

EXPLANATORY NOTE

THE Latin text, which is here printed for the first time, forms the second volume of a large edition of Marco Polo which has been planned by Sir Percival DAVID, with the help of Professor Paul PELLIOU and other scholars and of myself. As it is not possible to publish the remainder of the book immediately (though it is hoped that the first volume will follow very soon), it has seemed right to allow readers to have this Latin text, which was actually printed in the Spring of 1935, without further delay.

The extreme importance of this previously unused text, here called Z, was shown in his monumental *Il Milione*, 1928, by Professor L. F. BENEDETTO, who had found in the Ambrosiana at Milan a copy of it made in 1795 for Joseph TOALDO, who borrowed the original for the purpose from the library of Cardinal Francisco Xavier de ZELADA at Rome. This copy, though generally faithful, was, as is now seen, mistaken in many small and some more important details; and it is a matter for great congratulation that the original was found at Toledo (where it had been almost unnoticed for 130 years) in 1932 by Sir Percival DAVID, as was announced in *The Times*, 4 April 1936, in *Le Temps*, 10 April 1936, and in the *Comptes Rendus* of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 1936, pp. 84, 85.* Formal permission to print the text was granted by the Dean and Chapter of Toledo Cathedral on 12 February 1934.

The manuscript is written on laid paper, the page measuring 21.3 cm. × 14 cm., the writing occupying approximately 16.4 × 9.1, the outer margin being about 3.3, and the tail usually 3.4 cm. The book consists of an independent title written on paper like that of the rest of the manuscript probably in the seventeenth century (fol. 1r^o, verso blank, cf. p. iii), and of twelve gatherings consisting respectively of 10, 10, 10, 12, 10, 10, 12, 12, 12, 12, 12, 12 leaves, numbered (in modern pencil) 2 to 135. The number of lines to a page varies from 26 to 28 in the gatherings 1, 4, 5, and 9; 24 lines in 6 and 7; 23 or 24 in 8; 27 in 2 and 3; 28 in 10 and 11; and 25 to 30 in 12, the last leaf having 13 lines on the recto and the verso blank. The margins contain a large number of notes in the same hand as the text. These are usually, and especially in the first half, religious—*adorant ydola, &c.*, and there are many cases of the single word *nota*, which in 1795 was transcribed as *non*. On fol. 2r^o (page v), so high up that it did not appear on the photographs from which the text below was printed, is written in a rather later hand: *Incipit liber domini Marci pauli veneti*. The writing is judged by

* The book is said to have been seen about the same time by Mr J. Homer Herriott who however was unable to examine it or to obtain photographs at that time.