

me that it was entitled *haft-júsh*, or "the seven metals," from being composed of an amalgam of so many. A portion of the shaft has been polished, about a finger's length, and the sheen of it is quite dazzling. Iron tools can make no impression on this pillar. *It is thirty cubits in length, and when I twisted my turban-cloth round the shaft, it took a length of eight cubits to compass it.*" The real height of the pillar above ground is twenty-two feet, and its greatest diameter a little more than sixteen inches.¹

As positive fiction we must set down the traveller's account of the historical events which he asserts to have taken place in China during his visit to that country, as will be more precisely pointed out in the notes which accompany his narrative. I shall there indicate reasons for doubting whether he ever reached Peking at all.² And his account of the country of Tawalisi, which he visited on his way to China, with all allowance for our ignorance of its exact position, seems open to the charge of considerable misrepresentation, to say the least of it. He never seems to have acquired more than a very imperfect knowledge even of Persian, which was then, still more than now, the *lingua franca* of Asiatic travel, much less of any more local vernacular; nor does he seem to have been aware that the Persian phrases which

¹ The pillar looks like iron, but I do not know if its real composition has been determined. It was considered by James Prinsep to date from the third or fourth century. I should observe that the shaft has been recently ascertained to descend *at least* twenty-six feet into the earth, and probably several feet more, as with that depth excavated the pillar did not become loose. But there is no reason to believe that it stood higher above ground in Ibn Batuta's time than now, and I gather from the statement that the diameter below ground does not increase. I am indebted for these last facts, and for the dimensions given above, to my friend M.-General Cunningham's unpublished archæological reports, and I trust he will excuse this slight use of them, as no other measurements were accessible to me that could be depended upon.

² When the traveller (iv, 244) tells us that the people of Cathay or Northern China used elephants as common beasts of burden in exactly the same way that they were used by the people of Mul-Jawa on the shores of the Gulf of Siam, he somewhat strengthens the suspicion that he never was in Northern China, where I believe the elephant has never been other than a foreign importation for use in war or court pomps.