

CEREMONIES OF FUNERALS AND OF BURNINGS / MARCO POLO

receives strength from it, since he must be present to see the body burned; and they do it because they say that with such honour will he be received in the other world.

VB And thus they do in each little house made on the way till they are come to the place where the body must be burned. And when he is carried to the place where he must be burned

L VL L VA then his kinsmen have painted images of men and women cut out of sheets of paper

R V made of the bark of trees, and have the names of the kinsmen written so that their bodies are

L burnt,—and horses and camels and sheep and other animals; and papers likewise in the

L form of money¹ [24b] as large as besants. And they have also sendals of different colours,

Z VA & clothes silver & many other things in numbers; and they have all these things thrown into the fire and burnt with the body, and say that in the other world the dead man will

FB VA have with him as many slaves & maids and horses and coins, and as many beasts and as

TA many sheep as they have paper ones burnt for love of him in that place before the body,

P and so he will live there in wealth and honour. And again I tell you that when the bodies

P are carried to burn all the musical instruments of the land go sounding before the

V L bodies around that fire. For they say that he is sure to be received with such honour in the

Z other world. And all this is done according to the position of the person and what his means

L require. And again I tell of another thing which they observe with regard to their dead,

R R that when any of these idolaters, who are of a position that they wish to burn the body,

VA VB V V are dead the kinsmen they send immediately for many of their astrologers, and when these

V astrologers are where the dead man is they tell them the nativity of the dead, that is the

V year when he was born, in what month and what day and the hour, and the day that

VB he died. And when the necromancer or astrologer has heard it he makes his divination

V R by diabolical arts and says to his kinsmen, when he has done his arts[and]seen under

VA what constellation, planet, and sign he was born, the day and the hour that the body must

VB TA be burned. And I tell you it often happens that some he makes wait a week or fifteen

R days without being burned, if at the time that planet is not in the ascendant, and some a

FB FB month, & some quite six² months, and less and more, according as he tells them by his

R art. And then it is the duty of the relations of the dead to keep them in their house

VA as long as I have told you, waiting for the planet to be propitious to them & not contrary; for

V they would never dare to carry them out of the house to make burning till the diviners

V tell them that it is good to burn. And as long as the body is not burnt and stays in their house they keep it in such a way; for I tell you that they have a coffin of

¹ B. points out that just below "sheep" (*montons*) take the place of "money" (*monete*) here, and suggests that the original may have had both words in both places. This is partly supported by L, which has both words here and neither below. V has *monede* only, in both places.

² VA: *vndexe* VL: *un giorno do, x, xx, xxx, e tal fiada sie mesi*