

279. MARSARCHIS

marchachi V*marchis* VB*marisarchis* LT*marsachis* VA, Z; R*marsarchin* TA³*marsaquis* FB*marsarchis* F, P, P⁵*marsarcho* VL*masarchim* TA¹*morsachis* G

We ought probably to read « Marsarghis », Syriac Mar-Sargis, « Holy Sergius », which in Mongolian has given Mar-Särgis and Mar-Sirgis, in Chinese transcriptions 馬薛里吉思 *Ma Hsieh-li-chi-ssü*, or *Ma Hsieh-êrh*[兒]-*chi-ssü*, or *Ma Hsi*[昔]-*êrh-chi-ssü*. The name is very common among the Nestorians; in the list of seventy odd names of priests engraved on the Nestorian stele of A. D. 781, there are four different Mar-Sargis, if not five.

It is PALLADIUS who discovered the principal Chinese texts relating to Mar-Sargis's tenure of office at Chên-chiang (see « Cinghianfu ») and to the churches he built : six churches in Chên-chiang or the immediate neighbourhood of Chên-chiang, and one in Hang-chou (see « Quinsai »). These texts have been translated by MOULE and L. GILES in *TP*, 1915, 627-686, and again in *Mo*, 145-160; cf. also T'U Chi, 117, 3 *a-b*. Mar-Sargis's family came from Samarkand. His grandfather and his father had served as Court physicians. He himself was called to the Court by Qubilai in 1268 to make a presentation of sherbet; later on, in 1273, he accompanied Sayyid Ajall to Yün-nan; in 1275, he served in Chên-chiang and Fu-chien; in 1277, or early in 1278, he was first appointed governor (*daruyāci*), and a little later reappointed but only vice-governor (*vice-daruyāci*) of Chên-chiang (Mong. *daruyāci*, from *daru-*, « to press », just as its Turkish synonym *basqaq* is from *bas-*, « to press »; the two verbs mean also « to impress », « to print »). Mar-Sargis remained in office at Chên-chiang three years according to Polo, five years according to the inscription due to Liang Hsiang. From Polo's mention of « three years » for Mar-Sargis at Chên-chiang as well as in his own case at Yang-chou (see « Yangiu ») — the case of « Çulficar » at the asbestos mines of « Ghinghin Talas » might be added — YULE (*Y*, II, 178) deduced that the normal term of office in Qubilai's time must have been of three years. As a matter of fact, such a rule, which was moreover in agreement with Chinese custom before and after the Mongol period, was expressly laid down in 1291, but not strictly enforced (cf. *TP*, 1915, 638). For Mar-Sargis, « three years » appears to be too short, as Mar-Sargis arrived at Chên-chiang in February 18, 1278, at the latest, and is said to have been still in office when he founded a monastery there in 1281; but there are some difficulties, linked perhaps with Mar-Sargis's transfer from the position of a *daruyāci* to the lower one of a *vice-daruyāci* (cf. *TP*, 1915, 638, 644-645, 648; *Mo*, 145, 156).

Whatever the case may be, Mar-Sargis seems to have remained the rest of his life in the region of Chên-chiang, and to have exerted some influence there. He was still alive in 1295, as appears from a new document which CH'EN Yüan discovered in the 通制條格 *T'ung-chih t'iao-ko* section of the 大元通制 *Ta-Yüan t'ung-chih* of 1323, and to which MOULE (*Mo*, 233) merely