

Cities & Memory

Diomira
Isidora
Zaira
Zora
Maurilla

Trading Cities

Euphemia
Chloe
Eutropia
Ersilla
Esmeralda

Thin Cities

Isuara
Zenobia
Chloe
Sophronia
???

Cities & The Dead

Melania
Adelma
Eusapia
Argia
Laudomia

Cities & Names

Algaula
Leandra
Pyrrha
Clarice
Irene

Continuous Cities

Leonia
Trude
Procopia
Cecilia
Pethesilea

Cities & Signs

Tamara
Zirma
Zoe
Hypatia
Olivia

Cities & Desire

Dorothea
Anatasia
Despina
Fedora
Zobeide

Cities & Eyes

Valdara
Zemrude
Baucis
Phyllis
Moriana

Cities & The Sky

Eudoxia
Beersheba
Thekla
Perinthia
Andria

Hidden Cities

Olinda
Raissa
Marozia
Theodora
Berenice

Kublai Khan does not necessarily believe everything Marco Polo says when he describes the cities visited on his expeditions, but the emperor of the Tartars does continue listening to the young Venetian with greater attention and curiosity than he shows any other messenger or explorer of his.

In the lives of emperors there is a moment which follows pride in the boundless extension of the territories we have conquered, and the melancholy and relief of knowing we shall soon give up any thought of knowing and understanding them.

There is a sense of emptiness that comes over us at evening, with the odor of the elephants after the rain and the sandalwood ashes growing cold in the braziers, a dizziness that makes rivers and mountains tremble on the fallow curves of the planispheres where they are portrayed, and rolls up, one after the other, the dispatches announcing to us the collapse of the last enemy troops, from defeat to defeat, and flakes the wax of the seals of obscure kings who beseech our armies' protection, offering in exchange annual tributes of precious metals, tanned hides, anti tortoise shell.

It is the desperate moment when we discover that this empire, which had seemed to us the sum of all wonders, is an endless, formless ruin, that corruption's gangrene has spread too far to be healed by our scepter, that the triumph over enemy sovereigns has made us the heirs of their long undoing.

Only in Marco Polo's accounts was Kublai Khan able to discern, through the walls and towers destined to crumble, the tracery of a pattern so subtle it could escape the termites' gnawing.

