

## DIAMONDS FROM THE MOUNTAINS OF MUTIFILI ≠ MARCO POLO

VA from them in another way. For you may know that there are great valleys and very  
 Z deep so steep around, the rocks,<sup>1</sup> *from the peaks of the mountains*, that none can go  
 VA FB there down to the bottom, in which bottom are many diamonds. But the men who go there  
 FB for the diamonds do so as I shall tell you. For they take flesh the leanest which they can  
 Z R have, several pieces dipped in blood, and standing above the caves throw them into those  
 deep valleys, and that flesh when it is thrown finds the diamonds in great abundance.  
 VA P VA *And the flesh falls most often on the diamonds, and then they fix themselves into the*  
 R flesh. Now it is true that many white eagles and white storks dwell in those mountains  
 FA R LT to catch those serpents and feed on them.<sup>2</sup> And when these eagles and storks perceive the  
 Z scent [&] see the flesh in the deeps of the valley they go off flying thither and take  
 P FB FB that flesh and either eat it there or carry it with their feet into another place on some rock.  
 TA VB Z on the brink of these valleys, and fly up on to the trees to eat it. And then the [82a] men  
 who have watched carefully where the eagles go, as soon as they see that the eagle  
 VB is pitched and that it is swallowing the flesh, they go there as soon as they can and  
 VB go under the tree shouting with great noise so that the eagles let the flesh drop and go off to  
 another place and do not take away the flesh for the fear which they have of the  
 men who come upon them suddenly below.<sup>3</sup> And when one is come to the flesh  
 VB VB then he takes it and often finds diamonds enough fixed there. Again when the eagle is  
 FA tearing the flesh they stand watching if any diamonds fall. And know well that there are so  
 many of them in these deep valleys that it is marvellous; but one can [not] go down there, and on  
 the other hand there are so many serpents down there that he who should go down there would  
 be devoured immediately. And again the men have diamonds from them in this way. For  
 VA when the eagles eat of that flesh of which I have told you, they go sometimes by chance  
 to a place where no one can drive them away, and they eat, that is [to say] that they swallow,  
 Z some diamonds. And then the men know the places where they stay at night; for the eagles  
 do not digest the diamonds. Then at night where the eagle makes his return<sup>4</sup> he casts  
 Z those diamonds which he has swallowed with his dung, and the men go there in

<sup>1</sup> *si degrotte enuiron les roces* cf. *si degrotte les rocches* (p. 407 below). The expression is a difficult one and the exact meaning perhaps uncertain. But the meaning which seems to be required by the context is that the sides of the valleys (or the summit of Adam's Peak) were formed of rocks too steep to climb. The grammatical construction of *les roces* seems in either case to be more difficult than the meaning of *degrotte*. cf. B., p. 186. R: *in le sommità, vi sono alcune valli circondate da grotte, & cauerne*, P: *valles quedam ita undique inmeabilibus rupibus circumcluse*

<sup>2</sup> LT: *propter commedendum illos quos occidunt dicti serpentes*

<sup>3</sup> cf. Z, p. lxxviii.

<sup>4</sup> *retoni* perhaps for *retorn* Just above, *uengient* is roughly but no doubt rightly corrected to *mengient* "eat".