

THE SONS OF CUBLAI KAAAN & HIS CONCUBINES = MARCO POLO

L It is true that every three days and three nights six<sup>1</sup> of these girls are sent to wait on  
P the lord when he goes to rest & when he gets up, both in the room and in the bed and for  
all that he needs; and the great Kaan does with them what he pleases. And at the  
FB V end of these three days and of three nights come the second six girls in exchange for  
FB these, and those depart. And so it goes all the year that every three days and three  
LT nights they are changed from six to six girls until the number of those hundred is  
R completed, & then they begin again another turn. It is true that while one party remains in  
the chamber of the lord, the others stay in another room near there so that if the lord has need  
of anything extraordinary, as drink and food and other things, the girls who are in the lord's  
chamber order those in the other room what they must prepare, and they prepare it immediately.  
And so the lord is not waited upon by other persons but by the girls. And the other girls who  
were valued at less carats stay with the other women of the lord in the palace, and they teach  
them to sew and to cut out gloves and to do other genteel work. And when any gentleman is  
looking for wives, the great Kaan gives him one of them with a very great dowry, and in this  
way he finds them all husbands of good position.

And it could be said, Are not the men of the said province annoyed that the great Kaan  
takes away their daughters from them? Certainly not. Rather they think it a great favour and  
honour, and are very glad that they have pretty daughters which he deigns to accept, because  
they say, If my daughter is born under a good planet and with good fortune, the lord will be  
able to satisfy her better and will marry her into a good position, which thing I should not have  
been able to do with satisfaction. And if the daughter does not behave well or has bad fortune,  
then the father says, this has happened to her because her planet was not good.

VA V VA **H**ERE HE TELLS OF THE SONS OF THE GREAT KAAAN. And again you may  
V P know that Cublai the great Kaan has indeed of these his four wives twenty-  
FB two male children. And the elder son of the first had for name Cinchim  
LT for the love of the good Cinghis<sup>2</sup> Kaan, the first lord; and this one ought to have  
R been great Kaan and lord of the whole empire after the death of Cublai his father.  
VA P And he had been already confirmed as lord while his father was alive. Now it happened  
VA that he died, this Cinchim, before the father; but there remains a son of his who has  
R VA R Temur for name, and this Temur ought to be great Kaan and lord after the death  
VA of Cublai; and it is [37a] right because he was son of the eldest son of the great  
R VA R Kaan, that is of Cinchim. Moreover I tell you that this Temur is a valiant man, full  
VA of kindness, wise, and prudent, and has often already behaved very well & has had many  
victories in battle. And you may know that the great Kaan has also quite twenty-five

<sup>1</sup> R: cinque

<sup>2</sup> cinchin . . . cinchin VA: cbinchim . . . chinchis