



BARBARO, GIOSAFAT

BARBARO, GIOSAFAT, Venetian merchant, traveler, and diplomat (Venice, 1413-94). He was appointed Venetian ambassador to Persia (1473-78) in order to solicit its Āq Qoyunlū sovereign Uzun Ḥasan (“il signor Assambei;” d. Šawwāl, 892/January, 1478) to wage war upon the increasingly menacing power of the Ottoman Turks; but in the end he realized that Uzun Ḥasan “had not the slightest intention of going against the Ottomans.” Barbaro’s travel book, written in 1487 and divided into two parts (Tana or Azov and surrounding countries and Persia) is somewhat lacunary and discontinuous; nevertheless it contains noteworthy historical information. The Persian section of the narrative concerns the figure of Uzun Ḥasan, his diplomatic and military activity, his court and camp, riches, feasts (dances, wrestling, exotic animals); the Persian trading routes and economy (goods, paper money, *qanāts*); the towns of Tabrīz, Solṭānīya, Isfahan (where Barbaro met A. Contarini, another Venetian envoy to Persia), Shiraz, Kāšān, Qom, Yazd, Lār, Hormoz, Darband, Astarābād, Baku, and their *bāzārs* and monuments; the remains of “Cilmynar” (Čehelmenār, i.e., *Persepolis*), the reliefs at Naqš-e Rostam, and the tomb of Cyrus; curious customs, manners of Sufis, *qalandars*, and dervishes.



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