

greatly destroyed it. It is a city which aboundeth greatly in bread and wine, and in many other good things. From this city to Jerusalem, (whither the Magi found their way, not surely by human strength but by Divine strength working by miracle, seeing how quickly they went), is a good fifty days' journey. And there be many other things with regard to that city which it boots not much to rehearse.¹

Passing thence I travelled to a certain city called IEST,²

¹ Kashan, a city of Persia, still tolerably flourishing, standing about halfway between Ispahan and Tehran, and also about halfway between Sultaniah and Yezd, long noted for its brocades and velvets, and also for its scorpions.

Sir T. Herbert alludes to the story of the Magi coming from Kashan, but as he quotes Odoric I suspect his knowledge was derived from him only. For it is remarkable that in the Palatine and Minor Ramusian versions of Odoric, it is at SABA, and not at Kashan that he speaks of the Magi. And this agrees with Marco Polo, who places at *Sava* the origin and sepulchres of the three kings. One he says was King of Sava, another of Ava, the third of the castle of the fire-worshippers. Both Saba and Ava still exist between Sultania and Kashan, or at least their names and remains do. They retain no traditions now about the kings.

Herbert observes that various authors have brought the Magi from Babylon, Shushan, Hormuz, and Ceylon, to which we may add that Armenian tradition brings them from Lake Van, Haiton the Armenian from Chinese Tartary, and John de' Marignolli from the Indian Archipelago. It was impossible to *bring* the wise men of the East from Europe, so they were *taken* there after death, surely by the strangest fable ever invented!

It is most likely that the location of the wise men at Saba in Persia rose out of a misapplication of Psalm lxxii, 10: "*The Kings of Tarshish and the Isles shall bring presents, the Kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.*" And it was probably through some mistake in dictation that all the versions of Odoric but the two mentioned refer the Magi to Kashan instead of Saba (*Chardin*, i, 297, 300, 301; *Herbert's Travels*; *Haiton*, ch. ii; *Assemani*, p. 750; *Abbott in J. R. G. S.*, xxv, p. 6).

² Yezd, occupying an oasis in the great Persian desert, is mentioned by Barbaro in the following century as a most industrious place, flourishing by its silk and cotton manufactures, and supplying with these a large part of Asia. These manufactures still continue. Many important caravan routes converge at Yezd, whilst the desert has given it security, and thus it has become a considerable mart.

The figs, pomegranates, grapes, and melons of the oasis are noted. The small raisins, not very much larger than Greek currants, are well known in India, into which they are largely imported under the name of *Kishmis*;