

CHAPTER I.

Information regarding the journey to Cathay, for such as will go by Tana and come back with goods.

IN the first place, from TANA to GINTARCHAN¹ may be twenty-five days with an ox-waggon, and from ten to twelve days with a horse-waggon. On the road you will find plenty of *Moccols*, that is to say, of *gens d'armes*.² And from Gittarchan to SARA may be a day by river, and from Sara to SARACANCO,³ also by river, eight days. You can do this either by land or by water; but by water you will be at less charge for your merchandize.

From Saracanco to ORGANCI may be twenty days' journey in camel-waggon. It will be well for anyone travelling with

¹ *Gintarchan*, or as below less incorrectly *Gittarchan*, is Astracan, though according to Sprengel the old city destroyed by Timur in 1395 was further from the Caspian than the present one. It is mentioned by Rubruquis in the preceding century as Summerkeur or Summerkent, most probably a clerical error for *Sittarkent*, and in this century it was the seat of a Minorite convent. The original name was *Haj-*, or *Hajji-Tarkhan*. Ibn Batuta says it was so called after a devout Haj who established himself there, in consideration of which the prince exempted the place from all duties, *Tarkhan*, he says, signifying a *placé free from duties*. This is a mistake, however, for *Tarkhan* among the Mongols denoted a *person*, the member of an order enjoying high privileges, such as freedom from all exactions, the right to enter the sovereign's presence unsummoned, and exemption from punishment for crime till a ninth time convicted. D'Ohsson quotes the mention of this title by a Greek author as old as the time of the Emperor Justin. (*Ibn Batuta*, ii, 410, and Edr's. note, 458; *D'Ohsson*, i, 45, etc.) In the Carta Catalana and Portulano Mediceo the place appears as *Agitarcham*; in Fra Mauro's Map as *Azetrechan*; by Barbaro and others, up to the middle of the sixteenth century, we find it called *Citracan*.

² *Moccoli* are in another passage explained by Pegolotti to be *Tartari scherani*, bandits or troopers. The word is, I suppose, simply *Mongols*, or rather as called in Western Asia *Moghols*, which will be almost the Tuscan pronunciation of *Moccol*. Indeed the word is called by the Armenians *Muchal* (*Neumann's Chron. of Vahram*, p. 88).

³ On *Sarai* see *supra*, p. 231. Saracanco appears to be unquestionably *Sarachik*, on which, and on *OrganCI* or *Urghanj*, see pp. 232, 234.