

THE PREFACE

TO THE FIRST AND SECOND VOLUMES

The second volume needs no apology. It consists entirely of the Latin text which was unearthed at Toledo, photographed, and finally printed, through the enthusiasm of Sir Percival DAVID. This is fully described in the Introduction. To serious students it will be a very great advantage to be able to place this remarkable text side by side with the Franco-Italian text(F), the French(FG), and RAMUSIO's Italian translation(R), of all of which modern printed editions exist; and their gratitude to Sir Percival will be correspondingly great. They will also be very grateful to the Librarian at Toledo, Don Agustín GUIASOLA, for his invaluable help in the finding and study of the manuscript, and rejoiced to hear that after living in hiding in peril of his life for seventeen months he was alive and well at the beginning of this year and able to report that Marco Polo too was safe in his place in the Library. The second volume was published before the first, in January 1938; formal leave to print the text having been kindly given by the Chapter of the Metropolitan Church of Toledo on 12 February 1934.¹

The larger part of the first volume is taken up by the English translation. This translation is an attempt to weave together all, or nearly all, the extant words which have ever claimed to be Marco Polo, and to indicate the source from which each word comes. It has been the occupation of my leisure hours for many years, and was begun with a very slender store of sources. Sources, through the kindness first of the Oxford Press and afterwards of Sir Percival DAVID, have increased till at the last the work has been done with complete copies of seventeen texts. But the passing of time and the gradual accumulation of material were sure to cause, and have in fact caused, some inequality of treatment and some lack of uniformity; the tendency having been perhaps to be more careful to add the little *ands* and *buts* as time went on. In particular a great many small additions were at first attributed to RAMUSIO, which were really taken by him from earlier manuscript sources which are still available. In very many cases these attributions have been corrected in the process of revision, but probably not in all.

The first attempt to make such a composite translation seems to have been

¹ Don A. GUIASOLA wrote to Sir Percival DAVID on 7 March this year as follows: "The Chapter dealt with Marco Polo at two sessions. At one it gave, at my request, authorization for making the photostats; and at another session it gave leave for the publication of the text, expressly authorizing you yourselves for this. *And it has given no authorization to anyone else with regard to the manuscript.*" (*Y a nadie más concedió autorización relacionada con el manuscrito.*)