

THE CITY IS BESIEGED FOR SEVEN MONTHS ≠ MARCO POLO

VB the city where the Tartars were with their women besieged all round so that none would  
 Z be able to go in there nor to come out without their consent and will. And what  
 shall I tell you about it? The people of the great Kaan held that city seven months,<sup>1</sup>  
 and they took much pains both day and night to find how they could make this  
 LT affair known to the great Kaan that he might send them help. But all this is of no avail  
 FB FB FB V to them that they should ever be able to make him know, for they could never send any  
 VB messenger. And they held that siege so that the Tartars could by no means make the lord great Kaan  
 know of their condition and being, nor ever send so carefully but that all their messengers fell  
 into the hands of the islanders, because that [army] of the islanders was of a very great host  
 set all round. The Tartars day and night did not cease to attack the people of the island with  
 very great and continual damage and loss. And when they see that they cannot do this  
 Z VB FB which they propose by any device, and seeing that they lacked food and that they could hold  
 Z Z out no longer, then finally they make agreement & truce with those outside, and gave  
 Z themselves up, saving their persons, in such way that they must stay there all the  
 VB days of their life.<sup>2</sup> The islanders who for very many years had not had war and bore it very ill,  
 and especially the loss of their women who were in the hands and power of their enemies, believing  
 that they would never have them again, when they saw that the Tartars were willing to give  
 them back the place and the women, joyful and satisfied with so great an offer all with one voice  
 Z constrained the king to make peace on the terms which were offered. And so it was observed.  
 VB and the peace was made and the place returned to the king. And this was in the 1269<sup>3</sup> year  
 from the incarnation of Christ. So went the affair as you have [73b] heard. And  
 VB VB when the Tartars were returned and the great Kaan knew of the discord of his two captains,

<sup>1</sup> TA,LT,R: "six" Z,V: "a long time" FB: vng (mistaking vii for vn) others "seven"

<sup>2</sup> The additions in VB, which at first sight seem to be too long to be mere padding by the translator, give alternative conditions of peace, of which neither can really be made consistent with F or Z (though supported by TA,LT,P and not inconsistent with VA,R), as follows:—  
 "Seeing that the Tartars were willing to give them back the place and the women, in such a way however that there should be granted them safe passage to be able to return to their fatherland and so much of their things that they should have quite enough until they were at their home; also if they pleased to keep the Tartars with wages at their expense they were content." *vedendo che tartarj era contentj renderge la tera elle done si uera mente che a quellj i fosseno conzesso sicuro adito de poter repatrjar et tanta dela lor roba che Abel mente i potesse bastar fino fosseno a chaxa loro ezian se a quellj piazeseno i tartarj retenjre con stjpendio a suo soldo erano contentj* (VB fol. 29a)

The story is of course one which lends itself to embroidery, and in VA (*I semesseno jn arborj che era apresso el porto*) we have another detail which is not really consistent with the more common form of the story of how the Tartars captured the Japanese ships.

<sup>3</sup> TA,LT,VA,P,VB,L: 1269 FA: 1268 FB: 1279 Z,V omit. R: 1264