

THE PROVINCE OF TUNOCAIN & THE DRY TREE = MARCO POLO

L FB **H**OW ONE GOES THROUGH A DESERT. And when one sets out from this
 VA VA TA **H** said city of Cobinan one goes through a desert which lasts quite eight
 V Z days journeys, in which is great drought, and there are no fruits nor
 VA VA TA trees, and the waters which are found are also very bitter there and bad as in that of
 V Z which I have told you above. And he who wishes to pass through this place brings with him
 LT VA Z all that he needs to eat and good water for the men to drink, except the bitter water
 VA Z Z of the desert which they compel the animals driven by thirst to drink with great pain,
 Z for they mix flour with the water and so tempt them to drink. And at the end of these
 VB eight [18a] days journeys one finds a province which is more than eight days journeys
 VB in circuit, which is called Tunocain. And subject to it there are cities and villages
 L enough, and it is in the province of Persie and on the borders of Persie towards tra-
 VB montaine, and in the said province there is a very great plain¹ in which is the Lone
 Tree, which the Christians call the Dry Tree, and I shall tell you what it is like.
 Z V The likeness and nature of it is this. It is very large and very thick, and its leaves are
 V green on one side and white on the other, and it forms burs like the burs of chest-
 V nuts, but there is nothing inside them, they are not good to eat; and of its wood balsam
 R L LT is made. And it is solid and very hard wood and is yellow like box, and in all those
 LT parts where that tree is there are no other trees nearer than more than a hundred miles,
 except in one direction² where there are near trees at ten miles. And there, say
 L LT those of that country that the battle between Alexandre the Great, king of Macedonia,
 V V VB and Darius king of Persie was. And the towns and the villages in this province are many
 V and have great abundance of all things good and fine, for the country is in a fair
 Z V place too well tempered, neither too hot nor too cold, but temperate. And the people
 FB V VA Z of this land all worship Mahomet, and there are very beautiful people there, and
 VA VB specially the women there are very beautiful beyond measure in my judgement. And
 we shall leave this and shall tell you of a country which is called Mulecte, the place
 FB where the Old Man of the Mountain used to live with his assassins, as you shall hear.

LT **H**ERE HE TELLS OF THE VALLEY OF THE OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN AND
 VB P OF HIS ASSASSINS. Mulecte is a country³ where, as is told, a certain very
 Z R evil prince who was called the Old Man of the Mountain used to live
 long ago; in which country heretics according to the Saracen law used to dwell. For this

calcination". (S.O.D.). For cane spodium cf. AVICENNA, Venice, 1507, fol. 151a: Tractatus II. De spodio Cap. dcxvij. SPodium quid est. Radices cannarum aduste. See PN.

¹ LT: prouincia

² VB adds *versso la contra* VG (just below): *czwenczik mylen*

³ LT: *montanea*