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Jordan Catala

*Mirabilia descripta*

*The Wonders of the East*



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*The Mirabilia descripta of*

**JORDAN CATALA**

(c. 1280 - c. 1330)



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Jordanus (1911) by Charles Raymond Beazley

*The Delphi Classics Catalogue*



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**JORDAN CATALA**



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*The Mirabilia descripta by Jordan Catala*



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## The Translation



*Sévérac-le-Château, a former commune in Occitania, southern France — Jordan Catala's likely birthplace*

## Mirabilia descripta



*Translated by Henry Yule, 1863*

Jordan Catala of Sévérac was an Occitanian Dominican missionary and explorer of Asia, who flourished in the early fourteenth century. His surname, Catala, is the Occitan for “Catalan” (from Latin *Catalanus*) and likely indicates his family’s origins from Catalonia. His sole extant work is *Mirabilia descripta*, which describes his varied travels of the East, especially recounting the ‘marvels’ he encountered in India.

Jordan was probably born in c. 1280, since the normal age for a long-distance emissary was about 45. There is no record of him studying in the Dominican province of Toulouse prior to the separation of the province of Provence in 1302, so he likely did not join the Dominicans until later. It has been suggested by some historians that he studied at the University of Toulouse and was possibly a disciple of the Latin bishop Jerome of Catalonia. He completed his education in the Dominican convents of Persia, where he learned the Persian language.

In 1302 Jordan is believed by some to have accompanied Thomas of Tolentino (c. 1255-1321), an Italian Franciscan missionary, via Negropont, to the East, though we only have definite proof that he travelled to western India in 1321, in the company of Thomas and his companions. Ill-luck detained them at Thane in Salsette Island, near Bombay, where Jordan’s companions were killed for blaspheming Muhammad in April 1321.

Having escaped, Jordan worked for a time at Bharuch, in Gujarat, near the Narmada estuary, and at Suvali near Surat. During this period, he wrote two letters to his fellow-Dominicans in north Persia, the first from Gogo in Gujarat (12 October 1321), the second from Thane (24 January 1323) describing the progress of his new mission. From these letters we learn that Roman attention had already been directed, not only to the Bombay region, but also to the extreme south of the Indian peninsula, especially to Columbum in later Travancore.

From Catholic traders Jordan learnt that Ethiopia (i.e. Abyssinia and Nubia) was accessible to Western Europeans. His letters urged the Pope to establish a Christian fleet upon the Indian seas. Between 1324 and 1328, Jordan likely visited Kollam and selected it as the ideal centre for his future work. It would also appear that he revisited Europe in c. 1328, passing through Persia, and perhaps touching at the great Crimean port of Sudak. He was appointed Bishop of the Malabar in 1328 and nominated by Pope John XXII in his bull *Venerabili Fratri Jordano* to the see of Columbum (Quilon) on 21 August 1329. This was the first Roman Catholic diocese in the whole of the Indies, with jurisdiction over modern India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burma and Sri Lanka. It was created on 9 August by the decree *Romanus Pontifex*. Along with the new bishop of Samarkand, Thomas of Mancasola, Jordan was commissioned to take the pallium (a sacred ecclesiastical vestment in the Roman Catholic Church) to John de Cora, archbishop of Sultaniyah in Persia, within whose province Kollam was reckoned. Jordan was also commended to the Christians of south India, both east and west of Cape Comorin, by Pope John.

Jordan is believed to have written his *Mirabilia descripta* prior to setting out for Malabar as bishop, within the period of 1329-1338. The text provides the most precise and reliable account of Indian regions, products, climate, manners, customs, fauna and

flora reported by any European in the Middle Ages. It is in fact judged to be superior even to Marco Polo's account of his travels written a few decades before.

In *Mirabilia descripta*, Jordan divides the Indies into three parts: India Major comprising the shorelands from Malabar to Cochin China; India Minor stretching from Sind (or perhaps Baluchistan) to Malabar; and India Tertia (evidently dominated by African conceptions in his mind) including a vast undefined coast-region west of Baluchistan, reaching into the neighborhood of, but not including, Ethiopia and the legendary Christian patriarch Prester John's domain. The *Mirabilia descripta* contains the earliest clear African identification of Prester John, as well as the first notice of the Black Sea under that name. The text refers to Jordan's residence in India Major and especially at Kollam, as well as to his travels in Armenia, north-west Persia, the Lake Van region and Chaldaeae. Jordan provides detailed descriptions of Parsee doctrines and burial customs, of Hindu ox-worship, idol-ritual, suttee (the Hindu practice in which a widow burns alive on her deceased husband's funeral pyre) and of Indian fruits, birds, animals and insects.





