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978-1-108-01076-4 - The Travels of Ludovico di Varthema in Egypt, Syria, Arabia Deserta and Arabia Felix, in Persia, India, and Ethiopia, A.D. 1503 to 1508

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LODOVICO DE VARTHEMA
EDITED BY GEORGE PERCY BADGER



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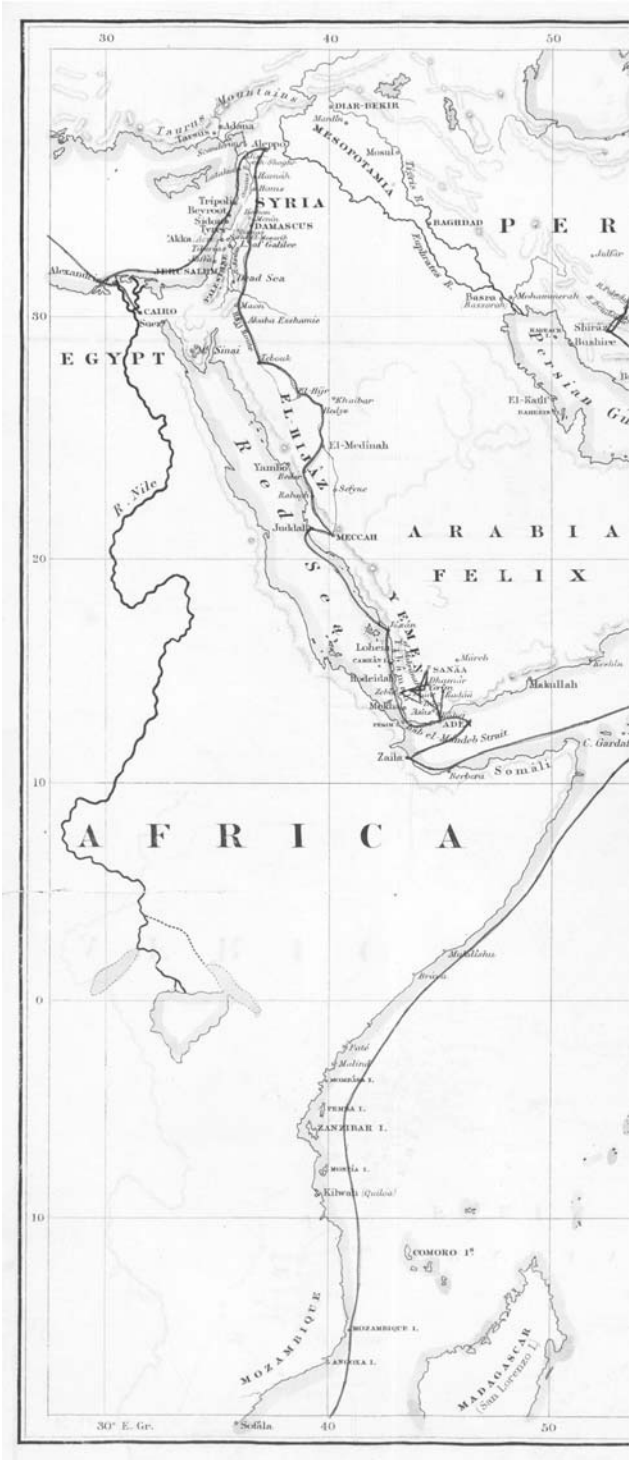
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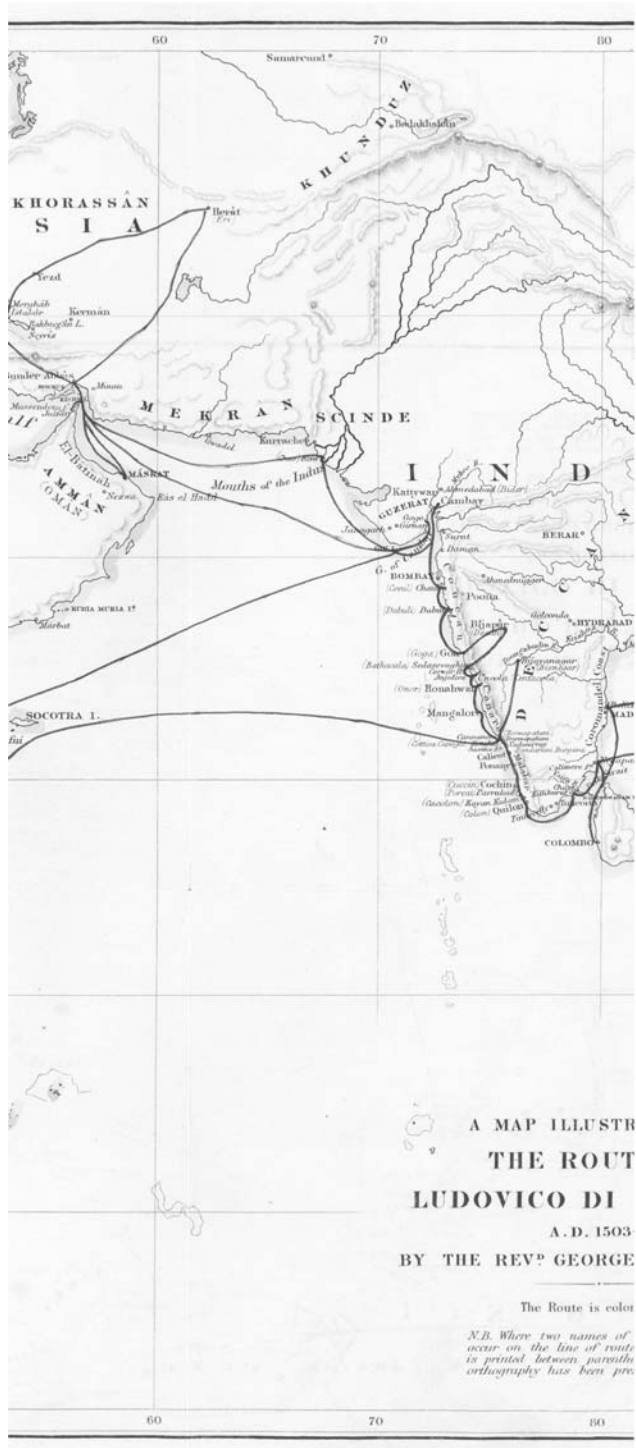
