

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD<sup>s</sup> THE PEARLS OF GAINDU  
 are written in this book belong also to the great Kaan, except only those provinces  
 which are at the beginning of our book which belong to the son of Argon *the lord* <sup>FB</sup>  
*of the sunrising*, just as I have written you, *which all belongs to the great Kaan, for he* <sup>FB</sup>  
*holds his land of him, and is his vassal and his kinsman and of his imperial line.* And so  
 outside those provinces all the others which are written in this book belong to  
 the great Kaan. And therefore if you do not find the provinces written, yet you <sup>FB</sup> <sup>FB</sup> <sup>FB</sup>  
 understand<sup>1</sup> it in such a way as I have told you. Now henceforth let us leave this  
 kind and we will tell you of the province of Gaindu.

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**H**ERE HE TELLS OF THE PROVINCE OF GAINDU. Gaindu is a province and <sup>L</sup>  
*city toward sunsetting, and has only one king.*<sup>2</sup> Formerly it was ruled by <sup>FB</sup> <sup>R</sup>  
*its own king, but after it had been subjected to the rule of the great Kaan he* <sup>Z</sup>  
*sends his own rulers there.* And do not understand by this speaking of sunsetting that the said <sup>R</sup>  
*regions are in the lands of the Sunsetting, but because we are going out from the lands which*  
*are between sunrising and the Greek wind coming towards sunset; and therefore we describe*  
*them as toward sunsetting.* The people of this province, they are all idolaters and are <sup>Z</sup> <sup>VB</sup>  
 subject to the rule of the great lord. And there are cities and villages enough <sup>V</sup> <sup>VA</sup> <sup>VB</sup>  
 to it, and the chief city likewise is called Gaindu, which is built at the beginning of the <sup>R</sup>  
 province. And they have a large salt lake [52b] where many pearls are found, which <sup>FB</sup> <sup>R</sup> <sup>Z</sup>  
 pearls are quite white but not round; indeed they are as it were in knots, because four, five, six,  
 and more seem to be held together in one. But the great Kaan is not in any way willing <sup>Z</sup>  
 that any one take them out, for if he were to have as many of them taken out  
 at will as one would find there, they would take out so many of them that they <sup>Z</sup>  
 would be very cheap and would be worth nothing. But yet I tell you that when  
 the great lord wants some of them he makes them indeed take out some of them  
 for him only alone, as many as he wishes at his pleasure. But without the king's leave <sup>FB</sup> <sup>P</sup>  
 no other could dare to take any of them without being immediately deprived of life, <sup>V</sup> <sup>FB</sup>  
 so that all the pearls that are taken come into the hands of the lord. And again I tell you <sup>VB</sup>  
 that there is also a mountain in which one would find the mine of a kind of stone <sup>R</sup>  
 which one calls turquoise, which are very beautiful stones, and they are in very <sup>FB</sup>  
 great quantities. But the great lord does not allow them to be taken by any except <sup>FB</sup> <sup>Z</sup>  
 by his command; & they too all come into the hands of the lord, & some of them are sold <sup>VB</sup>  
 to merchants as he wills. And I tell you that in this province also there is such a very new <sup>Z</sup> <sup>I</sup>  
 and strange custom with their wives as I shall tell you. For they do not regard it  
 at all as villainy if a foreigner or other man who comes shames him at pleasure with <sup>FB</sup> <sup>Z</sup> <sup>Z</sup>  
 his wife or with his daughter or with his sister or with any woman whom he may

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<sup>1</sup> & porcoi uoç neles prouences si lentendes

<sup>2</sup> VA: a oto re