

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD^s MAGICIANS OF DAGROIAN

.168.

not believe that because it is said by diabolical art, that they openly show it to be so; indeed they say it is by the virtue of the gods with the help of their art. And if they say that he must recover of that sickness then they leave him until they say that he ought to be healed, and he is cared for; but if they say that there is no remedy by which the sick man can recover and that he must by all means die of the sickness, as they divine, then the relations of the sick send for men who are specially appointed to put men to death, [namely] those sick people who are judged by their charmers to be sure to die, and say, This sick man is condemned to die. Do that which must be done. And some of these men who know how to kill sick persons most easily and gently come and press down the sick man who will soon be dead and put him something on the mouth¹ of that sick man so that they make him to be suffocated immediately, and kill him before the time of his death. And when he is dead they cut him up and have him openly² cooked. And then all the relations of the dead come and have a friendly feast together and eat him [76d] up completely after he is cooked and roast. Moreover I tell you that they eat and suck out also all the marrows which are inside the bones, leaving no moisture nor other fat in them at all. And they do this because they do not wish any atom of him to remain, so that it may not decay. For they say that if there were to remain there any substance in the bones that that substance from its decay would make worms, and the worms would die at last for want of food. And they say that from the death of these worms the soul of the dead would suffer very heavy punishments and would have great harm from it and sin, namely because so many souls sprung from his substance should perish, and therefore they eat him all. And after they have thus eaten him wholly they take all the bones and put them in a beautiful small casket of stone, and then they carry them and hang them to the rocks in great caves of the mountains in such a place that no man nor beast or other evil thing could touch them. And again I tell you that if they of this country can catch other men who are not of their country they catch them, and if he cannot ransom himself they kill him and eat him up all immediately. Now this is a very evil way and bad custom and so it is a very cruel and very evil people. Now we have told you of this kingdom, and then we will leave you this and will tell you of the next, that is of Lambri, as you shall be able to hear.

¹ *adonc les parens dou malades mandent por ceste homes uient e prement lo mort e li metent aucune chouse sor la boche* For *prement*, which most MSS. omit, V reads *tuol* so that it is likely that we ought to read *prenent* "take". FA, FB read *malade* for *mort*, and *robe* or *robes* for *chouse*. The alternative use of *robes* and *chouse* rather suggests an original Italian *robbe*, and the explanation is perhaps to be found in B.'s suggestion that the original contained even more Italian words than F does.

² *aperte* perhaps for *apertement*, "skilfully".