

THE KING OF ABASCE MARCHES AGAINST ADEN ≈ MARCO POLO

TA V Z sepulchre & of everything. Whereupon the bishop tells him all the truth about it in
 Z order, and the king holds it for a very holy thing and has great faith in it when he
 had heard. And after that the bishop had told him all the facts of the sepulchre,
 V he tells him how the sultan of Aden had had him circumcised, bound, and beaten
 V for his great shame and for contempt of him. And when the king had heard this,
 VB that his bishop was stopped by the sultan of Aden & was so shamed for contempt
 of him, he has so great anger that it wanted but little that he should die of grief.
 Z And he speaks so loud that all those who were about him heard it well and says
 that he refuses ever to wear crown or to hold land if he does not take great vengeance
 on him so that all the world shall talk of it. And what shall I tell you of it? You
 VA may know quite truly that the king prepares himself as fast as he could with a very
 exceedingly great [94a] people, of knights and of men on foot, and he also brings
 Z FB V with him great quantity of elephants with all their castles very well armed, where
 Z there were quite twelve or fourteen men on each castle. But yet otherwise than when going
 Z to war there would go quite twenty men on each castle. But in an army they go only
 twelve, that they may be able to hold themselves more conveniently. And when he was well
 arrayed with all his people he sets himself on the way and they went until they
 VB were come to the kingdom of Aden. When the lord of Aden learned of the host prepared by
 the lord of Abasce, supposing that he was not able to resist the great army of the king of Abasce,
 R VB he made come to his help two great Saracen kings his neighbours, planning to send to fortify
 V & guard well the passes. And when they knew, the kings of that province of Aden came
 VB with a very great multitude of Saracens on horses and on foot to all the strong
 passes to defend their land and that their enemies should not be able to enter
 VB there; & told other people to put themselves in strong places. Now it happened that the
 king of Abasce with his people were at this strong pass where they find their
 V enemies in great quantity; and then they begin the very cruel and most evil battle.
 But it fell out in such a way that the kings of the Saracens who were three¹ could
 Z not resist the great force of the king of the province of Abasce because he had many
 people and good. For the Christians are worth much more than the Saracens are
 Z Z worth. And for this cause the Saracens were turned away back in flight, and the king
 FB VB of the Christians with all his men enters into the kingdom of Aden by force. But
 VB you may know well that a very great number of his own men and also of Saracens
 were killed at that pass. And what shall I go telling you? You may know quite
 truly that when the king of Abasce with his people was entered into the kingdom
 V of Aden in three places indeed or in four the Saracens were driven back in front of

¹ V: *vil et* B. suggests that *vil* is a corruption of *.iii.*