*Portrait fresco of John XXII, fourteenth century, Collection of the Palais du Roure, Avignon — Jordan was appointed as bishop in 1328 by Pope John XXII.*

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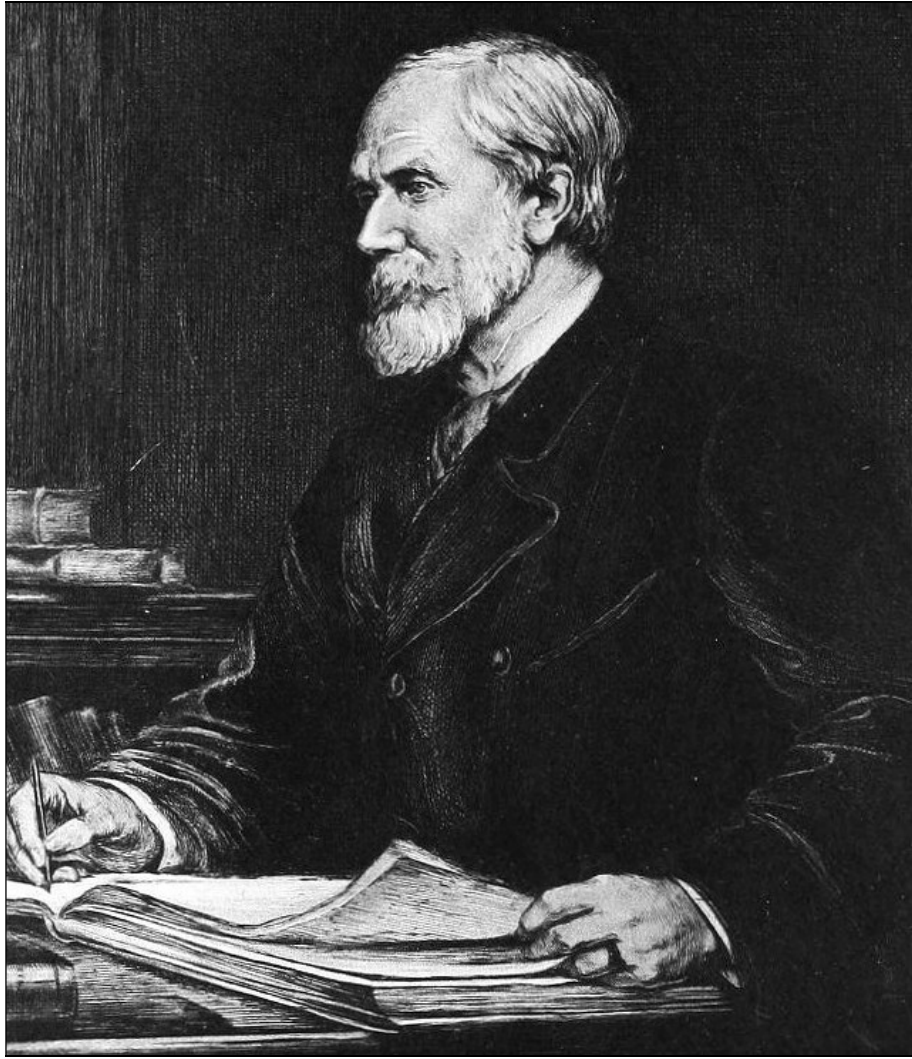
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*The translator, Sir Henry Yule (1820-1889) was a Scottish Orientalist and geographer. He published many travel books, including translations of the works of Marco Polo.*

MIRABILIA DESCRIBITA

THE

WONDERS OF THE

BY

FRIAR JORDAN

OF THE ORDER OF PREACHERS AND BISHOP  
IN INDIA THE GREATER,

(CIRCA 1330).

TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN

AS PUBLISHED AT PARIS IN 1839, IN THE REPERTOIRE  
ET DE MÉMOIRES, OF THE SOCIETY OF

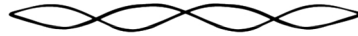
WITH THE ADDITION OF A COMMENTARY

BY

COLONEL HENRY WILKINSON

*The translation's first edition title page*

## DEDICATION.



TO

HIS EXCELLENCY

SIR H. B. E. FRERE, K.C.B.,

GOVERNOR OF BOMBAY.

