

ORIGIN AND SURVIVAL OF THIS NAME MILION ≠ MARCO POLO
 Venetian prisoners are taken to the prison of Genoa and are there a long time. This Sir Marchus was a long time in Tartary with his father and uncle and saw many things there and made a fortune and also learnt much, for he was a man of worth. And so being in prison at Genoa he makes a book of the great wonders of the world, of the things, that is, which he saw. And he says less than he saw, because of the tongues of detractors who easily impose lies on others, and rashly condemn as a lie whatever they cannot believe or will not understand. And that book is called the Book of Milio (*liber milionis* or *milonis*) about the Wonders of the World. And because great and vast and almost incredible things are found there, he was asked by friends when he was dying to correct his book and take back what he had written too much; and he answered, I did not write half of what I saw."¹

It has been doubted whether the book was called Milione in the author's lifetime, but YULE quotes from Villani, "the book called Milione which Master Marco Polo of Venice made".² Yet as far as I know Milione is rarely applied to the book in the older manuscripts, and very rarely indeed to the man. Professor BENEDETTO has argued that Milione, Milio, or whatever form it may take, is not a nickname at all, but Marco's real name, a form of Emilio, the Latin *Æmilius*.³ YULE and ORLANDINI are inclined to accept RAMUSIO's story that

¹ Quoted by B., p. cxciv, from the Ambrosian MS. D.526, fol. 77c,d. Twice in seven lines the Pope is called Boniface VI instead of VIII. B., *ibid.* note (5), gives part of the passage from a MS. at Turin dated 1428 (Biblioteca Nazionale G II 34) where Marco is called *quidam venetus qui diu fuit cum tartaris et dicebatur filius milionis*. cf. also Y. II. p. 511; Or. d.4 (10 April 1305), *nobiles viri petrus maurecenus & marcus paulo milion*. cf. p. 529 below and plate 8.

² G. Villani *Historie, &c.*, 1559, p. 99 (Bk. V, cap. 28): *il libro detto Milione che fece messere Marco Polo di Venegia*. Villani began to write in 1307 and died in 1348.

³ *Il Marzocco*, 14 sett., 1930, pp. 1, 2; 16 nov., 1930. In his supplementary note (16 nov.) B. produces a good example of a child having been named Milion at Padua in 1321; and the surname Milion is still to be seen over a shop in Venice. On 10 October 1936 Sir Percival DAVID wrote: "I have found the name of the shop below, FARMACIA GALVANI DI A. MILION. It is No. 2799, in the Campo Francesco Morosini (già S. Stefano)." cf. *Indicatore anagrafico di Venezia*, 1931, p. 297. ORLANDINI had noted the occurrence of Mattia Miglione in 1241 (Perg. proprio No. 3), of Marcus Milio in 1315 (M. Odorico b. 820 prot.), and of three or four cases of Milion in the 16th century. But it is still to be explained how it is that this name was either unknown or misunderstood by Marco's contemporaries, and does not seem to have been given him in family documents (except once in 1362 - Or. p. 55) until the fifteenth century when it is preceded by "known as" (*dictus*). cf. BOERIO *Diz. Veneziano*, MILIA, Emilia. By the 18th century the name had attained to the curious form "Marco Polo Colombo Camilione" (Mus. Correr, MS. Cicogna 3236, p. 6; d. 100, p. 595 below).