

then they cook the meat, and set it before the idols, and sprinkle the broth hither and thither, saying that in this way the idols get their bellyful. Thus it is that they keep their festivals. You must know that each of the idols has a name of his own, and a feast-day, just as our Saints have their anniversaries.<sup>12</sup>

They have also immense Minsters and Abbeys, some of them as big as a small town, with more than two thousand monks (*i.e.* after their fashion) in a single abbey.<sup>13</sup> These monks dress more decently than the rest of the people, and have the head and beard shaven. There are some among these *Bacsi* who are allowed by their rule to take wives, and who have plenty of children.<sup>14</sup>

Then there is another kind of devotees called SENSIN, who are men of extraordinary abstinence after their fashion, and lead a life of such hardship as I will describe. All their life long they eat nothing but bran,<sup>15</sup> which they take mixt with hot water. That is their food: bran, and nothing but bran; and water for their drink. 'Tis a lifelong fast! so that I may well say their life is one of extraordinary asceticism. They have great idols, and plenty of them; but they sometimes also worship fire. The other Idolaters who are not of this sect call these people heretics—*Patarins* as we should say<sup>16</sup>—because they do not worship their idols in their own fashion. Those of whom I am speaking would not take a wife on any consideration.<sup>17</sup> They wear dresses of hempen stuff, black and blue,<sup>18</sup> and sleep upon mats; in fact their asceticism is something astonishing. Their idols are all feminine, that is to say, they have women's names.<sup>19</sup>

Now let us have done with this subject, and let me tell you of the great state and wonderful magnificence of the Great Lord of Lords; I mean that great Prince