

THE WONDERFUL PALACE OF CANES AT CIANDU = MARCO POLO

VB L grove, the great Kaan has made for his dwelling a great palace or loggia which is all of
 R L canes, upon beautiful pillars gilded and varnished,¹ and on the top of each pillar is a great
 R dragon all gilded which winds the tail round the pillar and holds up the ceiling with the head,
 and stretches out the arms, that is one to the right hand for the support of the ceiling and the
 P VA other in the same way to the left; but it is all gilded inside and out and worked & painted
 TA with beasts and with birds very cunningly worked. The roof of this palace is also
 R all of canes gilded and varnished so well and so thickly that no [32c] water can hurt it,
 P VB and the paintings can never be washed out; & it is the most wonderful thing in the world
 to be understood by one who has not seen it; and I will tell you how it is made of canes.
 VB You may know truly that those canes of which these houses are made are more than three
 LT VB or four palms thick and round and are from ten paces to fifteen long. One cuts them
 FB TA L across in half at the knot, from one knot to the other, and splits them through the middle.
 LT P lengthwise, and then a tile is made; and from each splitting two tiles are made. And of
 P FB these canes which are thick and so large are made pillars, beams, and partitions, and
 they are put to many other uses, for they do many other works with them, [so] that one can
 P roof a whole house with them and do all from the beginning,²—and this palace
 VA of the great Kaan, which is in the middle of that park, of which I have told you above
 L R was all made of canes. But each tile of cane is fixed with nails for protection from the winds,
 VB P and they make those canes so well set together and joined that they protect the house from rain
 and send the water off downwards. Moreover the great Kaan had made it so arranged that
 L L P he might have it easily taken away and easily set up, put together and taken to pieces,
 P without any harm whenever he wished, for when it is raised and put together more than
 R P R two hundred very strong ropes of silk held it up in the manner of tents all round about,
 because owing to the lightness of the canes it would be thrown to the ground by the wind.
 FB And I tell you that the great Kaan stays there in that park three months of the year,

¹ V: *cholone de marmoro inmarmorade et invernichade* But this does not seem to agree with the statement that the palace could be taken to pieces, and may be due to confusion with the permanent marble palace.

² *len le trence par mi de un nod as autre & adonc est fait un coup & de cesstes channes que sunt grosses & si grant que len en puet courir maison & fer toute de chief* This seems to be incomplete, obscure, and perhaps out of order. P: *Arundines . . . in longitudine habent passus .xv. et in grossitudine ultra palmas tres. De hiis fiunt columpne trabecule et clausure. Desuper etiam hiis tegitur tota domus. Diuiduntur etiam arundines iuxta nodos et pars per medium scinditur. et de scissura qualique (? qualibet) tegule due fiunt; que super domum composite domum a pluua protegunt. et aquam emittunt inferius.* L: *Et ex hiis tam grossis cannis potest fieri domus quelibet quia ex ipsis est totum hoc palacium factum* B.'s correction is: "And of these canes[are made tiles]which are thick &c.." I suppose that *de un nod as autre* means "knot by knot", or "at every knot".