

HOT SPRINGS OF CHERMAN AND SALT DESERTS ≠ MARCO POLO

FB tell you of *the facts* of Indie at this point, for indeed I shall tell you of it below
 in our book when it shall be time and place; but now I shall go back by tramontaine
 V L to tell you of those *regions & provinces*, and we shall go back *in order to do this*
 from Curmos of which we have now spoken by another road to the city of Cherman of
 V which I have told you *above*, because into the countries of which I wish to tell you
 one cannot go except from this city of Cherman. And I say to you that the king
 V of the *said*[city], Rucnedin Acmat whom we left just now, is a vassal of this king
 of Cherman. And on the way back from Curmos to Cherman is a very beautiful
 Z VA L VB *and great plain and great abundance of food. And there are many good & most perfect.*
 FB Z VB *naturally hot baths springing from the earth.* And there are partridges enough and very
 V VB FB L *cheap. And there are fruits and dates in very great plenty and very cheap.* And even
 VA the wheat bread here is so bitter that none can [17c] eat of it if he is not for a
 Z good time used to it; and this comes about because *the land is soaked with the water*
 Z R *there which indeed is bitter and salt.*¹ The baths of which I have spoken to you
 above are of spring water very hot, and they are very good for many diseases and
 P FB for removing the itch. Now I wish to begin to tell you about the countries which I
 FB V shall name to you in *this my book turning to the road towards tramontaine*, and
 V you shall hear how² *one goes through many wild and desert places.*

FB P **H**OW ONE GOES THROUGH WILD COUNTRY AND POOR.³ When one sets off
 Z from *this city of Cherman towards Cobinan* he rides quite seven days
 Z marches of very troublesome road, and I shall tell you how. *When one*
 Z *leaves Cherman where there are three days marches, a certain desert is entered where one*
 VA *finds no river⁴ nor rivulet nor water, or very little, and that which one finds is salt*
 P VB *and green as meadow grass, so that it looks more like the juice of grass than water, and*
 Z *unwholesome; and it is so bitter that none could bear to drink it, and if one were*
 Z *to drink only one sip of it it would make him retire more than ten times. And*
 LT *again he who should eat only a little grain of the salt which that water produces,*
 Z *it would also make him purge a great deal. And therefore the men who go crossing*
 V LT LT *those deserts by that way must carry good water with them to drink through all that road.*

¹ TA: *e questo e per lo mare cheui uiene* and so LT.

² *et bores comant* FB: *et orez comment* TA: *et diremo chome* V: *diremo chomo se uano per molti luogi saluadegi e dexerti* But FA: *& ore commence* So B. translates *Incominciamo*.

³ *part sauuaie contre a pour* Ft *part saouaie contree & pour*. This rubric seems to have puzzled the scribes and appears in many forms. It is probably right to read with B. *poure*; but his reading *par tre* is less certain. The mark on the cross of the *t* in the Table (p. 65) looks like a smudge, and is not a familiar sign for *re* in this MS..

⁴ *riuer* VA: *aqua ne fiume ne riozuol* Others: "water"