

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD—HIS ORIGINAL SOURCES sources and with very large and important additions which had not, until fourteen years ago, been found in any manuscript or other printed edition. When Z' (a copy of Z made in 1795) was discovered by BENEDETTO in the Ambrosiana at Milan it was found to contain many but not all of the passages peculiar to R. For such important places, for example, as the murder of Acmat (pp. 214-216) or the Palace at Quinsai (pp. 338, 339) R remains to day our only authority.¹ It has been assumed that these peculiar passages (those which are unique and those which he now shares with Z) were taken by RAMUSIO from an old Latin MS. which he had examined and of which he writes as follows. After saying that *Marco Polo* was, as he believed, first written in Latin, he proceeds, "of which book a copy, written the first time in Latin, of wonderful antiquity, and perhaps copied from the original by the hand of the same M. Marco, I have often seen and compared with this which we are now publishing, lent me by a gentleman of this city of the House of Ghisi, a great friend of mine, who had it with him and held it very dear."² Nine pages earlier in his Preface he had said: "Now seeing that so many details of that part of the world of which the aforesaid M. Marco has written are being discovered in our time, I have judged it a reasonable thing to make his book come to the light with the help of different copies written more than two hundred years ago (in my judgement) perfectly correct and by a great length much more faithful than that which is read hitherto; so that the world should not lose that fruit which can be gathered from so great diligence and industry about so honourable a science, for the knowledge which is acquired of the part towards the east-north-east, put down by the ancient writers for land unknown."³ This is a plain statement that his text was compiled "with the help of different copies", and in the later passage he says that he "compared" the Ghisi Latin text "with this which we are now publishing". He does not say nor at all imply that something like one fifth of "this which we are now

did not say that Soldadia was a city of Armenia suggests that he may have seen and used no text of P but a printed edition, for the words *ciuitatis Armenie* do occur in the early MSS. of P. And it is natural enough that he should take the best existing printed text as the basis of his new edition; but it is not easy to be sure which text he used, for that of c. 1483 would not have given him the name Pipino, but Pepur, while *Novus Orbis*, 1532, omits the prologue; and the only early printed edition which includes the prologue and has the name Pipino correctly seems to be the Portuguese version of 1502. Yet R. speaks of P as Latin.

¹ See Additional Note on chapter 152, p. 499 below.

² *Nauigationi et Viaggi*, 1559, Prefazione fol. 7r^o. d. 95 p. 586. He means, obviously, that he had seen an old copy of the original (as he believed) Latin.

³ *Nav. et Viaggi*, 1559, Pref. fol. 2v^o. d. 95 p. 578.