

THE JUSTICE CLIMATE & CUSTOMS OF MAABAR ≠ MARCO POLO

had from him, and though many times asked by the merchant had often on account of inconvenience fixed a [later] date for payment, the merchant, because the delay was hurtful to him on account of his business, being ready one day while the king was riding about the place immediately surrounded the king himself with all his horse with a circle on the ground. And when the king saw this he let his horse go no farther, nor did he move himself from the place before the merchant had been wholly satisfied. And when the people standing round saw it like this they were very much surprised, saying, See how the king was obedient to justice. To whom the king, I who established this just law, shall I break it because it was against me? No, I am bound before others to observe it. Moreover I tell you also that the most of them keep themselves

R TA³ from drinking wine made of grapes, nor is he that drinks much wine accepted by them for witness nor for any surety, nor he who goes sailing by sea; for they say that

VL L a drinker of wine & he who goes by sea is desperate because he is not afraid of death, and Z therefore they do not accept him as a witness nor is his witness valid. But you may L know that they do not hold any selfindulgence as sin, for they do not call wantonness a sin. There is so great heat there that it is a wonder, and for this reason they¹ go

VL L Z VB altogether naked; for there is no rain but only three months of the year, that is in June L VB and in July and in August, for then it sometimes rains; and if there were not the said FB Z VA water that comes in those three months in rain, which moistens the air & the land, VB there would be so great [8od] heat that none could escape there, for all would die Z of heat. But by that rain they have not quite so great heat. And again I tell you that there are many among them wise in an art which is called physiognomy, that is Z Z which teaches to know men and women their qualities and properties, if they are good Z or bad. And they know it immediately by looking at the man or the woman. They Z Z know much also what it means to meet birds or beasts. They watch omens also Z VB more than any men in the world and fore-know better what is good or bad; they know how to predict what must happen to each one. For I tell you that when a man goes Z Z on his journey to any place by any way and it happens that on the way he hears that Z Z any other snores or makes a sneeze, he sits down immediately on the road and goes no Z Z farther. If that man sneezes again it seems to him that it is good for him, then rising Z he goes his way forward; and if he sneezes no more, then it seems to him that it is not good for him, he sets himself at once to sit, and many times he turns himself Z back towards home, giving up the journey begun. Again for each day in the week they say there is one hour unlucky, that is banned,² which they call coiach; namely as if on Monday the hour

¹ VL: garzoni S: mochachos

² See p. lxxv: horam infelicem id est uciacham quam appellant choiach . . . hora uciacha id est coiach
As far as I know the word uciacha has not yet been well explained. R, which has the rest of this passage,