

6. ACMAT¹

achmac, achmach bailo R

RAMUSIO, our only source for this chapter, writes «Achmach Bailo» and «Achmac». I have corrected them to «Acmat», taking *-c* for a misreading of *-t*, but after much hesitation, since such changes of finals are also always possible in popular speech. The original name is of course Aḥmad. Polo has a final *-t* when he speaks of another Aḥmad (see «Acmat»²) and the confusions between *t* and *c* are so frequent in mediaeval mss. that I think we can safely adopt «Acmat». For the second element, see «Bailo».

Aḥmad, in Chinese 阿合馬 A-ha-ma, a man from Bānākāth (south-west of Tashkend) according to Mussulman writers, was Qubilai's most powerful minister when he was assassinated (April 10, 1282). In addition to his biography in YS, 205 (and in T'u Chi, 106, 1-6), there are countless mentions of Aḥmad and his family in YS and other Chinese works of the time. Rašidu-'d-Dīn's account and most of the Chinese texts relating to Aḥmad's murder have been translated by MOULE in JNCB, 1927, 1-28; this is not the place to undertake a fresh comparison of them all. I wish only to point out a few additional facts:

1. Although 和尚 *ho-shang* means «Buddhist monk» and, as such, was commonly employed at the time in «vulgar» language as the equivalent of Turk. and Mong. *toīn*, it was also then very often used as a personal name, either alone in the case of non-Chinese people, or with a surname prefixed in the case of Chinese. WANG Hui-tsu¹, 18, 9-10, distinguishes 13 men called Ho-shang in YS alone, and, for others with a Chinese surname, including Kao Ho-shang, feels unable to decide whether Ho-shang is here a personal name or is to be understood as indicating that they were monks.

2. In the case of Kao Ho-shang, Aḥmad's biography (YS, 205, 3 b) calls him a 妖僧 *yao-sēng*, «monk of black arts», and Yü Chi (cf. JNCB, 1927, 34) «the monk of black arts, the *p'u-sa* (*bodhisattva*) Kao»; but Yü Chi was only ten years old in 1282, and knew the story second-hand. That Kao Ho-shang was some sort of a magician is confirmed by an earlier text (YS, 11, 1 a; cf. JNCB, 1928, 257), which says: «The 17th year *chih-yüan*, ... the second month, on the day *i-hai* (March 12, 1280), Chang I said: 'Kao Ho-shang exercises magical practices; he can bring devils (*kui*) to serve as soldiers and [can also] reduce the enemy from afar.' An order was issued that Ho-li-ho-sun (Qoryosun) should take soldiers and with Kao Ho-shang go to the northern borders.» Chang I was a man of note, a colleague of Aḥmad as *p'ing-chang* from 1270 to at least 1275, and it is of some importance to find him interested in Kao Ho-shang already in 1280, as he is one of those who were executed as being party to Aḥmad's murder.

3. As MOULE has justly observed (cf. also JNCB, 1928, 257), it is difficult not to admit that the Kau *finjan* of Rašidu-'d-Dīn is Kao Ho-shang; but Kao Ho-shang was not *finjan*, that is to say a *p'ing-chang*, and nothing shows that he had anything to do with the siege of Hsiang-yang, while