

253. HORIAT

<i>boriat</i> R	<i>horiath</i> P	<i>oriach</i> VA
<i>buat o oriat</i> TA ¹	<i>orati</i> VL	<i>oriat</i> (TA ¹) VB
<i>horiad</i> FA, FB	<i>oriac</i> (?) LT	<i>ouat</i> TA ³
<i>horiat</i> F, L		

This is the reading of F; RAMUSIO has « Boriat »; no parallel passage in Z. Since PAUTHIER (*Pa*, 226) and YULE (*Y*, I, 308), it has been admitted that « Horiat » means the Oirat, a Mongol tribe which appears already in Chinghiz-khan's history and which, much later, and in much altered conditions, gave its name to the Oirat, or Kalmuk, or Western Mongols. Plan Carpine writes « Voyrat » (*Wy*, 56, 88). According to Rašidu-'d-Dīn, the Oirat had their seat, when Mongol history begins, in the region of the Kām River, that is to say the Yenissei. But there are some difficulties about « Horiat ».

The Mongolian form, from the *Secret History* of 1240 down to late chronicles, is Oyirat, and, in § 239 of the *Secret History*, « Tūmān Oyirat », « Ten-thousand Oyirat », which is only one of the numerous cases when a fixed number became attached to the name of a Turkish or Mongol tribe (the same chronicle knows the « Ten-Thousand Tübāgān », a branch of the Kerait; the « Ten-Thousand Kirghiz »; etc.). Rašidu-'d-Dīn writes اوريات Oirat; the Chinese transcriptions vary from 猥刺 Wei-la (*YS*, I, 6 a; not « Ta-shi Wei-la » as in *Br*, II, 160) and 斡亦刺 Wo-i-la = Oyirat (*YS*, I, 6 b) to the ethnic 歪刺歹 Wai-la-tai (*YS*, 43, 3 b) or 外刺歹 Wai-la-tai (*Cho-keng lu*, I, 15 b), i. e. Oiradai; in Ming times, the Oirat are called in Chinese 瓦刺 Wa-la, not a very accurate transcription.

From all these forms and transcriptions, it is clear that there has never been, in the pronunciation of the Mongol period, an *h*- at the beginning of the word. On the other hand, this is the only proper name beginning with *h*- in F, and RAMUSIO has a *b*-.

Apart from the name, Polo says that the Horiat are the only ones, outside of the Imperial family, to be allowed to drink the milk of the Imperial white mares, which must be the *caracosmos* (< = **caracomos*, *qara-qumīz*) of Rubrouck. But nothing, in the texts we know, corroborates Polo's statement. The tribe hereditarily in charge of the Imperial mares was the Qīpčaḡ, of Turkish origin (cf. *JA*, 1920, I, 169-171). As to the privilege of drinking milk otherwise reserved to the Imperial family, we would expect rather, as PALLADIUS said, the name of the Qonḡrat or Onggirat (see « Ungrac »), to whose tribe most of the first rank Empresses belonged. No victory of Chinghiz-khan is particularly associated with the Oirat. One family of Oirat married princesses, the Yen-an princesses of *YS*, 109, 2 b, but so also, apart from the Onggirat, did other tribes, for instance the Öngüt (see « Unc »).

In spite of these objections, I have no better solution to propose for the present. To read « Boriat » with RAMUSIO would not help, as the Buriat are practically unknown in Mongol history