at the start of his journey to China, Ibn Battuta and his party were attacked by a group of bandits, he was robbed and nearly lost his life. Despite this setback, within ten days he had caught up with his group and continued on to Khambhat in the Indian state of Gujarat. From there, they sailed to Kozhikode (Calicut). While Ibn Battuta visited a mosque on shore, a storm arose and one of the ships of his expedition sank. The other ship then sailed without him only to be seized by a local Sumatran king a few months later. He then left India, determined to continue his journey to China. Half-kidnapped into staying, he became chief judge and married into the royal family of Omar. He became embroiled in local politics and left when his strict judgments in the laissez-faire island kingdom began to chafe with its rulers.

From the Maldives, he carried on to Sri Lanka and visited Sri Pada and Tenavaram temple. Stranded on shore, he worked his way back to Kozhikode, from where he returned to the Maldives and boarded a Chinese

junk, still intending to reach China and take up his ambassadorial post. He reached the port of Chittagong in modern-day Bangladesh intending to travel to Sylhet. Ibn Battuta went further north into Assam, then turned around and continued with his original plan. He then went to Sumatra. Ibn Battuta then sailed to Malacca, Vietnam, the Philippines and finally Quanzhou in Fujian province, China. From there he went north to Hangzhou. He also described traveling further north, through the Grand Canal to Beijing, but as he neared the capital an internal power struggle among the Yuan Mongols erupted, causing Ibn Battuta and his Hui guides to return to the south coast. Return home and the Black Death

After returning to Quanzhou in 1346, Ibn Battuta began his journey back to Morocco. In Kozhikode, he once again considered throwing himself at the mercy of Muhammad bin Tughluq, but thought better of it and decided to carry on to Mecca. The Black Death had struck and he was on hand as it spread through Syria, Palestine, and Arabia. After reaching Mecca he decided to return to Morocco, nearly a quarter of a century after leaving home. On the way he made one last detour to Sardinia, then in 1349 returned to Tangier by way of Fez, only to discover that his mother had also died a few months before. Ibn Battuta was a great explorer. He faced many hardships and he knew this from the beginning .. but he loved exploring places which made him a very important and famous traveller.