

Emperor Kúblái, his court, wars, and administration. A series of chapters near the close treats in a verbose and monotonous manner of sundry wars that took place between the various branches of the House of Chinghiz in the latter half of the 13th century. This last series is either omitted or greatly curtailed in all the copies and versions except one; a circumstance perfectly accounted for by the absence of interest as well as value in the bulk of these chapters. Indeed, desirous though I have been to give the Traveller's work complete, and sharing the dislike that every man who *uses* books must bear to abridgments, I have felt that it would be sheer waste and dead-weight to print these chapters in full.

This second and main portion of the Work is in its oldest forms undivided, the chapters running on consecutively to the end.\* In some very early Italian or Venetian version, which Friar Pipino translated into Latin, it was divided into three Books, and this convenient division has generally been adhered to. We have adopted M. Pauthier's suggestion in making the final series of chapters, chiefly historical, into a Fourth.

51. As regards the language in which Marco's Book was first committed to writing, we have seen that Ramusio assumed, somewhat arbitrarily, that it was *Latin*; Marsden supposed it to have been the *Venetian* dialect; Bal-  
Language  
of the  
original  
Work.  
 delli Boni first showed, in his elaborate edition (Florence, 1827), by arguments that have been illustrated and corroborated by learned men since, that it was *French*.

That the work was originally written in *some* Italian dialect was a natural presumption, and slight contemporary evidence can be alleged in its favour; for Fra Pipino, in the Latin version of the work, executed whilst Marco still lived, describes his task as a translation *de vulgari*. And in one MS. copy of the same Friar Pipino's Chronicle, existing in the library at Modena, he refers to the said version as made "*ex vulgari idiomate Lombardico*." But though it may seem improbable that at so early a date a Latin version should have been made at second hand, I believe this to have been the case, and that some internal evidence also is traceable that Pipino translated *not* from the original but from an Italian *version* of the original.

\* 232 chapters in the oldest French which we quote as the *Geographic Text* (or G. T.), 200 in Pauthier's Text, 183 in the Crusca Italian.