

As to the title from which *bailo* has been corrupted, we may perhaps make a guess. Although almost all-powerful, Aḥmad was not a *ch'êng-hsiang* (see «Cingsan») until shortly before his death, in 1282. From 1270, for a number of years, he was a 平章 *p'ing-chang* (YS, 112, 5 b-6 a), and there can be no doubt that such was the title under which he was commonly spoken of; it is the one which Rašīdu-'d-Dīn (Bl, II, 508) gives to him, under the usual Persian form فنجان *finjān* (perhaps to be read *fūnjān*; see «Pianfu»). So, in Chinese as well as in Persian circles, *p'ing-chang* is certainly the title under which Polo knew Aḥmad in China, and it is the one we should expect to find in his narrative (for this use of the title when speaking of a *p'ing-chang*, cf. for instance BEFEO, IX, 677). I think Polo dictated *Pinjan (or *Punjan?), which was transcribed something like *Bicia or *Bucia, and it is the form which, misread, and with the attraction of a familiar title, gave birth to «Bailo». Polo's original form probably began with *p*-, and we have other cases where a similar change between *p* and *b* occurs; apart from «Apusca» where we would expect «Abusca», cf. the double form «Batui» and «Patu» for Batu. In favour of *Picia, with *i*, we may note the «Pinzanus» of a Papal letter of 1338, which is quite possible for *p'ing-chang* (cf. Mo, 264). For a probable Burmese alteration of *p'ing-chang*, cf. BEFEO, IX, 660. On *p'ing-chang*, cf. also Y¹, III, 120; TP, 1916, 526-527.

Another explanation would be that Polo used *bailo* as a substitute for some Oriental title, and that «come si diria Vicario» was an explanation of *bailo* added by Rustichello or by RAMUSIO. This would have the advantage of retaining the text as it is, but the divergent translations suffice to show that the text, as it stands, is not easy to accept, and in such a case it would also be difficult to account for the second mention of «Achmach Bailo», instead of «Bailo Achmach». Moreover, *bailo* in Italian, *baile* in French, were well-known words, and I doubt that they should have required an explanation. I rather think that the explanatory words are due to Polo himself, as a sort of translation of the Oriental title he had used.

53. BALC

balabach V

balac Fr, t, FA, FB, TA¹, TA³,

LT, L

balach VA, VL, R

balc F, VB, L

balch Z

baldach P, S

This is Balkh, on which cf. «Balkh» in EI, by R. HARTMANN; LS, 420-423; Mi, 337. It is the only original Western mention of Balkh in the Middle Ages, if we except, a century later, «Vaeq» (corrupt for *Valq) in CLAVIJO. «Balcia» of the Catalan Map, «Baleges» of the Medeci Map, «Balch» of Fra Mauro, and even «Waldach» of the Walsperger Map (cf. HALLBERG, 59-60) seem all to be based on Polo mss. In the translations made at Damietta in 1221 of an Arabic document bearing on the Mongol invasion of Iran, I believe that we must identify with Balkh not only the «Bolche» of the first «charta», as is said by ZARNCKE, but also the «Barach» of the second and the «Balch» of the third (cf. ZARNCKE, *Der Priester Johannes*, II, 40, 53, 57, 59). For mentions of Balkh in Chinese texts before the Mongol period, cf. CHAVANNES, *Doc. sur les Tou-kiue*, 319; also my remarks in JA, 1934, I, 42-43. For a Khotanese form Bāhūlaka, cf. BSOS, IX, 546.