

THE DELUDING SPIRITS IN THE DESERT OF LOP \neq MARCO POLO

R talking in a way that they seem to be their companions, for they call them some-
 R times by their names, and many times they make them, *believing that they are some*
 V Z L *of them, follow those voices & go out of the right way so that they are never reunited*
 VA Z *to their fellows & found, & news of them is never heard; and in this way they know not*
 L *how to return, and being without food and drink many of them are dead in the past and*
 L *lost. And again I tell you that not only by night does this appear, but often even by day*
 P VA FB *men hear these voices of spirits, and it often seems to you that you hear many*
 R V LT V *instruments of music, sounding in the air, and especially drums¹ more than other*
 LT *instruments, and clashings of weapons. And so those who wish to pass that way[and] cross*
 V *this desert, must take very great care of themselves that they be not separated from their fellows*
 L *for any reason, and that they go with great caution; they must hang bells on the necks of their*
 R VB *horses & animals to hear them continually so that they may not sleep, & may not be able*
 R *to wander. Sometimes by night they will perceive what is like a rush of people in another*
 direction, and so believing that they are their company they go where they hear the march of
 the cavalcade, and when it is day they find themselves taken in by these spirits in this & other
 ways, and many not knowing of these spirits come to an evil end. Sometimes by day spirits come
 in form of a company to one who has stayed behind & he goes off the way, & then they
 leave him to go alone in the desert & perish. And there have been some of them who as they
 travelled, these spirits have put themselves into the form of an army & come charging towards
 them, who believing that they were robbers have taken to flight and, having left the high
 way, no longer knowing how to find the way, for the desert stretches very wide, have perished
 miserably of hunger. And thus those who are not well warned of these deceptions come to bad
 R ends. And they are wonderful things to hear and difficult of belief, which these spirits do; but
 R indeed it is as is told, and much more wonderful. And therefore they are accustomed to go very
 strictly in a company, and before they begin to sleep they set a mark towards the direction they
 R have to travel. And[in]this [23d] way of necessity this desert is crossed, and at so great
 LT FB trouble and great peril and fear as you have heard. Henceforth we will leave telling
 FB you of the desert, of which we have really told you all the doings, and we will tell
 FB you of the provinces which one finds when he comes out of the great desert of Lop.

TA **H**ERE HE TELLS OF THE PROVINCE OF TANGUT. And when one has ridden
 these thirty days marches of the desert of which I have told you, then
 L L VB one finds at the going out of the desert a city which is called Saciou, which
 Z Z belongs to the great Kaan. And it is in the province which is called Tangut. And
 they of that province are all idolaters; though it is true that there are some Turks who

¹ V,L: "bells" L adding that it is because travellers use bells.