

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD^s THE SIEGE OF SAIANFU

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great trade and great handicrafts are done there. *The people of which, they are idolaters,* V
 and have money of notes, and have their dead bodies burnt, and they are subject FB
 to the rule of the great Kaan. And they have silk enough and make much cloth of V V V
 gold and of silk of many sorts very beautiful. And they have fine hunting and chase Z FB V R
 enough. And in short it has all the noble things which befit a noble city to have. L FB
 Moreover I tell you quite truly that you will know that through its power this city was Z R
 held for three years while it refused to surrender to the great Kaan, and defended itself a R Z
 long time after all the province of Mangi was surrendered. And the reason was this, that Z R
 at all times there was a great army of the great Kaan above it, but it is not able to
 stay¹ there except on the one side, and that was towards tramontaine; for on all
 the other sides there was a great lake and deep and pools by which ships were able to Z P
 go into it and come out from it, whence victuals enough were brought to the city by water. Z
 at their pleasure, nor could the army forbid it.² And the army of the great Kaan can only FB Z
 besiege it on that side of tramontaine. And they had provisions enough by all the
 other sides, and they had this by water. And thus I tell you that he never would
 have had it by hunger if there had not been a thing which I shall tell you. Now you TA
 may know that when the army of the great Kaan had stayed at the siege of this
 city three years and they could not take it, they were greatly enraged thereat. And
 when the army wished to leave with great wrath, then Master Nicolau and Master Mafeu TA
 and Master Marc Pol said, We will find you a way by which the town will surrender TA
 itself im[64a]mediately. And those from the army said³ that they wish it with a
 will. And all these words were said before the great Kaan, for the messengers of V
 those from the army were come to say to the great lord how they could not have
 the city by siege, and that they had provision from a quarter such that they could
 not hold it. And when this was told to the great Kaan, he was taken with an extreme dis- R
 pleasure at it, that when all the province of Mangi had come to his obedience this one alone should

¹ demorer Z: permanere TA: stare V: romagnir B.: fermarsi FB: assegiar VA: asediar
 R: approssimar RR.: "approach"

² Z omits the rest of this chapter. L omits all mention of the siege. V gives the whole story
 of the siege, following F very closely in other respects but omitting all allusion to the interven-
 tion of the Polo family. This omission in V is done, as far as I can judge, without any clumsy
 connexions or other signs that the text has been consciously changed. In the same way in the
 chapter on Yangiu Marco Polo is omitted from the summaries of Z and L and from the full
 story of V. Thus these embarrassing references to Polo in connexion with Yangiu and
 Saianfu are absent from the important and related group of texts, Z, L, V. cf. pp. 26, 316 n.2.

³ V: allora uno christian nostorino disse andiamo et siamo alemani che troueremo muodo per lo qual nui
 aueremo presto la zitade all qual quello de lo exercito disse . . . For the phrase siamo alemani cf. V
 fol. 34v^o: esser aleman chon lui