

THE KING MOVES HIS ELEPHANTS TO BATTLE ≈ MARCO POLO

FB do this by great wisdom and by good leadership *that they had*. For you may know
 VA R that beside that plain where he set himself was a very great wood, strong and full of
 R VA very high trees. And he posted them beside that wood that he might be able to lead on his
 R enemies, because he knew that the elephants could not enter that wood with the castles; intending
 that, if the elephants were to come with such fury that they could not resist them, they should
 VB R VB retire into the wood and shoot arrows at them in safety. And calling to him all his horsemen
 he exhorted them with most eloquent words that they would not be of less might than they had
 been in the past, and that strength did not consist in numbers but in the valour of brave and
 R VB tried horsemen; and that the people of the king of Mien and Bangala were inexperienced in
 R arms and not practised in war, in which they had not been engaged as they themselves had been
 VB so many times. And therefore they must not fear the multitude of the enemy but trust in their
 R VB own skill which had already been long tried in many places in so many enterprises that their
 R VB name was feared and dreaded not only by the enemy but by all the world; so that they must be
 of that same valour as they had been. And he promised them certain and undoubted victory.
 In such way as you have heard the Tartars waited for the enemy on that plain.
 Now let us cease a little to talk of the Tartars, though we shall indeed soon come
 back to them, and we will talk of the enemy. Now you may know quite truly that
 V R when the king of Mien had stayed awhile and rested some days with all his army and
 FB knew that the army of the Tartars was gone into the plain, they set out from there where
 V they were and put themselves on the road and go and draw near till they were come to
 the plain of Uncian where the Tartars were all arrayed. And when they were come
 VB R into that plain to encamp at one mile from the enemy, he put his battalions in order and
 VB FB he posted his battalions of elephants and all the castles and the men above well
 R V armed for the fight in the front line. And behind he arranges his many men on horse and
 FB R on foot very well and very wisely, like a wise king that he was, but distant as it were
 in two wings, leaving a great space between. And there he began to inspirit his men, telling
 them that they should determine to fight bravely because they were sure of victory, being four
 to one,¹ and having so many elephants with so many castles that the enemy would not have
 the courage to look at them, having never fought with such animals. And when he had
 R planned and settled all his affair and had caused infinite instruments to sound, with great
 V FB vigour he set himself to go with all his host of his people toward the enemy to battle.
 VB And when the Tartars saw them come,² not losing[heart]they do not make it seem
 that they are dismayed at anything but show that they are proved and mightily
 R brave. For you may know with no mistake that they stood still and did not move, but

¹ VB: tre per vno

² V, perhaps with some misunderstanding, adds: *il qualli veniano che apena iera sentidi*