

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD^s ELEPHANTS IN BATTLE

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ground until he may put the female elephant there turned over *with the belly upward* Z
in the manner of a woman. *They do this thus* because she has the natural parts far L
toward the belly, and the bull elephant mounts upon her as if he were a man.
And again I tell you that the women of this island are a very ugly thing to see,
for they have great mouths and large *prominent eyes* and large, *thick, and short noses*. P TA
They have the breasts¹ four times as large as other *ordinary women* have, *which adds* VB L
the more to ugliness. *They are black as a mulberry & of great stature*. They are a very ugly VB
thing to see, *for they look like devils*. They live *moreover, the people of this place*, on rice VB Z V
and on flesh and on milk and on dates. They have no wine from vines, but they
make *their wine for common drinking* of rice and of sugar and of *other spices* so that LT P Z
it is a very *tolerable and good drink and intoxicates no less than that of grapes does*. Very LT VB
great trade is done there for many merchants come there with many ships which
bring there many goods, all which they sell² in these islands, and they carry away
again plenty of the wares of the island and especially they carry away great quantity
of elephants tusks which are there in plenty. And again I tell you that they have
ambergris enough, *of which they find a great supply on the beaches of the island*, because R
great whales are caught there in plenty. [92d] And again you may know that *the* P R
lords of this island sometimes go to war among themselves, and these men of this island
are very good fighters and fight very hard in battle, for they are strong and are not
at all afraid of death. *They are not however brave, as I have said, in proportion to their size*. VB
And they have no horses but they fight on camels and on elephants. For I tell you V
that they make castles of wood on the elephants and cover them very well *with skins* FB G
of wild beasts & with boards and then there mount up there *in each of those castles* P LT
from sixteen³ men to twenty with lances and with swords and with stones, and it
is a very mighty battle, that *which is made* upon the elephants. And they have no Z Z
arms but shields of leather and lances and swords and they kill one another well
all together. And again I tell you another thing. For you may know that when they
wish to bring the elephants to the fight they give them to drink plenty of their
wine, that is their drink *of spices which they make for themselves, so that they make them* VA FB

¹ Several texts mistake *mamelles* for *mani* "hands", VA,P,G,VB,TA. L has the curious addition, *quia prohibiendo eas post spatulas perueniunt usque ad nates*, and B. (p. 208) quotes from K, *les mameles los pengem tant fort qu'elles sa poden gitar detras*. There is nothing like this in L¹.

² *con maintes nes que hi aportent plosors mercandies que toutes les nes uendent* The phrase *toutes les nes uendent* is unique in this manuscript and should perhaps be corrected to *toutes les uendent* which (itself not very natural) occurs twice in the preceding chapter. Z: *que uendent* V: *le quale vendeno*

³ TA,LT: 12