Dear Sir Bartle Frere,

There is no time to ask your assent to this dedication. But I have trust enough in your love for old travellers, and in your good-will to the editor, to venture it without permission. I have some hope too that I introduce to you a new acquaintance in the Bishop of Columbum, whose book seems little known.

Like many other old travellers of more fame, whilst endeavouring to speak only truth of what he has seen, Jordanus retails fables enough from hearsay. What he did see in his travels was so marvellous to him, that he was quite ready to accept what was told him of regions more remote from Christendom, when it seemed but in reasonable proportion more marvellous. If there were cats with wings in Malabar, as he had seen, why should there not be people with dogs' heads in the Islands of the Ocean? If black men cut off their own heads before their gods at Columbum, why should not "white and fat men" be purchased as delectable food in Java? If there were rats nearly as big as foxes in India Major, why should there not be rocs that could fly away with elephants in India Tertia?

Apart from this credulity, it might be well if the heads of some of our modern sojourners in India could be endowed with a little more of that Organ of Wonder which gave these old story-tellers such a thorough enjoyment of the real marvels of the East, and could by its help see something worthier there than a howling wilderness, affording no consolation but that silver fruit, which, like the coco-nut described by our author, is borne twelve times in the year.

Were Jordanus to come to life again, he would see many changes no doubt, but he would still find many landmarks standing after the five and a half centuries. To say nothing of the "Coquodriles" and the horrible heat, he would find the Parsis still disposing of their dead in their strange old fashion, the Nairs still handing down their succession in oblique descent, the Dóms still feeding on offal and doing the basest drudgeries, the poor Poliars still dwelling in dens and howling by the wayside, the ox still "honoured like a father," and the idols still "dragged through the land like the Virgin at Rogationtides;" he might even hear now and then of "living women taking their places on the fire and dying with their dead." Much therefore of evil he would find very persistent. How on the other side? He would indeed also find the Hindus still "clean in feeding," but would he still pronounce them to be "true in speech and eminent in justice?" Is it not to be feared that he would find not only the wealth of that Columbum, which in the days of his bishopric was hidden by the masts of all the East from Yemen to Cathay, as far gone by as the splendours of the kings of Telinga and Narsinga, but the natural life and genius of the people degenerate and their inborn arts in decay? He would indeed see vigorous efforts in action to introduce a new life into the country; instead of Diabolus roaring in the woods by night he might hear the

scream of the locomotive; and he would meet among those Western conquerors who, in strange fulfilment of the prophecies of his own day, are now ruling India, some confident believers in the renovation of the land through the introduction of the material progress of Europe.

Will that belief be justified? I am not likely to undervalue the work in which my best years have been spent; but surely that alone will not serve. The question that carried Jordanus to the East five hundred and forty years ago is still the great question for India, however Providence may solve it. Till India becomes Christian there is no hope of real life and renovation. Would Jordanus Redivivus discern much progress in this direction since the days of his episcopate? How like his talk about the matter is to that of our own missionaries in the nineteenth century! Hindu Christians are still a feeble and scattered folk, and the advance towards Christian light seems to all who care not, and to many who do care, almost nothing. But it is encouraging to know that you think very differently, and few indeed have had at once your capacity and your opportunity for a just judgment.

I am ever, dear Sir Bartle,

Your faithful friend and servant,  
H. Yule.

Genoa, October 14th, 1863.

## PREFACE.



THE LITTLE WORK here presented was printed in the original Latin at Paris in 1839, under the editorship of M. Coquebert-Montbret, in the *Recueil de Voyages et de Mémoires, publié par la Société de Géographie*, vol. iv.

I cannot find that it has ever been published or translated in England, or even noticed in any English book, except in the *Ceylon* of Sir James Emerson Tennent, where there is an allusion to it.

The book itself does not add anything to our knowledge; but the observations of a traveller who resided in India so far back as the beginning of the fourteenth century must be very dull indeed if sufficient interest cannot be derived from their date to make them acceptable. Nor do I think our author is dull, whilst I regret that he is so brief, and has omitted so much that he might really have laid up as an addition to our knowledge. The very fact that there were Roman Catholic missionaries and a bishop in India at that period, just between the days of Marco Polo and those of Ibn Batuta, may indeed be excavated from old ecclesiastical chronicles; but it is certainly unfamiliar to the knowledge of those who do not dig in such mines.

