

## 134. CHAIERO

*caiaro* VB<sup>2</sup>*cairo* R*chaiero* VB (in *B*)

I think «Caire» must have been Rustichello's French spelling for Cairo; cf. «Kaire» and «Kayre» in Hethum (*Hist. des Crois.*, Arm., II, 230, 232, 347, 348), «Chayre» on the Catalan Map.

Polo generally uses «Babilonie» instead of «Caire», so that YULE suspected an editorial change in RAMUSIO's text which gives «Cairo» in the passage relating to the navigation on the Nile (Y, II, 439). *RR*, 353, and *B*, 369, have changed «Caire» into «Babilonia», evidently impressed by YULE's idea that Polo never mentions the name Cairo. But since the name of Cairo is given in *VB*, and so cannot be attributed to RAMUSIO, I prefer to retain it. Polo repeats here oral information of Mussulman origin and uses the Arabic words «çerme» and «Calizene»; it is quite natural then that he should also keep the name Cairo used by his informants.

The question may be raised whether he does not use it elsewhere. In the passage on the bishops, etc., sent abroad by the Nestorian Patriarch, the mss. of groups *F* and *TA* have «Cata» and the like, *i. e.* Cathay, but *Z* writes «Alochayray» and *R* «al Cairo». A mention of Cairo would not now be excluded *a priori*, since we have another in the passage relating to navigation on the Nile. But I agree with BENEDETTO that Cathay must here be meant, especially because there were no Nestorian activities in Egypt in the 13th cent.

To my knowledge, the name of Cairo occurs only once in Chinese texts, *i. e.* in 1225, when Chao Ju-kua writes it 𪛗野 Chieh-yeh, and calls it a «district» (州 *chou*), not a «city» as in the translation. The transcription, which would suppose \*Kēyā, is unsatisfactory, as also the others in that chapter which relate legends of unknown origin (cf. *HR*, 144-145).

## 135. CHARIZIERA

*chariziera* V (and see BERCA)

The name is doubtful, and difficult to identify. One is tempted to connect it with «Tharzara», which occurs in *V* as a corrupt reading for «Berca» (*q. v.*); but Bärkä, who died in 1266 at the latest, is of course impossible here. BENEDETTO (*B*<sup>1</sup>, 429) thought that Baraq (see «Barac») was actually meant. Yet there are serious difficulties in such an identification. Baraq was defeated in 1270 and died *c.* August 1271; but these events took place in eastern Persia and western Afghanistan, and ought not to have exerted a belated and far-away influence upon the progress of the Polos from the Mediterranean to Mesopotamia and western Persia in October 1271.

Another hypothesis would be to connect the Polos' stop at «Laias» with the Mongol advance towards northern Syria in the second half of October, 1271. But the chief officer in command