

the church with the Cardinal and his aunt and some of his Council, and the Cardinal told me on behalf of the king that he had heard I wished to go to Babylon and M. Sinai, and as the king had to send an ambassador on his own affairs to the Soldan he begged me to accept this office, and thereby greatly oblige the king: and I knew well that the Cardinal had managed it so to satisfy me. And I answered that I was well content to serve him, forasmuch as he was a king, and a Christian, and of the land of France. The king bid me dine there with him and the Cardinal, and there he gave the orders for my journey. And thence I left for the port of Paphos, where the king had sent orders that I should be lodged in a village on a mountain, a wholesome spot, on account of the great unhealthiness of Paphos, and I rested in the house of Diego Thenorio, an esquire of Castile, and had much pleasure with him. And after three days there arrived in the port of Paphos a *fusta* of eighteen thwarts, which was to take me, and it brought the king's dragoman who was to go with me, and much victuals, as for a king's household, and the instructions as to what I was to do with the Soldan. On the following day we sailed and were at sea for eleven days, sometimes with a favourable wind, and reached at last the harbour of Damiaa, where the Nile, which rises in the terrestrial Paradise, enters the Mediterranean sea. We passed up the river a league and a half to the city of Damiaa, which is about the size of Salamanca.... There I saw the first pigeons which carry a letter on the feather of the tail: it is done by carrying them from the place where they are bred to another place, and attaching the letter and letting them go, and the bird returns to its home. It is done to have early news of people arriving by land or sea, that they may not be taken by surprise, since they live without a fortress and without walls (pp. 66—72).

[*Pero Tafur sailed up the Nile to Cairo, saw crocodiles, elephants and giraffes, the pyramids (which he calls Joseph's barns) and other wonders. He obtained an audience of the Sultan, who granted the king's requests—one of these was that "he might be allowed to sell his salt, which was a great source of income, throughout Syria without paying dues." He then journeyed to Mount Sinai and returned safely to Cairo in company with one Nicolo de Condo, who beguiled their time and toil with strange tales of Preste Juan and the sources of the Nile.*]

From Damiaa I put to sea and arrived in seven days at the port of Paphos, where I had embarked, a very unhealthy place: the very day I arrived the Bishop (Angelo de Narni) and two of his esquires had died. And God was gracious to me so that directly I set foot on land I mounted the animals of the Bishop and his men and left for the court of the king of Cyprus, who was in Nicosia. And my dragoman whom the king had given me went ahead to tell the king and the Cardinal, and they sent to bid me halt that night in a village, because the next morning they wished to give me an honourable reception, and so they did. The next morning as I was going on my road I found many of those gentlemen of the king's court, who came out to receive me, and accompanied me to the king's presence, and when I arrived I found the king and the Cardinal and many of the *grandees* with them, and I was very well received, and treated with as much kindness as if I had been of their family: they praised God that I was returned safe from so great a journey, and thanked me warmly from the king for what I had done in his service, offering me freely things which I might like. I then took my leave of the king, and the admiral who was there took me to his house as before, where I was very well lodged. The next morning there arose a great tumult throughout the town, and all took to arms, the Cardinal among the first and Madame Ines his sister and some of the *grandees* of the realm against the king to kill or take a favourite of his, called Jacobo Guiri [Jacques Gourry], by office a judge. The king fled to a fortress on the edge of the city, called the Citadel, and there they surrounded him, and made these terms with him, that he would put