The translation which follows has been made, and the brief particulars which I shall give respecting the author have been derived, from the *Recueil* above indicated.<sup>1</sup>

The manuscript from which the French editor transcribed belonged to the Baron Walckenaer. It is on parchment, of the fourteenth century, and contains other matter, the work of Jordanus occupying twenty-nine quarto pages.

The author is termed a native of Séverac. That he was a Frenchman will appear from several passages in his book. But there are at least five places of the name of Séverac in France. Three of these are in the district of Rouergue, in the department of the Aveyron (near the eastern boundary of the old province of Guyenne, and some ninety miles N.E. of Toulouse), and it was probably from one of these that he came. There was a noble family of this province called De Séverac, of which was Amaury de Séverac, Marshal of France in the time of Charles VII. But, as will afterwards appear, our traveller was called *Catalani*.<sup>2</sup>

The dates of his birth, his death, or his first going to the East, are undetermined. But it is ascertained that he was in the East in 1321-1323, that he returned to Europe, and started again for India, in or soon after 1330. There appears to be nothing to determine whether this book of *Mirabilia* was written on his first, or on a subsequent, return to Europe.

The authorities for the dates just given are the following: —

Two letters from Jordanus are found in a MS. in the national library at Paris (in 1839, — Bibliothèque du Roi — MS. No. 5,006, p. 182), entitled *Liber de ætatibus*, etc. The first of these is dated from Caga,<sup>3</sup> 12th October, 1321. It is addressed to members of his own order (the Dominican) and of that of St. Francis, residing at Tauris, Tongan, and Marogo,<sup>4</sup> and points out three stations adapted for the establishment of missions, viz., Supera, Paroco, and Columbum. On the receipt of these letters, Nicolaus Romanus, who was Vice-Custos of the Dominicans in Persia, is stated to have started for India.<sup>5</sup>

In his second letter, dated in January, 1324, Jordanus relates how he had started from Tabriz to go to Cathay, but embarked first for Columbum with four Franciscan missionaries, and how they were driven by a storm to Tana,<sup>6</sup> in India, where they were received by the Nestorians. There he left his companions, and started for Baroch,

where he hoped to preach with success, as he was better acquainted with the Persian tongue than the others were. Being detained however at Supera, he there heard that his four brethren at Tana had been arrested, and returned to aid them, but found them already put to death. He was enabled to remove the bodies of these martyrs by the help of a young Genoese whom he found at Tana, and, having transported them to Supera, he buried them in a church there as honourably as he could.<sup>7</sup>

The only remaining date in the biography of Jordanus is derived from a bull of Pope John XXII., the date of which is equivalent to 5th April 1330, addressed to the Christians of Columbum, and intended to be delivered to them by Jordanus, who was nominated bishop of that place. The bull commences as follows: —<sup>8</sup>

“Nobili viro domino Nascariorum et universis sub eo Christianis Nascarinis de Columbo, Venerabilem fratrem nostrum Jordanum Catalani, episcopum Columbensem, Prædicatorum Ordinis professorem, quem nuper ad episcopalis dignitatis apicem auctoritate apostolicâ duximus promovendum—” etc.

The Pope goes on to recommend the missionaries to their good-will, and ends by inviting the Nascarini (*Nazraní*, Christians, in India) to abjure their schism, and enter the unity of the Catholic Church.

The Pope had shortly before nominated John de Core to be Archbishop of Sultania in Persia. This metropolitan had, at least, three bishops under him, viz., of Tabriz, of Semiscat, and of Columbum.<sup>9</sup> The two latter were entrusted by the Pope with the *Pallium* for the archbishop. Sultania, between Tabriz and Tehran, was the seat of the Persian kings previous to the Tartar conquest in the thirteenth century, and was still a great centre of commerce between the Indies and Europe. The number of Christians was so great, that they had in this city, it is said, four hundred churches. (?)<sup>10</sup>

We may suppose that Jordanus, after fulfilling his commission at Sultania, proceeded to his see in Malabar by the Persian Gulf, the route which he had followed on his first visit to India; but whether he ever reached it, or ever returned from it, seems to be undetermined.<sup>11</sup> M. Coquebert-Montbret assumes that he did both; but as far as I can gather, this is based on the other assumption, that his *Mirabilia* was written *after* returning a second time. My impression is that it was written *before* he went out as bishop, for it contains no allusion to his having held that dignity. Nor does it appear to be known whether he had any successor in his episcopate.

