

IUGURISTAN · & RELIGIONS IN GHINGHIN TALAS ~~¶~~ MARCO POLO
 and we will tell you of the others that are between tramontaine and the plough-
 v beam. And you may know that this province belongs to the rule of the great Kaan.
 z IUGURISTAN is a certain large province and is subject to the great Kaan. In it are cities
 and many villages but the chiefest city is called Carachoço. This city holds many other cities
 and villages subject under itself, whose people worship idols. But there are many Christians
 following the Nestorian rule. There are also some Saracens. The Christians are very often
 joined with idolaters in marriage. But they say that the king whom they first had did not take
 his beginning from human generation, but was sprung from a certain fungus which is made
 up from the sap of trees, what indeed [is accustomed] among us to be called esca; and from him
 all the others descended. The idolatrous people are very learned according to their rules and
 customs, and are always studying in the liberal arts. In that land grow corn and very good
 wine; but in winter the cold there is more severe than is known in any part of the world.

v H E R E HE TELLS OF THE PROVINCE OF GHINGHIN TALAS. When one sets out from
 p this aforesaid province of Camul, Ghinghin talas is a province which again
 z v b v is likewise next to the aforesaid little desert between tramontaine and the
 v v z plough-beam. And it is sixteen¹ days marches in size, and it belongs to the domain of
 v l t v the great Kaan, and there in that province are cities and villages enough. And there
 z z are three kinds of people; these are idolaters some, and they are the more, and some
 z z those who worship by the law of Mahomet, and some Turks who follow the law of
 v l Nestorian Christians & Jacobites. And on the border of this province towards
 tramontaine is a mountain in which is a very good vein of steel and of andanique.²
 f b z l And know too that in this same mountain is found a good vein from which the cloth
 p v which we call of salamander, which cannot be burnt if it is thrown into the fire, is made, &
 f b v a it is of the best that is found in the world. And you may know in truth that salamander of
 v a l which I speak is not a beast nor serpent, for it is not true that those cloths are of the hair of
 f b an animal which lives in fire, as one says in our country, but is such a thing as I shall
 f b say below; it is a vein of earth, and you shall hear how. It is truth that you know well
 that by nature no beast nor any animal can live in fire, because each [25b] animal
 v b is made of the four elements, namely air, water, fire, & earth, so that an animal of
 any kind has in it heat, moisture, cold, & dryness, & so it would be impossible that an
 animal made up of the four elements should be able to live in fire. And because people
 did not know the certainty about the salamander they said it in the way that
 they say still that salamander is a beast; but it is not truth. But I shall tell it you
 t a now, how salamander is made and what it is. For I tell you that I had a companion,

¹ TA,LT: 6 FA,FB,Z,VA,P,L: 16 V: dodexe VB: xv.

² VA: dandanicho e de azuro