

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD<sup>s</sup> THEIR DRINK AND DRESS

·70·

then they take some broth or water in which the flesh is cooked·to wash their mouth and  
sprinkle it in their honour outside the door of their house or room, where that god of  
theirs stands,·to the other spirits. And when they have done this they say that their god  
and his family have had their share. And after this they eat and drink the rest·as  
they please. For you may know that they drink mares milk. But I tell you too that  
they have learnt to prepare<sup>1</sup> it in such a way that it is like white wine; and it is very  
good to drink and they call it in their tongue chemis.<sup>2</sup> Their clothes are like this.  
For the rich men & nobles wear cloth of gold and cloth of silk and under the outer  
garments rich furs of sable and ermine and vair and of fox & of all other skins very  
richly; and all their trappings[&] fur-lined robes are very beautiful and of great value.  
And their arms are bows and arrows and very good swords and clubs studded with iron,  
and some lances·and axes, but they avail themselves of bows more than of any other  
thing for they are exceedingly good archers, the best in the world,·and depend much·  
from childhood·upon arrows.·And on their backs they wear armour made of buffalo hide  
and of other animals very thick, & they are of boiled hides which are very hard and  
strong. They are good men and victorious in battle and mightily valiant and they are  
very furious, and have little care for their life, which they put to every risk without any regard.  
They are very cruel men. And we shall tell you how they are able to work more than  
other [29a] men. For when the army goes out for war or for any other necessity, more readily  
and bravely than the rest of the world do they submit to hardships, and often when he has  
need he will go or will stay a whole month without carrying any common food except  
that he will live on the milk of a mare and will eat of the flesh of the chase which  
they take with their bows. And his horse will graze on the simple grass that he shall  
find in the fields·by the way so that he need not carry barley and other grain·or hay or  
straw. And they are very obedient to their lord and I tell you that when there is  
need they stay two days and two nights on horseback without dismounting, and he stays all  
the night on horseback with all his arms and sleeps on horseback, and the horse will  
go grazing all the time on the grass wherever it may be found.·And they are those people  
who most in the world bear work and great hardship and wish least expense, & are  
content with little food, and who live more and are for this reason suited best to conquer  
cities & lands and kingdoms. And it was well seen in them; just as you have heard and shall  
hear in this book how from slaves they are now lords of the world. They are very well arranged  
& ordered in this way that I shall describe to you. You may know that when a lord

<sup>1</sup> labent FA,FB omit. TA (acchonciallo), LT (parant), L (conficiunt), P (parare), VA,V (chonza) support B.'s correction l'adobent.

<sup>2</sup> chemins perhaps for chemuis, kumiss. V: chemenis See PN.