

THE PRODUCTS BIRDS AND PEOPLE OF ERGIUUL ≠ MARCO POLO

for when one has taken it he finds on it at the navel in the middle under the belly  
 VB between the skin and the flesh a pustule of blood which grows on this animal when the  
 VB moon is full, which one cuts off with the whole skin<sup>1</sup> and takes it out, and they dry  
 it in the sun. And that blood is the musk from which comes so great [31a] odour.  
 VB And from this country is the finest musk that is found. The flesh of this animal is very good  
 to eat, & they are taken in great numbers. And you may know that in this country it<sup>2</sup>  
 L V exists in very great quantity and so good as I have told you. The men of this province  
 FB they live by trade and by crafts both of cloth of gold and of silk, and have abundance of  
 V P L all corn. And the province it is twenty-five<sup>3</sup> days marches in size & is very fertile. And  
 VB there are in this province most beautiful pheasants twice as large as those of our country  
 P V V VB in Italy, for they are about of the size of peacocks, a little less. And they have most  
 beautiful tails ten palms long at the most, and there are many of nine, & of eight,  
 L L and of seven at the least. Yet there are also pheasants of another sort which are of the  
 L L VA same size and altogether of the fashion of those of our country.<sup>4</sup> Of the other birds  
 P P there are many most beautiful of many different kinds with very beautiful feathers and  
 VA P V VA very well coloured with very beautiful variety of colours. But the people of this region  
 VB P P VB V are all idolaters and followers of lust, and they are commonly tall and very fat and have  
 V VB L Z small noses and the hair of the head black. And they have no beard except only so  
 R many<sup>5</sup> hairs on the chin. The honourable ladies have no hair except on the top of  
 V the head; nowhere else have they any hair. The women are very white and have very  
 Z fair flesh, and in all the members they are very well made in all respects. And you may  
 Z know that the men they delight themselves much in sensuality and take wives  
 enough, because their religion nor their usage does not hinder them, but they can  
 take as many<sup>6</sup> of them as they wish and as they have the power to keep. Moreover  
 P Z I tell you that the men seek for beautiful wives rather than for noble, for if there is a very

<sup>1</sup> L: cum parte pellis sibi correspondente

<sup>2</sup> TA,LT,V refer, as here, to the musk; FA,FB,VA,P: "of these animals"; L is ambiguous.

<sup>3</sup> TA<sup>2</sup>: xv

<sup>4</sup> de la grande & de faisonz des nostres pais TA<sup>1</sup>: al modo di queste paese L: fasiiani alterius modi qui sunt totaliter similes nostris et eiusdem magnitudinis VA: de grandezza de quelli dele nostre chontra VB: . . . chome questi nostri Perhaps we should omit pais, or read grande de faisanz, or, with B., & de faisonz des faisans des nostres pais.

<sup>5</sup> quant FA,FB: aucuns L: aliquantulos P: imberbes sunt set pilos solum circa labia habent Z: iiij V: quatro R: quattro TA,LT have no corresponding word. Possibly we should read quatre

After "idolaters" V adds: e trouasse chauli negri although it retains e li chauli negri below.

<sup>6</sup> toutes FA,FB: assez TA,V,VB: tante LT: quot R: quante Z: multas, very much shortening the passage. Perhaps read tantes.