

Having related this story, I will now tell you of the different provinces of Persia, and their peculiarities.

NOTE 1.—“*Mire.*” This was in old French the popular word for a Leech; the politer word was *Physicien*. (*N. et E.* V. 505.)

Chrysostom says that the Gold, Myrrh, and Frankincense were mystic gifts indicating King, Man, God; and this interpretation was the usual one. Thus Prudentius:—

“ Regem, Deumque adnunciant
Thesaurus et fragrans odor
Thuris Sabaei, at myrrheus
Pulvis sepulchrum praedocet.” (*Hymnus Epiphanius.*)

And the Paris Liturgy:—

“ Offert Aurum *Caritas*,
Et Myrrham *Austeritas*,
Et Thus *Desiderium*.
Auro *Rex* agnoscitur,
Homo Myrrha, colitur
Thure *Deus* gentium.”

And in the “Hymns, Ancient and Modern” :—

“ Sacred gifts of mystic meaning :
Incense doth their God disclose,
Gold the King of Kings proclaimeth,
Myrrh His sepulchre foreshows.”

NOTE 2.—“*Feruntque* (Magi), si justum est credi, etiam ignem caelitus lapsum apud se sempiternis foculis custodire, cujus portionem exiguam, ut faustam praeisse quondam Asiaticis Regibus dicunt.” (*Ammian. Marcell.* XXIII. 6.)

NOTE 3.—Saba or Sava still exists as SÁVAH, about 50 miles S.W. of Tehrân. It is described by Mr. Consul Abbott, who visited it in 1849, as the most ruinous town he had ever seen, and as containing about 1000 families. The people retain a tradition, mentioned by Hamd Allah Mastaufi, that the city stood on the shores of a Lake which dried up miraculously at the birth of Mahomed. Sávah is said to have possessed one of the greatest Libraries in the East, until its destruction by the Mongols on their first invasion of Persia. Both Sávah and Ávah (or Ábah) are mentioned by Abulfeda as cities of Jibal. We are told that the two cities were always at loggerheads, the former being Sunni and the latter Shiya. [We read in the *Travels* of Thévenot, a most intelligent traveller, “qu’il n’a rien écrit de l’ancienne ville de Sava qu’il trouva sur son chemin, et où il a marqué lui-même que son esprit de curiosité l’abandonna.” (*Voyages*, éd. 1727, vol. v. p. 343. He died a few days after at Miana, in Armenia, 28th November, 1667). (*MS. Note.*—H. Y.)]

As regards the position of AVAH, Abbott says that a village still stands upon the site, about 16 miles S.S.E. of Sávah. He did not visit it, but took a bearing to it. He was told there was a mound there on which formerly stood a Gueber Castle. At Sávah he could find no trace of Marco Polo’s legend. Chardin, in whose time Sávah was not quite so far gone to decay, heard of an alleged tomb of Samuel, at 4 leagues from the city. This is alluded to by Hamd Allah.

Keith Johnston and Kiepert put Ávah some 60 miles W.N.W. of Sávah, on the road between Kazvin and Hamadan. There seems to be some great mistake here.

Friar Odoric puts the locality of the Magi at *Kashan*, though one of the versions of Ramusio and the Palatine MS. (see Cordier’s Odoric, pp. xcv. and 41 of his Itinerary), perhaps corrected in this, puts it at *Saba*.—H. Y. and H. C.