

ASTROLOGERS AND BOYS AND BIRDS IN MAABAR ≠ MARCO POLO
good for the buyer, sometimes good for both or bad for both; and they guide themselves by that.

- These things indeed they have from experience. And again I tell you that as soon as an infant is born in this kingdom, whether he be male or female, the father or the*
- Z VB *mother immediately has his nativity put in writing, that is what day he is born, the*
 VB *year, and in what month and in what moon and what hour & minute, that when they*
 are grown up these astrologers may be able to judge what they have to do. And they do this
 because they do all their deeds¹ with astrologers and with diviners who know
 VB *much of enchantment and of magic art and of geomancy; & great faith is put in*
 them, holding firm what they tell them must be firm, nor can they fail. And some there are,
 FB Z *as I have told you, [who] know astronomy and other diabolical charms. Again, whoever*
 has sons, when they are of the age of thirteen years immediately sends them away from home,
 depriving them of the food of the home. For they say that now they are at an age at which they
 can get food of themselves, and trade and make gain as he himself did; and he gives to each one
 twenty or twenty-four grossi, or money of such a value, that they get and make gain with them.
 The fathers do this indeed that the sons may become practised and quick in everything and may
 become used to dealings. These boys indeed do so, for the whole day they do not stop running
 now here now there buying one thing and afterwards selling that same thing. And at the time
- R Z *when the pearls are fished they run to the port and buy from the fishers. & from others. five or*
 six pearls, according as the fishers have them, and carry them to the merchants who stay in
 houses from fear of the sun and say, Do you want these? They cost me truly so much, give
 whatever of profit you please. And they give them something of profit above the price they owe;
 and then they run back again. Or they say to merchants, Do you please that I go to buy some-
- R Z *thing? And so they practise themselves in many other things, and so become very good and very*
 cunning dealers. But they carry the necessaries to the house of the mothers, and they cook and
 prepare for them, but it is not that they eat anything at the expense of the fathers. And again
- Z L *you may know that in this kingdom and through all Indie they have all both beasts*
 L VB *and birds very different from ours of the sunsetting except one bird only, and that is*
 Z *the quail.² This bird with no mistake [81a] is like ours; but they have all their other*
 things very strangely different from ours, for I tell you quite truly that they have
 bats (these are the birds which fly by night and which have no quills and no
 L FB *feathers,³ like a mouse), birds like this they have as large as large goshawks.⁴ They have*
 goshawks all black like ravens⁵ and they are much larger than ours, and they are
 good fliers and good at taking birds. Moreover I will speak to you of another

¹ lor foies Z: sua facta FB: leurs faiz B.: lor [fait toutes] foies

² VB: la quila ³ qe ne ont poines & ne plumes

⁴ VL: notole grande come galine ⁵ LT, TA: "coals"