

BOGA SETS ARGON FREE & KILLS THE MELIC ~~≠~~MARCO POLO
 Z to court to take *solace and* pleasure with all the fair ladies whom he had there. He
 TA leaves a great melic *his deputy* as lord of all the army, and leaves Argon for him to
 keep, and says that he is to be kept as dearly as he held his own body. And he
 tells his melic to come away to court by small¹ marches for the saving of his people.
 V And the melic says that his commandment [102d] shall be well done. Then Acmat
 L departs with a great company and put himself on the road to go to court *with speed,*
for he was more than fifteen marches distant. In such a way as I have told you Acmat
 departed from his army and left that melic of whom I have told you master of it.
 And Argon was left captive and in irons, and stayed so sorrowful that he would
 wish to die.

Z HOW ARGON WAS PRISONER AND HOW IT IS PLANNED THAT HE SHOULD BE
 V SET FREE. Now it happened that a great Tartar baron *who was rich,*
 TA H who was of a very great age, *subject to the Soldan,* had great pity for Argon
 TA who *ought to be his lawful master,* and says to himself that they do great evil and great
 V disloyalty in holding their lord prisoner. And he says that he will do all he can
 that he may be set free. Then he makes no delay but all immediately goes off to
 TA many other barons *of the host* and tells them how that they did great evil in that
 they held their liege lord prisoner, and that it would be a great good if they were
 to deliver him and make him their lord as he ought to be by reason. And when
 the other barons, who heard what this one had put before them, both knew him for
 one of the wisest men who were there and also recognized that he said truth, they all
 agree with him and told him that they were gladly willing for it. And when the
 TA barons were agreed to this, then *a baron who was named Boga,* that is he who had
 put all this forward, and with him were these, Elcidai and Togan, Tegana, Tagaciar,
 Oulatai, and Samagar; all these whom you have heard named go off to the [103a]
 L tent where Argon was *kept* prisoner. And when they were come there, then Boga,
 who was the elder and head of this deed, speaks first and says in such fashion:
 L Fair lord Argon, says he, we know quite clearly that we have done evil & *un-*
reasonably in that we have taken you. So we tell you that we wish to turn to do
 well and to the right, that is that we wish to set you free, and that you may be
 our liege lord as you are by right. Then Boga is silent that he says no more.

V HOW ARGON WAS SET FREE. (HOW ARGON HAD THE RULE.²) Now when
 Z V H Argon had heard what Boga had said he believes quite truly that it is
 mockery of him and answers very scornfully and sadly *in this way:* Fair

¹ Z: *paucis* which is, in effect, the opposite of *petite*. V: *in pochi di*

² The rubric of this chapter is accidentally omitted in the MS., and that of the next chapter
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