

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD & THE PALACE OF CUBLAI

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pass to and fro. It has no high upper floor, but is on a level base in such a way that the pavement is about ten palms higher than the other ground around. And the roof or covering is very extremely high. And all round there is a wall of marble level with the pavement, two paces thick, and within the wall the palace is placed in such a way that all the wall outside the palace is as it were a walk by which one goes and passes all round, where men can see from the outside. And on the outer edges of the wall is a most beautiful balustrade with columns, on which people can lean.¹ The walls of the halls and of the rooms inside are all covered with gold and with silver and blue, and there are portrayed very finely in carved work lions & dragons and beasts and birds and fair stories of ladies and knights and many other different kinds of beautiful things² and stories of wars, which are on the walls; & the roof also is made so that nothing else is seen³ there but gold and silver and paintings. On each quarter of the palace is a great flight of marble steps which go up from the ground to the top of the said wall of marble which surrounds the palace, by which steps one goes up into the palace. The hall is so great and so broad that it is a great marvel, and more than six thousand⁴ men would well feed there at once, sitting at table together. And in that palace there are four hundred rooms, so many that it is a marvel to see them. It is so beautiful and so large and so rich and so well made and arranged, that it is thought that there is not a man in the world who should have the power to know how to plan it better nor make it. And the roofs⁵ above, that is outside, are all red and green and azure & peacock-blue and yellow and of all colours, and are glazed so well and so cleverly that they are bright like crystal, so that they are seen to shine very far round the palace.⁶ And you may know that that roof is so strong and so firmly put together that it lasts many years.⁷ In the part behind the palace there are large houses, rooms, and halls, in which are the private things of the lord,

the second &. The sentence begins the account of the palace hall, with its terrace.

¹ or "where people can assemble." *al qual si possono accostar gli huomini.*

² *bestes* But FA,FB: *choses* V,TA: *chose* R(omitting the first *besstes*): *diuerse maniere di bestie*

³ *ne i se port autre* TA: *non ui si puo vedere altro* R: *che altro non si vede* So read (with B.)
se pert

⁴ TA: *ij^m* V: *sie zento* R: *gran moltitudine*

⁵ FA,FB: *Les tres de la couverture* explained by PAUTHIER to mean "the beams of the roof", but as both texts include the phrase about the consequent splendour of the roof when seen from a distance, one would wish that *tres* could mean "tiles".

⁶ R: *di tutti i colori. & vi sono vitreate nelle fenestre cosi ben fatte . . . come christallo*, This suggests that the original may have said that the tiles were coloured and glazed like quarries in windows; possibly reading *come sono for & vi sono*. F: *& sunt enuertree* V: *et sono in veriadi*

⁷ FA: *a touz temps* FB: *a tous jours* V: *piu de mile ani* R: *molti anni* Others omit.