Hugh of Jabala Encyclopedia Article

Hugh of Jabala

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Contents

Hugh of Jabala Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Hugh of Jabala.....3

Hugh of Jabala

fl. 1140s

French prelate who first related the story of Prester John to the historian Otto of Freising (c. 1111-1158). Hugh served as bishop of Jabala, now the city of Jubayl in Lebanon, a coastal town that in ancient times had been the Phoenician city of Byblos. Sent by the crusader king Raymond of Antioch to gain support from Pope Eugenius IV for a new crusade, he told the pope about a Christian king in the East who had supposedly attempted to assist the crusaders in their efforts against the Muslims of Palestine. Otto later included the story in his *History of the Two Cities* (1143-46). In 1165 a forged letter, allegedly from Prester John, appeared in Europe. The quest for the legendary king would inspire numerous European efforts at exploration through the time of Prince Henry the Navigator (1394-1460) and beyond.