

THE HORSES AND HEALTHY AIR OF BADASCIAN = MARCO POLO

R But afterwards the whole breed of them was destroyed. And the breed of them was only in the
 power of an uncle of the king, and when he refused to allow the king to have any of them he
 was put to death by him; and the wife out of spite for the death of the husband destroyed
 the said breed, and so it is lost. Again there are bred amongst those mountains
 sakar falcons which are very good and good fliers. And the lanner falcons are bred
 R there too, perfect goshawks, & sparrowhawks. Hunting and chase of beasts and of
 V V birds there is great plenty. And wheat they have good; and barley they have without
 Z P husk, that is to say that it is all grain and no bran is taken from it. They have likewise
 R abundance of millet & panick. They have no oil from the olive, but they make it of
 R sesame¹ which is like flax seeds, but those of the sesame are white and the oil is better and
 more savoury than any other oil, and the Tartars and other dwellers in those parts use it;
 V P FB P and of nuts. And in the enterings into this kingdom are many narrow bad and steep
 P passes and many strong places, so that they have no fear that any people of other
 Z regions and of those near them could come in to their hurt. And their cities and their
 Z villages are in great mountains in very strong places. Likewise the peculiar quality
 of the mountains is like this. They are very high so that a man continues in the journey from
 the bottom to the top from morning until vespers before he can mount up. Moreover on the
 R Z R Z top are very great plains where there is great wealth of grass and trees, where are great
 R springs and very clear which run down over the rocks like rivers to the bottom. In the said
 Z springs are found trout and many other delicate fish. On those tops of the mountains the air
 R Z is so pure and the sojourn there so healthgiving that if, while he lives in the cities and houses
 R Z which are built on the plain and in the valleys near the mountains, a man catches fevers of any
 R kind, namely tertian, quartan, or continuous, or any other chance sickness, he immediately climbs
 Z R Z the mountain and resting there on the mountains two or three days the sickness is driven
 R Z away and he receives health on account of the goodness of the air. And Master Marc said
 R that he had proved this same. Because when he was in those parts he remained sick for about
 a year, and immediately, when he was advised to go up to the said mountain, he was well
 Z again. There are also two or three mountains as it were sulphurous, and the waters always
 R come sulphurous from those mountains. There is a very great supply of wild sheep; and they
 go sometimes in one flock four hundred, five hundred, and six hundred. And many of them are
 L FB taken, but they never fail. And they are very good archers and good hunters, and the greater
 VA Z part of them are dressed in skins of beasts because they have great dearth of other
 P garments of cloth, for woollen garments are either quite impossible to be had there or are
 V FB exceedingly dear. And the great ladies of this land and the gentle wear cloth. They wear
 R VB V FB garments like trousers down to the feet like men such as I shall tell you, and make them

¹ VA: de somenti e de susimani et de nuxie