

And near this country is another realm called RESENGO, towards the south.¹ Many things are there produced whereof I do not write.

21. The friar speaketh of the excellent island called Java.

In the neighbourhood of that realm is a great island, JAVA by name,² which hath a compass of a good three thou-

¹ It seems fair to adopt the one intelligible reading of a proper name among many of which nothing can be made, especially when that one is so unlikely to be the result of accident as here. Resengo I take to be the territory of the REJANG, "one of the most civilised nations of Sumatra, having a peculiar language in an original written character" (*Crawford* in voce.) The old British settlement of Bencoolen, which we held for one hundred and forty years to little profit, but which had Dampier for its gunner, and Raffles for its governor, lay in the Rejang territory.

² Whatever doubts may have been raised as to the Java Major of Polo, this of Odoric is the true Java. The circuit, indeed, of three thousand miles is vastly exaggerated; it is the same which Polo and Conti ascribe to their Java Major, and was no doubt the traditional assertion of the Arab sailors, who never visited the south of the island, and probably had extravagant notions of its extension in that direction, as we know that later voyagers had.

Though Odoric's statements are vague and superficial, and the history of Java is excessively perplexed at this period, there are some positive landmarks to be discerned, by which, in a degree, our traveller's narrative is verified.

A powerful dynasty about this time existed in Java, and in an inscription of ascertained date (A.D. 1294) the king Uttungadewa claims to have subjected *five kings*, and to be sovereign of the whole island (Jawa-dwipa). Nearly to the same date attaches the history of two unsuccessful expeditions dispatched by Kublai Khan to Java, one to claim homage and tribute, in which his envoy was handled much as king David's envoys were treated by the children of Ammon, and a second to avenge this insult, but which ended, after various events, in the expulsion of the Mongol force with loss and ignominy.

It must, I fear, be quite uncertain where the royal residence was, which Odoric describes in such glowing terms; for though Majapahit, in the eastern part of the island, was the seat of the most powerful sovereigns from a date believed to be somewhat later than our traveller's time till the establishment of Mahomedanism one hundred and fifty years afterwards, the king abovenamed appears to have had his abode near Pajajaran in the West.

There is nothing improbable in Odoric's description of the palace, if we remember that gold leaf glitters as much as gold plate. The vivid