

263. JAVA (c. 163)

<i>çaua</i> Z	<i>iauaa</i> FA	<i>java</i> G
<i>giaua</i> VL; R	<i>jajia</i> VA	<i>yana, zaua</i> TA ³
<i>iana</i> V	<i>jana</i> FAt, FBr, VA	<i>yaua</i> LT
<i>iaua</i> F, Fr, Lr, VB, VL; R	<i>jaua</i> F, Ft, FB(?), L, LT, P, TA ¹	

The various readings prove that Polo's spelling was not « Iava » and point to « Java » (with French *j* pronounced *ž*, not *j*); the other possibility would be « Giava », but « Giava » appears only in R, where it is almost certainly a modernisation. The name is of course identical with that of our Java.

Both the name and the geographical identity, accepted by PAUTHIER, YULE and others, are so plain that I would not insist upon it if it had not been challenged by BENEDETTO (*B*¹, 443). But BENEDETTO has been unduly impressed by CHARIGNON's preposterous idea (*Ch*, III, 150-157) that Qubilai's campaign of 1292-1293 was led against some part of South-Eastern Indo-China, not against Java. CHARIGNON has induced BENEDETTO to believe in a « Kua-wa kingdom » located near the Mekong estuary. Is it necessary to restate that 瓜瓦 Kua-wa is a misreading of 爪哇 Chao-wa = Java and that not only the name of the country, but those of cities and men are identical in Chinese and Javanese sources? A theory which places the Javanese Majapahit « some 200 *li* NE of the present Saigon » (*Ch*, III, 153) is below the level of a refutation.

BENEDETTO himself is in favour of Polo's « Java » being Borneo, an identification proposed by MARSDEN, but dropped by all subsequent commentators. But there is no reason why Polo's nomenclature should be different from that of the Chinese, Javanese, Malay, Arabic and Persian sources, none of which applies the name « Java » to Borneo. The objections raised by BENEDETTO to « Java » being Java are, I think, of no great weight. The first is that Sumatra being bigger than Java, Polo ought not to call Sumatra « Java la menor » if by « Java » he meant Java. The answer is that Arab and Chinese ships did not then circumnavigate Java as they did for instance Sumatra, and the Southern coast of Java remained unknown to them as, after them, to Western travellers in the 16th cent. (cf. *Y*, II, 274). The second objection is that Java is not to the North-East of Sumatra; the directions are often quite wrong in Polo's text, but I do not see anywhere that he places « Java » to the North-East of « Java la menor ». BENEDETTO adds that, above all, Java is not to the South-East (*a scirocco*) of, and 1 500 miles distant from, Champa. But the text says « between South and South-East », and the case is exactly the same if we adopt Borneo. As to the distance, it is well-known that Polo's indications of distances are often inaccurate, particularly when he speaks by hearsay. YULE had already admitted that the chapter on « Java » was a digression, but thought Polo may have visited Java on a former occasion; this is also the view taken in *RR*, 424 (although, p. VIII, Java is supposed to have been visited on the homeward journey). I do not myself believe that Polo ever went to Java; but, of course, he heard of that « pearl of islands », as YULE calls it, and introduced it into his narrative after Champa, because it was after calling at Champa's main