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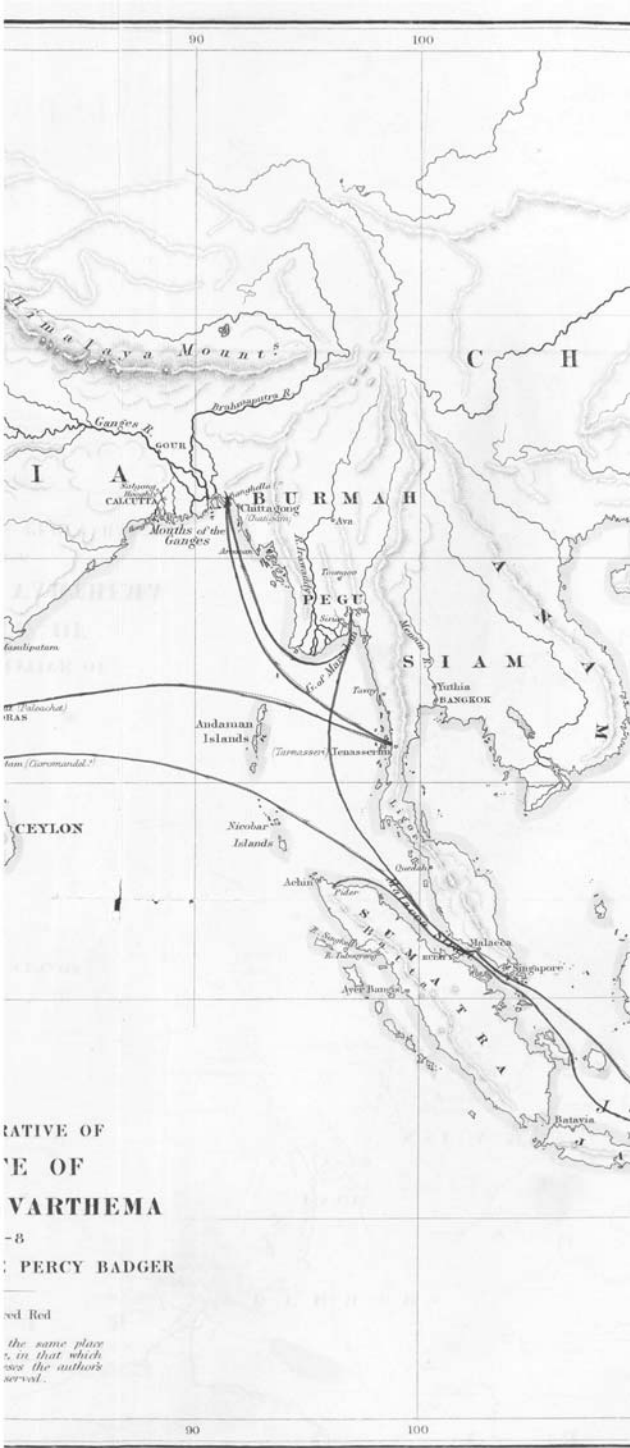
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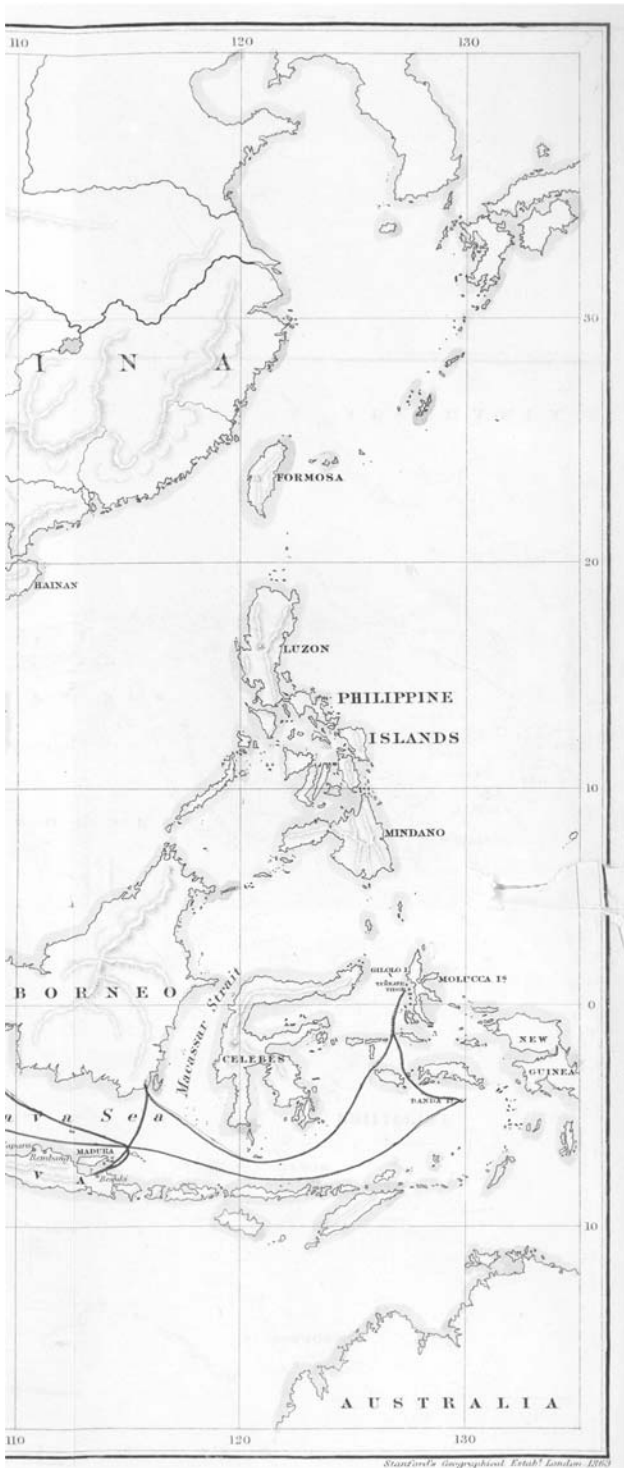
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A.D. 1503 TO 1508.

