

THE GREAT PREPARATION FOR THIS BATTLE ≠ MARCO POLO

his people were so near them, they set themselves on the way and go against their  
 FA Z enemies valiantly. And what shall I tell you about it? They go riding till they were  
 Z LT Z V FA come near to the place where the army of king Caidu was by a space of about ten miles,  
 FA and there they pitched their tents & made their camp well and orderly. And you may  
 know that the king Caidu was in tents in that same plain with all his people. Each  
 of the sides they rest themselves and prepare themselves as best they can to fight  
 together. And why should I make you a long story? You may know quite truly  
 that on the third day after that the son to the great Kaan was come there and the  
 Z son to the son of the Prester Johan, in the early morning each [97c] of the parties  
 LT armed themselves and prepare themselves as best they can for the battle. And there  
 was no great deal of advantage of the one people over the other, for there was  
 neither of the sides which had not about 60000 horsemen well armed with bows  
 FA and with arrows and with swords and with clubs and with shields & with other  
 Z Z arms in their manner. And it makes, each side, an array of its six squadrons and in  
 Z each squadron they put 10000 horsemen and in each there were excellent and good  
 leaders. And when the two sides were on the field drawn up and ready, then they  
 FA FA were only waiting till they should hear the drums begin to sound loudly, on each side  
 one: for the Tartars dare not begin battle so long as the drums of their lord do not  
 begin to sound, but as soon as they sound then they begin the battle. Moreover  
 the Tartars have also such a custom that when they are drawn up that they may  
 wait for the battle until the drums begin to sound, then they sing and play their  
 instruments of two<sup>1</sup> strings very sweetly, and they sing and play and make great  
 sport, waiting always for the battle. And because of this use I tell you that both  
 these people who were drawn up and were waiting for the battle and the sounding  
 Z of the drums, they sang and play so well and so sweetly that it was a wonder to hear.  
 And when they had stayed some while in such way as I have told you and were  
 waiting till they should hear the drums sound, then the drums on both sides begin  
 to sound. And what shall I tell you about it? When the drums begin to sound the  
 people make no more delay but all immediately [97d] let the one people run against  
 FA the other furiously, and then the battle very great, very bitter, & very fierce began. They  
 Z put the hands to the bows and cocked their arrows on them & began to shoot. Now  
 one could see all the air covered with arrows as if it were rain. Now could he see  
 many men and many horses to be mortally hit. Now one could hear there shouting  
 Z and uproar so great that he would not hear God thundering for it. And certainly  
 they were well seen to be mortal enemies. And why should I make you a long

<sup>1</sup> Z,V: "four"