

Lone Tree

<i>abbero del sole</i> TA ³	<i>alboro solo</i> V, VA	<i>arbor sola</i> LT, Z
<i>albero del sole</i> TA ³ ; R	<i>alterum solum</i> LT	<i>arbre seul</i> F, FA, FB
<i>albero solo</i> TA ¹ , TA ³	<i>arbor seul</i> L	<i>arbre sol</i> F, FA
<i>alboro del solle</i> V	<i>arbor sol</i> L, P	

Much has been written on the Dry, or Lone, Tree; the main information is to be found in *Pa*, 95-96; *Y*¹, II, 103; CORDIER, *Odoric de Pordenone*, 21-29; and, above all, in *Y*, I, 128-139, and III, 31, and in GRIMAUDI, *Il mito degli alberi del Sole e della Luna e dell' Albero secco nella Geografia e nella Cartografia medievale* (in *Atti del V° Congresso Geografico Italiano*, Naples, 1905, II, 828-842).

The first point to establish is the true form of the names. The important passages are those of *B*, 32 (XL⁸⁻⁹), « l'arbre seul que les cristiens appellent l'arbre seche », and of *B*, 222 (CCIII³⁻⁴), « l'arbre sol que eu livre d'Alexandre est apellé l'arbre seche ». For « arbre seche », there is no discrepancy: all Mss., in all versions, have the equivalent of « Dry Tree ». The case is different with the first name. TA, and V, followed by GRYNAEUS and RAMUSIO, have understood it as meaning « Tree of the Sun »; MARSDEN (pp. 109-111) adopted this in his turn, and YULE has tried to prove (*Y*, I, 129, 135, 138) that such was the correct rendering of « Arbre Sol »; he has been approved by CHARIGNON (*Ch*, I, 71) and PENZER (*Pe*, 344); RICCI-ROSS (*RR*, 411) retain « Arbre Sol » without any comment. FR. KAMPERS (*Vom Werdegange der abendländischen Kaisersmystik*, Leipzig, 1924) based his reasoning of p. 118 on the assumption that Polo's « Arbre Sol » was the « Tree of the Sun ». Yet, in BENEDETTO (*B*¹, 437) as well as in MOULE's translation (cf. Vol. I, 128, 456), it is not « Tree of the Sun », but « Lone Tree » which has been adopted. In my opinion, there is not the slightest doubt that this is the only acceptable translation. YULE took much pains to demonstrate that *sol* meant « sun » in both Venetian and Provençal, and that, in mediaeval French, the prepositional sign (*de*, *du*) was not necessary to the genitive. He added that « it is the Tree of the Sun that is prominent in the legendary History of Alexander, a fact sufficient in itself to rule the reading ». But there are many flaws in his argument. To begin with the end, it is not « Arbre Sol », but « Arbre seche » which is ascribed by Polo to the Book of Alexander. A second point is that F has « Arbre sol » only once, but the second time « Arbre seul », and that LT as well as Z have rendered it « arbor sola ». Another objection which ought to have occurred to YULE and was raised by HOUTUM-SCHINDLER (*JRAS*, 1909, 157) is that *sol*, at least in the feminine *sole*, occurs elsewhere in F with the meaning « alone », while the word for « sun », whatever it may be in Venetian or Provençal, is « soleil » in F (cf. *B*, 35 [XLIV¹²], 190²⁶, 214²⁸, 232 [CCXIX³]; once « solei » in *B*, 29 [XXXVII¹⁶]). Finally, when Polo explains that there is not a single other tree for more than a hundred miles, except in one direction where there are trees at a distance of ten miles, this is in itself a clear comment on the name of the « Arbre Sol », or « Arbre Seul », the « Lone Tree ».

Such being the case, no time need be wasted on PAUTHIER's absurd « Arbre Solque » (*Pa*, 95), already refuted by YULE (*Y*, I, 129), nor on the joint lucubration of the orientalist REINAUD and the mediaevalist FRANCISQUE MICHEL, according to whom the plane is sometimes confused with the poplar, in Arabic حور *hawwar*, which Polo may in his turn have confused with Pers. خور *hōr*, خ *hor*,