

·178·

THE WEALTH & MANY WIVES OF KING ASCIAR ≠ MARCO POLO

FB all the truth, and you have well understood also how all these relics came of necessity, as they tell, by the son of the king.¹ There is nothing else which does to tell, and henceforth we shall leave it and shall tell you forward of other things and shall speak to you
Z first of all of the noble city of Cail.

·179·

V Z **H**ERE HE TELLS OF THE NOBLE CITY OF CAIL. Cail is a noble city and great
V Z and belongs to Asciar the first brother of the five² brother kings aforesaid
of the province of Maabar. And you may know quite truly that all the
ships which come from towards sunsetting, that is from Curmos and from Chisci
V L and from Aden and from all Arabie, loaded with many goods and with horses in
V great quantity make port at this city. For the merchants make port at this city
Z because it is situated in a good place and in a good market for doing trade and
FB also because many merchants come there from many parts round about to buy
FB merchandise and horses and other things. Great trade is done in this city. And this
L king is very rich & abounding in treasure and wears on him many [87a] rich precious
V V L stones, and he goes with much state, and he maintains his kingdom well in peace &
FB with great justice, and specially loves the merchants who come there from other
Z parts, that is the foreign merchants. These indeed he supports and maintains with
great uprightness. And so I tell you that the merchants go there very willingly
for this good king who maintains them so well. And indeed it is true that they
make great profit there and have great good there. And again I make you know
L that this king in the time of Master Marc Pol has quite three hundred women and
VB L more whom he keeps with the greatest state; for he holds himself in great honour above
L FB others who keeps & can keep more women. And as I have told you there are in this province
Z of Maabar five kings. And again I tell you that when indeed any discord comes between
these five³ kings who are real brothers of one father and of one mother and they
wish to fight together, then their mother who is still alive puts herself between
them and does not let them fight. And several times it happened that when her
sons do not wish to abide by her prayer and wish in the contrary way⁴ to fight,
then their mother takes a knife and says to them, If you will not put yourselves

¹ FB: *Et si auez bien entendu comment vindrent par force toutes ces Reliques si comme il contient* (FA: *content*) *par le filz dun* (FA: *du*) *Roy Y. II. p. 320* seems to interpret this as "The relics being, according to the Idolaters, those of that king's son." cf. PAUTHIER, *Marco Polo*, p. 599.

² Z: "eight" V: "six" FB: "four"

³ Z: "eight"

⁴ *lor fig . . . en contre mainere* B. suggests *en toute mainere* (cf. Z, p. lxxxvii) but leaves *lor* unchanged. FB: *faire a force*