

## PRINCE GIORGE AND THE ARGON OF TENDUC = MARCO POLO

V L V R VA such; and his own name is Prester Giorge. And the greater part of the people are Christians.  
 V And he holds the land for the great Kaan, but not all that which Prester Johan  
 P held, but some part of that. But I tell you also that after the death of that king who  
 VB was killed by Cinghis in battle, these lords, that is Giorgians, are reckoned of noble blood,  
 VB for the great Kaan, descended from Cinghis who had the daughter of Uncan (whom we in  
 our tongue call Prester Johan) for wife—from which lady all these lords are descended—  
 Z have always given of their daughters and others of their kindred to the kings who  
 VA Z VA reign in that region who are descended of the lineage of Prester Johan. And in this  
 FB province are found the stones from which azure [31c] is made, which is like a vein  
 VA VB V of earth, and it is plentiful there and very good, and they are good at making it. And  
 Z FB FB VA there is made much camlet of camels hair very good and of every colour. And they live  
 VB on flocks and on the fruit which they take from the land, with which they do great  
 V Z business, and some trade also is done there and handicraft. And the rule indeed belongs  
 Z to Christians because the king is Christian though he is subject to the great Kaan, as I have  
 V VA L P told you above, but there are also idolaters enough and some men who worship by  
 V Z FB the law of the abominable Mahomet. And there is also a race of people (the Christians  
 VB who have the rule) who are called argon in their own tongue, which means to say guasmul  
 in French, that is to say that they are born of the two races, of the lineage of those  
 Z Z of Tenduc who worship idols and of those who worship by the law of Mahomet.<sup>1</sup>  
 TA They are the whitest men of the country and fine men more than the others of the country  
 FB P who are infidels, and more clever and better traders than can be found elsewhere in any  
 FB province; and for this cause they have the rule. And you may know that the chief seat  
 Z of Prester Johan was in this province when he ruled the Tartars and all those other  
 VA VA Z great provinces and kingdoms round; and all his descendants keep his seat [and] dwell  
 there still. And this Giorge whom I have named to you is of the lineage of Prester  
 VA Johan, as I have told you in the story, and is the sixth<sup>2</sup> lord since the great Prester

reading of F. FA,FB,VB omit. Z: *presbiter quidem est xristianus quia omnes &c..* V: *e lo re de questa prouinzia si sono de la prouinzia(sic) del prete zane e vien chiamato per so nome prete giorgin e tien la tera &c..* It seems to be possible that iohan is a very early error due to *prestre iohan* only three words above. cf. TP 1932, pp. 111-114.

<sup>1</sup> *hil hi a une ienerasion de iens que sunt appelles argon qe uant a dire en françois guasmul ce est a dire quil sunt ne del deus generacions de la lenguee des celz argon renduc & des celz reduc & des celz que aorent maomet* The words *des celz argon renduc &* should probably be omitted as in the translation, but the mistaken insertion of *argon* is not easy to explain; unless it may be a relic of a clause like *que aorent les ydres*, which appears in Z.

<sup>2</sup> FA,VA,L: "sixth" FB: *seiziesme* Z: *quantum de progenie illa* R: *quarto di quella progenie* Others omit.