Translated
FROM THE ORIGINAL ITALIAN EDITION OF 1510,
WITH A PREFACE,
BY
JOHN WINTER JONES, Esq., F.S.A.,

And Edited,
WITH NOTES AND AN INTRODUCTION,
BY
GEORGE PERCY BADGER,
LATE GOVERNMENT CHAPLAIN IN THE PRESIDENCY OF BOMBAY,
AUTHOR OF "THE NESTORIANS AND THEIR RITUALS,"
ETC., ETC., ETC.

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TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
SIR CHARLES WOOD, BART., G.C.B.,
HER MAJESTY'S SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA,
THIS EDITION
OF THE EASTERN TRAVELS OF
LUDOVICO DI VARTHEMA,
AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY,
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
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(The headings in the larger type are those of the original text.)

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PREFACE,

BY THE TRANSLATOR.

THE following translation has been made from the first edition of Varthema's work printed at Rome in the year 1510, or, as stated in the colophon: "Nel Anno M.D.X. a di · vi de Decembrio." It is impossible to peruse Varthema's narrative and not feel a conviction that the writer is telling the truth, that he is recording events which actually took place, and describing men, countries and scenes which he had examined with his own eyes. There is a manifest absence of all attempt at composition. The tale is told with a charming simplicity and all the concise freshness of a note-book, and the author has evidently not stopt to consider whether the word he used was Bolognese, Venetian, or "Lingua Toscana." Neither has he felt any qualms of conscience as to his grammar. This latter circumstance has occasionally rendered the meaning of a passage somewhat doubtful. The printers also have added their mite to the obscurity by sometimes uniting two words or sentences together, or separating one word or sentence into two, or by leaving out a word alto-

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gether. This edition, however, is the only one which gives Varthema's text truly. Even the Latin translation by Archangelus Madrignanus (a monk of the abbey of Clairvaux), which was finished on the 25th day of May 1511, or within six months after the publication of the first Italian edition, is not always an exact exponent of Varthema's text. Later editions vary still more, and the English translation, which is given in Eden's Collection of Voyages and Travels, printed at London in 1577, is extremely imperfect: many passages are totally at variance with the original, and many others are omitted. It has, therefore, been thought advisable by the Council of the HAKLUYT SOCIETY that a new version should be executed, which should as far as possible be a faithful representative of the original work. With this object in view, the translator has endeavoured to preserve the quaint dry style of the author. This must be his excuse for retaining some expressions which are hardly suited to the refinement of the present day, and for not omitting some anecdotes which a writer in modern times would hardly venture to record. They, however, afford an additional voucher for the truth of the narrator: it is impossible to imagine them to be inventions, and they only make us feel the more assured that we are really travelling with Varthema, and sharing with him in all his adventures. His work at once attracted attention. It was, as stated above, immediately translated into Latin, shortly afterwards into German, then into Spanish and French, again into

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German, then into Dutch and English, a third time into German, and again into Dutch in the middle of the 17th century.

All the early editions, as well of the original Italian as of the translations of this work, are extremely rare and costly. The consequence is, that there is, perhaps, no work which has been so frequently reproduced, of which the lists given by bibliographers are so inaccurate and imperfect. They have been obliged to copy one from another without the means of testing the accuracy of their statements. The translator has had the advantage of seeing most of the editions of which he gives the titles, and has described them somewhat fully for the benefit of those to whom the originals may not be conveniently accessible.

The following is a list of the most important editions of this work :—

Italian.

1. Itinerario de Ludouico de Varthema Bolognese nello Egypto, nella Surria, nella Arabia deserta & felice; nella Persia, nella India & nella Ethiopia. La fede, el uiuere, & costumi de tutte le prefate Prouincie con Gratia & Privilegio infra notato.

Colophon.—Stampato in Roma per maestro Stephano guilireti de Loreno & maestro Hercule de Nani Bolognese, ad instātia de maestro Lodouico de Henricis da Corneto Vicētino. Nel Anno M.D.X. a di .vi. de Decembrio. 4°.

This edition contains 102 leaves, besides the title, 100 of which are numbered, and the two leaves containing the last page of the privilege, and the first

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