

INDIE NUTS & THE RED EARTH OF ST THOMAS ≠ MARCO POLO

Saracens of that country have great faith in him and say that he was a Saracen, and

VB V say that he is a very great prophet and call him avariun in their tongue, which means
 FB VB Z to say¹ [82c] holy man in French. And that body shows very many & fine miracles. The
 Christians who guard the Church have many trees which make wine and which produce Pharaohs
 nuts. For from one nut a man would be fed with food and drink. For they have first an outside
 shell on which there are as it were threads which are used in many things and avail for many
 purposes. Under that first shell is a food on which a man feeds sufficiently. It is indeed very
 savoury and sweet as sugar, white as milk, and is made cup-shaped like the outer shell. And in
 the middle of that food is quite so much water that a phial would be filled, which water is
 clear and cold and of a very perfect taste; which water one drinks when he has eaten the inside,
 and so from one nut a man is filled with food and drink. And for each one of these trees the
 Christians pay to one of the four brother kings in the province of Maabar one goat in every
 month. And we will tell you of the wonderful things which are there. Moreover you may
 V know that in that place there is such a marvel as I shall tell you. Now you may
 know that the Christians who go there on pilgrimage take of the earth of the
 Z P place where the holy body of Saint Thomas was killed and reverently carry that earth
 VA into their country and give a little of this earth, mixed with water or with other liquid,
 to the sick to drink when he might have quartan fever or tertian or fever like this,
 FB and as soon as the sick man drinks it he is healed by the power of God and of the saint.
 And this happened to all those sick persons who drink that earth. And know that
 Z it is red earth. And Master Marc carried some of this earth to Venese with him and healed
 many with it. And again I will tell you of a beautiful miracle which happened about
 P the 1288² year from the incarnation of Christ. It was true that a great baron of that
 Z VB country, the forenamed king, one season found that he had a very great quantity of a
 G grain which is called rice,³ (of which all the provinces have enough in Indie, since there is no
 LT Z corn) and at the time of the harvest of rice with this grain he had the Church of Saint Thomas
 V Z filled and he filled all the houses which were around the Church of the holy body, in
 P which the pilgrims coming to visit the holy body used to lodge, because he had no houses to his
 VB liking where to put it. And they could not forbid him because of the greatness & power of
 V the baron. And this baron worshipped the idols. When those Christians who watch the

¹ In the margin at the foot of this page someone has written in a later hand: *Qui diuifica quine vue Lo chor di scō tomeo*

² TA: 1289 FB: 1308 VL,S: 1297 Z omits.

³ Rice has been mentioned many times before, and this needless explanation suggests perhaps the use of a separate note of this story in the compilation of the book. cf. p. 43 and p. xlviij, *per quoddam maximum flumen*, where however the river has not been mentioned before in Z, although it has been mentioned in F and R.