

NICOLAU MAFEU MARC AND BOLGANA SET SAIL ≈ MARCO POLO

HERE HE DESCRIBES HOW MASTER NICOLAU AND MASTER MAFEU AND MASTER MARC SET OUT FROM THE GREAT KAAH. And when the great Kaan sees that *the said* Master Nicolau and Master Mafeu and Master Marc must go with those ambassadors, he makes them all and three come before him and spoke to them many gracious words of the great love which he bore them, and that they should promise that when they had been some time in the land of Christians and at their home they would return to him, & gives them two¹ tablets of gold-sealed with the royal seal with [8d] orders written thereon that they should be free & exempt from every burden. & secure through all his lands, and wherever they might go they must have all the expenses for themselves and for all their train, and an escort given them that they may be able to pass in safety. He entrusts them with many things on his own behalf & with an embassy to the Apostle and to the king of France and to the king of England and to the king of Spain and to the other crowned kings of Christendom. Then he made fit out for the queen fourteen ships which had each four masts and many times went with twelve sails.² And I could well tell you how they were made, but because it would be too long a matter I will not mention it to you at this point but below, when it is place & time for it. Among the said ships there were at least four or five which had from 250 to 260 sailors. And when the ships were fitted out and furnished with food & with all things necessary & the three barons and the lady and these three Latins, the two brothers Master Nicolau and Master Mafeu and Master Marc, were ready to go to king Argon, they presented themselves to their lord, took leave of the great Kaan, and with great joy came to the ships which were prepared & assemble themselves on the ships with a very great company of ladies and gentlemen. And the great Kaan made men give them many rubies and other jewels very fine and of very great value, and also the expenses for ten years.³ And what shall I tell you about it? They set themselves on the sea and sailed quite three months till they came to an island which is toward midday which has the name Java; in which island are many marvellous things which I shall tell you in this book hereafter all clearly. Then they set out from that island and I tell you that they sailed through the

Latins should leave. Nevertheless, as he could not do otherwise, he consented to all that they asked of him. And if it had not been so great and powerful a reason that compelled him, the said Latins had never departed."

If this is authentic, it fixes the return of Marco from India approximately to 1289. See PN.

¹ L: vnam

² R: con noue vele V,P: 4. VA: ando auella Z, TA^s omit the clause. Others: 12

³ por.x.anç FA, FB, TA, LT, VA, P, V, L, VL, R all read "two", which may perhaps be correct.