View Across the Dead Sea - Félix Bonfils - c. 1875

The Dead Sea seemed to recede away from us as if in flight...
At last, we stood before the water that covers the sinful cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. It looks quite innocent and is so clear that, where it is not so deep, one can see every pebble on its bed... The temperature of the water was 27° Réaumer.
It has such a high salt content that it is impossible even for those who cannot swim to sink. One could lie flat in it without concern and read the Jericho Times, if only the needs among the Beduins, robbers and monks who inhabit the Jordan Valley had given rise to such a newspaper. By the way, what I did miss at the Dead Sea was the pillar of salt that Lot's inquisitive wife was supposedly turned into...
(A Modern Crusade, Dr. Adam Carrillo, 1958)
The water that covers the sinful cities is so deep, one can see every pebble. The water was 17° Réaumur, exactly as in a bath. One could lie flat in it ad libitum, and the Jerichoites, if only the lions, robbers and monks who inhabit the region, could rise to such a newspaper. By the sea, the Dead Sea was the pillar of salt that was supposedly turned into salt. (Dam Karrilion, 1868)

Northern End of the Dead Sea · Anonymous · c. 1875

THE DEAD SEA. The motionlessness and the color of the Dead Sea remind one of a lake... Its shores are strewn with dried-up tree-trunks and pieces of wood, doubtless fioram washed down by the Jordan. The water seems to me to have the same temperature as a normal bath; contrary to my expectations, it is completely clear. Sassetti, who tasted it, burst his tongue doing so; I was thirsty but did not attempt the experiment.

(Journey in the Orient, Gustave Flaubert, 1853)
[Saturday] August [12] 1850

SAINT-SABA. Before one reaches Saint-Saba, a massive ramp up to the monastery... The monastery is located on the cliffs, it is built into them on all sides from top to bottom; within, there are deep ravines; in terms of its situation, it is a true Palestine monastery. Our letter was taken up in a basket...

...Behind railings, we were shown the tomb of St. Saba, several skulls that belonged to monks who had been massacred by Bedouins... (Journey in the Orient, Gustave Flaubert, 1853)
aba Monastery on the Road from n to the Dead Sea - Anonymous -

August 12, 1840

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(Journey in the Orient, Gustave Flaubert, 1853)

Bethany - On the Eastern Slope of the Mount of Olives - Anonymous - c. 1875

June 9, 1842

We came to Bethany, where I visited the cave in which Lazarus lay in the sleep of death from which Jesus woke him to life. We then took the same route that our Savior rode to Jerusalem, one-and-a-quarter hours away, and along which the people demonstrated their love and devotion one last time by strewing olive branches and flowers. In how short a time was this scene of sublime joy transformed into its harshest possible contrast, into the spectacle of the most pitiful martyrdom and death!

(Journey of a Viennese Woman in the Holy Land, Ida Pfeiffer, 1844)
June 2, 1841.

This small monastery and the church are built close to the city at the very same place where Jesus was born. ... Like the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, this large church here in Bethlehem belongs communally to the Latins, Armenians and Greeks. Each of these sects has built onto this church a tiny monastery for itself.

(Journey of a Viennese Woman in the Holy Land, Ida Pfeiffer, 1844)
Pilgrims at Christmas.

and the church are built close to the cave where Jesus was born. ... holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, this church belongs communally to the Greeks. Each of these sects has built a monastery for itself.

Roman in the Holy Land, Ida Pfeiffer,

Bethlehem - The Place of Christ’s Birth in the Church of the Nativity - Félix Bonfils - c. 1875

June 2, 1842
Located under the high altar of this large church is the cave in which Christ was born. Two flights of stairs lead down to it; one belongs to the Armenians, the other to the Greeks. The Latins were left empty-handed. The walls and the floor are inlaid with marble. A marble slab with the inscription, Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus natus est (Here, Jesus Christ was born unto the Virgin Mary), indicates the place from which the True Light first emanated. A shining sun attached to the wall behind this slab receives its light from many lamps that burn uneasingly.

August 12, 1853
At the site of the Nativity itself, five lamps are lit... The place on the floor upon which Jesus was laid is marked by a large star, from which the gold has been taken away... I stood for a long time here, and I found it difficult to tear myself away from it; this is beautiful, this is true, a song of mystic joy...

(Journey in the Orient, Gustave Flaubert, 1853)

(Journey of a Viennese Woman in the Holy Land, Ida Pfeiffer, 1844)