

THE PORCUPINES OF SCASSEM · AND BADASCIAN ≠ MARCO POLO

V L of this city passes a rather large river.¹ And in this province there [20b] are taken
 VB many porcupines. And when the hunters wish to catch them and set the very fierce ·
 VA FB large dogs upon them, the porcupines gather themselves all together² and they are
 P many. And when they are all assembled, they shake themselves each with great fury and ·
 FB Z VA run & then throw the spines, which are lightly fastened on their backs and on the head
 P FB P and by their sides, at the dogs and men and wound them badly · very often in several
 V L FB places. Then the hunters go upon them & take them. · And this city of Scassem is in a great
 FB FB province³ which is also called Scassem and has a language for itself. And the rustics
 FB FB who have their flocks stay in the mountains; for they make very fine dwellings
 FB FB there and large underground. For they make great caves there, and they can do so
 FB Z VB L very easily because the mountains are not of rock here but are · for the more part · only of
 FB earth. And when one leaves this city of Scassem of which I have told you above
 FB he goes riding three days marches in which he finds no dwelling nor food nor
 R drink for the wayfarers except water; but grass enough for the horses is found; but the way-
 FB VA farers must carry it with them as much as they need for the journey. And at the end
 V FB of these three days marches one finds the province of the name of Badascian, and I
 V will tell you here below of its doings.

P **H**ERE HE TELLS OF THE GREAT PROVINCE OF BADASCIAN. Badascian is a large
 province where the people worship Mahomet and have a language of
 FB VB R their own. It is a very great & broad realm which for length lasts quite
 L V twelve days marches, and is ruled by inheritance, that is that it is said that · all the kings
 V they are of a lineage descended from the king Alexandre and from his wife who was
 FB FB the daughter of the king Darius the Great who was lord of the great realm of Persie;
 V and all those kings of the said [province] are still called Çulcarnein in Saracen, their
 V language, which means to say in French king Alexandre, for love of [20c] Alexandre
 FB LT the Great. And in this province or kingdom the precious stones are produced which
 LT one calls balasci, which are very beautiful and of great value. And they are called
 balasci from Badascian, that is from the province or from that kingdom where they are found.
 Z And they are produced in the rocks of the great mountains, and I tell you that
 V VB when they wish to dig them · [they are got] with great trouble, for they make great caverns

¹ FA,FB: auques grant Z: aliquantulum magnum P: fluuius magnus TA,VB: grande fiume
 V: vno fiume grande VA: vno gram fiume L: in plano per medium cuius transsit flumen satis magnum
 R: assai ben grande

² les porches saccoilent toutes ensemble Z: porcus totus in se glomeratur It seems to be probable
 that Z is right, but the other texts have taken it as in F.

³ scasunen est une grant prouences Read perhaps scasim est en une But V: questa sono vna gran
 prouinzia L: est magna prouincia dicta scasunen See PN.