

bodies after death, and when the husband dies before the wife, the wife burns herself alive with her husband, saying that she is going to be happy with him in the other world, and it is done in this way, that, the husband dying, the wife gives a great entertainment and dresses herself in the richest garments she has, to which entertainment come all her relatives and those of her husband, and after having eaten, she goes with all the people to a place where a very great fire has been built, singing and dancing until she reaches the said fire, and then they throw in the dead body of the husband, and at once she bids farewell to her relatives and friends and leaps into the fire, and she who most nobly throws herself into the fire brings most honor upon her family. but even now this custom is not observed as it used to be, since the Portuguese have traded with them and given them to understand that Our Lord God is not served by such a practice.

Nº 15. The grand Khan of the Tartars is a very great lord and very mighty, he is called King of Kings and Lord of Lords: he is wont to give to his liegemen garments thirteen times a year, at thirteen very great feasts which he holds each year; and these garments are of greater or less value according to the quality of the person to whom they are given, and to each one is given a¹ belt and leggings, a hat adorned with gold and pearls and precious stones according to the greatness of the personage, and these garments which the said grand Khan gives each year are 156,000; and this he does to give greatness and magnificence to his feasts, and when he dies they bear him to be buried to a mountain which is called Alcay, where are buried the grand Khans, Emperors of the Tartars, and those who bear him to burial slay all those they find, saying to them go and serve our master in the other world; and in the same way they slay all his horses, camels, and baggage-mules which they have, thinking that they will go to serve their lord. When *Mongui* Khan, Emperor of the Tartars, died, there were slain three hundred thousand men, whom those who bore him to burial met on the way as Marco Polo says in his book, chapter 42.² Poggio the Florentine, secretary of Pope Eugenius IV, towards the end of his second book, which he wrote on the variation and changes of Fortune, does much to confirm what the said Marco Polo wrote in his book.

Nº 16. There are various opinions as to what is Trapovana,³ since the Spaniards and Portuguese have navigated the Indian Ocean. How Ptolemy places it in degrees of latitude and longitude I think is well known to all. Some modern explorers hold that the island of Ceylon is Trapovana; others hold that it is the island of Sumatra.⁴ Pliny writes of Trapovana in his sixth book, chapter 22, and says there was a time when the opinion was held that Trapovana was another world, and that it was called Antichthon, and that Alexander was the first to inform us that it was an island, and that Onesecritus, admiral of his fleet, [says] that in the said island of Trapovana there are larger and more warlike elephants than in India, and that Magasaene gives as its length seven thousand stadia, and as its width five thousand; that there is no walled city in it, but seven hundred villages, and that in Claudius' reign⁵ ambassadors came from the said island to Rome. In this way: the freedman Damius Plocamius, who had bought of the republic⁶ the taxes of the Red Sea and sailing around Arabia was carried by the north wind in such a way that on the fifteenth day he entered a port of the said island called Hipnus,⁷ and was very generously received and treated by the king, and that after having remained in the said island six months he learned the language, and that one day talking with the king he told him that the Romans and their Emperor were incredibly just, and that the king, seeing that the coins which the said freedman had were of equal weight although the stamp showed that they were of different emperors, moved by this, sent ambassadors to Rome, the chief of whom was Rachia, to make friendship with Claudius, from which ambassadors he heard that in the said island there were five hundred cities, and that the said ambassadors were astonished to see in these heavens of ours the north star and the Pleiades as something new and to them unknown, and that they said that in the said island they only saw the moon above the earth from the eighth day to the fifteenth, and they were especially astonished that shadows turned⁸ towards our sky and not⁹ towards theirs, and that the sun rose on the right and set on the left, from which aforesaid reasons it seems that in the said island where the said freedman made harbor the north star is not seen, which is seen in the island Trapovana, whence it might be said, considering whence the said freedman Damius Proclanius started and the course he might have made with a raging north wind,¹⁰ that the island where he made harbor was the island of San Lorenzo and not Trapubana. And that as king of the said island an old and mild man

¹ belts, leggings, shoes, helmets or shade hats [cf. Marco Polo.]

² in the twenty-fourth chapter of his fourth book. ³ and where it is situated.

⁴ [What follows is not taken from the text of Pliny, but is translated directly from the Spanish.]

⁵ about the beginning of his government.

⁶ the Romans.

⁷ Hippurus [cf. Pliny].

⁸ to the right towards our pole.

⁹ when in their country they saw them always go the left.

¹⁰ and the narration of the envoys to Tiberius.