

THE MONASTERIES AND FEASTS OF THE IDOLS = MARCO POLO

FB to our idols so that they may be able to save us and our bodies and our animals and
 VA FB our corn & the fruits of the land and all our things. And these bacsi say these things
 R not to the great Kaan personally, but to the barons who are about the great Kaan and
 R to those who have authority to speak to the lord for others, and these say them to the
 V FB great Kaan, and then when that day is come the lord orders his bailiffs who are about him
 V that they have all that they ask to honour the feast of their idols, such as flesh, bread,
 & wine. And when these bacsi have had all those things for which they have asked,
 VB they do great honour with them to their idols to which that day is set apart with great
 VB FB FB singing sweet & pleasant, with most beautiful praises, and with very great festival and
 FB with very many lights. For they cense them with the good smell of incense which they
 V V make of many sorts of all those other good sweet-smelling spice things, and have the
 VA FB flesh cooked and put it thus cooked before the idols, and go and sprinkle some of
 VB LT VA the broth taken from the cooked flesh and milk hither and thither in the air, and say that
 VB the idols take so much of it as they wish. And they do this in the presence of the people
 who stand to watch the sacrifice with very great reverence & firmly believe that by such sacrifices
 most pleasing to the gods they keep the lord from all danger & all their things proceed with the
 very greatest prosperity. In such a way they do honour to their idols on their feast
 Z VB days. For you may know quite truly that all idols have their proper days dedicated
 to them, on which days they make solemnities & reverence & great feasts in their names¹
 FB Z VB P every year, as our saints have on the special days. In that region many monks are set apart
 VB for the service of idols. For they have very large monasteries and abbeyes dedicated to
 VB Z those idols. [33c] For I tell you that there are some of the large monasteries so large that they
 VB are as large as a small² city, in which are according to the state & size of the temples from
 R 1000 to more than two thousand monks who serve the idols according to their custom,
 P V who dress more decently with more religious garments than all the other men do.
 FB P For they wear the crown of the head shaved and the beard shaved beyond the fashion
 V of laymen. And they make the greatest feasts for their idols with greater singing
 P and with greater lights than were ever seen. Beside them there are many other different
 idolater monks elsewhere in the region. And again I tell you that these bacsi have among
 P them some such as according to their order can take many wives, and they do so;
 LT for they take them and have children enough. These dress differently from the others.

¹ feste en lor nomes nomes should not mean "names", and so B. proposes en lor jor només FB: a son nom. et jour de sa feste VA: al so nome

² FB: grande VB: grandissima TA,LT have made it: "There is a small city where is a monastery in which are more than two thousands of monks"; & VA: "In that region there is one monastery which is as large as a small city."