

**H**ERE HE BEGINS ABOUT THE GREAT PROVINCE OF PERSIE. PERSIE is a very great province which was anciently very noble and of great doings, but now the Tartars have destroyed and wasted it *for the greater part, it is much smaller than it once was.* In Persie is the city which is called Sava from which the three magi set out when they came to worship our Lord Jesus Christ when he was born in Bethlehem. And in this same city too, by what is said, all the three magi are buried in three sepulchres or tombs very great and beautiful, and above the sepulchre—above each sepulchre—is like a square house, and round above, very well worked;<sup>1</sup> and the one is beside the other. [14a] And the said three bodies are still all whole and have hair and beards as when they were alive; whose names are these. One had for name Baltasar, the second Gaspar, the third Melchior. And the said Master Marc was in that city & asks many people of that city about the life of those three magi many times, but there was no one there who was able to say anything about it, except that they said that they were three crowned kings friends one of another, who long ago were buried there in those three tombs. But he learnt about them that which I shall tell you, from other people of the province. And indeed it is not to be despised as a thing which is false. You must know that three days marches further forward they find a village which is called Cala Ataperistan, which means to say in French Village of the Worshippers of Fire. And this is really truth, for the men of that village worship the fire for their god. And I will tell you why they worship it as

Baldach, is a mountain which was once transferred from its own place to another place by divine power. The Saracens moreover wished to show that the Gospel of Christ was vain, for that which the Lord says, If you have faith as a seed of mustard you shall say to this mountain, pass over hence, and it will pass over, and nothing shall be impossible to you. For they said to the Christians who were living in those parts under their rule, Either move that mountain over in the name of Christ, or all be converted to Mahomet, or you shall all perish with the sword. Then a certain devout man, comforting the Christians, by prayer poured out in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ moved that mountain to the place which was pointed out in the sight of a multitude of people. And on account of this many of the Saracens were converted to Christ."

<sup>1</sup> & desoure nont mut bien cures Z: & a parte superiori rotunda multum artificiosa The text needs the least possible change to make it, as B. suggests, & desoure riont muit bien cures of which Z is an exact translation. V: quadra chomo vna chassa eda porte disopra ede molto artificialmente fata FA: mult bien enquierree dessus FB: moult bien escuree dessus TA<sup>s</sup>,VA,LT,P,R omit the sentence.

F is undecided between three tombs and one apparently; FA,FB speak consistently of three, while Z,TA',LT definitely say that the three bodies were in one tomb. P and R omit the whole story.