

as the «melic» (*q. v.*) meant by Polo must be Alināq, killed in 1284 (cf. *Y*, II, 474). But the text is surprising. Polo says that the «melic» of whom he has spoken and who has been killed «avoit a non Soldan» and was the greatest lord after Aḥmad. Already during the second half of the Abassid caliphate, the title of *sultān*, originally borne only by the caliph, had commonly been usurped by any powerful chief (cf. BECKER, in *Der Islam*, VI, 350 sq.). It is quite possible that Polo should have heard of Alināq as «the Sultān», and not known his true name. Or he may have confused Alināq with Sultān *idāji*, who had great power under Arḡun and was finally killed on March 4, 1291, three days before Arḡun himself died (cf. *Oh*, IV, 56-57).

20. ALTAI

achai, chai VB
alcai F, VL
alcay FA, FB, L
alcaym G
alchahy LT

alchai TA³, VA, VL
alchaim TA³
alchay LT, P, TA¹
allai VA

altai, batai V
altay R
dalcay FB
elcay FA

The name is of course that of the Altai mountains, but it is not used in the sense of Altai proper, either Northern or Southern. Moreover, Polo never went to any Altai. In the text, the name of Altai first occurs, after the paragraph on Qaraqorum and the history of Chinghiz-khan, as that of a great mountain where all the «great lords» («grant seingnors») of the line of Chinghiz-khan are taken to be buried. The second time, Polo, having told what he had to say about the god and the laws of the Tartars, takes leave of «Qara-qorum and Altai — where the [Great Lords of the] Tartars are buried —» to speak of tribes still more to the north. It is evident that Polo means by Altai a mountain north of the Gobi; YULE (*Y*, I, 247) had too much common sense to think otherwise, and *B*¹, 438, has misunderstood him when he makes him look for Polo's Altai «immediately north of the Great Wall near Kalgan». Without too much precision in his mind, Polo certainly means, by Altai, the traditional place of Chinghiz-khan's burial, somewhere near the sources of the Onon and the Kerulen. Whether Qubilai and his successors were also buried there is another question, which however need not be here taken into account, as Polo left China before Qubilai's death. For the difficult problem of Chinghiz-khan's death and burial, see «Caagiu».

YULE (*Y*, I, 247) has said that the name of Altai was used in a rather loose way by «Sanang Setsen», but he is not quite correct. In «Sanang Setsen», it is said (SCHMIDT, 103) that Chinghiz-Khan died when his camp was on the southern side of the «Altan-ḡan» (not «Altun-ḡan» as in YULE; *altun* is Turkish), on the banks of the Qara-mörän (Yellow river). «Altan-ḡan» is Mongolian, and means «Gold Lord[-Mountain]», but the legend carries us far to the south-west of the Khingan YULE speaks of, and, unless we correct «Altan» to «Altai», there is nothing to prove that