

THE WICKED TYRANNY OF ACMAT THE BAILO  $\approx$  MARCO POLO  
 that is learned astrologers, say that it is wrong to shed human blood. It has been told then  
 about the contents of the city of Taidu. Now we shall say how the Cataians wished to rebel  
 in the city.

OF THE TREACHERY PLANNED TO MAKE THE CITY OF CAMBALUC REBEL, AND HOW THE  
 AUTHORS WERE TAKEN AND PUT TO DEATH. Cap. 8.

It is a true thing, as will be said below, that there are deputed twelve men who have the  
 disposal of the lands and governorships and all the other things, as seems best to them. Among  
 whom was a Saracen named Acmat, a clever and strong man, who had great influence and  
 authority with the great Kaan beyond the others. And the lord was so fond of him that he had  
 every liberty. For, as was found after his death, that Acmat so bewitched the lord with his  
 spells that the lord gave the greatest belief and attention to all his words, and so he did all  
 that he wished to do. He gave away all the governorships and offices and punished all the  
 evildoers. And whenever he wished to put anyone whom he hated to death, whether justly or  
 unjustly, he went to the lord and said to him, Such a one is worthy of death because he has  
 offended against your Majesty like this. Then the lord said, Do what thou pleasest; and im-  
 mediately he had him put to death. And so, when men saw the full liberty which he had and  
 that the lord gave such full trust to his word that they did not dare to contradict him in anything,  
 there was no one so great and of such authority that he did not fear him. And if anyone was  
 accused by him to the lord on a capital charge, and wished to defend himself, he could not  
 disprove it and use his arguments because he had no one with whom [he could do so], for none  
 dared to speak against that Acmat. And in this way he made many die unjustly. Besides this  
 there was no fair lady whom, if he wanted her, he did not have at his will, taking her for wife  
 if she was not married, or otherwise making her consent. And when he knew that anyone had  
 some pretty daughter, he had his ruffians who went to the father of the girl saying to him,  
 What wilt thou do? Thou hast this daughter of thine. Give her for wife to the Bailo, (that is  
 to Acmat, for he was called Bailo as one would say Deputy) and we will make him give thee  
 such a governorship or such an office for three years. And so he gave him his daughter. And  
 then Acmat said to the lord, Such a government is vacant or ends on such a day; such a man is  
 fitted to rule it. And the lord answered him, Do what seems right to thee. And so he invested  
 him immediately with such a governorship. In this way, partly through ambition for governor-  
 ships and offices, partly because this Acmat was feared, all the fair ladies—he either took them  
 for wives, or had them at his pleasure. He had also sons, about twenty-five, who were in the  
 greater offices; and some of them, under the name and shelter of the father, committed adultery  
 like the father, and did many other unspeakable and wicked things. This Acmat had collected  
 much treasure, because each one who wished for some governorship or office sent him some great  
 present.