Another work appears to have been traced with some plausibility to our author. It is a chronicle composed in the fourteenth century, and quoted by Muratori from a MS. which in 1740 existed in the Vatican library, with the No. 1960. It is adorned with fine miniatures, and is entitled

“Satyrica gestarum rerum, regum et regnorum, atque summorum pontificum, historia, à creatione mundi usque ad Henricum VII. Romanum augustum.”

The chronicle ends with the year 1320, and purports to be written by one *Jordanus*. The passage which is considered to identify him with our author is one relating to the martyrdom of four Minor Friars at Tana, and is so interesting in itself as to be worth quoting at length. It is very perplexing, that though several of the circumstances appear to identify his narrative with that which forms the subject of our author’s letter quoted in a previous page, the dates are irreconcilable. This difficulty the French editor does not notice, nor can I solve it.<sup>12</sup>

“Mdcccix. Pope John read in the consistory, with great approval, a letter which he had received, to the effect following: To wit, that certain brethren of the orders of Minors and Preachers, who had been sent on a mission to Ormus to preach the faith to the infidels, when they found that they could do no good there, thought it well to go over to Columbum in India. And when they arrived at the island called Dyo,<sup>13</sup> the

brethren of the order of Minors separated from the rest of the party, both Preachers and secular Christians, and set out by land to a place called Thana, that they might there take ship for Columbum. Now there was at that place a certain Saracen of Alexandria, Ysufus<sup>14</sup> by name, and he summoned them to the presence of Melich, the governor of the land, to make inquest how and why they were come. Being thus summoned, he demands: what manner of men are ye called? They made answer, that they were Franks, devoted to holy poverty, and anxious to visit St. Thomas. Then, being questioned concerning their faith, they replied that they were true Christians, and uttered many things with holy fervour regarding the faith of Christ. But when Melich let them go, the aforesaid Yusuf a second and a third time persuaded him to arrest and detain them. At length Melich and the Cadi and the people of the place were assembled, Pagans and idolaters as well as Saracens, and questioned the brethren: How can Christ, whom ye call the Virgin's son, be the son of God, seeing that God hath not a mate? Then set they forth many instances of divine generation, as from the sun's rays, from trees, from germs in the soil; so that the infidels could not resist the Spirit who spake in them. But the Saracens kindled a great fire, and said: Ye say that your law is better than the law of Mahomet; an it be so, go ye into the fire, and by miracle prove your words. The brethren replied that, for the honour of Christ, that they would freely do; and brother Thomas coming forward would first go in, but the Saracens suffered him not, for that he seemed older than the others; then came forward the youngest of the brethren, James of Padua, a young wrestler for Christ, and incontinently went into the fire, and abode in it until it was well nigh spent, rejoicing and uttering praise, and without any burning of his hair even, or of the cloth of his gown. Now they who stood by shouted with a great cry, Verily these be good and holy men!

“But the Cadi, willing to deny so glorious a miracle, said: It is not as ye think, but his raiment came from the land of Aben ...<sup>15</sup> a great friend of God, who when cast into the flames in Chaldea, took no hurt; therefore, hath this man abode scatheless in the fire.

“Then stripped they the innocent youth, and all naked as he was born was he cast by four men into the fire. But he bore the flames without hurt, and went forth from the fire unscathed and rejoicing. Then Melich set them free to go whither they would. But the Cadi, and the aforesaid Yusuf, full of malice, knowing that they had been entertained in the house of a certain Christian, said to Melich: What dost thou? why slayest thou not these Christ-worshippers? He replied: That I find no cause of death in them. But they say: If ye let them go, all will believe in Christ, and the law of Mahomet will be utterly destroyed. Melich again says: What will ye that I should do, seeing that I find no cause of death? But they said: His blood be upon us. For it is said that if one cannot go pilgrim to Mecca, let him slay a Christian and he shall obtain a full remission of sins, as if he had visited Mecca. Wherefore, the night following, the three men aforesaid, Melich, the Cadi, and Yusuf, sent officers who despatched the three brethren, Thomas, James, and Demetrius, to the joys of heaven, bearing the palm of martyrdom. And after awhile, having made brother Peter, who was in another place, present himself before them, when he firmly held to the faith of Christ, for two days they vexed him with sore afflictions, and on the third day, cutting off his head, accomplished his martyrdom. But their comrades, the Preachers and the rest, when they heard this, wrote to the West, lamenting wofully that they had been parted from the company of the holy martyrs, and saying that they were devoutly engaged in recovering the relics of the martyrs.”

I had desired to add to this preface some notices of the Christians of Malabar, embracing the latest information; but my work is cut short by circumstances, and I must content myself with saying something, hurriedly put together, as to the identity of *Columbum*, the seat of the bishop's see.

