

378. VONSAMCIN

<i>ionsamcaym</i> FB	<i>uosanchim</i> P	<i>vonsancin</i> R
<i>iousamchin</i> (?) FA	<i>vansancon</i> VA	<i>vonsanciri</i> Z
<i>nonsan</i> VB	<i>vonsaincin</i> VL	<i>vonsanicin</i> F, L
<i>samin</i> TA ³	<i>vonsanchi</i> LT	<i>vor</i> V
<i>sanicin</i> TA ¹		

This is the form which must be adopted in view of F, R and Z; only their agreement prevents me from preferring Van^o given in VA. It has long been suspected that the name meant 范文虎 Fan Wên-hu, who played a prominent part in the expeditions against Japan, but the second element of the name was never explained. YULE (Y, II, 261) thought that it might have been altered from *sangun* (see « Sangon »), and his idea has been accepted in *Ch*, III, 261, and *B*¹, 449. But, even apart from the fact that Polo's « sangon » is not *chiang-chün*, « general », the attempt was hardly satisfactory from the point of view of palaeography. I have already suggested the proper form in *RR*, 438. The second part, « samcin », represents 參政 *ts'an-chêng*, « State Counsellor », a title which was regularly used under the Mongol dynasty as an abbreviation of 參知政事 *ts'an-chih chêng-shih*, and which Rašidu-'d-Dîn transcribes سم جينك *sam-ĵing* (*Bl*, II, 472, 536; cf. also *Ber*, III, 17); *ts'an* is one of the words which were still pronounced with a final *-m* under the Mongols. So « Vonsamcin » is simply « Counsellor Von ». As to Von (or Van ?), we ought also to have Vom or Vam, with *-m*; but it is possible that Von is the result of a wrong reading of Vō or Vā = Vom or Vam. Fan Wên-hu really was *ts'an-chih chêng-shih*, and although he was promoted to *chung-shu tso-ch'êng* in 1278 (*YS*, 10, 1 a), there is nothing abnormal in that Polo still calls him by his former title.

Fan Wên-hu has no biography in *YS*, so that we do not know his real *cursus honorum*; a notice on him has been compiled by T'u Chi, ch. 112. Son-in-law of the Sung general 呂文德 Lü Wên-tê, he is the same Fan Wên-hu who fought with the Sung against the Mongols during the siege of Hsiang-yang (cf. *JNCB*, 1927, 9, 10) and who went over to the side of the Mongols at a later date (1275). There are many mentions of Fan Wên-hu in *YS*, but I have not collected all of them. Qubilai held that the governing abilities of his high officials who had come from Mussulman countries or from Southern China compared very favourably with those of the pure Mongols; and in 1278, addressing one of these, he praised the high qualities of Mussulmans like Aḥmad and 'Ali, and of Southerners like Lü Wên-huan and Fan Wên-hu (*YS*, 10, 3 a); at the same time, he felt that Fan Wên-hu had changed sides rather rapidly.

PAUTHIER (*Pa*, 543, 544) says that the Chinese armada Polo speaks of is the one which was wrecked in 1281, and CHARIGNON agrees with him. But CHARIGNON adds (*Ch*, III, 126) that Fan Wên-hu has no biography in the official history, « a grave indication that his life did not end honourably ». The last remark is intended to countenance Polo's statement that both « barons » were executed by order of Qubilai on account of their cowardice. There is no foundation for CHARIGNON's