

An identification of *nan-si* to which PELLLOT¹ first called attention is given in the Chinese-Sanskrit dictionary *Fan yi min yi tsi*,² where it is equated with Sanskrit *guggula*. This term refers to the gum-resin obtained from *Boswellia serrata* and the produce of *Balsamodendron mukul*, or *Commiphora roxburghii*, the *bdellion* of the Greeks.³ Perhaps also other *Balsamodendrons* are involved; and it should be borne in mind that *Balsamodendron* and *Boswellia* are two genera belonging to the same family, *Burseraceae* or *Amyrideae*. Pelliot is quite right in assuming that in this manner it is easier to comprehend the name *nan-si hian*, which seems to be attached to the ancient Chinese name of the Persia of the Arsacides. In fact, we meet on the rocks of Baluchistan two incense-furnishing species, *Balsamodendron pubescens* and *B. mukul*,⁴ observed by the army of Alexander in the deserts of Gedrosia, and collected in great quantity by the Phoenician merchants who accompanied him.⁵

While it is thus possible that the term *nan-si hian* was originally intended to convey the significance "Parthian aromatic," we must not lose sight of the fact that it is not mentioned in the ancient historical documents relative to Parthia (An-si) and Persia (Po-se),—a singular situation, which must furnish food for reflection. The article is pointed out only as a product of Kuča in Turkistan and the Kingdom of Ts'ao 漕 (Jāguḍa) north of the Ts'un-liñ.⁶

Aside from the geographical explanation, the Chinese have attempted also a literal etymology of the term. According to Li Ši-čen, this aromatic "wards off evil and sets at rest 安息 all demoniacal influences 諸邪; hence its name. Others, however, say that *nan-si* is the name of a country." This word-for-word interpretation is decidedly forced and fantastic.

¹ *T'oung Pao*, 1912, p. 480.

² Ch. 8, p. 10 b.

³ Cf. *T'oung Pao*, 1914, p. 6.

⁴ JORET, *Plantes dans l'antiquité*, Vol. II, p. 48. The former species is called in Baluči *bayi* or *bai*.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 649.

⁶ *Sui šu*, Ch. 83, pp. 5 b, 7 b.