

55. BANGALA

<i>bagaliar</i> V	<i>bangalan</i> F	<i>bangilla</i> LT
<i>balgana, bulgana, malgana</i> G	<i>bangalla</i> V, VA, VB	<i>bangula</i> FAt
<i>banchale, banghala</i> TA ¹	<i>anganla</i> Z	<i>ghanghala</i> TA ¹ , TA ³
<i>bangala</i> F, Fr, t, FA, FB, L, LT, P, V, VA, Z; R	<i>banghalla, bughala, chan- ghala</i> TA ³	<i>pangala</i> VA <i>sangala</i> FB

Polo's account of Bengal is what he had heard in Yün-nan. In it there are many errors and contradictions, for instance when he says that the king of «Mien» (= Burma) was also king of «Bangala» and that Qubilai took both kingdoms away from him, but later on he devotes a special paragraph to «Bangala», without any further mention of «Mien», and says that it had not yet been conquered by Qubilai, although Qubilai had already had troops assembled for that purpose. CHARIGNON's attempt (*Ch*, II, 260) to derive all mentions of «Bangala» in Polo from «Pagan» or from «Mangala» (on account of the Marigala-caitya at Pagan!) are valueless, and ought not to have been taken into account in *B*¹, 438. YULE (*Y*, II, 99, 128) has thought that Polo mixed up the data relating to Pegu (Burm. Pagóh), which he had heard in Yün-nan, with the accounts of Bengal given by men who had gone there by sea. For Prof. BENEDETTO (*B*¹, 438), the name «Bangala» is really that of Bengal, but Polo uses it only as a designation of an Indo-Chinese country which is probably Pegu.

I cannot agree with most of YULE's and BENEDETTO's views on «Bangala». The name of course is certainly that of Bengal. We could suppose that in the case of «Mien and Bangala», «Bangala» has been altered from «Baigo», or some such name, under the influence of the «province» of «Bangala», Bengal, which is described further on. We would thus escape the contradictions mentioned at the beginning of the present note. But all mss. agree, though there are no parallel passages in Z, so that provisionally at least, we can but keep the text as it stands. It looks as if the long account of the battle with the «king of Mien and Bangala» was a separate narrative somewhat clumsily inserted after the original dictation of the rest of these chapters.

As to the «province» of «Bangala», I have no doubt, despite BENEDETTO's objections, that Polo really means Bengal, and not Pegu. YULE has already noted that POLO's indications in that chapter, scanty as they are, apply to Bengal, and not to Pegu (cf. also DAMES, *Barbosa*, II, 147). Moreover, there has always been, from before the Christian era, a land route leading direct from Bengal to Yün-nan via Burma. Polo's contemporary, Rašidu'-d-Din, describes it (cf. *infra*), and it is only too natural that Polo should have heard of it in Yün-nan. But, hearing of «Bangala» in Yün-nan, and although knowing that it was towards India, he still attached it to Indo-China, the size and shape of which were to him a mystery, and so developed, beyond the southern borders of China, the line of his three «provinces» of «Bangala», «Caugigu» and «Amu», where the errors are not confined to Bengal. In truth, it is precisely the nature of