

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD<sup>s</sup> HIS FAITHFUL SERVANTS  
 much wealth and so many dear stones. Now I have told you of this. So I will  
 tell you again of other wonderful things. Now you may know quite truly that  
 this king has quite five hundred women, these are wives<sup>1</sup> or concubines. For I tell LT  
 you that as soon as he sees a beautiful lady or girl then he wishes her for himself  
 [and] takes her to wife. In this kingdom are women very beautiful of themselves; & beside this Z VL  
 they make themselves beautiful in the face and in the whole body. Moreover he did in  
 this matter such an unfitting thing as I shall tell you. You may know that this Z  
 king saw a very beautiful woman with his brother, who was his brother's wife. So he took FA Z  
 her from him by force and kept her many days for himself. And his brother who was FB V  
 a prudent man & wise showed no sign but suffered him in peace and made no quarrel R FB Z  
 with them. And this was the reason. For he was many times nevertheless on the point of Z  
 stirring up war against him because he had taken his wife from him, but their mother used V Z  
 to show them her breasts and say, If you stir up a quarrel between you I shall cut off my  
 breasts which nourished you. And so the trouble was stayed. This king has many children. FB  
 And again I will tell you another strange new thing of this king which well makes Z  
 one marvel. I tell you that this king has knights & gentlemen who are called his faithful R  
 ones & private servants in plenty;<sup>2</sup> and they are on this manner. For they are faithful L  
 ones of the lord in this world and the other, according to that which they say.  
 And I would go on to tell you of this great wonder. These faithful ones wait on  
 the lord at the court and ride with the king and have great authority and position Z  
 about him. And wherever the king goes these barons bear him company and have  
 very great authority in all the realm. And you may know that when the king dies  
 and his body is burnt in a great fire, as is their custom, then there is much people gathered FB G  
 together. And many of the company and also of all these barons who were his faithful  
 ones as I have told you above, throw themselves into fire [79c] together with the king of Z G  
 their free will, and are burnt with the king to bear him company in the other world;  
 for they say that since they have been his companions in this world they ought to be so and to FB G  
 serve their lord in the other also. And again I tell you that there is in this kingdom a FB  
 usage like this. For when the king dies and leaves great treasure there, yet the son<sup>3</sup>  
 who remains would not touch it for anything in the world, but keeps it without any VB  
 diminution. For they say, I have all the kingdom of my father and all the people, I  
 can well find means then to make gain of it as my father did; & they say that it VB

<sup>1</sup> *femes ce sunt muier* LT: feminas idest uxores siue concubinas Z, see p. lxxi.

<sup>2</sup> TA makes these the king's sons, & says that on the king's death all except the eldest burn themselves.

<sup>3</sup> TA,LT,Z,V,VB,R: "sons" TA,LT adding: "except the elder who ought to reign".