

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD^s THE FLOUR FROM TREES

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a kind of trees which are very thick and large and old, which make flour which is very good to eat. And these trees are all full of flour inside. For you may know that these trees have very thin bark and their wood round about is perhaps three fingers thick, and all the pith found inside the wood is flour which is like the dust of the timber worm, [and] the pith is like the pith of sambuk.¹ And those trees are as thick as two men could embrace round. And this flour they take from those trees, and it is put in things like tubs full of water and is stirred into the water with a stick; then the chaff and husks float to the top of the water and are thrown away and the pure flour sinks to the bottom. This done the water is let out and the clean flour is left in a lump at the bottom, and then it is made up into dough with water. And they make of it many cakes of dough which are very good to eat and other eatables of theirs, as we do of wheat flour. For I the said Master Marc Pol who saw all this tell you that we ourselves tried them sufficiently, for we often ate them. And I took some of this flour to Venese with me. And the bread of that flour is like barley bread and of that taste. But the wood of this sort of trees is equal in weight to iron, and thrown into water sinks like iron. This wood might be split from top to bottom straight by line like a reed cane, for when the tree is emptied of flour the wood, as has been said, remains perhaps three inches thick. Those people make of this wood lances, short and not long, because if they were long none could carry them, not to say use them, on account of the too great heaviness of the wood. They sharpen the lances themselves at the end and then burn the point a little at the fire; and these lances so prepared surpass any iron lances in piercing any kind of armour. There is nothing else which does to tell. Now we have told you of this kingdom which is one of the parts of this isle and of these six kingdoms which are on this side of this isle. And we will tell you nothing at present of the other two kingdoms on the other side, because we were not there at all, and therefore we will leave telling you it then since we have indeed told and described the greater part of this Lesser isle of Java, and will tell you of the two little islands, of a very small island which is called Gauenispola² and the other Necuveran by name.

HERE HE TELLS OF THE ISLAND OF NECUVERAN. When one sets out from the Lesser isle of Java of which I have told you and from the kingdom of Lambri and he goes by tramontaine about 150 miles, then one finds two islands which, the one is called Necuveran, of which I wish to speak, and the other Angaman.³ And in this island they have no king nor any lord, and the people of it are like wild beasts. And I tell you that they all go naked both males and women and cover themselves with nothing whatever in the world. They use carnally together

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¹ The words "[and] . . . sambuk" are not in VB² cf. B. p. 175.

² Z: necuueran (p. lxviii)

³ FB: que len appelle gauenispola et necoram