

Tree as a designation for the whole of that border territory : his very words « in the parts of the Dry Tree, on the borders of Persia », « to the Dry Tree, that is to that country », and « from towards the Lone Tree » bear evidence to this extensive use of the name. They do not mean, nor even suggest, that « Lone Tree » or « Dry Tree » was employed in the same manner by Persians or Mongols, nor that Ghazan kept guard of the passes at the « Lone Tree » or « Dry Tree ».

If we accept that the « Lone Tree » must be located north or rather north-east of Tūn, can it have anything to do with the cypresses of Zoroaster? The one at Ferūmad, west of Mešed, is excluded, since it stood quite away from Polo's route. As to the other, that of Kišmar near Turšiz, it is true that Turšiz is north of Tūn, and, in principle, one may conceive, though it is not probable, that Polo should have gone as far north before turning to the east. But, in spite of the uncertainty of the traditions relating to that tree, we must not forget that, in the second half of the 13th cent., it was considered to have been felled many centuries ago; moreover the tree of the village of Kišmar certainly was not a hundred, or even ten miles distant from any other tree, and finally the description cannot be referred to a cypress when it fits a plane. The only thing which may be said is that such holy trees seldom die in the memory of men; others take their place, and it may be that a tradition which originally concerned the alleged cypress of Zoroaster at Kišmar was popularly transferred in Polo's time to a remarkable plane which stood alone more to the north-east. As YULE says, « the plane, as well as the cypress, was one of the distinctive trees of the Magian Paradise ».

That the plane seen by Polo was a very holy one can hardly be doubted, since this is the only way to explain that he should have identified this Lone Tree with the Dry Tree so prominent in the legends of the Middle Ages. This is the more necessary, when we have discarded YULE's « Tree of the Sun », and remain with a « Lone Tree » which does not find much support either in the legend of Alexander or in the mystic tradition of the Christians. Polo expressly says once that the Lone Tree was the same which the Christians (not « we Christians » as in PAUTHIER's text in Court French, here followed by YULE) called the Dry Tree, and another time that the Lone Tree was the same which was called the Dry Tree in the *Book of Alexander*. But what the Dry Tree?

We may leave alone LAZARI's explanation that « Albero Secco » may stand for « Albros-coo » = Alburz-koh, the « Alburz Mountain » (cf. CORDIER, *Odoric de Pordenone*, 29). Polo's « Arbre seche », « Dry Tree », is not an Oriental name, and the traveller was quite right in stating that this designation was in use among the Christians. I cannot retrace here the manifold origin of this « Dry Tree », nor enter into the different forms of its legend. For some, it was the Tree of Knowledge of the Paradise at which Seth, Adam's son, had been allowed to glimpse, and Seth had seen that the tree was dry; but it was to become verdant again on a glorious day, when the Christians had recovered the Land of Promise. Others maintained that the tree had dried up on the day of the Passion of the Saviour. In later developments, probably when the Dry Tree had more or less replaced the Trees of the Sun and the Moon in the legend of Alexander, there were two Dry Trees, for instance in the romance of *Sidrac* (cf. Ch. V. LANGLOIS, *La connaissance de la nature et du monde*, 1937, 273). YULE and CORDIER have collected many passages which show that, in the Middle Ages, the « Dry Tree » was almost synonymous of the furthest limit of the world, and this is confirmed by the fact that, in ancient mediaeval maps, it is located in the extreme East, near the garden of Eden. If it was not the Tree of Knowledge or the Tree of Life itself, it