It is clear that *Columbum* is not Colombo in Ceylon, though the French editor is wrong in supposing that the latter city did not exist in the time of Jordanus, for it is mentioned by the modern name in Ibn Batuta's travels, only a few years later. Jordanus evidently does not speak of Ceylon as one who had been there, and whilst treating of greater India, he says distinctly, "*In istâ Indiâ, me existente in Columbo, fuerunt inventi,*" etc.

The identity of *Columbum* with *Kulam* or *Quilon*, on the coast of Malabar (now in Travancore), might therefore have been assumed, but for the doubts which have been raised by some of the editors of Marco Polo as to the position of the *Kulam* or *Coilon* of Marco and other medieval travellers.

Mr. Hugh Murray, adopting the view of Count Baldello Boni in his edition of Marco Polo, considers that the place so-called by those travellers was on the east coast of the Peninsula. I have not time to seek for Baldello's edition, and do not know his arguments; but I conceive that there is enough evidence to show that he is wrong.

The argument on which Murray rests is chiefly the position in which Polo introduces his description of *Coilon*, after *Maabar*, and before *Comari*; *Maabar* being with him an extensive region of Coromandel, and *Comari* doubtless the country about Cape Comorin. But, omitting detailed discussion of the value of this argument, which would involve a consideration of all the other difficulties in reducing to geographical order Polo's notices of the kingdoms on the coast of India, his description of *Coilon* as a great port for pepper and brazil-wood, is sufficient to identify it as on the coast of Malabar. The existence of places called *Coulam* on the east coast in the maps of D'Anville, Rennel, and Milburn, is of little moment, for an inspection of the "Atlas of India" will show scores of places so-called on both sides of Cape Comorin, the word signifying, in the Tamul tongue, 'an irrigation tank, formed by damming up natural hollows.' Indeed, though I have found no trace of any well-known port on the east coast so-called, there were at least four ports of the name on the west coast frequented by foreign vessels, viz., *Cote Colam*, north of Cananore; *Colam*, called *Pandarani*, north of Calicut; *Cai-Colam*, or *Kaincolam*,<sup>16</sup> between Cochin and the chief place of the name; *Coulam*, or *Quilon*, the *Columbum* of our author.

We know that *Kulam*, on the coast of Malabar, was founded in the ninth century, and that its foundation formed an era from which dates were reckoned in Malabar.<sup>17</sup> In that same century we find<sup>18</sup> that the sailing directions for ships making the China voyage from the Persian Gulf, were to go straight from *Maskât* to *Kulam Malé*, a place evidently, both from name and fact, on the coast of Malabar. Here there was a custom-house, where ships from China paid their dues.

The narrative of Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela is very hazy. He calls *Chulan* only seven days from *El-Cathif* (which is a port on the west coast of the Persian Gulf), "and on the confines of the country of the Sun-worshippers." However, his description of the pepper-gardens adjoining the city, the black Jews, etc., identify it with one of the *Kulams* on the Malabar coast, and doubtless with *Quilon*, which was the chief of them.

Then comes Polo's notice of *Coilon* already alluded to, followed by our author's mention of it, and residence there.

It is probable that the *Polumbrum* or *Polembum* of his contemporaries *Odoricus* and *Mandevill*, are corrupt readings of the name of *Kulam* or *Columbum*. The former

describes this place as at the head of the pepper forest towards the south, and as abounding in all sorts of merchandize; Mandevill adding, “thither go merchants often from Venice to buy pepper and ginger.”

Ibn Batuta, only half a century after Polo, is quite clear in his description of *Kaulam*, as the seat of an infidel king, the last city on the Malabar coast, and frequented by many Mahomedan merchants. He also says that Kaulam, Calicut, and Hili were the only ports entered by the ships of China.

So also Conti, early in the fifteenth century, on his return from the Eastern Archipelago, departing from Champa (Cambodia), doubtless in one of those same ships of China, after a month’s voyage arrives at *Coloen*, a noble city, three days from Cochin, and “situated in the province called Melibaria.”

Coming down to later times, Barbosa, in the first years of the sixteenth century, speaks of Coulon still as the great pepper port, the seat of one of the three (chief) kings of Malabar, and where lived many Moors, Gentiles, and Christians, who were great merchants, and had many ships trading to Coromandel, Ceylon, Bengal, Pegu, Malacca, Sumatra, etc.

