

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD^s THE MONKS OF BARSAMO
kinds, and water enough. The Saracens of the city of Tauris are very cruel people, evil G V VB
and disloyal, and do much harm to the Christians and to all the other people who are not of V
their law.

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OF THE MONASTERY OF THE BLESSED BARSAMO WHICH IS WITHIN THE BORDERS OF R
 TAURIS. Cap. 10.

In the borders of Tauris is a very religious monastery with the title of the Blessed Saint Barsamo.¹ There is an abbot with many monks who wear the habit like that of the Carmelites. And that they may not be given up to idleness these are always making woollen girdles, which they then place on the altar of the Blessed Barsamo when they celebrate the Offices. And when they go through the provinces begging (like the Brothers of the Holy Spirit) they give of them to their friends and to the noblemen, because they are good to take away the pain which any one may have in the body, and for this reason everyone devoutly wishes to have them.

OF THE GREAT WONDER OF THE MOUNTAIN WHICH HAPPENED IN BAUDAC
 BEFORE IT WAS TAKEN BY THE GREAT CAN. And we wish to tell you also a V
 great wonder which happened between Baudac and Mosul.² It was
 true that in about the 1275³ year from the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ there Z V
 was a very evil and cruel calif of Saracens in Baudac who, wishing very great evil to the V VA
 Christians—and this is natural to all Saracens, to hate Christians—, both day and night LT
 thought of nothing else but of a means and plan how he could make all the Christians R Z
 of his land turn Saracen again or, if not, that [12b] he might rob them and spoil them VB
 of their things and make them all be put to death. And about this he consulted
 every day with his monks and with one of his casses⁴ of his law, for all together FB FB
 wished great evil to the Christians. And it is a true thing that all the Saracens of
 the world always wish great ill to all the Christians of the world. Now it happened FB
 one day at last that the calif who was very learned, searching certain writings, that is the V Z V
 Gospels of holy Scripture, with the wise men who were round him found a point
 of Scripture in a Gospel such as I shall tell you. They find that in a Gospel⁵ it says Z

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¹ Monasterio intitolato il beato Barsamo santo, molto deuoto. B. finds great difficulty in the last two words (*Marco Polo*, p. 430; cf. B. p. 23). The present version follows MARSDEN.

² VA: *dentro baldacho e mosul* and *In le contrade de turis e baldacho* P: *inter thaurisium et baldachum* cf. p. 74 note 3 above.

³ Z, V, R: 1225. FG, TA, LT, VB: 1275. VA, P omit.

⁴ Casses may be *kašš*, the Arabic for "priest". See PN. FB: *vng des prestres de sa loy*.

⁵ As examples of small corruptions and perhaps deliberate variations we give: TA': *innuno vassello iscritto* (twice) V: *in vno vanzelio . . . che dizea dio chon la suo bocha* VA: "One day those wise men said to the calif, Sir, we have found that which you go seeking. The Gospel of the Christians says whoever shall have so much faith as the size of a seed of mustard, that if