

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD^s THE CITY OF CARACOROM

.63.

wild asses in very great plenty. For there are sometimes small pine woods¹ in plenty on the edges of this desert. And when one has ridden these forty days journeys through this desert he finds a province towards tramontaine where is a very great city which is called Caracorum; and you shall hear what this city is hereafter. And all the abovesaid provinces and cities, that is the city of Saciou, the province of Camul, and the province of Ghinghin talas, the province of Succiu, and the city of Campçio, and the city of Eçina, belong to the great province of Tangut.

VB FB FB VA

L

LT

LT FB P

HERE HE TELLS OF THE CITY OF CARACOROM. Caracorum is a city which is all of timber and earth, which in my judgement is three miles round, which was as they say the first city² which the Tartars have when they come out from their country. The city indeed is surrounded with a strong mound, because they have no supply of stones, near to which on the outside is a very large castle, and in that is a most beautiful palace where the ruler of it dwells. And when they came out from this land all the citizens went to the palace where the lord stayed and holds it.³

.64.

L

VB

VB

Z

R

V

You have learned then and heard of many provinces and kingdoms and cities. Now I wish to tell you of the great Kaan, lord of the Tartars, how he was first made, and what was the occasion of his lordship. And I will tell you about the deeds of him and of all the Tartars and all their ways, how they first have the rule and how they were spread through the world.

VA

VA

FB FB

It was true that in the beginning the Tartars lived in tramontaine about Ciorcia⁴ and Bargu. And in that country there is a very great plain which had no dwellings as of cities and of villages. But there was good pasture for animals and very great rivers and good water enough. And the Tartars lived there, and they had no lord over their head, but

V R

V

V

V VA V

chosen to follow that of R, partly supported by V: *et molti zente stano per li monti e uale.* and by VB: *Massi in alguna parte per la montagna et he abitada ene bestie.* The present version is supported by VA which puts a stop at "summer". FB omits all mention of mountains and valleys. The passage is perhaps at best incomplete and confused.

¹ *bestaies de pin* corrected to *boscajes de pin* by ROUX (1824). TA: *boschi di pini* FB: *bosquez petiz de pin aucunesfoiz*

² *lequel fu le primer sire que les tartar ont.* L: *et ex hac fuit primus dominus* LT: *in qua fuit primus dominus* TA: *nella quale fue il primo singniore* VB: *e segundo dicono el primo signor sono tartaro* VA: *in la qual fo fato fugire el primo signior che aue mai i tartari de soa zente.* P: *ubi originem habuit dominium tartarorum* But *le primer sire* becomes in FA,FB *la premiere cite*, in V *la prima seza* Z: *& fuit primus locus ad quem antiquitus tartari se primitus reduxerunt* The version follows FB.

³ *et quando lor insi de questa tera tuti li zitadini ando al palazzo la che staua el signor e quello tene* It seems to be just possible that this obscure sentence is meant to state that when Caracorum was given up the capital was moved to Cambaluc.

⁴ *en tramentaine entro ciorcia & en cel contree* The old versions vary between *entour* and *inter* in place of *entro*. L: *in loco dicto trociorcia*