

## THE BRIDGES OF QUENLINFU &amp; SILKY FOWLS ≠ MARCO POLO

Z carry lances and swords and are the most cruel men *that may be found* in the world,  
 Z for I tell you that they go all day killing men and *when they are killed, first they*  
 Z drink the blood, *and then they all eat them.* And they are always eager about this  
 Z to go to kill men to drink the blood and *afterwards to eat the flesh.* Now we will  
 Z leave you this and will tell you of another thing. For you may know that at *the*  
 Z *end of the third days march of the six of which I have told you above one finds the*  
 Z Z city by the name of Quenlinfu, which is a very great city and noble, *whose people worship*  
 V *idols and are responsible to the city of Fugiu, and they are subject to the rule of the great*  
 FB P Kaan, and have money of notes. This city is set on a river; it has three bridges of the  
 L Z LA greatest and most beautiful and of the best to be found in the world, *which are founded*  
 P VA *on one side in the walls of the city.*<sup>1</sup> For they are quite one mile long and quite nine paces  
 P VA wide,<sup>2</sup> and they are all of stone and *adorned above with beautiful pillars of marble.*  
 They are so beautiful and so wonderful that they would need a great treasure to  
 Z make one. *The people, they live by trading and by crafts. They have silk enough*  
 R *which they weave into different sorts of cloth. Ginger and galingale grow there in plenty.*  
 Z *So much cotton cloth of twisted<sup>3</sup> thread is made there that it is to be had in the whole province*  
 Z P Z R *of Mangi. They have very fair men and ladies in this city and they live very delicately.*  
 And again there is a strange thing which does well to mention. For I tell you  
 R that I was told (*but I did not see them*) that there are hens which have no feathers but  
 P R VL R *have hairs on the head and skins with black hair like cats, and are quite black & fat, so*  
 P *that it is a strange thing to see them. They make excellent eggs too like those of our*  
 VA *country, and are very good [70b] to eat.*<sup>4</sup> *There are many lions, on account of which it*  
 R *is very dangerous to pass through those regions unless people go in great numbers. There is*  
 no other thing which does to mention and so we will set out and will go forward.  
 I tell you moreover that in the other three days journeys, that is of the six days  
 FB R *journeys of which I have told you above, one sees and finds again many cities and many*  
 villages where there are merchants and merchandise enough and craftsmen. They  
 Z have silk enough and are idolaters and subject to the great Kaan. They have *also*  
 chase and hunting enough. There are large and fierce lions which do much harm to

<sup>1</sup> G: *di czu beydin endin . . .*

<sup>2</sup> FB, Z, L, VA, P, G: "eight" For the length, the MSS. vary between one mile and 100 paces. VL says "four bridges". <sup>3</sup> R: *tinto*

<sup>4</sup> Odoric says of these silky hens: *Galline vero sunt albe ut nix non habentes pennas sed solum lanam sunt portantes ut pecus.* cf. A. Van den WYNGAERT *Sinica Franciscana* I., 1929, p. 461. Though silkies are usually white, a black variety is known, and in any case the Chinese call them *wu ku chi*, "black boned fowls", or even *wu chi*, "black fowls". cf. *The New China Review* III, 1921, pp. 213-215.