

« Mahal », with a notice (cf. *Zu*, 63) : « The Mahal Island is inhabited by Christians; there is an archbishop on it; on the said [island] much amber is found; the corsairs of those seas have there their haunt, and they spread and place in deposit their plunder there; the place where the bishop resides is called Schorian. » It seems clear that « Schorian » is an erroneous reading of Polo's Scotra, analogous to Schora of TA³ r, Scorta of Ft, etc. (see « Scotra »), and that we have here a duplication of Socotra. The notice of the two islands north of Mahal says (*Zu*, 63) : « These two islands are inhabited by Christians; the women live in one of them, called Nebila, the men in the other called Mangla, and they stay only three months in the year with the women ». No doubt is possible that the notices of the three islands are taken from Polo, but with the exception of the three names Mahal, Mangla and Nebila. These cannot be due to Conti, whose information on « Sechutera » (in RAMUSIO's version « Zocotera ») is embodied in Fra Mauro's notice of Sochotra. Moreover, one of them at least occurs before Conti. YULE (*Y*, II, 405) has noticed that Nebile was already mentioned on two of Marino Sanudo's maps (and on Paolino da Venezia's; cf. GOLUBOVICH, *Bibl. Bio-bibl.*, II, 85); Nebile also appears on the Vesconti map (cf. HALLBERG, 368; HALLBERG has a notice on Socotra, but without Fra Mauro's « Schorian », and no notice on the Male and Female Islands). The Catalan map has a « Regio Femnarum », which may be due to Polo, but then is misplaced between « Malao » (see « Malaiur ») and « Semescra » (see « Sumatra »; cf. BUCHON, 4th map, and p. 156); no other names are given there. YULE wondered at the names « Mangla » and « Nebila », the first reminding him of Skr. *maṅgala*, « fortunate », and the second of Arabic *nabīlah*, « beautiful ». It seems to me probable that the three names are derived from an unidentified source which cannot be Polo and, in view of the occurrence of Nebile on a map of the early 14th cent. (Sanudo's work was presented to John XXII in September 1321), must be dated in about the first quarter of that century.

The three names could be located with certainty only if we could account for all of them, and this is not the case. One, however, lends itself to a probable explanation, that of Mahal. It seems to represent مهل Mahal or محل Maḥal, now Mālē, the island of the Maldives on which Ibn Baṭṭūṭah (IV, 111) and Sīdī 'Alī Čelebī (*Fe*, 533) agree that the king of the Maldives had his residence, and which has given its name to the whole group (cf. also « Mahaldu » of Barbosa, DAMES transl., II, 104). Instead of « Ibn Baṭṭūṭah and Sīdī 'Alī Čelebī », FERRAND (*JA*, 1924, I, 120) says « Sulaymān and Ibn-Baṭṭūṭah »; but the Sulaymān of the 9th cent. does not mention Mahal, and FERRAND probably means, in an incorrect chronological order, Sulaymān ibn Aḥmad al-Mahrī, whose work, dated 1512, has been so largely used by Sīdī 'Alī Čelebī; I must remark, however, that although Maḥal appears in the later Sulaymān's description of the Maldives published and translated by FERRAND in *JA*, 1924, I, 115-119, nothing is said there of the king's residence. If the quotation be correct, it must come from some other paragraph.

Since Mahal also enters Fra Mauro's « Divamoal », i. e. the Maldives (see « Cowry »), we must admit that the name occurs twice on his map, on account of his use of different sources; but this is not a rare occurrence. In the 9th cent. Sulaymān (FERRAND's transl., 31) and Maš'ūdī in the 10th (*Prairies d'or*, I, 335) say that the Maldives were governed by a woman. Idrīsī (JAUBERT's transl., I, 67) also ascribes a prominent position to the Maldivian queen; but I do not think that this can account for Fra Mauro's location of Mahal, confused with Socotra, in the vicinity of the Male and Female Islands. Mangla and Nebila or Nebile remain mysterious. Sulaymān ibn Aḥmad al-Mahrī