

THE FAITH OF CHRISTIANS AND OF SARACENS ~~of~~ MARCO POLO

terrified the calif and all the Saracens. Stop, by God, from your prayer, all the Saracens began to cry out ; for the mountain went and moved as long as the prayer of the shoemaker continued, when prayer ceased the mountain stopped. And when the calif and all the Saracens see this so great and so manifest miracle they remained all dismayed and have great wonder at it [13d] saying, Great is the God of the Christians; and many turn Christian because of it. And the calif himself in particular had himself baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy Ghost, Amen; and became Christian, but it was secretly for fear of the Saracens of the province. But when he died there was found a golden cross hanging on his neck which he always bore hidden beneath his robes. Whereupon the Saracens do not bury him in the tombs of the other calif but put him in another place apart from the rest because the cross was found upon him.¹ The Christians had very great joy of this great most holy miracle and went home making very great festival, giving thanks to their Creator for what he had done for them. In this way all the Christians of that land are free and were always well treated from then till now. Moreover from reverence of the aforesaid cobbler and of the favour then obtained the Christians, Nestorians and Jacobites, always ever since solemnly celebrate the day of the anniversary of this miracle continuously fasting on the vigil. Note that the Christians, Armenians, Nestorians, and Jacobites, differ in certain articles ; indeed on this account one repudiates and is separate from another. In that way went this wonder as you have heard. And do not wonder if the Saracens hate the Christians, because the accursed law which their prophet Mahomet has given them commands that all the evil that they can do to all people who are not of their law and all that they can take from them, they have no sin from it. And if Christians were to kill them or to bring any harm upon them they are counted among themselves as martyrs. And for this thing they do great evils and would do much more ill if it were not for the government. And all the other Saracens of the world behave themselves in this manner. And at the end of their life their priest comes to them asking whether they believe Mahomet to have been the true messenger of God, and if they answer that they believe, then they say that they are safe ; and thus they reduce the Tartars and many other people to their law because they are very free to sin and according to their law no sin has been forbidden them. Now see how bloody a law and how evil commandments they are. This thing which was not for silence, which happened in the regions of Tauris and Baudac, has been told. And now let us leave Tauris and we will begin about Persie. And from this Tauris into Persie there are twelve days journeys.²

¹ S: "because after that miracle he had lived and died as a true Christian, and after death a cross of flesh (*cruz de carne*) was found on his right shoulder." FRAMPTON omits the last clause. VL: *una croxe de carne*.

² The story of the mountain is summarised in P as follows : "About the translation of a certain mountain in that region. c. xviii. In those regions, that is between Thauris and Baldach,