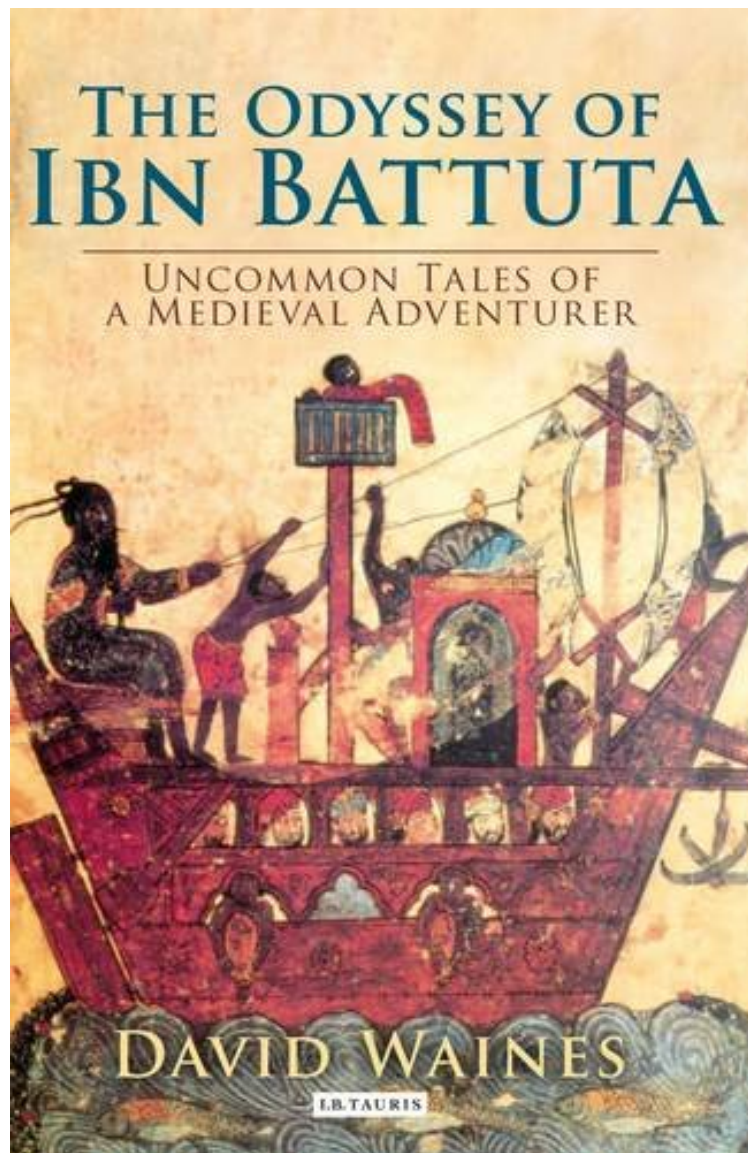


(Free pdf) The Odyssey of Ibn Battuta: Uncommon Tales of a Medieval Adventurer

## The Odyssey of Ibn Battuta: Uncommon Tales of a Medieval Adventurer

*Professor David Waines*

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**Professor David Waines : The Odyssey of Ibn Battuta: Uncommon Tales of a Medieval Adventurer** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Odyssey of Ibn Battuta: Uncommon Tales of a Medieval Adventurer:

Ibn Battuta was, without doubt, one of the world's truly great travellers. Born in 14th century Morocco, and a contemporary of Marco Polo, Ibn Battuta has left us an account in his own words of his remarkable journeys throughout the Islamic world and beyond: journeys punctuated by adventure and peril, and stretching from his home in Tangiers to Zaytun in faraway China. Whether sojourning in Delhi and the Maldives, wandering through the mazy streets of Cairo and Damascus, or contesting with pirates and shipwreck, the indefatigable Ibn Battuta brings to vivid life a medieval world brimming with marvel and mystery. Carefully observing the great diversity of civilizations which he encountered, Ibn Battuta exhibits an omnivorous interest in such matters as food and drink, religious differences (between Christians, Hindus and Shi'a Muslims), ideas about purity and impurity, disease, women and sex. Recounting the many miracles which its author claims to have experienced personally, his al-rihla or 'Travelogue' is a fascinating mosaic of mysticism and reportage offering a prototype magic realism. David Waines discusses the subtleties of the al-rihla, revealing all the wonders of Ibn Battuta's world to the modern reader. This is a gripping treatment of the life and times of one of history's most daring, and at the same time most human, discoverers.

'A valuable introduction to one of the grand texts of travel literature.' BBC History Magazine, 'The Odyssey of Ibn Battuta will introduce new readers to the world of the Travels and it will enlighten them on aspects of that world which have until now attracted little comment. It may inspire others to explore Ibn Battuta's world at greater depth.'

Tim Mackintosh-Smith, author of *Travels with a Tangerine: A Journey in the Footnotes of Ibn Battuta*, 'Waines' delightful book is packed full of wonderful details from al-Rihla along with numerous quotes from the originator. The book is laced with engaging, descriptive passages of the Muslim world's most famous travel tale in which the author's insightful knowledge of medieval Islamic traditions and cultures is put to great use, without overshadowing or obscuring the original narrative. The end result is a book that I would not only highly recommend for scholars of classical Islamic studies, Muslim history and civilisation, but also for the more general reader who enjoys the energy and excitement of a "rip-roaring" travel epic, albeit from the comfort of their own armchair.' Muslim Book , 'By highlighting Ibn Battuta's encounters with sex, strangeness and the sacred, David Waines makes this deservedly most famous of medieval travellers more intelligible, more enjoyable and more rewarding than ever.'

Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, William P Reynolds Professor of History, University of Notre Dame, and Professorial Fellow of Queen Mary, University of London, 'This book is more than just a highly entertaining account of the travels of Ibn Battuta in Arabia, Africa and South East Asia. It is innovative and offers a remarkable insight into the world of this intrepid globetrotter who travelled as far as China. David Waines has succeeded in making the reader feel as if they were really there, so clearly does he present the various anecdotes and the captivating details of ordinary life. It is a work of great scholarship and will be of interest to both academe and the general reader. A valuable contribution to Islamic travel literature.'

Dionisius A Agius, Al Qasimi Professor of Arabic Studies Islamic Material Culture, University of Exeter, 'In this thoroughly engaging book David Waines places the famous Moroccan traveller in the colourful context of medieval story-telling and travellers' tales, establishing which of his writings were borrowed from other authors and which are plausible accounts of his own remarkable adventures. Waines shows how the details about food, hospitality, dress and sexual customs registered by Ibn Battuta fit into the broader milieu of a medieval world in which marvels and miracles, slave-girls and sultans, generosity and cruelty jostle for space and attention. The Odyssey of Ibn Battuta is a perfect companion-piece to the master-traveller's own extraordinary record.'

Malise Ruthven, author of *Islam: A Very Short Introduction* and *A Historical Atlas of the Islamic World* About the Author David Waines is Emeritus Professor of Islamic Studies at Lancaster University. He wrote the bestselling textbook 'An Introduction to Islam', now in its second edition, and edited a volume entitled 'Patterns of Everyday Life' in the Formation of the Classical Islamic World series. He has also written many articles on the medieval Arabic culinary and dietetic traditions.