

M. Pauthier lays great stress on the character of these MSS. as the sole authentic form of the work, from their claim to have been specially revised by Marco Polo. It is evident, however, from what has been said, that this revision can have been only a very careless and superficial one, and must have been done in great measure by deputy, being almost entirely confined to curtailment and to the improvement of the expression, and that it is by no means such as to allow an editor to dispense with a careful study of the Older Text.

57. There is another curious circumstance about the MSS. of this type, viz., that they clearly divide into two distinct recensions, of which both have so many peculiarities and errors in common that they must necessarily have been both derived from *one* modification of the original text, whilst at the same time there are such differences between the two as cannot be set down to the accidents of transcription. Pauthier's MSS. A and B (Nos. 16 and 15 of the List in App. F) form one of these subdivisions: his C (No. 17 of List), Bern (No. 56), and Oxford (No. 6), the other. Between A and B the differences are only such as seem constantly to have arisen from the whims of transcribers or their dialectic peculiarities. But between A and B on the one side, and C on the other, the differences are much greater. The readings of proper names in C are often superior, sometimes worse; but in the latter half of the work especially it contains a number of substantial passages* which are to be found in the G. T., but are altogether absent from the MSS. A and B; whilst in one case at least (the history of the Siege of Saianfu, vol. ii. p. 159) it diverges considerably from the G. T. *as well* as from A and B.†

I gather from the facts that the MS. C represents an older form of the work than A and B. I should judge that the latter had been derived from that older form, but intentionally modified from it. And as it is the MS. C, with its copy at Bern, that alone presents the certificate of derivation from the Book given

* There are about five-and-thirty such passages altogether.

† The Bern MS. I have satisfied myself is an actual *copy* of the Paris MS. C.

The Oxford MS. closely resembles both, but I have not made the comparison minutely enough to say if it is an exact copy of either.