

HOW JESTERS CONQUER THE PROVINCE OF MIEN ≠ MARCO POLO

L L take that city, were a very great number of jesters [57d] and of acrobats of every sort.  
 L P FB And to remove them from the court the great Kaan calling them together to him said to them  
 P one day that he wishes them to go in conjunction with another army to conquer the  
 FB FB FB K province of Mien, and that he will give them a good captain and good help.<sup>1</sup> For the  
 king of Mien was not worthy that soldiers should go there to take the land from him, since he  
 had been so foolish that he had rebelled against the great Kaan. The jesters said that they  
 VA FB were gladly willing to obey all his commands. So the lord had what was needed for an army  
 made ready for them, and gave them a company of men at arms. And then they set themselves  
 on the way with that captain and with that help which the great Kaan gives them  
 FB P and rode so far that they came to this province of Mien as he commanded them, that they might  
 conquer it and subdue it to his rule. And what shall I tell you about it? You may know  
 FB that these jesters with those people who went with them conquer all that province  
 VB of Mien. And when they have conquered it and are come to the siege of this noble  
 VB VB city they took it in a short time and, being entered into the said city of Mien, when they find  
 FB FB these two towers of which I have told you so fair and so rich, they were all very greatly  
 P astonished at them and dared not destroy them without having first obtained the leave of  
 the great Kaan, and send to tell the great Kaan where he was the likeness of these  
 V FB two towers and how they were beautiful and of very great value, and what did he wish  
 them to do, for the great wealth which was upon them; and that if he wishes they will  
 take them down and send him the gold & the silver. And the great Kaan, who knew  
 VB VB that that king who had been loved by them in the past had had them made for his tomb  
 VB and soul and that one might have remembrance of him after his death, he immediately  
 made commandment and said that he did not wish that they should be taken down at  
 VB all, but says that he wishes them to stay guarded and respected in such manner as that  
 VB king who had had them made had planned them and appointed; because it was not a  
 laudable thing that the name of the lords worthy of fame and glory should be damaged &  
 broken, and to this day the towers are adorned and well guarded. And it was no wonder,  
 FB because I tell you that no Tartar in the world ever touches a thing of any dead man,  
 Z nor anything else [which] might be struck by thunderbolt or lightning or plague, which might  
 V Z VB happen through divine judgement; nor would he take any tribute from them. And this is a  
 custom with the Tartars who think it a very great sin to move anything belonging to the dead.  
 Z VB They of this province have [58a] elephants enough & large and wild oxen<sup>2</sup> large and  
 Z beautiful; stags, fallow-deer, roe-deer, and all kinds of animals have they in great  
 abundance. Now I have told you of this province of Mien. Now we will leave you

<sup>1</sup> LT: et daret eis in socios illos de canica, et illos de dojde.

<sup>2</sup> VB: homeni saluatichi