Here, however, at last, we find something to justify Marco Polo in regard to the position in which he introduces the kingdom of Coilon. For, after speaking of Coulam on the Malabar coast, Barbosa goes forward to Cape Comorin, where he says the country of Malabar indeed terminates, but the “aforesaid kingdom of Coulam” still goes on and comes to an end at the city of Cail, where the King of Coulam made his continual residence. So also the “Summary of kingdoms,” etc., in Ramusio, describes the kingdom of Colam as extending on both sides of Cape Comorin.

It is intelligible, therefore, that Marco, coming upon territory belonging to the *kingdom* of Coilon, before reaching Cape Comorin, should proceed to speak of the city of that name, though it lay upon the western coast. But there is in this no ground for asserting, as Mr. Murray does, that “the *place* of that name described by Marco and other early Europeans lay to the east of that great promontory.” We have seen that a regular catena of authorities, from the ninth to the sixteenth century, concurs in representing Coulam, Kulam, Coloen, Coilon (*Quilon*), on the coast of Malabar, as the great entrepôt of trade with east and west, and there can be no reasonable doubt that this is the Columbum which was the seat of our author’s mission.

The occasional quotations given in the notes will indicate the quality of the author’s Latin. The French editor is unwilling to believe that episcopal Latinity could be so bad, and suggests that his vernacular was Latinized by some humbler scribe, and probably extracted from a larger work. In support of this, he adduces the abrupt commencement, and the “but” with which he plunges in— “Inter Siciliam *autem* et Calabriam.” But he gives a fac-simile of the beginning of the MS., and the words seem to me (all inexpert I confess) almost certainly to be “Inter Siciliam *atque* Calabriam,” so that this argument is null.

One must notice the frequent extraordinary coincidences of statement, and almost of expression, between this and other travellers of the same age, especially M. Polo. At first one would think that Jordanus had Polo’s book. But he certainly had not Ibn Batuta’s, and the coincidences with him are sometimes almost as striking. Had those ancient worthies, then, a Murray from whom they pilfered experiences, as modern travellers do? I think they had; but *their* Murray lay in the traditional yarns of the Arab sailors with whom they voyaged, some of which seem to have been handed down steadily from the time of Ptolemy — peradventure of Herodotus<sup>19</sup> — almost to our own day.

And so I commend the simple and zealous Jordanus to kindly entertainment.

London, June 27th, 1863.

Nota Bene. The English edition of Marco Polo, so often referred to in my notes, is Mr. Hugh Murray's fourth edition; Edinburgh, Oliver and Boyd, (*no date*; more shame to Oliver and Boyd).

In my absence on the continent my friend Mr. Badger has undertaken the correction of the press. The *revise* sheets have been sent to me, but in the absence of my manuscript and references I fear some errors may still inevitably escape correction.

The numbers to chapters and paragraphs have been attached by me,  
H. Y.

#### ENDNOTES.

<sup>1</sup> I have to regret that unavoidable circumstances have interrupted my pleasant task, and have compelled me to leave this preface, and some part of the commentary, in a cruder state than I should have allowed, had time permitted of the search for further particulars or illustrations of the author's life, mission, and descriptions.

<sup>2</sup> The French editor regards this as his surname. Is it not more probably only the genitive of his father's name?

<sup>3</sup> "Which I suspect to be *Conengue* or *Khounouk*, a port of Persia, on the Persian Gulf," (*French Editor*). Speaking without having seen the letter, I should rather suspect it to be the island and roadstead of *Karrack*, called by the Arabs *Khârej*, but also locally, as appears by the Government charts, *Khârg*. (My friend Mr. Badger thinks it may be *El-Kât*, an ancient port still much frequented, fifty miles south-west of the mouth of the Euphrates.) I find from M. D'Avezac in *Rec. de Voyages*, (iv. 421), that this letter is published in *Quétif & Echard*, Scriptoris Ordinis Dom., i. p. 549, and that the second letter is given by *Wadding, Annales Minorum*, vi. 359.

<sup>4</sup> *Tauris*, Tabriz; *Tongan*, which the French editor calls "Djagorgan" (?), is probably Daumghan in Persia, south of Astrabad, mentioned by Marco Polo (ii. 17), with an allusion to the Christians there; and *Marogo* is Maragha in the plain east of Lake Urumia, formerly the capital of the Tartar Hulaku.

