

HOW THE BATTLE WAS PREPARED AND BEGUN = MARCO POLO
 near him, going immediately out of the tent, Naian and his men saw the great Kaan with
 V VA his people so well disposed. so near & so suddenly round their camp they were all amazed
 VB at it, judging that he could not give time to prepare his things, for he knew the eagerness &
 P VB activity of Cublai. The army also of Caidu was not yet come. Nevertheless, after he had called
 FB P his chiefs to him & set his things in order, they all run to arms while those were coming
 FB down; they array themselves immediately very well and form their squadrons well
 R V and in order, grieving that he had not joined with Caidu. And when both sides were
 FB arrayed for the battle, as I have told you, so that they had only to strike, then one could
 R R FB see and hear infinite horns & many other instruments sound of many sorts, and many
 VB FB VB pipes, and the singers. all singing with a loud voice, in so great numbers that the air seemed
 to tremble; for you may know that the customs of the Tartars are such. For when
 they are drawn up and in squadrons to fight, they would not rush into the battle
 FB for so long as the drums¹ do not sound, that is those of their captain. For else before the
 sound of the great drum of the great lord none would dare to begin the battle. And then while
 FB the drums do not sound all the most of the Tartars sound their instruments of two
 VB strings, very pleasant to hear, and sing to cheer up the hosts; and that was the reason why
 the playing [35b] and the singing were so great there both on one side and on the
 LT FB other that it was wonderful. And when all the people as they sang and played were well
 prepared on both sides, then the great drums of the great Kaan begin to sound
 R FB first, on the right side and the left, and the other of Naian began also to sound. And as soon
 as the drums begin to sound, then they make no delay but let the one people run
 V towards the other and joined hands with bows and with swords and with clubs and a
 VB V few lances, for the horsemen do not carry lances; but the greater part of the great Kaan's men
 V FB on foot had² indeed crossbows and other arms of offence enough; so fiercely that it
 was a wonder to see. And what shall I tell you about it? They begin the very cruel
 V and wicked fight. Now can one see arrows fly so that there was so great darkness from
 FB V the great abundance of arrows & missiles. on one side and on the other. that the sky could not
 R be seen, for all the air was full of them, as if it were rain on every side. Now can one
 R FB see knights indeed and horses fall dead to the earth in great number. till all the ground
 FB was covered with them. The cry there was so great and noise on one side and on the other
 R that one does not hear God thunder. And so horrible was the crying of the men and the
 noise of arms and horses that it inspired an extreme terror in all who heard it. When they had
 shot the arrows they came to close quarters with the lances and swords and with the iron-shod
 FB clubs; and the multitude of men, and above all of horses, which lay dead one upon the other
 was so great that one party could not pass over to where the others were. For the battle was

¹ See PN (Nacar).

² auenent Read auoient FA,FB: ont