

THE ORDER AND MAGNIFICENCE OF FEASTING ~~BY~~ MARCO POLO

L VL R likewise his grandsons, according to their ages, and his kindred and others who are connected
 R FB by blood, that is those who are descended of the imperial line, so low that I tell you that
 R their heads come to the feet of the great lord. None the less Cinchim his first son sits
 R VA rather higher than the other sons. And then the other barons and princes. & other people
 VL sit[at the] other tables still lower step by step according to their dignity, & state, and age.
 VA And it goes in the same way with the women, that at the feet of the first queen is the
 table of the other queens & of the other younger children of the great Kaan; for all the wives
 of the sons of the great lord and of his grandsons and of his kindred sit on the left
 L side, namely, of the empress, also more low; and next sit all the wives of the barons and
 of the [39a] knights, and they also sit lower. And they know each their place where
 R he ought to sit according to his rank and dignity in the place assigned to him and proper by
 L the ordering of the lord, so however that each is on the right side, & all their wives on the
 VA left, that is on the side of the empress. And the tables are arranged in the hall in such a way
 L VA that the great lord can see all the feasters, and they are always a very great number.
 R Do not believe that all sit at table; on the contrary the greater part of the knights and barons
 P eat in the hall on carpets, because they have not tables. And outside this hall are other halls
 at the sides; and in these royal banquets there sometimes feed more than forty thousand¹
 P VA of them, beside those who are of the king's court. who always come in numbers to sing & to
 make various sport. And many times more than ten thousand persons eat at the tables which
 are outside the great hall. For many men come there with many great presents, and
 P R they are men who come from foreign parts with jewels and with strange things and
 VA unaccustomed to be seen, and some there are who have had a domain or lordship and
 P VA wish one again, and jesters innumerable. And for this reason so great a multitude of men
 R like these are wont always to come on days like these when the great Kaan holds
 R VA open court and makes feast. And in the middle of this great hall where the great
 R lord keeps his table is a most beautiful structure, large and rich, made in the manner of
 a square chest, and each side is of three paces, cunningly worked with very beautiful carving
 of gilded animals; and in the middle it is hollowed out, and there is a great and valuable
 vessel in the shape of a great pitcher of fine gold which holds quite as much wine as
 FB LT L a common large butt of six barrels or of six salme, & it is full of wine or of some other good
 VA R drink. And round the foot of this pitcher, that is in each corner of this chest, is a smaller
 VL R FB one of silver, of the capacity of a grape-tub, full of good spiced drinks, very fine and of great
 R value, in one of which is mares milk, and in another camels', and so with the others, according
 as there are different kinds of drinks. And on the said chest stand all the vessels of the lord,

¹ P: .xj.milia TA: senza numero VL: quatro millia Z,V,R omit. Others "more than 40000".