<sup>5</sup> Which shows that the places indicated by Jordanus were in India. Paroco is of course Baroch, and Columbum, Coulam or Quilon. Respecting the identity of this last we shall, however, have to speak more fully. Supera, the French editor states, after D'Anville, to be "the port now called Sefer, the *Sefara el Hind* of the Arabs." It is doubtless the Supara of Ptolemy, which he places on the north of the first great river south of the Namadus or Nerbudda. Masudi also says that Sefara was four days' journey from Cambay. These indications fix Supera on the Tapti, over against Surat, and probably as the ancient representative of that port. (See Reinaud's *Mém. sur la Géog. de l'Inde*, and Vincent's *Periplus of the Erythræan Sea*, p. 385.)

<sup>6</sup> A town on the island of Salsette, about twelve miles from Bombay, and formerly a port of considerable importance.

<sup>7</sup> According to the Acta Sanctorum of the Bollandists, this martyrdom took place, 1st April 1322. There is a letter from Francis of Pisa (I presume in the MS. above quoted), a comrade and friend of Jordanus, which gives similar details. They are also found in the *Bibliotheca Hispanica Vetus* of Nicol. Antonio, p. 268. (*French Editor's Comment.*) See also below, pp. ix-xii.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted by the French editor from *Odericus Raynaldus, Annal. Eccles.*, No. 55.

<sup>9</sup> The French editor supposes *Semiscat* to be, perhaps, a misreading for Samirkat = *Samarkand*. Mr. Badger suggests judiciously *Someisât*, the ancient Samosata. There was another see under Sultania, viz., Verna, supposed by D'Avezac to be Orna or Ornas, which he identifies with Tana, the seat of a Venetian factory at the mouth of the Don, on the site of ancient Tanais. (*Rec. de Voy.*, iv. 510.)

<sup>10</sup> The editor does not give his authority for this. Sultania was destroyed by Tamerlane, and never recovered its former importance. It was still a city of some size in the time of Chardin, but is now apparently quite deserted. It is not mentioned by M. Polo.

<sup>11</sup> I conclude, from a passage near the end of the work (ch. xiv.), that the actual residence of Jordanus at Columbum, previous to his writing, lasted only a year, or thereabouts.

<sup>12</sup> I have now no doubt that the date in the next line is wrong. For, according to M. D’Avezac (in the same volume of the *Rec. de Voyages*, which contains Jordanus, p. 417), the celebrated traveller Odoricus of Friuli, who was at Tana in 1322, sent home a letter describing this martyrdom as having occurred in the preceding year. It is in the Bib. Royale (now Impériale) at Paris. The narrative, in still greater detail than here, is indeed to be found in the Itinerary of Odoricus, as published in Hakluyt, at least in the Latin; the English translation does not give the details. From this error in date, as well as the better style of Latin, I should doubt if this chronicle was written by our Jordanus.

<sup>13</sup> Diu, on the coast of Guzerat, where the old Portuguese warriors afterwards made such a gallant defence against the “Moors” in 1547.

<sup>14</sup> Yusuf.

<sup>15</sup> *Sic*. I suppose it should be Abraham, according to the well-known Mussulman tradition; perhaps called, as Mr. Badger kindly suggests, *Aben* (or Ibn) *Azer*, the son of Azer, the Mussulman name for Terah.

<sup>16</sup> In Keith Johnstone’s new and beautiful atlas Quilon is identified with Kayan or Kain-Kulam. This, I have no doubt, is quite a mistake. The places, though near, are quite distinct, and in the beginning of the sixteenth century were under distinct sovereigns. I may here notice what I venture, with respect, to think is an error in Mr. Major’s edition of Conti (*India in the Fifteenth Century*). Conti, on his first arrival in Malabar, lands at “Pudefitania,” and, after describing his visit to Bengal, and his ascent of the Ganges, returns to Pudefitania. Mr. Major interprets this in the last place *Burdwan*. But, apart from other arguments, it is evidently in both passages the same place, *i.e.*, *Pudipatanam*, one of the old forgotten ports on the coast of Malabar, but mentioned by Barbosa and the Geographer in Ramusio. Other names mentioned by Conti are in need of examination. *Maarazia*, the great city on the Ganges which he visits, is certainly not *Mutra*, as the editor has it, but Benares. The Braminical name, *Baranási*, is near enough to Conti’s.

<sup>17</sup> Wilson’s preface to Mackenzie’s Collections, p. xcvi.

<sup>18</sup> See the relations of Mahomedan voyagers published by Renaudot, and again by Reinaud.

<sup>19</sup> See end of note to ch. v. para. 16.

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