

A NOBLE PALACE OF KING FACFUR IN QUINSAI = MARCO POLO

TA Z and the most noble *palace* that is to be found in the world. And I will tell you some-
 Z thing of it. Now you may know that the palace has a circuit of quite ten miles
 Z TA TA of land¹ round and it is square and is walled with high and thick walls, all with
 TA P battlements. And inside the walls at the back are many very beautiful gardens with
 FB all the good fruits which man would know how to describe, the most beautiful and
 Z delectable gardens in the world. There are many beautiful fountains and several lakes
 Z P Z where there are found many good fishes. And in the middle of the inner space of this
 VA Z wall is the palace very vast and beautiful, the largest that is in the world. It has a chief
 Z hall in it so large and so fair that a very great number of people could stay in it
 Z Z at once and eat at table. The hall is all portrayed and painted with painting of gold
 TA Z and blue & there are many different stories² and many beasts and birds and knights
 and ladies and there are many marvels. It is a very beautiful sight to see, for on all
 the walls and on the whole ceiling one could see nothing but painting in gold
 Z and other colours delectable and beautiful. And what shall I tell you of it? You may know
 FA that it is so beautiful that I should not be able to describe to you the great nobleness
 of this palace, but I will [68b] tell you briefly and in sum all the truth of it, to
 wit that this palace has twenty halls all of one size and of one decoration, and they
 P are indeed so large that ten thousand men together could eat at table there with ease,
 and they are all painted and worked very nobly with gold. Moreover I tell you
 that this palace has quite a thousand rooms, these are houses fair and great, both
 Z for sleeping and for eating; and the nature of this palace is something wonderful.³ The

¹ P¹⁸ (followed by Port. 1502, but not P⁶): *Primo lacus magnus circuit muros eius altitudinis valde magne.*

² *estaites* Z: *ystorie*

³ The more elaborate account of the palace in R (fol. 47E-48A) is as follows: "Now we will speak of a most beautiful palace where the king Fanfur lived, whose predecessors had had a space of country enclosed which they surrounded for ten miles with very high walls and divided it into three parts. Into the middle part one entered through a very large gate, where were found on one side and on the other very large and broad pavilions on the level ground, with the roof supported by columns which were painted and worked with gold and the finest azures. Then at the head was seen the principal one and larger than all the others, painted in the like way with the pillars gilt, and the ceiling with the most beautiful ornaments of gold; and round about on the walls the stories of the past kings were painted with great skill. There every year on certain days dedicated to his idols the king Fanfur used to hold court and give a banquet to the chief lords, great masters, and rich artificers of the city of Quinsai, and ten thousand persons at one time sat at table there conveniently under all the said pavilions. And this court lasted ten or twelve days, and it was a stupendous thing and past all belief to see the magnificence of the guests dressed in silk and in gold with so many precious stones upon them,