

alludes. I translate the whole text from the facsimile edition of the Peiping National Library (1930), 29, 10-11 :

« In the first year *yüan-chêng*, the 7th moon, the 23rd day (September 3, 1295), the Grand Secretariat reported as follows : ' The Christian (*yeh-li-k'o-wên, ärkä'ün*) 馬昔思乞思 Ma-hsi-ssü-ch'i-ssü (read Ma-hsi-êrh[兒]-ch'i-ssü, Mar-Sargis), saying that he has built out of his own means, in Chiang-nan, temples (*ssü*, here = churches) in the name of the present Emperor (=Tämür; see « Temur »), of Emperor Säčän (= Qubilai, *q. v.*), of Emperor Yü-tsung (= Čingim; see « Cinchim ») and of the Empress, is not paying the rent for the government land he is using nor the taxes for the fields he has bought, because (the money) is used to burn incense and candles [in praying for the Imperial family]. 愛薛 Ai-hsieh has reported on this, and we have been ordered to discuss the question. Now, the question of trade duties and land taxes to be paid by the *ho-shang* (Buddhist monks), the *hsien-shêng* (Taoist monks; see « Sensin »), the *ärkä'ün* (Christian clergy) and the *ta-shih-man* (Mussulman priest; Pers. *danišmänd* > Mong. *dašman*) has long been reported upon to the Emperor, who has issued an edict to have the decision enforced everywhere. If [Mar-Sargis] is exonerated, that will be contrary to the edict enforced everywhere, and others will avail themselves of that precedent. If [Mar-Sargis] is ordered to pay with corn, he may then, in case his means are not adequate [to meet his debt], have the matter reported again. This was sanctioned by Imperial edict'. »

This interesting document, which mentions the churches built by Mar-Sargis south of the Yang-tzū, shows that Mar-Sargis was still alive in 1295. It provides us at the same time with a fresh text concerning Ai-hsieh, that is to say 'Isa, a Syrian Christian, who lived from 1227 to 1308. The texts concerning him were summed up by me in *TP*, 1914, 638-641, and I have given additional notes in *JA*, 1915, II, 495, and *Pe*, 52-53; see also *Mo*, 228-229, and here, « Bargu ».

It is probable that Polo knew Mar-Sargis while Mar-Sargis was at Chên-chiang, and he is probably indebted to him for the legend of the main pillar of the church at Samarkand hanging in the air after the stone supporting it had been removed (see « Samarcan », and Vol. I, 145), since the same legend occurs in the inscription composed by Liang Hsiang for one of the churches built by Mar-Sargis at Chên-chiang (cf. *Y*, I, 187; II, 178; *TP*, 1915, 632; *Mo*, 146).

Polo speaks only of two Christian churches built by Mar-Sargis, but we know from Chinese texts that Mar Sargis erected six churches at Chên-chiang and in its immediate vicinity, and one at Hang-chou (see « Quinsai »). Two of the churches at Chên-chiang were given back to the Buddhists in 1311 (*TP*, 1915, 642-643), but three of the remaining four still existed in 1333, with one more the erection of which seems not to have been the work of Mar-Sargis, unless he founded it later than the seven churches (one of which was at Hang-chou) mentioned in the inscription of 1281. In all probability there was even an eighth Christian church, the 大光明寺 Ta-kuang-ming-ssü, founded in 1295 by 安馬吉思 An Ma-chi-ssü (cf. *TP*, 1915, 639, 678; *Mo*, 150-151). MOULE thinks that the name of the founder could suggest that the Ta-kuang-ming-ssü was Christian, but adds that the name of the temple, « Temple of the Great Light », sounds rather Manichaeism. It is true that there were still many Manichaeism in China in the Mongol period, but they had no more contact with the West, where Manichaeism had disappeared, and they bore purely Chinese names. As to An Ma-chi-ssü, I believe we must read An Ma-ku[古]-ssü, and that is only another spelling