

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD^s THE ARMIES OF CUBLAI

.78.

He had guards placed without delay at all the passes which went towards the lands of Naian R
and Caidu, that they should not know what he intended to do; and then he immediately ordered
that the men who were round the city of Cambaluc by the space of ten days journeys should be
gathered together with the greatest haste. And he had assembled quite 360000 horsemen VA
& quite 100000 footmen of those who were near the city of Cambaluc. And for this P
reason did he make up so few people, because these were of his armies which were
near to him, because he wished to attack the enemy suddenly and unexpectedly. His other P
armies, which were twelve, which were a very vast number, kept continually to guard R
the provinces of Catai, were ten times as many, & were so far away at war to conquer V
lands and cities & were scattered in many directions at his command that he could not V FB
have had them in time and on the spot. It would have required the time of thirty or R
forty days journeys, and the preparation would have been known, and Caidu and Naian
would have joined together and either withdrawn altogether or retired into strong positions P R
of their own choice. But he wished with speed (which is the companion of victory) to prevent
the preparations of Naian and to find him alone, when he would be able to conquer him better
than when in company. And because in the present place it is convenient to say something of
the armies of the great Kaan, it must be known that in all the provinces of Catai, of Mangi,
and in all the rest of his dominion are found many unfaithful and disloyal persons who would
rebel against their lord if they could; and therefore it is necessary in every province where
there are large cities and many people to keep armies there, which stay in the country four or
five miles away from the city, which cannot have gates or walls to prevent them from entering
in whenever they please. And the great Kaan makes these armies change every two years, and
he does the same with the captains who command them; and with this curb the people stay
quiet, and cannot move nor make any change. Besides the pay which the great Kaan always
gives them from the revenues of the provinces, these armies live on an infinite number of flocks
which they have and on the milk which they send to the cities to sell, and so buy the things
which they need. And they are scattered in different places thirty, forty, & sixty days journeys
distant. For if he had made up the half of all his force he would make up as many R
knights on horseback as he would wish,¹ so great a multitude that it would be
an impossible thing to believe and to hear. And these 260000² horsemen & infinite V

en xij.jours, so making it probable that by a strange coincidence this odd division of xxii
into x xii was found in the text from which FG was made. VL: xij. TA,LT,V,VA,P: 22
R: 20

¹ con il uondroit B. suggests et il uendroit—"make up so many knights on horseback, and
there would come so great a multitude, that"

² cclx^mhomes L: 260000 (in short summary) V: 260000, in both places. But others
360000 here, as above.