

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD<sup>s</sup> PRESTER JOHAN SETS OUT

.66.

when those ambassadors were gone then he has all his people from all his cities through  
 many regions and strange summoned and arrayed. He makes indeed so [27b] great  
 a force of so many sorts of people and strange that a greater had almost never been heard  
 speak of. In such way as you have heard were the one people arrayed and the other.  
 And why should I make you a long story of it? You may know quite truly that  
 Cinghis Kan lord of the Tartars did the same, & with all his great host of people came  
 away into a vast plain and beautiful which was called Tenduc, which belonged to  
 Uncan who is called Prester Johan, and there he pitched his camp. And I tell you that  
 they were so great multitudes of people that none could know the number of horse  
 & of foot who were altogether very many. And staying there he had news in the space of a  
 few days how Prester Johan was coming with all his force. And so Cinghis Kan he rejoiced  
 greatly at it because that was a fair plain and so great and so broad to make battle with  
 broad space. And therefore he waited there for him very gladly and much wished his  
 coming to fight with him. But then the story ceases to speak of Cinghis Kan and  
 of his men, and we shall come back to Prester Johan and to his men.

HOW PRESTER JOHAN WITH HIS PEOPLE WENT TO MEET CINGHIS KAN. Now  
 the story says that when Prester Johan knows that Cinghis Kan with all  
 his people was coming upon him & was encamped in the plain of Tenduc,  
 he went with all his people against him, and they go till they were come into this  
 plain of Tenduc, and there they pitched camp near to that of Cinghis Kan by about  
 twenty miles.<sup>1</sup> And there each party rested themselves two days so as to be more fresh  
 and lusty the day of the fight. In such way as you have heard were the two vast  
 armies in that plain of Tenduc. And with Cinghis Kan were many Nestorian Christians  
 & also many Saracens. And one day Cinghis Kan king of the Tartars makes astrologers  
 who were [27c] Christians and Saracens come before him and orders them that  
 they should be able to tell him by their enchantments and skill of astrology who must  
 win the battle between him and Prester Johan. The astrologers viewed it by their  
 arts. The Saracens do not know how to tell him the truth of it, but the Christians  
 told him the truth of it and before all show it clearly there. For they said, O lord Cinghis  
 Kan, thou desirest to know who must be the conqueror of this fight; we wish thee thyself to see.  
 And immediately they have a green<sup>2</sup> cane before him and cut it through the middle  
 lengthwise & made two parts of it, and then they put one half on one side, on the side  
 of Cinghis, and the other on another, on Prester Johans side, one not far from the other

.67.

<sup>1</sup> de tangutc.cingins chan a.xx.miles tangutc should probably have been cancelled. TA,R: "10 miles" Others, "twenty"

<sup>2</sup> V: breganega, a word not easily found in the dictionaries. See pp. 268, 343.