

## THE FIG

42. The fig (*Ficus carica*) is at present cultivated in the Yang-tse valley as a small, irregular shrub, bearing a fruit much smaller and inferior in quality to the Persian species.<sup>1</sup> According to the *Pen ts'ao kan mu*, its habitat is Yañ-čou (the lower Yang-tse region) and Yün-nan. In his time, Li Ši-čen continues, it was cultivated also in Čekiañ, Kiañ-su, Hu-pei, Hu-nan, Fu-kien, and Kwañ-tuñ (吳楚閩越) by means of twigs planted in the ground. The latter point is of particular interest in showing that the process of caprification has remained unknown to the Chinese, and, in fact, is not mentioned in their works. The fig is not indigenous to China; but, while there is no information in Chinese records as to the when and how of the introduction, it is perfectly clear that the plant was introduced from Persia and India, not earlier than the T'ang period.

The following names for the fig are handed down to us:—

(1) Po-se (Persian) 阿駢 *a-ži*, \*a-žit(žir) (or 阿驛 *a-yi*, \*a-yik),<sup>2</sup> corresponds to an Iranian form without *n*, as still occurs in Kurd *hežir* or *ezir*. There is another reading, 駢 *tsañ*, which is not at the outset to be rejected, as has been done by WATTERS<sup>3</sup> and HIRTH.<sup>4</sup> The *Pen ts'ao kan mu*<sup>5</sup> comments that the pronunciation of this character (and this is apparently an ancient gloss) should be 楚 *č'u*, \*dzu, \*tsu, \*ts'u, so that we obtain \*adzu, \*atsu, \*ats'u. This would correspond to an ancient Iranian form \*aju. At any rate, the Chinese transcriptions, in whatever form we may adopt them, have nothing to do with New Persian *anjir*, as asserted by Hirth, but belong to an older stage of Iranian speech, the Middle Persian.

(2) 映日 *yin-ži*,<sup>6</sup> \*añ-žit(r). This is not "apparently a tran-

<sup>1</sup> STUART, Chinese Materia Medica, p. 174. The *Či wu miñ ši t'u k'ao* (Ch. 36, p. 2), however, speaks of the fig of Yün-nan as a large tree. According to F. N. MEYER (Agricultural Explorations in the Orchards of China, p. 47), the fig is grown in northern China only as an exotic, mostly in pots and tubs. In the milder parts of the country large specimens are found here and there in the open. He noticed black and white varieties. They are cultivated in Šan-hwa 善化 in the prefecture of Č'añ-ša, Hu-nan (*Šan hwa hien č'i*, Ch. 16, p. 15 b, ed. 1877), also in the prefecture of Šun-t'ien, Či-li (*Kwañ-sü Šun t'ien fu č'i*, Ch. 50, p. 10).

<sup>2</sup> *Yu yañ tsa tsu*, Ch. 18, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Essays on the Chinese Language, p. 349.

<sup>4</sup> *Journal Am. Or. Soc.*, Vol. XXX, p. 20.

<sup>5</sup> Ch. 31, p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> *Pen ts'ao kan mu*, Ch. 31, p. 26.