

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD^s THEIR SIZE AND RIGGING

at once which all sail [64d] by this river, which is so broad that it does not seem to be a river but sea, it is so broad. Now then you can well think, since this city which is not at all too large has so many ships, how many are the others. For I tell you that by this river one goes through more than sixteen provinces, and also there are more than two hundred very large cities upon it, without the towns and the villages, which are all larger than this of Singiu and all have more boats than this, not counting the cities and lands which are situated on the rivers which flow down into this main river, which likewise have much shipping; and all the aforesaid ships bring merchandise to this city of Singiu and carry it back; and the chief merchandise which is carried on this river is salt, which the merchants load in this city and carry through whatever regions are upon this river, & also inland, leaving this main river and sailing by the rivers which enter it, filling all the regions around those rivers. For for this reason salt is carried to this aforesaid city of Singiu from everywhere about the sea shore, and there the ships loading carry of it through the foresaid places. They also carry iron. But when the ships come down by the river they bring to this city wood, charcoal, hemp, and many other different wares with which the regions near the sea shore are supplied. And yet the shipping is not enough to carry the aforesaid things; indeed many goods are carried on rafts. And all the large ships of this river are made as I shall tell you. They are covered with only one deck and have only one mast with one sail, but they are of great tonnage, for I tell you that they carry cargo for the most part from 4000 cantar up to 12000 (which some of them carry) in weight by the count of our country of Venese, varying between the said numbers according to the size of the ship. Now there is nothing else which does to tell, and so we will depart then from here, of which we have well told you the facts, and afterwards we will tell you of another city which is called Caigiu. But first I wish to tell you a thing which I had forgotten to write because it does well for our book to tell. Now you may know that all the ships have not all the tackle of ropes of hemp, except indeed that they have the masts and the sails rigged with them. But I tell you that they have the hawsers or, to speak plainly, tow-lines of nothing else but of canes, with which the ships are towed upstream by this river. You may know that these ships which go on this river, those which go against the current of the water are towed because the current of the water is strong, otherwise they could not go. And you understand that these canes are the thick and long canes of which I have told you in this book above, which are quite fifteen paces long. They take these canes and split them from one end to the other into many thin strips and bind them the one end with the other and make them ropes as long as they wish, twists quite three hundred ells, that is paces, long; and it is much stronger than hempen ropes would be, with so great care are they made. And each of these ships has eight or ten or twelve horses which tow it through the river against the stream, and also with it. At many places

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