

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD^s MARC COMES FROM INDIE
Kaan, set out riding for the space of eight months by that same way that they were come. And on the journey they found that by a war newly begun between certain kings of the Tartars the roads were closed, and not being able to go forward they were obliged against their will to return again to the court of the great Kaan, to whom they related all that had befallen them. And then at this time that the said ambassadors were come for that lady Master Marc¹ V returns with a certain embassy from Indie, who was gone as ambassador of the lord. & had LT FB VB been or passed through the province of king Argon. & told the embassy and the other different FB TA FB things which he had seen on his way & how he had gone through foreign provinces & very L strange seas and tells many wonderful new things of that country. And the three L barons that have seen Master Nicolau and Master Mafeu and Master Marc who were Latins and wise men, had very great wonder. And when they heard that those had FB VA a wish to depart, then they thought and they said among themselves that they wish FB that they may go with them by sea; for their intention was to return to their country FB by sea for the sake of the lady, because of the great labour that it is to travel so far by land; and they go immediately to the great Kaan and ask him favour, as also did the queen, V VB that he should send them by sea and that he send the three Latins with them to V their lord. to do honour to king Argon. And on the other hand they would gladly take them with P FB them as their companions in this journey. because they knew that they had seen and explored L FB much of the sea of Indie and of those countries by which they must go, and especially Master Marc. The great Kaan who loved these three his Latins as much as I have told you, FB did them that favour with great reluctance, and gives leave to the three Latins and LT tells them that they should go with those three barons with that lady.²

¹ V: *missier nicholo e misier mafio* This is a slight indication that V may come from a text which did not give Marco the supreme position which he holds in F. cf. pp.26,316,317.

² R, fol. 3F: "At this time M. Marco who was returned from the parts of India, where he had been with some ships, told the great Can many new things of those countries and of the journey which he had made, & among the other things that those seas were sailed with great safety. And when those words were come to the ears of the ambassadors of king Argon who were desirous to return home, from which they found themselves absent for three years past, they went to speak with the said M. Nicolo, Maffio, & Marco, whom they found likewise very anxious to see their native land again; and they made a plan between them, that the said three ambassadors with the queen should go to the great Can and should say that as it was possible to go safely by sea to the lands of king Argon, less would be spent by sea, and the journey would be shorter, as M. Marco who had sailed to those lands had said, his Majesty should be content to do them this kindness that they should go by sea, and that these three Latins, that is M. Nicolo, Maffio, & Marco, who had practice in sailing the said seas, must accompany them to the lands of king Argon. Hearing this their request, the great Can showed great displeasure in the face because he did not wish that these three

Latins