

THE FEAST AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR = MARCO POLO  
 R and give him very great presents, each as is suitable to him who brings it, and  
 FB accordingly as it is ordered. And there come many other men also, each with great  
 VA FB presents on that day, to ask favours of the lord; and they are those who wish to ask  
 him to give them some domain. And the great lord has chosen twelve barons who  
 FB FB are set over this affair, to give the domains to men like these according as they think it  
 FB P is fitting to each. And again on this day all people of whatever faith they are, all the  
 P FB idolaters and all the Christians or the Jews and all the Saracens and all the other races  
 TA VA of the Tartar people who are subject to the rule of the great Kaan must make great petitions  
 FB FB FB and great assemblies and great prayers, each to the idols and to their God with great  
 L R chants, and great lights, and great incense, that he may be pleased to save and protect them  
 LT P their lord, and that they give him long life and good and joy and health, and safety,  
 and prosperity. In such manner as I have told you lasts that day the joy and the  
 FB FB LT feasting of his nativity. Now let us leave speaking to you of this feast, for we have  
 well told you of it, and we will speak to you of another great feast which he makes  
 on their beginning of the year, which is called the white feast.

LT HERE HE TELLS OF THE GREAT FEAST WHICH THE GREAT KAAAN MAKES ON  
 L THEIR BEGINNING OF THE YEAR. It is true that the Tartars they make  
 P their solemn feast which they name white at the beginning of the year in the  
 month of February, on the kalends, that is the first day of the year, by the Tartar computation.  
 LT R And the great lord and his clan and all those [40a] who are subject to him, throughout  
 P their districts, wherever they are, make of it such a feast as I shall tell you. It is the  
 FB FB custom that the great Kaan with all his subjects dress themselves all in white robes, so  
 FB FB that on that day both men & women, small and great, when they have the power to do it,  
 L are all dressed in new and white clothes. And they do it because white dress seems to  
 them lucky and good, and therefore they wear it at the beginning of their year  
 R so that they may take their good and have joy and comfort all the year. And on this  
 FB FB day all the people and<sup>1</sup> all the provinces and all the regions & kingdoms and countries  
 LT which hold land and domains of him bring him very great presents according to  
 R their ability of gold and of silver and of pearls and of many precious stones and of  
 VA LT many very rich white cloths and of other things, as is fitting; and whatever presents are  
 FB made are of white things and with white things. And they do it on that day that all the

FA,TA,VA,R: & FB omits. The second & regions is omitted by FA,TA,LT which otherwise have exactly the same form of sentence, and it may be due to the influence of & region which comes just above it in the preceding line.

<sup>1</sup> & FA,FB,V,VA: de L: gentes.s.reges principes et barones . . . similiter et omnes prouincie R: genti, prouincie, & regni Others express differently. cf. p.221 n.5 above.