

A STRANGE CUSTOM AND GOLD IN ÇARDANDAN ≠ MARCO POLO

R R FB and the other men¹ whom they have bought & also taken in war and conquered from
 VA other lands, whom they keep for slaves. And these do all their duties which the lords
 P command with their wives. And in this province the custom is that when the ladies have
 FA been confined and have given birth to a child, they wash him and wrap him up in
 VB clothes, and the lord of the lady gets into the bed and keeps the infant that is born
 VB with him and lies in the bed forty days² without getting up from the bed except for
 VB important necessary duties. And all the friends and relations come to see him and
 stay with him and make him great joy and entertainment. And they do this because
 they say that his wife has borne great fatigue in carrying the infant in her womb
 VA FB nine months & in giving birth to him, so the husband must also have his share of suffering;
 TA and therefore they say that they wish her to rest and do not wish her to bear more
 LT of it in that term of forty days, except that she is obliged to give suck to the child. And
 VA his wife, as soon as she has given birth to her child, she gets up from the bed as
 R soon as she can and does all the duty of the house and waits on her lord, taking him
 VB Z food and drink, the time he is in the bed, as if he himself had borne the child. They eat of
 R FB all flesh both cooked and raw, as is said above. And they eat rice cooked with flesh³
 VA & with milk and with other things according to their usage. They drink [54d] wine
 Z which they make of rice and with admixture of many good spices, which is very good
 VB R and delicious to drink. Their money is gold which they spend by weight, and cowries are
 VB also spent there for their small money. Moreover I tell you for truth that they give
 R one ounce of gold for five ounces of silver and a saggio of gold for five of silver. And this
 R happens because they have much gold, but no silver mine nearer than five months of
 days journeys. And therefore⁴ the merchants come there with much silver and

¹ & as autres hommes Read perhaps & les autres hommes (B.) Z: et alii homines Or perhaps translate "and with the other men" TA: chogli ischiavi L: vna cum eorum seruis FB: et leurz esclaves V: et i omeni liqualli i piano non i retien per suo serui ma fano li suo bexogni chon le suo moier

² Z: circa xxx dies uel plures Others, "forty"

³ FB: Ris avec char cuite

⁴ argentier propes. a v. mois de iornee & por ce FA,FB,TA,V(?),L support this strange reading, but LT: ad quinque giornatas VA: apresso a molte zornade P,Z,VB,R omit the sentence. It seems to be possible that the text has become confused, and that the original ended a sentence with propes., and then said that the merchants came as far as a five months journey to buy this gold. In the text of V (et questo aduenien per che i nonna arzenti et vieno zingue mexi de zornade i marchadanti vanoli chon molto arzento) arzenti et vieno looks like a corruption of arzentiera vicina. V would then be an exact version of F, with the important exception that it has nothing in place of & por ce after zornade.