

There are several kings in the country, and they have a language of their own. They are a people of simple manners, but both men and women very handsome, being all very white and [tall, with long fair hair]. There are many strong defiles and passes in the country; and they pay tribute to nobody except to a certain Tartar king of the Ponent, whose name is TOCTAI; to him indeed they pay tribute, but only a trifle. It is not a land of trade, though to be sure they have many fine and valuable furs, such as Sables, in abundance, and Ermine, Vair, Ercolin, and Fox skins, the largest and finest in the world [and also much wax]. They also possess many Silver-mines, from which they derive a large amount of silver.¹

There is nothing else worth mentioning; so let us leave Rosia, and I will tell you about the Great Sea, and what provinces and nations lie round about it, all in detail; and we will begin with Constantinople.—First, however, I should tell you of a province that lies between north and north-west. You see in that region that I have been speaking of, there is a province called LAC, which is conterminous with Rosia, and has a king of its own. The people are partly Christians and partly Saracens. They have abundance of furs of good quality, which merchants export to many countries. They live by trade and handicrafts.²

There is nothing more worth mentioning, so I will speak of other subjects; but there is one thing more to tell you about Rosia that I had forgotten. You see in Rosia there is the greatest cold that is to be found anywhere, so great as to be scarcely bearable. The country is so great that it reaches even to the shores of the Ocean Sea, and 'tis in that sea that there are certain islands in which are produced numbers of gerfalcons and peregrine falcons, which are carried in many directions. From Russia also to OROECH it is not very far, and the journey