

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD AND OF TURCOMANIE

Now we have told you of the Little Armenie and afterwards we shall tell you of Turcomanie,¹ which is part of it.

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HERE HE TELLS OF THE PROVINCE OF TURCOMANIE. In the province of Turcomanie are three generations of people. They are Turcomains who worship Mahomet and hold his religion; and have a brutish law and live like beasts in all things; and they are ignorant people and have a barbarous language and distinct from others. And sometimes they stay in mountains and sometimes on moors² according to where they know that there is good pasture for their flocks, because they do not plough the land but make their living from flocks alone. And these Turcomains rarely dwell except in the fields with their flocks, and they have garments of skins and houses of felt or of skins. And I tell you that very good Turcomain horses are bred there and very good mules large & of great value. And the other people are Armenians (not very perfect Christians), and the third Greeks who live & dwell mixed with them in cities and towns and in villages and live by trade and by crafts. They have many goods. For you may know that there in five of their places are made the sovereign carpets of the world and of the most beautiful colours. There are made also cloth of crimson silk and of other colours & of gold very beautiful & rich in very great quantity, and many other [10a] things also. They also cultivate the land. Yet the whole province is named from the first people & is called Turcomanie, while the Armenians and Greeks are there as if by accident. Their best & most famous city in that province is Como, Caiserie, and Sevasto. And Master Saint Blasius suffered martyrdom there for Christ. And these cities are very good and fertile, but others less. And there are also many other cities and

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¹ It is a great misfortune that the Cotton MS. Otho D 5 (FO, see pl. 23.) was very seriously damaged and almost destroyed by fire. It has consequently been impossible to make very much use of even those parts which survive, but a version of the remains of the chapter on Little Armenia is here given as a specimen:

"Here begins our first book, of the Little Ermine. It is true that there are two Ermynie, one large and [one small. The people of the Lit]tle are Christians and there is a [king who maintains]well his land both by force and . . . parts the Soldan of Babilonie, and they make great tribute every year. They are subject [to the]great Can of Tartairs lord of the Sunrising . . . many castles proud(?) and strong and towns enough. . . . One has for name Laias. It is between(?) the sea and . . . road of the sunrising. And they live . . . precious stones pearls spicery which the merchants of . . . buy there and carry them through the whole world of the sunsetting. There is cotton (Cotoun) enough. They are people of great enjoyment and of great drink. They have plenty of wine white and red. There are things of all kinds and bone eise leis(?). There are plenty of . . . and of passes narrow and strong."

The old French in which this manuscript was written differs too from that of either F or FG.

² landes & so FG. VA: piano TA: valle LT,P: vallibus L: ualles Z: uiis V: neue