NOTES ON MARCO POLO

BY

PAUL PELLIOT

1. ABACAN

abaccatum Z	*abatam* VA	*abatham* P
abachan FB	*abatan* F, FA, TA¹, VB, VL	*abattan* L
abagatan V	*abatar* LT	*abbaccatan* R
abaiam TA³		

The name is doubtless corrupt. PAUTHIER (*Pa*, 544) thought that «Abacan» was certainly the general whose name he wrongly read as 阿剌罕 A-tz'ŭ-han; but it is A-la[剌]-han, as SCHLEGEL justly remarked in 1898. In «Abacan», SCHLEGEL saw a clerical error for «Alacan», and this correction has been considered as possible, or probable, in *Y*, II, 596; III, 103; *RR*, 410; *B¹*, 437. CHARIGNON (*Ch*, III, 123) takes this solution for granted, and gives the credit of it to the «ancient Jesuits», but without authority. Palaeographically, the corruption is possible, and we have cases like *babisci* for *balisci* in PAGNINI's Pegolotti (cf. *Y¹*, III, 149, 154).

The original form of the name transcribed A-la-han in Chinese can be ascertained. There is a biography of A-la-han in *YS*, 129, 3 *b*-4 *b*; an account of his life is also given in the inscription written by Yü Chi concerning his son El-temür (*Tao-yüan hsio-ku lu*, ed. *Ssŭ-pu ts'ung-k'an*, 24, 1-6); both have been critically combined by T'u Chi, 93, 2 *b*-4 *b*. A-la-han was a Jalair, the son of 也柳干 Yeh-liu-kan (*Yälügän); and Rašīdu-'d-Dīn (*Bl*, II, 576) speaks of a general الاقان Alaqan, son of جیکه بهادر Jilügä-bahadur; the alternation of *y*- and *J*- seems due to the fact that the same sign marks these two sounds at the beginning of words in Uighur-Mongol writing, but the two names are the same (with *i* [= *e*] ∿ *ä*, and the quiescent final -*n* usual in Mongolian). So we can be sure that, in the present case, A-la-han is to be understood as Alaqan; GAUBIL's «Argan» (also «Hargan», «Algan»; cf. *Hist. de Gentchiscan*, 161, 169, 191-192; *Y*, II, 261) is a wrong restitution.