

THE GREAT WEALTH OF THE CALIF OF BAUDAC \neq MARCO POLO

L Z V Z study very much in all knowledge & especially in the law of Mahomet, and in necromancy,
 V physics, astronomy, geomancy, and physiognomy, and philosophy. And it is the most noble
 Z city and the greatest that is to be found in all those parts. Moreover you may
 V know truly that with the calif of Baudac who dwells here is found the greatest treasure
 R of gold & of silver & of precious stones that ever was known to have been [11c] found
 LT VB with any man through all Levant; and through it in the end he was made to die of hunger.
 LT And I shall tell you how.¹ It was true that about the 1255² year that Christ was
 FB born the great lord of the Tartars of the sunrising who had Ulau for name, who
 VA was brother to the great lord who now reigns, he who is named Cublai,³ assembles
 VB TA VB a very great host of horse & of foot and comes upon the calif in the city of Baudac and
 P V besieged it and finally took it by force. And this was a very great thing, because
 VB there were in Baudac more than a hundred thousand horsemen to guard it without
 VB FB VA the vast number of men on foot. And when he had taken it & when the king came into
 TA the city, he finds with the calif this multitude of treasure & he finds a tower all full of
 TA P VA gold & of silver & of precious stones and of other treasure of immense value; & the
 VA P treasure was so great that so much was never seen at one time in one place; but
 because he was a miser nor knew how to provide himself with a sufficient army, nor gave
 gifts to the horsemen which he had, so he could not escape disaster. When he sees this great
 FB FB VB treasure assembled he has very great wonder at it, hardly believing that there is so much
 LT FB gold in the world, and sends for the calif who had been taken and makes him come
 V FB before him immediately. Then he says to him, Calif, says he, now tell me why hadst
 VA thou amassed so much treasure? I have great wonder at thy avarice, that thou wast
 so miserly as to refuse to spend or give of this treasure to the horsemen and to thy people.
 FB What oughtest thou to do with it? Now didst thou not know that I was thy
 VA V Z mortal enemy and was surely coming upon thee with so great an host to take thee
 V and thy land, to disinherit thee? And when thou knewest it why didst thou not
 V V take thy treasure & have it given to horsemen of the land and to other mercenaries
 FB Z TA VB & to men at arms to defend & keep thee & thy people and thy city? The calif astonished
 & terrified answers him nothing because he knew not what he ought to say. And
 FB VB then the lord Ulau said to him, Calif, thou dost not speak, & since I see that thou
 VB lovest the treasure so much & hoped that it would be the support of thy life, so I wish

¹ il dirai LT: et quomodo fuerit dico uobis so read ie dirai

² P: m.cc.l. R:1250 VB: m cc lx (?) Others: 1255 The actual date was 1258.

³ V: fradelo de mengon el qual regnaua in quel tempo This correct alternative raises a curious question of authorship. That Mongkä was reigning at the time was known to the author of the text preserved in R. See pp. 43, 92, 103, 167, &c..