

reputed a noble drink; and indeed great abundance of all other victuals is found there.

33. Of the marvellous sight that Friar Odoric beheld in a certain monastery of the idolaters.

This is the royal city in which the king of Manzi formerly dwelt. And four of our friars that were in that city had converted a man that was in authority there, in whose house I was entertained. And he said to me one day: "*Atha* (which is to say *Father*)<sup>1</sup> wilt thou come and see the place?" And when I said that I would willingly go, we got into a boat,

later travellers. Before his time Rubruquis says he could not distinguish it except by the smell from the best wine of Auxerre (*Vinum Autisiodorense*, *qu.* of the Chablis kind?). Ysbrandt Ides says when kept a year or two it very much resembled in colour, taste, and strength the best Rhenish. Father Ripa: "Rice is bruised and compressed into solid cakes. When used these cakes are broken and put into vessels with hot water and fermented. The liquor thus produced might be mistaken for excellent grape-wine. It is made sweet or acid at pleasure by the addition of certain herbs during the fermentation, and a colour is given to it as required." John Bell of Antermony calls it "clear and strong as Canary." A modern traveller's description quoted by Davis compares it to Madeira in colour, and a little in taste. (*Rubruq.*, 299; *Astley*, iii, 567; *Father Ripa*, p. 51; *Davis*, ii, 21.)

This liquor was called by the Mongols *darassun*, the *terraccina* of Rubruquis. The word *bigini* or *bignii* is probably the Persian *bagni*, "malt liquor or beer," though this is not a good description of the Chinese beverage. This word *bagni* is applied by some of the people of the Caucasus to their own beer (which Klaproth says is very like London porter), and might be used by the Alans, with whom, as disciples of the old Archbishop John, Odoric would be much in contact whilst at Cambalec. (*Richardson's Pers. Dict.*; *Klaproth, Voy. au Caucase*, i, 243.)

<sup>1</sup> *Atha* is a Turkish word signifying, as Odoric says, *father*. Taking it in connection with *Rabban*, which occurs just below, it may be noted that in 1288 there came on a mission from the Ilkhan of Persia to the court of France, a certain Nestorian bishop, who is termed by the chroniclers *Rabban Ata*. Remusat observes that this is probably no proper name, but the union of two titles in different languages, and cites a certain Syrian priest at the court of Okkodai Khan who was called by the sovereign *Ata*, father, and by the courtiers *Rabban*, master. (*Mem. de l'Acad. des Insc.*, vii, 359.)

It is curious that Ibn Batuta should quote this Turkish word *Atha* as being commonly addressed to old men in this very city of Cansai (iv, 288).