

TOCTAI MEETS NOGAI IN THE PLAIN OF NERGHI ≠ MARCO POLO

HOW TOCTAI GOES TO MEET NOGAI. And when the king Toctai was well prepared he departed and set himself on the way with all his people. And you may know quite truly that he takes quite 200000 horsemen.

z And they ride so far by their days marches [110b] without finding adventure which is worthy of mention again¹ that they were come to the plain of Nerghi which was very great and fair, and there he pitched his camp to wait for Nogai. For he knew that he was coming as fast as ever he can to the battle. Moreover you may

z well know of a truth that the two sons of Tolobuga were *come there* with a very fine company of horsemen, who were come to avenge the death of their father.

z But then we will leave Toctai and his people and will turn *back* to Nogai and to his men. Now you may know quite truly that when Nogai knew that Toctai was moved and that he was coming up, he makes no delay but set himself on the way with all his people. And you may know that he had quite 150000 horsemen, too good people and valiant, better enough men of arms than were those of Toctai. And what shall I tell you about it? He does not wait at all two days after that Toctai was come into that plain before he was come there with all his people and pitched his camp well and orderly near by ten miles to the enemy. And when the camp was

z spread then one can see many beautiful pavilions of cloth of gold *and of silk* and many beautiful tents. It is indeed like a camp of a rich king. And that of Toctai was not at all less beautiful nor less rich, but more; for he had there such rich

VB pavilions and such rich tents that it was a wonder to see *so many men drawn up on that plain with so many pavilions and tents all richly adorned*. And when both these kings

VB VB were come into this plain of [110c] Nerghi they stop *for ten days* so as to *prepare themselves and to be fresh and rested on the day of the battle*.

HOW TOCTAI SPEAKS TO HIS PEOPLE. And the king Toctai gathers his people and makes a great parliament and speaks among them in such

VB z manner: *Valiant Sirs, says he, brothers and comrades, we are come here to fight with the king Nogai and with his men; and to do this we are very right, for you know that all this hatred and this rancour is come about because Nogai would*

VB *not come to do justice to the sons of Tolobuga, but answered as if he were overlord that whoever wished to ask anything of him should come to his court.*² And truly since he departs from justice it is right that we be victors in this battle and that he be dead and destroyed in it. And for this reason each one of you must encourage himself

¹ *encore* B. corrects to *en conte*. cf. p.449 n.3 above.

² It has been impossible to include the many additions to the rhetoric of this passage which are found in VB (fol. 39c). They tell us no new facts.