

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD'S MERCHANDISE OF ADEN

right into Alexandre. And in such manner and by this road from towards Aden do the Saracens of Alexandre have the pepper and the other spicery and the dear merchandise of Indie; nor by other way which is so good and short can it come there to Alexandre; and it comes safely without great trouble. And to this port come many merchants with their ships, and thus from this port of Aden the ships go through the isles of Indie with many merchants and loaded with much merchandise. And again I tell you that the same merchants also carry into the isles of Indie from this same region¹ many good horses and beautiful Arab war-horses of great value from which the merchants make great gain and profit; for I wish you to know that the merchants sell a good & fine horse in Indie for quite 100 marks of silver and more. Moreover I tell you that the king or sultan of Aden has very great revenue and great treasure from the great duty which he takes from the ships and from the merchants who go and come in his land. And moreover I tell you quite truly [95a] that by this means which I have told you, from the great duty which he has continually from the merchants who come into his land, he is one of the richest kings of the world. For this is the greatest port which is in all those regions for the exchange of goods; and all meet together there with their ships. Moreover I shall tell you of this sultan that he did a thing which was a very great loss to the Christians. For you may know quite truly that he is of such power that in the year of God 1200 in the 91 year² when the sultan of Babilonie went upon the town of Acon, that is Acre,³ to besiege it, when he took it and did so much harm to Christians, this sultan of Aden gave, as was said, quite 30000 horsemen of his people and quite 40000 camels to the sultan of Babilonie to help, so that it was a very great gain to Saracens and loss to Christians. And know that he did this more for the great ill that he wishes to the Christians than he did it for goodwill that he has to the sultan of Babilonie nor for love that he bears the sultan, for he had no love indeed for the sultan of Babilonie. Also we wish you to know that the ships of Aden, Curmos, Chisci, and other parts which sail through the sea of Indie are very often shipwrecked because of their frailty. And if that sea were as troubled and rough and were troubled as often as the sea in our parts is troubled, no ship would finish her voyage but would suffer shipwreck. But what do the merchants and those who sail with those ships? They take with them indeed many sacks of leather, and when they feel that the weather and the sea is disturbed they fill these sacks with pearls and precious stones if they have any,

¹ *de ces part* very possibly for *de cest port* cf. Z, p. cii. TA: *questo porto*

² VA: 1270 VB: 1293 P gives no date (cf. PAUTHIER, II, p. 705), and reduces the contingent to 1000 camels only. R: *nel 1200* The version keeps the quaint form in which G expresses 1291.

³ LT: *ierusalem*