

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD<sup>s</sup> IUGURISTAN AND RUSSIA  
tioned (1) a new chapter on the province of Juguristan with its capital Khara-Khojo (p. xx), (2) a long passage on the Christians in Fugiu (pp. lii-liv), and (3) a long addition to the chapter on Russia (pp. cxxix-cxxx).

“With regard to the chapter on Juguristan, it has always been a matter of surprise to students that no mention should have been made of the Uighurs and of their capital Khara-Khojo, which has yielded so many remains of a highly developed civilisation to modern explorers. It is indeed strange that so important a chapter should have been dropped out of all the other texts. Short as it is, it contains accurate history and curious folk-lore. Incidentally the legend regarding the first king, who was born of “one of those swellings that sap produces on the bark of trees and that we call *esca*”, reminds one of the famous Turkish legend regarding the origin of the tribe of Qipčaq, who are said to have derived their name from the fact that their ancestor was born in the hollow of a tree (*qavnuq*), where he was discovered with his mother by the great Oghuz Khan, who thereupon adopted the boy. Curiously enough there is an alternative form of this name, *qavčaq*, and in old Turkish *qav* means tinder (*esca*).

“With regard to the Christians in Fugiu, it has been suggested by Professor PELLLOT that these Christians in whom Marco and his uncle Maffeo took so much interest were Manichæans, who were very numerous in the district but had no official status under the Mongols. However this may be, the omission from all other texts of this long and important passage is quite unaccountable.<sup>1</sup>

“With regard to the chapter on Russia no one can fail to be struck by the minuteness and abundance of details which could not possibly have been invented. Marco Polo, of course, obtained these details at second-hand, as there is no reason to suppose that he ever visited Russia himself.

“In reconstituting, as far as we are able, the original narrative of Marco Polo, we are confronted with the difficulty of accounting for the various omissions which occur in the best available texts. No doubt a number of theories might be adduced to explain each type of passage omitted, but such theories must of necessity be confined to the realm of conjecture. For one type of omission we might find as an excuse the incredulity of the scribe, for another his religious scruples, and for a third his lack of interest.

“Knowing Marco Polo as we do, I think we may accept the view that the fuller the text, the more curious the details and the more prolix the language, the

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<sup>1</sup> But see *Christians in China before the Year 1550*, p. 143 n. 23; and specially PN. (A.C.M.)