

## THE NEW SPELLINGS OF THE PROPER NAMES ≠ MARCO POLO

Little or no attempt has been made to exercise a critical discrimination and to accept or reject additional matter as it may seem more or less certainly to represent the original or to have been added by a copyist. The marking of all added words and the indication of the sources not only render such discrimination unnecessary, but give the reader some opportunity of forming his own judgement of the value of the different texts. Even a first-rate text like F seems to have been abridged not only in matter but in form, so that the expansions of, say, VB may seem to have a chance of having been taken from the original; but when it is observed that VB adds very little to the matter of the book, it is hard to avoid the suspicion that these sometimes considerable elaborations of expression (*puerile ed ambigua retorica*, BENEDETTO calls them) may be merely imaginary additions to a text which was at first at least as short as F.<sup>1</sup> There are places, too, where it seems to be very obvious that a divergent reading is merely the result of a deliberate paraphrase; but on the whole there is, in the present state of our knowledge of the text, so little foundation for a sound criticism that it has seemed better to include as much as possible; and, besides the multitude of small words and phrases which are of little importance, some larger passages which BENEDETTO at first included and later rejected are still included here.

In the version of the text the spelling of the proper names has been modified. While my general aim has been to give as nearly as possible the spelling of F or of some other good manuscript, it has yet seemed to be necessary first to spell a given name in the same way whenever it occurs, and secondly to use the same form in the version as is used in PELLIOT'S Notes in volume III. In these Notes some changes have been made in the spelling of a few of the words which seemed to be wrong in the manuscripts with a view to giving them a correct, or at least a less incorrect, form while preserving the general manner of the old transcriptions.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> MARSDEN (p. lxi), MURRAY (p. 38), YULE & CORDIER (II, p. 531), and BENEDETTO (p. clxxxiii) all abuse the handwriting of VB<sup>2</sup> (Sloane 251). It is closely written in a picturesque Italian cursive to which palæographers seem to have given little attention; but the letters are formed with so great regularity that the reading rarely presents serious difficulty. The explicit and colophon are, I think: *Espljzizit liber mjlonis ziuis veneziarum* and *Questo lbro scrjsse salvador paxutj del 1457 auiazo de barutj patron miser cabriol ualaresso chapetanio miser pollo barbarigo.*

<sup>2</sup> The spellings of names in F present, like the language of the text, a curious blend of French and old Italian forms. Some terminations seem to be simply French, as *Armenie* or *Alexandre*; and it is quite possible, as PELLIOT suggests, that *Abasce* is a hybrid representation of French *Abache* with mute *e*. Other final vowels are Italian, though forms like *Sacion* may suggest