

THE WONDER OF THE PILLAR OF SAMARCAN = MARCO POLO

VB but many times has been at enmity with him, & there have been great wars between
 FB V them, and they hate one another much; and he has Caidu to name. And it is towards the
 R plough-beam. And I will tell you a great marvel which happened, it was told him,
 P like this in this city by the power of Christ. It is true that it is still not a great time
 R R —already a hundred and twenty-five years—since one named Ciagatai, own brother to the
 P V great [22b] Kaan, persuaded by the Christians and taught, came to holy baptism and became
 VB Christian, & was lord of this country & of many others. And all the Christians
 TA of the city of Samarcand, when they saw that the lord was made Christian, they have
 FB VB R very great happiness & joy at it; and then with the favour of the lord they made in that
 P FB VB LA L city of Samarcand a very great & noble round¹ church in memory of this to the honour of
 VA LT Master Saint John Baptist, and so that Church was called to day.² And they took a
 VB R VL VB very beautiful and great square marble stone, which the lord had taken from a building
 FB TA which belonged to the Saracens and put it in the middle of this Church, and set it for
 P VA support of a column of marble which was in the middle of the Church, and the
 V P V Church was made in such a way that this column held up the whole roof of the Church.
 R VB which was round; to the very great displeasure of all the Saracens who were obliged to stay
 VL VB silent and quiet from fear, because the Lord was a Christian, but yet with very great hatred
 & ill will towards the Christians; and as they naturally were, but much more multiplied
 by the noble stone taken from their building and set in the Christian Church, holding this to
 L VB be done by the Christian lord in their despite. Now after no long time, when the Church
 V L was built and nobly adorned, it happened that this Ciagatai who was Christian died, [and]
 R VB his son who was young & who was given into the charge of the nephew of the great Kaan.
 R P who did not wish to be a Christian succeeded him. And when the Saracens who hated the
 L Christians, & who at first had stayed quiet from fear of the lord, saw that he was dead,
 FB and because they had had and still had great wrath for that stone which had been
 V V FB theirs, which was taken and put in the Church of Saint John of the Christians as you
 FB VA have heard, they said among them that they wish to take back that stone which supported
 L FB LT the pillar of the Church from the Christians by love or by force from under the pillar, and
 L carry it out of the Church. And they could well do this, for they were far more, indeed
 V ten times as many as the Christians. And when they had taken counsel then some of
 the better Saracens go to the Church of Saint John and said to the Christians who
 V LT were there that they wanted by all means that stone which had been theirs, which had
 FB been taken from them. The Christians said that it was indeed theirs, but they are willing

¹ For the reading of LA, which is supported by R (*il tetto di quella, che era ritonda,*) but not by G, see B., p. 40.

² VB: *la qual si ha ora si chiamata san zuan dela collona*