

## GALBANUM

23. There is only a single Chinese text relative to galbanum, which is contained in the *Yu yan tsa tsu*,<sup>1</sup> where it is said, “*P'i-ts'i* 齋<sup>2</sup> 齊 (\*bit-dzi, bir-zi, bir-zai) is a product of the country Po-se (Persia). In Fu-lin it is styled 預勃梨他 *han-p'o-li-t'a* (\*xan-bwiδ-li-da).<sup>3</sup> The tree grows to a height of more than ten feet, with a circumference of over a foot. Its bark is green, thin, and extremely bright. The leaves resemble those of the asafœtida plant (*a-wei*), three of them growing at the end of a branch. It does not flower or bear fruit. In the western countries people are accustomed to cut the leaves in the eighth month; and they continue to do this more and more till the twelfth month. The new branches are thus very juicy and luxuriant; without the trimming process, they would infallibly fade away. In the seventh month the boughs are broken off, and there is a yellow sap of the appearance of honey and slightly fragrant, which is medicinally employed in curing disease.”

Hirth has correctly identified the transcription *p'i-ts'i* with Persian *bīrzai*, which, however, like the other Po-se words in the *Yu yan tsa tsu*, must be regarded as Pahlavi or Middle Persian;<sup>4</sup> and the Fu-lin *han-p'o-li-t'a* he has equated with Aramaic *xelbānita*, the latter from Hebrew *xelbenāh*, one of the four ingredients of the sacred perfume (Exodus, xxx, 34-38). This is translated by the Septuaginta *χαλβάνη* and by the Vulgate *galbanum*. The substance is mentioned in three passages

<sup>1</sup> Ch. 18, p. 11 b.

<sup>2</sup> HIRTH, who is the first to have translated this text (*Journal Am. Or. Soc.* Vol. XXX, p. 21), writes this character with the phonetic element 爾, apparently in agreement with the edition of the *Tsin tai pi šu*; but this character is not authorized by K'añ-hi, and it is difficult to see how it could have the phonetic value *p'i*; we should expect *ni*. The above character is that given by K'añ-hi, who cites under it the passage in question. It is thus written also in the *Min hian p'u* 名香譜 by Ye T'ín-kwei 葉廷珪 (p. 10, ed. of *Hian yen ts'ui šu*) and in the *Pen ts'ao kan mu* (Ch. 33, p. 6), where the pronunciation is explained by 別 \*biet. The editors of cyclopædias were apparently staggered by this character, and most of them have chosen the phonetic *man*, which is obviously erroneous. None of our Chinese dictionaries lists the character.

<sup>3</sup> The *Pen ts'ao kan mu* (*l. c.*) annotates that the first character should have the sound 奪 *to*, \**dwat*, which is not very probable.

<sup>4</sup> There are also the forms *pīrzed*, *bārzed* (LECLERC, *Traité des simples*, Vol. I, p. 201), *berzed*, *barije*, and *bazrud*; in India *bireja*, *ganda-biroza*. Another Persian term given by SCHLIMMER (*Terminologie*, p. 294) is *wešā*.