

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD^s THE ISLAND OF SEILAN

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anchor, nor sail thence, because it draws ships into a certain gulf from which they can never go out. And this is so because that sea in its wildness eats away all the land and digs up and overturns trees with the roots and afterwards draws them into the gulf. And into this gulf are always drawn so many trees which never escape thence that it is wonderful. And thus ships which enter into the gulf are so much entangled in those trees that they cannot move from the place and so stay there always. Now we have told you of these strange people because it does well to mention in our book. And then we will leave them and will tell you onwards of other things, and we will speak to you of another island which is called Seilan as you will be able to hear.

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FB

HERE HE TELLS OF THE ISLAND OF SEILAN. When one sets out from the island of Angaman and he goes about 1000 miles by sunsetting and something less towards the south-west-wind,¹ then one finds the island of Seilan which is quite truly the best island that is now to be found in the world for its greatness; and I shall tell you how. And know that it is quite 2000 and 400 miles round in its circuit. Moreover I tell you that anciently it was much greater, for it was quite 3000 and 600² miles round [77d] according as is found on the world-maps of the good sailors of that sea. But the tramontaine wind comes there and blows so hard that at different times it has made a large part of this island to go under the water, and thus much of its territory is lost, and this is the reason why it is not so great as it was formerly. But know that from there where the tramontaine wind comes the island is very low and quite flat; and when one comes from the high sea with any ship one cannot see the land before one is upon it. Now we will tell and describe to you of the doings of this island. They[of]this island have a special speech and a king for themselves who is called Sendernam. They of this[island]are idolaters, and they pay tribute to none. And they go all naked, men and women, except that they cover themselves in their natural parts with a piece of cloth.³ And they have no grain but rice; and they have sesame seed from which they make oil in great quantity; and they live on milk and on flesh and on rice. They also eat all flesh, as those mentioned above, specially even human flesh. And in this island they have wine from those trees of which I have spoken to you above. They have brazil in great abundance of the best which can be found in the world. Now we will leave telling you these things for the present, and will tell you of the most precious things that are in the world. For I tell you that noble and good

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FB V FB

¹ R makes sense of this obscure phrase by inserting "and"; others (e.g. TA,VA,L) omit "less", making the course west and by south. P: "towards south-west" only.

² FB: 3200 FA: 3000 VA: 3500 LT: 4600

³ G: *tragin si eyn wenik ledirs* (LA(in B.): *modicum corii*), which may be derived from VA: *vna peza che i chuoure*