

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD'S WINE & COAL IN CATAI

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find these *many large trees* by lonely ways, which are a very great *help and comfort* FB FB R
to the merchants and to the wayfarers, who would not know how to keep the road if VA
there were not those trees. And they are on all the roads which need them, of which I have FB V
told you, that is through all provinces and through all kingdoms which are under his V
rule; provided that the place is suitable to be planted; but in the sandy and desert places and R
in the rocky mountains where the said roads pass, and it is not possible to plant them, he has
other signals put up of stones and pillars which show the way. And he has certain barons who
have the duty of arranging that they may be always kept in repair. And beyond what is said
above about the trees, the great Kaan has them planted the more gladly because his diviners and
astrologers say that he who has trees planted lives a long time. Now I have told you about
the trees of the roads, then I will tell you of another[thing].

HERE HE TELLS OF THE WINE WHICH THE PEOPLE OF THE KAAAN DRINK.

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And again you may know that the greater part of the people of the
province of Catai drink¹ good wine, and it is such a wine as I shall describe LT
to you. For instead of wine they make a drink of rice, and they make the rice boil with Z P VB
very many other good spices mixed together, and they make it²—the drink or wine—in L Z Z
such a way and so well [47a] and with such a flavour that it is better worth drinking than R
any other wine of grapes, and men could not wish better. And it is very clear and sparkling VB R Z Z
& very fragrant and beautiful. And it makes a man become drunken sooner than VB Z
any other wine because it is very hot stuff, and it is sweet. Now we will leave speaking TA VA TA³ FB
to you of this and we will tell you another thing, how the stones are burnt like logs. FB

HERE HE TELLS OF A KIND OF STONES WHICH ARE BURNT LIKE LOGS. It is

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true again that through all the province of Catai there is found a kind of VA L
large black stones which are dug from the mountains as veins, which V
burn and make flames like logs and consume away like charcoal. They keep up the fire L R
and cook better than wood does. Moreover I tell you that if you put them on the L
fire in the evening and make them catch well, I tell you that they keep fire all the
night so well that one finds some in the morning.³ These stones make no flame except VA R
a little at first when they are lighted, as charcoals do, and staying thus glowing they give great
heat. And you may know that these stones are so good that nothing else is burnt through FB
all the province of Catai as far as possible, though it is true that they have wood P

¹ FA begins this chapter word for word the same as F; FB does the same, only omitting *de la prouence*, down to *catay*, but then inserts *viuent et* before *boiuent*. *viuent* may possibly be for *vsent*, "use & drink".

² *laboient* TA³: *lauorello* LT: *parant* L: *efficitur* but Z: *bibunt* R: *beuono*

³ FRAMPTON here inserts: "which I suppose be of the nature of oure Seacoles,"