

may refer to the 府 *fu* cities, for which he found the number 39 in OXENHAM's *Historical Atlas*. But the main division of the Empire during the Mongol dynasties was in 路 *lu*, of which, at the time the materials afterwards used in *YS*, 58, 1 *a*, were collected, there were 185. As to the *fu*, there were then 33; but these *fu*, although their areas were independent of the *lu*, were second in rank to them, and cannot well have been mentioned by Polo. We could also think of the 總管府 *tsung-kuan-fu*, many of which coincided with *lu* seats; but there are serious difficulties in the way of such a solution. It seems as if the « 34 provinces » should be taken in connection with the 31 to 41 *jarγučī*, since Polo says there was only one « judge » for each « province ».

## 333. SCIER

*aner* (?) TA<sup>3</sup>

*astor, oscior, vsca* LT

*cester, ester, socrer* VB

*descer, sciet, scyer* Z

*ersac, su* (?) V

*escer* F, P

*escier* F, FA, L, TA<sup>1</sup>, TA<sup>3</sup>; R

*esier* VA

*estier* FB

*exyet, sor* G

*ezier* FAt

*pecher* R

*scier* TA<sup>1</sup>, TA<sup>3</sup>, Z

*ser* P, TA<sup>1</sup>, VA

*ster* L

YULE's « Esher », RICCI-ROSS's « Eshier » and BENEDETTO's « Escier » (B<sup>1</sup>, 443) are not correct; they are due to copyists' wrong divisions of « de scier » into « d escier ». Sometimes the whole mistaken form has crept in as « descer » (or been altered, as in RAMUSIO, 53 *b*, to « Pecher »; the same alteration « Pecher » occurs in RAMUSIO's edition of Barbosa, I, 292 *a* and *b*; cf. also DAMES, *Barbosa*, I, 54); but « Scier » is well attested by TA, P, Z, and Fra Mauro. Moreover, Polo's « Scier » is not to be interpreted phonetically as simply Šer (as YULE did, and despite « Xer » on REINEL's map of 1516; cf. KAMMERER, *La Mer Rouge*, II, App. IV), but as Ši + er, in two syllables. The name is شير, usually transcribed Šiḥr, a place on the southern coast of Arabia, but the real vocalization in mediaeval times must have been Šiḥār. It is established by Chao Ju-kua (*HR*, 281) who, in 1225, wrote 施曷 *Shih-ho* (*ho* is \*χāt and γāt, with -*t* rendering also -*l* and -*r*, so Šiḥār), later by Polo's « Scier » (= Šiḥār), and even in the 16th cent. (except for the first vowel), by BARBOSA's « Xaer » (ed. DAMES, I, 64-68) and Barros's « Xael » (on this last form, cf. *JA*, 1919, II, 228).

The « Soer » adopted by YULE in one passage and interpreted by him as « Sohār » in the Gulf of Oman (II, 340, 348) has justly embarrassed DAMES; so it may be worth remarking that it is only a misreading for « Scer » = « Scier ». In *EI*, s. v. « al-Shiḥr », A. GROHMANN has said that the Portuguese « Xaer » represented a pronunciation « Šaḥr », « visibly the most ancient », since *šahr* means « coast »; but Chao Ju-kua and Polo invalidate this argument.

On the Chinese map of the early 15th cent. which has been reproduced by PHILLIPS and which is of Mussulman origin, we find (*JNCB*, XIX, 224) a name 失里兒 *Shih-li-êrh*, in which I agree with PHILLIPS in seeing « al-Shiḥr »; but the transcription would be wrong, and there must here be a clerical error for *Shih*-[黑] *hei-êrh*, Šiḥār, giving the same pronunciation as in Chao Ju-kua and in Polo.