

THE MILK SACRIFICE & CHARMERS OF CIANDU = MARCO POLO

VB FB R some of it to drink if they please, and the earth and the air and the idols which they
 VB worship, so that for this charity done to the spirits they may save him¹ all his things,
 VB VA VA VA VA & that all his things may prosper, both men and women, and beasts, and birds, and
 R corn, and all other things which grow on the land. And from there the great Kaan
 L departs in the month of August from the aforesaid park for this reason and goes to another
 FB R P place, as I have told you, to make with his own hand that sacrifice of milk to his gods. And
 on the day of the festival mares milk is prepared in vast quantity in honourable vessels, and
 the king himself with his own hands pours much of the milk hither and thither to the honour of
 his gods. And the astrologers say that the gods drink the milk poured out. After the unspeakable
 sacrifice the king drinks of the milk of the white mares. So this rite is solemnly observed on the
 28 day of August for ever. But I will go on to tell you also a marvel which I had
 FB forgotten to tell. Now you may know that when the great Kaan was staying in his
 FB palace in this place every year three months of the year, and there was rain or fog or bad
 FB R weather,² he had wise astrologers with him and wise charmers who go up on the roof
 VB of the palace where the great Kaan dwells when any storm cloud or rain or mist rose in the air.
 R L and by their knowledge and by their incantation dispose all the clouds³ & rain and
 V all the bad weather to remove above his palace, that they do not touch that palace,
 VB but go beyond; so that above the palace there was no bad weather nor ever a drop of
 R water fell on it, and everywhere else the bad weather went on; rain, storm, and thunder-
 V bolts falling all around, while the palace was not touched by anything. And these wise men
 VB VB who do this are two sorts, the one called Tebet and the other Chescemir. They are two
 races of people who are idolaters. They know devilish arts and [33a] enchantments
 VB more than all other men & control the devils, so that I do not believe there are greater
 FB charmers in the world; and that which they do they do it all by devil's art and make the
 VB other people believe that they do it by their goodness & great holiness and by God's
 R work. And therefore they go filthy and unclean, not caring for their own honour nor for
 the persons who see them; they keep mud on their faces, nor ever wash nor comb themselves,
 VB but always go dirtily. And these same people, this most evil race of necromancers & charmers
 R of whom I have told you, have such a beastly and horrible usage as I shall tell you.
 V V For I tell you that when they know that a man is condemned to death for ill that he

¹ por coi les espiert en aient a boir e les ydres espiert por ce que il li sauent The translation leaves out the second espiert. B. inserts, apparently without any MS. support, ydres[dient qu'il convient que en aient a boir les]espiert &c.. VB repeats spiriti but in a slightly different place.

² il fust luic ou musles ou mantens Ed.1824 (corrected by Godefroy) read il fust pluie ou niusles ou mantens and nothing better seems to have been suggested by other texts or by B., who translates musles by nuvolo. L (Ferrara): quod aer nubilis (for nubibus) inficeretur. uel pluuias

³ mies for nues L: nubes VB: nenbo