

FROM THE *IMAGO MUNDI* BY IACOPO D'ACQUI = MARCO POLO
lord the Old Man gains vast wealth from such trade. Moreover those young men, believing that they will return to the aforesaid Paradise, expose themselves to death everywhere and kill many. And such things are more done in the east than in these parts. (cf. chapters 41-43, pp. 130-133 above.)

Master Marchus of Venese says in his book about the great wonders of the world and about the Tartars things which I have copied out and put briefly, which seem almost incredible.

And he says whoever in Tartary has or gets gold takes it immediately to the treasurer of the lord great Kaan who is lord of the Tartars, and in place of gold in the amount of the value and more what he asks for is given him immediately. And that gold is already so much in quantity in different places and cities that it is said to exceed in quantity the whole amount, separate from other amounts, of all Italy. But of silver and other precious things such as of precious stones and the best [78a] metals the quantity nor number nor weight could not be reckoned by any man alive. And no wonder, because it is continually increased and never diminished from the deposit.

There are made in the court of the great Kaan of the east different entertainments, and sometimes small and sometimes great. And though they may be called small yet nothing there is ever small. But in the great entertainments he rides with the nobles, and when they are gathered together at their entertainments there are found almost always about 150000 nobles on horses who all are robed in cloths of gold . . . except their servers who are often threefold. And this is true, though it may seem weighty.¹

The great Kaan has hunters in very great multitude who have nothing else to do except to attend every day to hunting after lions, bears, oxen, wild asses, horses, stags, &c.; for there are infinite animals. And they take much care of the skins of animals both domestic and wild. These hunters carry hawks and eagles and have dogs without number. And there are quite 100000 men on horses who are intent on hunting every day. And all the game they carry to the court of the great Kaan; and if the flesh cannot be carried, they carry the skin. For they have deserts very great and incredible and full of all wild beasts. (cf. chapter 91, p. 226 above.)

It is said in the book of Milio that there are in the east in some places very thick canes. And that thickness is of one cubit before one reaches the hollow in the middle. And the merchants take of those canes and put them on a cart; and there

¹ *de panis deauratis de limacor. exceptis suis uitoribus qui sunt sepe in triplo. Et istud est uirum (t: uerum) licet uideatur graue. cf. B., p. cxcvi.*