

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD & THE GUARDS OF MANGI

great merchandise of many kinds and of great value come and go there from Indie and from other foreign parts in very great number, which add to the value of the city. And from this city of Quinsai to the harbour is a great river; which makes this harbour as it enters the sea, by which the ships are able to come up to the city; and all the day the ships of Quinsai go up and down with merchandise at their pleasure and there they load on to other ships which go through different parts of Indie and of Catai.¹ And this river also goes through other parts and cities more distant than to this city. And again I tell you that after he had reduced to his obedience all the province of Mangi, which was one single kingdom, the great Kaan has divided it into nine parts, that is to say that he has made nine very great kings of it, so that each is a great kingdom; and they go to stay there to govern and to administer justice to the people. But always [67c] you understand that all these kings are there for the great Kaan & in this way, that they make each year the report of each kingdom separately to the factors of the great lord, of the revenue and expenses, and of their rule, and of all things belonging to their kingdom. And in this city of Quinsai continually holds his court and dwells one of these nine kings and is lord of more than a hundred and forty cities all very great and rich. Moreover I shall tell you one thing more at which you will be much astonished. For I tell you there is no doubt that in the vast province of Mangi are altogether quite 1200 cities, besides the castles and the towns of which there is great quantity, all fair and rich, all dwelt in by a great multitude of rich and industrious people, and in each is a guard for the great Kaan as large as I shall tell you, according to the extent and need of the case, to guard them against rebellion. You may know quite truly that in each city of these 1200 cities, that which has least of them, there are a thousand men between foot and horse; and such there is which is guarded by ten thousand, and such by twenty thousand, and such by thirty thousand, more & less according to the state of the lands and their power, and all are paid by the lord; so that they are really so great in number that it can hardly be counted and I dare not tell it, fearing that I shall not be believed; but the city of Quinsai certainly has a guard of thirty thousand soldiers. And the greater part of the revenues of the cities which are collected in the treasury of the great Kaan is set aside for the maintenance of these guards of mercenaries. And if it happens that some cities rebel (for the men, overtaken by some madness or intoxication, often murder their rulers), the moment the event is heard the neighbouring cities send so many men of these armies who destroy those cities which have made the mistake; for it would be a long affair to wish to make an army come from another province of Catai, which would require two months time. But do not understand that these men are all Tartars, but they are from Catai, good men at arms. For the Tartars are horsemen and do not stay except

¹ By "there" (iui) must be understood Gampu; "this city", below, is Quinsai.