

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD^s MARC STAYS IN SUMATRA

·166·

like human skin. And when the skin is dry the holes where the hairs are fixed are so shrunken z that it seems as if they grew there naturally. And the feet and hands and the other limbs which are not quite like human limbs they stretch and reduce and fashion them by hand to the human likeness. And then they have them dried and put them in wooden moulds with salt R VB and smear them with saffron and with camphor and with other things that they may FB VA not decay, in such a way that they seem to have been men. And they sell them to LT merchants who carry them through the world for profit, and give men to believe that they are L LT men so small. And it is a great deception, for they are made in such a way as you have heard. For in all Indie, nor in other more savage places, wherever I have been, VB I reckon there were never seen any [76b] men so small as those seem, nor did I ever VB hear tell that there were small men anywhere. Now we will tell you no more of this kingdom of Basman where there is nothing else which does to mention. And so we FB will leave this and will tell you hereafter of the other kingdoms one after the other, [and] FB of the next kingdom which is called Sumatra.

HERE HE TELLS OF THE KINGDOM OF SUMATRA. Now you may know that FB when one departs from Basman he finds the kingdom of Sumatra which FB is the third kingdom also in this same island and it is on the borders of the VB FB VB aforesaid kingdom of Basman; in which kingdom I myself, Marc Pol, stayed there with FB P my companions for about five¹ months because of the unfavourable weather which we VB Z VA had, which forced me to stay there, [and] contrary winds which did not let us go our way Z VB forward. And again I tell you that here also the north pole which is vulgarly called the FB Z P tramontaine star is not seen at all. And again I tell you that the stars of the Greater FB FB P Bear, that is those which the people call the plough-beam,² are not seen neither little nor much. They are all savage idolaters and have a rich and great and powerful VB Z king. They are also claimed for the great Kaan. Now thus we stayed five months as I have told you. And in these five months that Master Marc Pol stayed in this kingdom VB Z V because of the bad weather, we came down from the ships to the land, with about two FB Z thousand men who were in the company, and made on land five towers or castles of beams and Z of logs; and there is very much timber there; and in those castles we stayed thus with our Z Z people for the greater part of five months, and towards the island I caused great ditches to be P Z dug round us, of which the ends finished on either side upon the shore of the sea, for fear of LT beasts and of those bad beast-like men who gladly catch and kill and eat men. But yet Z Z those of the island used to trade with these in victuals and other things; for trust was established between them. There are the best fish in plenty which may be found in the world. They FB Z

·167·

¹ VB: "six"

² P: *currum magnum* L¹: *de magistro de curu* L omits *de curu* VB adds *vento*