

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD<sup>s</sup> THE SALT OF TAICAN

·45·

company. And I tell you that *there are many houses on the mountains, & there is water* VB  
*enough on this road, and good hunting enough; & there are also some lions. But food* LT L V  
*one does not find there in these mountains in all these twelve days marches, but it* R  
*is necessary that those who have to go that way carry food with them for their* V  
*horses and for themselves.*

·46·

**H**ERE HE TELLS OF THE MOUNTAIN OF SALT. And when one has gone these  
 twelve days marches he finds a village which is called Taican, where  
 there is *found a very great market of wheat & other corn. And it is built* Z VB Z  
*in very [20a] beautiful & gracious country, and all the mountains of it are towards* VB V VA  
*midday and are very large and high, and some are all full of salt, very white and well* VA R TA VB  
*savoured, hard as rock. And all the country round for more than thirty days journeys* FB  
*come to seek for that salt which is the best in the world, & they use no other salt.* FB VB  
*And it is so hard that one cannot take it except with a great iron pick;<sup>1</sup> and I tell* L  
*you that it is in so great abundance that all the world would have enough of it to*  
*the end of the world. Some mountains indeed abound in almonds and pistachios of which a* Z  
*very great market is held there. And when one leaves this city he goes riding three days* FB  
*journeys still between the Greek wind and sunrising always finding beautiful* FB  
*country where one continually finds beautiful dwellings enough, and plentiful in* L TA  
*fruits and in corn and in vines and in all things. And all the inhabitants moreover* FB V Z  
*worship Mahomet. And they are very bad people, thieves & robbers and murderers* VA L VB  
*and treacherous. They stay a great deal in taverns<sup>2</sup> with beaker to mouth, for all the day* Z TA VA  
*they like to drink, for they have much good fermented wine and they are great* FB  
*drinkers and become drunken very willingly. And they are expert in that faith[of Mahomet],* V  
*wherefore they wear nothing on their heads nor feet but a cord about ten palms<sup>3</sup> long* VB VB  
*and they wind it round their heads. And they are very good hunters and catch game* VA  
*enough, and have no other clothes but the skins of the beasts which they catch.*  
*And<sup>4</sup> them they cure in their way and clothes and boots are made of them, and they* VB  
*all know how to cure the skins of the beasts which they catch; and each one cures* FB  
*the skins for his own clothes and boots. And when one has gone these three days marches* L  
*one finds a city which is called Scassem on the plain, which belongs to a count.* L  
 And his other cities and villages are in the mountains. And through the middle

<sup>1</sup> L,P: malleis VA: picboni VB: pai de fero e piconi

<sup>2</sup> il demorent mult en bercarie FA: en bueries FB: en buerie Z,P: in potationibus TA: col  
 bicchiere a bocca LT: cum ceatis ad os So perhaps bercarie should be translated "drinking".

<sup>3</sup> TA<sup>3</sup>,LT: brachia

<sup>4</sup> in read &