

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD'S MAGICIANS & IDOLATERS

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has done and is killed by the government of the land, that condemned man is given to them & they take him and have him cooked and eat him; but if he were to die of his own natural death they never eat him for anything in the world. And of this race of charmers there is so great a number that it is a marvel. Besides the abovesaid name they are also called *bacsi*, that is, of such a religion or order, as they would say Brothers Preachers or Minors; and they are so trained and expert in this magical or devilish art that they do almost anything that they wish. And again you may know quite truly that these *bacsi* of whom I tell you above, who know so many enchantments, do among the rest so great marvel past all belief as I shall tell you. For I tell you that when the great Kaan sits at dinner or at supper in his chief hall in his capital city, at his great table, which table set apart for the eating of the lord is more than eight cubits high, as will be said in the next book, and the golden drinking cups are after their manner on a table in the middle of the pavement on the other side of the hall quite ten paces away from the table and are full of wine and of milk and of other good drinks for the lord, then these wise charmers of whom I have told you above, who are named *bacsi*, they do so much by their enchantments and by their arts that those full cups are lifted of themselves from the pavement where they were and go away by themselves alone through the air to be presented before the great Kaan when he shall wish to drink, without anyone touching them. And when he has drunk, the said cups go back to the place from which they set out. And they do this sometimes while ten thousand¹ men look on, and in the presence of whomsoever the lord wishes to see it; and this is most true & trustworthy with no lie, for it is done at the table of the lord every day. And indeed we shall tell you the wise men of our land who know necromancy say that it can well be done.² Again I tell you that [33b] these *bacsi*, when the feasts of their idols come which they wish to celebrate, they go off to the great Kaan and say to him, Sir, we tell you that on such a day such a feast of such an idol of ours is coming, and name the name of that idol that they please; and then they say to him, You know, fair Sir, that this idol knows how to make bad weather and plagues come and loss of our things and of the beasts and of corn, if they have not been honoured with offerings and holocaust. And therefore we pray you, fair Sir, that you have given to us so many sheep which have black heads—and they say what number of them they please—and we wish you to let us have also so much incense and so much lign aloe and so much of such a thing and so much of such, as it seems good to them at their will, that we might be able to do great honour and great sacrifice

¹ TA³: ij^m Others: "10000"

² & bien uoç diron . . . dient FB: Car bien vous en diront les sages So B. (perhaps rightly) omits dient.