

Bolod *čingsang*, the well-known Mongol informant of Rašidu-'d-Dīn, reminded Ghazan of the famous tree near which his (Ghazan's) remote ancestor, Chinghiz-khan's grand-uncle Qutula (« Kubilakaan » in *Ha*¹, II, 116, is a wrong reading), had been enthroned and around which the Mongols had danced to the point of beating down the ground around it by one ell (*Ha*¹, II, 116; cf. the parallel account in the *Secret History*, § 57, and see « Cinghis », p. 335); it had since become a favourite resort for pilgrims.

For Polo's Lone Tree, another hypothesis has been proposed, which deserves more attention than PAUTHIER's. When speaking above of the *name* used by Polo, I have discarded HOUTUM-SCHINDLER's explanation as *diraht-i sol*, but that does not mean that the tradition of the cypress of Zoroaster cannot be taken into consideration. HOUTUM-SCHINDLER's intricate and somewhat contradictory theory was that Polo, while mentioning a *diraht-i sol*, « sol tree », which was the cypress of Zoroaster, hence his « Arbre Sol », had confused it with a solitary big Oriental Plane, the one which he, in fact, described as « Arbre Seul », « Lone Tree ». If we leave out the mistaken etymology of « Arbre Sol », a possible connection with the cypress of Zoroaster, already suggested by YULE (*Y*, I, 131), had been accepted, a few years before HOUTUM-SCHINDLER, by LE STRANGE (*LS*, 356), who said of the legend of that cypress: « It is possibly the origin of Marco Polo's ' Arbre Sol which we Christians call Arbre Sec ' ».

Even at the cost of a partial duplication of YULE's statements, it may be useful, in view of what I shall have to say on the « Dry Tree », to copy here LE STRANGE's summary of the legend (I adapt the spelling of Oriental names to the system used in the present notes): « Mustawfī [writing in 1339-1340] states that at the village of Kišmar, near Turšiz, had stood the celebrated cypress-tree, originally planted by Zoroaster as a memorial of the conversion of King Guštasp to the Magian religion. This tree grew to be larger than any other cypress that had ever been, and according to the *Šāh nāmāh* it sprang from a branch brought by Zoroaster from Paradise. Such too was its power that earthquakes, which frequently devastated all the neighbouring districts, never did any harm in Kišmar. According to Qazwīnī [writing in 1275] the Caliph Mutawakkil in 247 (861) caused this mighty cypress to be felled, and then transported it across all Persia, in pieces carried on camels, to be used for beams in his new palace at Sāmarrā. This was done in spite of the grief and protests of all the Guebres, but when the cypress arrived on the banks of the Tigris, Mutawakkil was dead, having been murdered by his son. » In a note, LE STRANGE adds that there is nothing about the Kišmar cypress in Ṭabarī or apparently in any of the earlier Arab chronicles, and that an amplified version of the story is found in the *Dabistān*, a work of the 16th cent. (it is quoted by YULE). Another cypress-tree, which had also risen from a shoot brought by Zoroaster from Paradise, was said to exist at Ferūmad, in the region of Tūs, about 100 miles east of Šāhrūd and 16 miles north of the high-road to Mešed (cf. *Y*, I, 131; HOUTUM-SCHINDLER, in *JRAS*, 1909, 158). YULE was also much impressed by Mustawfī's mention at « Bostam » (so written in our maps; more anciently Bastām or Bisṭām, south-east of the south-eastern angle of the Caspian) of a « dry tree » (*diraht-i hušk*) said to have originally been the staff of Mahomet (or of Moses; cf. *JRAS*, 1909, 161).

But has Polo's Lone Tree or Dry Tree anything to do with any of those, and if it has, with which one? YULE started from the fact that Polo more than once speaks of the « Lone Tree » or « Dry Tree » to characterize the whole northern and north-eastern frontier of Ḥorasān: all the