

Departing from it, I came to a certain hill which is called SARBISACALO;¹ and in that country is the mountain whereon is Noah's Ark. And I would fain have ascended it, if my companions would have waited for me. But the folk of the country told us that no one ever could ascend the mountain, for this, as it is said, hath seemed not to be the pleasure of the Most High.²

2. Concerning the City of Tauris and the City of Soldania, where dwelleth the Persian Emperor.

From that country I passed to TAURIS, a great city and a royal, which anciently was called Susis, and was the city of the King Ahasuerus.³ In it they say the Arbor Secco existeth in a mosque, that is to say, in a church of the

¹ This puzzling name occurs also in Balducci Pegolotti's detail of stages on the road to Tauris, under the form of *Sermessacalo*. I can only suggest that these Italian corruptions contain the name of the station of *Hassan-Kala'a*, some twenty-four miles from Erzurum, near where the roads to Kars and Tabriz separate, perhaps under some such form as *Serai-Hassan-Kala'a*. It was once a considerable place, and the site of one of the Genoese castles which protected the road from Trebizond. There are also hot springs at the place. (*Brant.*, u. s., p. 230.) The name may however contain the Armenian *Surp* or *Surpazan*, holy.

² MIN. RAM. "For the mountain is most holy, and moreover is inaccessible on account of the deep snow that covers at least two-thirds of it."

On Ararat, see note to *Jordanus*, p. 3. Rubruquis gives a curious popular reason why no one should ascend the mountain (p. 387). Haiton says that though nobody dares mount because of the snow, yet something black appears on the top which is vulgarly called Noah's Ark. The usual Mussulman tradition places the grounding of the Ark not on Armenian Ararat, but on the Jibul Judi in Kurdistan, whence Benj. of Tudela says "Omar Ben Khatab removed the Ark from the summit and made a mosque of it" (p. 93). Sir H. Rawlinson considers Judi to be much higher than Demawend, and as Demawend is believed to be fully 4,000 feet higher than Ararat, the claims of Judi to be the mountain of the Ark are very intelligible. (See President's Address in *Jour. R. Geog. Soc.*, xxix, p. clxx.)

³ "And on the way I passed the Red River, where Alexander routed Darius the King of Asia; and in that city we have two convents." *Pal.* It is correct that the Franciscans had two convents in Tauris (*Wadding*). Respecting the Red River (*Fiume Rosso*), see note to Pegolotti *infra*. Tauris (*Tabriz*) was the capital of more than one dynasty, and